

## A BIBLICAL VIEW OF PEACE

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### Scriptures:

Malachi 2:4-6  
Matthew 10:34-39  
Isaiah 9:6  
Romans 5:1-5  
John 14:27  
Philippians 4:7

Scripture gives various understandings of the word 'peace'. I will attempt to give a pointer for each.

Today, and throughout history, Israel stands under the threat of war as surrounding opposing powers seek to wipe her out.

The Old Testament records periods of peace for Israel alternating with periods of war, suffering and exile. The prophets cried out against the people for worshipping the Baals (gods) and the Asheroth (places of worship). These were cults brought into the Jewish nation from other countries. They involved extreme sexual gratification, the sacrifice of humans and turning their backs on the Redeemer God, Yahweh, who brought them out of Egypt. When the Jews turned to these places of worship, ignoring the warnings of the prophets, enemies came against them, destroying their land and killing many of their people. The Old Testament sees these conquering armies as agents bringing punishment for the sins of Israel's idolatry. Whenever the kings, leaders and people worshipped the God of Israel, peace and prosperity fell upon them.

In Malachi 2:4-6 we find the final mention of 'peace' in the Old testament.

*"True instruction was in his mouth and nothing false was found on his lips. He walked with God in peace and uprightness and turned many from sin."* (v.6)

These verses not only speak of the ministry of the tribe of Levi, God's chosen priests, but point to some characteristics which should be seen in Christian ministers in the New Testament. The Prophet speaks of showing love and respect for God, living honestly by God's standards, preaching the truth and leading by example. What a wonderful picture of any leader God appoints.

As we come to the teaching of Jesus we find Him warning His disciples in Matthew 10:34,

*"Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but the sword."*

To understand this verse we must continue reading verses 35-39 which give context. Although Isaiah 9:6 describes Jesus as 'the Prince of Peace', Matthew 10:34-39 points to our broken relationship with God, and Jesus bringing healing to that relationship when we put Him first.

Romans 5:1 tells us; *"Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."*

In John 14:27 Jesus spoke to those who followed Him closely in His earthly ministry. These words remain true for everyone who follows Him today in a changeable and insecure world.

*"Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."*

This promise of peace lines up perfectly with His words in John 14 where Jesus is making a farewell which would acquire great meaning following His death and resurrection. Well respected Commentator Professor Donald Guthrie writes, "There is a strong possessive aspect in this context. Jesus spoke of a peace which was His. His peace has been put to the test."

As we come to the close of our study, we turn to Paul's words to the Philippians 4:7

*"And the peace of God which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."*

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, I pray that I may know this deep peace at work within me as I meet the problems and persecution in the days that lie ahead. Help me to remain strong in You. Amen.