

I'm convinced that there are a good many things in this life that we really can't do anything about, but that God wants us to do something with.

-Elisabeth Elliot

GADSBY'S CATECHISM

By William Gadsby, about 1800

(Presented here as originally published – this does not constitute a full endorsement of the Riverside Baptist Church)

Question LIV. Which is the fourth commandment?

Answer. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day and hallowed it.

Ex. 20.8-11; Deut 5.12-15.

Question LV. Which is the fifth commandment?

Answer. Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

Ex. 20.12; Deut. 5.16.

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Sunday Morning Bible Study -- 10:00 AM

Sunday Morning Worship -- 11:00 AM

Prayer and Bible Study Wednesday Evening 6:30 PM

WCWV 92.9 FM – 8:00 AM Sunday Morning

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST REPORT

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Pillar and ground of the Truth” -- 1 Timothy 3:15

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THE APPEARING OF OUR SAVIOR

Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: 2 Timothy 1:9-10

The attention given to the birth of Christ our Lord at this time of the year points to the tendency of men to consider the life of Christ in segments. While it is good that we look to the fact and the details of His birth as recorded in the Word, we would not lose sight of the fact of His eternal existence and especially that He ever lives and reigns on high. The birthdates of many are observed who have long since died and not one of them is risen. But we are not merely memorializing the birth of One who has died; we are celebrating the life of one who is risen. And so, is His identification of Himself: “I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore...” Sadly, many give voice to the idea of honoring the birth of Christ who have no interest in serving Him as the living and true God manifest in the flesh.

The accounts of the birth of our Lord comprise what is arguably one of the most beautiful narratives of all times. To we who believe, there is no minimizing the importance of both the event and the manner in which it is told to us in the Word. It is interesting to note that two of the Gospel accounts do not mention the birth (Mark and John). The focus of Mark is the action of our Lord as He went about doing good while not leaving any doubt as to who He is as the Son of God and God the Son. John would turn our attention to the eternal existence of God the Son in declaring that, *In the*

beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. John 1:1. Luke, in His depiction of Jesus as the Son of Man, would give special attention to His birth in that He is the man Christ Jesus.

The term used here and elsewhere in the Word of God is “appearing” and in this way we are informed of the manifestation of Christ as the Gospel focus while enforcing the fact of His eternal existence and His determination to save a people for His name. In the first of Paul’s epistles to Timothy he had declared the well-known: *And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. 1 Timothy 3:16.* In writing to Titus the reference to Christ is included with the thought, *For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Titus 2:11.* Even in the biblical expressions of expectation the reference to His birth is included: *So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation. Hebrews 9:28.*

Paul reminds us of the great significance of the birth of Christ by referencing the eternal purpose of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. The mystery of Godliness, Christ in us the hope of glory as a matter of experience, anchors the

eternal work of grace in us. I may date the time of the revelation of Christ in me, but I am then increasingly conscious of a consideration in the eternal purpose of God. So, it was that our salvation and our "holy calling" (note the order) was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. The appearing of our Lord confirmed the determination and set in motion the eternal purpose of God to save a people for His name.

It is glory to God in the Highest that peace would be on earth and that His name would be called Jesus. This was the word of the prophets of old, the expectation of David and is the hope of all who truly believe. It would be Jesus who would declare "I have glorified thee on earth..." The song writer said it well that "long lay the world in sin and error pining." But the provision of God was the perfect life and therefore the perfect Lamb. Indeed, He would save His people from their sins and He would do it by the power of a perfect life, lived in full subjection and submission to His Father and our Father and then offering the perfect sacrifice. The acceptance of that sacrifice and the subsequent resurrection and ascension of Christ declares the successful fulfillment of His "purpose in grace."

Thus, it is declared in our text that by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ that our greatest enemy (death) has been abolished. To

we who once knew only bondage through the fear of death, the sense of liberty is precious realized. But He has also "brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel." How much greater is this than the sentimental thoughts and warm fuzzy feelings of many at this season? And how wonderful it is that the He continues to appear. The Gospel is not a proposition: it is a proclamation. And salvation is not a reformation; it is a revelation. Christ our Lord first appeared in the little town of Bethlehem and continues to appear in the hearts of poor undeserving sinners and eternal life is made manifest.

