

Lutheran Service Book 883

**“All Praise to Thee, My God This Night”**

Tuesday, December 31 at 7 PM

The Eve of the Name of Jesus – 2013

Sundays at 8:00 &amp; 10:45 – They return on January 5

Mondays at 7 PM – They return on January 6

**Introduction:** Dear friends in Christ: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen! New Year’s Eve is a good time for thinking about ♦the past, ♦the present, and ♦the future:

- **Past:** To →reflect on, →accept, and →try to benefit from *all that the LORD has allowed in 2013*.
- **Present:** To honestly assess our lives – *spiritually, physically, and relationally*. With the present practices of my life: +Am I growing in Christ? +Am I treating my body as a temple of the Holy Spirit? +Am I doing everything I can to be in a good relationship with others?
- **Future:** ✓Is my confidence in the LORD – *for this life and for the life to come*? ✓Am I determined to seek and follow the LORD’s will for my life? ✓Am I planning to live in continual repentance – thus *ever-sorry for my sins and ever-trusting in Jesus as my only Savior*?

We now focus on the hymn, “**All Praise to Thee My God This Night**,” which includes key aspects of our past, our present, and our future. Wherever we are doing well – *let us praise the LORD*, but wherever we are living in sin – *let us heartily repent!*

Thomas Ken, who lived from 1637-1711 is the hymn writer. He also wrote “**Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow**” (LSB 805), “**Awake, My Soul, and with the Sun**” (LSB 868), and “**Almighty Father, Bless the Word**” (LSB 923).

1. **Stanza 1:** **All praise to Thee, my God, this night, For all the blessings of the light. Keep me, O keep me, King of kings, Beneath Thine own almighty wings. //** Think about *those words and their time*; back in the 1600’s there were no electric lights. But rather than complain about the darkness, Thomas Ken looked back to the light God had given *and praised Him!* He also looked ahead into the night and sought the LORD’s protection, even as King David did with this prayer: “**Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me, for in you my soul takes refuge. I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings...**” (Psalm 57:1 NIV)
2. **Stanza 2:**
  - a. **Forgive me, Lord, for Thy dear Son, The ill that I this day have done... //** Ken also knew of his sins, so He asked the LORD to forgive him – not because he was worthy, *but the sake of God’s dear Son who lived and died to pay his penalty!*
  - b. **That with the world, myself, and Thee, I, ere [pronounced “air,” meaning “before”] I sleep, at peace may be. //** Since unforgiven sin brings *separation and unrest*, Ken was praying for forgiveness ♦from others, ♦from himself, and ♦from His God BEFORE he slept. Why? *So he could sleep in peace!* Let us fully *believe and follow 1 John 1:9*; then sleep in peace in 2014!

3. **Stanza 3: Teach me to live that I may dread, The grave as little as my bed. Teach me to die that so I may, Rise glorious at the awe-full day** [*not an awful day, but a day filled with awe – wonder, amazement*]. // Some year, someday death will come to each one of us – *unless Jesus comes first*. Therefore, **life is best when we are ready for our eternal rest!** Some think they are ready because of ♦their goodness or ♦their lack of badness, *but true readiness is found only in Jesus!* Referring to Jesus, *whom people had crucified but God had raised*, Peter declared: “**And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved.**” (Act 4:12 NAS) Therefore, *knowing Jesus as Savior*, we can look forward to our grave as much as our warm and comfortable bed – *confident that Jesus will raise us up when He returns (John 5:28-29)!*

4. **Stanza 4: Oh, may my soul in Thee repose** [*rest*], **And may sweet sleep mine eyelids close, Sleep that shall me more vig'rous make, To serve my God when I awake!** // What are your thoughts at bedtime? Thomas Ken wanted his soul to rest in His God – *no cares, no worries, and a good restful sleep!* But why? NOT for his own selfish gain, BUT to be strengthened to serve His God when He awoke. This is one of my favorite bedtime prayers: “Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray, dear Lord, my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake, I pray, dear Lord, my soul to take. **But if I wake before I die, I pray, dear Lord, please show me why**” (Prayer Basics, Part 1). Now that is *sleeping and waking with God’s purpose for our lives in mind!*

5. **Stanza 5: When in the night I sleepless lie, My soul with heav'nly thoughts supply; Let no ill dreams disturb my rest, No pow'rs of darkness me molest.** // So good sleep, *it’s a very nice blessing!* But this stanza covers several possibilities: +If I cannot sleep—*give me heavenly thoughts!* +If I dream—*give me good ones!* +As I rest—*protect me from the powers of darkness!* Even David slept in peace, *NOT because he was a brave warrior BUT because his confidence was in the LORD!* He prayed: “**I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.**” (Psalm 4:8 NIV) *May the LORD be our single source of confidence in 2014!*

6. **Stanza 6: Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below; Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host: Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.** // As mentioned earlier, Lutheran Service Book includes four hymns written by Thomas Ken: One is what we commonly use as the Doxology – *a liturgical hymn of praise*; then the other three include the Doxology as the final stanza.

**Conclusion:** So, thinking about ♦our past, ♦our present, and ♦our future **in union with the Christ**, let us know we are blessed – *come whatever*; then, let us praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! And all God’s people said: **Amen!**