

SHALOM, SHALOM!

"You will keep him in shalom shalom, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You" (Isaiah 26:3)

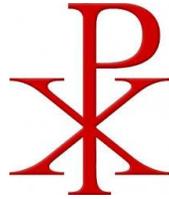


Peace, the Key to Spiritual Power

B r o o k y R S t o c k t o n

Shalom, Shalom!

Version 1.1



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Table of Contents

Table of Contents	3
Dedication	5
Preface	6
Acknowledgments.....	7
Public Notice.....	7
Getting Off the Treadmill	8
Shalom Shalom	10
Isaiah 26:1-3.....	10
Peace Generates Spiritual Power.....	13
Isaiah 30:15.....	13
Peace in the Storm	16
Mark 4:37-41	16
The Peace of God - Superior to the Intellect.....	22
Philippians 4:6-7	22
Double Peace from Jesus	25
John 14:27.....	25
Peace Defeats Satan	31
Romans 16:20	31
Peace, the Means to Perfection	37
Hebrews 13: 20-21	37
Peace that Sanctifies	42
1 Thessalonians 5:23-24.....	42
Cultivating a Spirit of Peace	45
Philipians 4:6-10	45

The Gift of Peace from the Lord of Peace	50
2 Thessalonians 3:16	50
Bad Thinking About Peace on Earth	52
Matthew 10:34.....	52
No Peace on Earth without Christ.....	54
Luke 2:14	54
The God of Peace be with You.....	58
Romans 15:33	58
Publications	60

Dedication

This work is dedicated to my lovely wife, Jo Ann who has modeled for me the peace of God at work in her heart – a woman who fears the Lord, never complains even in the most turbulent times, and whose price is far above rubies.

Preface

I was reading the Holy Scriptures (Romans 16:20) one morning when I read, “The peace of God shall soon crush Satan under your feet. It was not the righteousness of God, or the holiness of God, or even the grace of God, but His peace that crushed the snake.

Immediately I knew that I had let the peace of God control my own ambitious, agitated heart.

Thus, this work is the result of my own endeavor to understand and surrender to the rule of peace.

I trust it will launch you on a journey of peace.

“May the God of peace be with you.”

Brooky Stockton, ret. pastor / teacher



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Getting Off the Treadmill

◆ In his masterpiece, “Screwtape Letters,” C.C. Lewis records a conversation between two malicious demons discussing how to ruin Christians. The advice given was, “Keep the subjects burdened with busyness!”

There is madness in the world. Christians are running, rushing, sprinting, in busy pursuit of money, fame, and success just like the pagans. With cell phones, social media, and emails we are way over connected.

How do we get off the treadmill? Where can we find the power to rest and to keep ourselves from unraveling?

We have heard of the power of knowledge and the power of money, but who among us has found the power of peace to guard our souls?

All men want peace – inner peace, family peace, and peace in the workplace. But, peace seems to be at a premium.

Isaiah informs us the key to power is peace, rest, and quietness, and not rigid rule-keeping, mental reasoning, esoteric knowledge, or dogged determination to make the right choices (30:15).

Though all His attributes are released upon the man who pursues His peace, it is the peace of God that protects men – not merely the knowledge of God.

The Apostle Paul taught the peace of God is superior to intellect and human reasoning (Philippians 4:6-8); that contact with the God of peace is the means by which Satan is crushed (Romans 16:20); that peace is the path to spiritual perfection (Hebrews 13:20-21).

If you visit a Benedictine monastery, you are likely to see this simple Latin word “pax” (peace) carved in stone or wood, and displayed over a main gate or doorway (*Pax intransibus* – peace to those who enter here). It is the disposition the monks value above all others.

Peace is the goal and the means to Christian victory. The trouble, however, is it takes all a man's knowledge of Scripture and faith to let the peace of God rule the heart during the troubles of life.

Want power over sin? Over Satan? Seek peace.

Rest, soul, rest! Shalom, Shalom!

Shalom Shalom

Isaiah 26:1-3



Courtesy of Christ Episcopal Church

◆ The picture on the left showing a mother bird under a waterfall represents peace in the midst of turbulence.

The power of (double) peace is a gift of God for troubled souls -- a peace given to those who enter the gates of the city of God:

Salvation offered

Isaiah 26:1 In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.

"In that day" refers to the entrance of the kingdom of God into history to defeat man's enemies (Satan, sin, and death) and to bring salvation to God's people.

Isaiah uses metaphors to impress the mind with the coming kingdom. He compares this day to a great feast (25:6), the removal of the black veil of death that grieves all nations (25:7), wiping away tears, and the removal of hostilities against the godly (25:8) -- a day of great joy (25:9). This feast is provided by the Lord of Hosts.

Death is man's fundamental enemy, and when the kingdom arrives death will be crushed . . . and, it was on the cross.

Arrival of the kingdom:

"This mountain" (25:10) is Mt. Zion -- figurative of Heavenly Mt. Zion. Remember the arrival of the Ark of the Covenant in Jerusalem in David's time -- a day of rest for the Lord, of joy for the people, and a proclamation regarding the defeat of God's enemies (Moab) (25:11).

"Moab" is used 19 times in Isaiah as the implacable adversaries of Israel . . . but, in this text we have mystical Moab -- a reference to the wicked who like mystery Babylon will be destroyed at the arrival of the kingdom of God. Here and in Jeremiah 48:2, the Spirit calls "Moab" a *dunghill* (*madmenah*). Like Egypt, Esau and Babylon, "Moab" is used typically to refer to God's enemies (25:11).

Isaiah 26:2 Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in.

"Open ye the gates" is the Lord's invitation to the nations to come to Him for salvation. Salvation from the shroud that covers all nations is not found with all so-called "gods," but only with the one, true God.

"O LORD, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth" (25:1)

On "that day" (25:9; 26:2), the first gift offered to those "who enter the gates" is peace with God (26:3; Romans 5:1).

The arrival of the kingdom (in His Son) is compared to "a rest" (25:10) for the LORD -- a rest God passes on to His trusting people in the form of shalom, shalom (double peace).

But, there is nothing restful about the arrival of God's kingdom for His enemies. The day of judgment is compared to three events: (a) of men trouncing on dung in the street, (b) a swimmer in breast stroke style treading water; and, and the tumbling of fortress-like walls in a siege -- a moment of terror for the inhabitants of the city (25:10-12).

Isaiah 26:3 Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."

"perfect peace" is a translation from the Hebrew words "shalom shalom."

Literally, this text reads, "Thou will keep him in peace peace "or "shalom shalom" - a reference to double peace and the power of peace that holds a man together while the walls of the unjust society come tumbling down due to the judgment of Almighty God (25:12).

In Hebrew, the two shaloms are separated by a vertical line called a *peseq* (shalom | shalom) to let us know the use of the two back-to-back words is intentional and not a translation gaffe.

Peace must be interpreted in its broadest form. The "shalom" refers to peace with God and peace with men (traditional enemies).

In the New Testament the entrance of the kingdom of God into history and the battle of all battles at the cross produced "peace with God" (Romans 5:1) and the blessing of the "peace of God" at work in the hearts of believers (Colossians 3:15; Philippians 4:7).

The Lord receives the title "God of peace" (Romans 15:33; 16:20; Philippians 4:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; and Hebrews 13:20).

Thus, Christian power to conquer our enemies comes from the peace that passes all understanding. Peace does not refer to the want of troubles, but rest of soul during those matters that stir up frustration.

The Benedict rule of peace urges every member of the community to be ruled by the pax of God and to put the needs of others over and above expressing one's displeasure over disruptive matters.

