

# Advent Hope



O Come, O Come Emmanuel

**Williamsburg Christian Church**  
Advent Study – Week 1

## **Advent Hope – O Come, O Come**

If we start our study in the book of Matthew, the first thing we get is a genealogy of Christ's lineage. There are 42 generations to be seen here as Joseph and Mary traveled to Bethlehem. Can anyone here trace back their lineage 40+ generations? Israel's people took the time and effort to remember this line of descendants. To tell the generations to come, over and over, so that it was remembered correctly, just as it should be. They repeated this lineage over and over so that it was remembered as they expectantly awaited the coming Messiah. And await they did, for 600 years God's people waited for word of the coming King of Kings while they lived under Babylonian captivity. For centuries they waited for the Redeemer-Messiah that we sing about in the Hymn, "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel."

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" is a translation of "Veni, Veni, Emmanuel", a 9th century Latin hymn that was originally used in church liturgy as a series of seven "Antiphons", translated as "Harmonies" or short musical statements that were sung each day of the last week of Advent until Christmas Eve arrived. Each of the Antiphons greeted the anticipated Messiah with one of the many titles ascribed to Him throughout the Old Testament. The 1861 translation from Hymns Ancient and Modern is the most prominent by far in the English-speaking world, but other English translations also exist.

Below are the seven Latin Antiphons in the correct order with each corresponding stanza of the English hymn. Notice that the beginning letters of each Antiphon form a reverse acrostic **ERO CRAS**, meaning "I shall be there tomorrow." In other words, this is the answer spoken the day before Christmas that echoes back from the One to whom the people call!

**Sapientia (Wisdom)** – Noun. sapientia f (genitive sapientiae); first declension. wisdom, discernment, memory. science, skilled practice. "The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord." Isaiah 11:2-3

**O Wisdom, coming forth from the mouth of the Most High, reaching from one end to the other, mightily and sweetly ordering all things: Come and teach us the way of prudence.**

**Adonai (Lord)** – Noun. A Hebrew name for God. 'In the daily priestly blessing, the Tetragrammaton was vocalized with the vowel points associated with the name **Adonai**.' 'In the New Testament, Jesus allows himself to be called 'Lord', which is our translation of **Adonai**, the substitute word for YHWH.' "For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our ruler, the Lord is our king; He will save us." Isaiah 33:22

***O Adonai, and leader of the House of Israel, who appeared to Moses in the fire of the burning bush and gave him the law on Sinai: Come and redeem us with an outstretched arm.***

**Radix Jesse** – which means “O Root (or Shoot, or Flower) of Jesse.” In other words, the Messiah will come from Jesse’s lineage. We hear this title for the Messiah in Isaiah 11:10: “In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his place of rest will be glorious.” Paul applies this verse to Jesus in Romans 15:12.

***O Root of Jesse, standing as a sign among the peoples; before you kings will shut their mouths, to you the nations will make their prayer: Come and deliver us, and delay no longer.***

**Clavis David** – which means “Key of David.” “I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David; he shall open, and no one shall shut; he shall shut, and no one shall open.” Isaiah 22:22

***O Key of David and scepter of the House of Israel; you open and no one can shut; you shut and no one can open: Come and lead the prisoners from the prison house, those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death.***

**Oriens** – A literal translation of the Latin yields “O Rising Sun”, but the poetic “O Morning Star” or “O Dayspring” is often preferred. “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined.” Isaiah 9:2

***O Morning Star, splendor of light eternal and sun of righteousness: Come and enlighten those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death.***

**Rex Gentium (King of the Nations)** – “He shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.” Isaiah 2:4

***O King of the nations, and their desire, the cornerstone making both one: Come and save the human race, which you fashioned from clay.***

**Emmanuel (God with Us)** – “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.” Isaiah 7:14

***O Emmanuel, our king and our lawgiver, the hope of the nations and their Savior: Come and save us, O Lord our God.***

***Refrain:***

***Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!***

O Come, O Come Emmanuel – Lyrics as they are today

**Verse 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 oh, Israel

**Verse 2**

O come Thou Dayspring come and cheer  
Our spirits by thy Advent here  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night  
And death's dark shadow put to flight  
Rejoice, Rejoice Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee oh, Israel

**Verse 3**

O come, Thou Rod of Jesse, free  
Thine own from Satan's tyranny;  
From depths of hell Thy people save,  
And give them victory o'er the grave.  
Rejoice, Rejoice Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee oh, Israel

**Verse 4**

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.  
Rejoice, Rejoice Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee oh, Israel

