

Truth For the Final Generation

Midday Message

“God of War or King of Peace?”

Opening Hymn: 225 NH “God is Working His Purpose Out”

Scripture Reading: *1 Corinthians 13:5-8a*

Introduction:

Last time we focused on the free sacrifice of God in His Eternal Son for all mankind while they were in active rebellion or as the scriptures say “...while we were yet enemies”, *Romans 5:8*. With this and other important biblical understandings of God’s character it is difficult to see God as violent and vindictive yet many still view God in this light.

Challenging Biblical Statements

¹¹ And I saw heaven opened and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. Revelation 19:11

³⁹ See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand. Deuteronomy 32:39

³ The Lord is a man of war: the Lord is his name. Exodus 15:3

Someone would say “it is clear that God is a God of war and for that reason killing would be a part of His character.”

We have already covered enough to answer this and many more questions that could be presented.

What Does The Scripture Mean?

In revelation 19:11 the imagery is of Jesus riding on a white horse to “make war” in the last days. We cannot go through the prophecy in detail but just enough to get the meaning of the term “war” in the passage. What we know in the verse is that “...and he that sat upon him [white horse] was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.”

1. He was called Faithful and True – in contrast to the Image of the Beast who used deception and lying wonders. (see Revelation 13:13, 14). Jesus is Faithful or
2. In Righteousness He doth judge and make war – The Greek word for

“war” in revelation 19:11 is “polemei” which is in the present tense and means that the war is ongoing. It implies, in context, an active struggle with evil.

Jesus is pictured coming the second time as part of the long-standing war against evil in the great controversy to both judge righteously and to actively fight in righteousness against the forces of evil. How is this done?

Waging War

⁶ Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts. Zechariah 4:6

The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works. Psalms 145:17

⁴ Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,⁵ Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil,⁶ Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;⁷ Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

⁸ Charity never faileth.... 1 Corinthians 13:5-8a

Caritas or Agape

Our English bibles were heavily influenced by Jerome’s Latin Vulgate. In Latin version of the scriptures the word Charity is derived from the Latin word Caritas. It meant then Love to God and Love to fellow men. A love that flows from God to man that finds expression in man’s giving and helping his fellowmen. It was a God derived action. Agape, on other hand, carries the understanding of the selfless all-encompassing love of God that is always giving!

Waring in righteousness

When God makes war then, it is on the basis of His Love and Righteousness and it finds expression in seeking the best for others, even His enemies, because God is Caritas or Agape!

God’s Method

The unfailing and unchanging principle we learnt was because of freedom intelligent creatures decide their own destiny. Moreover, because God knows everything and has created them free, He cannot violate their freedom. This means that whatever effect may have come to them has to have been a direct result of their choice rather than an arbitrary act on God’s part!

⁷ Be not deceived; God is not mocked [treated with contempt]: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also

reap.⁸ For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. Galatians 6:7-8

¹⁷ Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. James 1:17

²⁰ Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.²¹ Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. Romans 12: 20, 21

It is a law that whatever is sown there will be a harvest according to the sowing. Effect follows cause with definite exactness. Furthermore, God only gives good and perfect gifts and that will never change! God, then, overcomes evil with good.

God Creates Evil?

I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things. Isaiah 45:7

The Hebrew word רָע (ra‘) is a broad word that can mean moral evil (wickedness, sin) and also calamity, disaster, or trouble. Most modern translators render רָע (ra‘) as disaster but that still falls short of the context.

Notice that God forms the light and creates darkness, forms the peace and creates evil. How does God form light and peace? By His word. How does God create darkness and disaster or evil? By rejecting that same word these things are created! Darkness is formed when light is blocked and disaster the outworking of a principle opposed to peace. God allows darkness and disaster and evil. They are perversions of the true not things that God called into existence. They are the caused by free choices and their rebellious effects.

God of Peace

¹⁷ And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. Isaiah 32:17

¹² That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

¹³ But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

¹⁴ For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;¹⁵ Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;

¹⁶ And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

¹⁷ And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.¹⁸ For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Ephesians 2:12-18

Appeal

What is peace? Most people have the idea that it is a sort of ecstatic feeling. They think that peace with God means an indescribable heavenly feeling; and so they always look for that imaginary feeling as evidence that they are accepted with God. But peace with God means the same thing that it means with men: it means simply the absence of war. As sinners we are enemies of God. He is not our enemy, but we are his enemies. He is not fighting against us, but we are fighting against him. How then may we have peace with him? Simply by ceasing to fight, and laying down our arms. We may have peace whenever we are ready to stop fighting. Waggoner On Romans 85.2

“Peace with God.” -Note that when we have peace with God we are not simply at peace with him, but we have his peace. This peace has been left on the earth for men; for the Lord has said, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.” John 14:27. He has given it to

us. It is ours, therefore, already. It has always been ours. The only trouble has been that we have not believed it. As soon as we believe the words of Christ, then we have in very deed the peace which he has given. And it is peace with God, because we find the peace in Christ, and Christ dwells in the bosom of the Father. John 1:18. Waggoner On Romans 85.3

Peace and Righteousness. -“Great peace have they which love thy law.” Psalm 119:165. “O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea.” Isaiah 48:18. Righteousness is peace, because our warfare against God was our sins that we cherished. God’s life is righteousness, and he is the God of peace..... Waggoner On Romans 85.4

Yours in Our Master’s Service

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