

Adore God's Grace this Christmas

☆ The Prophet (vv.1-2)

☆ God's Radiance (v.3)

☆ Superior Inheritance (vv.3-4)

In the name of Jesus our newborn Savior, dear rejoicing Christians:

Have you heard about all the little boys, I mean grade school age, who got Lamborghinis, Mercedes and BMWs for Christmas? We found some excellent models with doors that really open, wheels that actually turn and steer. Even some older boys like uncles had fun playing cars with the grandsons. Such is the extent of Lamborghinis, Mercedes and BMWs for most of us.

Sadly, that's as far as **Grace** goes for many **this Christmas**. We have seen God's **Grace** come down to earth. We have heard our Lord's Apostle Paul inspired by the Holy Spirit to write glorious comfort: ***"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast."*** (Ephesians 2:8f NIV84) Millions of people **this Christmas** do not understand **Grace** this way. A different "prophet" came along and wrote in a different book: ***"...for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do."*** (2 Nephi 25:23 – *Book of Mormon*) Trying to insert works into God's **Grace** is like spraying paint on a real Lamborghini, Mercedes, or BMW. Come kneel with me beside the manger. **Adore God's Grace this Christmas.**

☆ The Prophet (vv.1-2)

Don't you love the way the Holy Spirit anticipates all the critics and other "prophets" who might come along and claim, "Look at me! Look at me! I'm *the Prophet!* I'm God's last word on what you should believe!" In this Sunday's Psalm we hear: ***"The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the LORD scoffs at them. Then he rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying, 'I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill.'"*** (Psalm 2:4-6 NIV84) Who has the right to replace God's Son?

"In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe."

In our Gospel today we heard the sweeping majestic prose of the disciple Jesus loved in John 1: ***"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made....The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."*** (John 1:1-3,14 NIV84)

There is no greater **Prophet** than God's own Son. Jesus is God's first, middle and last Word as ***"the Way, the Truth and the Life."*** He says, ***"No one comes to the Father except through me."*** (John 14:6) The eternal Son inherits all things from His Father, including divine names, divine characteristics, divine works and divine honor. ***"All men should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him."*** (John 5:23)

This was my question for a security guard at Children's Hospital, Minneapolis, when God gave us our first grandson restored to health. After he admitted he had not read the *Koran*, I told him I had. And I keep wondering why if Mohammed is "the Prophet," his grave is in Mecca, but Jesus went right up to heaven. They deny Jesus died, but even still. The guard's answer: "It's a matter of interpretation."

☆ God's Radiance (v.3)

“The Son is the radiance of God’s glory....” Look at Jesus. God’s **Grace** shines in His loving face. ***“God’s glory”*** has never looked so large and wonderful than in those two little eyes that looked to God from His manger bed. There we see God’s glory is to love wretched sinners like us who deserve nothing but His wrath and punishment. All the world’s religion scream, “That isn’t fair. You must do good works to be saved!” And Jesus smiles back and says, “No, I am all you need. Look to me and my works. Be saved by my merit.” Anything else is fingernails on a chalk board, keys on a shiny door panel, burning rubber in God’s nostrils. God can do what He wants and save as He will – in Christ alone.

Jesus is the exact character stamp of God’s essence.

He holds everything up by His powerful Word. Otherwise, the world would collapse. When He comes again radiating God’s glory across the skies, He will roll up the heavens like a scroll and call all the living and the dead from their graves. Christmas hides such power and glory in the manger.

He provided purification. Hebrews 10:14 – ***“By one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.”***

☆ Superior Inheritance (vv.3-4)

Superior to the angels – Americans need to know.

Superior to the angels – religious leaders need to know: Joseph Smith – *Moroni*; Mohammed – angel in the desert.

In His holy Name we trust for our righteousness as God’s free gift. And good works flow from the gratitude of sins-forgiven. Ephesians 2:10 – ***“We are God’s workmanship...”***

- in Mary and Joseph – reflecting God’s righteousness
- in Jesus’ personal, perfect holiness
- in our children too: shoveling snow without being asked, setting up candles, cleaning and caring for the church, praying for their friends, helping parents, grandparents, neighbors....
- best of all, telling all.

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