

ADORE HIM - WHAT CHILD IS THIS

Scripture used: [Matthew 14:27 \(NLT\)](#)

OVERVIEW

In our “Adore Him” series, we will be examining a different Christmas hymn or carol every week leading up to Christmas. This week’s hymn, “What Child is This?”, written in 1865 by William C. Dix, is the expression of Dix’s personal story of severe illness and depression, a revelation of God’s love, and Dix’s experience of spiritual and physical healing. “What Child is This?” is now a remarkable theological expression of Jesus’ full humanity and full divinity, and the hymn, along with Dix’s story, reminds us that God is truly with us no matter what storms we are facing in life. Like the disciples in [Matthew 14:22-33 \(NLT\)](#), Jesus reminds us to not be afraid, to be courageous in our actions, and to know that God is with us.

KEY POINTS

- 1) Pastor Hurmon used the triangle of discipleship to provide a way for us to consider whether we are growing in our relationship with God. Are we more **committed** to God? More **trusting**? Are we growing in God’s **heart** of generosity and compassion to others? As we approach Christmas, it’s a great time to reflect on how our relationship with God has grown over this year. And if we don’t see many signs of growth, it’s a great opportunity to lean into the wonder of Christmas and ask God to draw near!
- 2) “What Child is This?” integrates themes from the Christmas story in both Matthew and Luke. In Matthew, The Wise Men (the Magi) are featured, and they represent the wealthy and educated. They were learned in science and history, and they knew they were coming to see a transformational figure. They came bearing expensive gifts. Many of us in Silicon Valley are in a similar position. We should be encouraged by scientists and believers like Francis Collins, the head of the NIH, who notes that the careful observation in science points to the presence (and not the absence) of God. In contrast, Luke highlights the shepherds in the field, who are lowly people and outcasts. ([Luke 2:18-20, NLT](#)). They have empty hands but full hearts. They have no material goods to give but are ready and willing to praise and glorify God. They hear the angel’s command to not be afraid, and they can take courage because God is with them through the birth of Jesus.
- 3) Today in our world of affluence, some of us are more like the Magi than the shepherds. Christmas is often an opportunity to provide gifts to ourselves and to our loved ones, but we can overlook the “shepherds” all around us. We should take the opportunity of Christmas to emphasize service and generosity in the name of Jesus. As we serve with the “shepherds” of today: the hungry, the homeless, the prisoners, the children in need, we will be blessed as a result.
- 4) Jesus comes for everybody - the wealthy and the needy. He answers the question: “Does God care?” with an affirmative YES. In [Matthew 14:22-33 \(NLT\)](#), during the storm on the Sea of Galilee, because Jesus acts in a way the disciples don’t understand, the disciples give way to fear. Jesus exhorts them to be brave, and to remember His presence. In the storms and mysteries of life - disease, unemployment, faltering marriage or business - Jesus is with us. This is the promise and assurance of Christmas: God is with us, so we don’t need to be afraid, and we can act courageously and faithfully in life.

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - Discern your heart. Are you more like one of the Magi or one of the shepherds? Do you have elements of both? As we approach the end of the year, how have you grown in your relationship with God this year?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Do you enter the Christmas season experiencing the reality that God is with you? The Magi and the shepherds were totally different in their status and resources, but they were all changed by the reality of God’s presence in their lives. How can you create space this Christmas to encounter Jesus and walk closely with Him each day?
- 3) **DO** - Consider prioritizing time to worship (like the Magi) or hanging out with “shepherds,” those who are overlooked and in need this Christmas. These are both great ways to encounter the presence of Jesus. And, be courageous and invite your friends and neighbors to NBCC’s Christmas Gatherings. You might just change someone’s life!