Plowshares Into Swords: The Lost Biblical Ideal of Peace

David Hazony

On an arid plain on the east bank of the Jordan River some three thousand years ago, a young Israelite from the tribe of Levi hurled his javelin through the body of a prince of Israel, killing him along with the Midianite idol-princess who lay naked beneath him.

The biblical story of Pinhas marks the climax of one of the worst crises in the Israelite journey from Egypt to the Promised Land. Only a few miles from their destination, many Israelites have abandoned God and turned to the Midianite god Ba'al-Pe'or, offering it sacrifices and partaking of its orgiastic devotional culture. Despite the best efforts of Moses, the religious corruption expands, reaching into the upper echelons of Israelite society and threatening to bring the new nation's dissolution.

The crisis reaches its height when Zimri ben Salu, chief of the tribe of Simeon, ceremoniously escorts the daughter of Midian's king into his tent—thereby declaring his tribe's fidelity to Midian and its effective secession from Israel.[1] As a paralyzed leadership looks on, Moses' great-nephew Pinhas emerges from the crowd and, with a thrust of his spear, brings the crisis to its dramatic conclusion.

The Bible offers an immediate vindication for Pinhas' act; God tells Moses of his unequivocal approval, and grants Pinhas an honor bestowed on no other individual in the Bible:

> And God spoke to Moses, saying: Pinhas son of El'azar son of Aaron the Priest has subdued my anger at the children of Israel, by avenging my jealousy.... I therefore grant him my covenant of peace. And he and his descendants shall bear a covenant of eternal priesthood, since he avenged his God, and atoned for the children of Israel.[2]

For his act of "jealousy" on God's behalf, Pinhas earns himself a divine "covenant of peace," as well as the promise of priesthood for his descendants. Moreover, Pinhas is hailed as a hero and subsequently placed in command of the 12,000-man force that invades and conquers the Midianites.[3]

Pinhas' covenantal reward has perturbed biblical commentators for millennia: How is it that a man who achieves extreme ends through violent means, and then leads the charge in war, is granted a reward redolent of amicability and nonviolence? What, indeed, has Pinhas to do with "peace"? The reader is left wondering whether he has missed something basic in the story—and whether the Bible does not have something entirely different in mind when using the term.

The modern peace idea rests on two closely-related principles, both of which merit little sanction from the Hebrew Bible. One is the *rejection of the use of force* in the maintenance of personal or national interests. This idea formed a central pillar of twentieth-century peace ideologies, causing leading pacifist thinkers such as Albert Einstein, Bertrand Russell and Thomas Mann to call for the dismantling of standing armies entirely: In 1930, the three signed a declaration stating, "Peoples of the world: Unite and testify your desire for peace by demanding universal disarmament!"[4] In a slightly modified form, the repudiation of force was permanently enshrined in the world's political lexicon with the 1945 UN Charter, which obligated

all member nations to "refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force" against other states.[5] Today, the idea still stands at the head of peace-activist rhetoric, as seen, for example, in a declaration by Avraham Yassour—one of Israel's leading peace scholars—that the "beginning of wisdom is the rejection of all means that contain violence and force."[6]

The other idea is that *compromise* is the only proper means of resolving conflicts—as epitomized by Woodrow Wilson's famous wish that World War I end in "peace without victory," that is, without the imposition of a victor's terms upon the defeated.[7] It is this notion which underlies the quest for negotiated settlements in almost all conflicts today: That the key to peace is the achievement of mutual agreement, which can only occur when each party sacrifices something they previously believed to be essential. To the contemporary mindset, the true "peacemaker" is the person who is willing to put aside his own ideas of history, justice and morality—in whose name wars are inevitably fought—in the interest of goodwill and nonviolence.[8]

The biblical peace idea, in contrast, begins with an affirmation of self-interest. By far the most common use of "peace" (*shalom*) in the Bible is to mean "well-being"—usually referring to the health or prosperity of an individual. In the book of Genesis, when the young Jacob travels to Haran to find his uncle Lavan, he meets a group of shepherds who know the man. "Is he at peace?" asks Jacob after his uncle, and the shepherds offer a one-word affirmation: "Peace." Jacob later sends his son Joseph to Shechem to see after his brothers, instructing him to "see about the peace of your brothers, and the peace of the sheep, and report back to me."[9]

This is the principal meaning of the term throughout the later biblical stories, as well. When King David, in the midst of a brutal military conflict against his own son Absalom, asks a messenger returning from the battlefield: "Is the youth Absalom in peace?"[10]—he is obviously referring neither to compromise, nor to rejection of force (they were, after all, at war), but to the latter's personal well-being. Similarly, when the judge Gideon fears for his life after coming face-to-face with an angel, God reassures him, "You

shall have peace; fear not, you shall not die."[11] In the book of Esther, Mordechai's daily visits to the palace are meant to inquire after "the peace of Esther"—that is, her well-being—as he has not seen her in some time.[12] And when Daniel undergoes an exhausting series of prophetic exchanges with various angels, he recounts that "in me there was no longer strength, and spirit remained not in me. But again, the likeness of a man touched me and strengthened me. And he said, 'Fear not, beloved man. Peace unto you—be strong, strong!'"[13] Again, "peace" here is the physical and mental well-being necessary for Daniel to continue his prophetic experience—irrespective of his relations with anyone else.

Perhaps the most striking example of peace as well-being appears in the book of Samuel, when King David encounters Uriah the Hittite, who has just returned from the front lines, and asks him about "the peace of Yoav, the peace of the people, and the peace of the war."[14] Startling in light of the modern usage, this case adds another dimension to the biblical peace idea: In the military context, "peace" throughout the Bible means not the avoidance of conflict through compromise, but precisely the opposite—progress toward victory. This usage, of course, is the inevitable extension of the Bible's understanding of peace as well-being: In a military conflict, well-being *is* the movement toward victory.

Thus when Benjaminite and Judean tribesmen come to David's stronghold in Tziklag, where he hides from King Saul's efforts to kill him, he offers them his loyalty in exchange for their alliance in the war. Their response:

> "We are for you, David, and with you, son of Yishai. Peace, peace unto you, and peace unto those who help you, for God has helped you." So David accepted them, and placed them in charge of the forces.[15]

Here "peace" clearly refers to neither the rejection of force nor any sort of compromise, but to the military success of David's forces—without which his personal well-being, in light of Saul's unremitting enmity, is

impossible. Similarly, the idiom "men of peace," which appears a handful of times in the Bible, refers everywhere to allies in combat, and never to the modern sense of someone dedicated to brokered nonviolent conflict resolution.[16]

In Psalms also, the idea of peace as military success is explicit: "Praise the Eternal, O Jerusalem! Praise your God, O Zion! For he has strengthened the bars of your gates, and has blessed your children among you. He has placed peace at your borders, and has satisfied you with the finest of wheat."[17] The "bars of your gates" refers to military strength, implying that "peace at your borders" comes not from a neighboring country's amicable intentions, but as a result of Israel's strategic position. Elsewhere, the Psalmist draws a direct parallel between power and peace: "God grant his nation might, God bless his nation with peace."[18]

