

# YHWH Shammah

יהוה שם

## YHWH Is There

Pronounced **Yä-wá' Shawm'-mah**, the compound name appears in the Old Testament only once in Ezekiel's promise of YHWH's presence in the coming Millennial kingdom, which captive Israel interpreted as a promise of their eventual return to their homeland.

"The distance all around will be 18,000 cubits. And the name of the city from that time on will be: THE LORD IS THERE (YHWH Shammah)."  
(Ezekiel 48:35 *parenthetical text added*)

The name "YHWH Shammah" may very well be the most exciting and comforting name GOD has given us. Why? Because in "YHWH Shammah" is the promise and pledge of GOD completing the work He intended at creation and began to fulfill in us when we received Christ as Savior.

being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you  
**will carry it on to completion** until the day of Christ Jesus.  
(Philippians 1:6 NIV *emphasis added*)

### Etymology

The word "*shammah*" derives from the Hebrew root "*shâm*" ("שם"), which means to "be **there**" or "**at that place**".

YHWH Shammah is the last name God revealed through His Old Testament prophets. In the historic setting in which it's given, this name reassured Israel that YHWH had not abandoned them during their 70-year period of Babylonian captivity, and that there would eventually be a restoration of Jerusalem and the Temple.

Ezekiel had prophesied 25 years earlier the time when Nebuchadnezzar would lay siege to Jerusalem, take them captive to Babylon, and defile and utterly destroy the Temple. And now, as the people's hopes of one day returning to their homeland were declining, he prophesied a most wonderful promise to them that YHWH was indeed in Jerusalem: **YHWH Shammah!**

### How is "shammah" used in Scripture?

Although the compound name appears only once in the Old Testament, the word "shammah" appears 823 times and is transliterated "**there**", "**where**", and occasionally "**whom**" (as in "in whom"). Frequently, its usage is transferred to a time period rather than a specific location, as in...

- <sup>8</sup> So the LORD (YHWH) scattered them from there (shâm) over all the earth, and they stopped building the city.
- <sup>9</sup> That is why it was called Babel--because there the LORD (YHWH) confused the language of the whole world. From there (shâm) the LORD (YHWH) scattered them over the face of the whole earth.  
(Genesis 11:8-9 *parenthetical text added*)



## What is the fulfillment of Ezekiel's prophecy?

There are several beliefs concerning the fulfillment of Ezekiel's prophecy:

- Orthodox Judaism believes this has a strictly literal interpretation that will be fulfilled when the Temple and sacrificial system are restored, after which the Messiah will come to reign in Jerusalem as the Son of David. Then, "Yahweh Shammah" will be realized.
- Other Bible scholars interpret the name solely in a spiritual sense with no fulfillment in an earthly Jerusalem.
- A third group of scholars combines the two interpretations and believes it has both a literal and a spiritual fulfillment.

If one considers the **whole** of Scripture, as well as the other usages of the word "shammah" in the Old Testament, then the third theory for believers is the most plausible. As Nathan Stone wrote:

"It has been seen that the fulfillment of this name was limited in the Old Testament both in its manifestation and scope. Every manifestation of God's presence in the midst of His people, though real, could only be but a shadow of a glorious reality to come. As to its scope, it was limited to the nation Israel.

"In the New Testament dispensation it has a wider scope in that it is more spiritual than symbolic, and more personal rather than national. For now it has been fulfilled ideally in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"As man, and representing the human race, 'the whole fullness of God was pleased to dwell in Him' (Colossians 1:19, marg.). He was the effulgence of God's glory and the very image of His substance (Hebrews 1:3, ASV). 'The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us,' says John, 'and we beheld his glory' (John 1:14, ASV). Thus He became 'God with us,' the Immanuel of Isaiah 7:14, the Child, the Son, the mighty God, the everlasting Father of Isaiah 9:6.

"The One who in the Old Testament came in occasional, mysterious appearances as the Angel of Jehovah, the Angel of His Presence, the Angel of the Covenant, the Angel in whom is Jehovah's name—became in Christ both the Presence itself and the Temple in whom the Presence resided so that in Him and of Him it could be said Jehovah Shammah, Jehovah is there.

"This Presence is now in believers as living temples of God. 'Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you' (I Corinthians 3:16, ASV)."<sup>1</sup>

## "Immanu'El" is "YHWH Shammah"!

While some might object to the analogy, I tend to think of "YHWH Shammah"—**God is There**—as being closely related to "Immanu'El"—**God with Us**. After all, both names assure us of YHWH's continual presence in our lives.

The true Kingdom of God—which His holy name, YHWH, embodies—is a present power within every person whose life has been transformed by the love of Christ. As Christians, we look



beyond Ezekiel's vision to the grander ideal represented by the new Jerusalem described by the Apostle John in Revelation—that city that needs no Temple because YHWH Himself is in her midst.

- <sup>2</sup> I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.
- <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God."
  
- <sup>22</sup> I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.
- <sup>23</sup> The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.  
(Revelation 21:2-3, 22-23)

I like the way the Complete Jewish Bible renders verse 3 above:

I heard a loud voice from the throne say, "See! God's Sh'khinah is with mankind, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and he himself, **God-with-them** (Immanu'El), will be their God."  
(Revelation 21:3 CJB *parenthetical text added*)

John's prophetic vision represents the ultimate literal fulfillment of the Covenant promises YHWH made with Israel when He gave the Law to Moses.

- <sup>11</sup> I will put my tabernacle among you, and I will not reject you,
- <sup>12</sup> but I will walk among you and be your God (Elohim), and you will be my people.  
(Leviticus 26:11-12 CJB *parenthetical text added*)

Of course, the fulfillment of all this is guaranteed by the Promiser Himself, **YHWH**. However, as Christians, we don't have to wait for that future glorious event to realize its fulfillment. As we pray daily, "*Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven,*" His presence with us is realized **every day** in the here and now. It isn't found in special religious services, which stand apart from our common life, but in the constant influence of His Spirit, forming our character after the image of Christ, permeating our every action, until **everything** done on earth is to the praise and glory of our Father in Heaven.

Thus, we can say that YHWH Shammah is both a **promise** of a future literal kingdom and a **present** spiritual **fulfillment** of the Kingdom of God within every true believer.

## Meditation

What an excellent name is this YHWH Shammah! The eternal, self-existent **I AM** who brings all things into being and who exists apart from our time and space constraints is **always there!** YHWH **is** there yesterday . . . **is** there today . . . and **is** there tomorrow! Not "**was**" . . . not "**will be**". He **is** there! And He is in **me** . . . and He is in **you**...!

Think about that for a moment. Recall what we learned in the third chapter: YHWH cares very deeply about **where** and in **whom** His name abides.



Remember, His name represents His very **essence**, His fundamental **nature**, His inherent **characteristics**, and His supreme **authority**.

This Covenant-keeping GOD of the Universe dwells anywhere and everywhere He chooses . . . anytime, **all** the time . . . and He has **chosen** to dwell **in me** and **in you!** Oh, praise His holy name! He **is** always **there** with us and in us! Hallelu YAH!

Father, as we meditate on this most wonderful name, may it comfort us and calm our fears, infuse us with strength and courage, and fill us with the confidence to endure. I pray that You would do whatever You have to do in each of us to make us a fit habitation for Your manifest presence. Be glorified in us!

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<sup>1</sup> Stone, Nathan, *Names of God*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1944, 2010. p. 185.

