



# Advent

An Advent Bible Study

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# How to Use This Study

# How to Use This Study

You are welcome to use this study in any way that is helpful to you, but it was written with three specific uses in mind.

## 1. FOR A CLASS OR SMALL GROUP SETTING

You may wish to use this study over the course of the four weeks of Advent. The introduction and seven verses divide nicely into the four weeks of Advent in this way:

Week 1: Introduction and Sapientia

Week 2: Adonai and Radix Jesse

Week 3: Clavis David and Oriens

Week 4: Rex Gentium and Emmanuel

Week one will begin with the history of the hymn as found in the introduction. Share the story, and discuss memories of singing the song. Then, see who can recite the most verses without help.

After the introduction in week one, and throughout the entirety of the other courses, guide the group through an in depth study of each verse, following the schedule above and the structure below.

# How to Use This Study

Study each title individually. Each time you begin with one of the seven names for Jesus, read the English translation of the antiphon with the class and ask for reactions. What words did people notice? What did it remind them of?

Then, sing or listen to the relevant verse of the English hymn. Ask the group if this is a verse they recall singing during Advent or Christmas over the years.

Next, remind the group that many hymnals only include three verses. Ask if this verse is one they would keep if they could only have three verses, and have them explain their decision. You may even choose to encourage debate amongst participants about whether to keep any given verse.

Finally, read the corresponding Bible passages. Ask if the passages are familiar, and if so, when participants remember reading or hearing them. Then talk through the reflection page and discuss the questions.

If you have additional time in your sessions, use one of the additional prompts and activities included in the appendix.



# How to Use This Study

## 2. IN CORPORATE WORSHIP

If you would like to incorporate a portion of this study in corporate worship, there are many ways to do so.

You could use the English hymn at the opening of worship, singing one verse each Sunday in Advent. You may wish to preface each verse with the corresponding Scripture reading or by reading the English translation of the antiphon.

You may choose to do a fifth verse on Christmas Eve.

During a Christmas Eve or Christmas Day service, put together each of the verses used throughout the season, singing a version of the hymn with either four or five verses.

Alternatively, you may choose to use one verse each Sunday as a sung response following the sermon, and to preach on the corresponding scripture each week.

# How to Use This Study

## 3. IN PERSONAL DEVOTION

The ancient antiphons were, at one point, used in the week leading up to Christmas Eve. You may wish to follow the same structure.

On Dec. 16, read the introduction to this study. Then, read one chapter each day from Dec. 17 through Dec. 23. If you're comfortable, sing the appropriate verse each day.

If you would like to extend your study through Christmas Eve, select either your favorite verses and re-read or sing them together. Reflect on the difference between singing one each day and a group of them together.

Whether you choose to use this study for a small group, during worship, as part of your personal devotional practices, or just as reading material as you prepare for Christmas, we hope it draws you into Scripture and prepares you to celebrate the birth of Christ!



# INTRODUCTION



# INTRODUCTION

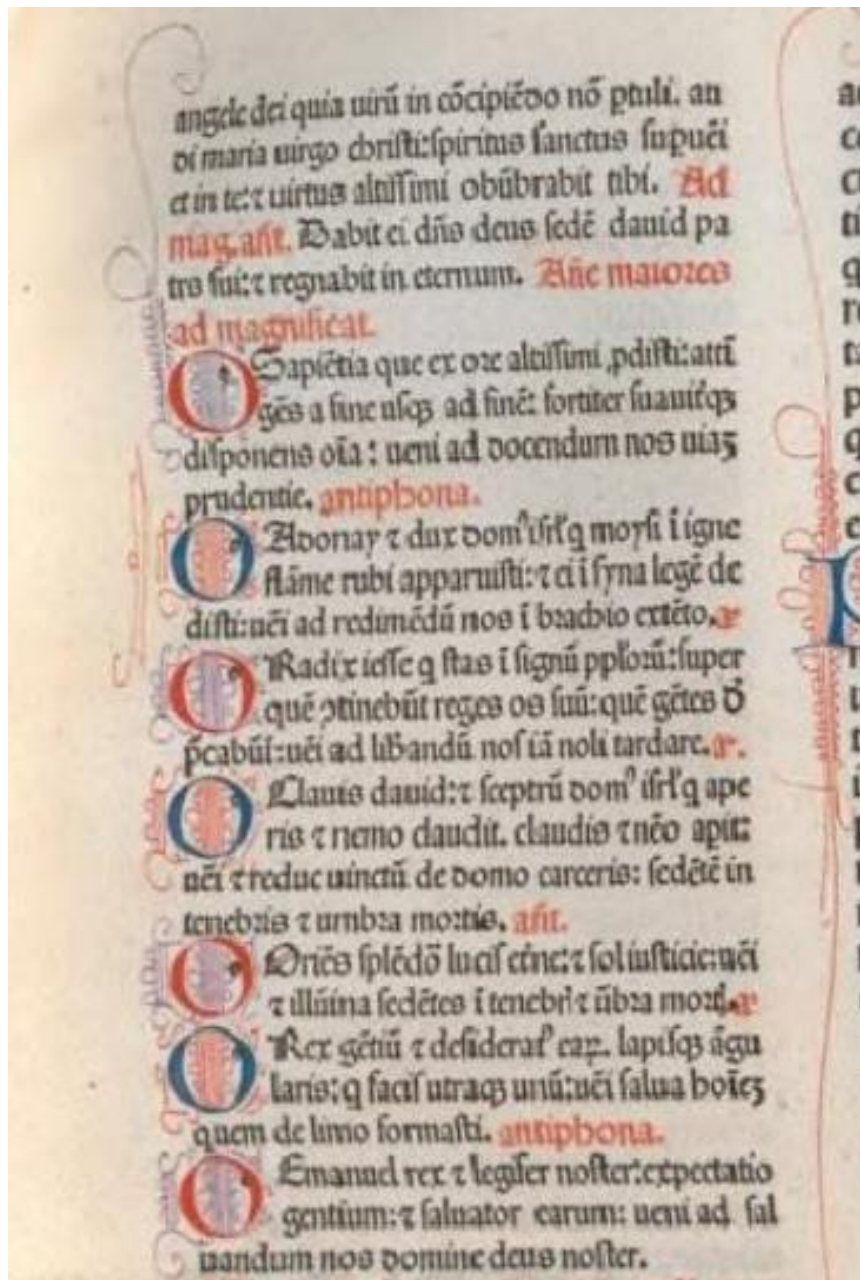
One of the most popular and widely used Advent songs is “O Come O Come Emmanuel.”

