

CHRISTMAS 2022
LUKE 2:1-14
PEACE ON EARTH!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to Luke chapter 2 as we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

We are going to be looking at – ***PEACE ON EARTH!***

And that is interesting to me because we are not seeing peace on earth, not even close. Even in America we see Americans more divided than ever before!

And when the holidays come around, we see depression on the rise. According to the American Psychological Association, 38% of people surveyed said their stress increased during the holiday season, which can lead to physical illness, depression, anxiety, and substance misuse.

So there is something going on that is causing people to be depressed and not celebrate what our God has done.

And it is not just holidays. Life in general and the things that we have to face, day in and day out, can cause us to lose hope, to become depressed.

Listen to these statistics. We are told,

Depression among adults in the United States tripled in the early 2020 months of the global coronavirus pandemic - jumping from 8.5 percent before the pandemic to a staggering 27.8 percent.

New research from Boston University School of Public Health reveals that the elevated rate of depression has persisted into 2021, and even worsened, climbing to 32.8 percent and affecting 1 in every 3 American adults. . . .

“The sustained high prevalence of depression does not follow [the same] patterns [we observed] after previous traumatic events, such as Hurricane Ike and the [West African] Ebola outbreak,” says study senior author Sandro Galea, dean of BU School of Public Health and Robert A. Knox Professor.

“Typically, we would expect depression to peak following the traumatic event and then lower over time. Instead, we found that 12 months into the pandemic, levels of depression remained high.”

- <https://bit.ly/3EUvR0b>

Not only that but listen to where our levels of hope are at. We are told, Heading into 2022, Americans are experiencing high levels of worry and much more temperate levels of hope.

Eighty-four percent of Americans say they are either extremely (55%) or very worried (29%), compared to the 42% of Americans who describe themselves as extremely (18%) or very hopeful (24%).

And, roughly one-quarter of Americans (26%) report that nothing makes them hopeful, while only 2% of Americans say that nothing makes them worried.

Levels of worry remain remarkably consistent across demographic categories, with no significant differences among them.

Roughly half of all groups indicate they are “extremely worried,” regardless of gender, age, race and ethnicity, level of educational attainment or political affiliation.

- <https://bit.ly/3eLBh2X>

Those are not very good statistics. And I know, you are probably thinking, “*Wow, where is he going with this. I’m depressed already! I thought we were celebrating the birth of Jesus?*”

Hang in there because what Luke is going to show us is that there is great hope, not in the government, not in our health, not in jobs, not in relationships, not in this or that! There is great hope in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and we need to keep our eyes on Him because we can have peace and hope right now!

I have broken down the verses we will be looking at this morning into the following main points. They are,

THE SAVIOR IS BORN – LUKE 2:1-7

SHEPHERDS FEAR – LUKE 2:8-9

GOOD TIDINGS – LUKE 2:10-12

PEACE ON EARTH – LUKE 2:13-14

With That as our introduction, let’s begin reading in Luke chapter 2, beginning in verse 1 and let’s see what the Lord has for us this morning as we study His Word and celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

LUKE 2**VERSES 1-7**

This is what mankind needed, maybe they were not looking for, but they truly needed –
THE SAVIOR IS BORN!

Ever since sin entered this world in Genesis chapter 3, when Adam sinned, that sin nature has been passed down to every person who was born.

That is the problem, and before there was even this problem of sin, before man was even created, God knew what He needed to do to rescue, to save His creation. And that was God becoming flesh and dwelling among us to pay in full the penalty for our sins!

Paul put it like this in Galatians 4:4-5, **“But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.”**

It was at the right time that God’s plan was put into play. Up until this time, it was preparation for the coming Messiah, Jesus Christ to be born and to ultimately go to the cross of Calvary to pay in full the penalty for our sins, as I have said!

Now let me also make this perfectly clear because today, many believe the stories in the Bible are just that, made up stories. A kind of ***“Once upon a time.”***

But these are not fanciful stories, but they are actual historical events and Luke makes that perfectly clear for us as he dates the time that Jesus was born.

