



December 10<sup>th</sup> – Peace - Purple

**Reading:** Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13; 2 Peter 3:8-15A

**Message:** Mark 1:1-8

**Sermon Title:** The Pursuit and Practice of Peace.

What is peace?

**The typical definition:**

Freedom from disturbance; tranquility. (A freedom from war or conflict)

A Biblical view of peace.

**Old Testament:**

Shalom – The state of being whole.

Physical Health

**Psalms 38:3 (LSB)**

3 There is no soundness in my flesh because of Your indignation; There is no **health** (shalom) in my bones because of my sin.

Well-Being of one another

**Genesis 29:6 (LSB)**

6 And he said to them, "Is it **well** (shalom) with him?" And they said, "It is **well** (shalom), and here is Rachel his daughter coming with the sheep."

Tranquility before death (the righteous)

### **Genesis 15:15 (LSB)**

15 "As for you, you shall go to your fathers in **peace** (shalom); you will be buried at a good old age.

### Political Peace

### **Joshua 9:15 (LSB)**

15 And Joshua made **peace** (shalom) with them and cut a covenant with them, to let them live; and the leaders of the congregation swore [an oath] to them.

### To complete something

### **1 Kings 9:25 (LSB)**

25 And three times in a year Solomon offered burnt offerings and **peace** (shalom) offerings on the altar which he built to Yahweh, burning incense with them [on the altar] which [was] before Yahweh. So he **finished** (shalom) the house.

Most often describes relationships between people and God or to other people.

### **Isaiah 54:10 (LSB)**

10 "For the mountains may be removed and the hills may shake, But My lovingkindness will not be removed from you, And My covenant of **peace** (shalom) will not be shaken," Says Yahweh who has compassion on you.

### **Isaiah 59:8 (LSB)**

8 They do not know the way of **peace** (shalom), And there is no justice in their tracks; They have made their paths crooked, Whoever treads on them does not know **peace** (shalom).

### **New Testament:**

Eirene (Air-A-Nay) – The state of well-being.

The world and our relationships are complex and filled with many moving pieces. To have shalom means to have wholeness and order to these relationships. To be without shalom is to not have wholeness. This is what the kings of Israel was supposed to bring to the nations around them, to be a blessing to the nations.

The Prophet Isaiah looked forward to a future king, a prince of peace. A kingdom of shalom with no end. That all things that are wrong are made right.

### **Isaiah 9:6,7 (LSB)**

6 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. 7 There will be no end to the increase of [His] government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of Yahweh of hosts will accomplish this.

Looking forward to the first Advent.

### **1. True peace will only ever be found in Christ.**

### **Mark 1:1-8 (LSB)**

1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. 2 As it is written in Isaiah the prophet: "BEHOLD, I SEND MY MESSENGER AHEAD OF YOU, WHO WILL PREPARE YOUR WAY; 3 THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, 'MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD, MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT.'" 4 John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 5 And all the region of Judea was going out to him, and all the people of Jerusalem; and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins. 6 And John was clothed with camel's hair and [wore] a leather belt around his waist and was eating locusts and wild honey. 7 And he was preaching, saying, "After me One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to stoop down and untie the strap of His sandals. 8 "I baptized you with water; but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

### **Mark 1:1-3 (LSB)**

1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. 2 As it is written in Isaiah the prophet: "BEHOLD, I SEND MY MESSENGER AHEAD OF YOU, WHO WILL PREPARE YOUR WAY; 3 THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, 'MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD, MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT.'"

**Gospel:** Euangelion

*“An inscription found in Priene, in modern-day Turkey, referring to Caesar Augustus says: “the birthday of [Augustus] has been for the whole world the beginning of the gospel (euangelion) concerning him.” (Priene 150.40-41) This inscription is found on a government building dating from 6 B.C.”*

**Mark 8:27-29 (LSB)**

27 And Jesus went out, along with His disciples, to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way He was asking His disciples, saying to them, "Who do people say that I am?" 28 And they told Him, saying, "John the Baptist; and others [say] Elijah; but others, one of the prophets." 29 And He [continued] asking them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered and said to Him, "You are the Christ."

