

God has a Name

7/14/24

Jehovah Shammah – Ezekiel 48:35

Sunday AM

You've likely heard about (2) precocious little boys who were called into the pastor's office one day after church b/c mom/dad were at their wit's end and didn't know where else to turn for help, so they took their boys to the pastor hoping he could lead them to Jesus. Well... oblivious to why they were there, the pastor asked them (1) question w/ the hope of being able to share Jesus w/ them – He asked, "Boys... can you tell me where Jesus is?" Well..., the boys looked at each other, then at the pastor, and shrugged their shoulders. After a pregnant pause, the pastor asked again – "Boys... where's Jesus?" At this point, the boys were getting scared. Finally, raising his voice, the pastor asked, "Boys... WHERE IS JESUS! Panicked, the boys ran out the door, down the street, into their house to hide their closest. Of course, mom/dad went home, found their boys panicked and crying. Concerned, they asked, "Boys... what's wrong?" Little Billy said, "The pastor has lost Jesus at church, and he's blaming us!"

Have you ever been blamed for something you had nothing to do w/? I think God gets blamed for things all the time that He's had nothing to do w/ too.

This summer, we've been looking at the names of God to help us to know who He is and how He operates – so that we have no misconceptions about Him but think rightly of Him.

There's little more frustrating than someone having a wrong impression of you. You get a bad rap b/c someone caught you at the wrong time on the wrong day and now you're saddled w/ a label that's not true.

God gets a bad rap all of the time (the devil makes certain). He gets blamed for things He had nothing to do w/ leaving people w/ a wrong idea of who He is.

When pastoring in NY, Harry Fosdick often counseled students from Columbia Un. One evening, a student told him that he could no longer believe in God. Dr. Fosdick asked the student to describe the God he didn't believe in. When the student finished sketching his idea of God, Dr. Fosdick said, "Well, we're in the same boat. I don't believe in that God either. But can I introduce you to the one true God of the Bible?"

Our goal this summer has been to introduce us to the truth of who God is. To address any wrong ideas that we might have of Him to help us see Him for who He is and for how much He loves us – so that we might know Him and trust Him w/ our lives.

It goes back to the 1st Commandment. *You shall have no other gods before you.* God wants us to know Him and for nothing to come b/w us and Him.

Today, I want us to look at one of my favorite names of God – ***Jehovah Shammah*** – The Lord is **THERE**.

I The God Who **IS** Present

Shammah means **THERE**. It means **God is present** – implying He is personal and can be experienced. In good times and bad – God is present.

Have you ever experienced God's presence? Have you known His closeness? I ask b/c God wants us to know Him. He doesn't want to be the God who is over there (point afar) – but the God who's here (touch heart).

When my kids were young, I loved playing hide-n-go seek w/ them. They'd hide and I'd go and find them. But when I hid, they often got distracted and forgot to come and find me. I have good news. God doesn't play hide-n-seek w/ us – He's always there on the lookout for you and me.

This is more than a religious event to attend – I'm talking about a *relational experience* – an empirical encounter. God showing up/showing out in your life.

Sadly – too many people are more concerned w/ being rightly religious than they are being rightly related.

LBH – we know how to have a weekly religious experience, but we struggle to have a daily relationship w/ God. We enjoy the pomp/circumstance of tradition but we're missing His mercies that are new every AM. I fear too many of us prefer a civilized religion instead of a raw/uncensored intimacy w/ God.

What is interesting to me about this name is that it is only mentioned once in the Bible and chronologically, it is the last name given for God in the OT.

And the name of the city from that time on will be – the LORD IS THERE. Ezekiel 48:35

As God's presence relates to Ezekiel's prophecy – it was around 574 B.C., 14 years after the fall of Jerusalem – the Temple had been destroyed and God had been evicted from His holy place in the temple – and more importantly, **from the hearts of His people.**

After Solomon's reign, the Israelites had a family feud and split into (2) kingdoms. The northern kingdom was Israel and the southern kingdom was Judah. Then, in 723 B.C. Israel was overrun by the Assyrians never to be heard from again. Then, in 607 B.C., Babylon invaded Judah. They allowed the Judah to continue to rule itself, but only if they paid taxes. But after 10 yrs, King Jehoiachin decided to host the Jewish version of the Boston Tea Party and stopped paying taxes.

In response, Nebuchadnezzar sacked Jerusalem and carted the king and his subjects (including Ezekiel) off into slavery. Once in captivity, Ezekiel began to have visions of God rebuilding the city of Jerusalem. At the climax of his vision, he reported that the city would no longer be called Jerusalem – the city of peace, but **Jehovah Shammah** – the Lord is **THERE.**

To know this name, we have to consider what this meant for the Israelites. They believed Jehovah was a present God – that He was always THERE.

In the Garden of Eden, God was w/ His creation. Genesis 3 says God walked in the cool of the day w/ Adam/Eve. They experienced security, acceptance, love, innocence, perfection, and intimacy w/ God. But their communion was lost by a single act of rebellion forcing God to throw Adam/Eve out of his Garden – out of his presence.

God was still there in the world, but not like He had been in the Garden. In the Garden, God was THERE – right there – but after the fall – everything changed. What changed?

