

Speaking Peace

“Peace” is one of those unique words that is best defined by what it is not. It is the opposite of, or the absence of, war, enmity, conflict, contention, or discord. Put positively, “peace” means harmony, concord, consonance, or unity. To “speak peace” means to tell another that there is no war, enmity, conflict, contention, or discord between us; that there is harmony, concord, consonance, and unity between us. It is to say that we are in fellowship.

GOD SPEAKING PEACE

God speaks peace to Himself. God is at perfect harmony with Himself within the Holy Godhead. God the Father speaks peace to God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, God the Son speaks peace to God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, and God the Holy Spirit speaks peace to God the Father and God the Son. There is perfect unity and perfect fellowship. God is love (1 John 4:8), and He loves Himself first and foremost. He is jealous of His glory (Ex. 20:5; 34:14; Deut. 4:24; 5:9; 6: 15; 32:21; Josh. 24:19; Isa. 42:8; 48:11; Ezek. 39:25).

God does not speak peace to depraved man. Man by nature does not have a righteousness that answers the demands of God’s law and justice. Because God is holy, He demands perfect righteousness of all who fellowship with Him. All who are without this perfect righteousness are cursed and are God’s enemies. They are under His wrath; He does not speak peace to them.

“You shall not bow to them, and you shall not serve them; for I [am] Jehovah your God, a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of fathers on sons, on the third and on the fourth [generation], to those that hate Me” (Ex. 20:5). “Cursed [is] he who does not rise to all the Words of this Law, to do them! And all the people shall say, Amen!” (Deut. 27:26). “And it shall be, if you will not heed the voice of your God, to take heed to do all His commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today, even all these curses shall come on you and overtake you: You [shall be] cursed in the city, and you shall be cursed in the field. Your basket and your kneading-trough [shall be] cursed. The fruit of your body [shall be] cursed, and the fruit of your land, the offspring of your oxen, and the young ones of your sheep. You shall be cursed when you come in, and you shall be cursed when you go out” (Deut. 28:15-18). “He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall mock at them. Then He will speak to them in His anger, and He will terrify them in His wrath” (Ps. 2:4-5). “For You [are] not a God enjoying wickedness; nor shall evil live with You. The boasters shall not set themselves before Your eyes. You hate all workers of iniquity. You shall destroy those speaking lies; Jehovah will despise the man of blood and deceit” (Ps. 5:4-6). “Jehovah tries the righteous, but His soul hates the wicked and the one loving violence” (Ps. 11:5). “Your hand shall find out all Your enemies; Your right hand shall find out those hating You. You shall set them as a fiery furnace in the time of Your presence; Jehovah will swallow them up in His wrath, and the fire will devour them. You shall destroy their fruit from the earth, and their seed from the sons of men. For they stretched forth evil against You; they imagined a plot; they cannot prevail, for You shall make them turn the back; against their faces You shall make ready [Your arrows] on Your strings” (Ps. 21:8-12). “But the wicked shall perish; yea, the enemies of Jehovah [shall be] like the beauty of pastures; they are consumed; like smoke, they vanish. The wicked borrows and never repays, but the righteous is

gracious and giving. For His blessed ones inherit the earth; and those cursed by Him shall be cut off” (Ps. 37:20-22). “God rises up [and] His enemies are scattered; and those who hate Him flee from His face. As smoke is driven away, You drive [them] away; as wax melts before the fire, the wicked perish in God’s presence” (Ps. 68:1-2). “Yea, God will crush the head of His enemies, the hairy crown of him who walks on in his guilt” (Ps. 68:21). “And reward our neighbors sevenfold. [Give] into their bosom their curse with which they have cursed You, O Lord” (Ps. 79:12). “Remember, O Lord, the reproach of Your servants, my bearing in my bosom the insults of the many peoples [with] which Your enemies have cursed, O Jehovah; [with] which they have cursed the footsteps of Your anointed” (Ps. 89:50-51). “For, lo, Your enemies, O Jehovah; for, lo, Your enemies shall perish; all the evildoers shall be scattered” (Ps. 92:9). “Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship [with] You, devising mischief for a statute?” (Ps. 94:20). “A fire goes before Him and burns up His enemies all around” (Ps. 97:3). “A declaration of Jehovah to my Lord: Sit at My right hand, until I place Your enemies [as] Your footstool” (Ps. 110:1). “You have rebuked the proud, the cursed ones who go astray from Your Commands” (Ps. 119:21). “Surely You will slay the wicked, O God; and men of blood will turn away from me. Who will maliciously speak against You? Your enemies are lifted up with vanity. O Jehovah, do not I hate those hating You? And am I [not] detesting those rising against You? I hate them [with] a perfect hatred; they have become my enemies” (Ps. 139:19-22). “The curse of Jehovah [is] in the house of the wicked, but He blesses the abode of the just” (Prov. 3:3). “For the perverse one [is] hateful to Jehovah, but His intimacy [is] with the righteous” (Prov. 3:32). “Lying lips [are] hateful to Jehovah, but those who deal faithfulness [are] His delight” (Prov. 12:22). “He who justifies the wicked, and he who condemns the just, even both of them [are] disgusting to Jehovah” (Prov. 17:15). “[There is] no peace, says Jehovah, to the wicked” (Isa. 48:22). “But the wicked are like the driven sea, which cannot be quiet, and its waves cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace to the wicked, says my God” (Isa. 57:20-21). “And say to them, So says Jehovah, the God of Israel, Cursed [is] the man who does not obey the Words of this covenant” (Jer. 11:3). “So says Jehovah, Cursed [is] the man who trusts in man, and who makes flesh his arm, and who turns aside his heart from Jehovah” (Jer. 17:5). “God [is] jealous, and Jehovah is avenging, Jehovah is avenging and is a possessor of wrath. Jehovah takes vengeance against His foes, and He keeps [wrath] against His enemies” (Nah. 1:2). “Then He will also say to those on [His] left, Go away from Me, cursed ones, into the everlasting fire having been prepared for the Devil and his angels” (Mat. 25:41). “For God’s wrath is revealed from Heaven on all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, holding the truth in unrighteousness, because the thing known of God is clearly known within them, for God revealed [it] to them” (Rom. 1:18-19). “But to the [ones] truly disobeying the truth out of self-interest, and obeying unrighteousness, [will be] anger and wrath, trouble and pain on every soul of man that works out evil, both of Jew first, and of Greek” (Rom. 2:8-9). “For the Law works out wrath; for where no law is, neither [is] transgression” (Rom. 4:15). “For as many as are out of works of Law, [these] are under a curse. For it has been written, Cursed [is] everyone who does not continue in all the things having been written in the book of the Law, to do them” (Gal. 3:10). “Let no one deceive you with empty words, for through these [things] the wrath of God comes on the sons of disobedience” (Eph. 5:6). “And you being dead in deviations and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the ruler of the authority of the air, the spirit now working in the sons of disobedience, among whom we also all conducted ourselves

in times past in the lusts of our flesh, doing the things willed of the flesh and of the understanding, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as the rest” (Eph. 2:1-3). “For the ones that are according to flesh mind the things of the flesh. And the ones according to Spirit [mind] the things of the Spirit. For the mind of the flesh [is] death, but the mind of the Spirit [is] life and peace; because the mind of the flesh [is] enmity towards God; for it is not being subjected to the Law of God, for neither can it [be]. And those being in the flesh are not able to please God” (Rom. 8:5-8). “Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that the friendship of the world is enmity [with] God? Whoever, then, purposes to be a friend of the world is put down [as] hostile [to] God” (Jam. 4:4).

