

### 3. Christmas Eve by Candlelight (whole service, with introductory musi

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Date: 24 December 2005

Preacher: William Philip

[ 0 : 00 ] Welcome everybody to this Christmas Eve by candlelight service.

It's good to see you here. Can anybody hear me? No. Margaret, nobody can hear me. Can you turn me up please? Can anybody hear me now? Only just. Can we have it turned on please?

Can we have it turned on please? Our story this evening begins not on earth but in heaven.

Not with mankind but with God because that's where the story of the Bible begins. And that's where we must begin if we're to make any sense at all of the Christmas story.

Because the Christmas story is first of all God's story. But it's not the story of a distant God, an unseen God, an unknown or an unknowable God.

[ 0 : 58 ] No, not that kind of God at all. For this God came down to earth from heaven who was God and Lord of all. And that's why Christmas is so wonderful.

And that's why Christmas is so wonderful.

And that's why Christmas is so wonderful.

And that's why Christmas is so wonderful.

Christmas is so wonderful. Christmas is so wonderful.

[ 3 : 20 ] Christmas is so wonderful. Christmas is so wonderful. And that's why Christmas is so wonderful. Christmas is so wonderful. Christmas is so wonderful. Christmas is so wonderful.

Christmas is so wonderful. Christmas is so wonderful. Christmas is so wonderful. He would live, though we had helped us, He'd have smiled like a needy, And he healed us for our family, And he cared us for our family, And our eyes and eyes of the hills, Through his own, we need him, For the land of the earth and the earth, In our Lord, in heaven alone, And he lived in human arms, Through the place where he is born. For the land of the earth and the earth, In our Lord, in heaven alone, When he often can be died, He will be in our eternal, Yet that God can come high, Where my stars will heal them now, For in mine shall we arise.

Then God said, Let us make man in our image, After our likeness, And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, And over the birds of the heavens, And over the livestock, And over all the earth, And over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.

So God created man in his own image. In the image of God, He created him. Male and female, He created them.

[ 5 : 59 ] And God blessed them. And God said to them, Be fruitful and multiply, And fill the earth and subdue it, And have dominion over the fish of the sea, And over the birds of the heavens, And over every living thing that moves on the earth.

And God saw everything that he had made, And behold, It was very good. The Lord God took the man, And put him in the garden of Eden, To work it and keep it.

And the Lord God commanded the man, Saying, You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, You shall not eat.

For in the day that you eat of it, You shall surely die. The Christmas story began long, long ago, At the very beginning of time.

And it's a wonderful picture, isn't it? That we listen to. Of the world as it's meant to be. Of the world as God created it to be. Of the world as we would love it to be. Peace and harmony, Of male and female, Of humankind and nature, Of humankind and God.

[ 7 : 12 ] No wonder the next carol that we're going to sing, Calls us to sing praises to our Creator God. But notice when we come to the last line, That it tells another story.

We praise our heavenly Lord, Who is made heaven and earth of naught, But we praise Him,  
Because with His own blood, Mankind has bought.

And the reading afterwards, Will begin to explain that also. The morning in the first place. The  
mountain in earth The city to pray with them oldu in world and death.

The End The End The End

The End The End The End The End The End The End The End The End The End The End Noel,  
Noel, Noel, Noel, For he's with me, for he is the end.

[10:26] And glory, God, you have a friend, For he's with me, for he is the end.

And may he be, for love and faith, By joy and faith, for he is the end.

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, For he's with me, for he is the end.

And may he be, for he is the end. And may he be, for he is the end.

And nor will he be, For he is the end. In hope and faith, Thank you.

[12:12] Thank you.

Thank you. Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had  
made.

