



Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

BIBLE FOUNDATIONS

Hebrew Words for Peace, Covenant, and Righteousness

Understanding Shalom, Covenant Faithfulness, Justice, and What Is Right Before God

The Short Answer

The Old Testament uses a rich family of Hebrew words to describe peace, covenant relationship, righteousness, justice, uprightness, integrity, and innocence.

Shalom describes peace, well-being, welfare, or wholeness. Berit describes a covenant - a binding relationship or commitment. Rib describes a dispute, controversy, or legal case and helps readers understand prophetic passages in which God brings a covenant case against His people. Tsedeq and tsedaqah describe righteousness, rightness, and justice. Mishpat describes judgment, justice, or a just decision. Yashar describes what is straight, upright, or right. Tamim describes completeness, integrity, or blamelessness. Naqi describes innocence or freedom from guilt.

These words overlap, but they are not interchangeable. Together they reveal something important about God's character and purposes: God does not merely want conflict to stop. He establishes faithful relationships, holds covenant unfaithfulness accountable, loves what is right and just, calls His people to walk uprightly, and ultimately brings true peace through Jesus.

Genesis 15:1-21 · Psalm 85:10-13 · Isaiah 32:16-18 · Micah 6:1-8 · Jeremiah 31:31-34 · Luke 22:20 · Romans 5:1

Opening Memory Anchor

Biblical peace is more than quiet circumstances. It is life made right under the rule of God.



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PART ONE BEGINNER GUIDE

1. HOW DO PEACE, COVENANT, AND RIGHTEOUSNESS FIT TOGETHER?

At first, these may seem like separate subjects. Peace sounds emotional. Covenant sounds legal. Righteousness sounds moral. But Scripture frequently brings these ideas together.

God creates relationships marked by faithfulness. He defines what is right and just. He calls His people to live accordingly. He holds covenant unfaithfulness accountable. And where God's righteous purposes are fulfilled, genuine peace can flourish.

Psalms 85 poetically brings righteousness and peace together. Isaiah 32:17 says that righteousness produces peace. Micah 6 shows that covenant relationship includes accountability, justice, hesed, and humble walking with God.

The biblical storyline eventually connects these themes in Jesus: God fulfills His covenant promises, justifies sinners, reconciles them to Himself, and promises a kingdom of lasting peace.

Why it matters: Biblical peace is not built by ignoring righteousness or justice. God's peace is consistent with God's character.

Memory Anchor

God's peace does not ignore what is wrong. It grows where God makes things right.

PEACE AND WHOLENESS

2. שָׁלוֹם - SHALOM

Strong's: H7965 **Pronunciation:** shah-LOHM **Basic meaning:** Peace; well-being; welfare; completeness

Key Scriptures: Numbers 6:24-26; Psalm 29:11; Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 29:7

Shalom is one of the best-known Hebrew words. It is often translated "peace," but its biblical range is broader than simply the absence of war. Depending on context, *shalom* can describe peace between people or nations, personal welfare, safety, well-being, prosperity, completeness, or things being well. In Genesis 43:27, Joseph asks about his father's "welfare" using *shalom* language. In Jeremiah 29:7, the exiles are told to seek the *shalom* of Babylon because their own welfare is connected to the city's welfare. In Numbers 6, God's blessing upon Israel culminates in peace.

Why it matters: Shalom describes life going rightly and well, not merely life without an argument.

3. DOES SHALOM LITERALLY MEAN "NOTHING MISSING, NOTHING BROKEN"?

Not exactly. The phrase "nothing missing, nothing broken" has become a popular Christian explanation of *shalom*. It can function as a memorable illustration of wholeness, but it should not be presented as the literal definition of the Hebrew word. *Shalom* has a broad semantic range determined by context: sometimes peace, welfare, safety, well-being, or completeness.

Word-Study Safeguard

A helpful illustration is not automatically a dictionary definition.

4. שָׁלֵם - SHALEM

Strong's: H8003 **Pronunciation:** shah-LEM **Basic meaning:** Complete; whole; sound

Key Scriptures: Genesis 15:16; Deuteronomy 25:15; 1 Kings 8:61

Shalem belongs to the broader Hebrew word family associated with completeness and wholeness. It can describe something complete or full, and can also describe integrity or wholeheartedness. In 1 Kings 8:61, Solomon calls Israel's heart to be wholly devoted to the LORD. The relationship between *shalom* and *shalem* helps readers see why biblical peace can carry ideas of wholeness, but related words do not automatically have identical meanings.

Why it matters: Biblical wholeness involves more than comfortable circumstances. It includes a life rightly ordered before God.



