



The Wonders of God's Names

Rev. Dr. Botros Botrosdief

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To

Mernda Presbyterian Church

Whittlesea Presbyterian Church

I would like to express my deep

appreciation of the work of

Drs Jean Ely and Fran Graham

In the editing of this book

To God be Glory

Soli Deo Gloria

Introduction

Names in the Bible are important; they were often used as an indication of a person's identification or his unique character. So it is with the names of God. When our Lord Jesus prayed for His disciples, He prayed that they might know the name of God. Jn 17:6 - "*I have manifested your name*" Jn 17:26 - "*I have declared to them your name*".

God's names are an important source of knowledge of who God is. It gives a clue to His rich character and communicates a message we need to know. For example, the name of Jesus means "Saviour" for "*He will save His people from their sins*".

It's very encouraging to our souls to study the names and titles of God and see how He has revealed Himself to us in Scripture. Each name means something; each reveals an important aspect of his nature, his character, his attributes and His relationship with us.

Knowing the names of God will help us trust him every day of our life. Faith will increase in our souls and these names become the basis of confidence, and encouragement of faith in our minds.

My prayer is that our eyes will open to God's glorious names, and our faith strengthens as it is written in Psalm 9:10 "*Those who know your name put their trust in you*".

To know his name is to know him. So, let us get to know God through his names.

Elohim - אֱלֹהִים

God the Mighty Creator

Elohim is the first name that appears in the very first verse of the Bible “*In the beginning Elohim-God- created the heavens and the earth*”.

Our Lord Jesus cried out to *Elohim* in his agonized prayer from the cross “*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabchthani?*” Which means, “*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*” Why did our Lord use this name in His deepest agony? Why we too, in our deepest agony should use the name of *Elohim* in our prayers?

The name *Elohim* speaks of three major facts;

- 1. *Elohim* is the Mighty Maker of the universe and the Supreme Creator of all life, who created everything from nothing. He is the able to give us beauty for ashes.**

Elohim emphasizes God’s power and strength. This is evident in His creating, from nothing, the heavens, the earth and all that is in them. “*In the beginning Elohim- God-created the heavens and the earth*”. “*He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast*” (Ps 33:9). “*By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible*”(Heb. 11:3)

It is no accident that the first thing God wanted us to know about Himself is that He is the Mighty Creator of everything. The Bible declares that only a fool who say “*There is no God*”. William Paley (1743-1805) said “*You can’t have a watch without a watchmaker. You can’t have a design without a designer. You can’t have a painting without a*

painter. We would never infer in the case of a mechanism such as a watch that its design was due to natural processes such as the wind and rain; rather, the existence of a watch points to the probability of a watchmaker. Living things are similar to mechanisms, exhibiting the same sort of orderly complexity, and we must therefore infer by analogy that their design is also the result of intelligent activity” (The Bible and Science made easy, p 6).

The whole revelation of Scripture is rooted in this fact: God is the Eternal who created the universe and everything in it. The Psalmist says: “*Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker” “My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth” (Ps 95:6; 121:2).* Solomon says: “*Remember your Creator in the days of your youth” (Ecc 12:1).*

Apostle Paul says in Acts 17:24 “*The God who made the world and everything in it, is the Lord of heaven and earth.”* Revelation 4:11 says; “*You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.”* Job says “*He stretches out the heaven over empty space, and hangs the earth on nothing” (Job 26:7).*

The early church viewed the doctrine of Creation as the beginning point of theology and a bedrock biblical belief. Its importance is summed it up at the very beginning of the Apostle’s Creed: “*I believe in God, the Father Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth...*”

When we pray to *Elohim*, we remember that He is the One who is creatively powerful, completely sovereign, and gloriously great. Your “*help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth” (Ps 121:2).* Your life is meant to show

the greatness and glory and the very presence of your *Elohim*, the Mighty Creator.

Elohim is the one who restored the beauty of his creation out of the wasteland. We see this in Genesis 1. In verse 1 the Bible says “*In the beginning Elohim created the heaven and the earth*”, but verse 2 says “*The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep*”. That raises the question: **What made God’s creation to be void and wasteland?** Because the Bible says in Isaiah 45:18 that “*God; who formed and made the earth, Who has established it, did not create it in vain or wasteland, but formed it to be inhabited*”.

Something had happened to God’s beautiful creation and ruined it. Some believe that Satan ruined the earth, when God threw him out from heaven. But God restored the beauty of the earth again. *Elohim* created light, and made everything on earth that looked good, and then created Adam and Eve to fill the earth and *Elohim* saw that everything was very good.

Elohim is still the same; “*Yesterday, Today and forever.*” He can restore the beauty of His image in us again. What Satan did to us through our sins, the loving *Elohim*, restored His image in us by His Son our Lord Jesus Christ as He promised “*To console those who mourn in Zion. To give them beauty for ashes. The oil of joy for mourning. The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. That they may be called trees of righteousness. The planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified*” (Isaiah 61:1-3)

Trust in the name of *Elohim* because “*The name of the LORD is a strong tower; - a fortified place- The righteous run to it and are safe*” (Proverbs 18:10.)

2. Elohim is the Covenant God.

"Elohim" is the plural form eloh אלה, which means "to make an oath"; as the Bible says in Hebrews. 6:13-16 "When Elohim made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself, saying, "Surely I will bless you and in your seed all the nation of the earth will be blessed. For people swear by something greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation."

Elohim entered into a covenant with His people. He made the covenant to redeem us and restore the beauty of His image in us again. He is our mighty God who is able to fulfil what He has promised.

He said: "Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength" (Isaiah 40:28-29).

When we pray remember that Elohim is the God who keeps his promises, "I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you" (Gen 28:15). "Elohim is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?" (Numbers 23:19)

3. Elohim speaks of God's Plurality in Oneness.

The word Elohim is a plural word, yet the verb that follows is always in the singular. God in Genesis 1:1 begins to tell us of His plurality in one-- TRINITY. It means that God is Father, Son and Spirit, and they are working as one.

Notice God's plurality of oneness. (Genesis 1:26) *“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth”*.

In Genesis 1:27 *“God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them”*. We are not just some person in the midst of a great big world who has no significance. You and I have value and God has a vision for us in that value.

Every Person Has a Purpose. Simply put, every person is made in the image of God and therefore has dignity, value, and purpose. Amazingly, Psalm 139 paints a vivid picture thousands of years before technology: *“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well”*.

Our Lord Jesus said in Matt. 12:12 *“Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep! So then, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath Day.”* We are so valuable, because *Elohim* the mighty creator sent His Son to die on a cross for us. He said *“For I know the plans that I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope”* (Jer 29:11).

Friends; you and I are valuable to God. The fact that He is the mighty One our Creator, the One who keeps His covenant, is the foundation of our hope in life and hereafter.

Friends when you feel that you are in the middle of an impossible situation, when it seems that trouble is coming at you from all sides. Look above to the sky, see the wonder of

God's creation, pray to *Elohim*, your mighty Creator, draw strength from his marvellous name. He is the One who gives meaning to your days and beauty to your life. Remember His promise "*Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you. Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.*" (Is. 41: 10).

Under this name we see the Mighty God, working on a dark and ruined creature, till by His Word all is set in order and made "very good." This is the name which we need to know before all others. The first revealed in Holy Scripture; for it shows us One, who, when all is lost, in darkness and confusion, brings back, first His light and life, and then His image, into the creature, and so makes all things new and very good. He has promised "*I make everything new*".

Yes, Amen, Come Lord Jesus. Blessed be Your name.

El Elyon- אֱלֹהֵי יוֹן God Most High

Many of us, who read the newspaper or watch television, feel as if our world is constantly in a state of chaos and confusion. Earthquakes, hurricanes, tsunami and floods, countries with nuclear bomb capabilities, H1N1 influenza, family problems, finances disappearing almost overnight, persecution against Christians by jihadists' Islamic groups and so many other occurrences cause us to wonder if really God is in control of this world.

As Christians, we know that our God is in complete control of everything that happens. Nothing takes Him by surprise. He is Sovereign; you can count on Him when everyone and everything seems to be working against you. He is in charge of your life. His name is called אֱלֹהֵי יוֹן “*El Elyon*” which is translated – God Most High.

This name identifies God as the Sovereign LORD and Owner of all. It emphasizes His uniqueness as the supreme ruler over all power in heaven or in earth. It reminds us He is not merely the mighty Creator of heaven and earth, but the Almighty Sovereign LORD and Controller of all things. He is the One who delivers his children, empowers them, and accomplishes his purpose even in their suffering, which itself is temporary and will be followed by the eternal glory He promises to them. So, let us draw strength from God's Word and meet *El Elyon*, God Most High.

- 1. The first place to go is Genesis chapter 14 where we see with *El Elyon*- God Most High the impossible became possible.**

In Genesis 14 we find how Abram comes to know *El Elyon* as the Most High God, when he met Melchizedek, who introduced himself as the priest of the Most High God. God's name was used four times in that meeting.

When we consider the odds that Abram was up against, we can understand how great his God is. Abraham's nephew, Lot had been taken captive in the midst of a war between nine Canaanite kings, five against four. Abram went out to rescue Lot with a force of just 318 men. Abram had to fight against the mighty armies of five kings. He not only survived, he defeated them. As he was returning home, he met Melchizedek the king of Salem and priest of God Most High.

As the priest of *El Elyon*, Melchizedek, blessed Abram and said: "*Blessed be Abram of God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High who has delivered your enemies into your hand*" (14:19-20).

In that moment, Melchizedek reminded Abram that what had seemed like impossibility, rescuing Lot from hundreds of military men, was accomplished because Abram had *El Elyon* the Most High God and Owner of all on his side.

Our God is absolutely sovereign. Nothing can catch Him by surprise. After Job finished with all of his great suffering, he told God Most High who appeared to him: "*I know that You can do everything, and that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You*" (Job 42:2.)

We may be overwhelmed by people who are out to do us harm. Do not forget that the Most High God is more powerful than all our enemies. We must learn to lean and trust our *El Elyon*, as David did. In his early life, David had Saul the King

of Israel as his enemy, yet David triumphed because God Most High was on his side.

2. The second place to meet *El Elyon* is in Daniel 4-5, where we see that God Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and how Nebuchadnezzar Praises Him. “*The king’s heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will*” (Prov 21:1)

Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon had done an impressive job of building the great city of Babylon. He was boasting of himself and thought he was high, all-powerful and mighty until He met the Most High! As he looked out across the city, he said, “Look at this great city of Babylon! By my own mighty power, I have built this beautiful city as my royal residence to display my majestic splendour” (4:30).

God in His mercy allowed Nebuchadnezzar to become insane for seven years. God said: "Let his mind be changed from that of a man and let a beast’s mind be given to him, and let seven years pass over him. This sentence is by the decree of the holy ones, in order that the living may know that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind" (4:16-17.)

At last, Nebuchadnezzar, came to his senses and realized that he was nothing compared to *El Elyon, God Most High*. Then he blessed *El Elyon* saying: "I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High and praised and honoured Him who lives forever; for His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom endures from generation to generation. All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, but He does according to His will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth; and no one can restrain His hand or say to Him: What have You done?" (4:34-35)

The Most High God will sometimes cause suffering so that we will cry out to Him for help. This happened to three young Jewish men in Babylon who were thrown into the fiery furnace because they did not worship the image of king Nebuchadnezzar. They cried to the Lord “Let them know that You alone, whose name is the LORD, are the Most High over all the earth” (Psalm 83:18).

3. The third place to meet *El Elyon* is in Isaiah chapter 14 where *El Elyon* is used to identify God as the Sovereign Most High over Satan’s and his kingdom.

In Isaiah chapter 14 we see the greatest testimonies of the sovereignty of God ever spoken that comes out of Satan’s mouth when he called God “the Most High”. Even Satan himself admitted that there is none greater than El Elyon.

The prophet Isaiah describes **the fall of Lucifer**, or Satan, from heaven. Satan, ever seeking to be like God, declares five ‘I will’ statements. The final ‘I will’ in Isaiah 14: 14 is that Satan will “be like the Most High”. *"How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.' But you have been cast out to Sheol"*.

4. Finally, in the New Testament we hear demons identifying our LORD Jesus as "Son of the God Most High" (Mark 5:7, Luke 8:28, Acts 16:17).

We should never forget that even Satan is under the absolute control of "The God Most High." We get a glimpse

of this when Jesus turned to Peter and said, Luke 22:31--32 "*Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail...*"

Friends trust in the Most High God, know that *El Elyon* is sovereign and He is in absolute control. Rest assured that our God has perfect control of all that happens in this world and nothing happens that He does not permit. Enjoy peace of mind because God Most High- is on our side. We live without fear, in spite of all odds.

The greatest provision that we could possibly have from God is our forgiveness "*they remembered that God was their rock, and the Most High God their Redeemer* (Psalm 78:35).

CONCLUSION: Have you ever recorded an important sporting event because you couldn't see it live on television? What if someone told you that your team won the game before you had an opportunity to watch it? If you decided to watch the game anyway it, it wouldn't bother you if your team got behind in the score because you knew the outcome. We should be like that because we know our glorious destiny. And we know our Most High God causes all things to work together for good to those who love Him.

In your life, when you face what seems impossible just like Abram, *El Elyon* is sovereign, He is in control, and He rules over all things. God Most High has the power and might to change people, event, and circumstances right now and in the future. Whatever the scope of your troubles, you can take

them to *El Elyon* and then watch, wait, and see what He will do in His perfect time.

Do you doubt the sovereignty of God in this world, because it seems that evil is overcoming good, and there is persecution and war against Christians in Muslims countries?.

Take comfort in this: God Most High is greater than those who intend evil, and He is certainly greater than the evil one.

Do you have an overwhelming burden that consumes you life? There is no need to carry your troubles or spread them around for so long. Wait no longer to take your problems to *El Elyon*. Sometimes He will deliver you. And sometimes He will dramatically change the course of your life. “*He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty*” (Psalm 92:1). He is your fortress, run to Him, He will carry you. He causes all things to work together for good to those who love Him, to those who are called according to His purpose.

Let us praise *El Elyon*, as the Psalmist did “It is good to give thanks to the LORD and to sing praises to Your name, O Most High”. If we are trusting God as *El Elyon* no mere human will harm you, the future will not worry you, and you will be content in every circumstance because your God reigns and rules over every area of your life. Even against all odds and difficult circumstances, the Most High God can turn any difficulty into an opportunity. Draw strength from *El Elyon*. He is Sovereign over all the earth. Blessed be His name, God Most High.

Adonai – אֲדֹנָי

God My Master

Adonai is the title used to describe the Sovereignty of God as the Divine owner and the master of His Creation. He is King of kings and Lord of lords. It is the same title which is used for Jesus in the New Testament. In English translations of the Bible, two names of God are translated “Lord” Yahweh, is translated "LORD" with capital letters, signifies God as the Great I Am, the Loving Redeemer. “*Adonai*” is translated “Lord” with a capital case "L," followed by lower case, "ord”, signifies God as the Sovereign Master and Owner of His Creation.

1. *Adonai speaks of the Sovereign God whose will is unstoppable.*
2. *Adonai speaks of Ownership and Lordship of God over all.*
3. *Adonai* pictures a master, servant relation.

(1) *Adonai* speaks of Sovereign God whose will is unstoppable.

In the Hebrew Text, when *Adonai* is used for God, is always plural to distinguished God from pagan’s gods and men, and this of course gives evidence of God's unique Trinity, One, yet in Three. When is used for man, it always in the singular “*Adon*”, as a title of respect, to show how servants speak to their masters and subjects to their kings.

As the Sovereign God, *Adonai* exercises and accomplishing His divine will for He is able to do whatever He has purposed. For example, God gives man free will but, although man rebelled against God, ultimately God's will is unstoppable. Psalm 110:1 says "*The LORD- Yahweh says to my lord- Adonai: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."*"

We see that clearly in Acts 2, when Peter said: "*Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs ... This man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead ... Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord (Adonai) and Messiah.*"

In Philippians 2:6-11, the Bible describes our LORD Jesus who "*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! Therefore God Yahweh- exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name –Adonai-, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord-Adonai, to the glory of God the Father*"

(2) Adonai speaks of Ownership and Lordship of God.

People, who invent or create things, protect them with an official document or copyright. They have the right to control their product, because they created it and own it. God is our

Creator; therefore He is the owner of everything, the universe, the heavens, and the earth, including every human being.

