

Jehovah Shalom: Jesus Brings Us Peace

Haggai 2:1-9 In the seventh *month*, on the twenty-first of the month, the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying: ² "Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people, saying: ³ 'Who is left among you who saw this temple in its former glory? And how do you see it now? In comparison with it, *is this* not in your eyes as nothing? ⁴ 'Yet now be strong, Zerubbabel,' says the LORD; 'and be strong, Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest; and be strong, all you people of the land,' says the LORD, 'and work; for I *am* with you,' says the LORD of hosts. ⁵ 'According to the word that I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt, so My Spirit remains among you; do not fear!' ⁶ "For thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Once more (it *is* a little while) I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; ⁷ 'and I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations, and I will fill this temple with glory,' says the LORD of hosts. ⁸ 'The silver *is* Mine, and the gold *is* Mine,' says the LORD of hosts. ⁹ 'The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former,' says the LORD of hosts. 'And in this place I will give peace,' says the LORD of hosts."

Gideon lived in a time of great trouble. The Midianite raiders were stealing everything the Israelites had. In their trouble Gideon and many others complained about God. They claimed that God had forsaken them. But God had not forsaken them, they had forsaken God. Gideon himself had an altar to Baal in his own backyard. Because they had forsaken God, they had no peace.

Jehovah in His mercy appeared to Gideon. At first Gideon did not believe that it was really the Lord. The Lord reached out His staff and touched the altar and fire came out of the rock and consumed the offering Gideon had put upon it.

When Gideon understood that it was Jehovah who stood before him, He was afraid for his life.

The Lord spoke to Gideon and told him, "Peace be with you; do not fear, you shall not die." Judges 6:23

Gideon built an altar and named it Jehovah-Shalom. The Lord is peace.

Gideon and all of Israel was not at peace. They were very troubled because they had forsaken the Lord. Jehovah appeared to Gideon and gave him peace. He gave peace to Gideon and did not kill him. He gave peace to Israel and delivered them from Midian.

Jehovah Shalom: Jesus Brings Peace

Jesus brings Peace, to Gideon, to Israel and to all of us. You also can find peace at Christmas, not by planning the best Christmas party, not by making sure your whole family is together, not by virtue of the presents or the food or the decoration, you too receive peace at Christmas when Jesus comes to you and gives you His peace.

John 14:27 ²⁷ "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

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Of the three altars, including today's, we have so far looked at this advent season, today's is probably the only one with a name you recognize.

Jehovah- Jireh: The Lord sees and provides

Jehovah-Nissi: The Lord is our banner.

Jehovah-Shalom: The Lord gives peace.

Shalom is such a popular word in the Hebrew language and so commonly used as a greeting that many know that its translation: peace. Even the children have probably heard it in the movie *Aladdin*. However, what you probably don't know is the richness of the word in the original language. The English word peace is a very dull word in comparison to its Hebrew counterpart.

In English peace is generally just the absence of conflict. Nice and precise. You are not at war you are at peace. You are not arguing with your spouse you are at peace.

In Hebrew however the word doesn't describe the absence of conflict as much as it describes the presence of the opposite. It's not just the absence of the negative but the fullness of the positive.

A kingdom is at peace not just when it is not at war but when it has good relations with its neighbors and trade between them is flourishing.

People have peace not simply when there is no conflict but when their lives are complete, whole, filled with the Lord's blessings.

The peace of God which Jesus brings is not just the absence of conflict but the fullness of God's blessings.

Simeon in the temple after holding the Savior in his arms sings, "**Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word;**" **Luke 2:29**

He is not asking the Lord to give him peace. He is stating that the Lord has given him peace. His life is complete. There is nothing missing, nothing left to wait for or do. Because his life is full and complete, he is ready to depart, to go to the Lord. Simeon life was not filled with conflict before this point, but it was incomplete as he waited for that promised blessing.

We sing this after communion. We have peace because our sins are forgiven and we are no longer at war with God. We have more than that. We have the fullness of God's blessing. There is no longer something missing in us we have been made complete in Christ.

"You complete me." Is a cheesy line in a movie, but it is an accurate description of what Christ does for us.

Psalm 35:27 27 Let them shout for joy and be glad, Who favor my righteous cause; And let them say continually, "Let the LORD be magnified, Who has pleasure in the prosperity of His servant."

The word translated prosperity in this passage is the same Hebrew word, shalom. The Lord has pleasure in blessing our lives with shalom: fullness, health, wellbeing, security, blessings, completeness, peace.