God speaks peace to His people. But, praise be to God, He sent His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, the perfectly sinless God-Man Mediator, to establish a righteousness for all whom He represented. By Jesus Christ’s atoning blood, the sins of all whom He represented were washed away; and when His perfect righteousness is imputed to His people, God enters into fellowship with them. The enmity and hostility has been taken away, there is no more war, and now there is peace between God and His people. There is blessed harmony. God and His people are not enemies; they are friends, and He speaks peace to them – all because of the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ. It is the gospel – the good news – of peace!

“Jehovah will give strength to His people; Jehovah will bless His people with peace” (Ps. 29:11). “Watch the perfect and behold the upright one; for the end of [that] man [is] peace. But the transgressors are destroyed together; the end of the wicked is cut off. But the salvation of the righteous [is] from Jehovah; [He is] their strength in the time of distress. And Jehovah helps them and delivers them; He shall deliver them from the wicked and saves them, because they trust in Him” (Ps. 37:37-40). “Give the king Your judgments, O God; and Your righteousness to the king’s son. Your people He shall judge in righteousness, and Your poor in justice. The mountains will lift up peace to the people, and the little hills through righteousness. He shall judge the poor of the people; and He shall save the sons of the needy; and He shall crush the oppressor” (Ps. 72:1-4). “I will hear what Jehovah God will say; for He will speak peace to His people, and His saints; but let them not turn again to folly. Surely His salvation [is] near to the [ones] fearing Him, for glory to dwell in our land. Mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace kissed [each other]. Truth shall sprout out of the earth, and righteousness looks down from Heaven. Yea, Jehovah shall give good, and our land shall give its produce. Righteousness shall go before Him and shall make a way for His footsteps” (Ps. 85:8-13). “Great peace [is to] those who love Your Law, and there [is] no stumblingblock to them” (Ps. 119:165). “Jehovah takes pleasure in those who fear Him, those who hope in His mercy. Praise Jehovah, O Jerusalem; praise your God, O Zion. For He has made strong the bars of your gates; He has blessed your sons within you. He sets up peace [in] your border, He satisfies you [with] the fat of the wheat. He sends His command out [on] the earth; His Word runs very swiftly; He gives snow like wool; He scatters the white frost like ashes; He casts out His ice like crumbs; who can stand before His cold? He sends out His Word and melts them; He causes His wind to blow, [and] the waters flow. He declares His Word to Jacob, His statutes and His judgments to Israel. He has not done so with any nation; and they have not known [His] judgments. Praise Jehovah!” (Ps. 147:11-20). “Her ways [are] ways of pleasantness, and all

her paths peace” (Prov. 3:17). “I [was] a wall, and my breasts like towers; then I was in His eyes as one finding peace” (Song 8:10). “For a Child is born; to us a Son is given; and the government is on His shoulder; and His name is called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. There is no end to the increase of [His] government and of peace on the throne of David, and on His kingdom, to order it, and to sustain it with justice and with righteousness, from now and forever. The zeal of Jehovah of Hosts will do this” (Isa. 9:6-7). “You will keep in perfect peace the mind stayed [on You], for he trusts in You” (Isa. 26:3). “Jehovah, You will ordain peace for us; for also You have worked all our works for us” (Isa. 26:12). “In that day sing to it, A vineyard of desire; I, Jehovah, keep it; I will water it every moment, that no one punish it; I will guard it night and day. Fury is not in Me. Who will give Me briars [and] thorns in the battle? I will step through it; I would burn it at once. Or will he lay hold of My strength that he may make peace with Me? Let him make peace with Me. Those coming in shall take root; Jacob shall blossom and Israel shall bud, and they will fill the face of the world [with] fruit. [As] the striking of His striker, did He strike him? Or as the slaying of His slain, is he slain? You will contend with her by driving her away, by sending her away. He shall take away by His harsh wind, in the day of the east wind. By this, then, the iniquity of Jacob will be covered, and this is all the fruit, to take away his sin; when he makes all the stones of the altar as chalkstones that are beaten in pieces; Asherahs and sun pillars shall not rise” (Isa. 27:2-9). “Comfort, O comfort My people, says your God. Speak lovingly to the heart of Jerusalem; yea, cry to her that her warfare is done, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she has taken from the hand of Jehovah double for all her sins” (Isa. 40:1-2). “Then justice shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness shall dwell in the fruitful field. And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the service of righteousness shall be quietness and hope forever” (Isa. 32:16-17). “How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of him proclaiming good news, making peace heard, bearing tidings of good, making heard salvation, saying to Zion, Your God reigns” (Isa. 52:7). “But He was wounded for our transgressions; [He was] bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His wounds we ourselves are healed” (Isa. 53:5). “For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but My mercy shall not depart from you; nor shall the covenant of My peace be removed, says Jehovah who has pity on you” (Isa. 54:10). “[I] create the fruit of the lips: peace, peace, to the ones far off and near, says Jehovah, and I will heal him” (Isa. 57:19). “Behold, I will bring health and healing to it, and I will heal them and will show them the abundance of peace and truth. And I will cause the captivity of Judah and the captivity of Israel to return, and will build them, as at the first. And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity which they have sinned against Me; and I will pardon all their iniquities which they have sinned against Me, and which they have rebelled against Me. And it shall be a name of joy to Me, a praise and a glory to all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do for them. And they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and for all the peace that I do for it” (Jer. 33:6-9). “And I will cut a covenant of peace with them, an everlasting covenant it shall be with them, And I will place them and multiply them, and I will put My sanctuary in their midst forever” (Ezek. 37:26). “Behold! The feet of Him bearing good news [is] on the mountains, making heard, Peace! O Judah, celebrate your feasts; fulfill your vows; for the worthless will not continue to pass through among you; he is completely cut off” (Nah. 1:15). “And speak to him, saying, So says Jehovah of Hosts, saying, Behold! The Man whose name [is] THE BRANCH! And He shall spring up out of

His place, and He shall build the temple of Jehovah. Even He shall build the temple of Jehovah; and He shall bear the majesty, and shall sit and rule on His throne. And He shall be a priest on His throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between the two of them” (Zech. 6:12-13).

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King comes to you! He is righteous and being victorious, humble, and riding on an ass, even on a colt, the son of an ass. And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem. And the battle bow shall be cut off, and He shall speak peace to the nations. And His dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth” (Zech. 9:9-10). “The Word which He sent to the sons of Israel, preaching the gospel of peace through Jesus Christ, this One is Lord of all” (Acts 10:36). “Then being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have had access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we glory on the hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory also in afflictions, knowing that affliction works out patience, and patience [works out] proven character; and proven character, hope. And the hope does not put [us] to shame, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through [the] Holy Spirit given to us; for we yet being without strength, in due time Christ died for ungodly ones. For with difficulty one will die for a just one, (for perhaps one even dares to die for the sake of the good one), but God commends His love to us in [this], that we being yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being justified now by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath through Him. For if [while] being enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life; and not only [so], but also glorying in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we now received the reconciliation. Because of this, even as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, so also death passed to all men, inasmuch as all sinned. For sin was in [the] world until Law, but sin is not charged [where] there is no law; but death reigned from Adam until Moses, even on those who had not sinned in the likeness of Adam’s transgression, who is a type of the coming [One]. But the free gift [is] not also like the deviation. For if by the deviation of the one the many died, much more the grace of God, and the gift in grace, which [is] of the one Man, Jesus Christ, did abound to the many. And the gift [is] not as by one having sinned; for indeed the judgment [was] of one to condemnation, but the free gift [is] of many deviations to justification. For if by the deviation of the one death reigned through the one, much more those who are receiving the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness shall rule in life by the One, Jesus Christ. So then, as through one deviation [it was] toward all men to condemnation, so also through one righteous act toward all men to justification of life. For as through the one man’s disobedience the many were constituted sinners, so also through the obedience of the One the many shall be constituted righteous. But Law came in besides, that the deviation might abound. But where sin abounded, grace much more abounded, that as sin ruled in death, so also grace might rule through righteousness to everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 5:1-21). “For the mind of the flesh [is] death, but the mind of the Spirit [is] life and peace” (Rom. 8:6). “And how may they preach if they are not sent? Even as it has been written, How beautiful the feet of those preaching the gospel of peace, of those preaching the gospel of good things” (Rom. 10:15). “And may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, for you to abound in hope, in power of [the] Holy Spirit” (Rom. 15:13). “God [is] faithful, through whom you were called into [the] fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord” (1 Cor. 1:9). “Christ redeemed us from

