

The Names of God

The Personal Name of God— Yahweh/Jehovah and Adonai

Names have meaning and are powerful, especially biblical names. You know the names and “nicknames” of your friends. Do you know the names of God and their meaning? Each name gives us another picture of our LORD God.

And God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And He said, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” Moreover God said to Moses, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: ‘The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations.’” Exodus 3:14–15 NKJV

“I AM WHO I AM” or “I will be who I will be” is the transliteration of the Tetragrammaton, the four Hebrew consonants denoting the personal name of God—YHWH. The Hebrew language has no written vowels—they are only pronounced through the knowledge of oral tradition. Hence, the best representation of the personal name of God is *Yahweh*. The Latinized version of YHWH was JHVH, which ultimately became transliterated as *Jehovah*.

In Scripture, the personal name of God is most commonly transliterated as “LORD,” in all capitals, in the KJV and NKJV versions of the Bible. Oftentimes, we see “LORD God” together (or simply “Lord God” in most other translations), denoting the personal nature of God. Keep that nuance in mind as you read Scripture, as God is revealing His very personal nature to you. It is tragically disappointing that most of our newer translations do not distinctly represent much of the true meaning and nuances of the Hebrew language.

So the LORD said to him, “Who has made man’s mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the LORD?” Exodus 4:11 NKJV

Adonai reverently means “Lord or Master” and was the name of God used instead of *Yahweh* at an early point in time when *Yahweh* became thought of as too sacred to be pronounced in any public fashion. Hence, *Adonai* was almost always substituted for *Yahweh* when praying or reading the Scriptures, but the connotation was the same as the personal name of God. Therefore, even though the Scripture read “*Yahweh*,” “*Adonai*” was spoken instead.

In summary, *Yahweh*, *Jehovah*, and *Adonai* all reference the personal name of God. *Yahweh* is by convention the most appropriate since it is the best direct transliteration of the original Hebrew. Good sheep know the Shepherd’s voice and His name.

My Provider and My Banner

Did you know that very early in the Old Testament, God identified Himself as your Provider and your victory Banner? Keep your hand in His hand, and His provision and victory over your enemies is secure and assured.

*And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering." So the two of them went together. Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" So he said, "Here I am." And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me." Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. And Abraham called the name of the place, **The-LORD-Will-Provide**; as it is said to this day, "In the Mount of the LORD it shall be provided." Genesis 22:8–14 NKJV*

Yahweh-Yireh (or Jehovah-Jireh) is the name used by Abraham to describe the "**LORD my Provider**"—and the ultimate provider of life and everything He surely is. Call upon the name of the LORD my Provider in your deepest, dire need. Instead of sacrificing everything that you have, your Provider has something nearby to supply your every need.

*And so it was, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands became heavy; so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it. And Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write this for a memorial in the book and recount it in the hearing of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." And Moses built an altar and called its name, **The-LORD-Is-My-Banner**; for he said, "Because the LORD has sworn: the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation." Exodus 17:11–16 NKJV*

Yahweh-Nissi (or Jehovah-Nissi) is the name that Moses used to describe God's victory for Israel over the Amalekites, after Israel's exodus from Egypt on their way to the Promised Land. Moses's hands lifted high to God, imploring for victory, was itself a banner and motivator for the people that God was surely with them. The "**LORD my Banner**" signifies God's hand of victory over the enemy. The banner we think of is the national flag or flag designating a particular group of people, especially raised high and flying in victory over a battlefield. In ancient times, the banner was more of an emblem or ensign held high on a pole as the identification for the people. It is a symbol of allegiance to be rallied around, and with God as your banner, victory against every enemy is assured.

My Peace and Host of Armies

God is your peace, and He is the one who goes with you into the battles of life. You may be up against seemingly impossible odds, but you are certainly not fighting alone.

