

Tsid'Ke-nu

I AM

El Shaddai

Jehovah-Shalom

El V'savak

Jehovah Rapha

Yahweh

LORD

El Elyon

YHWH-M'Kaddesh

God

Jehovah-Nissi

Jehovah-Jireh

LORD of Hosts

El Gibhor

Jehovah

Eloah

Elohim

Adonai

El Tzur

The God Behind the Names

The God Behind the Names

by Rev. Linda S. Smallwood (*Ret.*)

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Prologue

- ¹ Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.
- ² I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."

(Psalm 91:1-2)

In May 2006 God told me, "*Teach My name to the Church.*" I thought it was an odd request because at the time, I believed His name was Yahweh or Jehovah and that most Christians already knew those names, plus the compound names Yahweh-Jireh, El Elyon, El Shaddai, and a few others. I had no idea I was embarking on a journey of discovery that would take almost four years to research, write, edit, rewrite, and finally publish the first "*Name & Attributes of God*" online course of study in 2010.

I also had no idea that, rather than that marking the **end** of the journey, it was really only the **beginning**! I thought I had "arrived", that I had completed the work the LORD wanted me to do when, in fact, I had barely begun!

When I started reviewing and editing this in early 2017, I had no idea that I would uncover other information that would drastically challenge some impressions I had published previously.

Suddenly, the "teacher"—the one who deigned to believe she had uncovered and discovered all she needed to know about this knowable God's name and titles, or at least, as much as He wanted me to learn and share—had become the student again. As the LORD has continued to lead me from one source to another to reveal more of Himself to me, gradually my opinions about what I thought I knew before began to change. And the more I learned about Him, the more I learned about myself . . .

As my knowledge of Him has evolved through this latest revision, I've found myself more in awe of Him . . . more in love with Him . . . and actually wondering, if only for a moment, if I had possibly strayed from my first Love... Was that possible? Had I perhaps allowed the academic pursuit of Him to replace the intimate communion we had shared before?

I am so thankful that our loving Father led me down this path—again—of wondrous discovery! If I've learned nothing else from this second study, it's that the more I know, the more I realize how **little** I know and the more I **want** to know!

I have never been more passionate and jealous for Father's true name as I am today, and all I want is for all to know how passionately **He** longs to **be known** by us!





Introduction

Through the years, I have quite often heard educated and intelligent persons say, "Let me tell you how I discovered God."

Whether these discoverers went on from there to a humble and adoring worship of God I cannot say. I do know, however, that all of us would be in great trouble and still far from God if He had not graciously and in love **revealed Himself** to us.

~A. W. Tozer

The above quote by A. W. Tozer describes very well the purpose behind this study. Our most gracious GOD has lovingly and patiently revealed Himself to us by telling us His name and more than 75 titles that describe/define who He is and who He desires to be in our lives.

This book is not intended to simply enhance your **knowledge** about GOD. After all, if it were possible to grasp GOD—to understand who and what He is—by our intellectual capacities, then, as Tozer also said, would we not then be equal to GOD?

The fact is that GOD has not intended for us to know everything there is to know about Him in the names He's given us. No. He knows that our finite minds are thoroughly incapable of such awesome and delightful knowing. **That** will take all of eternity for us to grasp!

Mere human language—whether Hebrew, Greek, Latin, English, or whatever—falls far short in its attempts to define the One who created all things . . . who measures the Universe with the span of His hand and thrills at the dance of the tiny, multi-colored peacock spider . . . whose voice roars above the mighty waters and stills a storm to a whisper . . . who commands the planets and stars and watches over the sparrow and causes lilies to grow in the desert . . . How can a fallible, created being possibly comprehend and describe the **Uncreated** One who created it? As the Prophet Isaiah wrote: "Shall what is formed say to the one who formed it, 'You did not make me'? Can the pot say to the potter, 'You know nothing'?" (Isaiah 26:16)

Yet, language is all we have. And so, using the language of the ancient Hebrews, GOD has revealed Himself to us—as we can bear it—in a way in which His attributes may be seen and understood by us. In writing this study, I purpose to render a deeper understanding of the GOD behind some of the names He has used by which to know Him better—and thus, to know ourselves—that we might be drawn into a more intimate relationship with Him.

Anglicized names used in this study.

Besides being referred to as "LORD"/"Lord" and "GOD"/"God" in most English Bibles, some also call the Christian God "Jehovah" or "Yahweh". The last two derive from the Hebrew "יהוה" (Yod-Heh-Vav-Heh), which have usually been transliterated as "YHWH" or "YHVH".

Since...

- Almost everyone is familiar with the use of "LORD" in English Bibles for God's personal name;
- "YHWH" is a more familiar transliteration of the original Hebrew name; and



- most Bible scholars agree that "Yahweh" is a more likely accurate Anglicized interpretation of the Hebrew name...

I will use "LORD", "YHWH", or "Yahweh" throughout this study whenever referring to the distinctive personal name of God; and I will use "GOD" when referring to Him in general.

What is our purpose on this earth?

That is a very good question, one that practically everyone who's ever lived has asked at one time or another. "What is our purpose? Why am I here?"

The Westminster Catechism states that the purpose of man—the reason we were created—is *"to glorify God and enjoy Him forever."* GOD's Word affirms the first part of this very short answer to a very complicated question.

If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things **God may be praised** through Jesus Christ. To him be the **glory** and the **power** for ever and ever. Amen.
(1 Peter 4:11 *emphasis added*)

So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the **glory of God**.
(1 Corinthians 10:31 *emphasis added*)

In order to truly worship and glorify GOD as well as *"enjoy Him forever"*—not simply go through the repetitive motions of religious rituals—we must not only know **about** Him, but we must **know** Him personally.

How do you get to know the all-knowing, all-powerful, self-existent, Most High holy GOD **personally**? Certainly, the very thought of such an endeavor might cause us to cower and resist even the attempt. After all, the Bible says *"no one can see God and live"* (Exodus 33:20)! It also says we are *"only dust."* So, who are **we** to **dare** to approach this GOD who's described as a *"consuming fire"* (Deuteronomy 4:24)?

Those are all quite valid objections and sound reasons for keeping our distance from God and for allowing our Pastor, Priest, or Sunday School teacher to stand between and tell us what we need to know **about** Him. And we certainly wouldn't be the first to respond or react in such a manner. The Israelites refused to draw near to God, but insisted that Moses go for them.

On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, with a thick cloud over the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast. **Everyone** in the camp **trembled**.
(Exodus 19:16 *emphasis added*)

- ¹⁸ When the people saw the thunder and lightning and heard the trumpet and saw the mountain in smoke, they **trembled with fear**. They **stayed at a distance**
- ¹⁹ and said to Moses, "Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die."
- ²⁰ Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning."
- ²¹ The people **remained at a distance**, while Moses approached the thick darkness where God was.

(Exodus 20:18-21 *emphasis added*)



Nevertheless, God **invites** us to draw near to Him, to learn from Him, and to permit Him to take care of us.

"I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my **people**."
(Leviticus 26:12 *emphasis added*)

"I love those who love me, and those **who seek me find me**."
(Proverbs 8:17 *emphasis added*)

"**Turn to me** and be saved, all you ends of the earth;
for I am God, and there is no other."
(Isaiah 45:22 *emphasis added*)

"You will **seek me** and **find me** when you seek me with all your heart."
(Jeremiah 29:13 *emphasis added*)

This is what the LORD says to Israel: "**Seek me** and **live**;"
(Amos 5:4 *emphasis added*)

Really, if you think about it, the entire Bible is a collection of 66 invitations from the Almighty for us to learn from Him, draw near to Him, and to **know** Him.

So, how do you get to know the Most High GOD . . . **personally**? Quite simple. How do you get to know **anyone**? You ask their name, spend time with them, listen to stories about their life, learn their likes and dislikes, and maybe even find out their favorite color or favorite food.

The name and titles GOD has shared with us about Himself in the Bible impart to us revelations of His character, His works, His extravagant love, and His relationship to us. It's in the knowing and understanding of His **name** and characteristics that we gain greater insight, love, respect, and reverence for who He is and thus, get to know Him **personally**.

The Bible says, about the **name** of GOD...

Let them **praise** the **name** of the LORD, for his **name** alone
is **exalted**; his splendor is above the earth and the heavens.
(Psalm 148:13 *emphasis added*)

[the Apostle Peter, quoting the Prophet Joel]
"And everyone who calls on the **name** of the Lord will be saved."
(Acts 2:21 *emphasis added*)

"A rose by any other name..."

William Shakespeare wrote: "*What's in a name? A rose by any other name would smell as sweet.*" That's true . . . and some might argue the same can be said of GOD. What does it matter what name we call Him so long as **we** know who we're talking about?

My question, then, is this: What do you think of when you hear the word "rose"? Do you immediately think of an onion . . . or a cucumber . . . or a chicken? At the same time, when you think of an onion, do you envision a white or red flower comprised of multiple levels of soft petals with a sweet, almost intoxicating fragrance?

So then, while the rose, itself, may smell the same—regardless of the name—obviously, calling it an "onion" does not elicit the same emotion, memory, or mental picture as is



common with the rose. It doesn't create a desire within you to hold one, to breathe in its essence, or to give it to a loved one on a special occasion. One could argue, therefore, that the name "rose" is critical to our immediate and appropriate response.

I propose, with this study, that the same can be said of the names "God" or "Lord". During the transliteration processes, the names GOD gave us to understand His personality and desires have been reduced to "LORD" or "GOD" with no indication of what the original Hebrew names **mean**.

As we get to know the LORD by the Hebrew names He used to reveal everything He wants us to know about who He is – His identity, attributes, desires – then our emotional and intellectual responses will obviously be altered. He will no longer be an ethereal, dispassionate, and impersonal entity within the "higher power" concept, but a **knowable, approachable, and personal** friend.

Have we created God in our image?

Too often, we dismiss the idea of needing to know the name(s) and features the Almighty has shared with us about Himself. We are too easily content with worshiping Him by the titles "God" or "Lord"—perhaps because they require less devotion, less obedience, less trust. After all, ascribing to Him such lesser titles puts Him on par with the world's many false gods, thereby making it possible for Him to live up to a lesser standard—one that demands sacrifice but withholds blessing, that promises but disappoints, that holds out an olive branch but strikes with a rod. For it is in His falling short of all we desire Him to be—whether that desire is realistic or not—that we can then pull away from Him, disobey Him, and even denounce and abandon Him, to our own devices.

Then, of course, left to our own devices, we find ourselves more content with the creation rather than the Creator. We can own it, manipulate it, fashion and create it to gratify our carnal nature, and then destroy it or remake it when it fails to satisfy.

Ever since the Serpent first deceived the Woman and she convinced the Man to eat, humankind has favored and pursued the lie over the truth. For thousands of years, the enemy of our souls has succeeded quite handily at convincing us of GOD's malevolence toward us, of Him placing unreasonable demands and restrictions on us, and of the biggest lie of all: our ability to attain our own righteousness. "...you will be like God..." (Genesis 3:5)

We believed it then, and we continue to believe it now as we create and recreate GOD in our image. "God" becomes whatever we decide he, she, or it is. And, rather than believe what He has told us about Himself, we celebrate those megalomaniacs among us who deny reality in favor of their own idealistic opinions conceived, not for truth or excellence, but to reject accountability or for personal exaltation.

Why are we reluctant to know God better?

I am surprised at how many who claim to know Him resist the notion that there's more to know about the Almighty than the "GOD" or "LORD" preached from most of our pulpits. When I talk to other Christians about this, many seem offended and respond, "**I know Him!**" while going on to tell me when they were saved or that they've "*always been a Christian*."

Please understand, precious friend, I am not challenging whether you're saved or not, nor am I challenging your personal relationship with the LORD. No, no, no! What I **am** saying is that He is so much more than most of us think He is, that He must have a good reason for giving us **more than 75** names by which to know Him better, and that He cannot be contained or restrained by the human limitations we've placed on Him.



Think of it this way. Have you ever been "in love"? Well then, when you first started dating that person, were you content with only knowing their first name? Didn't you want to know their eye color and birthday? Didn't you want to hear about their birthplace, their childhood, other family members, and education? Didn't you also long to know their hopes and dreams, or their favorite color, food, or place to vacation/holiday? In other words, you wanted to know as much about them as they were willing to share.

Then, why would we not want to know the same about the Most High God? Why are we so reluctant to know Him as He **yearns** to be known by us? How can we **claim to love** Him and yet not desire to **know** Him more intimately? **What's stopping us?**

Pride? Undoubtedly. After all, to say that we want to know more about God so we can draw closer to Him means that maybe we're not as perfect Christians as we thought we were! Who wants to admit that they're not as "*tight with Jesus as Peter and John ever were!*"? It's a little laughable, I know, but if you think about it, it's unfortunately more true than we may want to admit.

Fear? I'm sure, but of what? Fear of **Him** . . . or of **ourselves** . . . ? We can't claim "fear of the unknown" because throughout Scripture He has strained to make Himself known to us and by us. Could it be fear that the better we come to know Him, the better we will come to know ourselves. So long as we can hold Him at arm's length—keep Him in the "church and devotions box" under the nightstand or on the tea table—we can deny our **need** for something or Someone greater than ourselves.

We're so good at wearing masks to keep others from seeing who we really are. We have our work masks, dating masks, shopping masks, and yes, even our church masks. And sadly, I would dare say we even have a mask we wear just for ourselves. We don't know how to live without them, how to take them off and peer into that dark glass to see what's beneath. We may not like what we see . . . It takes courage to say:

23 **Search me**, God, and know my heart; **test me** and know my anxious thoughts.

24 **See** if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

(Psalm 139:23-24 *emphasis added*)

On second thought, then . . . maybe we **can** claim "fear of the unknown." After all, knowing ourselves is a lifelong, albeit sometimes half-hearted, pursuit for most of us—one that even the most learned amongst us has difficulty mastering. It requires moving out of our comfort zone to a more vulnerable—or less defensible—emotional state where our inadequacies and fears, whether rational or irrational, are open to interrogation.

On the other hand, the eternally self-existent Creator and Sustainer of all that exists knows Himself full well. He has no emotional insecurities, no delusions, and no need for compulsive comparisons. As the One who possesses perfect power and knowledge, He has no reason to expose Himself to interrogation or inspection by **anyone**. And yet, He does . . .

While **we** hold **Him** at arm's length, He **invites** us to draw near and to interrogate and investigate every nook, cranny, and vestige of all that He is. He not only passionately **desires to be known** by us, but better yet, He is **knowable**! He has told us **who** He is, what He's **done**, and what He **wants to do** in the future. He has demonstrated time and again not only His **desire** to meet our every need, but His unlimited **capacity** to do so!

He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—
how will he not also, along with him, **graciously give** us **all** things?
(Romans 8:32 *emphasis added*)

Can anyone really "**know**" Almighty GOD?

So now, we come back to the question posed at the beginning of this section: How do we get to **know** this "knowable" God? It's simple, really. There's a story about a dispassionate young man who approached the Greek philosopher Socrates, seeking knowledge.

Puffed up with pride and false humility, the young man said, "*O, great Socrates, I come to you for knowledge.*"

The philosopher took the young man down to the sea, waded in with him, and then dunked him under the water for thirty seconds. When he let the young man up for air, Socrates asked him what he wanted. "*Knowledge, O great one,*" he responded.

Socrates put him under the water again, only this time a little longer. When he let the young man up for air, Socrates asked him again what he wanted, "*Knowledge!*" he sputtered, thinking to impress the philosopher.

He dunked the young man a third time, holding him under until he fought to come up for air. When he let him up the third time, Socrates asked him, "*What do you want?*"

"*Air!*" the young man gasped. "*I want air!*"

"*Good,*" answered Socrates. "*Now, when you want knowledge as much as you wanted air, you shall have it!*"

In much the same way as that young man was gasping for his very life's breath, if we truly want to know GOD in the way that He wants to be known by us, our souls must **hunger** for Him as much as our lungs hunger for the next breath. We must **thirst** for Him as we and all creatures thirst for water.

As the deer pants (longs, thirsts) for streams of water,
so my soul pants (longs, thirsts) for you, my God.
(Psalm 42:1 *parenthetical text added*)

Thankfully, when we finally renounce the lies and the liar, shed our pride, confront our fears, and open our hearts to draw near to the Lover of our souls, we find that it requires very little effort on our part. He **has done** and **will do** most of the work for us. We have only to ask, "*Open the eyes of our hearts*" to personally experience all of His power, glory, and majestic beauty.

¹⁸ I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the **hope** to which he has called you, the **riches** of his glorious inheritance in his holy people,

¹⁹ and his **incomparably great power** for us who believe...
(Ephesians 1:18-19a *emphasis added*)



Jesus prayed that we might know the Father's name!

When Jesus prayed with His disciples in the upper room "*on the night he was betrayed*" (1 Corinthians 11:23), He professed:

"I have revealed **Your name** to the men
whom You gave to Me out of the world. They were Yours,
and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. "

(John 17:6 MKJV *emphasis added*)

And before He departed the upper room to begin His journey to the Cross, He concluded His prayer:

"And I **made known** to them Your **name**,
and will make it known, so that the love *with which*
You have loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

(John 17:26 MKJV *emphasis added*)

According to John's gospel, these are the last words Jesus spoke before agonizing in the Garden to the point of sweating blood . . . before suffering through an all-night mockery of a trial . . . before having His flesh shredded at the scourging post, His beard ripped out, and thorns pressed into His scalp . . . before being nailed to a tree to suffocate to death . . .

If teaching **Father's name** to His disciples was **Jesus' foremost thought** only hours before coming face-to-face with the worst physical and emotional cruelty humankind and Satan could unleash, should we think it any small matter to the Almighty that **we** should also know His name?

Why isn't it enough to know the names I already know?

Don't misunderstand me here. I'm not talking about knowing the **words** "Jehovah" or "Yahweh". I'm not talking about knowing the names "El Shaddai", "Jehovah Jireh", "Yahweh Nissi", or any others you've learned in various lessons.

To "**know**" His name and various titles is to know **more** than the words. It's to know all that the names **embody**, all that they reveal to us about this extravagantly-loving, self-existent and eternal GOD who has patiently endured our prideful ambivalence. To "know his Name" is to know **Him**!

"I will walk among you and **be your God**, and you will **be my people**."

(Leviticus 26:12 *emphasis added*)

That's a plea from the heart of Almighty GOD that's been recorded at least six times in Scripture—the LORD God, reaching out, desiring only to **draw us** to Himself so He can take care of us. If we will simply take one step in His direction, He promises:

¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to **prosper** you and not to harm you, plans to **give** you **hope** and a **future**.

¹² Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and **I will listen** to you.

¹³ You will **seek me** and **find me** when you seek me with all your heart.

¹⁴ I **will be found by you**," declares the LORD

(Jeremiah 29:11-14a *emphasis added*)



Do you know Him well enough to fully trust Him in persecution?

The Apostles knew His name and they walked in **power** and **authority**, worked wondrous **miracles**, and turned their world upside-down! The early Christians in Jerusalem and throughout the Roman Empire knew His name, and they endured **horrendous trials** the likes of which cause us to turn away in horror when we hear of some of them.

Reports by first to third-century Christian and non-Christian historians—like Flavius Josephus, Eusebius Pamphili, Publius Cornelius Tacitus, and many others²—testify to the following persecutions of early Christians³:

Some were sewn into the skins of animals, and then ravaged and devoured by dogs, or they were suspended naked on a piece of wood fixed in the ground and dangled as food for wild beasts.

Others were covered with hot wax until it became hard, then fixed to axletrees, and set on fire to illuminate Nero's gardens, or they had boiled pitch poured upon their heads and were then burnt.

Many were crucified, crowned with thorns, and had spears run into their sides, in imitation of Christ's passion—most after witnessing their spouses and children crucified, as their assailants tried to persuade them to renounce Christ. The Apostle Peter was crucified upside-down after watching his wife suffocate to death on a cross!

The Apostle John was boiled in oil and, having miraculously survived, was later banished to the island Patmos off the coast of Greece.

Like the first martyr, Stephen, many were thrown into pits and pummeled with stones until their broken bodies succumbed to death.

They were scourged until their muscles, tendons and veins lay bare, were pressed to death with weights, had their brains dashed out with clubs, or were thrown from cliffs.

They were scorched on a gridiron, burnt with red-hot irons, torn with sharp hooks, laid naked upon live coals intermingled with glass, or were flayed alive and rubbed with salt until they expired.

Others were stretched upon a wheel by which all their bones were broken, or they were stretched upon a rack until all their joints were dislocated and their limbs separated from their bodies.

They were beaten with rods, de-nailed, scorched with lighted torches, and had their feet pierced with nails by which they were dragged through the streets before finally being beheaded.

They were pinched with fiery tongs, girded with burning plates, and bound hand-and-foot on a grated bed of iron to be roasted alive over a fire pit.

At Utica, 300 Christians were placed round a burning limekiln and were commanded either to sacrifice to Jupiter or to be thrown into the kiln. Unanimously refusing, they bravely jumped into the pit, and were immediately suffocated.



These brave persecuted men, women, and children behaved with such astonishing courage that many of their persecutors converted to Christianity out of their admiration for a faith that inspired such fortitude.

How did they endure such horrors? How **could** they? Just like Daniel in the lions' den (Daniel 6:16-27) and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego who were thrown into a blazing inferno (Daniel 3:13-28), they **knew the name** of the One in whom they had placed all their hopes and trust! When the Apostle Paul was under house arrest in Rome awaiting his execution, he wrote to Timothy:

That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet this is no cause for shame, because **I know whom I have believed**, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day.
(2 Timothy 1:12 *emphasis added*)

Could **you** remain faithful in the face of such terrors? Could **I**? Until and unless I face such a trial, I can't honestly answer that . . .

One thing I **am** sure about, however, is that the generic "God" preached from most of our pulpits or the dainty silver crosses we wear around our necks will likely **not** provide the calm assurance needed at such a moment.

It seems to me, therefore, that we would do well to **learn everything** we can possibly know about the "God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ", the One whose name Jesus taught to His disciples, the One called *God* or *Lord* or *Yahweh* or *Jehovah* or . . .

Conclusion

Thus, we come to the purpose of this book. I don't claim to know all there is to know about this subject or this most awesome, holy GOD. Certainly, whatever insight I've gained in studying the Almighty's name and attributes barely touches the surface of all there is to know about Him!

My hope is that I might awaken within your spirit a desire to know Him on a more personal level and whet your appetite to go deeper and higher with Him—far beyond what I present within these few pages.

The shepherd boy, David, knew the LORD so intimately that he was able to face the giant, Goliath, armed only with a few stones and the **name** of the LORD!

David said to the Philistine, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the **name** of the **LORD Almighty**, the **God of the armies** of Israel, whom you have defied."
(1 Samuel 17:45 *emphasis added*)

And years later, King David knew Him so well and was so passionate about his relationship with Him that he danced and celebrated the LORD in the streets!

- ¹⁴ Wearing a linen ephod, David was **dancing** before the LORD **with all his might**,
¹⁵ while he and all Israel were bringing up the ark of the LORD with shouts and the sound of trumpets.
(2 Samuel 6:14-15 *emphasis added*)



As a result of the researching, writing, editing and rewriting of this study, I have succumbed to the LORD's relentless love and He has answered the following prayer I've sung countless times in the past.

"Teach me to have a childlike heart
Free me to **be undignified**
Teach me to have a childlike heart
Free me to **dance all over my pride!**

"Gonna **dance like a child**
Sing like the Son
Abandon myself to the Holy One!"⁴

Like King David, I have reached a point where dancing undignified and abandoning myself to the Holy One is as natural a response to His love as is taking my next breath! I pray that you, too, would reach a point where you would **hunger** to learn more about Him as revealed in His names . . . continue to **draw closer** to Him through those revelations . . . open yourself to **receive** from Him the healing and peace He desires to bestow . . . and abandon yourself to give Him all the **glory due His name!**

- ¹ Ascribe to the LORD, you heavenly beings, ascribe to the LORD **glory** and **strength**.
- ² Ascribe to the LORD the **glory due his name**; worship the LORD in the **splendor** of his **holiness**.
(Psalm 29:1-2 *emphasis added*)

-
- ¹ Known as the "Tetragrammaton" (Greek for "word of four letters") by Bible scholars and linguists, God's name is comprised of four Hebrew letters: י (Yod or Yud) ה (Heh) ו (Vav) ה (Heh) or, reading right-to-left, יהוה (Yod-Heh-Vav-Heh).
 - ² Wikipedia, *Historiography of Early Christianity*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historiography_of_early_Christianity, np, 10/01/18.
 - ³ Sources include:
Wikipedia, *Persecution of Christians*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persecution_of_Christians. np, 10/01/18.
Bible Study Tools, *Fox's Book of Martyrs*, <https://www.biblestudytools.com/history/foxs-book-of-martyrs/>. np, 10/01/18.
Wikipedia, *Rack (torture)*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rack_\(torture\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rack_(torture)). np, 10/01/18.
 - ⁴ *Undignified*, by Darrell Evans. Copyright © 1999 Integrity's Hosanna! Music.

This work is intended for devotional purposes only and does not insist on the use of certain names of GOD as a point of doctrine or fidelity to Scripture.



Maybe the question isn't "*who*", but "*why*"!

When I first began writing this study in 2006, I asked and I've heard others ask, "**Who** changed God's name?" I've come to realize, however, that no one changed His name, *per sé*. We simply stopped using it, stopped proclaiming it, and stopped acknowledging that YHWH, the God of Israel, was/is any different from any of the thousands of other "gods".

That disturbed me. Then, as I poured over several books and websites about the names of God, I noticed something that disturbed me even more. It seems that no one's asking, "**Why** don't we use God's name?" After all, if knowing His name(s) is important enough for hundreds of books and websites to be published on the subject, why haven't we been using, or at least teaching, His name(s) all along—especially since the birth of the Church?

Why do we stubbornly persist in using such inferior titles as "God" and "Lord" when we know those aren't His name? And, why isn't anyone else asking...

Why did we stop using GOD's name?

If you ask Jews why they don't use God's name, the first thing you'll find is that most, if not all, of them use "G-d" when writing about Him and say, "*Hashem*" (meaning "*the name*") when talking about Him. As for the answer, itself, while there seem to be many, they really are all variations of the same answer: **reverence**.

Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain:
or the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.
(Deuteronomy 5:11 KJV)

I suppose we can all **claim** "reverence" when it comes to not using GOD's proper name, but for Jews it really **is**. Although they've substituted "Adonai" for the original name ("יהוה"), they believe they're breaking the above commandment if they even use the name "Adonai" in any context outside of worship, praise, or prayer. Many are so strict in their observance of this teaching that, if they do happen to say the name "Adonai", they immediately follow it with statements such as: "*Bless His holy name,*" or "*His name be praised forever!*"

I believe it's more about **unbelief** than reverence!

That's a bold statement to make, I know, and one that might evoke much negative emotion among fellow believers. Nevertheless, all of the proofs about YHWH's earnest desire for everyone to know His name begs the question, "Where did we get the idea that we should **not** use it?"

After much prayerful contemplation, I wonder if it might be that we became more aware of our own unworthiness than about **His** unlimited capacity to love and graciously forgive us.

Although Israel has been chosen by YHWH, they have a long and very sad history of not believing Him, of not trusting Him to be everything He told them He wanted to be to them.

- They wandered in the desert for 40 years because of **unbelief**.
- Their **unbelief** prompted them to repeatedly seek out other gods of stone, clay, and wood that they could see and touch.



- **Unbelief** in YHWH's faithfulness compelled them to insist on an earthly king like the other nations had.
- And, **unbelief** prevented them from seeing their promised Messiah in their midst because He didn't look and act the way they expected Him to!

While the Jews look(ed) forward to the Messiah's coming and believ(ed), at least in part, in the promise of His far-reaching redemption, perhaps they didn't believe . . . **enough**. Those who did are the ones whose testimonies we remember: Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (Israel), Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Rahab, Caleb, Gideon, Deborah, Samson, Esther, Samuel, David, and all the prophets. As the writer of Hebrews added:

- 32 And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah, about David and Samuel and the prophets,
 33 who **through faith** conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions,
 34 quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies.
 35 Women received back their dead, raised to life again. There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection.
 36 Some faced jeers and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment.
 37 They were put to death by stoning; they were sawed in two; they were killed by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated--
 38 the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and in holes in the ground.
 39 These were all commended for their **faith**, yet none of them received what had been promised,
 40 since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.

(Hebrews 11:32-40 *emphasis added*)

YHWH didn't require—or even ask for—perfection from Israel. He knew that was impossible apart from Him. His Word tells us what He required.

My **sacrifice**, O God, is a **broken spirit**; a broken and **contrite heart** you, God, will not despise.
 (Psalm 51:17 *emphasis added*)

For this is what the high and exalted One says—he who lives forever, whose **name is holy**: "**I live** in a high and holy place, but also **with** the one who is **contrite** and **lowly in spirit**, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite."
 (Isaiah 57:15 *emphasis added*)

"Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?" declares the LORD. "These are the ones I **look** on with **favor**: those who are **humble** and **contrite in spirit**, and who tremble at my word."
 (Isaiah 66:2 *emphasis added*)



Contrite means "to feel or express pain or sorrow for sins or offences; remorseful." Notice the above verses tell us that YHWH **favors** and **resides with** those who are humble ("lowly in spirit") and remorseful ("broken spirit"). Remember, too, that He **chose Israel** for His **name to dwell**, not because they were great—and certainly not because they were perfect, as their history clearly indicates—but because He **loved them** and **wanted to**.

The evidence of YHWH's extravagant and unreasonable love, His faithfulness to His promises, and His faithfulness toward His chosen people—even toward David, an adulterous murderer—is overwhelming and indisputable. With all this evidence and almost 200 references to His desire to have His name known, **unbelief** appears to be a more than plausible explanation for them being afraid to use His name.

What's our excuse as Christians?

Almost 2000 years ago on Calvary, Jesus Christ uttered, **"It is finished!"** In the original Greek—the language in which the New Testament was written—this word was *tetelestai*, an accounting term that means "*paid in full*." Jesus had accomplished what He had come to do. He came to pay the debt once and for all time that had accumulated against us because of sin.

We know, too, that making Father's name known was foremost on His mind only hours before going to the Cross.

So, what's **our** excuse for stubbornly continuing to reduce Him to "God" or "Lord"? Why have we permitted Israel's unbelief to infiltrate the Church and shape our doctrines?

- True, we are commanded to not use His name in vain. However, since GOD's Word tells us many times to "call upon His **name**," "let His **name** be exalted," and "praise His holy **name**," then obviously He approves of us using it in a moment of prayerful meditation or exuberant praise.
- True, we are commanded to not **profane** His name among us. But, have we really considered just **how** we might "profane" His name? If using it in a moment of praise is not profaning His name, could it be instead by how we **live** our lives before a watching world? What happens if it's discovered that someone who claims the name of Christ filed a false expense report, lied on a job application, or took something that didn't belong to them? Would we not be profaning YHWH's name whenever we do something that prompts an unbeliever to sneer about us, "And s/he **claims to be a Christian**"?

Based on the foregoing, it would appear that profaning His name or using His name in vain is **not** about **speaking** His name, but about how we **live it**! He has lovingly **placed His name on us**; it's up to us to **live in it**.

Christianity's unique claim that sets it apart from all other world religions is that Christ's death on Calvary 2000 years ago **fully paid** our **sin debt**. Christianity says we can't and don't have to do anything to save ourselves, but have been made **righteous by His blood** (Ephesians 2:8, 2 Timothy 1:9), that we are **adopted** into YHWH's family (Romans 8:23), and are **joint heirs** with Jesus Christ (Romans 8:17, Ephesians 3:6).

Logically, then, Christ's sacrifice makes us **holy** and **acceptable vessels** for YHWH's **name to inhabit**.

Therefore, I suggest, once again, that the most logical explanation for clinging to a defense so weak as "reverencing" His holy name is **unbelief**. We know He is an all-loving, merciful GOD! We know He forgives our sins when we come to Him in repentance and humility. What we may not be sure of is if we're "contrite **enough**" to qualify for His forgiveness. What about



those sins that we keep committing and keep confessing? Surely, there must be a limit to how often He will forgive **those**!

Jesus told Peter that he must forgive "**seventy times seventy**." That's **490 times**. And that's for the **same** offense, not different ones. Of course, we know that was merely Jesus' way of demonstrating that there's no limit to the number of times we should forgive because there's no limit to the number of times YHWH forgives us.

