

The Arrival of the King

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Luke

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Bible Text: Luke 2:1-20
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Worship the Lord on Christmas morning, Sunday, to have Christmas fall on Sunday, it only happens every five or six years depending on whether you have, when the leap year falls and all of that, but my daughter was telling me it's not going to happen again, or someone told me, maybe it wasn't Maggie, not again until 2033. So the next time we skip over Sunday as it moves around, you know, Christmas moves around the week and so it will be 11 years until we get to do this again. But great way to spend Christmas in the presence of God, with the people of God, worshipping the Son of God.

I do want to read that very familiar passage, Luke 2. I want to read the whole passage this morning and I want to talk to you about "The Arrival of the King." The arrival of the king. You look at the text and we'll read it in a moment, you look at the text and the way that Luke unfolds what's happening in a very straightforward almost matter-of-fact way, it's not matter-of-fact but there's a subtlety about his presentation that then allows the reality of it to hit you with even greater force because the irony of what is happening, we talked about this a little bit last night with the contrast between Caesar Augustus and Jesus who is the true King is something he's doing in the first seven verses, but what I want to think about is the main emphasis of the passage and as we're thinking about that, what's the main point in this passage or the main detail he wants you to notice which leads you to the main point of this passage. If you think about this, the coming of the King of kings and the Lord of lords into history. This is about to be, if we could go back to the moment on the timeline before Christ entered time and space, was conceived in the womb of Mary, the most momentous thing to happen in the history of the world to that point was the coming of God into his creation. Nothing else compares to that point and for the one who is the King of kings and Lord of lords to enter into this world, what preparation would go into making that all that it needs to be.

The Bible speaks about the fact that it's clearly Christ has come at the appointed time. At the right time Christ died for the ungodly, Romans 5. Galatians 4, in the fullness of time God sent forth his Son. In the fullness of time, until the time was right, that's when God sent his Son. So it was at the right time, it was in the fullness of time, and yet when you look at the circumstances as they unfolded, it appears almost to be an accident. I mean, how is it that Jesus is not born in a palace? It appears to be almost random and Luke presents it that way.

I was thinking about this, this week, and you know, how, what preparations are made when world leaders make visits to other places. We had a couple in our church years ago, some years back, Larry and Mary Harrison, many of you will remember them. They were a wonderful couple, loved the Lord, they've got four boys now. He is in the Secret Service and he entered the Secret Service and has been on the Presidential detail for guarding President Obama and President Trump. Now they're in Italy and his job in Italy is that when the President or Vice President, Secretary of State, other key dignitaries come over, he goes ahead of the visit and coordinates everything that's going to happen, wherever they're going to go. They consider every single possibility. Think about that. If the President were coming here, what goes into that? There are people that they go and they scan the route. Is there a place where there could be an assassin? They know everything about it. They make sure that every contingency has been considered and planned for, every detail of the trip scrutinized with the greatest care. This is for an earthly President, how much more for the King of glory? I mean, the King of kings is going to come into time and space into a world that is completely hostile to him, into a world that is ruled by the god of this age, the prince of darkness who has always hated God and hated Christ since he rebelled, and wants to destroy the Son of God, wants to destroy all the work of God.

So Christ is coming into the world and we're going to see as we look at this passage, he didn't come without a protective, you know, like the President has. You know, you have the Secret Service detail. You've got, in fact, Larry was on the Secret Service detail in a couple of different capacities. He was the detail that actually the guys in the suits with the earpieces walking around right in front of the President in the crowd. He was also in a tactical unit. When we visited him some years back, 2017 I think it was, he was on the tactical unit. Everywhere the President goes, there is within like 200 feet of the President at all times a vehicle that is nondescript but inside of it are like eight guys that have on heavy armor and all kinds of weaponry. I saw the armor and the weaponry at his house, he showed it to me. I mean, they can go, they can kill you about six different ways. You know, they can do whatever they need to do and so these guys are always within, like I said, 200 feet of the President no matter where he is. Now they're completely out of sight, nobody ever sees them. You've got the other guys, though, around that are watching and scanning constantly and that's for the President of the United States.

And so the King of kings and the Lord of lords comes into time and space, he does come with a protective guard, in a sense, because we see that angels in this passage, the host of heaven, the armies of heaven are with him. Now they're unseen except to the shepherds but they're there, and yet the details don't seem to have been planned out, the contingencies don't appear at first glance to have been properly appropriately considered and weighed because Jesus is born in Bethlehem and there is not an appropriate place for him to be laid. As we read the text, think about that.

