

Names for God

There are hundreds of names for the Divine in the Bible.

Throughout scripture and poignantly in the Gospel of John, Jesus says “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” (John 10:10b)

Names for God lead us to this revelation that God is all about us as a community living life abundantly. Therefore, names/images for God invite us to a trustworthy view of God as lifegiving and thus all Christian practices that flow from God as lifegiving.

Although God may be judge, the majority of scripture points to a God who judges in a way that invokes corrections made so that “all may have life and have it abundantly.” Both testaments, and the lived experiences of followers of Christ, overwhelmingly point to a god who seeks life abundant for all.

And as co-creators with God, we are invited to name the Holy through our own context, expounding on the names scripture provides.

Examples include mystics and theologians presented here:

- Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179), a theologian, preacher and abbess of the 12th century, talks about this fullness of life as greenness or viriditas. She describes “the greening power of God” as a verdant, life-giving vitality that flows through all things, not only the earth but also through human beings.
- C.S. Lewis (1898-1963) wrote of God in “Surprised by Joy” as the Great Interferrer.

Advocate	“But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all that I have said to you.” John 14:26
Alpha & Omega	“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty. Revelation 1:8
Christ/Messiah	The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.” John 4:25 *Christ comes from the Greek word χριστός (chrīstós), meaning “anointed one.”

El-roi/God Who Sees Me	So (Hagar) named the Lord who spoke to her, "You are El-roi," for she said, "Have I really seen God and remained alive after seeing him?" Genesis 16:13
Emmanuel	"Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." Matthew 1:23
Father	"The Lord carried you, as a father carries his son..." Deut 1:29–31
I Am	God said to Moses, "I am who I am." Exodus 3:14 - "I AM the: Bread of Life, Light of the World, Door, Good Shepherd, Resurrection and the Life, Way the Truth and the Life, Vine" Gospel of John
Judge	"Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?" Genesis 18:25b
Keeper/Shade in the Heat	"The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade at your right hand." Psalm 121:5
Lord/Holy One, Creator, King	"I am the Lord, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King." Isaiah 43:15
Maker of Heaven and Earth	"May the Lord, maker of heaven and earth, bless you from Zion." Psalm 134:3
Mother	God: "As a mother comforts her child, so I will comfort you..." Isaiah 66:1
Rabbi/Teacher	Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher). John 20:15
Son of Man/Child of Humanity/Fully Human	"But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he said to the paralytic..." Mark 2:10
Wisdom	"Does not wisdom call and understanding raise her voice?" Proverbs 8:1