



14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. (Isaiah 7:14)

23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. (Matt 1:23)

Before God spoke in aeons past, the world was mantled in a thick curtain of darkness which had shrouded it from the moment that it was made, from nothing, by the Voice of God. It was from this smothering darkness that God spoke Light into being, and it was so. The sphere of the earth was exposed to the light of first day, and Creation continued to its physical consummation by the executive hand of the Lord – the same Lord who not only made Heaven and earth, but you and me. ***“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.”*** (John 1:1-4) ***“That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name*** (John 1:9-12) The same Lord who came down at Christmas and humbled Himself to the bed of a manger for feeding animals, and whose coming was heralded by the Light of a Star.

The Lord God knew in the Eternities Past that man would not be able to achieve any righteousness at all on his own power and will; so the Lord God made provision for a Savior who would come into the world to redeem those who would believe upon Him truly and devoutly. The only One who could qualify to redeem of sin must, Himself, be Holy and Sinless. That One Person was the Lord Jesus Christ – the only Begotten of the Father and the Lamb that was sacrificed for us from before the foundation of the world. ***“But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without***

spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you (1 Peter 1:19-20, also Rev 13:8)

In the Garden, eastward at Eden, man chose to partake of the tree with which Satan tempted him rather than that blessed Tree of Life which would have granted righteousness and salvation from the beginning. So the Tree of Life was removed to Paradise, and man has since, through his natural deformity of spirit, followed that evil voice that spoke from the ill-winded tree at Eden. But, remember? God had already provided a remedy through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He promised fallen man a Savior. True Israel looked forward to that Promised Seed from Abraham to John the Baptist. Their faith in the Coming Savior was the means of their salvation; and that faith in the accomplished event of Christ's sacrifice is the means of our salvation today. Civil Israel was by and large lost to darkness just as the civil-complicit church of today is by and large lost to darkness. True Israel lives in the faith of the people of God in that Promised Seed which is the Lord Jesus Christ. The Old Testament faith continues in the New.

Our hymn for this first Advent Week represents the desire of the ages for One to save us from our sins and its consequent death, so the words of an old 9th century Latin antiphon, 'Veni Emmanuel,' or Come Emmanuel, was put to deeper meaning and tune by the Anglican priest, John Mason Neale in 1851. Of course, the hymn has its ancient inspiration from the two introductory biblical passages of this devotion.

**O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.**

Refrain:

Rejoice! Rejoice!

Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

What a wonderful Advent hymn we have in the doctrinally sound, biblical truths contained in this beautiful hymn. Its tune – Ephratah, or *Veni Emmanuel* - is somber and reverential and touched with the color of devotion and expectancy. It is not necessary to have a rousing melody or a ridiculously loud modern drumbeat to rejoice. The quiet rejoicing in the silent and deep chambers of the sanctified heart is the most profound of all.

Across the dark vapors of evil man-made governments and religion, faithful men and women had yearned for the promised coming of the Lord. The world was spinning into the abyss of ruin and wickedness. A Savior was yearned for to bring Godly righteousness and compassion upon such a morass of error and darkness. "O Come" rings out the voices of the devout people of God. This was answered in order by the second repetitious emphasis, "O Come." And to whom was the plea made? To Emmanuel – the God that is with us! Amazingly, the Great I AM, does not speak in tenses other than the forever PRESENT TENSE. He is, always has been, and always WILL BE "I AM." Likewise, He is Emmanuel – the God that is now forever with us in our present years. He is not the God that HAS BEEN with us, or WILL BE with us, but the One who is always and PRESENTLY with us forevermore!

Why, you may ask, do we need to be ransomed? It is because we have been in bondage to sin and death. We have lived lives of the walking dead without God (Ephesians 2:1-10). We have answered to the every wish and commandment of our

master, the Dark Prince of the Air. We need a new mind and a new will! We need to put on the Mind and Will that was in Christ Jesus. We need to be purchased, ransomed, redeemed, and justified from our lives of death and sin. We have lived in exile among the wicked of the world, but now the Son of God shall appear with healing in His Wings. This is cause to rejoice, and to rejoice yet again and again. Emmanuel shall come to us!

