

YAHWEH: THE NAME OF GOD

1. Yahweh (יהוה) is God's personal name. Other "names" are actually titles, not names.
 - a. **Exodus 3:13-15** 13 Then Moses said to God, If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, The God of your fathers has sent me to you, and they ask me, What is his **name**? what shall I say to them? 14 God said to Moses, I Am who I Am (אֲנִי־אֶהְיֶה אֲנִי־אֶהְיֶה). And he said, Say this to the people of Israel: I Am (אֲנִי־אֶהְיֶה) has sent me to you. 15 God also said to Moses, Say this to the people of Israel: Yahweh (יהוה), 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, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.
 - b. **Hosea 12:4-5** 4 [Jacob] strove with the angel and prevailed. He wept and sought his favor. He met God at Bethel, and there God spoke with us— 5 Yahweh (יהוה), the God of armies, Yahweh (יהוה) is his memorial name.
 - c. Examples of titles that are not personal names include El Elyon (God Most High), El Shaddai (God Almighty), and Adonai (my Lord).
2. Yahweh is used 6823 times in the Old Testament, far more than any other term for God.
 - a. Elohim ("God") is used about 2500 times. Adon ("Lord") is used about 360 times.
 - b. Yahweh is sometimes abbreviated as *Yah* and *Yahu*.
 - (1) **Exodus 15:2** 2 Yah (יה) is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation. This is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him.
 - (2) **Psalms 68:4** 4 Sing to God, sing praises to his name. Lift up a song to him who rides through the deserts. His name is Yah (יה). Exult before him!
 - (3) **Isaiah 12:2** 2 Behold, God is my salvation. I will trust and will not be afraid. For Yah Yahweh (יהוה יהוה) is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation (יִשְׁעֵךָ).
 - c. Yahweh never appears in a declined form, in a plural form, or with suffixes.
 - d. Scholars generally agree the original pronunciation of יהוה was Yahweh or Jahveh.¹
 - e. God's name is called the Tetragrammaton, a Greek term for the four Hebrew letters.
 - f. The first extrabiblical reference to Yahweh is the Mesha Stela (840 bc).
3. Yahweh is a very "vowelish" name. It emphasizes the breath/exhale/spirit of God.
 - a. **Genesis 2:7** 7 Then Yahweh God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.
 - b. **1 Kings 19:12** 12 And after the earthquake a fire, but Yahweh was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper.
 - c. **Job 12:10** 10 In [God's] hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of all mankind.
 - d. **2 Timothy 3:16** 16 All Scripture is exhaled by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.
 - e. The name Yeshua (Jesus) is also a very "vowelish" name.

¹ Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, "[Jehovah](#)," *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 1106.

4. God first disclosed his personal name to Moses. His name was not previously known.
 - a. **Exodus 6:2-3** 2 God spoke to Moses and said to him, I am Yahweh. 3 I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as El Shaddai, but by my **name** Yahweh I did not make myself known to them.
 - (1) **Exodus 3:13-15** 13 Moses said to God, If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, The God of your fathers has sent me to you, and they ask me, What is his **name**? what shall I say to them? 14 God said to Moses, I Am who I Am (אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה). And he said, Say this to the people of Israel: I Am (אֶהְיֶה) has sent me to you. 15 God also said to Moses, Say this to the people of Israel: Yahweh (יְהוָה), 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, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.
 - b. Though Moses uses the name Yahweh to narrate Genesis, the name was not actually known until Exodus.
 - (1) **Genesis 2:4** 4 These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that Yahweh Elohim made the earth and the heavens.
 - (2) **Genesis 17:1** 1 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, Yahweh appeared to Abram and said to him, I am God Almighty (אֱלֹהֵי שָׁמַיִם). Walk before me and be blameless.
 - c. However, it is possible Adam and Eve knew God by the name Yahweh before the Fall.
5. The name Yahweh represents God's very being, essence, and nature.
 - a. **Exodus 3:14-15** 14 God said to Moses, I Am who I Am (אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה). And he said, Say this to the people of Israel: I Am (אֶהְיֶה) has sent me to you. 15 God also said to Moses, Say this to the people of Israel: Yahweh (יְהוָה), the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.
 - b. **Exodus 34:5-7** 5 Yahweh descended in the cloud, stood with [Moses] there, and proclaimed the **name** of Yahweh. 6 Yahweh passed before him and proclaimed, Yahweh, Yahweh, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, 7 keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity, offense, and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation.
 - c. **John 17:6** 6 I [Jesus] have manifested your **name** [being, essence, nature] to the people [disciples and believers] whom you gave me out of the world.
 - d. God's name Yahweh especially emphasizes his eternity and self-existence.
 - (1) See *The Eternity of God*.
 - (2) See *The Self-Existence of God*.
6. The personal name Yahweh sets apart the true God from all false gods.
 - a. **1 Kings 18:24** 24 You call upon the **name** of your god [Baal], and I will call upon the **name** of Yahweh, and the God who answers by fire, he is God. And all the people answered, It is well spoken.
 - b. **1 Kings 18:38-39** 38 Then the fire of Yahweh fell and consumed the burnt offering, the wood, the stones, and the dust and licked up the water that was in the trench. 39

