

Missing Jesus

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[0 : 0 0] much appreciated and also to Phil at the back he's often an unsung hero he's the techie guy who pulls all this together and makes the rest of us look half decent as he works the buttons and flashes the lights and so forth so thank you very much indeed Phil for your ministry as well.

Just want to speak for a few moments on the passage that was read recently. The BBC a couple of weeks ago did a they were having a quite quiet discussion as it were and talking about do you send Christmas cards to people nowadays and I'm sure maybe a few years ago before you had the internet and a computer and a phone we all sent loads and loads of Christmas cards and it cost us a fortune and stamps. Nowadays it might just be a text a whatsapp thing Merry Christmas a couple of wee smiley faces and a Christmas tree and a Santa or whatever we don't often do this is the King and Queen's Christmas the official Christmas card for this year that was taken in the grounds of Buckingham Palace and here is another Christmas card or an image this is by First Minister John Swinney it's a photograph of Los Lach Faskoli and it was taken by the woman there Jane Barlow and it was taken in his

North Persia constituency that's the photograph that he's going to use in his cards and send him out a lot of politicians do this they have competitions they they choose a picture they send it out and behind that is usually a good cause this particular photograph will be signed by him and it will be auctioned off and the money that they will earn from this will go to a children's charity called Children First he says that he is committed to ending child poverty in Scotland so that's the reason why he's chosen that picture I wonder if you remember this other image who used that on a card can anybody remember who chose that image a number of years ago that was another politician that chose that one that was Nicola Sturgeon's a few years ago she chose that image and she chose that image to show the impact of global warming on this polar bear on this iceberg that's melting and that was the image that she chose if you don't remember who was used that you'll not remember who did the drawing the drawing was done by Annie Lennox she of the Eurythmics she did this and Nicola Sturgeon used this as well earlier this year Alex Salmon passed away passed away as well here is the image that he used does anybody know that the name of the man and the image and who he is it was drawn by Peter House and his drawings are very graphic indeed they're all every all these characters look as if they've just come out the mine or the pit or whatever they all look rough you'd find them in a in a pub somewhere I like his his drawings does anybody know the name of this man in the image this man is called Artaban that is his name and if you maybe the name rings a bell this man is is based on a novel here is the novel by Henry Van Dyke and he is called the fourth wise man there was a novel written in 1895 about this man called Artaban he's a he's a Persian scholar or a priest and this book was written by a clergyman and unlike the other magi who saw the signs and the star he too had had gifts to bring to Jesus and uh and he sets out however along the way he stops to help a dying man and because he does this he misses the the caravan of the other three wise men so there's according to the book that was supposed to be four it's not a true story it's just a novel but he misses this and therefore because he helped this this dying man he missed uh the whole birth uh of

Jesus and you can see why uh many politicians or you can see why Alex Salmon liked uh that guy because he helped others those in who in need and many politicians choose a picture that's based on that eventually the the story goes that uh Artaban spends the next 30 or so years basically on his quest to try and find Jesus and he uh eventually arrives has been to Egypt because he when he gets to Bethlehem his mom and dad Jesus uh Mary and Joseph have gone so he's trying to find them for these 30 or so years he arrives in Jerusalem just as Jesus was being crucified he missed the birth of Jesus but not only that he missed the whole life of Jesus he never heard Jesus teaching he never heard anything about him and he used the last of his gifts he had three gifts he had a

sapphire a ruby and a pearl of great price and he gave these away to help others he eventually gives away the pearl to ransom a young woman from being sold into slavery the story goes that he was killed by a slate falling from a roof and as he's lying there dying uh the writer says this a voice comes to him and says this verily I say to you and as much as you have done this to the least of these my brethren you have done it for me and the the story goes that because of his good deeds he is welcomed into heaven now that is so far from the scriptures uh it's hardly worth recognizing if we could be saved and gain an entrance into heaven by doing good deeds good deeds good deeds are great whether it's to children or to orphans or whoever none of these can save us and that's where the book goes goes wrong uh if we could be saved by coming to church on on carols by candlelight and God sees our heart and and we were singing carols and that was enough Jesus really didn't have to come and he certainly didn't have to die he had to come because we need a savior we cannot save ourselves and that is what artaban failed to recognize many people are like this today they're like artaban of old they miss christmas they miss the whole point gee artaban missed jesus birth he missed his life he missed all of his teaching unlike the other wise men who did come and they did meet jesus they admired him so let's consider what the other wise men knew that artaban didn't very quickly three points very quickly first of all they recognized they saw jesus that the one in the manger was a king he was king this was mentioned to us in jane's reading after jesus was born in bethlehem in judea during the time of king herod magi from the east came to jerusalem they asked where is the one who is to be born king of the jews a few verses on bethlehem in the land of judah you are by no means least among the rulers of judah out of you will come a ruler jesus is more than just a man who was born he is the son of god he is god the son come to dwell among us in him was life and his life was a light of men he was with god in the beginning in colossians it says this about jesus he is the image of the invisible god the firstborn overall creation for by him all things were created things in heaven things on earth visible and invisible thrones powers rulers authorities all things were created by this baby they were created by him and for him he is before him and all things in him all things hold together this baby in the manger is is not to be looked on as one who is with sentimentality a wee baby who doesn't love a wee baby and go oh and your heart goes out to him he is king he is king of kings lord of lords he is the son of god that's why when jesus at the age of 30 when he began to preach says repent for the kingdom of god is near he brings his kingdom he brings his kingdom his rule and one day this king will judge us that is the fact he didn't just live and die and was buried he died he rose again he is seated at the father's right hand even this evening and one day we will see him whether we believe him or not we will stand before him and he will judge us what did we think of him did we miss him did we miss what christmas is all about and the need of a savior secondly he's not only king he is a shepherd the three wise men recognize this where is the one who was born king but secondly verse six you bethlehem in the land of judah are by no means least among the rulers of judah for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people israel that wee phrase tells us how he will rule he doesn't come and and just rain fire down and use his authority he comes to rule as a shepherd to care for sheep to provide to protect a shepherd is a great job it's a great role he cares for sheep and that is the picture that we are to get of this king in the manger this baby who is the creator of the world come down god among us he is king but he is shepherd who will shepherd his people i don't know about you but i need somebody to shepherd me sometimes you think well i'm invincible [10:35] i'm okay whether you get older or not we need somebody just to love us just to care for us to see us to know us to know our name it's great if somebody knows your name somebody comes up to you great to see you harry pete mary you go wow you know my name i feel special the lord knows you he knows you better than you know yourself he cares for you he came to save you he came to die for you jesus is the shepherd who came to lay down his life for the sheep he mentions this i am the good shepherd the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep the hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep for when he sees a wolf coming he abandons the sheep and runs away and the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it the man runs away because he's a hired hand jesus said and cares nothing about the sheep i am the good shepherd i know my sheep and my sheep know me just as the father knows me and i know the father i lay down my life for the sheep jesus is the good shepherd he is the shepherd of his people so he is king and he is shepherd he came to love and to care and to provide and thirdly he is to be worshipped we just heard the music group singing if there was one word you never missed it was the word worship and that is what we are to do he is worthy of all praise and glory and worship artaban missed this entirely he never worshipped him he didn't get what he was about at all went around helping folk thinking that

