

# The Sacred Name of the Creator

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BETA EDITION

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*introduction*

## **My Journey**

Back around 1996 I began learning about things in the Bible that I'd never heard before.<sup>1</sup> For as long as I can remember, I've had a desire to follow the Creator. I come from a family of ministers (both men and women), and my entire life has been centered around the Bible and Church. It's all I've ever known, and I am thankful for this good foundation. I'm so glad my parents loved God and the Bible.

Growing up I used the words/names God and Jesus. We also used the word Lord to describe both God and Jesus, as well as the words Christ and Father. We were big on the name Jesus, to the point of speaking this name over someone who was being water baptized (our understanding of Acts 2:38). I was taught that a name mattered. It identified the One you were calling on for an answer to prayer, or for the salvation of your soul. At the age of 15 I learned that the name Jesus was of recent origin, that the letter J was the last letter to be added to the English alphabet, and that none of the Messiah's family or personal disciples would have called him Jesus.

When I was first learning all of this it brought to my memory something I hadn't really paid much attention to in the 1989 film *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*. Towards the end of the movie, Indiana (the adventurous researcher) has to pass a few tests in order to enter the room with the "Holy Grail" (the cup that the Messiah drank from at his last supper with his disciples before being crucified). In the second test, he has to spell out *God's* name. There's a series of stones laid out on the floor with each letter of the alphabet on one stone, and he realizes he needs to step on the proper letters of God's name in order to move on to the next test. It's quite the scene.

As he whispers to himself "*Jehovah*," he begins to step on the letter J but falls through the floor and has to catch onto something to pull himself back up. He catches his breath, and remembers that in Latin, *Jehovah* begins with an *I*. Latin is used here (I presume) due to it being the predominant language of Scripture in the Roman Catholic Church. Scripture itself is written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, none of which contain the letter we know as J. This would have to mean that God's name couldn't be *Jehovah*, and the one we now call Jesus was never called Jesus by his personal disciples, or by anyone prior to the later, English language.

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<sup>1</sup> I owe much gratitude to my father-in-law, Arnold Bowen, for teaching me everything he knew about the Sacred Name. I began studying with him before I got married, and for many years after that. He was the spear-head (so to speak) of my journey down the path of realizing that God has a personal, proper name, and that it's important to use it.

So if Jehovah and Jesus are later derivatives, what are the originals? Why would I not want to use the original name for God or Jesus in my own reading, prayer, praise, and worship? Why would I not want to call God what the old Patriarchs and Prophets called Him? If I already believed God's name was important, based upon Holy Scripture, wouldn't it be important to use His *original* name? These are some of the questions I began to ask as I was studying.

### **I Found My Hallelujah**

The very first point that got me started on this journey was the word *hallelujah*. I heard this word in every church service I went to, usually when the preacher shouted this word from behind the pulpit, or when a congregant would speak this word in prayer as they cried out to God. Through all of this, I never had the proper meaning of the word explained to me. When I finally asked, I was told it means "Praise the Lord," and I remember once being told it means "The Highest Praise," but I later discovered that neither explanation was completely accurate.

Through study I found that this word stems from the Hebrew language, and is found in Hebrew Scripture. One place is in Psalm 150 where we read in English (KJV) "Praise ye the LORD." In the HCSB (Darby, JPS) it reads "Hallelujah!" In Hebrew this is a compound word stemming from the base words *halal* (praise, celebration) and *Yah* (a contraction of YHWH or Yahweh).

In Hebrew, the name of God consists of four letters, and is used approximately 7,000 times in the Older Testament. This is what it looks like in both the older and more modern Hebrew script (reading the letters from right to left).

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We bring these letters over into English (reverse order) as YHWH, but the contracted form (YH) is found 49 times in Hebrew Scripture, is often used in poetry and song, and is sometimes called the short form of God's name. I soon found out that in the King James Version (the Bible I then read the most from) this form of God's name was retained in Psalm 68:4 as JAH, but pronounced with a Y just like in hallelujah. The original 1611 KJV says IAH, which can also be found in Revelation 19:1-5 in the Greek form of the word (*alleluia*).

I'm 40 years of age now, so it's been a long time since I began my research. I started using the Sacred Name of the Creator back in 1997, but I've learned so much more since then. This knowledge didn't just miraculously fall out of heaven into my head all at once; I learned little-by-little through my own on-and-off study of Biblical manuscripts, scholarly articles, books, and lectures by others who have spent their own lives studying Scripture.

One of the Scriptures that stood out to me like a highlighted text was the Third Commandment (found in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5). There we learn (KJV) that we are not to take the name of the LORD in vain, and that we will not be held guiltless if we take His name in vain. The Bible I now use most (HCSB, 2004) says that we will not be left unpunished if we misuse the LORD'S name. If we aren't to *misuse* His name, why aren't all of us properly *using* and *reverencing* His name? I still ask myself that question when I see believers snub the idea of the Sacred Name. I've even seen people roll their eyes when hearing someone stress the importance of the name YHWH, calling it silly or not really a big deal. The fact is that the Almighty has a name, He placed it in His Word thousands of times, tells us to call upon and praise His name, but at the same time not to misuse it or take it in vain. He says we'll be punished if we violate these commands. Why then so much neglect?

Back in the late 90's I was shown that everywhere we see the words LORD and GOD in all capital letters in the KJV, the underlying Hebrew text reads (transliterated into English): *YHWH*.<sup>2</sup> The Hebrew letters here are yod-hey-waw-hey, and many scholars believe that these letters were originally pronounced something like *Yahweh*. Why then did my Bible say LORD? How did we get the letters LORD from YHWH? Why are we trying to *translate* a name rather than *transliterate* a name, as is most commonly done throughout Scripture with other proper names of both people and places? When I inserted and spoke the name YHWH into the text of the Third Commandment, it brought to light the fact that it wasn't the word Lord or God that I was called to reverence or not misuse, but an actual, proper name.

Many people have been called lord throughout history. In England there is a "house of lords." Even the words "sir" or "mister" are based upon the meaning of the word lord as a title of respect for a grown man. The same common use is seen with the word god. I read in Scripture about Dagon the *god* of the Philistines, and Baal the *god* of the Canaanites. Exodus 20:7 is not commanding anyone to make sure to reverence the word lord or god, and writing it out as LORD or GOD doesn't really change anything. In the Hebrew manuscripts of the Bible all the letters are capitalized anyway. Capitalization isn't a form of reverence the ancients gave to a word, that came later in some English Bibles.

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<sup>2</sup> The way this was shown to me was in the preface of an English Bible translation. Chapter Two of this work will take a detailed look at many of these prefaces and the reasons given for the treatment of the Name in their particular translations.

Exodus 20:7 should read like this: "You shall not take the name of Yahweh your God in vain, for Yahweh will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain." That's a direct quote from the World English Bible, a year 2000 translation of the Bible (based on the 1901 American Standard Version). I've found that there are other Bibles that use the proper Name for God in Exodus 20:7's rendition of the Third Commandment: The Darby Translation, Young's Literal Translation, the Rotherham Emphasized Bible, the Lexham English Bible, and the Jerusalem Bible all use the proper Name in this verse and thousands of other verses in the Older Testament portion of Scripture.

The Bible I now use, the Holman Christian Standard Bible, was introduced to me back in 2004. One of the reasons I purchased it was because the person who showed it to me told me it used Yahweh in place of LORD in Exodus 3:15. I checked it out and was pleasantly surprised. In Exodus 20:7 however, the word LORD remains as a substitute. I soon learned that the HCSB translators decided to use the name Yahweh when they felt a text emphasized God's personal name, rather than in every place it belonged. How was Exodus 20:7 (the Third of the Ten Commandments) not an emphatic text? I was let down, but I still bought the Bible due to its tremendous readability, and balance between literal and dynamic equivalency in translation.

I believe the name YHWH is of great importance. I go so far as to say that someone who becomes aware of His name yet refuses to use it is disrespecting the Creator at best and taking it in vain at worst. I say this because the Hebrew word for vain (*shav*) can be understood as *to bring something to nothing, ruin or destroy, and uselessness*.<sup>3</sup> This is not the only way to violate the Third Commandment, but it is a way to violate it. By not using His name, a person is bringing His name to nothing. The neglect of use continues the ignorance among the populace. We respect the Creator by *using* His name, and using it with reverence. We disrespect Him by saying something like, "Eh, it's just what's in your heart that matters. He knows what I'm talking about." It's so disrespectful to speak of our Creator that way, but I've talked to many preachers over the years who have basically made this statement in one way or another. I honestly believe it's due to the stronghold of tradition, not wanting to lose a position or money, and just not wanting to be different from most churches and pastors. But since when did the Creator call us to a lifestyle of going with the flow? His prophets and apostles were all men and women who were different than the majority. Yohanan the Washer (John the Baptist) got his head chopped off for publicly speaking out against a King (Mark 6:14-29) and we can't even get preachers to use the name of the Almighty when their current, earthly life

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<sup>3</sup> It should also be noted that the Hebrew word *shav* is translated as false in the second giving of the Ten Commandments (Deuteronomy 5:6-21). There, the Ninth Commandment reads (KJV) "Thou shall not bear false witness." The idea is that falsifying information against someone is a crime. With this understanding it may be said that the Third Commandment speaks against falsifying the Name of the Creator. I can't see how substituting His Name for something else isn't violating this command.

is *not* at stake. It's such a shame. The USA is a country of comfort, and that comfort has rubbed off on Christianity in a horrible way. Churches aren't what they used to be; it's even hard to get a Christian to discuss a Biblical subject.

In the prophecy of Malachi a Book of Remembrance is mentioned which contains the names of people who feared Yahweh and thought upon (CEV "discussed") His name (Malachi 3:16-18). It says that Yahweh listened to these people when they spoke of Him among themselves. Now compare this with Revelation 3:5 where we read that the victorious ones will never be erased from the Book of Life, and that the Messiah will *confess or acknowledge their names* before his Father and the angels. The Messiah is not going to share your photo with his Father, or your fingerprint; he's going to speak your name in his Father's presence. Do you hope he gets your name right? I sure do. Then why aren't we making an effort to get our Heavenly Father's name right? According to Malachi 3 we should make the effort. I want to be one of those precious jewels, a special possession on that day of judgment. I want the Almighty to have compassion upon me. My life is statistically about half-way over upon this earth; all of our lives are but a vapor. They can be enjoyable at times, but are filled with vanity after vanity. The life we should be most concerned with is eternal life in the coming Kingdom. If you love Him, that's where your focus will be.

