

Intro: Joy? For what? Where does our joy really lie in this wonderful season of Advent, the celebration of the arrival of the Christ? BMW says that it's in driving the newest car. Is it in being around family and friends that deliver us the great joy promised by the angels to those shepherds guarding their flocks on that holy night? Maybe it's found in giving and receiving gifts?

As good and as wonderful as all of these things may be, are they the "good news of great joy" that was announced and about which we sing? We were made to rejoice in the wonder and glory of God, worshipping Him with gladness and glorifying His all-surpassing greatness with deep contentment and abundant happiness! The problem is that our sin has twisted our joy, perverted our affections, and alienated us from God and each other. The advent of the Messiah was to cure these fatal ills.

In fact, the Scriptures tell us the reasons for people's joy when the birth of the Christ was announced:

Joseph is told that "He will save His people from their sins" (Matt 1:21)

Mary is told that "He will receive the throne of David and reign over Israel with an everlasting kingdom" (Luke 1:32-35)

Zacharias (John the B's father) is told that "the Lord has raised up a horn of salvation" that "we might serve Him without fear in holiness and righteousness before Him all of our days" (Luke 1:69-75)

John the Baptist simply leapt in his mother's womb (Luke 1:44)

Anna is told of a redeemer (Luke 2:38)

The Magi know that a King has been born (Matt 2:2)

Herod understands it is the Christ, the Messiah (Matt 2:4)

And here in Luke 2:10 we see the shepherds receiving the gospel of a Savior-King, Christ the Lord
Even Abraham rejoiced to see His day (John 8:58)

The angels told the shepherds that night that the gospel brings them great joy for three reasons: 1) it eliminates their fear, 2) it is for all the people, and 3) this Savior is the Eternal King.

1. The Gospel Brings Great Joy to Us

a. This good news is a great joy

i. "which is great joy"

ii. The content of the message brings great joy

1. Great modifies joy!

2. This is an exemplary joy, a superlative of joy, an intensive joy!

iii. Cheer Up! Have a merry heart!

b. Psalm 95:1 – let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation

c. Rom 15:13 – may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing...

d. Phil 4:4 – Rejoice always! Again: Rejoice in the Lord!

2. The Gospel Give Us Great Joy For it Calms Our Fears

a. Do not be afraid

i. We fear because we have alienated ourselves from God

1. Judgment, Wrath, Enemies of God

2. This alienation due to sin spread to lesser alienations from each other, and from nature

a. Adam and Eve blame-shifting after hiding from God

b. Sin brought a curse upon the ground and made nature an antagonist to our desires

3. the glory of the Lord is an awesome and terrible thing

a. bringing fear in the presence of divine majesty

b. It is our guilt that brings fear of divine judgment

- i. Our guilt is due to our sin, which is why it's "good news" that a Savior has been born
 - ii. Our guilt leads to death, as promised and foretold at the beginning by the Lord ("in that day you will surely die')
 - iii. James 1:15 – over-desire gives birth to sin which leads to death
 - ii. common phrase in Scripture when the divine meets the temporal
 - 1. Jesus walking on water – Matt 14:27
 - 2. Transfiguration – Matt 17:5
 - 3. Angels at the empty tomb – Matt 28:5
 - 4. Resurrected Jesus – Matt 28:10
 - 5. We live with a great fear, here the fear of death because of sin
 - iii. This basic promise is to not be afraid for God brings to us a promise
 - 1. Is 1:18 – Come let us reason together, says the Lord, though your sins are as scarlet, they will be white as snow
 - 2. Is 41:10 – Do not fear for I am with you, for I am your God, I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand
 - 3. Isaiah 59 – the LORD saw that no man could save so He put on His armor to save us Himself
 - 4. Heb 2:14-15
 - b. Because I bring good news to you
 - i. Behold! Interjection to look! See!
 - ii. good news = gospel
 - 1. Good news indicates a lesser reality now
 - a. The bad news must precede the good news
 - b. Why is news of a Savior being born good news?
 - i. Because WE NEED TO BE SAVED FROM SIN AND DEATH!!
 - ii. 1 Cor 15:56-57
 - 2. a message brought that is good
3. The Gospel brings us great joy for it is for all of us
 - a. for you
 - i. this good news is being brought *to them*, it is a message *intended for them*
 - 1. never underestimate the weight of the biblical words, "for you"
 - 2. They indicate a good promise, a wonderful truth that blesses us so that we may glorify the Lord (see v14)
 - ii. God's saving work through the Christ is for us!
 - iii. Bringing peace to us who believe (v14)
 - 1. "on whom God's favor rests"
 - 2. Heb 11:6 – "without faith it is impossible to please God"
 - 3. Phil 2:12-13 – work out your salvation with fear and trembling for God is working out His own good pleasure in you
 - iv. God makes peace with those who place their trust in Him by atoning for their guilt through the blood of Jesus Christ so that He adopts them as His children with full benefits having been given the righteousness of Jesus
 - b. to all the people
 - i. the gospel is for everyone
 - ii. this gospel of a Savior brings great joy to all people
 - 1. not a racist gospel, nor a closed gospel

