

# God: Compound Names

The Israelites frequently gave their children Hebrew compound names that included a name of God plus another grammatical component such as a noun or verb. Scholars call these compound names theophoric (Greek: “bearing the name of God”) names. There are approximately 450 theophoric names in the Bible, of which about four hundred are personal names and the other fifty are place names.<sup>20</sup>

Biblical scholar Dana Pike wrote, “The very fact that so many of the names in ancient Semitic societies, including the Israelites, were of a theophoric nature demonstrates a strong disposition toward the role of the divine in the lives of these people. These names indicate what attributes and qualities were associated with a specific deity by the general populace of a society.”<sup>21</sup>

A common theophoric name includes the name *El*, which is generally translated in English as “God.” *El* may appear at the beginning of the name (as in Elidad, Eliezer, Elijah, Elisha, Elkanah, Elnaam, Elnathan) or at the end of the name (as in Ariel, Jezreel, Joel, Michael, Samuel, Uriel). In addition to the name *El*,

theophoric names include a verb, a noun, or another grammatical component that serves to describe God or one of His divine characteristics, attributes, or qualities. For example, the name Uzziel (“God is my strength”) shows that God is strength; Elnaam (“God is gracious”) sets forth God’s divine grace; Daniel (“God is my judge”) presents God’s judgeship; and Uriel (“God is my light”) reveals that God is our light. A few names describe aspects of the Atonement and Resurrection. These include Elkanah (“God has purchased”), Elisha (“God is salvation”), Elishua (“God is salvation”), Paltiel (“God is my deliverance”), Meshezabel (“God saves”), Eliakim (“May God raise up”), Mehujael (“God causes to live”), and Raphael (“God has healed”).

Theophoric names were popular in Israelite communities. For example, about thirteen biblical personalities had the name Joel; eleven persons possessed the name Eliezer; and another eleven had the name Michael.

There are many other *El* names in the Old Testament, but space limitations preclude listing them all in this chart.

| Name   | Meaning*                | Name     | Meaning             |
|--------|-------------------------|----------|---------------------|
| Abdeel | Servant of God          | Gabriel  | God is strong       |
| Abiel  | My father is God        | Gaddiel  | My fortune is God   |
| Adiel  | God has adorned Himself | Gamaliel | My reward is God    |
| Ammiel | My kinsman is God       | Hanamel  | God has shown favor |
| Ariel  | Lion of God             | Hanniel  | Favor of God        |

| <b>Name</b>       | <b>Meaning*</b>            | <b>Name</b>       | <b>Meaning</b>     |
|-------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Asahel</b>     | God has made               | <b>Hazael</b>     | God has seen       |
| <b>Azarel</b>     | God has helped             | <b>Immanuel</b>   | With us is God     |
| <b>Azriel</b>     | My help is God             | <b>Iphtahel</b>   | God opens          |
| <b>Barachel</b>   | God blesses                | <b>Ishmael</b>    | God hears          |
| <b>Eldaah</b>     | God desires                | <b>Jahaziel</b>   | God sees           |
| <b>Eldad</b>      | God has loved              | <b>Jahdiel</b>    | God rejoices       |
| <b>Elead</b>      | God has witnessed          | <b>Jahleel</b>    | Wait for God       |
| <b>Eleasah</b>    | God has made               | <b>Jathniel</b>   | God is constant    |
| <b>Eleazar</b>    | God has helped             | <b>Jediael</b>    | God knows          |
| <b>Elhanan</b>    | God has shown favor        | <b>Jehallelel</b> | He will praise God |
| <b>Eliab</b>      | My God is father           | <b>Jehiel</b>     | May God live       |
| <b>Eliakim</b>    | May God raise up           | <b>Jerahmeel</b>  | May God have pity  |
| <b>Eliam</b>      | God is kinsman             | <b>Jeruel</b>     | Foundation of God  |
| <b>Eliasaph</b>   | God has added              | <b>Jesimiel</b>   | God establishes    |
| <b>Eliashib</b>   | God causes to return       | <b>Jezreel</b>    | God sows           |
| <b>Eliathah</b>   | You are my God             | <b>Joel</b>       | The Lord is God    |
| <b>Elidad</b>     | My God has loved           | <b>Kadmiel</b>    | God is before me   |
| <b>Eliel</b>      | My God is God              | <b>Lael</b>       | Who belongs to God |
| <b>Eliezer</b>    | My God is help             | <b>Lemuel</b>     | Who belongs to God |
| <b>Elihu</b>      | He is my God               | <b>Mahalalel</b>  | Praise of God      |
| <b>Elijah</b>     | My God is the Lord         | <b>Malchiel</b>   | My king is God     |
| <b>Elimelech</b>  | My God is king             | <b>Mehetabel</b>  | God does good      |
| <b>Eliphaz</b>    | My God is fine gold        | <b>Mehujael</b>   | God causes to live |
| <b>Eliphelehu</b> | May my God distinguish him | <b>Meshezabel</b> | God saves          |

| <b>Name</b>       | <b>Meaning*</b>      | <b>Name</b>       | <b>Meaning</b>        |
|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Eliphelet</b>  | My God rescues       | <b>Methushael</b> | Man of God            |
| <b>Elisha</b>     | God is salvation     | <b>Michael</b>    | Who is like God?      |
| <b>Elishama</b>   | God has heard        | <b>Mishael</b>    | Who belongs to God?   |
| <b>Elishaphat</b> | God has judged       | <b>Nethanel</b>   | God has given         |
| <b>Elishua</b>    | God is salvation     | <b>Paltiel</b>    | God is my deliverance |
| <b>Eliud</b>      | My God is majesty    | <b>Pedahel</b>    | God ransoms           |
| <b>Elizaphan</b>  | My God has protected | <b>Pethuel</b>    | Youthfulness of God   |
| <b>Elizur</b>     | My God is a rock     | <b>Raphael</b>    | God has healed        |
| <b>Elkanah</b>    | God has purchased    | <b>Reuel</b>      | Friend of God         |
| <b>Elnaam</b>     | God is gracious      | <b>Samuel</b>     | His name of God       |
| <b>Elnathan</b>   | God has given        | <b>Shealtiel</b>  | I have asked God      |
| <b>Elpaal</b>     | God has acted        | <b>Shelumiel</b>  | God is my peace       |
| <b>Elzabad</b>    | God gives a gift     | <b>Uriel</b>      | God is my light       |
| <b>Ezekiel</b>    | May God make strong  | <b>Uzziel</b>     | God is my strength    |
| <b>Gabael</b>     | God is raised up     | <b>Zabdiel</b>    | Gift of God           |

\* The meanings of some names are subject to dispute.