

“A Son Is Given”

Isaiah 9:6

As we approach the Christmas holidays, I would like to invite you to use this message as part of a “Christmas present.” By that I mean learning what Christmas means to us at present. Picture it this way: God’s glorious Gift has been wrapped up with a number of pieces of prophetic wrapping paper. Beginning with Genesis 3:15; 49:10, Deuteronomy 18:15, 18, etc. and leading through the Gospels and Epistles all the way into the Book of Revelation, unwrap the prophecies about God’s Greatest Gift – His Son and eternal life (Romans 6:23).

In the message from this text last Sunday, we asked, “Who will end the violence?”¹ This came to our minds once again this week when a Muslim couple savagely murdered 14 people in San Bernardino, California. This may be part of a larger “deep terror matrix”² or network. The family members of the assassins seem as shocked and bewildered as the rest of us. You look forward to the upcoming holidays; they think about the horrors that haunt the families of the dead and injured. But even as we speak, fighters from the West are bombing oilfields in Syria in a battle with the Islamic State in Syria. How can there be a peaceful resolution to all of these hostilities?

Missionary Don Richardson³ was shocked by the jubilant reactions of the headhunters in the Kamoor village of the Sawi tribe in Irian Jaya. As he shared the good news of Jesus Christ with them, they expressed joyous reverence – for Judas! It turned out that one of the highest virtues of their village society was treachery – the skills of deception and the betrayal of trust. How could the Richardsons encourage them to put their faith in Jesus, when they held greater admiration for Judas? And then, the Richardsons found themselves in the midst of a vicious war between the headhunters of Kamoor and Hainam.

What the Richardsons learned about humanity in Irian Jaya in 1962 is still happening around the world. According to Psalm 2:1, nations rage as treacherous people plot conspiracies; but the real war is between man and God. Sinful mankind declared war with God and His Anointed One, the Messiah (Psalm 2:2-3). Who will make peace for mankind, who is at war with his Maker and himself?

In the last message, we studied Isaiah’s prophecy to Judah. The Assyrians, whose mass murder and brutality is unrivaled today, would devastate Judah (Isaiah 8:7-8).

They would do so because God's people had turned from Him to worship the idols of the nations (Isaiah 10:10-11); but God would also punish the proud, murderous Assyrians (Isaiah 10:12). Isaiah's heartfelt appeal in Isaiah 8:19-20 was simple: *"Should not a people seek unto their God?"* He reminded them to turn to *"that law and to the testimony: If they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them."*

So today, in the midst of the darkness of our society, we are looking for light. And there is Light! We learned from Isaiah 9:2, *"The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: They that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined."* Is there Light that can bring real life to men who live in the shadow of death? In the midst of that heartless Assyrian violence, God shared His heart. In so doing, He gave us the solution for the world's savagery; He gave us the Victor who would conquer this violence.

"For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: . . ." (Isaiah 9:6)

The Nature of the Messiah

"Unto us a Child is born," and *"unto us a Son is given"* are similar expressions that modify and amplify each other. The first predicted that a "Child" [singular *masculine* noun] – a human male child – would be born on the earth. But this Child would be different. He would be a "Son" who is "given." In this gradual unwrapping of God's greatest Christmas present, we have hints about the human *and* heavenly nature of the One who would be born. The heavenly hint is that He was a "Son" before He was given! And most remarkably, He is given to "us!" This use of "us" helps us to understand God's grace that brings people together. Through the context of Isaiah's prophecy, we understand that the "us" is Jewish people, Gentiles and redeemed people. This is "the Light" that shines in human darkness everywhere.

In the light of the fuller revelation of God, we can see this most clearly in the New Testament. In fact, most of us can quote it. Let's do so, shall we? The words of Jesus in John 3:16, *"For God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."* God gave His Son; *"unto us a Son is given!"* The Bible clearly teaches the pre-existence of the Son, the Second Person of the Godhead, in passages such as John 1:1-4. There

we learn that He is the Life that gives light to men. But even the Old Testament hints gave men enough light to follow. For instance, in Proverbs 30:4, the question about God was asked, *“What is His name and what is His Son’s name, if thou canst tell?”* And don’t forget that tantalizing prophecy of Isaiah 7:14, *“Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a Virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.”* Matthew 1:23 translates the name “Immanuel” as *“God with us.”* This Son is revered as God by no less than God the Father (Hebrews 1:8, quoting Psalm 45:6)! The Son, from heaven was “given” to be born as a human Child. And He was born for “us!”

The Two Arrivals of the Messiah

As we unwrap this “Christmas present,” we see the hints that there is more than one piece of prophetic wrapping paper. At His first arrival the Child would be born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14; 9:6); but this same Son would ultimately have “the government” placed upon “His shoulder.” Even the apostles assumed that this meant one arrival instead of two. After all, wasn’t it natural to presume that if Jesus Christ conquered death, then it was time for the government of the world to be placed upon His shoulder? This is why they asked Jesus, *“Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?”* (Acts 1:6-7) But they learned that there would be two advents – two arrivals – of the Son. The angel explained that they would see Jesus come again in the same way that they had seen Him go to heaven (Acts 1:11). You can almost hear the sound of their prophetic wrapping paper being torn into two pieces in their minds. Now they could see the Lord in the light of Psalm 2; the same Lord who would be poured out to die on Zion’s hill (for our sins) and be raised again (Acts 13:32-34), would return to rule with a rod of iron (Psalm 2:9).

