

**December 13 / Sunday**

**Then Pealed the Bells More Loud and Deep...**

Read [Isaiah 9:1-7](#) / [Luke 1:57-60, 67, 76-79](#) and [2:13-15](#)



**14 / Mon – Peace prophesied** | Read [Isaiah 9:1-7](#)

Isaiah was a prophet to the kings of Judah from approximately 740-700 BC. His words spoke of coming judgement, earned by people's breaking covenant with God. But Isaiah also prophesied a coming Messiah would bring restoration. What stands out to you the most about the four titles Isaiah uses in v. 6? What is the hallmark of His governance in v. 7?

**15 / Tue – Path of peace** | Read [Malachi 3:1](#) / [Isaiah 40:3](#) / [Luke 1:67-68, 76-79](#)

Not only was the promise of a Savior given in the Old Testament but it was also promised that one would come before Him to prepare the way. The birth of John was a confirmation the Messiah's coming was imminent. Zechariah's words reminded them that *"the rising sun will come to us from heaven...shine light in the darkness...and guide our feet into the path of peace."* What are some ways God has led you into 'the path of peace'?

**16 / Wed – Much more than just peace** | Read [Luke 2:14](#) / [John 14:27](#)

When you read the word *peace*, it's actually the word *shalom*, a common greeting among Jewish people today. *Shalom* denotes *"a state of untroubled, undisturbed well-being, brought about by the grace and loving mind of God wherein the derangement and distresses of life, caused by sin, are removed. It is the result of a divine promise that grants deliverance and freedom; grace that affects the character of a person."* (Zodhiates) This is what Jesus offers; will you receive it?

**17 / Thu – Peace no matter what** | Read [Romans 8:35-39](#)

When Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day" in 1863, his own peace had been shaken. Two years earlier, he lost his beloved wife. Now the Civil War was raging, his son was severely wounded, and the country was fighting back-to-back pandemics. Despair seemed to mock '*peace on earth*' until he realized the source of it is not in happy circumstances. God's peace, *shalom*, stands firm *in spite of* them. Have you experienced this kind of peace?

**18 / Fri – Your decision** | Read [John 14:27b](#) / [Romans 8:6](#)

You may not have a choice about what you are going through right now but you *do* have a choice about what you let into your head and heart. Jesus was firm. Don't allow your heart to be troubled. Do *not* give in to fear. Paul expands it further by saying where your mind goes, the rest of you will follow. Fearful thoughts are focused on what *you* see. Thoughts focused on who *God* is and who you are (His) will generate a consistent peace. Will you purposely follow Jesus' command?

**19 / Sat – Your source** | Read [Galatians 5:22-25](#)

Life in Jesus' day and in Longfellow's time was not so different from yours today. There have always been threatening circumstances...disease, hunger, poverty, oppression and death. Of course you do what you can. But when things are out of your control, you can *still* be filled with peace. Will you be the person who brings calm to chaotic situations, responds with compassion toward those in crisis, and who finds God's grace to walk through any fearful situation with peace?