



*Prince of
Peace*

Introduction


The first Christmas was a time for joy and peace. After the annunciation, Mary's voice rose up in her *Magnificat* to express that her "soul exalts the Lord," and "my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior" (Lk. 1:46-47). The angelic multitude appearing to the shepherds in Bethlehem praised God and said, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased" (Lk. 2:14). Excitement was in the air - the shepherds came in haste and found their way to Mary, Joseph, and the newborn baby Jesus. The magi from the East, when they saw the star, "rejoiced exceedingly, with great joy" (Mt. 2:10). Simeon's eyes saw God's salvation, and Anna began giving thanks to God while speaking about the redemption of Jerusalem.

Introduction

The headlines of a contemporary newspaper of the day would have reported: “Today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord” (Lk. 2:11). The long-expected Messiah, the divine Son of God and Savior of the world, had been born in a humble manger in Bethlehem. There was reason to rejoice and to experience real peace. The hopes and fears of all the years were met in Him that night. Two thousand years later, many millions struggle to find peace in the midst of pain, loss, war, poverty, broken relationships, injustice, disease, physical and sexual abuse, financial hardship, anxiety, personal betrayal, and uncertain futures, to name a few. One person used Facebook to exhort us to remember those who are hurting during the Christmas season.

A Facebook Post

“Just some thoughts as we enter the Christmas season. It is important to remember that not everyone is looking forward to Christmas. Some people are not surrounded by large wonderful families. Some of us are having problems during Christmas and may be overcome with great sadness when we remember the loved ones who are not with us. For many it is their first Christmas without a particular loved one and many others lost loved ones at this time. And, many people have no one to spend these times with and are overcome with loneliness. We all need caring, loving thoughts right now.”

A glowing lantern with a warm yellow light inside, surrounded by red Christmas ornaments and pine branches. The background is dark with many small white stars, creating a night sky effect.

What hope might we
offer to those who have
neither peace nor joy as
Christmas approaches?

The Search for Peace

“I know men who would write a check for a million dollars if they could find peace.”

- Billy Graham, *Peace with God*



Billy Graham

1918 -

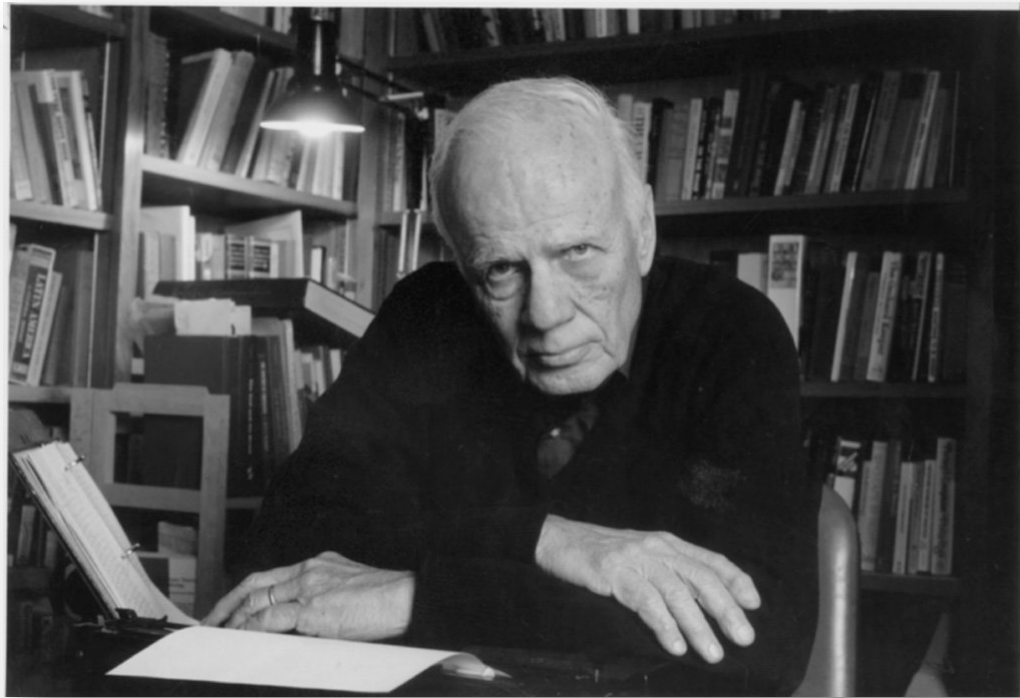
The Search for Peace

On his sixty-fifth birthday, H.G. Wells said, "I am sixty-five, and I am lonely and have never found peace."



