

From the editor

For this issue, we would like to share the message, "Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem" written by Pastor Peter in 2004. Now is the time for us to keep praying for the peace of Israel, Gaza, Russia, Ukraine, and especially for the children in the areas.

May the peace of God be done within people's hearts and in all the lands.

Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem

Peter

Jerusalem is a symbolic city in many ways and has been called the city of David, the capital of God from ancient times. Yet, being the symbolic city that it is, there has been religious controversies and struggles among Judaism, Christianity and Muslim within this small city. They have been insisting their self-righteousness against each other, and the government of Israel currently faces the ever increasing intense struggle to deter the terrorist activities. Though it is called the holy city, it also may be the ugliest city of all.

For that reason, in this present time of fear, as terrorism is breaking out all over the world, the Lord is telling us to pray for the peace of Jerusalem. We sing the last part of the newest Hato praise in Hebrew, "Shaal shalom Jerusalem."

When the risen Lord appeared to His disciples, He said, "Shalom." It means "Peace be with you," but it was not just a word of greeting. It was the prayer for the Heavenly Father's will to be accomplished on earth as it is in heaven, and the

desire of God to heal the suffering world with the heavenly peace and to embrace the whole wounded creation by His love.

I seriously pray for the peace of Jerusalem, but at the same time it is the prayer for the whole hurting land and all wounded people.

The time of great renewal of creation is at hand. The second coming of the Lord is getting close.

Thus, the world is getting darker and the people are living in fear contrary to God's desire.

Pray for the children of Russia and the children of Japan.

Cry aloud to the Lord! O daughter of Zion! Let tears stream down like a torrent day and night! Give yourself no rest, your eyes no respite! Arise, cry out in the night, at the beginning of the watches! Pour out your heart like water before the presence of the Lord! Lift your hands to him for the lives of your children, who faint for hunger at the head of every street.

(Lamentations 2:18-19 RSV)

Pray, pray and pray. The earth is covered with the fire of hatred. Unless we extinguish this fire of enmity, the terrorists will surely reach their hands to nuclear weapons sooner or later in their desperation.

The people of Sodom and Gomorra did not realize the terrible destruction until the very moment it was about to fall on them.

If we do not pray, the world would experience its whole destruction. The fear of terrorism and earthquakes will strike the land of Japan and America.

Those who say that the plan of God is to be accomplished regardless of our prayers will be thrown out of the stage of the end time. The plan of God is not an automatic machine. God who knows everything and who rules everything in His sovereignty is telling us to pray for the peace of Jerusalem. If we do not pour out our souls in prayers, it is the same as ignoring the warning of God. And we will regret it in its full extent. Prayer is the joint work of God and man. It is not the time of running away, saying, "I don't care." Pour out your heart like water before the presence of the Lord. Young children are fainting for hunger at the head of the street. How can you live as if nothing were happening?

"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem," says the Lord.

This famous word of Psalm chapter 122 verse 6 is used by some Israelite fanatic believers (some Jewish and some Christians) in a rather political sense. However, it does not have any favoritism to Israel. Every place where we pray for the Lord's will is "Jerusalem." All creation the Lord loves is "Jerusalem."

I believe the earthly Jerusalem has a special place in God's plan for sure. However, to "pray for the peace of Jerusalem" definitely do not mean to take a pro-Israel or pro-American position, or anti-Arab philosophy.

I remember the sound track of the movie I saw when I was young. It was "Chariots of Fire," an extremely beautiful screen work, and even more beautiful was its music. In that movie there was a music composed for "New Jerusalem," a poem written by a British mystic poet, William Blake, and I was moved by the celestial tune of the boy soprano of that song.

Blake imagined “Jerusalem” built on the green hill of England and described how he was fighting there against the threatening enemy of darkness like an ancient warrior.

I feel the same way. “Jerusalem” is a holy city which exists in any country, any city and any person. It is God’s holy sanctuary, but in reality it is trampled in mud and overwhelmed with sin and hatred just like the earthly Jerusalem.

Therefore, the Lord says, “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.”

Wasn’t the cross of Christ given to resurrect the garden of Eden again as God’s possession?

William Blake was considered eccentric for his rich imagination, and does not seem to receive an appropriate evaluation even now, but he was a visionary. Although a “visionary” is usually translated as a “dreamer,” I believe its true meaning is actually not such a negative one but represents a person who lives for God’s vision. Those who believe in Christ are “visionaries” (those who see God) in the deepest meaning of the word. They are the people who see or desire to see God’s will.

Young Isaiah was a visionary. In the year when King Uzziah died, he saw a mysterious phenomenon that the trail of the Lord sitting on a throne filled the temple of Jerusalem. Hearing the seraphim singing, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory,” he trembled. Yet, when he heard the Lord’s voice saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” his heart was set. “Here am I. Send me.”

Now is the time. I can see “Jerusalem” of God in the land of Nishinomiya, Okinawa, Sapporo, in children’s schools, and in husbands’ workplaces. May the “peace of

Jerusalem” come upon our home, children, and myself.
I shall say to the Lord, “I am here. Send me.”

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