According to historical documents, Quirinius was governor over Syria in 7-9 A. D., which would place the birth of Christ several years too late! Bible critics love that as they shout out, ***“Another Bible error!”***

First of all, the word “**first**” in verse 2 is the Greek word PRO, and thus, this verse can read, “*This census took place before Quirinius was governor of Syria.*” And that would make sense since many believe that he was governor over Syria twice, in 3-2 B. C. and thus, if this census or taxation took place before he was governor, that would place it sometime in 4 B. C., which was the timeframe Jesus was born.

Also, Caesar Augustus, also known as Octavius, ruled Rome from 27 B. C. to 14 A. D. and he makes this decree that a census be taken.

Caesar Augustus was the first Caesar to be called “*Augustus*” [majestic, venerable] and prior to that it was a title that was given to the gods. But now man had become God or so they thought. In fact, when Caesar Augustus died men actually “*comforted themselves, reflecting that Augustus was a god, and that gods do not die.*” (John Buchan)

Thus, as you can see, these men thought they were god’s and in power, in control, and what they wanted done was done or else! So he issues a decree to tax the people thinking he was in charge but, as we are going to see, he was not in control but God was using him as His instrument to fulfill His plans!

One more point here just to give you an idea of the world that Augustus lived in and the world that Jesus was going to be born into.

We are told, “The lusty peninsula was worn out with twenty years of civil war. Its farms had been neglected, its towns had been sacked or besieged, much of its wealth had been stolen or destroyed. Administration and protection had broken down; robbers made every street unsafe at night; highwaymen roamed the roads, kidnapped travelers, and sold them into slavery. Trade diminished, investment stood still, interest rates soared, property values fell. Morals, which had been loosened by riches and luxury, had not been improved by destitution and chaos, for few conditions are more demoralizing than poverty that comes after wealth. Rome was full of men who had lost their economic footing and then their moral stability: soldiers who had tasted adventure and had learned to kill; citizens who had seen their savings consumed in the taxes and inflation of war and waited vacuously for some returning tide to life them back to affluence; women dizzy with freedom, multiplying divorces, abortions, and adulteries.” (Durant)

Not a very good time, not a time where there was much hope, kind of like the days we are living in now.

So the decree was sent forth and people were to go to their home city to register and pay their taxes.

Here we see Joseph and Mary make this 80-mile journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem, which means the *house of bread*, to fulfill the command of Caesar Augustus. You see, he wanted them to return to their hometowns to be taxed there, and both Joseph and Mary were from Bethlehem.

Make no mistake about it, this was a difficult journey, and we are not sure how far along Mary was in her pregnancy, but Joseph was not going to leave his pregnant wife home, especially with all the talk about her becoming pregnant before marriage and not by Joseph!

Now you may be thinking, *“How can God allow something like this to happen to this godly family? And all because some guy in Rome who thinks he is a god, makes this decree!”*

Please understand that what transpired was in the plan and purposes of God and I think in our own lives, it is no different. Now you may not agree with that, but God is in control and not man. Yes, man has a free will to do what he wants, but God knows what man will do before he does it and thus, God will use it for His plan and purposes!

And if you are still struggling with this, we are told in Micah 5:2, **“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.”**

Some 700 years before this event took place God said the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem and how would you get this couple to travel that far in her condition, the later stages of her pregnancy?

As we have seen, there was a decree sent by this power-hungry ruler that all must return to their hometowns for taxation purposes.

So who is really in control, who is really in power? God is in control and that will never change! It is as Proverbs 21:1 says, **“The king’s heart is in the hand of the LORD, like the rivers of water; he turns it wherever He wishes.”**

Also notice in verse 5 that it says that they were **“betrothed”**, and the word **“wife”** was added. What is the point. They were married but they had not consummated the marriage yet, not until after the birth of Jesus we see Mary and Joseph had other children.

So as they were in Bethlehem Mary goes into labor and born to her is a Son that they call Jesus! And the way Luke wrote this it seems like Mary was alone in this delivery, there was no one there to help her except Joseph.

