

BFF379 Shalom

Scott Moore: Welcome to the "Building Faith Families" podcast with Steve Demme. I'm your host, Scott Moore. Thanks for joining us today. Good morning, Steve. How are you today?

Steve: I'm well. How are you?

Scott: Good.

Steve: I've been waking up with this thought in my mind, and so I thought we'd run with it this morning. What is a normal greeting if you were to meet somebody 3,000 years ago?

Scott: I have no idea. Greetings and salutations.

Steve: That's only if you watch Charlotte's Web. It would be peace, or peace be with you, right?

Scott: OK.

Steve: If you're in Israel, it would be shalom. The first time it appears in Scripture is as a name for God, Jehovah-Shalom, which means Jehovah is peace. As we look at the Hebrew, we're going to find out that there's more to it.

Let's pray. Father, thank You for Your word. Thank You for the language in which You have written Your word. Thank You for our ability to read and study and to go deeper into Your word. What we're after is not just more information, what we're after is more connection with You, more understanding of Your nature, more knowledge of who You are as revealed by Your different names. In Jesus' name, help me to teach well, help us to understand the Scriptures, give us ears to hear what you are saying, and then write these insights on our heart by Your Spirit. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Scott: Amen.

Steve: Way back in Judges 6, we encounter a man named Gideon. Things were going hard with the Israelites because the Midianites were abusing them. One day, an angel showed up and began talking to Gideon, and he said that he was going to save Israel. I'm going to start reading now.

"Gideon says, 'How can I save Israel? Behold, my clan is the weakest in Manasseh. I am the least in my father's house,'" and he goes on.

Then he said, "I'm going to prepare you a sacrifice." The angel of Jehovah reached out the tip of the staff that was in his hand and touched the meat and the unleavened cakes and fire sprang up from the rock and it consumed the meat and the unleavened cakes.

"And the angel of Jehovah vanished from his sight. Then Gideon perceived that he was the angel of Jehovah. And Gideon said, 'Alas, O Lord God, for now I have seen the angel of Jehovah face to face.'"

He thinks he's going to die, but Jehovah said to him, "Peace be to you. Do not fear, you shall not die." Gideon built an altar to Jehovah there and named it Jehovah Shalom." This is Judges 6:24. Shalom is one of the few words that most of us probably know from Hebrew. I have some Spanish friends and about the only thing I know besides the alphabet is ola.

Steve: If you go to Israel, and you say shalom, it can mean hello, it can mean goodbye, it can mean peace. What I want to focus on is the fact that in Hebrew, it's not a one-to-one correspondence.

In English, when we say the word peace, it pretty much means the absence of conflict. It means, I am at peace with my neighbor, I'm at peace with myself. It means I can go to bed in peace. I'm not all stirred up. It just means peace.

When we go to Greek, we find there's one word, "eirene," which means peace. In Greek and English, it's pretty much word-to-word, but in Hebrew, shalom is bigger than that. It's a concept, if I can put it that way.

When people spoke in Hebrew, it's a bunch of words put together. It's a thought. It's a concept, it's bigger than just single words. The word shalom is used 237 times in the Old Testament, and most of the time it has something to do with peace. Peace is 153 of those. Peaceably, peacefully, perfect peace etc. It also means safe, safely, safety. It means secure. It means welfare. It means well-being. It's a state. It's not just the word peace, which we would call the absence of conflict, but it's fuller. When you look at the word shalom in the Strong's Hebrew, it means completeness, soundness, welfare and then peace.

It's a fascinating word. If you think about the end of Genesis, when Joseph is the prime minister and his brothers appear. He asked them, "How is it with your father? How is his welfare?"

That's the word shalom. In Isaiah 9, "For to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given. And the government shall be upon his shoulder. His name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and of peace, there will be no end."

He is the God of peace. He is the prince of peace. He is amazing. Then in Isaiah 26:3-4, "You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on You because he trusts in You. Trust in Jehovah forever, for Jehovah God is an everlasting Rock."

Now, this is where the word peace takes on a larger dimension. You keep him in perfect soundness of mind, but You also keep him in wholeness. You keep him in a good place. A place of safety, security. He's in a state of good welfare. He's sound. These are all the words that when you hear the word "peace."

It means completeness-soundness-wholeness. This word surprised me when I was finding all these different translations for shalom.

Here's a man that God made a covenant of peace with him in Numbers 25, when children of Israel grievously sinned. God sent a plague among them. They were mixing with the nations around them and even the leaders. Right when they were repenting of their sin, in light of the tabernacle, one of the leaders takes one of the girls from a different country into his tent in plain sight of those praying and repenting.

Phinehas sees them, jumps up from the prayer meeting, takes his spear, and kills them. Jehovah said to Moses, "Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, son of Aaron, the priest, has turned back My wrath from the people of Israel in that he was jealous with My jealousy among them."

What a wonderful expression. "He was jealous with My jealousy." He thought the way I thought. He felt what I felt. His heart was beating with My heart, so that I did not consume the people of Israel in My jealousy. "Therefore say, 'behold, I give to him My covenant of shalom, My covenant of peace.

"And it shall be to him and to his descendants after him the covenant of a perpetual priesthood because he was jealous for his God and made atonement for the people of Israel."

I think about that verse and wonder if there are descendants of Phinehas that Scott and Steve know. Maybe we're some of his descendants because He said it's going to be a perpetual priesthood to his descendants. Who knows?

