

THEME: The Night was Holy Because Jesus is Holy!

How the Christmas Carol 'O Holy Night!' came into existence:

In 1847, Placide Cappeau was the commissionaire of wines in a small French town. Known more for his poetry than his church attendance, it must have shocked Placide when his local Catholic priest asked him to pen a poem for Christmas mass. Nevertheless, the poet was honored to share his talents with the church.

In a dusty coach traveling down a bumpy road, Cappeau considered the priest's request. Using the Gospel of Luke as his guide, he imagined witnessing the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. Thoughts of being present on the blessed night inspired him. By the time he arrived in Paris, "Cantique de Noel" had been completed.

Moved by his own work, Cappeau decided that his "Cantique de Noel" was not just a poem, but a song in need of a musician's hand. Not musically inclined himself, the poet turned to one of his friends, Adolphe Adams, for help.

The son of a well-known classical musician, Adolphe had studied in the Paris conservatoire. As a man of Jewish ancestry, for Adolphe the words of "Cantique de Noel" represented a day he didn't celebrate and a man he did not view as the son of God. Nevertheless, Adams quickly went to work, attempting to marry an original score to Cappeau's beautiful words. The song was first performed just three weeks later at a Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve.

Initially, "Cantique de Noel" was wholeheartedly accepted by the church in France and the song quickly found its way into various Catholic Christmas services. But when Placide Cappeau walked away from the church and became a part of the socialist movement, and church leaders discovered that Adolphe Adams was a Jew, the song — which had quickly grown to be one of the most beloved Christmas songs in France — was suddenly and uniformly denounced by the church. Yet even as the church tried to bury the Christmas song, the French people continued to sing it, and a decade later a reclusive American writer brought it to a whole new audience halfway around the world.

Not only did this American writer — John Sullivan Dwight — feel that this wonderful Christmas song needed to be introduced to America, he saw something else in the song that moved him beyond the story of the birth of Christ. An ardent abolitionist, Dwight strongly identified with the lines of the third verse: *"Truly he taught us to love one another; his law is love and his gospel is peace. Chains shall he break, for the slave is our brother; and in his name all oppression shall cease."* The text supported Dwight's own view of slavery in the South. Published in his magazine, Dwight's English translation of "O Holy Night!" quickly found favor in America, especially in the North during the Civil War.

Since that first rendition at a small Christmas mass in 1847, "O Holy Night" has been sung millions of times in churches in every corner of the world. This incredible work — requested by a forgotten parish priest, written by a poet who would later split from the church, given soaring music by a Jewish composer, and brought to Americans to serve as much as a tool to spotlight the sinful nature of slavery as tell the story of the birth of a Savior — has become one of the most beautiful pieces of music ever created.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:

What does it mean to be Holy?

What was it that made the night Holy?

How Holy do you have to be to get to Heaven?

MAIN POINTS:

- I. **Jesus is unlike sinful humanity - (Romans 3:9-19)**
 - II. **Jesus is God who became flesh - (John 1:1-5, 14)**
 - III. **Jesus is the fullness of Deity - (Colossians 1:15-20)**
 - IV. **Jesus is holy like the Father - (Revelation 4:8-11)**
 - V. **Jesus is worshipped in Heaven - (Revelation 5:8-14)**
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I. Jesus is unlike sinful humanity - (Romans 3:9-19)

9 What then? Are we better *than they*? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; **10** as it is written: "There is no righteous person, not even one; **11** There is no one who understands, there is no one who seeks out God; **12** They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, there is not even one." **13** "Their throat is an open grave, with their tongues they keep deceiving," "The venom of asps is under their lips"; **14** "Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness"; **15** "Their feet are swift to shed blood, **16** destruction and misery are in their paths, **17** and they have not known the way of peace." **18** "There is no fear of God before their eyes." **19** Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God;

A. Mere humans are sinful and never holy apart from grace.

- There are no "good people" ... there is only a good God!
- **O Holy Night!** - "*Long lay the world in sin and error pining, till He appear'd and the soul felt its worth*"

B. It's was 'O Holy Night!' because sinless God was born for you!

- If Jesus was ONLY human then we are still without hope!
- **O Holy Night!** - "*Led by the light of Faith serenely beaming, With glowing hearts by His cradle we stand.*"

C. Jesus was born that sinful humanity might have everlasting life.

- **O Holy Night!** - "*A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices, For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn.*"

II. Jesus is God who became flesh - (John 1:1-5, 14)

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him not even one thing came into being that has come into being. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the Light of mankind. 5 And the Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not grasp it. ... 14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us; and we saw His glory, glory as of the only *Son* from the Father, full of grace and truth.

