

We frequently hear the phrase, “a religion of peace,” but are we thinking of the same thing when we use the word **peace**? Let me illustrate what I mean.

Lying near a barber cutting my hair was a large book called *History of the Balkans*. “Want to become an expert on where the Kosovars came from,” I asked. “No,” he said, I want to know what happened.” “How the Muslims conquered the area over 500 years ago?” I asked. “Those were Ottoman Turks,” he said. I agreed, of course (but the Ottoman Turks were Muslims). So I said, “Please allow me to ask you a question” (since I now thought that he was a Muslim). “Go ahead,” he said.

I asked him this: “How many attacks did the Lord Jesus lead, and how many attacks did Mohammed lead?” “I do not know the answer,” he replied. So I said to him that the Lord Jesus led zero attacks and Mohammed led about 75 attacks. Then I asked, “Which is the religion of peace?” His answer was quite revealing and illustrates what I said about using words when we do not attach the same meaning to them -- in this case the word **peace**. He replied, “Mohammed was trying to make peace.” I did not wish for any controversy; that was not my point. So I remarked to him that a Muslim can never have peace regarding his sins. He just looked at me and made no attempt to respond. He knew that it was true. I then said that I was a Christian, one that knew that his sins were forgiven because Christ died for my sins and God has forgiven me, and I have peace with God. I concluded by saying that I believe that many

professed Christians in the USA are not real Christians. With that he emphatically agreed.

How can a person know that God has forgiven his sins, knowing peace with God? I wonder if you are conscious of the fact that God’s word declares:

. . . for there is no difference; for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).

The meaning regarding sinning is falling short of what is due God, falling short of glorifying Him. Suppose you try to jump across a 100 foot Canyon and jump out about four feet from the edge. You fall short and down you go. Another person tries and jumps five feet, and down he goes. Effort is useless. We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God. Saying, “I am doing the best I can to jump the Canyon” would be foolish, and you recognize that. Why do something like that when eternity is before you and you will find out, too late, that your works, and your professed goodness, and your religiousness, and your thinking that you are not so bad as the other person, have not propelled you across the Canyon. You have sinned and come short of the glory of God and you will go down!

“There is no difference” whether you jumped five feet and the other person four feet. “All have sinned and **come short** of the glory of God.” That is the description of your case; and you will go down unless . . .

You have no moral strength to successfully work for your salvation. The Word of God says:

for we being still without strength, in [the] due time Christ has died for the ungodly. For scarcely for [the] just [man] will one die, for perhaps for [the] good [man] some one might dare to die; but God commends *his* love to us, in that, we being still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:6-8).

Yes, still “without (moral) strength” to please God after all that trying to jump across the Canyon over to God; yes, “being still sinners” after all effort, there stands that wonderful truth, that provision by God Himself -- “Christ died for us.”

For the wages of sin [is] death; but the act of favor of God, eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:23).

The Son of God became man in order to die to glorify God regarding sin, and shed His blood on the cross. So we read of Christ:

. . . having made peace by the blood of his cross (Colossians 1:20).

But have you by faith appropriated this for yourself? The Lord Jesus Christ said:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, that he that hears my word, and believes him that has sent me, has life eternal, and does not come into judgment, but is passed out of death into life (John 5:24).

That verse says that you are in a state of death, i.e., spiritual death, before God, and that there is a way of passing out of that state into life, i.e., eternal life. Do

you have faith in the One Whom God has sent into the world? The Apostle John wrote:

And *we* have seen, and testify, that the Father has sent the Son [as] Savior of the world (1 John 4:14).

Therefore,

. . . if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thine heart that God has raised him from among [the] dead, thou shalt be saved. For with [the] heart is believed to righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made to salvation (Romans 10:9, 10).

Peace with God centers in a person, not in a religion. Writing to the Christians in the city of Ephesus, the Apostle Paul said:

. . . but now in Christ Jesus *ye* who once were afar off are become near by the blood of the *Christ*. For he is our peace . . . (Ephesians 2:13, 14).

Writing to Christians in Asia Minor, the Apostle John in an ascription of praise said:

To him who loves us and has washed us from our sins in his blood . . . (Revelation 1:5).

Romans 3:25 speaks of the Christian's blessing "through faith in his blood." Hebrews 9:22 says:

. . . without blood-shedding there is no remission [i.e., forgiveness].

Your efforts are "dead works":

. . . how much rather shall the blood of the Christ, who by the eternal Spirit offered himself spotless to God, purify your conscience from dead works to worship [the] living God? (Hebrews 9:14).

The blood of Christ speaks of the sufferings for sins on the cross, under God's judgment, and the voluntary death in sacrifice when He bowed His head in death. And then when He was dead, a soldier pierced His side and out came blood and water (John 19). This signifies that His sacrifice in bearing my judgment does two things. The water signifies that His sacrifice cleans the soul from the dirt, the *filthiness*, of sin; and the blood washes our sins away concerning *guilt* before God.

. . . having made peace by the blood of his cross (Colossians 1:20).

The guilty sinner, acknowledging his state of lostness before a holy God, by claiming the sacrifice of Christ to be for himself, comes into peace with God.

. . . in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of offences, according to the riches of his grace (Ephesians 1:7).

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## ***"A Religion of Peace"***