

JEHOVAH-SHALOM – THE LORD OUR PEACE

Judges 6:1-24

INTRODUCTION

- On 30th September, 1938, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain returned from Germany announcing, “Peace for our time”
- Within a year of Chamberlain's declaration of peace, Germany invaded Poland and WWII had begun
- It has been estimated that out of 3530 years of recorded history, there were just 286 years of peace, 14,351 wars and 3.64 billion people killed
- “Peace” – just hearing that word evokes all manner of thoughts in our hearts
- Peace is something that all mankind desires, but very few will ever experience
- It is not to be found in the nations of the world, in the families of the world, or in the hearts of the men of this world
- But there are a small number of blessed people who have found the secret to peace and are living in a state of perfect peace
- As we continue in our studies in the names of God, you'll recall last week we studied the name Jehovah-Mekadesh – The Lord Who Sanctifies
- God, at Mount Sinai, showed himself to be holy; he showed he requires his people to be holy; and he makes his people holy
- Now we move forward about 300 years to the time of the judges
- When the Bible speaks of “judges”, they are not so much like the judges of our day, making decisions in a courtroom, but were deliverers and saviours of the children of Israel, raised up by God to deliver the people from their oppressors

- Under Joshua's leadership, the Israelites served the Lord and even promised they would serve the Lord (Judges 2:14-15)
- Yet when they cried unto the Lord in their distress, "the LORD raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them" (Judges 2:16)
- This cycle sin, suffering, supplication and salvation is repeated seven times in the Book of Judges, and with each cycle, Israel's apostasy becomes progressively deeper, so that by the end of the book the nation was in a state of anarchy – "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25)
- Here in Judges 6, we find the Israelites in a state of distress, oppression, conflict, weakness, fear, anxiety, privation, starvation – the complete opposite of peace
- Yet into that dreadful situation, the Lord pronounces to Gideon, "Peace be unto thee" (v.23)
- That must have sounded strange to Gideon, yet he took hold of that word and "built an altar there unto the LORD, and called it Jehovahshalom" (v.24)
- Jehovah-Shalom – The Lord Our Peace, or The Lord Send Peace
- The Hebrew word "Shalom" remains a common salutation among the Jews to this day
- It is a divine peace, which encompasses wholeness, completeness, prosperity, soundness and contentment
- The New Testament equivalent is *eirene*, and is used primarily to refer to the heart-peace that believers enjoy by the Holy Ghost
- In all but four of the New Testament epistles, "peace" is used as a salutation, always preceded by "grace", and sometimes "mercy" (Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:3; 2 Corinthians 1:2; Galatians 1:3; Ephesians 1:2; Philippians 1:2; Colossians 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 1:1;

2 Thessalonians 1:2; 1 Timothy 1:2; 2 Timothy 1:2; Titus 1:4; Philemon 3; 1 Peter 1:2; 2 Peter 1:2; 2 John 3; Revelation 1:4)

- Paul refers numerous times to “the God of peace” (Romans 15:33; 16:20; Philippians 4:9; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 13:20)
- How do we find this peace? The people of this world every day are attempting to find it through wealth, sensual pleasure, religious practices and countless other pursuits
- Some of these things may give a temporary feeling of peace and satisfaction, but there is no lasting peace found in them
- People spend their lives vainly pursuing peace in the things of the world, while refusing the one true source of peace, and go to their graves in emptiness and frustration
- Here in Judges 6 we are presented with means by which peace is lost, but then also how true peace may be gained

I. THE SIN THAT REMOVES OUR PEACE (1-6)

A. God created man in a state of peace

1. In the original creation, Adam and Eve enjoyed perfect peace in Paradise
2. They had peace with God, they had peace with each other, they had peace with the rest of the creation, they had peace with themselves

B. The fall stripped mankind of all peace

1. Now all of us as Adam’s children enter this world in a state of trouble, conflict and discord because of our sin
2. “There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked.” (Isaiah 48:22)
3. “But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.” (Isaiah 57:20-21)

4. "The way of peace they know not" (Isaiah 59:8; Romans 3:17)
- C. Israel's condition pictures what sin does to us
1. We become prey to our enemies (v.1)
 2. We live in continual fear (v.2)
 3. We are robbed of prosperity and blessings (v.3-5)
 4. We are impoverished (v.6)
- D. God withholds his peace from his people because of their sin (v.1)
1. God would have given them peace, but because of their sin, he withheld it
 2. "O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea" (Isaiah 48:18)
 3. Christ wept over Jerusalem for their rejection of him, and their rejection of his peace: "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes" (Luke 19:42)
 4. There can be no change to this situation until, coming to an end of ourselves, realising there is no other means of deliverance, we cry unto the Lord (Judges 6:6)

II. THE WORD THAT REVEALS OUR PLIGHT (7-10)

- A. God sent a prophet to the children of Israel
1. Elsewhere in Judges, the Lord raised up a judge in response to Israel's cry, but in this case, he first sends a prophet
 2. God wanted Israel to be certain as to why they were in such trouble – "ye have not obeyed my voice" (v.10)

