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## **A SAVIOR – A LIFE-GIVER**

– *LUKE 2:1-20* – *JANUARY 21.* –

**"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ, the Lord."**

TODAY'S STUDY is a most interesting one, relating to the birth of Jesus. The Scriptures are most careful to point out to us that He was not begotten after the usual manner – that He had no earthly father, but was begotten by the Holy Spirit. The necessity for this is manifest. The father is the life-giver, the mother is the nourisher of the offspring. If Jesus had received His life from a human father it would have been tainted, impaired, under condemnation of death, as is that of all others. This would have frustrated any work on His part as the world's Redeemer, because no imperfect man could have redeemed a perfect one, as the Psalmist declares – Psa. 49:7.

In order for Jesus to be able to give His life a redemption price for Father Adam's life (and for the life of his race, forfeited by disobedience), it was necessary that He be perfect, sinless; as we read, "He was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." And again, "A body hast Thou prepared Me," for the suffering of death.

It is not enough, then, that we recognize Jesus as good, well-intentioned in mind. We must see in Him human perfection, sufficient as a sacrifice to offset the forfeited life of the first perfect man, Adam. And we must see also that He was begotten from above – that the holy spark of life in Him as the babe was a transferred life-principle from a pre-existent condition, mentioned by our Lord when He prayed, "Glorify Thou Me with the glory that I had with Thee before the world was." St. Paul explains to us that "He was rich and for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich."

## **FOR OUR SAKES HE BECAME POOR**

Few babes in all Judea or in all the world were born in a more humble place than Jesus. Joseph and Mary had gone to their native city, Bethlehem, for tax registration, under the imperial edict. The little city was crowded with others on similar errand. And so it came that Jesus was born in a cattle stall, where Joseph and Mary had been compelled to lodge for the night. Ah! we cannot wonder that it is difficult for many to understand why our Heavenly Father sent forth His Son for our redemption under such ignominious conditions! Only those who have the spirit of the Divine Plan, through the begetting of the Holy Spirit, can see the wherefore.

## **FEAR NOT! – GOOD TIDINGS – GREAT JOY – ALL PEOPLE**

The Message of the angels was surely an inspired one, fully in harmony with God's promise to Abraham – only an enlarged statement of the same – the same "all people" to be blessed – and it was still good tidings and it still meant great joy; but now, two thousand years later, the Message pointed out the very Individual through whom the good tidings would have fulfilment – the Babe of Bethlehem.

The angelic announcement, "Fear not," is interesting. All humanity realize that they are sinners and naturally have forebodings. They find it difficult to believe that [R4941 : page 460] God is really gracious and loving. The gods of the heathen nations are ferocious, unloving and unlovable. But the God of all Grace, the Father of Mercies, is a God of Love, who delights to use His Divine power for the blessing and uplifting of His erring children. Therefore He was peculiar in sending the Message of "good tidings of great joy unto all people," as well as in sending His Only Begotten Son at great cost to be man's Redeemer – that He might be just and still be the Justifier of those who believe. – Rom. 3:26.

The Message declared that a Savior had been born – the Anointed, the Lord. He was to be the antitypical Moses, the antitypical Aaron, the antitypical Melchisedec, the antitypical David. In addition to the qualities pictured in these various typical characters, He was, also, the Son of the Highest. He was to be the Savior – the Deliverer – the Mediator of the New Covenant, so long looked for, hoped for, prayed for.

There is a special force or meaning in this word Savior – it signifies *life-giver*. The Syriac version is the one in which Savior is translated *life-giver*; and Syriac was, likely, the language spoken by Jesus and others of Palestine at that time. And is there not a special fitness or appropriateness in this name *life-giver*? What had man lost and what would he wish to have back? The Scriptures answer that Adam lost life and came under the penalty, "Dying, thou shalt die." He did not lose heaven, for he never possessed it. He lost earthly life, an Eden home, human perfection. And Jesus declared that He "came to seek and to recover *that which was lost.*" – Matt. 18:11. [R4942 : page 460]

Hence, as we have seen, He was provided with a perfect, human life, that "He by the grace of God might taste death for every man," and that by thus suffering, the Just for the unjust, the penalty of the sinner, He might become the purchaser or the Redeemer of Adam and all his race, with a full right to restore to perfect life and to all that was lost as many as would receive it at His hand – thankfully. Throughout His entire Messianic reign of a thousand years He will be the world's Life-Giver, raising the willing and obedient up out of sin and death conditions to perfection and everlasting life and earthly, human blessings.

But our Lord also does a work for the Church, the "elect," His bride and joint-heir in the Kingdom, and this blessing to the Church begins before the setting up of His Kingdom. The Church "are by nature children of wrath even as others," but they are not to be restored

to what was lost. The offer to them is that they shall become copies of the Redeemer and lay down their lives, walking in His footsteps, and that He will make up for all their deficiencies and that thus the Father of Mercies will bring them like their Lord to the divine nature, will assist them in making their "calling and election sure" to the heavenly state which God has promised them, for "if we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him; if we die with Him, we shall also live with Him." – 2 Tim. 2:11,12.

## **THE HALLELUJAH CHORUS**

In verse 14 we have a kind of Hallelujah chorus or angelic response to the Message of the angel already given. A heavenly host sang, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." How grand! How inspiring! But we see not yet this glorious condition achieved. The proper glory to God is not yet rendered on earth as it is in heaven. Nor does peace yet wave her banner, even over so-called Christendom.

What is the matter? Ah, said the Apostle, that is a secret, a mystery, hidden from past Ages and Dispensations! The mystery is that God not only intends to have Jesus for His Anointed One, to rule and bless the world, but He has foreordained also a company of footstep followers to be with Him and share His work, and this entire Gospel Age has been devoted to the work of selecting this class, variously called the Body of Christ and the "espoused virgin," which eventually, at the Second Coming of the Lord, is to become "the Bride, the Lamb's Wife" and joint-heir.

It is for this that the Apostle declares that the whole creation groans and travails in pain until now – waiting for the manifestation of the Sons of God – the revelation of Jesus and His Bride in the glory of the Kingdom for the blessing of natural Israel and all the families of the earth with knowledge and assistance, that the willing and obedient may be recovered to the image and likeness of God and to everlasting life.

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