

# **IN THE MARGINS: Be Joyful – The life-changing power of Jesus' coming and return**

*By Tony Martin*

*Editor*

Have you ever thought about how some events in history just completely change the game? Like, they split everything in two—before it happened and after it happened. It might sound dramatic, but that's exactly what the birth of Jesus did. Imagine the brightest lightning bolt cutting across the sky on a steamy July afternoon, lighting up everything in its path. That's what Jesus' birth did to time and space.

It wasn't random. It wasn't an afterthought. This was part of God's plan from the very beginning. Long before there was a you, a me, or even the world as we know it, God had something in mind. He promised this moment to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David—people we've heard about since Sunday School. And the prophets? They couldn't stop talking about it. People waited for centuries, and finally, the culture and the world were ready for the biggest moment in history: the Messiah arriving on the scene.

But here's the thing—it wasn't just about a baby being born. It wasn't even just about a new ruler stepping into history. Jesus didn't come to play the part of some great world leader who would just influence politics or power. No, He was, and is, so much more. Jesus is God in the flesh. Think about that for a second. God, who had previously shown Himself through an entire nation and a set of laws, decided to make Himself known through a single man. A God-man, to be precise.

And here's the kicker—He didn't come to merely fix a few things or change some external circumstances. Jesus came to change everything. He came to bridge the gap between God and humanity. The way we could know God, the way we could relate to Him, was fundamentally different from the moment Jesus entered the world. And what's even more incredible? This wasn't a one-time deal. He's coming back. That's right—Jesus didn't just come, die, rise again, and leave it at that. He's returning to fully establish His kingdom, and that's reason enough to be joyful.

So, how does this truth fit into our everyday lives? Let me share a little testimony with you.

I've been a Christian since I was 11. Not too terribly long ago, there was a time in my life when everything felt off—like the pieces didn't fit together. I had the job, the family, the routine, but I kept feeling like there was something missing. I tried all kinds of things to fill that gap—staying busy, setting goals, focusing on what I thought was important. But no matter what I did, it didn't quite cut it. I felt disconnected, like I was going through the motions without understanding the bigger picture.

Then, one day, while reading through the Gospels, it hit me: Jesus didn't just come to check a box on some divine checklist. He came to establish a personal relationship with me. The birth of Jesus wasn't just a historical event or something to celebrate at Christmas. It was a life-altering reality that meant I didn't have to keep searching for meaning on my own. God had already provided the answer through Jesus.

I started to realize that everything I was looking for—peace, purpose, joy—wasn't found in my circumstances or achievements. It was found in knowing Jesus. Suddenly, the things that used to stress me out, the things I worried about, didn't seem so overwhelming anymore. Not because my life got easier, but because I knew I wasn't in it alone. God Himself had come down

into my mess, into my world, to show me a better way to live—a way marked by love, grace, and hope.

And that joy? It became real. I found myself being joyful in the midst of things that would've normally brought me down. Why? Because I knew Jesus. I knew He had come once, and I knew He was coming again. That simple truth brought a kind of peace that I can't really explain, but I bet some of you know exactly what I mean.

So, if you're reading this today and feeling disconnected, lost, or like life is just one big to-do list that never ends, I want to encourage you: stop and consider what Jesus' birth means for you personally. God didn't send His Son just for the sake of history. He sent Him for you—to know you, to love you, and to invite you into a relationship with Him.

The best part? This isn't just some abstract theological concept. It's personal. Jesus' birth was the beginning of a relationship between God and us that changes everything—how we see the world, how we treat others, and how we navigate life's ups and downs. And He's coming back to complete what He started.

That's why, no matter what you're facing, there's reason to be joyful. You're not alone, and your story isn't over. Jesus is at the center of it all, and with Him, there's always hope.

So, be joyful. He's coming back.