

# SING FOR SYRIA



*Open Doors*

# 1 Once in Royal David's City

Once in royal David's city  
Stood a lowly cattle shed,  
Where a mother laid her baby  
In a manger for His bed:  
Mary was that mother mild,  
Jesus Christ her little child.

He came down to earth from heaven,  
Who is God and Lord of all,  
And His shelter was a stable,  
And His cradle was a stall;  
With the poor, and mean, and lowly,  
Lived on earth our Saviour holy.

And our eyes at last shall see Him,  
Through His own redeeming love;  
For that child so dear and gentle  
Is our Lord in heaven above,  
And He leads His children on  
To the place where He is gone.

Not in that poor lowly stable,  
With the oxen standing by,  
We shall see Him; but in heaven,  
Set at God's right hand on high;  
Where like stars His children crowned  
All in white shall wait around.

## Luke 2:1-7 The Birth of Jesus

*In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.*

*While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.*

**"The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him 'Immanuel' – which means 'God with us.'" Matthew 1:23**

Jesus was born in the Middle East. The gospels tell us this, not only in the place names – Nazareth and Bethlehem – but in the cultural references, too: the extensive family tree going back generations, the shepherds in the fields, the gifts of gold, incense and myrrh. Not only that, there's the way daily life is laden with history and religion, the willingness to recognise dreams and visions, the political turmoil, the need for peace.

Much of this is still a part of Middle Eastern heritage – and countries like Syria and Iraq, as well as the Holy Land, are in our minds and hearts as we celebrate the Christmas story each year. This year we particularly want to remember Syria, where, after seven years of unimaginable violence, the conflict is still not resolved and the memory of persecution from IS fighters still traumatises Christians. Nevertheless, under the faithful guidance of leaders like Pastor Abdalla in Aleppo and Pastor B in Tartus, ordinary churches in Syria are bringing hope and light to thousands in their communities, thanks to supporters of Open Doors.

So, as we sing of salvation and the Prince of Peace entering our world, let's remember those in Syria for whom there is no peace; as we celebrate the Light of the world, let's pray for His light to shine in their lives; as we declare tidings of comfort and joy, let us share the gifts God has given us, that His kingdom may come, bringing joy and hope to all.

## Did you know?

When Jesus was born, the Roman Province of Syria covered what is today Lebanon, Syria and parts of Turkey. The Governor of Syria also had overall authority over Galilee and Judea.



## 2 Silent Night

Silent night, holy night!  
All is calm, all is bright.  
Round yon virgin, mother and child,  
Holy infant so tender and mild,  
Sleep in heavenly peace,  
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night!  
Shepherds quake at the sight.  
Glories stream from heaven afar.  
Heavenly hosts sing alleluia.  
Christ the Saviour is born!  
Christ the Saviour is born.

Silent night, holy night!  
Son of God, love's pure light.  
Radiant beams from Thy holy face,  
With the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus Lord, at Thy birth,

▶ Watch Josh Gauton of Worship Central singing Silent Night at [www.opendoorsuk.org](http://www.opendoorsuk.org)

If your heart and home is in Syria, what have you got to sing about? The night is most certainly not silent. Nevertheless, through seven years of conflict, Syrian Christians have continued to celebrate the birth of Christ. "When we put the lights on the tree," says Pastor Abdalla of Alliance church, Aleppo, "we see them in a different way. We feel that light will come and give light in the world - and in our hearts in these difficult days. This light is still giving light in lives during the crisis. It's the same light that has been through the ages."

## 3 O Come, All Ye Faithful

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant!  
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;  
Come and behold Him  
Born the King of Angels:  
O come, let us adore Him, (x3)  
Christ the Lord.

God of God, light of light,  
Lo, He abhors not the virgin's womb;  
True God, begotten, not created:  
O come, let us adore Him, (x3)  
Christ the Lord.

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,  
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!  
Glory to God, glory in the highest:  
O come, let us adore Him, (x3)  
Christ the Lord.

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning;  
Jesus, to Thee be glory given!  
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing!  
O come, let us adore Him, (3x)

### Did you know?

'Eid Milad Majid' means 'Merry Christmas' in Arabic – the most widely-spoken language in Syria, Iraq and the Middle East.

