

No Peace on Earth, part 2

(Psalm 2)

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Introduction

In 1955, Jill Jackson wrote the song Let There Be Peace on Earth.

According to Jackson, the song was an attempt to “create a climate for world peace and understanding.”

It was first sung by a group of 180 teenagers of various backgrounds and religions on a mountain top in California.

After that initial singing, the song quickly gained fame throughout the world..

Over the next 25 years, it circled the globe and ended up being sung at high school graduations, veterans day celebrations, and eventually made its way into many church hymnals.

The song has been recored by musicians of all sorts of genres..

Tennessee Ernie Ford, Pat Boone, and Johnny Mathis all sold copies of this song..

In 1993, Vince Gill recorded it with his daughter as part of a Christmas album that went platinum..

In 2007, a Pennsylvania woman started a campaign for every church to sing it as a closing hymn on their Sunday services that fell closest to September 11..

In 2015, it was sung at an interfaith service at Ground Zero in New York City hosted by the Pope.

That same year, Microsoft made a commercial featuring the song being sung in the middle of New York City..

Some churches will be singing it this morning in conjunction with their Christmas services, since it is often considered a Christmas hymn..

Yet, the irony of the song is that it has not made one dent in the wars on earth since it was first sung in 1955..

In fact, you could even say that the prevalence of peace on earth has only diminished since the song was written..

On Tuesday, Christmas will arrive but world peace won't no matter how passionately we long and sing for it..

On Tuesday, wars will continue around the globe despite Christmas cards that call for world peace..

In fact, while you sit down to eat dinner with family and open presents, over 40 wars and conflicts will still be occurring on Earth.

So while it may sound sweet and encouraging to sing, “Let There Be Peace on Earth,” the reality is that there is no peace on earth this Christmas..

And there never has been..

Even on the first Christmas night when Christ came into the world, (which was most likely not December 25th,) there were wars raging in the Roman Empire.

So why do we sing songs of peace and give cards promoting peace at Christmas when peace has never been a reality in this world?

And secondly, will there ever be a peaceful Christmas?

Well, Psalm 2 is going to give us answers to those questions and more..

I have entitled this message...

No Peace on Earth, part 2.

Last week, we heard Jesus say that the purpose of his first coming was not to bring peace on earth..

And we saw that Christ was telling the truth, since his life was far from peaceful.

In fact, we have only looked at 8 chapters of John's gospel so far, and most of it is filled with opposition to Jesus' message and ministry.

Not only did Jesus die a violent death, he lived a life where the religious leaders waged war on his teaching..

Well this morning, we are reminded once again that the arrival of Jesus at Christmas was not meant to bring worldwide peace..

It was meant to bring personal peace in the midst of a world at war...

So let's begin by simply reading the first 3 verses of Psalm 2..

We can call this..

I. The World's View of Christmas (1-3)

1

***Why are the [a]nations in an uproar
And the peoples devising a vain thing?***

2

***The kings of the earth take their stand
And the rulers take counsel together
Against the Lord and against His [b]Anointed, saying,***

3

***“Let us tear their fetters apart
And cast away their cords from us!”.***

The author of this psalm, who was most likely David, took notice of the wars around him...

And in the first 3 verses, he made some observations of what he saw...

And in verse 1 he saw what we see...

The nations in an uproar.

There is fighting everywhere.

History has shown and our current world continues to be an example of these verses..

The nations battle each other to gain more power, more resources and more money.

Wars are driven by the evil desires of the human heart.

And though we think and imagine nations battling one another...

These wars are just a reflection and representation of the human heart which wages war with God...

Look at verse 2...

The kings and rulers take their stand against the Lord.

The struggle for power and supremacy in the world is actually a war against God.

And this should make sense to us..

Where is the final battle of history?

In the valley of Armageddon, where the nations will eventually line up to fight against God.

And history is headed that way.

Every war is some way is a lead up to that battle in the future.

And why are the nations wanting to defeat God?

Look at verse 3....

They want to break free from the fetters and cords of the Lord.

Fetters are the ankle shackles and the cords would be the chains that join prisoners together.

And that is the picture...

The nations and kings of the earth see themselves on the chain gang of God.

They view God as the unrightful owner of their lives..

And this is the bottom line in every man's rebellion.

He wants to be free from God.

That's the basic desire of the fallen human heart.

We seek freedom from authority.

That is the struggle as we raise our children.

The conflict there is between a parent authority and a child's desire for no authority.

Every human heart is geared that way from birth.

The fall of Adam's heart led to fall of every heart after him.

How did the serpent tempt Eve?

Has God really said?

God had exercised his rightful authority over Adam and Eve, but their desire to throw off this authority led to disobedience.

And because of that, every man has been born with a desire to break free from the fetters and cords of God's authority.

And the world's great deception is that people think escape from the Lord's authority

Unfortunately, they are dead wrong.

