The Exiled King, The Extreme Response & The Hated King

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Date: 22 December 2024 Preacher: Mr Ally MacLeod

[0:00] It's Pete's with you here today. My name's Alia Pace in Edinburgh, currently at, looking to join the Hope Church League, which is a plant from St. Columbus Research in 6th and Edinburgh.

But I'm from this, so it's a warm welcome back. I'm a bit windy welcome back as I got back from Friday afternoon just after school finished. I'm a teacher down in Edinburgh. But the call to worship this morning is going to be reading from Luke chapter 2.

If you want to turn to the air for that. Luke chapter 2, just from verses 8 to 13. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field.

Keeping watch over their flock by night. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them. And there were sore afraid.

And the angel said to them, Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

And this shall be a sign unto you. You shall find the babe wrapped in swarming clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a great multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men.

And just looking just very briefly down to verse 20 as well. When the shepherds had heard this, this great thing, and they had seen it for themselves. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

That's what we're here to think about at this time of year, and that's what we're here to think about this morning. Now as we start our time together, we're going to sing from Psalm 8.

Psalm 8 speaks of creation and of those whom God uses. How excellent in all we are, Lord our Lord is thy name, who hast thy glory far advanced above this starry frame.

From infants and from sucklings, thou didst strength ordain. For like those cause, that so thou mightst be avenging foe from strength. When I look up unto the heavens, which thine own fingers fain, unto the moon and to the stars, which were by thee ordained, then say I, what is man that he remembered as thy thee?

Or what the son of man that thou so kind to him should see? For thou a little lower hast him than the angel made, with glory and with dignity thou crowned hast his head.

Of thy hand's works thou madeest him, Lord, all under sheep to his plate, all sheep and oxen, yea, and beasts, that in the field he's straight.

Files of the air, fish of the sea, all that pass through the same, how excellent in all we are, Lord our Lord, is thy name. Sing that to God's grace. How excellent in all the air, Lord our Lord, is thy name.

Who has thy glory far advanced, above the starry flame?

From infant's hand, from suckling's wild, Thou didst send glory.

[4:14] For thy foes cause that soul of mine, The outending glory strain.

When I look up unto the heaven, Which thy gold fingers slain, Unto the moon, Unto the star, Which way by thee ordained.

Then say I walked this man that thee, Remembered it by thee, For thou of the sun of man that thou, So kind to him should be.

For thou art this young, O Lord our God, And thine the angels may.

With glory and with dignity, Thou covenant hast his head.

[6:11] Of thy hands works the misty Lord, All under thee is laid.

All sheep and oxen, Ye and beast, That in the field who stay.

Fowls of the air, Fish of the sea, All my paths through the sea.

Our excellent and all thee have, Lord our Lord is thy name.

Let's pray. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, As we gather here this day, At the end of another week, At the end of another year, We thank you for your goodness to us.

[7:37] Thank you for your kindness towards us, Your mercy towards us. And thank you, That you would allow us to point ourselves and one another back to the gift of your Son Jesus.

We pray that we would just remember that we do not deserve the gift of your Son. That we would say as we sung, what is man that he remembered is by thee?

Or what the Son of Man that thou so kind to him shouldst be? Lord, thank you that you do not need us. You are all powerful, you are all loving and all good.

But you choose to use us in the places in which you have placed us, the circles in which you have placed us. Be it work, be it family, be it school, be it whatever else. And that you have placed these people here this morning to be a light pointing out of your word.

As to why you are here this morning to gather under your word, to gather to praise your name. We pray that we would be mindful at this time of the gift that your Son is to us.

[9:15] Of the many things and the many ways in which even this week or even today that we have not have acted. And that we do not deserve. We do not deserve your gift and we pray that our attitude would be like what the Psalms has written here.

That we do not deserve your kindness. But we ask for forgiveness Lord that for ways in which we have acted that may point to an attitude of thinking that we deserve anything from you.