Rest, soul, rest! Take hold of double peace.

Shalom, Shalom!

Peace Generates Spiritual Power

Isaiah 30:15



◆ There is something about us that as soon as we experience a flurry of troubles, the wheels in our little minds begin to turn to all the human solutions that we can think of to find safety from the pressure up on us.

Agitated, we fret, worry, and complain. But, this passage is one of main texts that inform us on how to experience safety and greater power while swimming through dynamic undercurrents of life.

The background of this text is the dark cloud of the Assyrian invasion (730+ BC) and the forbidden alliance of Judah with Egypt.

The "woe" in verse one is an expression of grievance because Judah's ambassadors brought gifts to the princes of Zoan as consideration in their proposed contract-alliance (30:2, 4). This trust in the shadow of Egypt for comfort and protection resulted in shame and confusion (30:3). This alliance added to their sin of rejecting the law of the Lord and His counsels (30:9). Thus, God promised to break Israel as a Potter break a vessel into shards.

Isaiah 30:15 For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In (your) returning and rest shall ye be saved; in (your) quietness (rest) and in (your) confidence (trust) shall be your strength: and ye would not.

"Thus saith the Lord" is the enacting clause -- the Source of authority behind the promise (contract); that is, God puts the full weight of His integrity behind those that rest under the shadow of His wings (Isaiah 37-39; Psalm 46, 76).

The contract offer is from **the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel** to Judah who was unsettled by the politics of the time.

He called for repentance - "**returning**" (noun) is the word *shubawh* which means to retire or withdraw from your plans of desperation -- from your trust in man to a trust in God; from an alliance with Egypt to reliance on the Lord.

The great lesson here is to trust the Lord and Him alone.

The noun "**rest**" (nachath) means "quietness" or "relax" -- a cessation of the nervous, desperate attention to man by taking comfort in the love and power of God to protect them. The sheep in His pasture can rest and be at peace because they are under the care of the Great Shepherd with staff in hand and an eye on the enemy.

The verbal infinitive "**quietness**" (shaqat) is an action that requires quietness, rest, and abandonment of all human effort to finagle circumstances to their advantage.

The noun "**confidence**" (bitchah) means trust -- a movement to a place of rest.

Ellicott: "The words describe a process of conversion, but the nature of that conversion is determined by the context. In this case it was **the turning from the trust in man, with all its restless excitement, to a trust in God, full of calmness and of peace.**"

Maclaren: "They had gone away from Him in their fears. They must come back by their faith. To them the great lesson was trust in God. Through them to us the same

lesson is read. The principle is far wider than this one case.
It is the one rule of life for us all . . .

'Returning and rest' corresponds to **'quietness and confidence.'** That **'rest'** answers to **'quietness'** and **'returning'** to **'confidence.'** In the former clause we have the action towards God and then its consequence. In the latter we have the consequence and then the action."

The saddest part of this text is "ye would not." Like modern man, ancient Hebrew statesmen struggled with trusting a God they could not see.

"ISRAEL always felt the difficulty of sustaining itself on the height of dependence on the unseen, spiritual power of God, and was ever oscillating between alliances with the Northern and Southern powers, linking itself with Assyria against Egypt, or with Egypt against Assyria" (Maclaren).

Matthew 23: 37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

The only requirement for protection is returning and trust.

Stop fretting.

Rest, soul, rest! Shalom, Shalom!

Peace in the Storm

Mark 4:37-41

A Boat Ride with Jesus



Courtesy of Freepik

◆ Why does God permit storms?

There are few things more unsettling to the human soul than the loss of a home due to a natural disaster, a nasty divorce, an estranged family member, failing health, or a sudden job loss.

Maybe you have gone through a horrific storm, taken an emotional hit, and then questioned God's love for you.

Have you ever thought, "If God is all-powerful, why didn't He prevent this monsoon and the misery it brought to me."

"If He loves me, why did He permit this bone-crushing tsunami to reach my shores?"

You are not alone in your bewilderment!

The disciples questioned Jesus in their distress, "Do you not care that we are perishing?"

Let's take a boat ride with the disciples on that stormy night.

A boat ride with Jesus

About 13 miles long and 8 miles wide, the Sea of Galilee is subject to sudden gales which sweep down from the north to disturb its tranquility.

However, on this night flashes of light broke through the dark grey thunder clouds. The sea-billows swelled like merciless monsters. Midnight-dark, ice-cold, spray-wet, exhausted from battling with oars, tossed up and down by the angry sea, thoughts that this was their last voyage raced through the minds of the sailors . . . that they were going to die in a watery grave! Mark says the unforgiving waves beat the boat until it was full.

Amazingly, Jesus slept through it all.

The Emergency Prayer

Waking the Lord, they shouted through the roar of the surf, “Master, carest thou not that we perish?”

In their minds, Jesus was not only asleep at the helm, He had abandoned them in their crisis!

Aren't we just like the disciples? When we row with all our might in the darkness, feel the wet cold spray of the brine on our face, and tremble with chills before the crushing waves in the storms of our life, we immediately draw the wrong conclusion — Jesus doesn't care for me!

These men could see, touch, taste, hear, and feel the chills of the cold, deadly blasts of sea spray, but they found little comfort for their conflicted-souls even though Christ was on board their craft.

The Order of Peace

Mark tells us the Lord “arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, “Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.”

Jesus dealt with the lesser problem first--the furious, cold sea. Next He dealt with the greater problem — the briny faithlessness of the disciples.

The Greater Problem of Fear

Mark 4:40 And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?

More serious than the cruel storm that craved their lives was the crippled faith of the twelve.

The question, "Why are you fearful?" seems so prosaic, doesn't it? Facing death, of course they were afraid! What human being wouldn't be?

But, according to Jesus, their fear was an anchor around their neck!

A greater problem than the crushing swells was the crushed faith on the boat that night. "No faith!"

What is it about us that we can see, feel, and hear the cold facts of a rain-soaked storm which blots out the moonlight on our voyage on the sea of life, but we can't see and feel the Lord on the mountains of these angry waves?

Why did He permit this storm to exhaust the disciples? Why does He allow us to go through rough seas which arouse our deepest fears and strip away what little confidence we have in Him?

Could it be the Lord permitted this downpour to better His men . . . to supply that which was lacking . . . to perfect the faith of the twelve?

And you . . . and your tempest?

Could it be the Lord has permitted bitter storms to better your faith . . . to develop sea-fairing skills needed to navigate your vessel on the voyage of life . . . to increase your resolve to be righteous . . . or to multiply your understanding of the Son to whom the winds and sea must obey?

Does Jesus Care?

Three times the disciples came to Jesus accusing Him of not caring for them: (A) the disciples in the storm; (B) Abandoned by her sister and facing the duties of a hostess, Martha became agitated, "Lord, dost thou

not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone?"; and (C) Overcome with grief due to the loss of her brother, The two sisters sobbed to Jesus, "Lord, if thou had been here, my brother had not died." (Mark 4:38; Luke 10:40; John 11:32)

While knowing the desperation His disciples would face, the Lord still ordered his men into the boat. He did not save them from the rough seas on which their vessel sailed, but He saved them from their worst fears.

Christians find themselves madly tugging at the oars in all kinds of storms: relational storms, health storms, marriage storms, occupational storms, legal storms, financial storms, spiritual storms, and end of life storms.

The Presence of Christ

As the Lord did not abandon the disciples in the boat, he will not abandon us in the ship.

And, as the disciples took little comfort in his presence with them, we sometimes fail to take sufficient comfort in his promise, "Lo, I am with you always."