And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces and said, Yahweh, he is God.
Yahweh, he is God.

- c. The term “Elohim,” on its own, is not specific enough to indicate the God of Israel.
 - (1) **Genesis 2:4** 4 These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that Yahweh Elohim made the earth and the heavens.
 - d. Muslims worship “God” (“Allah”), but they do not worship Yahweh of Israel.
 - (1) **Exodus 3:15** 15 God also said to Moses, Say this to the people of Israel: Yahweh, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.
 - (2) **Exodus 5:1** 1 Moses and Aaron went and said to Pharaoh, Thus says Yahweh, the God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness.
 - (3) **Exodus 34:23** 23 Three times in the year shall all your males appear before Yahweh God, the God of Israel.
7. God’s name is:
- a. Blessed.
 - (1) **Daniel 2:20** 20 Blessed be the name of God forever and ever.
 - b. Holy.
 - (1) **Ezekiel 36:22-23** 22 It is not for your sake, house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. 23 And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name.
 - c. Majestic.
 - (1) **Psalms 8:1** 1 Yahweh, our Lord, how majestic is your name (שם) in all the earth!
 - d. Strong.
 - (1) **Proverbs 18:10** 10 The name of Yahweh is a strong tower. The righteous one runs into it and is safe.
8. God jealously guards his name, so we must not blaspheme, misuse, or profane it.
- a. **Exodus 20:7** 7 You shall not take the name of Yahweh your God in vain, for Yahweh will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.
 - b. **Leviticus 24:16** 16 Whoever blasphemes the name of Yahweh shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall stone him. The sojourner as well as the native, when he blasphemes the name (שם), shall be put to death.
 - c. **Ezekiel 36:22-23** 22 It is not for your sake, house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. 23 And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name.
 - d. **Malachi 2:2** 2 If you will not listen, if you will not take it to heart to give honor to my name, says Yahweh of hosts, then I will send the curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings.
 - e. **Romans 2:24** 24 As it is written, The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you [Israel].
9. Traditionally, Jews do not say “Yahweh” for fear of taking God’s name in vain.