Adonai speaks of Lordship, the right of God to rule over us. Lordship implies complete possession on God's part, and complete submission on our part. We are not our own. God as our Master and Creator, made us who we are, and what we are. Paul told the church at Corinth in I Corinthians 15:10, "*But by the grace of God I am what I am.*" God's right to rule our lives includes His redemptive work. God has not only created us, He has bought us back from sin through the blood of His Son, Jesus Christ. As our Creator and Redeemer, God is our *Adonai*, our Owner and Master! He alone has the right to tell us what to do!

(3) *Adonai* pictures a master, servant relationship.

The relationship of slave and master in the Bible was sometimes one of love and allegiance. A slave had more privileges than the hired help. A slave could inherit the estate of his master, as Abram addressed God as *Adonai*, His Master and spoke about his servant Eliezer of Damascus who will inherit all Abram's (Genesis 15: 1-6).

A slave could participate in the Temple sacrifices and was a member of the household. The hired help was excluded from these privileges. The servant is assured that his Master has the resources and ability to care for him. As a member of the master's household, the master provides for all the servant needs. The servant need not worry about his basic provision.

The servant has the privilege of calling upon his relationship with the Master to get the help he needs.

In Genesis 15:2 we see the name *Adonai* as first used in the Bible. Abram had defeated four kings and their armies, as he rescued his nephew Lot. In spite of his victory, Abram is filled with fear. He is fearing retaliation in some form, from the kings he has just defeated, but God's message is timely, the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, "Fear not, Abram: I am your shield (your personal protector), and your exceeding great reward (your eternal, immeasurable wealth and wages)."

Abraham responds "*O Lord GOD, (Adonai) -what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus? Adonai said to him "This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir. He took him outside and said: Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them. Then he said to him, so shall your offspring be. Abram believed the LORD and he credited it to him as righteousness"*.

Abram is acknowledging God as his *Adonai*, his Master! Abraham was an "*adon*," lord, master, over a tremendous amount of wealth, and a large number of people. He understood the relationship between a master and his servant. In the midst of his fears, Abram is learning to say, "My *Adonai*!" Abram's Master, his *Adonai*, is Creator of all things. He can do as He pleases! All Abraham needs to do is say, "My *Adonai*."

Adonai was teaching Abram two truths that run through the entire Bible. *Adonai* owns everything and we must trust and obey Him.

***Adonai* is the most frequent name used in David's life.** When the Lord denied David the privilege of building a Temple, it was hard to accept. David seriously desired do this, but God would not let him. The Lord instead, gave David the task of preparing the materials for his son Solomon, who would build it. God then promised to establish David's throne and kingdom forever.

Humbled by all of this, notice David's response In 2 Samuel 7:18-20, it appears four times *“Who am I, O Sovereign LORD, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far? And as if this were not enough in your sight, O Sovereign LORD, you have also spoken about the future of the house of your servant. Is this your usual way of dealing with man, O Sovereign LORD? ‘What more can David say to you? For you know your servant, O Sovereign LORD.’”*

David is saying, "You are my *Adonai*, my Lord, my Master. You know me best, and You know what is best. It is a honor to be given the smallest task in Your kingdom. Yes, my *Adonai*. I will do what You ask me to do, and I will do it with all my might."

David recognizes God's Sovereignty and his role as a servant. Even though he is king, he acknowledges that *Adonai* owns everything and as a result he must obey Him. David

understands the awesome power of *Adonai* when he writes in Psalm 114:7 “*Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord.*”

We are said to be not our own; we have been bought with a price (I Cor. 6: 19-20). We belong to God who is our Lord and Master. This is summed up beautifully in Psalm 24:1 “*The earth is the LORD’s and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.*” Humble obedience to the clear teaching of scripture is the key to a blessed life.

Adonai speaks of a very special relationship that we have with God. He is our Lord, we are His servants. That why He asks this heart searching question in Luke 6:46 “*And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say.*”

To know God as Our Lord is a wonderful experience. David said: “*O LORD-Yahweh- our God- Adonai- how excellent is your name in all the earth*” (Psalm 8:9). He has purchased us. We belong to Him. We ought to love and serve Him not as a hired servant, but as member of His family! Jesus Christ is our *Adonai*!

We must be willing to surrendering the situation before us to our *Adonai*! We must be willing to wait, trusting Him to supply what is needed in His time, and in the manner He sees fit.

El Shaddai- אֱלֹהֵי שָׁדַי

The Almighty All Sufficient God

El-Shaddai is name of God that was revealed to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Job, and which is translated *God Almighty*. The name *El Shaddai* identifies the all powerful God who overpowers nature, the God of the Impossible, the all Sufficient One who keeps His promise, who nourishes supplies, satisfies and is the source of blessing and comfort.

He blesses Abraham, Isaac and Jacob with the promise of numerous descendants even if He seems slow to fulfil His promise. He blesses and comforts Job, Naomi and Ruth even if His hand seems too heavy upon them.

(1) El Shaddai is the God of the Impossible.

Let us look for a moment at the circumstances of how this name was first revealed. Genesis 12:4 tells us that Abram was 75 years old when God appeared to him promising him that in his seed all the nation of the earth will be blessed. Ten years had passed, and Abram was waiting for the promise to be fulfilled. When it appeared, it would be too late, for such a promise to be fulfilled, Sarai his wife suggested that he should take Hagar as his second wife to have child from her. Abraham took matters into his own hands, and Ishmael was born of Hagar, of the will of man, of the will of the flesh and not of God. Ishmael was born when Abram was 86 years old (Gen16:16).

God allowed 13 years more to pass, till it was no longer possible according to the flesh that the child of promise

should be born from Sarai. Now Abram is 100 years, and Sarai 90 years old. Then God appears to him and reveals His name as *El Shaddai*, promising the impossible, that a son from Sarai will be born. He said to him "*I will make nations of you.*" God changes the name Abram, to Abraham, which means father of many nations. (Gen17:1-9; 15-17).

Q: Why did God promise that Abram would have a son then wait 25 years before He came through on His promise?

Genesis 17:17 tells us that Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart "*Shall a child be born to a man who is 100 years old? And shall Sarah who is 90 years old, bear a child?*"

There was no question that a son could only come if God performed a miracle. Maybe this will answer some of our questions as to why God delays answers to our prayers. God said: "*Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know*" (Jeremiah 33:3) "*With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible*" (Matthew 19:26).

Like Job, who said to The Almighty God: "*I know that You can do everything, And that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You*", Abraham learned to look at God instead of just his circumstances. Abraham believed God and the Bible says in Romans 4:19-21 "*Without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb; yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform.*" Hebrews 11:11

says: “*By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised*”.

(2) *El Shaddai is the all sufficient God.*

God reveals Himself to Abraham as the Mighty in sufficiency. He is sufficient to revive the deadness of the human body in order to show His great power and blessing.

The All Sufficient One doesn't need our help! Abraham and Sarah had to learn that what God promises only God can give, that the promise was not to be made sure by the works of the flesh. So the bodies of both of them must die first to make them realize that it was all of God.

Jacob had to be made lame before he could finally get the Blessing of the Almighty, lest he *should boast* in his own sufficiency. So, too, God's salvation in Christ is His gift to us and not to be earned by anything we may do "*not of works lest any man should boast.*"

We experience God's sufficiency if we realize our own insufficiency. Abraham knew his own insufficiency, the uselessness of relying upon his own efforts and the folly of impatiently running ahead of God. The birth of Ishmael proved to be a sore trial, not only in Abraham's household, but to Abraham's descendants, both physical and spiritual, all through the ages. God as *El-Shaddai* is sufficient for all things. Man's interfering only brings troubles and sorrows.

(3) *El Shaddai the God of all comfort and blessing.*

In blessing Jacob, Isaac says "*El-Shaddai blesses you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you*" (Gen 28:3). In

Genesis 35:11; God Himself says to Jacob: "*I am El-Shaddai: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of you.*" Jacob upon his deathbed repeats the promise of a great posterity made in the name of *El-Shaddai* and in that name pronounces the same blessing upon Joseph, from God *El Shaddai* (Gen 48:3-4: 49:25).

In the Book of Job the name *Shaddai* is mentioned 31 out of the 48 times in the Old Testament. There we see the end of Job's life was even more blessed and fruitful than his beginning. Job felt the pain of loss even though he was "*perfect and upright*" but God allowed Satan to empty Job so completely of self that he could enjoy double blessings. He understood this in the day when he said: "*But now mine eye sees You*". Then he received power with God to intercede for his friends, and he was filled with double blessings.

In His wisdom, God sometimes uses sufferings of different circumstances to help us to enjoy His blessing. But we must be careful not to get ahead of God. In the Book of Ruth, Naomi and her husband didn't trust God the Almighty to take care of their needs. They made the choice to leave Israel and live in Moab. There, Naomi felt the pain of the loss of her home, her husband and her two sons. She returns to Israel a bitter woman. She said to her friends and relatives: "*Do not call me Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the LORD has brought me home again empty: why then call you me Naomi, seeing the LORD has testified against me, and the Almighty has afflicted me*" (Ruth 1:20-21).

But at the end of the Book of Ruth we see how Naomi experienced God's comfort and blessing and the end of her life was even more blessed and fruitful than her beginning.

The same *El-Shaddai* of the Old Testament is the One who appears in the New Testament. He is the same yesterday and today and forever. Sometimes the Almighty allows suffering to afflict us because His love for us and His zealous desire for us to enjoy His comfort and blessing. He has chosen us to bring forth much fruit and to ensure that this fruit should remain (John15:16).

As the all-sufficient One He says, "*Without me you can do nothing*"(John15:5). He makes us fruitful with His gifts, but He finds it necessary to let us pass through the narrow gate that leads to the eternal blessing "*Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it*" (Matt 7:13-14).

The name Almighty God tells us that from God comes every good and perfect gift, that He never wearies of pouring His blessings and comfort upon His people. We must not forget that His strength is made perfect in our weakness; His sufficiency is most manifest in our insufficiency; His fullness in our emptiness. God's future promise should make us happy in the present.

He is the Almighty all-sufficient One because He is able to carry out His purposes and plans to their fullest and most glorious and triumphant completion. He is able to save to the uttermost. And He is able to do more abundantly above all that we can ask or think. Blessed be His name *El Shaddai*.

El Olam אֵל עוֹלָם The Everlasting God

El Olam is another name for God that reveals one of the most important aspects of the divine character – His Eternity. The name *El Olam* was translated “*The Everlasting God*”.

The first occurrence of *El Olam* is found in Genesis 21:33, where Abraham is oppressed with the sense of earth’s instability. He believed that the Everlasting God was his perfect protection and true home. Abraham moved home seven times; here today and gone tomorrow, from Ur to Haran, from Haran to Shechem, from Shechem to Bethel, from Bethel to Egypt, from Egypt to Bethel, from Bethel to Hebron, from Hebron to Gerar at last.

At Gerar, he dug a well of water and pitched his tent and there made a treaty of friendship with its king Abimelech and sealed the covenant by giving seven lambs to Abimelech to guarantee possession of the well and land. Abraham named the well Beer-sheba (the southern town in Israel), which means "the well of the oath" or "the well of the seven."

At Beer-sheba, he planted a grove tree as a memorial and called upon God’s name *El Olam*, the Everlasting God, to express his faith in the everlasting covenant that God made with him. He looked to the insecure earthly things in the light of the Everlasting God, the One who is always there for him to protect the Promised Land not only as long as Abimelech lived. He also sought long-term protection as well, from the enemies of Abraham's descendants after he died.

As Abraham faced the coming years, he knew that wells of water disappear, trees are cut down and covenants between

men do not last; but the Everlasting God remains forever. He believed that *El Olam* would not change and that “underneath the everlasting arms” is the perfect protection.

What does the name *El Olam* say about our God?

First, El Olam is the Eternal One. The fact that God is eternal is a difficult idea to understand. How long is forever?

A man asked God how long a million years was to Him. God replied, “Just like a single second of your time, my child.” Then the man asked how much a million dollars was to Him. “To Me, it is just like a single cent to you.” So the man asked the Lord, “Well, could I have one of your cents” And God replied, “Certainly, my child, just a second.”

We measure things, careers, and ourselves by time. Nothing on this earth lasts forever, only God is eternal. God is not limited by the time. He has no beginning, no end. The past, present, and future are all the same to God and this means that nothing could ever take God by surprise. He is at the beginning and at the end, at the same time. He stands outside of time as the Everlasting One.

Everything wears out. Clothes wear out, vehicles wear out, and bodies wear out. This whole world will someday wear out. God is the Only One in Existence that does not wear out. *El Olam*, the God without a beginning, the God who never will cease to be, the God who will never grow old, the God for whom eternity is what present time is. He has always been the same. He always will be the same. He is before and above all things He created.

Picture a large table with many objects scattered all over it. Imagine how an ant would view the things on this table. It would crawl to one object and explore it and then move on to the next object. We could say that the ant would go from one

thing or event to the next on that table. We, on the other hand, could look down on the table and see everything all at one time. As we go through life, we experience it as a series of events, one after the other. But God sees everything all at once. This helps us to understand a little of what the eternity of God is!

Some say, "God is nature, God is in all things, and all things are God." What an insult! If you gather together all the great music works of Mozart in one book and say, "This is Mozart," you would insult him, putting him on the level of his work. We may see Mozart in each composition, but Mozart is above them. He is their maker. So it is with God. God made all things, we can see His handiwork in all things, but He is above His creation. We worship God, not His creation! *Isaiah 40:28* says, "Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, The Creator of the ends of the earth"

Second, El Olam is the changeless One. His plans are certain and His rewards are secure. Times change, people change, governments change, everything changes, but God doesn't change. He never has, and He never will. We sometimes feel threatened and lost in a world of change. In a changing world, God's presence is eternal. No one can be with us all the time. Our parents, friends, relatives, spouse, are not with us all the time or forever.

Sometimes the people we depend on disappoint us, fail us, betray us, and even leave us. Life is unsettled, but we gain great comfort from the Bible's affirmation that God is changeless. *El Olam*, the eternal God can be relied on. Every generation can say, "He is my God!" "For the LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting; and His faithfulness endures to all generations" (Psalm 100:5).

El Olam's plans are certain. Isaiah 46:9-10 says: "*Remember the former things long past, for I am God, and there is no other; there is no one like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things which have not been done, saying, My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure.*"

El Olam's rewards are secure. Our Lord promised in John 10:28-29 "*I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. "My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand"*".

Third, El Olam is the tireless One. His protection is perfect and in Him we have the everlasting strength. When we grow old, we wear out! Circumstances, persecution, or sin may drag us down but an everlasting God cannot let us down. Isaiah 40:30 describes this loss of strength and energy. It says, "*Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall.*" The Bible says in Deuteronomy 33:26 "*There is none like the God of Jeshurun, who rides the heavens to your help, and through the skies in His majesty. The eternal God is a dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms"*

Isaiah 40:28-31 says; "*Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable. He gives strength to the weary, and to him who lacks might He increases power. Though youths grow weary and tired, and young men stumble badly, yet those who wait for the LORD will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary"*.

How wonderful it is to know that *El Olam*, the eternal God, never tires. He is tireless! When we grow weary and when we would faint, and fail in our service, the eternal God is there to renew us! Isaiah 40:29 reads, "*He (El Olam) gives power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increases strength.*"

There is nothing that can get us up and going again like waiting on the Lord. Verse 31 reads, "*But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.*" The word "wait," implies that we look to Him and lean on Him. The Bible says: "*In the Lord God is everlasting strength*" (Is 26:4).

Our strength is not in health, or wealth or experience, or friends or in any earthly things. All of these will ultimately fail and at any moment, we could find ourselves without these things. Only the eternal God, *El Olam*, can help us get up when we are down; to keep going when we hit a wall and feel like quitting; to stay positive when everything and everyone around us is negative!

Let us look always at *El Olam*, as Abraham did and trust the eternal, the changeless and the tireless God. His plans are certain and His rewards are secure. His protection is perfect and in Him we have the everlasting strength. Call on our *El Olam*, the eternal, unchangeable God, because "*the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and His truth endures to all generations*" (Psalm 100:5).

O Lord Jesus, our *El Olam*, you are the same yesterday, today, and forever, You are the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. Help us to trust you in the big and small events of our lives. Blessed be His name. Amen.

