



This morning we look at our fourth and final Advent theme: peace. We will look at what God's Word has to say about peace. We began with hope which caused us to focus on what can give us hope in our lives. Without a faith in God there can be no real hope.

Hope-Faith

The principal Bible passage concerning hope was Hebrews 11:1 that tells us, "Now faith is the substance [**hypostasis**] of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (NKJV). We were able to unlock how this applies to our lives by gaining a clear understanding of the Greek word for "substance." It was **hypostasis**, which refers to that upon which we choose to build our lives; that thing upon which we stand. Faith in God is the ONLY thing that provides a solid, firm foundation upon which we can build our lives. We sang, "On Christ the solid rock I stand all other ground is sinking sand. All other ground is sinking sand."

Love

As we put our faith and trust in God, we experience the wonderful love that he offers to each of us by His grace. When we have faith in God we are able to experience a love beyond measure. We learned together that the Hellenized Jewish scholars who translated the Tanakh from Hebrew into Greek (the septuagint) settled on a Greek word **agape** to describe God's love for us. They combined all of the Hebrew descriptions of God's love into a love described most accurately in the Greek as **agape, an unselfish love**. We learned that He loved us in an unselfish way, which is how we are to love one another. Jesus tells us, "35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." (John 13:35, KJV).

Joy

Last week we learned that Hebrew expresses joy as **simchah** or **sason**. Again in looking at the septuagint, we found that Greek expresses these together as **chara**. This joy is not mere happiness which fluctuates like the waves of the ocean. It is not a happiness based on circumstances or possessions. Rather, it is a joy that comes from within. It is a **deep-seated satisfaction born out of a faith in God and an understanding of His grace and mercy for you**. This joy arises in the heart of the believer who knows this truth. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28, KJV). One of our teachers related how love and joy cling to one another like two magnets.

God's Peace is Shalom

Peace can be thought of as the third magnet that clings to love and joy. In fact, when a believer has total faith in God and experiences the love of God, he or she loves others in a supernatural way. It is in a Holy Spirit enabled way that goes beyond what any human being can muster up on their own. As love takes hold, there is a joy that fills the heart. It is a joy that is found only in

the Lord. It is living out the biblical truth so many times proclaimed, “The joy of the Lord is my strength”. https://www.openbible.info/topics/joy_of_the_lord_is_my_strength (this website gives 100 verses that describe such joy based in the Lord).

When the believer is filled with the love of God and the joy of the Lord, peace rules in such a heart. This is SHALOM. The turmoil is gone. The chaos is gone. The doubt is gone. The confusion is gone. Shalom gives rest to the weary soul, knowing that He rules and reigns in not only the events of our lives, but the events of the universe. To understand this peace, it helps to delve into the word God uses to describe this: SHALOM.

Peace

If you’re not very familiar with Hebrew, the first place you might have ever heard the word shalom is in the Aaronic blessing which I say each week at the Grove. Shalom is the last word in the priestly blessing.

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord lift up his countenance on you, and give you shalom.

(Numbers 6:24-26, NKJV with shalom used instead of peace as the last word).

When the Aaronic blessing is said, I often use the word shalom instead of peace. There is a reason that I do this. The word “peace” is nothing compared to God’s concept of peace. The first time the word shalom is seen in the Bible is in Genesis chapter 15. This is that profound account of God performing a unilateral covenant with Abraham while he is in a deep sleep and does nothing. It is a picture of grace. The chapter begins with an angelic visit to Abraham with a promise of him becoming a great nation. The ONE THING THAT ABRAHAM DID WAS TO BELIEVE. The text tells us, “⁶And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.” (Genesis 15:6, NKJV). God is telling us in this passage that belief alone has always been God’s precondition for a relationship with Him. After then giving Abraham a list of things that God would do for Him, God assured Abraham of his eternal destiny.

¹⁵ Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace [shalom]; you shall be buried at a good old age. (Genesis 15:15, NKJV).