Luke 2:1-20. In fact, I want you to, kids, I want to ask you to listen specifically for one thing that occurs three times in this passage. There's one key word that occurs three times

as I read so listen for it. It's actually 2, 3, 4 words together that occur several times, but one concept particularly.

1 Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. 2 This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3 And everyone was on his way to register for the census, each to his own city. 4 Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, 5 in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child. 6 While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. 7 And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. 8 In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. 10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; 11 for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12 This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." 13 And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, 14 "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased." 15 When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds began saying to one another, "Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us." 16 So they came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger. 17 When they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child. 18 And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds. 19 But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart. 20 The shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them.

Let's pray together.

Father, we ask that You might bless us with Your presence, that You might make Your word living and active in our hearts, and that the entrance of Your word might give light to our souls and in Your light we might see light, we might see the glory of Christ. We pray in His name. Amen.

Now there's one concept I was looking for. There's a number of words that are repeated more than once and so I could have clarified that a little more, but one. If you take away the main characters and you're looking at concepts or events or circumstantial things, the one thing that was repeated three times was that the baby was laid in a manger. In verse 7

we're told that, they "laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn." The angels when they saw, when they told the shepherds, "This will be a sign for you," verse 12, "you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." And then Luke's careful to tell us, "they came in a hurry," verse 16, "they came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger." Now what is a manger? A manger is a feeding trough. It is an area, an implement to feed livestock, the donkeys, cattle, sheep. It's something made to put, you know, food for animals in. So this is something that is normally filled with the saliva of, you know, some animals and with, you know, just the nastiness that goes with that. It's clear and the inference is that Jesus was in a stable, that the place that he was born and the place that he was laid was a stable in a manger, a feeding trough was his bed.

So back to what I was talking about before, if the Son of God is coming into the world, the King of kings and Lord of lords, certainly every contingency has been considered, every detail has been thought through, and, of course, it has. Strictly speaking, there are no accidents in the economy of God. He always does what he has decreed and planned to do and so he before the foundation of the world decreed that his Son would enter time and space in a stable, in a place that's not a romanticized stable of Precious Moments figurine situation, but it's a stinking stable. You've been in a barn where animals are kept, you know that it's not in a lot of ways a pleasant place to be. You smell the smells. You see the evidence of the animals. And so this was where Jesus was first laid down as a baby.

Now thinking about it and I think it's important, too, and I want to just point this out, I think it's interesting to note that Luke, Luke 2 is what we just read, right? Not Luke 1. Now think about that for a moment. Luke could have begun his gospel with this account. You know, it would have been a great place to begin, "in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus," but what does he begin his gospel with? He begins his gospel with the account of John the Baptist's conception. Remember, Zechariah, this old gentleman who's married to Elizabeth, they're both advanced in age. They have had no children. He's a priest. He's working his routine, I mean, his turn as a priest in the temple. He's offering incense and there he encounters an angel who tells him, "Zechariah, you're about to have a child." He can't believe it. He says, you know, "How can I know this is true?" And the angel says, "Well, you won't be able to talk until he's born, that's how you'll know. I'll give you a sign. You won't be able to speak." And he can't speak for nine months until John is born. His son is John the Baptist who will go on before the Lord.

So you see God is taking care of every detail. He said he's preparing John to be the forerunner just as he had prophesied in the Old Testament there would be a forerunner, Isaiah and Malachi, that would go on before the Lord to proclaim the name of the Lord, to make straight the way for the Lord. He's coming. And so the whole first chapter we see all of that. We see the angel Gabriel going to Mary and telling her that she's going to have a baby. And we see her going to visit Elizabeth, John's mother, who happens to be her cousin and remember the beautiful picture there where Mary now knowing that she's pregnant with the Son of God, engaged to Joseph, bewildered in all of this, but the angel told her, "Your cousin is in her third month of pregnancy." And so she hurries to see

Elizabeth and remember when she walks into Elizabeth's house, she calls out to Elizabeth, Elizabeth hears her voice. I mean, think about this, Mary probably said, I mean she said it in Hebrew not in English, "Elizabeth!" And at that, the baby in her womb leaps for joy and Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesies and says, "Blessed are you, and why has God shown such favor to me that the mother of my Lord would visit me?" Elizabeth doesn't know what's going on but the Spirit comes upon her and tells her what's going on, "The mother of your Lord has just come into your house." And Mary responds, the Spirit comes upon her and she sings the praise, I mean, she speaks the praise of what we call the Magnificat, lifting up the Lord in her own heart in verses 46 to 56 of chapter 1. Then John is born. Zechariah has not been able to speak for nine months. When he writes down, he was told by the angel, "You shall call his name John." It's so cool that he can't speak for nine months. He's trying to tell them what he saw. He can't. They didn't have sign language back then, I guess, and so he can't tell them what he's, you know, seen. I mean, at some point he probably started writing it down but the text says he's just trying to make motions to them to tell them that an angel appeared to him. Well, he can't speak for nine months and then the baby is born, it comes time to name the baby and Elizabeth says his name is John, and they say, "Wait a minute, you've got nobody in your family named John." And so they go to Zechariah, "This can't be right, Zechariah. She's saying his name is John. Somebody in your family, you've got to name him after somebody in your family." And he writes down on the paper, "His name is John." At that moment his tongue is loosed and he is filled with the Spirit and he prophesies.

