

Great Antiphons

Antiphonae majores

(8th century?)

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

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

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

English metrical version by
J.M. NEALE, HENRY W. BAKER, H. S. COFFIN:

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel;
That mourns in lonely exile here,
Until the Son of God appear.

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

O come, Thou Rod of Jesse, free
Thine own from Satan's tyranny;
From depths of hell Thy people save,
And give them victory o'er the grave.

O come, Thou Day-Spring, come and cheer
Our spirits by Thine Advent here;

Latin text: J.P. Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*, Series Latina,
vol. 78, pp. 732–733, via *Hymnology Archive*.

English text: The Church of England, except 'O Oriens,' for
which I use the alternate rendering 'O Dayspring.'

Original Latin:

O Sapientia!
quae ex ore Altissimi prodisti,
attingens a fine usque ad finem
fortiter, suaviter, disponensque omnia,
veni ad docendum nos viam prudentiae.

O Adonai, dux domus Israel!
qui Moysi in igne flammae rubi apparuisti,
et ei in Sina legem dedisti,
veni ad redimendum nos in brachio extento.

O radix Jesse!
qui stas in signum populorum,
super quem reges continebunt os suum,
quem gentes deprecabuntur,
veni ad liberandum nos, jam noli tardare.

O clavis David, et sceptrum domus Israel!
qui aperis, et nemo claudit,
claudis, et nemo aperit,
veni et educ vinctum de domo carceris,
sedentem in tenebris, et umbra mortis.

O Oriens
splendor lucis aeternae, et Sol iustitiae!
veni et illumina sedentem in tenebris
et umbra mortis.

O Rex gentium, et desideratus earum,
lapisque angularis! qui facis utraque unum,
veni, salva hominem
quem de limo formasti.

O Emmanuel Rex et legifer noster,
expectatio gentium, et Salvator earum!
veni ad salvandum nos, Dominus Deus noster.

Latin metrical version (1694, 1878):

Veni, veni Emmanuel.
Captivum solve Israël,
Qui gemit in exilio
Privatus Dei filio:

Gaude gaude Emmanuel,
Est natus pro te Israel,

Veni ô Jesse virgula
Ex hostis tuos ungulâ
De specu tuos Tartari
Educ et antro Barathri.

Veni, veni ô Oriens
Solare nos adveniens,

Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight.

O come, Thou Key of David, come
And open wide our heavenly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery.

O come, O come, Thou LORD of Might!
Who to Thy tribes, on Sinai's height,
In ancient times didst give the law,
In cloud, and majesty, and awe.

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 the whole world with heaven's peace.

Text of English metrical version: First five stanzas (J.M. Neale, revised by Henry W. Baker) from *Hymns Ancient & Modern* (London: Novello, 1861). Last two stanzas (H. S. Coffin) from *Hymns of the Kingdom of God* (New York: A.S. Barnes & Co., 1916).

Noctis depelle nebulas
Dirasque noctis tenebras.

Veni clavis Davidica.
Regna reclude caelica,
Fac iter tutum Superûm,
Et claude vias inferûm,

Veni , veni Adonai,
Qui populo in Sinai
Legem dedisti vertice
In maiestate gloriae,

Veni, o sapientia,
Quae hic disponis omnia,
Veni, viam prudentiae
Ut doceas et gloriae!

Veni, veni, Rex gentium,
Veni, Redemptor hominum,
Ut salves tuos famulos
Peccati sibi conscios!

Text of Latin metrical version: First five stanzas from *Triplex Horologium Juventutis Studiosae* (Westphalia, 1693), via *Hymnology Archive*. Emendation by AFM: “clavus” to “clavis” following *Psalteriolum Cantionum Catholicarum* (Cologne, 1710), via *Hymnology Archive*. Last two stanzas from Joseph Mohr, *Cantiones Sacrae* (NY: Frederick Pustet, 1878), via *Hymnology Archive*.