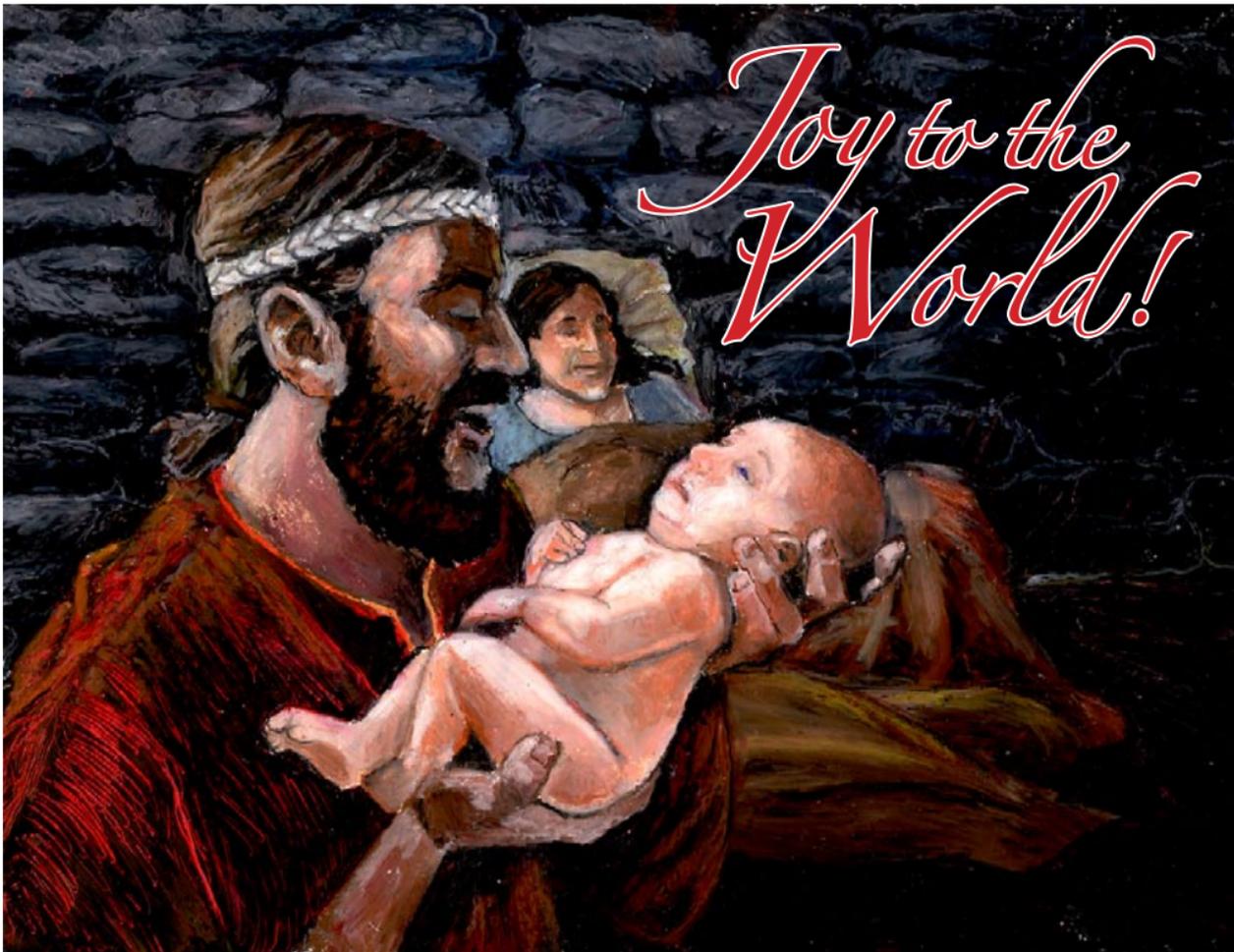


*Joy to the  
World!*



# Joy to the World!

*A child has been born to us...*

*A son has been given to us...*

## Rejoice, It's a Boy!

This eventful birth in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago has changed the course of history on this planet. The tiny child born that starry night has shaken the earth! The virgin Mary gave birth in a stable with only the help of her husband, Joseph. Her labor must have been brought on by the stress of a long journey from their home in Nazareth to Bethlehem. Such a journey would be a simple one-hour drive in an automobile, but 54 miles on foot or donkey is not easy for a woman at the end of her pregnancy.