So then . . . if we still believe we're **unworthy** to use YHWH's name . . . if we still think we are reverencing the Most High GOD when we persist in calling Him the same name as all the gods who are **not** "GOD" . . . if we still **question** what the Bible says YHWH wants in favor of our own church traditions and training . . . the only logical conclusion is **unbelief**!

And interestingly, **that** would disqualify us and make us unfit to speak His name!

And **without faith** it is impossible to please God,
because anyone who comes to him must believe that
he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.
(Hebrews 11:6 *emphasis added*)

Can we truly love and worship a GOD we don't trust?

That may be the most absurd question I've ever asked! Of course we can't! **Worship**—true worship "in spirit and in truth"—is grounded in **love**. And **love**—true love—requires **trust**.

- Do you trust His abounding love enough to place all your hopes and fears in His hands, trusting Him, and Him alone, for the consequences?
- Do you trust His inexplicable grace enough to let Him make you worthy instead of you working for your own righteousness?
- Do you trust His unwavering evidentiary promises concerning that abounding love and inexplicable grace?

If you do—if you **really** do—then speaking His name in worship and in prayer should be as natural as drawing your next breath. If you do—if you **really** do—then praising Him, by name, should be as instinctual as boasting about your child's outstanding school record!

It's obvious that YHWH, our Most High GOD, cares deeply about how, when, where, and why His name is used. As Christians, shouldn't **we** care just as much as He does about honoring and proclaiming His name before a watching world...?

Is GOD's actual name really **that** important?

A name is more than just a label; it is an **identity**. When people think of your specific name, they get a mental picture of you (of your face, your eyes, your smile) and of your attributes. What do I mean by "attributes"? I mean those characteristics, mannerisms, and habits that distinguish you from others—whether you're kind or hateful, generous or stingy, encouraging or discouraging, arrogant or humble, strong or weak, able-bodied or disabled. They might also include your vocation or hobby, such as loving to cook, or being a carpenter or welder, a loving mom, a singer or student or athlete.

In the Bible, a name is more than a means of identifying oneself. It is the distinct personality of a persisting entity—an exactness—that tells us everything we need to know about that person. For example...



- The name Jacob means "*overthrower*" or "*deceiver*". "Esau said, 'Isn't he rightly named Jacob? This is the second time he has taken advantage of me:'" (Genesis 27:36a)
- Later, God changed Jacob's name to Israel, which means "*princely contender with God*" or "*God fought for*". Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome." (Genesis 32:28)
- The name Nabal means "*fool*". "Please pay no attention, my lord, to that wicked man Nabal. He is just like his name—his name means Fool, and folly goes with him." (1 Samuel 25:25a)
- And, let's not forget about the man Jabez whose name means "*pain*" or "*sorrowful*". "Jabez was more honorable than his brothers. His mother had named him Jabez, saying, 'I gave birth to him in pain.'" (1 Chronicles 4:9)

The Bible makes it clear that names are important to a person's identity; they represent that person's authority and all that they stand for. Should we think it would be any less so when the Almighty reveals **His** personal name and attributes to us?

The Messiah has a name.

- **Hebrew:** יהוה (pronounced "Yeh-hah shoo'ah" or "Yeh-shoo'ah") meaning "YHWH (יהוה) is Your Salvation"
Although this was His Hebrew name, it was not the name by which He was known when He walked on earth, as it was not the "common" language of the day.
- **Aramaic:** ܝܫܘܥ [Yêšû] (pronounced "Yá-soo")
Aramaic was the language spoken and understood by most of the people of that region at the time, so this was the name by which most people knew Him.
- **Greek:** Ἰησοῦς (pronounced "Há-soos")
The New Testament writers wrote the Gospels and Epistles in Koine Greek because it was the official business language of the Roman Empire at that time. Thus, this is the name they used when writing about Jesus. Contrary to the assertions of the "Sacred Name Movement" (of which I am **not** a part), this form of the name is not of pagan origin nor does it have any connection to the Greek god Zeus. It was/is as accurate a transliteration of the Hebrew/ Aramaic name as is linguistically possible.
- **Latin/English:** Jesus (pronounced "Há-soos" in Latin and "Jee-zus" in English).
Again, the Latin rendering was/is as accurate a transliteration from Hebrew/Aramaic to Greek to Latin as is linguistically possible.

You and I have distinctive names and attributes.

We each have an official birth (or baptismal) name. When combined with our middle name and surname (usually paternal, sometimes also maternal), it becomes the distinctive name that identifies us. That name represents our family's and our own reputation, lineage, and history.

So, also, the GOD of the Bible has revealed Himself by a distinctive name. Obviously, the name and titles GOD uses for Himself in the Bible reveal His characteristics—**who** He is, **what** He is, what He **does**, what He **can do**, and who or what He **wants to be** in our lives,

both individually and collectively. When the Bible uses the phrase "the **name** of God" or "in the **name** of the Lord", it refers to His **total** person—all that He is.

LORD, our Lord, how **majestic** is your **name**
in all the earth! You have set your glory in the heavens.
(Psalm 8:1 *emphasis added*)

I believe a blessing is lost when we allow a **title** ("God" or "Lord") to replace the **actual name** of the GOD of the Bible.

So, should I start calling Him something other than "God"?

Does this mean we should only use GOD's precise name(s) that He revealed to us in the Bible when we pray to Him or talk about Him? No, I don't think so. Or at least, that's not the point I'm trying to make here.

The point of this book is not to destroy long-established church doctrine or traditions. It isn't to persuade you or "guilt" you into adopting a new custom in your prayers and worship.

My objective is the same as His was when He first started expressing Himself to us in all His varied, and yet seemingly contradictory, aspects. Through His names, we learn that He is both simple and complex . . . He is all-powerful and yet capable of being wounded or hurt . . . He can beautifully create and utterly destroy . . . He is both the shepherd and the Lamb . . . He shows no favoritism but strongly desires intimacy . . . He is incomprehensible (beyond understanding) and yet **knowable**!

I don't believe He told Moses His name and revealed His many attributes through diverse titles just so we would **address** Him by those names. Rather, He revealed His name and characteristics to us to help us know Him better, to learn to trust Him, and to draw near to Him.

As you learn about His name and characteristics, consider inserting His original names in place of the Anglicized words during your personal Bible study and devotions. This will not only improve your understanding of Him, but will aid you in gaining greater insight into the full intent(s) of the passage(s). Gradually, He will become bigger . . . more majestic . . . more holy . . . more able to meet every one of your deepest needs . . . and more worthy of your heartfelt devotion and worship.

"Hallowed be Thy name..."?

"Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name..." (Matthew 6:9 KJV) What does that mean? It doesn't mean we should reverence the **words** "God" or "Lord". Rather, it's about the **name** behind the words "God" and "Lord" . . . and about the **GOD** behind those names. The better you know Him by the name and attributes He's revealed to us, then whatever name or title you use will take on a much more significant meaning.

Then, you'll know—and **He** will know—regardless of the name/title you use, that you're talking about/to **the** GOD who is worthy of all **praise, glory, honor, and power** and whose **name** is **awesome** and **glorious**!

Stand up and **praise** the **LORD** your **God**, who is from everlasting to everlasting.
Blessed be your **glorious name**, and may it be **exalted** above all blessing and praise.
(Nehemiah 9:5b *emphasis added*)



"You are **worthy**, our Lord and God, to receive **glory** and **honor** and **power**, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."
(Revelation 4:11 *emphasis added*)

Meditation

What does GOD think about you?

The Most High GOD does not **need** us in order to be fulfilled. He doesn't need our approval or anything else outside of Himself to fulfill Him or give His life purpose. GOD's glory is intrinsic and as essential to His Being as light and heat are to the sun. His glory is infinite, which means no one can add to it or subtract from it. It is the only part of Himself which He will not part with or share (Isaiah 48:11).

All of His thoughts and feelings toward us are rooted in His holy nature and are always expressed perfectly. His love, joy, sorrow, and peace are undivided, uncreated, unaffected, and unaltered by anything outside of Himself. He never has a bad day, but all of His emotions are perfect expressions of His perfect Being.

He is the eternal, self-existent, thrice-holy GOD who shines brighter than the noonday sun and who, as Pastor John Piper said, simply "*delights in being God*."¹ He is the full expression of **love** and of **life**!

He craves a relationship with us, not to meet **His** needs, but to lavish His unquenchable love on us and meet **our needs** simply because He delights in the objects of His love!

...as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride,
so will your God **rejoice over you**.
(Isaiah 62:5b *emphasis added*)

He brought me out into a spacious place;
he rescued me **because he delighted** in me.
(Psalm 18:19 *emphasis added*)

In other words, GOD didn't save you or me because of our decency, good works, good attitude, or whatever you and I might think makes us desirable. Rather, He saved us to bring glory to Himself, to appease His justice, and to demonstrate His sovereignty. But mostly, He saved you and me simply because He loves us!

Yet the LORD **longs to be gracious** to you;
therefore he will rise up to show you compassion.
For the LORD is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him!
(Isaiah 30:18 *emphasis added*)

As I heard one pastor say one time, if GOD had a refrigerator, your picture would be on it. If He had a wallet, your photo would be in it. He doesn't say, "I love you *if*" or "I love you *because*." He says, "I love you—period!" In Deuteronomy 7:6 He calls you His "**treasured possession**," and Psalm 17:8



says you are "the **apple** of His eye!" Whenever you want to talk, He listens. He can live anywhere in the universe, and He **chose your heart!**

- 17 How precious to me are your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them!
18 Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand--when I awake, I am still with you.
(Psalm 139:17-18)

"I have loved you with an **everlasting love**;
I have drawn you with **unfailing kindness**."
(Jeremiah 31:3b *emphasis added*)

You can't make GOD stop loving you because His love is not based on what you do, but on **who He is**.

- 35 **Who shall separate** us from the **love of Christ**? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?
38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, **nor any** powers,
39 neither height nor depth, **nor anything else** in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
(Romans 8:35, 38-39 *emphasis added*)

"Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my **unfailing love** for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed," says the LORD, who has compassion on you.
(Isaiah 54:10 *emphasis added*)

Who is He to you?

Is He El Elyon, GOD Most High . . . is He YHWH Jireh, the Lord Will Provide . . . YHWH Rohi, your Shepherd . . . YHWH Rapha, your Healer . . . YHWH Tsid'ke-nu, your Righteousness?

"The one who is victorious will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out the **name** of that person from the book of life, but will **acknowledge that name** before my Father and his angels."
(Revelation 3:5 *emphasis added*)

GOD knows each of us by name. If Christ is going to acknowledge our names before the Father, **shouldn't we know His name too...?**

¹ Piper, John. *The Pleasures of God – God's Delight in Being God*, © 1991, 2000 by Desiring God Foundation.

This work is intended for devotional purposes only and does not insist on the use of certain names of GOD as a point of doctrine or fidelity to Scripture.



God's *name* is "glorious" & "awesome"!

We often talk about the **LORD** being glorious and awesome. And certainly, no one would dispute that. But the Bible also tells us that His "**name**" is glorious and awesome!

...revere this **glorious** and **awesome name**—
the LORD your God
(Deuteronomy 28:58b *emphasis added*)

In the priestly command called "Aaron's Blessing", GOD actually **put His name** on the children of Israel to bless them.

- 23 "Tell Aaron and his sons, 'This is how you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them:
24 ""The LORD **bless** you and **keep** you;
25 the LORD make his face **shine** on you and be **gracious** to you;
26 the LORD turn his face toward you and give you **peace**."
27 "So they will put **my name on** the **Israelites**, and I will **bless** them."
(Numbers 6:23-27 *emphasis added*)

GOD didn't do this because Israel was **worthy**. He chose Israel solely because He wanted to restore the relationship between Himself and His creation through Abraham's Seed (Y'shua)—just as He had promised in Eden and had sworn to Abraham hundreds of years earlier.

- 7 The LORD did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples.
8 But it was because the LORD **loved** you and **kept the oath** he swore to your ancestors that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt.
9 Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the **faithful God, keeping** his **covenant of love** to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commandments.
(Deuteronomy 7:7-9 *emphasis added*)

Putting His own distinctive name on them was the same as an adoptive parent giving their surname to their adopted child. It was an unprecedented demonstration of His **outrageous love** and **utter pleasure** in them! His name was also a **guarantee** of His constant **provision** and **protection** and that they possessed all the rights of **sonship**.

Wherever I cause my **name** to be honored,
I will **come** to you and **bless** you.
(Exodus 20:24b *emphasis added*)

And now . . . because of what Christ accomplished on Calvary in giving Himself as payment for our sins, GOD's Word says that **we** are also adopted into that same heritage of **love, care, authority, and protection**!

...the Spirit you received brought about your **adoption**
to sonship. And by him we cry, "**Abba, Father**."
(Romans 8:15b *emphasis added*)



The Bible references the *use* of GOD's "*name*" more than 170 times!

During the course of this study, I became aware of phrases referencing, not only GOD's actual name, but the *use* of His name. I discovered that He's not only zealous about us *knowing* His name and making His name known; He also cares very deeply about *how, where, why*, and *in whom* His name is used!

- At least 16 times, He says that His reason for doing certain things is so people will "know [His] *name*," "fear [His] *name*," or that His name will be "declared."
- More than 50 times YHWH refers to a place for His "name to dwell" or His name being in a person or place.
- At least 19 times YHWH says He does certain things for His *name's sake*.
- More than 30 times He says, not only that He is holy, but that His *name* is holy and worthy of glory.
- At least 58 times GOD's Word uses phrases such as "*My name*" and "*Your name*," indicating that He wants everyone to *know* His *name*.

God also said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'The LORD, the 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*, the *name* you shall *call me* from generation to generation."
(Exodus 3:15 *emphasis added*)

But I have raised you up for this very purpose,
that I might show you my power and that
my name might be *proclaimed* in all the earth.
(Exodus 9:16 *emphasis added*)

Then to the place the LORD your God will choose as a *dwelling*
for *his Name*—there you are to bring everything I command you:
your burnt offerings and sacrifices, your tithes and special gifts,
and all the choice possessions you have vowed to the LORD.
(Deuteronomy 12:11 *emphasis added*)

For the *sake of his great name* the LORD will not reject
his people, because the LORD was pleased to make you his own.
(1 Samuel 12:22 *emphasis added*)

Those who *know your name* trust in you, for you,
LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you.
(Psalm 9:10 *emphasis added*)

But you, Sovereign LORD, help me *for your name's sake*;
out of the goodness of your love, deliver me.
(Psalm 102:21 *emphasis added*)

In that day you will say: "Give praise to the LORD, *proclaim* his
name; make known among the nations what he has done,
and *proclaim* that his *name* is *exalted*."
(Isaiah 12:4 *emphasis added*)



"Therefore my people will **know my name**; therefore in that day they will know that it is I who foretold it. Yes, it is I."
(Isaiah 52:6 *emphasis added*)

In particular, YHWH cares about His **reputation**, about His name being **profaned** among those of us who claim to belong to Him.

"Tell Aaron and his sons to treat with respect the sacred offerings the Israelites consecrate to me, so they will **not profane my holy name**. I am the LORD.
(Leviticus 22:2 *emphasis added*)

"**Do not profane** my **holy name**, for I must be acknowledged as **holy** by the Israelites. I am the LORD, who made you holy"
(Leviticus 22:32 *emphasis added*)

19 "I myself will call to account anyone who does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks **in my name**.

20 But a prophet who presumes to speak **in my name** anything I have not commanded, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, is to be put to death."

(Deuteronomy 18:19-20 *emphasis added*)

10 "and then come and stand before me in this house, which **bears my Name**, and say, 'We are safe'—safe to do all these detestable things?

11 Has this house, which **bears my Name**, become a den of robbers to you? But I have been watching!" declares the LORD.

12 "Go now to the place in Shiloh where I first made a **dwelling for my Name**, and see what I did to it because of the wickedness of my people Israel.

13 While you were doing all these things," declares the LORD, "I spoke to you again and again, but you did not listen; I called you, but you did not answer.

14 Therefore, what I did to Shiloh I will now do to the house that **bears my Name**, the temple you trust in, the place I gave to you and your ancestors."

(Jeremiah 7:10-14 *emphasis added*)

Notice in the above verses from Jeremiah how angry GOD becomes about the corrupt activities of those who represent His **name**! He was saying that because of their iniquities, He was going to deal with them in the same way as He had dealt with Shiloh. Although the ark had been at Shiloh, the LORD made it a victim of His wrath (Psalm 78:58-64). Now He was going to do the same to Jerusalem and her temple. He had commanded them to **not profane** His **name** and yet, by their evil deeds, that's exactly what they had done!

A few of the other verses referencing the **use** of YHWH's name include: Exodus 6:3, 27, 3:21; Leviticus 19:12, 20:3, 22:32; Numbers 1:9, 6:27; Deuteronomy 14:23, 16:2-11, 26:2; 2 Samuel 7:13, 26, 20:8-9, 22:50; 1 Kings 5:5, 8:16-19, 33-48, 21:4-7, 23:27; 1 Chronicles 22:8-10; 2 Chronicles 6:5-10, 20-38, 7:14-20, 33:4-7; Ezra 6:12; Nehemiah 1:9-11; Isaiah 29:23, 48:9-11, 52:5-6; Jeremiah 14:7-9, 14-15, 23:25-27, 29: 21-23; 34:15-16; Ezekiel 20:9-44, 36:20-23, 43:7-8; Daniel 9:18-19; Amos 2:7, 9:12; Zechariah 5:4, 13:9; Malachi 1:6-14, 2:2-5.



Obviously, YHWH is really passionate about us knowing His **name** and making His **name** known. He's even more passionate about blessing those in whom His **name dwells** and He's jealous about how we represent His name to a watching world!

Why did YHWH tell us His name and unique characteristics?

His purpose in revealing His distinctive name and ±75 other names and titles was so that we might **know** Him better, **draw near** to Him, and **receive** from Him all that He desires to lavish on us.

Unlike all the other gods of the nations, the GOD of the Bible is the **only** One who demands **nothing** from us in order to pursue a relationship with Him. Even under the Old Covenantal blood-sacrifice system, GOD didn't command the sacrifices to indulge some unquenchable thirst for blood. Rather, He required the sacrifices...

- to help us understand that sin is such a grievous matter that He cannot simply disregard it, but that atonement must be made for it;
- so we would accredit to Him absolute, uncompromising holiness, morality, and perfection; and
- to then **make a way** for Him to draw near to us without discrediting His holiness.

And, under the **New** Covenant, GOD provided the perfect, once-for-all-time sacrifice in the Person of Y'shua haMashiach (Jesus the Christ). In the most dramatic and outrageous expression of His abounding love for us, the Almighty paid the ultimate price required for our detestable sin. The Lawgiver and Judge—who determined the requirements for His blessings as well as the necessary consequence or punishment for our disobedience—stepped down from the throne and **paid our debt** for us! He **permanently destroyed** the veil that separated us from Him (Matthew 27:51).

No other god throughout all of man's history has ever done that! That's because no other god throughout history **could** do that...!

That's why He wants us to know His name!

We didn't decide what name to call the GOD of the Bible. Jehovah's Witnesses didn't decide what His name should be. No! **YHWH** told us His name . . . **HE** determined which Hebrew words best describe His nature . . . and then, **HE** disclosed His personal name and various attributes to us!

He did this to distinguish Himself from all the other "gods" because **none** of His distinctive attributes can be ascribed to **any other** being—including the cuddly and convenient "gods" of today's megalomaniac gurus!

Translating YHWH's name into lesser words like "God" and "Lord" entirely eclipses His **unparalleled beauty, power, authority, and love**. As Dr. Adam Clarke wrote in his *Commentary on Genesis*:

"Jehovah is translated into English by two words, LORD and GOD. In both of these words the centralising identity of the supreme Creator is lost, for they are used indiscriminately of the deities of the heathen and the God of the Christians; it would be far better if in the authorised Version of the Scriptures this 'name of God' had been transferred untranslated. 'Shaddai' is invariably translated 'Almighty,' in which word again the identity is lost;



for the word 'Almighty' is merely a word in common usage as a name of God, and for the designation of the ordinary powers of the universe."¹

Meditation

Let's look at a simple comparison between YHWH and the other so-called "gods" of the world.

All other "gods" require strict adherence to a list of rules, ritualistic observances, and prescribed payments and penalties (even blood sacrifices as continue to this day in Muslim countries, Israel, and in Hinduism).

YHWH asks only that you "act **justly** and love **mercy** and to **walk humbly** with your God." (Micah 6:8)

All other "gods" say if you work really hard and if your good deeds outweigh the bad, then **maybe** you'll be saved; but you never know if/when you've done enough.

YHWH says "**no one** will be declared **righteous** by the works of the law, but that through the law we **become conscious** of our sin" (Romans 3:20); and "what the law was powerless to do . . . **God did** by **sending his own Son** . . . to be a sin offering" (Romans 8:3).

All other "gods" heap guilt and shame upon you for your mistakes and allow you to carry that burden for the rest of your life.

YHWH **invites** "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavily burdened, and I will **give you rest**" (Matthew 11:28); and promises "He is faithful and just to **forgive** your sins..." (1 John 1:9)

All other "gods" promise nothing, but say **you** are responsible for your own safety, provision, and wellbeing.

YHWH promises to "**never leave you nor forsake you**" (Joshua 1:5); to "**meet all your needs**" (Philippians 4:19), "**forgive all your sins and heal all your diseases, redeem your life from the pit, crown you with love and compassion, and to satisfy your desires with good things...**" (Psalm 103:3-5)

Considering the differences between YHWH and all the pagan gods, I believe we would all agree that He **deserves** to be praised.

Only YHWH is the *Creator* and *Sustainer* of all that exists . . . **only YHWH** is *thrice glorious* in holiness . . . **only YHWH** is absolutely *just* while also being overwhelmingly *merciful* . . . **only YHWH** is both *Judge* **and** *Redeemer*!

Only YHWH is fully **worthy** of our love . . . **worthy** of our devotion . . . **worthy** of our praise . . . **worthy** of our **adoration**!

Oh, precious brother and sister! Draw near and know this most **glorious** and **awesome name**! And in the knowing, know His **heart** . . . know His **plans** for you . . . know **HIM**!

"To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb
be **praise** and **honor** and **glory** and **power**, for ever and ever!"
(Revelation 5:13b *emphasis added*)

¹ Clarke, Dr. Adam (1762-1832). *The Adam Clarke Commentary*, Genesis 1, Verse 1. Public Domain.

This work is intended for devotional purposes only
and does not insist on the use of certain names of
GOD as a point of doctrine or fidelity to Scripture.



YHWH / Yehovah / Yah

יהוה / יהוה / יה

Most books about the names of God start their name study with "Elohim" as it's the first name of God that appears in the Bible (Genesis 1:1). And certainly, there is much to be learned about the Most High from this name. However, I have chosen to begin with the name that is **the** name of God and the one that appears most often throughout Scripture.

What is God's personal name?

The Bible reveals to us approximately 75 different names that tell us who God is. Of these, only one is His distinctive, personal **name**. The others are actually titles or designations disclosing all that He is and desires to be in His personal interactions with us.

For example, my **name** is Linda, but I am also known as or called "Aunty", "Mom", "Mama", "Sister", "Teacher", and "Pastor" by different people, depending on the level of our relationship. While all are valid "names" by which people know me, they are not my actual name. They are titles or "attributes" that give some insight into who I am in relationship to that person.

And so it is with the GOD of the Bible. Known as the "Tetragrammaton" by Bible scholars and linguists, GOD's name is comprised of four Hebrew letters: י (Yod or Yud) ה (Heh) ו (Vav) ה (Heh); or reading right-to-left, י ה ו ה (Yod-Heh-Vav-Heh). This name is usually transliterated as "YHWH", "JHVH", or "YHVH" (written in all uppercase as "LORD"/"LORD" or "GOD"/"GOD" in most English Bibles), variations of which have been further interpreted by the names "Yahweh" and "Jehovah".

Regardless of which transliteration one uses, the Hebrew Tetragrammaton "יהוה" is the **distinctive personal name** of the GOD of Israel.

Etymology.

The name derives from two Hebrew emphatic verbs:

- "hâyâh" ("הָיָה")—meaning to **exist**, to **be** or **become**, to **come to pass**; and
- "hâvâh" ("הָוָה")—meaning to **breathe**, to **be**, to **exist**.

In other words, "YHWH" ("יהוה") means the "**self-existent** and **eternal one**" or the "**one who is**" (as in "*I am what I am*" in Exodus 3:14). And, as the "**one who is**", His name can be further interpreted as "**He who imparts existence**."

How and when did YHWH reveal His name to us?

Used ±6800 times, according to the Authorized King James Bible (KJV), "יהוה" ("YHWH") is first seen in the second chapter of Genesis.¹

This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created,
when the LORD (YHWH) God (Elohim) made the earth and the heavens.
(Genesis 2:4 *parenthetical text added*)



However, GOD did not actually reveal Himself to mankind by the **name** "יהוה" ("YHWH") until many centuries later when He called Moses to deliver the children of Israel from Egypt.¹

² And Elohim (God) spoke to Mosheh (Moses) and said to him, "**I am יהוה** (the LORD).

³ "And I appeared to Abraham, to Yitsḥaq (Isaac), and to Ya'aqob (Jacob), as Ėl Shaddai (God Almighty). And by **My Name, יהוה** (LORD), was I not known to them."

(Exodus 6:2-3 TS *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

¹⁴ And Elohim (God) said to Mosheh, "**I AM that which I AM**" (Hebrew: "Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh" [I am/will be what I am/will be]) And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Yisra'el (Israel), '**I AM** (Ehyeh) has sent me to you.'"

¹⁵ And Elohim (God) said further to Mosheh, "Thus you are to say to the children of Yisra'el, '**יהוה Elohim** (LORD God) of your fathers, the Elohim (God) of Abraham, the Elohim of Yitsḥaq, and the Elohim of Ya'aqob, has sent me to you. This is **My Name forever**, and this is My remembrance to all generations.'"

(Exodus 3:14-15 TS *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

From the choice of words in the above-referenced verses quoted from *The Scriptures 2009*, it's obvious that GOD desires us to understand His character—that He wants us to know, not only His name, but to know **Him . . . through** His name!

Exodus 14:4 further supports the view that the name "YHWH" embodies certain aspects of GOD's character—those inherent attributes that determine His moral and ethical actions and reactions—that no other name or god does . . . or **can**.

"And I shall strengthen the heart of Pharaoh, and he shall pursue them.
But I am to be esteemed through Pharaoh and over all his army,
and the Mitsrites (Egyptians) shall **know that I am יהוה** (the LORD)" And they did so.
(Exodus 14:4 TS *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

It isn't likely that God intended in Exodus 14:4 above that the Egyptians would simply learn His **name**. There is a strong element of Divine self-disclosure within it. He wanted them to know that יהוה ("YHWH") is not **a** god, but is **the** GOD!

**GOD desires us to understand the manner of
His character; He wants us to know, not only
His name, but to know Him *through* His name!**

What do we learn from the name "YHWH"?

Perhaps the most important characteristic embodied in the name "YHWH" is that He is a GOD of truth. Really, YHWH **defines** truth, for He **is** truth!

For a long time Israel was without the **true God**,
without a priest to teach and without the law.
(2 Chronicles 15:3 *emphasis added*)

Whoever invokes a blessing in the land will do so
by the **one true God**; whoever takes an oath in the
land will swear by the **one true God**. For the past
troubles will be forgotten and hidden from my eyes.
(Isaiah 65:16 *emphasis added*)

But the LORD is the **true God**; he is the living God, the eternal King.
When he is angry, the earth trembles; the nations cannot endure his wrath.
(Jeremiah 10:10 *emphasis added*)

Now this is eternal life: that they know you,
the only **true God**, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.
(John 17:3 *emphasis added*)

As **the** Truth, it logically follows, then, that YHWH is also perfectly **loving, just, and righteous**. Let us reason this out...

- In order to have true love, one must include a systematic and unbiased standard of justice. A loving parent, for instance, establishes boundaries and a meting out of legitimate and appropriate rewards or punishment for specific actions or even attitudes.
- In other words, justice without love is not justice, and love without justice is not love.
- And of course, truth must include love and justice. Without love and justice, there is no truth.
- And finally, where there is complete and perfect truth, love and justice, there is naturally unceasing **righteousness**.

It is this one **true, loving, just, and righteous** GOD who gave the Law to Israel. Oh, I know, our natural self immediately cringes when we first hear that word—**law**—and meet with its legitimacy and reality. We don't like laws. We tend to think of laws as being restrictive and prohibitive—not to mention punitive.

The fact is, however, that we imperfect, selfish mortals need boundaries, which really is just another word for "law". Without laws, humankind would have quickly fallen into brutal anarchy, which certainly would have led to our extinction long before now.

If we must have laws, then, would we all not prefer that they come from a perfectly **loving, just, and righteous** GOD of complete **truth**?

Contrary to widely-held modern thinking—even among Christians—YHWH did not give the Law to Israel to restrict, withhold, rescind, or punish. Rather, He established the Law to set Himself apart from the other gods, to set Israel apart from the other nations, to help us see our need for a Redeemer, and to make a way for Him to draw near and to **bless** Israel!

For instance...

- His laws prescribing certain sanitary practices exceeded most health and hygiene standards of today and kept Israel free from the diseases of the nations around them.



- His law about the Sabbath was a law of compassion and grace, not prohibition. In that day and culture, it was customary for them to labor seven days a week from sunup to sundown. In mandating the Sabbath, GOD's people had a day to rest from their labor, spend time with family and friends, and reflect on GOD's goodness and faithfulness. That's why Jesus told His critics, "**The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.**" (Mark 2:27)
- The law about giving tithes and offerings was a means of providing for widows, orphans, the elderly and destitute, as well as the priests and scribes.
- His laws about not gleaning or gathering all the crops provided food for poor people, orphans, and travelers.
- His laws about Sabbath rests for the land every seven years made the land more productive; and the Jubilee year enabled families to be freed of debts and to recover their families' heritage.
- And, while other nations' gods often demanded human sacrifices for no other purpose than to satisfy their own blood lusts, Israel's one true GOD required animal sacrifices and offerings to help them understand how grievous sin is—not only to Him but also to themselves—and to make a way for Him to forgive them and draw near to them. He even made allowances for poor people to bring offerings that were more within their means.

It is the most natural and loving thing a parent can do for their child—setting boundaries to protect them, teaching them proper standards of health and hygiene, and shaping their moral and spiritual character. YHWH's giving of the Law to Moses was His way of demonstrating to them His commitment to His covenant promise to provide their every need and protect them from harm.

In addition to YHWH being **true, loving, just,** and **righteous**, Scripture tells us that there is also **power** in His name!

Then Asa called to the LORD (YHWH) his God (Elohim) and said,
 "LORD (YHWH), there is no one like you to help the powerless against the mighty.
 Help us, LORD (YHWH) our God (Elohim), for we rely on you, and **in your name**
 we have come against this vast army. LORD (YHWH), you are our God (Elohim);
 do not let mere mortals prevail against you."

(2 Chronicles 14:11 *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

"Therefore I will teach them—this time I will teach them my **power**
 and **might**. Then they will know that my name is the LORD (YHWH).

(Jeremiah 16:21 *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

So, what we learn from the name "YHWH" is that He is the **one true God** . . . set apart from and superior to all other gods . . . **all-powerful**, fully **loving**, completely **just**, and wholly **righteous**.

How did we get the name "Jehovah" from "YHWH"?

There are several theories as to how this happened. Some believe we simply Anglicized the "YHWH" transliteration of "יהוה" by inserting vowels between the consonants. While that's certainly a plausible explanation, I believe it ignores some history critical to the process.



As mentioned previously, GOD's personal name is so sacred to Jews that they don't want to speak it or even write it for fear of violating the commandments to not use His name in vain or profane His name.

"You shall not misuse the name of the LORD (YHWH) your God (Elohim),
for the LORD (YHWH) will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name."
(Exodus 20:7 *parenthetical text added*)

"Do not profane my holy name, for I must be acknowledged
as holy by the Israelites. I am the LORD (YHWH), who made you holy."
(Leviticus 22:32 *parenthetical text added*)

The Complete Jewish Bible (CJB) renders those verses:

"You are not to use lightly the name of Adonai ("יהוה") your God (Elohim),
because Adonai ("יהוה") will not leave unpunished someone who uses
his name lightly."

"You are not to profane my holy name;
on the contrary, I am to be regarded as holy among
the people of Isra'el; I am Adonai ("יהוה"), who makes you holy."
(*Parenthetical text added*)

In order to not risk violating those commands, the Jewish practice for centuries has been to read "Adonay"/"Adonai" ("אֲדֹנָי") in place of "YHWH" ("יהוה"). As we will discuss in the next lesson, "Adonai" means "*Master*" or "*Sovereign Ruler*" and generally denotes **authority** and **exalted position**.

