

Luke 2:14

- Glory to God and Peace on earth -

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Introduction

- ❖ “Do not be afraid. **I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.** Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord” (Lk 2:10-11).
And:
- ❖ **“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”** (Lk 2:14).
 - “On earth peace”? On this earth? This world is torn apart by regional wars in Africa and the Middle-East. Terrorists cause fear by their attacks. In some regions, there are tensions between followers of the different world religions. There are (increasing) political and economic tensions between the world powers.
 - “On earth peace”? Is this peace only available to those who believe the Gospel, the good news of the birth of Jesus Christ? Is it peace with God and peace of the heart, an inner peace, as a result of the forgiveness of sins, the grace, and mercy of God?
- ❖ One aspect of the Gospel of Luke should not be overlooked. It is one of the four Gospels, and Luke wrote his Gospel in a Roman-Greek world. It is Gospel, good news, and at the same time, it has far-reaching political and religious consequences in a world, where the Roman Emperor especially in the eastern part of the Roman Empire, was revered as a god and lord of this world.¹
 - The angels glorify God. At the same time, their song is highly religious-political: only God has the supreme power. Only God will give peace.
- ❖ Although the story of the birth of Christ and the visit of the shepherds is probably the best-known story in the world, it is important to preach these words again and again. Jesus Christ is the promised one, who conquered sin and evil. He overcame death by his resurrection. He is Son of God and son of man. He glorified his heavenly Father and will establish eternal peace. He is the glory of God. He is the peace of God.

¹ "Imperial Cult (ancient Rome)." *Wikipedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, n.d. Web. 16 Dec. 2016.

- It all started with Genesis 3:15, where the Lord God cursed the serpent, the devil, Satan. “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he² will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”
 - The prophet Isaiah comforted the oppressed people of Israel with the following words: “**For to us a child is born**, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, **Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace, there will be no end.** He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this” (Isa 9:6-7).³
 - God became man: “Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross!” (Phil 2:5–8).
 - And: “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth” (Jn 1:14).
- ❖ The context, form and structure, theological, technical and hermeneutical notes given in this sermon outline overlap with other sermon outlines taken from Gospel of Luke. This makes it possible to use this sermon outline as a “stand-alone”. You can also fit this outline into a series of sermons.

Context

- ❖ Luke wrote this introduction to his gospel:
 - “Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. Therefore, since I myself have carefully **investigated** everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus” (Lk 1:1-3).
 - It is probable that he met Mary and spoke with her.⁴
- ❖ Luke was writing for an audience with a Roman-Greek background. He gave a historical account.
- ❖ The story of the announcement of the birth of Jesus Christ to the shepherds in the fields belongs to the introductory chapters of this gospel:

² Revelation 12:1-7 shows this war between the offspring and the serpent, the dragon.

³ All these titles are royal epithets.

⁴ Luke 2:19 and 2:51: “But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart” might point to this first-hand information.

| | |
|------------|--|
| Lk 1:1-4 | Preface – introduction |
| Lk 1:5-25 | The announcement of the birth of John the Baptist |
| Lk 1:26-38 | The announcement of the birth of Jesus |
| Lk 1:39-56 | Mary meets Elisabeth; song of Mary |
| Lk 1:57-80 | Birth, circumcision and naming of John the Baptist; song of Zechariah |
| Lk 2:1-21 | Birth, circumcision, and naming of Jesus; the shepherds in the fields of Ephrata; the song of the angels |

Form and structure

- ❖ The announcement of the birth of Christ to the shepherds has a few scenes.

| | |
|---|---|
| <i>Setting:</i> | “And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. |
| <i>The announcement of the birth of Christ – the sign</i> | An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.’ |
| <i>The glorification of God by the angels</i> | Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.’ |
| <i>The shepherds found the baby – the sign</i> | When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.” So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. |
| <i>Afterwards</i> | When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.” |

