

The Structure of Matthew 5:9, Peacemaker Adoration And its Connection with the שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלֹת

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Introduction

The overture of the Sermon of the Mount consists of nine Beatitudes and two affirmations which are both called “The Blessings.”¹⁹ Bruner divides the Beatitudes in three groups:

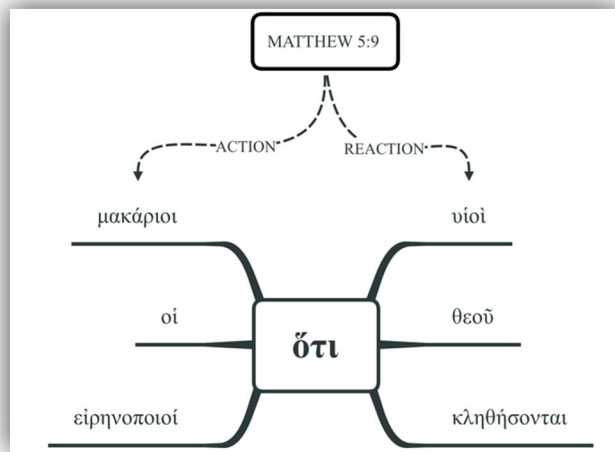
- A. The Inaugural Need (or Poor) Beatitudes of Grace and Faith, 5:3-6.
- B. The Central Help (or Full) Beatitudes of Service and Love, 5:7-9.
- C. The Concluding Hurt (or Persecution) Beatitudes of Joy and Hope, 5:10-12.²⁰

Matthew 5:9 is present in the middle of the three groups. Also, the text itself gives a structure that I named *action* and *reaction*, and this paper is focused on the first part: *action*. The Greek texts say: “μακάριοι οἱ εἰρηνοποιοὶ ὅτι υἱοὶ θεοῦ κληθήσονται.”²¹ Thus, there are two sentences which are linked with the conjunction ὅτι and can be drawn like this:

¹⁹ Frederick Dale Bruner *Matthew: A Commentary, Volume 1. Revised and Expanded Edition. The Christbook Matthew 1-12* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004), 154.

²⁰ Ibid., 155-185. Bruner explains each section of the three groups. It seems that the *Central Help* is highly important because is not only named *The Central Help*, but it is also the *Central section* of the three sections.

²¹ Nestle et Aland, *Novvm Testamentvm. Textus Secundum III.* (Editionem UBS, omnio cum XXVI. Et XXVII. Editionibus Novi Testamenti Graece), 6.



Matthew 5:9 is constructed of seven words. It is the seventh beatitude and is distinctive because of the noun *peacemaker*. This noun only occurs here in the New Testament and not once in the Septuagint, LXX.²² These points provide some context for the two words that will be studied in this paper.

“Blessed” in the Greco-Roman World and Jewish Thought

There are two words for happiness in Greek that the author could have used. One is *eudaimonia* which is the term Aristotle uses when he speaks about human happiness in the *Nicomachean Ethics*.²³ By contrast, Matthew uses the word μακάριος, which points to a divine realm beyond human happiness.

²² Craig A. Evans, *Matthew. New Cambridge Bible Commentary, NCBC*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 107. The verb, however, does occur once in the LXX: “*He who winks with his eyes deceitfully brings grief to men, but he who reproves honestly makes peace*” (LXX Prov. 10:10).

²³ Carlos G. Vaugh, *The Sermon on the Mount: A Theological Interpretation*. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986), 13. Carl G. Vaugh mentioned that Jesus not only points to divine happiness but calls the attention to a relational fact as well. In the original use of the word, a relation was always implied between the one who possessed divine happiness and the benefactor who brought it—according to Honor and Shame culture—in that time.

However, it is important to understand the meaning of this word and the idea of happiness according to the philosophers who impacted the mind of society. Indeed, this word is significant because Jesus repeats it nine times. The meaning of the word μακάριος and its cognate verb initially corresponded to the older form μακάρ. However, the word gradually changed to being used for the wealthy and their freedom from the worries and cares of life. Plutarch also saw happiness in wealth.²⁴ Epictetus²⁵ understood happiness as a feeling inside of us that allows us to feel freedom. He highlighted that:

If you wish for anything else, though, you will end up following, with groans and laments, whatever is stronger than you are, because you will always be seeking your happiness in things outside yourself, without ever being able to find it; for you are looking for happiness where it is not to be found and are failing to search for it where it actually lies.