He said to the woman Did God actually say You shall not eat of any tree in the garden? And the  
woman said to the serpent We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden But God said You shall  
not eat of the fruit of the tree That is in the midst of the garden Neither shall you touch it lest you die  
But the serpent said to the woman You will not surely die For God knows that when you eat of it  
Your eyes will be opened And you will be like God Knowing good and evil So when the woman saw  
that the tree was good for food And that it was a delight to the eyes And that the tree was to be  
desired to make one wise She took of its fruit and ate And she also gave some to her husband Who  
was with her And he ate The Lord God said to the serpent Because you have done this Cursed are  
you above all livestock And above all beasts of the field On your belly you shall go

And dust you shall eat All the days of your life I will put enmity between you and the woman And  
between your offspring And her offspring He shall bruise your head And you shall bruise his heel To  
the woman he said I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing In pain you shall bring forth  
children Your desire shall be for your husband And he shall rule over you And to Adam he said  
Because you have listened to the voice of your wife And have eaten of the tree of which I  
commanded you You shall not eat of it Cursed is the ground because of you In pain you shall eat of  
it All the days of your life Thorns and thistles It shall bring forth for you And you shall eat the plants  
of the field By the sweat of your face You shall eat bread Till you return to the ground For out of it  
you were taken For you are dust And to dust you shall return A curse upon human relationships  
A curse upon nature A curse upon our very lives To dust you shall return And that is more like the  
world we know Isn't it?

[15:19] And it's all because Because our rebellion against God Has put us in bondage To a dark  
power To the devil himself But God's promise right from the beginning Was that evil would not have  
the last word That God himself would intervene in history Through the offspring of the woman And  
he would at last destroy The work of the devil He would thus redeem his people And down through  
history That promise shone Despite long ages of darkness Until at last At the first Christmas That  
offspring came He came to save us all From Satan's power When we were gone astray And to  
vanquish the power of evil forever The following

I do need to grace And that's not alone We pray Remember Christ our Savior Who's born on  
Christmas Day Till they all know from Satan While when we were gone and pray For writings of  
comfort and joy Motherless child For writings of comfort and joy From God our heavenly Father And  
heavenly angels came And unto death to shepherds For writings of his name Father in every hand  
For the Son of God I gave For writings of comfort and joy For writings of comfort and joy  
Dear Lord and heavenly angels Let nothing you have cried This day is born and Savior Of virtue,  
power and light So free to be to have With all the friends of David's wife For writings of comfort and  
joy For writings of comfort and joy For writings of comfort and joy For writings of comfort and joy  
And to shed bits of orbit and light To bind the and want Torend the fire Like twisted up with  
congratulate of comfort and b And unto death toad Person naar escol In Jorge Or  
gene For alteäter of comfort and joy, comfort and joy,

O dying of comfort and joy. God's went to heaven, he had given me clear and in his own way.

He's not given and made to re-open deep on faith. His mother giving me to the Lord in praise, O  
dying of comfort and joy, comfort and joy, O dying of comfort and joy.

[ 19 : 14 ] And to the Lord we praise him, all he did in his way, and with two other brothers, he's not and other praise, then holy guide of grace, and some other joy we praise, O dying of comfort and joy, comfort and joy, O dying of comfort and joy.

there shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit, and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist and faithfulness the belt of his loins. In that day the root of Jesse who shall stand as a signal for the peoples, of him shall the nations inquire and his resting place shall be glorious.

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus, it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and singing.

Strengthen the weak hands and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who have an anxious heart, be strong, fear not. Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God.

[ 20 : 56 ] He will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap like a deer and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.

For waters break forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert. The burning sand shall become a pool and the thirsty ground springs of water. In the haunt of jackals where they lie down, the grass shall become reeds and rushes and a highway shall be there and it shall be called the way of holiness.

And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with singing everlasting joy shall be upon their heads. They shall obtain gladness and joy and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. and at last the Christ whom the prophets faithfully foretold is born the seed of the woman the shoot of Jesse the son of David.

At last he comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found and so Christmas is indeed a message of joy to the world. the song the harp and sing of God.

[ 22 : 25 ] Amen. Joy to the world the morning count donde ■■■ras thecendant eachnej The Lord is a stronghold, the Lord is a stronghold, He comes to make His standing soul,

For us the church is found, for us the church is found, For us the church is found.

