

Sample - from Book #3 for web

Chapter 5

Peace — Reality, or Fleeting Mirage?

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem! Psalm 122:6.

Was this a command to pray for the **real estate** that Jerusalem is built on and for the buildings in the city, or for its inhabitants who continued to reject Christ?

This command to pray for the peace of Jerusalem has been taken **out of context** and repeated so often without thought, that it has taken on a religious life of its own. It is almost like praying a string of beads. Some people just do it because, like the TV ad. for Quaker Oats says, “It’s the right thing to do!” What should this prayer for peace mean?

When the Jews were taken captive to Babylon, the prophet Jeremiah gave them this command from God, regarding **Babylon** where they were being held captive;

*This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those **I carried** into exile **from Jerusalem to Babylon**: seek the peace and prosperity **of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.** Jeremiah 29: 4,7.*

Jerusalem is not the only city God asked His people to pray for. In this instance he told them to direct their prayers toward the welfare of Babylon! Read 1 Timothy 2:2. Why do some teachers talk as though Jerusalem is the only city God ever asked us to pray for?

Was it an accident that Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, repented and gave his allegiance to the true God? See Daniel chapter 4. This is the autobiography of a Babylonian king who responded to the chastisement of the Lord **as a result of the prayers of God’s people who were in Babylon.** What was the key to Nebuchadnezzar’s conversion? See verse 27. He found the peace God offers. Could Daniel have had something to do with his conversion?

Jesus defined the meaning of the word “peace.”

He told the Jews how they lost it, and in Whom it may be found again.

And when as He approached He saw the city, He wept over it, exclaiming, Would that you had known personally, even at least in this your day, the things that make for peace (for freedom from all the distresses that are experienced as the result of sin and upon which your peace, that is, your security, safety, prosperity and happiness depends)! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For a time is coming upon you when your enemies will throw up a bank...about you, and surround you, and shut you in on every side.

And they will dash you down to the ground, you and your children with you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another; [all] because you did not come progressively to recognize and know and understand... the time of your visitation [that is, when God was visiting you, the time in which God showed Himself gracious toward you and offered you salvation through Christ]. Luke 19:41-44 (Amp).

The highest authority in Scripture, Jesus Christ himself, tells us in the above statement what it means to pray for the peace of Jerusalem. Let's look at the key words I underlined.

1. **“He wept.”** Jesus not only prayed for His people, but He “prayed Himself to death” for them. He did all that divinity could do to redeem them. Then, just before He was crucified by the very people that He loved, He viewed their city and wept over it. Jesus prayed many tears for the people in Jerusalem! Do you think He was concerned about the rocks, and mortar, and real estate, or about the people?
2. **“In this your day.”** God's prophetic clock for Israel was now at one second to midnight. In effect, Jesus said, **“This is your day, and you are blowing it!”** The climax of the 490 year prophecy by Daniel had arrived! Had Israel met the conditions set out by God in that prophecy? Had they made an end of sinning? Were they prepared to anoint the Most Holy One? This was their day, and what had they done about it? Israel had reached the end of **“Rebellion Road.”** Jesus wept.
3. **“The things that make for peace.”** What constitutes peace? What does that word mean? What are its ingredients? If you want to make a cake you need to have the ingredients that make a cake. How can you have peace if the right ingredients are missing? What are those ingredients? Review Daniel 9:24. Israel was trying to bake a “holy cake” without the ingredients listed in God's “recipe Book.”
4. **“The time of your visitation.” That was the time of Israel's judgment.** God's prophetic clock was within 3 ½ years of striking the fatal midnight hour, when Israel's opportunity to submit to their King would be realized or forever forfeited. Instead of rising to glory, they were pulled up by the roots, and again scattered among the nations of the world. How many times do we think the Son of the Living God is going to submit Himself to the mockery of sinners? According to Jesus, that rebellious nation has had its day.

