

Lecture Outline: Joy in the Advent of Jesus

1. Introduction to Joy in the Advent

Overview of the concept of Joy in the New Testament

In the New Testament, the concept of joy is deeply entwined with the Christian faith, serving not just as an emotion but as a fundamental aspect of spiritual life. This joy is portrayed as transcendent, often independent of the usual sources of happiness like material wealth or favorable circumstances. It's a joy rooted in the relationship with God, the fulfillment of His promises, and the salvation offered through Jesus Christ. In the New Testament, joy is frequently associated with the realization of God's presence and activity, whether it's in Jesus' birth, His teachings, miracles, death, resurrection, or the hope of eternal life.

This spiritual joy is distinct in its source and nature. It's not fleeting or based on external conditions, but it is enduring and often thrives even in adversity. For instance, the Beatitudes in Matthew 5 present a picture of joy that is paradoxical to worldly understanding, suggesting that those who are poor in spirit, mourning, or persecuted are blessed with the joy of God's kingdom. The writings of Paul further emphasize this concept, as he speaks of rejoicing in suffering, where joy becomes a defiant assertion of faith and hope in the midst of trials (Romans 5:3, Philippians 4:4).

Moreover, the New Testament joy is communal and missionary in nature. It's not only a personal experience but also a shared reality among believers, as seen in the Acts of the Apostles where the early Christian community is often described as being full of joy, even in persecution. This joy is also evangelical; it's a testament to others about the transformative power of faith in Christ. In essence, New Testament joy is a profound, unwavering sense of well-being that comes from knowing God, understanding His grace through Jesus Christ, and being part of a community that shares and spreads this joyous faith.

The anticipation of Joy in the coming of Jesus

The anticipation of joy in the coming of Jesus, as depicted in the Bible, is a theme deeply woven into the fabric of Old Testament prophecy and realized in the New Testament. This sense of joy is rooted in the long-awaited fulfillment of God's promises to redeem and save His people. In the Old Testament, prophets like Isaiah spoke of a coming Messiah who would bring salvation, peace, and joy to the world. Isaiah 9:6-7, for instance, foretells the birth of a child who will bring endless peace and joy to His people. This joy is not merely personal or temporary but is envisioned as a profound transformation of reality, where sorrow and sighing will flee away (Isaiah 35:10).

As the narrative transitions to the New Testament, this anticipation reaches its climax with the birth of Jesus. The Gospels, especially Luke, capture this joyous expectation. The angelic announcement to the shepherds of Jesus' birth is a proclamation of "great joy" for all people

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(Luke 2:10). Similarly, the story of Elizabeth and Zechariah, the parents of John the Baptist, reflects this joy. Elizabeth's joy upon conceiving John, who would prepare the way for Jesus, and Zechariah's joyous prophecy after John's birth, highlight the deep connection between the anticipation of Jesus and the joy it brings.

In essence, the biblical anticipation of joy in the coming of Jesus is a central theme that underscores the whole narrative of redemption. This joy is prophesied as a radical reversal of the human condition—from despair to hope, from suffering to healing, and from separation to reconciliation with God. The birth of Jesus is the fulfillment of these ancient hopes and prophecies, and His life, death, and resurrection are seen as the ultimate source of lasting joy for humanity. This joy transcends the immediate happiness of His arrival; it embodies the deeper, enduring joy of salvation and restoration in God's kingdom.

2. Gospel of Matthew

Matthew 1:18-25: The Joy of Joseph upon discovering Mary's divine pregnancy

Matthew 2:1-12: The Magi's Joyful journey and discovery of Jesus

3. Gospel of Mark

Mark does not directly address Jesus' birth, but focuses on his ministry. Discuss how Jesus' teachings and miracles brought joy.

4. Gospel of Luke

Luke 1:26-38: Mary's Joyful response to the Annunciation (Magnificat)

Luke 2:1-20: The Shepherds' Joy at the news of Jesus' birth

Luke 10:1-24: Jesus' Joy in the Holy Spirit

5. Gospel of John

John 1:1-18: The Joy of the Word becoming flesh

John 15:1-11: Jesus speaks about complete joy

6. Conclusion

Reflecting on Joy in our lives as a reflection of the Joy of the Advent

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Fill-in-the-Blank Worksheet

1. In Matthew 1:18-25, Joseph felt joy upon learning of _____.
2. The Magi in Matthew 2 displayed joy when they _____.
3. The Gospel of Mark focuses on Jesus' _____ that brought joy.
4. In Luke 1, Mary expresses her joy through the _____.
5. The shepherds in Luke 2 were joyful upon hearing the news of _____.
6. In Luke 10:21, Jesus expresses joy in the _____.
7. John 1 describes the joy of _____ becoming flesh.
8. Jesus talks about complete joy in John _____.
9. The Annunciation to Mary is found in Luke _____.
10. The joy of Joseph is described in the context of a _____.