

GRACE GAZETTE

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Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

Hebrews 12:12-13

PRAYING FOR PEACE

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.

Psalms 122:6

War is a constant reminder of the wickedness of men from ancient times even to the present. Since sin entered the world there has been continual conflict between the members of the human race. Such is the wages of sin and the demonstration of the manifestation of the judgement of GOD upon that sin. As nations began to be established in the earth so this warfare was given something of a legitimacy in the minds of sinful men. There are many even today (in a supposedly enlightened age) who believe that it is proper and advisable for nations to war with one another over political and economic objectives.

The LORD testified that these conflicts are inevitable and ongoing. In foretelling HIS disciples about the impending destruction of Jerusalem (which occurred in A.D.70) HE said, *"And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet."* (Mat 24:6) In much the same way in which HE told them that the poor would always be with them (see Mark 14:7) HE told them that wars and conflicts would continue to occur in the earth even to the end.

The scripture plainly says *"The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will."* (Prov 21:1) GOD raised up Egypt as a mighty warring nation just for the purpose of displaying HIS power in their destruction. (see Rom.9:22) HE directed the nation of Israel to destroy the heathen through warfare and HE chastened the disobedience of Israel through the same. HE raised up the Babylonians so that they might humble Israel by bringing her into captivity. Then as the Babylonians gloated in their own prosperity HE sent the Medes to render judgement upon them for their many sins not the least of which was their destruction of the temple in Jerusalem. So we can obviously say that all wars are ordained or predestined by GOD to fulfill HIS divine purpose in the unfolding of history. Yet woe be to those nations who shed innocent blood. (see I Kgs.21:16) David was a man after GOD's own heart yet he was not allowed to build the temple because (see II Sam.16:7,8; I Kgs.5:3) of the wars he was involved in.

Man's affinity for such conflict would consume us all were it not that GOD did restrain us. It is reported that Robert E. Lee once said as he surveyed the extreme carnage of one Civil War battle, "It is a good thing that war is so terrible lest we should grow too fond of it." Men will always go as far into the destruction of one another as the LORD will allow them, for such is the sinfulness of sin.

The sons of GOD are instructed to be men of peace (see Rom.12:18) and to that end the LORD has ordained to work in them a love for it and a desire to see its increase in the earth. Yet the peace which the sons of GOD crave and seek HIM for is not just to see the absence of earthly conflict. They desire and enjoy a peace which passeth understanding. It is that peace which the LORD promised when HE said, *"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) The men of this world can sometimes grow weary of conflict and

many times express that they desire peace. But the peace with which they are content is of no comfort for the true sons of GOD. The sons of GOD desire a lasting peace whereas the men of this world are ready to go to war as soon as they feel threatened or believe that they have been wronged in some way. That peace which the sons of GOD long for can be had even when death and destruction are raining down around and upon them.

Some have taken the Psalmist's words to be exhorting us to pray for peace in a natural city upon the earth. This would be a futile prayer since this region of the earth has not experienced peace in the last two thousand years. The earthly city of Jerusalem shall never be a city of peace because it is not designed to be. The religion of men will keep this city a hotbed of hatred and strife even until the time of the end as the LORD prophesied. The Jerusalem whose peace we are to pray for is that heavenly Jerusalem which is as a bride adorned for her HUSBAND: the kingdom of CHRIST, the CHURCH for which HE shed HIS precious blood. A prayer for peace in this city is one which shall indeed be heard and answered for this is the FATHER's purpose; *"Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."* (Luke 12:32) The peace of that city:

Is forever secured by the blood of CHRIST. *"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."* (Col 1:20) By the shedding of CHRIST's blood once and for all there is remission of sin. The only barrier to peace between the LORD and HIS elect was in the sin of a broken law. By the work of JESUS CHRIST who has imputed HIS righteousness to us we now have peace with GOD. HE is satisfied being both just and the JUSTIFIER of HIS own people and now we are reconciled to HIM by this same blood which satisfied the demands of HIS holy law. There has never been a time when GOD did not love HIS people with an everlasting love but there was indeed a time when there was enmity in the hearts of the elect towards GOD. This too has been taken away forever in the shedding of HIS blood who is our peace. (see Eph.2:14-17)

Is multiplied by the knowledge of its inhabitants. *"Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,"* (2Pet. 1:2). The peace which is purchased by JESUS CHRIST is perfect but the knowledge of it by the saints is not. That is why it is necessary for us to publish peace and glad tidings unto the church. *"How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"* (Rom 10:15) The reprobate are ever learning and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth but the sons of GOD learn continually of HIS purpose to give them peace.

Is the rule of its inhabitants. *"And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful."* (Col 3:15) This is the principle which shall ever be the comfort of the LORD's people. *"Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it."* (Psa 34:14) We are exhorted in the scripture to *"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men."* (Rom 12:18) There is no place among GOD's people for a cantankerous spirit or one that takes delight in strife, conflict and turmoil. We have been called unto peace.

Is the pure delight of all who dwell therein. *"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."* (Phil.4:7) Peace and hope go hand in hand. The more clearly a man sees his hope realized the more at peace he will be. *"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost."* (Rom 15:13) No man can have any expectation of acceptance with the LORD except that this gift be granted unto him. When a man possesses this hope then peace like a river will flood his soul and he shall be able to put all of his enemies to flight. *"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 forever and ever. Amen."* (Heb 13:20-21)