2. the gospel is for the weak, the outsider, the broken, the sinner
 - a. "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Matt 9)
 - b. "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened down and I will give you rest..." (Matt 11)
 - c. "Christ came into the world to save sinners..." (1 Tim 1:15)
 - d. The gospel is the power of God for salvation to the Jew first and also to the Gentile (Rom 1:16)

4. The Gospel Brings Us Great Joy For it Gives Us the Savior-King

- a. For today a Savior was born
 - i. The good news that brings great joy is the proclamation of a Savior's arrival
 1. He is a Savior
 2. Matt 1:21 – call his name Jesus for he will save his people from their sins
 - ii. the content of great joy is the SALVATION work of the Christ
 - iii. The Savior is bringing reconciliation with God and man (v14)
 1. Eph 1:5,7
 2. Rom 5:1-2, 10-11
 - iv. The Savior is bringing reconciliation with each other
 1. When the gospel is all of God's grace, it means that no person is inherently any better than another
 2. No culture, no nation, no family deserves God's forgiveness and salvation any more than any other
 3. Racial reconciliation, loving enemies, peaceful fruit of righteousness are all produced by the Spirit of Christ within us
 - v. The Savior is bringing reconciliation with nature
 1. Rom 8:19-25
 2. 2 Pet 3:13
- b. who is Christ the Lord
 - i. early proclamation of the deity of Christ
 - ii. God is the Savior and He has been born a man in order to SAVE his people (from their sins, see Matt 1:21)
 - iii. The world faces a certain tension at Christmas, for they want Christmas but not Christ, celebration but not salvation, leading to weak joy in the pleasures of the world that does not have the electrifying and transforming power of the joy of sinners set free to be sons.
 1. They suppress the truth in unrighteousness (Rom 1:18)
 2. Living with the hypocrisy of celebrating His birth through songs of joy but rejecting the cause of such joy.
 - a. Rather than God giving the gift of a Savior-King, Santa gives gifts for being good
 - b. Rather than rejoicing in the salvation from sins, there merriment in salvation from work and school schedules.
 - c. Rather than delighting in the grandeur and the goodness of God's self-disclosure and incarnation for our redemption, there is only the false and hollow delight of the heart's idolatry of family, friends, and food

- d. The reality is that many have no right nor reason to rejoice at Christmas for the rejection of the Savior at His first advent means His rejection of them at His second advent.
- c. The Savior is the Eternal King
 - i. in the city of David, i.e. Bethlehem: Micah 5:2
 - 1. Davidic family – Isaiah 9:7
 - 2. Eternal kingdom fulfillment –
 - a. Daniel 2:44-45
 - b. Daniel 7:13-14
 - c. Luke 1:33
 - d. 2 Pet 2:11
 - ii. The Savior-King has arrived, the Messiah our Lord
 - 1. To save us from our sins and its repercussions
 - a. Reconciliation through atonement
 - b. Sonship through propitiation
 - 2. To rule us with power, glory, and honor
 - 3. As was foretold: Jeremiah 30:18-24
 - iii. The True King has arrived to set us free from the old rulers of our lives (idols of the heart)
 - 1. The Kingdom of Christ means that God is restoring the proper relationship to Himself through repentance and faith in Jesus alone, forgiveness for our sins by grace through the new birth
 - 2. The King who saves us by His own blood then reorders our hearts into goodness, peace, and joy as we come to a deeper heart knowledge of the gospel of grace and place ourselves under His reign
 - iv. The true glory and joy are reflected back to God and are not merely self-interest in our own salvation
 - v. We get the salvation that we so desperately need and God the glory that He already deserves