

The Peace of God

By Steve Sebastian and Dave DeWitt

Basic Questions

It is the purpose of this study to explore three questions:

1. What is peace? Can we arrive at a universally accepted definition of peace?
2. What is the difference between secular peace and biblical peace?
3. How do we get peace, biblically and secularly? Where does peace come from?

Definitions

Here are some standard definitions of peace:

The New Oxford American Dictionary

peace |pēs|

noun

1 freedom from disturbance; quiet and tranquility: *you can while away an hour or two in peace and seclusion.*

- mental calm; serenity: *the peace of mind this insurance gives you.*

2 freedom from or the cessation of war or violence: *the Straits were to be open to warships in time of peace.*

- [in sing.] a period of this: *the peace didn't last.*
- [in sing.] a treaty agreeing to the cessation of war between warring states: *support for a negotiated peace.*
- freedom from civil disorder: *police action to restore peace.*
- freedom from dispute or dissension between individuals or groups: *the 8.8 percent offer that promises peace with the board.*

Wikipedia

“Peace is a sign of harmony characterized by the lack of violence, conflict behaviors and the freedom from fear of violence.”

Strong's Definition of the Hebrew Word *Shalom*

7965. שָׁלוֹם *shalom*, completeness, soundness, welfare, peace: — at ease(m)(1), close friend(1), close friends(1), favorable(m)(1), friendly terms(m)(1), greet(5), greet(1), greeted(1), health(1), how(1), peace(154), Peace(2), peaceably(1), peaceful(2), peacefully(3), perfect(1), prosperity(3), rose(1), safe(2), safely(7), safety(6), secure(1), state(1), trusted friends*(m)(1), welfare(14), well(17), well-being(5), who were at peace(1), wholly(1).

Strong's Definition of the Greek Word *Eirene*

515. εἰρήνη *eirene*; from εἶρω (*to join*): lit. or fig. *peace*, by impl. *welfare*: —peace(90), undisturbed(1).

You will notice that most definitions list peace as a freedom from some sort of anxiety, disturbance, hostility, or conflict, whether external (such as war) or internal (such as worry).

So peace seems to be a form of freedom.

But we should also look at what it adds, not just what it frees us from, but what it frees us to. And that seems to be a mental or physical calm or serenity. The Hebrew word includes the idea of *completeness, soundness, safety or well-being*. The Greek word is hardly ever translated anything but *peace*, but it comes from the root word meaning *to join*.

Peace is freedom from: anxiety, disturbance, worry, war, hostility, and conflict.
Peace is freedom toward: calm, serenity, safety, completeness, or soundness.
So as an overall definition, it would seem like

Peace is freedom from turmoil, which results in well-being

Turmoil is disturbance, confusion, or uncertainty.

Well-being is the state of health, happiness, and good fortune of a person or group.

The Dog and the Stockbroker

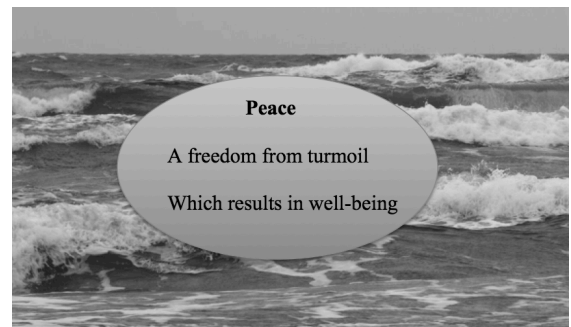
- A dead dog is not at peace. He may have freedom from turmoil, but he does not have health, happiness, and good fortune.
- A healthy successful stockbroker does not have peace, if he became successful while being sued by his competitors and losing his family. That's because his well-being was not the result of (or is not being defined as) freedom from turmoil.
- A dog on a leash might have peace, if he is healthy, happy, and safe because of having a master that gives him freedom from the conflicts that would otherwise surround him.
- A healthy successful stockbroker has peace if his well-being came as a result of (or is defined as) being free from the turmoil of law suits and a dysfunctional family.

Peace is a result of freedom from turmoil, only when it leads to well-being.

Boundaries Create Freedom

Since freedom is essential for peace, we should look a bit at the nature of freedom. Peace is freedom from things like anxiety, disturbance, worry, war, hostility, and conflict. But the interesting thing is that those freedoms, and all freedoms, come as a result of some sort of restrictions. There is an old experiment, which has been carried out on several occasions. If you have a small school and you let the children out for recess with no instructions, they will generally play close to the school building. There will be a few wild kids who run out in to the street and need to be retrieved, but the majority of the kids will play close to the school. If you then put a fence around the schoolyard, which allows a play area all the way out to the sidewalk, the children will play all the way out to the fence. The fence created the boundary, which gave the freedom to venture out beyond the area close to the school.

If you fence in animals, or put a dog on a leash, you restrict their movement but give them the freedom to do whatever they want and still be safe from whatever lies beyond the fence or leash. The fence gives those animals peace—freedom from the conflicts which lie beyond the restricted area, plus an opportunity for well-being. Fences might be too restrictive or not restrictive enough. So it is crucial to have the right fences.



When it comes to people, our fences are legal, moral, and cultural. Conservative groups tend to make fences that restrict creativity and liberal groups tend to extend the fences to where they allow us to destroy ourselves. So it's essential to have the right fences. But there is no peace without freedom and no freedom without fences.

So restrictions are essential for peace.

