

THE GOOD NEWS OF PEACE

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CHAPTER TEN of the Acts of the Apostles has been described as the 'Pentecost of the gentiles', since it recounts the conversion and gift of the spirit to Cornelius as the opening scene of the dramatic spread of the gospel to the gentile world. Prior to the baptism of Cornelius, Luke recounts a speech of Peter which incorporates much of the missionary theology of the early community. Peter begins by describing God as the one 'who does not show favouritism, but accepts those from every nation who fear him and do what is right' (10,34), and then goes on to give a kerygmatic summary of the life of Jesus (10,37-43), in a manner similar to other places in Acts (e.g. 3,12-16; 5,30-32). Here, however, the summary is introduced by an even shorter epitome (10,36): 'You know the word which he sent to Israel, preaching the good news of peace (*euangelizomenos eirēnēn*) through Jesus Christ'. The subsequent narration of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus are thus called the good news of peace. We would claim that this characterization provides an entrée to a very important facet of the theology of the lucan writings. Only Luke describes the work of Jesus as the gospel of peace; and he speaks explicitly of peace more frequently than Mark, Matthew and John combined. Consideration of those places in the gospel where he speaks of peace as well as attention to certain related motifs will enable us to sound the depths of Luke's good news of peace. It will also suggest ways in which this good news can be again heard.

No matter how unique a message, no author creates a unique language to communicate it, so that in speaking of peace Luke draws on a rich storehouse of nuances and associations. In hebrew thought, peace (*shalom*) is not simply absence of conflict, concord or security, but also well-being, a full and whole life manifest in the blessings of God, fertility of the land and joy in community.¹ Psalm 85, a prayer for deliverance and an expression of hope in the power of God, indicates the intimate connection of *shalom* with other vibrant

expressions of Israel's faith: 'Steadfast love (*hesed*) and faithfulness (*emeth*) will meet, justice (*sedeq*) and peace (*shalom*) will kiss each other (v 10). It is especially akin to justice (*sedeqāh* or *dikaïosunē*) as the Jewish-Christian Letter of James testifies: 'And the harvest of justice is sown in peace, by those who make peace' (Jas 3,18). In *his* language of peace, Luke seems especially influenced by Isaiah, even in places where the contact is more by allusion than by direct citation: for example by the designation of the messianic king as the prince of peace (Isai 9,6; cf Lk 1,79; 2,14), or the praise of the messenger of peace: 'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good tidings, who publishes peace' (literally, 'of him who proclaims the gospel of peace' Isai 52,7; cf Acts 10,36). Interestingly, neither Luke nor any other New Testament writer lays great stress on peace as 'inner calm' in the face of adversity — a nuance important to contemporary Hellenistic philosophy.

In his own language of peace Luke reflects the different shades of meaning of the term. In the infancy narratives peace is virtually identified with that salvation which is to characterize the new age (1,79; 2,14); and it will characterize the new age inaugurated by the resurrection (24,36). The seemingly ritualized dismissals by Jesus of those healed, 'Go in peace, your faith has saved you' (7,50; 8, 48), combine the religious emphasis on the presence of God's saving power and the return of well-being with the normal biblical wish for a safe journey. Luke shows understandings of peace in less religious contexts such as security from theft (11,21), the averting of war (14,32; Acts 12,20), respite from persecution (Acts 9,31), the reconciliation of clashing parties (Acts 7,26) and the resolution of conflicts within the Christian community (Acts 15,33).