Before we move on to the meat of this book, I'd like to share with you an encounter I had in the spring of 2020. I was doing a job for a guy whose name was Roy, and for the first half of the job I called him Ray. I probably had misspelled his name in my work book, and he just didn't see the need to correct me (I guess) the first dozen or so times I said Ray. About halfway through the job, he remarked, "You keep calling me Ray, but my name is Roy." I chuckled, shook my head, and apologized for the mistake on my part; it definitely was not my intent to mispronounce his name. He was good, and I called him by his actual name (Roy) for the rest of the job. Let me ask you a question; would it have been disrespectful for me to continue to call this man Ray after he corrected me? I can't imagine anyone answering no. Of course it would have disrespected him; he had *just* corrected me. It would have been a total jerk move for me to not care and just keep calling him a name that wasn't his. Out of respect for him as a human being I corrected my error. ***How much more respect is the Creator of heaven and earth worthy of?*** The one who created you, giving you the breath of life and allowing you to walk, talk, sing, smile, laugh, and cry. No offense at all to Roy, but our Creator is worthy of so much more! Will we respect Him? Will we respect the name He gave Himself? Will we stop calling Him titles in place of His name? Or, will we just stand there and keep calling him "Ray"?



*chapter one*

## Learning the Name

In the model prayer that Yeshua<sup>4</sup> taught us to pray (Matthew 6:9-13), he began by saying (KJV), "*Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.*" Synonyms for the word *hallowed* are set-apart, special, unique, and sacred. This is where we get the concept of the *Sacred Name*. It's not something a movement made up at the beginning of the 20th century. The Sacred Name is something that our Messiah believed in and taught. This Sacred Name is none other than YHWH.

In a famous passage in Exodus, Moses was commissioned to go back to Egypt and deliver the children of Israel from the bondage they'd been enslaved to since the days of the Pharaoh who knew not Joseph. While up on a mountain, the Mighty One of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob spoke to Moses, telling him of the plans that were in play for releasing the Israelites. During this encounter Moses told this Great Voice that if he went back to Egypt and explained what had happened to him, the children of Israel would ask about the Name of the One who had sent him; they would want to know if he was coming of his own accord or if he had genuine authority from the Most High. So Moses said, "What should I tell them?"<sup>5</sup> In Exodus 3:15 we read this response:

God said moreover to Moses, "You shall tell the children of Israel this, 'Yahweh, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, and this is my memorial to all generations. (Exodus 3:15, WEB)<sup>6</sup>

Here we have the Sacred Name announced to Moses by the Creator Himself. The Mighty One of Moses' ancestors says that Yahweh is His name forever. Forever means without end. Yahweh was His name then, and it is still His name now. This is seen by Him calling it "my memorial to all generations." The root word of memorial is memo, like when you write a memo on a little sticky note or jot one down in the notes app on your phone. We do this to recall something we don't want to forget.

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<sup>4</sup> Yeshua is the original, personal, proper name of the Messiah (Christ), and is preferred by the author. For a detailed examination of this name, please consult Appendix 2 of this book as well as my video teaching (on YouTube) titled *Where Did the Name Jesus Come From?*

<sup>5</sup> This question from Moses has caused some to wonder if the Sacred Name was known prior to the exodus. A detailed look at this can be found in Chapter Five of this book.

<sup>6</sup> Other translations record this as (HCSB) "This is my name forever; this is how I am to be remembered in every generation." (NIV) "This is my name forever; the name you shall call me from generation to generation." (GNT) "This is my name forever; this is what all future generations are to call me."

Memorial carries with it the meaning of a remembrance or recollection. We are to remember the Creator as Yahweh. I say with sadness that our generation today does not view Yahweh as His memorial name. People have either discarded, misplaced, or ignored this memo. His name is rarely ever spoken because tradition has overtaken Holy Spirit inspiration. Most people follow the traditionally accepted practice of not worrying about how we address our heavenly Father. "He knows what I mean" or "He knows my heart" has become the mantra for Christians, and it is amazing that out of all the topics people spend time thinking about, their Creator's name is rarely one of them.<sup>7</sup> My desire is to try my best to communicate to the reader the importance of *knowing* as well as *using* the Sacred Name of the one, true Mighty One, thus bringing to Him the honor and esteem that He deserves. The heavenly Father has given us His memorial, should remember Him in the way He chooses us to, rather than in the way which we think would be more beneficial to us, or more practical to society or modern day Christianity.

But you, O Yahweh, abide forever, and your remembrance from generation to generation. (Psalm 102:12, LEB)

The name of (Yahweh) will be remembered forever, and he will be famous for all time to come. (Psalm 135:13, CEV)

This was (Yahweh) God Almighty - (Yahweh) is the name by which he is to be worshiped. (Hosea 12:5, GNB)

### **Translation vs. Transliteration**

You've probably heard a news reporter speaking English, but then all of a sudden say the name of a foreign person or place in the native language of that area. When the news outlets reported that President Donald J. Trump went to speak with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, the reporter didn't all of a sudden give the North Korean leader an English name. The same goes for the Pyongyang and Ryongsong Residence, where Kim Jong Un resides. These are proper names, and remain the same no matter what language a reporter speaks. My parents named me Erich Matthew Janzen, and the name I've always went by is Matthew. If I journey to Russia, China, Japan, or Mexico, my name does not change. Natives in those areas may pronounce my name a bit differently (due to various accents and/or dialects) by my name will always remain Matthew. I can be given a Russian or Chinese *version* of my name, but those would be secondary to my original name.

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<sup>7</sup> Some people argue that they don't use the Sacred Name frequently or in worship due to its holiness. I don't find that mindset in the Scriptures. No Patriarch or Prophet ever viewed the name Yahweh as too holy to be spoken, or too holy to even be spoken in common, everyday speech. They all believed its holiness meant that it should be spoken and used regularly. Ruth 2:4 is a good example of this everyday use. Boaz goes out to check on his workers in the field and says, "Yahweh be with you." They reply, "Yahweh bless you."

English translators of Hebrew Scripture generally *transliterate* names of people and places into English; they carry down the letters of a proper noun from the Hebrew language into the corresponding letters of the English language. Merriam-Webster.com defines transliterate as "*to represent or spell in the characters of another alphabet.*" Dictionary.com has "*to change (letters, words, etc.) into corresponding characters of another alphabet or language.*" The Oxford English Dictionary (2nd Edition, 1989) gives "*to replace (letters or characters of one language) by those of another used to represent the same sounds.*" This last definition shows us the purpose of transliteration. While it is not always entirely possible to duplicate the original sound of a proper noun in a second language, that is the aim.<sup>8</sup>

We find an example of this in Second Kings 17 where the king of Assyria had not brought anyone to Samaria that could teach the foreigners (who were placed in that land) how to fear Yahweh. When he finally acquired a priest to teach the people, they still continued to fear their *false* gods. They worshiped and served their heathen gods right along with learning how to worship and serve the One, True Mighty One (Yahweh). The primary meaning of this text will not be discussed entirely here, but quoting the passage will be sufficient to show the difference between *correct* transliteration and *improper* substitution.

(29) Howbeit every nation made gods of their own, and put them in the houses of the high places with the Samaritans had made, every nation in their cities wherein they dwelt. (30) And the men of Babylon made Succothbenoth, and the men of Cuth made Nergal, and the men of Hamath made Ashima, (31) And the Avites made Nibhaz and Tartak, and the Sepharvites burnt their children in fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim. (32) So they feared the LORD, and made unto themselves of the lowest of them priests of the high places, which sacrificed for them in the houses of the high places. (33) They feared the LORD, and served their own gods, after the manner of the nations whom they carried away from thence. (2 Kings 17:29-33, KJV)

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<sup>8</sup> At the [accreditedlanguage.com](http://accreditedlanguage.com) blog they give a good description of transliteration saying, "When you go to a Chinese restaurant, the menu might feature Chinese characters that you don't understand. When those characters are transliterated, they approximate the Chinese word's pronunciation... If you can't read or speak Chinese, you still won't understand the transliterated language. Only when that Chinese word on the menu is translated into English will you be able to comprehend it... Transliteration focuses more on pronunciation than meaning, which is especially useful when discussing foreign people, places, and cultures."

Even in the time frame of this passage, Yahweh had become just *a* mighty one, on equal footing with the foreign gods. In our English translations this problem is magnified because we have all the other god's names being transliterated (and thus memorialized), while the name of the true Mighty One stands behind a mere title: LORD. This would not be the case if the translators had just continued the transliteration practice from the aforementioned verses. Instead, they chose to use a substitute word (LORD) in place of a proper noun/name (YHWH). Each of the above false gods could be termed as "the lord" of certain individuals, peoples, or nations at that present time. So to place the word "lord" as *the name* for the Mighty One of Israel is not only incorrect, but presents no distinction or uniqueness for Him. It makes Him just another lord (if not a lesser lord) in the midst of many lords. The other lords have names, but He does not, at least in this English translation.

Most people today have knowledge that words or common nouns are almost always translated,<sup>9</sup> while proper nouns are almost always transliterated. Let's use the example I gave earlier of my name Matthew. People do not go around calling me by the translation of my name, which is *gift of Yah*. With common nouns or everyday words it is different. We English speaking people do not all say the Spanish word *porfavore* every time we vocalize the word *please*. We instead use the English *translation* of the Spanish word, and the translation of a word does not sound like its counterpart in the language it is being translated from.

### **English Titles for the Creator**

The English words God and Lord are more what we would call *titles*, instead of proper names. They are like doctor, lawyer, teacher, or pastor; describing positions of someone, but not making obvious the particular person you are referring to. Deuteronomy 10:17a (WEB) is a good example: "For Yahweh your God, he is God of gods, and Lord of lords." The Hebrew words *elohim* (gods) and *adonim* (lords) are used to refer to other mighty ones. The same stands true for related titles such as *eloah* and *el* (usually translated as god in English Bibles; see 2 Chronicles 32:15). Look up the term *el* in Deuteronomy 32:12 and Psalm 81:9 to see that it too does not pass the test. The Almighty must have an *exclusive* name to distinguish Him from the foreign gods mentioned in Scripture, so that we may properly distinguish Him and give Him the honor He deserves in the way that He wants.

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<sup>9</sup> Two examples of this can be found in John 1:41-42 (WEB): "He first found his own brother, Simon, and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah!' (which is, being interpreted, Christ). He brought him to (Yeshua). (Yeshua) looked at him, and said, 'You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas' (which is by interpretation, Peter)." The LEB reads "which is translated Christ" in verse 41, and the CEV reads "This name can be translated as Peter" in verse 42. With Cephas, it appears that Yeshua gave Simon an additional name that described the work he would do; he would be a rock or foundation stone. Cephas is the Syriac word for rock, while Petros (from where we get Peter) is the Greek word for rock.

The title "God" (or Lord, Father, any other title) is neither personal nor distinctive (one can even make a god of his belly; Philippians 3:19). In the Hebrew Scriptures the same word ('Elo-him') is applied to Jehovah, the true God, and also to false gods, such as the Philistine god Dagon (Judges 16:23, 24; I Samuel 5:7) and the Assyrian god Nisroch (2 Kings 19:37). For a Hebrew to tell a Philistine or an Assyrian that he worshiped "God"... would obviously not have sufficed to identify the Person to whom his worship went.<sup>10</sup>

Confusion is caused if we limit our use to the King James Version<sup>11</sup> of the Bible. Take (for example) Isaiah 42:8:

*I am* the LORD, that *is* My name; And My glory I will not give to another, nor My praise to graven images.

