

Joy to the World¹

This was written by Isaac Watts (Nonconformist) in 1719, and loosely based on parts of Ps.98. There, Yahweh's people were urged to a mega celebration over his decisive kingly victory and justice, shining particularly through his covenant people, and in which nature, even the mountains, will delight, and other positive results will be seen by others. If war is the aggravation of the normal human situation, it shows the abnormality of man. Watts looked for the still soon to be return of King Jesus, which will end the cause of wars, bringing man into normality. God's son, the true king, had made his decisive victory through incarnation and crucifixion, and his return will complete the two-stage plan of global redemption and shalom (Lk.2:10). Nature shall fully rejoice when Gen.3:17's curse ends (Rm.8:19-22), but even now we see glimmers of that light.

I have changed wording from the see it happening, to the see it happened, viewpoint. I have removed the sageism, *men*, and the dubious, *floods*—had Watts pictured a devastating flood, and would he have spoken of a typhoon, or of a tornado, of joy? I have presumed that, though in the present tense, *he comes to make* refers to the incarnation, not the parousia (second coming), contrasting the new creation blessing to the old creation curse. Finally, Christ's rulership of the present world (κοσμος/*kosmos*) is moot. Is *he* responsible for its lawlessness, or is the ruler of this present evil, Satan? The fact that deity has ultimate oversight (ultimacy), and as love allows the fruits of rebellion to be significant, is another matter. But a new age is to dawn, when Christ shall rule unopposed, under the ultimate king.

From: *Joy to the world! the Lord is come² / Let earth receive her King / Let every heart / prepare him room / And heaven and nature sing, / And heaven and nature sing, / And heaven, and heaven and nature sing.*

Joy to the earth! the Saviour reigns / let men their songs employ / while fields and floods / rocks, hills, and plains / repeat the sounding joy, / repeat the sounding joy, / repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

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 / far as the curse is found / far as, far as the curse is found.

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, wonders of his love.

To: *Joy to the world, messiah came / The earth received her king / Now every open heart / can bear his family name / And heaven and nature sing / And heaven and nature sing / And heaven, and heaven, and nature sing.*

Joy to the earth, the saviour reigns! / Let us our songs employ / While fields and woods / rocks, hills, and plains / Repeat the sounding joy / Repeat the sounding joy / Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.

No more need sin and sorrow grow / Nor thorns infest our ground / He came to make / God's blessings flow / Far as the curse was found / Far as the curse was found / Far as, far as, the curse was found.

Soon all the world, shall see his face / The nations look above / We'll see his glory / the fullness of his grace / And wonders of his love / And wonders of his love / And wonders, wonders, of his love.

¹ www.hymnary.org/text/joy_to_the_world_the_lord_is_come/fulltexts

² This is less imperfect rhyme. A Wesley song had Late in time behold him *come*, Offspring of a Virgin's *Womb*. Watts here had Joy to the world, the lord is *come!* Let every heart prepare him *room*. Possibly their dialect once had *come* have the same *oom* sound as *womb* and *room*. Keeping 'come', something ending in 'not shun' would be perfect rhyme, but would turn a positive *accept*, to a negative *don't refuse*. Watts' rhyming fails with his *He rules the world*, stanza (grace/righteousness; prove/love).