

“His peace will never end.”

Pax Romana—the peace of Rome. Every nation and civilization that has ever existed has desired “peace.” The Roman Empire pursued and maintained its “Pax Romana,” its “peace of Rome,” through its Roman Legions. There were about 25 to 30 Roman Legions in the generations around Christ with about 300,000 total active military soldiers. These soldiers wielded the sword and the most advanced military technology in the world. They used violence to **crush** their opposition and to keep revolutions and rebellions in check. They spilled the blood of thousands and thousands in order to maintain “peace.” But Pax Romana was **fleeting** and **fragile**. Everytime Rome crushed a revolution or rebellion they angered and traumatized a people, leaving children without parents and parents without children. These traumatized people craved **revenge** against Rome and eventually when they were strong enough, they would rise up again, trying to destroy the Roman Empire. Battle after battle, war after war, Rome fought and bled and killed to try to maintain Pax Romana—the peace of Rome. Constant war and fighting all in the name of “peace” which was fleeting and fragile. Eventually the Roman Empire completely collapsed and all of its dreams of **peace** were buried in the rubble of its cities, governments, and armies.

The kingdoms of Israel and Judah also desired **peace**. And they pursued this peace just like **all** the other **nations** of the world. They built up armies of horses and chariots. They fought and bled and killed to put themselves on the international scene. They wanted to be a great and powerful nation. But in their grab for power and greatness they angered the nations around them. Egypt to their south wanted what they had. Babylon to their east wanted what they had. Assyria to their north wanted what they had. Israel and Judah entered into the military and political arena with these great nations and tried to go toe-to-toe with them. It did **not** work.

Assyria, Egypt, and Babylon all took turns attacking the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. But the kingdoms of Israel and Judah would not give up. They would declare, ***“Bricks have fallen, let’s rebuild with stones!”*** Their ambitions, cities, and armies would be torn down, but they would turn around and try to build them **again**—bigger and better this time—thinking the results would be different. But every time, what they built was torn down. Like Proverbs says, ***“As a dog returns to his vomit, so a fool repeats his foolishness.”*** They kept going back to their vomit. They kept rebuilding their cities, walls, and armies, they kept rebuilding the foolishness of Civilization. They kept reliving and repeating their mistakes, trying to be like the nations of the world, trying to find **peace** through violence and the sword. As the prophet Isaiah put it, ***“They ate and were still hungry. They consumed and were unsatisfied.”*** They devoured each other and those around them through their competitive greed. They ate and ate and consumed and consumed trying to find peace, but **never** found true and lasting peace. They were always unsatisfied. Every battle, every war never brought peace—just more pain, more anguish, more violence, more suffering, more trauma.

The “peace” that all nations and civilizations try to enact is always fleeting, tentative, and fragile. Civilizations try to make “peace” through nuclear standoffs and the standing threat of possible invading armies, war, and violence. But any “peace” achieved by Civilization is just a pause before the next round of violence and war.

Saul, the first king of Israel was known for killing his **thousands**. David, the next king of Israel, the son of Jesse, was known for killing his **tens of thousands**. But David, through all his wars and all of his killing, could not find or achieve **peace** for his kingdom. David’s kingdom was shattered and crushed, as bigger and stronger armies and nations came against it. David’s kingdom was destroyed and cut down to nothing. But the prophet Isaiah said that from ***“the stump of Jesse”*** a new kingdom would arise. Not like David’s, not filled with violence and the killing of tens of thousands. But a kingdom of truth where the only weapon ever wielded was the Word of the Lord. In this kingdom Isaiah said, ***“The wolf will live with the lamb...The calf and lion will feed together....The lion will eat grass....Children will play with snakes.”*** This was a kingdom of true peace as the Lord foretold, ***“They won’t harm or destroy on my holy mountain.”*** This was a kingdom with a ruler who did **not** wield the sword. Isaiah foretold that this ruler, the Christ, will create a kingdom and ***“his peace will never end.”***

Jesus is this long-awaited ruler, the Christ who creates a different kingdom, one of true peace. Jesus said, ***“Blessed are the peace-doers for they are the Creator’s children.”*** Peace is not an **end** or a **goal** that you accomplish and achieve through other tactics and methods. Peace is something that you **do** and **live** in every moment of your life. The nations of Civilization are all blind fools, returning to their vomit, thinking they can achieve peace using its opposite: the violence of the sword. This will **never** work. The only way to find peace is to **do** peace. Those who live by the sword will never find peace. Those who wield violence will never find peace. Only those who **are** peaceful and who **live** peace and who **do** peace will find true peace as the Creator’s children.

How are you trying to find peace in your life? By trying to be in control and force peace to come through your strength of will over and against others? Or are you pursuing peace by letting go and being a **peaceful person** who stands down, turns the other cheek, and does not fight against the evil person? Are you a peace-doer, a peace-maker in how you live, in how you talk, in how you think?

All people from all nations are invited to the mountain of the Lord, to live in the kingdom of Christ. This invitation is for us today—right now. We can leave behind the false peace of Civilization and its sword and become peace-doers, become children of the Creator. We can live in the kingdom of Christ today. We can be filled with ***“his peace that will never end.”*** We can be a different kind of people, a holy people who live on the mountain of the Lord, the mountain of no violence and no war. We can stop being wolves and live as lambs. We can stop devouring others to get ahead and eat grass like sheep. We can sing the new song of the Lord, ***“The Creator is my salvation. I will trust and not be afraid. The Lord is my strength and shield.”***

If we want peace in our lives, then we need to get up and start **living** peacefully. We need to **be** peace, we need to **do** peace. There is another kingdom, better than all nations. There is a peace better and more real and more lasting than Pax Americana, better than the empty peace promised by America. It is the kingdom of Christ, it is the peace of Christ. Turn to Christ and listen to him today, practice his teachings and be a doer of peace and you will be filled with ***“his peace that will never end.”*** Amen.