

The Basics of Peace

I. Introduction

- A. The New Testament definition of the kingdom of God is “living right with God, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” (Romans 14:17).
- B. Sometimes peace is described as not active, but peace is not emptiness.
 - 1. Peace is not even the absence of disturbing negative influences.
 - 2. Peace is a gift from God.
 - 3. It is a grace God gives to people who enter into His kingdom through repentance.
 - 4. Peace is always a positive thing, not the absence of negative influences.
- C. We are probably never more aware of peace, or at least the word “peace”, than during the Christmas season.
- D. The gospel of Luke tells the story of the birth of Jesus. Luke wrote that the angel said, “Give glory to God in heaven, and on earth let there be peace among the people who please God.” (Luke 2:14).

II. Peace on Earth—WHAT?

- A. What were the angels talking about when they announced, "on earth let there be peace?"
- B. The angels were speaking to common shepherds. The shepherds spoke Aramaic language and understood the trade language of Greek. The angels would not have spoken in the formal religious language that the Jewish scribes and priests used.
- C. The common Greek language word for peace (*Eirene*) also means that our other relationships in life are being brought into harmony.

Ephesians 6:15 On your feet wear the Good News of peace to help you stand strong.

- D. After His resurrection, Jesus greeted His disciples differently than He greeted others.
- E. Christ has a higher goal for our lives than just getting rid of our fears.
- F. In the New Testament God is called "the God of peace" at least 5 times.
- G. Paul taught us that when we pray to God with thanksgiving we will live in peace. If our lives are filled with worry, we will not have peace.

Philippians 4:6-7 Do not worry about anything, but pray and ask God for everything you need, always giving thanks. ⁷ And God's peace, which is so great we cannot understand it, will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

- H. God's peace may be beyond your understanding, but it is gloriously comforting.

III. Peace on Earth—WHERE?

- A. The political world is very uncertain.
- B. The economic world does not offer us peace.
- C. Even though there has been amazing progress in our lifetimes, there is not very much peace in the social world of America.

- D. Twice God warned a society much like our own: "There is no peace for evil people," says the Lord. (Isaiah 48:22; 57:21).
- E. The religious world doesn't have much peace either.
- F. There does not seem to be much peace anywhere in the world.

IV. Peace on Earth—TO WHOM?

- A. Having Christ living in you is not the answer to all your problems. It is not a guarantee of peace, not even to Christians.
- B. The angel's announcement of Christ's birth was not a promise of peace for everyone. It was very specific. The literal Greek is "peace . . . among those whom he has favored."
 1. The Revised Standard Version reads, "peace...among men with whom he is pleased."
 2. The New English Bible puts it, "And on earth his peace for men on whom his favour rests."
 3. John Knox translated it, " ...and peace on earth to men that are God's friends."
 4. Montgomery says, "peace among men who please him."
- C. There is an obvious cause and effect relationship between pleasing God and living in the peace of God.
- D. The angelic messengers brought God's announcement to many more people than just the common shepherds. God said to declare, "Peace on earth to men that are God's friends...and on earth peace among men in whom he finds pleasure" (Knox translation).
 1. God's friends are the people who consistently believe God and obey Him faithfully.

James 2:23 This shows the full meaning of the Scripture that says: "Abraham believed God, and God accepted Abraham's faith, and that faith made him right with God." And Abraham was called God's friend.
 2. These shepherds heard what was said, believed what they were told, they obeyed their instructions, and they saw Christ.
 3. It is not surprising that their hearts were overwhelmed with the peace of God.
 4. God's peace stays with people who listen to His voice and obey His commands.

Philippians 4:9 Do what you learned and received from me, what I told you, and what you saw me do. And the God who gives peace will be with you.
- E. Yes, there is "PEACE ON EARTH," but it is not peace for everyone. It is shared with the people who will trust and obey.

V. Peace on Earth—HOW?

- A. When Paul was teaching on the fruit of the Spirit, he said that peace was in the first group to ripen—Love, joy, PEACE.
- B. Paul taught us what God's great kingdom here on earth will be like. Also he described the kingdom of God in Heaven.

Romans 14:17 In the kingdom of God, eating and drinking are not important. The important things are living right with God, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.
- C. This peace is not promised to all the people on earth.

- D. Peace comes out of relationship, not out of religion.
- E. Peace is not an idea; it is a condition.
- F. When we receive the "PRINCE OF PEACE" (Isaiah 9:6), we receive the peace of the Prince.
- G. Did the angels exaggerate in their announcement?

VI. Peace is Relational

- A. This angelic announcement was mostly announcing that a Person had come. That person was bringing peace.
- B. A Savior had come.
Matthew 1:21 She will give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.
- C. CHRIST (Messiah) had come.
Luke 2:11 Today your Savior was born in the town of David. He is Christ, the Lord.
- D. The LORD had come.
Luke 2:11 Today your Savior was born in the town of David. He is Christ, the Lord.
- E. When Christ controls your mind, your day will be filled with peace.