

Message: I want to step out of my role as Narrator to slow things down, and cause us to reflect for just a few moments.

These songs are about a lot of things, and no doubt your mind has been inspired to reflect on many thoughts as you have heard our wonderful choir lift their hearts on high. But I hear three important messages that will help us all this Christmas:

1. Promise: The first is a promise. Many Old Testament prophets told the fractured and disobedient Jews that a Messiah would come and lift them out of their misery. For over 700 years the promise of a Messiah danced around the imagination of the oppressed hearts of the Israelite people. But the people continued to live in disobedience, and so the Israelites were invaded, and overrun by occupying nations. The Hebrews were living as slaves to outsiders, but mostly they were living as slaves to their sinful ways. They needed the Promised Messiah to save them. They needed a Promised One, The Anointed One, to come from the Living God and rescue them. They needed a Promised ruler to sit on the throne and reign forever. The promise was there in scripture. And the promise was about to come true.

2. Miracle: Then the second inspiration from these songs has to do with a miracle. No. That's not quite right. Not a miracle, but miracles too numerous to count: a young virgin who is pregnant. A older barren cousin who suddenly is expecting a son. An angel who speaks to three people, announcing the Good News of a coming Messiah. A baby who leaps in response to his mother seeing the young virgin. And then the birth of the King of Kings, of Jesus, the One who saves, whose birth fulfils more than 700 prophecies, And finally 2 more miracles: visiting kings, and the miracle of two elderly, God-fearing people who searched the Temple until the Messiah came.

One by one they have recognized Jesus as the Messiah. One by one they are lead to the One baby who is the Christ, and they

gathered before the Child King and fell in worship and praise at the miracle before them.

3. Belief: And then there is belief. There were 1. promises made that were fulfilled, just as promises are coming to you today from the Lord God - promises of hope and joy and love. There were 2. miracles that happened as the Messiah came to earth, just as God will give you miracles today, just look around and see them. But it all comes down to belief. Look at the story of Christmas: so many people were asked to have an important role in the coming of the Messiah, and everyone was asked to believe. Everyone was asked to accept, Everyone was asked to take their belief and allow God to work the miracles He had promised - which God did and more.

Taking it home: I do not know how your life is unfolding before you today. You might be here today and everything is going well, and your life is on track and running at full steam. Belief is often more difficult when things are going well. Or you might be here today and the wheels of your life are coming off, and you too, feel the despair and pain that the Hebrew people felt until the Messiah was born.

Please know this: There is hope. There is peace. There is a light for you in your darkness. And the way to step into hope, the way to have peace, the way to know love, deep and eternal, is through belief in the Messiah, in the babe born in Bethlehem more than 2000 years ago.

Can you believe? Remember this: Belief in the Messiah changed the lives of everyone He encountered, from the moment Jesus, the Christ Child, was born. Will you let yourself believe today?