- a. God's name was never pronounced except by the high priest when he entered into the most holy place on Yom Kippur.²
 - b. Jews use the terms Adonai ("Lord") or Hashem ("the Name") instead.
 - c. Do not unnecessarily offend Jews by using the name "Yahweh" around them.
 - d. Despite Jewish practice, God wants us to use his personal name, if we do so respectfully.
 - (1) **Exodus 20:7** 7 You shall not take the **name** (שֵׁם) of Yahweh your God in vain, for Yahweh will not hold him guiltless who takes his **name** (שֵׁם) in vain.
 - (2) In the OT narrative, characters often use the name Yahweh in direct speech.
 - e. When we respectfully use the name Yahweh, the true God is glorified.
10. Yahweh is translated "the LORD" in English Bibles. Adon is translated "Lord."
- a. **Psalms 110:1** 1 Yahweh (יהוה) says to my Adon (אֲדֹנָי): Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.
 - b. Learn to distinguish between Yahweh and Adon as you read the Old Testament.
 - c. When reading the Bible out loud, substitute "Yahweh" for "the LORD."
11. "Jehovah" comes from the terms Yahweh and Adonai smashed together (JeHoWaH).
- a. Jehovah is formed from the consonants of Yahweh and the vowels of Adonai.
 - b. In the KJV, Yahweh is translated "Jehovah" in four places:
 - (1) **Exodus 6:3** 3 I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as El Shaddai (אֱלֹהֵי שַׁדַּי), but by my name Jehovah (יהוה) I did not make myself known to them.
 - (2) **Psalms 83:18** 18 ...That they may know that you alone, whose name is Jehovah (יהוה), are the Most High (עֶלְיוֹן) over all the earth.
 - (3) **Isaiah 12:2** 2 Behold, God is my salvation. I will trust and will not be afraid. For the Lord Jehovah (יְהוָה יְהוּה) is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation.
 - (4) **Isaiah 26:4** 4 Trust in the Lord (יהוה) forever, for the Lord Jehovah (יְהוָה יְהוּה) is an everlasting rock.
 - c. It's best not to use the term "Jehovah." "Yahweh" is much better.
12. Yahweh is commonly used together with Elohim and Adonai.
- a. Yahweh Elohim.
 - (1) **Genesis 2:4** 4 These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that Yahweh Elohim (יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים) made the earth and the heavens.
 - (2) **Exodus 9:30** 30 As for you [Pharaoh] and your servants, I [Moses] know that you do not yet fear Yahweh Elohim (יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים).
 - (3) **Psalms 30:2** 2 Yahweh my God (יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי), I cried to you for help, and you have healed me.
 - b. Lord Yahweh.
 - (1) **Genesis 15:2** 2 Abram said, My Lord Yahweh (אֲדֹנָי יְהוה), what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?

² M. G. Easton, [Easton's Bible Dictionary](#) (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1893).

- (2) **Joshua 7:7** 7 Joshua said, Alas, my Lord Yahweh (אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה), why have you brought this people over the Jordan at all, to give us into the hands of the Amorites, to destroy us? Would that we had been content to dwell beyond the Jordan!
- (3) **Isaiah 3:15** 15 What do you mean by crushing my people, by grinding the face of the poor? declares my Lord Yahweh of armies (אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת).
13. The name Yahweh applies equally to each member of the Trinity.
- a. **Matthew 28:19** 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the **name** (sing.) of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
- b. The Father is Yahweh.
- c. The Son is Yahweh.
- (1) The essence of the Christian faith is to understand that Yeshua is Yahweh.
- (2) **Isaiah 12:2** 2 Behold, God is my salvation (יְשׁוּעָה). I will trust and will not be afraid. For Yah Yahweh (יְהוָה יְהִי) is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation (יְשׁוּעָה).
- (3) **John 8:58** 58 Jesus said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I Am.
- (4) **Romans 10:9** 9 If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord [Yahweh] and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.
- (5) **Philippians 2:9-11** 9 God has highly exalted [Jesus] and bestowed on him the **name** that is above every **name**, 10 so that at the **name** of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Messiah is Lord [Yahweh], to the glory of God the Father.
- (6) See *The Name of Jesus* and *The Deity of Jesus*.
- d. The Holy Spirit is Yahweh.
14. God's name is specially associated with Israel, Jerusalem, and the Jerusalem temple.
- a. Israel.
- (1) **Exodus 20:24** 24 In every place where I cause my **name** to be remembered I will come to you [Israel] and bless you.
- (2) **Deuteronomy 28:10** 10 All the peoples of the earth shall see that you [Israel] are called by the **name** of Yahweh, and they shall be afraid of you.
- b. The ark of the covenant.
- a. **1 Chronicles 13:6** 6 David and all Israel went up to Baalah, that is, to Kiriath-jearim that belongs to Judah, to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the **name** of Yahweh who sits enthroned above the cherubim.
- c. The house of David.
- a. **1 Chronicles 17:23-24** 23 Now, Yahweh, let the word that you have spoken concerning your servant [David] and concerning his house be established forever and do as you have spoken, 24 and your **name** will be established and magnified forever saying, Yahweh of armies, the God of Israel, is Israel's God, and the house of your servant David will be established before you.
- d. Jerusalem.
- (1) **Deuteronomy 12:5** 5 You shall seek the place that Yahweh your God will choose out of all your tribes to put his **name** and make his habitation there.