The Lord is a stronghold, the Lord is a stronghold, and the Lord is a stronghold, The Lord is a stronghold, the Lord is a stronghold, and the Lord is a stronghold, Do sit.

Listen now to what the New Testament writer of the letter to the Hebrews says about the world as we still see it now, And about the world to come, the world as it shall be, because of what Jesus came to accomplish for the whole of creation.

He says this, Now it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking. It has been testified somewhere, What is man that you are mindful of him, or the son of man that you care for him?

[ 25 : 06 ] You made him for a little while lower than the angels. You have crowned him with glory and honour, putting everything in subjection under his feet.

Now, in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. But at present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him.

But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, Crowned with glory and honour because of the suffering of death, So that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, In bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.

For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one origin. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers, saying, I will tell of your name to my brothers.

[ 26 : 16 ] In the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, behold, I and the children God has given me.

Since, therefore, the children share in flesh and blood, He himself likewise shared in their humanity, That through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, That is the devil.

And deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. Many people get very sentimental at Christmas time, But there is no sentimentality at all, actually, about the

Christmas message.

It is nothing less than the last battle. It is the invasion of darkness by light. And it doesn't happen without violence and struggle to the very death.

For only when sin departs before his grace, Can life and peace come in its place. So? When doesn't happen with a celerity, If that is the finality of sin, You may get to mourn the void track, And your prayer of the Christ when they're earned, And your prayer of the grace of Christ.

[ 27 : 41 ] And the healing of the Holy Spirit. The night of the angels ring, you hear the angels ring. The day of the angels ring, you hear the angels ring.

You come in your hands on the earth, you are the heavenly angels.

The night of the angels ring, you are the heavenly angels ring.

You are the heavenly angels ring. The day of the angels ring, you are the heavenly angels ring.

The day of the angels ring, you are the heavenly angels ring. The day of the angels ring, you are the heavenly angels ring.

[ 29 : 05 ] The day of the angels ring, you are the heavenly angels ring. The day of the angels ring, you are the heavenly angels ring. The day of the angels ring, you are the heavenly angels ring. The day of the angels ring, you are the heavenly angels ring.

The day of the angels ring, you are the heavenly angels ring. The day of the angels ring, you are the heavenly angels ring. The day of the angels ring, you are the heavenly angels ring. The day of the angels ring, you are the heavenly angels ring. The day of the angels ring, you are the heavenly angels ring.

The day of the angels ring, you are the heavenly angels ring. The day of the angels ring, you are the heavenly angels ring.

And if you'd allow me, I'd like to spend a few minutes just explaining that last reading that we had read to us there. We've been asking the question over our Christmas services here in St. George's Tron.

Why did Jesus come? Why did he come in the flesh? Well, on Sunday morning last we saw that, according to Matthew's Gospel, he came to save his people from their sins.

[ 30 : 18 ] That is, he came to bring forgiveness. To be a saviour from sin's penalty. On Sunday evening we saw that also he came to bring liberation.

That is, he came to be a saviour from sin's power and dominion. To set us free, as Paul says in Romans 8 verse 2, from the law of sin and death.

And tonight I want to look at yet another dimension of what it was that Jesus came in the flesh to do. What his incarnation, his enfleshment was all about.

Why God himself took the flesh of humankind and came into our world. And that last passage, the one that I read to you, makes it exceptionally clear.

It tells us that Jesus came into our world not just to be a saviour from sin's penalty, not just to save us from sin's power, but also to save us from sin's dark personality.

[ 31 : 23 ] He came to bring us victory. Victory over our great enemy, the devil himself. And again, the New Testament is very clear.

It is Jesus' death that explains his birth. Just let me read again the last couple of verses I read to you. He himself, that is Jesus, shared our humanity so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver all those who through the fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

Victory. That's why the New Testament tells us Jesus came in the flesh. He came to win victory. Not for himself, but for those who live under the shadow of death.

