



THE WAY

TERM 4 : FRIDAY 9
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FROM THE COLLEGE CHAPLAIN

Boring church music and a father's challenge inspired one of the greatest Christmas carols of all time that is not about Jesus birth.

Isaac Watts (1674-1748) is best known for writing the song, Joy to the World. He wrote it, despite disliking music in church, he thought it was dull. It was his father who gave him a challenge to do something about it. This set Watts on a lifelong pursuit to write lyrics that praised Jesus and reminded Christians of their hope in his saving work on the cross. This is exactly how he came to write, Joy to the World.



One day he was reading Psalm 98, and verse 4 gripped him:

“Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth; break into joyous song and sing praises!”

And this is exactly what Watts set out to do. But it's not about the Jesus' birth, it's about the story of Christ's return—his second coming.

You can see it quite clearly in the words. Verse 1 says;

Joy to the world! The Lord is come;

Let earth receive her King;

Let every heart prepare him room,

And heaven and nature sing

The earth did not receive King Jesus, but like sheep, we went astray. Still, we know that there will be a day when this will not be so.

Verse 3 talks about sins and sorrows being no more:

*No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make his blessings flow
Far as the curse is found*

If you have lived on this earth for more than two minutes, you know that this is not our current experience. But there will be a fulfillment of all Christ's work that is not fully expressed this side of eternity. So we have hope. And that brings joy despite our circumstances.

The final verse says:

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

These final lines speak of how the nations will take an active role in revealing the glory of God. That certainly isn't today, but that day will be wonderful!

It's a wonderful song that can be sung at any time of year, even Christmas!

I pray that you and your family experience something of the joy expressed in this song that is found in Jesus.

Have a very blessed Christmas.

Rev Stuart Tye
College Chaplain
