

***PEACE: For Unto Us A Son Is Given*****Good Morning & Merry Christmas OIC!**

As we approach the celebration Day of God's Greatest Gift to Mankind, His Son Jesus, we open our hearts again to God's Love and Wisdom in His Holy Word. The prophet Isaiah has what most agree are the most famous prophetic words of the coming Messiah or Christ. **(Isaiah 9.6/KJ21)** *6 For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder. And His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.* In the 18<sup>th</sup> Century Handel, a born-again Jew, wrote the Christ honoring overture *Messiah* including the glorious piece, "For Unto Us A Son Is Given."

About 700 B.C. Isaiah spoke these words to God's Chosen People of Israel, but then divided into Israel, to the north, and Judah. Isaiah warned both nations of God's wrath at their pretending to be worshiping the Lord God Almighty, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In Isaiah Chapter 9, his audience was primarily Judah regarding an invasion by Assyria sent by God to bring them to repent. But, as history in the Bible would show, Isaiah's prophecies against Israel, would also lead to invasion by foreign armies. Israel also continued to ignore God's prophets and God's Laws. **(Isaiah 9.5)** *The boots of the warrior and the uniforms bloodstained by war will all be burned.* This statement aims to have a lasting impact upon these nations, Judah and Israel. For it was a promise of Victory and a Savior in the shadow of prophesied war! God also aimed these prophecies to impact the whole world.

**MESSIAH, THE CHRIST, PROMISED- For Unto Us A Son Is Given**

Isaiah prophesy of the Messiah in 700 B.C. even included the details of Jesus' home town in Nazareth in Galilee. For after Joseph and Mary had escaped with Baby Jesus to Egypt, we read in the Newer Testament **(Matthew 2.20-22)** *20 "Get up!" the angel said. "Take the child and his mother back to the land of Israel, because those who were trying to kill the child are dead." 21 So Joseph got up and returned to the land of Israel with Jesus and his mother. 22 But when he learned that the new ruler of Judea was Herod's son Archelaus, he was afraid to go there. Then, after being warned in a dream, he left for the region of Galilee.*

Isaiah had written in **(Isaiah 9.1-2)** *Nevertheless, that time of darkness and despair will not go on forever. The land of Zebulun and Naphtali will be humbled, but there will be a time in the future when Galilee of the Gentiles, which lies along the road that runs between the Jordan and the sea, will be filled with glory. 2 The people who walk in darkness will see a great light. For those who live in a land of deep darkness, a light will shine.* Thus, Jesus was the light of the world shining in Galilee.

Isaiah continued to prophecy a victory in what looked like total defeat by the Assyrians. He was looking ahead to the Messiah. In **(Isaiah 9.4- 5 )** *For you will break the yoke of their slavery and lift the heavy burden from their shoulders. You will break the oppressor's rod, just as you did when you destroyed the army of Midian. 5 The boots of the warrior and the uniforms bloodstained by war will all be burned. They will be fuel for the fire.*

### FOR UNTO US A SON IS GIVEN

**(Isaiah 9.6-7)** *For a child is born to us, a son is given to us.*

*The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called:*

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

*7 His government and its peace will never end. He will rule with fairness and justice from the throne of his ancestor David for all eternity. The passionate commitment of the LORD of Heaven's Armies will make this happen!*

As we read words like “government” and “justice” we better understand how the Jews who rejected Jesus had some “facts” from this prophecy to misunderstand His Eternal Purpose. On Palm Sunday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, \* A.D. 30 Jesus rode into Jerusalem as a Victorious King, an Apparent Messiah to all in Jerusalem. The Nation Israel was under martial law having been invaded by Rome. This was during the Passover Feast and just before His Crucifixion at the hands of wicked men. Roman soldiers under Pilate would submit to the Jewish Religious leaders' demands to crucify Jesus.

But, as people often do today, the Jews watching Jesus' apparent Victorious Entry into Jerusalem chose the parts of the Bible understood by the carnal or natural mind only. The Jews under oppressive force of Rome imagined with some real faith in the Older Testament Bible in **(Isaiah 9.7)** *He will rule with fairness and justice from the throne of his ancestor David for all eternity.*

And in **(Isaiah 9.4)** *For you will break the yoke of their slavery and lift the heavy burden from their*

*shoulders. You will break the oppressor's rod, just as you did when you destroyed the army of Midian.* Thus, Messiah must be a fierce warrior. Surely if Jesus is Messiah, the Jews thought, He would cast out the Romans as they saw Him cast out demons!

And **(Isaiah 9.5)** *The boots of the warrior and the uniforms bloodstained by war will all be burned.* **So Messianic Rule means War** meant swords and trumpets sounding, horses charging, men's blood being spilled to accomplish the deliverance of God's People, the Jewish Nation, from the unjust Roman Empire! But, they did not see the spiritual truth. That is how God did it before against Midian. God must not do anything different now, then He did before, they thought!