He also mentioned that happiness cannot be found in royal power²⁶ suggesting then that happiness is inside everyone. Epictetus, on the other hand, discusses how great the struggle is to win divine enterprise, a kingdom, freedom, and happiness.²⁷ In *book IV*, he again talks about self-happiness inside everyone. He concludes:

There is one path alone that leads to happiness—and keep this thought at hand morning, noon, and night—it is to renounce any claim to anything that lies outside the sphere of choice, to regard nothing as being your own, to surrender everything to the deity, to fortune, to consign the administration of everything to those whom Zeus himself has appointed to carry out the task, [40] and to devote yourself to one thing alone, that which is your own, that which is free from all hindrance, and when you read, to refer your reading to that end, and so too with your writing and your listening.²⁸

²⁴ See Plutarch (*Artaxerxes* 12.4): Τοὺς θεοὺς εὐχομαι ποιῆσαι μακαριον καὶ πλουσιον “I pray the gods to make him rich and happy” [tr. LCL, 11:154-155]

²⁵ Epictetus, *Discourses, Fragments, Handbook*. Oxford World’s Classics. (United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2014), 231.

²⁶ Ibid., 353.

²⁷ Ibid., 242.

²⁸ Ibid., 452-453.

At that time in society, people knew happiness as something inside of everyone as is mentioned by Epictetus, but it is important to see how Aristotle—who was before Epictetus—understood happiness. From Aristotle and on, it was a common word used to describe persons who were secure from the hardships of life.²⁹ After Aristotle spoke about virtue, the forms of friendship, and the varieties of pleasure, he started to talk about happiness and how he understood happiness. Aristotle mentioned that the contemplative life is the happiest.³⁰ He sees happiness as something outside of the human being.

Epictetus and Aristotle speak about human happiness. Nevertheless, it is important to understand the Jewish idea of the same word. In the LXX, μακάριος generally translates to the Hebrew word אֲשֶׁרִי. Stefanovic³¹ said this word is used 45 times in the Hebrews Scripture, and the word occurs mainly in Psalms and the Wisdom Literature. It is also significant that Yahweh is never called אֲשֶׁרִי/μακάριος in the fashion of the Greek gods, only humans.³²

The book of Psalms begins with a beatitude which is a form usually associated with wisdom literature. However, it occurs most frequently in Psalms.³³ *Blessed* or *Happy* occurs 25 times in the Psalms and 8 times in Proverbs.³⁴

²⁹ Ranko Stefanovic. “The meaning and Message of the Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount”. *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, 26/2 (2015): 171-186.

³⁰ Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*. *Oxford World's Classics*. (United States: Oxford University Press, 2009), 194.

³¹ Ibid., 174-175.

³² Gerhard Kittel et al., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament Commentaries*. (Grand Rapids MI: Eerdmans, 1967), 364.

³³ Leander E. Keck et al., *The New Interpreter's Bible Commentary Volume Three. Introduction to the Hebrew Poetry [Job, Psalm] Introduction to the Wisdom Literature [Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs]* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2015), 304.

³⁴ See e.g., Psalm 2:12; 32:1-2; 33:12; 34:8; 40:4; 41:1; 106:3; 112:1; 119:1-2.

The blessed pronounced in Psalm 1—for example—shows the idea behind Jesus. It is well known that society was impacted by philosophers who claimed that *happiness* is in wealth, reflection, or inside of a person. However, Jesus highlights *happiness* claiming that what truly matters is being אֲשֶׁרִי which means more than earthly possessions or internal happiness, but heavenly blessings. Jesus changed the paradigm known in his time by remembering this word in Jewish literature.

Stefanovic³⁵ claims that:

True happiness is not attached to wealth, to having enough, to a good reputation, power, possession of the goods of this world. The μακάριοι might possess nothing, be hungry, humble, afflicted, humiliated, endure hardship, and be persecuted; the circumstances of life may turn against them; yet life cannot take the happiness from them because life has not given it to them. In such a way, the Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount depict a “reversal of all human values.”

