

## **Gloria in Excelsis Deo (Luke 2:8-20) - Pastor Blake Hart**

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### Introduction

- The first of the three songs after the Birth of Jesus.
- My hope is that this song will be magnified by the beauty of the entire context of this powerful scene.
- Read v. 8-20
- Explain verses 1-7
- Explain the significance of The tax, the historical significance (not a day too early or too soon),
- and why there was no place for them in the inn (God surely could have ordained a room, but the son of man had no place to lie his head), In an unclean place, lying in an unclean bed all for our sake, and for the reality that more than just people and angels adored their master that night
- (Isa. 1:3 The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's crib)
- His whole life would be marked by such affliction, he was suffering servant of Isaiah, and the entire life of that infant would we lived in the shadow of calvary, but take heart that there was no room for him, that he suffered so greatly, that he was afflicted in every way because every bit of it was for our sake, (We have a high priest who is able to empathize with us in every way.
- The grand reality of Christmas is the reminder that we have a God who absolutely knows.

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### **I. The Angel's Audience**

Read v. 8-9

Bethlehem six miles outside of Jerusalem filled with sheep that were used for the sacrifices.

Paint the picture of a starry night lying upon a hill watching over your sheep probably gathered around a fire with a few of your friends, and then the most immaculate eye burning light you've ever seen appears before you.

It is said that they were filled with great fear.

Heavenly angels are cloaked by the holiness of God day and night and few things are more horrifying than a sinner in the presence of holiness (Isa 6).

But why shepherds?

- considered low class, undesirable, even considered thieves of a sort

"Has not God chosen the poor of this world, to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him." (James 2:5.)

- God chose to first visit low class nobodies who were marginalized and forgotten by society to show who he had come for. The physician comes for the sick.

Explain why this is such good news.

-But he also came to shepherds because he was coming a shepherd the perfect shepherd. (Remind of Ezekiel 34).

He was the good shepherd coming to seek and save the lost sheep. (What was David before he was a king.)

\*So the message to shepherds is a reminder that God came for the lowly, the outcast, the forgotten because he himself is the Good Shepherd.\*

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## II. The Angel's Message

Read v.10-12

Knowing the men are horrified, the angels like they have with Mary and Joseph say "Fear not, we have good news of great joy."

Tell story of Mother whose son is a soldier and is deployed but two men in dress uniforms show up to her door but says we bring good news your son has saved many lives and will be receiving the medal of honor after he returns home.

The message that the angels bring will be more joyful than any news anyone could ever receive, and it is not just for these shepherds but for all the people.

But what was this great message?

"For unto you is born in this day in the city of David"

“A Savior” - If you have ever sinned in any form or fashion you need a savior, explain how only God can forgive sins, Jesus says the son of man referring to himself can forgive sin.

“Who is Christ” - Christos - the anointed one, the Messiah.

Three groups that are ever considered anointed in the OT: Kings, Prophets, and Priests.

Jesus is our final King. He will forever sit upon the throne of David and the scepter of Judah will never depart from him. He will rule an elect multitude from every tribe tongue and nation in the new heavens and earth and will do so for all eternity.

Jesus is our final prophet, in that all the fullness of God is revealed in his person. “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, **2** but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.” - Hebrews 1:1-2

If you have seen me you have seen the Father, all the fullness of deity exists in Him. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature,

Jesus is our final priest. He is the mediator between God and man, the fulfillment of the Mosaic Covenant by being the perfect high priest, and the spotless lamb who would serve as the once and for all sacrifice that would propitiate the wrath of God against all this sacrifice covered.

Through him we can approach the throne of God Boldly, and he forever makes intercession on our behalf.

“He was also the LORD” The sovereign creator who is over all things, not only is he king of kings he is Lord of Lords, his will will never be thwarted and every knee will bow and confess that this Jesus is Lord.

You cannot have Jesus as your Savior without also having him as your Lord, doing what he says do and going where he says go.

This is what made that news so great and so joyful, and they tell them where they can find their beloved savior.

Read v.12

The excitement and the joy of the angels could not be held though immediately upon disclosing their message they are moved to praise.

