

## WHAT DOES THE DIVINE NAME MEAN TO CHRISTIANS?

The divine name is represented by the four Hebrew characters יהוה which are read from right to left in Hebrew and so are spelt as *yod he haw he* (YHWH) when presented in English. It is called the tetragrammaton which occurs **6,825+** times in the Masoretic Hebrew text; yet most translations replace the Name entirely by the word LORD. However, a few translations make a choice out of several possibilities as to how the Name should be written.

❖ “Jehovah (Heb. יהוה)...This is my name *to time indefinite*...” NWT.

“Yahweh (יהוה)...This is my name *forever*, and my memorial name to all generations”  
(*Ex. 3:15 NJB*).

### THE MEANING OF THE NAME

Most translations render Exodus 3:14 as “I am who I am and the interpretation is that God is saying that He is ‘the self existent one.’ However, the Hebrew phrase *ehyeh asher ehyeh* does not carry a meaning concerning existence and so does not allow for the rendering “I Am” i.e. the self existent one; so the Septuagint translation in Greek of *ego eimi ho hown* and meaning “I am THE BEING” is a mistranslation. Additionally the Hebrew *ehyeh* is the imperfect of *qal* and so gives the meaning of “I will be.” So Aquilla’s translation from Hebrew into Greek renders it as *esomai esomai* and meaning “I shall be, I shall be.” Also the Hebrew does not allow for the causal form “I cause to become who I cause to become” because the causative form of the verb does not exist in Hebrew. So the Meaning of the name YHWH is “***I will be what I will be***” as in Moffat and Byington, and footnotes in most other translations, and this phrase is the source or etymology of the name YHWH. However, Moffatt is incorrect when he translates YHWH as “the Eternal” because the footnote to the RSV says:

The name does not indicate God’s eternal being but his action and presence in historical affairs.

### THE NAME REPRESENTS GOD’S CHARACTER, REPUTATION AND AUTHORITY

The name reveals the person. Therefore, the symbol [*the Name*] must be associated with that character and reputation of God. He warns about:

❖ “...the prophets...who intend to make my people forget my name (*authority and character*) by their dreams” (*Jer. 23:27*).

### THE CAUSE OF THE FAILURE TO USE THE NAME

At the time when many of the Jews had returned to Jerusalem after the fall of Babylon in 539 B.C.E., they learned to speak and write Aramaic and lost their ability to use Hebrew. So about 460 B.C.E., according to the Talmud (Sanhedrin 21b), Ezra rewrote the Hebrew Scriptures in the square Aramaic characters yet leaving **the name in the older paleo-Hebrew script**. Also about this time the Jews stopped using the name when speaking to foreigners. By the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C.E., when Simon the Just was high priest, articulating the Name was reserved for use only in the temple, according to the Talmud (Yoma 39b). Elsewhere one of the substitutes would be used. Yet, although the Jews had stopped saying the Name it was still written.

When the Septuagint was produced it mistranslated Leviticus 24:16 to read:

- “And he that **names the name of the Lord**, let him die the death: let all the congregation of Israel stone him with stones; whether he be a stranger or a native, **let him die for naming the name of the Lord.**”

In fact, the original Hebrew had said “the one who **blasphemes** the name of the LORD (Heb. YHWH) shall be surely put to death.” However, this threat as a result of the mistranslation in the Septuagint resulted in the majority of Jews boycotting the use of the name sometime after 270 B.C.E. and starting to use substitutes. By Jesus’ time these substitutes included: Adonai (Lord), Heaven, Father, the Blessed One, The Power.

### THE SHORTENED FORM OF THE NAME

Exodus 15:2 gives the first of 50 occurrences in the Masoretic text of the shortened form of the Name as YH and spelt as “Yah” in the Hebrew-English Interlinear and Rotherham, and as “Jah” in Young’s Literal, Darby, and the NWT. This name continued to be used long after the error of the Septuagint translation of Leviticus 24:16 causing Jews to cease to use the full name. The shortened form is evident in the phrase “alleluiyah” in the Revelation 19:1-6.

### PRONUNCIATION OF THE NAME

- Using Jewish sources the Spanish Dominican monk **Ramundus Martini** in his book *Pugeo Fidei* in 1270 used the spelling **Yohouah** (*Iohouah*).
- Then the spelling and pronunciation **Iehouah** (Heb. *Yehouah*) was first fully recognized by **Pietro Galatino** (1460-1540). Michael Servetus, in 1531, concurred with this pronunciation.
- Then the German scholar **Sebastian Münster** used a Latinized form as **Iehovah** after which Tyndale (1530s) and the first copies of the 1611 KJV used this form.

NOTE: No letter J existed in any language until the 15<sup>th</sup> century and came later from French into the English language.