That is for all human beings. But to understand that, we have to go right back to the very beginning of the passage in Hebrews 2 that we read, because that makes sense of the story.

Let me just draw your attention to that now briefly under four headings. The first is this. The world God created for man. Verses 7 and 8 of our reading there speak of the world as God created it.

[ 32 : 42 ] Notice, it is created for man. Do you see verse 7 there? Humankind, God says, is crowned with glory and honor by God. God has put everything in creation, as verse 8 says, in subjection to him.

There is nothing outside mankind's control. Now, the writer here in the New Testament is quoting from one of the Old Testament Psalms, Psalm 8, which in turn reflects the theology of the very first couple of chapters of the Bible, Genesis 1 and 2, where we learn that man is made in God's image

and as God's image, as God's vice regent, to rule the world for God, to reflect God's cosmic rule in our world.

That's the world that God made for man. And of course, we do see this in the world, don't we? We do see the mastery of mankind. We do see the glory and honor of mankind that does reflect a wonderful creator.

Just think of the whole history of human achievement, from the wonders of ancient civilizations right through to the present day.

Think of the beauty of buildings in some of the ancient cities of the world. Think of the glories of classical literature, of poetry, of prose, of plays, of song.

[ 34 : 09 ] Just think of the creative genius of the musical composers throughout history, the sheer magnificence of their music. The BBC radio this week, for the last 10 days, solidly without a break, has been continuously playing the music of Bach.

Isn't it extraordinary? That a man could have so much music in his soul, that it would take 10, 24 hour periods, just to play his contribution to the world of classical music.

Just think of the extraordinary conquering and mastery of nature by mankind, so that we can live from North Pole to South Pole, from the heat of the desert to the barren wastelands of the tundra, because we've invented clothing, and heating, and homes, and electricity, and things like that. We can even live in Glasgow, thanks to the amazing invention of the umbrella, without which life here would be utterly impossible. We can travel, can't we, to the opposite side of the earth, in a matter of hours.

We can even send men and women into space, and spacecraft to Mars. Think of the extraordinary complexities, that have developed in world trade, so that we can sit down to our Christmas dinner, and eat fruit cocktail, made up of mangoes and passion fruits, coming from the other side of the world, and here we are in December in Scotland.

[ 35 : 37 ] We can wear shoes, that are made in Portugal, from leather, that comes all the way from Brazil. We can wear ties, woven in Italy, from silk, that's travelled all the way from China.

And we could go on, and on, and on, and on, speaking about the mastery of mankind. Yes, indeed, the human mastery of our world, is astounding. And the Bible says, that is the world, God made for man.

But of course, that's not the whole story, is it? And our reading in verse 8, goes on to make clear, that something else, is true also.

It recognises also, the world that man, has created for himself. Verse 8, at present, we do not see, everything, subjected to him. And that's true, isn't it?

For all the mastery of man, in the cosmos, there is another side, isn't there? For all the wonder, of human cultural achievement, there's also a dark side, there's a seedy side, there's a shameful side, isn't there?

[ 36 : 45 ] So the biggest culture business, in this globe today, is the pornography industry, with all the abuse, and exploitation, and all the damage, that it wreaks.

For all the beauty, of architecture, and landscaping, it's true, isn't it? That much of the developed world, is blighted, by the sheer ugliness, the soullessness, of sprawling, concrete jungles, that only compounds, the sense of despair, of the people, that have to live in them.

For all the mastery, of nature, by man's ingenuity, there is vast, subjugation, and destruction, of nature, by man's greed, and avarice, and thoughtlessness.

So that climate change, and deforestation, and pollution, and overcrowding, and destruction, these are the watchwords, today, aren't they? We hear them all the time. For all the wonders, of travel, and trade, the centuries, have left us, a long, long legacy, of exploitation, and theft, and abuse, of peoples, and nations, and continents, as the strong, and the powerful, have swept away, the weak, and the powerless.

