

# Theology Proper ~ Doctrine of God

## The Names of God ~ What is God called?

To the Western mind very little (if any) significance is attached today to the meaning of a child's given name, the determining factors are usually only the parents' personal preferences or the phonetic compatibility with the family name. However, this was not the case in the Ancient Near East. A person's given name often commemorated some great historical or religious event, or it denoted the parents' hope for / assessment of a child's character (see, e.g., Gen. 4:1; 4:25; 5:29; 10:25; 17:5, 15; 1 Sam. 25:25). God also revealed names for himself in Scripture that reflect his character. In his revelation in Scripture he progressively selected titles and names to display aspects of his divine character so that we might be better able to understand and worship him.

Name	Definition	Significance	Key Verse(s)
<b>YAHWEH (LORD), I AM</b>	Self-existent, Unchanging One	The LORD is independent, existing by his own power. This is the unique, preferred name of God, and was revealed to his people as the faithful, redeeming God. Because God is unchanging and faithful he can be trusted.	Ex 3:2-14, Ex 20:2; occurs 6000+ times in OT.
<b>Adonai, Kurios</b>	Lord, Master (note lower case 'Lord')	As the creator and sustainer, God has the right to rule over us--he is the Lord over creation. Yet he is more than just a ruler, he is a benevolent master who loves, provides, and desires to have a relationship with his creation.	Is 45:9, Ps 8:1, Deut 10:17; Adonai 440+ times in OT; Kurios 700+ times in NT.
<b>Elohim, El, Eloah</b>	God, Strong Creator	The root means "strong one." It is the most general name for God used in the OT; however, it is more a title than a proper name. It connotes his power; the one who created the universe from nothing and is limitless in his strength.	Gen 1:1; occurs 2500+ times in OT.

<b>El Shaddai</b>	Almighty God	God is all-powerful, without limits. Nothing is too hard for God. Because he is almighty, he is more than able to care for his children. He is all-sufficient for our needs.	Gen 17:1, Gen 28:3, Gen 35:11
<b>El Olam</b>	Everlasting God Related designation: Ancient of days	God is eternal, without beginning or end, existing endlessly. He does not change in any measure of his being; he does not add to or diminish in any respect. Therefore, we can depend upon God, for he will always exist and will be faithful because of his infinite, eternal character.	Is 40:28, Gen 21:33 <i>Ancient of days:</i> Dan 7:9,13,22
<b>El Kana</b>	A Jealous God	God is a jealous who requires faithful devotion to him. He will not allow another to take his place.	Ex 34:14, Deut 4:24, Josh 24:19, Nah 1:2
<b>El Elyon (King of Kings)</b>	God Most High	God is greater than anyone or anything else. He alone is sovereign over everyone and everything in this world. God will not allow another to take His place; therefore, we need not fear if we know El Elyon.	Gen 14:19,22; Ps 7:18; Ps 78:56
<b>El Roi</b>	God who Sees	God sees beyond the surface, looking upon his creation with eyes of compassion. God sees everything; nothing is outside his watchful care. Therefore, he protects his children and desires their good.	Gen 16:13; illus. verses: 2 Chron 16:9a, Prov 15:3, Ps 33:18, Ps 121.
<b>YAHWEH-SABBAOTH</b>	The LORD of Hosts	The LORD is the commander of a great army (hosts). This name has an obvious warlike flavor and seems to be God's "royal name." He is the true Monarch of Israel--the almighty King over <i>all history</i> . As such, God protects his people and leads them to victory.	1 Sam 17:45, 1 Chr 17:24, Ps 84:12, Is 1:24

<b>YAHWEH-YIREH</b>	The LORD who Provides	God foresees our needs and provides. He is able to fully provide because he not only has all of creation at his disposal but he also has the unexhaustible resource of himself. Believing that God will provide enables us to sacrifice without reservation.	Gen 22:14
<b>YAHWEH-ROPHE</b>	The LORD who Heals	God is our healer, able to heal all kinds of hurts. He is concerned about healing our deepest needs.	Ex 15:26
<b>YAHWEH-NISSI</b>	The LORD my Banner	The banner was used to identify a group, and the one bearing our banner is all-powerful. Victory comes from the LORD and his victory is always sure. We are victorious when we trust in our LORD.	Ex 17:15
<b>YAHWEH-SHALOM</b>	The LORD my Peace	Only God is worthy of our highest affections. Peace comes only from God, and though God does not always remove our troubles, he gives us peace in the midst of trouble.	Jdg 6:24, Is 26:3
<b>YAHWEH-ROHI</b>	The LORD my Shepherd	God knows his own and cares for us as a shepherd cares for his sheep. We need a shepherd's care; we are ignorant, foolish and weak. God's care is loving, protective, and sure; he will protect, defend and provide for us because his name is at stake.	Ps 23:1, Ps 34:19, Ps 100:3
<b>YAHWEH-SHAMMAH</b>	The LORD is There	God is everywhere present. God is always present with his people, and therefore his people have nothing to fear.	Ez 48:35, Ps 23:4
<b>YAHWEH-EL EMETH</b>	The LORD God of Truth	God does not lie, every word of his proves true. He will fulfill all his promises because he is a God of truth. God will lead us in the truth if we trust in him.	Ps 31:5, Num 23:19
<b>YAHWEH-MAGINENU</b>	The LORD my Defense	God will defend those who trust in him.	
<b>YAHWEH-OR</b>	The LORD is Light	God is light, in him is no darkness. He guides and provides direction.	Ps 27:1

#### OTHER DESIGNATION

<b>The Name</b>	Synonym for the infinite God	The word for "name" was occasionally employed as a sufficient representation in itself of God's titles and name. In such cases 'the name' stands for the <i>whole manifestation of God</i> in His relation to His people so that it becomes synonymous with God.		Lev 24:11, Ex 20:7, Ps 76:2
<b>Abba, Pater</b>	Father	God is a Father to those who believe in his name. He is the perfect father, benevolent and good in every way. He is not a Father in name only, but in function (because of his character). He desires a close, personal relationship with his children where he protects and nourishes, and his children should grow in resemblance to him.		Mk 14:36, Rom 8:15, Gal 4:6, John 1:12
<b>The LORD our Righteousness (Jer 23:6)</b>	<b>Judge of the Whole Earth (Gen 18:25)</b>	<b>The Holy One of Israel (Is 1:4, 40:25, 54:5)</b>	<b>The Lord God of Israel (Jdg 5:3)</b>	<b>The Lord the Sanctifier (Ex 31:13)</b>

This list could go on and on<sup>1</sup> because these compounds are not really distinct names but are more like designations / titles. Yet they need to be included since they do reveal some important things about God. Remember, in the Ancient Near East a name was more than just an identification; it was descriptive of its bearer, often revealing some characteristic or activity of that person. "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!" (Ps 8:1, 9).

The knowledge of the true God is the highest knowledge any person can attain. The world around us tells us of the power of God, but it is from the Bible that we learn the full facts about God. Specifically we learn about Him through what the Bible says about His character (attributes) and His names.

<sup>1</sup>Other designations include: God of our Fathers (2 Chron 20:6), Faithful God (Deut 7:7-11), Living God (Dan 6:26-27), Fortress (Ps 59:16), Hiding Place (Ps 32:7), Rock (Ps 18:2), Helper (Ps 118:7), King of the Nations (Jer 10:7), King of the Ages (King Eternal, Deut 33:27, 1 Tim 1:17), and King of Heaven (Dan 4:37).