

# 6 TOWARDS SHALOM

## This study expands some of the themes of chapter 9

The description of the exclusion of murderers from the [New Jerusalem] (22:15) shows that this is a wholly non-violent society, for everything has been made new (21:5).

From chapter 9, 'Shalom: God's great plan', p. 161

### Opening question

Near the end of the book of Revelation, the Spirit and the bride (the church) say to Jesus, 'Come' (22:17). The reader is invited to join them in their prayer, and the writer of the book adds his own voice to it in verse 20.

Does your heart join with these voices, or do you have reservations? Why, or why not?

### Case study

Read Micah 4:3–4. This is the prophet's great vision of the future that God has in store. What themes do you notice here? What would the world be like if everyone sat under their own vines and fig trees (v. 4)?

### Digging deeper

Now read Isaiah 9:1–7, another great vision of the future. We often read these words at Christmas, but tend to skip over verses 3–5. This is a pity, because it means we miss some important themes. There are three great lights (v. 2) that will cause God's people to sing for joy (like a harvest celebration, or like the song of battle triumph; v. 3):

- The end of oppression – just as God saved his people from slavery in Egypt or used Gideon to shrug off oppression by the Midianites (v. 4).
- Not just the ending of a war, but the ending of all war, with the destruction of military apparatus (v. 5).
- The birth of the baby whose arrival will institute these things (v. 6).

How do these 'hidden verses' enrich our understanding of what God is doing in sending his Son?

### For further study

Read Revelation 22:1–5. How many themes from Genesis 1–2 can you identify?

When Jesus says, 'Behold, I am making all things new' (Revelation 21:5, ESV). What does that include?

How will this shape the way that you pray?