



GOD WITH US

PRAYING THE NAMES OF JESUS

∞ SERMON SERIES | SUNDAYS, 11/28 - 12/26 | chapelwood.org/names

JESUS CHRIST, O WISDOM FROM ON HIGH
November 28, Dr. John Stephens

JESUS CHRIST, O ROOT OF JESSE
December 5, Dr. John Stephens

JESUS CHRIST, O KEY OF DAVID
December 12, Dr. John Stephens

JESUS CHRIST, O KING OF NATIONS
December 19, Dr. John Stephens

JESUS CHRIST, O IMMANUEL
December 24, Dr. John Stephens

JESUS CHRIST, O BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR
December 26, Rev. Tammy Heinrich

GOING BEYOND THE SERMON

SERMON SERIES OVERVIEW

The hymn *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*, highlights a different name of Jesus in each verse. During Advent, we will study the Scriptures from which these names are drawn. For the accompanying prayers, we will use the “O Antiphons” that come from 8th- or 9th-century monastic life. “The ‘Great O’s’ were designated to concentrate the mind on the coming Christmas, enriching the meaning of the Incarnation with a complex series of references from the Old and New Testaments,” according to British hymnologist J.R. Watson. You can find the entire hymn and the antiphons in the United Methodist Hymnal (1989, No. 211). For more information, go to <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/history-of-hymns-o-come-o-come-emmanuel>

Week One of Advent
Jesus Christ, O Wisdom From on High

*O come, O Wisdom from on high,
who ordered all things mightily;
to us the path of knowledge show
and teach us in its ways to go.*

BIBLE S.W.A.P.

S—Scripture: Isaiah 11:2 and Proverbs 8:12 (NRSV)

Isaiah 11:2 says, “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.”

In Proverbs 8:12, wisdom speaks, saying, “I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, and I attain knowledge and discretion.”

Notes:

W-What Does it Mean and What Can I Obey?

The “Him” being referenced in Isaiah 11 is Jesus (who is called the root of Jesse later in the chapter and the focus of next week’s lesson). When Jesus comes, He ushers in a renewal of creation. He pervades and permeates all creation with His mighty re-ordering of the world that will one day no longer be infected with sin. “As Christians, when we hear the word messiah, we automatically think of Jesus, and rightfully so. However, it is important to realize that the word messiah does not only refer to Jesus. The Hebrew word for messiah means ‘anointed one’ and comes from the verb

meaning ‘to help, to save, or to deliver,’” writes Dr. Sandra Richter in *Epic of Eden* Isaiah. “The idea was that the one the prophet identified by the physical act of anointing with oil was God’s ordained leader. This one was appointed to help, save, and deliver the citizens of the kingdom of God. How would this anointed one accomplish these things? “The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him” (11:2). With this understanding in mind, read Matthew 1:1: “An account of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham.” Richter asks, “Who is Isaiah’s promised ‘Messiah’?”

Much of Proverbs is about wisdom, occasionally even wisdom personified. In Proverbs 8:12, wisdom speaks, saying, “I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, and I find knowledge and discretion.” Not only does wisdom dwell with prudence, but in Jesus we also see that He is Wisdom come to dwell with us and teach us His way of prudence. Chapelwood member Mark Jodon writes, “Jesus comes to show us the path of knowledge, a path much broader than perhaps we imagined. This path, a lifelong journey led by His example, each day offers new glimpses and hints of His spirit. Jesus (also) comes to teach us His ways of wisdom and knowing. There are many ways we are taught; there are many ways we learn. All of these ways dwell with us. His wisdom dwells in our hearts, moves us out into the world, and we become co-creators of His new order.”

A-Apply

The Scriptures and the hymn lyrics point us to Jesus. Spend some time reflecting how Jesus, the anointed Messiah, has imparted wisdom to you.

The path: What are some of the life lessons you have learned while following Jesus?

The ways: What are some Christ-like ways of being that Jesus has formed in you?

The wisdom: What makes sense to you now that you could only understand through the Spirit living in you?

The understanding: What can you see behind the “facts” because Christ gives you insight into situations?

The counsel: What good advice have you been given by God’s spirit?

The might: What strength have you received from Jesus?

P-Prayer from Antiphon 2

O WISDOM, who came forth from the mouth of the Most High, reaching from end to end, and ordering all things mightily and sweetly:

Come, and teach us the way of prudence.

Week Two of Advent
Jesus Christ, O Root of Jesse

*O come, O Branch of Jesse's stem,
unto your own and rescue them!
From depths of hell your people save,
and give them victory o'er the grave.*

BIBLE S.W.A.P.

