

# Jehovah Shalom

By Barry Minsky

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## **Quacco Baptist Church**

215 Quacco Road  
Savannah, GA 31419

**Website:** [www.quaccobaptist.org](http://www.quaccobaptist.org)

**Online Sermons:** [www.sermonaudio.com/minsky](http://www.sermonaudio.com/minsky)

Good evening. Turn this thing on here. There we go it's on.

Ok. As you know we have been looking at various names of God. We are getting pretty close to the end of that study. I think I have three more. So very soon we will be finished with that study.

Tonight we are looking at the name Jehovah Shalom and literally that just means Jehovah or the Lord, peace. And we can construe it in different ways, the Lord our peace, the Lord is peace, the Lord peace, the Lord...and, you know, any way we would want to talk about it.

The term is used in Judges chapter six which is an absolutely fascinating story that we find in the Old Testament Scriptures. If you have studied the book of Judges you will realize that there is a pattern that occurred throughout the book of Judges. In fact, the best way to understand the book is to understand the pattern. What you find is that the children of Israel over and over and over again turned away from the Lord. And they turned to other gods and they disobeyed him and they rejected him. And then he brought an enemy against them and allowed that enemy to conquer them, to defeat them. And then in the midst of all of their struggle they turned back to God again and asked him for deliverance and then he raised up a deliverer and delivered them. And we see this happening just over and over again in the book of Judges.

And as I said, that's really the pattern of the book. If you read through Judges you need to be looking for that because that seems to be the way God has structured this book to allow us to see his deliverance of his people after they had turned away from him.

And it is a beautiful picture because God still does the same thing. I mean we turn away from him. And there are times that he has to chastise even those of us who are believers. And there are times that in the midst of our seeking to serve him we find ourselves going astray and things come into our lives that are not necessarily the happiest things, the things that we want. And then when we turn back to God he gives us peace and he gives us joy. And this is, as I said, a pattern.

For instance, it says if you go, let's see, to chapter four. This is just one example of this. It says in the beginning of the chapter, "Then the sons of Israel again..."<sup>1</sup> And you notice the word again. "...did evil in the sight of the LORD."<sup>2</sup> You will find that throughout the book.

This is how chapter six begins as well. It is another story of the children of Israel turning away from God and the same occurrence just with different characters again. It says in the beginning of the chapter it says, chapter six, "Then the sons of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD gave them into the hands of Midian seven years."<sup>3</sup> This should be a lesson for us and the book of Judges should teach us that if we want to have peace and joy in our lives we need to be following the Lord. Or when those times come in our lives that we will turn against him and even for brief periods of time do things that dishonor him and are against the law of God, there will be times that he will bring into our lives things that will tend to draw us back again. And those things are not always pleasant things. They can be very sad things that will come into our lives. And sometimes he uses that type of chastening to bring us back to him, that we might turn to him and honor him again in our lives.

And we will see that this is exactly what happens in this passage. The people turned away from the Lord and did evil. God delivered them into the hands of the Midianites and just as it had happened in the past, God brought this evil upon the people.

One of the most fascinating things that we see here is that God chooses to use someone who would really surprise us if we knew a little about him. Gideon, the one who is used of God is a man who really was...was not one of the great ones of the people of Israel. He was, in fact, a younger person. He was one who didn't seem to have a lot going for him. All he was was a man who was a farmer, who was working in his father's field. And we find that in verse six Israel, "So Israel was brought very low because of Midian, and the sons of Israel cried to the LORD."<sup>4</sup>

God chose—as we see in this passage—to use a young man who was not, as I said, one who would be our first choice. Doesn't God often do that? I mean, you know, when you see the call of David, David was the little boy in the family. He was not the great one. And you will remember the story about how all of his older brothers came before the Lord and God, one after another, said, "No, it is not him. It's not him. It's not him." And finally he was asked, "Well, don't you have another son?"