I believe there are people walking around today that are part of that covenant of peace that God made with that man way back in Numbers because he had his heart beating with God's heart. He made atonement and he received a covenant of peace.

Now, we're going to look at the root word for shalom, which is a noun, and it's shalem, a verb. It's used 116 times. It means to be complete or to be sound. It means to make amends, to make an end, to finish, to be full.

In Leviticus 6, when God is giving instructions, "If you find someone that's stolen your stuff, he needs to make restitution," that's shalom. He needs to make it right. He needs to make amends. Interesting, isn't it?

Shalem is also the root word for sholomon, which we would pronounce Solomon. We think of Solomon as the king during the reign of peace, but the more I understand this word, I like to think that not only was it the reign of peace, but it was the reign of completeness. Everything came together for Solomon.

He not only restored the temple, he built the temple. He was at peace with his enemies all around. He was at peace with himself. He was at peace with the kingdom. He was in a really good place, notice what Scripture says, "Thus all the work that King Solomon wrought in the house of Jehovah was finished." It was completed. It was whole. It was sound.

There's another word that is tied to this, and it's used 87 times in the Old Testament. It is shalom, and it's the root word for peace offerings. It means full, devoted, complete. I don't know, what are you thinking about this? Is this striking a chord with you?

Scott: Yeah, I scribbled down a couple of phrases that really strike me when I think of shalom. You're right, when we say peace, it can be as flippant as the hippie thing, like, "Peace, dude," or just the absence of conflict.

When I think of shalom, it's more like, the phrase is, "Hide me in the shadow of Your wings. It is well with my soul. He restores my soul." To me, shalom is a deep peace at the level of the soul, where, it's not just the absence of problems or conflict. It's a deep abiding peace in your soul.

Steve: Excellent. Just to complete this thought, sorry, I didn't mean to use that word, "complete," but the word complete, even in Genesis when God is talking to Abram, He said, "Your people are going to be there for 400 years," then, "They shall come back here in the fourth generation for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet shalom." It's not yet complete.

I want you to take that word wholeness, soundness, complete, in addition to what we know about peace with God, peace with each other, peace with those around us, and now we're going to read four New Testament passages.

I'm going to start with the one that I think about the most. 1 Thessalonians 5:23, "May the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." I think that's an amazing verse. By the way, that verse was quoted by a Christian MD who believed that the concept of being whole, of being complete, was a Christian concept, which led to the word being used in natural circles of holistic medicine. Fascinating, because if I was to start off by saying holistic, you'd think, "Oh, oh, Steve's going New Age on me."

Steve: This sense of wholeness is a Christian concept, when you think about it because you and I know that if we are angry and bitter, we're going to be sick. Our emotions affect our bodies. Our spirits affect our emotions. It's a complete package. John 14:27, Jesus says, "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you." There's a difference between the peace that God gives and the peace that the world gives. In other words, you get enough money, your house is paid off, your kids are OK. No, no, there's a deep abiding sense of peace. "Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid." John 16:33, "I have said these things to you that in Me you may have peace. In the world, you will have tribulation, but take heart, I have overcome the world." In the world, things might not add up. You might have problem after problem after problem.

You might have children in the NICU. You might have a basement that's filled with water. You might be old and you have trouble getting up in the morning, whatever. "You're going to have peace in Me, though. In Me, you may have peace."

Just a little comment, Jesus is a priest after the order of Melchizedek. Melchizedek is described in Hebrews 7 and in Genesis when Abraham met him, as the king of Salem, which means the king of peace.

That's what it says in the second verse of Hebrews 7, "To him, Abraham apportioned the tenth part of everything he is, first by translation of his name "king of righteousness." That's what "tzedek" means. He is also king of Salem, that is king of peace. Jesus got it in His veins, He's got it in His genes. He is the Prince of peace. He's the King of peace, and He's going to make us completely whole. What do you think? I'm at the end of my notes.

Scott: I think this is also linked with joy, because if we have peace as in just the absence of conflict at the moment in our lives, that doesn't really bring joy, but when you've got that deep abiding peace, that's the difference between joy and happiness. It's the same thing as the difference in peace and shalom. It's a deeper thing again at the soul level.

Steve: I agree. Hallelujah. Thank you.

Scott: Sure.

Steve: Good insights.

Scott: Love it.

Steve: Let's pray. Let's pray for God to give us that kind of peace. When we hear the word peace, let's think of wholeness, let's think of completeness. Let's think of body, soul, and spirit being impacted by the Prince of wholeness. Father, thank You for Your Son. Thank You for sending Jesus to make us whole.

Thank you for sending Jesus to take away our sins, to reconnect us with God, to restore us in a relationship with Him and give us something, as God said, that is deep and abiding. There's a joy, there's a wholeness, there's a soundness right down in our spirits.

Whether we can put our finger on what it is, I pray You'll give it to us today. Don't let this just be a little peaceful word, but let it be something that's deep and abiding. I know that You came, not just to set us free from sin, but to restore us to full relationship with You. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Scott: Amen. That's our show for this week, folks. Thanks for joining us for the Building Faith Families podcast with Steve Demme. If you have a question for the show, email Steve at spdemme@gmail.com. If you have a question for me, you can reach me at scott@unsocializedmedia.com. Thanks for joining us. Have a great week.