

The Mothers of Jesus

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 23 December 2023

Preacher: Walt Alexander

[0 : 00] The following message is given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee.! For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com.

And Isaac, the father of Jacob. And Jacob, the father of Judah and his brothers.
And Judah, the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar. And Perez, the father of Hezron. Hezron, the father of Ram. Ram, the father of Amminadab. And Amminadab, the father of Nashun.
And Nashun, the father of Salmon. And Salmon, the father of Boaz by Rahab. And Boaz, the father of Obed by Ruth. And Obed, the father of Jesse.
And Jesse, the father of David, the king. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah.
And Solomon, the father of Rehoboam.

[1 : 24] And Rehoboam, the father of Abijah. And Abijah, the father of Asaph. Asaph, the father of Jehoshaphat. Jehoshaphat, the father of Joram.

And Joram, the father of Uzziah. And Uzziah, the father of Jotham. And Jotham, the father of Ahaz. And Ahaz, the father of Hezekiah.

And Hezekiah, the father of Manasseh. And Manasseh, the father of Amos. And Amos, the father of Josiah. And Josiah, the father of Jeconiah and his brothers at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

And after the deportation to Babylon, Jeconiah was the father of Sheeltiel. Sheeltiel, the father of Zerubbabel. And Zerubbabel, the father of Abiud.

And Abiud, the father of Eliakim. And Eliakim, the father of Azor. And Azor, the father of Zadok. And Zadok, the father of Achim.

[2 : 31] And Achim, the father of Eliud. And Eliud, the father of Eliezer. And Eliezer, the father of Matan. And Matan, the father of Jacob.

And Jacob, the father of Joseph. The husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.

So all the generations from Abraham to David were 14 generations. And from David to the deportation to Babylon, 14 generations.

And from the deportation to Babylon to Christ, 14 generations. This is the word of God. Well, as you know, the opening words to a book are very important.

They either make you want to keep reading or toss the book aside. Several months ago, my wife and I began a book entitled, A Fever in the Heartland.

[3 : 37] The Ku Klux Klan's plot to take over America and the woman who stopped them. Now, the title alone is intriguing, but the introduction riveted us.

It introduced us to D.C. Stevenson, the Grand Dragon of Indiana. And the Grand Dragon of the largest realm of the KKK that the world had ever known.

It detailed his incredible power, direct access to the president, power over the governor, seemingly innumerable cops, judges, prosecutors, ministers, and mayors in the state of Indiana answered to D.C.

Stevenson, the old man as he was known. In 1925, it seemed that the stage was set for the old man to not just be the Grand Dragon of Indiana, but the Imperial Wizard of the United States.

The introduction, though, concludes by taking us to a ball in the winter of 1925. The governor and 150 of Indiana's dignitaries were there, but all eyes were on Stevenson.

[4 : 55] Across from him sits a young lady named Madge Oberholzer. She had been hired to help set up for the event, and she ran home dressed up, snuck into a seat at Stevenson's table.

Unbeknownst to Stevenson and everyone else present, she would soon bring him down. The last words of the introduction are this. All that would stand between him and Klan control of much of the United States was Madge Oberholzer.

She would force a reckoning. A sensational trial of a man who'd enlisted countless Americans in a pledge of hate. He asked her to dance, and later he gave her his phone number.

I mean, if you don't keep reading after that. Yeah, I mean, I was all in. Well, the opening words of the Gospel of Matthew don't seem that important.

Not exactly the words that just keep you moving when you open them and begin to read. They don't grab your attention. They're so repetitive and so same old, same old.

[6 : 06] They don't draw us in to keep reading. Unlike Luke's Gospel, they don't begin with stars and shepherds or angels appearing. No, Matthew's Gospel begins with a long list of names.

The story of Christmas in Matthew's Gospel begins with a list of 44 names, most of which we can't pronounce. Not quite the beginning we would expect.

