

The Language of Christmas: A Better Word for Chaos

Then Joshua built an altar to the Lord, the God of Israel, on Mount Ebal. ³¹ He followed the commands that Moses the Lord's servant had written in the Book of Instruction: "Make me an altar from stones that are uncut and have not been shaped with iron tools."

Joshua 8:30-31 (NLT)

Together, we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself.

Ephesians 2:20 (NLT)

KEY IDEA: PEACE IS A _____.

*For a child is born to us,
a son is given to us.*

The government will rest on his shoulders.

And he will be called:

*Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

Isaiah 9:6 (NLT)

For he himself is our peace...

Ephesians 2:20 (NIV)

"I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid.

John 14:27 (NLT)

*"Glory to God in highest heaven,
and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased."*

Luke 2:14 (NLT)

The Israelites did evil in the Lord's sight. So the Lord handed them over to the Midianites for seven years. ² The Midianites were so cruel that the Israelites made hiding places for themselves in the mountains, caves, and strongholds. ³ Whenever the Israelites planted their crops, marauders from Midian, Amalek, and the people of the east would attack Israel, ⁴ camping in the land and destroying crops as far away as Gaza. They left the Israelites with nothing to eat, taking all the sheep, goats, cattle, and donkeys. ⁵ These enemy hordes, coming with their livestock and tents, were as thick as locusts; they arrived on droves of camels too numerous to count. And they stayed until the land was stripped bare. ⁶ So Israel was reduced to starvation by the Midianites. Then the Israelites cried out to the Lord for help.

When they cried out to the Lord because of Midian, ⁸ the Lord sent a prophet to the Israelites. He said, "This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: I brought you up out of slavery in Egypt. ⁹ I rescued you from the Egyptians and from all who oppressed you. I drove out your enemies and gave you their land. ¹⁰ I told you, 'I am the Lord your God. You must not worship the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you now live.' But you have not listened to me."

¹¹ Then the angel of the Lord came and sat beneath the great tree at Ophrah, which belonged to Joash of the clan of Abiezer. Gideon son of Joash was threshing wheat at the bottom of a winepress to hide the grain from the Midianites. ¹² The angel of the Lord appeared to him and said, "Mighty hero, the Lord is with you!"

"Sir," Gideon replied, "if the Lord is with us, why has all this happened to us? And where are all the miracles our ancestors told us about? Didn't they say, 'The Lord brought us up out of Egypt'? But now the Lord has abandoned us and handed us over to the Midianites."

¹⁴ Then the Lord turned to him and said, "Go with the strength you have, and rescue Israel from the Midianites. I am sending you!"

¹⁵ "But Lord," Gideon replied, "how can I rescue Israel? My clan is the weakest in the whole tribe of Manasseh, and I am the least in my entire family!"

¹⁶ The Lord said to him, "I will be with you. And you will destroy the Midianites as if you were fighting against one man."

When Gideon realized that it was the angel of the Lord, he cried out, "Oh, Sovereign Lord, I'm doomed! I have seen the angel of the Lord face to face!"

²³ "It is all right," the Lord replied. "Do not be afraid. You will not die." ²⁴ And Gideon built an altar to the Lord there and named it Yahweh-Shalom (which means "the Lord is peace").

Judges 6:1-16,22-24 (NLT)

HOW CAN WE FIND SHALOM THIS CHRISTMAS?

- STOP CHASING _____, AND START CHASING _____.

- INVITE THE _____ INTO THE _____.
- BUILD THE FIVE _____ SPACE.