

A night sky filled with stars, featuring a prominent bright starburst in the upper left quadrant. The bottom of the image shows a dark silhouette of a landscape, possibly a mountain range or a rocky terrain. The text "And on Earth, Peace..." is overlaid in the center in a green, bold font.

And on Earth, Peace...

O Little Town of Bethlehem

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars together, proclaim the holy birth,
And praises sing to God the King, and peace to men on earth!

And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city. Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, And on Earth, peace, goodwill toward men!"

Luke 2:1-14 NKJV

O Little Town of Bethlehem

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Amidst conflict, humans yearn for peace

- Much effort is spent at every level human existence (global, national, community, domestic, personal) to achieve and/or maintain peace
- The history of the world is fraught with conflict
- Times of peace are fleeting and tenuous at best
- Our family and personal lives are usually no exception

The root of conflict traces back to the Garden...

The Conflict Begins

- In Genesis 3:14-19, we find these words: **cursed, enmity, sorrow, pain, toil, thorns and thistles, sweat**
- In the next chapter, Cain kills his brother Abel
- From that point forward, Biblical history is rife with war, murder, hatred, conflict, and...
- A yearning for the one who will bring peace, the Messiah

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, **Prince of Peace**. Isaiah 9:6

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, And on Earth, peace, goodwill toward men!"

Luke 2:13-14

The Prince of Peace has come!

This story has inspired many songs of hope.
Even much of the world celebrates.

But...

The story of His arrival was not a peaceful one!

“Herod will seek the young child, to destroy Him.”
Matthew 2:13

“Blessed are the peacemakers, For
they shall be called sons of God.”

Matthew 5:9



But...

“Do you suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division.”

Luke 12:51



And...

Pilate said, "Behold your King!" But they cried out, "Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar!"

John 19:14-15

Now, more than 2000 years
since Christ died and rose
again...



The world remains in conflict.



What has gone wrong?

Since conflict began, humans
have yearned for peace.

God promised peace through
Jesus Christ.



Has God broken His promise?



The peace the world seeks is
impossible.

The Origin of Conflict

- Conflict began as man set himself in opposition to God
- Conflict spread internally to his own soul
- Conflict spread externally to his fellow man
- A true solution to conflict must address the root cause
- The root cause of all conflict is SIN (**S**imply **I**, **N**ot God)!
- The world may desire peace within and among themselves, but...

“We will not have this man reign over us!” Lk. 19:14

Imagine there's no heaven
It's easy if you try
No hell below us
Above us only sky
Imagine all the people
Living for today...

Imagine there's no countries
It isn't hard to do
Nothing to kill or die for
And no religion, too
Imagine all the people
Living life in peace...

Imagine no possessions
I wonder if you can
No need for greed or hunger
A brotherhood of man
Imagine all the people
Sharing all the world...

You may say I'm a dreamer
But I'm not the only one
I hope someday you'll join us
And the world will live as one

Imagine, by John Lennon

"There is no peace," says the Lord, "for the wicked." Is 48:22

For to be carnally minded is death... Because the carnal mind is enmity against God. Rm. 8:6,7

For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman.

And they shall not escape.

1 Thessalonians 5:2-3

So I ask again...

Has God broken His promise
(or failed) to bring “peace on
Earth” through Christ?

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: “Glory to God in the highest, **And on Earth, peace, goodwill toward men!**”

Luke 2:13-14

A true solution to conflict
must address the root cause.

The root cause of all
conflict is **SIN!**

For Christ also died once for sins, the just
for the unjust, that He might bring us to
God... 1 Pt. 3:18

And you, who once were alienated and
enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet
now He has reconciled... Col. 1:21

Having been justified by faith, we have peace
with God through our Lord Jesus Christ...

Rom. 5:1

To be carnally minded is death, but to be
spiritually minded is life and peace.

Rom. 8:6

God has kept His promise!

For no matter how many
promises God has made, they
are "Yes" in Christ! 2 Cor. 1:20

The Origin of Conflict = Opposition to God (Sin)

Conflict with
God

Conflict within
own soul

Conflict with
fellow men

“The carnal mind is enmity against God...” Rm. 8:67

The End of Conflict = Reconciliation to God (Salvation)

Peace with
God

Peace within
own soul

Peace with
fellow men

“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts...” Col. 3:15

And on Earth, Peace...

Peace with God

Having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ... Rom. 5:1

Peace within our own souls

To be spiritually minded is life and peace. Rom. 8:6

Peace with our fellow men

“Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God.” Mat. 5:9

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**Let there be peace on earth
And let it begin with me**