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SHALOM IN THE OLD TESTAMENT; Tepker; S.T.M., 1961

SHALOM IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

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A Thesis Presented to the Faculty  
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Department of Old Testament Theology  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Sacred Theology

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by

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Shalom is one of the most frequently used words in the Old Testament Scripture. According to Young's Analytical Concordance of the Bible the form of the noun, verb, and adjective appear approximately 475 times in the Old Testament. This tabulation does not include its use in many proper names such as Jerusalem, Solomon, Absalom, etc.

It is a word with many meanings. A glance at a Hebrew lexicon will reveal that the holy writers have employed shalom to express a great variety of ideas and concepts. This becomes evident also from a study of the modern translations. The Revised Standard Version uses twenty-eight different English words or phrases to express the exact meaning of shalom in various contexts, and the Smith-Goodspeed translation employs forty-one.<sup>1</sup>

The importance of this versatile word can be seen from the fact that it designates the master blessing in life. It represents the sum of all that is wholesome and worthwhile in life. Shalom is a comprehensive word, covering the manifold relations of daily life and expressing the ideal state of life in Israel.<sup>2</sup> Dr. James Hastings describes it thus:

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<sup>1</sup>See Appendix, Tables I, II, and III.

<sup>2</sup>"Peace," A Theological Word Book of the Bible, edited by Alan Richardson (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1951), p. 165.

You cannot look into the Bible, either into the Old Testament or into the New, without discovering that peace is, so to speak, the master blessing, the grand issue both of the Law and of the Gospel to mankind. It is the climax of the Jewish benediction, as if in those rich old times of Levitical costliness and beauty there was no higher blessedness than that "The Lord bless thee and keep thee: the Lord make His face shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee and give thee peace." It is presented in glowing prophecy as the crowning result of the Messiah's reign: "Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end." "In His day shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. . . ."3

The significance of shalom is reflected also in the fact that it has had no small influence on the meaning of the Greek word eirene. In classical Greek eirene was primarily negative, signifying peace as the opposite of conflict, but it became filled with the content of the Hebrew and Aramaic shalom. According to James Hasting's Dictionary of the Bible, eirene "took over, first in the LXX and then in the N. T. the broader import of shalom, which is conspicuous in the (Hebraistic) benedictions (see Mk. 5:34; Luke 7:50; 24:36; John 14:27; James 2:16, etc.) and in the epistolary salutations." Concerning this point, von Rad states: "To the reader of the LXX there was brought the impression that eirene has a positive content and does not only signify rest, but refers to the state of man not injured through any misfortune or violence. . . ."4

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<sup>3</sup>James Hastings, The Christian Doctrine of Peace (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1922), p. 3.

<sup>4</sup>G. von Rad, "Shalom im A. T.," Theologisches Woerterbuch Zum Neuen Testament, edited by Gerhard Kittel (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1935), II, 406.

Thus from the outset one is impressed with the breadth and the significance of this versatile word. It shall be the purpose of this dissertation to study the noun shalom, the verb shalam, and the adjective shalem in order to discover the various shades of meaning that attach themselves to this rather complex concept. Our attention will be centered primarily on the use of the noun. We shall treat the verb and adjective only briefly.

One might expect that a word so rich in theological content would have commanded the attention of many scholars. However, one is rather surprised to find that comparatively little has been written on this subject. Even theologies of the Old Testament usually treat this word only in a general way; and larger exegetical works pass it by rather rapidly.

The need for further study of this Old Testament concept is accentuated also by the fact that scholars have disagreed on the question whether shalom conveys merely the thought of earthly blessings or also refers to the state of peace between the sinner and his God similar to that set forth in the New Testament.



## CHAPTER II

### SHALOM, A POSITIVE CONCEPT

A study of the English versions of the Bible reveals that shalom is most frequently translated "peace." The noun appears approximately 224 times in the Old Testament, and in 184 of these instances the King James Version translates shalom with "peace," "peaceable," or "peaceful." The Revised Standard Version does so in 156 cases, and Smith-Goodspeed, 107 times.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps it is also significant that in the King James Version only shalom is translated "peace."

However, it is also true that shalom is used in a wider sense than the English word "peace" would indicate. According to its etymological meaning, it denotes not merely a state of rest and tranquility, the absence of annoyance and freedom from war, but includes primarily the thought of positive blessings. G. von Rad comments as follows: "It would be a limiting if, from the start, one would translate shalom with 'peace.' The original meaning of the word is 'well-being' (Wohlsein), with a clear emphasis upon the material side."<sup>2</sup> Alan Richardson adds: "The fundamental meaning is totality, well-being, harmony, with stress on the material

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<sup>1</sup>See Appendix, Table I

<sup>2</sup>G. von Rad, Theologisches Woerterbuch Zum Neuen Testament, edited by Gerhard Kittel (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1935), p. 400.





וְהִשְׁמַעְתָּ אֶת־תְּפִלָּתִי וְהָיִיתָ לִּי לְשׁוֹמֵר וְהָיִיתָ לִּי לְשׁוֹמֵר, "Thou shalt make thy prayer unto Him, and He shall hear thee, and thou shalt pay thy vow."

Frequently, shalam is used also to express the fact that one performs a deed, fulfills a purpose, or brings something to completion. In Isaiah 44 the Lord through the prophet is predicting that Cyrus will perform all the purposes of the Lord; he shall bring about the deliverance of Israel and shall give permission to rebuild the temple. In verse 28 we read: "I am the Lord. . . that saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform my pleasure. . ."

וְהָיִיתָ לִּי לְשׁוֹמֵר. Shalam is used here in the Hiphil and means "to perform something".

In all of these examples one can readily recognize the positive thrust of the verb shalam. It means to express the thought that one maintains harmony, completeness, and wholeness in his relationships by making restitution, by paying his debts, by performing vows, by fulfilling a purpose, etc.

Furthermore, the positive meaning of shalom is reflected also in the use of the adjective. Shalem is frequently translated "perfect"<sup>6</sup>, especially when reference is made to kings whose hearts were right with God, or not right with Him. In 1 Kings 11:4 the holy writer reports: "For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods; and his heart was not perfect with

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<sup>6</sup>See Appendix, Table 3.



these translations are very close to the root idea "wholeness", "completeness"; and in each case they indicate a positive concept.

At times the adjective shalem is translated "whole" as in Deuteronomy 27:6. Moses and the elders command the people that after they have entered the land of promise, "Thou shalt build the altar of the Lord thy God of whole stones." The Hebrew renders this: אֲבָנִים יְשֵׁלִים אֲלֵטוֹת תִּבְנֶה יְיָ-תִּסְבֵּךְ אֶת-הָאָרֶץ.

In Amos 1:9 the prophet declares that Tyre is due for punishment from the Lord, because "they delivered up the whole captivity to Edom", or as the Smith-Goodspeed translation expresses it: "They handed over a whole people as captives to Edom." The Hebrew has: עַל-הַקָּדֻשׁ אֲנִי גִזַּת אֶת-כָּל-הָעַמִּים

At times shalem is also rendered "just" as in Proverbs 11:1. The King James Version translates this passage: "A false balance is an abomination to the Lord, but a just weight is his delight." Both the Revised Standard Version and Smith-Goodspeed agree with this translation. In the Hebrew it appears thus: וְאֵיבֹן לֹא יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת-הָאֲזָנָה.

There are also occasions when shalem is translated "full", as in Genesis 15:16. "But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again; for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." In Ruth 2:12 rewards are spoken of as being full. "The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel under whose wings thou art come to trust." These are the words of Boaz to Ruth as

he admires her courage for her treatment of Naomi and for her trust in the living God of Israel. He prays that the Lord may grant her a full reward. Hebrew: שְׁלוֹמֵךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל

Finally, we note that the positive meaning of shalom is reflected also in the noun. In many instances the noun is translated with "prosperity" or "welfare" or "safety." The 33rd chapter of Jeremiah contains a song celebrating the restoration of the people and the cities of Israel. The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, telling him that the Chaldeans will indeed come into the city to wage war against it. In preparation, the houses will be torn down to make a defense against the siege mounds and before the sword. But the prophet promises that God will restore the fortunes of Judah and Israel and rebuild them as they were at first. He will also cleanse them of their guilt. Then we read in v. 9: "And it shall be a name of joy, a praise, and an honor before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them; and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and for all the prosperity (shalom) that I procure unto it." The King James Version, the Revised Standard Version and Smith-Goodspeed agree that the most exact rendering of shalom in this case is "prosperity," a positive blessing, rather than simply the negative "peace," in the sense of freedom from war.

We see shalom used in its positive sense also in Genesis 43:27. On their second journey to Egypt the sons of Jacob were invited to a meal in the house of their brother, Joseph.

During the course of the conversation Joseph asked them  
 " . . . of their welfare, and said, Is your father well,  
 the old man of whom you spoke? Is he yet alive?" The holy

writer records the words: וְשָׁלוֹם לְאָבִי וְלְאֵתָנָן וְלְבָרְכָה וְלְרָחֵל וְלְיוֹסֵף וְלְבָרְכָה וְלְרָחֵל וְלְיוֹסֵף

We should note that shalom appears  
 twice in this passage, and in both cases it is translated as  
 a positive concept. The King James Version, the Revised  
 Standard Version and Smith-Goodspeed are agreed that in the  
 first instance shalom can be rendered "welfare" and in the  
 second, "well."

We find a similar usage in 2 Samuel 18:29. When Ahimeaz  
 went to inform David that the rebellion against him had been  
 broken, immediately the king asked: "Is the young man  
 Absalom safe?" The Hebrew records this incident in the  
 words: וְהָיָה כִּשְׁמֵרָה וְהָיָה אֲבִישָׁי וְהָיָה אֲבִישָׁי וְהָיָה אֲבִישָׁי וְהָיָה אֲבִישָׁי

Passages of this kind, showing that shalom is basically  
 a positive concept, could be multiplied; however, a mere  
 sampling at this point will be sufficient, since additional  
 instances will appear in the following chapters. Of course,  
 it would be incorrect to draw the conclusion that shalom is  
 always used in a positive sense. We shall see below that  
 this versatile word is used in Scripture also in a negative  
 way, indicating rest and tranquility, the absence of annoy-  
 ance and freedom from war.



### CHAPTER III

#### SHALOM, EXPRESSIVE OF THE IDEAL PHYSICAL STATE OF MAN

In order to appreciate the full breadth and scope of shalom, we must recognize that it includes all that the Israelite understood by the term "good." It is important that we note that in various passages of Scripture shalom and "good" appear as parallels. In Lamentations 3:17 Jerusalem wails: "Thou hast removed my soul out of shalom; I forgot what is good." We find a similar parallelism in Jeremiah 8:15: "We looked for shalom, but no good came." Also in Jeremiah 14:19 the prophet utters the complaint: "Hast Thou utterly rejected Judah? Hast Thy soul loathed Zion? . . . We looked for shalom and there is no good." When Yehweh intervenes, the world will be amazed at "all the goodness and the shalom that I procure unto Israel," Jeremiah 33:9. The prophet Isaiah also places shalom and "good" in parallel positions. In Isaiah 52:7 the prophet exclaims: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth shalom, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth." Isaiah here places shalom, not only in the same context with "good," but also with "salvation."

Johs. Pedersen makes the following comment:

He who has shalom has everything, because it implies all the harmony and happiness which any one can take. Therefore peace is the first and last in life. If one wants

to know something of a man, then one asks: Has he peace? He who has sent his sons with the herds send a messenger to them in order to get tidings of their peace and that of the herds (Gen. 37:14). "Hast thou, thy husband and thy son peace?" Elisha tells his servant to ask the woman of Shunem. In the answer to this question all is implied. When Jacob asks the shepherds whether Laban has shalom, then it means; Does he live in the close harmony of the family, in a friendly relation to his fellows, has he health and prosperity, is he successful in his undertakings, do the cattle thrive, etc.? If the Israelite can answer this brief question in the affirmative, then he has no more to wish for in life.<sup>1</sup>

Thus shalom is expressive of the ideal physical state of man. It embraces every blessing that will contribute to the happiness and welfare of mankind. Dr. Leupold expresses it thus: Shalom is ". . . a broad term which connotes that rich measure of well-being when nothing essential is lacking."<sup>2</sup> This truth can be demonstrated also from numerous Bible passages which we shall group under special categories.

1. Scripture uses shalom in the sense of "good health."

In Psalm 38:3 David, at a time of great misery and perplexity on account of his sins, exclaimed: "There is no soundness in my flesh because of Thine anger, neither is there any shalom in my bones because of my sin." David's body evidently was ill in consequence of Yahweh's indignation. He was so conscious of his transgressions that it affected his health. In this psalm the holy writer places shalom and "soundness in my flesh" in parallel positions indicating that

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<sup>1</sup>Johs. Pedersen, Israel, Its Life and Culture (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), I--II, 313 f.

<sup>2</sup>H. C. Leupold, Exposition of the Psalms (Columbus, Ohio: The Wartburg Press, 1959), p. 858.

they are related thoughts.

There is a similar usage in Genesis 42:27. When the brothers of Joseph, including Benjamin, went to Egypt on their second journey for food and provisions, and when they partook of a meal in Joseph's house, he asked them concerning their welfare and then inquired: "Is your father well, the old man of whom you spake? Is he alive?" In asking them **הֲאֵלֶיךָ שָׁלוֹם** Joseph obviously was interested in knowing the state of his father's health. Thus shalom and good health are closely related.

2. Scripture also uses shalom and "healing" in the same context.

In Jeremiah 6:14 the prophet rebukes the leaders of the people, especially the false prophets and the priests, who failed to warn the people of their sins and of the judgment that was impending. Concerning them he writes: "They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace! where there is no peace."<sup>3</sup>

The same is true of Jeremiah 14:19. The prophet intercedes for Judah, and when Yahweh rejects his intercession, Jeremiah inquires of the Lord God: "Hast thou utterly rejected Judah? Hath thy soul loathed Zion? Why hast thou smitten us, and there is no healing for us? We looked for peace and there is no good, and for the time of healing, and behold trouble."

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<sup>3</sup>See also Jer. 8:11.

We find a similar usage also in Isaiah 53:5, where the prophet writes those familiar words: "The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed."

In each of these passages "healing" and shalom appear in the same context, which would certainly indicate that they are related ideas.

3. In still other passages of Scripture it is evident that to have shalom means "to be unharmed."

David was sent by his father to carry provisions to his brothers who were on the field of battle and to enquire concerning their safety. Thus in I Samuel 17:18 David is told: "Carry these ten cheeses unto the captain of their thousand and look how thy brethren fare. . .,"  $\text{וְהָיָה אִתְּךָ עֶשְׂרֵי בָרֵי עֹשֶׂה לְרֹאשׁ הָאֲלָפִים וְהָיָה אִתְּךָ עֶשְׂרֵי בָרֵי עֹשֶׂה לְרֹאשׁ הָאֲלָפִים}$ , lit. "enquire about your brothers concerning shalom," i.e., "see whether they are unharmed."

When Joseph's brothers were tending the flocks of their father at Dothan, Jacob sent Joseph out to see how they were faring, to see whether they were unharmed, whether all was well with them. According to the original text Jacob told them:  $\text{וְהָיָה אִתְּךָ עֶשְׂרֵי בָרֵי עֹשֶׂה לְרֹאשׁ הָאֲלָפִים וְהָיָה אִתְּךָ עֶשְׂרֵי בָרֵי עֹשֶׂה לְרֹאשׁ הָאֲלָפִים}$ .  
literally, "See the shalom of your brothers and the shalom of the flock."<sup>4</sup>

In Genesis 33 is related the dramatic story of the meeting between Esau and Jacob twenty years after the latter had obtained his brother's birthright and Isaac's blessing. De-

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<sup>4</sup>Gen. 37:14.

spite the fact that two decades had elapsed, Jacob felt some concern regarding his brother's attitude toward him. Had his bitterness receded? However, by diplomatic actions on the part of Jacob friendly relations were restored between the brothers, and we read in v. 18: "And Jacob came shalem to the city of Shechem." He weathered the meeting with his brother in safety with no harm having come to him.

When the Angel of Lord appeared to Gideon, he feared for his life because he had seen the Lord face to face. But the angel said to him: "Shalom be unto thee; fear not; thou shalt not die."<sup>5</sup> Gideon could enjoy shalom because he was not in danger of losing his life.

A most interesting instance of the use of shalom in the sense of safety is found in Job 21:9. Zophar, one of Job's friends, had insisted on the fact that retribution for sin always befalls the wicked in this life. But Job contradicted him and declared that, as a matter of common observance, bad men often go prosperously through life without any sign of God's displeasure. In v. 9 he says: "Their houses are shalom from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them." Apparently shalom again in this case means "safe" or "unharméd."

4. Shalom is used in Scripture also in the sense of victory.

The warrior has shalom, not only when the battle is over

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<sup>5</sup>Judges 6:23.

and peace has been established, but he has shalom especially if he has been victorious. This is apparent from passages such as Judges 8:7-9. When Gideon and the three hundred men with him became hungry and faint while pursuing Zebah and Zalmunna, the kings of Midian, he asked the men of Succoth for food and provisions, but the officials of Succoth refused. Thereupon Gideon told them: "Well, then, when the Lord has given Zebah and Zalmunna into my hands, I will flail your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with briers." Gideon then went to Penuel and made the same request for food, but he was given the same answer. His reply to them was: "When I come again in shalom, I will break down this tower." Both of these passages mean approximately the same thing, which indicates that in the opinion of Gideon "to have shalom" meant to conquer these two chiefs.

In 1 Kings 22:28 we have a similar use of shalom. After Benhadad of Damascus had been defeated by King Ahab of Israel, he restored all the Israelite cities to Ahab with the exception of Ramoth-Gilead. After a time Ahab and Jehoshaphat made an alliance to retake it by force. Before launching their campaign, however, they consulted the prophets regarding the outcome of their venture. All of the prophets predicted victory for Ahab - all except Micaiah who said that Israel would be defeated and would be as sheep without a shepherd. Micaiah was put in prison because of his unfavorable prediction and fed with the bread of affliction and the water of affliction until Ahab would return beshalom. Micaiah re-

plied: "If thou return at all beshalom, the Lord hath not spoken by me." The context seems to indicate that beshalom here means "victoriously" or "in victory." Smith-Goodspeed agrees with this translation.

Regarding this passage Pedersen comments:

We must not consider this as if peace were the release from fighting which follows upon victory. This "peace" would also belong to the vanquished; and Gideon had not finished the fight because he had gained the battle. Peace is victory itself. . . . The great warrior is he who always has "peace" in his battles.<sup>6</sup>

Also in Judges 11:31 shalom seems to indicate victory. Jephthah in his war against the Ammonites made a vow to the Lord that if Yahweh would deliver Ammon into his hands, then on his return beshalom, he would offer as a burnt offering whatever first came out of his house to meet him. Delitzsch prefers the translation: "When I return safely. . . ." <sup>7</sup> The Revised Standard Version, however, has "When I return victorious. . . ." The context seems to indicate that the latter is more exact, although at times it is difficult to ascertain when the translation should be "safely" and when "victorious" would be preferable.

5. Frequently in Scripture shalom means "prosperity," "welfare," or "good fortune."

In Deuteronomy 23:6 the people of Israel were told concerning the Ammonites and the Moabites: "Thou shalt not seek

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<sup>6</sup>Pedersen, op. cit., p. 312.

<sup>7</sup>C. F. Keil & F. Delitzsch, "Joshua, Judges, Ruth," Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament (Reprint; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1950), p. 385.

their peace nor their prosperity all thy days forever."

This chapter deals with membership in the congregation of Israel. An Ammonite or a Moabite was not permitted membership in the congregation even to the tenth generation.

Though related to Israel, they had refused them bread and water in the wilderness and had hired Balaam to curse them. Therefore, the people of Israel should not concern themselves with their shalom. Delitzsch interprets this as meaning that Israel was never to seek their welfare and prosperity.<sup>8</sup>

Smith-Goodspeed shares this view.

Another example of this usage appears a few chapters later. In Deuteronomy 29:19, Israel is called to obedience and is warned lest there be a man or a woman among them who is turned away from the true God to idols and yet imagines that he will prosper. In v. 19 we read: "When he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself, saying, I shall have shalom though I walk in the imagination of my heart." Delitzsch translates the verse as follows: "That no one when he hears the words of this oath may bless himself in his heart, saying, It will prosper with me, for I walk in the firmness of my heart."<sup>9</sup>

When Ezra arrived in Jerusalem with a group of exiles from Babylon, he soon discovered the laxness in public worship,

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<sup>8</sup> C. F. Keil & F. Delitzsch, "The Pentateuch," Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament (Reprint; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1949), III, 414.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 449.



the intermarriage with the native population and the consequent abomination that was current among the people. Ezra fell on his knees, spread out his hands in prayer before God and confessed the enormity of the sins of the people in mingling with their pagan neighbors. He called to mind the command of the Lord, stated in Exodus 23:32; 34:16; and Deuteronomy 7:3, forbidding intermarriage and seeking the shalom of the pagan. Therefore he exhorted the people, as it is recorded in Ezra 9:12: "Give not your daughters unto their sons, neither take their daughters unto your sons, nor seek their shalom or their wealth forever, that ye may be strong and eat the good of the land." The context suggests that shalom means something similar to "welfare" or "prosperity."

