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# יָהוָה

#### Meaning

Yahweh - God's personal name

It is not a generic term for "god", but rather the word יְהֹוָה (YHWH) is the name by which God uniquely identifies himself in the Old Testament.

First appearing in Genesis 2:4plugin-autotooltip\_default plugin-autotooltip\_bigGenesis 2:4

Hebrew אֵכֶּה תּוֹלְדָּוֹת הַשְּׁמֵיִם וְהָאֶרֶץ בְּהַבּּרְאֵם בְּיֹוֹם עֲשֶׂוֹת יְהֹוֶה אֱלֹהָים אֶבֶץ וְשָׁמֵיִם ESV These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens. NIV This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created. When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens-αὕτηἡβίβλοςγενέσεωςοὐρανοῦκαὶγῆςὅτεἦἡμέραἐποίησενὁθεὸςτὸνοὐρανὸνκαὶτὴνγῆν..., it occurs over 6.000 times in the Old Testament.

Frequently translated into English as "LORD" (all capital letters).

#### **Pronunciation**

In ancient Israel, the name was considered too sacred to pronounce aloud. When reading Scripture, Jews would often substitute אֲדֹנָי (Adonai, "Lord") instead.

The Masoretes (medieval Jewish scribes) added the vowel points of "Adonai" to "YHWH" leading to the hybrid form "Jehovah."

Most English Bibles today translate it as "LORD" (all in capitals) to distinguish it from "Adonai" (Lord).

## **Meaning and Etymology**

The name is related to the Hebrew verb הַיָּה (hayah, "to be"), suggesting meanings such as:

"I am who I am" (Exodus 3:14plugin-autotooltip\_default plugin-autotooltip\_bigExodus 3:14

Hebrew וַיָּאֹמֶר אֱלֹחָנִי אֶלַחָנִי אֲלֵחָנִי בּSV God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" NIV God said to Moses, "I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'

- καὶὁθεὸςπρὸςἐγώεἰμιὁὤνκαὶτοῖςυἱοῖςΙσραηλὁὢνἀπέσταλκένμεπρὸςὑμᾶς...)
- "He is"
- "He causes to be"

This conveys that God is self-existent, eternal, and unchanging. He is the One who depends on nothing else for existence and brings all things into being.

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## **Theological Significance**

YHWH is not a general term for "god", rather it is a personal, covenantal name. It reveals God's faithfulness and presence with His people:

- Exodus 6:2–3 God tells Moses that He is revealing Himself as YHWH, the God who keeps His promises.
- Deuteronomy 6:4plugin-autotooltip\_default plugin-autotooltip\_bigDeuteronomy 6:4

Hebrew שְׁמֵ יִשְּׂרָאֵֵל יְהֹוֶה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהֹוֶה אֶם ESV "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. NIV Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. NLT "Listen, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. LXX καὶ ταῦτα τὰ δικαιώματα καὶ τὰ κρίματα ὅσα ἐνετείλατο κύριος τοῖς υἰοῖςΙσραηλἐντῆἐρήμψἐξελθόντωναὐτῶνἐκγῆςΑἰγύπτουἄκουεΙσραηλκύριοςὁθεὸςἡμῶνκύριοςεἷς ἐστιν... – "Hear, O Israel: The LORD (YHWH) our God, the LORD is one."

• Psalm 23:1plugin-autotooltip\_default plugin-autotooltip\_bigPsalm 23:1

Hebrew מָזְמְוֹר לְדָגֵד יְהְנֵה רֹעִי לָאׁ אֶחְסֵּר ESV A PSALM OF DAVID.The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. NIV The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. NLT The LORD is my shepherd; I have all that I need. LXX ψαλμὸς τῷ Δαυιδ κύριος ποιμαίνει με καὶ οὐδέν με ὑστερήσει – "ΥΗΨΗ is my shepherd."

In this sense, YHWH embodies both God's transcendence and His relational nearness.

#### **Connections with the New Testament**

Although the Greek New Testament uses Κύριος ("Lord") rather than YHWH, many passages apply Old Testament texts about YHWH to Jesus Christ (e.g., Philippians 2:10–11, Romans 10:13plugin-autotooltip default plugin-autotooltip bigRomans 10:13

Greek πᾶς γὰρ δς ἂν ἐπικαλέσηται τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου σωθήσεται. ESV For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." NIV for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." NLT For "Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved. quoting Joel 2:32plugin-autotooltip\_default plugin-autotooltip\_bigJoel 2:32

Hebrew ESV And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the LORD has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the LORD calls.