Through this horrific trial the disciples were blessed with a new understanding of Christ:

The Lord rebuked this storm as if the storm had exceeded its authority; that is, the Lord knew about the storm, the exasperation the disciples would experience. Likewise, He knows about our storms. He is always the omniscient One.

But, He does not merely know about these storms, He ordains them for the benefit of his followers. He is sovereign, not nature.

The Savior slept through the storm (amazing!). Likewise, more often than not, the Lord appears to be asleep during all our trials. A sleeping Jesus has tried the patience of many a saint.

Jesus never abandons ship. "Lo, I am with you always."

The Lord administrates according to priorities. First, He calmed the sea; second, He calmed the disciples.

The Lord controls the wind and the sea. Hurricanes, earthquakes, tornadoes and the forces of nature are subject to His command. These powers ought to inspire awe and lead us to find new ways to repent.

The weak faith of the disciples concerned the Lord. Faith is one of those virtues that the Lord esteems: "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold . . ." (1 Peter 1:7)?

Lessons for the Disciples

They were in this storm because the Lord ordered them to get in the boat and to go to the other side; that is, they were in this trial because they obeyed Jesus. Christians suffer more for their obedience to Christ than for any other reason.

They learned that what the Lord orders, He supplies the strength to do.

They only sought the help of the Lord after their strength was exhausted and they had rowed all night.

Awakened, the Lord asked a question, not so that He could obtain an answer, but for the disciples to reflect on their plight and state of mind: "Why are ye so fearful?" Their fear was not justified. It was a greater problem than the raging sea. They were afraid because they failed to take sufficient comfort in His presence and in His powers.

Awakened, the Lord asked, "Where is your faith?" The diminished faith was a greater problem than the raging sea. The amount of fear raging in our hearts is proportional to the amount of faith we exercise in our Lord during the storms of life.

The storm experience appears to be ordained of Christ to improve the faith of the disciples.

Trials do not come to hurt us, but to help us. The blessing of this storm is that the twelve learned the Lord controls the winds, the seas, the waves, and the tempest in their lives.

Finally, they learned how foolish it was to accuse the Lord of not caring for them. While the wet and cold and exhaustion was real, their conclusion that Jesus did not care was false.

The Peace of God - Superior to the Intellect

Philippians 4:6-7

◆ Life is filled with troubles, and when they come our way, God's Word instructs us on how to prevail.

In a sea of troubles, there is peace to be found.

Seize the opportunity

Philippians 4:6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

The first verb "be careful" comes from the Greek word *meimnao* which means "to be troubled." It is translated "take no thought" in some texts. The word is a present, active imperative or command.

The adverb "nothing" (*medeis*) negates the action; that is, "do **not** be troubled . . . anxious . . . or worried." It could be translated, "Stop being anxious, right now!"

The subordinate conjunction "but" (*alla*) is a strong adversative. In contrast to being worried, God gives an order: "Let your requests" (prayers and supplications) be made known to God because necessity presses you to do so. He is not asking men to give up and to sink below the crested waves of anxiety, but to sail above the surf and foam until their ship reaches port.

The second verb "make known" (*gnorizo*) is a present, active imperative meaning "make known and keep on making known your needs" to God through prayers and petitions.

In praying about pressing needs, it helps to add spices to supplications. Requests adorned by the sweet incense of "thanksgiving" have more power at the throne of grace than muttering rotten complaints.

The apostle is not saying the future has no troubles or that you are to deny the gravity of your circumstances. He seeks to purge nervous anxiety from the soul that sweats over all potential problems so common to humanity.

The Old Testament example of this is wearing wool. Priests were not permitted to wear wool lest they sweat. Soul-sweat hinders effective service (Ezekiel 44).

He is not asking men "to make believe" and "pretend" every thing is good. He is ordering men to lay hold of God with one hand and to do their duty with the other . . . to let go of worry, to trust, and to accept responsibility by committing real needs to the Lord in prayer.

Claim the promises

Philippians 4:7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

You can enjoy God's presence . . . and have a peace from God . . . a peace that surpasses human understanding . . . a peace that will keep (*phroureo*) your heart and mind.

The word "keep" (*phroureo*) means "to guard" or "garrison." A future, active indicative, Paul assures the Philippians that God has sentinels guarding their future.

The noun "peace" refers to "tranquility" and "rest of soul" in the midst of a storm; that is, a man can have peace in bad weather as well as good weather; in winter as well as the summer; on high seas and on calm seas. God is not only on duty during the day time, but during the night time.

The participle "passes" refers *to something superior or of higher rank and authority* than reason and mental acuity (nous); or "of more value" than money. Our Founding Father placed a great emphasis on the power of reason . . . but, there is a virtue higher than intelligence. It is a peace that surpasses all thought, thinking, intellect, emotion, analysis, logic, and reason; that is, God's peace can't be explained because there is nothing that "sight" can see to sustain it . . . yet, it is there working underneath the hustle and bustle of this world to settle and quiet our souls for good.

Rest, soul, rest! Shalom, Shalom!

Double Peace from Jesus

John 14:27

◆ In 2 Kings 2:1-15, 19-22 Elisha prayed for a double portion of the spirit of Elijah.

Because we live somewhere between sheer terror and the soft patter of rain upon our windows, some of us need to pray for a double portion of the Lord's peace.

Who can serve God in this unstable, maddening world without peace?

Shalom! Shalom!

(1) The kingdom of God is characterized by peace.

Where Christ is recognized as the King-Messiah, there is peace. Shalom marks his reign (Isaiah 9:6-7).

"The wolf will dwell with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the goat . . . they will not hurt or destroy on my holy mountain" (Isaiah 11:6, 9)

The LORD, thou wilt ordain peace (shalom) for us: for thou also hast wrought all our works in us." (Isaiah 26:12)

Because God punishes the Leviathan (hostile nations to Israel), God urges men to make peace with him. The exhortation to seek peace with God is repeated twice (Isaiah 27:1- 5):

"Let him make peace (shalom) with me; Let him make peace (shalom) with me" (5).

All of God's children can enjoy peace (Isaiah 54:13); But, there is no peace offer to the wicked (Isaiah 48:12; 57:20-21)).

- Peace comes to those who accept the reign of Christ and His authority.
- Peace comes when just men embrace God's Son by faith (Romans 5:1).

The pardoned have the certainty of double *shalom* (Isaiah 57:19), but there is no peace (shalom) to the rebel.

" . . . Peace (shalom), peace (shalom) to *him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the LORD; and I will heal him.*"

God offers peace to them that are near (Hebrew believers), and to them that are afar (Gentiles); to Jews in Babylon and to Jews in Jerusalem; to front row Christians and to back row Christians.

Isaiah 57: 20-21 But the wicked *are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.*

- Peace comes to those who forsake lawlessness and embrace God's law-order:

"Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend (stumble) them" (Psalm 119:165).

- (Double) Peace comes to men who mind the things of God:

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee" (Isaiah 26:3).

Literally, this text reads, "Thou will keep him in peace peace "or "shalom shalom" - a reference to double peace and the power of peace that holds a man together while the walls of the unjust society come tumbling down due to the judgment of Almighty God (25:12).

(2) On the night of the Last Supper (Tuesday), Jesus announced:

John 14:27 *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you:*

Note: One could make an argument here that Jesus left them with objective peace (Romans 5:1 - peace with God) and His subjective peace (John 16:33 - the peace of God).

(3) In the evening of Resurrection Sunday Jesus comforted His disciples:

John 20:19-21 *Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.*

Our text deals with two different occasions where the Lord had a double message of peace for his troubled disciples.

