

HANDOUT PART 3 TO EXPERIENCE GREAT JOY REQUIRES THE PEACE OF GOD

2000 Years Ago, Peace Arrived on Planet Earth. His Name is Jesus. He Came into the World Humbly and Without Notice. But the Heavens were a Different Story. A Towering Angel Accompanied by Hordes of Heavenly Hosts Lit Up the Sky with Praise to Introduce Our Savior—The PRINCE OF PEACE.

Luke 2:14: "*Glory to God in the Highest Heaven, and on Earth Peace to Those on Whom His Favor Rests*"

KEY: The Gospel of Jesus Christ is a Message of Reconciliation and Hope John 3:16,17, that Hope is Only Accessible to Those who Believe in Him John 3:18, 36

The Angels are NOT Declaring God's Benevolence (GOOD WILL) to ALL Humanity; they are Celebrating His Mercy and Peace to Those who Follow His Will by Accepting His Son. (John 6:28–29; Hebrews 11:6).

*To Understand the kind of Peace the Angel Declared, We Must Accurately Understand Why Jesus came, Jesus Didn't Arrive One Silent, Holy Night with a STOCKPILE of God's Peace to Scatter Across the Earth as a "Gesture of Goodwill" toward All Mankind. Instead, **Jesus Came to BE PEACE On Earth to Every Person Who Would Receive His FREE GIFT! Ephesians 2:14, Isaiah 9:6***

KEY POINT: *God Does NOT Punish those Who Reject His Son...Those who Don't Believe Simply Remain in Their Prior State of Condemnation. WITHOUT PEACE! John 3:17-18*

- In that Condemned state, the World has NO way of Ever Experiencing the Kind of 'Peace on Earth' Described by the Angel at Jesus's birth.

POINT: To Reject Christ is to Reject God's Peace John 1:12 gives Us Good News... "To those who believed in his name [Jesus], He gave the right to Become Children of God".

- When we Accept Christ as our Savior, We Become Recipients of God's Divine Favor.
- Peace comes to live inside each person who receives Him 2 Cor 13:5, Rom 8:10
- AND IT IS THIS DIVINE PEACE HE OFFERS US THAT IS OUR GREAT JOY!

Question>>>If Jesus is Our Peace, Why Don't All Believers Enjoy a Life Free of Conflict?

This Question gets to the Heart of an Issue that Jesus's own Disciples Grappled with Before His Death and Resurrection. The disciples had grown up believing that when the Messiah came, He would Conquer their Enemies, Subdue All Other Nations, and Set Up a Kingdom that would Make Everything Right in the World. The Disciples' Expectations were Limited to An Earthly Understanding of what God's Kingdom Was to be.

Jesus Explained to Pilate John 18:36, "*My kingdom is NOT of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place*". **Luke 17:21**

- It's powerfully at work in the world, through the lives, and in the hearts of all believers.

KEY: *The Prince of Peace Rules and Reigns in His Kingdom and Our Peace on Earth can be Experienced to the Depths of Our Souls—As We Abide With Him There.*

- God's Peace is Not a Worldly Brand of Peace that Ebbs and Flows with Circumstance. *It's a Perfect Peace Powerful Enough to "Serve as the very guard Against the Circumstances of Unrest,"*

When the Angels Proclaimed Luke 2:14 "*Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth Peace to those on whom his favor rests*"...*They were bursting at the seams with GREAT JOY and Exaltation because They Knew they Were Witnessing God's Plan of Redemption Through His Son.*

The Announcement was part of an Invitation to 'come and see' God's Lamb, who had arrived to take away the Sins of the world and bring Peace to All who Believe in Him. 1 Tim 1:4 & 2 Peter 3:9

The Angel's Proclamation was an Important part of God's plan to Introduce His Son to the World and Show that His Invitation to Receive Salvation Extends to Shepherds, Leaders, and Everyone in Between.

KEY: The Reason it's Important to Avoid Painting the Angel's Proclamation of Peace in Generic Terms like, "Peace on Earth to All Men" Is Because this Phrase Creates a Blanket Statement that Misdirects the Lost World from the True Source of God's Peace—**Which is...Faith in and Acceptance of His Son!**

- **Romans 5:1, John 16:33, Ephesians 2:13, 14**
- Scripture also Describes the True Condition of Mans Heart and Attitudes and Minus the Covering of Jesus's Blood...The Picture is Far from Peaceful. **Matthew 10:33-34**

KEY: The Hope that Christmas Brings Can't be Fully Realized or Enjoyed Until We Come to Terms with Our Utter Need for a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

- *That Blessed Hope Is the Only Thing that Provides Peace on Earth! It Also Gives Every Sinner the Opportunity, through Jesus's Blood, to Become a Child of God, "On Whom His Favor Rests."*

KEY POINT: IT IS GOD'S PEACE ALONE THAT OFFERS EACH OF US GREAT JOY!

- Peace is Not the Absence of Problems, Difficulties or Adversity...Peace Is the Presence of Jesus!
- *Practicing the Presence of God is About Turning Your Every Life Experience into a Prayer. Nothing You Face in Life is Exempt from Surrender to Jesus.*
- *Midst Every Victory, Every Trial, Every Annoyance, Every Disagreement. We are to Just Turn it Around and Bring it into the Presence of God.*

FOLLOWING ARE A FEW WAYS TO PRACTICE GOD'S PRESENCE...

- **Begin Your Day With Intentionality.**
- **Turn Complaints Into Cries Of Praise.**
- **Turn Suffering Into Surrender.**
- **Turn the Mundane Into A Holy Moment.**

If You Do Not Have This Peace Or Great JOY Weve Been Speaking About these Past Weeks...You Can Experience God's Peace Simply by Daily Walking with Jesus Christ...The Prince of Peace!

KEY: *The Only Way You Can Know Peace is to Know the Prince of Peace, by Inviting Jesus Christ to come into Your life.*

If You Have Never Done this...You Can...By Simply saying *Jesus I Acknowledge My Sin and Need for a Savior...Right Now I am Confessing MY Sin and I ask You to Come into MY Life and be MY Savior and Lord.* And then Thank Him for His Wonderful Gift!

BLESSING *"May the God of Hope Fill You With Great Joy and Peace as You Trust in Him, So That You May Overflow With Hope By the Power of the Holy Spirit"*

MERRY CHRISTMAS