

12/24 – Candlelight Service - “The Journey of Christ 2”

John 1:1-5, John 1:14

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 He was with God in the beginning.

3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.

5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Special Music: “Somewhere In Your Silent Night”

Casting Crowns

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nT-5cP4Beol>



The board members of Heaven Incorporated were staring out the windows into a vast emptiness. They all thought that something needed to be done with this underutilized space. It was like there was a placeholder here for something that hadn't happened, and nothing was in the planning stages that they were aware of. Why had the Chairman chosen this spot for a meeting? After all, there were so many more attractive places to meet in heaven. Why here with a view of an empty lot?

While they were talking among themselves, the Chairman's son arrived and took his place at the table, carefully listening in to their conversations. His dad had told him why they were meeting here but he had been told to keep it a secret for the time being.

The Vice President for Planning and Guidance entered the room, his hands full of maps, charts, projections, and various and sundry paperwork which he laid on the table. It was obvious that he was in on the secret, since he had accumulated all this data that he was ready to share. He placed a project report and an agenda in front of every chair, then sat next to the Chairman's son and listened to all the speculation as the other board members continued to comment about the empty space. After a few minutes, several moved to sit in their respective chairs thinking that maybe the project report that the VP had provided might provide some answers to their questions.

At precisely the exact time of the meeting, not a minute early, nor a minute late, the Chairman and Chief Architect stepped into the room and took his place

at the head of the table. “Please everyone, let’s get started,” he said, encouraging those standing to take their seats.

“I know you are wondering why we are meeting in this space. I know that it might even make a few of you uncomfortable. But I assure you, you will understand everything in a few minutes. I have a vision. Probably the greatest vision I have ever had. And it involves this empty space outside the windows. I’m not going to waste your time and energy trying to make you guess what I am talking about. It will be much easier for all of us if I just tell you.

Imagine if you will, a new place filled with three dimensional objects of all kinds, galaxies of stars, planets, moons, and space. Each galaxy different. Each star different. Each planet different. Each moon different. But all made up of materials that I will create to give this “universe” substance and balance. As a matter of fact, that’s what I want to call it. “The Universe.” And I have brought you all here so that I can share this plan with you. Because, well, this plan is huge.”

Murmurs came from around the table in hushed voices. “Sounds interesting.” “I’m excited! Something new!” “I don’t understand. Why?” “Aren’t there already enough wonderful places around heaven?” “I think this is a waste of time and resources.” “I think The Chairman may be losing it.” “I don’t think we should be doing something to just be doing it!” “What is the purpose?” “How long is this meeting going to last? I’m late for lunch.” And so on.

“Settle down, settle down,” said the Chairman’s son. “I want you to hear what my Father has to say. But they do have a point, Father, why would you want to do this?”

“You don’t understand because I haven’t told you the best part yet,” said the Chairman, “and I want you to listen very carefully, because this is crux of my purpose. This project isn’t about creating another corner in heaven. This is a completely independent environment. But it serves a purpose. A glorious and astounding purpose.

A map of the proposed Universe descended behind the Chairman. “Right here,” the Chairman point to a tiny speck on the map, “in what will be known as the Milky Way, circling around this star at the outside edge of the galaxy, is a small planet. And it is here that the purpose of everything else will take place.”

“Well, what is it?” “What could be so important what you need to create something so massive if everything is really about this tiny planet?” “You’re not making a whole lost of sense.” “Can we get on with it?” Impatience is such a terrible waste. Everything has its time.

The Chairman paused and let them calm down before he continued. “Before I tell you, I want you to know that this is something that I am doing. You don’t have to lift a finger. This is all me. I just want you to know what is coming. On this third planet (the earth) revolving around the sun (Sol), I will make a paradise. A paradise that will be the focus of my greatest creation. Humankind. Creatures with a mind of their own. Creatures that will be challenged by their

own thoughts, capable of creating new things. In many ways, they will be like me.”

“Uh oh” “Where does he come up with this stuff?” “Creatures that can think for themselves? It will never work.” “I see trouble ahead.” The murmurs were disrupting to the meeting, but the Chairman was prepared.

“Oh, it gets better. They can even choose to believe that I don’t exist.”

