

Advent Devotional

by Peter Covington

O Holy Night!

My wonderful man, Luis, used to be a manager at a computer store and knows a plethora of applications to use in our home. One of my new favorites is to request music from Alexa, as the Christmas season is getting started. It is fun to pop through the play options of Christmas music to experience the most moving songs.

I am very taken with songs that emphasize how completely Jesus' birth changed the world, especially "Oh Holy Night." Nature itself seems to respond to the Savior's birth as "the stars are brightly shining," and "yonder breaks a new and glorious morn."

But we encounter more profound changes to the world system ushered in with Christ's entrance into the world: "In all our trials (Jesus was) born to be our friend;" "Truly He taught us to love one another;" and most profoundly of all, "in His name all oppression shall cease." Jesus came to save us not only from our sins but to start a new era of love and peace, banishing not only our petty worries but "all oppression" and establishing the law of love.

Of course that work is not yet complete as the power of God continues to break the oppression in human world systems, but the entry of Jesus into the world, signaled and empowered the end of injustice and the reign of love of and peace. The change was incredibly profound, like moving from drought to a waterfall.

Our response is equally profound as we "fall on your knees" and we "hear the angel voices." Jesus changed the world and altered human history forever, and we can see his birth not only as a call to action, but also a submission to the new, peaceful order created by God in the gift of Jesus



to a worried, burdened earth. The response to the Baby Jesus again and again was simply to kneel by the manger. Jesus brought Peace still available to us.

Jesus is neither our cheerful concierge nor our task master, but brought a profound change in the world system, moving from the worry about what to DO allowing us to be in repose in submission to divine love. Let us, then, experience “a thrill of hope (in which) the weary world rejoices.”

Here are the song lyrics in full and correct order:

O Holy night! The stars are brightly shining
It is the night of our dear Savior's birth
Long lay the world in sin and error pining
'Til He appears 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; O hear the Angel voices!
O night divine, O night when Christ was born
O night, O Holy night, O night divine!

[Verse 2]

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 Orient land
The King of kings lay thus in lowly manger
In all our trials born to be our friend
He knows our need, to our weakness is no stranger
Behold your King; before Him lowly bend.

[Verse 3]

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;
Let all within us praise His holy name.
Christ is the Lord! O praise His name forever!
His power and glory evermore proclaim!