



What Child is This?  
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Pastor Ryan LaRock  
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## “What Child is This?”

**At the heart of Advent is not simply a passive exercise in waiting, but a waiting that is both \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.**

### Verse 1

“What child is this who, laid to rest, on Mary’s lap is sleeping? Whom angels greet with anthems sweet, while shepherds watch are keeping?”

- Set to the published 1652 tune of “Greensleeves,” an English pub song that may or may not be a commentary on King Henry VIII’s relationship with Anne Boleyn.
- Lyrics we know penned by William Chatterton Dix, a marine insurance manager, in 1865. Originally written as the poem, “The Manger Throne.”
- Dix’s true calling was poetry, his middle name harkening back to one of England’s finest poets, Thomas Chatterton.

### Verse 2

“Why lies he in such mean estate where ox and ass are feeding? Good Christians, fear, for sinners here the silent Word is pleading.”

**What child is this who would meet us in our \_\_\_\_\_ darkness?**

*When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah: "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more."*

Matthew 2:16–18 (NRSV)

- Our faith does not leave us in the darkness of our unique Bethlehem realities.

**What child is this who would meet us in our \_\_\_\_\_ darkness?**

*No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor power, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Romans 8:37–39 (NRSV)

- This child, Christ the King, would usher in the good news that we do not face the darkness in isolation.

### Verse 3

*"So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh, come, peasant, king, to own him; the King of kings salvation brings, let loving hearts enthrone him."*

**What child is this who would meet us in our \_\_\_\_\_ darkness?**

*The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined...For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.*

Isaiah 9:1–2, 6–7 (NRSV)

- Dix's words look to who Jesus would become—the one who is the \_\_\_\_\_ that inspires our worship.

*And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."*

Luke 1:46–55 (NRSV)

- The darkness of Advent is what opens our eyes to the need for \_\_\_\_\_.

## Answer key

At the heart of Advent is not simply a passive exercise in waiting, but a waiting that is both ACTIVE and INTENTIONAL.

What child is this who would meet us in our PHYSICAL darkness?

What child is this who would meet us in our EMOTIONAL darkness?

What child is this who would meet us in our SPIRITUAL darkness?

- Dix's words look to who Jesus would become—the one who is the GOOD NEWS that inspires our worship.
- The darkness of Advent is what opens our eyes to the need for A SAVIOR.