That we can rule our own lives. That we no better than you, the author and perfect of our faith, the creator of all things. We pray that as we gather around the families at this time of year that we would remember the goodness of that gift.

The undeservedness of that gift and the fact that we could never even begin to contribute to what that gift gives us.

Which is salvation and a life everlasting with you in the end when you return. We thank you for the hope that that gives us. We thank you for the hope amidst difficult and uncertain times that we have seen in our world.

[10:25] And we ask that we would continue to remind ourselves and each other of that gift to us. We pray that as we continue through this time of worship together that we would be not distracted by anything else.

But any other worldly concerns. That we would be able to focus in on what you have to say to us. Grant me clarity as I speak this morning. And grant us all clarity of mind as we listen to what you have to say to us through your word.

And we pray all these things in your son's precious name. Amen. We're going to sing again from Psalm 103.

We're going to sing Psalm 103 from verses 1 to 8. Psalm 103 through 10 10 through forgive, who thy diseases, all, and pains, doth heal and be believed, who doth redeem with thy life, that thy death may not go down, who thee with loving kindness doth and tender mercies crown, who with abundance of good things does satisfy thy might, so that even as the egos change, renew it is thy youth. God righteous, judgment, exudes for all oppressive ones, his ways in Moses, our strength, and he his acts, make known to Israel's sons. The

Lord our God is merciful and he is gracious, longsuffering and slow to wrath in mercy plentiful. We'll sing again, we're God's praise. O thou my soul, flesh God the Lord, and all that in me is, he's servant of his holy name.

[13:05] O thou my soul, the Lord thy God, and all forgetful he.

Of all his gracious benefits, he has bestowed on thee.

All thy integrity, who thou, O graciously forgive, who thy did Jesus, long and james, does he, O graciously forgive, who does redeem thy life, love, love, who dances on God, who with the loving kindness of our tender mercies crown, who with abundance of good things and with the loving kindness of our tender mercies crown, who with abundance of good things

God satisfies thy mouth. God satisfies thy mouth, so that in the kingdom's day, renew this life, God righteous, God satisfies thy mouth, so that in the kingdom's day, renew this life, God righteous, God righteous judgment execute.

God through the kingdom, through the kingdom, through the kingdom, The Lord our God is merciful, and He is gracious.

[16:30] From suffering and soul to us, in mercy plentious.

Now, the passage that we are going to be looking at today is from Matthew's Gospel. Turn to Matthew's Gospel with me into chapter 2.

Now, we'll be focusing on verses 13 and 23, but I'm going to read from the beginning, just to give us some of the context. Now, when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of head of the king, Behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that was born the king of the Jews?

For we have seen his star in the east, and we come to worship him. When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where the Christ should be born. And he said to him, In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah.

[18:05] For out of thee shall come a governor that shall rule all my people Israel. Then Herod, when he had trivily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.

And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child. And when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also. And when they had heard the king, they departed.

And lo, the star which they saw in the east found before them. Till he came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly joy.

And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child that made his mother, and fell down and worshipped him. And when they opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts.

They were born, gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And they warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Bethlehem, they departed to their own country, and then awake.

[19:09] And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt.

And be thou there until I bring thee word. For Herod will seek the young boy to destroy him. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt.

And was there until the death of Herod. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt I have called my son.

Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wrath, and went forth and slew all the children of the dead of him. And all the coaches did off from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men.

Then was fulfilled all which was spoken by generally the prophet, saying, In Ramon there was a voice heard, lamentation and weeping and great mourning.

[20:14] Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not. But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph and Eden, saying, Arise, take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel.

For they are this which sought the young child's life. And he arose and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he had heard Archelaus the rain in Judah and Judea, in the roof of his father headed, he was afraid to go with him.

Notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee, and came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth. That it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by the prophets, he shall be called.

And as I pray, just off the back of that, Father, we thank you for your word. Thank you for what it says to us. We pray that as we come to it in the next few moments, that we would be still, that our hearts and our minds would be ready to hear what you have to say to us.

