

## **Advent Reflections**

The following prayers have been sung in churches and cathedrals from around 700AD. They were written by someone who imagined that they were living in the years BC – before Christ. They thought about what they would hope for and need in a saviour. They found inspiration in passages from the Jewish Scriptures (the Old Testament) which pointed to the hope of the people of Israel for a Messiah.

These are prayers of yearning and longing. Traditionally they are sung during evening prayer, one each day between 17<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> December. \*

I hope these short reflections and images will help you during the last few days of Advent to deepen your appreciation of our Saviour Jesus Christ, as we pray ‘Come, Lord Jesus.’

*Martin Castle – Advent 2025*



### **Wisdom** – Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> December

*O Wisdom, coming forth from the mouth of the Most High,  
reaching from one end to the other mightily,  
and sweetly ordering all things:  
Come and teach us the way of prudence.*

The kind of wisdom described here is beauty and order that flows from God and is reflected in creation. In the Old Testament, wisdom is personified as a woman who urges her children to keep her ways (see Proverbs 8 v 32). In the New Testament Jesus Christ is described as ‘The power of God and the wisdom of God’ (1 Corinthians 1 v 24).

- Which parts of your life reflect order and beauty, and which parts are more chaotic?
- The word ‘prudence’ means having good judgement and acting carefully. How prudent are you?

*O Wisdom, coming forth from the mouth of the Most High,  
reaching from one end to the other mightily,  
and sweetly ordering all things:  
Come and teach us the way of prudence.*

*Come, Lord Jesus!*



### **Lord** – Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> December

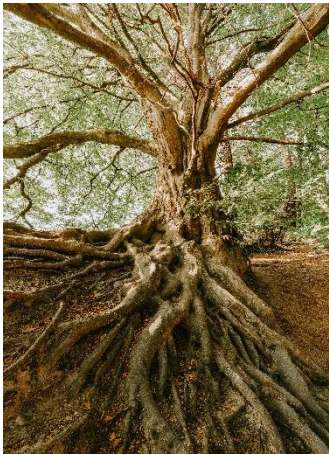
*O Adonai, and leader of the House of Israel,  
who appeared to Moses in the fire of the burning bush  
and gave him the law on Sinai:  
Come and redeem us with an outstretched arm.*

In the Jewish tradition Adonai, translated ‘LORD’, is the title given to God, because the divine name is too holy and powerful to be uttered safely. When God spoke to Moses from the

burning bush (see Exodus chapter 3), Moses asked God his name. God replied, 'I am who I am'. Through Moses, God led the people of Israel out of slavery in Egypt, and on Mount Sinai gave the law to the people of Israel. Just as God redeemed the people of Israel, Jesus is the one who powerfully redeems us from slavery to sin and death (see Romans 6 v 6).

- What would you like God to redeem for you or for someone else?

*O Adonai, and leader of the House of Israel,  
who appeared to Moses in the fire of the burning bush  
and gave him the law on Sinai:  
Come and redeem us with an outstretched arm.  
  
Come, Lord Jesus!*



### **Root** – Friday 19<sup>th</sup> December

*O Root of Jesse, standing as a sign among the peoples;  
before you kings will shut their mouths,  
to you the nations will make their prayer:  
Come and deliver us, and delay no longer.*

Jesus descended from King David, who was the son of Jesse. It became a large family tree. The Old Testament prophet Isaiah foretold of a day when a new 'shoot' would grow from the root, and the spirit of wisdom and understanding would rest upon Him. He will establish a peaceful kingdom, and nations shall seek after Him.

- Picture a nation, community or family where there is much strife. Imagine what it would be like for it to be 'rooted and established' in the love of God (see Ephesians 3 v 14-19).

*O Root of Jesse, standing as a sign among the peoples;  
before you kings will shut their mouths,  
to you the nations will make their prayer:  
Come and deliver us, and delay no longer.*

*Come, Lord Jesus!*



### **Key** – Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> December

*O Key of David and sceptre of the House of Israel;  
you open and no one can shut;  
you shut and no one can open:  
Come and lead the prisoners from the prison house,  
those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death.*

The prophet Isaiah also spoke of a 'servant', a descendent of King David who would bring out 'from the prison those who sit in darkness.' (See Isaiah

42 v 1-9). A keyholder brings security, and this keyholder provides absolute security against what appear to be powerful forces.

