

## Peace on Earth

### Introduction

Over a century ago Henry Wadsworth Longfellow looked out on the strife-torn world of his day and mused:

“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.  
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.’ ”

In 2008 we still have a world filled with war, hate, and strife. Yet again the Christmas bells peal in joyous anticipation. For, although mankind does not yet have universal peace, it has the promise.

### Message

#### 1. Peace promised (Luke 2:14).

- a. Peace depends on righteousness (Isaiah 32:17).
- b. Peace comes through Christ (Psalm 29:11).

#### 2. Peace purchased (Colossians 1:20).

- a. There is peace in this life. Once we were “like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest,” for there is no peace to the wicked (Isaiah 57:20,21). Then Jesus came and said, as to the angry waves of Galilee, “Peace, be still” (Mark 4:39). Now we rest in the hands of God as safely as the Christ-child rested in the arms of Mary on that first Christmas Day.
- b. There is peace in the future life (Psalm 4:8; 1 Corinthians 15:55–57).

#### 3. Peace pursued (Psalm 34:14).

- a. Be at peace with your brethren (Mark 9:50). “Ye are brethren” (Acts 7:26).
- b. Be wary of a false peace (Ezekiel 13:10).

#### 4. Peace prevailing (John 16:33).

- a. Today peace is personal. It is true, “The ambassadors of peace shall weep bitterly” (Isaiah 33:7). Their peace plans fail. But ambassadors of Christ can offer peace to mankind (see Acts 10:36) through the Prince of Peace.
- b. One day peace will be universal. When the judgments of God upon the earth are finished, wars shall cease.  
As a result of the Great Tribulation the people will learn righteousness (Isaiah 26:9). Then for a thousand years the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth (Isaiah 11:9). There will be no more fighting (Isaiah 9:7). What a golden age that will be.

### Conclusion

A famous picture shows Waterloo — where Wellington defeated Napoleon — a good while after the bloodshed had ended. Grass had grown, covering the battlefield. A dismounted cannon remained, and a lamb that had come up from the pasture lay asleep in the mouth of the cannon. This is a picture of the peace Christ will bring. Men shall no longer destroy one another with bayonets, bombs, and bullets. Even the wild animals will lose their fierceness in that day (Isaiah 11:1–9). Though strife abounds now, a better day is coming.

As Longfellow’s poem continued:  
“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.’ ”