that will be enough to save him he wasn't impressed he didn't really know jesus the magi the other three did know him he is king he is shepherd he comes to shepherd his people but verse 2 in matthew 2 that jane read to us where is the one who is born king of the jews we have seen his star when it rose and have come to worship him it appears that when they saw the star the star disappeared and the magi didn't know where to find jesus so they go to jerusalem there they are told you will find him in bethlehem and then when the star appears again we we read when they saw the star it rose and went on ahead of them it's till it stopped over the place where jesus was when they saw the star they were overjoyed why because the star led them to jesus i wonder if that thrills you tonight just to think about jesus to meet jesus to to give your life to him the magi were thrilled at the star why because it led them to jesus it would lead them to the one who was king who was shepherd and when they came they worshipped him and gave their gifts gold frankincense and myrrh there's a whole sermon in those three gifts but i'll just mention them to you gold is fit for a king you don't uh give king charles and queen camilla something out of pound stretcher uh when when you visit them you you get something out of harrods or something out of whatever it is and you say this this is for you you you're a king you're a queen this is worthy of you gold they present gold because they recognize this is a king this is a king before them frankincense speaks of the divinity of jesus being the son of god it's a symbol of worship used in worship mir is to anoint him for his death even in this they recognize that he will die he comes to die you and i are born to live we don't we don't think well that's me i'm just going to die jesus whole mission was to die he was born to die to set his face towards jerusalem and the easter time we remember

that he died on the cross so what about jesus today let me just finish by giving you a picture at the end of the bible not in the beginning of the new testament and matthew and luke but in the book of revelation this is who jesus is today the bible tries its best to try and paint a picture of of the power and authority of jesus alive seated at god's right hand having finished his work dying for you and me revelation one i turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me and when i turned i saw seven golden lampstands among the lampstands was someone like a son of man dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet with a golden sash around his waist the hair on his head was white like wool as white as snow and his eyes were like blazing fire his feet were like burnished bronze in a furnace and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters in his right hand he held seven stars and coming out of his mouth was a sharp double-edged sword his face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance and john tells us what he did when he saw this when i saw him i fell at his feet as though dead then he placed his right hand on me and said do not be afraid i am the first and the last i am the living one i was dead and now look i am alive forever and ever i hold the keys of death and hades artaban was supposedly according to the book the fourth wise man he wasn't wise in the sense that you cannot save yourself by just busying yourself with good deeds we need to know who jesus is we need to know him as our savior we need him to save us from our sin and we need to come to him and acknowledge that and say i thank you for sending your son i thank you for coming and dying on the cross for me and trusting only in that living a life that pleases him not to repay him but out of great gratitude for what he has done for us jesus is king he is shepherd he is worthy of all praise and glory so let me finish with a question are you a wise man or a wise woman are you wise on this sunday evening do you recognize who jesus is or are you like artaban who didn't quite understand who jesus was and why he came let's stand and sing a closing song it's oh holy night the stars are brightly shining before we sing this you're welcome to stay behind it'd be great if you can stay behind and have tea or coffee i was i was tempted somebody said we were getting sausage rolls i was a dog with two tails sausage rolls i'm always bending my wife's ear can't just give a sausage forget the salmon sausage rolls no sausage rolls so if i burst your bubble as well no sausage rolls tonight we'll have tea and coffee and wee chocolate things so that is great but it is great to see here tonight as i'm looking around i recognize most of you but there's a few folk i don't recognize and it's especially good to have you with us it really is it means a lot and uh but it means a lot uh the lord you mean a lot to the lord and may the lord speak to you and draw him draw you to himself even this evening let's stand and we'll sing together oh holy night and you