

"...He will be called:
Wonderful Counselor
Everlasting Father Mighty God
Prince of Peace!"

Isaiah 9:6

Peace

Used to, I loved watching beauty pageants. I don't know why; I guess they were entertaining?? Anyway, one of the interview questions was, "If you could only have one wish, what would you wish for?" Inevitably, the contestant's answer would be, "World peace." Every time—year after year.

I guess we all want peace. Not just the absence of war, but personal peace, well-being, harmony. You can imagine the people of Israel wanted to experience peace. I'm sure they were tired of being under enemy attack for so many years. Now the prophet of God is giving them some hope of future peace.

ABOUT THEM:

The people's rebellion and alliances with the surrounding pagan cultures had left them spiritually bankrupt. Willful rebellion separates people from God. God loved Israel too much to allow them to participate in evil, because evil destroys lives. Living God's way strengthens lives.

God's message was: rebellion would have its consequences, but there was healing in the future. They needed a strong leader who would steer them toward right living, strongly following the ways of God.

Isaiah prophesied Jesus would be that leader, governing with complete authority and unending love. Jesus would be their **Prince of Peace**.

ABOUT YOU:

- How would you describe the way you live your life?
- What rules your thoughts, attitudes and actions?
- How would you rate your sense of well-being?
- Are you satisfied with the level of peace in your heart?

- How would your Christmas experience be affected if you had a heart make-over?

ABOUT HIM:

In the Bible, a prince indicates royalty, but just as frequently, the word denotes leadership and authority. Israel could look forward to Jesus Christ as their ruler, whose kingdom would have no end. This strong leader would govern from a heart of love, his intentions for them only being love. Just as his kingdom has no end, his love has no end.

Can you imagine how comforting that must have been, how hopeful they must have felt? This was life-changing! They would finally live in security, with that sense of ease and quiet in the mind and soul...if they flipped their thinking from rebellion to reconciliation with God.

Handing our lives over to Jesus yields an **extreme benefit:**
incomprehensible peace.



In its beginning, peace may not look like peace. When Jesus was living on earth, he described his role like this: *"Don't imagine that I came to bring peace to the earth! I came not to bring peace but a sword."* (Matthew 10:34) Those sound more like fightin' words than peaceful words!

But here's the truth we sometimes miss: **Before we get to peace, there has to be a destruction of everything that is not peace.**

Picture this strong prince riding in, wielding a sword, cutting away everything that stands in front of peace. Otherwise, peace will be stifled, blocked.

There must be a purification before peace.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU AND ME?

Christmas is considered "the most wonderful time of the year", yet it seems this holiday is the most stressful in many ways. We encounter disagreements and divisions among our families. We are stressed by our schedules and activities. We feel inner conflict between expectations and truly celebrating the spiritual aspect of the season—the gift of life in Jesus's birth.

In the middle of all the hustle and bustle, WE NEED THE **PRINCE OF PEACE**.

I challenge you to STOP, give him space to ride in, wielding his sword, cutting away everything that does not look like peace.

What is difficult for us to maneuver is easy for the Prince of Peace to make right!

Here's how it works: He rules by love. His way of governing is peaceable, agreeable to his character. The government will be like its leader—as the government increases, the peace increases.

And isn't that what we all want? "World Peace"? I find that in our own worlds, we desire two kinds of peace:

- Internal - we crave that sense of calm in our inner selves, that state of wholeness, that quiet in the mind and soul. What keeps you awake at night, disturbing your peace?
- External - with others, we desire harmony and healthy relationships that prosper and grow in authentic love. Considering your friends and family, what patterns of struggle disturb the peace?

Authentic peace is guaranteed by the **Prince of Peace**. Read the Supporting Scriptures below and note how each might help you find the solution to internal and external peace. Let the **Prince of Peace** love you...let him lead you into his supernatural peace within yourself and with others.

Getting Personal

Purity First, then Peace. What do you tend to hold onto that needs to be cut away in order to experience true peace?

What changes can you make in order to make space for the Prince of Peace to ride in, wielding his sword, gifting you with internal peace and external peace?

SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES:

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| • Philippians 4:6-7 | • Proverbs 16:7 | • Isaiah 26:3 | • Matthew 5:9 |
| • Proverbs 1:33 | • Romans 8:6 | • Romans 12:18 | • Ephesians 4:3 |
| • John 14:27 | • James 3:17-18 | • 1 Peter 3:10-11 | |
| • Psalm 34:14 | • Psalm 25:12-14 | • Psalm 119:165 | |