

To Know Him By Name



An Intimate Look at the Names of God

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Yahweh Shammah: The LORD is There

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Yahweh Shammah

(yah-WEH SHAM-mah)

“...And the name of the city from that time on will be:

THE LORD IS THERE.”

Ezekiel 48:35



DAY ONE: THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD

Between the miracle of creation and the disaster of the first sin, Adam and Eve enjoyed some sort of idyllic existence in the Garden of Eden. We don't know how long this state of perfection lasted, and we can only imagine what it must have been like to walk with God in the cool of the day.

Since our tragic fall, God has been reestablishing that close, intimate relationship He originally enjoyed with man. Though we're still awaiting a return to the garden, *Yahweh* has been very creative in manifesting His presence, in one way or another, to be near His people. Check out the many methods He employed throughout Israel's Old Testament history to make His presence known, so to speak. Note the particulars of each.

Exodus 13:20-22

Exodus 23:20-22

Exodus 40:34-38

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Joshua 5:13-15

1 Samuel 4:6-7

2 Chronicles 6:40-7:3

Did you catch that? *“The priests could not enter the temple of the LORD because the glory of the LORD filled it.”* Wow. God’s glory, sometimes called the *shekinah* glory, was a constant and visible manifestation of His presence among His people. When the Israelites left Egypt a cloudy pillar went before them as they wandered in the wilderness. It rested above the portable tent, or tabernacle, where they met with God. And finally, after centuries of waiting for a proper house, fire reigned down from heaven and God’s glory filled the temple built for Him on Mount Moriah.

Who chose the place where the temple was built? See 2 Chronicles 7:12.

Further into this chapter, *Yahweh* says something very interesting to Solomon. Read 2 Chronicles 7:16. What was the purpose of this temple and what would always be there?

From previous lessons, we know God’s heart was broken by the very people He desired to hear from, to watch over, and to dwell among. Over the ensuing centuries, the Israelites plunged down a slippery slope of idolatry, breaking the first commandment and then all the rest. The nation,

no longer living by God's Law and thus unable to live in peace with one another, was torn apart. They formed two nations now: Israel in the north and Judah in the south. The prophets of *Yahweh* came and went, warning of judgment, begging and pleading for repentance but to no avail. Eventually, God allowed foreign armies to invade and take captive what remained of His people.

From captivity in Babylon, the prophet Ezekiel had a disturbing vision. Jerusalem, not yet completely destroyed, was on the brink of a final annihilation. The LORD's temple was about to be reduced to rubble. *Yahweh's* people had so defiled His dwelling place that His presence was forced to leave it. Ezekiel describes this amazingly tragic event. For a little context begin by reading Ezekiel 10:1-5.

The entire episode is incredibly surreal. *Yahweh's* presence went up above the cherubim and moved from the inner court to the threshold of His house. Jump to verses 18 and 19. Leaving the threshold, to where does His glory move?

Finally, in Ezekiel 11:22-23, what do we learn?

Take a moment and try to picture the magnificent cloud of the glory of the LORD rising up from His throne, the mercy seat, and moving from the holy of holies to the inner court, and then to the threshold of His temple where He lingers. Then He moves through the outer court to the east gate where He stops, and looks out into the city with disgust at what His wicked people are plotting. Finally, He leaves Jerusalem altogether and stops above the Mount of Olives. It's almost as if He moves by degree, tortured by the stubbornness of His people, longing in vain for them to repent and call Him back as their first love, their husband. It was not to be.

Soon after His presence left Jerusalem, He ordained that His temple be destroyed by the Babylonians. He could never dwell in a place so defiled by sin and corruption. The Jewish captives living in Babylonia despaired that they would never see God's city or temple rebuilt and that they themselves were to blame for its destruction. Although God abandoned

His home, He would never abandon His people. He was bound to them by a covenant that He intended to keep even at great cost to Himself.

Yahweh was far from finished with them. Later, again through Ezekiel, He sent a message of hope to His captive people. In the future, the glory of the LORD will return to Jerusalem by way of the very east gate through which He departed. Read Ezekiel 43:1-9. What emotions does this stirring scene generate in your heart? Note them in the margin.



DAY TWO: THE WORD BECAME FLESH..

Technically speaking, Ezekiel tells us, *Yahweh Shammah* is the name of a city, not a name of God. But like so much of Scripture, it reveals not just the obvious – the future physical location of His dwelling – but it reveals the eternal character of God – His faithfulness, His constancy, and the promise of His presence forever.

The exiles longed for the presence of *Yahweh* to someday return to the holy city and dwell among them again. They eventually went home to Jerusalem to rebuild both the city and the temple. But the *shekinah* glory of God did not return to the new temple. Israel would not see the cloud filling His house as they had at the dedication of Solomon's temple. *Yahweh* had another plan. This time the glory of the LORD entered the temple in the arms of a young woman named Mary. Read the report of it in Luke 2:21-32. Who was Simeon and what was he waiting for?

In first century Jewish lingo, the consolation of Israel was another way of saying the Messiah, or the Christ. That threesome came through the temple gate one day and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, Simeon knew exactly who they were. After four hundred years of silence, the wheels were set in motion once again. The presence of God had returned to Mount Moriah.