To remind the reader to not pronounce the name "YHWH" ("יהוה"), but instead to read the name "Adonai" ("אֲדֹנָי"), they placed the vowel points of Adonay (a, o, a) under the Tetragrammaton "YHWH", thus creating "יהוה".

Using the Leningrad Codex² and the Greek Septuagint³, the first translators who transcribed YHWH's name from Hebrew and Greek to Latin had no reason to believe that the vowels of יהוה yielded an imprecise designation. Therefore, they transliterated it as "YaHoWaH", just as it **appeared** to indicate in the Hebrew. (This is the argument Jehovah's Witnesses have used to support their claim that GOD's personal name is and "always" has been "Jehovah". However, as we now know, "Jehovah" cannot be a correct interpretation as it incorporates letters that were never a part of the name that YHWH gave to Moses in Exodus 3:14-15.)

During the transliteration of the Scriptures from Hebrew and Greek to Latin (known as "Romanization"), "J" replaced "Y" (as in "Ya'akov" becoming "Jacob", "Yeshua" and "Yêšû" becoming "Jesus", etc.) and "V" replaced "W", thus rendering "YaHoWaH" as "JaHoVaH". And finally, when translating the Scriptures from Latin to English, translators further Anglicized the name by changing the first vowel from "a" to "e" to coincide with the common pronunciation.

Today, Jehovah's Witnesses as well as many English-speaking Protestant Christians and people of other languages whose Bibles were influenced by the English King James Version (KJV/AV) use the English transcription "Jehovah" (sometimes, albeit rarely, "Yehovah"). Most scholars and theologians, however, agree that "Jehovah" is a philological improbability⁴ since

the original Hebrew written form was only intended to remind the Hebrew reader to say "Adonai" and was not the original name given to Moses.

The Jews also continue to use the name "Adonai" almost exclusively as the proper name of YHWH. In addition to the verses in Exodus 3:15-16 and 6:3, which we already discussed, the English Complete Jewish Bible (CJB) uses the actual Tetragrammaton "יהוה" or "Yud-Heh-Vav-Heh" only two other times:

Adonai passed before him and proclaimed: "YUD-HEH-VAV-HEH!!!
Yud-Heh-Vav-Heh (יהוה) [Adonai] is God, merciful and
compassionate, slow to anger, rich in grace and truth;"
(Exodus 34:6 CJB)

In the course of which the son of the woman of Isra'el uttered the Name
[Yud-Heh-Vav-Heh (יהוה)] in a curse. So they brought him to Moshe.
(His mother's name was Shlomit the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan.)
(Leviticus 24:11 CJB)

**GOD obviously wants us to know His name,
most likely for what it reveals about who He is
and who He *wants* to be to each of us!**

How do you *pronounce* "YHWH" or "YHVH"?

There is considerable debate among scholars, linguists, and students alike as to the correct pronunciation of GOD's formal name, as spoken by YHWH to Moses in Exodus 3:14-15.

- Some say the name should be pronounced just as it is written according to the pronunciation of the letters themselves, "Yod-Há-Väv-Há'".
- As we've already discussed, others claim it should be "Jehovah", incorporating the vowels of "Adonay" into "YHWH" or "JHVH".
- Arguing that Hebrew is more a spoken language than a written one, some have added vowels to "YHWH" to create "Yahweh" while others believe the name should be pronounced "Ye'hôvâh".
- And finally, based on the pronunciation of the verb from which the name derives, "hâyâh", perhaps GOD's name is pronounced "Yo'haw-yaw".

The fact is that the precise pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton cannot be academically and conclusively determined. Even among Israeli university scholars, there is widespread disagreement because the name has not been spoken in Israel since the Temple was destroyed in 70 CE (AD).

No doubt, countless spiritually zealous seekers will debate and wrestle with this particular issue for many years to come, until that Day when we shall all see Him face-to-face and know Him as we are known. Until then, I am deeply grateful that our extravagantly-loving God doesn't let our awkward fumbling of His name come between us. Rather, He invites us into His presence and showers us with His unrestrained love and mercy!



Meditation

At one time—based on a purely personal and admittedly subjective experience—I had believed that His name should be pronounced exactly as He revealed it to us in the Hebrew, "Yod-Há-Väv-Há'". While that may be a reasonable presumption, I have since changed my thinking on it.

When teaching languages, we normally think of the alphabet according to the **sounds** formed by each letter, not according to each letter's name. For instance, we don't pronounce the word "scuba" (an acronym) "es-see-yoo-bee-á". Therefore, to say that God's name should be pronounced according to the **names** of the Hebrew letters may not be as logical as it seems.

I suggest that the reason no one today knows how to pronounce His name is because there is **no natural** human sound that can adequately replicate the unique sound and significance of the name of the Most High GOD.

Since YHWH's desire has been for us to know **Him** and His **heart** of overflowing love for us, I propose that it isn't the **pronunciation** that matters, but what the name **represents**. I believe His name isn't a word to be **verbalized**, but is perhaps more a **deep sigh** to be **breathed** from within the heart.

After all, is that not where the Most High abides—within the heart? Is that not where YHWH has written His laws and placed His set-apart name—on our hearts?

As the **one true, loving, just, and righteous** GOD, His name tells us **who** He is and who He **wants to be** to each of us!

Stop and consider for a moment: The Tetragrammaton "YHWH" literally means "**I AM**". GOD who **is** is telling us in Exodus 3:14 that He **Is!** He is . . . He always has been . . . He will always be . . . and He causes all things to be (exist).

In reading the Scriptures with this new information, I pray that we all would develop a zeal and affection for the **true name** itself over such inferior titles as "God" and "Lord" and that we would simply allow **Him** to speak His name into our hearts.

- 15 And the nations shall fear the Name of יְהוָה, And all the
sovereigns of the earth Your esteem,
16 For יְהוָה shall build up Tsiyon, He shall appear in His
esteem.

(Psalm 102:15-16 TS)

- 1 Praise Yah⁵! Praise, O servants of יְהוָה, Praise the Name of
יְהוָה!
2 Blessed be the Name of יְהוָה, Now and forever!
3 From the rising of the sun to its going down, The Name of
יְהוָה is praised.
4 יְהוָה is high above all nations, His esteem above the
heavens.
5 Who is like יְהוָה our Elohim, Who is enthroned on high?
(Psalm 113:1-5 TS)

- 1 Praise Yah! Praise the Name of יְהוָה; Praise, you servants of יְהוָה,
- 2 Who are standing in the House of יְהוָה, In the courts of the House of our Elohim,
- 3 Praise Yah, for יְהוָה is good; Sing praises to His Name, for it is pleasant.
- 4 For Yah has chosen Ya'aqob for Himself, Yisra'el for His treasured possession.
- 5 For I know that יְהוָה is great, And our Master is above all mighty ones.
- 6 has done whatever pleased Him, In the heavens and in earth...

(Psalm 135:1-6a TS)

Let them praise the Name of יְהוָה, For His Name alone is exalted,
His splendour is above the earth and heavens.

(Psalm 148:13 TS)

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- 1 Although God didn't reveal His actual name until many centuries later, Moses is credited as being the author of the Pentateuch (first five books of the Bible). As the author of Genesis, therefore, it is reasonable that he would use the name in the Genesis narration that God had revealed to him in Exodus.
 - 2 **Leningrad Codex** - The oldest complete manuscript of the Hebrew Bible in Hebrew dated 1008 CE (AD), using the Masoretic Text and Tiberian vocalization.
 - 3 **Greek Septuagint** - The earliest Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures from the original Hebrew. It is estimated that the Torah (Pentateuch or first five books of the Old Testament) was translated around 200 BCE (BC) and the remaining texts were translated 100 BCE
 - 4 **Sources:**
 Make Sure Ministries, "*Jehovah vs. YHWH*", <https://www.makesureministries.com/jehovah-yhwh/>, np, 12/2018
The Jewish Encyclopedia, public domain, <http://jewishencyclopedia.com/8568-articles/jehovah>, np, 12/2018.
Encyclopaedia Judaica © 2007 by Thomson Gale. Lewisohn, Ludwig (Jerusalem), Vol. 7, p. 680.
 - 5 The Hebrew יְהוָה, the contracted/abbreviated form of יְהוָה, occurs 49 times in the Hebrew Scriptures, primarily in the Psalms. That is the origin for the word "Hallelujah", the Hebrew being "הַלְלֵי יְהוָה" ("Hālāl Yah").



Adonai (Adonay) & Elohim/El/Eloah

אלה / אל / אלוהים & אֲדֹנָי

Except for "YHWH", the two most common names/titles for GOD in the Biblia Hebraica (Hebrew Bible) are "Adonai" and "Elohim". Apart from the name "YHWH", the designations "Adonai" and "Elohim" say more about the GOD of Israel than any other name. Certainly, all that the names embody deserve considerable deliberation.

Because the two words are so similar to each other and are often combined in the Old Testament, I thought it logical to study these two names together.

Etymology

Adonai: "Adonai" derives from the Hebrew root "adon" (pronounced 'âdôn) ("אֲדֹנָי"), meaning **master**, **owner**, or **sovereign ruler**. Thus, when referring to the GOD of Israel, the name expresses the **authority** and the **exalted position** of GOD. In the ordinary sense, "adon" refers to both human and divine relationships. The word "adon" (plural "adonai") appears ±335 times throughout Scripture, frequently in reference to a servant's master or the family patriarch.

So Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, "After I am worn out and my lord (adon) is old, will I now have this pleasure?"
(Genesis 18:12 *parenthetical text added*)

"My lords (adonai)," he said, "please turn aside to your servant's house. You can wash your feet and spend the night and then go on your way early in the morning."
(Genesis 19:2a *parenthetical text added*)

The angel answered me, "These are the four spirits of heaven, going out from standing in the presence of the Lord (Adon) of the whole world."
(Zechariah 6:5 *parenthetical text added*)

The name "Adonai" ("אֲדֹנָי") is the emphatic **plural** form of "adon" and is used exclusively as a proper name of God. Implicit in the name "Adonai" is not only the expectation of provision and protection, but also of potential profitability. That's why Abraham had the courage to ask the Lord for an heir immediately after Adonai promised to care for and protect him.

- ¹ After this, the word of the LORD (YHWH) came to Abram in a vision: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your **very great reward**."
- ² But Abram said, "Sovereign (Adonai) LORD (YHWH), what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?"

(Genesis 15:1-2 *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

In referring to "Adonai" as "**a** proper name of God," we must not confuse this with **the** proper name, יְהוָה, of the **one true God**.

The name "Adonai" in and of itself, and not as a substitute for "YHWH", occurs ±430 times and generally denotes the **authority** and **exalted position** of GOD. Primarily, the name

stresses God's relationship to man as his **Master, Authority, and Provider** (not to be confused with YHWH Jireh, which means "GOD Sees" / "GOD Will Provide").

Elohim: The precise development of the word "elohim" (pronounced 'ĕlôhîym) is disputed. There are two prominent theories.

- Some believe it derives from the shorter Hebrew word "El" (pronounced 'êl) ("אֵל") and a similar Hebrew word "'ayil" (ah'-yil) ("אֵיִל" in Hebrew), both of which mean **mighty, strong, or prominent** (as in "chief").
- Others believe it derives from the Hebrew form of "Eloah" (pronounced 'ĕlôahh) ("אֱלֹהִים"), a prolonged form of "'êl", which appears to be used most frequently when comparing **the** GOD to the gods of the pagan polytheistic religions, as in...

They sacrificed to demons, not God (Eloah),
to gods (elohim) they didn't know...
(Deuteronomy 32:17a WEB *parenthetical text added*).

In the natural, the word also refers to powerful men or judges.

The word "Eloah", in reference to YHWH, is the root of the Chaldee word "Eloi" ["ĕlôî"] (pronounced *el-o-ee'*), which Jesus uttered from the cross: And at three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" (which means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"). (Mark 15:34 *ref.* Psalm 22:1)

The use of "eloah" in the Bible is rare, occurring primarily in poetry and late prose, mainly in Job. The word "El", however, is itself translated "God" ±250 times and frequently in circumstances which especially indicate the great power of God. For example...

- **El Shaddai** (God Almighty or Almighty God) as in Genesis 17:1 — When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty (El Shaddai); walk before me faithfully and be blameless."
- **El Elyon** (God Most High) as in Genesis 14:18-19 — Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High (El Elyon), and he blessed Abram, saying, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High (El Elyon), Creator of heaven and earth."
- **El Gibhor** (Strong & Mighty God) as in Isaiah 10:21 — A remnant will return, a remnant of Jacob will return to the Mighty God (El Gibhor).
- **El Tzur** (God our Rock) as in 2 Samuel 22:47 — "The LORD lives! Praise be to my Rock (Tzur)! Exalted be my God, the Rock (El Tzur), my Savior!
- It is also one of the names given to the promised Messiah in Isaiah 9:6 — For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God (El Gibhor), Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
- See *also* Genesis 7:1, 28:3, 35:11; Numbers 23:22; Joshua 3:10; 2 Samuel 22:31-32; Nehemiah 1:5, 9:32; Isaiah 9:6; Ezekiel 10.



"Elohim" ("אֱלֹהִים") is the **plural** form of "Eloah" and is the first name of God that occurs in Scripture.

"In the beginning Elohim created the heavens and the earth."
(Genesis 1:1 TS)

The Bible uses "Elohim" when emphasizing God's **might, creative power, justice, and rulership**. The name refers especially to His **sovereignty, creative work, and mighty works**.

Although "Adonai" and "Elohim" are similar, the distinguishing attributes that differentiate them are that the name "Adonai" affirms God's **elevated position of authority and rulership**, whereas the name "Elohim" refers to Him as the **Creator** who **interacts** with and **reveals** Himself to His creation.

"Elohim" is both a proper name and an adjective.

Apart from the first two books of the Bible where "Elohim" is seen as a proper noun for the Creator, throughout the remaining Scriptures "Elohim" is more an appellative or designation. For example, in the frequent expression, "LORD *your God*" in most English Bibles, "LORD" ("YHWH") is the **proper name**, while "*your God*" ("your Elohim") defines the deity, thereby functioning as an adjective. Two other variations of this are "Elohai" (meaning "*my God*") and "Elohaynu" (meaning "*our God*").

As the Sovereign Authority and Creator over all creation, the name "Elohim" denotes God as the **supreme deity** of a person or people.

How are the names "Adonai", "Elohim", and "El"/Eloah represented in English?

As we learned in the previous study, to avoid violating the commandment "You shall not take the name of Yahweh (יהוה) *your God* (Elohim) *in vain*" (Exodus 20:7), the vowels of "Adonay" ("Adonai") were inserted between the letters "YHWH", thus creating "יהוה". This was done to remind the reader to not pronounce the name "YHWH", but to say "Adonay" instead. In fact, the most current English versions of the Hebrew Scriptures now use "Adonai" almost exclusively in the place of "YHWH".

Adonai ("אֲדֹנָי"), in and of itself, represents GOD as our **Master** and **Sovereign Ruler**. and is transliterated "**Lord**", "**God**", or "**Sovereign**" whenever it refers to **the** GOD (as in "the Lord")—not as an Hebraic substitute for יהוה". It is used ±325 times in the Old Testament and is especially prevalent in the books of Isaiah (30 times), Jeremiah (14 times), and almost exclusively in Ezekiel and Amos (208 times and 18 times respectively). Following is a mere sampling of the verses that use the name "Adonai" in the original Hebrew to describe our Most High GOD.

LORD (YHWH), our Lord (Adonai), how majestic is your name
in all the earth! You have set your glory in the heavens.
(Psalm 8:1 *parenthetical text added*)

Great is our Lord (Adonai) and mighty in power; his understanding has no limit.
(Psalm 147:5 *parenthetical text added*)



What do you mean by crushing my people and grinding the faces of the poor?" declares the Lord (Adonai), the LORD (YHWH) Almighty.
(Isaiah 3:15 *parenthetical text added*)

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw **the Lord** (Adonai), high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple.
(Isaiah 6:1 *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

Then I heard the voice of the Lord (Adonai) saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"
(Isaiah 6:8 *parenthetical text added*)

But you, Sovereign (Adonai) LORD (YHWH), help me for your name's sake; out of the goodness of your love, deliver me.
(Psalm 109:21 *parenthetical text added*)

Elohim ("אֱלֹהִים"), as a designation or adjective, represents God's **might, creative power**, and **sovereign authority** over creation. It is translated "**God**" when referring to the Creator, as an appellative when GOD is seen interacting with humans (as in "*your/my/ our God*" or "*the God/the LORD God*"), or by inference.

The name "אֱלֹהִים" ("Elohim"/"Eloah"), transliterated "**God**", references GOD interacting with His creation and appears in ±1300 verses in the Old Testament:

- the compound name "יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים" ("YHWH Elohim") in ±75 verses;
- "your/our Elohim" in ±645 verses;
- "the Elohim of" in ±350 verses; and
- "Elohim" alone in 233 verses.

In the first two books of the Bible, the name portrays GOD as the transcendent Creator of the universe.

In the beginning God (Elohim) created the heavens and the earth.
(Genesis 1:1 *parenthetical text added*)

So God (Elohim) said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant I have established between me and all life on the earth."
(Genesis 9:17 *parenthetical text added*)

I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God (Elohim). Then you will know that I am the LORD (YHWH) your God (Elohim), who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians.
(Exodus 6:7 *parenthetical text added*)

Be careful that you do not forget the LORD (YHWH) your God (Elohim), failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day.
(Deuteronomy 8:11 *parenthetical text added*)

May God (Elohim) arise, may his enemies be scattered; may his foes flee before him.
(Psalm 68:1 WEB *parenthetical text added*)



For this is what the LORD (YHWH) says--he who created the heavens,
he is God (Elohim); he who fashioned and made the earth, he founded it;
he did not create it to be empty, but formed it to be inhabited --
he says: "I am the LORD (YHWH), and there is no other."
(Isaiah 45:18 *parenthetical text added*)

For your Maker is your husband--the LORD (YHWH) Almighty
is his name-- the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer;
he is called the God (Elohim) of all the earth.
(Isaiah 54:5 *parenthetical text added*)

"I am the LORD (YHWH), the God (Elohim) of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?"
(Jeremiah 32:27 *parenthetical text added*)

EI ("אֵל") / Eloah ("אֱלֹהִים") are both also translated in the lowercase "**God**", frequently in circumstances indicating the **great power, strength, and might** of GOD. "Eloah" appears in 56 verses, 41 of which are in the book of Job; and "El" appears in 232 verses, usually in concert with other attributes of God, such as "El Shaddai", "El Elyon", "El Gibhor", etc.

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD (YHWH)
appeared to him and said, "I am God (El) Almighty (Shaddai);
walk before me faithfully and be blameless."
(Genesis 17:1 *parenthetical text added*)

"I am God (El), the God (Elohim) of your father," he said.
"Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt,
for I will make you into a great nation there."
(Genesis 46:3 *parenthetical text added*)

Do not be terrified by them, for the LORD (YHWH) your God (Elohim),
who is among you, is a **great** and **awesome** God (El).
(Deuteronomy 7:21 *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

...our God (Elohim), the **great** God (El), **mighty**
and **awesome**, who keeps his covenant of love...
(Nehemiah 9:32a *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

For who is God (Eloah) besides the LORD (YHWH)?
And who is the Rock except our God (Elohim)?
(Psalm 18:31 *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

Your righteousness is like the **highest** (el) mountains,
your justice like the great deep. You, LORD (YHWH),
preserve both people and animals.
(Psalm 36:6 *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

What's the difference between "YHWH Adonai" and "YHWH Elohim"?

Occasionally, Scripture employs the compound names "YHWH Adonai" ("יְהוָה אֲדֹנָי") and "YHWH Elohim" ("יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים"). Since the Jews replaced "YHWH" with "Adonai", whenever the compound name "YHWH Adonai" appears in the Hebrew Scriptures, in order to avoid duplication of "Adonai", they substituted "Elohim" for "Adonai" and read it as "Adonai Elohim".

And now . . . several thousand years later and working with several different English Bible translations and versions¹, the average non-linguist Bible student is left to sort out the difference between "LORD God" and "Lord GOD" in some Bibles. It can also be confusing determining when the lowercase "God" means "Adonai", "Elohim", or "El"/"Eloah".

The general rule of thumb is this:

- The uppercase "LORD" and "GOD" always represent the original Tetragrammaton "YHWH".
- The lowercase "Lord", "Sovereign". or "All-Powerful" always represent the original "Adonai" when it was not used as a substitute for "YHWH".
- The lowercase "God"..
 - represents "Elohim" when used in the Creation narrative, as a descriptor when interacting with His creation (as in "your/our/my/his/their God", the "God of"), or in place of GOD's name (as in "You" or "He");
 - represents "Adonai" when used in combination with "YHWH" (as in "LORD God"), except in the Creation narrative;
 - represents "El" or "Eloah" when used to refer to YHWH by reference (as in "He is God").

How is "YHWH Adonai" represented in English Bibles?

"YHWH Adonai" ("יהוה אֲדֹנָי") in the original Hebrew appears 347 times in the Old Testament. Following are examples of several verses—all based on the original "יהוה אֲדֹנָי" ("YHWH Adonai")—as they are represented in different English Bible translations/versions:

Isaiah 25:8

He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord (Adonai) GOD (YHWH) will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD (YHWH) hath spoken *it*.
(KJV *parenthetical text added*)

he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign (Adonai) LORD (YHWH) will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove his people's disgrace from all the earth. The LORD (YHWH) has spoken.
(NIV *parenthetical text added*)

The LORD (YHWH) All-Powerful (Adonai) will destroy the power of death and wipe away all tears. No longer will his people be insulted everywhere. The LORD (YHWH) has spoken!
(CEV *parenthetical text added*)

Jeremiah 14:13

Then said I, Ah, Lord (Adonai) GOD (YHWH)! behold, the prophets say unto them, Ye shall not see the sword, neither shall ye have famine; but I will give you assured peace in this place.
(KJV *parenthetical text added*)

Then I said, Ah, O Lord (Adonai) Jehovah (YHWH)! Behold, the prophets are saying to them, You shall not see the sword, nor shall you have



famine; but I will give you true peace in this place.
(MKJV *parenthetical text added*)

Then I said, "Sovereign (Adonai) LORD (YHWH), you know that the prophets are telling the people that there will be no war or starvation, because you have promised, they say, that there will be only peace in our land."
(The Good News Bible *parenthetical text added*)

Ezekiel 39:25

Therefore thus saith the Lord (Adonai) GOD (YHWH); Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for my holy name;
(KJV *parenthetical text added*)

"Therefore thus says the Lord (Adonai) Yahweh (YHWH): 'Now I will reverse the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy on the whole house of Israel. I will be jealous for my holy name.'
(WEB *parenthetical text added*)

"Therefore thus says the Lord (Adonai) GOD (YHWH): Now I will restore the fortunes of Jacob and have mercy on the whole house of Israel, and I will be jealous for my holy name."
(English Standard Version *parenthetical text added*)

How is "YHWH Elohim" represented in English Bibles?

As noted previously, the compound name "YHWH Elohim" only appears in the Creation narrative and whenever GOD is seen directly interacting with His creation.

Then the LORD (YHWH) God (Elohim) formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.
(Genesis 2:7 *parenthetical text added*)

The LORD (YHWH) God (Elohim) took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.
(Genesis 2:15 *parenthetical text added*)

- ²¹ The LORD (YHWH) God (Elohim) made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.
- ²² And the LORD (YHWH) God (Elohim) said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever."
- ²³ So the LORD (YHWH) God (Elohim) banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken.
(Genesis 3:21-23 *parenthetical text added*)

Then he prayed, "LORD(YHWH), God (Elohim) of my master Abraham, make me successful today, and show kindness to my master Abraham.
(Genesis 24:12 *parenthetical text added*)

Of course, it would be most expedient and convenient to simply leave the above conclusions on page 45 as the final word. However, with so many different English translations today and scholarly differences of opinion, that is not possible.



For example, the Modern King James Version (MKJV) renders the Hebrew "Adonai" ("אֲדֹנָי") as "Jehovah" in several verses while most other English Bibles use the more accurate lowercase "Lord", as seen in the following examples.

	KJV	NIV	MKJV
Nehemiah 1:11	O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name	Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name.	O Jehovah, I pray You, let now Your ear be open to the prayer of Your servant, and to the prayer of Your servants who desire to fear Your name.
Psalms 51:15	O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.	Open my lips, Lord, and my mouth will declare your praise.	O Jehovah, open my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Your praise.
Psalms 57:9	I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people: I will sing unto thee among the nations.	I will praise you, Lord, among the nations; I will sing of you among the peoples.	I will praise You, O Jehovah, among the peoples; I will sing to You among the nations.
Isaiah 38:16	O Lord, by these <i>things men</i> live, and in all these <i>things is</i> the life of my spirit: so wilt thou recover me, and make me to live.	Lord, by such things people live; and my spirit finds life in them too. You restored me to health and let me live.	O Jehovah, by these things men live, and in all these is the life of my spirit; so You will recover me, and make me to live.

I encourage you to not only make note of the names in the Bible you normally use, but to consider looking up the verses in another version to compare and validate their accuracy. Then, as you read your Bible, insert and speak the Hebrew names and meditate on what they reveal about our wonderfully merciful, extravagantly loving, and abundantly compassionate GOD! In so doing, you will soon find yourself naturally drawn into worship, resulting in a more intimate and fulfilling relationship with this **all-powerful**, **inexplicable**, and yet **knowable** GOD!

Is the Trinity embodied in the plural nouns "Adonai" and "Elohim"?

As noted previously, "Adonai" is the emphatic **plural** form of "Adon", and "Elohim" is the masculine **plural** form of "Eloah".

While these names are written in the plural form, they regularly employ **singular** verbs and pronouns in Hebrew grammar and are **singular** in usage, as in...

For the LORD (YHWH) your God (Elohim) **is** God (Elohim)
of gods (elohim) and Lord (Adonai) of lords (adoni),
the great God (El), mighty and awesome, who **shows**
no partiality and **accepts** no bribes.
(Deuteronomy 10:17 TS *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)



(If using plural verbs along with the plural "Adonai" and "Elohim", the verse would read: "For the LORD your God **are** God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who **show** no partiality and **accept** no bribes.")

"How great you are, Sovereign (Adonai) LORD (YHWH)!
There **is** no one like you, and there **is** no God (Elohim)
but you, as we have heard with our own ears.

(2 Samuel 7:22 TS *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

(If using plural verbs along with the plural "Adonai" and "Elohim", the verse would read: "...There **are** no one like you, and there **are** no God but you...")

Surely God (Elohim) **is** my help; the Lord (Adonai) **is** the **one** who **sustains** me.
(Psalm 54:4 *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

(If using plural verbs and pronouns along with the plural "Adonai" and "Elohim", the verse would read: "Surely God **are** my help; the Lord **are** the ones who **sustain** me.")

Many Christians view the plurality of "Adonai" and "Elohim" as proof of the Trinity. They argue that, acting in **usage** as singular nouns with singular verbs, the concept of a plurality of Persons embodied in the one GOD is at least **implied**, if not indirectly inferred.

Consider, too, that whenever the word "elohim" appears in Scripture in reference to **pagan** gods, **plural** pronouns and verbs are also used.

So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him,
"Get rid of the foreign gods (elohim) that **are** with you,
and purify yourselves and change your clothes.
(Genesis 35:2 *emphasis added*)

Do not bow down before their **gods** (elohim)
or worship **them** or follow **their** practices.
(Exodus 23:24 *emphasis added*)

Be careful, or you will be enticed to turn away
and worship other **gods** (elohim) and bow down to **them**.
(Deuteronomy 11:16 *emphasis added*)

This then begs the question: Might Scripture's use of **plural** pronouns and verbs for **pagan** gods and yet **singular** verbs and pronouns for **Adonai** and **Elohim** be to deliberately convey the concept of plurality in the one Godhead?

Keep in mind that the Bible majors in oxymorons with such statements as "the greatest must be the least" (Luke 9:48), "to live, you must die" (Matthew 16:24-25), "the first shall be last, and the last shall be first" (Mark 10:31). Thus, we cannot overlook Scripture's use of both singular **and** plural pronouns at times in reference to both names "Adonai" and "Elohim"—which would suggest that the plural are actually **one** and the one is actually **more** than one.

²⁶ Then God (Elohim) said, "Let **us** make mankind in **our** image, in **our** likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in

the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."
27 So God (Elohim) created mankind in **his** own image, in the image of God (Elohim) **he** created them; male and female **he** created them.
(Genesis 1:26-27 *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

And the LORD (YHWH) God (Elohim) said,
"The man has now become like one of **us**, knowing good and evil.
(Genesis 3:22a *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

Then I heard the voice of the Lord (Adonai) saying,
"Whom shall **I** send? And who will go for **us**?"
And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"
(Isaiah 6:8 *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

Some suggest a plural of majesty or intensity.

On the other hand, some Bible scholars suggest that the plural "Adonai" and "Elohim", including the use of plural pronouns, refers only to plurals of **majesty**, such as was common for kings of other nations. A modern-day example of this would be what is commonly referred to as the "royal we" often used by persons of high office, such as the Queen or the Pope. In situations in which it is used, the dignitary is typically speaking not only in his/her personal capacity, but also in an official capacity as the leader of a nation or institution. In some cultures, usage of the plural form tends to be perceived as more polite than the singular forms.

However, there is no evidence in Scripture or other historical records of any King of Israel ever referring to himself in the plural. Therefore, there is very little likelihood of such usage being employed in reference to Almighty GOD.

Other scholars suggest that the plural "Adonai" and "Elohim" refers to a fullness of **divine strength** or a plural of **intensity**. They argue that the Hebrews often expressed a word in the plural to give it a stronger meaning, as in Isaiah 6:3 with "Holy" being expressed three times or Jesus repeating "Verily" ("Truly") for emphasis.

In his *Commentary on Genesis*, Dr. Adam Clarke argued quite the contrary:

"The original word אֱלֹהִים Elohim, God, is certainly the plural form of אֵל El, or אֱלֹה Eloah, and has long been supposed, by the most eminently learned and pious men, to imply a plurality of Persons in the Divine nature. As this plurality appears in so many parts of the sacred writings to be confined to three Persons, hence the doctrine of the Trinity, which has formed a part of the creed of all those who have been deemed sound in the faith, from the earliest ages of Christianity.

"Nor are the Christians singular in receiving this doctrine, and in deriving it from the first words of Divine revelation. An eminent Jewish Rabbi, Simeon ben Joachi, in his comment on the sixth section of Leviticus, has these remarkable words: 'Come and see the mystery of the word Elohim; there are three degrees, and each degree by itself alone, and yet notwithstanding they are all one, and joined together in one, and are not divided from each other.'

"He must be strangely prejudiced indeed who cannot see that the doctrine of a Trinity, and of a Trinity in unity, is expressed in the above words."²

Admittedly, I may be too much a romanticist to fully indulge a purely objective academic approach when striving to know the Most High GOD on a more intimate level. I simply cannot separate GOD's use of plural proper nouns with singular verbs and pronouns and His use of plural verbs and pronouns elsewhere in Scripture.

I find it highly improbable that the original Hebrew texts would employ *singular* pronouns and verbs with the names "Adonai" and "Elohim" and plural pronouns for Himself in other places unless GOD deliberately intended to convey the concept of *plural identities* in the **one God**.

Does the plurality of "Adonai" and "Elohim" prove the Trinity?

No. I wish it were that simple. However, as there is no way to perfectly and completely *understand* the doctrine of the Trinity, there is, therefore, no definitive way to explain or *prove* it.

"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways
higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."
(Isaiah 55:9)

Although we can understand some facts about the relationship among the three, ultimately, the concept of three distinct Persons forming one GOD is incomprehensible to the human mind! However, this does not mean the Trinity is not true or that it is not based on the Bible. And it does not mean that we take it only on faith without earnest study and contemplation.

...the plural words "Adonai" and "Elohim" teach us that no *finite* word(s) can adequately define the *infinite* personality of God.

