

JOY TO THE WORLD: **HE RULES THE WORLD**

Saturday, December 30

Reading: Revelation 11:15-18

Revelation 11:15 *"The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Messiah, and He will reign for ever and ever."*

He rules the world with truth and grace / And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness / And wonders of His love
And wonders of His love / And wonders, and wonders of His love

Psalms 98 reads, "The LORD has made His salvation known and revealed His righteousness to the nations...let them sing before the LORD, for He comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples with equity" (98:2, 9).

This last verse clearly shows that 'Joy to the World' is not talking about the Christmas story. Or is it? While Christmas is the celebration of Jesus' first coming, it is the start of the whole salvation story! The birth of Baby Jesus in a manger would have no impact if it did not lead to Him ruling the world "with truth and grace." There would be no "glories of His righteousness and wonders of His love" without His coming to earth to live, die, and rise again to provide salvation for those who put their trust in Him. So in this sense, 'Joy to the Word' IS a Christmas song. It tells us the end of the story began in Bethlehem.

At the beginning his gospel, the Apostle John wrote about Jesus Christ as "the Word."

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:1, 14).

Grace and truth are vital aspects to Jesus' character...and of those who follow Him. Grace is unmerited favor – getting what we don't deserve. Truth is not based on the world's opinions or definitions but on the Person and character of God Himself. This is how Christ will rule the earth! The world will stand in awe of His righteousness and love. These are what brought Jesus to earth in the first place. The righteousness of God demanded a penalty for people's sin and disobedience. That punishment was death (Romans 6:23). But because of His great love, Jesus came to take that punishment for us! He died in our place and opened salvation to all who trust in Him.

This last verse of 'Joy to the World' reminds us of where the Christmas story is going. It began in a manger but will end on an eternal throne. It began with a helpless Baby but will end with His return as King of kings and Lord of Lords. It began in a backwater village with very few paying any attention. It will end when "every eye will see Him" (Revelation 1:7) and "every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:10-11).

POINTS TO PONDER:

One day, Jesus will rule and reign forever. The question is: Is He reigning in your life today? Have you experienced the truth and grace of His salvation? If so, how are living to prove the glories of His righteousness and the wonders of His love to the world around you? In this new year, what will you do to show others that Jesus is your Savior and King?