And for all the beauty, and the love, that is given expression, in the great poetry, and the love songs, of the world, it's so often, isn't it? hatred, and brutality, and aggression, and vengeance, so often, these things, that has marked, the history books, of human civilization, and it's still, these things, isn't it, that top the headlines, on our newspapers, every single day, the bulletins, on our radio, and the television, and the internet.

[ 38 : 36 ] Isn't that true? Not to mention, our constant battle, our losing battle, against disease, and aging, and death itself. Yes, we must admit, that for all man's, wonderful ability, for all his mastery, and achievement, we do not yet, see everything, in subjection, to him.

Not at least, in the way we'd like to, and not in the way, that the Bible, is talking about. And the reason, is simple. This is the world, man has made, for himself.

And this is the result, of mankind's rebellion. The rebellion, that's spoken of, in Genesis chapter 3, as we read, where man said, no, we can make a better world, than God's made.

We'll do it ourselves, our way. Could have been scripted, by Frank Sinatra. And God said, okay, have it your way. Make the world, that you want, but be sure, that it will bring, nothing but disaster. A curse, on all your relationships. Men and women, will be at odds, with one another. Man and his environment, will be at odds. Man and life itself, will be at odds.

[ 39 : 58 ] Death, will rule, in this world, that you've made. But that is the world, as we knew it, isn't it? Echoes, of what might have been, in man's triumphs, and glories, yes.

And yet, harsh realities. A dark side, that we can't escape. You see, there's no sentimentality, in the Bible. The Bible tells the truth, not a fairy story.

It tells it, as it is. The good, yes, but also the bad, and the ugly. We see enough, to see what the world, should be, and also what it is not, and cannot be, just because, we are, what we are.

But this is what, the Christian message, is all about. Because, in the good news, about Jesus, we see, thirdly, the world, that God has recreated, for a new humanity, in Christ.

Because, because of what Jesus did, we do see him, crowned with glory, and honor. We see, in the risen Jesus, one triumphant, human being, man as he was made to be, man as he was destined to be.

[ 41 : 09 ] We see, in Jesus, exactly that. Crowned with glory, and honor, because he did not rebel. He did not, do it his own way. But he was obedient, to his father, in all things.

Even, through a death, that he did not deserve. So that, as verse 9 says there, by the grace of God, he might taste death, for everyone.

You see, here at last, is man, as God made him, a perfect reflection, of the glory, and honor, of God. Now friends, whatever you think, whoever you are, whatever your religious background, or whether you have, any such background at all, the person, of Jesus, of Nazareth, as he is presented to us, in history, requires, explanation.

You simply, cannot ignore him, and remain, willfully ignorant, of a man, who has changed, the course of history, who has changed, the fate of nations, and the empires.

Only the most arrogant person, only the most, ignorant person, could just sweep him aside, as an irrelevance. Now somehow, you must, have an explanation for him, for his life, for his teaching, for his action, for the legacy, that he's left, in the world.

[ 42 : 39 ] You must, take him seriously, on his own terms. Well, this text, that we're looking at, is the New Testament's, explanation, of who he is, and what he's done.

And that explanation, is that he has, tasted death, for all, so as to be, the founder, of salvation, to bring many sons, to glory. That is, to recreate, a new humanity, for them, to fill a new world, a new creation, with many brothers, and sisters, to share, the glory, and honor, that he has, to become, true human beings.

It's that big, you see, the Christian message, is not, not, just about, souls being saved, and going off, to float off, into some heavenly, ether somewhere.

No. The Christian message, is not about, pie in the sky, when you die. The Christian message, is about, the recreation, of the cosmos. It's about, the recreation, of humankind.

The question is, how? How could something, so massive, come about? A retaking, of the whole universe, a remaking, of humanity itself? Well, that brings us, to the last point, really the main point, in verses 14 and 15.

