

42-02-09.wpd --Glory to the Newborn King
Advent, Christmas, angels, singing, Christ's Kingdom
Luke 2:14

The display of God's glory is seen in Christ's redemption story.

INTRODUCTION:

--Luke 2:14 (NIV) "*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.*" [*Gloria in Excelsis Deo*, one of four hymns preserved by Luke in the first two chapters of his gospel, the others being, Mary's *Magnificat*, John the Baptist's father Zechariah's *Benedictus*, and Simeon's *Nunc Dimittis*].

--This "angel-song" is a two-fold proclamation: 1) it proclaims the glory of God, 2) it proclaims where this glory is coming from: *God's work in redeeming lost humanity*. **HOM.idea.**

--KJV, "on earth peace, goodwill toward men" (Textus Receptus); NIV-- "*on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests*" (oldest MS) [*"favor" lit.= "pleasure"*] What is God's pleasure?-- Heb 11:6a, without faith it is impossible to please God

--That's some background to this verse, but let's look at a hymn based on this it: "*Hark the Herald Angels Sing*" written by Charles Wesley in 1739 and sung today to the tune created by Felix Mendelssohn in 1840 for a cantata to celebrate the 400th anniversary Gutenberg's invention of the printing press. [Gutenberg's 1st project was to print the Bible. He said, "*Religious truth is captive in a small number of manuscript books which guard the treasures. Let us break the seal which holds the holy things; give wings to the truth that by a means no longer written at great expense by the hand that wearies itself, but multiplied by an unwearied machine, it may fly to every soul born in the world.*"] Charles Wesley's hymn does this also, making the truth known to the multitudes, as long as it continues to be sung at Christmas. "*Hark! The herald angels sing, / Glory to the newborn King*" **Title.** Let's see how His glory is displayed in these stanzas of Charles Wesley's hymn:

I. The Glory of His Introduction, (Stanza #1 - 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 th'angelic host proclaim, / "Christ is born in Bethlehem!")

- A. Prov 25:2, It is the glory of God to conceal a matter; to search out a matter is the glory of kings. (God's plan of salvation was hidden for centuries under the atoning cover of ceremonial symbols and sacrifices, but at this time in human history, a King was born who would pursue the matter of our salvation to the point of complete revelation and

universal proclamation. (**The display of God's glory is seen in Christ's redemption story.**)

- B. Wesley tells us to harken to the angelic proclamation of Luke 2:14, then he paraphrases that proclamation, and calls all the world to join these angels in broadcasting this proclamation.

TRANS: "*Glory to the newborn King!*" says the repeating chorus of this hymn, because this new King was born to bring "*Peace on earth, and mercy mild,*" by establishing the means to make "*God and sinners reconciled!*"

II. The Glory of His Incarnation, (Stanza #2 - Christ, by highest Heav'n adored; / Christ the everlasting Lord; / Late in time, behold Him come, / Offspring of a virgin's womb. / Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; / Hail th'incarnate Deity, / Pleased with us in flesh to dwell, / Jesus our Emmanuel.)

- A. The glory of this King is in the distance of His journey:
1. from eternity into time
 2. from "highest heaven" to the womb of a lowly virgin girl
- B. The glory that His Incarnation confirmed to our human bodies:
1. God is not embarrassed by being seen wearing human flesh
 2. Deity is to be greeted/welcome (hailed) in a human body
 3. God doesn't look on human flesh as vile or beneath His dignity
 4. By having a human body, God is really "Immanuel" ["with us"] (having a real physical body is essential to the human condition).

TRANS: God's glory in Christ is incarnate glory! The eternal vehicle of that glory is now and forevermore a human body. That fact should set us straight about the dignity and sanctity of our human flesh, no matter how obscenely and abusively cultures, esp. our own culture, has treated the human body or taught us to think indecently about it.

III. The Glory of His Ministry, (Stanza #3 - Hail the heav'nly Prince of Peace! / Hail the Sun of Righteousness! / Light and life to all He brings, / Ris'n 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.)

- A. Welcome ("Hail") the promised "Prince of Peace" (The lasting peace governments try to achieve is only temporary [Caesar Augustus was thought to be a great prince of peace for bringing Mediterranean nations under Roman rule, but the "Pax Romana" eventually failed.]) The peace that Christ brings will last forever-- Isa 9:6-7, For to us a child is born, to us a

son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.

- B. Welcome to the "Sun of righteousness" who brings "light and life" and "healing"-- Mal 4:2, But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall. (part of *healing* is *deliverance*).
- C. Christ's greatest ministry was to deal a *deathblow* to death: "Born that man no more may die" and He did this by *resurrection*: "Born to raise the sons of earth; Born to give them second birth")

TRANS: There is a resurrection for sinners and one for sinners made into saints by new birth. We choose which resurrection want. We didn't choose to be born into Adam's race, but we can choose new birth into God's family-- John 1:12-13, Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God--children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

IV. The Glory of His Victory, (Stanza #4 - 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. / Now display Thy saving power, / Ruined nature now restore; / Now in mystic union join / Thine to ours, and ours to Thine.)

- A. His victory of winning sinners to sing: "Come, Desire of nations, come"
- B. His victory over Satan: "Rise, the woman's conqu'ring Seed, / Bruise in us the serpent's head."-- God says to Satan in Gen 3:15, "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."
- C. [Milton is famous for Paradise Lost but not so well known for his *Paradise Regained*] Why do humans gravitate to *bad news* and skip over the *Good News*? Christ turned the tragedy Humanity Lost into Humanity restored: Now display Thy saving power, / Ruined nature now restore; / Now in mystic union join / Thine to ours, and ours to Thine

CONCLUSION: The most glorious message for us about the glory of the newborn King is that we can share in His glory by faith: Adam's likeness, Lord, efface, / Stamp Thine image in its place: / Second Adam from above, / Reinstate us in Thy love. / Let us Thee, though lost, regain, / Thee, the Life, the inner man: / O, to all Thyself impart, / Formed in each believing heart.