

Series: Names of God

Lesson: Jehovah Shalom

Text: Judges 6:24

Introduction

The compound name of Jehovah we will study today is Jehovah Shalom. The name is first found in Judges 6:24, "So Gideon built an altar there to the LORD, and called it Jehovah is Peace. To this day it *is* still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites." ([Judges 6:24 NKJV](#))

It had been more than 200 years since Jehovah revealed Himself to His people as Jehovah-M'Kaddesh, the God who sanctifies. Joshua, Israel's great general and leader, had long since died. The land had been conquered and divided among the tribes. But still, no national unity had yet been achieved. Israel did not have a central government or worship. It was a period which the book of Judges says, "every man did that which was right in his own eyes."

After Joshua died, Israel began to stray from faith in Jehovah and pursued the pagan gods of their neighbors. The new modern generation had only heard stories about Jehovah Jireh, who delivered Israel from bondage in Egypt. They didn't know the Jehovah Rophe, who heals sicknesses and sorrows, and prevented misfortunes from coming upon them.

They suffered numerous defeats when they turned their backs upon Jehovah Nissi as their banner of victory. They corrupted themselves with the idolatry and immorality of the Canaanites rather than sanctify themselves to Jehovah M'Kaddesh. So they forfeited their purity, peace, prosperity, and liberty. They severed their connection with God and forsook their destiny as a unique and special people, set apart for God's service and purpose among the nations. Consequently, they could not rise above the material barriers to spiritual living.

It's not too difficult to understand why the attraction of the gods of the heathen held such allure for them. Without a sense of God's unique mission for their lives, there was no common purpose to unite them. Without that spiritual vision, they became easy prey to the appetites and lusts of a more worldly lifestyle. As their apostasy deepened, so did the bondage and misery. God used their bondage to chasten and awaken them to their spiritual calling. Because they disobeyed God, their purpose in the Promised Land fell short.

God planned for them to be more than mere tillers of the soil and tenders of the vineyards. He placed a spiritual seed in their hearts. But by imitating the worship of their corrupt neighbors, they trampled on that spiritual seed and endangered their physical existence.

They should have completely subdued the Promised Land. Instead, the Canaanites subdued Israel and swept over the land, reaping whatever Israel had sown, driving them into the caves and rocks. Israel had to live in underground caves with air

holes they could flee to when the enemy approached. They posted watchmen to warn them.

It was a vicious cycle of alternating prosperity and adversity, sinning and repenting, slavery and deliverance. They would sin and then experience the consequences of their sins. In their distress, they would cry out to God for deliverance. God would hear their prayer and deliverer them. Then, once again, Israel would enjoy God's blessing and prosperity. But after a while, they would fall away again, and the whole process would begin again.

Gideon was a young man who lived during a time when Israel's sinfulness had caused them to experience severe oppression from the Midianites. Because of their sins, the Lord had delivered them into the hand of the Midianites for seven years. Midian and the Amalekites would come with great hordes of men and cattle and devour the land, destroying what they could not consume.

In Judges 6, Gideon was threshing a little wheat he had somehow saved from these hordes of Midianites. Gideon threshed his wheat in the secrecy of a winepress for fear the Midianites would plunder and perhaps even kill him. While he was threshing, the angel of Jehovah appeared to Gideon with a promise that he would deliver Israel. Gideon, of course, had some doubts about that idea. But, eventually, he decides to accept the challenge.

In faith, he builds an altar which he calls Jehovah Shalom in anticipation of God's victory and peace.

I. THE MEANING OF PEACE

"Shalom" is a very significant word in the Old Testament and is used in various forms. It is translated as "whole" or "uncut" in Deuteronomy 27:6, " You shall build with whole stones the altar of the LORD your God, and offer burnt offerings on it to the LORD your God." ([Deuteronomy 27:6 NKJV](#))

Daniel uses the same word as "finished," "God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it;" ([Daniel 5:26 NKJV](#)) In 1 Kings 9:25, it says, "So Solomon 'finished' the temple." It is used as "full" in Genesis 15:16, "The iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." It is translated as "make good" in Exodus 21, relating to losses caused by carelessness. In Genesis 43, Joseph asks about the welfare of his brothers and uses the same word again when he asks if their father is well. In 2 Samuel 20:9, before Joab deals a treacherous and fatal blow to General Amasa, he asks, "Are you in good health, my brother?"