[ 44 : 04 ] The answer is, only through, the cosmic victory, of one, who destroys him, who holds the power of death, that is, the devil. Jesus, came in the flesh, to destroy, our great, enemy.

The enemy, who holds this world, in bondage, because of our first rebellion. And so, Jesus, comes to deliver us, from the bondage, of slavery, to sin and death.

You see, that liberation, that I spoke about, last week, comes through, the victory, of the one, who exercises, power over him, who has power, over us.

The devil, is not God's enemy. He has no power, over God. He is a creature. He has no hold, over God. God has no need, of victory, over the devil. He is our enemy.

He holds us, in life, long, slavery, in the fear of death. But Jesus, came, as the hymn says, to smite, in man, for man, the foe.

[ 45 : 12 ] And he gives us, the victory. Thanks be to God. Can you hear that chorus, in Handel's Messiah? Friends, do you grasp, what that means? To receive, as a gift, something that you, otherwise, could never have.

Victory, over the chilling, fear of death. Our world, the world that you, and I inhabit, lives, in bondage, because of the fear, of death.

Death, which frustrates, our greatest desires, and achievements. Death, which robs us, of our greatest loves, and loved ones. Death, whose shadow, stalks us, with every passing year, as we see, and as we feel, our bodies aging.

But Christians, are those, who have found, in Jesus Christ, the source, of eternal salvation, because they've obeyed, and followed him. Christians, are those, for whom Christ, has tasted death, and so delivered them, from the hold of death.

Christians, have received, in Christ, the victory, over the great enemy, who had the power of death, and has it, no longer. That's why, Christian people, do not fear death.

[ 46 : 32 ] That's why, Christian believers, are truly free. Free, to live life now, knowing that, though, yes, as yet, we don't see the world, as it should be.

We don't see ourselves, as we should be, crowned with glory, and honor, lords of life eternal, but we do see it, in Jesus Christ. And we know, that what we see, in him, in his resurrection, will be, at his coming, for all, who have believed, and trusted in him.

As our passage says, he's not ashamed, to call them brothers, and sisters, and to share, his victory with them, to share, his inheritance, with all of us.

That's why, if you've been, as some as you may have been, to a Christian funeral, you'll know, a great difference. And I can tell you, that there is a great gulf, when I bury somebody, who is a Christian believer, surrounded by other believers, when I have to bury those, who have no faith, death.

Of course, Christians also grieve, because death is a blot, it's a horror, on God's creation. That's why Jesus himself, wept at the tomb of Lazarus, his friend. He wept in anger, at this blot, on the creation, as God meant it to be.

[ 47 : 57 ] But we don't grieve, as the Apostle Paul says, like those who have no hope. No. Because we have the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ, who has destroyed him, who has the power of death.

Who has freed us forever, from the bondage, and fear of death, because his resurrection, has paved the way for ours. His resurrection is the promise, the down payment, of the recreation of the world, for man, forever.

And that's the message of Christmas. That's why we sing in the carols, From depths of hell, thy people save, and give them victory, or the grave.

That's why we sing, Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death dark shadows, put to flight. Mild he lays his glory by, born that man no more may die.

No more then, as a child of earth, must I my lifetime spend. His history, his destiny, are mine to apprehend. Oh, what a Savior, what a Lord, oh master, brother, friend, what a miracle, has joined me, to this life, that never ends.

[ 49 : 16 ] That's the message, of the Christmas carols. That's what Christmas means. The resurrection, and recreation, of the world, through a Savior, who gives his people victory, over the power of sin, and death, and over the dark personality, who has been our enemy, from the start.

Friends, you won't find a better illustration, of this aspect, of the Christmas story, anywhere, than in C.S. Lewis's wonderful book, The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe.

And I do hope, that you'll go and see that film, over the Christmas holiday period. I certainly can't wait, to see it myself. But it's all about this, because it's about, the story, the great story, the story of a world, destroyed, and a world now recreated, through the victory, of God the Savior.

