

THE HISTORICAL TUMULTUOUS PEACE: PAX ROMANA

- The *Pax Romana* is a name placed by historians on the 200-year period from 27BC to 180AD.
 - In 27BC Octavius became Caesar Augustus after he defeated Mark Anthony and Cleopatra in a Roman Civil War. He ruled for 41 years.
 - Marcus Aurelius was considered the last emperor of the *Pax Romana*.
- Truth: nobody living during the *Pax Romana* would have considered it to be a time of peace.
 - The first and second Jewish revolts were during this time (70 and 135 AD).
 - Marcus Aurelius' reign was filled with competition for the emperorship from within and invaders from without.
- When there was "peace" it was almost always because no dissent and no competition was allowed. The people were placated with "bread and circus."

CHRISTMAS SEASON CAN BE A "PAX ROMANA"

- The Hallmark Channel has made a fortune convincing us that Christmas is a perfect time of year.
- The world is not a hallmark Christmas movie.
 - Grief at Christmastime becomes almost unbearable for some.
 - Depression at Christmastime can be brought on by false expectations, loneliness, stress, and so much more.
- The "Christmas Peace" can be a "Pax Romana" type of peace: imposed but not real.

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS WAS FILLED WITH AS MUCH "GRIT" AS IT WAS "GLORY."

- Luke 1:26-38
 - Glory- this is a seen of glorious grace introduced by a glorious angel.

- Grit- how will Mary explain this to Joseph? Her Parents? Her neighbors?
- Luke 2:1-20
 - Glory- A glorious choir with a glorious announcement and a glorious scene of simple shepherds bowing down to a newborn King!
 - Grit- A taxation decree, a cold night in the barn with an expectant wife, delivering a baby and having to lay it in a manger...then interrupted by an impromptu gathering of unbathed men.
- Matthew 2:1-23
 - Glory- A glorious star! Mysterious, educated and wealthy Magi bringing gold, frankincense, and myrrh!
 - Grit- One King (the one actually in charge) is out to kill the newborn baby, ending in **Rachel weeping for her children** (v. 18).

YOU CAN FIND "THE PEACE THAT PASSETH ALL UNDERSTANDING" EVEN IN A WORLD OF CHAOS.

- Which shines brighter – the grit or the glory? It is hard to tell.
- In the end, that baby of Bethlehem died a horrible death, worthy only of the worst of criminals.
- The Christian gospel is the only pathway to a true spiritual peace that goes beneath the surface of physical "war and peace."
 - Foundation of the Gospel: All of humanity was separated from fellowship with God
 - One man caused this problem: Adam.
 - We don't inherit Adam's guilt, we inherit Adam's **CONDITION**, which is separation from God.
 - Without a rescuer, we will die in separation.
 - One Man came to restore the fellowship: 1 Corinthians 15:22 - **For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.**
- How to receive that life Christ provides: Ephesians 2:8-9 - **For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.**