When Jesus the Messiah was born we find this announcement in Lk. 2:14. “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” With Messiah’s entrance into the world we have this herald of peace. What is this peace that Messiah brings? Is it peace among nations? Is it cessation of all war? Is the peace Messiah brings physical in nature? To answer this question, let’s look at a few of the prophecies about Christ In Isa. 9:6-7 the Bible says, “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.”

In this well known Messianic prophecy we find promise that the Christ child would rule God’s kingdom, wearing titles of honor associated with that rule. One of these titles is “Prince of Peace.” This of course points to the fact that Messiah brings peace as part of His kingdom rule. The passage further promises that as Messiah rules on David’s throne He will bring peace without end.

The same theme is part of another Messianic prophecy. In Ezek. 34:24-25 the Bible says, “And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken it. 25 And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods.” Notice first the prophecy speaks of “David” being the ruler in Messiah’s kingdom. David the former king of Israel had been dead about 400 years; and from that time till Ezekiel there were not any rulers in the Jewish nation named David. Therefore, we understand “David” here to stand as a symbol of Messiah. This is the commonly accepted interpretation, even among Jews. Compare with Ezek. 37:24-25.

Notice also Messiah’s rule is said to involve a covenant of peace. Again we find prophecy that Messiah was to bring peace. The careful reader will also observe this covenant of peace is described in symbolic terms of beasts ceasing out of the land. You can find comparable use of this symbol in Isa. 11:6-9.

In Zech. 9:9 we find the familiar prophecy of Messiah the king riding into Jerusalem on a donkey. Verse 10 goes on to say, “And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth.” Observe this passage talks about Messiah speaking a message of peace to heathen.

Whatever kind of peace these passages say Messiah would bring, it would involve a covenant of peace and that covenant message being spoken to the heathen. Is this a temporal peace? Is this the cessation of wars between nations? After all, Zech. 9:10 talks about war weapons being cut off. Is this an earthly peace between man and beast? Or, are all these things symbols of a different kind of peace?

Amos 9:11-15 is another passage that foretells of the Messianic kingdom. “In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old: 12 That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the LORD that doeth this. 13 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. 14 And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. 15 And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the LORD thy God.” This passage is brimming with Messianic promise, all stated in physical terms. It promises that in messiah’s kingdom David’s house would be rebuilt, Israel would overcome their ancient enemies, they would again inhabit the land, rebuilding her cities. Should we understand these promises to be physical in nature?
Many who speak of the peace Messiah brings would have us believe that very thing. Premillennialists insist these Messianic prophecies point to a future, earthly kingdom, wherein there will be peace on earth for a thousand years. Others insist that peace between nations is the central message of Chris. However, a careful study of scripture reveals otherwise.

In Acts 15:14-17 James takes up Amos’ prophecy, quoting it and applying it to the church. James said, “Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. 15 And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, 16 After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: 17 That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.” James took Amos’ prophecy, swelling with promises that sound physical, and spiritually applied them to the church. The inspired Apostle James said these prophecies have a spiritual application.

Furthermore, James said the prophets [plural!] agree with this. That is to say, more prophecies than the one James quoted [Amos 9:11-15] speak of Messiah’s spiritual work in physical symbols. The peace Messiah brings was never intended to be understood as a physical, temporal peace.

In Jn. 14:27 Jesus said, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” Jesus clearly said that He brings a peace that is different from the peace the world gives.

Peace between nations is great, and certainly something for which we earnestly pray [I Tim. 2:1-2]. However, peace among nations only affects things in this life. As important as temporal peace may be, it doesn’t satisfy man’s greatest need. And it doesn’t last forever.

But the peace Messiah brings meets our greatest needs and as the prophecy said, it is without end! Rom. 5:1 says, “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:” Messiah brings lasting, eternal peace, peace with God! This peace is the message of the New Covenant, preached to all nations, just as the prophecies we’ve studied foretold. Acts 10:36 says, “The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:)”

So the next time you read Lk. 2:14, know that the promise, “on earth peace, good will toward men” is not about peace between man or beast. It’s about man who’s offended his God having an opportunity to make peace. This is the peace that Messiah brings. Col. 1:20-21 sums up our thoughts well. “And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. 21 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled.” Let us give praise to Jesus our Messiah and king for the peace He brings!