



Luke 2:1–14 (NIV)

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. ² (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) ³ And everyone went to their own town to register.

⁴ So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. ⁵ He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷ and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

⁸ And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

¹³ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, ¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

O Holy Night – The Rest of the Story

I. A Request To An Unlikely Man

- In 1847, Placide Cappeau was requested by his parish priest to write a poem for Christmas Mass.

II. Another Request To Another Unlikely Man

- He asked his friend, Adolphe Charles Adams, to compose a tune for the poem.
- Adolphe Charles Adams was Jewish and thus the words of the song represented a day he did not celebrate and the birth of a child he did not recognize as the Messiah.

III. BANNED!

- Initially, the song was wholeheartedly accepted by the church and sung throughout France at Christmas Mass.
- “Cantique de Noel” was denounced as unfit for church services due to its lack of musical taste and “total absence of the spirit of religion.”

IV. Coming To America

- In the 1860’s, American John Sullivan Dwight translated the song into English—moved not only by the words celebrating the birth of Jesus, but as an abolitionist he was inspired by the words:

“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.”

V. The Christmas Miracle

- In 1906, Reginald Fessenden spoke into a microphone and for the first time in history a human voice was transmitted over the airwaves.
- *“And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.”* Luke 2:1 (NLV)
- “O Holy Night” was played on his violin and became the first song ever to be broadcast over the air via radio.

VERSE ONE – A View From Above

O holy night! The stars are brightly shining
It is the night of the dear Savior’s birth
Long lay the world in sin and error pining
‘Til He appeared and the soul felt its worth
A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn
Fall on your knees! Oh, hear the angel voices!
O night divine, O night when Christ was born
O night, O holy night, O night divine!

VERSE TWO – A View From The Manger

Led by the light of faith serenely beaming
With glowing hearts by His cradle we stand
So led by light of a star sweetly gleaming
Here come the wise men from the Orient land
The King of kings lay thus in lowly manger
In all our trials born to be our friend
He knows our need, our weakness is no stranger
Behold your king! Before him lowly bend!
Behold your king! Before him lowly bend!

VERSE THREE – A View From Our Own Lives

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
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we
With all our heart we praise His holy name
Christ is the Lord! O praise His name forever!
His power and glory evermore proclaim
His power and glory evermore proclaim.