

THAT TREASURE TROVE OF TRUTH: “HARK! THE HERALD-ANGELS SING!”

by Jim Kerwin
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Introduction

It’s a curious fact, but true. Christmas songs are encountered so universally year after year during the Christmas season that even nonbelievers have more than a few fully memorized. Sure, they know secular songs like *White Christmas* and *Silver Bells*; but it’s amazing how many know all the verses and words to hymns like *Silent Night*, *Hark! The Herald-Angels Sing* and *Joy to the World*.

Realizing that little fact may help you to open up some opportunities for Christmas sharing and seed-sowing, if you know how to make use of it. If you familiarize yourself with (or, better yet, memorize) a few key Scripture passages, you can illuminate some truths that an unbeliever has already (though unknowingly) memorized. The “anchor” is already there in their memory, and, once explained, the Holy Spirit may use the extra light you provide to good advantage.

This is hardly a novel idea. The Brothers Wesley, John and Charles, ministered among the poor and illiterate people of England in the 18th Century. These common folk couldn’t read or write, but they could (and did!) sing and memorize many songs. The Wesleys bore this very much in mind when writing their amazing output of hymns. (Between the two of them, they wrote over 10,000 in their lifetimes!) Falling back on a very ancient and Scriptural method¹ of disseminating truth, they would visit public gatherings and pubs, learn the tunes that the common folk knew, then set their lyrics to tunes already known and loved.²

And what lyrics! The winsome words were purposefully pregnant with wholesome, clear theology, replete with Scriptural truth and quotes and references and allusions. Thus when these songs were memorized, the working class absorbed the treasure trove of truth they contained. They literally sang the Gospel, and the Bible, and evangelical theology to themselves – and to each other. And you know as well as I do that once a catchy tune with clever words gets into your head and starts “playing” in the background, it’s very hard to get the song out of your mind.

¹ The Book of Psalms is the most obvious, of course, but there are other examples, two of which we will mention. God had Moses employ a song as a teaching tool and testimony. See Deuteronomy 31:14-30, esp. vv. 19, 22. Deuteronomy 32:1-43 is that song, as v. 44 shows. Also, the words of 1 Timothy 3:16 are known to be a hymn of the First Century church. The early Christians, a larger portion of whom seem to have been Gentile slaves, were largely illiterate; knowing this fact puts an eye-opening spin on Colossian 3:16 and why the “teaching and admonishing one another” was done “with psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs.”

² Many Americans don’t know that a similar joining of lofty words and a drinking song combined to produce one of their most beloved anthems. The melody to which they have sung *The Star-Spangled Banner* for almost two hundred years was originally an old tavern tune for a song known as *To Anacreon in Heaven*.

But though modern singers know the words to these wonderful Christmas hymns, few understand the meaning and import of what they are singing. That's where *you* come in. Do you remember the story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-40)? The Lord maneuvered Philip into the right place at the right time. From there, all this great evangelist had to do was to ask a seemingly innocent question: "Do you understand what you're reading?"

The response of the sincere, religious (he was reading a Bible, after all), but almost-clueless man in the chariot was, "How can I, unless somebody explains it to me?"

In the providence of God it happened that this foreign official was reading in a "Gospel" portion, a Messianic passage written by the Prophet Isaiah (53:7-9). Philip was able to seize the opportunity the Lord had given him, and use it to full advantage, presenting the truth of the Gospel and bringing this soul to Christ.

In a fashion similar to Philip, if you understand the truths presented plainly and in veiled fashion in these Christmas songs, you too can be prepared to shed further light, seizing opportunities to "gossip the Gospel" as you point out the meanings pregnant in the lyrics. You won't even scare somebody off by producing a Bible.

Then again, maybe even *you* will be delighted and surprised about just how freighted with Gospel truth these songs are. So let's take one – Charles Wesley's justly famous and beloved ***Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*** – and go over it verse by verse and line by line. You'll find the exercise will be quite a meaty Bible study along the way!

Verse One

*Hark! The herald-angels sing,
"Glory to the new-born King,
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled."
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
Join the triumph of the skies!
With the angelic host proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"*

Wesley commences his hymn the point of the Gospel story known to so many, the appearance of the angels to the shepherds outside Bethlehem in Luke 2:1-20, esp. vv. 8-17.

Hark!

This is an excited invitation and an exhortation and even a command. Listen carefully!

