

Christmas Series 2022 - God With Us (week 4)

Matthew 1:20-23

The 7 Hebrew names of God and what it means for us today

Many of us growing up got great toys and presents for Christmas. Unfortunately, when we heard the name of Jesus, it was in the songs we sang - Christmas carols. We may have known a little *about* Jesus, but not actually *known him*. Maybe we have watched Christmas movies that we loved, and that was all special to us, being together with family. But, as good as those Christmases were, they couldn't hold a candle to Christmas after we came to a personal relationship with Christ - after giving our hearts and lives to Jesus Christ. Christmas then took on a whole new meaning, as we celebrated Jesus - talked about him - understood the songs we sang about him - the Person who now lived inside of us, and changed our lives dramatically.

What is Christmas to you? The real Christmas story begins to make sense.

Matthew 1:20-23 NIV

"But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.' All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: 'The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel' (which means 'God with us')."

We've been talking about the seven names of Jehovah God (JEHOVAH - Hebrew; Tetragrammaton = YHWH) - when we see the names of God all throughout the Scriptures - those names reveal his nature and character - they would often mark powerful, game-changing events throughout the Old Testament. When those events happened, the Hebrew servants of God would *mark* the spot, often with an altar made from a stack of rocks. They would mark a place so that every time they and others would pass by that altar or marker, that pile of rocks would represent what God did at that place.

The first six names we've already covered are:

- 1] *Jehovah-Nissi: God Is My Banner* - Exodus 17:16. He is now my Banner of Victory - his victory over my life.
- 2] *Jehovah-Jireh: God Will Provide* - Genesis 22:13-14
- 3] *Jehovah-Rapha: God Heals* - Exodus 15:26. We may have scars on our bodies - those scars are proof that God still heals.
- 4] *Jehovah-Shalom: God Our Peace* - Judges 6:24
- 5] *Jehovah-Rohi: God Our Way and Shepherd* - Psalm 23:1
- 6] *Jehovah-Tsidkenu: God of Righteousness* - Jeremiah 23:6. Some of us have a difficult time worshipping because we feel the weight and guilt - shame and condemnation - and yet, Romans 8:1 tells us, *"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus..."* If you are in Christ, you have been made whole - made right.

Today, we're looking at the name,

Jehovah-Shammah - the God Who is Ever Present.

Matthew 1:22-23 NIV

"All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: 'The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel' (which means 'God with us') [communion]."

John 1:14 NIV

"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."

also - John 1:14 The Message Bible

"The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood..." Jesus put on an earth suit and moved into the neighborhood. *"The Word became flesh and dwelt among us [The word for this is, 'Incarnation']"* God with us - God, through his Son, Jesus, came to this earth, and he put on skin, flesh and bone. His love was so fierce, so feral that He could not stand on the sideline, He had to put on a uniform and get in the game.

Philippians 2:6-8 NIV

"[Jesus] being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!"

Jesus was willing to come and be birthed into this world as a child - as a baby, as we sing about in the Christmas songs - and he was born into that, willing to suffer what we suffer, yet without sin. That's the Christmas narrative - the Christmas Story. The incarnation of Christ - which means that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us - God with us. *That's the God we serve and love - the God that said, "Unless I enter in the game - into the human experience - I will never be able to fully understand what they suffer and go through."* And so he did in his Son. That's how we get to *Jehovah-Shammah* - the God who is with us - the God Who is Present.

The Scriptures talk about this being ours to have - the very *Presence* of God. Psalm 22:3 says, *"He inhabits [sits among] the praises of his people."* God literally shows up and is attracted to our worship, as we make a joyful noise to him, he loves and is attracted to that effort, and that heart to do something that pleases him.

Ezekiel 48:35 ESV

"The circumference of the city shall be 18,000 cubits. And the name of the city from that time on shall be, The LORD Is There (Jehovah-Shammah)." Ezekiel had a vision of the restoration of the city of Jerusalem. God would rest his Presence on the city - the heavenly and eternal city of Jerusalem from then on. It would be perpetual in nature.

