

The Hands of God, The Face of God, & The Feet of God: In a Manger

Matthew 2:1-11

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, And the Word was with God, And the Word was God;

John 1:14 And the Word Became flesh and dwelt among us.

CHRISTMAS NIGHT: WHEN GOD CAME TO EARTH

Christmas Eve Communion a time to stop and rest in the blur of the holidays.

Today in the quietness, with hearts gathered to worship, we lift our grateful hearts to the God become man, the Baby born to die, and the Savior who came to become sin for us.

Christmas Eve is our time like those who first witnessed His birth: to also bow in utter unworthiness at His feet, and pour out our treasures before Him. Listen to the scene from:

MATTHEW'S STORY OF THE WISEMEN

Shortly after the birth of the Messiah, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem and inquired of king Herod where the real king of the Jews was to be born. The theologians of Herod's court knew the Scriptures well—In 'Bethlehem' they recited.

Ironically, though they knew the Scriptures, they did not believe them! They did not even bother to travel the five or six miles to Bethlehem to see their Messiah.

Herod believed the Scriptures! That is why he sent a corps of butchers to Bethlehem to slaughter innocent children. But he was too late. The magi had come and gone and Jesus was by now safe in Egypt.

The magi believed the Scriptures. They had traveled several hundred miles to worship this Babe. When they saw the child, they fell down and worshiped him.

And they gave him gifts--gold, frankincense, and myrrh. This was an unusual present—by any standards. The gold, of course, we all can understand—but the frankincense and myrrh were odd.

Now myrrh, like frankincense, was a perfume. But unlike frankincense, myrrh smelled of death. In the ancient world, it was used to embalm a corpse. Jesus himself would be embalmed with this very perfume (John 19:39).

Even at the birth of our Savior, the shadow of the cross is already falling over his face.¹

¹ Daniel B. Wallace, <http://bible.org/article/birth-jesus-christ> [374 words]

THEIR FIRST RESPONSE WAS WORSHIP

And what does Matthew record as the first mention of reaction to Christ? ***Worship.***

The First Gospel describes this hallowed moment with such unforgettable words. Please listen to Matthew 2:9-11 (NKJV):

When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. ¹¹ And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, ***and fell down and worshiped Him.*** And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Those wise men “***fell down and worshiped Him;*** and when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him.”

WORSHIP: A PRESENTATION OF OUR OFFERINGS TO GOD

Today, we have gathered to renew our focus on Christ, and worship Him in three wonderful ways.

First, this Christmas Eve, *we worship the One who was born with the Hands of God.*

BEHOLD & ADORE CHRIST'S HANDS OF LOVE

As² baby Jesus lay in that manger, the night of His Birth, His hands were wrapped securely in the blanket of “swaddling clothes” (Luke 2:6-7). Those hands that once had been so busy were now resting quietly.

Those Hands that once unfurled the galaxies, fashioned each star, and called them each by name: now are pink and tiny.

Genesis 1:16 Then God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also. (NKJV);

Hands now soft and small, crafted the mighty mountains, and dug the deepest ocean trenches.

Psalms 90:2 Before the mountains were brought forth, Or ever You had formed the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God. (NKJV).

Those Hands scooped up the rich soil of the Garden, shaped and fashioned the form of Adam out of lifeless dirt, and breathed into it the breath of life; and planted an immortal soul within.

² These words are drawn from Max Lucado, *Cast of Christmas*

Genesis 2:7 And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. (NKJV)

This is why we worship the One with the Hands of God. Jesus the Son was God become flesh who would willingly defile Himself to touch sinners. Lepers felt acceptance and the blind found healing. Jesus came to us in the darkness of our sins and rescued from the pit of destruction.

Those hands that touched cold and lifeless corpses and brought them to life: touched our cold and lifeless hearts with His life-giving grace.

Second, this Christmas Eve, *we worship the One who was born with the Face of God.*

BEHOLD & ADORE CHRIST'S FACE OF GLORY

As the Shepherds, and later the Wisemen stood with Joseph and Mary, the face of that newborn baby so gentle and sweet, had already blazed with the light of the incredible brightness of the Sun.

