



Peace with No End

by Tim Kelley

World peace, both within and between nations, has been the goal of world leaders since the dawn of history. Somewhat recent examples include the rise of democracies in the early 1800's, Karl Marx's idea of communism, globalization where the world eventually becomes one big nation, and the concept of "mutually assured destruction" that came about after the invention of the atomic bomb. And of course, there was the League of Nations that followed World War One and then the United Nations that took its place after World War Two.

Religion has attempted to play a role in creating world peace as well. Buddhism teaches that world peace can only be achieved when every individual's mind is conditioned to abandon negative emotions such as anger and hate, and replace those with love and compassion.

Hinduism teaches that peace can be achieved through education, where peoples and individuals strive to understand each other and meditate on what everyone has in common and set aside the differences.

Christianity and Judaism both teach about a time of peace that will spread throughout the world as a result of the coming, or the return of, the Messianic figure pictured by the prophets of old.

Obviously, none of mans efforts have brought lasting peace, at least not the peace we typically think of.

Today I want to talk with you about peace. We're going to define it, show a couple of examples where mankind has had the opportunity for world peace, and offer some ideas on what we can do to insure world peace.

What is peace? The Mirriam-Webster online dictionary defines it as:

1. a state of tranquility or quiet: as
 - a. freedom from civil disturbance
 - b. a state of security or order within a community provided for by law or custom
2. freedom from disquieting or oppressive thoughts or emotions
3. harmony in personal relations
4. a state or period of mutual concord between governments
 - a. a pact or agreement to end hostilities between those who have been at war or in a state of enmity

I submit that most of us would agree with that definition, after all we all want to live in a world that is free from hostility; where we don't have to be constantly looking behind our back; where we don't have to pay exorbitant taxes in order to fund a huge military machine; or fear that our sons - and now our daughters - might someday be sent off to war. Since – for the most part – we all claim a Judao-Christian heritage, we long for the time when the nations will –

^{NKJ} **Isaiah 2:4** . . . beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war anymore.

To us – that is peace. But is it really? Does cessation of war = peace?

The Bible paints a slightly different view of peace. When we look up the word "peace" in the Tnakh, we find that it is most often translated from the Hebrew word "shalom" (שָׁלוֹם) – 7965 – 236 times). Shalom is used many times in scripture to describe situations that we would typically describe as "peaceful". For instance, in Leviticus 26, YHVH describes the "shalom" that would come if Israel would continue to walk in His ways and commandments –

^{NKJ} **Leviticus 26:6** I will give peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and none will make *you* afraid; I will rid the land of evil beasts, and the sword will not go through your land.

From this passage, we see that “shalom” certainly includes the cessation of war – at least war within the land of Israel, but it also includes the removal of fear, even the fear of wild animals that might harm our livestock or children.

“Shalom” comes from the Hebrew root word “shalam” (שָׁלַם – 7999), a word that – according to the Strong’s dictionary - implies “making peace”. Unfortunately, it’s hard to grasp the definition of a word when that very word is used as part of its definition. Therefore, I often to go to the Ancient Hebrew Research Center when I want to find the “concrete” definition of a Hebrew word. AHRC is a website hosted by Jeff Benner, a self taught Hebrew scholar who searches out the etymology of Hebrew words. On his web site he explains the meaning of the verb “shalam”, the root word of “shalom” -

“The verb ‘shalam’ means to ‘restore’ in the sense of replacing or providing what is needed in order to make someone or something whole and complete. The noun שָׁלוֹם (shalom) is one who has, or has been provided, what is needed to be whole and complete.”

Jeff explains by quoting a passage in Exodus –

^{ESV} **Exodus 21:35-36** "When one man's ox butts another's, so that it dies, then they shall sell the live ox and share its price, and the dead beast also they shall share, or if it is known that the ox has been accustomed to gore in the past, and its owner has not kept it in, he shall **repay** ox for ox, and the dead beast shall be his.

He explains that –

“In this passage the word shalam is used to express the idea of ‘replacing’ or ‘restoring’ one dead ox with a live one because of negligence. The verb shalam literally means ‘to make whole’. The word shalom has the same basic meaning but in the noun form as can be seen in the following verse.”