But restrictions themselves do not create peace. Inmates are not at peace simply because they are in prison. A lion is not at peace simply because he is in a cage. Restrictions lead to peace, if and only if, they allow for a state of health, happiness, and good fortune. If you are marooned on a small island, you would not be at peace if there was no sense of well-being on the island. You would want to get off the island as soon as possible. But if the island was England or Australia, maybe not. The island gives you freedom from the restrictions of floating at sea, but it does not create peace unless it also gives you a sense of health, happiness, and good fortune.

Secular Peace

[The word “secular” has several dictionary definitions. Throughout this paper, we will be using the word **secular** to define **attitudes of the world**, including religious views, which are not derived directly from the Bible.]

Wikipedia on Peace

Peace is a sign of harmony characterized by the lack of violence, conflict behaviors, and the freedom from fear of violence. Commonly understood as the absence of hostility and retribution, peace also suggests sincere attempts at reconciliation, the existence of healthy or newly healed interpersonal or international relationships, prosperity in matters of social or economic welfare, the establishment of equality, and a working political order that serves the true interests of all.

The **2009 Nobel Peace Prize** was awarded to U.S. President Barack Obama for his “extraordinary efforts” to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples. The Norwegian Nobel Committee announced the award on October 9, 2009, citing Obama’s promotion of nuclear nonproliferation and a “new climate” in international relations fostered by Obama, especially in reaching out to the Muslim world.

So according to Wikipedia, peace includes:

- “Sincere attempts at reconciliation” [between people]
- “The existence of healthy or newly healed interpersonal or international relationships
- Prosperity in matters of social or economic welfare
- The establishment of equality, and
- A working political order that serves the true interests of all”
- “Extraordinary efforts” to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples.

So we see that Wikipedia defines peace in terms of reconciled relationships, social and economic welfare, and equality “that serves the true interests of all.”

Quotes from Famous People Associated with Peace

- “Peace is the only battle worth waging.” **Albert Camus**
- “Peace is not merely a distant goal we seek, but a means by which we arrive at that goal.” **Martin Luther King Jr.**
- “Peace is always beautiful.” **Walt Whitman**
- “Peace cannot be kept by force, it can only be achieved by understanding.” **Albert Einstein**

- “When the power of love overcomes the love of power, the world will know peace.” **Jimi Hendrix**
- “If you want peace, you don't talk to your friends. You talk to your enemies.” **Archbishop Tutu**
- “Courageous people do not fear forgiving for the sake of peace.” **Nelson Mandela**
- “An eye for an eye only ends up making the whole world blind.” **Mahatma Gandhi**
- “Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable.” **John F. Kennedy**
- “Peace cannot be achieved through violence, it can only be attained through understanding.” **Ralph Waldo Emerson**
- “A peace is of the nature of a conquest; for then both parties nobly are subdued, and neither party loser.” **William Shakespeare**
- “He that would live in peace and at ease must not speak all he knows or all he sees.” **Benjamin Franklin**

[The above quotes take from peacedirect.org and brainyquote.com.]

The Pope and Peace

Here are some excerpts from an article by Francis D’emilio (AP) reporting on the Pope Francis’ New Years’ Day message, 2014. [We have only quoted what the pope said.]

We are all children of one heavenly father, we belong to the same human family and we share a common destiny... This brings a responsibility for each to work so that the world becomes a community of brothers who respect each other, accept each other in one’s diversity, and takes care of one another... I, too, believe that it will be good for us to stop ourselves in this path of violence and search for peace... the gospel of brotherhood speak to every conscience and knock down the walls that impede enemies from recognizing that they are brothers... [Francis prayed that] “the courage of dialogue and reconciliation prevail over the temptation for vendetta, arrogance, corruption.” I invite even non-believers to desire peace. (Join us) with your desire, a desire that widens the heart. Let us all unite, either with prayer or with desire, but everyone, for peace ... God is peace: let us ask him to help us to be peacemakers each day, in our life, in our families, in our cities and nations, in the whole world.

So according to the pope:

- “We are all children of one heavenly father. We belong to the same human family. We share a common destiny.”
- “[We should] work so that the world becomes a community of brothers—the gospel of brotherhood.”
- “The courage of dialogue and reconciliation [should] prevail over the temptation for vendetta, arrogance, corruption.”
- “[We should] invite even non-believers to desire peace. (Join us) with your desire ...”
- “God is peace.”

Some Secular Peace Principles

Here are seven general principles we can derive from the above quotes:

1. **Individual or national peace must eventually become “world peace.”** Peace depends upon “healed interpersonal or international relationships” (Wikipedia), which “can only be achieved by understanding” (Einstein and Emerson).
2. **Peace requires “the establishment of equality,** and a working political order that serves the true interests of all” (Wikipedia). “A peace is of the nature of a conquest; for then both parties nobly are subdued, and neither party loser” (William Shakespeare).

3. **Peace comes though “the courage of dialogue”** (Pope Francis). “If you want peace, you don't talk to your friends. You talk to your enemies” (Archbishop Tutu).
4. **Peace is the most important thing there is.** “Peace is the only battle worth waging” (Albert Camus). “God is peace” (Pope Francis). “Peace is always beautiful” (Walt Whitman). “Courageous people do not fear forgiving for the sake of peace” (Nelson Mandela).
5. **Peace must be achieved peacefully.** War and conflict are never good. “Peace is not merely a distant goal we seek, but a means by which we arrive at that goal” (Martin Luther King Jr.). “Peace cannot be kept by force” (Albert Einstein). “Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable” (John F. Kennedy).
6. **Peace is connected to love, and defined as brotherhood.** “When the power of love overcomes the love of power the world will know peace” (Jimi Hendrix). We should “work so that the world becomes a community of brothers—the gospel of brotherhood” (Pope Francis).
7. **Peace ignores moral and theological differences.** “We are all children of one heavenly father. We belong to the same human family. We share a common destiny... [We should] invite even non-believers to desire peace” (Pope Francis). “He that would live in peace and at ease must not speak all he knows or all he sees” (Benjamin Franklin). “An eye for an eye only ends up making the whole world blind” (Mahatma Gandhi).

