

The Miracle of Peace

Isaiah 9:6-7; Daniel 2, Rev. 21-22

INTRODUCTION: Christmas is over, but this morning I want to talk with you about something that is in the aftermath of Christmas. It is a result of Christmas.

Isaiah had said,

Isaiah 9:6-7

For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given;

And the government will be upon His shoulder.

And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father,
Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end,

Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom,

To order it and establish it with judgment and justice

From that time forward, even forever.

The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

When God promised the miracle of a coming Savior, He promised that the Savior would be the Prince of Peace, and that He would rule the earth in a Kingdom of Peace forever.

The Miracle promised has been given.

The miracle Savior was Himself the Light of the World.

The miracle Savior became the miraculous substitute for us by dying on the cross for our sins offering us forgiveness and eternal life.

Yet, many in our world would say

Where's the peace?

There is certainly no peace in Israel where Jesus came, lived, and died.

There is no peace anywhere in the mid-east.

There is no peace anywhere in range of N. Korea's newly developed ballistic missiles, just another of many reasons I thank the Lord He has called me to Florida and not California!

But here in America, where's the peace? Our nation is more divided than perhaps any time since the civil war.

So we can understand, can we not, why people would say, "Where's the peace?"

But friend, listen to me.

Peace has come!

The Kingdom of Peace is coming!

Let me show you, perhaps this will be new for some and a reminder for others, but let me show you why we do not see more evidence of the peace that comes from the Prince of Peace who came in the person of Jesus Christ.

I. PEACE IS LINKED TO RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Isaiah 32:17 The work of righteousness will be peace, And the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever.

The Spirit said through Isaiah, that **when righteousness is present, it brings peace.**

But folks, **when righteousness is scarce, peace is scarce!**

James 4:1–3 1 Where do wars and fights *come* from among you? Do *they* not *come* from your *desires for* pleasure that war in your members? 2 You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend *it* on your pleasures.

Think about this. Isn't this true in your own experience?

In your job?

- When people are selfish,
- self-serving,
- when they are willing to lie to get what they want,
- when they cheat the boss by not doing their job properly,

Is there peace at the workplace?

In your larger family?

- When people are selfish,
- self-serving,
- when they are willing to lie to get what they want,
- when they won't carry their weight of family responsibility,

Is there peace in the family?

In your life?

- When you are selfish,
- self-serving,
- when you are willing to lie to get what you want,
- when you are not doing what you should be doing,

Is there peace in your heart?

Unrighteousness, wickedness, sin destroys peace.

As I wrote this message, I asked myself the question: When in my life did I experience the least peace in the events and people surrounding me?

It did not take long for the answer to immediately come to mind.

It was during the days that some labeled “The Baptist Wars.” It has been more properly relabeled in retrospect “The Conservative Resurgence.”

It primarily encompassed twenty years, from 1979 to 1999, and in those twenty years I grew from a young pastor to a middle-aged one. In Southern Baptist life there were fierce battles in convention meetings, board room meetings at Baptist institutions like seminaries and mission boards, in committee meetings where so much of the ongoing work of institutional Baptist life was done. It even spread into some churches and there were battles fought in church business meetings and among staff members.

Both insiders and outsiders asked many times quite publicly, “Why can’t those Baptists get along?”

And Baptists, by the tens of thousands, asked, “Why can’t we just make peace with each other?”

And folks, the reason Baptists could not come to peace for twenty years was because the lack of peace was due to unrighteousness – due to sin – not among the lost world, but among Baptists!

We had a sizeable group of Baptists who

- had ceased believing that the Bible was the perfect, inerrant Word of God.
- They chastised men who used the words perfect or inerrant when describing the Bible.
- They taught their sinful philosophy that the Bible was the work of flawed men and therefore reflected those flaws in the text.

- They taught that at most, the Bible only communicated spiritual truth, and even some of that might be contaminated.
- This was being taught in Baptist Seminaries and Bible Colleges not only all over our country but sometimes in schools Baptists planted in countries around the world.
- And while it was broadly taught it was just as broadly denied. Those doing it lied about it, because they knew that the vast majority of Baptists in the pews who were paying their salaries through their tithes and offerings would not put up with this if they knew.

And this sin, this unrighteousness stole the peace of Southern Baptists just as I became a pastor.