El Roi אֱלֹהֵי רֹאֵי The God Who Sees

*“You are **El Roi** the God who sees me: for she said, I have now seen the One who sees me”* (Genesis 16:13)

El Roi , is one of God’s names which means “**The God who sees me**”. This name implies much more than a God who is *all seeing* and *all knowing*, but He is the one who sees us in our misery and in His love cares for us. What God sees in our lives, moves Him to show us compassion, give us comfort and work on our behalf. The name *El Roi* implies our value as person, no matter who we are or what we do; it implies that because God sees, we are never alone. He is with us to comfort, protect and deliver.

The name *El Roi* is set in an interesting story involving Abraham, Sarah, and her Egyptian maidservant Hagar. Hagar came to know *El Roi*, as the God who sees and cares.

The story begins with God who had promised Abraham that He would make of him a great nation, and through his seed, all the nations of the earth would be blessed. There was one problem. Abraham and Sarah were old and years had passed with no son. Sarah took matters into her own hand. Sarah thought of a plan to make it happen. She would give her Egyptian servant Hagar to Abraham as a second wife and she would bare them a son. Hagar began to act wrongly towards Sarah. Hagar was filled with pride and despised her mistress Sarah. It comes to a point where Sarah says that she’s suffering because of Hagar. Sarah tells Abraham “*My wrong be upon you*” or “This is all your fault!”

What does Abraham do? Abraham, says “*It’s your servant, do what you want,*” because Hagar is her property according the custom of those days! So Sarah begins to mistreat Hagar and makes life hard for Hagar- so hard- in fact that it causes her to run away.

Hagar went into the wilderness; she stopped by a fountain of water in the wilderness of Shur, which is on the border of Egypt. The angel of the Lord appeared to her and asked her where she came from and where she was going. Who is this “angel of the Lord?” Hagar identifies him as the Lord Himself in human form. This is a pre-incarnate appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ! Hagar pours her heart out to Him, and tells Him her sad tale “*I am running away from the presence of my mistress Sarai*”.

The response of the Lord is not what we would expect to hear. Most would anticipate the Lord lovingly telling Hagar, “There now, I understand what those bad people have done to you. You just go on home to Egypt to your mommy, and I will take care of Sarah and Abraham.” Instead, the Lord tells Hagar to go back and submit herself to, humble herself before, her mistress, Sarah!

It is obvious that the Lord knew everything about Hagar. The Lord had not forgotten her. He saw it all and knew it all! But returning to face her hard and harsh mistress Sarah was not the easy way out. The Lord was asking Hagar to change her own attitude and actions toward Sarah. She must be willing to take whatever Sarah deals out! Hagar had to swallow her pride and return!

We are all so quick to run from the hardship and think what might be the best thing to do, but Hagar proves that there

are times when God calls us to stay and endure hardships. Sometimes God puts on us different kinds of hardship and harsh treatment to work out His purpose in our lives.

The Lord goes on with a promise and blessing to Hagar's obedience. He told Hagar, "*I will multiply your seed, that it shall not be numbered for multitude.*" She will have a son. God tells Hagar to name him Ishmael, which means God hears.

The name *El Roi* the God who sees and the God who cares is not just for Hagar. God is *El Roi* to each of us today. We all need in our lives a greater awareness of the fact that God sees and cares. It doesn't matter who we are, *El Roi* sees and cares.

Are we aware of God's presence? Think about it. Of the six plus billion people that populate the earth, the Lord, *El Roi*, sees and cares about you! His eyes see your every move! Psalms 33:13-14 says, "*The LORD looks from heaven; He beholds all the sons of men. From the place of His habitation He looks on all the inhabitants of the earth.*"

The reality of a God who sees everything and cares brings comfort to us. There are times in our lives when we literally cry out for someone to know, someone to see and care.

The amazing thing is Hagar's response. Rather than responding to the message of the Lord's revelation about her and her son, Hagar is overwhelmed to learn that God sees, knows, and cares about her! Even though she had to return to her difficult situation, she could find help and healing in the reality that God sees and cares about her!

***El Roi* sees all of life's inequities and injustice.** While Hagar is not totally innocent or blameless in this situation, it is obvious that she is caught in a scheme that is not of her own making. She is under the authority of Sarah, and gets in trouble for obeying orders! When she looks to Abraham for support, he sells her out!

Life is filled with inequities and injustice. Some of us may have feel, very much like Hagar. We may feel very much mistreated, abused, or neglected.

But rejoice, we can be confident that as *El Roi*, the God who sees everything that is going on in our lives. He is the righteous judge who cares for us. It will be best for us to give our heavy burden to *El Roi*, the God who sees!

***El Roi* sees our suffering and feels our heartaches.** Hagar is broken-hearted. Just reading her story, we can sense her pain and suffering! What is the response of a God in heaven to people that have been mistreated?

In the middle of the desert, The Lord appeared to her! She said to him “You are a God who sees me.” In the midst of conflict we feel that nobody gets and nobody understands how we’ve been treated. But you are not alone. The God in heaven who created you and gives you purpose, sees what has happened to you, maybe nothing else will give you hope today but that sentence “God sees! God cares for you”. Sometimes that’s all you can take hope in!

The loving God who cares for Hagar is today for us. Hebrews 2 tells us that Jesus “*was made a little lower than the angels, taking on the form of flesh and blood. Why? So that*

He might experience life and death as it is for us! By His suffering as a man, Jesus is equipped and qualified to be our understanding, compassionate High Priest!” Today, we can go to Him in the hour of our greatest need and suffering, knowing that He sees, He knows and understands! We can find help and comfort in the time of need!

***El Roi* sees our trouble, our own contribution to our circumstances.** While Hagar had in some sense been a victim of circumstances manipulated by Sarah, Hagar was a willing player. As an Egyptian slave, Hagar was a piece of property. But Hagar was presented with a chance to become someone of importance and gain the upper hand as second wife in those days. Filled with a sense of pride, Hagar made matters worse by her attitude and actions toward her mistress Sarah.

Sarah was wrong to faithlessly plan, instead of wait for God’s time as He promised. Abraham was wrong he should have stood up to his wife and challenged her faith in God's promise! However the Loving God cared for Hagar.

***El Roi* sees what is yet to be. *El Roi* gave Hagar hope of a brighter future!** Seeing something happen is one thing and responding to it is completely different. What God does in our story may surprise you. Hagar was a nobody to the world, but a somebody to God! What *El Roi* does is create a new and bigger vision for Hagar’s life. Let’s see the fascinating discussion between God and Hagar: God asks Hagar: Where have you come from and where are you going? Check out Hagar’s response, “*I’m running away from my mistress Sarah.*” She is so focused on where she had come from, that she doesn’t even answer the question as to where she is

going? So the angel answers that part of the question for her, “*I will so increase your descendants that they will be too numerous to count.*” That’s your future!

Many times we become so preoccupied with dealing with our past that we never think about our future. Like Hagar we sometimes get caught up in that question “*where have I come from?*” However, an equally important question is, “*where are we going?*” *EL Roi* not just teaches Hagar how to handle her past, but also gives her a new and better future.

That’s always what God does when we’ve been mistreated. He heals our wounds, and sometimes asks us to revisit the issue, so that we can be healed and go on to fulfil his purpose in our life. *El Roi* is telling us today: **I am here for you.**

If you have never been *rejected* or *cast aside*; if you have never felt *all alone*, thinking *no one knows, no one cares, no one understands*; if you have never been *misunderstood, mistreated* or *suffered unjustly* at the hands of another; if you have never been *used, abused, not wanted* or *not loved*; if you have never *suffered alone*, lost in *wilderness hurt* and *pain*—then the name *El Roi* the God who sees me, may not have a great impact on you.

But if you have ever felt *all alone, dying in an emotional wilderness*, you will be comforted and encouraged to know that *El Roi* always sees, always knows and always understands as he meets us in our suffering! Then this name *El Roi* is for you. Of the 6 billion people on earth, He’s looking at you today. God wants to hear your broken heart! God sees you, He is the *El Roi* who cares for you! Trust Him and lean on His promises. Praise be to His name *El Roi*.

Yahweh Yireh- יהוה יִרְאֶה

The LORD Will Provide

People today still have wrong ideas about God as it was in Abraham's day. Without looking to God's revelation in the Bible about Himself, we can easily have a distorted view of who God really is. The Bible tells us in Hebrews 1:1-2 "*In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he made the universe*".

One of these revelations of God about Himself is His names. Today we are looking to His name "*Yahweh Yireh*" in Genesis 22: 14 which translated "*The LORD Will Provide*".

Yahweh Yireh might be one of the names of God that Christians most recognize and sing. You may have heard a Christian saying to another "The Lord provides", but almost always in the context of finances. *Yahweh Yireh* is so much more than a provider of money issue. This name has three meanings: "**God is showing the way**", "**God who sees to it**", "**God who provides**".

Yahweh Yireh was revealed when Abraham took his son Isaac to sacrifice him in obedience to God's command. When Isaac said; "Father Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" Abraham said, my son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering ... But the Lord stopped Abraham to do so, and showed him a ram. And

Abraham called the name of that place *Yahweh Yireh*: as it is said in the mount of the Lord it shall be seen. (Gen 22).

This event seems strange and uncomfortable; it confused some and annoyed others. Some say: What kind of God would ask one of his followers to sacrifice their child to see if they believed in him or not? Why did God make such a demand?

If we understand the environment in Abraham's day and see what he discovered about God there, and if we know how Jesus explained that event, we will see the greatness of God's love and that story will not confuse us anymore.

It is important to know that a large part of the Bible story in the Old Testament is about God's people learning the correct view about God and how they discovered that He is the Only One True God who is different than the false gods around them. Abraham discovered what God is like through the events that happened in his life. It is the same in the Gospels; we see our Lord Jesus correcting people's distorted views of God.

People of Abraham's day were worshipping the forces of nature as their gods. They offered them sacrifices to please them and get their blessing. Over time they became locked and trapped in the cycle of continually offering more and more as these false gods' demanded, until they get to the point where they have nothing left to give. So they offered the most precious thing they have, their children. But Abraham saw God was different to these false gods that he used to worship.

Let us go back to the first time God appeared to Abraham. God said to Abraham: "*Go from your country and from your father's household to the land I will show you. I will make you*

into a great nation, and I will bless you; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you” (Gen 12).

Abraham is not told simply to move house. He is told to leave behind the old way of doing things to appease the false gods and step into a new one, with a God who is very different from those false gods he used to worship in his country Ur. This God was *very* different from everything Abraham had been taught. This God is interested in him, He longs to bless him, and bless the whole world through him.

That is how we understand that story in which Abraham learns about this God and he call His name *Yahweh Yeria*. God comes to Abraham and says ‘*take your son, your only son, Isaac the one you love and sacrifice him there as a burnt offering*’ (Genesis 22:1-2).

A quick observation: Why doesn’t Abraham argue with God as he did before when God speaks of the destruction of Sodom, Abraham, in part to protect his nephew Lot, makes God justify why God is doing so. Why doesn’t Abraham say “Lord, You promised me to make Isaac into a great nation, You ask me now to sacrifice him, I don’t understand? But Abraham doesn’t seem in the least shocked that a God should ask him to sacrifice Isaac his beloved son. Why not?

Because God stepped into Abraham’s life and showed him something of what he is like. God told him “I am going to bless you.’ This God has made promises to Abraham, most of which concerning Isaac. So Abraham tells the servants “*the boy and I will go over there to worship, then we’ll come back to you*”. When Isaac asks; “*father where is the lamb?*” he says ‘*God will provide the lamb.*’

Against all doubt, Abraham obeys, believing that somehow God will provide. In agony, Abraham built the altar and raised the knife to plunge it into Isaac's chest. But God stopped Abraham and Said: "*Do not lay your hand on the lad. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son.*"

The Bible said: "*By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called," concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense*" (Hebrews 11:17-19).

The point of this story is Abraham's discovery of God. This God he's been following isn't like the false gods he knew back home. His discovery is that this God is *Yahweh Yireh* – the Lord who provides. It is as if that God is telling Abraham "Throughout your old ways, you have learned that if you want these false gods provide to for you, you have to give and give until you have nothing left. I'm not like that. I am the God who blesses and shows you the way to it and I am the God who provides.

Our Lord Jesus speaks of Abraham's story and said to the Jews: "*Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day and he saw it and was glad*" (John 8:56). And He explained the significance of this event of Abraham and Isaac and the ram, when He used the words *one and only son* in His conversation with Nicodemus, who was one of the religious teachers of that day.

Our Lord reminded him of why God told Moses to lift up a bronze snake in the wilderness to save the Israelites who were attacked by snakes and how they were saved by turning to and

looking at it. Then He explained the significance of this event and said *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son that whoever believes in Him will not perish but will have the eternal life”*.

But there’s a deeper reason why Jesus points towards *this* story. Nicodemus said to Jesus: *“Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.”*

Jesus said to Nicodemus *“I am telling you the truth, no-one can see the Kingdom of God unless he is born again.”* **In Jesus’ day, the Kingdom of God was a hot topic.** Jewish leaders of different groups were concerned about what they could do to God to get the blessing of His kingdom? Nicodemus came to Jesus that night, hoping to know what He can do to get the blessing of God’s kingdom.

But Jesus says *“You are Israel’s teacher,”* said Jesus, *“and do you not understand these things”?* You have to leave behind your old way of doing things, your old ideas of how you please God, and step into a totally different way. It’s not based on what you have to do for God, but based on what God is doing for you *“For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him will not perish but will have the eternal life”*.

The idea of getting blessing from gods who demand offerings to please them in Abraham’s day is the same thing as getting the blessing of God’s Kingdom in Jesus’ day.

Nicodemus comes to Jesus and he says; “we are all trying to find ways how we get the blessing of the kingdom of God. The Sadducees are saying we have to do this, we the Pharisees are saying we have to do that; what do you think, Jesus? Settle

our argument. Jesus says you are all thinking about what you have to give to get God on your side, and who can give the most. After all this time you still haven't learnt the lesson of Abraham. God does not want you giving all you got, or to bring what's most precious to you, as a means of winning his blessing. He showed the way to Abraham, It is God who sees to it. It is He who provides. He provided the ram "*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son that whoever believes in Him will not perish but will have the eternal life*".

Man has been trapped in a cycle of what do I have to give to get God's blessing, until *Yahweh Yireh* has provided the way, and the truth and the Life for us. The ultimate sacrifice has been made. God has given us his One and Only Son to draw us to Himself. No more wrestling to get his blessing. He said 'Come to me all you who are weak and heavy laden, I will give you rest... Learn from me and you will find rest for your souls.' *Yahweh Yireh* is the name that assures us that:

- When we feel condemned, He provides forgiveness. we have nothing to do to get this blessing "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life"
- When we are weak, He provides the strength.
- When we think we don't have what it takes, He provides peace, strength, resources, and whatever else we need

We can rest assured that our God is *Yahweh Yireh* "*He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all! How will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?*" So Trust Him. He sees the situation beforehand and is able to provide for your needs.

Yahweh- יהוה:

The Great I AM

Proverbs 30:5 is asking us: What is God's name? What is His Son's name? In Exodus 3:13-15, we read the story of how God declared His personal name. Moses was tending his sheep, and He saw a dry old bush just caught on fire. He came near and he looked and looked and he couldn't believe his eyes. The fire in the bush was shining in a strange way. It glowed but nothing was burning away. Moses came near and a loud voice spoke from the burning bush, "Moses, Moses; take off your shoes, you are standing on holy ground." Moses took off his shoes, and the voice said:

"I am the God of your fathers ... "Go and tell Pharaoh the king of Egypt to set my people free." And Moses said, to God, *"If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?"* God said to Moses, *"I AM WHO I AM."* And he said, *"Say this to the people of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"* God also said to Moses, *"Say this to the people of Israel, 'Yahweh' the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you': this is my name for ever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations."*

Now notice that God gives three answers to the question, "What shall I tell them your name is?"

1. First, in verse 14 God says, *"I AM WHO I AM."*
2. Second, in verse 14 God says, *"I AM has sent me to you."*

3. Third, in verse 15 God says, “*Yahweh* . . . has sent me to you . . . this is my name forever.”

The name YHWH was translated LORD, all capital letters. But where does this translation come from? After the returning from Exile, the Jews considered the name *Yahweh* is so sacred that no one could say it. In every occurrence of YHWH, the Jews substituted *Adonai*. The Hebrew word, *Adonai*, was translated in Greek to *Kurios* and from it we got word, LORD. So every time you see the word, LORD, it is really the word, *Yahweh*- The Great I AM.

