

# WORSHIP GUIDE: CHRISTMAS WORSHIP CELEBRATION

Sunday AM, December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022 – 10:15am

## BEHOLD!

**Welcome:** [Pastor Steve]

***Narration before*** “Come Behold the Wondrous Mystery”

Throughout the course of history, humans have fumbled about looking for answers to the big questions – the big **mysteries** – of life. We want answers to our problems. We don’t like being stuck in a state of no-solutions. We don’t like wandering around, unable to **See** what’s coming. We don’t like these riddles in the dark.

Yet the clear answer to all of the mysteries and riddles and problems of life came from God, as He assumed the form of a baby. Fully God. Fully man. In the flesh. The Incarnation.

So many of our songs and stories about the incarnation wrestle with these paradoxes – these seeming mysteries. But as good truth-seekers, we are called to examine the mysteries, to look closely, to **BEHOLD** them.

We are to **BEHOLD** God putting on flesh, leaving the chorus of heavenly beings singing His praises to enter a stable where the stink of farm animals filled the newborn's nostrils. What a strange setting to place a king!

We are to **BEHOLD** the perfect life of Jesus, this God-man who never committed a trace of sin. He was like us yet perfect, like we could never be. The true and better Adam, Jesus is the fulfillment of all of God’s law and all of God’s plan to save us. How can it be?

And then we are to **BEHOLD** the darkest moment of all of history. The reality of sin as our problem, the cause and root of all society’s ills, the thing that broke nature, the answer to our ever-present “WHY,” The justice for sin, is put on Jesus on a Roman cross. In our place. Hanging with common criminals but bringing to fruition the Father’s promised plan. It’s hard to fathom the grace of this action. What a seemingly discouraging ending!

But, this isn’t even the end. We then **BEHOLD** the biggest comeback in the history of comebacks. We see the ultimate villains — Satan, sin, and death — defeated by the God of life. No grave can restrain. No power of hell can separate. What a picture of what is to come for us! What a foretaste of deliverance! How unwavering our hope! Christ in power resurrected, as we will be when He comes. What a wondrous mystery!

We can't **BEHOLD the baby without BEHOLDING the Life, death, and resurrection of Jesus**. His coming set into motion the coming of the Kingdom of God. It's not always easy for us to understand and it can truly seem mysterious. But, this mystery kept secret for long ages – as Paul writes in Colossians – has now been revealed in God's wonderful mystery, Jesus Christ.

His promise has been kept. Our hope is secure. Our Creator has come for us. Our problem has a solution. What a wondrous mystery! Come. Look. See. **BEHOLD!**

**CHORAL & CHILDREN'S CHOIR:** *Come Behold the Wondrous Mystery*

Come behold the wondrous mystery  
In the dawning of the King  
He the theme of heaven's praises  
Robed in frail humanity  
In our longing, in our darkness  
Now the light of life has come  
Look to Christ, who condescended  
Took on flesh to ransom us

Come behold the wondrous mystery  
He the perfect Son of Man  
In His living, in His suffering  
Never trace nor stain of sin  
See the true and better Adam  
Come to save the hell-bound man  
Christ the great and sure fulfillment  
Of the law; in Him we stand

Come behold the wondrous mystery  
Christ the Lord upon the tree  
In the stead of ruined sinners  
Hangs the Lamb in victory  
See the price of our redemption  
See the Father's plan unfold  
Bringing many sons to glory  
Grace unmeasured, love untold

Come behold the wondrous mystery  
Slain by death the God of life  
But no grave could e'er restrain Him  
Praise the Lord; He is alive!  
What a foretaste of deliverance  
How unwavering our hope  
Christ in power resurrected  
As we will be when he comes  
What a foretaste of deliverance  
How unwavering our hope

Christ in power resurrected  
As we will be when he comes

**CONGREGATIONAL SONG:** *O Come All Ye Faithful*

O come, all ye faithful,  
joyful and triumphant!  
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem!  
Come and behold him,  
born the King of angels.

