

life groups' sermon guide **to": you, from: God – Prince of Peace**



Life Groups exist at Kingsway to provide authentic relationships for spiritual growth, caring for one another, and reaching out to the unchurched.

Ice Breaker:

This week we continue our study of the names of God by looking at the name “Prince of Peace” found in Isaiah 9:6.

What comes to mind when you hear the word “peace”? Take a moment to write down all the stories, images, time periods, and topics you think of.

Digger Deeper:

The book of Isaiah begins by explaining that these visions from God took place during the reign of the Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. Even more specifically, the famous “call” of Isaiah takes place “in the year King Uzziah died” (Isaiah 6:1). That year was 740 B.C. and it was a trying time for the people of Israel. Only five years earlier a new king had risen to power in Assyria and that king had been blasting through the Ancient Near East with his powerful armies.

Among the leaders of Israel, there was serious disagreement about how to handle his impending attack. The northern rulers wanted to form a military alliance and fight against Assyria. Another leader, King Ahaz, wanted to make a peace treaty with the king of Assyria in hopes of stemming off his invasion.

God had Isaiah warn Ahaz that this was a bad idea, and in order to illustrate the point, God had Isaiah conceive a child as a sign against Ahaz. **Read Isaiah 8:3-4.**

Isaiah’s son was to serve as a sign against Israel—because Israel did not trust in the LORD, their true King, and instead sought peace from an earthly king, they were going to be overtaken by the nation of Assyria.

The birth of Isaiah’s son is placed in contrast with the birth of Jesus. In fact, as we read through the book of Isaiah, we notice that he repeatedly goes back-and-forth between a message of judgment and a message of hope. As Old Testament scholar, Barry Webb, explains, Isaiah “is a book about demolition and reconstruction, judgment and salvation.”¹

We perhaps see this most clearly in chapter 9 when Isaiah’s son, a symbol of destruction, is contrasted with another child, the coming “Prince of Peace.” **Read Isaiah 9:2-7.**

¹ Webb, Barry G., *The Message of Isaiah* (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1996) 31.

Just as the nation of Israel eventually fell to the Assyrians as God had promised, so to the coming “Prince of Peace” arrived about 1700 years later in a small stable in the town of Bethlehem. **Read Luke 1:32-33 and John 1:9**, which both pick-up some of Isaiah’s language.

Reflection:

Read Matthew 11:28-30 – *What do you think it means that Jesus will provide his people “rest” or as Isaiah says, “peace”?*

Application:

The Hebrew word for peace is *shalom*. *Shalom* covers a much broader spectrum than our English word “peace.” In addition to healthy relationships between nations and people, *shalom* includes bodily health, prosperity, contentedness, peaceful sleep, even salvation. *Shalom* means the world as God intended.²

How has Jesus brought shalom to your own life? Take some time to share your stories.

If you’re not a believer, have you heard stories about other people who have received peace from their relationship with Jesus?

As we celebrate the arrival of Jesus, our “Prince of Peace,” what tangible ways can you share Christ’s shalom with others?

² For some examples, see Isaiah 57:18; Psalm 4:8; Judges 4:17; and Jeremiah 29:11.