

Jesus the True King

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[0 : 0 0] the last song that we sang began with the line do you feel the world is broken that verse finished with a question do you wish that you could see it all made new i would argue that this this song this new hymn deserves its place on a christmas playlist because it does two things for us it puts into words what i guess we are all painfully aware of all that is not right all that is broken with our world we live with an ongoing pandemic we hear of a ongoing migrant crises that is racism that is global warming but perhaps too it gives voice to to some of the the longings in our own hearts when we are aware of all that is broken about us perhaps our anger or our selfishness maybe our sense of emptiness and a longing for ourselves to be made new perhaps many of us we feel the darkness even at christmas and we find ourselves longing for hope but wonderfully that that song also took us to the good news of the christian faith because it took us to jesus and the promise of the everlasting king who will rescue and who will restore the worthy one who has come the king who reigns the one who will come again to complete god's saving plan for the world his plan that will bring all his people to be with himself forever that king that worthy king is jesus and sometimes we need times like this to remind ourselves of who jesus is because perhaps you know an experience like this maybe coming out of lockdown perhaps or maybe you just haven't seen relatives for a while especially thinking about children if you haven't seen a child for a while what happens in our minds they are frozen in time aren't they they're frozen at a particular age two months two years whatever it might be whatever they are they're still growing and developing but we don't see it and we forget and so they're frozen memories and i think this can happen some things with jesus too every year perhaps we dust off the portrait of jesus in the manger but there he stays until the next candles by candlelight rolls around well our two readings from luke luke who wrote his gospel was a doctor and a careful historian they provided two snapshots of the early life of king jesus when at his birth one when he was just eight days old but i hope with these portraits that we'll be able to see more of the story of king jesus so that we can begin to understand and appreciate again why he is presented by the angels as good news of great joy for all the people to as it were unwrap the story behind the christmas story so that first portrait witnesses king jesus uh king jesus enter into an aching world in those short verses at the beginning of luke 2 we we learn some remarkable things about jesus birth jesus who is called emmanuel which means god with us you hear that a lot in christmas carols emmanuel means god with us and as god with us and we notice that he didn't stay at arm's length from us that we notice that he doesn't stay isolated from suffering and sadness jesus is presented in the bible as totally god and totally man but he's never floating six inches off the ground immune from pain and suffering but from his first breath his story shows why he can both sympathize and say jesus was born into a jewish family at a time when

the jews were being oppressed by the roman empire he is part of a people group who had been suffering for centuries at the hands of various world empires jesus was born in bethlehem i know nothing town a back and beyond kind of place when it came to power and influence within his country and he was born to mary a poor teenage virgin girl who would wrap jesus in swaddling clothes and place him in a feeding trough for the animals now we might expect god's king to arrive in ultimate luxury but instead where's his first bed to be found it's among the noise it's among the dirt it's among the animal sounds we might expect god's eternal king to be welcomed and honored but his first visitors a group of despised shepherds and when the king hears king headed hears about the birth of jesus he wants to destroy him in the cradle we might expect when god's king came that he would demand to be served but instead we hear jesus say that he came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many jesus like many millions still today was a child born into poverty and adversity and yet on that first christmas angel songs ring out from the heavens the child wrapped up in the manger is none other than god's promised eternal savior king the one who's coming will reveal to us the glory of god's love the one who brings joy and peace to all with eyes to see him the hope for the world wrapped up in jesus the child in the manger the one has come to be good news for a broken and a hurting world well luke then takes us eight days later into a new setting he takes us to the temple in jerusalem and to a different messenger not the angels this time but an elderly man simeon who knew the spirit of advent we know boys and girls don't we advent is a time of waiting and expecting and anticipating well that was simeon because he was waiting for god's king to arrive and he was led by god's holy spirit to speak about jesus the king to speak words about his future again i imagine for those of us who are parents we will have found ourselves from time to time reflecting perhaps asking the question i wonder how my son or my daughter will turn out when they grow up i wonder what they'll do for a living what will they enjoy who will they meet what will their friends what will their family be like perhaps we have some anxiety as we think what world will future generations inherit what we find here as baby jesus is taken to the temple as an eight-day-old infant elderly simeon takes him in his arms it praises jesus for all to hear but also makes predictions about jesus future this old man simeon says to god god i can rest in peace now because god's promised savior king has now arrived and i've seen him in fact i've held him in my arms simeon spoke about the light of god's glory and love shining through the darkness for all the world to see luke tells us that mary and joseph were stunned to hear these words and it's no