S—Scripture: Isaiah 11:10 and Romans 15:12

Isaiah 11:10 says, “On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.”

Paul quotes Isaiah in Romans 15:12: “and again Isaiah says, “The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the Gentiles; in him the Gentiles shall hope.”

Notes

W-What Does it Mean and What Can I Obey?

Isaiah 11 is set in a context of “felled trees” across both the northern and southern kingdoms of Israel who had been admonished by God as a result of King Ahaz breaking covenant with Yahweh. Isaiah prophesied this in Isaiah 7, and yet God does not leave Israel and Judah without hope. Read Isaiah 10:33 – 11:1 for the imagery of a shoot coming up from a stump in a forest cut down by God. “Isaiah 11:1-9 is another passage we typically hear at Christmastime. Why? Because it communicates the message of hope into a landscape of despair. As the prophet said, the tree had been cut down, only the stump seemed to remain. But a “shoot will come up” out of that stump, and a “Branch will bear fruit.” In that place where it seems there is no pathway forward, God gave one – not just to Israel, but to each of us,” writes Richter, p. 75.

Jesse was the father of King David (read 1 Samuel 16:1, 11-13). Jesus, a descendent of David, is named as the root of Jesse. This miraculous “signal” or “banner” is a sign for both Jews and Gentiles of the invitation of God to come, and dwell in God’s kingdom. God will gather people from all the nations through Jesus.

A- Apply

The Scriptures and the hymn lyrics point us to Jesus. Spend some time reflecting how Jesus, the Root of Jesse, has been a signal of God's love to you.

Unto your own: How do you see yourself as a child of God?

Rescued: How has God saved you? From what?

Victory over hell and death: What does it mean to you to be saved from hell and the destruction of death?

Hope: In addition to the image of a shoot coming up from a felled tree stump, what other images and examples of hope come to mind when you reflect on Jesus?

P-Prayer from Antiphon 4

O ROOT OF JESSE, who stands for an ensign of the people, before whom kings shall keep silence and to whom the Gentiles shall make their supplication:

Come, and deliver us and tarry not.

For more Advent and Christmas resources, go to chapelwood.org/Christmas

You will find links to worship services, Christmas serving opportunities, resources and activities for children and students, concerts, and daily devotionals written by Chapelwood members.

Week Three of Advent
Jesus Christ, O Key of David

*O come, O Key of David, come
and open wide our heavenly home.
Make safe for us the heavenward road
and bar the way to death's abode.*

BIBLE S.W.A.P.

S—Scripture: Isaiah 22:22 and Revelation 3:7

Isaiah 22:22 says, “And I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David. He shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.”

John references Isaiah’s key of David in Revelation 3:7, which says, “And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: ‘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.’”

Notes:

W-What Does it Mean and What Can I Obey?

In context, when Isaiah refers to the key of David, it sounds like an object that will be given to Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, the officer in charge of the royal palace in Jerusalem where King Hezekiah’s family lives. The key is a symbol of authority, both for Eliakim and for Jesus. The key opens the door to opportunities that await. The church in Philadelphia is seen by John to have a stronghold because of their faithfulness to Christ and John prophesies that the church will be safeguarded during the eschatological (end times) tribulation.

Everyone yearns for a “door of opportunity” to open. The Hebrew people in Isaiah’s day looked ahead to the “Day of Yahweh when Yahweh would physically return to Israel bringing deliverance to his own and destruction to his enemies,” writes Richter, p. 55. “Does this sound familiar? Of course it does, because the second coming of Jesus (God the Son) is the same event as the Day of Yahweh.” In the first century, the Jews are a small community located around Jerusalem and up north in Galilee under Roman rule whose ruling class (Pharisees, Sadducees, and the Sanhedrin) are “navigating the difficult terrain between being an independent religious community and a subject Roman province. If the Romans decide to wipe out the province of Judea, they can. And with that destruction all of the dreams of a restored Jewish community will perish as well. Unless of course . . . God shows up.”

A- Apply

Advent is a time of remembering Jesus's birth and anticipating his return. He is the key to heaven for all people who believe in Him. While we await, we yearn for safe passage in this world and hope for all that is to come. Reflect on your current path and your hoped-for future.

How would you describe the current "terrain" you are navigating in life?

Can you imagine Jesus walking the path with you in your present situation? What difference does that make for you?

What dangers lurk around you? What are you afraid of? How would your attitudes and actions be different if those fears were gone? How might Jesus bear those burdens for you by locking the door against them?