The first occasion where the disciples needed peace was on Tuesday night at the Last Supper before the Lord's all night trial and passion.

Who can fully grasp the whirlwinds of emotion swirling within the hearts of the disciples at the Passover Supper? Something was wrong! Tension filled the air. Satan entered the heart of Judas. Jesus stripped down to his essentials to wash the feet of the disciples. Peter rudely objected. Jesus reported treason in their midst. Winds of doubt rushed through the hearts of the disciples. Jesus identified Judas as the traitor by giving him the sacred portion of the meal (the sop). Jesus announced He was going away; and, then he told Peter that He was going to betray Him three times.

Jesus silenced the wind and the storm while in the boat on the Sea of Galilee, but the gale tossing and twisting the faith and fear of these

seminary students on this Passover night hit land like an ominous category 3 hurricane.

Double peace: Twice Jesus used the word "peace" to calm the storm stirring up doubt and fear in the heart of the eleven:

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you."

The second occasion where the disciples received double peace was on the evening of Resurrection Sunday.

Think of the waves of emotions that must have swamped the boat where the disciples birthed their hope on Passover Week: Jesus's arrest; Peter slicing off the right ear of the servant of the high priest; Jesus's healing touch; Peter's denial of Christ before a handmaid; The Lord's all night trial; the Sanhedrin's guilty verdict; Jesus's beatings before Herod; Pilate's condemnation and death sentence; His crucifixion on a cross; His death; His burial in the tomb; disciples hiding; and then . . .

Peter and John's shocking announcement the tomb was empty; Mary Magdalene's stunning report that she saw the risen Christ near the garden tomb; the chatter of doubt, wonder, and mystery by the small band of disciples gathered together on Sunday evening; the shutting of the doors while hiding from Roman authorities; and, then the sudden appearance of a dead man (Christ) standing in the middle of the frightened crowd.

Can you feel the unruly seas of fear, the lawless waves of doubt, doomed hope, sputtering faith, swells of unbelief, impetuous distrust, stern skepticism, and chaotic chatter colliding with sanguine hope, storybook faith, and intangible dreams of the followers of Christ?

Can you feel the calm reaching the shores of every soul in that room when the risen Christ appeared alive "in the flesh" behind shut doors saying to the stunned Galileans, "Peace be unto you"?

With those words, the Lord softly quieted the thunder of doubt and the roaring waves of fear crashing on the beach of the disciples' souls.

But, no sooner was the cold storm over that a tropical storm surfaced. When the Lord showed the stunned disciple his hands and side, the mood shifted. Suddenly, the hearts of the mariners burst with wonderment!!

Paralyzed with happiness coupled with self-loathing the Lord said,

"Peace be unto you" (John 20:21).

When the bitters of life pound upon the shores of our lives, we need His sweet peace.

When disappointment rushes in to fill an empty room of lost hopes, we need His peace.

When clouds of doubt darken our day, we need to bask in the light of His peace.

"If God be our God, He will give us peace in trouble. When there is a storm without, He will make peace within. The world can create trouble in peace, but God can create peace in trouble" - Thomas Watson (Puritan).

". . . Then were the disciples glad" (John 20:20).

When the sweets of life excite our tastes with ecstasy, we need His clarifying peace.

When the dreams of life are realized and the smiles of angels overwhelm us, we need His calming peace.

"Double your peace, to my soul, Oh Lord!"

(4) Double peace is found in Isaiah 26:3

"Thou wilt keep *him* in perfect peace, *whose mind is stayed on thee*: because he trusteth in thee."

A literal translation of this portion of the song should read, "Thou will keep him in *shalom shalom* . . ." That is "double peace." The translators interpolated the phrase "perfect peace" to express double peace, "shalom shalom." The idea here is of impeccable peace. The one whose mind trusts in the Lord for salvation will experience optimal peace -- "shalom shalom" -- "perfect peace."

(5) Peace is the means through which God conquers Satan; that is, men must lay hold of the God of peace to defeat sin.

Romans 16:20 And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

Satan is not conquered by anger or wrath or bulldozing determination . . . but by a heart at rest enjoying *shalom shalom*.

Rest, soul, rest!

Peace Defeats Satan

Romans 16:20

A Crushed Snake



◆ Maclaren titled this verse, "A Crushed Snake" and this subtitle is adopted here.

The announcement of a crushed snake is good news because Satan is notorious for his sins of lying, deceiving, dividing, and tempting.

For a man who was "troubled on every side, fightings without, and terrors within," peace must have been like King Tutankhamun's Treasures to the apostle (2 Corinthians 7:5).

Notice the peace, serenity, and ease at which the Archangel manages Satan in

Guido Reni's painting of the defeat of Satan. With sword in hand, serenity on his face, and without anger on his brow, he crushes Satan under his foot.

A Crushed Snake

Romans 16:20: And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

The word "bruise" (suntribo) can be translated "crush." It is a term announcing defeat of the enemy and victory for God's people. It means "to tread down."

We must get rid of "stinkin' thinkin'." This text addresses the common error of thinking Satan is all powerful and that Christians are helpless under his spell. Victory, not defeat, is the destiny of the church.

Perhaps the apostle was thinking of God's promise to Eve --

Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

or perhaps Paul considered Psalm 91:13 --

Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.

Or, remembered our Lord's words to the 70 evangelists --

Luke 10:19 Behold, I give unto you power **to tread** (trample, crush) on serpents and scorpions, and **over all the power of the enemy**: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

The Confidence of the Apostle

Paul possesses a confidence that Satan is a defeated foe. Victory over Satan is the "perennial gift to the church" (Maclaren).

Every generation has the authority to claim victory over this adversary. You can succeed. You will prevail. And, the church will be successful in its gospel mission.

The One doing all this trouncing is "the God of peace." This Bone-crusher is **not** announced as the "God of war," the "God of Israel," the "God of truth" (Exodus 15:3; 24:10; Deuteronomy 32:4) or even "the God of

patience (Romans 15:5) or “the God of hope” (Romans 15:13) – but, the “God of peace.”

Whenever a particular attribute of God is mentioned in a text it has a particular bearing on the effect intended.

The word “peace” is used 19 times in Romans. Paul begins his treatise with a salutation of peace (1:2) and ends his didacticism with a benediction of peace (15:33).

The main effect of the gospel is “peace with God” (5:1) and the main gift of the Spirit is “life and peace” (8:6). Further, the message Christians preach is called “the gospel of peace” (10:15) because peace is the one of the main marks of the kingdom of God (14:17).

The letter to the Romans reveals the tension between Jews and Romans, law and grace. The goal of edification required the Romans to be at peace with God and one another. That is, walking with the God of peace to obtain the “peace of God” would not only solve their internal disputes, but conflicts caused by Satan from the outside. However, these disputes appear to be of secondary importance in this passage.

Paul looks at the big picture and the overall scheme of things in Rome. He assures the believers that God would soon crush the opposition and give them victory in the conflict between Satan and the gospel, State and church, and in matters of flesh and spirit. All the sin that breaks the spirit of His children in Rome will be crushed by the God of peace.

The tension that arises among God’s people is the war between principalities and the Prince of peace, between Satan and Christ, between lies and the truth. To believe in God one must believe in Satan and that the God of peace will give the church power to tread on the enemy.

The Confidence of Christians

Every Christian can have the assurance that Satan is a defeated foe, all smoke and no fire; all bark and no bite; all tongue and no feet. The believer will prevail over the “lust of the flesh,” “the lust of the eyes,” and the “pride of life” (1 John 2:16).

