

Joy To the World
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Isaiah 9:2-7
December 24, 2017

Opening Music:

Joy to the World
Come Thou Long Expected Jesus
While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks
It Came Upon a Midnight Clear

Luke 1:26 *In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" ²⁹ But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."*

³⁴ *And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵ And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born*

will be called holy—the Son of God. ³⁶ *And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren.* ³⁷ *For nothing will be impossible with God.”* ³⁸ *And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.*

Mary tried to discern what sort of greeting this may be! Don't you love how the scripture is so understated... here is my interpretation, Mary was freaked out! An angel had come to her... that would be scary enough, but that angel then tells her that she is pregnant with the son of God, the long-awaited Messiah, the creator and savior of the world. Don't be afraid Mary, you have found favor with God. How could you be anything but afraid. But he makes it clear, you have done nothing wrong, you are God's chosen servant. Look at Mary's response... *I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.* Literally, she says, "I am God's slave. Let His will be done in my life." Amazing. Two thousand years of waiting are nearly over!

Music:

We Three Kings of Orient Are
O Come, O Come, Emmanuel
O Come all Ye Faithful

Luke 2:1 *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.

No room. God had it all planned perfectly. The creator of the universe had taken on the form of man. God himself had come to earth as a baby for one single purpose... to die and take the fury of God onto himself so mankind could be redeemed and saved for all eternity. 10 trillion galaxies he had spoken out of his mouth. Perfectly aligned, beautifully arrayed. Billions of people he created and sustained, giving them life and breath and everything they needed to live each day. That same Jesus came into a world that had no room for him. So, he was born in a stock barn, his first bed a feeding trough. Rough, dirty and unrefined; it was a picture of the people he came to save. They were blinded by the prince of the world and though they knew of the prophecies, though they had been looking for a messiah... this was not the one they expected or wanted. He was born to this yet unmarried young couple. A young, innocent virgin girl for a mother. A simple, sincere, hard-working carpenter for a father. Unto you, young couple, a child is born... but not any child. The government shall be

upon his shoulders and of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end!

Music:

Angels From the Realms of Glory

Silent Night

Angels We Have Heard on High

Luke 2:8: ⁸ *And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. ¹⁰ And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”*

¹⁵ *When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” ¹⁶ And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. ¹⁷ And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. ¹⁸ And all who heard it wondered at what the*

shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰ And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. ²¹ And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

Shepherds. Today we think of them as humble servants. Our manger scenes are always so kind to them... simple, peasant men who are overjoyed to see the baby Jesus. But shepherds would never have been portrayed that way in the first century. Shepherds were not beloved in the day of Jesus, in fact they were despised by many and considered the lowest of the low in society. Even Aristotle took a cheap shot at shepherds calling them the “laziest, who lead an idle life, and get their subsistence without trouble from tame animals; their flocks wandering from place to place in search of pasture, they are compelled to follow them...” Jesus was born to the simplest of parents, in the lowliest of places; his birth witnessed by the dregs of society. The imagery is too obvious to miss. The army of angels coming to declare the most important birth in the history of mankind to a group of stinky, unappreciated, hopeless men. These shepherds, just like the manger, just like the parents, are a picture of the desperation and hopelessness of humanity. But we shall be hopeless no more! *Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased.* Shout it out! The world that knew no peace now has the Prince of Peace lying in a dirty manger in a little nothing town with

shepherds as a witness. Hope has come to the hopeless. Peace has come to those who have known no peace. Come and see, go and tell.

Music:

The First Noel

Go Tell It On the Mountain

Shine On Us

Isaiah 9:2-7: ² *The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.* ³ *You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil.* ⁴ *For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.* ⁵ *For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire.* ⁶ *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.* ⁷ *Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.*

The people of this world have walked in great darkness. For millennia, the world had been subject to a cruel prince, the prince of darkness. He

sucked the light out of the world, making it an achromatic color of darkness. But now, the people have seen a great light. God is multiplying the nation, building his church, redeeming his rebellious creation. The world has found joy, true joy, once again. The yoke of the burden of our oppressor has been broken and all who oppressed us will face their doom in judgment.

A child is born. A king is born. THE king is born! The son, promised in Genesis 3:15, the male seed who will crush Satan... he has been born. And the government of all creation will rightfully rest on his shoulders. And we, his subjects, his followers, his brothers and sisters, will call him Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His eternal throne will do nothing but increase and peace shall never, ever end. God's zeal, his driving desire to show us his glory and express his love for us will cause all this to happen. It is his solemn promise to us. Fulfilled in his glorious son.

Hallelujah. Unto us a savior is born this day in the city of Bethlehem. His name is Jesus. Come, let us worship him. Come let us live for him. Come let us adore him.

Would you please stand as we close this time of worship and sing together the Hallelujah Chorus.

Closing Song:

Hallelujah Chorus.