

What Saith the Scripture?

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from the series

Keeping Covenant

A Covenant of Peace

Part 2

"For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the Covenant of My Peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee" (Isaiah 54:10).

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Thesis: The certainty that a Christian will live his life in peace is personally assured through the Living God's Covenant of Peace.

Proof: Man negatively defines peace as the absence of war or hostilities with himself; while, more importantly, *God positively represents His peace as the active, joyful submission to His will, which is attended with a lack of conflict with Himself.* "And, having made peace through the blood of His Cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in Earth, or things in Heaven" (Colossians 1:20). With God, True Peace is only found in and through Jesus Christ, Whose "Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6). "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our LORD Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1). The temporary tranquility that may come from man's lack of mortal combat with man, is fleeting; and still, it belies the truth that man's peace can only affect the outward, and that, only for a short time. "Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not" (James 4:2).

In contrast, the peace offered by God to all those who submit by faith to the sacrifice of His Son for their sins, is an Eternal Healing, and "they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of [Christ's] hand" (John 10:28). "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5). Concerning the superiority of God's peace, our LORD Jesus Christ comfortingly promised, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27). And, Christ's peace permeates completely the inner man. "6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. 7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7). Spiritual peace causes us to be unruffled by any provocations. "Great peace have they which love Thy Law: and nothing shall offend them" (Psalm 119:165).

Conflict attends man's relationship to man, while abiding in this world. "From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?" (James 4:1). Man's own wickedness deprives him of peace. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked" (Isaiah 57:21). However, when peace has been made with God through faith in Christ Jesus, the newly born Saint has the opportunity of experiencing True Peace. "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace" (Luke 7:50). The peace that God gives, always begins with the reconciliation of man through Christ's sacrifice of Himself on the Cross to atone for the sins of mankind. "20 And, having made peace through the blood of His Cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in Earth, or things in Heaven. 21 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled" (Colossians 1:20-21).

Though Jesus pledged His people tribulation while in this world, He has comforted us that He has overcome the world. "These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). Further, He has revealed to us that we, too, may have victory over the world through faith. "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1John 5:4). Upon this principle of faith, i.e., "For we walk by faith, not by sight" (2Corinthians 5:7), God has dealt with His people, and expects us to personally receive His covenants, just as the Roman centurion trusted Jesus to heal his servant. "The centurion answered and said, LORD, I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the Word only, and my servant shall be healed" (Matthew 8:8). God rewarded the centurion according to his faith. "And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour" (8:13).

There is such a thing as a Covenant of Peace that may be claimed in faith by the Children of God as present protection from the ravages of the enemy. "For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the Covenant of My Peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee" (Isaiah 54:10). *As with all of God's covenants, the faith exercised by the recipient, affects the implementation of the covenant, i.e.,* "According to your faith be it unto you" (Matthew 9:29). Consequently, this newfound peace with God may be pressed to mean more than future serenity in Heaven or even present tranquility of heart, but may also be extended to mean peace with our enemies. "When a man's ways please the LORD, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him" (Proverbs 16:7). It must be remembered that it is God's Promise--not man's assurances-- that must be trusted by the Saints for the fulfillment of His Covenant of Peace. "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31).

God's Covenant of Peace is ours by faith, even if the authority over us seems to be against us. "The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: He turneth it whithersoever He will" (Proverbs 21:1). Our confidence in the LORD God causes us to put great stock in His Words. "The LORD said, Verily it shall be well with thy remnant; verily I will cause the enemy to entreat thee well in the time of evil and in the time of affliction" (Jeremiah 15:11). It is unimportant that our enemies may appear to be so impressive to our physical senses, because it is our faith that will apprehend God and "win Christ" (Philippians 3:8). "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me" (Psalm 23:4). Knowing this, therefore, the Apostle Paul exhorts us, "1 that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and

giving of thanks, be made for all men; 2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour" (1Timothy 2:1-3).

Conclusion

The one who needs most the Covenant of Peace, is the one that is most providentially directed to receive it, because "my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19). It has been the experience of the Saints throughout the ages that God's Covenant of Peace has been available to those who have been led to lay hold of it. "There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling" (Psalm 91:10). "There shall no evil happen to the just: but the wicked shall be filled with mischief" (Proverbs 12:21). It is just when the enemy casts the greatest shadow, that we need most to turn to the Promises of God and trust in Jehovah's Covenant of Peace. "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him" (Isaiah 59:19). Just as God answered when Jehoshaphat cried out in his time of need, we, too, ought to trust in God's Covenant of Peace for our present deliverance. "And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, It is the king of Israel. Therefore they compassed about him to fight: but Jehoshaphat cried out, and the LORD helped him; and God moved them to depart from him" (2Chronicles 18:31). Better yet, we ought to take the initiative, foresee the evil coming, and claim **now** the Covenant of Peace, i.e., "A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished" (Proverbs 22:3).

God has supplied the Covenant, but we must fulfil the always present condition of faith, to receive the benefits of His Peace. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee" (Isaiah 26:3). The certainty is there that we may live a life of peace; but, the extent of that peace is limited only by our faith. "Great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt" (Matthew 15:28). "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth" (Mark 9:23). May we be able to confess like Solomon that God has blessed us with His peace, i.e., "the LORD my God hath given me rest on every side" (1Kings 5:4).

Maranatha!