The song’s history, however, is rich and complex—or messy and complicated, depending on your appreciation of history.

The hymn’s dark sound, coupled with obscure titles for Jesus like “Dayspring” and “Key of David,” give the song an ancient feeling. Though the hymn’s current form wasn’t complete until the early 1900s, its initial versions date back hundreds and hundreds of years.

Centuries ago, Christians used a series of responsive chants called antiphons to prepare for Christmas Eve. Written in Latin, these antiphons were based on various titles for Jesus and used in sequence, one per day. The seven titles are as follows:

O Sapientia  
O Adonai  
O Radix Jesse  
O Clavis David  
O Oriens  
O Rex Gentium  
O Emmanuel



## The O Antiphons

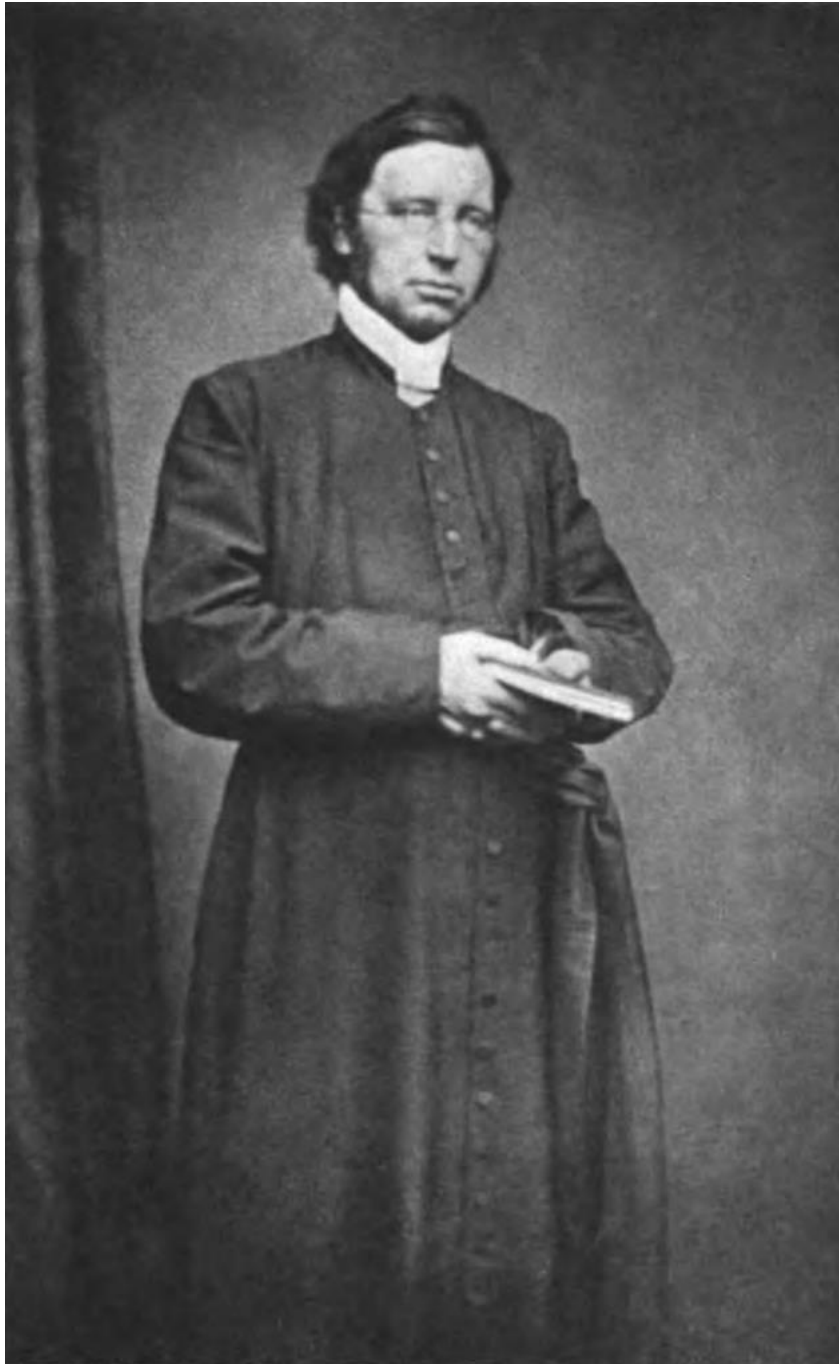
From Brevarium Romanum, 1478

# INTRODUCTION

For centuries, the “O antiphons,” chanted in Latin, guided Christians in their preparation for Christmas.

In 1851, theologian and hymnodist John Mason Neale published a book of hymns entitled *Mediaeval Hymns and Sequences*. He included a translation of an ancient chant which he titled “Veni Veni Emmanuel.” This first collection began with the words “Draw nigh, draw nigh, Emmanuel.”

