

places, the spontaneous truce continued the next day as neither side was willing to fire the first shot.

The prophet foretold:

*Isa 9:6*⁶ For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called ... Prince of Peace.

The prophecy was fulfilled as the angels sang:

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

CONCLUSION

A small boy filled with all kinds of playful ideas anxiously awaited his father's return from work. An extra-long day at the office, however, had taken its toll, and his father longed for a few minutes of relaxation. Over and over again the boy tugged at his dad's leg with yet another suggestion of something they might do together. Well, finally in total frustration the father ripped from a magazine a picture of the world and tore it into a hundred pieces. "Here," he said handing the child a roll of scotch tape, "go and put the world back together." Ah, peace at last, or so he thought. But, in just a few minutes, he was interrupted again, there before him stood his son—and in hands was a picture of the world. "Son, that's incredible. How did you do it?" "It was easy," said the boy, "you see on the other side of the picture of the world was the picture of a man, and as soon as I got the man straightened out the world came together."

What a profound answer. How true! Get man fixed and the world will be okay. For that to happen the Prince of Peace must be welcomed into our hearts, our homes, our nation and our world. On this Christmas Day, let us, at least, make a start.

O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!

Philip Brooks

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NAMES OF THE MESSIAH

4. PRINCE OF PEACE

Isaiah 9:2-7

INTRODUCTION

A man lay on his deathbed, worried by fear because he had harbored hatred against a man who had been his friend. He sent for the one with whom he had had a disagreement years before; he then made offers of peace. The two of them shook hands in friendship. But as the visitor left the room, the sick man roused himself and said, "Remember, if I recover, the old quarrel stands."

The country was threatened with enemy invasion. King Ahaz could only think of useless alliances. Isaiah gave the country hope as he told of a king who would be worthy to sit on David's throne and rule God's people. He would be a Prince of peace. There was more than that. **When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son.** He would indeed be the Prince of Peace and bring:

PEACE WITH GOD

Sin separates us from God. The Bible tells us that all have sinned and fallen short of God's glory. The angels sing praises to God, giving him the glory and announcing **peace on earth** because of the birth of the Messiah, a Savior. Through him a right relationship with God can be restored. That is real peace – *shalom*. It is not just the absence of strife and conflict. It is something positive – the blessing of a right relationship with God.

*Psa 29:11*¹¹ May the Lord give strength to his people! May the Lord bless his people with peace!

It is through the Prince of peace whose coming Isaiah prophesied that salvation comes. Jesus brings the peace of salvation.

Were there nails in the wood of the manger?

Did a thorn put the baby in danger?

Take your peace while you can,

Who is born Son of Man.

Sleep for now, the betrayal comes later. (*Matthew Davis*)

Even at Jesus' birth the cross began to cast its shadow. Simeon said that Jesus' coming would be for the fall and rising of many. Everyone will have to make a decision. The haughty and the arrogant who refuse to accept Jesus will fall. They pass judgment on themselves. But for the humble and meek, they will be raised up and experience salvation, peace with God. It will mean a tremendous cost to Jesus but it will bring them into that right relationship with God.

*John 14:27*²⁷Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

A friend visited an elderly woman badly crippled by arthritis. When asked, "Do you suffer much?" she responded, "Yes, but there is no nail here," and she pointed to her hand. "He had the nails, I have the peace." She pointed to her head. "There are no thorns here. He had the thorns, I have the peace." She touched her side. "There is no spear here. He had the spear, I have the peace."

That is what Jesus has done. He gave himself so that we might have the peace.

PEACE WITH OURSELVES

When the wise men came to king Herod asking for the new born King of the Jews, Herod was *troubled*. The word means to be disturbed, unsettled and thrown into confusion. He was insanely jealous and lived in constant fear of a rival for his throne. His paranoia led him to more and more cruelty, murdering his favorite wife, two of his sons and ordering the slaughter of the children of Bethlehem. Sin always disturbs and troubles the heart. It is the source of all disorder and distress. The Prince of peace brings us peace with ourselves. He came to deal with sin, including the sin in our own lives. Paul gave the church at Corinth a list of what sin can make a person into. It includes: sexual immorality, idolatry, adultery, the practice of homosexuality, theft, greed, drunkenness, swindling. Then he says, **And such were some of you**. But a change has taken place. The Prince of Peace has come into their lives and so they have been washed clean and made holy. The Prince of Peace restores the true order; redresses, re-establishes, revolutionizes.

Thoughts and actions take their proper place and there is a calm within our lives.

Hark, the glad sound! the Savior comes,
The Savior promised long;
Let every heart prepare a throne,
And every voice a song.

He comes the prisoners to release,
In Satan's bondage held;
The gates of brass before Him burst,
The iron fetters yield.

He comes, from thickest films of vice
To clear the mental ray,
And on the eyes oppressed with night
To pour celestial day.

He comes the broken heart to bind,
The bleeding soul to cure;
And with the treasures of His grace
To enrich the humble poor.

Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace,
Thy welcome shall proclaim;
And Heav'n's eternal arches ring
With Thy beloved Name. *Philip Dodderidge*

PEACE WITH ONE ANOTHER

Christmas Eve in 1914 was all quiet on France's Western Front, from the English Channel to the Swiss Alps. Trenches came within 50 miles of Paris. The war was only five months old, and approximately 800,000 men had been wounded or killed. Every soldier wondered whether or not Christmas Day would bring another round of fighting and killing. But something happened: British soldiers raised "Merry Christmas" signs above the trenches, and soon carols were heard from German and British trenches alike. Christmas dawned with unarmed soldiers leaving their trenches, though officers of both sides tried unsuccessfully to stop their troops from meeting the enemy in the middle of no-man's land for songs and conversation. Exchanging small gifts, they passed Christmas Day peacefully along miles of the front. At one spot, the British played soccer with the Germans, who won 3-2. In some