

Praying for Peace and Justice in the Holy Land

As the horrific Hamas-Israel War is now well into its second month, one Messianic congregation in Jerusalem is asking for other believers in Jesus, the Jewish Messiah and Savior of Gentiles, to join them in prayer for “our government... safety of our soldiers... the release of hostages... and the safety of innocent peoples affected by this war.”

The radical Islamists of Hamas in Gaza decry the Jews as usurpers of the land “from the river to the Sea” (i.e. from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea). While shouting “Allahu Akbar” (an expression meaning “the God ALLAH is greater”) during their barbaric assaults, they claim to acknowledge Jesus of Nazareth as a prophet, but not as the eternal Son of God.

These terrorists have little tolerance for the “people of the book,” who pray for peace and justice in the Holy Land. Instead, they threaten atrocious assaults—like Hamas committed on Oct. 7, 2023—“again and again and again” until Israel is destroyed and every Jew is eliminated.

Jesus of Nazareth is the Sacred Son of God

The name Jesus is Yeshua in Hebrew and means “Yahweh is Salvation,” as the angel told Joseph, the future husband of Mary, Jesus’ birth-mother: “Son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son and you shall call His name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:20b–21, NKJV).

This is the gospel message of the apostle John: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting

who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:16-18).

Jesus boldly declared that He is the sole avenue of salvation. "...I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6).

Peter, the primary fisherman-disciple from Galilee, explained to the people gathered at the temple area in Jerusalem, at the Jewish Feast of Pentecost: "There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12; NKJV)."

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Jerusalem is the City of Peace

From the times of the Jewish King David, Jerusalem has been considered a sacred site to the Jews. There, Solomon built the first Jewish Temple and there the Jews and proselytes to their faith worshiped the God of heaven and earth with sacrifices and offerings.

At Jerusalem, Jesus was crucified, buried and raised from the grave. From the Mount of Olives, just east of the city, Jesus later ascended to heaven and angels affirmed to His disciples He would come again (literally and physically) to that site, "in like manner as you have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11).

There, in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came upon the assembled disciples when they were "all with one accord in one they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:1-4). As Jesus had told them before this, they became witnesses to Him "in Jerusalem, and in all Judea

and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

Jerusalem is also revered by Muslims, as the place to which Mohammed supposedly rode some mystical, winged, horse-like animal on a fanciful night-time journey from Mecca to Jerusalem, as described in their holy book, the Quran. The present Al-Aqsa mosque and Dome of the Rock, located on the previous platform site of the Jewish Temple, commemorate these claims.

This is also the place where Jews and Christians are urged to "pray for the peace of Jerusalem" (Psalm 122:6). Christ Jesus is our peace, "who has made both [Jewish and Gentile believers] one, and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility [between God and mankind]" (Eph. 2:14-16; ESV).

Through Him, we have access by one Spirit to the Father! Let us boldly come to Father God, through Jesus, His Son, in regular intercession for peace and against the hatred and horrors around our world!

The God of Justice

We can have confidence that our sovereign God will ultimately right all wrongs in our world, because He is the God of Justice. It is an attribute that naturally flows out of His righteousness and holiness and all sin must be justly accounted for.

Sin separates us from our holy God. Romans 3:23 reminds us we all have fallen short of His glory and His holy designs and desires for us. Yet, later, Paul explained "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (6:23). Through the death of His Son, He has made

possible the free gift of our forgiveness.

For justice to prevail, we deserve the consequences of the sinful wages we have earned. However, our God is “just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus” (3:26). Because of our confession of sins and faith in the righteous results of his death, burial and resurrection, He has aligned us with His holy purposes and made us right (or “justified”) in His sight.

Now, we must live as agents of this God of justice and focus our thoughts on those things which are true, honorable and right [just]. We must fill our minds with those things which are pure, beautiful and full of commendation—rather than condemnation (my version of Philippians 4:8).

There are occasions when our God of Justice must exercise His wrath. “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord, in Romans 12:19. Sometimes His wrath must be carried out in “just wars” through civil governments (“God’s minister”) to punish wrongdoers and re-establish right and justice (v. 13:4).

But first, “let us pursue the things which make for peace...” (14:19) and continue to “pray for the peace of Jerusalem.”
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