**Isaiah 40:3 (LSB)**

3 A voice is calling, "Prepare the way for Yahweh in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God."

**Malachi 3:1 (LSB)**

1 "Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming," says Yahweh of hosts.

**Malachi 4:5-6 (LSB)**

5 "Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and awesome day of Yahweh. 6 "And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to [their] children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land, devoting it to destruction."

**John 1:21-23 (LSB)**

21 And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" And he said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." 22 Therefore, they said to him, "Who are you, so that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?" 23 He said, "I am A VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, 'MAKE STRAIGHT THE WAY OF THE LORD,' as Isaiah the prophet said."

**Matthew 11:11-14 (LSB)**

11 "Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen [anyone] greater than John the Baptist! Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. 12 "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and violent men take it by force. 13 "For all the prophets and the Law prophesied until John. 14 "And if you are willing to accept [it], John himself is Elijah who was to come.

**Luke 1:16-17 (LSB)**

16 "And he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God. 17 "And he will go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

**2. The origin of the Gospel is found in \_\_\_\_\_.**

**Mark 1:4-5 (LSB)**

4 John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 5 And all the region of Judea was going out to him, and all the people of Jerusalem; and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins.

**3. Wholeness begins with \_\_\_\_\_ of where we are broken.**

**Mark 1:6-8 (LSB)**

6 And John was clothed with camel's hair and [wore] a leather belt around his waist and was eating locusts and wild honey. 7 And he was preaching, saying, "After me One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to stoop down and untie the strap of His sandals. 8 "I baptized you with water; but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

**2 Kings 1:8 (LSB)**

8 And they said to him, "[He was] a hairy man with a leather girdle girded about his loins." And he said, "It is Elijah the Tishbite."

**Zechariah 13:4 (LSB)**

4 "And it will be in that day, [that] the prophets will each be ashamed of his vision when he prophesies, and they will not put on a hairy mantle in order to deceive;

**Acts 1:5 (LSB)**

5 for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

**4. The good news is that \_\_\_\_\_ things are made \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ.**

**The Practice and Pursuit of Peace.**

**1. A \_\_\_\_\_ is not peace.**

**Luke 12:51-53 (LSB)**

51 "Do you think that I came to grant peace on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division; 52 for from now on five [members] in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three. 53 "They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."

**2. Peace can only be found in the \_\_\_\_\_.**

- a. Acknowledge and confess our sins
- b. Accept Christ as God and savior
- c. Ask that He forgive and lead you

**3. Peace is an \_\_\_\_\_ pursuit.****1 Peter 3:10-12 (LSB)**

10 For, "THE ONE WHO DESIRES LIFE, TO LOVE AND SEE GOOD DAYS, MUST KEEP HIS TONGUE FROM EVIL AND HIS LIPS FROM SPEAKING DECEIT. 11 "HE MUST TURN AWAY FROM EVIL AND DO GOOD; HE MUST SEEK PEACE AND PURSUE IT. 12 "FOR THE EYES OF THE LORD ARE TOWARD THE RIGHTEOUS, AND HIS EARS ATTEND TO THEIR PRAYER, BUT THE FACE OF THE LORD IS AGAINST THOSE WHO DO EVIL."

**Matthew 5:9 (LSB)**

9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

**Peace** (שלום, *shalom*; εἰρήνη, *eirēnē*). A pervasive concept in the Bible that most commonly relates to a relationship of love and loyalty with God and one another.

### **In the Old Testament**

In the Old Testament, “peace” carries the fundamental meaning of welfare, prosperity, or wholeness as well as the absence of hostility (compare Westermann, “Peace [*Shalom*],” 20, 44–53). The term is frequently used as the antithesis of harm (רעה, *ra’ah*; compare 1 Sam 20:7; Jer 29:11; 38:4) and as a synonym for what is good (טוב, *tov*; Deut 23:6; Ezra 9:12; Jer 33:9).

