

Fall 2014 Newsletter
Detroit Bible Students Ecclesia
P.O. Box 51, Southfield, MI 48037-0051
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*He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.
I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.
Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.
He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust:
his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.*

Psalm 91:1-4



The Peace of God

Another year of wars, revolutions, personal and national financial turmoil, and terrorism is nearing its close. It is impossible to turn on the TV news or read a newspaper or news magazine without reports of unspeakable horror meeting our eyes. There is no escape from the suffering even for those who live in places of relative peace. The specter of illness and death hangs over all. What an illusive thing peace seems in this evil world. Yet, there is a peace that transcends all things. This is the peace of God.

How beautiful and reassuring are the expressions of trust in the Lord found in the words of the Psalmist (91:2): "I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust." These words are even more meaningful when we take into consideration the preceding verse, which reads, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty."(vs1) While this is a comforting statement concerning God's protecting care over his people, it nevertheless indicates that there is a condition attached to it—That we dwell in the secret place of the most High.

But, what does it mean to dwell in the secret place of the most High? The word "dwelleth" is from the Hebrew verb *yashab*

which means "sitting." It includes the thought of calm repose, or resting. The phrase, "in the secret place of the most High," gives the thought that this is the most private part of God's will and plan—his most closely held secrets.

The scriptures repeatedly declare that God's great plan is a "hidden mystery" to the world. (Colossians 1:26) Only to those who now draw near to God through faith and consecration are the secrets of his plan made known. Only those who through prayer and diligent study of God's word seek to discern the Bible's true sentiments and real teaching are in any way "dwelling in the secret place of the most High." Of these the scripture says, "The secret of the LORD is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His covenant." (Psalm 25:14) Jesus gave his disciples an indication of their privileged status when they asked him why he always spoke to the people in parables. He said, "To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to others parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand. (Luke 8:10; Mark 4:11)

God's peace will only come to those who put their **full** trust in him. The Psalmist says: "Great peace have they that love thy law, and nothing shall offend them." (Psalm 119:165) The

assurance of our Lord Jesus is "Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered." (Luke 12:7) But, nowhere does the Bible teach that the Christian will be sheltered from trouble. Among the last words Jesus spoke to his disciples he said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)

What the child of God is promised is that our troubles will be supervised and measured. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." (1 Corinthians 10:13) In this text "temptation" comes from a word that means "testing" or "discipline."

The "exceeding great and precious promises" of the secret place of the Most High do not belong to our flesh. God is not looking after the interests of our flesh but only after our spiritual welfare. We are not exempt from the ills and diseases common to the flesh. God's promise that "neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling" (Psalm 91:10), refers to our dwelling in the secret place of the most High. No evil can befall us that will do us spiritual harm, for God is fully protecting us, having given his angels a charge concerning us; "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Hebrews 1:14) There is a promise for every phase of the Christian life, by use of which promises we may be made partakers of the divine nature. (2 Peter 1:4)

In the 46th Psalm, we have another prophetic picture of our day. It begins "God is our refuge and strength, an ever present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea." This is truly a profound statement of confidence while the whole world is falling apart. Verse 6 continues, "Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts." How like our day. Ever since the first great worldwide conflict, World War I, we have been witnesses to the fall of kingdoms and the dissolution of nations. The vast colonial empires are no more and ethnic strife has fractured nations such as Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. Only recently Scotland made an attempt to secede from England.

Amidst the conflict verses 4 and 5 tell us: "There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells. God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day." And the Psalm ends with the wonderful declaration, "He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth. He breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire. He says, 'Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.' The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress." (Psalm 46:1-11 *New International Version*)

Our Lord taught us as His followers to pray—"Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." Surely none will dispute that God's will being done in heaven means the perfect happiness of all of His angelic hosts, nor is there any

death or sickness there, no tears or physicians. Surely none will doubt that there is no sorrow in heaven nor cause for any.



The promise of God's coming kingdom in which righteousness will dwell is the constantly recurring theme of the Bible. Jesus came to give his life a ransom for Adam's dying race so that the promise of the Kingdom could become a reality. During his ministry and the ministries of the Apostles, the kingdom was constantly preached. (Matthew 4:23; 9:35; Mark 1:14; Luke 8:1; Acts 8:12; 20:25; 28:31) Jesus further demonstrated the power of the kingdom when he healed the people's diseases and raised Lazarus from death. On such good authority as these, the child of God can find peace and rest amidst the world's alarms in the promise of the Kingdom.