In general, personal names are not translated from one language to another e.g. the name *Satan* is never translated from language to language. So with the divine name as being the most important, one would imagine that translation would be less favoured than **transliteration**. However, all other Bible names have been Latinized and then anglicised.

### TWO SYLLABLES OR THREE

Leading Hebraist Rudolf Kittel felt that **Yehowah** was the correct Hebrew pronunciation. George Buchanan **Yahowah**. (Yet there is a difficulty with this because it inverts the Hebrew letters and also the word *howah* = disaster, so that **Yahowah** would mean “Yah is disaster”). The use of 3 syllables is promoted because the many theophoric names (*names that incorporate part of the divine name*) are all 3 syllable words e.g. Yehoram. Yet this in itself is not proof of 3 syllable pronunciation of God’s name and the current weight of scholarship favours the pronunciation *Yahweh* as shown below:

- *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, p.680 acknowledges that:

The true pronunciation was never lost. Several early Greek writers of the Christian church testify that the name was pronounced **Yahweh**.

- the original pronunciation of which is well attested as Yahweh. *The Catholic Encyclopaedia*.
- The pronunciation Yahweh is indicated by transliteration into Greek *laouee* *Erdmann’s Bible Dictionary*.
- Professor of Semitic Linguistics at Tel Aviv University, Anson Rainey notes:

I mention the evidence (for Yahweh) from Greek papyri found in Egypt. The best of these is **laouee**. Clement of Alexandria said ‘...the tetragrammaton is pronounced laouee...’

*COULD THE HEBREW ‘YEHOWAH’ (pronounced Yehouah) BE CORRECT?*

However, other scholars and authorities have their legitimate reasons for believing the name in Hebrew to be *Yehowah* (Anglicized via Latin into *Jehovah*). For instance, the Hebrew letters for Y H W are **used as vowels** as well as consonants, so that the letter Y sounds as I and E, H sounds as H in the middle and aspirated at the end like A, and W sounds as O and U. This gives a pronunciation of IHUA which is similar to *Yehouah* as proposed first by Pietro Galatino in the 1500s, thereby giving a 3 syllable name.

Furthermore, some scholars demonstrate that there are problems with the choice of **Yahweh/Yahvé** which may be of Samaritan origin or is really hypothetical because it is based on the Greek form *Iabe* and on grammar rather than on biblical explanation. So it seems that there **must be some uncertainty about the pronunciation of the name**.

*THE CLAIM THAT ‘JEHOVAH’ HAS THE VOWEL POINTS OF ‘ADONAI’*

This claim has been made for over 400 years. However, from an analysis of both words and connected forms it is evident that this claim is incorrect because the “simple *shewa*” in *Yehovah* and the *hatef patah* in *Adonai* are not the same points.

ANCIENT COPIES OF THE SEPTUAGINT (LXX)  
CONTAINED THE DIVINE NAME

Jewish copies of this text before 150 C.E for the use of **Jewish readers** contained the Name in the square Aramaic letters. The *Septuagint Papyrus Fouad 266* dated to 1<sup>st</sup> century B.C contains the tetragram in square Aramaic letters in 49 places in Deuteronomy. Also a *Qumran LXX fragment of Leviticus 2:4* contains the name. However, copies of the LXX produced for **Gentile readers** did not contain the Name but rather had substituted it with *kyrios* (Lord). There is evidence that the Septuagint was reworked from the Christian Scriptures by Gentile Christian scholars who, in later copies, replaced the divine name with *kyrios*. This reworking is the reverse of the previously held view that the apostles and disciples quoted the name from the Septuagint. If this is true then the inspiration of the Christian Greek Scriptures was fed back into the Septuagint. In reaction to this thought of Gentile tampering with the LXX three other Jewish translations of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek came into being, namely, that of Aquilla (129 C.E), of Symmachus (165 C.E.), and of Theodotian (175 C.E.). These all contain the tetragrammaton written in Hebrew characters. However, the fact that some ancient copies of the Septuagint have the divine Name has no bearing on the fact that it is not contained in the Christian Greek Scripture copies. Please see the Kingdom Interlinear Translation.

DOES MATTHEW’S GOSPEL IN HEBREW (ARAMAIC) PROVE  
THAT HIS GREEK GOSPEL CONTAINED THE NAME?

There is considerable evidence that Matthew wrote a gospel account in the Hebrew dialect i.e. a form of Aramaic. Ireneus, Origen quoted by Eusebius, Eusebius himself, and Jerome all testify to this fact. Papias in 125 A.D. stated: “Now Matthew compiled **the logia** in the Hebrew dialect” i.e. Aramaic. However, it is impossible to say that Matthew’s gospel in the Hebrew dialect was written before his gospel in Greek. It may have been that his Hebrew gospel was reworked from his original in Greek. In fact, it is very **unlikely that Mathew’s Greek gospel was a translation from Aramaic into Greek** because it does not bear the marks of a translation. This is because it was contrary to Greek practice to name a Greek translation after the author of an original produced in another language. According to Moulton:

As a tax-collector Matthew would have been fully conversant with Greek. Although his Gospel contains Hebrew parallelism, Hebrew elaboration and his thought is Hebraic the language is colourless Hellenistic of the average type.

