

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” (LSB 357)

INTRODUCTION & MESSAGE ON VERSE 1 (Pastor)

Using the church year calendar to guide our worship journey throughout each year has been a tradition in the Christian Church for centuries. It provides us with a structured way to review the Person & Work of Jesus Christ as well as the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

The first half of the church year calendar takes us through the life of our Lord, Jesus, the Christ. It begins with the season of Advent. The word “advent” comes from the Latin word “adventus” which means “coming.” It is very fitting for us to begin our new church year with the Advent season since we could not have the forgiveness of sins and eternal life without the coming of Jesus into our lives to live, suffer, die and rise again for us!

God had given the promise of a Savior from the power of sin, death and the devil to Adam & Eve in the Garden of Eden as well as to His people Israel throughout their history. One such promise is recorded in Isaiah 7:14 → *Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.*

An angel announced the fulfillment of this prophecy to Joseph in a dream, informing him that his fiancée, Mary, was pregnant with Jesus by

the power of the Holy Spirit. *All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel” (which means, God with us) (cf. Matthew 1:22-23).*

The advent hymn of invitation which we will consider this evening is “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.” In the first verse we sing about Jesus, our Immanuel, Who came to pay the price of judgment and punishment for our sin so that we don’t have to live separated (that is, exiled) from God. Jesus has brought us into a perfect relationship with our heavenly Father! Throughout the hymn we pray that He will come back again to take us, *the Israel of God*, (cf. Galatians 6:16) to heaven so we can experience that perfect relationship with Him forever. Let’s sing the first verse together.

vs. 1: O come, O come, Emmanuel, And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel!

MESSAGE ON VERSE 2 (Elder)

As the LORD gave His promise of sending a Savior throughout the Old Testament He used many different titles, names and pictures to describe Him. This hymn uses some of these to describe Jesus and His work in our lives.

In the book of Proverbs wisdom is personified as a woman showing

people “the path of knowledge” and calling them to obey God’s ways. In 1 Corinthians 1:30 Jesus is called our *wisdom from God*. Jesus is certainly our “Wisdom from on high.” All of God’s work and purpose for our lives is bound up in Him. It is He Who gives life in all its forms meaning and direction in relationship with God the Father. According to Colossians 1:15-17 *Jesus is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation . . . all things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.*

Therefore, we desire Christ to come to us, put order to our lives and teach us to live in the “path of knowledge.” As Isaiah 33:6 says: *He will be the stability of your times, abundance of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge.* Let’s sing verse two together.

vs. 2: O come, Thou Wisdom from on high,
Who ord’rest all things mightily;
To us the path of knowledge show,
And teach us in her ways to go.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

MESSAGE ON VERSE 3 (Pastor)

Isaiah prophesied the birth of Jesus: *To us a Child is born, to us a Son is given . . . and His name shall be called . . . Mighty God.* (cf. Isaiah 9:6). Jesus was present when the LORD appeared to His people on Mt. Sinai after He had redeemed them from their slavery to Egypt. It was here that He gave His people *the law*—His Ten Commandments.

As the *Lord of might* Jesus also came to fulfill that Law on our behalf because we couldn't keep it perfectly due to our sinfulness. Jesus said in Matthew 5:17 → *Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.* We pray that He would come into our hearts today with His perfect obedience so we can follow God's Law daily. Let's sing verse three together.

vs. 3: O come, O come, Thou Lord of might,
Who to Thy tribes on Sinai's height
In ancient times didst give the Law
In cloud and majesty and awe.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

MESSAGE ON VERSE 4 (Elder)

Isaiah referred to the Messiah's lineage when He pictured Jesus as a *branch*, saying: *There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from His roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. And His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD* (cf. Isaiah 11:1-3; Jeremiah 23:5).