At the end of the 1850s, another collection of songs entitled *Hymns Ancient and Modern* incorporated Neale’s hymn, but with updated lyrics. The new version of the hymn included the more familiar opening line “O Come, O Come Emmanuel”.



## Portrait of John Mason Neale

From Lawson, Mary Sackville and John Mason Neale. 1910. *Letters of John Mason Neale: selected and edited by his daughter*. London: Longmans, Green, and Co.

# INTRODUCTION

Neale's hymn, however, was only five verses long—it lacked two of the seven antiphons.

In 1916, Presbyterian pastor and theologian Henry Sloane Coffin sought to complete the translation. In his hymnal *Hymns of the Kingdom of God*, Coffin provided the missing antiphons. He included a note at the bottom of the hymn, explaining that the new verses were drawn from the ancient "O Antiphons."

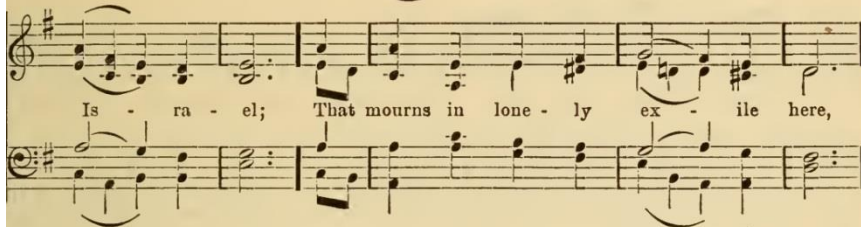
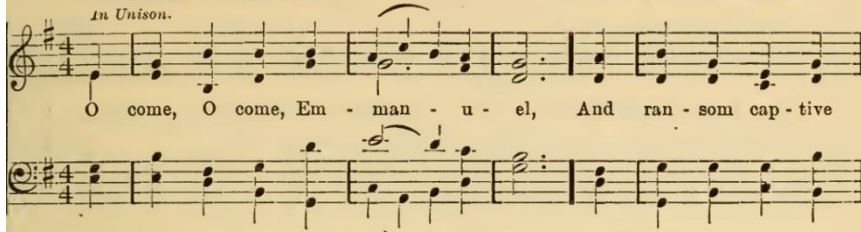
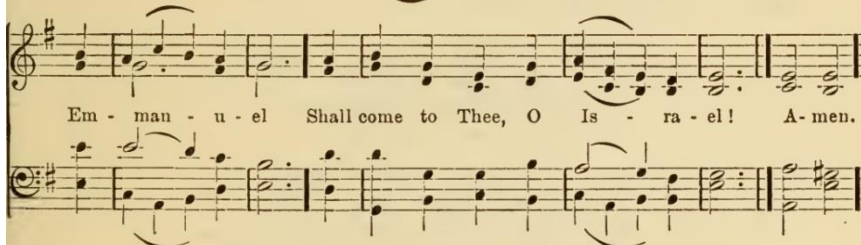
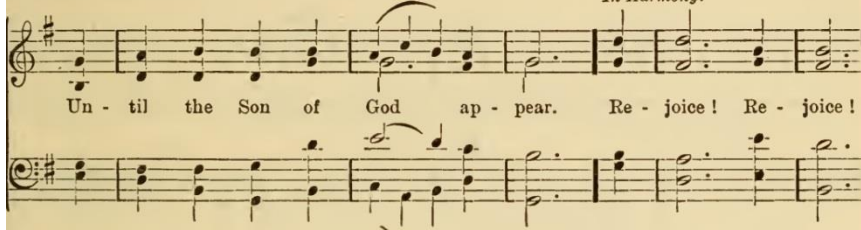
Yet Coffin's hymnal only included one of Neale's verses alongside his own, for a total of three. The new, more complete version lacked not two but four of the original titles for Christ!

