

I. INTRODUCTION

*I heard the bells on Christmas day
Their old familiar carols played
And wild and sweet, the words repeat
Of peace on Earth, goodwill to men*

*Till ringing, singing on its way
The world revolved from night to day
A voice, a chime, a chance sublime
Of peace on Earth, goodwill to men*

*Then in despair, I bowed my head
“There is no peace on Earth!” I said
For hate is strong, and mock’s the song
Of peace on Earth, goodwill to men*

*Then pealed the bells more loud and deep
God is not dead, nor doth he sleep!
The wrong shall fail, the Right prevail
With peace on Earth goodwill to men*

Powerful words. Each stanza captures the tension of this season, the heart-wrenching, confounding, undeniable truth of “peace on Earth, goodwill to men.” The great poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote these words on Christmas day 1963. Just three weeks earlier, Longfellow’s son returned from the American Civil War permanently paralyzed by a gunshot wound. And just three years earlier, Longfellow’s wife had died tragically in a home fire. And yet Longfellow has the audacity, the faith, the peace, to write “God is not dead, nor doth he sleep.”

His prose was a hopeful, courageous lament of the dissonance between the pleasant chiming of the Christmas bells and the harsh reality of death and war and injustice and brokenness surrounding him. Despite gazing deeply into the horrors of a world that seemed to be coming apart at the seams, Longfellow endured. He proclaimed his hope in the peace that would one day come like the rising sun: “The wrong shall fail, the Right prevail, with *peace* on earth, goodwill to men.”

We are in a season littered with holiday euphemisms and clichés, and few are more famous than “Peace on Earth.” But true, Christian peace is so much greater, so much deeper, and so much more unsettling than a trite, Christmas card cliché. Christian peace is all those things because it looks *squarely* at the malevolent and profound evil of this world, in all its cruelty and darkness, and refuses to bend the knee. The peace we will study today is the comforting peace that Paul described as “surpassing all understanding” (**PHILIPPIANS 4:7**), the same steadying peace that defines the Kingdom of God (**ROMANS 14:17**), the same peace that the relentlessly persecuted early church

used as a greeting to one another, and the same peace that steadied Longfellow’s hand. Peace is the life and language of Christ’s church.

So what is this “Peace on Earth” that Longfellow speaks about? To answer that question, we will examine: (1) the Passage on Peace, (2) the Presence of Peace, (3) the Absence of Peace, (4) the Perspective for Peace, and (5) the Promise of Peace.

II. THE PASSAGE ON PEACE

Let’s begin with the passage, specifically **LUKE 2:18-14**:

⁸And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. ¹⁰And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people! ¹¹For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹²And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” ¹³And suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ¹⁴“Glory to God in the highest, and on Earth, peace among those with whom He is pleased.”

This passage is almost too familiar this time of year. It would not surprise me if some of you zoned out part way through reading Luke’s recap! That over-familiarity, though, can play an ironic trick on us, as we are quick to gloss over three important keys to this passage: the *shepherds*, the *town*, and the *angels*.

A. The Shepherds

First, consider the audience of this heavenly announcement: local shepherds. Our lack of familiarity with shepherds hinders our ability to fully understand them.

For starters, there is really only reason these shepherds were out in the fields with their sheep: lambing season. Usually, in the springtime, shepherds would take to the fields with their flocks, tending to the mother sheep giving birth to new lambs. This season would leave the shepherds isolated from their towns for weeks, and that physical isolation represented their social isolation. First century, near-Eastern shepherds were treated as outcasts among their own people. The first-century trend away from nomadic communities—and toward stable, rooted cities—diminished the shepherds’ social status. Their work was considered lesser. Their testimonies were *not* considered in a court of law at all. They commanded little to no respect. Yet, the heavenly host chooses them to receive the news that the Hebrew people had been waiting for generations to hear.

Listen to how songwriter Michael Card describes the scene:

Shepherd’s watch, listening to lambs bleat

*Tired backs, worn out and cold feet
All life long, living like outcasts
All life long, longing for life*

Now *this* is the way of God! In this moment, God invades the kingdom of this world with the values of his Kingdom. He opposes the proud and gives grace to the humble (**1 PETER 5:5-6, PROVERBS 3:34**). He reveals the greatest announcement—the birth of the long-awaited Messiah—to people least likely to receive it, the least likely to be believed. And those shepherds go on and take hold of a great honor: the first heralds of the gospel. God is doing here what he does so often; he is using those considered weak to humble the strong, and he is speaking through those who have been silenced (**PROVERBS 31:8-9**). Of course, Jesus will go on to identify himself as the Good Shepherd (**JOHN 10:11**).

God’s gospel revealed to these Shepherds reminds us that Christmas is about more than glitzy presents and pine trees; it is about God’s unique identification with marginalized. And that truth reminds us that the ways of this world are not the ways of the people of God. To illustrate, reflect on this quote from author and scholar David Bentley Hart in his article “No Enduring City”:

“When the peasant Christ tells the aristocrat Pilate that his kingdom is not of this world, or when Paul warns Christians against any commerce with the ways of the gods of this cosmos, or when Christ commands his followers to forgive those who wrong them in excess of all natural justice, or likens the wealthy citizen at heaven’s gate to a camel attempting to slip through a needle’s eye...the Gospel is announced as something essentially subversive of the accustomed order.”

Consider what Hart is getting at. As God’s people, immersed in a culture consumed with status, we would do well to remind ourselves—and each other—that while this world is concerned with image, God is concerned with the heart (**1 SAMUEL 16:7**).

B. The Town

Next, consider the town: the angels choose to describe the little town of Bethlehem as “the city of David” (**LUKE 2:11**). Bethlehem was no major city. It sat at no important trade routes. It protected no significant resources. However, the angel’s explicit link to that little town of Bethlehem to the legendary King David would have immediately evoked the King’s heroic image in the Hebrew oral tradition: a young boy who defeated the giant Goliath, who reigned for four decades, and who the prophet Samuel described as “a man after God’s own heart” (**1 SAMUEL 13:14, ACTS 13:22**).

King David also represented a particular kind of hope for the people of Israel. While much of the history of God’s people was often defined by their collective failure and sin, there were some examples that the people clung to, examples of God’s rule and reign facilitated by faithful leaders who chose to follow God with all of their heart, soul, strength, and mind. The Old Testament books of 1st and 2nd Kings as well as 1st and 2nd Chronicles illustrates this.

- In **Kings**, the downfall of the royal family is chronicled with painstaking detail. King after king, chapter after chapter, the author paints a painful portrayal of sin and unfaithfulness. Kings was intended to shock the conscience of hard-hearted Hebrews who had forgotten their God. The books end with the capture of the northern kingdom of Israel by Assyria.
- In **Chronicles**, however, the books emphasize the highlights of the people's royal lineage. Many of the most troubling stories highlighted in Kings are strategically removed or replaced with encouraging stories of the few faithful Hebrew kings. Why? Because Chronicles was written to the Hebrews *in the midst of* their exile. Chronicles reminded the Hebrew people of their physical and spiritual lineage, that they were *still* God's people.

I am reminded of a quote from Richard Hayes, a respected theologian and author. He once said that we cannot truly understand Jesus without first understanding him as the heir to David, the promised one of Israel. That is precisely why the angels take the time to note “the city of David.” They are, like the books of Chronicles, reminding the shepherds of their identity as God's people.

C. The Angels

Lastly, we cannot forget the angels! Note their sheer delight—“good news of great joy”—and their compulsion to celebrate (**LUKE 2:10, 14**). This host of heaven joins together “all at once” in a joyful shout to proclaim the faithfulness of God. And this kind of heavenly jubilation is not rare: we know from the apostle Peter that the angels are awestruck by the work of Christ, that “salvation” is something “into which angels long to look” (**1 PETER 1:10-12**).

I do not think it is a stretch to say that many of us battle foes in this arena. We all long for the kind of joy and passion and fervor described in this passage when we consider the gospel.

- For some of us, the foe we fight on this front is anxiety and apathy (**ROMANS 12:11**). The passion that was once present no longer is, or has been overcome by fear.
- For others, the foe we fight is distraction (**LUKE 10:38-42**). It is, after all, far easier to turn on the television, bake a treat, go for a run, lounge on the couch...than it is to meditate on God's word.
- And for others, our foe is arrogance (**PSALM 14:1, PROVERBS 28:26**). We believe we do not *need* to immerse ourselves in the presence of God, that we “are doing just fine thank you very much!”

Of course, each of these foes are fueled by lies, and lies are the native tongue of our Enemy (**JOHN 8:44**). My prayer is that we would *fight* for the kind of passion modeled by the angels here, angels who have, from eternity past, tirelessly and relentlessly gazed into the gospel and deepened their understanding of God's ways. May we learn to delight in God just as they have.

Now that we have dug in and considered these oft-overlooked details to the passage, don't miss Luke's culmination in verse 14: in perhaps the most famous Christmas passage, and in the most

famous verse of that passage, the most famous word of that famous verse is **PEACE**. The Angels are proclaiming “peace on earth”—but what on earth does that mean?