It is used as "render" and "pay" or "perform" in the sense of fulfilling or completing an obligation. The psalmist writes, "Offer to God thanksgiving, And pay your vows to the Most High." ([Psalms 50:14 NKJV](#))

It is translated as "perfect" or "loyal " about twenty times." David asks God to "Give my son Solomon a loyal heart to keep Your commandments and Your testimonies

and Your statutes, to do all *these things*, and to build the temple for which I have made provision" in (1 Chronicles 29:19 NKJV). And Solomon echoes this when he exhorts the people, "Let your heart, therefore, be perfect [*shalem*] with Jehovah our God." (1 Kings 8:61)

That is the underlying concept of all the various translations of this one Hebrew word. It is a word that is most often and most appropriately translated as "peace" some 170 times. Shalom expresses the deepest need of the human heart and represents the greatest measure of contentment and satisfaction that can be experienced in life.

During the reign of King Solomon, "Judah and Israel dwelt safely (that is, in confidence and peace), each man under his vine and his fig tree, from Dan as far as Beersheba, all the days of Solomon. (1 Kings 4:25 NKJV)

Jeremiah said that Shalom would characterize the reign of the Messiah, the righteous Branch of David, and Judah and Israel will dwell safely in peace (Jeremiah 23:6). The Messiah would be the "Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6), and Jerusalem, the city of the Messiah, means "city of peace" or "possession of peace."

Peace was the common form of greeting in early Bible times, even as it is today in the Middle East. It is also the word used in "peace offering." The peace offering was one of the sacrifices of atonement. (Leviticus 3; 7:11-21). The peace offering was a picture of restoration. The fellowship broken by sin between God and man was atoned for by shed blood.

It indicated that both God and man, priest and people, were reconciled by partaking of the offering.

All of the meanings contained in this word indicate that every blessing is part of the restoration that God intended. God wants to restore us to the peace mankind enjoyed with Him before sin marred that fellowship.

II. THE SOURCE OF PEACE

God is not only the source of our peace; He is perfect peace! He grieves over the sin and corruption of the world, which at creation He pronounced so good. He is stirred to wrath by the evil of the wicked. He is not indifferent to humanity's sorrows and needs, especially those of His people. God tells Moses in Exodus, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people . . . I know their sorrow." Isaiah writes, "In all Israel's affliction, He was afflicted." (63:9).

Yet, strangely enough, misery and suffering do not disturb God's peace. Nothing can destroy the perfect balance of His divine nature. Because of His unfailing peace, God gives us peace that passes understanding. God's peace sustains our hope and assurance.

Jehovah is also the source of peace in His attitude toward us. The prophet Jeremiah writes, " For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope." (Jeremiah 29:11 NKJV)

The Scriptures clearly indicate that God desires all of mankind to experience His goodness and peace. Ezekiel 33:11 says, "He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked but only that he turn from his evil way and live."

The Scriptures are full of the promise and purpose of peace. Leviticus 26 God says, "If you walk in my statutes . . . and do them . . . I will give peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid: and I will rid evil beasts out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land."

Psalms 29:11 says, "The Lord will bless his people with peace." Isaiah 26:12 says, "Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us." Peace forms the apex of the great high priestly benediction that Aaron was to use to bless the children of Israel, "The Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace" (Numbers 6:24-26).

III. THE PRESENCE IS PEACE

In Judges 6:22, Gideon addressed the angel of Jehovah as, "O Jehovah Elohim." In the very next verse, it is Jehovah Shalom who speaks peace to Gideon. It is the most striking manifestation of Jehovah amidst all the chaotic, restless struggling of this period in Israel's history. In the Book of Leviticus, God revealed Himself as Jehovah-M'Kaddesh, the God who sanctifies. Now, God reveals Himself as Jehovah Shalom, the God of Peace.

After conquering Canaan, Israel should have entered into the rest spoken of in Hebrews Chapter 4. Moses spoke of this rest in the wilderness when he said, "for as yet you have not come to the rest and the inheritance which the LORD your God is giving you." (Deuteronomy 12:9 NKJV)

Because of disobedience, Israel failed to enter into that rest. Nothing is more characteristic of the Book of Judges than its chaotic restlessness. Over and over again, after God's deliverance from bondage and misery, we read that the land had rest for a while.