And it came to mind, "Yeah, well, there's David. I mean, you know, he is out there doing some things, I mean, taking care of the flocks. I mean, gosh, you couldn't mean David, could you?"

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<sup>1</sup> Judges 4:1

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Judges 6:1

<sup>4</sup> Judges 6:6

And, in fact, it was David, the least likely, that God chose to use in a wonderful way to be king over his people Israel.

Well, what do we find about Gideon in this passage? Well, we'll take a look in just a moment. The interesting story that occurs is that we read in verse 11 that an angel of the Lord came. We have encountered the angel of the Lord in the past here. Do you remember that I mentioned that any time you read about the angel of the Lord you can be almost certain that this is God himself, almost certain that it is God himself. And, in fact, the angel of the Lord is normally what we call a theophany, an appearance of God in the flesh. And I am convinced that any time there is a theophany in the Old Testament it is a christophany. It is an appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Why do I say that? Well, we read in the New Testament, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."<sup>5</sup> The only way that we see God is through the Lord Jesus Christ. And I am thoroughly convinced that when we go into the Old Testament and we see these theophanies, it is actually a pre incarnate appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ and I am convinced that that is what we have here.

Well, it says in verse 11—and let's take a look at it—"Then the angel of the LORD came and sat under the oak that was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite as his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the wine press in order to save it from the Midianites."<sup>6</sup>

Now where was Gideon? Well, he was kind of out in the field somewhere. He was not, you know, out in the middle of where the people are. He was working out in the field and he was trying to produce something to make sure there would be some food for the people and that was the work that he was doing.

And it says, "The angel of the LORD appeared to him and said to him, 'The LORD is with you, O valiant warrior.'"<sup>7</sup>

Gosh! Gideon was not a valiant warrior. Gideon was a young fellow who was out in the field taking care of the wheat so that there would be something to eat. Why in the world does the angel of the Lord say to him, "O valiant warrior"?<sup>8</sup> Why in the world is that said?

Well, you know, God does not deal with us on the basis of what we are, but on the basis of what we can be. Here was a young man who was anything but a warrior. I mean he was one who, you know, would be hiding from the Midianites rather than going out and fighting. He was one who would be the least likely to be the head over an army. I mean,

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<sup>5</sup> John 1:18

<sup>6</sup> Judges 6:11

<sup>7</sup> Judges 6:12

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

you know, the people would say, “You have got to be kidding. You don’t mean Gideon. I mean, come on. We have some warriors here. What are you picking a little boy for?”

And yet God called him a valiant warrior.

I wonder what terms he might use to describe some of us. I wonder whether there are some of us in this church that God would want to say, “Oh, you outstanding Sunday school teacher,” and you have never taught Sunday school in your life. But you can. And God believes in you. And God can give you the ability and he is ready to use you.

How about, “Oh, you wonderful dramatic person who can be involved in some sort of drama in the church”?

And you say to yourself, “Who me? I have never done that in my life.”

Well, you see, God is not looking at what you are. He is looking at what you can be. He is looking at the potential of what you have. And that is what he was doing with Gideon. Here was this young fellow out in the field and God comes up to him and says, “All right, you valiant warrior.” And I would imagine that Gideon was probably looking around saying, “You know, there is nobody else here. Who do you mean, Lord? You certainly don’t mean me. I mean I am no warrior.”

But God, in fact, did mean him because God was planning on using him. In fact, you will find that Gideon here seems to make all kinds of excuses. He talks about what sounds as if he is not trusting God to do a work. Listen to the words that he uses.

It says in verse 13, “Then Gideon said to him, “O my lord...”<sup>9</sup> Now, you remember, by the way, the...our discussion of the various names of God that we have had and as we are looking at it today, that is the word אֲדֹנָי (‘ad-o-noy’) which just means master. He doesn’t know yet that he is talking to God himself. He is just calling this one the master. “O my lord [or O, master] if the LORD...”<sup>10</sup> Now in this case it is Jehovah. You see it is all capitals. “If the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about, saying, “Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?” But now the LORD has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midian.”<sup>11</sup>

Does that sound like a person of faith? No, it doesn’t. Does that sound like a great warrior, “O, valiant warrior”?<sup>12</sup> No it doesn’t.