Thus, it is possible to see the *reverse of all human values* in a suffering situation and at the same time be אֲשֶׁרִי/happy. Some psalmist wrote: “Where is your God?” Psalm 42:3. The question is put in the persecutor’s mouth and however, the immediate answer to that question is a call to remember (v.3), a call to worship (v.4), and a call to hope in God (v.5).

Doukhan³⁶ goes further and asks again: “How can we worship a God who keeps silent in the presence of the killing of the innocent?” Yet, this is possible. Jesus knew this and although it went against all kinds of philosophy, Jesus began the Beatitudes with the word μακάριοι suggesting not only *blessed* or *happiness* but worship.

³⁵ Ibid., 177.

³⁶ Jacques B. Doukhan, “Where is God” *Journal Shabbat Shalom*. 3.

The conclusion of the first word that Jesus said presents a different view from the Greco-Roman world. Jesus is suggesting more than the *ephemeral* happiness understood by philosophers and society. Indeed, He suggests a *happily blessed*, that at the same time can be considered those who are מְשֻׁבָּחִים/μακαριοι as worshipers.

“The Peacemaker” Background

Sande wrote a book named *The Peacemaker*; his book refers to the idea of how people can stop conflict. For example, he said: “*Conflicts present a unique opportunity to serve people,*” or “*One of the most difficult offenses to address is one that involves an abuse of power or authority.*”³⁷ The general idea of *The Peacemaker* is shown by Sande in the idea of *resolving conflict*.³⁸ Sande shows a small picture of what is to be a peacemaker but there is something more about it.

Supporting Sande’s view, France mentions that this beatitude goes beyond a merely peaceful disposition to an active attempt to “make” peace, perhaps by seeking reconciliation with one’s own enemies, but also by bringing together those who are estranged from one another.³⁹ France and Sande see the general idea of the peacemakers which is satisfactory but there is more to be understood about the peacemakers.

³⁷ Ken Sande, *The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict*. (Grand Rapids MI: Baker Book House Company, 2004), 143-156.

³⁸ See., How Sande shows some interesting subject about—for example—*Live at Peace, Is this Really Worth to Fighting Over? Conflict Starts in the Heart, Confession Brings Freedom, Go and be Reconciled*. His main idea is about make peace. Also, there is a specific chapter in which he refers to *Where is Right to Go to Court?*

³⁹ R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew. The New International Commentary on the New Testament*. (Cambridge, U.K: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007), 169.

The word εἰρηνοποιός is constructed of two words. Εἰρήνη means peace and ποιέω means make.⁴⁰ The first word εἰρήνη has some implications that are important to understand in the Greco-Roman World and when Jesus talked about the peace-maker.

The kind of peace known in Rome was a term used to designate Roman political rule in the Mediterranean world beginning with the reign of Caesar Augustus and lasting for the next two and a half centuries. This was known as the *Pax Roman*. The Augustus Golden Age experiences three *Pax*: The Ideal of Pax Romana, The Pax Cult, The Pax Roman, and New Testament Writings.⁴¹

Thus, philosophers have different ideas about *peace* than Jesus did. The understanding of peace to some philosophers such as Seneca is rooted in the idea of having peace with people around and going further to the *peace of mind*. This was very important in his teaching about *anger* that includes the study of *peace*.⁴² However, Plato teaches Socrates that *peace* comes “when age sets us free from passions of that sort.”⁴³ When Glaucon interrupted one of Plato’s dialogues, he responded and claimed the same idea planted in Socrates. Socrates suggests that a healthy life in *peace* naturally comes with a

⁴⁰ Ibid., 8. *From the Greek New Testament Bible*.

⁴¹ Craig A. Evans & Stanley E. Porter, *Dictionary of New Testament Background*. (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 771.

