

## CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

717 North Stapley Drive, Mesa, AZ 85203 Phone: (480) 833-7500

Series:	Scripture Memory	Pastor/Teacher
Number:	124	Gary L.W. Johnson
Text:	Hebrews 13:20-21	
Date:	January 14, 2024 (a.m.)	

### A GREAT BENEDICTION (Part II)

A. W. Pink, a truly great Bible teacher of a past generation, asks this important question: “A most important practical question is, How do we come to be interested in this Divine peace and reconciliation? A threefold answer may be returned: by ordination, impetration, and application. First, by the Father’s eternal decree or foreordination, for as to who should enter into the same has not been left to chance; hence, God’s elect are termed *the sons of peace* (Luke 10:6). Second, by the Son’s impetration or paying the purchase price: *having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself* (Col. 1:20). Third, by the Spirit’s application, who subdues our enmity, bends our stubborn wills, softens our hard hearts, overcomes our self-righteousness, and brings us into the dust before God as self-condemned criminals suing for mercy. It is at our conversions this Divine peace is actually conveyed to us, for it is only then that God’s wrath is removed from us (John 3:36) and that we are restored to His favour. Further grace is given us day by day as those already reconciled to God. A final reason may now be advanced why God is here addressed as *the God of peace*, and that is, to afford us valuable instruction in connection with prayer. It is very striking to note that in more than half of the passages where this particular Divine title occurs, it is where He is being *supplanted* – the reader may verify this for himself by consulting Rom. 15:33 and 16:20, 2 Cor. 13:11, Phil. 4:9, 1 Thess. 5:23, 2 Thess. 3:16, and here. Thus, it is employed for the purpose of *encouraging* us in our addresses at the Throne of Grace. Nothing will impart more confidence and enlarge our hearts more than the realization God has laid aside His wrath and has only thoughts of grace toward us. Nothing will inspire more liberty of spirit than to look upon God as *reconciled* to us by Jesus Christ: *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand* (Rom. 5:1, 2).”<sup>1</sup>

I. **THE GOD OF PEACE.** Here he is called “the God of peace” (also in Romans 15:33; 16:20; Philippians 4:9; and 1 Thessalonians 5:23). He is, in addition, “the God of glory” (Acts 7:2), “the God of patience and consolation,” as well as “the God of hope” (Romans 15:5, 13); “the God of all comfort” (2 Corinthians 1:3); “the God of love and peace” (2 Corinthians 13:11); and “the God of all grace” (1 Peter 5:10). Thomas Manton (1620-1677), in his masterful treatment of our text, makes the following observations: “God is the God of peace as he is the author and approver of this peace: 1 Cor. 14:33, *For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints*; 2 Thess. 3:16, *Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always, by all means.*”<sup>2</sup>

II. **HOW IS GOD THE GOD OF PEACE?** The *peace* here of which God is the author is primarily the peace of the gospel (Eph. 6:15), and peace which has been established, or re-established, between man and his Creator by the blood of Christ’s cross (Col. 1:20), the peace of God in Christ Jesus which passes all understanding (Phil. 4:7), peace, in short, in its deepest and fullest sense. It is the God of this peace, which speaks forgiveness and acceptance to man at the very heart of his being and which should permeate the whole of his existence in all its relationships and vicissitudes, whom our author invokes here.<sup>3</sup>

III. **THE BASIS OF GOD'S PEACE.** Before this peace could be made and this woeful breach repaired, there were two things to be removed which stood in the way – God's wrath, and our rebellious nature. The righteous wrath of God is appeased by the blood of Christ; our rebellion is cured and healed by his Spirit. The latter is but a consequent of the former. The first foundation for this peace was laid in the blood of Christ: Col. 1:20, *And having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself*; Isa. 53:5, *The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed*. The enmity had been irreconcilable and impossible to be removed, unless God had taken this way, unless the Son of God had died for a sinful world, that by the merit of his obedience he might give satisfaction to a provoked God for the wrong we had done him.<sup>5</sup>