And that we would be open to what that is, to what we need to hear from your word at this time. We pray that we would just be still as we hear from it, the good news of your son being born into us, and the rescue that he is going to bring.

[21:42] We pray these things in your son's name. Amen. Now before we come to God's word again, we're going to sing again from Psalm 124. First version of Psalm 124, we'll sing the whole Psalm this week of God's faithfulness to his people.

Psalm 124, we'll sing the whole Psalm 134.

We'll sing back to God's word.

Hath not the Lord been on our side, May it's I am now to say, Hath not the Lord been on our side, When men rose us to slay, They had the swallowing quick when us, Their rocket's us did play, Waters have covered, Thus our soul hath sunk in the stream.

Then had the waters swelling high, Hope upon our soul made way, Blessed be the Lord who to their teeth, Thus gave not fall afraid, Our soul is given, As a word, Out of the foulers' near, And the rushing through the the rushing through the

[25:13] God's name, his name who did us have created unto the earth's enclave.

Amen. And the thing that made it through the , it made it through the , it made it through the , it made it through , it made it through , it made it through , it made the problem is depending on how you look at my dad who is either more discerning or more difficult with his taste if it can't happen, if it's not realistic he's not interested so the one thing that we can kind of there are a few that one of the main things we can gather around and watch well together is a murder mystery now as you watch the first maybe 20 minutes half an hour of the thing you are as clueless as the characters in the film you've been shown things and on the first viewing you're wondering why are we being shown these things, why are we being told these things, what on earth is going on but then some key information is revealed and it allows you to look back on them with far more clarity and with a greater appreciation for what is actually going on and I wonder as I read the passage especially the latter half which is what we're going to focus on from verses 13 to

I wonder if that's maybe what you're thinking maybe you haven't read this part of Matthew's Gospel in a while maybe you just haven't clocked this part surely this isn't right how can this be?

maybe if you are at home from living the way you've been brought along today and you're unfamiliar with this account of Jesus' life life you're asking why is this here?

Matthew's aim in the whole of his Gospel is to show us that Jesus is the promised Messiah King Matthew's known as the Jewish Gospel and that was his audience who's speaking for Jewish people who knew their Old Testament very well which is why there's so many references to prophets in them and so far what we've seen just up to verse 12 would have been a great place to finish that part of the story before we read Jesus and start the covenant the Magi are exceedingly joyful they're worshipping King Jesus and offering the gifts that show who he is the gold the fine sense the myrrh and Herod never finds out where he is and we can move on to Jesus' teaching but this passage also it just seems to have come right out of left field the one who caused such great joy who's the end of that massive genealogy you see in Matthew chapter 1 of whom it has been said he will save people from their sins and he's the reason why this news of Christmas time is so good and yet in this passage he's made a refugee as a result of an assassination of him and he's forced to live in a backwater town that nobody cared for some way for God's promised

Messiah King to start his life but we see that this is actually further proof that he really is who the word of God says he is with fulfilments of these Old Testament prophecies which we'll look at just now so let's look at these things under three different headings we have the exiled king in verses 13 to 15 and we have the extreme response to the king in verses 16 to 18 and then we have the hated king in 19 to 23 so let's have a look at that just now so in verses 13 to 15 I'll just reread those for us and when they were departed behold the angel of the lord appeared to Joseph in the room saying arise and take the young child and his mother and flee into Egypt and be thou there until I bring thee word for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him

I mentioned this briefly earlier on but this is a dramatic change from the previous section verses 11 and 12 speak of exceeding rejoicing with great joy and that has given way dramatically to clear and present danger now there's an urgency here so from the moment that kind of headed gives the order Bethlehem and Jerusalem in about five months apart my five K time is not anything to be impressed but trained Roman soldiers would probably make it in about maybe half an hour four to five minutes if they were if they left straight away from when the order was given so they need to read now and just notice a couple of things in these versions notice the order in which Joseph is instructed to take them it's a young child and his mother the child is first because it's his story so we never lose track of why it is being told and it's the same in verse 20 when they're told to return at the end of our passage and note secondly the command that is given to them the command is to flee now the Greek word is one from which we get the word fugitive they're going to be on the run and they need to do so now now it's a long trip it's about 75 miles from where they were to the border of Egypt and where

