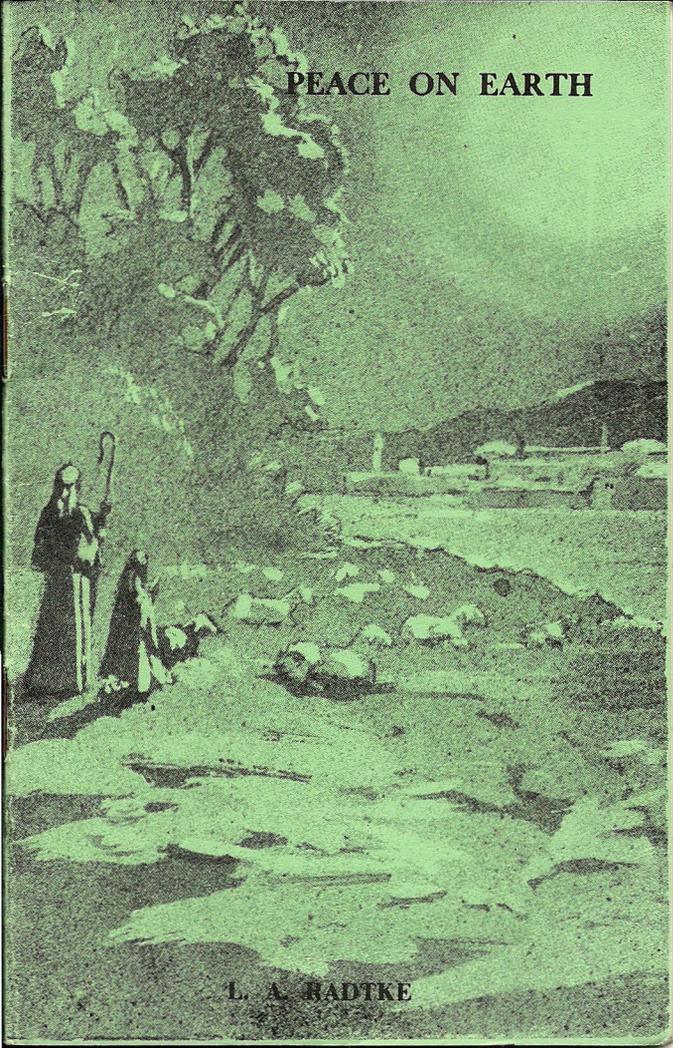


PEACE ON EARTH



L. A. RADTKE

MAN'S QUEST FOR PEACE

Peace is the desire of nearly every person in the world. It is being sought among the nations of the East as well as the nations of the West. But alas, it seems to be just beyond their grasp.

This world wide turmoil is but a reflection of the inner turmoil that exists within the heart of man. Many of the best selling books deal with peace of mind, peace of soul, peace of heart (which is another admission of man searching for that which he does not have).

This inner turmoil spills over into every area of life. For example, it has been stated that over 8 million in the U.S. alone need immediate help for psychiatric disorders.

Because this turmoil and hostility is present in the home, the break down of the home has become America's number one social problem. The divorce rate is now forty percent overall, and fifty-four

percent for second marriages. One University professor stated that a happily married couple is an oddity, indicating that all is not well among many families which are still hanging together. Naturally, children suffer in this unloving, warring atmosphere and too often become victims of child abuse.

Many young people, in search of happiness and peace, run away from themselves and their families to find a welcome from those who exploit and use them. Drugs, too often, become the prelude to crime, prostitution, homosexuality, etc. By the time a young person realizes there is no peace or satisfaction in these areas, their problems and miseries may be so compounded, that in despair they seek an escape from life itself. Thus, suicide has become the second highest cause of death among young people.

The dictionary defines peace as "freedom from or cessation of war or hostilities - that condition of a nation or community

when it is not at war with another". The second part of the definition says that "peace concerning the inward man is freedom from the mental or spiritual disturbances arising from emotional conflict or passion, sense of guilt".

We see that the term "peace" may be used in the social realm of the physical, man's relationship to his fellow man, or, it may be used in the spiritual realm, his relationship to God and himself.

WAR IN HEAVEN

Satan is the author of war. Ezekiel 28:15 says, "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee". Notice that sin (iniquity) started first in the heart of Satan. He became occupied with himself, his own importance, and his own ambitions. In Isaiah 14:12-15, we have his heart ambitions recorded in the five "I wills". "His heart was lifted up because

of his beauty; he corrupted his God-given wisdom by reason of his own brightness". Ezekiel 28:17.

This then erupted open rebellion of one third of the angels in heaven.

WAR ON EARTH

Satan's conversation with Eve in the garden of Eden indicates that he had to first place some question marks in Eve's thinking before she would openly rebel against God.

In Genesis 3:1 & 3, he slandered the integrity of God. In verse 5 he slandered the goodness of God and denied the severity of the penalty that would fall upon her, namely death.

In open defiance to God, "She took of the fruit and did eat and gave also unto her husband and he did eat". Genesis 3:6. When man fell in sin in the Garden of Eden, it was the result of rebellion

against a holy, righteous God. Man in effect, declared war on God. As the by product of this spirit of anarchy and rebellion against God, he then began to war with others. This was manifested in the children of Adam and Eve, for the first murder involved two brothers by the names of Cain and Abel. Nature around them also fell under a curse, and resulted in the law of the jungle, the survival of the fittest. The animals began to kill and to destroy each other. Man, who rebelled against God, fell under the curse of death and lives in a world of rebellion and death.