So now we know that even here in Isaiah 9:6, we actually have the two “arrivals” of God’s Son: once as a human Child born of a righteous virgin, the second as the Victor conquering all the challenges of wicked humanity. Rest assured; here we have the Prince of Peace, and “this man shall be the peace!” (Micah 5:5)

When the Richardsons threatened to leave if the tribal war continued, the Kamoors had a problem. They wanted the steel tools the missionaries provided, so they had to make peace. But how could such savage, treacherous tribes make peace? To guarantee that there would be peace without treachery, the chief gave his infant son to their enemies! The chief of the tribe took his own infant from his tearful wife and carried it along a line of warriors. Each warrior would touch it, vowing to maintain the peace as long as the child lived. Then the child was given to the enemy chief who carried the child to his warriors, who also vowed to keep peace. The

Richardsons instantly recognized that here was a redemptive story; here was the way that these headhunters overturned deception and treachery and made peace. With new joy, the Richardsons began to share the Gospel of “the Peace Child” that God Himself had given to make peace with men.

Mankind is deceptive and treacherous. But God gave His only Son as His commitment to make peace with all those who would take His “Peace Child” as a way to end the hostility. This Gospel message ran like wildfire through the Sawi villages of the Kamoor and the Hainam. Hundreds were saved; hostilities were ended; churches were planted.

The message of “the Peace Child” is still transforming lives today. How? Let’s practically apply this passage in four ways:

Conduct: What should I do?

- Since God gave me the life of His Son, I should give myself as a living sacrifice to Him to serve others. (Romans 11:36-12:1, 2-21).
- I should tell others about this unique message of God’s Peace Child, because there is nothing else like it in religious teachings
- I should look for ways to communicate to the immigrants in our society: to show them that Gospel good is greater than evil terror
- Make a special prophetic “Christmas present” to show your children how God’s prophecies have been gradually unwrapped to show us God’s Gift

Character: What should I be?

- Since God cared enough to reveal His Son in a human nature, I should strive to be like God’s Son in my human nature (Col. 1:27)
- Since God gave us Light (Isaiah 9:1-6), I should be the light of the world, loving others into the light (Matt, 5:14; 1 Thess. 5:4)
- Since God is the Giver, I should be a giver. (Ephesians 4:28)
- Since God made peace by the sacrifice of His Son, I should be a peacemaker using the News of His Son (Matthew 5:9)
- Since God has given me the priceless Gift of His Son, I should be joyful and pure in His loving light (1 John 3:1-3)
- Since Christ is returning to rule as the Governor of the world, I should be humble, putting away sin. (Romans 13:12-14)

Career: Where should we go?

- Next door with a plate of cookies and Gospel goodness
- To the lunchroom where others are talking about this terrorism
- Into public forums and other nations to tell others about the peace that comes from the Prince of Peace

Classify: How do I discern between right and wrong?

- Since “unto us” a Child is born, I should view all human beings (God’s creation and image-bearers) as important potential recipients of the life-changing Gift of the Gospel.
- Since “unto us” a Son is given, I should view those who are redeemed recipients: brothers and sisters in God’s family (Eph. 2:19)
- When people insist on violent revenge, I should remember the way of the Peace Child” and overcome evil with Gospel good (Rom. 12:21)
- Since “the government shall be upon His shoulder,” I should seek to warn every man and teach every man in order to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus (Colossians 1:28)
- Since there is no peace for the wicked without the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 57:19-21), I should reject the world’s shallow approach to “peace” (Jeremiah 6:13-15).

Above all, I should give of my very best to the Master. Let’s turn to hymn #547 to sing, “Give of Your Best to the Master.”

Pastor Gordon Dickson, Calvary Baptist Church, Findlay, Ohio

1. That message, *Who Will End the Violence?* is on our website at <http://www.cbfindlay.org/blog/who-will-end-the-violence>

2. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/usa/12030160/California-shooting-Multiple-victims-reported-in-San-Bernardino-live.html>

3. This story is told in Don Richardson’s book, “Peace Child: An Unforgettable Story of Primitive Jungle Treachery in the 20th Century” <http://www.amazon.com/Peace-Child-Unforgettable-Primitive-Treachery/dp/0830737847>

Immanuel, God Dwells with Men

*Immanuel, God dwells with men
The Miracle of Bethlehem
For God gave us His Son, His Lamb
The sacrifice for sins of man
To save poor sinners, just like me
To save for all eternity
To bring His new adopted sons
To glory through His Promised One*

*How wonderful, this Counselor
The Mighty God and heaven's door
The Everlasting Father: Christ
Who paid our sins' most awful price
For unto us a Child is born;
The Son we greeted with our scorn
But His great reign shall never cease,
The everlasting Prince of peace*

*This King of kings and Lord of lords
Is Jesus Christ, the Living Word
His government shall never end
Through peace that He alone extends
Because He died for sins of men
And conquered death and rose again
So, He alone can end our strife
The Christ: the Way, the Truth, the Life.*

-- GAD 12/4/14