

## The 'Names' of God in Scripture

Then Moses said to God, "Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I will say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you.' Now they may say to me, 'What is His name?' What shall I say to them?" God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM "; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM (*ehyeh: Yahweh*) has sent me to you.'" Exodus 3:13,14

In Biblical times, names were not only used to identify a person but represented much more. Ancient names gave a description of the bearer's characteristics, qualities, insights into their nature, traits, and personalities. For example, when Jacob (meaning '*grasping the heel*') had an encounter with God in Genesis 32; his name was changed to Israel (meaning '*struggled with God*'). The nation of Israel has 'struggled with God' ever since. Jesus changed Simon's name to the Aramaic name Cephas (meaning '*the rock*'). In English the name is Peter, identifying the Apostle as one who was to be a leader of the early Church.

If names were very important in describing people, which is the best name used to describe God? The answer: it is impossible to describe the qualities (the very being) of God in one, even two words. Some Biblical scholars believe there are 116 names that identify who God is in the Old Testament, while other sources say there are 72 names of God. When you add the New Testament names (mostly in Greek) there are an additional 105 names of God. Regardless of how many descriptors, naming God is and was a monumental (but enriching) task.

### *Elohim*

The very first verse in the Bible used the word '*Elohim*' for God. It is used 2599 times in the Old Testament and is a plural word. "In the beginning, God (*Elohim*) created the heavens and the earth," (Genesis 1:1). The name basically means, "the God of strength and power." By speaking, *Elohim* became the Creator of the universe. Only *Elohim* could create something when there was nothing to start with. One of the foundational verses of Christianity is Genesis 1:26; "Then God (*Elohim*) said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness." The name of God (*Elohim*) may have been on John's mind when he profoundly started his Gospel in the New Testament by using 'Word' (in Greek) as a name for Jesus:

“In the beginning was the Word (*Logos*), and the Word was with God (*Theos*), and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.” (John 1:1-3)

When your life seems ‘powerless’ or you lack strength to carry on: call upon the Creator ‘*Elohim*’ (the God of strength and power) to strengthen you.

### ***‘El’ -***

The term ‘*El*’ which is related to ‘*Elohim*’ is used as part of a compound word to name and describe God. There are 31 distinct uses of ‘*El*’ in the Old Testament. Usually used in referencing a specific name for God while interacting with people. One such example is ‘*El-Olam*’ and another ‘*El-Shaddai*’.

### ***El-Olam***

First used in Genesis 21:33, it is mentioned 439 times in the Bible. It means ‘*The Everlasting God*’ and identifies Him as eternal and existing before time and space. *Olam* comes from the Hebrew root word implying ‘eternity’. “From everlasting to everlasting, You are God (*El-Olam*),” (Psalms 90:2). It is interesting to note that the writer of Hebrews in the New Testament wrote, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday today and forever,” (Hebrews 13:8). Jesus is also given the name “The Alpha and the Omega” (the beginning and the end) in Revelation 1. If you are uncertain as to your future or do not know which way to turn, remember that God has always existed – always was – and always will be; call upon ‘*El-Olam*’ to guide you as you venture ahead.

### ***El-Shaddai***

First used in Genesis 17:1,2; it is mentioned 48 times in Scripture. The name means ‘*Lord God Almighty*’. Abraham was ninety-nine years old and his wife (Sarah) was ninety. God told him that He was going to make a covenant with him and was going to start by allowing the married couple to have a son. “I am Almighty God (*El-Shaddai*) .... And I will make a covenant between Me and you.” Abraham, because of their ages, laughed at the proclamation believing it to be impossible for Sarah to have a child. As a result, God told him that the son’s name was going to be Isaac (meaning *he laughs*). In the Gospels, four times Jesus says that “all things are possible with God.” When you get to the point in your life that things appear to be impossible, call upon ‘*El-Shaddai*’ to change the impossible to the realm of the possible.

