



voice of prophecy

# Peace on EARTH



*By Shawn and  
Jean Boonstra*

*Additional features include stories and poems such as “A Civil War Christmas,” “The Three Kings” and “The Gift of the Magi.”*





*Peace*  
*on* EARTH

The title "Peace on EARTH" is rendered in a decorative red font. "Peace" is in a large, flowing cursive script. "on" is in a smaller, simpler cursive script. "EARTH" is in a bold, all-caps serif font. The text is surrounded by several red stars of varying sizes and decorative flourishes, including a large star above "Peace" and smaller stars scattered around the words.

*By Shawn and  
Jean Boonstra*





# Peace on EARTH

*Once you've read the book,  
experience the event!*

The *Peace on Earth* DVD features a Christ-centered message by Pastor Shawn Boonstra and inspirational music by award-winning musicians.

This program was chosen as ABC Television's official Christmas program in 2014, and it's a timeless celebration of Jesus' birth.

## ***Features:***

- An inspirational message by Pastor Shawn Boonstra with an introduction by Jean Boonstra.
- Internationally-renowned musicians Christine Wollmann, the Adventist Children's Chorus and the King's Heralds.
- A heartwarming story by Bill Knott.
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Running time: 74 minutes.

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# Introduction

The daily news cycle can be enough to make a person realize that something is not quite right in this world. This planet was not intended for violence, hatred and fear. We were created for something better—something different.

God the Father sent His Son as a tiny baby to set this world right. Jesus is the Desire of All Nations. That baby grew up to be a man and paid the price for us so many years ago. We can have hope and peace this Christmas and throughout the year. The price has been paid and He will return!

*"And it came to pass in those days [that] a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city. Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child.*



So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this [will be] the sign to you: you will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.' 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!' So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us.' And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. Now when they had seen [Him], they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child." (Luke 2:1-17)

# *Peace on Earth*

*By Shawn Boonstra*

There's this unusual passage in the Old Testament book of Haggai where the prophet refers to the coming Messiah as "the Desire of all Nations." Of course, that's not one of the better-known titles for Jesus and it's certainly not one of the titles you'd expect to hear at Christmastime. What you expect at Christmastime is the stuff Isaiah wrote: "Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace," and "unto you a child is born."

But Haggai calls Jesus "the Desire of All Nations," and if you want to understand why, one of the best places to look is Exodus 33.

Now, I know that's not the Bible passage you expect to read at Christmas. You want to read Matthew 1 and Luke 2, but just bear with me for a moment, because I think this is going to make some real Christmas sense.

In Exodus chapter 33, Moses is out in the desert, the children of Israel have just passed through the Red



Sea, and they're on their way to the Promised Land. There are hundreds of thousands of people trusting Moses with their very lives, and Moses begins to feel the weight of leadership. He wishes—more than anything else—that God was just a little bit closer. The same way *you* feel when the weight of the world is on your shoulders.

Now, he had no doubt that God was *real*. He had seen miracles in the Pharaoh's palace (the rod turned into a snake, the hand that became leprous), the parting of the Red Sea, and the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, so he knew that God was real, but under the weight of leadership, he wanted more.

So Moses is standing on the mountain. He's as close to God as you can physically get—God is just inside the cloud—and he asks for something astonishing:

*"Please, show me Your glory." (Exodus 33:18)*

He's saying, "Lord, I know you're real. But I've got to have more. I'm asking You, please—step out from behind the cloud—*and let me see Your glory.*"

And that was a dangerous request, because the Bible is clear: sinners cannot stand in the presence of a holy God.

"Moses, if that were possible, I would do it, but don't you understand? That would kill you—

because the human race has sinned and (where the presence of God used to be a delight) now the presence of a holy God has become a consuming fire. A sinner cannot stand in my immediate presence! I would love to come out, but I can't."

"But Lord, there's got to be *some* way—please—just let me see something of Your glory!"

It's the cry of the whole human race, staring into space, looking at our problems, wondering if we've been left on our own.

Now here's the question I want you to think about: Who exactly, is in that cloud? Who exactly does Moses want to see?

First Corinthians 10 tells us this is *Jesus*—before He was born. So Moses is getting his first glimpse of the coming baby in Bethlehem, and now he's got to have more.

"Lord, please, show me your glory! Please come out from behind the cloud. I need to see Your face!"

Why? When you start to see who Jesus really is, you can never get enough. The desire just builds.

