

Prince of Peace  
Isaiah 9:6  
December 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021

1. Jesus gives \_\_\_\_\_ peace \_\_\_\_\_ God.

2. Jesus gives \_\_\_\_\_ peace \_\_\_\_\_ God.

3. Jesus gives \_\_\_\_\_ peace with others.

Questions for Discussion/Reflection on *Prince of Peace*

1. Of the four two-word names for Jesus in Isaiah 9:6 that we have developed in this series, which has been the most significant for you? Why?
2. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow struggled as he heard singing about peace on earth but was in the middle of great suffering. Have you had a similar struggle?
3. Why do we need peace with God? How do the following passages describe our condition before we have peace with God through Jesus?
  - a. Romans 5:6-10
  - b. Ephesians 2:1-3
  - c. Colossians 1:21
4. If we know we have peace with God, why do we still struggle to have internal peace? What is it about the world we live in that makes it difficult to feel “at peace?” (see John 16:33)
5. What practical steps are we encouraged to follow in Philippians 4:6-9 to experience peace?
6. Given the previous points about peace with God, why does Jesus say that the peacemakers will “be called sons of God?” (Matt. 5:9)
7. What makes it difficult to live at peace with others? (Rom. 12:18; Luke 12:51-53)

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Intro

This morning we will consider our fourth and final two-word name of Jesus from Isaiah 9:6 – Prince of Peace. Of the four names, this might be the one that most immediately resonates with us as we think of Christmas.

We know the words of the angels to the shepherds in Luke 2

Luke 2:14 <sup>KJV</sup> **Luke 2:14** Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

We hear the words of so many Christmas hymns that include references to peace.

*O Come O Come Emmanuel* - Bid envy strife and quarrels cease, Fill all the world with heaven's peace

*O Little Town of Bethlehem* – And Praises sing to God the King and peace to men on earth

*It Came Upon a Midnight Clear* – Peace on the earth good will to men, from heaven's all gracious king

*Hark! The Herald Angels Sing* – Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled

*Silent Night* – Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace

It's probably Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, the American poet, who captures the conflicted experiences we have about the promises of peace. He wrote the poem *I heard the Bells on Christmas Day* that was set to music a decade later. In it, he wrestles with the promises of peace and the reality of war.

On Christmas day, 1863 he was in Washington, DC where his oldest son had been transported after he was shot fighting for the North in the Civil War. The doctors were unsure if he would be paralyzed for life after a bullet nicked his spine.

That wasn't the first tragedy in their family though. Two years earlier his wife died tragically when her dress caught on fire. Henry tried to put it out but was unsuccessful and was severely burned himself.

Can you picture him scarred, widowed, a son in hospital from a war that was far from over and far from certain what type of nation would emerge when it was over, and he hears the bells from a church near by and hears a choir singing "peace on the earth goodwill to men."

Author and historian Justin Taylor describes it this way:

Longfellow . . . wrote a poem seeking to capture the dynamic and dissonance in his own heart and the world he observes around him. He heard the Christmas bells that December day and the singing of "peace on earth" (Luke 2:14), but he observed the world of injustice and violence that seemed to mock the truthfulness of this optimistic outlook.

His poem moved from observation of the sounds of Christmas to the bleak contrast of war. But then, like many of the Biblical psalms, he returned to the theme of hope.

I heard the bells on Christmas Day  
Their old, familiar carols play,  
and wild and sweet the words repeat  
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

I thought how, as the day had come,  
the belfries of all Christendom  
Had rolled along the unbroken song  
of peace on earth, good-will to men.

And in despair I bowed my head

There is no peace on earth I said  
For hate is strong and mocks the song  
Of peace on earth, good-will to men

Then rang the bells more loud and deep  
God is not dead, nor does he sleep  
The wrong shall fail, the right prevail  
With peace on earth, good-will to men

Our world still groans under the weight of war. Disasters strike close to home as well. If you don't feel like celebrating this Christmas, perhaps like Longfellow, you need to be reminded that God is not dead, nor does He sleep. This promise from Isaiah 9:6 of a prince of peace who will have no end to the increase of His kingdom and of His peace still stands.

The word for "peace" in Isaiah 9:6 is the rich Hebrew term, *shalom*.

Cornelius Plantinga Jr explains the term in his thought-provoking essay, *Sin: Not the Way It's Supposed to Be* "The webbing together of God, humans, and all creation in justice, fulfillment, and delight is what the Hebrew prophets call *shalom*. In English we call it peace, but it means far more than just peace of mind or cease fire between enemies. In the Bible *shalom* means universal flourishing, wholeness, and delight—a rich state of affairs in which natural needs are satisfied and natural gifts fruitfully employed, a state of affairs that inspires joyful wonder as the creator and savior opens doors and speaks welcome to the creatures in whom he delights. *Shalom*, in other words, is the way things are supposed to be."