Following Coffin's translation, the hymn became a staple in hymnals and collections of worship music, though without consensus on which verses to include. Occasionally editors chose to include all seven verses, but often hymnals contained just three or four verses, and the verses chosen are inconsistent. The only constant is the inclusion of some version of Neale's "O Come O Come Emmanuel" verse as the opening.

## Jesus Christ

VENI EMMANUEL Six 8s.

Ancient Plain Song, 13th Century

*In Unison.**In Harmony.*

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, O Israel!

2 O come, Thou Wisdom from on high,  
And order all things, far and nigh;  
To us the path of knowledge show,

And cause us in her ways to go.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to Thee, O Israel!

3 O come, Desire of nations, bind  
All peoples in one heart and mind;  
Bid envy, strife and quarrels cease;  
Fill the whole world with heaven's peace.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to Thee, O Israel!

Based on Ancient-Latin Antiphons: v. 1 tr. John M. Neale, 1851, 71. vv. 2 and 3 tr. Henry S. Coffin, 1916.

## Veni Emmanuel

From Coffin, Henry Sloane, Ambrose White Vernon, and Herbert B. Turner.  
1916. *Hymns of the Kingdom of God: Revised*. New York: A.S. Barnes.



# INTRODUCTION

This study will lead you through the seven verses of “O Come O Come Emmanuel”. Each section will offer a Latin version of the Antiphon, as well as an English translation. The study then turns to the familiar hymn verses based on the ancient antiphons.

Since English hymnals are inconsistent in their ordering of the verses, this guide will follow the current custom of beginning with “Emmanuel.” After that, the guide will follow the sequence of the Latin antiphons, beginning with Sapientia.

Each of the titles of Jesus in the hymn are drawn from Scripture, so each section will include relevant passages and a brief reflection to go along with them.

As outlined above, this guide can be used in a wide variety of ways, including personal devotions, corporate worship, or in a small group or classroom setting. We would love to hear how you use this study! Let us know at SYI@pts.edu.

# INTRODUCTION

In this study, the Latin versions of the Antiphons and their English translations come from:

Baker, Pacificus. 1782. *The Christian Advent; or entertainments for that holy season, in moral reflections and pious thoughts and aspirations*. London: J.P. Coghlan.

Neale's translations come from:

Neale, John Mason. 1851. *Mediaeval Hymns*. London: Joseph Masters.

Updated translations of Neale's verses come from:

1858. *Hymns Ancient and Modern*. London: William Clowes and Sons

Coffin's translations come from:

Coffin, Henry Sloane, Ambrose White Vernon, and Herbert B. Turner. 1916. *Hymns of the Kingdom of God: Revised*. New York: A.S. Barnes

Scripture comes from:

New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All right reserved worldwide.



# INTRODUCTION

For further reading see:

"Antiphons" in Julian, John. 1892. *A dictionary of hymnology, setting forth the origin and history of Christian hymns of all ages....* London: Murray.

"Church and Organ Music." *The Musical Times* 50, no. 802 (1909): 785-88.

Collins, Ace. 2004. *Stories behind the best-loved songs of Christmas*. Philadelphia: Running Press.Press.

Giles, Gordon. 2005. *O come, Emmanuel: reflections on music and readings for Advent and Christmas*. Oxford: Bible Reading Fellowship.

Hyde, Edward. 1658. *Christ and his Church: or, Christianity explained ... With a justification of the Church of England, according to the true principles of Christian Religion, and of Christian Communion*. Oxford: Rich Davis.

McKim, LindaJo K. 1993. *The Presbyterian hymnal companion*. Louisville, Kent: Westminster/John Knox.



EMMANUEL

## CHAPTER 1 – O EMMANUEL

# CHAPTER 1 – EMMANUEL ANCIENT ANTIPHON

Antiphon

Latin:

O Emmanuel, Rex et Legifer noster, Expectatio Gentium et Salvator earum: Veni ad Salvandum nos, Domine Deus noster.

English:

O Emmanuel our King and Lawgiver, the Expectation of the Gentiles and their Saviour: Come and save us, O Lord our God.

# CHAPTER 1 – EMMANUEL ENGLISH HYMNS

Verse 5 – John Mason Neale, 1851

Draw nigh, draw nigh, Emmanuel.  
And loose Thy captive Israel,  
That mourns in lonely exile here,  
Until the Son of God appear!  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Is born for thee, O Israel!

Verse 4 – Hymns Ancient and Modern, ca 1958:

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, O Israel.

EMMANUEL

What did you notice about the hymns and antiphons? What did they have in common? Is there anything you would change?

[illegible]

# CHAPTER 1 – EMMANUEL SCRIPTURE

## Isaiah 7.14 (NRSV)

<sup>3</sup>Then Isaiah said: 'Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? <sup>14</sup>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.