Today, we see figurines of this famous story on the village greens, in the shopping malls, and in church parking lots. There they stand so serenely, all of the characters: The happy parents, the shepherds, the cows and sheep, the donkeys, and then, there in the middle, the little odd-shaped feed trough holding the precious baby. You can buy the whole set of figurines to put on your own coffee table, if you



like. Not one piece of the set can be missing... all arranged beautifully under a small, rough-looking structure, like a tiny barn, with lots of straw. It truly is a beautiful scene. But often, the stark reality of the scene escapes us...

The young couple were expecting a boy. It was no surprise as Joseph's unsure hands reached out to catch the baby being born by his struggling young wife. Slippery and straining to come to birth, the tiny creature exited the nurturing environment of his mother's womb into the world where he would meet the greatest of all challenges.

Joseph's hands reached out for the first time that night to a promised Child. It would be the first of many, many times that his hands would touch the One who would bring salvation to the world. For Joseph had been chosen by the Almighty to care for and raise up this little boy who would become the Savior of the world.

## The Promise

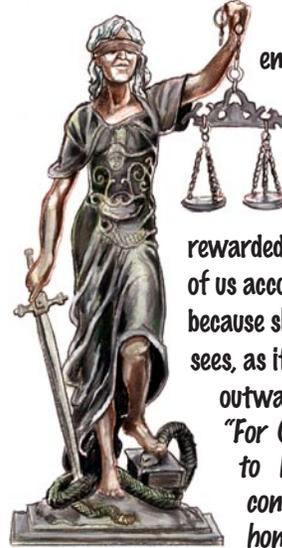
*"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of his government and peace. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever." Isaiah 9:6*

*"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, to men of good will." Luke 2:14*

This Son who has been born to us will be the Prince of Peace. He would bring peace on earth to men of "good will." A good will is a will that wants to do the right thing. Thus, it was made very clear by the angels that night as they appeared to the shepherds who were watching their flocks on the hillside above Bethlehem: being willing to do the right thing was the litmus test. Peace on earth would only come to men of "good will." This baby would bring peace for those who had a good will, a will that wanted what God wants on this earth: for the kingdom to be established by the Prince of Peace who would uphold justice and righteousness... Justice and righteousness...

## Figure of Justice

*"You better watch out, you better not cry, you better not pout, I am telling you why... He sees you when you are sleeping. He knows when you are awake. He knows if you've been bad or good. So, be good, for goodness sake!"*



This lighthearted song of encouragement to children during this season goes along perfectly with the strict warning of the Word of God. The song says that if you do not choose to do what is right, you will not be rewarded. For "Justice" will properly reward each of us according to our deeds. She is blindfolded because she will not be influenced by what she sees, as if she could be persuaded falsely by some outward show. Lady Justice has perfect scales.

*"For God will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil; But glory, honor, and peace, to every man that worketh good, For there is no respect of persons with God." Romans 2:6-11*

Rushing through the department store, the voice of Sammy Davis Jr. croons the old melody..." Oh, tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy... to save us all from Satan's power when we had gone astray." Odd to hear such words in such a setting. What would "Satan's power" have to do with this festive season? There is certainly more to this season than meets the eye.

Though everyone fears being called a "Scrooge" at this time of year, it has been scientifically proven that some of the holiday rituals that have taken root in this society do have questionable origins. A brief study into the historic roots of the holiday gives conclusive evidence that it is linked to the ancient winter solstice festivals, and only adopted by the Roman church against the solemn warnings of the early church fathers. Yet beyond all the tinsel on the Christmas trees, there are essential truths to consider at this time of year.

The most important truth is that a special "boy" was born on this earth some two thousand years ago. Though scholars all confirm that his birth could not have been in December, nonetheless, he was born. And he was a real boy, *not some supernatural being*. He was a thoroughly "male" boy.

And because he was a real boy, his birth is very good news to all of us human beings, both male and female... It was only a real man who could save other real men like us. He suffered and was tempted in his life just like all other humans. He understands what



we go through because he endured all the things we have to endure. But because he never gave in, he qualified to be the Savior of the World... Thus we, real men and real women, have his example to pattern our lives after. The perfect life of the Savior paved the way for those who would follow him... His life did not set a course which was impossible for his "followers" to follow...



To men of "good will," this is good news of **Great Joy!**

*"And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good news of great joy, which shall be to all people. For to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the baby wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, to men of good will."*

Luke 2:10-15



*Season's Greetings*

Significant Greetings by