There is much Scriptural support to validate the doctrine of the Trinity, not as an explicitly stated doctrine, but as a *revealed* one. However, the names "Adonai" and "Elohim"—in and of themselves and apart from the other Scriptural proofs—are not sufficient to indisputably *prove* the doctrine of the Trinity.³

Meditation

It is truly unfortunate that we have substituted the lesser titles "Lord" and "God" to represent our Sovereign Most High GOD. It's only in learning what **He** revealed to us and wants us to know about Himself in the names/designations **He** used that we can fully render to Him "**all the glory due His name!**" (Psalm 29:2 *emphasis added*)

Whether plurals of *majesty* . . . plurals of *intensity* . . . or implying a **Triune GOD** . . . the plurality of "Adonai" and "Elohim" reinforces the point made in the discussion of the pronunciation of "YHWH". The Most High GOD's names embody so much more about the infinite personality of GOD than our mortal minds can grasp. Just as there's no human sound that can adequately replicate the unique sound of GOD's distinctive name, all of our attempts to define Him by the finite words we **do** understand fall far short of defining all that He is and all that He wants to be to us!



As Nathan Stone wrote in *Names of God* concerning the name "Elohim":

"There is blessing and comfort in this great name of God signifying supreme power, sovereignty, and glory on the one hand, for 'thine [Elohim] is the kingdom and the power and the glory'; and on the other hand signifying a covenant relationship which He is ever faithful to keep. Thus He says to us, 'I will be to you Elohim,' that we may say, '**My Elohim**;' in Him will I trust.' (Psalm 91:2 *emphasis added*)."⁴

¹ A **translation** seeks to render the Hebrew or Greek text into a precise and accurate equivalent in another language without changing the text.

A **version** (or adaptation) intentionally changes the text, purportedly for greater clarity or understanding.

Technically, as it is not possible to achieve a "perfect translation" from one completely different writing system and culture to another, all translations are "adaptations" to the extent necessary. Some scholars argue that the difference between a Bible "translation" and "version" is similar to whether the glass is "half empty" or "half full."

² Clarke, Dr. Adam (1762-1832). *The Adam Clarke Commentary*, Genesis 1, Verse 1. Public Domain.

³ My Redeemer Lives. *The Trinity: Revealed Doctrine*, and *The Trinity: One in Purpose, Power, and Ministry*, <http://www.myredeemerlives.com/mbs/trinity.html>, np, 10/01/18.

⁴ Stone, Nathan. *Names of God*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1944, 2010. p. 32.

El Shaddai

אל שדי

God Almighty / The Almighty

Pronounced *el shad-dah'ee*, this is the best-known of the "El" compound names—thanks in no small measure to the song by the same name by Amy Grant¹.

The compound name is usually translated in English Bibles as "**God Almighty**", "**the Almighty**", or "**Almighty God**".

If you use the NIV...

If you use the NIV for your devotional study, you should not mistake the title "**LORD Almighty**" with this one. The NIV uses "LORD Almighty" to represent "YHWH Sabaoth" ("LORD of Hosts"), not "El Shaddai".

To avoid any confusion, remember that "El" is always represented by lowercase "God" and "YHWH" is always represented by uppercase "LORD" or "GOD". Thus, "LORD Almighty" could never represent "El Shaddai".

This is an excellent example of why it's always good to study more than one version of the Bible to ensure a more accurate and thorough understanding of the text.

Too often, we tend to emphasize the word "almighty" ("Shaddai") as being the word that denotes GOD's might and power in the name "El Shaddai". And while the word certainly means that—and more—we must not forget that the name "**El**" ("God"), in and of itself, already means "**mighty**", "**strong**", and "**prominent**".

YHWH is already "**the mighty GOD**" without the word "shaddai".

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, **Mighty God** (El), Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
(Isaiah 9:6 *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

who show loving-commitment to thousands, and repay the crookedness of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them – the Great, the **Mighty El**, יהוה (YHWH) of hosts is His Name
(Jeremiah 32:18 TS *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

So now, the question is: What does YHWH wish us to know about Himself—and perhaps about ourselves—in revealing this name/attribute to us?

Etymology

The exact origin and derivation of the word "*shaddai*" is disputed. While most tend to believe the name derives from Hebrew, many scholars and linguists argue that the name derives from the ancient Egyptian or Akkadian² languages which preceded Hebrew.

In the following discussion, we shall examine all of these possible sources.

Hebrew Roots: Shadad / Shad or Shadayim / Dai or Day

According to *Strong's Hebrew Dictionary*, the following words have been used at various times in the development of the name:

- The Hebrew root word "*shadad*" ("שָׁדַד"), meaning "**powerful**" or "**destroyer**", suggests impregnable power and occurs 57 times. The name can also mean "to ravage" or "destroy". Some scholars state that, while Elohim is the GOD who creates, this root word suggests that El Shaddai is the GOD who **triumphs** over every obstacle and all opposition; He is able to **subdue** all things to Himself and can compel nature to do what is contrary to itself.

An example of such an occurrence is when GOD overcame the natural "deadness" of Sarah's and Abraham's bodies in connection with the birth of Isaac (Genesis 18:10-14, 21:1-7).

However, not everyone agrees with this interpretation. As Nathan Stone wrote in *Names of God*:

"...one scholar writes that 'Elohim is the god who creates nature so that it is and supports it so that it continues, El Shaddai the God who compels nature to do what is contrary to itself.' And so another says that as El Shaddai He reveals Himself by special deeds of power.

"It is quite likely that there is some connection between the name *Shaddai* and the root from which some modern scholars think it is derived, but in view of the circumstances under which it is often used and in view of the translation of another word almost exactly like it, we believe it has another derivation and a more significant meaning than that of special power."³

- The Hebrew word "*shad*" or "*shadayim*" ("שָׁד"), meaning "**breasts**", occurs 24 times as "*shaddai*" and may be interpreted as "the One who is mighty to **nourish**, **supply**, and **satisfy**". This interpretation is especially appropriate and reasonable in light of two incidents recorded in the book of Isaiah.

You will drink the milk of nations and **be nursed** at royal breasts (shad). Then you will know that I, the LORD (YHWH), am your Savior, your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.
(Isaiah 60:16 *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

¹⁰ "Rejoice with Jerusalem and be glad for her, all you who love her; rejoice greatly with her, all you who mourn over her.

¹¹ For you will **nurse** and be satisfied at her comforting breasts (shad); you will drink deeply and delight in her overflowing abundance."

¹² For this is what the LORD (YHWH) says: "I will extend peace to her like a river, and the wealth of nations like a flooding stream; you will nurse and be carried on her arm and dandled on her knees.

¹³ As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you; and you will be comforted over Jerusalem."

(Isaiah 66:10-13 *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

- And finally, some believe the word derives from the Hebrew word "dai" or "day" ("דַּי"), meaning "**enough**", which, like "shad" or "shadayim", suggests **provision, sustenance**, and **blessing**. It says that El Shaddai is the **all-sufficient, all-bountiful** El, as shown in Genesis 49:24-25.

Of course, either or all of the above would naturally be intensified when combined with "El" and would refer to YHWH as the One who **mightily** nourishes and satisfies, who protects to the **uttermost**, and who **abundantly** supplies His people.

Egyptian Root: *Sha*

One theory that has found support among Christian scholars—as set forth by Philosophers F.M. Behymer and M. deJassy in various writings in *The Monist*, a quarterly peer-reviewed academic journal of philosophy—is that the root of "shaddai" originates with the Egyptian "sha", which denotes all **commencement of forms** and **births**.⁴

Thus, the name "El Shaddai" may relate chiefly to the physical function of nursing, thereby providing **strength, potency**, and **power** derived from such nourishment. This name also supports the concept of nourishment derived from the Hebrew "shad" or "shadayim".

This can be further supported by the theory that many of the proper names, as well as other words found in the Hebrew Bible, had their origin in the Sanskrit language, which of course preceded both the Egyptian and Hebrew languages.

Akkadian Roots: *Šadu* or *Shaddu*

Another popular theory put forth about the development of the word "shaddai" is that its roots may be found in the Akkadian word "šadu" (or "shaddu"), meaning "**mountain**", which suggests **great strength**. When combined with "El", then "El Shaddai" becomes "**The God of the Mountain**".

Since people in ancient days believed that the gods dwelt high up in the mountains—and for the Hebrews, their deliverance from slavery in Egypt and the Law came from YHWH on Mount Sinai—this theory certainly deserves due consideration. It says that El Shaddai, as "king of the hill", is high and lifted up, far **above all** principalities, powers, and might—the **all-powerful**, or **GOD Almighty**.

Conclusion

Knowing that many of the words known to us today in different languages have been developed from multiple common sources, I tend toward acceptance of all these as sources of the word "shaddai". Where similarities occur among ancient languages, I suggest they all derive from a common source: Whether Sanskrit, Akkadian, or Egyptian—all of which preceded Hebrew—the source of all life, including languages, is the One who gave us the name, El Shaddai Himself.

How is "Shaddai" used in Scripture?

The proper noun "Shaddai", by itself, occurs 41 times in the Old Testament, 29 times in Job alone, and is translated "Almighty" in most English Bibles. In fact, the name "Shaddai" is the one written on the Mezuzah scroll⁵.

⁴ Hear, O Israel: The LORD (YHWH) our God (Elohim), the LORD (YHWH) is one.

⁵ Love the LORD (YHWH) your God (Elohim) with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

⁶ These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts.



- 7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.
- 8 Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.
- 9 Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.
(Deuteronomy 6:4-9 *parenthetical text added*)

because of your father's God (El), who helps you,
because of the Almighty (Shaddai), who blesses you
with blessings of the skies above, blessings of the
deep springs below, blessings of the breast (shad) and womb.
(Genesis 49:25 *parenthetical text added*)

"Blessed is the one whom God (Eloah) corrects;
so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty (Shaddai)."
(Job 5:17 *parenthetical text added*)

The Spirit of God (El) has made me;
he breath of the Almighty (Shaddai) gives me life.
(Job 33:4 *parenthetical text added*)

Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High (Elyon)
will rest in the shadow of the Almighty (Shaddai)."
(Psalm 91:1 *parenthetical text added*)

Wail, for the day of the LORD (YHWH) is near;
it will come like destruction from the Almighty (Shaddai).
(Isaiah 13:6 *parenthetical text added*)

See *also* Numbers 24:4, 16; Ruth 1:20,21; Job 5:17, 6:4, 6:14, 8:3-5, 11:7, 13:3, 15:25, 21:15,20 22:3, 22:17, 22:23-26, 23:16, 24:1, 27:2, 27:10-13, 29:5, 31:2, 31:35, 32:8, 34:10,12, 35:13, 37:23, 40:2; Psalm 68:14; Ezekiel 1:24; Joel 1:15.

How is the compound name used in Scripture?

The compound name "El Shaddai", translated "Almighty God" or "God Almighty", occurs seven times in the Old Testament.

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD (YHWH) appeared to him and said,
"I am God Almighty (El Shaddai); walk before me faithfully and be blameless."
(Genesis 17:1 *parenthetical text added*)

May God Almighty (El Shaddai) bless you and make you fruitful
and increase your numbers until you become a community of peoples.
(Genesis 28:3 *parenthetical text added*)

And God (Elohim) said to him, "I am God Almighty (El Shaddai);
be fruitful and increase in number. A nation and a community of nations
will come from you, and kings will be among your descendants."
(Genesis 35:11 *parenthetical text added*)

See *also* Genesis 48:3; Exodus 6:3; and Ezekiel 10:5.



How does this apply to me?

Considering how seldom the name appears outside of the patriarchal period, it would be easy to dismiss its importance and relevance in our lives today. That would be truly unfortunate. Let's look again at the two names.

The name "El" refers to GOD's **power** and **might**; and "Shaddai" refers to the One who **nourishes** and **completely satisfies**. So, as El who helps and Shaddai who abundantly blesses, El Shaddai is the **all-powerful** GOD, who is **more than enough**, and who **abundantly blesses** with all manner of blessings.

In the name "El Shaddai", He says He is both mighty **and** sufficient! In my lack, He is the One who **abundantly provides** all my needs; in times of trouble, He is my **strong tower** and **shelter**; and in my weakness, He is **strong**!

Your right hand, LORD (YHWH), was majestic in power.
Your right hand, LORD (YHWH), shattered the enemy.
(Exodus 15:6 *parenthetical text added*)

Jesus looked at them and said, "With man
this is impossible, but with God **all** things are **possible**."
(Matthew 19:6 *emphasis added*)

And my God will meet **all** your **needs**
according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.
(Philippians 4:19 *emphasis added*)

- ⁹ But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my **power** is made **perfect in weakness**." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.
- ¹⁰ That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then **I am strong**.

(2 Corinthians 12:9-10 *emphasis added*)

His strength can neither be increased nor diminished, and **no one** can stop Him from accomplishing all of His purposes.

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who **does not change** like shifting shadows.
(James 1:17 *emphasis added*)

Our God (Elohim) is in heaven; he does **whatever pleases him**.
(Psalm 115:3 *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

We can trust that El Shaddai's power is working to accomplish good outcomes for us because He sees the entire picture and knows the end from the beginning.

"I make known the end from the beginning,
from ancient times, what is still to come. I say,
'My purpose will stand, and I will **do all that I please**.'"
(Isaiah 46:10 *emphasis added*)



And we know that in all things God works for the good
of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.
(Romans 8:28 NIV)

GOD desires to bless us and to provide in abundance all of our needs. The name El Shaddai is indicative of a GOD who is powerful enough to do just that. Only an **all-powerful** GOD can bless **all** of mankind with **all** manner of blessings.

As Nathan Stone wrote in *Names of God*:

"...the idea of One who is all-powerful and all-mighty is implied . . . for only an all-powerful One could be all-sufficient and all-bountiful. He is almighty because He is able to carry out His purposes and plans to their fullest and most glorious and triumphant completion. . . . So He is able to save to the uttermost. And He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we can ask or think."⁶

As the One who **created** all things in heaven and on earth (John 1:3), who **eternally exists** (Nehemiah 9:5), and who **sustains** all things by His will alone (Colossians 1:17), El Shaddai is **answerable to no one**!

His **power** is **unlimited** and **unmatched**! Nothing is beyond His sight or His reach. **Nothing** is **too hard** for Him! Our minds cannot conceive all that El Shaddai can do!

Jesus Christ is El Shaddai!

Scripture tells us that Jesus Christ is completely sufficient for all matters of life and godliness.

³ His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.

⁴ Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

(2 Peter 1:3-4 NIV)

⁹ For in Him dwells all the **fullness** of the **Godhead** bodily.

¹⁰ And you are complete in Him, who is the Head of all principality and power.

(Colossians 2:9-10 MKJV *emphasis added*)

He is completely sufficient for:

- creation (Colossians 1:16-17);
- our salvation (Hebrews 10:10-12);
- our sanctification (Ephesians 5:26-27); and
- our glorification (Romans 8:30).

Jesus Christ manifests as our more-than-sufficient, all-nurturing El Shaddai as...

- the Eternal El 'Ôlâm with no beginning and no end (Isaiah 44:6, Revelation 1:17-18);
- YHWH Shalom, our perfect peace that passes understanding (Haggai 2:9, Ephesians 2:14);



- the Captain of our Salvation (Joshua 5:15, Hebrews 2:10);
- our High Priest (Psalm 110:4, Hebrews 3:1, 4:14-15, 5:6-10);
- the Righteous Servant (Isaiah 53:11, Matthew 20:28);
- YHWH Gâ'al, our Redeemer (Isaiah 41:14, 49:26, Galatians 4:4-5, Titus 2:14);
- the Light of the world (John 9:5);
- the Bread of Life (Nehemiah 9:20-21, Psalm 42:8, John 6:48, Hebrews 10:20);
- the door/way to eternal life (Zechariah 10:12, John 10:7, 14:6);
- our Sabbath rest (Hebrews 4:9);
- YHWH M'kaddesh, the Holy One (the Christ) of Israel (Isaiah 54:5, John 6:69);
- YHWH Tsid'Ke-nu, our Righteousness (Jeremiah 23:6, 1 Corinthians 1:30);
- YHWH Rohi, our Chief Shepherd (Psalm 23:1, John 10:11, 1 Peter 5:4);
- El Tsûr, the Rock of our Salvation (Psalm 62:2, Matthew 1:21); and
- the Ancient of Days (Daniel 7:13, Revelation 20:11-12).

Jesus Christ is "Hâyâh 'ăsher Hâyâh," **I AM** (Exodus 3:14, John 8:58)!

Meditation

Dawn Wilson, founder and director of *Heart Choices Today* and researcher for *Revive Our Hearts*, writes:

"In modern culture, the proclamation of God's power has gone silent in many churches. A God of love is more palpable, more easily received, than the God who is sovereign and powerful—the Mighty God who can turn the hearts of kings and direct nations to do His will.

"Habakkuk's **prayer** (3:1-16) expressed some of the reasons the prophet trembled over a 'report' about the Lord. He recounted the Lord's mighty character and works, His anger over sin, and His sovereignty over the nations. When God's prophets spoke His words with power, sometimes people and nations listened and turned to the Lord; but others resisted God. So it is today when God's people speak up about His power and might.

"If pastors preach the whole counsel of God, they will remind God's people to see Him as He is: the reigning '**Lord God Almighty**' (Rev. 11:17) who will someday exert His great power and reign forever. He is the God who **chooses** (1 Pet 2:9) us to make us a holy people and He transforms us with His power. He is to be honored with reverence and **awe** (Heb 12:28-29)—holy 'fear of the Lord.'" ⁷

In order to experience GOD's power and exceedingly abundant sufficiency, we must realize our own **insufficiency**. GOD cannot fill that which is already full. He cannot pour blessings into hands that are holding tightly to that which is inferior



to what He desires to give us—be it past hurts, anger, resentment, worry, fear, or even former blessings and victories.

If we want to experience all that YHWH has revealed through His names, we must first make ourselves empty vessels which El Shaddai can then fill and use! Then . . . and **only** then . . . is He able to **be** El Shaddai to us!

¹ *El Shaddai* written by Michael Card and John Thompson, performed by Amy Grant, ©1982, Myrrh Records.

² **Akkadian** (lišanum akkaditum) A Semitic language claimed by some Paleolinguists (those who study dead languages) to be the language from which Hebrew evolved. It was spoken in ancient Mesopotamia, particularly by the Assyrians and Babylonians. The name of the language is derived from the city of Akkad, a major center of Mesopotamian civilization.

³ Stone, Nathan, *Names of God*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1944, 2010. pp. 50-51.

⁴ (M. de Jassy, *The Monist*, January 1908; Massey, Gerald, *Book of the Beginnings*, Vol. II, p. 161)

Behymer, F. M., ON THE ORIGIN OF THE HEBREW DEITY-NAME EL SHADDAI. *The Monist* 25, no. 2 (1915): 269-75. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27900533>.

⁵ **Mezuzah scroll**



Religious texts from Deuteronomy inscribed on cloth parchment, rolled up and placed into a decorative case, and attached to the doorframe of Jewish households in accordance with Jewish Law. Note: The scroll is always placed at an angle with the top toward the doorway to represent the blessing being carried into the home.

⁶ Stone, Nathan, *Names of God*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1944, 2010. p. 56.

⁷ Wilson, Dawn. *Names of God series, What Is the Meaning of the Name El Shaddai?*, <https://www.biblestudytools.com/bible-study/topical-studies/what-is-the-meaning-of-the-name-shaddai.html>, np, 09/30/18.

El Elyon אל עליון Most High God / God Most High

Pronounced *El El-yone'*, the word "elyon" ('elyôn) is an adjective that means "**elevated**", "**lofty**", or "**supreme**".

Etymology

According to *Strong's Hebrew Dictionary*, the word "elyon" derives from two Hebrew roots, the second a root of the first:

- root "'lh" or "ly" ("לָה"), meaning "to **go up**" or "**ascend**".
- "'âlâh" ("עָלָה"), meaning "to **ascend**", "be **high**", or "to **mount**".

Before we discuss the meaning of the name and all its implications, I would like to speak to that root word "'âlâh". Obviously, it is the same root used for Islam's "Allah". Understandably, this might be a point of concern or contention for some Christians to think of YHWH—our Elohim . . . our Adonai . . . our El Shaddai—having an association with Islam's false God.

However, it should not be. Remember, the El of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Israel) is also the El of Abraham, Ismael, and Esau. GOD's covenant promise to Abraham was to bless his offspring with many descendants.

- ² "And I will make you a great nation. And I will bless you and make your name great. And you shall be a blessing.
 - ³ And I will bless those that bless you and curse the one who curses you. And in you shall all families of the earth be blessed."
- (Genesis 12:2-3 MKJV)

Of course, we know the blessing for the "families of the earth" was fulfilled in the Messiah's propitiatory¹ death on behalf of **all** the families of the earth and was sealed/approved by YHWH in the resurrection. Nevertheless, the promise to bless Abraham was originally given with no stated pre-condition, no stipulated restrictions insisted upon as a condition of the promise.

Many years later, YHWH told Abraham that the covenant would be fulfilled through his yet-to-be-born son Isaac. However, He did not abandon Ishmael—the son of the slave woman, Hagar—but made a similar promise to bless and increase Ishmael.

- ¹⁹ Then God (El) said, "Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.
- ²⁰ And as for Ishmael, I have heard you: I will surely bless him; I will make him fruitful and will greatly increase his numbers. He will be the father of twelve rulers, and I will make him into a great nation.
- ²¹ But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you by this time next year."

(Genesis 17:19-21 *parenthetical text added*)



"I will make the son of the slave into a nation also, because he is your offspring."
(Genesis 21:13 NIV)

The questions, then, become:

- Are YHWH and El the same GOD or different Gods?
- Can YHWH have any association with Allah?
- Is Allah the same as YHWH?

Let's look at two key verses that assist in answering this seeming paradox.

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD (YHWH)
appeared to him and said, "I am God (El) Almighty (Shaddai);
walk before me faithfully and be blameless."
(Genesis 17:1 *parenthetical text added*)

- ² God (Elohim) also said to Moses, "I am the LORD (YHWH),
³ I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God (El) Almighty
(Shaddai), but by my name the LORD (YHWH) I did not make myself fully
known to them.
(Exodus 6:2-3 *parenthetical text added*)

Recall that even though Moses used YHWH's distinctive name in his narrative about Abraham, He made it clear that Abraham knew GOD as "El", not as "YHWH". True, the verses suggest an **identification** between YHWH and El Shaddai—and thus by inference, an identification between YHWH and Allah. However, they acknowledge a more definite and distinctive **connection** between El, the God of the **patriarchs**, and YHWH, the God of the **Mosaic** era.

Clearly, what the verses tell us is that, even though they didn't know it at the time, the Patriarchs (Abraham and his descendants) who worshiped El in the past were actually worshipping YHWH, even though they didn't yet know Him by that name.²

It is clear, therefore, that until YHWH revealed His distinctive name to Moses and He **chose** Israel as His own in fulfillment of the covenant He'd made with Abraham, **all** of Abraham's descendants worshipped El. This would include those who went on to worship Allah.

In other words, although they started out worshipping the same El, it was Israel **alone** to whom YHWH revealed Himself, whom He charged with making His name known, and through whom "all the families of the earth" have been blessed. Thus, to answer the questions posed earlier...

- Are YHWH and El the same God or different Gods? He is the same GOD. The GOD of the Patriarchs, El/El Shaddai, later revealed His distinctive name, YHWH, to Moses.
- Can YHWH have any association with Allah? Only in the sense that YHWH is El, but El is **not** Allah.
- Is Allah the same as YHWH? No. The El whom the Patriarchs worshiped told Moses that His personal, distinctive name is "יהוה" (YHWH), not "Allah". And, YHWH's covenant promise was fulfilled in Isaac's descendants, **not** Ismael's.



How is "elyon" used in Scripture?

In each case in which the adjective "elyon" occurs, it denotes that which is **highest** or **uppermost**. It is used to describe...

- the **height** of objects or places:

The high (elyon) places, however, were not removed;
the people continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense there.
Jotham rebuilt the Upper Gate of the temple of the LORD (YHWH).
(2 Kings 15:35 *parenthetical text added*)

The king of Assyria sent his supreme commander, his chief officer
and his field commander with a large army, from Lachish to King Hezekiah
at Jerusalem. They came up (alah) to Jerusalem and stopped at the
aqueduct of the Upper (elyon) Pool, on the road to the Washerman's Field.
(2 Kings 18:17 *parenthetical text added*)

- the **prominence** or **high position** of persons:

And I will appoint him to be my firstborn,
the most exalted (elyon) of the kings of the earth.
(Psalm 89:27 *parenthetical text added*)

- the **prominence** or **elevated ranking** YHWH placed on **Israel** as a nation:

He has declared that he will set you in praise, fame and honor
high above (elyon) all the nations he has made and that you will be
a people holy to the LORD (YHWH) your God (Elohim), as he promised.
(Deuteronomy 26:19 *parenthetical text added*)

If you fully obey the LORD (YHWH) your God (Elohim)
and carefully follow all his commands I give you today,
the LORD (YHWH) your God (Elohim) will set you
high above (elyon) all the nations on earth.
(Deuteronomy 28:1 *parenthetical text added*)

When applied to YHWH—the covenant-keeping El—the name "Elyon" stresses His **highest supremacy** above all other gods who dare call themselves "gods". When the two names "El" and "Elyon" are combined, the resultant name can be literally translated as "the **Extremely-Exalted, Mighty, Highest GOD**".

I cry out to God (Elohim) Most High (Elyon), to God (El), who vindicates me.
(Psalm 57:2 *parenthetical text added*)

He is stronger than the strongest "Force", higher than the highest "Power", the Answer to every question, the superlative all-encompassing, all-surpassing GOD!



How often does the single name "Elyon" appear in Scripture?

The name "Elyon", in reference to YHWH, appears in the Scriptures 34 times—many in poetic passages, especially in the Psalms. It also appears once in Moses' final song that he recited to the whole assembly of Israel after YHWH had refused to allow him to enter the Promised Land.

When the Most High (Elyon) gave the nations their inheritance,
when he divided all mankind, he set up boundaries
or the peoples according to the number of the sons of Israel.
(Deuteronomy 32:8 *parenthetical text added*)

Other Old Testament passages that use the single name "Elyon" in reference to YHWH—sometimes as a separate name parallel to "El"—include:

the prophecy of one who hears the words of God (El),
who has knowledge from the Most High (Elyon),
who sees a vision from the Almighty (Shaddai),
who falls prostrate, and whose eyes are opened:
(Numbers 24:16 *parenthetical text added*)

The LORD (YHWH) thundered from heaven;
the voice of the Most High (Elyon) resounded.
(2 Samuel 22:14 *parenthetical text added*)

I will give thanks to the LORD (YHWH) because of his righteousness;
I will sing the praises of the name of the LORD (YHWH) Most High (Elyon).
(Psalm 7:17 *parenthetical text added*)

Let them know that you, whose name is the LORD (YHWH) --
that you alone are the Most High (Elyon) over all the earth.
(Psalm 83:18 *parenthetical text added*)

Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High (Elyon)
will rest in the shadow of the Almighty (Shaddai).
(Psalm 91:1 *parenthetical text added*)

For you, LORD (YHWH), are the Most High (Elyon)
over all the earth; you are exalted far above all gods (elohim).
(Psalm 97:9 *parenthetical text added*)

How often does "El Elyon" appear in Scripture?

The compound name "El Elyon" (translated "**God Most High**" or "**Most High God**", depending on which English Bible translation you are using)—occurs 12 times in the Old Testament.

The name first occurs four times in Genesis when the Priest Melchizedek (Hebrews 7:1) meets Abram upon his return following a great military victory.

¹⁸ Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High (El Elyon),



- ¹⁹ and he blessed Abram, saying, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High (El Elyon), Creator of heaven and earth.
- ²⁰ And praise be to God Most High (El Elyon), who delivered your enemies into your hand." Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.
- ²¹ The king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the people and keep the goods for yourself."
- ²² But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "With raised hand I have sworn an oath to the LORD (YHWH), God Most High (El Elyon), Creator of heaven and earth
- ²³ that I will accept nothing belonging to you, not even a thread or the strap of a sandal, so that you will never be able to say, 'I made Abram rich.'

(Genesis 14:18-23 *parenthetical text added*)

They remembered that God (Elohim) was their Rock,
that God Most High (El Elyon) was their Redeemer.
(Psalm 78:35 *parenthetical text added*)

But they put God (Elohim) to the test and rebelled against
the Most High (Elyon); they did not keep his statutes.
(Psalm 78:56 *parenthetical text added*)

"I will ascend above the tops of the clouds;
I will make myself like the Most High (Elyon)."
(Isaiah 14:14 *parenthetical text added*)

See also Psalms 7:10, 9:2, 57:2, 78:35;
Hosea 11:7; Mark 5:7; Luke 8:28; Acts
16:17; Hebrews 7:1.

El Elyon is the *Highest* Power!

The phrase, "*May the force be with you!*" has become a part of our popular culture vernacular. Another term that people use frequently, and without threat of antagonizing or alienating anyone, is "*Higher Power*". In religious circles, some see those two terms as being offensive to GOD, as they think they deny His existence.

But, do they . . . really? For many who claim to be "Christian", not because they've accepted Christ as Savior, but because of what they **aren't**—they aren't Buddhist or Hindu or Muslim or Atheist or whatever—"God" is essentially the same as "the Higher Power" or "the Force". They all refer to a metaphysical, omnipotent and omnipresent, indescribable and impersonal energy. The only difference is that those who want to

Did you know...?

All the references to the "**Most High God**" in the book of Daniel do **not** represent "*El Elyon*". Rather, they come from the Chaldee language, or the "Aramaic dialect", as it is sometimes called. Also referred to as "Syrian", it was the common language in Western Asia, and after the Exile gradually came to be the popular language of Palestine.

"**Most High**" in the book of Daniel represents "*'illay*" ("עִלַּי"), which means "**supreme**" or "**high**" and actually has its roots in "*âlâh*"; and "**God**" represents "*êlâhh*" ("אֱלֹהִים"), the root of which is "*Eloah*".

Nebuchadnezzar then approached the opening of the blazing furnace and shouted, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High ('illay) God ('êlâhh), come out! Come here!" So Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came out of the fire,"
(Daniel 3:26 *parenthetical text added*)

deny His existence or who want to be their own "gods" can use words like "the Force" and "the Higher Power" without violating their need to claim self existence.

GOD's Word, however, says that YHWH is **the** "Most High God". That means He is **Stronger** than the strongest "force", **Higher** than the highest "power", the **Answer** to every question, the superlative **all-encompassing, all surpassing** GOD! His dominion is everlasting, and His kingdom endures forever!

³⁴ "At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most High (Elyon); I honored and glorified him who **lives forever**. His dominion is an **eternal** dominion; his kingdom endures from generation to generation.

³⁵ "All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does **as he pleases** with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. **No one can hold back** his hand or say to him: 'What have you done?'"

(Daniel 4:34 *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

He is the **Supreme Authority**, which no power in the universe can challenge, question, or conquer. No external force can cause Him to change His mind or alter His plans, but He has the **absolute** ability and authority to exercise His right according to His will.

I believe Kay Arthur said it best when she wrote about the name "El Elyon":

"..if God is not sovereign, if He is not in control, if all things are not under His dominion, then He is not the Most High, and you and I are either in the hands of fate (whatever that is), in the hands of man, or in the hands of the devil."³

And Bruce Hurt, otherwise known online as *Precept Austin*, shared this:

"God gave me this song (by Robin Mark) to remind me that He is the Most High God, El Elyon, and that 'He brings death and makes alive . . . He humbles and He exalts . . . He lowers us to raise us so that we can sing His praises. Whatever is His way all is well.'

"God is sovereign and He is in absolute control. Our world may feel like no one is in control, but please know that El Elyon has perfect control of all that happens in this world and nothing happens that He does not permit. Do you acknowledge Him as the Most High? Rest assured that you will bend your knee to Him one day, either by compulsion or conviction. I encourage you to begin today."⁴

I will give thanks to the LORD (YHWH) because of his righteousness;
I will sing the praises of the name of the LORD (YHWH) Most High (Elyon).

(Psalm 7:17 *parenthetical text added*)

For the LORD (YHWH) Most High (Elyon) is awesome,
the great King over all the earth.

(Psalm 47:2 *parenthetical text added*)



Meditation

What the Bible says...

about יהוה (YHWH)

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
(Genesis 1:1)

It is I who made the earth and created mankind on it. My own hands stretched out the heavens; I marshaled their starry hosts.
(Isaiah 45:12)

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.
(Isaiah 7:14)

"I the LORD **do not change.**"
(Malachi 3:6a *emphasis added*)

It is written: "'As surely as I live,' says the Lord, '**every knee will bow** before me; **every tongue will acknowledge God.**'"
(Romans 14:11 *emphasis added* ref. Isaiah 45:23)

"I, the LORD--with the **first** of them and with the **last**--I am he."
(Isaiah 41:4b *emphasis added*)

"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."
(Revelation 1:8)

"do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God **will be with you** wherever you go."
(Joshua 1:9b *emphasis added*)

about Jesus

- ¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
 - ² He was with God in the beginning.
 - ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.
- (John 1:1-3)

"The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us").
(Matthew 1:23)

Jesus Christ is **the same** yesterday and today and forever.
(Hebrews 13:8 *emphasis added*)

that at the name of Jesus **every knee should bow**, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
(Philippians 2:10 *emphasis added*)

"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the **First** and the **Last**, the **Beginning** and the **End.**"
(Revelation 22:13 *emphasis added*)

"And surely **I am with you always**, to the very end of the age."
(Matthew 28:20b *emphasis added*)

In His exalted position as our **Sovereign Ruler** and **Righteous Judge**, YHWH Elohim determined the penalty for sin.