Yet this same prophet, Isaiah, had told these people the spiritual Mission of Jesus in **(Isaiah 53.5)** *But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed.* And then, about 700 years later, we read the Apostle Peter re-quoted Isaiah's prophecy after Jesus Death, Resurrection, and Ascension back into Heaven: **(1Peter 2.24)** *He personally carried our sins in his body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. By his wounds you are healed.* Also how could He be a Valiant and Violent Messiah and be called *Prince of Peace* in **(Isaiah 9.6)**

### UNTO US A SON IS GIVEN – HIS MISSION

Yes, this Little Jesus baby came with the Mission to die for sinful Mankind, even me and you. Jesus Mission was told us throughout the Bible and summarized in **(1 Peter 3.18)** *Christ suffered for our sins once for all time. He never sinned, but he died for sinners to bring you safely home to God.* The Jews in 30 AD missed it due to their passionate desire for a physical deliverance from an oppressive cruel government, Rome. How can we understand Jesus' Mission of death for others today? We see in the Bible how Jesus' original disciples also missed it! For they were shocked at “His Mission from Heaven to Earth was Death then Resurrection.” Peter said this in a very outspoken manner. Reading in **(Matthew 16.21-23)** *From then on Jesus began to tell his disciples plainly that it was necessary for him to go to Jerusalem, and that he would suffer many terrible things at the hands of the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of religious law. He would be killed, but on the third day he would be raised from the dead. 22 But Peter took him aside and began to reprimand him for saying such things. “Heaven forbid, Lord,” he said. “This will never happen to you!” 23 Jesus turned to Peter and said,*

*“Get away from me, Satan! You are a dangerous trap to me. You are seeing things merely from a human point of view, not from God’s.”* Peter was already imagining Jesus' Messianic rule in Israel. Peter must have thought that Jesus had to stay alive to cast out the Romans as He had cast out devils! Well, Jesus shocked Peter back with calling him “Satan.” Jesus knew Peter loved Him and was true to Him. But Jesus also knew that the Devil gets his power of suggestion working in the mind of men, like Peter, like me and you too. Jesus said in **(Matthew 16.23)** : *You are a dangerous trap to me.* Although the divine Son of God, Jesus was admitting his humanity. He was watching for the devil's traps to avoid the Cross for Mankind's deliverance from sin and God's righteous judgment.

The world is still missing Jesus' Mission today. We might consider modern life and realize much has changed, but yet, much is still the same in the hearts of men. We find wars all around planet earth. The brutal and cruel Syrian government just fell. The Ukrainian president stands toe to toe to one of the world's superpower leaders, Putin of Russia. I guess freedom loving people, especially in nations with some freedom under their governments, are hoping and praying for victories for the oppressed. This may be a good feeling, and the Apostle Paul instructed his student Timothy in **(1 Timothy 2.1-3)** *I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them. 2 Pray this way for kings and all who are in authority so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity. 3 This is good and pleases God our Savior,* At the same time, the Church must beware of missing God's spiritual purposes in this world today. He does not change His plan to fit the plans of man. Oftentimes beyond our understanding as the Bible tells us in **(Ephesians 1.11)** *and he makes everything work out according to his plan.*

Yes, our compassion for human sufferings is a good thing. But it may blind us to God's plan to save souls from eternal suffering for sin. This is what the Jews did to the Lord Jesus. He failed them for not taking up arms against Rome. They only saw peace by over coming governments, not peace by having their sins forgiven.

As I was writing this Message, I was reminded of a period in my home nation, America. That period of time in the 1960-70s felt much like **(Isaiah 9.1)**: *Nevertheless, that time of darkness and despair will not go on forever.* This was the period of public conflict against authority regarding the Vietnam War and Civil Rights for people of color. Americans felt tricked by their government leaders into many

American young men's slaughter in Vietnam. Democracy apparently failed because the facts were being hidden from Congress, and Congress represented the people in America.

The result was much bitterness and confusion. There was violence in the streets by “Peace Marchers” who were once shot by soldiers. The soldiers were fighting because of what only appeared to be a dangerous situation, noisy and riotous crowds. Americans' confidence in their government had been dropping since the assassination of President J.F. Kennedy in 1963. There was an air or spirit of desperation in many. Although the Vietnam War officially ended in 1973, it was clear that America had “lost” its first war in history. The spirit of a bitter “joy” or “sarcastic peace” was expressed in a “Christmas” song written by the famous British music writer, John Lennon. The title of the song: *So This Is Christmas*.