At His birth, the angels announced that the Prince of Peace had arrived with a message of peace for a troubled world. He had come to establish the **substance of peace** in the hearts of men. He told His disciples, “If men will not receive the message of peace you carry, shake the dust off your feet as a witness against them, and **take your peace with you!**”

The peace of Jerusalem is contained only in Jesus, and in His message of peace! God's peace is not dependent on outward circumstances. Jesus said,

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.
John 14: 27.

The peace of Jerusalem is **not** dependent on,
 Freedom from national unrest, or
 Freedom from political unrest, or
 Freedom from feuding between Jews and Arabs, or
 Freedom from outside invasion, or
 Securing the temple mount, etc. etc.

The peace of Jerusalem is the receiving of the Messiah in the person of Jesus Christ. Apart from Him, people may be wailing for peace, where there is no peace. He alone is the Source of Peace! Read Ephesians 2:14. The prophecies of the Old Testament were written primarily to the Jewish

nation. They focused largely on the Jewish captivity in Babylon, and the subsequent restoration of Jerusalem and the temple. The books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah and to some degree Daniel, were concerned mainly with those events.

Some portions of those prophecies may also apply to end times, but it is pitiful how the historical fulfillment of those prophecies is almost entirely overlooked by some of today's teachers. The accuracy with which they **were fulfilled** in every detail, is proof positive that the Scriptures are truly of supernatural origin. Only an all-knowing God could have given so many prophecies, through so many prophets, who were separated by such great distances in both time and space, and have them all fit together perfectly like the pieces of one great big jig-saw puzzle.

TEACHERS WHO PROJECT ALL THESE PROPHECIES INTO THE FUTURE ARE INADVERTANTLY PREACHING THE DOCTRINE OF THE ANTICHRIST, AND unwittingly GIVING SUPPORT TO those who believe THE LIE, THAT THE MESSIAH HAS NOT YET COME.

Projecting fulfilled prophecies into the future without Scriptural authority, can lead to very dangerous conclusions. This practice gained momentum in 1948 when modern Israel was resurrected after 2000 years in oblivion. Speculators began wondering what that phenomenon might mean, and jumped to conclusions without taking the time to see how that event may be verified, both in history and in Scripture.

Second Coming - to Sow or to Reap?

The most serious error to result from such misuse of Scripture, was to project the coming of Christ, as the Messiah, to some time in the future. Daniel 9:24-27 met its **complete fulfillment** in the ministry of Jesus Christ. People who make room for a future Messiah to appear, are by that very statement, denying that the One who came 2000 years ago was indeed the promised Messiah, the Son of God. **Jesus Christ will never again appear as the Messiah!** He will return as King of kings, not to sow, but to reap! Hebrews 9:28.

Natural Jews destined to evangelize the nations?

History records that exactly in the middle of the 70th and final week allotted to Israel, Christ was crucified, and then 3 1/2 years later, when Stephen was martyred, their place as God's chosen channels of light to the world was turned over to the **spiritual** descendants of Abraham with this announcement by Paul;

When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and talked abusively against what Paul was saying. Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: "We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles. For this is what the Lord has commanded us: 'I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.' " Acts 13: 45-47. (quoted from Isaiah 49:6.)

The above statement by Paul marked the fulfillment of Isaiah chapter 49, verse 6.

Paul applied the fulfillment of this prophecy, which stated that God made Israel to be a light to the ends of the earth, to the work that was about to begin through himself and Barnabas as they left the now defunct religion of Judaism.

Because of opposition to the ministry of the Apostles, an open cleavage occurred in Israel. **There always were two opposing spirits in Israel.** But after Christ was crucified, it became apparent that the two could no longer walk together. On one hand was **Old Covenant Israel**, which refused to accept the Messiah, and on the other, was the dynamic **New Covenant Israel** under the headship of Christ. **Both were led by Jews!**

The idea that Christianity was anti-Jewish is totally misleading! Initially Christianity was of a purely Jewish origin. As it opened the door to people of all races, it took on a cosmopolitan flavor welcoming all on an equal footing.