*O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him,  
Christ the Lord!*

God from true God, and  
Light from Light eternal,  
Born of a virgin, to earth he comes!  
Only-begotten Son of God the Father

*O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him,  
Christ the Lord!*

Sing, choirs of angels,  
Sing in exultation,  
Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above!  
Glory to God, all glory in the highest

*O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him,  
Christ the Lord!*

***Narration Before*** "O Savior of Our Fallen Race"

So many words and phrases familiar to us about Christmas express ideas of "Joy" "Peace" "Love" and "Hope" – these are appropriate, as they reflect the truly wonderful things we have and can experience since Jesus came. But what you won't usually find on most ornaments or those well-crafted Christmas signs you can get at Hobby Lobby are words like "wreckage," "fallen" and "disgraced." We are happy to focus on the goodness of Jesus – and it is goodness indeed. But all too often, we forget who we are in

the story. We are the lost sheep, the prodigal sons & daughters, a ruined and disgraced people, of a fallen race, standing in our own wreckage.

Why would God provide hope, and show love, and give peace, and fill us with joy – ultimately redeeming us – if we are really that bad? To understand, you have to go back to the beginning of the story.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, and from the heavens he lit up the earth and set it spinning into a rhythm of illuminated days and dark nights. He created living things to fill the earth, and at last, created a man and woman, whom he made into his own image. He gave them the responsibility to care for the earth – but what set them apart from everything else wasn't their dominion over the earth, but their relationship with the creator. They spent time **SEEING GOD in person, Beholding** His glory, as he walked with them in the Garden.

But then one day the tempter planted a question in the heart of them, and the man and woman believed a lie, and sinned against their creator. The moment they did, they were filled with humiliation, shame, fear, guilt, mistrust, blame-shifting, and loneliness. Full of sin now, they hid, because they couldn't bear to **SEE** God anymore. They were fallen; and everyone who was ever born after them would be fallen too. Was there any hope for redemption in the midst of their wreckage?

The hope came as a promise – the promise of a Savior who would one day restore the broken relationship. It was the promise that one day, all of the fallen would one day by be raised up by faith through the rising again of the Son. All the wreckage would be restored into something beautiful, reflecting the true beauty and perfect goodness of the Creator. Someday a savior would come and tear away the veil so that we all could once again see his radiant face and **BEHOLD his glory**.

**CHORAL:** *O Savior of Our Fallen Race*

O Savior of our fallen race,  
O Brightness of the Father's face,  
O Son who shared the Father's might  
Before the world knew day or night,

O Jesus, very Light of light,  
Our constant star in sin's deep night:  
Now hear the prayers Your people pray  
Throughout the world this holy day.

Remind us Lord of life and grace  
How once, to save our fallen race,  
You put our human vesture on

And came to us as Mary's son.

Today, as year by year its light  
Brings to our world a promise bright  
One precious truth outshines the sun:  
Salvation comes from You alone.

For from the Father's throne You came,  
His banished children to reclaim;  
And earth and sea and sky revere  
The love of Him who sent You here.

And we are jubilant today,  
For You have washed our guilt away.  
O hear the glad new song we sing  
On this, the birth of Christ our King!

O Savior of our fallen race,  
The world will see Your radiant face  
For You who came to us before  
Will come again and all restore.

Let songs of praise Your name adorn,  
O Christ, Redeemer, virgin-born  
Whom with the Father we adore  
And Holy Spirit evermore.  
Alleluia!

### ***Narration before*** “WHO IS THIS”

**Jeremy:** “And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for **BEHOLD**, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is **Christ the Lord**. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!’”

**Susie:** It’s a familiar passage to hear at Christmas – the addition of the shepherds seems so cozy, like a country postcard. But have you ever thought about what that experience would have actually been like?

Let us imagine that we are with the shepherds on those hills in Palestine. We have **SEEN** and heard the angels, and we have begun to run to Bethlehem. We come bursting into the presence of Mary, Joseph, and the baby, and immediately, we wonder: “what are we *looking* at? **WHO is this?**”

What we’re looking at is a real baby – a human baby. Not just an idea or a religious experience. What we are looking at is real, simple, definite, complete. There is no reason to think that the baby shows any special manifestations. There is no halo hovering over his head. And yet this little baby we see lying here is the second person of the Trinity. He himself has been God forever. This baby is God who has taken on flesh. He made himself nothing, taking on the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men. By putting on the form of a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death – even the death of the cross.