It should not surprise us, therefore, that in numerous passages in the Bible peace means simply *victory*.[19] When in the book of Kings, Solomon orders the execution of Yoav—the former army chief-of-staff who betrayed David and killed a number of his top men—Solomon declares that the blood of Yoav's victims "shall return upon Yoav's head and upon that of his offspring forever; whereas to David, and to his offspring, and to his house, and to his throne, there shall be everlasting peace from the Eternal."[20] Solomon understands that peace requires the unequivocal defeat of those who through their disloyalty have endangered the nation's well-being. Likewise, the saga of David's war with his son Absalom includes the counsel of Ahitofel to Absalom, urging him to send twelve thousand troops to kill David, through which the people will enjoy "peace."[21] And when a messenger arrives to inform David that the forces of Absalom have been defeated and that the latter himself has been killed, he enters declaring, "Peace! ... Blessed is the Eternal your God who has delivered up the men who raised their hand upon my lord the King!"[22]

Perhaps the most decisive case of peace as victory appears in the book of Deuteronomy, in which Moses instructs his people in the art of war, prior to their crossing the Jordan:

> When you approach a city to conquer it, first call upon it in peace. If they answer in peace, and open to you [their gates], then all the people there shall be for you a levy, and they shall be enslaved to you. And if not ... you shall slay every male by the sword.[23]

In the Jewish view, a conquest that can be achieved without the dedication of resources, risk to one's soldiers and loss of life among the vanquished that accompany violent conflict is highly preferable to a bloodbath. Yet there is no discounting the fact that here, the call to "peace" refers to a peaceful *surrender* to invading Jewish forces.[24] Not only are conflict and force preserved as legitimate ideas, but it is through their threat that peace is attained.

This principle received its fullest expression during Israel's greatest period of peace, the reign of Solomon. Of all Israel's kings, it is Solomon whom the Bible reveres as the greatest of peacemakers. But Solomon's successes came not through his willingness to compromise with other nations, nor his rejection of the use of force. On the contrary, the most powerful of Israelite kingdoms was built upon military and economic vitality, depicted as the product of Solomon's wisdom. Consider, for example, the king's bloodless conquest of Israel's neighbor to the north, the kingdom of Tyre in southern Lebanon: "And the Eternal granted wisdom to Solomon, as he had promised him; and there was peace between Hiram [king of Tyre] and Solomon, and the two of them signed a treaty. And King Solomon raised a levy of all Israel, and the levy was thirty thousand men. And he sent them to Lebanon, ten thousand per month's rotation; each would spend one month in Lebanon and two months in his home...."[25] Solomon's understanding of politics led him to conclude that peace along Israel's northern border required permanently stationing ten thousand men in southern Lebanon, transforming Hiram's kingdom into a puppet regime. When the time came to build the Temple in Jerusalem, Hiram's kingdom "volunteered" vast raw materials for the project.[26] Hiram's subordination to Solomon was made even clearer when Hiram himself was summoned to Jerusalem to oversee much of the work: "And King Solomon sent, and took Hiram from Tyre."[27]

Indeed, Solomonic Israel flourished to a degree beyond that of any other kingdom in the Bible precisely because it was the dominant military power in the region, and was therefore free of the incessant attacks from hostile neighbors which had plagued the reigns of Saul and David:

> And Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the river [Euphrates] to the land of Philistia until the border of Egypt; they would bring offerings and serve Solomon all the days of his life.... and he had peace on all sides about him. And Judah and Israel dwelt in security, every man beneath his vine and fig tree, from Dan until Beersheva, all the days of Solomon. And Solomon had forty thousand stalls for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen.[28]

It was the fortitude of Solomon's military, his "forty thousand stalls for his chariots and twelve thousand horsemen," that granted his nation the blessings of a great power, ruling directly or indirectly over the entire region and receiving tribute from the neighboring kings.[29] Military security in turn led to unprecedented economic well-being: In Solomon's Israel, silver and gold were "as common as stones,"[30] and "Judah and Israel multiplied like the many sands of the sea, eating, drinking and rejoicing."[31] And it was this sort of peace—the well-being of a nation that dominates its nearby enemies and thereby brings war to an end—that gave birth to the image of "every man beneath his vine and fig tree." While the phrase is now often used to depict a state of mutual tolerance and avoidance of conflict, the biblical intention is altogether different: Only in a civilization where external threats have been tamed—through the successful use of force, if necessary—can an individual attend properly to his economic, intellectual and spiritual growth, thereby allowing the creative development of the society as a whole.[32]

Economic, intellectual and spiritual flourishing are in fact integral to the biblical vision of national peace. For the nation as for the individual, peace at bottom means well-being—and like physical security, a healthy economy and a vibrant intellectual and cultural life are crucial components of national well-being. It is for this reason that the concepts of military

security and economic health are so closely linked in the Bible: Just as the Psalmist's "peace at your borders" goes hand-in-hand with an abundance of "the finest of wheat," the depiction of Solomon's military might immediately follows the image of Judah and Israel "eating, drinking and rejoicing"—and both lead up to the statement that the kingdom was at peace.

Israel under Solomon was the Bible's paradigm of a national "peace"—as God tells David explicitly, foretelling Solomon's life: "Behold, a son shall be born to you ... and I shall give him relief from all his enemies around. For his name will be Solomon [*Shlomo*—a cognate of *shalom*], and peace and solace I shall bestow upon Israel in his days."[33] And the elements of this paradigm are clear: Military supremacy, reputation and wealth coupled with outstanding religious and cultural achievements.

The interrelationship of all these elements finds its clearest expression in Solomon's crowning achievement: The construction of the great Temple in Jerusalem. In a letter to Hiram, Solomon writes: "You know about David my father, that he could not build a house in the name of the Eternal his God, due to the wars that surrounded him, until the Eternal could deliver them beneath the soles of his feet. But now, the Eternal has given me rest all around, and there is neither adversary nor evil attacker. So behold, I intend to build a house in the name of the Eternal my God...."[34] The Temple was entirely David's initiative, and it was to a great degree in David's honor that Solomon undertook the project at all. Yet "due to the wars that surrounded him," David never had the resources to plan and build such a colossal structure. It was only in the time of his son Solomon, when the brutal wars had been ended by Solomon's military successes, and the bounty of Tyre and the other surrounding nations furnished the necessary economic strength, that the people Israel could build the Temple, firmly establishing their religious culture in a way that would change the face of Jewish practice forever.

The idea of peace as an all-encompassing national well-being reappears in the book of Hagai, a prophet who witnessed the return of the Jews to the land of Israel, after decades of exile, toward the end of the sixth century B.C.E. Hagai delivered to the Judean governor Zerubavel a vision that was to

guide the leadership of the new Jewish state, a vision of national "peace" that included strength, wealth and honor:

> For thus says the Eternal of Hosts: It shall come very soon—I will shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the land. And I will shake all the nations, and all the nations' treasures shall come forth, and I shall fill this house with honor, says the Eternal of Hosts. For mine is the silver, mine is the gold, says the Eternal of Hosts. Great shall be the honor of this house ... *and in this place I shall bestow peace*, says the Eternal of Hosts....
>
> I will shake the heavens and the earth. And I shall overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I shall destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations. I shall overturn the chariots and their riders, and the horses and their riders shall come down, each man by another man's sword. On that day, says the Eternal of Hosts, I will take you, Zerubavel son of Shalti'el ... and I shall make you as a signet ring, for you I have chosen, says the Eternal of Hosts.[35]

Hagai, it should be noted, is speaking not of some far-off idea of the end of days, but of the imminent creation of Israel's Second Commonwealth, the rebuilding of the nation that will include construction of the Second Temple in 517 B.C.E. His vision of a national peace endowed with wealth, honor and might is striking in its similarity to the kingdom of Solomon. Indeed, such an idea of peace as national well-being appears throughout the prophetic texts.

