

"The Storms of Life Will Come"


That doesn't mean that those who know God will not go through difficult times. They will. If our nation encounters terrorist attacks, environmental or economic disasters, those who know God will be included in the suffering. But there is a peace and a strength that God's presence gives. One follower of

Jesus Christ put it this way: **"We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. For while we live, we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you."** (2 Corinthians 4:8-12) Reality tells us that we will confront problems. However, if we go through them in relationship with God, we can react to them with a different perspective and with a strength that is not our own. No problem has the capacity to be insurmountable to God. He is bigger than all the problems that can hit us, and we are not left alone to deal with them.

"Peace Of Mind Through God"

We have no idea what the future holds. If it brings hard times, God can be there for us. If it brings easy times, we will still need God to fill that inner void we have and to give our lives meaning. When all is said and done, what matters most? What really matters is that we are not separated from God. Do we know God? Does He know us? Have we shut Him out of our lives? Or have we let Him in? Through knowing Him, He produces in us a changing perspective and gives us hope. Through being in a relationship with Him, we can have peace in the midst of all circumstances.

Our greatest problems are not physical, but spiritual. God knows this, so He provided a solution for our separation from Him. He made a way for us to find our way back to Him... through Jesus Christ. No matter what happens in the world around you, there is peace of mind knowing that God can be there for you. Regardless of what the future holds, you can have God as your constant.

Thousands of world leaders and media personalities speak and dream of a coming world peace, usually with good intentions, but the Bible paints an entirely different picture. The Bible has much to say about peace and also about the conditions for peace. In fact, one could rightly claim the Bible as God's **"Peace Treaty."** All of God's conditions for peace are laid out in the Bible for everyone to read. But, as we shall see, when one rejects God's peace treaty, he rejects peace altogether.



Hebrew Bible uses a familiar but significant word, shalom. In its purest sense, shalom means **"Peace."** The connotation is positive. That is, when someone says, **"Shalom,"** or, **"Peace unto you,"** it doesn't mean, "I hope you don't get into any trouble"; it means, **"I hope**

you have all the highest good coming your way." Most people in our world don't understand peace as a positive concept. All they know is the negative aspect of peace, which is merely the absence of trouble. The biblical concept of peace does not focus on the absence of trouble. **Biblical peace is unrelated to circumstances; it is a goodness of life that is not touched by what happens on the outside. You may be in the midst of great trials and still have biblical peace.** Where does a man find the kind of peace that is not just the absence of trouble--the kind of peace that cannot be affected by trouble, danger, or sorrow? It is ironic that what is surely the most definitive discourse on peace in all of Scripture comes from the Lord Jesus on the night before He died in agony. He knew what He was facing, yet He still took time to comfort His disciples with the message of peace: **"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful."** (John 14:27) The peace Jesus is speaking of enables believers to remain calm in the most wildly fearful circumstances. It enables them to hush a cry, still a riot, rejoice in pain and trial, and sing in the middle of suffering. This peace is never by circumstances, but instead affects and even overrules them.

"GUARD YOUR HEART"

"And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." The word for **"Guard"** in Philippians 4:7 is not the word that means to **"watch,"** or **"keep imprisoned."** It is a word that is often used in a military sense, meaning **"to stand at a post and guard against**

the aggression of an enemy." When peace is on guard, the Christian has entered an impregnable citadel from which nothing can dislodge him. **The name of the fortress is Christ, and the guard is peace.** The peace of God stands guard and keeps worry from the corroding our hearts, and unworthy thoughts from tearing up our minds. This is the kind of peace men really want: **And that is exactly the peace through which the guilt of the past is forgiven; by which the trials of the present are overcome; and in which our destiny in the future is secured eternally.**

"There Are Many Foxholes In Life"