- ❖ It is noted that Luke 2:14 doesn’t have any verbs. It is an acclamation

Technical, hermeneutical and historical notes

Some historical dates

- ❖ Jesus Christ was born around 4 BC, during the reign of Emperor Augustus (Rome) and King Herod (Jerusalem, Juda).
 - Augustus (23 September 63 BC – 19 August 14 AD) was the founder of the Roman Principate and considered the first Emperor, controlling the Roman Empire from 27 BC until his death in AD 14.
- ❖ Luke wrote his Gospel probably around 60-70 AD.⁵
 - This was during the reign of Emperor Nero (54 AD – 9 June 68 AD).⁶

Hermeneutical chart

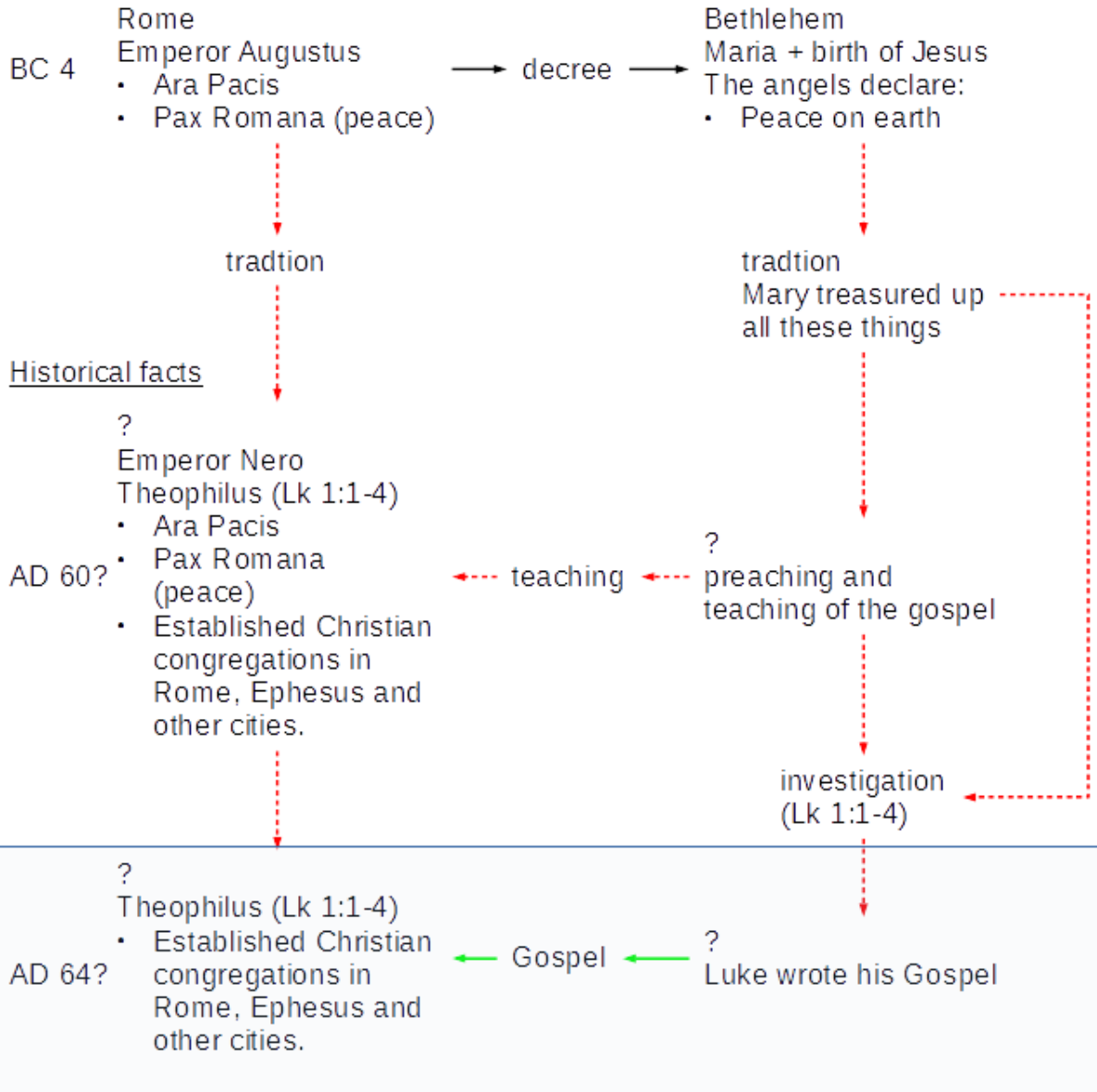
- ❖ When Luke wrote his gospel, the Roman emperors were increasingly revered as Lord and a conflict between Christ, the Lord, and the emperor, the Lord couldn't be avoided.
 - Augustus himself didn't promote an emperor cult to honor him as Savior and Lord of the world. In the eastern part of the Roman Empire, this was more a custom, than in the western part.
- ❖ The hermeneutical chart on the next page shows the following. When Christ was born, during the days of Emperor Augustus, the angels of God proclaimed his glory and peace on earth. Mary treasured all the words spoken by the shepherds up in her heart and mind. They became part of the traditions, the stories about the birth of Christ. They were probably orally transmitted and perhaps as time passed by, written down as part of different gospels, which have been lost.
 - When this story of the shepherds as part of the proclamation of the Gospel by the apostles and evangelists entered the Roman-Greek world AD 30, the gospel became conflictual because the Roman emperors were increasingly honored as lord and savior of the world, especially Emperor Augustus.
- ❖ For the exposition of the song of the angels, the final part of the chart is the most interesting one. The following questions can be asked:
 - How did Theophilus understand the words?
 - "Glory to God in the highest";
 - "And on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."
 - Theophilus probably must have visited one or more Christian communities, men, and women on whom the favor of God was resting. These communities were showing and promoting a different peace in comparison with the Roman Peace,

