

The God of Peace

Heb. 13: 20; 1 Thess. 5: 23; Rom. 16: 20; Phil. 4: 7-9.

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The beginning of another year in the history of this world is marked by conditions of unrest on every hand; the knowledge and research of men are leading them constantly into paths fraught with danger, and the quest for *peace* seems more remote from success than ever before.

At the outset of man's history, it is evident that there were conditions of restfulness in Eden, if only for a brief period. What was it that spoiled those conditions? In short it was the success of Satan as he sought to implant into man's mind distrust of God; and it is this principle of distrust which has robbed man of the enjoyment of peace. Distrust brought in disobedience, and this principle of sin is the root cause of all the disruption and unrest in the world.

It is a sad yet true reflection that not only has man lost the enjoyment of peace, but he is quite incapable of regaining it. In that wonderful summary of man's activities and shortcomings which Paul gives to us by the Holy Spirit in Romans 3, he concludes by saying, "And the way of peace have they not known; There is no fear of God before their eyes," (vv. 17, 18). How plainly the truth of these words is evidenced today! Men away from God, seeking the way of peace, and all their efforts proving futile.

The Scriptures mentioned above bring the blessed God before us as the *God of peace*, a title which the apostle so often gives to Him. It is blessed to contemplate God as moving in the tranquillity of His own thoughts, carrying out His purpose undisturbed by the unrest which sin has brought in, having in Himself the resources of love and of power sufficient to deal with the whole problem. When Zacharias prophesied in Luke, chapter 1, he concluded his prophetic reference to Christ (yet to be born) by saying that He would "guide our feet into the way of peace." Do we not discern here the blessed secret of how peace is to be secured? The "God of peace" brings into the scene One who is competent to carry out every thought of His heart. In Isaiah 9, we read "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given . . . and His Name shall be called . . . Prince of peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end," (vv. 6, 7). When that moment arrived, the moment of Christ's birth, the angelic host said, "Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace," (Luke 2: 14).

In this short article only a brief reference can be made to all that was involved in the coming into this scene of Christ. Colossians 1: 20, is a concise, yet deeply profound, setting forth of the truth. There we see that things in heaven and upon earth were in need of reconciliation, and in order to bring this reconciliation about it was necessary that the Lord Jesus should make "peace through the blood of His cross." Luke 2, as we have seen, speaks of "peace on earth;" Luke 19: 38, speaks of "peace in heaven." Glory in the highest is related to both, and all will be brought into evidence through the work of the cross.

In Hebrews 13, the writer of the Epistle brings the saints into living touch with the God who has established this great matter of settled peace through the death of Christ, the proof of it being seen in His resurrection from the dead. An "*everlasting covenant*" has been established which nothing can shake, and hence as believers we touch a realm of *abiding peace*.

If the Scripture in Hebrews speaks of what the "God of peace" *has done*, and its abiding results,

the verse in Thessalonians speaks of His *present* activities in relation to the whole being of the believer. How blessed to be thus affected in "spirit, soul and body" by the precious influence of peace. We are given to understand that the vast solar system, including the sun and all its planets, moves constantly under the "sweet influences of the Pleiades" (Job 38: 31). How blessed to think of the saints held and controlled by the God of peace; the spirit unruffled by contrary elements around, and able to rise in responsive praise to God. Perfectly this was seen in Christ Himself; His mighty works had been refused in Chorazin and Bethsaida, but as in communion with His God He could rejoice in spirit and say, "I thank Thee, O Father," (Luke 10: 21). Do we not realise that practical sanctification is dependent upon communion with God? — and as thus in living touch with the God of peace we find ourselves set apart in our affections from this scene of dissatisfaction and unrest. Would not this be reflected in our speech and actions amongst men? If our affections were in the enjoyment of the restfulness of the presence of God, we should not be marked by the expressions of complaint and uncertainty which are common in this world, but the very restfulness of our spirits, reflected in our conversation and in our ways, would be a testimony to those around.

In the verse from Romans we see what the God of peace will do in a *future* day. The one who has brought all the unrest into the world is to be completely *crushed*, as the word implies, and this under the feet of the saints. What a wonderful triumph of God this is! As without God the feet of men are "swift to shed blood," (Rom. 3: 15), but as having come under the control of Christ the feet of the saints have been guided into the "way of peace," and are thus found in moral superiority to all the evil which Satan has brought in, and as in moral accord with the God of peace are available to Him in His dealing with it.

As we wait for this coming day, how precious it is to have our hearts and minds kept in the enjoyment of the "peace of God, which passeth all understanding," and as engaged with the morally beautiful things enumerated in Philippians 4: 8, 9, to find ourselves even now in the very company of the God of peace.