## Matthew 1.22-25 (NRSV)

<sup>22</sup>All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

<sup>23</sup> 'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel', which means, 'God is with us.' <sup>24</sup>When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, <sup>25</sup>but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

# CHAPTER 1 – REFLECTION AND QUESTIONS

As explained in the Matthew passage, the word Emmanuel literally means “God is with Us.”

Matthew picks up the imagery used in Isaiah and applies it to the birth of Christ.

The writers of “O Come, O Come Emmanuel” use this title to refer to Jesus. The title is used almost exclusively as the first verse of our English versions of the hymn, and has come to serve not only as the hymn’s opening, but as its title as well.

Why do you think this particular title has become the first one in our hymn, even though it is last in the Latin versions?

What does it mean to claim that Jesus is Emmanuel?

What titles might you include for Jesus that are not used in this hymn?



# SAPIENTIA

## CHAPTER 2 – SAPIENTIA: WISDOM



# CHAPTER 2 – SAPIENTIA: WISDOM

## ANCIENT ANTIPHON

Antiphon

Latin:

O Sapientia quæ ex ore Altissimi prodiisti, attingens a fine usque ad finem, fortiter suaviterque disponens omnia: veni ad docendum nos viam Prudentiæ.

English:

O Wisdom, who has proceeded out of the Mouth of the Most High, reaching from End to End, strongly and sweetly disposing all Things: Come and teach us the Way of Prudence

# CHAPTER 2 – SAPIENTIA: WISDOM

## ENGLISH HYMN

Verse 2 – Henry Sloan Coffin, 1916:

O Come, Thou Wisdom from on high,  
And order all things, far and nigh;  
To us the path of knowledge show  
And cause us in her ways to go.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to Thee O Israel!

SAPIENTIA: WISDOM

What did you notice about the hymns and antiphons? What did they have in common? Is there anything you would change?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines, similar to standard notebook paper. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

# CHAPTER 2 – SAPIENTIA: WISDOM

## SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 33.5-6

- <sup>5</sup> The LORD is exalted, he dwells on high;  
he filled Zion with justice and righteousness;  
<sup>6</sup> he will be the stability of your times,  
abundance of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge;  
the fear of the LORD is Zion's treasure

Luke 2.39-40

<sup>39</sup> When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. <sup>40</sup>The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favour of God was upon him.

# CHAPTER 2 – SAPIENTIA: WISDOM

## SCRIPTURE

### I Corinthians 20-15

<sup>20</sup>Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?<sup>21</sup>For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe.

<sup>22</sup>For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, <sup>23</sup>but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling-block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, <sup>24</sup>but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. <sup>25</sup>For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

## CHAPTER 2 – REFLECTION AND QUESTIONS

Isaiah 33 is often understood to refer to God's deliverance. In the midst of the chapter, the author draws a connection between salvation, wisdom, and knowledge.

In Luke 2, we find the story of Jesus traveling to the temple as a child. Several times in the chapter, Luke highlights Jesus' wisdom.

The Corinthians reading is a famous passage contrasting God's wisdom and the foolishness of human wisdom.

"O Come, O Come Emmanuel" refers to Jesus as "Wisdom from on High." How do you understand this title, especially with passages like Isaiah 33, Luke 2, and I Corinthians 20 in mind?

Why might the authors of the various versions of this hymn have used the title "Wisdom" for Jesus?



ADONAI

## CHAPTER 3 — ADONĀi: LORD

# CHAPTER 3 – ADONĀĪ: LORD ANCIENT ANTIPHON

Antiphon

Latin:

O Adonai, et Dux domus Israel, qui Moysi in igne flammæ Rubi apparuisti, et ei in Sina legem dedisti: Veni ad redimendum nos in Brachio extento.

English:

O Adonai, and Leader of the House of Israel, who didst appear to Moses in the Fire of the flaming Bush, and didst give to him the Law on Mount Sinai; Come and redeem us with a stretched out Arm.



# CHAPTER 3 – ADONAI: LORD

## ENGLISH HYMNS

Verse 5 – John Mason Neale, 1851

Ruler and Lord, draw nigh, draw nigh!  
Who to Thy flock in Sinai  
Didst give, of ancient times, Thy Law,  
In cloud and majesty and awe.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Is born for thee O Israel!

Verse 5 – Hymns Ancient and Modern, ca 1958:

O Come, O Come, 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.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

# Adonāi: LORD

What did you notice about the hymns and antiphons? What did they have in common? Is there anything you would change?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

# CHAPTER 3 – ADONĀi: LORD SCRIPTURE

## Exodus 4.10-11

<sup>10</sup>But Moses said to the LORD, 'O my Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor even now that you have spoken to your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.' <sup>11</sup>Then the LORD said to him, 'Who gives speech to mortals? Who makes them mute or deaf, seeing or blind? Is it not I, the LORD?