We begin to think here that the Creator's name is the LORD, but we've already established that cannot be, because the title LORD, no matter how it looks in our English Bibles (LORD, Lord, lord) is shared by other deities. Now notice Psalm 83:18:

That men may know that thou whose name alone is JEHOVAH art the most high over all the earth.

Here we have a contradiction to Isaiah 42:8. This passage says His name is JEHOVAH, but Isaiah said His name is the LORD. Does He have two names that don't look or sound alike? Did the author of Isaiah not know what the author of Psalms knew?

### **Yahweh is His Name**

In Hebrew Scripture<sup>12</sup> both of these verses use the four letters YHWH (Yahweh) where we read in English "the LORD" or "JEHOVAH."<sup>13</sup> When consulting the Hebrew, we can enjoy the harmony of both verses agreeing on the one name Yahweh, but what most English Bibles have done here is broken the Third Commandment. Why they chose to properly transliterate the names of foreign gods and not the name of the true Mighty One finds its roots in uninspired traditions of men.

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<sup>10</sup> *Aid to Bible Understanding*, Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc. 1969, 1971, page 885.

<sup>11</sup> In mentioning the King James Version, I am not placing it on a lower status than the other versions. I believe all versions which do not use the name Yahweh (or a variation thereof) are in violation of the Third Commandment.

<sup>12</sup> The majority of that portion of the Bible commonly called the Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew.

<sup>13</sup> The word God when written as "GOD" in all capital letters (in the English translations of Scripture) is also an uninspired substitute for the name Yahweh. The name of Jehovah will be examined in Chapter Two.



*chapter two*

## English Bible Versions

When I began my study on this subject one of the things that helped me greatly was a part of the Bible people rarely read: *the preface*. I found that many Bibles explain their method of operation when it comes to translating from Hebrew and Greek into English, and these Bibles generally contain a section on their non-use of the Sacred Name. I was able to glean a lot of information from these Bibles on the Name, even though they chose not to use it in their English text. A closed mind may be opened quickly when you show a person the name Yahweh inside of a Bible they are used to reading or hearing, even if it's just in the preface. It's a good beginning for anyone to see translators admit that the name of God is Yahweh.

The versions of the Old Testament that do *not* contain Yahweh's name are the English versions. All of the Old Testament Hebrew texts contain the name, as well as the earliest copies of the Septuagint.<sup>14</sup> The modern versions explain to us their reason for not using Yahweh's name, so as we go through these, ask yourself if the reasons you read are holy and just. We'll begin with a 1920's to 30's English translation, The Smith and Goodspeed Bible (sometimes called "The Bible: An American Translation").

**Smith & Goodspeed** - <http://www.bible-researcher.com/goodspeed.html>

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One detail of the translation which requires explanation is the treatment of the divine name. As nearly as we can now tell, the Hebrews called their Deity by the name Yahweh, and in a shorter form, Yah, used in relatively few cases. In course of time they came to regard this name as too sacred for utterance. They therefore substituted for it the Hebrew word for 'Lord.' When vowels were added to the text, the consonants of 'Yahweh' were given the vowels of 'Lord.' Somewhere in the fourteenth century A.D. Christian scholars, not understanding this usage, took the vowels and consonants exactly as they were written and produced the artificial name 'Jehovah' which has persisted ever since. In this translation we have followed the orthodox Jewish tradition and substituted 'the Lord' for the name 'Yahweh' and the phrase 'the Lord God' for the phrase 'the Lord Yahweh.' In all cases where 'Lord' or 'God' represents an original 'Yahweh' small capitals are employed. Anyone, therefore, who desires to retain the flavor of the original text has but to read 'Yahweh' wherever he sees LORD or GOD.

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<sup>14</sup> The Septuagint is the Old Testament translated into the Greek language. This translation began to take place around the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C. Later copies of the Septuagint did replace the Sacred Name with the titles *kurios* (lord) and *theos* (god). I cover this in more detail in Chapter Seven.

The translators here give *Orthodox Jewish Tradition* as their reason for leaving out the Sacred Name. We need to be careful here, because Yeshua warned us that sometimes tradition violates what the Almighty has commanded (Matthew 15:6, 9). Mark 7:6-13 has the Messiah teaching that first century Jews often made void the Scriptures by their tradition: "Making void the word of God by your tradition, which you have handed down. You do many things like this." (Mark 7:13, WEB) This doesn't mean that all tradition is bad, but a tradition that ultimately steers us away from a commandment certainly is, and could be detrimental to our right-standing with the Creator.

I remember doing some work once for an Orthodox Jewish man when I was in my 20's. We talked for a while and one subject we spent a lot of time on was the Sacred Name. This nice man would say either *Adonai* or *Ha Shem* (literally "the Name") each time he would reference the Almighty. There was a large Hebrew Bible sitting on this man's table in the kitchen, and my father-in-law (who was with me at the time) asked the man's daughter to read a passage. I can't remember what exact text it was, but it contained the Sacred Name. Every time she would get to YHWH (in Hebrew) she would read *Adonai*. Smith and Goodspeed tell us in their preface that this reading practice began over time as Jews gradually felt the Name to be too holy to speak. As we'll cover later and in more detail, this stemmed from building fences around the commandments found in Exodus 20:7 and Leviticus 24:10-16.

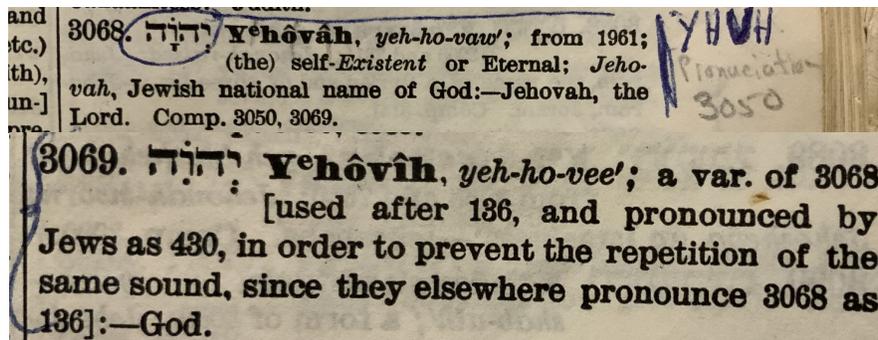
After hearing this young girl use *Adonai* twice in re-reading the text, my father-in-law asked her to slow down and read this one particular word carefully. She slowly read the passage again, and when she got to the *Name* she paused, looked up, and said, "We don't say that word." She had been taught to read *Adonai* instead of YHWH. That's how deep this tradition runs. Orthodox Jewish children do not even notice the four Hebrew letters of the Sacred Name when they read through their Scriptures, because they've been trained not to see it.

I've actually trained my children in the opposite way. Most years, at the Feast of Tabernacles, we read the entire book of Deuteronomy, and we take turns reading blocks of five to ten verses at a time. When my children take part in this reading (even when they were all younger) they automatically say "Yahweh" every time they see "the LORD." It's like second nature to them because I've taught them from as early as they were able to learn that "the LORD" was an uninspired substitute for the name YHWH. I think it's important to break the tradition. I believe this tradition of not saying the Name violates Scriptures that tell us to say the Name (Psalm 99:6, "Moses and Aaron among His priests, and Samuel among them that call upon His name; they called upon Yahweh, and He answered them." Psalm 105:1a, "Oh give thanks unto Yahweh, call upon His name.")

**NASB - <http://www.bible-researcher.com/nasb-preface.html>**

In the Scriptures, the name of God is most significant and understandably so. It is inconceivable to think of Spiritual matters without a proper designation for the Supreme Deity. Thus the most common name for the Deity is God, a translation of the original Elohim. One of the titles for God is Lord, a translation of Adonai. There is yet another name which is particularly assigned to God as his special or proper name, that is, the four letters YHWH... This name has not been pronounced by the Jews because of the great sacredness of the Divine Name. Therefore it has been consistently translated as LORD. The only exception to this translation of YHWH is when it occurs in immediate proximity to the word Lord, that is, Adonai. In that case it is regularly translated GOD to avoid confusion. It is known that for many years YHWH has been translated as Yahweh. No complete certainty attaches to this pronunciation.

There are times in the NASB where they've substituted the four letters of the Name with the word LORD. There are other times where they've substituted the Name with the word GOD. This is said to be done in order to avoid confusion. It seems to me that using the name YHWH where it belongs would have avoided all of this other confusing substitution stuff in the first place. You can verify these different times in Hebrew by opening up a Strong's Concordance of the Bible, and turning to numbers 3068 and 3069 in the Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon. There you will see the four letters (from right to left; yod-hey-waw-hey) vowel pointed differently. This is because one vowel point set stems from *Adonai*, while the other set stems from *Elohim*.



The first picture (3068) is a combination of the four letters of the Sacred Name and the vowel points from the Hebrew word Adonai (H136 in Strongs). The second picture (3069) is a combination of the four letters of the Sacred Name with the vowel points from the Hebrew word Elohim (H430 in Strongs). Adding the vowels of Adonai to YHWH produce something like *Yuhowah*. Adding the vowels of Elohim produce *Yehowih*. Each reading can be found in Hebrew Scripture due to the Jewish tradition of adding these vowel markings to make sure no one inadvertently blurted out the Sacred Name.

When a Hebrew reader came across the Name with the vowels of Adonai they would read it as Adonai; when the Name was vowel pointed as Elohim they would read it as Elohim. The variant vowel points from Elohim are due to the times in Hebrew Scripture that read "Adonai YHWH" (for example, Genesis 15:2 and Deuteronomy 3:23). If they vowel pointed YHWH as Adonai in these cases, the reader would say "Adonai Adonai." To avoid such repetition, the vowels of Elohim were added to the Sacred Name in these instances, and the reader would say "Adonai Elohim."

**NIV** - <http://www.bible-researcher.com/niv-preface.html>

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In regard to the divine name YHWH, commonly referred to as the Tetragrammaton, the translators adopted the device used in most English versions of rendering that name as LORD in capitol letters to distinguish another Hebrew word rendering "Lord" for which small letters are used.

In studying about this subject in relation to the NIV Bible, I ran across a letter written by a Julie Moore to an Edwin Palmer. Palmer was the Executive Secretary of the NIV translation committee back in late 1960's and through the 1970's. Moore wrote her letter asking Palmer why he chose NOT to use the Sacred Name in his translation of the Old Testament.<sup>15</sup> Palmer wrote back by saying:

Dear Miss Julie. Thank you for your letter and concern about the fact that the NIV did not use the name Jehovah in the OT. Here is why we did not: You are right that Jehovah is a distinctive name for God and ideally we should have used it. But we put 2 1/4 million dollars into this translation and a sure way of throwing that down the drain is to translate for example, Psalm 23 as, 'Yahweh is my Shepherd.' Immediately we would have translated for nothing. Nobody would have used it.<sup>16</sup>

I remember the first time I came across this letter online. I sat there with my hand over my face and started shaking my head; I couldn't believe what I had just read. Knowing that humans are sinners but by the grace of Yah, it shouldn't have shocked me, but still, it is sad when you see people who say they follow the Creator disrespect Him in their practice.

