

The Wednesday Word, December 25, 2019: The Sovereign, Saving Servant

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9:6)

Our Lord’s entrance into the world demonstrates, among many things, God’s humility and servant’s heart. The truth is, our God is a humble God. This is verified by the touching words, “And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself” (Philippians 2:8). Jesus might have been born in a royal palace, and that would have been a wonderful condescension for Him. Nothing would have been too grand for He who was “a child born” and a “son given” yet at the same time “The mighty God” and the “everlasting Father” (Isaiah 9:6).

Yet, His entrance into this world was in a stable. Have you ever been in a rough and ready cow shed? I have! And it’s no place into which to bring a baby with the squish of manure under feet and the odious smells. What humble earthly beginnings.

It’s also significant that the first people to hear the wonderful news of the Saviour’s birth were not the great people of the land, the high priests and rulers, but humble shepherds tending their flocks by night. Again, the pride of man is rebuked. Shepherds were not held in high esteem in those days. Many considered them the dregs of society.

But what of heaven? What did heaven think of this event? The angel of the Lord was sent to tell the shepherds. We have instances in Scripture where angels appeared just as men, so as not to excite astonishment and bewilderment in those to whom they appeared. But in this case, the glory of the Lord appeared to the shepherds. That glory must have been wonderful, surpassing anything on earth, so much so that the shepherds were ‘sore afraid.’ Being instructed not to fear, they were told that that day in the city of David was born a Saviour, which was Christ, the Lord. What an announcement. A Saviour was born. Not a new teacher with a new set of demands, but a Saviour!

In an instant there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, crying aloud, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men” (Luke 2:14).

What a contrast to the stable and the manger! When children of royal parents are born there are gun salutes to celebrate the great event. But was there ever a child greeted like this heavenly Child?

Look at the arrival of the young prince of glory and see not only a display of foretold servanthood and saviorhood but also a demonstration of sovereign majesty. In order that Christ should be born at Bethlehem, the entire Roman world was to be taxed. The proud Roman Emperor, Caesar Augustus, little thought when he decreed this taxing that he would fulfil the Scripture, *“But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting”* (Micah 5:2).

In that prophecy, seven centuries and more before the birth of our Lord, we have presented to us Christ's manhood, the place of His birth, and the clear declaration of His deity.

What sovereignty! What servanthood! What saviourhood all bound up in that little infant, Jesus, the babe of Bethlehem

And that's the Gospel Truth!