You see, this is someone who is doubting. This is someone who is not trusting. This is someone who was not reading to go into a battle, but God looked at him and said, “ You are a valiant warrior because that is what I am going to make out of you.”

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<sup>9</sup> Judges 6:13

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Judges 6:12

What a wonderful message for us today. You know, sometimes we all sit back and say, “Lord, you know, the task is too great. I don’t know how I am going to do it. I don’t know I am ever going to accomplish what you want.” But God and us make a wonderful...God and one of us makes a wonderful pair, you know that? You put God and one human being who loves him together and you can turn the world upside down. And that is what he is talking about with Gideon in this passage.

And so we then find out in verse 14 that this, in fact, the Lord who is speaking to him. Now remember, The angel of the Lord who is there and then we read in verse 14, “[And] the Lord...”<sup>13</sup> And the name is Jehovah. You see, it is all capitals. “[And] the LORD looked at him and said...”<sup>14</sup> This is the same angel of the Lord who was being talked about up here. It is Jehovah who was appearing to him in human form. I believe it was the Lord Jesus Christ, pre incarnate appearance. “[And] the LORD looked at him and said, ‘Go in this your strength and deliver Israel from the hand of Midian. Have I not sent you?’”<sup>15</sup>

Well, that is an exciting story. Let’s go on. “He said to Him, ‘O Lord, how shall I deliver Israel?’”<sup>16</sup> Here he is doubting again. Listen to him. “Behold, my family is the least in Manasseh, and I am the youngest in my father’s house.”<sup>17</sup> “Lord, I am just a little boy. How do you expect me to go out and defeat the hosts of Midian? You are asking too much of me, God.” That is what he is saying. He is saying, “I am not capable. I cannot do it.”

“But the LORD said to him, ‘Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat Midian as one man.’”<sup>18</sup>

He gave him a commission and he said that he would be with him, that he would give him the power, that he would give him the ability and the task would be done.

I often think about that. I say, “Gosh, Lord, you know, sometimes the tasks that I have been given in my life,” and I am sure, you, too, “seem to be almost impossible.”

I can remember the time when I was called upon. We were living in Germany and at two o'clock in the morning we got a phone call. I’m not used to getting too many phone calls at two o'clock in the morning. But I got a phone call and the phone call was from the commander. Well, you know, when the commander calls you listen. It doesn’t matter what time of day or night it is, but you listen. And the phone call was, “There has been a bombing in Saudi Arabia and you are on the crisis intervention team. You will be on a plane in six hours.”

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<sup>13</sup> Judges 6:14

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Judges 6:15

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Judges 6:16

And, you know how you answer a commander, right? “Yes, sir.” Ok. No, it was, “Yes, sir.” That’s the appropriate. There is no other appropriate answer, “Yes, sir. Ok.”

Well, Nancy got up with me. We packed my stuff. I got everything ready. And I want to tell you something. He said six hours. That plane actually left eight hours later and I was in Saudi Arabia and I really prayed. I said, “Lord, how can I do this? People have been killed.” There had been that terrible bombing that took place in Riyadh and I was being sent to deal with the people who were there with the families and to work with them. And I remember praying and I remember saying, “Lord, this is going to be an incredible task to deal with a multitude of people who have died. And I don’t know whether I am up to that task.”

Well, God blessed me and I had a wonderful ministry there, not because of who I am, but because of who was with me. It was the Lord. And when the Lord is with you, you can do anything. Here is this little boy. And God says, “You are a mighty man of valor and I am going to send you out, you valiant warrior.”

God did it. And it was incredible.