III. THE PRESENCE OF PEACE

When confronted with a critical concept like peace, it always so incredibly important that we—as students of the word—carefully unravel its precise meaning. When we do that, and when we ensure that our twenty-first century ideas of “peace” are restrained, what we will find is so remarkable, so grand, so enthralling that you’ll be ashamed to buy another snowman-covered “peace” holiday card! Why? Because the well-intentioned yet shallow message of “peace” in this season cannot compare to the “peace” the angels are proclaiming to the shepherds in Luke 2.

In English, the word “peace” conjures up a passive experience, defined by an *absence* of conflict. But Biblical peace is much larger and more magnificent in scope. In the Bible, the word peace is most often translated from a single, beautiful term: SHALOM.

In scripture, shalom means “universal flourishing, wholeness, and delight.” Shalom is state of affairs in which natural needs are satisfied, gifts are fruitfully employed, and joy and wonder are birthed on a routine basis, all by the hand of God. Shalom is the way that creation was at its beginning, when God declared all he had made to be very good! When scripture speaks of shalom, it is not describing the mere absence of conflict—it is speaking to the presence of God-guided and God-centered wholeness that magnifies the created value, dignity, and worth of all God’s creation. In a word, shalom captures God’s desire for all of creation—human to God, human to human, and human to nature—to exist in harmony. In short, *shalom is the way things ought to be*.

To try and get our arms around this lofty, astonishing concept, I want to explain shalom in two parts: shalom *illustrated*, and shalom *demonstrated*. **Think of it as a kind of reverse show and tell!**

A. Shalom Illustrated

With complex ideas like this one, it can be helpful to think of a visual illustration. Tim Keller, in his book *Generous Justice*, provides a helpful one: a tapestry.

Imagine that each of you brought a thread, and each thread was a different color and material. If I took them from each of you, and then I simply dropped them on the floor, I would have a pile of independent strings, in proximity to one another yet still isolated. But what if I took them, and I carefully examined each one, and I began to wrap them and weave them in and through one another? Eventually, I would have a strong, beautiful fabric.

That woven fabric is the tangible expression of shalom in scripture. It is what the prophets prayed and pleaded for throughout the Old Testament. While false prophets proclaimed “peace, peace” to deceive the itchy ears of their listeners, the true prophets of God argued that peace could never be achieved apart from righteousness and sacrifice and justice. Repeatedly, they taught that peace

would be destroyed so long as men and women refused to live righteously before the Lord and others.

Consider **ISAIAH 32:17-18**:

¹⁷ And the effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever. ¹⁸ My people will abide in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.

And, so, the prophets carried on, longing to see God, humanity, and creation woven together in justice, fulfillment, and delight.

B. Shalom Demonstrated

So, what does it look like to live out shalom? What exactly are God's people called to do? For one, they are called to justice, or *mishpat*. Nicholas Westeroff, a profound theologian and expert in the study of shalom, explains it this way:

*"I do not have to argue that shalom is fully present among human beings, and between God and human beings, only when there is no injustice in those relationships. Shalom, in that way, incorporates justice. Justice in our relationships by no means exhausts shalom; shalom is more than justice. **But justice is, as it were, the ground floor of shalom.**"*

For many of us, when we think of "justice", we think of punishment for crime doled out by the state. But that is only a component of justice in scripture. Justice means to be in accordance with God's desire for his creation, and to that extent, justice is about much more than punishment for the wrongdoer. It concerns making whole those things which sin has broken.

Importantly, the Hebrew word *mishpat* is in many instances in the Old Testament paired with another word: *tsedaqauh*, which is ordinarily translated as "righteousness" (**ISAIAH 1:21, AMOS 5:24**). According to Bruce Waltke, a renowned Old Testament scholar, a community demonstrates shalom when it is made up of people committed to living out *righteousness*. Here is what he says in his commentary on Proverbs:

"'Righteousness' is a social term, signifying that people do right by one another...in a nutshell, 'righteousness' means to disadvantage oneself as necessary in order to advantage others, and 'wickedness' means to 'disadvantage others in order to advantage one's self.'"

I would venture to say that this is not the way we think of righteousness in the Scriptures. But when you link the lofty and at times even abstract idea of "righteousness" down to the streets and sidewalks of a neighborhood like ours, we can see how wickedness, simplified, can mean any time we empty others to fill ourselves, while righteousness means emptying ourselves to fill others.

Scan the annals of history. Review the Hall of Faith in Hebrews (**HEBREWS 11**). Notice how, in each case, these heroes faith are marked by their sacrifice. Abel sacrificed the best of his herd to a God he couldn't see; Noah sacrificed decades of life to save his family from a storm he couldn't imagine; Abraham sacrificed the comforts of his home and family to follow God; Joseph suffered in jail so that he might save his people; Moses risked his life standing against Pharaoh; Rahab risked everything to assist two spies because she feared their God. And on and on.

And, of course, who is the ultimate example of this sort of behavior? Jesus Christ! What greater example is there of someone relinquishing his benefit for the benefit of others, taking—as the apostle Paul says in **PHILIPPIANS 2:7**—the form of a servant, emptying himself so we can be filled, dying so that we might live? Remember the words of **ISAIAH 53:5**:

⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

III. THE ABSENCE OF PEACE

In the traditional liturgical calendar, usually just a few days after Christmas, the church observed something known as the “Feast of Innocents.” That feast was dedicated to the Herod’s massacre of newborn children discussed in Matthew 2:16-18:

¹⁶ Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men. ¹⁷ Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah, the prophet, saying:

*¹⁸ “A voice was heard in Ramah,
Lamentation, weeping, and great mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children,
refusing to be comforted,
because they are no more.”*

What a tragedy, so terribly linked to the glorious arrival of the baby Jesus. As we emerge from the glow of shalom, we cannot escape the many profound reminders all around us that shalom is not the way of the world today. It also shows us that we cannot avoid wrestling with the darkest questions, questions to which I do not claim to have all of the answers. At times, I too have doubted whether the cause of Christianity was hopeless. More often, I cave into despair and apathy. But, family, we must not recoil from this pain. Grappling with sin in our world, in ourselves, is a critical step in the pathway to peace.

We cannot speak of peace without staring squarely into the overwhelming presence of sin in our world. For the church, the Advent season reminds us, even as we stare back into the brokenness of his world, to respond with the attributes of God: Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. “I will build my church,” Jesus declared, “and the gates of hell will not prevail against it!” (**MATTHEW 16:17-19**)

To do that, I want to briefly examine cosmic, historic, and corporate examples of brokenness:

A. Cosmic

First and foremost, sin has disrupted, has broken, far more than our own individual standing before a holy God. It has corrupted all of creation, subjecting it to futility and a cruelty that Paul compares to the pains of a childbirth in **ROMANS 8**:

²⁰For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope ²¹that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²²For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth.

Paul’s language is extreme, but not exaggerated. The kind of cosmic brokenness he is describing speaks to an unspeakable pain in the world itself. Remember, when God created the world in its perfect goodness, humans had no reason to fear random, violent outbursts from nature, nor concern themselves with plagues and diseases. That all changed with Adam and Eve,

Consider a recent example of this kind of devastation: The deadliest storm of a hyperactive 2017 hurricane season, Hurricane Maria led to the deaths of nearly 3,000 Puerto Ricans, or more than twice as many deaths in New Orleans from Hurricane Katrina, and the most American deaths resulting from hurricane since the nineteenth century. The island territory was quickly overwhelmed. Hospitals and morgues were at full capacity, leading some to bury their relatives in mass graves out of a hopelessness that they would be properly buried.

Mass graves. Think about that. If you are not familiar with the concept, consider this an introduction. There is a common perception among many—repeatedly dispelled by the Red Cross and others—that if dead bodies are not buried immediately, then their decomposition will create significant health risks. In some cases, civil authorities will even organize communities to dig deep, long burial sites. And before the bodies are buried, medical staff will cut into the bodies of the deceased, remove a piece of their femur for future DNA testing intended to identify the victim, and then wrap the bodies in plastic. Children may be involved in carrying these corpses to their “resting place.”

My friend, Lincoln Moore, once told me about his time in Haiti, when he worked to coordinate medical relief efforts against the cholera outbreak in 2010. Lincoln told me one story where, while he was in a medical tent, he sat working between a dying father and his daughter, who was also perilously ill. While Lincoln was there, the daughter passed. The father, when realized this, wept and wept. Lincoln could not help but weep, too, and to lament “where is God in all of this?”

Lincoln’s question is one we cannot avoid asking when faced with cosmic brokenness like this.

B. Historic

Second, and in addition to the disruption of shalom at the cosmic level, we also see shalom disrupted historically. As Solomon noted in **ECCLESIASTES 7**:

*¹⁰Say not, “Why were the former days better than these?”
For it is not from wisdom that you ask this.*

At the turn twentieth century, many in Western society began to believe that utopia—the concept of a perfect world—was attainable. The industrial revolution, accelerated by technological innovation and scientific discovery, had solved many of the world’s chronic problems. Medicine, flight, and more had been created. Man’s potential was literally sky-high. This overly-optimistic view even found its way into a Christian theology known as the Social Gospel, which took the good of *shalom* and *misphat* but forgot about *tsadequah* and salvation.