As significant as the content of Luke's statements on peace are the contexts in which they are found. In the infancy narratives God enters history anew with the coming of one who will 'guide our feet in the way of peace' (1,79). The next concentration appears in the mission discourse (10,1ff) where the missionary is to prepare the way for Jesus by offering a greeting of peace to 'a child of peace'. Jerusalem has long been recognized as central to Luke's theology, not only as the place where the gospel begins and ends but as the place where new stages in salvation history (the coming of Christ, his passion, the gift of the spirit) are inaugurated, and, at Jesus's entrance to Jerusalem, only in Luke do the disciples proclaim 'peace in heaven and glory in the highest' (19,38); while Jesus subsequently weeps over the city which did not know the things that make for

peace (19,41). As indicated, in the resurrection account Jesus greets his disciples with peace and then sends them to be heralds of repentance and forgiveness to the whole world (24,47-49); whilst the actual move of the gospel to the world recalls the gospel of peace (Acts 10,36). Luke's language of peace is located, therefore, at those places which are structurally and dynamically important to the gospel, where the gospel is 'in motion' and where barriers are broken down, be it the barrier between God and creation erected by sin or between peoples themselves. Structurally Luke seems to say that peace is part of the christian mission which is involved in breaking down barriers. Examination of individual passages will indicate a consonance between context and content.

The lucan infancy narrative speaks of peace three times (1,79; 2,14; 2,29), yet the whole section creates a mood and stirs feelings associated with peace.² God's entry into human history is not accompanied by the apocalyptic panoply of the day of the Lord nor even by the often strident language of a prophetic summons to conversion. Recipients of God's revelation have their fears quelled and express their joy in canticles of praise (1,30.46-55.67-79) which echo major themes of the whole gospel. The *dramatis personae* of the infancy narratives are people of peace, the *anawim* or poor of the land, the 'upright and devout', like Elizabeth and Zachary or like Anna and Simeon who are waiting faithfully 'for the redemption of Israel'.

Peace occurs first in the *Benedictus* of Zachary: 'for in the merciful compassion of our God the dawning light from heaven will visit us to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet in the way of peace' (1,78-79). Though recorded as a canticle of Zachary spoken after the circumcision of John, parts of this canticle may be more directly christological than pertinent to the mission of John. This is especially true of verses 78-79, which are grammatically awkward and connected only loosely with the preceding verses.³ The description of the 'dawning light from heaven' is more pertinent to Jesus, as is the enlightening and guiding role of the one who is born. In this hymn we are very close to the incarnational theology of the early jewish-christian community. Like the God of Exodus who sees and hears the groans of his people and then enters human history to deliver them (Exod 3,7-8), through his 'merciful compassion' God enters history in the person of Jesus to bring light, and guide his people.

The phrase 'to guide our feet in the way of peace', which in the

hymn is parallel to deliverance from the cloud of death, and the term 'way of peace' (*hodon eirēnēs*) echoes Isaiah: 'the way of peace they know not, and there is no justice in their path' (59,8). Since often allusions to the Old Testament by New Testament authors are not simply to the specific text but to the context, examination of this isaian passage sheds light on the phrase 'way of peace'. There is a call to national repentance (59,1-20), which follows the summons to the true fast (58,1-14). In the first part, there is an indictment of lies, injustice, violence and the shedding of innocent blood which culminates in the statement 'the way of peace they know not' (59,8). The way of peace thus has a negative nuance, the avoidance of those things censured by Isaiah. The positive content comes from the function of the *Benedictus* as heralding the coming of Christ. The way of peace will be that kind and quality of life which Jesus will embody in the gospel and the way of discipleship to which he will summon his followers. The way of peace becomes a virtual paraphrase for the gospel itself.

Such a perspective is supported by the use of peace in a cardinal section of the infancy narratives. At the birth of Jesus an angel appears to the shepherds telling them 'fear not' and announcing the good news of great joy: 'For to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour who is Christ the Lord' (2,12). This angel is then joined by a heavenly host saying:

Glory to God in the highest
And on earth peace to those
on whom his favour rests (2,14).