Principles of Peace from the Old Testament

Here are seven general principles we can derive from the Old Testament. [See Appendix A for a complete analysis of the Old Testament on peace.]

1. Peace is personal or national.

Peace in the Old Testament was sometimes personal, such as between Isaac and Abimelech. It often included a whole family, tribe, or city-state. But it was also a national peace between Israel and other nations (Genesis 15:15; 26:29, 31; Joshua 9:15; Joshua 10:20-21; Joshua 11:19; Judges 6:23-24; 1 Samuel 1:17; 16:4-5; 29:7; 2 Samuel 10:19).

2. The strongest holds the power of peace.

Peace requires strength. In the days of war, that meant winning or having the stronger army or nation. But it would also be true about being stronger financially or morally. The weak can never offer peace. For example, Joshua conquered Jericho and Ai and all the people of Canaan were afraid of him. Because of that, the Gibeonites (via deception) came to Joshua for peace and *Joshua made peace with them [the Gibeonites] and made a covenant with them, to let them live; and the leaders of the congregation swore an oath to them* (Joshua 9:15, see also Joshua 10:20-21; 2 Samuel 10:19). The same would be true with God. We cannot negotiate peace with God. Peace with God is always on His terms. And in the Old Testament that was through a *peace offering* (Exodus 20:24; Ephesians 2:8-9). [The phrase *peace offering* is used 87 times in the Bible.]

3. It is not always appropriate to be at peace with everyone.

When people set themselves up as the enemies of God, we should not make theological or moral peace that would give the impression that we approve or tolerate their opposition to God or His commandments. For example, God told Moses,

No Ammonite or Moabite shall enter the assembly of the LORD; none of their descendants, even to the tenth generation, shall ever enter the assembly of the LORD ... You shall never seek their peace or their prosperity all your days (Deuteronomy 23:3, 6; see also 29:18-20; Ezra 9:12; 2 Kings 9:22; Ecclesiastes 3:8; Isaiah 26:3; 45:7; Jeremiah 16:5).

4. We should never make peace with the wicked.

We should never be at peace with those who say something like, *“I have peace though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart* (Deuteronomy 29:18-20). Peace can come through false confidence provided by a false teacher telling people that their sin is okay with God. The psalmist said,

*Do not drag me away with the wicked and with those who work iniquity, who speak **peace** with their neighbors, while evil is in their hearts* (Psalm 28:3; see also Judges 18:6).

5. Enduring peace accompanies virtue, not evil.

Peace is connected to those who are called *upright* and *righteous*. Peace comes to those who provide rest, do good, depart from evil, and practice *lovingkindness*. But concerning the wicked, *Their feet run to evil, And they hasten to shed innocent blood; Their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity, Devastation and destruction are in their highways. They do not know the way of **peace**, And there is no justice in their tracks; They have made their paths crooked, Whoever treads on them does not know **peace*** (Isaiah 59:7-8; see also Psalm 34:14; 37:37; 85:8, 10; 119:165; Proverbs 16:7; Isaiah 32:17; 48:22; 59:7-8; 59:7-8; 1 Chronicles 22:9; 2 Chronicles 20:30).

6. Peace comes from wisdom and leads to joy.

The ways of wisdom are *pleasant ways and all her paths are **peace** and counselors of **peace** have joy* (Proverbs 3:17; 12:20).

7. World peace will only come after the coming of the Messiah in His Kingdom.

The Kingdom promise to Israel includes the promise:

*For you will go out with joy And be led forth with **peace***; (Isaiah 55:12). [And the Messiah is] *called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, **Prince of Peace**. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of **peace*** (Isaiah 9:6-7; see also Isaiah 11:1-9).

World peace, however, will not take place until after a time of great tribulation on the earth.

- *Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a **time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued*** (Daniel 12:1)
- *“Indeed, ask now concerning the former days which were before you, since the day that God created man on the earth, and inquire from one end of the heavens to the other. **Has anything been done like this great thing, or has anything been heard like it*** (Deuteronomy 4:32).

Principles of Peace from the New Testament

Here are seven general principles we can derive from the New Testament. [See Appendix B for a complete analysis of the New Testament passages on peace.]

1. World peace is inappropriate because it will always be a compromise with Satan.

At the Second Coming, the Messiah will bring peace because He will be defeating the Satanic forces at the end of the tribulation period and establishing a rule of righteousness in the Millennial Kingdom. He will legislate peace from power and impose righteousness (Isaiah 11:1-9; Revelation 19:11-21). But before His Second Coming, God will issue a judgment that will *take peace from the earth* (Revelation 6:4).

At Christ's first coming, and yet today, Satan is *the god of this world* (2 Corinthians 4:4), so world peace will always be a compromise with Satan. Jesus said

*Do not think that I came to bring **peace** on the earth; I did not come to bring **peace**, but a sword* (Matthew 10:34). [On another occasion, He said], *Do you suppose that I came to grant **peace** on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division; for from now on five members in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three* (Luke 12:51-52).