Now all of that preparation leading up to the birth of Christ, and then the birth of Christ happens in this most amazing way. Complete anonymity. Nobody knows to welcome him into Bethlehem. Nobody knows to usher in, "This is the King's family. We need to prepare a place for them." There's no one looking out for them, no one going ahead for them that they can see, no human being is aware of it until the angel makes it known to the shepherds. What do you make of that? Why did God do that? Why a manger? Why did the Son of God come to the earth to be born in a stable, a stinking stable? He's the King of kings. He's the Lord of lords. He's come to establish his reign. Why is he not on a throne?

Think about the unfolding of the plan of God in the Old Testament because it surprised all of the Jews in the first century how Jesus came, even though if they'd read their Bible carefully they would have known better. Remember we talked a couple of weeks ago about how Jesus after his resurrection, the day of his resurrection meets those men on the road to Emmaus, those disciples on the road to Emmaus, and he takes them through the Bible and shows them how it was clear that the Messiah must suffer, he must die and on the third day be raised again. "If you'd read your Bible, your Old Testament carefully, you would have seen this." And yet their eyes were veiled to it. They didn't understand it. But when you go back and you look at the unfolding of the word of God because the Bible basically is addressing this issue, the Bible is answering the question how can sinners like you and me ever hope to dwell in the presence of a holy God? That's the question. How can sinners like you and me ever be reconciled to a holy God, a God who cannot merely wink at sin? Who cannot excuse rebellion?

He's a God who must punish evil. We would not want a God who would not punish evil. What would it be like to live in a world where evil went unpunished? Murderers, we'd just say, "Hey, are you sorry? Okay, go free." No, there must be justice and God, if we feel that way as sinners ourselves, how much more must a holy God feel the need for justice? And yet God is a God of compassion. And so we're sinners and we are people who are separated from him, we come into the world with a sin nature and we then exhibit it from the various early time. You don't have to teach, one thing you don't have to teach your child anything to do is to disobey. They come into the world wired for that. They come into the world wired for rebellion. You don't have to do that. It's like one theologian friend of mine says that they're vipers in diapers. It's true. We're sinners from our mother's womb, like David said.

So how can sinners like us be made right with God? That's the question that Scripture is seeking to answer and it's basically telling us we have a two-fold problem. The first problem is we want, this is what sin is, we want to live for our own glory, by our own authority, and do what we want to do. We want to determine for ourselves what is right, what is desirable, what is good, and we reserve that right for ourselves rather than submitting to God. We're rebels and we needed a new king. We need to come under the reign of a righteous king because the things that we want to do lead to death. "There is a way that seems right to a man but the end thereof is the way of death." Everything, every time we rebel against God, it leads to death in our lives.

So we need a new king. We need to come under the kingship of God's holy reign, and so we needed a Messiah to be sent that would be king but we also, it's not just enough to say, "Hey, we would like now to be submitted to You as our King," we have another problem and the problem is guilt. We have a rebellious heart and we have a guilty heart. Those are the two problems. Our rebellious heart needs to be tamed by a king, but our guilty heart needs to be dealt with by a priest. We need an offering for sin. We need payment to satisfy God's holy justice.

So from the very beginning, you see the Scripture doing these two parallel issues that need to be dealt with and it's right there in Genesis 3:15, the third chapter in the Bible. Right after Adam and Eve sin, God makes a prophesy as he curses the serpent. He says to the serpent, "Cursed are you above all cattle. You'll go about on your belly." And then he says this, "And I will put enmity between your seed and the woman's seed." Now he's talking to the serpent, "I'm going to put enmity between your seed, serpent, and the woman's seed. He will bruise your head and you will bruise his heel." The seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent will do battle and the seed of the woman will bruise the head of the serpent while the serpent bruises the heel of the seed of the woman. The seed of the woman is Christ, the only time that any man has been born apart from a seed coming from the man. In fact, the word in Hebrew for "seed" is a word which translates into Greek into a word that is "spermos" which we translate in English "sperm; seed." That comes from the male. But the seed of the woman will then have this conflict. Well, the seed of the woman is the virgin-born Christ, the only time the seed was present in a woman without a man's involvement. And this conflict is going to happen so that he's going to reign, he's going to rule, he's going to defeat Satan's reign and deliver those

under his authority but at the same time he's going to be wounded. You see this beginning of the fact that there has to be a kingship but there also has to be an offering.

