

Not Peace But A Sword

Luke 2:13-14 [New King James] *“And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!’”*

The message given by angels at the physical birth of Jesus Christ was one of peace.

Isaiah 9:6-7 [New King James] *“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, **Prince of Peace**. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.”*

One of the names given to Jesus Christ is “Prince of Peace,” yet Matthew quotes Jesus Christ as not bringing peace but a sword! [Matthew 10:34]

Luke 12:51 [New King James] *“Do you suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather **division**.”*

Luke replaces the metaphorical “sword” by the non-metaphorical “division.”

Both evangelists then continue to report the words of Jesus Christ as bringing division in the family, [Matthew 10:35-36; Luke 12:52-53]. Matthew also finishes his record of what Jesus Christ said by quoting Micah 7:6.

One thing is certain, Jesus Christ never advocated conflict, but the very opposite.

Matthew 5:9 [New King James] *“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”*

Meaning God is the God of Peace, so that those who seek peace reflect His character.

The message which Jesus Christ’s followers proclaimed was called the *“gospel of peace,”* [Ephesians 6:15] or *“word of reconciliation,”* [2 Corinthians 5:19-20].

This reconciliation was not only a doctrine but was experience among the Galilean ministry, when Simon the Zealot and Matthew the tax collector were able to live together as two of the twelve apostles, the rest of the company must have seen this as a miracle of grace.

When Jesus spoke of tension and conflict within a family He probably spoke of personal experience. There are indications in the gospel message that some members of Jesus Christ’s own family had no sympathy with His ministry.

Mark 3:21 [New King James] *“But when His own people heard about this, they went out to lay hold of Him, for they said, ‘He is out of His mind.’”*

This refers to Jesus Christ’s own kinsmen responding in this way.

John 7:5 [New King James] *“For even His brothers did not believe in Him.”*

Even James at this time did not believe what his brother Jesus Christ preached.

If we question how James attained the position of leadership in the Church in Jerusalem the answer is found in **1 Corinthians 15:7**, a special revelation of the resurrected Jesus Christ to His physical brother.

So when Jesus Christ said that His coming would not bring peace but a sword of division, He was referring to the effect of the message He brought, not the purpose of His coming.

In these words of Jesus Christ was a warning to His followers that to be a disciple of His would bring with it hostility and persecution, even to expulsion from the family circle.

It is well that all who seek to become disciples of Jesus Christ are forewarned of such division, for they could never say, "*we never expected that we would have to pay this price for following Him!*" [**Luke 14:26-33**]