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COVENANT

5. בְּרִית - BERIT

Strong's: H1285 **Pronunciation:** beh-REET **Basic meaning:** Covenant

Key Scriptures: Genesis 9:8-17; Genesis 15:18; Exodus 24:7-8; Jeremiah 31:31-34

A *berit* is a covenant. A covenant is a solemn, binding arrangement that establishes or defines a relationship and its commitments. Biblical covenants are not all identical. Some contain promises, obligations, or signs. Some establish enduring relationships. Some are connected to particular people, descendants, kings, land, or the nation of Israel. God makes covenants with Noah and Abraham. He establishes covenant relationship with Israel at Sinai. He makes promises concerning David and his royal line. The prophets later announce a new covenant.

Why it matters: The biblical storyline is shaped by God's covenant faithfulness.

Memory Anchor

A covenant is more than a promise. It establishes a binding relationship and its commitments.

6. קָרַת - KARAT

Strong's: H3772 **Pronunciation:** kah-RAHT **Basic meaning:** Cut; cut off

Key Scriptures: Genesis 15:18; Exodus 24:8; Jeremiah 34:18

Karat ordinarily means "cut." Biblical Hebrew commonly speaks of making a covenant using the expression **karat berit**, literally "cut a covenant." English translations usually say "make a covenant." Genesis 15 provides a vivid example. Abram prepares divided animals, and a smoking fire pot and flaming torch - symbols associated with God's presence - pass between the pieces. Genesis 15:18 then says that the LORD "made" a covenant with Abram, using *karat berit*. Later passages also connect covenant-making with cut animals.

Why it matters: Biblical covenant language reflects the seriousness of covenant commitments. But readers should be careful not to build elaborate symbolic meanings from the verb "cut" beyond what the biblical context supports.

RIGHTEOUSNESS

7. צְדָקָה - TSEDEQ

Strong's: H6664 **Pronunciation:** TSEH-dek **Basic meaning:** Righteousness; rightness; justice

Key Scriptures: Leviticus 19:36; Psalm 85:10-13; Isaiah 32:17

Tsedeq describes what is right, righteous, or just. It can be used in moral, judicial, and relational settings. Leviticus speaks of honest - or "righteous" - weights and measures. The Psalms repeatedly connect righteousness with God's character and rule. Isaiah connects righteousness with peace. Biblical righteousness is not merely private religious behavior. It includes what is right according to God's standards.

Why it matters: God's righteousness affects both personal character and the way people treat one another.

8. צְדָקָה - TSEDAQAH

Strong's: H6666 **Pronunciation:** tseh-dah-KAH **Basic meaning:** Righteousness; justice; right conduct

Key Scriptures: Genesis 15:6; Genesis 18:19; Isaiah 1:27; Amos 5:24

Tsedeqah belongs to the same word family as *tsedeq*. Its range includes righteousness, justice, and right conduct depending on context. Genesis 15:6 says Abram believes the LORD, and God counts it to him as righteousness. Genesis 18:19 also speaks of doing righteousness and justice. The prophets use righteousness language when confronting injustice and calling God's people back to faithful living.

Grammar Note

Tsedeq is grammatically masculine, while *tsedeqah* is grammatically feminine. Both belong to the same righteousness word family. The grammatical gender distinction should not be turned into a theological distinction between "male" and "female" forms of righteousness.

Why it matters: Biblical righteousness includes both standing rightly and doing what is right. Context determines which aspect is emphasized.



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9. צַדִּיק - TSADDIQ

Strong's: H6662 **Pronunciation:** tsah-DEEK **Basic meaning:** Righteous; just

Key Scriptures: Genesis 6:9; Genesis 18:23-25; Psalm 1:5-6

Tsaddiq is commonly used for a righteous or just person. Noah is described as a righteous man in Genesis 6:9. Abraham asks whether God would sweep away the righteous with the wicked in Genesis 18. The Psalms frequently contrast the righteous and the wicked. Calling someone righteous does not necessarily mean that person has never sinned. Scripture itself records failures among people otherwise described as faithful or righteous.

Why it matters: Biblical righteousness should not automatically be equated with sinless perfection.

JUSTICE AND RIGHT JUDGMENT

10. מִשְׁפָּט - MISHPAT

Strong's: H4941 **Pronunciation:** mish-PAHT **Basic meaning:** Judgment; justice; legal decision; ordinance

Key Scriptures: Deuteronomy 16:18-20; Micah 6:8; Isaiah 1:17; Amos 5:24

Mishpat comes from a word family associated with judging. Depending on context, it can refer to a judgment, a legal decision, justice, an ordinance, or what is due or proper. Scripture repeatedly connects *mishpat* with God's concern for vulnerable people. Israel's judges are commanded not to distort justice. The prophets condemn societies in which powerful people maintain religious activity while exploiting others. Micah 6:8 calls God's people to do justice, love *hesed*, and walk humbly with God.