As in the *Benedictus*, the incarnation is in close association with the presence of peace. However, here peace has less of an ethical dimension and more of the comprehensive nuance of the hebrew *shalom*, the fulness of salvation. The birth of Jesus gives glory to God and fulness of life to those whom God has favoured. The translation 'on whom his favour rests' still causes some surprise to those long accustomed to the earlier 'peace on earth to men of good will'. While the manuscript and exegetical tradition presents a labyrinth of options, we can note that, despite the lack of a contemporary consensus on the best translation, there is agreement that 'men of good will' is the least acceptable. Also, it suggests a wrong theology: that is, that the peace given in the birth of Jesus is somehow limited to those of good will. The opposite is the case; it is the good will or

graciousness of God, given in the coming of Jesus, which will create peace on earth. The gift is prior to the demand. Peace on earth will be a consequence of people's realization that they are recipients of the goodness of God.

The final use of peace in the infancy narratives is, a fitting conclusion to the triptych of sayings on peace. At the conclusion of the narratives surrounding the birth of Jesus, he is presented in the temple and before Simeon and Anna, a pair from the ranks of the *anawim*, much like the couple with which the narrative begins (2,22-38). On seeing the child Simeon says: 'Lord as you have promised you now dismiss your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation which you have prepared in the sight of all your people' (2,29). In Simeon's prayer we have the close association of peace with salvation. Simeon then represents one of those 'on whom God's favour rests' (2,14), and now he can depart or commit himself to God in peace. The *shalom* which God grants in the coming of Christ conquers even the barrier which death erects to the realization of God's love. Also Luke's audience hearing or reading the story of Simeon and Anna at the end of the first century will see in them, as in the others of the infancy narrative, the symbols of Israel, the parent people of the Messiah. Simeon's praise for the child as a light for revelation to the gentiles anticipates the mission outwards from the Jewish community to the gentiles; while his designation of the child as 'for glory of the people of Israel', suggests an eirenic posture toward the people of Israel. The Lucan Christians now increasingly gentile, are never to forget their Jewish heritage. Luke's theology here is close to that of the letter to the Ephesians, written at the end of the first century, which also contains a concentration of the language of peace, especially in the picture of Christ 'our peace who has made us [Jew and Gentile] both one and broken down the dividing wall of hostility' (Eph 2,14).

Apart from the commands to 'go in peace', the next concentration of statements on peace occurs in the mission discourse (ch 10). In contrast to the infancy narratives where he draws on the traditions of the early community, Luke now utilizes that source containing sayings of Jesus which Matthew also uses (Q). However, Luke is the only evangelist to record two mission discourses of Jesus, one directed to the Twelve (9,1-6) and the other to a larger group of disciples (10,1-16). Though the second discourse is in the context of a mission within Palestine, it may prefigure the wider mission to the gentile world by others than the Twelve. The discourse begins with a

command to the disciples to prepare the way in those places where Jesus would later come. Jesus says that 'the harvest is plentiful' and that the disciples are to go as 'lambs in the midst of wolves', both of which suggest that the mission is to inaugurate a new age. The harvest is a traditional symbol of the final gathering of God's people (e.g. Isai 27,12; Joel 3,13); whilst the allusion to lambs in the midst of wolves is not only a metaphor for defencelessness but may evoke the 'peaceable kingdom' which, according to Isaiah, the Messiah will inaugurate, e.g. 'The wolf shall dwell with the lamb' (11,6), and 'The wolf and the lamb shall feed together' (65,25). Such a perspective fits in with the advent of the missionaries: 'Whatever house you enter, first say, "peace be to this house", and if a son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon him, but if not it shall return to you' (10,5-6). These words of the disciples are not simply a polite greeting but an indication that the coming of Jesus *within* history signals the advent of *shalom*, peace, as God's blessing, in the same way that heavenly 'messengers' heralded his coming *to* history with a proclamation of peace (2,14).

