

(Topics and Lead-in Below)

Before the Starry Universe

TUNE: God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen

Ephesians 1:3-4

♩ = 56

Dm Dm $\frac{A}{C\sharp}$ A7 Dm Am7 B \flat F B \flat A Dm $\frac{Gm}{B\flat}$ A Dm

1. Be - fore the star - ry u - ni - verse There reigned the great I Am. This
 2. The crea - ture knew his Mak - er, but In pride he turned a - way. He
 3. But God re - fused to turn a - way, So driv - en by His love. He

Dm $\frac{A}{C\sharp}$ A7 Dm Am B \flat F B \flat A Dm $\frac{Gm}{B\flat}$ A D Gm $\frac{C}{E}$ F $\frac{B\flat}{D}$

be - ing wise and won - der - ful In love con - ceived a man. He formed him in His
 trad - ed all his rich - es for A debt he could not pay. He clothed him - self in
 laid a - side His splen dor just To draw us all a - bove. Our Lord is now Im -

$\frac{F7}{A}$ B \flat F A7 Dm Dm 6 C $\frac{E}{A}$ C C7 Dm $\frac{C}{E}$ F B \flat F
Refrain

like - ness - So the mys - ter - y be - gan.
 suf - fring and In deep and fear - ful shame. Praise God for the
 man - u - el, A child of flesh and blood.

F Gm 6 $\frac{Dm}{A}$ A Dm Dm 6 C $\frac{C}{B\flat}$ $\frac{Dm7}{A}$ $\frac{C7}{G}$ F $\frac{B\flat}{D}$ $\frac{E}{A}$ B \flat F Gm 6 $\frac{Dm}{A}$ A Dm

won - der of His love, In - fi - nite love! Praise God for the won - der of His love!

WORDS: Ken Bible
MUSIC: English Melody

GOD REST YOU MERRY
8.6.8.6.8.6. w. Ref.

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TOPICS: Advent; Atonement; Christmas; Creator; God's Love

LEAD-IN: *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. (Ephesians 1:3-4, NIV)*

LEAD-IN DEVOTIONAL READING:

God's Promise to Adam and Eve

Hear these words from Genesis 3:

*The LORD God said to the serpent,
"Because you have done this,
Cursed are you more than all cattle,
And more than every beast of the field;
On your belly you will go,
And dust you will eat
All the days of your life;
And I will put enmity
Between you and the woman,
And between your seed and her seed;
He shall bruise you on the head,
And you shall bruise him on the heel."*

*To the woman He said,
"I will greatly multiply
Your pain in childbirth,
In pain you will bring forth children;
Yet your desire will be for your husband,
And he will rule over you."*

*Then to Adam He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I command you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it':
Cursed is the ground because of you;
In toil you will eat of it
All the days of your life.
Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you;
And you will eat the plants of the field;
By the sweat of your face
You will eat bread,
Till you return to the ground,
Because from it you were taken;
For you are dust,
And to dust you shall return."
(vv.14-19, NASB)*

God made us like Himself. He made us lords, to rule over His creation. He made our home a beautiful garden and filled it with all we could ever want or need. He drew near to us. He walked with us. Life was beauty, abundance, wholeness, harmony, and peace.

Sovereign God honored us with the power to make choices. We used that power to reject Him. We mistrusted His goodness. In our arrogance we ignored His wisdom and pursued our own way. We still do, and every day we eat the bitter fruit of our fear and pride.

But when we rejected Him, God did not reject us. Even in judging us He planted the seeds of our salvation:

1. He decreed that an age-long battle would ensue between Satan and Eve's descendants. Satan would strike their heel, but they would strike his head. They would crush it. This is the Bible's first promise of Messiah. A Son of Man, a descendent of Eve, a Deliverer would forever defeat Satan and end his destructive influence over our race.
2. Even death, our greatest curse and punishment, became part of His plan of salvation. What a tragedy it would have been for us to live forever in our fallen state, separated from God, the source of all good! Therefore in love God immediately proclaimed that we would die, and He closed the path to the tree of life so that our corrupted condition wouldn't go on forever (Genesis 3:24). Death, though terrible, could end our separation from Him, if we chose to repent and trust Him again. Death could reopen the way to life, to rebirth, to a new creation where life would be all He intended it to be.

With paradise destroyed, within minutes our loving God began to unveil the marvelous mystery of salvation—a salvation already planned before the foundation of the world (Matthew 25:34; Ephesians 1:3-4; Revelation 13:8). He immediately began to point us toward Jesus Christ.

*Father, we cannot fully grasp Your goodness.
It is too far above us.
It is too broad in time.
We cannot trace Your love and all its magnificent ways.*