



HOW GREAT IS OUR JOY

BY JUSTIN COFIELD

The story of the birth of Jesus is one that many people hear as children during the Christmas season. This special story is communicated along with a great parallel between the gifts that we give one another at Christmas, and the gift that God gave mankind with the birth of Christ. Luke 2 chronicles this defining moment in history by telling the story of Christ's birth:

"And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn."

(Luke 2:6-7 ESV)

As we look further at Luke 2, we see the perspective of the shepherds watching their flocks. This is the text from which this song is taken:

"And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger."

(Luke 2:8–12 ESV)

We have to look at this and believe that the Shepherds are the first people on earth to hear about the birth of the promised Messiah. This is a moment when men of socially "low" standing get to hear angels tell of the most significant event in history – before and since. God chose to share the good news of the greatest gift with the filthiest of people. Can you imagine their awe, wonder, humility... their unspeakable joy? A prophecy that these men had heard since they were children,

was now coming true! This is an incredible picture of God's love and His truthfulness.

This child born to be our King

Goodwill to men his name will bring

He touched the sick and made them well

He died my death and conquered Hell

The second verse of this song links the perspective of the shepherd to the perspective of the modern day believer. The foreshadowing of Christ's Kingship and his compassion is something that was communicated to the shepherds that night. The second half of this verse looks back on the impact that Christ had and continues to have on the earth. His power to heal, and His promise of redemption and grace are shown here.

How great is our joy, how great is our joy

So praise we the Lord with loud noel

Finally, the word "Noel" is taken from the French word meaning "birthday". It may seem strange to praise the Lord with a loud "birthday". However, the truth is that we have inexplicable joy in who He is and what He has done. Our praise to Him in this song is in celebration of His birth. It would be better defined to say that we praise the Lord with a loud "happy birthday." So as we sing praise to Him with loud noel, we are celebrating our great King and relishing in the joy that comes with the good news of Christ's birth.

We sing Hallelujah – Hallelu!