As a young pastor, I remember hearing older pastors talk about those boring convention meetings. For the first twenty years of my ministry I never went to a boring convention meeting. I also did not go to many that would have been called peaceful, because unrighteousness had stolen the peace.

But folks, listen now! Hear this. Righteousness won! Righteousness won!

And when it did, peace returned.

By the grace of God, our convention came back to say we Baptists believe the Bible is the Word of God, truth without any mixture of error, perfect, inerrant, infallible, the very Word of God.

That righteous decision was passed down to our seminaries, and today, every one of our six Southern Baptist Seminaries teaches according to that righteous principle, and every professor on the faculties believes this with all their heart.

And it has brought peace.

Not perfection, peace!

II. CHRIST BROUGHT PEACE INTO THE WORLD BY OFFERING RIGHTEOUSNESS TO US.

Isaiah 53:5 But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.

The chastisement of Jesus upon the cross had our peace as one of its results.

2 Corinthians 5:21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

We can be made righteous by trusting in Jesus who died upon the cross.

It is this righteousness of Christ in us that can bring peace into our lives.

Isaiah 26:3 You will keep *him* in perfect peace, *Whose mind is stayed on You,*
Because he trusts in You.

Remember the example of Daniel. We talked about Daniel two weeks ago as the one who introduced the magi, the wise men, to the Holy Scriptures, thus leading to there being some magi who would recognized that the star over Bethlehem signaled the birth of the King of the Jews. Therefore, they went to Judea to find and worship Him.

Well, this Daniel, when he was a young man captive in Babylon found himself in the midst of a city and a place in turmoil.

- Nebuchadnezzar had this dream sent by God.
- His wise men could not reveal the dream or the meaning.
- He started killing them.
- Panic consumed Babylon!
- One man was calm. That was Daniel. One man was at peace in the midst of a city that knew no peace.

How did Daniel experience peace when everyone around him was anxious and in turmoil? Remember that Daniel trusted in the coming Christ before He came!

- **faith**
- **counsel – advice based on God’s Word**
- **wisdom – the knowledge of God’s Word made practical in experience**
Daniel no doubt knew Prov. 3:5-6. God directed Daniel’s response
- **prayer**
 - Are your best friends, the ones you go to when you become anxious about something, good prayer partners? If not, you need different friends. (You need friends also filled with faith, counsel, wisdom, and who are people of prayer.)
- **praise**
- **glory to God**

When we allow the righteousness we gain through trusting Christ to be expressed in these six ways in our life, we can have peace even when the job, family, world around us is at war!

III. ULTIMATELY JESUS SHALL REIGN OVER THE NEW EARTH AND NEW HEAVENS AS THE KING OF THE KINGDOM OF PEACE!

Listen to Isaiah describe this Kingdom of Peace.

Isaiah 11:6–9

6 “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb,

The leopard shall lie down with the young goat,

The calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little child shall lead them.
7 The cow and the bear shall graze; Their young ones shall lie down together;

And the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

8 The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole,

And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den.

9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,

And what shall produce this peace that encompasses the whole earth, even penetrating the animal kingdom?

For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea.

The Revelation also describes this day.

Revelation 21:1–4 1 Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. 2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them *and be* their God. 4 And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

How will this Kingdom of Peace come? Now hang with me a minute. I am going to show you something really cool.

Isaiah 11 described this Kingdom of peace, the wolf lying down with the lamb, bears and lions eating grass instead of other animals and people, snakes that don't hurt anybody. Go with me to the beginning of Isaiah 11.

Isaiah 11:1, 5 1 There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots. ... 5 Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, And faithfulness the belt of His waist.

Who is Jesse? David's father.

Now go to the last chapter of the Bible, Rev. 22. This is the chapter after God says, "I make all things new."

Revelation 22:16 "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star."

Jesus is the Miracle Promised

The Miracle Given

The Miraculous Light of the World

Who became our Miraculous Substitute

So that those who trusted Him would gain His righteousness

Which gives them peace in this world when they

- **Walk in faith**
- **Receive counsel from God's Word**
- **Act in wisdom**
- **Pray**
- **Praise God**
- **Give glory to God**

And which gives them a place in God's glorious Kingdom of Peace.