"Moses, I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I'll show you everything I can."

Now, don't miss what's happening in this story: God wants to come out of that cloud, because He has seen the way we live, and He wants something



better for you.

You're not the only one who feels the pain. God has noticed what life is like. He has noticed:

- Terrorist attacks around the world.
- People getting beheaded in online videos.
- Drone strikes in the Middle East.
- Hunger.
- Hurricanes and other natural disasters.
- Religious cults that destroy people.
- And young girls sold into prostitution.

He has felt it all.

Psalm 56 says He records every one of our tears; it says He collects them in a bottle.

He feels it, and He longs for peace on Earth because He's a God who spent more time healing than preaching. He's a God who wept at the tomb of a friend. He's a God who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He's a God whose heart aches for the relationship we used to have before we threw it all away.

He wants to get closer. He wants to put a stop to it.

But the problem is: how do you put a stop to evil without destroying the people involved with it? How do you eliminate wickedness without

destroying *all of us*?

If we're honest about it, evil lurks in *every* human heart.

How could He step out from behind the cloud without destroying us?

"Okay, Moses, here's what I'm going to do. I can't reveal Myself the way I'd like to, because that would kill you, but for right now, I *will* show you My Name."

Now listen carefully to this:

*"And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, 'The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth.'" (Exodus 34:6)*

What did God show Moses? He showed him His perfect, flawless character. He showed him His intentions of peace and goodwill toward all men. He showed him something of the baby in Bethlehem 1,500 years later.

And that's why Haggai calls Him the Desire of Nations.

He's exactly what you'd hope God would be like.

*"And I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations and I will fill this temple with glory." (Haggai 2:7)*



Haggai wrote that as Israel was coming back from Babylon, and they had to rebuild the temple that God would fill with His glory. It was the very thing that Moses had asked to see—a confirmation of God’s presence; some assurance that we are not alone in a troubled world.

That was exciting stuff! Because when Solomon built the first temple, God actually showed up and moved in. He filled the temple with His presence and the people could point to the temple and say, “See? God has not abandoned us!”

*“The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former,” says the Lord of hosts. ‘And in this place I will give peace,’ says the Lord of hosts.” (Haggai 2:9)*

He will show His glory and He will bring peace.

It’s a big promise and the people were excited, but you know, when they built it, nothing happened. No fire from heaven. No choir of angels. No brilliant cloud of God’s glory. No peace on Earth.

And that temple was absolutely greater than the first!

Instead there were Greek kings and then the Roman army, and the temple was empty, and God’s people had absolutely no peace.

“Lord, where did you go? I thought you said this next temple would be filled with Your glory—I



thought you said it would be greater than the first one!"

It was bitter. It was hard to understand, and God's people were tempted to think that the human race was now on its own, like a lot of people think today.

And then 500 years later, God suddenly steps out from the behind the cloud and He literally walks into that same temple with human feet as *one of us, a flesh-and-blood human being*.

Now listen to this:

*"Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,' which is translated, 'God with us.'" (Matthew 1:23)*

Not God *near* us, not God *watching* us from inside the cloud, not God somewhere up above us, not God behind the veil in the Most Holy Place—God *with us*, because His desire for you is even bigger than your desire for Him.

Now listen to the Christmas story, because Haggai saw it coming (Luke 2:8-14):

*"Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them (the very thing Moses asked to see), and they were greatly afraid."*



Well of course, they were. They'd always heard that if you see the glory of God, it means you're going to die.

*"Then the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid, (God has found a solution) for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. (It's why Jesus is the Desire of All Nations) For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this [will be] the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.' 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!'"*

It's exactly what Haggai promised: peace on Earth! Right now, the story is not complete. There are still kids who go to bed hungry, even here in America. We still live with natural disasters (drought in California, hurricanes in New York and New Orleans), people still start wars, there are riots in the streets and a sense that something isn't right. We still don't have peace on Earth...not really.

But that's because the story isn't finished. There's more to come. Just listen to the way the Bible ends, right down at the end of the Bible—the final words that God inspired:

*"And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, 'Behold,*

*the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.’ Then He who sat on the throne said, ‘Behold, I make all things new.’ And He said to me, ‘Write, for these words are true and faithful.’” (Revelation 21:3-5)*

God is keeping His end of the bargain. The question is: as He gets closer to you, what are you doing about it?

