

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

"JEHOVAH SHALOM: THE LORD IS PEACE"

JUDGES 6:11-24

This Week's Core Competency

Peace – I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, others, and me. Philippians 4:6-7 *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

When Gideon realizes that he has seen the angel of the LORD face to face, he fears he's going to die (Jud 6:22). How do we know that? We know that because the LORD says to him immediately, "Peace! Do not be afraid. You are not going to die" (v. 23). This encounter prompts Gideon to build an altar that he appropriately calls, "The LORD is Peace" (v. 24).

In order to fully understand the significance of the LORD's greeting and altar's name, we have to understand what the word "peace" means, which is not as easy as you might think. Consulting an English dictionary is helpful, where four meanings for the word are commonly given: 1) a state of tranquility; 2) inner contentment or calm; 3) harmony in relationships; 4) absence of war or a pact to end hostilities. Unfortunately the Hebrew word, *shalom*, commonly translated "peace," has a much broader field of meaning. One commentator writes, "The Hebrew noun *shalom* means 'peace,' but *shalom* is not simply the negative peace of an absence-of-strife. This term carries with it, positively,

the rich implications of soundness and wholeness, of that full integration of life which becomes possible only for those who live in turn with the One who is the Master of all that a man may encounter (Isa. 26:3)" (J. Barton Payne, *The Theology of the Older Testament*, 429). This explains, in part, why this one Hebrew word is translated by so many English words. According to one dictionary, "*shalom* occurs over 250 times in 213 separate verses. The KJV translates 172 of these as 'peace.' The remainder are translated about 310 different ways, many only a single time each" (*The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, s.v., 2401 *shalom*). While a totally adequate thumbnail definition of the term is out of the question, the following one comes close: The fundamental meaning of *shalom* "is 'totality' (the adjective *shalem* is translated 'whole'), 'well-being,' 'harmony,' with stress on material prosperity untouched by violence or misfortune" (Alan Richardson, *A Theological Word Book of the Bible*, s.v., peace).

When fire flares from the rock, consuming the meat and bread (v. 21) that Gideon set before the angel of God, the soon-to-be deliverer exclaims, "Oh no! LORD Yahweh." "Such an unexpected response terrified Gideon, since it confirmed to him beyond doubt that he had been speaking with the angel of the Lord. Remembering that no one can see God and live (Exod. 33:20), the frightened and reluctant servant finds God's will further confirmed to him in 'peace.' He will not die, because God has called him for a specific purpose. God's peace is upon Gideon and so he worships, calling his altar Yahweh-Shalom, 'the-Lord-Is-Peace' (well-being)" (David Jackman, *Judges, Ruth, TCC*, 110).

**When God conscripts, he enables.
When he sends, he equips.**

– David Jackman

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Gideon is certain he will die, but the LORD assures him he will live, suggesting that the assurance of his own personal safety and security serves as a harbinger of his victory over the Midianites and the consequent safety and security of Israel. Here's how one commentator makes the connection: "Gideon was a young man in a time of severe oppression by the Midianites. Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and He delivered them into the hand of the Midianites seven years. They were compelled to live in dens in the mountains. Midian and her allies, including the Amalekites, would come with great hordes of men and of cattle and eat up the land, destroying what they could not devour and leaving neither sustenance, nor implements, nor animals. Gideon was threshing a little wheat, saved somehow from the all-devouring hordes of the enemy, and in the secrecy of the wine-press, for fear of them, when the angel of Jehovah appeared to him with a promise of deliverance in response to Israel's cry. Gideon, after some doubt, hesitation, and reassurance, accepted the promise and the challenge. In faith he reared an altar which he called *Jehovah-shalom*, in confident anticipation of victory and peace" (Nathan J. Stone, *Names of God*, 90).

