

Rejoice, the Lord is King

A Hymn Story by Harry Eskew

This hymn text by Charles Wesley was published first in his brother John Wesley's *Moral and Sacred Poems* (1744) and two years later in his own collection of sixteen hymns, *Hymns for our Lord's Resurrection* (1746). Four of Charles Wesley's original six stanzas are found in our hymnal. Carlton Young in the *Companion to the United Methodist Hymnal* (566) observed that the refrain for the first three stanzas comes from the Great Thanksgiving of the Eucharist beginning "Lift up your hearts" with the final refrain from Paul's resounding affirmation of the Resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15: 50 -52, particularly 15:51-52a ("We will not all die, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.").

Wesley's refrain emphatically helps us voice our enthusiastic response using the apostle Paul's words in Philippians 4:4: "Lift up your heart, lift up your voice! Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!"

Part of the widespread use of this Wesley hymn is due to its remarkable tune that flows stepwise up and down the major scale, even including an entire ascending stepwise octave approaching its final cadence, composed by his fellow Englishman John Darwall less than thirty years after Wesley's text. It is a tune that seamlessly fits Wesley's text.

Rejoice, the Lord is King

Rejoice, the Lord is King:
Your Lord and King adore!
Rejoice, give thanks and sing,
And triumph evermore;

Refrain:
Lift up your heart,
Lift up your voice!
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

Jesus, the Savior reigns,
The God of truth and love;
When He had purged our stains,
He took His seat above;

Refrain:
Lift up your heart,
Lift up your voice!
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

His kingdom cannot fail,
He rules both earth and heaven;
The keys of death and hell
Are to our Jesus given:

Rejoice in glorious hope!
 Our Lord and judge shall come
 And take His servants up
 To their eternal home:

Refrain
 Lift up your heart,
 Lift up you voice!
 Rejoice, again I say, rejoice.

The Baptist Hymnal
 1991

Rejoice, the Lord Is King

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Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice — Philippians 4:4 NIV

1. Re - joice, the Lord is King: Your Lord and King a - dore!
 2. Je - sus, the Sav - ior, reigns, The God of truth and love;
 3. His king - dom can - not fail, He rules o'er earth and heav'n;
 4. Re - joice in glo - rious hope! Our Lord and judge shall come

Re - joice, give thanks and sing, And tri - umph ev - er - more: Lift
 When He had purged our stains, He took His seat a - bove: Lift
 The keys of death and hell Are to our Je - sus giv'n: Lift
 And take His ser - vants up To their e - ter - nal home: Lift

up your heart, lift up your voice! Re - joice, a - gain I say, re - joice!
 up your heart, lift up your voice! Re - joice, a - gain I say, re - joice!
 up your heart, lift up your voice! Re - joice, a - gain I say, re - joice!
 up your heart, lift up your voice! Re - joice, a - gain I say, re - joice!

WORDS: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788
 MUSIC: John Darwall, 1731-1789

DARWALL
 Irregular