



Finding God in Grief Through His Names

By Lisa Appelo

Jehovah Shalom: The LORD My Peace

Deep loss rocks our world like little else. It wrings us out emotionally, physically, mentally and even spiritually [leaving us exhausted](#).

The death of a child or spouse, sibling or parent, the unwanted loss of a marriage and losses in chronic diagnoses or finances upend our routines and bring enormous change. [Grief causes intense stress](#) which can affect sleep, eating, immunity, health and mental focus.

And yet in the midst of deep grief, it's possible to be anchored by deeper peace.

Jehovah Shalom is our peace.

The name Jehovah Shalom is found in Judges 6:24. For seven years, the Midianites rampaged Israel, destroying crops and livestock and leaving the nation impoverished and terrified.

In the midst of this terror, the angel of God appeared to Gideon and called him to conquer the Midianites. Gideon protested that he was incapable.

“But the Lord said to him, ‘Peace be to you. Do not fear; you shall not die.’ Then Gideon built an altar there to the Lord and called it, The Lord Is Peace.” (Judges 6:24, ESV)

Jehovah is God’s name reflecting his eternal, unchanging nature. Shalom is the Hebrew word translated peace but encompasses more than our English translation captures. Shalom means completeness, soundness, well-being, safety, prosperity, health, and peace.

[When life falls apart around us](#), God does not. God’s unflinching character and unchanging promises mean we can have peace in the midst of suffering.

“Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way.” (2 Thess. 3:16, ESV)

Jehovah Nissi: The LORD My Banner

I never knew grief was such a fight! It's a struggle to find joy and our emotions work to convince us we'll never smile again. Even managing everyday issues like a broken water heater feel like another hard battle to get through.

Then there's the enemy. When we're at our weakest, he comes at us with lies, discouragement and despair.

Finding God in grief means finding the One who fights for us.

Jehovah Nissi means the LORD my banner and it's a military name found in Exodus 17. Just before the Hebrews reached Mt. Sinai, they were attacked by the Amalekites, who ruthlessly struck from the rear targeting the [weakest in the community](#).

As Israel fought the Amalekites, Moses stood on a hill with his staff raised high. When Moses held up the staff, Israel gained but when Moses' arms tired and he lowered the staff, the Amalekites gained. Aaron and Hur came alongside, lifting Moses' arms until evening when Israel triumphed.

But the staff didn't win the battle. Moses recognized God had fought for Israel.

“Moses built an altar there and named it Yahweh-Nissi (which means ‘the Lord is my banner’).” (Ex. 17:15, ESV)

The battles in grief are too much for us.

Just yesterday, a sweet widow in my online group posted she couldn't take it anymore. Others immediately replied with encouragement and prayers, figuratively holding her arms up in battle. That evening she posted again, noting the prayers had carried her through that hard place.

When grief threatens to pull us under, we need to let others hold our arms up in prayer.

God who fought for Israel and overcame their enemy is the same God who fights for us and has overcome ours.

“What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?” (Rom. 8:31, ESV)

Jehovah Ezer: The LORD My Help

I can't tell you how many times I [cried out to God to help in my grief](#). I've learned that “Help!” is a complete prayer!

God offers divine help and as such, it's unlike anything we could ask for or imagine. His wisdom, his provision, his rescue and his restoration are beyond what we can see and think.

Ezer, the Hebrew word for help, is almost always used in scripture to refer to God's divine help, especially in insurmountable difficulty.

God's help comes in situations where if God doesn't act, we have no hope.

Psalm 33:20 says, “Our soul waits for the Lord; he is our help and our shield” and Psalm 124:8 says, “Our help is in the name of the Lord.”

Friend, in circumstances that cause us to be helplessly dependent on God, we can count on God being our ever-present help.

“So we can confidently say, “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?” (Heb. 13:6, ESV)

Jehovah Rohi: The Lord My Shepherd

The first words of Psalm 23 are familiar to so many, in and outside the church. “The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.”

David, the shepherd who became king, penned these words about the King who was his Shepherd. ([Jennifer Rothschild, Psalm 23 Bible study](#))

What was the role of the ancient shepherd? The shepherd guided his sheep, providing for their needs. The shepherd provided such protection the sheep were able rest on all fours in complete safety. The shepherd knew each sheep and watched over each one individually, bringing back any that wandered from his protective care.

Loss throws us into a wilderness we never saw coming. It doesn't feel like lush pastureland or still waters, but God tenderly provides everything we need in this unexpected place.

God guides us through each hard step, walks with us through the valley of the shadow and protects us from the enemy.

And while our wandering heart may question or even push against God, God never abandons or leaves us.

"I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me..." (John 10:14, ESV)

El Olam: God Everlasting

The death of a loved one helps us see that this world is not our home.

The things of this world grow strangely dim as we realize our time on earth is short, but our time in heaven is long.

The name El Olam is revealed in Genesis 21 when Abraham made a covenant with two Philistine rulers to protect a well he dug in Canaan. After making the covenant, he planted a tamarisk tree.

"Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba and called there on the name of the LORD, the Everlasting God." (Gen. 21:33, ESV)

Abraham was a sojourner in Canaan — God had promised the land to his descendants but wouldn't give it to Israel until centuries later. Abraham's actions in digging a well and

planting a tamarisk tree in land he didn't yet own showed he believed God would fulfill his promise.

We too are sojourners waiting for the promised land of heaven.

Are we taking actions in the years God gives us on earth that show we truly believe in eternity? Where am I investing my time? My priorities? My hope?

As hard as grief is, it can serve to point us to what matters. Our everlasting God can use loss to align our hear to his.

Our sorrow will end. God will not only wipe [every one of our tears but he will redeem them.](#)

The eternal God is your dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms. (Deut. 33:27, ESV)

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<https://lisaappelo.com/finding-god-in-grief-5-more-names-of-god/>