In fact, if we're honest, when we come upon a genealogy like this, we usually just skim past it and get to the real action. But Matthew's Gospel begins this way for a number of reasons, but one of the main ones is to slow us down.

To unveil to us and uncover to us Jesus Christ and what he came to do in a most surprising way. So we're going to study this genealogy. Main point is Jesus came down to open wide forever the way to God to all who believe.

Jesus came down to open wide forever the way to God to all who believe. I'm going to break it out in three points. The first is Christmas is a wonderfully true story.

[7 : 23] Now, Matthew, so it's a wonderfully true story. Matthew does not begin his story of Christmas with once upon a time. Like we might expect a fairy tale.

He doesn't begin with in a galaxy far, far away. Matthew begins with a genealogy. Now, without the convenience of records and Ancestry.com, genealogies in the ancient world tell others exactly who you are.

They are carefully kept so that someone can list out their genealogy for employment or legal or other reason. They are like birth papers. When my in-laws fled Vietnam, they left with their clothes on their back, a bit of cash, and their papers.

Their papers were vital to show that he fled for South Vietnam, trained by the United States. They proved who they were. Well, genealogies are like that. Genealogies are all about facts.

The facts of who your parents are, who your siblings are, where your family is from. And Matthew begins his story of Christmas with a genealogy to place Jesus and all that he did in real time.

[8 : 36] To place him in history. Matthew begins this way to alert us that Jesus is not a myth. Jesus is not a fairy tale. Jesus is a historical person with a bloodline.

Matthew is saying that before Christmas is anything else, it is objective historical fact. It's a story of a real person born into a real family with a really big family tree who became known to many in the real world around him.

It is cold, hard facts that lie at the foundation of Christmas. If not historically true, Christianity, unlike other religions, crumbles to pieces.

But Matthew begins this way also to say that the true story of Christmas has been a long time coming. Verse 1, if you look back there, he literally says, it says the book of the genealogy, but literally it's the book of the genesis of Jesus Christ.

Now for some of us, when we hear the word genesis, we think of a band in the 80s and 90s. But for the original readers of this gospel, they thought immediately of the beginning.

[9 : 51] That's what genesis means. This is the book of the beginning of Jesus Christ. This is the beginning of Jesus Christ, but it doesn't begin at his birth.

Matthew begins 2,000 years ago in Mesopotamia, 4,000 now at the call of Abraham. Matthew continues through Egypt where the people lived for 400 years and on through the wilderness and into the promised land.

Matthew takes us up to King David and then quickly down through the crumbling kingdom after him. Matthew takes us into Babylon, into exile and back where the people waited.

Thousands of years are contained in these verses. Forty-two generations. All captured in these names. What it's saying is the story of Christmas doesn't begin in a manger.

The story of Christmas begins thousands of years ago and every page of scripture whispers his name. The story of Christmas is about Jesus Christ, not merely the son of Mary, but the son of David, the son of Abraham.

[11:06] I love the way the Jesus Storybook Bible captures this in the beginning of it. It says the Bible isn't a book of rules or a book of heroes. The Bible is most of all a story.

It's an adventure story about a young hero who comes from a far country to win back his lost treasure. It's a love story about a brave prince who leaves his palace, his throne, everything to rescue the one he loves.

It's like the most wonderful of fairy tales that has come true in real life. You see, the best thing about this story is it's true.

There are lots of stories in the Bible, but all of them are telling one big story. The story of how God loves his children and comes to rescue them.

It takes the whole Bible to tell this story. And in the center of this story, there is a baby. Every story in the Bible whispers his name.

[12:10] He's like the missing piece of a puzzle. This piece that makes all the other pieces fit together and suddenly you see the beautiful picture. And this is no ordinary baby.

This is the child upon whom everything would depend. Christmas is a story.

Thousands and thousands of years all along. That's what God has been doing. He's been writing a story preparing for the arrival of Jesus Christ in the fullness of time.