Since when should servants of the Most High place money over truth? What is more important: the money put into a translation or faithfulness to the text from which you are translating? Is *Yahweh* uncommon to some readers of the Bible? Sure, but the only way we are going to correct that problem is to put the Name back where it belongs and begin to use it regularly, in both our worship services and everyday vernacular. Palmer went on to write this in his response letter:

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<sup>15</sup> I've added a copy of this letter in Appendix 1 of this book.

<sup>16</sup> I found this letter many years ago (in doing research on the Sacred Name) at a link on a website that was associated with the Jehovah's Witnesses. Sadly, that link no longer exists, but thankfully I saved a PDF of it on my computer.

We are the victims of 350 years of the King James tradition. It is far better to get two million to read it... and to follow the King James, than to have two thousand buy it and miss the grand truth in the Bible on every page because they are following an old fashion translation and have the correct translation of Yahweh... It was a hard decision, and many of our translators agree with you.

Realize here how he admits that Yahweh is more correct than what they chose to go with, and that he uses the word *victim* to describe himself and others who have fallen prey to the "King James tradition" from the early 17th century.

This reminds me of a phrase I first heard while watching an episode of the Andy Griffith Show: "*Oh what a tangled web we weave when first we practice to deceive.*" There was a jewelry thief who came from out-of-town posing as an innocent passer-by. He had the entire town deceived at one point, and almost got away with it, had it not been for the crafty Sheriff (Andy Taylor) who kept the town running smooth and basically crime free. I'm not saying that Mr. Palmer is equal with this jewelry thief, I'm saying he has done worse. Stealing is a crime against man. Removing the Name of the Author of Sacred Scripture is a crime against the Creator. Palmer might have meant well, but good intentions do not always equal purity or correct practice.

What it boils down to is this: do we please the Almighty, choosing His way over tradition, or do we stand there with our head in the sand like an ostrich? Edwin Palmer was likely a very intelligent man, but our Messiah did tell us that some things are hidden from the wise and prudent, yet revealed unto babes (Luke 10:21).

**NET - <https://netbible.com/preface/>**

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Today most OT scholars agree that the vocalization of the Divine Name would originally have been something like Yahweh, and this has become the generally accepted rendering. The Executive Steering Committee of the NET Bible spent considerable time discussing whether or not to employ Yahweh in the translation. Several OT editors and translators favored its use, reasoning that because of its use in the lyrics of contemporary Christian songs and its appearance in Bible study materials, the name Yahweh had gained more general acceptance. In spite of this, however, the Committee eventually decided to follow the usage of most English translations and render the Divine Name as "Lord" in small caps. thus the frequent combination... Yahweh Elohim is rendered as Lord God.

I used to go to the local *LifeWay* Christian bookstore here in my hometown (they closed down the store in fall of 2019 and moved to online sales only). I would always walk to the Dictionary and Encyclopedia section to see if they were carrying anything new. In the last 10 years or so, I have seen just about every major Bible Dictionary or Encyclopedia move to use Yahweh frequently throughout their work (as this NET preface mentions). This gives me much hope.

For example, I just reached over and pulled a commentary on Matthew from my book shelf. It's written by RT France. In it there is a comment on Matthew 1:21 that says, "*On the name 'Jesus' ... The Hebrew Yehoshua is normally taken to mean 'Yahweh is salvation...'*"<sup>17</sup> A commentary on Exodus I have (by William H.C. Propp) states this under Exodus 3:15, "*Notice how gradually Yahweh approaches the explicit pronouncement of his name: 'I will be who I will be... has sent me to you... Yahweh... has sent me to you.' Only the last truly answers Moses' question.*"<sup>18</sup> It makes me happy to see scholars using the Sacred Name frequently in their writings, and you would think that such a scholarly work as the NET would have opted for the use of Yahweh. Perhaps future revisions will correct their initial translation. Ultimately, we shouldn't take our lead from Bible study materials or contemporary Christian music. It's enough that the Scriptures themselves contain the Sacred Name. That's plenty of reason to use it in regular Bible reading, singing, and prayer. Thankfully, there are some versions of Scripture that have been bold enough to retain Yahweh's name in their translation. One of the first ones I came across early on in my studies was the *Emphasized Bible* of 1897, by J.B. Rotherham.

**REB - <http://www.teleiosministries.com/rotherhambible.html>**

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The Name Restored ... Why? Because its suppression was a mistake. So grave a mistake cannot be corrected too soon. An unwarrantable liberty has been taken; the path of humility is to retrace our steps. In What Form? ... to give the name JHVH the vowels of the word for Lord (Heb. Adonai) and pronounce it Jehovah is about as hybrid as a combination as it would be to spell the name Germany with the vowels in the name Portugal... **Gormuna**. The monstrous combination Jehovah is not older than about 1520 A.D... The form Yahweh is here adopted as practically the best... Men's names are throughout the Scriptures fraught with significance, enshrining historical incidents, biographical reminiscences, and so forth; and why should the Name of the Ever-Blessed be an exception to this rule?

Rotherham spends almost eight pages in his preface discussing the name Yahweh, as he chose to use it throughout the Older Testament portion of his translation. I am thankful for this man. He chose to go with Hebrew Scripture rather than a tradition of man that violates the command of Yahweh.

Rotherham points out what you'll find in many reference works in regards to the name Jehovah. Remember what we just went over in regards to the vowel points of Adonai being placed on the name YHWH. Later Christian scribes saw this and did not understand the former Jewish practice that sought to keep the Name from being spoken. They assumed the vowels around the Name were correct, and then brought over the name Jehovah (from Yuhowah) into their respective language. Rotherham says this is as ridiculous as adding the vowels of Portugal to the consonants of Germany. You come up with Gormuna, a fictitious place.

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<sup>17</sup> The New International Commentary on the New Testament, The Gospel of Matthew, 2007 Eerdmans Publishing Company, page 53.

<sup>18</sup> The Anchor Yale Bible Commentary, volume 2, Exodus 1-18, 1999 by Doubleday, page 205.

You can look up the name Jehovah in many Bible dictionaries and they will tell you it's a mistake. For example, I have here my Eerdmans Bible Dictionary from 1987. On page 561 under "Jehovah" it says, "*A name of God, devised during the Renaissance by artificially combining the consonants of the name Yahweh (held by the Jews to be unutterable) and the vowels of the substitute name Adonai.*"

Rotherham isn't the only one to correct the mistake. Other Bibles that use the name Yahweh include the Jerusalem Bible, World English Bible, Lexham English Bible, and Holman Christian Standard Bible. I have used the HCSB as my personal Bible since 2004. I grew up using the KJV, but began to branch out in the late 90's as I progressed in my Bible study. In the early 2000's I was introduced to the HCSB through a newspaper article someone had clipped out for me, just because it talked about how this translation of the Bible used the name Yahweh in passages that emphasized the name of God. I went to my local Christian bookstore and picked up a hardback pew version of this Bible. As I began to comb through it, I immediately liked its readability, as well as its balance of formal and dynamic equivalency. I've since had it re-bound and am still using this Bible today. Here's a portion of what is said in the preface:

**HCSB (2004, Preface, page xiii)**

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...the HCSB OT uses *Yahweh*, the personal name of God in Hebrew, when a biblical text emphasizes Yahweh as a name: *His name is Yahweh* (Ps 68:4). Yahweh is used more often in the HCSB than in most Bible translations because the word *LORD* in English is a title of God and does not accurately convey to modern readers the emphasis on God's name in the original Hebrew.

I remember how I loved to carry this Bible with me, because if anyone ever questioned my use of the name Yahweh I'd turn over to Exodus 3:15 in my HCSB, show them where it says Yahweh is the name the Creator wants to be remembered by, and tell them they could buy one of these Bibles at their local Christian Bookstore. Most people's eyes would get as big as aggie marbles, because they had never seen a mainstream Bible with the name Yahweh in it multiple times.

It reminds me of when an old friend of my father-in-law pulled up beside me on a dirt driveway in his pick-up truck, and asked why we used "that funny name for God." I smiled and asked him to hand me the Bible that sat up on his dash. I looked at the binding and saw NKJV so I didn't really know what it was going to say when I flipped it open to Psalm 68:4. As I began to read it out loud I noticed that the NKJV chose to use the name YAH in this passage, and I was super excited about it. As I showed it to "*ol' Larry*" that day, he was immediately convinced. Why? Because it was in his Bible, a Bible that he either bought himself or was given by someone dear to him. It would be so wonderful if all Bibles contained Yahweh's name!

Unfortunately the HCSB was updated in 2017 to discard the name Yahweh. I was so disappointed when I first found this out. It's not an update if you ask me, it's a back-track. They had even put out a short video in years passed explaining why their use of Yahweh was superior and more accurate than the use of LORD. The video can't be found on their updated site now (for the CSB), they rather state:

The CSB Translation Oversight Committee chose to come into alignment with other English translations, departing from the HCSB practice of utilizing "Yahweh" in the text... full consistency in rendering YHWH as "Yahweh" would overwhelm the reader. As an example, Numbers 9:23 would read as follows if HCSB had been fully consistent in its use of "Yahweh." "They camped at Yahweh's command, and they set out at Yahweh's command. They carried out Yahweh's requirement according to Yahweh's command through Moses."<sup>19</sup>

Overwhelming? What in the world do they even mean here? Is God's proper name too overwhelming for a servant of His to speak multiple times in a Bible verse where He inspired His name to be? This type of reasoning blows my mind. Yes, the HCSB should have been consistent in the approximate 7,000 times the name YHWH belongs in the text, but to essentially say "Let's leave it out completely because using it all the times God did would be overwhelming" is petty. I was happy with the around 600 times the HCSB included Yahweh in the text, which is similar to the old KJV that included the name Jehovah four times (and JAH once). At least an avid Bible reader would come away concluding that God had a proper name, or that at least this was one of His names.

I recently ran across something called the *Legacy Standard Bible*. It is a Bible produced by the Master's Seminary out in California, and spear-headed by John MacArthur, a popular Christian preacher and Bible commentator. The translators of this Bible (primarily seven men) have chosen to use the name Yahweh in the English Older Testament every single time they find it in the Hebrew text. I was so excited to read this on their site:

Traditionally, the translation "God" renders the Hebrew word Elohim. Likewise, the word "Lord" is a translation of Adonai. In the LSB, God's covenant name is rendered as Yahweh, as opposed to LORD. The meaning and implication of this name is God's self-deriving, ongoing, and never-ending existence. Exodus 3:14-15 shows that God Himself considered it important for His people to know His name. The effect of revealing God's name is His distinction from other gods and His expression of intimacy with the nation of Israel.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> You can find more of their reasoning here: <https://csbible.com/ministry/hcsb-to-csb/> - They do state in this section of their website, "In addition, when quoting Old Testament texts that include an occurrence of YHWH, the New Testament renders YHWH with the word *kurios*, which is a title (Lord) rather than a personal name. This supports the direction of bringing the CSB in line with most English translations, rendering YHWH as LORD." I will deal with their mention of the NT quotations of the OT in Chapters Six and Seven.