Word-Family Note

Mishpat belongs to the same word family as שָׁפַט - SHAPHAT - H8199, meaning "judge" or "govern." A *shopet* is a judge. Recognizing the relationship helps explain why *mishpat* can refer both to a judicial decision and to justice more broadly. As always, the related root helps orient the reader; context determines the specific meaning.

Why it matters: Biblical justice is not a modern invention. It is rooted in God's own righteous character.

UPRIGHTNESS, BLAMELESSNESS, AND INNOCENCE

11. יָשָׁר - YASHAR

Strong's: H3477 **Pronunciation:** yah-SHAHR **Basic meaning:** Straight; upright; right

Key Scriptures: Deuteronomy 6:18; Judges 21:25; Psalm 25:8

Yashar can describe something straight or level. When used morally, it can describe what is upright or right. Deuteronomy repeatedly calls Israel to do what is right in the LORD's sight. Judges ends with the tragic observation that everyone did what was right in his own eyes. The contrast is significant. Human beings can decide that something seems right. Scripture points instead toward what is right before God.

Why it matters: Biblical uprightness is not defined merely by personal preference.

12. תָּמִים - TAMIM

Strong's: H8549 **Pronunciation:** tah-MEEM **Basic meaning:** Complete; whole; sound; blameless

Key Scriptures: Genesis 6:9; Genesis 17:1; Deuteronomy 18:13; Psalm 19:7

Tamim has a broad range connected to completeness or soundness. It can describe animals without defect in sacrificial contexts and people as blameless or having integrity. God tells Abraham to walk before Him and be *tamim*. Noah is described with this word in Genesis 6:9. The larger biblical accounts show otherwise. "Blameless" should therefore not automatically be read as "never having committed a sin."

Why it matters: Biblical blamelessness is not permission to claim moral perfection. It calls for wholehearted integrity.

13. נָקִי - NAQI

Strong's: H5355 **Pronunciation:** nah-KEE **Basic meaning:** Innocent; clean; free from guilt

Key Scriptures: Exodus 23:7; Deuteronomy 19:10; Psalm 24:4

Naqi can describe someone innocent or free from guilt in a particular matter. Scripture strongly condemns shedding "innocent blood." This word is especially useful because it reminds readers that biblical justice includes distinguishing guilt from innocence. A just judge must not condemn the innocent or excuse the guilty.

Why it matters: God's justice is not arbitrary. Truth matters.



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14. HOW DO THESE WORDS WORK TOGETHER?

Hebrew	Main idea	Helpful distinction
Shalom	Peace / well-being	Life going rightly and well
Shalem	Complete / whole	Completeness or wholeheartedness
Berit	Covenant	Binding relationship and commitments
Karat	Cut	Used in the expression "cut a covenant"
Tsedeq	Righteousness / justice	What is right or just
Tsedaqah	Righteousness	Righteousness or right conduct
Tsaddiq	Righteous	A righteous or just person
Mishpat	Judgment / justice	Right judgment or legal justice
Yashar	Upright / straight	What is right or upright
Tamim	Complete / blameless	Wholeness, integrity, soundness
Naqi	Innocent	Free from guilt in a matter

Quick Picture

COVENANT establishes relationship. **RIGHTEOUSNESS** describes what is right. **JUSTICE** applies what is right. **UPRIGHTNESS** walks in what is right. **PEACE** describes the well-being that flourishes under God's righteous rule.

PART TWO

WANT TO GO DEEPER? INTERMEDIATE

15. ARE ALL BIBLICAL COVENANTS THE SAME?

No. Scripture uses covenant language in several settings, and readers should resist forcing every covenant into exactly the same structure.

NOAH - Genesis 9

God promises the preservation of the earth's regular order and gives the rainbow as a covenant sign.

ABRAHAM - Genesis 12; 15; 17

God promises Abraham descendants, land, and blessing, with blessing ultimately extending to the nations.

ISRAEL AT SINAI - Exodus 19-24

God establishes Israel as His covenant people, gives His law, and defines Israel's covenant responsibilities.

These covenants are connected within one biblical storyline, but their participants, promises, signs, obligations, and functions are not identical.

DAVID - 2 Samuel 7; Psalm 89

God promises a royal line connected to David and God's kingdom purposes.

