

Get Ready | John 20:19-23 | May 7, 2017

Peace be with you. (20:19, 21)

Peace = eirene

NIDNTT, Vol. 2

In *Classical Literature* peace denotes the antithesis to war, or the condition resulting from a cessation of war. Peace is the state of law and order which gives rise to the blessings of prosperity. 776

In the *Old Testament LXX eirene* [peace] is almost invariably used to translate the Hebrew *shalom* which occurs more than 250 times in the OT...

Salom includes everything given by God in all areas of life... Throughout the Hebrew OT, *shalom* covers well-being in the widest sense of the word (Judg 19:20); prosperity (Ps 73:3); even in reference to the godless; bodily health (Isa 57:18; Ps 38:3); salvation (Isa 43:7; Jer 29:11)... The concept of peace is found at the climax of the blessing in Num 6:24 ff., where it sums up all the other blessings and where it is closely associated with the presence of Yahweh. *“The Lord bless you and keep you: The Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you: The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace”* (Num 6:24 ff.). 777

In the *New Testament eirene* is found 91 times in the NT, 24 of which are in the Gospels... Christ’s farewell discourses in John (chapters 14-16; also chapter 20) contain the word 5 times, in each case denoting Christ’s gift to his disciples (Jn 14:27; 16:33; 20:19, 21, 26)... It is not possible to trace any development of the idea of *eirene* within the NT. Both in form and content it stands firmly in the LXX and Hebrew OT tradition, though in addition the meanings set out under CL continue to make their influence felt... In other words, the biblical concept of peace from *shalom* is primarily that of wholeness. This divinely-wrought reality exercises a mighty influence in the present world, though it still awaits final fulfillment. Soteriologically, peace is grounded in God’s work of redemption. Eschatologically it is a sign of God’s new creation which has already begun. Teleologically it will be fully realized when the work of new creation is complete. 780

As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you. (20:21)

Has sent = apestalken [Perfect Active Indicative 3 person singular – *apostello*]

Sending = pempo

NIDNTT, Vol. 1

Apostello is used 131 times in the New Testament... *pempo* occurs as a virtual synonym especially in John (32 times)... John’s use of the two words side by side without any obvious difference is not to be put down merely to contemporary Hellenistic usage. It may be that he wished to stress the purely functional aspects of the term in contrast to the institutional concepts already being attached to *apostolos*, and also to underline more strongly the authority of the Lord who sends (cf. Jn 4:34; 7:16; 14:24 with 5:36; 7:29; 17:21, 25). 128

[NOTE: there are multiple directions, some of which very different, that have evolved in time since the 1st century. This diffusion of thought makes it impossible to locate a simple, single meaning to *apostolos*. The term, very similar with *baptism*, carries a depth and dynamic that transcends our ability to harness by human language – thus, we content ourselves with the trajectory of the word and openness to God’s leading within the trajectory of *sending*.]

We consider that NT scholarship has not sufficiently considered the meaning of the verb *apostello* as a starting point for a solution. Already in secular Greek “to send” was used as a technical term for a divine authorization, and its

subject was used, admittedly very rarely, with the meaning “messenger”. Since the Hellenistic churches could not be assumed to have an understanding for the concept of the *saliah*, the Gentile Christians would understand apostle in exactly this sense. If we consider too that the LXX uses this term for the mission of the prophets, we shall ask ourselves whether OT prophecy cannot serve as a positive basis for the special concept of apostleship in the primitive church. If that is so, the primitive church chose, as it so often did, an unfamiliar word, seldom used in the secular language, with little ready-made content, in order to fill it with one expression its own conceptions. 134-135

Receive the Holy Spirit. (20:22)

Receive = *labete* [Aorist Active Subjunctive 2 person plural – *lambano*]

TDNT, V. IV

The original etymological meaning is “to grasp,” “to seize.” It develops in two directions. (1) The first is active, “to take,” “to bring under one’s control on one’s own initiative...” (2) The second direction gives us already in classical Greek the sense “to receive,” “to acquire” (passively), both literally and also figuratively. 5

In the *New Testament* *lambano* is fairly common in narrative in sense one, “to take”... Sense two is predominant, especially in theologically significant verses. 6

What man *receives* from God is in the first instance is *pneuma* [Spirit] (Jn 7:39; 20:22; Ac 1:8; 2:38; 1 Cor 2:12), along with His specific charismatic operations (1 Pe 4:10). Reception of the [Spirit] distinguishes Christians from the world (Jn 14:17) and so unequivocally constitutes them Christians that (in Acts) the answer to the question whether there has been reception of the Spirit determines absolutely whether a man is a Christian or not (Ac 10:47; 19:2). Paul lays particular emphasis on the fact that man cannot even prepare the ground for this reception (Gl 3:2, 14). 7

The force of these statements is apparent when we set them against the background of Jewish and Rabbinic tendencies towards legalism and synergism, in which the believer makes a decisive contribution to his own salvation. 7

If you *forgive(1)* the sins of anyone, they are *forgiven (2)*; if you withhold *forgiveness* from anyone, it is withheld. (20:23)

(1) Forgive = *aphete* [Aorist Active Subjunctive 2 person plural – *aphiemi*]

(2) Forgiven = *apheontai* [Perfect Passive Indicative 3 person singular – *aphiemi*]

(3) Forgiveness – Most English translations add #2 a third time to capture the meaning found in the Greek which does not repeat *apheontai*.

The task of proclaiming the forgiveness which has been brought about by Christ is given to the church. This task is carried out in preaching, in the personal declaration of forgiveness to individuals, and also in the proclamatory rites of baptism and the Eucharist. It is not a case of mere reference to and repetition of something past. Each time it is a fresh act of proclamation, coming from Christ himself to the concrete situation of the present. Its validity is grounded in the authority given by Christ to the church (Matt 18:18; cf. 16:19; Jn 20:23; cf. also 1 Jn 5:16; Jas 5:15 f.), and always remains conditional on obedience to him. This comes about through renewed realization of forgiveness in the real situations of everyday life, with their call to decision, and not in some timeless application. This is shown by the commission to retain along with the commission to forgive (*krateo* [withhold], as opposed to *aphiemi*, Jn 20:23; cf. Matt 18:18; 16:19). 703