

Why Messianic Believers—and Christians—Should Diligently Pursue Peace Now

Jesus said to His disciples, *“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God”* (Matt. 5:9).

Jesus’ beatitude about peacemakers contradicted the first-century zealot impulse that called for taking up armed resistance against Rome. Several of His disciples embraced the zealot ideal. The beatitude about peacemaking attempted to turn their thoughts away from armed revolution.

Jesus calls the peacemakers “sons of God” because, in the Bible, God is called the *Oseh Shalom*, that is, “the One who makes peace in His heights” (Job 25:2). Peacemakers imitate God, who makes peace above.

The Delitzch Hebrew version of the gospels translates “peacemakers” as “those who pursue peace” on the basis of Psalm 34:14: *“Seek peace, and pursue it.”* A man who pursues peace endeavors to make peace. He does not passively wait for his enemies to be reconciled to him. Instead, he pursues peace like the working man pursues his daily wages. He pursues peace with his enemies and seeks to make peace between a man and his fellow and between a man and his wife. Rabbi Hillel used to say, *“Be among the disciples of Aaron, loving peace and pursuing peace.”*

According to one rabbinic legend, Aaron was called a son of peace, loving peace and pursuing peace, because he was a peacemaker among the sons of Israel, especially between a man and his wife:

“There were thousands in Israel who were called by the name of Aaron, for if not for Aaron, they would not have come into the

world. Aaron made peace between husband and wife so that they were reconciled, and they named the child that was born after him" (Avot d'Rabbi Natan).

James, the brother of the Master, says that the peacemaker can be likened to a man who sows his field. He plants peace, but when the crop ripens, he harvests righteousness: "And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace" (James 3:18). For this reason the writer of the book of Hebrews urges us to "*pursue peace with all men*" (Heb. 12:14), and Paul tells us, "If it is possible, as much as it depends on you, live peaceably with all men" (Rom. 12:18).

By making peace on Earth, we bring the world closer to the Messianic Era, when the Prince of Peace will reign. By practicing peace now, we participate in the peace of the coming kingdom, importing the Messianic Era into today's world. {eoa}

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