God has authority because he is the Creator.

He will eventually exercise that authority in a man's life, with or without man's permission..

So many people see salvation as the end of all fun in their life...

To them, submission to God's authority brings grief and boredom...

Yet, the beauty of the gospel is this...

When you submit to God's authority now, it isn't that the Lord is a hard boss..

Getting saved is not submitting to the worst kind of ruler.

Jesus said in Matthew 11..

28 "Come to Me, all [z]who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For My yoke is [aa]easy and My burden is light."

Coming to Christ is not putting on chains and fetters...

But experiencing true freedom.

Yes, we obey Christ's commands, but his commands are not a burden by a blessing.

They protect us and keep us.

Do You know what is incredibly sad about those who see the Lord as holding them hostage?

The truth is that sin actually holds them in chains every day.

They live under the authority of sin.

Though their blind eyes can't see it.

Their lives are in bondage to sin.

The freedom they seek actually leads to more bondage.

Its like the young boy who saves up his money to buy a car..

To him that car is freedom...

But what happens?

He has to work more to afford the payments, insurance and gas.

So more work means less time to ride.

He was aiming for freedom but ended up in bondage to work.

The same is true for the sinner.

He seeks freedom from God but lives in bondage to sin.

That is where the fallen heart leads.

Yet, the kings and rulers fight for this freedom from God every day.

That is the reality of the world in which we live.

While the world dresses in their nice Christmas sweaters and sings for world peace, in their hearts they are at war with God..

And until the world establishes peace with God, they will be at war with each other forever..

Now, let's turn to....

II. The Lord's View of Christmas (4-6)

***4 He who [c]sits in the heavens laughs,
The Lord scoffs at them.***

Now, the psalmist is trying to shock us here.

The thought of God laughing and scoffing at the world's rebellion is disturbing to some and even irreverent to others..

But this is the language that God inspired the psalmist to write.

The point is that God is not threatened at all by the rebellion of people and nations against Him.

He is perfectly in control of the situation..

WE all have the picture of this small boy who wants to fight the big kid.

So, he runs up with fists swinging and the bigger boy puts his hand on the boys head..

And holds him at a distance while the kids punches furiously.

In the cartoons, he even yawns and falls asleep.

That is the picture here.

Though the world may seem chaotic to us...

There is not one bullet fired or one footstep of a soldier
that escapes God's notice.

He is perfectly in control.

You turn on the news and people talk all day about what
we will do with the situation here or there...

The experts wring their hands...

And God twittles his thumbs.

God is not worried about the results of the latest news
poll.

His plans are not altered the voice of public opinion.

In fact, God's voice is the only one that matters in verses
5 and 6..

5

*Then He will speak to them in His anger
And terrify them in His fury, saying,*

6

*“But as for Me, I have [d]installed My King
Upon Zion, My holy mountain.”*

God declares that the battle is already over before it has begun.

He says your fighting is hopeless.

And why is the world's rebellion and resistance to God's authority hopeless?

Why will the world's struggle to be in control and overthrow God come to nothing?

God's plans have been established.

His king has been installed in Zion.

In 1933, Adolf Hitler predicted that the German empire would last for 1000 years.

In 1945, he was defeated and dead.

The world has had its share of failed predictions of world empires.

Yet, God will establish a world empire to never be destroyed.

And it will be ruled by His chosen King who will rule from Zion, which is another name for the city of Jerusalem.

And though King David is certainly in view here...

This is a reference to the Ultimate King to come.

The Lord's view of Christmas is that the King of Kings was born in a feeding trough in Bethlehem..

The Lord's view of Christmas is that this season declares his sovereignty over the affairs of the world...

The Lord's view of Christmas is that Christmas is proof that the Lord's plans are right on schedule..

Christ has come a first time to be humiliated, killed, and resurrected so that his second coming will be his installment as King over creation.

Christmas is wonderful not because because of the presents we get but because it is evidence that the Baby of Bethlehem is going to return as the King over Zion.

The Lord's view of Christmas is not that peace has come but that prince of peace will be coming...

As the world rebels at Christmas while singing of world peace, God laughs and knows that his plan is right on schedule..

Now that we see the world's view of Christmas and the Lord's view of Christmas, what is the Christ's view of Christmas..

III. The King's View of Christmas (7-9)

*7 "I will surely tell of the [e]decree of the Lord:
He said to Me, 'You are My Son,
Today I have begotten You.*

*8 'Ask of Me, and I will surely give the [f]nations as
Your inheritance,
And the very ends of the earth as Your possession.
9 'You shall [g]break them with a [h]rod of iron,
You shall shatter them like [i]earthenware.'"*

In these verse, we first see of the connection between the Lord and his appointed King..

The King is none other than the Son of God.

And the first gifts of Christmas were not frankincense, gold, and myrrh...

The first gifts of Christmas were the Father giving the nations of the world to His Son..