The herald-angels

Heralds were those who spoke for a king, declaring his decrees and, more importantly, warning people to make way for a king and his entourage as he proceeded from one city to the next on a journey. In this case, the King has just completed a mind-boggling journey from the infinite to the finite, from spirit to flesh, from Heaven to earth, from Deity to humanity.

Glory – to God!

The heavenly beings know to give glory to God alone (Revelation 7:12; 19:1). The word order of the Greek text of Luke 2:14 (the original of which has no spaces at all between words, let alone punctuation) allows for two renderings, either one of which would be an acceptable parallelism. We've always "heard" the verse as:

Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace, good will toward men
[or On earth peace to men of good will].

But it's allowed that the angels might have meant:

Glory to God in the highest *and on earth*;
Peace to men of good-will.

The import is they are glorifying God in heaven ("the highest") and on earth, that is, they acknowledge the veiled Deity of the infant in the stable. They offer glory to God the Father and the Son, and make a herald-declaration of peace to men.

The new-born King

Jesus is acknowledged from the very outset as "Christ *the Lord*," (Luke 2:11) that is, God's King, His promised Messiah.

Peace on earth

To the race of sinful, rebellious mankind, at odds and at war with God, the heralds, on God's behalf, declare *peace*, a promise of pardon and end of strife. The ratification of this "peace treaty," this New Covenant, would be completed scarcely three decades later, through the blood of this King sent from God (Colossians 1:20). Truly, we have peace with God through our *Lord* Jesus Christ (Romans 5:1).

Mercy mild

“Mercy and truth are met together; Righteousness and peace have kissed each other,” it says in Psalm 85:10. God’s mercy is extended to us, because the demands of His righteousness have been fulfilled in Christ.

God and sinners reconciled

This is the glorious declaration of the Gospel. Rebellious, self-willed sinners though we are, God longed to have us return to Him. Paul shares a wonderful truth: God was *in Christ* reconciling the world to Himself (2 Corinthians 5:19). The apostle shares this in the context of another truth – God has given to *us*, to those who know Him through Christ, the ministry of reconciliation, and our message as Heaven’s ambassadors is “Be reconciled to God!” (vv. 18-20). And what does it mean to reconcile? The simplest definition is *to restore harmony or friendship between two parties*.

Joyful, all ye nations rise

“I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to *all people*.” (Luke 2:10). God’s purpose is to redeem and reconcile men and women “out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.” (Revelation 5:9).

Join the triumph of the skies

This not only anticipates Christ’s victory on Calvary and His return (“Behold, He cometh with ten thousands of His saints” – Jude 14-15), but it also encompasses Paul’s words when he says, “Thanks be to God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ” (2 Corinthians 2:14). Modern translations render this a bit more clearly, more appropriately to the public spectacle Paul had in mind; take, for instance, the NRSV translation of this verse: “But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession...”

A triumphal procession (or “triumph”) was a city-stopping, celebratory parade through the streets of Rome. A triumph was granted to a Roman general who met *three* criteria (hence the “tri-”, the prefix for three, as in *triathlon* and *tricycle*):

- a) He had to win a decisive, overwhelming victory against enemies of the state;
- b) He must be declared *imperator* (i.e., commander-in-chief; not *emperor*, though they share the same root) by his troops in the field as a result of his great victory and their undying loyalty to him.

- c) He had to request from – and receive from – the Roman Senate for the right of a triumph (i.e., a victory parade).

The general's triumphal procession through Rome would take up an entire article if we let it. Suffice it to say that in addition to the celebrated general himself, crowned with a wreath of laurel leaves, the procession included victorious troops, booty taken, and enemy captives, especially leaders, marched along in chains. Thus Paul pictures Christ in the 2 Corinthians passage, leading us in a spectacular triumphal parade, both as "booty" (souls snatched from the clutches of the enemy) and as the victorious army of the Victor. Carrying the same word-picture over to Colossians 2:15, Paul writes of the defeated, chained enemy chieftains: "And having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it..."

***With the angelic host proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"***

The humble shepherds believed, made haste to the Bethlehem stable, and became effective witnesses of Christ, telling one and all what they had heard and seen, to the great wonder of many. (Luke 2:17-18). The exhortation is now to all us of – we need to proclaim Him and His coming with the same wonder, awe, and loving zeal.

