



Road Map for Peace?

and thus peace will reign. It is a dream that reminds us of the Biblical narrative of 'building the tower of Babel'.

Islamic perspective

When it comes to faith, we find that in some ways, Islam, Christianity and Judaism agree with each other that peace will only come through the Messiah. In the Qur'an it is Jesus who is the Messiah (*Isa al-Masih*) — not Muhammad (Sura 3:45). The details about the Messiah's peace plan are not in the Qur'an, but in the *Ahadith* - the collections of what Muhammad said and did. The summary of these traditions is that when the Messiah comes, he will join the *Mahdi*¹ against non-Muslims - who would not listen to his command to become Muslims, and that Jesus will destroy the Anti-Christ. Through war, peace will be established. During this time Jesus will take a bride, have children, die and be buried next to Muhammad and then the Day of Judgment will occur.



Biblical Perspective



In contrast to this, the Bible gives a very different picture. Jesus indeed is coming as the judge and as the bridegroom, but the bride is the church settled in the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and earth (Isaiah 54:6; Jeremiah 3:1; Ezekiel 16:8; Hosea 2:19; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:25, 31-32; Revelation 19:7-9; 21:2,9). We learn that the Messiah 'will judge between the nations ... they will beat their swords into plowshares' (Isaiah 2:4). He 'will rule them with an iron scepter' (Psalm 2:9). 'His greatness will reach to the ends of the earth. And he will be their peace' (Micah 5:2, 4-5).

As Christians we pray for the "peace of Jerusalem" (Psalm 122:6) remembering that God's 'Road Map for Peace in the Middle East' culminates in the just reign of the Messiah who will judge all nations, Israel included. He will also be 'very angry with those nations,' some of whom stand against the Jews (Amos 1:2; Zechariah 1:15). He will "gather all the nations" (Zechariah 14:2-3). That includes Europe and America, which has become the world's number one advertiser of a life-style allowing adultery, homosexuality, pornography, abortion and more. Today, in Europe and America, Interfaith movements are trying to bring all religions and ideologies together as one, with the idea that there is one God and many ways to get to heaven. The intention is to 'COEXIST in peace with our neighbors'. If this was valid, God would not have sent Jesus as the second Adam to give his life as a ransom in the first place. This is blasphemy in God's eyes and will also be judged.



Christians know that Jesus, will be the bridge between people of all races and religions, but he is also the bridge between mankind and God. The only way Muslims, Christians and Jews can have peace among themselves is through the Messiah - Jesus. When Jesus forgave sin (Mark 2:10; Luke 7:48) as only God can do, (Isaiah 43:45; Mark 2:7; also Qur'an - Sura 3:135), he also said, "Go in peace" (Luke 7:48-50) and share the Good News of Salvation. It is no coincidence that at birth the Messiah was named 'Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins' (Matthew 1:18). The Bible says, 'We have peace with God through Jesus Christ' (Romans 5:1) and that He is our peace. It is Him who has 'destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility' thus making peace. He came for such a purpose and as He ministered peace, we should do the same (Ephesians 2:14-18). Thus, the way we can bring peace to people is to introduce all people to the Prince of Peace.

Waging peace on Muslims

Jesus has said to love our enemies and pray for them who persecute us. The Hebrew greeting Jesus used, *Shalom Aleichem* שָׁלוֹם אֵלֶיכֶם is very similar to the universal Muslim greeting in Arabic of *Salaam Aleikum* السلام عليكم (Peace to you). This is only a small thing, but blessing Muslims in the sense that we greet them with warmth, sincerity and goodwill opens the door for further dialogue, leading to their Salvation. The ideology of Islam does not teach love for enemies, but rather hatred. The Christian way to break such an ideology is to pray for Muslims. We must wage peace and love on Muslims and share with them the real Jesus who is the Prince of Peace, and that includes, both the 'moderate' and the 'militant', if there exists such a division. The best way for Christians to respond to the present situation in the Middle East is to look to the cross as the bridge to reconciliation. Most Muslims are true seekers after God as indicated by their prayer several times a day that God would lead them into the straight path (Qur'an - Sura 1:6). Christians must reach out to Muslims with the Gospel of Peace. A Muslim cries to God asking, 'Show me the way' — *Ihidina as-siraat*. Jesus answers, 'I am the way...' — *Ana howa as-siraat* (John 14:6) — Steven Masood



¹ *Mahdi* (Arabic: مهدي English: *Guided One*) is the prophesied redeemer of Islam who will stay on Earth for a time before the Day of Judgment. Alongside Jesus, he will fight non-Muslims and establish an Islamic empire. *Shi'a* sect of Islam believes, it is their 12th Imam who disappeared in the 9th century who will come back.