The semitic-sounding phrase, son or child of peace, with the words which follow are somewhat enigmatic. The expression is similar to others such as 'son of the Torah', and 'son of darkness or of light'. It designates not only possession, that is, a peaceable person, but commitment to or obligation towards — that is, a person destined for peace.⁴ In the eschatological context of the whole discourse Jesus's command means that the disciples are to be emissaries of the new age when peace is to reign in human life. If, however, the gift of *shalom* is rejected, the mission is to continue. The hint of rejection precipitates the sayings in the last part of the discourse (10,12-16).

The next statement of peace comes also from the source containing the sayings of Jesus and is in the context of the demands of discipleship in preparation for the coming, in this case, the return of the Lord. The disciple is to forsake reliance on material wealth (12,1-21) and is not to be anxious or fearful, but to have trust in God (12,22-34). However, reliance on God is not to spawn pacifism, but rather a posture of active waiting, since the present is a time when much will be demanded (12,35-48). Jesus then speaks of his own purpose in coming: 'I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how I am constrained until it is accomplished. Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division' (12,50-51). The matthean form of Luke (12,51) is perhaps more

familiar, 'I have come not to bring peace, but the sword' (Mt 10,34). At first glance this saying harmonizes poorly with the mission command of Jesus in Luke 10. Are we to assume that the disciples are to be bearers of the message of peace, whilst Jesus will bring the sword? The second century *Gospel of Thomas* makes explicit the violent potentialities of the saying: 'It is dissension that I have come to cast upon the earth: fire, sword and war'.⁵ Luke's alteration of the sword to division represents an attempt to obviate a violent interpretation of the saying, perhaps to disassociate Jesus and his followers from militant messianic movements like the Zealots.

The most common line of interpretation is to take sword or division as alluding to the crisis brought on by the demands of the kingdom most vividly expressed by those sayings of Jesus which speak of division between family and loved ones (Lk 12,52-53; Mt 10,35-36; cf Mk 10,29 and Lk 14,26: 'If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother . . .'). The saying immediately preceding (12,49-50) suggests that the kind of suffering Jesus will expect of his disciples is present in his own mission, since he has a baptism he must undergo. To this interpretation I would suggest another which builds on it. When Jesus says that he is not coming to bring peace, we hear echoes of Jeremiah's attack on pseudo-prophets who proclaim the hollow peace of a security built on injustice: 'Everyone is greedy for unjust gain; and from prophet to priest every one deals falsely saying, "peace, peace", when there is no peace' (6,14; see 8,11). Also the messianic expectations of Jesus's time were varied. The Messiah was to inaugurate a reign of peace, but this would involve the exclusion of the sinner from the holy community and the expulsion of the foreigner from the land, often by armed conflict in the name of the Lord. Jesus associates with the sinners, receives the centurion, praises the Samaritan and rejects the way of violence. Paradoxically, then, his course of action brought violence, first to himself and then to his followers who suffer divisions within the family and often the kind of martyrdom he suffered (e.g. Stephen, Acts 7,54). The lucan Jesus is the true prophet who rejects false peace and that peace which can be achieved only through sectarian violence.

Apart from the post-resurrection greeting (24,36), the final lucan statements on peace appear at Jesus's entry into Jerusalem. In all the gospel accounts this entry has a messianic meaning as fulfilment of Zechariah's prophecy that the Messiah would come to Jerusalem (Zech 9,9) seated on a donkey — which in biblical thought is the

symbol of one arriving in peace. In Luke the account has an added dimension, since only Luke has explicit statements about peace here. They are again associated with a 'coming' of Jesus and with a new stage in salvation history, since it is in Jerusalem that the final act of Jesus's life will be played out. Here he will rise and commission his Church to be missionaries empowered with the spirit (24,46-50).