What that means is that from the very beginning and all along, God knew what he was doing.

Pause at any point in that genealogy and you find the people of God facing various trials and temptations.

Facing sin and failure. Facing sin and failure. Yet all along, God was writing a story. All of it leading in the fullness of time to the birth of the baby.

[13:14] I love the way O Little Town of Bethlehem captures it. The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

There's a vital takeaway for us. I recently read about monarch butterflies. Not that I'm reading books about birds or butterflies. I was reading a book.

It used this illustration talking about monarch butterflies. Something I didn't know that monarch butterflies migrate like birds do. So they fly from Mexico to breeding grounds in the north and back.

The problem is it takes four and sometimes five generations of monarch butterflies to make it through the migration. No single butterfly migrates from Mexico up to the north and back.

It takes generations. I mean, can you imagine getting the kids ready for this? I mean, Junior, we just want you to cross the border. Come on. Or come on, little man.

[14:20] You're next. We just want you to span the nation of Texas on your way to the north, you know. He's calling them to something like that. I mean, we can't get that in the way we think about life.

But I think it's an important way of taking this away for us. If you pause these monarch butterflies, not that they think psychologically about their life. But if you pause them, they wouldn't find the meaning of their life in what they're doing.

They're just swimming or they're just flying to a direction and dying. And somebody's taking up the baton, so to speak. The same is true for us. You're not meant to find the meaning of your life in thinking about me, but in us.

Find the meaning of your life in a much greater story. That's what's going on in this genealogy. You pause at any point. You find the people of God facing so many things just like us. And the meaning is not in the things you're certainly facing right now, but in being brought up into this fabulous story of thousands of years that God will continue to write until he brings us to worship him face to face.

So Christmas is a wonderfully true story. Secondly, Christmas is for those who hate it the most.

Christmas is for those who hate it the most. This genealogy is not a normal genealogy.

[15:35] And you probably picked that up as we were going. I mean, a normal genealogy just says so-and-so was the father of so-and-so, and so-and-so was the father of so-and-so. But this genealogy is what they would say is an annotated genealogy.

It interrupts the rhythm of so-and-so fathering so-and-so with little details. We see that in verse 2 when it says Judah had some brothers.

We know the 12 tribes of Israel. So we know he had some brothers. Of course, Perez had a twin brother. David was the king in verse 6.

Jeconiah was the king when they went into Babylon. And so it's telling us a bit of history as it goes. And it also skips a number of generations. If you line this up with Luke's genealogy or with some of the chronicle, you would notice it skips.

And it tells us what it's doing at the end of the genealogy in verses 16 and 17. That it just includes 14 generations from Abraham to David, 14 from David to the exile, 14 more from the exile back into the land to Jesus Christ.

[16:44] Matthew is not merely filling in the family tree of Jesus Christ. Matthew is telling us something. Perhaps the most important thing Matthew is telling us revolves around the inclusion of five women.

Luke's genealogy mentions 67 men in the genealogy of Jesus Christ. But Matthew includes 40 men and five women.

The issue, though, is not just that this genealogy includes women, but it's the women that it includes. Now, if you're going to include a few women from the Old Testament, I mean, wouldn't you include Sarah?

Sarah. The first lady, so to speak. Rebecca or Rachel. But this list includes Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, the wife of Uriah, and finally Mary.

Now, to help us understand what's going on here, we've got to understand the way genealogies work. Genealogies were not just like citizenship papers. They were a bit like resumes. They included your family and lineage so that folks would know who you are, so folks would know who they are.

[18:04] But folks only wrote down those parts that would impress others. We've got to do the same thing in our resume. I mean, we don't include in our resume the job we quit and left everyone hanging.

We don't include those few months at community college where we didn't try. Yeah, alum. You know, we don't throw that in there.