καὶἔσταιπᾶςδςἂντὸὄνομακυρίουσωθήσεταιὅτιἐντῷὄρεικαὶἐνἔσταικαθότικύριοςκαὶεὐαγγελιζόμενοιοῦ ςκύριος).

This reflects the early Christian conviction that Jesus shares in the divine identity of YHWH.

### **Grammatical forms**

Because יְהוָה (YHWH) is a proper personal name, not a regular noun, it does not decline for number, gender, or case like ordinary Hebrew words. Nevertheless, in Scripture, it appears in different

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grammatical roles and syntactic relationships (for example, as subject, object, or in construct with another noun).

#### **Basic Grammatical Function**

Grammatical Function	Description	Example Reference	Hebrew Text
Subject	YHWH is the subject performing the action	Exodus 20:7plugin-autotooltipdefault plugin-autotooltip_bigExodus 20:7  Hebrew לָא תָשֶא אֶת שָׁם יְהוֶה אֱלֹהֵיךּ לְשֵּוֶא כֶּי לָא יְנְקֶּהֹ יְהוֶֹה אֵת אֲשִׁר יִשֶּא אֶת שָׁם יְהוֶה אֱלֹהָיךּ לְשֵּוֶא כֶּי לָא יְנָקֶהֹ יְהוָֹה אֵת אֲשִׁר יִשֶּא אֶת שְׁם יִהוֶה אֱלֹהֵיךּ לְשֵּוֶא בָּי לָא יְנָקֶהֹ יְהוָֹה אֵת אֲשִׁר יִשֶּא אָת שְׁם יִהוֶה אֵלֹה ESV "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name. οὐλήμφητὸὄνομακυρίουτοῦθεοῦσουἐπἰματαίωοὐγὰρμἡκαθαρίσηκύριοςτὸνλαμβάνοντατὸὄνομααὐτοῦἐπὶματαίω – "YHWH will not hold him guiltless"	יְהנָה
Object	YHWH is the object receiving the action	Psalm 18:1plugin-autotooltip_default plugin-autotooltip_bigPsalm 18:1  Hebrew לְּמָנַצְּחֵ לְעֲבֶּד יְהוּוָה לְּזְׁדֵד אֲשֶׁר דַּבָּר לִיהוֹה אָת דֻּבְרִי הַשִּׁירֶה הַיָּאָת בְּיִוֹם הָצִּיל יְהוֹה אוֹתִוֹ מִבֶּף כֶּל אֹיִבְּיו וּמֵיֵד שְׁאָר ESV TO THE  CHOIRMASTER. A PSALM OF DAVID, THE SERVANT OF THE LORD, WHO ADDRESSED THE WORDS OF THIS SONG TO THE LORD ON THE DAY WHEN THE LORD RESCUED HIM FROM THE HAND OF ALL HIS ENEMIES, AND FROM THE HAND OF SAUL. HE SAID: I love you, O LORD, my strength. ɛἰςτὸτέλοςτῷπαιδὶκυρίουτῷᾶἐλάλησεντῷκυρίωτοὺςλ – "I love You, O YHWH, my strength."	יְהנָה
Predicate / Apposition	identifying or describing	Exodus 15:3plugin-autotooltip_default plugin-autotooltip_bigExodus 15:3  Hebrew יְהְנֵה אָלִחְמֵּה יְהְנֵה שְׁמִלְחְמֵּה ESV The LORD is a man of war; the LORD is his name. NIV The LORD is a warrior; the LORD is his name. NLT The LORD is a warrior; Yahweh is his name! LXX κύριος συντρίβων πολέμους κύριος ὄνομα αὐτῷ KJV The LORD is a man of war: the LORD is his name. – "YHWH is a warrior."	יְהנָה
Vocative (address)	Used when addressing God	Psalm 8:1plugin-autotooltip_default plugin-autotooltip_bigPsalm 8:1  Hebrew לְמִנְצֵּח עֵל הַגּּמִּית מִיְּמִוֹר לְדָרֵד ESV TO THE CHOIRMASTER: ACCORDING TO THE GITTITH. A PSALM OF DAVID. O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. NIV O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. εἰςτὸτέλοςὑπὲρτῶνληνῶνψαλμὸςτῷκύριεὁκύριοςἡμῶνώςθαυμαστὸντὸὄνομάσουἐνπάσητῆγῆὄτιἐπήρθηἡσουὑπεράνωτῶνοὐρανῶν "Ο YHWH, our Lord, how majestic is Your name"	

## **Construct or Possessive Relationships**

While YHWH itself does not take a construct ending, it appears in construct phrases, especially "YHWH of  $\_$ ."