Israelites have settled in Jerusalem it's about another hundred miles into Egypt there now this is taking weeks just generally speaking just with the two of them two friends of mine have recently had a child within the last month or so and they've been told they can only travel about an hour of an hour and a half in a car with them before you have to move them around and just let them loosen off a wee bit so imagine how much more slow this is going to be on a camel with anyone and we then see Joseph's immediate response to that in verses 14 and 15 when he arose he took the young child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt he didn't question it he just did it and he was there until the death of heaven that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet saying out of Egypt I have called my son now the prophet that is mentioned here is a guy called Hosea it was written about 700 years before

Peter's birth and very briefly God speaks through Hosea about the seriousness with which Israel are ignoring him sticking in the face of the one who created them and yet when he was well within his rights passed them off as a lost coppers we see this face out of Egypt I call my son out of Egypt I call my son it was not a prophecy about the Messiah escaping to Egypt and returning to Israel initially in fact it wasn't really a prophecy at all in Hosea's time what it was saying it was a statement that got by God concerning his deliverance of Israel in the Exodus in the full sentence in Hosea 11 when Israel when Israel was a child then I loved him and out of Egypt I called my son Israel who was created as a nation by God is described metaphorically as his son here so how can

Matthew apply this passage to Jesus he's speaking before Jesus' time in the past tense how can it be ascribed to Jesus now this is what we call a type in the Bible what that basically means is that the Old Testament story is being repeated in the New in a bigger way Jesus is the full true greatest son of God and just has gone to Israel out of Egypt to save them he's now going to take Jesus out of Egypt to save the world this is part of a larger kind of Israel Jesus comparison than Matthew develops throughout his gospel and just as God brought his son out of Egypt so Jesus the true son of God is brought out of Egypt as well just as Israel was tested for 40 years in the wilderness so Jesus was tested by Satan for 40 years in the wilderness but the key difference being while Israel repeatedly failed to obey

God Jesus repeatedly obeyed God he remained capable and obedient Matthew's use of Hosea 11 is not a misapplication of the Old Testament text but rather a profound presentation of what Jesus is and that is the fulfilment of Israel as the servant Messiah and son of God Jesus represents the nation of Israel and succeeds where they fail and his coming and in his coming he is now going to fulfil Israel's Old Testament mandate and that was to reveal God's glory and take that message of salvation to the ends of the earth now looking at the second little section in this passage we see the extreme response to the king now this response that prompted the fight to Egypt for Jesus

Mary and Joseph is the response that Herod gives it's the third response that we have seen to Jesus in Matthew chapter 2 there's a reaction of the scribes and the wise men right at the start of this passage who knew the Old Testament better than anyone so who should have seen what these signs were pointing to and they knew that they pointed to Jesus but did nothing when the fulfilment of them was right confronted them now there's the reaction of the wise men so we have apathy at first now we have the reaction of the wise men of the east they saw signs and rather than do nothing they saw him out and worshipped him with exceedingly great joy when they found him but we now get here to Henry there's no two ways to put this he was an evil despotic man who we have seen throughout the chapter is not comfortable with the idea of a messiah a new king coming to

Israel which is in verse 3 is that when Herod the king had heard these things he was troubled and all Israel with him now Herod has a track record for this he once killed 300 of his own mobility who he suspected of trying to desert him he murdered three of his own sons he killed much of the male side of his wife's family before killing her at the end of his life he had no issue with getting rid of perceived rivals to his authority him and they had a pretty track record of doing not the man he wants to cross and we see that he perceived what the wise men did as crossing him we see that in verse 16 he then headed when he saw that he was not of the wise men was exceeding rough and went forth and slew all the children that would have beckoned him and all the coasts thereof from two years old and under according to the time that he had diligently inquired of the wise men notes here on the language that was used when he says rock that's what he means he thinks he has been personally slanted by the wise men and does not take well to it and when it says exceeding rock the weak word is a word really really strong it means a violent rage so he has lost control of himself at this point in time now this is the scene that you see in the vivid place or the pictures of

