

**Series Series:** The Canticles of Advent

**Sermon title: Gloria In Excelsis Deo**

**Scripture reading:** Luke 2:1-14

Clearwater Bay International Baptist Church

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"*Glory*" is a word that we hear a lot in the Bible.

Moses said to God in **Exodus 33**, "Please show me your glory."

**Psalm 19**, "The heavens declare the glory of God, the sky above proclaims his handiwork."

**Psalm 57:5**, "Be exalted, O God, above the heavens. Let your glory be over all the earth!"

**Psalm 96:3**, "Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples."

**Isaiah 6**, "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!"

**Isaiah 42:8**, "I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols.

**Habakuk 2:14** For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

### **What does Glory mean?**

The Hebrew word for glory is *Kabod*. It means heavy or weighty. So, if you are heavy with something like gold or camels or spices or kingdoms, then naturally you have great value and worth.

The Greek word used for glory is *Doxa*. It means opinion. If someone has a high opinion of you then you have honor and fame.

Joel Beeke says this about glory; ***“the word glory means the display of excellence and praiseworthiness (glory shown) as well as the response of honor and adoration to this display (glory given).”***

So, we see God’s glory....and the proper response is to give him.....glory.

**When the New Testament speaks of the glory of God, it points us to Jesus Christ, God the Son.**

**John 1:14** when John thought of glory he thought of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ.

“The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

**Hebrews 1:3** says, (God the Son) “is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.

**Luke 2:14** “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”

**Why this phrase from the angels and why here?  
They could have said anything. But they said THIS!**

One of the things that I want us to see in our passage today by way of introduction is that there are 2 people competing for glory in these 14 verses.

One seemed to have all the glory and one seemed to have none. Yet, things are not as they appear.

### **Luke 2:1-14**

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. **2** This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. **3** And all went to be registered, each to his own town.

**4** And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, **5** to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. **6** And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. **7** And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

**8** And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

**9** And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. **10** And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. **11** For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. **12** And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." **13** And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, **14** "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

#### **I. WHAT THE ANGEL SAID.** (Singular)

**10** And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the

people. **11** For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

This angel's declaration is spoken into a time when there was already a king. In fact a King of Kings, an Emperor.

- a king whose arrival was good news.
- a king who had a great army.
- a king who would bring peace

Luke assumes his Greek audience (Theophilus) knows exactly who he Caesar Augustus is.

Gaius Octavius...aka...Caesar Augustus was the first Emperor of Rome.

He ruled from 27 B.C until 14 A.D.

Augustus is not his name but a religious honorific title that he took when he became emperor.

His empire was known for its glory.

*Augustus* means "majestic" or "worthy of honor".

It's a title of glory and he was worshipped as a deity.

On Augustus's birthday in 9 B.C. a letter from the Proconsul Paulus Fabius Maximus was engraved in stone in Priene, (a city in modern-day Turkey), paying tribute to Augustus. See if it sounds familiar to you.

*“Since Providence, which has ordered all things and is deeply interested in our life, has set in most perfect order by giving us Augustus, whom she filled with virtue that he might benefit humankind, sending him as a **savior** [σωτήρ], both for us and for our descendants, that he might end war [peace] and arrange all things, and since he, Caesar, by his appearance.... surpassing all previous benefactors, and not even leaving to posterity any hope of surpassing what he has done, and since the birthday of **the god** [τοῦ θεοῦ] **Augustus** was the beginning of the **good tidings** [εὐαγγέλιον] for the world that came by reason of him...”*

**We must be careful not to remove our nice Christmas story from the Greek audience in which Luke wrote it.**

Augustus is worshipped as a deity and celebrated as ‘good news’ to the people.

He is seen as the *savior*. He is *anointed* or raised up by the gods to lead the world as *Lord* and bring *peace* (the Pax Romana) to all.

Into this historical context, Luke weaves a different story of good news.

It was declared and proclaimed, not by a governor but by an angel from heaven.

## **So, what was the message this single angel declared?**

**10** And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. **11** For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

## **Good news, great Joy, for all people, Savior, Christ the Lord.**

A baby has been born to some peasants, not in Rome but in a little village in Bethlehem, the hometown of one of Israel's famous kings of the past.

This baby's birth is miraculous.

This baby is no ordinary baby.

Luke wants his readers to understand this.

This Jesus is the long awaited Messiah of the Jewish people and HE is Savior and Lord and.....not Caesar.

## **To believe this good news and confess 'Jesus is Lord' could cause you great trouble in the Roman Empire and it can today.**

So, this single angel actually proclaims the gospel.

## **II. WHAT THE ANGELS SAID.**

Let's look at **verses 13-14**.

**13** And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

**14** "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

This is an innumerable number of a heavenly army of angels. In 2 Kings 19...one angel killed 185,000 Assyrians. Here there is a massive number of them. And they say, **14** "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

### **Why this phrase from the angels and why here?**

First, let's talk about **GLORY** again.

Because if we want to see the glory of God, we look to Christ. The angels are saying, *'Here, here in Christ, God the Son, becoming man to be the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world....here is glory! Not in Caesar, not anywhere else, but here in Christ.'*

This passage should really read like this.....

**Glory in the highest to God, and peace on earth to people He favors.** (HCSB)

God deserves praise and glory in the highest for what he has done through Christ.



God the Son, took on human flesh to redeem his rebel creatures...all who would believe in him.

When we think of the work of God in Christ, we should break out into praise and adoration....like those of

**Revelation 5.**

Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!

The gospel is that God alone deserves glory. He alone deserves praise.

**Are you living a life for God or for yourself?**

Second, the angels mention peace.

14 "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

It should be read like this; "*peace on earth to people He favors.*"

**"The people whom God favors are those who have found God's undeserved favor, or grace, through Christ."** [Christian Standard Bible Note.]

The single angel proclaims the gospel and so does the multitude of the heavenly army.

- “I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. **11** For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”
- “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”

**Good news, great Joy, for all people, Savior, Christ the Lord, Glory be to God, peace to those who believe.**

**Do you have peace?**

**What is peace?** Peace is a gift.

Peace is the internal rest experienced when the grace of God is dispensed through the Holy Spirit.

This world promises glory and peace.

All glory belongs to God alone and there is no peace except in Christ.

**Romans 5:1** says ‘we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.’

Jesus said, “I have said these things to you that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”

**John 16:33**