

American Decency Association

PO Box 202, Fremont MI 49412 231-924-4050 www.americandecency.org
Encouraging Christians to guard their heart December 2023

He Rules the World

By Chris Johnson



“He rules the world with truth and grace/And makes the nations prove/The glories of His righteousness And wonders of His love...”

Why do we sing these words every Christmas? When we read the news, this verse of the carol seems to ring hollow. Just in the past few months, Michigan and Ohio have ensconced the murder of infants in our state constitutions. This has happened under Christ’s rule? Is Hamas’ terrorism in Israel proving the glories of His righteousness? Are the kids who’ve been convinced they need their organs mutilated in order to truly be themselves proving the wonders of His love?

Yet, the sentiment of this verse of Joy to the World is rooted in Isaiah’s

prophecy in chapter 9, which we know so well from Handel’s Messiah: “For to us a child is born, to us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and of peace there will be no end...”

1 Corinthians 15:25 picks up this theme: “For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.”

Here is where we find our hope as we read of victories for abortion advocates, terrorists, and those who hate humanity: Jesus reigns; His government is increasing; He is putting His enemies under His feet. His victory is inevitable.

Ligonier ministry’s Tab-talk magazine highlighted this point beautifully with the help of Matthew Henry in their study of Luke 17:22:

“Before the officers took

Jesus into custody, He remarked that they could have arrested Him peacefully in the daylight, for He could have easily been found teaching in the temple. They came at night because the hour belonged to them – it was appointed for their purposes – and because it was fitting for the power of darkness behind the events to operate in the literal darkness of night.

Matthew Henry comments that we can actually draw encouragement from God’s enemies’ having an hour of ‘triumph’ when we are considering the church’s travails in this world. He notes three truths: ‘(1.) It is but an hour that is permitted for the triumph of our adversary, a short time, a limited time. (2.) It is their hour, which is appointed them, and in which they are permitted to try their strength, that omnipotence may be the more glorified in their fall. (3.) It is the power of darkness that [succeeds for a moment,] but darkness must give way to light, and the power of dark-

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ness be made to [submit] to the prince of light.”

“Any apparent victory of the powers of darkness is only temporary, for the ultimate victory belongs to the resurrected Christ, who has conquered death and overcome the worst that the devil could throw at Him. No situation is ever truly hopeless for the people of God, for we serve the victorious Savior.”

As we sing the words of Joy to the World, and other Christmas carols which sing of, not only the cute little infant in the manger, but the King of Glory, the Bright Morning Star, the Son of David, the Seed of the Woman, the promised Messiah, let us remember we’re not just remembering something that happened a long time ago. We’re celebrating a victory the effects of which we’re only beginning to enjoy.

Jonathan Gibson has compiled an Advent lit-

urgy book called “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel,” that I’m looking forward to going through with my family this season. He writes in the introduction,

“Although the longings, hopes, and expectations of the coming, conquering son are met in Jesus’ first coming, it does not change the reality that God’s people are a waiting people.”

“...In the Old Testament, believers wait for Jesus’ first coming. In the New Testament, believers wait for His second coming. In both cases, God’s people live in the light of Christ’s advent.”

“...Since the days of the early church, Christians have observed a time in the church calendar for a focused concentration on the second coming of Christ, known as Advent... as the centuries passed, the season became more directly connected to Christmas – a time to consider Christ’s second coming as Christians reflected on His first coming.”

This Advent and Christmas season, the news of

the world is dark. But Christ brought hope at a dark time at His first coming – it’s why He’s called the Morning Star. His birth was the first glimpse of light, the light has grown over the millennia since, and our ultimate hope is in the glory of the full day that will be revealed at His final Advent.

Let Earth Receive Her King!

Puritan Thomas Blake prompts us forward in faithfulness as we await the coming of our Lord:

“What is the best frame the soul can be in, in order to its meeting with Christ with the greatest comfort and boldness? As first, to have the love of Christ witnessed and sealed up unto the soul by the Spirit of God; (2) to be disengaged from this world and all the entanglements and incumbrances thereof; (3) to have grace in its exercise; (4) communion with God and a holy conversation maintained and kept up; (5) raised desires and longing of soul for His appearance.”



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