“The One who in the Old Testament came in occasional, mysterious appearance as the Angel of [Yahweh], the Angel of His Presence, the Angel of the Covenant, ...became in Christ both the Presence itself and the Temple in whom the Presence resided so that in Him and of Him it could be said [Yahweh] Shammah, [Yahweh] is there.” – Nathan Stone

Though Luke tells us He was named Jesus, what does Isaiah say He will be called in Isaiah 7:14?

When Isaiah was prophesying to Israel, the glory of the LORD had not yet departed from His dwelling place among His people. They certainly could not conceive of such a thing ever happening and thus they could not fully appreciate the meaning of the name *Immanuel*: God with us. How does the writer of Hebrews describe *Immanuel* in Hebrews 1:1-3?

The word radiance means *effulgence*, a word we don't use much in our modern vernacular. It comes from the root word *effulge*, which means, according to the *Free Online Dictionary by Farlex*, “to cause to shine with abundance of light; to radiate; to beam; to shine forth.” Jesus is not a reflection of glory, He contains within Himself all the glory of God. Paul concurs in Colossians 1:15-20. What does he tell us about our *Immanuel*?

We see clearly now, from our twenty-first century perspective, God had in fact returned and was dwelling among His people for a time. His purpose in this manifestation, however, wasn't solely to live among them as it will be when the Ezekiel's visions come to pass. He returned to Israel as Messiah to, as Colossians 1:20 told us, make peace by shedding His blood. His mission underscores an important point. *Yahweh*, the God of

redemption and relationship, is not satisfied to sit on high in heaven, distant from His people. It has always been His way to pursue them, to engage them, and to make it possible, outrageous though it may seem, to be near them.

Though by historical standards He had only just arrived, after three years Jesus told His disciples He was leaving them. Where does He say He is going and why? See John 14:1-3. Pay attention to the why. Jesus reaffirms this in His prayer in John 17:24. What does He say?

The shocking truth is that Jesus wants us with Him. *He wants to be near us.* Until that day when we are physically in His presence in heaven, Jesus assures us He is still with us. What two promises does He make in Matthew 18:20 and Matthew 28:20?

Not long into the future, though the disciples could not have imagined it, the second temple of the LORD, rebuilt after the exile, would also be destroyed, this time by the Romans. Though it devastated the Jews, the early church had been taught an important principle by Paul that demonstrated there was little cause for sackcloth and ashes. What had he suggested to them in both 1 Corinthians 3:16 and 2 Corinthians 6:16?

We are the temple in which He dwells. The words *Yahweh Shammah*, the LORD is there, are inscribed upon our hearts. In 2 Corinthians 6:16, Paul has cleverly repackaged an Old Testament promise found in Leviticus 26:12 and applied it to the reality of our faith post-Calvary. That promise is sandwiched in between two verses that can also speak to us. God says: *"I will put My dwelling place among you...I am the LORD your God who brought you out of Egypt...I broke the bars of your yoke and enabled you to walk with heads held high."*

He has freed us from the yoke of sin and the shame that always accompanies it. How else could a holy God declare our bodies to be His temple and dwell within us? How amazing is our God and His grace!



DAY THREE: NOWHERE TO RUN, NOWHERE TO HIDE

*“No matter where we may go by choice or compulsion, we can never
journey to any place He cannot reach.”² – Herbert Lockyer*

Scripture proves Mr. Lockyer’s words true. Because *Yahweh* is omnipresent, there is truly nowhere beyond the scope of His presence. The psalmist declares that no matter where he goes, *Yahweh Shammah*. Read again the familiar and expressive words of Psalm 139:1-12. David winds his way through the extremes of the human experience always discovering *Yahweh Shammah*. What does he conclude in verse 12?

What a powerful truth! *Even the darkness is not dark to You*. Reflect on that and note what it means to you that even the darkness cannot hide us from Him.

Perhaps no one understood this better than the prophet Jonah. He experienced a darkness unlike any other. Read Jonah 1 and jot down some key words from the first three verses that indicate apparently Jonah had not read Psalm 139.

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What do we learn in verse 10?

Jonah wasn't even trying to hide the fact that he was on the run from God. Doesn't it seem a little unwise to advertise? Remember, this is a God who does lots of things just for *His Name sake*. Could this be the case here? Why or why not?

At the end of the first chapter, where does Jonah find himself?

Read Jonah's prayer in chapter two. Needless to say, he was in a dark and distressing place. His prayer recounts his ordeal quite poetically. What phrases does Jonah use to describe the desperateness of his state?

How does he express that even from inside the belly of a great fish, *Yahweh Shammah*? He says it a couple different ways.

Jonah acknowledged, before he was saved from his traumatic experience, "*Salvation comes from the LORD.*" *Yahweh* commanded the fish to release Jonah and the fish obeyed. Jonah 3:1-3 tells us that the LORD commanded

Jonah a second time, and following the example of the great fish, Jonah obeyed. Later in the story we learned that Jonah preached and the city of Nineveh repented. Jonah brought the word of the LORD to a sinful people and they responded and turned from their evil ways.

