

December 22, 2019 -

Isaiah 9:6-7 -

"Christmas, a time of Peace"

### Introduction:

A roving reporter stopped six people on the sidewalks of New York City and asked: "What was the most important event in human history?" The first replies were: The invention of the wheel, "The settlement of Jamestown, "The splitting of the atom, "The first man on the moon, the internet." Finally the sixth answer came from a 14-year-old boy: The birth of Jesus Christ." For over 2000 years now mankind celebrates this special child of peace.

God's people are said to "see only distress and darkness and fearful gloom during the day of Isaiah in chapter 8". This era was one of invasion of the Northern tribes by the Assyrians. They were humble and afflicted as a disciple of the Lord but God promised that they will see a great light, that their warfare will end because "unto us a child is born" and his name will be PRINCE of PEACE! Christmas time has a unique way to foster peace or at least hope for it.

On Christmas Eve in 1914, German and British troops fighting in WW1 stop hostilities and sang Christmas carols to each other across the front lines, and at certain points the Allied soldiers even heard brass bands joining the Germans in their joyous singing. At the first light of dawn on Christmas Day, some German soldiers emerged from their trenches and approached the Allied lines across no-man's-land, calling out "Merry Christmas" in their enemies' native tongues. At first, the Allied soldiers feared it was a trick.

However, seeing the Germans unarmed they climbed out of their trenches and shook hands with the enemy soldiers. The men exchanged presents of cigarettes and plum puddings and sang carols and songs. Some Germans lit Christmas trees around their trenches, and there was even a documented case of soldiers from opposing sides playing a good-natured game of soccer. German Lieutenant Kurt Zehmisch recalled: "How marvelously wonderful, yet how strange it was. The English officers felt the same way about it. Thus Christmas, the celebration of Love, managed to bring mortal enemies together in peace for a time. Not even a world war could destroy the Christmas spirit. The spirit of the person of Christ can change the hearts of men toward peace. Lasting Peace will only be obtained by the Prince of Peace!

### I The World Without Peace.

1. The world that Jesus was born into wasn't thinking about preparing for this one and only Prince of Peace! Rather a human Emperor named "Caesar Augustus". He was the great nephew of Julius Caesar. His name was really Octavia. In Julius' Caesar will Octavia was to succeed him in leading the Roman Empire. We find him mention in [Luke 2:1-2](#).

2. He was actually the First Roman Emperor of the World Empire. Many historians believe that he was the greatest of all Roman emperors. He brought Rome together uniting the empire together. However; to do this you need money and lots of it. So the people of that time were being heavily taxed, and faced every prospect of a sharp increase to cover expanding military expenses. Caesar Augustus called for a census "that the entire world should be taxed".

History confirms this taxation and the timing in history. (The Works of Josephus) Scripture confirms this taxation and history reaffirms this. (Acts 5:33-37)

3. It was a busy time in the Judean village, but the excitement had nothing to do with the upcoming birth of Christ. The crowds had gathered to take part in this unwanted census. They didn't know that Mary was about to deliver the Savior of the world the prince of Peace. In such a time, and amid such a people, a child was born to a migrant couple who had just signed up for a fresh round of taxation, and who could not find a room anywhere. But he is what the world longed for.

4. Jesus was born during a time of “peace,” but it came at the cost of Rome’s heavy-handed oppression. The *Pax Romana* (“Roman Peace”) existed only because Rome squashed all opposition by violence and oppression. So much for peace among mankind, so where is there peace on earth good will toward men? Did God fail? Is Christmas really a time of peace?

Where is the promised peace? Actually, upon contemplation, we can see that Jesus brought all that is needed for peace in our world. He told us to turn the other cheek, go the extra mile, forgive offenses, reject greed, tolerate each other’s weaknesses, live to serve and love one another as He has loved us. He taught the principles of peace, calling for people to love their neighbors as they love themselves.

## II. The Peace that Christ Brings.

1. God could have imposed a peace on the world, the way the Romans did. He could have made it so swords rusted away before they were used. But instead he chose to send peace into the world through his Son. Jesus was born as a child, grew up, lived among us, and eventually died on a cross. He showed us by example the ways of peace and kindness. Folks, our Lord had to go through that kind of suffering to foster us peace. But this peace is not likened unto the world.

