# Christmas in the Garden — Delivery Transcript

**Genesis 3:15 (CSB) · Wes Terry · Tuesday, December 24, 2024** · *Advent 2024*

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Have you ever heard of people celebrating Christmas early? I mean early early like Christmas in July. Anybody ever celebrated Christmas in July? It's a thing. It's it was mainstreamed in the nineteen forties. There was a movie by the name Christmas in July and it became a became a thing. And I think it really became a thing because for retailers during the summer months when sales are kind of slow it was a way to kind of get everybody excited again and make a little money. I've even seen a handful of churches do like Christmas in July for world missions and stuff like that.

It's a pretty novel idea. But for those of you who are Christmas fanatics and you love Christmas, maybe you're into it. I'm just you know I don't know how I feel about it. But it's not something that's totally new. In fact, if you think about it, the scripture actually celebrates Christmas earlier than the Gospels. In fact the first mention of Christmas in the Old Testament is actually in the very first book of the Old Testament, within the first three chapters of the first book of the Old Testament in the book of Genesis.

And I call it the first Christmas promise. And what I want us to do this evening as we light our Christ candle and we reflect on the meaning of Christmas is to look at that promise in Genesis chapter 3. Verse 15 and to explore how the Bible advances that Christmas promise from Genesis All the way to Revelation in 15 minutes. Alright, so I'm d I'm just kidding. About the fifteen, it'll probably be sixteen or seventeen, but we're going to go as fast as we possibly can. I didn't anticipate bringing this message.

It was just kind of a thought I had, and as I began to explore it, the Lord truly ministered. To my heart about the meaning of Christmas and about what Jesus has come to accomplish and I hope he'll do the same for you as well. The book of Genesis, if you're not familiar, is the book of Beginnings. We spent about two years in the book of Genesis. If you're bored, you can you can go listen to some of those messages. But the very opening chapters of Genesis show a God who created everything out of nothing He took order, he took chaos and put it into order.

He filled it with substance and significance. He made the animals, he made the land, he made everything that we see, and then on the sixth day he created mankind in his own image. And he said it's good. In fact, they said of mankind that it is very good. And then if Genesis 1 was kind of the zoomed out picture, in Genesis 2 it zooms in on a specific human couple who are placed in a garden. And the reason I wanted to bring this message is because when most of us think about Christmas, we think about a manger.

And rightly so, there was a manger in Bethlehem, there were oxen the A-word that we're weaning or feeding as the Christmas hymn does. But that's not really where the first Christmas happened. The first Christmas happened in the book of Genesis in a garden. Not in a manger. And this garden was an awesome garden. This garden was the epitome of Christmas. What is the essence of Christmas if you think about it? Jesus is our Emmanuel, which means God is with us. And in the Garden of Eden, the uniqueness of the garden is that God was dwelling with his people.

Eden gave mankind the gift of Christmas, which is God with us. And it was so good. It was they had trees, they had every kind of food-bearing plant, they had a river that broke up into four rivers that you gave you unlimited. Water, all the water you could ever want. They had a tree in the middle called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and then there was another tree in the middle called the tree of life and they actually have a little picture here. I don't know why it's fuzzy like that and we need to cover this part.

Oh no she's got fig leaves covering that part so we should be okay but the idea of the garden is that they spent time with the Lord. They had all of their needs met. They were husband and wife. God joined them together. He as or her being his helpmate, bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. Everything was awesome in the garden until Genesis chapter 3, when this serpent comes sliding in. And tempts Eve and what the serpent does. The serpent's never called Satan, but he's satanic in his intentions at the very least.

I think he's a I think he does represent the enemy, the big enemy, the bit the chat the capital S. Devil, our capital D devil. And what he does is he attacks God's word. He says, did God really say? And then he attacks God care God's character and saying he shouldn't have forbidden you from eating of this tree. Because God said of the tree in the middle of the garden, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you can't eat of that tree or you will surely die. And the devil comes to Eve and this serpent and says, you're not going to surely die.