Now Gideon perceived that He was the Angel of the LORD. So Gideon said, "Alas, O Lord God! For I have seen the Angel of the LORD face to face." Then the LORD said to him,

*“Peace be with you; do not fear, you shall not die.” So Gideon built an altar there to the LORD, and called it **The-LORD-Is-Peace**. To this day it is still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites. Judges 6:22–24 NKJV*

*Yahweh-Shalom (or Jehovah-Shalom) is the name that Gideon used to describe God after his encounter with the *Angel of the LORD*. We will discuss this in further detail in a later devotion, but for now, understand that this is no ordinary angel of God but is, in fact, the Son of God Himself, the preincarnate Jesus Christ before He was made man. Thus, this is a direct encounter and visitation of God to Gideon (and there were many other such instances recorded in the Old Testament). Because it was thought that one could not be directly in the presence of God and live, Gideon was obviously overwhelmed, yet our God is the “**LORD my Peace**” even in the most dire and death-defying situations. Call upon our God of Peace in your valleys of dismal despair.*

*Then David said to the Philistine, “You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the **LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel**, whom you have defied. 1 Samuel 17:45 NKJV*

And when the servant of the man of God arose early and went out, there was an army, surrounding the city with horses and chariots. And his servant said to him, “Alas, my master! What shall we do?” So he answered, “Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.” And Elisha prayed, and said, “LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see.” Then the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. 2 Kings 6:15–17 NKJV

*Yahweh-Sabaoth (or Jehovah-Sabaoth) our “**LORD of hosts**” is literally the innumerable angelic army of heaven. David calls upon the heavenly host to support him in his conquest of the giant Philistine, Goliath, just as the prophet Elisha did when the Syrians came to war against Israel. You may be the underdog, the unlikely, one against impossible odds—yet open your spiritual eyes and look around you and see the invincible and innumerable angelic heavenly host with horses and glistening chariots of fire that are all around you. No, you are not alone in life’s battles. Call upon the LORD of hosts.*

My Healer and My Shepherd

God is your Healer and God is your Shepherd, but both require that you are following only Him. Make sure you willingly do not stray.

*Now when they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah, for they were bitter. Therefore the name of it was called Marah. And the people complained against Moses, saying, “What shall we drink?” So he cried out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a tree. When he cast it into the waters, the waters were made sweet. There He made a statute and an ordinance for them, and there He tested them, and said, “If you diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am the **LORD who heals you**.” Exodus 15:23–26 NKJV*

Yahweh-Rapha (or Jehovah-Rapha) is the name God identifies Himself as the “**LORD my Healer.**” Soon after parting the Red Sea, God makes the bitter and probably toxic waters at Marah fresh and clean and healing for the Israelites. Note, however, that in this passage continued healing comes at a contingent price—diligent obedience unto the Lord. Know that God has certain expectations of us too. He is our Healer and Physician, so never remiss in calling out His healing name.

*The **LORD is my shepherd**; I shall not want.* Psalm 23:1 NKJV

Yahweh-Raah (or Jehovah-Raah) is the “**LORD my Shepherd,**” well known from David’s Twenty-third Psalm, the Shepherd Psalm. This shepherd analogy is frequently used throughout the Bible and connotes one who leads, cares for every need, protects, and continually watches over the flock. This is precisely how the Lord our God looks after and cares for us, to the point of sacrificing self for the protection of each valued member of His flock. The shepherd knows every sheep, and the sheep know and follow only the shepherd. No matter what trouble life may bring, know that your Shepherd is right there with you, willing to sacrifice it all just for you. He will never leave you nor forsake you, for He has already laid down His life for you.

My Sanctifier and My Righteousness

The Holy Spirit is our Sanctifier, and we are made righteous through Christ. Being a believer is truly a wonderful thing.

*“Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: ‘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 the **LORD who sanctifies you.**’* Exodus 31:13 NKJV

Yahweh-M’Kaddesh (or Jehovah-M’Kaddesh) is the “**LORD my Sanctifier,**” the One who imparts His Word and Law into my heart and makes me holy as He is holy. The Holy Spirit who indwells us is now truly our Sanctifier, as He imparts His guidance and direction to urge us onward to become holy vessels worthy of the Lord. Remember, sanctification is all about cooperation and allowing the Holy Spirit to do His work. Call upon the Lord to help you overcome your past and walk each day in the newness of Him. Become the holy vessel that God designed you to be.