So, none of these facts prove that Matthew's Greek gospel ever had 'the Name' in it, and all copies give evidence to the contrary.

### THE CONSPIRACY THEORY THAT THE NAME WAS REPLACED BY *KYRIOS* IN THE CHRISTIAN GREEK SCRIPTURE ORIGINALS

If one examines the Kingdom Interlinear Translation (KIT) Greek text (1969 edition and 1985 edition) produced by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society one finds the Greek word *kyrios* (meaning 'lord' or 'master') throughout and nowhere in this text does one find the word *Jehovah* in either Hebrew or Greek letters. So it does seem strange that the divine name occurs over 6,800 times in the Hebrew Scriptures and then is not found in any Greek copy of the Christian Scriptures apart from Revelation 19:1, 3, 4 and 6 which contain *halleluYAH* — YAH being the shortened form of YHWH. So, the possibility is proposed by Jehovah's Witnesses that figurative *wolves* in a time of apostasy tampered with the inspired text in both the Christian Greek Scriptures.

#### *REASONS OFFERED FOR THE SUPPOSED CHANGE TO KYRIOS*

1. A mystical reverence for the Tetragrammaton.
2. Legislation on superstitions.
3. Persecution by the Romans because of the Jewish revolts in 66 and 135. Therefore, Christians would not want to appear Jewish in their writings or the copies thereof.
4. **The apostasy after the apostles died.**
5. Greek Christian antipathy to things Jewish.
6. The loss of the Name accompanies the infiltration of Greek pagan philosophy.

Jewish Alexandrian theology and Gnostic lore was toward a Platonic *nameless God* as taught by Aristotle, Seneca etc. Justin Martyr (c.160) refers to: "a God who is called by no proper name." He did not understand that the Tetragrammaton was a proper name, but thought it to be an archaic word for Lord. However, after the death of James, according to Thiede:

it was no longer necessary to show consideration for Jewish sensitivities... Suddenly...almost at a stroke...holy names were being abbreviated in Christian papyri...when Jews and Christians were becoming estranged.

And Gertoux states that the: "'nomina sacra' was used in all Christian manuscripts after 135 C.E ... However, Jewish copyists wrote the Name in paleo-Hebrew until 250 C.E."

**Reasoned eclecticism** (e.g. the NKJV is based on the Majority Text which is eclectic) is a position taken by some translators wherein they disagree with a master text in certain instances for sound reasons. So could reasoned eclecticism be appealed to concerning *Kyrios* as a substitute for the Name? Some say that the Name falls within the semantic, lexical and dictionary range of *Kyrios*. However, this still does not translate what is actually contained in the Greek text. Jehovah's Witnesses generally appeal to #4 above, that after the apostles died apostate Christians decided to replace the Christian documents with new ones that contained *kyrios* rather than YHWH .

#### *NO EVIDENCE FOR THE THEORY*

There is no genuine evidence that copyists blanked out God's Name from the Christian Greek Scripture text. Is such tampering even really possible if **God is the guardian of His Scriptures**? If there had been any tampering with the text then why did Paul not transliterate *YHWH* from the Hebrew as he had done with *Sabaoth*?

- ❖ “Lord Sabaoth” (*Rom. 9:29 NJB*) (kyrios sabaoth in KIT Greek text) = “YHWH Sabaoth” in Isaiah 1:9. Also note James 5:4.

Further proofs against this theory are given later in this study. Nevertheless, the NW Translation Committee has inserted the name ‘Jehovah’ in its translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures. Is this going beyond the mandate of a translator?

### INSERTION OF THE NAME 237 TIMES IN THE CHRISTIAN GREEK SCRIPTURES OF THE NWT.

The Christian Greek Scriptures do have two Lords – the Lord God and the Lord Messiah and this seems to cause confusion as to who is being spoken of because both are simply titled “Lord.” Furthermore, if one makes the kind of substitution that the NWT has made then how does one make the correct choice for substitution? Could doctrinal error be created by a wrong choice? Certainly it can be reasoned that if the writers of the Christian Greek Scriptures quoted from the Hebrew Scriptures then perhaps there is justification for the inclusion of the divine name. However, there are only some 50 of these direct quotations from the Hebrew Scriptures and yet the NWT Christian Greek Scriptures contains the name ‘Jehovah’ 237 times, and careful analysis shows that **only 112** of the 237 ‘Jehovah’ references come from passages in the Hebrew Scriptures. This leaves **125 which don’t**. So is there any real evidence to back up the choice to render *kyrios* in these 125 instances as ‘Jehovah’? Furthermore, *the Greek word Kyrios* appears 714 times in the Christian Greek Scriptures of the NWT i.e. in KIT. It is translated 651 times as Lord in reference to Jesus; 62 times as “sir,” “master,” or “owner,” in reference to humans other than Jesus; and 223 times as ‘Jehovah’. The remaining 14 ‘Jehovah’ references are renderings of the word ‘God.’

