

## 20251221 Peace – Shalom – That Relief You Feel When You Realize You Are Not God!

SHALOM my precious brothers and sisters. I want to share a personal story this morning about how I came to love languages in general (and Hebrew in particular). God could have given me any family, but He gave me my family. I had an amazing father. He was one of two children born to my grandmother, Lela Belle Knox and my grandfather, Faber McMullen Sr. Their life stories are super interesting. They were both people of humble means who raised two extraordinary sons. Those two boys both have great life stories, but that isn't the focus of what we're studying this morning. I will tell you that through the influence of a neighbor, the two young boys came to faith in Jesus. They eventually led both of their parents to Christ and were all baptized together as a family at West University Baptist Church. As things ended up, my family lived in a Jewish neighborhood in Houston right next door to the rabbi of the largest Temple in the city. My dad loved to engage in discussions with the rabbi about the Bible, and the rabbi challenged my father to learn Hebrew if he wanted to discuss the Hebrew scriptures. At the time of his death, dad had a good working knowledge of 10 languages. But the one he most loved and devoted himself to was Hebrew, which he called "God's language."

The word for peace in Hebrew is *shalom*. About 10 years before dad died, he told me that he wanted to teach me some biblical Hebrew. On one occasion, we discussed the word *shalom* as we continued our journey in Hebrew together. I can still hear his voice in my mind. "Dad, what is the true meaning of *shalom*?" Dad often taught me with storied illustrations. He answered, "son, *shalom* is the rest a mother feels when she has washed the clothes, folded them and put them away, the meal has been cooked, the dishes are clean and put away, the kids have been fed, the husband has been attended to, the bills are all paid, and the mother can finally put her feet up in the bed and have time to herself." If that's not a picture of rest, I don't know what is. *Shalom* is translated as "peace" in English, but it means so much more than our feeble concept of peace. As I think through this today, I consider what Jesus said, *"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, NKJV)*. Jesus is telling us that shalom peace is something very different than what the world offers. He offers to let us rest in Him, being neither troubled or afraid. This means that shalom is something WAY BIGGER than how we think of "peace" or being "at peace".

### Shalom – The Concept of Completing a Circle

When Sandy and I took our first trip to Israel around the year 2000, my knowledge of the Hebrew language consisted only of knowing the Hebrew alphabet and one word, *shalom*. I was able to read and write the word *shalom* - שלום. As we spent our first few days there on our tour, everytime someone came up to greet the tour, they would say, "Shalom." As the conversation ended, instead of saying "Goodbye" or something like that, they would again say, "Shalom." It was both hello and goodbye. I figured it must be similar to the word aloha in that it is said in Hawaii for hello and goodbye. But *shalom* is different. *Shalom* is a way of saying, "this engagement has begun, it has come full circle, and it is ended." The circle of conversation had been completed. God tells us throughout the Bible what true peace, shalom, means.

**PAUSE – Finding Peace through Trusting in Him**

You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You.  
(Isaiah 26:3, NKJV).

So there in Israel, on that first tour, as we began to have free time, we would go into little shops to make purchases. The shop keeper would give us a receipt each time we made a purchase. I looked on the receipt and I couldn't figure out why the only Hebrew word which I knew was on the the receipt. I asked our guide, "why did they stamp our receipt with the word "shalom?" She said, "That means you've paid your bill. You don't owe anything else on your account." So, in that sense, *shalom* meant that I owed a debt, but it had been paid in full. Wow! That sure means something different than the word peace that we use in English (which basically means a lack of conflict). Again, it was a circle being made complete. I went into a shop where I was told *shalom* when I entered. I found something that I wanted which incurred a debt that I paid. The receipt was stamped with *shalom*, meaning that my debt was paid in full. The shopkeeper said goodbye to me by saying "*shalom*." It seemed like I was hearing the word "shalom" everywhere. When Jesus came from heaven, and He went to the cross in payment for my sins and yours, we were invited to participate in that shalom. In doing so, when we came to Him, our names were written in the Lamb's Book of Life, and SHALOM was stamped next to each of our names, meaning our sins were PAID IN FULL. He not only gives us strength, but He blesses us with true peace.

**PAUSE – A Promised Blessing to God's People:**

The LORD will give strength to His people;  
The LORD will bless His people with peace. (Psalm 29:11, NKJV).

**The Roots of the Word shalom – Repairing what is Broken**

The root meanings of words are important. They give us an idea of the linguistic ancestry of a word. The Hebrew word *shalam* (שלם Strongs H7999) is a primitive three letter root meaning "to be complete," "to be whole," "to be sound," or "to be safe." It embodies the ideas of wholeness, completeness, restoration, and making amends with others. There are many words in Hebrew which are variants of the word *shalom*, but around each of them is the core meaning of: making something incomplete to be made complete, or to make something broken to be fixed. This repair is of all things, be they: financial, physical, relational, mental, or material. That's a task that the world just can't perform. In fact, it is only God who can make us complete when we are incomplete in some way. It is only He who can fix us when we're broken. It is only He who can bring true *shalom* into our lives. *Shalom* isn't just being quiet and being away from the hustle and bustle of life, but it means that something that was begun has been finished appropriately. Something that was broken has been divinely fixed. At its core, *shalom* is about being at peace with God. When we come to Jesus in faith, we are brought into *shalom* with God.

