

## COME, THOU LONG EXPECTED JESUS

1. 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.

2. 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.

42-02-12-Come Thou Long-Expected Jesus  
Advent, Christmas, Messiah, Incarnation, freedom, hope, longing  
Luke 2:25-32  
Only the coming King will bring the hopes our Advent carols sing.

### INTRODUCTION:

–In 2012, we had a sermon series on 4 Christmas carols. This year, we're doing 4 more. Advent season ends the Christian Year by focusing first on Christ's 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming, then on His 1<sup>st</sup> Coming. Christmastide follows and includes New Year's Day, as a new Christian Year begins. –“**Come Thou Long-Expected Jesus**” is sung on 1<sup>st</sup> Advent Sunday, because it expresses the long-awaited OT hope for the Messiah, as seen in Simeon's prayer, when he blessed baby Jesus in the temple– Luke 2:29-32, “Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.” –This 16-line song expounds the 1<sup>st</sup> Advent's many theological themes and amplifies the heart-cry of the last prayer in the Bible: “Yes. Come, Lord Jesus.” **HOM.idea.** Before we look at the song, let's explore...

### I. The Heart of the Hymn-Writer

- A. **Charles Wesley**, the 18<sup>th</sup> child of Samuel and Susanna Wesley, was 3 years younger than his brother John, but in 1738, he came to saving faith in Christ 3 days before John did.
1. He and John were stellar examples of unsaved religious faith:
    - a. baptized as infants and raised in the godly home of a minister,
    - b. ordained after studies at Oxford, where Charles began a student group for prayer, Bible study and holy disciplines (joined later by John and the famous preacher George Whitefield),
    - c. then, sent as young missionaries to America, but came back to England, disheartened, feeling like religious failures.
  2. Their conversions show that everyone—even very committed religious people—need to be “born again,” as Jesus taught.
- B. Charles' own conversion began his prolific hymn-writing. (His new birth gave birth to poems expressing a now authentic faith.)
1. From the year he became a real Christian until his death, 50 years later, he wrote over 6,500 hymns (about 130 a year).
  2. His hymns are evangelistic, packed with doctrine, and always

*exalt Jesus.* (Not all became popular [but **some are still familiar**]:

- a. **And can it be that I should gain** / An interest in the Savior's blood?
  - b. **Arise, my soul, arise;** / shake off thy guilty fears;
  - c. **Christ the Lord is risen today,** / Alleluia!
  - d. **Hark! The herald angels sing,** / Glory to the newborn King;
  - e. **Love divine, all loves excelling,** / Joy of Heav'n to earth come down;
  - f. **O for a thousand tongues to sing** / My great Redeemer's praise,
  - g. **Rejoice, the Lord is king!** / Your Lord and king adore;
  - h. **Soldiers of Christ, arise,** / And put your armor on...]
  - i. And, this one: **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.
- C. These lines capture our longing for the *deliverance* Christ brings.
1. Years earlier, in America, Charles was *so shaken* by the *evils of slavery*, he nearly had a nervous breakdown [In his journal, he records his shock at seeing parents give their child a slave to torment.]
  2. In 1744, on viewing England's *orphan crisis* and poverty caused by *class division*, he was encouraged by the Advent implications of Hag 2:7 (KJV), And 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.

**TRANS:** Today *we see* a growing *slave-trade of human trafficking*; the *fatal child abuse of the abortion industry*; the *worldwide poverty from economic exploitation*; the *endless suffering from war's tragedy*. No political promises of deliverance have helped! What we long for is God's answer to "Yes. Come, Lord Jesus." **Only the coming King will bring the hopes our Advent carols sing.** *This song is...*

## II. An Elaborate Prayer for Christ's 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming

- A. In OT times, they prayed for God to intervene with angelic power or forces of nature, but our NT prayer is incarnational. (God loved us enough to be "*born*" as *one of us*, so we address Him that way.)
  1. We address Him who is *Born to set* [His] *people free*;" because Jesus said in John 8:36, "...if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."
  2. "*Born Thy people to deliver*," for the angel told Joseph in Mat 1:21, "you are to give him the name **Jesus**, because he will **save his people from their sins**." [Jesus means, *Jehovah saves, Jehovah heals, Jehovah delivers*.]

3. "*Born a child and yet a king*,"— Isa 9:6a, For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and **the government** [*the Kingdom rule*] will be **on his shoulders**.
  4. "*Born to reign in us forever*," because [in a literal rendering of Luke 17:21b (JSB)], Jesus said, "the kingdom of God is **within you**."
- B. *We pray not to a distant Deity* but to "Emmanuel... 'God with us,'" and we join Wesley's amplification of the "Yes-Come-Lord-Jesus" prayer:
1. "*Come, Thou long expected Jesus... From our fears and sins release us*," because , since Eden's fall, we've awaited You, the woman's promised "seed" Who would "crush" the serpent Satan's head!
  2. *You, Jesus, are* "*Israel's strength and consolation... Hope of all the earth... Dear desire of every nation, Joy of every longing heart...*" **We pray**, "*Let us find our rest in Thee*." [Even as Augustine prayed: "*You have made us for Yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in You*."]
  3. *You, Jesus, are the One*, "*Born to reign in us forever, Now Thy gracious kingdom bring*," for it will answer the prayer You taught us to pray: "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."
  4. "*By Thine own eternal Spirit, Rule in all our hearts alone*;" for Rom 14:17 says Your "**kingdom... is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit**."
  5. "*By Thine all sufficient merit, Raise us to Thy glorious throne*." For, as Heb 11:9-10 says, we sojourn "in a foreign country" looking for "the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God." (*You, Jesus*, bring this *ultimate, afterlife answer* to the human heart's longing!)

## CONCLUSION:

—This prayerful song is at the heart of all Christmas carols. It not only addresses the universal longings of humanity but proclaims God's hope-filled answer in the person of His Son. **Only the coming King will bring the hopes our Advent carols sing.**

—Jesus came *as one of us*, incarnate, "*born to reign in us*," not just for these short earthly lives, but "*forever*." Such an awesome *relational hope in God* is absent in this world's history of religions. And because Christ's promised return is signed in His own blood and sealed by His own resurrection, we have the divine guarantee that our prayer is never in vain, when we *prayerfully* sing, "*Come, Thou long expected Jesus*."