

Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

**[Introduction]**

“Joy to the world, the Lord is come!” However, we have to ask ourselves, why is “this” the season of Joy? What is the reason for our joy?

As we remember the birth of Jesus tonight we often repeat the saying “Jesus is the reason for the season,” but what does that really mean? How does Jesus bring Joy? Have you ever really sat down and thought about it? What are the full implications and reasons for your Joy?

Often, when we sing Joy to the World, we focus on the surface. “Joy to the World” is a valid statement, but what is beyond the surface? We know the effect. This **is** the season of joy. But what is the cause? Following along with our sermon hymn we will cover three causes for our joy.

**[The Lord is Come!]**

“The Lord is come!” is the first such cause. As Jesus comes we see Immanuel, God with us. However, just having God near you doesn’t really guarantee any good things. Look what happened to Sodom and Gomorrah as God drew near. What is the reason that the Lord’s coming is Joyful?

The Apostle Paul writes in his doxology to the Romans “Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ” (Ro 16:25). These words tell us that Jesus is able to strengthen us in the gospel. In fact, when Jesus came to earth he not only preached the gospel he lived the gospel.

However, when we look around at all of the Christmas decorations and activities that abound this month, we often get distracted. We find ourselves focused more on the coming of Christmas than the coming of Christ.

We lack joy because we see Christmas letters, Christmas decorations, Christmas cookies, Christmas presents, and Christmas activities that haven’t been completed.

We lack joy because of the cleaning, cooking, and calories.

We lack joy because we think Christmas is about our world.

But Christmas isn't about us or about what the world thinks of as Joy. Instead Christmas is about the joy of being strengthened in the faith.

“Joy to the world, the Lord is come!” The reason for our Joy is because Christ's coming strengthens us. It gives us the fulfillment of the prophetic promises. It gives us trust in the Word of God to not return empty, but to accomplish its purpose, and succeed in the thing for which it was sent. (Is 55:11).

Paul writes that Christ is, “the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages” (Ro 16:25). Or in other words, Christ is the key to the bible. His coming and teaching is the reason we have faith in the Bible. We don't believe Christ because he is in the Bible. Instead we believe Christ because, by his coming, dying, and rising he proved that his words can be trusted. He proved that he is the Son of God and therefore we should listen to him. “Jesus loves me this I know” because Jesus told me so.

The Bible is the Word of God because Christ tells us so. In fact, he quotes from it throughout his ministry. He quotes from it because it gives us trust to see the fulfillment of God's Word.

One example from very early on in Jesus' ministry is when he went to the Synagogue and read before the assembly from the scroll of Isaiah.

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me  
to proclaim good news to the poor. ...  
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,  
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor” (Lk 4:18–19).

Then he sat down and said to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” (Lk 4:21). “The Lord is come!” Christ fulfills scripture.

The first cause for Joy is that “The Lord is come!” It gives and strengthens faith through the prophetic promises that are fulfilled. The Lord's coming gives us trust in the Word of God.

### **[*The Savior Reigns*]**

As the Lord's coming enables us to trust in the Word of God, next, we look for the second cause for our joy by singing, “Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!” We see Christ's reign here on earth. We have cause for joy because, by the Savior's reign, Paul says, “the prophetic writings (have) been made known to all nations” (Ro 16:26).

We are all nations. We come from many and various nations and walks of life, but very few of us can claim Jewish descent. In fact, without the Savior's reign bringing the prophetic writings to us, then we'd be lost.

We would lack Joy in Christ's coming, because his coming wouldn't be for us.

The prophetic writings, in their original context, were only for the people of God. We weren't those people. We were the people of the world. The people of the nations' celebrating Christmas as a commercialized and secularized holiday of giving.

To us giving was the reason for the season. Giving and getting. We had false joy in Christmas because we followed the nations attitude of "what's in it for me." It has been said before, "Me, Myself, and I" is the unholy trinity. We focused in on ourselves and found only despair.

However, Paul says "I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also..." to all of **you** here today. "For in **it** the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, 'The righteous shall live by faith.'" (Ro 1:16-17).

Therefore, we have Joy, because the Savior's reign strengthens us and brings about faith and belief in God and His Words. The Savior's reign brings the Word of God to all nations. That is the second cause for our joy, the cause to let us sing, "Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!"

*[No more let sins and sorrows grow]*

The first cause to our effect of Joy is that "the Lord is come!" and mirrors the second cause that "the Savior reigns!" However, we aren't done yet, the song and the reason for our joy continues. We also sing, "No more let sins and sorrows grow." Here we find the third cause for our joy. We find that the Lord's coming and the Savior's reigning has produced more than just faith.

Sure, it has strengthened us.  
Sure, it has revealed to us the mystery.  
Sure, it has brought the prophetic promises to us.  
But that's not all.

All of this... All of this, cause for joy, that is as Paul says, "according to the command of the eternal God" (Ro 16:26). All of this, has also brought "about the obedience of faith" (Ro 16:26) to us.

As a result, “No more let sins and sorrows grow” you have the obedience of faith. The ability to follow God’s word joyfully. The Ability to obey out of faith and not out of fear.

The ability to look at God’s laws as more than just a curb and a mirror, but also as a guide. The righteousness that comes by faith is lived out in the obedient and sanctified life.

The Lord’s coming and the Savior’s reigning brings joy because it daily buries your false motivations of a secularized and worldly Christmas. Instead, the Lord’s coming and the Savior’s reigning brings with it the motivation to look to Jesus.

To look to His power.

To look to His resurrection.

To look to His victory.

To remember that Jesus is the reason for the season and to bring about the obedience of faith. We have cause for joy because our third cause enables us to “no more, let sins and sorrows grow.”

### **[Conclusion]**

Today, as we looked at the three causes for our joy we also encountered the world’s idea of joy. We found ourselves lacking joy in Christ’s coming because we thought Christmas was about worldly joy. However, as we sing, “Joy to the World” we ask ourselves, “what is the cause for our joy?” The answer is that:

1. “The Lord is come!” which causes Joy by giving and strengthening faith. And, through the prophetic promises that are fulfilled, it gives us trust in the Word of God.
2. “The Savior Reigns!” which causes joy by giving and strengthening faith. And through His reign brings the Word of God to all nations.
3. “No more let sins and sorrows grow” which causes joy in seeing the obedience of faith. And the ability to live an obedient and sanctified life.

Jesus gives us cause for Joy. Therefore, with Paul, we can say to the only God, to the wise God “be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.” (Ro 16:27).

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“Now may the God of peace... equip you with everything good that you may do his will, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.” (Heb 13:20-21)

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