- (2) **1 Kings 14:21** 21 Rehoboam...reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city that Yahweh had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his **name** there.
- (3) **2 Chronicles 6:6** 6 I [Yahweh] have chosen Jerusalem that my **name** may be there.
- (5) The Jerusalem temple.
 - (1) **1 Kings 9:3** 3 I [Yahweh] have consecrated this house that you [Solomon] have built, by putting my **name** there forever. My eyes and my heart will be there for all time.
 - (2) **2 Kings 21:7** 7 Yahweh said to David and to Solomon his son, In this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put my **name** forever.
 - (3) **2 Chronicles 2:1** 1 Solomon purposed to build a temple for the **name** of Yahweh and a royal palace for himself.
 - (4) **2 Chronicles 6:7** 7 It was in the heart of David my father to build a house for the **name** of Yahweh, the God of Israel.
 - (5) **2 Chronicles 6:10** 10 I have risen in the place of David my father and sit on the throne of Israel, as Yahweh promised, and I have built the house for the **name** of Yahweh, the God of Israel.
 - (6) **2 Chronicles 6:33** 33 ...Hear from heaven your dwelling place and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to you, that all the peoples of the earth may know your **name** and fear you, as do your people Israel, and that they may know that this house that I have built is called by your **name**.
 - (7) **2 Chronicles 7:16** 16 I have chosen and consecrated this house that my **name** may be there forever. My eyes and my heart will be there for all time.
15. Jesus came once in God's name, and he will come again in God's name.
 - a. Coming in God's name indicates one is God's official agent and representative.
 - b. **Psalm 118:26** 26 Blessed is he who comes in the **name** of Yahweh!
 - c. **Matthew 21:9** 9 Blessed is he [Messiah Jesus] who comes in the **name** of Yahweh!
 - d. **Matthew 23:39** 39 You [Jerusalem] will not see me again until you say, Blessed is he who comes in the **name** of Yahweh.
16. God saves us by his name.
 - a. **Psalm 54:1** 1 O God, save me by your **name**, and vindicate me by your might.
 - b. It is into the name of the Trinity that believers are immersed.
 - (1) **Matthew 28:19** 19 Go...and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the **name** of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
 - c. Every believer is called by God's name.
 - (1) **Isaiah 43:6-7** 6 Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, 7 everyone who is called by my **name**, whom I created for my glory....
17. As believers, we are to:
 - a. Call upon God's name.
 - (1) **Genesis 4:26** 26 At that time people began to call upon the **name (אֱלֹהִים)** of Yahweh.
 - (2) **Genesis 12:8** 8 There [between Bethel and Ai] [Abraham] built an altar to Yahweh and called upon the **name** of Yahweh.

