

Names of God, Pt 12 - Psalm 23

Names of God Series

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Bible Text: Psalm 23

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We have been learning of the character of our great God as revealed to us in his many names. And, of course, by way of review, help me identify the Hebrew names of God as the external triune creator is אלהים (el-o-heem'). Very good.

The self existing one is יהוה (yeh-ho-vaw').

God almighty is אל שרי (ale shad-dah' - ee)

Lord or Master is רענסי (ad-o-noy').

The God who sees or the God who provides, יהוה יראה (yeh-ho-vaw' yir-eh').

The God who heals, יהוה יראה (yeh-ho-vaw' yir-eh').

God our peace, יהוה שלום (yeh-ho-vaw' shaw-lome').

God who is there or the God who is here, יהוה שמה (yeh-ho-vaw' shawm' - maw).

God our banner, ניס (nis-see'), very good.

God our righteousness, ונקדצ (tsid-kay' - noo).

And the God who sanctifies or makes us holy is קדש (kaw-dash) or God is קדוש (kaw-dosh).

And, admittedly, there are hundreds of additional names of God that are found all through the Scriptures. However, rather than studying all the names of God, I want to use our final two studies in this series to help us put we have learned to practice, that is, how can we make application of what is before us on the screen in a practical way in our lives. And today I want us to lead us through an exercise that will illustrate how that we can

find God in every text of Scripture and learn to look at him and look to him for the help that we need.

I have chosen to use a very familiar portion of Scripture, Psalm 23. And I would invite you to go there in your Bibles this evening, Psalm 23.

Embedded in Psalm 23 we will find the character of God as revealed in the names of God that we have studied.

Now most often when we read the Scriptures we think about ourselves. What does this say about me? What does this say to me? What does this say that can help me? What does this say that can teach me? And that is all well and good, for, of course, all Scripture is profitable, 2 Timothy 3:16, that we might be complete, thoroughly equipped for ever good work. However, we ought, first, to read the Bible and to ask: What does this say about God? And we need to behold our God in the Scripture.

Psalm 119 verse 10 the author says:

“With my whole heart I have sought You [in the Scriptures there].”¹

And example, of course, I think I have given previously is the favorite Bible story of David and Goliath. It isn't about David, nor is it about Goliath. 1 Samuel 17 is about God. The Bible reads in 1 Samuel 17:

Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. 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, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. Then all this assembly shall know that the LORD does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the LORD'S, and He will give you into our hands."²

And then reason that I elected to first teach on the names of God after your calling me to be your pastor is because I believe your view of God is so important for us as we process life. How do we process the political events in our country over the last couple of days. Our view of God is so important. Proverbs 21:1 says:

“The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, Like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes.”³

Your view of God will help you to process life.

¹ Psalm 119:10.

² 1 Samuel 17:45-47.

³ Proverbs 21:1.

So let's take a look at Psalm 23 and let's behold our God, looking at the text, Psalm 23. Verse one says:

“The LORD is my shepherd.”⁴

Stop right there. We know the name capital L, capital O, capital R, capital D. Do you see it there in Psalm 23 verse one? We know that to be יהוה (yeh-ho-vaw'). יהוה (yeh-ho-vaw') is David's shepherd.

Now we have hardly begun to read and we are already encountered with another name of God. We discover another name of God here in Psalm 23 and that is יהוה רועה (yeh-ho-vaw' raw-aw'), God our shepherd.

Now, our intent this evening is not to explore another name of God. But do you know what the problem is? We can't avoid or escape God's revelation of himself in the Scriptures. It is all over the place. And you cannot read the Scriptures without discovering God. And so here at the beginning of the Psalm, יהוה (yeh-ho-vaw') is my רועה (raw-aw'), my shepherd. And we could spend the rest of the evening this evening meditating on the meaning of God our shepherd, יהוה רועה (yeh-ho-vaw' raw-aw'). And we could spend the rest of the evening giving testimony to how God has shepherded our lives, but our exercise this evening is to take the names of God that we have already learned and see if we can find some of them in the rest of this psalm. So we are going to move on beyond יהוה רועה (yeh-ho-vaw' raw-aw'), God our shepherd. And I want to do this by using the table that you have been given. You notice the first column there is titled “Man's need,” and you have a copy of it in front of you.

This speaks, really, to the premise of our entire study in the names of God. You remember our premise. God has progressively revealed himself to his people by introducing himself with and identifying himself by different name at different times. God's names were given to man by God himself during specific times of man's need. And that has been the genius. As we have discovered God's names, we discovered it in a context. In the midst of an Old Testament Bible story where man had a need. Why? So that we might know that God is our all in all.

There is a second column there on your chart and that is called “God's name.” And this evening we will borrow from the names of God that we have studied to date. And look carefully, because this is your last quick look at what names we have available for us in our collection of God's names. This is our toolbox. These are the names of God that we have come to know and understand and the character that is described there.