He just doesn't want you to be like him. Don't you want to be like God? Why is God trying to not let you be like him? And Eve succumbed to the temptation, she ate of the fruit, and gave some to her husband, who was standing there with her. And as soon as she ate of that fruit, their eyes were both open, they realized that they were naked, they felt incredible shame, and the communion and intimacy that with God that they had enjoyed up until that point was replaced by isolation and shame and hiding from the Lord.

And so they heard the sound of the Lord in the garden. They ran from him and hid. And the Lord was calling out to them, where are you? Where are you? And it was that fall in the garden that changed everything that we experience, that changed everything about the world as we experience it today. So much of the suffering and brokenness and chaos in our world is a result of that original sin. And you see God explain that in the book of Genesis. He actually puts a curse on the serpent.

He says you're going to crawl on your belly for the rest of your days. He puts a curse on the ground. And says that it's going to produce thorns and thistles. And then he explains the consequences of sin to the man and the woman. Says this is going to happen to you, mankind. This is going to happen to you, womankind, and this is how it's going to disrupt your relationships with each other. But even after he explained the curse and the consequences of sin, afterwards he does this very merciful act of providing for them to cover their nakedness.

An animal is sacrificed and skin coverings are made to cover their nakedness. And after or alongside of that skin covering, the Lord makes a promise. That theologians call the first gospel or the proto-evangelion. And it is this promise in Genesis 3. 15 that I think is the first Christmas promise. Because he is promising something that will reverse this curse and restore what was lost in that first sin, which was the presence. And peace of God in Eden. And so this is how the promise goes in Genesis chapter 3, verse 15.

He's actually speaking to the serpent, but the promise is going to be fulfilled through the woman. He says, I'm going to put hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He, this chosen offspring, is going to strike your head. Other translations say crush your head. And then you, serpent, are going to strike. Some translations say bruise his heel. It's actually the same Hebrew word, but you see this promise of a child, a seed of the woman. Who is going to be born and fight against the seed of the serpent, and that one of those chosen offspring is going to actually destroy the serpent by crushing his head, but in the process of destroying that serpent, he is going to be struck on his heel.

And if you take that and think of it through the lens of Christmas, you're going to see three big Christmas ideas. Number one, the promised seed. The Lord is saying, I'm going to restore the garden of Christmas. I'm going to restore the garden that you lost through a promised coming child, through a promised coming sacrifice. That is going to be developed later through the temple and through a promised coming subjugation or triumph over the serpent. Once in once in all. And so if you take those ideas from Genesis 3:15 that there's going to be a seed of the woman who is going to be struck on the heel by the serpent, but in crushing the serpent, he's going to totally defeat him so that the Eden that was lost can finally be restored.

That's the message of Christmas and that's the message of the gospel. And what you see happen from Genesis 3 onward is that basic promise of Christmas repeat itself over and over and over again. And again, we don't I'm not being for real that we're going to go through the entire Old Testament, but the entire Old Testament tells this story. And since we don't have time to talk about all of it, I just want to kind of break it into three I want to try to break the Old Testament into three big sections.

And this is how the Jews read the Old Testament, even still today. This I think is how Jesus read the Old Testament when he was on the road to Emmaus with his disciples. He was teaching them from the Old Testament and he said these things had to happen just as they were revealed in the law, the prophets, and the writings. Those three separations are how Jews read the Bible today, the Old Testament Bible. The law is the Pentateuch or the first five books of the Old Testament. The prophets, we think of the prophets as like the guys who were, you know, preaching in the wilderness.

But Jewish people today think of the prophets as former prophets and latter prophets. The former prophets were the ones who talked about the history of Israel leading up to the establishment of a kingdom with David and all of those things. So you got Joshua, Judges, first and Second Samuel, first and Second Kings, those are prophets and the Hebrew Bible. And then you have what are called the latter prophets who talk about what happened after the fall of the kingdom, men like Jeremiah, Isaiah. Ezekiel, Daniel, the 12 minor prophets. And then after you have the prophets and the Torah, you have a final little section, and it's called the writings.

