

# ***God's Great Plan for the World***

## ***Christmas Day***

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# **Sunday, December 25, 2022**

Last night, the readings spoke of story of the Nativity and how with a star and angels, God broke through into the world. God, interrupted history when he came to dwell among us. The birth of one small baby in Bethlehem to poverty and homelessness, to parents forced by unreasonable government demands to travel all the way across their small nation. On the surface, a nobody born to nobodies, yet who would change the whole nature of things. After this birth, nothing would ever be the same again.

In our Gospel reading this morning, John explains that these temporal things that we can see have their origin in the beginning. In the beginning, the word was - The word already existed and that the things that we celebrate at this time are not just an historical event, but the reality of the world as it is. God has a plan to restore humanity to a right relationship with him. These events are part of what God is doing, that we might be restored as his children.

So it is that the message of Christmas is that God has acted. He has given us a present - He has given us his son, his only son that we might through him receive life - eternal life and escape the bondage of death.

So if God has acted, how ought we respond? One of the saddest things about Christmas, is that we have done what humans manage to do to all things, - to take something simple and make it Christmas. I have spent a fascinating few days reading up on the origins of many of our Christmas traditions, and also the traditions of other lands. These have all been started to assist us in our understanding of the Christmas message, like the tree - whose evergreen leaves remind us of eternal life, and yet these have managed to take over and the true meaning is lost in the busyness.

John calls us back to understand that Christmas is part of God's great masterplan. That the birth of the baby was no accident, but a conscious effort on God's part that we might get right with him. Our response begins today, for as we gather around the Lord's Table, we are recognising this great initiative of God, and invite him to share in our lives. As we reach out our hands for communion, or wait quietly for a blessing, we have responded to him. But let us not compartmentalise our response. Let us not separate the religious from the ordinary, the everyday. For our response to God is as much in sharing presents under the tree as it is gathering in his house. Let us not close the door again to God as we leave his house to return to the world. God has stepped into our world as a baby in Bethlehem and given us this message of Good News to take to the world. As God's people here on the Yorke Peninsula, we are asked to tell this message to the world.

As we share in the Lord's Table this morning, and as we return to the world, let us proclaim to the world the good news. That the word has been made flesh and has dwelt among us. We have beheld his Glory.

Take a moment now, in the quiet of this church. Look beyond the busyness and the confusion of Christmas and contemplate the meaning of this child's birth.

May the Lord bless you and your families, and may your Christmas be happy and holy, and may the blessed babe of Bethlehem touch your heart and your life.

**AMEN**