“But father,” the Son said, “Why would you want that?”

“Well Son, I have decided to create a system where these creatures, although they might choose to not believe in my existence, can also choose to love me, just as I will love them. They will be my greatest accomplishment, and also my greatest disappointment.”

“Wait a minute!” one of the board members said, “Why in the world would you want to do that? Why create a rebellious creature that will only disappoint you? Why not just make them compliant.”

“Because I want them to love me because they choose to love me. Yes, there are those that will rebel. They will turn their back on me. They will even make idols to worship rather than worship me. But there will also be a great capacity to love from those who choose to have a relationship with me. I do this out of love. I do this because love is never a one-way street. As I love them, they will love me. But yes, they are going to fail. They will not be able to follow the rules that I create, try as they might. As much as they will say they love me, they will often fail.”

“And then you can destroy them, right?”

“Now why would I go to all this trouble to destroy them? It’s quite simple really. They can choose to be with me, or they can choose to turn away. But that decision is theirs. And those that turn away can also turn back to me again.”

“But what if they fail you over and over again?”

“I expect them to,” said the Chairman. “They will be a stiff-necked people, who are fickle in their love for me. So, I will need to create a way to remove the stains of the egregious actions in their lives so that they can come back to me when they apologize for those actions.”

“You are making this too easy on them”

“Not really. I am asking the impossible of them. I am asking them to abandon the very nature that I am giving them that might cause them to rebel. So, I will make a way for them to return to me and those actions won’t be counted against them.”

“Say again? This really has me confused. Instead of corralling them, preventing them from committing sins, you are going to make a way for those sins to be removed and forgotten, and then they can come back? Why not just fence them in?”

“Because then, they would not have a choice. They would be forced to love me. That is not my intent. I want to give them the choice so that they will come to know just how much I love them. And I have a plan to do that. But to

accomplish that, I will need a volunteer. I need for someone to love these creatures as much as I do. I need for someone who will slip into the skin of a human, teach them what it means to love me, and then die for them as a sacrifice to make them clean.”

“Whoa! There’s the basic fault with this plan, no one is going to want to do that!”

“I will,” said the Chairman’s Son.

“What?” “No way.” “You don’t know what you are saying.” “You’re as daffy as your dad.”

“I get it, Father,” said the son. “I think it will be the greatest thing you have ever done. What greater example of love can there be than to die for those who don’t deserve it? And the very fact that it happens will be the ultimate example of love for them to show everyone around them. It’s brilliant! I’m in!”

“It’s stupid.” “It’s ridiculous.” “It will never work.” “They will reject him.” “They will torture him.” “They may even kill him.” “The apple doesn’t fall far from the tree.”

The Chairman shook his head and said, “You weren’t listening when I told you that I am going to do this. I don’t need your permission or your opinions. This is happening folks. Now get on board.”

“And Son, I knew you would be the one to volunteer. It won’t be easy. It will be the hardest thing ever done. But I also know that you can do it. I believe

you are the only one that can do it. I'm even going to give you a running head start by sending you as baby with a virgin mother. You will be born in the most difficult of situations, in the humblest of circumstances. This baby will be born in a cattle stall surrounded by shepherds and animals because there will be no one to take the mother in that night. And from those beginnings, you will go on to change the minds of people and show them on a path back to me. You will teach them my ways. You will example my truths. You will be the savior to those who believe.

And mister Vice President for Planning and Guidance, I am sending you right behind my Son as my spirit, my guide in the human world so that even after the great sacrifice of my son, the people will have a compass in their lives that will always point back to me."

The Chaiman looked around the room. He could read the skepticism in their faces. He waited before he continued, "Now, I know that you all have a million questions and trust me, this is not the last time we are going to talk about this. But I want you to know that my mind is made up and it is not going be changed. Those of you who choose to get onboard with this project, will receive the greatest of blessings. I am truly hoping that you will join me. This will be my greatest achievement and I would greatly appreciate your support."

And with that the Chairman stood up, took the time to look each board member in the eye, and left the room. His Son and the Vice President for Planning and Guidance followed him. Together, they were of one mind ready to

begin the greatest of adventures.

God bless you all,

AMEN

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