Psalms 37:11 is another case in point. The holy writer states: "The meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of shalom." It should be noted that the underlying problem in this psalm is the prosperity of evil men. The psalmist compares the good fortune of the godless with the true happiness of the believer. The prosperity of the wicked is shortlived. The believer should not fret. Let him trustingly wait on the Lord, for he shall enjoy abundant shalom. Undoubtedly shalom in this case means "good fortune," or "prosperity." It is translated thus both by Smith-Goodspeed and The Revised Standard Version.

When the returning exiles were rebuilding the temple at Jerusalem, Zechariah encouraged them to continue their work in spite of the difficulties which they were encountering, for

"The seed shall be shalom; the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give her dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things." Obviously this passage brings the message that happiness and prosperity are in store for Jerusalem if it does according to God's will.<sup>10</sup>

While the prophet Jeremiah was in prison for predicting that the land of Judah would be overrun by the enemy, he purchased a field in Anathoth. His purchase was to be a sign that houses and fields would yet be bought in the land, despite the temporary success of the foe, for the Lord had promised: "Behold, I will bring it health and cure, and I will cure them and will reveal unto them the abundance of shalom and truth." The context seems to indicate that shalom also in this instance is best translated "prosperity."<sup>11</sup>

A most unusual use of shalom is recorded in 2 Samuel 11:7. Orders had been issued that Uriah should return from the field of battle and report to the king. Then the holy writer states: "When Uriah was come unto him, David demanded of him how Joab did, and how the people did, and how the war prospered." The Hebrew expresses this as follows: וַיִּשְׁאַל דָּוִד אֶת-וּרְיָה בֶן-נֶחֱמִי אֶת-יְהוָה וְאֶת-הָעָם וְאֶת-הַמִּלְחָמָה וְאֵת-יְהוָה וְאֵת-הָעָם וְאֵת-הַמִּלְחָמָה וְאֵת-יְהוָה וְאֵת-הָעָם וְאֵת-הַמִּלְחָמָה. Particularly noteworthy is the last statement which demonstrates the rather unusual way in which shalom can be used in

<sup>10</sup>Zecheriah 8:12.

<sup>11</sup>Jeremiah 33:6.

conjunction with  $\text{שָׁלוֹם}$  and hence refers to the success or progress of the battle.

Another passage that is worthy of our attention is recorded in the twenty-ninth chapter of Jeremiah. Both in Jerusalem and in Babylon false prophets were promising the exiles a speedy return from captivity and instilling the highest hopes in the Israelites. To counteract this false propaganda Jeremiah sent a letter to the exiles directing them to settle down in Babylon, build houses, plant gardens, eat of their fruit, take wives and beget sons and daughters. In verses 1 and 7 the prophet advises them:

Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have deported from Jerusalem to Babylon. . . . Seek the shalom of the city, whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it; for in the shalom thereof ye shall have shalom.

Scholars have understood shalom in this case as referring to the physical welfare of Babylon. Dr. Laetsch writes:

"Not only by their example, but by actively seeking the welfare of their community they were to become the salt of the earth."<sup>12</sup> According to the Pulpit Commentary the prophet is here urging the exiles:

Interest yourselves in the peace or welfare of the city, whether Babylon or any other place where you may be in exile, and pray for its welfare, for your own wellbeing

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<sup>12</sup>Theodore Laetsch, Bible Commentary Jeremiah (St. Louis, Mo.: Concordia Publishing House, 1952), p. 233.

is inseparable from it.<sup>13</sup>

6. Shalom is used frequently in Scripture also as a greeting.

When Israelites met or when they addressed friends or relatives in letters, it was customary to inquire about their welfare and to wish them shalom and good fortune.<sup>14</sup> When Nabal, a wealthy and prosperous man, was shearing his sheep in Carmel, David sent ten of his men to request food and provisions of him. As these men approached Nabal, they addressed him with the customary greeting: "Shalom be to thee, and shalom be to thine house, and shalom be unto all that thou hast."<sup>15</sup> Commenting on this passage, Delitzsch notes that the expression  $\text{אֵת־שָׁלוֹם} \text{ אֵת־בְּיָדְךָ}$  which means literally: "ask after his welfare," is the equivalent of: "Greet him in a friendly manner."<sup>16</sup> A similar greeting is used in 1 Chronicles 12:18. A group of soldiers and skilled bowmen from the tribe of Benjamin went to Ziklag to join forces with David. At first he was suspicious of treachery. But

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<sup>13</sup>T. K. Cheyne, "Jeremiah," The Pulpit Commentary (Reprint; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1950), p. 587.

<sup>14</sup>von Rad, Theologisches Woerterbuch Zum Neuen Testament, edited by Gerhard Kittel (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1935), II, 400.

<sup>15</sup>1 Sam. 25:6.

<sup>16</sup>C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, "The Books of Samuel," Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament (Reprint; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1950), p. 239.

Amasai, the chief of the captains expressed the sentiment of all when he said: "Thine we are David. Shalom, shalom be unto thee." Shalom, as used here, is a greeting expressing their wish for David's health, safety and prosperity.

Frequently shalom is used also as a farewell greeting, in which one wishes another good fortune on his way. After the Lord appeared to Moses at Mt. Horeb and chose him to lead Israel out of Egypt, Moses returned to his father-in-law, Jethro and besought him: "Pray, let me go back to my relatives in Egypt to see whether they are still living. And Jethro said to Moses, Go in Shalom," i. e. May you have good fortune and success on your journey.<sup>17</sup>

Because the territory of the tribe of Dan was not sufficiently large, five men were sent to spy out the land and look for a large place. When they came to the dwelling of Micah in Mt. Ephraim, they met a young man who claimed that Micah had hired him as a priest. They asked the young man to inquire of God whether they would be prosperous in their search. The young man told them: "Go in shalom; before the Lord is your way wherein you go."<sup>18</sup> They interpreted this as an assurance of success. Delitzsch translates this passage: "Go in peace; straight before Jehovah is your way; i.e. it is

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<sup>17</sup>Exodus 4:18.

<sup>18</sup>Judges 8:16. See 1 Sam. 25:35 and 2 Sam. 15:9.

known and well pleasing to Him."<sup>19</sup>

After Namaan was healed of leprosy, he confessed faith in the God of Israel and vowed to serve only Yahweh. However, it was his duty to assist the king in his act of worship in the house of Rimmon, the chief idol of Syria. When he entered the house of Rimmon and bowed down, it was not an act of personal worship on his part, but an act of service to the king. Therefore, he asked the Lord to be indulgent with him. In reply to his request the prophet answered; "Go in shalom."<sup>20</sup> Delitzsch adds by way of explanation: "Go in peace, wishing the departing Syrian the peace of God upon the road, without thereby either approving or disapproving the religious conviction which he had expressed."<sup>21</sup>

With regard to passages of this type Pedersen comments as follows:

When a man goes on a journey, whether away from home or homewards, the journey is to take place in peace. This expression implies that everything is as it should be. The relation to those he leaves behind is harmonious; the journey is successful, and on his return he finds everything well and comfortable. When it is said that the Israelites are to return in peace after having carried on judicial proceedings for the under-judges appointed by Moses (Exod. 18:23), then it means that the dispute is settled; the harmony is complete, and they

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<sup>19</sup>C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, "Joshua, Judges, Ruth," Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament (Reprint; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1950), p. 434.

<sup>20</sup>2 Kings 5:18-19.

<sup>21</sup>C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, "The Books of the Kings," Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament (Reprint; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1950), p. 320.

return with their work well done.<sup>22</sup>

7. According to the Hebrew way of thinking "to have shalom" meant also to enjoy a long life and then to die a natural death.

In Proverbs 3:1-2 long life and shalom are mentioned together as the reward of those who live according to God's will: "My son, forget not my law; but let thy heart keep my commandments; for length of days and long life and shalom shall they add to thee." There can be no doubt that the whole Old Testament is pervaded by the idea that long life is a blessing of God and that it contributes much to one's happiness. In substantiation of this Pedersen states: "According to the ten commandments this is the reward for honoring one's father and mother."<sup>23</sup> He calls attention also to such passages as Zechariah 8:4: "There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age."<sup>24</sup> One might add to this, passages such as Isaiah 65:20,22:

There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days, for the child shall die an hundred years old, but he who misseth an hundred years old shall be reckoned accursed. . . for as the days of a tree are the days of my people.

At the conclusion of a long life the Hebrew wished to go

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<sup>22</sup>Pedersen, op. cit., p. 312.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 315.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

unto his fathers beshalom in peace. In Genesis 15 the Lord is speaking to Abram concerning the four hundred years of oppression which shall come upon His people in Egypt, and of the deliverance which would follow. But as for Abram, the Lord promised in v. 15 that he would go to his fathers beshalom, and be buried in a good old age. He would die a natural death, unaffected by the oppression that was to come.

When Josiah became king, he did that which was right in the sight of God. Among other things he had the temple renovated and repaired after it had been neglected for 200 years. In the process of renovation the book of the law was found. It was read; also those parts which threatened dire punishment if Israel neglected the worship of Jehovah and served other gods. At the suggestion of Josiah the Lord was consulted concerning these threats. Yahweh answered that He would most certainly bring evil upon Jerusalem and Judah because of their neglect, but it would occur after the death of Josiah, since he had repented and followed the Lord. God's promise is recorded in 2 Kings 22:20:

Behold, therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave beshalom, and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I shall bring upon this place.

Josiah was killed in battle, but he died beshalom in the sense that he did not see the destruction that later descended on Judah and its inhabitants.

Another instance of this kind is recorded in Jeremiah.



34. The Lord had declared through the prophet that the king of Babylon would be successful in his attack on Jerusalem, that the city would fall and be burned with fire, and that Zedekiah, the king, would be carried captive to Babylon. But in v. 5 the Lord gives Zedekiah a remarkable promise: "Thou shalt die beshalom, and with the burning of thy fathers, the former kings which were before thee. . . ." In this case "to die beshalom" meant to depart this life by a natural death. "With the burning of thy fathers" has reference to the custom of burning aromatic spices at the burial of kings and members of the royal family. Thus it was not Zedekiah's fate to die a violent death in battle and to remain unlamented and unburied as was the case with Jehoiachim.

8. Finally, shalom is used also in the sense of rest, tranquility, and absence of war.

While the basic meaning of shalom suggests a positive concept and has nothing to do with the passive and negative, it is not difficult to understand how this fundamental conception could undergo a change of meaning even very early in Hebrew history. Hastings suggests the following explanation:

In countries often ravaged, and among people often ruined, by war, every blessing of life was found in peace. Thus the incidental meaning of the word has permanently displaced the original; and we translate it by an expression which never suggests to us the idea of completeness, but only that of tranquility and rest. In the security of modern travel we scarcely realize how much uneasiness was caused in days when there were too many whose hand was against every man, when a company of travelers decried the approach of another band. It would be an anxious question, Are these friends or enemies? Does their coming mean war or peace? And the salutation of peace was a welcome

relief of well-grounded apprehension.<sup>25</sup>

That the word shalom came to mean "rest" and "tranquility" is also evident from many examples in Scripture. In the Book of Leviticus God demanded of Israel that she make no idols and erect no graven images or pillars and set up no figured stone to bow to it. Israel should walk in His statutes and observe His commandments. Then together with many other blessings God would give her peace and rest.<sup>26</sup> Neighboring armies would not attack. Cities would not be destroyed.

In Deuteronomy 2:26-27 Moses records an incident that took place as the Israelites were proceeding on their way to the land of promise. They sent messengers to Sihon, the king of Heshbon, with words of shalom, requesting permission to pass through his land. They wanted him to sell them water and food, and in return they promised not to make war against him.

Sometime later, after the Israelites had entered the land of promise, the Lord gave them specific ordinances about waging war to clear the land of the Canaanites:

When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim shalom unto it. And it shall be, if it make thee an answer of shalom and open unto thee, then shall it be that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee. And if it will make no shalom with thee,

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<sup>25</sup>James Hastings, The Christian Doctrine of Peace (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1922), p. 6.

<sup>26</sup>Leviticus 26:6.

but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it.<sup>27</sup>

When the inhabitants of Gibeon, a small independent state in the mountains northeast of Jerusalem, heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, they used trickery to preserve their lives. They dressed in old garments, gathered mouldy provisions, and went to Joshua, claiming to have come from afar because they had heard of his fame. Joshua and the leaders of the people acted foolishly; they did not consult the Lord before making a covenant of peace with them; thus they broke the law of God who had commanded that no covenant be made with the nations of Canaan.<sup>28</sup>

In the instances listed above, shalom very evidently refers to the absence of hostilities and means peace as opposed to a state of war. This negative aspect of shalom is demonstrated, furthermore, by the fact that shalom and שָׁלוֹם וְחַיִּים, peace and war, often appear as parallels in passages of Scripture. An instance of this kind is to be found in 1 Kings 20:18. King Ahab had paid an annual tribute to Benhadad of Damascus, but Syria was not satisfied with what it considered to be so small a share of Ahab's prosperity; hence it demanded more. Ahab apparently was ready to yield, but when Benhadad again increased his demands, the king of Israel refused and, following the advice of the prophet, he

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<sup>27</sup>Deuteronomy 20:10-12.

<sup>28</sup>Joshua 9:15.

moved to attack Syria. Hearing that men were coming out of Samaria and not knowing their intention, Benhadad issued the orders: "Whether they come out for shalom, take them alive, or whether they be come out for שָׁדָד, take them alive."

In Psalm 120 the holy writer complains of adversaries who were maliciously hostile to him and took every occasion to do him harm. He desired peace, but when he protested his willingness to live peaceably with all men, they deliberately chose to regard his attitude as hostile. In verses 6 and 7 the psalmist writes: "My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth shalom. I am for shalom (peace), but when I speak, they are for שָׁדָד (war)."

Similarly, in Ecclesiastes 3:8 the holy writer says: "There is a time for שָׁדָד and a time for shalom." There is a time for peace and a time for war.

Furthermore, it is interesting to note that in 1 Chronicles 22:9 shalom and שָׁלוֹם, peace and quietness, appear as parallels. King David, intending to build a temple unto the Lord, began making plans and gathering materials, but the word of the Lord came to him saying:

Thou hast shed blood abundantly and hast made great wars; thou shalt not build a house unto my name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in my sight. Behold, a son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about; for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give shalom and שָׁלוֹם (peace and quietness) unto Israel in his day. He shall build a house for my name.

Evidently shalom and שָׁלוֹם express parallel ideas.

In 2 Chronicles 15:5 shalom and שָׁלוֹם peace and disturb-

ances, are employed in the same context, in a way which would indicate that they are opposite concepts. Azariah, the son of Oded, otherwise unknown, warned Asa and all of Judah and Jerusalem, "The Lord is with you while ye be with him, and if ye seek him, he will be found of you, but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you." Then in verse 5 he continues: "And in those days there was no shalom (peace) to him that went out, not to him that came in, but great מַהְלָה (disturbances) were upon all the inhabitants of the countries."

Shalom and כַּלְבַּיִת, peace and the sword, appear together in Jeremiah 4:10. The prophet was deeply grieved when he heard the announcement of judgment about to fall upon Judah, and he complained: "Ah, Lord God! Surely thou hast greatly deceived this people and Jerusalem saying, Ye shall have shalom (peace), whereas כַּלְבַּיִת (a sword) reacheth unto the soul." Very evidently shalom is used here in a negative sense indicating a state of peace as opposed to war.

Thus it is apparent from the foregoing examples that shalom which originally meant "wholeness," "completeness," and then "well-being," took on a variety of other related meanings. It developed to the extent that it was used to indicate health, healing, prosperity, security, fertility within the family and on the field, long life, a natural death; and, what is more, it was employed also as a synonym of rest, tranquility, and quietness, the sense in which the English word "peace" is commonly used today. The context must deter-

mine the precise meaning of shalom.

However, shalom is indicative not only of a state in which one might find himself but also of a relationship. It may designate a relationship between the members of a family, between friends and acquaintances, between God and man, etc. It has been said: "Peace is the normal and proper condition of men in relationship with one another, enjoyed most intimately in the family (Gen. 13:8) and extended to others by a covenant (1 Sam. 20:42), which determines a relation and is so a covenant of peace."<sup>28</sup> It is with this use of shalom that we shall deal in Chapter IV.

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<sup>28</sup>"Peace," A Theological Word Book of the Bible, edited by Alan Richardson (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1951), p. 165.

## CHAPTER IV

### SHALOM AND HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

Scripture frequently uses shalom to describe relationships of harmony and peace which exist between individuals or groups of people. We shall direct our attention, first, to the significance of shalom as it is applied to the Hebrew household.

In order to understand this use of the term, we must acquaint ourselves with the Israelitic conception of the family. The Hebrew considered members of the same household to be united by a most intimate bond. Pedersen comments as follows:

The family is a common life, an organism which grows and spreads in the shoots which it is constantly sending forth. The symbol of the plant or the tree naturally suggests itself, and the ancients themselves already made use of it. When we speak of genealogical trees, the symbol, properly speaking, can only be applied with certain limitations. We are thinking of the individual as owing his existence to the preceding generation; but he emancipates himself more and more, until as a grown-up man he has his point of gravity entirely in himself. In the eyes of the Israelites, however, the symbol is fully applicable; indeed, it is rather more than a symbol, for tree and human species are two entirely analogous forms of life. Just as the branch not only owes its existence to the trunk and the root, but constantly sucks its nourishment from it, in the same manner the individual holds his life only in connection with his family. It is that which is expressed by the sons bearing the name of the father.<sup>1</sup>

Also contributing to the bond between members of a family was

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<sup>1</sup>Johs. Pedersen, Israel, Its Life and Culture (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), I--II, 267.

the fact that parents and children possessed the same flesh and blood. Concerning this Pedersen states:

The strong community between the members of the family has its physical presuppositions, resting upon the fact that their bodies are made of the same substances. They have the same flesh, bones and blood. "What profit is it, if we slay our brother and conceal his blood," says Judah to his brothers when they are on the point of committing violence against Joseph. "Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hands be upon him; for he is our brother, our flesh" (Gen. 37,27). In the marriage laws "the flesh" is even the usual appellation of those related. But one can also say "flesh and bone." Laban says to Jacob: "Thou art my bone and my flesh" (Gen. 29,14), and the same term Abimelech uses in relation to the Shechemites (Judg. 9,2).<sup>2</sup>

The unity of the individual with his family is seen also from the fact that the Hebrew household shared in the rise or fall of its members. When Saul was made king, it was not only Saul himself, but also his family, that was elevated. Samuel said to him: "In whom is all the pride of Israel? Is it not in thee, and in all thy father's house."<sup>3</sup> Later, when he was rejected, it was also his family that lost its royal dignity.<sup>4</sup> But as long as the house of Saul was in power, the rule of David was not safely established. Even after Samuel had anointed David to be king in Saul's place, the members of Saul's family had in themselves an inborn claim to share the glory of rulership. David, therefore, had

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>1 Sam. 9:20.

<sup>4</sup>2 Sam. 3:10.



to neutralize all who were of the house of Saul. In this he showed great wisdom, because he succeeded in doing it without breaking his covenant with Jonathan.

Another case in point is recorded in Numbers 16. Two men, Dathan and Abiram, revolted against the rule of Moses, which they considered intolerably despotic. But God took the part of Moses. The two men, together with their families, were isolated, all Israel standing some distance from their tents, where the rebels were left alone with their wives and children. At the prayer of Moses the earth opened and swallowed up Dathan and Abiram with all that belonged to them.

Instances of this kind could be multiplied. When Pharaoh deprived Abraham of his wife, because he had deceived the ruler into believing that Sarah was his sister, God plagued Pharaoh and his house with many plagues.<sup>5</sup> A similar incident is recorded in a parallel narrative, in which the guilty person was Abimelech. Because he had taken Sarah, he was threatened with death, and his wives and slave-women were unable, for a time, to bear children.<sup>6</sup> When the Danites stole a graven image from a man by the name of Micah, they threatened to kill both him and the souls of his house.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Gen. 12:17.

<sup>6</sup>Gen. 20:17-18.

<sup>7</sup>Judges 18:25.

Jacob reproved Simeon and Levi for the act of violence committed against Shechem, and then said: "The Canaanites shall gather themselves together against me and slay me, and I shall be destroyed, I and my house."<sup>8</sup> From these events we learn that the individual formed a complete unity with his entire family, his household, and his property. He did not act for himself alone. Whatever he did, the family likewise had done. For together they formed a unit so closely knit that no single part of it could be separated and considered independent.

The unity of the family may be seen also from the fact that the Israelite at times called a close relative or an intimate friend of his, 'עֲמֵי שָׁלוֹם, i.e., "a man of my peace." Thus in Jeremiah 20:10 the prophet complains: "All my men of peace watched for my fall." And in Psalm 41:9 the holy writer laments: "Yes, the man of my peace, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me." Commenting on this passage, Pedersen states: "The man of peace is he with whom one shares one's bread, whom one relies upon, and from whom one would least of all expect enmity."<sup>9</sup>

A further indication of the bond which united members of a family is the fact that the Israelite considered strife among brethren most unnatural. When a misunderstanding arose

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<sup>8</sup>Gen. 34:30.

