# You Were Made for Christmas

**Article by**

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Few things are more tragic than taking Christmas in stride. Its spirit and magic, that alluring sense of supernatural goodness, are not just for children, but even for the grownups. Especially for the grownups. God forbid that we ever get used to Christmas.

There is something here so remarkable that pagan astrologers take to flight for the long, arduous journey westward. Something so good is in the offing that a wicked king commands the slaughter of innocents. Something so unusual that blue-collar workers, who thought they’d seen it all, are filled with great fear, then leave their flocks in haste to find this newborn — and then can’t keep quiet. “And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them” ([Luke 2:18](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke%202.18)).

## Christ the Lord

This great first-century wonder, worth announcing with angelic host, and telling everyone who will listen, finds its heart in this: “unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord” ([Luke 2:11](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke%202.11)).

Not only is this the advent of the long-awaited Christ, the Messiah, the specially Anointed One of whom God’s people have pined and prophets opined, but this is “the Lord.” God himself has come. Here, finally, after centuries of waiting, is the true Immanuel. Here is “God with us” ([Matthew 1:23](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%201.23)).

It is news too spectacular to say all at once. Day after day will pour forth speech in the life of this child. Act after act will reveal piece by piece that this human somehow shares the divine identity of Yahweh, “the Lord” of Israel and the nations. Page after page in the Gospels, story after story, will show us progressively more, that this one who is so manifestly man is also truly God.

This Word who “became flesh” ([John 1:14](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%201.14)) is one and the same Word who was in the beginning with God, and was God, and all things were made through him ([John 1:1–3](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%201.1%E2%80%933)). This is the great spectacle for those shepherds and magi, and it is the wonder we ourselves, who have lived our blessed lives knowing this truth, should aspire to taste again each Christmas.

But he is not just God with us; it gets better. He has come to rescue us.

## Christ the Savior

God is with us in this Christ, and it is no circus stunt for mere entertainment. This is no raw demonstration that the creator can be a creature if he wants. Rather, this marvel is for us, for our rescue from sin and all its pervasive effects, entanglements, and ruin.

“Unto you is born this day . . . a Savior,” heralds the angel ([Luke 2:11](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke%202.11)). “You shall call his name Jesus,” the messenger says to Joseph, “for he will save his people from their sins” ([Matthew 1:21](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%201.21)). Jesus, Hebrew Yeshua, means “Yahweh saves.” This same God sent Moses as his instrument to save his people from Egypt. He sent Joshua, and the judges, and the kings as his instruments of rescue at points in the past. And now he himself comes, and he comes to save.

But there is more yet to be said. It gets even better.

## Christ the Treasure

God himself arrives not only to save us from sin and death, but to rescue us to himself. Christ comes, and will pay the ultimate price in suffering and death, “that he might bring us to God” ([1 Peter 3:18](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet%203.18)), that risen he would be our exceeding joy ([Psalm 43:4](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2043.4)) at the bottom of this good news of great joy ([Luke 2:10](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke%202.10)).

There are “higher ends,” according to Puritan Thomas Goodwin, than his being God-in-the-flesh and his coming to save God’s people. All the benefits achieved by his life and death “are all far inferior to the gift of his person unto us, and much more the glory of his person itself. His person is of infinite more worth than they all can be of” (quoted in [Jesus Christ](http://www.amazon.com/Christians-Pocket-Guide-Jesus-Christ/dp/184550951X/), 3).

Jesus himself is the Great Joy that makes all the attendant joys of our salvation so great. The risen Christ is the treasure hidden in the field ([Matthew 13:44](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%2013.44)). He is the pearl of great price ([Matthew 13:45–46](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%2013.45%E2%80%9346)). He is not just God with us, here to save us, but he himself is our greatest joy, the preeminent Treasure, who will satisfy our human souls forever like only the divine-human Christ can.

## Christ the Glory

But Christmas doesn’t terminate on our enjoyments. The herald is joined by the heavenly host: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!” ([Luke 2:14](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke%202.14)).

Call it Christmas Hedonism, if you will. The Joy he came to bring in his own person as the God-man is the joy that aligns with, and fulfills, the great purpose of all creation. Christmas brings the electricity of joy that runs along the grid of all reality.

Goodwin continues: God’s “chief end was not to bring Christ into the world for us, but us for Christ . . . and God contrived all things that do fall out, and even redemption itself, for the setting forth of Christ’s glory.” Mark Jones spells out so helpfully what it means that Jesus is not just Lord and Savior, but also Treasure:

The glory of Christ is not an appendix . . . . As it is the culmination of all we can say about his person and work, so his glory provides the most basic reason for saying it, in that it is the basis for and the fullness of our eternal enjoyment of him . . . . we are not speaking the whole truth if we make Christ’s personal glory subservient to our salvation. ([Jesus Christ](http://www.amazon.com/Christians-Pocket-Guide-Jesus-Christ/dp/184550951X/), 4)

This child of Christmas is more than Lord. He is even more than Savior. He is our great Treasure, and in “our eternal enjoyment of him” is his glory and the end for which God created the world. Christmas is not finally about his birth for our salvation, but our existence for his glory.

You were made for the Great Joy of Christmas.

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