

## Joy Over The Saviour's Birth.

Text: Isa 9:2-7

Suggested Hymns:

34, 627, 30, 26, 33

1) Who Should Participate In This Joy

2) What Should Be The Character Of This Joy

3) What Should Be The Real Cause Of This Joy

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Isaiah 9:2-7, <sup>2</sup> *The people who walked in darkness Have seen a great light; Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, Upon them a light has shined.*

<sup>3</sup> *You have multiplied the nation And increased its joy; They rejoice before You According to the joy of harvest, As men rejoice when they divide the spoil. <sup>4</sup> For You have broken the yoke of his burden And the staff of his shoulder, The rod of his oppressor, As in the day of Midian. <sup>5</sup> For every warrior's sandal from the noisy battle, And garments rolled in blood, Will be used for burning and fuel of fire.*

<sup>6</sup> *For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. <sup>7</sup> Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.* (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

The hymnist wrote,<sup>1</sup>

This is the day the Lord hath made:  
He calls the hours His own;  
Let heav'n rejoice, let earth be glad,  
And praise surround the throne.

This is the day in which God, the immeasurable and eternal God, whom the heaven, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain, came down from heaven and visited this earth, the day in which God became man, and was born into the world a helpless child, our brother, and a member of our own race.

This is the day in which the Saviour appeared, the long-expected Saviour, for whom the children of men had been waiting and longing for a period of four thousand years.

This is the day in which all those precious promises were made true which God had given since the beginning of the world, that He would come to us poor sinners and save us from the curse which we had incurred.

This is the day in which the eternal Son of God appeared in our midst, when the Word was made flesh and dwelled among us. This is the day in which Christ was born in Bethlehem, in the land of Judea, of a pious and chaste virgin, the blessed Virgin Mary of the house and lineage of David.

Isaiah, who lived more than seven hundred years before the birth of Christ, was privileged to see this day of the Saviour's birth in prophetic vision, by divine inspiration.

God revealed to him the future as if it was the present. And how did this Prophet rejoice to know that the promised Saviour would be a child, Immanuel, God with us!

Every line of the Epistle which we have heard breathes joy, and the Prophet speaks as though he could not find ample words to praise the heavenly Child.

Now if the saints of old, like Isaiah, were in such delight that their joy knew no bounds as they saw the Saviour's birth far away in the future, how much more must we rejoice, knowing, as we do, that the Saviour's birth is an accomplished fact, and that it occurred just over 2,000 years ago?

The theme of our sermon is *Joy Over The Saviour's Birth*. May the Lord bless our meditation.

## **1. Joy Over The Saviour's Birth Who Should Participate In This Joy**

Our text begins, <sup>2</sup> *The people who walked in darkness Have seen a great light; Those who dwell in the land of the shadow of death, Upon them a light has shined.*”

In these words the Prophet shows for whom the Saviour came and who would participate in the joy over the Saviour’s birth. In his prophetic vision he sees a brilliant light, a great light, a light grander in its lustre and brilliancy than any planetary star, a light before which all the stars in the heavens pale and fade, a light greater even than the orb of day, the sun, which illuminates the whole earth.

What was the meaning of that great light? The Prophet himself interprets the meaning of that great light when afterwards he says, <sup>6</sup> *For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given*” It is the Light of this world, the promised Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, who says of Himself in John 8:12, *“I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life,”* and of whom John says in John 1:9–10, <sup>9</sup> *That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.* <sup>10</sup> *He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.*

Upon whom does the Prophet see this Light shining? Upon the people who walk in darkness, and upon those who dwell in the land of the shadow of death.

Who are these people? Again the Prophet interprets himself when he adds, <sup>3</sup> *You have multiplied the nation And increased its joy.* The human nation it is, upon whom the great Light shines, the joyless human nation, sitting in darkness, ignorant of the true God, dwelling in the land of the shadow of death, upon an earth of sin, and woe, and misery, and leading a life which is terminated by temporal death and followed by eternal damnation.

Such is the state and condition of all people since Adam’s fall. By nature we all walk in darkness and dwell in the land of the shadow of death; that is, we are sinners, and the wages of sin is death; eternal death is our inevitable doom.

But lo, in Christ Jesus the Light is come, the Light which dispels the darkness that covers the earth and the gross darkness which is upon the people, the Light which brings joy, and happiness, and life, and salvation to all who have been walking in darkness and dwelling in the land of the shadow of death.

For whom, then, has the Saviour come, and who should participate in the joy over the Saviour's birth? O glorious truth! All people, everybody, not a single soul excepted.

Did not the angel say to the shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem, *Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people?*<sup>2</sup> Come, then, if you are in darkness, or despondent or cast down; here is joy for you. Christ is born. He has come to remove the cloud which hangs over you.

Do your sins oppress and trouble you? Here is the Saviour who came to be bruised for your iniquities and wounded for your transgressions. Is your life a life of grief and sorrow? Here is the Saviour who came to bear our griefs and to carry our sorrows.

Are you suffering from poverty and want? Here is the Saviour who became poor that you might be made rich in heaven. Have your friends deserted you, and is there no one in whom you can confide? Here is the Saviour who will be to you a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

Are you being wronged, slandered, and abused? Here is the Saviour who came to tell you in Matthew 5:11-12, <sup>11</sup> *"Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

Are you burdened with illness, and has disease fastened upon you? Here is the Saviour who came to more than recompense you for all the sufferings of this present time.

Are you in mourning because you have been deprived of those whom you love? Here is the Saviour who came to wipe away your tears, and to assure you that all things must work together for good to those who love God.

In short, who ever you are, if you are dwelling in the land of the shadow of death, or upon earth, rich or poor, happy or unhappy, honoured or despised, for you the Saviour came. All should participate in the joy over the Saviour's birth.

