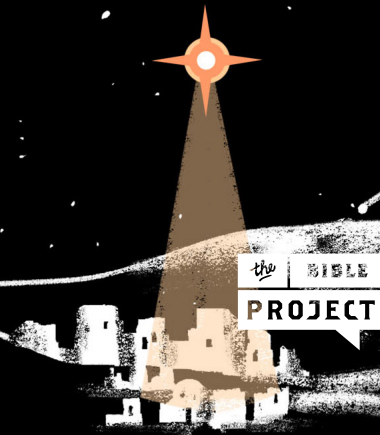


Advent: Peace

STUDY NOTES



SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

00:56–01:13

The word peace is common in most languages. People can talk about peace treaties or times of peace; it means the absence of war. And in the Bible, the word peace can refer to the absence of conflict, but it also points to the presence of something better in its place.

SECTION 2: SHALOM

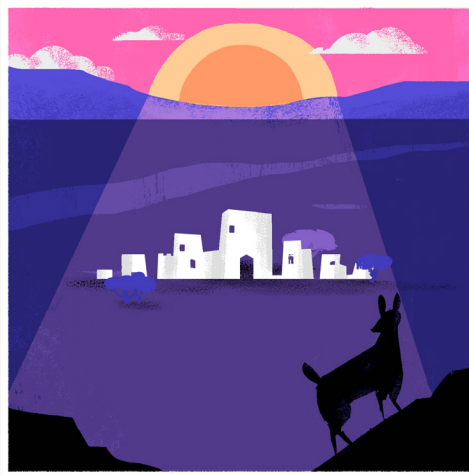
01:14–03:05

In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word for peace is “shalom,” and in the New Testament, the Greek word is “eirene.” The most basic meaning of shalom is complete or whole. The word can refer to a stone that has a perfect whole shape with no cracks.¹ It can also refer to a completed stone wall that has no gaps and no missing bricks. Shalom refers to something that’s complex with lots of pieces that’s in a state of completeness, wholeness. It’s like Job who says his tents are in a state of shalom because he counted his flock and no animals are missing.² This is why shalom can refer to a person’s well-being. Like when David visited his brothers on the battlefield, he asked about their shalom.³ The core idea is that life is complex, full of moving parts and relationships and situations, and when any of these is out of alignment or missing, your shalom breaks down. Life is no longer whole; it needs to be restored.

1. In Joshua 8:31, the people refer back to Moses’ commands to create an altar of stone that was whole and without cracks with which to make their peace offerings to YHWH.

2. Read more in Job 5:24.

3. Read more in 1 Samuel 17.



In fact, that's the basic meaning of shalom when you use it as a verb. To bring shalom literally means to make complete or restore. So Solomon brings shalom to the unfinished temple when he completes it.⁴ Or if your animal accidentally damages your neighbor's field, you shalom them by giving them a complete repayment for their loss.⁵ You take what's missing, and you restore it to wholeness. The same goes for human relationships. In the book of Proverbs, to reconcile and heal a broken relationship is to bring shalom.⁶ And when rival kingdoms make shalom in the Bible, it doesn't just mean they stop fighting; it also means they start working together for each other's benefit. This state of shalom is what Israel's kings were supposed to cultivate, and it rarely happened. So the prophet Isaiah, he looked forward to a future king a prince of shalom.⁷ And his reign would bring shalom with no end—a time when God would make a covenant of shalom with his people and make right all wrongs and heal all that's been broken.

4. You can read this in context in 1 King 9:25.

5. You can see how "shalom" is used in reference to living in harmony with your neighbor in Exodus 22:4.

6. Read more in Proverbs 16:7.

7. See more of Isaiah's prophecy in Isaiah 9:5-6.

This is why Jesus's birth in the New Testament was announced as the arrival of eirene.⁸ Remember that's the Greek word for peace. Jesus came to offer his peace to others like when he said to his followers, "my peace I give to you all."⁹ The Apostles claimed that Jesus made peace between messed up humans and God when he died and rose from the dead.¹⁰ The idea is that he restored to wholeness the broken relationship between humans and their Creator. This is why the Apostle Paul can say Jesus himself is our eirene.¹¹ He was the whole, complete human that I am made to be but have failed to be, and now he gives me his life as a gift. And this means that Jesus's followers are now called to create peace.

Paul instructed local churches to keep their unity through the bond of peace,¹² which requires humility and patience and bearing with others in love. Becoming people of peace means participating in the life of Jesus who reconciled all things in heaven on earth, restoring peace through his death and resurrection.¹³ So peace takes a lot of work because it's not just the absence of conflict. True peace requires taking what's broken and restoring it to wholeness, whether it's in our lives, our relationships, or in our world. And that's the rich biblical concept of peace.

8. You can read more about the New Testament arrival of Jesus in Luke chapter 2.

9. Read more in John 14:27.

10. You can read more about the Apostles' claims about Jesus in Romans 5:1.

11. See this verse in context in Ephesians 2:14-15.

12. Read more in Ephesians 4:3.

13. See this verse in context in Colossians 1:19-20.



שלום



PEACE



SHALOM



RECONCILED ALL THINGS IN HEAVEN AND EARTH, MAKING PEACE THROUGH THE BLOOD OF HIS CROSS