Admittedly, many people wait until times get really rough before they turn to God. A military chaplain from World War II explained that **"There Are No Atheists In The Foxholes."** When life is rosy, people don't feel like they need God. But that often changes when things get

messy, when we realize we're in the trenches. We don't need failure or tragedy to feel the foxholes. Most often lack of peace results simply from the absence of God in our lives. We can find ourselves in a foxhole at any given time. I am using **"foxholes"** as a metaphor and many of us will find ourselves in one of these. We find the foundations of our society are being challenged on every hand. Family values, children, the aged, even life itself are coming under increased scrutiny and challenge. All of this in turn is creating a high level of physical, emotional, and spiritual stress in today's world. At times we may find ourselves in a crisis situation and the very foundations of our world will seem to be crumbling under our feet. The feeling of isolation can overcome us and peace is now replaced with fear. Stress, the experts say, is a physical, chemical, or emotional factor that causes bodily, mental, or spiritual tension, resulting in a sense of fear, overload, and inability to focus on a single issue, a feeling that everything is out of control. It's not easy to understand stress. It's like the wind: we don't know where it comes from or where it goes, but when we feel it we're very much aware of it.

"He Give Us His Peace"



Jesus Christ is seen as the One Who gives peace. Jesus said, **"My peace I give to you."** Notice He says **"My peace."** Here is the key to the supernaturalness of this peace: It is His own personal peace. It is the same deep, rich peace that stilled His heart in the midst of mockers, haters, murderers, traitors, and

everything else He faced. He had a calm about Him that was unnatural and nonhuman. In the midst of incomprehensible resistance and persecution, Jesus was calm and unfaltering; He was a rock. The Holy Spirit is the Giver of this peace, and He dispenses it as a gift. Galatians 5:22 says one aspect of the fruit of the Spirit is **"Peace"**. You might ask, if it was Christ's peace, why is the Holy Spirit giving it? The answer is in John 16:14, which says, **"He will glorify Me; for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you."** The Holy Spirit's ministry is to take the things of Christ and give them us. Perfect peace comes when our focus is off the problem, off the trouble, and constantly on Christ.

Isaiah 26:3 says, **"The steadfast of mind You will keep in perfect peace, because he trusts in You."** With God involved in our lives, we can rest easy. As we get to know God and listen to what He says in the Bible, He brings about that peace of mind in our lives, because we know Him. We see life from His vantage point, aware of His faithfulness and ability to take care of us. So no matter what the future holds, we can place our hope in God as our constant. He's waiting to prove Himself in our lives if we will turn to Him and seek Him.

"Peace Is Built On The Solid Foundation Of Christ"

Are you building upon something in your life? Believe it or not, every person is building upon something. Each of us has a foundation, something we're putting our hope and faith in. Maybe it's ourselves -- **"I know I can make my life a success if I try hard enough."** Or a lifestyle -- **"If I can make enough money, life will be wonderful."** Or even a time period -- **"The future is going to change things."** God has a different viewpoint. He says it is shaky ground to put our hope and faith in ourselves, in other people, or in anything this world offers. Instead, He wants us to trust in Him.



He says, **"Everyone who hears these words of Mine, and acts upon them, may be compared to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded upon the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine, and does not act**

upon them, will be like a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and it fell, and great was its fall." (Matthew 7:24-26) It's wise to have God involved in our lives for those times when the catastrophes come. But God's intent is for us to have a more abundant life no matter what the circumstances are. He wants to have a positive influence on every area of our lives. When we rely upon Him and His Words, we are building upon the Rock.

"God Is Powerful - He Is All Knowing"

Unlike us, God knows what will happen tomorrow, next week, next year, the next decade. He says, **"I Am God, and there is no one like Me, declaring the end from the beginning."** (Isaiah 46:9,10) He knows what will happen in the future. More importantly, He knows what will occur in your life and will be there for you when it happens, if you've chosen to include Him in your life. He tells us that He can be **"Our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in times of trouble."** (Psalm 46:1) But we must make a sincere effort to seek Him. He says, **"You will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart."** (Jeremiah 29:13)