

With regards to today's Scripture verse, Paul was Jewish, so when he said "the God of peace be with you", he was saying "*Jehovah Shalom* be with you". "*Jehovah Shalom*" is Hebrew for "the God of peace". The first appearance of the name *Jehovah Shalom* is in the Old Testament story of Gideon in Judges 6.

As we read Gideon's story, we discover that the Midianites terrorized Israel day and night, descending upon them like a swarm of marauding locusts and destroying their crops and pillaging their livestock. Fearful of their cruel enemies, the Israelites hid in dens and caves in the mountains. It is no wonder Gideon was petrified, and hid himself at the bottom of an abandoned winepress to thresh the measly stalks of dry grain he had somehow managed to scavenge. He was bound by fear and overcome by all the news of terror that surrounded him. In the midst of Gideon's fear, "the Angel of the LORD appeared to him, and said to him: "The LORD is with you, you mighty man of valour!" (Judges 6:12) When you find the expression "the Angel of the LORD" in the Old Testament, it usually refers to our Lord Jesus in His pre-incarnate state. Jesus Himself appeared to Gideon when he was in the pit of fear, and called him a mighty man of valour. Isn't that amazing?

Are there moments when you feel besieged by fear? When you hear reports of terror or exposure to some virus, do you feel fearful and anxious? Has fear driven you into hiding? The truth is, regardless of how you feel, when our Lord Jesus looks at you right now, He sees you as a mighty man or mighty woman of courage. He sees your potential, your gifting, your call, and your destiny to do great things in this life! As the ending of Gideon's story shows, He will guide you and cause you to be a testimony of His protection as you trust in Him and see yourself and your situations through His eyes.

Romans 15:33 "Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen."