**GLORY TO GOD, PEACE TO MEN**

Luke 2:1-14

Key Verse 14

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

**Introduction**



 In this passage we can learn how Jesus was born and the message the angels delivered about his birth. Jesus was born in a small town, Bethlehem and placed in a manger. Jesus’ birth is the good news of great joy for all the people. Jesus’ birth reveals the glory of God. Why is Jesus’ birth glory to God? It is because it is a fulfillment of God’s salvation plan for the fallen world through Jesus’ humble obedience (Phil 2:5-11). Why is Jesus’ birth ‘peace to man’? It is because through Jesus we can be reconciled with God. Jesus came to this world as the ransom sacrifice for sinners, and sinners can become the children of God. When we accept God’s amazing love through his Son Jesus, we can have peace: peace with God, peace with one another, and peace in our hearts. May God help us to renew our joy and peace while we newly meditate on Jesus’ birth through this passage.

**1. Read verses 1-7. Describe the historical background of Jesus’ birth. (1-3) What is the significance of Joseph and Mary’s going to Bethlehem? (4-5; Mic 5:2) What does Jesus’ birth in a manger mean? (6-7; 2 Cor 8:9)**

1-1. **Read verses 1-7**.

 In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. 2 (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) 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 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 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.

**1-2.** **Describe the historical background of Jesus’ birth. (1-3)**

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

· Caesar Augustus( B.C 63-A.D:14) Original name was ‘Gaius Octavius’. He was the first emperor of Roman Empire and was enthroned for 40 years (B.C.27-A.D.14). He was a very powerful and successful emperor who established the foundation of Pax Romana. (The peace of Rome).

· Usually a census was ordered on a regular basis for taxation, army service, and for keeping the order in the Empire.

· Quirinius : The Roman governor of Syria. He was an able general and helped Caesar Augustus as an advisor for a while. Israel became part of Syria and was ruled by the Empire.

. Census should be taken of the entire Roman world : The Roman empire was the most powerful kingdom on earth at this time and was very prosperous. But Jesus’ kingdom and his power was very small at this time, as tiny as a baby. However Rome perished but Jesus’ kingdom is still growing and Jesus is in the most high with all authority in heaven and on earth!

. "It is possible that the Sovereign Lord God used the emperor's order as a means of removing Mary from possible gossip and emotional stress in her own village. Joseph had already accepted her as his wife (Matthew 1:24), but apparently continued in betrothal (Luke 2:5), pledged to be married, till after the birth."

· Everyone went to their hometown: For the census, people had to go back to their hometown and register. This was the customary way Israel’s census registration was conducted. The Roman way was to have the people register wherever they lived at the time. Jews also followed the order but they kept their pride and dignity as a chosen people.

· By describing the historical background, the author Luke shows that Jesus’ birth was a historical fact that actually happened, fulfilling God’s promise.

**1-3.** **What is the significance of Joseph and Mary’s going to Bethlehem? (4-5; Mic 5:2)**

 ***So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem 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 and was expecting a child.***

· Joseph and Mary went to Bethlehem : It was the fulfillment of prophecy about the Messiah’s birth. ***“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah,out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.”* (Mic 5:2)**



· Micah was a prophet who prophesied from approximately 737 to 696 BC in Judah. He preached one of the most significant prophecies of Jesus Christ’s birth in all the Old Testament, pointing some seven hundred years before Christ’s birth to His birthplace of Bethlehem and to His eternal nature.

· Micah’s prophecy was fulfilled exactly in history seven hundred years later.

· God fulfilled His word using the Emperor’s order, which shows God’s sovereignty and his faithfulness. God is the Lord of history and his will is done absolutely.

· Joseph belonged to the house and line of David : It was the fulfilment of God’s promise that the Messiah would come as a king in the line of king David.

· Bethlehem : King David’s hometown (1 Samuel 20:6). Located 7.2 km from Jerusalem, used to be called ‘Ephrathah’, Rachel was buried in the place.(Gen 35:19) called “house of bread” as well.

**1-4.** **What does Jesus’ birth in a manger mean? (6-7; 2 Cor 8:9)**

 ***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.***

· The time came for the baby to be born: Jesus was born, going through all the same growing processes just like any other baby. He was born as an ordinary baby and human being.

· By being born with human flesh, He is able to empathize with us and help us. **For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. (Heb 4:15)**

· Her first son : After Jesus’ birth, Mary gave birth to other children. (Lk 8:19,20 Mt 12:46, Mk 3:31)

· guest room available : refers to motel or inn, Jesus couldn’t have a room where he could be taken care of as a baby. From his birth Jesus experienced suffering and poverty.

· Placed him in a manger : very poor, humble and low place. He was so humble and poor even though he was the Lord of Lords, compared to the Emperor of Rome.

· The place of Jesus’ birth shows Jesus’ humility and suffering. Jesus replied, **“Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.”(Lk 9:58)**

· Jesus served sinners through his suffering and humility.

· Jesus made us rich through his poverty**. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich. (2Cor 8:9)**

* Jesus was born at an inn where people stay temporarily to give the message that the earth was his temporary place. To all the believers this world is a temporary place where we stays for a while until we enter the kingdom of God, our eternal home.
* Jesus was not welcomed by people. Rather they didn’t recognize him, so they allowed him to be laid in a manger.
* We cannot see any glory or honor from this baby in the manger. Instead what we see is humility, poverty, and sorrow.

**2. Read verses 8-12. Who were the first recipients of the news of Jesus’ birth? (8, 9) How is Jesus’ birth the good news of great joy for all people? (10, 11) What does this sign tell us about God’s work (12)?**

**2-1. Read verses 8-12**.

 And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. 9 An angel 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. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. 11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. 12 This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

**2-2. Who were the first recipients of the news of Jesus’ birth? (8, 9)**

***And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. 9 An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.***

· Shepherd: shepherding was considered as lowly job. People looked down shepherds considering their work as manual and unclean. Shepherds were ignored as low class humble people.

* Even though people didn’t recognize him, God honored him through certain people and his angels. People could doubt saying ‘How could a baby laid in a manger be a savior?’ But through his message to the shepherds and the appearance of huge number of angeles, God clearly demonstrated that Jesus was Messiah whom he sent.
* But giving the news of Jesus’ birth to the shepherds first, God showed who the Messiah would be for his people. Jesus became a good shepherd to his sheep and laid down his life for them(Jn 10:11)

· The good news was given to the poor and humble people first. He came for lowly people who were poor in spirit.

· keeping watch over their flocks at night : the shepherd took care of the sheep taking turns at night. They were faithful shepherds who took take care of their sheep well.

Moses and David keeping their sheep were called to serve God's people.

. Likewise Jesus is the good Shepherd who watches over his sheep faithfully even at night.

· The glory of the Lord shone around them, which refers to the presence of God. The good news came from God and God was working. God confirmed the message by shining his glory around them. It was God’s glorious work.

**2-3. How is Jesus’ birth the good news of great joy for all people? (10, 11)**

 ***But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. 11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.***

· Good news: Jesus’ birth is good news because his birth will be a blessing for all people.

· It will bring great joy for all the people : all people on earth regardless whatever background they may have. Anyone can receive the blessing of Messiah’s birth by faith.

· The good news is a savior, the Messiah was born: what people really need is the savior, the Messiah who can save them from their problem, especially from their slavery of sin and death.

· He is the Lord: Jesus is the Lord God. He is the Lord over all things including our hearts and life.

· When people are free from their sins and ruled by the Lord Jesus, they can live a life that is full of fruit, joy and peace.

. Also the Hebrew word “Messiah” is translated to the Greek word “Christ” In the Old Testament, three groups of people were anointed. They were priests, prophets, and kings. They were anointed with oil to signal their dedication to God.