For everyone belongs to me, the parent as well as the child--
both alike belong to me. The one **who sins** is the one who **will die**.
(Ezekiel 18:4 *emphasis added*)

As the **Most High God**—who does what He pleases and no one dares ask or accuse Him—He stepped out of Heaven, put on flesh, and came to do what we could not do for ourselves. He took our beating, shed His blood, and paid the penalty for us that He Himself had decreed had to be paid!

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God
is **eternal life in Christ Jesus** our Lord.
(Romans 6:23 *emphasis added*)

To **know Jesus** is to **know El Elyon**! Jesus Christ **is** the **Most High God**! Paul Wilbur said it best in the reprise to his song, "El Elyon"⁵:

"El Elyon Most High God
Holy is Your Name
Elohim El Shaddai
Yeshua Adonai
Let the glory of Your name be magnified
Lord Most High!"

-
- ¹ **propitiatory** – Having power to atone for or reconcile by way of compensation. Christ's death on Calvary paid the debt we owe for our sin so that we won't have to.
- ² Source: DiMattei, Steven. *Contradictions in the Bible, Are Yahweh and El the same god OR different gods?* <http://contradictionsinthebible.com/are-Yahweh-and-el-the-same-god/>, np, 10/08/18.
- ³ Arthur, Kay, *LORD, I want to Know You*, Copyright © 1992, 2000 by Kay Arthur. p. 15.
- ⁴ Precept Austin, *El Elyon – God Most High*, https://www.preceptaustin.org/el-elyon-_god_most_high, 01/08/18, 10/08/18.
- ⁵ *El Elyon*, written and performed by Paul Wilbur. Copyright © 2005 by Paul Wilbur.



YHWH Jireh (Yireh)

יְהוָה יִרְאֶה

YHWH Sees / Will Provide

Pronounced Yä-wá' Yir'eh, the compound name appears in the Old Testament only once—in a statement by Abraham to memorialize God's intervention in the sacrifice of his son, Isaac, by providing an animal substitute.

So Abraham called that place **The LORD Will Provide**.
And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided."
(Genesis 22:14 emphasis added)

Etymology

Most people have been taught that this name means "**The LORD Provides**". However, that is a misnomer and imprecise teaching.

The word "*jir'eh*" (yir'eh) ("יִרְאֶה") derives from the Hebrew word "*ra'ah*" (râ'âh) ("רָאָה"), which means "**to see**" or "**to foresee**". In the Hebrew Bible, it is translated "**to see**" or "**to appear**", and it is often used to refer to someone who foresees, such as a seer—not to be confused with the word for prophet, "*nabiy*" (nâbîy').

Formerly in Israel, if someone went to inquire of God,
they would say, "Come, let us go to the seer (jir'eh),"
because the prophet (nabiy') of today used to be called a seer.
(1 Samuel 9:9 *parenthetical text added*)

The LORD (YHWH) warned Israel and Judah through all his prophets (nabiy') and seers (jir'eh): "Turn from your evil ways. Observe my commands and decrees, in accordance with the entire Law that I commanded your ancestors to obey and that I delivered to you through my servants the prophets."
(2 Kings 17:13 *parenthetical text added*)

To be sure, not all words translated "seer" in the English Bibles have the same Hebrew root. For example, the Hebrew word for "seer" in 1 Chronicles 9:22 is "*ro'eh*", meaning "*one who sees a vision*"; and in 1 Chronicles 21:9 and many other verses, the Hebrew word for "seer" is "*chozeh*", meaning "*a beholder*".

What is the significance of the name "YHWH Jireh"?

Most of YHWH's compound names and titles arise out of an historic incident, and portray YHWH in some aspect of His character meeting specific human needs. Naturally, all of these names are significant because of their relationship to the name "YHWH".

It isn't enough that we simply know the various names YHWH has given us as some sort of rote learning exercise. If we truly desire to know YHWH on the intimate and personal level that He yearns to share with us, then we must study these names and designations and their significance in the historical settings in which they're given. Only then, may we even come close to grasping all that the Elohim of Heaven and Earth wants us to know about Himself.



Why else would He inspire these revelations about His character and His interactions with His creation?

The compound name "YHWH Jireh", as recorded in Genesis 22:14, is significant because it commemorates a great deliverance. The patriarch, Abraham, had just endured the most arduous emotional trial anyone could ever go through. After he and his wife, Sarah, had been blessed with the miraculous birth of their son, Isaac, now the LORD had asked him to sacrifice that same son.

Surely, Abraham would have gladly sacrificed thousands of bulls or lambs. But God said, "Take your son..." He might have been willing to sacrifice a servant or even Ishmael, his beloved son by the slave woman. But God said, "...your **only son** whom you love, Isaac..." (Genesis 22:2)

After all the tests, trials, and hardships he'd gone through prior to this—even leaving his country and loving God more than his own father—now the Almighty was asking him to give up his precious son whom he loved with all his heart!

The Bible doesn't tell us everything that went through Abraham's mind or what that three-day journey to Moriah was like. All we know is what Abraham **knew** for sure. YHWH had asked him to "take . . . your **only son** . . . Isaac . . . and **sacrifice him**."

And now, just as he was about to plunge the knife into Isaac's throat, the LORD called out and stopped him. **Just in time!** And there, caught in the thickets, was a ram which the LORD had provided for Abraham and Isaac to sacrifice together as a burnt offering to the LORD.

Naming the place "YHWH Jireh" serves as a perpetual reminder of the marvelous, awe-inspiring grace and provision of YHWH.

How did "to see" become "will provide"?

Obviously, there might be some confusion as to how the word meaning "to see" can then also be translated to "will provide"—unless we consider the nature of **YHWH Shaddai**.

In His eternality, our **covenant-keeping, self-existent** GOD knows all things and foresees all things. He foresaw man's fall into sin and our need for redemption, and "while we were yet sinners," He made provision for that in the Person of Jesus Christ (Romans 5:8). In the same way, He foresees all our needs and **in foreseeing**, He **goes before** us and **provides** for them before we are even aware of the need!

So then, YHWH Jireh is El Shaddai . . . **fulfilled!** He is our Almighty GOD who abundantly **blesses** and **supplies** all that He foresees!

As the 19th Century Anglican pastor H. W. Webb-Peploe wrote in *The Titles of Jehovah*:

"...with God, to see is also to foresee. As the One who possesses eternal wisdom and knowledge, He knows the end from the beginning. . . . From eternity to eternity He foresees everything. . . . Thus with God foreseeing is prevision. As the Jehovah of righteousness and holiness, and of love and redemption, having prevision of man's sin, and fall, and need, He makes provision for that need. For provision, after all, is merely a compound of two Latin words meaning "to see beforehand". And we may learn from a dictionary that "provide" is simply the verb and "prevision" the noun of seeing beforehand. Thus to God prevision is necessarily followed by provision, for He certainly will provide for that need which His foreseeing shows Him to exist. With Him prevision and provision are one and the same thing."¹



Meditation

After we've gone through hardships or passed some particularly difficult trial, it is common for us to think, now that the storm has passed, we can relax. We might even be tempted to think the Almighty should give us a hearty pat on the back for a "job well done."

However, there's an important lesson to be learned from the trial Abraham faced here. Notice the words in Genesis 22:1—"...**after these things**, God tempted him..." Abraham had already proven his love for GOD many times over! He had risked everything he had to follow GOD, even to the point of leaving his father and his homeland. Surely, he had proven his love for GOD!

It's important to understand that GOD doesn't tempt us to sin (even though in Abraham's case, it would not have been sin because he would have been doing what God had commanded him to do). Rather, GOD places us in these trials to help us discover **His** grace and so that we might learn how strong we are in Him!

in all these things we are **more than conquerors** through him who loved us.
(Romans 8:37 *emphasis added*)

That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I **am strong**.
(2 Corinthians 12:10 *emphasis added*)

From Abraham to Joseph, from David and the Prophets to the Apostles, Scripture makes it clear that victory in former trials neither supplants nor protects us from future trials. In fact, just as the strongest steel is forged in the hottest furnaces, so too, strong faith is forged in strong trials.

Another lesson to be learned from Abraham is that his deliverance was not due to any elaborate or clever scheme on his part. There is no indication that he argued, contrived, dodged, or even try to pray his way out of it. It was purely YHWH Jireh's doing!

YHWH Jireh always has His eye upon us. He always sees our sufferings, and He always provides exactly **what** He determines is needed **when** it's needed. He will not only manifest, but will **magnify** His **wisdom, power**, and **goodness** on our behalf so that He might be glorified in us and through us!

These have come so that the proven genuineness of your **faith**—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though **refined by fire**—may result in **praise, glory** and **honor** when Jesus Christ is revealed.
(1 Peter 1:7 *emphasis added*)

¹ Webb-Peploe, *The Titles of Jehovah*, p. 24 as per Stone, Nathan, *Names of God*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1944, 2010. pp. 79-80.





YHWH M'Kaddesh

יהוה קדוש

YHWH Who Sanctifies or Makes Holy

It may be argued that no other name more accurately expresses the **bounteous nature** and character of God and the requirements He places on His people than the name "YHWH M'Kaddesh"/"YHWH Qâdash".

Pronounced **Yä-wá' M-ka'dash** or **Yä-wá' Kaw'dash** the compound name is translated into English as "**YHWH who Sanctifies**" or "**YHWH who Makes Holy**".

Etymology

Many studies of this name limit their discussion to the three instances in which the specific compound name, "YHWH M'kaddesh", appears in Scripture; and they group other related Hebrew words under the one term—"m'kaddesh" or "m'keddeshem". However, since there are actually four related Hebrew words that derive from the same root verb, I found it helpful to my understanding of this most wonderful name to look more closely at all four words, both individually and collectively.

The four Hebrew words that derive from the same root verb, "*qâdash*" ("קִדַּשׁ"), are so closely similar in English that their differences are negligible only in Hebrew grammar:

- The verb form, "*m'kaddesh*" ("קִדַּשׁ"), means "**to be made clean**" and is used only in the name "YHWH M'kaddesh"—as in "**the LORD (YHWH) who Sanctifies (M'kaddesh).**" (Exodus 31:13)
- The verb, "*qadash*" (*qâdash*) ("קִדַּשׁ"), means "**to make**" as ceremonially or morally "**clean**" (pertaining to a person or persons) and is usually translated "**sanctify**", "**dedicate**", or "**consecrate**"—as in "**consecrate (qadash) yourselves.**" (Leviticus 11:44)
- The adjective, "*qadosh*" (*qâdôsh*) ("קִדְשׁ"), means "**holy**" or "**sacred**" by high status or superiority (pertaining to GOD, angels, a sanctuary)—as in "**the Holy (Qadosh) One of Israel.**" (Psalm 89:18)
- The adjective, "*qodesh*" (*qôdesh*) ("קִדְשׁ"), means "**consecrated**", "**dedicated**", or "**hallowed**" (pertaining to a thing or object)—as in "**they are holy (qodesh)**" or "**holy (qodesh) garments.**" (Ezekiel 42:14)

How often does "YHWH M'Kaddesh" appear in Scripture?

The compound name, "YHWH M'Kaddesh", appears only three times in the Old Testament.

"Say to the Israelites, 'You must observe my Sabbaths. This will be a sign between me and you for the generations to come, so you may know that I am the LORD (YHWH), who makes you holy (M'kaddesh).'"
(Exodus 31:13 *parenthetical text added*)



"Keep my decrees and follow them. I am the LORD (YHWH), who makes you holy (M'kaddesh)."
(Leviticus 20:8 *parenthetical text added*)

"Regard them as holy, because they offer up the food of your God (Elohim). Consider them holy (qadosh), because I the LORD (YHWH) am holy (qadosh)--I who make you holy (M'kaddesh)."
(Leviticus 21:8 *parenthetical text added*)

How are "qadash", "qadosh", or "qodesh" used in Scripture?

As you can see from the preceding verse, it is not unusual to find two or more of the other three related word forms in the same verse. Following is a list of verses using at least two of the other word forms. Although not specific to the name "YHWH M'Kaddesh", itself, this list reveals how serious YHWH is about having everything related to Him set apart from all other uses.

- Both "qodesh" and "qadash" are used 55 times in 22 verses, as in...

⁹ "Take the anointing oil and anoint the tabernacle and everything in it; consecrate (qadash) it and all its furnishings, and it will be holy (qadosh)."

¹⁰ "And thou shalt anoint the altar of the burnt offering, and all his vessels, and sanctify (qadash) the altar: and it shall be an altar most holy (qadosh)."

(Exodus 40:10 KJV *parenthetical text added*)

See also Exodus 28:38, 29:33,37, 30:29, 40:13; Leviticus 22:2-3,16,32, 27:14; 1 Samuel 21:5; 2 Kings 12:18; 1 Chronicles 23:13, 26:26; 2 Chronicles 5:11, 29:5, 31:6, 18; Ezekiel 44:19; Haggai 2:12.

- Both "qadash" and "qadosh" are used 16 times in six verses, as in...

"I am the LORD (YHWH) your God (Elohim); consecrate (qadash) yourselves and be holy (qadosh), because I am holy (qadosh)."
(Leviticus 11:44a *parenthetical text added*)

See also Leviticus 6:27, 20:7, 21:8; Isaiah 5:16, 29:23.

- The adjectives "qodesh" and "qadosh" are both used 26 times in nine verses, as in...

Exalt the LORD (YHWH) our God (Elohim) and worship at his holy (qodesh) mountain, for the LORD (YHWH) our God (Elohim) is holy (qadosh).
(Psalm 99:9 *parenthetical text added*)

See also Leviticus 7:6, 21:6, 24:9; 2 Chronicles 35:3; Isaiah 58:13; Ezekiel 39:7, 42:13; Daniel 8:13.

In addition to the above, GOD's Word uses "qadosh" 74 times in 91 verses; "qadash" 100 times in 124 verses; and "qodesh" 389 times in 351 verses.

In other words, in addition to the name "YHWH M'Kaddesh", YHWH uses the terms meaning "holy" (set apart), "consecrated", "sacred", or "to make clean" **660 times** in 603 verses.



Obviously, being consecrated or set apart to YHWH's service alone is of the utmost importance to Him!

As Himself the Holy One, YHWH is *separate from* and exalted *above all else* in the universe.

Whatever seeming differences the various English words may suggest, the primary idea of separating or setting apart to our one true holy GOD is common to them all. The related word forms are used throughout Scripture to...

- set apart specific days for worship, rest, or celebration:

⁸ "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy (qadash).
⁹ Six days you shall labor and do all your work,
¹⁰ but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD (YHWH) your God (Elohim). On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns.
¹¹ For in six days the LORD (YHWH) made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD (YHWH) blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy (qadash)."
(Exodus 20:8-11 *parenthetical text added*)

"On the fifteenth day of the seventh month, hold a sacred (qodesh) assembly and do no regular work. Celebrate a festival to the LORD (YHWH) for seven days."
(Numbers 29:12 *parenthetical text added*)

See *also* Exodus 12:16, 31:15, 35:2; Numbers 28:18,25-26, 29:1,7,12; 1 Samuel 21:5; 1 Kings 8:8; Nehemiah 8:9-11; Isaiah 58:13.

- emphasize the difference between the "Holy One" of the Bible and the many detestable pagan deities:

"When they see among them their children, the work of my hands, they will keep my name holy (qadash); they will acknowledge the holiness (qadash) of the Holy One (qadosh) of Jacob, and will stand in awe of the God (El) of Israel."
(Isaiah 29:23 *parenthetical text added*)

"I will show the holiness (qadash) of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD (YHWH), declares the Sovereign (Adonai) LORD (YHWH), when I am proved holy (qadash) through you before their eyes."
(Ezekiel 36:23 *parenthetical text added*)

See *also* Leviticus 22:2,32; 1 Kings 9:3,7; 2 Chronicles 7:16,20.

- dedicate certain articles for service to YHWH:

King David dedicated (qadash) these articles to the LORD (YHWH), as he had done with the silver and gold from all the nations he had subdued:
(2 Samuel 8:11 *parenthetical text added*)



"You shall take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle,
and all that is in it, and shall make it holy (qadash),
and all its furniture: and it will be holy (qodesh)."
(Exodus 40:9 *parenthetical text added*)

See *also* Exodus 28:2 & 4; Zechariah 14:21.

- set apart individuals or even an entire nation:

"'you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy (qadosh)
nation.' These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites."
(Exodus 19:6 *parenthetical text added*)

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born
I set you apart (qadash); I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."
(Jeremiah 1:5 *parenthetical text added*)

See *also* Exodus 13:2, 28:36; Deuteronomy 7:6.

- designate a particular building or location as holy:

"Eat it in the sanctuary (qodesh) area, because it is your share
and your sons' share of the food offerings presented to the LORD (YHWH);
for so I have been commanded."
(Leviticus 10:13 *parenthetical text added*)

This is what the LORD (YHWH) says: "I will return to Zion and dwell in
Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the Faithful City, and the mountain
of the LORD Almighty (Shaddai) will be called the Holy (qodesh) Mountain."
(Zechariah 8:3 *parenthetical text added*)

See *also* Exodus 25:8; Joel 3:17; Obadiah 1:17.

All of these instances refer to contact or interactions with the one true holy GOD. The Sabbath day was holy because YHWH rested in it; the mountain of the LORD and the sanctuary were holy because **YHWH dwelt there**; the people of YHWH were to be holy because **He** would **dwell among them** and they would represent Him to the rest of the world.

YHWH our GOD is above all else!

This was the first truth Israel learned about YHWH. As Himself the Holy One, YHWH is **separate from** and exalted **above all else** in the universe.

"Be holy because I, the LORD (YHWH)
your God (Elohim), am holy (qadosh)."
(Leviticus 19:2b *parenthetical text added*)

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD (YHWH) our God (Elohim), the LORD (YHWH) is one."
(Deuteronomy 6:4 *parenthetical text added*)

Some opponents of Trinitarian theology use this verse as proof against that doctrine. Of course, such arguments show not only a lack of understanding of the unique unity and concert of the triune Godhead, but they also neglect the full context in which YHWH made this statement.

Regardless of how one feels about the Trinitarian doctrine, we know that YHWH cannot be resolved into various kinds of deity. Thus, in saying that "YHWH is **one**," YHWH was denying the validity of, and separating Himself from, identification with the other nations' polytheistic gods, such as Baalim. YHWH was, in fact, saying that He is the **one** and **only GOD** separate from and superior to all other gods.

You were shown these things so that you might know that
the LORD (YHWH) **is** God (Elohim); besides him there is **no other**.
(Deuteronomy 4:35 *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

He is holy!

In Isaiah's vision of the LORD on His throne, he recorded that the seraphim—those splendid, gigantic "fiery ones" (possibly an allusion to their burning love for the Almighty)—cover their faces while proclaiming YHWH's holiness.

- ¹ In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord (Adonai), high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple.
- ² Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they **covered their faces**, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying.
- ³ And they were calling to one another: "**Holy** (qadosh), **holy** (qadosh), **holy** (qadosh) is the LORD (YHWH) Almighty; the whole earth is **full of his glory**."
- ⁴ At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

(Isaiah 6:1-4 *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

Do they cover their faces because YHWH's glory and holiness are too intense to behold? Or is it because, as Bible scholar Nathan Stone suggests, that in spite of their own blazing glory, they are so aware of their unworthiness that they don't want to desecrate One so holy even with their gaze? Recall what YHWH told Moses when he asked to see GOD.

"But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live."
(Exodus 33:20)

The most fundamental, solemn, and impressive of all the attributes of YHWH is His holiness. It is this intrinsic attribute that makes Him **the** GOD! Apart from His holiness, He would cease to **be** GOD! As Nathan Stone quoted in *Names of God*:

"It is this holiness of which an old Scottish divine writes: 'It is the balance . . . of all the attributes of Deity. Power without holiness would degenerate into cruelty; omniscience without holiness would become craft; justice without holiness would degenerate into revenge; and goodness without holiness would be passionate and intemperate fondness doing mischief rather than accomplishing good.' It is this holiness which gives to God grandeur and majesty, and more than anything else constitutes His fullness and perfection."¹

YHWH our GOD is holy! All the Law and the miraculous events that followed on Mt. Sinai and in the wilderness were intended to indelibly impress upon Israel the truth of the holiness of their God. It is this holiness of which YHWH is so jealous.



Do not worship any other god (el), for the LORD (YHWH),
whose name is Jealous (Kanno), is a jealous God (El).
(Exodus 34:14 *parenthetical text added*)

YHWH's holiness is so pure . . . so intense . . . so overpowering . . . so incomprehensible . . . that it cannot be compared with any other gods. What comparison is there between the period at the end of a sentence and our galaxy with its thousands of solar systems? Or, how would you compare a microscopic mite with an albatross or the condor?

Ludicrous? Yes. And that is the very point that Scripture is trying to make. Just as the mite is, in fact, totally insignificant when considering the albatross' power and might, no other "god" can even **approach** the brilliance and holiness of YHWH. **That's** why He cannot abide our worship of, or service to, other "gods".

- 3 "You shall have no other gods (elohim) before me.
 - 4 You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below.
 - 5 You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD (YHWH) your God (Elohim), am a jealous God (El),"
- (Exodus 20:3-5a *parenthetical text added*)

Ascribe to the LORD (YHWH) the glory due his name;
worship the LORD (YHWH) in the splendor of his holiness (qodesh).
(Psalm 29:2 *parenthetical text added*)

Of course, your "god" doesn't have to be an actual god such as Krishna, Shiva, Brahma, Gaia, Buddha, Baal, etc. A "god" can be anything or anyone you desire more than you desire YHWH. It can be money, material possessions, alcohol or tobacco, your iPod or computer games, another person, sex, and so on. Slowly but surely, our false gods are a love affair with destruction—not because they're necessarily "bad" in and of themselves (such as another person or even a ministry), but because they draw us away from the **only** One who **is** "good" and true.

I say to the LORD (YHWH), "You are my Lord (Adonai);
apart from you I have **no good** thing."
(Psalm 16:2 *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

Do not remember the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways;
according to your love remember me, for **you, LORD (YHWH), are good**.
(Psalm 25:7 *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

Unfortunately, left to our own devices, we can never achieve the holiness required by YHWH. It is impossible for us to keep YHWH's Law and to overcome the desires of our carnal nature.

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.
(Romans 3:23)

Thankfully, we are not left to our own devices, but YHWH assures that He will transform us and sanctify us unto Himself — **if** we are willing.

"that you may know that I am the LORD (YHWH)
who sanctifies (m'kaddesh) you."
(Exodus 31:13 *parenthetical text added*)



YHWH wishes to impart the glory and beauty of His holiness to us.

YHWH is the **one true GOD**, set apart and superior to all others who would call themselves "gods". He is the self-existent, eternal, all-powerful **I AM**. He is our **Mighty El**, our Creator, Supreme Authority, and Master **Adonai**; He is the Mighty GOD of the Mountains, **El Shaddai**; He is the Highest GOD of gods, **El Elyon**!

We discussed previously how jealous YHWH is for how those of us in whom He has placed His name live our lives and represent His name before a watching world. As it's an anthropological fact that people inevitably become like the god(s) they serve, it follows, then, that the one **true holy GOD** would require His people to also be holy. As Nathan Stone wrote:

"A God separate from all that is evil, too pure to behold evil, the very anti-thesis of all evil, requires that the people He chooses be also separate from all evil and separated to the purpose for which He chose them."²

"Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: '**Be holy** (qadosh) because I, the LORD (YHWH) your God (Elohim), am holy (qadosh).'"
(Leviticus 19:2 *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

Meditation

No doubt, you've heard the phrase "holier than thou." It's usually meant in a disparaging manner about people who think—or who appear to think—they're better than others.

However, it's important to understand that, from a human perspective, "holiness" does not mean "good" or "perfection". The word "holy" means "to be separate" or "set apart". Sanctification is the **separation** of an object, place, or person to the dedication of the **one true GOD**.

As Christians, we are justified by faith in Jesus Christ. This means we are declared righteous before our holy GOD. He no longer sees our sin, but He sees the righteousness of Jesus Christ, which has been imputed (applied) to us.

This **righteousness** is given through faith in **Jesus Christ** to all who believe.
(Romans 3:22 *emphasis added*)

For we maintain that a man is **justified by faith** apart from works of the Law.
(Romans 3:28 *emphasis added*)

Christ is the culmination of the law so that
there may be **righteousness** for **everyone who believes**.
(Romans 10:4 *emphasis added*)

However, justification is not sanctification. Justification liberates us from the **quilt** and **penalty** of sin. Sanctification, on the other hand, is YHWH's most wonderful work in us that releases us from the **power** of sin.

From the point of conversion and on, sanctification is a lifelong process, the full reality of which will finally be realized when we stand with all the Saints in His holy Presence. As one pastor explained, at the moment of conversion, we receive **positional** sanctification. It is not dependent on our spiritual **condition**, but on our spiritual **position** in Christ.

The Holy Spirit then begins the process of **progressive** spiritual and actual sanctification as we put off our old sinful nature and become more like Christ and His nature of righteousness.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the **new** creation
has come: The old has gone, the **new is here!**
(2 Corinthians 5:17 *emphasis added*)

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live,
but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body,
I live by faith in the Son of God,
who loved me and gave himself for me.
(Galatians 2:20)

Those who belong to Christ Jesus have
crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.
(Galatians 5:24 *emphasis added*)

- 1 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, **set your hearts on things above**, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.
- 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.
- 3 For you died, and **your life** is now **hidden with Christ** in God.
- 4 When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.
- 5 **Put to death**, therefore, whatever belongs to your **earthly nature**: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.
- 6 Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.
- 7 You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived.
- 8 But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.
- 9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices
- 10 and have **put on the new** self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.
(Colossians 3:1-10 *emphasis added*)

Thus, the term "sanctified" or "set apart" means more than just position or relationship in regard to YHWH. It means **participation** in the divine nature of YHWH: His holiness, justice, omniscience, goodness, compassion, righteousness, majesty, fullness, and perfection.

How wonderfully exciting that this one true holy GOD doesn't leave us struggling in our own strength, trying to achieve a state of holiness that's impossible to

attain. **No!** He is **YHWH M'Kaddesh**, "The GOD Who **Makes** Holy". What we cannot do on our own, He is willing and eager to do in us—if we **let** Him.

Oh, most holy GOD and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, I pray that we would humble ourselves and allow You to **be** YHWH M'Kaddesh in us so that our lives might bring glory and honor to Your most glorious name!

¹ Stone, Nathan, Names of God. Chicago: Moody Press, 1944, 2010. p. 121.

² Ibid. p. 127.





YHWH Nissi

יהוה נִסִּי

YHWH Is My Banner

Pronounced **Yä-wá' Nis-see'**, the compound name "YHWH Nissi" appears only once in the Old Testament.

Moses built an altar and called it The LORD is my Banner (YHWH Nissi).
(Exodus 17:15 *parenthetical text added*)

Etymology

The word "nissi"/"nissî" ("נִסִּי") derives from two Hebrew words:

- The noun "nes" (nês) ("נֵס"), which means "**banner**", "**pole**", or "**standard**".
- The verb "nasas" (nâsas) ("נָסַס"), which means "**to gleam** from afar, "**to be conspicuous** as a signal", or "**to raise a beacon**".

Where does the single word "nissi" appear in Scripture?

In battle, opposing nations would fly their own standard at each of their respective front lines to give their soldiers a feeling of hope and a point of focus. Moses had built the altar to memorialize that YHWH was Israel's banner under which they had defeated the Amalekites.

Combined with GOD's personal name, "YHWH", the name becomes "**YHWH Is My Banner**". This is what YHWH is to us: a banner of encouragement to give us hope and a focal point.

In addition to the single employment of the compound name in Exodus 17:15, the single word "nes" is translated in English Bibles as **banner**, **sign**, **standard**, or **pole** in 20 verses.

But for those who fear you, you have raised
a banner (nes) to be unfurled against the bow.
(Psalm 60:4 *parenthetical text added*)

He lifts up a banner (nes) for the distant nations,
he whistles for those at the ends of the earth.
Here they come, swiftly and speedily!
(Isaiah 5:26 *parenthetical text added*)

"Their stronghold will fall because of terror; at the sight of the battle
standard (nes) their commanders will panic," declares the LORD (YHWH),
whose fire is in Zion, whose furnace is in Jerusalem.
(Isaiah 31:9 *parenthetical text added*)

See *also* Numbers 21:8-9, 26:10; Isaiah 11:10,12, 13:2, 18:3, 30:17, 33:23, 49:22, 62:10; Jeremiah 4:6,21, 50:2, 51:12,27; Ezekiel 27:7.



Depending on which Bible translation/version you're using, the verb "nasas" is translated "**ensign**", "**banner**", or "**jewels** in a crown" in one verse.

The LORD (YHWH) their God (Elohim) will save his people
on that day as a shepherd saves his flock. They will
sparkle in his land like jewels (nasas) in a crown.
(Zechariah 9:16 *parenthetical text added*)

What is the significance of the name "YHWH Nissi"?

To say, "*YHWH is my Banner*" is to say YHWH is our Leader, our Commander in Chief. We fight under YHWH's direction and in defense of His name and His truth. And although we must don our armor and stand in the battle (Ephesians 6:11-17) in the same way as Joshua and Israel's army had done, it is by **YHWH's** strength and in **His name** that we conquer and gain the victory.

In Israel's case, this was the first battle they would fight after their miraculous delivery from bondage in Egypt. Prior to this, YHWH had fought their battles and provided for them. Just as a parent protects, nurtures, trains, and comforts their child until they can take care of themselves, YHWH had lovingly intervened, provided their food and water, and fought their battles. All the while, they were learning that the GOD of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was **faithful** and **more than sufficient** (El Shaddai) for their every need.

- He led them out of Egypt with great signs and wonders (Exodus 7:14-13:17; Acts 7:36).
- He brought them through the Red Sea on dry land and swept Pharaoh's army into the sea (Exodus 14:13-29).
- He brought forth water out of the rock at Horeb (Exodus 17:6; Numbers 20:11), fed them with manna and quail in the desert (Exodus 16:1-35; Numbers 11:31-32), healed their diseases (Exodus 15:26), and even preserved their clothing and sandals so that none wore out for 40 years (Deuteronomy 29:5)!

The sheep now had to become warriors!

The function of miracles is to lead us to a state of faith in which miracles are not necessary. YHWH had fought for Israel, and now Israel would learn to fight for YHWH.

The Amalekites came and attacked the Israelites at Rephidim.
(Exodus 17:8)

- ¹⁷ Remember what the Amalekites did to you along the way when you came out of Egypt.
- ¹⁸ When you were weary and worn out, they met you on your journey and attacked all who were lagging behind; they had no fear of God (Elohim).
(Deuteronomy 25:17-18 *parenthetical text added*)

There is no indication that the Israelites provoked the Amalekites in any way. It would appear that the Amalekites attacked Israel merely through the hopes of plunder. Or, as sons of Esau, brother to Jacob (Israel), perhaps it was due to generations of increasing anger and hostility over what Esau saw as Israel cheating him out of his rightful heritage. Whatever their reason, in a most cowardly manner, the Amalekites had attacked the rear of the camp, killing all those who were faint and weary before taking their spoils.

Moses said to Joshua, "Choose some of our men and go out to fight the Amalekites. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of God (Elohim) in my hands." (Exodus 17:9 *parenthetical text added*)

Moses' staff—which once had herded sheep in the wilderness—had become the rod of YHWH by which He executed severe judgments upon Egypt, parted the Red Sea, and brought water from a rock. Now, this symbol of all YHWH's dealings on Israel's behalf would be raised toward Heaven in prayer and to remind them that YHWH was the source of their help, the only One on whom they could depend.

- ¹ I lift up my eyes to the mountains-- where does my help come from?
- ² My help comes from the LORD (YHWH), the Maker of heaven and earth.
(Psalm 121:1-2 *parenthetical text added*)

Suddenly, this seemingly ill-equipped group of former slaves and shepherds—with YHWH as their Commander—had experienced their first decisive victory and drawn their first inspiring breath of freedom and strength! They were transitioning from a **passive reliance** on YHWH to an **abiding confidence** in Him!