Gideon's name for God, the true source of *shalom*, echoes throughout the New Testament where God is frequently referred to as "the God of peace" (Ro 15:33; 2Co 13:11; Heb 13:20). No wonder Jesus, the Prince of Peace promised in the Old Testament (Isa 9:6), says to his disciples, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you" (Jn 14:27) and "I have told you these things, so that in my you may have peace" (16:33). He, too, is the true source *shalom*. No wonder Paul opens practically all of his letters with the greeting, "Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ" (Ro 1:7; cf., 1Co 1:3; 2Co 1:2; Gal 1:3; Eph 1:2; Php 1:2; 2Th 1:2; 1Ti 1:2; 2Ti 1:2; Tit 1:4; Phm 1:3).

day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

Judges 6:11-24

11 The angel of the LORD came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezerite, 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."

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. 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 Abiezerites.

EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- * Underline "angel of the LORD" throughout.
- * Double underline "the LORD" throughout.
- * Square bracket [] "in a winepress" in v. 11.
- * Circle "mighty warrior" in v. 12.
- * Box "but" indicating contrast in vv. 13 (2x), 15, 23.
- * Angle bracket <> "sir" in v. 13 and "Lord" in v. 15.
- * Circle "why" in v. 13.

- * Square bracket "in the strength you have" in v. 14.
- * Circle "save" in v. 14.
- * Circle "ephah" in v. 19.
- * Circle "sign" in v. 17.
- * Highlight v. 22.
- * Circle "Peace!" in v. 23.
- * In another color highlight "the LORD is Peace" in v. 24.

day 2

EXPLORE – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. What do you infer regarding Gideon and his times from verse 11?
2. The "angel of the LORD," an *angel* or the *LORD*? Explain.
3. The angel of the LORD calls Gideon "mighty warrior." Is he kidding? Explain.
4. Put Gideon's take on Israel's history in your own words.
5. Explain the *contrast* in verse 15 and its significance.
6. One commentator claims there are two *timeless* assurances in verses 14 and 16 (Cundall, 105). Identify them and their *timeless* significance.
7. Explain any connection you see between the "sign" Gideon requested and the "offering" he brought to the angel of the LORD.
8. Explain why Gideon calls the altar he builds "The LORD is Peace."
9. Discussion: "The LORD is Peace" is Yahweh's name. Talk about what it says about him.

day 3

EXAMINE – an explanation of its message to clarify your understanding of the passage.

The book of Judges covers the history of Israel in the promised land from the death of Joshua to the rise of the monarchy. On the one hand, it's the story of frequent apostasy that provoked divine discipline. On the other hand, it's the story of divine deliverance in response to the urgent appeals of the Israelites in times of crisis. The stories it tells are characterized by recurring cycles of apostasy, oppression, cries of distress, and gracious deliverance. Each cycle has a similar beginning: "the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord" (6:1; cf., 3:7, 12; 4:1; 10:6). Each also has a recognizable conclusion: "the land enjoyed peace forty years" (8:28; cf., 3:11, 30; 5:31). One commentator describes the era this way: "It was a period of alternating prosperity and adversity, of sinning and repenting, of slavery and deliverance. They would grievously sin and be brought very low. In their extremity they would remember Jehovah their God and cry out to Him for deliverance. Jehovah would hear them and raise up a deliverer for them. Then after serving Jehovah, Israel would fall away again, and the whole process would be repeated" (Stone, 89-90).

The story of Gideon begins when the angel of the LORD appears to the "mighty warrior" and unfolds as the conversation between them continues (6:11-20). The angel or messenger of Yahweh greets him with the words, "The LORD is with you mighty warrior" (v. 12). The irony of his greeting is obvious. Gideon is hardly a mighty warrior. He's hiding in a winepress threshing a paltry amount of wheat in an attempt to avoid being seen by the marauding bands of Midianites that continually ravage the land. While Gideon's response is understandable given the circumstances, it's far from commendable. "If the LORD is with us," he replies, "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" (v. 13). One writer calls Gideon, "an example of those who know what God has done in the past, who have memorized the creed, but who find it belied by present reality. To Gideon, stories of past deliverance are irrelevant in light of the Midianite crisis. To him, God may have worked long ago, but he no longer cares about Israel. Biblical faith has lost its relevance to the present situation" (K. Lawson Younger, Jr., *The NIV Application Commentary: Judges*, 180). The

don't-wanna-be judge conveniently ignores the fact that the Lord told his people not to worship the gods of the Amorites, but they refused to listen (v. 10), and the fact that the Lord has delivered them repeatedly from previous oppressors.