Our Lord Jesus used that name I AM for Himself to prove for the Jews that He is *Yahweh* their God. He says I AM the bread of life; I AM the light of the world; I AM the door of the sheep; I AM the good shepherd; I AM the way, the truth and the life; I AM the resurrection and the life. I AM the true vine. And then He said something that got him killed. Jesus said, “Before Abraham was, I AM. And the Jews around him cried out, “Blasphemy. You are making yourself equal with God.” It was true. Jesus was making himself equal with God when he said I AM.

What is the message that God is trying to communicate with us through his name I AM- *Yahweh*?

There are three truths we must know in the Divine Name *Yahweh*, I AM WHO I AM.

1. *Yahweh* is the Eternal ever-existent God

He is always there even before the beginning of time and does not change. What does it mean to us that God is the ever-existent God?

It means that God is always in control and we need not fear. The Bible uses the fact that God has always existed to convince us of His control over everything. God said in Isaiah 48:12-13 "*Listen to me, O Jacob, Israel, whom I have called: I am he; I am the first and I am the last. My own hand laid the foundations of the earth, and my right hand spread out the heavens; when I summon them, they all stand up together*".

He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. What does it mean to us that God never changes? It means that we can count on God. If God has helped us in our past problems, we can be confident that this God will help us in our present and future problems. The Bible says in Isaiah 40:28 "Yahweh is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary."

When we face difficult times, remember that our God is the First and the Last, the God who has always existed. The only One who is always in control of everything around us. In him we live and move and have our being. He cannot faint or grow weary. He is an unending river of life and the source of our strength every morning—and will be for all eternity.

2. Yahweh is the God who is beyond comprehension.

"I am Who I am" also speaks about the God who is beyond comprehension. Moses wanted to know the name of God so that he could know God. But Moses could not comprehend what God said "*I AM WHO I AM*". It is as if God is saying, "I am beyond your comprehension. Who am I? I am what I am."

Because God is beyond our comprehension, there will be some actions of God that will be hard to accept. We question

why God allows some things to happen. "*For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts*" (Isa 55:8-9).

We cannot understand everything God has done. If we do, we would be God ourselves. We need to accept what God has permitted in this world and in your life. And trust Yahweh your eternal God to work things for good.

3. Yahweh, the Great I AM is The redemptive God.

Yahweh is the name that is linked to God's redeeming acts in the story of His love to us. He is the one who appears to Moses and revealed His love for His people. He said to Moses: "*I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry ... I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out to a land flowing with milk and honey ... And now, behold, the cry of the people of Israel has come to me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt*" (Exodus 3:7-10).

Yahweh is the loving God who would be present to his people, listening for their cries, answering their prayers, showing his power on their behalf, responding faithfully even when they acted faithlessly.

To the Egyptian the name Yahweh would have been a terror- a name to forget because it linked with plagues, darkness, defeat and death. But to the people of Israel,

Yahweh would forever mean salvation, freedom, promise, and power. Yahweh is the loving redeemer, wonder-working God, the one who out of pity and love reached into human history and revealed his grace and mercy. Yahweh is the name by which this great I AM wanted to be forever known.

This Eternal God who always there has drawn near to us in Jesus Christ to save us from our sins just as He saved His people from their slavery in Egypt. In John 8:56-58 Jesus said to the Jewish leaders “Your father Abraham rejoiced that he was to see my day; he saw it and was glad.” They then said to him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?” Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly! I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.” When Jesus said, “Before Abraham was, I AM,” he took up all the majestic truth of the name of God, wrapped it in the humility of servanthood, offered himself to atone for all our sins, and made a way for us to see the glory of God without fear.

In Jesus Christ we who are born of God have the unspeakable privilege of knowing Yahweh as our Father—I AM WHO I AM—the Great I AM, who is always there for us. Yahweh is our Jesus, the One who reminds us still that Yahweh Saves.

He is telling you I will be anything you need. If you are thirsty, I am water. If you are starving, I am food. If you are all alone, I am friend. If you are an orphan, I am your father. If you are weak, I am strong. If you are afraid of anything, I am always beside you. No matter what you need, I am all things for you. I am Yahweh. I AM. I am with you. I am in you. I am for you. I am everything you need.

This is the name of God Yahweh; I AM WHO I AM! And may those who know His name put their trust in him. Amen!

Yahweh Sabaoth יהוה צבאות

Lord of Hosts

Yahweh Sabaoth is another title for God that is translated “Lord of hosts”. *Yahweh Sabaoth* speaks of God’s glorious mighty power over everything in Heaven and on earth. Nothing can stand before Him.

The first use of this name appears at the close of the period of the judges, the time when the spiritual condition of Israel was very low (I Samuel 1:3, 4:4 & 17:45),

Using this name in our daily life gives us hope when it seems as if there is no way out. It gives us peace and calms our fear and anxiety on those nights when we may be worrying about the next day (Joshua and the wall of Jericho). It gives us confidence that He brings us through whatever obstacles come our way. It gives us joy and comfort knowing that He is listening to our cry (Hannah). Let us see the significance of this name *Yahweh Sabaoth* in our life today.

1. The Lord of Hosts protects His own

Yahweh Sabaoth identifies God as the commander of The Heavenly Hosts. These “Hosts” of the Lord are not seen, but they travel the world doing His work. Isaiah 31:5 says; “As birds flying, so will the LORD of hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also he will deliver it; and passing over he will preserve it”. “Bless the LORD, O you his angels, you mighty ones who do his word, obeying the voice of his word! Bless the LORD, all his hosts, his ministers, who do his will!” (Ps 103)

2 Kings 6:9-17 tells the story of Elisha and his servant in the trouble with the king of Syria. The king sends an army of horses and chariots to surround the city where Elisha is staying. His servant wakes in the morning to find that they surrounded. With great fear he tells Elisha of the situation. The prophet answered "*Don't be afraid, those who are with us are more than those who are with them.*" And Elisha prayed, 'O LORD, open his eyes so he may see.' Then the LORD opened the servant's eyes, *and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.*" (6:16-17)

2. The Lord of Hosts battles our obstacles

When the odds seem against us, when life appears overwhelming, that is when we need to look at *Yahweh Sabaoth*. Most of us can handle the normal problems in life. We are somehow able to keep going in spite of them. Yet when a giant problem shows up and the challenge is so hard to cope, we end up doing nothing. In this case we need to view what we see in the light of knowing a name for God that is applicable to the crisis that we are in. *Yahweh Sabaoth*, the LORD of Hosts, is the name that is applicable to any giant we face.

1 Sam 17:45-47 tells us the story of Goliath a Philistine warrior who was over nine feet tall. The Israeli army looked at him and ran out of fear. But David looked at him and knew God was the Lord of Hosts, the supreme commander in the situation. David knew that God is the Lord over every force whether in heaven or on earth. He informed Goliath that the Lord will deliver him into his hands. David said to Goliath "*you come to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts,*

the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saves not with sword and spear". David trusted in God's name Yahweh Sabaoth and said "for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hands"

David responded to Goliath's mockery by announcing that he had the Lord of Hosts on his side. He had confidence because he knew the power of God's name. Where the Israelite's perspective focused on Goliath's physical stature, David's perspective focused on God's power. The Lord of Hosts battles obstacles that come our way. Challenge your Goliath and your greatest fear through God's name; victory will be yours. Give your battle to *Yahweh Sabaoth*; the Lord of Hosts, He will battle your obstacles (See also; Joshua and walls of Jericho).

3. The Lord of Hosts hears our cry

Psalm 46 says: *"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, Even though the earth be removed, And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though its waters roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with its swelling. The LORD of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our refuge"*.

Genesis 28:12- 17 tells us the fear that Jacob had and his cry to God, and how God heard his cry *"Jacob dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven, and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it."* I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you".

In 1 Sam 1:11 Hannah vowed a vow, and said, O Lord of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your handmaid, and remember me, and not forget your handmaid, but will give me child, then I will give him unto You all the days of his life. Hannah committed her struggles to the Lord of Hosts who answered her with a child Samuel who would later become one of Israel's greatest prophets.

4. The Lord of Hosts will right the wrongs.

Have you been persecuted or unfairly treated? Instead of simply taking the matter into your own hands, ask the Lord of Hosts to bring justice to you. God will right the wrongs in his day and in his time. We must be patient. He waits until the right moment. The prophet Jeremiah cried to the Lord “*O LORD of Hosts; You who judge righteously, testing the mind and the heart. Let me see your justice, for to you I have revealed my cause*” (Jer 11:20). The Bible says: “*Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him, and he will act. He will bring forth your righteousness as the light and your justice as the noonday*” (Ps 37:5). This is His promise in Mal 3:5 “*And I will be a swift witness against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, says the LORD of hosts*”.

Q: Why doesn't the Lord of Hosts do something now? The answer is found in 2 Peter 3:9-10; “*God isn't late with his promise as some measure lateness. He is restraining himself on account of you, holding back the End because he doesn't want anyone lost. He's giving everyone space and time to change. But when the Day of God's Judgment does come, it will be unannounced, like a thief*”.

We are spiritual beings poured into physical containers in a finite existence...It limits our vision...We simply cannot see what is there in the spiritual realm of things which goes beyond our physical body and goes beyond our ability to see, touch, taste, feel, or hear.

This knowledge demands faith. It cannot be understood without trusting in the revelation of God's Word to us.

Our response is one of choice. Either we become more responsive to God and put our trust in him or we withdraw and live in a physical world without hope or joy.

As Christians, we should trust the Word of God. We do not know what will happen in five years or tomorrow. We do know who we are with -even when He isn't seen. The Lord of Hosts, *Yahweh Sabaoth* is His name.

Yahweh Sabaoth, LORD of Hosts, please calm our fear and anxiety. You know everything that is going on in our lives right now. Thank you for your hands that protect us. Help us to rest in the knowledge that you are with us even in the most frightening of circumstances so that we may move forward in your power and might.

What a great promise we have in Zechariah 4:6 says; "*This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel saying, 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD of hosts*". Proverbs 18:10 says: "*The Name of the Lord is a Strong Tower; the righteous run to it and are safe. 'O Lord of Hosts; blessed is the man that trusts in You'*" (Ps 84:12).

El Khay- אֱלֹהֵי

The Living God

Our theme today in our continuing series on the wondrous names of God is “*El Khay*” which translated means “***The Living God***”. This name of God sets Him apart as the only true God from all false gods made by men. In Isaiah 45:5 God says, “*I am the Lord, and there is no other, besides me there is no God*”.

The pagan gods made by men are not *living and active*. They have to be taken care of by man. These gods can’t do anything for themselves or for others.

Our God is living. **He hears, speaks, sees, takes action, and walks with us.** The Bible says in Psalm 115:

“Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him. But their idols are silver and gold, made by human hands. They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but cannot see. They have ears, but cannot hear, noses, but cannot smell. They have hands, but cannot feel, feet, but cannot walk, nor can they utter a sound with their throats”.

The Living God is all powerful, knows all things, and He is everywhere at all times. He is immortal, invisible, invincible, unchallengeable, infallible, incomprehensible, and there is none like Him. Everything we need, whether it be spiritual, mental, emotional, or physical is found in Him. He is all we will ever need or desire.

This name *El Khay* "living God" is used only 28 times in the Bible, but the truth of the living God is written on every page. Let us see five great works of the Living God with us;

1. *El Khay*- The Living God takes away our fear and fulfils His promise to us.

He spoke to Joshua, delivered him from fear, as He departed the Jordan before His people and He fulfilled His promise of giving them the Promised Land.

Joshua was afraid to lead Israel after the death of Moses, but the Living God appeared to him saying:

*“Today I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you ... And Joshua said to the people of Israel, “Come here and listen to the words of the Lord your God ... Here is how you shall know that **the living God (El Khay) is among you ... the waters of the Jordan shall be cut off from flowing, and the waters coming down from above shall stand in one heap... and all Israel will cross on dry ground as He had done to the Red sea, when he dried it up before us until we had crossed over. He did this so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the LORD is powerful and so that you might always fear the LORD your God”** (Joshua 3:7-17; 23:14)*

Before his departure to heaven, Joshua gave glory to the Living God who fulfilled His promise and said to Israel:

“Now I am about to go the way of all the earth. You know with all your heart and soul that not one of all the good promises the LORD your God gave you has failed. Every promise has been fulfilled; not one has failed (23:14)

2. - The Living God -*El Khay*- gives us victory over evil and glorifies His name before those who are surrounding us.

It was a time when Goliath, the giant of the Philistines defied the armies of Israel, and Saul the king of Israel and all of his army were dismayed and terrified. David heard this, and said: *“who is this pagan Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God (El Khay)?”*

What David said was overheard and reported to Saul, and Saul sent for him. David said to Saul the king of Israel: “Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him.” Saul replied, “You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a boy, and he has been a warrior from his youth.” But David said to Saul, “The LORD who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine.” Saul said to David, “Go, and the LORD be with you.” When the Giant saw David coming to him, he said “Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks?” Come here, and I’ll give your flesh to the birds and the wild animals!”

David said to the Philistine, *“You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the LORD will deliver you into my hands, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle is the LORD’s, and he will give all of you into our hands.”*

The Living God gave David victory over the giant, glorifying His name among His people and before the surrounding nations (1 Sam 17; see also 1 Kings 19.)

In Psalm 84:1-2 David sang to the Lord “*My heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God.*”

3. *El Khay*- The Living God works wonders and delivers us out of the hands of those who want to destroy us.

This was the testimony of King Darius the king of Persia who wrote to all the peoples, nations, and languages that were under his dominion: “*Peace be multiplied to you. I make a decree, that in all my royal dominion people are to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel, for he is the living God (El Khay); his kingdom shall never be destroyed, and his dominion shall be to the end. He delivers and rescues; he works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, he who has saved Daniel from the power of the lions*” (Daniel 6: 24-28).

4. Jesus the Son of the Living God has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. He is alive!

Peter said to Jesus “**You are the Christ, the Son of the living God**” (Matt 16:16). He was crucified because of his claim to be the Son of the Living God (Matt 26:36-66). Jesus said: “*I am the way, and the truth, and the life ... I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live* (John 14: 6 & 11:25-26). His resurrection proved that He is the Son of the Living God (Romans 1:4). The angel said the women: “*Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen, as he said* (Matt 28:5-7.) Yes our LORD is alive; “*He has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel*” (2 Tim 1:10)

This is the good news: that we have hope in the eternal life because of the Resurrection of the Son of the Living God. This what Peter says: *“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead”* (1 Peter 1:3).

5. The Living God, has made us alive in Christ, and He dwells in us as His temple and walks with us all the days of our life till He comes and will take us home.

As **children of the Living God**, we are made alive in Christ as we come to Jesus for the cleansing of our sins. Apostle Paul says: *“For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, “I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people”* (2 Cor. 6:16).

Having been raised from the dead, our Lord Jesus the Son of the Living God now sits at the right hand of God’s throne interceding for us. We are free from condemnation by the resurrection of our Lord. The Bible is telling us: *“Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us”* (Romans 8:34).

Meditate on God’s name “El Khay- The Living God”, Pray it, Believe it—His Word is true. Sing for joy to *El Khay*...He is the LIVING God! His kingdom shall never be destroyed, and his dominion shall have no end. He delivers and rescues; he works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth.

Praise Jesus...Christ, the Son of the Living God! He is the Resurrection, the Way, the Truth, and the Life! Thank *El Khay* that He listens to you, speaks to you, dwells with you, and walks with you! Thank Jesus for having the power to conquer sin and death. Thank Him for interceding on your behalf.

What “Jordan waters” do you need *El Khay* to part for you? Talk with Him about it...He can hear your cries. What are “giant” you scared of? Trust in name of the LIVING GOD as David did, and you will defeat your giant.

When we are discouraged by the changes that overwhelm us in this life, look to an unchanging God. Put your hope in the Living God, because as the Bible says: “*Our hope is in the living God*” (1Timothy 4:1-10). When earthly joys fade and life turns to bitterness or to ashes, lift up your eyes and look unto Him. Hope in the living God!

Ask Him to perform signs and wonders that glorify Him. Ask the LIVING GOD to empower you to daily walk, dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. He said: “*I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore. Amen*” (Rev. 1:18)

Believe it—His Word is true. God is not dead, NO! He is alive! Believe it and sing it as you go about your day!

He is coming again as He promised and then all the children of the Living God will be with Him for evermore. Blessed be His name. Amen.

