

It Is Done! The Perfect Peace Of God

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I would like to give you the title of today's sermon right from the get-go because it is important for you to keep it in the forefront of your minds throughout this message. Perhaps in this one sentence is a specific purpose statement of the entire Book that we all have in front of us on our laps, around the table in front of us, as God prepares His creation to do the words of His law forever in perfect unity. The title of today's sermon is, "It is done! The Perfect Peace of God."

Today, in these times of trial and trouble—personal, national and global, physical, mental, and spiritual—we need to be joyfully grateful for the small peek God has given of the scope of His work that goes far beyond anything that any one of us could ever imagine. Please keep what I am saying now in your minds as we work toward the conclusion of the sermon today.

We are being prepared by God for something that none of us can fully grasp or even tangibly grasp within this current part of God's creation process although we have a privileged responsibility right now within this incredible plan to follow Jesus Christ meticulously.

In faith, with our calling by the Father to His Son, we must be looking beyond everything exploding around us to the reality of God's endgame for all men with the same swelling hope as those who have gone before us did in faith.

A number of years ago, Nancy and I were in Kansas City for a wedding. Another city, like most of the major cities these days, as Chicago, New York, Los Angeles are being shredded by division and violence, although at that time a number of years ago, it was a relatively peaceful place. On that Friday afternoon, as we were pulling into the hotel where we stayed, I noticed a

large memorial of some kind on the top of a hill in the middle of a huge park-like area. I thought this would be a great place to walk and think and pray the following morning on the Sabbath.

So the next day, early on a beautiful Sabbath morning, I walked over there to walk and pray. The grounds turned out to be about half to three quarters of a mile square, with a number of walking paths circling through it. The paths all eventually led to uphill to a two-level offset plaza that together covered about a 700 ft by 700 ft square piece of land. At the end of the park, in the middle of the upper plaza, stood an impressive granite tower about 300 ft tall.

After I finished my walk and prayer, I went to this curious place. It turned out to be a magnificently grand memorial built in an impressively sprawling Greco Romans design. It is the only memorial in the United States solely dedicated to World War I, the so-called war to end all wars. It had been built immediately following World War I and was dedicated in 1921 in the presence of the men who had led the allies to victory in Europe. At the unveiling was Admiral Beatty of Great Britain, Field Marshal Foch of France, General Pershing of the United States, General Diaz of Italy, and Field Marshal Jacques of Belgium. Of all these men, they have also been memorialized in a bronze relief at the base of the monument. But with the anarchy and the lawlessness these days, I would not be surprised if that monument that stood for 100 years may have been defaced or destroyed by now.

Anyway, as I said, there were two ornate plazas, a lower one and an upper one, on which the 300 ft tower stood. The lower plaza was about 20 ft below the upper and 400 ft wide, with curved granite staircases at each end leading to the other plaza. At the next level up on the back wall of this plaza, between the two stairways, was an impressive piece of artwork 17 ft high and stretching the entire 400 ft. It was a very graphic display intended to portray the horror of war and the hope of peace the way men envisioned it.

At the center of the mural was some kind of winged spirit with the form of a woman. She is standing with an outstretched arms, clutching a sword in her right hand and a sheaf of wheat in her left. On each side of her were two pictorial displays with inscriptions above all four sections. The first scene on the sword side was of soldiers pulling cannons received by soldiers with

rifles, followed by soldiers mounted on huge snorting horses. Over it was the inscription from Revelation 6:8, "And I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And his name that sat on him was Death, and hell followed him."

The second scene was of nurses with maimed and bandaged soldiers, many with missing limbs and on crutches, hobbling toward the figure in the center, some on their feet and some on their knees. Over this part was the inscription that read, "Violence shall no more be heard in my land; wasting nor destruction within thy borders."

On the wheat side of the figure were women, some with fruit in their hands, offering it to the returning warriors. Others playing harps, followed by others riding on oxen with fruit of the field adorning the animals. The inscription over their heads was, "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God." The final scene on the wheat side pictured a husband and a wife holding the produce of the field in their outside hands, while between them, each one of them is holding the hand of a toddler, who was standing on the horns of a ram. Behind them is a muscled worker with the gears of industry moving behind him. Over their heads is written, "Then shall the earth yield her increase and God, even our God, shall bless us."

Finally, over the top of this whole relief, spanning the entire 400 ft, are these words, "These have dared bear the torches of sacrifice. Their bodies returned to the dust, but their work lives forevermore. Let us strive on to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations."

Brethren, this was, according to the men of the times, and for a few years to come, the war to end all wars. According to the encyclopedia, World War I was, at the time and in the years just after it, described as the war to end all wars. The phrase was in part a reaction to the horrors of the conflict that led many to believe that, with the full cost of modern warfare so evident, no nation would dare ever want to fan the flames of war again.