The LORD overlooks Gideon's cynicism telling him, "Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand. Am I not sending you?" Although Gideon has the ability to do what he is commanded because the LORD who is sending him is also going with him, he nevertheless makes excuses. "My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family" (v. 15). All true, but again the LORD assures him by making it perfectly clear that he will be with him to make him victorious (v. 16). But Gideon requires a sign, so he goes off to prepare an offering for God's messenger (v. 19). Apparently, he hopes his offering will occasion the sign. What Gideon thinks of the messenger is hard to say, although he doesn't appear to recognize he's speaking with the angel of the LORD at this point. He returns with meat in a basket, its broth in a pot, along with unleavened bread. He pours out the broth and places the meat and bread on the rock where he was threshing as directed (v. 20).

The story reaches its climax when fire flares from the rock, consuming the meat and the bread that Gideon has set before God's messenger, leaving the would-be judge terrified at the prospect of dying (vv. 21-22). The angel of God touches the meat and the bread with the tip of his staff and fire flares from the rock consuming both; then he disappears. Gideon's "Ah" or "Alas" (ESV) might be translated "Oh no!" Aware for the first time that he has been talking face to face with the angel of the LORD—one who speaks directly for the LORD—he fears he is about to die. But the LORD assures him, "You are safe." We might paraphrase, "You will be fine." At this point, he evidently hears God speak directly to him, since the angel has disappeared.

The story concludes when Gideon builds an altar to the LORD and calls it "The LORD is Peace" (v. 24). In his own person, Yahweh is perfect peace. What's more, Yahweh is the source of peace for his people. According to one commentator, "That altar, which doubtless became a centre of interest and worship following the sweeping victory of Gideon, still existed in the editor's day, which indicates a considerable lapse of time, otherwise there would be no point in the

observation" (Arthur E. Cundall and Leon Morris, *Judges & Ruth*, TOTC, 106).

Like all biblical narratives this one has an *upper* story and a *lower* story. The *upper* story is about God, who graciously forgives his people, delivers them from their enemies, and restores their misfortunes to preserve them for what he has promised. In a nutshell, he is their peace, the one who causes them to say, "It's all good!" The *lower* story is about Gideon, who after resisting God's call, decides to obey the one whom he recognizes will be the source of his success, the one who has given and will give him *shalom*.

The Message of the Passage

*You can obey HIM, who is peace, without hesitation
because he is with you and will give you shalom.*

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you through his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James teaches in James 1:22. Reflect on 3 "living questions" to apply what you have learned this week.

- **Journal your answers to the following *living* questions:**

–How is God making himself known to you?

–How does God want to change you?

–How is God calling you to change your world?