We leave that out to impress. It's so great having Gil back here this morning from Pastors College. Well, several months ago, while we were reviewing Gil's resume for Pastors College, I need to regretfully inform you that he left a few things out. Back in the 1830s, a revival spread through Reformed churches in East Tennessee.

This is factual. All of these Reformed churches were excited about the revival, but there were certain teachers that began teaching churches to reject Reformed theology and embrace some liberal teaching in response to the revival.

[19:12] There was one man in East Tennessee that was a particular problem. The churches failed to discipline this one man and his teaching spread.

And I quote in a history of Reformed theology in Tennessee, only in Tennessee where the teaching gained a foothold was there a majority of believers adhering to this teaching.

This majority may be accounted for by the influence of Hezekiah Balch, Gil's great, great, great granddad.

I mean, what are we to do? The churches failed to discipline him. What are we going to do in response?

When Gil was trying to impress the pastor's college, he wisely left Hezekiah off. And if Matthew was trying to impress us, he would have left these five women off as well.

[20:22] But he includes them to show the shocking grace of God that comes to us. In Christmas, the first woman's name is Tamar, who we'll encounter later in Genesis.

Genesis 38 tells us that Tamar was the oldest, or Tamar is married to the oldest of three brothers. When her husband dies, one of her brothers is supposed to take her in marriage and to continue the brother's line.

It's the way the Old Testament was. None of these brothers step up. They disobey and they refuse. His father-in-law, Judah, promises to find a husband for her in time, but he never comes through.

So Tamar, Genesis 38, tells us, dressed up like a prostitute and seduces her father-in-law so that she could have a baby. She should have been stoned, but instead she gives birth to a son who would become the father of Jesus Christ.

The line leading to Jesus continues because Judah went into a prostitute and ended up getting his daughter-in-law pregnant. Merry Christmas.

[21 : 38] The second woman is Rahab. Rahab is a prostitute who appears near the beginning of Joshua. When the people are going into the promised land, they're commanded to drive out the Canaanites who lived in the land.

Rahab is a Canaanite, that means not a member of the people of Israel, who lives in Jericho. When the spies enter the land, though, they come to her house.

She welcomes them and hides them. She risks her life, and when the walls of Jericho come tumbling down, she walks out alive. I love the way Joshua 6 captured it.

The young men who had been spies went in and brought Rahab and her father and mother and brothers and all who belonged to her, and they brought all her relatives and put them outside the camp of Israel, and they burned the city with fire and everything in it.

But Rahab, the prostitute, and her father's household, and all who belonged to her, Joshua saved alive. And she's lived in Israel to this day because she hid the messenger whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

[22 : 58] And the mystery of providence, we don't even know in the Old Testament. Before long, she marries Salmon and ends up being a mother of Jesus as well.

The third woman's name is Ruth. Now, a whole book of the Bible is devoted to the story of Ruth. She's a widow. She, too, is from a foreign land, a land the Israelites weren't supposed to live in and a people among whom they weren't supposed to marry.

But a man from Bethlehem marries her. Then she dies, left with the opportunity to remain in her home country of Moab.

She follows her mother-in-law to Bethlehem. She says, Your God will be my God. Your people be my people. She refuses to leave.

She does whatever she can to provide. And then this incredible character, Boaz, emerges. Boaz is a next in kin to marry her and redeem her, a kinsman redeemer in the Old Testament, to rescue her for being a widow.

[24 : 13] And he marries Ruth the Moabite. I love the way the end of Ruth says it. After she's married, she conceives.

And the women of the neighborhood gave him a name saying, A son has been born to Naomi. That's her mother-in-law. Just a way of saying, God's rescued us out of our desperate situation. They named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David. She too has a baby and becomes a mother of Jesus Christ.

The fourth name on the list is the wife of Uriah. Now this name recalls one of the saddest scenes in the Old Testament. But why doesn't Matthew mention her name?

We have several prostitutes already in. You know, why doesn't he mention her name? Well, when King David was on the run from Absalom, a group of men went out in the wilderness to protect David and be with him.