the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us; for it has been written, Cursed [is] everyone having been hung on a tree” (Gal. 3:13). “But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love [with] which He loved us, even we being dead in deviations, [He] made us alive together with Christ (by grace you are being saved), and raised [us] up together and seated [us] together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus, that He might demonstrate in the ages coming on, the exceeding great riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you are saved, through faith, and this not of yourselves; [it is] the gift of God; not of works, that not anyone should boast; for we are [His] workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God before prepared that we should walk in them. Because of this, remember that you, the nations, [were] then in [the] flesh (those having been called Uncircumcision by those having been called Circumcision in the flesh made by hands) that at that time you were without Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers of the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now, in Christ Jesus you who then were afar off, came to be near by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, He making us both one, and breaking down the middle wall of partition, in His flesh causing to cease the enmity, the Law of the commandments in decrees, that He might in Himself create the two into one new man, making peace, and might reconcile both in one body to God through the cross, slaying the enmity in Himself. And coming, [He] proclaimed peace to you, the ones afar off, and to the ones near” (Eph. 2:4-17). “Then stand firm, having girded your loins about with truth and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod the feet with [the] preparation of the gospel of peace” (Eph. 6:14-15). “Be anxious about nothing, but in everything by prayer and by petition with thanksgivings, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philip. 4:6-7). “And He is the Head of the body, the assembly, who is [the] Beginning, [the] First-born out of [the] dead, that He be preeminent in all things; because all the fullness was pleased to dwell in Him, and through Him making peace by the blood of His cross, to reconcile all things to Himself; through Him, whether the things on the earth, or the things in the heavens. And you then being alienated and hostile in [your] mind by evil works, but now He reconciled in the body of His flesh, through death, to present you holy and without blemish and irreproachable before Him” (Col. 1:18-22). “And to await His Son from Heaven, whom He raised from [the] dead, Jesus, the [One] delivering us from the coming wrath” (1 Thes. 1:10). “But we being of day should be sober, having put on [the] breastplate of faith and love, and [the] hope of salvation [as] a helmet; because God has not appointed us to wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, He dying on our behalf, so that whether we watch or we sleep, we may live together with Him” (1 Thes. 5:8-10).

BELIEVERS SPEAKING PEACE

Believers speak peace to other believers. Believers have harmony and unity with one another. They judge other believers to be regenerate based on what these believers confess, which is the true gospel of salvation conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ alone. They fellowship with one another and speak peace to one another based on the only ground of peace, which is the person and work of Jesus Christ. Their unity with each other is based on their unity with Christ, a common walk in the light, a common belief of and defense of

the truth of the gospel, common adversaries, and common suffering.

The apostles spoke peace to the believers in the churches to whom they wrote, both in the greetings at the beginnings of letters and in the closings at the ends of letters (Rom. 1:7; 15:33; 1 Cor. 1:3; 2 Cor. 1:2; 13:11; Gal. 1:3; 6:16; Eph. 1:2; 6:23; Philip. 1:2; Col. 1:2; 1 Thes. 1:1; 5:23; 2 Thes. 1:2; 3:16; 1 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:2; Tit. 1:4; Philem. 1:3; 1 Pet. 1:2; 5:14; 2 Pet. 1:2; 2 John 3; 3 John 14; Jude 1:2; Rev. 1:4).

Believers love the same things. They hate the same things. They are closer than any natural blood relations. They love the Lord Jesus Christ and His only gospel. They hate all false gospels that condition salvation in any way, to any degree, on the sinner. They desire to fellowship with each other. They rejoice together in Christ and defend each other against the attacks of their enemies. They help each other in times of need. They encourage, edify, admonish, and forgive one another.

“I [am] a companion of all who fear You; yea, of those who keep Your Precepts” (Ps. 119:63). “Behold! How good and how pleasant [is] the living of brothers, even in unity” (Ps. 133:1). “And I do not pray concerning these only, but also concerning those who will believe in Me through their word; that all may be one, as You [are] in Me, Father, and I in You, that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And I have given them the glory which You have given Me, that they may be one, as We are One: I in them, and You in Me, that they may be perfected in one; and that the world may know that You sent Me and loved them, even as You loved Me” (John 17:20-23). “And they were continuing steadfastly in the doctrine of the apostles, and in fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42). “For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in [the] Holy Spirit. For the [one] serving Christ in these things is pleasing to God, and approved by men. So then let us pursue the things of peace, and the things for building up one another” (Rom. 14:17-19). “And may the God of patience and encouragement give to you to mind the same thing among one another according to Christ Jesus, that with one accord [and] with one mouth you may glorify [the] God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of this, receive one another as Christ also received us, to [the] glory of God” (Rom. 15:5-7). “Now I exhort you, brothers, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that you all say the same thing, and there be no divisions among you, but you be united in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Cor. 1:10). “For also we all were baptized by one Spirit into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, even all were given to drink into one Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:13). “For the rest, brothers, rejoice! Perfect yourselves; encourage yourselves, mind the same thing, be at peace; and the God of love and of peace will be with you” (2 Cor. 13:11). “Then I, the prisoner in [the] Lord, exhort you to walk worthily of the calling in which you were called, with all humility and meekness, with long-suffering, bearing with one another in love, being eager to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. [There is] one body and one Spirit, even as you also were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, the [One] above all and through all and in you all” (Eph. 4:1-6). “I thank my God on all the remembrance of you, always in my every prayer on your behalf making [my] prayer with joy over your fellowship in the gospel, from [the] first day until now, being persuaded of

this very thing, that the [One] having begun a good work in you will finish [it] until [the] day of Jesus Christ; as it is righteous for me to think this of you all because you have me in [your] heart, both in my bonds and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you are all sharers of the grace with me” (Philip. 1:3-7). “Only behave yourself worthily of the gospel of Christ, so that whether coming and seeing you or being absent, I hear the things concerning you, that you stand fast in one spirit and one soul, striving together in the faith of the gospel, and not being terrified in anything by those who oppose, which to them truly is a proof of destruction, but to you of salvation, and this from God; because it was granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer on His behalf, having the same struggle which you saw in me and now hear [to be] in me” (Philip. 1:27-30). “[So] then, if [there is] any comfort in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of [the] Spirit, if any tendernesses and compassions, fulfill my joy, that you think the same, having the same love, one in soul, minding the one thing, [doing] nothing according to party spirit or self-glory, but in humility, esteeming one another [as] surpassing themselves; each not looking at the things of themselves, but each also [the] things of others” (Philip. 2:1-4). “Yet [as] to where we have arrived, walk by the same rule, [being] of the same mind” (Philip. 3:16). “And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which you also were called in one body, and be thankful” (Col. 3:15). “Therefore, encourage one another, and build up one another, as you indeed do. But, brothers, we entreat you to know those laboring among you, and taking the lead of you in [the] Lord, and warning you, even esteem them most exceedingly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves” (1 Thes. 5:11-13). “And let us consider one another, to incitement of love and of good works, not forsaking the assembling together of ourselves, as [is the] custom of some, but exhorting, and by so much more as you see the Day drawing near” (Heb. 10:24-25). “But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of His Son Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:7). “Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God, and everyone who loves has been generated from God, and knows God. The [one] who does not love has not known God, because God is love. By this the love of God was revealed in us, because His Son, the Only begotten, God has sent into the world that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son [to be] a propitiation relating to our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love having been perfected is in us” (1 John 4:7-12). “The [one] loving his brother rests in the light, and no offense is in him” (1 John 2:10).