⁴² Seneca. *Dialogues and Essays*. *Oxford World’s Classics*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 18-52. Seneca highlights the subject of *On Anger* in his *Book III to Novatus*. In this section he suggests that *peace* is a gift from Pythagoras but for his troubled spirit, it seems like *peace* works for the gods more than for human being [8.26], Seneca highlights peace in the *wine-cup* when the mind is relaxed from the bustle of the world [14.31], the same idea is presented again when he mentioned: “How peaceful, how deep and free when the mind has either praised or taken itself to task... This is a privileged!” [36.47], Seneca sees peace in the “constant study of beneficial instructions, by noble actions, and a mind fixed on desire only for what is honorable” [41.50]. Seneca suggested “Let us grant to our soul...” and later he added “...the peace of mind” and interesting after suggests the *peace of mind* he also lies this concept with the *be free of this evil* (the evil means do not have *peace of mind*.)

⁴³ Plato, *The Republic of Plato*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1945), 5.

good old age.⁴⁴ Indeed, Plato considers *peace* when there is not internal conflict—it is in old age—and emphasized that, “*He is indeed one who sets his house⁴⁵ in order, by self-mastery and discipline coming to be at peace with himself.*”⁴⁶

On the other hand, the word *peace* that Jesus referred to was more than the *Pax Roman* or the *peace* taught by the philosophers as is seen above. The idea of *peace* could be impacted by the Greco-Roman world and influence Jewish living during that time. However, this concept was not Jesus’ intention.

Green claims that in Matthew 5:9 the word εἰρήνη indicates more than the absence of war, but it is like the Hebrew word שָׁלוֹם, for which it serves as a translation throughout the LXX.⁴⁷ A peacemaker is not a pacifist. A pacifist wants peace at any price, but true peace is based on righteousness in the idea of שָׁלוֹם.⁴⁸ It is important to consider this idea of שָׁלוֹם in Jesus’ discourse. Indeed, it is key to remember that Jesus was Jewish and the concept of שָׁלוֹם was well understood by Him. שָׁלוֹם is one of the central concepts in the Hebrew Scriptures. This word is derived from the word שָׁלַם meaning “whole,” and “complete,” suggesting a holistic perspective.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Ibid., 60. It seems like Plato idea about peace is highlighted in time-age. It is not that old people is just wisdom but at the same time enter a peace state of mind.

⁴⁵ *Sets his house*: It is not about a physical and tangible thing, but Plato refers here an analogy to *sets his house* with the idea to *set the mind*. For Plato, it was important to have the *mind* in order to reach the long-awaited *peace*.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 141-142.

⁴⁷ Joel B. Green et al., *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels. A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship*. (Nottingham, England: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 667.

⁴⁸ John Philips, *Exploring the Gospel of Matthew: An Expository Commentary*. (Grand Rapids MI: Kregel Publications, Inc., 2005), 90.

⁴⁹ Jacques B. Doukhan. “Shalom: The Hebrews View of Peace,” *Shabbat Shalom: A Journal for Jewish-Christian Reconciliation*. Vol. 41#1, (1994), 42.

Thus, שלום not only concerns human relationships in Jewish thought, but reaches, in fact, all aspects of human existence.⁵⁰ On the other hand, שלום is a comprehensive term for the theological, social, and personal well-being given by creation and blessing and restored by salvation. It is the wholeness, goodness, and integrity of relational existence with God, self, and others.⁵¹

Kaiser also sees that שלום is a gift from the Lord making a connection with Gideon when he built an altar and named it: ⁵²יְהוָה שָׁלוֹם (Judg. 6:24). שלום, then is a blessing from above.⁵³ Jesus' idea of שלום includes *all aspects of human existence* and must be considered in the Old Testament, to understand Jesus' speech about the *peacemaker*.

Indeed, the concept of the שלום is found often in the Old Testament and refers to more than just what is written above.⁵⁴ Certainly, it is not possible to study all שלום in the Old Testament, so this paper is going to focus on Psalm 122 to understand the idea of שלום of Jesus and to understand more about the peacemaker.

A Closer Approach to Psalm 122

As is seen above, the word שלום (*peace*) in Jewish thought is not only just the act to stop conflict or something else established for the philosophers with all their theories to understand a such word. Indeed, this word is full of meaning in the Old Testament and

⁵⁰ Ibid., 42-45. Jacques B. Doukhan highlight five meaning about *Shalom* in his *all aspect of human existence view*, he says that: Shalom means health, Shalom means justice, Shalom means love, shalom means God and shalom means Hope.