2. The peace of Christ is in the midst of the world's trouble.

In the upper room, Jesus told the Twelve,

***Peace** I leave with you; My **peace** I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful* (John 14:27). [And later] *These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have **peace**. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world* (John 16:33).

3. Peace is obtained in a context of the fear of God and the comfort of the Holy Spirit.

Luke tells us,

*The church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed **peace**, being built up; and going on in the **fear of the Lord** and in the **comfort of the Holy Spirit*** (Acts 9:31).

Paul said of the sinful world,

*Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of **peace** have they not known: There is **no fear of God** before their eyes* (Romans 3:16-18).

4. The gospel of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ results in eternal peace.

*Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have **peace** with God through our Lord Jesus Christ* (Romans 5:1). *There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, but glory and honor and **peace** to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek* (Romans 2:9-10; see also Ephesians 2:17; 6:15; Colossians 1:20).

5. We should try to be at peace with all men because peace is a characteristic of God and a fruit of the Spirit.

The reason for pursuing peace is not for the sake of humanity. Peace should be pursued because it reflects the character of God. Paul told the Romans,

*If possible, so far as it depends on you, [believers should] **be at peace with all men*** (Romans 12:18).

The author of Hebrews wrote,

*Pursue **peace with all men**, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord* (Hebrews 12:14; see also Romans 8:6; 14:17; 15:33; 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:11; Galatians 1:3; Ephesians 4:3; Colossians 3:15).

6. Peace is the believer's guaranteed answer to prayer.

*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the **peace** of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus* (Philippians 4:6-7).

7. Believers are to live in peace with one another.

There is a special sense in which believers are to

*Live in **peace** with one another (1 Thessalonians 5:13), and pursue righteousness, faith, love and **peace**, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart (2 Timothy 2:22; see also James 3:18).*

A Comparison of the Three Ideas about Peace

Here is a summary of the seven perspectives about peace discussed above:

Old Testament Peace is:

1. Personal or national
2. From war or superiority
3. Not always appropriate
4. Not with the wicked
5. From virtue not sin
6. From wisdom
7. Global, after the Messiah brings in His Kingdom

New Testament Peace is:

1. Never about world peace today
2. In the midst of tribulation
3. Connected to the fear of God
4. Eternal through the gospel
5. To be pursued with everyone
6. A believer's answer to prayer
7. To be among true believers in Christ

Secular Peace is:

1. Global "world peace"
2. The equality of all
3. Through dialogue
4. Most important
5. To be achieved peacefully
6. Love—global brotherhood
7. Disregarding moral and theological differences

Comparing Old Testament Peace with New Testament Peace

In the Old Testament, peace was sometimes personal or tribal, up and until the 1500s B.C. when God formed the nation of Israel. Then God had a commitment to both the individual and the nation. The disobedience of individuals led to a lack of peace, not only for that individual Israelite but also for the whole nation (until the nation dealt with the disobedient individual—Joshua 7).

In the New Testament, that concept changed with the coming of the church age (recorded in Acts chapter 2). Jesus lived under the Mosaic Law, which saw peace as something given to (or withheld from) the nation Israel. Therefore, we hear Him say,

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling (Matthew 23:37).

But Jesus also prepared the apostles to start the church. So we hear Him say to the apostles,

Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful (John 14:27).

The ministry of the apostles was all about individual peace. There is no institutional commitment of God through the apostles, and therefore, no peace ever offered to a nation, or any other institution, in the New Testament.

In the Old Testament, when peace was offered or negotiated, it was always from the physically or militarily stronger person or nation to a weaker one (Joshua 9). Equal parties may agree to be at peace with one another but only when each one has some strength to offer the other.

In the New Testament, this was also true, but the strong who offered peace were the morally and theologically strong (1 John 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:3; 16:11). The dominant example, however, is God Himself offering peace through the Gospel (Romans 5:1). Jesus offered peace from a position of power, when He said,

*These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have **peace**. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world (John 16:33).*

Although peace is desirable, and should be pursued if possible in both testaments, neither the Old nor the New Testament sees peace as something that is appropriate with everyone in the world. The world, up and until the Second Coming of Christ, is under the dominion of Satan. And since *the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving* (2 Corinthians 4:4), it is not appropriate to negotiate peace with Satan or the unbelievers he has blinded.

We should be men and women of peace, not warmongers or trouble causers. Believers are to be physically and emotionally at peace with the world because the world and its issues are not all that important. To go to war over money, power, pride, independence, or national sovereignty (except for Israel in the Old Testament) is to make the things of the world important. Jesus and the apostles are the example. They never pursued war or began an external conflict. What they did was proclaim the truth of the Word of God, which caused continual conflict. So although they were men of physical and emotional peace, their message eliminated the possibility of peace with the world.

In both testaments, peace comes from wisdom and the fear of God. But there are also constant warnings about making peace with sin, or our sin nature, or with those who are sinners or false teachers. This is a stern warning because such a peace is possible, and it will pragmatically work for a time. For example, Solomon attempted to have empirical peace through multiplying wives. This worked for a time because his 700 wives made peace with the village kings that gave him their daughters and granddaughters to marry. They were not about to side with anyone attacking Israel when they had children and grandchildren running around Jerusalem. This worked very well at establishing peace. But it also resulted in Solomon worshiping the gods of his wives. He joined himself with wives without regard for their religious difference.