#### AVAILABLE MANUSCRIPTS

There are over 5,000 extant manuscripts of the Christian Greek Scriptures. Yet for support for the word *kyrios* the NW translation Committee has cited only 12 Greek manuscripts and 8 early versions. In contrast to this the United Bible Societies’ *Greek New Testament* cites 754 Greek manuscripts, 86 versions, and 149 lectionaries to support the use of the word *kyrios*.

#### BASED ON 25 HEBREW VERSIONS TERMED ‘J’ REFERENCES

In the Reference Edition of *the New World Translation* it is stated that:

To know where the divine name was replaced by the Greek words *kyrios* and *theos*, we have determined where the inspired Christian writers have quoted verses, passages and expressions from the Hebrew Scriptures and then we have referred back to the Hebrew text to ascertain whether the divine name appears there. In this way we determined the identity to give *kyrios* and *theos* and the personality with which to clothe them. To avoid overstepping the bounds of a translator into the field of exegesis, we have been most cautious about rendering the divine name in the Christian Greek Scriptures, always carefully considering the Hebrew Scriptures as a background. We have looked for agreement from the Hebrew versions to confirm our rendering. (Appendix 1D, pp.1564-1565).

Support for this position is appealed to from 27 translations from the Greek into Hebrew and termed “J” references by Jehovah’s Witnesses. However, two of these are not actually Hebrew versions, i.e. J<sup>20</sup> is Moulton and Geddon’s concordance, and J<sup>21</sup> is *The Emphatic Diaglott*. The evidence for the use of *Kyrios* comes from manuscripts as early as 200 C.E., and generally from 300 to 400 C.E.

#### THE ‘J’ REFERENCES DO NOT SUPPORT THE WTS POSITION

However, evidence given for ‘Jehovah’ comes from **translations into Hebrew from the very same Greek manuscripts** which do not contain ‘Jehovah.’ The oldest of these translations into

Hebrew is J<sup>2</sup> ‘Matthew in Hebrew’ by Shem-Tob-ben-Shaprut in **1385** which uses the circumlocution “The Name” throughout rather than the Tetragrammaton. The rest of the “J” references date from 1537 to 1975. So it appears that the New World Bible Translation Committee attributed greater authority to these Hebrew versions in their 237 ‘Jehovah’ references than to the best Greek manuscripts which universally use *kyrios*. The fact that no extant copy of the original Greek texts of the NT contains the divine name should have been a warning to the NWT committee that it would be going beyond the translators’ mandate from God to make such a change from the word ‘Lord.’

NOTE: J<sup>1-4</sup> may actually be copies and editions that come from Matthew’s Hebrew Gospel rather than translations from a Greek text as do the remainder of the “J” references.

*THE TRINITARIAN BIBLE SOCIETY AND J<sup>18</sup> BY SALKINSON and GINSBURG*

Two of the Hebrew versions that are cited, namely J<sup>17</sup> and J<sup>18</sup>, were produced by **The Society for Distributing the Holy Scriptures for the Jews**. Amazingly J<sup>18</sup> was also published by its associated society: **The Trinitarian Bible Society**. This brings up the question of bias from such publishers in their version. Such Trinitarian Bible publishers would be drawn to attempt to *unite* the personalities represented by the divine name (יהוה) and Kyrios i.e. Jehovah with Jesus to prove a trinity.

*HOW THE WORD ‘JEHOVAH’ IS USED IN J<sup>17</sup> and J<sup>18</sup>*

- ❖ “...provided YOU have tasted that the Lord is kind” (1 Pet. 2:3 quoting Ps. 34:8).
- ❖ “Taste and see that Jehovah (יהוה) is good, O YOU people” (Ps. 34:8).

*Yet the Hebrew version translates this verse as:*

- ❖ “If so be ye have tasted that [our] Lord (Heb. *adonenu*) is gracious.”

So a Hebrew version used by the NW Translation Committee to support the rendering ‘Jehovah’ translates the Greek word *kyrios* as the Hebrew *adonenu*. In doing this it clearly identifies Jesus with Jehovah of Psalm 34:8. Evidently the NWT committee broke its own rule of having “no other recourse,” because of the clear reference to Jesus in 1 Peter 2:3, by failing to translate it using the word ‘Jehovah’ when the original Hebrew text has ‘Jehovah.’