#### *Peace in Greetings and Farewells*

The biblical characters use the term “peace” in friendly greetings and farewell statements to communicate an absence of hostility. For example, when his brothers are unsure whether he will exact retribution on them for having extra money in their sacks, Joseph assures them of his friendly disposition toward them by stating, “Peace to you; do not fear” (Gen 43:23; compare Judg 6:23; 19:20; 1 Sam 25:6). Also, typical friendly farewells are given in terms of peace: “Go in peace” (Gen 44:17; Exod 4:18; 1 Sam 25:35; 29:7; 2 Sam 15:27).

#### *Peace in the Sense of Welfare*

The Old Testament contains examples of people asking about “a person’s peace,” which equate to inquiries about how the person is faring (Gen 29:6; 43:27; Exod 18:7; Judg 18:15; 1 Sam 17:18; 2 Kgs 4:26; 10:13) or the possibility of entering into diplomatic negotiations with that person (2 Kgs 9:17–22; Wiseman, “Is It Peace?” 317–22). For example, when David asks Uriah how the battle with the Ammonites is progressing, he “asked concerning the peace of Joab and the peace of the people and the peace of the war” (2 Sam 11:7). In this case, “peace” does not refer to the absence of hostilities but the welfare of those involved and progression of the fighting (Mauser, *Gospel of Peace*, 15).

The biblical authors also use the term “peace” in prayers for prosperity for the king (Psa 72:7), Jerusalem (Psa 122:6–8), and Israel (Pss 125:5; 128:6). God speaks peace to His people (Psa 85:8) to bless them (Num 6:26). Westermann argues that the Hebrew word for “peace” “signifies the welfare of persons in community in the most comprehensive meaning of existence” (Westermann, “Peace [*Shalom*],” 43).

#### *Peace as the Absence of Hostility*

At times, “peace” indicates the absence of hostilities. In texts where the term “peace” contrasts with warfare, it likely communicates a mere cessation of warfare instead of friendship (Deut 20:10; Judg 4:17; 21:13; 1 Sam 7:14; 1 Kgs 2:5; 5:12; Jer 25:37; Ezek 7:25; Mic 3:5). Ecclesiastes 3:8 places peace and warfare in direct contrast: “There is a time for war, and there is a time for peace.” Those responsible for procuring peace treaties that brought an end to warfare were called “messengers of peace” (Josh 9:15; 10:4; 11:19; 2 Sam 10:19; 1 Kgs 22:44; Isa 33:7).

The biblical authors depict the absence of hostilities as fundamentally a good thing (compare Deut 20:10–15). For example, David was not allowed to build the temple because he engaged in frequent warfare, but his son Solomon (whose name derives from the term for peace, **שָׁלוֹם**, *shalom*) was able to build the temple because God had granted him peace from his enemies (2 Chr 22:9; compare 1 Kgs 5:3–4).

Isaiah predicted that when the Messiah arrived, He would be called the “Prince of Peace”—presumably because He would achieve lasting peace over His enemies (Isa 9:6; compare Mic 5:5). At this point, God would destroy weapons in the world as the people “beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks” (Isa 2:4 ESV; Mic 4:3 ESV; compare Wolff, “Swords into Plowshares,” 211–28).

