



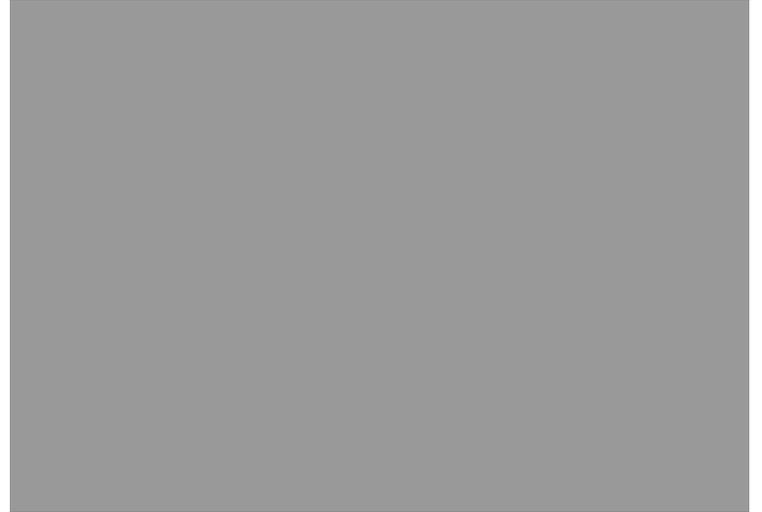
INBREAKING

THE KINGDOM COME AT CHRISTMAS

The Power of Joy





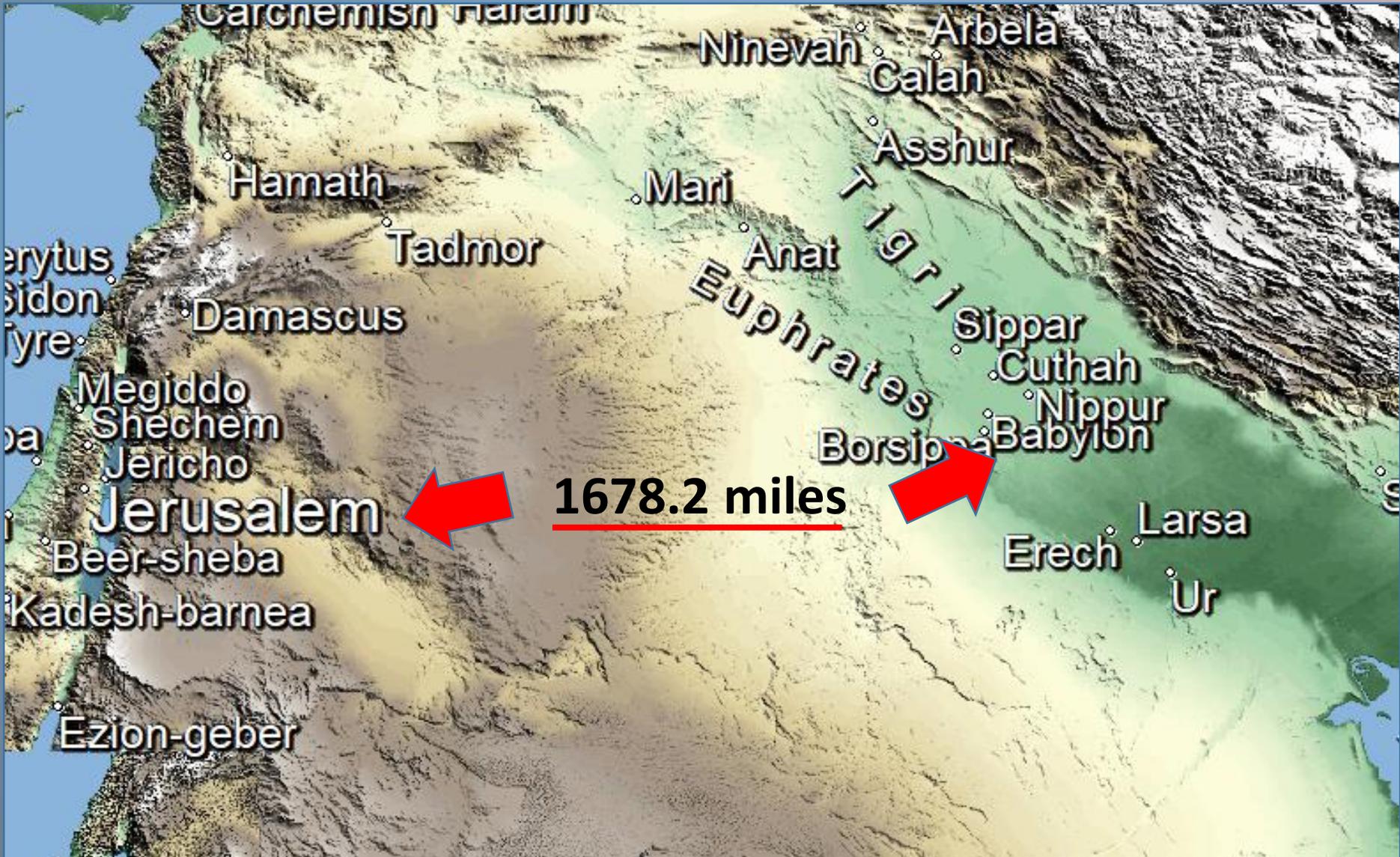


Joy is hope fulfilled
and faith rewarded.

Joy Is Hope Fulfilled and Faith Rewarded

“Christian joy is no mere gaiety that knows no gloom, but is the result of the triumph of faith over adverse and trying circumstances, which, instead of hindering, actually enhance it”

(ISBE Bible Dictionary, s.v. Joy)



God's Letter to the Exiles

¹⁰ This is what the LORD says: "You will be in Babylon for seventy years. But then I will come and do for you all the good things I have promised, and I will bring you home again.

(Jeremiah 29:10 NLT)

God's Letter to the Exiles

⁵ "Build homes, and plan to stay. Plant gardens, and eat the food they produce. ⁶ Marry and have children. Then find spouses for them so that you may have many grandchildren. Multiply! Do not dwindle away! ⁷ And work for the peace and prosperity of the city where I sent you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, for its welfare will determine your welfare."

(Jeremiah 29:5-7 NLT)

"² I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. ³ I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you."

(Genesis 12:2-3 NLT)

Psalm 126

When the LORD brought back his exiles to Jerusalem, it was like a dream! ² We were filled with laughter, and we sang for joy. And the other nations said, "What amazing things the LORD has done for them." ³ Yes, the LORD has done amazing things for us! What joy! ⁴ Restore our fortunes, LORD, as streams renew the desert. ⁵ Those who plant in tears will harvest with shouts of joy. ⁶ They weep as they go to plant their seed, but they sing as they return with the harvest.

(Psalm 126:1-6 NLT)

The Path to Joy Leads through Hope and Faith

- Hope means trusting God enough to envision a future where the dark night of trials and weeping finally dawns with the joy of dreams fulfilled and longings satisfied.
- Faith means living with my eyes on Jesus and letting his promise of future joy transform the way I live today and tomorrow.

Hope: Seeing Joy Ahead until It Actually Appears

³ All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by his great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now we live with great expectation, ⁴ and we have a priceless inheritance—an inheritance that is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay. ⁵ And through your faith, God is protecting you by his power until you receive this salvation, which is ready to be revealed on the last day for all to see. ⁶ So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you have to endure many trials for a little while.... ⁸ You love him even though you have never seen him. Though you do not see him now, you trust him; and you rejoice with a glorious, inexpressible joy.

(1 Peter 1:3-6, 8 NLT)

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Faith: Living Our Lives Expecting Joy

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. ² We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne.”

(Hebrews 12:1-2 NLT)



Challenge

1. Spend some time each day imagining what life will be like and how you'll feel when Jesus' promised joy replaces your current trials.
2. Ask God to show you ways in which keeping your eyes on Jesus and his promise of joy can change the way you are living your life right now.



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