

Advent Devotional – REJOICE part 3
December 19, 2018

Mary has just found out she is pregnant and journeys to visit her relative Elizabeth.

Luke 1:39-47 Common English Bible

³⁹ Mary got up and hurried to a city in the Judean highlands. ⁴⁰ She entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴² With a loud voice she blurted out, "God has blessed you above all women, and he has blessed the child you carry. ⁴³ Why do I have this honor, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴ As soon as I heard your greeting, the baby in my womb jumped for joy. ⁴⁵ Happy is she who believed that the Lord would fulfill the promises he made to her."

⁴⁶ Mary said,

"With all my heart I glorify the Lord!

*⁴⁷ In the depths of who I am I **rejoice** in God my savior.*

Yesterday, I pointed out that Luke uses a funny sounding Greek word to describe Mary's response – a word that is only used four times in the entire New Testament. It is used in the context of speaking of coming: the coming of Christ at Christmas, the coming of the Holy Spirit and the second coming of Christ.

This is the Advent season. It is a season of preparation for the coming of Christ – both comings of Christ; the first one that we celebrate on Christmas day, and the second coming that we anticipate with joy. The coming of Christ evokes response of joy. It is easy for me to respond with joy for the coming of Christ over 2,018 years ago.

- Joy that God has come into our world and lived among us.
- Joy that God is present with us (Emmanuel)
- Joy that God became human and experienced all the things we experience.
- Joy that God has come to save us (make us whole).

It may be harder to anticipate with joy the next coming of Christ. Some franchises of Christian faith of absconded with the second coming of Christ and turned it into something to manufacture fear, trepidation, and anxiety. I am one of those who wish the "Left Behind" series would've been left behind. Our response to Christ's coming is, or should be, joy, exultation, celebration. In Revelation (a book that speaks of Christ coming again) joy and celebration describe how we respond to the coming of Christ. *Revelation 19:7 states, "Let*

us rejoice (chara) and celebrate (aggalliasei). Joy is the appropriate response to the coming of Christ!

- Joy that love wins and triumphs over evil and hatred
- Joy that God's great kingdom has come to earth in its fullness and completeness.
- Joy that selfishness, self-centeredness and all of its consequences are eradicated.
- Joy that wars and violence have ended and peace reigns.

As we near the end of the Advent season, let us remember that Luke (writer of the Gospel of Luke and Book of Acts) and John, the author of Revelation, describe the coming of Christ evoking joy. Let it be with us as it was for Luke, John, and Mary...

"Joy to the world, the Lord has come!

Let earth receive her king." (Joy to the World)

"He will come again in glory ...and his kingdom will have no end. "

(Nicene Creed)

To which we say, "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus." (Revelation 22:20 – The Voice)

Rejoicing with you!