

Prepare In Joy

Long Beach Alliance Church December 21, 2014 • Pastor Chris Lankford

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

~John 3:16-17 (ESV)

1) Joy Flows From Hope In God's Love

- A) The Psalms were the “song book” of Israel; five smaller sections (1-41, 42-72, 73-89, 90-106, 107-150) triumphantly concluded with the five “Hallelujah” (Doxology) Psalms (146-150).
- B) These last five Psalms are notable because of their form (they all begin and conclude with “Hallel-ujah”), and also because of the post-exile (post-Prisoner-of-War) time of composition in Israel’s history.
- C) The Hallelujah-Psalms (Psalm 146-150) become, for New Testament Christians, a compact guide for joyfully experiencing God in the midst of brokenness, difficulties, and circumstances beyond our control.
- D) Further, these Psalms are exemplary as Advent Psalms, looking forward to the return of the King. Intentional worship (Psalm 146:1-4) reflects on God’s character (146:5-10) bringing hope (146:5) because of God’s loving promises (146:6-9), resulting in a fullness of joy and worship (146:10).

2) God's Loving Faithfulness Provides Authentic Joy

- A) A wonderful example of Advent hope and joy despite the circumstances was spoken by Mary, mother of Jesus Christ. Her “Magnificat” (from “mega-loonoh,” to magnify), is a wondrous “Psalm” (Luke 1:46-55).
- B) Mary’s “magnifying God” response (1:46-47), despite crazy-difficult circumstances (Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38), hopes in God’s faithful provision (1:50-55) joyfully anticipating the coming Messiah (1:48-49).