

# O Come, O Come Emmanuel

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, if we could, this evening for a short while, and with the Lord's help, if we could turn back to Isaiah chapter 7.

I want us to look at all three of the Emmanuel prophecies that we read, but if we just read the one that mentions the name Emmanuel.

So Isaiah chapter 7, I'm reading at verse 14. Isaiah 7 at verse 14, Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign.

Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and call his name Emmanuel.

As you know, we're considering the question, what is the gospel according to Christmas carols? What is the gospel according to Christmas carols?

[ 1 : 08 ] It's the question we've been asking over this Christmas season, because as you know, Jesus is the reason for the season. And that's what each of these Christmas carols have sought to remind us and reaffirm to us, that they're not an obstacle to the gospel, but they're an opportunity to share the gospel.

And just to quote from the article, The Gospel According to Christmas Carols, to quote it again slightly, it says that Christmas carols provide us with a unique opportunity to share the gospel. It is the perfect time to explain the meaning of these songs to those who don't know Christ and share the good news of the gospel with them.

And so that's what I want us to do again this evening. I want us to look at another Christmas carol, because as we've discovered already, Christmas carols are full. They're full of theology.

And I don't think I realised how full they were until I started looking at them with you in more depth. We saw the fullness of it in Isaac Watts' evangelistic prayer, where he said, Joy to the world, the Lord has come.

[ 2 : 15 ] Let earth receive her king. Let every heart prepare him room. And heaven and nature sing. We saw it in Wesleyan and Whitefield's proclamation. Hark the herald angels sing.

Glory to the newborn king. We saw it last Wednesday evening, when we considered, O Come, All Ye Faithful, by John Francis Wade. We saw it on Sunday evening, with John Moore's evangelistic proclamation, where he was talking about silent night, holy night.

And then this evening we come to another Christmas carol, a well-known Christmas carol, O Come, O Come, Emmanuel. O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.

And I'd just like us to walk through each verse of this Christmas carol and see that the first line of each verse draws our attention to a name of Jesus.

The first line of each verse draws our attention to a name of Jesus. And you can see that there. So verse 1 has the name Emmanuel. Verse 2, the rod of Jesse.

[ 3 : 22 ] Verse 3, key of David. Verse 4, the dayspring. And verse 5, Adonai, Lord of Might. And as you'd expect, each name of Jesus, it depicts and describes the character of Jesus.

So each name depicts and describes the character of Jesus. Now you'll be shocked to know that I don't have any alliterative headings this evening.

In fact, I don't have any headings at all. So try and stay awake. All I have for you this evening is a question. What's in a name? What's in a name?

I'm sure I've asked this question before. But the reason I ask the question is because there's a lot to be said about a name. Names have meaning. All names have meaning. The name, my name, Murdo, means mariner.

My surname, Campbell, is cowbeer, squint mouth. So I'm a mariner, as you know, with a squint mouth. In the Bible, names have more meaning.

[ 4 : 28 ] So the name Adam means man, because Adam was the first man. The name Eve was the name that Adam gave his wife, because she was the mother of all living.

And it was through Eve that human life would come into the world. The name Abraham means father of many nations, because the Lord promised Abraham that through his descendants, all the nations of the earth would be blessed.

The name David, I have a David in my home. His name means beloved, because he was the man after God's own heart. And, you know, even all names have meaning.

So names in the Bible have meaning. We see that even with one of the disciples of Jesus. He was called Simon. And yet Jesus renamed him Peter. Peter means rock.

And that was because Jesus promised that it would be upon Peter's confession of the Christ. It would be upon that rock, upon his confession of faith, that Jesus Christ would build his church and the gates of hell would not prevail against it.

[ 5 : 32 ] So there's a lot to be said about a name, because names have meaning. And if that was true of anyone, it was true of Jesus. Because, as you know, it was the angel who said to Joseph, they said, the angel said, call his name Jesus.

Call him saviour. Call him salvation. Why? Because he shall save his people from their sins. And as we read there in Isaiah chapter 9, one of the Emmanuel prophecies, we read that this saviour was going to have many names.

He was not only going to be called Emmanuel in chapter 7, but also in chapter 9, he's going to be given all these names. He's going to be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace.

So what's in a name? There's a lot in a name. So call his name Jesus. Call him salvation. Call him saviour. Because he's going to save his people from their sins.

And that's what Peter affirmed in the book of Acts. Peter said to the crowds that were listening, he said, there's no other name under heaven, given among men, by which we must be saved.