- B. We need the word of God to show us the reality of our spiritual condition
1. The word of God is as a mirror that shows us as we truly are (James 1:23-25)
 2. In the Bible we learn the truth of the holiness of God; and the truth of the sinfulness of man
 3. Multitudes today are in ignorance as to their deplorable spiritual state, and their sin that has brought them into it
 4. Most people are deceived about their true spiritual condition
 - ✓ They think they are good when they are evil
 - ✓ They think they are clean when they are filthy
 - ✓ They think they are rich when they are poor
 - ✓ They think they are alive when they are dead
 - ✓ They think they have sight when they are blind
 - ✓ They think they are at peace with God when they are at enmity with God
 - ✓ They think they are under God's favour when they are under his frown
 5. But God's word, especially the law, shows us our sin (Romans 3:20; Galatians 3:22)
 6. This is what *we* need, this is what *the world* needs – to hear the message of God's word to break through our delusions and show us the truth

III. THE LORD WHO RESTORES OUR PEACE (11-24)

- A. The LORD appeared to Gideon and brought peace
1. As Gideon secretly threshed wheat at the winepress, Jehovah appeared to him
 2. Note that the "angel of the LORD" (v.11) is the LORD himself (v.14), known as the "angel of his presence" (Isaiah 63:9), a theophany and Christophany – a pre-incarnate appearance of the Son of God

3. The LORD pronounced to Gideon, “The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour” (v.12)
 4. What words of comfort and encouragement to a fearful, feeble saint!
 5. Gideon’s objections regarding the Midianites (v.13) and his own deficiencies (v.15) are answered by God, promising his presence and Israel’s victory over their enemies (vv.14,16)
 6. Gideon needed to learn, as we all do, that peace is not found in our own abilities and efforts, but in the Lord himself
 7. Gideon presented a gift to the angel of the LORD, which was consumed by fire, proving that this was no mere man, but an angel of the LORD (vv.17-21)
 8. Fearing he would die, Jehovah spoke peace unto Gideon, assuring him he would not die
 9. In response, Gideon built an altar of thanksgiving and named it Jehovah-Shalom
 10. Gideon then destroyed the altar of Baal (6:25-32) would eventually lead 300 men to battle against the Midianites and the LORD delivered them into his hand (7:9-25)
- B. Peace is found only through the Lord Jesus Christ
1. He is promised to bring peace
 - a. 600 years before his birth, he was called “The Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6)
 - b. At his birth, the angels proclaimed, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” (Luke 2:14)
 - c. During his ministry he pronounce peace on the wind and the waves (Mark 4:39) on the people he healed (Luke 7:50; 8:48) and on his disciples (John 20:19-21)

- d. The message of the apostles was “peace by Jesus Christ” (Acts 10:36)
2. He purchased our peace
 - a. God's perfect justice could not merely allow him to pronounce sinners forgiven and reconciled to himself without sin being satisfied
 - b. There must be a sacrifice for sin, if man is to be at peace with God
 - c. The animal sacrifices under the Old Covenant provided a temporary atonement for sin, but could never take the guilt of sin away (Hebrews 10:4)
 - d. But it was the Son of God, who left the glory of heaven and came into this world in human flesh, who lived a perfect life, then offered himself a sacrifice for our sins, and “made peace through the blood of his cross” (Colossians 1:20-22)
 - e. Jehovah-Shalom himself took the punishment we deserve, dying in our place, “that he might bring us to God” (1 Peter 3:18)
 - f. “The chastisement of our peace was upon him” (Isaiah 53:5) – that is the punishment required to bring us into a state of peace with God, which should have been upon us, went upon him
 - g. “We were reconciled to God by the death of his Son” (Romans 5:10)
 - h. “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself” (2 Corinthians 5:19)
 - i. “For he is our peace” (Ephesians 2:14)
3. He gives peace to his people (John 14:27)
- C. Those who receive this peace with God by faith in Christ, may increase their experience of this peace in their daily walk

1. By keeping our mind stayed upon God and trusting in him (Isaiah 26:3)
2. By loving God's law (Psalm 119:165)
3. By keeping God's commandments (Proverbs 3:1-2)
4. By prayer (Philippians 4:6-7)

CONCLUSION

1. Like the false prophets of Israel that pronounced peace when there is no peace (Ezekiel 13:16), so today there are many false prophets promising peace apart from Jesus Christ
2. Eliphaz told Job, "Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace" (Job 22:21)
3. "No God, no peace; know God, know peace"
4. Can you say you know God and you know his peace?
5. One test to determine whether you have true peace or not is how you react when things don't go your way
 - ✓ Do you respond with frustration, disappointment, anger and anxiety?
 - ✓ Or do you respond with contentment, knowing that God's will is always best, and that he is working all things together for good?
6. If you have received the gift of peace from God through faith in Jesus Christ, you now have a duty and obligation to that peace:
 - ✓ Let God's peace rule in your heart (Colossians 3:15)
 - ✓ Pray for authorities that we might live in peace (1 Timothy 2:2)
 - ✓ Seek peace with others (Hebrews 12:14; Romans 12:18; 14:19; Psalm 34:14; 1 Peter 3:11)
 - ✓ Proclaim peace to the lost (Isaiah 52:7; 2 Corinthians 5:20)