### ***Hannah’s Story***

Her name was Hannah, and she was a recluse—a loner who lived on the edge of town. If for some reason you knocked on her door, she would turn off the lights and pretend nobody was home.

She just didn’t *like* people, because people had hurt her one too many times.

And every year, her little town had a Christmas party in the town hall half a block from her house, with pretty lights, and Christmas music, and people singing carols and all that stuff people love to do at Christmas. And every year, Hannah would sit by the window of her bedroom and open it just a crack so she could hear the people singing, but she never went, because she was never invited.



She just listened from a distance, year after year, because there was something strangely warming about it. It reminded her of her childhood. It reminded her of a time when life was better.

And then came that hard winter when everything went wrong, and she got sick, and her life began to slip away on her, and she called for the pastor even though she hadn't darkened the door of the church in 26 years.

And he read "pastor things" like Psalm 23:4:

*"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me..."*

And they sat quietly, and that's when they heard it: the sound of people singing.

"Pastor!" she said, "it must be Christmas! I've lost track of time! That's that party at the town hall! Do you think you could open the window just a little bit more so I could listen?"

He opened the window just a crack, but not so much that she would get cold.

And they listened for a few moments, and then Hannah began to sing along quietly in the voice of someone who was slipping away.

*"Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright..."*

And she began to cry. "Pastor, I've wanted to go to that party, but I never did. I just sat here and

listened from the outside. I wanted to get closer, but I never did."

"Why, Hannah? Why didn't you go?"

"Because nobody ever asked me."

"But Hannah, every year, when I came to ask you, you turned out the lights and pretended you weren't home..."

God has already taken a step your way. The question is: will you leave the lights on or turn them off and pretend you're not home?

*"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men." (Luke 2:14)*



# *A Civil War Christmas*

*By Frank Moore*

A soldier, writing from his camp near Fredericksburg, narrated the following, which occurred while he was on picket duty with his company:

It was Christmas Day and after partaking of a Christmas dinner of salt pork and hard tack, our attention was attracted by a rebel picket who hailed us from the opposite side of the river.

"I say, Yank, if a fellow goes over there, will you let him come back again?"

Receiving an affirmative answer, he proceeded to test the truth of it by paddling himself across the river. He was decidedly the cleanest specimen of a rebel I had seen. In answer to a question, he said he belonged to the Georgia Legion. One of our boys remarked, "I met quite a number of your boys at South Mountain."

"Yes, I suppose so—if you were there," said the



rebel, while his face grew very sad. "We left many of our boys there. My brother, poor Will, was killed there. It was a hot place for a while, and we had to leave it in a hurry."

"That's so, Georgia; your fellows fought well there, and had all the advantage, but the old Keystone boys were pressing you hard. By the way, I have a likeness here (taking it out of his pocket), that I picked up on the battlefield the next morning, and I have carried it ever since."

He handed it to the rebel, who, on looking at it pressed it to his lips exclaiming, "My mother! My mother!"

He exhibited considerable emotion at the recovery of the picture, but on the recovery of his composure he said that his brother had it in his possession, and must have lost it in the fight. He then asked the name of the one to whom he was indebted for the lost likeness of his mother, remarking, "There may be better times soon, and we may know each other better."

He had taken from his pocket a small pocket Bible in which to write the address, when Alex, who had taken no part in the conversation, fairly yelled, "I know that Book; I lost it at Bull Bun!"

"That's whar I got it, Mr. Yank," said the rebel, and he handed it to Alex. "I am much obliged to you,



Georgia Legion; I would not part with it for all the Southern Confederacy."

I was a little curious to know something further of the book, so I asked Alex to let me see it. He passed it to me. I opened it, and on the flyleaf was written in a neat hand, "*My Christmas Gift, to Alex, Dec. 25th, 1860. Ella.*"

"Well, Alex," said I, "it is not often one has the same gift presented to him a second time."

"True, Captain; and if I could but see the giver of that today, there's but one other gift I would want."

"What's that, Alex?"

"This rebellion played out, and my discharge in my pocket."

The boys had all been busy talking to our rebel friend, who, seeing a horseman approaching in the direction of his post, bid us a hasty good-bye, and made a quick trip across the Rappahannock.

Night came on, and those not on duty lay down on the frozen ground to dream of other Christmas nights, when we knew not of war.