While all the gospels record the acclamation of Jesus as one who comes in the name of the Lord, only in Luke do the disciples say: 'Peace in heaven and glory in the highest' (19,38). The parallelism with 'glory to God in the highest and on earth peace . . .' (2,14) suggests that here we have a lucan addition to the tradition of the entry into Jerusalem. The evangelist thus encloses the major portion of Jesus's public ministry with two acclamations of peace. The phrase 'peace in heaven' is somewhat puzzling. 'In heaven' can be a surrogate for 'God'; but the question remains in what sense Jesus's entry occasions peace with God. One possibility is that the coming of the Messiah who brings peace is the occasion for ascribing praise to God as the author of peace.⁶ Another is that the impending death of Jesus is that event which will create peace between alienated humanity and God; as in Romans (5,1) where the effect of justification is that 'we have peace with God through Jesus Christ', or Ephesians (2,11-16) where those who were alienated or strangers are brought near by the blood of Christ, who is our peace.

The second mention of peace at the entry occurs in the description of Jesus weeping over the anticipated destruction of Jerusalem. Though prophecies of the destruction of Jerusalem are attested at different levels of the gospel tradition (e.g. Mk 13,1-2 and parallels; Lk 13,34-35), this incident is found only in Luke. The vividness with which the destruction is described suggests that these verses were formulated after the event. The picture of Jesus weeping evokes the image of Jeremiah weeping over the people of the kingdom of Judah: 'Oh that my head were waters and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people' (Jer 8,23).

Jesus is the rejected prophet who weeps over the sins of the people and ultimately bears their guilt. The occasion for the lament is not simply the destruction, but what precipitated it, the ignorance of the people over 'those things which made for peace'. Like many of the phrases using 'peace', this is somewhat cryptic. It could simply mean 'salvation', and Jerusalem's tragedy, that they did not see the

salvation offered in Jesus. However, my feeling is that the phrase is more specific.

The first clue is the statement that not only are the things which make for peace hidden from Jerusalem, but that it did not know the time of its visitation (*episkopēs*, 19,44). The only other time the term visitation appears in the gospel is in its verbal form in the initial verse of the *Benedictus* (1,68), and more significantly in 'the dawning light (Christ) will visit us (*episkepsetai*)', in order to guide our feet in the way of peace (1,78). We would contend then that the way of peace which results from God's visitation and the things of peace which Jerusalem did not know at its visitation, comprise the life and teaching of Jesus as the revelation of God. The second clue to the more specific meaning of 'the things of peace' comes from the location of the lament at the goal of Jesus's journey to Jerusalem which begins at 9,51. In this 'travel narrative' Luke includes most of the material of his gospel which is particular to him and which includes his own vision of the christian life. It also represents instructions for the christian community as it makes its way from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth (Acts 1,3). Specific elements of this material are especially pertinent: such as non-retaliation on enemies (9,55); compassionate care for a neighbour (10,29-37); concern for the disadvantaged (the poor, the maimed, the lame and the blind [14,13-14]); reconciliation within the human family and with God (15,1-32); proper use of wealth (16,1-31), and trusting prayer (18,1-14). The way of discipleship sketched between the beginning of the journey (9,51) and the entry to Jerusalem is that which makes for peace. Finally the lucan reader could not but contrast the way of peace offered by the Messiah, Jesus, to the way of war and familial strife brought to Jerusalem by the messianic leaders of the Zealot movement in the last days of the jewish war, A.D. 69-70.⁷

This understanding of 'the way of peace' and 'the things which make for peace' as a cipher for the kind and quality of life presented by Jesus suggests that other major motifs of the gospel are also connected with peace. Of the possible avenues of approach, I would propose two which are central to Luke and of contemporary import. First, there is Luke's inclusive vision of the recipients of God's graciousness. The apostles are to be witnesses to the end of the earth (Acts 1,8), and at Pentecost the unity in understanding given to 'people from every nation under heaven' (Acts 2,5) both reverses the disunity of Babel (Gen 11,1-9) and anticipates the unifying power of