After the war, a number of initiatives were taken to try to enforce the covenant of striving to achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations. These things included the formation of the

League of Nations, the rewriting of the map of Europe, the Kellogg-Brand Pact outlawing war, and a number of other treaties limiting military power. We all know how well that worked as the nations were already determining how to better develop weapons of war to gain the upper hand. Here again are men at their proudest determining they have seen the errors of their ways and have turned.

To men, the error of their way was they could not fight modern warfare the way they had always done it, so they had to quit fighting and just figure out a better way to keep doing what they wanted to do apart from God.

Brethren, nothing has changed! It is politics as usual, as Richard just said. No matter what the circumstances, our pride and men's way of dealing with things are still the way to unresolved conflict. But what I hope we are going to see today is that God has been working on His plan to create a perfect peace that will never, ever bring war within all of His creation again. Today, right now, He has given us everything that *we* need to bear the torches of sacrifice so that God's peace and our part in it will live forevermore.

What I hope we will see today is that God has been working with absolute understanding of His endgame from eternity to create a peace of unity and harmony that will never be broken and we, of all people on the face of the earth and down through history, have a responsibility to live up to God's peace, even as the drums of war are trying to drive us to fall into line with their beat, on one side of the political spectrum or the other.

Perhaps this seems a bit over the top, but brethren, especially in light of the last couple of messages we have had, there has never been in our recent memories a time like this, and it is going to get worse. But we cannot get caught up in it. Our eyes and everything we do needs to be focused on God's perfect endgame that is worth so much more than deciding what side of the political fence we should stand. Our citizenship is in a carefully prepared place within the Kingdom of God that lies beyond the heavens and the earth we now see, that will no longer even exist someday.

I Corinthians 13:8-13 Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. For we

know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also have known. [as God knows us] And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Brethren, love never fails. I think we are all aware that I Corinthians 13, the so-called Love Chapter, does not define love. It describes the actions that love produces. How many of these actions, though, are we seeing in the world around us today, and especially in ourselves? We are going to go back now to I Corinthians 13, the first 10 verses, but I will be reading it from the Amplified Bible.

I Corinthians 13:1-10 (AMP) If I [can] speak in the tongues of men and [even] of angels, but have not love (that reasoning and intentional spiritual devotion such as is inspired by God's love for us and in us), I am only a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers (the gift of interpreting the divine will and purpose), and understand all the secret truths and mysteries and possess all knowledge, and if I have [sufficient] faith so that I can move mountains, but have not love (God's love in me), I am nothing (a useless nobody).

Even if I dole out all I have [to the poor and providing] food, and if I surrender my body to be burned or in order that I may glory, but have not love (God's love in me), I gain nothing. Love endures long and is patient and kind; love never is envious nor boils over with jealousy, it is not boastful or vainglorious, does not display itself haughtily. It does not. It is not conceited (arrogant, and inflated with pride); it is not rude (unmannerly), and does not act unbecomingly. Love (God's love in us) does not insist on its own rights or its own way, for it is not self-seeking; it is not touchy or fretful or resentful; it takes no account of the evil done to it [it pays no attention to a suffered wrong]. It does not rejoice at injustice and unrighteousness, but rejoices when right and truth prevail.

Love bears up under anything and everything that comes, is ever ready to believe the best of every person, its hopes are fadeless under all circumstances, and it endures everything [without weakening]. Love never fails [never fades or becomes obsolete or comes to an end]. As for prophecy (the gift of interpreting the divine will and purpose), it will be fulfilled and pass away; as for tongues, they will be destroyed and cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away [it will lose its value and be superseded by truth]. For our knowledge is fragmentary (incomplete and imperfect), and our prophecy (our teaching) is fragmentary (incomplete and imperfect). But when the complete and perfect (total) comes, the incomplete and imperfect will vanish away (become antiquated, void, and superseded).

This is the only war that will end all wars, the war that we are waging now to produce these things daily in our lives. It is easy for us to look at others and see the lack of this kind of love in them. But how much are we seeking God to open our minds to what we ourselves are doing that puts us in opposition to His love, and what we need to be doing to live His way of outgoing concern for everyone?

So what is the source of this love? What is the love that will produce the peace that not even the faith that can move mountains could? Brethren, I am sure you are already a step ahead of me. If you are not already there, please turn with me to I John 5.

I John 5:1-5 (AMP) Everyone who believes (adheres to, trusts, and relies on the fact) that Jesus is Christ (the Messiah) is a born-again child of God; and everyone who loves the Father also loves the one born of him (His offspring). By this we come to know (recognize and understand) that we love the children of God: when we love God and obey His commands (orders, charges)—[when we keep His ordinances and are mindful of His precepts and His teaching].

