

O COME O COME EMMANUEL

—

Week 2: Emmanuel

ADVENT 2022



Advent Reader 2022

*O Come, O Come,
Emmanuel*

Advent Reader: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Week 2: Emmanuel

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Introduction

BEHOLD

We will begin this week's reflection through the following song:

Behold - Phil Wickham

By Dallas Jenkins, Phil Wickham, Steven Furtick
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Verse 1

Behold the King has come
Divinity incarnate
Creator of the world
Breathing our air

Behold what light has come
And the dark cannot contain it
The Savior of the world
Is finally here

Verse 2:

Behold the Father's love
Beyond all comprehension
He gave His only Son
To die in our place

Go and see that empty tomb
He's not there for He is risen
Every heart prepare Him room
Jesus Christ the King of Heaven

Chorus:

O come let us adore Him
Come let us adore Him
For He alone is worthy
Christ the Lord

Bridge:

We give You all the glory
We give You all the glory
We give You all the glory
Christ the Lord

We praise Your name
We praise Your name
Jesus we praise Your name forever
Christ the Lord



"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).'*"

Matthew 1:22-23 (ESV)

"O come, O come, Immanuel,
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."

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"
John Mason Neale

Reflection

EMMANUEL

I still remember the first time watching the Disney movie *Hercules* and being intrigued by its opening scene. For those who want a bit more context of what I am referring to, *Hercules* was Disney's attempt to tell a story under the Greek Mythological framework. The story begins with a scene "up in the heaven" where the gods gathered together to celebrate the birth of Hercules, Zeus and Hera's son. In that scene, you can easily spot all these famous Greek gods and goddesses: Hades, Hermes, Poseidon, Athena, Artemis, and Apollo. As a child, I had no clue who these gods were, but this scene planted an idea: gods are "up there."

Our culture today shares a similar understanding of gods and deities. It is common for us to think that the gods are "up there," sitting on their thrones, looking down from heaven, keeping an eye on what we are doing, uninterested, and maybe intervening occasionally. Somehow we have this impression that these "up there" gods are too occupied and have little concern over the mundane things "down here." Gods and humans, heaven and earth, are like separate entities with minimum overlaps. The only time we "interact" is when we need their help.

However, according to the Biblical authors, the God we worship is nothing like that. From the very beginning chapters of the Bible, we find ourselves welcomed into a story where God is very involved in our world. God walked with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. God made a covenant with Abraham. God led the Israelites as pillars of clouds and fire during the Exodus. God rained down manna and quail while His people were in the desert. God fought the battles with Joshua. God's glory filled the temple of Solomon...These are only some of the many incidents in which the Biblical authors witnessed God's active presence. All these events prompt us to wonder if God is really that disinterested in what's happening in our lives.

And when we come to the Gospel of Matthew, we hear more shocking news. Jesus, the son of God, the son of Joseph and Mary, the long-awaited Messiah, is also the Emmanuel. The word Emmanuel or *Immanuel* comes from two words. *Immanu* means with us. *El* means God. Putting these together, we come to the meaning of Emmanuel as "with us God." And this is a Good News!! The God we worship is not just the sovereign "above us God." He is not just the powerful and almighty "over us God." Yes, He is the Creator of the whole universe, the "before us God," and He is also the Omega, the End of all, the "after us God." But none of these titles can outweigh the significance of Emmanuel, the "with us God." To be "with us" means God has to come and dwell among us. This costs Him something. At least, He can't just stay "up there." He needs to be "down here" with us, sharing our joys and sorrows, understanding our pains and longing, and experiencing what is like "down here." The God we worship, according to the Gospel writers, is "with us", the one who came and walked with His people.

As we sing the words "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel", may the Spirit open our eyes to spot the active presence and mercy of God. May our hearts also long for the day when we can see God's dwelling place to be fully established among us, the day we finally get to experience the full weight of "God himself with us and be our God."

Daily Reading

As you read and reflect on each day's passage, what does "God with us" look like?
What are some areas that we are longing to experience Him being "with us"?

Sunday Dec 04, 2022

Exodus 40:34-38 The Glory at the Tent

Monday Dec 05, 2022

Joshua 1:1-9 Joshua the New Leader

Tuesday Dec 06, 2022

Psalm 121 My Help Comes From?

Wednesday Dec 07, 2022
Ezekiel 34:1-24 The Good Shepherd

Thursday Dec 08, 2022
Matthew 1 Here Comes the Messiah

Friday Dec 09, 2022
Luke 5:12-16 Jesus "With Us"

Saturday Dec 10, 2022
Revelation 21:1-4 The Finale