⁵¹ James Luther Mays, *Psalms Interpretation. A Bible Commentary for teaching and Preaching* (Louisville KT: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 34.

⁵² It is the same word *shalom* with the *atnah* which mark the center of the verse.

⁵³ Walter C. Kaiser Jr. *Toward Old Testament Ethics* (Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 179.

⁵⁴ Clinton E. Arnold, *Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*. (Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2010), 168.

especially in the Psalms. This paper considers the idea of the *peacemaker* in Psalm 122 to know more about the concept of שָׁלוֹם in which Jesus and his audience understood this word. This Psalm has the same Greek word ειρήνη-שָׁלוֹם in the LXX and in Hebrew is translated as שָׁלוֹם.⁵⁵

Most commentators see this Psalm in three stanzas: verses 1-2, 2-5, and 6-9.⁵⁶ Following the structure of the three stanzas the Psalms can be divided in these subtitles: Departure from Jerusalem and arrival 1-2; Jerusalem itself 2-5; Praying, worship, and conclusion for Jerusalem 6-9.

For this structure, the last stanza must be taken to understand the idea presented above of שָׁלוֹם which relates to worship and Jesus' speech to the *peacemaker*. Nevertheless, a parallel between Psalm 122 and Matthew 5:9 is shown to understand the last stanza that is presented in this paper.

The Parallel between Psalm 122 and Matthew 5:9

It seems a similar sequence appears between the crying in Psalm 120, and among the crying of the people before Jesus' Beatitudes in Matthew 5. The Bible mentioned before Jesus' Beatitudes that people were ill, suffering from various diseases, severe pain, demon-possessed, people with epilepsy, and paralyzed trying as well to find an answer to their pain.⁵⁷ On the other hand, the psalmist introduces his pain screaming *I cried to the Lord in my trouble*, and at the end of Psalm 120 he cannot have *peace* as the suffering people in

⁵⁵ Alfred Rahlfs, *Septuaginta Id est Vetus Testamentus graece iuxta LXX interprets. Duo volumina in uno*. (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft Stuttgart, 1979), 142.

⁵⁶ Sidney Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from Psalms: Foundations for Expository Sermons in the Christian Year*. (Grand Rapids MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2016), 81.

⁵⁷ See., Mat. 4:24.

Matthew 4. The psalmist continues crying, “*too long has my soul had its dwelling with those who hate peace,*” and he added “*I am for peace, but when I speak, they are for war.*” It seems as if the cause of the problem is *not having peace*.⁵⁸

The similitude is the same in Psalm 121 while after the painful situation, the psalmist declares in Psalm 121: “*I will raise my eyes to the mountains.*” It seems that there is something in *the mountains* that can comfort him, and the question asked is: “*From where will my help come?*” Jesus, after Ἰδὼν *seeing*⁵⁹ the painful situation of the multitude in Matthew 4, immediately “*went up on the mountain*” (Matthew 5:1.) There is a difference here because Psalm 121 shows the psalmist raising his eyes to the mountains, but Jesus *went up* to the Mountain.

Jesus’ Beatitudes in Matthew 5:9 occurs on the mountain in order to bring peace and comfort to his audience. The mountains play an important role, and the psalmist said that God dwelt in the *mountains* Ps. 74:2. This means that if God is in the *mountains*, we can have שְׁלוֹם. In the Bible, God encountering people in the *mountains* means a spiritual experience.⁶⁰

This reality is seen in Psalm 122. In Jerusalem “*to which the tribes go up*” (to the mountain), the pilgrim feels safe, worships, and שָׁעָלוּ שְׁלוֹם יְרוּשָׁלַם. Also, at the end of the Sermon of the Mount, people followed Jesus.

⁵⁸ See., Psalm 120:1,6-7.

⁵⁹ The NASB does not translate *seeing* it said: “now when Jesus saw the crowds...”. Nevertheless, the first word presented in the prologue of Matthew 5 is the next action after seeing the pain in the crowds. The Greek Ἰδὼν connected the last part of Matthew 4 with Matthew 5, *seeing*.