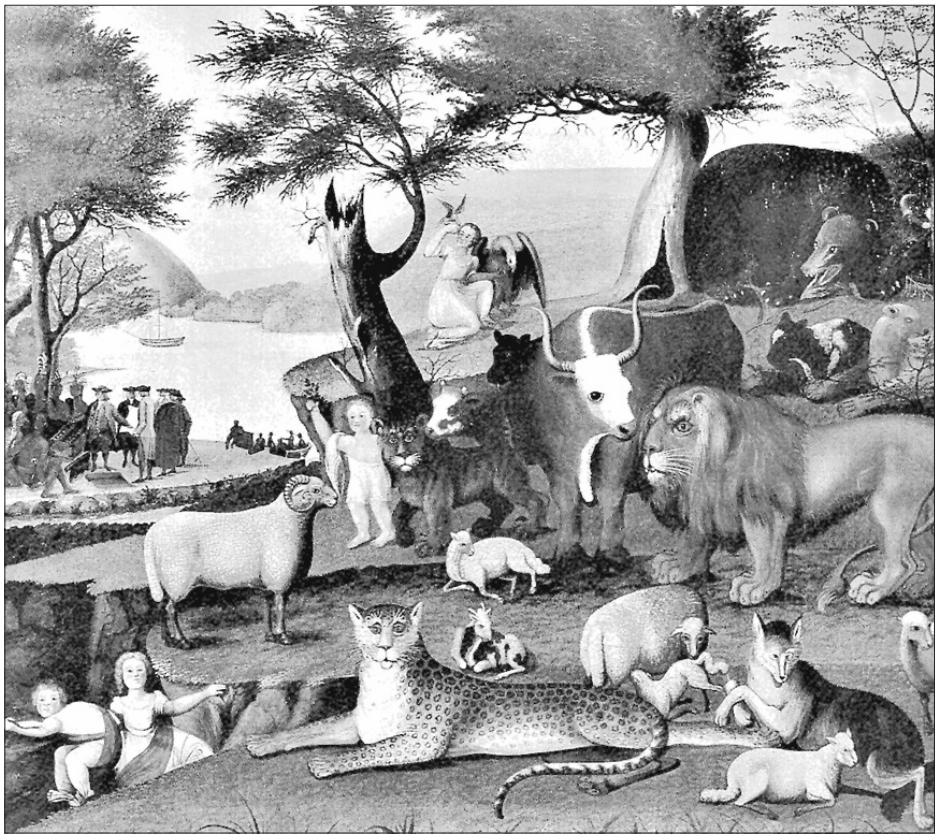
By and large, the few Bible scholars who have acknowledged the vast discrepancy between the modern and biblical usage of the word "peace" have tended to downplay its significance, acknowledging that "peace" is frequently a poor translation of *shalom*, while ignoring completely the philosophical implications of the fact.[36] Yet the problem of peace in the Bible is far more than one of vocabulary: The entire modern vision of peace—

a dream of universal brotherhood and quietude reigning throughout the world, in which conflict as a whole has spontaneously ceased, former enemies have laid down their arms, and even the threat of force has become a thing of the past—finds little support in the Hebrew Bible.[37]

For hundreds of years, western visionaries have looked forward to an eschaton that is utterly placid, as depicted in countless paintings and other works of art, such as Edward Hicks' *Peaceable Kingdom*, a famous work depicting stately lions, bulls and other wildlife living in serenity, free of conflict and struggle, self-assured and wise in their redemptive bliss, while Native Americans and Pilgrims in pre-Revolutionary dress chatter quietly in the background. In such a utopian world, even the most basic physical and spiritual drives—hunger and sexuality, honor and passion—are somehow displaced by a spirit of mutual understanding and communal tranquility. There is no police, no army, nor even necessarily a court system, since conflict itself has been eliminated, and disagreements are resolved through the good-will and self-sacrifice of society's members.

But the biblical prophets did not dream this dream. They offered a different one, in which world history is resolved not through nonviolence and compromise, but through the victory of the Jewish nation, religion and ethic—a victory that includes the return of the Jews to their land, the establishment of a strong, prosperous Jewish polity and the "judgment" of the nations—that is, the punishment and eradication of evildoers. A salient example of this idea is found in the book of Joel, where God tells Israel:

> Prepare for war, awaken warriors, come forth and arise men of war! Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruninghooks into spears! Let the weak say "I am a hero!" Let the nations come round and assemble, for there the Eternal has placed your warriors. Let the nations awaken and come up to the valley of Yehoshafat, for there I shall sit to judge all the nations around.... for great is their iniquity.... The sun and moon have darkened, and the stars have withdrawn their splendor. And the Eternal will roar from Zion, and from Jerusalem will send his call, and the heavens and earth will shudder—yet the Eternal will be merciful to his people, a



Edward Hicks, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 1847.

Courtesy: *Princeton Alumni Weekly*

> strength to the children of Israel. And you will know that I am the Eternal your God, who dwells in Zion on my holy mountain; and Jerusalem will be holy, and foreigners will no longer pass through it.[38]

Joel's end-of-days vision portrays Jewish warriors who beat their "plowshares into swords" and their "pruninghooks into spears," in order to carry out the duty of effecting God's justice in the world. In this vision, the nations (whose principal guilt may be their idolatry, but may also be their oppression of Israel) assemble in the valley of Yehoshafat to receive punishment from the warriors, and it is from Jerusalem—a synecdoche for the Jewish kingdom—that God's "roar" goes out, the toll of his bells of justice striking fear throughout the world.