Jesus coming to the earth the scene that that night really doesn't grab thinking about it's a purely evil act that ravaged the whole town and the surrounding in this but the logic behind it with the character we're looking at here is pretty in step with the character that we know he's happy to wipe out a generation of infants on the off chance that he gets rid of Jesus at the very start of his life there's a rejection of Jesus that leads to tragedy from death and the question you might be asking is the one I mentioned at the start how could this serve any possible purpose why is this here Matthew answers that in these next couple of verses when he says then the voice fulfilled that was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet saying in Ramah was there a voice heard lamentation and weeping and great mourning

Rachel weeping for her children and would not be comforted because they are not now this is going back into the Old Testament this is another prophet speaking it's another type it's another Old Testament story repeating itself in the need I'm going to dig into this just for a couple of minutes so we can understand where it is coming from now this is from the book of Jeremiah in chapter 31 and Jeremiah was a prophet who mostly had bad misled he was pronounced it because doom of a bad nation the king of Israel was split in two at this point and where Jeremiah was things had gotten so bad that they were eventually overrun by the Babylonians as a punishment for life in Hosea deliberate and repeated disobedience and rejection it's horrifying way and it brings

Jeremiah to tears who's known as the weeping prophet but right in the middle we've got [41:17] chapters 13 to 33 which are ones of great hope in this book which is otherwise pretty blue and the prophecy Matthew writes of is right in the middle of this section now the prophecy that we just heard from is from verse 15 of Jeremiah 31 and Ramah the town that is mentioned there is basically a border town where the two kingdoms of Israel met and it's also where the people of Israel were gathered before they were deported to Babylon it's where the whole of Israel drove together before being spread out the farm line it was seen like a death mill to the whole nation now Rachel wasn't around when the exile happened Rachel being Jacob's true love and the one who bore

> Benjamin and Joseph to Jacob now these sons both represented the northern and the southern kingdoms and that sort of tribe eventually settled and this Rachel who said give thee children or I die is now having all of her great great great many times grandchildren scattered in such a manner that the place doesn't really exist anymore so we have Ramah a place of great grief at the doom of all Israel's people we have Rachel the symbolic mother of all of Israel's people for both this is the absolute lowest point but if you read on it we have turned to Jeremiah 31 or if you haven't taken a note of this where we see just after that in verses 16 and 17 of Jeremiah 31 there is hope again thus saith the Lord refrain thy voice from weeping and thy nation's ears for thy work shall be rewarded saith the

> Lord and they shall come again from the land of the enemy and there is hope in thine end saith the Lord that thy children shall come again to their own border rejection of God has led to tragedy but there is redemption for his people but they just can't see it yet God will rescue them now how does this work in Matthew's gospel at this time the mothers quite rightly would refuse to be comforted we can't maybe fully empathise with that but we can understand the feelings like this would emanate from the tragedy that it's been led to is not from a foreign power this time it's from the one king they might have asked has God deserted his people is he really in control does he really hold all the heart because it looks like

> Babylon has all the heart but just as a gen man that is not the end of the soul the king is coming exile just sorry the king is coming exile and Bethlehem has experienced tragedy the redemption is coming for his people just as Israel did the king is coming back from Egypt and just as Israel did the king is coming back from enforced exile these two great recipes of the old testament which are the exodus and the exile of god enacted for the people are now being repeated in Matthew chapter 2 but with far bigger consequences far bigger meaning for us as well now one of my favourite verses in the book of exodus is the whole story in view here is one from exodus chapter 2 verse 25