And guess what's in the writings? Poetry, wisdom, the psalms, ecclesiastes, proverbs, these kinds of things. If you take those big umbrellas and you think about this Christmas promise of a coming child and a coming sacrifice or a coming temple and a coming a coming king or coming throne, it is amazing how they develop and pave the way for the coming of Jesus Christ at Christmas. And again we've as a church been going through the book of Genesis for feels like forever, but it's only been a couple years. And what you saw in Genesis is that the promised child is traced right after Adam and Eve have their fall.

They have two kids. You guys remember what their kids' names were? Cain and Abel, very famous pair. And it thought, you know, Abel looked like a pretty good offspring to crush the head of the serpent. He offered a good sacrifice to the Lord, but then it Cain got upset about it and killed his brother. And so that up you know, upset that apple cart. So the question was, well who's going to be the offspring now? And they had another son named Seth. But Seth wasn't the chosen offspring either, and so after Seth it goes down to, you know, I can't remember all the names, but it basically goes from Seth on down to Noah, from Noah on down to Shem, from Shem on down to Terah, to Abraham, from Abraham to Isaac, from Isaac to Jacob, from Jacob to Judah.

And Genesis ends with Judah being the chosen seed. But you see the promised child being traced. And what you see in the book of Genesis, who is so fascinating, is this hostility between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman. God's children and Satan's children always fighting against each other, and there's this inner angst. When is that promised child going to come and crush the head of this serpent? And Genesis closes with that question still open. Now when it comes to the temple or the sacrifice that needed to be made to restore Eden, you see this show up in the patriarchs a little differently, right?

If Eden was a temple. And the sacrifice for the making of offerings was that period. After Eden, God's presence isn't just everywhere all the time. God only shows up in specific places and specific times for specific people. And usually the way God shows up is through the visitation of an altar. You know, Joseph, our I'm sorry, Abraham built an altar, he experienced God's presence. He even called it Bethel, house of God. Jacob, same thing. Isaac, same thing. God shows up in an altar as they make sacrifices. With the story of Abraham, you see the idea of worshiping God through sacrifice with the offering of first with the offering of his self, then with the offering of his son Isaac.

You see the idea of sacrifice with Judah, who is offering himself at the very end of the book of Genesis for his brothers even though he had done nothing wrong, he was willing to pay the price for his brothers. And so you see this theme of sacrifice, you see this theme of the promised child develop. But still Genesis ends with this question. Those sacrifices are not sufficient. We're still not able to get back to the garden. Something bigger and better has to come. And then with the idea of kingdom in the book of Genesis, it closes with Joseph ruling over Egypt, but there is no king, no it no earthly king for Israel sitting on the throne.

Well you leave Genesis, you get to Exodus. Similar ideas but developed, right? The chosen child in Exodus isn't from the line of Judah. It's actually another actually another leader he's very well known played by Charlton Heston in some famous movies you guys remember who he is? Yeah Moses and Moses was the little baby right little baby Moses born as a Jew and was raised as an Egyptian in Pharaoh's court. And he left the glory and the power and prestige of Egypt and he answered the call of God to lead his people.

Back home to worship the Lord. Back not necessarily back to Eden, but certainly out of Egypt into the promised land. And so that's what Moses does as that promised child. And he does a he does a fine job of it. He's not perfect, but he is advancing the seed of promise. He's advancing God's agenda. Moses is also the one who oversees the transformation of God's presence manifesting through the ark and sacrifices. To or from the altar, making sacrifices on the altar, he transforms that into the presence of God through making atonement through the tabernacle.

And the tabernacle is a big idea in the Old Testament that was designed by Moses. When you get to the book of Exodus and you start looking at all the specificity that God required for the

making of the tabernacle, you get this idea that this is a very important place, this is a very holy place, and this is a place in which God is going to dwell. With his people. And he would. He would dwell with Moses in the tent of meeting, and then later on it transformed from a little tent to a big tent that was centralized in Shiloh.

