

This is the last Sunday before Christmas and 1st Sunday we looked at the classic Christmas classic, *Hark the Herald Angels Sing*. To day we are going to look at a hymn with roots back to the Roman church. We are going to look at the Theology of this song. Where was the writer of this hymn drawing his material, was it Biblical?

The text for “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” comes from a 7 verse poem that dates back to the 8th century. The poem was originally in Latin, *Veni, Veni Emmanuel*. The one thing I remember from taking Latin in high school was this phrase ‘I came, I saw, I conquered’. It was first said by Julius Caesar after winning a battle in Asia Minor (now Turkey). So this is a plea for Emmanuel, God with us, to come.

This ancient advent hymn originated in part from the “Great ‘O’ Antiphons,” part of the medieval Roman Catholic Advent liturgy. On each day of the week leading up to Christmas, one responsive verse would be chanted, each including a different Old Testament name for the coming Messiah. When we sing each verse of this hymn, we acknowledge Christ as the fulfillment of these Old Testament prophecies. We sing this hymn in an already-but not yet-kingdom of God. Christ’s first coming gives us a reason to rejoice again and again, yet we know that all is not well with the world. So along with our rejoicing, we plead using the words of this hymn that Christ would come again to perfectly fulfill the promise that all darkness will be turned to light. The original text created a reverse acrostic: “ero cras,” which means, “I shall be with you tomorrow.” That is the promise we hold to as we sing this beautiful hymn.

*Verse 1 O come, O come, **Emmanuel**, and ransom captive Israel
that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.
Refrain: Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel shall come to you, O Israel.*

The first stanza of this song speaks of *Emmanuel, God with us*. Isaiah tells that God himself is going to give us a sign, “*Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel. Is 7:14* This child is coming to *ransom captive Israel*, to set captives free and that is what Jesus reads from Isaiah when He is beginning His ministry. *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free. Luke 4:18, Is 61:1* God is coming to ransom a people, a people that mourns, groans for his appearing, we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. *Rom 8:23*

*Verse 2 O come, O **Wisdom from on high**, who ordered all things mightily;
to us the path of knowledge show and teach us in its ways to go. Refrain*

This second stanza talks of Wisdom, wisdom that orders all things and shows us the way to go. The book of Proverbs is all about knowing wisdom and instruction. Proverbs 4:1 states, *Wisdom is the principal thing; Therefore get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding.* Solomon, in 1 Kings, when was given the opportunity to ask God for anything, asked for an *understanding heart*.

“Your servant is in the midst of Your people which You have chosen, a great people who are too many to be numbered or counted. “So give Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people to discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?” It was pleasing in the sight of the Lord that Solomon had asked this thing. 1 Kings 3:8-10 (1 Kings 2:10-12, 3:3-14)

*Verse 3 O come, O come, great **Lord of might**, who to your tribes on Sinai's height
In ancient times did give the law in cloud and majesty and awe. Refrain*

One of the most well-known names for the Lord, El Shaddai, “the overpowerer.” This calls attention to the Lord’s sovereign might to do whatever He purposes to do, *Your right hand, O LORD, has become glorious in power; Your right hand, O LORD, has dashed the enemy in pieces. Ex. 15:6 Matt. 19:26* “Adonai” (Exodus 19:16) is a name for God, the giver of the law, *there were thunder and lightning flashes and a thick cloud upon the mountain and a very loud trumpet sound, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled.* Dealing with salvation we see God’s might in Jesus’ redemption, *it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.* The disciples asked, “Then who can be saved?” And looking at them Jesus said to them, “With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

*Verse 4 O come, O **Branch of Jesse’s** stem, unto your own and rescue them!*

From depths of hell your people save, and give them victory o’er the grave. Refrain
O Branch of Jesse refers to Jesus’ lineage *Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit. (Isaiah 11:1)* Jesse was the son of Ohed, and the grandson of Boaz and Ruth. He was a farmer and sheep breeder in Bethlehem. David was the youngest of Jesse’s eight sons. (1 Samuel 17:12-20) Jesus came to rescue sinners, *From depths of hell your people save, and give them victory o’er the grave.*

*Verse 5 O come, O **Key of David**, come and open wide our heavenly home.*

Make safe for us the heavenward road and bar the way to death’s abode. Refrain

“Key of David” again refers to Jesus’ lineage. *Then I will set the key of the house of David on his shoulder, When he opens no one will shut, When he shuts no one will open. Isaiah 22:22* John picks this phrase up in Revelations 3:7, *And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: He who is holy, who is true, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, and who shuts and no one opens.* The verse says come Emmanuel and open wide our heavenly home. In Revelations Jesus says, *‘I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, so that no one will take your crown. ‘He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write on him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name. Rev 3:11-12* Jesus will truly *Make safe for us the heavenward road.*

*Verse 6 O come, O **Bright and Morning Star**, and bring us comfort from afar!*

Dispel the shadows of the night and turn our darkness into light. Refrain

Jesus is a Sun of Righteousness, bringing us comfort from afar (from God’s heavenly home). He is the Way the Truth and the Light. Last week we looked at the hymn, Hark the Herald Angel. That song had a similar verse.

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;

Malachi talk of this, *But for you who fear My name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. Malachi 4:2,* Numbers 24 states, *A star shall come forth from Jacob, a scepter shall rise from Israel. Numb 24:17* John the Baptist’s father Zacharias Prophecies, *Because of the tender mercy of our God, with which the Sunrise from on high will visit us, Luke 1:78* This theme is continued by Jesus in Revelations, *“I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.” Rev 22:16*

*Verse 7 O come, O **King of nations**, bind in one the hearts of all mankind.*

*Bid all our sad divisions cease and be yourself our **King of Peace**. Refrain*

Jesus is called the King of King and Lord of Lords Prince of Peace To the Jews Jesus said, “Behold, your house is left to you desolate; and I say to you, you will not see Me until the time comes when you say, ‘**BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!**’” Luke 13:35
This is final verse is the calumination of all of history in Christ. Jesus is fully God and has the title King of Kings and Lord of All. There is no true peace in our lives until we surrender our hearts to the Prince of Peace. What is described here is the New Jerusalem when God will ultimately destroy the power of sin, *there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain.*

Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. 4And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.” Rev 21:2-4

9He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him 10with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. Eph 1:9,10

18I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might 20which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. 22And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, 23which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. Eph 1:18-23

Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, 5and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. Rev 1:4-5

For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. Is 9:6

Unto us a Child is born!