

Christmas Series 2022 - God With Us (week 2)

Matthew 1:23

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

Matthew 1:23 NIV

"The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel (which means 'God with us')".

We are celebrating this truth, that the Bible says he would be called Jesus - *"Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace"* (Isaiah 9:6), but also *Emmanuel*, which, translated, means *God With Us* - and he is *with us right now*. The seven Hebrew names of God reveal his character. Not only do they identify him, but they are also his *identity*, in terms of who he is and what he does. We looked at the first two of those last week -

Jehovah-Nissi - God Is My Banner (Exodus 17:15)

It's amazing to know from the Bible, that Jesus has already won the war. Jesus, on our behalf - Emmanuel - *God With Us*, has already won the war that some of us feel like we're fighting right now. There are battles and skirmishes to be fought, but the *war* has already been won. Jesus already took the keys of death, hell, and the grave out of the hands of the enemy, and has given them to *us*, and has said to us, *"Go and live this Life to its fullest. In fact, if you'll do that, I have a promise for you. I'm going to give you abundant Life - Life to the full."*

We know there's a thief that comes to steal, kill, and destroy, but Jesus said, *"I've got the keys to death, hell, and the grave. I've got the keys to the Kingdom, and I'm giving them to you, because I am your Banner of Victory."* Some days, no matter what - no matter how you feel like you did in *your* race - no matter how things are going, you've got to fly your *Banner* anyway, and say, *"My Bible tells me that in the end, we win, and because of that, I'm flying my Banner of Victory, and I thank You, Lord, for the Banner of Victory!"* In Jesus, we can ride our "victory lap" every day.

Jehovah-Jireh - The LORD Will Provide (Genesis 22:13-14)

No matter what's going on in the world - more political or financial cycles - we don't need to be completely racked with fear, always waiting for the other shoe to drop. The Good News is, our God is Jehovah-Jireh our Provider. The Bible doesn't say that our job, or any inheritance we're waiting on, or our stock options - none of those, at the end of the day, is our provider. Today, we're talking about the next two names of God in terms of who he is and what he does:

Jehovah-Rapha, the God Who Heals (Exodus 15:26)

Some of us have prayed for something that didn't work out, and wonder if God still heals today. We may have scars on our bodies - those scars are proof that God still heals. We have other scars than the ones on our bodies - scars on our lives - our souls - our psyches, where we've been damaged - we've been hurt - we've suffered trauma and loss.

In the context of that, we need to know that God is a God who still heals today. He might not do it the way we want it done, or in the way that we want it, or in the timing that we want it. He might have a whole other perspective on healing that we haven't considered yet, because we tend to be one-dimensional on this thing.

After Pharaoh released the children of Israel from Egypt, he then changed his mind, sending his army to pursue them. At the banks of the Red Sea, Moses jammed his staff in the edge of the shore and the sea parted, so the Israelites crossed the sea on dry land. As the Egyptians followed, the sea collapsed in on them and they drowned.

Moses then led his people three days into the desert, and they had no water. God had just protected them *through* the water, but even so, they didn't trust him. They came to an oasis with plenty of water, but it was bitter - undrinkable. They blamed Moses, and said, *"What have you done to us? You brought us out here only to die!"* They grumbled and were angry, so Moses went before the Lord and prayed, and the Lord showed him a piece of wood, telling him to throw it into the bitter water and it would turn sweet. After this miracle they continued in the desert to yet another oasis of water.

Exodus 15:26 NIV

"He said, 'If you listen carefully to 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 the LORD, who heals you.'" A covenant statement - *"If you do this, I will do this...for I am Jehovah-Rapha - the Lord Who Heals you."*

Some people here are facing physical things, and yes, God does still work miracles, but he also performs miracles in other realms beside the physical - traumatized hearts - broken people, distraught and depressed - and God heals them. There's also the ultimate healing - someone who crosses over. We may struggle with this if we're so locked-in to the temporary here - so concerned that God wants to heal in the now.

We need to pray like it depends on us, and trust like it depends on Him, because he is Jehovah-Rapha. We pray and ask him to *"do it now, Lord. Amen and do it again."* But there are times when it doesn't happen in the timing we want. We can become angry in our grief over those who are now in the presence of the Lord - where we say we *want* to be - but we are citizens of another kingdom, and need to understand that we pass from life to *greater* life - we have not lost forever those who crossed over before us. We miss them temporarily, but not forever. We mourn and grieve them, yes - it's healthy and appropriate - but we also recognize the truth, that Jehovah-Rapha has done the ultimate healing - the ultimate work.

1 Peter 2:24 NIV

"He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; 'by his wounds you have been healed.' "

This healing is past tense. If we receive what Jesus did for us on the cross, then our wounds - our eternal wounds - our soul wounds - are healed in Jesus' name by the work of Christ.

Jehovah-Shalom - God Is Our Peace (Judges 6:24)

In a season of wars, the Israelites would prepare provisions of grain to store for when they were needed later, but enemies would come to steal what they had worked so hard to gather, harvest, and prepare. Gideon was out in the stone-walled threshing area, when raiders came and plundered the grain. Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him and instructed him on what to do, and Gideon saw the Word of the Lord come to pass - they chased off the enemy and enjoyed a time of peace. So Gideon built an altar to the LORD there and called it The LORD is Peace [*Peace - Hebrew: nothing missing, nothing broken, whole, integrated, complete, total*]

Philippians 4:4-8 NIV

“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.”

The Peace of God that passes - supercedes - transcends - all understanding is ours in Christ. He is Jehovah - God With Us - in Christ, and now, in the Person of the Holy Spirit who lives in us, and *He* is our Peace.

Colossians 1:27 NKJV

“To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” [Christ Incarnate - Christ in you and through you, the confident and joyful expectation of God's manifest presence]

Prayer

Father, thank You for Your Word. You are Jehovah-Rapha our Healer - and, of course, we want healing in the here-and-now for all the things that ail us - that we go through. Lord, in Your timing and in Your way, You do - sometimes in a process, and sometimes through a miracle - but You are Jehovah-Rapha. Our scars prove that You're the God Who still heals today.

You are Jehovah-Shalom our Peace, and through that Peace, You have broken down the dividing wall - we have access to You. Thank You that You give us a Peace that goes beyond what we can possibly understand - an other-worldly kind of Peace. You are Jehovah-Shalom. We thank You for that today. Thank You for being our Provider - our Banner of Victory - our Healer - and our Peace. We say Yes to You today and we give You honor and Glory. In Jesus' name. Amen