H.G. Wells
1866 - 1946

Loneliness



Walker Percy
1916-1990

“I have discovered that most people have no one to talk to, no one, that is, who really wants to listen.”

- *The Moviegoer*



“The Christless heart is like a troubled sea that cannot rest. There is no peace for it.”

- John E. Haggai

What Hope? A Child Is Born

- “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The Everlasting Father, **The Prince of Peace**” (Is. 9:6, KJV).
- “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, **Prince of Peace**” (NIV).
- “For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. And the government will rest on his shoulders. These will be his royal titles: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, **Prince of Peace**” (NLT).



The Child is the Prince of Peace

- “*Peace* is personal fulfillment, well-being, harmony, peace with God. The verb, *salem*, means ‘to be whole, complete.’ This Prince, then, himself a whole personality, at one with God and with his people, administers the benefits of peace/wholeness in his benign rule” (Alec Motyer).
- The prophet Isaiah foretold that the same person who would be the son of a virgin – “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (Is. 7:14) – would be the one who bears the government “with all its official rights and godlike majesty, upon his shoulder” (Keil & Delitzsch).



The Meaning of *Peace*

“The term *salem* (peace) basically means wholeness, absence of brokenness, destruction, and disintegration....It refers to the presence of freedom and an integration of life. It speaks of contentment of the heart and a resting in the knowledge of security. It pronounces confidence in and assurance for the present and the future. The child or son as Prince of Peace is to be the embodiment of peace and so when he comes, peace comes; and when he reigns eternally, peace is present for all times and ages” (Gerhard van Groningen).

God's Offer of Peace

- **It begins with reconciliation with God.** “Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1). Before we can have the peace *of* God, we must have peace *with* God.
- **It is the fruit of a life given to prayer.** “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:6-7).

God's Offer of Peace

- **It is experienced more and more by those who grow in their conviction, by faith, that God will never abandon them.** “I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,” so that we confidently say, “The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What shall man do to me?” (Heb. 13:5-6).
- **It is gained by those who acknowledge God's sovereign control over all things and yield themselves fully to Him.** Surrender everything into His care. “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight” (Prov. 3:5-6).

God's Offer of Peace

- **It is God-given and not of this world.** “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful” (Jn. 14:27).
- **It passes all understanding.** It cannot be explained by those who do not have it nor by those who do. It is the gift of God. It is perceived when one has it.
- **It guards the heart and the mind.** It protects the affections and the intellect, keeping out the flaming arrows of the evil one and distrustful thoughts about God.

God's Offer of Peace

- **It may be interrupted by wounding the conscience with sin.** “If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened” (Ps. 66:18). Paul wrote: “In view of this, I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before men” (Acts 24:16).
- **Those who have a greater measure of clear sight of Christ's love have greater peace, though no one has perfect peace in this life, and it may be interrupted or diminished from time to time.** “...and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God” (Eph. 3:19).

God's Promise of Peace

- “May the Lord give strength to his people! May the Lord bless his people with peace!” (Ps. 29:11).
- “But the meek shall inherit the land and delight themselves in abundant peace” (Ps. 37:11).
- “Great peace have those who love your law; nothing can make them stumble” (Ps. 119:165).
- “Her ways (wisdom’s) are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace” (Prov. 3:17).
- “You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you” (Is. 26:3).

God's Promise of Peace

- “In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety” (Ps. 4:8).
- “But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed” (Is. 53:5).
- For you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands” (Is. 55:12).
- “Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand” (Is. 41:10).

The Prince of Peace, His Shoulders Are Broad Enough

“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My load is light” (Mt. 11:28-30).

“Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you” (Ps. 55:22).