<sup>20</sup> You can find this and more at LSBible.org

On the LSB YouTube channel you will find interesting panel discussions on the process of their translation. One of their videos is titled, "Why the Legacy Standard Bible Translates 'Yahweh' in the Old Testament," in which two scholars sit down and discuss some of the things we've covered in this chapter. I hope they pave the way for future Bible versions or revisions.

I end this section with this: why not place the name Yahweh back into the Scriptures? Why not read the Scriptures how Yahweh intended them to be read? You have the opportunity to read "Yahweh" no matter what translation you prefer, so why not do so and break the tradition of man? Are you willing to love the Creator more than your own feelings and desires, or do you just wish to continue to refer to Him with titles and generic names that can be and are applied to any and all so-called gods? Take some time to think about this, and join me in the next chapter as I attempt to answer one of the more common objections to the doctrine of the Sacred Name.



*chapter three*

## Does Name = Authority?

The easiest way to understand the importance of a name is to understand the importance of identification. If you had to undergo a major surgery, and before were to be given a strong anesthetic, I'm sure you would hope that the proper anesthetic was administered instead of some other treatment which didn't do the job. It could be very painful if a mistake was made, and all because of a mistaken identity in the *name* of a medicine.

What if you went into a surgery because someone thought you were a different person? All of a sudden you see these huge pliers directed at your front teeth because they think your teeth are rotten and have to come out. Would you scream at them? I sure would. I would wonder what in the world they were doing and try my best to say, "Who do you think I am?! My name is Matthew Janzen and I'm gonna' need to hear an explanation for this!" These catastrophes are usually avoided because physicians are able to identify different people, not just by their appearance, but by a proper name. Praise the Father for my personal name and my front teeth!

We can be sure that if we use the name of a child while they are in the middle of a large crowd, we will get a response from that child. It's true that a child can respond to certain tones of voice, or more indirectly by referring to them with a title like *son* (or even by a known nickname), but the surest way to receive their response is by using their given name, and more specifically their full name. I remember being a kid and having my parents get my attention by saying my full name in a stern tone. It worked.

I know people sometimes argue that they can receive responses by just calling out "son" or "sweetheart," but the fact is that the response is *more likely* to come if the child's proper name is used. Oddly enough, people who argue like this wouldn't even dream of letting their child go nameless when he or she is born. This is because names are important. New parents spend months deciding on what to name their baby. My wife and I were particular in naming all five of our children, and not just because we wanted their names to sound trendy, but because we wanted significant meaning to be behind each name. Names hold character, allow for identification, and show authority through all of this. *Zondervan's Pictorial Bible Dictionary* capitalizes this point.

**NAME...** In Bible times the notion of "name" had a significance it does not have today, when it is usually an unmeaning personal label. A name was given only by a person in a position of authority (Genesis 2:19; 2 Kings 23:34), and signified that the person named was appointed to a

particular position, function, or relationship (Genesis 35:18; 2 Samuel 12:25)... In the Scriptures there is the closest possible relationship between a person and his name, the two being practically equivalent, so that to remove the name is to extinguish the person (Numbers 27:4; Deuteronomy 7:24). To forget God's name is to depart from Him (Jeremiah 23:27)...<sup>21</sup>

We see this significance in the places where Yahweh *changed* a person's name. We hear of people changing their name today because they don't like the sound of their given name, or sometimes it's because they identify their name with past trauma and are looking for a fresh start and new identity. This second reason traces back to Yahweh giving people new distinctiveness, and it all began with them being called by a fresh, new name.

Take for example Abraham. That's what we call this great father of faith today, but his name wasn't always Abraham. From Genesis 11 to Genesis 17 the name given for this great Patriarch is Abram, meaning "father" or "high father." In Genesis 17 Yahweh speaks to Abram and tells him that he will become a father of many nations, and that his name will no longer be Abram, but Abraham. Abraham means "father of many" or "father of a multitude." That's not a huge difference from Abram, but the difference is still significant. Yahweh saw fit to change Abram's name because the old name had a meaning that wasn't sufficient to express this new promise Yahweh was giving to him. Abraham fit much better, and thus people have called him Abraham ever since.

Let's look at another one. In Genesis 25 a child was born to Isaac and Rebekah; two children actually, but one of them was named Jacob. This initial name was given because he was the second of twins to exit Rebekah's womb, and his hand was holding on to his twin brother's heel. Jacob means "supplanter, trickster" or even "heel-catcher." Later in life, Jacob wrestled with an angel (Genesis 32:24-32; Hosea 12:3-4) and was said to struggle or strive with elohim (god; a mighty one). He prevailed in this match and was given the name Israel which means "he struggled with God" or "he will rule as God." Some lexicons give the meaning as "contender; soldier of God." These meanings point to his wrestling match with elohim (the angel of God) here. Yahweh didn't just slap some letters or a sound on this man. There was *purpose* behind it.<sup>22</sup>

Have you ever wondered why you were given your name? Maybe your mom or dad just liked the sound, but maybe you were given your name because someone wanted a special meaning to be attached to you, or because an important person in your family's past had that name, and they wanted you to carry it on.

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<sup>21</sup> *Zondervan's Pictorial Bible Dictionary*, general editor Merrill C. Tenney. I only have a photocopy of this page of the dictionary. If anyone is interested I will be more than glad to send it to you.

<sup>22</sup> Another reference to a name change, but this time the name of a place, is found in Genesis 28 where Yahweh visited Jacob-Israel in a dream and gave him a promise. When Jacob woke up he said, "Surely Yahweh is in this place, and I did not know it. What an awesome place this is! This is none other than the house of God. This is the gate of heaven. (Genesis 28:16-17, HCSB)" He then named that place Bethel which means "House of Elohim (God)," although it had been formerly named Luz (meaning "almond or nut tree").

Here's another Bible Dictionary that eloquently explains just how important names were in days past (and should still be today). Read this carefully, and check out each Scripture citation in your own Bible.

**NAME.** The designation of a person or place. Names carry more value and importance in biblical than in modern usage. Not only may a name identify, but it frequently expresses the essential nature of its bearer; to know the name is to know the person (cf. Ps. 9:10)... In the Bible, as throughout the Semitic world, a name carries significance beyond that of its meaning or its use as a title. Because of the vitality ascribed to works, a name signifies first and foremost existence. Everything and everyone has a name (Eccl. 6:10), and the very naming brings them into being (Isa. 40:26; cf. Gen. 2:19). The name represents the person (Num. 1:2; cf. Acts 1:15, KJV; RSV "persons") and the personality (e.g. Nabal, "fool"; 1 Sam. 25:25). Because a name is a social reality, kept by memory and through posterity (cf. Ps. 72:17), to cut off a person's name means not only death but the very obliteration of one's existence (e.g., 1 Sam. 24:21; Ps. 9:5; 109:13).<sup>23</sup>

Notice that the number one definition of name is "the designation of a person or place" not authority or meaning. A name always carries a meaning, and holds some kind of authority, but that comes secondary to the actual name represented by letters and sounds.

Many people when presented with the subject of the Sacred Name say something like this: "*Well, that just means His authority*" and act like they shouldn't be required to say "Yahweh," because it doesn't really matter.<sup>24</sup> It's just His authority or power that matters (they say). Is this accepting Scripture or leaning to our own understanding? While authority is definitely found in His name I believe it is cheating ourselves of clear, Scriptural evidence to do away with Yahweh's name on the basis of this authority argument. Authority is intrinsic in His Name, but is only found *in His Name*. In other words, the name of Yahweh is *more* than just a literal name, but it's not *less* than that.

If I attempt to cash my paycheck, but it happens to be written out to another person (in their *name*), the bank is going to give me a strange look when I stand there trying to explain to them how it's really my check. I've had this happen before with someone just *misspelling* my name. They have to go by the name on the check, and if it's made out to "John Smith," then Matthew Janzen isn't getting the money. Let's say I'm sent to retrieve a package in the name of Bob Jones, but I tell the person holding the package that I've come in the name of Tom Watson, what do you think would happen? The holder would be derelict in their duty to give me the package without the proper authority. Authority exists *only* when the name is used.

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<sup>23</sup> The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary, edited by Allen C. Myers, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987, page 747.

<sup>24</sup> What's strange to me is that these same people, before learning the name Yahweh, had no problem saying Jesus, Lord, God, or Jehovah. It's like the Name all of a sudden becomes irrelevant when they are told that there's been a mistake, and we're using substitutes or derivatives instead of the original.

Think about young David's battle with Goliath. Goliath was a giant with mighty armor: a sword, spear, and shield. Just before David slung a stone at Goliath's forehead he said (1 Samuel 17:45, WEB) "You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin; but I come to you in the name of Yahweh of Armies, the God of the armies of Israel, who you have defied." David spoke an actual name, and power was found in that name. David identified the Mighty One he worshiped and served, and Yahweh fought for David that day, guiding his stone in the right direction. David signed the right name on the check.

The Hebrew word for name is *shem*, and it's used hundreds of times in the Older Testament in reference to the name of a person, place, or thing. Genesis 2:11 says, "The name of the first (river) is Pison." Genesis 3:20 says, "And Adam called his wife's name Eve." Genesis 4:19 tells us the names of Lamech's wives, Adah and Zillah. It's certainly true that the word *shem* is sometimes used of reputation, like in Genesis 6:4 ("men of renown," KJV), but these uses are much less frequent than the most often use of an actual name of a person, place, or thing; just like we use the word name in English today.

Furthermore, phrases like "men of renown" do not diminish from the more natural use of name. If a man is *renown* or *famous*, it means that when his name is spoken it's well known in the community. I told my son to go to a mechanic's shop the other day, and to make sure to tell the owner, "I'm Matthew Janzen's son." I did that because I have a good relationship with the owner, and I wanted the owner to know that the young man seeking help was my son. I am a man of renown with this mechanic, and with other people in my community. My name carries weight with these people.

The proper way to understand this is not to make two concepts battle with each other. Name and authority go hand-in-hand because authority is found *within* a name. Let's look at a passage in the Newer Testament that I believe will help us understand this relationship.

And it came to pass, on the next day, that their rulers, elders, and scribes, as well as Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the family of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, "By what power or by what name have you done this?" (Acts 4:5-7, KJV)

If you continue to read on you will find that Apostle Peter answered the question by using a proper name (*Yeshua*,<sup>25</sup> from the Hebrew). Peter did not answer by saying, "Oh, it's actually just the authority that matters and we have done it by the authority!" That doesn't even make sense.

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<sup>25</sup> See Appendix 2 for a study on the proper name of the Messiah.

Had Peter said this, the next words to come out of the high priest's mouth would have been, "By *whose* authority Peter?" The question asked shows that authority and name are basically synonymous; without an actual, proper name you do not have an origin of the authority.

I am not saying that a person who uses the name Yahweh automatically has the authority of Yahweh behind them. We see in Scripture that there were prophets who prophesied lies in the name Yahweh.<sup>26</sup> Prophesying a lie does not carry Yahweh's power, so we can conclude that for someone to merely vocalize the name Yahweh does not necessarily mean that they are on Yahweh's side. This can also be true on the flip side. We can do something in a person's name without having to vocalize the name of the person. We can do things in the name of Yahweh (on His behalf, promoting His cause)<sup>27</sup> without speaking His name after every move we make. However, none of this does away with the *actual name*. The name Yahweh still stands in the text of Scripture numerous times, and no argument of *authority only* passes the test of Biblical scrutiny.