We rejoice as new appearances of Christ are given us. We meet Him at every turn in the Word of God. He is there in every hour of need. Again, referring to a well-known contemporary song, "every day He comes to me with new assurance." We are amazed at the freshness He brings to the hope of all who believe.

We praise God for the appearing of His Holy Child Jesus in Bethlehem of old. We rejoice to know that He is no less than God manifest in the flesh. We would honor Him in His birth and rejoice in the righteousness of God we witnessed in His life. We would bow at the contemplation of His majesty. And we would eternally celebrate Him and His manifestation in our hearts. May Jesus Christ be praised. *bhs*

The Angels' Song, Its Opening Note "Glory to God in the highest."

The instructive lesson to be learned from this opening note of the angels' song is, that salvation is God's highest glory. He is glorified in every dewdrop that twinkles in the morning sunshine. He is magnified in every wood flower that blossoms in the copse, although it is born to blush unseen of man, and may seem to waste its sweetness on the forest air. God is glorified in every bird that warbles on the trees, and in every lamb that skips in the meadows. Do not the fishes in the sea praise Him? From the tiny minnow to the huge leviathan, do not all creatures that swim in the waters laud and magnify His great Name? Do not all created things extol Him? Is there aught beneath the sky, save man, that doth not glorify God? Do not the stars exalt Him, when they write His Name in golden letters upon the azure of heaven? Do not the lightnings adore Him when they flash His brightness in arrows of light piercing the midnight darkness?

Do not the thunderpeals extol Him when they roll like drums in the march of the God of armies? Do not all things that He hath made, from the least even to the greatest, exalt Him? But sing, sing, O universe, till thou hast exhausted thyself, yet thou canst not chant an anthem so sweet as the song of Incarnation! Though Creation may be a majestic organ of praise, it cannot reach the compass of the golden canticle,—Incarnation! There is more melody in Jesus in the manger than in the whole sublime oratorio of the Creation. There is more grandeur in the song that heralds the birth of the Babe of Bethlehem than there is in worlds on worlds rolling in silent grandeur around the throne of the Most High. —C. H. Spurgeon. *God With Us*

Joy to the World

This year marks the three hundredth anniversary of one of the most beloved Christmas hymns in the English language: “Joy to the World.” Interestingly, though, its author, Isaac Watts (1674–1748), likely wasn’t thinking of Christmas when he penned it.

The hymn first appeared in 1719, when Watts published a collection of hymns, to which he gave the catchy title *The Psalms of David: Imitated in the language of the New Testament*, and applied to the Christian state and worship. His goal was to breathe new life into the English congregational psalm-singing of his day and help Christians view the psalms through New Testament lenses.

The hymn we know as “Joy to the World,” Watts titled “The Messiah’s Coming and His Kingdom,” and he based it off of Psalm 98. The “coming” Watts primarily had in mind when he composed the hymn was Christ’s second coming. He was thinking culmination, not incarnation.

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So why did this hymn become a Christmas carol? Likely it’s because in 1839 the American hymn writer Lowell Mason pieced together the tune we’re all now familiar with from two different places in the Advent section of Handel’s *Messiah*. But whatever the reason, it’s a sweet providence. The hymn lyrics celebrate truths about Christ that, for the Christian, are past, present, and future. It reminds us all at Christmas that Advent is only the beginning, that it points forward to the “blessed hope” (Titus 2:13).

The Lord Is Come

It is altogether right for us to sing at Christmas, “Joy to the world, the Lord is [meaning has] come!” Indeed, he has come. And why did he come the first time? To make it possible for “his blessings [to] flow far as the curse is found.” Jesus was born to accomplish a work that would purchase the full redemption of his people and his world.

That’s why all the references to the birth of Jesus in the New Testament have a significant future orientation: Christmas is about what’s coming.

When the angel visits Mary, he tells her the child she will conceive miraculously “will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High” and that “God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end” (Luke 1:32–33).

--Excerpted from an Article by Jon Bloom of *Desiring God*