Believers may sometimes unwittingly speak peace to unbelievers. Contrary to the false accusations of our enemies, we do not believe that it is impossible for believers to speak peace to unbelievers. There are some circumstances in which believers do speak peace to those who turn out to be unbelievers. The distinction between this kind of peace-speaking and the peace-speaking in which it is impossible for believers to engage will be explained further below.

To show the reader how a believer may for a time unwittingly speak peace to an unbeliever, four scenarios will be put forth. The believer in these scenarios will be called Mr. Smith, and the unbeliever will be called Mr. Jones.

Scenario 1: Mr. Jones tells Mr. Smith that he believes in the gospel of salvation conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone. Mr. Jones tells Mr. Smith that he has repented of dead works and former idolatry and counts all his former religion as dung. He judges all who confess salvation conditioned on the sinner, including all who believe in universal atonement and all who speak peace to such people, to be lost. Mr. Smith sees no flaws in Mr. Jones's confession of the gospel and no other doctrines inconsistent with his confession. What should Mr. Smith do?

The answer is that Mr. Smith should – indeed, **MUST** – speak peace to Mr. Jones. He must judge, based on Mr. Jones's confession, that Mr. Jones is a believer. But, the reader may ask, what if it turns out that Mr. Jones was lying? As soon as Mr. Smith finds out that Mr. Jones was lying and that he really does not believe the true gospel and has not repented, Mr. Smith will stop speaking peace to Mr. Jones. Yet **WHILE** Mr. Smith was speaking peace to Mr. Jones (before Mr. Jones showed his true colors), Mr. Smith was a believer speaking peace to an unbeliever.

Some have accused us of holding to the view that all who speak peace to any unbeliever are lost. This is a false accusation. Certainly a person who speaks peace to someone who openly confesses a false gospel to him is lost (more on this kind of peace-speaking to come). But this is different than someone who speaks peace to an unbeliever who outwardly professes the truth.

Scenario 2: Mr. Smith has just been regenerated. He was formerly an atheist and has never heard of phrases like “the doctrines of grace” or “universal atonement” or the words “Calvinism” or “Arminianism.” He knows nothing about the state of “Christendom” in America. He heard the true gospel of salvation conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone and believed it, and he repented of dead works and former idolatry. He meets Mr. Jones on the street who tells him, “I'm a Christian. I believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ.” Mr. Smith naïvely judges Mr. Jones to be a Christian before asking him more questions, because Mr. Smith assumes that Mr. Jones believes the same thing he does. In Mr. Smith's mind, Mr. Jones's confession was equivalent to saying, “I believe in the gospel of salvation conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone; I believe that Christ's righteousness demands the salvation of all whom He represented. I have repented of dead works and former idolatry.” It is certain that Mr. Smith's naïveté is sinful. But should we judge Mr. Smith to be lost just because he spoke peace to this person who said, “I'm a Christian. I believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ”? No. Mr. Smith has much to learn regarding false professors. But he has not knowingly spoken peace to an unbeliever.

Let us get even more subtle than that:

Scenario 3: Mr. Smith is a Christian who knows about the false gospel of Arminianism. As a true Christian, he obviously believes that Arminianism is a false gospel, that all who hold to it are lost, and that all who claim to believe the true gospel but who speak peace to those who bring a false gospel of Arminianism are lost. Now suppose Mr. Jones says to him, “I believe that the doctrines of grace are the truth and anything that contradicts them are lies. I rejoice in sovereign grace, in double predestination, in particular redemption. I believe that Arminianism is a

damnable heresy from the pit of hell. I believe that the god of Arminianism is no God at all, that the christ of universal atonement is no Savior, that the atonement of Arminianism is no atonement at all. Arminianism is satanic.” Mr. Smith then naïvely judges Mr. Jones to be a Christian before asking him more questions, because Mr. Smith assumes that Mr. Jones believes the same thing he does. Again, it is certain that Mr. Smith’s naïveté is sinful. But should we judge Mr. Smith to be lost because he spoke peace to this person who seemed to come out so boldly for the doctrines of grace and against Arminianism? Of course, we know that one such as Mr. Jones can be against the “ism” yet speak peace to those who hold to the “ism.” They can say that ArminianISM is a damnable heresy from the pit of hell, yet they will say that some Arminians are regenerate. But do we expect that all Christians, even Christians who are familiar with Arminianism, will know that some of those who seem so strong against ArminianISM are actually unregenerate? We should not expect such of all Christians. Mr. Smith has much still to learn about those who will say that ArminianISM is a false gospel but who believe that some Arminians are saved. But his speaking peace to Mr. Jones is based on his assumption that Mr. Jones believes that all Arminians are lost. He unwittingly spoke peace to an unbeliever who professed belief in the true gospel.

Let us now go to an example that might seem absurd at first but will hopefully give the reader food for thought:

Scenario 4: Go back to Scenario 2 regarding Mr. Smith who knows nothing about Arminianism and has never even heard the word. Now suppose Mr. Jones comes up to him and tells him that Arminianism and Christianity are equivalent terms, that all Arminians believe in the gospel of salvation conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone and have repented from dead works and former idolatry, and that all Arminians believe that Christ’s righteousness demands the salvation of all whom He represented. Now what if Mr. Smith were then asked, “Are Arminians your brothers in Christ?” and Mr. Smith said, “Yes”? Does his answer show that he is an unbeliever? No! He has been given a false definition of “Arminianism” and “Arminian”; thus, he does not really know what Arminians believe (i.e., what Arminianism is). Based on this false definition he has been given, he says that Arminians are his brothers in Christ. So, in this strange scenario, can a believer say that Arminians are his brothers in Christ? Yes! Thus, it is important to make the clarification that all who *know what Arminians believe (i.e., what Arminianism is)* and yet call some Arminians their brothers in Christ are unbelievers. As soon as Mr. Smith (or any Christian) finds out what Arminianism really is, he will immediately judge all Arminians to be unbelievers. In fact, as soon as any Christian finds out that a person believes that Jesus Christ died for everyone without exception, that Christian will judge that person to be an unbeliever.

In 1 John 2:18-19, Paul says, “*Little children, it is a last hour, and as your heard that the anti-christ is coming, even now many antichrists have risen up, from which you know that it is a last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us. For if they were of us, they would have remained with us; but [they left] so that it might be revealed that they all are not of us.*” When these unbelievers – these antichrists – were among the fellowship, it was not immediately revealed that they were unbelievers. It was only later, when something happened that resulted in

their leaving the fellowship, that the state of their heart was revealed. Had they openly confessed a false gospel, the believers would have immediately recognized them to be unbelievers. But they professed to believe the true gospel; that is the only way they could have become part of the fellowship.