## PAUSE – Peace with God through Faith in Christ

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, (Romans 5:1, NKJV).

### Doing a Deep Dive of the word Shalom

During this four-part series, we've made a deep dive into the origins of HOPE, LOVE, JOY, and today, PEACE. These are inheritances that are ours if we will just take them and enjoy them. Otherwise, we're like the person who has renounced some bequest given to them in a will. We learned that hope is the product of "standing on God's promises." Love is all about giving. If there is no giving going on, then there is no love. We learned that joy is about leaning. As we lean on the everlasting arms of God, we are filled with a sense of well-being in knowing and having true joy that we are depending on the only thing upon which we can depend, and that is God. So, what about *shalom*? *Shalom* is about resting. **Resting has to do with trusting, relying, believing, listening, focusing, and receiving God's perfect rest for our weary and troubled souls.**

This word that God uses to convey the concept of peace to us, has its linguistic ancestry in a proto-semitic root S-L-M (I've written it left to right so we can more easily recognize it) is the foundation of *shalom*. This is the word *salam* in Arabic which means peace and submission. Satan even hijacked the roots of the word to give the world Islam, one of the most repressive and horrible false religions of the world. There is no real *shalom* in this false religion, only death, destruction, domination, and misery. Jesus warned us about such fakes when He said, <sup>40</sup>*The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. (John 10:10, NKJV).* Satan steals the word and uses it for his purposes. Only the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob through His human person of Jesus can bring us true *shalom*.

At this point you might be feeling that I'm giving some kind of ying-yang, circle of life sort of sermon. I am not, but it helps to understand why God chose this root word to describe the peace He intends for us to have when we find our rest in Him. **Resting in Him is when you are at peace under His authority.** It is seeing and realizing that He truly is sovereign in your life. As I am fond of saying, **"Shalom is that relief you feel when you realize that you are not God."** Without something greater than ourselves, the short-lived circle of life can be depressing. It can seem to be without purpose.

King Solomon (meaning "peaceful" from the word *shalom*), begins his book, Ecclesiastes, making observations about the endless circle and inferred meaningless of the human experience.

<sup>4</sup> *One generation passes away, and another generation comes;...*

<sup>5</sup> *The sun also rises, and the sun goes down,....<sup>6</sup> The wind goes toward the south, And turns around to the north; The wind whirls about continually, And comes again on its circuit. <sup>7</sup> All the rivers run into the sea, Yet the sea is not full; To the place from which the rivers come,*

there they return again.

.....

<sup>9</sup>That which has been *is* what will be, that which *is* done is what will be done, And *there is* nothing new under the sun. (Ecclesiastes 1:4a, 5a, 6-7, 9, NKJV).

Solomon goes on to say that if we focus only on the here and now, and on the creation rather than the Creator, all seems like nothingness. He calls it vanity. Scripture gives us a pathway to finding *shalom*.

**PAUSE - Peace Triggered through Joy, Prayer, and Thanksgiving:**

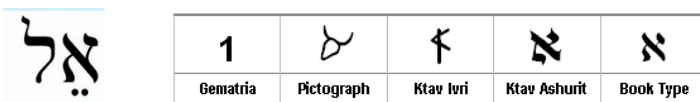
*<sup>4</sup> Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! <sup>5</sup> Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. <sup>6</sup> Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; <sup>7</sup> and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:4-7, NKJV).*

**Could Shalom Possibly be a Word Picture?**

As dad and I continued to study Hebrew together, we were fascinated in looking at some of the pictorial roots of the Hebrew language. Let me explain what I mean. Hebrew letters are all really symbols of ancient pictures at some level. The ancients drew pictures that developed into words that were assembled from the pictures. Not all are that way, but many are. We always wondered which came first, the picture or the word (like the chicken and the egg). Let me give you a few examples of how meanings are imbedded in the very letters of certain words. The word for God is actually two pictures that are put together.

Remember now that we are reading from right to left. The letter on the right, the Aleph, is in fact an ox's head. It often embodies the idea of strength, power, might, and leadership. The letter that follows is the Lamed. It is a picture of a shepherd's crook. It is associated with shepherd, leadership, authority. So who is the most powerful leader or the strongest shepherd? He is God. This is the word in Hebrew for God. The word is EL.