Short-term peace can be obtained without righteousness or moral virtue. For example, Ahab and Jezebel were at peace while worshiping Baals and Asheroths, and supporting their false prophets. Also, Ahab was at peace after Jezebel lied and murdered Nabal in order to steal his vineyard so Ahab could have it. Saul was at peace with trying to kill David, Jeroboam was at peace with setting up a golden calf to be worshiped at Dan and Bethel. So the danger of being at peace with sin is that it can be beneficial for a while. The only sure way to define a proper peace, in both testaments, is to restrict it to the things which are consistent with the Word of God.

Comparing Biblical Peace with Secular Peace

There are basically two ways to think about peace. If our peace perspective is a global effort brought about by men, it will have a very different application than if our peace perspective is a personal effort brought about by peace with God.

The scope of secular peace today, and presumably for all time to come, is global. Since we live in a global community, any peace short of “world peace” would not be acceptable. The vehicle of the secularist to bring about this world peace is to establish:

1. Global religious tolerance
2. Global political alliance
3. Global economic equality
4. A progressive definition of morality

This will all happen through what they call “dialogue,” because dialogue, as a path to “world peace,” always assumes compromise, tolerance, and a progressive morality. It’s what Satan did in Genesis 3:1 when *he said to the woman, “Indeed, **has God said**, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?’”* Satan took a “God has said” and turned it into a “Has God said?” A command of God was questioned by means of a dialogue, which assumed God’s Word could be subjected to compromise, tolerance, and a fluid morality. Pope Francis said,

“The courage of dialogue and reconciliation [should] prevail over the temptation for vendetta, arrogance, [and] corruption.”

No one would disagree with that. But the question is, Should “The courage of dialogue and reconciliation prevail over” the Word of God? Because that’s the issue. The “courage” to compromise the Word of God is what must prevail over its commands if we are to pursue “world peace.” Dialogue may help us understand the Word of God, but to dialog over our global differences reduces the Word of God into *Has God said?*

And it’s not just about understanding each other better. The secular premise is that we don’t understand each other, and if we did, we would realize we are all very much alike. I understand the other world religions, and I understand that they contradict the Bible. Dialog as a solution to peace is only effective if the people of these religions are not serious about what they believe. If Christians believe the Bible is true, “dialogue” will not lead to “reconciliation” with the false teaching of other religions. If a Buddhist, Muslim, Hindu, or Jew believes their religion is true, then they cannot dialogue their way into accepting the Bible.

Here is what a “dialogue and reconciliation” approach has done to morality. There are (at least) five major sins condemned in the Bible that have been considered a problem by all sophisticated societies since the beginning of recorded history:

1. Abortion (or some sort of infant sacrifice)
2. Homosexuality
3. Cohabitation (or pre-marital fornication)
4. Divorce
5. Lying

All through history, up and until a few years ago (say, from the time of Christ to the 1960s), these five moral actions have been considered a **problem** by almost everybody, secular and religious. Today, they are considered a **solution** by almost everybody, secular and religious. Never before in history has anything like any of these clear, obvious, biblically condemned sins been considered a solution. But today they are. And it’s because we are pursuing “dialogue and reconciliation” with those committing them. Instead of “God has said,” our dialogue has asked, “Has God said?”—turning problems into solutions. So we are, theoretically, on our way to “world peace” via reconciliation with our fellow man.

World peace in both testaments is only obtained by the coming of the Messiah to the earth (which the New Testament calls the Second Coming) to set up His own kingdom. In both testaments, this is not a peace brought about gradually by the efforts of man. Those efforts only result in a satanic evil world controlled by the antichrist and will lead to a tribulation period where God will *take peace from the earth* (Revelation 6:4). The purpose of the future seven-year tribulation (Daniel 9:27) is to judge the world for its sin and rebellion against God (Psalm 98:9; Revelation 14:6-7).

Therefore, any attempt at world peace before the Second Coming of Christ:

- Tolerates Satan’s moral perversions

- Compromises truth with lies
- Defines peace apart from those who fear God, those *men with whom He is pleased*
- Ignores Christ's dichotomy, *in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation*
- Runs contrary to Christ's statement, *Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword*
- Works toward nullifying God judgment, whereby He will *take peace from the earth*

Secular "World Peace" Starts with Deception and Ends with Oppression

One other thing should be mentioned about secular world peace. Throughout history, peace within nations or leagues of nations has generally come about through a people being deceived and ends with those same people being oppressed. Classic examples include Castro's Cuba, Chavez's Venezuela, the Kim Jong-Il and Un regime in North Korea, and Soviet Communism. Soviet leaders, from Lenin (who came to power by popular demand) to Ceausescu in Romania, promised peace and delivered it—via oppression. The UN came about as an instrument of peace. Then NATO was created as a global army (a "military alliance") to bring it about. The same will be the case with the global peace offered by the antichrist in the upcoming great tribulation.

And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast... And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hand or on their forehead (Revelation 13:14-16).

Where Does Peace Come from and How Do We Get It?

The definition of peace is the same in the Bible as in secular society. The Hebrew word שָׁלוֹם (*shalom*), the Greek word εἰρήνη (*eirene*), and the English word "peace" all mean about the same thing.

Peace is freedom from turmoil, which results in well-being.

Both believe in an external peace and an internal peace. Both believe peace is good, valuable, and something that should be pursued with all people. But there the similarities end.