Moses built an altar and called it The LORD (YHWH) is my Banner (Nissi).
(Exodus 17:15 *parenthetical text added*)

How does that apply to us today?

It is through much tribulation that we enter the kingdom of heaven. That is not to say that we strive to attain righteousness, for we **are** the righteousness of YHWH in Christ Jesus. Rather, the trials in the Christian's life—much like the Amalekites' attacks on Israel—are numerous, varied, unexpected, and often come in rapid succession.

We are in a constant spiritual and moral battle with many enemies—Satan, poverty, sickness, emotional conflicts, and even prosperity. Just as the Israelites had to conquer Amalek or be destroyed, we too must conquer these enemies as they seek continually to stop or destroy us.

The memorial that Moses built acknowledged that the Israelites had fought and gained the victory, not by their own valor or might, but under the **banner of YHWH**. The **glory** of victory was His and **His alone**.

Since YHWH does not change (Malachi 3:6) and Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8), we are assured that YHWH Nissi continues to fight the Amalekites in our lives as He did for Israel. In fact, His Word tells us that His battle with Amalek is an eternal one.

He said, "Because hands were lifted up against the throne of the LORD (YHWH), the LORD (YHWH) will be at war against the Amalekites from **generation to generation**."
(Exodus 17:16 *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

In order to be successful in this conflict, however, we must combine physical activity **and** prayer. Joshua fought the Amalekites on the field of battle while Moses fought their false gods on the hill in prayer. It is imperative that earnest prayers should be made to YHWH for His presence and power to go with us in our spiritual battles. Just as Moses had to climb the mountain to pray, we must remember that prayer is not passive, but is often an uphill **work**.



Thankfully, we do not battle in our own strength. Jesus Christ is both our Joshua and captain of our salvation **and** our Moses who ever lives making intercession for us.

In bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what he suffered.
(Hebrews 2:10)

Therefore he is able to **save completely** those who come to God through him, because he always lives to **intercede** for them.
(Hebrews 7:25)

Jesus Christ is our Standard Bearer and our Intercessor. He is **YHWH Nissi!**

Meditation

Like Moses, whose hands and arms grew heavy, we are often impeded by weaknesses consequent to our limited human frame.

Jesus told His disciples, "**the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak,**" (Matthew 26:41) because He understood that it is easy for us to grow weary in our religious devotion. No amount of physical strength can overcome the everyday infirmities inherent to our flesh. However, we learn from Moses—who supported Joshua and Israel's army and whose own arms were supported by Aaron and Hur—that holy companionship is helpful and needful during those times of spiritual and moral conflict.

Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves.
A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.
(Ecclesiastes 4:12)

Two are better than one, three are better than two, and so on. We must diligently endeavor to hold up the hands of those who minister among us and to bear one another's burdens. One person's strength or energy assists another in their weakness.

It was the sustaining and permanent energy of not one man, but **three** together on the mountain, who assured Israel's decisive victory.

- ¹¹ As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning.
- ¹² When Moses' hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur **held his hands up**--one on one side, one on the other--so that his **hands remained steady** till sunset.
- ¹³ So Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword.
(Exodus 17:11-13 *emphasis added*)

Even the strongest arms will fatigue and fail when extended for a long period. The more spiritual our service to YHWH, the more likely we are to weaken under the weight of it. There is no indication that Joshua became weary in the battle, only



that Moses' hands were heavy in praying. In other words, prayer can hardly be said to be an easy or passive work!

Thankfully, this work, too, is not done without Divine assistance. Jesus Christ is our Heavenly Intercessor who never grows weary, but who continually intercedes on our behalf before YHWH's throne.

For there is one God and **one mediator**
between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus,
(1 Timothy 2:5 *emphasis added*)

Who then is the one who condemns? No one.
Christ Jesus who died--more than that, who was raised to life--
is at the right hand of God and is also **interceding for us**.
(Romans 8:34 *emphasis added*)

For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with human hands
that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself,
now to **appear for us** in God's presence.
(Hebrews 9:24 *emphasis added*)

While we must be diligent to support one another's efforts in prayer, it is consoling to know that Jesus' hands never grow weary with pleading! As we hold up one another's hands in the battle, Jesus Christ continues to intercede for us and also to hold up our hands!



YHWH Rapha (Rophe)

יְהוָה רֹפֵא

YHWH Heals / YHWH Who Heals

Pronounced **Yä-wá' Raw-faw'** (or **Roh-fee'**), the compound name "YHWH Rapha" appears only once in Scripture and is the second name YHWH used to reveal Himself to His people. It arises out of one of Israel's earliest experiences in the wilderness after their exodus from Egypt.

He said, "If you listen carefully to the LORD (YHWH) your God (Elohim) and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the LORD (YHWH), who heals (Rapha) you."
(Exodus 15:26 *parenthetical text added*)

Etymology

The word "*rapha*" (*râphâ'*) is a Hebrew root verb meaning "**to mend**", "**cure**", "**heal**", or "**restore**". It is primarily transliterated as "heal/s" or "healed" in the Scripture, but is also used as a noun meaning "physician".

How is "rapha" used in Scripture?

The word "rapha" appears in four verses in the Old Testament as a noun or pronoun.

Then Joseph directed the physicians (*rapha*) in his service to embalm his father Israel. So the physicians (*rapha*) embalmed him
(Genesis 50:2 *parenthetical text added*)

"Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician (*rapha*) there? Why then is there no healing (*rapha*) for the wound of my people?"
(Jeremiah 8:22 *parenthetical text added*)

See *also* 2 Chronicles 16:12 and Job 13:4.

As a verb meaning "**to heal**" or "**make whole**", the word appears in 63 verses in the Old Testament. Of those, 20 verses pertain directly to YHWH's **involvement** in healing, although they do not incorporate the compound name itself.

So Moses cried out to the LORD (YHWH),
"Please, God (El), heal (*rapha*) her!"
(Numbers 12:13 *parenthetical text added*)

- ² Praise the LORD (YHWH), my soul, and forget not all his benefits—
³ who forgives all your sins and heals (*rapha*) all your diseases
(Psalm 103:2-3 *parenthetical text added*)

"Return, faithless people; I will cure (*rapha*) you of backsliding."
"Yes, we will come to you, for you are the LORD (YHWH) our God (Elohim)."
(Jeremiah 3:22 *parenthetical text added*)



Heal (rapha) me, LORD (YHWH), and I will be healed (rapha);
save me and I will be saved, for you are the one I praise.
(Jeremiah 17:14 *parenthetical text added*)

"But I will restore (rapha) you to health and heal (rapha)
your wounds," declares the LORD (YHWH),
(Jeremiah 30:17a *parenthetical text added*)

"Come, let us return to the LORD (YHWH).
He has torn us to pieces but he will heal (rapha) us;
he has injured us but he will bind up (rapha) our wounds."
(Hosea 6:1 *parenthetical text added*)

See *also* Exodus 15:26; Deuteronomy 28:27; 1 Kings 18:30; 2 Kings 2:21, 20:5,8; 2 Chronicles 16:12, 30:20; Psalms 6:2, 30:2, 41:4; Isaiah 19:22, 30:26, 57:19; Jeremiah 19:11.

GOD's Word also references instances when YHWH actually **inflicts** harm and does **not** heal, as Moses warned Israel for her disobedience in his farewell speech...

²⁷ The LORD (YHWH) will afflict you with the boils of Egypt and with tumors, festering sores and the itch, from which you cannot be cured (rapha).

³⁵ The LORD (YHWH) will afflict your knees and legs with painful boils that cannot be cured (rapha), spreading from the soles of your feet to the top of your head.
(Deuteronomy 28:27, 35 *parenthetical text added*)

Jesus is YHWH Rapha, the "Great Physician".

Contrary to popular thought, there are no Scriptural references to Jesus as "the Great Physician". In fact, He only very loosely referred to Himself as a "physician" twice:

- When the religious leaders criticized Him for including tax collectors and "sinners" among His followers, He answered in reference to spiritual healing.

On hearing this, Jesus said to them,
"It is not the healthy who need a **doctor**, but the sick.
I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."
(Mark 2:17 *emphasis added*)

- When He gave His first message in Nazareth—where "He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief" (Matthew 13:58)—He prophesied about their rejection and refusal to believe.

Jesus said to them, "Surely you will quote this proverb to me:
'**Physician**, heal yourself!' And you will tell me, 'Do here in
your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum.'"
(Luke 4:23 *emphasis added*)

With so little direct references to Jesus as a physician—let alone as "the Great Physician"—one might question how He came to be known by this name in the Church. The answer is simple. Nearly one-fifth of the Gospel accounts is devoted to Jesus' healing ministry. Out of



3,779 verses in the four Gospels, more than 700 relate specifically to Him healing physical and mental illnesses.

- ³² There some people brought to him a man who was deaf and could hardly talk, and they begged Jesus to place his hand on him.
- ³³ After he took him aside, away from the crowd, Jesus put his fingers into the man's ears. Then he spit and touched the man's tongue.
- ³⁴ He looked up to heaven and with a deep sigh said to him, "*Ephphatha!*" (which means "*Be opened!*").
- ³⁵ At this, the man's ears were opened, his tongue was loosened and he began to speak plainly.

(Mark 7:32-35)

- ³² While they were going out, a man who was demon-possessed and could not talk was brought to Jesus.
- ³³ And when the demon was driven out, the man who had been mute spoke. The crowd was amazed and said, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel."

(Matthew 9:32-33; see also Luke 11:14-16)

See also Matthew 4:23-25, 8:5-16,28-34, 9:18-31,35-38, 12:10-15, 13:58, 14:14,34-36, 15:21-31, 17:14-21, 19:1-2, 20:29-34, 21:14-15; Mark 1:23-34, 2:3-12, 3:1-12, 4:40, 5:1-15, 6:5, 53-56, 7:24-43, 8:22-27, 9:2-8,17-29,37-42, 10:46-52, 16:9; Luke 4:31-39, 5:15-26, 6:6-11,17-19, 7:2-10,21, 8:2,26-56, 13:11-13,22, 14:1-4, 17:15-19, 18:35-43, 22:50-51; John 4:46-54, 5:2-15, 9:1-12,35-37, 18:10.

He touched me!

As YHWH Rapha in the flesh (John 1:14), Jesus modeled the level of compassion required for a good physician, one that goes beyond meeting external physical needs to ministering to people's emotional/psychological needs too, as in...

- ² A man with leprosy came and knelt before him and said, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean."
- ³ Jesus reached out his hand and **touched the man**. "*I am willing,*" he said. "*Be clean!*" Immediately he was cleansed of his leprosy.

(Matthew 8:2-3 *emphasis added*; see also Mark 1:40-42, Luke 5:12-13)

He **touched** the man! Tearing down the walls of alienation and centuries of prejudice—**and** in opposition to the Law of which He was the divine Author—Jesus touched a man who had probably not felt the touch of another human for decades. Based on my own experiences while ministering to lepers in India, I can testify that Jesus touching that man undoubtedly meant as much, if not more, to him as his physical healing did!

Over and over again in the Gospels, we see Jesus deliberately touching sick and disabled people, as in Matthew 8:15, 20:34, Mark 7:33, and Luke 22:51. YHWH Rapha is the Great Physician who not only heals the physical needs of His people, but also our emotional and spiritual needs.

He gives life.

Only יהוה (YHWH) is "**I AM**", the One who **imparts existence**. As YHWH Rapha in the flesh, Jesus exercised His authority over death by resurrecting those who had died, the best-known account being that of Lazarus' resurrection.



- 38 Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance.
- 39 "Take away the stone," he said. "But, Lord," said Martha, the sister of the dead man, "by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there **four days.**"
- 40 Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?"
- 41 So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me.
- 42 I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me."
- 43 When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!"
- 44 The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."

(John 11:38-44 *emphasis added*)

See also Luke 7:11-16 and 8:54-55.

There was a widespread belief at that time — one which is popular even to this day — that a person's spirit remains in the area for up to 72 hours after death. As a result of this belief, any "raising from death" within 72 hours, regardless of who performed it — and there have been many — could be challenged as merely a **resuscitation**, not a **resurrection**. (That's the basis of the claim that opponents of Christianity have been making for years when they claim that Jesus didn't die on the cross, but merely fainted and was later revived.)

In Lazarus' case, Jesus didn't go to Bethany until after Lazarus had been dead and in the tomb **four days (96 hours)**! His body had already begun to decay and there would be a stench! But Jesus didn't care about any of that. After all, if He could create man from the dust of the earth, surely He could **recreate** one from a corpse!

What great comfort, peace, and blessed hope there is in embracing the name "YHWH Rapha", the El who heals us! The great Elohim of the universe isn't far off and disinterested in His creation.

YHWH Rapha, our Great Physician, loves us so much that He willingly and purposely offered His back to be scourged and His body to be crucified in order to heal and deliver us from our greatest disease: **sin**!

But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,
and by his wounds we are healed (rapha).
(Isaiah 53:5 *parenthetical text added*)

Meditation

There are some who believe that a person's illness or disability is a result of sin in their lives. I believe this teaching is not only unbiblical, but has led to more people being crippled by guilt and shame than any physical ailment they might also be dealing with. I also believe it has pushed people **away** from Christ rather



than drawing them **to** Him. This is truly unfortunate. The fact is that ***all disease is a consequence of sin.***

Every malady this world faces today—sickness, war, environmental disasters, famine, crime, poverty, homelessness, and so on—is a consequence of sin. Both the sufferings resulting from sin and the precious experience of sweet release and spiritual healing, should lead each of us to abhor and forsake sin in our own lives.

Then, as Ephesians 6:13 admonishes, "**having done all . . . stand.**" When difficulties come—and they will—don't accuse yourself . . . don't accuse others . . . and don't let others accuse you.

In the story of the paralytic whose friends lowered him into a crowded room where Jesus was ministering, Jesus told him, "**Son, your sins are forgiven.**" (cf. Mark 2:2-11) Apparently, Jesus knew that the paralyzed man needed to know his sins were forgiven. Why? Who knows? **Jesus** knew! As our Creator, He knows us and understands our needs even better than we do. While we may think we need physical healing, He offers something far better. He brings spiritual healing which can easily repair any part—body and soul—that is not functioning properly.

How many in our hospitals today would be instantly cured if they knew the Savior came, not to condemn, but to **take away** their sin, guilt, and shame? And how often do we obscure that message of hope and healing by criticizing, accusing, maligning, and degrading those who need the Savior and Great Physician?

Jesus never taught that sickness is the result of personal sin and the Bible does not teach that sickness is the result of personal sin. Therefore, we must be careful not to insinuate that flawed doctrine into Scripture nor permit it to infiltrate our churches.

As the Body of Christ (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:27), we are the Great Physician's hands. We are called to serve, to help, to lift up, to comfort, to encourage, and to heal. We are **not** called to judge that which only the LORD knows.

Really, if you think about it, regardless of when we came to Christ or how long we've been walking with Him, we **all** came helplessly, hopelessly lost. We **all** came wounded with the sickness of sin on us and in us. Thus, we are uniquely qualified to be the Great Physician's "wounded healers", **not** prosecuting attorneys or judges...



YHWH Ro'hi (Rohi)

יהוה רעה

YHWH My Shepherd / YHWH My Friend

Pronounced **Yä-wá' Ro-hee'**, this attribute of YHWH is best known to us through the most intimate figurative language of the 23rd Psalm: "The LORD is my shepherd..."

Charles Spurgeon called it "the pearl of the psalms." Millions have memorized these few words penned by the shepherd-who-would-be-king, David. Ministers have recited them at weddings, baptisms, and funerals to offer words of comfort, peace, and hope.

This beloved psalm is so familiar to many of us that one might be tempted to give it little more than a cursory glance. **Don't!** It's important that we take time to consider all that this name reveals about YHWH and the relationship He desires to have with us.

Etymology

The word ro'hi is a transliteration of two Hebrew words:

- The word "*ra'ah*" (râ'âh) ("רָעָה") is a Hebrew root word that means to "**tend a flock**", that is, to "**pasture**" it or to "**graze**". "*Ra'ah*" is both a noun and a verb, meaning "**a** shepherd" and "**a** pasture", as well as "**to** shepherd" or "**to** pasture".
- Two other closely similar words that derive from "*ra'ah*" are "*reya*" (rêya') ("רֵיעַ")—meaning an "**associate**", as in a "brother", "friend", "neighbor", or "companion"—and "*re'uth*" (re'ûth) ("רֵעוּת"), a **female** "associate", as in a "friend" or "neighbor".

How are "*ra'ah*" and "*reya*'/*re'uth*" used in the Old Testament?

Both words are used throughout Scripture to represent human relationships, whether between the leaders and the people or between close friends, neighbors, and associates.

The word "*ra'ah*" appears ±170 times in the Old Testament to represent the relationships between political or religious leaders and the people, either as their shepherds or in reference to how they cared for them.

"In the past, while Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel on their military campaigns. And the LORD (YHWH) said to you, 'You will shepherd (*ra'ah*) my people Israel, and you will become their ruler.'"
(2 Samuel 5:2 *parenthetical text added*)

"who says of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd (*ra'ah*) and will accomplish all that I please; he will say of Jerusalem, 'Let it be rebuilt,' and of the temple, 'Let its foundations be laid.'"
(Isaiah 44:28 *parenthetical text added*)



"Then I will give you shepherds (ra'ah) after my own heart,
who will lead (ra'ah) you with knowledge and understanding."
(Jeremiah 3:15 *parenthetical text added*)

"Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds (ra'ah) of Israel; prophesy
and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign (Adonai) LORD (YHWH) says:
'Woe to you shepherds (ra'ah) of Israel who only take care (ra'ah) of
yourselves! Should not shepherds (ra'ah) take care (ra'ah) of the flock?'"
(Ezekiel 34:2 *parenthetical text added*)

- ² The idols speak deceitfully, diviners see visions that lie; they tell dreams
that are false, they give comfort in vain. Therefore the people wander
like sheep oppressed for lack of a shepherd (ra'ah).
³ "My anger burns against the shepherds (ra'ah), and I will punish the
leaders; for the LORD (YHWH) Almighty will care for his flock, the people
of Judah, and make them like a proud horse in battle."
(Zechariah 10:2-3 *parenthetical text added*)

See *similar verses* in Genesis 4:2; Exodus 2:17-19, 34:3; Numbers 14:33; Judges 14:20; 1
Samuel 16:11, 21:7; 2 Samuel 7:7; Psalms 23:1, 28:9, 78:71-72; Proverbs 10:21;
Ecclesiastes 12:11; Isaiah 5:17, 14:30, 40:11, 49:9, 65:25; Jeremiah 2:8, 10:21, 23:1-4;
25:34-36; Ezekiel 34:2-23; Hosea 4:16; Micah 7:14; Nahum 3:18; Zephaniah 2:6,7; 3:13;
Zechariah 11:3-16; 13:7.

The word is also used figuratively with regard to believing ("feeding on") lies or foolishness.

The discerning heart seeks knowledge,
but the mouth of a fool feeds (ra'ah) on folly.
(Proverbs 15:14 *parenthetical text added*)

See *also* Isaiah 44:20; Hosea 12:1; Ezekiel 34:16.

The word "reya'/re'uth" appears ±170 times in regards to the relationships between
friends and associates.

"Come, let us go down and confuse their language
so they will not understand each other (reya')."
(Genesis 11:7 *parenthetical text added*)

The men had been seated before him in the order
of their ages, from the firstborn to the youngest;
and they looked at **each other** (reya') in astonishment.
(Genesis 43:33 *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

Speak now in the ears of the people, and let every man
borrow of his neighbor (reya'), and every woman of her
neighbor (re'uth), jewels of silver, and jewels of gold.
(Exodus 11:2 KJV *parenthetical text added*)

So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law
and bowed down and kissed him. They greeted
each other (reya') and then went into the tent.
(Exodus 18:7 *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

Whenever they have a dispute, it is brought to me,
and I decide between the **parties** (reya') and inform them
of God's (Elohim) decrees and instructions."
(Exodus 18:16 *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

See similar verses in Exodus 20:16-17; Leviticus 20:10; Deuteronomy 5:20-21, 13:6, 15:2; Joshua 20:5; Judges 6:29, 7:13-22; Ruth 3:14, 4:7; 1 Samuel 10:11, 14:20, 30:26; 2 Samuel 2:16; 12:11; 13:3; 16:17; 1 Kings 8:31, 16:11; 2 Kings 3:23, 7:3,9; Esther 9:22; Job 2:11, 19:21, 42:7-10; Psalms 12:2, 101:5; Proverbs 3:28-29, 17:17-18, 29:5; Ecclesiastes 4:4; Isaiah 19:2, 41:6; Jeremiah 5:8, 29:23, 34:15-17; Ezekiel 22:11-12; Hosea 3:1; Jonah 1:7; Micah 7:5; Habakkuk 2:15; Zechariah 8:16-17; Malachi 3:16.

What is the significance of these names in regards to YHWH?

The use of both words that comprise the name "Ro'hi" indicates the intimacy YHWH desires between Himself and His people.

As our Reya', YHWH desires an intimate relationship as **friend, confidant, brother**, and the **Lover of our souls**—as in the following accounts of His relationship with Moses and the holy love between Saul's son, Jonathan, and the newly-anointed King, David.

The LORD (YHWH) would speak to Moses
face to face, as one speaks to a **friend** (reya').
(Exodus 33:11a *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

After the boy had gone, David got up from the south side
of the stone and bowed down before Jonathan three times,
with his face to the ground. Then they kissed **each other** (reya')
and wept **together** (reya')--but David wept the most.
(1 Samuel 20:41 *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

As our Ra'ah, YHWH desires to **lead, provide for**, and **protect** us—to be the One to whom we look to supply all our needs.

In order to fully understand the compound name, "**YHWH My Shepherd**", let's consider more closely the relationship of the shepherd to his sheep as told to us by Harriet-Louise Holland Patterson in *Around the Mediterranean with My Bible*:

"Shepherding does not change much in Palestine, where wild beasts may descend still upon unprotected sheep and suddenly destroy them. The Palestine shepherd lives night and day with his animals. He establishes a degree of intimacy with them which is touching to observe. He calls them all by their names and they, knowing his voice and hearing his only, heed. He protects the sheep from thieves and preying animals who would devour them at night, by sleeping in the opening of the often makeshift sheepfold and they, sensing his watchfulness, fear 'no evil.' He provides pasture and water even in the wilderness and the presence of enemies and they, casting all their anxiety upon him, are fed. There is a singular communion between the shepherd and his sheep which, after one has visited Palestine and observed it, makes the symbol of the good Shepherd peculiarly apt and the Twenty-third Psalm strangely moving."¹

YHWH doesn't want mentally- and emotionally-detached children simply going through repetitious religious exercises. He wants a **close personal** involvement in every aspect of our lives.

"But his bow remained steady, his strong arms stayed limber,
because of the hand of the Mighty One of Jacob,
because of the **Shepherd** (Ra'ah), the Rock of Israel,"
(Genesis 49:24 *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

- 4 He will stand and shepherd (ra'ah) his flock in the strength of the LORD (YHWH), in the majesty of the name of the LORD (YHWH) his God (Elohim). And they will live securely, for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth.
- 5 And he will be our peace when the Assyrians invade our land and march through our fortresses. We will raise against them seven shepherds (ra'ah), even eight commanders,
(Micah 5:4-5 *parenthetical text added*)

Taking all of the above into consideration, we may conclude that the name "Ro'hi" symbolizes "**associating with**", "**taking pleasure in**", "**caring for**", and "**cherishing**".

Combined with the name "YHWH", the above relationships find their most affectionate and exalted verbal expression: YHWH, **our** Shepherd . . . YHWH, **your** Shepherd . . . YHWH, **my** Shepherd!

- 1 Hear us, Shepherd (Ro'hi) of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock. You who sit enthroned between the cherubim, shine forth
- 2 before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh. Awaken your might; come and save us.
- 3 Restore us, O God (Elohim); make your face shine on us, that we may be saved.

(Psalm 80:1 *parenthetical text added*)

- 10 See, the Sovereign (Adonai) LORD (YHWH) comes with power, and he rules with a mighty arm. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him.
- 11 He tends (ro'hi) his flock like a shepherd (ro'hi): He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.

(Isaiah 40:10-11 *parenthetical text added*)

- 11 For this is what the Sovereign (Adonai) LORD (YHWH) says: I myself will **search** for my sheep and look after them.
- 12 As a shepherd (ro'hi) looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will **rescue** them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness.
- 13 I will **bring** them out from the nations and gather them from the countries, and I will **bring** them into their own land. I will **pasture** (ro'hi) them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and in all the settlements in the land.
- 14 I will tend (ro'hi) them in a **good pasture**, and the mountain heights of Israel will be their grazing land. There they will lie down in **good grazing land**, and there they will feed (ro'hi) in a **rich pasture** on the mountains of Israel.

- ¹⁵ I myself will tend (ro'hi) my sheep and have them **lie down**, declares the Sovereign (Adonai) LORD (YHWH).
- ¹⁶ I will **search** for the lost and **bring back** the strays. I will **bind up** the injured and **strengthen** the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will **shepherd** (ro'hi) the flock with justice.
(Ezekiel 34:11-16 *parenthetical text added*)

Notice the language in that prophetic promise: He will "**search** for the lost" . . . "**bring back** the strays" . . . "**bind up** the injured" . . . and "**strengthen** the weak." No other revealed name of GOD denotes such caring intimacy as the name YHWH Rohi! As Nathan Stone wrote in *Names of God*:

"Everything that the shepherd is to the sheep, Jehovah is to His people. If there can exist such a tender intimacy between a man and sheep, how much more so between Jehovah and the spirits He has created and redeemed; and what a marvelous thing that God should offer Himself for such a relationship. He had said, 'I will dwell among the children of Israel' (Exodus 29:45), and the word dwell is the word Shekinah, denoting His glorious presence. Jehovah as Shepherd offers His people the intimacy of His presence. He may be as intimately known as the shepherd is of the sheep. . . . The intimacy of the shepherd is the most precious privilege and possession of the sheep, and this the Lord's people, as His sheep, should cultivate and enjoy. But it comes only by long and constant association and abiding in His presence."²

Referring back to Psalm 23, YHWH Rohi isn't only the Shepherd of His people, He is **my** Shepherd. As sheep of His fold, you and I can rest in the sure knowledge that we are precious to Him and that our GOD cares about every one of our needs. We need not fear, nor doubt, nor wonder. YHWH is **my** Shepherd . . . YHWH is **your** Shepherd . . . Oh, praise His most holy name!

Our Ro'hi desires to have the kind of intimate relationship with us that the shepherd has with his sheep—one by which He calls each of us by name.

Meditation

"The LORD is my shepherd..." Stop for a moment and meditate on those words. The whole of the 23rd Psalm stands on this single phrase.

"The **LORD**..."—YHWH . . . Jehovah . . . Yahweh . . . Yud-Heh-Vav-Heh . . . the Self-Existent, eternal, Almighty, Most High God—is a declaration of **GOD's role**.

"...is **my**..." Martin Luther said that "*faith is a matter of personal pronouns*." We must personalize and internalize the truth of this statement. It is a declaration of **our role** in the relationship.

"...**shepherd**." This is a declaration of GOD's **responsibility**. YHWH condescended to calling Himself the Shepherd of His people. As such, it is **His** responsibility to...

- lead us to **good pasture**.



Jesus, the 'good shepherd', said: "...do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?'...your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you..." (Matthew 6:31-33)

- keep us **safe** in the pasture.

One way in which the shepherd protects the sheep is to lead them to a pasture with a natural boundary on three sides and then lie down in the entrance-way to the pasture, making himself like a door. In that way, no one can get to the sheep without waking the shepherd. And the shepherd will fight to the death to protect his sheep. That's why Jesus said: "**I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved.**" (John 10:9)

- seek out and bring back any who have strayed.

The shepherd knows where to find the best pasture, most refreshing springs, shade in the scorching heat, or warm and dry shelter in the midst of brutal storms. He also knows where the dangerous cliffs or fissures or thickets are, and he is able to protect the sheep from voracious animals that would devour them. Because he has a vested interest in the sheep—they are **his** sheep—he seeks after and brings back any that have strayed from the safety of the fold. That's why Jesus said quite simply: "**the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.**" (Luke 19:10)

As a flock, we have only to indulge a most nutritive and excellent pasture, sleep peacefully in comfort and safety, and trust His grace and providence to lead us in the way in which we should go.

Who belongs to this "flock"? The "flock" would be you. It would be me. It would be anyone and everyone who was lost . . . who has heard His voice and has turned to follow. Does that mean we will never stumble, never fail, never sin again, never again lie or get angry or resent or envy or do any of the myriad other things consequent to our fallenness that grieve the Holy Spirit?

Sadly, no. But, what a precious promise we have from the LORD who is **our** "**good shepherd**", who "**came to seek and save**" us—first to bring us into the fold, and then to bring us back when we stray!

"The LORD is **my** shepherd..."

"The LORD is **your** shepherd..."

"The LORD is **our** shepherd..."

¹ Patterson, *Around the Mediterranean with My Bible*, pp. 142, 143.

² Stone, Nathan, *Names of God*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1944, 2010. p. 170.



YHWH Shalom

יהוה שלום

YHWH Is Peace / The Name of YHWH Is Peace

Pronounced **Yä-wá' shaw-lome'**, the compound name appears only once in the Old Testament.

So Gideon built an altar to the LORD (YHWH) there and called it The LORD (YHWH) Is Peace (Shalom). To this day it stands in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.
(Judges 6:24 *parenthetical text added*)

Etymology

The word "*shalom*" derives from the Hebrew root "*shâlam*" ("שָׁלַם"), which means to be "**safe**", "**completed**", "**perfect**"; to be "**well**", "**happy**", "**friendly**"; and by implication "**absence of strife**".

Since the Talmud translates "YHWH Shalom" as "*The **Name** of God is Peace*", the word is considered to be so sacred that Jews are not permitted to greet another with "Shalom" in unholy places, such as a bathroom.

What is the historical setting of this compound name?

In order to understand the importance of this covenantal attribute of YHWH, we must consider the historical setting in which it was given. As a result of Israel's idolatrous rebellion against YHWH, He sent the Midianites against them. For several years, they severely oppressed Israel, ruining their crops and destroying their land and livestock. When Israel cried out to YHWH to save them, the Angel of the LORD appeared to an unlikely deliverer, Gideon, who was threshing wheat in a secret place for fear of the Midianites.

Prior to this, the LORD had sent a prophet to teach and exhort Israel (Judges 6:8-10). Now, the Angel of the LORD had come to confirm the word of the prophet, to commission Gideon as Israel's deliverer, and to inspire him through various miracles. Most Bible scholars believe that the Angel of the LORD was a preincarnate self-manifestation of YHWH—or Jesus Himself, as Jesus **is** YHWH incarnate. This, of course, is borne out by Gideon's own testimony after the Angel suddenly disappeared.

²² When Gideon realized that it was the angel of the LORD (YHWH), he exclaimed, "Alas, Sovereign (Adonai) LORD (YHWH)! I have seen the angel of the LORD (YHWH) face to face!"

²³ But the LORD (YHWH) said to him, "Peace (shalom)! Do not be afraid. You are not going to die."

(Judges 6:22-23 *parenthetical text added*)

Obviously, Gideon not only believed he had come face-to-face with YHWH, but the LORD's response to him seems to confirm that. Or, at the very least, YHWH did not correct Gideon's thinking. At that, Gideon felt compelled to build an altar and call it "**YHWH Shalom**".

This celestial encounter was much more significant than we might think at first telling. Gideon, a young farmer who only hours earlier had been threshing in secret, suddenly stepped into



the role and title by which the Angel of the LORD had addressed him: "mighty man of valor" (Judges 6:12). How did he do this? What brought about such a dramatic change? The answer is simple. In verse 23, YHWH said, "Peace! Do not be afraid," which implied a foretelling by YHWH Jireh of the successful outcome of the impending battle in which he was about to engage.

All Gideon had to do at that point was **believe** and step into that peace and freedom YHWH had just promised. Think about that. **Before** Gideon destroyed his father's altar to Baal and sacrificed a bull to YHWH on a new altar . . . **before** he tested and confirmed the LORD's word with the fleece . . . **before** he decreased his army by more than 30,000 men and routed out the Midianites and Amalekites with only 300 men . . . Gideon had been infused with **total peace** and **confidence** because he had first **worshiped** at the altar of "YHWH Shalom"!

