

# LESSON 230

## WARS AND PEACE

Related Scripture: Psalm 46

**KEY VERSE:** "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."—John 14:27.

Lesson Scripture: Micah 4:1-4;  
Matthew 24:6-8; James 4:1-4

### Introduction:

Questions of war and peace have excited controversy through the ages. Biblical prophecies of a future world of peace have been misused or misinterpreted to support false theories of pacifism held by some well meaning Christians.

Most people prefer peace—so long as they have or can get everything they want without fighting for it. History demonstrates, however, that poor people (individuals and nations) are generally more willing to fight and risk their lives to get what they want than rich people (individuals and nations) are willing to fight to keep what they have.

Other supposed reasons for war, political or religious, are usually mere camouflage or window dressing, so far as human motivation is concerned.

With most people, even the issue of freedom vs. slavery is thought of chiefly in economic terms.

So far as this world is concerned, people being what they are, there can be no lasting peace. This is the clear teaching of the Bible. Americans, if they are wise, will quit trying to buy peace from our natural enemies and prepare to defend ourselves against them.

For our lesson this week, we have the following outline:

1. Wars Expunged, Micah 4:1-4
  - a. Power of God, 1
  - b. Paths of God, 2
  - c. Peace of God, 3
  - d. Purpose of God, 4
2. Wars Expected, Matthew 24:6-8
  - a. Rumors of wars, 6
  - b. Ravages of wars, 7, 8
3. Wars Explained, James 4:1-4
  - a. Origin of enmity, 1
  - b. Omitted entreaty, 2
  - c. Offensive effort, 3
  - d. Option of enemies, 4

### Notes on the Printed Text:

**Wars Expunged, Micah 4:1-4.**

Apparently we have here a glimpse of the millennial reign of Christ. Then indeed we shall have lasting peace on earth, but not until then. It is vain and delusory to talk about achieving lasting peace through world government without Christ. We can have no peace worth having without the Prince of Peace. (Isa. 9:6.)

### Power of God, 1.

"Mountains" and "hills" here seem to represent nations or governments. "In the last days" of this world the mountain or authority of "the house of the Lord" will be at the top of all earthly authority, and "people shall flow unto it."

### Paths of God, 2.

"Many nations" will seek instruction from "the God of Jacob" to "walk in his paths," not because of any change in their depraved human nature, but simply because "the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." When He shall rule the nations "with a rod of iron" (Rev. 19:15), the fear of swift judgment will compel at least an outward obedience.

"When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." (Isa. 26:9.)

### Peace of God, 3.

Numbers, strength, or distance will alike be unable to hinder enforcement of divine judgment. "Many" people, "strong" and "afar off," will be subdued by His almighty power, and will be made to dwell in peace. For a thousand years (Rev. 20:3-7), Satan will be bound, aggression will be stopped, and wars will cease.

Knowing the universal desire for peace and security, Satan is trying to anticipate and counterfeit the millennium with his own world government. But "when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them." (I Th. 5:2.) Genuine peace and justice await the coming of our Lord.

### Purpose of God, 4.

"Every man under his vine and under his fig tree"—no communism here! Men shall dwell in safety without fear simply because "the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken"—and who can defeat His purpose?

### Wars Expected, Matthew 24:6-8.

Children of God already have an inner peace with God, and wait with confidence both for millennial and for eternal peace. But meanwhile we live in a world of sin and strife, and our Savior has plainly warned us to expect the woes of wars and worse throughout this age.

### Rumors of Wars, 6.

We are not to be troubled by rumors. We know what to expect. The end is not yet. Let us not indulge in false hopes, or be deceived by false promises. Amid the wars and rumors of wars, men will cry "Peace, peace; when there is no peace." (Jer. 6:14; 8:11.) Let us be prepared for the things that "must come to pass."

### Ravages of Wars, 7, 8.

Besides the ravages and devastation of war itself, famines and pestilences are the usual concomitants of war. These things men bring upon themselves. Then God adds earthquakes and other natural disasters as evidences of His wrath upon a rebellious world. But the worst is yet to come, as "All these are the beginning of sorrows."

#### **Wars Explained, James 4:1-4.**

Spiritually blinded and willfully ignorant of revealed truth, sinful man brings disaster upon himself and then tries to blame God for his suffering the consequences of sin—either his own sin or the sins of others. For those who will listen, the word of God clearly explains the reasons for war.

#### **Origin of Enmity, 1.**

Wars and battles among people, even among God's people, come from the conflicting pleasures of the "members" or parties involved. That is, different people seek to please themselves in different ways, and so come into conflict with other people.

In wars between nations, for instance, one nation covets the land or other possessions of a second nation, which in turn wishes to hold on to its own possessions, and so they fight. Or, in wars over religion, one nation wishes to convert or destroy another nation, which prefers to survive with its own religion, and so they fight. Or, in totalitarian warfare, one nation wishes to enslave another, which prefers to be free, and so they fight. In any case, either side is (at least for the moment) pleased when it wins, and displeased when it loses.

#### **Omitted Entreaty, 2.**

Generally speaking, God's people cannot afford to be aggressors, especially in personal affairs. Their God will so overrule that they can never enjoy the fruits of covetousness, extortion, and aggression, if they are really His children. Why do they not ask Him for what they want? There is no scarcity with God; if we lack anything that God would be pleased for us to have, it is simply because we have failed to ask Him for it.

#### **Offensive Effort, 3.**

Yet even prayer can be an abomination to God. (Prov. 28:9.) It is possible to put much time and effort into prayer without receiving a blessing, because the very effort is offensive to God when we pray selfishly to satisfy our own lusts.

#### **Option of Enemies, 4.**

So far as life in this world is concerned, it is not possible to be without enemies, but we do have an option of enemies: that is, we can choose whether to live in enmity with the world or in enmity with God. Professed people of God who seek to maintain friendship with the world are practicing spiritual adultery and so make themselves enemies of God. We need to make up our minds which side we are on. If we are on God's side, let us be faithful to Him; the world cannot protect us from His wrath, but He can protect us from or in and through the worst that the world can do.

#### **Key Verse:**

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."—John 14:27.

Jesus gives to us an inner peace that the world knows nothing of. He Himself is our peace with God (Eph. 2:14); He Himself, in the person of the Holy Spirit, abides within (Ro. 8:9-11; Col. 1:27) to calm our fears and to lead us in the ways of peace.