



CHRISTMAS JOY?

December 2017

*For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

Isaiah 9:6

Is Christmas a joyous time of year for you?

© marja Bergen
Copy to your heart's content. Share. But don't sell.

The nostalgic side of us tends to make us wish for a perfect kind of Christmas, like we remember from years ago. When we were younger we enjoyed happy times gathered with friends and family. Traditional cookies on pretty plates, carols playing. But for me and many others, Christmas no longer matches what it used to be. It's no longer the holiday we remember it to be.

I'm going to sound like Scrooge here, saying "Humbug." Personally, during the last few years I've approached Christmas with trepidation. Tears formed when I heard Christmas music playing in the mall—much too early. To be honest, I can't wait for the festivities to be over, so I'll be free to work on the projects I love. I look forward to the New Year when everything can be cleared away and returned to normal.

Christmas is a tough time for many. It seems to be the time when losses are most deeply felt, when financial needs sting most, when depression brings us to the darkest places.

But the joyous birth of the Christ child bring should not bring such pain! There's something wrong!

Think about "*Joy to the world*," the carol sung in churches on Christmas Eve, sending congregants off to festivities. How is this going to be for you this year? Will you hurt as so many do? Or will you find it within yourself to appreciate Christmas' true meaning?

I recently visited with a young woman, not long married, not long in Canada. Although she was a Christian, she did not have a tradition of celebrating Christmas. Several times through our visit she wondered, "I need to plan how to celebrate Christmas." She was starting fresh. She had no past traditions to draw from.

How would it be for you to start a new tradition from scratch? What would you do? Could starting clean mean less pain?

My young friend said that she didn't understand Christmas celebrations at all. "Why don't we celebrate Jesus every day instead of only once a year?" she asked. Now there's a plan! If we celebrated Jesus and what he means to us every day, maybe sadness would not hit us quite so hard in December. Christmas joy would be with us daily.

The Lord has come, and he is here today. He was here yesterday and will be here tomorrow.

Joy to the world! Every day.

marja