The word shalom is derived from “shalem” which means “harmonized,” “whole,” or

IN SEARCH OF

SHALOM
שלום



“complete.” A rabbi friend of mine explained it to me by saying, “it means to make a full circle.” It describes a whole or fully satisfied situation. This completeness can be between neighbors, politically (such as peace in a country), or it can be shalom on a personal level such as one’s wellness or safety.

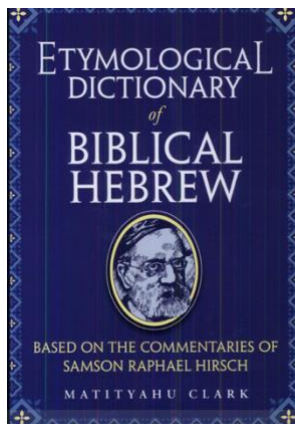
In the general or political sense, God promises that if His people follow His commandments, He will grant them shalom in the land such that “no sword will pass through your land” (Leviticus 26:6). Psalm 29:11 also says that “God will bless his people with shalom.” There are many biblical examples of shalom being experienced in a national or political way.

The basic root of shalom is from the three consonant שָׁלֵם (shalem) meaning to harmonize or to make whole or complete. The idea of “wholeness” is carried over into the heart of the word **shalom**. When Joseph’s brothers came looking for grain in Egypt, we read: “*Then he [Joseph] asked them about their well-being [shalom], and said, “Is your father well [shalom], the old man of whom you spoke? Is he still alive?” And they answered, “Your servant our father is in good health [shalom]; he is still alive.” (Genesis 43:27-28a, NKJV).*

Note that in Hebrew all those things being asked about are rolled up into one word **SHALOM**. To simply say “peace” just isn’t enough to describe what God intends when the word *shalom* is used. When I first made a visit to Israel, I was surprised at how much I heard the word shalom. It is used to say “hello” and it is used to say “goodbye.” It completes a full circle of interaction.

My father, who was a lay Hebrew scholar used to say, “Son, shalom is what a woman feels when she has fed the children, taken care of her husband, cleaned the kitchen, put away all the dishes, has all of the bills paid, and she can FINALLY put her feet up in the bed and rest.” Shalom has so much to do with setting our minds at rest, free from the cares and worries of the world.

Jesus used the word *shalom* often. The disciple John records these beautiful words of the greatest Rabbi of all. 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.” (John 14:27)* Jesus promises a peace that is unknown to the world. Let’s read that with the Hebrew word for peace. **“Shalom I leave with you, My shalom I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled and don’t be afraid.”**



Those who have sat under my teaching, have heard that in Hebrew, words are built on simple “roots.” These are usually three foundational consonants that have a basic underlying meaning. The root consonants then appear in related words. So, a root like SH-L-M (“sh” represents one letter in Hebrew) can appear in hundreds of words. The root appears with different combinations of vowel sounds and it creates a word that is always related to the root. Thus, the root *sh-l-m* appears in such words as *shalom* (“peace, well-being”), *hishtalem* (“it was worth it”), *shulam* (“was paid for”), *meshulam* (“paid for in advance”), *mushlam* (“perfect”), *shalem* (“whole”), and hundreds of other words including “paid,” and “paid in full.”

Binyanim בנינים- The root letters take on seven potential verbal configurations. Each is called a binyan. In the plural they are called binyanim.¹ Think of those in western terms as verb tenses (although that isn't quite accurate). They are more like verb moods.

Mishkal משקל – The root letters take on usually between 50 and 100 forms to create noun forms. There can be hundreds of these forms for every three-letter root in Hebrew.

I've spent days looking for an equivalent in English, but it just doesn't work that way. It would be like starting with the word EAT, and then building a huge vocabulary including those letters with regards to anything about eating. You might call a restaurant an "eatery" and a food court would be an "eateria." You might describe termite eaten wood as "eatermwood." Hebrew marvelously connects all the words up with the three letters that form the basic idea.

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch on p.264 of his 19th Century commentary defines שלם as "harmonize," or "complete."² He further specifies the sub-definitions including: 1) being whole, 2) compensating, 3) bring full, 4) being well, 5) peace, and 6) **a Temple offering**.