Verse Two

*Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold Him come,
Offspring of a virgin's womb!
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
Hail the incarnate Deity!
Pleased as man with men to dwell
Jesus our Immanuel.*

***Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,***

Here is the clearest declaration yet in the song that this Babe is none other than Christ – Messiah! – *and* the adored, eternal Lord of Heaven. This introduces the theme of the rest of this verse, the Divine and human natures of this "new-born King."

***Late in time behold Him come,
Offspring of a virgin's womb!***

Readers familiar with Galatians will recognize this poetic rephrasing of Paul's great statement:

But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman...

Galatians 4:4

And it wasn't just *any* woman, but according to Isaiah's awesome prophecy, Messiah was to come from the womb of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:21-23). (As an aside, it is amazing to me that in a modern world where virgins actually *can* be made to conceive through the manmade process of artificial insemination, doubters and scoffers still think that God couldn't have accomplished a virgin birth in His power and wisdom. But Psalm 14:1 and 53:1 are just as true today as they were three thousand years ago when David penned his inspired song lyrics – "The fool hath said in his heart, 'There is no God.'")

***Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
Hail the incarnate Deity!***

What does "veiled in flesh" mean? John's great revelatory teaching is that "the Word became flesh [that is, human] and dwelt [literally, *tabernacled*, from Gk. *skēnōō*, from the Greek word for "tent" – *skēnē*] among us." (John 1:14).³ This straight teaching from the Bible has been a stumbling block for many. What? God became a man? How absurd! The Infinite became finite? Impossible! Yet it was because of more than just an omnipotent whim that "God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them" (Genesis 1:27). Is it a great thing, then, for the Almighty to come and dwell as Man made in the image of God – to show us what that image was meant to be? Wesley sums this up in two immortal lines of another of his Christmas hymns:

Our God contracted to a span,
Incomprehensibly made man!⁴

The writer to the Hebrews teaches us that the way into the heavenly holy of holies is through the veil of His flesh (Hebrew 10:19-20), that is, through Jesus' earthly death and resurrection.

But, wait – the *Godhead*? This, too, is Wesley teaching us New Testament theology. "For in [Christ]," declares Paul, "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." (Colossians 2:9)

Truly, Jesus is God incarnate – fully God and fully Man.

³ There is a wonderful teaching in Scripture about Christ tabernacling among us and The Feast of Tabernacles (*Sukkoth*), but that will have to be reserved for some future article.

⁴ From Wesley's hymn, *Let Earth and Heaven Combine*.

***Pleased as man with men to dwell,
Jesus our Immanuel.***

“What is man,” asks David, “that Thou art mindful of him, or the son of man, that Thou visitest him?” (Psalm 8:4; 144:3; Hebrews 2:6) This is the age-old mystery – why does God even bother with us? The answer is unfathomably simple – because He loves us, loves us enough that it *pleased* Him to come to live among us, then die for us, then dwell within us forever. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son...” (John 3:16).

So the mind-boggling wonder of the Nativity story can be summed up in a single word from the Isaiah 7:14 prophecy already mentioned, a name – ***Immanuel***, “God with us.” The words of Joseph Hart rise up in a heart of worship:

O love of unexampled kind
That leaves all thought so far behind,
Where length and breadth and depth and height
Are lost to my astonished sight!⁵

Verse Three

*Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings,
Risen with healing in His wings.
Mild He lays His glory by,
Born that man no more may die;
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth.*

Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!

Having already been reminded of the Divine declaration from the angels to mankind through the shepherds – “Peace on earth to men of good-will” – Charles Wesley now brings us face to face with another Messianic prophecy from Isaiah 9:6-7:

For unto us a child is born,
unto us a son is given:
and the government shall be upon his shoulder:
and his name shall be called
Wonderful, Counsellor,

⁵ From Hart’s hymn *Come, All Ye Chosen Saints of God*.

The mighty God,
The everlasting Father,
The Prince of Peace.

No wonder this Man could say to His disciples, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you.” (John 14:27) No wonder that bridging the chief characteristics of this Prince’s Kingdom – righteousness and joy in the Holy Ghost – is the indispensable element of *peace* (Romans 14:17). And those who are in Christ know the daily reality – the peace of this Prince of Peace now keeps our hearts and rules them. (Philippians 4:7; Colossians 3:15)

***Hail the Sun of Righteousness...
...Risen with healing in His wings.***

Here’s a Messianic prophecy that’s not as familiar to modern believers, one of the last uttered before the birth of this Baby:

But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings...

