

What is the true meaning of Shalom? Hebrew Word Studies, Teachings / By Doug Hershey
The common western definition of peace is — the absence of conflict or war —
but in Hebrew “shalom” means so much more.

“Shalom” is taken from the root word **shalam**, which means, **“to be safe in mind, body, or estate.”** It speaks of completeness, fullness, or a type of wholeness that encourages you to give back — to generously re-pay something in some way. True **biblical shalom** refers to an inward sense of completeness or wholeness. Although it can describe the absence of war, a majority of biblical references refer to an inner **completeness and tranquility and well-being.**

In Israel today, when you greet someone or say goodbye, you say, Shalom. You are literally saying, **“may you be full of well-being”** or, **“may health and prosperity be upon you.”** This is the rich fullness of Biblical peace.

If this is the way we understand biblical peace, then suddenly many verses take on a whole new meaning. Consider the following Scriptures about peace ...

Numbers 6:23 "Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, 'This is the way you shall bless the children of Israel. Say to them: 24 "The LORD bless you and keep you; 25 The LORD make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you; 26 The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, And **give you peace.**"

The context of the Aaronic Blessing is ironic. God told Aaron to bless Israel with **peace** while they were getting ready to go conquer the Promised Land. If peace means “the absence of war,” then this doesn’t make sense, since they would soon be destroying cities.

God was referring to an inner peace and completeness brought on by sharing in His countenance and His protection. That was the blessing that Israel needed!
Peace in Israel

Israel was to rarely experience times of outward peace, but even in the midst of battle, they were to have an **inward rest** brought on by the presence of the Lord, regardless of the outward circumstances — so it should be for us as well.

What did Jesus say about peace?

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.” Matthew 5:9
In this verse, Jesus is not referring to mediators or political negotiators, but to those who carry **an inward sense of the fullness and safety** that is only available through son-ship with God.

In the biblical Hebrew understanding of shalom, **there is a point at which you have so much shalom that it spills out from you**, and is repaid or rendered to others. And so, as you make others peaceful and inwardly complete, that makes you a peacemaker. Jesus said these peacemakers will be called sons of God. Jesus was called the Son of God. **By sharing God’s uncontainable peace with others, we become just like Jesus.**