So, what happened? Today, cynicism doesn’t even begin to describe the malaise over Western society. We’ve seem to have lost our luster. Why? Well, consider what occurred in the twentieth century. In that span of one hundred years, more lives were lost in conflict than any other century previously. Words like “holocaust” and “genocide” became uncomfortably familiar.

- The Congolese War: **9 million**
- World War I: **15 million** – the so-called “War to End All Wars”
- Russian Civil War: **9 million**
- Stalin’s Regime: **20 million**
- World War II: **69 million** – the largest and deadliest war in human history
- Jewish Holocaust: **6 million**
- Mao’s Regime: **40 million**
- An additional 18 other wars where between **1 million** and **5 million** perished

At the peak of humanity’s optimism, well over one hundred million were slaughtered. Least to say that articles and books and conversations about utopia have not been so warmly welcomed as they were in the early 1900s. If anything, those ideas were *offensive* in the face of so much evil. And a generation of relative peace in the world today still has not atoned for the generations lost to war.

C. Corporate

That leaves us with a third dimension to sin and brokenness in the world: our own community. And this is where the discussion gets a little bit closer to home, literally. And no, I won’t cite Detroit’s various crime statistics. Doing so at this point borderlines on cliché. It also obscures another kind of brokenness in our community that is nearly as prevalent, the kind the author of Proverbs laments (**PROVERBS 13**):

*²³The fallow ground of the poor would yield much food,
but it is swept away by injustice.*

So, let's talk about sports stadiums. Many of you are familiar with the Little Caesar's Arena, a project developed by the Illitch family and their development company, Olympia. In 2013, the original plans for the LCA projected at \$450 million; the final reported cost nearly doubled to \$863 million, and most of that hike stemmed from the unveiled "District Detroit" concept, a bold idea to surround the stadium with housing, restaurants, and more. City leaders touted the economic benefits of the project, newspapers published the renderings in large spreads, and the city eagerly anticipated the new home to both the Red Wings and the Pistons. And to make it all work, the Downtown Development Authority—the city's economic development agency created to support private developments—committed \$324 million (with another \$75 million on the way).¹

In January 2016, when construction began, Olympia vowed that a new hotel and as many as 150 residential units would be completed by the time the arena opened in September 2017. To date, not a single residential unit has been finished, and earlier plans to build nearly 700 residential units in six different building were changed this spring after two of the buildings were slated for office and retail use. Much of the Olympia property remains empty, aside from the 27 parking area servicing LCA patrons.²

"My across-the-board opinion is, 'put up or shut up'" when it comes to Olympia, said Richard Etue to the Detroit News. Etue is a member of the Neighborhood Advisory Committee, a group appointed by Detroit's City Council to hold the Illitch family account to the plans they used to acquire public dollars. "The walkable neighborhood with active restaurants and retail around the arena, with year-round activities, has not materialized because Olympia doesn't want it to."³

And just this week, the Detroit News reported that Olympia is waffling on a handshake deal with the Neighborhood Service Organization, a non-profit that works with the chronically homeless.⁴ The deal was thus: NSO would sell a small, troubled shelter called the Tumaini Center on Third Avenue—just a few blocks north of the LCA—to Olympia, and Olympia invest \$1.5 million to help the nonprofit acquire and renovate a new facility that would replace the Tumaini Center. That plan was abandoned until Olympia's conduct caught media attention, but to date nothing remains memorialized.

In city riddled with deep-seeded, institutional issues that require massive amounts of resources, a dishonest developer gets the gain. The prophet Amos (**5:11**) has something to say about this:

¹ Bill Shea. "[How Olympia financed an arena in a bankrupt city.](#)" CRAIN'S DETROIT BUSINESS. 9/10/17.

² "[Illitches waver on deal to help Midtown shelter move.](#)" THE DETROIT NEWS. 12/5/17.

³ "[Little Caesars Arena's funding mix not without critics.](#)" THE DETROIT NEWS. 10/4/17.

⁴ "[Illitches waver on deal to help Midtown shelter move.](#)" THE DETROIT NEWS. 12/5/17.

¹¹Because you trample on the poor, and you exact taxes of grain from him, you have built houses of hewn stone, but you will not dwell in them; you have planted pleasant vineyards, but you shall not drink wine.

And yet that prophetic promise seems vain. Longfellow’s lament seems more appropriate:

*Then in despair, I bowed my head
“There is no peace on Earth!” I said
For hate is strong, and mock’s the song
Of peace on Earth, goodwill to men*

V. THE PERSPECTIVE FOR PEACE

And yet, if you feel, even now, that the darkness is winning, I am here to tell you: *fear not*. We do not worship a God who struggles against the darkness. “The light shines in the darkness,” the apostle John says, “and the darkness has not overcome it” (**JOHN 1:5**). “I am the light of the world,” Jesus says, “and whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (**JOHN 8:12**). We worship an all-powerful, indiscriminately loving God. He is our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace (**ISAIAH 9:6**). And *that* is good news!

Family, I am convinced that one of the reasons you and I struggle to see how the Price of Peace can be at work is because we struggle to gain the right *perspective*. So often, when we encounter the God revealed in scripture, and when we look at the evil all around us, we balk. Frankly, what do *you* say when we witness the God who nearly destroys the world in a global flood; the God who refuses to clue Job in on his incessant suffering while still demanding his trust; the God who leads the Hebrews to conquer Canaan; the God who strikes down an Israelite soldier simply because he lunged to catch the Ark of the Covenant from falling?

What we must *not* do is begin with what we consider to be wrong about God. No, this is the same God the angels called the Prince of Peace. And if you aren’t talking about all of him, you aren’t really talking about Jesus. You and I are lacking perspective. In *The Weight of Glory*, C.S. Lewis gently guides his readers into understanding the limited perspective of all humans. He explains that we have a rather simple understanding of what “the good” really is. When we discuss God, Lewis says, we are often distracted and disoriented by what we consider to good and true, based on our own limited perspectives and experiences.

To illustrate this, Lewis describes a child outside in the mud, eagerly baking mud pies, slopping and sliming himself silly. His parents are pleading with him to get up and follow them on a sailing vacation. From that child’s perspective, sailing is unknowable. And although it is obviously superior to sitting in filth and bacteria-infested goo, the child will always prefer—and even refuse to abandon—the familiar over the unknown. In the same way, when we encounter the gravity and greatness of God, when we study his attributes, we are still left comparing who he is to what we know. And if we stay there, and we don’t acknowledge the limitations of our perspective, we will

continue to make our mud pies and misunderstand the call and character of God. We will continue to misunderstand evil in this world, continue to disrupt shalom ourselves, and continue to wallow under the weight of sin and brokenness.

Instead, we must turn to the Bible, which routinely reveals our limited perspective. Shortly after Jesus is born, a man named Simeon prophesies over him. God promised Simeon that he would one day see the Messiah. Upon seeing the baby Jesus, Simeon rejoiced! Yet, when he prophesied, he declared that Jesus had been appointed “for the fall and rising of many in Israel” and that “a sword would pierce” the very soul of his mother, Mary. It is an astonishing prophecy when combined with Jesus’ own words in Luke 12:

⁴⁹I came to cast fire on the earth...⁵³Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. ⁵⁴They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother and against daughter and daughter against mother.

So, is Simeon’s prophecy—combined with Jesus’ own teaching—some kind of justification for religious war? Or the rejection of one’s family? Not at all! By taking into account the whole counsel of God, and centering ourselves, on the gospel, we can see that Simeon and Jesus are not encouraging violence; they are speaking of the gravity of the cross, and its impact on the relationships we hold most closely. To become a citizen of the Kingdom of God, one must count the cost of discipleship. That cost may very well include dramatic changes to our closest relationships. Remember, Jesus own disciples left everything they had—their homes, their careers, and their families—to follow him. Even our most fundamental, socially-necessary, life-defining relationships will be called into question. But we need *perspective* to be able to see that.

And what is perhaps the most compelling Biblical example illustrating the need for perspective? Christ’s own death! Consider his final day. The entire scenario was a mockery of justice. There have been whole articles and books dedicated to the miscarriages of justice that should have swept Jesus’ examination into a mistrial. And his punishment—even prior to his crucifixion—went far beyond the agreed-to limits that the human body could endure. Indeed, Jesus was so physically humiliated and exhausted that he died on the cross only hours after he was fixed to it, despite most crucified convicts lasting for days. As an onlooker, unaware of God’s greater work, it would be easy—rational even—to conclude that *nothing* good could come from this unjust, cruel death. And yet, because we have a proper perspective, we recognize that Jesus’ death was perhaps the most beautiful and incredible and satisfying and transformative moment that has *ever* happened. Christ’s death on the cross ignited the opportunity for true peace on earth. Christ’s death atoned for our sin and brought peace with God; it established the beginning of his church to bring peace to the world; it unveiled the Kingdom of God that will one day consume the world in true shalom. Christ’s death demonstrates that despite all the evil in the world, he must love us. Why else would he choose to endure that kind of suffering, humiliation, and divine separation?