Malachi 4:2

From this one scripture we could develop two glorious themes at great length; but for the sake of brevity, we merely touch on both:

Jesus as the Light of the world: In John 8:12 and 9:5 Jesus declared Himself to be the Light of the world. Leaving no room for doubt, John touches on this theme again in his First Epistle: “God is Light.” (1 John 1:5). “Walk while ye have the light,” is Jesus’ exhortation (John 12:35). The beloved disciple echoes those words decades later:

...if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

1 John 1:7

Jesus as Healer:

But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

Isaiah 53:5

...God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

Acts 10:38

Peter may have had this prophecy in the back of his mind when he spoke of the Day dawning and the Daystar arising in our hearts (2 Peter 1:19).

Light and Life to All He Brings

This is in the midst of the last phrase cited, but this line especially draws on John 1:4-9:

- ⁴ In him was life; and the life was the light of men.
- ⁵ And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.
- ⁶ There was a man sent from God, whose name *was* John.
- ⁷ The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all *men* through him might believe.
- ⁸ He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.
- ⁹ That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

Mild He Lays His Glory By

One of the great mysteries of all time is what theologians refer to as the Kenosis – The Emptying. The word itself comes from the Greek verb *kenōō*, *to empty*, and the concept comes from Paul’s Epistle to the Philippians, where he says:

- ⁵ Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:
- ⁶ Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:
- ⁷ But ***made himself of no reputation*** [Greek: *heauton ekénōsen*, literally, “*He emptied Himself*”] and took upon him the form of a servant [Greek: *doulou*, from *doulos*, slave], and was made in the likeness of men:
- ⁸ And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Philippians 2:5-8

The mystery is this: how could infinite, almighty God become human? In some way that we cannot comprehend (despite all the theological discourse about the subject), a Person of the Godhead laid aside – poured out, emptied out – His prerogatives of divinity and became the obedient slave of God. Paul depicts the Kenosis in a slightly different way to the Corinthians:

For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

2 Corinthians 8:9

Wesley shows the sweet simplicity of inspiration when he presents it this way: “Mild He lays His glory by.”

***Born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth
Born to give them second birth.***

Now we look at the very practical results brought by this glorious Sun of Righteousness, this Kenotic King, this God-Man. Yes, there is healing in His wings, and the greatest healing of all is salvation and new birth.

Born: We can point to a specific point in finite time when the Timeless One came forth among us!

That man no more may die:

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

Hebrews 2:8

And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

John 11:26

Born: We can point to a time when the Infinite One became finite among us.

God was manifest in the flesh.

1 Timothy 3:16

To raise the sons of earth:

I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live... John 11:25

³⁹ And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

⁴⁰ And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 6:39-40

Born: We can point to a time when the All-encompassing Omnipotent One transformed into the utterly helpless state of a newborn human infant encompassed in swaddling clothes.

To give them second birth:

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

John 3:3

Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

John 3:7

Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

1 Peter 1:23

Verse Four

*Come, Desire of Nations, come,
Fix in us Thy humble home;
Rise, the woman's conquering Seed,
Bruise in us the serpent's head.
Adam's likeness now efface,
Stamp Thine image in its place:
Second Adam from above,
Reinstate us in Thy love.*

Come, Desire of Nations, come

At this time of year, many who enjoy performances of Handel's *Messiah* may be familiar with the first Bass Recitative passage, which comes from the words of the Prophet Haggai:

⁶...thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land;

⁷ And I will shake all nations, and the Desire of all Nations shall come:

Haggai 2:6-7

Jesus is not only the Desire of All Nations, but He is also *desirous* of all nations. This is the reason behind His decree:

¹⁸ And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

¹⁹ Go ye therefore, and teach all nations...

Matthew 28:18-19

The end – that is, His *Second Coming* – hangs in no small part on this command to go to all the nations, all the unreached people groups, being fulfilled:

And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

Matthew 24:14

We think back to the first verse of this hymn – *Joyful all ye nations rise!*

Fix in us Thy humble home

Left unquoted, but implied, from the Haggai passage are the words “...and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts. (Haggai 2:7). If the Incarnation boggles the mind, what shall we say of the fact that God, the God of glory, desires to make His home in us, to dwell within us?! It is another, deeper, even mystic aspect of incarnation. What more intimate fellowship can there be between God and man than for God to live in our hearts? Yet this is the glorious “mystery” proclaimed by the New Testament. When we are truly born again, the entire God-head dwells in our “humble home”:

God the Holy Spirit:

¹⁶ And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

¹⁷ Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, ***and shall be in you.***

John 14:16-17

God the Son:

“That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith...”

