

Luke 2:7-14 - Coming Into A Story in the middle makes no sense. First Christmas Advent is in the middle.
(Second - Already - Not Yet)

The beginning and the end of the Bible are essentially the same - the Bible, which covers the entire history of humanity begins with a new heaven and a new earth, and ends with a new heaven and a new earth. With a whole lot of somethin somethin in between.

Heaven and earth were created in state of perfect peace. Shalom & glory

Gen 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Gen 1:26 Then God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us.

Gen 1:31 Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good!

End in Perfect Peace Shalom & glory

Rev 21:1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared. And the sea was also gone. 2 And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

3 I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, "Look, God's home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them. 4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever."

5 And the one sitting on the throne said, "Look, I am making everything new!"

Side Note - Neuter Christmas

Hope: absolute expectation of coming good - Hope always has an object and an expectation.

Ultimate Hope is to get back to the way it used to be. The way it once was. How far back? To the beginning!

Shalom = Peace Neil Plantinga, a theologian, "The webbing together of God, humans, and all creation in equity, fulfillment, and delight"—[this] is what the Hebrew prophets call shalom. We translate it "peace," but in the Bible, shalom means universal flourishing, wholeness, and delight. It describes a rich state of affairs in which natural needs are satisfied and natural gifts are faithfully and fruitfully employed, all under the arc of God's love.

"If I threw a thousand threads onto the table, they wouldn't be a fabric. They'd just be threads lying on top of each other. Threads become a fabric when each one has been woven over, under, around, and through every other one. The more interdependent they are, the more beautiful they are. The more interwoven they are, the stronger and warmer they are. God made the world with billions of entities, but he didn't make them to be an aggregation. Rather, he made them to be in a beautiful, harmonious, knitted, webbed, interdependent relationship with one another." Tim Keller

Physical Shalom, Psychological Shalom, Social Shalom, Environmental Shalom

The curse **Genesis 3:17-18** - 17 And to the man he said, "Since you listened to your wife and ate from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat, the ground is cursed because of you. All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it. 18 It will grow thorns and thistles for you, though you will eat of its grains.

Romans 8:19-22 - 18 Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will reveal to us later. 19 For all creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are. 20 Against its will, all creation was subjected to God's curse.

Restore Shalom -two part process - two step - First & Second Christmas otherwise you and I would be hopeless

First Christmas promise and Christmas fulfillment

Isaiah 9:1-2 1 Nevertheless, that time of darkness and despair will not go on forever. The land of Zebulun and Naphtali will be humbled, but there will be a time in the future when Galilee of the Gentiles, which lies along the road that runs between the Jordan and the sea, will be filled with glory. 2 The people who walk in darkness will see a great light. For those who live in a land of deep darkness, a light will shine.

Colossians 1:11-14 11 We also pray that you will be strengthened with all his glorious power so you will have all the endurance and patience you need. May you be filled with joy, 12 always thanking the Father. He has enabled you to share in the inheritance that belongs to his people, who live in the light. 13 For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, 14 who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins.

Isaiah 9:6-7 6 For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 His government and its peace will never end. He will rule with fairness and justice from the throne of his ancestor David for all eternity. The passionate commitment of the LORD of Heaven's Armies will make this happen!

Colossians 1:15-20 15 Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, 16 for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see— such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him. 17 He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together. 18 Christ is also the head of the church, which is his body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So he is first in everything. 19 For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ, 20 and through him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ's blood on the cross.

Christmas promise and Christmas fulfillment (in Jesus)

God acting as peace-maker, **who reconciles all of creation to Himself**

Reconciliation presumes a state of estrangement or hostility (rebellion)

Sin = personal/inner; circumstantial/external; governmental/societal discord (darkness)

God - Self - Others

God was promising Israel (us) Christmas peace in the person of Christ

Jesus would come as **The Light into the darkness of their external world powers, inner struggles and conflict, and alienation from God and reconcile all things as the Prince of Peace**

Colossians 1:20 - 20 and through him God reconcile everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ's blood on the cross.

2 Corinthians 5:18-19 - 18 And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. 19 For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation.

The claim here is that everything is and will **be set right though the Cross of Christ**

The cross is God's act of **reconciliation and peacemaking that restores the Shalom of original creation**

Because through the Cross (and resurrection) God dealt with **sin, death, devil**

Colossians 1:13-14 - 13 For he has **rescued us from the kingdom of darkness** and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, 14 who **purchased our freedom and forgave our sins.**

The whole world was under the power of sin, death and the devil

1 John 5:19 tells us, "the whole world lies in the power of the evil one."

Ephesians 2:1-3 - 1 Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. 2 You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. 3 All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God's anger, just like everyone else.

For this reason **God, as peace-maker sent His Son (in the flesh) as the Prince of Peace** to reconcile us

Hebrews 2:14-15 - 14 Because God's children are human beings—made of flesh and blood—the Son also became flesh and blood. For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the devil, who had the power of death. 15 Only in this way could he set free all who have lived their lives as slaves to the fear of dying.

