

# Names of God, Pt 8 – Jehovah Shammah

*Names of God Series*

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Perhaps you have been to the Minnesota State Fair or the Mall of America or one of any number of amusement parks and have seen a cartoon artist drawing caricatures of people. Now a caricatures is a representation of one's likeness, but with exaggerated accents. Perhaps the chin or the nose or the ears or some other feature of one's image is enlarged and expanded. And, of course, this distortion is common in political cartoons.

But this evening I have for you an example. Without permission I have for you an example. And there before you is a sketch of my wife and I. Perhaps you recognize. But do my ears really look like that?

Worse. Sure. Is my head really that big or is my body really that small or is my arm really that hairy?

Although a few of us have the ability to sketch such a picture on canvas, most of us, however, do engage in the art of misrepresenting one another by accentuating a dominant characteristic of another.

For instance, did you hear about so and so? I heard that she is always late to everything. Did you hear about so and so? I heard that he is never happy unless he gets his way.

Ok, beyond the gossip and the slander that we are just committed, is that really the only thing that you can think of to describe that other person? Surely there is more to their image than that. But, alas, many times we think the very same way about God. And we create and we confine our big God into our little mind so that if 10 people were asked to draw a picture of God there would be 10 different pictures.

One picture might portray God as a God of love. Another picture might portray God as a God of judgment and any imbalance of any one of God's attributes creates a caricature of God. And so to keep us from this error, we have been enlarging our understanding of God's character and correcting any misrepresentations that we might have of him by learning of his names and gaining a full and accurate picture, not of God's caricature, but of his character.

The point of review, you remember our premise. God has progressively revealed himself to his people by introducing himself with and identifying himself by different names at different times. God's names were given to man God himself during specific times of man's need so that we might know that God is our all in all.

As we do each Wednesday evening, a bit of review for you. The first name that we studied was **אלהים** (el-o-heem') meaning eternal, triune creator from Genesis chapter one, the God who created the heavens and the earth, the eternal God who created the heavens and the earth, the triune God who created the heavens and the earth.

Next we studied **יהוה** (yeh-ho-vaw'). **יהוה** (yeh-ho-vaw') is the self existing one, very good. Of course, **יהוה** (yeh-ho-vaw') is the God who introduced himself to Moses at the burning bush in Exodus chapter three. When Moses protested, "God, who are you? Who are you that the Egyptians would accept what you say?" And God introduced himself as **יהוה** (yeh-ho-vaw'), the self existing one.

**אל שרי** (ale shad-dah'- ee), the God almighty, almighty God, the one who can do anything, for he caused an old man and a barren woman to conceive, Genesis chapter 18. For nothing is too difficult or hard for **אל שרי** (ale shad-dah'- ee).

**רעונסי** (ad-o-noy'), Lord or master, very good. Although we normally think of a master as one who abuses his authority over a slave or a subordinate, we can think of God as our master as a good God. We can look to him and go to him for help.

**יהוה יראה** (yeh-ho-vaw' yir-eh') means the God who provides or the God who sees. In Genesis 22 Abraham was to sacrifice his only son Isaac in Mount Moriah. When Isaac asked his father, "Behold, father, behold, I see the wood and, behold, I see the fire, but I don't see the lamb. Where is the lamb?" And Abraham answered, "God sees and God will provide himself a lamb."

**יהוה רפא** (yeh-ho-vaw' raw-faw'). Oops. I gave it to you. The God who heals, very good. In Exodus 15 Israel was three days in the wilderness and found themselves without water or I might more accurately say with only bitter water. And God used the object lesson of the bitter water to introduce himself to his people as the God who heals the bitterness of their own hearts. Remember I explained how that bitterness is simply harbored hurt. It is not wrong to hurt. We all hurt. But if we harbor that hurt it becomes a cancer within us that will destroy us and defile those around us, Hebrews 12:15.

And then finally I believe it was just as week or two ago **יהוה שלום** (yeh-ho-vaw' shaw-lome') means God our peace. Israel was suffering at the hand of the Midianites. Midian means strife. And so during a season of great strife when Israel was being pillaged and plundered in every way by the Midianites, when Israel had no rest, Israel longed for peace, God appeared to Gideon and called him to go up against the Midianites. God introduced himself as **יהוה שלום** (yeh-ho-vaw' shaw-lome') or the God of peace.

I review these each Wednesday evening so that we might remember God and so that we might claim the character of God during different circumstances in our lives and I would encourage you to pray the names of God. I would encourage you to claim the names of God and gain a full and accurate picture of the character of God.