1. Secular society believes man should pursue global "world peace." The Bible says the antichrist will promise world peace, but it will only happen after the Second Coming of Christ, and the Bible never suggests that we should pursue it. The statement *Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven* (Matthew 6:10 KJV) is a prayer for God to do it, not a command for us to do it. The first coming of Christ brought war to peace. The Second Coming of Christ will bring peace to war.
2. The secular world believes world peace includes the social and economic equality of all people. So peace requires equality. But in the Bible, equality has nothing to do with peace. Biblical peace is in the midst of our social differences, not a result of equalizing them. Paul wrote, *Were you called while a slave? Do not worry about it; but if you are able also to become free, rather do that. For he who was called in the Lord while a slave, is the Lord's freedman; likewise he who was called while free, is Christ's slave* (1 Corinthians 7:21-22).
3. Secular peace comes through "dialogue and reconciliation" of people with differences. Biblical peace comes through repentance and reconciliation with God. *Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ* (Romans 5:1).

4. For the secularist, peace between our fellow human beings trumps everything. In the Bible, our relationship with God trumps everything. For secular peace, our relationships with each other must define our relationship with God. In the Bible, our relationship with God defines our relationship with each other.

5. Secular peace is to be achieved peacefully. Martin Luther King Jr. said,

“Peace is not merely a distant goal we seek, but a means by which we arrive at that goal.”

But in the Bible, peace was not “a means by which we arrive at that goal.” Rather, peace was arrived at by war, a physical war in the Old Testament and a spiritual war in the New Testament. And that war was to be approached from a position of strength.

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil (Ephesians 6:10-11).

6. Secular peace is connected to love and defined as global brotherhood.

“When the power of love overcomes the love of power the world will know peace” (Jimi Hendrix).

“[We should] work so that the world becomes a community of brothers —the gospel of brotherhood” (Pope Francis).

Biblical peace is connected to the fear of God, which leads to repentance and the comfort of the Holy Spirit.

*The church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed **peace**, being built up; and going on in the **fear of the Lord** and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit* (Acts 9:31).

7. Secular peace is to be obtained by minimizing our moral and theological differences. In the Bible, morality and theology are always superior to peace, because morality and theology define our relationship with God, and our relationship with God defines our relationship with each other. God told Israel that He went to war with the nations, and even His own people, because of their idolatry and all of the *abominations which you have committed* (Ezekiel 16:51). The Apostle Paul did not suggest we pursue “dialogue and reconciliation” with sinners. Instead, he condemned

... *those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners... and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching* (1 Timothy 1:9-10).

In Conclusion

Although the Bible and the secular world both have the same definition of peace, and both see peace as valuable and something to be pursued, that’s where the similarities end. They are diametrically opposed to one another when it comes to

- The extent of peace
- The origin of peace
- The relative value of peace
- How to get peace

According to the secularist, peace should be global, it comes from moral and theological tolerance, it is of supreme value, and we get it by dialogue with one another about our differences. According to the Bible, peace is personal, it comes from conforming to the character of God, there are a lot of

things more valuable (like truth, holiness, and a fear of God), and we get it by repentance and receiving Christ by grace through faith. All this boils down to one huge question:

Should peace be shaped and formed by our progressive global society, or by the Word of God?

Appendix A

Peace in the Old Testament

Peace can describe a condition of tranquility before death.

- Genesis 15:15—*As for you, you shall go to your fathers in **peace**; you will be buried at a good old age.*

Peace is a lack of conflict with a particular party by agreement or treaty.

- Genesis 26:29, 31—[Abimelech said “you [Isaac] will do us no harm, just as we have not touched you and have done to you nothing but good and have sent you away in **peace**. You are now the blessed of the LORD.”... In the morning they arose early and exchanged oaths; then Isaac sent them [Abimelech and his men] away and they departed from him in **peace**.

The strongest holds the power of peace.

- Joshua 9:15—*Joshua made **peace** with them [the Gibeonites] and made a covenant with them, to let them live; and the leaders of the congregation swore an oath to them.*

Peace can come through conquest.

- Joshua 10:20-21—*It came about when Joshua and the sons of Israel had finished slaying them with a very great slaughter, until they were destroyed, and the survivors who remained of them had entered the fortified cities, that all the people returned to the camp to Joshua at Makkedah in **peace**. No one uttered a word against any of the sons of Israel.*
- 2 Samuel 10:19—*When all the kings, servants of Hadadezer, saw that they were defeated by Israel, they made **peace** with Israel and served them.*

Peace with God is connected to a ritual offering made to God.

- Exodus 20:24—*‘You shall make an altar of earth for Me, and you shall sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your **peace offerings**, your sheep and your oxen; in every place where I cause My name to be remembered, I will come to you and bless you. [The phrase *peace offering* is used 87 times in the Bible.]*

Peace might be offered as conditions of surrender in time of war.

- Deuteronomy 20:10-12—*When you approach a city to fight against it, you shall offer it terms of **peace**. If it agrees to make **peace** with you and opens to you, then all the people who are found in it shall become your forced labor and shall serve you. However, if it does not make **peace** with you, but makes war against you, then you shall besiege it.*

Peace was not to be sought with everyone.

- Deuteronomy 23:3—*“No Ammonite or Moabite shall enter the assembly of the LORD; none of their descendants, even to the tenth generation, shall ever enter the assembly of the LORD.*

- Deuteronomy 23:6—“*You shall never seek their [Moabites and Ammonites] **peace** or their prosperity all your days.*”

It is possible to be at peace with our own sin or secret sin.

Peace against God can be achieved as a personal stubbornness of the heart, while violating the commands of God.