And as Jesus is born, we are told that Mary wrapped Him in “**swaddling cloths**” and this comes from an ancient Greek word that means “*to tear.*” In other words, she wrapped Jesus in torn strips of cloth!

So we see here – ***THE SAVIOR IS BORN!***

As we read on, we will see God working with another group of people in the fields of Bethlehem – ***SHEPHERDS FEAR!***

VERSES 8-9

Notice who the first group of people who heard of the birth of the Savior were.

They were not priests nor were they businessmen, they were not the high-class society type people. They were not the highly educated people.

No, they were shepherds or what we might call the outcasts of society. In fact, shepherds were known for their dishonesty, they could not be trusted.

As Morris tells us, “*As a class shepherds had a bad reputation . . . More regrettable was their habit of confusing ‘mine’ with ‘thine’ as they moved about the country. They were considered unreliable and were not allowed to give testimony in the law courts.*”

Why would God do that, speak to these shepherds first? Because God comes to those who are in need, who recognize that they are in need, that they realize that they have come up short. The Gospel message is for those who know they need Jesus!

It would seem that these shepherds who were caring for these sheep in the area of Bethlehem were the ones that cared for the Temple flock. In other words, these men protected and cared for the lambs used in the Temple sacrifices.

That is interesting to me because there in Bethlehem was born the Lamb of God who has come to take away the sins of the world! No more sacrifices will be needed because the perfect sacrifice was going to be made by Jesus!

Now imagine these shepherds out in the field, it is nighttime and all of a sudden, an angel appears before them, and we are told that **“they were greatly afraid.”**

No kidding, I hear a noise at night and wonder what is going on!

Maybe you are living in a world that has caused you to fear, to be afraid, you have lost hope and you just want to get out of this crazy world!

Don't give up, don't give in, bring it to the Lord! I know, that sounds so nice and simple and yet, what you are going through is not nice or simple.

Think about this world that Jesus came into. Why did He do that? Because man was living in darkness and the Light of the World stepped into this darkness and was going to shine brightly.

If you are in that darkness right now, come to the Light of Jesus. You see, these shepherds were in fear, they were afraid as this angel appeared to them out in the field.

And what is this angel going to do?

We don't have to guess because we are told that this angel will bring – ***GOOD TIDINGS!***

VERSES 10-12

Here we see this angel, maybe Gabriel because he seems to be the angel that brings news, information to God's people, and this time he brought "**good tidings**" or the Gospel message, which, of course is very Good News to these shepherds!

And this Good News was not just to the Jews but to all people!

You see, we didn't need an advisor, we needed a Savior!

We didn't need a doctor, we needed a Savior!

We didn't need a businessman, we needed a Savior!

We didn't need a lawyer, we needed a Savior!

We didn't need a warrior, but we did need a Savior because our sins have separated us from God!

Make no mistake about it, sin is the problem, and we all have that sin nature.

But man isn't really interested in dealing with this sin issue, they just want peace. But here is the problem. Because of the sin issue, you will not find peace in this world or even in your own life until that sin issue is dealt with!

The shepherds are also told that this Savior is to be found wrapped in swaddling cloths and in a manger or feeding trough. Not exactly what you would expect from someone who is going to save you, the Savior. You would expect Him to be found in a royal mansion, wrapped in purple garments and maybe even a little crown on His head. But not Jesus, He was born in a manger and wrapped in strips of cloth.

Also, keep in mind that the word "**Christ**" means Messiah and, like I have said, the sign to these shepherds is that they will find this Savior of mankind, this Messiah wrapped in swaddling cloth's and lying in a manger.

Now for these shepherds, for the people, this great joy they might be looking for is a time of peace, of safety, without wars or conflicts, something that was not seen very often. At this time the Jews were under Roman persecution or Roman rule. And there was peace as long as you obeyed them but if you disobeyed their rules, look out, there would be no peace for you!