^{ESV} **Genesis 43:28** They said, "Your servant our father is well (shalom); he is still alive." And they bowed their heads and prostrated themselves.

So “peace” in the Biblical sense implies more than just cessation from war. Peace is when everything is restored to wholeness, and it’s with that definition that I want to continue, because **restoration** is the role of The Messiah, and it’s the role we’ve been called into as well.

The Feast of Tabernacles pictures a time of peace. The thought of swords being beaten into plowshares and the wolf dwelling with the lamb are pictures that come to mind when we think about the millennial kingdom of Messiah Yeshua, but Sukkot pictures another time as well. Let’s go to Leviticus 23 and see what YHVH says about that other time.

^{ESV} **Leviticus 23:41-43** ⁴¹ You shall celebrate it as a feast to the LORD for seven days in the year. It is a statute forever throughout your generations; you shall celebrate it in the seventh month. ⁴² You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All native Israelites shall dwell in booths, ⁴³ that your generations may know that I made the people of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God."

We don’t often think about the wilderness journey of the Israelites as being a millennial setting. After all, they were presumably in the desert, complained about everything, and there were a number of instances where the Israelites and YHVH didn’t get along with each other very well. There on the other hand, as they neared the end of the 40 – year journey, it seems that these problems became less frequent. During this time, the Israelites had the Torah, as well as someone who could explain it; they had

righteous judges (Ex. 18) who made judgments based on the Torah; they had YHVH dwelling in their midst in the Tabernacle; they were being fed bread from heaven; and those who walked with God seemed to not age (Joshua 14:10-11). By the time they were ready to cross the Jordan, you might say that they were “whole” – at peace with their neighbors and with God. You might even say that the wilderness journey was a picture of the Kingdom of God.

I remember Feast of Tabernacles sermons from back in my early years of this walk where the minister would describe what it takes to have a kingdom. Back then, they said it took four things:

1. subjects (people)
2. land
3. law
4. a king

Could these four requirements be found in the wilderness journey. I submit that they were. Let’s take a look.

First, the Israelites were the subjects, the covenant people. Second is the land. The land was already theirs – it had been given to their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. All they had to do was take it from those who were occupying it, a task that (according to Caleb) they were “well able” to do (Numbers 13:30). The third requirement is a law, and for Israel, it was the Torah. And the king, according to Deuteronomy 33:5 and 1 Samuel 12:12, was YHVH.

So it appears that the wilderness journey may have been a forerunner of the Kingdom of God, and thus YHVH wants us to look back at that time during this festival of Sukkot and remember it.

But in spite of the awesome miracles that were performed for Israel, within three generations, Israel had turned from God and the kingdom began to crumble.

There was another time in Israel’s history when we might say that the Kingdom of God was on earth, and that was during the reigns of King David and his son Solomon. David was a man after God’s own heart, a man who loved the Torah, a king hand-picked by YHVH, and a fierce warrior.

David was able to unite Israel as a nation in a way they had not been since the death of Joshua over 300 years earlier. As a result of that restoration he brought wholeness – “shalom” - back to Israel. As a single people Israel became the strongest nation in the region, and possibly in the known world. The scriptures point out that Solomon – whose name means “peace”¹ -

^{ESV} **1 Kings 4:21-25** . . . ruled over all the kingdoms from the Euphrates to the land of the Philistines and to the border of Egypt. They brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life . . .²⁴ For he had dominion over all the region west of the Euphrates from Tiphseh to Gaza, over all the kings west of the Euphrates. And he had peace on all sides around him. ²⁵ And Judah and Israel lived in safety, from Dan even to Beersheba, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, all the days of Solomon.

Along with the good Kings (at least to a point), a united people, 400 years of insight into the Torah, and territory that came close to that which was promised to Abraham, Israel during the reign of King Solomon had righteous judgments and YHVH dwelling in her midst. It’s interesting to note that the pinnacle of Solomon’s reign was when he dedicated the Temple during the Feast of Tabernacles.

But like Israel had done before, Israel quickly disintegrated when Solomon turned away from following God. Within just a few years, Israel was again at war with herself – the northern tribes under the

¹ שְׁלוֹמֹה – “shlomoe” - peace

leadership of Jeroboam the Ephraimite battling the southern tribes under the leadership of Rehoboam the Jew². This battle continues to some extent even to this day.

