

We are entering the Christmas season. One of the things that makes Christmas such a memorable time of year is the music. We listen to same songs year after year and they put us in a holiday mood. You visit the dentist, your doctor, or any number of stores play Christmas Muzak in the background. Many of the newer songs, songs from the 40's, 50's, and 60's talk of the holidays (Happy Holidays), special moods and relationships (The Christmas Song, Chestnuts Roasting On An Open Fire) or Santa Claus (Santa Claus Is Comin to Town). While these songs put us into the American holiday spirit they miss the true Christmas message of the Song of God born in the manger of Bethlehem. If we go back to the old Christmas hymns we find that they are full of teaching about Christ. This morning we are going to consider the message of the Christmas classic, *Hark the Herald Angels Sing*.

*Hark! the herald angels sing glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled:
Joyful all ye nations rise, join the triumph of the skies,
With the angelic host proclaim, Christ is born in Bethlehem:
Hark! the herald angels sing, glory to the newborn King.*

The first stanza describes the good news of the savior's birth. God has sent the One who will reconcile the sinner back to Himself. Therefore, all the nations should rise and sing and proclaim the good news, which is Christ the King! Luke tells us of shepherds experiencing a visitation of angels, *an angelic host proclaiming glory to the newborn King*. The angels were announcing that *a Savior, Christ the Lord, was born in Bethlehem*.

8In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. 9And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. 10But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; 11for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12" "This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." 13And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, 14"Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased." Luke 2:8-14

This first stanza describes the advent of Christ the King, *the newborn King*! There is great rejoicing and the promise of peace with God and mercy, grace, forgiveness of sin, *Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled. Oh, let the nations be glad and sing for joy!* We haven't seen the nations being glad about the rule of Christ. Psalms 2:1,2 states, *Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?* That's what we have seen. Think about Herod when he was told this King of the Jews was to be born, his reaction was to kill this *newborn King*. The Jews told Pilate Jesus was not their king. They said, *We have no king but Ceasar*. ate The apostle John wrote, *The true Light who gives light to every man was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through Him, the world did not recognize Him. John 1:9,10*

But there will be a fullness of time, a time when the angels again will sound, *there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever."* Rev 11:15 At that point heavenly host will will praise God saying, *Hark! the herald angels sing, glory to the ever reigning King*. God has sent the One who will reconcile the sinner back to Himself. Therefore, all the nations should rise and sing and proclaim the good news, which is Christ the King!

Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting Psalms 106:48

*Christ, by highest heaven adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold him come, offspring of a virgin's womb!
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see, hail the incarnate Deity!
Pleased as man with men to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel:
Hark! the herald angels sing, glory to the newborn King.*

The next stanza speaks of Christ's coming and who He was *incarnate Deity, the Word made flesh*. While Jesus existed as a man, in the flesh, He was also God, *the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting Psalms 106:48, Christ, by highest heaven adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:14* The second line of this second stanza is, *late in time behold him come*. This concept is similar to Hebrews 1 where the writer declares *in these last days God has spoken to us in His Son*.

1 God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, 2 in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. Heb 1:1,2

This hymn makes reference to the miraculous virgin birth *offspring of a virgin's womb*. The next lines express the nature of Christ, fully God and yet fully man, God veiled in the flesh. The miracle of the Incarnation of the Son of God is the fact of God becoming Man, *the Word became flesh and dwelt among us*. God, *incarnate Deity* who chose to live as a man to redeem fallen man. As Charles Wesley writes in another of his hymns O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing, *He breaks the power of canceled sin, He sets the prisoner free*.

*His love my heart has captive made, His captive would I be,
For He was bound, and scourged and died, My captive soul to free.
He breaks the power of canceled sin, He sets the prisoner free;
His blood can make the foulest clean; His blood availed for me.*

The third stanza really gives us the Gospel, the good news.

*Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings, Risen with healing in his wings;
Mild, he lays his glory by, born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth, born to give them second birth:
Hark! the herald angels sing, glory to the newborn King.*

Why did Christ Come? He was *Born to raise the sons of earth, born to give them second birth, newness of life*. Issac Watts classic hymn, Joy to the World, talks about Christ's redemptive purpose, *No more let sins and sorrows grow, Nor thorns infest the ground; He comes to make His blessings flow far as the curse is found*. This is what we have in Christ, newness of life, *second birth*. This hymn doesn't tell how Christ brought this healing, *Light and life to all he brings, Risen with healing in his wings*. It is of course through His substitutionary death for man on the cross, *When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. Romans 5:6 NLT* The hymn says, *Mild, he lays his glory by, born that man no more may die*. This sounds like the sacrifice lamb described in Isaiah, *He was oppressed and afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth. He was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so He did not open His mouth. Is 53:7*

There is a fourth stanza that we must look at

*Come Desire of nations come, fix in us Thy humble home
Rise the woman's conqu'ring seed, bruise in us the serpent's head
Adam's likeness now efface, stamp Thine image in its place
Second Adam from above, reinstate us in Thy love
Hark! the herald angels sing, glory to the newborn King.*

Come Desire of nations come, we are to pray Thy kingdom Thy will be done. The end of the NT reads, *He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming quickly." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.* Rev 22:20 Then a prayer, God *fix in us Thy humble home*. To the Colossians Paul wrote, *God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.* Col 1:27 *Adam's likeness now efface, stamp Thine image in its place*. This what Paul describes in 2 Cor 5:17, *If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.* God effaces (erases) the mark of sin from the Christian, *the old things passed away*. And new things have come, God stamps His image in the place of Adam's fallen image. This hymn is referencing the fall of Adam in the garden, *Rise the woman's conqu'ring seed, bruise in us the serpent's head*. This is an OT prophecy of Christ's redemption, Christ was the seed of woman that defeated the power of the serpent (Satan).

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."

This is the message of Christmas, God sent His Son, to become man, for the purpose of redeeming Adam's fallen race, *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith.* Rom 3:23-25

Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righteousness!

Do you know this *Prince of Peace* this *Sun of Righteousness*?