**NOTE:** How is this peace appropriated? Shedd writes, "In the first place, the priestly work of Christ has an influence upon the human conscience similar to that which it has upon divine justice. Man's moral sense is pacified by Christ's atonement. Peace is everywhere in Scripture represented as the particular effect produced by faith in Christ's blood: *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God* (Rom. 5:1); *we are made nigh to God by the blood of Christ, for he is our peace* (Eph. 2:13-14); *having made peace through the blood of his cross* (Col. 1:20); *peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you* (John 14:27); *the peace of God passes all understanding* (Phil. 4:7). The human conscience is the mirror and index of the divine attribute of justice. The two are correlated. What therefore God's justice demands, man's conscience demands. *Nothing*, says Matthew Henry, *can pacify an offended conscience but that which satisfied an offended God*. The peace which the believer in Christ's atonement enjoys, and which is promised by the Redeemer to the believer, is the subjective experience in man that corresponds to the objective reconciliation in God. The pacification of the human conscience is the consequence of the satisfaction of divine justice. God's justice is completely satisfied for the sin of man by the death of Christ. This is an accomplished fact: *Jesus Christ the righteous is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world* (1 John 2:2). The instant any individual man of this world of mankind believes of a fact is always needed in order to a personal benefit from it. Belief is not needed in order to establish the fact. Whether a sinner believes Christ died for sin or not will make no difference with the fact, though it will make a vast difference with him: *If we believe not, yet he abides faithful: he cannot deny himself* (2 Tim. 2:13). Unbelief cannot destroy a fact. Should not a soul henceforth believe on the Son of God, it would nevertheless be a fact that he died an atoning death on Calvary and that this death is an ample oblation for the sin of the world. But it must be remembered that the kind of belief by which a man obtains a personal benefit from the fact of Christ's death is experimental, not historical or hearsay. A man may believe from common rumor that the death of Christ satisfies divine justice for the sin of the world and yet experience no benefit and no peace from his belief, even as a blind man may believe from common rumor that there is a mountain in front of him and yet have none of the pleasing sensations and personal benefits that accompany the vision of it. The blind man may have no doubt of the fact that there is a mountain before him; he may even argue to prove its existence and still have all the wretched sensations of blindness and obtain no personal advantage from his hearsay belief. And a sinful man may have no skeptical doubt that the death of Christ on Mount Calvary has completely expiated human guilt, and may even construct a strong argument in proof of the fact and still have all the miserable experience of an unforgiven sinner, may still have remorse and the fear of death and the damnation of hell. The belief by which men obtain personal benefit, namely, mental peace and blessedness, from the fact of Christ's atonement involves trust and reliance upon Christ. A man may believe Christ and yet not believe on him. Christ himself marks the difference between historical or hearsay belief and experimental faith in Matt. 13:13-15: *Seeing, they see not; and hearing, they hear not, neither do they understand. In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which says, By hearing you shall hear and shall not understand; and seeing you shall see and shall not perceive*. Whenever there is an experimental belief of the actual and accomplished fact of Christ's atonement, there is a subjective pacification of the conscience corresponding to the objective reconciliation of divine justice. But this subjective effect of Christ's death is neither the primary nor the whole effect of it. It presupposes the objective satisfaction or propitiation. In this instance, as in all others, the object is prior to the subject and determines its consciousness."<sup>4</sup>

IV. **THE DEMONSTRATION OF GOD'S SATISFACTION.** "It may seem strange," writes Guthrie, "the writer leaves until the benediction any direct reference to the resurrection (*who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus*), but there can be no doubt that his whole discussion assumes it. Since he reflects on the exaltation and present intercessory work of Christ, he moves one step ahead of the resurrection. But in this benediction, he wants to remind the readers especially of the powerful activity of God, seen supremely in the resurrection of Christ."<sup>6</sup>

