

WHY THIS HUMBLE KING?

Thursday, December 4

Reading: Philippians 2:5-11

Philippians 2:6 *Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to His own advantage; 7 rather, He made Himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.*

8 *And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!*

William Dix first verse of ‘What Child is This?’ answered the question ‘WHO.’ Now he turns to the question ‘WHY.’ Why this humble birth in a lowly cattle trough? Have you ever considered why God choose to enter this world as a humble Baby? He could have come as a conquering Warrior or a powerful King. He could have been born in a mansion with servants and people at His beck-and-call. Yet He chose to come as a Baby born in poverty.

*Why lies He in such mean estate / Where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear: for sinners here / The silent Word is pleading
Nails, spear shall pierce Him through / The cross be borne for me, for you
Hail, hail the Word made flesh / The Babe, the Son of Mary*

Most hymn books use the last part of verse 1 as the chorus for all the verses. But Mr. Dix has a separate answer for each question he asks in the verses. Here, his answer to ‘WHY’ points us to the cross. In Philippians 2, the apostle Paul also points us to the cross as Jesus’ ultimate show of love and humility.

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to His own advantage; rather, He made Himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! (Philippians 2:5-8)

The “Word made flesh” is silently pleading for us to consider the reason why He came. In his book God With Us, Pastor John MacArthur puts it well:

“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”¹

Interestingly, this Philippians passage was probably a song sung by the early church. The last line of this verse of ‘What Child is This?’ reflects the ending to that other song recorded by Paul in Philippians 2:9-11 where Christ is highly exalted and every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. ‘Hail’ comes from the old English word for ‘to heal or make whole.’ We should praise the Lord Jesus because His death has brought us new life. How will you share the message of forgiveness of sins through Jesus this Christmas? How can you celebrate the real WHY of Jesus’ birth?