

Hope of Peace

- Roland Clarke

The prospect of finding a solution in the longstanding war between Israel and the Palestinians seems more hopeless than ever. These bleak prospects are becoming even worse because of the resurgence of jihadist groups across the Muslim world all of whom are determined to eliminate Israel. Also bear in mind, there are no small number of Muslims around the world who sympathize strongly with Hamas and the PLO.

Perhaps a wise place to begin is to acknowledge that according to the Qur'an and the Bible, peacemaking is a noble divine character quality that all God-fearing people should emulate. As Jesus Christ said, *"Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the sons of God."*

Long before the Messiah came, the prophets described him as "Prince of Peace," saying that he would bring peace to the world. (Isaiah 9:6; 11:1-12; 52:7) If we look carefully at Christ's words and actions we see that he spoke **peace** while healing the sick and he pronounced **peace** while forgiving repentant sinners. (Luke 8:48; 7:50)

Today world leaders are seeking to bring **peace** through dialog. For example, in late 2008 the United Nations convened a "High-Level Meeting on the Culture of Peace" at which the Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon said, "the need for dialogue among religions, cultures and civilizations has never been greater." Here we are six years later with little fruit to show. The world is more polarized than ever and desperately needs **peace**.

It is a well known fact that the cornerstone of the UN charter is captured in the words, *"beating swords into ploughshares."* But how many are aware that this quote is part of a Bible prophecy pointing to Jesus the Messiah? It is remarkable that Christ is recognized by followers of all faiths as an outstanding prophet, peacemaker and "messiah" figure. But there is another reason why we ought to focus on a spiritual leader, like the Messiah: the fact is, very few people trust politicians.



Interestingly both Muslims and Christians believe Jesus Christ will return to earth in the end times to rid the world of evil and bring worldwide **peace**. (Jews also expect their Messiah will come.) One Muslim writer noted that Islamic sources confirm Al Masih (Jesus) will abolish Jihad; "Sayyidina Salamah bin Nufayl has said that the messenger of Allah said, 'The (command of) Jihad will not be abolished until the descent of Isa Ibn Maryam.' (Seerat al-Mughlata', Musnad Ahmad)"

The similarities between this Hadith and Bible prophecies are intriguing. The prophets foretold that the Messiah *"will settle international disputes. They will hammer swords into ploughshares... Nation will no longer fight against nation nor train for war any more.... Your king will bring **peace** to the nations."* (Isaiah 2:4; Zechariah 9:10).

Not only so, the hadith echoes other Messianic prophecies from the Tanach (Old Testament) describing Messiah's reign as follows: "the wolf and the lamb will live together" and **peace** will pervade the whole world. (See Mufti Mohammad Shafi's book, Signs of Qiyamah and the Arrival of the Maseeh, pp. 38,78, where he quotes Abu Dawood and Ibn Majah, Hadith #13).

It seems fitting to conclude with a Scripture that notes the alienation between Jews and Gentiles, but concludes by saying, Jesus Christ *"himself is our **peace**, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall"* (Ephesians 2:14)

Of course, sceptics may argue that followers of the three monotheistic faiths don't have the greatest reputation for being **peaceful**. Besides that, each faith has a different understanding of how the Messiah will bring **peace**. You might be surprised by what you will find if you take time to consider, "Who is the Messiah, the Prince of **Peace**?"

You may wish to read, "Converging Destinies: Jerusalem, Peace and the Messiah" which is available online: <http://tinyurl.com/6movg5s> or contact me directly: rolandclarke1139@yahoo.com