

## God's Answer to Evil

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Isaiah 9:6-7

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**Saturday, December 6, 1941** - U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt makes a final appeal to the Emperor of Japan for peace. There is no reply. Late this same day, the U.S. code-breaking service begins intercepting a 14-part Japanese message and deciphers the first 13 parts, passing them on to the President and Secretary of State. The Americans believe a Japanese attack is imminent, most likely somewhere in Southeast Asia.

**Sunday, December 7** - The last part of the Japanese message, stating that diplomatic relations with the U.S. are to be broken off, reaches Washington in the morning and is decoded at approximately 9 a.m. About an hour later, another Japanese message is intercepted. It instructs the Japanese embassy to deliver the main message to the Americans at 1 p.m. The Americans realize this time corresponds with early morning time in Pearl Harbor, which is several hours behind. The U.S. War Department then sends out an alert but uses a commercial telegraph because radio contact with Hawaii is temporarily broken. Delays prevent the alert from arriving at headquarters in Oahu until noontime (Hawaii time) four hours after the attack has already begun.

**Sunday, December 7** - At 6 a.m., the first attack wave of 183 Japanese planes takes off from the carriers located 230 miles north of Oahu and heads for the U.S. Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor.

At 7:02 a.m., two Army operators at Oahu's northern shore radar station detect the Japanese air attack approaching and contact a junior officer who disregards their reports, thinking they are American B-17 planes which are expected in from the U.S. west coast.

At 7:15 a.m., a second attack wave of 167 planes takes off from the Japanese carriers and heads for Pearl Harbor. Pearl Harbor is not on a state on high alert. Senior commanders have concluded, based on available intelligence, there is no reason to believe an attack is imminent. Aircraft are therefore left parked wingtip to wingtip on airfields, anti-aircraft guns are unmanned with many ammunition boxes

kept locked in accordance with peacetime regulations. There are also no torpedo nets protecting the fleet anchorage. And since it is Sunday morning, many officers and crewmen are leisurely ashore.

At 7:53 a.m., the first Japanese assault wave commences the attack with flight commander, Mitsuo Fuchida, sounding the battle cry: "Tora! Tora! Tora!" (Tiger! Tiger! Tiger!).

The Americans are taken completely by surprise. The first attack wave targets airfields and battleships. The second wave targets other ships and shipyard facilities. The air raid lasts until 9:45 a.m. Eight battleships are damaged, with five sunk. Three light cruisers, three destroyers and three smaller vessels are lost along with 188 aircraft. The Japanese lose 27 planes and five midget submarines which attempted to penetrate the inner harbor and launch torpedoes.

The casualty list includes 2,335 servicemen and 68 civilians killed, with 1,178 wounded. Included are 1,104 men aboard the Battleship USS Arizona killed after a 1,760-pound air bomb penetrated into the forward magazine causing catastrophic explosions.

In Washington, various delays prevent the Japanese diplomats from presenting their war message to Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, until 2:30 p.m. (Washington time) just as the first reports of the air raid at Pearl Harbor are being read.

**Monday, December 8** - The United States and Britain declare war on Japan with President Roosevelt calling December 7, "a date which will live in infamy..."

**Thursday, December 11** - Germany and Italy declare war on the United States. The European and Southeast Asian wars have now become a global conflict with the Axis powers; Japan, Germany and Italy, united against America, Britain, France, and their Allies.

By the time the war is over, 60 million people will have lost their lives across the globe, costing the United States alone One Trillion dollars. War is sometimes a necessity, for at times we must restrain or subdue those bent toward evil. But war is never pleasant. It never leaves a person feeling they had done a great thing. No, those who must face the horror of war are left with the realization that this is indeed a wicked and evil world in which we live.

I think most Christians understand why there is evil. Wickedness seems to be written on the hearts of all humanity. But the bigger question by most is why God seems to allow evil to go unchecked and unrestrained in this world. Why doesn't He do something to stop it? The truth is that God has done something already. He has addressed the presence of evil in this world, and His answer came in the form of a Child born in a stable in Bethlehem.

In Isaiah's prophecy, we hear God promise, *<sup>6</sup>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. <sup>7</sup>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!*<sup>1</sup> (Isaiah 9:6-7)

More than just a prophecy meant for the distant future, for the Day of the Lord (Revelation 20:2-3), more than the promise of peace with God through Christ, I believe there is a present day peace upon this earth that many people do not see.

According to the Apostle Paul, lawlessness and evil are currently being restrained upon this earth. Not eliminated, but restrained. *"And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way."*<sup>2</sup> (2 Thessalonians 2:6-7)

Paul says that the Man of Lawlessness (or Man of Sin) will not be seen until that which restrains him has been taken away. Something is keeping him from being revealed (*apokalypto* in Greek). This revealing (what we call the apocalypse) will happen only when God removes that restraint (verse 7). The restraint is often identified as the Holy Spirit. So, in other words, evil is presently held in check by the Holy Spirit. And if we think things are bad now, just wait until evil is no longer restrained. I believe we have no idea just how wicked and evil this world can be.

Now here is where it gets interesting. It is the presence of the Holy Spirit on this earth that keeps this Man of Lawlessness from being revealed. Do you know

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<sup>1</sup>Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

<sup>2</sup>*New American Standard Bible : 1995 update*. 1995 (2 Th 2:6-7). LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

where the Holy Spirit dwells here on earth? He exists within those who have called Christ Lord and have accepted His work of salvation upon the cross.(John 14:17). It is the presence of the Church that restrains evil in this world. It is people like you and me who, by surrendering ourselves to Christ, give the Holy Spirit power to suppress this evil and keep wickedness in check. That's why Paul could argue that the Day of the Lord could not have happened since the church was still present on earth. God would not withdraw the Spirit from the church and leave us as orphans (John 14:18).

The point I'm trying to make here is that just as Christ came as the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6), He has called those who follow Him (those who call Him Lord, and mean it) to be instruments through which that peace continues. Sometimes we are to be the benchmark by which all else is measured. That's why war seems so evil and so wrong. And sometimes, as vessels through which the Holy Spirit works, we must be instruments of peace that keep evil and wickedness in check. But the very reason we can look at events (like Pearl Harbor or what recently happened in India) and declare them wrong is because the Prince of Peace has shown us how God would have us behave. God has invaded this sinful and evil world in the form of a Son. And by that Son, we know what peace should look like. I pray that those who claim to follow the Son are living in a way that shows this to the world, and that the message of peace will be heard throughout this world.