For the [true] love of God is this: that we do His commands [keep his ordinances and are mindful of His precepts and teaching]. And these orders of His are not irksome (burdensome, oppressive, or

grievous). For whatever is born of God is victorious over the world; and this is the victory that conquers the world, even our faith. Who is it that is victorious over [that conquerors] the world but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God [who adheres to, trusts in, and relies on that fact]?

II John 4-6 (MSG) I can't tell you how happy I am to learn that many members of your congregation are diligent in living out the truth exactly as commanded by the Father. But permit me a reminder, friends, and this is not a commandment but simply a repetition of our original and basic charter: that we love each other. Love means following his commandments, and his unifying commandment is that you conduct your lives in love. This is the first thing you heard, and nothing has changed.

We conduct our lives in love.

Brethren, do we want the real peace following the war to end all wars? Then this is what we need to be doing right now in this love for God: keeping His commandments. Jesus Himself said, as recorded in verses 9 and 10 of John 15:

John 15:8-17 "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples. As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and your joy may be full. This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things I have heard from My Father I have made known to you. You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you

ask the Father in My name He may give you. These things I command you, that love one another."

The fruit we need be producing just as He did even under the most difficult circumstances, is described right there in I Corinthians 13. But this fruit is actually developed only, *only* by keeping His commandments. Many of you who have been listening to the Friday night Bible studies regularly know that John Ritenbaugh's previous study before the book of Hebrews Bible study (that is now being played on Friday evening to Saturday mornings), was his series on the Offerings of Leviticus from the late 80s.

So at this point in the sermon, with a slight but pointed change in the direction, we will be reviewing verbatim quite a bit of what John taught about the importance of those offerings in our lives. This is to most of you probably merely a review. And although I will be quoting quite extensively from Part One of this series, it is the "Offerings of Leviticus, Part Four, The Peace Offering" that is really what I am talking about today. Because this section, within the scope of this sermon, is vital to the hope that is before us and the work that we need to be doing right now in this war to end all wars by the grace of God and only, only, brethren, through Jesus Christ can be accomplished.

We are going to look through more of the introduction rather than Part Four because I think John makes a strong argument in Part One that Jesus Christ is everything and if we want to do what Part Four tells us, we need to have Jesus Christ, that part in us that is in everything, firmly in our minds. As we get start in this section of the sermon based mainly on what John has taught about the offerings of Leviticus, there are three things I would like you to remember.

1. The book is titled Leviticus, mainly because it deals with the work of the whole set-apart tribe of Levites and the work expected of them by God on behalf of all the people.
2. Although it is commonly known by its title from the Septuagint, Leviticus (which is very appropriate), I would like us to focus on what it was originally called based on the first word in the Hebrew, which is "and he called." Not a big deal, but I think it is a good reminder to us of our own calling right here,

right now, in this vital work that God expects from *the* called-out of the earth to Jesus Christ in following the Lamb wherever He goes now, through the grave and into eternity.

3. The theme of this book is holiness. Please keep in mind that when the Word, our Creator, who gave up all His rights and privileges as God, became a man and the First of the firstborn, He did it to pay the penalty that none of us could pay for our sins. But keep in mind the most crushing part of that penalty was the separation that He endured from the Father while the penalty was being paid. This not only is important to us now, but within this sermon is an important point for us to consider toward the incredible hope that is ahead of us in holiness.

John Ritenbaugh said in Part One of his sermon series on the offerings of Leviticus (as I said, this will be pretty much verbatim).

Now, the overall issue of the Bible is government. Maybe that is not exactly right. I could make that even broader by saying that the overall issue of the Bible is God's purpose. Perhaps the most important issue pertaining to God's purpose is government. I say that because God's overall purpose is introduced right in the first chapter of Genesis, "Let Us create man in Our image."

I need to insert here what I said at the beginning of the sermon about not letting the title of the sermon, "It is Done! The Perfect Peace of God" get away from the forefront of your minds, even as we consider the partial beginning of the project and God's stated purpose of the creation of men in the very image and likeness of God within the everlasting government of God. Now back to citing what John said.

Government is then, in a bad light, introduced in the third chapter when Adam and Eve rejected the government of God. But when the subject broadens out, the Bible is concerned not only with God's government, but also with man's government, and self-government. The Bible shows how man rejects God's government through sin. It also shows how man's rule over men is abusive. It also shows us very clearly that men had better learn how to govern themselves, or nothing will ever work.

Brethren, how clearly are we witnessing this very thing these days? Not only are things not working out, but the scatter gun approach to the problems and the fickle-minded pride on all sides destroys any opportunity for peace. National, familial, or personal, men's ruling over men has hardly ever shown itself to be more abusive than it is today. And the only rules of self-government seem to be every man is doing what is right in his own eyes. John continued in his introductory sermon to the offerings of Leviticus,

It is also a book about faith, because faith is the operative power or responsibility for mankind. It is also a book about hope, which is the Kingdom of God. It is also a book about love, which has very much to do with government, and faith reveals itself in how it loves. Here is the overall principle in Romans 10:4. It is such a simple statement, but can very easily be taken wrong. "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes."