Peter and Jude talk of false teachers secretly creeping into the fellowship: *“But false prophets were also among the people, as also false teachers will be among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, and denying the Master who has bought them, bringing swift destruction on themselves”* (2 Pet. 2:1). *“For certain men crept in secretly, those having been of old written before to this judgment, ungodly [ones] perverting the grace of our God into unbridled lust, and denying the only Master, God, even our Lord Jesus Christ”* (Jude 1:4). These unbelievers – these false teachers – were not immediately seen to be unbelievers, since they did things secretly. Had they openly confessed a false gospel, the believers would have immediately recognized them as unbelievers. But they professed to believe the true gospel. That is the only way they could have become part of the fellowship.

In 2 Corinthians 11:13-15, Paul says, *“For such ones [are] false apostles, deceitful workers transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And did not Satan marvelously transform himself into an angel of light? [It is] not a great thing, then, if also his ministers transform themselves as ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.”* The unbelievers – the false apostles, the deceitful workers, the ministers of Satan – who come into the fellowship deceitfully are not ones who openly confess a false gospel. Instead, they are ones who *“transform themselves as ministers of righteousness,”* preaching, for a time, the true gospel. During this time, the believers will fellowship with such people, since they are professing belief in the true gospel. But this transformation is only a temporary one; in time, they reveal themselves to be ministers of Satan. And when they confess what is opposed to the gospel, the believers will judge them to be unregenerate, stop speaking peace to them, and remove them from the fellowship.

And we also think of Paul’s letter to the Galatians in which some believers were deceived by the Judaizers who came into the Galatian church in the same way all false teachers come into true churches – creeping in subtly. They did not come in overtly preaching works salvation; they were coming in disguised as preachers of the doctrines of grace.

Some of our enemies will point out that we used to speak peace to those whom we now consider to be unbelievers, and if we were to judge ourselves based on the same standard with which we judge others, then we would have to judge ourselves to be unregenerate, since we spoke peace to unbelievers. If their accusations were true, then we would be hypocrites. But their accusations are false. When we spoke peace to those who turned out to be unbelievers, we spoke peace to them based on their profession of belief in the true gospel. What we had heard them speak (or what we had read that they had written) was the true gospel. Nothing we had heard them say (or nothing we had read that they had written) was a rejection of the true gospel. Thus, not only did we speak peace to them, but we HAD TO speak peace to them based on what they had said or written, since their profession was orthodox. But as soon as they said something (or as soon as we read

something) that was a rejection of the true gospel, we judged them to be unbelievers. When we spoke peace to them, we did so NOT KNOWING that they were rejecters of the true gospel; in fact, we did so BECAUSE they professed belief in the true gospel and BECAUSE we had not seen anything that would lead us to believe otherwise.

This goes for some who are now in the Heterodoxy Hall of Shame who are not alive now. From what we had read, they professed to believe the true gospel, and nothing we had read up to that point was a rejection of the true gospel, so we endorsed them. But when it came to our attention that they had written something that was a rejection of the true gospel, then we immediately disendorsed them.

Among those who are alive, a good example of our speaking peace to someone who turned out to be an unbeliever is John Robbins of the Trinity Foundation. Robbins seemed (and still seems, in some of his writings) to be so strong for the true gospel and against the false gospel of Arminianism. An example of this is what he wrote in the preface to Gordon Clark's *The Atonement*: "Most churches in the United States that call themselves Christian reject the Gospel. They teach, if they are liberal, that Jesus was a good man – even a martyr – but he died in no one's place; or, if they are conservative, that Jesus died in everyone's place, desires all men to be saved, and offers salvation to all. But it really makes little difference whether a church is large, respectable, liberal, and teaches that Jesus died for no one; or enthusiastic, growing, conservative, and teaches that Jesus died for everyone. The result is the same: Jesus Christ actually saves no one – no one at all. Both liberals and conservatives agree that people save themselves by an exercise of their wills. The conservative 'Christ' makes salvation possible, if people will only let him into their hearts; the liberal 'Christ' points the way to salvation, if people will but follow his example. Neither 'Christ' saves. The liberals are perhaps more forthright in denying the Gospel; they say that Jesus was just a good example or a good teacher. They don't pretend to present a Saviour. The conservatives disguise the fact that they have no Gospel – no good news – by saying that God loves everyone and offers salvation to all. But the meaning of both the liberal message and the conservative message is the same: Neither a good moral teacher nor a mere offer of salvation actually saves. Neither the liberals nor the conservatives, the humanists nor the Arminians, have a Saviour."

This sure sounds like Robbins believes that all who believe in universal atonement are unregenerate, does it not? Yet when asked specifically about what he believes (in the context of our finding out that Gordon Clark wrote that ALL true Arminians MUST be saved), he said this: "Second, can an Arminian get the doctrine of justification straight? Yes, considered all by itself, he can. He can understand the resurrection, imputation, substitution, the alien righteousness of Christ, and believe them. Many Arminians do not, but it is theoretically possible for one to do so. One must keep in mind the distinction between a system and a person. In one of the quotes you provided, Clark pointed out that people are sometimes wonderfully confused, and they are saved in spite of that confusion. ... No, all those individuals who believe in universal atonement are not necessarily unregenerate. To assert that they are necessarily unregenerate implies that one can believe all the rest of Christian theology and still go to Hell. The doctrine of the extent of the atonement does not occupy the central position that justification by faith alone does." Incredible.

Robbins believes that at least some Arminians, those who do not have a Saviour, who do not have a gospel, who have a “Christ” who actually saves no one at all, are believers! He bases this on his (and Clark’s) Van Tilian view that some Arminians are Christians who are “wonderfully confused” about the very heart of the gospel, the efficacious atonement of Jesus Christ. He believes that some Arminians, who believe in a “Christ” who does not save, believe the gospel. What does this say about what Robbins believes about the gospel?

And more recently, there is Allen Baird of the British Reformed Fellowship and Covenant Protestant Reformed Fellowship (a mission church of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America), who wrote this in the *British Reformed Journal*: “It might be said by the Christian in true disgust that such a view of the atonement [the Arminian view] is no atonement at all. ... Therefore, to put the matter at its most focused, it is not the case that the Arminians hold to one view of the atonement and the Reformed hold to another, but the Arminians really deny any atonement whatsoever!”

Since Baird believes that “the Arminians really deny any atonement whatsoever,” then he believes that the Arminians are unsaved, right? Not according to Baird, who said the following when asked if he believed that all Arminians are unregenerate (*italics in original*): “However, I must confess that I deny your conclusions about all who have defective views on the atonement being unregenerate. ... Now I do not believe that all Arminians are saved. What I am saying is that they *may* be regenerated, and many are. ... Therefore, it is my opinion that the difference between us and ordinary Arminians is *only one of degree*. We simply believe more truths and reject more errors than they do. Both Calvinists and Arminians may believe in the same Christ of the ancient church creeds. The difference is that Calvinists have a clearer and more consistent conception of the nature of Christ’s work than the Arminian has. ... So to the question in your letter where you say you would like to know for sure if I consider all such people (i.e. Arminians) to be unregenerate, I reply that I would not.” Incredible. Baird believes that at least some Arminians, those who deny any atonement whatsoever, are believers! He bases this on his view that the difference between his belief and the Arminians’ belief is *one of degree* and not *one of kind*. He believes that the Arminian gospel (the one that denies any atonement whatsoever) is the SAME GOSPEL as what he believes, only to a lesser degree. He does not believe that this gospel that denies any atonement whatsoever it is a DIFFERENT GOSPEL than the true gospel. What does this say about what Baird believes about the gospel?

