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Restoring to wholeness

שָׁלוֹם
SHALOM

"For Jesus himself is our peace…" **(Ephesians 2:14)**

This world is not as it should be. The brokenness caused by sin surrounds us, even invading our homes and hearts. Betrayal, disappointment, death, decay, deception and disease abound. But that is not the end of the story.

Despair and destruction are not our fate as children of God. The Messiah has come to set right all the wrongs, to repay debts, to repair, rebuild, restore, release, renew and heal. This is Jesus' heart and mission. His rightful title in this role is *'The Prince of* ***Shalom****'* (see *Isaiah 9:6*).

The Biblical concept of *shalom* involves much more than our typical use of the English word 'peace'. *Shalom* is not just the absence of conflict, like a ceasefire or a truce between enemies. Rather, it encapsulates wholeness, wellness, peace, security, welfare, wellbeing, completeness, prosperity and more! *Shalom* is a restoration to wholeness. It is a return to the way things ought to be, and a deep trusting in the Lord that he is accomplishing just that (see *Ezekiel 34:16, Joel 2:25-26, Acts 3:19-21* and *Psalm 147:3*). As a fruit of the Spirit, *shalom* is available as a gift from God. It is a state of the heart which is secured in Christ.

"Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of shalom be removed," says the Lord*, who has compassion on you"* (Isaiah 54:10).

Imagine your life as a complex, partially complete, work of art, with pieces missing or broken and in need of repair. We can let Jesus be both the Rock and Chief Cornerstone – that firm foundation for our life – and the Master Craftsman. As 'clay' in his capable and good hands, we can trust the wise 'Potter' to add, remove and shape as he sees fit (see *Isaiah 64:8 and Ephesians 2:10*). *"*Lord*, you establish* ***shalom*** *for us; all that we have accomplished you have done for us"* (Isaiah 26:12).

The verb associated with *shalom* is *shalam* שָׁלַם which means to 'be complete' or whole, to pay / repay, to finish, to 'make amends' or 'make good'. When a debt is owed and then repaid, *shalom* is made. For example, in Leviticus the law required: *"He that kills an animal shall restore it [make shalam] to the owner"* (Leviticus 24:21).

Other words in the same family of words, sharing the same root letters, include:

- Jerusalem (*Yerushalim* in Hebrew) יְרוּשָׁלַם which means the 'city' or 'foundation' of ***'shalom'***. Jerusalem is where the Messiah made ***shalom*** (restored relationship) with God through his death, burial, resurrection and ascension.
- Solomon (*Shlomo* in Hebrew) שְׁלֹמֹה means 'man of *shalom*.' He was the one to 'complete' the Temple, in other words, to bring it '***shalom***' (completeness). During King Solomon's reign, peace and prosperity prevailed for the Israelites (see *1 Chronicles 22:9*).

In all the places where there is lack in our lives, Jesus himself steps in as our *Sar Shalom, "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not lack"* (Psalm 23:1).

In different ways and seasons of life we all experience degrees of brokenness. The *Sar Shalom* desires to make everything whole again. He paid the price for us, that he might restore us after the disastrous effects of the Fall (see *Luke 4:14-21* and *Colossians 1:13-14*).

Seek Shalom

The chasm between God and ourselves caused by sin is the most fundamental way in which we all experience a lack – desperately needing shalom. *"Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have* ***shalom*** *with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"* (Romans 5:1).

Ideally, fractured relationships with other people can be repaired through repentance and forgiveness. As much as it depends on us, we should do our part to seek to live 'in *shalom*' (wholeness of relationship) with all men (see *Romans 12:18*). Jesus said, *'Blessed are the Shalom-makers'* (see Matthew 5:9). However, even where that is not possible, Christ himself steps in to make up the lack – to be our 'enough'. He offers himself as our comfort, leader, shepherd, heavenly Bridegroom, and friend in every season. He generously provides himself in relationship with us; and often, in due course, other people for us to be in relationship with too (see *Psalm 68:5-6*). Jesus said: *"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have* ***shalom****. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world"* (John 16:33).

The Lord is *shalom* (see *Judges 6:24*), and he blesses his people with *shalom* (see *Psalm 29:11*). His sweet shalom is meant to permeate our entire lives – if we would only invite him in to do so! *"Seek shalom and pursue it"* (Psalm 34:14).

"Now may the Lord of ***Shalom*** *himself give you* ***shalom*** *at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you"* (2 Thessalonians 3:16).

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