

# “Praise God from Whom all Blessings Flow”

## The Common Doxology / The Old 100<sup>th</sup>

What is a doxology?

- From the Greek – *doxo* “glory,” *logia* “saying”
- A form of words that offers praise to God, especially for His work of creation and redemption. Scripture records a number of these forms of praise which were used in both public and private worship.
  - Doxologies used in the formal worship of Israel:  
1Ch 29:10-13 *See also* Ps 41:13; Ps 72:18-19; Ps 106:48; Ps 150:1-6
  - Doxologies used in the spontaneous praise of God’s people:  
Ro 11:33-36 *See also* Ps 57:5,11; Mt 21:9 pp Mk 11:9-10 pp Lk 19:38; Gal 1:5; Eph 3:21; Php 4:20; 1Ti 1:17
  - Doxologies used as a benediction:  
Jude 24-25 *See also* Eph 3:20-21; Ro 16:25-27; Heb 13:20-21; 2Pe 3:18
  - Doxologies used in heavenly worship:  
Rev 5:12-13 *See also* Isa 6:3; Lk 2:13-14; Rev 4:8,11; Rev 5:9-14; Rev 7:12; Rev 19:1

Early Musical Doxologies

- Among Christian traditions, a doxology is typically an expression of praise sung to the Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- It is common in high hymns for the final stanza to take the form of a doxology.
  - The Great Doxology – “Gloria in excelsis Deo” is a hymn beginning with the words that the angels sang when the birth of Christ was announced to the shepherds in Luke 2:14
  - The Lesser Doxology – “Gloria Patri” text:  
“Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, and now, and always, and into the ages of ages. Amen.”

## Our Doxology

- Often referred to as The Common Doxology, because it is the most commonly sung doxology in Protestant traditions today.
- The Text:
  - “Praise God from Whom all Blessings Flow” was written in 1674 by Thomas Ken, a clergyman in the Church of England.
  - The text was written as the final verse of two hymns, “Awake My Soul and with the Sun,” and “Glory to Thee My God, this Night.” These hymns were for morning and evening worship at Winchester College.
  - The text soon began to be sung separated from these hymns and set to different music.
- The Music:
  - The music is attributed to the French composer Louis Bourgeois (1510 – 1560).
  - The melody first appeared in the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the Genevan Psalter as the musical setting for Psalm 134.
  - The Genevan Psalter was compiled in response to the teaching of John Calvin that communal singing of psalms in the vernacular language is a foundational aspect of church life.
  - Calvin intended the melodies to be sung in plainsong during church services, but harmonized versions were provided for singing at home.
  - The music is often referred to as The Old 100<sup>th</sup> because it became popular from its association with Psalm 100 in a translation by William Kethe entitled “All People that on Earth do Dwell.”
  - The melody can be used for any hymn text in long meter, that is, with four lines of eight syllables each. The text “Praise God from Whom all Blessings Flow” fits this meter.
  - The hymn “From All that Dwell Below the Skies,” a paraphrasing of Psalm 117 by Isaac Watts with the Doxology as the final verse, is commonly sung to the tune.

When we sing “Praise God from Whom all Blessings Flow”, we are singing lyrics written almost 350 years ago, we are singing a melody composed over 450 years ago, and we are singing a hymn sung by hundreds of thousands of believers before us.