**O Come, O Come Emmanuel!**

What is the meaning of Christmas?

Christ Anointed one, Messiah, King

mas = mass = Anglo-Saxon maese = Latin missa = to send.

So Christmas means the sending of a messiah—a Savior-king.

This is what we are celebrating this morning. God sent a Messiah-king.

I will use two Christmas carols this afternoon

O come, O come Immanuel

O come, O come, Immanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here,
Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel
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.

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.

Why in a minor key? Because we were captive Israel. We were slaves to sin. We were slaves to our slave master, who is Satan.

Before Christ came into our lives, we mourned in exile here.

But then Emmanuel came.

Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

Im among or toward manu us El God

God came toward or among us.

This is the incarnation.

John 1:1-3 This is John’s version of a birth narrative

John 1:14 The Word became flesh and took up residence among us.

Jesus is literally God among us.

 We observed his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father full of grace and truth.

God became a child. God became a baby. God became a helpless little child in a manger.

To the Greeks, a scandal. To Muslims, a scandal. To us, Rejoice, Rejoice Immanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

John 1:18

In other religions God is distant and unknowable

In Christianity God came down to us.

That is the Christian message!!!

God had to become like man so that man could become like God.

God had to become like man so that he could be the perfect high priest.

Jesus is God who came toward/among us

The prophecy: A helpless, poor, peasant, humble girl who is betrothed to be married will conceive and give birth to God-in-the-flesh.

And what did Immanuel do?

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.

We were captive Israel.

We were Joseph, brought as a slave to Egypt

We were Israel enslaved in Egypt.

We were enslaved to sin and our slave-master Pharaoh/Satan owned us.

Before the baby Jesus came, before the Son of God appeared, we were living in exile. We were cut off from the living God.

We were Judah, taken into captivity in Babylon.

Isaiah 59:2 Our iniquities (sins) had separated us from our God. Our sins had hidden his face from us, so that he did not hear.

Eph 2:4-5 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ, even when were dead in our transgressions and sins.

Isaiah 9:1-7

The land of Zebulun and Naphtali is a reference to Nazareth, where Jesus was raised. Jesus was called the Nazarene

v. 1 Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress.

v. 2 We were walking in darkness.

We were living in the land of deep darkness.

But Rejoice, Rejoice, Immanuel has come to rescue thee O Israel.

v. 2 A light has dawned.

v. 3 The nation has been enlarged. Not just Jews any more!

v. 4 A yoke burdened us.

v. 5 Our oppressor—Satan and sin are fuel for the fire.

Why?

v. 6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given.

v. 7 He will reign on David’s throne from that time on and forever.

This is the good news of Christmas. The baby, lying in a feeding trough, is God with us. He will rescue/ransom captive Israel.

Micah 5:2-5

But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from old, from ancient times.

v. 3 Israel will be abandoned until the one in labor will bear a son. 430 years of silence will be broken when Gabriel announces to the lowly shepherds:

Luke 2:10-11

Behold! I bring you good news or great joy. Today as Savior who is Messiah the Lord was born for you in the city of David—Bethlehem. Christ-mas A Savior/Messiah has come.

v. 4 He will shepherd his flock

His reign will reach the ends of the earth.

v. 5 And he will be our peace.

Joy to the world! The Lord is come
Let earth receive her King!
Let every heart prepare Him room
And heaven and nature sing
And heaven and nature sing
And heaven, and heaven and nature sing

Joy to the world! The Savior reigns
Let men their songs employ
While fields and floods
Rocks, hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy
Repeat the sounding joy
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy

He rules the world with truth and grace
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness
And wonders of His love
And wonders of His love
And wonders, wonders of His love

Joy to the world, the Lord is come. Let earth receive her king!