*Passage excerpted from The Civil War in Song and Story: 1860-65.*



# *The Three Kings*

*By Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*

Three Kings came riding from far away,  
Melchior and Gaspar and Baltasar;  
Three Wise Men out of the East were they,  
And they travelled by night and they slept by day,  
For their guide was a beautiful, wonderful star.

The star was so beautiful, large, and clear,  
That all the other stars of the sky  
Became a white mist in the atmosphere,  
And by this they knew that the coming was near  
Of the Prince foretold in the prophecy.

Three caskets they bore on their saddle-bows,  
Three caskets of gold with golden keys;  
Their robes were of crimson silk with rows  
Of bells and pomegranates and furbelows,  
Their turbans like blossoming almond-trees.

And so the Three Kings rode into the West,  
Through the dusk of night, over hill and dell,



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And sometimes they nodded with beard on breast  
And sometimes talked, as they paused to rest,  
With the people they met at some wayside well.

"Of the child that is born," said Baltasar,  
"Good people, I pray you, tell us the news;  
For we in the East have seen his star,  
And have ridden fast, and have ridden far,  
To find and worship the King of the Jews."

And the people answered, "You ask in vain;  
We know of no king but Herod the Great!"  
They thought the Wise Men were men insane,  
As they spurred their horses across the plain,  
Like riders in haste, and who cannot wait.

And when they came to Jerusalem,  
Herod the Great, who had heard this thing,  
Sent for the Wise Men and questioned them;  
And said, "Go down unto Bethlehem,  
And bring me tidings of this new king."

So they rode away; and the star stood still,  
The only one in the gray of morn  
Yes, it stopped, it stood still of its own free will,  
Right over Bethlehem on the hill,  
The city of David, where Christ was born.

And the Three Kings rode through the gate and  
the guard,  
Through the silent street, till their horses turned  
And neighed as they entered the great inn-yard;  
But the windows were closed, and the doors  
were barred,  
And only a light in the stable burned.

And cradled there in the scented hay,  
In the air made sweet by the breath of kine,  
The little child in the manger lay,  
The child, that would be king one day  
Of a kingdom not human but divine.

His mother Mary of Nazareth  
Sat watching beside his place of rest,  
Watching the even flow of his breath,  
For the joy of life and the terror of death  
Were mingled together in her breast.

They laid their offerings at his feet:  
The gold was their tribute to a King,  
The frankincense, with its odor sweet,  
Was for the Priest, the Paraclete,  
The myrrh for the body's burying.

And the mother wondered and bowed her head,  
And sat as still as a statue of stone;



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Her heart was troubled yet comforted,  
Remembering what the Angel had said  
Of an endless reign and of David's throne.

Then the Kings rode out of the city gate,  
With a clatter of hoofs in proud array;  
But they went not back to Herod the Great,  
For they knew his malice and feared his hate,  
And returned to their homes by another way.

# *The Gift of the Magi*

*By O. Henry*

One dollar and eighty-seven cents. That was all. And sixty cents of it was in pennies. Pennies saved one and two at a time by bulldozing the grocer and the vegetable man and the butcher until one's cheeks burned with the silent imputation of parsimony that such close dealing implied. Three times Della counted it. One dollar and eighty-seven cents. And the next day would be Christmas.

There was clearly nothing to do but flop down on the shabby little couch and howl. So Della did it. Which instigates the moral reflection that life is made up of sobs, sniffles, and smiles, with sniffles predominating.

While the mistress of the home is gradually subsiding from the first stage to the second, take a look at the home. A furnished flat at \$8 per week. It did not exactly beggar description, but it certainly had that word on the lookout for the mendicancy squad.



In the vestibule below was a letter-box into which no letter would go, and an electric button from which no mortal finger could coax a ring. Also appertaining thereunto was a card bearing the name "Mr. James Dillingham Young."

The "Dillingham" had been flung to the breeze during a former period of prosperity when its possessor was being paid \$30 per week. Now, when the income was shrunk to \$20, though, they were thinking seriously of contracting to a modest and unassuming D. But whenever Mr. James Dillingham Young came home and reached his flat above he was called "Jim" and greatly hugged by Mrs. James Dillingham Young, already introduced to you as Della. Which is all very good.

