

PEACE

By Henry Anderson

When we English speaking people greet someone we say hello, or hi, or howdy, or something like that, but in Israel or where the Hebrew language is used they greet one another with the word shalom, which means peace. Mankind has been seeking peace for millennia, and have failed to achieve it, in fact mankind in general do not know the way to peace. *Ro 3:17 And the way of peace they have not known.*" Most of us have not realized what great significance this word has.

The word of Yahweh places great emphasis on peace. In fact it is one of the most basic and necessary elements in any society for the individual in that society to pursue in order to ensure happiness for himself and other members of that society. We must learn it now in this world, in this life, if we desire our hope of eternal life to become a reality, because in the society to come, in Yahweh's kingdom, there will not be anyone there who has not learned now, in our time of judgment, to live at peace with others. Yahweh tells us to pursue peace.

Heb 12:14 Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Master:

No one who doesn't pursue peace will see Yahshua, the king of peace There was a time when none of us pursued the path of peace. I did not follow the pathway to peace.

Yahshua came preaching peace: *Ac 10:36 "The word which Yahweh sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Yahshua Messiah--He is Master of all--*

He said in *Matt 5:39 "But I tell you not to resist evil . But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. 40 "If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. 41 "And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two.*

This isn't the natural thing for us to do. We naturally want to fight back. They are doing us wrong! We are in the right! Doing the natural thing does not lead to peace, it leads to further violence and hatred. If we overcome the natural reaction, and follow the words of Yahshua, we are pursuing peace.

Another difficult course of action for many is to pursue peace with those who have assumed power over us, the governing authority. There are some who advocate a controversial stance against it. This does not lead to peace. When Peter was confronted by tax collectors this is what happened: *24 After Yahshua and his disciples arrived in Capernaum, the collectors of the two-drachma tax came to Peter and asked, "Doesn't your teacher pay the temple tax?" {24 Greek <the two drachmas>} 25 "Yes, he does," he replied. When Peter came into the house, Yahshua was the first to speak. "What do you think, Simon?" he asked. "From whom do the kings of the earth collect duty and taxes-- from their own sons or from others?"*

26 "From others," Peter answered. "Then the sons are exempt," Yahshua said to him.

27 "But so that we may not offend them, go to the lake and throw out your line. Take the first fish you catch; open its mouth and you will find a four-drachma coin. Take it and give it to them for my tax and yours."

Yahshua is saying here that they did not owe this tax to those who had power to impose taxes, yet in pursuing the way of peace he instructed Peter to pay the tax. If they had not paid the tax it would have resulted in a confrontation with the tax collectors for they would have been offended. We are instructed by Yahweh to pay taxes even though He only requested a tithe of the produce to be paid to the Levites when Israel was living under a theocracy. Later when they demanded of Samuel (in reality demanding of Yahweh) that they have a king like the rest of the nations, Yahweh told them what would happen.

9 Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit thou shalt protest solemnly unto them, and shalt show them the manner of the king that shall reign over them. 10 And Samuel told all the words of Jehovah unto the people that asked of him a king. 11 And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: he will take your sons, and appoint them unto him, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and they shall run before his chariots;

12 and he will appoint them unto him for captains of thousands, and captains of fifties; and he will set some to plow his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and the instruments of his chariots. 13 And he will take your daughters to be perfumers, and to be cooks, and to be bakers. 14 And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants.

15 And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants. 16 And he will take your men-servants, and your maid-servants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work. 17 He will take the tenth of your flocks: and ye shall be his servants. 18 And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king whom ye shall have chosen you; and Jehovah will not answer you in that day.

Yahweh gave them a king, He was the one who selected the man to rule over them. He says in *Da 4:17* 'This decision is by the decree of the watchers, And the sentence by the word of the holy ones, In order that the living may know That the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, Gives it to whomever He will, And sets over it the lowest of men.' *Da 5:21* "Then he was driven from the sons of men, his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild donkeys. They fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till he knew that the Most High God rules in the kingdom of men, and appoints over it whomever He chooses."

He is the one who sets up rulers not only in Israel but in the kingdom of men, in other words all nations. Not only do we have Yahshua's example of paying taxes to those who have power over us, but Yahweh inspired Paul to write this to say to the Romans who were living under the Roman government, just as most of the civilized world was at that time:

Romans 13:1 ¶ Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.

