

ADDITIONAL JEHOVISTIC NAMES

Jeremiah 23:6

V. Jehovah-Tsidkenu -- The Lord our Righteousness.

The word tsidkenu is derived from tzedek, which is translated righteousness. Originally it meant to be straight. There is no more significant word in the Old Testament. The Hebrew word cannot be translated adequately by any one English word. It signifies God's dealings with men under the ideas of righteousness, justification and acquittal. It is applied to the outward obligations and relationships of men. This word was also used of a full weight or measure toward God in the spiritual sense. Thus Israel was commanded to walk in the paths of righteousness and to offer the sacrifices of righteousness, putting their trust in the Lord. "Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord" (Psalm 4:5). Human language is insufficient to convey the full comprehension of the idea of righteousness and justification contained in this word. It is only as we see it exhibited in God's character and actions that we see it clearly.

Jehovah, the perfectly righteous One, is the source of righteousness. His righteousness is an everlasting righteousness and his testimonies are righteous forever. "Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy law is the truth..... The righteousness of thy testimonies is everlasting: give me understanding, and I shall live" (Psalm 119:142,144). In all His dealings He is righteous. If men are not righteous they cannot have peace with God and cannot live in fellowship with Him. In distinction from the gods of the heathen, who were whatever their devotees wishes them to be, Jehovah is consistently set forth in the Old Testament as the holy and righteous God. He demands righteousness in His people. His standards are absolute. He does not lightly regard defection from His standard. All unrighteousness is sin, and sin banishes from His presence and incurs His wrath.

Israel had no righteousness of her own. She was a wayward and a rebellious people. If the continuation of the covenant depended upon Israel's righteousness, it would be broken at once. That was why God said to Israel, "You need righteousness, but you do not have it. I will give it to you." So He revealed Himself as "the Lord our righteousness." Jeremiah 23:6: "In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness," reveals the fact that God gives His people the righteousness without which they cannot live in fellowship with Him. From the earliest time, the answer to man's condition and plight was clearly declared to be a provision of God. No attainment of even the best of men could reach the divine standard. Isaiah summed up this discrepancy between man's highest achievements and God's requirements in words which utterly shatter all human complacency. He said, "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away" (Isaiah 64:6).

In contrast to Jehovah's perfect righteousness is man's lack of it, or his guilt. God cannot overlook this lack of righteousness in man. He requires righteousness and we do not have it in or of ourselves. So He has provided it for us and offers it to us and we can receive it. His righteousness is bestowed upon us as a free gift.

In both Testaments this righteousness which God requires is not a mere trait of character or standard of conduct: it is the holiness of God Himself operative in the life which is wholly submissive to Him. It is most intimately related to the Person

of God Himself, and is found in men in the measure that their lives are yielded and responsive to the Lord. Upon the basis of Christ's righteousness alone it is possible to live a holy life. If we are to live a holy life, we must be forgiven; we must be justified; we must be clothed in the righteousness of Christ. The Lord our righteousness gives as a free gift that which is needful for us if we are to live in fellowship with Him. His righteousness is bestowed upon us as a free gift through faith. Of the Lord our righteousness Whitelaw said:

"I once was a stranger to grace and to God,
I knew not my danger, and felt not my load;
Though friends spoke in rapture of Christ on the tree,
Jehovah-Tsidkenu was nothing to me.

"When free grace awoke me, by light from on high,
Then legal fears shook me, I trembled to die:
No refuge, no safety, in self could I see;
Jehovah-Tsidkenu my Saviour must be.

"My terrors all vanished before the sweet Name;
My guilty fears banished, with boldness I came
To drink at the fountain, life-giving and free;
Jehovah-Tsidkenu is all things to me."

VI. Jehovah-M'Qaddishkem -- The Lord our Sanctifier.

This name is closely related to "The Lord our Righteousness." Its first appearance is in Exodus 31:13: "Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you," in connection with the reiterated command concerning the observance of the Sabbath. The law regarding the Sabbath had been given before this in Exodus 20:8-10, but it was repeated when God gave Moses instructions for the preparation of the tabernacle. Perhaps those engaged in the sacred task of preparing the sanctuary of the Lord might regard their work as divine service which they were justified in continuing on the Sabbath, so Jehovah made clear that even this work was subject to the law of the Sabbath. The Sabbath was God's gracious gift to man. All history testifies to the inestimable value of it to spirit, mind and body. History also testifies to the difficulty men have found in observing the Sabbath aright. It was not intended primarily to provide rest and refreshment; that is secondary. The supreme purpose of the Sabbath is to establish God's claim upon the lives of His people. The one day in seven set apart for worship and spiritual service, rightly observed, would inevitably lead to a true knowledge of God and fellowship with Him. Because proper observance of the Sabbath is fundamental to a right relationship to God, the law concerning it is explicit and uncompromising.

To keep one day in seven holy is a standard few can attain. Men are lovers of self rather than of God; and even the zealously religious had rather be busy in what they consider to be God's service than quiet waiting upon Him, in worship and devotion. To meet this deficiency God gave the promise contained with this name: "I am the Lord that doth sanctify you." What He demands, He will provide. He will give them the desire and enablement to obey provided there is a true responsiveness to His will on their part.

The word "sanctify" has two distinct meanings in the Bible. It is applied to persons and things set apart for holy service. In relation to people, the word relates also

to character; they are to be worthy of that "set apartness." So from its earliest appearances this name for God sets forth the highest standard of His requirement of His people -- conformity to His own holiness. How impossible a standard! Yet He requires it, and cannot be satisfied with anything less. His own character demands it. His sanctifying power, like all His enabling grace, operates in and through the responsive heart and dedicated will. "Sanctify yourself." The power available will become effectual only in the exertion of earnest endeavor. Repeatedly the challenge is issued as in I Peter 1:15, "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation." We can no more be holy, however, than Israel could. But the impossible is possible, for "I am the Lord which doth sanctify you." We may be holy if we will sanctify ourselves: yet all our sanctification will be the gracious result of God working in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure. Put the matter of your sanctification into the hands of the Lord.