And here's the craziest part. Here's what's so cool. So much of the artifacts and furniture, if I can use that term, in the temple was an intentional throwback to the Garden of Eden. The menorah here is a reference to the tree of life that was in the middle of the garden. The entry to the tabernacle was from the east. Which is they were cast out of Eden. They were east of Eden. So to get back into God's presence, they had to come in from the east. The bread right here is called the bread of presence.

Which the gift of Eden was the presence of God. It was also reminding them of God's presence with them in the wilderness to the provision of manna. You see the idea of an altar. This mercy seat was the thing on which the sacrifice of an animal would be made to make atonement for sin. And you see the presence of God dwelling on that mercy seat, but who's protecting the mercy seat? You can't see it, but it's these little angels. These are called Seraphim. And that's exactly who God put at the very front of Eden to say, do not pass go, do not collect two hundred dollars, you cannot come back in here because of your sin.

And so you see that imagery of Eden over and over again. You have a priest, just like Adam was a priest serving the Lord in the garden, that first temple, you have a priesthood through Aaron and Levi who is serving the Lord in this in this tabernacle and the big idea in that period of time with the Torah was that God's presence could be experienced. But it was very localized, it required cleansing and sacrifice, and a priestly mediator who could intercede on behalf of the people. So Moses was the child, the tabernacle was the temple, and the kingdom, again, is still left vacant.

The Torah ends with no king in Israel. They are making their way back to the promised land, but the one thing that is certain is that God's people will not be stopped. The Lord has triumphed over Pharaoh in Egypt. The Lord has triumphed. Over the Tower of Babel, the Lord has triumphed over the wicked earth through the flood. You see God's judgment established in the people of God. Experiencing the mercy and the kingdom of God advancing without much opposition. As as Jesus said of his church, the gates of hell could barely or would not be able to prevail against it.

And so that's the Old Testament law. That's the five books of the Old Testament. And you see this theme of child and temple and kingdom growing and advancing. The five books end with the question. Everybody else has a king, well what about us? And that's what the prophets began to anticipate. And remember in the Hebrew Bible, the prophets are split up into the former prophets and the latter prophets. The former prophets are Joshua judges 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 kings, which tell the story of king David. First it tells the story of

Samuel, who becomes a priest, who finds David and says, all the big and awesome boys are not who what God wants.

He wants this little. You know poetic musical boy and he's going to be king and then Saul becomes king and then David replaces him and it's a big big story but the prophets are anticipating a physical earthly kingdom ruled by David. Who's the chosen child? Well it depends on the book you're reading. It could be Joshua, it could in Joshua it's Joshua. In judges it's men like Samson. In Samuel it's men like Samuel, and in 1st and 2nd kings it's men like David Men appointed by God for a particular purpose to advance the seed of promise.

And then when it comes to the temple, guess what David does? At first the tabernacle gets centralized in a place called Shiloh, right? They take back the promised land. That was one of my favorite spots when we were in Israel, was going to Shiloh and looking at where the temple and all that thing stuff was of remember Hannah praying for a child and God miraculously gave her a baby, which paved the way for Samuel, which paved the way for David. You see the temple established in Shiloh, or the tabernacles established at Shiloh, but even that tabernacle finds its ends up getting corrupted and all sorts of problems and the priesthood is all wet is all messed up and so God leads David to design a true temple.

And the true temple unfortunately wasn't built by David, but it was built by Solomon. And Solomon took everything that was in the original tabernacle and he multiplied it by like 70,000. He says, if one menorah is good, let's have 20 menorahs. And if I'm assessing a little bit, it's like one to seven. One to seven ratio. If one's good, seven's better. And he just filled it. And you see the glory of the temple grow. And you see the priesthood grow. And you see worship get centralized in a place like Jerusalem.