By this verse Christ is named as the object of the Bible, the instruction of God. It is that toward which is aimed. It does not mean that Christ is the conclusion of the law, except in one isolated sense, but rather He is the goal, He is the law, or He is the instruction of the goal. It is saying that He is what the law designs and He is the personification of the law's intent.

Ephesians 4 says that "we are to grow in the knowledge of Christ, unto a perfect man, unto the measure and the stature of the fullness of Christ." This is the very tall order. He is the standard. He is the personification of perfect faith, of perfect love, of perfect government. The purpose of the law, or the instruction of God, is to bring us to Christ, and so the law describes His character in very broad strokes.

. . . Genesis 1 tells us about the recreation, and we know that there is going to be a spiritual recreation of man. After we arrive at being a spiritual wreck in this world, we have to be recreated, as it were, into something that can serve God's purpose in the Kingdom. Genesis 2 lays the foundation for what His purpose is, that He is recreating or reproducing Himself. It also tells us there, that we are

to "dress and keep." "Dress" means "to enhance and embellish." "Keep" means "to guard, to protect, or preserve." When you apply this to what it says in Genesis 1 about God's purpose, that He is creating us in His image, we know then from chapter 2 by the terms He is using, that it is going to have something to do with God's purpose.

We begin to look into other places, and we find that man, as he is created, has to be embellished into something else. As he is being embellished, he also has to be preserved. This tells us that we can be built into something more beautiful. As we are being made into something more beautiful, an effort has to be made to keep us from backsliding. So there is the constant continuous process that is going on.

Genesis 3 tells us how the world began. It also lays the foundation and gives us the first introduction that there is going to have to be a shedding of blood. How did that occur in the third chapter? God had to kill the animals in order to provide a covering for Adam and Eve. "Being naked" is a symbol of being without character, without the Spirit of God, without the character of God. But it takes blood, there has to be a death to cover this.

Brethren, we are covered by Jesus Christ to do a work right now. Do not keep that far from your minds.

John continues:

The main theme in the book of Exodus is redemption, being taken out from the slavery at the price of the Passover lamb. The book of Exodus ends with the dedication of the Tabernacle. That ought to tell you something. The Tabernacle represents the church—you and me collectively. We have been redeemed and we are now built into a body. When we get to the end of the book of Exodus and go into the book of Leviticus, the book of Leviticus begins with the word "And." It is a continuation. What is the book of Leviticus about? It

is about consecration. It is about devotion to God. It is about holiness. It is about continuing access to God, without which we will go back into the world.

We are spending so much time going over John's introduction to the book of Leviticus because it has everything to do with the goal of holy righteous character that God expects from us now within this life—to be holy as He is holy in preparation to serve with Christ. What we need to deeply appreciate is, I think, obvious in this introduction, is that the very Creator of all things gave Himself as the living example for us to follow, and anything less than our maximum effort to emulate what He has done, and is doing, knowing that He Himself will accomplish the end product in us, is unacceptable to Him.

John continues,

. . . We are to live by every Word of God, are we not? They are there for our instruction, and we are to get the teaching that is there, and apply that teaching, understanding, and wisdom to our lives so that we can come to the image of God. Now who is the object of the law? It is Christ. We want to be in His image. Are you beginning to get the point? Jesus Christ is described in the great detail in the Old Testament, but it is contained in circumstances that require a bit of effort to find. But believe me, brethren, once you begin to get into it, the teaching of the Old Testament is in a way so much deeper than what we see in the New Testament there is hardly any comparison.

. . . There are books in the New Testament that are graduate material, like the book of Hebrews. That is a deep, deep book. Why? It is the one book in the New Testament that most closely resembles an Old Testament book, and that is why we have so much difficulty with it.

John said at the end of that first part,

Let us finish on one of my favorite scriptures in Hebrews 2, verses 9-10. It is one of my favorites simply because it teaches me

something that I need, for some reason, to be reminded of so often. If you go all the way back to verse 5, you can begin to understand that he is talking about man and how it is the kind of mystery what God is doing. It is not a mystery to us though.

Hebrews 2:9-10 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, should taste death for everyone. For it was fitting for Him, for whom all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory [you and me], to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

John continues,

The word "captain" is from the Greek *archegos*. *Archegos* means a leader, a pioneer, a forerunner, an author. In profane Greek writings it is frequently translated as "a scout." All these have the same general implication. An *archegos* is one who goes before, doing those things with the intent that others should follow and do what he did. Imitate. Christ is our *Archegos*. He is our Forerunner. He is our Captain. The term captain may be used in terms of a battle or warfare. The captain goes forward, fully expecting that those who follow—the lieutenant, the sergeant, the private—are going to do what he is doing in following him. Do you get the point? Do you get the understanding there?

