

Yahweh Shalom: "The Lord Is Peace"

Scripture Reading — Judges 6:11-24

*Gideon built an altar to the LORD there and called it The LORD Is Peace.
—Judges 6:24—*

Today's reading takes place in a strange setting. People usually threshed grain in the open, where the wind could blow away chaff from the grain being tossed up in the air. But Gideon worked under the cover of a winepress. Gideon and all his people feared the Midianites, who often came to raid their land and ruin their crops.

Hiding in the winepress, Gideon meets a visitor, "the angel of the LORD [Yahweh]," who ironically assures him, "The LORD is with you, mighty warrior."

This encounter initiates Gideon's call to be God's deliverer of his people from the Midianites. At the end of this story, Gideon builds an altar, calling it Yahweh Shalom, "The LORD is peace." Gideon uses this name for God in response to a word of assurance: "Peace! Do not be afraid. You are not going to die." Shalom, the Hebrew word for "peace," refers to "completeness, soundness, flourishing, well-being." Gideon needs this assurance not because he fears the Midianites, but because he has seen the angel of the Lord face to face.

Throughout Scripture, fear is the normal reaction to seeing God's messengers. Sinners cannot endure God's holiness. Yet, if we have come to know Jesus, we too have seen the face of God (see John 14:6-7). Instead of reacting with fear and terror, though, we can say, "Yahweh Shalom, 'The LORD is our peace.'" May you rest in the Lord's peace today and always.

Prayer

God of Peace, in your Son we have seen your glory. Help us to serve as you call us to, knowing that you are our peace. Amen.

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