- What powerful forces do you need to be released from, or protected from?

*O Key of David and sceptre of the House of Israel;  
you open and no one can shut;  
you shut and no one can open:  
Come and lead the prisoners from the prison house,  
those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death.*

*Come, Lord Jesus!*



### **Morning Star – Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> December**

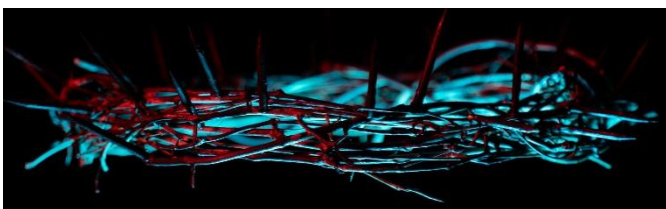
*O Morning Star,  
splendour of light eternal and sun of righteousness:  
Come and enlighten those who dwell in darkness  
and the shadow of death.*

The ‘morning star’ usually refers to the planet Venus which appears to shine brightly in the sky just before dawn. When you see the morning star you know that the dawn will soon break. The world lived long in the darkness of sin and death culminating in the death of Jesus. Yet Jesus rose from death, and we see the first signs that a new dawn approaches in all its splendour. The dawn *is* coming - it’s not if, but when! (see Malachi 4 v 2)

- We all need hope in life, but what do you base your hope upon?

*O Morning Star,  
splendour of light eternal and sun of righteousness:  
Come and enlighten those who dwell in darkness  
and the shadow of death.*

*Come, Lord Jesus!*



### **King – Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> December**

*O King of the nations, and their desire,  
the cornerstone making both one:  
Come and save the human race,  
which you fashioned from clay.*

Wars and conflict between nations abound. The rulers of the nations often create this conflict rather than build peace, and cities lie in ruins. In a building, the cornerstone binds walls together, creating a whole, stable building. The prophet Isaiah declared that God would lay a ‘precious cornerstone, a sure foundation’ which would be built upon with justice and righteousness (see Isaiah 28 v 14-18). Lies and deceit would be swept away. The one who created us from the dust of the earth would build a new humanity, where all people, Jews and non-Jews, will be drawn into the family of God (see Ephesians 2 v 14), making us one.

- What kind of leader attracts you and why, and how do they compare to the King whose only crown was a crown of thorns?

*O King of the nations, and their desire,  
the cornerstone making both one:  
Come and save the human race,  
which you fashioned from clay.*

*Come, Lord Jesus!*



**God** – Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> December

*O Emmanuel, our King and our lawgiver,  
the hope of the nations and their Saviour:  
Come and save us, O Lord our God.*

Here is the ultimate longing, in which all our longings come together – the desire for God. The word ‘Emmanuel’ is taken from the prophet Isaiah who foretold of the birth of a child who would be called ‘Emmanuel’ which means ‘God is with us’ (see Isaiah 7 v 10-14). The baby, placed in the manger is the hope of the world. We have not been abandoned because God has not only come among us, but through simple faith in Jesus, dwells within us. As the apostle Paul put it, ‘Christ in you, the hope of glory’ (Colossians 1 v 27).

- As you approach Christmas Day and throughout the 12 days of Christmas, nurture the sense that in Jesus Christ, God dwells within you through his Holy Spirit. What begins to change for you?

*O Emmanuel, our King and our lawgiver,  
the hope of the nations and their Saviour:  
Come and save us, O Lord our God.*

*Come, Lord Jesus!*

\*If you want to explore these themes more deeply see:

Malcolm Guite, Waiting on the Word – A poem a day for Advent, Christmas and Epiphany, Canterbury Press, 2015

Jane Williams, The Art of Advent, A painting a day from Advent to Epiphany, SPCK, 2018

Church Times Podcast by Malcolm Guite in 2021:

<https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2021/26-november/audio-video/podcast/listen-again-malcolm-guite-o-come-o-come-a-journey-through-the-advent-antiphons>

I am indebted to these authors in helping to shape these reflections.