
Steadfast Love

Victory Life Church — Advent 2019

Sunday, December 8, 2019 — The Peace of Jesus

We celebrate Advent because we are living with different hopes than the unbelieving culture around us.

Hope: a proper perspective of the future that creates a positive attitude in the present

Our proper perspective of the future is return of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who will set the world right at His return (Titus 2:11-13). This hope is a bold proclamation that present reality is not ultimate reality. This hope tethers our lives to God's future, not to our present circumstances and feelings.

We want things to be made right, for people to live in harmony and without conflict, without fear and distrust and anxiety and corruption. This is the world we hope for at the second advent of Christ, and the new creation. But we don't just want the *world* to be made right, *we* want to be made right. We can recognize that our lives seem to lack a sense of wholeness and completeness.

We want the world and ourselves to be at *peace*. Peace does not just mean the absence of conflict, it also points to something better being in its place. The Old Testament word in Hebrew for peace is "shalom" and in the New Testament, the Greek word is "eirene." At the most basic level, the meaning of this word is "whole" or "complete."

Shalom refers to something that is complex with a lot of pieces, like a house or an assembly line, that is in a state of completeness and wholeness.¹ The essential idea is that life is complex, full of moving parts, relationships, and situations, and when any of these are out of alignment or missing, shalom breaks down. Life is no longer whole; it needs to be restored.

Shalom, when its used as a verb, brings out this kind of a meaning.² You can *shalom* an unfinished project (like Solomon does the Temple, 1 Kings 9:25), bringing it to completion and wholeness. The same goes for a broken relationships, you *shalom* the relationship by bringing healing and reconciliation to it.

¹ Joshua 8:31 — a stone that has a perfect whole shape with no cracks; Job 5:24 — Job says his tent is in a state of shalom because his flocks had no missing animals; 1 Samuel 17:18 — shalom can refer to a person's well-being, David asking about the shalom of his brothers

² 1 Kings 9:25 — Solomon brings shalom to the unfinished temple when he completes it; Exodus 22:4 — Shalom is referenced to living in harmony with your neighbor, bringing shalom to your neighbors field when your animal damages it; Proverbs 16:7 — You bring shalom when you reconcile or heal a relationship with another human.

The prophet Isaiah looked forward to a future king of Israel in the lineage of David who would finally deliver on what kings and nations had all failed to deliver on: shalom.

Isaiah 9:6-7 (ESV) For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, **Prince of Peace**. Of the increase of his government and of **peace** there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

This is a promise that this king would make a covenant of shalom³ from God with his people that would have no end, that all wrongs that be made right, and all that is broken in us and all that is broken in the world would be healed.

This is what makes the coming of Christ such a powerful event. The Gospels claim that the coming of Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of all of these promises.

Luke 1:26-33 (ESV) In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him **the throne of his father David**, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and **of his kingdom there will be no end.**"

The promise from the angel is that Jesus is the one Isaiah saw, the king from the line of David that would establish a kingdom, a government, that would bring God's shalom. It is Jesus, the Prince of Peace, that is the only one who can deliver on God's peace.

Jesus as the King, the King of Kings, brings peace (NT "eirene"). People, systems, governments, companies can only participate in bringing peace ("shalom", "eirene") to the world in submission and partnership with King Jesus.

John 14:27 (ESV) Peace I leave with you; **my peace** I give to you. **Not as the world gives** do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

This peace is what we all want. We want to experience it ourselves and we want it for our world. The Apostles claimed that Jesus made peace between broken humans and God when he died and rose from the dead.⁴ The idea is that He restored to wholeness what was broken:

³ Isaiah 54:10

⁴ Romans 5:1

the relationship between humans and their Creator. The Apostle Paul even asserted that Jesus Himself is our peace⁵ (“eirene”).

When Jesus returns, His kingdom will establish the peace (“shalom”, “eirene”) that never ends. But with that perspective of the future, we can have an attitude, a posture of peace in the present. Jesus takes the broken pieces of our lives and puts them back together as we trust in Him.⁶ As Jesus keeps healing and restoring us, He is moving all of us toward His future where He reconciles all things to Himself.

What it means to be a follower of Jesus is to celebrate His first advent, celebrating God establishing His peace in the midst of a broken and rebellious world, as we look to the future second advent, where the shalom comes to completion. With an eye toward that future, we live in the present with hope and peace, trusting God in the midst of life’s challenges and circumstances, because He is the one who brings completeness and wholeness to our lives.

Psalm 37:7-11 (ESV) Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him; fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way, over the man who carries out evil devices! Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath! Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil. For the evildoers shall be cut off, but **those who wait for the Lord shall inherit the land. In just a little while, the wicked will be no more; though you look carefully at his place, he will not be there. But **the meek shall inherit the land** and delight themselves in **abundant peace.****

⁵ Ephesians 2:14-15

⁶ Colossians 1:20