notes **N** STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

v. 11 **angel of the LORD** "The alternation of the phrases used to describe Gideon's divine visitor shows that *the angel of the Lord* was used synonymously with *the Lord*. The theophany was in human form, as was usual in the earlier part of the Old Testament period, and the language was strongly anthropomorphic, which allowed full personality to the Deity" (Cundall, 104). Another commentator offers this more detailed theological explanation: "The Angel of the Lord was not merely 'an angel'; He was a theophany—an appearance of the second Person of the Trinity in visible and bodily form before the Incarnation. Prominent during the time of Moses (Ex. 3:2-15; Num. 22:22-35) and Joshua (Josh. 5:13-15), this divine manifestation also appeared during the period of the Judges to Gideon (Jud. 6:11-24) and to the parent of Samson (13:3-21). The Angel of the Lord was Deity for He was called Yahweh (e.g., Josh. 5:13-15; Jud. 6:11-24; Zech. 3) and God (e.g., Gen. 32:24-32; Ex. 3:4), and had divine attributes and prerogatives (cf. Gen. 16:13; 18:25; 48:16). Yet this Messenger of the Lord was also distinct from Yahweh, thus indicating a plurality of Persons within the Godhead (cf. Num. 20:16; Zech. 1:12-13)" (F. Duane Lindsey, "Judges," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*, 381). On the other hand: "It may be, however, that, as the Lord's personal messenger who represented him and bore his credentials, the angel could speak on behalf of (and so be identified with) the One who sent him (see especially 19:21; cf. 18:2, 22; 19:2). Whether this 'angel' was the second person of the Trinity remains therefore uncertain" (*The NIV Study Bible*, note on Ge16:7).

v. 11 **in the winepress** "Some extent of the influence of the Midianite raids can be gained by the reference to Gideon beating out wheat in the winepress, which was normally a hollow carved out of the rock with a channel connecting it to a lower trough. The grapes were placed in this depression and trodden out by foot, the juice running down into the lower receptacle. Threshing was normally carried out with a threshing-sledge drawn by oxen, in an exposed place so that the wind could carry away the chaff, but Gideon was improvising in the winepress, away from the sight of marauding bands. The same reference indicates the smallness of the harvest. It could be beaten out with a rod or staff in a confined place" (Cundall, 104).

v. 12 **mighty warrior** "Though this description may have been spoken in satire (at this point Gideon was anything but a mighty warrior!), it probably reflected Gideon's potentiality through divine enablement, as well as expressing his notable rank in the community" (Lindsey, 392).

v. 13 **sir** Cf., v. 15 "Lord" (NIV margin "or sir"). One commentator calls this "a courteous but firm way (from an inferior to a superior) of showing disagreement" (J. Alberto Soggin, *Judges*, OTL, 115).

v. 13 **why** Cf., v. 10. "Gideon shows an ignorance to the problem in Israel—'[doing] evil in the eyes of the Lord,' 6:1; Israel has apostasized again, and this is why the Midianites have come. Moreover, Gideon's question is cynical because it shows little awareness of all the recent mighty acts of God on behalf of the sinful nation and implies that Yahweh is not a god, that he does not defend his people, and that he does not contend for Israel (cf., ironically 6:31)" (Younger, 175).

v. 14 **strength you have** "It is not clear from the text if this strength was there before his calling, so that it is already latent in Gideon (cf. v. 12b, where the messenger calls Gideon a 'mighty warrior') and that therefore the calling simply brings it to light; or whether Gideon receives a particular gift in the course of his calling" (Soggin, 119). Perhaps Gideon is to believe what the angel said, "the LORD is with you," and go in the Lord's strength (cf., v. 16), i.e., "the strength which thou now hast, since Jehovah is with thee" (C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes*, 2:332).

v. 17 **sign** Cf., vv. 36-38. Gideon's preparation of food following his request for a sign is no indication that he had forgotten he had made it (see Leon Wood, *Distressing Days of the Judges*, 206). More likely, the sign in Gideon's mind involved the Visitor's reaction to his offering, "a gift presented to God, on the acceptance of which he hoped to receive the sign, which would show whether the person who had appeared to him was really God" (Keil, 2:333).

v. 19 **ephah** "The ephah of flour alone weighed between 34 and 45 pounds, which, in a time of scarcity, was a not inconsiderable gift" (Cundall, 106). "The large amount of food prepared by Gideon—goat's meat and broth, and bread made from an ephah (one-half bushel) of flour—reflected both his wealth in a destitute time and the typical excessiveness of near-Eastern hospitality" (Lindsey, 392).

v. 23 **Peace!** Or "you are safe" (NET); lit., "you have peace" (Robert G. Boling, *Judges*, AB, 134). The greeting confers peace or well-being (Richardson, 165). Gideon is afraid he will die because he had seen the angel of the LORD "face to face." Instead of death and destruction, the angel speaks words of health and well-being, which explains why he calls the altar he builds there "The LORD is Peace."

Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

Guest writer: Carol Bourland - During this month, we have been looking at some of the names of God. As our pastor has said, the names of God show us who God is, his character. We have studied that He is the God who is and always will exist, the God who always does what is right, and the God who will always provide what we need. The God of the Bible, the only true God, is also the "God of Peace." We cannot fully understand the peace he gives us even when bad things happen to us, but he has promised this peace that is beyond our understanding (Php 4:7). In our story this week, Gideon was afraid and hiding from his enemy, the Midianites. But an angel of God appeared and called him a "Mighty Hero," Gideon surely wasn't acting like a "Mighty Hero," was he? However, the angel of the Lord reassured him that with God's help, he would be a "Mighty Hero." Peace must have come over Gideon, because once he understood that God would be with him in the battle with the Midianites, Gideon called God the "God of Peace." Boys and girls, we can experience peace from God when we realize that if we trust Him to be with us even during hard times, He will be. When we know Him as our personal Savior, He promises to "never leave us or forsake us."

What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Read Judges 6:11-24

1. Did Gideon seem like a "Mighty Hero" to you?
2. Where should Gideon have run when he was scared?
3. What happened when Gideon realized God was with him?

What Do You Think

Is it okay to be scared sometimes? What do you think it takes to be a "Mighty Hero" in God's eyes?

What R U Going To Do

Read Judges 7. Did Gideon become a "Mighty Hero"? He defeated a whole army with 300 men plus "1." He had to depend on that "1" to win the battle. Who was He? If Gideon can win a battle only because God was with him, what "battles" can you win with God on your side? Does that give you peace?

MEMORY TIME

Core Comp

Peace - I live without worry because things are good between God, myself and others.

Memory Verse

Psalm 86:10 - *For you are great and do marvelous deeds; you alone are God.*

KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized CC ____ and Verse _____. Family completed **Say** _____ **Think** _____ **Do** _____

Child's name _____ Grade ____ Parent's signature _____

Earn 1 token by completing the PantegoKids Bible study and another token by reciting the memory verse.
Questions: Kids@pantego.org

30 CORE COMPETENCIES

10 CORE BELIEFS

Trinity 2 Corinthians 13:14

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation By Grace Ephesians 2:8-9

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible 2 Timothy 3:16-17

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God Psalm 121:1-2

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ John 1:12

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church Ephesians 4:15-16

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity John 3:16

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion Psalm 82:3-4

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity John 14:1-4

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship 1 Timothy 6:17-19

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES

Worship Psalm 95:1-7

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer Psalm 66:16-20

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study Hebrews 4:12

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness Matthew 6:33

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts Romans 12:4-6

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community Acts 2:44-47

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time Colossians 3:17

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith Ephesians

6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life Romans 12:1

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 CORE VIRTUES

Joy John 15:11

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace Philippians 4:6-7

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

Faithfulness Proverbs 3:3-4

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Self-Control Titus 2:11-13

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility Philippians 2:3, 4

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love 1 John 4:10-12

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience Proverbs 14:29

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness 1 Thess. 5:15

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness Philippians 4:5

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

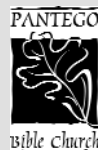
Hope Hebrews 6:19-20

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

About the Authors

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Wendy Hollabaugh (B.S.W. University of Texas at Arlington) is the Children's Minister at Pantego Bible Church. Wendy has over ten years of experience in Children's Ministry. She has a passion for leading families to connect with God and each other. She enjoys creating compelling environments where kids fall in love with God and His Truth. Wendy and her husband, Greg, are also involved in their own personal youth ministry as they are training their three teenagers, Hannah, Aaron and Noah.



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