Exodus 33:14-15 ESV

"And he said, 'My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.' And he [Moses] said to him, 'If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here.'"

When Moses was leading the Israelites out of bondage - out of slavery - they were getting ready to cross over, but they were circling the mountain over and over - they were taking the test and failing it every time - so they had to take a re-test for forty years. And here they were again, and Moses would go outside of the tent city they had set up, and he would meet with God. The place was called the Tabernacle of Meeting, where he would get with God face-to-face.

Moses had a young assistant named Joshua. The Bible says that when Moses would go back into the tent city that Joshua would go and remain in the tent - in the Presence of God - where he wanted to stay and dwell. And Joshua would later take the baton from Moses, when Moses' time was up, he was replaced by Joshua, who had spent extended time in the Presence of God - *Jehovah-Shammah - the God Who is Ever Present.*

Moses, here, is getting ready to lead the people out and go across - move on - and Moses says this to God, *“Will You send Your Presence, and can I see Your Glory? If You don’t go with us, I don’t want to go.”*

We are living and walking by faith. If God doesn’t show up, nothing we do will matter - none of it will work. It would be good for us to say, *“God would You send Your Presence with us? As we are stepping into a new year, would You send Your Presence? In fact, if Your Presence is not with us, we don’t want to go. We don’t want to take a step without You. We need Your Presence.”*

Then Moses asked God to, *“Show me Your Glory [literally means the manifested Presence of God in all its fullness].”* That was a risky thing to ask from Moses because it had been said that if anyone was to see the Glory of God, they would die on the spot, because a human being couldn’t handle it.

Jeremiah 29:11 ESV

“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.”

Jeremiah’s prophecy of God’s goodness during a time when the people of Israel - Jerusalem had been raided and they were taken into captivity into Babylon, and they were there in captivity for seventy years - *after* God had promised the land. Suddenly, they had found themselves stolen and taken away to a foreign place against their will. In the middle of that, God speaks into it through the prophet Jeremiah. He’s telling us how to find him. The Lord desires for us to know him as *Jehovah-Shammah* - the God Who is Ever Present, the God who is perpetually with us.

Psalms 105:4 ESV

“Seek the LORD and his strength; seek his presence continually! [perpetually, never stopping]”

Hebrews 13:5 ESV

“Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’”

Matthew 28:19 ESV. The Great Commission (a charge, giving orders, instructions):

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.’”

Is Jehovah-Shammah present for you?

This is a good time to re-commit - re-commission - re-up, in terms of stepping into a new year - focused and committed - *Jehovah-Shammah* - the God Who is Ever-Present. He'll never leave you nor forsake you. His Presence is with you continually - perpetually. God gave the best Gift he could possibly give us - and that was in the birth of his Son, Jesus Christ. he made a way where there was, prior, no way. He made a way in the desert where there was nothing - he made roads straight that were curvy and messed up. He comes in - he gave us the best he had, and that was his son Jesus.

How amazing it would be for us to say, *"I'm going to give God the best I have. I'm going to give Him my self. I'm going to give Him my life. I'm going to commit this next year to Him, and just say, Father, I'm Yours. Order my steps - lead me and guide me. Show me what to do - how to live - how to navigate this crazy world."* ...he'll do that.

Prayer

Father, Thank You for giving the Best You had. You gave us the greatest Present - Your Son Jesus Christ - and You also gave us Your Presence - by being with us continually - perpetually - even on our worst day. We are grateful as we press pause on our busy-ness, and say Thank You, Lord. We echo the words of Moses when he said, "If You don't go with us, we won't go." So, would You go with us - send Your Presence with us. Jehovah-Shammah - the One Who is with us - Emmanuel - God with us.

Thank You for Your Presence. In this upcoming new year, we want to go with a renewed heart. We want to re-commit - re-up - to be all in. Thank You, Lord, that You're all in with us. We want You in our hearts and in our lives. We admit that we've gone through some dry times and dry places, and we ask for Your Grace as we re-commit ourselves to You.

We love You and honor You. In Jesus' name. Amen