Could it be that God desired it be said of Nineveh, *Yahweh Shammah*? And this mission for which Jonah was chosen was a mission to save a lost people. It is clear from the story that God did not wish to destroy these people. He takes no joy in judgment. Jonah was to bring the Name of the LORD to Nineveh that they might be saved and that He might be found among them. God always intended Israel to be a missionary people. They were to represent Him to the world and, being such a sweet aroma in a harsh and hostile setting, draw the nations to *Yahweh*. Aren't we charged with the same mission, phase two? What do our lives look like when we take that on? Make some notes in your journal and be as specific as you can.

In the end, it is His plan to have people from every tribe, tongue and nation dwelling with Him. He will have representatives from all the diversity of His creation called mankind. He will be there. He wants us all there, too. Far into the future, beyond the tribulation, the anti-christ, Armageddon, and the lake of fire, after the thousand year millennium kingdom and rule of Christ, Revelation tells us *all* things are made new again. Read Revelation 21:1-4. When the New Jerusalem, the holy city, comes down from heaven, what does the voice from the throne proclaim in verse 3?

And what will be the benefits of living there with Him? Verse 4 is very specific.

This is the culmination of all that God has been working toward since the disaster in the garden. Ezekiel 48:35b says: "*And the name of the city from that time on will be: THE LORD IS THERE.*"

He is here with us now, within the temple of our hearts. He will be there in the end, living with us in the holy city. And He is everywhere in between. Here. There. Everywhere. *Yahweh Shammah*.

*“...Who has controlled history since the beginning? I, the LORD,
am the one. I was here at the beginning, and I will be here
when all things are finished.”* – Isaiah 41:4, New Century Version



DAY FOUR: JOURNAL PSALM 135

It's hard to believe our study of the names of God is coming to a close. Our God is a great God and greatly to be praised! With that in mind, let's get started on this week's praise and worship psalm. Read Psalm 135 slowly and thoughtfully. Jot any responses to this psalm down in your journal.

In verse 1 we are encouraged to praise the name of the LORD. Think back over the past 15 weeks and spend time contemplating each name of God. Which name holds the most significance to you today?

According to verse 2 we stand in His house and dwell in His courts. Praise God that He desires to dwell with you.

Beginning in verse 3 the psalmist declares God is good and His name is lovely. Write out a psalm of praise thanking God for His goodness and declaring that His name is lovely.

We are called chosen and God's possession in verse 4. Thank God for choosing you and claiming you as His own.

The psalmist ponders God's sovereignty, power and wonders in verses 5 through 12. He then ends this section of his psalm with a reminder that God's name is everlasting. The psalmist desires for God's name to be remembered throughout all generations. Take time today to share God's name with someone from a younger generation.

Describe the impotence of the idols of this world (verses 15 through 18). How are they contrasted with our God? Spend time thanking God for the fact that He speaks to us, He sees our needs, and He hears our prayers.

Write out a declaration of reverence and trust. The name of our God is great! Blessed are we who dwell in His presence.



SMALL GROUP: DOING LIFE TOGETHER

It is nothing short of amazing that God longs to dwell among His people. He desires to be our God and He wants for us to be His people. What an incredible truth! Someday God's desire to dwell with us will be completely fulfilled and we will live with Him face to face. Until then, we have to be content in knowing that God is here among us, even when we can't see or feel Him.

We started this chapter by looking at verses where God's presence was manifested in one way or another. What do these verses tell us about God's desire to dwell among His chosen people?

Read 2 Chronicles 7:16. Discuss the significance of the temple as a place where God's glory dwelt.

Although God wanted to dwell among His people forever, the people rebelled and worshiped other gods. Therefore, God caused His glory to leave Jerusalem and the Temple. Ezekiel recorded this vision in Ezekiel chapters 10 and 11. He then relayed this vision to the people. How do you think the people felt when they heard God's glory had left the temple?

After over 400 years God's glory returned to the temple when Jesus was presented there shortly after His birth. Describe how Simeon and Anna must have felt when they saw God in the flesh back in His dwelling place.

Not only did Jesus dwell among us while He was here on earth, He also promised that when He returned to heaven He would prepare a place for us to dwell with Him there. What hope does this promise offer to us?

At His ascension, Jesus declared He would be with us to the very end. The New Testament writers tell us Jesus does this by causing His Holy Spirit to live in us. Read 1 Corinthians 3:16 and 2 Corinthians 6:16 and discuss the significance of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us.

This week we read Psalm 139 where God declares there is no place on heaven or earth where we can go to escape His presence. Why might we try to hide from God's presence?

Why did Jonah try to hide from God? What was the result?

End your time today by discussing what Revelation 21:3 says about God's desire to dwell among His people. Rejoice! The LORD is There!

*“And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and he will dwell among them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be among them,
and he will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death;
there will no longer be any mourning,
or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.’”*

– Revelation 21:3-4

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Notes



¹ (Stone 1944, 156)

² (Lockyer 1975, 61-62)