2 Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. 3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. 4 For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. 5 Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. 6 For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very

thing. 7 ¶ Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.

The argument is made that these authorities have no legitimacy, that they are usurping Yahweh's authority and therefore one does not owe them taxes. This view is in direct opposition to the scriptures quoted above. Yahweh gave the Israelites a king, and He says he is the one who appoints rulers in the kingdom of men, and puts over them the basest of men. One in his rebellion against authority has to ignore or twist these plain scriptures and go against the preponderance of evidence to maintain that Yahweh does not instruct us to pay taxes to the governing authorities.

All of us despise paying taxes to those who waste the taxpayer's dollars and live high on the hog, paying themselves outlandish salaries and lush retirement benefits. Some of the tax dollars do benefit us all. We get to drive on fast freeways and other well paved roads. We have a mail service as good or better than any in the world. There is a retirement and health benefits paid for by our taxes. And other benefits the public receives from the taxes. We know that they are paltry considering the amount of taxes the government takes from us, but mankind in general prefers it to be this way rather than come under Yahweh's government and His laws.

We ourselves preferred it before Yahweh opened our minds to His purpose and truth, because we could decide for ourselves what is right and wrong, and these governments, administered by men, allows us to do many things that Yahweh doesn't. Now that we have been sanctified (called out of this world's way of deciding for ourselves what is right and set aside) Yahweh tells us to pursue the pathway of peace concerning these authorities. Yahshua by His sermon on the mount was instructing those who have ears to hear how to pursue peace. He says

42 "Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away. 43 ¶ "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 "But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you. 45 "that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

Paul inspired by Yahweh said this: *Heb 12:14 Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: Also this : Ro 12:18 If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.* That includes those governing authorities who impose taxes on us. When we defy them in any way, excluding defying them in our obedience to Yahweh, we are not pursuing the way to peace. If we avoid paying taxes we do not have peace within ourselves because no matter how hard we mistakenly try to convince ourselves that we are right in doing so, there is a nagging fear that those authorities will find us out, and if we are found out we will not have peace with the governing authorities.

If relatives or close friends ask us for something, or to do something for them, we usually do, but we find some excuse not to do it for others. Many times this engenders ill will, for they know that we can help them because we help our friends and relatives, and so the ill will that is engendered sometimes leads to strife. Our Father in heaven shows no partiality, and if we are His sons, or hope to be, we must not either, but must follow the pathway of peace, because Yahweh is a god of peace.

Ro 15:33 Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

Ro 16:20 And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Master Yahshua Messiah be with you. Amen.

Php 4:9 The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

The word peace encompasses the whole plan of Yahweh. It encompasses the ten commandments.

Ps 119:165 ¶ Great peace have those who love Your law, And nothing causes them to stumble.

Keeping His law, His commandments, not only produces peace with others, but gives us peace of mind. Not having peace with others, causes us to not have peace of mind. Most of us have had controversy with another and during that controversy our minds are filled with anger and thoughts of revenge if we think they have done us wrong. We are not in a happy or peaceful frame of mind.

If we don't have peace of mind, then we need to examine our lives. Are we really walking in His law of love? Are we living a life free of sin? Lets look at some of the commandments and see how they relate to peace. The first is to have no other gods before me. Yahweh is a god of peace. We are to put peace first in our lives, for if we put Yahweh first we are putting peace first.

If we keep the second third and fourth, we are keeping the first. If we honor our father and mother, and if we do no murder, no adultery and do not steal, we are pursuing peace because the breaking of these commandments causes controversy, hatred, and violence. If we murder, the victim's relatives seek vengeance, or if we even have hatred in our hearts for another, which is a spirit of murder, the hatred could lead to violence, and we certainly don't have peace within ourselves. If we do not honor our father or mother, instead of them having peace within themselves, we generate unhappiness for them and resentment from the rest of the family. Some have been killed by a spouse for committing adultery. That is certainly not a peaceful result. This is true with all of Yahweh's commandments. If we break any of these commandments we are putting another god before Yahweh, and when we do our actions lead in the opposite direction of peace.

1Pe 3:11 Let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it.

Heb 12:14 Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Master

(Rom 8:28 KJV) "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love YHWH, to them who are the called according to his purpose."~
