

# Bible Readings

## End to war: peace, justice & righteousness

**The Prophets and Psalmist foretell an end to war and the coming of the Prince of Peace. Micah, Ezekiel, Zechariah and Isaiah, and the author of Psalm 46 write of the destruction of weapons: war-horses, chariots, bows and arrows, spears, shields, swords, war clubs and clothing. Arms will be used for fuel or converted into tools for agriculture and there will be the coming of a new and radically different king – a righteous ruler (Isaiah and Zechariah). Our Saviour, Jesus Christ, calls his followers to engage in non-violent peacemaking and enemy love (Matthew), characteristics of discipleship reinforced in the Letters of James, Paul and Peter.**

He makes wars to cease to the ends of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear, he burns the shields with fire. "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. [Psalm 46: 9-11](#)

'In that day,' declares the Lord, 'I will destroy your horses from among you and demolish the chariots.'  
[Micah 5: 10](#)

Then those who live in the towns of Israel will go out and use the weapons for fuel and burn them up – the small and large shields, the bows and arrows, the war clubs and spears. [Ezekiel 39: 9](#)

He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war any more. [Isaiah 2: 4 \(also Micah 4: 3\)](#)

For as in the day of Midian's defeat, you have shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of the oppressor. Every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire. For unto us a child is born, to us a son is

given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. [Isaiah 9: 5-7a](#)

Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on the colt, the foal of a donkey. I will take away the chariots of Ephraim and the war-horses from Jerusalem, and the battle-bow will be broken. He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth. [Zechariah 9: 9-10](#)

Love and faithfulness meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other. [Psalm 85: 10](#)

See a king will reign in righteousness and rulers will rule with justice... The fruit of righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence for ever. My people will live in peaceful dwelling-places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest. [Isaiah 32: 1, 17-18](#)

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. [Matthew 5: 9](#)

You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly father is perfect. [Matthew 5: 43-48](#)

But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure: then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness. [James 3: 17-18](#)

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse... Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but

leave it for God's wrath... Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good. [Romans 12: 14, 17-18a, 20](#)

Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. [1 Peter 3: 9](#)

## The arms trade

**The first verse from Deuteronomy puts a limit (unspecified) on the size of the king's 'cavalry' and prohibits the importation of more horses from Egypt, the former land of slavery for the Israelites. Solomon, the last ruler of the united kingdom of Israel disobeys this command on both counts and actually exported 'weapons' to neighbouring territories (1 Kings). Years later, the prophet Isaiah warns of the dangers of unholy alliances and reliance on military might rather than the Lord, a view echoed by the writers of Psalms 20 and 33.**

The king, moreover, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself or make the people return to Egypt to get more of them, for the Lord has told you, 'You are not to go back that way again.'  
[Deuteronomy 17: 16](#)

Solomon accumulated chariots and horses: he had 1400 chariots and 12,000 horses, which he kept in the chariot cities and also with him in Jerusalem... Solomon's horses were imported from Egypt and from Kue – the royal merchants purchased them from Kue. They imported a chariot from Egypt for 600 shekels of silver, and a horse for a 150. They also exported them to all the kings of the Hittites and of the Arameans.  
[1 Kings 10: 26, 28-29](#)

Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, who rely on horses, who trust in chariots and the great strength of their horsemen, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel, or seek help from the Lord. [Isaiah 31: 1](#)

Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God. [Psalm 20: 7](#)

No king is saved by the size of his army; no warrior escapes by his great strength. A horse is a vain hope for deliverance; despite all its great strength it cannot save. [Psalm 33: 16-17](#)

His [God's] pleasure is not in the strength of the horse, nor his delight in the legs of a man [infantryman].  
[Psalm 147: 10](#)

## Our weapons

**The writer of Psalm 28 and Paul contrast the weapons and methods of waging war by the world with that of the God-fearing.**

The Lord is my strength and shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped. [Psalm 28: 7a](#)

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary they have divine power to demolish strongholds.  
[2 Corinthians 10: 3-4](#)

... be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled round your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions... [Ephesians 6: 10-18a](#)

... put on the armour of light. [Romans 13: 12b](#)

... let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate and the hope of salvation as a helmet. [1 Thessalonians 5: 8](#)

**Compiled by Alun Morinan from the New International Version (NIV, 1984), except Matt 5:9 which is from Today's New International Version (TNIV, 2005)**

