

WHAT CHILD IS THIS?
JESUS: CHILD OF PEACE AND SALVATION

(Luke 2: 1-20)

Intro: What child is this?

- Throughout Advent we have been reflecting.
 - #On how God can do marvelous things through a child.
- Isaac.
 - #Child of Laughter and Sacrifice.
- Moses.
 - #Child of Water and Deliverance.
- John the Baptizer.
 - #Child of Sound and Sight.

Now it is Christmas.

- We come to the Christ child.

What child is this?

- Jesus.
 - #Child of Peace and Salvation.

I. Child Of Peace.

A. A Decree Went Out From Caesar Augustus.

1. Augustus was the Roman Emperor.
 - a. 27 B.C. – A.D. 14.
 - b. His name was Octavian.
 - Great-nephew of Julius Caesar.
 - But the Roman Senate gave him the august title.
 - #Augustus.
 - *From which we get the name of the 8th month.
 - + In our calendar.
 - =August.
2. You have perhaps heard of Pax Romana.
 - a. Peace of Rome.
 - b. Roman Peace.
 - Describes a long period in the history of the Roman Empire.
 - #27 B.C. – A.D. 180.
 - #When there was:
 - *Relative peace.
 - *Minimal expansion by military force.

- c. Pax Romana began under the reign of Augustus.
 - Sometimes known as Pax Augusta.
 - #Augustan Peace.
 - Augustus was thought to be a man of peace.
 - #Although the purpose of his:
 - *Decree.
 - *Census.
 - +Count noses.
 - =For tax estimates.
 - =For a military draft.
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- B. Joseph And Mary Went To Be Registered.
 - 1. Emperor issued a decree.
 - 2. They obeyed.
 - a. They were law abiding citizens.
 - b. They were people of peace.
 - Point Luke wishes to stress.
 - #For Mary and Joseph.
 - #For Zechariah and Elizabeth.
 - #For all Christians.
 - c. They are not a threat to Pax Romana.
 - 3. Which is how Mary and Joseph come to be in Bethlehem.
 - a. Rather than in their hometown of Nazareth.
 - b. When the time comes for Mary to have her baby.
 - Jesus.
 - In a manger.
 - #Because there was no room for them in the inn.
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- C. Jesus Was A Child Of Peace.
 - 1. His army said so.
 - a. Not a military army.
 - Equipped with:
 - #Swords.
 - #Spears.
 - #Helmets.
 - #Shields.
 - b. But an army of angels.
 - NRSV reads:
 - #"Multitude of the heavenly host."
 - *Luke 2: 13.
 - #Greek word literally means "army."
 - *"Multitude of the heavenly army."

2. Don't think for a minute that this is simply a coincidence.
 - a. Luke knows how to tell a story.
 - b. His story contrasts:
 - Jesus.
 - #Babe of Bethlehem.
 - Caesar Augustus.
 - #Roman Emperor.
 - c. As the heavenly army of angels proclaims:
 - “Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favors.”
 - #Luke 2: 14.
3. Where does true peace come from?
 - a. From a palace in Rome?
 - To the Mediterranean world.
 - b. From heaven above?
 - To the ends of the earth.
4. How is true peace achieved?
 - a. By Romans legions?
 - Deployed throughout:
 - #Europe.
 - #Middle East.
 - #North Africa.
 - Ready to kill.
 - #To maintain law and order.
 - #To maintain the borders of Caesar's kingdom.
 - b. By one man?
 - Prince of Peace.
 - #Who will one day ride into Jerusalem.
 - *Not:
 - +In a chariot.
 - +On a war horse.
 - *But on a donkey.
 - +Beast of burden.
 - Ready to die.
 - #On a cross.
 - #To open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers.
 - #To make peace with God.
 - It begins with him as a baby.
 - #In a manger.
 - #In Bethlehem.
5. What child is this?
 - a. Jesus.
 - b. Child of Peace.

II. Child Of Salvation.

A. Augustus Was Called "Savior Of The Whole World."

1. Many ancient inscriptions said so.
 - a. If you see it in print.
 - It must be true.
 - b. If it's carved in stone.
 - It must really be true.
2. Where else was one to look?
 - a. For protection from earthly peril.
 - b. For deliverance from one's enemies.
 - c. For peace and prosperity that could provide:
 - Full employment.
 - Chicken in every pot.
 - Car in every garage.
 - Medicare.
 - Medicaid.
 - Financial security in one's golden years.
 - d. Caesar.

B. Isn't The World Still Looking For Such A Savior?

1. Stock market lost 22% of its value in the first 8 days of October.
 - a. Wall Street.
 - b. Financial sector.
 - c. Individual investors.
 - Looking for a savior.
2. Two of the Big Three American auto makers are on the verge of bankruptcy.
 - a. Even with their:
 - Corporate jets.
 - Golden parachutes.
 - Union contracts.
 - b. They're looking for a savior.
3. When we are diagnosed with an illness.
 - a. Has no known cure.
 - b. We're looking for a savior.
4. When our congregation faces:
 - a. Declining numbers.
 - b. Aging membership.
 - c. Recurring deficits.
 - We're looking for a savior.

C. To You Is Born This Day In The City Of David A Savior, Who Is Christ, The Lord.

1. Not:
 - a. Caesar.
 - b. Uncle Sam.
 - c. Uncle Henry.
2. But Jesus.
 - a. Whose name means:
 - Savior.
 - God saves.
 - b. Who saves us.
 - Not necessarily from:
 - #Earthly perils.
 - #Personal heartache.
 - #International conflict.
 - #Sickness.
 - #Economic downturns.
 - But from:
 - #Eternal consequences of our sin.
 - #Eternal alienation from God.
 - c. Who is God's heavenly stimulus package.
 - In human form.
 - #In a manger.
 - #In Bethlehem.
 - In bread and wine.
 - #In our hands.
 - #In our mouths.
 - #In our hearts.

Concl: What child is this?

- Jesus.
 - #Child of Peace.
 - #Child of Salvation.

