



## Week 8 Session Guide

### Jehovah-Shalom “The Lord your Peace”

#### Introduction:

People have dreamed of peace for as long as they’ve been on the earth. But what is peace? Is it just the absence of conflict or injustice? Is it even just the absence of animosity? Is it a feeling of calm, a sense of tranquility? Ironically, wars are always fought with the claimed goal of obtaining “Peace”, usually by promising to vanquish whatever “enemy” is disturbing the “peace”.

Throughout the ages people have defined “Peace” in varied ways but it is always perceived as something beneficial, something to hope for, something to strive for. The Hebrew word translated in the Bible as “Peace” is “Shalom”. According to Strong's Concordance “shalom” means completeness, wholeness, health, peace, welfare, safety, soundness, tranquility, prosperity, perfectness, fullness, rest, harmony, the absence of agitation or discord. Shalom comes from the root verb shalom meaning to be complete, perfect and full.

#### Old Testament:

We find the origin of the aspect of God’s name as “The Lord is Peace” in the narrative of Gideon in Judges 6:11-24. Because of their disobedience of God’s laws Israel was under severe distress because of the oppression of the Midianites. One night, as Gideon was surreptitiously threshing wheat, hiding from the Midianite occupiers. The Angel of the Lord (the Pre-Incarnate Jesus) appeared and said to Gideon, “The LORD (YHWH) is with you, O valiant warrior”. Gideon, not realizing Who he was talking to, then entered into an argument with the Angel complaining that God had abandoned Israel. When told that he, Gideon, would lead the Israelite army to victory over their enemies, he scoffed and whined that he was the youngest man from the least family in Israel. When the Angel of the Lord finally revealed Himself to Gideon, Gideon feared that his smart mouth toward the Angel of the Lord had just sealed his death warrant. (His fear was well founded. Everyone in Israel knew that only the High Priest could enter into the Presence of the Lord, and only once a year, and only after extensive preparation and sanctification). Once he realized the extent of his offense, Gideon said, “Alas, O Lord YHWH. For now I have seen the Angel of the Lord face to face”. But God said to him, “Peace to you, do not fear; you shall not die.” Verse 24 records, “Then Gideon built an altar there to the Lord and named it The Lord is Peace.” (YHWH Shalom).

We see in this story, Gideon as a type of mankind; quick to contend with God, to disagree with God’s assessment of ourselves and shifting blame for our misfortune from our own sinful disobedience to a perceived lack of concern on God’s part.

The declaration of God’s name as “The Lord is Peace” in this event however showed God’s grace, mercy and compassion to Gideon and revealed His desire for Peace and reconciliation and the restoration of “Shalom” between God and individuals as well as for the entire nation. The rest of the story in Judges records God’s

miraculous strategy to use Gideon to cause the self destruction of the Midianite allied armies and to restore independence and peace to Israel.

## **New Testament: Jesus “the Prince of Peace”**

In Isaiah 9:6-7 the prophet Isaiah speaks about a “child being born” and He will be called the “Prince of Peace.” We see from this prophecy that God is indeed zealous for peace, for the complete well being of His Creation and that He intends to accomplish this universal “Shalom” by manifesting Himself as a human being Who will establish God’s Kingdom on Earth and then establish and ensure “Peace” as He rules over this Kingdom.

Of course, God accomplishes this in a way totally unexpected by most people. The Ancient Jewish Biblical scholars all believed that the Messianic prophecies described a King who would appear in Israel and would militarily subdue all of Israel’s enemies, establishing “peace” by destroying His enemies and forcing the survivors to submit to his rule. God, in His wisdom, knew that forced submission only produces an apparent and temporary “peace” or lack of conflict but does not address the root cause of the lack of peace defined by the Epistle of James as, “.. your pleasures that wage war in your members. You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask [God].”

As we found in our previous study on “The Lord our Righteousness”, our natural hearts are wicked, self centered and opposed to God’s standard of Righteousness. Shalom is impossible for someone with this type of heart as they will always be in conflict with God and other people.

Once again, God had the ultimate and the only solution as described in Romans 5:1, “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” But that peace, that reconciliation is only the beginning. The Apostle Peter declares that as Christians we, “must turn away from evil and do good; [we] must seek peace and pursue it.” And Paul tells us in Colossians 3:15 to “Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.” And as the Peace of Christ rules in our hearts we are commanded to, “... Live in peace with one another.’ (Our brothers and sisters in Christ) (1 Thess 5:13). And from there to “Pursue peace with all men” (Heb 12:14). In fact, this is one way that people will know that we are the children of God. Jesus promised in His Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:9, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”

God is passionate about establishing peace, “Shalom” in His Creation because Peace, “Shalom” is His Nature. It will happen and it will be everlasting because He is changing the hearts, the very thought processes of people to become like Jesus and to love true Godly peace and by His grace to LIVE peacefully with Him and His people.

## **Discussion Questions:**

1. What steals your peace? What brings you peace? How can we have peace in the middle of the storms of life?
2. Why does self-centeredness make peace impossible? How do we eliminate self-centeredness?
3. Read John 16:33. What does it teach us about peace? How will Peace on Earth ultimately be established?
4. How can we practically demonstrate and introduce Jehovah Shalom to the world around us?