Both were basically Jewish institutions! What happened was that the people who called themselves “Israel,” became divided, and were moving in two different directions. One segment of “Israel” refused to move out of their comfort zone. A spiritual minority who recognized the temporary nature of the Sinai agreement, left what they considered the fossilized religion of Judaism and found refuge in the covenant of faith God had given to Abraham. **Old Covenant Israel** put their trust in their **physical and genetic relationship** to Abraham. **New Covenant Israel** emphasized their **spiritual union** with Abraham and his God. Clearly, one group represented the Ishmael spirit, while the other were, like Isaac, children of faith.

According to Paul's statement, the commission that he and Barnabas received to go to the Gentiles, marked the **beginning of the fulfillment of that prophecy in Isaiah 49:6.** As more Christian Jews joined Paul and Barnabas, they formed the nucleus of New Covenant Israel, who were the first to become missionaries taking the Gospel to a waiting world. Jews did not join the Gentiles. Gentiles united with the believing Jews under Christ.

With that prophecy fulfilled, the exclusive Jewish era was over.

Does Genesis 22:18 Contradict Genesis 3:15?

When God told Abraham that the nations would be blessed through his “seed”, was He indicating Abraham's natural descendants, as some people claim? They argue that God's promise to Abraham regarding his “Seed” (Genesis 22:18) was not part of the Old Covenant, and therefore was not terminated at the cross. However, Genesis 22:18 cannot introduce a different avenue to God than Christ, who was promised in Genesis 3:15. The original language is very clear that the “Seed” referred to in that promise did not refer to Abraham's natural offspring, but to Christ. The argument over the application of Genesis 22:18 is nothing but a red herring, or at most, a moot point. For proof read **Galatians 3:16** which is the Holy Spirit's interpretation of the original text. (We quote from the Amplified).

Now the promises (covenants, agreements) were decreed and made to Abraham and his Seed (his offspring, his Heir). He (God) does not say, And to seeds ... as if referring to many persons; but, And to your Seed... obviously referring to one Individual, Who is (none other than) Christ, the Messiah. (Emphasis supplied).

When God says it, that settles it!

Numerous Christian teachers quote extensively from the books of Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Zechariah. These teachers support a theory that the prophecies spoken to Israel, while they were under the Old Covenant, but were not fulfilled at that time because of their refusal to co-operate with God, must be fulfilled to literal Israel today. To be understood correctly, Old and New Testament prophecies must be considered in context, and as two parts of the same revelation. God gave us both because we need both.

Will Jacob's natural descendents (spiritual Ishmaelites according to Galatians 4: 21-31) be given yet another opportunity to fulfil the commission God had given to Abraham's offspring? Or will that commission be completed by Abraham's spiritual descendents who are represented by Isaac?

The theory that only part of the Old Covenant was terminated at the end of Israel's probationary period of 490 years, and that the prophecies which were subject to that covenant are still valid to Jacob's natural descendants today, is based on the same mindset as the divine right of kings in Old England used to be.

That view runs straight in the face of both Old Testament and New Testament teaching. Again we will let Inspiration speak to this view. The following Scripture was addressed specifically to Israel, not to the heathen nations!

*Then the word of the Lord came to me: "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter does?" declares the Lord. "Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel. **If** at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down and destroyed, and **if** that nation I warned repents of its evil, then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned.*

*And **if** at another time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be built up and planted, and **if** it does evil in my sight and does not obey me, then I will reconsider the good I had intended to do for it.*

*Now therefore **say to the people of Judah and those living at Jerusalem, 'This is what the Lord says: Look! I am preparing a disaster for you and devising a plan against you. So turn from your evil ways, each one of you, and reform your ways and your actions.'***

Jeremiah 18: 5-11. (Emphasis supplied).

This particular warning was addressed to Israel, for Israel. It was **not** given to Israel regarding God's dealings with other nations. God's prophetic utterances are always subject to the full co-operation of the people addressed, regardless of race. God is no man's debtor! God is inviting today's Jews **and** Gentiles alike, to accept the covenant He gave to our father Abraham, that we might find the peace and harmony that has eluded us for over 2000 years. **Abraham does indeed have a message for us in the 21st century.**

Because they were conditional, the prophet Zechariah also qualified the prophecies given to Israel.