<sup>9</sup>Pedersen, op. cit., p. 265.

between the servants of Abraham and those of Lot, Abraham said to his nephew: "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen, for we be brethren."<sup>10</sup>

Nothing was more unnatural than strife between brothers. It may happen when a demoniac spirit possesses them and confuses their soul, as may at times occur in an army which has a mighty God against it (Judg. 7,22; 1 Sam. 14,20). Or it takes place in a dissolved community, where all human order has been made to give way to chaos. When everything collapses in Israel, every individual will fight his brother and his neighbor (Is. 19,2); no one will be able to trust his neighbor, but a man's enemy will be the men of his own house (Mic. 7,5-6); every one alone will they have to totter out through the breaches of the palaces lying in ruins (Amos 4,3).<sup>11</sup>

Such a state of dissolution evidently existed in Jerusalem prior to the Babylonian exile. When Jeremiah poured out his soul before the Lord and asked Him why the wicked prospered, and how long the land of Judah would have to mourn, Yahweh's answer indicated that the trials through which the prophet had passed were as nothing compared to those which awaited him. Those to come were by comparison as horses to footmen, as the swelling of Jordan to a land of peace. Then the Lord revealed to Jeremiah what seemed to be a plot against his life. He told him: "Even thy brethren and the house of thy father, even they have dealt treacherously with thee; yea, they call a multitude after thee; be-

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<sup>10</sup>Gen. 13:8.

<sup>11</sup>Pedersen, op. cit., p. 264.

lieve them not, though they speak fair words unto thee."<sup>12</sup>

The life of David provides a most unusual example depicting the meaning of shalom as it applied to the family, both from a negative and a positive point of view. Despite the fact that he was successful in many ways and a great man of God, David enjoyed little shalom in his own household. Several of his sons caused him great anguish and violated the unity of their home. Adonijah openly revolted against his father and was elected king by a small group of his followers. Ammon violated his half-sister, Tamar. Because of this evil deed, Absalom carried in his heart a deep hatred for Ammon, and when the occasion presented itself, he ordered his servants to slay him. Each one of these deeds was a gross breach of the family shalom. But what was David's reaction? His attitude appears strange, for he became angry with his sons but did nothing. Concerning Adonijah it is related in 1 Kings 1:6: "And his father had not displeased him at any time in saying, Why hast thou done so." Regarding Absalom, the holy writer states in 2 Samuel 13:38,39: "So Absalom fled and went to Geshur and was there three years. And the soul of King David longed to go forth unto Absalom." David grieved at the slaying of Ammon, but he took no action to punish Absalom for his vile deed; moreover, after his grief had subsided, David Accepted Absalom back into his

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<sup>12</sup>Jeremiah, 12:6.

home. Pedersen explains the attitude of David by saying that he could do nothing under the circumstances. He says:

Peace was broken, but could not be made whole because it had been broken by those who were to uphold it. If David had removed the guilty, he would have made whole the breach with a new breach. He could do nothing, because he loved them too dearly (2 Sam. 13, 21, the Greek translation; 1 Kings 1, 6).<sup>13</sup>

Another breach of the family shelom occurred when Absalom by flattery won the hearts of the people in his father's kingdom and then revolted against him. Pedersen emphasizes the seriousness of this deed when he writes:

That the son places himself outside the family and raises the standard of revolt against his father, is so utterly unnatural that no law can take account of it. It is more absurd than a kingdom divided against itself; it is a unity, a soul that is at war with itself. If the son sets himself against the father, then he is as a diseased member of a body, and the father who, by the act of the son, is forced to remove him, is as a man who cuts his own flesh.<sup>14</sup>

If it had been a stranger that had revolted against David, the king no doubt would have taken speedy and decisive action to put down the rebellion and punish the offender. But with Absalom leading the revolt, David fled, weeping and with his head covered. When Joab gathered the forces of the king to counter-attack, David's chief interest was that his son be not harmed; and when the news was brought to him that the revolution had been halted and Absalom killed, he showed only grief at the loss of a son. Pedersen adds:

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<sup>13</sup>Pedersen, op. cit., p. 256 ff.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 267.

His warriors sneaked into the town, ashamed of their victory, as if they were an army in defeat, while David went to his chamber and wished he had died instead of his son."<sup>15</sup>

To understand David's actions in these situations one must view them against the background of the Israelitic conception of the family. The Hebrew household was a closely knit unit, and David was going to great lengths to heal the breach of peace that had occurred in his home.

It is this same unity within the family that we must keep in mind, if we are to grasp the full content of shalom as it is used in passages such as Job 5:19-27. Eliphaz is describing the blessedness of the man who bears his trials patiently and does not despise the chastening of the Lord. In the Revised Standard Version these verses are translated as follows:

The Lord shall deliver you from six troubles; in seven there shall no evil touch you. In famine he will redeem you from death, and in war from the power of the sword. You shall be hid from the scourge of the tongue, and shall not fear destruction when it comes. At destruction and famine you shall laugh, and shall not fear the beasts of the earth. For you shall be in league with the stones of the field, and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with you. You shall know that your tent is safe (beshalom), and you shall inspect your fold and miss nothing. You shall know also that your descendants shall be many, and your offspring as the grass of the earth. You shall come to your grave in ripe old age, as a shock of grain comes up to the threshing floor in its season. Lo, this we have searched out; it is true. Hear and know it for your good.

Verse 24 is of particular importance in our discussion.

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 266.

"You shall know that your tent is beshalom." In this context it is quite evident that shalom indicates more than just a static condition such as health, safety, physical prosperity, etc. If this passage is interpreted in the light of the Israelitic conception of the family, then shalom is expressive also of a relationship: first, the relationship of harmony and peace which the Israelite associated with life in the family, and, secondly, a proper and blessed relationship to God. In short, this passage suggests a condition in which there is present everything necessary for the happiness of the man who trusts in God. He has shalom with nature, shalom in his family, and shalom with God. Delitzsch writes:

In ver. 24 shalom (which might be adj.) is predicate; thou wilt learn . . . that thy tent is peace, i.e. in a condition of contentment and peace on all sides. Ver. 24b is to be arranged: And when thou examinest thy household, then thou lackest nothing, goest not astray, i.e. thou findest everything, without missing anything, in the place where thou seekest it.<sup>16</sup>

Commenting on Job 5:19-26 Pedersen says:

Peace spreads everywhere with him who is blessed. He himself is peace, his house is peace, everything that belongs to him is peace. When he examines his homestead, he only sees shalom, nothing is wanting, and nothing fails . . . . To this description there is a positive as well as a negative side. Peace is growth and expansion; fertility in husbandry and family, health and strength throughout life . . . this also implies that everything evil must be kept away.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>F. Delitzsch, Biblical Commentary on the Book of Job (Reprint; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1949), I, 103.

<sup>17</sup>Pedersen, op. cit., p. 316 f.

But shalom is used, not only to express the harmony and peace which the Israelite associated with the family. It is also employed to describe the intimate relationship existing between friends. Friendships were held in the highest regard by the Hebrews. That they were blessings to be sought after and valued can be seen from passages such as Ecclesiastes 4:9-12:

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow; but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have head, but how can one be warm alone. And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

David urged those who wished to attain happiness in this life and enjoy the goodness of God in richest measure: "Seek shalom and pursue it" (Psalm 34:14). They should maintain good relations with their neighbors, friends, and acquaintances. That is the mark of the godly man.

David also complained about those who professed to be friends but broke the bond of peace that should have united them. He pleaded: "Draw me not away with the wicked and with the workers of iniquity, which speak shalom to their neighbor, but mischief is in their hearts" (Psalm 28:3). In Psalm 55:20 David confessed that he was so disturbed that he longed for the wings of a dove that he might fly away, because he was being taunted by a familiar friend, a companion with whom he walked in God's house. Concerning him, David wrote: "He hath put forth his hand against such as be at



peace with him; he hath broken his covenant."

When the prophet Jeremiah felt the strain of his task, he poured out his soul in a similar lamentation. He longed to escape to some lonely place in the wilderness, where he would be away from the treacherous people among whom he was laboring, for they were full of falsehood; they professed friendship and peace to their neighbors, but inwardly they were waiting only to do harm. In Jeremiah 9:8 the prophet complains: "Their tongue is as an arrow shot out; it speaketh deceit; one speaketh shalom to his neighbor with his mouth, but in heart he layeth his wait."<sup>18</sup> Nothing was more wicked and contemptible than breaking this bond of peace that ordinarily united friends.

But Scripture also records numerous examples of true friendships in which shalom is present. When Solomon came to the throne in Israel and had set his kingdom in order, he turned his attention almost immediately to the building of the temple. The time was opportune, for the nation was at peace. Solomon, therefore, entered into negotiations with King Hiram of Tyre, who provided him with the timber and stone needed for the structure. Solomon, in turn, furnished Hiram with wheat and oil. It was a mutually profitable arrangement. However, it was undoubtedly more than just a business deal. The holy writer remarks: "And there was shalom between Hiram and Solomon; and they two made a

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<sup>18</sup>See also Jer. 20:10.

league together."<sup>19</sup>

Evidently this treaty with Hiram was the result of a legacy of friendship which King David had bequeathed to his son. The context clearly shows that these two great men respected each other very highly and were united by a bond of friendship.

On occasions Scripture employs shalom to describe the intimate relationship existing between individuals "whose hearts are knit together." When David was in Ziklag, a group of Saul's soldiers came to him and asked that they might be permitted to join his forces. David was suspicious of treachery and cautioned them:

If ye be come peaceably unto me to help me, mine heart shall be knit unto you, but if ye be come to betray me to mine enemies, seeing there is no wrong in mine hands, the God of our fathers look thereon, and rebuke it.<sup>20</sup>

It is also apparent from Scripture that shalom and ת'ר'ך are closely related. There are passages in which these two terms appear as parallels. Genesis 26:28-31 speaks of a treaty between Abimelech and Isaac. After Abimelech had ordered him to leave the land of the Philistines, he recognized that the Lord was with Isaac and was blessing him. Abimelech then wanted to make a covenant with him. He said:

Let there be now an oath betwixt us, even betwixt us and thee, and let us make a covenant ( ת'ר'ך ) with

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<sup>19</sup>1 Kings 5:15. In the Hebrew, 1 Kings 5:26.

<sup>20</sup>1 Chron. 12:17. See also 1 Sam. 18:1-3.

thee, that thou wilt do us no hurt, as we have not touched thee, and as we have done unto thee nothing but good, and have sent thee away in peace (  $\text{בְּשָׁלוֹם}$  ) . . . . And they arose up betimes in the morning, and swore one to another; and Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace (  $\text{בְּשָׁלוֹם}$  ).

The two terms appear together also in Psalm 55:20: "He hath put forth his hands against such as be at peace (  $\text{בְּשָׁלוֹם}$  ) with him; he hath broken his covenant (  $\text{בְּרִיתוֹ}$  ).<sup>21</sup>

In Ezekiel 34:25 the relation between the two terms appears even closer. The prophet writes:  $\text{כִּי־בְרִית־אֶשְׁלַם־לָהֶם$   $\text{בְּשָׁלוֹם}$ . Here  $\text{בְּרִית}$  and  $\text{בְּשָׁלוֹם}$  appear as part of the same expression and are translated "a covenant of peace."<sup>22</sup> This is simply a more emphatic designation for an agreement or treaty. In this regard G. von Rad writes:

The relation between  $\text{בְּרִית}$  and  $\text{בְּשָׁלוֹם}$  is so firmly established that in this connection  $\text{בְּשָׁלוֹם}$  seems to have been something of an official term, which can be understood either in this sense that  $\text{בְּשָׁלוֹם}$  is sealed with a covenant by both contracting parties; or, in reverse, that the covenant inaugurates a relation of  $\text{בְּשָׁלוֹם}$ . In the latter case the prophet Ezekiel is significant. In two instances he speaks of Jehovah as announcing a covenant of peace for Israel, and in both cases . . . shalom is . . . the result of the making of a covenant. Ez. 34,25; 37,26.<sup>23</sup>

The relation between  $\text{בְּרִית}$  and  $\text{בְּשָׁלוֹם}$  is so close that at times only one of these terms appears in the text,

<sup>21</sup>See also 1 Kings 5:12.

<sup>22</sup>See also Ezekiel 37:26.

<sup>23</sup>G. von Rad, Theologisches Woerterbuch Zum Neuen Testament, edited by Gerhard Kittel (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1935), II, 401.

while the other is also implied. An example of this is to be found in the friendship of David and Jonathen. In 1 Samuel 18:1-3 we read:

And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathen was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathen loved him as his own soul. And Saul took him that day and would let him go no more home to his father's house. Then Jonathen and David made a covenant because he loved him as his own soul.

This relationship was entered into by a covenant of peace and was confirmed by Jonathen's giving David his robe and his arms. Saul received the young son of Jesse into the shalom of the family and gave him a position of honor. Later, when David's success and popularity increased to the extent that Saul felt threatened, the harmony and the bond of friendship between him and David was severed. Ordinarily Jonathen would have shared the views of his father, but his friendship for David was now too strong. At first, he tried to bring about a reconciliation between his father and his friend, but in this he failed. When Saul sought the life of David, Jonathen renewed his covenant with his father's foe. The bond of friendship was stronger than the ties of kinship. The story of David and Jonathen has been called the greatest eulogy of friendship.<sup>24</sup> It is a remarkable example of unity, oneness of will, and harmony of purpose. Truly, the souls of these men were knit together

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<sup>24</sup>Johs. Pedersen, Israel, Its Life and Culture (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), I--II, 279.

by the bond of shalom. But the word most prominently used to describe this relationship is  $\text{שָׁלוֹם}$ , not shalom.  $\text{שָׁלוֹם}$  appears in the narrative a number of times, but shalom is found only seldom. However, it should be remembered that in instances of this kind  $\text{שָׁלוֹם}$  is actually equivalent to  $\text{שָׁלוֹם שָׁלוֹם}$ .

Thus shalom is often used in Scripture to describe the intimate bond between friends; and when it is employed in this manner, it indicates unity, harmony, and a relationship of unquestioned trust and confidence. To sever such ties of peace was considered a most serious and treacherous act. Those guilty were called workers of iniquity.

Finally, Scripture uses shalom when referring to the covenants and treaties that were customarily established between nations. When Joshua and the leaders of Israel were deceived into making a covenant with the Gibeonites, the Bible describes it thus: "And Joshua made shalom with them, and made a league with them to let them live, and the princes of the congregation swore unto them" (Joshua 9:15).

A similar usage is found in 1 Kings 4:24, where the holy writer states that King Solomon "had shalom on all sides round about him." The kingdom over which Solomon reigned extended from the Euphrates to the land of the Philistines in the southwest and to the border of Egypt in the south and embraced a mixture of many tribes and peoples. David had left none of the neighboring nations unconquered, except some Philistines and Aramseans. This realm was held togeth-

er by agreements. The neighboring tribes, having been conquered by the Israelites, made peace treaties. These treaties are here described by the term shalom.

In Isaiah 33:7 the prophet speaks of ambassadors of shalom, valiant ones, who shall weep bitterly. These envoys of peace were probably the representatives of King Hezekiah who were sent to Rabshakeh for the purpose of entering into an agreement that would spare the city of Jerusalem from attack and destruction by the Assyrian army. But the negotiations for a treaty failed, and thus the men of Judah were in despair. In this case, too, shalom refers to a covenant of peace between two nations. This covenant, however, was more than just a non-aggression pact.

How an agreement of this kind could be entered upon and what it implied, may be seen from the thirty-fourth chapter of Genesis, which relates the story of the sordid covenant between the sons of Jacob and Shechem. Shechem had violated Dinah, the daughter of Leah, but after committing his vile deed, he loved her and wanted her as his wife. Father and son, therefore, went to Jacob to arrange a covenant between their two peoples. The substance of the proposed agreement is stated in verses 9 and 10:

The soul of my son Shechem longeth for your daughter; I pray you give her him to wife. And make ye marriages with us, and give your daughters unto us, and take our daughters unto you. And ye shall dwell with us; and the land shall be before you, dwell and trade ye therein, and get your possessions therein.

The sons of Jacob had not forgotten the outrage done to their

sister, but they did not openly demand reparation; instead they followed a course of deceit. In reply to Shechem's suggestion for an agreement, they made a counter-proposal:

We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one that is uncircumcised, for that were a reproach unto us. But in this will we consent unto you: if ye will be as we be, that every man of you be circumcised, then will we give our daughters unto you, and we will take your daughters to us, and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people. But if ye will not hearken unto us, to be circumcised, then will we take our daughter and be gone (vv. 14-17).

Shechem and Hamor immediately agreed to this proposed covenant and took steps to fulfil their obligations. They presented the matter to their fellow-townsmen, and in good faith the men of the city agreed to enter such a covenant. But while they were weak with their wounds, Simeon and Levi had their revenge; they killed the men and took Dinah. What is more, the sons of Jacob plundered the city and carried away all the women and children, besides all cattle and goods. This was an outrageous breach of shalom. Jacob showed that he realized the seriousness of his sons' deeds when he said to them:

Ye have troubled me to make me stink among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites, and the Perizzites; and I being few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house (v. 30).

This story, sordid as it is, nevertheless shows the significance of the covenant, even when it was violated. A treaty of this kind implied that the two parties in the agreement entered into a relationship of unity and harmony, a oneness of will and purpose. They formed common customs

and views; they entered into a common life. They communicated of their essence one to the other. They intermarried.<sup>25</sup>

The significance of such a treaty is apparent also from passages such as 2 Kings 10:12-14, which clearly indicate that such treaties implied common responsibilities on the part of the contracting parties. When Jehu was engaged in exterminating the house of Ahab, he met the brothers of Ahaziah, the king of Judah. Quite innocently, they gave him the information that they were on their way to the Ephraimite princes with whom they were at peace. Because of their friendly relations with the members of the house of Ahab, Jehu ordered that they be apprehended and slain, forty-two men in all. The law of the ancients seemed to be that a person was either wholly a friend or wholly an enemy. The least help rendered may be sufficient to create a full responsibility.<sup>26</sup> Conversely, common enemies at times joined people in relationships of peace.<sup>27</sup> The two Aramean princes, Toi and Hadadezer, were at war with each other. When David fought with Hadadezer and defeated him, Toi sent his son to David in order to strengthen the peace between them (2 Sam. 8:9-10).

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., pp. 291 f.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 292.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.



New combinations always created confusion in older covenants and brought about conflicts.<sup>28</sup> Judah had a covenant with Syria. Later on, Benhadad, the king of Syria, made a treaty also with Baasha, the ruler of Ephraim. Therefore, when Baasha attacked Asa, King of Judah, Asa sent presents to Benhadad in order to strengthen the covenant between them; at the same time he urged Benhadad to break his league with Baasha. The king of Syria acknowledged the claim of the older covenant and broke his peace with the kingdom of Israel.<sup>29</sup> Thus treaties among nations could become quite complicated.

When covenants of this kind were established between nations, it also implied commercial intercourse, as well as the exchange of certain cultural characteristics.<sup>30</sup> David and Solomon had a covenant with Hiram of Tyre, according to which the latter supplied Israel with cedar and cypress timber for the construction of the temple, while Israel furnished Tyre with grain and oil. Solomon cooperated with Hiram in establishing far-flung commercial enterprises, in which his fleet of ships was navigated to distant ports.<sup>31</sup> Later on, Omri attempted to strengthen the relations between Israel and Phoenicia and brought about the marriage between

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 293.

<sup>29</sup> 1 Kings 15:18 f.

<sup>30</sup> Pedersen, op. cit., p. 293.

<sup>31</sup> Bernhard W. Anderson, Understanding the Old Testament (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1957), p. 149.

his son, Ahab, and Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal, king of Tyre. This entailed the introduction of the Phoenician religious cults into Israel. Just as Solomon built shrines for his foreign wives, so King Ahab constructed a "temple of Baal" for Jezebel; he had it equipped with an altar and an image of Asherah, the mother goddess. Anderson says:

This was the Phoenician version of the Canaanite nature religion, which we know best from the Ras Sheamra literature. From the time of Israel's entrance into Canaan, this religion had been making subtle inroads into the covenant faith. But notice that Baalism had now acquired a political drive, for Phoenician imperialism was at its very height in the Mediterranean world. In antiquity, the way to acknowledge the political supremacy of another nation was to acknowledge and appropriate the religion of that country.<sup>32</sup>

When two nations entered into a covenant, it did not necessarily mean that they were equal partners in the agreement. The strongest was always the one that ruled. For example, when Israel made a treaty with Assyria, it meant, in reality, that Israel subordinated itself to the will of that mighty nation. Therefore a prophet like Hosea complained of such covenants.<sup>33</sup> Undoubtedly it meant that the stronger left its impression on the weaker also in a cultural way. When Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judah and carried into exile the king and all the princes, he made a covenant with Zedekiah and put him on the throne. The covenant consisted in Zedekiah and Nebuchadnezzar having one will, Nebuchadnezzar's.

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid., pp. 205 f.

<sup>33</sup>Hoses 12:2.

If Zedekiah opposed it, he had broken the covenant.<sup>34</sup>

Such a covenant was often forced on the vanquished. When Ahab had defeated Benhadad, he imposed certain conditions on him and made an agreement with him; this agreement was an expression of the fact that Benhadad was subordinate to the will of Ahab.<sup>35</sup> Likewise, when the Syrians were defeated by David, and David slew the men of seven hundred chariots and forty thousand horsemen, and Shobach, the captain of the host of the Syrians, it is said that the kings who were servants of Hadadezer ". . . made peace with Israel and served them."<sup>36</sup> This was a covenant, not of equals, but one in which the Syrians were subordinate. Finally, in Joshua 9:25, when the Gibeonites deceived Joshua into entering a covenant with them, they said to the leader of Israel: "Behold, we are in thy hand; as it seemeth good and right unto thee to do unto us, do." The covenant of peace was not broken, but they had to subordinate themselves and serve as slaves in the temple.