Colossians 2:13-15 - 13 You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins. 14 He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross. 15 In this way, he disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross.

Now, because of Christ's victory over sin, death and the devil on the Cross—we can and will know peace -

Peace with God

Colossians 1:20-22 -20 and through him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ's blood on the cross. 21 This includes you who were once far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions. 22 Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault.

Romans 5:1-2 - 1 Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us. 2 Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God's glory.

Our standing before Him is perfect peace! • This is an unshakable, immovable place of peace

Isaiah 54:10 - For the mountains may move and the hills disappear, but even then my faithful love for you will remain. My covenant of blessing will never be broken," says the LORD, who has mercy on you.

Which means we have **abiding inner peace and joy**

Psalms 32:1-7 - 1 Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sin is put out of sight! 2 Yes, what joy for those whose record the LORD has cleared of guilt, whose lives are lived in complete honesty! 3 When I refused to confess my sin, my body wasted away, and I groaned all day long. 4 Day and night your hand of discipline was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat. 5 Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide my guilt. I said to myself, "I will confess my rebellion to the LORD." And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone. 6 Therefore, let all the godly pray to you while there is still time, that they may not drown in the floodwaters of judgment. 7 For you are my hiding place; you protect me from trouble. You surround me with songs of victory.

Which also means we can have **peace even in the midst of turmoil**

Isaiah 26:3-4 - 3 You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you! 4 Trust in the LORD always, for the LORD GOD is the eternal Rock.

Philippians 4:4-9 - 4 Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice! 5 Let everyone see that you are considerate in all you do. Remember, the Lord is coming soon. 6 Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. 7 Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. 8 And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. 9 Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me—everything you heard from me and saw me doing. Then the God of peace will be with you.

Jesus is the Prince of Peace (Immanuel = God of peace with us) - **forging new paths of peace in your mind**

God's heart for His people

Isaiah 66:12-14b - 12 This is what the LORD says: "I will give Jerusalem a river of peace and prosperity. The wealth of the nations will flow to her. Her children will be nursed at her breasts, carried in her arms, and held on her lap. 13 I will comfort you there in Jerusalem as a mother comforts her child." 14 When you see these things, your heart will rejoice. You will flourish like the grass!

We experience this through Jesus

John 14:27 - 27 "I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid.

John 16:33 - I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world."

Press into the person of Jesus (make room for Him!) - We can experience peace increasingly as we press into and follow Jesus

The way of peace

Luke 1:78-79 (Zacharias filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesying)

78 Because of God's tender mercy, the morning light from heaven is about to break upon us, 79 to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide us to the path of peace."

We can miss the path of peace

Luke 19:41-42 - 41 But as he came closer to Jerusalem and saw the city ahead, he began to weep. 42 "How I wish today that you of all people would understand the way to peace. But now it is too late, and peace is hidden from your eyes.

God longs for us to know peace in following Him

Isaiah 48:17-19 - 17 This is what the LORD says— your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: "I am the LORD your God, who teaches you what is good for you and leads you along the paths you should follow.

18 Oh, that you had listened to my commands! Then you would have had peace flowing like a gentle river and righteousness rolling over you like waves in the sea. 19 Your descendants would have been like the sands along the seashore— too many to count! There would have been no need for your destruction, or for cutting off your family name."

Don't forget Second Christmas...already not yet

And we, and the whole world, will ultimately **know peace in full** when Christ returns (Second Christmas)

The object of reconciliation (peace) as explained in Isaiah and Colossians is the whole world (universe)

Ways the world is reconciled (at Second Christmas)

Isaiah 9:7 - His government and its peace will never end. He will rule with fairness and justice from the throne of his ancestor David for all eternity. The passionate commitment of the LORD of Heaven's Armies will make this happen!

Isaiah 2:4 - The LORD will mediate between nations and will settle international disputes. They will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will no longer fight against nation, nor train for war anymore.

Isaiah 11:4-10 - 4 He will give justice to the poor and make fair decisions for the exploited. The earth will shake at the force of his word, and one breath from his mouth will destroy the wicked. 5 He will wear righteousness like a belt and truth like an undergarment. 6 In that day the wolf and the lamb will live together; the leopard will lie down with the baby goat. The calf and the yearling will be safe with the lion, and a little child will lead them all. 7 The cow will graze near the bear. The cub and the calf will lie down together. The lion will eat hay like a cow. 8 The baby will play safely near the hole of a cobra. Yes, a little child will put its hand in a nest of deadly snakes without harm. 9 Nothing will hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain, for as the waters fill the sea, so the earth will be filled with people who know the LORD. 10 In that day the heir to David's throne will be a banner of salvation to all the world. The nations will rally to him, and the land where he lives will be a glorious place.

One day, all of creation will be at peace - Because God dealt with sin, death and the devil

That is why the angels sang this the night Christ was born... **Luke 2:7-14**

14 **"Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased."**

Where do you need peace in your life right now? **Make room there for Jesus** - grace and peace