⁵ For a discussion of the various possible dates of writing see: Bock, D. "Luke, the Gospel of." In: Green, J. (2002, p. 498-500).

⁶ Nero. (n.d.). Retrieved December 22, 2016, from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nero>

which was honored by an altar in Rome. The peace of the Christian communities was embedded in love and joy (Gal 5:22).

Historical facts



- textual evidence
- - - - - implied tradition

❖ The question marks in this chart indicate that the present reader has no access to this information. It is not known, where Theophilus was living, and where, when and under which circumstances Luke wrote his gospel.

Verse 8-12

❖ The titles of Jesus:

- Savior = “σωτήρ”: **one who rescues, savior, deliverer, preserver**, as a title of. This was the epithet especially of the Greek god Asclepius, the god of healing. In the second century AD, the Greek philosopher Celsus compared the cult of Asclepius with the Christian worship of the Savior. Likewise, other divinities, like Sarapis and Isis, as well as Heracles or Zeus were called Savior.⁷
 - In the Old Testament, the Lord presents himself as the Savior of Israel and as a personal Savior (Ps 24:5; Ps 65:5; Isa 45:15, 21; Isa 62:11).
- Lord = “κύριος”: 2. **one who is in a position of authority, lord, master**.
 - a. as a designation of God (Lk 2:9: “angel of the Lord,” “the glory of the Lord;” Lk 2:26: “Lord’s Christ”);
 - b. Closely connected with the custom of applying the term κύριος to deities is that of honoring (deified) rulers with the same title. From the time of the Roman emperor Claudius, who reigned from AD 41-54, we find the Roman emperors so designated in increasing measure; in isolated cases, even earlier.
 - κύριος is also used in ref. to Jesus in Old Testament quotations, where it is understood of the Lord of the new community (Lk 3:4).⁸
- Christ = “Χριστός”: 1. **fulfiller of Israelite expectation of a deliverer, the Anointed One, the Messiah, the Christ**.⁹
- The titles or epithets of Christ, which are firmly rooted in the Old Testament and ascribed to the God of Israel, became a source of religious conflict between the church and Rome when the Gospel went out into the world and was preached in front of governors, Greeks and Romans. This conflict forms the background of the final book of the Bible, the Revelation of John.

❖ Sign = “σημεῖον”:

- 1. **a sign or distinguishing mark whereby something is known, sign, token, indication;**
- 2. **an event that is an indication or confirmation of intervention by transcendent powers, miracle, portent;** a. **miracle:** a miracle of divine origin, performed by God himself, by Christ, or by men of God.¹⁰

Verse 14

❖ Glory = “δόξα”:

- 3. **honor as enhancement or recognition of status or performance, fame, recognition, renown, honor, prestige**¹¹;

⁷ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (2000, p. 985).

