

The Things That Make For Peace

By Jane Titrud

As Jesus rode toward Jerusalem in order to face suffering and death at the hands of the city's wicked rulers, He paused to weep over the city when it finally came into view, saying,

*If you had known in this day, even you, **the things which make for peace!** But now they have been hidden from your eyes.*

For the days shall come upon you when your enemies will throw up a bank before you, and surround you, and hem you in on every side, and will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation. (Luke 19:42-44 NASB)

He had also mourned over the city a few days before, saying to the Pharisees:

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not have it!

Behold, your house is left to you desolate; and I say to you, you shall not see Me until the time comes when you say, 'BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!' (Luke 13:34-35)

Jesus wept and mourned because the people of the city were about to make the same mistake they had made several times before. Once again, they would kill a man who had been a true prophet in their midst. Yet, this time they would kill One who was more than a prophet. They would crucify the very Son of God, even their long-awaited Messiah.

Considering the way Jesus rode into Jerusalem mounted on a foal of a donkey, there would have been no excuse for not knowing who He was. Everything happened just as the prophet Zechariah said it would in Zechariah 9:9: "*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you: He is just and endowed with salvation, humble, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.*" The multitudes even called out to Him as He predicted they would back in Luke 13:35, "*saying, 'BLESSED IS THE KING WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; peace in heaven and glory in the highest!'*" (Luke 19:38)

Yet, the people of Jerusalem would soon deny their King. The irony here is that a city whose very name meant "possession of peace" did not know the things that make for peace, nor did the place that was also known as "the City of God" (Psalm 48:1-2) recognize His coming.

One problem was that the Jews were living under the thumb of Rome. They wanted deliverance from foreign rule, and they expected their Messiah to lead them to victory and establish political peace immediately. That is why many were initially anxious to make Him king. The Jews did not understand, however, that their greatest enemy was within themselves, in that their hearts had become callous and cold toward the things of God.

When Jesus stood before Pontius Pilate, He did not deny that He was a king. He spoke the basic truth when Pilate asked Him, "*So You are a king?*" Jesus answered, "*You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice*" (John 18:37).

Yet, the full truth was that He was more than a king. He was the Son of God and the Savior

of the world. As the perfect sacrifice, He was about to willingly die in order to provide all who would believe in Him a way of salvation from the bondage of sin. His death would bring all of the necessary elements together that would lead to everlasting peace with God. Thus, He also bore witness to the truth concerning the spiritual condition of the people. Otherwise, they might not recognize the need for such a salvation.

His convicting witness unto those who thought they were already righteous, however, led to a secondary and more acute problem. The Jews basically did not want to acknowledge their sinfulness. This was mainly why they rejected Him. What He was about to accomplish was not the kind of salvation they were looking for or thought they needed. Hardened hearts still keep the majority of the Jews from recognizing their true need even today.

The blindness of the Jews has not been due to a lack of revelation knowledge in the Hebrew Scriptures. The elements of salvation that lead to everlasting peace were disclosed hundreds of years before Jesus was born. God inspired the sons of Korah to include them in Psalm 85. Verses 8-13 of this psalm reads as follows:

I will hear what God the LORD will say; for He will speak peace to His people, to His godly ones; but let them not turn back to folly.

Surely His salvation is near to those who fear Him, that glory may dwell in our land.

Lovingkindness and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

Truth springs from the earth; and righteousness looks down from heaven.

Indeed, the Lord will give what is good; and our land will yield its produce.

Righteousness will go before Him, and will make His footsteps into a way.

(Psalm 85:8-13)

Notice especially that the salvation of God would be characterized by loving-kindness balanced with truth. Moreover, true peace must meet the righteous demands of a Holy God. These things only come together perfectly in the person and work of Jesus Christ. This kind of salvation and its resulting peace cannot be achieved by mere human effort. Hence, the reason why unbelievers in any age do not understand the things that lead to peace is that such knowledge comes through faith in Jesus Christ.

It naturally follows that the farther people become removed from the truth, the more they need the Gospel. Christians must, therefore, not be discouraged by the current rejection of truth. Jesus willingly died for the sins of mankind despite the rejection He knew He would face. Believers should thus be faithful to share the Good News as well. The truth that God has provided a way unto salvation and peace through the righteous work of Jesus Christ is the only hope of the world.