And the idea is that, man, we're getting more serious about dealing with sin. Sin is a problem. We want God's presence. God's presence will fall in the Holy of Holies. It is only in this place, but we've got to deal with sin. We need a good priest. We need a good mediator. But even though all that was amplified and increased, it still was deficient. Moses, as gifted, David, as gifted as he was compromised spiritually. Solomon, as wise as he was, lost the kingdom. It was split into two, northern and southern kingdoms, and eventually it was invaded by the Babylonians in the I think Babylonians were in the south, and then the Assyrians were in the north, and God's people ended up enslaved to pagan nations and pagan kings once more.

And so this king, this earthly king who was supposed to fix it, who was supposed to bring us back to Eden, he was deficient. And the temple that was supposed to make sacrifice so that we could get the presence of God, it was deficient. And this promised child, as good as he was, a man after God's own heart, he wasn't good enough. He was pointing to someone else, someone else who was greater. And that's what the latter prophets talk about. The latter

prophets anticipate this coming king. They realize the futility of their own human efforts to try to do what only God can do.

And one of the most famous Christmas passages from the latter prophets is from a guy named Isaiah. It's on all of your Christmas cups, Isaiah chapter 9, verse 6. And it talks about the promised child. Who will become a reigning king? A child will be born for us, a son will be given to us, and the government will be on his shoulders. He will be named Wonderful Counselor. This is priestly language. Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of peace The dominion will be vast. Its prosperity will never end. He will reign on the throne of David and over his kingdom to establish and sustain it with justice and righteousness from now on and forever.

And we're not going to accomplish this. Dave is not going to accomplish this. Moses is not going to accomplish this. We tried and failed. The zeal of the Lord of armies. Will accomplish this. And so you see the people of God in the Old Testament begin awakening this hunger for this God-sent, God-annointed Messiah who would do what none of them were able to do. And it's amazing when you read through the prophets, all of the all the passages that point to the Messiah. We don't have time to go through all of them, but there are so many, and it's wetting their appetite, anticipating when is this promised king, this promised priest, and this promised prophet going to finally come.

And then when you take the third umbrella, the writings, which is the Psalms and the Proverbs, and the ecclesiastes Man, there's so many messianic Psalms, like Psalm 2 that talks about the reigning king, or Psalm 110-1, which says that there's going to be a son of God who will reign as king. Or a Proverbs eight that talks about a son of wisdom who's eternal. He's not like normal sons and children who born today and die tomorrow. This is an eternal wisdom from God, and that's the Son who's on his way.

The Psalms talk about a priest who's going to establish a temple in which the presence of God is to be desired over life itself. That I'd rather spend one day in your courts than a thousand anywhere else. You see this language developed in the in the Psalms in the Proverbs. All of them anticipating the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. And that is what the gospels present. In their Christmas narratives. Now we read Luke chapter 2, and Luke chapter 2, if you pay careful attention. Gives you all of these clues that resolve that tension from the Old Testament, specifically Genesis 3.

1. Jesus is the child of the woman. Jesus is the sacrifice who will be bruised. And Jesus is the king who will rule. A couple of ways you see this. First, he's a child. He's born of a virgin. He is the genealogy of Jesus, which we've looked at over the last four or five weeks, is really specifying that He is the fulfillment of that tracing of the promise in

> Genesis and Exodus that Jesus is not just the son of man, but he's also the son of God. He's traced all the way back to Adam.

You see Isaiah's prophecy that he's born of a virgin. You see the name. He is Emmanuel, which is God with us. The angelic announcement that we read, showing that he's not just a mere human child, but he's the son of the most High God. And then the prophecy from Micah 5. 2 that talks about being born in Bethlehem, that there's going to be a ruler in Israel who's coming forth. From old. And so he's the promised son, but he's also the promised king, the ruler. When Gabriel announces the birth to Mary, he says Jesus is going to sit on the throne of his father David.

When the magi arrive, remember the wise men, they come and they bow down to Jesus, they give him offerings that are fit for a king Herod, when he finds out that the king of the Jews is on the scene, he gets he gets a wild hare, he was known for that, and he kills all the infants in the surrounding area because of the threat to his throne, because he knew the Messiah, the Christ, was here and he was going to be the ruler that they desperately needed, which meant Herod had to go.