⁸ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (2000, p. 578).

⁹ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (2000, p. 1091).

¹⁰ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (2000, p. 920).

- ❖ The highest = “ὕψιστος”:
 - 1. **pertaining to being the highest in a spatial sense, highest.** Opposite to earth.¹²
 - This also means that God has the highest status.
- ❖ Peace = “εἰρήνη”:
 - 1. **a state of concord, peace, harmony;**
 - 2. **a state of well-being, peace.** a. corresponding to Hebrew *שְׁלוֹמ* *welfare, health*. b. Since, according to the prophets, peace will be an essential characteristic of the messianic kingdom), Christian thought also frequently regards “peace” as nearly synonymous with messianic salvation (Isa 9:6).¹³
 - Peace is not simply the absence of war, but evokes a whole social order of well-being and prosperity, security and harmony.¹⁴
 - “The fruit of righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever” (Isa 32:17; see also Isa 48:18).
 - “You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all” (Acts 10:36).
 - “In the Roman world, Pax was the personification of (political) peace. Scarcely heard of before Augustus, she comes (as Pax Augusta) to represent one of the main factors which made the imperial government both strong and popular, the maintenance of quiet at home and abroad (according to Tacitus, a Roman historian, Augustus ‘seduced everyone with the sweetness of peace’). The most famous monuments of the cult were the Ara Pacis Augustae (the altar dedicated to the peace of Augustus) and templum Pacis (temple of Peace), built by Emperor Vespasian and dedicated AD 71.”¹⁵
 - “The funds to create this grand monument were acquired through Vespasian’s sacking of Jerusalem during the Jewish-Roman Wars.”¹⁶
- ❖ Favor = “εὐδοκία”:
 - 1. **state or condition of being kindly disposed, good will** of humans (Phil 1:15). **Lk 2:14** ἐν ἀνθρώποις εὐδοκίας has frequently been interpreted **among men characterized by good will**. But evidence from Qumran and recent literary analysis of Luke points to meaning 2.

¹¹ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (2000, p. 257).

¹² Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (2000, p. 1045).

¹³ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (2000, p. 287-288).

¹⁴ Nolland, J. (1989, p. 108).

¹⁵ Pax. In: *The Oxford classical dictionary*. (2003, p. 1129).

¹⁶ Temple of Peace, Rome. (n.d.). Retrieved December 22, 2016, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temple_of_Peace,_Rome

- 2. **state or condition of being favored**, *favor, good pleasure* this would refer to the persons upon whom divine favor rests and the meaning would be ***people to whom (God) shows good will*** or ***whom (God) favors***.¹⁷
 - Due to the fact that this word is used within the context of an acclamation of the glory of God, and the shortness of this text,¹⁸ it might be possible that both meanings are in few. People favored by God are people of good will (towards God).¹⁹

Exposition

Verse 1-13

- ❖ **“In those days Caesar Augustus”** (Lc 2:1). Due to an Imperial decree, Joseph and Mary had to return to the city of Bethlehem, the “city of David” (Mic 5:2; Mt 2:6), for taxation purposes. This Roman emperor wasn’t aware of the far-reaching consequences of this edict. At the same time, God was fulfilling his promises.
- ❖ Mary was pregnant of the Lord. “While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn.”
 - This manger belonged probably to the shepherds who were out in the fields of Ephrata. This happened according to the plan of God. The shepherds will hear good tidings from the angel: “This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger” (Lk 2:12). It was probably their manger.
- ❖ An angel of the Lord appeared to the shepherds. They are terrified when the glory of the Lord shone **around them**.
 - Try to imagine, it is completely dark, and there is only the light of the stars and suddenly you’re standing in the spotlights.
 - “The presence of the glory of God suggests that it is God himself at work in the coming of the Christ.” “This use of glory originated from the Old Testament. “God himself could not be seen, but his radiance could be apprehended.”²⁰
 - At all major events, the annunciation, the birth of Christ, the resurrection, and the ascension, angels were present and proclaiming the word of God.