The proximity of our contact changed – after the fall, the closest the Israelites came to dwelling w/ God was in the Tabernacle/Temple. His presence was located in the Ark of the Covenant in the holy of holies. *When Solomon's temple was being dedicated, the Lord took up residence there.*

When the priests w/drew from the Holy Place, the cloud filled the temple of the Lord. The priests couldn't perform their service b/c of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled his temple. Then Solomon said, "The Lord has said He would dwell in a dark cloud; I've indeed built a magnificent temple for you, a place for you to dwell. 1 Kings 8:10-13

God was **THERE** in His Temple, but not like before the fall. There was no fellowship or relaxed walks in the cool of the day. Instead of God being THERE, He was over there – on the other side behind the curtain.

The nature of our contact changed – instead of walking intimately w/ God, now God could only be approached thru the priests/sacrifices. The High Priest was charged w/ entering the holy of holies to make atonement for sin once a year for the nation.

So, when we come to Ezekiel, there's a problem b/c the Temple had been destroyed due to Judah's sin – and in the minds of the people, w/out a Temple, there was nowhere for God to dwell. **What happened?**

- 1 **They lost the wonder of His majesty** – They were more concerned w/ what God could do for them instead of what He could do thru them. They treated God like He was their genie in a bottle – calling on Him only when they needed Him.
- 2 **They bought the lie they weren't as bad as the pagans.** Even worse, they came to think the ways of the pagans around them weren't so bad after all. They turned from God and embraced pagan actions.
- 3 **They believed outward religious activity was more vital than inward purity.** They thought as long as they brought a sacrifice – it'd be enough.

After allowing Judah to face the consequences of their actions by letting the Babylonians sack Jerusalem, God graciously stepped in to encourage His people. He showed Ezekiel a vision of a new Jerusalem, a city w/ a glorious Temple where the sacrificial system would be reinstated. Ezekiel saw God's glory in His Temple – and he exclaimed, "The Lord is There".

DYK the same God who wanted the Israelites to know His presence wants us to know His presence too.

II The God Who is **WITH** Us

For you/me today – it begins w/ Jesus – **God w/ us.**

This happened so that what the Lord spoke thru the prophet came true: "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel," which means "God is w/ us." Matthew 1:22-23

It all happened in a moment, a most remarkable moment... The omnipotent in one instant, made himself breakable. He who'd been spirit became flesh. He who was larger than the universe became an embryo – and He who sustains the world w/ a word chose to be dependent on the nourishment of a young girl... God as a fetus. Holiness sleeping in a womb. The creator of life being created. God was given eyebrows, elbows, kidneys, and a spleen, He stretched out against the walls and floated in the amniotic fluids of His mother. God came near. Lucado

Knowing our hopeless/sinful condition, God did the only thing that He could to redeem/restore His lost creation – He stepped out of heaven, humbling Himself as a servant, and incarcerating Himself in flesh in the person of Jesus to die on a cruel cross as a worthy sacrifice to seek/save the lost.

God came near to live here (*point to heart*). Jesus came near to reestablish an intimate relationship w/ you and me. In His great love, He did what was necessary to move from THERE to HERE (heart).

III The God Who is **IN** Us

So, it's not enough that God is w/ us – we must be w/ Him too. But to be w/ Him, we have to receive the gift of His presence and invite Him into our lives.

But as many as have received Him, to those who have believed in His name, He has given them the right to be called the children of God. John 1:12

Once God enters into our lives thru salvation, the H.S. takes up residence – and we're now His Temple.

Do you not know that you body is the temple of God who is in you and you are not your own? For you have been bought w/ a price, therefore glorify God w/ your mortal body. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

W/ the H.S. now living in us, we now have the promise that He'll never leave or forsake us. And now – *greater is He that's w/in us than he who's in the world.*

This means that once we've trusted in Him as our Savior/Lord – that wherever we go, He goes w/ us. Whatever we do, He does it w/ us. His H.S. w/in us is at war w/ our fleshly nature struggling to perfect us in Christ. He *convicts, leads, guides, and directs* us. It means that God stepped out of eternity to step into our lives. **He came near to be in here!**

IV The God Who is **THRU** Us

It doesn't end there. God made His dwelling among us to redeem us, but also to empower us for His kingdom.

We weren't just saved from hell; we were saved into a purposeful relationship w/ God. God has a plan for us. In Matthew, Jesus said we're to be salt/light – fishers of men. We exist to accomplish His mission.

We are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating us: we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 2 Corinthians 5:20

This means our lives exist to serve an eternal cause that is greater than ourselves. As God lives in us, He wants to live thru us as we represent Jesus to the world by our words/actions. Our purpose is His mission – which is to seek/save the lost.

Our lives are to be about influencing people to *know, walk, and serve* Jesus by loving others as He loves us.

One of my favorite stories is of a little boy who heard the preacher say that when a person is saved Jesus comes and lives inside of them. The mom looked at the boy to measure his response and noticed that he looked confused. As they were leaving church the boy turned to his mom and asked, "Mom, if Jesus lives in you then shouldn't He poke thru you."

YES! Yes... He should! I like that. God came near to be present in our lives. The God who is **THERE** wants to poke thru you so that other people might experience His grace/mercy too thru you.

In meeting Jehovah Shammah, we find the God who is there – who is present in our lives to allow us to know Him, to grow in Him, and to show Him to others. So, if anyone (of the demonic) ever tries to tell you anything different – they're lying! God is **THERE** today for you!