



Daily Verse and Comment

Luke 2:11-14

(11) For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. (12) And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, 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, good will toward men.

King James Version

The title "Christ the Lord" would probably have been said as "Messiah Adonai" in the Aramaic that these shepherds spoke. This is a not-so-subtle intimation that this newborn child was not only the promised Messiah, but also the One known as "the Lord" in the [Old Testament](#). The angel is not merely announcing the birth of a special baby in Bethlehem but that [God](#) had been born as a human being ([Matthew 1:23](#); [John 1:14](#))!

In verses 13-14, Luke writes: "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth [peace](#), goodwill toward men!'" Here appears another BOOM! in the evangelist's narrative. Suddenly, there was not just one angel in the glory of the Lord, but a whole host of them all around the quivering shepherds. Not only were they visible, they were singing as only angels can, praising God. Their presence heightens the importance of the announcement.

The angels are obviously overjoyed that this greatly anticipated event in God's plan had finally taken place. Another huge step in God's purpose had been accomplished. Note, too, that this was not just a small, heavenly choir but the heavenly host that appeared in full force. God's vast army came to add their voices to the announcement that their great Captain had just been born!

The hymn they sang, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" requires some explanation. *Glory* is the Greek word *dóxa*, which means "praise, recognition, honor, worship"—the height of reverence and adulation that we could give or say to God. "In the highest" is a somewhat controversial phrase in that, as a superlative, it could modify either "glory" or "God." Thus, it could refer to the highest glory or the highest God (or even God in the highest heaven). There is a possibility that in the Aramaic, the words the angels sang may have been "Glory to the Most High God," since that is a common title of God in the Old Testament.

They also sing of peace on earth. One of Christ's titles is "The Prince of Peace" ([Isaiah 9:6](#)), and He who had just been born would eventually bring peace on earth. He would do it first through His sacrifice, making peace between God and sinful man ([Romans 5:1](#)), and later He would return in glory, bringing peace to the earth with the sword ([Revelation 19:11-21](#)). He will have to impose peace at His [second coming](#), but once He does, the earth will have real peace. Only through the birth of God's Son in Bethlehem could the process of bringing true peace to the earth begin.

The final words in the angels' song are "goodwill toward men," a long-disputed phrase. However, most modern experts in Greek agree that the whole clause should be translated, "Peace on earth among men of His good pleasure." This implies that God was bringing peace and [joy](#) especially and specifically to those to whom He had granted favor or extended grace.

During the [Passover](#) sermon [Jesus](#) gave His disciples, He says, "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you" ([John 14:27](#)). His disciples, numbering a mere 120 ([Acts 1:15](#)), were the only ones who could really experience peace because they comprised the extent of those with whom God had found favor. Yet, within days, thousands more had been converted, and God's peace began to expand. Real peace, a fruit of God's Spirit ([Galatians 5:22](#)), can only be produced in those in whom God's Spirit dwells ([Romans 8:14](#)). Right now, members of God's church are the only people on earth who can really have godly peace on earth because "unto us a Child is born. Unto us a Son is given" ([Isaiah 9:6](#)).

We are the "men of His good pleasure." Jesus tells His disciples in [Luke 12:32](#): "Do not fear little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you

the kingdom." We are the ones who have this favor from God. The angels' song is a declaration to us that God is with us, just as He was with Mary when He overshadowed her ([Luke 1:35](#)). As spiritual Israel and spiritual Zion, we are the apple of His eye ([Deuteronomy 32:9-10](#); [Zechariah 2:7-8](#)), and He will do all He can to bring us to salvation and into His Kingdom.

These passages mean so much more than what we usually see in a [Christmas](#) pageant, a nativity scene out on the town common, or hear in a catchy jingle. What we see in these announcements are elements of the way God works, and they should strengthen our [faith](#) in Him and what He is doing. They should solidify our hope in the resurrection because, not only did the Father bring His Son into [the world](#) just as prophesied, but He also guided Jesus through a perfect human lifetime to His sacrificial death for us all, resurrecting Him from the grave exactly [three days and three nights](#) later, as Jesus had said was the only sign of His Messiahship ([John 2:18-22](#)).

That glorious Holy One ascended to heaven and now sits at the right hand of God as our High Priest. He is the Head of the church and our soon-coming King. He promises us, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" ([Hebrews 13:5](#)), as well as, "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also" ([John 14:3](#)). He now awaits the word from His Father to return to this earth to set up His Kingdom. What great confidence we can have that all this will happen as planned, and we will be part of it!

As the angels sang to the shepherds in the field, "Glory to the Most High God and peace on earth among those He favors!"

— Richard T. Ritenbaugh

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