Construct Phrase	Meaning	Example Reference	Hebrew Text
YHWH Elohim	"LORD God" — combining God's personal and general titles	Genesis 2:4plugin-autotooltip_default plugin-autotooltip_bigGenesis 2:4  Hebrew אֱלֶה תּוֹלְדְוֹת הַשְּׁמֵיִם וְהָאֶרֶץ בְּהָבֵּרְאֶם בְּיוֹם עֲשֶׂוֹת יְהוֶה אֱלֹהֶים אֱלֶךְ וְשָׁמֵיִם וְהָאֶרֶץ בְּהַבּּרָאֶם בְּיוֹם עֲשֶׂוֹת יְהוֶה אֱלֹהָים אֱלֶךְ וְשָׁמֵיִם וְהָאֶרֶץ בְּיוֹם עֲשֶׂוֹת יְהוֶה אֱלֹהָים אֱלָךְ וֹשְׁמֵיִם וְהָאֶרֶץ בְּיוֹם עֲשֶׂוֹת הַלָּהִים אֱלָרְ וִשְׁמֵיִם וְהָאֶרֶץ בְּיוֹם עֲשֶׂוֹת ESV These are the generations of the heavens and the earth and the heavens. NIV This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created. When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens-αὕτηἡβίβλοςγενέσεωςοὐρανοῦκαὶγῆςὅτεἦἡμέρᾳἐποίησενὁθεὸςτὸνοὐρανὸνκαὶτὴνγῆν	יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים
YHWH Tsevaoth	"LORD of hosts" — the God of angelic armies	1 Samuel 1:3	יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת
YHWH Shalom	"The LORD is peace"	Judges 6:24plugin-autotooltip_default plugin-autotooltip_bigJudges 6:24  Hebrew יָּיְבֶּי מְּלֶּבֶּי מִיְּהוֹה נַיִּקְרָא לְּוֹ יְהוֶה שָׁלֵּוֹם שֻּׁד הַיִּוֹם הַּזֶּיה עוֹדֶּנּוּ בְּעָבְּרֶת אֲבֵי הָעֶזְרִי  ESV Then Gideon built an altar there to the LORD and called it, The LORD is Peace. To this day it still stands at Ophrah, which belongs to the Abiezrites. NIV So Gideon built an altar to the LORD there and called it The LORD is Peace. To this day it stands in Ophrah of the Abiezrites. καὶἀκοδόμησενἐκεῖθυσιαστήριοντῷκυρίωκαἰἐκάλεσεν	יְהנָה שָׁלוֹם
YHWH Yireh	"The LORD will provide"	Genesis 22:14plugin-autotooltip_default plugin-autotooltip_bigGenesis 22:14  Hebrew נַּיִּקְרֵֵא אַבְּרָתֵם שֵׁם הַמִּקְוֹם הַהְוּא יְהוֵה יִרְאֵה אֲשֶׁר ׁ יֵאָמֵר הַיּוֹם בְּתַר יְהוֶה יֵרָאֵה ESV So Abraham called the name of that place, "The LORD will provide"; as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided." NIV So Abraham called that place The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, καὶἐκάλεσεντὸὄνοματοῦτόπουἐκείνουκύριοςεἶδενἵνασήμερονἐντῷὄρεικύριοςὤφθη	יְהוָה יִרְאֶה

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		Jeremiah 23:6plugin-autotooltip_default plugin-autotooltip_bigJeremiah 23:6	
YHWH Tsidqenu	"The LORD our righteousness"	Hebrew בְּיָמִיוֹ תִּנְשַׁע יְהוּדָּה וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן לָבֶטֵח וְזֶה שְׁמְוֹ אֲשֶׁר יִקְרְאוֹ יְהוֶה צִדְקֵנוּ ESV In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: 'The LORD is our righteousness.' NIV 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 Our Righteousness. ἐνταῖζήμέραιζαὐτοῦσωθήσεταιΙουδαζκαὶΙσραηλκατασκηνώσειπεποιθώζκα	יְהנָה צִדְקֵנּנּ

## Prepositional Phrases with יְהוָה

Here YHWH follows prepositions. The form itself remains unchanged, but the vowel under the initial consonant may slightly adjust because of the preposition.

