# "Let the Peace of God <u>Rule</u> In Your Hearts"

"*And let the peace of God **rule** in your hearts, to the which also ye are called into one body; and be ye thankful*," Col. 3:15.

The word *"peace"* denotes harmonious relationships. To possess *"the peace of God,"* one must therefore possess a harmonious relationship with God. This, of course, was made possible by reason of the great sacrificial death of Jesus Christ, Who, *"by the grace of God,"* tasted *"death for every man,"* Heb. 2:9. Jesus, Who *"is our peace,"* became our sin offering, and broke *"down the middle wall of partition"* between Jew and Gentile, thereby enabling both Jews and Gentiles to be reconciled *"unto God in one body"* (the church), Eph. 2:14-16; Heb. 9:28. When the *"enmity"* caused by sin is slain as one comes into contact with the blood of Christ (which is accomplished when the penitent believer is *"baptized into His death,"* Rom. 6:3), he is then at peace with God because he has received the *"remission of sins,"* Acts 2:38.

However, <u>making</u> peace with God by obeying the fundamental requirements of the gospel for aliens is no more important than **keeping** peace with God thereafter. Hence, writing to the saints at Colosse, Paul said *"let the peace of God **rule** in your hearts,"* Col. 3:15. Contextually speaking, there are a number of both negative and positive requirements listed in this chapter which make for peace.

**Negatively** speaking, one must not set his affections *"on things on the earth;"* he is to abstain from *"fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry."* He must *"put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication,"* and *"lie not to one another*," Col. 3:2,5,8-9.

**Positively** speaking, he is to set his *"affections on things above*," and *"put on"* such things as *"bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering,"* as well as forbearance, forgiveness, and love. Further, he is to *"let the word of Christ"* richly dwell in his heart, do all by Christ's authority, and be true in the many relationships of life; whether as a wife, or a husband, or as children, as a servant, or a master, Col. 3:2,12-25; 4:1.

All of the above are mandatory for him who lives at peace with God. However, Paul said *"let the peace of God **rule** in your hearts…"* The word *"rule"* is from the Greek *brabeuo*, which means "properly, to act as an umpire, hence, generally, to arbitrate, or to decide" (Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, p. 307). I like the comments of Albert Barnes in his notes on this verse. He says that the peace which God gives "is to preside over and govern the mind; to preserve everything in its place; and to save it from tumult, and irregularity. The thought here is a beautiful one. The soul is liable to the agitation of the various faculties in place and order; and nothing is so well fitted to do this as the calm peace which religion gives, a deep sense of the presence of God, the desire and the evidence of His friendship, the hope of his favor, and the belief that He has forgiven all our sins. The 'peace of God' will thus calm down every agitated element of the soul; subdue the tumult of passion and preserve the mind in healthful action and order — as a ruler sways and controls "the passions of assembled multitudes of men."

Moreover, in addition to what has been stated, it behooves us to pay close attention to the inspired words stated so clearly in Phil. 4:6,7: "*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And **the peace of God,** which <u>surpasses</u> <u>all understanding,</u> will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."*

Perhaps one reason why so many do not enjoy **real** peace with self and with God is

because they cater too much to the desires of other people, or to the demands of passion, and thus fail to fully submit  to the will of God in all things.  If you covet the "green pastures" of contentment, the "still waters" of peace, and the cup which "runneth over," with **real** inner happiness, then completely commit yourself to the doing of God's will!
**** —Bobby Witherington

### "Fake News" in Religion

Turn on the TV and do some channel surfing of the different news outlets, and you will become amazed at the conflicting presentations of the same news item.  It readily becomes obvious that some are guilty of "slanting" the news, and others are just plain lying!  It seems that one's party identification, or whether or not the news reporter is a "liberal" or a "conservative" greatly affects that person's analysis of a given news item, and how he (or she) reports it — whether in a positive or negative light.  It becomes rather obvious that somebody is either misinformed, or uninformed, or just plain dishonest.  Consequently, perhaps more than ever before, we are hearing people complain about "fake news."  And, frankly, I think the term "fake news" is an appropriate description of much of the news we hear.

The aforementioned situation, caused in large part by "fake news" is very serious, the ultimate consequences of which no one is able to fully predict.  However, there is another realm in which "fake news" is causing much greater damage.  Specifically, I am referring to "fake news" in the **religious** realm!

"Fake news" in this realm is not a new thing.  For example, with reference to "*the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*," God said "*you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die*," Gen. 2:17.  Adam and Eve had God's word on this topic, and God's *"word is truth*," John 17:17; in fact, *"the entirety"* of God's *"word is truth*," Ps. 119:160.  However, in complete contrast to what **God** said about eating of the forbidden fruit, Satan said to Eve, *"you will **not** surely die,"* and then further lied about the supposedly positive benefits she would receive if she disobeyed God's word.  Hence, Eve "*being deceived, fell into transgression,"* I Tim. 2:14; she ate of the tree and "*also gave to her husband, and he ate,"* Gen. 3:6.  Consequently, "*through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned*," Rom. 5:12.  "Fake news," deceitfully framed by Satan, the "*father*" of lies, John 8:44, is that which resulted in the fall of man and from which, either directly or indirectly, has resulted all the sin, heartache, death, destruction, and misery which has engulfed the human race.  "Fake news" in the religious realm is not a matter to be lightly regarded!

Yes, Satan is the "*father*" of lies, John 8:44, but he has many agents spreading his lies.  Regarding this point, the apostle Paul said "*such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ*," and he then said "*and no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light,"* 2 Cor. 11:13,14! In the New Testament, writing about some who lived in Old Testament times, the apostle Peter said "*there were also **false** prophets among the people*," but he then warned, saying, *"there will be **false** teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction,"* 2 Pet. 2:1. That is bad, but what is even worse is the news in the next verse, namely this, "*And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed*," 2 Pet. 2:2.

Beloved, let us face certain facts. When you have literally hundreds (perhaps thousands!) of different and differing denominations, with their leaders preaching a multitude of different and differing doctrines, it is evident that much "fake news" is being disseminated in the religious world!  Two preachers can not preach contrasting beliefs, and both of them be right.  This is why

the apostle John cautioned his readers, saying, *"beloved, do not believe every spirit, but **test the spirits**, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world,"* I John 4:1.  This is why the apostle Paul urged the saints at Thessalonica to *"test all things; hold fast what is good,"* I Thess. 5:21.

       Much of the "fake news" spouted in the religious world comes from the lips of likeable, charismatic, highly educated, eloquent men (and women) who graduated with honors from theological seminaries, and whose word multitudes (to their eternal detriment) embrace without question.  Yes, the religious world is awash with "fake news."  In view of this sad, indisputable fact,  regardless of who may be preaching, it behooves us to be like the "*fair-minded*" Bereans who *"received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether those things were so*," Acts 17:11.  Obey the truth!   Reject "fake news!" —Bobby Witherington

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