

The Everlasting Covenant of Peace: 7

A Covenant of Prosperity

We began a few weeks ago looking at shalom in the light of its' meaning the whole well-being and welfare of man. So far we have seen that *shalom* includes:

- our safety & protection
- harmony in regards to our relationships (i) with God and (ii) towards others
- soundness and clarity of mind.
- health and healing

Today we are going to look at shalom – our covenant of prosperity

Ezekiel 37.26

“Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them, and it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; I will establish them and multiply them, and I will set My sanctuary in their midst forevermore.”

Ezekiel calls the covenant of peace an everlasting covenant – it will not be removed (**Isaiah 54.10**), it is still active and in force today. We can appropriate all that this covenant encompasses by faith.

Jeremiah 29.11

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope”

God's thoughts toward us are thoughts of peace (shalom). The word shalom in the context of this verse is understood to be prosperity and blessing - the welfare and well-being of man.

“For I know the plans I have for you' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” (NIV)

“I alone know my purpose for you, says the Lord: prosperity and not misfortune, and a long line of children after you” (NEB)

“For I keep in mind my purpose for you, a purpose of weal, not of woe, to let you have hope for the future” (Moffatt)
weal – prosperity and welfare, weal-th

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end” (AV)

(1) the future that God expects and longs for you, and (2) completion of your expectation.

God's thoughts toward us are thoughts of prospering us in all areas. Not the type of prosperity that will harm us. Prosperity is not just about money – money can destroy a person.

Look at how many people have gained huge amounts of money (through gambling, inheritance etc) and have said that it destroyed them – because they don't know how to handle money. Mishandled prosperity destroys, the Bible gives warning about that.

Proverbs 1.32 “For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.” (AV)

- The Hebrew word (*shalvah* #7951) means ‘abundance, prosperity, security, ease’
- Prosperity in the hand of a fool will destroy him – he doesn't know how to handle or use money.

1 Timothy 6.9-10 “But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”

- Money and prosperity in itself is not harmful – it is a blessing
- However, mishandled prosperity and the love of it bring destruction
- This verse, which is often misquoted, says the **love of money is a root** of all kinds of evil.
- vs6-8 talk about being content with what you have – I don't believe this means that you should be happy that you are in a state of need and destitute, but they you enjoy the prosperity that God gives and not desiring more and more.

Let me give you a Biblical definition of true prosperity - **2 Corinthians 9.8-11**

“And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. (9) As it is written: “HE HAS DISPERSED ABROAD, HE HAS GIVEN TO THE POOR; HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS ENDURES FOREVER.” (10) Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness, (11) while you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God.”

true prosperity is -

- *having all sufficiency in all things* – you have your needs met
- *may have an abundance for every good work...* - you have more than you need so that you can be a blessing to somebody else.
- ‘us 2 that'll do’ or ‘us 4 and no more’ attitude is not in the spirit of Christ – (11) ‘*you are enriched in everything for all liberality*’

We are looking at the covenant of peace as a covenant of prosperity.

Judges 19.16-21

- This passage tells of a traveller that sought lodgings for the night in Gibeah
- No one would take him in.
- An old man met him and provided for all his needs (v20) “And the old man said, ‘Peace be with you! However, let all your needs be my responsibility; only do not spend the night in the open square.’”

Lamentations 3.17

The prophet laments that at the removal of peace, there is no prosperity -

“You have moved my soul far from peace; I have forgotten prosperity”

There are other verses in the Old Testament where the word *shalom* is translated as prosperity:

Psalm 35.27 – “Let them shout for joy and be glad, Who favor my righteous cause; And let them say continually, "Let the LORD be magnified, Who has pleasure in the prosperity of His servant.””

God takes pleasure in prospering His children

Jeremiah 33.9 – “Then it shall be to Me a name of joy, a praise, and an honour before all nations of the earth, who shall hear all the good that I do to them; they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and all the prosperity that I provide for it.”

God is the one who gives prosperity – since prosperity is from God why are so many Christians against it?

God's Covenant of Peace is a covenant of prosperity. The Jewish people are renowned for their wealth and business acumen, they know God prospers His people, they know the covenant of peace.

Exodus 3.15-22,

- When God brought His people up out of Egypt, He brought them up in prosperity. They were slaves, serving the Pharaoh, struggling to survive, lacking in every area but God blessed them with abundance.
- Where do you think all the gold, silver, precious cloth etc. came from that was used in the wilderness to make the golden calf, or brought for the offerings for the construction of the Tabernacle? – it came from Egypt, the prosperity of God, the Covenant of Peace upon them.
- God's thoughts toward them were thoughts of peace and prosperity – to bring them out of bondage, out of poverty into a land that flowed with milk and honey, a land of abundance.

Poverty is not a blessing it is a curse. Poverty is a bondage, it keeps you oppressed and bound.

We don't have to fear prosperity – it is the blessing and favour of God.

- Prosperity is part of the covenant of peace
- In just a few hours the Covenant of Peace can take you from poverty to the most prosperous in the land. (look at Joseph – from prison to Prime Minister in one morning)
- It will take you from the land of not enough into the land of more than enough.