This evening we will add to our portrait of God by learning of him as יהוה שמה (yeh-ho-vaw' shawm'- maw). יהוה שמה (yeh-ho-vaw' shawm'- maw) means God is there.

Now I am sure at one time or another you have heard a friend say to another, “I am there for you. I am there for you, pal. I am there for you, buddy,” meaning you are not alone. I will stand by you. I will help you if you need me. But to a far greater degree God is there for us.

And so to fully understand the significance of this we must consider what God’s presence meant to God’s people Israel, beginning in the Garden of Eden. God was present with is creation. God was there. Genesis explains how that God walked and talked with Adam and Eve in the cool of the garden. God was there.

Now this is not a real picture of the Garden of Eden, but it will have to do. Most of the pictures of Adam and Eve that I found were a little risqué for our purposes this evening. And so if you will in you mind’s eye assume that this is the Garden of Eden and there in the garden Adam and Eve had everything they needed. They had security and they had love and acceptance and innocence and perfection and an intimate relationship with God. God was there with Adam and Eve in the garden. But they sinned against God and the fellowship was broken for the Bible tells us that God is:

“...of purer eyes than to behold evil, And cannot look on wickedness.”<sup>1</sup>

Habakkuk 1:13.

The Bible says that our iniquities have separated between us and our God, Isaiah 59 verse two.

And, consequently, Adam and Eve were cast out of the garden from the presence of the Lord.

Time passed and later God met with his people with a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. The tabernacle was the visible manifestation of God’s presence among Israel. We might say that God was there with his people.

The Bible explains that the tabernacle was to be a dwelling place for God, Exodus 25 verse eight.

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<sup>1</sup> Habakkuk 1:13.

Later still King David wanted to build a permanent place for God to dwell among his people, but it was David's son Solomon who was given the honor to construct the temple. It was a project that took seven years. It was a marvel of architecture. But, nonetheless, when it was completed Solomon conceded:

“But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built!”<sup>2</sup>

Ultimately, God's presence on earth was centered in the holy city of Jerusalem, specifically the temple and we might say that God was there.

But, alas, after Solomon's reign, Israel had a Family Feud and split into two kingdoms. The 10 northern tribes, of course, being Israel, the southern two tribes were called Judah. And in time Israel fell to the Assyrians. Judah was overrun by the Babylonians. The city of Jerusalem, the place where God resided, if you will, his residence among men was invaded. The temple was destroyed. The people were taken captive and it was as if Israel had been delivered from bondage in Egypt only to go into bondage in Babylon.

But the greatest tragedy of captivity was not so much the human restriction as much as it was the spiritual separation. And this is what you need to know this evening. In a very real sense, to the Jews, when they were away from Jerusalem they were away from God.

Have you ever felt that God was a million miles away? Where was God when you needed him? Why wasn't God there for you during that terrible crisis in your life?

I want you to turn with me to Psalm 137 as we begin. There are a number of Scriptures that I will have you find. I want us to quickly read and consider this psalm of lament, this longing of the captive to be back in Jerusalem where God was.

Psalm 137.

“By the rivers of Babylon, There we sat down, yea, we wept When we remembered Zion.”<sup>3</sup>

Or when we remembered Jerusalem.

We were captives in Babylon. Maybe by the Euphrates or the Tigris River there and we sat down by the river and we wept and we remembered Jerusalem.

We hung our harps Upon the willows in the midst of it. For there those who carried us away captive asked of us a song, And those who plundered us requested mirth, Saying, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion!"<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> 1 Kings 8:27.

<sup>3</sup> Psalm 137:1.

<sup>4</sup> Psalm 137:2-3.

They were mocking the captives. The Babylonian people were mocking the Jewish Hebrew captives saying, “Sing for us one of those songs from Jerusalem, ha, ha, ha. Sing for us one of those songs you used to sing in Zion where your God is, ha, ha, ha.”

Verse four.

How shall we sing the LORD’S song In a foreign land? If I forget you, O Jerusalem, Let my right hand forget its skill!<sup>5</sup>

Presumably its skill upon the harp.

“If I do not remember you, Let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth—If I do not exalt Jerusalem Above my chief joy.”<sup>6</sup>

Don’t let me play the harp. Don’t let me sing at songs. And the tragedy of separation was not just the city of Jerusalem, but what it represented. For you see, folks, God was there in Jerusalem.