The illustration on the right shows the progression from the ox's head to the modern letter.<sup>1</sup>



Other Example: The word father. The Authority/Strength in the house/tent. It is the picture of

an ox head followed by a tent. **אב**

This incidence of pictographs with hidden meanings holds true for many Hebrew words. Most simply and notably are the words for God and father that you've just seen above. These are

<sup>1</sup> Jeff Benner, [https://hebrew4christians.com/Grammar/Unit\\_One/Aleph-Bet/Aleph/aleph.html](https://hebrew4christians.com/Grammar/Unit_One/Aleph-Bet/Aleph/aleph.html)

shown to present the idea of a relationship that sometimes exists between the definitions behind letters that possibly give words meaning.

The Hebrew word Shalom (שָׁלוֹם) comes from the root shin-lamed-mem (ש-ל-מ), meaning "to be whole, complete, or perfect," and signifies more than just the absence of conflict, encompassing health, wholeness, security, tranquility, and well-being in all aspects of life (physical, spiritual, relational).<sup>2</sup>

Although I have no authoritative source for saying this, if we go to pictographs of the letters with their underlying meanings, the S-L-M could possibly mean:

**Steady hand** – of a **shepherd** – in the **midst of chaos** (using the samech for the sound of the "s")

Or using the letter "shin," it could possibly be interpreted as:

**Shepherd** – **destroys/eats** – **chaos**. (This reverses the order of the two first letters).

I realize that these interpretations are an academic stretch, and they can be met with much criticism, but I've learned to have my mind open when dealing with the mysteries of God. And, if this helps us to understand and remember what real peace is all about, then it might be worth our attention.

#### **Pause - Secret to finding Peace: Let Your Mind Dwell on These Things**

<sup>8</sup> Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. <sup>9</sup> The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the **God of peace will be with you**. (Philippians 4:8-9, NKJV).

#### **Getting Back to God's Word**

So, putting conjecture aside, what does the Bible solidly say about peace? Depending on what translation you use, the Bible (Old and New Testament) mentions peace somewhere between 320 and 429 times. The average of those two numbers is 374.5 times. Let that sink in for a minute. That means that God intends for us to experience peace every day of our lives, and depending on the translation used, He even gives us 10 extra doses for the really tough days.

Although Psalm 23 doesn't use the word peace, I think it describes the peace that we find when we rest in Him, submitting to His sovereign will for our lives, and realizing that it is all about Him. David describes the benefits of having such a walk with God.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C5%A0-L-M>

*The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. <sup>2</sup> He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. <sup>3</sup> He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. <sup>4</sup> Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. <sup>5</sup> You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over. <sup>6</sup> Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever. (Psalm 23, NKJV).*

You might be saying, “pastor, all of this is wonderful, but right now I am not experiencing peace in my life.” Listen closely as God lays out how he wants us to experience this last and wonderful inheritance available to every believer. Start it with the realization that “it is a great relief when you realize that you are not God.”

**Pause - Peace with Others in General:**

<sup>17</sup> Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. <sup>18</sup> If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live **peaceably** with all men. (Romans 12:17-18, NKJV).

**Pause - Peace with your Enemies:**

<sup>7</sup> When a man's ways please the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at **peace** with him. (Proverbs 16:7, NKJV).

**Pause - Peace with Those in the Church:**

<sup>11</sup> Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in **peace**; and the God of love and peace will be with you. <sup>12</sup> Greet one another with a holy kiss. (2 Corinthians 13:11-12, NKJV).

**Pause - Peace within yourself by Resting on and in Him:**























<sup>28</sup> Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For My yoke *is* easy and My burden is light. (Matthew 11:28-30, NKJV).

**LET US PRAY – PAUSE**

<sup>22</sup> *And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: <sup>23</sup> “Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, ‘This is the way you shall bless the children of Israel. Say to them: <sup>24</sup> “The LORD bless you and keep you; <sup>25</sup> The LORD make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you; <sup>26</sup> The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you **peace**.” ( Numbers 6:22-26, NKJV).* Pastor - “May He give you His perfect *shalom* in this Christmas season.”

AMEN

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](mailto: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.

Name	Pictograph	Meaning	Name	Pictograph	Meaning
Aleph		Ox / strength / leader	Lamed		Staff / goad / control / "toward"
Bet		House / "In"	Mem		Water / chaos
Gimmel		Foot / camel / pride	Nun		Seed / fish / activity / life
Dalet		Tent door / pathway	Samekh		Hand on staff / support / prop
Hey		Lo! Behold! "The"	Ayin		Eye / to see / experience
Vav		Nail / peg / add / "And"	Pey		Mouth / word / speak
Zayin		Plow / weapon / cut off	Tsade		Man on side / desire / need
Chet		Tent wall / fence / separation	Qof		Sun on horizon / behind
Tet		Basket / snake / surround	Resh		Head / person / first
Yod		Arm and hand / work / deed	Shin		Eat / consume / destroy
Kaf		Palm of hand / to open	Tav		Mark / sign / covenant