THE NEW COVENANT - Jeremiah 31:31-34

God promises forgiveness, transformed hearts, and His law written within His people.

Reader Safeguard

"Covenant" is a biblical category. One theological system for organizing every covenant is an interpretation of the biblical evidence.

16. רִיב - RIB: WHAT IS A "COVENANT LAWSUIT"?

Strong's: H7379 **Pronunciation:** REEV **Basic meaning:** Dispute; controversy; legal case; contention

Key Scriptures: Hosea 4:1; Micah 6:1-8; Isaiah 3:13-15; Jeremiah 2:9

Rib can describe a dispute, controversy, or legal case. In several prophetic passages, Scripture portrays the LORD bringing a *rib* against His people. Micah 6 provides one of the clearest examples. God calls creation as witnesses, presents His case against Israel, reminds His people of His faithful acts, and exposes their covenant unfaithfulness.

This legal setting provides important context for Micah 6:8: do justice, love *hesed*, and walk humbly with God. Micah 6:8 is therefore not an isolated slogan about being a good person. It comes after God's covenant case against a people who had received His grace but were not living faithfully before Him.

Scholars often describe passages like these as "covenant lawsuits." That phrase is a useful modern description of a recognizable prophetic pattern. Scripture itself does not formally name a literary genre called "the covenant lawsuit."

Why it matters: Covenant relationship includes accountability. God's faithfulness does not make injustice insignificant.

Memory Anchor

The God who keeps covenant also holds covenant unfaithfulness accountable.



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17. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO “CUT” A COVENANT?

The expression *karat berit* - “cut a covenant” - is a Hebrew idiom for making a covenant. Genesis 15 helps readers understand why cutting imagery could accompany covenant-making. Animals are divided, and God’s symbolic presence passes between the pieces.

Jeremiah 34:18-20 later describes people who passed between the pieces of a calf when making a covenant and then violated their commitment. This provides strong biblical evidence that cut animals could accompany solemn covenant ceremonies. But caution remains necessary. Not every occurrence of *karat berit* describes the complete ceremony, and the verb itself should not become a doorway to speculative hidden meanings. The central point is clear: **Covenants were serious commitments.**

18. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TSEDEQ, TSEDAQAH, AND MISHPAT?

TSEDEQ - Often emphasizes righteousness, rightness, or justice.

TSEDAQAH - Closely related to *tsedeq* and often describes righteousness, justice, or righteous conduct.

MISHPAT - Often emphasizes judgment, a legal decision, an ordinance, or justice being administered.

Scripture frequently places righteousness and justice together. Genesis 18:19 joins *tsedeq* and *mishpat*. Psalm 89:14 describes righteousness and justice as foundations of God’s throne. Amos 5:24 calls for justice and righteousness to flow through the community. This shows why biblical righteousness should not be reduced to private morality. God cares about both **PERSONAL RIGHTEOUSNESS** and **RIGHTEOUS TREATMENT OF OTHERS**.

19. DOES TSEDAQAH SIMPLY MEAN “CHARITY”?

No. In later Jewish usage, *zedakah* became strongly associated with charitable giving. That history is important and helps explain why the word is often encountered today in connection with charity. But readers should not import that later specialized usage into every biblical occurrence.

Biblical *tsedeq* has a broader semantic range involving righteousness, justice, and right conduct. Genesis 15:6 uses it for the righteousness credited to Abraham. Isaiah and other prophets use righteousness language in contexts involving justice and faithful conduct. Charitable generosity can certainly be righteous. But **TSEDAQAH = CHARITY** is too narrow as a universal biblical definition.

Memory Anchor

Later usage can illuminate a word’s history. It should not rewrite its earlier biblical context.

20. DOES BIBLICAL RIGHTEOUSNESS MEAN MORALITY, RIGHT RELATIONSHIP, OR JUSTICE?

Depending on the passage, righteousness language can touch all of these areas. This is why one-sentence definitions can become misleading. Biblical righteousness can involve morally right behavior, just decisions, honest dealings, faithfulness to obligations, vindication, right standing, and conduct consistent with God’s standards.

The exact emphasis depends upon context. A legal passage may emphasize justice. A wisdom passage may contrast righteous and wicked conduct. A prophetic passage may emphasize justice and faithful treatment of others. A theological passage may emphasize a person’s standing before God. The word family is broad enough to function in all of these settings.

Word-Study Safeguard

Do not force every occurrence of a Hebrew word to carry its entire possible semantic range at once.