But though Israel failed as a kingdom, the memory of her greatness did not, especially in the hearts of the prophets. Roughly 70 years after the southern tribes of Judah were taken captive into Babylon, the prophet Daniel dreamed of a kingdom which the God of Heaven would raise up that would never be destroyed³, and partly due to Daniel's other prophecies, those in first century Judea believed that Daniel's vision would come to pass, and the Kingdom of God would be established in their day. It was in that setting that an angel appeared to a virgin daughter of Israel saying:

^{ESV} **Luke 1:30-33** ³⁰ . . . "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

According to the angel, Yeshua would sit on the throne of David and reign over the house of Jacob, the Israelites. Yeshua's throne is not a new throne over a new kingdom, but it's the restoration of the dynasty that was established by YHVH as David reigned over all Israel. In other words, Yeshua would reign over a united Israel, not the fractured nation that came about as a result of Solomon's rebellion against YHVH. What's more, Yeshua's kingdom would never fail.

When Messiah Yeshua began his ministry, His focus was on that Kingdom. Even before choosing His disciples, He would preach –

^{ESV} **Matthew 4:17** "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

The message of the kingdom was obviously welcome by the Jewish people of His day because Yeshua was even able to teach it in the synagogues in the region of the Galilee -

^{ESV} **Matthew 4:23** ²³ And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people.

Yeshua even told His followers that the Kingdom of God should become their highest priority –

^{ESV} **Matthew 6:33** But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Let's spend a few moments and look at some of the prophecies of that Kingdom. We'll start with a very popular one –

^{ESV} **Isaiah 9:6-7** ⁶ For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

This prophecy is generally understood to pertain to the Messiah. In it we find that He will rule from the throne of David and that his kingdom will continually grow, bringing peace with it. Notice that what establishes and sustains His government is justice and righteousness. The two Hebrew words are "mishpat" and "tsedaqah", both of which refer to justice just as it's translated in the KJV.

² 1 Kings 14:30

³ Daniel 2:44

Since his government and the associated peace will continue to grow throughout his reign, we can assume that His government will not necessarily bring worldwide peace at the beginning, but that peace will grow as his dominion grows. This is consistent with Yeshua's statement to his disciples –

^{ESV} **Luke 13:18-21** . . . "What is the kingdom of God like? And to what shall I compare it? ¹⁹ It is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his garden, and it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made nests in its branches." ²⁰ And again he said, "To what shall I compare the kingdom of God? ²¹ It is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, until it was all leavened."

So the kingdom will start small, likely in Judea, and grow as people begin to see the benefit of walking in God's ways. Notice what Isaiah says –

^{ESV} **Isaiah 2:2-4** ² It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains . . . and all the nations shall flow to it, ³ and many peoples shall come, and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

A key aspect of the Messianic Kingdom is that the Torah will be taught to all who come, and because all the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Zion will have a Torah background, Yeshua will be able to fulfill the next part of the prophecy.

⁴ He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.

The King James version of this passage translates the word "yakach" (יָכַח - 3198) as "rebuke", but a better translation would be "decide" or "judge", both of which have the connotation of simply "making it right" as can be seen in the first place this word is used.

^{JPS} **Genesis 20:16** And unto Sarah he said: 'Behold, I have given thy brother a thousand pieces of silver; behold, it is for thee a covering of the eyes to all that are with thee; and before all men thou art righted.'

In this passage, Abimilech did what it took to make it right with Abraham and Sarah, and just as the man who repays his neighbor for the loss of his ox, "making it right" brings shalom.

What we see here is that peace is a byproduct of a Torah-based society that makes wise judgments based on that Torah. Thus without Torah, there can be no peace.

I believe there will be a Messianic Kingdom. That kingdom will be populated by Hebrews – men and women from every tribe, people, and land who have "crossed over" and want to serve the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They will dwell in Jerusalem and Judea, and will continue to spread out until they cover the earth, and their king will be Messiah Yeshua, sitting on the throne of his father David.

In that kingdom, there will be many roles and jobs. There will be road builders, judges, bakers, and teachers, but one of the most important jobs will be that of peacemaker.