Yahweh Rophekha- יהוה רפֿאָךְ

The LORD IS Your Healer

Today our focus is on God’s name “*Yahweh Rophekha*”, the LORD is your healer. This name was first revealed to the Israelites when they had been wandering in the wilderness for three days without water to drink, and then they came to a place called Mara, which means “bitterness.” This is the name Naomi chose for herself when she said: *“Don’t call me Naomi. Call me Mara, because the Almighty has made my life very bitter. I went away full, but the LORD has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi? The LORD has afflicted me; the Almighty has brought misfortune upon me.”*

At Mara they found water, but it had a very bitter taste. They turned their anger on Moses saying: *“What shall we drink?”* Moses cried out to the LORD, and the LORD revealed Himself and showed him a piece of wood to throw into the water, and the water became sweet.

Then LORD said to them *“If you listen carefully to the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am “Yahweh Rophekha” the LORD, who heals you”* (Exodus 15:22-26)

In the midst of their bitterness, and grumbling, God revealed Himself as their healer. Three days earlier, the Israelites were praising God who freed them from their slavery in Egypt *“I will sing to the LORD, for he is highly exalted...The LORD is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation. He is my God, and I will praise him, my*

father's God, and I will exalt him" (Ex.5:1-3). But now after three days they turned from giving praise to grumbling because they had a bitter taste in their mouth.

Bitterness can blind us to see God's power and His promises. Israel had forgotten the bitterness of slavery in Egypt, and their life there was terrible. But now freedom from Egypt had also left them feeling bitter because their expectations of sweet water were shattered. But Moses did what he should do, he cried out to the Lord. That's what hard times can do for us. When we're in pain, we must cry out to the LORD. Instead of complaining, we call upon the name of the Lord our Healer.

Q: Are there different kinds of healing than physical healing? Yes, the Bible speaks of two other kinds of healing: emotional healing and spiritual healing. We are not just flesh; we are made up of three parts: a body, a soul and a spirit. God wants us to be whole, and complete. God wants to heal us physically, emotionally and spiritually (1 Thessalonians 5:23). He is your Healer *Yahweh Rophekha* when you are in need of any kind of healing.

Emotional Healing: The LORD heals emotional hurts and broken hearts. In Psalm 147:3 "God heals the broken hearted and binds up their wounds". "The word "broken" means "to break into pieces, to crush and to smash." Sometimes we feel that way and our emotional pain is overwhelming. Friend, whatever pain you're carrying around, hand it to the Healer today. In the midst of your tears, cry out to Yahweh Rophekha and ask Him to put you back together again. In Psalm 6:2-3 David prayed "*O LORD, heal me, for my bones are in agony*".

Physical Healing: Sometimes we experience a tough time when we get sick and the pain and discouragement that comes

along, and we're devastated by the news we've received from doctors. Whatever the case, when our bodies don't work, we need to ask *Yahweh Rophekha* to heal us.

In 2 Kings 20:5-6 we read that Hezekiah became very ill and was about to die. He cried to God and he was healed. Isaiah the prophet said to him "*This is what the LORD, the God of your father David, says: I have heard your prayer and seen your tears; I will heal you...I will add fifteen years to your life.*" But if we are not healed, let us accept God's will. I will talk more about physical healing shortly.

Spiritual Healing: This is by far the most important of the three kinds of healing. *Yahweh Rophekha* sees that we are spiritually sick and He in His mercy and grace provides healing through the shed blood of Jesus on the Cross.

Jeremiah 17:9 records the condition of the human heart: "*The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?*" Isaiah 1:5-6 pictured the state of man without Christ "*The whole head is injured, the whole heart afflicted. From the sole of the foot to the top of the head there is no soundness, only wounds and welts and open sores, not cleansed or bandaged or soothed with oil.*" Our depravity is total, affecting every part of our lives. But the merciful God promises us with the good news: "*Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool*" (Isaiah 1).

Thank God our healer through the work of His Son who "*Took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows... He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed*" (Isaiah 53:4-5).

Q: Why God allows Mara sometimes in our lives?

When the Israelites were faced with three days of no water, the Bible says that God tested them. When we go through tough times emotionally, physically or spiritually, we are really entering a testing time (Numbers 15:25).

There are at least five principles to keep in mind that will help us pass the test and come to know God as our Healer *Yahweh Rophekha*.

1. Trials and sickness can get us back on track. That's exactly what the psalmist said in Psalm 119:67-71 "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word...It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees."

2. Sometimes our pain is related to sin. In Psalm 32:3-4, David links his physical pain and his emotional agony to his personal sin: "When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer." David prayed: "O LORD, have mercy on me; heal me, for I have sinned against you." (Ps 41:4).

3. Not all illness is directly linked to personal sin. We must be careful to not link every problem we have to some sin in our lives. This was the mistake that Job's friends made when they kept accusing him of wrongdoing. In their minds, Job was suffering because he had somehow sinned. The LORD Jesus addressed this common mindset when he was asked to explain why a certain man was blind. His disciples wanted to know whether the man or his parents had sinned. Our great LORD answered "*Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life*" (Jn 9:3).

4. Call your God on the way to the doctor's office. God could have made the bitter waters at Marah sweet apart from any other means, but he chose to use the wood. Likewise God can heal with just a word from His mouth, but He uses other instruments as well. Elisha put salt in the spring and God healed the water (2 Kings 2:21).

5. Trust in the LORD even if you don't get well. Some people mistakenly believe that if we just have enough faith, we can be healed of everything. Others think that God does not heal today and so they don't even pray about their problems. The proper biblical perspective is this. Pray and trust God's will for your life. God certainly can, and sometimes does, heal people in a miraculous way today. But the Bible does not teach that He will always heal those who come to him in faith.

The Bible tells us in (2 Cor 12:7-9 & Gal 4:12-16), about Apostle Paul's illness: "*thorn was in flesh*". All his life he was physically ill!

Also In 2 Tim. 4:20, the Bible said that Trophimus, was seriously sick. Because of his illness Paul had to leave him behind in Miletus and continue ministry without him. Though many were healed under Paul's ministry, Trophimus was not. Why God healed so many others Paul prayed for and not Trophimus we don't know.

Timothy too was having constant stomach problems. Paul advise him through Doctor Luke to "*Stop drinking only water, and use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses*" (1 Tim. 5:23.)

The LORD, can sweeten the bitterness of life. He is the bondage breaker as He promised in Leviticus 26:13 "*I broke the bars of your yoke and enabled you to walk with heads held*

high". We experience healing every day of our lives and most of the time; our healing goes unnoticed and unrecognized. God Himself created the amazing design of the human body and its ability to fight diseases and infections. This is the power of *Yahweh Rohekha*, Our Healer.

Whether you're hurting emotionally, physically or spiritually, trust *Yahweh Rophekha* the God who made the sour waters sweet. Sometimes The LORD's healing is within your heart, strengthening you to face your difficulty with a new endurance. Let us learn to trust Jesus, the Great Physician, rely on His name *Yahweh Rophekha* our Healer. Can God heal? Yes He can. Will He heal? Yes, He will. Watch and wait to see how He heals.

Pray with Jeremiah "*Heal me. O LORD, and I will be healed; save me and I will be saved*" (Jer 17:14). Trust His promise "*My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.*" And say with confidence with Apostle Paul: "*I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong*" (2 Corinthians 12:9-12).

The Bible says: "*Those who cried to the LORD in their trouble, He saved them from their distress. He sent forth His Word and healed them*" (Psalm 107:19-20).

Let us give thanks to the LORD for His unfailing love and His wonderful deeds for us. Let us trust and bless His name *Yahweh Rophekha*, The LORD who heals you. He will heal the bitter waters of this life.

Yahweh Nissi - יהוה נִסִּי.

The LORD Is My Banner

Over the past several weeks we have been looking at the some titles and names of God that revealed His character to us in Scripture. Today we come to another: *Yahweh Nissi*, which means “**The LORD Is My Banner**” (Exodus 17: 8-16).

Banners or flags identify the country we belong to, a rallying point for soldiers, athletes, fans to inspire, and strengthen their spirit to victory. They unite citizens as one people, and display a certain message that any group wants to tell. Moses used the rod of God as the banner for His people. With it he defeated the magicians of Egypt. He stretched it out and the Red Sea parted for their escape and the Egyptian army destroyed in the sea.

The name “*Yahweh Nissi*- the LORD is my Banner” comes from a very important event. It’s not to be forgotten. The Israelites were in the desert of Sinai for two months after their freedom from slavery in Egypt. They arrived at a place called Rephidim, where there was no water at all! They grumbled and put their anger on Moses, but Moses cried out to God. The Lord worked miracles and brought out water from the rock.

But at Riphidim, they faced another problem. They were attacked by the **Amalek**, the descendants of Esau. Amalek attacked the isolated ranks of Israel, all the stragglers, tired and weary; without any mercy or fear of God, as the Bible says in book of Deuteronomy 25:18. See also (Obadiah 10).

Moses said to Joshua to go and choose some men, and fight the Amalek. Moses got up to a hill with “**the rod of**

God” and Aaron and Hur went with him. Moses lifted his hands, holding the rod towards heaven, and Joshua triumphed. When he lowers his hands, the battle does not go well for Israel. Moses is getting tired, so Aaron and Hur get a stone for him to sit on and support his arms. As the sun sets, God brings victory to the Israelites. “*Moses built an altar and called it **Yahweh Nissi- The Lord is Our Banner***”. Nissi = banner is the same word that is used when Moses made the serpent of brass and lifted it up for the salvation of the people. It is a type and picture of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This event at Riphidim was to be a memorial for Israel. “And the LORD said to Moses, “*Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: because I will completely blot out the name of Amalek from under heaven.*” The significance here is that God is the banner for those who take refuge in Him. He is the One who brings us victory.

When Moses held up the rod of God in the battle with the Amalek, he was holding it like a banner, appealing to God’s protection and His presence among them. **Moses’ rod was God’s banner.** It used to be his shepherd’s rod, and it became God’s rod since He called Moses at the burning bush. By it he had defeated the magicians of Egypt, and parted the Red Sea. Now it is lifted up on the mountain and God brings victory over Amalek.

The name *Yahweh Nissi* reminds us of four things:

First: We are in a spiritual battle today.

Amalek is a “type” of world, flesh, and devil that attack us. Spiritual warfare is a reality. Satan our enemy attacks us all the time. His forces are unseen, but very real. The Bible says in Ephesians 6:12 “*For we wrestle not against flesh and*

blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places”.

Second: We will win the battle because God is our banner.

He is the one who gives victory and protects us. That is why Moses built an altar and named it *Yahweh Nissi*, to be a memorial of God’s protection and power. The place where the Lord’s name “*Yahweh Nissi*” was revealed would remind Joshua of victory that God always brings. The victory wasn't in Joshua's expertise. It wasn't in Moses' himself. Victory comes from God! The rod of God in the hand of Moses was a symbol of God's power and presence. Our victory is in the cross; we must keep returning to the cross, and remember that our Lord won the battle for us. He said: “It is finished”.

God promised his people: "*When you goes out to battle against your enemies, and see a people more than you, be not afraid of them: for the LORD your God is with you, which brought you up out of the land of Egypt*" (Deuteronomy 20:1) "*Be not afraid or dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's*" (2 Chronicles 20:15).

David said: "*The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do to me?*" (Ps 118:6). In Romans 8:31; Paul says to the Christians in Rome: "*What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?*"

Our banner is our LORD Jesus Christ, He is our *Yahweh Nissi* and His cross is its symbol. The Bible says: "*And his banner over me is love*" (Song of Songs 2:4). Our battle can only be won in God's strength and through His love for us.

Thirdly: Joshua would remember how Moses trusted in LORD and needed friends to help him maintain the banner being lifted high.

So we are also, we need to trust God and ask for help of prayers from our brothers and sisters in the LORD. While the banner was visible, God's people would make progress. If it dropped they began to lose. This is the lesson that must not be forgotten. Our need is always to trust in the LORD Jesus, and we are in need of the body of Christ who will be our support when we grow weary. Every believer needs to rally under God's banner. We need each other! That is why the local church is so important to us. Moses, Aaron, and Hur were up on the mountain lifting up the battle to God...Joshua and the army was in the heat of the battle. We need to pray and support one another and lift one another up in prayer for victory over evils and enjoy life with the LORD.

Fourthly: Joshua would remember that God had sworn to have war against Amalek from generation to generation.

We are at war with the flesh, the world and the devil, until the coming of our LORD. The Bible says *“Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh”* (Gal 5:16). *“And do not give the devil a foothold”* (Eph 4:17) *“Do not love anything in the world; the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever”* (1 John 2:15).

The spiritual war is going on, but the LORD Our Banner will never leave us nor forsake us, He will give us the victory as Paul says: *“Thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place”*(2 Cor 2:14). Yes Lord: *“You have given a banner to those who fear You, that it may be displayed because of the truth. That Your beloved may be delivered”, “And his banner over me is love”* (Ps 60:4-5). Praise His name *Yahweh Nissi*, the LORD our Banner.

El Qanna- אֵל קָנָא

A Jealous God

This name of God seems to be strange; it has confused some and annoyed others, because jealousy is sin and the Bible makes it clear that God is not like humans in that He never commits sins, but He is absolutely holy. The word “jealous” is almost entirely negative in the English language. So, what does the Hebrew text say?

“**Jealousy of God**” is always in the context of idol worship “*Do not worship any other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God*” (Exodus 34:14). In that context of idol worship God is not using the word "jealous" as you or I would. Its use to describe God is different from how it is used to describe the sin of human jealousy (Gal 5:20). So what is the difference?

There are two kinds of Jealous, Jealous from –qana- and Jealous on -qannâ. Jealous from –qana- is always negative word which describes the envious feeling we get when someone else has something that we want or has qualities that we wish we had. For example; a person might be jealous or envious of another person because he or she has a nice car, home, some ability, skill or career...etc.

(1) The Philistines envied Isaac for he had great possessions of flocks and servants (Gen 26:13-14). (2) Joseph’s brothers envied him because his father Jacob loves him more than them (Gen 37:11) (3) The Jews envied Jesus because of the multitudes of people who followed him and that is why they handed him to Pilate (Matthew 27:18) (4) The Jews envied Paul because he won the Greeks to Christ (Acts 17:5).

Jealous on qannâ is a positive word, which describes godly zeal of watching over the things of God. (1) Elijah: *“I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty”* (1 Kings 19) (2) Jesus cleansed the temple, because it’s written about Him *“Zeal for your house will consume me”* (John 2: 17) (3) Paul was jealous for the maturity and growth of Church and he said *“I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy”* (2 Cor11:1-2.)

The Qnna of God –Jealousy of God

God is not jealous or envious because someone has something He wants or needs. **“Jealousy of God”** is always in the context of idol worship. Exodus 20:4-5 says, *“You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God.”*

In these verses, God is warning his people of those who make idols and bowing down and worshiping those idols instead of giving the LIVING GOD the worship that belongs to Him alone. It is a sin as God points out in the Ten Commandments to worship or serve anything other than God.

The Israelites lived among people who believed in the worship of many gods. The greatest threat came to Israel from Canaanite religions that personified the forces of nature into deities (Baal worship). God’s people committed the great sin of worshiping their God with man made gods. The prophets of God were emphasizing again and again that God of the Israel was not just another god; but He is the only true Sovereign, Creator God. He is the One who created the aspects of nature that the pagan’s people worshipped!

The prophets used two metaphors, to describe the *qanna* of God, Jealousy of God. **The first image** describes God as the Loving **Father** who is constantly watching over his children, protecting them from harming themselves. **The second image** describes God as **the loving forgiving Husband** who brings his wife back home.

He said to His people: *“You deserted the Rock, who fathered you. You forgot the God who gave you birth ... They made me “qanna” jealous by what is no god and their worthless idols ... They are a nation without sense, there is no discernment in them ... The Lord will judge his people and have compassion on his servants... I have wounded and I will heal... For the Lord will make atonement for his people”* (Deuteronomy 32: 18, 21-34)

“The Lord will be qanna- jealous for his land and take pity on his people (Joel 2: 18). God is jealous of what belongs to Him. We are His people whom He loves. When Satan takes us from God, the loving God as a Father or a Husband of His people interferes and rescues us from his snare and brings us back.

The Book of Hosea takes the two metaphors of Father and Husband and applies these images to God's relationship with His people. The basis is love. *“qanna”* is a way to describe God's love as a Father and as a Husband for his people who were in misery. They put themselves in it by worshipping idols, but the loving God with compassion brought them back.