**CONCLUSION:** John Newton, the great hymn writer was also a diligent pastor and serious student of Scripture. He wrote regarding Christ being described as the great shepherd: "Our Lord expressly styles himself the *Shepherd*, the *good Shepherd of the sheep*, and the apostle Peter styles him the *chief Shepherd*. His faithful ministers have the honour to be under-shepherds; he appoints and qualifies them to feed his flock. They are the messengers of his will, but they can do nothing without him; they can only communicate what they receive, and cannot watch over the flock unless they are themselves watched over by him. For, with respect to efficacy, he is the chief, and, indeed, the sole Shepherd. The eyes of all are upon him, and *his eye* is upon and over all his flock. The Old Testament church had a shepherd, and their shepherd was Jehovah. Unless therefore the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls likewise be Jehovah, we fall unspeakably short of the privilege of ancient Israel, if their Shepherd was almighty, and if ours could be but a creature. Surely we could not then say, what yet the apostle affirms, that we have a *better covenant, established upon better promises*; since Messiah himself is expressly declared to be the surety and the mediator of this covenant. But would it not be better, upon this supposition, with David, who could say, Jehovah is my Shepherd, than with us, who are entrusted to the care of a delegated and inferior keeper, if Jesus be not Jehovah? Besides, who but Jehovah can relieve the necessities of multitudes in all places, in the same moment, and be equally near and attentive to them in every age? The sinner, who is enlightened to know himself, his wants, enemies, and dangers, will not dare to confide in anything short of an almighty arm; he needs a shepherd who is full of wisdom, full of care, full of power; able, like the sun, to shine upon millions at once, and possessed of those incommunicable attributes of Deity, omniscience and omnipresence. Such is our great Shepherd; and he is eminently the good Shepherd also, for he laid down his life for the sheep, and has redeemed them to God by his own blood. A *shepherd* is a relative name; it has reference to a *flock*. This great and good Shepherd has a flock, whom he loved from everlasting, and whom having loved, he will love to the end. He humbled himself for their sakes, submitted to partake of their nature and their sorrows, took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of sinful flesh. He died for his sheep, *the just for the unjust*, to redeem them from the curse of the law, from the guilt and dominion of sin, from the power of Satan, and then bring them to God. They, by nature, are all *gone astray, every one to his own way*; but having thus bought them with his blood in his own appointed time he seeks, finds, and restores his sheep. By the power of his word and Spirit, he makes himself known to their hearts, causes them to hear and understand his voice, and guides them into his fold. Then they become his sheep in the sense of my text. They are under his immediate protection and government. Considered as individuals, they are fitly described by the name of *sheep*. A sheep is a weak, defenseless, improvident creature; prone to wander, and if once astray, is seldom known to return to its own accord. A sheep has neither strength to fight with the wolf, nor speed to escape from him; nor has it the foresight of the ant, to provide its own sustenance. Such is our character, and our situation: unable to take care of ourselves, prone to wander from our resting place, exposed to enemies which we can neither withstand nor avoid, without resource in ourselves, and taught, by daily experience, the insufficiency of everything around us. Yet, if this Shepherd be our Shepherd, weak and helpless as we are, we may be of good courage. If we can say with David, *The Lord is my Shepherd*, we may make the same inferences which he did, *therefore I shall not want: therefore I need not fear.*"<sup>7</sup>

## ENDNOTES

---

<sup>1</sup> A. W. Pink, *Exposition of Hebrews* (rpt. Baker, 1954), p. 1277.

<sup>2</sup> *The Complete Works of Thomas Manton XVII* (rpt. Maranatha Publications, 1973), p. 377.

<sup>3</sup> P. E. Hughes, *A Commentary On The Epistle To The Hebrews* (Eerdmans, 1977), p. 589.

<sup>4</sup> W. G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology* (Third edition, P&R, 2003), p. 208.

<sup>5</sup> T. Manton, *op. cit.*, p 378.

<sup>6</sup> Donald Guthrie, *Hebrews: Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* (IVP, 1983), p. 278.

<sup>7</sup> *The Works of John Newton IV* (rpt. The Banner of Truth, 1985), pp. 151-153.