* **First, Jesus is our Priest.** In order to accept Jesus’ birth as good news of great joy, we must listen to the bad news first. The bad news is that we human beings are sinners and all of us are destined to die. This is our destiny as uncomfortable as this truth might be. Sin breaks God’s heart. Sin provokes God’s anger. So the forgiveness of sin is costly. In the Old Testament times, people brought the best animals they had to sacrifice it, for atonement or forgiveness of their sins before the priests. In this way, sacrifices were offered every day in the temple. But the day came when the cute lamb in the temple was no longer the sacrifice.
* Yes! The day has come! What a great day it is! When the baby in the manger grew up and offered himself as the Lamb of God. The baby in the manger was born precisely in order to become the offering on the cross. He is the Lamb of God, given us by the Father for the reconciliation of all who put their faith in Jesus.
* Jesus is our Priest who sacrificed himself for us. This world was full of enmity. But it is reconciled by the Lamb of God who is our Priest. Because Jesus, our Priest, offered himself for us, we have access to God. We have access to the Kingdom of God. We were guilty, but not guilty any more through the baby Jesus. This is really good news of great joy!
* **Second, Jesus is our Prophet.** A prophet is a mediator between God and men who speaks God’s words to his people. He speaks what he has heard by inspiration from God or what God has shown him by vision or dreams.
* Jesus speaks conclusively for God because He Himself is God, Emmanuel, which means ‘God with us.’ Jesus says, “I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin” (Jn 8:34). But Jesus promises “Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (Jn 8:30). We were slaves of sin but Jesus saves us from our sins through his word of truth as a perfect mediator between God and men.
* **Third, Jesus is our King.** In Israel’s history, there were not many good and responsible kings. King David was different from others. He was a shepherd-king. He defended people at his own risk, for any reason. While he was on the throne, David brought glory to his people and eventually to God. But, as we know, even King David committed sins of adultery and murder. We need a perfect sinless shepherd king who rules us with truth and grace, but there is none who could ever rule in this way. But Jesus came to this world as the perfect God and the perfect man to be our Shepherd King.
* Then what is the ultimate purpose of Jesus’ coming to this world? It was to bring us back to his eternal kingdom. As Christ the Lord, Jesus came to restore the eternal kingdom of God. People thought that the Roman Empire would be eternal. But there is nothing eternal in the world. Only the kingdom of Jesus is forever. While on earth, Jesus rules our hearts with his grace and truth.
* When our lives are over, our ultimate destination is the kingdom of God. When we have faith in the kingdom of God, we can live a life as holy pilgrims with no anxiety. We can live our lives with God’s holy mission and the living hope of the kingdom of God.
* Spiritually we are in a battleground against Satan. Sometimes we are wounded, MIA (missing-in-action), or even KIA (killed-in-action). Who can safeguard us in this battlefield? Only Jesus is our King anointed from eternity.
* Jesus is the resurrection and the life. Good Shepherd Jesus never forsakes even a single sheep. He will bring all of us to His kingdom. Christ the Lord restores sinners and this world as a priest, and next he rules us as a king and teaches us the truth as a prophet. In this way, we are free as long as we remain in Jesus. Thank you, Jesus! You are indeed our Christ and the Messiah the Lord!

**2-4. What does this sign tell us about God’s work (12)?**

 ***This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”***

· baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger : the manger is the place where there is no glory and honor. The manger refers to humility, sacrifice and suffering. It shows how Jesus would save his people.

* Jesus didn’t come to this world with glory but came with complete humility

· God started his salvation work at the lowest place with a small baby. God starts his work with small and tiny thing and make it great, powerful and glorious.

**3. Read verses 13-14. How did the heavenly hosts with the angel praise God? (13-14) How does Jesus’ birth reveal God’s glory and bring peace to those who accept Him?**

**3-1. Read verses 13-14.**

 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising Godand saying,14 “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

**3-2. How did the heavenly hosts with the angel praise God? (13-14)**

· A great company of the heavenly host : The angels of God were the witness of the great work of God and they praised God for his great work through the birth of the Messiah.

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

* The angels celebrated the Messiah’s birth with great praise. We should celebrate Jesus’ birth with great joy and thanks praising God who sent him.
* God’s work of salvation shows his glory the most.

**3-3. How does Jesus’ birth reveal God’s glory and bring peace to those who accept Him?**

***· Glory to God in the highest heaven***

- The glory of God and his divine nature dwell in Jesus and are revealed through Him. **The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word**. (Heb 1:3a)

- The glory of God will be revealed through Jesus’ salvation work on earth and people will praise God.

- God’s glorious salvation work will be completed through Jesus Christ.

- The Messiah’s birth itself demonstrated God’s love, faithfulness, and power which are God’s glory.

· ***On earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.***

- Jesus will break down the barrier between God and men and bring reconciliation and peace between them through his sacrifice on the cross. **For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, (Eph. 2:14)**

- Before we were enemies of God because of our sin. Jesus reconciled us to God so that we would have peace in relationship with God. When people are reconciled to God in Jesus, they can have true peace. **Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 5:1)**

- People also can have peace among themselves overcoming all conflicts and having reconciliation in Jesus Christ. People can reconcile to each other and love one another in Jesus and have peace together.

**Conclusion**

 Jesus was born with deep humility and poverty to serve sinners and make them truly rich in him. He is the savior, the Messiah and the Lord. We can have true peace in Jesus reconciling with God and others. God revealed his glory and proclaimed peace to all people through Jesus’ birth.

**One word; GLORY TO GOD, PEACE TO MEN**