

Glory and Peace

Luke 2:14 - NCBC, December 25, 2022

Main Point: **The birth of Jesus brings glory to God and peace to us.**

- Jesus' birth shows God's beauty and worth through:
 - The humble position of God for us (Phil 2:5-11)
 - The human presence of God with us (John 1:14)
 - The sovereign power of God over us (Hebrews 1:3)
 - The fulfilled promise of God to us (Galatians 4:4-5)
- Jesus' birth offers God's grace and shalom:
 - For our relationship with God (Romans 5:1-2)
 - For our relationships with others (Eph 2:14-17; 4:31-32)
 - For our relationship with self (Philippians 4:6-9)
 - For our relationship with the future (Romans 16:20)

Application: **Glorify God by believing in Jesus for the sake of your peace.**

Opening Announcements:

- **Please plan to join our very special COMBINED New Year's Day Service**, next Sunday morning (1/1) at 10am. Nursery will be offered, but no other Adult or Children's Programming since both services will meet together at 10am.

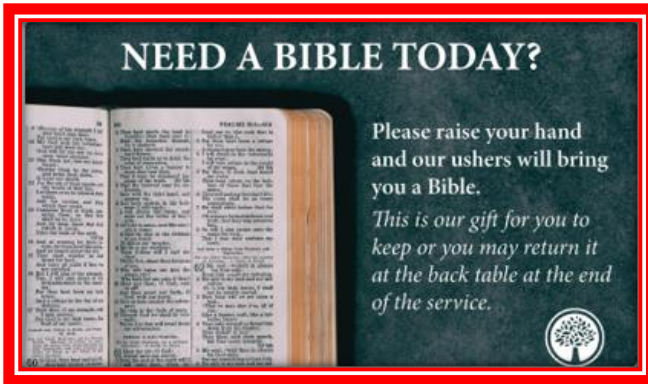
<<O Come All You Unfaithful>>



It makes all the difference in the world that Christ was born, doesn't it? Christ was born for the guilty, the unfaithful, the lonely and the lost. Christ was born for us. To become our offering, so now you and I can be welcomed by our Holy Creator into His glory and peace.

It's such a privilege to be able to worship Jesus with you on this Christmas Morning. Last night at our Christmas Eve service we considered the joy and good news of Christ's birth, so today we open our Bibles again to **Luke chapter 2** to consider how Jesus' birth brings glory to God and peace to all who believe.

So please prepare for our Scripture reading by opening your Bible to **Luke chapter 2**.



If you need a Bible, please just raise your hand and our ushers will gladly bring you a Bible. If you need a new Bible this Christmas, then please take this Bible home with you as our Christmas gift to you today. For we would be delighted to know that you were reading God's love letter along with us every day.



Christmas is a special holiday filled with all kinds of emotion. But we've gathered together this morning to pierce through all the distracting traditions and noisy glitter of this weekend to simply bow our hearts in humble adoration and worship of our God who came to earth Himself to save us from our sins.

So let's listen to these familiar Scriptures with fresh awe this morning, as we stand together for the reading of **Luke 2**, in the English Standard Translation. Today our sermon is just going to focus on **verse 14**, but I'll begin reading in **verse 1** to remind us of the context:

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. 2 This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3 And all went to be registered, each to his own town. 4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, 5 to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. 6 And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. 7 And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

8 And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. 10 And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. 11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12 And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

14 "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

This is God's Word. Please be seated. Let's Pray.

This morning we focus our attention on just one verse: **Luke 2:14**. This single sentence expresses an explosion of angelic praise and wonder at the birth of Jesus.

Can you picture the scene in your mind? First in **verse 9** a single angel appears to the shepherds and announces the good news of Jesus' birth. These social outcasts working the hills outside of Bethlehem were terrified and awe-struck at the same time. A Savior who is the long-promised Messiah the Lord has been born in town? And now their darkness is supernaturally flooded with the glory of God and a sign is given them, inviting them to personally go and see the fulfillment of God's promise themselves!

But then, in **verse 13**, this single heavenly messenger who is surrounded by the awesome glory of God is joined by an entire army of angels who are all praising God and saying the same expression of praise together in unison:

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom God is pleased.

These are such awe-inspiring words of praise from the heavenly army of God's messengers. This entire scene must have blown the shepherd's minds. What is happening right now? And what does this all mean?