[ 6 : 46 ] And even Paul, when he wrote to the Philippians, he was talking about the exaltation of Jesus. And he said, it will be at the name of Jesus that every knee will bow in heaven and on earth and in hell.

And every tongue will confess that he is Lord to the glory of God the Father. So what's in a name? There's a lot in a name. There's a lot in a name.

And every name in the Bible that refers to Jesus seeks to exalt his name and exalt the person of Jesus.

But you know, this always reminds me, the names of Jesus, they always remind me of the story that the late R.C. Sproul told when he came back from in-service training.

Like us here in the Free Church, R.C. Sproul, he died in 2017, I think. But R.C. Sproul, he was a Reformed Presbyterian minister.

[ 7 : 47 ] He was a minister in the PCA, in the Presbyterian Church in America. And like all Presbyterian ministers, you have to attend in-service training every three years.

So I'll be away in January, second week of January, for four days of in-service training. But when R.C. Sproul described the occasion he had to attend in-service training, he said very bluntly, whenever I attended these things, they were often very boring and very tedious.

But he says, I'll never forget that one incredible speaker whose topic centered upon Jesus Christ. And he describes this well-respected, well-dressed elderly professor who climbs up to the steps of the podium to speak to all these PCA ministers.

To give his lecture. And all he did was clear his throat. And he smiled at them. And for the next 45 minutes, he slowly repeated off by heart every name and every title of Jesus Christ.

And in his story, when he tells the story, he gives you a list of some of the names he heard. Rock of Ages. Redeemer. King of Kings.

[ 9 : 03 ] Bride of Life. Living Water. Son of God. Our Sure Foundation. Good Shepherd. Mediator. Our Advocate.

Alpha and Omega. The Stone the Builders Rejected. Beginning and End. Friend of Sinners. He's the Great Physician. He's the Anointed One.

The Healer of Broken Hearts. Lamb of God. Blessed Hope. Our Atonement. Mighty Fortress. Our Shelter.

The Narrow Gate. The Lord of Grace. God of All Comfort. Word of Life. Bright and Morning Star. Glorious Lord.

Living Word. Chief Cornerstone. Creator. Ancient of Days. Author and Finisher of our Faith. Son of Man.

[10:02] Resurrection and the Life. The Way, the Truth and the Life. The True Vine. The Captain of our Salvation. And that said, Sproul.

Was just scratching the surface. But at the end of the 45 minute lecture on the names and titles of Jesus. He says that the entire auditorium was reduced to quiet tears.

And he says this is what happens when we focus upon Jesus and all that he has accomplished.

Because every name in the Bible is directing our attention towards Jesus.

Every name in the Bible is directing our attention towards Jesus. And I was looking it up. Apparently there's about 198 names of Jesus in the Bible.

So every name in the Bible is directing our attention towards Jesus. And that's what we see in this Christmas carol here. We see that every name and title in each verse is directing our attention towards Jesus.

[11:11] But what's amazing is that this Christmas carol, it's been around for nearly 1200 years. It dates back to the 8th or the 9th century. And like many other Christmas carols, it was originally written in Latin.

So it had the title Veni, Veni, Emmanuel. Which it wasn't until, as it says there at the bottom, until 1851 that it was translated into English by this man, John Mason Neal.

And it was translated as O come, O come, Emmanuel. John Mason Neal, he was an English-Anglican minister. And he's also known for writing another Christmas carol that you might have heard of.

Good King Wenceslas. Which apparently gives John Mason Neal the claim to fame of one of history's most festive clergymen.

I don't know how he got that title. But anyway, it's this Christmas carol with the names and titles of Jesus that attracts our attention this evening. But you know what always adds and even amplifies a Christmas carol and makes it memorable is the tune.

[12:19] We all know the tune Silent Night. We can all think of the tune Hark the Herald Angels Sing. I don't know if you know the tune to O come, O come, Emmanuel. If you've ever sung this carol or even heard this carol, you'll know that it has an eerie tune.

Or you could say a mournful tune. And the tune certainly adds and amplifies the lyrics of the Christmas carol. Because as you can see from the first two verses, they draw our attention to what we were reading earlier in these Emmanuel prophecies here in the book of Isaiah.

The Emmanuel prophecies as we read them, they're in chapters 7, 9 and 11 in the book of Isaiah. And they're known as the Emmanuel prophecies for obvious reasons.

They prophesy, proclaim and they point us forward to the Emmanuel, to the one who is God with us in the flesh. But what's remarkable is that even though Isaiah's words were written 700 years before Jesus was born, what's remarkable is that Isaiah's ministry was difficult.