Grasping truths like these requires patient perspective. Imagine appearing in a locked room, with no windows, filled masked, gloved, whispering individuals swarming around a table. On that table

is an unconscious body, obviously bruised, naked, and injured. The masked persons begin to cut into and tear open the unconscious individual, slowly removing tissue and even organs. What are we to make of this scene? If we jump to conclusions, we might miss the fact that this is, in fact, the scene of a major surgery, designed to save—not harm!— life. The masked individuals are trained professionals, sworn to save and serve the fragile life before them. Indeed, even a procedure designed to save, *without* the proper perspective, can appear irredeemable.

In each of these examples, the appearance of evil is not being swept under the rug. God is not ignoring it. No, he is at work, using what appears to be unquestionably evil—divisions among friends and family, the death of the Messiah—to bring about a greater good. We can see, throughout all of scripture, that in the midst of evil, God is at work, bringing all things together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose (**ROMANS 8:28**).

VI. THE PROMISE OF PEACE

So, what now? How can we correct our limited perspective? What does it look like to live in, and live out, the peace Paul describes as “the peace which surpasses all understanding” (**PHILIPPIANS 4:17**)? I would argue that, first, we must look beyond ourselves, into Scripture, and consider the “Big Questions.” That probably seems counter-intuitive. The way of the world is the exact opposite; there are entire industries set up to help you and I avoid our fears. We have food, television shows, and sandy beaches that all provide a momentary and mindless mirage of “escape.” But that isn’t the way of Christianity; Christians find their peace by looking trusting God for the restoration of all things:

*¹Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ²And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴**He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.**” ⁵And he – Jesus – who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.”*

Taste and see that the Lord is good! Here, we see Scripture standing well beyond our perspective, reminding us of the restoration that is to come. When Jesus returns, there will be peace in every way: the Kingdom of Heaven coming down to Earth. Creation itself will be set free from the bondage of corruption (**ROMANS 8:21**). Weapons will be bent into plowshares (**ISAIAH 2:4**). We will enjoy the work of our hands, free from the fear of death and disease (**ISAIAH 65:17**). Jesus will redeem the cosmic, historic, and corporate brokenness as he guides all of creation into resurrection, renewal, and restoration! And that, *that* is where Christians find their peace. Christians know, believe, trust, and hope that one day, everything that has happened—all of the wrong, the evil, and the brokenness—will be wrapped up and reconciled. And Christians realize

that, in the face of that glory to come, no measure of sacrifice that we must endure will be outweighed by the joy of Christ's redeeming work to come.

I love the way the way that Fyodor Dostoyevsky says it in *The Brothers Karamasov*:

“I believe like a child that suffering will be healed and made up for, that all the humiliating absurdity of human contradictions will vanish like a pitiful mirage...that in the world's finale, at the moment of eternal harmony, something so precious will come to pass that it will suffice for all hearts, for the comforting of all resentments, for the atonement of all the crimes of humanity, for all the blood that they've shed; **that it will make it not only possible to forgive but to justify all that has happened.**”

The lives we lead now are but a shadow of the true life we will one day inherit. This is the reality from which flow the hope and love and joy and *peace* that define the Christian response to evil.

So, now what?

What is the Christian to do in response? If we are honest, we are tempted to choose to obvious option: to be—be satisfied, be happy, be comfortable, and await that glorious day. But that is not the vision taught in the scripture. The source of our hope—the true shalom invoked by Christ's rule and reign—is not a distant dream. I would argue that this promised should lead us to act, to *anticipate* that future hope so that we can be peacemakers here and now (**MATTHEW 5:9**). And, oh, do we ever need peacemakers today!

But what do I mean by “anticipate”? I am borrowing the idea from the brilliant scholar N.T. Wright. In Romans 6, Paul explains that, after Jesus died and was raised, believers are “in him” and must “reckon” that they too have died and been raised. Wright explains that teaching calls believers to anticipate the hope of resurrection and Jesus making all things new by acting in the present through Spirit-led, habit-forming disciplines that demonstrate their *current* obedience to the Prince of Peace.

Consider a couple of Wright's analogies. If I say “I expect it will rain later today,” I may mean that that I expect it is going to rain sometime later. But if I say the same thing, and I am wearing a raincoat or carrying an umbrella—even though the sun is shining!—my words, combined with my conduct, mean something more. They mean that I am already dressed in a way that will be appropriate for the later conditions. That second kind of anticipation is what Wright is getting at. There are other analogies:

- An **instrumentalist** told by her conductor to *anticipate* a beat, meaning she will begin to play her notes a fraction before the written music says to.
- A **chess player**, *anticipating* his opponents move, plans ahead before that move can occur and heads off the challenge.

- A **group of loyal subjects**, gathered together by the rightful King to overthrow an illegitimate ruler, will obey the true King not only when he has re-ascended to his throne, but when they follow him even before he's taken the crown.

In each example, the main figure is anticipating actively. And like the last analogy, we Christians live under the rule and reign of Christ even while Satan manipulates the levers of this world as the “Prince of the powers of the air” (**EPHESIANS 2:2**). In short, we are acting in the present in a way that is appropriate in the future!

So, then, what does it look like for us to actively anticipate in the present? To show our allegiance to the True King? We live as peacemakers, as bearers of the peace we have been given.

- **ROMANS 5:1** // Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.
- **COLOSSIANS 1:20** // And through him [Jesus] to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.
- **EPHESIANS 2:14** // For he himself is our peace, who has made us one and has broken down in the flesh the dividing wall of hostility.
- **JOHN 14:27** // Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them, be afraid.
- **PSALM 34:14** // Turn away from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.
- **MATTHEW 5:9** // Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.
- **ROMANS 14:17** // For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

But be careful, family. This kind of peace is all-consuming, life-changing, and radicalizing in a way that is both supernatural and unexplainable. Consider the early church. They endured incredible religious persecution. Tens of thousands of self-identified Christians were brutally murdered by the Roman Empire. And yet, members of the early church would greet each other with the word “peace.” They *greeted* each other in this way! Families, torn apart, never to see each other again. Brothers and sisters, marched into coliseums to entertain bloodthirsty citizens, carved to pieces by lions, tortured, burned alive. And yet, *not once* did the early Christians rise up in violent self-defense. Not once did the church give in to the cycle of violence, not once did they attempt to overthrow their Roman oppressors. Instead they became “martyrs”—a name born from an early church father, Justin Martyr. Listen as he describes their peace:

“We ourselves were well familiar with war and murder...but all of us have exchanged our swords for ploughshares, our spears for farm tools. Now we cultivate the fear of God, justice, kindness to men, faith, with the expectation of the future given to us by the Father himself through the Crucified One.”

Astonishing. Martyr not only knew the Prince of Peace; he abandoned all other ways of the world. And that is precisely how Christians can be peacemakers. Christians know the end of the story.

They have the eternal perspective. Christians can suffer injustice, sacrifice their whole selves even, because Christians are not drive by the hope of the present. Their hope is in the resurrecting work of the Prince of Peace, the Son of God who will wipe away every tear from every eye. The one who declares, “Behold, I am making all things new!” (**REVELATION 21:10**)

VII. CONCLUSION: “PEACE ON EARTH”

*Then pealed the bells more loud and deep
God is not dead, nor doth he sleep
The wrong shall fail, the Right prevail
With peace on Earth, good will to men*

So, from where does Longfellow’s peace come? From where does he draw the strength after the tragic death of his wife and the war-induced paralysis of his son? Now, it is clear! Longfellow longs for and lays claim to Christ’s redeeming work in the future—that the wrong *shall* fail, and that the right *will* prevail. Despite the chaos surrounding him, despite the various evils he and his family faced, Longfellow finds the comforting, steadying peace in Christ’s work to come.

Longfellow is not unlike Paul, who also drew his strength and his peace from Christ. Despite living a life riddled with persecution and pain that eventually culminated in his own martyrdom, Paul could say with confidence (**PHILIPPIANS 4:13**):

¹³I have learned to be content in want and in plenty...I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength.

Ultimately, these men draw their peace—their shalom—from the Prince of Peace. They recognize that, despite the peril and evil threatening to consume them, the promises of the Prince of Peace have become their own peace.

And so now, I ask you to consider this Prince of Peace, Jesus. You could respond like:

- The Lawyer (**LUKE 10**) – You can attempt to justify yourself, to try and stack the cards in your favor, to make excuses.
- The Rich Young Rule (**MARK 10**) – You can acknowledge him, and even appreciate him, but continue in rebellion.
- The Disciples (**MATTHEW 4**) – you can accept him, believe him, and leave everything you have to follow him.

My prayer is that you would follow in the footsteps of the man in the Parable of the Field (**MATTHEW 13:44**), who, in finding a great treasure hidden in a field, sold all that he had with great joy so that he could buy that field. May Jesus, the Prince of Peace, be your treasure.

NUMBERS 6:24-26

²⁴May the Lord bless you and keep, ²⁵the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you, ²⁶the Lord turn his face toward you, and give you peace.