So this morning I want to just push the pause button, and take a few minutes to carefully consider what this angelic army is saying. Is this what you'd expect the angels to say? Now that we live in the church age and have the benefit of all the Old Testament and New Testament Scriptures, how would you expect all God's angelic messengers to react to Jesus' birth?

If you look carefully at **verse 14**, you'll notice the angels' praise looks in two directions. Up and down. Jesus' birth gives them reason to look up, and say "Glory to God in the highest." But Jesus' birth also gives the angels reason to look down, and say, "and on earth peace among those with whom God is pleased."

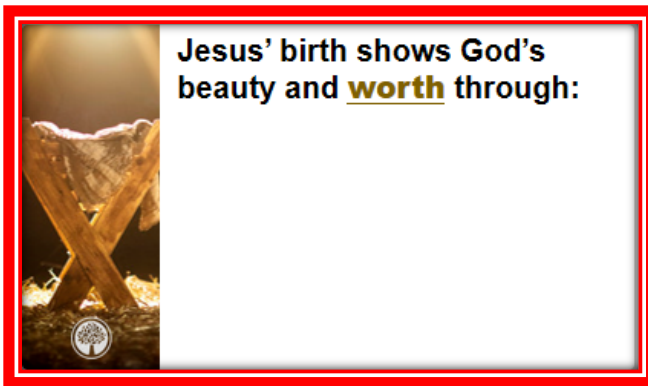
In other words, this angelic praise helps us see that,



The birth of Jesus brings glory to God and peace to us. Christmas is a celebration of glory and peace. God's glory, and Christian's peace.

So today we are going to simply answer two questions: First, how does the birth of Jesus actually bring glory to God? And second, how does Jesus' birth actually bring us peace? And my prayer is that this reflection on God's glory and our God-given peace will swell our hearts with greater praise and faith as we celebrate Christmas today.

So first, let's think for a moment about how Jesus' birth actually brings glory to God.



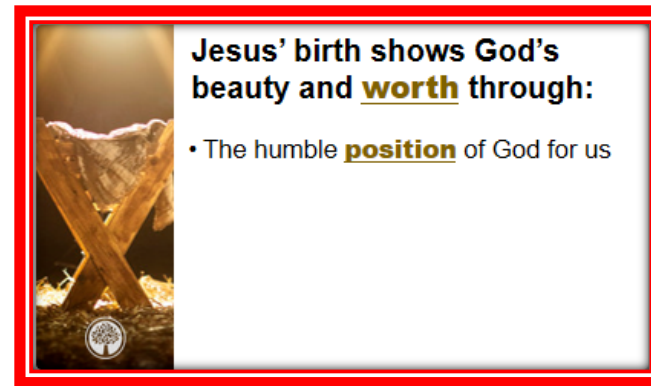
How does Jesus' birth put God's beauty and worth on display? After all, God's glory refers to God's beauty and worth, doesn't it?

When the angels say "Glory to God" they are saying God is worthy of praise, He is good, He is beautiful, He is to be treasured and valued above all others.

You see, in the Bible, glory refers to "light" or "brilliant radiance," and "weightiness" or "significance." So the glory of God is the manifestation of God's presence. The glory of God is the sum expression of God's significance. The glory of God is "the holiness of God going public," as John Piper says. God's glory refers to God's beautiful holiness and supreme worth being made visible to others.

So how does God being born as the baby of a virgin in Bethlehem show us God's beauty and worth?

Well, first Jesus' birth glorifies God through,



The humble position of God for us.

At first this seems like a paradox. How is the humiliation of God a reason to praise God?

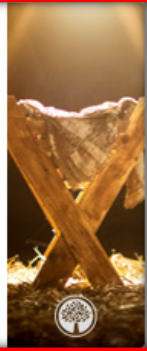
Remember Jesus was born into a very humble position. Born to young virgin who was publicly shamed for her pregnancy out of wedlock. Born into poverty. Placed in a dirty feeding trough. Forced to share his home with animals since his own extended family was too embarrassed to associate with him.

This is a very humble position for God to assume. Why didn't God choose for Jesus to be born into the wealth and privilege of a Roman or Chinese emperor's family?