wonder these glorious words spoken about the child born in the manger but as our reading went on and as simeon continued to speak there was a darker tone there was a more somber tone to his words he anticipated that jesus future would include him being spoken against being despised being rejected he will divide people some people would worship him and some people would cry crucify him mary the mother of jesus who wrapped him in swaddling clothes will watch her own son be crucified and wrapped in burial clothes simeon warned her of the sword of grief that would pierce her own soul as nails pierced the savior's hands and feet and when we think about simeon's words and the angel's words we wonder how can this be are the angel's words untrue how can the eternal king die and why how can jesus bring peace and joy to the world if he is to suffer and die see mary doesn't know yet but jesus god's promised king who died on the cross would be unwrapped from those grave clothes by the power of god on the third day at his resurrection hope would live because jesus is alive so to consider these portraits of baby jesus and to consider his story as we find it recorded by dr luke our historian begs the question why why did the son of god become one of us why did he endure all that suffering and die in agony why did the everlasting king become the humble servant who laid down his life as a ransom for many and the answer the wonderful answer is love god's love for the world that he created the love of god for broken hurting people who need salvation who need to be made new we read in the bible that this good and loving god made us as people in his image to know and to enjoy him but the sad reality of the human race is that we have turned our backs on our god rejecting him and his good rule for our lives and this good god cannot leave that sin and rebellion unpunished but in his goodness and love what does god do god sent his son jesus to come into the world to walk in our shoes to be our substitute to live the perfectly obedient life that we are called to live but fail to do and then to die as a willing sacrifice taking the punishment for our rejecting of father god before jesus would rise again in victory that's why jesus came this is the story behind the christmas story this is christmas unwrapped this is good news for the hurting for the anxious for the unknown for those seeking something more the bigger picture of jesus god's true and worthy king and what we discover in the good news of the bible is that we are called to place our trust in jesus as savior and king and when we do that we're made new from the inside out to receive jesus is to receive forgiveness from sin is to receive peace with god a welcome as his child the joy of living the life we were made for with him for all eternity that that's the good news of great joy for all people this christmas now we're in a few moments we are going to sing again one last time but before we do that

let me invite you to do a few things first of all please stick around for some refreshments afterwards chance to enjoy some time together the only thing i would say is that the the serving hatch is is over to my right at the back of the hall if you get your drink and maybe move away to the other side just to make sure there's plenty of space that'd be wonderful um let me invite you as well if you have any questions about the christian faith or about our church and you can either speak to me afterwards or speak to the person that brought you or indeed pick up a one of our welcome leaflets get in touch with us via the website if you have any questions that you have and also please let me invite you to help yourself to some of our christmas books we have loads of christmas books to give away there are a selection again on my right for for kids just in the hall and then on the left a whole bunch for adults there a small gift from us as a church for you let me particularly recommend this one this is called is christmas unbelievable uh... written by rebecca mccloughlin a very short very accessible uh... study into the so i suppose examining uh... is uh... the christian faith the christmas story uh... historically reliable and why does it matter um... so there's loads of those uh... please take some also if you have uh... friends family if you're a bit late in your christmas shopping uh... we have lots uh... people would appreciate that i am sure and we also have copies of luke's gospel uh... so we read a little bit of luke's account of jesus life we have some more again on the table that we'd love for you to take away if you don't have one to read uh... i think that's all that i need to say uh... save to say let's stand uh... for our final three carols uh... silent night joy to the world and all come all ye faithful uh...

uh... uh... uh...

[14 : 28] uh... uh... uh... uh uh uh uh uh