[25 : 21] They were his mighty men. They're listed in Chronicles. Uriah the Hittite was one of them. King David repays Uriah years later.

While he's out fighting for their country, King David sleeps with his wife. Adding insult to injury, when David finds out she's pregnant, he arranges for Uriah, her husband, to be killed.

Both he and Bathsheba should have been sentenced to death. But instead, he continues to reign. And she gives birth to Solomon. The next king.

Matthew removes her name, not to criticize her, but to point the blame at David.

That's what's going on. The wife of Uriah is reminding us of the man David killed. So that the blame would rest on him.

[26 : 26] So if Matthew were composing a genealogy of Jesus Christ to impress us, to impress the world, each of these women would not have been included. Why are they there?

Scholars argue about this. Why is there so much emphasis on the colorful and crooked family tree of Jesus Christ? Well, Matthew is saying, Jesus is not coming just to gather the people of Israel. Jesus is coming for the outcasts as well. Jesus is coming for the outsiders. Jesus is coming for those who are not born into the right family or with the right background.

Jesus is coming for those in the shadows of death. Each of these women don't belong. They're outsiders to the people of Israel. And Jesus is coming as the one who came for the outsider.

Jesus is the true son of Abraham who brings blessing to the nations. One of the things we've seen again and again as we've gone through Genesis, in him will all the nations be blessed.

[27 : 30] The plan of God all along was not an internal family plan, but a global, multi-generational, multi-family, all-colored plan.

And that's what Jesus is coming to do. Just as Isaiah 49, it is too small a thing for the servant, talking about Jesus Christ, for the promised one to just gather up the people of Israel.

He must be a light to the nations. So Christmas is not for the in crowd or the good crowd or the successful crowd.

It's for tax collectors and sinners. It's for prostitutes, adulterers, misfits, and rejects. It's for those with a past that they'd love to scrub out.

It's for those with regrets. Those with nightmares. Christmas is for those who hate it the most because they never feel worthy enough.

[28 : 35] Never feel put together enough. Isn't that the story? Isn't that the story of the last woman, Mary? I was reading again in Luke 1 the other day, meditating on her prayer after the angel Gabriel appears to her.

Twice she mentions the humble estate in which he finds her, this poor servant girl, poor virgin. Twice she mentions mercy.

When we think about grace, grace is for the undeserving. Well, mercy is for the miserable. That's what she's saying. She says, he who is mighty has done great things for me.

Wonderfully, Christmas is for you. I don't know if you're happy or sad. I don't know if this year has been a year of bliss or a year of misery.

I don't know if you love this time of year or dread it. Sometimes we think young kids can just fly through Christmas. It's all joy. I remember as a young boy, same age as my son is now, 13 years old and my cousin had died that summer.

[29 : 57] And going through Christmas, I felt the most empty and pathetic thing in the world. It seemed all fun, but not real.

wherever you find yourself today. Christmas is for you. One of the reasons the Bible includes so many genealogies is because the Lord wants you to know that he doesn't forget anyone's name. He hasn't forgotten your name. He knows what this year was like. He made you. He knows you and he came for you with all your misery so that you might know his grace.

Thirdly, Christmas is the beginning of the end of all sin and pain. Christmas is the beginning and the end of all sin and pain.

Another thing that stands out from this genealogy is the emphasis upon David. Look in verse 1 again. The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

[31 : 06] Verse 6, it says, Jesse, the father of David, the king. Verse 17, talking about all the generation from Abraham to David and from David to the deportation of Babylon and the deportation of Babylon to Christ.

First 14 generations. Obviously, the key figure of the history of Israel is David. David is the king.

If you're using the words the king in reference to Israel, you immediately think of David. He was the man after God's own heart. But there's something else going on here.

It was customary for, as we've seen already, it's customary for Jewish writers to compose genealogies to say something important, to arrange them, to arrange them so that they're memorable and easy to memorize.

