

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 death's dark shadows put to flight.

O come, Desire of nations, bind
In one the hearts of all mankind;
Bid Thou our sad divisions cease,
And be Thyself our King of Peace.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

For centuries this ancient wish echoed across the plains of Judea. And then one evening in a stable in Bethlehem the wish was granted.

He is Born, the Divine Christ Child

When you wish upon a star
Makes no difference who you are
Anything your heart desires
Will come to you
If your heart is in your dream
No request is too extreme
When you wish upon a star
As dreamers do.

What a star to wish on was in the heavens that night. It's radiant light surely inspired many a wish. Of all those wishes, the one that came true was the greatest hope for mankind – The light had come at last!

Welcome, the Child of Light

There are only a few records of the earliest Christmas practices, but as early as the 4th century some Christian groups were celebrating “natus Christus” or the birth of Christ, on December 25th and eventually the word nael, or noel was used in the same manner.

In the Middle ages, carols often began with nowell, or noel and soon that word that referred to any songs about the birth of Christ. So when we sing a Christmas carol, or wish someone a joyous noel, we are following the example of angels announcing the good news that Jesus Christ was born, not just for Israel, but for all mankind.

The First Noel

In the stillness of the night, under the brightness of a star, Mary surely wished the same thing for her son that all mothers wish. She wished for him to sleep.

In the French Carol, “Bring a Torch Jeannette, Isabella” visitors to the stable need to keep their voices down so not to wake the baby. To this day in the Provence region of France, children, dressed up as shepherds and milkmaids, carry torches and candles to Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve singing this carol.

However this melody was not originally a Christmas song, but a dance for French Nobility. So if you find yourself tapping your toes, perhaps some French blueblood runs in your veins. Mais Oui!

Bring a Torch, Jeannette, Isabella - women

It was Christmas Eve, 1906. Reginald Fessenden, a former colleague of Thomas Edison, had figured out that by combining two frequencies together, radio could do more than simply transmit Morse code. It could carry the sound of the human voice –without wires. Three days earlier Fessenden notified ships at sea to monitor the airways, telling them at 9 PM Eastern Time there would be a very special message. At the appointed hour the radio operators heard not the clicks and dots they were accustomed to, but the voice of Fessenden, the son of a preacher, reading to them from the Gospel of St. Luke. Then he picked up his violin and played “O, Holy Night”.

The men aboard the ships thought they were dreaming. To hear music from miles and miles away must have seemed no less than miraculous. They excitedly called their shipmates and they gathered around the radio, listening in awe. Perhaps it made them feel a little less alone on the open vast seas.

And just so the Gospel of Jesus Christ has made us feel a little less alone. Since that night radio has taken the message of good news around the world and “O Holy Night” has become one of the most recorded and played spiritual songs in the entertainment industry. It’s beautiful imagination of the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem continues to inspire millions no matter how they hear it; live, recorded, or carried on invisible waves through a radio.

Fall on your knees! O hear the angel voices!
O night divine, O night when Christ was born.

O Holy Night - Flute Solo

O how I wish I could sing like an Angel
I’d sing carols so high and sweet
O if I had the voice of an Angel

I'd be singing that sweet Child asleep.

O how I wish I had the wings of an Angel
Shining with glory bright
O if I had the wings of an Angel
I'd be rocking that sweet Child at night

Christmas Angel so long ago
You saw the Christ Child in the star's glow
You sang to Jesus on His bed of hay
On that first Christmas day.

O how I wish I could sing like an Angel
I'd sing carols so high and sweet
O if I had the voice of an Angel
I'd be singing that sweet Child asleep.

Corlynn Hanney

Angels in Seven

Joseph looked at the tiny infant in Mary's arms. The child was delivered safely and he felt relieved. When inn after inn turned them away he worried the baby would be born in a corner of some dirty ally. This stable was much better. He blessed the name of the innkeeper who took pity on them.

