

Tis the Season to Be Jolly?  
December 3, 20016

I Opening

A) Tis the Season for Christmas Carols

- 1) I heard the bells on Christmas day  
Their old familiar carols play  
And mild and sweet their songs repeat  
**SLIDE** Of peace on earth, good will to men
- 2) And the bells are ringing  
Like a choir they're singing  
**SLIDE** In my heart I hear them  
Peace on earth, good will to men **SLIDE**
- 3) And in despair I bowed my head  
**SLIDE** There is no peace on earth I said **SLIDE**  
For hate is strong and mocks the song **SLIDE**  
Of peace on earth, good will to men
- 4) But the bells are ringing **SLIDE**  
Like a choir singing  
Does anybody hear them?  
**SLIDE** Peace on earth, good will to men

B) **SLIDE** Things don't seem to be changing for the better

- 1) The wars continue to rage in Iraq and Afghanistan
- 2) Our elected officials see abortion as a health choice
- 3) Crime is rampant
- 4) Drug use is on the rise
- 5) 54% of teens under 18 admit to sexting
- 6) College campuses are in a constant state of turmoil
- 7) Iran's new missile will reach Israel, prompting a greater likelihood of an attack by Israel
- 8) Massive debt threatens this nation and its future

C) So, is this really the season to be jolly?

## II **SLIDE** Jesus, the light of the world

A) **Isaiah 8:21-22(NIV)** <sup>21</sup>Distressed and hungry, they will roam through the land; when they are famished, they will become enraged and, looking upward, will curse their king and their God. <sup>22</sup>Then they will look toward the earth and see only distress and darkness and fearful gloom, and they will be thrust into utter darkness.

- 1) Does this sound like our world?
- 2) Are people distressed, hungry, homeless, and angry?
- 3) Do you see any hope in this world?
- 4) Does the darkness seem to be spreading and engulfing our world?
- 5) Well, this passage actually describes the world into which Emmanuel (God With Us), the Christ child, would be born
- 6) God chose to have His Son born into a dark and violent world
- 7) Violence and sin do not mean that Christ has failed; instead, they show us how much the world needs Jesus
- 8) It was for this reason Jesus was born

### B) Jesus' world

- 1) 37 BC Herod the Great captures Judea - Herod turns Antigonus, the king, over to Mark Antony, who beheads him
- 2) 36 BC - Herod fears his 17-year-old brother-in-law Aristobolus will be named "King of the Jews" so he appoints him High Priest instead
- 3) 35 BC - Priest Aristobolus is drowned at a party on Herod's orders
- 4) 30 BC - Herod is confirmed "King of the Jews" by Octavian
- 5) King Herod, a half-Jew, tried to appease the Jews through building projects that stimulated the economy
- 6) 29 BC - Herod kills one of his 10 wives, her grandfather, her mother, his brother-in-law, and 3 of his sons
- 7) At one point, Caesar Augustus commented, "I'd rather be Herod's pig than his son,"
- 8) 6 BC - Magi ask Herod if he knows where they may find the "King of the Jews"

- 9) Fearing the prophecy, Herod orders the death of all male children 2 years old and younger
- 10) This was the world into which Christ was born
- 11) This was the world that exists when the angels sang **Luke 2:14 (NJB)** <sup>14</sup> Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace for those he favours.

### C) Scriptures

- 1) **SLIDE Isaiah 9:2-7(NIV)** <sup>2</sup> The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned. <sup>6</sup> For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. <sup>7</sup> Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.
  - a) Isaiah was prophesying about a time yet to come
  - b) He was looking forward to this Child Who would bring a great light into the world
  - c) Isaiah was rejoicing for what was to come
  - d) Yes, this is the season to be jolly because we have seen this great light
  - e) We rejoice that after 2,000 years no darkness has diminished that light
  - f) We rejoice because that light still shines in the darkness
- 2) **SLIDE John 1:1-5(ICB)** <sup>1</sup>Before the world began, there was the Word. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was with God in the beginning. <sup>3</sup>All things were made through him. Nothing was made without him. <sup>4</sup>In him there was life. That life was light for the people of the world. <sup>5</sup>The Light shines in the darkness. And the darkness has not overpowered the Light.
- 3) These verses describe what I call "Christmas in the Dark"

- 4) Isaiah tells us the people were walking in darkness
  - 5) They were surrounded by deception, strife, rampant sin, with no desire to change
  - 6) They were walking dead because, instead of looking to heaven to praise God, they looked to heaven to blame God
  - 7) They walked in a gloom with no hope
  - 8) Into this world a Child was born
  - 9) He is a great light
  - 10) His government, built upon that light, will increase more and more
  - 11) He no longer **will be known** because HE IS Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace
  - 12) His light is life for all the people in the world
  - 13) That light is still shining in the darkness and no matter what the news reports, the darkness will not overpower it
  - 14) Yes, darkness is in our world - for that we weep
  - 15) Yes, the Light is in our world - for that we rejoice
  - 16) This is the season to be jolly BECAUSE the Great Light, the Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, our Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace is among us
- D) **SLIDE** Jesus, the Light Who shines in the darkness on Christmas
- 1) God gave the world Jesus so it would have a choice
  - 2) God knew the violence and sin would not stop
  - 3) He placed His Son into a dark and violent world so people would have a choice between the darkness and the light
  - 4) The violence of today does not diminish the story of Christ
  - 5) No, it simply reveals that some still choose the darkness
  - 6) But the light has not gone out - it never will
- E) Rest of the song
- 1) Then the bells rang more loud and deep  
**SLIDE** God is not dead, nor does He sleep  
 The wrong shall fail, **SLIDE** the right prevail  
 With peace on earth, good will to men
  - 2) Then ringing singing on its way **SLIDE**

The world revolved from night to day  
A voice, a chime, a chant sublime **SLIDE**  
Of peace on earth, **SLIDE** good will to men

- 3) And the bells they're ringing  
Like a choir they're singing  
And with our hearts we hear them  
Peace on earth, good will to men  
**SLIDE** Do you hear the bells they're ringing?  
The life the angles singing  
**SLIDE** Open up your heart and hear them  
Peace on earth, good will to men **SLIDE**  
Peace on earth, Peace on earth  
Peace on earth, Good will to men **SLIDE**

F) Yes, it is the season to rejoice

- 1) Jesus' Toy Box
- 2) Christmas caroling: Wednesday night before Christmas