### Other examples of 'El - '

- El-Elyon (The Most High God) (42x) Genesis 14:18
- El-Qanna (Jealous God) (6x) Exodus 20:5
- El-Roi (The God Who Sees) Genesis 16:13
- El-Echad (The One God) Malachi 2:10
- El-Elohey Israel (God, God of Israel)

### Adonai

A name for God first used in Genesis 15:2 when Abram addressed Him. It is mentioned 434 times in the Scripture and is a plural word. The singular word *Adon* means 'Lord, Master, Owner,' a name referring to majesty, respect, and a royal title. Bible encyclopedias refer to *Adonai* as signifying that God is Sovereign and does not answer to anyone other than Himself. "O Lord God (*Adonai*), You have begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your strong hand; for what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do such works and mighty acts as Yours?" (Deuteronomy 3:24). Synonyms for sovereignty include supremacy, dominance, and preeminence. Thus, I encourage you to frequently pay tribute to '*Adonai*' in your prayer time, lifting up the name of God who is Sovereign and above all others.

### *Emmanuel (or Immanuel)*

The word means '*God With Us*' and is mentioned three times in the Bible. It is first used in Scripture as part of a Messianic prophecy that is the cornerstone of Christianity: "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and will call his name *Immanuel*," (Isaiah 7:14). God leaves the glory of the Throne room in Heaven and enters the human race humbly as a child in order to (ultimately) reunite sinful man to a Holy God. The last words Jesus tells His disciples before returning to the Throne in Heaven are "I am with you always, even to the end of the age," (Matthew 28:20). As a child of God (John 1:12) when you are in the depths of loneliness or despair, call upon '*Emmanuel*.'

### *Yahweh / YHWH / LORD / Jehovah*

This is the most common name for God in the Bible and is used almost 7,000 times. It comes from the Hebrew word meaning 'to be' or 'to exist'. It implies '*God is our Lord and Master*,' and was first used in Genesis 2:4. The Hebrew language has twenty-two consonants, and vowels are used as dots and short line markings. Jewish history records that this name of God was considered to be so holy (that out of reverence), His name was not to be mentioned or pronounced. Thus, this name of God is simply - *YHWH* - with no vowels for pronunciation. It is also the only proper name of God according to Hebrew scholars.

For semantic purposes, Old Testament scribes converted *YHWH* into a two-syllable word (with vowels) as *Yahweh*. Then, starting in the 9<sup>th</sup> Century (A.D.) Jewish scholars combined the vowels of *Adonai* to *YHWH* which created the name '*Jehovah*', giving the readers of the Bible a pronounced description for this name of God. When the King James Version of the Bible was translated into English (1604-1611), the scholars consistently used *Jehovah* for *YHWH*/*Yahweh*, resulting in most English translations using '*Jehovah*' for the better part of the next four hundred years.

Just as '*El*' was used in a compound word, *Yahweh/Jehovah* is also used as compound word combinations to name God. Two such examples are *Jehovah-Raah* and *Jehovah-Rapha*.

### ***Jehovah-Raah (Rohi)***

This word combination is used for the name of God in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm and means "*The Lord is my Shepherd*". As a psalm of David (a former shepherd as a youth) it gives the implication that God cares, feeds, and protects His people (sheep). When sheep wander away, the shepherd draws them back into the herd. The duty of every shepherd is to lead and guide. Jesus Himself said that He was the Good Shepherd (John 10:11). During those times when you wander away or seemingly become lost, call upon '*Jehovah-Raah*' to guide you back.

### ***Jehovah-Rapha (Rophe)***

Since this name of God is a cornerstone plot of *No Dark Clouds*, it should be addressed in this study guide. It means '*The Lord Heals*' and comes from the name of God in Exodus 15. After Moses led Israel out of the bondage of Egypt, the nation wandered in the wilderness of Sinai. When they arrived at a place called Marah (Exodus 15:23) the water was so bitter it was unusable. God told Moses to throw a tree into the water, and as it entered the water, God would 'heal' it and make it clean to drink and use. Then, God told Israel that if they obeyed Him (15:26), He would be their Healer. If you need emotional, spiritual, or physical healing, call upon '*Jehovah Rapha*' to give you healing.