If you were to read even the previous chapter, Isaiah chapter 6, Isaiah's asking the question, How long, O Lord? How long do I have to keep preaching to this people? And the Lord says, until the city is lying in ruins.

[13:39] So Isaiah had a difficult ministry. But the reason his ministry was difficult, it was due to the fact that the people were walking in darkness. The people were walking in darkness.

The Israelites were repeatedly returning to all their ignorant idols. And Isaiah, along with other prophets, they had been commissioned and commanded by the Lord to call the Israelites to repent and to return to the Lord.

But as you know, the Israelites, they refused to listen. They refused to listen to the Lord. And what happened was the darkness of the Israelites became even darker.

And you know the history. 586 BC, the nation of Israel was invaded. They were infiltrated by the Babylonian army. The Babylonians, as you know, they were ruled and reigned by Nebuchadnezzar. And when the Babylonians invaded and infiltrated Jerusalem, they demolished the city. They destroyed the temple. And they detained all the people. And they took them into exile in Babylon.

[14:45] And it's there that they would remain in the darkness of Babylon for the next 70 years. It was a dark period in their history. In fact, it was one of the darkest periods of Israel's entire history.

And this is why this Christmas carol has such a mournful tune to it. Because it wants to add and amplify the lyrics. But what this carol reminds us and reassures us is that even in the midst of darkness, and even in the midst of devastation, the devastation of exile, there was hope. There was always hope. And their hope was that they would be redeemed. Their hope was that they would be rescued from exile in Babylon. Their hope was that they would be able to rebuild the city.

Their hope was that they would be able to restore the temple. Their hope was that the Messiah would come. And so that in the midst of the darkness and the devastation of exile, there was hope. And there was hope all because of these three Emmanuel prophecies. In chapters 7, 9 and 11 of Isaiah. We read that they were in darkness.

[16:01] But the prophecy in chapter 9 says, 9 verse 2. Chapter 9 verse 2, it says, 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. And so you can see the hope that's there. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

Those who dwelt in a deep land of darkness, exile, on them light has shone. And this is why this Christmas carol opens in verse 1 with this prayer.

So you see there's this great hope.

There's this hope that draws our attention to the name and title of Jesus. He is our Emmanuel. He is God with us. And we read that, the name of Jesus, we read that in chapter 7.

[17:17] Verse 14, the Emmanuel prophecy. The Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son. And you shall call his name, Emmanuel.

And you know, unlike Jews who claim that this doesn't actually refer to the Messiah, we know and we can be sure that it's an Emmanuel prophecy.

We know that it's messianic in its context and in its content because it's quoted in the New Testament in reference to the birth of Jesus.

We're told in Matthew chapter 1, all this took place. So the birth of Jesus took place in this way to fulfill what had been spoken by the prophet Isaiah.

In Isaiah 7, 14. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son. And they shall call his name, Emmanuel. Which means God with us.

[18:17] So that's the first name and title. Emmanuel. In the second verse of this Christmas carol, it draws our attention to another name and title of Jesus. We see there, it's the rod of Jesse.

The rod of Jesse. We read in verse 2. 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, O Israel. Now as you know, the rod of Jesse is a name and title of Jesus.

Because Jesse was the father of David. David was the shepherd boy who became the king. King David in Israel. And as you know, Jesus was from the line and the lineage of King David.

Therefore, Jesus was from the rod of Jesse. He was a descendant of Jesse. But you know, Jesus is depicted and described as the rod of Jesse here.

[19:23] Because the exile in Babylon had cut down the nation of Israel. So the nation of Israel was often pictured like a large tree. This large tree.

But the exile had cut the tree to the ground. And where the tree falls, there it shall lie, as Solomon said. And the tree had been cut down through exile.

Exile had cut Israel down in such a way that all that was left of them, all that was left of this original large tree, was a stump.

But the hope of Israel was that from that stump or out of that stump would grow a stem. And that stem would develop and grow into a rod.

A rod from the line and lineage of Jesse. And that's what we read about in the other Emmanuel prophecy in chapter 11. It says there in chapter 1, verse 1 of chapter 11.

[20:26] There shall come forth a shoot or a stem from the stump of Jesse. A branch from its 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.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see or decide disputes by what his ears hear. But with righteousness he shall judge the poor. And decide with equity for the meek of the earth. And he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth. And with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist. And faithfulness the belt of his loins. And you know, don't you find it remarkable? You read those verses there. Verse 2. The spirit of the Lord is upon him. And don't you find it remarkable that when Jesus stands up in the synagogue in Nazareth.