### *Peace in Relationships*

In the Old Testament, the term “peace” is often used to describe a relationship characterized by friendship, care, loyalty, and love. These relationships can be with God or between people. A close friend in the Old Testament is commonly called “a man of my peace” (Pss 7:4; 41:9; Jer 20:10; 38:22; Obad 7). The term “peace” often appears in the inauguration of covenants, which often formalize an already-existing relationship of love and loyalty (von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 1:130; contra Westermann, “Peace [*Shalom*],” 41). Thus, in Obadiah 7, “the men of your peace” parallels “the men of your covenant.” Joshua 9:15 describes how Joshua “made peace with them [the Gibeonites] and made a covenant with them.” To be at peace with someone, then, can mean more than just the cessation of hostilities but a relationship of love and loyalty (compare Gen 26:28–31; Psa 55:20). Further, it is wicked to “speak peace” to one’s neighbors while devising evil in one’s heart (Psa 28:3; Jer 9:8), precisely because to “speak peace” is an expression of friendship, not hatred (compare Gen 37:4). A relationship with God marked by loyalty and love is also described as a relationship of peace (contra Westermann, “Peace [*Shalom*],” 40). Although it appears sometimes as if the wicked have peace (Job 21:9; Psa 73:3), in

reality peace with God is the possession not of the wicked (Isa 48:22; 57:21) but of those who are meek (Psa 37:11) and righteous (Isa 57:1–2), who serve Yahweh (Psa 35:27), who love the law of God (Psa 119:165), and who please the Lord (Prov 16:7). The nature of this peace with God is evidently glorious and much more than the absence of hostility—for peace is parallel with good things (Deut 23:6; Ezra 9:12), such as:

- inheriting the land (Psa 37:11);
- long life (Prov 3:2);
- quietness and trust (Isa 32:17–18);
- righteousness (Pss 35:27; 37:37; 72:3; 85:10; Isa 48:18; 60:17);
- strength (Psa 29:11);
- tranquility (Gen 15:15; Exod 18:23; 2 Kgs 2:6; Psa 4:8; Isa 32:17);
- divine steadfast love (Jer 16:5).

Those possessing this peace have a future (Psa 37:37), joy (Prov 12:20), and long life (Psa 34:14). Aaron's blessing demonstrates a link between peace and God's presence (Num 6:24–26; compare Pss 29:11; 85:8, 11; Durham, “**שלום**, *shalom*; and the Presence of God,” 281–93).

### *Covenant of Peace*

Peace with God and one another is fundamental to the promises of Israel's restoration and the new creation. Isaiah 32:15–18 promises that when the Spirit, who is the sign of the new age, is poured out, He will create righteousness and peace. God has future plans of peace for His people (Jer 29:11); peace will characterize the new temple (Hag 2:9) and Jerusalem (Jer 33:9), whose inhabitants will “love truth and peace” (Zech 8:19). In the Genesis creation account, the narrative revolves around the notion of peace—the creation and maintenance of order and the reversal of disorder (Ollenburger, “Creation and Peace,” 147–58). In the same way, the prophetic vision of the new creation is a vision of order and peace produced by justice and righteousness (Brueggemann, *Peace*, 15–18). Although God had promised in the Sinai covenant to give peace to Israel if they obeyed (Lev 26:6), this was not realized due to Israel's sin (Isa 48:18; Zech 8:10). The prayer of Solomon that Israel's heart would be at peace with (or devoted to) God (1 Kgs 8:61) did not come to fruition even in Solomon's own experience as he turned to foreign gods (1 Kgs 11:4). It is only in the inauguration of the new covenant that this lasting peace with God and one another is achieved, and thus this new covenant is called a “covenant of peace,” a covenant that assuages divine wrath (Isa 54:10; Ezek 34:25; 37:26; compare Num 25:12; Mal 2:5; Batto, “Covenant of Peace,” 187–211).

Isaiah places emphasis on future peace with God. “Peace” (שָׁלוֹם, *shalom*) serves as a significant concept uniting Isa 48–55 (Lessing, *Isaiah 40–55*, 632). In Isaiah the sins of Israel had separated them from God and hindered the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant (Isa 48:18–19). Isaiah stresses that “there is no peace for the wicked” (Isa 48:22; compare Isa 57:21). But God solves Israel’s plight through the work of the Servant, whose death as a guilt offering (Isa 53:10) brings peace with God (Isa 53:5). As a result of His work, the good news of peace is proclaimed to a worldwide audience, who will by union with the Servant experience great peace in the future age (Isa 52:7; 54:1–10, 13; 55:12; 57:19; 60:17; 66:12).

