

BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH OF ERIE
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“FINDING PEACE IN OUR STRUGGLES”

Series #3

REDISCOVERING CHRISTMAS: GOOD NEWS IN TROUBLING TIMES

Isaiah 9:6-7; Luke 2:10-14

Christmas is over and we still don't have much peace on earth or good will toward mankind. So where is this **PEACE the angels spoke about in V-14**? If we ever needed a proclamation of peace, it's right now. Listen to this declaration first given over 2,000 years ago, celebrating the “true truce of God” that leads to peace among people from **Luke 2:10-14**. There is so much to unpack in this passage but instead of doing that, we're going to primarily spend our time in **verse 14**, “*Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.*” (NASV) is a better translation than our beloved KJV. Let's put this together. God did not wish or bestow peace on the earth to everyone, God sent Jesus, who is God Himself, and who is Peace, to those people who have accepted Him, and those who believe in Him, God has placed His favor. In the coming of Jesus, God extends grace to those out of place. I see two outcomes of this announcement from the angels.

1. **Glory to God** – glory goes up to God
2. **Peace to people** – peace comes down from God

1. GLORY TO GOD - GLORY GOES UP TO GOD

The original meaning of “**glory**” is the idea of weightiness. God's glory is the sum total of the weightiness of all His attributes. It includes splendor, brightness, shining, radiance, brilliance, status, praise, honor, wonder and supernatural power. It has to do with the fame of God's glorious name. But there's more. Notice all of this is in the superlative – “**in the highest.**” This refers to the “loftiest and most elevated.” God is at the highest level, the peak, the summit.

It had been a long time since God's glory dwelt on earth. Think back to the “**tabernacle.**” This was a portable worship center where God dwelt and met with his people. It was also the place where sacrifices were made and where God's glory and holiness were displayed (**Exodus 40:34-35**). The Jewish rabbis coined the expression **shekinah glory**, a form of a Hebrew word that literally means “**He caused to dwell.**” For many years, people met with God and knew of His glory through the Tabernacle.

Later on, God instructed King Solomon to build a permanent worship center called the **Temple** where the **GLORY** of God dwelt (**1 Kings 6:13, 8:10-11**). The heavens are silent for four centuries until **Harold** the Angel (I mean, the **herald** angel) starts harking in **Luke 2:9**. These angels were waiting a long time for the birth of the baby and now they explode with adoration. **This doxology was God-centered and glory-focused.**

2. PEACE TO PEOPLE - PEACE COMES DOWN FROM GOD

The adoration of the angels led them to declare a proclamation of peace in the second stanza of **verse 14**: “...*and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased.*” Notice that peace comes only after praising. We must put God and His glory first and then peace will come. We must keep together what the angels kept together – Glory to God and peace to people. A heart bent on showing and sharing the glory of God will know the peace of God. The phrase “**Happy Holidays**” is meaningless without an acknowledgement of the **holiness of God.**

The word “**peace**” in the New Testament means to “*join together; to set at one again.*” It has the idea of gluing something back together and is used in at least four ways.

- **Peace with God** – that's the vertical dimension - **Romans 15:13**
Before we can be at peace with God, we must come to grips with how ruptured our relationship with God is apart from Christ. **Romans 1:18; 3:17-18, 5:1**
- **Peace of God** – this takes place internally
In order to have the peace of God internally, we must first experience peace with God vertically. The upward dimension must be taken care of before inward peace can permeate our lives. Only those at peace with God can experience the peace of God. Shortly before Jesus died, He declared in **John 14:27**
- **Peace with others** – that's peace horizontally
Jesus said in **Matthew 5:9**. I find it interesting that Jesus didn't call us to be “peacekeepers,” but instead “peacemakers.” (**Romans 14:19**)
- **Peace for others** – that's the proclamation of peace in the gospel - **Acts 10:36**

We must keep the order straight.

Hope has a name...it's Jesus!
Love has a name...it's Jesus!
Joy has a name...it's Jesus!
Peace has a name...it's Jesus!

Let's go back and ponder the message given to the shepherds in **Luke 2:11**: “*For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.*”

1. **Personal** – “unto you”
2. **Present** – “this day”
3. **Place** – “city of David”
4. **Person** – “Savior who is Christ the Lord.”