

Angels We Have Heard On High

START

Angels we have heard on high Sweetly singing o'er the plains

And the mountains in reply Ech - o - ing their joyous strains

Glor

ri - - a in ex - - cel - - sis De - - - - o!

Glor

ri - - a in ex - - cel - - sis De - - - -

END
- o!

Lyrics

English

Angels we have heard on high
Sweetly singing o'er the plains
And the mountains in reply
Echoing their joyous strains
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be?
Which inspire your heavenly songs?
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee,
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

See Him in a manger laid,
Jesus, Lord of heaven and earth;
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid,
With us sing our Saviour's birth.
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

French

Les anges dans nos campagnes
Ont entonné l'hymne des cieux,
Et l'écho de nos montagnes
Redit ce chant mélodieux
Gloria in excelsis Deo (Bis)

Bergers, pour qui cette fête ?
Quel est l'objet de tous ces chants ?
Quel vainqueur, quelle conquête
Mérite ces cris triomphants?
Gloria in excelsis Deo (Bis)

Ils annoncent la naissance
Du libérateur d'Israël
Et pleins de reconnaissance
Chantent en ce jour solennel
Gloria in excelsis Deo (Bis)

Cherchons tous l'heureux village
Qui l'a vu naître sous ses toits
Offrons-lui le tendre hommage
Et de nos cœurs et de nos voix
Gloria in excelsis Deo (Bis)

GO - KEY™ Template

ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH

♯

♯

A

A

G

G

F

F

E

D

D

C

C

C

♯

♯

♯

History and Origin

"Angels We Have Heard on High" is a Christmas carol with the lyrics written by James Chadwick, Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle, to the music from a French song called *Les Anges Dans Nos Campagnes*. The music is the same as the original song, though Chadwick's lyrics albeit unique and original are clearly derived and inspired, and in parts a loose translation. The song's subject is the birth of Jesus Christ narrated in the Gospel of Luke, specifically the scene in which shepherds outside Bethlehem encounter a multitude of angels singing and praising the newborn child. The lyrics of "Angels We Have Heard on High" are inspired by, but not a direct translation of, the French carol known as *Les Anges dans nos campagnes* (literally "the angels in our countryside") composed by Francois-Auguste Gevaert in Languedoc, France, though they are clearly inspired by that song, and broadly follow the same storyline. The French song has received many adjustments or alignments including "Angels We Have Heard On High" – its most common English version – written in 1862 by James Chadwick, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle, northeast England. The carol quickly became popular in the West Country, where it was described as "Cornish" by R.R. Chope, and featured in Pickard-Cambridge's *Collection of Dorset Carols*. Chadwick's lyrics differ from the original French version, including a new song title, and are deemed an original work attributable solely to him. Chadwick did not directly translate the lyrics but wrote a new set of lyrics that closely followed the story theme of the original French song. The lyrics of "Angels We Have Heard on High" were written to fit with the music of *Les Anges dans nos campagnes*. Chadwick's lyrics are clearly inspired but are not a direct translation of the song, though there are similarities. It is considered a derivative work, although Chadwick's lyrics are considered original under copyright laws and entirely his, despite the fact that they are recognized as a "derivative work". The lyrics are completely unique in sections, but loosely translated in other sections from the original French song.

"Angels We Have Heard on High" is most commonly sung to the hymn tune "Gloria", as arranged by Edward Shippen Barnes. Its most memorable feature is its chorus:

Gloria in Excelsis Deo! (Latin for "Glory to God in the highest")

Where the sung vowel sound "o" of "Gloria" is fluidly sustained through a lengthy rising and falling melismatic melodic sequence. "Gloria in Excelsis Deo" is the first line of the song of the angels in the Gospel according to Luke in Latin.

In England, the words of James Montgomery's "Angels from the Realms of Glory" are sung to this tune, except with the "Gloria in excelsis Deo" refrain. It is from this usage that the tune sometimes is known as *Iris*, the name of Montgomery's newspaper.