### ***Other Yahweh/Jehovah word combinations***

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|---------------------|------------------------------|------------------|
| • Jehovah-Jireh     | (The Lord Will Provide)      | Genesis 22:14    |
| • Jehovah-Shalom    | (The Lord is Peace)          | Judges 6:24      |
| • Jehovah-M'Kaddesh | (The God Who Sanctifies)     | Leviticus 20:7,8 |
| • Jehovah-Nissi     | (The Lord is my Banner)      | Exodus 17:8-15   |
| • Jehovah-Sabaoth   | (The Lord of Hosts) (285x)   | 1 Samuel 1:3     |
| • Jehovah-Tsidkenu  | (The Lord our Righteousness) | Jer 23:6,33:16   |
| • Jehovah-Shammah   | (The Lord is There)          | Ezekiel 48:35    |

## New Testament names of God / Jesus

In the New Testament all but two names of God are written in Greek. Those other two were written in Aramaic. Jesus in teaching His disciples how to pray (*The Lord's Prayer*), used the Aramaic word '*Abba*' to describe God the Father. It simply means '*daddy*'. "Our Father (*Abba*) who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name," (Matthew 6:9). The other instance was when Christ (in agony) was on the cross and He says in Aramaic: "Eli, Eli, lama sabachtani,," (My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me, Matthew 27:46) It is interesting to note that Paul told us to also pray to our '*Daddy*': "For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" (Romans 8:15). If you are living in fear or anxiety and just need a hug from your 'heavenly daddy', call upon *Abba* to comfort you.

The most common name for God in the New Testament is '*Theos*' and it is used 1343 times describing both Jesus and God the Father. Another name for God/Jesus is '*kyrios (or kurios)*' meaning 'Lord'. It is used 748 times. The word comes from the Greek root word '*kuros*' and literally means '*supremacy or supreme in authority*'. For the first three hundred years of the early Church, only Caesar could be declared '*kyrios*' (supreme or god-like). When they began using the word to describe Jesus as the true 'supreme in authority,' the young Church became a threat to the entire Roman empire.

"If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord (*kyrios*)," and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." (Romans 10:9)

Thousands upon thousands of Christians from the early Church gave their life declaring Jesus as the 'supreme' (*kyrios*) Son of God. Along with the many other names of God/Jesus from both the Old and New Testaments, if you ever decide to do an in-depth study of 'The Names of God', there are many resources that have already been prepared for such studies. One thing is for sure, if you ever partake in a comprehensive study of the names of God, you will most certainly be blessed and gain valuable insight into the Scripture and who God is.

### Some New Testament names identifying Christ as God

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|--------------------------|------------|---------------------|-------------|
| • The Son of the Highest | Luke 1:32  | The True God        | 1 John 5:20 |
| • God my Savior          | Luke 1:47  | Emanuel             | Matt 1:23   |
| • The Lord of Glory      | 1 Cor 2:8  | I Am                | John 8:58   |
| • Creator of all things  | Col 1:16   | First and the Last  | Rev 1:17    |
| • Wisdom of God          | 1 Cor 1:24 | Brightness of Glory | Heb 1:3     |
| • Seed of David          | Rom 1:3    | Savior of the world | 1 John 4:14 |
| • Lamb of God            | John 1:29  | Root of David       | Rev 5:5     |
| • Door of the sheep      | John 10:7  | The True Vine       | John 15:1   |
| • Bread of Life          | John 6:35  | Chief Cornerstone   | 1 Pet 2:6   |

## Scripture Nuggets:

“The name of the LORD is a strong tower; The righteous runs into it and is safe.”  
Proverbs 18:10

Psalm 8:1

O LORD, our Lord, How majestic is Your name in all the earth, Who have displayed Your splendor above the heavens!” Psalms 8:1

“Some boast in chariots and some in horses, But we will boast in the name of the LORD, our God.” Psalm 20:7

"For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst." Matthew 18:20

“Behold, the days are coming,” declares the LORD, “When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; And He will reign as king and act wisely and do justice and righteousness in the land. “In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell securely; and this is His name by which He will be called, “The LORD our righteousness.” Jeremiah 23:5,6

Then Gideon built an altar there to the LORD and named it The LORD is Peace.”  
Judges 6:24

“Blessed be the name of the LORD from this time forth and forever.” Psalm 113:2

“And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, “KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.” Revelation 19:16

“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.” John 1:12