Now Christ is our example. In I Corinthians 11 Paul said, "Imitate me, just as I am also imitate Christ." Christ is the One who is the *Archegos*. He is represented in all those types.

Brethren, I spent an inordinate chunk of this sermon quoting from the "Offerings of Leviticus, Part One" because it fairly clearly reminds us that Jesus Christ is everything to us, both in what He has done and continues to do, so that we can learn right now to live as He lives, not getting swallowed up into this mess. What He is leading us to is a perfect peace if we will follow the Instruction Manual to do our part in this war to end all wars.

I am not going to spend nearly as much time from this point forward quoting John Ritenbaugh, even though the "Offerings of the Leviticus, Part Four: The Peace Offering" is the main offering which we are concerned with here today. I am just going to draw down to some of the salient points John makes about this offering that is critical to our work now and through eternity. It may seem to you that these are another quite a bit of what John wrote, but it is very important to us to understand the peace offering. But before John's comments, please turn with me to Leviticus 3 and we will be reading just what God has to say to us about the peace offering.

Leviticus 3:1-17 [my Bible has the heading, The Peace Offering]
"When his offering is a sacrifice of peace offering, if he offers it of the herd, whether male or female, he shall offer it without blemish before the Lord. And he shall lay his hand on the head of the offering, and kill it at the door of the tabernacle of meeting; and Aaron's sons, the priests, shall sprinkle the blood all around on the altar. Then he shall offer from the sacrifice of the peace offering an offering made by fire to the Lord.

The fat that covers the entrails, and all the fat that is on the entrails, and the two kidneys and the fat that is on them by on the flanks, and the fatty lobe attached to the liver above the kidney,s he shall remove; and Aaron's sons shall burn it on the altar upon the burnt sacrifice, which is on the wood that is on the fire, as an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the Lord. If his offering is the sacrifice of peace offering to the Lord is of the flock, whether of male or female, he shall offer it without blemish.

If he offers a lamb as his offering, then he shall offer it before the Lord. And he shall lay his hand on the head of the offering, and kill it before the tabernacle of meeting; and Aaron's sons shall sprinkle its blood all around the altar. Then he shall offer from the sacrifice of the peace offering, as an offering made by fire to the Lord, its fat and the whole fat tail which he shall remove close to the backbone. And the fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails, the two kidneys and the fat that is on them by the flanks, and the fatty lobe attached to the liver above the kidneys, he shall

remove; and the priest shall burn them on the altar as food, an offering made by fire to the Lord.

And if his offering is a goat, then he shall offer it before the Lord. He shall lay his hand on its head and kill it before the tabernacle of meeting; and the sons of the Aaron shall sprinkle its blood around the altar. Then he shall offer from it his offering, as an offering made by fire to the Lord. The fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails, the two kidneys and the fat that is on them by the flanks, and the fatty lobe attached to the liver above the kidneys, he shall remove; and the priest shall burn them on the altar as food, an offering made by fire for a sweet aroma; all the fat is the Lord's. This shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwellings: you shall eat neither fat nor blood.

Now we will carefully consider hopefully enough of what John writes in this that we can draw it clearly into the purpose of this sermon with God's fully accomplished perfect peace. John writes,

Biblical commentators have given this offering a variety of titles. Peace, fellowship, praise, and thanksgiving are the most common. However, the *Keil & Delitzsch Old Testament Commentary* states the most correct is "saving offering." Each title shows a somewhat different aspect of the teaching contained in it. Verse 5 informs us that this too is a sweet-savor offering, indicating that no sin is involved in it, and thus it is most satisfying to God. The word "satisfying" is important to understanding this offering.

Verse 5 also shows us an aspect of the ritual that teaches us about this offering's purpose. It is burnt upon, that is, on top of, the burnt offering, which in turn had the meal offering on top of it. They were not necessarily layered like a sandwich and then all burned at the same time. However, the daily burnt offering was always made first and it was always followed by the meal offering and the peace offering on the same fire. The peace offering, then, had to be offered after the other two were already burning. How long after is lost to history, but it could not have been a long time if the same fire was used.

John then went on to explain some of the various parts of the distribution of the animal sacrifice.

Please turn with me now to Leviticus 7. As we read these verses, I am going to quote from John about this section that we are going to be looking at right now. But something else we will be talking about in a little bit tends to be overlooked, which is critical to those of us who the Father has called to His Son to be unified with Them now.