Josh Garrels / “O Day of Peace”

*O Day of Peace that dimly shines
Through all our hopes, and prayers, and dreams
Guide us to justice, truth, and love
Delivered from our selfish schemes*

*May the swords of hate fall from our hands
Our hearts from envy find release
Till by God’s grace our warring world
Shall see Christ’s promised reign of peace*

*Then shall the wolf dwell with the lamb
Nor shall the fierce devour the small
As beasts and cattle calmly graze
A little child shall lead them all*

*Then enemies shall learn to love
All creatures find their true abode
The hope of peace shall be fulfilled
For all the Earth shall know the Lord*



CELEBRATING
Advent

Longfellow, "I Heard the Bells"

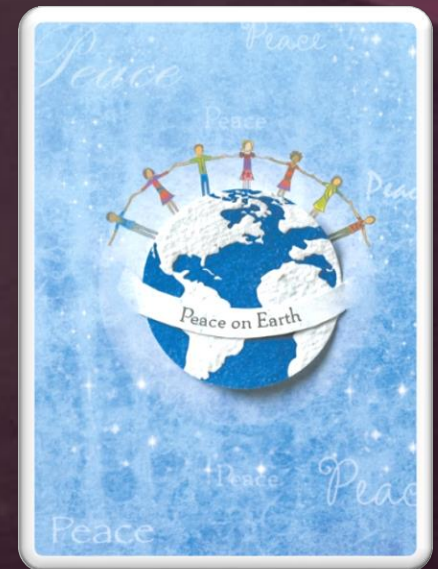
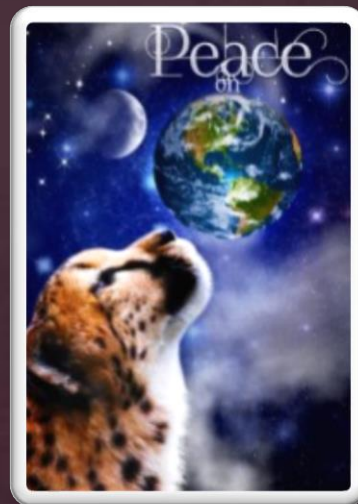
I heard the bells on Christmas day
Their old familiar carols play
And wild and sweet, the words repeat
Of peace on earth, goodwill to men

'Till ringing, singing on its way
The world revolved from night to day
A voice, a chime, a chance sublime
With peace on earth, goodwill to men

Longfellow, "I Heard the Bells"

Then in despair, I bowed my head
"There is no peace on earth" I said
For hate is strong, and mocks the song
Of peace on earth, goodwill to men

Then pealed the bells, more loud and deep
"God is not dead, nor doth he sleep!"
The wrong shall fail, the Right prevail
With peace on earth, goodwill to men



- I. The **PASSAGE** on Peace
- II. The **PRESENCE** of Peace
- III. Love **ABSENCE** on Peace
- IV. Love **PERSPECTIVE** for Peace
- V. The **PROMISE** of Peace

- I. The **PASSAGE** on Peace
- II. The PRESENCE of Peace
- III. Love ABSENCE on Peace
- IV. Love PERSPECTIVE for Peace
- V. The PROMISE of Peace

LUKE 2:8-14

⁸ And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ 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. ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."

LUKE 2:8-14

¹² "And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths, and lying in a manger."

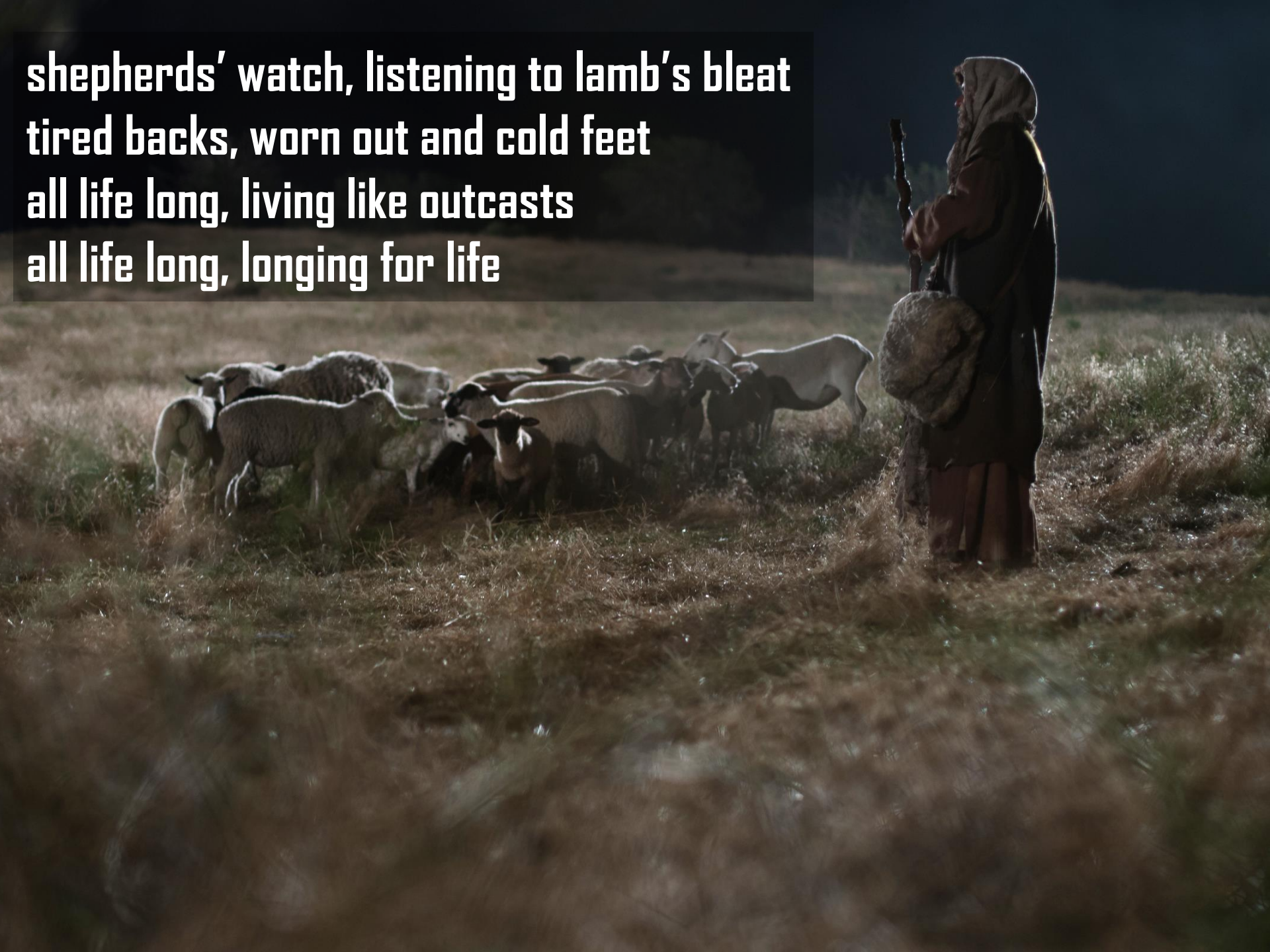
¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

THE SHEPHERDS
THE CITY
THE ANGELS

The SHEPHERDS



**shepherds' watch, listening to lamb's bleat
tired backs, worn out and cold feet
all life long, living like outcasts
all life long, longing for life**



DAVID BENTLEY HART

"When the peasant Christ tells the aristocrat Pilate that his Kingdom is not of this world, or when Paul warns Christians against any commerce with the systems of the gods of this world, or when Christ commands his followers to forgive those who wrong them in excess of all natural justice, or likens the wealthy citizen at heaven's gate to a camel attempting to slip through a needle's eye...the Gospel is announced as something essentially subversive to the accustomed order."

1 SAMUEL 13:14

¹⁴ For the Lord sees not as man sees; man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart.

The TOWN





The ANGELS





1 PETER 1:12

¹² ...the things that have been announced to you by those who preached the good news...things into which angels long to look.

“Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth
PEACE
to those on whom God's favor rests.”

So, what is this PEACE?

- I. The PASSAGE on Peace
- II. The PRESENCE of Peace
- III. Love ABSENCE on Peace
- IV. Love PERSPECTIVE for Peace
- V. The PROMISE of Peace

PEACE • *English*

"a state of tranquility or quiet;
an absence of hostility"

PEACE • *Scripture*

"a state of universal flourishing,
wholeness, and delight."

PEACE • *English*

"a state of tranquility or quiet;
an absence of hostility"

PEACE • *Scripture*

"a state of universal flourishing,
wholeness, and delight."

“SHALOM”



Shalom
as a
TAPESTRY

MISHPAT & TZEDAKAH

JUSTICE & RIGHTEOUSNESS

NICHOLAS WOLSTEROFF

"I do not have to argue that shalom is fully present among human beings, and between God and human beings, only when there is no injustice in those relationships. Shalom, in that way, incorporates justice. Justice in our relationships by no means exhausts shalom; shalom is more than justice. But **JUSTICE** is, as it were, the ground floor of shalom."

ISAIAH 32:17

¹⁷ And the effect of **RIGHTEDOUSNESS** will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever.