In view of the significance attached to these covenants of peace, one can readily understand why the Lord forbade Israel to enter into treaties with neighboring nations. Already early in the history of Israel, when God's people were venturing forth upon their conquest of Canaan, they were in-

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<sup>34</sup>Ezekiel 17:12-16.

<sup>35</sup>1 Kings 20:34.

<sup>36</sup>2 Sam. 10:19.

structed to exterminate the Canaanite, lest they be led into idolatry. The strict regulations which Yahweh gave His people are recorded in Exodus 23:31-33:

. . . I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand; and thou shalt drive them out before thee. Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. They shall not dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against me; for if thou serve their gods, it will surely be a snare unto thee.

This policy is repeated in Exodus 34:12: "Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee."

In a special code of war the Lord established policy for the Israelites regarding their relation to tribes and nations which lived at some distance:

When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it. And it shall be, if it make thee an answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee. And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it, and when the Lord thy God hath delivered it into thy hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword, but the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself; and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which the Lord thy God hath given thee. Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities of these nations. But of the cities of these people, which the Lord thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth, but thou shalt utterly destroy them; namely, the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee; that they teach you not to do after their abominations, which they have done unto their gods, so should ye sin against the Lord your God.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>Deut. 20:10-18.

This commandment of the Lord was again emphasized by Ezra upon his arrival in Jerusalem with a group of exiles from Babylon. Hearing of the laxness in public worship, the intermarriage with the native population, and the consequent abomination that was current among them, Ezra fell on his knees, spread out his hands in prayer before God, and confessed the enormity of the sins of the people in mingling with their pagan neighbors. He called to mind the commandment of the Lord in Exodus 23 and Deuteronomy 7, forbidding intermarriage and seeking the peace of the pagan. He told them:

Now therefore, give not your daughters unto their sons, neither take their daughters unto your sons, nor seek their shalom or their welfare forever, that ye may be strong and eat the good of the land.<sup>38</sup>

This was indeed a wise regulation, for history substantiates the fact that when Israel disobeyed God and entered into a covenant relationship with neighboring nations, it was her religious life that suffered. This covenant of peace, the shalom, with pagan tribes represented too intimate a relationship with idolaters.

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<sup>38</sup> Ezra 9:12.

## CHAPTER V

### SHALOM AND GOD'S RELATION TO MAN

At this point in the discussion the question arises whether shalom is used in the Old Testament to designate a spiritual relationship between God and man. More particularly, does shalom ever imply a relationship between Yahweh and the sinner that is comparable with the New Testament concept of peace with God through the forgiveness of sins wrought by the work of the Messiah? There has been a sharp difference of opinion among scholars with regard to this question.

Some have held the view that shalom has reference only to earthly, material blessings. G. von Red summarizes his opinion in the following paragraph:

If one reviews the varied possible uses of shalom in the Old Testament, a negative element appears; we could produce no example in which shalom would designate the specific spiritual attitude of an inner peace. It is easily substantiated that shalom much more often refers to a totality than to an individual. As a typical example of this, Lamentation 3:17 could be named: "And thou hast removed my soul far off from peace; I forgot prosperity." But even in this example shalom is not something hidden, something internal, but something which appears in the form of outward prosperity. Shalom is decidedly something external in the majority of texts where the concept designates the circumstances of a totality. If one thinks of the combination with שָׁלוֹם, with וְשָׁלוֹם Zech. 8:16), or with שָׁלוֹם (Is. 60:17), then one must say that the word shalom in its most frequent application is a decidedly social concept.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>G. von Red, "Shalom im A. T.," Theologisches Woerterbuch Zum Neuen Testament, edited by Gerhard Kittel (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1935), II, 404 f.

Pedersen holds a similar view, although he does not express it as directly. In his chapter entitled "Peace and Salvation," he points to the very close relation between shalom and שָׁלוֹם when he says:

Salvation which in its root means victory and prosperity, is in its subsequent development entirely penetrated by the idea of peace which gradually developed in Israel: unchecked prosperity, happiness in security under the protection of the strong God, the abolition of all dangers . . . It consists in the weak human soul having strength conferred upon it by its God when utterly submitting itself to Him. It is developed, "gets space," in that everything evil which might check it is kept away from it. The plague rages round him, striking down all others, but not him. All who might check him are bound with solid chains; the wild beasts are so changed that he who is saved can trample on them as he likes, for they cannot hurt him. This salvation is identical with the peace which the prophets promised their people.<sup>2</sup>

A few paragraphs later he then indicates that he considers שָׁלוֹם to be a purely earthly and material concept. Undoubtedly he applies the same limitation to shalom as he does to שָׁלוֹם, referring it exclusively to earthly prosperity and victory.

This position coincides with the theological views of such scholars as Ludwig Koehler, who does not find in the Old Testament a plan of salvation that involves the forgiveness of sins through the work of the Messiah. He writes:

The Old Testament does not teach that God changes His mind in a single event of His heilsgeschichte or shall do, so that from that moment forgiveness is there for anyone who is willing to receive it. It speaks only occasionally of forgiveness and certainly does not put

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<sup>2</sup>Johs. Pedersen, Israel, Its Life and Culture (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), I-II, 332 f.

it as the center of its scheme of salvation. Forgiveness plays no part at all in the teaching of the early prophets. Where it does occur, however, it is as a rule a question of forgiveness from case to case, removing the disturbance caused by sin without leading to a new life which makes these disturbances basically impossible. In a few passages, Jer. 31:34; 33:8; 50:20 forgiveness appears to be bound up with thorough-going salvation; but there it is a consequence of salvation, not a starting point or presupposition of it; also it is not brought about by an event of the heilsgeschichte but by a free act of God's gracious will.

The entire salvation which the Old Testament revelation proclaims depends much more upon judgment which eradicates the sin that has been committed and upon conversion which saves men from the possibility of future sin.<sup>3</sup>

Concerning the person of the Messiah, Koehler asks:

Has the Old Testament no Messiah through whom salvation and redemption come? The word and the concept Messiah are infrequent in the Old Testament, and though infrequent, nevertheless also ambiguous. The priestly writings designate the high priest Messiah, Lev. 4:3, 5, 16; 6:15, and a great number of passages use the word for the historical king of Israel--the word meaning in these instances simply God's anointed, 1 Sam. 24:6; 26:9. As a term pertaining to salvation Messiah occurs very seldom. The name is given to the Persian king, Cyrus, Isa. 45:1, because he without knowing it is used by God to bring the salvation of liberation and return to the Jews. In the days of the last hardships there is a Messiah and prince--he perishes; but his mission is not to bring about salvation, Dan. 9:25 ff.

We do come across one, however, in a difficult passage, Isa. 52:13--53:12, who does not bear the name Messiah but who is known as the servant of the Lord. He has no form nor comeliness. His name is unknown. The rest of the Old Testament knows nothing more about him. Yet he it is of whom it is said that he will see his seed and satisfy himself with the knowledge of the Lord. Of him it is said that he hath borne our griefs and he carried our sorrows. The chastisement of our peace (salvation) was upon him and by his stripes we are healed. As his

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<sup>3</sup>Ludwig Koehler, Old Testament Theology, translated by A. S. Todd (Philadelphia, Pa.: The Westminster Press, 1957), p. 218.



form is shrouded in dim half-light, so the "we" and the "our" which recur are indeterminate. But everyone who reads these sorrowful, importunate utterances feels bound to include himself in that "we" and that "our". Not far from this Isaiah passage, 52:13-53:12, is 61:1 where we read: "And the spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me". If 61:1 is written with reference to 52:13 ff., then one can call the suffering servant of the Lord a Messiah. If he is a Messiah, then he is a Messiah who brings salvation--for it says "because of our faithlessness" and "for our salvation" and "by his stripes we are healed", 53:5. This Messiah--if one may really call him that--is a Messiah who suffers. He is a Messiah who suffers vicariously. At this point the theology of the Old Testament comes to an end.<sup>4</sup>

Thus one gains the impression that Koehler is not convinced that the Messiah, spoken of in the Old Testament, is the one who would suffer for the sins of the world, die vicariously, and thereby reconcile God and man so that they are now at peace.

Similarly, Jewish scholars do not regard shalom as being expressive of a spiritual peace between the sinner and God, resulting from the forgiveness of sins procured by the Messiah. They assert that the King Messiah will bring peace when he comes, but they limit the meaning of shalom to material peace and prosperity.<sup>5</sup> Concerning the forgiveness of sins wrought by a redeemer or intermediary, a Jewish scholar remarks:

A distinction must be drawn between the unchanging

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 238.

<sup>5</sup> Abraham Cronbach, The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, edited by Isaac Landman (New York: Universal Jewish Encyclopedia Co., Inc., VII, 419).

monotheism of Israel and the Christian conception of the Redeemer. Paul declares that by his blood Jesus obtained eternal redemption for mankind (Hebrews 9:12). In Christianity, redemption is forgiveness of sins, to which mankind could not attain without the blood of Jesus, the Redeemer (Col. 1:14). . . . In Judaism there is no intermediary power. Forgiveness of sins is obtained by man in direct communion with God. Israel regards sin as a rebellion against God or as a perversion of men's way on earth. . . . Forgiveness is granted to any man who is truly repentant. In seeking it man approaches God without mediation. Unlike the Christian, to whom redemption means primarily remission of sins, the Jew thinks of God as man's redeemer in a more positive sense. Through His power all men will become aware of the reality of the moral law which will be inscribed indelibly on their hearts. They shall all know God and understand His ways, from the least even unto the greatest of them (Jer. 31:34). As the result of this spiritual awakening, those evils which man has invented will disappear. This will be the redemption. The Redeemer is God, in whose light man must walk (verse 5).<sup>6</sup>

There are other scholars, however, who find in shalom both a temporal and a spiritual significance. While shalom is frequently used in a purely material and earthly sense of prosperity, health, safety, and freedom from oppression and vexation, at times it indicates also an inner peace with God, similar to that spoken of in the New Testament. Bishop A. P. Forbes says:

The word peace in the Bible does not merely mean that rest and tranquility and absence of annoyance, which we understand by the word; but it means all positive blessings, both spiritual and temporal. It is the common salutation in the East, and it was the usual benediction of the Lord, Peace be unto you! And so Jerusalem, which is the type of heaven, is by interpretation the vision of peace; and Melchizedek, its king, who was thus the king of peace, foreshadowed him who is the Prince of Peace; and the highest and the fullest of all Christian well-wishing, and the amplest of all church blessings,

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., IX, 98.

is that peace of God, which passeth all understanding may be upon us and rest upon us forever. It is, in short, that universal harmony in the relations between God and His creation which it has been the blessed work of Christ's incarnation to cause--the reconciliation of all things that are in heaven and in earth. It is the fruit of the passion of Christ for He is our Peace, as the Apostle says . . . .<sup>7</sup>

The Catholic Biblical Encyclopedia makes the following comment:

The inspired writers of the Old Testament not only discussed peace in its human aspect, but also in its relation to Almighty God. The peace of God, however, is above the purely material concept, and includes freedom from the power of sin, and the happy and joyful state of the just and their good conscience.<sup>8</sup>

There are also numerous Scripture passages in which shalom implies peace with God through the forgiveness of sins. Numbers 6:24-26 is the solemn benediction which God appointed for dismissing the people of Israel: "The Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord make His face shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee and give thee peace."

Keil and Delitzsch see in this passage Yahweh's promise of both material and spiritual good. In the first part of this blessing, the emphasis is on preservation from evil in the world and includes a prayer that the Lord would protect His people, be the Defender of His church, and preserve it

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<sup>7</sup> James Hastings, The Christian Doctrine of Peace (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1922), pp. 3 f.

<sup>8</sup> John E. Steinmueller and Kathryn Sullivan, Catholic Biblical Encyclopedia, Old and New Testaments (New York City: Joseph P. Wagner, Inc., 1956), p. 829.

with His guardian care. But these scholars see a particularly clear reference to spiritual blessings in verses 25 and 26. They remark:

"Jehovah make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee" defines the blessing more closely as the manifestation of the favor and grace of God. The face of God is the personality of God as turned towards men. Fire goes out from Jehovah's face and consumes the enemy and the rebellious (Lev. x. 2, cf. xvii, 10, xx. 3; Ex. xiv. 24; Ps. xiv, 17), and also a sunlight shining with love and full of life and good (Deut. xxx. 30; Ps. xxvii. 1, xliii. 3, xliv, 4). If "the light of the sun is sweet, and pleasant for the eyes to behold" (Eccl. xi. 7), "the light of the divine countenance, the everlasting light (Ps. xxxvi. 10), is the sum of all delight" (Baumg). This light sends rays of mercy into a heart in need of salvation, and makes it the recipient of grace. --- The third (v. 26), "Jehovah lift up His face to thee, and set (or give) thee peace" (good, salvation), set forth the blessings of God as a manifestation of power, or a work of power upon men, the end of which is peace (shalom), the sum of all the good which God sets, prepares or establishes for His people . . . the triple blessing expressed in the most unconditional manner the thought, that God would bestow upon His congregation the whole fulness of the blessing enfolded in His divine Being which was manifested as Jehovah. But not only does the name Jehovah denote God as the absolute Being, who revealed Himself as Father, Son, and Spirit in the historical development of His purpose of salvation for the redemption of fallen man; but the substance of this blessing, which He caused to be pronounced upon His congregation, unfolded the grace of God in the threefold way in which it is communicated to us through the Father, Son, and Spirit.<sup>9</sup>

In a footnote Keil and Delitzsch call attention also to the comments made by Martin Luther with regard to this important passage. They point out that the reformer refers

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<sup>9</sup>C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, "The Pentateuch," Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament (Reprint; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1949), III, 41 f.

the first blessing to bodily life and good, but the second and third blessings he refers to the spiritual nature and the soul, saying:

Just as the sun, when it rises and diffuses its rich glory and soft light over all the world, merely lifts up its face upon all the world; . . . so when God gives His Word, He causes His face to shine clearly and joyously upon all minds, and makes them joyful and light, and as it were new hearts and new men. For it brings forgiveness of sins, and shows God as a gracious and merciful Father, who pities and sympathizes with our grief and sorrow. The third also relates to the spiritual nature and the soul, and is a desire for consolation and final victory over the cross, death, the devil, and all the gates of hell, together with the world and the evil desires of the flesh. The desire of this blessing is, that the Lord God will lift up the light of His word upon us, and so keep it over us, that it may shine in our hearts with strength enough to overcome all the opposition of the devil, death, and sin, and all adversity, terror, or despair.<sup>10</sup>

Another example showing that shalom is used in Scripture to designate peace with God is recorded in Judges 6:23. The angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon and commended him to deliver Israel from the Midianites. At Gideon's request the Lord gave him a sign, assuring him that it was truly God that was speaking to him, giving him this command. But the miracle filled his soul with fear and with a consciousness of his sinfulness; therefore, he exclaimed: "Alas, O Lord God! because I have seen an angel of the Lord face to face." Delitzsch remarks:

Here is an expression of alarm, viz., fear of death which might be the necessary consequence of his seeing God (see Ex. xx. 16 and the remarks on Gen. xvi. 13) . . . . But the Lord comforted him with the words,

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

"Peace to thee; fear not; thou wilt not die." . . . In gratitude for this comforting assurance, Gideon built an altar to the Lord, which he called Jehovah-Shalom, "the Lord is peace." The intention of this altar . . . is indicated in the name that was given to it. It was not to serve as a place of sacrifice, but to be a memorial and witness of the revelation of God which had been made to Gideon, and of the proof which he had received that Jehovah was peace, i.e. would not destroy Israel in wrath, but cherished thoughts of peace. For the assurance of peace which He had given to Gideon was also a confirmation of His announcement that Gideon would conquer the Midianites in the strength of God, and deliver Israel from its oppressor.<sup>11</sup>

The name of Jehovah-Shalom suggested two thoughts to Gideon: first, the Lord was at peace with him; Yehweh would spare his life in spite of the fact that he had seen the angel of the Lord. God would put away from him that which separates the sinner from God. Secondly, the Lord was in a relationship of peace with the people of Israel and, therefore, was not holding their sins against them, but had forgiven them and would now fight with them against the Midianites and deliver them from their oppressor.

The Pulpit Commentary shares the opinion that the name of the altar, "Jehovah-Shalom," implies that a state of peace existed between God and Gideon.

The Book of Psalms also contains passages in which shalom advances far beyond the mere temporal and material condition of peace and tranquility. Psalm 29 portrays the power of the almighty God in nature. When a storm shook the

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<sup>11</sup>C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, "Joshua, Judges, Ruth," Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament (Reprint; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1950), I, 213.

mighty cedars of Lebanon, Yehweh set as king, ruling and controlling all things. This was to be a living demonstration to all of God's people that the Lord is able to sustain them in the face of all obstacles regardless of how formidable they might be. The psalmist, therefore, says: "The Lord will give strength to His people; the Lord will bless His people with peace." It would be limiting the meaning of this passage if we were to refer it solely to the physical obstacles that confront God's people. The Pulpit Commentary makes the following comment with regard to verse 11:

The Lord, who shows His strength in the thunderstorm, will be able, and assuredly will be willing, to "give strength to his people"--to impart to them some of that power and might which He so abundantly possesses. Then they, partaking in His strength, need not fear the attacks of any adversaries. Struggle and contention will, by His good providence, be one day brought to an end; and ultimately the Lord will bless His people with peace--will give them the "rest that remaineth to the people of God" (Hev. iii, 9), the perfect peace which passeth all understanding."<sup>12</sup>

In this connection it is interesting to take note of a statement made by Spurgeon:

Nothing is harder to enter into the heart of a poor creature (when all is in an uproar in his bosom, and his conscience threatens nothing but fire and sword, wrath, vengeance, from God for his sin), than thoughts or hopes of peace and comfort. Now the psalm is spent in showing what great things God can do, and that with no more trouble to Himself than a word speaking, "The voice of the Lord is full of majesty" (verse 4). "It breaks the cedars, it divides the flames, it shakes the wilderness, it makes the hinds to calve." This God that doth all this, promiseth to bless his people with

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<sup>12</sup>G. Rawlinson, "The Psalms," The Pulpit Commentary, edited by H. D. M. Spence and Joseph S. Excell (Reprint; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1950), I, 213.

peace, outward and inward; for without this inward peace, though he might give them peace, yet he could never bless them with peace as he there undertakes. A sad peace, were it not, to have quiet streets, but cutting of throats in our houses? Yet infinitely more sad to have peace both in our streets and houses, but war and blood in our guilty conscience. What peace can a poor creature taste or relish while the sword of God's wrath lies at the throat of conscience? not peace with God himself.<sup>13</sup>

According to some Bible commentaries the very colorful and picturesque use of shalom in Psalm 85 has reference to a spiritual relationship between God and men. The context makes that quite evident. The psalm opens on a note of thanksgiving. God had shown mercy to His people, forgiving their sins, withdrawing His wrath from them, and granting them deliverance and restoration. Some scholars think it probable that this psalm was written shortly after the return of God's people from Babylon. Leupold says:

. . . it was, indeed, a remarkable instance of restoration when God suffered His people to return after having been completely unrooted. No nation had had such an experience. He had at that time also obviously forgiven their sins and pardoned their iniquities. His wrath which had once burned so fiercely against His people had also ceased to manifest itself. Because of these manifest tokens of divine goodness shown them the people were extremely happy, and exuberant shouts of joy were commonly heard among them.<sup>14</sup>

But this joy was short-lived. When God was again displeased with the evil actions of His people, He withdrew His

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<sup>13</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, The Treasury of David (New York: Funk & Wagnells Company, 1892), II, 45.

<sup>14</sup>H. C. Leupold, Exposition of the Psalms (Columbus, Ohio: The Wartburg Press, 1959), p. 609.



blessing, and the forward movement of restoration has halted. The situation in Israel looked quite hopeless. But the people knew where to seek help. The psalmist prayed that God might manifest anew the loving-kindness that He had shown formerly, and in answer to his earnest prayer old convictions come alive in his heart. Inner assurance dawned upon his mind. Therefore, the psalmist confidently asserts:

He will speak shalom unto His people, and to His saints, but let them not turn again to folly. Surely His salvation is nigh them that fear Him, that glory may dwell in the land.

What was the content of this shalom? Undoubtedly the psalmist was confident of the fact that God would again withdraw His anger, forgive His people, and restore them to His favor as He had done in the past. All of this implies, of course, a spiritual relationship between Yahweh and Israel.

Furthermore, it should be noted that shalom and salvation appear as parallels indicating that they are related thoughts. This is significant because some scholars assert that in this instance salvation evidently means more than a physical state such as prosperity, safety or victory.

Creager and Alleman state: "The salvation which is declared to be near is shown in the following vv to include both spiritual blessing and material prosperity; its climax is the glory, i.e. the living presence of God."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Harold L. Creager and Herbert C. Alleman, "The Psalms," Old Testament Commentary, edited by Herbert C. Alleman and Elmer E. Flack (Philadelphia, Pa.; The Muhlenberg Press, 1948), p. 568.

