

30 Minute Carols (carols, readings and explanation)

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[0 : 01] Well now listen as we read for the third time the passage in Matthew's Gospel that we've been looking at these last few weeks. I'll read the whole passage but you've got I think on the sheets just the last couple of verses there.

But listen to what Matthew says. Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

And her husband Joseph being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things behold an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream saying Joseph son of David.

Do not fear to take Mary as your wife for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son and you shall call his name Jesus for he will save his people from their sins.

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet. Behold the virgin shall conceive and bear a son and they shall call his name Emmanuel. Emmanuel which means God with us.

[1 : 23] When Joseph awoke from sleep he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him. He took his wife but he knew her not until she had given birth to a son and he called his name Jesus.

Well if you have got Bibles I'm not sure whether you have got Bibles today have you? You have? Oh good. Well it's page 807. Sorry. I should have said that. Do keep it open.

Because I want to say just a few things about that in a moment. But perhaps we'll sing again first. This lovely carol. Hark the herald angels sing. Glory to the newborn king.

Peace on earth and blessed he had.

God and Savior. God and Savior. God and Savior. God and Savior. Joyful glory. Ancient shine. Join the triumph of the sky.

[2 : 37] With the heavenly host to praise. Christ is born in Bethlehem. Christ this try. Christ the herald angels sing.

O angels and kings are clean. Christ will the Lord.

Christ the everlasting Lord. In His blood, behold Him, come Watched with our emergency Hail Him, flesh, the joy of His King Hail Him, Son, His deity Jesus, and His land to dwell Jesus, our Emmanuel Far the herald angels sing Glory to the new heart of me Hail the heaven of kings of kings Hail the Son of righteousness Righteous life in all He brings

With with healing in His feet That He laid His glory high On that mantle morning night God, He will be the rich and sons of earth God, He will give His bread and bread On that mantle of angels sing Glory to the new heart of me Well now, if you've got the Bibles, do open them at page 807, that passage we read.

If not, then at least have the couple of verses there on the sheet in front of you. We're asking the question these last few weeks about Christmas. What kind of birth is this?

[5 : 06] And in amongst the carols today, we're looking at this passage in Matthew's gospel for the third time, where Matthew tells us very clearly how the birth of Jesus took place.

It took place, says Matthew, in verse 18, in this way. No other way. This way. And we've already seen the first thing he tells us is that it's a supernatural birth.

Here is a child who is fully human. He's born of a normal human mother, the Virgin Mary. But also, he is fully divine.

Joseph is not his father. Joseph, we're told, is Mary's husband. But she gave birth to Jesus before she had ever had any sexual relations with Joseph.

He is born by the Holy Spirit. He is revealing God to humankind once and for all and forever. It's a supernatural birth. Secondly, Matthew's told us that it's not just a revealing birth, it's a saving birth.

[6 : 16] He came, verse 21, to save his people from their sins. That's God's interpretation of Jesus' birth. It comes from the mouth of his angel.

I didn't make that up. Matthew didn't make it up. He's reporting what God has said. But there's one more thing that Matthew makes clear for us in these verses.

And we're going to look at that now. He says, also, as well as being a supernatural birth, as well as being a saving birth, it is, in fact, a scriptural birth.

This is a birth with a purpose. But it's a birth according to plan. It wasn't sudden and unexpected. It had been foretold, in fact, from ancient times.

It had been foretold by God in Scripture through his prophets, through the writers and the poets from the very, very beginning of time. All this, verse 22 says, that's not just the details, but everything, the whole events of his coming, his origin, his birth, his naming, the purpose of why he came.

[7 : 20] All this took place to fulfill the Scriptures, to fulfill the Old Testament. Because the story of God is one story right from the very beginning.

And this, says Matthew, is what it's all about. This is the climax. This is where it's all been going, right from the very beginning. This child, and what he's going to do, is the great climax of all the ages of history.

Of all the words of the prophets. Of all the promises of God. It is a scriptural birth. I want you to see how, in two very distinct ways, Matthew's telling us it's a scriptural birth.

First of all, verse 23 there, tells us that it fulfills many specific prophecies of Scripture. Verse 23 is a quote here, from a very famous prophecy, Isaiah chapter 7, verse 14.

The virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel. Now these words were spoken 700 years before Jesus Christ was born.

[8 : 39] The context was that Judah, God's people, his land, under King Ahaz, were facing a terrible threat of invasion from the land of Syria in the north, and an alliance with the land of Ephraim.

If you like, it was the superpower of the day. And they had given their express purpose. We're going to come, we're going to terrorize your land, we're going to remove God's king, the son of David, from his throne, destroy the line of those kings, and put one of our own kings on the throne over God's people.

That was the threat that they were under. And God spoke through his prophet and said to Ahaz, the king of Judah, this will never come to pass, because my promise, and my promised line of kings leading to my Messiah will never, ever be utterly destroyed.

