

# “THE LORD IS THERE”

*“And the name of the city from that time on will be: ‘THE LORD IS THERE’.” —EZEKIEL 48:35*

The Hebrew names of God are revealed in Scripture through people’s experience of Him. Ezekiel’s experience of God came in a sequence of visions, leading to a climax in which the name ‘Jehovah-shammah’, meaning, “THE LORD IS THERE” is given to us.

The book of Ezekiel opens during the time of Judah’s exile in Babylon. Ezekiel is sitting by the Kebar River and has a compelling vision of God. Chapter one gives a detailed account, but briefly, he sees a figure of a man seated on a throne high above. From the waist up, He’s glowing like metal, surrounded by brilliant light. This vision depicts the transcendence of God. Ezekiel discovers that God’s presence was not just in the temple of Jerusalem, but in Babylon, an alien and oppressive territory.

Ezekiel’s message was not about getting the people back to God, but about getting God back to the people. Arrogance, sin and rebellion had driven God out of the temple in Jerusalem, but oppressed and in captivity, the people cry out to Him. God hears their cries and Ezekiel sees God coming back to the temple, entering through the east gate, His voice like the roar of rushing waters, and the land radiant with His glory. “Then the Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner courts and the glory of the LORD filled the temple” (Ezekiel 43:5). He then watches the east gate entrance being blocked off so that nothing more could enter; significant of the fact that nothing more can be added to God.

God said to Ezekiel, “Son of man, this is the place of my throne and the place for the soles of my feet” (Ezekiel 43:7). The throne speaks of kingship, and the ‘soles of my feet’ speaks of occupied territory with God as conqueror. Ezekiel then sees a river flowing out from the temple with lush green trees along both banks, and is told all kinds of fish will be swarming its water. The river benefits the whole city, bringing restoration and life. God tells Ezekiel, “And the name of the city from that time will be: Jehovah-shamma, “THE LORD IS THERE”.

God left Jerusalem, but He didn’t leave His people. They humbled themselves, He heard their cries and He came back. The Babylonians are eventually overpowered by the Persians and the Jewish exiles are set free, many returning to their homeland and others choosing to stay. God restored His people and eventually Jerusalem. The wonderful message here is that in our humility and contrition, God hears us, and when we allow Him to occupy the throne of our hearts, He conquers all and brings about restoration and life.

***PRAYER: Dear Heavenly Father, I am humbled by your grace and compassion. Thank You for hearing my prayers and always being there.***

***TO REFLECT UPON: When was the last time I prayerfully turned to God in repentance?***