

יהוה

“YHWH-Shalom: The Lord is Peace”

Introduction – War and Peace

Judg 2:10-23

- 10 After that whole generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation grew up, who knew neither the LORD nor what he had done for Israel.
- 11 Then the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD and served the Baals.
- 12 They forsook the LORD, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of Egypt. They followed and worshiped various gods of the peoples around them. They provoked the LORD to anger
- 13 because they forsook him and served Baal and the Ashtoreths.
- 14 In his anger against Israel the LORD handed them over to raiders who plundered them. He sold them to their enemies all around, whom they were no longer able to resist.
- 15 Whenever Israel went out to fight, the hand of the LORD was against them to defeat them, just as he had sworn to them. They were in great distress.
- 16 Then the LORD raised up judges, who saved them out of the hands of these raiders.
- 17 Yet they would not listen to their judges but prostituted themselves to other gods and worshiped them. Unlike their fathers, they quickly turned from the way in which their fathers had walked, the way of obedience to the LORD's commands.
- 18 Whenever the LORD raised up a judge for them, he was with the judge and saved them out of the hands of their enemies as long as the judge lived; for the LORD had compassion on them as they groaned under those who oppressed and afflicted them.
- 19 But when the judge died, the people returned to ways even more corrupt than those of their fathers, following other gods and serving and worshiping them. They refused to give up their evil practices and stubborn ways.
- 20 Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel and said, "Because this nation has violated the covenant that I laid down for their forefathers and has not listened to me,
- 21 I will no longer drive out before them any of the nations Joshua left when he died.
- 22 I will use them to test Israel and see whether they will keep the way of the LORD and walk in it as their forefathers did."
- 23 The LORD had allowed those nations to remain; he did not drive them out at once by giving them into the hands of Joshua. NIV

How often do we consider conflict to come from our adversary? And yet, Scripture plainly teaches that God leaves obstacles for us to test us. And not just to test us, to train us as well.

Judg 3:1-2

- 1 These are the nations the LORD left to test all those Israelites who had not experienced any of the wars in Canaan
- 2 (he did this only to teach warfare to the descendants of the Israelites who had not had previous battle experience): NIV

The Lord left these “ites” to train the children of Israel in warfare.

Col 2:15

And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. NIV

If Christ has triumphed over all the evil spirit hoard and dispossessed them, why are they still roaming the earth? Well, part of the reason is to teach us warfare (Eph 6:10-18)!

It is true that God left these nations in the land. But is that why they were not enjoying peace? No, they were not enjoying peace because they had forsaken YHWH, the God of peace. Our peace is not dependent upon our circumstances, but upon our relationship. Gideon, a man who lived in a time of turmoil, understood what real peace meant.

I. The Altar of Peace

1. The Pronouncement of the Name

A. The circumstances of Gideon's calling

Judg 6:1-6 NIV

- 1 Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD, and for seven years he gave them into the hands of the Midianites.
- 2 Because the power of Midian was so oppressive, the Israelites prepared shelters for themselves in mountain clefts, caves and strongholds.
- 3 Whenever the Israelites planted their crops, the Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples invaded the country.
- 4 They camped on the land and ruined the crops all the way to Gaza and did not spare a living thing for Israel, neither sheep nor cattle nor donkeys.
- 5 They came up with their livestock and their tents like swarms of locusts. It was impossible to count the men and their camels; they invaded the land to ravage it.
- 6 Midian so impoverished the Israelites that they cried out to the LORD for help.

I think that if we will examine our lives, we will find that the times we seek the Lord the most are the times we are in trouble. This should give us pause when trouble comes. We should first ask if we have offended God before we begin to assume that the devil is attacking us.

Judg 6:7-10

- 7 When the Israelites cried to the LORD because of Midian,
- 8 he sent them a prophet, who said, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I brought you up out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.
- 9 I snatched you from the power of Egypt and from the hand of all your oppressors. I drove them from before you and gave you their land.
- 10 I said to you, 'I am the LORD your God; do not worship the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you live.' But you have not listened to me." NIV

Before deliverance comes, the Lord lets them know the reason of their bondage.

