

Peace

Peace is freedom from, or cessation of war or hostilities; that condition of a nation or community in which it is not at war with another. Concerning the individual, it is by definition the freedom from perturbances, a condition of quiet tranquility, or an undisturbed state. We speak of peace of mind, or of soul or of conscience. These are worldly dictionary definitions. But what is the peace spoken of in Scripture, especially by Jesus and the Apostles? What does Jesus mean in John 14:27 when he says, "Peace I leave you, my peace I give you; not as the world gives, give I unto you." This is the same peace referred to in John 16:33, 20:19,21,26, and in Acts 10:36, as well as eleven times in Romans and a total of 71 times in the New Testament. In each of these it is the Greek word "eirene" (i-ray'.nay) which means "one, peace, quietness, rest, *set at one again.*" What a treasure there is here in this word when understood in the fullness of the glory in which Jesus meant to convey it! Listen to His words again with what, I believe, is the fullness of his meaning! "Peace I leave you, My peace, My rest, My father's accomplishment through me of having you *set at one again* with me!" How weak and non-descript by comparison is the word "peace" as a translation of the wonderful word "eirene" in its fuller and here more appropriate meaning, to be "*set at one again!*" This is the peace of God which "passeth all understanding" (Philippians 4:7). It passes all understanding because it is a spiritual change, which can never be understood by the natural man.

When we read John 14:27 as it is translated, we comprehend little more than the current dictionary meaning of the word "peace." The interpretation indicated above is, I believe, a much more accurate and profound statement from our Lord. Simply applying the word "peace," provides us only a tiny fragment of the real meaning, which our Lord chose to convey. Here, and 70 more times, the Holy Spirit is saying to us that Jesus has "set (us) at one again." This is the divine promise of Ephesians 2:8, 9 repeated over and over again! He is saying to us who are born again that we are one again with Him!!! We are no longer children of Adam, but are now children of God! Before we were born again, we were a house in ruins; body, soul and spirit were in disarray. Before he sinned, Adam

was governed by the spirit, in direct communication with the Holy Spirit of God. He was spiritually at one with God. The human spirit, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, directed the soul that controlled the body. Then came the fall, the result of the original sin. That “fall” was when this arrangement with Adam and Eve crashed and came to ruin. The spirit was no longer in control of the soul, nor was there any communication between the human spirit and the Holy Spirit. The sensuous creature, that is the body along with the ego or soul, were now in control, with the human spirit remaining in a subordinate position. The man who was made in the spiritual image of God lost that image (1 Corinthians 15:15-50). As his own God-connected spirit separated from the Holy Spirit, so did the light with which he was clothed, and he was no longer “at one” with God, but instead a creature at war with God, filled with sin and the uncontrollable propensity for sin. This took on the nature of a genetic defect in the ruptured spirit, soul-body-trinity, a defect transmitted to all future generations. In effect, the spirit-Spirit communication network was totally severed. But here, giving us His “peace,” Jesus says to believers that He has *set us at one* again with God; He has restored the original order of the structure of man; He has put the spirit back in control of the soul and restored spirit-Spirit communication. Even though we retain that generic defect we call sin, it can no longer cause us death or to remain separated from God. For having received the second birth and thus having been “*set at one again*” with God, we become the children of God and thus are immune to the second death, for from the second birth is eternal life.

This peace of John 14:27 and the peace which “*passeth all understanding*” of Philippians 4:7 is the second peace. It is the peace of God as compared with the peace with God. When we accept Jesus as our Savior, that is, when we receive the grace of salvation through faith in the Gospel, we are no longer at war with God. But the ultimate peace, that peace which “*passeth all understanding*,” that peace of God, is that most inner and blessed peace which comes only when we yield to Him and accept Him as our Lord. It is when we place our trust in Him for all things, not worrying about anything, but are prayerfully thankful and accepting of all things. That is the true peace of God, when we are *set at one* with Him. Jesus again expresses this incredible condition of the redeemed soul in John 17:21-23, using, in essence, this definition, but not calling it “peace”. Listen

to this starting with verse 20: “*Neither pray I for those alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they may be one; as thou Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one even as we are one. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou has sent me, and hast loved them, as thou has loved me.*” Three times Jesus includes the phrase “that they may be one.” Think about what He is saying; “that they may be one in us”!! Isn’t that the condition of “the peace that passeth all understanding?” If we are in God and God in us, are we not set at one again with Him as was the first Adam before sin entered the world? This is “the peace that passeth all understanding!”

Perhaps it can also be expressed this way. The war ends. That is, we stop fighting Him with our disbelief in His Truth and become at peace with God as we receive Jesus as our Savior. However, it is when we also become one with Him as our Lord that we receive that peace of God, that peace that passeth all understanding. All of us, who are born from above, call Jesus our Lord and Savior, but how many live the full measure of the role wherein He is our Lord? For Him to be our Savior is the result of our acceptance through faith that He is our Savior. But acknowledging Him and having Him as our Lord, is a day-by-day, moment by moment, continuing process of surrender and subordination of self to His will even when it is difficult and inconvenient. It is characterized by our daily conviction, confession and repentance regarding our weaknesses as applied to our obedience and faith. It is a continual seeking to give back to Him our own will and accepting His as the only will in our lives.

Making Him truly our Lord does not just happen. It is an on going, ever developing process as we pray and seek Him as our Lord and Master in everything we do, think and feel. Only then can grow within us that second peace which “passeth all understanding,” that is, when we are fully *set at one* with Him.

It is interesting and somewhat confirming to note that there is no such definition for peace in the Old Testament Hebrew. How could there be? The spirit-Spirit reunion could not come about until Jesus' act of love on the cross-washed away the sins of all who were in the faith. Prior to that, the sins of all of the Old Testament saints were merely covered, not erased, and when they died, their spirits, though destined eventually for heaven, had to descend into the paradise side of shoel to await Jesus' incredible act of redemption. They could not be "set at one again" until He provided the way, that only way.

How incredibly wonderful it is that He came, and hereby did provide the way to set us at one again with Him!!!!