God says: *“How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I set you like Zeboiim? My heart churns within Me; My sympathy is stirred. I will not execute the fierceness of My anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim. For I am God, and*

not man, The Holy One in your midst; And I will not come with terror” (Hosea 11:8-9).

The Loving God, as a Father and a Husband to His people says: *“Return, Israel, to the LORD your God”*. His people say: *“We will never again say ‘Our gods’ to what our own hands have made, for in you the fatherless find compassion.”* God says: *“I the Lord will heal their waywardness and love them freely, for my anger has turned away from them. Israel says: what more have I to do with idols? I will answer him and care for him. I am like a flourishing juniper; your fruitfulness comes from me. .. In this day says the LORD: that you will call Me ‘My Husband’. I will remove the names of the Baals from her lips; no longer will their names be invoked. I will betroth you to me forever in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion. I will betroth you in faithfulness, and you will acknowledge the LORD”* (Hosea 14: 1-8 7 2:16-20)

El Qanna, our Zealous God enters into deep committed relationships. He did it with Israel and He has done it with His Church today. From God's perspective this relationship is as intimate and as exclusive as a family bond, and God is not a neglectful father or husband. He is attentive and faithful. He desires and expects the exclusive attention of His people as His family and will not allow anything that comes between Him and us to disrupt or destroy this relationship.

Our *El Qanna* expresses His desire to guard our relationship with Him and to remain faithful to Him as The Bible says: *“The Spirit of God who dwells in us yearns jealously” (James 4:5)* *El Qanna* alone is worthy of ALL our devotion and praise. He is jealous for us because He made us, loves us, and wants us to enjoy His eternal glory forever. Blessed be His name *El Qanna*.

Yahweh Raah- יהוה רעי

The LORD is My Shepherd

When life seems like a road full of rocks and hard to pass through, and you look for guidance and hope, when you say “I can’t help it”! “What shall I do”? Your only need is to look God’s name “*Yahweh Raah*”: He is Your Shepherd.

This name is so powerful and relevant to our daily life. It is a name that gives us hope and comfort. It is the name that speaks of God as the Great Shepherd of his people who loves and cares for us. The Bible presents our Lord Jesus as “*Yahweh Raah*” the One True Good Shepherd, who protects the lives of his sheep at the cost of his own life.

Psalm 23 talks about *Yahweh Raah*, our Shepherd and what He does for us. Let’s look at this beautiful Psalm and see a new vision of our great Shepherd. David was an old man when he wrote this Psalm. He had seen tragedies and disappointments, but he also had come to know God – the good shepherd who cares for him all the time.

David explains in Psalm 23, four places, where we see God our great Shepherd, caring for us; **the Pasture (1-2), the Valley (3-4), the Fold (5) and the Heavenly House (v.6).**

1. **In the Pastures** “The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures: he leads me beside the still waters” (vv. 1-2).

The pastures refer to **our work for living**, where we have provision and rest. Back in the days of David, pastures were

green following the rainy season but this didn't last all year. In pastures there were no fences, the land was rough and dangerous, because wild animals and snakes were attacking the sheep, and the helpless sheep needed constant oversight.

The eastern shepherds guarded their sheep, led them, provided food and water for them and the shepherd knows where to lead them. In every way he simply loved them, even giving them names. Our Lord Jesus said: "*You are my sheep. I am the good shepherd, and I know my sheep, and am known of mine*" (John 10).

Our God as the good shepherd is adequate for every need we may have in this life on earth. David has a testimony about how God cares for him "*I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread*" (Psalm 37:25).

When Jacob blessed the two sons of Joseph –Ephraim and Manasseh, he said "*The God, before whom my father's Abraham and Isaac walked, The God who has shepherded me all my life long to this day, the Angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads*". And when he blessed his son Joseph, he said "*Joseph's branches run over the wall, the arms of his hand were made strong By the hands of the Mighty God of Jacob from there is the Shepherd, the stone of Israel, by the God of your father who will help and bless you*".

"*So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*" God cares for us because he loves us and he is doing so because His name is *Yahweh Raah*.

2. In the Valley (vv.3-4.) The valley refers to the fearful and difficult time of our life- but even though *Yahweh Raah* is giving us guidance and protection. “He restores my soul: he leads me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.. Yes, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for you are with me; your rod and your staff they comfort me”.

In this verse David is not speaking about the shepherd but speaking to the shepherd. In the dark valley, He is with us calming our fears. This valley represents any difficult experience of life that makes us afraid. Sheep lack good vision and are easily frightened in new circumstances, especially where it's dark, but the presence of the shepherd calms them.

The sheep hear the shepherd's voice and follow him. When a sheep starts to walk through this dark valley, it will lead him into trouble and he goes astray. But the good shepherd, who knows his sheep by their names, calls him and brings him back. You and I are like lost sheep in the darkest time in our life, and we are not able to guide our own lives. We need to rely on our Lord the great shepherd of the sheep as David said “*Your rod and staff are comforted me*”.

The rod and staff are not referring to two separate instruments a shepherd might carry. Eastern shepherds carried **a walking stick that has two ends:** The top crook / hook which is called rod, used to pull the sheep out of the pit if they slip and fall in. And the bottom end called a staff to defend the sheep from its enemy. Sometimes, a shepherd had to use his rod to knock a stray ram on the head in order to get his attention!

Jewish Rabbies pictured the rod and staff in the Law of Moses and the teaching of the Prophets for disciplining a wayward sheep.

We often don't have the ability to get out of the pits into which we have fallen. We are comforted when we see our Shepherd pulls us out of the pit. Paul found comfort when the Lord said to him *“My grace is sufficient for you: for my strength is made perfect in weakness”* (II Corinthians 12:9). When we live by His grace and His truth we find comfort.

Walking with his sheep through this narrow, fearful and dangerous valley, David had this scene in mind, when he wrote Psalm 23 and testified about God's provision in the hour of fear. We can pass through that valley without fear

As we walk through the valley of trouble, even we are as defenceless as sheep against the wiles of the Devil, we have no fear, but comfort because we know our Shepherd is with us, and he's fully capable of guiding and sustaining us. He is walking with us all the way home.

**3. In the Fold. The Fold refers to our earthly home-
there under His care there is the peace of His Presence.**
*“You prepares a table before me in the presence of my
enemies: You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over”*.

After each difficult day's work, the aim of the shepherd was to bring the sheep safely back to the fold where the weary sheep could safely rest for the night. During the night, thieves and wild animals might approach the fold, but the presence of the shepherd calmed the fear of the sheep. The Lord doesn't always remove the dangers from our lives, but He does help us to overcome them and not be paralysed by its fear.

In the Fold, the shepherd would examine the sheep to be sure none of them was injured or sick from eating a poisonous plant. He applied the soothing oil on the heads and horns of the sheep to keep the insects away. To the thirsty, he had his large two-handled cup filled with water. The sheep knew they were safe and they could sleep without fear.

4. In the Heavenly House there will be the joy of the blessed Eternity (v.6)

As an old man, and in spite of his sins and failures, David looked back over his life, he gave thanks that the Lord had blessed him with goodness and mercy *“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life”*. As David looked ahead, he knew he would be in the heavenly house of the Lord forever *“I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever”*.

This isn't a reference to the temple, because the king didn't live in the temple. Nobody could live there or anywhere else forever. The Bible says that we shall meet our Shepherd in heaven *“For the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd us and lead us to the living waters. And He will wipe away every tear from our eyes”*.

If you could ask God for one thing, what would you request? David tells us what he would ask. He longs to dwell in the house of God forever. He doesn't seek a temporary place, but rather a lifelong residence. We too, are looking for that day to be with the Lord forever when He comes.

Finally let us sum up the significance of God's name *Yahweh Raah*". Psalm 23 presents a cluster of **seven names**

of Yahweh our Lord, describing what He does for us in every circumstance of our life.

When you say “*The Lord is my shepherd*” **Yahweh Raah**, this is a confession of faith that testifies to a personal relationship. You confess that the Eternal God “Yahweh” the great I AM, the Loving Redeemer still the same, the One undertaking the defence and care and guidance of your life “The LORD is My Shepherd”.

“*I shall not want*”, this is a simple affirmation re-echoing the assurance of Abraham, **Yahweh Yireh** “*The Lord will provide, or see to it, showing the way*”. As the Great Shepherd, He is able to supply our need. What more do I want.

When you say, “*He makes me to lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside the still water*” Here is the confession of faith in **Yahweh Shalom**, the Lord of Peace, the one who gives me rest to enjoy peace of mind.

Verse 3, “He restores my soul” **Yahweh Rophehka**, the LORD your Healer. The divine Shepherd is likewise the divine healer whose healing ministry includes healing of my spirit, my soul, and my also my body as well. In verse 5 “You anoint my head with oil” explains the custom of the eastern shepherd who carried a small jar of oil or ointment to relieve the cuts and bruises of the sheep.

“*He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.*” His name’s sake! What name? **Yahweh Sidqenu**, the LORD our Righteousness. Here is the beautiful work of our

Loving LORD in us. He does not force us to take the road of righteousness with punishment as some think wrongly about Him, but He leads us with compassion and loving-kindness.

“Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me”. **“You are with me”** is the title of the Presence of God **“Yahweh Shamma”**, and it may well be the title of the whole psalm. The LORD is there, whether it be in the pastures, in the valley, in the fold, amid enemies, the Shepherd is ever near. He is always at hand all the days of our life, until we reach His dwelling place above, He fills all time, and eternity as well.

“You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies”. You might well ask; where is God’s name in this verse. In our human way the banquet follows the battle, and a victorious leader and his troops are entertained and feasted. Our LORD is **Yahweh Nissi**, He is our Banner, our Defence. The banquet is spread before the battle because the banner is already victorious. *“He brought me into His banqueting house and His banner over me was love”* (Song of Songs 2:4)

When the Lord is our shepherd, we will have;

- Provision - I have all that I need;
- Peace - I have rest from a weary journey;
- Protection - I have safety from my enemies;
- Providence - I have guidance in times of confusion;
- Presence - I have a companion when the way is lonely;
- Paradise - I have a home awaiting me in heaven.

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life" (v. 6). Let us then listen to His voice as our Shepherd said: "My sheep hear My voice" John 10:27.

Yahweh Raah is calling us to the comfort of His arms. He is calling us to enjoy the rest of receiving forgiveness and restoration. He wants to guide us all the way as He walks with us through our faith journey of life. He wants us to enjoy the joy of His presence both now and for eternity.

Under His care we are not afraid of changes of life; the future before us is secured because *Yahweh Raah* says in Ezekiel 34:11-16

“I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day he is among his scattered sheep, so will I seek out My sheep and deliver them from all the places where they were scattered on a cloudy and dark day.. I will feed them in good pasture. There they shall lie down in a good fold and feed in rich pasture. I will seek what was lost and bring back what was driven away, bind up the broken and strengthen what was sick”

Blessed be His name “*Yahwah Raah*”.

Yahweh Sidqenu - יְהוָה צְדִיקֵנוּ.

The LORD our Righteousness

We have been looking at the various ways that God has revealed Himself to us in Scripture indicated by His names. Each name that God uses for Himself reveals to us an aspect of His character that helps us to know Him better. One of the great majestic names of God is “*Yahweh Sidqenu*” “The LORD Our Righteousness” (Jer. 33:16).

This name answers the question of how should we be just with God? (Job 9:2; 25:4). Psalm 130:3 says: “*If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?*” The answer is found in God’s promise “*In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory*” (Isaiah 45:25).

Jeremiah prophesied of a Righteous Branch who would come and His name will be *Yahweh Sidqenu* which means *the Lord our righteousness* “*Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will raise up ... a righteous Branch;... and this is His name by which He will be called, ‘The Lord our righteousness’*” (Jeremiah 23:5- 6; 33:16).

That is what is promised in Christ “*He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities*” (Isaiah 53:11).

The name *Yahweh Sidqenu* speaks of three important things;

- 1. The Holiness of God and our need of perfect righteousness to be in His Presence.**

2. God's promise to provide His righteousness to us in Christ.

3. How we must always see ourselves as God sees us in Christ.

- God's Holiness and Our need of Perfect Righteousness

The prophet Isaiah once had a vision in which he saw the Lord God on His throne. Around the throne were heavenly beings who were praising God, saying, "*Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory.*"

Isaiah was so overcome by what he saw of the glory and holiness of God that he cried out, "*Woe is me! I am doomed; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts*" Isaiah 6:5

What was it that caused Isaiah to say, "Woe is me, for I am doomed"? It was his sense of sinfulness. Isaiah realized that he did not have the perfect righteousness he needed to be in the presence of the holy and glorious God.

Q: Can we produce a perfect righteousness that is acceptable to God? No, we cannot. No matter how hard we try, we cannot obey the commandments of God perfectly. The Bible says, "*There is none righteous, no, not one ... there is none that does good, no, not one... For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*" (Romans 3:10, 12, 23)

We can't make ourselves "right with God." Think of it like a crumpled up piece of paper. Try and smooth it out. No matter how hard you try, you won't be able to make it perfectly smooth again.

- God’s Promise to provide His righteousness to us in Christ

But thanks be to God, what we can never do ourselves, God has done for us. His name *Yahweh Sidqenu* speaks of His promise to provide a perfect righteousness for us through the Righteous Branch, the Messiah, the son of God who became sin for us “***that we might become the Righteousness of God in Him***” (2 Cor 5:21.)

He is called the “*Righteous Servant*” in Isaiah 53:11. He is “*the Sun of Righteousness*” in Malachi 4:2. He is “*the Messiah, the righteous king*” in Zechariah 9:9.

The promise foretold through the prophets was simple: God’s great desire was that men would hear His call, turn from their sins and look for righteousness that God Himself would provide through the Messiah.

This righteousness cannot be earned. It is never deserved. “***For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight. But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe***” (Romans 3:21-26).

To go back to the illustration of the crumpled paper ...Our Lord Jesus doesn’t “uncrumple you” and straighten you out by making you obedient to the law. He covers you with his own righteousness.

- **How does God make us perfectly righteous in His sight?**

He does this by putting us “*In Christ*”. God has robed us with the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 5:12 that we are declared righteous before God through the atoning death of Christ. The Bible says, “*For He [God] has made Him [Christ] to be sin [a sin offering] for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him*” (2 Corinthians 5:21)

The words “In Christ” express the glorious position God has given to the believer. When God looks at us, He does not see us as we are; He sees only Christ. Because we are in Christ, we have a perfect righteousness before God. Christ is our righteousness.

This righteousness is perfect because Christ is perfect. This righteousness never changes because Christ never changes. This righteousness is now our righteousness because we are in Christ. Every believer is in Christ. Every believer can say, “Christ is my righteousness.”

We Must See Ourselves as God Sees Us

We must begin to see ourselves as God sees us - perfectly righteous in Christ. This perfect righteousness is God's gift to us because we are in Christ. You are not the person you used to be. You are a “new creature in Christ.” The Bible says, “*Therefore if any man be IN CHRIST, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new*” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Just as God looks at His Son and sees Him perfectly righteous, so He looks at us and sees us perfectly righteous because we are in Him. God wants us to live our lives each day in the full consciousness of being righteous in His sight because we are in Christ. Say to yourself again and again, "I am in Christ! He is my righteousness!"

There is no truth in the Bible more important for us as Christians than knowing that we are in Christ and that He is our righteousness. This is something God did for us when we took Christ as our Saviour.

Thank God: we are covered with the robe of Christ's righteousness. Over the top of our crumpled piece of paper, God sees Christ. Let us cling to Christ, put our trust in him, rejoicing with the prophet Isaiah who sang: "*I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness*" (Isaiah 61:10)

That name is blessing when we struggle with our sinful weaknesses. God wants us to remember his name. He is *The LORD Our Righteousness*. You can say, "The LORD my Righteousness." I am made righteous of God in Christ. The devil can't keep poking at me with my guilt. God doesn't see it. He only sees me living and breathing "in Christ Jesus...our righteousness."

That's the name we celebrate today. That name is all about God's love for us. It's a blessing for us all. It's a blessing for you and me, because our Lord Jesus Christ is *Yahweh Sidqenu*: The LORD Our Righteousness. He took away our sin and guilt so that we could have true righteousness. Blessed be His name *Yahweh Sidqenu*. Amen.

Yahweh Mekoddishkem- יהוה מקדשכם

The Lord Who Sanctifies You

Shortly after Israel was redeemed from their slavery in Egypt, God called them to Holiness “*I am the LORD who brought you up from the land of Egypt to be your God; thus you shall be holy for I am holy. Consecrate yourselves. You shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation*” (Exodus 19:1-6; Lev 11:44-45; 19:1).