Thank God we don't have to worry about wars, about conflicts today, right? Obviously that is a little sarcastic, and maybe not a little. We see wars and rumors of wars all over the place. Threats of violence even in our own cities!

Not much joy let alone great joy for anyone today! Wars are happening and people are fearful.

In saying that, let me show you what people think about war from an article written in Scientific American from April of 2022. The title is – ***WILL WAR EVER END?***

This is what we are told,

I recently asked my first-year humanities classes: ***Will war ever end?*** I specified that I had in mind the end of all wars - like the one currently ravaging Ukraine - and even the ***threat*** of war between nations.

I primed my students by assigning “Warfare Is Only an Invention,” by anthropologist Margaret Mead, and “A History of Violence,” by psychologist Steven Pinker.

Some students suspect, like Pinker, that war stems from deep-rooted evolutionary impulses.

Others agree with Mead that war is, in her words, a “bad invention” rather than a “biological necessity” or “sociological inevitability.”

But whether they see war as springing primarily from nature or nurture, almost all my students answered: ***No, war will never end.***

War is inevitable, my students say, because humans are innately greedy and belligerent. Or because militarism, like capitalism, has become a permanent part of our culture. Or because, even if most of us hate war, warmongers like Hitler and Putin will always arise, forcing the people being attacked to fight in self-defense.

My students' reactions don't surprise me. I started asking if war will ever end almost 20 years ago, during the U.S. invasion of Iraq. Since then I've polled thousands of people of all ages and political persuasions in the U.S. and elsewhere. About nine out of 10 people say war is inevitable.

This fatalism is understandable. The U.S. has been at war nonstop since 9/11. Although American troops left Afghanistan last year after 20 years of violent occupation, the U.S. still maintains a global military empire spanning 80 countries and territories. Russia's invasion of Ukraine reinforces our sense that when one war ends, another begins.

War fatalism pervades our culture. In *The Expanse*, a sci-fi series I'm reading, a character describes war as a "*madness that's in our nature*"; it flares up and subsides but never vanishes for good. "*I'm afraid that as long as we're human,*" he says, war "*will be with us.*"

Ending war won't be easy, but it should be a moral imperative, as much so as ending slavery and the subjugation of women. The first step toward ending war is believing it is possible.

- <https://bit.ly/3WCuIAH>

Now his solution to the problem is flawed. He believes that *“The first step toward ending war is believing it is possible.”*

The problem with that is we tried that before and I am sure many times, but in the late 1960’s and into the 1970’s remember what their slogan was, *“Make peace not war!”* as hippies went forward with this message.

How did that work out?

Not good as they fought amongst themselves as well as others.

Again, the problem is that sin nature and the manifestations of that sin nature is what we see in this world today.

So here is my take on all of this. There will be no peace in this world until we first make peace with God!

In other words, that sin nature needs to be replaced, that old man needs to die, and we need to be born again in Christ. We need to repent of our sins and ask Jesus to be Lord and Savior of our lives.

When man makes peace with God, then and only then can there be peace with his fellow man, peace on earth!

You see, Jesus came the first time, God became flesh and dwelt among us, He was born in Bethlehem to bring peace between man and God!

Remember what we are told in Isaiah 59:1-2, **“Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.”**

So sin separates man from God and listen then how that sin is manifested in the lives of mankind. Isaiah continues on in Isaiah 59:3-8 and tells us, **“For your hands are defiled with blood, And your fingers with iniquity; Your lips have spoken lies, Your tongue has muttered perversity. No one calls for justice, Nor does any plead for truth. They trust in empty words and speak lies; They conceive evil and bring forth iniquity. They hatch vipers’ eggs and weave the spider’s web; He who eats of their eggs dies, And from that which is crushed a viper breaks out. Their webs will not become garments, Nor will they cover themselves with their works; Their works are works of iniquity, And the act of violence is in their hands. Their feet run to evil, And they make haste to shed innocent blood; Their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; Wasting and destruction are in their paths. The way of peace they have not known, And there is no justice in their ways; They have made themselves crooked paths; Whoever takes that way shall not know peace.”**

Not a pretty picture, nor is it intended to be a pretty picture. It is just a reality. Man apart from God, lost in his sins, walks in darkness and not the light of God and thus, what is manifested in his life is evil, darkness.