## **2. Joy Over The Saviour's Birth**

### **What Should Be The Character Of This Joy**

And what should be the character of their joy? This is the second part of our consideration.

The Prophet says, *They rejoice before You According to the joy of harvest, As men rejoice when they divide the spoil.* <sup>4</sup> *For You have broken the yoke of his burden And the staff of his shoulder, The rod of his oppressor, As in the day of Midian.* <sup>5</sup> *For every warrior's sandal from the noisy battle, And garments rolled in blood, Will be used for burning and fuel of fire.*

Here the Prophet sees two pictures in his vision, harvesters bringing in the sheaves, and soldiers dividing among themselves the spoils in the enemy's camp whom they have conquered.

How great is the joy of the harvesters as they gather the golden grain into the barn! They have made a feast of harvest-day. They shout and sing as they bring in one load after the other, and store away the products of the field.

And how jubilant are the victors to whom belong the spoils! When, after a hard and blood-stained fight, with the roar and confused noise of battle and their garments rolled in blood, the warriors conquer the enemy at last, and drive him out of his camp, and take possession of his goods, and divide among themselves all those things which they found in the camp, how great is their joy! They laugh and jest, they eat and drink and are merry, for they are the victors, they have won the battle.

Such is the joy which the Prophet sees in those who look to the great Light shining upon them, who rejoice in the Saviour's birth. It is like the joy of the harvester and of the conqueror, that is, great joy, triumphant joy, joy which knows no bounds.

O how great should be our joy over the Saviour's birth! Is there any event in the history of this world which has brought us greater gain and greater deliverance? Has not the Saviour's birth brought us the harvest of heaven and deliverance from the prince of hell?

Well does the Prophet say, <sup>4</sup> *For You have broken the yoke of his burden And the staff of his shoulder, The rod of his oppressor, As in the day of Midian.* How great was Israel's deliverance in the days of Midian, when Gideon

with only three hundred picked men surprised the host of Midian by night and took their camp without the use of a weapon!

Each of his merely had a pitcher with a lamp in it and a trumpet. They surrounded the camp, broke the pitchers, held up the lamps, blew the trumpets, and shouted, *“The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon!”*<sup>3</sup> whereupon the Midianites fled in confusion, and Israel was delivered from them.

Great was the joy in all the borders of Israel. But how much greater our joy should be over the Saviour’s birth by whom we have been delivered from all the foes of our eternal welfare!

It is a spiritual joy which should fill our hearts on this day. True it is, that on Christmas Day the whole world is turned into a sea of gladness. However, many people know of no other joy than earthly joy on this day. Their hearts are filled with gladness because they receive their Christmas gifts. Let these gifts remind you of the great gift which God has bestowed on you in His love, of His dear Son whom He gave for you, and let the joy over the Saviour’s birth exceed the joy over earthly things.

Our joy on this day should be like the joy of the shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem, who received the angel’s message and came with haste to Bethlehem to see the heavenly Child in the manger. Our joy should be like the joy of Mary, who said, *“My soul magnifies the Lord,”*<sup>47</sup> *And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour.”*<sup>4</sup> Such should be the character of our joy over the Saviour’s birth.

### **3. Joy Over The Saviour’s Birth**

#### **What Should Be The Real Cause Of This Joy.**

And now, in the third place, let us see what should be the real cause of our joy.

The Prophet says, *6 For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.*

The real cause of our joy over the Saviour's birth the Prophet expresses in two little words, "*unto us.*" He says, *unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given.*

We Christians are to rejoice this day for various reasons. We rejoice because in the Saviour's birth God has made true all those precious promises which from the beginning of the world He had given as to the coming of the Deliverer.

We rejoice because in the Saviour's birth God has come down to us from heaven and visited our fallen race. We rejoice because the Saviour's birth ended the old dispensation and inaugurated a new era, the glorious time of the New Testament.

But the real cause of our joy on this day should be that unto us a Child is born and unto us a Son is given. The Saviour is a present, a gift of God to us. He is given, presented to us in His birth. He is our own. He is our brother, and even closer than a brother. He is more intimately connected with us than any human tie can express.

Could God have shown greater love to us poor sinners? Could God give us a greater gift than Himself, His own dear Son? We read in Romans 8:32, <sup>32</sup> *He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?*

If we have God's own Son, if we receive Him into our hearts, if we accept the great gift of God by a true faith, what shall we be lacking? What more shall we want? Is not His name called Wonderful to provide for us, Counsellor to guide and govern us, The mighty God to protect us, The everlasting Father to guard and keep us, and The Prince of Peace to fill our hearts with the peace of God which passes all understanding?

Does He not reign and rule forever in His glorious kingdom which He established by the government upon His shoulder, and which He has founded upon this earth by His painful suffering and bitter death on the cross, and comfort and bless His loyal subjects with the forgiveness of all their sins, life, and salvation?

What more, then, do we need for a truly happy life on earth and for a blissful hereafter? What more shall we want, if the Lord be our Shepherd, if we have received the Christ-child into our hearts ?

To make your joy complete, then, change the personal pronoun in the prophecy. Where the Prophet says, "Unto us," say, "Unto me." *Unto me a Child is born, unto me a Son is given.*

Let us sing with a joyful heart,<sup>5</sup>

Praise God the Lord, ye sons of men,  
Before His highest throne;  
Today He opens heaven again  
And gives us His own Son.  
And gives us His own Son. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> Hymn 502

<sup>2</sup> Luke 2:10

<sup>3</sup> Judges 7:18

<sup>4</sup> Luke 1:46-47

<sup>5</sup> Hymn 26