

Will There Ever Be Peace in Our Troubled World?

Hatred and violence seem to be everywhere around us these days. Peace, in this troubled world, seems quite elusive,

Whether it's the "mostly peaceful protests" in our streets or college campuses or the deadly devastation of insurrectionists and evil terrorists, "the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one" (1 John 5:19, NKJV).

While we will not see true peace until the Prince of Peace comes, in all of His strength and glory, spiritual warfare needs to be regularly exercised today by maturing saints of God to overwhelm the evil one, in these last days!

Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem

The Psalmist David calls for us to pray for or "ask intently" for peace on behalf of Jerusalem, its people and holy places. Jerusalem was the spiritual and civic center of the Jewish nation, and David wrote this psalm for pilgrims to sing while ascending to Jerusalem and the stairs of the Sanctuary or Temple, the "house of the Lord." Still, today, we need to pray for its peace and prosperity; for its safety and security.

"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: 'May they prosper who love you. Peace be within your walls, Prosperity within your palaces.' For the sake of my brethren and companions, I will now say, 'Peace be within you.' Because of the house of the Lord our God I will seek your good (Ps. 122:6-9, NKJV).

The males of the Jewish nation were required to make this pilgrimage three times each year (Deut. 16:16-17), at the prescribed feasts of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. Likewise, peace must begin at the center of our lives and

relationships, with our faithful devotion to the word and ways of God.

In verse six, the admonition to “pray for the peace of Jerusalem” uses a kind of poetic word play, since the very name Jerusalem means “City of Peace.” Thus, we are instructed *to pray for the peace of the city of peace*. May it live up to its name! As children of the most-high God, we must also live up to the “family name.”

Peace, in Hebrew, is the word *shalom*. It is used like the word *aloha* is used in Hawaii, as a greeting and a farewell. It is a common way of life—the “Aloha Spirit.” Likewise, the way of life for God’s followers is to be the way of “Shalom,” not only the absence of strife, hatred or enmity, but a comprehensive way of life concerning our general welfare, health, prosperity and happiness.

Jews often greet each other with the blessing, “peace unto you,” or in the Hebrew, *shalom aleichem*, with the other person responding, “unto you peace,” or *aleichem shalom*.

Christ is Our Peace

A friend expressed an important truth to me recently when he said, “The enemy loves war and death because it eliminates time for people to repent!” Each fatality eliminates that life, but potentially the progeny that may have come from that life, as well. Without Christ, Hell gained again!

As the end of this age grows closer, Satan knows that his time is short and he and his demons stir hatred and immorality with greater intensity and frequency, as the “desires of the flesh are against the Spirit” (Gal. 5:17, ESV).

Paul said Christ Jesus is our peace, “who has made both [Jewish and Gentile believers] one, and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in

himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility [between God and mankind]" (Eph. 2:14-16; ESV).

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Through Him we have access *by one Spirit to the Father!* Let us boldly come to Father God in regular intercession regarding the hatred and horrors around our world!

Prayer is a very practical way for us to help. "The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working" (James 5:16b, ESV). Therefore, let us:

- Pray for the safety of those who have been taken hostage and their families, who anxiously wait for them, and for those families whose loved ones are not coming home.
- Pray for provision for both Arab and Jewish civilians whose homes are destroyed and whose families are displaced, missing or dead.
- Pray for the children [...]"the children; the children"...] who are terribly frightened and traumatized.
- Pray for hope for all affected peoples, that their eyes would be fixed on the God who saves and alone can bring peace.
- Pray for many Arabs and Jews to come to true faith in Christ Jesus and for the current war to end quickly.

Spirit-Assisted, Prayer Language

The Apostle Paul says, in addition to our praying our own thoughts and the suggestions of others (as above), we may find deep emotions within us during our devotional prayers and praise, which we cannot seem to put into words and we do not

know what or how we should pray (Rom. 8:26). In these instances, our spirits may cry out to God with sighs, groanings, or loud “cries and tears” (Heb. 5:7).

Pastor Jack Hayford taught these deep expressions of prayer from our inner beings are aided by the Holy Spirit and made into effective intercession before the throne of God (Rom. 8:27). To us, these may just be unlearned, silly-sounding syllables that we may not understand but may actually be part of words of a private, spiritual, prayer-language God is giving us (Luke 11:11-13).

This “prayer language” is for private use and personal benefit. It is unlike the gift of tongues, which is to be shared within a congregation and always requires interpretation, for the profit and edification of the church (1 Cor. 14:4-5 and 12-13). This Spirit-assisted prayer is a resource to use in our private devotions of prayer and song (Vv. 14-15).

Paul went on to explain that praying and singing, both in tongues and in everyday language, were normal and regular parts of his prayer and praise experiences (Vv. 18-19). It was desirable and recommended for all believers (14:5).

I suggest praying and singing, both in tongues and in everyday language, will enhance *our* abilities to intercede for the saints according to the will of God (Rom. 8:27). Such supplication in the Spirit (Eph. 6:18) enables our spiritual warfare, which is needed for such a time as this (Esth. 4:14).

Let us faithfully worship God, in spirit and truth, and continue to pray for the peace of Jerusalem!

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