

Names of God

There are literally hundreds of names, titles and descriptions for God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in the Bible, referred to generally as simply the “names of God.” These names provided here represent a good beginning point in understanding the names of God and where they came from.

ELOHIM [EL-O-’HEEM]: **CREATOR**

Usually translated “God;” is a plural word, meaning three or more: “Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, in our likeness... [Gen. 1:26, NIV].’” He is our Creator, who created us to love, for His glory, for His pleasure. “Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. ...I am God, and there is no other; I am God and there is none like me. I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient time, what is still to come [Is. 46:4, 9-10, NIV].” We turn to *Elohim* in our prayers when we need to sense His love and His eternal watch care. “*El*” is a title, rather than a personal name.

EL ELYON [EL-’EL-YAWN] : **GOD MOST HIGH, SOVEREIGN RULER**

El Elyon rules over the affairs of men, and in Daniel 4, after several years of living like an animal, Nebuchadnessar ultimately acknowledged that and blessed the Most High God [Dan. 4:34, NIV]. It is *El Elyon* that Satan approaches about Job [Job 1:6-12], and it is *El Elyon*, our Most High God, Who protects us from Satan in Psalm 91. When we need to know He is in control, we pray to *El Elyon*, with the confidence David expressed in Psalm 21: “For the king trusts in the Lord, through the unfailing love of the Most High, he will not be shaken [Psalm 21:7, NIV].” David affirmed that even though *El Elyon* is the powerful, supreme Most High God, His relationship with us is still one of unfailing love.

EL SHADDAI [EL-SHA-’DIE]: **OUR SUFFICIENCY**

This is one of the most powerful of all God’s titles, suggesting unlimited power and resource, combined with an unending willingness to give us a bountiful supply of all we need. This is a name that God chose for Himself, deliberately revealing Himself to us as *El Shaddai* in Genesis 17: “When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, ‘I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless [Gen. 17:2, NIV].’” Scripture shows us that *El Shaddai* promised to “greatly increase” Abram’s numbers [v.2] and make him “very fruitful [v.6].” When we call to Him as *El Shaddai*, we are acknowledging that we have faith that He is capable and willing to make us a blessing to others, for the sake of His Kingdom.

ADONAI [ADD-EH-’NYE]: LORD AND MASTER

This, too, is a plural Hebrew word, translated “Lord.” If He is our Master, we are His servants. He is responsible to tell us what to do and to provide what we need to do it, the direction and sustenance we need for daily living. As servants, we must yield, we must obey. When Isaiah saw God upon His throne, he saw Him as *Adonai*; it was *Adonai* who said, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” When Isaiah responded, “Here am I. Send me!” [Is. 6:8, NIV] Joshua prayed to *Adonai* when he met the Commander of the Army near Jericho: “What message does my Lord [*Adonai*] have for his servant [Joshua 5:14, NIV]?” -- and the Lord told him exactly what to do to bring down the walls of Jericho. When we’re seeking guidance and direction, we can pray to *Adonai*.

JEHOVAH [YHWH, YA’-WAY]: THE SELF-EXISTENT ONE

Jehovah is God’s personal name, one He first revealed to Moses at the burning bush: “God said to Moses, ‘I am who I am [Ex. 3:14, NIV].’” *Jehovah* is usually translated LORD. In Hebrew, *Jehovah* is written as “YHWH,” a name so holy it is never pronounced. His name *Jehovah* has the meaning, “ever revealing,” and is used in combination with other names throughout Scripture to reveal more about Who He is and desires to be to His people. *Jehovah* is eternal and never-changing -- always “I Am,” never “I Was” or “I Will Be.” When we feel like we’re on shifting sand, we pray to *Jehovah*, our Rock.

JEHOVAH-JIREH [JIE’-REH]: THE LORD WILL PROVIDE

In Genesis 22, the Lord told Abraham to take his son Isaac to Mt. Moriah to sacrifice him. As Abraham’s knife was raised, the Angel of the Lord called to him and stopped him; he looked and found a ram for the sacrifice in a bush. Because the Lord foresaw his need and provided the ram, Abraham built an altar for the “Lord Who Provides” -- *Jehovah-Jireh* [Gen. 22:1-18]. It’s important to note that in context, Abraham is one who loved God more than his beloved son Isaac [v.2], who was a man of worship [v.5] and who immediately obeyed God [v.18]. Those who love, worship and obey the Lord are ones who can anticipate His provision.

JEHOVAH-ROPHÉ [RAH’-FAH]: THE LORD WHO HEALS

God revealed this name in Exodus 15, when Moses was leading the Israelites through the desert. They went three days without water, then came to Marah, where there was water, but it was too bitter to drink. Moses cried out to the Lord, and He showed Moses a piece of wood to throw into the water, and the water became sweet [Ex. 15:25, NIV]. Then the Lord said, “If you listen carefully to the voice of 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 [*Jehovah-Rophe*] the Lord who heals you [Ex. 15:26].” Note that here it was bitter water He made sweet; perhaps His first concern for our healing is more for our heart and emotions than our physical bodies. Note, too, the condition to His healing of disease.