*This will happen **if** you diligently obey the Lord your God. Zechariah 7:15.*

Joshua 1:13,15, Hebrews 3:8, and Deuteronomy 6:5, and 28:15-29 confirm the view that prophecies or promises God makes to any specific individuals or groups of people, are subject to the terms of those agreements. Otherwise we could hold God hostage, just as the writers of the book **'Israel, the Church and the Last Days'** seem to believe.

Does Judaism control God's agenda?

Two Hebrew writers, Dan Juster and Keith Intrater (apparently both claim to be Messianic Jews) co-authored the book **Israel, the Church and the Last Days**. Here are a few excerpts from their book;

"Israel is a representative of the nations. She has the right to invite Jesus to rule the world because she is a representative of the nations. However, if Israel as the representative of the nations, does not invite Jesus to rule the world, He won't." Page 86.

"Since the Rabbinic council is invested with divine jurisdiction in religious matters, the rabbis could not possibly make a mistake in recognizing and confirming who the Messiah is. Since the rabbis in the Sanhedrin council determined that Yeshua was not the Messiah, and since they have the legal right to determine that choice, by definition, Yeshua cannot be the Messiah."
Page 229. (emphasis supplied).

According to the authors, rabbinic Judaism also believes that,

"At the right time and by appropriate standards, the rabbinic council will recognize and confirm who the Messiah is, and that will be the correct choice." Page 230.

The big question: since when has Christ become subject to human selection? By assuming to put the "Messiah" under their authority, those particular people see themselves as eventually controlling not only God, but the whole world! What arrogance! Some people seem to have bought into Satan's lie to Eve, that "you shall be as gods".

These statements seem to affirm the idea that the authority to decide who will be recognized as the future "messiah" is in the hands of Israel's Rabbinic Council. 2 Thessalonians chapter two warns us about the antichrist who will rise against God's authority. Since the council has already rejected the true Christ, who would they choose? Very interesting!

Whether the authors, themselves, adhere to these views, or whether they were merely expressing the beliefs of modern Judaism, is not made clear. However, one thing is clear, there are still people who think they are the drivers, and that God belongs in the back seat. Apparently the seeds of spiritual pride that Satan planted in the Garden of Eden when he told Eve that "You shall be as gods," are still rooted in some who would think of themselves as "The Chosen People".

Again, we will let Inspiration speak to this view;

*This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ **has come in the flesh** is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of antichrist.* 1John 4: 2,3.

Herald appeared as usual, and invited a brief evaluation of the material in this chapter. He cautioned the participants to evaluate the material as objectively as possible, and try not to let political or emotional ties blur their search for truth.

Reporter Hunt: “The role that natural Jews are destined to play in the final history of this present age is a subject that has captivated the minds of many Christian denominations and Jews alike. After 2000 years of wandering among the nations of the world, they are back in their old homeland, and it is again called Israel! This cannot be an accident. What is the meaning of this phenomenon? As I have been studying this subject I can see what the return of the Jews may not mean. However, what I would like to know is, what does it mean? Or is this phenomenon only to give Israel one final opportunity as a nation, to repent for rejecting Christ 2000 years ago?”

Herald: “Israel mirrors the condition of the people who claim to be the guardians of the Christ-centered faith! The events that shape eternity are **not** initiated in Israel! The real conflict is not between Israel and its neighbors, or between different races, or between opposing religious systems. The real warfare is between Jesus Christ on the one hand, and Lucifer, or Satan on the other. Conditions in the whole world are a reflection of the war in the heavens. Israel is but one focal point of that reflection.”

