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"UNTO YOU IS BORN...A SAVIOR."

– DEC. 25. – HEB. 1:1-9. –

"Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord." – Luke 2:10,11.

"CHRISTMAS Day," in celebration of our dear Redeemer's birth, has for long centuries been celebrated on December 25th; and altho it is now well known that this date is in error, and that it more properly corresponds with the date of the annunciation to Mary, nine months before our Lord was born, and that he was born about October 1st, – nevertheless, since the Lord has given no instructions whatever upon this subject, and since it is proper to do good deeds and think good thoughts upon any day, it cannot be improper, in harmony with general usage, for us to remember in a social way our dear Redeemer's birth at this time.

Our Lord Jesus was God's great gift to Israel and to the world, as yet appreciated fully only by the Spiritual Israelite. Through him also all of God's gifts are promised and to be bestowed. (Eph. 4:8.) In view of these things, the custom throughout Christendom of making Christmas Day a joyful one, by the interchange of little tokens of love in the family, and to the poor, seems most appropriate.

The central thought of our Golden Text is that Christ is a *Savior*, provided for the world – for "all people." [R2407 : page 372] And while all may gather something of the force and meaning of the word "Savior" as signifying deliverer, its underlying force and significance are not generally recognized. It is supposed that the Lord and his disciples spoke the common language of Palestine, the Syriac, and in that language this word, rendered Savior, signifies "Life-Giver." How much force this adds to the meaning of this beautiful text! Jesus was born to be a Life-Giver, and this joyful news is to all people. He may

give *life* to whomsoever he chooses; and he chooses to give it, in harmony with the divine will, only to those who come unto the Father through him, by faith and obedience.

A life-giver is a father, and it is from this point of view that our Lord Jesus is prophesied to be, by and by, known as the Everlasting Father – the Giver of everlasting life – to the obedient of the world, not to the Church. (Isa. 9:6; 1 Pet. 1:3.) Adam, the father of the race, failed to give to his posterity perfect and lasting life: through sin he came under the sentence of death himself, and transmitted to his posterity only a blemished, dying condition. What the whole world needs, therefore, is life – eternal life, – and in sending Jesus into the world, God was meeting our necessities most bountifully.

But God does not propose to give eternal life to any of his creatures unless that gift would be a real blessing: and we know that eternal life would be a curse, instead of a blessing, to any not in full accord with the Lord and his righteous arrangements. Accordingly, we are told that all who would have the life which Jesus came to secure for mankind, and to offer to all, must accept the same according to the terms, conditions and limitations of the New Covenant – faith in the Redeemer and heart-harmony and obedience to God, to the extent of ability. In the present time (sin abounding and Satan deceiving and blinding) not many can appreciate this great gift of God's love, and not many become his disciples in verity. This is the time, therefore, in which the Lord selects, "elects," from the whole world of the redeemed ones the "little flock," who shall be joint-heirs with Christ in the Kingdom.

But thanks be unto God, we can now see that the plan of salvation does not stop with the gathering of the elect Church, but that in the full sense of the word it is merely beginning there. And the testimony of the angelic choir which sang at our Savior's birth, and of the angel who declared, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people," shall yet be completely fulfilled.

In the lesson above set forth (Heb. 1:1-9), the Apostle calls attention to the fact that our Lord Jesus and his testimonies were but further developments of the great divine plan of which God had been speaking to his people Israel, "at sundry times and in divers manners" in the past. He points out that if it was always appropriate to hearken to the Lord's messengers, it is much more appropriate that we hearken to the great Chief Messenger of Jehovah, our Lord Jesus, "whom God hath appointed heir of all things."

He next points out the *basis* of our good hopes of salvation through Christ – the *basis* on which divine justice and love may operate toward fallen mankind; *viz.*, that this Jesus "himself *purged our sins* and has sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high," far above angels and principalities and powers.

When the Apostle points out the high exaltation of our Lord Jesus, and that it was a reward for his obedience in suffering death on our behalf, he proves four things: (1) That our Lord Jesus did give a *ransom* for our transgressions, which was satisfactory to the divine justice; so that through his stripes we might be healed, notwithstanding the sentence of eternal death which was against us through father Adam's transgression. (2) He proves this by the fact of our Lord's resurrection and high exaltation above angels, to share the Father's throne and nature in glory. (3) This exaltation of the Savior implies power – power to carry out the blessed provisions of the New Covenant, which he merely sealed with his precious blood. It must yet be made effective to mankind. (4) To make it effective [R2408 : page 372] will imply the use of the power and exaltation granted to this Life-Giver by Jehovah. Having bought the world from under the sentence of death he will in due time proceed to the establishment of the heavenly Kingdom: thus he shall bring in everlasting righteousness as the law of earth; lay judgment to the line and righteousness to the plummet; sweep away all the refuges of lies; bind the great Adversary, Satan; and, opening the eyes of the blind and the ears of the deaf, he then will cause all mankind to know respecting the love of God which

passeth all understanding, which would not that any should even perish, but that all might turn unto him and live. – Isa. 11:9; 28:17; 35:5; 2 Pet. 3:9,13; Rev. 20:2.

The exalted and fully empowered Life-Giver will then stand ready, not only to make known to all mankind the terms of the New Covenant under which all may have eternal life, by obedience to God in him, but as the great Prophet he will stand ready to teach, and as the great Priest he will stand ready to help their infirmities and to direct their paths in the way of righteousness.

"Hallelujah! What a Savior!"

"He is able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto the Father by him." "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation, to everyone that believeth."
