

Refuge City Church — December 20, 2020
The Harmony of Christmas (Part 4: “Joy to the World”)

Scripture Reading (Matthew 1:18-25)

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. **19** And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. **20** But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. **21** She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” **22** All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: **23** “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us). **24** When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, **25** but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

- **(Luke 2:1-7)**

1 In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. **2** This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. **3** And all went to be registered, each to his own town. **4** And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, **5** to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. **6** And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. **7** And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Context — What was happening all around?

- Mary, a virgin betrothed to Joseph, found with child **[adultery and public scrutiny]**.
 - To tell the story of her pregnancy would have brought skepticism and cries of insanity.
- Joseph, wrestling with how to deal with it all... *initial* consideration = publicly shame Mary and/or divorce her. **[anger, shame, embarrassment]**
- Adhering to the requirement of the census, the travel to Bethlehem, and was not able to secure lodging, so they find the closest thing available... a barn, and place their newborn in a feeding trough **[inadequacy for the divine Son of God]**
- The Messiah, Savior of the world, born in obscure circumstances, to obscure people, who would eventually settle in an obscure town **[Nazareth]**, His birth announced to obscure shepherds, and a star leads obscure magi to visit from afar.
- In spite of it all, God brought forth His Son, to be born in this world, and live out His given name. **[Matthew 1:21, “...you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”]**
 - Jesus = Yahweh saves
 - Immanuel = God with us
 - Christ = Messiah; deliverer

- Lord = King; Master; ruler
 - **Philippians 2:10-11**, “so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”
 - Can we reflect for a minute on that? **God.With.Us.** That is what we celebrate at Christmas.
- What does the name of Jesus provide = **JOY**
 - Both Elizabeth [**Mary’s relative**] and her baby [**John the baptist**] rejoiced at the presence of Mary who was with child.
 - **Luke 1:44**, “For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for **joy**.”
 - Mary rejoiced at what God called her to do!
 - **Luke 1:46-47**, “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit **rejoices** in God my Savior,”
 - The angel brought the shepherds “good news of great joy”.
 - **Luke 2:10**, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great **joy** that will be for all the people... **Luke 2:20**, And the shepherds returned, **glorifying and praising** God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.”
 - The wise men had joy, “When they saw the star, they **rejoiced** exceedingly with great **joy**.” ...and then as a response, worshipped King Jesus.

What is JOY = exultation, ecstatic delight, exhilaration

- Joy is the expressive result of being in the presence of Jesus!
 - It is not something we manufacture because, as Christians, we’re supposed to be 24/7 happy-go-lucky people.
 - Joy allows us to look through and beyond current circumstances to the greater purpose of who Christ is and why we exist.
 - It is the very presence of God with us, and in us, that brings us joy. [**Galatians 5:25; fruit of the Spirit**]
- When we sing “Joy to the world”, what are we are declaring? [**Song Lyrics**]
 - **The Lord is come.**
 - **John 1:14**, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”
 - **Galatians 4:4-5**, “But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.”
 - **Let earth receive her King.**
 - He was born a King. He died a King. He will return as King of kings!
 - **Let every heart prepare Him room.**
 - There may not have been room in the inn, but He wasn’t born to rule the physical.

- This is why, when Jesus stood before Pilate prior to His crucifixion, He would state, “My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world.” Then Pilate said to him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.”
{John 18:36-37}
- He came to take up residence in our hearts and lives, if we receive the salvation and grace freely offered to us.
- **Revelation 3:20**, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.”
- We were created for this purpose! Out of all creation, we are the only ones God made in His image.
 - **Psalm 19:1**, “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.”
 - **Luke 19:40**, “I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.”
- **Joy to the world! The Savior reigns; Let men their songs employ.**
 - Why did Moses and the Israelites sing after God lead them across the Red Sea... Salvation brings joyful praise!
 - **Exodus 15:2**, “The Lord is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation; this is my God, and I will praise him, my father’s God, and I will exalt him.”
 - What is the purpose of the majority of the Psalms... Salvation brings joyful praise!
 - **Psalm 98:4-6**, “Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises! Sing praises to the Lord with the lyre, with the lyre and the sound of melody! With trumpets and the sound of the horn make a joyful noise before the King, the Lord!”
 - Why did Mary sing her song of praise... Salvation brings joyful praise!
 - **Luke 1:46-47**, “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,”
 - Why were Paul and Silas singing hymns after being beaten and thrown in prison?
 - Their salvation was not of this world, and in that they could have joyful praise.
 - **Acts 16:25**, “About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them... **{The jailer is then brought to salvation} 34**, Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.”
 - Why do the angels in heaven and those surrounding God’s throne eternally fall down and worship God?
 - He is worthy of eternal praise for the salvation He provides!
 - **Revelation 4:8, 11**, “...and day and night they never cease to say, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!”... “Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.”

- **No more let sins and sorrows grow**
 - Jesus was born to die, to set you free!!
 - **Romans 6:6**, “We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.”
 - **1 Peter 4:2**, “You won’t spend the rest of your lives chasing your own desires, but you will be anxious to do the will of God.”
- **He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove the glories of His righteousness, and wonders of His love!**