If you look at the template again, you will notice the third column is titled “God's Word.” And here we will fill in a phrase of Scripture from Psalm 23.

⁴ Psalm 23:1.

And then, finally, you will notice the fourth column is titled “God’s promise,” a promise that we can claim.

Are you ready? Do you have a pen or a pencil? And let’s see if we can’t take Psalm 23 and create a little table or a chart here beginning with man’s first need is famine. Famine.

Perhaps you have a need. Perhaps it is a need for a job, employment. There are some that are part of Fourth Baptist Church family that are out of work currently. My mother and father who are currently teachers at Pillsbury Baptist Bible College will soon be out of work. Perhaps you have a need for food or a need for money. There is famine. And so we might consider God’s name **יהוה יראא** (yeh-ho-vaw’ yir-eh’), the God who provides.

But where do we find that in Psalm 23? How about the phrase, “shall not want”? You see **יהוה** (yeh-ho-vaw’) is my shepherd, my **רָעָה** (raw-aw’), I shall not be in want. I will be satisfied for God will take care of me and as a sheep whose needs are wholly met, I can rest. God’s promise is provision.

You see, it is not Jehovah Visa or Jehovah MasterCard or Jehovah American Express, it is **יהוה יראא** (yeh-ho-vaw’ yir-eh’). It is God who provides. And in the seasons of man’s need, what we might call famine, we can claim the promise of God’s provision. We shall not want, because he is our **יהוה יראא** (yeh-ho-vaw’ yir-eh’).

Now the name **יהוה יראא** (yeh-ho-vaw’ yir-eh’) is not found there in the second part of verse one, but the promise of God’s character as we have learned is there. Do you follow this?

Let’s try another one. What about man’s need is faint? Perhaps you are hurting. Perhaps you are weak. Perhaps you are hardened or helpless. That is your need. God’s name is **יהוה רפא** (yeh-ho-vaw’ raw-faw’), the God who heals.

Now where in Psalm 23 can we find a phrase that speaks to this? I would suggest verse number three, “he restores my soul.” Folks, there are heart hurts that you have this evening that only God can heal. And perhaps you recall that I preached from Psalm 23 some weeks ago. I explained how that a cast sheep or a cast down sheep is a sheep that has fallen on its back and has lost its footing and is unable to right itself. And that sheep must be restored, must be placed back up on its feet. And in the weakness of that poor, vulnerable suffering sheep, it is the shepherd who restores.

We might say that God’s promise is he is the physician. He can heal the hurt or the helplessness of man’s need.

So we find **יהוה רפא** (yeh-ho-vaw’ raw-faw’) here.

How about this one? Man's need is we are flustered. We are anxious. We are stressed. We are confused. For some of us that is a common occurrence. The name of God is יהוה שלום (yeh-ho-vaw' shaw-lome'), our peace.

In the chaos of your world when you get a bit panicked, יהוה שלום (yeh-ho-vaw' shaw-lome').

Where in Psalm 23 can we find a phrase that illustrates this? How about in—and some of this is a bit out of order—how about in verse two? “He leads me beside still waters”? Still waters.

I think I have previously explained that sheep cannot drink from moving waters because they are intimidated by the babbling brook or the stream with that moving water and a sheep needs still water, otherwise they become flustered and confused and anxious and stressed. And so God's promise is he will be a peacemaker to us, giving us that peace that passes all understanding, that peace that you can't even explain in the chaos of your world. You can be still and calm.

We might claim the promise that he is a peace maker.

How about this? Man's need is that we often fall or fail. Perhaps we are wayward. Perhaps we are backslidden. Perhaps we are going down the wrong path, as it were. God's name יהוה ונקיצ הוהי (ye-ho-vaw' tsid-kay' - noo), our righteousness. And I find in verse three, “He leads me in the paths of righteousness.”

Perhaps you came in a point of wrong direction in your life. God's promise is he is the path finder.

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. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake.⁵

Are you able to be hold your God in Psalm 23? It is not just about the sheep and the comfort of the sheep. It is about the character of God.

Let's continue. I think there is a little bit more we can add here. How about man's need of fear? Uncertain about the future? Face a daunting circumstance? God's name יהוה שמו (yeh-ho-vaw' shawm' - maw). God is here or God is there.

And what does God's Word say in Psalm 23 verse four?

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me.”⁶

⁵ Psalm 23:1-3.

⁶ Psalm 23:4.

That would be God's presence. He is with us. His rod and staff they comfort me.