**Verse 5**

O Come Thou King of nations bring  
An end to all our suffering  
Bid every pain and sorrow cease  
And reign now as our Prince of Peace  
Rejoice, Rejoice Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee oh, Israel

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel is one of the oldest and most loved hymns of all time. It tells us to rejoice, and know that over 2000 years ago, Christ the King came to this earth that we might be restored. That we would know Him and the Father that sent Him. So that we might be saved from the tyranny of Satan, and be set free from the bondages of Sin, death, and the grave. This hymn is a great source of hope in a world that sometimes doesn't have much. Hope, not in ourselves or our current situations, but hope in the love of a Father that made a way for us to know Him as He restores us to Himself. Eugene Peterson, Theologian and Pastor explains Hope in this way:

*“Hoping does not mean doing nothing. It is the opposite of desperate and panicky manipulations, of scurrying and worrying. And hoping is not dreaming. It is not spinning an illusion or fantasy to protect us from our boredom or our pain. It means a confident, alert expectation that God will do what He said He will do. It is imagination put in the harness of faith. It is a willingness to let God do it His way and in His time.”*

1. Can you put this into your own words?
2. As you think about your life, what obstacles stand in the way of living with hope, a confident, alert expectation that God will do what He said He will do; a willingness to let God do it His way and in His time?

We live in a time and place that knows the story of Christmas, but how deeply and to what end? Are we truly awaiting the coming of the Christ as they did in the olden days? Not just those days that we would deem as ancient times, but olden times not too far off. Times that our parents or grandparents would have known?

3. Think about how you expectantly awaited Christmas and the things your family did to prepare for the holidays when you were a child.
  - a. How do you feel times are different now then how they were just a generation ago?
  - b. Do you still hold on to any of the same traditions now that you did then?
  - c. How did you include Christ in those traditions?
4. *Think of a time when you desired or hoped for something more than anything else in the world.*
  - a. *What do you remember as your most hoped for Christmas gift as a child?*
  - b. *Have you ever hoped for Christ in that same way?*
  - c. *Do you wait with urgent expectancy for Him this holiday season?*
  - d. *Why or why not?*

## LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE OF HOPE

*As you light the candle of hope consider asking the following questions, one each night.*

*How is Jesus the hope of the world?*

*How is Jesus the hope of our nation?*

*How is the Jesus the hope of our neighborhood?*

*How is Jesus the hope of our friends?*

*How is Jesus the hope of our own lives?*

## CONCLUDING MEDITATION

“Maybe it is not ripe yet, a fig that is still a hard-green knot no bigger than a gumball. Or maybe it is not even real yet, a dream of the future that is still a long way off. Waiting, we have to admit that we are not in charge here. There are things we think we cannot live without that we are denied, and there are things we had given up wanting for ourselves that are suddenly dropped in our laps. We can say yes and we can say no to these things, but we do not seem able to control them. Our lives are formed in the hands of a great mystery that does not ask us for our advice.

“So, if waiting is an aggravation, it is at least partly because we do not like being reminded of our limits. We like doing—earning, buying, selling, building, planting, driving, baking—making things happen, whereas waiting is essentially a matter of being—stopping, sitting, listening, looking, breathing, wondering, praying. It can feel pretty helpless to wait for someone or something that is not here yet and that will or will not arrive in its own good time, which is not the same thing as our own good time.

“And yet waiting is an essential part of the Christian life. Listen to what we say every time we break bread together: ‘Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.’ This is the mystery of our faith, that we are always waiting for Christ to come to us even though we believe that he has already come and that he is coming to us right now in word and sacrament.”<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> **Barbara Brown Taylor** - is an American Episcopal priest, professor, author and theologian and is one of the United States' best-known preachers. In 2014, and TIME magazine placed her in its annual TIME 100 list of most influential people in the world. <sup>1</sup>

## **PRAYER**

**Father, as we prepare our hearts and our minds for the celebration of your Son's birth, give us the hope that is expected of your people. Give us the desire to wait for You and to know Your love for us. Allow us to share that love and hope with those You seek to redeem and to see them as you do, as children loved and scooped up into the arms of Jesus ready to celebrate another birthday here on this earth. Thank you for grace and mercy in Christ's name, Amen.**

### **Sources:**

[https://hymnary.org/text/o\\_come\\_o\\_come\\_emmanuel\\_and\\_ransom](https://hymnary.org/text/o_come_o_come_emmanuel_and_ransom)

Advent Hope 2017 – Williamsburg Christian Church

Advent – New Life Fellowship, New York City, Pastor Rich Villodas