

## 2025 - The Year of Peace

John 14:27 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

*<sup>27</sup> Peace I leave you, My peace I give you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled, nor fearful.*

3 John 1:2 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

*Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may **prosper** and be in **good health**, just as your **soul prospers**.*

Judges 6:24 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

*Then Gideon built an altar there to the Lord and named it **The Lord is Peace**. To this day it is still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites (Judges 6:24).*

## Introduction

2024 is gone and 2025 is upon us! Happy and blessed New Year to you and your family! May the Lord grant us His peace in all areas of our lives this year and beyond. Amen.

In the past three months, as pastor of this congregation, I was searching for the Lord's directions in 2025. One day, I was on my knees. In my prayer, God reminded me of a verse in the Bible, Psalm 68:9, which says, "God **restores** our heritage when it languishes." The verb 'to restore' got stuck in my mind. I

strongly felt that the Lord was leading me to the theme of restoration in 2025.

Then, I prayed more and researched further in God's Word on the word 'restoration.' And, finally, a word emerged from my study. It is a Hebrew word 'Shalom' (שלום). 'Peace' in English.

## **Content**

Two words, 'Shalom' and 'Peace' are inseparable. We cannot talk about 'Peace' without 'Shalom.' For instance, when Jesus talks about His peace in today's text, of course, He used the word 'Shalom.' When the resurrected Christ appeared to His disciples and greeted them saying, 'Peace,' of course, He used the same Hebrew word 'Shalom.' So, throughout the sermon this morning, you will hear me interchangeably use those two words, 'Shalom' and 'Peace.'

Let me begin with 'Shalom.'

## **What Is Shalom (שלום)?**

Today, Jewish folks use 'Shalom' as a word of greeting such as 'hello,' 'good morning' or 'goodbye,' or even 'have a nice day.' We too the believers in Christ say 'Peace' to each other during 'passing of the peace.'

But ‘Shalom’ means much more than just the word of greetings. It **covers all aspects of life**: physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being. So, when we say ‘Shalom’ or ‘Peace,’ we actually say to each other: “*May all you need for your well-being today/ come to you this day.*” (Skip Moen).

## **Biblical Meanings of Shalom**

‘Shalom’ is translated ‘Peace’ in English: 352 in NASB (262 in the Old Testament/92 in the New Testament). (32 books / 39 books in the Old Testament) (26 books /27 books in the New Testament). 9 out of 10 times, God’s Word speaks about peace, which means that ‘Peace’ is an integral part of human life. We need ‘Peace’ with God and with each other. Everybody needs it. Everybody longs for it. No one can live without ‘Peace.’

Here are some examples in the Bible where the word ‘Shalom’ appears.

- *The LORD Himself is Shalom* (Judges 6:24). As God is love, so is He ‘Shalom.’ He is ‘Peace.’ Our ‘Peace.’ Our ‘Shalom.’ The same God of ‘Peace’ has the *thoughts of ‘Shalom’* (Hebrew: *machshavot shalom*), not of evil, to give us a future and a hope (Jeremiah 29:11). Let’s not forget: ‘Shalom’ is God’s ultimate plan for you. ‘Peace’ is the ultimate outcome God hopes and desires in your life. He wants you to be *whole, complete, prosperous, and content in all respects*. This happens when you

have ‘Shalom’ (Peace) with God and submit yourself to His will (I will explain it later).

- *Everyone needs ‘Shalom’ in their relationships. Christ commands us to be a ‘Shalom-maker’ (‘Peacemaker’) (Matthew 5:9).*
- *‘Shalom’ means to complete, to bring to closure, or to make safe and secure in all you do.*
- *It also means ‘free from fault.’*
- *It means to ‘make whole, to restore things that are lost or stolen’ (e.g., finding the lost sheep), to pay off debt (e.g., Jesus made ‘Shalom’ with God on our behalf after paying off the wages of our sin), or to make compensation for injury or for trespass in sacred things.*
- *It also carries the meaning of keeping vows or promises made.*
- *‘Shalom’ is also used in the context of health and soundness in body.*
- *It means prosperity, peace, quiet, tranquility, and contentment.*

All these references boil down to ‘Peace’ in the following three areas: spirit, soul, and body.

**‘Shalom’ means peace, harmony, and completeness in your Spirit, Soul, and Body (in that order).**

Please look at today’s verse, 3 John verse 2. *Beloved, I pray that **in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers** (3 John 1:2).* Pay attention to the order of ‘Shalom’: when our soul (spirit) is well with God first, then prosperity and health will follow.