[ 21 : 27 ] He reads from the same book. Not the same chapter. But the same book from Isaiah. And he asserts and affirms. The spirit of the Lord is upon me. Because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives. The recovery of sight to the blind. To set at liberty those who are oppressed. And to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour. And so he is the rod of Jesse. He is the one from whom there will come a stem from the stump. And the stem will develop into a rod. The rod from the line and lineage of Jesse. Then in verse 3 of the Christmas Carol. It draws our attention to another name of Jesus. We're told there he is the key of David. The key of David. Which is another name and title. It's found in the book of Isaiah. It's found in chapter 22. Where the Lord says about the messianic king. He says, I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David.

[ 22 : 33 ] He shall open and none shall shut. And he shall shut and none shall open. And you know the fact it mentions there about the shoulder.

The shoulder is important because it relates to one of the Emmanuel prophecies. The Emmanuel prophecy in Isaiah chapter 9 and verse 6.

Where it says, For to us a child is born, to us a son is given. The government shall be upon his shoulder. His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father. Prince of Peace. So the government of God's son will be a royal government. It will be a government placed upon his shoulders.

Because he will be the messianic king. He will be a descendant of the great King David. He will be from the line and lineage of King David. He will have the key of King David.

[ 23 : 32 ] And you know, this understanding of who King David is and the key of David, it helps us make sense of verse 3. Where it says, 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. You know, the hope of Israel. The hope of Israel was that when the Messiah would come, when this Davidic king would come, he will open a new and living way.

He would rule and reign in such a way that the crooked places would be made straight, and all the rough places would be made plain. He would open a door of salvation that no man can shut. He would open a door of salvation that no man can shut. He is the key of David. And you know, what's fascinating about the Bible, I love how it all holds together.

This name and title, Key of David, it reappears later in the Bible. It reappears right at the end of the Bible, in the book of Revelation, when Jesus is writing to the church in Philadelphia.

[ 24 : 49 ] And what Jesus writes is, He is the key of David.

He is the key of David.

Then verse 4 highlights another name and title of Jesus. He's the dayspring. He's the dayspring. We're told in verse 4, O come thou dayspring, come and cheer.

Our spirits by thine advent hear. Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight. The dayspring is how Zechariah, Zechariah was the father of John the Baptist.

That's how he described Jesus. You remember when Zechariah, he received the promise of the Messiah, but he didn't believe it. And the angel Gabriel told him that he would be unable to speak for nine months until his son, John, would be born.

[ 26 : 02 ] And it was only when they named John, when they gave John his name, it's only then that Zechariah's tongue was finally loosed, and he was enabled to speak. And the first thing Zechariah says about his son, his newborn son, who was John the Baptist, he said, You shall be the prophet of the highest, for you shall go before the Lord to prepare his way for the dayspring.

The dayspring from on high has visited us to give light to those who sit in darkness. That's back to Isaiah 9, verse 2. Those who sit in darkness have seen a great light.

The dayspring from on high has visited us to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death to guide our feet into the way of peace.

It reminds us that Jesus was given the name and title of dayspring because at his birth, it was to be a new day. The birth of Jesus was going to bring in a new day, a new dawning from the history of this world.

There was going to be a new beginning. And with that new beginning was the promise of new birth, that we must be born again. It was the promise of new life. It was the promise of new hope, where this saviour of sinners, this Emmanuel, he was going to make all things new.

[ 27 : 27 ] He was the remedy to a ruin. He's going to restore this ruined creation and make all things new. And so this Christmas carol, it gives to us names and titles of Jesus that draw our attention to Jesus.

There's Emmanuel in verse 1, what of Jesse verse 2, K of David verse 3, Dayspring verse 4, And then lastly, in verse 5, we have the name Adonai, Lord of Might.

Adonai, Lord of Might. We read there in verse 5, O come, Adonai, 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.

And then the chorus, Rejoice, Rejoice, Emmanuel, shall come to thee, O Israel. Adonai, let's use the, Adonai is the word that Jews use when they read the Old Testament.

So they consider the name of God to be so sacred and so holy that they would never say, Lord. They would always say, Adonai.

[ 28 : 38 ] For example, Jews, when they come to Psalm 23, they would never say, The Lord is my shepherd. They would always say, Adonai is my shepherd. Adonai is my shepherd.

But what's been highlighted here with this name and title is that Jesus is Adonai. Jesus is Lord. More than that, Jesus is Lord of Might.

That's what he's told. Adonai, thou Lord of Might. Jesus is, as the Bible describes him, Jehovah Sabaoth. Another name. He is Jesus, Lord of Might.

