

American Decency Association

PO Box 202, Fremont, MI 49412 231-924-4050 www.americandecency.org
Encouraging Christians to guard their hearts December 2019

Joy to the World

by: Marshall Segal



The Gospel of Luke gives the most detailed story of the birth of Christ and also the most detailed prescription for joy. Luke wants us to see that the story of the world meeting Jesus in the flesh is a story of the world finally finding full joy in God.

It begins with the birth of John the Baptist. The angel said to Zechariah:

“Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great before the Lord. . . and he will go before him to make ready for the Lord a people prepared for him.” (Luke 1:13–17) Even before the baby was born, the message was a message of joy. Through

his angel, the Lord promised that people would rejoice at the birth of John because he would pave the way for the Christ. The joy God’s people would have in Jesus was so real and so intense that they would feel it looking into the face of the messenger — a man set apart to declare the coming of the King.

Rejoice! The King is coming into the world to save sinners and spread his joy.

Good News of Great Joy

Then, the baby was born, the Messiah himself came forth from heaven through his mother’s womb. That night, an angel appeared to some shepherds and declared, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people” (Luke 2:10). Those poor, unsuspecting shepherds were hearing the chorus of the praise that we’ve sung ever since.

Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King; Let every heart prepare him room.

Rejoice! The King *has* come, and with this baby, fullness of joy was born for all who would believe.

Your Reward Is Great

Jesus’s birth was not Luke’s final word about our joy. Even in the midst of the very worst circumstances — the awful persecution of Jesus and his disciples — Jesus’s message remained the same, “Rejoice.” “Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven” (Luke 6:22–23).

The story of the world meeting Jesus in the flesh is a story of the world finding their full joy in God.

Those who rejoice at Jesus’s coming will suffer in this life, but their weakness, pain, and misery here are as nothing compared with the glories they already have in heaven. When we suffer for the sake of Christ, we are

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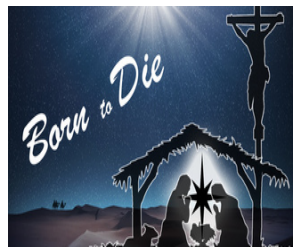
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blessed, because suffering with him is a way of confirming we are his. And those who are his have nothing to fear and nothing to lose, and everything to gain, everything already waiting for them in heaven with God.

So no more let sins and sorrows grow. Though the battle rages for a few short decades here, and we experience many losses along the way, fix your eyes on the joy ahead. Rejoice that your names are and always have been written in heaven (Luke 10:20).

Rejoice! Nothing in this world can undo or even diminish your joy in Jesus. No sin and no sorrow can separate you from him and the everlasting happiness he brings.

Joy to the World

The baby born in Bethlehem was born to die in our place. He went to the cross and received the

wrath we deserved for our sin (Luke 23:46). He died to purchase the joy the angels announced at his birth. And three days later, he rose from the dead, the firstborn of all who would follow him. He appeared to his disciples and showed them how all of the Bible was pointing to him — the baby born in a manger, the preacher of good news, the Son of God crucified on the cross, the King who conquered the grave, the Joy of the world.

And after he left them, ascending into heaven and promising to return, “they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy” (Luke 24:52). The King that died, never surrendered to death. He rose and reigns in glory, sending his disciples among the nations to offer everyone everywhere never-ending joy in him and with him in his presence (Luke 24:46–49).

He rules the world with truth and grace, And makes the nations prove The glories of his righteousness, And wonders of his love.

Rejoice! Jesus was born and died to have a world of worship — sons and

daughters from every people on earth — and we’ll live and sing and enjoy God with them forever.

[Used with permission: Desiring God, December, 2014]

“It is an unfortunate thing for the Christian to become melancholy. If there is any man in the world that has a right to have a bright, clear face and a flashing eye, it is the man whose sins are forgiven him, who is saved with God’s salvation.”
C.H. Spurgeon



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