

Hartford Bible Students

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Endless War... Eternal Peace

Another War

"Why do the heathen [nations] rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves... against the LORD..." (Psalm 2:1, 2) Throughout history, the power hungry have tried in vain to conquer the world by force. Sooner or later, a new regime has sought to usurp control. They think that it is only through force that they can establish peace.

The vain thing spoken of in Psalm 2 is that men believe they can establish universal peace under their own selfish terms · without the Prince of Peace and his righteous principles ruling in their hearts. In this present evil world, powerful, oppressive leaders will continually arise, indoctrinating hatred with their propaganda campaigns. Without the Prince of Peace, there will always be conflicts over religion, economic gains, territorial expansions, civil disputes, and nations rising against nations.

But, thank God, a strong universal government is about to put an end to the vain imaginations of these despotic rulers. In God's Holy Kingdom, Christ will reign with a rod of iron upon those who impose their unrighteous wills upon others. (Revelation 2:27; 20:1- 4) There will be no more power-hungry dictators, for none shall "hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea." (Isaiah 11:9)

Wars Shall Cease Worldwide

The final conflict between the kingdoms of this world under Satan's control and the peaceable

kingdom of Christ will not mean the end of the physical world, but the end of evil and selfishness now contaminating this world. (Galatians 1:4) It will serve to soften men's hearts so that they will desire to live in harmony with righteousness. Selfishness, rivalry, and jealousy will give place to compassion, sympathy and brotherly love.

The shaking process of the time of trouble will continue until Messiah's unshakable kingdom shall assert itself and take control of the world's affairs. The final battle between good and evil will demonstrate to the human mind the fact that nothing man can do will be able to bring order out of the chaos. The Lord assures us of the blessed result of His intervention on behalf of the world: "I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come." (Haggai 2:7)

By the end of this terrible shaking, mankind's only desire will be to live in peace and harmony with their neighbors. Then "nation shall not lift up sword against nation, either shall they learn war any more." (Isaiah 2:4) And the God of Heaven "...shall make wars to cease unto the ends of the earth... Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth." (Psalm 46:9,10)

What Happens After Wars Cease?

This peace and prosperity were prophesied by the angels at Jesus' birth: "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." (Luke 2:10) Sadly, most Christians are taught that only a few who accept Jesus now benefit from the offer of salvation and that all others will be destroyed, or worse, sent to an eternal life of torture.

But reasoning on the Scriptures we see that ever since Adam fell in the Garden of Eden, his children have inherited sin and have been plagued by this sin and its resulting sorrow and death. Most have never really had a chance to learn of God or to have an opportunity for salvation — the real good news. God knew that, through inherited weakness and the influence of Satan, the majority of mankind would not be capable of responding to His counsels, and hence, God "so loved the world" that He provided an opportunity of salvation in due time for everyone! Jesus Christ "tasted death for every man" and provided "a ransom for all to be testified in due time." (John 3:16; Hebrews 2:9; 1 Timothy 2:6)

Even Christ himself stated that this present age is not the due time for the most of humanity to learn of him. He declared that the Bible was purposely written in parables and symbols so that none but those of faith now would be converted. "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of God: but unto them that are without all these things are done in parables. That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them." (Mark 4:11-12)

If now is the only time for all to be converted, why did Jesus not give a clear message so that all could have an equal opportunity to understand his words of salvation during this lifetime? The reality is that now is the time for the selection of a few with "ears to hear" - the Church - "a people for God's name." (Acts 15:14-17)

After this nighttime of sorrow, and after mankind's experience with sin and self-rule, most will come forth from their graves anxious to hear knowledge of the Lord! With the promise that Satan will be bound, they will have, for the first time, a reasonable chance to be brought to perfection and everlasting life.

Jeremiah 31:34 says of that time, "...they shall all know me from the least of them unto the greatest."

Jeremiah also shows that they will no longer die for the inherited sins of their fathers, but, in God's Kingdom, if they refuse God's generous mercy during the reign of righteousness, they will then die for their own iniquity. (Jeremiah 31:29, 30) All others - every reformed sinner who took advantage of God's benevolence - will have the Law of God written in his heart. (Jeremiah 31:33)

Herein is the key to understanding God's ultimate plan for His human creation — to recognize that the Scriptures clearly teach that there are two distinct time periods for mankind to receive salvation - one due time for the faithful who go to heaven and one due time for those who remain on earth or who are raised from their graves when God's kingdom will have come on earth as it is in heaven. (Matthew 6:10)

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