2025/11/03 19:20 1/4 יְהוֹנָה

# 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 אֵלֶהִים אֶבֶץ וְשָׁמֵיִם וְהָאֶבֶץ בְּהַבּּרְאֵם בְּיֹוֹם עֲשֶׂוֹת יְהוֶה 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-αὕτηἡβίβλοςγενέσεωςοὐρανοῦκαὶγῆςὅτεἦἡμέρᾳἐποίησενὁθεὸςτὸνοὐρανὸνκαὶτὴνγῆν..., 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 אָדֹעָי (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 אֱלֹחָים אֶל מֹשֶּׁה אֱהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֱהְיֶה וַיֹּאֹמֶר כָּה תֹאמֵר לִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵׁל אֱהְיֶה שְׁלַחְנִי אֲלֵיכֶם ESV 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.'

- καὶὁθεὸςπρὸς ἐγώεἰμιὸὤνκαὶτοῖς υἱοῖς Ισραηλὸὢνἀπέσταλκένμε πρὸς ὑμᾶς...)
- "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.

#### Last update: 2025/10/26 22:19

## **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

2025/11/03 19:20 3/4 קהֹנָה

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 אָת שֶׁם יְרֵוֶה אֲלֹהֵיךּ לְשֵּוֶא כֶּי לָא יְנָקֶּהֹ יְהוֶֹה אַת אָשֶׁר יִשֶּא אָת שִׁם יִרוֶה אֲלֹהֵיךּ לְשֵּוֶא כֶּי לָא יְנָקָּהֹ יְהוָֹה אַת אָשֶׁר יִשֶּא אָת שִׁם יִרוֶה אֲלֹהֵיךּ לְשֵּוֶא כֶּי לָא יְנָקָּהֹ יְהוָֹה אָת אָשֶׁר יִשְּׁא אָת שִׁם יִרוֹה אָל ESV "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, NIV "You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.  οὐλήμφητὸὄνομακυρίουτοῦθεοῦσουἐπἰματαίφοὐγὰρμἡκαθαρίσηκύριοςτὸνλαμβάνοντατὸὄνομααὐτοῦἐπὶματαίφ – "YHWH will not hold him guiltless"	יְהוָה
Object	YHWH is the object receiving the action	Psalm 18:1plugin-autotooltipdefault plugin-autotooltip_bigPsalm 18:1  Hebrew לְּמָנַצְּחֵ לְעֲבֶּד יְהוּוָּה לְּזְׁדֶד אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר לִיהוָֹה אָת דֻּבְרִי הַשִּׁירֶה הַזְּאָת בְּיָוֹם הַצִּיל יְהוֹה אוֹתִוֹ מֵבֶּף כָּל 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. ɛἰςτὸτέλοςτῷπαιδἰκυρίουτῷᾶἐλάλησεντῷκυρίωτοὺςλ – "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 שְׁלֶחְמֵּה יְהְנֵה שְׁלֶחְמֵּה 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."	יְהוָה
Vocative (address)	Used when addressing God	Psalm 8:1plugin-autotooltip_default plugin-autotooltip_bigPsalm 8:1  Hebrew לְמִנְּצֵּח עֵל הַגּּּהִּית מִיְּמִוֹר לְדָרָד 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. εἰςτὸτέλοςὑπὲρτῶνληνῶνψαλμὸςτῷκόριεὁκόριοςἡμῶνώςθαυμαστὸντὸὄνομάσουἐνπάσητῆγῆὅτιἐπήρθηἡσουὑπεράνωτῶνοὐρανῶν – "Ο YHWH, our Lord, how majestic is Your name"	יְהוָה

## **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 אַלָּה תּוֹלְדָוֹת הַשְּׁמֵּיִם וְהָאֵרֵץ בְּהַבֵּרְאֵם בְּיֹוֹם עֻשְּׂוֹת יְהוֶה אֱלֹהֶים אֵרֶץ וְשְׁמֵּיִם 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- αὕτηἡβίβλοςγενέσεωςοὐρανοῦκαὶγῆςὅτεἦἡμέραἐποίησενόθεὸςτὸνοὐρανὸνκαὶτὴνγῆν	
YHWH Tsevaoth		1 Samuel 1:3plugin-autotooltip_default plugin-autotooltip_big1 Samuel 1:3  Hebrew יְּטְלֵה הְשִּׁיִם שָׁנֵי בְּנֵי עֵלִּי חָפָּנִי וּפְּנְּיִם יָמִימִה יָמִימָה לְהָשִּׁתַּחָוֹת וְלִּזְבָּח כִּיהוֶה בְּשִׁלְה וְשְׁׁם שְׁנֵי בְּנֵי עֵלִי חָפָּנִי וּפְּנְּיִם יְמִימָה לְהָשִּׁתַחָוֹת וְלִזְבָּח לִיהוֶה ESV Now this man used to go up year by year from his city to worship and to sacrifice to the LORD of hosts at Shiloh, where the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests of the LORD. NIV καὶἀνεβαινενὸἄνθρωποςἐξήμερῶνεἰςἡμέραςἐκπόλεωςαὐτοῦἐξπροσκυνεῖνκαὶθύειντῷκυρίῳθεῷεἰςκαὶἐκεῖ	יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת
YHWH Shalom	"The LORD is peace"	Judges 6:24plugin-autotooltip_default plugin-autotooltip_bigJudges 6:24  Hebrew נִיּבֶּל שֶׁׁם גִּדְעָּוֹן מִזְבֵּׁל לִיהוֹה וַיִּקְרָא לִוֹ יְהוֶה שָׁלָוֹם עֲד הַיִּוֹם הַזֶּה עוֹדֶּיג בְּעָפְרֵת אֲבִי 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. καὶἀκοδόμησενἐκεῖθυσιαστήριοντῷκυρίῳκαὶἐκάλεσεν	יְהוָה שָׁלוֹם
YHWH Yireh	"The LORD will provide"	Genesis 22:14plugin-autotooltip_default plugin-autotooltip_bigGenesis 22:14  Hebrew נֵיִּקְרֵא אַבְּרָחֵם שֵׁם הַמִּקְוֹם הַהָּוֹּא יְהֹנֵה יִרְאֵה אֲשֶׁל יֵאָמֵר הַיֹּוֹם בְּהַר יְהֹנֶה יֵרְאֶה 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

	Jeremiah 23:6plugin-autotooltip_default plugin-autotooltip_bigJeremiah 23:6	
YHWH Tsidqenu	Hebrew בָּיָמִיוֹ תּּוָשֵׁע יְהוּדָּה וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכִּוֹ שְׁבֶּטֵח וְזֶה שְׁמִוֹ אֲשֶׁר יִקְרְאוֹ יְהוֶה צִּדְקֵנוּ 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. ἐνταῖςἡμέραιςαὐτοῦσωθήσεταιΙουδαςκαὶΙσραηλκατασκηνώσειπεποιθώςκα	יְהנָה צִדְקֵנוּ

## 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	Hebrew Text
to / for YHWH	לַיהוָה
from YHWH	מֵיְהוָה
in / by YHWH	בַּיהוָה
with YHWH (object marker + name)	אֶת־יְהוָה
upon / against YHWH (context determines nuance)	עַל־יְהוָה

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Last update: 2025/10/26 22:19

