

## **HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING**

### **STANZA 2: THE MYSTERY OF THE INCARNATION**

Wednesday, December 13

Reading: Hebrews 2:5-18

**Hebrews 2:17** *For this reason He had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that He might make atonement for the sins of the people.*

Christ by highest heaven adored / Christ the everlasting Lord  
Late in time behold Him come / Offspring of the Virgin's womb  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see / Hail the incarnate deity  
Pleased as man with men to dwell / Jesus our Immanuel  
Hark! the herald angels sing / Glory to the newborn King

The Incarnation is a mystery. How could the eternal Son of God become a finite man? The second stanza of 'Hark! the Herald Angels Sing' helps us delve into this mystery. It begins with a reminder of God's perfect timing: "Late in time behold Him come / Offspring of the virgin's womb." At the perfect time and in God's predetermined plan, Jesus was born into the world. In the letter of Galatians, the apostle Paul put it this way:

But when the set time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. (Galatians 4:4-6)

Wesley's carol presents many biblical images of this great mystery: "Veiled in flesh the Godhead see / Hail the incarnate deity / Pleased as man with men to dwell..." This amazing truth was displayed in the opening to John's gospel.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...and the Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:1, 14)

The book of Hebrews gives us a good picture of the mystery of the incarnation. Jesus, "who was made a lower than the angels for a little while (2:9) and broke the power of sin and death by dying on the cross (2:14-15). He was "fully human in every way, in order that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in serve to God, and that He might make atonement for the sins of the people" (2:17). Imagine the all-powerful Son of God leaving the glories of heaven and the praise of the angels to become a helpless Baby, born to a poor family in the lowliest of situations. That is what the incarnation means!

#### **POINTS TO PONDER:**

Think about these words from John MacArthur's book God With Us:

"Here's a side of the Christmas story that isn't often told: those soft little hands, fashioned by the Holy Spirit in Mary's womb, were made so that nails might be driven thorough them. Those baby feet, pink and unable to walk, would one day walk up a dusty hill to be nailed to a cross. That sweet infant's head with sparkling eyes and eager mouth was formed so that someday men might force a crown of thorns onto it. That tender body, warm and soft, wrapped in swaddling clothes, would one day be ripped open by a spear. Jesus was born to die." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John MacArthur. God With Us, p. 116.