How is "shalom" used in Scripture?

Although the compound name appears only once in the Old Testament, the word "shalom" by itself appears ±326 times. Transliterated "peace" in our English Bibles, the word appears ±120 times as a greeting or blessing and ±157 times in its various contexts meaning "**well**", "**peace**", "**good health**", "**whole**", "**perfect**", or "**fulfilled**".

- ²⁷ He asked them how they were (shalom), and then he said, "How is (shalom) your aged father you told me about? Is he still living?"
²⁸ They replied, "Your servant our father is still alive and well (shalom)."
And they bowed down, prostrating themselves before him.
(Genesis 43:27-28 *parenthetical text added*)

"...the LORD (YHWH) turn his face toward you and give you peace (shalom)."
(Numbers 6:26 *parenthetical text added*)

Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace (shalom), for we have sworn friendship with each other in the name of the LORD (YHWH), saying, The LORD (YHWH) is witness between you and me, and between your descendants and my descendants forever."
Then David left, and Jonathan went back to the town.
(1 Samuel 20:42 *parenthetical text added*)

So they turned in there and went to the house of the young Levite at Micah's place and greeted (shalom) him.
(Judges 18:15 *parenthetical text added*)

"The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house,' says the LORD (YHWH) Almighty. 'And in this place I will grant peace (shalom),' declares the LORD (YHWH) Almighty."
(Haggai 2:9 *parenthetical text added*)

See *also* Genesis 24:21, 28:21; Leviticus 3:1-9, 4:31,35, 7:11,14,20-21,29, 9:4, 10:3, 17:5, 19:5, 22:21; Numbers 6:14,17,26; Judges 6:23, 11:31, 18:6; 1 Samuel 20:13,21; 1 Kings 2:33, 5:12, 22:17,28; 2 Kings 2:3,5, 20:19; 2 Chronicles 18:16,27; Psalm 4:8, 29:11, 85:8, 125:5; Proverbs 16:7; Isaiah 9:7, 26:12, 39:8, 42:19, 45:7, 48:22, 54:10,13, 57:19, 62:6, 64:12, 66:12; Jeremiah 4:10, 12:12, 14:13, 16:5, 23:17, 28:9, 29:7,11, 30:5, 34:5; Ezekiel 13:16; Micah 3:5; Zechariah 1:11, 6:13, 8:19.

Note: A closely-similar Chaldee word, "*sh^elām*", meaning "**prosperity**", is also translated "peace" in four verses in the Old Testament: Ezra 4:17 and 5:7 and Daniel 4:1 and 6:25.



What is the significance of the compound name?

Based on the many uses of the word throughout the Old Testament, we can conclude that "shalom" means much more than the English word "peace", which means generally "harmonious relations" and the "absence of strife". While "shalom" certainly means that, it goes so much further. to that kind of peace that results from being a whole person in right relationship with God and with others. As Nathan Stone wrote:

"This word is one of the most significant in the Old Testament, its various shades of meaning harmonizing with the doctrine of the atonement as the basis of **peace with God**."¹ (*emphasis added*)

The compound name, "YHWH Shalom", is perhaps the most exciting of all His titles because it's the only attribute which YHWH doesn't bestow **on** us or do **for** us, but which He shares **with** us! All of the other titles express His power, majesty, and holiness or they tell us how He desires to bless and take care of us. With "YHWH Shalom", however, He reveals that He doesn't merely **have** peace, but that He **is** peace! And His desire is for us to participate in it! Nathan Stone explains it this way:

"Jehovah in His own person is perfect peace. This He must be if He is to be the source of peace to mankind. He is grieved at the sin and corruption of the world, which at creation He had pronounced so good. He is stirred to wrath at the evil of the wicked.

Yet none of these things disturb His peace in the sense that they can destroy or unsteady the perfect balance of His divine nature. He could never give to others a peace the passes understanding if He were not perfect, unfailing peace Himself. This is our hope and assurance."²

Jesus gives peace that surpasses understanding.

When Jesus shared that last supper with His disciples before the Feast of Passover, He tried several times to explain where He was going and why. He washed their feet, prophesied Judas' betrayal and Peter's denial, and commanded them to love one another. During that time, He even stooped to wash the feet and break bread with the very one who, with a false assurance of fidelity, would **sell** Him!

Following Judas' departure, He told those who remained...

"Peace I leave with you; **my peace** I give you.
I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not
let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."
(John 14:27 *emphasis added*)

How could He talk about **peace**, knowing the torturous trial that lay before Him? He was not only facing the most horrendous **physical** pain that one human being can inflict on another, but He was about to experience the most painful of all human **emotions**—one friend's treachery and another's denial...

His disciples no longer doubted that He was the long-awaited promised Messiah. They **knew** He was! But like most in Israel at that time, they believed that the coming of the Messiah meant liberation from Roman rule. For three years, they had followed Him, content to wait for Him to bring about His kingdom in His own way and in His own time, leaving all their hopes and expectations for the future in His capable hands. It never occurred to them that He was embarking on a journey to Calvary.



Now, instead of taking the kingdom "by storm"—which Jesus surely could have done if that had been His mission—instead of freeing them from political and religious tyranny, He was talking about leaving them. And He was saying something about loving one another (John 15:12-17), about abiding in Him (John 15:4-7), and about peace.

They didn't understand . . . How could they "abide" in Him if He was leaving? And what kind of "peace" could they possibly have without Him?

While trying to make them understand that He **had** to leave them, He was also trying to address their questions whose answers they weren't yet prepared to understand. He knew that in only a few days they would see more clearly what He'd been trying to tell them . . . that in giving His life for them, He was making a way for them to experience the greatest **freedom** of all. He was offering them wholeness and abundance. He was offering them freedom from fear of a vengeful, angry GOD to total **acceptance** and **oneness** with a loving **Father**.

But for now, all He could do was tell them He was going to prepare a place for them in His "Father's house" (John 14:2-3) . . . that He was sending the Holy Spirit to comfort and teach them (John 14:16,26) . . . and that He was leaving them in peace.

They didn't understand . . . They couldn't reconcile His words with their expectations. And although they trusted Him implicitly, their resulting confusion made it impossible to believe He really meant He was leaving them but not abandoning them. It **felt** like abandonment. Certainly, this Man who could command all of nature to bend to His will wouldn't quit before accomplishing the mission for which they thought He had come!

They didn't understand . . . They wanted here-and-now **physical** liberation while He was fulfilling the requirements for their eternal **spiritual** liberation. In a few days, they would understand. In a few days, they would rejoice in His victory. In a few days, they would be so infused with courage and confidence that the world would never be the same because of their testimony! In a few days, they would be able to say that they had lived and slept and eaten with the Prince of Peace, and they would be able to appropriate the peace which presently eluded them.

In a few days . . . they would understand when the words, "**It is finished!**" uttered at Calvary would be followed three days later with "**He is risen!**" shouted outside an empty tomb. Then, they would understand that He had accomplished something far greater than anything they expected or could have hoped for. He had restored the **peace with God** that had been lost by the Fall!

Then . . . they would be able to say with the Apostle Paul...

And the **peace of God** (YHWH Shalom), which transcends all understanding,
will **guard** your **hearts** and your **minds** in Christ Jesus.
(Philippians 4:7 *emphasis & parenthetical text added*)

Meditation

Jesus knew peace on a level that none of us have ever experienced. He **never** knew fear. As the eternal **I AM**, He never feared "the unknown" as we all do at



one time or another. He never feared death because He knew He was the Resurrection and the Life. And He never lived a single moment in fear of GOD...

Jesus is the only Person who's ever lived who could truly call GOD His "Father". He was completely at home in the Temple (His "Father's house"). He never once doubted the Father's love and never allowed Himself to be in spiritual bondage to religious rules and taboos that cause the rest of us to doubt GOD's love and be **afraid** of Him.

If you're tempted to object and claim you've never been afraid of GOD, think about how often you've joked about the proverbial lightning bolt after doing something wrong. At one time or another, we're all trained to believe that when things go wrong or we suffer some harm that it's because we've done something to make GOD angry. It's Satan's original lie, that GOD doesn't really love us and that He's withholding what we really need to fulfill us.

It is said that the greatest thirst or hunger of every human heart at some point in their lives is to be at **peace** with GOD . . . **unafraid** of Him . . . **at ease** and **at one** with Him. And **that** is what Jesus appropriated for us at Calvary when He paid, once for all time, for the sins of the whole world.

"The death he died, he died to sin **once for all**,"
(Romans 6:10a *emphasis added*)

"For the wages of sin is death, but the **gift** of God
is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."
(Romans 6:23 *emphasis added*)

"For it is **by grace** you have been saved, through faith--
and this is not from yourselves, it is the **gift** of God,"
(Ephesians 2:8 *emphasis added*)

"we have been **made holy** through the sacrifice
of the body of Jesus Christ **once for all**."
(Hebrews 10:10 *emphasis added*)

The peace the world gives is momentary and temporary because it depends on our circumstances. The peace Jesus offers comes from the One who is eternal and unaffected by events—the One who is perfect, who **is** unfailing peace Himself.

We don't have to **ask** for peace; we only have to **receive** it. In Christ, we have peace with GOD. In Christ, we have **YHWH Shalom!**

¹ Stone, Nathan, *Names of God*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1944, 2010. p. 136.

² Ibid. p. 138.





YHWH Shammah

יהוה שם

YHWH Is There

Pronounced **Yä-wá' Shawm'-mah**, the compound name appears in the Old Testament only once in Ezekiel's promise of YHWH's presence in the coming Millennial kingdom, which captive Israel interpreted as a promise of their eventual return to their homeland.

"The distance all around will be 18,000 cubits. And the name of the city from that time on will be: THE LORD IS THERE (YHWH Shammah)."
(Ezekiel 48:35 *parenthetical text added*)

The name "YHWH Shammah" may very well be the most exciting and comforting name GOD has given us. Why? Because in "YHWH Shammah" is the promise and pledge of GOD completing the work He intended at creation and began to fulfill in us when we received Christ as Savior.

being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you
will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.
(Philippians 1:6 NIV *emphasis added*)

Etymology

The word "*shammah*" derives from the Hebrew root "*shâm*" ("שם"), which means to "be **there**" or "**at that place**".

YHWH Shammah is the last name God revealed through His Old Testament prophets. In the historic setting in which it's given, this name reassured Israel that YHWH had not abandoned them during their 70-year period of Babylonian captivity, and that there would eventually be a restoration of Jerusalem and the Temple.

Ezekiel had prophesied 25 years earlier the time when Nebuchadnezzar would lay siege to Jerusalem, take them captive to Babylon, and defile and utterly destroy the Temple. And now, as the people's hopes of one day returning to their homeland were declining, he prophesied a most wonderful promise to them that YHWH was indeed in Jerusalem: **YHWH Shammah!**

How is "shammah" used in Scripture?

Although the compound name appears only once in the Old Testament, the word "*shammah*" appears 823 times and is transliterated "**there**", "**where**", and occasionally "**whom**" (as in "in whom"). Frequently, its usage is transferred to a time period rather than a specific location, as in...

- ⁸ So the LORD (YHWH) scattered them from there (*shâm*) over all the earth, and they stopped building the city.
- ⁹ That is why it was called Babel--because there the LORD (YHWH) confused the language of the whole world. From there (*shâm*) the LORD (YHWH) scattered them over the face of the whole earth.
(Genesis 11:8-9 *parenthetical text added*)



What is the fulfillment of Ezekiel's prophecy?

There are several beliefs concerning the fulfillment of Ezekiel's prophecy:

- Orthodox Judaism believes this has a strictly literal interpretation that will be fulfilled when the Temple and sacrificial system are restored, after which the Messiah will come to reign in Jerusalem as the Son of David. Then, "Yahweh Shammah" will be realized.
- Other Bible scholars interpret the name solely in a spiritual sense with no fulfillment in an earthly Jerusalem.
- A third group of scholars combines the two interpretations and believes it has both a literal and a spiritual fulfillment.

If one considers the **whole** of Scripture, as well as the other usages of the word "shammah" in the Old Testament, then the third theory for believers is the most plausible. As Nathan Stone wrote:

"It has been seen that the fulfillment of this name was limited in the Old Testament both in its manifestation and scope. Every manifestation of God's presence in the midst of His people, though real, could only be but a shadow of a glorious reality to come. As to its scope, it was limited to the nation Israel.

"In the New Testament dispensation it has a wider scope in that it is more spiritual than symbolic, and more personal rather than national. For now it has been fulfilled ideally in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"As man, and representing the human race, 'the whole fullness of God was pleased to dwell in Him' (Colossians 1:19, marg.). He was the effulgence of God's glory and the very image of His substance (Hebrews 1:3, ASV). 'The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us,' says John, 'and we beheld his glory' (John 1:14, ASV). Thus He became 'God with us,' the Immanuel of Isaiah 7:14, the Child, the Son, the mighty God, the everlasting Father of Isaiah 9:6.

"The One who in the Old Testament came in occasional, mysterious appearances as the Angel of Jehovah, the Angel of His Presence, the Angel of the Covenant, the Angel in whom is Jehovah's name—became in Christ both the Presence itself and the Temple in whom the Presence resided so that in Him and of Him it could be said Jehovah Shammah, Jehovah is there.

"This Presence is now in believers as living temples of God. 'Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you' (I Corinthians 3:16, ASV)."¹

"Immanu'El" is "YHWH Shammah"!

While some might object to the analogy, I tend to think of "YHWH Shammah"—**God is There**—as being closely related to "Immanu'El"—**God with Us**. After all, both names assure us of YHWH's continual presence in our lives.

The true Kingdom of God—which His holy name, YHWH, embodies—is a present power within every person whose life has been transformed by the love of Christ. As Christians, we look



beyond Ezekiel's vision to the grander ideal represented by the new Jerusalem described by the Apostle John in Revelation—that city that needs no Temple because YHWH Himself is in her midst.

- ² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.
³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God."

²² I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.
²³ The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.
(Revelation 21:2-3, 22-23)

I like the way the Complete Jewish Bible renders verse 3 above:

I heard a loud voice from the throne say, "See! God's Sh'khinah is with mankind, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and he himself, **God-with-them** (Immanu'El), will be their God."
(Revelation 21:3 CJB *parenthetical text added*)

John's prophetic vision represents the ultimate literal fulfillment of the Covenant promises YHWH made with Israel when He gave the Law to Moses.

- ¹¹ I will put my tabernacle among you, and I will not reject you,
¹² but I will walk among you and be your God (Elohim), and you will be my people.
(Leviticus 26:11-12 CJB *parenthetical text added*)

Of course, the fulfillment of all this is guaranteed by the Promiser Himself, **YHWH**. However, as Christians, we don't have to wait for that future glorious event to realize its fulfillment. As we pray daily, "*Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven,*" His presence with us is realized **every day** in the here and now. It isn't found in special religious services, which stand apart from our common life, but in the constant influence of His Spirit, forming our character after the image of Christ, permeating our every action, until **everything** done on earth is to the praise and glory of our Father in Heaven.

Thus, we can say that YHWH Shammah is both a **promise** of a future literal kingdom and a **present** spiritual **fulfillment** of the Kingdom of God within every true believer.

Meditation

What an excellent name is this YHWH Shammah! The eternal, self-existent **I AM** who brings all things into being and who exists apart from our time and space constraints is **always there**! YHWH **is** there yesterday . . . **is** there today . . . and **is** there tomorrow! Not "**was**" . . . not "**will be**". He **is** there! And He is in **me** . . . and He is in **you**...!

Think about that for a moment. Recall what we learned in the third chapter: YHWH cares very deeply about **where** and in **whom** His name abides.



Remember, His name represents His very **essence**, His fundamental **nature**, His inherent **characteristics**, and His supreme **authority**.

This Covenant-keeping GOD of the Universe dwells anywhere and everywhere He chooses . . . anytime, **all** the time . . . and He has **chosen** to dwell **in me** and **in you**! Oh, praise His holy name! He **is** always **there** with us and in us! Hallelu YAH!

Father, as we meditate on this most wonderful name, may it comfort us and calm our fears, infuse us with strength and courage, and fill us with the confidence to endure. I pray that You would do whatever You have to do in each of us to make us a fit habitation for Your manifest presence. Be glorified in us!

¹ Stone, Nathan, *Names of God*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1944, 2010. p. 185.



YHWH Tsid'Ke-nu / Tsidkenu

יְהוָה צִדְקָה

YHWH Our Righteousness

Pronounced Yä-wá' T-sid'-kay'-noo, the compound name appears only twice in the Old Testament, both times in Jeremiah:

- ⁵ "The days are coming," declares the LORD (YHWH), "when I will raise up for David a righteous (tsaddiyq) Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right (tsadaq) in the land.
- ⁶ In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The LORD (YHWH) Our Righteous Savior. (Tsid'Ke-nu)."
(Jeremiah 23:5-6 *parenthetical text added*)
- ¹⁵ "In those days and at that time I will make a righteous (tsaddiyq) Branch sprout from David's line; he will do what is just and right (tsadaq) in the land.
- ¹⁶ In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. This is the name by which it will be called: The LORD (YHWH) Our Righteous Savior (Tsid'Ke-nu)."
(Jeremiah 33:15-16 *parenthetical text added*)

Etymology

There are three Hebrew words that derive from the same root "tsadaq" (tsâdaq) ("צִדְקָה") that are transliterated "**righteous**" or "**righteousness**", depending on the situation or object of the descriptor. "Tsâdaq" means to "**be/make right**" or "**cleanse**" morally and is often used as a verb or adverb in a **causative** sense, as in...

And Absalom would add, "If only I were appointed judge in the land!
Then everyone who has a complaint or case could come to me
and I would see that they **receive** justice (tsadaq)."
(2 Samuel 15:4 *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

In order to fully discern all that YHWH wants us to know about the use of this word with His name, it is helpful to look at all of the Hebrew words that derive from this one root word. They are:

- "Tsid'ke-nu", which derives from "tsedeq" ("צֶדֶק"), meaning the "**right**", "**moral**", or "**just**". It refers primarily to moral or legal integrity and honesty and is the one that is represented as "**righteousness**" in the compound name in most Bibles and "**righteous Savior**" in the NIV. It is also transliterated as "**fair**", "**accurate**", and "**honest**" in some Bible translations, as in...

"Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality
to the poor or favoritism to the great,
but judge your neighbor **fairly** (tsedeq).
(Leviticus 19:15 *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)



- "*Tsedaqah*" (tsedâqâh) ("צֶדֶקָה"), which means "**rightness**", "**uprightness**", "**justice**", or "**virtue**", is often transliterated "**righteousness**" as it refers to an internal subjective work on the human level, as in...

Sow righteousness (tsedaqah) for yourselves, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to seek the LORD (YHWH), until he comes and showers his righteousness (tsedeq) on you.
(Hosea 10:12 *parenthetical text added*)

- "*Tsaddiyq*" (tsaddîyq) ("צַדִּיק"), which means "**just**", "**lawful**", or "**righteous**", refers to righteousness from YHWH's perspective, either in defining Himself or in His opinions of us, as in...

For the LORD (YHWH) is righteous (tsaddiyq),
he loves justice (tsedek); the upright will see his face.
(Psalm 11:7 *parenthetical text added*)

Regardless of how hard we try or what words we use, mere human language is totally insufficient to enable a complete understanding of the ideas of righteousness and justification contained in the word "tsid'ke-nu". Only when we study it and all its roots in the context of YHWH's character as the "**Perfectly Righteous One**" can we begin to see it clearly.

What is the significance of Jeremiah's use of the compound name?

Following the death of Solomon, GOD divided the 12 tribes of Israel into two kingdoms: the ten northern tribes under one rule as Israel and the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and most of Levi under Davidic rule as Judah. This was YHWH's judgment against the house of David for Solomon's grievous sin of idolatry.

Rather than turning back to the one true GOD, Judah continued to reject Him and instead trusted in their idols. In sharp contrast to YHWH's laws (Deuteronomy 16:18), the people of Judah further added to their sin by perverting righteous judgment and ordaining unrighteous decrees, as in...

who **acquit** the guilty for a bribe,
but **deny justice** (tsedaqah) to the innocent (tsaddiyq).
(Isaiah 5:23 *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

- ¹ Woe to those who make **unjust** laws, to those who issue **oppressive** decrees,
- ² to **deprive** the poor of their rights and **withhold justice** from the oppressed of my people, making widows their prey and **robbing** the fatherless.

(Isaiah 10:1-2 *emphasis added*)

The time for Judah's punishment by exile was drawing near. Since their actions indicated that they despised YHWH's provision of redemption as **YHWH Jireh**, He could not continue to be **YHWH Rapha**, their Healer (Isaiah 1:6); and without the protection of **YHWH Nissi**, their Banner, they were defeated at every turn. Nevertheless, they stubbornly refused to repent and return to **YHWH M'Kaddesh**, their Sanctifier, and they became more corrupt and degenerate. And having forsaken **YHWH Shalom**, their Peace, they were torn by internal dissension and violence, and subjected by outward aggression and conquest.

It is in these contexts, therefore, that YHWH pronounced judgment against Judah and Israel. At the same time, however, through the Prophet Jeremiah, He promised that a time was coming when He would save Judah once again and execute justice and righteousness in the land through the "**Righteous Branch**". Of course, we know this "Righteous Branch" to be none other than Y'shua haMashiach (Jesus the Christ).

Where else are the root words used in Scripture?

The words "tsedek", "tsadaq", "tsedaqah", and "tsaddîyq" appear more than 500 times in Scripture in reference to obligations and relationships with one another and with YHWH.

This is the account of Noah and his family. Noah was a righteous (tsaddiyq) man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God (Elohim).
(Genesis 6:9 *parenthetical text added*)

Abram believed the LORD (YHWH),
and he credited it to him as righteousness (tsedaqah).
(Genesis 15:6 *parenthetical text added*)

The LORD (YHWH) said, "If I find fifty righteous (tsaddiyq) people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake."
(Genesis 18:26 *parenthetical text added*)

Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron. "This time I have sinned," he said to them. "The LORD (YHWH) is in the right (tsaddiyq), and I and my people are in the wrong."
(Exodus 9:27 *parenthetical text added*)

- ³⁵ "Do not use dishonest standards when measuring length, weight or quantity.
³⁶ Use honest (tsedek) scales and honest (tsedek) weights, an honest (tsedek) ephah and an honest (tsedek) hin." I am the LORD (YHWH) your God (Elohim), who brought you out of Egypt.
(Leviticus 19:35-36 *parenthetical text added*)

And I charged your judges at that time, "Hear the disputes between your people and judge fairly (tsedek), whether the case is between two Israelites or between an Israelite and a foreigner residing among you."
(Deuteronomy 1:16 *parenthetical text added*)

When people have a dispute, they are to take it to court and the judges will decide the case, acquitting (tsadaq) the innocent (tsaddiyq) and condemning the guilty.
(Deuteronomy 25:1 *parenthetical text added*)

"The LORD (YHWH) has dealt with me according to my righteousness (tsedaqah); according to the cleanness of my hands he has rewarded me.
(2 Samuel 22:21 *parenthetical text added*)

I will give thanks to the LORD (YHWH) because of his righteousness (tsedek);
I will sing the praises of the name of the LORD (YHWH) Most High (Elyon).
(Psalm 7:17 *parenthetical text added*)



The LORD (YHWH) is righteous (tsaddiyq) in all his ways, and holy in all his works.
(Psalm 145:17 KJV *parenthetical text added*)

Seek the LORD, all you humble of the land, you who do
what he commands. Seek righteousness (tsedek), seek humility;
perhaps you will be sheltered on the day of the LORD's anger.
(Zephaniah 2:3 *parenthetical text added*)

YHWH is consummate righteousness.

As the eternally self-existent "**I AM**", morally excellent Master and Sovereign Ruler **Adonai**,
and covenant-keeping Almighty **El Shaddai**, YHWH is Himself **perfectly righteous**. That is,
He doesn't "possess" righteousness. Rather, He **is consummate righteousness**.

For the LORD (YHWH) is righteous (tsaddiyq),
he loves justice (tsedaqah); the upright will see his face.
(Psalm 11:7 *parenthetical text added*)

¹⁴² Your righteousness (tsedaqah) is everlasting and your law is true.

¹⁴⁴ Your statutes are always righteous (tsedeq); give me understanding
that I may live.
(Psalm 119:142, 144 *parenthetical text added*)

But the LORD (YHWH) is righteous (tsaddiyq);
he has cut me free from the cords of the wicked.
(Psalm 129:4 *parenthetical text added*)

Declare what is to be, present it—let them take counsel together.
Who foretold this long ago, who declared it from the distant past?
Was it not I, the LORD (YHWH)? And there is no God (Elohim) apart
from me, a righteous (tsaddiyq) God (El) and a Savior; there is none but me.
(Isaiah 45:21 *parenthetical text added*)

He always does what is right.

It is His inherent character to **always** do right: His word is true; He fulfills all His promises;
and He always does that which ought to be done. This does not necessarily mean that He
always punishes the guilty, but that He is totally impartial in all His judgments.

He is the Rock, his works are perfect,
and all his ways are just. A faithful God (El)
who does no wrong, upright and just (tsaddiyq) is he.
(Deuteronomy 32:4 *parenthetical text added*)

LORD (YHWH), the God (Elohim) of Israel, you are righteous (tsaddiyq)!
We are left this day as a remnant. Here we are before you in our guilt,
though because of it not one of us can stand in your presence.
(Ezra 9:15 *parenthetical text added*)

The LORD (YHWH) is gracious and righteous (tsaddiyq);
our God (Elohim) is full of compassion.
(Psalm 116:5 *parenthetical text added*)

The LORD (YHWH) did not hesitate to bring the disaster on us,
for the LORD (YHWH) our God (Elohim) is righteous (tsaddiyq)
in everything he does; yet we have not obeyed him.
(Daniel 9:14 *parenthetical text added*)

What is the fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy?

Jeremiah's prophecy speaks about a time when "Judah shall be saved and Israel shall dwell in safety." Of course, history tells us that no such state of prosperity and peace has existed since the time of the Babylonian captivity up to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE. Thus, like Ezekiel's prophecy about "YHWH Shammah"—and certainly all Biblical prophecy yet to be fulfilled—there are conflicting beliefs concerning the fulfillment of this prophecy:

- Orthodox Judaism believes this will be literally fulfilled when the Messiah comes to reign in Jerusalem as the Son of David.
- Other Bible scholars believe this prophecy has a spiritual fulfillment only and has already been fulfilled by Christ's atoning death through which both judgment and righteousness have come to all humankind.
- A third group combines the two interpretations and believes it has both a literal and a spiritual fulfillment — the spiritual already being fulfilled by Jesus Christ, the Righteous Branch, and the literal yet to be fulfilled during the Millennial rule of Christ.

Jesus Christ is the "King and Righteous Branch".

Again, as in the discussion of Ezekiel's prophecy, it's important to consider the whole of Scripture when interpreting prophetic fulfillment. Since Jeremiah's prophecy has not been literally fulfilled since the Babylonian exile around 598 BCE, we must consider whether a **spiritual** aspect has been fulfilled and if there's a literal one yet to come.

As we consider Jesus as the "King and Righteous Branch" spoken of in Jeremiah's prophecy, we look to GOD's Word for confirmation of whether He meets the requirements. In order to see Jesus as the fulfillment of these roles, we must compare the New Testament testimonies with various Messianic prophecies. As the list is rather extensive, the following provides only about one-fourth of all fulfilled prophecies and contains only references without quoted Scripture.

Old Testament Prophecy	Subject	Fulfillment
Genesis 49:10	From the Tribe of Judah	Luke 3:33
Isaiah 9:7	Heir to the Throne of David	Luke 1:32,33
Micah 5:2	Born in Bethlehem	Luke 2:4,5,7
Isaiah 7:14	Born of a Virgin	Matthew 1:22,23 Luke 1, 26,27, 30,31
Psalms 2:7	Declared to be the Son of GOD	Matthew 3:17
Zechariah 9:9	Triumphal Entry to Jerusalem	Mark 11:7,9,11
Isaiah 50:6	Spat on and Struck	Matthew 26:67
Isaiah 53:5	Vicarious Sacrifice	Romans 5:6,8
Psalms 22:17,18	Sneered at and Mocked	Matthew 27:35,36
Psalms 34:20	No Bones Broken	John 19:32,33,36



Zechariah 12:10	His Side Pierced	John 19:34
Psalms 16:10	The Resurrection	Mark 16:6,7
Psalms 45:6,7 Psalms 102:25-27	Anointed and Eternal	Hebrews 1:8-12

A complete list of fulfilled Messianic prophecies and Messianic psalms is available at www.myredeemerlives.com/namesofgod/messianicprophecies.pdf.

Jesus Christ is the only Person who's ever lived who could answer to the character specified in Jeremiah's prophecy. He is a branch through David's seed; He is a totally righteous King; and through His atoning death, both justification and righteousness have come to all human-kind.

Christ makes us righteous.

Jeremiah's prophecy says, "this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD (YHWH) OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS (Tsid'Ke-nu)." This means that, by implication, Christ is both the author **and** the instrumentation by which we are justified.

- ²⁵ God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—
- ²⁶ he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be **just** and the **one who justifies** those who have faith in Jesus.
(Romans 3:25-26 *emphasis added*)

In saying that Jesus "justifies" us, it does not mean we're not guilty; rather, it means we are **relieved** from blame or obligation for our sins. Through Christ's atoning sacrifice, we now possess a righteousness—namely, Christ's righteousness—which perfectly and forever **satisfies the law**, thereby making us righteous and acceptable to GOD.

God made him who **had no sin to be sin** for us,
so that **in him** we might **become the righteousness of God**.
(2 Corinthians 5:21 *emphasis added*)

The sole condition on which this righteousness is imputed or credited to the believer is **faith** in or on the Lord Jesus Christ.

For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a **righteousness** that is **by faith** from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."
(Romans 1:17 *emphasis added*)

Oh, the weight of pardoning love!

Most of us think when bad things happen or when we're particularly tested by a difficult trial that GOD is using that to humble us. And certainly, He can and does. But His love goes so much beyond that.

One of the main reasons—if not **the** reason—so many resist the Gospel message is human pride. We tend to glory in our own virtues, even to the point of flaunting them before one another. And if we could, I dare say we would even flaunt them before Almighty GOD. But the Bible reminds us that, when compared to YHWH Tsid'ke-nu's righteousness...

All of us have become like one who is unclean,
and all our righteous acts are like **filthy rags**.
(Isaiah 64:6a *emphasis added*)

The original Hebrew represented by "filthy" is "menstrual". Imagine us flaunting menstrual cloths in GOD's face! And yet, we would if we could . . .

William Nicoll wrote in his *Commentary on Ephesians* in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*:

"We sinners are a proud race, and our pride is oftentimes the worst of our sins. Therefore God humbles us by His compassion. He makes to us a free gift of His righteousness, and excludes every contribution from our store of merit; for if we could supply anything, we should inevitably boast as though all were our own. We must be content to receive mercy, love, grace, kindness—everything, without deserving the least fraction of the immense sum. How it strips our vanity; how it crushes us to the dust—**'the weight of pardoning love!'**"¹ (*emphasis added*)

Meditation

Jesus Christ is YHWH M'Kaddesh, "The GOD Who Makes Us Holy", **and** YHWH Tsid'Ke-nu, "The God Who Makes us Righteous". On the surface, these works of grace might seem like one-and-the-same. They are not. However, they **do** go hand-in-hand—or at least, they should.

As we learned in the study of YHWH M'Kaddesh, GOD's work of sanctification is a lifelong process that requires our participation and releases us from the **power** of sin.

As our YHWH Tsid'Ke-nu, on the other hand, Jesus Christ liberates us from the **guilt** and **penalty** of sin. We are at once and forever justified and made righteous based on faith alone in Christ's work alone.

The most wonderfully exciting part of both titles is that they remind us of our GOD's extravagant love. The Creator and King of the Universe loves us so much that He isn't willing to leave us struggling in our own strength, trying to earn our own righteousness or achieve a state of perfect holiness, both of which are impossible for us to attain. GOD is not only willing, but it **"pleased"** Him to offer the Sacrifice that would set us free.

Oh! Worship Him, Church! See Him as He truly is! Stand in awe of Him. Bow in reverence of Him. YHWH, our Elohim, is **holy** . . . YHWH, our Elohim, is **righteous** . . . YHWH, our Elohim, is **just** . . . YHWH, our Elohim, is **the** GOD, fully deserving of all our praise, adoration, worship, and obedience! When we finally begin to comprehend and acknowledge our holy GOD's perfect holiness and righteousness, we cannot help but acknowledge our own guilt before YHWH Tsid'Ke-nu, the Righteous GOD, as the Prophet Jeremiah did.

