

Names of God: A Way to Understand His Nature and Character

The Names of God used in the Bible act as a roadmap for learning about the character of God. Since the Bible is God's Word to us, the names He chooses in scripture are meant to reveal His true nature to us.

Names of God: His Titles Revealed in Scripture

"**ELOHIM**" (or *Elohay*) is the first name for God found in the Bible, and it's used throughout the Old Testament over 2,300 times. *Elohim* comes from the Hebrew root meaning "strength" or "power", and has the unusual characteristic of being plural in form. In Genesis 1:1, we read, "In the beginning *Elohim* created the heaven and the earth." Right from the start, this plural form for the name of God is used to describe the One God, a mystery that is uncovered throughout the rest of the Bible. Throughout scripture, *Elohim* is combined with other words to describe certain characteristics of God.

Some examples:

Elohay Kedem - God of the Beginning: (Deuteronomy 33:27).

Elohay Mishpat - God Of Justice: (Isaiah 30:18).

Elohay Selichot - God Of Forgiveness: (Nehemiah 9:17).

Elohay Marom - God Of Heights: (Micah 6:6).

Elohay Mikarov - God Who Is Near: (Jeremiah 23:23).

Elohay Mauzi - God Of My Strength: (Psalm 43:2).

Elohay Tehilati - God Of My Praise: (Psalm 109:1).

Elohay Yishi - God Of My Salvation: (Psalm 18:47, 25:5).

Elohim Kedoshim - Holy God: (Leviticus 19:2, Joshua 24:19).

Elohim Chaiyim - Living God: (Jeremiah 10:10).

Elohay Elohim - God Of Gods: (Deuteronomy 10:17).

"**EL**" is another name used for God in the Bible, showing up about 200 times in the Old Testament. *El* is the simple form arising from *Elohim*, and is often combined with other words for descriptive emphasis.

Some examples:

El HaNe'eman - The Faithful God: (Deuteronomy 7:9).

El HaGadol - The Great God: (Deuteronomy 10:17).

El HaKadosh - The Holy God: (Isaiah 5:16).

El Yisrael - The God Of Israel: (Psalm 68:35).

El HaShamayim - The God Of The Heavens: (Psalm 136:26).

El De'ot - The God Of Knowledge: (1 Samuel 2:3).

El Emet - The God Of Truth: (Psalm 31:6).

El Yeshuati - The God Of My Salvation: (Isaiah 12:2).

El Elyon - The Most High God: (Genesis 14:18).

Immanu El - God Is With Us: (Isaiah 7:14).

El Olam - The God Of Eternity (Genesis 21:33).

El Echad - The One God: (Malachi 2:10).

"**ELAH**" is another name for God, used about 70 times in the Old Testament. Again, when combined with other words, we see different attributes of God.

Some examples:

Elah Yerush'lem - God of Jerusalem: (Ezra 7:19).

Elah Yisrael - God of Israel: (Ezra 5:1).

Elah Sh'maya - God of Heaven: (Ezra 7:23).

Elah Sh'maya V'Arah - God of Heaven and Earth: (Ezra 5:11).

"YHVH" is the Hebrew word that translates as "LORD". Found more often in the Old Testament than any other name for God (approximately 7,000 times), the title is also referred to as the "Tetragrammaton," meaning the "The Four Letters". YHVH comes from the Hebrew verb "to be" and is the special name that God revealed to Moses at the burning bush. "And God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM; and He said, thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, I AM has sent me to you... this is My eternal name, and this is how I am to be recalled for all generations'" (Exodus 3:14-15). Therefore, YHVH declares God's absolute being - the source of everything, without beginning and without end. Although some pronounce YHVH as "Jehovah" or "Yaweh," scholars really don't know the proper pronunciation. The Jews stopped pronouncing this name by about 200 A.D., out of fear of breaking the commandment "You shall not take the name of YHVH your God in vain" (Exodus 20:7). (Today's rabbis typically use "Adonai" in place of YHVH.)

Here are some examples of YHVH used in scripture:

- YHVH *Elohim* - LORD God: (Genesis 2:4). YHVH
- M'kadesh* - The LORD Who Makes Holy: (Ezekiel 37:28).
- YHVH Yireh* - The LORD Who Sees/provides: (Genesis 22:14).
- YHVH *Nissi* - The LORD My Banner: (Exodus 17:15).
- YHVH *Shalom* - The LORD Of Peace: (Judges 6:24). YHVH
- Tzidkaynu* - The LORD Our Righteousness: (Jeremiah 33:16).
- YHVH *O'saynu* - The LORD our Maker: (Psalm 95:6).