Throughout the prophetic visions, it is this utter defeat by Israel of the evil-doing nations that enables the peace of the messianic era. Thus the prophet Obadiah predicts that when the Jews return to their land, "the house of Jacob shall be a fire" that will burn the surrounding nations "like straw," conquering the mount of Esau and the lowlands of the Philistines, and recapturing the fields of Efraim and Shomron, the territories of Benjamin and Gil'ad, and the cities of the Negev: "And saviors shall climb upon mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau, and the kingdom shall be of the Eternal."[39] The book of Amos offers a messianic age in which Israel will "possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the nations...."[40] And the prophet Micah, like the earlier books of the Bible, makes the link between victory and peace explicit in his prediction of the emergence of a new Jewish king: "And he shall stand and herd, with the strength of the Eternal, with the glory of the name of the Eternal his God, and they shall abide, for his greatness shall then extend to the ends of the earth. *And this shall be peace*.... And they shall rule over the land of Assyria by sword, and the land of Nimrod with drawn blades. And he shall save us from Assyria when they come to our land, when they march upon our borders."[41]

The prophet Jeremiah also presents an end-of-days vision in which a renewed Jewish state has become "a name, a joy, a song and a glory before all the nations of the world, who shall hear of all the good that I shall bestow

upon them, and they shall fear and tremble for all the good and all the peace which I shall make for it."[42] In Jeremiah's vision, Israel's "good" and "peace" are the stuff that makes its former oppressors "fear and tremble." And as in the days of Solomon, Jeremiah foresees Israel's victory over the nations as bringing prosperity and other blessings: "Thus says the Eternal: Behold I return the captives of the tents of Jacob, to their dwelling-places I shall bestow mercy. And the city will be built upon its mountain, the castle in its place shall stand. And from there will come forth thanksgiving and glee, and they shall grow and not dwindle, and I shall make them wealthy; they shall not suffer.... and I shall requite their oppressors.... The Eternal's anger shall not be quenched until he has acted, until he has carried out his plans; in the end of days you shall see it."[43] The contrast between Israel's future and that of her former oppressors is clear: While a reconstituted Israel is "wealthy," a "castle" exuding "thanksgiving and glee," the destruction of evil-doing nations is a drink to quench "the Eternal's anger."

Ezekiel, too, presents a redemptive peace vision that depicts Israel's military, economic and political preeminence among the nations. He fills two chapters of his book with a detailed prediction of Israel's apocalyptic military victory over the superpower Gog, which will prove the righteousness and truth of God and his chosen people in the eyes of the world.[44] Elsewhere, he describes the flourishing national life that will follow these victories:

> And I the Eternal will be for them a God, and my servant David a prince among them—I the Eternal have spoken. And I will make for them a covenant of peace.... And I shall bring the rain in its season, rains of blessing they shall be. And the tree of the field shall give its fruit, and the land its bounty, and they shall be in their land in security, and they will know that I am the Eternal, when I break the rods of their yoke, and save them from the hands of their enslavers. And they shall no longer be a derision of the nations, and the beasts of the land will no longer eat them, and they shall dwell in security, and none shall make them afraid.[45]

Here Ezekiel invokes Pinhas' "covenant of peace" to depict a national rebirth in which a renewed prosperity ("rains of blessing") and prestige ("they shall no longer be a derision") are closely linked to the fact that the "enslaving" nations no longer have the power to "make them afraid."

True, the prophets vary in their emphasis: While some focus upon a Jewish hegemony on the ethical, philosophical and theological plane—and some do hint at an ultimate utopia in which there will be "new heavens and a new earth"[46] and men will be given a "new heart"[47]—others offer an unambiguously military domination. Yet despite these differences, it is hard to escape the fact that virtually all the prophetic texts incorporate one form or another of Israelite victory and the demise of offending nations into their eschatological visions of peace.[48] Needless to say, this is a far cry from the modern peace-dream, in which turning the other cheek—perhaps the epitome of conflict-avoidance and rejection of force—is supposed to form the basis of diplomacy, in which nations somehow discover the benefits of nonaggression, and their inhabitants, in the manner of Hicks' painting, spend their days chattering happily amongst themselves.

It would go without saying that the Hebrew Bible never countenanced such a world were it not for the fact that pacifists throughout the ages have routinely justified their conception of peace with biblical verses. Most often cited is Isaiah, who predicts that the nations will "beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruninghooks, nation shall not raise its sword against nation, and they shall learn war no more."[49] In the modern reading, the nations have somehow discovered the pitfalls of force, and in a spirit of brotherhood have elected to resolve disputes amicably and live each in his own beliefs, without ever resorting to violence to achieve their goals.

This reading of Isaiah, deeply ingrained in the consciousness of Jew and Christian alike, ignores the content of Isaiah's vision as offered consistently throughout his book—including the immediate context. The extended passage reads:

> Therefore thus says the Lord the Eternal of Hosts, strength of Israel: Lo, I shall be relieved of my inciters, and avenged of my enemies.... I shall return your judges as in the beginning, and your advisors as at the start; after that, you shall be called the "City of Justice," the "Faithful Community".... And the transgressors and sinners shall be destroyed together, and deserters of the Eternal shall be annihilated.... And it shall be in the end of days that the mountain of the Temple of the Eternal shall be established as the highest of mountains, lifted above the hills, and all the nations shall stream unto it. And many peoples shall go, and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Eternal, to the Temple of the God of Jacob, and learn from his ways, and go in his paths," for out of Zion shall flow teaching, and the word of the Eternal from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and castigate many peoples, and they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruninghooks; nation shall not raise its sword against nation, and they shall learn war no more.[50]

Isaiah envisions not the miraculous, spontaneous abandonment of force in favor of brotherhood, but something entirely different: The return of Israel to its land, the restoration of Jerusalem as a political and moral center ("for out of Zion shall flow teaching"), the reestablishment of Jewish "judges"—who in the biblical idiom are political-military leaders—and the gathering of the nations to hear their judgment. Only once God "shall judge among the nations, and castigate many peoples," and is "avenged of [his] enemies," and when the truth and justice of the Jewish faith are backed by Israelite muscle, will the peoples of the world succumb to this idea and "beat their swords into plowshares," abandoning their independent military aspirations. Indeed, Isaiah envisions an end to war—but through Israelite victory, not compromise.

This becomes even clearer upon examining the rest of Isaiah's vision.[51] Spanning sixty-six chapters of which the bulk deals with the relationship between God and the people Israel, the book of Isaiah builds up to a climactic depiction of the end of days, in which God directs honor to Israel like a "river of peace" after judging and punishing the nations for their wickedness:

> For thus says the Lord: "Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the nations like a flowing stream.... For lo the Eternal shall come with fire, and his chariots like a storm, to quench his anger and fury in flames of fire. For by fire the Eternal judges, and by his sword all flesh, and many will be those who perish at the hands of the Eternal.... And I, for their acts and thoughts, come to bring together all the nations and tongues and they shall come and see my glory. And I shall place among them a sign, and send of them survivors unto the nations ... those who have not heard my name nor seen my glory, and shall tell of my glory to the nations. And they shall bring all your brethren from all the nations as an offering to the Eternal ... to my holy mountain Jerusalem...."[52]

Reminiscent of Joel, Isaiah predicts the gathering of the nations to receive judgment "for their acts and thoughts," in which "many will be those who perish at the hands of the Eternal," while political Israel is reborn upon its land. Elsewhere in Isaiah, God compares the fate of his chosen people, whom he calls "my servants,"[53] with that of the enemy nations: "Therefore thus says the Lord Eternal: Behold, my servants shall eat, while you shall hunger; behold my servants shall drink, and you shall thirst. Behold my servants shall be happy, and you shall be shamed. Behold my servants shall rejoice of good heart, and you shall scream in pained heart, and shall wail of broken heart.... For behold I shall recreate the mirth of Jerusalem, and the rejoicing of her people."[54] Again, the Israel that eats, drinks and is happy while her former oppressors see their downfall harkens back to the time of Solomon, when the Jews were "eating, drinking and rejoicing" while they "ruled over all the kingdoms" in the region—kingdoms which until then had striven to destroy the Jewish nation. As with many of the other prophets (Micah, for instance, quotes the biblical description of Solomon's kingdom directly when he envisions "every man beneath his vine and fig tree"[55]), Isaiah's paradigm for the kind of peace which will reign in the messianic age is that which prevailed in the days of Solomon.