The lyrics are filled with words “Happy Christmas” and “I hope you have fun.” Of course, as all the *Beatles* music, a simple tune was written that tickles music nerves, so to speak. It is hard to forget the tune. My main point is that the main theme of this “Christmas” song without Christ is humanism. It expresses sarcasm for the struggles affecting the whole world from the Vietnamese War, and civil rights. Words in the song such as “Have a Happy New Year.. Make it a good one, Without any fear.” As I had expected, there is nothing in the song about JESUS! Anger at the American government may have been well deserved, but, using Jesus' Birthday to express it is wrong! But, this in modern America is man's quest for humanity's relief or deliverance from injustice or to be “Merry” by the ceasing of war by peace treaties between nations! The world in the 1971 missed what the Jews missed in 30 AD. Jesus is the *personal Prince of Peace* for the hearts and minds of men regardless of nation or political belief.

### **UNTO US A SON IS GIVEN – MERRY CHRISTMAS**

There was no spirit of “merry” in Lennon's song. Yes, it had humanistic hope for better things ahead. The last chorus includes repeating “The war is over!”.... many times. It is true that peace in Vietnam would have more American young men living to see their 19th birthday. I saw many of my old high school friends drafted into Army after 1968 “Tet Offensive.” Many Americans died. But, with all the bloodshed around the world, what should “Merry Christmas” really mean. How can there be true joy in a world of sorrow and pain?

One thing to remember dear Christians is that Jesus prophesied that there will be no such human government of peace on earth. He said when his disciples asked him about the End of Time and His return in **(Matthew 24.3-6) 3** *“Tell us, when will all this happen? What sign will signal your return and the end of the world?”* **4** *Jesus told them, “Don’t let anyone mislead you, 5 for many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Messiah.’ They will deceive many. 6 And you will hear of wars and threats of wars, but don’t panic. Yes, these things must take place, but the end won’t follow immediately. 7 Nation will go to war against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in many parts of the world* **Therefore** there is only answer to ”How can there be a *Merry Christmas* with true joy in a world of sorrow and pain?” It is not miraculous governments that give us no war. It is in the Prince of Peace, Jesus. For - **UNTO US A SON IS GIVEN.**

It is not only in Japan that many people wish others a *“Merry Christmas”* and never stop to read the name of *Christ* inside it. Actually, *Iesu Kirisito*, is not there if we say it in English. English speaking countries are really more guilty of this failure to realize that **UNTO US A SON IS GIVEN** when they say *“Merry Christmas.”*

You may ask, how is this happiness possible, Pastor Bruce. Well, I had been pondering and praying about that. **My answer is that a sinner can worship the Holiday Itself, and not the Person it celebrates.** Man was created with Eternity in the Heart as we see in **(Ecclesiastes 3.11)** Yet God has made everything beautiful for its own time. He has planted **eternity in** the human heart, but even so, people cannot see the whole scope of God’s work from beginning to end. So worshipping anything gives a feeling of happiness. Enjoying the bright Christmas lights, the cheerful music, and the gathering of families together are not sinful practices. But worshipping the Holiday and ignoring or rejecting God's Gift , Jesus, is a sin!

**Peace and Sin never coexist in the heart of Man- UNTO US A SON IS GIVEN.**

The prophet Isaiah told us that, as God told His people Israel in **(Isaiah 57.20-21) 20** *“But those who still reject me are like the restless sea, which is never still but continually churns up mud and dirt. 21 There is no peace for the wicked,”* says my God. If anyone rejects God's Son, he is rejecting God. People rejecting God have no real peace. The Apostle John wrote about God and His Son in the Newer Testament about 55 A.D. In **(1 John**

**5.11-12) 11** *And this is what God has testified: He has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have God's Son does not have life.* The Jews looking for a WAR making Messiah did just that. John wrote this in his Good News about Jesus. Reading **(John 1.10-13) 10** *He came into the very world he created, but the world didn't recognize him. 11 He came to his own people, and even they rejected him. 12 But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. 13 They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God.* Here is true joy. True Peace is only possible by believing in Jesus and accepting Him. This rebirth creates a new person deep inside every new Believer. The new heart desirous for purity and a relationship with Jesus and God. This is the GIFT OF GOD.

The Greek Septuagint was the version of the Older Testament most used by Jesus' disciples as they quoted the Bible. The Greek Septuagint translation of the Older Testament removes any confusion of calling Jesus “*Everlasting Father*” in the 9<sup>th</sup> Chapter of Isaiah. For it renders **(Isaiah 9.6/SEPT)** *his name is called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty One, Potentate, Prince of Peace, **Father of the Age to Come.*** The whole Bible clearly shows Trinity: Father – Son --Holy Spirit. Here God the Father gave God the Son. But, Jesus is the source or Divine Cause for men to enter the Age to Come by His Blood Sacrifice on the Cross.