The destiny of the gospel is victory, not defeat; triumph, not failure; conquest, and not subjection. Lies will not prevail over the truth; darkness will not overcome the light; doubts will not crater faith; and evil will not bulldoze down the good God is doing in your soul.

There is a star of light that conquers the dark night, and that star is the God of peace. There is a fire that warms the heart from the cold and that fire is the God of peace; there is a song in the midst of the clang and clatter of this age, and that melody is the God of peace. Peace and stability will prevail over tension and chaos that comes into our lives.

The Coaction of Believers

Satan is a defeated foe. God crushes the serpent, but He uses our feet to do it. While justification is an act of God that does not insist on our cooperation, sanctification requires our consent.

Every believer can peacefully put his hand on the plow, till the soil, and know that his labor is not in vain. The prize is ours and the God of peace will use our feet to crush the evil one.

The promise and pledge of victory is ours. We need only to rest and to rely upon the God of peace; the God of patience; and, the God of hope. We begin each day with hope; rest under the shade of His patience during the heat of day; and, and enjoy the wine of victory in the evening for crushing the enemy.

Our goal is to let the peace of God rule over our anxious hearts, to calm our agitated souls, to harness our tongues, to give thanks in all things, and to persist in doing good.

In so doing, *“the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing”*
(Romans 15:13).

How can Satan possibly prevail against the honey of Divine joy on the lips, the eye of faith on the cross, the hand of patience on the plow, and a heart filled with peace resting in the God of hope, patience, and peace?

The saint eating manna in the early hours cannot be conquered by the dainties offered by Satan during the day; a heart filled with hope and love cannot be despondent over the diabolical news of the day; and, a mind filled with the sweet things of Christ cannot be polluted by the ire of politicians or news pundits.

The Conquest of simple Faith (16:19)

Neither the cyclones of criticism, gales of ghoulish pleasures, hurricanes of worry, tornados of disruptions, downpours of doubt, rainstorms of soggy news, nor blizzards of resistance can conquer the simple man governed by the peace of God.

It is possible for us to achieve victory over Satan and to do so with calm energy without disturbing our peace. We do not have to be angry or strain every muscle to crush his ugly head under our feet. Nor do we need to express endless agitation over our foe. The God of peace shall provide the victory.

The Chronology of this crushing

Finally, mark Heaven’s timing and the swiftness of Satan’s defeat. The God of peace is near and He shall shortly, slowly or suddenly crush the monster opposing holiness.

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.”

This victory is assured, not because we are good; but, because He is good; not because of our faithfulness, but because the God of peace is faithful to dispense grace to the unworthy.

Psalm 46:5 God shall help her, and that right early."

Early means "morning:" that is, though the Christian waits in darkness for Satan's defeat, he waits for that which is sure to come.

Isaiah 30:15 For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In (your) returning and rest shall ye be saved; in (your) quietness (rest) and in (your) confidence (trust) shall be your strength: and ye would not.

Rest, soul, rest! Shalom, Shalom!

Peace, the Means to Perfection

Hebrews 13: 20-21

Hebrews 13: 20-21 Now *the God of peace*, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, *make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

◆ This is a prayer for the complete restoration of the sheep; that is, as silver is refined in the furnace, let us be refined so we might perfectly reflect His image under heat of trials.

The title “God of peace” is the subject of the sentence and “make you perfect” (katartisai) is the optative verb; that is, it is a wish, not a command and not a fact.

“Perfect” (katartisai) means “to mend what is broken; to make whole or complete; to sew a rip in a garment”

Paul’s prayer is grounded on the work of the “God of peace” – not the God of truth or the God of righteousness, but the “God of peace.”

This “God of peace,” having been propitiated by the death of His Son on the cross; and, our debt having been fully discharged by the blood of Christ; and, God having forgiven us of our sins by the mediation of the Savior, reached into hell and raised the Lord Jesus from the dead.

Use of the title “God of peace” implies there was some kind of strife or conflict to which His work was needed. Possibly, (a) the strife and division among the Hebrews needed repair or (b) the conflict regarding God and sinners having ended through Christ, God being at rest restored the life of His Son.

Jesus is called “the great shepherd of the sheep.” He is great in character; great in battle; great in love; great in holiness; great in courage; great in His accomplishments, and great in Shepherding of God’s flock.

Believers are called “sheep” probably because we do not understand what the Shepherd did for us at Calvary and does for us in His present exalted life. As the good shepherd, our Lord died for the sheep and protects them from Divine wrath (Psalm 22); as the great shepherd He lives and provides for His sheep (Psalm 23); as the Chief Shepherd he reigns . . . and rewards the servant-sheep with eternal blessings (Psalm 24).

“The blood of the everlasting covenant” implies that God works to mend us completely based on His covenant promise and consideration of the price paid for our salvation; that is, since blood is the currency of the spirit world, and we were purchased with His blood, “making us perfect” in His sight is a continuation of His promise.

There is an illusion here to Isaiah 63:11 “Where is He that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of His flock?” Here the shepherds are no doubt Moses and Aaron (Psalm 77:20), God having delivered the people from death also brought Moses and Aaron out of the Red Sea to lead His flock to Sinai.

His salvation at the Red Sea was based on the covenant of blood – a completion of His promise to deliver His people from bondage. The blood that saved the people from the death angel secured all other blessings including their redemption from Egypt by way of the Red Sea.

The great work of mending and bringing the people to perfection must have a strong foundation: God of peace, blood, covenant, raised from the dead, a living Shepherd, great in power, love, and peace.

The great work of conforming us to His will is total reconciliation of the total man to the total image of Christ; that is, that there might not be any part of the man that is not committed to the will of God. To wake up thinking one has a choice whether to do good or evil demonstrates the

lack of reconciliation of the man to God. The perfect man has no choice but to do "every good work" and what is "well pleasing in his sight."

When praying we do not look at ourselves, but to the resources of Another – the God of peace. We start with the fact of God's accomplishments through the Son, and reach for the impossible – perfection. Let us remember, the Good Shepherd died for us to save us from the penalty of sin and that the Great Shepherd lives to save us from the power of sin. One day the Chief Shepherd will save us from the presence of sin.

The "God of peace" is used six times in Paul's epistles (Romans 15:13; 16:20; Philippians 4:7; 4:9; Colossians 3:15; 1 Thessalonians 5:23)

The title "God of Peace" acts like a benediction over our restless lives, unsettled hearts, and heated conflicts to bring us peace that we might walk where angels walk (MacLaren).

Tapping into the "God of Peace" would calm their fears, temper their anger, repair relationships, and restore their ability to pursue holiness.

This "God of Peace" dwells above the conflicts, gloominess, and irritations common to men; and in His presence the restless heart can find shalom. His peace can shed light on our shadows, calm the waves on our turbulent seas, minister sweetness where there is bitterness, and bring a dove's wing where there are clenched fists and tight jaws. "My peace" I give unto you declared Jesus.

The only way to obtain peace is to be good – "Make you perfect in every good work to do his will . . ." There can be no peace on earth where there is not conformity to Heaven's will. Want peace? Then lighten the load on your ship and throw your mutinous captain-self overboard, your iron anchor attached to the underside of this world, your heavy burdens of collecting silver and gold, and your steel desires to have your way on this voyage.

Philippians 4:9 Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you

Moreover, the peace of God orders our holiness (See: 1 Thessalonians 5:23). What a man needs for peace is to surrender his vessel to be captained by the Lord Jesus Christ, to allow His peace to be the steersman, and to debar frivolous anger, lusts, and bitterness from standing at the helm.