Righteousness → SHALOM

BRUCE WALTKE

“‘Righteousness’ is a social term, signifying that people do right by one another...in a nutshell, ‘righteousness’ means to disadvantage oneself as necessary in order to advantage others, and ‘wickedness’ means to ‘disadvantage others in order to advantage one’s self.’”

BRUCE WALTKE

“‘Righteousness’ is a social term, signifying that people do right by one another...in a nutshell, ‘righteousness’ means to disadvantage oneself as necessary in order to advantage others, and ‘wickedness’ means to ‘disadvantage others in order to advantage one’s self.’”

EMPTYING *ourselves* in order to **FILL** *others*

ISAIAH 53:5

He was pierced for our transgressions...and by his wounds, we are healed.

EMPTYING *ourselves* in order to **FILL** *others*

- I. The PASSAGE on Peace
- II. The PRESENCE of Peace
- III. Love **ABSENCE** on Peace
- IV. Love PERSPECTIVE for Peace
- V. The PROMISE of Peace

MATTHEW 2:16-18

¹⁶ Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from this wise men. ¹⁷ Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah, the prophet, saying:

¹⁸ "A voice was heard in Ramah,
Lamentation, weeping, and great mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children,
refusing to be comforted,
because they are no more."



COSMIC
HISTORIC
CORPORATE

COSMIC
HISTORIC
CORPORATE

ROMANS 8:20-22

²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²² For we know that the whole of creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.

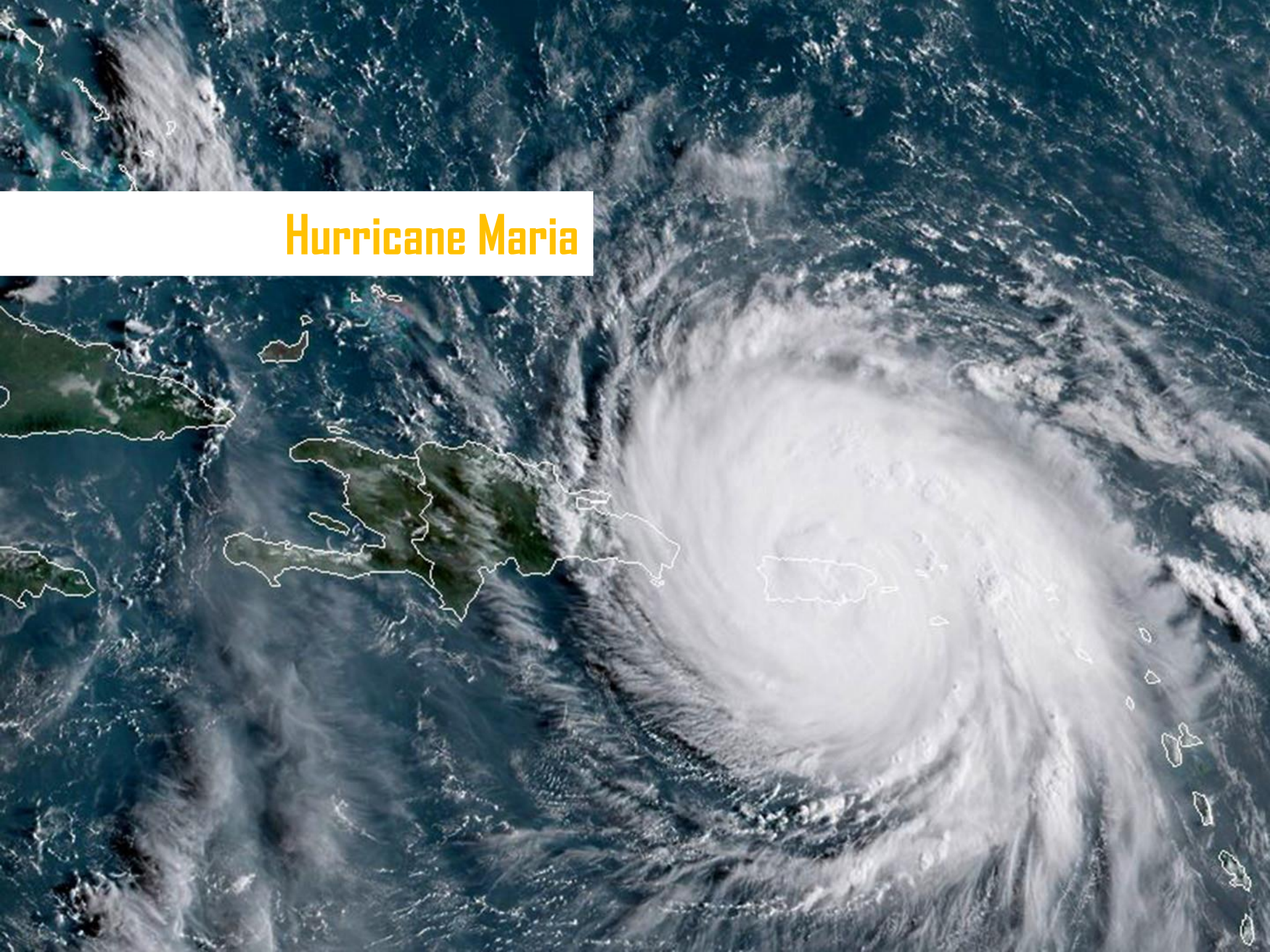
GENESIS 1:31

¹⁷ And God saw everything that he made, and behold, it was very good.

GENESIS 3:17

¹⁷ And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, "You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life."