▶ Watch 'Home and hope for Noeh' to see how your support is bringing hope to the Middle East at [www.opendoorsuk.org](http://www.opendoorsuk.org)



After repeated attack by militants, St Elias Cathedral, Aleppo, had to be abandoned for four years. It was joyously re-opened on Christmas Day 2016 when wood from the damage was used to create a crib.

## 4 Away in a Manger

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,  
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.  
The stars in the bright sky looked down where  
He lay,  
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,  
But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes.  
I love thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,  
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask Thee to stay  
Close by me forever, and love me I pray.  
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,  
And take us to heaven to live with Thee there.

## 5 O Holy Night

O holy night! The stars are brightly shining.  
It is the night of our dear Saviour's birth.  
Long lay the world in sin and error pining  
Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth.  
A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices.  
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn.  
Fall on your knees! O hear the angels' voices.  
O night divine! O night when Christ was born.  
O night divine, o night, o night divine.

Led by the light of faith serenely beaming,  
With glowing hearts by His cradle we stand.  
So led by light of a star sweetly gleaming,  
Here come the wise men from the Orient land.  
The King of Kings lay thus in lowly manger;  
In all our trials born to be our friend.  
He knows our need, to our weaknesses no  
stranger,  
Behold your King! Before Him lowly bend!  
Behold your King, Before Him lowly bend!

Truly He taught us to love one another;  
His law is love and His gospel is peace.  
Chains shall He break for the slave is our brother;  
And in His name all oppression shall cease.  
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we,  
Let all within us praise His holy name.  
Christ is the Lord! O praise His Name forever,  
His power and glory evermore proclaim.  
His power and glory evermore proclaim.



"This help is so important for us. Without such support we could not live." Samoouh (LEFT) and daughter Nima have received relief packages, furniture and blankets from a church supported by Open Doors. "God has saved us during these seven years of war. God gave us help through the church."

## 6 O Little Town of Bethlehem

O little town of Bethlehem,  
How still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep  
The silent stars go by.  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth  
The everlasting Light;  
The hopes and fears of all the years  
Are met in Thee to-night.

O morning stars, together  
Proclaim the holy birth!  
And praises sing to God the King,  
And peace to men on earth.  
For Christ is born of Mary  
And gathered all above,  
While mortals sleep the angels keep  
Their watch of wondering love.

How silently, how silently,  
The wondrous gift is given;  
So God imparts to human hearts  
The blessings of His heaven.  
No ear may hear His coming,  
But in this world of sin,  
Where meek souls will receive Him still,  
The dear Christ enters in.

O holy child of Bethlehem,  
Descend to us, we pray!  
Cast out our sin and enter in,  
Be born in us to-day.  
We hear the Christmas angels,  
The great glad tidings tell;  
O come to us, abide with us,  
Our Lord Emmanuel.

## 7 In the Bleak Midwinter

In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,  
Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;  
Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,  
In the bleak midwinter, long ago.

Our God, heaven cannot hold Him,  
nor earth sustain;  
Heaven and earth shall flee away  
when he comes to reign.  
In the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed  
The Lord God Almighty, Jesus Christ.

Angels and archangels may have gathered there,  
Cherubim and seraphim thronged the air;  
But his mother only, in her maiden bliss,  
Worshipped the beloved with a kiss.

What can I give him, poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;  
If I were a wise man, I would do my part;  
Yet what I can I give him: give my heart.

### Did you know?

From December onwards, southwestern Syria experiences sub-zero temperatures, high winds and heavy snowfall. Even in Aleppo, Pastor Abdalla says, "The winter is always difficult because it is so cold – people are in need of electricity and fuel, so the needs are increased."

▶ Watch Pastor Abdalla talking about Winter in Aleppo, Still Celebrating Christmas, and reading the following passage in Arabic at [www.opendoorsuk.org](http://www.opendoorsuk.org)

### Luke 2:10-14 The message of the angels

*But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; He is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom His favour rests."*



"The church is helping those tired and traumatised by war – creating an environment of love and support. Using music and art helps children express their feelings. The church can make a big difference in these cases. Please pray for the children to have new memories: colours in their thoughts, not images of the war."