**CHORAL:** *Who is this?*

Who is this, divine and tender  
Hailing from eternal shores?  
Once arrayed in highest splendor  
Now in poverty adorned

He is Jesus God made mortal  
Word in flesh the light of life  
From a throne room to a stable  
Hope is born this holy night

Who is this of might and meekness  
Given all authority?  
With a word He stills the tempest  
At His touch the blind can see

He is Jesus our Messiah  
Long awaited long proclaimed  
Sing “Hosanna in the highest”  
Christ the King has come to reign

Who is this reviled and stricken  
Broken on a cursed tree?  
Son of God by God forsaken  
Drenched in our iniquity

He is Jesus slain for sinners  
Laiden with our guilt and grief  
All our praise to Him we render  
For His wounds have won our peace

Who is this entombed in darkness  
Cast into the bitter depths?  
He whom grave nor Hell could harness  
Rose and tore the sting from death

He is Jesus God triumphant  
Risen to the Father's side  
All will bow in awe and reverence  
At the name of Jesus Christ

O come let us adore Him  
O come let us adore Him  
O come let us adore Him  
Christ the Lord

***Narration before "God So Loved the World"***

Why would God do this - come into this world as a humble, helpless infant? Only the scriptural answer will suffice: the second person of the Trinity has been born as a baby because he *loves the world*. But why as a baby? Because he **came to meet the central need of people** – not to overthrow Romans, or raise the living standards of the world, or even teach and relieve ignorance. He came, as the angel revealed to Joseph, to “**save His people from their sins.**”

All of the humility surrounding the birth of a helpless infant was pointing, not to power or knowledge or temporal comfort. Instead, this baby, that they **BEHELD** in a manger was pointing to the ultimate humility of a child who would grow to be a man that walked a lonely road towards a cross.

The shepherds, that so many of us have heard about so many times, **BEHELD** Jesus, the messiah, the savior – they didn't just **see** a baby that day. Their eyes were opened, and they **understood** that God, by giving his only son as a baby, was showing his love to the WORLD so that everyone who **beheld** him wouldn't have to be separated from Him anymore but could instead have eternal life with Him. They **heard**, they **went**, and they **beheld**.

And their lives were never the same.

**CHILDREN'S CHOIR:** *God So Loved the World*

God so loved the world  
He gave His only Son  
Once born in Bethlehem

Christ the King, Christ the King  
Our Savior Heaven sent, Christ the King

God so loved the world  
He gave His only Son  
Behold! Emmanuel  
God with us, God with us  
O hear the first Noel, God with us

For all who will believe  
Will not perish, but live  
For all who will believe  
In the Son

For all who will believe  
Will not perish, but live  
For all who will believe  
Life has come

God so loved the world  
He gave His only Son  
Who paid our sacrifice  
At the cross, at the cross  
The fullness of new life, at the cross

For all who will believe  
Will not perish, but live  
For all who will believe  
In the Son

For all who will believe  
Will not perish, but live  
For all who will believe  
Life has come

***Narration before*** “Behold the Lamb”

In the Old Testament, in Isaiah 40, we find the Israelites, God’s “chosen people,” deported to a strange land – exiled and captive in ancient Babylon. They were far, far from home with no hope of return. Yet in this no-hope-possible context, they experienced an inbreaking of God’s grace. “Comfort” the prophet cried – a Hebrew word with connotations of *courage* and *strength*. His message was something akin to “Be comforted! Have hope! This is not the end. You are going to **SEE** and **experience** something you could never have imagined in your wilderness life.” Like their ancient



ancestors who had experienced miraculous provision and deliverance in the Egyptian wilderness, they too would **SEE** God make a path through the wilderness for them.

God kept his word; eventually, the Israelites returned to Jerusalem. Yet this return was not the end of the prophecy. Centuries later, another prophet, John the Baptist, would clear the path for the Mighty God, our Lord Jesus Christ, to **save** his people from their wandering existence – exiled from God and one another due to sin. John would soften people’s hearts for Christ’s arrival. And on the day that Jesus came to him in the flesh, he would cry out for everyone the command to **“BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD, WHO TAKES AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD!”** It echoed the call of the prophet in Isaiah 45 to **“LOOK** unto me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.”

The Jews would have understood this call to **Look – to Behold**. The story was passed down, about a time of rebellion, where fiery serpents were sent to punish their ancestors. As the Israelites watched their friends and family members die, they cried out to God, who gave them a bronze serpent on a staff to “look at and be saved.” Was there something magical about looking at a bronze figurine? No – but **LOOKING** showed an intentional, decided heart of faith, a desperate desire to see and understand and do whatever it took to be rescued. They **beheld** the serpent, and it took away their punishment.