Knowing the importance of names in general, causes us to arrive at the importance of our Creator's name. When I first learned all of this I started re-reading the Bible, inserting the name Yahweh where it was inspired to be. I began to see verse after verse that emphasized His name. It was fresh Bible reading. Take a look at this sampling of Scriptures that emphasize the name Yahweh. The Bible is repetitive when dealing with its importance.

Yahweh is a man of war: Yahweh is His name. (Exodus 15:3, WEB)

He said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you, and will proclaim Yahweh's name before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. (Exodus 33:19, WEB)

For you shall worship no other god: for Yahweh, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God. (Exodus 34:14, WEB)

He who blasphemes Yahweh's name, he shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall certainly stone him. The foreigner as well as the native-born, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death. (Leviticus 24:16, WEB)

If you do not diligently observe all the words of this law written in this scroll by revering this glorious and awesome name, Yahweh your God. (Deuteronomy 28:58, LEB)

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<sup>26</sup> Deuteronomy 18:20; Jeremiah 14:14-15; 23:25-26; 27:15; 29:9, 21, 23

<sup>27</sup> One definition of *name* given by Henry Joseph Thayer, in his Greek-English lexicon is as follows: "To do a thing by one's command and authority, acting on his behalf, promoting his cause." (1977, page 447, by Baker Books)

They said to him, "Your servants have come from a very far country because of the name of Yahweh your God; for we have heard of his fame, all that he did in Egypt..." (Joshua 9:9, WEB)<sup>28</sup>

For Yahweh will not give up his people, because of his great name, for Yahweh was minded to make you his people. (1 Samuel 12:22, REB)

...Rise, bless your God YHWH, from age to age, and they bless the Name of Your glory that [is] exalted above all blessing and praise. (Nehemiah 9:5, LSV)

Yahweh, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth, who put your splendor above the heavens. (Psalm 8:1, LEB)

Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we trust the name of Yahweh our God. (Psalm 20:7, WEB)

Point out to me, O Yahweh, thy way, I will walk steadfastly in thy truth, My heart will rejoice to revere thy name. (Psalm 86:11, REB)

Let the name of Yahweh be blessed, from now until forever. (Psalm 113:2, LEB)

Not to us, O Yahweh, not to us, but to your name give glory, because of your loyal love, because of your faithfulness. (Psalm 115:1, LEB)

I will take the cup of salvation, and call on Yahweh's name. (Psalm 116:13, WEB)

It will happen that whoever will call on Yahweh's name shall be saved, for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be those who escape, as Yahweh has said, and among the remnant, those whom Yahweh calls. (Joel 2:32, WEB)<sup>29</sup>

Why would we want to continue to use substitutes in place of Yahweh's name? Why would we want to just call on titles that can apply to any false deities? You don't have to. You can begin using His name today, and sharing it with those you meet. Just start by asking people if they've ever heard the word *hallelujah*. Teach them that this word is said the same in every language, and means "Praise ye Yah." Share with them that this is the short, poetic form of the Father's name. Watch as people's faces light up when they begin understanding this great truth!

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<sup>28</sup> Notice in this passage that people had heard of the fame of Yahweh; they knew who to identify with this fame because of the name Yahweh. Just imagine if someone attempted to tell them about Yahweh, but only said, "Have you not heard of His fame?" The people would respond "Whose fame?" Would they then respond, "You know the fame, the fame, the fame, the fame!" (?) Of course not. Yahweh actually raised Pharaoh of Egypt up to magnify His name (Exodus 9:16).

<sup>29</sup> This verse is quoted or alluded to in the Newer Testament by Peter (Acts 2:21), Paul (Romans 10:13), and Hananiah (Ananias; Acts 22:16) in reference to salvation.

*chapter four*

## Forgetting the Name

Everything we've covered so far has shown that ancient Hebrews used the name Yahweh *freely* in their worship and conversation.<sup>30</sup> There is nothing in the Tanach that suggests anything different. No one felt the Name was too sacred to be spoken. On this Abraham Cohen writes:

In the Biblical period there seems to have been no scruple against its use in daily speech. The addition of Jah or Jahu to personal names, which persisted among the Jews even after the Babylonian exile, is an indication that there was no prohibition against the employment of the four-lettered Name. ...there was a time when the free and open use of the Name even by the layman was advocated. The Mishnah teaches: 'It was ordained that a man should greet his friends by mentioning the Name' (Ber. IX. 5). It has been suggested that the recommendation was based on the desire to distinguish the Israelite from the Samaritan, who referred to God as 'the Name' and not as JHVH, or the Rabbinite Jew from the Jewish-Christian.<sup>31</sup>

How did Israel go from using the Name in daily speech, as an ordained greeting among friends, to being a death sentence if uttered? This same author tells us that it was later taught that anyone who pronounced the Name was guilty of a capital offence and lost their share in the world to come. That's a giant leap and change in practice.

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<sup>30</sup> In a June 20, 2017 news article at *Aleteia* (written by John Burger) we read, "A previously invisible inscription on the back of an 2,600 year-old pottery shard, which was on display at a museum in Jerusalem for over 50 years, has given researchers some new insight into life during Israel's First Temple period... After deciphering 50 characters on the back, researchers understood the previously hidden inscription was a continuation of the text on the front. The newly discovered text begins with a request for wine and a guarantee for assistance if the addressee has any of his own requests... More significantly, perhaps, is its comparatively free use of the tetragrammaton, the four Hebrew letters used for the name of God, Y-H-W-H. In Arie Shaus's estimation, it demonstrates a very different attitude towards Jewish laws. Shaus, of Tel Aviv University, was one of the principal researchers who studied the artifact. 'The front side of the shard was thoroughly studied, and it begins with some kind of standard letter opening, with one person blessing another using the name of God, Y-H-W-H,' Shaus told JNS.org. This use of sacred language is 'interesting and important' because it shows the Jewish religion and laws currently used by modern Jews 'are a bit different to what was practiced back then.' The fact that Jews living in Israel 2,600 years ago could 'freely' write the full spelling of God's name differs from modern Jewish law forbidding the practice." See: <https://aleteia.org/2017/06/20/archaeologists-discover-previously-invisible-inscription-on-2600-year-old-artifact/>

<sup>31</sup> Everyman's Talmud, The Major Teachings of the Rabbinic Sages, by Abraham Cohen, 1949, pages 24-25.

Think about this in relation to prophet Moses. The Almighty directly told him to go *say* to the children of Israel down in Egypt that *Yahweh* sent him to them (Exodus 3:15-16). Will Moses be in the Kingdom?<sup>32</sup>

The question I'm looking to answer in this chapter is this: *when among the Israelites did the name Yahweh cease from everyday use?* We know that there were many times when Israel of old strayed away from the commandments, and Scripture informs us that there were times the Israelites forgot Yahweh's name because of the god Baal and because of many false dreams or visions (Judges 2:11; 3:7; Jeremiah 23:26-27). Time and time again Yahweh's holy prophets had to reprimand Israel because of their apostasy, but part of the apostasy was forsaking the Sacred Name. We see this being rebuked during the time of the prophet Malachi, where even Yahweh's own Levite priests were dishonoring His Name.

"A son honors his father, and a slave his master; but if I am a father, where is my honor, and if I am a master, where is my reverence?" says Yahweh of hosts to you, O priests, who despise my name. "But you say, 'How have we despised your name?' ... "From the rising of the sun to its setting, my name is great among the nations, and in every place incense is being presented to my name, and a pure offering. For my name is great among the nations," says Yahweh of hosts... "And so then, O priests, this command is for you: If you will not listen, and if you will not take it to heart to give glory to my name," says Yahweh of hosts, "then I will send the curse on you, and I will curse your blessings; moreover I have already cursed them because you are not taking it to heart." (Malachi 1:6, 11; 2:1-2, LEB)<sup>33</sup>

Malachi was written sometime between 433 and 425 B.C.<sup>34</sup> That puts about four hundred years between this prophecy and the birth of Messiah.

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<sup>32</sup> In an online teaching on YouTube ("The Sacred Name - TorahResource" October 25, 2016), Messianic scholar Tim Hegg tried to use Exodus 5:22 as a foundation in Torah for not speaking the Name. In this text we find the Name used, but when Moses responds to YHWH he is recorded as saying, "Lord (Adonai), why have You caused trouble for this people?" Hegg goes on to say he can't know for sure what Moses actually said, but when the scribes wrote it down they put Moses using Adonai because they didn't want him to be blaspheming the Name. What Hegg doesn't point out is that just one chapter earlier (Exodus 4:1) records Moses as speaking the Name in conversation with the Almighty: "Then Moses answered, "What if they won't believe me and will not obey me but say, 'YHWH did not appear to you?'" There are numerous places where Moses is recorded as speaking the Name, and in Exodus 3:15 he is given a direct commandment to speak the Name in the presence of the community of Israel.

<sup>33</sup> It's important to note here that the Levite priests weren't refraining from using the name Yahweh in their speech. They were defaming Yahweh by their actions in other areas, such as offering deficient sacrifices (Malachi 1:7-14). The point then is two-fold. The priests were still *speaking* the name Yahweh, yet a disrespect for the Name was severely scolded.

<sup>34</sup> The King James Study Bible, 1988 edition, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Liberty University, page 1375.

We can also know that the custom of not speaking the Name had taken hold amongst some Jewish communities in the late B.C and early A.D. era from the writings of two prominent Jewish historians, Philo and Josephus.<sup>35</sup> Philo of Alexandria (20 B.C. to 50 A.D.) acknowledges this prohibition in his record of history:

...and a golden leaf was wrought like a crown, having four names engraved on it which may only be mentioned or heard by holy men having their ears and their tongues purified by wisdom, and by no one else at all in any place whatever. And this holy prophet Moses calls the name, a name of four letters...<sup>36</sup>

Philo also records that if someone were even dare to utter the Name unseasonably, he must endure the punishment of death,<sup>37</sup> and "Therefore these men must not be thought worthy of pardon who out of volubility of tongue have spoken unseasonably, and being too free of their words have repeated carelessly the most holy and divine name of God."<sup>38</sup>

Josephus (who lived from 37 A.D. to 100 A.D.) also gives us knowledge of how the Sacred Name was viewed by some in his day. In recounting the story of Moses' request in Exodus 3:13 for the name of God he writes:

Whereupon God declared to him his holy name, which had never been discovered to men before; concerning which it is not lawful for me to say any more.<sup>39</sup>

Josephus would not even so much as declare verbatim the Ten Commandments, most likely because of the Sacred Name having eight occurrences within the commands.<sup>40</sup>

So what happened during the centuries between Malachi's prophecy and the birth of Messiah to digress from what was such a solid affirmation by all previous, righteous practice recorded in Hebrew Scripture? As far as I can tell, the beginnings of this tradition can be traced to a time period between 175 to 164 (B.C.). A wicked

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<sup>35</sup> Some have suggested that the work of Ben Sira (or Ecclesiasticus) teaches against speaking the name by citing Sirach 23:10b (OSB) "So also he who makes a vow and continually names the Holy One will never be cleansed from sin." I disagree with interpreting this text as a prohibition against speaking the Name. The context is dealing with frivolous oath-taking. Verse 10a says, "For as a servant who is continually beaten will not lack bruises," and then it continues by talking about someone who makes oaths by speaking the Name. The point is that if you are flippant in your oath-taking (which involves invoking the Name) then you are bound to break one of your many oaths. Verse 11 verifies this by saying, "A man who swears many oaths will be filled with lawlessness... If he swears in vain, he will not be declared righteous."

