

Psalm (Quality: Good)

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Date: 25 December 1983

Preacher: Collier, Gilbert (1900-1984)

[0 : 00] morning to a psalm, Psalm 40, and words that are found in the 7th and 8th verses.

40th Psalm, verses 7 and 8. Then said I, lo, I come. In the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God. Yea, thy law is within my heart.

I expect some of the dear young people here will think that the minister has forgotten the time and season of the year. He's taken a text right away from that wonderful part of scripture which describes the coming of the Saviour into this world.

But let me assure you, I have not forgotten the fact that we meet here today on the day of Christ's glorious birth, his birthday. And what a wonderful birthday it is. I often think that there, and there of course there are many, many children who have their birthday on the same day. No doubt in their early days there's a measure of resentment that they find their great day obliterated to a large extent by the celebrations and the activities that are going on all around them. But it is nevertheless a very wonderful thing to be born the day that the Lord Jesus Christ was born. And I'm going to let you into a little secret this morning.

And I do want that you dear children should have the same or similar experience that I once did at such a time as this. When I was twenty, I had such a sense of wonder, fill my heart, about the nativity of the Lord Jesus Christ. His coming into this world. And all the wonders that are associated with that coming. I never had an experience quite like it before. And I think I never had at this time of the year such an experience since. And it was an outstanding experience. And I remember this may be very childlike and somewhat foolish. I don't recommend you to imitate me in any way in this respect because it gave my poor mother a good deal of difficulty. But I took a piece of soap and I wrote on the mirror that was in our front room,

[3 : 45] God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.

And the whole wonder associated with the Lord Jesus Christ at that time I will remember was enhanced in my thoughts and in my soul.

And what I believe it was, it was a coming to me personally of the dear Savior and Redeemer.

Now that is what I feel we need. We can be taken up with all the activities and the pleasures and the outward things, the presence and the gifts at a time like this and lose sight, lose sight completely of the real meaning of the birth of Jesus Christ. Lose sight of it completely. And a great many people, there's no doubt, do.

This time of the year doesn't mean anything to them, but excess of pleasure and such like things. But I do pray this, and I have prayed this earnestly, I hope, before coming here this morning, that you dear young people might have an experience, if not today, it's some near future time. When he that came, the one who in our text says, I come, may come to you. And if he does, there's not a shadow of doubt but what you will know.

[5 : 53] And be overwhelmed, perhaps, with a sense of his glory and his wonderful person.

Now I must explain why I have taken this text. Well, it's in the Old Testament, as you know. The Psalms are part of the Old Testament scriptures.

And I venture to say this is one of the most wonderful declarations in the Old Testament about the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And it really is his own words. And it really is his own words. If you look at these words carefully, I'll read them again to you. Then said I, lo, I come. In the volume of the book it is written of me.

Now David could never possibly have entered into those words or terms. And only one person could truly speak such a language as this.

[7 : 10] Only one person ever lived, ever will live, that could speak these very words with truth. And that person must be the Son of God.

He says, lo, I come. Then if you look carefully in the earlier part of the Psalm, in the penultimate verse, you will read these words.

Thy thoughts, thy thoughts, which are to us word, they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee. If I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.

Now you think how true that is in regard to the incarnation wonder of the dear Son of God.

The thoughts of God surrounding it, planning it, fulfilling it in such a clear, wonderful way.

[8 : 22] Scripture says he must be born at Bethlehem. If you read the fifth chapter of Micah, there you see these words, And thou Bethlehem of Ephratah, though thou beest little among the thousands of Israel, of Judah, yet out of thee shall come him who shall be governor of my people.

And you find, therefore, that in the Old Testament Scriptures, there are wonderful references to this coming of the Lord Jesus.

But then all the thought that is behind it, the wonderful plan. You see, he had to be born at Bethlehem, and he was at Nazareth, or his mother was at Nazareth, and Joseph too.

They were very, very poor, and they would not have intended in any way whatever to have gone to Bethlehem at that stage. Mary was coming very near to the time when she would be delivered, and they knew that.

And it would be the last thing for them to think of a journey as long as that, right away from Galilee down into Bethlehem.

[9 : 51] But you see, there came this great decree, this decree that was issued by a heathen pagan king.