You know the story. Narnia, is a land in bondage, and fear, in slavery, to the White Witch. It's a place, where it's always, freezing dark winter, and yet it's never Christmas.

All the bad, and none of the joy. And then at last, Aslan, the Lion, appears, the son of the Emperor, over the sea. And at first, it seems, that all is lost.

[ 50 : 36 ] He's defeated. He must die, on the stone table, to answer the deep magic, from the dawn of time, because, because the man-child, Edmund, is enslaved, in bondage, to the White Witch.

And he does die. It all seems lost. Until, in the morning after, the stone table is broken, and Aslan, and Aslan is alive again.

And he explains, the deeper magic, from before, the dawn of time, that speaks, of the prophecy, being fulfilled. And then, a wonderful thing happens.

All, those who follow Aslan, follow in his train. And there's a mighty battle, in which they overcome, the powers, and the forces of darkness.

Aslan, leading the way, storming, the citadel, of the White Witch, breathing the breath of life, onto all those subjects, she, by her magic, had turned to stone, and bringing them back to life.

[ 51 : 43 ] And first, there's Christmas, and then there's the beginnings, of the thaw of spring. And then, there's summertime, and the whole world, is changed forever.

Friends, that, is the message, of the Christmas gospel. If Christmas is not about that, it's about nothing. It's a fraud, it's a sham, it's a shameful delusion.

And we should stop celebrating it. But if it is about that, about God taking human flesh, so that through death, he might destroy the one, who has the power of death, and so that he might give, give us the victory, if it is about that, then it is the message, that this world needs more, than any other.

It's the message, of death's dark shadows, put to flight, forever. It's a message of life, and immortality, brought to life, in Jesus Christ.

Christmas spells, Christmas spells the end, of the winter of death, and fear, it spells the birth of spring, in your life now, and the promise, of a summer to come, of life, and of hope, and of peace, that is eternal, everlasting.

[ 53 : 07 ] Jesus came, Jesus came, to bring us victory, to be a savior, from sin's guilt, yes, from sin's power, yes, and from sin's, dark personality, and his hold, over us, in the fear of death.

I do hope, that you'll be rejoicing, in that message, this Christmas, because that's, what it's all about. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank, and we praise you, that you sent your son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to come down, from the glories, of heaven, into the deep, darkness, of a world of sin, to bring, us the victory, that we might, shed the fear, and the gloom of death, and rejoice, in the knowledge, of a sure, and certain life, that is eternal, because, already, we see, in the risen Jesus Christ, one who is, crowned with glory, and honor, who is not ashamed, to call us, brothers and sisters, and who came, to be, the captain, the founder, of our salvation.

may we grasp, this message, this Christmas, we pray, for we ask it, in Jesus Christ's name, Amen. Amen. Well, in a moment, we'll sing, our final hymn, of this service, but do stay behind, afterwards, for mince pies, and coffee and tea, it would be lovely, to have a chance, to chat to you, there are a number, of cards, in your seats there, with about a course, called Christianity Explored, and if you'd like, to learn more, about Jesus Christ, and his claims, either to write him off, in your own mind, or, to see whether, what he says, is true, and we'd love, to invite you to that, it starts mid January, on Thursday evenings, or on Thursday lunch times, and we'd be very glad, to welcome you to that, it's very non-threatening, nobody will make you sing, or pray, or do anything, you don't like to do, but we will ask you, just to examine, the scriptures, and see what Jesus, says about himself, there's also some books, at the door this evening, and called, what's the point of Christmas, if you'd like to take, one of those, and read them, they're free, and we'd love you, to have one, but before we, finish, let's, shortly stand, and sing the last carol, when we hear the music begin, which in , the sound of your land, the world would look glad, with the sound of the life, so our blessed life, should we look for their love, and to have one to say, to have one to say, to have one to say, and to have a sound of our work, and to be decided, or do have one or two■■■,

Amen. CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS

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CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS Thank you.

[ 58 : 58 ] Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Surround you now and forever.

Amen.