Leviticus 7:11-18 This is the law of the sacrifice of the peace offering which he shall offer to the Lord: If he offers for thanksgiving, then he shall offer, with the sacrifice of thanksgiving, unleavened cakes mixed with oil, or unleavened wafers anointed with oil, or cakes of blended flour mixed with oil. Besides the cakes, as his offerings he shall offer leavened bread with the sacrifice of thanksgiving of his peace offering. And from it he shall offer one cake from each offering as a heave offering to the Lord. It shall belong to the priest who sprinkles the blood of the peace offering.

The flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offering for the thanksgiving shall be eaten the same day it is offered. He shall not leave any of until the morning. But if the sacrifice of his offering is a vow of voluntary offering, it shall be eaten the same day that he offers his sacrifice; but on the next day the remainder of it may also be eaten; the remainder of the flesh of the sacrifice on the third day must be burned with fire. And if any of the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offering is eaten at all on the third day, it shall not be accepted, nor shall it be imputed to him; it shall be an abomination to him who offers it, and the person who eats of it shall bear the guilt.

Leviticus 7:29-32 "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'He who offers the sacrifice of the peace offering to the Lord shall bring his offering to the Lord from the sacrifice of his peace offering. His own hands shall bring this offering made by fire to the Lord. The fat with the breast he shall bring, that the breast may be waved as a

wave offering before the Lord. And the priest shall burn the fat on the altar, but the breast shall be Aaron's and his sons.' Also the right thigh you shall give to the priest as a heave offering from the sacrifice of your peace offerings."

John Ritenbaugh continues writing, saying:

We need to understand the order followed here: The offerer brought the offering to the altar, laid his hand on it, and slew it. The priest sprinkled the blood upon the altar around it. The animal was then cut up, and God's portion—almost entirely fat, besides the two kidneys—was placed on top of the already burning burnt and meal offerings. Then the priest received the breasts and the right shoulder for himself and his children, and the offerer received the remainder of the animal to eat.

However, it had to be eaten within one day if it was a thank offering or within two days if it was a vow or a voluntary offering. If any remained to the third day, it had to be burned. In this process, the major teaching of the peace offering is revealed. Recall that the burning on the altar of the sweet-savor offerings pictures God consuming a meal and being satisfied. Likewise, the priest receiving his portion shows him being satisfied, and the offerer with his portion is also satisfied. "Filled," "gratified," "contented," "accepted," "convinced," "supplied," "persuaded," "pleased," and "assured" all capture the intent of the symbolism.

In addition, since all parties—God, priest, and man—share the same meal and satisfaction, it shows all in peaceful communion or fellowship. Because it was placed in sequence on top of the other two offerings, the peace offering is directly connected to them and thus it depicts the *effect* of perfect devotion to God and man: peaceful satisfaction and fellowship, the fruit of devotedly keeping the two great commandments of the law. In this sacrifice, Christ symbolically plays all three parts. He is the offering, sacrificing His life and service; He is the priest, serving mankind at the altar as Mediator; and He is the offerer, bringing His sacrifice to the altar.

The altar, the place of meeting for the all three, represents sacrificial services and devotion to God that give Him satisfaction and result in our acceptance before the Father. The peace offering shows man, as Christ, accepted, fed, strengthened, and satisfied by sacrifice, teaching that sacrifice is indeed the essence, the heart and core, the essential element of love whether to God or man. More specifically, it shows us that sacrifice plays a major role in acceptance before God, spiritual feeding and therefore spiritual strength, and spiritual satisfaction that we look for. Devoted people sacrifice for those they love. Thus sacrifice indicates devotion to God (burnt offering) and devotion in service to man (meal offering).

If you have not recently gone over this study, what we learned through the other parts of this study in Leviticus is that Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ alone, is the whole burnt offering of total devotion to God as defined in the first four commandments, and the whole meal offering of total devotion in outgoing concern to men as defined in the last six commandments.

These offerings represent the complete and absolute fulfilling of God's commandments by Him perfectly in love of God and men. He *is* the only way to the perfect peace of God, and for us to participate in this perfect peace we need to be living as He lives, following His unmatched example of total self-sacrifice while understanding in this life, and especially at this time brethren, we will still stumble. But He, and He alone, makes us acceptable before the Father.

The peace offering represents our duty to bring to God only what God supplies through Jesus Christ in self-sacrifice to the best of our God-given abilities. This is now going to be what all creation will eventually need to do. But right now, by the grace of God, those of us called by the Father to His Son must be striving to do this with our focus on Jesus Christ, actively learning to live the law of God within all circumstances our lives, especially now, especially during these times knowing that our citizenship is already in the place Jesus Christ has prepared in the Kingdom of God.

Now please turn with me Leviticus 19.

Leviticus 19:5-8 And if you offer a sacrifice of peace offering to the Lord, you shall offer it of your own free will. It shall be eaten the same day you offer it, and on the next day. And if any remains until the third day, it shall be burned in the fire. And if it is eaten at all on the third day, it is an abomination. It shall not be accepted. Therefore everyone who eats it shall bear his iniquity, because he has profaned the hallowed offering of the Lord; and that person shall be cut off from among his people.

