

All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: 'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel', which means, 'God is with us.'

Silence is kept

ANTHEM

Sleepers, wake! (TIS 266 v.1)

*Words: Philipp Nicolai (1556 – 1608),
Music F. Mendelssohn (1809 – 47)*

THE CONCLUSION

READING - *Revelation 22: 12-13, 16-17, 20*

I, John, heard a voice saying to me: 'See, I am coming soon; my reward is with me, to repay according to everyone's work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.

It is I, Jesus, who sent my angel to you with this testimony for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.' The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come.' And let everyone who hears say, 'Come.'

And let everyone who is thirsty come.

Let anyone who wishes, take the water of life as a gift.

The one who testifies to these things says
'Surely I am coming soon.' Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

HYMN 273 – Lo, he comes with clouds descending

PRAYERS

Let us pray.

Silence is kept

In joyful expectation of his coming to our aid we pray to Jesus.
Come to your Church as Lord and Judge.

We pray for ... Help us to live in the light of your coming
and give us a longing for your Kingdom.

Maranatha:

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.)

3 The virgin womb that burden gained
With virgin honour all unstained,
The banners there of virtue glow,
God in his temple dwells below.

4 From God the Father he proceeds,
To God the Father back he speeds,
Runs out his course to death and hell,
Returns on God's high throne to dwell.

5 O equal to thy Father, thou!
Gird on thy fleshly mantle now,
The weakness of our mortal state
With deathless might invigorate.

6 O Jesu, Virgin-born, to thee
Eternal praise and glory be,
Whom with the Father we adore
And Holy Spirit, evermore. Amen.

*Veni, Redemptor gentium, Ambrose of Milan (340–397)
translated by John M Neale (1818–1866)*

O SAPIENTIA

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.

READING - *Ecclesiasticus 24: 1–9*

Wisdom praises herself, and tells of her glory in the midst of her
people. In the assembly of the Most High she opens her mouth, and
in the presence of his hosts she tells of her glory:

'I came forth from the mouth of the Most High, and covered the
earth like a mist. I dwelt in the highest heavens, and my throne was
in a pillar of cloud. Alone I compassed the vault of heaven and
traversed the depths of the abyss.

Over waves of the sea, over all the earth, and over every people and
nation I have held sway. Among all these I sought a resting-place; in
whose territory should I abide?

‘Then the Creator of all things gave me a command, and my Creator chose the place for my tent. He said, “Make your dwelling in Jacob, and in Israel receive your inheritance.” Before the ages, in the beginning, he created me, and for all the ages I shall not cease to be.
Silence is kept

HYMN 167: *How deep the riches of our God*

O ADONAÏ

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.

READING - Exodus 3: 1-6

Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. Then Moses said, ‘I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up.’ When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, ‘Moses, Moses!’ And he said, ‘Here I am.’

Then he said, ‘Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.’

He said further, ‘I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

Silence is kept

HYMN – *My God, how wonderful thou art*

1 My God, how wonderful thou art,
thy majesty how bright,
how beautiful thy mercy-seat,
in depths of burning light!

O REX GENTIUM

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

READING - Revelation 15: 2-4

I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name standing beside the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands. And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb:

‘Great and amazing are your deeds, Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, King of the nations! Lord, who will not fear and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your judgements have been revealed.’

Silence is kept

HYMN 272: *Come, thou long-expected Jesus*

O EMMANUEL

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

READING - *Matthew 1: 18-23*

The birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly.

But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.’

whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.' This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

Silence is kept

CANTICLE *Benedictus*

Refrain:

The rising sun will visit us with healing in its wings PCS 160

Blessed are you Lord the God of Israel,
You have come to your people and set them free.

You have raised up for us a mighty Saviour,
born of the house of your servant David.

Through his holy prophets you promised of old
to save us from our enemies, from the hands of all who hate us,

To show mercy to our forbears,
and to re/member your holy covenant. **(R)**

This was the oath you swore to your father Abraham:
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,

Free to worship you without fear,
holy and righteous before you all the days of our life.

And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High,
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,

To give God's people knowledge of salvation
by the forgiveness of their sins. **(R)**

In the tender compassion of our God
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,

To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death,
and to guide their feet into the way of peace. **(R)** *(Luke 1: 68-79)*

2 How dread are thine eternal years,
O everlasting Lord,
by angel spirits day and night
incessantly adored!

3 How wonderful, how beautiful,
the sight of thee must be,
thine endless wisdom, boundless power,
and awful purity!

4 O how I fear thee, living God,
with deepest, tenderest fears,
and worship thee with trembling hope,
and penitential tears!

5 Yet I may love thee too, O Lord,
almighty as thou art,
for thou hast stooped to ask of me
the love of my poor heart.

6 No earthly father loves like thee,
no mother, e'er so mild,
bears and forbears as thou hast done
with me thy sinful child.

7 Father of Jesus, love's reward,
what rapture will it be,
prostrate before thy throne to lie,
and gaze and gaze on thee!

Frederick William Faber (1814-1863)

O RADIX JESSE

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.

READING - Isaiah 11: 1-4a, 10

A shoot shall come out from the stock of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth. On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.
Silence is kept

CAROL *A tender shoot*

A tender shoot has started up from root of grace,
As ancient seers imparted from Jesse's holy race;
It blooms without blight, blooms in the cold bleak winter,
Turning our darkness into light!

This shoot Isaiah taught us, from Jesse's root should spring;
The virgin Mary brought us the branch of which we sing,
Our God of endless might gave her this child to save us,
Thus turning darkness into light!

Words: William Bartholemew (1793 – 1867);

Music: Simon Lole (b. 1957)

O CLAVIS DAVID

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.

READING - Jeremiah 23: 5-6

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. And this is the name by which he will be called: 'The Lord is our righteousness.'
Silence is kept

HYMN *Like a candle flame* (*Men sing words in bold italics, women sing words in light italics, all sing 'alleluia!'*)

- 1 Like a candle flame, flick'ring small in our darkness.
Uncreated light shines through infant eyes.
Chorus: ***God is with us, alleluia, God is with us, alleluia, come to save us, alleluia, come to save us, alleluia!***
- 2 Stars and angels sing, yet the earth sleeps in shadows;
can this tiny spark set a world on fire?
Chorus:
- 3 Yet His light shall shine from our lives, Spirit blazing,
as we touch the flame of His holy fire.
Chorus:

Graham Kendrick (born 1950)

*Copyright © 1998 Make Way Music, PO Box 320, Tunbridge Wells,
All rights reserved. Used by permission.*

O ORIENS

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

READING - John 1: 19–28

This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who are you? He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, 'I am not the Messiah.' And they asked him, 'What then? Are you Elijah?' He said, 'I am not.' 'Are you the prophet?' He answered, 'No.' Then they said to him, 'Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?' He said, 'I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord', as the prophet Isaiah said. Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, 'Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?' John answered them, 'I baptize with water. Among you stands one