It is most likely that Ezekiel was part of this department, one of those in captivity which really is where we will find the name יהוה שומה (yeh-ho-vaw’ shawm’ - maw). And if you will, turn with me now to the book of Ezekiel and we will find where God is introduced as יהוה שומה (yeh-ho-vaw’ shawm’ - maw).

The book of Ezekiel. Ezekiel prophesied during the time of Israel’s Babylonian captivity. Israel was at its lowest point. Jerusalem had fallen. Ezekiel chapter 10 as you are making your way there.

The people were in a foreign land. It was as if God was gone or it was as if the people were gone and God was still in Jerusalem.

And I want you to consider the devastation, then, when Ezekiel explained how that God’s glory had departed from Jerusalem. Ezekiel chapter 10 verse 18.

“And they will go there, and they will take away all its detestable things and all its abominations from there. Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh...”<sup>7</sup>

And do you know what? This is not what I am looking for. I am reading in chapter 11.

Ezekiel chapter 10 verse 18. I am sorry.

Then the glory of the LORD departed from the threshold of the temple and stood over the cherubim. And the cherubim lifted their wings and mounted

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<sup>5</sup> Psalm 137:4-5.

<sup>6</sup> Psalm 137:6.

<sup>7</sup> Ezekiel 11:18-19.

up from the earth in my sight. When they went out, the wheels were beside them; and they stood at the door of the east gate of the LORD'S house, and the glory of the God of Israel was above them.<sup>8</sup>

Turn to chapter 11 verse 22.

So the cherubim lifted up their wings, with the wheels beside them, and the glory of the God of Israel was high above them. And the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city and stood on the mountain, which is on the east side of the city [that is the Mount of Olives]. Then the Spirit took me up and brought me in a vision by the Spirit of God into Chaldea, to those in captivity. And the vision that I had seen went up from me. So I spoke to those in captivity of all the things the LORD had shown me.<sup>9</sup>

Ezekiel spoke of the departure of God's glory from Jerusalem and it was reminiscent of the time when the ark of the covenant was captured and Eli's daughter-in-law named her child Ichabod saying the glory of God has departed from Israel.

And it is interesting here to note that God's glory left Jerusalem and went across the Kidron Valley to the Mount of Olives. And I think it is no coincidence that Christ ascended into heaven from the Mount of Olives and is promised to return at the same place.

But I want you to fast forward to Ezekiel 43. Don't lose me. I know this is uncharted territory for most of us. Ezekiel 43.

Ezekiel has now explained how that God's glory has left Jerusalem, has left the temple. And this is adding insult to injury now. Not only are the people in captivity, but now God is no longer there back in Jerusalem, Ezekiel 43. Here we will read of a reversal of the departure of the Lord's glory.

Ezekiel 43 verse one.

“Afterward he brought me to the gate, the gate that faces toward the east. And behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east.”<sup>10</sup>

It is coming from the Mount of Olives now across the Kidron Valley, back to the temple mount.

His voice was like the sound of many waters; and the earth shone with His glory. It was like the appearance of the vision which I saw—like the vision which I saw when I came to destroy the city. The visions were like

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<sup>8</sup> Ezekiel 10:18-19.

<sup>9</sup> Ezekiel 11:22-25.

<sup>10</sup> Ezekiel 43:1-2.

the vision which I saw by the River Chebar; and I fell on my face. And the glory of the LORD came into the temple by way of the gate which faces toward the east. The Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court; and behold, the glory of the LORD filled the temple. Then I heard Him speaking to me from the temple, while a man stood beside me.

And He said to me, "Son of man, this is the place of My throne and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever. No more shall the house of Israel defile My holy name, they nor their kings, by their harlotry or with the carcasses of their kings on their high places."<sup>11</sup>

And we could keep reading here in chapter 43 of the millennial temple and its activity. But finally and ultimately here Ezekiel is speaking of the new Jerusalem, Ezekiel 48. We are almost done. Ezekiel 48 verse 35.

Speaking of this new city, Ezekiel 48:35.

“All the way around shall be eighteen thousand cubits; and the name of the city from that day shall be: THE LORD IS THERE.”<sup>12</sup>

In your Hebrew Bibles, יהוה שמה (yeh-ho-vaw’ shawm’ - maw). The name of the new city יהוה שמה (yeh-ho-vaw’ shawm’ - maw).

You see, folks, the return of Jehovah’s presence, you hear me very carefully. The return of Jehovah’s presence is the hope and the end of all prophetic expectation for the Jew. And the most remarkable aspect of the new city of Jerusalem will be the presence of the Lord. While God’s glory had departed from the city as a prelude to God’s judgment we read of that in Ezekiel 10 and 11, his return to dwell in Jerusalem will be a sign of blessing and, to be sure, the day will come when the Messiah will rule and reign from Jerusalem and that will take place in the millennial reign.