Reporter Holmes: “It seems to me that the Christian church in America, which is supposed to represent the ideals and principles of the Christ-centered faith, has been surrendering territory to atheism ever since the birth of Israel in 1948. The Christian church used to boldly promote family values, faithfulness, honesty, and ‘The Golden Rule’. As a reporter, it seems to me that even in the church, ‘He who has the gold makes the rules.’ What has gone wrong? For all its apparent success, why is Christianity in America losing its influence in the schools and in government alike? It seems that the tide is running against the church. Are events in the world a reflection of this trend?”

Professor Clarity: “Recent years have been marked by great progress in evangelization. Converts are being brought into the church by the thousands, but a year later where are they? Sinners are called to give their hearts to Jesus, expecting that life’s troubles will be over. When do we hear the kind of sermon that John the Baptist preached? When do you hear sin rebuked as Jesus did, when He exposed those who found it more popular to wash the cup on the outside than to clean the inside.

In what ways does Israel reflect the state of those who pose as guardians of the Christ-centered faith? As Secularism, humanism, commercialism and worldly culture are quietly infiltrating the Christian churches, Israel is also being dominated by political forces that have made materialism their god.”

Rabbi Benjamin: “I believe that the judgment of the world is at hand. Satan is fuelling the antichrist spirit that controls the nations. He wants to present the world as united against God. Let us pray for the people of Jerusalem that they not be found on the enemy’s side.”

Herald: “Do not be blind to the fact that natural Israel is not the focal point of the struggle between Christ and the antichrist! The focus and center of the conflict is in the spirit world! Israel, and the whole world, are only the reflectors of that controversy.”

Rabbi Benjamin: “It’s very unsettling when I realize that Israel’s ancient leaders thought they would be protected by a divine miracle if the Babylonians should dare to attack their so-called “holy city” in the days of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. In 70 AD they again expected God to rebuke the Roman armies and save them because they saw themselves as “the apple of God’s eye”. Are not Christians today being subjected to another “Peace and Safety” cry similar to that which the theologians fed to the unwary people in those days? Weren’t those events recorded as a warning

to us who are living at the climax of this present age, not to presume upon the goodness of God, while accommodating the ways of the world?"

Herald: "Today many people reflect that same attitude. I understand that the "Peace and Safety" cry that is taught in many of your assemblies, is that before God's judgments are released upon the world, American Christians will be beamed up to heaven's safety, from where they will watch the sinners squirm. Don't forget that the servants of God in other lands are **today** being martyred for their faith. Where is the spirit of Moses who asked God to spare the sinners, or he would rather die with them? Ancient Israel was under a similar illusion, that they would be immune to Satan's attacks."

Professor Clarity: "It seems to me that even with Israel and its neighbors serving as God's mirror to the world, many of us are still in the dark. Why is it that so many of us become so easily infatuated with shadows and mirrors? Why have we been taught to consider the nation of Israel as though it is the center of God's universe, if in reality it is only a mirror image of conditions in the spirit world? Isn't this a repetition of the same mistake that was made when some among us became infatuated with the sanctuary and its services, not realizing that they were only temporary shadows or reflections of Christ's ministry on behalf of sinners?"

Rabbi Benjamin: "The more I look into God's prophetic Word, the more challenging it becomes. I love my people. I love to think of the city of Jerusalem where Jesus ministered and was crucified for my sins. As Jews we relish our past history, but I am most concerned that we are not hearing what God's Spirit is saying to us today. We are so focused on mirror images, that we are blinded to present reality by the traditional veil that covers our eyes. I'm afraid that 2 Corinthians 3:12 to 15 describes our condition."

Hunt: "As a reporter, I have personally checked the book entitled "Israel, the church and the Last Days" from which the writer quoted. I would like to clarify a point that may be misunderstood. There are divergent views among Messianic Jews, even as there are among other religions. While most religious Jews still believe that their race is presently covered by Old Covenant promises, there seems to be some disagreement as to how far they should carry that concept. Don't they teach that the Old and New Covenants are two parts of the same package, and that the Sinai Covenant transcends the cross?"

Herald: "Traditional teachings have a way of taking on a life of their own. Through constant repetition, even a fantasy can take on the form of reality, until the individual can no longer tell the difference between what is real and what was born in his own mind."