# CHAPTER 3 – ADONĀĪ: LORD

## SCRIPTURE

### Exodus 19.16-20

<sup>16</sup> On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, as well as a thick cloud on the mountain, and a blast of a trumpet so loud that all the people who were in the camp trembled. <sup>17</sup> Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God. They took their stand at the foot of the mountain. <sup>18</sup> Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke, because the LORD had descended upon it in fire; the smoke went up like the smoke of a kiln, while the whole mountain shook violently. <sup>19</sup> As the blast of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses would speak and God would answer him in thunder. <sup>20</sup> When the LORD descended upon Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain, the LORD summoned Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.

## CHAPTER 3 – REFLECTION AND QUESTIONS

Exodus 4 recounts Moses' encounter with the burning bush. Moses, in speaking to God, uses the title "Lord." In this passage, "Lord" is a translation of the Hebrew word "Adonai."

Exodus 19 and 20 tell us the story of Moses receiving the Ten Commandments. In this passage, we find Moses headed to the top of the mountain to encounter God once again. Throughout this passage, God is referred to as "LORD," here written in small caps, which is an indication that the original word is not the title "Lord" (Adonai) but the name of God. Though the title is different, the English verses of the hymn draw from the imagery of this passage.

These passages display human reactions to God's presence.

Why do you think this hymn uses the term "Lord" for Jesus? Why do the hymn writers choose to refer to these passages in Exodus as they talk about Jesus?



# RADIX JESSE

## CHAPTER 4 — RADIX JESSE: ROD OF JESSE

# CHAPTER 4 – RADIX JESSE: ROD OF JESSE ANCIENT ANTIPHON

Antiphon

Latin:

O Radix Jesse, qui stas in signum populorum, super quem continebunt Reges as suum quem Gentes deprecabuntur: Veni ad liberandum nos, jam noli tardare.

English:

O Root of Jesse, who standest for a Sign of the People, before whom Kings shall shut their Mouths, whom the Gentiles shall beseech: Come and deliver us. Do not now delay

# CHAPTER 4 – RADIX JESSE: ROD OF JESSE ENGLISH HYMNS

Verse 2 – John Mason Neale, 1851

O Rod of Jesse's stem, arise,  
And free us from our enemies,  
And set us loose from Satan's chains,  
And from the pit with all its pains!  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Is born for thee, O Israel!

Verse 2 – Hymns Ancient and Modern, ca 1958:

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



# Radix JESSE: ROD OF JESSE

What did you notice about the hymns and antiphons? What did they have in common? Is there anything you would change?

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# CHAPTER 4 – RADIX JESSE: ROD OF JESSE SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 11.1-6 (NRSV)

A shoot shall come out from the stock of Jesse,  
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see,  
or decide by what his ears hear;

<sup>4</sup> but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,  
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;  
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,  
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

<sup>5</sup> Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist,  
and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

<sup>6</sup> The wolf shall live with the lamb,  
the leopard shall lie down with the kid,  
the calf and the lion and the fatling together,  
and a little child shall lead them.

# CHAPTER 4 – RADIX JESSE: ROD OF JESSE SCRIPTURE

## Matthew 1.1-6 (NRSV)

<sup>1</sup>An account of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham. <sup>2</sup> Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, <sup>3</sup>and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Aram, <sup>4</sup>and Aram the father of Aminadab, and Aminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, <sup>5</sup>and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, <sup>6</sup>and Jesse the father of King David. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah,

## CHAPTER 4 – REFLECTION AND QUESTIONS

As Isaiah 11 describes the perfect reign of the perfect king, Christians typically think of Jesus. As a result, this passage is often connected to our understanding of Christ.

Matthew 1 relays the genealogy of Jesus through a list of names. Since it's essentially a list of names, this passage is not frequently read out loud or featured in Bible studies. Yet the list of names has tremendous significance, such as the inclusion of Jesse as seen in this selection, which recalls passages like Isaiah 11.

What does it mean for Jesus to be from the line of Jesse?

Why do you think the hymn writers chose this obscure term as a title for Jesus?

What does it mean for Jesus to be connected to this passage of Isaiah?



# CLAVIS DAVID

## CHAPTER 5 — CLAVIS DAVID: KEY OF DAVID

# CHAPTER 5 – CLAVIS DAVID: KEY OF DAVID ANCIENT ANTIPHON

Antiphon

Latin:

O Clavis David et Sceptrum Domus Israel, qui aperis et nemo claudit; claudis et nemo aperit: Veni et educ vinctum de domo carceris, sedentem in tenebris et umbra mortis.

English:

O Key of David and Sceptre of the House of Israel, who openest and no one shutteth, who shuttest and no one openeth: Come and lead out of Prison the Bound sitting in Darkness and the Shadow of Death.

# CHAPTER 5 – CLAVIS DAVID: KEY OF DAVID ENGLISH HYMNS

Verse 4 – John Mason Neale, 1851

Key of the House of David, comel!  
Reopen Thou our heavenly home!  
Make safe the way that we must go,  
And close the path that leads below.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Is born for thee, O Israel!

Verse 4 – Hymns Ancient and Modern, ca 1958:

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, O Israel.

# CLAVIS DAVID: KEY OF DAVID

What did you notice about the hymns and antiphons? What did they have in common? Is there anything you would change?