Sin breaks *shalom*, it breaks peace.

"*Shalom* is God's designed plan for creation and redemption; sin is blamable human vandalism of these great realities and, therefore, an affront to their architect and builder."

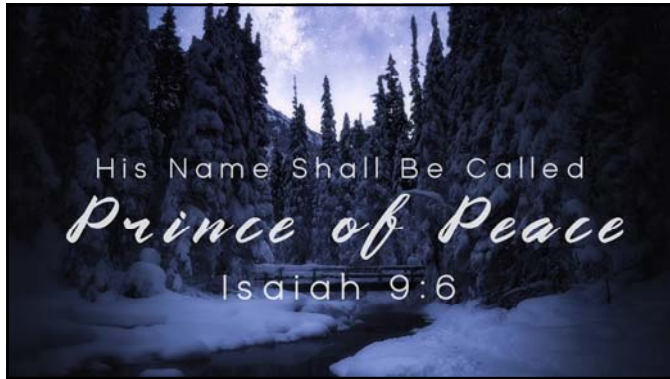
And into this human vandalism comes the Prince of *Shalom*, the Prince of Peace. How does He bring peace? What kind of peace does He bring? At least 3 types of peace – vertical, internal, and horizontal.

1. Jesus gives **vertical** peace **with** God.
  - a. **Colossians 1:19-22** For it was the *Father's* good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, <sup>20</sup> and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, *I say*, whether things on earth or things in heaven. <sup>21</sup> And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, *engaged* in evil deeds, <sup>22</sup> yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach—
    - i. From alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, but now reconciled – holy and blameless and beyond reproach
    - ii. That means God isn't mad at you.
      1. I recently heard someone say that 20 years ago the struggle that young Christians had was trying to keep one foot in the world and one foot in church and he had a lot of conversations about what it truly means to follow Christ wholeheartedly. Now he has a lot of conversations with young Christians who secretly feel like God is mad at them. They need to be convinced that God isn't mad at them.
  - b. **Romans 5:1-2** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup> through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.
    - i. we have peace with God
      1. because we have already been justified

- a. justified by faith
  2. through our Lord Jesus Christ
  3. because we stand by grace
  - c. There is no other way to find peace with God except through Jesus Christ.
    - i. We cannot find peace with God by religious ritual.
    - ii. We cannot find peace with God by being a good person.
    - iii. We cannot find peace with God by convincing ourselves He doesn't exist.
      1. Gavin Ortlund begins his book on the existence of God this way: "Suppose Hamlet is searching for Shakespeare. He cannot find him in the way he might find other characters in the play, like Ophelia or Claudius. So where should he look? Hamlet's knowledge of Shakespeare will be different than anything else in his life. On the one hand, finding Shakespeare will be very difficult. Shakespeare is very far removed; Hamlet has never encountered him. On the other hand, the knowledge of Shakespeare might also prove unavoidable. For in a deeper sense, Shakespeare is very close; Hamlet has never done anything *but* encounter him. As Hamlet's creator, Shakespeare is at once beyond his every device and inside his every thought."
        - a. God, Ortlund goes on to explain, is to us something like what Shakespeare is to hamlet. He is infinitely close and infinitely far. Reality itself abides within him. But infinitely far because he is qualitatively different than anything we have ever known. He surpasses us constantly at every level.
      2. How could He then be knowable?
        - a. He could join His deity to humanity and come as a baby.
      3. But how would people know to expect Him and recognize Him?
        - a. He could prepare the way through written predictions that He would come.
        - b. He could prepare the way through a religious system that emphasized God's holiness and the need for a sacrifice.
      4. But where should He come?
        - a. He could come at the point on the earth where three great continents touch.
      5. when should He come?
        - a. He could come at a time when a global power had forced peace on much of the known world so the message of his coming could spread safely on their system of roads.
        - b. He could come when a writing system could record and preserve the knowledge of His coming.
2. Jesus gives internal peace from God.
    - a. Peace with God through Jesus is an objective reality. It's not something you feel, it's something that is true. But in Jesus we get more than an objectively true peace (although that is most important), we get the resources we need to have internal peace as well.
    - b. **John 14:27** "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.