Well, Gideon asked for a sign from God. We see in verse 20 that God, in fact, gives him a sign. He says God said to him, “Take the meat...”<sup>19</sup> Now he was told to...he went out and he prepared an animal to be a sacrifice and some unleavened bread and God says to him, “Now take the meat and the unleavened bread and put it on a rock and I want you to pour broth on it.”<sup>20</sup>

I wonder why he wanted him to pour broth on it. Well, you see, if you pour broth on it, it is not as likely to burn, right? I mean, you know, it is all wet. So he pours the broth all over it and then the angel of the Lord comes and takes a staff and touches the meat and the fire comes up from the rock and consumes it. I think that’s a good enough sign from God, wouldn’t you say? The Lord was showing him, you know, “I can do this. I can with the battle through you and Midian, in fact, will be defeated.”

Here we have Gideon now, who is preparing himself and here we find that Gideon builds an altar. And here is where this name of God comes in. But, by the way, this just before we do that. I want you to take a look at verse 22 which has nothing to do, really, with what we are discussing right now, but we have talked about names of God.

It says here, “Alas, O Lord GOD!”<sup>21</sup> Now I want you to notice that...and I hope this is true with all of you. But anyway it should...the name God there should be in all capitals in your translation. Is it? I hope so. I remember one time there were some...a couple of translations that... Ok, all capitals, very unusual. Normally it is Lord in all capitals that is Jehovah. In this case God is a translation of the name Jehovah and here it is אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה (ad-o-noy’ jeh-ho-vah)

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<sup>19</sup> Judges 6:20

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Judges 6:22

You might ask, “Well, why in this case did they use the name God?”

Well, because Lord was used right before it, אֲדֹנָי ‘(ad-o-noy’). If you had used the traditional Lord it would say, “Oh, Lord, Lord.” That would sound strange. So they translate it, “Oh, Lord God.” Just a, you know, aside as you are studying the names of God it is important to notice that.

Well, Gideon builds an altar. We read of this in verse 24 and he names it “The Lord is peace, the Lord our peace, The Lord peace.” It is interesting that when he thinks of God and he talks about peace we have to understand that there are actually two kinds of peace that are mentioned in the Bible that come from God.

First of all the Bible talks of a peace with God. And that is a peace that every single Christian has, the peace with God is the end of hostility. Now, you need to think about this. Do you know that our relationship to God before we come to know Jesus Christ is one of animosity, one of hostility where we are in rebellion against him? And when he saves us he gives us a peace that is called in the New Testament, “peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”<sup>22</sup>

Gideon had that peace. He now has a relationship with God. But the other kind of peace which is called the peace of God—and we are told “And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”<sup>23</sup> That is what he was seeking. That is what he wanted because he now knows that God is with him. But there is a sense in which he does not have complete peace. He doesn’t know that he can win the battle. He is not sure. He doesn’t know that the victory will be his. But God is going to show him and demonstrate to him that peace which can be his.

God gives him a challenge. The challenge that God gives him is that he is going to go and destroy the altar of Baal and what is called the groves. And the groves were the altars that were set up for Ashtoreth, the female goddess that was viewed as important in that day. And so we read that by night he goes out and he destroys the statue of Baal and he destroys the statue of Ashtoreth.

Now this is a pretty dangerous thing to do for a couple of reasons. These were the gods of those people. They had brought those gods in and made them to be their gods, although, of course, they didn’t exist at all.

And the other interesting thing is that it appears as if that his father is the leader of the worship of Baal. That’s getting pretty dangerous, isn’t it? He is not only rebelling against what Israel has done, but he is rebelling against his own father and his own father’s leadership in this heathen religion that had been brought in.

But we find in verse 31 that after all of this is over and he has done this, that his father

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<sup>22</sup> See Romans 5:1

<sup>23</sup> Philippians 4:7

stands up for him. Isn't that exciting? He didn't know what would happen. My guess is that under normal circumstances his father would have been as angry as can be. "What do you mean knocking down the statue of Baal and knocking down the statue of Ashtoreth? How can you do that?"