Here, along with Leviticus 7:18 (and for future reference, if you want to look at it, Leviticus 22:21-23), is something that we all need to take very seriously because it is a warning. God has put a time limit on us. And this is the only time of our sanctification. If we waste this moment that we have been given to do our duty now, we make God's gifts something profane—common—and we will find ourselves cut off for eternity. We need to take this seriously, brethren. *Now is our time*. Within the perfect plan of God this is the time He has predestined us to learning and living the self-sacrificial duty God expects and guarantees us to do that is made possible and is absolutely certain through Jesus Christ.

However, just like the foolish virgins awaiting the bridegroom and those Israelites who refused their chance to go into the Promised Land and were condemned to die in the wilderness, we could lose out on something that God greatly desires for us, and we will make it happen *if* we stay faithful and do our parts. We are living in times unlike any in recent memory. It is a perfect storm that is only going to get worse, but we cannot get caught up in it.

We must be focused on Jesus Christ and the work that only He can do to have us live as He does, the sacrificial offering to God and man that brings us into a perfect peaceful harmony with Them right now. We can have that peace if we are valiantly staying the course in sacrificial devotion to God and man in accord with God's will. We may not have the complete peace that will only come when God is through with His project, but as John said in

another sermon on the offerings of Leviticus that was given in April of 1997 about the meal and peace offering, what we are doing right now has a lot to do with our state of mind, as Christians at this time.

Incidentally, I heartily recommend that you all listen to that particular sermon, because within it you will see just how important Jesus Christ is as the unblemished sacrifice to make our blemished sacrifice acceptable to God. Again, that was the "Sacrifices of the Leviticus, Part Five" from April 12, 1997.

We are now going to take a short time looking at several scriptures regarding what we need to be doing right now if we are following the Prince of Peace. But before we do that, I would like us to turn to Isaiah 9. And you are going to quickly recognize this as prophecy concerning Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 9:2-7 The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined. You have multiplied the nations and increased its joy; they rejoice before You according to the joy of harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil.

For you have broken the yoke of this burden and the staff of his shoulder, and the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian. For every warrior's sandal from the noisy battle, and the garments rolled in blood, will be used for burning and fuel of fire. For unto us a Child is born, unto us, a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end.

Of course this is a prophecy about Jesus Christ, but there are two things we need to pick up here. The first one is that He is referred to as the Everlasting Father. This is not the Father who Christ revealed in Luke 10:22 and John 1:18, who He said is greater than Himself. But He is the Everlasting Father in the sense that He is the Creator and the Deliverer of mankind to the Father. This is what Ryan [McClure] referred to there in Romans 8:15. Paul said the

creation that He is working on is the same as in Jeremiah 31:9 where the God of creation identifies Himself to Jeremiah as the Father to Israel and Ephraim His firstborn.

So remember, this is Jesus Christ, as we are told in John 1 there is nothing that has not been created by Him. The apostle Paul makes clear in I Corinthians 15 that He is the one who is doing the work that He and the Father apparently determined to be His responsibility from eternity, to bring a wholly and completely perfected creation back to the Father. Hold on to this because it is very important to the incredible and perfect peace that is before us, which will never, ever fail in war again.

We also need to see in verse 6 He is called the Prince of Peace. This prince is equivalent to the Greek word mentioned earlier in the book of Hebrews as the Captain of our salvation. You will find the same word is used by the Peter in the New Testament when he proclaims to the Israelites in the Acts 3: 15 they had put to death the Holy One, the Prince of life that the Father had raised from the dead. The prince is *archegos*, the same word in Acts that is in Hebrews. And He is the one leading the way to eternal life.

In the Old Testament there in Isaiah 9:6, prince is from the Hebrew word *sar*. It is #8269 in *Strong's* and it indicates a lead person and is variously translated in the King James Version as captain that had ruled, chief, captain, general, governor, keeper, lord, prince, ruler, steward. We find the same words used in Exodus 2. We are going to read that now because I believe there is a good lesson for us there.

Exodus 2:11-14 Now it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out to his brethren and looked on their burdens. And he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren. So he looked this way and that, and when he saw there was no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. And when he went out the second day, behold two Hebrew men were fighting, and he said to the one who did the wrong, "Why are you striking your companion?" Then [this man] said to him, "Who made you a prince and a judge over us. Do you intend to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?" So Moses feared and said, "Surely this thing is known!"

Perhaps Moses within his leadership position in the Pharaoh's house, and with knowledge of the coming deliverer taught in his formative years from Amram and Jochebed, put two and two together and decided, hey, he was the guy. Perhaps he presumptuously acted on emotion rather than the direction of God, as God possibly pointed out to him when the Hebrew man said, "Who gave you the authority to act as judge?" That might be something we want to keep in our minds as we are living in these circumstances where emotions are driving people to presumptuously do things that are not in line with God's will and only contribute more to the chaos and confusion.