21. DOES “BLAMELESS” MEAN SINLESS?

Not necessarily. This matters because Scripture calls Noah *tamim* and tells Abraham to be *tamim*. Yet Scripture also records human weakness and sin. The word can describe completeness, integrity, soundness, being without defect, or blamelessness. Sacrificial animals could be *tamim* because they were without disqualifying defect. A person could be described as *tamim* in relation to integrity or faithful conduct.

The context must determine the meaning. The Bible’s broader teaching is clear that all human beings are sinners in need of God’s grace. Therefore, describing Noah or another faithful person as “blameless” should not automatically be turned into a claim of absolute sinlessness.



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22. HOW ARE RIGHTEOUSNESS AND PEACE CONNECTED?

Read Psalm 85:10-13 and Isaiah 32:16-18. These passages bring righteousness and peace together. Isaiah says that the effect of righteousness will be peace. Why? Because biblical peace is not merely the absence of visible conflict. Imagine a society where violence temporarily stops but injustice continues. The streets may appear quiet. But biblical *shalom* has not fully arrived. Lasting peace requires things to be made right. This does not mean every earthly difficulty disappears whenever people act righteously. Scripture contains many righteous people who suffer. The point is larger: God's ultimate kingdom joins righteousness, justice, and peace rather than separating them.

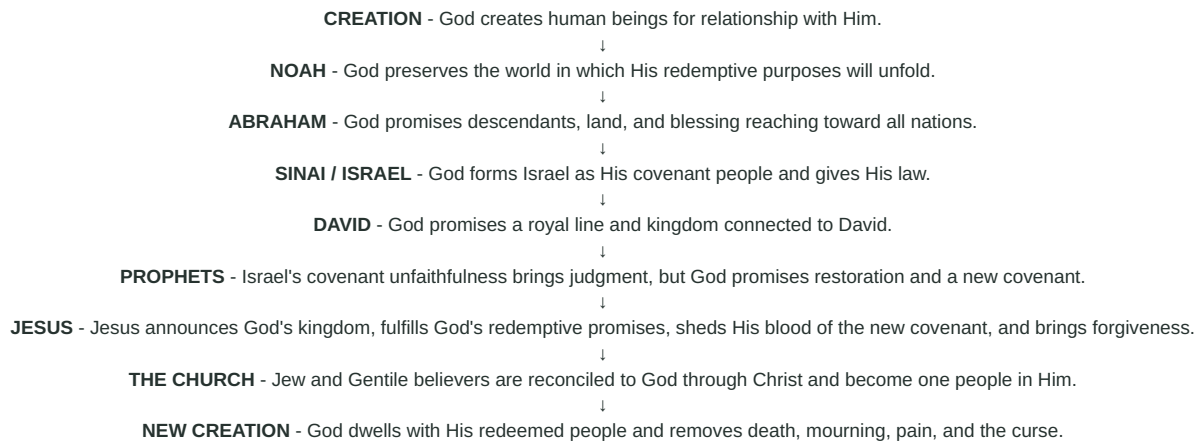
Memory Anchor

Biblical peace is not peace at the expense of justice.

23. CAN SOMEONE HAVE SHALOM WHILE LIFE IS DIFFICULT?

Yes, depending on what aspect of *shalom* is in view. Because *shalom* has a broad range, readers should avoid treating it merely as an inner feeling of calm. Biblical peace can describe external welfare and social conditions. But Scripture also reveals people trusting God while circumstances remain difficult. The New Testament develops this theme further. Jesus tells His disciples that they will experience trouble while also speaking of the peace He gives. Paul speaks of peace with God through Jesus Christ. Christian peace therefore does not require pretending that suffering is absent. The Gospel promises something deeper: reconciliation with God, God's presence, and the certainty that His kingdom will ultimately make all things right.

24. WHAT IS THE BIBLICAL COVENANT STORYLINE?



This overview simplifies a large biblical subject. Its purpose is to help readers see the storyline, not settle every theological debate about how the biblical covenants relate to one another.

25. WHAT IS THE NEW COVENANT?

Read Jeremiah 31:31-34. Jeremiah speaks to people whose covenant unfaithfulness has brought devastating consequences. Yet judgment is not God's final word. God promises a new covenant.

Jeremiah emphasizes God's law written within His people, genuine knowledge of God, forgiveness of sin, and restored relationship. Jesus explicitly uses new-covenant language at the Last Supper. Read Luke 22:20. The New Testament later develops Jeremiah's promise, especially in Hebrews 8-10. The new covenant therefore is not merely a modern theological label. It is rooted in the prophetic promise and explicitly connected to Jesus.



