



Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. (Luke 1:13-14)

Good Christian men, rejoice

Good Christian men, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
give ye heed to what we say:
Jesus Christ is born today;
ox and ass before him bow,
and he is in the manger now.
Christ is born today!
Christ is born today!

Good Christian men, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
now ye hear of endless bliss;
Jesus Christ is born for this!
He hath opened heaven's door,
and man is blessèd evermore.
Christ was born for this!
Christ was born for this!

Good Christian men, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
now ye need not fear the grave:
Jesus Christ was born to save!
Calls you one and calls you all
to gain his everlasting hall.
Christ was born to save!
Christ was born to save!

This is another fine old German carol from the early Reformation Days. It was composed by Valentin Triller in 1573. Its most common accompanying tune is *In Dulci Jubilo*. The carol sets an appropriate mood and attitude for all who love the Lord and rejoice at His Coming. If the "ox and ass before Him bow," how much more should man whose insight is far above that of the beast of the field?

"Good Christian men, rejoice with heart and soul and voice; give ye heed to what we say: Jesus Christ is born today; ox and ass before him bow, and he is in the manger now." I will point out for the uninitiated, that the biblical term 'man' when used in the non-specific sense refers to both. In the Old Testament, 'man' refers to mankind - the human race. Just as Mary and Simeon rejoiced at the news of Jesus, so must every man, woman, and child who comes to know of Him. The voice that calls from Heaven, either by angels or the written Word, must be heeded. The entire Bible is about the Lord Jesus Christ, and every sermon ever preached must point to Christ else it is not a sermon.

"Good Christian men, rejoice with heart and soul and voice; now ye hear of endless bliss; Jesus Christ is born for this! He hath opened heaven's door, and man is blessed evermore." Jesus Christ did open Heaven's Door for all who believe, but He also closed another Door for the same. Do you know which Door that was? It was the Door to Death and Hell that He closed for those who have received His Salvation. Evermore is a long time, but it is restricted to the space-time continuum. A better word might be 'eternally' for Eternity is not constrained in time. The bliss of Christ is endless, indeed, and only grows more acute with the approach of the Kingdom.

"Good Christian men, rejoice with heart and soul and voice; now ye need not fear the grave: Jesus Christ was born to save! Calls you one and calls you all to gain his everlasting hall." An important truth is revealed in this stanza: if we rejoice in heart and soul, that rejoicing must be manifested in by our voices. We cannot keep silence about such joy! We do not fear the grave any more than we fear the mere "shadow of death." No Christian soul literally descends into the grave though his body of clay may do so. Just as the poor beggar, Lazarus, was wafted on wings of Angels "to the bosom of Abraham," and the Rich man "died and was buried," so shall everyone who calls upon the Name of the Lord be carried to that Haven of Rest by His Holy Angels. Christ came into the world to save sinners! As Paul says: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." (1 Tim 1:15) Unfortunately, so many are called who reject the call. "So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen." (Matt 20:16)

Permit me now to comment on the refrains to each of those three stanzas of this carol.

1) "Christ is born today! Christ is born today!" Christ was born into His physical body 2013 years ago. He came into the world to save us. But Jesus is born into some human heart every day. The very day that you come to know Jesus Christ as Lord, Savior, and Redeemer is the very day stamped on your adoption papers in Heaven. It is the moment that a new name is recorded in the Book of Life of the Lamb. If you have received Christ into your heart, then He was born into your heart that self-same day.

2) "Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!" This refers to its preceding stanzas - Christ came as a blessing to us, and He has opened Heaven's Door for us. There was no other means whereby we might be reconciled to Heaven and to the Father but by Jesus Christ.

3) "Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!" If you have not known this point,

then you have not known Christ! There was no other means for salvation apart from Christ. " Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)

There is no man that is perfect and righteous except the Lord Jesus Christ. He was sinless and knew no sin. In order to pay the death penalty for OUR sins, He must not have His own sins to pay for on the cross. He was the ONLY One who was qualified to stand in our stead and die for us to pay that penalty. And He only needed to do so "once and for all."

These are the messages and descriptions of the Christmas Angels. Did you hear them?