This image shows a full page of blank handwriting practice paper. It features 20 evenly spaced, horizontal blue lines running across the entire width of the page. The lines are thin and consistent in color, providing a guide for letter height and placement. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



# CHAPTER 5 – CLAVIS DAVID: KEY OF DAVID SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 22.22 (NRSV)

<sup>22</sup> 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.

Revelation 3.7-8

<sup>7</sup> 'And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write:

These are the words of the holy one, the true one,

who has the key of David,

who opens and no one will shut,

who shuts and no one opens:

<sup>8</sup> 'I know your works. Look, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.

## CHAPTER 5 – REFLECTION AND QUESTIONS

Once again, the hymn writers draw on language from Isaiah. Chapter 22 contrasts the self-centered ambition of a wicked leader with the righteous action of a godly leader.

Isaiah illustrates the power and authority of the righteous leader through the image of the “key of the house of David.”

Chapter 3 of Revelation then uses this language, applying the phrase “key of David” to the relationship between God and the people of an early church.

What does “Key of David” indicate in this passage from Revelation?

Why might the hymn writers have chosen this phrase from Isaiah and Revelation as a title for Jesus?

What does it mean to call Jesus the Key of David?



# ORIENS

## CHAPTER 6 — ORIENS: DAYSPRING

# CHAPTER 6 – ORIENS: DAYSPRING ANCIENT ANTIPHON

Antiphon

Latin:

O Oriens, Splendor Lucis æternæ et Sol justitiæ: Veni et illumina  
sedentes in tenebris et umbra mortis.

English\*:

O Dayspring, Brightness of the everlasting light, Sun of  
Righteousness, come to give light to them that sit in darkness and  
in the shadow of death!

\* This English translation, unlike the others in this study, comes from 1881's the Parochial Hymnbook. This alternate translation appears because the 1783 translations seen throughout the rest of this study translates "Oriens" simply as "Orient," a term rarely used today.

# CHAPTER 6 – ORIENS: DAYSPRING ENGLISH HYMNS

Verse 4 – John Mason Neale, 1851

Thou, the true East, draw nigh, draw nigh,  
To give us comfort from on high!  
And drive away the shades of night,  
And pierce the clouds, and bring us light!  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Is born for thee, O Israel!

Verse 4 – Hymns Ancient and Modern, ca 1958:

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

## ORIENS: DAYSPRING

What did you notice about the hymns and antiphons? What did they have in common? Is there anything you would change?

[illegible]

# CHAPTER 6 – ORIENS SPLENDOR: DAYSPRING SCRIPTURE

## Malachi 4

See, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble; the day that comes shall burn them up, says the LORD of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. <sup>2</sup>But for you who revere my name the sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall. <sup>3</sup>And you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet, on the day when I act, says the LORD of hosts. <sup>4</sup>Remember the teaching of my servant Moses, the statutes and ordinances that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel. <sup>5</sup>Lo, I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes. <sup>6</sup>He will turn the hearts of parents to their children and the hearts of children to their parents, so that I will not come and strike the land with a curse.

# CHAPTER 6 – ORIENS SPLENDOR: DAYSPRING SCRIPTURE

Luke 1.76-78

<sup>76</sup> And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;  
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,

<sup>77</sup> to give knowledge of salvation to his people  
by the forgiveness of their sins.

<sup>78</sup> By the tender mercy of our God,  
the dawn from on high will break upon us,

<sup>79</sup> to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow  
of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.'



## CHAPTER 6 – REFLECTION AND QUESTIONS

Malachi 4 contrasts the flames of an oven which burn with the “sun of righteousness” which will have “healing in its wings.”

In the passage from Luke 1, Zechariah is speaking about his son, whom we know as John the Baptist. Zechariah calls John a prophet of the Most High, and goes on to say that the mercy of God will send a dawn that drives away shadow and provides light for those who sit in darkness.

The various versions of “O Come, O Come Emmanuel” use similar language in referring to Jesus as the dayspring, the East (the place of sunrise), or the sun of righteousness.

What does it mean to apply these names to Jesus?

Why did the hymn writers choose this imagery?

What other Scripture passages use similar language?



# REX GENTIUM

## CHAPTER 7 – REX GENTIUM: DESIRE OF NATIONS

# CHAPTER 7 – REX GENTIUM: DESIRE OF NATIONS ANCIENT ANTIPHON

Antiphon

Latin:

O Rex Gentium et desideratus earum Lapisque angularis, qui facis  
utraque unum: Veni et salva hominem quem de Limo formasti

English:

O King of the Gentiles and their desired one, and the Corner Stone  
who makest both one: Come and save Man whom thou hast  
formed out of the Slime of the Earth.

# CHAPTER 7 – REX GENTIUM: DESIRE OF NATIONS ENGLISH HYMN

Verse 2 – Henry Sloan Coffin, 1916:

O Come, Desire of nations, bind  
All peoples in one heart and mind;  
Bid envy strife and quarrels cease;  
Fill the whole world with heaven's peace.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to Thee, O Israel!