### III. The Angels' Song

Read v. 13-14

We are told that there was a multitude of heavenly hosts that means legion or army.

The same legion that Jesus could have summoned to wipe out all those at his Cross was singing glorious praise.

This was common they sang when they watched him Create the world (Job 38:7)

How we ought to be more like the angels moved to praise and joy over the grand works of our creator.

Read v.14

The coming of this child will be the greatest revelation of the glory of God even among the heights of heaven, and the coming of this child will bring peace to God's people — who will one day fill the whole earth with righteousness and peace. “Of the increase of his government *and of peace* there will be no end (Isaiah 9:7).”

First his glory in the highest, there is no greater act of God's glory than the coming of Jesus, every attribute of God would be fully revealed in the Savior's life, death, and resurrection, and secondly, peace is found wherever the Son is received.

This is a grand correlation and perhaps the most important concept of the entire Christmas story. The Christmas of Jesus coming is the greatest display of God's glory and the only means by which eternal lasting peace is found.

The point is that, even though God's offer of peace goes out to all, only his chosen people — the people who receive Christ and trust him as Savior and Messiah and Lord, will experience the peace he brings.

You get a glimpse of this meaning in Luke 10:5–6, Jesus says to his disciples, “Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace be to this house!’ [that's the offer of peace to all] And if a *son of peace* is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if not, it will return to you.”

God's peace in Christ is offered to the world. But only the “sons of peace” receive it. How do you know if you are a “son of peace”? How do you know if you are part of the angels' promise, “Peace among those with whom he is pleased!”? Answer: you welcome the Peacemaker, you receive Jesus

God is glorified, and peace is multiplied wherever the Son is received.

### **Three Ways this Peace is Revealed**

1) Peace between God and us, receiving the son is the only means by which no longer are children but children of God. Justified by faith, not works or anything else. We are peace with God.

Talk about Muslim story, and explain there is no sweeter reality than going to bed with that peace in your heart.

2) Peace with ourselves. I include any sense of guilt or anxiety that tends to paralyze us or make us hopeless. Here again believing the promises of God with a view to glorifying God in our lives is key.

Philippians 4:6 do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

The picture here is that our hearts and our minds are under assault. Guilt, worries, threats, confusions, uncertainties — they all threaten our peace. And Paul says that God wants to “guard” your hearts and minds. He guards them with his peace. He guards them in a way that goes beyond what human understanding can fathom. Don’t limit the peace of God by what your understanding can see. .

3) Peace with others. This is the one we have least control over. So we need to say it carefully the way Paul does in Romans 12:18. He says, “If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.”

For many of you when you get together with family for Christmas, there will be some awkward and painful relationships. Some of the pain is very old. And some of it is new. In some relationships you know what you have to do, no matter how hard it is. And in some of them you are baffled and don’t know what the path of peace calls for.

In both cases the key is trusting the promises of God with heartfelt awareness of how he forgave you through Christ. I think the text that puts this together most powerfully for me again and again is Ephesians 4:31–32, “Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”

Continually cultivate a sense of amazement that in spite of all your sins God has forgiven you through Christ. Be amazed that you have peace with God. It’s this sense of amaze-

ment, that I, a sinner, have peace with God, that makes the heart tender, kind and forgiving. Extend this to others seventy times seven.

In all of this God is exponentially glorified because he and he alone can bring such peace, and he did 2000 years ago in a gift wrapped in swaddling clothes.

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#### **IV. The Shepherds' Response**

Read v. 15-20

1. They Made known what they Heard. The Christmas message is not one to keep quiet about we ought to tell it with such joy and and expedience.
2. They glorified and praised God for all they heard.

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Closing

Good news of Great Joy! That's what Christmas is. Three songs we've seen Mary's song of God's grace and Mercy and Justice.

Zechariah's song of who and what Jesus would do as Immanuel and our perfect savior, and then the Angels song of God's glory and perfect peace for all who receive this Savior, this Christ, this Lord.

Christians let us leave singing praise and glorifying God for sending his Son, and let us praise Christ who though was God did not count equality with God a thing to be Christ, and was born into the Gutter most to save to the utter most.