*“Behold, the days are coming,” says the LORD, “That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell safely; Now this is His name by which He will be called: **THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.**”* Jeremiah 23:5–6 NKJV

Yahweh-Tsidkenu (or Jehovah-Tsidkenu) is the “**LORD my Righteousness**” revealed in Jeremiah prophetically for Israel during the Millennial reign of Christ here on earth. Christ is the Branch of righteousness and King who will certainly rule the earth with all justice and peace. For Israel, they must wait till the Millennium for this to be realized, but for the church, all believers in Christ, this is realized for us now, as Christ’s righteousness is already imputed to us. We are made righteous through Him now, and His justice will soon rule this earth. Come quickly, Lord Jesus!

Our God of Recompense and the One Who Smites

Every person will ultimately experience the presence of God—either as salvation poured out or judgment poured out. Be exceedingly thankful that you’re a believer and share the love of Christ poured out for you.

*Because the LORD is plundering Babylon And silencing her loud voice, Though her waves roar like great waters, And the noise of their voice is uttered, Because the plunderer comes against her, against Babylon, And her mighty men are taken. Every one of their bows is broken; For the **LORD is the God of recompense**, He will surely repay. Jeremiah 51:55–56 NKJV*

Yahweh-El-Gemolah (or Jehovah-El-Gemolah) is the “**LORD, the God of recompense**,” our God who, with full righteousness and justice, makes sure that full restitution will be made where needed, and the wrongs fully righted. We can be sure that nothing escapes His balance scales and that all truth, honor, and perfect justice will ultimately prevail. Rest assured, we do not need to get back at our enemies or try to even the score, for God has all that perfectly taken care of. It is best we leave all that to Him. So the next time you’ve been wronged, do nothing on your own, but pray to our God of recompense, and be at peace knowing that He will make it right.

*Now will I shortly pour out my fury upon thee, and accomplish mine anger upon thee: and I will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense thee for all thine abominations. And mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: I will recompense thee according to thy ways and thine abominations that are in the midst of thee; and ye shall know that I am the **LORD that smiteth**. Ezekiel 7:8–9 KJV*

Yahweh-Nakeh (or Jehovah-Nakeh) the “**LORD that smites**” is literally the Lord who ultimately brings perfect judgment upon the earth and all those who willingly reject Him. The ultimate realization of God’s judgment is, of course, the Tribulation, when His wrath is poured out upon the entirety of earth and its inhabitants, including the antichrist and false prophet. We, the church, will have already been raptured to heaven and so escape God’s wrath and judgement. Remember, God is a loving God, but also holy, righteous, and ultimately must judge sin and evil and forevermore remove it from His presence.

Common Names for God

Knowing God’s names helps us to better know Him. I hope and pray that your visualization and understanding of Him will draw you ever closer and keep you firmly attached.

*“Hear, O kings! Give ear, O princes! I, even I, will sing to the LORD; I will sing praise to the **LORD God of Israel**. Judges 5:3 NKJV*

Yahweh-Elohim (or Jehovah-Elohim) the “**LORD God**,” combines the personal name of God, Yahweh, with the more general term for God, Elohim. Elohim often means the Mighty One, but in certain other contexts could mean Creator, King, Judge, or Savior. When seen as the LORD God of Israel, the connotation is typically that of the One, True God, the Mighty One. There is none like Him.

*In the beginning **God** created the heavens and the earth. Genesis 1:1 NKJV*

*Elohim, “**God**,” the most common usage for God in the Bible is the general term, Elohim. Again, its meaning is the Mighty One in all His majesty and glory.*

*Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of **God Most High**. Genesis 14:18 NKJV*

*El Elyon, “**God Most High**” is used in a few passages of Scripture and literally means “the strongest Mighty One.” El is believed to be the root or more ancient version of Elohim and connotes the same identification of God.*

*When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am **Almighty God**; walk before Me and be blameless. Genesis 17:1 NKJV*

*El Shaddai, “**Almighty God**,” rendered in various ways throughout Scripture as Almighty God, God Almighty, the Almighty, the LORD Almighty, and the LORD God Almighty. There is the obvious meaning of almighty as the all-powerful, omnipotent God but also the connotation of God the All-Sufficient, needing nothing in Himself and supplying fully all the needs of all His creation. So He is the all-powerful, all-sufficient Mighty One. Yes, truly He is.*

*Then Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and there called on the name of the **LORD, the Everlasting God**. Genesis 21:33 NKJV*

*El Olam, the “**Everlasting God** or **God of Eternity**.” Often, we just see the phrase “from everlasting to everlasting.” And finally, we see a similar description of Jesus Christ in Isaiah:*

For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6 NKJV

The Angel of the LORD

Do you know who’s who? Sometimes, it may be important to know if you’re talking to God Himself or one of His angels. When you’re reading Scripture, you need to know.