¹⁷ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (2000, p. 404).

¹⁸ Nolland, J. (1989, p. 108).

¹⁹ For a grammatical discussion of the use of the genitive case see: Wallace, D. B. (1996, p. 86-91).

²⁰ Burge, C. “Glory.” In: Green, J. (2002, p. 269).

❖ “But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid. **I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.**”

- “How beautiful on the mountains
are the feet of those who bring good news,
who proclaim peace,
who bring good tidings,
who proclaim salvation,
who say to Zion,
‘Your God reigns!’” (Isa 52:7).
-

Verse 14

- ❖ The glorification of God is an important theme in the Gospels of Luke and John.²¹
- ❖ It is likely that a first-century Hellenistic (Greek) reader, like Theophilus (Lk 1:1-4), would find in this story concerning the birth of one who is to be savior and bringer of peace an echo of the language in which Augustus had been honored.²²
 - The following comparison is insightful.

| Augustus ²³ | God (Jesus Christ) |
|---|--|
| Augustus is Latin for "majestic," "the increaser," or "venerable"), was an ancient Roman title given as both name and title to Gaius Octavius (often referred to simply as Augustus). ²⁴ | Glory to God in the highest |
| Augustus 'seduced everyone with the sweetness of peace'. He established the Pax Romana, the peace of Rome. | and on earth peace |
| This peace was maintained by law and order, by military presence and in cases oppression. | to men on whom his favor rests. |
| His birthday was hailed as the beginning of good news. ²⁵ | "But the angel said to the shepherds, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy." (Lk 2:10). |
| Augustus was hailed as a savior. | "A Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. (Lk 2:11). |

- ❖ Christ is the glory of God:
 - "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."
- ❖ Christ is the peace of God, given to men:
 - "For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity

²¹ Hurtado, L. "God." In: Green, J. (2002, p. 274).

²² Nolland J. (1989, p. 112).

²³ Augustus. (n.d.). Retrieved December 20, 2016, from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Augustus>

²⁴ Augustus (honorific). (n.d.). Retrieved December 20, 2016, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Augustus_\(honorific\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Augustus_(honorific))

²⁵ "... since Providence, which has ordered all things and is deeply interested in our life, has set in most perfect order by giving us Augustus, whom she (Providence) filled with virtue that he might benefit humankind, sending him as a savior, both for us and for our descendants, that he might end war and arrange all things, and since he, Caesar, by his appearance ... since the birthday of the god Augustus was the beginning of the good news for the world that came by reason of him..." (Porter, S. E., 2006, p. 93)

out of the two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near” (Eph 2:14-17).

- It is the peace of reconciliation to God and to each other. It is the peace of love and joy. See above.
- Paul wrote to the Philippians: “And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Phil 4:7).
- This peace of God can only fully be understood in the light of the cross, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, as Paul makes clear in his letters to the Romans and to the Ephesians.

Verse 15-21

- ❖ The shepherds went to Bethlehem and “found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.” All who heard the story of the shepherds were. “Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.”
 - She was most likely one of the sources for Luke when did his investigations.
- ❖ “The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.”

