

“Blessed Are The Peacemakers....”

(Matt. 5:9)

By
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For more than five decades, religious leaders have publicly prayed for peace in the war-ravaged Middle East. All the while, statesmen have pleaded with and prodded Middle East nations to establish “peaceful coexistence.” But in today’s relentlessly escalating Religious War, mouthing prayers and pleas for “peace” and “tolerance” does not make anyone a “peacemaker”—except perhaps in his own opinion!

There can be no real peace between religious enemies until enough people improve their understanding of the beliefs that divide them. Even believers in the most benign religions or philosophies are contributing to today’s bloodshed, if only because their thinking is not wise enough to provide the understanding that can bring peace to mankind. So, everyone needs an improved understanding and, hard as it is to believe, sooner or later everyone will have all the understanding needed to live together peacefully. *But we are the generation that must soon gain a crucial measure of that urgently needed understanding.* Otherwise, we or our immediate heirs will be the generation that reaps the dark harvest of a nuclear winter, until the survivors finally see the sun rise “with healing in its wings” (Mal. 3:20/4:2).

Below, I have reprinted the Introduction to *Of Promises and Previews: Urgent Old Messages for a New Millennium*. The rest of the book explains *what* we, or our immediate heirs, must understand before we can “make peace.” But be aware: The needed understanding requires everyone to alter his own thinking somewhat. We can improve our understanding in the light of day or in the darkness of a nuclear winter. The improvement is inevitable, but we can choose to learn in darkness or in light.

Introduction

Most people have heard the scientific prediction of the dark, cold nuclear winter that would envelop the world after a nuclear war. But most people don't want to think of that war—which we're told we could survive—much less think of the winter that scientists believe mankind cannot survive. Therefore, you need to know that this book will keep you in mind of that war and its winter aftermath, because it speaks of the God Whose Messengers foretold them both.

He is the God revealed by Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad. But it's not my intention to frighten you into becoming a practicing Jew, Christian, or Muslim. How you worship God, if you do, is your business. I'm only inviting you to think about the God Whose Messengers described the disaster that you might seldom mention, but can never completely forget. It could profit you to think about Him because, no matter your current opinion of Him, if a nuclear winter comes in your lifetime, you will remember the God Who warned it could happen. And, when wrapped in the winter's darkness, you might well wonder if your understanding of Him is all that it needs to be.

The *combined teachings* of *all the Prophets*, which this book offers, can help you better understand the God Who sent the Messengers and better understand His messages. For, when the Prophets' teachings are linked together, you will hear what you probably haven't heard before.

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For a certainty, Jews, Christians, and Muslims have never lacked authorities to interpret their Scriptures for them. Nor have they lacked “expert instruction” in the proper observance of rules and rituals. But there are no indisputable experts on the “Almighty” (Psalms 91:1) God, Himself. Hence, anyone who feels God's Presence in his life is qualified to discuss God's relationship with man. And everyone, whether a believer or an unbeliever, can judge the value of what he hears, as you'll do with my words. (I assure you, however, this text doesn't recount my personal relationship with God—a fact you might welcome!)

In fact, practically everything said about God in these pages is based on the teachings of the Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; Moses and the other Hebrew Prophets; Jesus and his Apostles; and Muhammad, “the Seal of the Prophets” (The Confederate Tribes 33:40). That means much of what you’ll read here has always been available in the Hebrew and Christian Testaments and the Koran. But, if you’ve read those three Books in their entirety, you’re probably a conscientious student of religions or an unbeliever searching for something believable. In other words, you probably aren’t a practicing Jew, Christian, or Muslim, since most believers don’t make a practice of reading each other’s Sacred Writings. Actually, according to a recent American Bible Society poll, only 18% of the respondents said they are “very” familiar with their own Sacred Book. The report prompted a Society official to comment, “Many people [92%] had Bibles in their home, but many people don’t actually read them”,¹ which is hardly surprising, since the Books aren’t famous for providing light entertainment at the end of a tiring day.

Because this book quotes the Prophets extensively, it, too, won’t serve as light recreation. But, in return for the thought it requires, this one volume will introduce you to all of God’s Messengers. Many of their teachings might be so familiar you could quote them yourself, even if you don’t believe them. When linked, however, some of their messages significantly differ from the teachings delivered in synagogues, churches, and mosques.

In our daily pursuit of secular knowledge, our common sense tells us to combine teachings from different sources that illuminate each other. But that’s not the way believers are taught to seek knowledge of God. They are expected to learn and adhere to their own religion’s doctrines. So, if you’re a devout member of an organized religion that worships the “Almighty” God, you might denounce me for mingling your cherished teachings with those you’ve always been taught are false or obsolete. Yet, all the Prophets spoke of the same God, and no Prophet ever commanded the world to listen *only* to him. It’s been the individual religions that have insisted we listen *only* to them.

Who I am and how I came to write a book that no organized religion could endorse is of no importance in this study of God and His messages. In truth, my personal experiences would be a gross intrusion in a book about God and His Prophets. Still, I believe you should know two things I *am not*. First, I am not and never mean to imply that I am a prophet of future events; I have only interpreted past teachings, which, in reality, everyone does when contemplating the Prophets' messages. Second, I am not an ordained teacher of any religion. If I were, I would have to esteem the teachings of one faith above all others, as the clergy of all faiths are expected to do. Those two facts reveal all that's worth noting about me, for I do not merit your attention. In these pages, what the Prophets say is all that matters.

Most people, however, cannot read any Sacred Book in its original language, and even those who can don't always agree on what was said. For instance, differing English translations of both Testaments and the Koran testify to the many authorized renditions of the same verses. Nevertheless, whatever we read in a Holy Book is what we believe or disbelieve. If we believe what we read, then, to us, *that* is what a Prophet said, regardless of persons who are absolutely certain another translation is "more accurate." Besides, most of the time, the *meaning* conveyed in the various renditions is identical; only the phrasing differs. (With that said, we'll leave the few Bible verses that gravely differ in meaning until much later in our study.)

The Prophets have told us that someday man will experience the death of the world as we've made it and the birth of a new one. Death and birth are seldom painless. A better understanding of the God Who sent that message could help us endure the pain. And He has promised that all who "...endure to the end..." (Matthew 24:13) "...shall go forth, and gambol as calves of the stall" (Malachi 3:20/4:2).

To order the complete book, *Of Promises and Previews: Urgent Old Messages for a New Millennium*, visit any online bookseller.

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