Imagine Jesus unlocking a door of opportunity for you or for someone you love. What beautiful opening do you see?

P-Prayer from Antiphon 5

O KEY OF DAVID and Scepter of the house of Israel, who opens and no one shuts, who shuts and no one opens:

Come, and bring forth from prison the captive who sits in darkness and in the shadow of death.

Week Four of Advent
Jesus Christ, O King of Nations

*O come, O King of nations, bind
in one the hearts of all mankind.
Bid all our sad divisions cease
and be yourself our King of Peace.*

BIBLE S.W.A.P.

S—Scripture: Isaiah 28:16 and Psalm 118:22

Isaiah 28:16 says, “therefore thus says the Lord God, See, I am laying in Zion a foundation stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation: “One who trusts will not panic.”

In Psalm 118:22, we read of such a cornerstone: “The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.”

Notes:

W-What Does it Mean and What Can I Obey?

God’s promise to lay the foundation stone in Jerusalem symbolizes both the foundation for a major building – the Jerusalem temple – and is also a promise of security for Jerusalem and the house of David. Jesus quotes Psalm 118:22 in reference to Himself in the parable of the tenants found in Matthew 21:33–44; Mark 12:1–11; and Luke 20:9–18. Jesus made it clear that he is the cornerstone spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he asked the leading priests and elders if they had ever read in the Psalms that the stone the builders rejected has now become the cornerstone. Then he said, “I tell you, the Kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation that will produce the proper fruit. Anyone who stumbles on that stone will be broken to pieces, and it will crush anyone it falls on.”

Peter likewise references this Psalm in connection with Jesus in a sermon in Acts 4:11 and in 1 Peter 2:7. Jesus is the cornerstone who is rejected and crucified, yet in that rejection He unites all people by His blood. We can participate in Jesus’ sacrifice as “living stones” in the spiritual house in which we serve in the priesthood of all believers. Like Jesus, we offer acceptable, spiritual sacrifices that build up the body of Christ in the world.

A-Apply

Notice the promise at the end of Isaiah 28:16: "One who trusts will not panic." Chapelwood member Madison Andrews writes "In Jesus we experience the spiritual ease that emerges from our awareness of the 'precious cornerstone' that upholds our faith. No trial or tempest can purloin the deep serenity promised to those who believe in this unshakable foundation."

Reflect on the peace that can be yours through trusting the King of Nations.

Binding your heart to others: Have you experience a supernatural way of being at one in God's love with someone very different from yourself?

Ceasing of divisions: A cornerstone holds together opposing walls in a building. How can Jesus bring together divided forces at play in your life? In your relationships?

King of Peace: What part of your life needs peace the most? How can Jesus' presence and love provide that in this Advent season?

P-Prayer from Antiphon 7

O KING OF THE GENTILES and their Desired One, Cornerstone that makes both one:

Come, and deliver us whom you formed out of the dust of the earth.

Christmas Eve***Jesus Christ, O Immanuel***

*O come, O come, Immanuel,
and ransom captive Israel
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.*

BIBLE S.W.A.P.**S—Scripture: Isaiah 7:14 and Matthew 1:23**

Isaiah 7:14: “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel.”

Matthew quotes Isaiah 7:14 in 1:23: “Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means, “God is with us.”

W-What Does it Mean and What Can I Obey?

Isaiah gives a doubtful King Ahaz encouragement to be patient and wait out the enemies who are attempting to destroy Jerusalem. First (v. 4) God tells Isaiah to say, “Take heed, be quiet, do not fear, and do not let your heart be faint;” next, God says, “It shall not come to pass . . . (but) If you do not stand firm in faith, you shall not stand at all. (vs. 7-9). Then, God tells Ahaz to “ask for a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” This is too much for skeptical Ahaz, so Isaiah intervenes and says: “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? 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.” Ahaz’s fear wins the day, and instead of trusting God and God’s promise to protect the land and the nation, Ahaz allies with the foreign kings and remains indebted to them.

The Gospel writer Matthew translates Immanuel for us: “which means, God with us.” It is the first of Matthew’s fulfillment citations that show throughout the gospel how Jesus’ life conforms to prophecies of the Hebrew Bible. Chapelwood member Madison Andrews helps us bridge the gap between Old and New Testaments, writing, “what unimaginable wonders awaited Mary and Joseph on the night of Jesus’ birth. What beauty lay in store for all humankind – Immanuel, God with us, in person and in spirit, ‘always, to the end of the age.’ (Matthew 28:20)

A-Apply

Chapelwood member Elaine Scott writes “Israel’s long wait is almost over! So is ours. Our hearts yearn for Immanuel, just as surely as Israel longed for Isaiah’s promise to be fulfilled.” The O Antiphons are filled with cryptic meaning. The first letters of each line, taken backwards, spell *Ero Cras* which means “Tomorrow, I will come.” This is how the seven lines came to be read each day in the week leading up to Christmas Eve. All our anticipation of Christmas Day seems to be bursting at the seams on Christmas Eve. The word “frenzy” applies in most households. It is a holy frenzy, filled with hope, faith, and love.