<sup>36</sup> The Works of Philo, translated by C.D. Yonge, Hendrickson Publishers, 2000, Moses 2:23.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, Moses 2:38.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> The New Complete Works of Josephus, translated by William Whiston, Kregel Publications 1999, Antiquities II, 12, IV. Notice also in this quotation that it was a belief of Josephus that the sacred name was not known before the time of Moses, a belief we deal with in a later chapter.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, Antiquities III, 5, IV.

king by the name of Antiochus Epiphanes made drastic attempts to bring pagan influence into the regions of Judea and Galilee. Some Jewish people who favored a Hellenistic way of life placed a man named Jason into the office of the high priest. This was done by promising king Antiochus a very large sum of money. "A gymnasium was built in Jerusalem, Greek names became common place, and Hebrew orthodoxy was considered obscurant and obsolete."<sup>41</sup> As time progressed, Antiochus had his heart set on wiping out all remains of true worship, and replacing Scriptural customs with total rebellion to the words and commandments of Almighty Yahweh.

Antiochus was determined to remove all traces of orthodox Jewish faith. Israel's God was identified with Jupiter, and a bearded image of the pagan deity ... was erected on the temple altar, where swine were offered in sacrifice. Jews were forbidden, under penalty of death, to practice circumcision, Sabbath observance, or the celebration of the Feasts of the Jewish calendar. Copies of the Scriptures were ordered destroyed. The laws were enforced with the utmost cruelty. An aged scribe named Eleazar was flogged to death because he would not eat swine's flesh.<sup>42</sup>

The book of First Maccabees (in what is commonly called the *Apocrypha* by Protestants or *Deuterocanon* by Catholics) records for us a few of the cruel happenings of the time:

In keeping with the decree, they sentenced to death the women who had their children circumcised, and the families who had circumcised them, and hung the infants from their mothers' necks. Yet many in Israel grew strong, and determined in themselves not to eat unclean things. They chose rather to die than be defiled by foods or profane the holy covenant. So they died, and great wrath came upon Israel. (1 Maccabees 1:60-64, OSB)

According to the *Encyclopedia Judaica* and *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, King Antiochus also prohibited the use of the Sacred Name.

Among the decrees of the Syrians during the persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes was one forbidding the mention of the name of God.<sup>43</sup>

The Greek Inquisition in Judaea prohibited the utterance of God's name, but when the Hasmonians became victorious they decreed that God's name should be mentioned even in notes and documents. The sages, however, opposed this innovation, as they thought the name would be defiled as the notes were canceled and thrown away as useless.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> The King James Study Bible, 1988 edition, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Liberty University, page 1383.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, page 1383.

<sup>43</sup> Encyclopedia Judaica, the Macmillan Company, Volume 7, 1971, by Keter Publishing House, Ltd. Jerusalem, Israel, pages 683-684.

<sup>44</sup> Jewish Encyclopedia (.com) under "Names of God."

The Talmud (in Rosh Hashanah 18b) records this in saying that "On the third of Tishrei the ordinance requiring the mention of God's name in legal documents was abolished, and on that day fasting is forbidden. For the kingdom of Greece had issued a decree against the Jews forbidding them to mention the name of Heaven on their lips. When the Hasmonean kingdom became strong and defeated the Greeks they instituted that people should mention the name of Heaven even in their legal documents."<sup>45</sup>

This shows the people of Israel continued to use the Name freely during the Maccabean period. For there to be a decree to *not* speak the Name means they *were speaking* the Name. Once the Temple was re-dedicated to the Almighty (the Hanukkah account) the speaking of the Name was reinstated. The decree to not speak the name was NOT initially given *by* Israelites but *to* Israelites - and by none other than heathen peoples.<sup>46</sup> The Israelites were *for* Torah not against it. We never find a verse in Holy Scripture urging us to *not* mention the name Yahweh. It makes sense that this prohibitive command did in fact stem from a heathen king, and only later became adopted by some among Israel. One author stated the following concerning this:

The very fact that the Greek rulers of Syria forbade the Jews from using the sacred name in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes demonstrates that the Jews were, in fact, using it at that time. The prohibition against its use by the Jewish religious leaders themselves came about as a reaction to heathen misuse.<sup>47</sup>

The Jewish Encyclopedia seems to favor in part that the prohibition came about as a safeguard to protect the sacredness of the Name.

According to Dalmon (l.c. pp. 66 et. seq.) The Rabbis forbade the utterance of the Tetragrammaton, to guard against desecration of the Sacred Name... Jacob (l.c. pp. 172, 174)... believes that the Divine Name was not pronounced lest it should be desecrated by the heathen.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Taken from Sefaria.org. The Talmud was written between 350 to 500 A.D. but contains much information that had been passed down orally prior to being codified. The word Talmud means study/learning and is comprised of discussions among Jewish sages about the proper understanding and practice of Torah.

<sup>46</sup> The decree from Antiochus and the Grecian Government is in direct contradiction to all we've seen in Holy Scripture. Isaiah 26:13 speaks of those making mention of Yahweh's name, Moses, Aaron, and Samuel called on Yahweh's name (Psalm 99:6), and Psalm 105:1 tells all of us who worship the Almighty to "give thanks to Yahweh and call upon His name!"

<sup>47</sup> The Sacred Name, by Qadesh la Yahweh Press, www.yahweh.org, page 143.

<sup>48</sup> Jewish Encyclopedia (.com) under "Tetragrammaton."

Also keep in mind that there were certain Jewish people in this day who favored a Hellenistic lifestyle in lieu of a lifestyle which represented Yahweh's teachings and instructions. Along with this, there is historical evidence that many descendants of Esau became a part of the Jewish peoples during the second century (B.C.), the same time the non-use of the Sacred Name began to occur. The lineage of Esau would not have had the background of the importance of retaining Yahweh's name as part of true worship. John D. Davis makes this observation of the location of Esau's descendants in the second century B.C.

The Edomites were driven from Petra westward by the Nabatheans in 312 B.C., and before the middle of the second century B.C. they were occupying, not only southern Judah, but also Hebron, and the country to its north as far as Bethzur (I Mac. 4:29; 5:65).<sup>49</sup>

Josephus writes that during the days of John Hyrcanus (upon his expedition to reverse the decrees of Antiochus of Epiphanes) the *Idumeans* were permitted to stay in the country of Judea "If they would circumcise... and make use of the laws of the Jews; and they were so desirous of living in the country of their forefathers, that they submitted to the use of circumcision, and of the rest of the Jewish ways of living; at which time therefore this befell them, that they were hereafter no other than Jews."<sup>50</sup> This mass conversion should not be minimized in connection with the surge in the second century of the discontinuation of speaking the Sacred Name. What began with a decree from the Grecian Government was continued by some Israelites and proselytes, and has continued down to us to this very day.

This tradition also occurred in part due to an extreme interpretation of a few passages in Torah.

At least as early as the third century B.C. the name seems to have been regarded by the Jews as a "nomen ineffabile," on the basis of a somewhat extreme interpretation of Exodus 20:7 and Leviticus 24:11...<sup>51</sup>

These commands actually teach that we are not to degrade, curse, blaspheme, or bring to naught the name of Yahweh, but they do not teach that we should not use or speak the name Yahweh, or substitute it. What happened here is a tradition was put in place in hopes of safeguarding the personal misuse of the Name *or* the degradation of the Name by heathens.

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<sup>49</sup> A Dictionary of the Bible, by John D. Davis, 1934, page 332.

<sup>50</sup> The New Complete Works of Josephus, translated by William Whiston, Kregel Publications 1999, Antiquities XIII, 9, 1. The Jewish Encyclopedia, under the heading EDOX, IDUMEA, states the following as well, "In southern Palestine, they [Edomites] prospered for more than four centuries. Judas Maccabees conquered their territory for a time... They were again subdued by John Hyrcanus... by whom they were forced to observe Jewish rites and law... they were then incorporated with the Jewish nation..."

<sup>51</sup> Jewish Encyclopedia (.com) under "Names of God."

The thought process goes: "If we don't speak it, and a heathen doesn't know it, how can it be profaned?" I think that's the initial reason behind this tradition. The problem though is by building a fence around the existing, written Torah, one can actually violate a command in order to keep a tradition.

It would be like me giving an instruction to my children to always cherish the apples on the tree in the front yard, because the tree has history, being planted by my Grandfather. Years pass and along comes some kids from out-of-town who have no association with the area (much less the apple tree), and they start knocking the apples out of the tree, stomping on them, taking one bite out of them, and then throwing them at each other or into the ditch. Out of frustration my children build a ten foot tall fence with barbed wire at the top all around the apple tree, and then post a sign saying that the tree is only for looks and the apples are never to be eaten; they got rid of the problem of abuse but the initial instruction by me to *cherish the apples* goes away. When I told them to cherish the apples, the intent was to pick the apples and enjoy eating them, or juicing them, or making an apple pie with them. I realize this is a fictitious illustration but you get my point. Safeguarding a command can sometimes lead to neglecting that command. We can't let the abuse of something turn us away from its proper use.

Yeshua of Nazareth did not support many of the *Traditions of the Elders* (or Pharisaical traditions) when He stated in Matthew 15:3 (GNB), "And why do you disobey God's command and follow your own teaching?" He then summed up Isaiah 29:13 when He stated, "These people, says God, honor me with their words, but their heart is really far away from me. It is no use for them to worship me, because they teach human rules as though they were my laws!" (Matthew 15:8-9, GNB) I do not see the sacredness in deleting the Creator's name from our lips and in no way do I desire to put a fence around the law by concocting traditions and doctrines of finite men. I'd rather obey Yahweh - His written Torah - than disobey it and think I'm doing something better.

As we come to a close in this chapter, let's note that the Jewish Encyclopedia expounds further upon the traditions existing between the second century B.C. and the first century A.D.

The true name of God was uttered only during worship in the Temple, in which the people were alone; and in the course of the services on the Day of Atonement the high priest pronounced the Sacred Name ten times (Tosef., Yoma, ii. 2; Yoma 39b). This was done as late as the last years of the Temple (Yer. Yoma 40a, 67). If such was the purpose [to not pronounce the Name lest the heathen should desecrate it], the means were ineffectual, since the pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton was known not only in Jewish, but also in non-Jewish circles centuries after the destruction of the Temple, as is clear from the interdictions against uttering it (Sanh., 1; Tosef., Sanh. Xii. 9; Sifre Zuta, in Yalk., Gen. 711; 'Ab. Zarah 18a; Midr. The. To Ps. Xci., end)<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, www.jewishencyclopedia.com, taken from the heading "Tetragrammaton".