We hear echoes of this call by the command of our Lord Jesus in Matthew 5:48; “*Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect*”. And again by Apostle Peter to all Christians “*You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvellous light*” (1 Peter 2:9). This call of holiness raises the question: What does holiness means? How can a Christian live a godly life in a world dominated by evil? The answer is found in the strong tower of God’s name “***Yahweh Mekoddishkem-*** *the LORD who sanctifies you*” (Lev 20:7).

1. The word "sanctify or to be holy" means "to set apart from a common to a sacred use." For example, the tabernacle of the Lord, or God’s Temple, and the Church building are dedicated for a sacred purpose which is to be a house of prayer. Priest, pastor, evangelist are consecrated to serve God, and not to do any other work. Sabbath is one day of the week to be dedicated for rest from work (Gen 2:2-3).

God also set apart His people to be “*a kingdom of priests and a holy nation*” to serve Him “*so that they may proclaim*

the excellencies of Him who has called them out of darkness into His marvellous light” (Ex.19:1-6; 1 Peter 2:9)

2. The Works of God for our sanctification. God would not command us to be holy without enabling us to obey that command. The Bible identifies two works of God for our sanctification; **positional and practical**, as He promises “*I AM the LORD who sanctifies you*” (Lev 20:7).

Positionally, Christians have been sanctified, set apart to belong to Christ. This sanctifying process is called being “*added to the church*” (Acts 2:47), “*translation into the kingdom*” (Col. 1:13), and “*entering Christ*” (Gal. 3:26-27).

We have been “*washed, sanctified, and justified*” by the work of Christ on the cross (1 Cor 6:11). In Christ, we received the cleansing of our spirit, we are free from any guilt of sin in God’s sight and we are set up apart in Christ to serve and glorify God. This is our spiritual state in Christ with all of its heavenly blessings (Eph. 1:3).

The other side of Sanctification is translation of our position in Christ into the practice of “*progressive holiness*”, “**Becoming in practice what we became in position**”. This is what makes those who around us take notice and see that we belong to Christ, a living proof of God’s love and His work in our life.

The Christian life is not what I do or don’t do that makes me holy. But the Christian has been made holy in Christ through “*positional holiness*”. Now my new nature in Christ produces the fruit of the Spirit of God’s “*progressive holiness*” to prove that I belong to Christ. Sanctification is a work of God, and not something that you can do for yourself. No one can do it; we all are stand helpless before the

depravity of our heart. Only the Holy God who said *"I am the LORD who sanctifies you"*.

3. How does God do this work in us? The Bible says in 1 Thessalonians 5:23 *"May the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely. And may your spirit, soul and body be preserved without blame at the coming of our LORD Jesus. He who calls you is faithful who is also will do it".*"

The three parts of man- spirit, soul and body, might be illustrated in three circles. The outer circle stands for our *body-* in Greek *"soma"*. This is shown as touching the material world through the five senses of sight, smell, hearing, taste and Touch. The middle circle for our *soul-* in Greek *"psyche"*. This is our mind, emotions, and our will. The inner circle the spirit- in Greek *"pneuma"*. This is the seat of our conscience which can know God and receive His life. It is a place deep inside us, a room intended only for God's Spirit to dwell in us.

The body you see walking through life may make mistakes and may fail to do what is right, and here is our struggle and our misunderstanding of how to live a godly life. Sanctification does not come from doing what is good or keeping the Law, the Ten Commandments. We can live a godly life only through knowing and relying on what God has done for us.

Let us see the battle inside us, our struggle with sin and see who controls our inner being or my inward man?

In Romans 7:15-25; Apostle Paul speaks of the battle inside us, between two natures of our mind, the Old and the New. And it can get to be a frustrating experience for the short or long term. Paul says: *"I do not understand what I do.*

For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me" (Romans 7:15-17)

Paul refers to that frustration with this ability to see what is good, and the inability to do it, and the ability to recognize what is wrong, and the inability to stop doing it.

Do you ever feel yourself pulled in two directions, two powerful forces? One force pulls you up toward doing God's will to live a godly life. The other force pulls you down towards sin and darkness.

Paul explains this battle and goes on to say *“Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man, but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death?” (7:21-24)*

Here comes the victory, when you stop trying and doing, instead, cry: WHO WILL RESCUE ME? When you cry: Lord; save me! You will experience victory.

We are not pursuing holiness in our strength but in total dependence on the liberating truth that God is *Yahweh Mekoddishkem*, the Lord who sanctifies you and His Spirit and His Word enable you to progressively become more holy as He conforms us to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ. “Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass” (1 Tess 5:24).

When Paul cries: “*Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death?*” He found the answer in the strong tower of the name of the Lord, he said “*Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my new mind am a slave to God’s law, I do good, but in my sinful nature a slave to the law of sin. Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.*” (7:24-25; 8:1-2)

God’s way is not to take us out of the world, but to take the world out of us. This separateness is not a physical removal from other people but a spiritual relocation into God’s victory in the world.

Apostle Paul tells us that God has given us the means of the grace to live a godly life. With our daily relationship with the living Christ, relaying on His Spirit and His Word, we can stand up against sin and temptation (John 16:11,17,19).

But if we try to do what is right by ourselves without the means of grace, we are bound to fail. In our own strength we are powerless against sin. Our own good intentions fail us

Paul is proclaiming the victory over sin nature “*Thanks be to God through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death*” (8:1-2)

Paul invites us to bring our inner straggle to the cross of Calvary; there we see Christ's grace is sufficient for us!

Until the coming of our Lord and the end of the world, the sin nature is still in operation in our lives when we are controlled by our fleshly desires. Satan is trying very hard to influence, our sin nature deceiving and tempting us to do sin.

But when we are living by the spirit, then the sin nature has no influence on our inner being because we are not control by the dictates of the flesh.

Paul is using this as a contrast between living in the flesh as oppose to living by the Spirit. He is saying that when we try to live by the flesh- to do what is right without relying of God then we are set up to fail. We will struggle with sin and be defeated by it even though Jesus meant us to be completely free of it. Paul is saying that we need to live by the spirit and we will not struggle with sin. He is using this illustration to prove that without God it is impossible to live that way.

Let us grow in our relationship to Christ. Sanctification is an on-going process. It begins at conversion, and continues as we grow in the faith, with *Yahweh Mekoddishkem*, the Lord who sanctifies us completely. It is God who does indeed complete the process of sanctification for those who are called to set apart in Christ Jesus. We who are in Christ are indeed richly blessed: We have been "called" by the gospel of Christ, to be holy and blameless. We have been "sanctified" set apart for a holy purpose by God the Father, as He works upon us through His Holy Spirit and with His Holy Word.

But dear friends, forces of Satan are very much at work. They seek to undermine our faith in Christ. They seek to harden our hearts, and to make us spiritually lazy, and not to maintain the carefulness necessary to keep ourselves in the love of God. But thanks be to our Holy God who loved us in Christ who “*gave himself up for us to make us holy, cleansing us by the washing with water of His Word, and to present us to himself as a perfect church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless*” (Eph5). Praise be to His Holy Name.

Yahweh Shalom – יהוה שָׁלוֹם

God our Peace

In the book of Judges, chapter 6:24, we find another significant name for God “*Yahweh-Shalom*” which translates “*The Lord is Peace*”. The book of judges tells us how God's people fell into a cycle of apostasy - oppression - repentance - deliverance - then apostasy and the cycle repeated itself again and again. In the text we read, we find the Israelites under severe oppression by the Midianites for seven years. Imagine you have a garden, and you work hard to make that garden produce abundantly. But every year, just about the time you are ready to gather in the harvest, your neighbours swoop down and take your produce away from you by force. This goes on every year, and there is nothing you can do about it. This is what happened to the Israelites. Seven years, the Midianites, their neighbours took all their food, tools, and livestock. The Israelites cried out for deliverance. God appeared to Gideon who was hiding behind closed doors in fear in the winepress, threshing some wheat for his family to survive. God exalted Gideon to the position of a mighty man, giving him the privilege to deliver God’s people to enjoy prosperity and peace. By faith Gideon built an altar to the LORD, and called it “*Yahweh Shalom*”.

That raises the question; what Yahweh Shalom stands for?

1. Yahweh Shalom is sensitive to the need and sorrows of His people.
2. Yahweh Shalom has a desire to give us His peace.
3. Yahweh Shalom speaks of our need to trust that His presence is with us.

4. Jesus Christ is our Yahweh Shalom who is with us always to the end of the age.

Yahweh Shalom is sensitive to the needs and sorrows of His people. He said *“I have surely seen the affliction of my people ... and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows”* (Exodus 3:7). In the book of Judges the Bible says *“His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel”* (Judges 10:16). Isaiah 63:9 reads *“In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old”*. Our Lord Jesus knows what you are going through because *“He is our great high priest who is able to empathize with our weaknesses, for He has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need”* (Hebrews 4:14-16).

Yahweh Shalom has a desire to give us His peace. He said *“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end”* (Jeremiah 29:11). In Psalms 29:1, we see the beautiful promise *“The LORD will give strength unto his people; the LORD will bless his people with peace”*. For this reason, the Lord appeared to Gideon and commanded him to go and deliver His people and give them peace. He said once to his people *“If only you had paid attention to my commands, your peace would have been like a river, your well-being like the waves of the sea”* (Isaiah 48:18.)

Yahweh Shalom speaks of our need to trust that His presence is with us regardless of the situation we are in. When the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said, *“The LORD is*

with you, mighty warrior.” “Pardon me, my lord,” Gideon replied, “but if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our ancestors told us about when they said, ‘Did not the LORD bring us up out of Egypt?’ But now the LORD has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midian.” The LORD turned to him and said, “Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian’s hand. Am I not sending you?” “Pardon me, my lord,” Gideon replied, “but how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family.” The LORD answered, “I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites, leaving none alive.”

But still Gideon has doubt, that the Lord is with him, so he said to the Lord *“If you will save Israel by my hand as you have promised; look, I will place a wool fleece on the threshing floor. If there is dew only on the fleece and all the ground is dry, then I will know that you will save Israel by my hand, as you said.”* And that is what happened. Gideon rose early the next day; he squeezed the fleece and wrung out the dew—a bowlful of water. Then Gideon said to God, *“Do not be angry with me. Let me make just one more request. Allow me one more test with the fleece, but this time make the fleece dry and let the ground be covered with dew.”* That night God did so. Only the fleece was dry; all the ground was covered with dew.

Yahweh Shalom assured Gideon that He is with him and said to him: *“If you are afraid to attack, go down to the camp of the Midianites at night with your servant Purah and listen to what they are saying. Then you will be encouraged to attack them.”* So he and Purah his servant went down to the outposts of the camp. Gideon arrived just as a man was telling a friend his dream. *“I had a dream ... A round loaf of barley*

bread came tumbling into the Midianite camp. It struck the tent with such force that the tent overturned and collapsed.” His friend responded, *“This can be nothing other than the sword of Gideon son of Joash, the Israelite. God has given the Midianites and the whole camp into his hands.”* When Gideon heard the dream and its interpretation, *he bowed down and worshiped Yahweh Shalom.* He returned to the camp of Israel and called out, *“Get up! The LORD has given the Midianite camp into your hands.”*

Regardless the situation you are in, trust that the Lord is with you; with confidence say with David *“He guides me along the right paths for his name’s sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me”* (Ps 23).

Our Lord Jesus Christ is our Yahweh Shalom who is with us always to the end of the age. He is called **“Prince of Peace”**. Isaiah prophesied about his coming and said: *“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace”* (Isaiah 9:6). Our Lord Jesus Himself said: *“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world gives, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid”* (John 14:27). *“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”* (John 16:33)

That raises the question: How can you have peace at the same time as you face trouble? What is this peace that the Bible speaks about? Peace in the Bible is not the absence of conflict or of trouble. Peace is not just cases fire. But Shalom

can be found in a war zone. Our Lord is saying to us: In this world, expect bad days, bad weeks, God forbid, even bad years, but take heart, I am with you. Do not define peace by circumstances. You and I may not be able to change the circumstances, but we can have peace in spite of it. Again the question is: how can we get such peace?

There once was a King who offered a prize to the artist who would paint the best picture of peace. Many artists tried. The King looked at all the pictures, but there were only two he really liked and he had to choose between them.

One picture was of a calm lake. The lake was a perfect mirror, for peaceful lofty mountains were all around it. Overhead was a blue sky with no clouds. All who saw this picture thought that it was a perfect picture of peace. **The other picture** had rugged mountains, and above was an angry sky with dark clouds, thunder and lightening. Down the side of the mountain tumbled a foaming waterfall. This did not look peaceful at all. But when the King looked, he saw behind the waterfall a tiny bush growing in a crack in the rock. In the bush a bird had built her nest. There, in the midst of the rush of angry water, sat the bird on her nest in perfect peace.

Which picture do you think won the prize? The King chose the second picture. The king said ‘peace does not mean to be in a place where there is no noise, trouble, or hard work. Peace means to be in the midst of all those things and still be calm in your heart. That is the real meaning of peace.’

Our Lord Jesus said: *“Come unto me, all you that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls”* (Matthew 11:28-29).

He Himself provided our peace for us by His own death
“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: For we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, but much more, we shall be saved by his life” (Romans 5:1, 10)

When the sea is beating against the rocks in huge dashing waves and the lightning is flashing, the thunder is roaring, the wind is blowing; remember that you are in Christ like the little bird sleeping in the cleft of the rock, its head peacefully under its wing, sound asleep. This is our peace in Yahweh Shalom, our Lord Jesus Christ, He is our peace – we can be able to sleep in the storm! In Christ, we are relaxed and at peace in the midst of the confusions and in the storm of this life. The storm rages, but our hearts are at rest in the cleft of our rock. In Him we have the perfect peace.

Peace is part of salvation package that we received from God in Christ. It is also the fruit of the Holy Spirit. *“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace...”* (Galatians 5:22) Trust that His presence is with us even in the midst of the storm. His name is called **“Emmanuel”** God is with us. He promises us *“I am with you always to the end of the age”*.

“Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus”(Philippians 4:6-9) *“Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour”* (Is 43).

יהוה אֲבִינוּ- Yahweh Abwnu-

The LORD Our Father

To Israel, God is never mentioned as “Father” in the sense the New Testament reveals Him. Our Lord Jesus invited us to address God when we pray to say “*Abba*” “*Our Father in heaven.*” Yet there are references in the Old Testament of the Fatherhood of God which are merely figurative, and used by way of illustration. Such tis he cry of His people asking Him to act as their Father:

*“Look down from heaven and see...where are your zeal and your might? The stirring of your inner parts and your compassion are held back from me. For you are our Father, though Abraham does not know us, and Israel does not acknowledge us; you, **O LORD, are our Father, our Redeemer from of old is your name**”*(Isaiah 63:15-16)

Let us see four aspects of what it meant to call God father:

1. God- the Father who carries his children, in whom we can trust (Deuteronomy 1:30-31)
2. God- the Father who disciplines his children, in whom we recognise His true love (Deut 8:2-5; Heb 12:4-11).
3. God- the Father who pities his children, to whom we are grateful (Psalm 103:8-14).
4. God- the Father who blessed his children with every spiritual blessing to Him we glorify His blessed name forever and ever Amen (Eph. 1: 3-14)

(1) God The Father Who Carries His Children

“The Lord your God, who is going before you, will fight for you, as he did for you in Egypt, before your very eyes, and in the desert. There you saw how the Lord your God carried you, as a father carries his son, all the way you went until you reached this place”(Deuteronomy 1:30-31).

Moses spoke these words to Israel and appealed to their experience of God’s care and how the Lord carried them just like a father carrying his son. He reminds them of what God has said *“You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself”* (Exodus 19:3-6).

How beautiful is this picture of God in his relation to us as His children: a Loving Father who picks up and carries his child in his arms or upon his shoulders. The message of the Bible’s reference to God as the carrying Father is to urge us to trust Him in the future, since he had not failed His people in the past. In contrast to the human father, our Father God continues to carry his people even to their old age. He is our faithful father, who carries you from start to finish. Our Father God is the loving Father who has carried us all the way and will do so to the very end.

See His promised *“Listen to me, you descendants of Jacob, all the remnant of the people of Israel, you whom I have upheld since your birth, and have carried since you were born. Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am He who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I*

will sustain you and I will rescue you” (Isaiah46:3-4). Here is God, the Father who carries us, protecting us through all dangers, one whom we can trust like a child in his father’s arms. We are His. Yes, we are safe and secure in His arms.

