

December 4th

HARK THE HERALD

This song is one of the first I can ever remember singing at Christmas. I learned it at church as a very young child and could sing all of the verses before I started to school. That accomplishment did not mean that I understood the song—it's a hard one for a child to understand. I remember singing the words but not making much sense of them.

What is a “herald”? How was Jesus “veiled in flesh”? Does Jesus have wings? It says so in the song.

Over the years, as my understanding of the work Christ increased, I came to appreciate this song for its depth and unvarnished truth of the gospel. Written by Charles Wesley, the founder of the Methodist church in America, it is rich with the essential doctrinal truths about Christ: He was God in the flesh who came to earth to live as a man and to reconcile us to Himself. He was “born to raise the sons of earth; born to give them second birth”.

I've noticed that the truth about Christ and His sacrifice for us is often as misunderstood to most people as this song was to me as a child. The true reason Christ came to earth and what He did for us when He died for our sins is the most compelling story in history—God himself redeemed His creation through His own sacrifice. There is no other like it—no mythology in any culture even comes close to this truth or to anything nearly as wonderful.



But compelling though it is, this truth is rejected or not understood by millions of people. Americans in general do not grasp this amazing reality. Most of them would describe Christianity as a set of rules that one is required to keep, to earn the favor of God, which is just a variation of every other religious system on earth. This common misconception, a clever lie of Satan, keeps many from learning the real truth, that God gives salvation freely and paid the price for it Himself. This misunderstanding prevents some from even acknowledging the existence of God himself.

I recently heard a comedic actor, who is a well-known atheist, say that he does not understand why people pray to God to help them find their car keys when that same God did not save people who prayed to be rescued from the Holocaust. What a tragic misunderstanding of the purposes of God and His love toward us. The fact that there is evil in the world is not the reason I personally need God to veil himself in flesh and come live with us here on earth. The fact that there is evil in my own heart is the reason I need God. The difference between the greatest evil ever manifested and my own selfishness is one of quantity, not quality. I need a savior as much as the worst person who ever lived. This is the beauty of the news those heralding angels gave—at last, God has come to earth to reconcile himself to his own creation—those of us with selfishness, greed, lust and every manner of evil hidden in our hearts. We can live in fellowship with Him, our creator because He is now our redeemer.

Contributed by Lyn Farrell

