

“Peace on Earth”

Dr. Geoffrey Plummer
Calvary Baptist Church

December 19, 2021

Scripture

Luke 2:1-14

Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. And everyone was on his way to **register for the census**, each to his own city. Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child.

While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. And she gave birth to **her firstborn son**; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. "This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

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

History and Beginnings of Christmas

- Many Pagan holidays around Winter Solstice
- The return of the sun became the coming of the Son

In the 4th century, Pope Julius I chose December 25. It is commonly believed that the church chose this date in an effort to adopt and absorb the traditions of the pagan Saturnalia festival. First called the Feast of the Nativity, the custom spread to Egypt by 432 and to England by the end of the sixth century.

By the Middle Ages, Christianity had, for the most part, replaced pagan religion. On Christmas, believers attended church, then celebrated raucously in a drunken, carnival-like atmosphere similar to today's Mardi Gras.

In the early 17th century, a wave of religious reform changed the way Christmas was celebrated in Europe. When Oliver Cromwell and his Puritan forces took over England in 1645, they vowed to rid

England of decadence and, as part of their effort, cancelled Christmas. By popular demand, Charles II was restored to the throne and, with him, came the return of the popular holiday.

The pilgrims, English separatists that came to America in 1620, were even more orthodox in their Puritan beliefs than Cromwell. As a result, Christmas was not a holiday in early America. **From 1659 to 1681, the celebration of Christmas was actually outlawed in Boston.**

After the American Revolution, English customs fell out of favor, including Christmas. In fact, Christmas **wasn't declared a federal holiday until June 26, 1870.**

So, was Jesus really born on December 25th?

Jesus's Christmas Story

- Decrees and a Census -> solely to localize the time of Jesus's Birth
- The Roman census was for military recruitment -> it was normally a draft.
- Jews could not be drafted, so they were excluded from the census
- As Rome fell under economic pressure, the census extended to Israel for tax purposes

Jesus was born in Bethlehem, the House of Bread, so the Bread of Life (John 6:35) was born in the House of Bread. Seems logical, right? David was also born in Bethlehem (1 Samuel 17:12).

Jesus was the firstborn Son, Luke writes, noting that Jesus had other siblings, half brothers and sisters. Traditional Catholic beliefs are that Mary was a virgin to her death which is not what the Bible teaches.

Does the fact that shepherds were watching over their sheep by night indicate that it was not a December birth? Not necessarily. The average temperature for Bethlehem in December is a high of 56 and a low of 47. It's possible, but not probable He was born in December.

Angelic Words (Luke 2:10-11)

Great Joy for All the People! Which people?

Zechariah 9:9

- "Rejoice greatly, O daughters of Zion! Shout Aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!"
- "Behold your King is coming to you, righteous, and having salvation is He!"

Simeon's Words (Luke 2:29-35)

"Now Lord, You are releasing Your bond-servant to depart in peace, According to Your word; For my eyes have seen Your salvation, Which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples, A LIGHT OF REVELATION TO THE GENTILES, And the glory of Your people Israel."

And His father and mother were amazed at the things which were being said about Him. And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, **this Child is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed-- and a sword will pierce even your own soul-- to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.**"

Angelic Multitude Praising God (Luke 2:13-14)

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

- The KJV/NKJV says "good will toward men"
- The NIV says "on whom his favor rests".
- The ESV/NASB says "with whom He is pleased".
- The Amplified Bible says, "with whom He is well-pleased."
- The Holman Christian Standard Bible says, "peace on earth to people He favors!"

Only the KJV/NKJV gives a different, more holistic reading.

Eudokia "To have favor for or have pleasure in"

Jesus's Thoughts on His Peace

Matthew 10:34

"**Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.**"

Jesus said this in the middle of discourse on True Discipleship. He continued:

"For I came to SET A MAN AGAINST HIS FATHER, AND A DAUGHTER AGAINST HER MOTHER, AND A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW AGAINST HER MOTHER-IN-LAW; and A MAN'S ENEMIES WILL BE THE MEMBERS OF HIS HOUSEHOLD. "He who loves father or mother more than Me **is not worthy of Me**; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me **is not worthy of Me**. "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me **is not worthy of Me.**"

John 14:27

"**Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you.** Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful."