He is Jehovah Sabaoth. He's the Lord of Hosts. He's the Lord of Hosts. And you know, we're familiar with many of the names and titles of Jehovah in the Bible.

I think we did a study of that a few years ago. I don't know if you remember it. But we looked at all these different Jehovah names in the Bible. That the Lord is, He is Jehovah Rapha, the Lord your healer.

[ 29 : 43 ] He is Jehovah Nisi, the Lord is my banner. He is Jehovah Jireh, the Lord our provider. He is Jehovah Mekadesh, the Lord who sanctifies you.

He is Jehovah Shalom, the Lord our peace. He is Jehovah Rohi, the Lord's my shepherd. He is Jehovah Sidkenu, as McShane would put it, the Lord our righteousness.

He is Jehovah Shama, the Lord is there. And He is also Jehovah Sabaoth, the Lord of Hosts. The Lord of Hosts.

And that's what we're going to sing about in a moment in our closing psalm. We're going to sing the other half of Psalm 46, where the psalmist says in Psalm 46, the Lord of Hosts.

Jehovah Sabaoth is upon our side. He doth constantly remain. The God of Jacob is our refuge, us safely to maintain. And so this Christmas carol, it gives to us five names and titles that draw our attention to Jesus.

[ 30 : 48 ] They draw our attention to Jesus. There's Emmanuel, Rod of Jesse, Key of David, Dayspring, and Adonai, Lord of Might.

And you know, all these names and titles of Jesus, they ought to remind us and reassure us of one thing. The one thing we have all come to know, that the name of Jesus is precious.

The name of Jesus is precious. Because as you know, there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

And it will be at the name of Jesus. I love what Paul says. It will be at the name of Jesus that every knee will bow and every tongue confess that he is Lord to the glory of God, the Father.

There was no headings. Just a question. What's in a name? What's in a name? The angel said, call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.

[ 32 : 00 ] May the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. O Lord, our gracious God, we give thanks to thee for that wonderful reminder that there is no other name like the name of Jesus.

And we give thanks to thee this evening that that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. We give thanks that by thy grace and by thy spirit thou hast enabled us to call upon the name of Jesus and that we even heard the voice of Jesus speaking to us in the gospel.

O we bless and praise thee that we know that the name of Jesus is precious. And Lord, help us, we pray. Help us to make the name of Jesus so precious.

So precious that we would be willing to share it with others. Willing to speak of our Jesus to those who don't know him yet. Because as we said, he is the friend of sinners.

He is the one who sticks closer than a brother. He is faithful. Faithful and he is one who saves to the uttermost. O Lord, bless us then we pray. Help us to love the name of Jesus and to love like Jesus day by day.

[ 33 : 16 ] Watch over us then we ask. Help us to keep looking to our Jesus, to know him and to love him and to keep confessing him as the author and the finisher of our faith.

Cleanse us we pray. Go before us. Take away our iniquity. Receive us graciously for Jesus' sake. Amen. We're going to bring our service to a conclusion this evening.

We're going to sing in that psalm. Psalm 46. Psalm 46, page 271. Singing from verse 7 down to the end of the psalm.

Psalm 46. Psalm 46. Psalm 46. You have the name repeated. Jehovah Sabaoth or the Lord of hosts.

It's repeated in verse 7 and then again in verse 11. He is the Lord of hosts, the Lord of the armies. He's the Lord Almighty.

[ 34 : 24 ] And what does the psalmist say about him? The Lord of hosts upon our side doth constantly remain. The God of Jacob's our refuge us safely to maintain.

Therefore, he says, come. Come and behold what wondrous works have by the Lord been wrought. Come, see what desolations he on the earth hath brought.

So we'll sing down to the end of the psalm of Psalm 46 from verse 7. And we'll stand to sing if you're able to God's praise. Amen. Amen. Amen. The Lord of hosts upon our sight doth constantly remain.

The God of chained, of time, refuge, the God of Jacob's refuge, a safely to maintain. Come and behold O Lord, find trust works abide.

[ 35 : 56 ] The Lord be wrought. Come see what desolations He on the earth hath brought.

to the ends of all the earth wars sent to peace He turns the glory grace the spirit He cuts the bow He brings the spirit He cuts in fire the child burns He burns Be still and know that I am called among the hidden

I will be exalted I on earth will be exalted I on earth will be exalted I high our God who is the Lord of hosts is still upon our side the God of Jacob refuge the

God of Jacob refuge forever will abide the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ the Holy Spirit be with you all now and forever more Amen