Exercising the peace of God impacts our relationships for good (Colossians 3:15).

The peace of God acts like an umpire guarding and protecting our hearts (Philippians 4:7).

This peace can only come by prayer. The heart is like a stormy sea tossing our ship on top of white caps and then burying our vessels under tons of wet darkness, fear, and marine debris. Only Christ can say, "Peace, be still!:

Come Thou fount of every blessing

Tune my heart to sing Thy grace

Streams of mercy never ceasing

Call for songs of loudest praise

This passage is the only reference to the resurrection of Christ in the epistle. We do not serve a dead martyr, but a living Savior – the high priest of our profession within the veil – the living Shepherd – the Great Shepherd of God's flock risen from the dead ready to perfect us.

We don't have to live in the shadows away from the sunshine or sail our vessel on stormy seas during cold, windy nights. Believing in His peace and praying to the Great Shepherd increases the possibilities of happy, holy service. The power that raised Christ from the dead is available to

us. There is no mountain we cannot climb; no river we cannot cross; and, no burden we cannot carry.

So, like a little bird, open your mouth and let him fill it. He lives to provide for you; to protect you, and to perfect you. Don't worry about storms on the sea, or getting lost in the forest, or wolves in the pasture, or thorn bushes near the path. The Great Shepherd of the sheep leads. Will you follow?

Rest, soul, rest! Shalom, Shalom!

Peace that Sanctifies

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

◆ The pursuit of holiness is the pursuit of piety; and, the pious seek freedom from sin and dedication to God in matters that pertain to their spirit, soul, and body.

"The apostle prays that they might be sanctified more perfectly, for the best are sanctified but in part while in this world; therefore we should pray for, and press toward, complete holiness" (Matthew Henry, October 18, 1662, to June 22, 1714).

23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This passage is preceded by ten or more short, pithy imperatives - duties that challenge the best of holy men. Who has the wherewithal "to rejoice evermore," or "to give thanks in everything?"

The word, "sanctify" means "to make holy;" that is, to separate something of value from profane matters and to dedicate it to holy service. The word implies being separated from evil, not from the duties of life like chores, work, daily patterns, relational bonds, or physical maintenance of matters related to the spirit, mind, and body.

"sanctify you wholly" implies the whole man. The order of "spirit", "soul", and "body" is important as it instructs men how to order their life.

Directions must be discerned in the "spirit," analyzed and digested in the "soul," and then acted on by the "body." Profane men are blind to this

order. The "soul" and "spirit" of common people in the world follow the impulses of their "body."

"sanctify you wholly" is in the optative mood meaning the statement is a wish slightly removed from reality (hypothetical). It is possible, but not necessarily probable. Unlike justification where God does all the work, sanctification requires our cooperation with His will. Thus, holiness in all matters exists in the stratosphere of human endeavors.

The One Who does all this sanctifying is called "The God of peace." Holiness comes to those who have peace with God and pursue the peace of God. Moreover, peace does not come to the frantic nor the hurried, but to those who are at rest in their soul. Sanctification comes from the God of peace (the happy, contented, orderly God Who loves His people). The emphasis here is not on the God of war . . . nor the God of holiness. . .nor the God of furious wrath, but from the God of peace, contentment, calmness, and serenity.

24 Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.

He calls us to be holy -- a mountain to climb and a raging river to cross for many.

The good news at the end of these pithy commands is that the duties of sanctification do not rest on us alone. The willing have the assurance of His help. In this text, the pious are called to trust Him Who is faithful to do what He calls men to do.

"Your sanctification after all depends on him, and as he has begun a work of grace in your hearts, you may depend on his faithfulness to complete it" (Barnes).

His work of sanctifying the man is **not** substitutionary; it requires the willing participation of the Christ-seeker. He is **not** suggesting *we let go and let God* but to work with Him to be holy. Because the "quickenened" one is no longer dead, He has a new capacity to pursue high and lofty matters pertaining to the will of God.

In justification, Christ is the doer and Savior. In sanctification, the Lord of peace is our helper. He is faithful. His commands contain the power to do it; that is. there is no decree in Scripture, no matter how difficult, where the Lord will not help the aspirant to achieve His purpose. What God orders, He proffers; what He instructs, He constructs; what He voices, He produces; what He commands, He supplies.

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul. (Horatio G. Spafford -
1873)

1 Thessalonians 5:27 I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.

Holiness is not just for the cleric, but also for the common man. Likewise, the promise! It is not only for the ministerial privileged, but for people in the pew.

"This epistle was to be read to all the brethren. Not only are the common people allowed to read the Scriptures, but it is their duty, and what they should be persuaded to do"
(Matthew Henry).

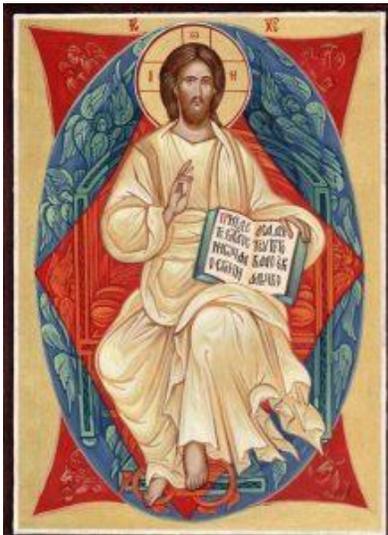
With God's help, let us trust and obey.

Rest, soul, rest! Shalom, Shalom!

Cultivating a Spirit of Peace

Philipians 4:6-10

4:6-9 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.



◆ We all need peace at various stages of our lives.

There are no 12 step programs to obtain peace, but obtaining peace does involve our consent and cooperation.

Here are a few actions we can take that will create a climate for us to enjoy the peace of God

(1) Distinguish between "peace with God" and the "peace of God."

Romans 5:1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have *peace with God* through our Lord Jesus Christ,

Colossians 3:15 And let the *peace of God* rule (act as judge, umpire) in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

Peace with God is a benefit of believing the gospel. When a person hears and believes in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, the war between the man and God is over. Our Armistice Day is the day of our salvation.

Peace with God is **not** a feeling, it is a fact all Christians possess. It is objective in nature, and represents a change in status from condemned to justified (Romans 5: see the benefits of justification, forgiveness, regeneration, reconciliation).

The subjective *peace of God* is needed when unwelcome events barge into our lives. The peace of God is a subjective feeling that all is well under His providence. It is the calm we receive from the Spirit when we trust God and believe that "all things are working together for good" (Romans 8:28) and that His "grace is sufficient in all things" (2 Corinthians 12:9-10).

(2) Distinguish between the peace of Christ and the peace of the world.

John 14:27 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.*

The world offers peace to those who accept its temporal, earthly, fickle, superficial, sensual political views, control, and statutes. The peace that Christ offers is a gift of heavenly grace to those who believe His promises, trust Him, and are in a right standing with Him.

The world's peace comes by eliminating suffering; Christ's peace comes to those in the midst of suffering. The world offers peace to the compliant, Christ offers peace to the defiant - to those that defy the world with its lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, and self-sufficiency (pride).

(3) Peace is a gift . . . and it must be received by faith. See John 14:1 and John 20:19

(4) Resist anxiety, anger, fear, and wrath:

James 1:19-20 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

John 14:27 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.*

Fear (anxiety, worry, anger, cowardice) and *trouble* (agitations, irritations, anger, disturbances) are opposites of peace.

The Greek verb "*Let not your heart be troubled*" (tarassesthō) is a present, middle imperative negated by the adverb "not" (me); that is, when trouble stirs up anxiety in our heart, we are under command to trust Christ for His peace and to participate in resisting the temptation to worry and fret.