Even still, surely the Son of God deserved better, Mary deserved better. She should be home with her mother and other women nearby to help. What did he know of bringing a child in the world? What did he know of raising the Son of God? He only knew how to turn wood into tables and chairs. How was he fit for such a calling as this?

He wished he knew what he could do for this child.

"Joseph?" Mary called. "What shall we name him?"

"Jesus" he replied. "The Angel told me, his name is Jesus."

"Jesus" Mary whispered. "Do you think we can go home soon?"

Joseph thought about it a moment. "I don't know." He finally said. "I..."

"It's alright." Mary said. "I trust you. I know you'll keep us safe."

"I will." Joseph promised. "I will."

Guard Him Joseph

When I was a child I always wondered about the shepherd girl. We had shepherd boys, but surely there must have been shepherd girls too. Shepherds lived and worked together as families. Where was the shepherd girl? Was she there that night? What did she see? What did she think? And so for her, I wrote this poem.

There was a little Shepherd girl who wished for just one thing --
To travel to Judea town and there behold a king.

Such a man a king must be with robes of red and purple
A golden crown upon his head and silken fur lined mantle.

His palace is of marble white as any milk,
A thousand rooms for visitors and beds all made of silk.

She heard tell of gardens there as sweet as any bower
Filled with the honey perfume of a million scented flowers.

She told her mother of her wish and asked if it could be
A humble shepherd girl like her could ever see a king.

Her mother smiled and replied, "We are shepherds only
And marble white and gilded things are not for those so lowly.

But tuck that wish inside your heart, may be a star will hear
And grant your wish so you may see all you hold so dear.

And so a year then two went by, the shepherd girl grew wiser
But never quite forgot her wish but kept it still inside her.

Then one quiet winter night angels filled the sky
And told the shepherds of a babe and told them of a sign.

And so the shepherd family looked until they found
An old and weathered stable with animals around.

And in a wooden manger there the girl beheld a child
All wrapped up in swaddling clothes looking small and mild.

Afterward they traveled home in silent holy awe.
The Shepherd girl, in reverent tone, spoke of what she saw.

It was no marble palace there but Mother I believe
Tonight my wish granted for I beheld the King.

Glory to God in the Highest

I truly believe that if we keep telling the Christmas story, singing the Christmas songs, and living the Christmas spirit, we can bring joy and happiness and peace to this world.” ~ *Norman Vincent Peale*

More than ever we need to tell the Christmas story. We need to sing the Christmas songs and bring the peace of that silent night into our lives, into our hearts.

Silent Night - Men with Shoji Ketchem singing the solo

If you wish to find the Lord,
Do not seek Him in the world,
For the world is not the place in which He dwells.

If you wish to find the Lord,
Do not seek Him in the mind,
For the mind can only know, it cannot taste.

If you wish to find the Lord,
You must open up your heart,
You must open up your heart and let Him in.

If you wish to let Him in,
You just call upon His name,
You just call upon His name and let Him in

Go Tell It on the Mountain

Love came down at Christmas,
Love all lovely, Love divine;
Love was born at Christmas;
Star and angels gave the sign.
Christina Rossetti

Christmas brings us so many good things - friends, family, music – but mostly love. And so at this time of year there is no greater wish we can make for you than to wish you Christmas.

I Wish You Christmas

Thank you for making our Christmas wish come true and letting us share the music celebrating his birth with you.

The lyrics of “O come, O come, Emmanuel” reflects prophetic themes found in the Old Testament. A messiah also called the Rod of Jesse, a Key of David, and a Lord of Might would be sent to redeem Israel. The title Emmanuel means, “God is with us”. And on that quiet night in a stable in Bethlehem he truly was.

O come o come Emanuel

The ancient wish from long ago was indeed fulfilled that night. He is born!

“And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the City of David a Savior

Rejoice, O Israel, Rejoice!

Rejoice

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