Look at what was going on. The approval of violence, of murder and they had their reasons, but God sees right through their evil and calls them on it! And with their hands they were doing evil towards people but again, they justified their actions, they were not wrong.

It was not only physical violence that we see but the words that they spoke were lies and they destroyed people’s lives with their words. The things that flowed from their lips were evil, perverse. And notice that all these actions here in verse 3 deal with murder, outward or physical murder and the murder that is caused by what we say, not just what we do!

Interestingly enough they are not calling for justice because they like the lifestyle that they are living. They are not interested in the truth because they are comfortable in the lies that they believe.

And sadly enough, they trust in these empty words to save them, to help them, to deliver them and in the end, it will destroy them. And the lies that they are telling bring forth evil, iniquity or immorality in the lives of others as well as their own!

You see, their actions were deadly towards people's lives and the idea is that they not only poisoned people with their words and actions, but they caught people in their web of deceit and crushed them!

Because they had no fear of God, they did as they pleased, they went running after evil. But God is saying that their works will not last. They will not prosper, and they leave a path of destruction wherever they go! How true that is.

Isaiah continues on and tells us this very thing as he says in Isaiah 59:9-10, "**Therefore justice is far from us, Nor does righteousness overtake us; We look for light, but there is darkness! For brightness, but we walk in blackness! We grope for the wall like the blind, And we grope as if we had no eyes; We stumble at noonday as at twilight; We are as dead men in desolate places.**"

Isn't it interesting that this is fun for a time but then comes the reality and you are looking for light, you are looking for justice and you are not finding any because the salvation you sought was not in God!

So here is the first step, to receive these – ***GOOD TIDINGS***, or to receive Jesus as your Lord and Savior and He will bring peace into your life. I am not saying that there is going to be peace in this world, not yet, but peace in your life.

And yes, when we think of peace we think of an absence of trouble, life is going along smoothly. That is not the peace that the Bible is speaking of. This is a peace in your life because you have made peace with God and no matter what you are going through, the Creator of heaven and earth is more than able to help you through them.

Yes, we long for a day when there will be peace on earth, but keep in mind that Jesus came the first time to make peace between man and God.

But there is coming a day when we will find – ***PEACE ON EARTH!*** That is what we will be looking at next!

And let me say this, even the pagans of the first century world sensed this need for peace and a savior.

Epictetus, a first century pagan writer, expressed this very thought. He wrote, ***“While the emperor may give peace from war on land and sea, he is unable to give peace from passion, grief, and envy; he cannot give peace of heart, for which man yearns for more than even outward peace.”***

You see, the outward peace will not come unless man makes peace with God. Unless you surrender to His will, you will not get along with your fellow man because there will always be some issue to cause conflict.

Peace with God and then peace with your fellow man and ultimately we will see –
PEACE ON EARTH!

VERSES 13-14

As this angel finishes bringing this good news to these shepherds all of sudden we see this multitude of angels break forth with this worship song unto the Lord, they just could not hold back any longer and they sang out, **“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace towards men of good will.”**

I know, in your Bibles it says that they were praising the Lord and singing **“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth good will toward men!”**

That is not correct. It should say, **“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace towards men of good will”** or **“Glory to God in the highest, and peace among men with whom He is pleased.”**

You see, the peace of God is not for everyone but for those who have come into a relationship with Jesus, who have asked Him to be Lord and Savior of their lives.

Who is God pleased with?

Those who believe in Him, and that belief is just not an acknowledgement of who He is because the demons know He is God, and they are not saved. It is giving your life to Him, all of it.

In John 6:29 we are told, **“... ‘This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.’”**

You see, God’s peace is not given to those who have good will nor to all, but to those who are recipients of God’s good will, His favor.

In fact, Isaiah 48:22 says, **“‘There is no peace,’ says the LORD, ‘for the wicked.’”**

And we see that manifested in the world today. Man is not finding peace and he is trying and trying and apart from God, it will not be something that he will find.