The Modern Hebrew expression for "how are you" is **Mah Shlom'cha?** (man) or **Mah shlomech?** for a woman. This is literally asking "what is your shalom?" How is your inner peace and your situation with the world around you and within you?

The very first time "shalom" is used in the Bible as a greeting was when the angel told Gideon, "Shalom to you. Do not fear. You shall not die" (Judges 6:23). Gideon built an altar in that place and called it "YHVH Shalom" – the Lord is Peace. Similarly, the Prophet Isaiah tells us through the centuries that the Messiah will be declared the "prince of shalom" (Isaiah 9:6).

As mentioned, shalom is derived from "shalem," which means whole or complete. God tells Abraham in Genesis 15:16 that the iniquity of the Amorites "is not yet "shalem" - it has not yet "come to pass." In Deuteronomy 25:15 God demands full and just weights that are "shlemah" (whole, complete, and true). Deuteronomy 27:6 says,"⁶ *You shall build with whole [shlomot] stones the altar of the LORD your God, and offer burnt offerings on it to the LORD your God.*" (NKJV).

Solomon, whose name itself comes from shalom, encourages that "hearts should be shalem with God" (1 Kings 8:61). That means wholly devoted to the Lord. Solomon's life spun out of control and the Bible tells us that he failed because his heart was no longer loyal ("shalem") to the Lord. He lusted after women from all over the world. His flesh consumed him.

The same root for wholeness or completeness is used in the sense of "payment." Boaz tells Ruth: "may the Lord yeshalem (reward) your work". And in Deuteronomy 32:35 the Lord says "Vengeance is mine, and shilem (retribution-payback)." In line with Rabbi Hirsch's commentary,

¹ <https://tzion.org/devarim/The%20Seven%20Binyanim.pdf>

² https://books.google.com/books/about/Etymological_Dictionary_of_Biblical_Hebr.html?id=eVAAfn6ltb4C

there were Temple offerings called a “shlamim.” These were offered as a sacrifice for peace. It was voluntary and not connected to the payment of any vow. So, which peace offering is there which can truly make us shalem – wholly- and heartedly devoted to God, and give us true shalom? Only the one who paid the price – shilem – for our transgressions.

Isaiah 53:5 a-c says, *“But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace [shalom] was upon Him,”* (NKJV).

The Greek equivalent of shalom, Eirini, was used in a similar way in the New Testament but it lacks the depth of the Hebrew foundation. Here are some verses where I’ve substituted the word shalom for the Greek word to give a deeper understanding of what they say to us.³

- “Your faith has healed you, go in shalom.” (Mark 5:34, Luke 7:50, Luke 8:48)
- “While they were saying these things, he himself stood in their midst and said to them ‘Shalom to you.’ ” (Luke 24:36)
- “Glory to the God in the highest, and on earth shalom among men with whom he is pleased.” (Luke 2:14)
- “Grace and shalom be with you.” (The opening of most of Paul’s letters.)
- “The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, shalom, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.” (Galatians 5:22-23)
- “Having been justified by faith, we have shalom with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Romans 5:1)
- “Shalom I leave with you, my shalom I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.” (John 14:27)

THE GOSPEL – GOD RECONCILES HIMSELF TO MAN

The gospel puts us back into harmony with God. It takes our relationship, which was broken by sin, and brings us back full circle into a beautiful relationship with God, with self, and with our neighbor. The requirement for shalom is a choice. It begins with belief. “And Abraham believed, and God accounted it to him as righteousness.”

Let us pray.

Union Grove is one of the oldest Baptist communities of faith in the State of Texas dating back to 1844. Pastor Faber McMullen may be reached by email at uniongrove362@gmail.com or by snail mail at: 15301 FM 362, Navasota, Texas 77868. Tel: 936-825-1227 (Edited and proofed by Amanda Neese- Webster, Texas.) All financial gifts to this ministry are tax-deductible as a 501 (c) (3) Corporation.

³ <https://biblesocietyinIsrael.com/shalom-in-the-bible/>