However, I would suggest to you this evening that there is a present fulfillment of the promise of God that the promise of God is with us really in the person of Jesus Christ and in the body of his Church. And we can experience God’s presence right now.

Of course, the presence of God is found in the person of Jesus Christ, John 1:14.

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.”<sup>13</sup>

And, of course, we know that his name was to be called Immanuel, meaning God with us. And so in a very real sense, God is there in the person of Jesus Christ. Also the presence of God is found in the people of God, the Church, 1 Corinthians 3:16 and 2 Corinthians

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<sup>11</sup> Ezekiel 43:2-7.

<sup>12</sup> Ezekiel 48:35.

<sup>13</sup> John 1:14.

6:16, that we are, in fact, the temple of God, both individually as believers and corporately as the Church.

But ultimately the whole expression of Ezekiel's prophecy is described in Revelation 21 and we need to go there, all the way in the back of your Bibles to Revelation 21. And we will find that we can connect some of the dots here. Revelation 21, perhaps the very last page of your Bibles.

Verse one.

“Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth.”<sup>14</sup>

This is not Ezekiel, now. This is, of course, John.

...for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God."<sup>15</sup>

If you will allow me a loose translation, God will be there, יהוה שמה (yeh-ho-vaw' shawm' - maw).

Verse 22.

But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light.<sup>16</sup>

And we could continue.

Conclusion. יהוה שמה (yeh-ho-vaw' shawm' - maw), God is there. What does that mean to those who heard of Ezekiel's prophecy? It would have meant so much to them. They were exiles, captive in a foreign land. And they lamented that they were in Babylon and God was there in Jerusalem.

As part of God's judgment, Ezekiel explained to the people that God's glory had departed from there. But the good news is that God and his presence and his glory would return and inhabit a new Jerusalem and God would be there.

Of course, as a New Testament Christian, we understand the presence of God to be found in the person of Jesus Christ and within the body of the Church. And there are numerous,

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<sup>14</sup> Revelation 21:1.

<sup>15</sup> Revelation 21:1-3.

<sup>16</sup> Revelation 21:22-23.



numerous Scriptures that speak to the omnipresence of God, that he would be with us always.

Hebrews 13:5.

“I will never leave you nor forsake you.”<sup>17</sup>

Matthew 28:20.

“I am with you always even to the end of the age.”<sup>18</sup>

One last place I would ask you to turn to and that is Psalm 139. And perhaps your mind has already wandered to Psalm 139 when we try to consider יהוה שמה (yeh-ho-vaw’ shawm’- maw).

I am tempted to read it all. God’s perfect knowledge of man and the intimate understanding that God has of each of us, but picking up in verse seven, the rhetorical questions.

Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me. If I say, "Surely the darkness shall fall on me," Even the night shall be light about me; Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, But the night shines as the day; The darkness and the light are both alike to You.<sup>19</sup>

And then, again, returning to the intimate knowledge that God has of us even before our birth.

Verse 17.

“How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them!”<sup>20</sup>

In a casual way we might say to a friend, “I am there for you.” But the truth of the matter is we can’t always be there for one another. But, dear friend, God is there for you. He is יהוה שמה (yeh-ho-vaw’ shawm’- maw). And might we remember that we are in a foreign land. We are only sojourners and pilgrims. We are, if you will, captive on this sphere, this globe we call planet earth.

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<sup>17</sup> Hebrews 13:5.

<sup>18</sup> Matthew 28:20.

<sup>19</sup> Psalm 139:7-12.

<sup>20</sup> Psalm 139:17.

But knowing that God's presence is among us is a blessing and we can claim even in the occasions of our greatest loneliness יהוה שמה (yeh-ho-vaw' shawm'- maw), God is there.

Let's pray.

*Father God, we thank you that you are an omnipresent God and that you have chosen to reside among us in the person of the Holy Spirit who indwells each believer. I thank you, God, that you are ever among us and that you are there for us or for the Jew who longs for the day when glory will return to the temple, for the Christian who looks forward to the day when there will be a new heaven and a new earth, a new Jerusalem you will rule and reign for 1000 years. Lord, in the meantime we thank you so much for your presence. May this not just be a theological truth that we might ponder, but a reality that we might experience on a daily basis with us in Jesus' name. Amen.*