JEHOVAH-NISSI [NEH'-SEE]: **THE LORD OUR BANNER**

Nissi means “banner,” and it refers to a banner, or standard, or flag that an army might carry into battle. It is the standard around which the soldiers gather, the banner they follow into battle. In Exodus 17 Joshua is leading a battle against the Amalekites when this name is revealed [Ex. 17:10-15, NIV]. There is a sense in which the Amalekites represent our on-going struggle with the flesh in Scripture. They were descendants of Esau, who sold his birthright for a bowl of stew, a fleshly desire. *Jehovah-Nissi* gave Joshua and his soldiers the victory, as He will give us victory over self. He is our Banner, our Victory.

JEHOVAH-SHALOM [SHA'-LOAM] : **THE LORD IS PEACE**

Gideon built an altar to [*Jehovah-Shalom*] the Lord Is Peace [Judges 6:24, NIV], but it wasn't because the Lord gave Him peace when he reduced his army, it was before that. The Israelites had spent many years disobeying the Lord. In Gideon's time, they had been oppressed by the Midianites for seven years, so impoverished that they finally cried out to the Lord for help. The Lord heard them and sent His angel to Gideon, to tell him the Lord wanted to use him to save Israel. Gideon was afraid, because he had seen the angel of the Lord face to face, and the Lord said to him, “Peace! Do not be afraid [Judges 6:23, NIV].” The Lord had come to reconcile His people to Himself once again; this name represents our Peace with God, our Prince of Peace who is the One Who reconciled us once and for all.

JEHOVAH-ROHI [ROE'-HYE]: **THE LORD MY SHEPHERD**

Of all the personal *Jehovah* names of the Lord, the most tender, the most intimate, is [*Jehovah-Rohi*] The Lord My shepherd. That's because of the nature of the relationship between the helpless sheep and his shepherd -- who names him, protects him, feeds him, leads him, who keeps him from wandering from the flock, and who searches for him if he does. In Psalm 23, David describes the Lord as *my* shepherd -- not *our* shepherd, not *their* shepherd, not *the* shepherd. He speaks of a one-on-one relationship, Our Shepherd Who knows His sheep and they know Him [John 10:14, NIV] , Who speaks and His sheep recognize His voice and follow [John 10:27, NIV].

JEHOVAH-SABAOth [SAH-BAH-'OATH]: **THE LORD OF HOSTS**

Lord of Hosts [*Jehovah-Sabaoth*] is translated “Lord Almighty,” and it is the name that David used as he challenged Goliath: “You come against me with sword and spear and javelin,” David said, “but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty [1 Sam. 17:45, NIV]...” We can call on the name and character of *Jehovah-Sabaoth* when we need the faith to step out to do our best, knowing the battle is more than we can handle alone. In Jehovah-Sabaoth we can find faith to trust Him with the giants in our lives.

***Jehovah-Shamma* [SHAH-MAH]: THE LORD IS THERE**

In the Old testament times, the Lord was in His temple, or He manifested His presence at certain times in certain places, such as with Moses in the burning bush or on top of Mount Sinai. In Ezekiel, the Lord is saying in a vision that the New Jerusalem will be named, [*Jehovah-Shamma*] “The Lord Is There [Ez. 48:35].” Not that He would be in the temple, but His presence will fill the city. The fuller meaning of this name as it applies to us is reflected in Jesus’ parting words to His disciples before He ascended to heaven, “And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age [Matt. 28:20, NIV].” We can pray that *Jehovah-Shamma* will manifest His presence in the lives of those we love, and that He will grant them minds and hearts willing to acknowledge Him.

***Jehovah-Tsidkenu* [SID-KEN-YOU]: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS**

In Jeremiah 23 we read, “The days are coming, declares the Lord, ‘when I will raise up...a Righteous Branch.... This is the name by which he will be called: [*Jehovah-Tsidkenu*] The Lord Our Righteousness [Jer. 23:6, NIV].” Christ is our righteousness, the Lord Our Righteousness. How might we use this Old Testament *Jehovah* name in our prayers? Certainly, when we need His help in seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. And when we pray for the lost -- that He will convince them of the truth, that their righteousness can never be good enough to gain them entry to heaven; it is only through the righteousness of our Savior that we can come.

***Jehovah-M’Kaddesh* [EM-KAH-DESH]: THE LORD OUR SANCTIFIER**

In Exodus 31, the Lord tells Moses, “Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am [*Jehovah-M’Kaddesh*] the Lord who sanctifies you [Ex. 31:13, NKJV].” This instruction came at the end of a long session Moses had with the Lord on top of Mount Sinai, where He received the ten commandments and other instructions for God’s people. It was after all these instructions and commandments that the Lord said to Moses, “I am the Lord Who sanctifies you.” He helps us keep His commandments, when we admit we can’t do it ourselves, and in prayer, ask for His help.