⁶⁰ See., Bill Crowder, *Gospel on the Mountains: Nine Encounters with God in the Bible*. David D. Ireland, *Journey to the Mountain of God: Pursuing Intimacy with Your Creator*. Rudi, *High Places: Spiritual Teachings for Spiritual People*. Uzochukwu Ohanele, *Lead Me to the Mountaintop: On the Journey with Christ to the Top*.

“The Peacemaker” as Worshiper in the Jewish Thought

Psalm 122:6-9 introduces the last stanza that is named: *Praying, worship, and conclusion for Jerusalem*. In this section the word שְׁלֹמֶה is mentioned three times which indicates its importance. Further, this psalm could be part of the festival of harvest and tabernacles.⁶¹ The word שְׁלֹמֶה is a word rich in meaning for which no English word can be adequate.⁶² “*Pray for the shalom of Jerusalem*” v.6. This is a translation of three Hebrew words, each of which contains the letters ש and ל, with the same letters appearing in the verb translated “prosper” and the noun “security” in verse 7.⁶³

This is the keyword and makes for what is probably the most striking example of alliteration in the whole psalter. The effect is to emphasize even further the concept of שְׁלֹמֶה.⁶⁴ It is crucial to remember the psalmist’s actions. In Psalm 120 he said: “*Too long has my soul had its dwelling, with those who hate peace.*” However, now it seems that in Psalm 122 he found the *peace* and he prayed for that *peace*. The psalmist is in שְׁלֹמֶה at the climax of the psalm: “*Pray for the peace...*” and “*May peace be within your walls...*”

Brueggemann highlights that it is crucial to see שְׁלֹמֶה as the center of worship.⁶⁵ After the actions between Psalms 120-122, the climax is worship. Not just this section but Psalms 120-134 is *pilgrim worship*.⁶⁶ There is worship everywhere around Psalm 122 and that worship found its climax at the *peace of Jerusalem*. It is interesting to note that the

⁶¹ Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel’s Worship* (London: Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1967), 195.

⁶² Robert Davidson, *The Vitality of Worship: A Commentary on the Book of Psalms* (Grand Rapids: MI. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 25.

⁶³ Ibid., 411.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 655.

⁶⁵ Walter Brueggemann, *Living Toward a Vision: Biblical Reflections on Shalom*. (Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1976), 185.

⁶⁶ Paul R. House, *Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 419.

pilgrim is inviting others “*for the sake to my brothers and my friends.*” As is mentioned above, שלום is more than *peace*.⁶⁷ Thus, Craig suggests that worship is about actions. Worship is an ordered series of activities that Christians carry out regularly.⁶⁸ Those actions begin with oneself when one is in *peace* with God. Both passages—Psalm 122 and Matthew 5:9—suggest actions. In Psalm 122 the pilgrim is asking for the *peace* of Jerusalem. Being a *peacemaker* is an act of worship and Matthew 5:9 is divided into two parts *action* and *reaction*. The first part works as an *action* in which Jesus is suggesting an act of worship by being a *peacemaker* and having a reconciliation with God.

Schultze also mentions:

*The word [שלום] means something richer than just peace... We are not called to worship God merely to make ourselves feel better, to teach moral lessons, to learn about the Bible, to entice more people to worship, or to make a name for our church in the wider community. We are gospel-spreading and gospel-living caretakers. Worship can direct us to delight in God's world and to sacrificial lives of shalom-spreading gratitude.*⁶⁹

Thus, שלום can be understood as *Harmonious Interaction*.⁷⁰ This interaction is well seen in Psalm 122 and Matthew 5:9. Psalm 120:6-9 is a prayer for God's blessing upon the holy city and for her salvation which includes all those who, like the poet, have affectionately taken her to their hearts. Therefore, שלום is an act of adoration but at the same time guides the people on how to pray, sing, give thanks, and worship.

⁶⁷ Francis Brown, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, with an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic* (Walton Street, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 1022.

