

1-1-2011

Did Come For To Die

Lee Magness
jlmagness@milligan.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/leaven>



Part of the [Biblical Studies Commons](#), [Christianity Commons](#), and the [Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Magness, Lee (2011) "Did Come For To Die," *Leaven*: Vol. 19: Iss. 3, Article 13.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/leaven/vol19/iss3/13>

This Liturgical Readings is brought to you for free and open access by the Religion at Pepperdine Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Leaven by an authorized editor of Pepperdine Digital Commons. For more information, please contact bailey.berry@pepperdine.edu.

DID COME FOR TO DIE

LEE MAGNESS

This Christmas reading explores the paradoxical way in which the saving death of Jesus is intimated even in the circumstances of his birth. The reading is configured for three voices (N, 1, 2), a scripture reader (lector) and a singer (cantor).

Introduction

Cantor "I wonder as I wander out under the sky,
How Jesus the Savior did come for to die.
For poor, ornery people like you and like I,
I wonder as I wander out under the sky."

N We wonder . . . , we wonder how Jesus—
1 the baby of Bethlehem,
2 the child in the cradle,
1 the swaddled son,
2 Mary's boy,
1 God's beloved—
N We wonder how Jesus did come . . . ,
1,2 did come . . . ,
All did come for to die.

One ~ Joseph

N We wonder . . . did Joseph wonder?
1 wonder about his wife-to-be,
2 wonder if he should marry Mary,
1 wonder about the words of the angel?
N Joseph surely wondered.
He had reason to wonder.

Lector Matthew 1.18-21

N Joseph surely wondered,
2 How could my betrothed be with child?
1 What do you mean, conceived by the Holy Spirit?
2 How do you know it will be a son?
1 What do you mean, save his people from their sins?

Cantor "I wonder as I wander out under the sky,
How Jesus the Savior did come for to die."

Two ~ Mary

N We wonder . . . did Mary wonder?
1 wonder at the wings, at the whispered words,
2 wonder at the "Fear not" in the face of her fear,
1 at the presence of holiness impinging on her humbleness,
2 at the shame, at the pain, at the flood of blood,
1 at the silence and the shout?
N Did Mary wonder at the weary shepherds,
1 their wide eyes glazed with glory,
2 their gaping mouths, their strange story?
N Did she wonder at the wise men,
1 their presence, their presents,
2 their talk of a king and a king?

1 Did she wonder at Simeon?
 N Mary surely wondered.
 She had reason to wonder.

Lector Luke 2.25-35

N Mary surely wondered,
 1 What does salvation have to do with my son?
 2 What revelation do you see in his ruddy cheeks?
 1 How would Gentiles gain from his gentleness?
 2 My son a sign to be opposed?
 1 How could *he*, so soft and swaddled, be a sword in my soul?

Cantor "I wonder as I wander out under the sky,
 How Jesus the Savior did come for to die."

Three ~ Shepherds

N We wonder . . . did the shepherds wonder,
 1 at the glory strewn across the sky,
 2 at the baby in the earthy straw?
 N The shepherds surely wondered.
 They had reason to wonder.

Lector Luke 2.8-20

N The shepherds surely wondered,
 1 A Savior from sleepy Bethlehem?
 2 A Messiah in a manger?
 1 A Lord lying amidst the lowing?
 2 How could a child be a King?
 1 At what price would peace be won?
 2 Just how mild mercy would be for the mediator?
 1 Did they see the shadow of death flicker across his face?
 2 Did they know it would take suffering to be a Savior?
 N The shepherds surely wondered.
 They had reason to wonder.

Cantor "I wonder as I wander out under the sky,
 How Jesus the Savior did come for to die."

Four ~ Magi

N We wonder . . . did the magi wonder?
 1 When they gave their gold,
 were they thinking thrones or thorns?
 2 When they gave incense, did they sense a sacrifice?
 1 When they graced him with myrrh, did they think of a grave?
 N The magi surely wondered.
 They had reason to wonder.

Lector Matthew 2.1-13

N The magi surely wondered,
 1 Why was Herod first so ignorant,
 then so interested, then so insistent?
 2 Why did everyone know where,
 but no one went there?
 1 Why did the king possess a palace,

but a peasant held the prince?
 N As they lumbered their long way home,
 Wouldn't they have wondered?
 1 Did they see the gathering gloom?
 2 Had they seen the sorrow in Mary's eyes?
 1 Had they heard the sighing echo in Joseph's ears?
 2 Did they see the bleeding in Herod's bloodshot eyes,
 1 hear the dying in the dusty streets of Bethlehem?
 2 Did they shiver with the chill of a stone-cold tomb?
 Cantor "I wonder as I wander out under the sky,
 How Jesus the Savior did come for to die."

Conclusion
 1 Joseph wondered,
 2 Mary wondered,
 1 The shepherds surely wondered,
 2 The magi must have wondered —
 N The question is,
 All Will we?
 N Can we conceive of the bloody body of baby —
 2 he would always be her baby —
 N bleeding on a cross?
 Can we imagine Emmanuel, God with us —
 1 he would always be God's son —
 N as a crucified King?
 1 We can.
 2 We must.
 N We wonder . . . have we lost our wonder?
 Has the story become so familiar
 that we can't feel the fear they all felt?
 Have we cuddled so close to Christmas
 that we have lost our ability to stand back in awe?
 Have all those candles blinded us to the light?
 We see the crèche, in all shapes and sizes,
 but can we see him, cursed and crushed on the cross?
 We wonder . . . can we wonder?
 1 We can.
 2 We must.
 N For we are the ones who know the answer to the question —
 how Jesus the Savior did come for to die.
 The answer is,
 1,2 for poor ornery people like you and like I.
 N It is for us, for poor, ornery people like us
 1 whose sin caused that cradle and caused that cross,
 2 whose sin brought on his birth and demanded his death.
 Cantor "No wonder as we wander out under the sky,
 That Jesus the Savior did come for to die."

1 He came for us.
 2 He died for us.

LEE MAGNESS TEACHES NEW TESTAMENT AT MILLIGAN COLLEGE IN MILLIGAN COLLEGE, TENNESSEE.