- (3) **Psalm 99:6** 6 Moses and Aaron were among his priests. Samuel also was among those who called upon his **name**. They called to Yahweh, and he answered them.
- b. Give thanks to God's name.
- (1) **Psalm 44:8** 8 In God we have boasted continually, and we will give thanks to your **name** forever.
- (2) **Psalm 97:12** 12 Rejoice in Yahweh, you righteous, and give thanks to his holy **name!**
- c. Glorify God's name.
- (1) **1 Chronicles 16:10** 10 Glory in his holy **name**. Let the hearts of those who seek Yahweh rejoice!
- (2) **1 Chronicles 16:28-29** 28 Ascribe to Yahweh, families of the peoples, ascribe to Yahweh glory and strength! 29 Ascribe to Yahweh the glory due his **name**.
- (3) The believer is to seek the glory of God's name, not the glory of his own name.
- (a) **Genesis 11:4** 4 Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a **name** for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.
- d. Honor God's name.
- (1) **Malachi 2:2** 2 If you will not listen, if you will not take it to heart to give honor to my **name**, says Yahweh of hosts, then I will send the curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings.
- (2) **Malachi 3:16** 16 Then those who feared Yahweh spoke with one another. Yahweh paid attention and heard them, and a book of remembrance was written before him of those who feared Yahweh and esteemed his **name**.
- e. Know God's name.
- a. **2 Chronicles 6:33** 33 Hear from heaven your dwelling place and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to you, that all the peoples of the earth may know your **name** and fear you, as do your people Israel.
- b. **Psalm 9:10** 10 Those who know your **name** put their trust in you, for you, Yahweh, have not forsaken those who seek you.
- f. Love God's name.
- (1) **Psalm 5:11** 11 Let all who take refuge in you rejoice. Let them ever sing for joy, and spread your protection over them, that those who love your **name** may exult in you.
- (2) **Isaiah 56:6-7** 6 The foreigners who join themselves to Yahweh, to minister to him, to love the **name** of Yahweh, and to be his servants, everyone who keeps the Sabbath and does not profane it, and holds fast my covenant— 7 these I will bring to my holy mountain and make them joyful in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar, for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.
- g. Praise God's name.
- (1) **Psalm 7:17** 17 I will sing praise to the **name** of Yahweh Most High (שִׁמְיִתְהוָה יְהוָה).
(עֲלֵיוֹן).
- (2) **Psalm 113:3** 3 From the rising of the sun to its setting, the **name** of Yahweh is to be praised!
- (3) **Psalm 145:2** 2 Every day I will bless you and praise your name forever and ever.
- h. Set apart God's name.

- (1) **Matthew 6:9** 9 Our Father in heaven, may your **name** be set apart (ἀγιάζω).
- i. Trust in God's name.
- (1) **Psalms 20:7** 7 Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the **name** of Yahweh our God.
- (2) **Isaiah 50:10** 10 Let him who walks in darkness and has no light trust in the **name** of Yahweh and rely on his God.
- j. Wait for God's name.
- (1) **Psalms 52:9** 9 I will wait for your **name**, for it is good, in the presence of the godly.
18. God remembers and rewards those who honor his name.
- a. **Malachi 3:16** 16 Then those who feared Yahweh spoke with one another. Yahweh paid attention and heard them, and a book of remembrance was written before him of those who feared Yahweh and esteemed his **name**.
- b. As a reward, Jesus will write the name of Yahweh on believers who conquer the world, the flesh, and the devil.
- (1) **Revelation 3:12** 12 I [Jesus] will write on [the one who conquers] the **name** of my God, the **name** of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new **name**.
- c. Believers in the new Jerusalem will have the name of Yahweh on their foreheads.
- (1) **Revelation 22:3-4** 3 No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in [the new Jerusalem], and his servants will worship him. 4 They will see his face, and his **name** will be on their foreheads.
19. To be associated with God's name is the greatest privilege imaginable.
- a. **Numbers 6:23-27** 23 Speak to Aaron and his sons saying, Thus you shall bless the people of Israel. You shall say to them, 24 Yahweh bless you and keep you. 25 Yahweh make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. 26 Yahweh lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. 27 So shall they put my **name** upon the people of Israel, and I will bless them.
- b. **Revelation 3:12** 12 I [Jesus] will write on [the one who conquers] the **name** of my God, the **name** of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new **name**.
20. One day, every creature in the universe will fear and glorify God's name.
- a. **Exodus 9:16** 16 For this purpose I have raised you [Moses] up, to show you my power, so that my **name** may be proclaimed in all the earth.
- b. **Revelation 15:3-4** 3 Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations! 4 Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your **name**? For you alone are holy.

Bibliography

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Notes