Judg 6:11-18

- 11 The angel of the LORD came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites.
- 12 When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said, "The LORD is with you, mighty warrior."
- 13 "But sir," Gideon replied, "if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our fathers told us about when they said, 'Did not the LORD bring us up out of Egypt?' But now the LORD has abandoned us and put us into the hand of Midian."
- 14 The LORD turned to him and said, "Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand. Am I not sending you?"
- 15 "But Lord," Gideon asked, "how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family."
- 16 The LORD answered, "I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites together."
- 17 Gideon replied, "If now I have found favor in your eyes, give me a sign that it is really you talking to me."
- 18 Please do not go away until I come back and bring my offering and set it before you." And the LORD said, "I will wait until you return." NIV

What was the sign Gideon asked of the angel? He wanted to eat with him a covenant meal. He sought the sign of an accepted sacrifice.

B. Gideon's peace offering

Judg 6:19-21

- 19 Gideon went in, prepared a young goat, and from an ephah of flour he made bread without yeast. Putting the meat in a basket and its broth in a pot, he brought them out and offered them to him under the oak.
- 20 The angel of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened bread, place them on this rock, and pour out the broth." And Gideon did so.
- 21 With the tip of the staff that was in his hand, the angel of the LORD touched the meat and the unleavened bread. Fire flared from the rock, consuming the meat and the bread. And the angel of the LORD disappeared. NIV

As we shall see later, this offering of Gideon's had the primary characteristic of a peace or fellowship offering. But the meal he looked to enjoy to seal the deal with the angel took a different turn. The angel lit the rock and disappeared.

C. The Lord is peace

Judg 6:22-24

- 22 When Gideon realized that it was the angel of the LORD, he exclaimed, "Ah, Sovereign LORD! I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face!"
- 23 But the LORD said to him, "Peace! Do not be afraid. You are not going to die."

24 So Gideon built an altar to the LORD there and called it The LORD is Peace. To this day it stands in Ophrah of the Abiezrites. NIV

Taking into consideration the times Gideon lived in and that the Lord had just called him to war, what was the basis for him calling on God as YHWH-Shalom, the Lord is peace? That he was not going to die for having seen God. That God was at peace with him.

If God is at peace with us, it matters not how many Midianite raiders our life is suffering. If we are at war with God, all the friends and alliances in the world cannot help us. As the bumper sticker says, "No Jesus, no peace. Know Jesus, know peace."

2. Our Father Is the God of Peace

A. The God of peace

1 Thess 5:23

May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. NIV

He sanctifies us through and through in order that we might have a peaceful relationship with Him. And His peace with us is based on covenant.

B. Peace based on covenant

Ezek 37:26-28

26 I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant. I will establish them and increase their numbers, and I will put my sanctuary among them forever.

27 My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be my people.

28 Then the nations will know that I the LORD make Israel holy, when my sanctuary is among them forever." NIV

The Lord has made the body of Christ His sanctuary. He indwells us by His Holy Spirit. Therefore, His covenant of peace will not be revoked

Isa 54:10

Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed," says the LORD, who has compassion on you. NIV

This covenant of peace was sealed with the blood of Jesus.

Heb 13:20-21

20 May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep,

21 equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever.
Amen. NIV

Not only does the Lord work in us that which is pleasing to Him, He also causes our enemies to be at peace with us when we do that which is pleasing to Him

Prov 16:7

When a man's ways are pleasing to the LORD, he makes even his enemies live at peace with him. NIV

3. He Brought Us Peace Through Christ

Rom 5:1-2

- 1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
- 2 through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. NIV

Eph 2:13-18

- 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.
- 14 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility,
- 15 by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace,
- 16 and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.
- 17 He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near.
- 18 For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. NIV

Peace with God means access. We can fellowship with Him face to face because of the sacrifice of Jesus.

II. The Peace Offering

1. The Old Testament Peace Offering – Lev 3:1-17; 7:11-34

- A. Recognition of sin (laying on of hands)
- B. For thanksgiving or to fulfill a vow

1 Thess 5:18 NKJV

in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

2 Cor 8:7-14

- 7 But just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

- 8 I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others.
- 9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.
- 10 And here is my advice about what is best for you in this matter: Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so.
- 11 Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means.
- 12 For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have.
- 13 Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality.
- 14 At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. Then there will be equality, NIV

The New Testament teaches us to give thanks always. Also, if we have vowed to give, then we should finish the work.