### **Peace in the New Testament**

The Graeco-Roman concept of peace held various nuances. For example, the Homeric literature portrayed peace as an ideal state that a hero achieved through war. This led to the common adage, “If you wish peace, prepare for war” (compare Vegetius, *Concerning Military Affairs* III [preface]). On the other hand, the Stoics conceived of peace as an inward tranquility. The New Testament concept of peace shows dependence on the Semitic understanding of peace rather than the Graeco-Roman conception. In the New Testament, the concept of peace is consistent with the Old Testament in that it refers to prosperity, which climaxes in the peace the Messiah brings.

#### *Peace in Greetings and Farewells*

The greetings and farewells in the New Testament also reflect those of the Old Testament in their use of the term “peace” (compare Tertullian, *Against Marcion* 5.5). For example, when Jesus sends out His disciples to accomplish His ministry, He instructs them to “let their peace be upon a house” (Matt 10:13; Luke 10:5–6)—referring to a friendly greeting (compare Heb 11:31). Jesus Himself issues the friendly farewell “go in peace” after healing the woman with a flow of blood (Mark 5:34; Luke 8:48) and forgiving a sinful woman (Luke 7:50). After His resurrection, Jesus appeared to His disciples several times with the greeting “peace be to you” (Luke 24:36; John 20:19, 21, 26). Jesus’ original audience would have understood these phrases as the typical Semitic way to wish someone well (compare Acts 16:36).

The greetings and farewells of the New Testament’s letters also use the term “peace.” The New Testament texts often open with the prayer that grace and peace would be given to believers (1 Thess 1:1; 1 Pet 1:2; 2 Pet 1:2; Jude 2) from God the Father (Col 1:2), from the Father and Jesus

Christ (Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:3; 2 Cor 1:2; Gal 1:3; Eph 1:2; Phil 1:2; 2 Thess 1:2; 1 Tim 1:2; 2 Tim 1:2; Titus 1:4; Phlm 3; 2 John 3), or from the Father, Son, and Spirit (Rev 1:4–5). Several New Testament letters also conclude with such prayer wishes (compare 2 Cor 13:11; Gal 6:16; Eph 6:23; 1 Thess 5:23; 2 Thess 3:16; 1 Pet 5:14; 3 John 15).

### *Peace as the Absence of Hostilities*

In the New Testament, “peace” can also refer to the absence of hostilities (compare Acts 7:26; 12:20). “Peace” is used in this way to describe peace treaties between kings (Luke 14:32). Jesus uses “peace” in reference to the absence of hostility when He speaks of conflict between family members and states that He “did not come to cast peace upon the earth but a sword” (Matt 10:34; Luke 12:51; compare Frankenmölle, “Peace and the Sword,” 217–18). This statement communicates that, although Jesus is the “Prince of Peace,” He is also a divisive, polarizing figure because of His unique claims of identity.

Paul teaches that if an unbelieving spouse desires a divorce from a believer, the believing spouse is not bound to chase after the unbeliever, because “God has called you in peace” (1 Cor 7:15). This suggests that God has called believers to live toward unbelievers without conflict and strife (compare Rom 12:18). In Revelation, the horse rider of the second seal was allowed “to take peace from the earth in order that people might slay one another” (Rev 6:4).

### *Messianic Peace*

The most prevalent nuance to the concept of peace in the New Testament is the messianic peace accomplished by Christ and experienced by the Church (compare Acts 9:31). In the Old Testament, the concept of messianic peace referred to both the absence of hostilities and a reconciled relationship with God and others in the context of the new creation. This messianic peace comes to fruition in the New Testament in Jesus’ ministry, death, and resurrection (Constantineanu, *Social Significance*, 76–77).