Baby Jesus, as God the Son, was the Creator and had already been the focus of the adoring gaze of Heaven's countless hosts. His face caused the Cherubim, closest to His Throne: to cover their faces, for He was God. His radiance of Glory made them bow in humility.

Daniel 7:9-10 His garment was white as snow, And the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, Its wheels a burning fire; A fiery stream issued And came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. (NKJV)

Listen again as that face is described:

"That face now quietly slumbering had looked at Creation and said it was good.

That pure, soft unblemished face nestled close to the warmth of His mother, would soon know sweat and dirt as the dusty hillsides of Galilee and Judea were tirelessly crossed.

That face would know the adoring gazes of grateful ones healed and fed. The deceitful looks of plotting and betraying enemies, and the looks of wonder from faltering disciples.

But most of all, the loving gaze of the Heavenly Father as with constant devotion the Father saw His one and only Son slip away for extended times of prayer, communion and reflection with Him".³.

Soon that baby fresh face would know the hatred of mankind. More than any human ever was, He was marred for our sin:

Isaiah 52:14 **His visage was marred more than any man**, And His form more than the sons of men; (NKJV).

Always remember that Baby Jesus is always the Lord of Glory!

Revelation 1:16b-17a His **countenance was like the sun shining in its strength**.
17 And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead.

³ Max Lucado, Cast of Christmas

Beautiful baby we worship you as the Lamb slain for our sins: Hands of Love, Face of Glory, & now: Feet of Peace.

Finally this Christmas Eve, *we worship the One who was born with the Feet of God.*

BEHOLD AND ADORE CHRIST'S FEET OF PEACE

Listen again as those feet are described:

“Those kicking, wiggling feet so soft would soon be calloused. The dirt of the earth He had made, knew its Creator. But the life breathed into clay humans did not.

Those feet that walked in Eden’s splendor calling out for the hiding, fallen first family would crisscross the Promised Land seeking and saving lost ones.

Then those feet would be stopped. In the dead of night they would rise from kneeling and turn to face a scattering flock and a seething mob.

Those feet would walk to phony trials, mock hearings and wicked dens of torture.

Then with blood drops staining those feet they would trudge till they collapsed on the way to Calvary.

Those feet that had walked the wings of the dawn, that had stood in the chariots of the thunder clouds, that had walked with Enoch and Abraham, and had crossed the expanse of the universe.

Those feet that had left the streets of heaven were now crudely pushed onto rough splintered wood. Pressed and held by the hands of one of His own creatures now stained with sin.

The Holy One of God would be spiked to a tree He had created by a creature He had come to rescue”.⁴

AT YOUR FEET WE SHALL BOW.

Revelation 5:8 And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders **fell down before the Lamb**. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. (NIV)

The foolish theologians of Herod's court did not believe the Scriptures.

Herod the madman believed, but disobeyed.

The majestic magi believed in this infant Savior—and it was reckoned to them as righteousness.

Today *we* follow their example and worship Him who has: the Hands, the Face, and the Feet of God.

BOW WITH ME NOW & OFFER YOUR GIFTS TO HIM

⁴ Max Lucado, *Cast of Christmas*

As the men prepare to serve us Communion, with heads bowed, listen to these words about the hands, face & feet of Christ:

Oh, to see the dawn, of the darkest day:

Christ on the road to Calvary.

[there are HIS FEET of peace]

Tried by sinful men, Torn and beaten, then

Nailed to a cross of wood.

CHORUS:

This, the pow'r of the cross:

Christ became sin for us;

Took the blame, bore the wrath—

We stand forgiven at the cross.

Oh, to see the pain written on **Your face**

[there is HIS FACE of glory]

Bearing the awesome weight of sin

Ev'ry bitter thought, ev'ry evil deed

Crowning Your bloodstained brow

Oh, to see my name written in the wounds

[there are HIS HANDS of love wounded for us]

For through Your suffering I am free

Death is crushed to death; life is mine to live,

Won through Your selfless love

FINAL CHORUS:

This, the pow'r of the cross:

Son of God—slain for us.

What a love! What a cost!

We stand forgiven at the cross.