Philippians 2 verses 6-11 helps us answer that question,

Philippians 2:6-8

⁶ who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but **emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.** ⁸ **And being found in human form, He humbled Himself** by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.



By saying that Jesus,

Who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Translation: Jesus was fully God, but when Jesus came to earth to become the saving substitute for sinners, He added humanity to His own nature. So that now through his birth, Jesus is both 100% God and 100% human.

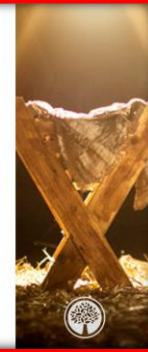
It was the greatest act of humility possible for Jesus to become the “God-man.” But it shows us the love of God for us... that God Himself would be willing to stoop so low to associate with you and with me in the depth of our own shame and humiliation!

Jesus’ birth into humility and humiliation glorifies God by showing us how far God is willing to go to save sinners

like us! God’s Son humbled Himself to the point of dying for us on the cross, all so that,

Philippians 2:9-11

⁹ Therefore God has **highly exalted Him** and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that **at the name of Jesus every knee should bow**, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, **to the glory of God the Father.**



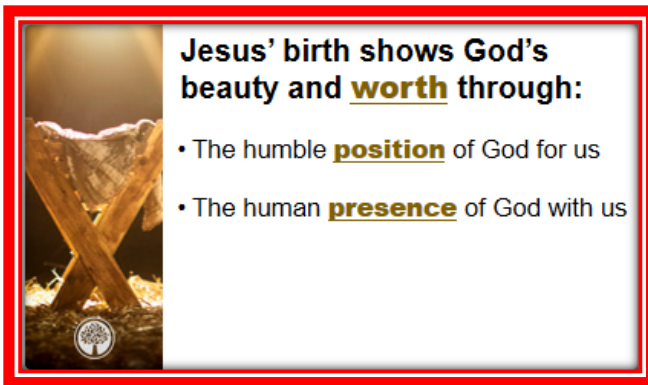
Verses 9-11 continue to say,

God can highly exalt Jesus and bestow on Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

So yes, Jesus’ was born on earth to die. Jesus’ birth put God Himself in the midst of our suffering and shame. And this shows us the beauty and worth of our Heavenly Father who so loved us that He sent His only Son to rescue us.¹

But Jesus’ birth also brings God’s glory through,

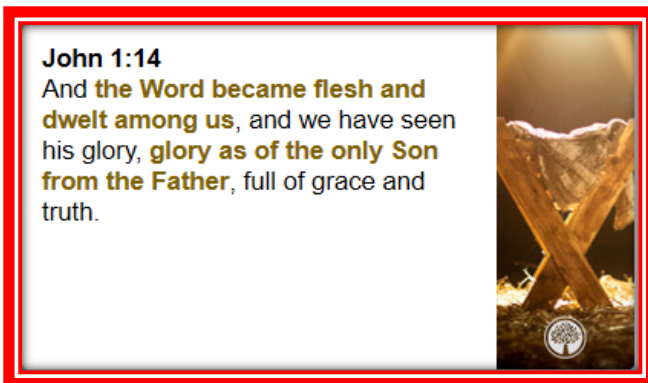
¹ John 3:16



The human presence of God with us.

After all, remember in the Old Testament, the presence of God and His glory was limited to the tabernacle or the temple. But now, in the birth of Jesus, Emmanuel² – God Himself is now present among us!

John chapter 1 delights in this reality, especially in **verse 14**,

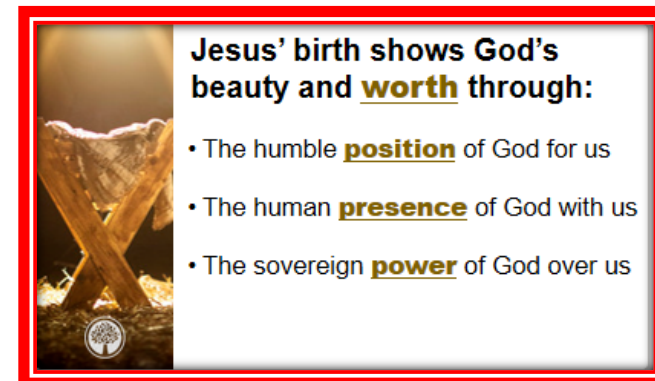


Which says,

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

O church – Jesus' birth shows us God's beauty and worth because now God Himself is here with us. The birth of Jesus reveals God Himself to the world in a manner never so personal in previous history. No wonder the angelic army is shouting,

Glory to God in the Highest!