Shalom is used again in verses 10 to 12 where the holy writer describes God's relation to man in these picturesque words:

Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven. Yea, the Lord shall give that which is good; and our land shall yield her increase.

Concerning this passage Creager and Alleman say:

Verse 10 is a beautiful statement of concord between God and man. The divine righteousness and mercy come from above (v 11), forming a harmonious fellowship with the truth or faithfulness thus inspired in man, and producing peace. "Heaven and earth are blended in permanent amity" (Maclaren).<sup>16</sup>

Another example of shalom being used in the sense of peace with God is found in Psalm 119:165. There the psalmist exults: "Great peace have they that love thy law; and nothing shall offend them." In the context the holy writer confesses that in the midst of persecution God's Word is his fear, his joy, and his love. Princes persecute him without cause, but his heart is not afraid of them; it fears before God's Word. This is, however, a fear that is associated with heartfelt joy because it brings peace of conscience through the forgiveness of sins. Delitzsch comments as follows:

Not merely morning and evening, not merely three times a day (lv. 18), but seven times . . . , i.e. ever again and again, availing himself of every prayerful impulse, he gives thanks to God for His word, which so righteously decides and so correctly guides, is a source of transcendent peace to all who love it, and beside which one is not exposed to any danger of stumbling (שִׁשְׁבַּע, *shib'at*).

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

LXX. *shalom*, cf. 1 John 2:10) without some effectual counter-working.<sup>17</sup>

Plumer expresses it thus:

Great peace have they which love thy law . . . . The peace of believers is great in many respects. It is manifold, being with God, with their neighbors, and with their own conscience. being sufficient and mighty, able to keep them calm in all perturbations and in all the awful scenes through which they shall pass. It is the peace of God which passeth all understanding.<sup>18</sup>

Leupold adds the thought:

From praise the writer's thoughts turn to two great blessings which fall to the lot of those men who love God's law. The first of these is "great peace", a broad term which connotes that rich measure of well-being when nothing essential is lacking. One form in which that peace finds expression in a man's life is that such men "shall not stumble", which has been defined that they shall "walk firmly and safely in the clear path of duty." But it is quite obvious that all such glorious prospects as great peace are only partially attained in this present life.<sup>19</sup>

Thus shalom, as it is used here, includes also that peace of conscience which comes from the assurance of God's grace and mercy as promised in His Word.

The same is true of Psalm 125:5 where the holy writer describes the Lord as the Protector of His people. After emphasizing the security of those who trust in the Lord, he offers a prayer in which he pleads that God may bless and strengthen those who walk uprightly, but exercise His judg-

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<sup>17</sup> Franz Delitzsch, Biblical Commentary on the Psalms (Reprint; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1949), III. 262.

<sup>18</sup> William S. Plumer, Studies in the Book of Psalms (Philadelphia, Pa.: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1867), p. 1086.

<sup>19</sup> Leupold, op. cit., p. 858.

ment upon those who turn aside to their crooked ways. Finally, he concludes the psalm with the prayer, "Peace be upon Israel." While these words undoubtedly include the idea of physical blessings, they should not be limited to them.

Delitzsch states:

Finally, the poet, stretching out his hand over Israel as if pronouncing the benediction of the priest, gathers up all those hopes, prayers, and wishes into one prayer: "Peace be upon Israel." He means "the Israel of God," Gal. 6:16. Upon this Israel He calls down peace from above. Peace is the end of tyranny, hostility, dismemberment, unrest, and terror; peace is freedom and harmony and unity and security and blessedness.<sup>20</sup>

Leupold makes the comment:

Toward the people of God his thoughts are the kindest. He prays that they may receive the total of those blessings that God loves to bestow on His people, cf. Ps. 122:6-9; 128:6; 131:3; Gal. 6:16.<sup>21</sup>

Plumer interprets the passage thus:

But peace shall be upon Israel, literally, peace upon Israel, i.e. peace be upon Israel. The force of such a phrase is well expressed by the future, as such an inspired petition is itself a sure prediction. The contrast is between the final punishment of the wicked, and the final prosperity of the righteous. When God shall weigh them in the balance of eternal justice, as the former rises, the latter sinks.<sup>22</sup>

Thus the prayer of the psalmist reaches its broadest scope in the concluding benediction: "Peace be upon Israel," which points to physical as well as spiritual blessings.

Another instance in which shalom is used in a spiritual

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<sup>20</sup>Delitzsch, op. cit., p. 287.

<sup>21</sup>Leupold, op. cit., p. 886.

<sup>22</sup>Plumer, op. cit., p. 1108.

sense is Issiah 26:12: "Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us; for thou also hast wrought all our works in us." In his commentary Fausset makes two interesting statements with regard to the meaning of shalom as it is employed here:

(1) The peace of the faithful is here described under the image of a well-fortified city. The whole context, connected as it is with Christ's coming to destroy death (cg. xxv. 8), cannot admit of the restoration from Babylon under Cyrus being its ultimate and exhaustive fulfillment. (2) Peace is God's favor; including all blessings temporal and spiritual, opposed to their previous trials.<sup>23</sup>

Especially worthy of note is Micah 5:4.5, where the prophet mentions shalom as one of the characteristics of the Infant that shall be born in Bethlehem Ephrathah and shall become the Ruler of Israel. Of him Micah writes:

And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God; and they shall abide, for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth. And this man shall be the peace.

Conservative scholars have always considered this to be prophecy concerning the birth of the Messiah. Keil writes:

The future ruler of Israel, whose goings forth reach back into eternity is to spring from the insignificant Bethlehem, like His ancestor, king David. The descent of David from Bethlehem forms the substratum not only for the prophetic announcement of the fact that the Messiah would come forth out of this small town, but also for the divine appointment that Christ was born in Bethlehem, the city of David. He was thereby to be made known to the people from His very birth as the great promised descendant of David, who would take pos-

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<sup>23</sup>A. R. Fausset, "Job - Issiah," A Commentary, Critical, Experimental and Practical on the Old and New Testaments (Reprint; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1948), III, 642.

session of the throne of His Father David forever. As the coming forth from Bethlehem implied birth in Bethlehem, so do we see from Matt. 2:5,6. and John 7:42, that the old Jewish synagogue unanimously regarded this passage as containing a prophecy of the birth of the Messiah in Bethlehem. The correctness of this view is also confirmed by the account of Matt. 2:1-11; for Matthew simply relates the arrival of the Magi from the East to worship the newborn King in accordance with the whole arrangement of his Gospel, because he saw in this event a fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies.<sup>24</sup>

As scholars have identified this Ruler, to be born in Bethlehem, with the Christ, they have also considered the shalom which He brings to be the spiritual peace that is ours through the forgiveness of sins. Laetsch writes:

And this Man shall be the Peace" (Gr. N), literally, Peace. The Babe of Bethlehem is not only the Prince of Peace (Is. 9:6), He is Peace (Eph. 2:14). Having Him, we have peace in the fullest sense of the term. This peace gives us assurance that our sins have been atoned for (Is. 53:6), forgiven (Micah 7:18,19), propitiated (1 John 2:2), blotted out of God's memory (Jer. 31:34; 50:20) . . . that all accusing voices shout in vain (Is. 54:17) . . . Jesus is Peace! Three short words, also in the original Hebrew. Yet an eternity of study cannot fathom its depth, millions of words cannot exhaust its meaning. That is the peace foretold in the Old Testament, proclaimed by the angels on the fields of Bethlehem, invoked by Paul upon his readers in every one of his letters, forming the burden of the everlasting hymns of the redeemed in heaven, in which the innumerable host of angels will join in praise and adoration: This Man is Peace!<sup>25</sup>

It might be objected, however, that the context makes such an interpretation impossible because it states that this

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<sup>24</sup>C. F. Keil, "The Twelve Minor Prophets," Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament (Reprint; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1949), I, 481.

<sup>25</sup>Theo. Laetsch, Bible Commentary, the Minor Prophets (Saint Louis, Mo.: Concordia Publishing House, 1956), p. 274.

Man who is to be born in Bethlehem and is to be the Ruler of Israel, ". . . shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land; and when he shall tread in our palaces."

In reply conservative scholars have pointed to the fact that verse 5 is not to be taken in a literal sense, as is indicated by the latter part of the verse, which is figurative:

". . . then shall we raise against him seven shepherds and eight principal men." These numbers cannot be taken mathematically. Regarding the interpretation of verse 5, Dr.

Laetsch comments:

Assyria is a type of all external enemies of the Church of Christ: Rome, imperial and papal; rationalism; Modernism; atheism; Communism; God and Magog of Rev. 20:8,9. Assyria, the very name that struck terror into the heart of every Israelite, just as the thought of the vast host of enemies fighting against the Christian Church fills the heart of the believer with anxious forebodings. Yet the Church is not panic-stricken. It shall raise "seven shepherds and eight men." As three and four (Amos 1:3-11), four and five (Is. 17:6), six and seven (Job 5:19; Prov. 6:16); so seven and eight here (also Eccl. 11:2) are not to be regarded mathematically, but as rhetorical figures, used to express an indefinite number, with or without the connotation of intensification. While sometimes the figure denotes a scanty measure, two, at the most three, e.g., Is. 17:6, here, as in Amos 1:3-11, it is used in the sense of *satis superque*, enough and more. Shepherds are the spiritual leaders of the people, clerical and laic; leaders, not like the false shepherds so bitterly denounced by Micah (ch. 3:1-11) and later by Jeremiah (ch. 23:1,2,9-32), but leaders who are at the same time "principal men" (Gr. N.), princes of, or among, men. These leaders shall oppose the enemies of the Church ruled by Christ. We think of the great leaders and reformers raised by the Lord throughout the centuries, men like Paul and the other apostles, Athanasius, Augustine, Wycliff, Luther, Tyndale, the missionaries to the heathen lands, faithful pastors and teachers in parochial and Sunday schools, consecrated laymen, Christian

fathers and mothers, etc.<sup>26</sup>

Finally, in discussing shalom as expressive of a spiritual relationship between God and man, attention should be given to the fact that this term is used in close proximity with the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, a portion of Scripture which many scholars consider to be a prophecy of the vicarious suffering and death of Christ, by which He sought peace between God and man through the forgiveness of sins.<sup>27</sup> It is significant that shalom is used three times in this context.

In Isaiah 52:7 the prophet writes: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who bringeth good tidings, that publisheth shalom, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that saith to Zion, Thy God reigneth." While it is true that this passage of Scripture undoubtedly has reference also to the deliverance of God's people from captivity in Babylon and to their return to Jerusalem, nevertheless this was not the only significance attached to that announcement. Certainly it had reference also to the coming of the messengers of the Gospel to spiritual Israel and their announcing salvation from sin. Lange says:

The return from the Exile represents only the feeble beginning of the restoration of God's reign. When John

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Franz Delitzsch, Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah (Reprint; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1949), II, 303.



the Baptist and Jesus Himself proclaimed that "the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 3:2; 4:17), the latter was about to lay the immediate foundation of it. But the whole period of the Church is as a pause, during which, along with many outward retrogressions, there is only a quiet, inward extension and deepening, and a weak, partial outward progress . . . . The completion will only take place when the Lord will come again visibly to realize His inward and outward sole dominion on earth . . . .<sup>28</sup>

Of particular significance is the fact that St. Paul quotes this passage in Romans 10:15 and there applies the words of Isaiah to the messengers of the Gospel who proclaim salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Therefore, Delitzsch comments as follows:

The gospel of the swift-footed messengers . . . is the gospel of the kingdom of God that is at hand; and the application which the apostle makes of this passage of Isaiah in Rom. x. 15, is justified by the fact that the prophet saw the final and universal redemption as though in combination with the close of the captivity.<sup>29</sup>

Shalom is used also in Isaiah 53:5 where the holy writer states with regard to the suffering Servant of Yahweh: "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquity; the chastisement of our shalom was upon him, and with his stripes we were healed." In this context shalom certainly has reference to that state of peace between God and man which resulted from the fact that the sinner's punishment was laid upon the suffering Servant, who then bore it vicariously. Commenting on this point, Delitzsch writes:

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<sup>28</sup>John Peter Lange, "Isaiah," Commentary on the Holy Scriptures (Reprint; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, n.d.), p. 564.

<sup>29</sup>Delitzsch, op. cit., p. 299.

According to our interpretation, the genitive אַלְוָה, which defines the musar so far as its object and results are concerned, clearly show that this manifestation of the justice of God, this satisfaction procured by His holiness, had His love for its foundation and end. It was our peace, or, what is more in accordance with the full idea of the word, our general well-being, our blessedness, which these sufferings arrived at and secured . . . . In what follows, "and by His stripes we have been healed," shalom is defined as a condition of salvation brought about by healing . . . . The stripes and weals that were inflicted upon Him have made us sound and well . . . . We were sick unto death because of our sins; but He, the sinless one, took upon Himself a suffering unto death, which was, as it were, the concentration and essence of the woes that we had deserved: and this voluntary endurance, this submission to the justice of the Holy One, on accordance with the counsels of divine love, became the source of our healing.<sup>30</sup>

Quite significantly, shalom appears a third time in this same context, in Isaiah 54, where the prophet described in dramatic fashion the results of the vicarious sufferings and the triumph of Yahweh's Servant. The people, forsaken on account of their sins, are to be restored to that sacred relationship in which Yahweh is their husband. His anger with them has abated. Compassion and mercy have filled His heart. He swears that He will never again allow His wrath to break forth upon them. He will make a covenant with them as He made with Noah, and it will be an everlasting covenant.

It is this relationship of love and grace that He is guaranteeing His people in v. 10. He calls it a בְּרִית אֶלְוָה, a covenant of peace and says: "For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not de-

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., pp. 319 f.

part from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee." Taking this passage in the light of its context, one is compelled to interpret shalom in the sense of peace between the sinner and God, peace that has been established by the sufferings and the triumph of the Redeemer, who has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.

The thirty-fourth chapter of the prophecies of Ezekiel also speaks of this  $\square \text{ז'ש' ת'ג'}$ . The chapter opens with an indictment of the false prophets and leaders in Israel, because of whom evil has come upon the people. They are called shepherds, and their sin consisted in this that they had served themselves instead of feeding their sheep; nor had they ministered to the diseased, and the sick, the broken and needy. The result of their failure was that the flock had been scattered and had become a prey of the beasts of the field. But the day of deliverance for the sheep was soon to come. Yahweh would raise up a new Shepherd for them. This Shepherd is called by the name David. Needless to say, however, it was not that the prophet expected the former king David to be raised from the dead to occupy this position as Shepherd. The reference rather is to the "sprout of David" (Jeremiah 23:5), already called simply David in Hosea 3:5 and Jeremiah 30:9. Yahweh will then be God to His people, and David will be Prince in the midst of them. He will carry out the will of Yahweh and not place Himself in opposition to God as the false shepherds did. As a result the Lord will

make a covenant with them.

In what will this covenant of peace consist? The answer is given in figurative language. Yahweh says:

I will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land; and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods. And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing. And the tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase, and they shall be safe in their land, and shall know that I am the Lord, when I have broken the bands of their yoke, and delivered them out of the hand of those that served themselves of them.<sup>31</sup>

When was this prophecy fulfilled? Keil answers:

If we take another survey, in conclusion, of the contents of our prophecy, the following are the three features of the salvation promised to the people of Israel:--(1) The Lord will liberate His people from the hand of the bad shepherds, and He Himself will feed it as His flock; (2) He will gather it together from its dispersion, bring it back to the land of Israel and feed it there, will take charge of the sheep in need of help, and destroy the fat and strong sheep by which the weak ones are oppressed; (3) He will raise up the future David for a shepherd, and under his care He will bestow upon His people the promised covenant blessings in rich measure. These saving acts of God for His people, however, are not depicted according to their several details and historical peculiarities . . . , nor are they grouped together according to their general design and character, and their essential features. If, then, we seek for the fulfillment, the Lord raised up His servant David as a shepherd to Israel, by sending Jesus Christ, who came to seek and to save that which was lost (Luke xix. 10; Matt. xviii. 11) and who calls Himself the Good Shepherd with obvious reference to this and other prophetic declarations of a similar kind (John x. 11 sqq.). But the sending of Christ was preceded by the gathering of Israel out of the Babylon-

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<sup>31</sup>Ez. 34:25-27.

ten exile, by which God had already taken charge of His flock.<sup>32</sup>

Thus the  $\text{בְּרִית־שְׁלוֹם}$ , the covenant of peace, undoubtedly referred to a spiritual relationship between God and man, by which God forgave men his sins through the redemptive work of Christ.

Commenting on this passage in Ezekiel, Von Rad makes this interesting statement.

One must say that the word shalom in its many uses only seldom designates such a spiritual (geistig) matter as is the case here. In this case shalom is not material well-being but the expression for the peaceful relation which is dependent upon the attitude of those who make the covenant. No wonder that the concept peace in this emphasis was well suited to indicate the latter prophetic insight concerning God and the people of God. Beside the two Ezekiel passages of the  $\text{בְּרִית־שְׁלוֹם}$ , which Yehweh grants to the people, we add especially Isaiah 54:10, "neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee."<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Carl F. Keil, Biblical Commentary of the Prophecies of Ezekiel (Reprint; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1950), II, 92 f.

<sup>33</sup> Von Rad, "Shalom in the Old Testament," *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s. 10 (1959), 1-11, p. 10.

## CHAPTER VI

### YAHWEH, THE SOURCE OF SHALOM

In previous chapters attention has been called to the fact that shalom represents the ideal state of man. It includes the sum-total of all that is good and wholesome in man's life, in his physical existence, in his associations with his fellowmen, and in his relation to God. Since the Israelites regarded the Lord as the source of all that was good, they also considered shalom to be the gift of God. G. von Rad comments as follows:

Selfevidently one in Israel applied to Yahweh the good things and the values which the word shalom comprises, i.e. which were asked to Him or were traced to Him as the Giver, to the degree that they were present. This use of our concept in the language of religion must not be thought of as a later development. On the contrary, if we said above that shalom rarely loses its fundamental meaning of a material value, then we must remark here before all that the word shalom where it is used in its full sense is a religious concept. In this regard one must rather reckon that in special uses of the concept an original emphasis was lost in the course of time . . . .<sup>1</sup>

God appears as the Giver of shalom in numerous passages of Scripture. According to Judges 6:24, Gideon built an altar unto the Lord and called it Jehovah-Shalom, the Lord is peace. As noted above, this was an act of gratitude which grew out of the fact that Gideon recognized Yahweh to be the

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<sup>1</sup>G. von Rad, "Shalom im A.T.," Theologisches Woerterbuch Zum Neuen Testament, edited by Gerhard Kittel (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1935), II, 401.

Giver and Source of shalom. The altar was to be a memorial to the God who cherished thoughts of peace both toward Gideon and toward Israel as a people.<sup>2</sup> In Jeremiah 29:11 God's attitude toward his nation is described in these words:

"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of shalom and not of evil." Through the prophet Isaiah, He speaks to His people thus: "Oh that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! Then had thy shalom been like a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea" (Isaiah 48:18). It is evident from Psalm 35:27 that He delights in the shalom of His servants: "Let them shout for joy and be glad that favor my righteous cause; yea, let them say continually, Let the Lord be multiplied, which hath pleasure in the shalom of His servant." Through the psalmist the Lord also urged His people to pray for the shalom of Jerusalem and the temple (Psalm 122:6).

Furthermore, the Scripture is replete with passages in which God promises peace to those who follow His commandments. In Leviticus 26:3,6. the Lord exhorts His people: "If ye walk in my statutes and keep my commandments and do them . . . I will give shalom in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid; and I will rid evil beasts out of the land; neither shall the sword go through your land."

God revealed Himself to David as the Lord and Giver of shalom when He said to him:

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<sup>2</sup>See page 55.

Thou shalt not build a house unto my name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in my sight. Behold, a son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of rest, and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about, for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give shalom and quietness unto Israel in His day (1 Chronicles 22:9).

Yahweh gives shalom not only to the nation but also to the individual. When David was cruelly betrayed by his familiar friend, he became despondent; he wanted to fly away as a dove and escape it all. But when he appealed to God, the Lord heard his petition, and David confesses in Psalm 55:15: "He hath delivered my soul in shalom from the battle that was against me." The Lord granted him peace.

The ability of God to grant and establish shalom is brought out in a particularly forceful manner in two passages. It is said in Job 25:20 that Yahweh effects shalom in heavenly places, high above all human concerns. Even the heavens and all their hosts are subject to Him and bow to His decrees. Shall He not arbitrate and bring shalom also to the children of men? And in Psalm 29:11 the holy writer emphasizes that the same mighty God who controls the storms that violently shake the towering cedars of Lebanon, the same Lord who sits in control over nature as King, ". . . will give strength to His people . . . will bless His people with shalom." Who would doubt His power to keep His promise?

The prophet Isaiah also portrays God as the Source and Giver of shalom. He expresses his full confidence and trust in God when he writes in the 26th chapter, the twelfth verse of his prophecy: "Lord, thou wilt ordain shalom for us, for



thou also hast wrought all our works for us." This was the song of praise that was sung also by the faithful of Israel when God restored them to their own land in peace. Again in the 66th chapter, the 12th verse of his prophecy, Isaiah, speaking of the Messianic kingdom, writes: "For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will extend shalom to her like a river."