(2) God- the Father who pities

“The LORD is compassionate and gracious; slow to anger, abounding in love... As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust” (Psalm 103:8-14)

God is like a human father who feels pity and compassion for his children in their small size and physical limitations. Our Heavenly Father does not expect of us more than we can do. Just as a human father watches with loving understanding as his son struggles with some man-sized load, so our heavenly Father looks down in pity on us in our weakness. ***“He sympathizes with our weaknesses”*** (Heb 4:15).

Here is God, the father who pities his people, and acts to carry away their sins so that they can be forgiving. Such fatherly compassionate love calls us to bless Him and forget not all his benefits. Glory be to his name.

(3) God- the Father Who Disciplines

“Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to humble and test you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that

comes from the mouth of the LORD. Your clothes did not wear out and your feet did not swell during these forty years. Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so the LORD your God disciplines you” (Deuteronomy 8:1-5.)

In their wilderness, God is compared to a father- a father who will allow his children to experience tough times in order to learn from them. Discipline, in this sense is a very positive word. God’s ‘*discipline*’ does not simply mean punishment- it means God’s loving actions in our lives that turn us away from wrong attitudes, to walk into maturity and intimacy with Him.

“We have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they indeed for a few days disciplined us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. Now no discipline seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it” (Heb 12.)

(4) God- The Father who blessed Us

Apostle Paul begins the letter to the Ephesians with a doxology of praise to God the Father who blessed us with seven blessings that we have in Christ. “*In Christ Jesus*” is used 7 times in this song of Grace. It describes our spiritual position in Christ, where we enjoy the Father’s blessing in our daily life.

For details of these 7 blessings, see my Book “*The Call of Grace*” pp 9-23.

The Descriptive Names of God

The Bible describes God as “*Fortress, Refuge, Shield, Rock, Dwelling place, Strong tower*”. These descriptive names for God are closely interrelated, and interconnected, it is best to deal with them together. When we pray to God using these descriptive names, our hearts will focus on Him who has promised to watch over us and keep us safe.

God is pictured as our **Refuge**, the one to whom we can run for safety and security. Moses said to God’s people “*The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms*” (Deut 33:27). God instructed Moses to “set apart” three cities of refuge to protect innocent victims from those who wished to do harm to them (Deuteronomy 4). How practical our Heavenly Father was in using an earthly place of protection to help us more clearly understand the refuge He is to you and me. The word “**Refuge- יְהוָה מִקְּסִי**”, means - High tower, Shelter and Hope.

As you and I face everyday challenges and attacks, we long for a city of refuge we can run to. And our Heavenly Father says, “Don’t worry. I’m the stronghold you can run to and be safe.” Doesn’t that give you confidence! His Word says “*The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runs into it and is saved*”.

Psalm 18:2 speaks of God as “**Our Fortress- יְהוָה מִצְּרֹדְתִי**”, “*The Lord is my fortress*”. A fortress suggests war and conflict, and a defence from the foe. The names Strong Tower and High Tower as applied to God express a similar provision and purpose. We see this connection in Psalm 144:2 “*He is my loving God and my fortress, my stronghold and my deliverer,*

my shield, in whom I take refuge.” “The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation. He is my stronghold, my refuge and my saviour. From violent people you save me. I called to the LORD, who is worthy of praise, and have been saved from my enemies” (2 Sam 22:2-4). “The Lord is my Light and my Salvation whom shall I fear or dread? The Lord is the Refuge and Stronghold of my life of whom shall I be afraid? ... I will say of the Lord, He is my Refuge and my Fortress, my God; on Him I lean and rely, and in Him I trust!” (Ps 27:1 & 91:2)

The Bible gives us a rich variety of impressive names and graphic pictures to reveal who and what our Lord actually is in regard to the protective safety and positive security of His redeemed children.

Psalm 3 speaks of God as our **shield** “*But you, LORD, are a shield around me, my glory, the One who lifts my head high*”. The shield “*Mchse-יְהוָה מִחֲסֵי*”, is the most ancient weapon of defence. Shields were most necessary for protection from darts, stones and blazing torches. A shield was the part of a soldier’s armour that not only kept away stabs of sword and all the flaming arrows against it, but was the means of defence between the soldier and his foe.

Apostle Paul speaks of “**shield of faith**” which is our faith and trust in the Lord “*Take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one*” (Eph 6:16). How blessed we are, when we know that our Shield, God is between the enemy and ourselves, and therefore no trial can overtake us apart from His permissive will!

Behind Him as our Shield, the antagonisms of Satan, and accusations of men cannot injure us. From among these most descriptive figures of divine ability, God choose the Shield as most impressive and came to Abraham with this new revelation of Himself which the psalmist confirms “*I am your shield*” (Gen 15:1)

Until the coming of our Lord to take us to the eternal glory, our life here like any story, it has tension, high points, and low points. There’s joy and delight as well as pain and sorrow. But because God is our rock, our stronghold and fortress, our trust in Him will be our shield against the flaming arrows of the devil.

A **rock** is another image of God’s protecting care. Psalm 62:2 says: “*Truly God is my rock-צוּרִי-Suri- and my salvation. He is my fortress, I will never be shaken*”. The Mountains or the big rocks round about Jerusalem with their refreshing shade and shelter afforded travellers relief from the scorching heat of the desert sun. The psalmist applied that image to God; the symbol is a touching picture of His protection and loving care of those who rest in His presence. He is our hiding place, our refuge and our shelter.

Isaiah 32:1-2 speaks of God “*as a **hiding place** from the wind. And a **cover** from the tempest. As **rivers of water** in a dry place. As the **shadow of a great rock** in a weary land*”.

The New Testament identifies our LORD Jesus as the spiritual rock that accompanied the Israelites from their redemption from slavery and during their long journey through the desert. He is our redeemer who took our sins away and became our shelter and our hiding place and by His

blood we are covered forever forms the judgment, and we have the blessing of the eternal life. He is the rock of ages; we can run to Him trusting that He will never put us to shame, as the Bible says “*Who trusts in Him will never be put to shame*” (1 Peter 2:6).

We may feel that we are slipping into discouragement; we may face something that frightens and shakes our confidence. May be illness? Job loss? Trouble at home? No matter how out of control life may seem, keep your eye glued to the Rock of Ages- to his promises, he is faithful! Do not focus on the circumstance that disturb you, but look at Him and build your life on His Word, trusting that when the rains come down, the streams rise up, and the winds blow and beat against your home, it will not fall because its foundation is securely built on the rock of ages.

Take hold of the words of Psalm 9:9 “*The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. Those who know your name trust in you, for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you*”.

May we ever gratefully sing of Him who is our “Shield and Defender”, “*You are my hiding place and my shield ... You are a shield around me, O LORD; you my glory, the One who lifts my head high.*” (Ps 119:114, 3:3).

Yahweh Shammah- יהוה שָׁמָּה

The Lord Is There

In our series on the wonders of God's names we are discovering that each name means something; each reveals an important aspect of his nature, his character, his attributes and how He relates to us. The purpose of this study is to take away the wrong impressions about God and to see who He is and how much He loves us.

There are people who label God things that are not true of Him. God gets blamed for things He had nothing to do with. Some think of a wrong idea of who He is. The devil makes certain of that to let people not think of God at all.

One evening, a university student told his pastor, that he could no longer believe in God. The pastor asked him to describe the God he didn't believe in. The student said God is not there, if He does exist, He is not fair; He is the cause of all suffering. When the student finished sketching his idea of God, the pastor said, "Well, we're in the same boat. I don't believe in that God of yours either. He is not my God. My God is the God of the Bible. He is Just, Loving, Good, Merciful and He is there for us all the time."

Today we come to consider His name *Yahweh Shammah* which means the LORD is THERE. This name is found in the last verse of the book of Ezekiel. The name is given for the New Jerusalem as the Bible says; "the name of the city will be '*Yahweh Shammah*' which means "*The Lord is there*" (48:35.)

Before we get to the meaning of this name, let's look at the big picture of the book of Ezekiel. After the fall of Jerusalem, and destroying its temple by the hand of the Babylonians

army around 586 BC, God revealed to Ezekiel **three big visions**: The first vision describes the appearance of the likeness of the glory of God, and Ezekiel is called to be a prophet (Ezek 1-3). Ezekiel is called "*The prophet of the captive Jews*". He was carried away to Babylon about 597 B.C. which was 11 years before Jerusalem was destroyed, in the second deportation of the Jews. The second vision describes how the presence of God departed from the Temple and the entire city of Jerusalem because God's people had turned away from God, and worshipped idols (Ezek 4-24). The third vision is a wonderful picture of God's glory returning to Jerusalem and its name shall be God's name "*Yahweh Shammah*" (Ezek 40-48).

Ezekiel ends with similar vision as the Book of Revelation ends, both are describing the glorious future where God will be with the redeemed forever (Ez 48:30-35 & Rev 21:12-14). John the apostle ends his vision of the new city of God with prayer "*Amen! Come Lord Jesus*" (Rev 22:20). This is the highest blessing that could come upon a city that its name will be called, *Yahweh-Shammah*, The Lord is there. This name is all about God's presence among his people.

Q: What is the significant of the name "*Yahweh Shammah-The LORD Is There*"?

This name of God indicates God's Promised Presence. To understand the significance of this name, we have to consider what God's presence meant for the people of Israel. The Israelites believed God was a present God – He physically was there. Beginning in the Garden of Eden God was in a relationship with His creation. God walked thru the garden in the cool of the day with Adam and Eve. They had everything security, love, acceptance, perfection and an intimate

relationship with God. But their communion was destroyed by their sin and they were cast out of God's presence. God was still there in the world, but not like he had been in the Garden.

After the fall everything changed. The Israelites came to see only glimpse of God's presence in the tabernacle and later in temple. His presence was located in the Ark of the Covenant in the holy of holies. But it wasn't like before the fall. There was no fellowship as in the garden and no relaxed walks in the cool of the day. God could only be approached through the priests. The High Priest was charged with entering the holy of holies to make atonement for sin for God's people.

When we come to Ezekiel time in the captivity, there is a problem because the temple had been destroyed. The people reasoned that without a temple, there was nowhere for God to dwell. They had been dragged off into slavery, and God's house destroyed. But what happened in Israel to bring them to this place? (Ez. 44:4-8)

1. **They lost the wonder of God's majesty.** They put God in a box and actually thought they could keep Him there. It was like they had a Jeannie in a bottle calling on Him only when they needed Him.

2. **They worshiped idols beside Him** and believed like their pagans neighbours that their outward religious expression was all what God wanted. They thought as long as they brought a sacrifice that was enough. That is why they went to captivity.

But there in their captivity God graciously steps in to encourage Ezekiel and those in exile. He showed Ezekiel a

vision of God's glory return to Jerusalem and its name shall be called *Yahweh Shamma* "Lord is There". God assured them that He has not abandoned them, but that there will be a restoration and He will be there with them forever. Although Israel was not always obedient to Him, God was always faithful to them. The Bible says: "*In all their distress he too was distressed, and the angel of his presence saved them. In his love and mercy he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old*" (Isaiah 63:9).

The question to us is how does this relate to us today? Simple! The same God who wanted the Israelites to know His presence wants us to know His presence today. Clearly this prophecy of God's presence is a promise given to the nation of Israel concerning their return from Babylonian captivity. But remember that the O.T. is Jesus concealed and the N.T. is Jesus revealed. So God's presence among His people, Israel, serves to foreshadow His unique relationship with His redeemed people as He promised "*I am with always to the end of the age*" (Matthew 28:20).

Jesus is Our Yahweh Shammah.

I. His name is called Immanuel, God with us. The Bible says: "*This happened so that what the Lord had spoken through the prophet came true: The virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they will name him Immanuel,*" which means "God is with us" (Mt. 1:22-23) "*The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We saw his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of truth and grace*" (Jn. 1:14) Why God made His dwelling among us!?

God stepped out of heaven, humbling himself as a servant, and He died on a cross and took away our sins, to redeem and restore us into full fellowship with Him. As a result we have His promise of continued presence.

II. God IN Us

He promised to dwell in us. As his children, we are His temple and His Spirit dwells in us. The Bible says; “*Do not you know, that you are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwells in you?*” “*God wanted his people throughout the world to know His glorious riches which is Christ living in you, giving you the hope of glory*” (1Cor 3:16 & Col.1:26-27).

This means that wherever we go, He goes with us. Whatever we do, he does it with us. He convicts us. He leads, guides, and directs us. And we must tune our ears to His voice as we set our hearts and minds on things above.

III. God THROUGH Us

God made His dwelling among us to redeem us, but also to empower us in the work of His kingdom. God has a plan for us. In Matthew, Jesus said we’re to be salt and light and fishers of men. Our lives exist to accomplish the mission of the Master. “*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 Cr 5:20).

Yahweh Shammah, is the God who is there – who is with us, dwells in us, and His presence in our lives to allow us to know Him, to grow in Him, and to show His great love to

others, *“For it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfil his good purpose”* (Philippians 2:13).

We have the privilege of a personal relationship with God through faith in His Son, Jesus. We never have to go looking for Him...He is always there! At His coming again, we hear a great voice out of heaven saying; *“Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God”* (Rev 21:3).

When you feel alone, say “God is there, He is here for me.” When you get bad news, say “God is there, He is here for me.” When you wonder why you hurt so bad, say “God is there, He is here for me.” When you’re tempted to do something wrong, say “God is there, He is here for me.” When you make a mistake, say “God is there, He is here, He is there for me.” When you have trouble to pay your bills, say "God is there, He is here for me.” When you’re afraid about the future, say “God is there, He is here for me.”

Remember His promise: *“My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest ... When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.”* (Exodus 33:14 & Isaiah 43:2). Praise His name *Yahweh Shammah!* He is always there for us.

Conclusion

As we come to the end of this book, may grace be ours to appropriate all the glorious truths the names of God suggest!

If our experience is to meet poverty, in any form, May our trust be in *Yahweh Yireh*, “The LORD Provides.”

If we are to suffer sickness, in any form, let us put ourselves in the care of the Great Physician “*Yahweh Rophehka*”, “The LORD who heals you”.

In our battle with the world, the flesh, and the devil, it is essential to keep our eyes on “*Yahweh Nissi*”, “The LORD our Banner”.

If Satan tempts us to sin, then let us remember our “*Yahweh Makaddeshem*”, “The LORD who sanctifies you”. We are perfect in Christ, and He always sees us in Him without any sin. Praise His Holy Name.

If trouble overtakes us, and the tendency to anxiety of heart and mind appears, let us whisper “*Yahweh Shalom*”, “The LORD my Peace”.

If persecuted, and the evil forces of Satan are gathering against us, let us take refuge in “*Yahweh Sebaoth*”, “The LORD of Hosts” whose name is from age to age the same. In Him we will win the battle.

If tempted to wander from the “green pastures” of the Word of God, may we quickly call upon “*Yahweh Raah*”,

“The LORD Our Shepherd” who restores our soul to the path of righteousness for His name sake.

If troubled with the things that seems odd and impossible, and you say in your heart it is too late, let us trust the God of Abraham “*El Elyon*,” “The Most High God”, with Him the impossible becomes possible.

If tempted to depend on our own righteousness, or if our conscience is troubled with sin, let us not forget that we are complete in Christ, and may we see Him anew as “*Yahweh Sidqenu*”, “The Lord Our Righteousness”.

If trouble overtakes us at home or abroad, wherever we are and whatever we do, may we remember “*Yahweh Shammah*” “The Lord is there”. He is with us always, wherever we go.

As we seek to live, walk, worship and serve our great “*Yahweh Eloheinu*”, “The Lord our God”, let us draw strength from His marvellous names and peace, joy, comfort and His blessing will be ours.

To God’s Names Are the Glory

Botros

Melbourne 2015

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“The Wonders of God’s Names”

Dr. Botros Botrosdief

This book will help us to know God better. To know God is to know His Names. Knowing the meaning of names of God will help us better trust him every day of our life. Faith will increase in our souls and these names become the basis of confidence, and encouragement of faith in our mind.

My prayer is that our eyes will open to God’s glorious names, and our faith strengthens as it is written in Psalm 9:10 “Those who know your name put their trust in you.”

Dr. Botros authored 37 books, 9 in English and 28 in Arabic. Dr. Botros is the minister of

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