

Christmas Series
“God Came Near”
Part 1: Peace
Sunday, December 6th, 2020

LUKE 2:1-20 (NIV)

The Birth of Jesus

2 In those days Caesar Augustus(A) issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world.(B) **2** (This was the first census that took place while[a] Quirinius was governor of Syria.)(C) **3** And everyone went to their own town to register.

4 So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem(D) the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. **5** He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him(E) and was expecting a child. **6** While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, **7** and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

8 And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night.**9** An angel(F) of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. **10** But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid.(G) I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. **11** Today in the town of David a Savior(H) has been born to you; he is the Messiah,(I) the Lord.(J) **12** This will be a sign(K)to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

13 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

14

“Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace(L) to those on whom his favor rests.”

15 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.”

16 So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.(M)**17** When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, **18** and all who

heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. **19** But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.(N) **20** The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God(O) for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Peace: Absence of conflict (world's definition)

Peace: Presence of God (Bible's definition)

SHALOM: Hebrew word for "peace." The most basic meaning of shalom is COMPLETE or WHOLE. ("Eirene" in the Greek)

Life is complex, full of moving parts, relationships and situations. When we are out of alignment, our shalom breaks down. Life is no longer whole; it needs to be restored.

To bring shalom literally means to make complete or restore.

The same goes for human relationships. In the book of Proverbs, to reconcile and heal a broken relationship is to bring shalom.

Proverbs 16:7 (NIV)

"When the Lord takes pleasure in anyone's way, he causes their enemies to make peace with them."

So the prophet Isaiah looked forward to a future king, a prince of shalom.

Isaiah 9:6-7 (NIV)

"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 Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness 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."

CALLED TO CREATE PEACE

John 14:27 (NIV)

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”

Jesus was the whole, complete human that I am made to be but have failed to be. And now, He gives me His life as a gift.

Ephesians 4:3-6 (NIV)

“Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”

Becoming people of peace means participating in the life of Jesus who reconciled all things in heaven on earth, restoring peace through his death and resurrection.

Colossians 1:19-20 (NIV)

“For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.”