

# Longing for a Prince of Peace

Thomas Robinson, *Longing for a Prince of Peace 1*, November 27, 2016

## Isaiah 9:1-7

<sup>1</sup> But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

<sup>2</sup> The people who walked in darkness  
have seen a **great light**;  
those who dwelt in a land of deep **darkness**,  
on them has **light** shone.

<sup>3</sup> You have multiplied the nation;  
you have **increased its joy**;  
**they rejoice** before you  
as with joy at the harvest,  
as they are glad when they divide the spoil.

<sup>4</sup> For the yoke of his burden,  
and the staff for his shoulder,  
the rod of his oppressor,  
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

<sup>5</sup> For every boot of the tramping warrior  
in battle tumult  
and every garment rolled in blood

will be burned as fuel for the fire.

<sup>6</sup> For **to us a child is born**,  
to us **a son** is given;  
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,  
and **his name** shall be called  
**Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,**  
**Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace** (*shalom*).

<sup>7</sup> Of the increase of his government  
and of **peace** (*shalom*)  
there will be **no end**,  
on the **throne of David** and over his kingdom,  
to establish it and to uphold it  
with **justice** and with **righteousness**  
from this time forth and forevermore.  
The zeal of the **LORD of hosts** will do this.

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## Luke 2:9-11

<sup>9</sup> And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. <sup>10</sup> And the angel said to them,

*“Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. <sup>11</sup> For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Messiah LORD. <sup>12</sup> And this will be the sign for you: you will find a baby swaddled and lying in a feed-trough.”*

<sup>13</sup> And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

<sup>14</sup> *“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among people, the recipients of God’s favor!”*

## Luke 12:50-52 (Cf Mt. 10:34)

<sup>50</sup> I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how great is my distress until it is accomplished! <sup>51</sup> Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. <sup>52</sup> For from now on in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three.

## Matthew 4:12-17

<sup>12</sup> Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee. <sup>13</sup> And leaving Nazareth he went and lived in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, <sup>14</sup> so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be filled up (with new meaning):

<sup>15</sup> *“The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations/Gentiles – <sup>16</sup> the people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light, and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death, on them a light has dawned.”* [Isa 9:1-2]

<sup>17</sup> From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Change your way of thinking (repent), for the kingdom of God’s realm is arriving.”

## Jeremiah 6:13

<sup>13</sup>“For from the least to the greatest of them, everyone is greedy for unjust gain; and from prophet to priest, everyone deals falsely. <sup>14</sup>They have healed the wound of my people lightly, saying, ‘Peace, peace,’ when there is no peace (*shalom*).”

## Jeremiah 33:6-9 God promises to restore Jerusalem after the Babylonian destruction.

<sup>6</sup>... I will heal them and reveal to them abundance of peace (*shalom*) and security. <sup>7</sup> I will restore the fortunes of Judah and the fortunes of Israel, and rebuild them as they were at first. <sup>8</sup>... I will forgive all the guilt of their sin and rebellion against me. <sup>9</sup> And this city shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and a glory before all the nations of the earth who shall hear of all the good that I do for them. They shall fear and tremble because of all the good (*tovah*) and all the peace/prosperity (*shalom*) I provide for it.

## Psalms 72:1-3, 8

<sup>1</sup> Give <u>the king</u> your justice, O God, and your righteousness to the royal son!	and the hills, in righteousness! ...
<sup>2</sup> May he judge your people with righteousness, and your poor with justice!	<sup>7</sup> In his days may the righteous flourish, <u>and peace</u> ( <i>shalom</i> ) <u>abound</u> , till the moon be no more!
<sup>3</sup> <u>Let the mountains bear peace</u> ( <i>shalom</i> ) for the people,	<sup>8</sup> May he have dominion from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth!

## Longing for Peace in a Fear-filled World

We focused our Retreat on the call to be Fearless. This Advent season we are centering on one of its most basic, comforting, challenging ideas: Peace. The two interact together. We start from Isaiah's celebration of the birth of a child (Handel's *Messiah*, Isa 9:6). In the NT this passage echoes in Luke's narrative of Jesus' birth, in Matthew's description of the start of Jesus' ministry. Jesus is this "Prince of Peace." But what does it mean?

Isaiah began prophesying in a time of powers pressing in on Judah (Israel, Syria, Assyria). Peace was a dream. A son is born in the Davidic royal family, possibly Hezekiah born to Ahaz. That child is a symbol of hope in a time of disaster. The prophet gives him the long prophetic name: Pele-yoets El-gibor Aviad Shar-shalom. Like the famous prophecy of a virgin conceiving (Isa 7:14; Mt 1:23), these words had an impact in their own time.

## Reading Prophetic Scripture in Unfolding Events

But the hope the words expressed was so vast! And the prophecy lived on when people could hardly remember the troubles of Jotham and Ahaz. Here was the hope of a Davidic King, the Messiah. The hope of justice and peace. The hope of light in darkness, the end of war, increasing joy, God himself, a Prince of Peace. Did God just let it go with Hezekiah's time?

The NT is very aware that events in human history are always limited, time-bound. Hezekiah was good, but his son Manasseh was awful. Josiah was good, but then things collapsed. Hezekiah could be a kind of prince of peace, but very limited like every human ruler.

The prophecies point beyond immediate fulfillment to God's larger surprising intentions.

## Is He a Prince? What Kind of Peace is This?

NT times had a Prince of Peace: Augustus Caesar. Rome conquered and called it peace. That was a peace that people understood: Power, order, easy commerce, silencing.

Could there be a Prince who doesn't impose peace by conquest? Who doesn't squash division but releases people's freedom and woos them by self-giving love? Who gives real life?

Could a Prince of Peace take humanity's violence on himself and free people from fear?