Well, listen to verse 31. "But Joash," that's his father, "said to all who stood against him, 'Will you contend for Baal, or will you deliver him? Whoever will plead for him shall be put to death by morning.'"<sup>24</sup> Total turn around on the part of his father. And he said:

"If he is a god, let him contend for himself, because someone has torn down his altar." Therefore on that day he named him Jerubbaal, that is to say, "Let Baal contend against him," because he had torn down his altar."<sup>25</sup>

You know, this is a very exciting part of the story. God is beginning to win the victory. How is he winning the victory? By turning the people of Israel around. Here the leader of the worship of heathen gods is saying, "Well, if Baal is a God, let him take care of himself. I am not going to take care of him. Let him, if he is a real god, do something. Jehovah would. Let's see what Baal can do."

And, of course, Baal didn't do anything because he didn't exist.

Well, as we go on in the story it is now time for Gideon to go into the battle. But he is not ready yet. He is not sure. And here we read the story—and I am sure you remember it—of Gideon putting out the fleece. He is not sure of what God is going to do. He says, "I need another sign from you, God."

You know, I don't know, but I will tell you that if I put an animal down on a stone and I put some unleavened bread there and I pour broth on it and all of the sudden fire comes up from the rock and burns it all up, that is enough of a sign. I mean, how much do you need?

This mighty man of valor is not quite ready yet. And so he says to God, "This is what I want you to do. If you are going to deliver Israel through me," he says, "Behold, I will put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor. If there is dew on the fleece only, and it is dry on all the ground, then I will know that You will deliver Israel through me."<sup>26</sup>

And that is exactly what happened. He woke up in the morning and everything is dry except the fleece. He picks it up and wrings it out. It is soaking wet. Does that sound like enough of a sign? What do you think? Isn't that... that's pretty good, isn't it?

No, not for Gideon. He is not ready yet. He says, "Lord, well," he says to God in verse 39, "Do not let Your anger burn against me that I may speak once more; please let me

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<sup>24</sup> Judges 6:31

<sup>25</sup> Judges 6:31-32

<sup>26</sup> Judges 6:37

make a test once more.”<sup>27</sup> “Now this time I am going to put the fleece out and what I want you to do is let the fleece be dry and everything else be wet.”

And he wakes up in the morning and sure enough that is exactly what happens. And so at this stage he is ready. He is prepared for the battle. God is going to do something very special. If we read this carefully, Gideon had 32,000 men who were ready to go into this battle. That’s a pretty decent army in that day. And he was ready to go and he was going to win this battle. And then God says to him, “We have a problem here. That’s too many people. I don’t want to send that many people in the battle. You know, if you send all of these people, you know, you are talking about 32,000 people. You send them into the battle, I mean, somebody is going to think that Israel won because they were strong. I don’t want them to think that. I want them to know it was God who won the victory. So you are not going to take all those people in the battle.”

And he says to him, he says, “First of all, if there is anyone who is afraid, I want them to go home.”

So Gideon announces, “Any of you folks afraid? Fellows, you are scared...?”

Can you imagine this in the army? That wasn’t the army I was in. You know, the commander gets up and says, “Look, folks. I just want to tell you. We are ready to go into the battle. Any of you afraid? Raise your hand. I’m going to send you home.” You know it wouldn’t happen. But that’s what God said. He says, “Let’s take all of those who are afraid, you send them home.”

Well, what is interesting is that two thirds of the people went home. Only 10,000 were left. Well, ok. That’s still a decent army, I mean, 10,000.

So Gideon gets ready. He is all set to go into the battle and he is going to go in and do what God had told him to do and God says, “No. Still too many people. I am not...I am not satisfied with that.”