VII. Jehovah--Shalom -- The Lord our Peace.

"Then Gideon built an altar there unto the Lord, and called it Jehovah-shalom" (Judges 6:24). "The Lord send (or, giveth) peace" is clearly Gideon's grateful acknowledgement of the grace bestowed upon Him in the Lord's words, "Peace be unto thee." More than that: his altar, with its name Jehovah-Shalom, was the expression of his confidence for the future, on the basis of the character of God as he had come to know it through his experience. God, who had given peace, would give it again. As Gideon faced the responsibility to which he had been called--to be leader of the nation in battle--he did so in the assurance that the end would be victory and peace. For the God in whom he trusted was Jehovah-Shalom. It is one of the most comforting of all truths concerning God, that He is the unchangeable Lord, the same yesterday, and today and for ever. What we have proved Him to be in times past, we may trust Him to be in days to come. He who had spoken the word of peace to His terror-stricken servant, would also "send peace" to the nation.

That is as true for us today as it was for Gideon. And how timely a message this is: for our need of peace in both our personal relationship with God and in the affairs of the world, is as great as was his, so long ago. Like him, we have perhaps doubted whether the voice of God were really His, or not; whether the commands of God were after all only the wishes and thoughts of men. Then, when we come unmistakably face to face with God, we tremble, as prophets and seers and millions of lesser men have done through all the ages, at their first conscious encounter with the Almighty. When God, and His claim upon our lives, become a living reality, who of His creatures does not exclaim, "Woe is me, for I am undone!" And to all such, as to Gideon, comes the reply of grace, "Peace be unto thee": for never yet did a soul bow in humility and contrition before God, without receiving pardon and quickening grace. And at the word "Peace be unto thee" the heart is immediately filled with peace: for this is not a mere reassurance, but a creative word--He giveth peace.

That word is spoken, now, of course, in Christ. As with other of these Old Testament names, the ultimate fulfillment of all that Jehovah-Shalom expresses, is in our Lord Jesus Christ. He is our peace (Ephesians 2:14). Under the very shadow of the Cross He made His bequest of peace. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).

Our Lord's words concerning His gift of peace, spoken in the Upper Room, utterly perplexed His disciples. The very foundations of life were being shaken, and evil seemed to be triumphing over good. But after the Resurrection of Christ, they realized that what they had thought to be calamity was the greatest victory of divine grace that even God Himself could conceive: for in the Cross He was redeeming sinful

men. Instead of the wicked will of wicked men prevailing over the good purposes of the Lord, He was in command all the time, giving His life a ransom for sinners. Thus the disciples learned that events are not necessarily what they seem to be.

In fellowship with the Prince of peace, His peace which passes all understanding garrisons both heart and mind.

However, the only people who have peace are God's children. Paul said, "Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1). Isaiah 48:22 tells us that "There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked."

VIII. Jehovah-Rohi -- The Lord our Shepherd.

The name Jehovah-Rohi is one of the most tender and winsome of the Biblical word-pictures of God. It expresses in graphic form a relationship with God for which the heart unconsciously yearns. We are created beings, dependent for all our needs upon the mercy and grace of Him Who made us. Together with this deep-seated awareness of dependence is a capacity for fellowship with God, which nothing can satisfy.

Psalms twenty-three flowed out of the deepest instincts of David's heart, and from his practical experience. Even when he became king, he thought of himself as the "shepherd" of his people. That is why he was such a good king. He retained the shepherd-heart. Frequently his thoughts went back to his youthful days, and quite likely he longed to be out on the hills of Bethlehem again, with his sheep. Then, as he meditated, he realized that all he had sought to be to his sheep, and more, the Lord was to him. So he wrote Jehovah-Rohi, "the Lord is my Shepherd."

Being a good and faithful shepherd himself, David knew quite well the duties of a shepherd. All that David was to his sheep, the Lord was to him, yea, and far more. He rejoiced greatly in the fact that the Lord would never forget, fail or forsake him. His unbounded confidence in His Shepherd eliminated all fear of want. He had the assurance that his Shepherd would supply his spiritual and material needs, because His riches were unsearchable, His love was unchanging and His faithfulness was unfailing. Anybody who can truthfully use the personal pronoun "my" in connection with the Great Shepherd need not fear want. However, unless one can use the personal pronoun here, the repeating of the words cannot bring any more real satisfaction than the counting of money which belongs to somebody else.

David had cared for his sheep, anticipating their needs and watching over them with kindly concern; he had protected them from danger, even at the peril of his life when he slew a lion and a bear. When necessary he had led them to fresh pastures, and though the journey had sometimes been arduous and the road had sometimes been rough, he had guided and tended them through all the hazards of the way. In like manner the Lord was with him, caring, leading and providing. Even so, He Who watches over us and provides for our temporal well-being will also supply all of our spiritual needs.

IX. Jehovah-Shammah -- The Lord is There.

This name, "The Lord is There," or "The Lord is Present" signifies God's abiding presence with His people. Instances could be multiplied of the Lord's presence with His people in all kinds of places and amid all circumstances of life. In fact, wherever a child of God is, "the Lord is there." What comfort and what strength of heart this assurance bestows! Those who are doing His will have the glorious promise of Christ: "Lo, I am with you all the days, even unto the end of the age."