**O come, thou Wisdom from on high,
who orderest all things mightily;
o us the path of knowledge show,
and teach us in her ways to go. Refrain**

There is no wisdom apart from the grant of Heaven. We attain that wisdom from that primal fear that there is a God in Heaven, and He is a God of justice. Knowing we fall far short of righteousness, we fear the judgment of God and seek forgiveness. *"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever."* (Psalms 111:10) The path of knowledge is that same Narrow Way that leads up to Heaven.

**O come, thou Rod of Jesse, free
thine own from Satan's tyranny;
from depths of hell thy people save,
and give them victory over the grave. Refrain**

The Rod of Jesse was the same by which David and the Son of David (Jesus Christ) came. But Jesse, too, is descended from Abraham – not only in bloodline, but in spiritual faith. His grandmother was the epitome of love – the Edomite woman named Ruth who married Boaz. Boaz was the son of Salmon and Rachab – the former prostitute of Jericho. (Matthew 1). The glorious truth of Jesus was that He was in every way wholly man and, at the same time, wholly God. There is not attempt to cover his genealogy because He was literally conceived by the Holy Ghost. He frees us from the tyranny of Satan over our souls through the instruments of sin. We have made our beds, already, in Hell, but Christ saves us from death and Hell by His own victory over death and Hell.

**O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer
our spirits by thine advent here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadows put to flight. Refrain**

I love this verse for its beauty and perspective on Christ. He is the very original Dayspring who spoke Light and Day into being at the beginning of Creation. *"Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath 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."* (Luke 1:78-79) He is also referred to as the Day Star by St Peter. There was nothing more cheering to me as a child that the beautiful, streaming rays of the effulgent light of the Sun at daybreak. When a very young boy, I always awoke very early and looked forward to the light of daybreak. It was very much like a new lease on life. The long night was ended, and the day of lively play had dawned in glory. That is the history of the past world of darkness without Christ. He came, and His gentle beams of love and redemption have showered upon our shoulders as a healing balm. Where the Light of Life beams, there can be no shadow of death. Death is born in darkness, but darkness cannot withstand even the smallest beam of Light. We are those

lower lights of God to bring those lost in the sea of life to the great Lighthouse of God's harboring Haven.

**O come, thou Key of David, come,
and open wide our heavenly home;
make safe the way that leads on high,
and close the path to misery. *Refrain***

**O come, O come, great Lord of might,
who to thy tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times once gave the law
in cloud and majesty and awe. *Refrain***

Our Lord Jesus Christ possesses the keys to that everlasting Kingdom foreshadowed in David. It is the Lord Jesus Christ who has conquered death and Hell for us and made available to all who believe the Throne of Mercy and Grace of the Father. There were no hospitals or orphanages prior to the coming of Christ. Women were treated as chattel, much as today in the dark lands of Islam. But Christ brought love to a world of hate as cool water on the parched desert earth. He gave, not only the Law as a teacher to us, but the remedy of His imputed righteousness to all who truly believe unto salvation.

**O come, thou Root of Jesse's tree,
an ensign of thy people be;
before thee rulers silent fall;
all peoples on thy mercy call. *Refrain***

**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. *Refrain***

**O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear. *Refrain***

The Lord Jesus Christ stands as our rallying Colors and Ensign of Righteousness. *"And he will lift up an ensign to the nations from far (Isaiah 5:26) Our Lord is that perfect Plumb Line that establishes righteousness forever. "Behold, I will set a plumbline in the midst of my people Israel: I will not again pass by them any more" (Amos 7:8) He is truly the "Desire of all Nations" but they have failed to comprehend His Compassion and Mercy. If we have put on that Mind which was in Christ, how can we be divided regarding the operation of the family, the church, or the nation? He is the true King of Salem (Peace) and the true High Priest of the Order of Melchizedek. "As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." (Heb 5:6)*

In the Lord's Prayer, we pray for the Coming of the Kingdom of God. Have we taken the Lord's Name in vain by praying that prayer? Do we seriously desire His kingdom of righteousness and justice, or would we prefer that He linger a bit so that we might fill our greedy fingers with just a little more filthy lucre? The Lord has come

according to the Promise, and the Lord is Coming again, according to the Promise. Are you ready for that momentous event this Advent Season?