The Angel of God said to him, “Take the meat and the unleavened bread and lay them on this rock, and pour out the broth.” And he did so. Then the Angel of the LORD put out the end of the staff that was in His hand, and touched the meat and the unleavened bread; and fire rose out of the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread. And the Angel of the LORD departed out of his sight. Now Gideon perceived that He was the Angel of the LORD. So Gideon said, “Alas, O Lord GOD! For I have seen the Angel of the LORD face to face.” Judges 6:20–22 NKJV

*Now there was a certain man from Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren and had no children. And the Angel of the LORD appeared to the woman and said to her, "Indeed now, you are barren and have borne no children, but you shall conceive and bear a son. For behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. And no razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines." So the woman came and told her husband, saying, "A Man of God came to me, and His countenance was like the countenance of the Angel of God, very awesome; but I did not ask Him where He was from, and He did not tell me His name. And the Angel of the LORD said to Manoah, "Though you detain Me, I will not eat your food. But if you offer a burnt offering, you must offer it to the LORD." (For Manoah did not know He was the Angel of the LORD.) Then Manoah said to the Angel of the LORD, "What is Your name, that when Your words come to pass we may honor You?" And the Angel of the LORD said to him, "Why do you ask My name, seeing it is **wonderful**?" So Manoah took the young goat with the grain offering, and offered it upon the rock to the LORD. And He did a wondrous thing while Manoah and his wife looked on—it happened as the flame went up toward heaven from the altar—the Angel of the LORD ascended in the flame of the altar! When Manoah and his wife saw this, they fell on their faces to the ground. And Manoah said to his wife, "We shall surely die, because we have seen God!" Judges 13:2–3, 5–6, 16–20, 22 NKJV (This is the foretelling of the birth of Samson.)*

A distinction must be made between the *Angel of the LORD*, seen in the Old Testament, and an *angel of the Lord*, typically seen in the New Testament (and occasionally in the Old Testament as well). The Angel of the LORD in most Old Testament Scripture verses is actually a *theophany* (a direct manifestation of God Himself to a person). In the New Testament, the angel of the Lord is a created angel, often the angel Gabriel, who brings a direct message from God to those special people on earth. Unfortunately, few translations of the Bible, other than the NKJV, capitalize "Angel" appropriately to help us determine who this entity really is. For that matter, most modern translations fail to capitalize many names directly referring to God Himself and the associated pronouns. This is extremely disheartening, and the reason that multiple translations, including the NKJV, need to be consulted frequently to appreciate the full, vibrant meaning of the biblical text.

The Angel of the LORD is most often taken to specifically be the preincarnate Jesus Christ Himself before He was born a man. Notice that in Judges 13:18, He identifies His name as "wonderful," the very same description Isaiah gives us of Christ in chapter 9, verse 6, as we just saw in our devotional yesterday. Furthermore, created angels always refuse worship and speak only on behalf of God, relating a specific message. However, the Angel of the LORD typically speaks with authority in the first person as God Himself, and oftentimes, initiates or encourages a burnt offering sacrifice, accepting worship of Himself. Furthermore, those who see and speak with the Angel of the LORD are often aware that this entity is in fact God and are fearful for their lives because they have seen Him.

Some notable appearances of the Angel of the LORD are as follows: to comfort and give assurance to Sarai's maid Hagar in Genesis 16:7–11, to stop Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac in Genesis 22:11–15, the "Man" who wrestled with Jacob and renamed him Israel in Genesis 32:22–30, the One who spoke to Moses out of the burning bush in Exodus 3:2, to Balaam in Numbers 22:22–35, to the Israelites in Judges 2:1–4, to Gideon in Judges 6:11–22, to Manoah and his wife in Judges 13:2–22, and in Zechariah's prophetic visions in chapters 1 and 3. Sometimes, it's important to know Who you're talking to.