

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

This is a very old hymn, first published in 1850 ... but originated as early as the 8th century. It helps us to understand an ancient prophecy ...

Isaiah 7:14, All right then, the Lord himself will give you the sign. Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel (which means ‘God is with us’).

This prophecy was ultimately fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ ...

Matthew 1:18-25,

¹⁸ This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit.

¹⁹ Joseph, her fiancé, was a good man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly.

²⁰ As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream.

“Joseph, son of David,” the angel said, “do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit.

²¹ And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”

²² All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord’s message through his prophet:

²³ “Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means ‘God is with us.’”

²⁴ When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded and took Mary as his wife.

²⁵ But he did not have sexual relations with her until her son was born. And Joseph named him Jesus.

How Does God’s Presence Help Us?

A. The presence of God gives me freedom from captivity.

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.

Kinds of captivity:

- Political (as in the days of Isaiah and Jesus).

- Our sin holds us captive.
- Fear holds us captive.
- Aimless living holds us captive.

Jesus came to help each of these, John 8:36, Jesus said, “So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”

B. The presence of God breaks the darkness in my life.

O come, Thou Day-spring, come and cheer
 Our spirits by Thine advent here;
 Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
 And death’s dark shadows put to flight.

“Day-spring” = Sunrise.

The father of John the Baptist answered a question posed in Luke 1:66, “what kind of kid are you having Zechariah?” A great question! We all have hopes and dreams for our children ... John’s Dad spoke of the what his son would introduce:

Luke 1:78-79, Because of God’s tender mercy, the morning light (day-spring) from heaven is about to break upon us, ⁷⁹ to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide us to the path of peace.”

John was quick to say “I am not the light ... Jesus is!” (John 1:8). If you need a “new day” in your life, Jesus can be that “day-spring” for you!

C. The presence of God makes peace possible.

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.

Haggai 2:7,9, “And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, says the LORD of hosts ... and the glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, says the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, says the LORD of hosts.”

In times of tumult, even when the foundations are shaken, peace is on the way!

D. The presence of God makes me joyful.

Refrain

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

Matthew 2:9-10, After this interview the wise men went their way. And the star they had seen in the east guided them to Bethlehem. It went ahead of them and stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were filled with joy!

The Wise Men were used by God to show us the value of searching diligently for Christ. The supernaturally provided star led them step by step to Jesus, and when they found Him they worshipped and gave Him gifts.

Joy is the best word used to describe Christmas ... joy is a sense of well-being that springs from hope ... and hope comes from discovering that God is with us and wonderfully interested in us.

You are not alone! God is with you ... and Jesus desires to fill every nook and cranny of your life with His life.

MAIN POINT: Christmas is about the presence of God in our lives.

What should we do about it? Enjoy Him! We live in a time when there are so many distractions ... at Thanksgiving there's football games, and parades, and now shopping beginning at 6:00 p.m.! We're on our phones and tablets and don't even make eye-contact with our dinner guests ... we've lost, to a degree, the power of presence.

Enjoy the presence of Christ this Christmas season. Spend time with Him, alone, just you two. Pray. Sing. Just soak Him up!

A closing prayer ... "Dear God, You have come to us! Thank you for breaking into our darkness and freeing us to be fully alive in Jesus. We pray for a keener and deeper walk with You this Christmas season. Amen."