Now, also consider for a moment how Jesus' birth brings glory to God by calling attention to the sovereign power of God over us.

Certainly the power of God's angelic announcement filled these shepherds with great fear in **verse 9**. They had no problem believing in the sovereignty of God in the middle of their night-shift as they were surrounded by the glory of God.

² Matthew 1:23; c.f. Isaiah 7:14

But this week I've been a bit amused considering the purposeful sovereignty of God at work in fulfilling all the Messianic prophecy surrounding the birth of Jesus. For example, approximately 700 years earlier in **Micah 5:2**, God promised the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem of Judah.

But Mary lived in Nazareth of Galilee. So how would God get Mary to Bethlehem just in time for Jesus to be born there?

Well, God would cause the Roman Emperor – Caesar Augustus – the most powerful ruler of the world at the time – to tax the entire world!³ Isn't that what we read in the first four verses of **Luke 2**?

O church – Christmas brings glory to God because it reminds us that we are not ultimately in charge of anything. Our God is exalted above all earthly powers, and He can decree that the entire world be put under a census for the purpose of taxation if that's what's required to get a pregnant teenager 90 miles north to Bethlehem.



I love how **Hebrews 1:3** says this,

Jesus is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature, and He upholds the universe by the word of His power.

So no matter what is going on in your life right now, friends, never doubt the goodness of God in His purposeful sovereignty. God is working even through our painful suffering to bring about His glory. To manifest His worthy beauty, and show Himself faithful over all.

Yes, the birth of Jesus brings much glory to God, because it shows us God's love through His humility, God's presence through His humanity, God's power through His sovereign control of history, and finally, God's promises through the hope of prophecy fulfilled.

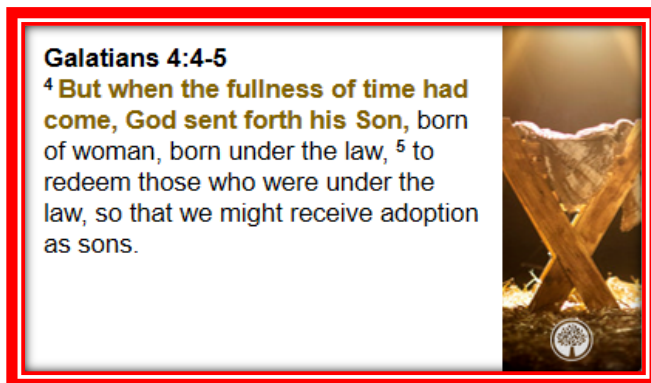
³ Proverbs 21:1
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Jesus' birth brings God's glory through the fulfilled promise of God to us.

Ever since **Genesis 3:15**, God promised to send a Messiah – an anointed Prophet, Priest, and King who would crush Satan's head and reestablish righteousness for His people. For years God's people longed to see that promise fulfilled.

And then Paul says in **Galatians chapter 4**,



But when the fulness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem

those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

The angels explode in praise because God always keeps His promises. At just the right time, in the fullness of God's timing in all of history, God shows us His beauty and worth by sending Jesus to be born, so that every sinner who believes on Jesus might be reconciled to God and welcomed into His blessed family forever.

Jesus' birth glorifies God, because it calls attention to God's human position, God's human presence, God's sovereign power, and God's fulfilled promises.

But now let's consider how,



Jesus' birth offers God's grace and peace, or shalom to all who believe on Him.

After all, the angelic army proclaims peace "among those with whom God is pleased!" And we need to take just a minute and explain what this phrase means, since the King James translation (and many of our Christmas carols that are based on the King James translation) say, "on earth peace, good will toward men."

But the original Greek Scripture clearly says the angels announce peace on earth “to men of goodwill.” Peace to those on whom goodwill rests. Or as our ESV translation helpfully says, “Peace among those with whom God is pleased.”

In other words, the birth of Jesus only brings peace to those whom God favors with saving faith. After all, **Hebrews 11:6** says that without faith it is impossible to please God. So God favors believers – all who believe in Jesus for their salvation – and gives believers the right to become children of God.⁴ The birth of the Messiah is wonderfully good news for all who believe on Jesus, but the birth of Jesus is terrifying judgment to all who hate the King and are actively rebelling against Him.