Reference might again be made to the Aaronic blessing. This great high priestly benediction of the Lord, with which Aaron and his sons were to bless Israel, reaches its climax in the third statement where it speaks of God as the Giver of peace: "The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee and give thee shalom" (Numbers 6:26).

G. von Rad calls special attention to Psalm 85, where in his opinion "the belief that shalom comes only from Yahweh--but in all sufficiency from Him--has found singular expression."<sup>3</sup> Particularly noteworthy are verses 8 to 10 where the psalmist exclaims:

I will hear what the Lord will speak, for He will speak shalom unto His people and to His saints . . . . Surely His salvation is nigh them that fear Him, that glory may dwell in our land. Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and shalom have kissed each other.

G. von Rad is of the opinion that this represents ". . . a climax in the Old Testament use of the concept shalom, because here God's concern for the salvation of His

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<sup>3</sup>G. von Rad, op. cit., p. 402.

people is viewed as the cause of a perfect earthly peace."<sup>4</sup>

Thus it is apparent from Scripture that God is the Source and Giver of shalom, and Israel from ancient times recognized Him as such.

However, it is equally clear that by disobedience man can deprive himself of this blessing of God. Frequently the Lord's promises of peace were prefixed with exhortations to holiness. In Leviticus 26:1,3, the promise of shalom and rest for God's people is preceded by the admonition:

Ye shall make no idols nor graven images, neither rear you up a standing image, neither shall ye set up an image of stone in your land, to bow down unto it, for I am the Lord your God . . . . If ye walk in My statutes and keep My commandments and do them . . . , I will give shalom in the land.

Psalms 125:5 declares that the promise of shalom will rest only upon the true Israel, upon the faithful members of the church of God. "Everlasting punishment is the end of the hypocrites and the oppressors; everlasting peace is the reward of those who place their trust in the Lord with unwavering confidence."<sup>5</sup>

Speaking through the prophet Isaiah, the Lord laments Judah's waywardness and obstinacy because it deprived her of the blessing of shalom:

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Paul E. Kretzmann, "The Poetical and Prophetic Books," Popular Commentary of the Bible, Old Testament (St. Louis, Mo.: Concordia Publishing House, 1924), II, 195.

O that thou hadst hearkened to My commandment! Then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea; thy seed also had been as the sand, and the offspring of thy bowels like the gravel thereof; his name shall not be cut off nor destroyed from before Me . . . . There is not shalom, saith the Lord, unto the wicked (Isaiah 48:18.19.22).

The same point is forcefully set forth in 2 Chronicles 15:1-8 which depicts a time in Israel when ". . . there was no shalom to him that went out, nor to him that came in, but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the countries." In that day Azariah, the son of Oded, warned Aha saying, "The Lord is with you, while ye be with Him; and if ye seek Him, He will be found of you, but if ye forsake Him, He will forsake you."

This, however, seems to have been a truth which certain false prophets in Judah and Israel did not grasp. Already in the days of Micah there appeared to have been a circle of prophets whose theology culminated in the word shalom. Their error did not consist in this that they preached peace, for Jeremiah and Ezekiel, as well as other servants of God, did the same after Judah had been punished for her iniquity. But these prophets of peace ignored the sins of the people and were unable to interpret the serious darkening of the political horizon as a coming judgment. They preached peace where there was no peace. "Instead of exposing the evils, the wickedness, and the idolatry of the people, they glossed over the conditions, treating the ulcerous growths of the body politic as insignificant bruises."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 411.

And thus from the time of Micaiah to Ezekiel we can follow a peculiar conflict in which a small minority, the so-called prophets of doom, contested passionately the preaching of prosperity by the false prophets. There is evidence of such an encounter in 1 Kings 22. Jehoshaphat of Judah and Ahab of Israel had formed an alliance against Syria, but before going into battle, Jehoshaphat suggested that they inquire of Yahweh concerning the success of their venture. Ahab brought forth 400 of his prophets who predicted certain victory for him, but when Micaiah, the true prophet of the Lord, was consulted, he predicted the complete defeat of the king and foretold that Israel would be scattered upon the hills as sheep without a shepherd. Future events proved the accuracy of Micaiah's pronouncement.

Micah, the Morasthite, knew the same opponents. He, too, accused them of exercising their sacred office for their own welfare; if they had a sufficient amount of bribe money, they were prepared to proclaim peace regardless of circumstances; but if they were not fed, they announced war and calamity as inevitable. Their sin was that they made the people to err and prophesied as it pleased the hearts of men. Micah predicted that judgment would overtake them.<sup>7</sup>

Jeremiah was most deeply involved in these disputes, and he was greatly disturbed by them. In his writings he

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<sup>7</sup> Micah 3:5-7.

refers frequently to the insidious and deceitful work of these false prophets. When he heard the announcement of judgment about to fall on Judah and saw the foe approaching ever nearer, he was so deeply moved that he accused God of deception because He had not only permitted these lying spirits to work, but had even ordained them and brought them forth for the hardening of the people's heart.<sup>8</sup> In Jeremiah 4:10 he complains: "Ah, Lord God! Surely thou hast greatly deceived this people and Jerusalem, saying, Ye shall have shalom, whereas the sword rescheth unto the soul"

In a very forceful manner Jeremiah describes the unfaithfulness of these false prophets when he writes: "They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Shalom, shalom, where there is no shalom" (Jeremiah 6:14). Whereas they should have warned the people of impending judgment and the need of repentance, these "watchmen of the people" protested to the nation ". . . that there is nothing to fear. All is sound in the nation's moral state, so all will be peace as to its political state."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> C. F. Keil, "The Prophecies of Jeremiah," Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament (Reprint; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1950), I, 109.

<sup>9</sup> A. R. Fausset, "Jeremiah--Malachi," A Commentary, Critical, Experimental and Practical on the Old and New Testaments (Reprint; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1948), IV, 22.

The prophet was convinced that much of Judah's guilt was due to the influence of these false leaders. They presented themselves to the people as bona fide servants of God and confidently assured them: "Ye shall not see the sword, neither shall ye have famine; but I will give you assured shalom in this place" (Jeremiah 14:13). Keil notes the fact that *שָׁלוֹם אֱמֶת*, peace of truth, means ". . . peace that rests on God's faithfulness and so: assured peace will I give you. Thus spoke these prophets in the name of Jahveh."<sup>10</sup> They claimed to speak with divine authority and thus led many astray. Consequently the Lord threatened them with judgment:

Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of My pasture, saith the Lord. Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel against the pastors that feed My people: Ye have scattered My flock and driven them away, and have not visited them; behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the Lord (Jer. 23:1-2).

Jeremiah warned the people not to be deceived by them, for despite the fact that these false prophets claimed to be speaking with divine authority ". . . they speak the vision of their own heart, not from the mouth of the Lord" (Jer. 23:16). They had not stood in God's council, nor did they follow God's Word and will. This is apparent from the fact that they promised peace and prosperity to all stiff-necked sinners.<sup>11</sup> The Lord made the accusation: "They say

<sup>10</sup>C. F. Keil, op. cit., p. 249.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 358.

still unto them that despise Me, The Lord hath said, Ye shall have peace; and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you" (Jer. 23:17).

In the 28th chapter of his book of prophecy Jeremiah relates the story of a dramatic meeting between himself and Hananish, one of the false teachers who were fanatically seeking his death. In the house of the Lord, in the presence of priests and of many people, Hananish predicted that within two years God would break the yoke of the king of Babylon; He would restore to the temple at Jerusalem all the holy vessels that had been taken by Nebuchadnezzar and bring back from Babylon all the exiles of Judah. Undoubtedly such a prediction must have been extremely popular. But what did Jeremiah reply to this unwarranted optimism? Dr. Laetsch describes this dramatic situation in these words:

It was not an easy task to face his opponent . . . . Like an iron pillar he stands alone in that howling mob and speaks, speaks boldly, courageously, but wisely. He does not thunder forth the law. He does not break out in violent denunciation of the false prophets. No! "Amen," he says. Let this be most certainly true. So may the Lord do! May the Lord establish thy word! That was not spoken in irony, in bitter mockery. No, these words were the sincere, heartfelt prayer of a man who had time and again pleaded for his beloved people, at home and in exile, prayed for the preservation of the nation, the city, the temple, (cp. ch. 8:18-9:1; 14:7-9); even after the Lord had forbidden him to pray (ch. 14:11-12; cp. 14:17-22). The noble prophet is not afraid to confess that his inmost desires and most fervent prayers are directed toward a speedy end of the Babylonian Exile. Yet dearly as he loved his country and his people, there is One to whom he is attached in even greater love and loyalty: Jehovah, the God of the covenant so shamefully and so persistently broken by his people. As Jehovah's spokesman he turns to the

self-appointed prophet: "Only listen to this word which I myself am about to speak in your hearing and in the hearing of all the people. From time immemorial the prophets before me and before you have prophesied against many countries and great kings of war and pestilence." Jeremiah, of course, had in mind only the true prophets of Jehovah. Every one of them prophesied evil against the nations because of their wickedness. And since Judah was guilty of like wickedness, the prophets pronounced God's judgment upon them also . . . . The unalterable condition of a return from exile had been stated in unmistakable language by the Lord of the Covenant (Deut. 30:1-5): a return to the Lord and obedience to His Word with all their heart and their soul. Of this change of heart, the essential prerequisite of a return out of exile (cp. Ezra 1:6), Hananiah had said nothing, nor was there the slightest evidence of such a change on the part of the nation.<sup>12</sup>

Therefore Jeremiah challenged Hananiah with the words:

"The prophet which prophesieth of peace, when the word of the prophet shall come to pass, then shall the prophet be known, that the Lord hath truly sent him" (Jer. 28:9).

Time would most certainly vindicate Jeremiah in this matter and prove the error of Hananiah.

But when Hananiah was unable to answer the quiet and convincing argument set forth by Jeremiah, he resorted to violence. He tore the yoke from the prophet's neck and broke it, saying: "Even so will I break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, from the neck of all nations within the space of two full years" (Jer. 28:11). At this point Jeremiah departed, leaving the issue in the hands of the Lord. But Yahweh did vindicate His prophet; He sent Jeremiah back to Hananiah with this message:

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<sup>12</sup>Theo. Laetsch, Bible Commentary, the Minor Prophets (St. Louis, Mo.: Concordia Publishing House, 1956), p. 227.



Thou hast broken the yokes of wood, but thou shalt make for them yokes of iron. For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: I have put a yoke of iron upon the neck of all these nations, that they may serve Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon; and they shall serve him; and I have given him the beasts of the field also. Then said the prophet Jeremiah unto Hananish the prophet, Hear now, Hananish; the Lord hath not sent thee; but thou makest this people to trust in a lie. Therefore thus saith the Lord: Behold, I will cast thee from off the face of the earth; this year thou shalt die, because thou hast taught rebellion against the Lord (Jer. 28:13-16).

Thus the Lord publicly disavowed Hananish who had called himself a prophet of the Lord and committed rebellion against the Most High. As a result he died two months later.

Finally, we note that Ezekiel also came into conflict with these prophets of shalom. His encounter with them is recorded in the 13th chapter of his book of prophecy, where he is commanded by the Lord: "Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel." The charges against them were similar to those made by Jeremiah. They were not inspired by the Spirit of God, but followed their own spirit and prophesied out of their own minds. In so doing they had, like foxes, destroyed the very fences of the vineyard of God instead of restoring and strengthening them. They had spoken in the name of the Lord without His authority, yet they expected Him to fulfil their word. Their immediate sin had been promising peace when judgment was determined. By their message they had given a false sense of security. In verses 10 to 12 the prophet employs a colorful illustration to describe these false leaders, their activities and their

fete. "When the people build a wall, these prophets daub it with whitewash." Therefore, the Lord orders Ezekiel:

Say to those who daub it with whitewash that it shall fall. There will be a deluge of rain, great hailstones will fall, and a stormy wind break out. And when the wall falls, will it not be said to you, Where is the daubing with which you daubed it?

Concerning this passage Keil comments as follows:

The meaning of the figure is intelligible enough. The people build up foolish hopes, and the prophets not only paint these hopes for them in splendid colors, but even predict their fulfillment, instead of denouncing their folly, pointing out to the people the perversity of their ways, and showing them that such sinful conduct must inevitably be followed by punishment and ruin. The plastering is therefore a figurative description of deceitful flattery and hypocrisy, i.e. the covering up of inward corruption by means of outward appearance. This leads the prophet to describe the judgment which they are bringing upon the nation and themselves, as a tempest accompanied with hail and pouring rain which throws down the wall that has been erected and plastered over . . . .<sup>13</sup>

Thus continued the conflict between the true servants of God who had the unenviable task of preaching divine judgment, and the false prophets who saw empty visions of peace and for a price did not hesitate to promise shalom and prosperity to a wayward people. The battle raged on until God's judgment struck with shattering force and brought the nation of Judah to a realization of her sins. Then a dramatic change took place. After the serious defeats 597 and 586 B. C., the prophets of God also proclaim-

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<sup>13</sup> Carl F. Keil, Biblical Commentary of the Prophecies of Ezekiel (Reprint; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1950), I, 168.

ed shalom and forgiveness to the penitent captives in Babylon. The proclamation of shalom became one of the most important elements in the preaching of both Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Jeremiah is inspired to write to the exiles in Babylon as follows:

Thus says the Lord: When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfil to you my promise and bring you back to this place. For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for shalom and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me; when you seek me with all your heart, I will be found by you, says the Lord, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, says the Lord, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile (Jeremiah 29:10-14).

Especially in chapters 30 to 33 the prophet Jeremiah records the plans of shalom and salvation which the Lord had made for His people. Such plans included the complete destruction of Babylon, the return of the exiles, the rebuilding of cities and palaces, the coming of the Messiah, and the establishment of His Kingdom of Grace and Power, in which Israel, Judah, and the Gentiles would be united in one holy Church.<sup>14</sup> As a visible and tangible sign of the fact that God would indeed restore His people to their native land, the Lord commanded Jeremiah to use his right as nearest of kin to purchase the field of Hanameel which was located near Jeremiah's native city, Anathoth. In those days of impending disaster, this purchase by the prophet was cer-

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<sup>14</sup>Laetsch, op. cit., p. 239.

tainly an indication of the fact that God had not abandoned His people.

Furthermore, Jeremiah was permitted to transmit to them the wondrous news given him by the Lord concerning Jerusalem: "Behold, I will bring it health and cure, and I will cure them and will reveal unto them the abundance of shalom and truth" (Jeremiah 33:6). The Lord would indeed bring them back from captivity in Babylon, but in addition He would graciously reveal to them

. . . the true, reliable peace and welfare that no enemy can take away from them (cp. John 14:27; Phil. 4:7). This peace is founded on the free and full forgiveness of their iniquities, their guilt, be that caused by sinning, missing the mark (cheta), or by transgressing, revolting against the Lord (v. 8). Because of this free pardon He will permit them to return to their homeland and will restore their former prosperity (v. 7).<sup>15</sup>

Again, the prophet could comfort his people with the assurance:

And Jerusalem shall be to Me a name of joy, a praise, and an honor before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them; and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and for all the shalom that I procure unto it (Jeremiah 33:9).

Morgen has summarized the significance of the thirty-third chapter of Jeremiah in these pointed words:

The song first celebrates the restoration of the people and the cities. This is described in its moral and material aspect, and in that order. The people are to be cleansed from their iniquity, and the city is to become "a name of joy" to Jehovah in the consciousness of all the peoples of the earth. The moral

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 286.

restoration will be manifested in a material one. The place, waste and desolate and without inhabitants, will again become the center of family life, and of joy and of prosperity. The establishment of the restored order is to be associated with the coming of One who is described as the "Branch of righteousness." In His person the two offices of King and Priest are to be united, and the result of His administration will be that Judah shall be saved and Jerusalem dwell safely.<sup>16</sup>

Such was the message of encouragement and hope which Jeremiah was to proclaim to the people of God after judgment had struck. By comparison it far surpassed the empty promises of the false prophets who proclaimed shalom without the command of God.

Ezekiel too was authorized by the Lord to bring to the captives who sat at the river Chebar the wondrous message of peace after he had pronounced divine judgment. Chapters 34 to 37 graphically describe the restoration. Cooke provides a summary of these important chapters in the following quotation:

A new age is about to dawn; punishment will be followed by recovery, Jahveh's purpose is to bring back Israel to its ancient home, and there to create a nation, outwardly and inwardly renewed, which shall devote itself wholly to His service. Thus (a) in place of the greedy shepherds of the past, Jahveh Himself will feed His flock, gathered and safe in His native land, 34:1-16; (b) the country will be transformed, made fertile and fully populated, 36:8-15; (c) the re-assembled nation will be purified in heart and spirit, 36:16-38; (d) Israel, as good as dead, will rise to new life, 37:1-14; (e) the old divisions of the kingdom shall vanish, and a David will rule over a united nation, in the midst

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<sup>16</sup>G. Campbell Morgan, An Exposition of the Whole Bible (Westwood, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1959), p. 332.

of which Jahveh's sanctuary will be set for evermore, 37:15-28. Under the circumstances of the day such a restoration could only be effected by great political change, by the fall of Babylon, for instance; but Ezekiel is silent on the subject; at the moment it was neither wise nor necessary to say how the deliverance would come; enough that Jahveh the one true God, had the power, and could be trusted to save His own.<sup>17</sup>

In these chapters our attention is drawn particularly to two passages, Ezekiel 34:25-31 and 37:24-28, both of which refer to a covenant of peace which the Lord will establish with His people. Concerning this covenant Keil writes:

וְיִשְׁבְּעוּ אֶת-אֲדָמָתָם is to be understood . . . as comprehending all the saving good which the Lord will bestow upon His sanctified people. There are only two factors of this salvation mentioned here in vers. 26b and 27, namely, the multiplication of the people, as the earthly sign of the divine blessing, and the establishing of His eternal sanctuary in the midst of them as the spiritual side. These two point back to the former acts of God, and hold up to view the certain and full realization in the future of what has hitherto been neither perfectly nor permanently accomplished on account of the sins of the people.<sup>18</sup>

It is evident that there is included in this covenant not only a promise of deliverance from captivity but also a prediction concerning the coming of the Good Shepherd from the family of David and the establishing of a sanctuary in the midst of God's people.<sup>19</sup> This was the message of shalom

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<sup>17</sup>G. A. Cooke, "The Book of Ezekiel," The International Critical Commentary (New York, N. Y.: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937), II, 372.

<sup>18</sup>Keil, op. cit., II, 135 f. See also p. 67 of this thesis.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 93

which Ezekiel delivered to the captives on the river Chebar.

Of course, there were also others among the prophets who, having denounced Israel and the false shepherds for their error, were then privileged to bring the people of God the assurance of peace and salvation. Since many of these prophecies have a direct bearing on the Messianic Kingdom, we shall treat them more fully in the chapter which is to follow.

[The following text is extremely faint and largely illegible. It appears to be a continuation of the previous paragraph, discussing biblical prophecies related to the Messianic Kingdom.]

Members of the [illegible] will possess a know- ledge of God sufficient to enable them to live according to

## CHAPTER VII

### SHALOM AND THE MESSIANIC KINGDOM

When the prophets raised their vision above the sin and idolatry, the turmoil and unrest of their day and focused attention on the Messianic kingdom that was to come, they sought to create within the minds of their hearers a most picturesque and glorious image. They spoke of a kingdom whose grandeur would far transcend that of the old covenant at Sinai. They pointed to a distant day when God's intimate love and forgiveness would be showered upon His people, and they in turn would rejoice and say: "Yahweh is our ruler! Yahweh is our king; He will save us" (Isaiah 33:22). As their king He will dwell in the midst of His purified people unto the end of time (Zechariah 2:11). He will make an everlasting covenant with them (Ezekiel 37:26; 43:6) and will remain forever their God, and they shall be His people (Jeremiah 31:33; Ezekiel 11:20). He will protect Zion ". . . as a cloud and smoke and the shining of a flaming fire by night" (Isaiah 4:5) and "a well of fire round about . . . and the glory within her" (Zechariah 2:5). The love which Yahweh will give His people will be like that of a shepherd who anxiously cares for his flock (Micah 2:12).

Members of the Messianic kingdom will possess a knowledge of God sufficient to enable them to live according to



His will, for "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the water covers the sea" (Isaiah 11:9). And as a result justice will dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness abide in the fruitful fields (Isaiah 32:16). The land will be possessed by virtuous men (Isaiah 60:21), who are happy to be Yehweh's servants (Isaiah 54:17). While in the past the prophets so frequently had to complain about the godlessness of the rulers, the injustice of officials, and the corruptibility of the false prophets, in the Messianic kingdom God will give His people "shepherds after God's own heart who will feed them with knowledge and understanding" (Jeremiah 3:15), and will care for them as a shepherd should (Jeremiah 23:4). In that day the priesthood of Aaron will have no further significance because the people of God will themselves be priests of the Lord (Isaiah 61:6).

Furthermore, the kingdom which the Lord will establish will be an everlasting kingdom. According to Hosea God will be espoused to spiritual Israel forever (Hosea 2:19). The King who shall come into their midst and establish His kingdom shall rule forever, so that there will be no end of shelom (Isaiah 9:6-7). And this indestructible kingdom, which God will bring forth, shall embrace all the nations of the earth (Dan. 7:14).

The Israel of Messianic times will be unto God a source of pleasure and delight. As a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so shall the Lord rejoice over His people (Isaiah 62:5). The redeemed, too, will experience the purest happi-

ness. The prophet says:

And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away (Isaiah 35:10).