I trust I am not moving too quickly for you. There is another need that man at times feel and that is the need to flee, to escape a conflict, to avoid a circumstance, to escape the persecution, perhaps, that is occurring. God's name יהוה יסן (yeh-ho-vaw' nis-see'), remember, God our banner, David writes in Psalm we:

“You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.”⁷

The table is not a banquet table piled high with lots of good food like pizza and donuts, I would prefer, but the table is a table land. And up in the high ranges of the mountains the shepherds would go and they would prepare a high range grazing area, a meadow and remove some of the rocks and the sticks and such. And there up there on that table land or that mesa, that plateau, the sheep would graze. However, there were always predators there, the mountain lions, if you will, that would prey on the sheep. But there in the presence of the predators and the enemies, the shepherd would prepare a place of feeding. And God's promise is protection.

Man's need we might in summary say that man forgets, man falters. And even the name that we learned this evening, יהוה רעא (yeh-ho-vaw' raw-aw'), the Lord, Jehovah is our shepherd, is what verse one says. In God's promises he is a pillar.

Now it is very possible, in fact it is very probable that you could do a better job of creating a table like this for Psalm 23. And you might say, “Well, pastor Matt, it seems that you forced some of your alliteration.”

And, do you know what? That is true. I worked really hard to get that fourth column to all start with a P. And I worked real hard to get that left hand column, man's need, to begin with an F. But that is not the point. Here is the point. If we read a portion of Scripture like Psalm 23 we are able to behold our God in the Word. And I want to do this just now and I will pause and I want you to audibly this evening, I want you to respond to me with the name of God and the character of God that we find here in Psalm 23. Are you ready? This might be very ugly exercise, but that is ok.

Here we go. Psalm 23 verse one.

“The Lord...”

What do we have here? Ok. This is capital L, capital O, capital R, capital D. This is יהוה (yeh-ho-vaw') and יהוה (yeh-ho-vaw') means self existing one. The self existing one is my shepherd. That is the name רעא (raw-aw'). We learned that this evening, ok?

⁷ Psalm 23:5.

“I shall not want.”⁸

You can look at your cheat sheet. יהוה ירצה (yeh-ho-vaw’ yir-eh’). He will provide.
We won’t be in want.

“He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters.”⁹

יהוה שלום (yeh-ho-vaw’ shaw-lome’), that is good, the peace.

“He restores my soul.”¹⁰

יהוה רפא (yeh-ho-vaw’ raw-faw’). He heals the hurts.

“He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name’s sake.”¹¹

וּנְקַדְצָהוּ (ye-ho-vaw’ tsid-kay’- noo).

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For
You are with me.”¹²

יהוה שמו (yeh-ho-vaw’ shawm’- maw). He is with us, his presence.

“You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.”¹³

יהוה יסן (yeh-ho-vaw’ nis-see’), meaning banner. Do you remember [?]? When did we
learn about יהוה יסן (yeh-ho-vaw’ nis-see’)? What was the occasion for God revealing
himself to us as יהוה יסן (yeh-ho-vaw’ nis-see’)? Does anybody remember?

Moses when? Ok, fighting the Amalekites and holding up his hands. Good. Remember
that and the conflict with the enemy?

“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in
the house of the LORD Forever.”¹⁴

And, of course, all of this is the shepherd, the רֹעֶה (raw-aw’). And there is so much that
we can learn from here.

⁸ Psalm 23:1.

⁹ Psalm 23:2.

¹⁰ Psalm 23:3.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Psalm 23:4.

¹³ Psalm 23:5.

¹⁴ Psalm 23:6.

Now what we have done is an exercise that is actually a bit simple. You don't need to be an educated theologian to do what we have done here this evening. What you do is you take your Old Testament Bible narrative, let's say the story of David and Goliath. And as you are reading through one of those familiar Bible stories, Daniel in the Lion's den, you are not looking for the facts of the story, nor are you asking, "What does this have to do with me?" You are looking to behold your God in the Scriptures and you will find yourself discovering additional names for God. And you will find you are discovering the character of God as revealed in the names that we have already studied.

And let me tell you what is going to happen. Your view of God is going to grow and then you will find yourself at times processing life, tragedy and travesty in life. And you will be able to turn back to the person of God and the character of God and claim the promise that we can find in his person.

Do you like that?

Next Wednesday night I believe we have a guest, Dr. Dave Little of Baptist Church Planters. The following Wednesday night we are going to do one more exercise and we are going to take the names of God and I want to give you some tips and tricks in how you might use these in your personal devotion life, your private life with your family in your home and how we might cling to the name of God. And I trust that will be a blessing to you.

Let's pray.

Lord, we thank you so much for revealing yourself to us in the pages of Scripture. You know, God, as we approach your holy Word, may we be careful not to think of ourselves or to think about one another, but to think about you. And, Lord, then as we meditate on who you are, we find that, in fact, you do meet our needs and your person and your character is wholly sufficient to meet our needs. I pray, God, that the things that we have studied these names and your character will be founded seated deep in our heart and our minds and that you might help us with them. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.