From the time man fell, the world has never known peace. There has always been war some place among peoples and nations, and in the measure that populations increase in various areas, every crime imaginable also increases. In it all, and through it all, man yearns for peace. If any man however, is to obtain peace, he must obtain that peace on God's terms, God's way, through God's provision which He has provided in the Prince of Peace,

the Lord Jesus Christ as He is revealed in the Word of God. But man, by nature, because he is a proud sinner, seeks to solve his own problems, the problems of others, as well as the problems of the world, by his own efforts and ingenuity.

PEACE ON MAN'S TERMS

Men in the past have sought to unite themselves under the call letters of peace.

We have recorded in Genesis chapter II, a man by the name of Nimrod, who actually formed the first United Nations in an effort to unite the world in building the tower which led to heaven; it was designed, no doubt, to escape future judgment and beat God at his own game. His plan was in opposition to God's plan. God judged those seemingly noble efforts, and it says in Genesis 11:9, "Therefore is the name of it called Babel (confusion), because the Lord there confounded the language of all the earth and from thence

did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth." The defunct League of Nations and the present day United Nations illustrate man's feeble efforts to have peace in a world full of hostility and rebellion toward God and man. Atheistic communism is another illustration of confusion, for while they speak of peace and advocate arms limitations, they continue to develop the largest Army, Navy and sophisticated missile system the world has ever known, while their philosophy holds three-fourths of the world in slavery. All done of course, under the call letters of peace.

You see the issue that faces man today is "On whose terms will he seek peace?" Will he seek it on his own terms, or will he avail himself to God's peace offered on God's terms. During the Christmas season you hear seven words repeated over and over again. These seven words are "Peace on earth, good will toward men." Luke 2:14. These seven words have become an accepted slogan in hopes that

man may still be able to obtain this great quest for peace, by his own efforts.

This angelic proclamation was not made for the purpose of encouraging warring peoples and nations of the world to settle their differences and make peace with one another. A much more important war had to be settled, which is the war that existed between man and God. This is why Christ came.

PEACE PROVIDED

Let us notice more carefully the good tidings of Luke 2:10 and 11. "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

The glad tidings center in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the purpose for which he came, to be the SAVIOUR of the world. In verse 12, the angel said, "And this shall be a sign unto you; ye

shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." The shepherds were well acquainted with the manger and stable where the first-born of all the animals were always set apart to be offered in sacrifice for sin.

This animal sacrifice pictured and looked forward to the Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, who would become by His death, the final sacrifice for all sin for all time. The swaddling clothes also picture that fact, for this was the same material used in wrapping dead bodies in preparation of the grave which was a sign the Shepherds could understand. Look carefully at the words spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ to His Father while He laid in a manger. He was the only baby who ever spoke and this is what He said:

"Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me."

Hebrews 10:5

Why was a body prepared for Him? Because, the Old Testament sacrifices, the lambs which were slain and the blood that was spilt, could never take away sins. Hebrews 10:4.

“And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God. For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.” Hebrew 10:11, 12, 14.

There were no chairs in the Old Testament tabernacle for the priest to sit on, because his work was never done. He worked day after day after day ever coping with man's sins. His religious, repetitious ritualistic work was evidence that sin was an ever-present issue that one must face and make atonement for daily.

But notice the contrast after Christ offered one sacrifice for sin forever. He sat down. The great obstacle of sin which stood between God and Man was now resolved. Is this not Good Tidings and Good News?

Christ came to suffer and die for the sins of the world. John 1:29; John 3:16. The sacrifice of Himself was so adequate that God is no longer holding man's sins against him. II Corinthians 5:19. Thus, no sins remain to be removed by our works, our sincerity, or by church rites, sacraments or rituals, since He removed them for us 2,000 years ago upon the cross.

By this act of reconciliation, God in His mercy is not giving man what he rightly deserves, which is eternal death or separation from God forever in the Lake of Fire. Revelation 20:15. God is now offering to all men, on the basis of grace, peace through the Lord Jesus Christ.

PEACE ON GOD'S TERMS

"Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Romans 5:1. To be justified by God means to be declared righteous by God on the basis of faith alone. But, what is faith? Faith is nothing and there is no virtue in faith alone. The virtue of faith rests in it's object. In this case the object is the Person of Jesus Christ and His finished work upon the cross for my sins. God's Word says, "There is none righteous, no not one"; "There is none that doeth good." Romans 3: 10-12. "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23. If one understands the futility of seeking the approbation of God, or peace with God, based upon his own terms and his own religious works, then he can know the truth of Romans 4:5. "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for right-

eousness." Then, he can also understand the truth of what it means to be saved by grace through faith. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." Ephesians 2:8-9.

Yes, the God of all peace sent His Son into the world to become a peace offering. This is what the angels were announcing that starry night when they were giving glory to God and saying, "Peace on earth, good will toward men."

The peace offering had arrived in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. When a sinner, which we all are, acknowledges Jesus Christ as his peace offering, he then can have "peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." Romans 5:1.

In His Peace,
Leonard Radtke

Heritage Trail Bible Church

Corner of Hwy 35 & Heritage Trail
McKinley, MN 55761

Sunday School & Service
10:00 a.m.

Sunday Evening Service
7:00 p.m.

Wednesday Bible Study & Prayer
7:00 p.m.