

Hymn: O Love, How Deep, How Broad, How High

“O Love, How Deep, How Broad, How High” is a beautiful depiction of Christ’s all-encompassing love for us. Written in the 15th century as a Latin text by an anonymous author, “O amor quam ecstaticus!” was translated hundreds of years later into English by a priest by the name of Benjamin Webb. Webb was a great lover of music, and in addition to translating many hymns into English, wrote several hymns of his own. He translated the manuscript into seven distinct stanzas (instead of the text’s original twenty-three), each depicting a portion of Christ’s life on earth. This version was later set to music and published in the 1852 book *The Hymnal Noted*, which John Mason Steele, a friend of Webb, compiled. The publication revived the old text, and many more people were able to find hope in its words.

Each of the stanzas of “O Love, How Deep, How Broad, How High” shows a different way Christ showed sacrificial love to humanity, from the time he was born on earth through his earthly ministry, death, and eventual resurrection. For this reason, many churches throughout the years have sung this hymn to celebrate Lent or Easter, as it is a wonderful summary of Jesus’s life and love towards us. Even now, this old hymn from the 15th century echoes a timeless message that still rings true in the modern age.

O Love, How Deep Lyrics

1. O love, how deep, how broad, how high!
It fills the heart with ecstasy,
That God, the Son of God, should take
Our mortal form for mortals' sake.

2. He sent no angel to our race
Of higher or of lower place,
But wore the robe of human frame
Himself, and to this lost world came.

3. For us he was baptized, and bore
His holy fast, and hungered sore;
For us temptations sharp he knew;
For us the tempter overthrew.

4. For us he prayed, for us he taught,
For us his daily works he wrought,
By words, by signs, and actions, thus
Still seeking not himself, but us.

5. For us to wickedness betrayed,
Scourged, mocked, in purple robe arrayed,
He bore the shameful cross and death;
For us at length gave up his breath.

6. For us he rose from death again,
For us he went on high to reign,
For us he sent his Spirit here
To guide, to strengthen, and to cheer.

7. To him whose boundless love has won
Salvation for us through his Son,
To God the Father, glory be
Both now and through eternity.

O Love, How Deep

Attr. Thomas á Kempis, 15th cent.
trans. Benjamin Webb, 1854, alt.

DEO GRACIAS
LM

English melody; harm. from
Hymns Ancient and Modern, revised, 1950

1. O love, how deep, how broad, how high, how pass - ing
2. He sent no an - gel to our race, of high - er
3. For us bap - tized, for us He bore His ho - ly
4. For us to wick - ed men be - trayed, scourged, mocked, in
5. For us He rose from death a - gain, for us He
6. All glo - ry to our Lord and God for love so

thought and fan - ta - sy, that God, the Son of
or of low - er place, but wore the robe of
fast, and hun - gered sore; for us temp - ta - tions
crown of thorns ar - rayed, He bore the shame - ful
went on high to reign, for us He sent His
deep, so high, so broad—the Trin - i - ty whom

God, should take our mor - tal form for mor - tals' sake!
hu - man frame, and He Him - self to this world came.
sharp He knew, for us the tempt - er ov - er - threw.
cross and death, for us at length gave up His breath.
Spir - it here to guide, to strength - en, and to cheer.
we a - dore for - ev - er and for - ev - er - more.