the gospel. The gospel first spreads to Samaria (Acts 8,1-8); and the first individual conversion recorded is that of the ethiopian 'minister of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians' (Acts 8,27). Gentiles are to be incorporated into the community (Acts 10; 14,27; 15,15ff). In contrast to Paul's adverse view of the gentile world (Rom 1,18-32), the lucan Paul speaks of God as a creator who can be worshipped by all nations (Acts 17,22-31). In the gospel the Samaritan is a model of compassion who fulfils the great commandment of love (10,25-37). The involvement of the jewish people in the death of Jesus is excused (Lk 23,34; Acts 3,17); and Gamaliel is portrayed in a favourable light as one who still seeks God's will (Acts 5,38-39). In both Gospel and Acts, Luke gives prominent place to women (Lk 1-2; 10,38-42; Acts 10,36-43; 18,1-4) in contrast to much of the cultural ethos. What Paul expresses theologically in saying that in Christ 'there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female' (Gal 3,28), Luke expresses in narrative form. Luke, then, stands in opposition to the kinds of ethnic, religious and social divisions which have been a paramount source of war and violence throughout history.⁸

Secondly, foundational to all Luke's individual statements on peace is his transmission and adaptation of Jesus's love command, and his picture of Jesus himself as the embodiment of that command. Luke echoes the words of Jesus in handing on the dual command of love of God and neighbour, but brings the relation to God and neighbour closer together by dropping the language of 'first' and 'second' (Lk 10,27; cf Mk 12,29-31). Also in accord with his tendency to make the demands of christian living concrete, he appends to this command the parable of the good Samaritan as one who fulfils the law of God by love of neighbour. In his section of the Sermon on the Plain corresponding to Matthew's Sermon on the Mount, Luke hands on the command: 'Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you' (6,27), but repeats the command again (6,35), in such a way that the various exhortations such as non-resistance to violence and the remission of debts are examples of love (6,27-35). He also adds in this section his version of the golden rule: 'As you wish that people would do to you, do so to them'. At the end of the passages on the love of enemies, Luke has 'be merciful as your heavenly father is merciful' (6,36); whilst Matthew has 'be perfect as your heavenly father is perfect' (5,48). Luke, therefore, sees love of enemies not only as exemplifying the golden rule, but also as a way of acting towards others as God has acted towards us. For Luke, the life of Jesus was the manifestation of God's tender mercy or

compassion on his people (1,79). Through such compassion the Samaritan who sees and has compassion moves from passer-by to neighbour (10,33); and through compassion the father and errant son are reconciled (15,20). Compassion is mercy in action; and Christians who have received the mercy of God are to see others who do them harm or injury not as enemy but as neighbours who have equal claim to God's mercy.

Not only does the lucan Jesus teach the way of forgiveness: he himself follows it. Luke's parallel between the death of Jesus and that of Stephen suggests that the evangelist intends the death of Jesus to be a model for his Church in the midst of persecution. This perspective emerges especially in the parts of the passion narrative distinctive to Luke: for example, Jesus's healing of the servant who was struck during the arrest (22,51). Even his condemnation occasions a reconciliation between Pilate and Herod 'they became friends . . . before this they had been at enmity' (23,12); and most importantly only Luke records Jesus's prayer of forgiveness for those who crucify him: 'Father forgive them for they know not what they do' (23,34; cf Acts 7,60).

At that very moment of the advent of the darkness of death, the lucan Jesus who came to give light to all who sit in darkness and under the shadow of death guides the feet of his followers into the way of peace. This way involves the mystery of trust in God, 'Father, into your hands I commend my spirit' (23,46) in the face of a violent and undeserved death, and the even greater mystery of forgiving prayer for the agents of that death.