Jesse was the father of King David, an important descendant of Jesus, and Jesus was the One about Whom this prophecy was specifically speaking. It is a prophecy picturing life (a branch) from death

(a stump), thus picturing resurrection. Jesus died to pay the just penalty for our sin and then rose again to free those who trust His “mighty pow’r to save . . . from satan’s tyranny” and give us “vict’ry o’er the grave!” God became man in the Person of Jesus and, through His Work as both true God and true Man, Jesus saved us! Thus, our confession, *Thanks be to God, Who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!* (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:57) Let’s sing verse four together.

vs. 4: O come, Thou Branch of Jesse’s tree,
Free them from satan’s tyranny
That trust Thy mighty pow’r to save,
And give them in vict’ry o’er the grave.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

MESSAGE ON VERSE 5 (Pastor)

The genealogies in Matthew 1 and Luke 3 prove that Jesus is the promised Messiah and a descendant of King David according to prophecy. Listen to the words of Jesus in Revelation 3:7 → *The words of the holy One, the true One, Who has the key of David, Who opens and no one will shut, Who shuts and no one opens.*

The picture of the *key* carries the idea of having the power to open or shut out someone trying to enter a house. In John 14:2-3 Jesus said: *In My Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to Myself, that where I am*

you may be also. The *house* to which He was referring is heaven and He wants all people to join Him in His “heav’nly home.”

In heaven there is no more “misery” or struggle in sin. However, the only way for us to safely take “the way that leads on high” is to repent of our sin and place our trust completely in He Who is *the way, and the truth, and the life*—Jesus. Miserable as this life may be in the presence of sin, the real “misery” we ask Him to “close” to us is eternal suffering in hell. We don’t want to be “locked” out of heaven to experience the “misery” of hell. Through faith in Jesus alone “the path to misery” in hell is closed and heaven’s “door” is opened for us! Let’s sing verse five together.

vs. 5: O come, Thou Key of David, come,
And open wide our heav’nly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

MESSAGE ON VERSE 6 (Elder)

The prophet Isaiah talked about the Messiah “shining” with His grace on those who didn’t know the LORD at all—even the Gentiles. He said in Isaiah 9:2 → *The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.* The phrase *those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness* refers to people who don’t know the LORD and are headed for eternal death in

hell.

Jesus came as “the Light of the world” (cf. John 8:12). When John the Baptizer’s dad, Zechariah, was told that his son would prepare the way for Jesus, He burst forth in a song of praise to Yahweh. In this song he referred to Jesus as the “Dayspring from on high.” In Luke 1:77-78 he said that John would *give knowledge of salvation to His people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the Dayspring from on high has visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.* (KJV)

Revelation 1:7 says: *Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him.* Throughout Jesus’ teaching He spoke more about our earthly life ending by His 2nd Coming than by death. Our prayer is for Jesus to come “from on high” in His 2nd Coming on the Last Day and bring us into His victory over “death’s dark shadows” in our lives. *Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!* (cf. Revelation 22:20) Let’s sing together verse six.

vs. 6: O come, Thou Dayspring from on high,
And cheer us by Thy drawing nigh;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death’s dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

MESSAGE ON VERSE 7 (Pastor)

In about 520 BC the prophet Haggai urged God's people to rebuild His temple in Jerusalem. This temple paled in comparison with the temple which was built by King Solomon and had been destroyed. However, Yahweh encouraged His people to continue building it with the promise of a far grander House of God to be built by the coming King, Whom he referred to as the *Desire of nations*. That "house" would be the New Testament Church.

He said in Haggai 2:6-7 → *Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts.* (KJV) In Jesus' incarnation, God became flesh, dwelling among us so that *we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth* (cf. John 1:14).

Since Jesus' presence constituted the glory of God amongst the people, this prophecy was partially fulfilled when Jesus came to the temple during His earthly ministry. However, it will be completely fulfilled on the Last Day when He will come again in glory.

Notice that Jesus is the *Desire of nations*—not just the Israelites or Jews. Jesus' Work was for the salvation of all people of all nations. The concluding verse of our hymn is a prayer based upon the work of Jesus spoken about in Ephesians 2:14-18. *Jesus is our peace, who has . . . broken down in His flesh the dividing wall of hostility . . . that He might*

create in Himself one new man in place of the two,—that is, Jews and Gentiles—so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility . . . For through Him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. Hearts are bound together through faith in Jesus as the “King of Peace.” Only He can make “our sad divisions cease.” Let’s sing together verse seven.

vs. 7: O come, Desire of nations, bind
In one the hearts of all mankind;
Bid Thou our sad divisions cease,
And be Thyself our King of Peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

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