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26. HOW DO PEACE, COVENANT, RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND JUSTICE COME TOGETHER IN JESUS?

Jesus stands at the center of these biblical themes.

COVENANT

Jesus identifies His sacrificial death with the new covenant. Luke 22:20

RIGHTEOUSNESS

Jesus is righteous and fulfills God's saving purposes. Through Him, sinners can be counted righteous before God. Romans 3:21-26

JUSTICE

The cross does not portray God as simply ignoring sin. Romans 3 presents God's saving action in Christ in connection with God's righteousness.

PEACE

Romans 5:1 declares that those justified by faith have peace with God through Jesus Christ. Ephesians 2 describes Christ as bringing peace and reconciliation.

KINGDOM

Jesus is the promised Davidic King whose kingdom ultimately brings God's righteous rule.

The Themes Converge

COVENANT PROMISE → COVENANT ACCOUNTABILITY → RIGHTEOUS SAVIOR → SIN DEALT WITH → RECONCILIATION → PEACE WITH GOD → A PEOPLE CALLED TO RIGHTEOUSNESS AND JUSTICE → THE COMING KINGDOM OF PEACE

27. IS JESUS CALLED THE “PRINCE OF PEACE”?

Yes. Isaiah 9:6 uses a royal title commonly translated “Prince of Peace.” Christians understand Isaiah 9 in connection with Jesus, and the New Testament presents Jesus as the promised Davidic Messiah and King.

The precise wording and arrangement of the royal titles in Isaiah 9:6 have received scholarly discussion, but the surrounding passage clearly connects the promised ruler with enduring government, justice, righteousness, and peace. The title should therefore not be reduced to “Jesus makes people feel peaceful.” Isaiah 9:7 specifically connects this reign with justice and righteousness. The peace of the Messiah is kingdom peace. It is peace established under righteous rule.

Why it matters: Jesus does not merely soothe troubled hearts. He is the King who ultimately makes all things right.

28. WHERE DOES THE BIBLICAL STORY OF SHALOM END?

The Bible ends with more than private spiritual peace. Revelation 21-22 describes a renewed creation in which God dwells with His people, death is defeated, mourning ends, pain ends, the curse is removed, God's servants see His face, and God's righteous reign continues forever.

Revelation does not use the Hebrew word *shalom* because it was written in Greek. But the biblical picture strongly fulfills the Old Testament hope of restored well-being under God's rule.

The Bible begins with God's good creation. Human sin brings alienation, disorder, injustice, suffering, and death. The biblical story ends with God's victory and restored creation. That is the fullest biblical picture of peace: not merely escaping trouble, but creation made right with God dwelling among His people.

29. HOW SHOULD THESE HEBREW WORDS BE STUDIED RESPONSIBLY?

1. IDENTIFY THE ACTUAL WORD.

Strong's numbers can help locate Hebrew vocabulary.

2. NOTICE THE GRAMMAR.

Related nouns, adjectives, and verbs do not necessarily mean exactly the same thing.

3. READ THE PASSAGE.

Context determines which part of a word's semantic range is active.

4. COMPARE OCCURRENCES.

Notice how Scripture actually uses the word.

5. COMPARE TRANSLATIONS.

Different translations can reveal legitimate interpretive possibilities.

6. USE LEXICONS CAREFULLY.

BDB and HALOT are valuable tools for investigating Hebrew usage.

7. DO NOT IMPORT EVERY POSSIBLE MEANING INTO ONE VERSE.

A word's semantic range is not its meaning in every occurrence.

8. RETURN TO SCRIPTURE.

Strong's numbers identify words. Lexicons describe usage. Context determines meaning.

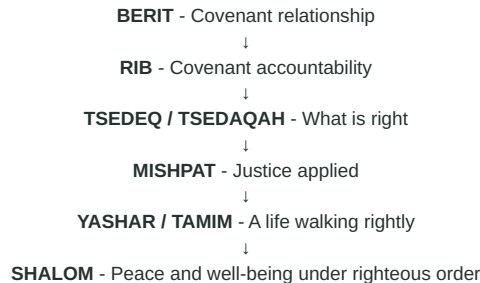
Word-Study Memory Anchor

A Hebrew word may enrich the reading of Scripture. It should never replace the reading of Scripture.



Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

A SIMPLE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



QUICK REFERENCE - KEY HEBREW WORDS

שָׁלוֹם - SHALOM - H7965
Peace; welfare; well-being; completeness

שָׁלֵם - SHALEM - H8003
Complete; whole; sound

בְּרִית - BERIT - H1285
Covenant

כָּרַת - KARAT - H3772
Cut; used in "cut a covenant"

רִיב - RIB - H7379
Dispute; controversy; legal case

צֶדֶק - TSEDEQ - H6664
Righteousness; rightness; justice

צִדְקָה - TSEDAQAH - H6666
Righteousness; justice; right conduct

צַדִּיק - TSADDIQ - H6662
Righteous; just

מִשְׁפָּט - MISHPAT - H4941
Judgment; justice; legal decision

שָׁפַט - SHAPHAT - H8199
Judge; govern

יָשָׁר - YASHAR - H3477
Straight; upright; right

תָּמִים - TAMIM - H8549
Complete; whole; sound; blameless

נָקִי - NAQI - H5355
Innocent; clean; free from guilt

REVIEW AND RETENTION

1. Does shalom simply mean "no conflict"? No. Depending on context, it can describe peace, welfare, safety, well-being, or completeness.
2. Is "nothing missing, nothing broken" the literal definition of shalom? No. It can be a helpful illustration of wholeness, but it is not a complete lexical definition.
3. What is a berit? A covenant - a binding relationship or arrangement with defined commitments.
4. Why does the Bible speak of "cutting" a covenant? Hebrew commonly uses *karat berit*, literally "cut a covenant," as the expression for making a covenant. Some covenant ceremonies involved cut animals.
5. What is a rib? A dispute, controversy, or legal case. In some prophetic passages, God brings a covenant case against His people.
6. Why is Micah 6:8 important in its context? It follows a covenant case in which God reminds Israel of His faithfulness and confronts their unfaithfulness.
7. Are all biblical covenants identical? No. Their participants, promises, signs, obligations, and functions differ.
8. What do tsedeq and tsedaqah describe? Righteousness, rightness, or justice depending on context.

9. What does mishpat add? It frequently emphasizes judgment, legal decisions, ordinances, or justice being administered.
10. What is shaphat? The related Hebrew verb meaning "judge" or "govern."
11. Does tsedaqah always mean "charity"? No. That association becomes especially important in later Jewish usage, while biblical *tsedaqah* has a broader righteousness/justice range.
12. Does tamim always mean "sinless"? No. It can describe completeness, integrity, soundness, or blamelessness depending on context.
13. What does naqi emphasize? Innocence or freedom from guilt in a particular matter.
14. How are righteousness and peace connected? Biblical peace flourishes under God's righteous and just rule rather than by ignoring wrongdoing.
15. Where do these themes come together most clearly? In Jesus, who fulfills God's covenant purposes, brings righteousness and reconciliation, and reigns as the promised King of peace.

FIVE TRUTHS TO REMEMBER

1. **SHALOM IS BIGGER THAN THE ABSENCE OF CONFLICT.** It can describe peace, welfare, well-being, safety, and wholeness depending on context.
2. **COVENANTS SHAPE THE BIBLICAL STORY.** God's covenant promises help carry the storyline from Noah and Abraham through Israel and David toward the new covenant in Jesus.
3. **COVENANT RELATIONSHIP INCLUDES ACCOUNTABILITY.** The prophetic *rib* passages show that God's faithfulness does not make covenant unfaithfulness or injustice insignificant.
4. **RIGHTEOUSNESS AND JUSTICE BELONG TOGETHER.** Biblical righteousness is not merely private morality. God cares about what is right in personal conduct, relationships, judgment, and society.
5. **JESUS BRINGS THESE THEMES TOGETHER.** Through Him come covenant fulfillment, righteousness, reconciliation, peace with God, and the promise of a kingdom in which all things are finally made right.



Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

DAY 1 - SHALOM

Read Numbers 6:24-26 and Psalm 29. Ask: What does God's peace include beyond emotional calm?

DAY 2 - COVENANT

Read Genesis 15. Notice: Who passes between the covenant pieces? What does God promise Abraham?

DAY 3 - COVENANT ACCOUNTABILITY

Read Micah 6:1-8. Ask: What does God remind Israel He has already done? How does that shape the meaning of verse 8?

DAY 4 - RIGHTEOUSNESS

Read Genesis 15:1-6 and Psalm 1. Ask: How is righteousness discussed differently in these passages?

DAY 5 - JUSTICE

Read Amos 5:21-24. Ask: Why does God reject religious activity disconnected from justice?

DAY 6 - NEW COVENANT

Read Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Hebrews 8:6-13. Ask: What does God promise to do?