The angels talk about the Christ the Lord, the one who will fulfill the prophecies of the Messiah, and then Zechariah's prophecy and Mary's song of praise point to the same. So he's the chosen child, he's the chosen king, and we could spend a lot of time talking about that. But the reason I wanted to bring this message. Is because he's the tabernacle. The garden. Christmas began in the garden. Okay? It didn't start in the manger. It started in the Garden of Eden. The presence of God was with man and we lost it.

And people spend their entire lives searching for the presence of God and getting Eden back. And the entire Old Testament is a is a an example of God's people even in their best attempts saying, we can't, God, you've got to do it. And God sends his son into the world as the fulfillment of the prophecy that unto us a child is born, and unto us a son is given, and the government's going to be on his shoulders. But how does he accomplish that priestly sacrificial work? How is Jesus the temple and the tabernacle?

Well, my favorite Christmas gospel is the Gospel of John, because John's gospel answers this question. So I want you to read this with me and then we're going to wrap it up. John chapter 1, his Christmas story is in the beginning, was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. He was with God in the beginning, and all things were created through him, and apart from him not one thing was created that has been created. In him was life, and that life was the light. In other words, Jesus was in the original Garden of Eden with the Father at the very beginning.

But that paradise was lost because of sin. Something else had to happen to restore the presence of God, to restore the temple, and that something else was embodied by Jesus.

John 1. 14. Great Christmas text the word, the eternal word who existed in the Garden of Eden, became flesh and dwelt among us. Now the reason this verse is so special is because this word translated dwelt is the same Greek word in the Hebrew, in the Greek Old Testament that's used for the tabernacle. So literally it could be translated, Jesus became flesh and he tabernacled among us.

In other words, the presence of God that used to be reserved only for the temple, only for the Holy of Holies. Only when sacrifice and provision and special things were made, that glory of God has now embodied itself and it is tabernacling among us in the here and the now. He is from the Father, the only from the Father, full of grace and truth. Jesus is that tabernacle. And Jesus later on, after Christmas is over, he says, You want to tear the temple down, I'll raise it up in three days.

I'm not just a tabernacle, I'm the temple. John says later in verse 16 and 18, we have received grace upon grace from his fullness. In other words, it's not about sacrifices and animals and priestly things in the Old Testament. It's about Jesus. The law was given through Moses. Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. The one and only Son who is Himself God and is at the Father's side, he has revealed him. This is the Greek word Ephanios. Where we get our word epiphany the Lord, the God of heaven, has been revealed on earth and we can experience his presence through the promised child that he has sent.

And the reason that God had to become a human being the reason it had to be Jesus, the God man, is because he's the only one who can fulfill the promise of Genesis 3. 15. He had to be a seed of the woman. Which meant God just couldn't come down and fix everything and his divine status. He had to take on flesh. He had to become part of the woman's seed. He also had to make a sacrifice. He had to have his heel bruised, which meant Jesus could only bring salvation through his own making of atonement.

And the bruising of the heel is the death of Jesus on the cross. When Jesus died on the cross, he is making atonement for sin. He is that covering of the nakedness for Adam. And Eve. He was the atoning sacrifice that the Levitical system and the tabernacle and the temple and all of those things were pointing to and anticipating. Something has to deal with my guilt, something has to take away my sin, and Jesus is that promised sacrifice and Jesus is the promised savior who crushes the head of the serpent.

Now what's so cool? Is those three things that are true about Jesus, that he's the seed and the sacrifice and the Savior King. He accomplic he accomplishes those three things. If you go to the next slide on the cross and right before he goes to the cross, he spends a long period of time in prayer. Where is he praying before he goes to the cross? It's a garden. It's the garden of Gethsemane. And when Jesus is in the Garden of Gethsemane, he does what Adam and Eve failed to do in their garden.

This is actually a clip from the passion of the Christ. It's the opening scene of the passion of the Christ. And it actually shows Satan there in the Garden of Gethsemane tempting Jesus. You don't want to do this. You don't want to be that child. You don't want to be that savior. That's not in the text, by the way, but you know, maybe. And Jesus is praying and he's wrestling with God and ultimately he says Father if it's possible let this cup pass from me but ultimately it's not about what I want it's about what you want.

And if this is your plan for how to save your people, then I will be obedient to your plan. My favorite part about the passion, he gets up, the snake has been trying to tempt him and lead him away from God's will. And he looks at the devil, and he looks down at that snake. And he stomps on it. That was a little early. Dramatic effect. Come on, Lord, stomp it. There we go. And so Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane did what Adam and Eve couldn't do, which is why his atonement is sufficient.

Because he was the sinless, spotless. Lamb of God. And Jesus, through that act on the cross, crushed the head of the serpent. That's what John says in his letters later in first John chapter three, verse eight. The Son of God was Ephanio. He was revealed for this purpose, to destroy the devil's works, to fulfill Genesis 3. 15, to crush the head of the serpent even as he was struck. On the heel. And three days later after Jesus, or on the third day after Jesus died on the cross, he raised from the dead.

God raised him from the dead. Guess where Jesus appeared to Mary And guess what Mary thought Jesus was when she saw him risen from the dead? She thought he was a gardener. This is a famous painting called the Touch me Not. She turned around, she saw Jesus standing there risen from the dead, but she didn't know it was Jesus. He said, why are you crying? Who are you seeking? And she says, I thought you were the gardener. If you've carried him away, tell me where you've put him, and I'll take him away.

Jesus was raised in the garden. And when we were in Israel, we went to, there's a debate, where did Jesus rise? But the garden tomb is a garden. It's a beautiful garden in which Jesus was raised. Now, where's Jesus right now? He's at the right hand of God. He's he's seated in throne, ruling and reigning. But Jesus is coming back again, and when Jesus comes back again, he is going to establish a new temple. And he's going to establish a new city, and he's going to establish an ultimate restored garden of Eden.

One of my favorite passages with this and we're done. Revelation chapter 21, verse 1. I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more I saw the holy city, the New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband. And then I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, look, God's dwelling. God's dwelling is a once again with humanity and he will live with them. If you go to the next slide, they will be his peoples and God himself will be with them and will be their God.

This is Genesis 3. 15, satisfied and fulfilled. He will wipe away every tear from their eye. Death will be no more, grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the previous things have passed away. And the one seated on the throne said, look, I'm making everything new. And he said, right, because these words are faithful and true. Now you might say, well, that don't sound like a garden to me, and you're right, it doesn't. It sounds like a city. It sounds like a temple, but it's also a garden. Because in the very next chapter it says I didn't see a temple in it.

Because the Lord, God Almighty, and the lamb are its temple. Why? Because Jesus is the tabernacle, Jesus is the temple, Jesus is alive and well. We don't need a temple because the sacrifices are done. And the city doesn't even need sun or the moon to shine on it because the glory of God illuminates it and its lamp is the lamb. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. Here's the garden. And then he showed me the river of the water of life, just like Eden.

One river breaking into four, endless water supply, clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and from the lamb down to the middle of the city's main street. What's in the middle of the street? What's in the middle of the Garden of Eden? The tree of life. What's in the middle of this restored Eden? The tree of life was on each side of the river, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit every single month. They will the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations, and there will no longer be any curse.

Genesis 3:15 is lifted. The throne of God and of the lamb will be in the city, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face and his name will be on their foreheads. Night will be no more. People will not need the light of the lamp or a light of the sun because the Lord God will give them light and they will reign forever and ever. He's the promised child. He's the promised priest. He's the new and better temple. He replaces the temple. And he is the reigning forever king, with whom we will reign when he comes again and makes all things new.

That is the light which is the life of men. And that is the light we light for the Christ candle of Advent. As John said in John 1. 5, the light that shines in the darkness, and yet the darkness has not overcome it. And so as we light this Christmas