



Advent Names for the Messiah

**If you were expecting a savior,
what names would you use to describe such a person?**

The **O Antiphons** are the fruit of the meditation and imagination of medieval Christians throughout Europe. They developed from long hours of prayer and searching of the scriptures for insights into the meaning of the season of Advent.

After much experimentation and sharing of insights, their creative prayer was distilled into seven short meditations using passages from the scriptures concerning names for the Messiah, to help them focus on who this savior is. As the texts became more familiar, they were set to music. Each antiphon was given special solemnity by beginning with the sound of the letter "O." Eventually these meditations on the scriptural names of the Messiah were chanted on the seven nights before the feast of Christmas, and these "O Antiphons" became part of evening prayer for this season of intense longing called **Advent**. They point us toward the meaning of the Advent season, and have become familiar through the song, "O Come, O Come Emmanuel."

Epiphany celebrates these beautiful prayers with lovely artwork that hangs in our Worship Center during the Advent and Christmas seasons. They are one way to evoke the many names or titles of the Messiah, long promised and born for us on Christmas Day.

Here are the titles found in these O Antiphons, translated from the original Latin text:

Wisdom	Leader of Israel	Root of Jesse	Rising Dawn
Key of David	King of the Nations	Emmanuel	



○ **Wisdom of our God Most High** (Sirach 24:2-3),
guiding creation with power and love (Wisdom 8:1):
come to teach us the path of knowledge! (Isaiah 40:14)



○ **Leader of the House of Israel** (Matt 2:6; Micah 5:1; 2 Sam 5:2) (**O Adonai, Lord**) (Exodus 3:2,14), appearing to Moses in the burning bush (Ex. 3:14), giver of the Law to Moses on Sinai (Ex. 20):
come to rescue us with your mighty power! (Jeremiah 32:21)



○ **Root of Jesse's stem** (Isaiah 11:1-3), sign of God's love for all
God's people (Is. 11:10), before whom all nations have recourse (Is. 52:15):
come to save us without delay! (Habakkuk 2:3)



○ **Key of David** (Is. 22:22; Revelation 3:7)),
opening the gates of God's eternal Kingdom (Is. 22:22):
come and free the prisoners of darkness! (Psalm 107:10)



○ **Radiant Dawn (or Morning Star)** (Jer. 23:5; Zech. 3:8,6:12; Ps. 19:6-7), splendor of eternal light (Hab. 3:4; Wis. 7:26),
sun of justice (Malachi 3:20): come and shine on those who dwell in
darkness and in the shadow of death. (Ps. 107:10; Luke 1:78)



○ **King of all nations** (Jer. 10:7; Haggai 2:7),
desire of all and cornerstone of the Church (Is. 28:16; Ps. 2:7-8; Matt. 21:42; Ephesians 2:14-20):
come and save us, whom you formed from the dust! (Genesis 2:7)



○ **Emmanuel** (Is. 7:14, 8:8; Lk 1:31-33),
our King and Giver of the Law of Life (Gen. 49:10, cf. Ezekiel 21:32),
Expected of the Nations (Is. 33:22):
come to save us, our ever-present God! (Is. 7:14,33:22)

Come, Lord Jesus, come!