*THE TRINITARIAN BIBLE SOCIETY’S USE OF haAdhon IN THEIR TEXT*

The Hebrew title *haAdhon* means “the Lord” or “the sovereign lord” according to the WTS and applies only to ‘Jehovah’ as does *adhonai*. Nevertheless, the translators of both J<sup>17</sup> and J<sup>18</sup> have frequently used *haAdhon* to identify the Lord Jesus. E.g. from J<sup>18</sup>:

- ❖ “The Lord (*haAdhon*) is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon” (Luke 24:34).
- ❖ “That the Lord (*haAdhon*) Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread” (1Cor.11:23).
- ❖ “But I will come to you shortly if the Lord (*haAdhon*) (NWT has ‘Jehovah’) will” (1Cor.4:19).
- ❖ “And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (*haAdhon*), to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:11).

In all these cases the Trinitarian Bible Society is claiming that Jesus is Jehovah by wrongly translating *kyrios* as *haAdhon*, and once again the NW Translation Committee has not followed its own rule in these instances. From 1 Corinthians alone, *haAdohn* appears 19 times in J<sup>17</sup>. Of these, in the NWT, it is translated as ‘Lord’ 16 times and as ‘Jehovah’ only 3 times. All of this inconsistency and selectiveness in translating the texts shows the NW Translation Committees’ mistake in not simply following the extant Greek texts from which we have the Christian Scriptures and which give *kyrios* and *theos* and which never use the tetragrammaton.

*FURTHER ANALYSIS OF THE HEBREW VERSIONS*

In 1 Corinthians 4:19, 10:9, 21 (twice), 22, and 11:32, the Hebrew versions do not agree regarding the translation of *Kyrios* to יהוה. At 1 Corinthians 10:9, and 11:32, there are only three versions that

actually use יהוה. In three other instances, there is agreement between only four Hebrew versions. This, therefore, means that the remaining 22 versions do not contain the Tetragrammaton.

#### THE THREE ACCOUNTS OF SAUL'S CONVERSION

From J<sup>18</sup> and J<sup>17</sup> and remembering that *haAdhon* means “the Lord” or “the sovereign lord” and applies only to ‘Jehovah’

- ❖ “But Saul, still breathing threat and murder against the disciples of the Lord (*haAdhon* i.e. ‘Jehovah’), went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, in order that he might bring bound to Jerusalem any whom he found who belonged to The Way, both men and women. ... 10 There was in Damascus a certain disciple named An·a·ni·as, and the Lord (*haAdhon* i.e. ‘Jehovah’) said to him in a vision: “An·a·ni·as!” He said: “Here I am, Lord (*adoni*= *my lord* i.e. Jesus).” The Lord (*haAdhon* i.e. ‘Jehovah’) said to him: “Rise, go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man named Saul, from Tarsus. For, look! he is praying, and in a vision he has seen a man named An·a·ni·as come in and lay his hands upon him that he might recover sight.” But An·a·ni·as answered: “Lord (*adoni*= *my lord* i.e. Jesus),” I have heard from many about this man, how many injurious things he did to your holy ones in Jerusalem. And here he has authority from the chief priests to put in bonds all those calling upon your name.” But the Lord (*haAdhon* i.e. ‘Jehovah’) said to him: “Be on your way, because this man is a chosen vessel to me to bear my name to the nations as well as to kings and the sons of Israel. For I shall show him plainly how many things he must suffer for my name.” So An·a·ni·as went off and entered into the house, and he laid his hands upon him and said: “Saul, brother, the Lord (*haAdhon* i.e. ‘Jehovah’), the Jesus that appeared to you on the road over which you were coming, has sent me forth, in order that you may recover sight and be filled with holy spirit” (*Acts 9:1, 2, 10-17*).
- ❖ “At that I said, ‘What shall I do, Lord (*adoni* = *my lord* i.e. Jesus)?’ The Lord (*haAdhon* i.e. ‘Jehovah’), said to me, ‘Rise, go your way into Damascus, and there you will be told about everything it is appointed for you to do’” (*Acts 22:10*).
- ❖ “And when we had all fallen to the ground I heard a voice say to me in the Hebrew language, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? To keep kicking against the goads makes it hard for you.’ But I said, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And the Lord (*haAdhon* i.e. ‘Jehovah’) said, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.’” (*Acts 26:14-15*).

Literally translated, the Hebrew says, “Jehovah God said ‘I am Jesus.’” So one must ask where was the integrity of the NW Translation committee when it used these very distorted Hebrew versions of the Christian Scriptures and then to have been selective in their use after stating having a policy of consistent translation - all for the purpose of adding the name ‘Jehovah’ to the text whilst maintaining a theological position. Really the evidence from other early versions should only be sought so as to corroborate what is already certain from the primary extant texts. In the case of the ‘divine name’ it is just not in those Greek texts. Yet the NW Translation Committee has given precedence over the known ancient Greek texts from which each Hebrew version was translated and distorted.