So be honest enough to ask yourself this morning, are you glad that Jesus is your Priestly King and Lord? As weird as it may sound, every one of us actually wants to be ruled by something.⁵ That’s the consequence of God making us all worshippers. Every human being will worship someone or something. We long to be ruled and satisfied by a superior power or pleasure. God created us to be ruled.

So are you trying to find peace by allowing yourself to be ruled by drugs, or gambling, or gaming, or sexual lust, or anger, or work? Are you trying to find peace through the rule of people-pleasing or even through proud mirage of self-rule?

True peace – or shalom – is far greater than the absence of conflict. It’s far deeper than calm serenity. True shalom – like the kind that comes by God’s grace to

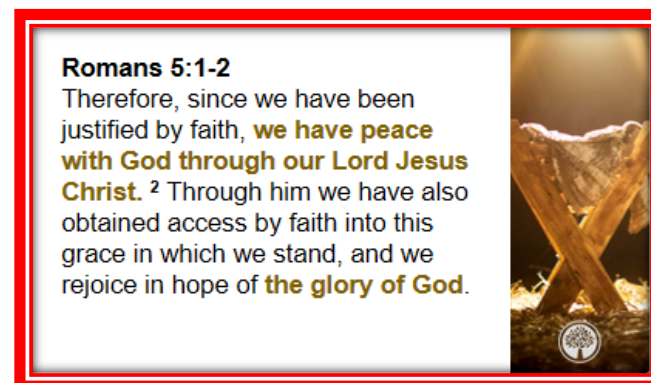
favorable believers – means righteousness. Wholeness. God’s peace refers to everything being restored to its right place – just as God intended it to be before sin.

So the birth of Jesus offers God’s favor and shalom to believers in four different ways. First offering shalom,



For our relationship with God.

And of course, this is the most significant way we experience God’s grace and peace.



Just as **Romans 5** says,

⁴ John 1:12-13
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⁵ <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/we-long-to-be-ruled>

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus was born to die in our place, so that any sinner like you or me who believes in Jesus' death and resurrection can obtain access by faith into God's saving grace, and then rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

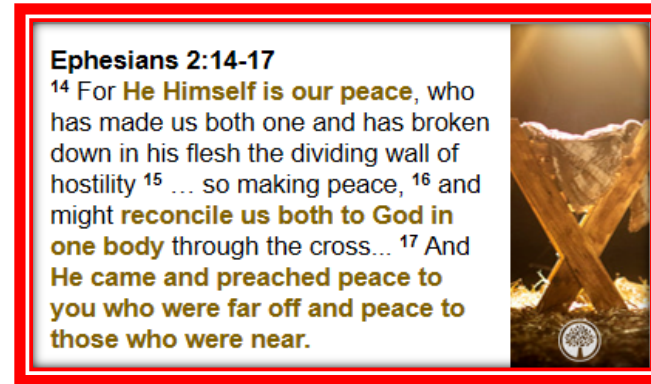
Church – Jesus was born so that Jesus could die in order for sinners to be reconciled to God. So that through Jesus' substitution for us, our relationship with a holy God could be restored back into perfect rightness and wholeness – just as God intended it to be before sin destroyed the intimacy of our fellowship with Him.

So Jesus came to earth to offer believers perfect shalom in our relationship with God. But also perfect peace,



For our relationships with others too.

Jews and Gentiles, rich and poor, old and young, black and white, and red and brown ... all people can now truly experience shalom – relationships with each other just as God intended apart from sin – because Jesus was born in Bethlehem!



Ephesians 2 verse 14 makes this clear saying,

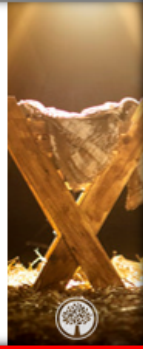
For Jesus Himself is our peace, who has made us both (in the context Paul is speaking of both Jews and Gentiles) one and has broken down in His flesh the dividing wall of hostility... so making peace, ... to reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross.

So church – Christmas should actually remind us that sinners can now live together in shalom again because of Jesus! O I know, our family gatherings at Christmas can often be full of all kinds of brokenness, relational conflict, and family drama.