Della finished her cry and attended to her cheeks with the powder rag. She stood by the window and looked out dully at a gray cat walking a gray fence in a gray backyard. Tomorrow would be Christmas Day, and she had only \$1.87 with which to buy Jim a present. She had been saving every penny she could for months, with this result. Twenty dollars a week doesn't go far. Expenses had been greater than she had calculated. They always are. Only \$1.87 to buy a present for Jim. Her Jim. Many a happy hour she had spent planning for something nice for him. Something fine and rare and sterling—something just a little bit near to being worthy of the honor of



being owned by Jim.

There was a pier-glass between the windows of the room. Perhaps you have seen a pier-glass in an \$8 flat. A very thin and very agile person may, by observing his reflection in a rapid sequence of longitudinal strips, obtain a fairly accurate conception of his looks. Della, being slender, had mastered the art.

Suddenly she whirled from the window and stood before the glass. Her eyes were shining brilliantly, but her face had lost its color within twenty seconds. Rapidly she pulled down her hair and let it fall to its full length.

Now, there were two possessions of the James Dillingham Youngs in which they both took a mighty pride. One was Jim's gold watch that had been his father's and his grandfather's. The other was Della's hair. Had the queen of Sheba lived in the flat across the airshaft, Della would have let her hair hang out the window some day to dry just to depreciate Her Majesty's jewels and gifts. Had King Solomon been the janitor, with all his treasures piled up in the basement, Jim would have pulled out his watch every time he passed, just to see him pluck at his beard from envy.

So now Della's beautiful hair fell about her rippling and shining like a cascade of brown waters. It



reached below her knee and made itself almost a garment for her. And then she did it up again nervously and quickly. Once she faltered for a minute and stood still while a tear or two splashed on the worn red carpet.

On went her old brown jacket; on went her old brown hat. With a whirl of skirts and with the brilliant sparkle still in her eyes, she fluttered out the door and down the stairs to the street.

Where she stopped the sign read: "Madame Sofronie. Hair Goods of All Kinds." One flight up Della ran, and collected herself, panting. Madame, large, too white, chilly, hardly looked the "Sofronie."

"Will you buy my hair?" asked Della.

"I buy hair," said Madame. "Take yer hat off and let's have a sight at the looks of it."

Down rippled the brown cascade.

"Twenty dollars," said Madame, lifting the mass with a practiced hand.

"Give it to me quick," said Della.

Oh, and the next two hours tripped by on rosy wings. Forget the hashed metaphor. She was ransacking the stores for Jim's present.

She found it at last. It surely had been made for Jim and no one else. There was no other like it in

any of the stores, and she had turned all of them inside out. It was a platinum fob chain simple and chaste in design, properly proclaiming its value by substance alone and not by meretricious ornamentation—as all good things should do. It was even worthy of The Watch. As soon as she saw it she knew that it must be Jim's. It was like him. Quietness and value—the description applied to both. Twenty-one dollars they took from her for it, and she hurried home with the 87 cents. With that chain on his watch Jim might be properly anxious about the time in any company. Grand as the watch was, he sometimes looked at it on the sly on account of the old leather strap that he used in place of a chain.

When Della reached home her intoxication gave way a little to prudence and reason. She got out her curling irons and lighted the gas and went to work repairing the ravages made by generosity added to love. Which is always a tremendous task, dear friends—a mammoth task.

Within forty minutes her head was covered with tiny, close-lying curls that made her look wonderfully like a truant schoolboy. She looked at her reflection in the mirror long, carefully, and critically.

"If Jim doesn't kill me," she said to herself, "before



he takes a second look at me, he'll say I look like a Coney Island chorus girl. But what could I do—oh! what could I do with a dollar and eighty seven cents?"

At 7 o'clock the coffee was made and the frying-pan was on the back of the stove hot and ready to cook the chops.

Jim was never late. Della doubled the fob chain in her hand and sat on the corner of the table near the door that he always entered. Then she heard his step on the stair away down on the first flight, and she turned white for just a moment. She had a habit for saying little silent prayer about the simplest everyday things, and now she whispered: "Please God, make him think I am still pretty."

The door opened and Jim stepped in and closed it. He looked thin and very serious. Poor fellow, he was only twenty-two—and to be burdened with a family! He needed a new overcoat and he was without gloves.

Jim stopped inside the door, as immovable as a setter at the scent of quail. His eyes were fixed upon Della, and there was an expression in them that she could not read, and it terrified her. It was not anger, nor surprise, nor disapproval, nor horror, nor any of the sentiments that she had been prepared for. He simply stared at her fixedly with that peculiar

expression on his face.

Della wriggled off the table and went for him.