- Pastor Abdalla

## 8 Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Hark! The herald angels sing:  
Glory to the new born king;  
Peace on earth and mercy mild,  
God and sinners reconciled.  
Joyful all ye nations rise,  
Join the triumph of the skies.  
With the angelic host proclaim:  
"Christ is born in Bethlehem."  
Hark! The herald-angels sing:  
Glory to the new-born king.

Christ, by highest heaven adored,  
Christ, the everlasting Lord,  
Late in time behold Him come,  
Offspring of a virgin's womb:  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,  
Hail the incarnate Deity.  
Pleased as man with man to dwell:  
Jesus, our Emmanuel.  
Hark! The herald angels sing:  
Glory to the new-born king.

Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!  
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!  
Light and life to all He brings,  
Risen with healing in His wings.  
Mild He lays His glory by,  
Born that man no more may die,  
Born to raise the sons of earth,  
Born to give them second birth.  
Hark! The herald angels sing:  
Glory to the new-born king.

## Christmas prayer for Syria

Dear Lord Jesus,  
We pray for our country of Syria, that You will be born in the heart of everybody. Take away the desire to fight and kill each other – and bring Your peace so that it will fill all hearts, so we can live in peace and safety. At Christmas, I pray for all the children who suffer because of this war. Remember them with Your grace and love. Help us as a church to work for them and serve them as You commanded us. We pray You will intervene in our beloved country, Syria. Amen.  
- Pastor B from Tartus

▶ Watch Pastor B's Christmas prayer for Syria at [www.opendoorsuk.org](http://www.opendoorsuk.org)

## 9 Joy to the World

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!  
Let earth receive her King,  
Let every heart prepare Him room  
And heaven and nature sing,  
And heaven and nature sing,  
And heaven, and heaven and nature sing

Joy to the world, the Saviour reigns!  
Let men their songs employ  
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

He rules the world with truth and grace,  
And makes the nations prove  
The glories of His righteousness  
And wonders of His love,  
And wonders of His love,  
And wonders, wonders of His love.

## Sing for Syria

**Every £26** raised could provide a monthly emergency relief pack for a family in Syria. This could include food, clothing, medicines, shelter, and heating during the freezing winter.

**Every £238** could provide training to help one person open a small business in Syria.

Pastor B's church in Tartus has a congregation of 60-70 people. But, as a partner of Open Doors, it supports 1,000 displaced families with monthly relief packages. He says: "The doors of the church are wide open. It has never been closed in the face of anybody and it does not differentiate between people whatever their background is. Our message is that 'We love everybody and we would like to help because you are in need'.

"At Christmas, we go to the camps and do a play for children. We talk to them about how Jesus was born in a cave and fled from one area to the other, like them – of how God protected Jesus, the same way He is protecting them now. When we present gifts to them from children in the church, this also brings joy to the church families. They learn that the true meaning of Christmas is to go and help those who are in need. This is one beautiful thing at Christmas."

The church is now opening a Centre of Hope where they will provide medical help, livelihood training for women and extra classes for children whose education deteriorated during the war. "The people don't need a church building. They need people who comfort them and bring peace. The children need people who pay attention to them. That is what we want to offer."

## Thank you!

"A glimmer of light in the darkness. That's what we celebrate at Christmas – and that's what the church is. At Open Doors, we believe there is no place too dark, too dangerous or too difficult to bring the hope of Jesus. Thank you for singing for Syria. Together, we can help that glimmer of light to grow, bringing joy to the world and hope to the Middle East."  
- Henrietta Blyth, CEO Open Doors UK & I

## Open Doors

Through its annual World Watch List, Open Doors shines a light on the countries where Christians face the most extreme persecution. In over 60 countries, Open Doors is strengthening the church with Bibles, training, literacy, livelihood support and advocacy services. We also mobilise the church in the UK and Ireland to serve Christians living under religious persecution.



**OpenDoors**  
60 years of serving persecuted Christians

[www.opendoorsuk.org](http://www.opendoorsuk.org)



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