God will transform Jerusalem into a city rejoicing (Isaiah 65:18). He will prepare a great feast for all people (Isaiah 25:6). Death will be no more (Isaiah 25:8), and the bodies of those who are dwelling in the dust shall rise and join in the rejoicing (Isaiah 26:19).

These are the spiritual blessings which shall characterize the Messianic kingdom. But the prophets speak also of an abundance of earthly good which the Lord God will lavish upon the members of His kingdom. Already in those early days of the patriarchs, when Jacob was about to die, he bestowed his prophetic blessing on his son Judah, predicting that in the Messianic age wine and milk would be in such abundance that they could be used for washing garments (Genesis 49:11-12). Thus there would be great fertility in the soil. That golden era will also be one in which sowing and harvesting will follow each other without interruption.

"Their threshing shall last until the time of vintage, and the vintage shall last to the time of sowing, and they shall eat bread to the full" (Leviticus 26:5). There will be many kinds of trees, which will bear fruit every month, and the leaves shall be used for healing (Ezekiel 47:12). God will give ample rain for the seed, and on every mountain and high hill there will be brooks running with water (Isaiah

30:25). The wilderness will become a fruitful field (Isaiah 32:15). The desert shall blossom (Isaiah 35:1). The fruit of the trees and the increase of the field shall be abundant, so that there will never again be famine among the nations (Ezekiel 36:30). The cattle will graze in large pastures (Isaiah 30:23). The desert will be like the garden of the Lord, and the wilderness like Eden (Isaiah 51:3). Instead of thorns there will be cypress, and instead of briars there will come up myrtle (Isaiah 55:13). The land will be populated with many inhabitants (Isaiah 49:19-21). Israel will expand to the right and to the left and possess the nations (Isaiah 54:1-3). Heinisch comments as follows:

Yahweh promised the patriarchs a countless posterity; to number them would be as impossible as to number the stars in the heavens or the sand on the seashore. These promises were repeated with reference to the messianic kingdom, "The number of the sons of Israel shall some day be like the sand on the seashore which cannot be measured or numbered . . . . I shall increase their number, they shall not decrease. The land, too narrow for its inhabitants, will ask in amazement, Who has given these births for me?"<sup>1</sup>

In the Messianic kingdom there will be no sudden, premature deaths, and at the age of a hundred years youthfulness will not have vanished. The prophet Isaiah describes it thus: "No more shall there be in it an infant that lives but a few days, or an old man who does not fill out his days, for the child shall die a hundred years old" (Isaiah

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<sup>1</sup>Paul Heinisch, Theology of the Old Testament, translated by William Heidt (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1950), p. 295.

65:20).

Great stores of wealth will be brought to Jerusalem from neighboring nations and foreign countries to enrich the city of God. The prophet Isaiah describes this liberality in some detail in chapter sixty:

Lift up your eyes round about and see; they gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far, and your daughters shall be carried in the arms. Then you shall see and be radiant, your heart shall thrill and rejoice; because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you. A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praise of the Lord. All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered to you . . . . Your gates shall be open continually; day and night they shall not be shut; that men may bring to you the wealth of the nations, with their kings led in procession . . . .<sup>2</sup>

Heinisch writes:

At the time of Solomon great treasures streamed into Jerusalem as subjected nations brought tribute. Later the Israelites had to pay tribute to foreign rulers, and hostile armies plundered the land. In the messianic era the riches of the people in the east and west will again flow toward the Holy City, and when enemies are conquered great booty will be gathered. Jerusalem's walls will be built of sapphires, her battlements of rubies, her doors of carbuncle stones and her enclosures of jewels (Isaiah 54:11-12).<sup>3</sup>

A very important characteristic of the Messianic kingdom will be the shalom which will exist in its midst. That there will be a remarkable state of peace is specifically stated in numerous passages of Scripture which will be dis-

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<sup>2</sup>Isaiah 60:4-7, 11 RSV. See also Is. 23:17-18; 45:14; 61:6; Haggai 2:7.

<sup>3</sup>Heinisch, op. cit., p. 295.

cussed below. At the moment, however, it should be noted that even in those passages where the word shalom does not actually occur, it is clearly implied. Concerning this point

G. von Rad comments as follows:

A component part of Old Testament eschatology, which ever and again is expressed by the prophets and other writers is the expectation of a final state of peace. The fact of this widespread and varied expectation must be mentioned here, although the key word shalom is occasionally missing in the pertinent text. Whether it is a prophecy of a return of the conditions of paradise, or the promise of a peace of nations which is brought about by divine instruction (Isaiah 2:2 ff.), or the expectation of a humble king at the end of time, who introduces an era of peace (Zech. 9:9 f), the fact that in these central eschatological discussions the word shalom is missing, or only found in a series with other statements as in Zech. 9:10, cannot take away the fact that here we are concerned with a prophetic shalom proclamation of broad scope. Therefore one may not accord to the passages which actually use the word shalom a commending importance above those other expressions.<sup>4</sup>

Our discussion, therefore, will take into consideration not only those passages in which the word shalom actually occurs, but also a few important texts in which the term is implied.

A state of peace which is characteristic of the Messianic kingdom will be introduced by the coming of a King whose sovereignty will extend over all the world. "His dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth" (Zechariah 9:10). He will reign in righteousness and with justice. "Righteousness shall be the girdle of his waist, and faithfulness the girdle of his loins"

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<sup>4</sup>G. von Rad, "Shalom im A. T.," Theologisches Woerterbuch Zum Neuen Testament, edited by Gerhard Kittel (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1935), II, 404.

Isaiah 11:5 RSV). As a result of His excellent rule, the nations shall seek Him; He shall be an ensign to the people (Isaiah 11:10). Even kings and rulers will do Him homage and bring Him gifts (Psalm 72:10). And He "will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth" (Isaiah 11:12). Certainly opposition will not be wanting. Kings and peoples will rise against Him, but they shall not be able to withstand Him. The Lord will establish Him upon the throne, for God has given Him the nations as an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth as His possession. He will break all opposition with a rod of iron and dash them as a potter's vessel (Psalm 2). He will rule in the midst of His enemies (Psalm 110:8,9).

The characteristic virtues of the Messianic King, however, will be meekness and love. He will guide and feed and care for His people as a shepherd (Ezekiel 34:23; 37:24-25). And as a result of the rule of this benevolent but mighty King, a remarkable state of shalom will exist in His kingdom. The Messianic era is pictured by the prophets as a time of disarmament. The Lord promises through His servant Hosea: "I will abolish the bow, the sword and war from the land; and I will make you lie down in safety" (Hosea 2:18 RSV). Micah writes:

And in that day, says the Lord, I will cut off your horses from among you and will destroy your chariots; and I will cut off the cities of your land and throw down all your strongholds" (Micah 5:10 f. RSV).

Yehweh will speak shalom to the nations (Zechariah 9:10).

Then weapons of war will be forged into useful tools.

"They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning-hooks" (Micah 4:3). Nations will not lift up swords against another, nor will they study the tactics of war (Isaiah 2:4). "Violence shall no more be heard in their land, devastation or destruction in their borders" (Isaiah 60:18). Men shall sit, each under his fig tree, with no one to frighten them (Zechariah 3:10).

According to Scripture this state of peace will extend also to the animal kingdom. One of the most detailed descriptions of this shalom is given by the prophet Isaiah:

The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall feed; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The suckling child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. (Isaiah 11:6-9).<sup>5</sup>

Commenting on passages such as this, Heinisch makes the following observation.

Peace will reign not merely over men and nations. Ordinarily after wars which cost many lives wild animals multiplied and ravaged the countryside; accordingly such beasts were considered a scourge sent by Yehweh against His sinful people. In the messianic era animals will no longer be harmful and beasts will live peaceably among themselves. In Israel's favor Yehweh will strike "a covenant on that day with the

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<sup>5</sup>See also Isaiah 35:9; 65:25; Ezekiel 34:25; Job 5:22-23.

beasts of the field and with the birds of the sky and the creeping creatures of the earth.<sup>6</sup>

The literal meaning of these passages which characterize the Messianic kingdom is quite clear, but the implications are so far-reaching that scholars have offered a variety of interpretations. Pedersen, for instance, understands them in a strictly literal sense. He sees them as expressions of Israel's highest ideal, which was security from all danger and rest in the sense of "unchallenged possession of the country, without the trouble of maintaining it."<sup>7</sup> He continues:

The ideal life of the Israelite becomes that of the weak under the complete protection of the strong. In calm and security he lives with his happiness; when he works, his God puts so much therein, that he obtains much greater results than his efforts would normally produce. He buys grain and milk and wine "without money" (Is. 55:1). His crops are so abundant that his "threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time;" if he lies down to rest, he is not to be frightened; evil beasts disappear, and if the enemy comes, then five shall be able to chase a hundred, and a hundred ten thousands (Lev. 26). Life passes smoothly, in complete security, because it is given him by his God.<sup>8</sup>

Pedersen conceives of Israel as having lost the courage and energy that was so evident in her ancestors. The Israel of old sought peace and security by uniting with others and by establishing treaties with strangers; wherever that was not

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<sup>6</sup>Heinisch, op. cit., p. 296.

<sup>7</sup>Johs. Pedersen, Israel, Its Life and Culture (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), I--II, 327.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.



possible, she maintained peace by fighting and becoming victorious. But now a different spirit has taken possession of her.<sup>9</sup>

Israel, having come to rest, wants prosperity in security, and therefore the home world and the outside world are divided by a gulf. Enemies cannot be tolerated within the horizon, and therefore they must either be exterminated or struck down in such a manner that they are conquered once for all.<sup>10</sup>

According to Pedersen there is in Israel a feeling of superiority over others.

Israel is not a people like other nations, but something apart, outside and above the nations. It can no more converse freely with them, making covenants, giving and receiving . . . . New ideals are born, centering in the absolute rulership of Israel. The Israelitic peace now consists in Israel being the only nation acknowledged in Canaan and all other nations being its inferiors. We may imagine that such ideals were limited to certain circles, but nevertheless they exercised great influence. We see them fully elaborated in the Deuteronomy, which claims the complete extermination of all the non-Israelitic peoples of Palestine (Deut. 7:2; 20:10-17).<sup>11</sup>

Closely associated with this sense of superiority on the part of Israel is her opinion that she is destined for world leadership. Pedersen sees this expressed in Isaiah 60:10-18, which describes the nations and kings as " . . . subjecting themselves entirely to Israel and yielding all their treasures to it . . . . This implies a claim to rule, nurtured by the ideals of world-conqueror and extended be-

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 317.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 318.

yond all bounds."<sup>12</sup>

In the Messianic era the mighty God will invert everything in Israel's favor. At the present time the Israelites are oppressed and ruled by others, but they look for a day when they will possess full power and will establish shalom. Then all thought of fighting against them will cease quite naturally, for the nations will think only of pacifying the mighty God of Israel, and " . . . with humble prayers they will tug at the mantles of the Israelites, in order to be permitted to go with them and have a share in their peace."<sup>13</sup> From Israel peace will spread over all the earth. The abolition of war concerns the whole world, but its starting point will be Jerusalem, for power and wealth will be concentrated there. Pedersen says:

The people must acknowledge the God of Israel as the mightiest; therefore they must look to him for instruction, and he decides everything for them. But when they have one ruler, who decides all points of issue, then nothing is left to fight for, and everyone can sit down peacefully under his vine.<sup>14</sup>

This condition of peace will extend also to the animal world. As was pointed out above, numerous passages of Scripture state that even the wild and the tame creatures will feed together in peace. Concerning this, Pedersen says that these passages are not a mere poetic glorification of

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 320.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 323.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 324.

of nature but a real claim on the part of Israel.

Beasts of prey must either, as with Ezekiel, be exterminated so that men can sleep safely anywhere, or they must be utterly revolutionized and become like tame animals. Lion and bear are to eat hay and grass, but not the cows and the lambs of the Israelites, much less the Israelites themselves. It is perfectly obvious what is the kernel of these descriptions. The security of Israel, its prosperity and undisturbed joy at its growth and fertility is the center of life. Round this center everything else must be arranged. Beasts of prey must disappear or be transformed, and strange people must fare likewise: either they must be exterminated or they must subordinate themselves to Israel and increase its happiness.<sup>15</sup>

Thus it is evident that Pedersen seeks a literal fulfillment of these passages, and doing so he accuses Israel of having an extremely unrealistic view of the future, one which centers only in its own interests and prosperity.<sup>16</sup>

Other theologians, however, have considered these passages in a much different light. Stoeckhardt, for example, understands them in a figurative sense as referring to the conditions which prevail in the New Testament Church. Commenting on Isaiah 2:2-4, he writes:

א'ו'ג'ג' א'ג'ג' are the last times, the New Testament era . . . the messianic age to which the eyes of the Old Testament believer were directed from the beginning . . . . The "mountain of the Lord's house" is, as usual, "the house of the Lord" or "Jerusalem", the kingdom of God. God's kingdom in the old covenant had its abode in Israel. Believing Israel was the church of God on earth. And there is only one church, which is essentially the same in all ages. In the messianic era the church of God will reach its true honor and dignity. The "mountains" and "hills", in contrast to the "mountain of the Lord's house", are

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 326.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 329.

the kingdoms of the world. In the New Testament times the kingdom of God, God's church, will have pre-eminence over the kingdoms of the world; it will be elevated above all the kingdoms of the earth; in size and area it will surpass the greatest world powers and will extend over the entire earth. This kingdom will stand firm, never wavering nor perishing, while the kingdoms of the world will have their appointed time and then pass away. How the kingdom of God will grow to such dimensions is stated in the second half of the verse. "All nations shall flow to it." This "flowing of the nations to the mountain of the temple" . . . is obviously meant in a figurative sense. In the last times all nations of the earth will enter into the kingdom of God; they will turn to the church of the Lord in the sense that they will be converted to the Lord of the church.<sup>17</sup>

With regard to verse 4 he says:

The Lord Jehovah will dwell among His people whom He has gathered out of Israel and from the Gentiles, and as the King of Zion He will judge and settle all matters . . . . It is a spiritual authority that He exercises among the converted Gentiles. He judges and rules them through the Word . . . . And the converted heathen submit willingly to the judgments and decisions of the Lord. Thus they no longer dispute and contend with one another. In the kingdom of God, in the kingdom of the Messiah, they no longer train for, nor wage war since peace, unity and love reign. The beating of the swords into plowshares and the spears into pruning-hooks is a figurative way of expressing the pleasant thought: peace on earth.<sup>18</sup>

Concerning the state of peace in the animal kingdom that is described in Isaiah 11:6-9, Dr. Stoeckhardt asserts that this, too, should be understood figuratively. He rejects the view of some scholars in his day who regarded these passages as nothing more than " . . . nice, pious wishes and

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<sup>17</sup> G. Stoeckhardt, Der Prophet Isaiah (St. Louis, Mo.: Concordia Publishing House, 1902), p. 19 f.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 21.

dreams on the part of the prophets."<sup>19</sup> Likewise he disagrees with those who understand these prophecies as descriptions of a future glorified world, a new earth where conditions will be similar to those of paradise at the beginning of the world when animals were tame and lived at peace among themselves.<sup>20</sup> Dr. Stoeckhardt bases his interpretation on verse 9, where it is stated that the inhabitants of the holy mountain will dwell in peace because they will know the Lord. He summarizes his views thus:

Obviously those on earth who know the Lord cannot include the animals but only men. And these very ones who know the Lord will give evidence of their knowledge in this that they will cause no one evil or harm. The knowledge of the Lord is the basis, the source and motive of this attitude that they will harm no one. Those who know the Lord are evidently the same people who according to verse 3 present to the exalted Christ the sacrifice of godly fear and worship. Knowledge, love and fear of the Lord is the attitude of the true people of God, the citizens and subjects of the Messianic kingdom, and this attitude of theirs, their relation to the Lord, expresses itself in their deeds and conduct, in their relationship to one another. They do not cause one another harm but live together in peace and love. And that is the status quo at the present time, the actual situation among the believers, that they know, fear, and love the Lord, and love one another, and do that which is good. In this prophecy the holy writer does not have in mind a future state of perfection, but he is describing the kingdom of God on earth.<sup>21</sup>

Franz Delitzsch interprets these passages in a more literal sense. That becomes evident from his exposition of the

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 153.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., pp. 154 f.

words of Issiah 2:2: "The mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills." He states:

The prophet here predicted that the mountain which bore the temple of Jehovah, and therefore was already in dignity the most exalted of all mountains, would one day tower in actual height above all the high places of the earth. The basaltic mountains of Beshan, which rose up in bold peaks and columns, might now look down with scorn and contempt upon the small limestone hill which Jehovah had chosen (Ps. lxxviii. 16, 17); but this was an incongruity which the last times would remove, by making the outward correspond to the inward, the appearance to the reality and the intrinsic worth. That this is the prophet's meaning is confirmed by Ezek. xl. 2, where the temple mountain looks gigantic to the prophet, and also by Zech. xiv. 10, where all Jerusalem is described as towering above the country round about, which would one day become a plain. The question how this can possibly take place in time, since it presupposes a complete subversion of the whole of the existing order of the earth's surface, is easily answered. The prophet saw the new Jerusalem of the last days on this side, and the new Jerusalem of the new earth on the other (Rev. xxi. 10), blended as it were together, and did not distinguish the one from the other. But whilst we thus avoid all unwarrantable spiritualizing, it still remains a question what meaning the prophet attached to the word b'rosh ("at the top"). Did he mean that Moriah would one day stand upon the top of the mountains that surrounded it (as in 1 Kings lxxii. 16), or that it would stand at their head (as in 1 Kings xxi. 9, 12, Amos vi. 7, Jer. xxxi. 7)? . . . . I decide for my part in favor of the second view, though I agree so far with Hofmann, that it is not merely an exaltation of the temple mountain in the estimation of the nations that is predicted, but a physical and external elevation also. And when thus outwardly exalted, the divinely chosen mountain would become the rendezvous and the center of unity for all nations. They would all "flow unto it" . . . . It is the temple of Jehovah which, being thus rendered visible to nations afar off, exerts such magnetic attraction, and with such success . . . . At the present time there was only one people, viz. Israel, which made pilgrimages to Zion on the great fes-

tivals, but it would be very different then.<sup>22</sup>

Also in his exposition of Isaiah 2:4 Delitzsch is inclined toward a more literal interpretation. When the prophet states that in the last times " . . . they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nations shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore," Delitzsch finds here a prediction of a political state of peace that will be realized on earth prior to the end of time. He summarizes his views thus:

What even a Kent regarded as possible is now realized, and that not by the so-called Christian powers, but by the power of God, who favors the object for which Elihu Burritt enthusiastically longs, rather than the politics of the Christian power. It is in war that the power of the beast culminates in the history of the world. This beast will then be destroyed. The true humanity which sin has choked up will gain the mastery, and the world's history will keep Sabbath. And may we not indulge the hope, on the ground of such prophetic words as these, that the history of the world will not terminate without having kept a Sabbath? Shall we correct Isaiah, according to Quenstedt, lest we should become chiliasts? "The humanitarian ideas of Christendom," says a thoughtful Jewish scholar, "have their roots in the Pentateuch, and more especially in Deuteronomy. But in the prophets, particularly in Isaiah, they reach a height which will probably not be attained and fully realized by the modern world for centuries to come." Yet they will be realized. What the prophetic words appropriated by Isaiah here affirm, is a moral postulate, the goal of sacred history, the predicted counsel of God.<sup>23</sup>

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Frenz Delitzsch, Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah (Reprint; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1949), I, 113 f.

23

Ibid., pp. 116 f.

Delitzsch finds in Isaiah 11:6-9 a promise that before the end of time there will be a "golden age," "a glorified state" when the peace of paradise will be restored, and animals will again live together in peace. He says:

The fathers, and such commentators as Luther, Calvin, and Vitrings, have taken all these figures from the animal world as symbolical. Modern rationalists, on the other hand, understand them literally, but regard the whole as a beautiful dream and wish. It is a prophecy, however, the realization of which is to be expected on this side of the boundary between time and eternity, and, as St. Paul has shown in Rom. viii., is an integral link in the predestined course of the history of salvation (Hengstenberg, Umbreit, Hofmann, Drechsler). There now reign among irrational creatures, from the greatest to the least,--even among such as are invisible,--fierce conflicts and blood-thirstiness of the most savage kind. But when the Son of David enters upon the full possession of His royal inheritance, the peace of paradise will be renewed, and all that is true in the popular legends of a golden age be realized and confirmed. This is what the prophet depicts in such lovely colours. The wolf and the lamb, those two hereditary foes, will be perfectly reconciled then. The leopard will let the teasing kid lie down beside it. The lion, between the calf and stalled ox, neither seizes upon its weaker neighbor, nor longs for the fatter one. Cow and bear graze together, whilst their young ones lie side by side in the pasture. The lion no longer thirsts for blood, but contents itself, like the ox, with chopped straw. The suckling pursues its sport by the edder's hole, and the child just weaned stretches out its hand boldly and fearlessly to me'urath tziphoni. It is evident from Jer. viii. 17 that tziphoni is the name of a species of snake . . . . The look of a snake, more especially of the basilisk . . . was supposed to have a paralyzing and bewitching influence; but now the snake will lose this pernicious power (ch. lxx. 25), and the basilisk become so tame and harmless, as to let children handle its sparkling eyes as if they were jewels.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 285 f.