**Spirit:** If you want ‘Shalom’ (peace, completeness, satisfaction, contentment) in your life, you must begin with God—the God of ‘Shalom.’ There’s no other way. ‘Shalom’ begins when your spirit is at peace with God. ‘Shalom’ with God is the foundation for ‘Shalom’ in all other areas of your life. Without ‘Shalom’ with God, your efforts for ‘Shalom’ will be fruitless.

Now, some of you may say, *I am cool with God. I don’t need Christ. I haven’t done anything wrong. I am morally good. I am no sinner.* Let me tell you: your own goodness doesn’t make you alright with God. You still need ‘Peace’ with God. In Jesus. You see, by nature, we are all sinners. We carry our sins in our hearts. And, God the Father is the Holy One in whose presence no sin, nothing unclean, is permitted. By the way, God considers our own righteousness as filthy rags. Listen to Prophet Isaiah who spoke about this: *For all of us have become like one who is unclean, And all our righteous deeds are like a **filthy** garment* (Isaiah 64:6). It’s time that we dropped our

own righteousness and confess that we need God's grace, mercy and forgiveness in Jesus.

Now, some others may ask me, "OK. I am ready to make peace with God. How do I do it?" Here's how: repent of your sins and confess that Jesus is your Savior and Lord. Let me repeat. Two things you need to do to make peace with God: Ask Him to forgive your sins in the name of Jesus and stop trespassing against God and your neighbors. Next, you confess with your mouth that Jesus is your Savior and Lord. By doing so, you lay the foundation of 'Shalom' in your life upon which you will build a life of 'Shalom' in all respects.

In reality, a lot of folks, even some in the church, live a life with no true 'Shalom.' They wonder why. There could be many reasons, but here's one explanation. When you disregard the part of 'Shalom' with God and jump right into 'Shalom' in your finances and health, when you are only interested in God's blessings without submitting yourself to His will, and when you treat God not as your Lord but as your servant like a Genie in the lamp, you won't have 'Shalom.' Please listen. The true 'Shalom' begins with God and ends with God. You want 'Shalom'? Begin with God. No God? No 'Shalom.' Remember: 'Shalom' with God means you submit yourself to God and His will. Not God submitting to your beck and call.

Here's how it works. When you are right with God, when your spirit is at peace with God, then God the author and the

giver of 'Shalom' will bless you in other areas as well such as health and prosperity. When you seek 'Shalom' outside God / without Jesus, you will be disillusioned in the end. You will lose both God and 'Shalom.' When you seek Jesus first, you will have them both.

**Soul:** Once the 'Shalom' with God is restored and maintained in our spirit, then, God's Shalom will trickle down to our soul--- a.k.a. heart and mind. For example, when I have peace with God, I know I am a child of God. As His child, I have the right to enter His throne room with confidence. Then, I present my requests for all my worries and anxieties, He will honor His promise (that is, 'Shalom') and keep my mind and heart in His peace (Philippians 4:6-7).

**Body:** Last but not least benefit we will have is the 'Shalom' in our body, that is, physical health. 'Peace' with God in your spirit will trickle down to your heart and mind and keep them in Christ's peace. And Christ's peace in your heart will trickle down to your body and keep it healthy. *A joyful heart is good medicine, But a broken spirit dries up the bones* (Proverbs 17:22).

## **Shalom in 2025**

So, folks, there you have it. The Lord wants you to have His complete 'Shalom' in all areas of your life. Throughout this year, let's pursue Christ's 'Shalom' in our lives. Let us pray that the Lord would restore 'Shalom' in the things that languished in

our lives: for instance, our relationship with God. We will repent. We will check out who we are in the sight of God. We will renew our commitment to God. We will look into the ways to keep God's 'Shalom' in our hearts and minds (e.g. reading the Bible, praying). We will also learn about keys to good health.

We will also explore the biblical ways to restore 'Shalom' in our homes: how to restore the broken relationships with spouses / parents / children / siblings. We will also talk about ways to maintain healthy finances.

Finally, we will continually ask for God's 'Shalom' in our church and communities: worship, Gospel sharing (evangelism), Sunday School, Youth, and missions.

## **Conclusion**

Pick up your own scroll after the service on your way out. I have prayerfully chosen 30 verses from the Bible--all related to your 'Shalom.' Do not discard it quickly. Take it seriously. Post it in the most visible place of your home. Read it once a day. Meditate on it. Memorize it. Claim it and experience it--the promise of 'Shalom'---throughout this year and beyond.

May the Lord speak to you through the verse in your scroll throughout the year. By the end of the year, as we look back the year of 2025, I pray that all of us will be able to say that indeed the Lord God has granted us His peace, 'Shalom,' in all



respects and that we have Christ's 'Shalom,' peace, harmony, and balance restored in our lives: personal, family, church, and communities. Amen.