These things leave us shaking our heads. They also show that someone can seem so right-on about Arminianism (and even be persecuted for his beliefs by Arminians and other Calvinists!) and yet turn out to be a God-hater. Believers can and do speak peace to them when they only know about their orthodox statements, but when they find out about their statements that reject the gospel, they no longer speak peace to them.

Believers will never speak peace to unbelievers who bring a false gospel. There are certain sins that believers cannot commit, since these sins are certain indicators of lostness. One of these sins is speaking peace to unbelievers who bring a false gospel. Does this sound like a contradiction of what was just said in the last section? It should not. Note that this is talking about speaking peace

to unbelievers who BRING A FALSE GOSPEL. This false gospel is BROUGHT by the unbeliever TO the believer, so the believer KNOWS that the unbeliever is confessing a false gospel.

“Everyone transgressing and not abiding in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. The [one] abiding in the doctrine of Christ, this one has the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bear this doctrine, do not receive him into the house, and do not speak a greeting to him. For the [one] speaking a greeting shares in his evil works” (2 John 9-11). In this passage, unbelievers are described as those *“not abiding in the doctrine of Christ”* and believers are described as those *“abiding in the doctrine of Christ.”* The Greek word for “to abide” means “to remain,” “to stay,” “to dwell,” “to continue.” Those who STAY in the doctrine of Christ are believers. Those who DO NOT STAY in the doctrine of Christ are unbelievers. Is a person who is in the doctrine of Christ 80% of the time and out of the doctrine of Christ 20% of the time STAYING in the doctrine of Christ? Some false religionists try to use this passage to show that believers can confess a false gospel some of the time as long as they confess the true gospel most of the time. They twist this passage to their own destruction. Christians NEVER confess a false gospel. They STAY in the doctrine of Christ.

Let us now focus on those who *“speak a greeting”* to one who *“does not bear this doctrine.”* To *“speak a greeting”* means to tell the person “rejoice” – to say that there is peace between that person and God. It means to speak peace to that person, to call that person a brother in Christ. To whom is this person speaking peace? It is one who *“does not bear this doctrine.”* It is one who does not CARRY, one who does not BRING the doctrine of Christ. Put positively, it is one who CARRIES, who BRINGS a false gospel. It is obviously talking about a person who is confessing a false gospel to another person. That other person KNOWS what the transgressor is confessing.

What does this passage say about a person who speaks peace to one who brings a false gospel? It says that this person *“shares in his evil works.”* He is a PARTICIPANT, a PARTAKER, a PARTNER in the evil deeds – in the false gospel – of the one who brings the false gospel. He is just as unregenerate as the one who brings the false gospel.

Since one who speaks peace to a person who brings a false gospel is surely unsaved, then speaking peace to a person who brings a false gospel is something that a believer cannot and will not do.

“Blessed is the man who has not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, and has not stood in the way of sinners, and has not sat in the seat of scorners” (Ps. 1:1). “I have not sat with lying men; and I will not go in with hypocrites; I have hated the assembly of evildoers, and I will not sit with the wicked” (Ps. 26:4-5). “Forsake the foolish, and live, and go in the way of understanding” (Prov. 9:6). “He who walks with the wise shall be wise, but one associating [with] fools shall be broken” (Prov. 13:20). “Go from before a foolish man, or you will not know the lips of knowledge” (Prov. 14:7). “And brothers I exhort you to watch those making divisions and causes of stumbling contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and turn away from them” (Rom. 16:17). “Do not be unequally yoked [with] unbelievers. For what partnership does

righteousness [have] with lawlessness? And what fellowship does light [have] with darkness? And what agreement does Christ [have] with Belial? Or what part does a believer [have] with an unbeliever? And what agreement does a temple of God [have] with idols? For you are a temple of [the] living God, even as God said, I will dwell in them and walk among [them], and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Because of this, come out from among them and be separated, says [the] Lord, and do not touch [the] unclean thing, and I will receive you. And I will be a Father to you, and you will be sons and daughters to Me, says [the] Lord Almighty” (2 Cor. 6:14-18). “For be knowing this, that every fornicator, or unclean one, or covetous [one], who is an idolater, has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for through these the wrath of God comes on the sons of disobedience. Then do not be partakers with them; for you then were darkness, but [are] now light in [the] Lord; walk as children of light. For the fruit of the Spirit [is] in all goodness and righteousness and truth, proving what is pleasing to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even reprove [them]” (Eph. 5:5-11). “If anyone teaches differently, and does not consent to sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching according to godliness, he has been puffed up, understanding nothing, but is sick concerning doubts and arguments, out of which comes envy, strife, evil-speakings, evil suspicions, meddling, of men whose mind has been corrupted and deprived of the truth, supposing gain to be godliness. Withdraw from such [persons]” (1 Tim. 6:3-5). “But know this, that in [the] last days grievous times will be [upon us]. For men will be lovers of themselves, money-lovers, braggarts, arrogant, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural feeling, unyielding, slanderers, without self-control, savage, haters of good, betrayers, reckless, puffed up, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness, but denying the power of it; even turn away from these. For of these are those creeping into houses and leading silly women captive, [the ones] having been heaped with sins, being led away by various lusts, always learning, but never being able to come to a full knowledge of [the] truth. But in the way Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so also these withstand the truth, men having been corrupted in mind, found worthless concerning the faith. But they will not go further, for their foolishness will be plain to all, as also that of those became” (2 Tim. 3:1-9). “And after these things I saw another angel coming down out of Heaven having great authority, and the earth was lighted up from his glory. And he cried in a strong, great voice, saying, Babylon the great has fallen! It has fallen, and it has become a dwelling-place of demons, and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean bird, even having been hated, because of the wine of the anger of her fornication which all the nations have drunk, even the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her; and the merchants of the earth became rich from the power of her luxury. And I heard another voice out of Heaven saying, My people, come out of her, that you may not share in her sins, and that you may not receive of her plagues; because her sins joined together, even up to Heaven, and God remembered her unjust deeds” (Rev. 18:1-5).

Believers will never speak peace to their former selves. As an immediate and inevitable fruit of regeneration, a believer is given the gift of repentance that consists of a *renouncing*, an *eschewing*, a *casting off*, an *abhorring*, a *detesting*, a *turning away from* his former self and former beliefs. He considers his former beliefs as damnable, as abominable, as blasphemy. He acknowledges that when he believed a false gospel, he was dead in his sins, a hater of God, an

open idolater, a producer of dead works, evil deeds, and fruit unto death. He will never say, “I know those things were wrong, but I was still saved back then.” If he previously believed in the false gospel universal atonement, he will never say that he continued to believe in universal atonement after he was saved.

A prime example of true gospel repentance is the apostle Paul. In Philippians 3:7-9, he wrote: *“But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss because of Christ. But, nay, rather I also count all things to be loss because of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count [them to be] trash, that I might gain Christ and be found in Him; not having my own righteousness of Law, but through [the] faith of Christ, [having] the righteousness of God on faith.”* Paul counted his former self-righteous religion as loss and dung. He made no claims of having continued in his former religion for a time after regeneration; in fact, he made it clear that he counted himself unregenerate when he believed this false gospel. In the verses before, he said that he was a zealous, moral, religious man; in fact, he said that he was *blameless* according to righteousness in Law! Yet he counted all of his zeal, all of his morality, and all of his religion as nothing more than dung to be thrown on the dung heap. This shows that Paul had truly repented upon conversion. Paul counted himself lost when he was in this false religion because of the excellency of the *knowledge* of Christ Jesus his Lord. When God saved him, God gave him the *knowledge* that his salvation was conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone, Paul’s works totally excluded. And when God gave him that *knowledge*, he counted his former religion as nothing but self-righteous dung, because he recognized that in his former religion, he believed in salvation conditioned on the sinner. In Romans 7:5, Paul said, *“For when we were in the flesh, the passions of sin were working in our members through the law for the bearing of fruit unto death.”* Paul and every Christian recognizes that when they believed a false gospel, they were in the flesh and bringing forth fruit unto death.