Philippians 4:6 *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.*

The verb "be careful" (merimnate) is another term for anxiety. It is a present active imperative negated by the direct object adjective "nothing" (mēden).

"passeth" refers to something higher in rank; to something superior to mental reasoning.

The Spirit forbids the believer to be anxious, troubled, agitated, irritated, and disturbed. Peace is king and it must reign in the tabernacle of the human heart.

(5) The opposite of anxiety is prayer, supplication, and thanksgiving.

Instead of worry and fret, the Spirit calls agitated Christians *to pray* (proseuché: general prayer and worship), *make supplications* (deēsei: formal, genuine, specific pleadings), and *give thanks* (eucharistia: gratitude) in the midst of troubled seas. See 1 Timothy 2:1-7.

(6) Claim the peace that passes all understanding that shall keep your heart and mind.

Note *the definition of peace* in Philippians 4:6 above: a peace that "passeth all understanding."

Again, notice the Greek word "*passeth*" (huperechó) means "to rise above," "to be superior," and "to govern." It is translated "higher powers" in Romans 13:1. The idea here is the "peace of God" is of higher rank than one's intellect. Being guided by the peace of God is more important than mental analysis and human reasoning; that is, when we can't discern which way to go in life, let the peace of God guide us.

The noun, "*understanding*" (nous) refers "to reason" and to one's "intellect." The promise is that a pious Christian can have a supernatural peace, a calm restful spirit, without a direct change in circumstances -- a peace that defies explanation. It is a peace that calms the soul without calming the sea upon which one's ship is sailing.

The verb "*keep*" (phroureó) means to guard as on a military patrol; that is, God's peace stands guard over one's mind and emotions to keep and to protect the soul from doing something foolish and irrational.

(7) Think on holy things:

Philippians 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

"Great thoughts of your sin alone will drive you to despair; but great thoughts of Christ will pilot you into the haven of peace" - Charles Spurgeon.

(8) Develop holy habits:

Philippians 4:8 Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

"Sow a thought and you reap an action; sow an act and you reap a habit; sow a habit and you reap a character; sow a character and you reap a destiny" (R.W. Emerson).

A minor disturbance happened in an Italian village, and a woman came running into the chapel chattering away as fast as she could jiggle her tongue. The priest held up his hand and stopped her prattle. Closing his eyes, the priest slowly spoke, "May the Lord bless you and keep you and give you peace!" Dropping his hand, he spoke to the roused woman, "Now, you can speak."

Rest, soul, rest! Shalom, Shalom!

The Gift of Peace from the Lord of Peace

2 Thessalonians 3:16

◆ Peace is used 429 times in the Bible; 111 times in the New Testament; and, six times in Paul's letters to the Thessalonians.

It seems the great need of every man is peace; peace of mind; peace in the heart; peace in the family; peace at work; peace with friends; peace with enemies; peace during the daytime and peace at nighttime.

But, how do we get this peace?

This text informs us that peace is a gift from the Lord of Peace.

2 Thessalonians 3:16 "Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all."

"Now" equals "and" or "but."

The title "Lord" (kurios) is used 46 times in Paul's letters to the Thessalonians. "The Lord Jesus Christ" is His official title. Here Paul addresses Him as "the Lord of peace."

"Lord of peace," i.e. Jesus Christ. He is the God of peace, the Proprietor of peace, the Custodian of peace, and the Master of peace; that is, everyone calling Him "Lord," would do well to seek the gift of peace, to possess a peaceful disposition, to be ruled by His peace, and to spread peace among the brethren. If the aim of an action is not peace, why do it?

"give" is an optative verb expressing a wish and not a fact; a hope without extravagance. Peace is His to give and for us to receive.

With Paul's exhortation on the coming judgment (1), the coming of apostasy (2:3), and his condemnation of brothers walking disorderly (3), the Thessalonians needed a measure of peace.

"peace at all times" means "in every way and in all forms; " literally, "always in every way" -- during the daylight and at midnight; in prosperity and in persecutions; in accords and in quarrels; in wealth and in poverty; in health and in sickness; in good times and bad times; on a full-stomach or on an empty-stomach; well-heeled or penniless.

"The Lord be with you all" is a benediction, a wish that every believer in the pew might not only have peace, but enjoy the presence of the Lord of peace. Peace is not just for the cleric, but for the common man.

Rest, soul, rest! Shalom, Shalom!

Bad Thinking About Peace on Earth

Matthew 10:34

◆ Enough of this nonsense that Christianity is a peaceful religion!

The Founder of Christianity said He did not come to establish peace on earth, but to start a war.

He even rebuked the presumption of men that thought He was on earth for a mission of peace. Peace is available to believers, but not to rebels.

Matthew 10:34 "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword."

The word "war" is mentioned 225 times in Scripture. "Sword," a metonymy for war is mentioned 424 times in the Word of God.

The Lord God declared war against the Canaanites and called for their genocide. Some societies are not worth preserving. In order to prevent the spread of the Amorite moral cancer, God called for the death of old men and infants (Exodus 23:23).

When God's people plunged into immorality, the LORD God declared war on his own people and called them His enemy (Isaiah 63:10). He destroyed all of them except a believing remnant (Isaiah 2:9).

The apostle Paul saw God in history warring against all ungodliness.

Romans 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

He describes the Christian life as one of warfare (2 Corinthians 10:4; Ephesians 6:10ff) – warfare with sword in hand and peace in the heart.

He called his best disciples to act like soldiers and endure the hardness of military life (2 Timothy 2:3-6).

He is at war against Christians with hidden affections for the things of this world (James 4:4).

He is even at war against our bosom sins (1 Peter 2:11).

He offers no peace to sinners engaged in active rebellion against His law-order, and He demands unconditional surrender to His authority (Romans 10:9, 10). He even throws rebel “sons” out of the house into outer darkness (Matthew 8:12).

And, it is only upon terms of absolute surrender (trust) can anyone enter His kingdom (Matthew 11:12).

The Founder of Christianity even lost his life fighting against the secret sins of politicians, lawyers, judges, and magistrates.

So, enough of this nonsense that Christianity is a peaceful religion!

While the gospel of Christ is not advanced by violence, Christianity is not a religion that offers peace to a world in rebellion against the Ten Commandments.

Christianity offers no compromise. It is at war with every sinner that resists His will.

But, it does offer peace to repentant, believing sinners and to those that enter His gates to find peace (Isaiah 26:1-3; Romans 5:1).

No Peace on Earth without Christ

Luke 2:14

Luke 2:14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

"Where have all the flowers gone?"

*"Where have all the soldiers gone? Gone to graveyards, everyone!
Oh, when will they ever learn?"*

◆ The world is on fire.

North Korea continues to build its intercontinental missile program; NATO threatens neighboring Russia; Blacks in America rap lyrics about killing all whites; men on football teams refuse to stand for the National Anthem, bitter women leak reports about sexual harassment, mere allegations are ending the careers of many celebrities; and, the media has a melt down over a traditional White House Christmas.

Men pray for peace . . . but there will never be peace without Jesus Christ the Lord of peace!

Peace on earth . . . through the Son is offered to men who seek to be right with God . . . nor is the angelic offer a bid for world peace based on secular principles, the apotheosis of women, and the politics of Madonna.

In fact Jesus corrected the erroneous idea that He was offering peace to the world when he said,

Matthew 10:34 Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.

A sword is a symbol of division, severed heads, and blood in the streets.