Ephesians 3:17

Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

2 Corinthians 13:5

To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

Colossians 1:27

God the Father:

If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

John 14:23

Rise, the Woman's conquering Seed, Bruise in us the Serpent's head!

These lines hark all the way back to the Proto-Gospel, the first “Good News” proclaimed for sinners, while at the same time a sentence of judgment declared to “that old Serpent, the Devil”:

And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

Genesis 3:15

Messiah, the Seed of the Woman, is the “conquering Seed.” The “bruising of the heel” was the temporary, *seeming* victory of God’s enemy over Christ on the Cross. But this was all part of the Divine Plan of redemption, deliverance, and restoration. As is always the case, the wily enemy only wound up serving God’s end:

Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known *it*, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

1 Corinthians 2:8

The defeat of the Serpent, the bruising – nay, the *crushing* of his head – was God’s great plan.

We follow this so far. But what does Wesley mean “bruise *in us* the Serpent’s head”? The poet developed the previous verse declaring God’s salvation in Christ – forgiveness, new birth, deliverance from Death, and resurrection. Now he continues with the theme of *full* salvation, moving into the doctrine of sanctification, that is, complete deliverance from indwelling sin. The sin nature goes under several names in the New Testament including *the carnal mind*, *the body of sin*, and *the old man*. Sin nature was not part of God’s original design of man; it is, as it were, an infection, a corruption of the perfect image of God, as if it were the transmittal of a portion of the nature of the devil. The Wesleys, the early Methodists, and all their spiritual progeny to this day believed that God could deal with this once, for all, in Christ:

⁶ Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

⁷ For he that is dead is freed from sin.

Romans 6:6-7

Thus the glorious petition of faith declared in this memorable Christmas hymn is saying essentially this: “Lord, I believe that You can and will deal with ‘the Serpent’s head,’ even the very nature of sin within me!” And Wesley continues on in this same vein of sanctification teaching...

***Adam’s likeness now efface,
Stamp Thine image in its place!
Second Adam from above,
Reinstate us in Thy love!***

That the sin nature is passed down to us from Adam is a tenet of Scripture and theology. Yet there is a glorious balance in the Salvation Saga. By one man – Adam – sin entered into the world (Romans 5:12), so by one man – Jesus the Christ – salvation from sin came to all who would receive it. In these four lines Charles Wesley focuses in on that glorious passage about the nature of the resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15. In v. 22, Paul essentially reiterates what he wrote to the Roman church:

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

But what is this about “Second Adam”? By the disobedience of one man we were all undone; by the utterly and completely faithful obedience of another Man, we were redeemed. And so Paul speaks of Adam and Jesus thus in v. 45:

And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam *was made* a quickening spirit.

And again in v. 47:

The first man *is* of the earth, earthy: the second man *is* the Lord from heaven.

And what of the images – that of Adam’s which we long to have “effaced,” and Christ’s, in whose image we long to be, restored to the full image of God in which man was created? That, too, is found in this very context, in 1 Corinthians 15:49:

And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

Reinstate us in Thy love. This is true new birth; this is full salvation. This is the purpose for which Christ emptied himself, became incarnate, was born, ministered on earth, was crucified in our behalf, raised from the dead, seated at the Father’s right hand – and this is how fully He redeems us when He takes up in us His “humble home.” We are reinstated in the love of God, restored to the image of God. If we really see this, our hearts swell with adoration, and we can,

With the angelic host proclaim,
“Christ is born in Bethlehem!”

With the herald-angels we can rejoice and declare:

“Glory to the new-born King!”

So much more could be said; we’ve only skimmed the surface! But if this meditation on Wesley’s lyrics has helped to unpack and reveal the treasure trove of truth these lines contain, I trust you’ll be able to sing this Christmas hymn with new joy and fervency and insight this season. And, like Phillip’s query to the Ethiopian eunuch, may you be presented with opportunities to ask, “Do you understand what you’re singing?” May the One Who was once given glory as the new-born King receive even more glory!

Amen.