UNBELIEVERS SPEAKING PEACE

Since there are many kinds of unbelievers, unbelievers speak peace to others based on a variety of standards. But one thing that is common to all of them is that they speak peace apart from the only ground of peace. Since their standard of judgment is not the true standard, they speak peace based on their own man-made standard. The standards vary, depending on what kind of God-hater the person is. We will focus on those who claim to believe the true gospel of salvation conditioned on the work of Christ alone (many of them calling themselves “Calvinists” or “Reformed” or “Sovereign Grace Believers”) but who speak peace to those who bring a false gospel of salvation conditioned on the sinner (“universal atonement advocates” or “Arminians”).

We have already seen in 2 John 9-11 that everyone who speaks peace to someone who brings a false gospel is unsaved. This is especially evident with the unbelievers who speak peace to universal atonement advocates. The universal atonement advocate brings his false gospel of “the good news that Jesus came and died for everyone without exception, now it’s up to the sinner to do his part,” and instead of telling that person that he is an unbeliever, these false peace-speakers will assure the universal atonement advocate that he is a brother in Christ and that he is at peace

with God. They will say that everything is okay with his soul, although the universal atonement advocate just needs to become “more consistent in his theology.” They consider the doctrine of the efficacious atonement of Jesus Christ to be nothing more than a “secondary doctrine” over which true Christians can disagree and still be in spiritual fellowship with one another. We have already seen examples of this above with John Robbins and Allen Baird. They do not believe that the efficacious atonement of Christ is an essential gospel doctrine. This is the most common view among those who claim to believe in efficacious atonement. It is the mainstream, fashionable Calvinist/ Reformed view. And it is damnable. They are participants in the sins of the Arminian transgressors, and they hate the true and living God just as much as the Arminian transgressors do.

Most of these false peace-speakers will try to justify their current peace-speaking by speaking peace to themselves when they were in the false religion of universal atonement. They will say, “Of course all who believe in universal atonement aren’t unsaved, because I believed in universal atonement for a period of time after I was saved.” They do not believe that when they believed in universal atonement, they believed a false gospel, were dead in their sins, haters of God, open idolaters, producers of dead works, evil deeds, and fruit unto death. They do not consider their former beliefs as damnable, as abominable, as blasphemy. Instead, they say that they still believed the true gospel while believing universal atonement, although they didn’t find the “consistency” and the “richness” and the “fullness” and the “deepness” of the gospel until they “came into” the doctrines of grace. Their “coming into” the doctrines of grace did not involve regeneration; it just involved an accumulation of “deeper knowledge.” These people have never repented of dead works and fruit unto death. They remain dead in their sins.

When these false peace-speakers speak peace to Arminians, they consider themselves to be so loving. And when they encounter people who say that all Arminians are unsaved, they accuse us of being so unloving and mean. Yet consider the following scenario: If a doctor knows that a patient has a deadly disease and knows the cure, what would be the loving thing to do? Would it be to tell the patient, “Everything is alright with you, Mr. Jones. Everything’s going okay. You’re fine”? No – the most loving thing would be to tell the patient that he has a deadly disease and then tell him the cure. To tell him that everything is fine would be the epitome of hatred. The blood of that patient would be on the hands of the doctor. And the blood of the Arminians is on the hands of the Calvinists: *“In My saying to the wicked, Dying you shall die; and you do not warn him, and you do not speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, he, the wicked, shall die in his iniquity. But I will require his blood at your hand. And you, because you have warned the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness or from his way, he, the wicked, shall die in his iniquity. But you have delivered your soul”* (Ezek. 3:18-19).

Like the doctor who tells the patient with a deadly disease that everything is okay, the false peace-speakers say, “peace, peace” when there is no peace. They tell the Arminians that there is peace between them and God, that they are not under God’s wrath. They speak the original lie of the devil: *“You shall not surely die”* (Gen. 3:4). They comfort them in their damnable wickedness. This is like the false prophets of the Old Testament who told the people that there was peace when there really was no peace: *“They have lied against Jehovah and said, [It is] not*

He; and, No evil shall come on us; and, We shall not see sword or famine. And the prophets shall become wind, and the Word [is] not in them; so it shall be done to them” (Jer. 5:12-13). “They have also healed the break of My people slightly, saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace. Were they ashamed when they made an abomination? They were not at all ashamed, nor did they know to blush. So they shall fall among those who fall. At the time I visit them, they shall be cast down, says Jehovah” (Jer. 6:14-15). “For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of My people slightly, saying, Peace, peace! And [there is] no peace. Were they ashamed when they had done hateful things? They were not even at all ashamed, nor did they know how to blush. So they shall fall among those who fall. In the time of their punishment they will wither, says Jehovah. I will utterly consume them, says Jehovah. No grapes will be on the vine, or figs on the fig tree; even the leaf withers. And I will give to them those who pass over them. Why do we sit still? Gather yourselves, and let us enter into the fortified cities; and let us be silent there. For Jehovah our God has made us silent there, and [He] has made us drink poisonous water, because we have sinned against Jehovah. We looked for peace, but no good [came]; for a time of healing, but, behold, terror!” (Jer. 8:11-15). “So says Jehovah of Hosts, Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you; they make you vain; they speak a vision of their own heart, not out of the mouth of Jehovah. They say to those who despise Me, Jehovah has said, You shall have peace. And they say to everyone who walks in the stubbornness of his own heart, Evil shall not come on you” (Jer. 23:16-17). “Because, even because they made My people go astray, saying, Peace! and there [was] no peace. And he builds a wall, and, behold, [others] daubed it [with] lime. Say to those daubing [with] lime, Yea, it will fall. There will be a flooding rain; and you, O hailstones, shall fall, and a tempestuous wind shall break. And, behold, when the wall has fallen, it shall not be said to you, Where is the daubing with which you have daubed? So the Lord Jehovah says this: I will even break in My fury [with] a tempestuous wind. And there shall be a flooding rain in My anger, and hailstones in fury, to consume it. And I will break down the wall that you have daubed [with] lime and bring it down to the ground; yea, I will bare its base. And it shall fall, and you will be consumed in its midst. And you shall know that I [am] Jehovah. And I will complete My wrath in the wall, and in those who daubed it [with] lime. And I will say to you, The wall [is] not; and, Those who daubed [are] not. The prophets of Israel who are prophesying concerning Jerusalem, and who see visions of peace for her, even [there is] no peace, declares the Lord Jehovah” (Ezek. 13:10-16). “So says Jehovah concerning the prophets who make My people err, who bite with their teeth and call out, Peace! And whoever does not give for their mouth, they even sanctify a war against him. So a night shall be for you [apart from] vision; and darkness [apart from] divining. And the sun shall go in on the prophets, and the day shall be dark over them. And the seers shall be ashamed, and those divining shall blush, all of them; yea, they shall cover over their mustache, for [there is] no answer [from] God” (Mic. 3:5).