There will never be peace as long as men are united around the humanistic principles of feminism, ANTIFA, promotion of Sodomy, the acceptance of psychologically deranged males who want to dress like women, theft in the name of taxation, porous borders, human trafficking in the prison system, a militarized police state, and the belief that money is the measure of man.

Christ has declared war on "Sodom (immorality) and Egypt (worldliness)" (Revelation 11:8).

"The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify that its works are evil." John 7:7

It is not his will that a society blasted with F-bombs, rap that lionizes rape and murder, and a Congress filled with liars, sexual perverts, and power mongers succeed.

A new America is taking shape around us, but it is not an America grounded in Christ. Rather, it is an America rooted in tolerance of religious humanism -- an America where the Washington Post and the New York Times want Americans to say "Good bye" to traditional Christian values and to accept a new Zionist world order based on political agenda of globalists and Hollywood stars.

This new religion, though it is not really new, traces its origin to the hissing snake under the poisonous tree.

This new religion believes in salvation by multiplication of laws; by a bigger and more efficient police state that can transform society and bring peace to men.

A secularized United States government is **not** strong enough to unite the left and the right, blacks and whites, Christians and Muslims, womanizers and virgins, responsible men and roaring feminazis, Democrats and Republicans.

The government in Washington D.C. is not good enough or powerful enough to bind wolves and sheep together. America is divided, and there is nothing in heaven or hell that can unite Sodom and the City of God.

Only the Babe in Bethlehem, King Jesus, and His accomplishments through the cross are strong enough to unite men together in harmony . . . and even this takes humble minds and yielded hearts.

Moreover, the religions of Islam and atheism are not noble enough to co-join the world.

Only the virtuous risen Savior can unite humanity . . . and only when men have peace with the God of the Bible can they have peace with one another.

The first glimpse of Christ in the New Testament is as a baby in a stable (Luke 2-3), but the final vision of Christ is a rider upon a white horse waging war against the anti-god forces of history (Revelation 19).

Moreover, the basis of peace offered to men is based on the shed blood--that is, it is only when Divine Claims are satisfied by blood currency is peace possible between God and the sinner (Romans 3:5; 5:9).

To those offering peace based on the acceptance of multiculturalism, Sodomy, Islam, equality, feminism, Zionism, disrespect for authority, and the police state, Christ has declared war!

To all those seeking the glory of God . . . we say "Peace to you!"

For all those seeking forgiveness of sins and a right relationship to God through repentance and faith in the blood of the Savior, we say "Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied" (1 Peter 1:2).

But, to those rapping for peace between Sodomites and the church, Muslims and Christians, and the acceptance of drag queens calls for maximum resistance - - a declaration of war!

Christmas reminds us that Heaven offers peace and good will toward men through the gift of God's Son and no other!

The God of peace be with you, Amen! (Romans 15:33).

The God of Peace be with You

Romans 15:33

◆ Paul requested prayer that (a) he might be delivered from Jewish persecutors, and (b) that he might be able to come and visit the Romans. Little did he know that he would be delivered from the evil Jews in Jerusalem by being arrested and sent to Rome as a prisoner. His main prayer was answered. He made it to Rome howbeit in chains and fetters.

Romans 15:33 Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

The benediction was not intended to close the epistle; but, it did end his doctrinal exhortation to the saints.

We must learn the difference between "peace with God" (Romans 5:1), the "peace of God" (Philippians 4:6-7), and the "the God of peace." He is the Source of peace, Maker of peace, and the One who gives peace to the agitated soul. He is the Source and Sustainer of peace – the Lord of peace.

The man of God achieves perfection (sanctification) when he claims peace with God by faith; fellowships with the God of peace; and, whose heart and mind is controlled by the peace of God during the vicissitudes of life.

For Christian monks the value of peace (pax in Latin) in the heart is a central spiritual goal, representing a profound state of inner tranquility and clarity amidst the chaos of the world. This inner stillness is cultivated through prayer, humility, and detachment from worldly desires. It is considered a prerequisite for spiritual growth and a deeper connection with the divine (Google AI).

Buddhist monks search for inner peace, but never find it because true peace is found only in Christ -- the ground of peace.

The God of peace sent His Son to the cross that we might enjoy peace with God; that is, the gospel is about how man might cease His adversarial battle with the Lawgiver and accept the offer of peace by the Lord.

To think our Lord came to bring peace on earth is stinkin' thinkin'! Our Lord is the "God of peace" and the foundation of our peace (Ephesians 2:14), but He did not come to bring peace to rebels: ""Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came **not** to send peace, but a sword" (Matthew 10:34). He extends no peace offer to criminals, politicians, swindlers, fornicators, feminists, and globalists because they are at war with God.

The believing Romans, once being at war with the Creator, are said to have peace with God through faith (5:1); therefore, Paul prays the believers in Rome might enjoy the presence and comfort of the God of peace. Vaya con Dios.

But, this benediction is not for Congress, the president, or the Supreme Court who wage war against truth and righteousness everyday of their existence.

Secondly, the Jews and Greeks in Rome were at war with one another arguing over issues of the faith, food laws, and matters of conscience (14).

Paul does not pray they would experience the "peace of God" but that they might experience the presence of the God of peace -- the former being an attribute of God guarding the heart and mind (nous); the latter referring to complete companionship of the Almighty.

Peace does not refer to the lack of problems, but to rest of soul during those difficulties.

Rest, soul, rest! Shalom, Shalom!

Publications

Books we have written:

1. [Biblical Standards for Civil Rulers, Form #13.013](#)
2. [Should Christians Always Obey the State?, Form #13.014](#)
3. [The Crisis of Church Incorporation, Form #13.017](#)
4. [A Family Under God, Form #17.001](#)
5. [Origin of the Bible, Form #17.002](#)
6. [The Gospel of the Kingdom of God, Form #17.003](#)
7. [Five Pillars of the Gladiator Gospel, Form #17.004](#)
8. [Prayer Puts Power In Your Life, Form #17.005](#)
9. [Old Testament Theology, Form #17.006](#)
10. [Towards Exegetical Eschatology, Form #17.007](#)
11. [A Commentary on Revelation, Form #17.055](#)
12. [Commentary on Romans 13, Form #17.056](#)
13. [What is the Date of the Biblical Flood?, Form #17.057](#)
14. [Behold His Glory, Form #17.059](#)
15. [Proverbs for Wisdom, Form #17.060](#)
16. [The Pursuit of Piety, Form #17.061](#)
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18. [Marriage Counseling Manual, Form #17.063](#)
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20. [Correcting the Upside Down Gospel, Form #17.065](#)
21. [Sermons on the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, Form #17.066](#)
22. [If I Could Do Church Again, Form #17.067](#)
23. [The Feminist War Against God's Law, Form #17.068](#)
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33. [Psalms of Asaph, Form #17.079](#)
34. [Double Through Discipleship, Form #17.080](#)
35. [The Art of Conflict Management, Form #17.081](#)
36. [Know Who You Are In Christ, Form #17.082](#)
37. [From Corinth to American Churches, Form #17.083](#)
38. [When Satan Goes to Church, Form #17.084](#)
39. [Nike Greek Grammar Manual, Form #17.085](#)
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41. [The Case for Common Law Marriage, Form #13.022](#)
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Works we have contributed to:

1. [Laws of the Bible, Litigation Tool #09.001](#)
2. [Ten Commandments of Freedom Form #13.016](#)
3. [SEDM About Us Page, Section 9](#)
4. [Proof of Claim: Your Main Defense Against Government Greed and Corruption, Form #09.073](#). Click [Here](#) for the article this publication is based on from this site