the GIVER: *a LOVE story* SLEEP in Heavenly PEACE

John 3:16a "For here is the way God loved the world—He gave His only, unique Son as a *gift.* (TPT)

On the day Jesus, the Infinite Infant, arrived on earth, it was at a tremendously hostile and tumultuous time, a world divided. Much like today. The political climate was stormy and the societal controversies screamed a loud outcry in the streets. Backlash from religious unrest sent oppressive shockwaves into the nooks and crannies of a mutinous dictatorship led by Herod the Great. Taxes were exorbitant; life was impossible. And God had been silent for 400 years.

We sing Christmas hymns at this time of year, some of which lend a false picture of the narrative of the times. We sing of 'merry gentlemen' and a 'happy morning', a 'silent night', and the baby, Jesus: 'no crying He makes'. For every strain that has a joyful sentiment, there are as many more which expose the hopelessness of the culture, and oppression, like chains, needing broken; humanity then, just like today, in need of hope and resolution, a Savior for the world. God the Father, in His infinite wisdom, knew what He was doing when He sent an innocent babe to a fallen world, a Gift so unexpected and absurd, that not one scholar or ruler or soldier could fathom His plan. Therefore, there is no way to thwart what one cannot comprehend; the plot thickens in the greatest love story ever told.

So, Peace arrived, not as a treaty or a promise or a compromise, but as a Person, the Person of Jesus Christ. He came so mankind might breathe a little easier, be a little softer, try a little harder to suffer long, to genuinely be gentle. What love is, 'it (love) does not traffic in shame and disrespect, nor selfishly seek its own honor. Love is not easily irritated or quick to take offense (v.5, TPT). Jesus, the love song of God, arrives to a petulant world, and instead of coming to rule with an iron fist, to shame the weak and guilt the sinner, He brings with Him the immunity of His grace and the immutability of His character, the perfection of His peace and the whispered promise of His presence. In Him, there is everlasting hope for heavenly sleep.

(Photo not my own)