Application

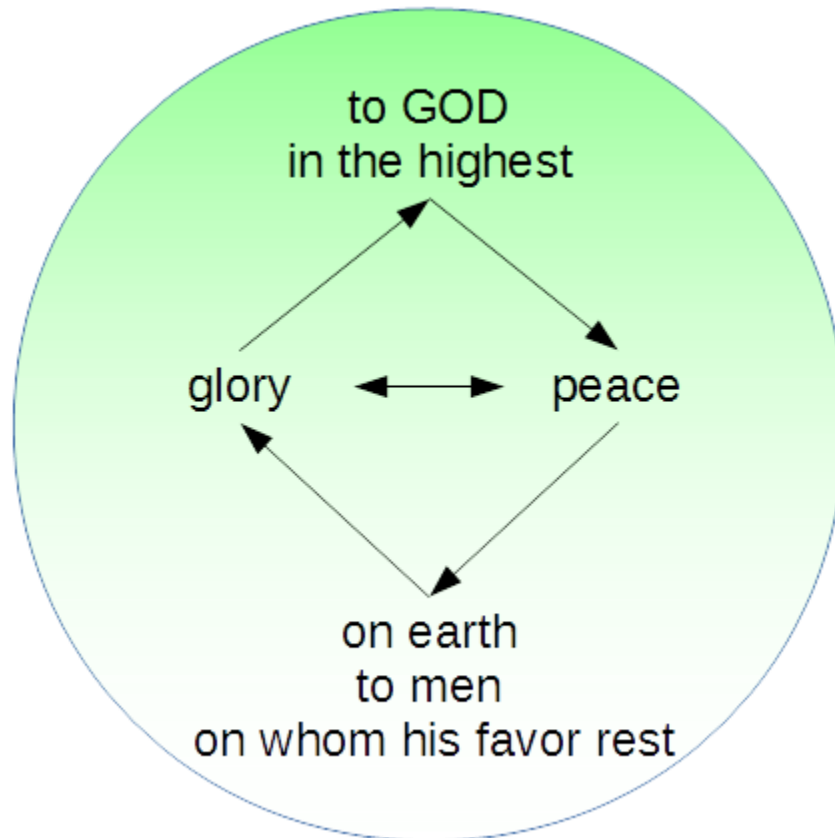
Verse 1-13

- ❖ The history of this world is governed by God. At the appointed time, Emperor Augustus issued a decree. And somewhere in a remote part of his Empire, two people went to a small town to register and to give to the LORD and Savior of this world.
- ❖ The news of the birth of Christ is announced by the angel and God’s radiance surrounds the shepherds. God himself is present.
 - “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.”
 - Indeed, great JOY!
 - Then the host of heaven sings praises to God.
- ❖ God is faithful to all his promises, which is stressed by the use of “city of David.”

Verse 14

- ❖ The birth of Christ means:
 - “Glory to God and
 - Peace on earth to men on whom his favor rests.”
 - It is amazing that God’s favor will rest on people.
- ❖ Peace is the ultimate gift of the Kingdom of God. Is part of the blessings of the Sermon on the mount: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God” (Mt 5:8-9).

- The Gospel is called the gospel of peace: “and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from **the gospel of peace**” (Eph 6:13).
- ❖ Peace is found loving and caring Christian communities. “The kingdom of God is a matter of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom 14:17).
- ❖ The peace of God is fruit of the Spirit: But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, **peace**, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law (Gal 5:22-23). All the other aspects of the fruit promote peace, and of course, the opposites take peace away.
 - Thus: love promotes peace, joy promotes peace, etc.
 - And: unfaithfulness takes peace away, the lack of love takes peace away, etc.
- ❖ Glory and Peace are the two sides of the same coin. Where God is glorified, Peace will be



given.

- ❖ This is made possible by God, who gave Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.²⁶

²⁶ Bird, M. F. (2015). Kyrios Christos: The Lordship of Jesus Christ Today. Retrieved December 20, 2016, from <http://www.harvardichthus.org/2015/06/kyrios-christos-the-lordship-of-jesus-christ-today/#fn-12555-4>

- Only the love Christ can conquer evil, terror, and fear, when people come to faith in him.

Quotes

Hark the herald angels sing
"Glory to the newborn King!
Peace on earth and mercy mild
God and sinners reconciled"
Joyful, all ye nations rise
Join the triumph of the skies
With the angelic host proclaim:
"Christ is born in Bethlehem"
Hark! The herald angels sing
"Glory to the newborn King!"

Christ by highest heav'n adored
Christ the everlasting Lord!
Late in time behold Him come
Offspring of a Virgin's womb
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see
Hail the incarnate Deity
Pleased as man with man to dwell
Jesus, our Emmanuel
Hark! The herald angels sing
"Glory to the newborn King!"

Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Son of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings
Ris'n with healing in His wings
Mild He lays His glory by
Born that man no more may die
Born to raise the sons of earth
Born to give them second birth

Hark! The herald angels sing
"Glory to the newborn King!"

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