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Pharaoh has just died and the Egyptians are treating the Israelites even worse than they were before and in chapter 2 verse 25 it says and God looked upon the children of Israel and God knew God knew he was not standing out in the back he was not letting this happening without anything to be done about it than this place in the exodus and the exile and now bringing Jesus here he's preparing to take action in a way that is going to lead an indelible permanent march upon collective memory of the entire human race the great recipes of the exodus and the exile are types of the rescue that has been brought about here and now in Matthew chapter 2 so we've seen that God's true king we've seen that there was to be an extreme reaction to him which would lead to travesty and lastly we've seen that he was to be hated and we'll look at that just now in verses 19 to 23 now we might think that using him being hated is not what we're looking for that doesn't sound like the plan but we're going to see again that that is to be expected so verse 19 let me read the first little half of that section again when he was dead behold the angel of the lord appeared to him in a dream saying arise and take the young child and his mother and go into the land of Israel for they are dead which sought the young child's life and he arose and took the young child and his mother and came into the land of

Israel this is the news that Mary and Joseph are waiting for this episode this awful time for them as a family is finally over they can finally go back to Bethlehem and carry on with raising the infant Jesus at peace or so they think verse 22 says when they heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea in the room of his father headed he was afraid to go to them notwithstanding to be warned of God in a dream he turned aside into the parts of Galilee so they set off they're on their way home thinking this is it and then they found out of this guy called Archelaus and their fear was justified so the Penn family were basically client kings from the Roman Empire which moved over that part of the world at this time so the Roman elite kings as such were confirmed by the empire to have their approval to run that part of the empire for them now this confirmation never occurred for Archelaus because Archelaus began to his way by sloughing the 3,000 prominent citizens now he still raised with a lesser title but the

Roman emperor of justice who himself wasn't exactly afraid to dispose of opponents removed him two years later and banished him to the far reaches of the empire and what happened eventually because of how brutal and evil Archelaus was is that the emperor took rule of Judea away from that family completely now Archelaus oversaw Judea but he did not oversee Galilee in the north so that's where Joseph went he wore a mouth and then to another dream he took his family there and again this is not without significance because they end up in Nazareth and verse 23 says he came to dwell in a city called Nazareth that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets he shall be called the Nazarene now I studied at Shafai University in Glasgow I quickly found out that many folk either just from the central belt or from other countries that came and I told them where I was from most people down in the central belt seem to think that civilization solves a right part the

A9 is this long winding road to Mordor or something like that questions I was legitimately asked sometimes in jest sometimes by people who didn't know any better are there cash issues up there can be cars we got do you have wifi now that's a very tame comparison to what was seen by Nazareth Nazareth doesn't really get a mention in the Old Testament but it is consistently mentioned with derision in the New Testament Christians Christians in the time of the Acts when Paul was around are referred to as the sect of the Nazarenes Paul was referred to like that he's spoken of when they say we have found this man a plague and is a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes John 1 starts with one of Jesus one future disciples being told that we found this person Nathaniel comes to Philip and then he says anything good about

Nazareth but where is this in the Old Testament no one's directly quoted here as is the case in the other two that we mentioned but the sentiment is there in multiple places particularly in the prophet Isaiah which looks ahead to that suffering sermon that God is sent so there's Isaiah chapter 53 a wonderful section of the Old Testament that we may know well is mentioned from chapter 53 verse 3 saying he is despised and rejected of men a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief and we hid as it were our faces from him and he was despised and we esteemed him not and again you see this deadly rejection that would bring about this greatest rescue greater than the exodus greater than the exile in verses 4 and 5 of that chapter surely he had borne our griefs and carried our sorrows yet he did esteem him stricken smitten of God and accepted but he was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities and the chastisement of our peace was upon him and with his stripes we are healed this is