- Deuteronomy 29:18-20—[I am making this covenant (verse 14)] *so that there will not be among you a man or woman, or family or tribe, whose heart turns away today from the LORD our God, to go and serve the gods of those nations; that there will not be among you a root bearing poisonous fruit and wormwood. It shall be when he hears the words of this curse, that he will boast, saying, “**I have peace though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart** in order to destroy [bring disaster upon] the watered land with the dry.” The LORD shall never be willing to forgive him, but rather the anger of the LORD and His jealousy will burn against that man, and every curse which is written in this book will rest on him, and the LORD will blot out his name from under heaven.*
- Ezra 9:12—‘*So now do not give your daughters to their sons nor take their daughters to your sons, and never seek their **peace** or their prosperity, that you may be strong and eat the good things of the land and leave it as an inheritance to your sons forever.*’

Peace is the opposite of war.

- Joshua 11:19—*There was not a city which made **peace** with the sons of Israel except the Hivites living in Gibeon; they took them all in battle.*

Peace comes when you realize you are not going to die.

- Judges 6:23-24—*The LORD said to him [Gideon], “**Peace** to you, do not fear; you shall not die.” Then Gideon built an altar there to the LORD and named it **The LORD is Peace**.*

Peace can come through false confidence provided for by a false prophecy.

- Judges 18:6—*The priest [The Levite Micah hired to be his family priest] said to them [the 5 Danites looking for a new place to live] “Go in **peace**; your way in which you are going has the LORD’S approval.”*

Peace might include meeting someone’s needs.

- Judges 19:20—*The old man said, “**Peace** to you. Only let me take care of all your needs; however, do not spend the night in the open square.”*

Peace came from having confidence that your prayer will be answered.

- 1 Samuel 1:17—*Then Eli answered and said [to Hannah], “Go in **peace**; and may the God of Israel grant your petition that you have asked of Him.”*

Peace meant safety.

- 1 Samuel 16:4-5—*So Samuel did what the LORD said, and came to Bethlehem. And the elders of the city came trembling to meet him and said, “Do you come in **peace**?” He said, “In **peace**; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.*
- 1 Samuel 20:21—*“And behold, I will send the lad, saying, ‘Go, find the arrows.’ If I specifically say to the lad, ‘Behold, the arrows are on this side of you, get them,’ then come; for there is **safety** (**peace**, שָׁלוֹם, Shalom) for you and no harm, as the LORD lives.*

Peace may be to avoid a conflict.

- 1 Samuel 29:7—*“Now therefore return and go in **peace**, that you may not displease the lords of the Philistines.*

Peace can be freedom from the judgment of God.

- 1 Kings 2:33—*“ [Solomon speaking about Joab when he had him killed] *So shall their blood return on the head of Joab and on the head of his descendants forever; but to David and his descendants and his house and his throne, may there be **peace** from the LORD forever.*”*

Peace is freedom from violence that leads to rest.

- 2 Kings 9:17-18—*Now the watchman was standing on the tower in Jezreel and he saw the company of Jehu as he came, and said, “I see a company.” And Joram said, “Take a horseman and send him to meet them and let him say, ‘Is it **peace**?’” So a horseman went to meet him and said, “Thus says the king, ‘Is it **peace**?’” And Jehu said, “What have you to do with **peace**? Turn behind me.” And the watchman reported, “The messenger came to them, but he did not return.*
- Psalm 35:20—*For they do not speak **peace**, But they devise deceitful words against those who are quiet in the land.*
- 1 Chronicles 22:9—*‘Behold, a son will be born to you, who shall be a man of **rest**; and I will give him rest from all his enemies on every side; for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give **peace** and quiet to Israel in his days.*
- 2 Chronicles 20:30—*So the kingdom of Jehoshaphat was at **peace**, for his God gave him **rest** on all sides.*

Peace may be impossible because of godless behavior.

- 2 Kings 9:22—*When Joram saw Jehu, he said, “Is it **peace**, Jehu?” And he answered, “What **peace**, so long as the harlotries of your mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many?”*
- Isaiah 48:22—*“There is no **peace** for the wicked,” says the LORD.*
- Jeremiah 16:5—*For thus says the LORD, “Do not enter a house of mourning, or go to lament or to console them; for I have withdrawn My **peace** from this people,” declares the LORD, “My lovingkindness and compassion.*

Peace is offered by the wicked while evil is in their hearts.

- Psalm 28:3—*Do not drag me away with the wicked And with those who work iniquity, Who speak **peace** with their neighbors, While evil is in their hearts.*

Peace can be a virtue connected to doing good and departing from evil.

- Psalm 34:14—*Depart from evil and do good; Seek **peace** and pursue it.*
- Psalm 37:37—*Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is **peace** (KJV).*
- Psalm 85:10—*Lovingkindness and truth have met together; Righteousness and **peace** have kissed each other.*
- Psalm 119:165—*Those who love Your law have great **peace**, And nothing causes them to stumble.*
- Isaiah 32:17—*And the work of righteousness will be **peace**, And the service of righteousness, quietness and confidence forever.*

Peace can be a reward from God.

- Psalm 85:8—*I will hear what God the LORD will say; For He will speak **peace** to His people, to His godly ones.*
- Proverbs 16:7—*When a man's ways are pleasing to the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at **peace** with him.*

Peace results from wisdom.

- Proverbs 3:17—*Her [wisdom's] ways are pleasant ways and all her paths are **peace**.*

Peace brings joy.

- Proverbs 12:20—*Deceit is in the heart of those who devise evil, But counselors of **peace** have joy.*

There is a time for war and a time for peace.