God says, “This is what I want you to do. I want you to take all the people down by the water and I want you to tell them to take a drink of water. And this is what I want. For all of the people who bend down on their knees and scoop up the water and drink it, send them home. I don’t want them. I only want those who lie down on the ground and lap up the water the way a dog does.

Well, you know, if I were planning to take certain people, they are the ones I wouldn’t take. Think of this for a minute. If you are getting ready go to into the battle and the army of the enemy is out there, what do you do? You lie on the ground and lap up the water so that your...you know, your...you are down there where they can attack you right away? No. You get down on your knees and you use your hand so you are ready to jump up again.

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<sup>27</sup> Judges 6:39

God says, “No. I am going to take the ones that lie down on the ground. And I am going to send them into the battle.”

And, in fact, God sends them into the battle. And with 300 men Gideon wins the battle without having to do anything. God routed the people so that one fought the battle and the children of Israel marched on by. And the victory was won.

I often think about that. Do you know, God doesn't win victory by numbers? God wins the victory because he is God.

One of the things I think about is, you know, if we look at us here we might say, “Well, we are a relatively small group, aren't we?” I mean, you know, this is not the largest church in Savannah. But here we are as a people of God who are called together to serve him.

You know and we could say, “Well, you know, we are not the 32,000. We are not even the 10,000. Well, maybe we represent the 300. But God took the 300 and he won the battle.”

And God can do that with us. Do you know that? God can take us and he can use us in an incredible way to win a victory in the midst of his field of battle. He can send us out to reach our community. He can make us to have the strength of a million because he is God and God and one person can win a victory. That is the lesson that we have here.

The Lord our peace, my guess is that Gideon had that peace of God that passed all understanding when that battle was over. That was thrilling.

But do you know what happened right after that? You know any time you win a victory there is one thing you have to be assured of. You are going to have a problem. Have you ever noticed that? You know, when things are just going great and all the victories are won, that is when the big challenges come up.

Well, chapter eight is fascinating in this regard. We read this and this is the conclusion of all that we have been looking at today. “Then the men of Ephraim said to him, ‘What is this thing you have done to us, not calling us when you went to fight against Midian?’”<sup>28</sup>

You know, this is almost like a joke. Here they are. They know what is going on. These are the folks who live right up in that area and their complaint is, “You went out and you won the battle. You didn't use us.”

Well, gosh. They had had forever to go out and win the battle against the Midianites if they had wanted to. But here they are. They saw the victory won, but they didn't have a part in it and so they want to complain.

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<sup>28</sup> Judges 8:1

Does that sound familiar to anybody? You know, it is amazing, isn't it, how...how that happens. And here is the answer. Here is the answer. It says right here. "And they contended with him vigorously."<sup>29</sup>

You know, people who complain always contend vigorously. It is never something mild.

"By the way, I just to share with you some helpful..."

No, it doesn't work that way. It is always a vigorous complaint. But here is what it says:

But he said to them, "What have I done now in comparison with you? Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer? God has given the leaders of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb into your hands; and what was I able to do in comparison with you?" Then their anger toward him subsided when he said that.

Then Gideon and the 300 men who were with him came to the Jordan and crossed over, weary yet pursuing.<sup>30</sup>

The lesson that we have here is: God is a God of peace and he gives to us peace in the midst of all of our difficulties, all of our battles, all of our challenges. He is there for us. And he can win a battle without having 32,000 people. I'll tell you something. When it said 300 he could have won the battle with 10 if he had wanted to because God is God.

And God can win a victory in our midst also. He can use us to reach out into this community, to grow in grace that we become a people of God so strong in the things of the Lord that each and everything we do will bring glory and honor to our Savior. And we will be used by him in a wonderful way to glorify his name and to reach our community with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Let's pray together.

*Father, we thank you for your love and goodness. We thank you for the lessons that you give us in your Word. For, Lord, your Word is truly that valuable Word that gives to us a sense of understanding of who you are and what you want in our lives. Help us to be sent forth into the battle, not in our own power, but in yours. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Judges 8:2-4