

Names of God from the Bible

5 – YHWH Shalom (Peace)

Every name of God is an eternal Name. So the name "The Lord is Peace" is as true for us as it was for Gideon.

Reading: Judges 6:11-24

Gideon was a great man with an inferiority complex. The Israelites were being persecuted by the Midianites, largely due to their rejection of God. One of the Midianites' nasty habits was to wait until the Israelite harvest was ripe, then attack and either destroy the grain by burning it or take the grain for themselves.

Gideon was a good and courageous man, and did not succumb under the threat of the Midianites. He decided to reap his crop and instead of taking it to the threshing floor, the obvious place, he took his harvest to the winepress and threshed it there. He took the extra precaution of threshing at night.

One night, God's angel appeared to him and told him that he would lead the people to a great victory over the Midianites. Gideon looked around to see who God might be talking to as he certainly didn't feel up to the job. However, the Lord repeated His promise, and Gideon, seeking confirmation, suggested that God should wait while he went and prepared a sacrifice. The Lord agreed to his request.

Gideon prepared the meat and God told him to place it upon a rock. Once Gideon had done so, God touched it with the staff in His hand and fire descended and consumed the sacrifice. Gideon was overcome with fear and cried out, believing he would die, having seen God. God reassured Gideon that he would not die. As a consequence, Gideon built an altar and called it, "*The Lord is peace*" (YHWH Shalom).

Subsequently, Shalom was understood predominantly to relate to well-being, as in the greeting, "*How are you?*" (*that is, are you experiencing Shalom?*) However, it later became more commonly used in the Old Testament in reference to experiencing inner harmony and blessings gained through a close relationship with God. It transcended from just feeling good to experiencing peace in the midst of crises. It was used to contrast the lack of peace for the wicked.

This idea is continued in the New Testament. Paul mentioned in Romans 5 that "*we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.*" Jesus Himself said that the peace He gives is not like the peace experienced in the world – a lack of conflict – rather, the peace He gives is calmness in the midst of hatred, violence and uncertainty. It comes through a relationship with God as Father, as provided by Jesus Christ His Son.

This is both a wonderful privilege and incredible blessing. We all experience challenges on a daily basis and they can rock our comfort, sap our strength and leave us exhausted. How wonderful for us, as Christians, therefore, to be able to approach God (knowing we will not die) and to off load all our fears, and find, in exchange, inner peace that only God can provide.

It is one of the most amazing benefits of being a Christian. When we come to the end of ourselves we find God is the answer – God is our peace. We sense the relaxing of our muscles, and the strain disappearing from our foreheads and minds. In its place we experience an incredible sense

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of love, acceptance and that, above all else, God is in control and will provide a way through all our challenges, however great they may seem to us at the time.

We receive God's peace, not because we are clever or that we deserve it, nor can we obtain peace by drawing on our own inner strength. No, this is external to us, a spiritual impartation. It is supernatural and flows from God, purely because Jesus has saved us and brought us into that personal relationship with God as our Heavenly Father.

What does that name mean for us today

It means that no matter the adverse circumstances we have to face or go through, God can and will provide a deep peace in our lives so we can face the future with confidence and joy.

Prayer

Father, thank You so much for the privilege of living in a personal relationship with You because of what Jesus did on the Cross when He died for my sin and rebellion against You. Thank You that because I have peace with You, I also experience inner peace in every situation of life. Amen.

Additional Readings

- Psalm 119:161-168
- Isaiah 26:1-13
- John 14
- 2 Thessalonians 3:16

Questions

1. How do we get peace with God?
2. Have you ever experienced the supernatural peace of God? How and when?
3. How does Jesus fulfil that name?