The angels’ declaration at Jesus’ birth, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace” (Luke 2:14 ESV) connects His arrival with messianic peace. Jesus tells two women He heals to “go in peace”—referring to messianic peace. He also tells the women, “your faith has saved (σώζω, *sōzō*) you,” which refers to both their having been physically healed and having received salvation by faith (Mark 5:34; Luke 7:50; (Witherington, “Salvation and Health,” 145–66). Jesus also proclaimed the gospel of peace to Israel (Acts 10:36; compare Isa 52:7; Eph 2:17), referring to the new and

reconciled relationship to God and others that had dawned in His ministry (compare Eph 6:15). The crowd's praise at Jesus' triumphal entry likewise connects Jesus with messianic peace: "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" (Luke 19:38).

Jesus achieved messianic peace by means of His death on the cross, which reconciled people to God and one another (compare Rom 5:1; Col 1:20). Ephesians 2:13–18 explains that whereas the Gentiles were at one time outside of and estranged from the people of God (Eph 2:11–12), through the atoning sacrifice of Christ they have been brought near to God and His people (Eph 2:13). Jesus' death abolished the Sinai law-covenant, which erected a barrier between God and humanity and between Jews and Gentiles (Eph 2:14–15). In its place He created peace for all those united to Him by faith, who are now seen as "one new man" (Eph 2:15), and who are now reconciled to God and have access into His presence (Eph 2:16–18; compare Eph 3:12). Jesus Himself proclaimed the accomplishment of this peace to His disciples when He appeared to them after His resurrection and blessed them: "Peace be to you" (Luke 24:36; John 20:19, 21, 26). The centrality of Jesus and His work on the cross is evident in that Paul can say of Jesus, "He himself is our peace" (Eph 2:14; compare Isa 9:6–7; Heb 7:1–3; Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 112). In this sense, God is truly "the God of peace" (Rom 15:33; 16:20; 1 Cor 14:33; 2 Cor 13:11; Phil 4:9; 1 Thess 5:23; Heb 13:20; compare 2 Thess 3:16).

Christians experience peace when they trust in Christ and grow in their faith. This is what Paul prays for when he asks that "the God of hope might fill you with all joy and peace in believing" (Rom 15:13). Paul further promises that when believers cast their cares on God through prayer, "the peace of God surpassing understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus" (Phil 4:7). This subjective sense of peace, security, and tranquility is probably what Jesus referred to when He said, "My peace I give to you." In this verse, Jesus links peace with the encouragement not to be afraid (John 14:27; compare John 16:33; Rom 8:6).

### *Peace in Relationships*

The New Testament writings frequently encourage believers to live in peace with one another, which requires that they maintain relationships based on love, loyalty, and care (compare Mark 9:50; Rom 14:19; 2 Cor 13:11; Eph 4:3; Col 3:15; 1 Thess 5:13; Heb 12:14; 1 Pet 3:11). This type of relationship characterizes the kingdom of God (Rom 14:17) and is the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22; compare 2 Tim 2:22) and wisdom (Jas 3:17–

18). Those who make peace—even within the context of the Church itself—are called sons of God, are blessed by God, and will receive their final reward (Matt 5:9; Jas 3:18; Heb 12:11; compare Humphrey, “Matthew 5:9,” 62–78).

The openings and closings of the New Testament letters communicate the Semitic understanding of peace. The typical Greek epistolary greeting was “greetings” (χαίρειν, *chairein*), and the typical Hebrew greeting was “peace” (שלום, *shalom*; εἰρήνη, *eirēnē*). Paul combined and modified these greetings in the phrase “grace and peace” (χάρις καὶ εἰρήνη, *charis kai eirēnē*; Lieu, “ ‘Grace to You and Peace,’ ” 161–78). This combination reflects the ethnic makeup of the church, which was composed of both Jews and Gentiles joined to Christ by faith. Given the early church’s recognition that the gospel was meant for both Jews and Gentiles, the greeting “grace and peace” carried a theological reminder of the peace with God that the Church possessed through Christ, as well as an ethical reminder of their need to live in light of this peace (Kremer, “Peace,” 139–40).

Joshua M. Greever, “Peace,” ed. John D. Barry et al., *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).