

The Nativity of our Lord
 Year of the Lord 2021
 Luke 2

“Holy Spirit, Light Divine, shine upon this heart of mine;
 Chase the shades of night away; turn the darkness into day!”
 “Let me see my Savior’s face; let me all HIS beauties trace!
 Show those glorious truths to me which are only known to Thee!”

“Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy...”

In the Name of Jesus:

After their good news, after their Gloria, the angels went back to heaven, Saint Luke records. All the way to BACK to heaven. How far was that? From heaven to earth; from earth to heaven. Sounds far! But the came and left with this word ringing: JOY!

Joy. I don’t know how far heaven WAS, before, in the Old, Dark time. But I tell you good news of great joy this night: Heaven and earth are one; now that Mary has delivered her firstborn son and laid Him in a manger.

‘Sooo...pastor, no man need climb his way UP to God, whatever that means?!’ Good thing, huh?! One less thing!

We still have things to do, my dear ones. The herald angel wrapped it all up on one word: joy.

Yes, joy as exhilaration, gas-in-the-tank, optimism that captures Heaven Himself! But what makes THIS JOY ‘great,’ my dear ones, is that THIS, HE is the JOY of the Good News, the Gospel! And that is not bound by feelings

or thoughts or deeds or life or death or earth or heaven or anything. It scoops them all up and keeps on going!

The Good News and Great Joy of The Baby in the Manger.

Babies take a lot of room; and the upstairs was too busy with grownups, the 'Inn,' Saint Luke records. But the Baby eventually toddled out of that animal feeder. He even made it INN! Upstairs! Upper room! And then: joy! 'Take, eat; Take, drink, all of you; Y'ALL feed on me; no one can give you more.'

On the way to The Inn, The Upper Room, He had nothing BUT joy to do, to proclaim!

²² "Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! ²³ Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets. ¹

'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.'
¹⁰ Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents." ²

And He knew joy Himself; and so, He prayed and praised and SANG:

²¹ In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding

¹ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (Lk 6:22–23). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

² [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (Lk 15:9–10). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.³

This is the Babe Who came ‘for the JOY set before Him,’ endured the cross, scorned its shame, and has sat down at the right hand of God.

But what He WAS in the manger and what He GAVE for our joy in the upper room, He still gives! And when y’all, dear Christians, eat His Body and drink His Blood, y’all do not RESEMBLE His Body; y’all ARE His Body. There is no greater mystery, no greater joy. Where He is with us, there Heaven and earth are all mixed up for good, and at peace: glory to God in the highest.

So I address now the dear people among THIS Body on Christmas Eve who can still make the joy of THIS here Body of Christ COMPLETE! Those who are here tonight but do not eat and drink with us, and confess and believe with us; those who are here tonight for our joy, but whose joy we pray would be ours more and more!

The disciples of Jesus who gather here, friends, have no list of requirements, no height you must reach, no level, before they will commune with you in great joy. If I may put it this way: it does not enter our minds that y’all must be AS GOOD as we are; but we do ask that y’all try to be as BAD as we are.

You can try. Pick up the tools we Christians SAY we pick up every day—Ahem!—The Ten Commandments of Moses. And throw yourself into them! ‘Today is God’s

³ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (Lk 10:21). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

Day, NOT my own to do as I please. And EVERY person in my orbit is there for ME to be FOR THEM, as much as I am FOR my own precious self!’

A day or two that, friends, and we will welcome you to the place and the meal and the room in which God is STILL one of us, truly Man—and yet—His problem, not OURS!—He gives us, the world, yesterday, today, until the End, Himself; even His Body and His Blood.

And WHERE does that GET US? Joy to the world!

Our RELIGION ‘GETS...US:’ NOWHERE! No place that we are not ALREADY! Where HE IS already, with us, under us, in us, for us.

Learn to eat and drink the Supper of the Babe of Bethlehem: for the sake of those who are afraid, daily and much, that they are alone in this cold world. ‘Am I the ONLY ONE on earth who CANNOT get aligned with Heaven?’

Good News! Great Joy! The angels says. THIS angel cries out! Your RESCUER cries out:
You...ARE...NOT...ALONEEE....!!!!

Despite the way this world goes and demands, the One Who rose from the dead rose for the joy of just those who cannot find heaven in themselves. And He will come to them until He comes again for our final joy.

Until then, He gives to His own, to the world, His Body and His Blood, to eat and to drink, so that HIS JOY is

complete! And if HIS, then mine and yours and those with whom you commune.

You do know, my dear ones, that this ‘Christmas’ thing the world has been using to make money through the year—Christmas Day is TOMORROW. But lots of people wish to meet in anticipation the night before. It’s all good. It’s all joy.

But if there is room for joy from you to those who will show up here tomorrow—with some fear lingering in them still—there is room for you INN this place. Oh! If there’s great joy at your home tomorrow, Glory be to God!

But we do PLAN, if the Lord wills, to gather again Sunday, to confess what we are and receive all that God in the Flesh can give us. And the next Lord’s Day, and so on. Plenty of opportunities for joy for you, for me, for the church, for the world. Glory be to God! Heaven HIMSELF rejoices when even ONE of us confesses his sins! What if two, three, or even more? What Joy! What Good News, in the Name of Jesus!