Conclusion

Peter's characterization of the life of Jesus as 'the good news of peace' has been a prism through which we were able to view Luke's presentation of that life. With Jesus comes 'peace on earth' which is salvation, well-being, and harmony between God and those on whom his favour rests. Jesus will guide his followers into the way of peace and teach the things of peace, which is to characterize the mission of Jesus and his followers. The word when proclaimed is a word of peace. Whatever the hermeneutical difficulties in applying the gospel to specific moral issues, the gospel of Luke sets the life of a Christian within the framework of proclaiming peace and doing the things which make for peace, just as it set the life of Jesus in that frame (2,14;19,38). Nor can the concrete aspects of that life be

considered irrelevant. God's love and concern for people from every nation as well as for the marginal and the stranger in the land are no less urgent in our day than in Luke's. Equally important is a way of discipleship which includes love for the enemy in the face of undeserved suffering. Only with Constantine did the cross become a symbol of victory over the hostile forces, rather than of a word of forgiveness spoken to enemies.⁹ Nor is such forgiveness to be equated with pacifism. The one who teaches the way of peace also proclaims release to the captives and liberty to the oppressed (Lk 4,16-18). His disciples confront the powerful of the world with a wisdom which their adversaries cannot withstand (Lk 21,12-19) and with freedom in the midst of suffering (Acts 28,31).

Luke's good news of peace summons Christians today to the most radical form of discipleship. The first one called to such discipleship in the gospel of Luke is she whose *fiat* opened the heavens to peace on earth. Yet her soul was to be pierced with a sword just as the followers of Jesus were to be split by division. The final word Luke offers on peace speaks not of peace but of its prerequisite: faith that the way on which the Christ will guide our steps is not empty but can be filled with God's *shalom*. Such a faith can hear again Elizabeth's greeting to Mary: 'Blest is she who has faith that the Lord's promises to her would be fulfilled' (1,45).

NOTES

¹ See Klassen, W.: 'A Child of Peace (Luke 10,6) in First Century Context', in *New Testament Studies* 27 (1981), p 489; Pedersen, J.: *Israel: Its Life and Culture 1-11* (Copenhagen, 1926), pp 310-17; Foerster, W.: *eirene*, in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament II* (Grand Rapids, 1964), pp 400-20.

² On the infancy narratives I am grateful to Brown, R.: *Birth of the Messiah* (London, 1977).

³ Brown, pp 390-91 and Marshall, I. H.: *The Gospel of Luke: New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, 1979), p 87, both hold that vss 78-79 refer to Jesus.

⁴ Klassen, *loc. cit.*, p 497; Marshall, *Luke*, p 420.

⁵ Gospel of Thomas, 16, in *The Nag Hammadi Library* (ed. James Robinson, New York, London, 1977), p. 120. An interesting variation on a saying of Jesus, found in *Thomas* is: 'If two make peace with each other in this one house, they will say to the mountain "Move away", and it will move away' (48, cf Mk 11,23).

⁶ Marshall, *Luke*, p 716.

⁷ Josephus, a Jewish historian and early participant in the war, gives a vivid picture of its final horrors. See *Jewish War, Book IV*.

⁸ Hammer, P. L.: *The Gift of Shalom* (Philadelphia, 1976), pp 100-01.

⁹ On the Christian opposition to war and all forms of violence in the first three centuries, see Bainton, R. H.: *Christian Attitudes toward War and Peace* (Nashville, 1960), pp 66-84, and Zampaglione, G.: *The Idea of peace in Antiquity* (Notre Dame/London, 1973), pp 207-62.

In conclusion, there is good news of peace with God that can be yours if you would but come to him in faith, turn from your sins, embrace the calling of our God, and you too may have your soul freed from unrest and anxiety, and enter into the glorious peace of God, a peace which surpasses all understanding. anxiety, peace. Tweet Share. Get Founders in Your Inbox. A weekly brief of our new teaching resources. Email Address*. CAPTCHA. Listen to Good News of Peace Radio/Podcast | SoundCloud is an audio platform that lets you listen to what you love and share the sounds you create.. St Marys. 9 Tracks. 2 Followers. Stream Tracks and Playlists from Good News of Peace Radio/Podcast on your desktop or mobile device.Â Let your audience know what to hear first. With any Pro plan, get Spotlight to showcase the best of your music & audio at the top of your profile.