Insecurity and fear had never been greater than in Gideon's day. So the angel of Jehovah comes to Gideon saying, "Jehovah is with you" (Judges 6:12). Israel didn't have peace because she no longer knew God's presence. That is the answer to Gideon's question, "O my Lord, If Jehovah is with us, why has all this befallen us?"

God was not with Israel. He is with those who are with Him. 2 Chronicles 15:2 says, "Now the Spirit of God came upon Azariah, the son of Oded. And he went out to meet Asa, and said to him: "Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin. The LORD *is* with you while you are with Him. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you. (2 Chronicles 15:1-2 NKJV)

When Gideon realized who he was speaking to, he was afraid. Probably, the consciousness of his own sinfulness in the presence of God made him tremble. Most sinners know that all is not well or at peace between themselves and God. We all need to be reconciled to God, but reconciliation can only happen if the price for our sin is paid.

The price of our sin is death. So how can God save the sinner if our sin requires our death. In the Old Testament, it happened by the sacrifice of an animal substitute whose shed blood paid the price, looking forward to the time when the Messiah would restore the peace between God and man.

At the angel's command, Gideon laid out this kind of an offering on an altar of rock nearby. As a token of acceptance, the angel caused fire to come out of the rock and consume the offering. Based on this offering, the angel said to Gideon, "Peace be unto you: fear not: you shall not die" (Judges 6:23).

Then Gideon called the altar Jehovah Shalom. This experience taught Gideon that Jehovah, who demands sanctification and purity, enables His people to fulfill His demands if they yield themselves to Him. Our sinfulness naturally causes us to shrink from God's holiness. It causes us to realize the impossibility of being what a holy God requires. But God reassures us and speaks peace to us. He says, "I am Jehovah who sanctifies you and calls you to live in my presence and fellowship."

It is the assurance that Jehovah Shalom gives to us. After his encounter with Jehovah, Gideon had a peaceful assurance that even though his family was small, one could chase a thousand, and two could put ten thousand to flight.

Conclusion

Jesus becomes the fullest manifestation of Jehovah Shalom. He is the perfection of our peace. Gideon's name for Jehovah finds its greatest expression and realization in the New Testament. Paul frequently calls upon "the God of peace," which he implies is Jesus Christ. (Romans 15:33; II Corinthians 13:11; Hebrews 13:20, etc.).

Jesus speaks of "my peace" in John 14:27 when He says to His disciples: "My peace I give unto you," and, "These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace" (John 16:33). He was so secure in peace that he could say, "Come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I Will give you rest . . . rest unto your souls" (Matthew 11:28, 29). As the Messiah, Jesus is the Prince of Peace promised in the Old Testament (Isaiah 9:6).

Before His birth, Zacharias announced Him as the day-spring from on high who visited His people "to guide our feet into the way of peace" (Luke 1:78, 79). At His birth, a multitude of the heavenly host sang "peace on earth, goodwill to men" (Luke 2:14).

Throughout his earthly ministry, Jesus preached and promised peace. His first words to His disciples after rising from the dead are, "Peace be unto you."

To the Ephesians, Paul wrote that Jesus "came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh" (Ephesians 2:17). Paul writes that Jesus accomplished this peace for us, and "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1).

By His own sacrifice, Jesus broke down the barrier of sin that stood between God and us and opened for us that new and living way into the holiest place of all. But the measure of our sanctification to Him, and our continued trust in Him, is the measure of our peace through Him.

Philippians 4:7 says, "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." But our continued peace depends on the measure of our trust and obedience. In Colossians 3:15, Paul tells us we are to let the peace of God rule in our hearts. Romans 8:6 says, "For to be carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace." (Romans 8:6 NKJV)

Peace is also the fruit of the Holy Spirit's work of sanctification in your life. Paul prays, "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thessalonians 5:23 NKJV)

Through Jesus, we have peace with God. Jesus is to us the peace of God. There is no hope of peace apart from Jesus for individuals or nations. It is always first righteousness, then peace. Both Old and New Testaments agree on this. Isaiah 32:17 says, "The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever."

But the only righteousness acceptable to God is the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ and those who receive it through their faith in Him. The way to experience peace in your life is through Jesus! He is Jehovah Shalom.