In the world's eyes, those who believe the Bible and trust it implicitly are thought illogical, credulous, superstitious and impractical. While the world still holds out hope that their humanitarian work will solve the world's ills, despite their best efforts, war still plagues the globe and hunger and pestilence abound. For every disaster that relief agencies attend to, another waits to strike. Trying to bring peace without the peacemaker is like trying to sweep back the tide with a broom. But God's promise is sure. The fact that Israel is back in its land after almost 2,000 years and continues to survive attack after attack from its Arab neighbors is strong evidence that God's promises come true. (Jeremiah 16:14,15; 24:6-7; 32:37-42; Amos 9:14,15)

Why, then should we hesitate for a moment to accept the explicit declarations of the Scriptures that a great change of dispensation is coming, when instead of the world being subject to the prince of this world who now worketh in the children of disobedience (Ephesians 2:2) it shall instead be under the dominion, the rulership, of the Prince of Glory, who redeemed Adam and his race from the curse of death by the sacrifice of Himself? But why hasn't God intervened before now?

Before God's blessings can come to the world, Christ's Church, the people for God's name, must be selected from among men. (Acts 15:14-18) All the promises and admonitions of the Scriptures are for those "called saints," (1 Corinthians 1:2; Ephesians 1:1) for whom God's truth is a "shield and buckler." (Psalm 91:4) Since Calvary the call has gone out to gather and develop the bride of Christ to be joint-heirs with their Redeemer. (John 17:9-11; 1 Corinthians 1:26,27; Romans 8:28) In the meantime, the world waits for "the manifestation of the sons of God." (Romans 8:19)

Revelation 21:2 is a picture of the Kingdom of God coming to earth. "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." This holy city Jerusalem represents the glorified Church of Christ and is the same spoken of in the 46th Psalm as "the city of God." However, in the Psalm this group is on earth, in the midst of the troubles, needing, and receiving, the help of God so she will not fall. She is refreshed by a river which gladdens her. Water pictures truth (John 4:10) and the truth of God's word and his unfailing promises refresh and sustain all who are his people today while they seek to walk faithfully in the midst of adversity. These waters make the city of God "glad." That is, we receive joy in knowing that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28)

Revelation continues: "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new." (Rev 21:3-5)

For more than six thousand years our race has been dying. It requires faith to believe that this order of things, which has prevailed for so long, will be set aside and a new order introduced. Death has been around for so long that many think that man was created to die and have forgotten that death was the punishment for sin. The aches and pains which have afflicted our race are the result of sin not the natural state of man as created by God.

The human race are God's children by creation—the work of his hands—and his plan with reference to them is clearly revealed in his Word. Paul says that the first man (who was a sample of what the race will be when perfect) was of the earth, earthy, (1 Corinthians 15:47) and his posterity, with the exception of the Gospel Church, will inherit the earth in God's kingdom. David declares that man was made only a little lower than the angels, and crowned with glory, honor, and gave him dominion over the earthly works of God's hands. (Psalm 8:4-8) Peter, our Lord, and all the prophets since the world began declare that the human race is to be restored to that glorious perfection in the resurrection, and given the dominion of earth that had been lost by Adam when he sinned. (Acts 3:19-21)

In the meantime, we look forward to the day when the true knowledge of God will fill the whole earth, when sighing and crying will be done away and there will be no more death; when the ransomed of the Lord will return with rejoicing and when no one will ever again hurt or destroy because all the earth will be at peace. (Habakkuk 2:13; Revelation 21:4; Isaiah 35:10; 11:9; Psalm 46:9) Hallelujah! What a Savior!



Close your eyes for a moment to the scenes of misery and woe, degradation and sorrow that yet prevail on account of sin, and picture before your mental vision the glory of the perfect earth.
 Not a stain of sin mars the harmony and peace of a perfect society;
 not a bitter thought, not an unkind look or word;
 love, welling up from every heart,
 meets a kindred response in every other heart,
 and benevolence marks every act.
 There sickness shall be no more; not an ache nor a pain,
 nor any evidence of decay--not even the fear of such things.
 Think of all the pictures of comparative health and beauty of human form and feature that you have ever seen,
 and know that perfect humanity will be of still surpassing loveliness.
 The inward purity and mental and moral perfection will stamp and glorify every radiant countenance.
 Such will earth's society be;
 and weeping bereaved ones will have their tears all wiped away,
 when thus they realize the resurrection work complete.
 Revelation 21:4

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