2. Let’s think for a moment about the sort of peace that Jesus’ coming assures us of. First of all, Jesus’ coming brings us peace with God. We read in Romans 5: 7 **“Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”**

We can have inner peace because God gave us his Son. But to achieve inner peace, we must clear a hurdle. We must realize that even this peace is not the absence of turmoil; rather, it’s peace in the midst of turmoil. As long as we are in this world, we will live war with turmoil until the prince of Peace returns with the administrators of peace, his church.

3. Yes, because Jesus offers us peace, His peace. Jesus said, **“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.**

--- JOHN 14:27

There is a peace which Christ brings that passes all understanding. It’s a lasting peace that remains with us even when times are difficult. And it’s a real peace, a peace that will see our hearts being put at ease.

Our faith and hope in Christ sets us free to live in peace even if the whole world is falling apart around us. Despite “wars and rumors of wars”, despite turmoil among families, despite terrorism, we can be content and undisturbed in our stormy surroundings.

4. If we accept what Jesus did for us and have faith in His power to give us a “peace that passes all understanding”, then we can put our hope in Jesus to help us to be at peace no matter what is going outside. Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, God’s gift of 2000 years ago, brought, and continues to bring, peace. But not as we define it, our peace does not consist in having a life or world free of turmoil, but rather in having a quiet heart in the midst of turmoil.

5. He will one day “reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness” (9:7). Such a regime will be no oppressive *Pax Romana*. It will be the reign of the Prince of Peace.

#### Conclusion:

Until then except the peace that God gives through His only begotten son. It seems that in large part, peace is up to us. Paul verifies that in Romans 12:18, “**As much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.**” This Christmas, let’s make peace our gift to the world in which we live as we reflect the Prince of Peace.

December 22, 2019 ~

Candlelight Service ~

Luke 2:1-14

**Angels:**

Psalm 91:10-12 promises that God gives His angels charge over His people to guard and protect them from harm. The Bible records several instances of God's keeping this promise. For example, the Lord sent angels to deliver Lot and his family from the destruction of Sodom (Gen. 19:1-25). He sent an angel to protect Daniel from the fury of the lions (Dan. 6:16-22). He sent an angel to set the apostles Peter free from imprisonments (Acts 5:17-20; 12:1-11).

But one of the greatest acts of angels was the annunciation when the Angel Gabriel appears to the virgin Mary that she would give birth to the Messiah (Lk. 1:26-38). Then again Angels also announced to the shepherds on Bethlehem fields the birth of Christ, the lord.

**Hymns: 191, 199, 206, 207**

**"Shepherds"** in the same country watching over their flocks. His birth was announced to shepherds, the common man, but not to King Herod. The simple men were the humblest and meekest. Note these were first to hear the greatest news! Shepherd cares for "Sheep" and the Lambs" Many of the "shepherds of Bethlehem raised the sheep or lambs for the temple sacrifices at "Jerusalem".

**Hymns: 205 & 216**

**Bethlehem**

Christ was born in Bethlehem, in Hebrew this means "The House of Bread" the literal meaning of the city's name. Bread is one of life's most common things. God wanted to identify with the common man. God wanted His Son available to all. Jesus was not born in the house of royalty, nor in the house of riches, nor in the house of celebrity. Jesus was not born in Jerusalem, or in Rome or in Athens or Alexandria. Jesus was not born in any political, commercial, cultural, educational, or socially significant city of the day.

When Micah, the Old Testament prophet, foretold the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, he emphasized its lack of significance to the world.

(Micah 5:2)

"But thou, Bethlehem, Ephrata, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel: whose goings forth have been from old, from everlasting."

**Hymns: 200 & 203**

**Jesus**

God's own son was born in the confines of the Passover lambs. The Lamb prepare before the foundation of the world and declared by God's marvelous messengers (read v10) Jesus was born to die. He became the supreme sacrifice to pay the penalty for the sins of mankind. It was all in Gods' timing for He would sent His son to redeem the world. And the child who was born was called, among other things, Emanuel God with us. Mark 10:[45] For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

**Hymns: 209 & 194; Finally Silent Night 189**