



29 November 2024

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

Advent begins on Sunday. The sermon series this year will be on *waiting, preparing, rejoicing* and *loving* as we prepare to celebrate Christ's birth.

One of the old carols we sing is *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*, written by Charles Wesley 280 years ago. Recall the words,

Come, Thou long-expected Jesus, born to set Thy people free.
From our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in Thee.
Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth Thou art.
Dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.

Born Thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a King.
Born to reign in us forever, now Thy gracious kingdom bring.
By Thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone.
By Thine all-sufficient merit raise us to Thy glorious throne.



Wesley based the words on Haggai 2:7, which in the King James Version reads,

“I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and
I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts.”

Think with me briefly about just four of the many Biblical truths in this carol.

- *Jesus is the One God promised.* Wesley's prayer, “Come, Thou long-expected Jesus”, was based on God's promise to send One to deal with our sin. There are many Old Testament prophecies that speak of Christ coming to earth, by some counts over 400 texts. The first one is in Genesis chapter 3, right after Adam and Eve sinned. 700 years before Jesus was born God promised through Isaiah,

“the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and she will name Him Immanuel” (7:14).

God told Joseph through an angel that this was fulfilled in Jesus, as we read in Matthew chapter 1.

- *Jesus is the One to set us free from fear and sin.* As God told Satan in Genesis chapter 3, the One to come “shall bruise you on the head”, defeat Satan and his power to instill fear and keep us captives of sin. Then there are more familiar words from God through Isaiah,
 “But He was pierced for our offenses, He was crushed for our wrongdoings; the punishment for our well-being was laid upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed. All of us, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the Lord has caused the wrongdoing of us all to fall on Him.”
 (53:5-6)

The apostle Paul tells us that God sent “His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh” (Romans 8:3), and “it was for freedom that Christ set us free” (Galatians 5:1). The writer of Hebrews declares that Christ became one of us so that “He might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives” (2:14-15).

- *Jesus is the One who brings strength, consolation, hope and joy.* The apostle Paul tells us in his letter to the church at Philippi that Christ is the One who strengthens us to do all that we need to do (4:13). Then in his second letter to the church at Corinth, that God is the God of all comfort who through Jesus abundantly comforts us in all our afflictions (1:3-5). The apostle Peter declared that God “according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Peter 1:3-4). And we recall Jesus’ words in John chapter 15, “these things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.”
- *Jesus is the One who saves us to rule in our hearts.* Jesus Christ, God the Son, is the ruler, the Lord. As we read in 1 Corinthians chapter 8, “there is only one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him” (6). So then, as Peter wrote, we are to “sanctify Christ as Lord in [our] hearts” (2 Peter 3:15). While our natural self rebels against bowing to the rule of anyone, including God, we now have the immeasurably great privilege of allowing Christ to rule, direct, guide us in His good and perfect will in every area and circumstance of our lives.

There are many more Biblical truths in this carol which you can trace out. Thank God for Jesus. Focus on these truths as you move forward through the first week of Advent on the way to celebrating Christ’s birth.

Pastor Lyle