

Names of God

“What Do We Call Him?” Series

Elohim: God The Creator (Genesis 1:1)

This first name for God is used more than 2,500 times in the Bible, 32 times in the first chapter of Genesis alone. Most scholars believe Elohim derives from the word El, which in turn comes from the word for “strong.” Specifically, this name means that He is the strong Creator God.

Adonai: God The Lord (Genesis 15:2)

It’s used over 300 times in the Old Testament. In the singular, the word Adon often refers to “Master” and is also defined as “Lord” or “Owner” and is used for how servants speak to their masters and subjects to their kings. When we say that God is Adonai, we are stating that He is Lord of all and that He is supreme over His subjects.

Jehovah Shalom: God of Peace (Judges 6:24)

Occurs only once in the Old Testament. Jehovah is translated as “The Existing One” or “Lord.” The chief meaning of Jehovah is derived from the Hebrew word Havah meaning “to be” or “to exist.” Shalom is probably the most popular Hebrew word because of its use as a common greeting. Shalom is translated as “peace” or “absence from strife.”

Jehovah Jireh: God our Provider (Genesis 22:14)

Occurs only once in the Old Testament. Jehovah-Jireh is a symbolic name given to Mount Moriah by Abraham to memorialize the intercession of God in the sacrifice of Isaac by providing a substitute for the imminent sacrifice of his son. Jehovah Jireh = “Jehovah will see (to it).”

Yahweh: God the Covenant Keeper (Exodus 3:14)

Variant spellings: YHWH, Jehovah. In the Old Testament Yahweh occurs 6,519 times and is translated as “The Existing One.” This name is used more than any other name of God. Yahweh is the promised name of God. This name of God which (by Jewish tradition) is too holy to voice, is actually spelled “YHWH” without vowels. YHWH is referred to as the Tetragrammaton (which simply means “the four letters”). While YHWH is first used in Genesis 2, God did not reveal Himself as YHWH until Exodus 3. The modern spelling as “Yahweh” includes vowels to assist in pronunciation. Many pronounce YHWH as “Yahweh” or “Jehovah.” We no longer know for certain the exact pronunciation. Yahweh is personal, present, and powerful.

El Shaddai: God The Almighty (Genesis 17:1)

Occurs 7 times in the Old Testament. The first part of this compound name El is the word for God and means “mighty and powerful.” There is some difference of opinion regarding the primary meaning of Shaddai. It is often translated as “Almighty” because it can stand for a mighty mountain. But the word also has a more tender definition. The root shad is connected to the nurturing relationship a mother has with her infant child and signifies one who “nourishes and satisfies.” When the two words are put together, El Shaddai means “One mighty to nourish and satisfy.”

Names of God

“What Do We Call Him?” Series

Jehovah Sabaoth: God of Power (LORD of Hosts) (1 Samuel 1:3)

It's used over 285 times, and at its root, refers to a captain or general who commands a mighty army. Some translations, including the King James version, translate this name as “LORD of Hosts,” while a couple of other translations use “LORD Almighty.” God is the king and commander over a spiritual army who has unlimited power, unbridled might and untarnished glory.

Jehovah Shammah: The God Who is There (Ezekiel 48:35)

Occurs only once in the Old Testament. Shammah is derived from the Hebrew word sham, which can be translated as “there.” The implication is that... “God is there, He is here, He is everywhere.” Nothing can separate us from God.

Jehovah Rapha: The God Who Heals (Exodus 15:26, Isaiah 53:4-5)

Occurs over 65 times. Rapha means “to restore,” “to heal” or “to make healthful” in Hebrew. When the two words are combined - Jehovah Rapha - it can be translated as “Jehovah Who Heals.” Jehovah is the Great Physician who heals the physical and emotional needs of His people.

Jehovah Nissi: God My Banner (Exodus 17:15)

Occurs only once in the Old Testament. Nes, from which Nissi derived, means “banner” in Hebrew. In Ex. 17:15, Moses, recognizing that the Lord was Israel's banner under which they defeated the Amalekites, builds an altar named Jehovah-Nissi (the Lord our Banner). Nes is sometimes translated as “a pole with an insignia attached.” In battle, opposing nations would fly their own flag on a pole at each of their respective front lines. This was to give their soldiers a feeling of hope and a focal point. This is what God is to us: a banner of encouragement to give us hope and a focal point. God's banner over His people is LOVE!

Abba: Father (Romans 8:15, Galatians 4:6)

“Abba” means “father” in Aramaic. Paul says the Aramaic word and then is interpreting the word right after. Because “abba” is believed to be a more common or intimate word that children used to address their fathers, some theologians have said that a better translation of abba for us today would be the word “daddy.” However, this is a leap. While this word may be a more intimate word than its Greek counterpart, it doesn't mean that it is something a small child would say in reference to his father (like daddy for papa). Abba shows us that we are supposed to have an intimate relationship with the Father as a son of God. Which means I can come boldly (crying out) before the throne of grace without fear or intimidation “because” of my position in the family. Only a son called his father abba. That's really different from what the Gentiles were used to before they were saved. They were always very separated from their gods. They were never a “son” of any god. Paul didn't just write to men, he wrote to everyone. Because Paul said, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female,” we are ALL first born sons of God. Our position and inheritance are all the same.