Meaning	Prepositional Phrase	Example Reference	Hebrew Text
to / for YHWH	לְיהוָה	Exodus 28:36plugin-autotooltip_default plugin-autotooltip_bigExodus 28:3  Hebrew אָל כָּל חַכְמֵי לֵב אָשֶׁר מִכָּאתָיו רָוּחַ חָכְמֵה וְעָשִּׁוּ אָת בִּגְדֵי אַהַרָּוֹ לְקַדְּשִׁוֹ לְכַהְנוֹ לִי ESV You shall speak to all the skillful, whom I have filled with a spirit of skill, that they make Aaron's garments to consecrate him for my priesthood. NIV Tell all the skilled men to whom I have given wisdom in such matters that they are to make garments for Aaron, for his consecration, so he may serve me as priest. καὶσὺλάλησονπᾶσιτο	לַיהנָה
from YHWH	מֵיְהוָה	Genesis 19:24plugin-autotooltip_default plugin-autotooltip_bigGenesis 19:24  Hebrew נְיהוָה הָמְטֶיר עַל סְדָּם וְעַל עֲמֹרֶה נְּפָּרֵית וָאֲשׁ מֵאָת יְהוֶה מֵן הַשְּׁמֵיִם ESV Then the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the LORD out of heaven. NIV Then the LORD rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah-from the LORD out of the heavens. NLT καὶκύριοςἔβρεξενἐπἰκαὶθεῖονκαὶπῦρπαρὰκυρίουἐκτοῦοὐρανοῦ	מֵיְהוָה
in / by YHWH	בַּיהוָה	Psalm 64:10plugin-autotooltip_default plugin-autotooltip_bigPsalm 64:10  Hebrew נְיִּיְרִאֹּוּ כְּל אֵׁדֵם וֻנַּגִּידוּ פְּעַל אֱלֹהִים וְמִעֲעֵּהוּ הַשְּׁכֵּילוּ ESV Let the righteous one rejoice in the LORD and take refuge in him! Let all the upright in heart exult! NIV Let the righteous rejoice in the LORD and take refuge in him; let all the upright in heart praise him! εὐφρανθήσεταιδίκαιοςἐπὶτῷκυρίῳκαὶἐλπιεῖἐπαὐτόνκαὶἐπαινεσθήσονταιπάντεςοἰεὐθεῖςτῆκαρδίᾳ	בַּיהוָה
with YHWH (object marker + name)	אֶת־יְהוָה	Deuteronomy 6:13plugin-autotooltip_default plugin-autotooltip_bigDeuteronomy 6:13  Hebrew אָת יְהוֶה אֱלֹהֶידְּ תִּיבֶא וְאֹתָוֹ תַעֲבֶדׁ וּבִּשְׁבֵע ESV It is the LORD your God you shall fear. Him you shall serve and by his name you shall swear. NIV Fear the LORD your God, serve him only and take your oaths in his name. NLT You must fear the LORD your God and serve him. When you take an oath, you must use only his name. κύριοντὸνθεόνσουφοβηθήσηκαὶαὐτῷλατρεύσειςκαὶπρὸςαὐτὸνκολληθήσηκαὶτῷὀνόματιαὐτοῦ	אֶת־יְהוָה
upon / against YHWH (context determines nuance)	עַל־יְהוָה	Numbers 21:7plugin-autotooltip_default plugin-autotooltip_bigNumbers 21:7  Hebrew נְּיָבׁ אֶל מֹשֶׁה נִיּאֹמְרָוּ חָטָׁאנוּ כִּי דִבּּרְנוּ בִיהוָהֹ וְלָּדְּ הִתְּפַּלֵל אֶל יְהוְֹה וְיָפֵר מֵעָלֵינוּ אֶת הַנְּחֲשׁ וַיִּתְפַלֵּל מֹשֶׁה ESV And the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you. Pray to the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. καὶπαραγενόμενοςὀλαὸςπρὸςἔλεγονὅτιἡμάρτομενὅτικατελαλήσαμενκατὰτοῦκυρίουκαἰκατὰσοῦεὖξα	עַל־יְהוָה

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