Trust me. Trust my promises. Ask me for a sign. Think of a sign in heaven above or earth beneath. Think of the most extraordinary molecular sign that you can think of.

And I'll give it to you as a token that my promise will never be broken. Well, Ahaz came over with a bit of a fit of false piety. And he said, oh, I'm not going to ask the Lord for a sign.

[10 : 08] That would be a terrible thing. Well, stupid Ahaz, God had said to him, ask me for a sign. And so God said, well, I'm going to give you a sign anyway. And this is going to be it.

A virgin will conceive and bear a son. Who ever heard of anything like that in heaven above or earth beneath? And what's more, this child will be called Emmanuel, God with us.

This child will be God himself in the flesh on earth. That's some miraculous sign, isn't it? You see what God's saying to his people, to his king.

I will never let my promise of salvation fall. Never, ever. No enemy can destroy it. Nobody can ever thwart my plan.

Even if, even if every king of Israel is killed and dethroned. Even if I have to bring a king from the womb of a virgin. That's what I will do. Because my promise of salvation is absolutely secure.

[11 : 20] Of course, Isaiah goes on to speak more words about this child in the next chapter or two of Isaiah. You know these words well. This child will be a wonderful counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

He will sit on the throne of David forever. He will establish his kingdom forevermore. Can you hear it being sung in the Handel's Messiah?

You can hear those words, can't you? Be in no doubt, says God, the God who makes promises keeps promises. And what Matthew is saying in writing these words at the beginning of his gospel is all of these promises are being fulfilled now in this birth.

In this birth of a virgin in the line of David, the mighty God, Emmanuel, with us in the flesh. God's promise shall not fall.

Every last detail of the prophecies about the coming of his Messiah, every last detail is fulfilled in the birth of Jesus Christ.

[12 : 34] It is a scriptural birth. A birth according to plan. That's the first thing. Let's think about that as we sing this next carol that talks about the promised Emmanuel.

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appears. the course of the earth of And what is only ever here Until the Son of God appear Rejoice, rejoice Emmanuel shall come to thee O Israel

O come, O come, the Lord of Christ Who to light my cross by and by In ancient times it's in the home In love and majesty and law Rejoice, rejoice Emmanuel shall come to thee O Israel O come, the Lord of Christ Be free by your cross-wraith and slavery

Come, get yourself, I need to stay And give the gifts we all agree Rejoice, rejoice Emmanuel shall come to thee O Israel O come, the Lord of Christ Prince O Jerusalem O bring the kiss on me And the hope in thee His treasure will be found all night And yet thy shadow's proof to fly Rejoice, rejoice

Emmanuel shall come to thee O Israel O come, thou ye of it is now That open wide a heavenly home May save the way that leads on high And close the path to misery Rejoice, rejoice Emmanuel shall come to thee O Israel I said there was two ways that Jesus' birth fulfills Scripture

[16 : 54] Fulfills the specific words of prophecies Many, many prophecies of the Old Testament But it's not only the fulfillment of specific prophecies Jesus' birth fulfills actually the whole story of the Bible The Bible isn't like Nostradamus Not just a book of random collections of dislocated sayings That are looking for fulfillment somewhere No, no, it's not like that at all It's one great story from beginning to end One great movement That's looking for fulfillment In Jesus Christ You see that in verse 23 In the explanation of Jesus' name He will be called Emmanuel Which means God with us And that is the subject of the whole Bible That's the plot of the whole of the Bible story

Let me just briefly tell you how Let's go right back to the very beginning To the story of creation What is the purpose of creation? Well, according to Genesis It's so that God can dwell with mankind In a wonderful world In a perfect world Enjoying perfect fellowship Enjoying a perfect relationship with His people But of course Genesis quickly goes on to tell us That all of that is lost by man's rebellion And the result is That mankind is cast out of God's presence So God is no longer with His people It's the great divorce That the Bible speaks about It causes rupture And pain on a cosmic scale And God hates that kind of breakup That divorce And He will not leave it to be like that And really the whole of the rest of the story of the Bible

Is how God brings back That situation that's been lost It's the story of redemption Of recreation Of restoration Of all that's been lost And it's all unfolding according to plan God will bring things back to right He promises right at the very beginning In Genesis chapter 3 That through the seed of the woman He would destroy man's enemy The devil And He says repeatedly throughout the Old Testament I will be your God And you will be my people In the book of Exodus He promises to be with His people After He's delivered them out of Egypt And He says I'm going to get you to build a tabernacle A tent So that I can live Right in the midst of all of your tents And Moses builds the tabernacle And the glory of God comes down And rests there God's presence right in the midst of His people

It's wonderful But Not even Moses can actually go into the tent Because of the glory and the holiness of God And the sin Even of the great leader Moses So there has to be constant sacrifices Again and again and again Day after day Week after week Just so that The people can remain alive In the near presence of God And that was true all the way through The history of Israel Later on in the temple And of course the prophets Came to the people With a consistent message Repent Come back Turn back to God Obey me And I will be your God And you will be my people Of course they couldn't And they wouldn't And they didn't But God said I will do something myself To bring you back To make you obedient To make you pure And He promised Not just

The great covenant But He promised a new covenant He said I will come And I will write my law In your heart And then you will be my people Forever And I'll be with you I'll forgive your sin I'll do away with everything That separates us That caused this divorce Ezekiel Makes An even more graphic statement He says I will sprinkle you With clean water And you'll be clean I will put A new heart In you I'll put my own spirit In you And my dwelling place Will be with you He says And I'll be your God And you will be my people again And the book of Ezekiel Ends in the very Last verse With a vision of a city And what's it called?

