



Advent ✨

FOUR WEEK DEVOTIONAL

THE SEASON OF
Advent

For centuries, followers of Jesus have carved out the four weeks leading up to Christmas Day for a season of preparation and anticipation. During this Advent Season, our community here at Cornerstone will gather around themes inspired from the 1200 year old hymn, "O Come, O Come Emmanuel". It expresses a deep sense of longing, waiting and anticipation of God's promised Messiah. The one who is called Emmanuel, God with us (Isaiah 7:14 / Matthew 1:23).

Whether you spend this devotional time alone with the Lord, or with family and friends, we pray that it will bless your Advent season with greater meaning and union with the Messiah.

O COME, O COME
Emmanuel

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.

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.

O come, Thou Dayspring, from on high,
And cheer us by Thy drawing nigh;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

○ come, Thou Key of David, come
And open wide our heav'nly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, ○ Israel.

○ come, Adonai, 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, ○ Israel.

Ransom & Rescue

WEEK ONE

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.

As we set our hearts on Jesus this advent season, the lyrics “O come, O come, Emmanuel,” ring with a chilling clarity. The Christmas story promises God with us, “Emmanuel.” Jesus came to “captive Israel,” to all of us, not as some distant ruler, but as an infant, close enough to behold. Close enough to laugh and cry with. Close enough to touch. Close enough to follow and learn from. This is our Savior.

“Rejoice! Rejoice!” for Christmas celebrates the greatest ransom of all time. God has rescued us from death, through His Son Jesus, who paid the full cost on the cross.

This Christmas, let us invite Jesus closer. Let us more fully grasp just how much He has ransomed each of us and how far he went to rescue humanity. As we know Him more, may we live out our joy with those around us. May we behold "Emmanuel" as He leads us to love and serve others in their stories of ransom and rescue.

Dayspring

W E E K T W O

O come, Thou Dayspring, from on high,
And cheer us by Thy drawing nigh;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O Lord, our Dayspring, our Dawn, the Beginning of a new order of things, draw us ever closer to You. Life's circumstances can, at times, appear dark and chaotic, yet your Presence is there in our midst to dispense and put to flight those shadows, bringing your light of truth to those things which feel upended.

As we reflect on Hanukkah's Festival of Lights, we are reminded that we can experience victory, and rejoice in who You are, the Light of the World. During this second week of Advent, traditionally the week of Peace, may the Prince of Peace bring healing, freedom and joy into our hearts and souls.

Victory over Tyranny

WEEK THREE

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.

For thousands of years the Jewish people waited for the promised Messiah to come. I wonder if God also waited eagerly, in his own season of advent, for the perfect time to implement his plan for the redemption of humanity. What joy and anticipation he must have felt as the infant Jesus, the "Rod of Jesse," took his first breath.

The birth of Jesus set in motion hope. We can hope because Jesus's death and resurrection bought our freedom. The victory that he already won is coming. Victory over anxiety and depression, victory over pain and suffering, victory over sin and evil, victory over death itself; it's coming.

In the meantime we wait. But, the beauty of Emmanuel is that we do not wait alone. Jesus waits with us. Whatever you walk through today, whether it is joy or sorrow, he walks with you. This week, may you notice Jesus with you. What do you feel when you notice his presence? What do you think when you realize the God of the universe is with you?

As you notice, may you rejoice in his presence. May you rejoice in the coming victory that is already won.

He Makes a Way

WEEK FOUR

O come, Thou Key of David, come
And open wide our heav'nly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel

To think of how the Divine made a way into the world via a human birth canal is beyond what our human minds can grasp. Emmanuel burst forth from the dark, crowded warmth of a womb into the vast bright world opening wide our union with Him. The Way came into the world taking his first breath of air and let out a small loud cry declaring that God was making a way. A way for us to be fully united with Him. Fully free, fully restored, fully alive.

Among the rawness and vulnerability of childbirth was a sacred key opening up the floodgates of Heaven coming to earth. The Creator of life stepped into the pain and joy of being human to walk alongside us in it all - from womb to tomb. Making a way for our life to be fully intertwined with His.

So that we may take steps each day in hope for what is to come. So that we may walk with grace the rough and rocky patches of life, and be enveloped in a love we are unable to fully grasp. Jesus laid a path that united heaven and earth and invites us to join Him there. So, as we wrap gifts and make cookies and prepare to gather together in the joys of this season, let us not only be reminded but stand in awe of a God who made a way and makes a way and is the Way. Emmanuel shall come to you today and evermore.