

The Attackers: The Choice of Wheel-tracks: the Negative Volition of Judah, Jer 6:16–19; the relationship of Peace (*Shalom*) with Righteousness (*Sethaqah*), Isa 48:18; 60:17

Jeremiah 6:16 - Thus says the Lord, “Stand by the ways [דֶּרֶךְ (*derek*): the wheel-tracks of righteousness & wickedness] and see and ask for the ancient [עוֹלָם (*‘olam*): decrees and covenants] paths [נְתִיב (*nathiv*): standards of behavior], where the good [טוֹב (*tov*): profitable, beneficial, & virtuous] way [הֲלָכָה (*halach*): lifestyle] is, and walk in it; and you will find rest [מְרֻגָּע (*margoa’*): renewal] for your souls [נַפְשׁוֹת (*nephesh*): *kardia*]. But they said, ‘We will not walk [הֲלָכָה (*halach*): in the ancient lifestyle] in it.’

50. “The old cross road now is waiting / Which one are you going to take? / One leads down to destruction / The other to the pearly gate. One road leads up to heaven / The other goes down below / Jesus our Savior will protect you / He’ll guide you by the old cross road.”¹

Jeremiah 6:17 - “And I set watchmen [the prophets] over you, saying, ‘Listen to the sound of the trumpet [the alarm of imminent danger]!’ But they said, ‘We will not listen.’

v. 18 - “Therefore, hear, O nations, and know, O congregation, what is among them.

v. 19 - “Hear, O earth: behold, I am bringing disaster on this people, the fruit of their plans, because they have not listened to My words, and as for My law they have rejected it also.”

51. If the people of Judah have not listened to the mandates of the Lord then compliance is impossible. Without accurate thought, no legitimate decision can occur and only wrongdoing can result.

52. Consequently, the Jews have deviated from wheel-tracks of righteousness and have adopted a lifestyle characterized by wheel-tracks of wickedness. With this in mind we return to Philip Nel’s analysis of *šālôm*:

¹ Bill Monroe, “The Old Cross Road,” *The Essential Bill Monroe and His Blue Grass Boys: 1945–1949*, compact disk, Columbia Legacy, CK52480, © and © 1992 Sony Music Entertainment, Inc.

The relation of *šālôm* to *sedaqa* [שֶׂדָקָה (*sethaqah*)], righteousness, deserves special comment. Isaiah 48:18 makes it evident that peace and righteousness flow from observance of Yahweh's commands and can be seen as his blessing ["If only you had paid attention to My commandments! Then your well-being (*šālôm*) would have been like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea."]. Isaiah 60:17 underscores this when it depicts the coming glory of Zion ["I will make peace your administrators and righteousness your overseers."]. Peace and righteousness are here personified as Zion's governor and ruler. No more violence and destruction will occur and Zion will be an exemplification of Yahweh's salvation (cf. 60:18–22; also Ps 72:1–7). In Isaiah 32 a similar picture of the future revival of Jerusalem through the Spirit of the Lord is given. A righteous king will reign (32:1) and righteousness will prevail in the country (v. 16). The fruit of this righteousness will be *šālôm* (peace), tranquility (*seqet*), and confidence (*betah*).² *Šālôm* (peace) and *seqet* (tranquility) are thus portrayed as the ultimate expressions of a sound and fulfilled existence in accordance with the intended order of Yahweh, expressed as the maintenance of *sedaqa*. (pp. 132–33)

This idea is also expressed in the cultic songs of Israel. In the prayer for the restoration of Israel in Psalm 85 the path of Yahweh's salvation is prepared by righteousness (*sedeq*, v. 13). Yahweh promises peace (*šālôm*) to his people (v. 8), and righteousness (*sedeq*) and *šālôm* will kiss each other [v. 10]. This metaphor gives expression to the dimension of life that will be experienced when the Lord's salvation is granted to his people. From these instances it is evident that the *šālôm* prediction of the future dispensation of salvation is closely linked with righteousness as the ideal category of existence in accordance with God's will.³ (p. 133)

² Isaiah 32:17.

³ Philip J. Nel, "שלום," in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, gen. ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 4:132–33.