But he could not be disobeyed, cost of disobedience to a king's decree might well be death. Therefore, Joseph had to take Mary, his espoused wife, all the way from Nazareth to Bethlehem.

And it was at Bethlehem that the Lord Jesus Christ was born. Now, what thought there was behind that?

Well, may the psalmist say, how great are thy thoughts to us, Lord. They cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee.

Now, I can trace, I believe, the Trinity in these wonderful declarations concerning the birth of Christ.

[11 : 09] In that passage that I've already quoted in Micah, it says this, Thou Bethlehem, Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me.

Here is the Father then, declaring that his Son is to come forth out of Bethlehem unto him.

The first prime purpose of the Lord's coming is to fulfill all the plans and purposes of his Father.

And it was unto him that Jesus Christ first of all came. Then, we have this word in the 40th Psalm where Christ himself prophetically declares that he comes, he will come.

Lo, I come. in the volume of the book it is written of me. I delight to do thy will, O my God.

[12 : 31] So here we have the Son then declaring his coming. And then as I was pondering the matter over in my mind, I felt this.

The wise men, how many we know not, who were brought from the far distant country in the east because what?

They saw a star. There was a guiding light that guided them towards Jerusalem and then ultimately towards Nazareth.

You know, Herod never saw that star. The religious people that were all gathered about Jerusalem and were well acquainted with the scriptures and could tell Herod exactly where the Lord Jesus Christ would be born.

They never saw the star. The only people, as far as we can judge, from the scriptures that saw the star were those people that went in, found the place, went in to the house where the young child was and worshipped him and gave him gifts.

[14 : 05] Now, I believe that star represents to us, to you and to me, the Holy Spirit, the light of the Holy Spirit that will lead sinners out of darkness unto Jesus Christ who is the light.

And look what it says here, remembering what the wise men did. They said, Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, mine ears hast thou opened, burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.

You see, sacrifice was finished when Jesus comes. And the wise men offered their gifts, not sacrifices, but their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

But they were gifts, not sacrifices, offerings, gifts. And they worshipped the Son of God.

Well now, I want us to trace the coming of the Lord Jesus then. And I hope I should be able to do it in simplicity.

[15 : 32] There are four things. And I'm going to take the experience and life of Mary. We were reading just now about Mary.

How the angel Gabriel came unto her in Nazareth. He knew where she lived. Just previously, the angel, the same angel of the Lord, had gone to Jerusalem and to the temple.

And there in the inner holiest place of all, he had confronted Zacharias. and brought him the messages of God.

And at the same time, he goes from Jerusalem to Nazareth, to a humble abode, no doubt. and he goes in and makes himself known to this woman. And he reminds her of the scriptures.

[16 : 51] He says, Hail thou that art mighty, highly favoured, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women. women. I made a pause there in reading the scriptures.

You know, there are people, there's a church today that makes Mary higher than everyone else. they would have this word altered and they would have inserted in this word instead of among men or among women, they would have it above women.

But she is not. She herself says very clearly, we shall look at that in a moment, she says about her needing a savior.

my soul doth magnify the Lord, my spirit rejoiceth in God, my savior.

So she needed a savior. She wasn't a sinless person. She wasn't conceived in immaculate conception.

[17 : 59] She was like every other woman. She was a sinner. And she needed redeeming mercy. But she was highly favored by God.

And the angel reminds her of the scriptures in the Old Testament where it says that beautiful scripture in the ninth of Isaiah. Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bring forth a child, a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel.

God with us. You see, and in that Hebrew scripture as well as in the Greek here, there's a definite article and we could read it in this way.

The virgin shall conceive and bring forth a son. you see, there was only one virgin in the plan of God who would be the recipient of this sacred thing which shall be called the son of the highest, the virgin.

Now Gabriel comes to her with this tremendous message, these tidings, this intimation.

[19 : 32] You can almost understand the immense effect it must have had upon this simple, plain, ordinary person who had lived a life of simplicity and no doubt she was a woman with the faith and fear of God in her heart.

Now, she says and the scripture tells us that she was greatly troubled, greatly troubled in her mind and heart about this salutation, what form it was, what it meant.

And the angel comes to her and this is the first thing of these four things I want to bring before you this morning, very briefly.