This understanding of peace as the fruit of victory is also evident in a second passage in Isaiah, equally famous for its apparent vision of world

peace without the option of force. This passage predicts that in the end of days, the "wolf will dwell with the lamb, the panther will lie down with the kid." Yet again, a look at the broader context reveals not that a "peaceable kingdom" will suddenly appear when adversaries elect to lay down arms, but that this idyllic result is intimately connected with Israel's defeat of its former oppressors:

> And a branch shall go forth out of the root of Yishai [David's father], a branch shall blossom from his roots. And there shall rest upon him the spirit of the Eternal, a spirit of wisdom and understanding, a spirit of counsel and heroism, a spirit of knowledge and fear of the Eternal... And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the panther lie down with the kid, and the calf, the lion and the fatling shall be led together by a small child.... They shall not do evil, nor be corrupt upon my entire holy mountain, since the world will be filled with the knowledge of the Eternal, as the waters cover the seas. And it shall be on that day, that the root of Yishai, who will stand as a banner among the peoples, to him the nations shall turn, and bring offerings in his honor.... And he shall set up a banner for the nations, and assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. The envy of Efraim will depart, and Judah's enemies will be cut off. Efraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Efraim. But they shall despoil the children of the east; they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab, and the children of Amon will obey them. And the Eternal shall utterly destroy the tongue of the sea of Egypt....[56]

A look at the broader passage reveals that the wolf dwelling with the lamb becomes possible only when the tribes of Israel lay aside their differences ("Efraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Efraim"), and unify to conquer and rule over their ancient enemies, Edom and Moab. Only when a powerful Israel has "despoiled" these nations will the latter defer to the "spirit of wisdom and understanding" that characterizes the new Jewish hegemony.[57] Again, Isaiah makes a pointed reference to Solomon, in describing a messianic king to whom "the nations shall turn, and bring offer-

ings in his honor"—an allusion to the Israelite kingdom at its peak, whose regional military domination led all its neighbors to "bring offerings" to King Solomon.[58] To Isaiah, as to the other prophets, the end of days brings forth a reborn Solomonic power that has obtained peace for Israel by fighting off its enemies, and has built a great civilization that will contribute decisively to the world's moral and religious development.

While the prophets employ Solomon to describe the national peace that will reign in the reestablished Jewish kingdom, they frequently return to the story of Pinhas for analogy when describing the character of the messianic king himself. Isaiah envisions a Pinhas-type king who is possessed of the righteous fervor that rescued Israel from Midianite corruption in the book of Numbers. Employing literary allusions, Isaiah draws a direct parallel between Pinhas and the new king:

> The people that walked in darkness has seen a great light; those who dwelled in the land of the shadow of death, a light has shone upon them. For you have broken the yoke of his burden, the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian.... For a child is born to us, a son given to us, and he shall carry the governance upon his shoulder, and his name shall be "Wondrous Wisdom, Heroic Leader, Lasting Father, Prince of Peace"—for the expansion of the kingdom, and for everlasting peace upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to perfect it and found it in judgment and righteousness, from now until eternity—the vengeance of the Eternal of Hosts shall do this.[59]

In this passage, Isaiah makes two deliberate allusions to the Pinhas episode: The "day of Midian," referring to the Israelite war against Midian in the desert that was sparked and led by Pinhas, and the "vengeance of the Eternal," a rare term first introduced in the Pinhas story. Like the young Levite, this "Prince of Peace" will bring the "expansion of the kingdom" and "everlasting peace upon the throne of David" as a result of his uncompromising dedication to "judgment and righteousness."[60]

The choice of Pinhas as a model is puzzling. Why is the righteous fervor of Pinhas a necessary character trait for the "Prince of Peace"? Like God's earlier selection of Pinhas to receive the unique "covenant of peace," this prophetic vision underscores a premise that lies at the very heart of the biblical peace idea: That peace stems not from compromising what one knows to be right for the sake of avoiding conflict, but from a complete unwillingness to compromise on morality and justice—even if force must be employed to defend them.

Isaiah's employment of the Pinhas story is therefore deliberate and telling, as is Ezekiel's usage (above) of the "covenant of peace"—a pointed reference to the reward Pinhas received.[61] To these prophets, Pinhas is not really an enigma at all: He is the man who more than anyone else represents the lost biblical ideal of peace—the idea that peace and well-being can never be attained at the expense of justice and morality.

The idea that cessation of hostilities is a goal which justifies the compromise of all other principles—and especially justice—has been a staple of pacifist thought for millennia. Cicero's formulation of this idea in the first century B.C.E. is still the accepted wisdom today: "I cease not to advocate peace; even though unjust, it is better than the most just war."[62] Martin Luther said the same sixteen hundred years later: "Peace is more important than all justice; and peace was not made for the sake of justice, but justice for the sake of peace."[63] It is this belief which leads many modern diplomats to pursue treaties with even the most brutal of dictators—such as the appeasement doctrine of the 1930s that cited "peace" as the moral justification for repeated acquiescence by European leaders to the demands of Nazi Germany.

In the biblical view, however, peace *requires* that justice be done—even at the point of a sword. It is this premise which underlies all the messianic visions: The military victories over evildoing nations depicted therein are fundamental for peace, because they are necessary for the ultimate triumph of the Jewish vision of justice and righteousness—and it is for this reason that Pinhas, whose entire story is the staunch defense of righteousness, becomes the sole biblical figure worthy of God's "covenant of peace."[64]

Whereas Pinhas may be the archetype of the obstinate defender of morality in the Books of Moses, he is by no means alone. His forefather Levi, son of Jacob, demonstrates a similar passion for righteousness, moral principle and the integrity of Israel in the book of Genesis. After Shechem, prince of the Hittites, kidnaps and rapes Jacob's daughter Dina, and then sends his father Hamor to acquire Dina for him as a wife, the sons of Jacob conspire to avenge the family's honor. In an elaborate ruse, the children of Israel convince Hamor and Shechem to have their entire city circumcised, in exchange for the promise of Israelite women. While the men of the city are bedridden from fulfilling their end of the bargain, Levi and his brother Simeon enter the city in stealth and slay every male:

> And on the third day, while they were in pain, Jacob's two sons, Simeon and Levi, brothers of Dina, took each his sword, entered the city securely, and killed every male.... And Jacob said to Simeon and to Levi, "You have undermined me, humiliating me in the eyes of the local inhabitants, the Canaanites and the Prizites—for I am few in number, and they will join together against me and attack me, and I and my house will be vanquished." And they said: "Shall they make our sister into a harlot?"[65]

While Jacob responds with what today would be considered a "pro-peace" argument, that is, a willingness to sacrifice one's integrity or concern for justice for the sake of avoiding conflict, the rogue brothers retort that the family's honor and the punishment of evildoers are principles that far outweigh Jacob's political concerns. If the "peace" between the peoples was ruined, it was the rapist and his cohorts, not the victims, who were to blame.