A. The Christmas story has its beginning in eternity past.

- There was NEVER a time when Jesus wasn't fully God.
- The incarnation occurred in TIME but Jesus has always been in ETERNITY.
- Jesus has always been holy and will always be holy.

B. Jesus is Creator God from which all things came into being.

- So much more than a baby in a manger!
- WOW - The Sustainer of the universe was wrapped in swaddling cloths!
- The One with control over the Universe seemed to be a helpless baby.

C. Jesus is the incarnate God in flesh and blood.

- **O Holy Night! - "*It is the night of our dear Saviour's birth*"**
- **O Holy Night! - "*O night when Christ was born*"**

III. Jesus is the fullness of Deity - (Colossians 1:15-20)

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation: 16 for by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominions, or rulers, or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. 17 He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. 18 He is also the head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. 19 For it was the *Father's* good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, 20 and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.

A. When the shepherds saw baby Jesus they saw the image of the invisible God.

- The gospel demands that Jesus not only be human but also entirely divine.

B. Jesus has first place in everything.

- Jesus is preeminent; before everything else.

C. Jesus is our reconciliation to the Father.

- Without Jesus, you literally have no hope of being saved!
- God makes you holy through faith in Jesus Christ.
- **O Holy Night! - "*The Kings of Kings lay thus in lowly manger; In all our trials born to be our friend.*"**

IV. Jesus is holy like the Father - (Revelation 4:8-11)

8 And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come." **9** And when the living creatures give glory, honor, and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever, **10** the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and they will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying, **11** "Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created."

A. "The Godhead is Holy, holy, holy"

- not Love, love, love ... but Holy, holy holy!
- Proclaimed by the angels night and day....24/7....on repeat....non-stop.

B. God's holiness spans all of time (past, present, and future).

- There has never been a time without God.
- However ... for most of eternity past there was NOTHING BUT GOD.
——> Meditate on that!

C. All creatures worship God and Him alone.

- God does not share His glory with another.
 - **Isaiah 42:8** *"I am the Lord, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, nor My praise to idols."*
- You will be most satisfied in this life when you're most satisfied in God.
- The best place for every creature is worshipping at the feet of the Creator.

V. Jesus is worshipped in Heaven - (Revelation 5:8-14)

8 When He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. 9 And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the scroll and to break its seals; for You were slaughtered, and You purchased *people* for God with Your blood from every tribe, language, people, and nation. 10 You have made them *into* a kingdom and priests to our God, and they will reign upon the earth." 11 Then I looked, and I heard the voices of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, 12 saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered to receive power, wealth, wisdom, might, honor, glory, and blessing." 13 And I heard every created thing which is in heaven, or on the earth, or under the earth, or on the sea, and all the things in them, saying, "To Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb *be* the blessing, the honor, the glory, and the dominion forever and ever." 14 And the four living creatures were saying, "Amen." And the elders fell down and worshiped.

A. Jesus is holy and worthy of our highest form of praise.

- **O Holy Night! - "Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we, Let all within us praise His holy name."**

B. Like the Father in Revelation 4, Jesus is worshipped in Revelation 5.

- **O Holy Night! - "Behold your King! Before Him lowly bend!"**

C. All creatures worship Jesus (just like the Father).

- **O Holy Night! - "Fall on your knees! O hear the angel voices!"**

THEME: The Night was Holy Because Jesus is Holy!

POINTS OF CONSIDERATION:

1. God is holy and Jesus is God, therefore Jesus is eternally holy.
2. To be holy means that Jesus wasn't sinful humanity like us, but rather God in the flesh and separate from all evil.
3. Because we break God's laws every day and are utterly sinful, we need His compassionate grace or we'll end up in Hell forever.
4. God requires absolute perfection and total holiness from His people, which is why Jesus was born on our behalf.
5. Jesus lived a perfect life of righteousness, holiness, and never sinned.
6. When Jesus died on the cross, He took God's wrath for our sin upon Himself.
7. God raised Jesus from the dead, which proved that Jesus was successful in paying the penalty for our sin.
8. You **MUST** repent of your sins and believe in Jesus in order to be saved.
9. When you believe in Jesus as your Lord and Savior, God gives you His grace and removes all of your sin (past, present, and future).
10. God then transfers the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ to your account, so that He not only sees you as sinless but also as **HOLY**.