They tell themselves and others that they are safe from God’s wrath, but their protection is nothing but a refuge of lies: *“So hear the Word of Jehovah, scornful men, rulers of this people in Jerusalem. Because you have said, We have cut a covenant with death; and, We have made a vision with Sheol, when the overwhelming rod passes through it will not come to us for we have made the lie our refuge, and we have hidden in falsehood. So, the Lord Jehovah says this: Behold, I place in Zion a Stone for a foundation, a tried Stone, a precious Cornerstone, a sure*

Foundation; he who believes shall not hasten. And I will lay justice for a line, and righteousness for a plummet; and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of the lie; and the waters shall overflow the hiding place. And your covenant with death shall be covered; and your vision with Sheol shall not rise up. When the overwhelming whip passes through, then you shall be for a trampling to it” (Isa 28:14-18). “For when they say, Peace and safety! Then suddenly destruction comes upon them, like the travail to the [one having babe] in womb, and not at all shall they escape” (1 Thes. 5:3).

They speak a false peace out of a wicked heart: “Draw me not away with the wicked, and with the workers of iniquity; who speak peace with their neighbors, yet evil [is] in their hearts” (Ps. 28:3). “Their tongue [is] a murdering arrow; it speaks deceit. [One] speaks peace with his neighbor with his mouth, but in his heart he sets his ambush” (Jer. 9:8).

They are like those in the New Testament who tickle the ears, speaking great swelling empty words, telling the unbelievers what they want to hear: ”For speaking over-swollen [words] of vanity, by [the] lusts of the flesh, by unbridled lusts, they allure those indeed escaping, the [ones] walking in error” (2 Pet. 2:18). “For a time will be when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own lusts, they will heap up to themselves teachers tickling the ear; and [they] will turn away the ear from the truth and will be turned aside to myths” (2 Tim. 4:3-4).

They engage in spiritual whoredom with the wicked, spreading their legs to those who spit in the face of Jesus Christ, showing themselves to be hostile toward God: “Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that the friendship of the world is hostility [toward] God? Whoever, then, purposes to be a friend of the world is put down [as] hostile [to] God” (James 4:4). “But you trusted in your beauty, and you prostituted [yourself] because of your name, and poured out your fornications on all who passed by; it was to him! And you took from your clothes and made for you high places of various colors, and fornicated on them, [such as] had not come, nor shall be. And you have taken beautiful things of My gold and of My silver, which I had given to you, and you made images of males, and fornicated with them. And you took your embroidered clothes and covered them. And My oil and My incense you have given to their face. Also My food which I gave you, fine flour and oil and honey [which] I fed you, you have given it to their face for a soothing aroma. And it happened, declares the Lord Jehovah. And you have taken your sons and your daughters whom you have borne to Me, and you sacrificed these to them for food. [Are] your fornications small? You have slaughtered My sons, and you gave them to cause these to pass through [the] [fire] for them. And in all your abominations and your fornications you have not remembered the days of your youth, when you were naked and bare, [when] you were squirming in your blood. Woe, woe to you, says the Lord Jehovah! [For] it happened, after all your evil, [Woe to you] that you have also built yourself a mound, and you have made yourself a high place in every open place! At the head of every highway you have built your high place, and have made your beauty despised. And you have parted your feet to all who passed by, and have multiplied your fornications. You have whored with the sons of Egypt, your neighbors, great of flesh. And [you] have multiplied your fornications to provoke Me to anger. And behold, I have stretched out My hand over you, and I drew back your portion. And I gave you to the will of

those hating you, the daughters of the Philistines, who are ashamed of your wicked way. You have fornicated with the sons of Assyria without being satisfied. Yea, you fornicated and yet you were not satisfied. And you have multiplied your fornication in the land of Canaan, [to the] Chaldean, and yet you were not satisfied with this. How weak is your heart, declares the Lord Jehovah, since you do all these, the work of a woman, an overbearing prostitute, in that you built your mound in the head of every highway, and you make your high place in every open place; yet you have not been as a prostitute, [even] scorning wages. [Like] the adulterous wife, instead of her husband, she takes strangers. They give a gift to all harlots, but you give your gifts to all your lovers and bribe them to come to you from all around for your fornication. And in you was the opposite from [those] women in your fornications, since no one whores after you, and in your giving wages, and hire is not given to you. [In] this you are opposite” (Ezek. 16:15-34).

Does the reader understand how utterly disgusting, repulsive, revolting, detestable, repugnant, contemptible, loathsome, vile, and abominable this kind of peace-speaking, this spiritual harlotry, is? It is more disgusting than sodomy. *“Hear the Word of Jehovah, rulers of Sodom. Listen to the Law of our God, people of Gomorrah” (Isa. 1:10). “I have also seen a horrible thing among the prophets of Jerusalem; they commit adultery and walk in falsehood. And they make the hands of evildoers strong, so that not a man returns from his evil. They are all of them like Sodom to Me, and those living in her like Gomorrah” (Jer. 23:14). “And the iniquity of the daughter of my people is heaped more than the sin of Sodom, which was overthrown as [in] a moment, and no hands were whirled on her” (Lam. 4:6). “[As] I live, declares the Lord Jehovah, your sister Sodom, she and her daughters, have not done as you and your daughters have done” (Ezek. 16:48). “And whoever will not receive you, nor will hear your words, having gone out of that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet. Truly I say to you, It will be more bearable to the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in Judgment Day than for that city” (Mat. 10:14-15). “And you, Capernaum, who have been exalted to the heaven, [you] will be thrown down to Hades.” For if the powerful acts happening in you had taken place in Sodom, it would remain until today. But I say to you, It will be more bearable for the land of Sodom in Judgment Day than for you” (Mat. 11:23-24).*

THE ONLY GROUND OF PEACE

“But may it never be for me to boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision [has] any strength nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. And as many as shall walk by this rule, peace and mercy [be] on them and on the Israel of God” (Gal. 6:14-16).

Peace is on all those who walk by THIS RULE. The Greek word for “rule” is *kanon*, from which we get the word “canon.” It means “standard,” “line,” “boundary.” And what is this canon, this standard, by which all who have peace walk? **MAY IT NEVER BE FOR ME TO BOAST, EXCEPT IN THE CROSS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.** Whoever walks and thus judges by THIS rule, by THIS standard, has peace with God. And there is peace BETWEEN those who walk and judge by this rule. Whatever one believes makes the difference between salvation and damnation, whatever one believes his salvation is conditioned upon, whatever one believes forms

any part of the ground of salvation, is what one boasts in, what one glories in. Those who are truly at peace with God boast in THE CROSS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ALONE. They believe that it is the work of Jesus Christ ALONE that makes the difference between salvation and damnation, that is the only condition of salvation, that is the only ground of salvation. And they will NEVER speak peace to anyone who brings a gospel in which ANYTHING ELSE makes the difference between salvation and damnation, ANYTHING ELSE is the condition of salvation, ANYTHING ELSE forms any part of the ground of salvation. They will NEVER speak peace to anyone who they know boasts in ANYTHING but the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. This means that they will NEVER speak peace to one who brings a false gospel of universal atonement, because all who believe that Jesus Christ died for everyone without exception DO NOT believe that it is the work of Christ alone that makes the difference between salvation and damnation, that is the only ground of salvation, upon which salvation is solely conditioned. Instead, they believe that it is the work and effort of the SINNER that makes the ultimate difference. They boast in self. Those who speak peace to ones who bring a false gospel of universal atonement have eyes full of adultery and are committing spiritual fornication; they are partakers in the evil deeds of the universal atonement advocates and are just as lost as the universal atonement advocates.

Those of us who do walk by this rule, who boast in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ alone, have blessed fellowship and communion with God, who speaks peace to us based on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ. We also have fellowship with each other, to whom we speak peace based on this very same gospel of salvation conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ alone. Amen.

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