

# All Creatures of Our God and King

**A**ll Creatures of Our God and King has an interesting history. It comes from one of the oldest known Italian poems called “Canticle of the Sun,” written by St. Francis of Assisi. Much could be said about the unusual life and legacy of St. Francis—his radical commitment to poverty in following Christ, founding of the Franciscan monks, and focus on creation. He even organized the first live nativity scene! Almost 800 years after St. Francis wrote “Canticle of the Sun,” pastor William Henry Draper translated and adapted the words into a hymn originally meant for children. The hymn soon gained popularity with its now famous tune, an old German melody arranged by composer Ralph Vaughn Williams.

While it’s true that Draper translated St. Francis’s words, it’s clear that he relied on an even older, more reliable source. Psalm 148 forms the clear backbone of this poetry. Both the hymn and psalm move from heaven (*sun, moon, stars*) to earth (*wind, water, fire*) with a focus on the elemental parts of our universe in God’s sovereign hand. And both end with a call to all peoples to praise God.

But how can the psalmist call upon stars and planets and creatures to praise God? Does that mean we should preach to animals? St. Francis thought so, but that’s a misunderstanding of the poetry. The writer of Psalm 148 uses a technique called *apostrophe*, a figure of speech which addresses something that cannot respond.

If that’s true, then we aren’t so much being sent out to literally call the universe to worship God, but to remember that it is already made and sustained for his praise. As we remember that truth, we also call one another to deeper praise. These words help us praise God when we encounter the everyday elements of creation. They will help us see the storms in our lives, physical or otherwise, as opportunities to praise God for his sovereign hand and purpose. They help us remember the purpose for which all creatures of our God and King were made: to glorify Him forever.

**Scripture to consider:**

- |              |           |               |
|--------------|-----------|---------------|
| Psalm 8      | Psalm 96  | Psalm 145     |
| Psalm 19:1-6 | Psalm 98  | Psalm 148     |
| Psalm 65     | Psalm 104 | Luke 19:28-40 |

♩ = 72

D Bm Asus A D/F# D Bm

1. All crea - tures of our God and King, lift up your voice and with us  
 2. Thou rush - ing wind that art so strong, ye clouds that sail in heav'n a -  
 3. Thou flow - ing wa - ter, pure and clear, make mu - sic for thy Lord to  
 4. And all ye men of ten - der heart, for - giv - ing oth - ers, take your  
 5. Let all things their Cre - a - tor bless, and wor - ship Him in hum - ble -

Asus A D/F# G D E7 A D Bm

sing al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Thou burn - ing sun with gold - en  
 long, O, praise Him! Al - le - lu - ia! Thou ris - ing morn, in praise re -  
 hear, al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Thou fire so mas - ter - ful and  
 part, O, sing ye! Al - le - lu - ia! Ye who long pain and sor - row  
 ness, O, praise Him! Al - le - lu - ia! Praise, praise the Fa - ther, praise the

Asus A D/F# D Bm Asus A D/A G D/F#

beam, thou sil - ver moon with soft - er gleam, O, praise Him! O,  
 joice; Ye lights of eve - ning, find a voice,  
 bright, thou giv - est man both warmth and light,  
 bear, praise God and on Him cast your care,  
 Son, and praise the Spir - it, Three in One,

A Bm E7 A Em B/D# Em Asus A D

praise Him! Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

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A Bm E7 A Em B/D# Em Asus A D

praise Him! Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!