

Lord Jesus Christ, with Us Abide

Ach bleib bei uns, Herr Jesu Christ
Geistliche Psalmen, Nürnberg, 1611
Drawn from Nicolaus Selnecker, et al.
Tr. composite

8.8. 8.8.

Ach bleib bei uns
Geistliche Lieder, Leipzig, 1589

1 Lord Je - sus Christ, with us a - bide, For round us
2 In these last days of sore distress, Grant us, dear
3 Lord Je - sus, help, Thy Church up - hold, For we are
4 O keep us in Thy Word, we pray; The guile and

falls the e - ven - tide; Nor let Thy Word, that
Lord, true stead - fast - ness That pure we keep, till
slug - gish, thought - less, cold. O pros - per well Thy
rage of Sa - tan stay! O may Thy mer - cy

heav'n - ly light, For us be ev - er veiled in night.
life is spent, Thy ho - ly Word and Sa - cra - ment.
Word of grace And spread its truth in ev - 'ry place!
nev - er cease! Give con - cord, pa - tience, cour - age, peace.

5 O God, how sin's dread works abound!
Throughout the earth no rest is found,
And falsehood's spirit wide has spread,
And error boldly rears its head.

7 And since the cause and glory, Lord,
Are Thine, not ours, to us afford
Thy help and strength and constancy.
With all our heart we trust in Thee.

6 The haughty spirits, Lord, restrain
Who o'er Thy Church with might would reign
And always set forth something new,
Devised to change Thy doctrine true.

8 A trusty weapon is Thy Word,
Thy Church's buckler, shield, and sword.
O let us in its pow'r confide
That we may seek no other guide!

9 O grant that in Thy holy Word
We here may live and die, dear Lord;
And when our journey endeth here,
Receive us into glory there.

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“Lord Jesus Christ, with Us Abide (*Ach bleib bei uns, Herr Jesu Christ*)” was written mostly by Nikolaus Selnecker and was first published in its complete form in *Geistliche Psalmen*, Nürnberg, 1611, after the author’s death. The parts of which it is composed have a varied history.

Stanza 1 first appears in two booklets dated c. 1570, *Zwei/Vier schöne Geistliche Lieder, an stadt des Gracias zu singen, nach dem Essen* (“Two/Four lovely spiritual songs, to be sung in place of the Gracias after the meal”). There it is found as the eighth stanza of Nikolaus Herman’s post-meal hymn, “Thank Ye the Lord Now and Always” (*Danket dem Herrn heut und allzeit*). This in turn is a translation of Philipp Melancthon’s 1551 elegiac couplet, “*Vespera iam venit, nobiscum Christe maneto / Extingui lucem nec patiari tuam*” (“The evening now has come; remain with us, O Christ, nor suffer Thy light to be extinguished”), printed in his *Epigrammatum libri sex*, Wittenberg, 1563, based on Luke 24:29, in which the disciples on the way to Emmaus plead with Jesus, “Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent,” after which He joins them for their evening meal. Stanza 2 first appears in *Christliche Gebet und Psalmen, welche die Kinder in der Jungfrau Schulen zu Freybergk zu beten und zu singen pflegen* (“Christian prayers and psalms, which the children in the schools in Freiberg are wont to pray and sing”), Freiberg, 1602. Lines 3–4 are reminiscent of Nikolaus Selnecker’s prayer following Psalm 29 in *Der Psalter mit kurtzen Summarien / und Gebetlein für die Hausveter und ihre Kinder* (“The Psalter with brief summaries, and prayers for the heads of households and their children”), Leipzig, 1572. It is from this Psalter that the remaining stanzas are drawn as well. Stanzas 3–4, 6–9 serve as a prayer for peace concluding Psalm 122, and stanza 5 appears as stanza 2 of the prayer following Psalm 149. When the stanzas were combined in their present form in 1611, the opening stanza took on new significance. Whereas it had begun as a reference to the evening meal, in its new context it referred to the evening of the world, the last days. “Lord Jesus Christ, with Us Abide” is thus a prayer for preservation in the midst of the great tribulation.

The tune originally printed with this hymn was “Erhalt uns, Herr.” The present tune is found as the alto part in Sethus Calvisius’ 1594 setting of Herman’s meal hymn. This tune can be traced to a 1589 Leipzig hymnal, which provided only the first line of most of its melodies. Presumably, therefore, this tune was already well known at that time, though no earlier sources are extant.

“Lord Jesus Christ, with Us Abide” appears in *The Lutheran Hymnal*, 1941, No. 292, and in the *Lutheran Service Book*, 2006, No. 585. The version in LSB omits three stanzas, and the new translation by F. Samuel Janzow is copyright 1982 Concordia Publishing House. The text in TLH is, however, in the public domain, and has been used for the Free Lutheran Chorale-Book. The text and music here provided 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.

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