And the scriptural account goes on to vindicate the brothers. For even though the argument appears to end in a stand-off, ensuing events prove Jacob's judgment to be misguided: "And they traveled, and the terror of God was upon the neighboring cities, and they did not pursue the children of Jacob."[66] Not only did Simeon and Levi ensure that justice was carried out and the family's dignity maintained, but their uncompromising action

went much *further* in preventing conflict and neutralizing the threat of war than Jacob's policy of appeasement. The security that the family of Jacob suddenly enjoyed, which enabled them to travel freely and accumulate wealth, was due precisely to the strength demonstrated by the brothers in defending the purity and honor of God's chosen, and of God himself by extension.

A similar event involves the Levites in the Golden Calf debacle in the book of Exodus. Upon receiving the tablets of the Ten Commandments, Moses descends from his forty-day prophetic retreat on Mt. Sinai to discover that the Israelites have compromised their monotheism to prostrate themselves before a sacred cow, having convinced themselves that their salvation from Egypt had come from an idol of their own making. Appalled, Moses sees a need for decisive action:

> And Moses stood at the gate of the camp, and cried, "Whoever is with the Eternal, let him come to me!" And all the children of Levi joined him. And he said to them. "Thus says the Eternal, God of Israel: Each man place his sword at his thigh, go forth, passing from gate to gate in the camp, and kill each man his brother, each man his neighbor, each man his kinsman." And the children of Levi acted according to Moses' word, and on that day there fell among the people about three thousand men. And Moses said, "Consecrate yourselves today to the Eternal, every man for his son and his brother, that he may give to you today a blessing."[67]

It was the Levites alone—Moses, too, was a Levite—who grasped the magnitude of the event and the need for immediate, severe action to prevent the people from either misreading a delay by Moses as implying his consent, attempting to reach a compromise that would legitimate their idolatry, or organizing themselves militarily in defense of their "god," causing a civil war. And indeed, the Levites' drastic measures quell the corruption—with several thousand idolaters slain, and their deity melted down, ground and tossed into the water, the moment of crisis passes.

The reward for the Levites' fealty to an untainted monotheism and willingness to act decisively in the defense of righteousness and national honor is striking in its similarity to that of Pinhas: The Levites earn themselves the eternal duty of priesthood and maintenance of the Tabernacle and, from Solomon's day onward, the Holy Temple.[68] The prophet Malachi draws the parallel between these duties and Pinhas' "covenant of peace" explicitly: "And you shall know that I have sent you this commandment, that my covenant might be with Levi, said the Eternal of Hosts. My covenant was with him for life and for peace.... evil was not found on his lips; he walked with me in peace and righteousness, and turned many away from evil."[69]

The Pinhas story, then, is really the third installment in the saga of the Levites' moral fortitude—not a tale of unpunished thuggery, but a pointed expression of the biblical idea of a most peaceful character. In Pinhas we discover a man who demonstrates an unshaking dedication to righteousness and the nation's well-being, a keen political insight enabling him to appreciate the scale of the threat and the need for immediate action, and the willingness to take extreme measures—despite the risks involved and the inaction of his peers—to ensure that truth and justice carry the day. By now, the connection between Pinhas and peace is clear: He is a man whose staunch moral stand saved Israel from disaster, effecting a victory of good over evil, and in so doing bringing well-being to his nation—just as his Levitical forebears had done.

From the drama of Levite moral obstinacy emerges what is perhaps the principal message of the biblical peace idea: That well-being and righteousness in the long run go hand in hand, that the wicked (nations or individuals) sooner or later must account for their deeds, and that it is the role of the righteous Jew to dedicate his life to the pursuit of justice and morality in a real world that is so often iniquitous.[70] Peace is a covenantal reward for the uncompromising righteous, for the Levite who refuses to live with a wicked world—and not for those who are prepared to compromise on justice for

the sake of avoiding conflict.[71] The biblical man of peace cannot countenance the rejection of force precisely because he understands that the absence of this powerful tool among the virtuous only increases its effectiveness among the evil—and in the long run, the sacrifice of justice for the sake of peace brings neither justice nor peace.

Thus are drawn the battle lines between the biblical and modern ideals: Whereas modern pacifism will assail the Bible as archaic, an embarrassing throwback to a bygone barbarism, the biblical outlook will discard today's peace paradigm as fundamentally *corrupt.* It is corrupt because, at its heart, the modern idea sacrifices morality for quiescence, trading in the biblical *demand* for conflict—for the victory of good over evil, of the righteous over the wicked—for a bucolic kingdom of zoological camaraderie in which debts are forgotten, mercy supplants morality, and humanity is preserved in a pristine brine of tepid quietude.

Of all peoples, it is the Jews who can least afford to discard the lessons of history, those events both tragic and redemptive that have proven time and again the limits of the modern peace idea, the catastrophic outcome of misapplied pacifism, and the need for a rediscovery of the biblical ideal of peace.

R. David Hazony is Managing Editor of Azure.

Notes

1. Numbers 25:1-18. Although the text does not explicitly implicate the entire tribe of Simeon in complicity with the crime, the immediate consequence of Pinhas' action, even before the divine verdict is handed down, is that "the plague [previously unmentioned] was stopped in Israel, and those who died in the plague were twenty-four thousand." (Numbers 25:8-9) In the national census that follows

in Numbers 26, the tribe of Simeon numbers only 22,200 members, as compared with the earlier census in Numbers 1, when they numbered 59,300. No explanation is given for the drastic—and unparalleled—drop in tribal population. It was probably this which led the rabbis to build their understanding of the Midianite episode around the entire tribe of Simeon. See the account in Sanhedrin 82a.

It was an awareness of the potential for civil war that motivated the rabbis to declare that Pinhas merited the priesthood because he brought "peace among the tribes." Zevahim 101b.

2. Numbers 25:11-13.

3. Numbers 31:6. The Midianite war is depicted in Numbers 31:1-54.

4. Otto Nathan and Heinz Norden, eds., *Einstein on Peace* (New York: Schocken, 1960), p. 106. In 1929, Einstein declared that were war to break out, he would "unconditionally refuse all war service, direct or indirect, and would seek to persuade my friends to adopt the same position, regardles of how I might feel about the causes of any particular war." Nathan and Norden, *Einstein*, p. 95.

5. UN Charter, Article 2, item 4.

6. Avraham Yassour, ed. *Peace: Generation Upon Generation Seeks It and Tramples Upon It* (Tel Aviv: Sifriat Po'alim, 1986), p. 32. [Hebrew]

7. President Woodrow Wilson, address to United States Senate, January 22, 1917: "Victory would mean peace forced upon the loser, a victor's terms imposed upon the vanquished. It would be accepted in humiliation, under duress, at an intolerable sacrifice, and would leave a sting, a resentment, a bitter memory upon which terms of peace would rest, not permanently, but only as upon quicksand. Only a peace between equals can last."