And again, it is not just a peace between God and man but now that peace that is coming will fill this land and we will see that when Jesus returns.

But until that time, like I have said, we can have peace with God through Jesus Christ and then the peace of God will fill our hearts and our lives, we can have peace with others.

It is as Jesus said in John 16:33, **“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”**

The only true peace is found in Jesus!

But listen carefully to what is coming, the peace that will fill this land when Jesus returns and sets up His Kingdom and rules and reigns from Jerusalem!

We are told in Isaiah 2:1-4, **“The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. Now it shall come to pass in the latter days That the mountain of the Lord’s house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, ‘Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths.’ For out of Zion shall go forth the law, And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, And rebuke many people; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war anymore.”**

We long for that day when violence, murder, will be done away with. There will no longer be wars in the Kingdom Age. Can you imagine today the amount of money we would have to help those in need if we did not spend the billions of dollars we do on military armaments. All the implements of war will be done away with. ***“Come Lord Jesus!”*** is all I can say!

You see, man keeps trying to work things out, to play nice with each other but because man’s heart is evil, that will never happen apart from Christ.

Yes, you may have brief periods of peace but in the end, war. And yes, the world seems to be more and more wicked, more so than ever before.

But God has warned us that this would be the case before His return. And our hope is not in this world but in the return of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

But before that happens, we are going to see judgment come upon a Christ rejecting world, and we call that period of time the Tribulation Period. And before that time even begins, the Church is out of here, raptured our caught up to be with the Lord!

I like the way that Martin sums this up as he wrote, ***“Men yearn for peace, but they will not acknowledge the hopelessness of their own efforts to achieve it. It is only when the word of the Lord goes forth from Jerusalem, when He Himself is reigning over the nations, that lasting peace will come.”***

Absolutely and like I have said, we long for that day!

We also see that nature itself will be returned to a time prior to sin entering this world. In Isaiah 11:6-9 we are told, **“The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, The leopard shall lie down with the young goat, The calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; Their young ones shall lie down together; And the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra’s hole, And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper’s den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord As the waters cover the sea.”**

Again, what we see here is the reign of the King and when the Messiah reign’s nature will be transformed. No longer will there be predators among the animals, and seemingly all animals will be herbivores, even man!

Think about this for a minute. Have you ever seen a leopard lying down with a calf?

I guess you might have but that is just because the leopard is eating the calf, sorry but today we see this survival mentality and we know what happens in the animal kingdom!

But like I have said, in the Millennial Kingdom there will not be carnivorous animals. They will be herbivores or vegetarians, like man will be. A lion will eat grass; you will be able to have bears and lions for pets.

The Millennial Kingdom will be like it was during the Garden of Eden before sin entered the picture, and death through sin.

In Genesis 1:29-31 we read, **“And God said, ‘See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life, I have given every green herb for food’; and it was so. Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.”**

Thus, sometime after sin entered the world or right after the flood, animals degenerated into carnivorous animals, meat-eaters! And for man, after the flood God said in Genesis 9:3-4 **“Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs. But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood.”**

Now some may have degenerated into meat eaters before the flood, but after the flood God said that we can eat meat.

But, in the Millennial Kingdom we will all be vegetarians.

Again, in Hosea 2:18 we read, **“In that day I will make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, with the birds of the air, and with the creeping things of the ground. Bow and sword of battle I will shatter from the earth, To make them lie down safely.”**

All creation will live in harmony, even those pesky mosquitos!

Paul even picks up on that in Romans 8:19-22 when he wrote, **“For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.”**

Nature is waiting for the transformation that will come when the Messiah reigns and believers are glorified. I can't wait for that day; the Millennial Reign of the Messiah will be glorious!

So what we are seeing here is that man is reconciled to God through the shed blood of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, on the cross of Calvary.

It is after this, in the Kingdom Age, we see not only peace with God fill the land, but the land itself is filled with peace. No more wars, no more fighting, no more evil as righteousness will fill the land!