[21 : 52] The Lord Is there In the midst of His people With His people You see The whole story of the Bible Is about that It's about God getting back To be with His people It's about God restoring Everything that had been lost But doing it For all eternity And that's the goal Of the whole Bible story That's That's where it's pointing to Right from the very beginning But how How Would that be fulfilled?

That's a question that's Being asked all the way down These dark ages Now says Matthew The answer is revealed In this birth In this birth According to Scripture According to plan Is a Savior To save forever And once and for all From the sin That separates God From man So that He can be Emmanuel God with us God with us at last And God with us forever Not just Emmanuel God with us for a short time Not just Emmanuel Well While Jesus walked the earth No This birth Was a Supernatural birth It was God Becoming man It was It was a saving birth God Becoming man To save us It was according to Scripture All according to His plan So that God can be Emmanuel Forever With us

Forever And that's what Matthew is Announcing here At the very beginning Of his gospel He's saying This is the fulfillment This is the beginning Of it And in the very last Verses Of his gospel At the very end After Jesus' death And his resurrection When all his plan Has been accomplished When he has saved his people From their sins When he's returning To his father What does he say?

Behold I am With you Always Even to the end Of the age And then At the end of the age When he comes In glory On the clouds of heaven He'll be with us In a perfect dwelling Place forever And ever And ever Just listen to Some verses From the very Last paragraphs Of the Bible From Revelation 21 Behold The dwelling Place of God Is with Men He will dwell With them And they will be His people And God himself Will be with them As their God You see In this birth According to Scripture According to plan All God's story Finds its fulfillment Its end Not its end In the sense of Its termination But its end In the sense of Its goal

Its purpose Its destiny I hope many of you Will go and see The Lion, the Witch And the Wardrobe I'm desperate to go And see it myself But listen to How C.S. Lewis Puts this In the very last book Of that series And I hope they make Them all into films As Aslan the Lion Says to Lucy At the very end Of the last battle In the new Narnia The term is over The holidays have begun The dream has ended This is the morning It was only the beginning Of the real story All their life In this world And all their adventures In Narnia Had only been the cover And the title page Now at last They were beginning Chapter one Of the great story Which no one on earth Has read Which goes on forever And which every chapter Is better Than the one before Friends This birth The birth of Jesus Christ Is the fulfillment

[25 : 52] Of the old Old story The story that stretches Back into the mists Of time To the very dawn Of time The story of God's Promise From a God Whose words Never Ever fail It's a birth In accordance With scripture In accordance With promise According to plan It's a birth Of the one who is Emmanuel God With us And so this birth Is just the beginning Of the real story Of the story Of joy And gladness And fulfillment And wonder A story that will Never ever Ever end For all of those Who will listen To the voice Of the angel Today Just as Joseph Listened to the voice Then And who will respond To the message Of the angel Today As Joseph did Then He did As the angel Of the Lord Commanded him See friends That message

That the angel Gave to Joseph Then That same message Of the angels Breaks into our world Again Today And every day In the name Of the Lord Jesus Christ Is proclaimed It's the same message It's the message Of the climax Of all time And eternity It's the message Of God with us To save us To bring us To be with him Forever That's the message Of Christmas And it's just as real And live And powerful Today As it was then So make sure That you Do As Joseph Did at that First Christmas Make sure That you listen To the message From God Make sure That you submit To God's revelation About himself In the good news Make sure That you believe And trust In the one Who is Emmanuel And who promises To be God With us Forever Join the story

Don't miss out On being part Of the great story That has begun In Jesus That will never
Ever end And in which Every chapter Is greater And more wonderful Than the chapter
That's been In the past It's the story Of God with us The story of Jesus The babe of
Bethlehem And now The risen Lord of glory Who comes To be with His people Forever
That's the message And it wasn't Just for shepherds It wasn't just For wise men It's for
everybody Who will hear And who will Rejoice in it And I hope That you'll Join me in
rejoicing In the message Of the Lord Jesus Christ This Christmas Well let's end By singing
The last song On the sheep here That traces the story From beginning to end In councils
of eternity Before the worlds Were formed Wait Thanks

Thank you.

God bless you.

[30 : 24] God bless you.

God bless you.

God bless you.

God bless you.