

Night Before Christmas / FAMILIAR CHRISTMAS STORY

“And there were in the same country children keeping watch over their stockings by the fireplace. And, Lo! Santa Claus came upon them; and they were sore afraid. And Santa said unto them: ‘Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people who can afford them. For unto you will be given great feasts of turkey, dressing and cake; and many presents; and this shall be a sign unto you, you shall find the presents, wrapped in bright paper, lying beneath a tree adorned in tinsel, colored balls and lights. And suddenly, there will be with you a multitude of relatives and friends, praising you and saying, ‘Thank you so much, it was just what I wanted.’ And it shall come to pass as the friends and relatives have gone away into their homes, the parents shall say to each other, ‘Darn it! What a mess to clean up! I’m tired, let’s go to bed and pick it up tomorrow. Thank goodness, Christmas only comes once a year!’ And they will go with haste to their cold bed and find their desired rest.”

NOT Long Sermon > MESSAGE Very Clear in SONGS and SCRIPTURES

DESIRE of Nations – Son of David – Lion of Judah – Prophet Greater Moses

Lamb of God – Messiah – Servant of the Lord – Priest like Melchizedek

HAS COME – MIGHTY God become HELPLESS Babe – JESUS the CHRIST

POWER of SONGS – Many of us MEMORIZED Lyrics of Christmas CAROLS

THEOLOGY of Hymn Writers > SHAPE our VIEW of Jesus

RED Sea – God’s PEOPLE DELIVERED / PERSECUTORS DROWNED

Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the LORD: "I will sing to the LORD, for he is highly exalted. The horse and its rider he has hurled into the sea. The LORD is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation. Exodus 15.1,2

MOSES LEAVING Nation of Israel – DIE on Mt. Nebo / They Crossed Jordan

And the LORD said to Moses: "You are going to rest with your fathers, and these people will soon prostitute themselves to the foreign gods of the land they are entering. They will forsake me and break the covenant I made with them...

"Now write down for yourselves this song and teach it to the Israelites and have them sing it, so that it may be a witness for me against them. When I have

brought them into the land flowing with milk and honey..."So Moses wrote down this song that day and taught it to the Israelites. Deuteronomy 31

VICTORY of King Jesus declared in REVELATION

...those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and over the number of his name. They held harps given them by God and sang the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb: "Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the ages" Revelation 15.1-3

EARLY Christian Church > Quick to DEVELOP a Body of SONGS

APOSTLE Paul writes to CHURCH he has NEVER BEEN in COLOSSAE

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. Colossians 3.16

KNEW they were SINGING – To be SAVED was to SING > Evidence of H.S.

He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Psalm 40.2,3

FOCUS few Minutes on ONE Verse – PRINTED on PROGRAM

Found in PASTORAL Letter – Written by Apostle Paul to Chief Lt.'s Timothy

1 Timothy 3.16 – Early Church HYMN - Developing Theology / Doxology

Timothy > Local Church > Tim. Bp./Overseer in EPHESUS – GOOD ORDER

Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth. Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory. 1 Timothy 3.14-16

Churches do many good things for people > Lonely > Friends > Future spouse

Many needs met by churches > Programs for youth, families, and the elderly.

Good places for Music Lovers > Sing in a choir > Play an instrument

Church Seminars > Financial advice > Cope with loss, Overcome addictions

Non-church people can do all these things > Sometimes do Better Job

ONE Thing Church has that WORLD does NOT HAVE - Word of God

1 thing Church does that non-church people cannot do is share the Word of God.

Church of Living God, a Pillar and Foundation of the Truth

Ephesians: TEMPLE of Diana / Artemis 127 Massive, Ornate PILLARS

STAND ON Truth / LIFT UP Truth

A church is not a building; in fact, many churches do not have buildings. A church is a group of believers committed to Jesus, to the Scriptures, and to one another.

WHAT is the TRUTH the Church should GUARD and GIVE AWAY?

CENTERED on Jesus Christ – Paul quotes Early HYMN or CREED

Introduces with phrase ‘Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great’!

MYSTERY – Wonder / GODLINESS – Faith / CHRIST – Key to godliness

DOCTRINAL CLIMAX of Letter > HEART, CENTER of Message

EPHESIANS – shouted for 2 Hours ‘Great is DIANA of the Ephesians!’

Here is OUR Creedal Affirmation > SHOUT from HOUSETOPS

Encourage you to REFLECT on v. 16 > Songs to be SUNG / Not DISSECTED

1st Perspective: CHRONOLOGICAL 6 EVENTS in Life & Ministry of JESUS

1st Coming to 2nd Coming/ Appearance in Flesh to Welcome Glory

He appeared in a body

INCARNATION – Pre-Existent Son of God becoming FLESH – TRUE MAN ENTERED World as BABY – LIVED and DIED

vindicated by the Spirit,

HOLY SPIRIT – CONFIRMED True Son by MIRACLES, Signs, Wonders

Supreme VINDICATION was the RESURRECTION

seen by angels,

ATTENDED by Angels thru All His Time on Earth

First-Hand WITNESSES to the FULL DRAMA of REDEMPTION

FILLED Sky on Night of Birth / SANG Glory of God to SHEPHERDS
Angels WELCOMED Him into HEAVEN – Rose from Death in VICTORY

was preached among the nations,

Church's Global Mission – OBEY the Command of the RISEN LORD

believed on in the world,

POWER of the Gospel – Word of God – Proclaimed by People of God and Applied by the Spirit of God

taken up in glory.

Not just ASCENSION but PAROUSIA – RETURN in Power & Glory

FINAL EPIPHANY – Appearance of our Great God and Savior

2nd Perspective: Jesus ON EARTH / IN HEAVEN

HISTORICAL, INCARNATE Jesus on EARTH

He appeared in a body, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels,

GLORIFIED, EXALTED Jesus in HEAVEN

was preached among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.

3rd Perspective: Three Antithetical Couplets

He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit,

REVELATION of Christ – Human and Divine aspects of Earthly Life and Ministry in Palestine

seen by angels, was preached among the nations,

WITNESS of Christ – Significance of Jesus – from Palestine to all the inhabitants of heaven and earth – angels and human – Nations and Jews

believed on in the world, taken up in glory.

RECEPTION of Jesus – Heaven and Earth / Saw and Heard / and Gave Him Glory

Well, WHICH ONE is it? Perspective 1,2,or 3?

Answer is YES! – It is ALL and 4,5,6,7

JESUS – Fills the Universe / Revealed as Baby

This ADVENT Baby Jesus gets BIGGER For You!

More than JOB in Church / Shopping for Gifts

Parties / Dinners / Meetings / Responsibilities

SOME TIME for WONDER and WORSHIP

GREATNESS of our GOD and HIS GRACE!

My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Colossians 2.2,3