



Memorial Park

An Evangelical Presbyterian Church

Foundations for the Carols

Introduction

This study seeks to identify the Biblical basis for the Christmas carols in our hymnbooks. Some have very clear Biblical foundations, and others are not so clear, with interjections based on tradition. The objective here is to make the connections between the biblical texts and the words of the carols.

Isaiah 7:10-17 & 9:1-7

1. Consider the context of these prophecies about the Messiah that was promised through Isaiah. What was Israel facing? What were the hopes and fears of the people?

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.

O Come, Thou Day-spring, come and cheer
Our spirits by Thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And Deaths dark shadows put to flight.

O Come, Thou Wisdom from on high,
And order all things, far and nigh;

To us the path of knowledge show,
And cause us in her ways to go.

O Come, Desire of nations, bind
All peoples in one heart and mind;
Bid envy, strife and quarrels cease,
Fill all the world with heaven's peace.

Rejoice! Rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to thee,
O Israel!

2. Which of these Isaiah prophecies are evident in this carol.
3. What other Biblical influence do you see in the words of the carol?
4. Why do you think people like this carol?

Micah 5:2-5a

5. How is the coming Messiah described in the Micah prophecy?

Joy to the World

Joy to the world! the Lord is come;
Let earth receive her king;
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And heav'n and nature sing...

Joy to the earth! the Savior reigns;
Let men their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy...

No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found...

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

6. What way does the carol reflect the theme of Micah 5?
7. Why did the author (Isaac Watts) describe the Messiah's reign with "truth and grace"? See John 1:17.

Memorial Park Church

8800 Peebles Road, Allison Park, PA 15101 | 412.364.9492
www.MemorialParkChurch.org

8. What is the reference to "the curse" about in verse 3? See Gen 3:17-24.
9. How will "the curse" be removed? See Gal 3:10-14 & Rev 22:1-6.
10. Why does the carol proclaim joy when "the curse" has not yet been fully removed?

Luke 2:13-14

Hark! the Herald Angels Sing

Hark! the Herald Angels Sing,
 "Glory to the new-born King;
 Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
 God and sinners reconciled!"
 Joyful, all ye nations rise,
 Join the triumph of the skies;
 With th'angelic host proclaim,
 "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

Christ, by highest heaven adored;
 Christ, the ever-lasting Lord!
 Late in time behold Him come,
 Off-spring of the Virgin's womb:
 Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
 Hail th'incarnate Deity,

Pleased as man to men to dwell,
 Jesus, our Emmanuel.

Hail the heav'n born Prince of Peace!
 Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
 Light of life to all He brings,
 Ris'n with healing in His wings.
 Mild He lays His glories by,
 Born that men no more may die,
 Born to raise the sons of earth,
 Born to give them second birth.

Hark! the Herald Angels Sing,
 "Glory to the new-born King."

11. In the carol, where do you see evidence of the following Biblical texts:

- a. Micah 5:2-5a
- b. John 14:27 & 16:33
- c. Col 1:19-20
- d. Matt 28:16-20
- e. John 1:14
- f. John 1:4
- g. Rev 21:22-26
- h. Phil 2:5-8
- i. Deut 33:27a
- j. John 3:3
- k. John 3:16
- l. Rev 5:11-14
- m. I Cor 15:51-58

12. If you had never heard the Gospel, and you encountered the words of this carol, what would you think about it?
13. What are the purposes of Christmas carols?
14. How can we avoid thoughtless singing the words of the familiar carols without focusing on the One they praise?