

A Guide in the Way of Peace

Thomas Robinson, *Longing for a Prince of Peace 2*, December 4, 2016

Isaiah 52:7-10

⁷ How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of one who brings news,
announcing **peace** (*shalom*),
bringing news of **good** things,
announcing **salvation** (*yeshuah*),
saying to Zion, “**Your God reigns!**”
⁸ A voice! Your watchmen lift their voice;
together they sing for **joy**;
for before their own eyes they see

the **return of the LORD to Zion**.
⁹ Break forth together into singing,
you ruins of Jerusalem,
for the LORD has **comforted** his people;
he has **redeemed** Jerusalem.
¹⁰ The LORD has bared **his holy arm**
to the eyes of all the nations,
and all the ends of the earth shall see
the **salvation** (*yeshuah*) of our God.

Luke 1:68-70, 76-79

⁶⁸ “Blessed be the **LORD God of Israel**,
for he has **visited** and **redeemed his people**
⁶⁹ and has raised up a horn of **salvation** for us
in the house of **his servant David**,
⁷⁰ as he spoke by the mouth
of his **holy prophets from of old**....
⁷⁶ “And you, child, will be called
the **prophet** of the Most High;
for you will **go before the Lord**

to **prepare his ways**,
⁷⁷ to give knowledge of **salvation** to his people
in the **forgiveness** of their sins,
⁷⁸ because of the tender **mercy** of our God,
whereby **he shall visit us**,
a sunrise from on high,
⁷⁹ to give **light to those who sit in darkness**
and in the shadow of death,
to **guide** our feet **into the way of peace**.”

Isaiah 40:3-5, 9-11

³ A voice cries: “In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. ⁴ Every valley shall be lifted up; every mountain and hill be made low ⁵ And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.” ...
⁹ Go on up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news; ... say to the cities of Judah, “Behold your God!” ¹⁰ Behold, the LORD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; ... ¹¹ He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms....

Isaiah 53:1-2

¹ Who has believed what he has heard from us? | And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? |
² For he grew up before him like a young plant, | and like a root out of dry ground; | he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, | and no beauty that we should desire him.

Isaiah 61:1-2 (Cf. Luke 4:18-19)

¹ The Spirit of the LORD is upon me, | because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; | he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, | to proclaim liberty to the captives, | and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; | ² to proclaim the year of the LORD’S favor

Matthew 11:2-6 (Cf. Luke 7:20-23)

² Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Messiah, he sent word by his disciples ³ and asked him, “Are you the one who is coming, or should we expect another?”
⁴ And Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵ the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. ⁶ And blessed is the one who is not offended by me.”

Luke 19:37-44

³⁷ As he was drawing near – already on the way down the Mount of Olives – the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen,

³⁸ saying, *“Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! [Psa 118:26, Zech 9:9; Mal 3:1]
Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” [Luke 2:14]*

³⁹ And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples.”

⁴⁰ He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.”

⁴¹ And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, ⁴² saying,

*“Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace!
But now they are hidden from your eyes.*

⁴³ *For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade
around you and surround you and hem you in on every side*

⁴⁴ *and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you.*

*And they will not leave one stone upon another in you,
because you did not know the time of your visitation.” [Luke 1:68; Gen 50:24]*

What Would a Prince of Peace Look Like?

In the context of Advent, the vision of a Prince of Peace may seem obvious. But in Jesus' time, Augustus Caesar was the great prince of Peace, conquering all: peace under Rome. Jews chafed under his appointed rulers over the land. God, not Herod or Pilate should rule. Where was Isaiah's promise: “Your God is King”? When would “the coming one” come? Jesus' whole story is that coming (Advent): Birth, ministry, passion, resurrection, all of it. People thought they knew what they were looking for – their own holy, good Augustus. After all, who is a more absolute king than God? They were ready to join the revolution. Jesus comes calling followers to “the Kingdom of God.” What else could it mean?

The Deeds of the Messiah

When Zechariah sings over his baby John, he echoes the prophets. God visits. Redeems. Illuminates. Saves. Brings Peace. John would prepare the way of the Lord who comes! But what would this mighty arm of the Lord look like? Isaiah had anticipated the shock. God's arm reaching into this broken world looks like nothing we've ever anticipated. When Jesus went to Nazareth and quoted Isaiah's prophecies, the people loved it, but when he began to interpret their meaning for the world, the crowd quickly turned against him. John himself, suffering imprisonment from Herod, later wonders if Jesus is really the true “coming one.” He send disciples to inquire. Jesus points to the things that they can see and hear, the words of Isaiah breaking into reality. Jesus knew that not even John or his closest disciples could yet understanding God's kingdom as Jesus knew it. Every word had to be reimagined: Glory—cross, humility. Power—self-giving love. Conquest—forgiveness, mercy. Victory—death, resurrection. Greatness—serving others. Peace—living boldly in the face of suffering knowing the indomitable, unbreakable love of God in Jesus.

The One who Comes in the Name of the Lord

Jesus comes to us as he came to Jerusalem. He calls us to a choice that changes everything. He comes as Lord/servant, King/lover, dying life-giver, bringing peace, reconciliation, hope. He will not go away. The rocks cry out. He reveals our life, our reality, our choice. He is the prince of a new peace! Trust him. Let him be King, Lord, Servant, Future, Present, Now!