Delitzsch seems to qualify his views somewhat when he adds:

All this, as we should say with Luthardt and Hofmann is only colouring which the hand of the prophet employs, for the purpose of painting the peace of that glorified state which surpasses all possibility of description; and it is unquestionably necessary to take the thought of the promise in a spiritual sense, without adhering literally to the medium employed in expressing it. But, on the other hand, we must guard against treating the description itself as merely a drapery thrown around the actual object; whereas it is rather the refraction of the object in the mind of the prophet himself, and therefore a manifestation of the true nature of that which he actually saw.<sup>25</sup>

But he concludes with a thought similar to that with which he began:

The land of Israel, the dominion of the Son of David in the more restricted sense, will be from this time forward the paradisaical center, as it were, of the whole earth,--a prelude of its future state of perfect and universal glorification.<sup>26</sup>

Laetsch rejects the thought that passages such as Isaiah 2:4 and Micah 4:3 can refer to an actual, literal state of political peace that is to cover the earth prior to the end of the world. Commenting on the statement:

"They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks," he asks:

Does this mean that when the eternal Lord . . . shall arise as the Arbiter among the peoples of the world, then the nations, overwhelmed by these soul-stirring actions, will no longer be inclined to settle their quarrels by force of arms?

He answers:

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 286.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 287.

The Lord of this kingdom knows no such universal peace. He knew only of wars and other calamities as the beginning of sorrows to continue until His appearance on the Last Day (Matt. 24:7 ff.). The divinely appointed herald of Christ (Luke 7:27) did not demand that the soldiers beat their swords into plowshares before they could become disciples of the Prince of Peace (Luke 3:14). Nor did Peter, the first messenger of Christ to the Gentiles (Acts 15:7), having accepted the invitation of a Roman centurion transmitted by a soldier, and preaching in a soldier's home before military men, demand that they must beat their spears into pruning hooks before they could join the Church of the Gospel preaching peace by Jesus Christ (Acts 10:7, 33 ff.). And Micah himself speaks not of an era of political peace among the nations of the world. He speaks here very definitely of God's Kingdom of Grace established by the Word of God proceeding from Zion and Jerusalem and gathering God's people throughout the world into one holy Christian Church (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8).<sup>27</sup>

In his interpretation of Micah 4:4 Dr. Laetsch states:

Sitting under one's vine and fig tree is an emblem of peace, security, happiness. Again, Micah speaks here of spiritual gifts enjoyed by the members of God's Church. The peace of God procured by the Prince of Peace and implanted into the heart of the believer by the Gospel keeps him free from cares and worries (cp. Ps. 23:4; 27:1,3; 56:11; Is. 41:10, etc.). This is indeed a peace passing understanding mingled with fightings and fears within and without as long as we live in this world of imperfection. Its fulness will be enjoyed only in the realm of eternal peace above. Yet to assure us of God's peace and to keep us in this peace, the prophet solemnly declares that the promise of such peace is not that of a mere man. It is the mouth of the Lord of Hosts, the Ruler of the universe, that has spoken.<sup>28</sup>

One of the most scholarly and complete discussions of these prophecies relating to the Messianic kingdom is pre-

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<sup>27</sup>Theodore Letesch, Bible Commentary, The Minor Prophets (Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Missouri, 1956), pp. 265 f.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 266.

sented by Paul Heinisch. After reminding the reader that the prophets loved to use metaphorical language, he points to the fact that a strictly literal or verbal interpretation of these passages will frequently involve the authors in contradictions both with themselves and with each other.<sup>29</sup> For example, weapons of war according to Hosea 2:18, Isaiah 9:4-5, and Micah 5:10-11 will be destroyed, but according to Isaiah 2:4 and Micah 4:3 they will be made into useful tools.<sup>30</sup> Zechariah 14:14 and Ezekiel 39:10 say that the nations will be plundered, but Isaiah 60:6-9 declares that the Gentiles will bring their treasures voluntarily. The wild beasts become tame according to Isaiah 11:6-9 and 65:25, but according to Ezekiel 34:25 they will be driven from the land. In Isaiah 65:20 and Zechariah 8:4 the holy writers state that people will become very old in the Messianic era, but in Isaiah 25:8 it is said that death will be destroyed forever. Isaiah 2:2 says that Zion will be the highest mountain on earth, but according to Zechariah 14:10 all the remaining country will be a level plain.<sup>31</sup>

These descriptions, however, present no contradictions if, instead of understanding them literally, we "properly evaluate them as picture illustrations." Heinisch continues:

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<sup>29</sup>Paul Heinisch, op. cit., p. 296.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 297.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

The prophets knew they were not giving objectively accurate descriptions of future conditions, as is shown by their constant endeavor to use new pictures and their refusal to employ the details of older imagery . . . . In these pictures we must distinguish between the essential and the accidental, between kernel and shell. The decisive element is not the isolated dots in the picture, which in themselves and apart from the context have no meaning, as they merely serve to enliven the whole picture, but the message which the prophet seeks to convey.<sup>32</sup>

Heinisch also calls attention to the fact that future events were frequently revealed to the prophets by means of visions. The holy writers then proclaimed their messages to the people in pictures which often lacked perspective. He says:

They presented events not in historical order, but place the future alongside or before the present, or intersperse present and future events without any regard for actual sequence--just as the eye discerns no depth-dimension among the stars in the firmament and judges various light rays to be equidistant . . . . Thus things which will happen at the end of time appear immediate to the prophet. The older prophets do not distinguish clearly between the preparation for the messianic kingdom (i.e. the return from exile) and the messianic kingdom itself; for them the inauguration of the messianic era coalesces with the fall of Babylon. Immanuel is a child during the invasions by Tiglath-pileser . . . . Likewise the prophets telescoped the appearance of the Messiah, the inauguration of the messianic era, and its final phase at the end of the world.<sup>33</sup>

Furthermore, according to Heinisch, the prophetic picture of the future kingdom becomes more understandable when one keeps in mind that the Old Testament writers frequently

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 298.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 299.

described the Messianic era by comparing it with paradise.

The wilderness become Eden, Sion and Cansan the garden of Eden. The fountain flowing from the temple corresponds to the river of paradise. In paradise the wild animals did not harm men, likewise in the future they will be tame . . . . We may think of the cherub and the flaming sword as we read about Yahweh becoming a wall of fire for Jerusalem.<sup>34</sup>

Thus the holy writers employed pictures from ancient Biblical accounts to describe the love, peace, and blessedness which will prevail in the Messianic kingdom. Heinisch concedes that many Israelites rejoiced over the seeming promises of earthly goods and did not understand the spiritual character of the prophetic teaching. Hope in earthly blessings burned brightly during the centuries of Seleucid and Roman oppression. He says:

The messianic expectations of large circles were oriented toward the secular-political, while the moral-religious aspect became recessive. Most of the Jews counted upon an earthly messianic kingdom in which they would enjoy top positions, a kingdom in which they would be guaranteed every material advantage, while the heathen would stand at their beck and call. How prophetic metaphor was further polished to suit their purpose, is well illustrated by the following apocalyptic propaganda: the earth will bear fruit 10,000 fold; on one vine will be 1000 branches, each branch will bear 1000 clusters, each cluster 1000 berries, each berry will produce 1 kor (364 quarts) of wine. Manna will fall from the sky, milk will bubble forth from the earth in springs, a measure of olives will give 10 baths (41 gallons) of oil. A man will sire 1000 children.<sup>35</sup>

But he concludes:

The Old Testament prophecies contain no basis for

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 301.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 303.

such speculations. Already before the exile the prophets inveighed against the popular notion of the "Day of Yehweh" being one of salvation for Israel and against the notion that patriarchal descent guaranteed divine favor. For the prophets the settlement of political problems or betterment of economic conditions was not of prime importance; of prime importance was the realization of the kingdom of God in human hearts through divine grace, the union of man with God in love and fidelity, redemption from sin, the conversion of the Gentiles, in order that all mankind could gather together to worship and serve the creator.<sup>36</sup>

Thus scholars have held a variety of opinions with regard to the shalom that will characterize the Messianic kingdom. Views range from a strictly literal interpretation which visualizes an era of unprecedented prosperity and political peace, to an interpretation which sees in these prophecies little more than fanciful dreams on the part of a selfish people which desires its own prosperity, comfort, and ease before all else. While it is evident that the passages in question present certain problems, the interpretation which coincides most closely with the clear passages of Scripture is that presented by theologians such as Stoackherdt, Leetsch, Heinisch, and others, who maintain that these texts are to be understood figuratively as portraying the blessings which are enjoyed by the believer in God's kingdom of grace.<sup>37</sup>

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Ibid.

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Matt. 3:2-10; 4:12-17; 24:7-14, 29-51; Luke 17:20-21; John 14:27; 16:33; Romans 10:15; 14:17; Eph. 2:14; 6:15.

## CHAPTER VIII

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In presenting this thesis the writer is aware of the fact that there other areas of the subject that might profitably be examined. Further attention could be given to the various uses of the verb and the adjective. A comparison might be made between the shalom passages as they appear in the Hebrew text and in the Septuagint. One could examine more fully the influence of shalom on the Greek eirēne. And perhaps still other topics might suggest themselves to the reader.

The present study has concerned itself largely with the noun and its significance in the life and culture of the Israelite. Fulfilling this assignment has been a rewarding experience, not only inasmuch as it requires the use of the original language, but also because it leads one into a large area of the Old Testament Scripture, acquaints him again with much of the history of God's people in ancient times, and in particular brings one into close contact with some of the most profound doctrines of the Old Testament: sin and grace, the vicarious atonement of the suffering Servant of Jehovah, the Messianic kingdom, etc.

By way of summary, a few comments may be in place with regard to the word shalom itself. Even a brief study will impress upon one the versatility and the breadth of mean-

ing associated with the word. This is quite apparent already for a study of recent translations of the Scripture. Translators have gone to great lengths to render shalom as accurately as possible. The translation by Smith and Goodspeed has employed 41 different English words or phrases in order to express precisely the meaning of shalom in a given context. The Revised Standard Version uses 28, and the King James Version, 16.

It is evident, therefore, that our English word "peace" does not embrace all that the Hebrew meant by shalom. At times shalom may indicate a state of rest and tranquility, or a condition in which there is freedom from physical disturbance. But, as we have seen, it is used very frequently to express a positive concept such as health, safety, prosperity, etc.

Scholars such as J. Pedersen claim that shalom underwent a radical change over the course of the centuries. They assert that gradually and almost imperceptibly it developed in a negative direction until in the days of the prophets it suggested an idealistic state of peace in which the Israelite could live safely under his vine and enjoy God's protection and unprecedented health and prosperity, even though it be at the expense of others.<sup>1</sup> This contention, however, is not tenable. While it is indeed true

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<sup>1</sup>Johns. Pedersen, Israel, Its Life and Culture (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), I--II, 329.



that shalom gradually changed from a positive into a predominantly negative concept, yet Pedersen's conclusions apparently are based on a misconception of the Messianic peace of which the prophets spoke. The prophets were not speaking of a physical, political state of peace but rather of a spiritual shalom which exists within the hearts of those whose sins are forgiven.

A study of this type reveals also that shalom is a word expressing relationships. It is frequently used to describe the harmony and unity among members of a family, or the good relations between friends, or peace among nations. But there are numerous passages in Scripture where shalom implies more than human relationships. Especially in the writings of the prophets it is often used in a context which strongly suggests a spiritual relationship of peace between the sinner and God. And in portions of Scripture such as Psalm 85 it is evident that the holy writers advance even farther as they employ shalom when they are speaking of a spiritual relationship between God and man that is based on the forgiveness of sins. The psalmist acknowledges that God has been gracious to His people in times past; He has forgiven their sins, covered their iniquities, and removed from them His wrath. And now on the strength of past mercies, he implores the Lord to display His steadfast love to them once more, restore them and grant them salvation. Having prayed, the psalmist is confident that God will grant his petition, for he states in verse 8:

"Surely, He will speak shalom to His people and to His saints," and "May they not return to folly." On the basis of this psalm, as well as other passages already treated, it is clear that shalom is at times used to designate peace in the highest sense, that is, peace with God because of sins forgiven.

But this shalom between the sinner and God is not the result of a fiat of the divine will and sovereignty, but it is effected through the sacrificial death of the suffering Servant of Yahweh. It is clearly stated in Isaiah 53:5 that our shalom was brought about by the fact that the punishment of our sins was laid upon Him. It was on account of our sins and iniquities that He was pierced.

A study of shalom indicates also that God is the source of this relationship of peace. Because of His steadfast love for His people He granted shalom between them and other nations, between the members of their families, between friends, between the sinner and God. As we have noted, that view is reflected in many passages of Scripture. Thus, according to Old Testament theology, Israel did not merit peace with God by their keeping of the divine law. It is true, the prophets warned their hearers that their transgressions would destroy shalom. They chided the false prophets for glossing over the glaring iniquities of the people and preaching peace where there was no peace. They promised that in the last days men would be instructed in God's Word and will, and, as a result,

righteousness and peace would prevail, but there are no passages which indicate that God's people must earn shalom. Instead the emphasis is always on the fact that God is the Giver of peace, and that He is motivated by His grace.

Furthermore, it is evident that shalom is closely allied with the Hebrew doctrine of eschatology. We are not suggesting that shalom is used in the Old Testament to describe the state of peace and blessedness that God will bestow upon His children in the world that is to come. Even in the psalms and among the prophetic writings there seem to be no clear passages in which shalom is used to describe the peace and fulness of joy that awaits the believer in heaven. One might be inclined to interpret that familiar Old Testament expression "he was gathered to his fathers in peace" as referring to the shalom of heaven, but both liberal and conservative scholars seem to agree that "to die in peace" means to die a natural death. Apparently these statements do not refer to the peace after death but to the peaceful circumstances leading to death.

However, shalom is often mentioned as a characteristic feature of the Messianic kingdom. In all of these instances shalom means, as Dr. Leupold suggests, ". . . that rich measure of well-being when nothing essential is lacking."<sup>2</sup> This includes not only the physical but also the

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<sup>2</sup>H. C. Leupold, Exposition of the Psalms (Columbus, Ohio: The Wartburg Press, 1959), p. 858.

spiritual blessings which the child of God enjoys in the New Testament times as a result of the fact that he is at peace with God, having the forgiveness of sin which our Lord Jesus Christ procured for us on the cross. Pedersen is in error when he assumes that the passages concerning the Messianic kingdom are describing a golden era to which the Old Testament believer looked forward, when God would elevate Israel to a position of world leadership by giving her a ruler who would subordinate all other nations to the Jews.

Mention ought also to be made to the fact that the word shalom as it is used in passages such as Isaiah 2:2-4, 11:6-9, etc. cannot have reference to a millennial reign of Christ on earth. As we have noted above, these passages are to be understood as figurative descriptions intended to portray the abundance of peace and contentment which is enjoyed by the Christian because God is his Father in Christ Jesus. If one is inclined to take these passages literally, one will become involved in seemingly contradictory statements.

In closing may we repeat that shalom is a most remarkable word. It is a term so comprehensive that there is no equivalent for it in the English language. It is a word that embraces in itself all that is good, all that is worthwhile, all the prosperity, all the safety, all the peace that one can enjoy in life. When a person has shalom he has everything necessary for a happy and blessed life.

APPENDIX

Translators have employed considerable care in rendering shalom as accurately as possible in the English. This becomes particularly apparent from the tabulations given below. The first column of Table I indicates the sixty-two ways in which shalom has been translated. Columns 2, 3, and 4 list the frequency with which each word occurs in the King James Version, the Revised Standard Version, and the translation by Smith and Goodspeed. Tables II and III offer similar information with regard to the verb shalam and the adjective shalem.

TABLE I

SHALOM AS IT HAS BEEN TRANSLATED IN THE KING JAMES VERSION, THE REVISED STANDARD VERSION, AND THE TRANSLATION BY SMITH AND GOODSPEED

Shalom in English	Number of times it appears in the K.J.V.	Number of times it appears in the R.S.V.	Number of times it appears in Smith-Goodspeed
Allies	0	0	1
Amicably	0	0	1
At ease	0	0	2
Come to terms	0	0	1
Condition	0	0	1
Course (of war)	0	0	1
Disaster (no shalom)	0	0	1
Fair	0	0	1
Familiar	1	1	0
Favor	1	0	1
Favorable	0	1	1
Feast (sacrificial)	0	2	0
Free	0	0	1

TABLE I (continued)

Shalom in English	Number of times it appears in the K.J.V.	Number of times it appears in the R.S.V.	Number of times it appears in Smith-Goodspeed
Friends	0	1	1
Friendly	0	0	1
Friendly greetings	0	0	1
Friendly relations	0	0	1
Friendly terms	0	0	1
Friendship	0	1	1
(Bosom) friend	0	1	0
(Intimate) friend	0	0	1
For the best	0	0	1
Greet	0	4	6
Good	0	1	3
Good will	0	0	1
Happiness	0	0	1
Health	2	1	3
How . . . are	0	0	1
How . . . did	3	0	0
How . . . fared	1	2	1
How . . . prospered	1	1	0
How . . . was doing	0	1	0
How . . . was	0	1	1
Just	0	0	1
Make prosper	0	0	1
Peace	173	143	97
Peaceable	2	0	1
Peaceably	9	8	2
Peaceful	0	3	4
Peace offering	0	0	1
Perfect peace	1	2	2
Prosperity	4	9	15
Prosperous	1	0	1
Protection	0	0	1
Quietly	0	0	1
Rest	1	1	0
Safe	2	5	5
Safely	1	2	3
Safety	0	4	3
Saluted	1	1	1
Say a good word	0	0	1
Settled	0	0	1
Make whole	0	1	0
Triumph	0	0	2
Unmolested	0	0	2
Victory	0	0	1

TABLE I (continued)

Shelom in English	Number of times it appears in the K.J.V.	Number of times it appears in the R.S.V.	Number of times it appears in Smith-Goodspeed
Victorious	0	1	3
Visit	0	1	0
Weal	0	1	1
Welfare	5	10	9
Well	14	21	26
Wholly	1	1	1

TABLE II

SHALAM AS IT HAS BEEN TRANSLATED IN THE KING JAMES  
VERSION, THE REVISED STANDARD VERSION, AND  
THE TRANSLATION BY SMITH AND GOODSPEED

Shalam in English	Number of times it appears in the K.J.V.	Number of times it appears in the R.S.V.	Number of times it appears in Smith-Goodspeed
Make amends	1	0	0
Complete(d)	0	1	2
Was completed	0	0	2
Dealing out	0	0	1
Dedicated one	0	1	0
Devoted one	0	0	1
Be ended	2	1	1
Bring to an end	0	1	0
Make an end	1	0	0
Finished	1	1	0
Was finished	2	3	1
Full (adv. inf.)	1	0	0
Fulfil(-led)	0	2	10
Fulfilling	0	0	2
Give	0	0	1
Give again	1	0	0
Give back	0	1	0
Give over	0	0	1
Make something good	6	3	3
Overtake	0	0	1
Pay (paid)	20	22	10
Paying	0	1	2
Pay again	2	0	0
Pay back	0	1	3
Paying back	0	1	1
Be at peace	1	1	1
Be at peace with	1	1	1
Are peaceable	1	1	1
Make peace with	7	7	7
Make to be at peace with	1	1	1
Perfect (parti- ciple)	1	0	0
Perform(-ed) (-eth)	7	4	0
Prospered	1	0	0
Make prosperous	1	0	0



TABLE II (continued)

Shalem in English	Number of times it appears in the K.J.V.	Number of times it appears in the R.S.V.	Number of times it appears in Smith-Goodspeed
Protect	0	0	1
Punish	0	0	1
Are punished	0	0	1
Recompense (d) (-st)	10	4	0
Be recompensed	1	0	0
Make recompense	1	0	0
A recompense	0	1	0
Render(ing) (est) (eth)	9	5	1
Repsy(ed) (est) (eth)	6	6	9
Repaying	0	0	1
Be repaid	0	0	1
Requite(d) (ing)	2	19	19
Is Requited	0	1	0
Make requital	0	1	0
Returned	0	1	1
Reward(ed) (eth)	10	4	3
Be rewarded	1	1	1
Make restitution	4	10	15
Restore	8	3	1
Succeed(ed)	0	1	1
Surely (adv. inf.)	0	0	1

TABLE III

SHALEM AS IT HAS BEEN TRANSLATED IN THE KING JAMES  
VERSION, THE REVISED STANDARD VERSION, AND  
THE TRANSLATION BY SMITH AND GOODSPEED

Shalem in English	Number of times it appears in the K.J.V.	Number of times it appears in the R.S.V.	Number of times it appears in Smith-Goodspeed
Blameless	0	3	0
Complete	0	1	1
Completion	0	0	1
Was completed	0	1	1
Devoted	0	0	1
Friendly	0	1	1
Full	2	3	3
Full intent	0	1	0
Just	1	1	1
Made ready	1	0	0
Perceivable	1	0	0
Perfect	16	0	9
Was perfected	1	0	0
Prepared	0	1	1
Quiet	1	0	0
Sincerity	0	0	2
Single (purpose)	0	0	1
Singleness (of mind)	0	0	1
Strong	0	1	0
Undressed (wood)	0	0	2
Unhewn	0	2	0
Well disposed	0	0	1
Whole	4	8	2
Wholly true	0	4	0

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