^{ESV} **Matthew 5:9** "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

Families and neighbors will need to learn to dwell together peaceably. Fellowships and communities will have to be shown how to work together in peace. And of course, ambassadors who truly know the way to peace will have to be sent out to other nations to instruct leaders and kings in how they can live peaceably with the surrounding nations.

If we hope to be able to be called a peacemaker in the Kingdom of God, we have to begin to practice peace now. So how can we do that? Here are three steps that I've come up with.

1. Learn the Torah -

Many of us, especially those of us who were raised in traditional Christian homes, are called to this walk and within a few months believe we are Torah scholars. We seem to have forgotten that our fathers –

“ . . . are destroyed for lack of knowledge” - ^{ESV} **Hosea 4:6**

. . . and that they had –

“ . . . forgotten the law of your God” - ^{ESV} **Hosea 4:6**

. . . because they had –

“ . . . regarded (it) as a strange thing.” - ^{ESV} **Hosea 8:12**

As we've seen, the Torah must first be taught throughout the land, after which the people can begin to make righteous judgments. As we saw back in Exodus 21, the word “shalam” is what happens when we apply righteous judgment.

In regards to Torah, we have a lot of catching up to do before we can really begin to understand and apply it properly, but when we do, we'll find that -

^{NKJ} **Psalms 119:165** Great peace have those who love Your law, And nothing causes them to stumble.

2. Use wisdom –

One of the biggest problems small groups have is the tendency to drive people away by teachers who lack wisdom in what they teach and the way they teach it. When we're new to this walk and YHVH opens our minds to His amazing truths, we oftentimes stumble over ourselves to explain to another new person all the intricacies of God's way, and in many cases, we're not too shy about telling them how bad their former church association is. We're also not shy about sharing some of the more “shocking” discoveries we've made. Just imagine the impact it would make if a young family, fresh out of the Baptist church, were to make their first Sabbath visit to your group or fellowship, and someone in the group went up to them and said “Did you know that the name 'Jesus' is the name of a pagan idol”, and then during your discussion of Deuteronomy 24, one of the leaders in the group tossed out “you know God gave David all of Saul's wives, and would have even given him more!”.

We need to use wisdom in our fellowships and realize that some things may be correct, but they're not always right.⁴ Peace requires that we use wisdom when dealing with others.

^{ESV} **Proverbs 3:13-18** ¹³ Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who gets understanding . . . ¹⁷ Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. ¹⁸ She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her; those who hold her fast

3. Seek to understand –

As YHVH continues to draw us back, we're going to find ourselves meeting with people from all religious backgrounds. We'll also find out that there are various opinions on how to observe a certain Torah commandment. For instance, some people believe that shrimp is clean to eat based on their study of the shrimp's bone structure. Obviously, others do not.

⁴ The topics mentioned are for illustration purposes and do not reflect the beliefs of the author.

Before being willing to correct another person on their observance of the Torah, I admonish everyone to first remember that even though the other person does not observe it “my” way, they are at least trying to observe it. This is especially true when we come in contact with those who were raised in Judaism. We – as non-Jewish believers, or what I’ll call “Ephraimites” – have a tendency to bash the Jews in regards to their Torah observance, or what we might consider “over-observance” of the Torah. Let’s remember what Paul said in the book of Romans –

^{NKJ} **Romans 11:11** I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation *has come* to the Gentiles.

Paul said that salvation has come to us for the purpose of provoking Judah to jealousy, but we will never provoke the Jewish people to jealousy if we continue to mock and criticize their observance of Torah. We can only provoke them by our example! Instead of mocking and criticizing, we should remember that the Jewish people have been doing this a lot longer than we have, and just maybe . . . there’s something we can learn from them. So let’s be kind to one another as we work our way though trying to understand YHVH’s awesome law. Again in Romans, Paul said –

^{NKJ} **Romans 14:17** for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Will there ever be world peace? Yes – there will. The seeds are being planted here and in all the places where YHVH has drawn His people to learn his ways. And when Messiah Yeshua returns to begin the restoration of His kingdom, I believe we will play a part in bringing peace to the world as His kingdom continues to grow.

For now, let me leave you with Paul’s farewell to the Hebraic congregation in Corinth -

^{NKJ} **2 Corinthians 13:11** Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

Shalom Alecheim