You see, the baby of Christmas owns the world.

The gentle child on the lap of Mary of Mary has the whole world in his hands..

This is an important truth that we often miss this time of year.

Jesus is not a helpless baby.

He is a baby that will one day direct the nations...

Though the world may see Jesus as nursing infant at Christmas, that is not the proper view of Him.

The babe in the manger will one day be the king on the throne, and just as the animals bowed to Christ, the whole world will bow to Him as well..

Christ sees Christmas as His coronation.

No, Jesus is not on the worldwide throne yet.

No, Jesus is not directing the United Nations.

No, Jesus is not keeping the peace in the Middle East.

But I can assure Christ is King, and one day, the entire world will be subject to His rule..

I am ready for the first Christmas with Christ as King.

There will be manger scenes for miles and everyone will say "Merry Christmas."

A final perspective on Christmas is found in verses 10-12...

IV. The Right View of Christmas (10-12)

Over the next few days, you will hear a lot about the real meaning of Christmas..

People will say things like...

The real meaning of Christmas is to love your neighbor..

The real meaning of Christmas is to help those in need...

The real meaning of Christmas is family and being together..

Yet as good as that sounds, none of that is the real meaning of Christmas..

The real meaning of Christmas and the right view of Christmas can be seen in 6 commands of Psalm 2:10-12..

Let me read it to us..

10

***Now therefore, O kings, show discernment;
Take warning, O [j]judges of the earth.***

11

***[k]Worship the Lord with [l]reverence
And rejoice with trembling.***

12

***[m]Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry,
and you perish in the way,
For His wrath may [n]soon be kindled.
How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!***

First, verse 10...the real meaning of Christmas is shown through proper discernment about Christ..

In other words, the real meaning of Christmas is a right personal judgment about Christ as Savior and Lord.

Second, verse 10..the real meaning of Christmas is shown through hearing the warning of Scripture for all who reject Christ..

Third, verse 11...the real meaning of Christmas is shown as we worship the Christ of Christmas..

You cannot celebrate Christmas apart from the worship of Christ..

Fourth, verse 11...the real meaning of Christmas is seen as you have a proper respect and fear of Christ..

Though Christ is gentle and innocent as the baby in the manger, he is also fearful as the king with the rod of iron..

Fifth, verse 12..the real meaning of Christmas is seen in the homage we give to Christ..

And the first evidence of that homage to Christ is our repentance and faith in Him...

You cannot experience the real meaning of Christmas by remaining in your sin..

Christ is not honored by those who fake their allegiance to Him..

And lastly, verse 12..the real meaning of Christmas is seen by our taking refuge in Christ..

You cannot experience the joy of this season if you are not in Christ..

If you ever wonder why some people seem so joyful this time of the year but you can't get in the spirit of Christmas, maybe you are outside of Christ..

Now I am not talking about the joy of presents or decorations or family or songs or any of that..

I am talking about the joy of Christmas that comes from the security of knowing Christ in a saving way..

If you don't have that security, come to Christ and take refuge in Him..

Those aren't fancy words used to confuse you..

Refuge in Christ is just like refuge in the world..

You take shelter to get out of the rain and stay dry.

Well, you the refuge in Christ to avoid the rain of God's wrath which is due everyone one because of their sin against God..

Only Christ provides that refuge..

If you want to know the right view of Christmas, show discernment, heed the warning, worship and fear Christ, and honor Him by taking refuge in Him...

That is the only way to experience the true meaning of Christmas..

Conclusion

A world famous art collector passed away, but his will directed all his artwork to be auctioned off.

The man had no heirs since his only son had died in World War 1.

However, the man had directed the auction occur on Christmas Eve and that every piece of his artwork be sold beginning with a simple drawing that his son had done before his death..

Well, the bidding started with that simply pencil drawing of his son, but no one had any real interest in it.

Sadly, the auctioneer lowered the price to \$3 in order to get it out of the way.

After it was sold, the auctioneer moved on to auction off a more valuable piece of artwork.

But before the bidding could begin, the lawyer for the deceased stood up and announced that the auction was over..

The crowd of esteemed art collectors who had travelled from all over the world went crazy..

What do you mean it is over?

There are still hundreds of pieces of art here.

The lawyer pulled out his client's will and read..

“I want to auction off my entire collection of artwork on the day before Christmas in the year of my death. However, there is one stipulation. Whoever purchases my son's piece of artwork will get the rest of the collection free. If you value my son's art enough to buy one, you have paid the highest hour to me as his father.”

The will continued...

“Ladies and Gentlemen, tomorrow is Christmas, and my lesson to you is simple.”

“Honor the Son tomorrow and you will please the Father, but to fail to honor the son tomorrow and you will miss out on all the Father's blessings.”

Good day and congratulations to the one who honored my son today.

I pray that your life will honor the Son this Christmas...

Let us pray.