

“Unto You is Born...”

Luke 2:1-20

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Christ-child is born in a lowly manger to parents of humble means in the city of David, and what a treasured joy it is to make such a proclamation! Just as the angels and the whole host of heaven proclaimed in the fields to the shepherds that glorious night, we sing with hearts full of cheer, “Glory to God in the highest!” The Savior of the world has come, and as the angel told Joseph in His dream, “He will save His people from their sins (Matt. 1:21).” And that is why we gather here this evening singing carols and praising God for all His mercies toward us. The one who will save us from our sins has come, and that truth is so much more than just a miraculous appearing of the Lord. God Himself has come in the flesh, and He has done it for you, that salvation might be given unto you by His blood.

God didn’t come into the world as a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths just to prove that He could. He wasn’t hanging around in heaven and got challenged to an impossible task only to respond, “Hold my beer.” He did it so that eternal life might be given unto you, because without that blessing of His only Son being born in Bethlehem you would be lost to an eternity of death. But that’s the joy of Christmas. Salvation has come unto you, “for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord (v. 11).” It’s not about the gifts under the tree or the visitation of a jolly man in a red suit, but the visitation of God in the flesh, the incarnate Word who has come to redeem the world.

Unto you is born forgiveness. He is the source and the means by which the guilt of your sins is removed. The wretchedness of your sin is something that you can never remove from the flesh that you bear in this life. It clings to you like a vile disease that is bent on your destruction and seeks only to gratify itself at your expense. It was necessary that He was born into the world as a true man so that He could die for the sins which you have no power to fix on your own. Without Jesus and His gift of atonement for your sins, we would have nothing, just as the prophet Daniel confesses before the Lord in chapter 9, verse 9, “To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against Him.” Our sinful flesh is in open rebellion against the Lord, and so it can do nothing good of its own. Therefore, the forgiveness we have is on account of Christ alone and the sacrifice He has made in order to bring us that precious gift.

Unto you is born redemption. He has purchased and won you back from the power of sin, death, and the devil. No longer does Satan rule over your life, because the one who has paid the price for you has come into the world. In taking all the filth of your sin upon Himself, He has taken all of the punishment for it as well. He was beaten, mocked, scourged, and crucified for you, so that the price of judgment would be paid in full. Death no longer has its sting. Sin no longer has its lordship. And Satan is an impotent fool who can do you no harm. The Lord Jesus has paid the price for your soul, and you are now regenerated by the Spirit as God has claimed you in your baptism. Redemption is so much more than a synonym for salvation or forgiveness. It is the cost of it, and the cost of it is the blood of Jesus which He willingly went to the cross to shed once and for all that you would no longer be slaves to unrighteousness and sin. The enmity that you once had with God was destroyed in His all-sufficient sacrifice.

Unto you is born peace with God. He has reconciled you to the Father, that you might be His dear children forever. The Prince of Peace, prophesied in Isaiah 9:6, has been born to inaugurate a peace with God that will carry you into and through eternity as one who is under His salvific rule. Before the coming of the Savior you were God's enemies, no different than the devil and His minions as they constantly seek to subvert His will. That is the state you were in before peace was given through Jesus Christ. Your sinful flesh constantly battling God's will, but without the Spirit of God dwelling in you to keep it in check. Through baptism into Christ's death, though, you now live in peace with God despite the sinful flesh. Because what dwells within you is the Son of God, and when the Father looks upon you, He sees His only Son, and not the sinful bag of bones that you are without Him. Because of that reconciliation, salvation is yours for the sake of Jesus and only for that reason will you dwell in His glory for eternity.

Unto you is born salvation. He has saved you from the scourge of sin and purified you in His blood which now covers you, and because of that work which He has done, you have been declared justified before the righteous Judge. Romans 8:1 says, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus," and that is why we stand confidently before the court of God despite our sinfulness. The babe born in Bethlehem is not just a decoration in the manger scene. He is not just "dear eight-pound, six-ounce, newborn infant Jesus, don't even know a word yet, just a little infant, so cuddly, but still omnipotent." The virgin's Son will be the all-availing sacrifice for the sins of the world when the fullness of time is reached just 33 years later. He will grow in "wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man," as Luke records in 2:52. He must suffer the human condition, but doing so without sin.

And the only purpose for that is your salvation. He lives the life of a true man so that His sacrifice would be sufficient to atone for the sins of the world and be accepted by the Father in heaven. He may be in humble estate in His birth, but His exaltation is coming as He makes His way to the cross for you. The second verse of our hymn just a moment ago captures the reality of His salvation for you so perfectly.

Why lies He in such mean estate
Where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear: for sinners here
The silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear, shall pierce Him through,
The cross be borne for me, for you
Hail, hail the Word made flesh,
The Babe, the Son of Mary!

The only reason for the Son of God to humble Himself to be born of the virgin Mary in lowly estate was so that His grace would be given unto you. There is no aspect of His incarnation that was done for God's benefit. He is the Almighty God, and your heavenly Father has no desires for Himself, but only for you. He desires that all would be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth—the truth that He sent His only Son into the world to redeem those who walk in darkness. But all those who walk in darkness have seen a great light, and that light is the light of men as the incarnate Son of the Most High God. His salvific purpose is the reason He came down from heaven, and His coming in order to be the propitiation for your sins is the only reason that salvation is given unto you.

As you look into the manger and see the world's Redeemer lying there, remember what was told to Joseph in Matthew's Gospel. "You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." All those who believe in the truth of that salvation have received the forgiveness He has come to bring. Because of that gift, the proclamation of the heavenly host rings truer in our ears than we could ever know. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased." The pleasure of God is in His Son, and because of the forgiveness He has so freely given to us, we share in the pleasure of God. He looks upon you the same way He looks upon the baby Jesus, for it is He that has covered you in His blood, and made you righteous before your Father in heaven. Blessed be the Child who has come as our Redeemer, to bring salvation unto you. Joy to the World! The Lord is come! Amen

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