Clearly, the NW Translation Committee has changed what the Christian Greek Scriptures actually say, and for theological reasons. Evidently this part of the Bible does not contain God’s name (other than the shortened form in Revelation 19).

#### IT IS POSSIBLE THAT JESUS SPOKE THE NAME WHEN QUOTING THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES

When Jesus quoted passages some 18 times either from the Hebrew text or the Septuagint text he likely used God’s name with his hearers. However, because there is no proof of this in any extant manuscript, the Name cannot legitimately be entered in any translation of the Christian Greek

Scriptures until such time as an original or a very early copy containing the Name is discovered. However, the biblical evidence is that Jesus used the term “Father” and the commonly used **periphrastics** for the name of God e.g. “Heaven” in Luke 15:18 and “Power” at Mark 14:61, 62. This is similar to when the High Priest used the term “The Blessed One” in the same verses. Please see *Hard Sayings of the Bible* F.F. Bruce. Yet, this does not mean that Jesus did not on some occasions use the divine name – but if so it was never recorded.

#### WHAT ARE THE CHANCES OF THE EXISTENCE OF AN ANCIENT COPY CONTAINING THE DIVINE NAME?

- The very **randomness** of the production, geographical dispersion, and the preservation of the copies of the Christian Greek Scriptures means that the chances of **all** of these copies being replaced with copies without the divine name, according to the conspiracy theory, are so remote as to be nil.
- For there to have been such an intention by apostate Christians to eradicate the Name they would have had to have the co-operation of **all** the faithful Christians.
- Christians were never party to wilful destruction of manuscripts. These were so precious to them that they did their best to preserve them as is evident in the 5,000 copies that are available today.
- It would have been impossible to gather **all** existing manuscripts containing the Name so as to consign them to destruction **at a single time**.
- If such destruction and/or replacement had been accomplished over a period of time there would have been a mix of manuscripts with some using the Name and others using the word *kyrios*. Then newer copies would also have been made from the ones containing the Name so that it would never go out of circulation.

There is no trace in any records or manuscripts that such a removal of manuscripts containing the Name and replacement with manuscripts containing *kyrios* ever took place. Now because John wrote his three letters at least 30 years after the other Christian Scripture writers he, certainly, would have written a warning to Christians concerning any wrong replacing of the Name, but clearly he didn't. Indeed if there had been an issue concerning a conspiracy to remove the Name and replace it with *kyrios* one would wonder why this issue was never raised by the faithful 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> century Christians, some of whom were prolific writers; yet, there is no record of such concern in the writings of Justin Martyr (110-165), Irenaeus (120-202), or Polycarp who had been taught by the apostle John. Furthermore, whenever any of these writers quote texts from the Christian Greek Scriptures where the NWT has ‘Jehovah’ their quotes have “Lord.” This is also true of even all later Christian writers.

Furthermore, 18 more recently available and even more ancient Greek manuscripts were not available to the NW Translation Committee in 1950 when they produced their Christian Greek Scriptures. At all 63 places where the NWT has “Jehovah” every one of these manuscripts has the word *kyrios*. So the statement of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses that eventually manuscripts would be discovered that have the name ‘Jehovah’ has not been born out in 60 years with even one occurrence of the Name in a Greek text.

Jehovah's Witnesses appeal to the work of George Howard or the University of Georgia and yet rejects Howard's statement that it is a theory when he says:

“In the following pages we will set forth **the theory** that the divine name יהוה (and possible abbreviation of it, was originally written in the N[ew] T[estament] quotation of and allusions to the O[l]d T[estament] and that in course of time it was replaced with the surrogate KS [abbreviation for *kyrios*, “Lord”].

*Quoted from the New World translation Reference edition, 1984, p.1564.*

## PROBLEMS CREATED BY INSERTION OF ‘THE NAME’

On page 153 of his book *The Tetragrammaton and the Christian Greek Scriptures* L. Lundquist makes the following points of logic:

1. Because the KIT has *kyrios* and the NWT has ‘Jehovah’ in the relevant places this is a simultaneous endorsement of two contradictory assertions.
2. Because Jehovah’s Witnesses insist on the presence of the name ‘Jehovah’ in the NWT, “we must then concede that Hebrew translations based on early Greek manuscripts carry greater weight than do these same Greek manuscripts themselves.” Clearly this is circular reasoning.

Lundquist’s conclusion is that: “To bring the Tetragrammaton into the Christian Scriptures requires that we deny the inspiration and authority of the Greek Scriptures themselves and seek a higher authority in the Hebrew translations.”

