

# *The Songs of Christmas*

ADVENT: Day 25

## "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.*

Typically sung during the final week of Advent, "O Come" has been sung throughout the world by God's people for more than twelve centuries. It was originally written in Latin and came to popularity in an 1861 English translation by John Mason Neale titled *Hymns Ancient and Modern*.

This ancient song reaches even farther back, reminding us of the incredible moment that Mary praised God after realizing she'd been chosen to carry and give birth to God's Son.

In Luke 1:46–49, she sang, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name." This passage (and on into verse 55) is called "The Magnificat."

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" reminds us of that incredible moment.

### **The story behind the song**

The hymn has many stanzas, and each describes a hope that Christians have because of Christmas. The deepest meaning of the holiday is found in a name, Emmanuel, God with us.

At first, the song and its melody seem to be sad and reflective of hard times. The first verse reminds us of the many years Israel was held captive by the Babylonians and Assyrians. But the words tell those from Israel to "Rejoice! Rejoice!" Emmanuel, their promised Messiah, would come. God would be with them.

On the day Christ was born in Bethlehem, Emmanuel came to dwell on the earth—and Jesus is still Emmanuel, God with us, today.

Do you believe that?

**God is with us**

Mary may have been the first one to realize in amazement what it was like to have the Son of God alive and within her, but she was not to be the last. Because of Christmas, Jesus dwells within the life of every believer.

Every Christian has received God's Holy Spirit, and he is Emmanuel, God with us.

God with you.

"Until the Son of God appear," may we "Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel has come!"

Let your soul magnify the Lord today.

Rejoice in God your Savior.

And thank him for the incredible gift of his Son on Christmas Day.

*"The Songs Tell the Story"*  
An Advent Devotional By: Janet Denison