Hurricane Maria





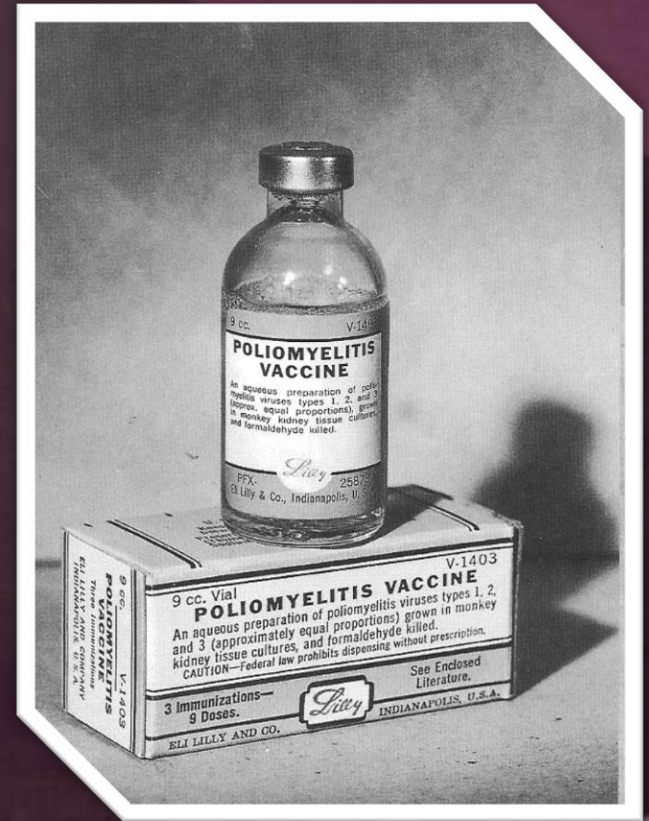


GENOCIDIO





COSMIC
HISTORIC
CORPORATE

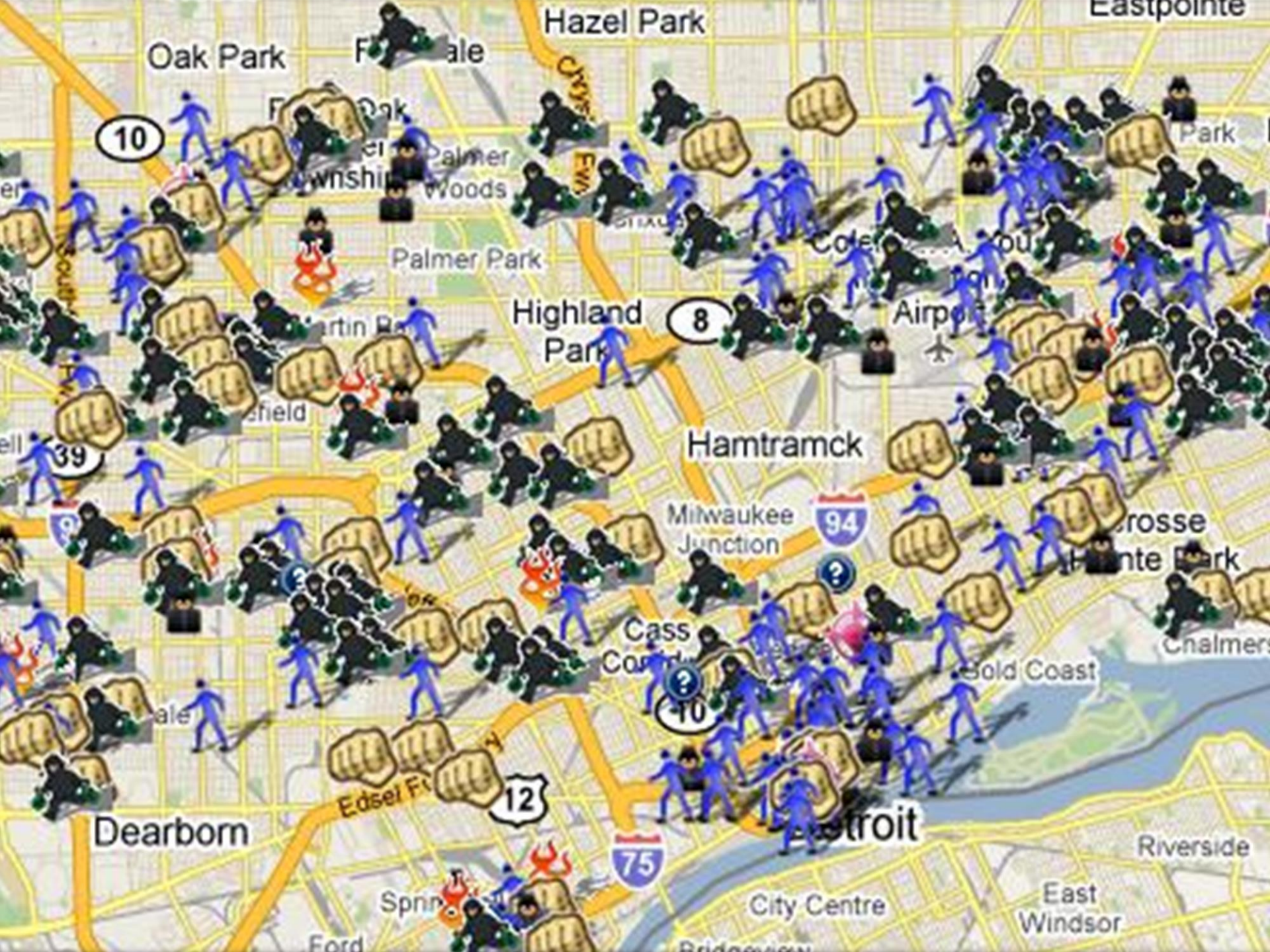


20th CENTURY WARS CASUALTIES

Congolese War	9,000,000
World War I	15,000,000
Russian Civil War	9,000,000
Stalin's Regime	20,000,000
World War II	66,000,000
Mao's Regime	40,000,000



COSMIC
HISTORIC
CORPORATE







WELCOME



STEP-BY-STEP
USER GUIDE



NSO

Neighborhood Service Organization

24-HOUR WALK-IN CENTER

3430 Third Avenue (313)832-3100



AMOS 5:11

" Because you trample on the poor, and you exact taxes of grain from him, you have built houses of hewn stone, but you will not dwell in them; you have planted pleasant vineyards, but you shall not drink wine.

And in despair, I bowed my head
"There is no peace on earth" I said
For hate is strong, and mocks the song
Of peace on earth, goodwill to men

- I. The PASSAGE on Peace
- II. The PRESENCE of Peace
- III. Love ABSENCE on Peace
- IV. Love **PERSPECTIVE** for Peace
- V. The PROMISE of Peace

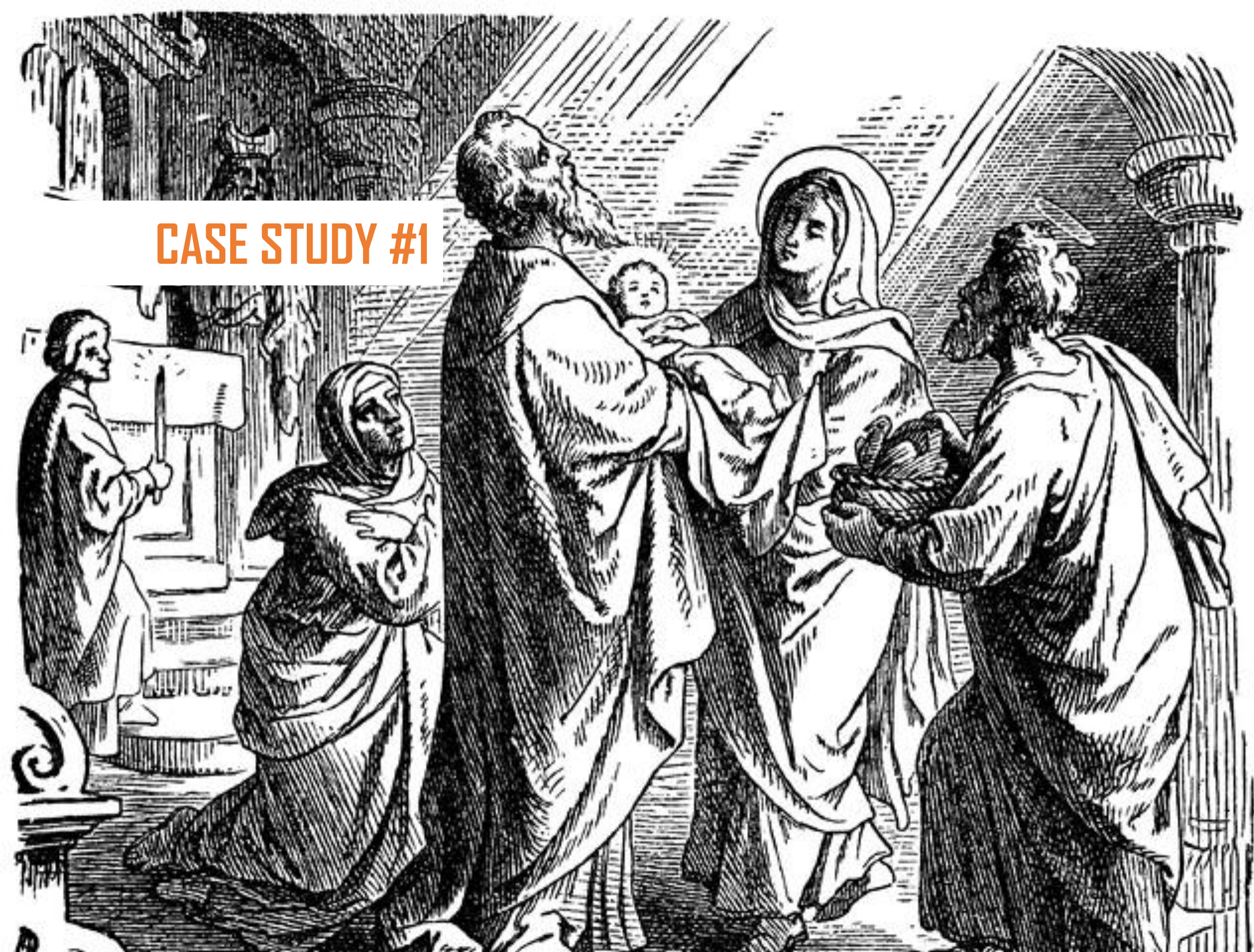
C.S. LEWIS

"If we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered to us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at sea. We are far too easily pleased."

PERSPECTIVE

A patient trust in our faithful God
to work ALL things, even apparent evil
for our good and His glory

CASE STUDY #1



LUKE 2:34-35

34 Then Simeon blessed them, and he said to Mary, the baby's mother, "This child is destined to cause many in Israel to fall, and many others to rise. He has been sent as a sign from God, but many will oppose him. **35** As a result, the deepest thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. **And a sword will pierce your very soul.**"

CASE STUDY #2

You're standing in a cold room with no windows, filled with masked, gloved, whispering individuals swarming around a table.

On that table is an unconscious body, obviously bruised, barely clothed, and injured. The masked persons begin to cut into the unconscious individual, slowly removing flesh and even organs.

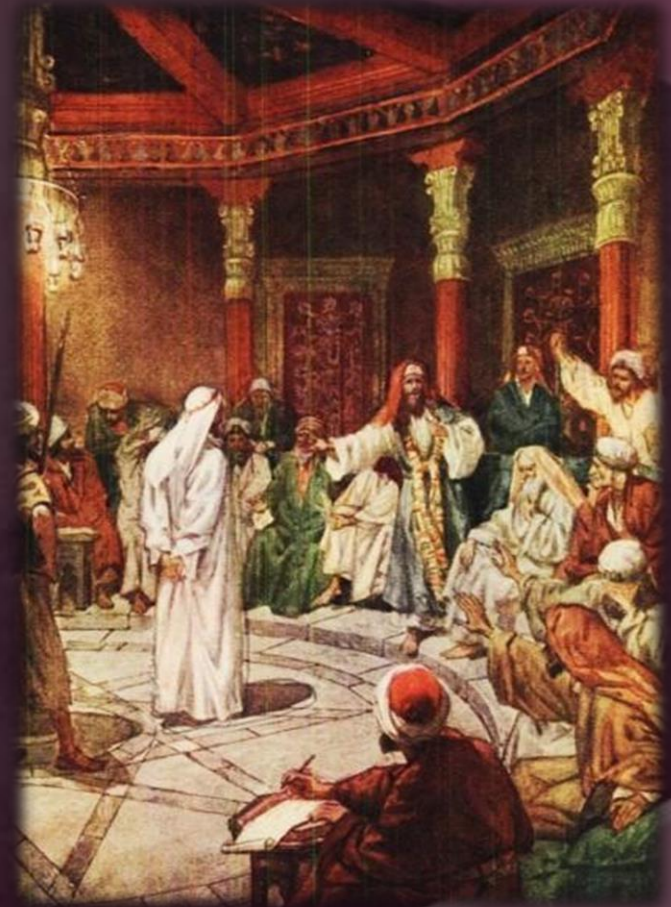
CASE STUDY #2

The Surgeon's Table



CASE STUDY #3

The trial and crucifixion of Jesus



PERSPECTIVE

A patient trust in our faithful God
to work ALL things, even apparent evil
for our good and His glory

- I. The PASSAGE on Peace
- II. The PRESENCE of Peace
- III. Love ABSENCE on Peace
- IV. Love PERSPECTIVE for Peace
- V. The **PROMISE** of Peace

QUESTION: Given our limited *PERSPECTIVE*, what can we do?