He says, fear not, fear not, Mary. Now, the first reaction then, we find in Mary's heart was a reaction of fear.

And I verily believe that every child of God who is visited by the Lord, they come through this experience. There's fear in their hearts.

[21 : 10] And that's a very real thing. It was with Mary. She was troubled and cast up in her mind what kind of salutation this was, what it meant, how it must and could and would affect her.

The angel says this, fear not. You know, my dear friends, if you go through the scriptures and look up passage after passage where the Lord is speaking to his people, you'll find the first word that he speaks is this very word that the angel Gabriel spoke to Mary, fear not, fear not.

Do you remember at all anything of this happening in your own experience? Were you in full turmoil and dread and anxiety and wonder knowing scarcely what anything meant that was going on within your heart and the Lord comes in some way or other and he says, fear not, fear not Mary.

So that was the first thing that we have to observe in the case of Mary when the Lord was dealing with her.

And the second thing is this, she had faith and I want you to take notice of this word. She says to him, how shall these things be?

[22 : 59] Seeing, I know not a man. 34th verse, Mary said unto him. Now those are very important words.

She doesn't say this is impossible. She doesn't say I don't believe a word about this. It's nothing that could be likely to happen.

No known cases ever have happened of this kind. Therefore, she doesn't say no, I can't believe it.

but she says, how can this be? She's inquiring from the angel Gabriel how such a tremendous thing could happen.

She was confident now. You see, there was faith here beginning to work. And that faith was saying this, I am in the presence of him with whom nothing is impossible.

[24 : 06] How then can these things be? She wanted an explanation. So do you. It's a good thing if you do want an explanation and go to the Lord for it.

Take nothing for granted, my friends. You've taken too much for granted in the past. past. And you thought, oh well that's all right.

I can go on and without great exercise and great concern. My dear friend, you're on the road that leads to ruin if you're on that road.

But if you inquire, if you seek earnestly, inquire of the Lord, you'll find people in the scriptures that were inquiring of the Lord when they're in real spiritual trouble or difficulty.

And so did Mary. How can these things be? Now I want you to notice a third thing. In verse 38, and Mary said, behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word.

[25 : 31] This is a wonderful spirit of submission to the will of God. Submission is the outcome and fruit.

of faith. People talk about committing these days a great deal, far too much really. Of course they transfer such a thing like this, which Mary was brought to enter into, they transfer it from the person to themselves, from the Lord, dealing with the person to themselves.

They make they themselves the whole source of responsibility. And they say, you ought to commit yourself to the Lord, you ought to commit your life to the Lord.

Now, this is the right way. When the Gabriel had brought these messages to Mary, and she had first of all feared greatly, and had been stilled by the word of the angel, fear not, when she had been given strength enough to ask and to inquire how these things could be, she comes to this point, be it unto me, whatever the Lord is pleased to do, be it unto me, according to thy word, she totally submitted herself sweetly unto the Lord.

And that, my dear friends, is one of the greatest possessions that we can have of a spiritual kind.

[27 : 28] Then finally, in the 46 verse, you'll read this, and Mary abode with her, 46, I'm reading the wrong one, and Mary said, my soul doth magnify the Lord, my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior.

It was a song, you see, she could raise up her heart in singing praises to God, my soul doth magnify the Lord.

You can feel it bursting up as it were from her very heart, overflowing with such strength and power, my soul doth magnify the Lord, my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior.

for he hath regarded the lowest state of his handmaiden. If you go on through what we call the Magnificat, you'll find how Mary, and by the language, and it was inspired language of course, she lays the creature low and honors the Savior.

her. She exalts him and she speaks of herself and her fellow creatures as being in the lowest place.

[29 : 06] If we are raised up by the Lord, we are raised up from the lowest. Don't let us forget that. There's nothing to credit you, nothing to give you great cause for praise and boasting about yourself.

If you are raised up by the grace of God, you are brought right from the depth. You are brought out of the miry clay as the first word in this psalm speaks, and out of the great depth, and he will put your feet upon a rock and he will put a new song in your mouth.

Now those are the four things. may the Lord write them in our hearts, may he bring this time of the year, this blessed season, this time when the Lord came to be a real wonder and a blessed reality to us personally.

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