8. Cf. Shalom Levin, "The Peace Ideal and the School's Contribution to its Actualization," in Rachel Pasternak and Shlomo Tzidkiyahu, eds., *A New Era or Losing the Way: Israelis Talk About Peace* (Tel Aviv: Eitav, 1994), pp. 251-258. [Hebrew]

9. Genesis 29:6; Genesis 37:14.

10. II Samuel 18:32.

11. Judges 6:23.

12. Esther 2:11.

13. Daniel 10:17-19.

14. II Samuel 11:7. Yoav is the commander of David's forces.

15. I Chronicles 12:18-19.

16. The term appears five times in the Bible, and its use is always ironic: "Your allies [*anshei shlomecha*] have turned you and defeated you" (Jeremiah 38:22); "Your allies [*anshei shlomecha*] have deceived you and defeated you" (Obadiah 1:7); "Even my allies [*ish shlomi*] whom I relied upon, who ate of my bread, have lifted their heels upon me" (Psalms 41:10—attributed to David); "He has sent his hand against his allies [*shlomav*], he has broken his covenant" (Psalms 55:21—also attributed to David); "'Denounce, and we will denounce [God],' say my allies [*kol enosh shlomi*] who await my stumbling" (Jeremiah 20:10).

17. Psalms 147:12-14.

18. Psalms 29:11.

19. One way in which the modern idea of compromise and nonviolence has displaced strength as a western virtue is the changed significance of two fingers raised in the air: The signal which as late as World War II meant "victory" only two decades later had come to refer to the modern idea of "peace"—both, of course, mean an end to war, but the difference is quite substantial.

20. I Kings 2:33.

21. II Samuel 17:3. There may also be a veiled reference to Pinhas here—Pinhas' army in the Midianite war also numbered twelve thousand.

22. II Samuel 18:28.

23. Deuteronomy 20:10-13. Other examples of this usage of "peace" appear in Joshua 10:1, 4; 11:19; II Samuel 10:19; I Chronicles 19:19. It is true that on a shallow level the term "peace" does in fact appear in the extended passage as opposed to "war." But the opposition is utterly different from today's usage: "Peace" can be an alternative to war *as a means of conquest*, and offers potential benefits as well: Not only are a nation's soldiers safe from harm and its resources preserved, but it can benefit from the enslavement of the city. In other words, whereas the Bible does appear to reject an outlook that glorifies war as an end—an activity which is highly valued independent of its results—the Bible never rejects war as a means of attaining not only minimal national security, but the expansion and growth of the nation beyond its minimum borders as well.

Peace and war are presented as opposites in the Bible in other places as well, most famously in Kohelet's prescription of "a time for war, a time for peace." Ecclesiastes 3:8. While modern-day peace activists have frequently and absurdly quoted the second half of the verse in their defense, one cannot escape the fact that the verse is granting equal legitimacy to war and peace in principle, and that in the context of the preceding text, Kohelet offers the idea that wisdom means knowing how to employ the proper means at the proper time.

24. Cf. Harold Louis Ginsberg, "Peace," in *Encyclopædia Judaica* (Jerusalem, Encyclopædia Judaica), vol. 13, p. 196. This case cannot be argued away as an exception where the nation's very existence is in question. The case in Deuteronomy

is traditionally understood to refer not to the conquest of the Canaanite peoples—whom the Bible grants no peaceful option—but to Israelite expansion beyond its original territory once the nation has been established. Cf. the continuation, Deuteronomy 20:15-17.

25. I Kings 5:26-28.

26. I Kings 5:22-24. While it is true that Solomon provided in exchange some quantities of grain to Hiram, it is clear from the context that this is a minimal amount, meant only to put food on Hiram's table (5:25) and possibly cover wages as well (5:20), but not to offer actual profit to Hiram's kingdom.

27. I Kings 7:13.

28. I Kings 5:1-6. Again, the number of troops is twelve thousand, perhaps a reference to Pinhas. See note 21 above.

29. The most famous example of the homage paid Solomon by a foreign leader is the visit of the Queen of Sheba, I Kings 10:1-14. The queen's gifts to Solomon included not only gold and precious stones, but a quantity of spices which, according to the Bible, was never afterwards equaled in any gift.

30. II Chronicles 1:15. Cf. II Chronicles 9:27.

31. I Kings 4:20.

32. This idea finds its parallel in the later idea of the *Pax Romana*. At the height of the Roman empire, peace reigned throughout the Western world precisely due to the unchallengeability of Rome's legions.

33. I Chronicles 22:9.

34. I Kings 5:17-19.

35. Hagai 2:6-9, 21-23.

36. *Shalom* most exactly translates to "wholeness" or "completeness." The etymological link between *shalom* (peace) and *shalem* (complete) finds at least one exact parallel in the Hebrew language, namely, the relation between *kavod* (honor) and *kaved* (weighty). The connection between completeness and well-being is apparent. The poverty of "peace" as an appropriate translation of *shalom* has been mentioned in a number of articles, including Ginsberg, p. 195, and Lionel Koppman, "Shalom," in William H. Gentz, ed., *The Dictionary of Bible and Religion* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1986), pp. 789-790. What has scarcely been explored, however, is precisely what the Bible does mean, or put another way, what ideal is the Bible presenting in placing *shalom* among its most cherished values. See Aviezer Ravitzky, "Models of Peace in Jewish Thought" in Aviezer Ravitzky, *In the Knowledge of God: Studies in Jewish Thought and History* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1991), pp. 13-33. [Hebrew]

37. See note 48 below. Peace as the end to war resulting from mutual, voluntary disavowal of warring aspirations has become a given of western diplomacy. Early twentieth-century texts such as Thorstein Veblen's *The Nature of Peace and the Terms of Its Perpetuation* (New York: Macmillan, 1917) and Benjamin Trueblood's *The Development of the Peace Idea and Other Essays* (New York: Garland, 1972; the title essay was written around 1912) work entirely under this assumption, the latter being particularly interesting due to its invoking of Christian values such as the Golden Rule and Christian messianism. But even a hawk such as Richard Nixon was forced to accept the premise of the term when he distinguished between "perfect peace," an end to animosity that is "the stuff of poetry and high-minded newspaper editorials, molded out of pretty thoughts and pretty words," and "real peace," a pragmatic path to global detente that will be "the down-to-earth product of the real world, manufactured by realistic, calculating leaders whose sense of their nations' self-interest is diamond-hard and unflinching." Richard Nixon, *Real Peace* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1984), pp. 3-4.

38. Joel 4:9-17.

39. Obadiah 1:17-21.

40. Amos 9:12.

41. Micah 5:3-5.

42. Jeremiah 33:9.

43. Jeremiah 30:18-24.

44. Ezekiel 38:1-39:16. In popular Jewish reference, this vision has for some reason come to be misunderstood as a battle between two superpowers, Gog and Magog, the result of which will somehow be the redemption of Israel. But in the account itself, it is Israel who fights against the superpower Gog, who dwells in the land of Magog. Cf. Ezekiel 38:2. The war takes place on Israelite territory, and ends in Israelite victory. In particular, cf. Ezekiel 38:14-20.

45. Ezekiel 34:24-28.

46. Isaiah 65:17, 66:22.

47. Ezekiel 36:26.

48. In addition to the passages from Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Joel, Obadiah, Amos, Micah and Hagai which are presented in this discussion, examples of the vision of the Jewish-national redemption can be found in Hosea 11:2-11, Nahum 1:1-2:14, Habakuk 2:13-14, Zephania 2:7-9 and 3:12-20, Zecharia 8:11-9:16 and Malachi 3:1-12. The Habakuk reference is less obvious, for that entire book employs a metaphoric style that refrains from explicit reference to people and nations, and contains little eschatological reference. The only prophetic book remaining is

Jonah, a story whose only prediction of any kind is the imminent destruction of Nineveh.