DAY 7 - JESUS AND PEACE

Read Isaiah 9:1-7; Romans 5:1-11; and Revelation 21:1-5. Trace the movement: **PROMISE** → **RIGHTEOUSNESS** → **RECONCILIATION** → **RESTORATION**

A SCRIPTURE PATH FOR CONTINUED STUDY

Genesis 9:8-17 - God's covenant with Noah
Genesis 15 - God's covenant with Abraham
Genesis 17 - Covenant sign and Abraham's call to walk blamelessly
Genesis 18:19 - Righteousness and justice
Exodus 19:24 - Covenant at Sinai
Leviticus 19 - Righteous conduct in everyday life
Numbers 6:24-26 - God's blessing of peace
Deuteronomy 16:18-20 - Justice without partiality
2 Samuel 7 - God's promises concerning David
Psalm 1 - The righteous and the wicked
Psalm 15 - Integrity before God
Psalm 72 - The righteous king and flourishing peace
Psalm 85 - Righteousness and peace together
Psalm 89 - Righteousness and justice under God's rule
Isaiah 3:13-15 - The LORD stands to judge His people

Isaiah 9:1-7 - The Prince of Peace and righteous kingdom
Isaiah 32:16-18 - Righteousness produces peace
Hosea 4:1 - The LORD's case against Israel
Amos 5:21-24 - Worship without justice rejected
Micah 6:1-8 - Covenant lawsuit, justice, hesed, and humility
Jeremiah 2:9 - The LORD contends with His people
Jeremiah 31:31-34 - The promised new covenant
Jeremiah 34:18-20 - Covenant breaking and the cut-calf ceremony
Luke 22:14-20 - Jesus and the new covenant
Romans 3:21-26 - God's righteousness and Christ's saving work
Romans 5:1-11 - Justification and peace with God
Ephesians 2:11-22 - Christ our peace and reconciliation
Hebrews 8-10 - Jesus and the new covenant
Revelation 21-22 - God's final restoration

FINAL MEMORY ANCHORS

• Biblical peace is more than quiet circumstances. • A helpful illustration is not automatically a dictionary definition. • A covenant is more than a promise; it establishes a binding relationship and its commitments. • The God who keeps covenant also holds covenant unfaithfulness accountable. • Biblical righteousness includes what is right before God. • Biblical justice is rooted in God's character. • Blameless does not automatically mean sinless. • Biblical peace is not peace at the expense of justice. • A Hebrew word may enrich the reading of Scripture; it should never replace the reading of Scripture.

FINAL TAKEAWAY

The Hebrew vocabulary of peace, covenant, and righteousness reveals a deeply connected biblical picture. **Shalom** describes peace, welfare, and well-being. **Shalem** adds the language of completeness and wholeness. **Berit** describes covenant relationship and commitment. **Karat** helps readers recognize the Hebrew expression for "cutting" a covenant. **Rib** describes a dispute or legal case and helps readers understand prophetic passages in which God confronts covenant unfaithfulness. **Tsedeq** and **tsedaqah** describe righteousness, rightness, and justice. **Tsaddiq** describes someone righteous or just. **Mishpat** emphasizes judgment and justice. **Shaphat** gives the related verbal idea of judging or governing. **Yashar** describes what is upright. **Tamim** describes completeness, integrity, or blamelessness. **Naqi** distinguishes innocence from guilt.

These words should not be flattened into slogans. Shalom does not simply mean "nothing missing, nothing broken." Tzedaqah does not simply mean "charity." Tamim does not automatically mean "sinless." And a covenant is more than an informal promise. Each word must be read in its biblical context.

Together, however, they reveal a larger storyline. God creates human beings for life with Him. Human sin brings alienation, disorder, injustice, suffering, and death. Yet God does not abandon His purposes. He establishes covenant promises. He remains faithful. He also confronts covenant unfaithfulness. The prophetic *rib* passages show that grace and accountability are not enemies. God reveals His righteous character. He demands justice. He calls His people to walk uprightly. He promises a righteous King. He promises a new covenant. And He promises peace.

These promises converge in Jesus. At the Last Supper, Jesus identifies His sacrificial death with the new covenant. At the cross, sin is not simply ignored. Through Christ, God provides salvation for sinners while demonstrating His righteousness. Those justified by faith have peace with God through Jesus Christ. The promised King therefore does more than create peaceful feelings. He reconciles sinners to God and establishes a kingdom characterized by righteousness and peace.

The biblical story ultimately moves toward a world in which God's purposes are fully realized: wrong is judged, evil is defeated, the curse is removed, God dwells with His people, and creation is made right. That is the Bible's deepest picture of peace. Not merely the absence of conflict. Not merely inner calm. But life restored under the righteous rule of God.

Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus