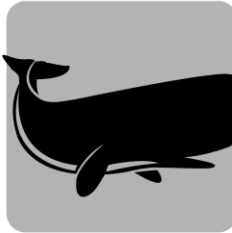
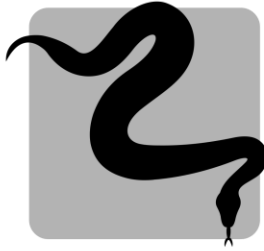
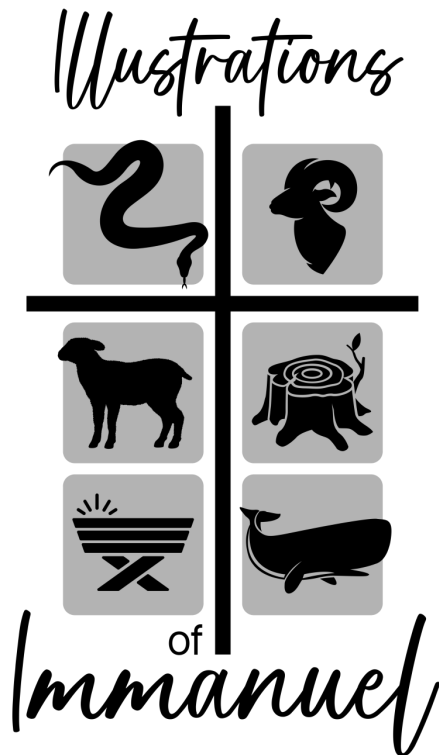


Illustrations



of

Immanuel



HYMN: O COME, O COME, EMMANUEL

327 st 1, 2

INTRODUCTION

Narration: Sebastian

Have you ever heard the phrase “A picture paints a thousand words”? Sometimes things that are difficult to explain verbally can be better understood when depicted visually. Jesus often spoke using parables. These stories share spiritual truths using pictures of familiar things in our world: a mustard seed, a rebellious child, a wedding banquet, a lost coin. In the same way, God gives illustrations throughout Scripture that point to this central message of his Holy Word: He promised and sent us a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. Let’s gaze with wonder at some of those illustrations and renew our hearts and joy through our Savior Jesus.

PART ONE: FROM PROBLEM TO PROMISE

Narration: Emma

In the first book of the Bible—Genesis, chapter 3—we’re told that God created two perfect humans called Adam and Eve. Not long after they were created, they disobeyed God’s command and brought the corruption of sin into the world. When God gave the first promise of the Savior, he spoke to Satan the tempter, who was in the form of a serpent.

Recitation: Jude

“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel” (Genesis 3:15).

Narration: Emma

The promised Savior would be born from mankind. God paints a picture of this offspring of Eve crushing Satan and all his power underfoot. But the serpent is not only a picture of the problem of sin. Later in the Old Testament there was a time when the Israelites were plagued by poisonous snakes and dying from their bites because of their rebellious sin. God commanded Moses to make a snake of bronze and hang it on a pole before the people. God promised that all who looked at the bronze snake would be spared from death. Jesus recalls this event in the book of John chapter 3. He shows how it points to the time when he himself would be hung on a cross to save all people.

Recitation: Titus

Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him. For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him (John 3:14-17).

<i>HYMN: WHAT CHILD IS THIS?</i>

<i>344 st 1, 2</i>

*Children: What child is this who, laid to rest, On Mary’s lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet, while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the King, Whom shepherds guard and angels sing
Haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary.*

**Congregation: Why lies he in such mean estate Where oxen now are feeding?
Good Christians, fear; For sinners here The silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear shall pierce him through; The cross be borne for me, for you.
Hail, hail the Word made flesh, The babe, the Son of Mary!**

PART TWO: FROM SACRIFICE TO SUBSTITUTE

Narration: Cate

After the fall, Adam and Eve's family grew and began to fill the earth. Many years later God appeared to their descendent Abraham and promised him that his descendants would number as many as the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore. God also promised that the Savior would be born from his family. But then a little while later God asked Abraham to do the unthinkable, something that seemed to contradict God's earlier promise to Abraham. God asked Abraham to sacrifice his only son Isaac.

Recitation: Shelby

Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife.

Travis

As the two of them went on together, Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, "Father?"

Harry

"Yes, my son?" Abraham replied.

Travis

"The fire and wood are here," Isaac said, "but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?"

Harry

Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son" (Genesis 22:6-8).

Narration: Cate

Isaac did not die that day. As Abraham was about to sacrifice his son, God stopped him and provided a ram to substitute for Isaac. Each one of us could never make sufficient sacrifice for the sins we commit. Staring eternal death in the face, we see in 1 Peter that God himself provides his Son to pay the necessary sacrifice for our salvation. Jesus' perfect life provides the perfection we are unable to achieve on our own. Jesus' suffering on the cross at Calvary pays the price for our every sin. As God the Father rightfully raises his hand to kill each of us for our sins, he stops himself and provides his own Son as our substitute to die in our place. Listen as the apostle Peter explains:

Recitation: Titus

“[Jesus] committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.” When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats.

Amelia

Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. “He himself bore our sins” in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; “by his wounds you have been healed” (1 Peter 2:22-24).