C. Remainder was to be eaten

Acts 2:46 KJV

And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,

1 Cor 11:24-25 NIV

24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me."

25 In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

When we eat with the Lord, we should not be found lifting our heel against Him.

Ps 41:9

Even my close friend, whom I trusted, he who shared my bread, has lifted up his heel against me. NIV

"Close friend" is a form of shalom.

2. Jesus Is Our Peace Offering

Col 1:19-20

19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him,
20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. NIV

3. He Governs Our Peace

By this we mean that if we submit to Him, we will have peace because He is the:

A. Prince of Peace

Isa 9:6

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, **Prince of Peace**. NIV

B. King of Peace

Heb 7:1-2

1 This Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God Most High. He met Abraham returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him,
2 and Abraham gave him a tenth of everything. First, his name means "king of righteousness"; then also, **"king of Salem" means "king of peace."** NIV

C. Lord of Peace

2 Thess 3:16

Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you. NIV

III. The Dimensions of Peace

1. The Security of Being in Christ

A. None can take us out of His hand.

John 10:28-30

28 I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand.

29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand.

30 I and the Father are one." NIV

B. He brings us safety.

Ps 4:8

I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety. NIV

Ps 127:1-2

1 Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain.

2 In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat-- for he grants sleep to those he loves. NIV

Isa 8:12-14

12 "Do not call conspiracy everything that these people call conspiracy; do not fear what they fear, and do not dread it.

13 The LORD Almighty is the one you are to regard as holy, he is the one you are to fear, he is the one you are to dread,

14 and he will be a sanctuary; but for both houses of Israel he will be a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall. And for the people of Jerusalem he will be a trap and a snare. NIV

We have nothing to fear but the Lord Himself!

2. The Breadth of Shalom

A. Shalom = 4 Greek terms

The Hebrew term “shalom” is answered by four different Greek terms in the New Testament. Shalom isn’t just peace, but welfare, health, safety, and prosperity as well. Accordingly, in the New Testament we find salvation, health and prosperity as aspects of peace.

i. Salvation

1 Thess 5:9-10

9 For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

10 He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. NIV

ii. Health

3 John 2

Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth. KJV

The word used for health in this verse is elsewhere used to describe wholesome words, sound doctrine and sound faith. Our prosperity and health are dependent upon a prospering soul. This is accomplished by holding sound words (1 Tim 6:1-6; 2 Tim 1:13) which form sound doctrine (1 Tim 1:10; 2 Tim 4:3; Titus 1:9) and build in us a sound faith (Rom 10:17; Titus 1:13).

iii. Prosperity

Jer 29:11-12

11 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.

12 Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. NKJV

B. Contrasts with peace

In an attempt to understand the concept of peace, it may be helpful to understand what its opposites are. In the New Testament, peace is contrasted with war (Matt 10:34-36), division (Luke 12:51), tribulation (John 16:33; Rom 2:9-10), death due to carnality (Rom 8:6), confusion (1 Cor 14:33), and destruction (1 Thes 5:3).

3. Peace Is Tangible

Peace is a tangible, spiritual reality.

John 14:27

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. NIV

Matt 10:11-16

11 "Whatever town or village you enter, search for some worthy person there and stay at his house until you leave.

12 As you enter the home, give it your greeting.

13 If the home is deserving, let your peace rest on it; if it is not, let your peace return to you.

14 If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake the dust off your feet when you leave that home or town.

15 I tell you the truth, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.

16 I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves. NIV

Conclusion

Our God is YHWH-Shalom and our peace is dependent upon a relationship with Him.

Ps 85:8

I will listen to what God the LORD will say; he promises peace to his people, his saints-- but let them not return to folly. NIV

Having peace with God, we should be found keeping peace with God.

2 Peter 3:10-14

10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.

11 Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives

12 as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat.

13 But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

14 So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him. NIV

Amen!