

On the Nativity – “The Grace of God Appeared”

The Grace of God appeared.

Can you *see Grace*?

Can you see the face  
that appeared this day that He may  
be revered and feared in hearts that treasure up these things?

Ponder deeply the Word of the Lord  
which, sharper than a double-edged sword,  
penetrated between soul and spirit  
and dwelt within the womb of Mary.

The sword that pierced her own soul as well,  
in His Incarnation began His descent to hell  
to redeem for Himself a people purified and made alive  
and given new eyes that with clear sight  
they may appertain and proclaim:

the grace of God *appeared*.

So with angels let us sing: “Glory to God  
in the highest and on earth peace to those of good will.”

Do you see Grace there in David’s town?

See how the Son of God came down  
from the realms of heavenly glory  
angels forever singing His story  
in the place where He is always proclaimed Holy, Holy, Holy  
heaven and (now) earth are filled with His glory.

See the grace of God appear in a babe wrapped in cloths  
and lying in a manger, a babe in imminent danger  
from the powers of false kings and counterfeit thrones  
blind to the great light that shone so bright.

Rulers walking in darkness cannot see the light.

Mary gave birth and the dragon fought her.

Rulers commanded and innocents were slaughtered.

Bethlehem’s children became the first martyrs  
who by the blood of the Lamb and their wordless testimonies  
already proclaimed the Lord’s triumph o’er His enemies.

See the great things He’s done for you and me,  
for those who were full and for those who yearned  
for the simple and the learned, for the rich and the poor  
for the righteous, the pure, the bruised and the sore.

See that for all of us, he has been mindful of his servants  
the humble lifted high and the hungry satisfied  
the lepers made clean and sinners justified by this

grace of God which appeared to establish justice  
 to burn our weapons and battle clothes  
 to make an end to war and bring soldiers home  
 the rulers' strength is broken by the Word  
 which was spoken in the birth of One who is God and Man

See the mysterious revelation of a Divine Plan:  
 Perfect Humanity who loves His enemies  
 whose mercy is justice and whose justice is mercy  
 Perfect Divinity who sets blind captives free  
 Proclaiming truly the Spirit of the Lord is upon Me.  
 Perfect Creator who enters creation  
 as a babe destined to rule the nations –  
 So with angels and prophets let us sing: “Glory to God  
 in the highest and on earth peace to those of good will.”  
 for the grace of God appeared  
 that He might be revered and feared  
 as Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God  
 Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace

Can you see this Grace?

Angels appeared in glory to shepherds  
 in awe of the tidings that their ears heard.  
 Heavenly messengers gave the word,  
 ‘Go, see Grace’.

See the place where this babe lies  
 The Son of God uttering infant's cries  
 Can you follow the angels' command?  
 Go to bright Bethlehem  
 you who hear the angels' anthem,  
 your Redeemer's life behold  
 Watch him there on this night so cold.  
 Hasten to the place where He was born,  
 there adore at his feet,  
 mark that miracle of time,  
 The Son's Incarnation complete.  
 So with angels and prophets and shepherds let us sing:  
 “Glory to God in the highest  
 and on earth peace to those of good will.”

Peace. Peace, meaning not only  
 absence of war but wholeness and healing,  
 and all of life restored: stillness where creation groans  
 family restored and friends for the alone,  
 the life guaranteeing creation's flourishing

a fountain of life forever nourishing  
 the bread of life giving joy perfected  
 wounds are healed and the dead resurrected  
 all through the union of man and divinity  
 mysteriously present within this baby.

Can you see Him? Can you see Grace,  
 laying in his mother's arms?  
 Splendor and majesty are before him  
 strength and beauty come forth from Mary's womb  
 so with angels and prophets and shepherds  
 and now with blessed Mary let us sing: "Glory to God  
 in the highest and on earth peace to those of good will."  
 for the grace of God appeared,  
 and we who walked in darkness have seen a great light  
 Christ once wrapped in great love in his mother's womb  
 was crucified, wrapped in cloths and laid in a tomb.  
 But the grace of resurrection was seen by many:  
 the apostles, disciples, and even Mary,  
 witnessed the glory of resurrection,  
 from the empty tomb to his triumphal ascension.  
 Now hidden in heaven and removed from sight  
 the Church waited and waits to once again see grace.  
 And now with them we wait, we wait for the blessed hope—  
 the appearing of the glory of our Savior, Jesus.

Can you see Grace? How marvelous that as we wait  
 He gives a sign of his presence with us.  
 For at this table the grace of God appears,  
 strengthens our faith, and dissolves all fears.  
 So come to this table, receive the Word,  
 eat bread, drink wine, and be transformed  
 into living the likeness of the Lord.  
 The Holy Spirit shall come upon you  
 and the power of the Most High shall overshadow you  
 and the One within you will be called the Son of God.  
 and you will bear forth into this world the Word  
 made flesh in your speech and zeal for good deeds,  
 that by all peoples grace will be seen.  
 So with all saints and angels and heaven and earth let us sing:  
 "Glory to God in the highest  
 and on earth peace to those of good will."  
 For the Grace of God indeed appears.

In the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.