

August 17th 2008: Names of God: Jehovah Shalom: Judges 6:1-24

A man once found himself on a train between two ladies. In this instance it was an unpleasant experience as the two ladies argued incessantly about whether the window should be shut or open. The lady furthest from the window argued that she would die of heat stroke if it wasn't opened. The other said she would almost certainly catch pneumonia if it didn't stay closed. When the ticket inspector arrived the ladies appealed to him to adjudicate on the issue. Unfortunately he had no solution. Eventually the man spoke up. "First open the window. That will kill the one. Then close it. That will kill the other. Then we will have peace."

Many people have a concept of peace ... similar to the man in this story. For them peace is the absence of conflict... **However this falls far short of**

- **In Scripture** peace is not the absence of conflict but the presence of One with you who loves you, and is powerful to keep you through every situation, no matter how terrible,..... Whether that situation changes or not

Peace is the One who can.....miraculously.....quieten your heart

A competition was once held.....to find the painting that best presented PEACE
There were paintings portraying the most restful scene imaginable
But the painting that was chosen seemed at first to present evrything but peace

It showed rugged and bare mountians
An angry sky from which rain poured.....lightening flashed
A torrential waterfall roared down the side of the rock face

Yet behind that waterfall in a tiny bush that was growing in a crack in the rock a mother bird had built her nest
And there.....in the midst of the roaring water and the raging storm....she sat on her nest in perfect peace

- **To have such peace**.....when your world is being destroyed around you..... And all you have ever valued in life.....including your own being.....**is in danger of..** would have seemed an impos dream...as far as Gideon...when we first meet...Judges 6

- His land.....was in turmoil
- His people under God's judgment
- The Ancient enemy....the Midianites.....a Nomadic people who constantly raided Had oppressed them for the last 7 years

Because of that the Israelites made for themselves shelters.....

When the enemy came in to destroy....to ruin...to ravage.....
They retreated from themin fear and terror....

There was no peace....or hope

- **Then finally God's people cried out to God**

After 7 years of consistent pain and suffering.....God sent them His prophet
..and His message was not encouraging

"This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I brought you up out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. 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. 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."

This sounds like God doing the Father bit to a child who has mucked up

Wanting His people to understand how their disobedience....led to this mess...
Before He steps in with the answer

- **And step in God does**

In v11 we find Gideon.....threshing the little wheat he had managed to rescue
in a winepress.....**Some** sort of depression in the rocks.....would not be seen
The Angel of the Lord comes and sits nearby....and calls out

The Lord is with you, mighty warrior

- **Now at first it** seems.....that Gideon doesn't realize that this visitor is an angel
And he begins to disagree with the statement.....**Yaweh is with you**→

"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."

Note how similar this is...to the message the prophet brought

Except Gideon obviously hadn't listen to the part about....Israel not listening !!

Sounds a little like the old complaint when things don't go our way

But where were you God?

You have helped others.....where were you when we needed you

--**Of course** we often gloss over any deficiencies on our part....Just like Gideon does

The interesting thing is that the angel.....who suddenly we are told is the LORD
Doesn't reiterate the message about Israel's failings

Instead He lets Gideon know.....That He is about to do something for them

HE IS SENDING GIDEON TO BE THEIR SAVIOUR

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?"

- **Surprisingly enough this news didn't make things better for Gideon**
He looked at himself.....and all he saw was weakness.....Potential failure
He thought about doing it in his own strength.....Knew he couldn't

And I also know from experience...that when I start to think only of my own strength
Then like Gideon.....I see my situation.....my task.....my resp
As hopeless and beyond me

- **The answer the Lord gave was great**

The LORD answered, "I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites together."

- **But still Gideon** doesn't seem to have any peace.....He still wasn't sure
So he went and prepared this offering.....brought it back and placed it on the rock
And v21-22 says

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!"

In fact.....Gideon now was pretty sure he was about to die

Not from the enemy.....**But because he had seen God**

- **And the Lord said to him**.....Shalom.....Peace.....You are not going to die

And it was that peace.....That Shalom that so flooded his heart...his thinking
That right there.....Gideon built an altar.....and called it

Jehovah-Shalom

THE LORD IS PEACE

Here is today's Name for God.....Jehovah-Shalom.....The Lord is Peace

At that moment nothing had changed as far as Gideon's position was concerned
The enemy were still there.....The threat still had to be dealt with
The idolatry of God's.....that had got them into trouble.....still had to be challenged

But God's peace.....unlike any other peace.....was present.....**For** The Lord is Peace
And the Peace that God is.....and therefore brings into a life when He enters
IS Shalom.....which means a full or complete presence of
Goodness.....security....control.....that nothing can destroy

AND

- **Gideon knew that the Lord who is Peace was with Him**
Because he witnessed his offering.....being supernaturally dealt with
Fire consumed.....the angel disappeared

- **Many centuries later**.....there was yet another offering....that was supernaturally dealt
It was offered up on the cross.....By God Himself
And there it knew the judgment for the sins it bore

But after that sacrifice had been offered.....then the impossible happened
The Lord rose from the dead

- **And on that** occasion when the Risen Lord first met with..... Upper room
He greeted them with the words **Peace be with You**

And from that time on:-

The One that Isaiah calls....The Prince of Peace
Enters into the heart of all who would receive Him.....As Jehovah-Shalom
The Lord is Peace

With Him in your life you can be confident.....that whatever occurs to you here
Whatever happens.....Whatever goes wrong.....Whoever attacks
You have Christ within.....And as long as You keep your eyes on Him.....You have peace

There's a story that illustrates this so well

Of a little boy who survived a ferocious shipwreck to be swept by the waves onto a rock. He sat there all night long until the next morning he was spotted and rescued. Did you tremble while you were on the rock during the night, someone asked him. Yes, said the boy, I trembled all night—but the rock didn't.

Jesus is that rock.....Do you have Him in your life.....Because he alone can give you this all-encompassing peace.....that endures for ever

And if He is in your life...Do you need to be reminded today...
to keep your eyes on Him

(When I heard from Lynne and Frank about Lynne's illness I was privileged to share with them at their house, and as we talked about her situation I asked Lynne how she was doing. And she said, Keith, I was looking at that passage in Philippians 4 about not being anxious and I read v 9 which says: And the God of peace will be with you. And the amazing thing is that I have, in my heart, this incredible peace)

In 1890 Horatio Spafford waved goodbye as a ship carrying his wife and his 4 daughters left America for France. Two days later it was wrecked and only his wife survived. While on his way by ship to France, the captain stopped at the location where the ship had gone down and left him to grieve for a while. Stafford took from his pockets some scraps of hotel stationery and wrote these words:

*When peace like a river attendeth my way
When sorrows like sea-billows roll
Whatever my lot Thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul*

He wasn't in denial.....He was grief stricken and sorrowful
But in his heart dwelt the Lord who is peace

And Jesus.....with whom He knew his daughters now were
Became for him and his wife...the peace...that He has promised always to be