And David's name, if you notice, is the 14th name on the list. Matthew also structures the genealogy to come up with three sets of 14.

[32 : 13] Even more, if you're assigning consonants, assigning values to the consonants in David's name, D, V, D, and you added those values up, it would reach 14.

Four plus six for the V. Four for the Ds to 14. While this genealogy certainly tells us that the story of Jesus is true, the story of Christmas is true and has room for all the outcasts, this genealogy tells us that this Jesus is the Son of David.

Now, in some ways, it's hard for us to relate because we've heard these types of words. We've heard him been called the Son of David all our lives, but this wasn't immediately clear to the original audience.

We have to slow down and appreciate all that is going on. When David was the king in Israel, about 1,000 B.C., David reached fabulous heights and was building a massive house for himself.

And he said, I want to build a house for the Lord. I want to build a fixed place. The Lord had been living in tents until that point. You know, he'd been a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, and then he was in the tabernacle, tent camping through the wilderness.

[33 : 25] He was in the middle of them. And so David said, I want him to have a fixed location. I want a physical address for the Lord. The Lord says, you're not going to build me a house. I'm going to build you a house, not a physical house.

I'm going to put one of your sons on the throne forever. You and your kingdom will never end. And so promises continue to anticipate and unpack what this son of David will look like.

And so they trace it through. That's some of what's going on in the kings. You know, they did not walk like their father David. They did walk like their father David. They did not walk. They're looking for this king. And then about 700 BC, Isaiah prophesies some of the words that we love to read at Christmas.

For to us, a child is born. To us, a son is given. And the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his kingdom and of peace, there will be no end. On the throne of David, and over his kingdom to establish it and hold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore.

[34 : 38] So what's going on is they, in 1000 BC, they're promised that one son of David would reign on the throne. They thought a physical descendant of him. And then this promise comes in 700 BC to say this physical, he is going to sit, there is going to be a descendant that sits on the throne, but he's going to be more than a mere human physical son of David, more than just born of David's line.

He's going to be mighty God. Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government, there will be no end.

There will be forevermore. And then in 500 BC, Ezekiel prophesied that it will not just be a son of David that will come, but the Lord will come.

Perhaps my favorite prophecy about his coming in Ezekiel 34, repeated 25 times with power of full effect. The Lord said, I myself will come.

He says, I will search for my sheep. I will seek them out. Isn't that Luke 19, 10? Came to seek and save that which is lost.

[35 : 47] I will rescue them from all places where they've been scattered. I will feed them. I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep. I will set over them one shepherd, my servant David.

And he shall feed them. He shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the Lord, will be their God. And my servant David shall be prince among them.

I am the Lord. God, I have spoken. So all of this emphasis is coming together for the original audience. And this genealogy is coming together for the original audience for them to hear that this son of David is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ.

Weaving Jesus into real time is weaving him into these promises that have been awaited for thousands of years. This is the one, the son of David, the rightful heir to David's throne by his lineage.

The genealogy is right there. These are his papers. They're right there. And he's rightly called the Christ, the Messiah, the anointed one because he's the king.

[37 : 03] Wonder of wonders though, he is the Lord, the son of God. Wonderful counselor, mighty God, everlasting father, prince of peace. He is the true and better Abraham who will be a father of all people from every tribe, tongue, and nation.

He is the true and better David who will reign forever and never fail. That's why this genealogy is composed so carefully and that's why it's formed around David yet includes why David failed or how David failed.

So we read the wife of Uriah saying that that David is not the true David because that David failed. But the true David is the one who will never fail, who will be made like us in every respect, yet be without sin so that he might have grace and mercy to everyone in their time of need.

So this David is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ who's come to open wide forever the way to God to all who believe. Scriptures say the light has shined in the darkness.

[38 : 14] The darkness has not overcome it. Jesus is the light of the world. It's as if we walk in the light as he is in the light.

