

## ***Joy to the World!***

I don't really know when Jesus was born. In fact, no one does! But the **important** fact is that He **was** born! Some very early documents (predating the Roman Catholic church) indicate He may have been born in December (despite what you may have heard about shepherds not being in the fields that time of the year.) But we don't really know and it makes no difference.

The angels and shepherds and others rejoiced that our Savior was born. We rejoice that he was born. Sinners who find the saving blood of Jesus rejoice at His bountiful grace. But that is exactly my point. Many boys were born in the first century who were named "Jesus." It was a rather common name, being a version of "Joshua."

But we see all through scripture in the early church the celebration of his death, burial and resurrection. It was Jesus' death that paid the price for our sin. It was Jesus' resurrection that proved once and for all the He **is** the Messiah, the only begotten Son of God, Emmanuel, "God with us," and it was His promise to take us home with Him when He comes again that gives us joy and hope.

The angels announced "glad tidings of great joy." The apostles taught and often suffered for "glad tidings of great joy." The early Christians not only endured suffering, but often were executed – yet never lost sight of that original promise of "glad tidings of great joy."

Today I pray that we remember to focus as much or more on the resurrection of our precious Lord as on His birth. "That's what Easter is for," you might counter. But we need to be reminded that neither Christmas nor Easter is actually in the Bible. What we do see is that kind **of joy every day of the year** in deeply committed Christians. True disciples don't wait around for months seeking "Christmas joy." We have it daily!

True disciples don't wait anxiously to get in the "Christmas spirit" or the "Easter spirit." We celebrate the resurrection of Jesus every single Sunday morning... just as scripture teaches us to do (Acts 20:1-7). We sing and pray and rejoice as we see scripture leading us into a deeper relationship with Him consistently throughout the year. Let's use this time of the year to help people get to know Jesus and His joy for real, all through every year. So... have a very happy and joy-filled "**Everyday!**"

Ray Wallace