We are in the middle of "on the job training" to work toward godly peace that only comes from self-sacrificial devotion to God and men. Work that is in line with the will of God and perfect work of Jesus Christ.

Sar can be translated captain, like *archegos*, but it also carries with it the sense of government authority or lord. Just as Jesus Christ is the Lord of the Sabbath, He is also the Lord of Peace. He is the one who governs and shows us how to fill a real and lasting peace so that we are ready to help everyone else who will be limping back from this war to end all wars.

As we run down to the end of the sermon, let us keep in mind what God expects from us now and following the sacrificial work and devotion to God and men. We are going to quickly go through a few of our duties right now in a number of scriptures that are very familiar to each of us. But how much are these the driving forces in our lives now? These are some scriptures we are all familiar with, but are we living them?

Psalms 119:161-168 Princes persecute me without a cause, but my heart stands in awe of your word. I rejoice at your word as one who finds great treasure. I hate and abhor lying, but I love your law. Seven times a day I praise You, because of Your righteous judgments. Great peace have those who love Your law, and nothing causes them to stumble. Lord, I hope for your salvation, and I do Your commandments. My soul keeps Your testimonies, and I love them exceedingly. I keep Your precepts and Your testimonies, for all my ways are before You.

Brethren, this needs to be the way of our life right now no matter how seriously we find ourselves out of sync and persecuted by this world as we strive to produce the fruits of love that the apostle Paul listed there in I Corinthians 13 toward all men, not just the brethren. We need to keep our focus on the Kingdom of God, when all will be living the commandments of God and following Jesus Christ, and nothing will cause anyone in that Kingdom to stumble. Our ways are before Him right now. How are we stacking up?

Psalms 34:11-18 Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you fear of the Lord. Who is the man who desires life, and loves many days, that he may see good? Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit. Depart from evil and do good, seek peace and pursue it. The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry. The face of the Lord is against those who do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles. The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrary spirit.

Seeking peace and pursuing it is now ours to do in following the Prince of Peace in our meager attempts to total devotion of God and to men, but made absolutely sure through Jesus Christ if we stay the course.

Philippians 4:4-9 Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I say, rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ.

Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue, if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

Brethren, this is our duty right now. We must not let the chaos and confusion around us pull us away from the peace of God that is now ours through Jesus Christ, just as it will be for all those who follow us down the road behind Christ.

I want to leave you with something to consider and I think it is incredibly exciting and should make us even the more determined to hang on to what we have been given now to work the peace of God within the circumstances of our lives.

We are told that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. But God does not create chaos and confusion, which is what we see in Genesis 1:2 as God started a recreation process. We are all aware that the angels were around before God created the heavens and the earth that we see, and that an archangel, who was right there at the throne of God, betrayed Him and that same angel led a rebellion against God and His way of life. He became Satan, God's self-proclaimed adversary, when iniquity was found in him. This led to the chaos and confusion and destruction we see in Genesis 1:2, but he thought of it before that.

But brethren, do you really think that God got caught off guard when iniquity was found in him? That He had to resort to a Plan B? I do not think so. As we just read in Philippians 4:7 something continued to drive the apostle Paul, a peace that Jesus Christ was in charge of producing that was beyond human understanding. As a matter of fact, this is the way the *God's Word Translation* paraphrases the apostle Paul's words,

Philippians 4:4-7 (GWT) Always be joyful in the Lord. I'll say it again, be joyful! Let everyone know how considerate you are. The Lord is near. Never worry about anything, but in every situation, let God know what you need in prayers and requests while giving thanks. Then God's peace, which goes beyond anything we could imagine, will guard your thoughts and emotions through Christ.

Jesus Christ is working everything to a perfect peace which goes beyond anything we can imagine. He is working everything towards the relationship with the Family of God. Abominable war against God's way of life will never an issue again.

II Peter 3:7-16 But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that for the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in them will be burned up.

Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot or blemish.

Revelation 21:1-7 Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people.

God Himself will be with them and be their God, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, no more sorrow, nor crying. There will be no more pain, for the former things have passed away. Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful." And He said to me, "It is

done! I am the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountains of the waters of life freely to everyone who thirsts."

We must be keeping our eyes focused above the heavens we see into the Kingdom of God, where the perfect peace of God never will be disturbed again by any mind that works apart from the perfect law of the love of God and the fruit that will produce. We must keep our focus on what is even beyond our imagination.

When our High Priest, Jesus Christ, proclaims, "It is done!" and the perfect peace of God that surpasses all understanding is established forever, a Family perfectly in line with the Father, devoted to one another and outgoing concern to each other forever, brethren.