

People who missed Christmas

Luke 2:1-6

Augustus teaches us that Peace cannot be created externally.
It can only be found in Christ internally

Luke 2:1-7

- In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. 2 This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3 And all went to be registered, each to his own town. 4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, 5 to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. 6 And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. 7 And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Caesar Augustus missed Christmas because he create his own Peace in himself: He believed HE was the Savior of the World

1. Why would Caesar Augustus believe he was the Savior of the World?

- the nephew, **adopted son**, and hand-picked successor to **Julius Caesar**.
- In 42 BC, the Senate formally deified Julius Caesar as *divus Iulius* (“**the divine Julius**”). This led to his adopted son, Octavian, being known as *divi filius* (“**son of the god**”)
- Octavian was given the name Augustus, in 27 BC, which means “great” or “venerable” or “worthy of reverence,” which is an insinuation that he was worthy of worship.
- Coins issued by Augustus featured Caesar’s image and inscriptions such as “Divine Caesar and Son of God.”
- An Egyptian inscription calls Augustus Caesar a star “shining with the brilliance of the Great Heavenly Savior.”
- During Augustus’ reign, emperor worship exploded – Caesar was known as “LORD” and “GOD”
- Augustus had coins made in his image that portrayed him as the savior of all under his rule

- Augustus attempted to create “Peace” by defining and controlling and bringing about social reform such as prosecuting adultery, ***which led to his own daughter being exiled. Augustus believed that “Peace” meant bring about a External-Social “wholeness” by demanding that there are no fatherless and motherless families. All were to procreate so as to “grow” Rome from the inside.***
- Augustus also attempted to create External “Peace” by ordering a census which would evaluate his military might, financial strength, and control over the masses. This was a huge burden to the Jews as it humiliated them and subjugated them to a foreign power.

- God wants Judah through the Prophet Jeremiah: Jeremiah 8:11: -
- “They (the leaders and prophets) offer superficial treatments for my people’s mortal wound. They give assurances of ***peace when there is no peace.***”

2) Why was Caesar Augustus NOT the Savior of the World?

- Isaiah 9:6:

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 Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

- **A child is born** - defines Jesus will be Human who relate to the needs of humanity. As Hebrews 4:15 reminds us: “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin”.

- **A Son is GIVEN** - ...not “born”, “given” – God sends His Son which focuses on His Deity and Divinity. Jesus IS God.

- Old Testament Scholar Motyer summarizes this well:
- “The Hebrew emphasis rests not on to us but on the coming one. Child relates him to his ancestry; son expresses his maleness and dignity in the royal line. He is born as from human parentage and given as from God.”

- ***“the government shall be upon his shoulder..”*** - He at last is the answer to the quest for a perfect and lasting government. His shoulders will bear that weight, and they will not buckle. As Jesus said, “All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth” (Matt 28:18).
- Zechariah 14:9 – “And the Lord will be king over all the earth; in that day the Lord will be the only one, and His name the only one.”

- **His Name** – not “names” but NAME! (See Matthew 28:19 - baptizing in the Name of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit)
- A name captures the identity, character, substance, nature and values of the PERSON.

- Jesus brings about Incredibly Clear Direction because He is the **Wonderful Counsellor**
- Jesus will call us on our sin, insecurities and destructive strategies – He will EXPOSE them! (John 3:20-21) Jesus knows what INSIDE a PERSON! (John 2:25).

- Jesus will form order out of Chaos as the Mighty God

- Jesus is the Eternal Personal Creator and Sustainer as the Everlasting Father

- Jesus works through the complexity of all conflict because He is the Prince of Peace

- **Why does this matter?**

- How can we make sure that we do not miss the Purpose of Christmas by attempting to externally create our own peace and not internally allowing God to change our heart and minds through a positional peace and progressive peace in Christ?

1) We can have a positional peace because of WHO Jesus is and What Jesus did for us on the Cross

- Ephesians 2:14-17 – “For **Jesus himself is our peace**, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility 15 by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so **making peace**, 16 and might reconcile us both to God in one body **through the cross**, thereby killing the hostility. 17 And **he came and preached peace** to you who were far off and **peace to those who were near.”**

- Colossians 1:19-22 – “For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, **making peace by the blood of his cross.** 21 And you, *who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds,* 22 **he has now reconciled** in his body of flesh by his death

2) We have a positional Peace and a Progressive Peace with God through Jesus Christ in which we rejoice irrespective of the circumstances.

- ***Romans 5:1-8***- Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, **we have peace with God** through our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Through him we have also obtained access by faith² into this grace **in which we stand**, and we rejoice in **hope** of the glory of God. 3 Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, 4 and endurance produces character, and character produces **hope**, 5 and **hope** does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.
- 6 For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly..... 8 but God shows ***his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.***"

3) We can have a Positional Peace in the Person of Jesus Christ alone because of His Promise:

- In ***John 14:27*** “Peace 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...”
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- In ***John 16:32-33*** “Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me. 33 I have said these things to you, ***that in me you may have peace.*** In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; ***I have overcome the world.***”

4) We have positional and progressive peace if we decide WHOSE and Who we are by how we condition our mind and thinking:

- Romans 8:6 – “For to set (condition) the mind on the flesh is death, but to set (condition) the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.”
- Isaiah 26:3 – “You keep him in perfect peace *whose mind* is stayed (focused, sustain) on you, because he trusts (total dependency) in you.”

5) We can have Positional Peace and Progressive peace through Prayer and thought life:

- Philippians 4:4-9
- 4 Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice! 5 Let everyone see that you are considerate in all you do. **Remember**, *the Lord is coming soon*.
- 6 *Don't worry about anything*; **instead**, **pray about everything**. Tell God what you need, and thank him **for all he has done**. 7 Then you will **experience God's peace**, which exceeds anything we can understand. **His peace will** guard your **hearts and minds** as you live **in Christ Jesus**.
- 8 And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. **Fix your thoughts** on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. **Think about things** that are excellent and worthy of praise. 9 **Keep putting into practice** all you learned and received from me—everything you heard from me and saw me doing. **Then** the **God of peace** **will be with you**.

6) We can have positional and progressive peace with one another as we collaborative work through conflict in a broken world

- Not the peace lovers – who compromise and want peace at all costs
 - Not the peace fakers – passive on lookers
 - Not the peace keepers – who sit back and observe conflict but do nothing to address conflict
 - Not the peace role deflectors – Who expect others to do something about it but do lift a hand to change
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- **Jesus actually said that something profound about PEACE MAKERS:**

- **Matthew 5:9** “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”
- James 4:1-2 – ***Where is the source*** of all quarrels and fights among you? Is not the source because of the pleasures that battles you have within each part of your inner being...of you. You anxious and deeply, frantically want something but you do not get it...so you covet and compare...fight and quarrel!

- James 3:13-18
- 13 If you are **wise** and **understand** God's ways, prove it by living an honorable life, doing good works with the humility that comes from wisdom. 14 But if you are bitterly jealous and there is selfish ambition in your heart, don't cover up the truth with boasting and lying. 15 For jealousy and selfishness are not God's kind of wisdom. Such things are earthly, unspiritual, and demonic. 16 For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and evil of every kind.
- 17 But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also ***peace loving***, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and the fruit of good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere. 18 And those who are ***peacemakers*** will plant seeds of ***peace*** and reap a harvest of righteousness and justice.