This is what God is promising in the benediction we are told every Sunday, when we hear "The Lord give you peace." Jehovah is promising us with these words that He will go with us throughout the week and bless us so that our lives are filled with His blessings.

This is what the angels meant when they appeared to the shepherds and said "peace on earth." The true King has been born and He will bring not only an absence of the negative but also a fullness of the positive. His blessings will rain like showers upon the earth and His people will prosper.

Jehovah Shalom: The Lord brings Peace

In our text the people have no peace. They are in constant conflict with their neighbors to the north, the Samaritans. Their crops are not producing the way they ought. The temple is not finished.

The Lord speaks to them through the prophet Haggai and promises them that His peace will come. The fullness of that peace will not come immediately and will not come through the temple they are building. Rather the "Desire of all nations" shall come and He shall bring them peace.

Jehovah Shalom: The Lord brings peace.

The peace of God is strength in the Lord

In the Hebrew a brick wall is at peace when it is complete, without cracks or holes, the stones held solidly together with good mortar. If the mortar is bad or missing or cracked, then the wall is not at peace. It is incomplete and has a weakness.

In our text the people are weak. They cannot finish the temple. They cannot defend against the aggression from the north. Because of this weakness they do not have shalom, peace.

The Lord and His word are the mortar that holds the pieces of our life together. When we put the Lord first He is our strength holding our life together. We are at peace. The people in our text did not put the Lord first. They had no mortar holding their lives together. They were not at peace.

In Deuteronomy 29:19 the Lord says, **“and so it may not happen, when he hears the words of this curse, that he blesses himself in his heart, saying, ‘I shall have peace, even though I follow the dictates of my heart’-- as though the drunkard could be included with the sober.”**

The Lord warns that some think they can have a full happy prosperous life by following the “dictates of their own heart.” As if their own plans, their own goals will give them happiness. The Lord says such people are like a drunkard, who thinks that he is walking in a straight line but rather wanders this way and that.

The Lord tells Joshua and Shealtiel to be strong in the Lord and He will give them peace.

Jehovah Shalom: Jesus brings us peace.

The peace of God is unity in the Lord

The Lord tells us in the book of Job:

Job 5:24 You shall know that your tent is in peace; You shall visit your dwelling and find nothing amiss.

Job’s house is at peace when there is nothing missing. His flocks are at peace when all the sheep and cattle are there. If an animal is missing there is no longer peace, wholeness.

The people in our text are not at peace because they are not complete. The Jews returned from Exile in Babylon but only a remnant. Most of them stayed in Babylon. The cities were empty. The country side was sparsely populated. The temple was small and the gatherings small.

Jesus brings peace. When He comes, He will gather all the people of God. None of the Lord’s sheep will be missing. The peace of God is this unity, this fullness.

Now we also are incomplete. Right now, at this church there are many of the Lord’s sheep that are missing. This makes us not at peace. This means that we are not whole. And when people are missing there is a gap, a hole in our life.

Some are missing because they have gone ahead of us to be with the Lord. Some are missing because they cannot make it to church because of sickness or old age. Some are missing because they choose not to come. Whatever the reason they leave gaps in our fellowship. We are incomplete.

God promises to bring fullness, completeness, and thus to give peace.

In the book of revelation this is continually emphasized. The Lord talks about the 144,000, the fullness of God’s people, the multitude too great to number. He is the Good Shepherd who gathers all His people.

The Lord brings peace.

The Peace of God is prosperity

In our text the Lord reminds us that “the silver is mine, the gold is mine,” and “I will bring glory to this temple.”

The job of a king is to bring peace to his people. Again, that is not just the absence of conflict but the prosperity of the nation. The Israelites were not prospering, they were struggling, but the Lord promises them that the true king is coming who will bring true peace.

Isaiah 9:6-7 ⁶ For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ Of the increase of *His* government and peace *There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.*

The peace that Jesus brings is prosperity to His people. Not the prosperity of this world, but rather the prosperity of His kingdom. We are rich in heavenly treasure even if we poor in earthly riches.

Jesus is the true king who alone can bring gold, silver and glory to His people. He brings peace.

Like Gideon we often blame the troubles we have in this life on God. Why did you not fulfill your promises we say to him, or even we might say, “there is no point in prayer and going to church, God does not answer and does not bless us.”

But it is not God who has failed but we. We have built altars to idols in our hearts when care more about our comfort and wealth than about God. We have followed the dictates of our own heart rather than put God and His word first. Yet God appears to us and promises us peace. He not only forgives our sins but blesses us through Jesus.

Jehovah Shalom: the Lord brings Peace.

Amen