⁶⁸ Craig L. Nesson, *Shalom Church: The Body of Christ as Ministering Community* (A Fortress Press eBook, 2010), 48.

⁶⁹ Quentin J. Schultze, *High-Teach Worship: Using Presentational Technologies Wisely* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2004), 47-48.

⁷⁰ Martin Sicker, *A Study of Jewish Worship: From Sacrificial Cult to Rabbinic Benedictions and Prayers*. (Zondervan Corporation, 2022), 476.

Shannon's thesis highlights a bigger perspective: the idea of *shalom* and liturgy. He claims that the שְׁלוֹם is a calling embodied in Christian worship and is therefore central to the life of the church.⁷¹ This reality is seen in the pilgrim when he went up to the mountains and the word שְׁלוֹם was repeated three times. The pilgrim is worshiping God because he wants to be in *peace*.

It is also interesting to note that God is named יְהוָה שְׁלוֹם. The pilgrim worships God and יְהוָה שְׁלוֹם, in Judges 6:24. In the Hebrew culture, a name is not just something to call someone but a person's identity and representative of their character. Thus, יְהוָה שְׁלוֹם is God. God is peace. Heaven is a place of great peace and something similar is on earth when someone enters God's presence through true worship and reconciliation.⁷²

Shannon concludes, then, that shalom, being intrinsic since the earliest moments of creation, is the cultural mandate republished for a world under the curse of sin.⁷³ Shannon sees שְׁלוֹם as something intrinsic from the very beginning. The first worshipers—Adam and Eve—were in שְׁלוֹם but after the fall things changed. Nevertheless, the meaning of the confession of sin and the assurance of pardon is very profound. It is the place in worship where שְׁלוֹם is between God and people are restored.⁷⁴ The fact that the pilgrim claims: "*I will now say, May peace be within you,*" makes a worship connotation after the pain he has been through.

⁷¹ Nathan D. Shannon, *Shalom and the Ethics of Belief: Nicholas Wolterstorff's Theory of Situated Rationality* (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2015), 110. This thesis explores this observation by emphasizing a deep symbiosis of worship and the active pursuit of justice and shalom in the world. Also, the argument is a connection between worship and practice which grounds the uniqueness of the Christian interest in justice and flourishing. The whole lecture is (4.5 *Shalom and Liturgy*).

⁷² M. Thomas Seaman, *Becoming True Worshipers: Experiencing More of God's Presence Through Deeper Worship* (US: Lulu Publishing Service, 2018), 87.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 115-116.

⁷⁴ Leanne Van Dyk, *A More Profound Alleluia: Theology and Worship in Harmony*. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004), 32.

After the pilgrim is in שלום there is an interesting change in the actions of the Psalms because in the next psalm, the singer claims: “*To You I have raised my eyes...*” Ps 123:1. It is important to remember that before the שלום concept the pilgrim raised his eyes to the mountain Ps 121:1. In the middle of both *raised my eyes* is שלום. If this passage is seen theologically, we must assume that the pain in Psalm 120, 121 and Matthew 4:24 represents sin which separates us from God. Nevertheless, there is peace after the pain because God can forgive our sins, and the result of that is worship, raising our eyes to God Ps 123:1 or following Him as was the consequence at the end of Jesus’ speech *When Jesus came down from the mountain, large crowds followed him* Matt 8:1.

Indeed, Ommen, suggests that the term of שלום includes, in theological terms, salvation.⁷⁵ The experience of the pilgrim and Jesus’ audience was more about having *peace* with others but to also be in *peace* with God and be a *peacemaker*. When Jesus forgives our sins, the natural result is worship because he saves us.

This reality is shown in Leviticus in Peace Offerings. In offering this sacrifice the worshipper demonstrates his “complete” fidelity to the Lord of the covenant. Indeed, the traditional rendering “peace offering” connects *shelamim* with the Hebrew word *shalom* and Gordon suggests that this concept means health, prosperity, and peace with God. i.e., salvation. This understanding of the peace offering, accepted by several ancient and modern writers, seems to do the most justice to the Old Testament evidence.