Peace among nations means very little without peace within our hearts. This is an everlasting kingdom that no one can take away from you. No cruel government leader, nor a devil, nor death can separate you from this Kingdom. As we are promised in the Bible in **(Romans 8.39)** *No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to **separate us** from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.* This is God's Mission. Jesus' Mission completed on the Cross. We can have peace that never ends, for Jesus said in **(Luke 21.33)** *Heaven and earth will disappear, but my words will never disappear.*

### **GOD'S KINGDOM ON EARTH - UNTO US A SON S GIVEN**

I want to note that I truly believe that the feelings that millions of people have at Christmas is from Holy Spirit even without seeing “Christ” in “Christmas. God is wooing or drawing people towards Faith in the Lord Jesus even just as “Little Baby Jesus.” Those without Christ in their hearts are living by

feelings without facts to support what they feel. They likely do not think anything about God or Jesus at all. But they are hearing music and lyrics of songs that point to the fact of the historical event, *Christmas*, which points to the historical *Jesus Christ*.

When I was about 8 years old I visited a Christmas event. It was Christmas Carol singing in a building near my home in America. The group, a rather heretical group, was handing out small Songbooks. I still recall that “Special Peace” which may have been a few minutes on that day. It took God's patience for 20 years to bring me to the *Prince of Peace*. But Holy Spirit used what was there, heretics or not.

Also, in the 1990's a member in the church I planted at Boston University in the USA was becoming a doctor. One of his papers for medical school was a thorough study of deaths and hospitalizations in major hospitals in the United States. There was an unmistakably decrease beyond all scientific or physician reasoning that hospitals had the fewer patients, and also the fewer deaths at Christmas Season when compared to the whole year. Truly, *this Good News is for everyone*.

#### **UNTO US A SON IS GIVEN – It's Your Birthday, *Jesus***

God reminds the world around us that this is His Son's Birthday. Yes, God keeps pouring out immeasurable oceans of Love to rescue those perishing even as He did me and my brothers and sister sin Christ here at OIC. But, feelings of Peace are not enough. As written in **(Romans 10.17)**. *Faith comes from hearing, that is, hearing the Good News about Christ*. We Christians have that peace of Christ inside of us. Yes, we are often pressed down in our feelings and we may battle with doubts. But, every Christmas we are closer to seeing Jesus face to face. Maybe 2025 will be the year!

We also have the duty of love to try to have sinners hear Jesus powerful name and story. One of my favorite Gospel singers, George Beverly Shea, used to sing with Billy Graham Crusades all around the world. We can show God's love for those outside of God's Family as in the Christmas song, *Put Christ Back Into Christmas*. I like the verse that says “Don't wish me a Happy Holiday. Put Christ back into Christmas on this blessed Holy Day.” Yes. It is easy to get so merry that we forget it is a Holy Day. It's Jesus Birthday.



## THE PRINCE OF PEACE ON EARTH– UNTO US A SON IS GIVEN

God sent His Son, the Prince of Peace, to redeem us. Buying our souls with His Sufferings on the Cross. As I mentioned earlier in **(1 Peter 2.24)** *He personally carried our sins in his body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. By his wounds you are healed.* Our spiritual sickness has been healed as we were born again. This verse is all about “The Sin Problem!” Yes, Jesus heals our physical diseases and afflictions when we have faith to receive it. That includes someone else having faith for you. But the real joy, that will never end, is a new heart and the forgiveness of sin. Jesus is the Father of the Age to Come. He is our entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven and when He returns at the End of Time to establish His Kingdom on Earth. The Son of God will then be the Valiant Warrior that the Jews wanted. He will be the King that creates a government of total peace with no wars. **(Isaiah 9.5)** *The boots of the warrior and the uniforms bloodstained by war will all be burned.* This verse will be fulfilled and mean the End of War after Jesus destroys all His enemies on planet earth. Also, **(Isaiah 9.7)** *His government and its peace will never end. He will rule with fairness and justice from the throne of his ancestor David for all eternity. The passionate commitment of the LORD of Heaven’s Armies will make this happen!* Thus God, *LORD of Heaven’s Armies*, will cause this to happen. God will not be prevented by any human government for He is Almighty. Then another prophecy by Isaiah will be fulfilled. In **(Isaiah 11.9)** *Nothing will hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain, for as the waters fill the sea, so the earth will be filled with people who know the Lord.* Then the Church and the World will be one under the Prince of Peace, Jesus. For **UNTO US A SON IS GIVEN..**

Brothers and Sisters in Christ...Let's go forth and show the world the Joy we have received from God's Gift, God's Son, His indescribable gift.

We can really say Merry Christmas and Happy Birthday Jesus all in one breath! Let's Do It!

*Let Us Pray...*

### REFERENCES

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NLT- Holy Bible, New Living Translation, Copyright 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188.

SEPT- The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English, Original Translation by Sirr Lancelot C.L. Brenton in 1851. Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, Massachusetts 01963, 2024