



# Links Players

## Christmas 2024 | Joy To The World

*For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder.... (Isaiah 9, ESV)*

One enduring image from most post-round interviews is the “unspeakable joy” exuded by the winner. In that moment, quivering lips and big ole tears accompany an inability to answer the typical question, “What does this win mean to you?”

The disappointments of the past fade into insignificance during the celebration of triumph. In that moment, gratitude and joy collide—raw emotions merge with years of memories in a torrent of indescribable feelings.

After all, this is how Tour Players “put bread on the table.” With years of dreams, countless hours of practice, endless days in obscurity, and, as one statistician described for most professionals, “a winning percentage close to zero,” it’s no wonder that emotions often get the best of them.

If Christmas represents anything, it tells the story of hope and joy! Nothing rivals the good news that “...to us a child is born; to us a son is given....”

Roughly 700-plus years ahead of this child’s arrival, Isaiah prophesied that “...the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14). Later, Isaiah would tell us that this child would hoist the government of world on his shoulders and lead it into everlasting peace (Isaiah 9:6-7).

When Isaiah first uttered this oracle, Israel and Judah were under Assyrian tyranny. Like them, our world is under the tyranny of darkness, misery, and the yoke of horrific bondage. For humans to triumph over it all, someone from outside the human condition must arrive, bringing light, joy, and victory.

Just as Isaiah prophesied, Jesus arrived at the appointed time (Galatians 4:4) to do what was impossible for anyone other than the “God-Man” to accomplish—he rescued his people from unimaginable darkness, indescribable gloom, and unconquerable bondage.

What is true for him now is also true for us in principle (de jure). What is true for him now will eventually be true for us, in fact (de facto).

In Isaiah’s day, it was difficult for Judah to imagine that one day, a child-king would be born who would not fail to bring about an everlasting dynasty.

That day did arrive, and the King of kings, who inspires angels to sing, shepherds to run, and wise men to journey, gave his life in redeeming love. With his triumph over sin and death, he does “rule the world with truth and grace.”

One day, as far as the curse is found, the glory of God will cover the world as waters cover the sea, and eternal joy will be ours. As promised, Jesus will return, the curtain will be pulled back, and all the world will hear the triumphant singing of angelic choirs.

Get ready, followers of Christ! We are in for the ride of our lives!

**READING:** Isaiah 7:10-14; Isaiah 9:1-7; Matthew 4:12-17; Revelation 21:1-4.

1. Tour players are constantly talking about the importance of patience. Why? What happens when we get impatient?

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2. It was 700 years before God made good on his promise to Isaiah of the Christ-child. For Abraham and David, it was much longer before the promised “seed” arrived. What are some things this might teach us about our faith journey?

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3. Application: Investigate your heart over anything you might be disappointed with or angry at God about. Has his “delay” in answering you caused you to stumble?

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