- i. This declaration of Jesus comes at the end of the parenthesis that is His earthly life. He is about to “go away” from his disciples, he is about to die. And they are processing this news with sadness, fear, uncertainty, and questions. But he promises them peace by promising them the Holy Spirit.
    - ii. **John 14:26** "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.
    - iii. One of the things listed as a fruit of the HS is peace (Gal. 5:22).
  - c. **John 16:33** "These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."
    - i. We bring our minds back to the truth that Jesus has overcome the world. We will still have tribulations – difficulties, hardship, suffering, persecution, etc. But we can have peace in Him who has overcome the world.
  - d. **Philippians 4:6-7** Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
    - i. Specific, gratitude infused prayer to God leads to the peace of God that is more than we could imagine or hope for and it will guard our hearts and minds.
    - ii. Our hearts and minds tend to wander into anything but *shalom*. But God’s peace can be a guard to our wandering, fearful, anxiety ridden hearts.
3. Jesus gives horizontal peace with others.
- a. This is where the painful lack of peace often pierces us.
    - i. This is what Longfellow struggled with as he witnessed the horror of war against his son.
    - ii. We know war and interpersonal conflict has not ceased.
  - b. Paul Salopek experienced this early in his quest to walk around the world. In January 2013 Salopek began a 21,000 mile attempt to walk from Africa, through the middle east, along the northern border of India, through China and Russia, take a boat across the Bering Strait into Alaska, and then down all the way to the tip of Chile. He hoped to accomplish this in 7 years. He’s only in China right now and has several pauses along the way.
    - i. He describes how his journey began in Ethiopia and immediately ran into an internal and ancient conflict. Two tribal groups were in a resource war over the grasslands and he was walking through the middle of it.
    - ii. “At one unhappy camp, I lay beside a cook fire snuffed out early to avoid detection, my boots laced up inside my sleeping bag, ready to run as I waited for gunfire to puncture the yowls of hyenas. How old are such nights?”
      - 1. “How old are such nights?” What a great line. People have lived in conflict since Genesis 3, for thousands of years. Even today, Russian military lines up on the border of Ukraine, China has been pushing aggressively against Taiwan, Afghanistan was quickly overrun this year.
    - iii. He also described being shot at in Israel, ambushed by Kurdish militia in Turkey, mistaken for ISIS in Syria and having to walk around Syria and more.
    - iv. But you don’t need to hear it from Salopek on the ground. We see it close to home and inside our own homes. Conflict lives.

- c. NT is littered with passages encouraging us to make peace, live in peace, and pursue peace with all people.
  - i. **Matthew 5:9** "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.
    - 1. We should pursue peace and attempt to be peacemakers
  - ii. **Romans 14:19** So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.
  - iii. **1 Thessalonians 5:13** Live in peace with one another.
  - iv. **Hebrews 12:14** Pursue peace with all men,
  - v. **Romans 12:18** If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.
- d. This last verse keeps our feet on the ground. We are to pursue peace but it won't always be found.
  - i. Sometimes it's because we've done what we can but the ball is in their court.
  - ii. Sometimes it's a reflection of our own ongoing sin that we are still blind to. 5 years from now we might look back and realize we were wrong, but that's a process of growth God is still in the middle of and will continue until we're with Him one day.
  - iii. Sometimes it's the inevitable response to loyalty to Christ.
    - 1. **Luke 12:51-52** "Do you suppose that I came to grant peace on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division; <sup>52</sup> for from now on five *members* in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three.
    - 2. <sup>53</sup> "They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."
    - 3. Our first response to Jesus' question in v. 51 might be, "Yes...it's in the song...peace on the earth." But we know better than to correct Jesus.
    - 4. Peace with God? Yes
    - 5. Internal peace? Yes, imperfectly for now
    - 6. Peace with others? Not yet, sometimes loyalty to him brings greater conflict, but we are to be peacemakers and eventually He will establish perfect *shalom* and there will be glorious peace.
- e. But eventually the Prince of Peace will establish peace.
  - i. That's the meaning behind Isaiah 9:5
    - 1. **Isaiah 9:5** For every boot of the booted warrior in the *battle* tumult, And cloak rolled in blood, will be for burning, fuel for the fire.
  - ii. **Psalms 46:9** He makes wars to cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariots with fire.
  - iii. Already but not yet
    - 1. Already peace with God
    - 2. Already internal peace, but not yet perfect
    - 3. Already equipped to be peacemakers, but not yet peace on earth



1

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And wild and sweet the words  
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5

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**Colossians 1:19-22** For it was the *Father's* good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, <sup>20</sup> and through Him to **reconcile** all things to Himself, having **made peace** through the blood of His cross; through Him, *I say*, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

8

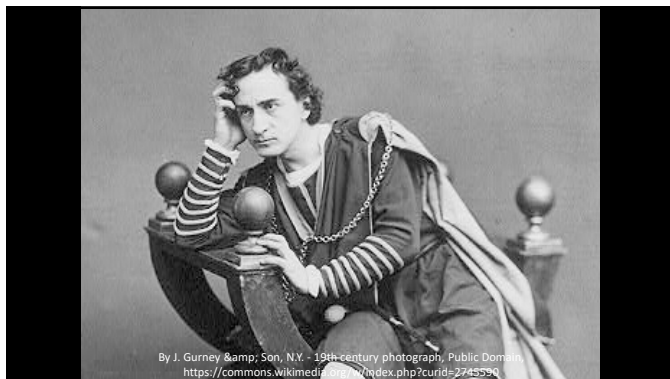


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10



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