QUESTION: Given our limited **PERSPECTIVE**, what can we do?

ANSWER:

Think about and
meditate on life's
“**BIG QUESTIONS**”

REVELATION 21:1-5

¹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.

² and I saw the holy city, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.

REVELATION 21:1-5

⁴ "He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away." ⁵ And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new."

ROMANS 8:21

²¹ The creation itself will be **set free from its bondage** to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

ISAIAH 2:4

⁴ And they shall **beat their swords into plowshares**, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.

ISAIAH 65:17-25

For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the **former things shall not be remembered or come into mind**....they shall build houses and inhabit them, they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not plant and another eat; for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be...they shall not labor in vain, or bear their children in calamity...the wolf and the lamb shall graze together.

FYODOR DOSTOYEVSKY

"I believe like a child that suffering will be healed and made up for, that all the humiliating absurdity of human contradictions will vanish like a pitiful mirage...that in the world's finale, at the moment of eternal harmony, something so precious will come to pass that it will suffice for all hearts, for the comforting of all resentments, for the atonement of all the crimes of humanity, for all the blood that we've shed; **that it will make it not only possible to forgive but to justify all that has happened.**"

So, now what?

BE • *peaceful satisfaction*

To be pleased, assured, and comfortable, awaiting the return of Christ

DO • *peace-making*

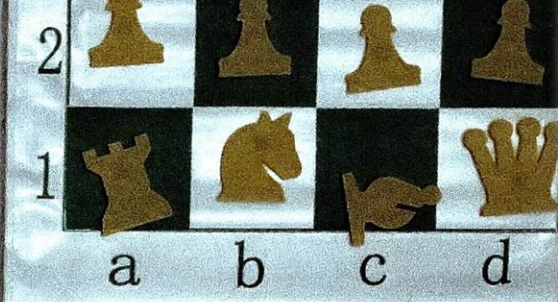
To actively participate in Christ's Kingdom here and now

PEACEMAKING = Anticipation + Action

ROMANS 6:11

“ So you also must **consider** yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.





Der kleine Schachbuch...
Willy...
Das grobe Reader's Digest Jugendbuch
LIGOR SIKHIN
König...
Chess...
Chess...
Chess...

MI MI DO

N.T. WRIGHT

“Imagine a rightful king coming secretly to his people, and gathering a small group of those people to help him overthrow the rulers who wrongfully rule from his throne. When he becomes king, fully and finally, his followers will obviously surrender their whole lives to him as a show of allegiance to their True King. But when they publicly obey him before the overthrow of the evil rulers – even when the True King is not yet acknowledged – **they are genuinely anticipating the obedience they will offer to him in the future.**”

ROMANS 5:1

1 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, **we have peace with God** through our Lord Jesus Christ.

COLOSSIANS 1:20

20 And through him to reconcile all things, whether on earth or in heaven, **making peace by the blood of his cross.**

EPHESIANS 2:14

¹⁴ For **he himself is our peace**, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility.

JOHN 14:27

²⁷ Peace I leave with you; **my peace I give to you**. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

PSALM 34:14

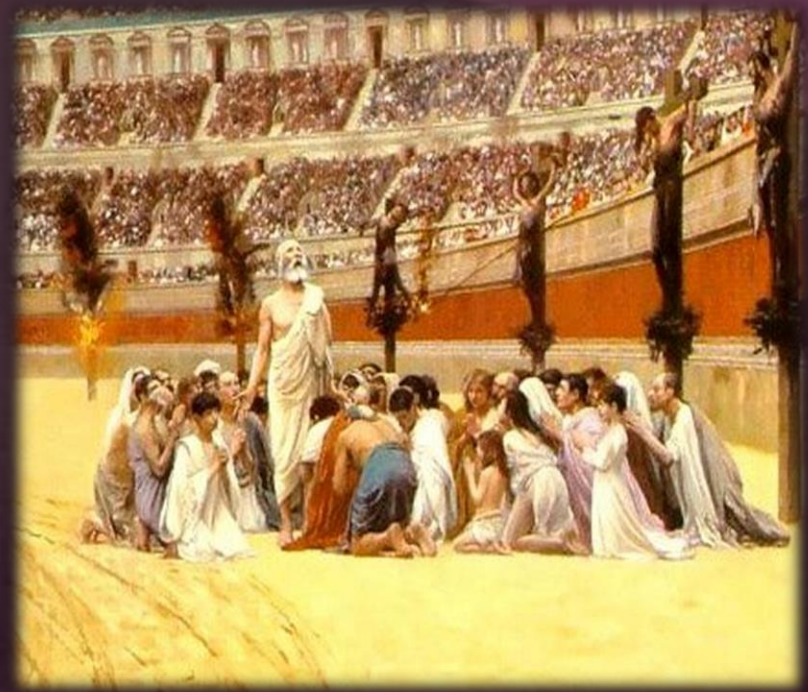
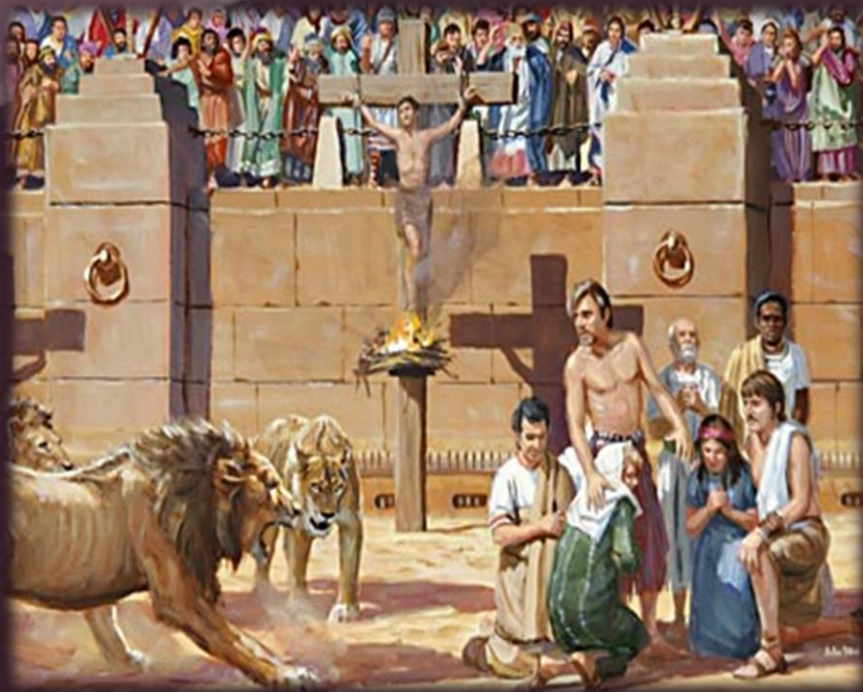
¹⁴ Turn away from evil and do good; **seek peace and pursue it.**

MATTHEW 5:9

⁹ **Blessed are the peacemakers,** for they shall be called children of God.

ROMANS 14:17

¹⁷ For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness and **peace** and joy in the Holy Spirit.



JUSTIN MARTYR

"We ourselves were well familiar with war and murder...but all of us have exchanged our swords for ploughshares, our spears for farm tools. Now we cultivate the fear of God, justice, kindness to men, faith, with the expectation of the future given to us by the Father himself through the Crucified One."

JUSTIN MARTYR

"We ourselves were well familiar with war and murder...but **all of us have exchanged our swords for ploughshares, our spears for farm tools**. Now we cultivate the fear of God, justice, kindness to men, faith, with the expectation of the future given to us by the Father himself through the Crucified One."

→ notice the references to **Isaiah 65!**

Then pealed the bells, more loud and deep
God is not dead, nor doth he sleep
The wrong shall fail, the Right prevail
With peace on Earth, goodwill to men!

What is the source of Longfellow's **PEACE**?

The trump shall resound
And the Lord shall descend
Even so, **it is well with my soul!**

What is the source of Spafford's **PEACE**?

In every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. **I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength**

What is the source of Paul's **PEACE**?

THE LAWYER

- Luke 10

THE RICH YOUNG RULER

- Mark 10

THE DISCIPLES

- Matthew 4



CELEBRATING
Advent