The sole apparent exception to the prophetic intent of "peace" is Zecharia 9:10, in which the new Israelite king will "speak peace unto the nations," in an immediate context of universal disarmament. Again, however, a look at the full passage removes any doubt that what is being described is the Israelite military domination of the entire world, which in turn will obviate the need or capacity for independent military aspiration, and therefore bring an end to war. Indeed, even in that very verse, the words that immediately follow are "and his reign shall extend from sea to sea, from the river until the ends of the earth."

I have deliberately excluded from this list the historical books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings, despite their traditional inclusion in the "prophetic" texts. This is not because of any lack of Jewish-national sentiment in those books, nor because I wish to make any statement regarding their prophetic origin. Rather, these texts are in principle historical, depicting the rise and fall of the First Commonwealth, and while in that context they do contain a healthy sampling of the words of various prophets, they contain little eschatological vision.

49. Isaiah 2:4.

50. Isaiah 1:24-2:4. The "spears into pruninghooks" image is also employed in Micah 3:3, immediately followed by his use of the "vine and fig tree" image. In Micah, the passage is a combination of the various prophecies discussed here, the sum total of which supports the suggested thesis even more than the Isaiah vision.

51. In this article, I deliberately ignore the scholarly debates over authorship of the various books, or parts of books, in the Bible. The biblical peace idea is universal throughout the prophetic texts, and for our purposes it therefore matters little whether a given vision was actually written by Isaiah or his deutero-namesake. Note, for instance, the similarity of the visions described in the first and last chapters of Isaiah, despite their having been authored, according to some scholars, by different people.

52. Isaiah 66:12-20.

53. The term "my servants" refers throughout Isaiah to the people Israel. For example: "Now hear, Jacob *my servant*, and Israel whom I have chosen: Thus says the Eternal, your Maker and Creator from the womb, who will help you—fear not, *my servant* Jacob, my chosen Jeshurun.... I will pour my spirit upon your seed, and my blessing upon your offspring." Isaiah 44:1-3.

54. Isaiah 65:13-18.

55. Micah 4:4.

56. Isaiah 11:1-15.

57. Another interpretation of the passage presents itself: Namely, that the wolf, lamb and other antagonistic animals—whose meaning is far from obvious—are not the nations of the world at all, but really the *tribes of Israel*, whose unification and cooperation grants them the military power to defeat the offending nations. True, this latter reading is at great variance with the traditional interpretation. Yet the classical reading enjoys virtually no support from context, while the revised reading offers the distinct advantages of (i) consistency with the bulk of Isaiah's visions, (ii) consistency with the immediate passage that anyway has the tribes unifying in war against the evil nations, and (iii) an explanation of the reference to King David—whose crowning achievement was the unification of the Jewish kingdoms of Israel and Judah.

Since the passage is both preceded and followed by the physical defeat of the various evil nations, the only support for the pacifist-utopian reading is the idea that the messianic king "will smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked" (Isaiah 11:4). This verse, while assumed to be depicting a nonviolent ruler (leaving the reader to wonder precisely how the wicked are slain), can just as easily be referring to the power and righteousness of the king's judgment—both the "rod of his mouth" and the "breath of his lips" refer to the justice and power of his verdicts, independent of (but not denying) his military greatness. For another Israel-centered reading of the text, see the Radak's commentary on Isaiah 11:6.

58. The account of Solomon's kingdom is quoted earlier; I Kings 5:1-6. Micah, as mentioned earlier, also quotes this account (Micah 4:4), and it is also referenced in Zecharia 3:10.

59. Isaiah 9:1-6.

60. This last citation is an almost verbatim quotation from Solomon's order that David's enemy Yoav be killed. I Kings 2:33.

61. Aside from the Pinhas story in Numbers, the term only appears in one other place in the Bible, in the book of Isaiah. The Isaiah reference is a beautiful description of God's everlasting commitment to Israel: "For this is to me as the waters of Noah: Just as I swore never again to bring the waters of Noah upon the earth, so too have I sworn never again to be furious with you and rebuke you. For the mountains may crumble, and the hills collapse, but my compassion for you shall not wane, and my *covenant of peace* will not collapse—says the Eternal your comforter." Isaiah 54:9-10. Cf. Malachi 2:5.

62. *Letters to Atticum*, book VII, epistle 14.

63. Martin Luther, *On Marriage Matters* (1530) in Robert C. Schultz, ed., *Luther's Works* (American Edition; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), pp. 265-320.

64. This view finds ample expression in the rabbinic literature as well. The Jerusalem Talmud provides one of the finest formulations of it: "The world stands

upon three things: Justice, truth and peace; and all three are really one: If justice is done, truth is done, and peace is done." In other words, only by doing justice can peace be achieved. Jerusalem Ta'anit 4:2.

65. Genesis 34:25-31.

66. Genesis 35:5. It is unlikely that Jacob ever fully appreciated the merit of his sons' position, for Levi's tribal elevation later on comes in direct contradiction to the curse they receive from Jacob on his deathbed. Cf. Genesis 49:5-7.

67. Exodus 32:26-28.

68. Exodus 32:29. Moses informs the Levites that they will receive a "blessing" from God as a reward, and this is traditionally understood to refer to the special status the Levites later receive: They are given the duties of maintaining the Tabernacle instead of military service, encamp in a close ring around the Tabernacle, and have their physical needs provided for by the other tribes rather than having to farm for themselves. From this, it is clear that their unusual position in the history of Israel is understood as stemming from their righteous fortitude, and in particular from their reaction to the Golden Calf. Cf. Numbers 8:5-26.

69. Malachi 2:4-6.

70. The connection between peace and moral improvement was not lost upon the talmudic rabbis, who said that "Any peace that does not contain reproval is not peace." Genesis Raba 54:3. Note the talmudic idea that Elijah, the prophet notorious for his chastisement of the Jewish people, comes only to "bring peace." Mishna Eduyot 8:7.

Many will contend that the entire book of Job is intended to address the very unreliability of the link between righteousness and well-being. Yet that book is in many ways an exception that proves the rule—that is, were it not for the Bible's assumption of worldly rewards for righteousness, Job's question would make no sense.

71. The symbolism of Levi representing heroism is underscored by a comparison to the forefather Levi's partner-in-violence, Simeon. For whereas the descendants of Levi prove themselves in the test of the Golden Calf, sealing their eternal elevation in Israel, the descendants of his brother Simeon suffer a different fate. In the Golden Calf episode, the Simeonites fail to grasp the evil taking place, and take no action of the sort that earns Levi the priesthood. Later on, as if to emphasize the difference between the brothers, the tribe of Simeon fails to inherit a contiguous piece of territory in the Promised Land (Joshua 19:1-9), and is thus doomed to tribal sickliness and historical triviality. And it is *their* tribal leader who finds himself at the wrong end of Pinhas' spear. Cf. Genesis 49:7. See also note 1, above.