So the prophet calls all to “Look and be saved!”  
And John calls all to **“BEHOLD the Lamb of God!”**

To those in darkness, **LOOK** to the Light, and **SEE**.  
**BEHOLD, the Lamb of God has come – to take away *our* sins.**

#### **CHORAL & TEEN ENSEMBLE:** *Behold the Lamb of God*

We who walk in darkness deep  
Now see the light of morning  
The Mighty God, the Prince of Peace  
A child to us is born

Behold, the Lamb of God  
Who takes away our sin  
Behold the Lamb of God  
The life and light of men  
Behold the Lamb of God  
Who died and rose again  
Behold the Lamb of God who comes  
To take away our sin

Wanderers in the wilderness  
O hear a voice is crying  
Prepare the way, make straight the path  
Your King has come to die

Behold, the Lamb of God  
Who takes away our sin  
Behold the Lamb of God  
The life and light of men

Behold the Lamb of God  
Who died and rose again  
Behold the Lamb of God who comes  
To take away our sin

Son of God (Emmanuel)  
Son of Man (We praise you)  
Behold (Behold) the Lamb  
The hope (the hope) of man  
Behold the Lamb

Behold, the Lamb of God  
Who takes away our sin  
Behold the Lamb of God  
The life and light of men

Behold the Lamb of God  
Who died and rose again  
Behold the Lamb of God who comes  
To take away our sin

II Corinthians 3:18 “- *But we all, with open face **beholding** as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*”

**CONGREGATIONAL SONG:** *Behold Our God* (piano, strings, choirs & congregation)

Who has held the oceans in his hands?  
Who has numbered every grain of sand?  
Kings and nations tremble at his voice  
All creation rises to rejoice

*Behold our God, seated on his throne  
Come, let us adore him  
Behold our king, nothing can compare  
Come, let us adore him*

Who has given counsel to the Lord?  
Who can question any of his words?  
Who can teach, the one who knows all things?  
Who can fathom all his wondrous deeds?

*Behold our God, seated on his throne  
Come, let us adore him  
Behold our king, nothing can compare  
Come, let us adore him*

Who has felt the nails upon his hands?  
Bearing all the guilt of sinful man  
God eternal, humbled to the grave  
Jesus, Savior, risen now to reign

*Behold our God, seated on his throne  
Come, let us adore him  
Behold our king, nothing can compare  
Come, let us adore him*

**MESSAGE** - Siblings of Christ [Pastor Steve]

***Narration before "Is He Worthy"***

Who is this Jesus?

He is the Word made flesh, who dwelled among us. And we **beheld** his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

He is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood and made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.

He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, the one who is Worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, for by his blood he ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made us a kingdom and priests to our God.

He is Worthy, the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. Come, all you faithful ones, and **BEHOLD your Worthy King!**

**CHORAL & CHILDREN'S CHOIR:** *Is He Worthy? & O Come All Ye Faithful*

Yea Lord we greet Thee  
Born this happy morning  
Jesus to Thee be all glory giv'n  
Word of the Father  
Now in flesh appearing

O come let us adore Him  
O come let us adore Him  
O come let us adore Him  
Christ the Lord!

O come let us adore Him  
Christ the Lord!

Do you feel the world is broken?  
We do  
Do you feel the shadows deepen?  
We do

But do you know that all the dark  
Won't stop the light from getting through?  
We do  
Do you wish that you could see it all made new?  
We do

Is anyone worthy? Is anyone whole?  
Is anyone able to break the seal  
and open the scroll?

The Lion of Judah  
Who conquered the grave!  
He is David's root and the Lamb who died  
To ransom the slave

Is He worthy?  
Is He worthy  
Of all blessing and honor and glory?  
Is He worthy of this?  
He is

Does the Father truly love us?  
He does  
Does the Spirit move among us?  
He does

And does Jesus our Messiah hold forever those He loves?  
He does

Does our God intend to dwell again with us?  
He does

Is anyone worthy? Is anyone whole?  
Is anyone able to break the seal and open the scroll?

The Lion of Judah Who conquered the grave!  
He is David's root and the Lamb Who died  
To ransom the slave

From every people and tribe  
Every nation and tongue  
He has made us a kingdom and priests to God  
To reign with the Son

Is He worthy? Is He worthy?  
Of all blessing and honor and glory?  
Is He worthy? Is He worthy?  
Is He worthy of this?  
He is

For He alone is worthy!  
For He alone is worthy!  
For He alone is worthy!  
Christ the Lord!

We'll give Him all the glory!  
We'll give Him all the glory!  
We'll give Him all the glory!  
Christ the Lord!

Is He worthy? Is He worthy?  
Of all blessing and honor and glory?  
He is!

**Closing Prayer:** [Pastor Steve]