## ADDRESSING GOD IN THE CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURES

*JESUS ALWAYS ADDRESSED GOD ONLY AS “FATHER”*

- ❖ “I publicly praise you, Father... Yes, O Father, because to do thus...” (*Matt. 11:25, 26*).
- ❖ “My Father, if it is possible, let...” (*Matt. 26:39*).
- ❖ “Father, into your hands I entrust my spirit” (*Luke 23:46*).
- ❖ “Abba, Father, all things are possible to you” (*Mark 14:36*).
- ❖ “Father the hour has come” (*John 17:1*).
- ❖ “Holy Father watch over them” (*John 17:11*).
- ❖ “Righteous Father the world has...” (*John 17:25*).

There is no record that Jesus ever addressed God as *Yehoweh/Jehovah/Yahweh* but used *Father* as a term of respect as any son would.

*JESUS ONLY DIRECTED HIS DISCIPLES TO ADDRESS GOD AS “FATHER”*

- ❖ “Our Father in the heavens, let your...” (*Matt. 6:9*), and by example as above.

*WHEN JESUS SPOKE OF GOD HE USED THE TERMS “MY FATHER” OR “MY GOD”*

- ❖ “I am going my way to the Father” ... “I am ascending to my Father” (*John 14:12; 20:17*).
- ❖ “If, now, God thus clothes the...” ... “My God, my God...” (*Matt. 6: 30; 27:46*).

*JESUS SPOKE OF GOD AS BEING THE FATHER OF OTHERS*

- ❖ “...give glory to **your Father**”...“as your heavenly Father is perfect”...“Your Father who is looking on in secret” ... “Your Father knows you need these things”  
(*Matt. 5:16, 48; 6:4; Luke 12:30*).

*PAUL SHOWS HOW CHRISTIANS REFER TO GOD*

- ❖ “...we cry out: **Abba, Father**” (*Rom. 8:15*).

*The Christian Greek Scriptures refer to God as Father about 260 times!*

LIKELY REASONS FOR THE NAME NEVER BEING IN THE  
CHRISTIAN GREEK SCRIPTURE AUTOGRAPHS*JESUS INHERITS HIS FATHER’S NAME (AUTHORITY)*

*Yeshua* means *YHWH is salvation* and demonstrates His whole character. However, in the Bible record no-one ever addressed Jesus by the name *Yeshua* or even *Jesus*. The record shows him addressed with the Greek name *Iesou* which via Latin has been anglicised as *Jesus*. However, the name *Jesus* is recorded in the same proportion in the Christian Scriptures as the name *YHWH* is recorded in

the Hebrew Scriptures. So God's name (authority) is now attached to Jesus so that through him God's redemptive purpose finds its fulfilment:

❖ “For as many as the promises of God are, they have become ‘yes’ in him” (2 Cor. 1:20 based on KIT).

This may indicate why God causes attention to be focused on His Son. The Father has invested in Jesus full power and authority to act in His name (Matthew 28:18).

❖ “...all should honour the Son just as they honour the Father. He that does not honour the Son does not honour the Father” (John 5:23).

❖ “...your own name [authority] which you have given me” (John 17:11).

❖ “All authority has been given me in heaven and on the earth” (Matt. 28:18).

❖ “...and bestowed on him the name [authority] which is above every name [authority]” (Phil. 2:9).

❖ “...he has inherited a name [authority] more excellent than theirs” i.e. *the authority of his Father* (Heb. 1:4).

❖ “...no other name [authority] under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

#### FOR ISRAEL ONLY DURING THEIR GENERATIONS

❖ “**Jehovah**...This is my name *to time indefinite* and this is the memorial of me to generation after generation” (Ex. 3:15).

This is not *forever absolutely* just as Sabbath-keeping was not *forever* even though it was to be “during your generations” (Ex. 31:13). Because these words were said to Israel they would not apply to all of mankind indefinitely.

❖ “I am Jehovah, I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by my name Jehovah I did not make myself known to them” (Ex. 6:2).

The *New International Bible Commentary*, p. 152 says in discussing this subject:

We do accept the plain sense of Exod.6:2 f., viz. that the Divine Name was not used before the time of Moses among the Israelites' ancestors. The occurrences of the Name in Genesis, irrespective of sources, can easily enough be understood as **scribal retrojections** occasioned by its later currency in Israel.

#### JESUS HIGHLIGHTED GOD'S NAME i.e. HIS ATTRIBUTES AND AUTHORITY

“*In the name (authority) of a prophet*” (Matt. 10:41 KIT). “*Baptizing them in the name (authority) of the holy spirit*” (Matt. 28:19). Yet no personal name is involved in these instances.

“Let **your name** be sanctified” = “*May you be revered*” (Matt. 6:9).

“Father glorify your name” = “*Father glorify yourself*” (John 12:28).

“I have made your name [character and reputation] manifest” (John 17:6).

“...watch over them on account of your own name [reputation]” (John 17:11).

“I have made your name [character] known to them” (John 17:26).

“I will write upon him the name [authority] of my God” (Rev. 3:12).

#### CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURE WRITERS HIGHLIGHTED GOD'S ATTRIBUTES AND AUTHORITY

❖ “a people for his name” = “a people for himself” (Acts 15:14 NIV).

❖ “...people who are called by my name” = “that have been declared mine” (Acts 15:17 Byington)

❖ “...it was in behalf of his name (as His representatives) that they went forth” (3 John 1:7).

❖ “I will declare **your name** to my brothers...I will praise **you**” (Heb. 2:12) as in Hebrew parallelism.

- ❖ “...which make public declaration to his name” = “publicly affirm their faith in him”  
(*Heb. 13:15 Barclay*).

### SUMMARY OF DETAILS

- The Name appears as יהוה (YHWH) in all of its 6,825+ occurrences in the Hebrew Scriptures., yet it must be presented in translations in a way that English readers can read it.
- The literal Name is to be associated with the character, reputation and authority of God.
- God has made His name known as YHWH. It was important to Him from the time of Moses until at least the time of Malachi.
- Scholars of the past did not think the Name is unpronounceable.
- Jewish versions of the Septuagint in Jesus’ time contained the Name. Gentile Christian versions did not contain the Name. Yet the Septuagint has no connection with the issue concerning the Name as never being in the Christian Greek Scriptures.
- Matthew wrote a gospel account in Hebrew which likely contained the Name. However, it likely was a reworking of the original Greek text which contained the word Lord.
- **Mathew’s Greek gospel was a translation from Aramaic into Greek** because it does not bear the marks of a translation. This is because it was contrary to Greek practice to name a Greek translation after the author of an original produced in another language.
- There is no real evidence either way as to whether or not Jesus and his disciples spoke the Name.
- It is virtually impossible that the Name appeared in the Christian Greek Scripture originals. It defies logic for it to have been replaced in such a short time. This conclusion would only be discounted if an original or a very early copy containing the Name were discovered.
- The New World Translation committee was wrong to have inserted the name Jehovah in its translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures on the basis of a set of Hebrew translations from the Greek copies which do not contain the name. This is a denial of the inspiration and authority of the Greek Scriptures themselves. It gives greater authority to the Hebrew translations.”
- Yet translations, such as the NWT, which wrongly substitute *Kyrios* for the Name (237 times) in the N.T are no worse than those which substitute the Name for *Kyrios* (6825+ times) in the Hebrew Scriptures. Both are bad practice.
- As with the Jewish institutions that have been superseded, so, too, the Christian Greek Scriptures may supersede the Hebrew with regard to the Name.
- We do not certainly know why the copies of the N.T writings do not have the Name.
- The most likely scriptural reason is that Jesus inherits his Father’s name i.e. all of His authority. Therefore, God causes all attention to be focused on His Son as the bearer of the Name.
- Many quotations from the Hebrew Scriptures applying to God are applied to Jesus in the Christian Greek Scriptures. This is because has been given all the prerogatives of God as God’s agent. Yet this does not make him ‘Jehovah.’

- Jesus always addressed and referred to God as “Father” and instructed his disciples to do the same.

## CONCLUSION AND ISSUES

There is no proof, that the Name was entered in the N.T. originals (autographs). Hence **to enter the Name in the N.T would be going beyond the translators’ mandate from God. We must follow the example of Jesus by addressing God as “Father.”** Nevertheless, it is perfectly proper to use the divine name in other writing or speech rather than falling into the bad habit that the Jews fell into after the writing of the Septuagint. The problem for the modern-day Christian is in knowing which pronunciation is correct or is the closest approximation. Should it be the Hebrew name (*Yahweh* or *Yehowah*), in spite of the fact that all other names in the Hebrew Scriptures have been Latinized and then anglicized, or should it be the form via Latin which was anglicised to ‘*Jehovah*.’

Although, as some have argued, it is true that it is impossible to have a deep relationship with a god who has no name, Jesus gave Christians the perfectly good substitute in calling God “Father” and so in intimate relationship with Him. Yet, those who simply address Him as ‘God’ are using a title and failing to follow Jesus’ lead on this matter for a close relationship.

The one final problem is: how, in the Christian Greek Scriptures correctly rendered without the word ‘*Jehovah*,’ does one distinguish the Lord God from the Lord Jesus Messiah on those occasions when only the single term “Lord” is used for both? The answer is that in Paul’s writings *kyrios* always applies to Jesus. And for the rest by far the majority of these occurrences apply to Jesus and are easily seen in context. These include ‘*Jehovah*’ texts from the Hebrew Scriptures that have been applied to Jesus. But those that apply to the Lord God have carefully examined according to the context.

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### SUGGESTED READING

*The Tetragrammaton and the Christian Greek Scriptures* by L. Lundquist

*The Name of God Y.eH.oW.aH Which is Pronounced as it is Written* by Gérard Gertoux

