

Christ Are We Bound Indeed to Praise

A solis ortus cardine

8.8. 8.8.

Christum wir sollen loben schon

Coelius Sedulius, c. 450

Latin Plainchant, 5th c.

German Version: Martin Luther, 1524

Setting: Lucas Osiander, 1586

Tr. Christopher J. Neuendorf, 2014

1 Christ are we bound in - deed to praise,
2 Though blest Cre - a - tor of all things,
3 From heav'n a - bove God's bound - less grace
4 The vir - gin house, that ten - der heart,

The Son of Ma - ry, vir - gin maid,
A hum - ble ser - vant's form He brings,
Was poured in - to the mo - ther chaste,
Was as God's tem - ple set a - part.

Far as the sun doth shine with mirth,
Through flesh to pay for flesh the cost,
A maid - en bore the Pledge con - cealed,
She who by none had been de - filed

Un - to the ends of all the earth.
Lest His cre - a - tion all be lost.
As yet to na - ture un - re - vealed.
Came through God's Word to be with child.

Christ Are We Bound Indeed to Praise

5 The honored mother gave Him birth
Whom Gabriel announced to earth,
Whom holy John leapt to display
While yet in mother's womb he lay.

6 In straw He lay with humble lot;
The manger rude chagrined Him not,
A little milk His only fare
Who ne'er lets birds of food despair.

7 The heav'nly choirs thereon rejoice
And angels praise God with their voice.
To lowly shepherds is revealed
The Shepherd who made all the world.

8 Praise, glory, thanks to Thee be paid,
O Christ, Son of the virgin maid,
With Father and with Spirit three,
From now unto eternity.

Christ Are We Bound Indeed to Praise

MARTIN LUTHER translated his Christmas hymn “Christ Are We Bound Indeed to Praise” (“*Christum wir sollen loben schon*”) from the Latin text “*A solis ortus cardine*” (“From the point of the sun’s rising”) of fifth-century poet Coelius Sedulius. The original was a grand acrostic poem treating the life of Christ in 23 stanzas, each beginning with a consecutive letter of the Latin alphabet. From that longer composition were drawn to shorter hymns, one for Christmas and one for Epiphany, and to each was added an identical doxological stanza. The Christmas text formed the basis of the present hymn, while the Epiphany text, “*Hostis Herodes impie*” (“Herod the Foe in Impious Wise”), yielded Luther’s text “*Was fürchtest du, Feind Herodes, sehr*” (“Why Fearest Thou, Foe Herod, So”).

When Luther’s German version was first published, it appeared with a simplified syllabic version of the earlier plainchant melody. Soon thereafter, however, the plainchant melody came into common use with Luther’s text. It is this version of the melody, in a setting by Lucas Osiander, *Fünffzig Geistliche Lieder und Psalmen*, Leipzig, 1586, No. 2, that has been chosen for the Free Lutheran Chorale-Book.

Select stanzas translated directly into English from Sedulius’s Latin appear in the *Lutheran Service Book*, 2006, No. 385, “From East to West, from Shore to Shore.” Robert Massie’s translation from Luther’s German appears in *The Lutheran Hymnal*, 1941, No. 104, “Now Praise We Christ, the Holy One.” All eight stanzas of Luther’s German text have been newly translated for the Free Lutheran Chorale-Book. Both text and music may be freely used and reproduced for any purpose whatever, and are offered with the prayer that they may serve for the edification of Christian people everywhere. For more information, visit the Free Lutheran Chorale-Book at:

☞ www.lutheranchoralebook.com ☞

The Free Lutheran Chorale-Book

presents

Christ Are We Bound Indeed to Praise

translated into German by

Martin Luther

from the ancient Latin of

Coelius Sedulius

and rendered into English by

Christopher J. Neuendorf

Davenport, Iowa

2015