In that same chapter, Genesis 3, how does God cover their sins? He has to kill animals. Remember they covered their sin with fig leaves but God kills animals because without the shedding of blood there is no covering for sin. And throughout the Bible, there's this dual focus. Think about it. In Exodus, this is a picture of salvation, the people are enslaved in Egypt in a place of great spiritual darkness and what happens? God shows himself to be King. "You need to come out and be My people and I need to be your King," and what does he do? He delivers them by his mighty outstretched hand, 10 plagues of his might and his power and authority on display in which he tramples upon the Egyptian pantheon. They worshiped frogs. They worshiped flies. They worshiped lice. They worshiped the sun. He said, "You worship these things, have a whole lot more of it and let Me show you I am the Lord and there is no other." And so he makes public spectacle of their gods and he leads them out but he doesn't just lead them out as a conqueror, how does he lead them out? The Passover lamb. For the people to come out of bondage, there must be a lamb slain. There must be blood on the door.

This picture continues throughout the Old Testament. We need a king and we need an offering for sin, and as you go through the Old Testament, the imagery is building, God is building the picture of what Christ would be. "In the fullness of time God sent forth His Son." God is showing us through the Old Testament what we need as a Savior, and pieces are coming together, pieces are coming together as you go through the history of the Old Testament.

We come to David and we see we need a king like David. We need a king who has a heart after God's heart, a man after God's own heart. That's what we need. And then the rest of the Old Testament, the prophets are always looking back saying, "We need one like David," and this is the messianic hope, "We need a Messiah. We need a king." And then in Isaiah it becomes clear that this king is going to bring some wonderful blessings. In Isaiah 7:14, walk through Isaiah, the portrait that he paints of the King. Isaiah 7:14, "He will be born of a virgin. This will be a sign for you, Behold, a virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and you will call His name Immanuel," which translated means "God with us." In Isaiah 9:2-6 tells us that, "Unto you is born this," no, "For unto us is born, a son is born. Unto us," oh, good grief, let's just turn to Isaiah 9. You know, this is what happens when you get older. "For a child will be born to us," Isaiah 9:6, "a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness." So the king that is coming is going to establish justice and righteousness. He's going to deliver us from the oppression of this evil, dark world.

You can read on continuing into Isaiah, turn to chapter 11, verses 1 to 5. Look at this king that is coming. Isaiah 11, "Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, The spirit of

wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. And He will delight in the fear of the LORD." You see, he will be a king who has great wisdom, great knowledge. He goes on to say, "He will not judge by what His eyes see, Nor make a decision by what His ears hear; But with righteousness He will judge the poor, And decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth." Don't we need a king like that? And look at his power, "He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked. Also righteousness will be the belt about His loins, And faithfulness the belt about His waist." And look what he's going to bring, verse 6, "And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, And the leopard will lie down with the young goat, And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little boy will lead them. Also the cow and the bear will graze, Their young will lie down together, And the lion will eat straw like the ox. The nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra, And the weaned child will put his hand on the viper's den." Weaned child, a little baby that's just old enough to no longer be nursing will be able to play on the ground, put his hand in the viper's den and the snake will not bite him. All the animals, there will be great sense of peace and harmony, and it comes because of this king.

Now let's go on to chapter 42 and see what Isaiah says as he continues to show us this king that is coming, what he'll be like. Isaiah 42, "Behold, My Servant," verse 1, "whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations." Look at his character. Look at his manner. "He will not cry out or raise His voice, Nor make His voice heard in the street. A bruised reed He will not break And a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish; He will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not be disheartened or crushed Until He has established justice in the earth; And the coastlands will wait expectantly for His law." He's a wise and knowledgeable king, we saw. He's also a gentle and meek king.

And this picture becomes even clearer in Isaiah 52. The Messiah that we need, the king that we need, Isaiah tells us in chapter 52, verse 13, "Behold, My servant will prosper, He will be high and lifted up and greatly exalted. Just as many were astonished at you, My people, So His appearance was marred more than any man And His form more than the sons of men. Thus He will sprinkle many nations." He's saying the king that's coming is going to bring in the reign of righteousness. He's going to be meek and he's going to be kind but he's going to be a fierce ruler who defeats his enemies, but he's going to be, his appearance will be marred more than any man. What is this? And he's going to sprinkle the nations.