But don't forget – the birth of Jesus is the birth of our Savior. And now that we have been forgiven for all of our sins,

Ephesians 4:31-32

³¹ Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. ³² **Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another**, as God in Christ forgave you.



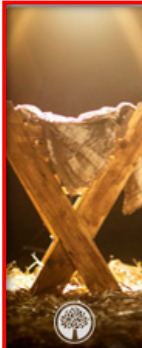
Jesus makes it possible for all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander to be put away, along with all malice. Now that Jesus has brought us salvation, believers have God's Spirit in us which enables us to truly be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ has forgiven us.

This is why the angels said, "and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased."

Jesus' birth offers God's grace and peace for our relationship with God, others, and then also,

Jesus' birth offers God's grace and shalom:

- For our relationship with **God**
- For our relationship with **others**
- For our relationship with **self**



with ourselves.

Because every one of us wrestles at times with condemning thoughts of guilt, shame, and despair. Our mind or inner thoughts are often embroiled with sin's devastating lies and conflict.

But now that Jesus has come, all believers are favored with,

Philippians 4:7-9

⁷ **And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.** ⁹ What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and **the God of peace** will be with you.



The peace of God, which surpasses all human understanding, which guards our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus.

This is the glorious result of Jesus' birth according to **Philippians 4:7-9**. All who believe on Jesus now get to experience an inner peace – a shalom of all being made right again inside our hearts and minds. Our thinking is put back into our right minds by the very God of Peace Himself.

Finally, Jesus' birth offers shalom or perfect wholeness,



For our relationship with the future.

Because obviously we all live in a world that is still broken by sin, and under the power of the evil enemy of God.⁶ We all wrestle against Satan's temptations and fiery attacks in this present age.



But **Romans 16:20** says that *The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.* In other words, there's coming a future day when all the wrongs will be made right, and perfect peace or shalom will be experienced by all of God's children. Justice and righteousness will

again reign on the earth under the Lordship of King Jesus.

None of this peace would ever be possible apart from God sending His son to be the Savior of sinners like you and me. And that's why Jesus' birth offers God's grace and peace for our relationship with God, with others, with ourselves, and even with the future.

These truths are what caused an army of angels to explode in the celebration chorus,

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased!



Because the birth of Jesus brings glory to God and peace to all who will believe in Him.

Which then leads us to our closing point of application. The obvious desired response to all of this is that every one of us here today would,

⁶ 1 John 5:19



Glorify God by believing in Jesus for the sake of your peace.

Call attention to the beauty and worth of God by submitting your life to the Lordship of Jesus. Believe that Jesus came to this earth to be born as a man – so that he could die as the only sinless person on the planet in your place. So that when He died on the cross, He was paying the death penalty that your own sins deserved.

And when Jesus rose from the dead 3 days later, He was showing Himself victorious over death, and proving that He paid all of your sins in full! Now whoever believes that Jesus died for you, and rose again for you, is forever set free from sin's slavery and adopted as one of God's own favored children.

When you believe on the Lord Jesus, you show that God has favored you with His good will. You now can experience peace with God, peace with others, peace with your own thoughts, and a forever peace in the future as part of God's eternal kingdom.

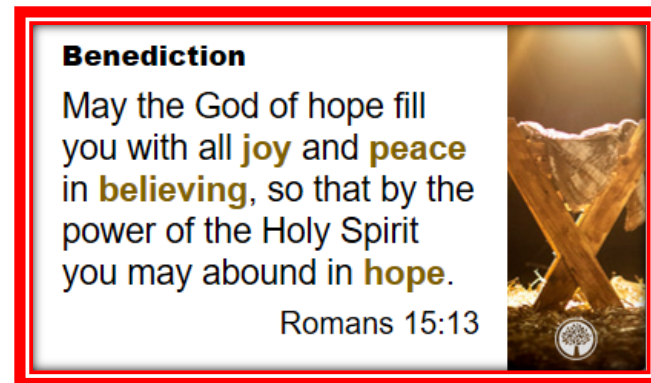


The birth of Jesus announces glory to God and peace to people. Will you believe in Jesus, and submit your life to the Prince of Peace today?

Let's Pray.

<Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee>

Let's pray our **Benediction** now as we are dismissed,



Romans 15:13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

Recommended Resources on Luke 2:14

- Psalm 113
- Isaiah 9:6-7; 53:5
- Micah 5:2
- Luke 1:79
- John 1:1, 14
- Acts 10:36
- Romans 5:1, 10; 15:13, 33; 16:20
- Ephesians 2:14-16; 4:31-32
- Philippians 2:6-8; 4:6-7, 9
- Colossians 1:20
- 1 Thessalonians 5:23
- 1 Timothy 2:5-6
- Hebrews 1:1-3; 2:5-9; 13:20-21
- <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/a-savior-is-born-glory-to-god-peace-to-man>
- <https://www.gotquestions.org/peace-with-God.html>
- <https://www.gotquestions.org/peace-on-earth.html>
- *The Glory of Christ*, Owen
- *The Glory of Christ*, Sproul
- *God's Glory Alone*, Vandrunen
- *Come Let Us Adore Him*, Tripp

Growing Deeper: Life Group Questions

Your life group might not be meeting for Christmas, but there is still a great place for discussion questions about the Christmas sermon to happen in your own family (or even by group text).

- Read the passage (Luke 2:8-21).
- Pray the passage (thanking God for sending a Savior and for your peace and salvation).
- Discuss the passage:
 1. If God is the most glorious being that exists, then why does He want to be glorified even more?
 2. What does it mean to bring glory to God? How does the birth of Christ glorify God?
 3. What are some ways in which you can glorify God this week?
 4. What is peace? In what ways does the world try to accomplish peace? How is the different from how God has brought peace?
 5. Of the different types of peace that God brings, which one do you struggle the most with? Why?
 6. How does God as the peacemaking God who brings peace change the way you relate to other people?
 7. What do you think God is calling you to obey or do after reading this passage?
 8. Who can you share these truths with?

"Glory and Peace"

Luke 2:14 - *Pastor Kevin Sauder*

Main Point: **The birth of Jesus brings glory to God and peace to us.**

- **Jesus' birth** shows God's beauty and _____ through:
 1. The humble _____ of God for us (Philippians 2:5-11)
 2. The human _____ of God with us (John 1:14)
 3. The sovereign _____ of God over us (Hebrews 1:3)
 4. The fulfilled _____ of God to us (Galatians 4:4-5)

- **Jesus' birth** offers God's grace and _____:
 1. For our relationship with _____ (Romans 5:1-2)
 2. For our relationships with _____ (Ephesians 2:14-17; 4:31-32)
 3. For our relationship with _____ (Philippians 4:6-9)
 4. For our relationship with the _____ (Romans 16:20)

APP: **Glorify God by believing in Jesus for the sake of your peace.**

Your responsibility by God's enabling is to consistently apply the divine principles and truth you've heard (Phil. 2:12-20, 1 Tim. 4:7-9, James 1:22-27).

As you meditate on this message, ask yourself:

- How does God want my beliefs/actions to change?
- How can I accomplish this change?
- What is the first step toward bringing about this change?

Recommended Resources:

- Psalm 113
- Isaiah 9:6-7; 53:5
- Micah 5:2
- Luke 1:79
- John 1:1, 14
- Acts 10:36
- Romans 5:1, 10; 15:13, 33; 16:20
- Ephesians 2:14-16; 4:31-32
- Philippians 2:6-8; 4:6-7, 9
- Colossians 1:20
- 1 Thessalonians 5:23
- 1 Timothy 2:5-6
- Hebrews 1:1-3; 2:5-9; 13:20-21
- <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/a-savior-is-born-glory-to-god-peace-to-man>
- <https://www.gotquestions.org/peace-with-God.html>
- <https://www.gotquestions.org/peace-on-earth.html>
- *The Glory of Christ*, Owen
- *The Glory of Christ*, Sproul
- *God's Glory Alone*, Vandrunen

Discussion Questions:

Even if you aren't having life group this week, these are some good questions for your family to discuss.

- A. Read the passage (Luke 2:8-21).
- B. Pray the passage (thanking God for sending a Savior and for your peace and salvation).
- C. Discuss the passage:
 1. If God is the most glorious being that exists, then why does He want to be glorified even more?
 2. What does it mean to bring glory to God? How does the birth of Christ glorify God?
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