Ambrose Bierce, the cynical author of a newspaper column called "The Devil's Dictionary", written in the 1800s, defined peace as "a period of cheating between two period of fighting."

Incidentally, he also defined love as "temporary insanity curable by marriage."

The world's definition of peace is not Jesus's definition of peace.

John 16:33

"These things I have spoken to you, **so that in Me you may have peace.** In the world you have tribulation but take courage; I have overcome the world."

You say, wait a second, isn't Jesus called the Prince of Peace?

The Prince of Peace -> Isaiah

Yes, let's turn to that passage in Isaiah 9 and look at it. There is a Bible passage quoted often in Isaiah 9. We read it every Christmas holiday and it is a beautiful passage to read.

Isaiah 9:6-7

“For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us;

And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness, from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.”

This is a prophecy, right? Isaiah wrote this 600+ years before Jesus was born.

We have to ask ourselves: “Has it been completely fulfilled yet?”

The world does not see Jesus as a Wonderful Counselor, nor as a Mighty God, nor as the Eternal Father...and certainly not as the Prince of Peace.

Only those who have come to know Him personally, who have experienced His peace, know Him as the Prince of Peace.

In the future, though, when He comes on a thundering white horse as John describes in Revelation 19 and eliminates every person that is not part of the chosen, those who are not part of the elect – then, the entire “world” will know Him as the Prince of Peace.

Don't you long for that day, Church?

Marana-tha -> Lord Come!

We can have true peace with God now!

True Peace with God

True peace with God is very easy to understand. In an evil world, however, false teachers and false prophets disguise the truth of the need to make peace with God.

Doesn't God love everyone?

The false teachers in the Old Testament failed to warn their people of the impact of their sin on the relationship between them and God. Instead, they gave them pleasing words, **“It's OK, I'm OK, you're OK”**...

Jeremiah 6:11-14

“But I am full of the wrath of the LORD; I am weary with holding it in. "Pour it out on the children in the street and on the gathering of young men together; For both husband and wife shall be taken, the aged and the very old. "Their houses shall be turned over to others, their fields and their wives together; For I will stretch out My hand against the inhabitants of the land," declares the LORD. "For from the least of them even to the greatest of them, everyone is greedy for gain, and from the prophet even to the priest. Everyone deals falsely. **"They have healed the brokenness of My people superficially, Saying, 'Peace, peace,' But there is no peace."**

Isaiah 30:9-10

“For this is a rebellious people, false sons, Sons who refuse to listen to the instruction of the LORD; Who say to the seers, "You must not see visions"; And to the prophets, "You must not prophesy to us what is right, **Speak to us pleasant words**, Prophecy illusions.”

James 3:17

“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable.”

We must teach the truth to our children, our friends, and our neighbors and have spiritual integrity (be pure) before we can discuss **true peace**.

John 3:36

“The one who believes in the Son has eternal life; but the one who does not obey the Son will not see life, but **the wrath of God remains on him**.”

Colossians 1:15-20

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created through Him and for Him.

He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, **having made peace through the blood of His cross**; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.”

The **only way** to have peace with God is to accept Jesus's blood sacrifice of His cross.

1 Timothy 2:1-6

“First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, **who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth**. For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time.”

Acts 4:12

Peter said, “There is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men **by which we must be saved**.”

You can have all this world, “Just Give Me Jesus”

The Offer of Peace

Matthew 11:25-30

"At that time Jesus said, "I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. "Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight. "All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, **and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.**

The only way someone is going to know about God is if Jesus purposely wills to reveal Himself

"Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

The offer is to come to Him while you can, before it's too late and you die without knowing Him personally.

Isaiah 55:1-7

"Ho! **Every one who thirsts, come** to the waters; And **you who have no money come**, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk Without money and without cost.

"Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and delight yourself in abundance.

"Incline your ear and come to Me. Listen, that you may live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you, according to the faithful mercies shown to David.

"Behold, I have made him a witness to the peoples, A leader and commander for the peoples.

"Behold, you will call a nation you do not know, And a nation which knows you not will run to you, Because of the LORD your God, even the Holy One of Israel; For He has glorified you."

Seek the LORD while He may be found; Call upon Him while He is near.

Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; And let him return to the LORD, **And He will have compassion on him, And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon."**

Close Your Eyes

Pray this request to God: "Lord, put a name in my mind of someone I know who does not know you personally!"

Raise your hand if you have a name...

Candy Canes in the House

Take One, Deliver One, Tell the Story to Someone

Prayer

Order of Service

Calvary Baptist Church, Cambridge

December 19th, 2021 – 9:30 AM

Dr. Geoffrey Plummer Preaching

Welcome and Announcements

Pastor Geoffrey Plummer

Worship in Music

Congregation

- Come Let Us Adore Him
- Silent Night
- Oh, Holy Night

Offertory Prayer

Deacon Colby Carpenter

Reading of God's Word and Prayer

Trustee Jerry Schaeffer

Sermon (Luke 2:1-14)

Pastor Geoffrey Plummer

Celebration Music

Congregation

- Amazing Grace

Benediction

Pastor Geoffrey Plummer

Announcements for Sunday December 19th, 2021

Communications Update

- The new website is LIVE: www.cbccne.org
- YouTube Channel: www.youtube.com/channel/UCra63eoUMtj13N2Q_uamemA
- Online Giving is Available: Go to the website, there is a Give button at the top right

- Sermon Video is online
 - Catch-up if you missed a message or forward the link to a friend
 - Subscribe on YouTube to get notifications of new videos

- Sign-up for Communication Updates if you haven't already

Upcoming Events

- Potluck Dinner after Worship Today Sunday, December 19th

- Packing of Christmas Program Treats Wednesday, December 22nd at 6:00pm

- Christmas Eve Service Friday December 24th at 5:30pm

Financial Update for Sunday December 19th, 2021

Account Description	November 2021
Checking Account	\$ 87,716.85
Savings Account	\$ 1,517.98
Youth Account	\$ 402.13
Memorial Fund	\$ 30,741.92
Debit Card Account	\$ 1,000.00
Building Fund	\$ 3,013.98
Total Bank Account Balances	\$ 124,392.86
Contributions Income	\$ 3,551.00
Monthly Expenses	\$ 5,181.02
Net Monthly Cash Flow	\$ (1,630.02)

Lyrics to Come Let Us Adore Him (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-SIYcNnJA20>)

O come, all ye faithful,
Joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem.
Come and behold Him,
Born the King of Angels!

O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee,
Born this happy morning;
Jesus, to Thee be the glory giv'n;
Word of the Father,
Now in the flesh appearing

O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord

O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord

Lyrics to Silent Night (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wJF5UfsW_lw)

Silent night, holy night!
All is calm, and all is bright
Round yon Virgin, Mother and Child
Holy infant so tender and mild
Sleep in heavenly peace
Sleep in heavenly peace

Silent night, holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight.
Glories stream from heaven afar
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia,
Christ the Saviour is born!
Christ the Saviour is born

Silent night, holy night!
Son of God love's pure light.
Radiant beams from Thy holy face
With dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus Lord, at Thy birth
Jesus Lord, at Thy birth

<the humming of the choral>

Lyrics to Oh, Holy Night (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pUh7xDO-8bE>)

O holy night, the stars are brightly shining,
It is the night of the dear Saviour's birth;
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
'Till he appeared and the soul felt its worth.
A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices,
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn;

Fall on your knees, Oh hear the angel voices!
O night divine! O night when Christ was born.

Led by the light of Faith serenely beaming;
With glowing hearts by his cradle we stand:
Led by light of a star sweetly gleaming,
Here come the wise men from the Orient land,
A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices,
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn;

Fall on your knees, Oh hear the angel voices!
O night divine! O night when Christ was born.

Fall on your knees, Oh hear the angel voices!
O night divine! O night when Christ was born.
O night divine! O night divine!

Lyrics to Amazing Grace (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NG0vH4WYChQ>)

Amazing grace
How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost, but now I'm found
Was blind, but now I see

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear
And grace my fears relieved
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed

Through many dangers, toils and snares,
We have already come;
'Twas grace hath brought us safe thus far,
And grace will lead us home.

When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we'd first begun.

Amazing grace
How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost, but now I'm found
Was blind, but now I see