# REX GENTIUM: DESIRE OF NATIONS

What did you notice about the hymns and antiphons? What did they have in common? Is there anything you would change?

[illegible]

# CHAPTER 7 – REX GENTIUM: DESIRE OF NATIONS SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 2.2-4 (NRSV)

<sup>2</sup> In days to come  
the mountain of the LORD's house  
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,  
and shall be raised above the hills;  
all the nations shall stream to it.

<sup>3</sup> Many peoples shall come and say,  
'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,  
to the house of the God of Jacob;  
that he may teach us his ways  
and that we may walk in his paths.'

For out of Zion shall go forth instruction,  
and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

<sup>4</sup> 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 any more.

# CHAPTER 7 – REX GENTIUM: DESIRE OF NATIONS SCRIPTURE

Haggai 2.6-7 (NRSV)

<sup>6</sup>For thus says the LORD of hosts: Once again, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land; <sup>7</sup>and I will shake all the nations, so that the treasure of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with splendour, says the LORD of hosts. <sup>8</sup>The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, says the LORD of hosts. <sup>9</sup>The latter splendour of this house shall be greater than the former, says the LORD of hosts; and in this place I will give prosperity, says the LORD of hosts.

## CHAPTER 7 – REFLECTION AND QUESTIONS

Isaiah 2 describes a vision of hope as the nations of the world gather in peace, replacing instruments of war with tools used to produce food - weapons of death with tools of life.

This chapter explicitly calls not only the people of Israel, but of all nations, to gather in the hopeful vision of peace.

Haggai 2 also offers a vision of a gathering, this time around the “treasure of the nations,” sometimes translated as the “desire of the nations.”

The various forms of “O Come, O Come Emmanuel” have drawn from this language, referring to Jesus as the desire of nations.

What is the significance of claiming the title “Desire of Nations” for Jesus?

Why would the authors of the various versions of this hymn have selected this imagery?



# APPENDIX: DISCUSSION PROMPTS AND ACTIVITIES

# DISCUSSION PROMPTS AND ACTIVITIES

## 1. Out of Order

Imagine that you are going to use this hymn like the ancient antiphons, one verse a day for the week before Christmas Eve. Knowing that you will sing only one verse a day in order, reorder the hymn, using all seven English verses. Explain why and how you chose your sequence, with particular attention to what is first and what is last.

## 2. Last Verse Standing

Imagine that you are publishing a hymnal and can only include five verses of this song. Which two would you cut and why?

Once you've selected five, your editor tells you that you need to cut one more. Which of the remaining five verses would you cut? Why?

Once you're down to four, you are asked to prepare a version with just three verses, and a version with just one. Select your top three and then most important verse.

Be prepared to defend your answer – others may choose different verses!

# DISCUSSION PROMPTS AND ACTIVITIES

## 3. What's old is new again

Imagine that a group of students has decided to create a hymnal containing only hymns that are more than 100 years old. In creating their hymnal, however, they want to update the language, replacing phrases that aren't used in contemporary speech. They have asked you to update the text of "O Come, O Come Emmanuel."

Without changing the meaning of the hymn, rewrite your favorite verses in common, modern-day language.

## 4. And then there were eight

Imagine that you have been entered in a competition to expand this hymn by adding one additional verse.

Using a title for Jesus found in Scripture, write an eighth verse to "O Come, O Come Emmanuel". Your new verse may not focus on the seven titles of the original verses.

Identify the Scripture your verse draws from, and explain why your verse should be the one included in the hymn.

# DISCUSSION PROMPTS AND ACTIVITIES

## 5. Seeing music

Imagine that a publisher has decided to produce a premium, illustrated copy of this hymn. You have been selected as one of seven artists to depict a verse of "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" visually. You have been given the opportunity to submit two illustrations, and the editors will choose one for inclusion in the book.

Plan and create illustrations for two of the verses of the hymn, and explain why they should be chosen for inclusion in the compilation.

## 6. Elevator pitch

Imagine that you step onto an elevator with a stranger when this song begins to play.

The stranger comments that it seems different than most Christmas music and then asks if you know anything about it. In 30 seconds, explain "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" to the stranger, who may have little or no knowledge of Christianity or Scripture.

# DISCUSSION PROMPTS AND ACTIVITIES

## 7. Out of tune

Imagine that in the distant future this hymn is forgotten and lost, until a copy of the words is discovered in a library. The music, however, is no where to be found. You, with your ardent appreciation of music, decide to set the ancient words to music.

Choose two new tunes to go along with the words of "O Come, O Come Emmanuel". You can use a tune that you know – from another hymn, a favorite song, jingle, or theme song – or you can create a new tune.

For your first tune, you may not edit any words.

Once you have selected a tune that works with the words as they are, you may select a second tune that goes with an edited version of the verses. For this second tune, you may add or subtract refrains, choruses, lines, words, or syllables as needed as long as you do not change the meaning of the text.

You may use any resources necessary to complete this activity.

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