Yes, there is coming a day when we will have peace on earth, but until that time, we can have peace with God, and we can have the peace of God as we go through the storms of life. Not because I said so, but because Jesus said so!

Remember how Jesus put it in John 16:33. He said, **“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”**

I don't think I am splitting hairs here but think about this. Jesus did not promise us peace, He offered peace to us.

What do I mean by that?

Notice again what He said, **“in Me you may have peace.”**

It is something that is offered to us, a peace in the midst of turmoil, a peace when things are falling apart, a peace that surpasses all understanding, and that peace is there for us to have as we rest in Jesus!

There truly is no real peace anywhere else! Thus, we need to stay focused. We need to keep our eyes upon Jesus. We need to trust in Him because everything around you will be shaken, there will be tribulation, not might be!

Again, this is not a promise of peace, but you can receive it if you want, it is up to you. The world's peace is empty; Jesus can give to us a peace that surpasses all human understanding. He can give us peace as we go through the storms of life!

It is as Jesus said in John 14:27, **“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”**

The question is, ***“Do you believe?”***

The most important birth in all of history is when God became flesh and dwelt among us – ***THE SAVIOR IS BORN!***

That is what mankind needed, a Savior to save them from their sins. Something that they could never do on their own, but God paid in full the penalty for our sins!

And yes, when the angel stood before the shepherds who were out in the fields, we saw the – ***SHEPHERDS FEAR!***

But God does not want us to be fearful and thus, this angel brings – ***GOOD TIDINGS!***

In other words, this angel presented to these shepherds the Gospel, the good news, that the Savior of the world, the Messiah was born in Bethlehem! And that good news is for every person on this planet!

It is here we see that the separation of man from God because of sin has been reconciled through Jesus Christ and we can now have peace with God. Prior to that mankind was at war with God because sin separated us. But now we enjoy that peace, that fellowship with God through Jesus Christ!

And lastly, we looked at what is coming – ***PEACE ON EARTH!***

And that peace is going to only come when Jesus returns to set up His Kingdom on this earth and righteousness will fill this land!

I don't know where you are at this morning. Maybe you are depressed. Maybe you are discouraged. Maybe you are in despair. Maybe you are wondering how you can know peace or happiness when you are suffering, and especially suffering at Christmas time.

You may be familiar with the song by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow – ***I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day***. That song was written on Christmas day back in 1863.

Now you may not know this about this man, but during this year he was in a deep depression.

What happened to him that brought this Christian man into this depression?

Keep in mind that Civil War was raging on!

Not only that but his son ran away to join the Union army!

Not only that but in a battle his son was severely wounded!

Not only that but his wife, Frances, died in a fire three years earlier!

And now it is Christmas time and this all weighed heavy upon his heart.

Trying to pull himself out of this depression he began to write, and he wrote down these words – ***“I heard the bells on Christmas Day their old, familiar carols play, And wild and sweet the words repeat of peace on earth, good-will to men!”***

As he was reflecting on all of this, the war and the death toll, all that happened in his family, he continued to write, ***“And in despair I bowed my head – there is no peace on earth, I said. For hate is strong, and mocks the son of peace on earth, good-will to men!”***

Not a very hopeful song. Not a very promising song. At least at this point. But Longfellow did not end there. As he focused on God and His Word he ended with these words – *“Then pealed the bells more loud and deep – God is not dead, nor doth He sleep; The Wrong shall fail, the Right prevail, with peace on earth, good-will to men.”*

Those words helped bring him out of his depression. You see, he understood that God is still in control, He is still on the throne and no matter what he was going through, God was still with Him. God was not dead. God was not asleep. But God was working.

I will challenge you that no matter where you are at this morning, each day get into the Word of God and remember the precious promises that He has for you.

Yes, we can have peace with God right now through Jesus Christ, but one day there will be peace on earth when He returns.

And I will leave you with this promise from God in Isaiah 9:6-7, where we are told, **“For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.”**

May we never forget His promises to us!