

The Names of God in the Old Testament

The Judean theology flowered from its Semitic roots where El was a generic term for all the deities of Canaan. El and its derivatives later revealed Yahweh as El—the one true God.

Name	Significance	References
El (God)	A generic Semitic title for deity; the mighty powerful Creator; God of the covenant; the protector	Gn 1:1,3,4,22; 17:7; 31:24; Is 44:24
Eloah; El Echad (the one God)	A generic name for deity; the one God who is savior, redeemer, and deliverer; the source of living water	Gn 45:5–6; Nm 23:22; Is 41:14; 43:3; 45:21; Jer 2:13; Mal 2:10
El Shaddai (God Almighty)	El Shaddai is a title of respect for the gods in the Canaanite pantheon; later became a name for Yahweh of Israel	Gn 17:1,7; 28:3; 35:11; 49:25; Ru 1:20–21; Ezr 1:2–4; 6:3; Ps 91:1; Is 9:6
El Rachum (God of compassion)	God, the compassionate one who suffers with the child in the “womb” (<i>rechem</i> in Hebrew means “womb”)	Dt 4:31; Neh 9:17
El Elyon (God most high)	Pre-Davidic God of Jerusalem; the faithful God; the most high	Gn 14:19–20, Nm 24:16, Dt 7:9, Ps 47:2–3
El Olam (God everlasting)	Eternal God of the universe; God of refuge and truth; originally a name for the Canaanite god of Beer-sheba but later became a name for Yahweh	Gn 21:33; Ps 31:5–6, 90:1–3, 93:2, 106:48; Is 26:4
El Yisrael; Hai; Elohe (God of Israel)	The living God; the Lord God of Israel; the holy one	Gn 33:20, Dt 5:26, 1 Sm 23:10, Ps 68:36, Is 5:16
El Gibbor (mighty God)	The God of war and strength; Lord; savior	Ex 15:2–3, Is 9:6
El Berith (God of the Covenant)	Pre-Israelite title for the Canaanite god of Shechem; later became a name for Yahweh	Jos 23:16, Jgs 9:46
Elohim (the single God)	Generic title for deity; signifies the singular, majestic God of Israel; plural form of El or Eloah—sons of heaven; can refer to Israel’s God or to false gods	Gn 1:1,26; 6:2; 17:19; Ex 3:6, 20:3
Yahweh (life, existence, to be, Lord)	Personal name for God; I am who I am; the Creator; ruler of history; the deliverer; the tetragrammaton YHWH (pronounced Yahweh) was not spoken but was substituted with the word <i>Adonai</i>	Gn 4:26, 49:24–25; Ex 3:13–15; 2 Sm 22:2; Prv 9:10
Adonai (my great Lord)	Used as a substitute for Yahweh; also commonly used as a title of respect for a significant male, a lower Lord, a social superior, a king, husband, father, or slave master	Ps 11:7, Jer 31:32, Hos 2:18, Mal 1:6
Yahweh Sabaoth (Lord of hosts)	Lord Almighty; conqueror and ruler of angels and deities; king of glory	Neh 9:6; Ps 24:10, 89:9–19; Is 1:24
Immanuel (Emmanuel); Yireh; El Roi (God with us)	A child who is a sign of God’s presence; the one who sees all, hears the cries of his people, knows the affliction of slavery, and saves	Gn 16:13–14, 22:13–14; Dt 11:12; 2 Chr 16:9, 42:1; Jb 34:21–22; Is 7:10–17