Further, Cuneo mentions that Wolterstorff’s work is a comprehensive vision that animates the Hebrew and Christian scripture. His theme is that when scriptures offer an

⁷⁵ Armand Léon van Ommen, *Suffering in Worship: Anglican Liturgy in Relation to Stories of Suffering People* (London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2017), 34.

image of *Shalom/Eirene*, these images are ethically infused. They include images in which the downtrodden are lifted, the oppressed are treated with dignity, and the weak receive just treatment.⁷⁶ Then, Cuneo concludes that the idea of *Shalom/Eirene* in the injunction to pray in peace is not, in the first instance, a directive to pray *for* peace or to *be at* peace with oneself when one prays. For that matter is a directive to pray *from* a state of peace.⁷⁷ The fact that the pilgrim repeats three times שלום indicates an important aspect of the word.

I want to highlight Wolterstorff's work in his writings. He suggests that to dwell in שלום is to *enjoy* living before God. So, שלום in the first place is to incorporate right, harmonious relationships with God and delight in his service.⁷⁸

Thereafter, he says that the harmony of *shalom* requires that the members of the community seek the good of each other and treat each other justly which is presented with the word *eirene* in the Gospel.⁷⁹ This work suggests, then, that both words, εἰρήνη-שלום, have the same connotation. One is mentioned in the psalm and the other was said by Jesus. Shalom is incomplete without participation in the disciplines of piety and the liturgy of the church.⁸⁰ The shalom community is indeed more than just a community. It is the *ethical*

⁷⁶ Terrence Cuneo, *Ritualized Faith: Essay on the Philosophy of Liturgy*. (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2016), 133.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 134.

⁷⁸ Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Until Justice and Peace Embrace: The Kuyper Lectures for 1981 delivered at The Free University of Amsterdam* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987), 69-70. In this old work peace is not merely the absence of hostility, not merely being in right relationship. He suggests that shalom at its highest is enjoyment in one's relationship. He also highlights relationship between human and nature, but the most important *shalom* is the relationship with God.

⁷⁹ Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Acting Liturgically: Philosophy Reflections on Religious Practice*. (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2018), 74-76. See also, Liturgical Theology, God as One Who Listen, and God as One Who Hears Favorably by, Nicholas Wolterstorff, *The God We Worship: An Exploration of Liturgical Theology*. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2015).

⁸⁰ Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Educating for Shalom: Essays on Christian Higher Education* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004), 24.

community in which its members exist in harmony with God and nature and find delight in all their relationships.⁸¹

Conclusion

Thus, according to what is mentioned above and Wolterstorff's work, embraces a good concept of שְׁלוֹם seeing it as worship. I suggest that Jesus had the Jewish thought about the *peacemakers* in which is written in the Old Testament as *harmonious interactions* related in worship. The idea of שְׁלוֹם pronounced in Matthew 5:9 must have this understanding. As is seen above, the idea of the first part of the text refers to *action*. God is not in conflict with human, but sometimes we are against God.

Davidson⁸² says "*Before soteriology was doxology.*" The theology of this is seen in the garden of Eden when everything was perfect and שְׁלוֹם was the *harmonious interactions* between God, Adam, and Eve. Everything was worship. Now because of sin it is not possible to enjoy that real worship and *interaction*. Nevertheless, it is possible to live in שְׁלוֹם and try to have the *harmony interaction*, enjoying the gift of salvation that Jesus offers and worshipping Him because in the New Jerusalem everything will be שְׁלוֹם and doxology again.

Therefore, שְׁלוֹם is a song of worship in which the pilgrim claims:

*Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
"May they prosper who love you.
May peace be within your walls,
And prosperity within your palaces."
For the sake of my brothers and my friends,*

⁸¹ Ibid., 142.

⁸² Richard M. Davidson, *A Song for the Sanctuary. Experiencing God's Presence in Shadow and Reality*. (Nampa ID: Pacific Press Association, 2022), 22.

*I will now say, “May peace be within you.”*⁸³

Thus, שלום is *harmonious interaction* with God and salvation in which the reaction is, “*they will be called sons of God.*” It is not about Greek or Rome influence but Jewish thought that the *peacemakers* are those who are in peace with God and intrinsically there is joy and worship because they are saved by God.

⁸³ Psalm 122:6-8.