God's king he was protected from the tragedy of verses 16 to 18 and the Lord intended to assure this but this was so that he would be kept for an even greater tragedy and the greatest injustice in history to be enacted upon him this hatred for him by the people and by the state was cast out in the state sanctioned murder by the most painful means possible at the time the evidence was often lacking so much so that it was left to the people to decide his fate and the Roman governor couldn't send him to die in good conscience he washed his hands of it and the people still called for his death over that of a murderer and an insurrectionist rejection of God at the cross led to deadly tragedy and on the

Friday it looks like rejection has won out but he rose just as he said he would and that is why we celebrate Christmas today because he came to die in our place and be punished where we should be punished the greatest rescue started when he came down now just to kind of finish up if you are a Christian here today I wonder how you react when you hear these things about Jesus maybe you hear Jesus spoken of like this just from reading in here maybe you hear it in your workplaces or on social media or in the news or wherever it might be now we should seek this kind of talk out but neither should we be shocked by it if we are rejected or being in when we hear this being so prevalent on social media online and in other places in the public eye and it seems like

God is in control and that all hearts are held by those who hate him remember that God knows and that he has seen you through thus far and he will see you through to the end the great of amazing grace has a verse that speaks through many dangers toils and snares I have already come but not anyone's right but it says it was grace that made me safe thus far and grace will lead me home and if you don't call yourself a Christian and you don't know Jesus today we all know that this time of year is different to the rest maybe you just think there is no need for this Jesus character in our Christmas maybe you believe the beliefs be outdated or whatever it might be but look at what was said of Jesus by someone who would eventually die for him to say in John chapter 1 we have spied him of whom

Moses in the law and of the prophets also wrote Jesus of Nazareth the son of Joseph who is still another future disciple Nathaniel said to him can anything be from Nazareth and Philip responds come and see the future disciple asks this question and Philip responds is come and see they'd all be making centuries for this day and Nathaniel said to him but Philip just says come and see that is in fact to you from God's word at Christmas time and at any time of the year come and see who Jesus is God's promised came from the very beginning came to be the very amongst the very least in a time that was considered to be the very least for the very least we do not have it all together but we know and love the one who does and who gives us true tangible hope in a world where it seems in such short supply come and see let me pray

Father thank you for the rescue that you enacted for us thank you for the ways in which your word points to it so clearly thank you for the way in which you enacted it so powerfully so finally for us that all we need to do is come to you and ask you for the forgiveness that you have won for us already and you welcome us in we thank you that this rescue is final and we pray that we may continue to live in the light of that be thankful for what you have done for us through your son when he came down to eventually die and to rise again we pray that we remember this and that we would just be overjoyed by it and we times are hard to remind ourselves of it or have others remind us of it not the same we pray these things in your son's precious name just as we close we're going to sing again in

Psalm 107 from verses 1 and 9 this time speaks of the Lord's mercies to us which are new every morning and they continually offer to all through what he has done for us what he did through Christ we're going to sing verses 1 to 9 praise God for he is good for still his mercy is lasting be let God you mean say so whom he from the enemy's hand did free and gather them out of the lands from north south east and west they stray in desert path this way no city found to rest for thirst and hunger in them faints their soul with space and rest in time to the Lord and he then flees from their distress them also in a way to walk that right is he the guide that they might to a city go wherein they might abide!

O that men to the Lord will give praise for his goodness then and for his works of wonder done unto the sons of men for he the soul that longing is that fully satisfied with goodness he the hungry soul will fill!

above the sin praise God for he is good for still his mercy is lasting me let God treat him to know whom he from the end his handed feet and gather them out of the land from north to east and west his traded danger fond last way no safety found to rest for thoughts come

God in earth and face their soul and space and rest they die unto the Lord and he and flee from them his rest!

them! also in a way to walk God rises!

he his guide!!! he he! he he he go!

[61:53] ! he he might abide! he!

that men should the! Lord forgive! praise for his goodness then and for his works of wonder!

God does! come to the sons of men! For he the soul that long is God's holy time is night with goodness he he like his soul that they are abundantly now unto him that is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy to the only wise

God our saviour glory and majesty dominion and power both now and ever Amen to to