



# PEACE

## Prince of Peace

By: Steve Moorhouse

*Isaiah 9:6 "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."*

Peace is most often understood as "freedom from disturbance." A disturbance is anything that interrupts our sense of tranquility. We frequently try to get all the scattered pieces of our lives in place so that we can experience inner peace. In this season of Advent 2023, there are disturbances everywhere that threaten to undo our sense of order. Wars and rumors of wars; wars without and wars within. Deep down, we all understand there is no such thing as freedom from disturbance. And yet, we still strive to manage every possible disturbance so that we can find rest for our weary souls. The Christmas calendar of decorating, baking, shopping, and activities is a special recipe for the disturbance of our peace.

There were disturbances everywhere in Isaiah's world as well. The chaos was so severe, the people had lost all hope of finding peace. Did he see peace coming by means of a political promise, military might, personal prosperity, or fire and brimstone from above? No. The prophet Isaiah foresaw peace coming by the gift of a child. **Peace is a Person.**

The greatest disruption to peace in human existence occurred in the Garden of Eden. This was the place of perfect peace. When Adam and Eve sinned against God, there was a great chasm that opened up between humankind and our Creator. Jesus secured peace for us by "making peace through his blood, shed on the cross" (Colossians 1:20) The cross bridges the enmity between us and God. Jesus is God's gift to us. Through Him, by Him, because of Him we have the peace that passes all understanding. Imagine an inner Garden of Eden free of conflict, anxiety, and fear. Jesus is the gateway to this inner garden of peace for all time in the midst of any and all disturbances, even death.

"Prince of Peace" is translated from the Hebrew phrase, "Shar Shalom." Prince of Peace is a title, one of the names for God. "Shar" is overseer, ruler, sovereign, or lord. "Shalom" is more than a spoken greeting or a goodbye. It is more than just the absence of disturbance. Shalom is rich and full of depth. Shalom is harmony, wholeness, completeness, and a sense of well-being. Jesus is "Shar Shalom." Pause, and meditate on this for a moment. He is not just the securer of peace that passes all understanding. He is Peace. In Him we are safe.

Peace is not passivity. The Prince of Peace has proactive power to bring light and life to a dark world. Sometimes, He comes by way of a song. In 1816, an Austrian cleric named Joseph Mohr had a congregation that was poverty-stricken, hungry, and traumatized. He could have resigned himself to the bleak landscape that resulted from twelve years of Napoleonic wars. Relying on the power and presence of the Prince of Peace, Father Mohr penned a six-verse German poem titled “Stille Nacht.” Two years later, Franz Gruber composed the music for his former student’s poem, and “Silent Night” debuted at Christmas Eve midnight Mass in 1818. “Silent Night,” the German version states, “today all the power of Fatherly love is poured out, and Jesus as brother embraces the people of the world.”

The power of this beautiful and tranquil carol to affect people the world over was demonstrated on Flanders Fields on Christmas eve in 1914. Six months into the First World War, Flanders Fields was a major theater of battle on the Western Front. British and German soldiers were entrenched on opposite sides against each other. They were so near to one another that they could hear conversations and smell the aroma of food cooking. On a night that came to be called the Christmas Truce, the Germans were singing carols. In the darkness, some of the British soldiers began singing back. A soldier speaking English in a strong German accent said, “Come over here.” Nervous soldiers on both sides climbed out of their trenches and met in what was known as “no man’s land.” Hands were shaken, tobacco and wine were exchanged, and a soccer game broke out. Years later, machine gunner Bruce Bairnsfather wrote in his memoirs that, “Not an atom of hate was on either side.” This is the power of the Prince of Peace to bring not an atom of hate into your inner Garden of Eden.

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## Questions:

1. Do you relate to words like anxiety, fear, mental unrest, hostility? On a scale of 1 to 10 what is your level of stress at this moment?
2. Do you have peace with God through Jesus Christ? If so, thank Him for securing that peace for you. If not, open your heart to Him and receive Him as your Savior and Lord.
3. How does the meaning of the title “Shar Shalom” deepen your understanding of Jesus as the Prince of Peace? Take a moment to write it down.

As you meditate on Jesus as “Shar Shalom,” sing “Silent Night” to help you experience an inner Garden of Eden. Even if it is just for a moment.