HYMN: LET ALL TOGETHER PRAISE OUR GOD

355

PART THREE: FROM LAMB TO LOVING SACRIFICE

Narration: Cate

The grandson of Abraham was Jacob, whom God gave the name Israel. His descendants became the nation of Israel, and they were enslaved in Egypt for hundreds of years. God used the nation's exodus from Egypt as yet another illustration that points to our Savior, the Lamb of God. On the night before the Israelites were freed from slavery, God gave the following instructions to Moses:

Recitation: Cathrine

The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt . . . “Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household. . . .

Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the members of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight. Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs.

Shelby

On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn of both people and animals, and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD. The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt” (Exodus 12:1,3,6,7,12,13).

Narration: Cate

The blood of the slaughtered lamb protected the Israelites from the righteous wrath of God. Centuries later John the Baptist, who was Jesus' cousin, pointed to Jesus as the perfect sacrifice whose blood would cleanse the world from their sins. Recalling the final plague in Egypt and the blood of the lamb by which God's people were saved from death, John points to Jesus with these words:

Recitation: Joe

John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29).

PART FOUR: FROM BRANCH TO BETHLEHEM

Narration: Hunter

After delivering his people from slavery in Egypt, God led the nation of Israel to the land of Canaan, which had been promised to Abraham. Here, Israel would become a great nation. They would be ruled one day by King David. The prophet Isaiah tells us that King David's father, Jesse, would be the stump from which the branch of the promised Savior would come forth.

Recitation: Amelia

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD—and he will delight in the fear of the LORD (Isaiah 11:1-3).

HYMN: BEHOLD, A BRANCH IS GROWING

360 st 1, 2, 4

RESPONSIVE NARRATION

Narration: Hunter

The prophet Micah points to the Messiah who would be born in Bethlehem, the town of King David. Please join in reading this prophecy from Micah chapter 5 verses 2 through 4 responsively:

Women:

“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah,

Men:

out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.”

Women:

Therefore Israel will be abandoned until the time when she who is in labor bears a son,

Men:

and the rest of his brothers return to join the Israelites.

Children:

He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.

All:

And they will live securely, for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth.

HYMN: OF THE FATHER’S LOVE BEGOTTEN

358 st 1, 3, 4

PART FIVE: FROM MAJESTY TO MANGER

Narration: Eleanor

Finally, the time came for the Savior to come to earth, for the Messiah to be made man, for the promised and prophesied one to be born and placed in a manger. Isaiah clearly shows us this is no ordinary baby. He came from the majesty of heaven and became like us—human, born of a virgin. He is God with us: Immanuel.

Recitation: Cathrine

Isaiah chapter 9 verse 6 says:

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Narration: Eleanor

In Luke chapter 2, angels proclaimed the arrival of the long-awaited Savior of the world to shepherds watching their sheep just outside of Bethlehem. The message and the messengers were a spectacular sight and sound, but the Messiah would be found seemingly helpless and in a lowly place.

Recitation: Jude

“Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.

Joe

This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

Travis

“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests” (Luke 2:10-14).

Narration: Eleanor

The shepherds were filled with joy and responded immediately.

Recitation: Harry

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.” So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger (Luke 2:15,16).

HYMN: HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING

350

PART SIX: FROM JONAH TO ETERNAL JOY

Narration: Sebastian

The birth of the Savior would be meaningless had he not completed the work he came into the world to accomplish. Jesus himself pointed to his own death and resurrection when he talked with the Pharisees and the teachers of the law about the sign of Jonah.

Recitation: Cathrine

As Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth (Matthew 12:40).

Narration: Sebastian

The final illustration of Immanuel points to his death and victory over the grave. Jesus completed the work of salvation when he rose from the dead. He crushed the power of Satan under foot and proclaimed victory over death—not just for himself but for all who place their trust in him. Paul writes to the believers in Corinth to assure them that through the resurrection of Christ Jesus, they too will live eternally with him in heaven.

Recitation by Congregation (1 Corinthians 15:20-22):

Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

Narration: Sebastian

From beginning to end and everywhere in between, God illustrates pictures for us that point us to his Son, Jesus—the King of kings who came down from heaven and was born in a lowly manger. He became one of us. He lived perfectly in our place. He suffered the consequence of our sin. He completed the work of our salvation in his resurrection. Because of all this, we are guaranteed victory over sin and death and promised eternal joy in heaven, where we will join to sing the praises of the King of kings forever.

SONG: ON CHRISTMAS NIGHT ALL CHRISTIANS SING

Children Sing Verse 1

*On Christmas night all Christians sing to hear the news the angels bring
On Christmas night all Christians sing to hear the news the angels bring
News of great joy, news of great mirth, news of our merciful King's birth*

Congregation Sings Verse 2

**When sin departs before his grace, Then life and health come in its place.
When sin departs before his grace, Then life and health come in its place.
Angels and saints with joy may sing All for to see the newborn King.**

Children Sing Verse 3

*From out of darkness we have light, which made the angels sing this night
From out of darkness we have light, which made the angels sing this night
Glory to God and peace to men now and forevermore. Amen.*

Prayer for Christmas

Blessing

HYMN: NOW SING WE, NOW REJOICE

363