



# Pearl Church

## *A Theology of Peace*

Peace is God's dream for the world. This peace is more than personal or interpersonal, God's peace is cosmic. Scripture is replete with this concept.

The Hebrew word for peace is *shalom*, which means "to complete" or "to make sound." As a verb, it is used to describe the completion of buildings, and the restoration of broken things, as well as the repayment of debt. As a noun, *shalom* is personal, referring to a state of being, as in contentment or tranquility about the past, present, and future, including peace in death. But peace is also interpersonal, between friends, nations, even God. Peace is quintessentially about the absence of war, the destruction of weapons, and the reconciliation of enemies, and the prophets foretell this peace as an ethical standard and characteristic of the age that the messiah promises to usher in.

These concepts of peace continue in the NT with the word *eirene*. This word is personal, referring to a personal state of being, but it too refers to relationship with others and with God. Again, peace is contrasted with war and interpersonal violence, and the proclamation of peace becomes the elevated vision of the messianic age inaugurated by Jesus, which culminates in the end of all violence and suffering. Another word used to express God's dream for the world is *union*, which expresses our intimate relationship to all things: God, humankind, and creation. In John's Apocalypse, the final book in the Bible, we see God's cosmic peace—humans at peace with themselves, each other, and God; creation at peace, and humans at peace with creation. The realization of this union awakens us to divinely love all things, and it animates our participation in cultivating God's shalom here on earth.