We have fellowship with God and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin. This is what Christmas is all about. It's not meant to be a story.

It's kind of re-say the same thing you've done every year. Because at the center of Christmas is not a story merely. The center of Christmas is a person.

The Lord Jesus Christ he came for the righteous he came the righteous the unrighteous that he might bring you to God. Christmas is about bridging the gap that you might approach him without fear of his wrath ever again.

You might know him truly experience forgiveness of sins. You might be set free. You might be like Kevin and home alone and run outside and say I'm not afraid anymore.

[39 : 28] Come death come sickness sorrow I'm not afraid anymore. I invite you to Jesus Christ.

Now the baby in Bethlehem is not the end of sin and pain as we know it. But it does announce that that day is coming soon. Bethlehem is an expiration date of all sin and pain.

I long for the day when I don't have to confess harshness anymore. I don't have to hear about another hospital stay or another rape another cheat who got ahead by ditching his wife another job loss another lonely Christmas ravaged by death.

Christmas doesn't end all that for me and you but it promises it will happen soon. What do we do? I mean is it worth celebrating?

If it doesn't end at all immediately. C.S. Lewis I think he helps us in his children's book The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe. If you haven't read this book this would be a great thing to do this Christmas.

[40 : 51] Fabulous book. Lucy and our siblings have climbed through the wardrobe. Now we don't use that word but kind of a big closet like thing.

They climb through the wardrobe of their uncle's home into a land called Narnia. They find out that the witch queen has cursed Narnia so that it is always winter and never Christmas.

Now it's still not winter here but it is Christmas. The story continues and the witch's power begins to wane.

The kids are making their way through Narnia but the witch's power begins to wane. The snow begins to stop. The sun comes out. The ground begins to thaw. Christmas is coming back.

They hear a sleigh they think it's the witch queen and no it's actually Father Christmas himself gives out gifts and presents.

[41 : 54] Most importantly they hear Aslan the Christ figure is on the move no doubt about to have a showdown with the witch queen.

The witch still has their brother Edmund has four siblings that go through the wardrobe they have Edmund she has Edmund under her spell and she's on the move to the stone table and as she does she stumbles upon a fabulous scene she's in her sleigh with Edmund starving for breakfast says she stopped a little way off a little way off at the foot of a tree sat a merry party a squirrel and his wife with their children and two saturs and a dwarf and an old dog fox now animals can talk in Narnia and interact all on stools around a table having a little feast Edmund couldn't quite see what they were eating but it smelled lovely and there seemed to be decorations of holly and he wasn't at all sure that he didn't see something like plum pudding now we don't eat plum pudding so it might be pecan pie down here in the south but what he's saying is he's smelling Christmas dinner he's seeing this wonderful celebration and the witch queen says what is the meaning of this speak vermin she said again what is the meaning of all this gluttony this waste this self indulgence perhaps you might have a friend that looks at you what's the meaning of all this

Christmas just sentimental hogwash might have a family member who says that you might ponder yourself is there really meaning in all this celebration this singing I don't like the carols this gift giving it's just a way to spread good vibes good cheer ignore what's really wrong I actually think it's an invitation to be a part of the foretaste of what to come the wonder of Christmas not going to end in just vanquishing all the foes first Corinthians 15 does say Christ must reign until he puts every enemy under his foot but it's going to end with a massive party until then we celebrate we feast we enjoy we give gifts in anticipation and celebration the one who gave us his son and the one who's promised a massive feast at the end in which he'll swallow up death wipe away all tears and cover our shame forever so Merry Christmas

Father in heaven we cast ourselves on to you this day and always Lord as the song says we don't want the promised son to remain a stranger we confess him again as our Lord as our Savior as our treasure we say come to us and abide with us our Lord Emmanuel in Christ's name Amen You've

been listening to a message given by Walt Alexander lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens Tennessee for more information about Trinity Grace please visit us at in in!
in