"Jim, darling," she cried, "don't look at me that way. I had my hair cut off and sold because I couldn't have lived through Christmas without giving you a present. It'll grow out again—you won't mind, will you? I just had to do it. My hair grows awfully fast. Say 'Merry Christmas!' Jim, and let's be happy. You don't know what a nice—what a beautiful, nice gift I've got for you."

"You've cut off your hair?" asked Jim, laboriously, as if he had not arrived at that patent fact yet even after the hardest mental labor.

"Cut it off and sold it," said Della. "Don't you like me just as well, anyhow? I'm me without my hair, ain't I?"

Jim looked about the room curiously.

"You say your hair is gone?" he said, with an air almost of idiocy.

"You needn't look for it," said Della. "It's sold, I tell you—sold and gone, too. It's Christmas Eve, boy. Be good to me, for it went for you. Maybe the hairs of my head were numbered," she went on with sudden serious sweetness, "but nobody could ever count my love for you. Shall I put the chops on, Jim?"



Out of his trance Jim seemed quickly to wake. He enfolded his Della. For ten seconds let us regard with discreet scrutiny some inconsequential object in the other direction. Eight dollars a week or a million a year—what is the difference? A mathematician or a wit would give you the wrong answer. The magi brought valuable gifts, but that was not among them. This dark assertion will be illuminated later on.

Jim drew a package from his overcoat pocket and threw it upon the table.

“Don’t make any mistake, Dell,” he said, “about me. I don’t think there’s anything in the way of a haircut or a shave or a shampoo that could make me like my girl any less. But if you’ll unwrap that package you may see why you had me going a while at first.”

White fingers and nimble tore at the string and paper. And then an ecstatic scream of joy; and then, alas! a quick feminine change to hysterical tears and wails, necessitating the immediate employment of all the comforting powers of the lord of the flat.

For there lay The Combs—the set of combs, side and back, that Della had worshipped long in a Broadway window. Beautiful combs, pure tortoise shell, with jeweled rims—just the shade to wear in the beautiful vanished hair. They were expensive

combs, she knew, and her heart had simply craved and yearned over them without the least hope of possession. And now, they were hers, but the tresses that should have adorned the coveted adornments were gone.

But she hugged them to her bosom, and at length she was able to look up with dim eyes and a smile and say: "My hair grows so fast, Jim!"

And then Della leaped up like a little singed cat and cried, "Oh, oh!"

Jim had not yet seen his beautiful present. She held it out to him eagerly upon her open palm. The dull precious metal seemed to flash with a reflection of her bright and ardent spirit.

"Isn't it a dandy, Jim? I hunted all over town to find it. You'll have to look at the time a hundred times a day now. Give me your watch. I want to see how it looks on it."

Instead of obeying, Jim tumbled down on the couch and put his hands under the back of his head and smiled.

"Dell," said he, "let's put our Christmas presents away and keep 'em a while. They're too nice to use just at present. I sold the watch to get the money to buy your combs. And now suppose you put the chops on."



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The magi, as you know, were wise men—wonderfully wise men—who brought gifts to the Babe in the manger. They invented the art of giving Christmas presents. Being wise, their gifts were no doubt wise ones, possibly bearing the privilege of exchange in case of duplication. And here I have lamely related to you the uneventful chronicle of two foolish children in a flat who most unwisely sacrificed for each other the greatest treasures of their house.

But in a last word to the wise of these days let it be said that of all who give gifts these two were the wisest. O all who give and receive gifts, such as they are wisest. Everywhere they are wisest. They are the magi.









# Peace on EARTH

The daily news cycle can be enough to make a person realize that something is not quite right in this world. We were created for something better—something different. And Jesus came to this planet so that we could look forward to a better life with Him for eternity! You can have hope this Christmas and throughout the year as you experience *Peace on Earth*.

This inspirational book features a Christ-centered message by Shawn Boonstra, as well as stories and poems such as “A Civil War Christmas,” “The Three Kings,” and “The Gift of the Magi.”

## **About Pastor Shawn Boonstra**

Pastor Shawn Boonstra is speaker/director for the Voice of Prophecy media ministry. His broadcasts, live seminars and books have been a source of inspiration around the globe. His clear grasp of Scripture and keen understanding of current events will give you a greater depth of biblical understanding, and will help you find peace of mind in a troubled world. For more information, please visit [vop.com](http://vop.com).