Look at chapter 53. He continues to talk about his servant when he says in verse 3 of chapter 53, "He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed." He's saying, "Look, the king that is coming is a king that will defeat His enemies through the most astonishing of

all ways, He will come to suffer. He will come to suffer unspeakable, unspeakable violence, unimaginable rejection. This King of kings and Lord of lords is coming into the world to break the reign of sin over the heart of each one of us who are gripped by sin. He's coming to break the reign of Satan and his evil kingdom, but to do so He must purchase back because of God's justice and holiness, must purchase us back by paying for our sins with His own blood."

So all of the Old Testament was building this picture, this portrait, and if people reading their Bibles carefully with the help of the Holy Spirit, they would have seen this and this is what makes sense of the manger. Why a manger? Why be born in a stable? The King of kings and Lord of lords is here. Yes, the King of kings and Lord of lords is here but he has come to establish God's reign and he will be victorious but he comes not as you expect, as a mighty lion, he comes as a gentle suffering lamb. He comes to do what is necessary to save sinners like you and me.

God was willing to come all the way down to save you. How approachable is Christ? Do you feel unworthy to go to the Lord? You think about all of your sin? You have a Savior here presented, offered to you in the Scriptures, offered to you today right where you are who was willing to come all the way down into the filth and mire of this world. He could come all the way down so that he could reach to the very deepest position that you could ever find yourself and he could lift you out by his great work at Calvary, because the manger is not the most appalling thing, the most appalling thing is what happens more than 30 years later when the Son of God is nailed to a tree and is cursed by God as he bears the sins of everyone who would ever believe for the Bible says, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree." He became a curse for us that we might become blessed of God.

This was what the manger was all about. From the very beginning of Jesus' life, you see he came to die. Someone has rightly said if you look at the gospels Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, the percentage of the material that is about the cross is staggering, basically the gospels are passion narratives with long introductions. It's all about the death of Christ. But he's willing to come into the world to save sinners like you and me but don't be confused about the fact that he is still the King of kings and Lord of lords. He is the victor.

One of my favorite passages in the book of Revelation is Revelation 5 where John, the apostle who is caught up into heaven, sees this glorious picture of what is happening in the victory that Christ has accomplished. He says in Revelation 5:1, "I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals." In the context, John, this book that is sealed up is the book that will lead to the unfolding of God's plan and his kingdom, and it's all held up in this book, this scroll that must be opened. And he said, "I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, 'Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?'" This book must be opened. These seals must be broken if God's purposes are going to be realized, if God's kingdom is going to be established, if God's people are going to be delivered. This must happen and John feels the urgency in the very depth of his being. Look what it says. The angel

said, "Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?" Verse 3, "And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the book or to look into it. Then I began to weep greatly because no one was found worthy to open the book or to look into it." John's weeping because the purposes of God are at a standstill. What can happen? "And one of the elders said to me, 'Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals.'" "The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the mighty warrior has come. Don't weep, John. The Lion of the tribe of Judah will open it."

And John says, "And I saw," he looks, where's the Lion? Where's the Lion of the tribe of Judah? Verse 6, "And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth. And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying, 'Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.' Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.' And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, 'To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.' And the four living creatures kept saying, 'Amen.' And the elders fell down and worshiped."

The manger tells you that the Lion of Judah is the Lamb of God and the Lamb of God is the Lion of Judah. The message of Christmas is that God has done everything necessary to save you no matter how filthy you feel, and we know ourselves if we see ourselves as we are, we truly are filthy, aren't we? But Christ has done all that is necessary. He was willing to do whatever it took and he has done it. So trust him. Love him. Surrender to him. Repent and believe the gospel and receive him as your Lord. That's the message of Christmas, that is the King that has come and has arrived is the King that has come to reign and his reign is a loving and precious reign and I hope you know him as your Lord or you will today run to him.

Let's pray.

Father, we thank You for the glory of who our Savior is. We marvel, Lord Jesus, that You were willing to leave the glory of heaven and come into this world. We praise You, Lord. Our hearts we offer to You. We pray for those that are here that don't know You that they would truly today cry out to You, rest in You, Your finished work, and allow You to deliver them from the reign and rule of sin and to fill them with Your love and joy. And

for all of us, Lord, who know You, that we would treasure our Savior more and give Him more glory in our lives each day. We pray in His name. Amen.