



'JOY TO THE WORLD'

Isaac Watts wrote a hymn in 1719 that has become one of the most popular Christmas carols that we sing in the church. The following verses roll out of our mouths as we visualize the birth of Jesus Christ:

Joy to the world! The Lord is come: let earth receive her King!
Let every heart prepare Him room, and heaven and nature sing.
Joy to the earth! The Savior reigns: let men their songs employ.
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy
He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness
And wonders of His love.

These lyrics are beautiful and profound, but they have nothing to do with Christ's birth nor was it Watts' intention to emphasize our Savior's birth in writing them. They are taken from Psalm 98, which anticipates the rule and reign of our Lord over all the earth. Watts initially entitled the hymn, "The Messiahs Coming and Kingdom." I am not trying to take away from one of our most revered carols, but rather recognize the bigger picture and excitement of our Lord's return. As Psalm 98 mentions, "Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth...shout for joy before the Lord, the King. Let the world resound and all who live in it...let them sing before the Lord, for He comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples with equity."

Especially now, in the midst of the tumultuous times we are currently living, His *first coming* set the stage and we should celebrate with joy, reverence, and awe, but we should also anticipate His coming again; how exciting that day will be. The first chapter of II Thessalonians speaks of this as well. Allow me to condense Paul's writing for the sake of space:

"God is just...He will give relief to you who are troubled and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with His powerful angels...on the day He comes to be glorified in His holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you..." (II Thess 1:6-10)

I believe all of us are ready for Christmas, as the world has become a bit darker this year. The good news is that we have a loving God who sent His Son as our Redeemer, and we as His church have the opportunity to shine brighter than ever. We have the most precious and powerful gift in all the world. Isaiah prophesied of Christ's birth in chapter 9:6, "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given...", but he also writes of His rule and reign as well in verse 7, "Of the greatness of His government and peace there will be no end...He will reign on David's throne...from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this."

From all of us at Dunklin we wish you a Merry Christmas! May we all together celebrate and rejoice over His birth, but eagerly anticipate His second coming as well.

"Joy to the world! The Lord is come: let earth receive her King!"



Nick



Behold a Child is Born



Merry Christmas