²⁰ We acknowledge our wickedness, LORD, and the guilt of our ancestors; we have indeed sinned against you.



²¹ For the sake of your name do not despise us; do not dishonor your glorious throne. Remember your covenant with us and do not break it.
(Jeremiah 14:20-21)

¹ Nicoll, William R. *"Commentary on Ephesians 2:7-10". "The Expositor's Bible Commentary"*. <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/teb/ephesians-2.html> #7, np., 01/2019.



YHWH / Elohim Tzva'ot (Sabaoth)

אלהים צבא / יהוה צבא

YHWH of Hosts / Elohim of Hosts

If you use the NIV...

Be aware that the NIV uses "**LORD Almighty**" to represent "YHWH Tzva'ot" ("LORD of Hosts"). This is not the same as "*El Shaddai*", which is represented as "*God Almighty*" or "*Almighty God*".

To avoid any confusion, remember that "YHWH" is always represented by uppercase "LORD" or "GOD", and "El" is always represented by lowercase "God". Thus, "**LORD Almighty**" could never represent "*El Shaddai*".

This is an excellent example of why it's always good to study more than one version of the Bible to ensure a more accurate and thorough understanding of the text.

Pronounced Yă-wá' or El-o-heem' Sa-bâ'ôt, the compound names appear 284 times in the Old Testament, primarily in the Prophets. One of the most exciting and interesting qualities attributed to YHWH, it is a most appropriate name with which to conclude this main study of the titles of GOD.

It's the name David used as his primary weapon against the Philistine giant, Goliath.

David said to the Philistine, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you **in the name** of the LORD (YHWH) Almighty (Tzva'ot), the God (Elohim) of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied."
(1 Samuel 17:45 *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

When thinking about the boy, David, going against the Philistine giant, most people think David defeated Goliath with a stone hurled from his slingshot. But, that's not what the text says. Read it again.

David had rejected King Saul's sword and armor as too heavy and bulky and confessed his full confidence in YHWH's ability and desire to enable him to prevail against the Philistine. As he gathered the stones for his slingshot, he said he was challenging Goliath with the **only** weapon at his disposal that he **knew** full well could and **would** spell victory—not his skill with the slingshot, but the "**name of YHWH Tzva'ot**"!

**David killed Goliath.
But YHWH Tzva'ot defeated him!**

And, this is the same name that Isaiah witnessed the fiery seraphim shouting in their constant praise and exaltation around YHWH's throne.



And one cried unto another, and said,
 Holy (qadosh), holy (qadosh), holy (qadosh),
 is the **LORD** (YHWH) **of hosts** (Tzva'ot):
 the whole earth is full of his glory.
 (Isaiah 6:3 KJV *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

It is a most wonderful name and one that should infuse every believer with courage and confidence to run the race that's been set before each of us!

Etymology

The word "tzva'ot" derives from two Hebrew words:

- The noun "tseba'ah" (tsebâ'âh) ("צְבָאָה"), meaning a "**mass**" of persons or things, especially for war, by implication an "**army**", "**host**", "**soldiers**", or "**war**".
- The verb "tsaba" (tsâbâ') ("צָבָא"), meaning to "**mass**" (an army or servants), "**assemble**", "**fight**", "**muster**", "**war**".

How are the compound names represented in Scripture?

"YHWH Tzva'ot" ("יְהוָה צְבָאָה"), "YHWH Elohim Tzva'ot" ("יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים צְבָאָה"), and "Adonai YHWH Tzva'ot" ("אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה צְבָאָה") are the most frequently used compound names or attributes of YHWH in the Old Testament.

- **YHWH Tzva'ot** is transliterated "**LORD of Armies**" or "**LORD of Hosts**" in most English Bibles. A few English Bibles, such as the NIV and CEV, display "**LORD Almighty**" or "**LORD All-Powerful**". This compound name is the one used most often and appears in 235 verses, primarily in Jeremiah, Isaiah, Zechariah, and 1 Samuel.

Who is this King of glory? The LORD (YHWH)
 of hosts (Tzva'ot), he is the King of glory. *Selah*.
 (Psalm 24:10 KJV *parenthetical text added*)

But the LORD (YHWH) Almighty (Tzva'ot) will be exalted
 by his justice, and the holy (qadosh) God (El) will be proved
 holy (qadosh) by his righteous acts (tsid'ke-nu).
 (Isaiah 5:16 *parenthetical text added*)

- 4 Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the LORD (YHWH); and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the LORD (YHWH), and work: for I am with you, saith the LORD (YHWH) of hosts (Tzva'ot):
- 5 According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not.
- 6 For thus saith the LORD (YHWH) of hosts (Tzva'ot); Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land;
- 7 And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD (YHWH) of hosts (Tzva'ot)



- ⁸ The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the LORD (YHWH) of hosts (Tzva'ot).
⁹ The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD (YHWH) of hosts (Tzva'ot): and in this place will I give peace (shalom), saith the LORD (YHWH) of hosts (Tzva'ot).
 (Haggai 2:4-9 KJV *parenthetical text added*)

- **YHWH Elohim Tzva'ot** is transliterated "**LORD God of Hosts**"/"**Armies**" (or "**the LORD God Almighty**" in the NIV) and appears in 23 verses, as in...

And David went on, and grew great, and the LORD (YHWH) God (Elohim) of hosts (Tzva'ot) *was* with him.
 (2 Samuel 5:10 KJV *parenthetical text added*)

Who is like you, LORD (YHWH) God (Elohim) Almighty (Tzva'ot)?
 You, LORD (YHWH), are mighty, and your faithfulness surrounds you.
 (Psalm 89:8 *parenthetical text added*)

When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart's delight, for I bear your name,
 LORD (YHWH) God (Elohim) Almighty (Tzva'ot).
 (Jeremiah 15:16 *parenthetical text added*)

- ¹⁴ Seek good, not evil, that you may live. Then the LORD (YHWH) God (Elohim) Almighty (Tzva'ot) will be with you, just as you say he is.
¹⁵ Hate evil, love good; maintain justice in the courts. Perhaps the LORD (YHWH) God (Elohim) Almighty (Tzva'ot) will have mercy on the remnant of Joseph.
¹⁶ Therefore this is what the Lord (Adonai), the LORD (YHWH) God (Elohim) Almighty (Tzva'ot), says: "There will be wailing in all the streets and cries of anguish in every public square. The farmers will be summoned to weep and the mourners to wail."
 (Amos 5:14-16 *parenthetical text added*)

See *also* 1 Kings 19:10,14; Psalms 59:5, 80:4,7,14, 80:19, 84:8; Isaiah 3:15; Jeremiah 5:14, 35:17, 38:17, 44:7; Hosea 12:5; Amos 4:13, 5:27, 6:14.

- **Adonai YHWH Tzva'ot** is primarily transliterated "**Lord GOD of Hosts**"/"**Armies**" (or "**the Lord, the LORD Almighty**" in the NIV) and appears in 16 verses, as in...

"See, I am against you, you arrogant one,"
 declares the Lord (Adonai), the LORD (YHWH) Almighty (Tzva'ot),
 "for your day has come, the time for you to be punished."
 (Jeremiah 50:31 *parenthetical text added*)

See *also* Psalm 69:6; Isaiah 10:23-24. 22:5,12-15, 28:22; Jeremiah 2:19, 46:10, 49:5, 50:25; Amos 3:13, 6:8, 9:5.

What is the historical significance of the names?

The entire Old Testament provides the backdrop for GOD's use of these names in His dealings with Israel, both in defeating their enemies, caring for the Ark of the Covenant, and in bringing judgment against Israel for their unfaithfulness. The one constant throughout Israel's history with YHWH Tzva'ot is **His** faithfulness to His Word and to His holiness and perfect righteousness.



...man's extremity is GOD's opportunity!

In addition to the story of David defeating Goliath, one of my favorites is that of GOD delivering Jericho into Israel's hand. In the following narrative, Joshua and Israel had crossed the Jordan and celebrated their first Passover in the Promise Land.

They were now preparing to go against Jericho, a city surrounded by a wall with its gates securely barred and closely guarded. Joshua hadn't received any Divine guidance since crossing the Jordan and, understandably, he might have been anxious about what to do next.

- ¹³ Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, "Are you for us or for our enemies?"
- ¹⁴ "Neither," he replied, "but as commander of the army (tzva'ot) of the LORD (YHWH) I have now come." Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence, and asked him, "What message does my Lord (Adon) have for his servant?"
- ¹⁵ The commander of the LORD's (YHWH) army (tzva'ot) replied, "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy (qodesh)." And Joshua did so.

(Joshua 5:13-15 *parenthetical text added*)

Imagine! Joshua had no reason to think the man was one of his own troops, so he logically might have anticipated that the man was an enemy soldier or spy. He asked if the man was an enemy or friend, and the man replied that he was **neither**. What did that mean? Any confusion Joshua felt at that moment was cleared up with the next announcement that the stranger was the "commander of the **LORD's** army". In his exalted position, he didn't concern himself with forming opinions about human affairs, which is why he answered, "Neither." His allegiance was to the King of Glory, to the One who is "before all things and who holds all things together" (Colossians 1:17).

Imagine how Joshua must have felt in that moment . . . He was the man who had stepped into Moses' position as the leader of Israel and Commander of Israel's armies. Now, he was standing before the Commander of **YHWH's** army! This Man was the one in charge, not of mere **human** armies, but of all angelic principalities, powers, and might and dominion . . . !

As William Nicoll wrote in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*:

"There could be little doubt in his mind who this "Captain of the host of Jehovah" was, and no hesitation on his part in yielding to Him the Divine honour due to the Most High. And then he must have felt warmly how very kind and seasonable this appearance was, just at the very moment when he was in so great perplexity, and when his path was utterly dark. It was a new proof that **man's extremity is God's opportunity**."¹ (*emphasis added*)

Joshua's compliant and immediate response says that he knew this was no ordinary angel. Having prostrated himself before the Man, Joshua now boldly asked, "What do you want me to do?" If there was any doubt in Joshua's mind about the Presence before him, it was addressed and removed with the Angel's next statement: "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy." Like his predecessor, Moses, to whom the LORD appeared in the burning bush in the desert near Mount Sinai, Joshua was now in the presence of the pre-Incarnate Christ, YHWH Himself!



Then the LORD (YHWH) said to Joshua, "See, **I have delivered Jericho** into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men."
(Joshua 6:2 *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

The Bible indicates that Joshua never hesitated in carrying out the attack on Jericho exactly as instructed even though, let's admit it, the instructions were **anything** but conventional. However, the One who commanded all of the Heavenly Host of angels had assured him of his success. Defeat was **not** possible!

How does this apply to me?

We imperfect, erratic humans are indecisive, temperamental, consistent in our inconsistencies, and reliable in our unreliableness. However, as Scripture assures us, when we are faithless, He remains faithful. He is YHWH Tsid'Ke-nu who **always** does what is right. He is YHWH Jireh who always accomplishes whatever He desires in accordance with His eternal, perfect foreknowledge.

Know therefore that the LORD (YHWH) your God (Elohim) is God (Elohim); he is the **faithful** God (El), **keeping his covenant** of love to a **thousand generations** of those who love him and keep his commandments.
(Deuteronomy 7:9 *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

For the word of the LORD (YHWH) is **right** and **true**; he is **faithful** in all he does.
(Psalm 33:4 *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

The LORD (YHWH) is **righteous** (tsid'ke-nu) in all his ways and **faithful** in all he does.
(Psalm 145:17 *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

- 8 "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD (YHWH).
9 "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.
10 As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater,
11 so is my **word** that goes out from my mouth: It will **not return** to me **empty**, but **will accomplish** what I desire and **achieve the purpose** for which I sent it.

(Isaiah 55:8-11 *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

"I the LORD (YHWH) **do not change**."
(Malachi 3:6a *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

"Jesus Christ is the **same yesterday** and **today** and **forever**."
(Hebrews 13:8 *emphasis added*)

GOD's perfection cannot be communicated to our imperfection!



This same faithful, true, and righteous GOD has promised to always be a refuge and to do battle on behalf of **all** who are in covenant with Him. That includes His covenant people, Israel, and it includes **spiritual** Israel— those who have been grafted in through faith in Christ's atoning work.

The LORD (YHWH) of hosts (Tzva'ot) is **with us**;
the God (Elohim) of Jacob is our **refuge**. *Selah*.
(Psalm 46: 7 & 11 KJV *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

- ⁴ This is what the LORD (YHWH) says to me: "**As a lion growls**, a great lion **over its prey**—and though a whole band of shepherds is called together against it, it is not frightened by their shouts or disturbed by their clamor—so the **LORD** (YHWH) **Almighty** (Tzva'ot) **will come down to do battle** on Mount Zion and on its heights.
- ⁵ **Like birds hovering** overhead, the **LORD** (YHWH) **Almighty** (Tzva'ot) will **shield** Jerusalem; he will shield it and **deliver** it, he will 'pass over' it (*ref. Exodus 12:27*) and will **rescue** it."
(Isaiah 31:4-5 *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

I was watching a nature show on TV about predatory animals and was impressed with how zealously the lion was guarding his prey. Even the lioness seemed as aggressive in protecting her kill as she was in protecting her cubs!

GOD's Word parallels YHWH Tzva'ot, our Warrior GOD and Commander of "the armies", with the fearless lion guarding its prey. That means our defeat is simply **not** possible! The sovereign King of the Universe promises to bring **all the armies** of Heaven to do battle against our adversary on our behalf.

Therefore the Lord (Adonai), the LORD (YHWH) Almighty (Tzva'ot),
the Mighty One of Israel, declares: "Ah! I will vent my wrath
on my foes and avenge myself on my enemies."
(Isaiah 1:24 *parenthetical text added*)

We must remember that all who are in covenant with Him today can call upon the same Name for shelter and defense. When all hope seems lost . . . when defeat appears inevitable . . . when foes sneer and accuse and friends abandon . . . we can cry out to our Warrior GOD, the LORD of Hosts, for rescue. The **battle** is His; the **victory** is already **ours**!

Thus, we can say with all confidence, "**No weapon forged against me will prevail, and I will refute** every tongue *that accuses me*," (Isaiah 54:17) and "**nothing shall separate me from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord**." (Romans 8:39).

Meditation

Although it is not given to us to fully understand the precise details—nor is it the purpose of this study to delve into such—in Israel's greatest hour of need YHWH Tzva'ot will wage war and rescue a remnant of His covenant people for all eternity.

- ⁸ In the whole land," declares the LORD (YHWH), "two-thirds will be struck down and perish; yet one-third will be left in it.
- ⁹ This third I will put into the fire; I will refine them like silver and test them like gold. They will call on my name and I



will answer them; I will say, 'They are **my people**,' and they will say, 'The LORD (YHWH) is our God (Elohim).'"
(Zechariah 13:8-9 *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

²⁵ As he says in Hosea: "I will call them '**my people**' who are **not my people**; and I will call her 'my loved one' who is not my loved one," (ref. Hosea 1:9 and 2:23)

²⁶ and, "In the very place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' there they will be **called 'children** of the living God.'" (ref. Hosea 1:10)

²⁷ Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: "Though the number of the Israelites be like the sand by the sea, only the remnant will be saved. (ref. Isaiah 10:21-22)

²⁸ For the Lord will carry out his sentence on earth with speed and finality."

²⁹ It is just as Isaiah said previously: "Unless the Lord (YHWH) Almighty (Tzva'ot) had left us descendants, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been like Gomorrah." (ref. Isaiah 1:9)

(Romans 9:25-29 *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

¹² For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile--the same Lord is **Lord of all** and richly **blesses all** who call on him,

¹³ for, "Everyone **who calls on the name** of the Lord will be saved." (ref. Joel 2:32 "...name (shem) of the LORD (YHWH)...")

(Romans 10:12-13 *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

YHWH, our Elohim, is perfect in wisdom, power, righteousness, and goodness. We may not understand everything involved in Him accomplishing what He has promised concerning Israel. However, we must remember that His thoughts are higher than our thoughts and His ways higher than our ways. GOD's perfection cannot be communicated to our imperfection, but we can rest assured that He is attending all the steps necessary to complete His divine and mysterious processes.

All who hear and obey when YHWH calls have become the **children** of the living GOD. We are heirs and joint heirs with Jesus Christ, the beloved recipients of His eternal love! It is not a state or condition to be earned, but simply to be received by faith. And in the receiving, we are assured that in Christ, **all** of GOD's promises are "**yes**" and "**amen**"! (2 Corinthians 1:20)

Therefore, we can say with the Psalmist, the Prophets and Apostles, and all the saints, "If **YHWH Tzva'ot** be for us, who can be against us?" (cf. Romans 8:31)
Let us forever adore and worship His matchless grace!

¹ Nicoll, William R. "Commentary on Joshua". "The Expositor's Bible Commentary".
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Epilogue

Have you seen the King?

- ¹ In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord (Adonai) sitting upon a throne, **high** and **lifted up**, and his train filled the temple.
- ² Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.
- ³ And one cried unto another, and said, **Holy, holy, holy**, is the LORD of hosts (YHWH Tzva'ot): the whole earth is **full** of his **glory**.
- ⁴ And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

(Isaiah 6:1-4 KJV *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

Can you imagine what that was like for Isaiah? Thousands and thousands of **fiery** angels all crying out in one voice, "**Holy!**" As their shout reverberates across the Universe, they shout again, "**Holy!**" and shake the Heavens. When they shout a third "**Holy!**" the earth shakes, demons tremble in fear, and all the Heavenly Host fall down and worship!

Or, consider what the Apostle John saw while exiled on the Island of Patmos.

- ¹² I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands,
- ¹³ and among the lampstands was someone like a son of man, dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest.
- ¹⁴ The hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow, and his **eyes** were like **blazing fire**.
- ¹⁵ His **feet** were like **bronze** glowing in a furnace, and his **voice** was like the sound of **rushing waters**.
- ¹⁶ In his right hand he held seven stars, and coming out of his **mouth** was a sharp, **double-edged sword**. His **face** was like the **sun shining** in all its brilliance.
- ¹⁷ And when I saw Him, I **fell** at His feet **as dead**.

(Revelation 1:12-17a *emphasis added*)

Many artists have attempted to reproduce John's vision. But, how can they? Mere human intellect cannot begin to comprehend an image so glorious, so frightening, so mind-bending as to cause John to immediately faint.

Both Isaiah and John did the very best they could in trying to describe what they saw. But, how could they? Where human intellect fails, then surely human language is all the more inadequate. The best they could do in their attempts to share their experiences was to tell us how they reacted. Isaiah's response was, "I am a man of **unclean lips**", as he saw himself as utterly profane! And John's reaction? "I **fell** at his feet **as** though **dead**."

Many claim to have experienced great emotional moments when they have knelt and "*received Christ as Savior*". And certainly, I have no doubts that they all are indeed heirs and joint heirs with Christ Jesus, for Scripture assures...



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

Through him you **believe** in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your **faith** and **hope** are **in God**.
(1 Peter 1:21 *emphasis added*)

Still, I ask again . . . **have you seen the King**? Isaiah and John were both believers, both saved, when they were suddenly confronted with that which cannot be discerned intellectually and can barely be tolerated emotionally, and their only response was to **die**! No defense . . . no personal recommendatory assertions . . . nothing but a profound awareness of their sinfulness, of their unworthiness to look upon all that their eyes beheld . . .

There are many among us who think they know everything there is to know about GOD, who believe they can explain His thoughts, His intents, and His judgments. In their attempts to explain the inexplicable, they place limitations on GOD's limitless love, draw boundaries around His boundless grace, and take the mystery out of worship of "the blessed and only Ruler, the **King of kings** and **Lord of lords**, who alone is **immortal** and who lives in **unapproachable light**, whom no one has seen or can see." (1 Timothy 6:15-16)

Almighty GOD, in the space of a short second of time, can reveal Himself to anyone with a humble and willing spirit. It isn't about doctrine or religious rites . . . it isn't about tithing, church attendance, community service, or any other external activity that would make us "worthy" to be in the presence of our holy GOD. If we would truly desire to see the King, we must first see our own filthy sinfulness. As A. W. Tozer explained:

"There should be a birth from above and within. There should be the terror of seeing ourselves in violent contrast to the holy, holy, holy God. Unless we come into this place of conviction and pain, I am not sure how deep and real our repentance will ever be.

"Today, it is not a question of whether we have Isaiah's cleanness, but a question of whether we have his awareness. He was unclean and, thank God, he became aware of it. But the world today is unclean and seems to be almost totally unaware of it."

Tozer went on to say that many of us are not comfortable with the holy attributes of GOD. If that's true, would that not impact the quality of the worship we try to offer to this knowable and yet incomprehensible holy GOD?

The word "holy" is more than an adjective . . . more than an ecstatic ascription of glory . . . more than complete moral purity . . . more than being guiltless, sound, or upright . . . more than being just and true . . . Could it be that it isn't **GOD** who can't be explained or understood, really, but His **holiness** that is "*just*" outside our mental capacity to grasp all that it is?

Both Isaiah and John were pious, righteous men of GOD who'd sacrificed all they had for Him. And yet, when confronted with the **moral purity of the Divine**, Isaiah's reaction was a feeling of **absolute profaneness**, and John **fell down as dead**.

YHWH knows our hearts and intentions, and He is able to restore the quality of our worship when we find that place of humble repentance . . . when we see ourselves as Isaiah and John did and repent, not for what we **do**, but for what we **are** . . .



Have you spent a moment in the presence of the inexplicable, transcendent **UNcreated**? His name is **YHWH Jireh**, the GOD who Foresees and Provides . . . **YHWH Nissi**, Our Banner . . . **YHWH M'kaddesh**, our Sanctifier . . . **YHWH Rapha**, our Healer . . . **YHWH Rohi**, our Shepherd . . . **YHWH Shalom**, our Perfect Peace . . . **YHWH Shammah**, the GOD who is always with us . . . **YHWH Tsidkenu**, our Righteousness . . . **YHWH Tzva'ot**, the LORD of Hosts.

I pray that, as you've studied and meditated on these attributes of YHWH, you might have been drawn into a more intimate fellowship with Him. May you be prompted to pray as Moses did, "**LORD, show me your glory!**" And then . . . prepare to **die** . . .

³³ Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!

³⁴ "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?" (ref. Isaiah 40:13-14)

³⁵ "Who has ever given to God, that God should repay them?" (ref. Job 41:11)

³⁶ For from him and through him and for him are all things. **To him be the glory forever!** Amen.

(Romans 11:33-36 *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)





Glossary

Akkadian A Semitic language spoken in ancient Mesopotamia, particularly by the Assyrians and Babylonians. The Hebrew language was influenced by the Akkadian language during Israel's exile in Babylon.

Allah Muslim name for the one and only God, Creator of all that exists, but not the same as the Judeo-Christian GOD, YHWH/Yahweh/Jehovah/Jesus.

Amalekites A tribe of nomads living in the area of south Canaan during the time of the Israelites' exodus from Egypt. They were the first ones to attack the Israelites upon their journey in the wilderness. Descendants of Amalek, a son of Esau's firstborn son Eliphaz, it is presumed that they harbored multi-generational resentment of Israel because Esau blamed Jacob (Israel) for stealing his birthright.

Ammonites A Semitic people descended from the son of Lot, born of an incestuous relationship with his younger daughter. They were a nomadic tribe who lived in the territory of modern-day Jordan, the capital of which is now Amman. Although closely related to the Israelites, they were more often counted as enemies than friends.

Aramaic The common Semitic language of Jesus and of large sections of the books of Daniel and Ezra, and also one of the languages of the Talmud.

Ark of the Covenant Sacred gold-covered chest in which the ancient Hebrews kept a gold jar of manna, Aaron's staff that had budded (Numbers 17:8), and the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments.

banner A distinctive flag representing the king or kingdom, always preceding the warriors into battle.

Chaldee Of or relating to the language of ancient Chaldea, the Babylonian kingdom in southern Mesopotamia; Babylonia conquered Israel in the 6th century BCE and exiled the Jews to Babylon where the Hebrew language was influenced by the Chaldee language.

Catechism An elementary book summarizing the principles of a Christian religion. Catholic children study a Catechism as part of their religious education; it outlines the principal tenets of their faith.

codex An unbound manuscript of some ancient classic (as distinguished from a scroll).

covenant A formal agreement between two or more parties to perform or not perform some action; in the Bible, an agreement between YHWH and His people in which He makes certain promises and requires certain behavior from them in return. The Old Testament is often referred to as the Old Covenant and the New Testament as the New Covenant (Luke 22:20).

etymology The history of a word; the study of the sources and development of a word.

Greek Of or pertaining to or characteristic of the ancient Greek and Roman cultures; the classic Grecian branch of the Indo-European family of languages.



Greek Septuagint The earliest Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures from the original Hebrew. It is estimated that the Torah (Pentateuch or first five books of the Old Testament) was translated around 200 BCE (BC) and the remaining texts were translated around 100 BCE.

Hebrew A person belonging to the worldwide group claiming descent from Jacob (renamed "Israel" by YHWH) and connected by cultural or religious ties; the official language of Israel.

holy The separating or setting apart (being made "holy") of a person, place or thing for YHWH's service.

impute/imputation Attributing (responsibility or fault) to a cause or source. In the Bible (1) the sin of Adam is imputed to all his descendants, thus all humans are guilty; (2) the righteousness of Christ is imputed to those who believe in Him; and (3) our sins are imputed to Christ, which He bore on Calvary to answer YHWH's demands of justice for our sins.

Jehovah Believed by some to be the correct pronunciation of GOD's name based on the Tetragrammaton "YHWH".

justification To declare righteous and make one right with God. Justification is God's declaring those who receive Christ to be righteous, based on Christ's righteousness being imputed to the accounts of those who receive Christ (Romans 3:21-26; 2 Corinthians 5:21). Justification is sometimes referred to as "*positional* sanctification", but is not the same as "sanctification".

Latin Of or relating to languages derived from Latin, the language of Rome. Besides English, the other most common Latin-based languages today are Italian, Spanish, French, Portuguese, Romanian, Ladin (a language spoken in northern Italy), and Sardinian.

Leningrad Codex The oldest complete manuscript of the Hebrew Bible in Hebrew dated 1008 CE (AD), using the Masoretic Text and Tiberian vocalization.

Masoretic Text Of or relating to the Masorah, a vast body of textual criticism of the Hebrew Scriptures including notes on features of writing and on the occurrence of certain words and on variant sources and instructions for pronunciation and other comments that were written between 600 and 900 CE by Jewish scribes in the margins or at the end of texts

Messianic Of or relating to a Messiah promising deliverance, as in Jesus the Messiah who delivers us from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:2).

Midianites Descendants of Midian, one of Abraham's sons by his second wife following Sarah's death. Moses married a Midianite woman, the daughter of a Priest who still retained knowledge of the God of their father, Abraham. Although Moses' Midianite brother-in-law assisted the Israelites during their journey through the desert, relations between the Israelites and the Midianites began to sour when the Midianites joined forces with the Moabites.

Moabites A Semitic tribe descended from Moab, the son of Lot, born of an incestuous relationship with his oldest daughter. Like the Ammonites, they were more often counted as enemies than friends.

nomads A people who have no permanent home but move about according to the seasons.

orthodox Of or pertaining to or characteristic of the oldest doctrines of Judaism according to the Torah and Mosaic Law.

propitiatory Having power to atone for or offered by way of compensation. Christ's death on Calvary paid the debt we owe for our sin so that we won't have to.

righteous God's own perfection in every attribute, every attitude, every behavior, and every word. Thus, God's laws, as given in the Bible, both describe His own character and constitute the plumb line by which He measures human righteousness.

Romanization To write in the Latin alphabet.

sanctification The separating or setting apart (being made "holy") of a person, place or thing for YHWH's service. For the Christian, our sanctification is a lifelong process and is GOD's will for us (1 Thessalonians 4:3). Not the same as "justification".

Semitic Of, relating to, or constituting a subfamily of the Afro-Asiatic language family that includes Hebrew, Aramaic, Arabic, and Amharic.

Septuagint The oldest Greek version of the Old Testament, said to have been translated from the Hebrew by Jewish scholars at the request of Ptolemy II, king of Egypt (circa 309-247 BCE).

Shiloh A place of rest, a city of Ephraim, 10 miles north of Bethel where the tabernacle was set up after the Conquest (Joshua 18:1-10), and where it remained during all the period of the judges till the Ark of the Covenant fell into the hands of the Philistines (1 Samuel 5:1).

standard A distinctive flag representing the king or kingdom, always preceding the warriors into battle.

Tetragrammaton Four Hebrew letters ("יהוה") usually transliterated as YHWH (Yahweh) or JHVH (Jehovah) signifying the Hebrew name for GOD.

Tiberian vocalization System of diacritics (mark added to a letter to indicate a special pronunciation) devised by the Masoretes of Tiberias to add to the consonantal text of the Hebrew Bible to produce the Masoretic Text. The Tiberian vocalization marks vowels and stress, makes fine distinctions of consonant quality and length, and serves as punctuation. While the Tiberian system was devised for Tiberian Hebrew, it has become the dominant system for vocalizing all forms of Hebrew.

translate Restate or rewrite words from one language into another language.

translation A rendering of the Hebrew or Greek text into a precise and accurate equivalent in another language without changing the text. Technically, as it is not possible to achieve a "perfect translation" from one completely different writing system and culture to another, all translations are "adaptations" to the extent necessary. Some scholars argue that the difference between a Bible "translation" and "version" is similar to whether the glass is "half empty" or "half full." (See version)

transliterate Rewrite text from one language to another wherein the alphabets are very dissimilar and translating word-for-word is not possible.

Trinity The Christian doctrine of the union of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in one Godhead.



version A rendering of the Hebrew or Greek text with intentional changes to the text, purportedly for greater clarity or understanding. Technically, as it is not possible to achieve a "perfect translation" from one completely different writing system and culture to another, all translations are "adaptations" to the extent necessary. Some scholars argue that the difference between a Bible "translation" and "version" is similar to whether the glass is "half empty" or "half full." (See translation)

Westminster Catechism A Catechism written in 1646 and 1647 CE by the Westminster Assembly, a council of English and Scottish theologians and laymen intended to bring the Church of England into greater conformity with the Church of Scotland.

Yah The contracted/abbreviated form of YHWH, occurs 49 times in the Hebrew Scriptures, primarily in the Psalms.

Yahweh Believed by some to be the correct pronunciation of GOD's name based on the Tetragrammaton "YHWH".

YHWH The English transliteration of the Hebrew name of GOD ("יהוה").

יהוה The four-letter (Tetragrammaton) Hebrew name of GOD, the English transliteration of which is "YHWH".

יה The contracted/abbreviated form of יהוה, which occurs 49 times in the Hebrew Scriptures, primarily in the Psalms. It is the origin for the word "Hallelujah", the Hebrew being "הַלְלֵי יְהוָה" ("Hâlâl Yah").

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About the Author

Rev. Linda Smallwood is an ordained minister and former missionary to India with degrees in Journalism, Biblical Studies, and Christian ministry. Linda has a proven track record of excellence in adult education which spans more than 50 years and includes assisting in the development of training materials for Indiana's first EMT certification in 1974, creating the curriculum and training model for all military medical facilities within the U.S. Army European Command, and editing U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop's revision of *Whatever Happened to the Human Race?* in 1982.



Upon leaving the military in 1984, Linda continued to hone her writing, editing, and creative skills developing tri-lingual training and marketing materials for steel manufacturing and engineering from 1986 to 1994 and creating an in-depth interactive online tutorial for business accounting and property management software from 1996 to 1999. Linda founded Singles for Christ, an interdenominational adult singles fellowship, in Cleveland, Ohio in 1996, and she launched My Redeemer Lives Christian Ministry, an international online teaching and prayer ministry, in 1999.

In response to communications with indigenous missionaries in India and Nepal, Linda moved to India in 2003. While living in India for the next ten years, she helped to establish three children's homes, founded the American Institute of Spoken English and Grammar, and developed a new Spoken English teaching model that has been adopted by a half-dozen other Spoken English schools in that Indian state. She became actively involved in promoting the web presence of AOCI, an international Christian ministerial association, and was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Ministry by their Board of Directors for her work in developing their online two-year Diploma curriculum in Biblical Studies.

Like the Apostle Paul, however, Linda maintains that whatever she's accomplished over the years is nothing compared to the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus. She believes that worship of the one true living GOD is our highest purpose and our soul's deepest thirst; and she longs for everyone to know Him as He desires to be known through the name and attributes He's so graciously revealed in Scripture. You can contact Linda through her ministry at rev.linda@myredeemerlives.com.



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