- Ecclesiastes 3:8—*A time for war and a time for peace.*
- Jeremiah 6:14—*"They have healed the brokenness of My people superficially, Saying, '**Peace, peace,**' But there is no **peace**.*

The Messiah is a prince of peace because of His power in the Millennial Kingdom.

- Isaiah 9:6-7—*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**. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of **peace**.*

Personal peace results from trusting in God.

- Isaiah 26:3—*Thou wilt keep him in perfect **peace**, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee (KJV).*

God makes peace and removes peace.

- Isaiah 45:7—*I form the light, and create darkness: I make **peace**, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.*
- Isaiah 55:12—*For you will go out with joy And be led forth with **peace**; The mountains and the hills will break forth into shouts of joy before you, And all the trees of the field will clap their hands.*

Peace will come to the whole earth during the Millennium.

- Jeremiah 12:12—*On all the bare heights in the wilderness Destroyers have come, For a sword of the LORD is devouring From one end of the land even to the other; There is no **peace** for any-one.*

Sinners do not know the way of peace.

- Isaiah. 59:7-8—*Their feet run to evil, And they hasten to shed innocent blood; Their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity, Devastation and destruction are in their highways. They do not know the way of **peace**, And there is no justice in their tracks; They have made their paths crooked, Who-ever treads on them does not know **peace**.*

Appendix B

Peace in the New Testament

Jesus did not come to bring peace on earth but rather division.

- Matthew 10:34—*Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring **peace**, but a sword.*
- Matthew 10:35—*“For I came to SET A MAN AGAINST HIS FATHER, AND A DAUGHTER AGAINST HER MOTHER, AND A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW AGAINST HER MOTHER-IN-LAW;*
- Matthew 10:36—*and A MAN’S ENEMIES WILL BE THE MEMBERS OF HIS HOUSEHOLD.*
- Matthew 10:37—*He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.*
- Luke 12:51—*“Do you suppose that I came to grant **peace** on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division.*
- Luke 12:52—*for from now on five members in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three.*

Peace results from self-judgment.

- Mark 9:49-50—*For everyone will be salted with fire. Salt is good; but if the salt becomes unsalty, with what will you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at **peace** with one another.*

Peace on earth is only for those in whom God is pleased.

- Luke 2:14—*“Glory to God in the highest, And on earth **peace** among men with whom He is pleased.”*

Peace comes as a result of obedience to God.

- Luke 19:42-44—*“If you [Jerusalem] had known in this day, even you, the things which make for **peace**! But now they have been hidden from your eyes. For the days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, and surround you and hem you in on every side, and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation.”*

The peace of Christ is in the midst of the tribulation of the world.

- John 14:27—***Peace** I leave with you; My **peace** I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.*
- John 16:33—*These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have **peace**. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.”*
- John 20:21—*So Jesus said to them again, “**Peace** be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you.”*

Peace is obtained in a context of the fear of God and the comfort of the Holy Spirit.

- Acts 9:31—*So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed **peace**, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase.*

Eternal peace is the result of the judgment of God upon *everyone who does good.*

- Romans 2:9—*There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek.*
- Romans 2:10—*but glory and honor and **peace** to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*

Peace cannot be obtained by the sinful ways of anyone in the world.

- Romans 3:16—*Destruction and misery are in their ways.*
- Romans 3:17—*And the way of **peace** have they not known.*
- Romans 3:18—*There is no fear of God before their eyes.*

Peace comes through justification by faith in Jesus Christ.

- Romans 5:1—*Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have **peace** with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Peace comes from setting our mind on the Holy Spirit rather than on the flesh.

- Romans 8:6—*For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and **peace.***

If possible, so far as it depends on you, [believers should] be at peace with all men.

- Romans 12:18—*If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at **peace** with all men.*
- Romans 14:17—*for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and **peace** and joy in the Holy Spirit.*
- Hebrews 12:14—*Pursue **peace** with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.*

Peace is a characteristic of God.

- Romans 15:33—*Now the God of **peace** be with you all.*
- Romans 16:20—*The God of **peace** will soon crush Satan under your feet.*
- 2 Corinthians 13:11—*Finally, brethren, rejoice, be made complete, be comforted, be like-minded, live in **peace**; and the God of love and **peace** will be with you.*
- Galatians 1:3—*Grace to you and **peace** from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Peace is to not be confused about the prophecy from God.

- 1 Corinthians 14:33—*for God is not a God of confusion but of **peace**, as in all the churches of the saints.*

Peace is a fruit of the Spirit.

- Galatians 5:22—*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, **peace**, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness.*

The Gospel is peace with God.

- Ephesians 2:17—*And came and preached **peace** to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.*
- Ephesians 4:3—*Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of **peace.***
- Ephesians 6:15—*And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of **peace** (KJV).*
- Colossians 1:20—*and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made **peace** through the blood of His cross.*

Believers should let the peace of Christ govern their hearts.

- Colossians 3:15—*Let the **peace** of Christ rule [literally, arbitrate or judge] in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.*

Peace is the believer's guaranteed answer to prayer.

- Philippians 4:6-7—*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the **peace** of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

Believers are to live in peace with one another.

- 1 Thessalonians 5:13—*and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in **peace** with one another.*
- 2 Timothy 2:22—*Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and **peace**, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.*
- James 3:18—*And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in **peace** by those who make **peace**.*

God will issue a judgment that will take peace from the earth.

- Revelation 6:4—*And another, a red horse, went out; and to him who sat on it, it was granted to take **peace** from the earth, and that men would slay one another; and a great sword was given to him.*