How are you anticipating the appearance of Jesus Christ on this particular Christmas Eve?

What difference will his presence with you and with your loved ones make?

P-Prayer from Antiphon 1

O EMMANUEL, our King and Lawgiver, the Expected of the nations and their Savior:
Come and save us, O Lord, our God.

First Sunday of Christmas
Jesus Christ, O Bright and Morning Star

*O come, O Bright and Morning Star,
and bring us comfort from afar!
Dispel the shadows of the night
and turn our darkness into light.*

BIBLE S.W.A.P.

S—Scripture: Isaiah 9:2 and Luke 1:78-79

Isaiah 9:2: “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them a light has shone.”

Luke: 1:78-79: “By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon 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.”

Notes:

W-What Does it Mean and What Can I Obey?

In other versions of “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, “ Jesus, the Bright Morning Star, is translated as “Dayspring,” a word for early dawn. Dayspring is used twice in the King James Version of the Bible, once in Job 38:12 and once in Zechariah’s song, the Benedictus, where we hear, “By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us.” (Luke 1:78)

It’s by God’s gentle mercy that dawn appears, and the light of day arrives, but first there is the shadow of night. “Shadow of death” is used more often in the Scriptures; most familiar to many is its use in Psalm 23:4.

The clearest biblical reference of this prayer, though, is Isaiah 9:2, which says, “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them a light has shone.” Read Isaiah 9:1-7. Imagine the people who first heard this oracle. They had suffered terribly. The northernmost tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali lay in ruins; every town had been affected by war; every family had buried a loved one. According to Richter, p. 72, “It was into this brokenness that the words of Isaiah 9:1-7 speak. God promises that these who had lost so much because of the sins of their leaders would one day be liberated from ‘the yoke’ of Assyria by a new leader (v. 4). These who had seen so much grief would dance as those at the harvest festival. These who had trembled when the ground shook under the boots of the enemy marching for their homes, would one day be comforted by the news of a new government. A leader who would indeed check his ego at the door. A king who would value the lives of his citizens more highly than his own. A prince whose chosen throne name would be ‘Prince of Peace.’ This is what your God has prom-

ised not only to the ancients but to us as well. Regardless of how broken our worlds might seem today, there is a day coming when ‘from then on and forevermore the Prince of Peace will reign. There will be no end to the increase of his government or of peace. For a ‘son will be given to us.’ Rejoice.”

A-Apply

Chapelwood member Lori Anderson reminds us that In the “bright light” of the “first Sunday of Christmas, we celebrate the birth of Jesus; the one born under the Bethlehem star who becomes our Bright and Morning star. The opening of the gospel of John reads, ‘in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.’ (John 1:4)” The call to obedience in the life of Christians, especially in the days following Christmas is to live in the light of Christ and let that light shine through us to everyone around us. Take time to reflect on the light inside you.

You bring light and life to those I carry on my heart. (pause to offer names)

You bring light and life to all people and to all places. (pause to offer specific peoples and places.)

In God’s tender mercy, you break across the horizon of our lives to usher in a new day, a new season, and new possibilities. I offer to you, all of those who long to make a new beginning.

Jesus, our Bright and Morning Star brings us “comfort from afar.” Even from a long way off, the comfort of Jesus finds its way to us. In these days after Christmas, is there someone in your lifeworld in need of comfort? Who might need a kind word, a call, text, or the blessing of your presence?

We awaken to the light of a New Year! 365 days stretch out before us with mysterious possibilities and unknown adventures. May we enter the world this new year, carrying the good news that Jesus is Emmanuel, God with us!

P-Prayer from Antiphon 6

O DAYSPRING, Brightness of the light eternal and Sun of justice:

Come, and enlighten those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.



*Going Beyond the Sermon is written by Teresa Rossy, Director of Adult Discipleship Ministries,
Chapelwood United Methodist Church in Houston, Texas.*

Source material is quoted throughout. The sermons are streamed online at www.chapelwood.org/archives.

To get Going Beyond the Sermon in your inbox, e-mail Laura Frost, lfrost@chapelwood.org.