

Names of God—Wk. 2

El Olam

This means, “King of the Universe/Ruler over everything, or for all Time”. It is used in many Hebrew prayers. For instance, the Sabbath Blessing.

“Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech haolam, Hamotzi lechem min Haaretz”.

[בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.]

This connects God’s sovereignty to his provision; however, it can also simply be a reminder that God is unchanging, and unmoved.

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of change”.
(James 1:17)

El Shaddai

The Hebrew phrase used here which is commonly translated “God Almighty” or “the Almighty God,” is translated as such based on English translation tradition; however, this is not based on the original Hebrew but how the Septuagint (the ancient Greek translation of the OT) translates *shadday* in the book of Job.

Shadday is like the Hebrew term *shad*, meaning “chest” (Ezek. 23:3,21,34; Song 4:5; 7:3), but “God of chests” is not a reasonable translation. The possibly related Akkadian word *shadu* (meaning “mountain”)—along with the abundant testimony in the Old Testament associating God with mountains (e.g., Sinai)—suggests that the word means “God of the mountain” or “God of the mountainous wilderness.” God is called this name again later in Genesis and in Exodus

“When Abram was ninety-nine years old Yahweh appeared to Abram. And he said to him, “I am El-Shaddai; walk before me and be blameless so that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you exceedingly.””
(Genesis 17:1-2)

- This is one of the ways that Theologians have dated the book of Job: language from the book is consistent with these narratives—no use of Yahweh, and instead, El-Shaddai is supplemented.

El Elyon

- Similar to El Shaddai and Yahweh Sabbaoth, El Elyon demonstrates Yahweh's supreme nature above both spiritual rulers and over all peoples. (Sometimes connected to God's redemptive ability)

*"Blessed be Abram by God Most High,
Maker of heaven and earth.
²⁰ And blessed be God Most High
who delivered your enemies into your hand." (Genesis 14:19-20)*

God is the maker of heaven and earth, and deliverer of his people from evildoers.

El Roi

God sees me just as I am. He knows me intimately! As the Psalmist says, "You (God) have searched me, and you know me". This should make us even more astounded at his love for us because, like you, I'm completely aware of the many awful things I have done, **and** unaware of many more that I've done. God knows it all, yet he still loves us.

The Hebrew phrase used here, *el ro'i*, can be translated as "God of seeing," referring to God's ability to see everything; "God of my seeing," a testimonial by Hagar that she has witnessed a divine being; or "God who sees me," a more personal version of the first translation. Hagar's remaining words suggest that the phrase deliberately expresses all of these.

"So she called the name of Yahweh who spoke to her, "You are El-Roi," for she said, "Here I have seen after he who sees me."" (Genesis 16:13)

Yahweh Yira'ah

"Abraham called the name of that place "Yahweh will provide," for which reason it is said today, "on the mountain of Yahweh it shall be provided.""
(Genesis 22:14)

Yahweh Yira'ah is a symbolic name given to Mount Moriah by Abraham to memorialize the intercession of God in the sacrifice of Isaac by providing a substitute for the imminent sacrifice of his son.

Only occurs once in the Bible, but the idea is carried throughout the whole biblical narrative—God continues to provide for his people in the wilderness, through exile, and in the person of

Jesus. As the New Testament writers were reflecting on this, they consistently thought of God as one that provides for his people. [Sermon on the Mount—Anxiety (Matt. 6:25-34)]

Yahweh Nissi

In battle opposing nations would fly their own flag on a pole at each of their respective front lines. This was to give their soldiers a feeling of hope and a focal point. This is what God is to us: a banner of encouragement to give us hope and a focal point.

This should give us hope both for the challenges we face, and also for the communities around us to come to know Yahweh.

Yahweh Rapha

Yahweh is healer of both our inner being and our external ailments. We can be sure of his desire for our whole person to be healed because of this name.

“The greatest need you and I have—the greatest need of collective humanity—is renovation of our heart. That spiritual place within us from which outlook, choices, and actions come has been formed by a world away from God. Now it must be transformed.” (Dallas Willard)

Yahweh Sabbaoth

Yahweh is ruler of spiritual beings in totality. Psalm 82 talks about God’s sovereignty over angels and demons alike. One thing that demonstrates Christ’s Lordship is that he also has power over the spiritual beings that brought chaos on the lives of the people he encountered.

Yahweh Tsidkenu

Yahweh is (1) our righteousness and is (2) the definition of righteousness. (1) He is our righteousness because we are not perfect (Rom. 3:23-24). We depend upon him to help us out of the sinful mire we have drenched ourselves in. Furthermore, (2) we can count on him to be righteousness to others—whether that means bringing people to justice, or extending mercy to others, often both at once.

Yahweh Shalom

Shalom is a derivative of shâlêm (which means "be complete" or "sound") Shalom is translated as "peace" or "absence from strife."

Therefore, God creates peace in creation, and in the human heart. He completes us, resolves strife between us, and sustains a peaceful creation, though we often drag it back into chaos.

This also includes an aspect of Yahweh's mercy. In the only mention of this name in the Bible, Gideon is calling God, "Yahweh Shalom" because Yahweh spared his life despite his repeated distrust in him.

Yahweh Raah/Rohi

Similar to Yahweh Yira'ah, and El Roi, God's being our shepherd means that he knows us intimately and sees us; however, this takes it one step further. In God knowing us intimately, he also knows how to lead us forward, how to care for us properly, and how to tend to the needs of our inner-most-being.

*"Yahweh is my shepherd;
I will not lack for anything.
² In grassy pastures he makes me lie down;
by quiet waters he leads me.
³ He restores my life.
He leads me in correct paths
for the sake of his name.
⁴ Even when I walk in a dark valley, I fear no evil
because you are with me.
Your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
⁵ You prepare before me a table
in the presence of my oppressors.
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup is overflowing.
⁶ Surely goodness and loyal love will pursue me
all the days of my life,
and I will stay in the house of Yahweh
for a very long time." (Psalm 23)*

Yahweh Boreh

Lastly, Yahweh is the Creator of the heavens and the earth. Much like calling him El Olam, this name does not only refer to him being the actual maker of everything, but also means that he

presides over it as King, and sustains it as the giver of life. One can find the roots for this name in the first verse of the Bible.

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

"בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ" (Genesis 1:1 in Hebrew)