

The Prince of Peace Christmas 2004

Isaiah 9:6, 7 “For unto us a son is born ...”

Introduction:

In the past 4 weeks Pastors, Jerry, Gene, and Nick have expounded on the royal titles: Wonderful counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Today ... The Prince of Peace.

There are over 300 messianic prophecies
Isaiah writes 700 years before Joseph and Mary walked that long road to Bethlehem.
With words inspired by the Holy Spirit he paints a portrait of the leadership of Jesus.

His writings are more like those of an historian who is looking back not forward. But he speaks of a son yet to be born, 740 years before it occurs.

These four royal titles are descriptors, leave one out and you have a misleading idea or representation.

Wonderful Counselor
Mighty God
Everlasting Father
Prince of Peace

Each stands independently, yet each one hinges on the other.
They speak of Jesus the Son of God ... For unto us a son is given...
They form a portrait of the Almighty God... The Trinity; Father, Son, Holy Spirit

Focus: Prince of Peace

First order is to better understand the concept of peace

What is Peace?

Christmas Eve WWI trenches France in 1914

On Christmas Eve in December 1914 one of the most unusual events in military history took place on the Western front. On the night of Dec. 24 the weather abruptly became cold, freezing the water and slush of the trenches in which the men bunkered. On the German side, soldiers began lighting candles. British sentries reported to commanding officers there seemed to be small lights raised on poles or bayonets.

Although these lanterns clearly illuminated German troops, making them vulnerable to being shot, the British held their fire. Even more amazing, British officers saw through their binoculars that some enemy troops were holding Christmas trees over their heads with lighted candles in their branches. The message was clear: Germans, who celebrated Christmas on the eve of Dec. 24, were extending holiday greetings to their enemies. Within moments of that sighting, the British began hearing a few German soldiers singing a Christmas carol. It was soon picked up all along the German line as other soldiers joined in harmonizing.

The words heard were these: "Stille nacht, heilige nacht." British troops immediately recognized the melody as "Silent Night" quickly neutralized all hostilities on both sides. One by one, British and German soldiers began laying down their weapons to venture into no-man's-land, a small patch of bombed-out earth between the two sides. So many soldiers on both sides ventured out that superior officers were prevented from objecting. There was an undeclared truce and peace had broken out.

That night, former enemy soldiers sat around a common campfire. They exchanged small gifts from their meager belongings - chocolate bars, buttons, badges and small tins of processed beef. Men who only hours earlier had been shooting to kill were now sharing Christmas festivities and showing each other family snapshots. The truce ended just as it had begun, by mutual agreement. Captain C.I. Stockwell recalled how, after a truly "Silent Night," he fired three shots into the air at 8:30 a.m. December 26 and then stepped up onto the trench bank. A German officer who had exchanged gifts with Captain Stockwell the previous night also appeared on a trench bank. They bowed saluted and climbed back into their trenches. A few minutes later, Captain Stockwell heard the German officer fire two shots into the air. The war was on again.

This account known as *Silent Night* is wonderful in the evidence of what the Prince of Peace can accomplish in the direst of situations, but it is not an example of what peace is

Peace is not a cease fire; **it is not** the absence of hostility or finding the proper security formula to secure us against terrorism.

What is peace? Why is Jesus called the Prince of peace?

Time travel to Gabriel's announcement to Mary

Read Luke 1: 26-38

Submitting to God's plan doesn't always bring the results we think it should.

The Virgin Mary and her fiancé Joseph had listened to and accepted the plan of God as announced to them through the angel Gabriel.

They had done all that God had asked of them, sacrificing personal plans and risking public disgrace even the possibility of death by stoning

There were a few details that Gabriel left out ...

A long and dangerous last minute trip from Nazareth to Bethlehem at worst possible time, the final days of Mary's pregnancy. And oh ... when you arrive there will be no place for you to stay you'll have to give birth to your baby in a stable

A 100 mile walk, that would be like having you walk the length of L.I. from Montauk Point to NY City. When you get there sorry no vacancy you'll have to look for a spot in the subway

You have been on that road haven't you? We all have. We have sacrificed personal desires or plans to help others only to find ourselves in a situation that just doesn't seem to make sense.

Mary and Joseph probably felt alone and confused having to obey the order of the Roman governor Quirinius' Census. Not knowing they were fulfilling prophecy **Micah 5:2** The Messiah would be born in the city of David (Bethlehem)

They were probably unaware of the angelic entourage accompanying them to protect their every step. They were not alone, they were never alone.

Peace is not the absence of conflict ... it is the companion that carries us through the conflict.

Read *the Picture of Peace* by Catherine Marshall

Peace is not a state of mind; it is a condition of the heart. It does not rely on migrating circumstances; it is the ability to have eyes to see and ears to hear what others cannot

It is one thing to know that Jesus is called wonderful counselor, mighty God, everlasting father, prince of peace.

It is an entirely different thing to have an active living relationship with him..

Most of us will have Christmas celebrations that include good food, beautiful decorations, family gatherings and exchanging gifts, but if peace is the missing ingredient the end result will be disappointment and emotional let down.

The true meaning of Christmas is not found in the final details the expensive or special gifts or the perfect meal or magical gathering.

Isn't that why God chose to make the birth of his son so unlike our Christmas celebrations? Mary and Joseph barely had a roof over their heads but held the prince of peace in their arms, and no two people ever had a happier Christmas!

Now its your turn ... will you embrace the one thing you need above all else?