The question we must now ask ourselves is this: seeing the suppression of the Sacred Name was a tradition brought about by a heathen king, would the Messiah and His disciples continue such a fallacy? Should we continue such a fallacy? The stern rebukes which came from the Messiah towards the Jewish religious leaders of His day for their traditions should shed light on the answer. Our worship is in vain when we teach for doctrines the commandments of men. Yahweh says to proclaim, declare, say, and praise His name, while tradition tells us otherwise. The choice is yours as to whether you will uphold the decrees of Antiochus' and Jewish tradition, or whether you will denounce tradition and sacrifice it on the altar of truth.

*chapter five*

## **The Name Before Moses**

When I first learned about the Sacred Name I was overjoyed. I'd been raised in church my entire, childhood life, but this was news to me and I loved it! I remember just going back through the Psalms and reading texts I had memorized as a child. "The LORD is my shepherd" changed to "Yahweh is my Shepherd." I was sharing it with as many people as I could, and I figured that they would all want to know about the original name of the Creator.

I do confess that looking back on it now, I was overzealous. My level of knowledge at that time was not equal with my zeal. As a grandfather now, I can see that a man's level of knowledge (and wisdom) should be *greater* than his zeal, and all of it should be wrapped in charity and kindness. I originally made this a point about what the Creator's name is *not* rather than what it *is*. I was so quick to bash Lord, God, and Jesus that it caused people to not even listen when I explained the name Yahweh. I share my beliefs differently now, and the difference yields much better results.

When I was back there, sharing everything I was learning, I did run into this idea that the "covenant name of God" wasn't known prior to the time of Moses. I found this to be a pretty common belief among people who had at least looked into the subject, and it seemed to have some substance based on a quick reading of Exodus 3:13 and 6:3. In Exodus 3, Moses asked the Almighty, "If I go to the Israelites and say to them: The Mighty One of your fathers has sent me to you, and they ask me, 'What is His name?' what should I tell them?" In Exodus 6 the Creator himself seemed to tell Moses that no one knew His name (YHWH) back in the days of the Patriarchs.

Then God spoke to Moses, telling him, "I am Yahweh. I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as God Almighty, but I did not make My name Yahweh known to them. (Exodus 6:1-3, HCSB)

Pretty much every major translation of the Bible that I checked said the same thing. The old KJV I was used to reading said, "but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them," while the NKJV had "but by My name LORD I was not known to them."

I didn't start reading the HCSB until 2004, and the above translation comes from my personal Bible. Later revisions of the HCSB finally landed on, "but I did not reveal My name Yahweh to them." That's pretty bold. I did notice that the NIV had, "but by my name the LORD I did not make myself fully known to them." That's an interesting translation choice when compared with every other major translation.

I didn't have all the study resources in the mid to late 90's that I have now, but when I first heard this objection I had a KJV study Bible that my parents had given me in December of 1995. It was pretty much the first Bible I remember being my own. When someone told me, "Well, Yahweh is *one* of God's many names, but no one back in Genesis used that name so we don't have to use it now," the only thing I had at my grasp to study were the notes in my KJV study Bible. I now see this as being the providence of Yahweh, because when I flipped over to the notes in Exodus 6:3, this is what I read:

The statement but by my name Jehovah was I not known to them is filled with meaning and has been one of the focal points of debate between the liberal critic and the conservative scholar for several centuries. There are three basic views:

(1) In the early patriarchal period the tribal name of God was El Shaddai, but Moses was now about to reveal for the first time the name Yahweh as the God of Israel (yet note Gen. 4:26; 12:1, 4; 13:4).

(2) The phrase should be expressed as a question: "And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, as God Almighty [El Shaddai]; but by my name Yahweh was I not known to them?"

(3) There is a special revelation of the name Yahweh, not its first introduction. Cowles says, "The meaning is, not that the name [Yahweh] was never used by them or given of God to them: but that its special significance had not been manifested to them as He was no about to make it manifest."<sup>53</sup>

I was intrigued by the Scripture references cited in the first position. After saying that Moses was about to reveal the name Yahweh for the first time, they give three texts in Genesis that oppose this view. I'll come back to Genesis 4:26 in a bit, but in the other two texts (Genesis 12:1-4; 13:4) we find the name YHWH being used during the time period of Abram. The texts say "Yahweh said to Abram" and (KJV) "there Abram called on the name of Yahweh." If Abram called upon the name of Yahweh, how could the Name be first proclaimed during the time of Moses?

As I combed through this first book of the Bible, I found Genesis 22:13-14. Here again, we don't just have a statement about Yahweh doing something, but a statement about Abraham naming a place "The LORD Will Provide." Notice the word LORD is in all caps, and as we've learned shows that the name YHWH stands behind this in the Hebrew text. So Abraham named the place "Yahweh Will Provide" or "Yahweh Yireh" in Hebrew. The Almighty provided a ram as a sacrifice in the stead of Abraham's son Isaac. If Abraham named a place after Yahweh, then he certainly

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<sup>53</sup> The King James Study Bible, 1988 by Liberty University, commentary under Exodus 6:1-8.

knew the Almighty by that name, and spoke that name. We also read of Isaac calling upon the name of Yahweh (Gen. 26:25), and Jacob speaking the Name in a vow (Gen. 28:20-22). That covers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the three men mentioned to Moses in Exodus 6:3. They all spoke the Sacred Name.

For me, the first position given in my King James Bible footnote was a wash. The book of Genesis records the Patriarchs speaking the Name, that is unless we believe the author of Genesis lied. Believe it or not, that is a view I've heard presented more than once, that Moses, writing the text of Genesis at a later time, superimposed the Sacred Name he knew for God back into the time of the Patriarchs. They reasoned that Moses knew the Patriarchs worshiped the same Mighty One as he, so he just places this newly given name (Yahweh) into previous history.

Think about it though. If this is the case, then Abraham didn't *really* name a place "Yahweh Yireh," Isaac didn't *really* call upon the name Yahweh, and Jacob didn't *really* speak the name Yahweh in a vow. Are we willing to hold to a position that Moses placed a name back into a time period where it didn't exist in the minds of humans, making us just *think* they spoke this name, called on this name, and worshiped the Creator by this name? That is a position I'm unwilling to take. I believe Moses was recounting factual, Hebrew history. He wasn't trying to make us think one thing when it was actually something quite different they were speaking. No, he recognized that the Mighty One he worshiped was called the same Name by worshipers of that same Mighty One in days gone by.

So if the Patriarchs called on the Name in their day, which of the remaining two views of Exodus 6:3 are correct? Should the statement made by Yahweh be viewed as interrogative, or was there a deeper manifestation of the Name given around the time of the exodus?

The NET Bible has a lengthy footnote on this text. They give as their translation (of Exodus 6:3), "I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name 'the LORD' I was not known to them." The translators of this Bible do not use YHWH or Yahweh in their Biblical text, but they fully acknowledge this is God's name all throughout their footnotes.

For example, right here in this lengthy footnote they write: "Yahweh is not one of God's names - it is his only name. Other titles, like El Shadday, are not strictly names but means of revealing Yahweh." That's a powerful statement coming from a scholarly resource. It's one you should remember when you are witnessing to others about the Sacred Name. The NET footnote goes into a seven point explanation as to why they feel the Name was going to be understood through Moses at a deeper level than during the Patriarchal period. I quote this in part:

It is important to note that "I am Yahweh" is not a new revelation of a previously unknown name. It would be introduced differently if it were. ...the texts of Genesis show that Yahweh had appeared to the patriarchs, and that he spoke to each one of them. The name "Yahweh" occurs 162 times in Genesis, 34 of those times on the lips of the speakers in Genesis... These passages should not be ignored or passed off as later interpretation... There is a difference between promise and fulfillment in the way revelation is apprehended. The patriarchs were individuals who received the promises but without fulfillment. The fulfillment could only come after the Israelites became a nation. The two periods were not distinguished by not having and by having the name, but by two ways God revealed the significance of this name. ...the verb "to know" is never used to introduce a name which had never been known or experienced. the Niphal and Hiphil of the verb are used only to describe the recognition of the overtones or significance of the name.<sup>54</sup>

The position taken by the NET translators is taken in other scholarly works, and it does make sense. The Patriarchs knew and called upon the Name, but a *greater knowing* (significance) of the Name would be seen when the things they had been promised were fulfilled in a later generation of their progeny. The knowledge then spoken by Yahweh in Exodus 6:3 wouldn't just be intellectual but also *covenantal*. I believe this is a strong possibility of interpretation and exegesis.

I, however, take the second viewpoint that is given in the aforementioned KJV Study Bible, that Yahweh is speaking interrogatively rather than declaratively. So instead of the text reading as punctuated in the KJV, it should read:

And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by *the name of* God Almighty,<sup>55</sup> but by my name Yahweh, was I not known to them?

I believe that in speaking to Moses, Yahweh is reassuring him. The Patriarchs knew the Almighty as Yahweh, and thereby knew the same covenant-keeping Mighty One. The promises made to them, in the name Yahweh, would be fulfilled towards the Israelites in Egypt, in the same name Yahweh.

I was attending a debate once where this explanation of Exodus 6:3 was brought up but the opposing side went on to accuse the explanation of adding a question mark to be diabolical. "No matter how hard you try, that question mark isn't there in your Bible!" I was just a young man then, and I pondered upon that; I didn't want to be guilty of adding anything to Scripture that wasn't there. Throughout the course of my life I continued to study, and one area I've now read and studied much on is textual criticism, the study of Biblical manuscripts, and how we end up with a Bible in our own language through transmission and translation. One thing I learned early on was that there is no punctuation (like we have today in English) in either Hebrew or Greek manuscripts of Scripture. When a professional translator is working

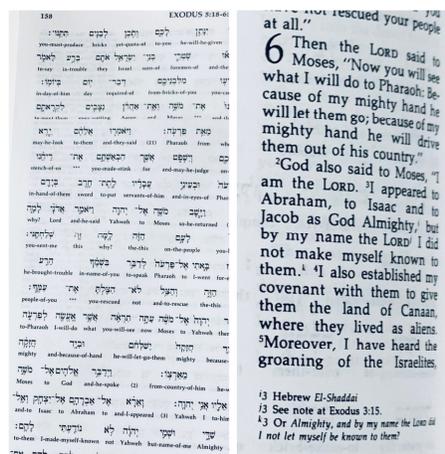
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<sup>54</sup> NETBible.org, commentary on Exodus 6:3.

<sup>55</sup> In the KJV the words "the name of" come before God Almighty. It must be pointed out that this is a translator insertion (thus italicized, as is the practice of the KJV), and does not exist in the Hebrew text from which they are translating. Other translations which say "as God Almighty" are more accurate in conveying the words "God Almighty" as a descriptive title of Yahweh rather than a proper name (noun).

through the text, they add punctuation as they translate; punctuation they deem to fit the context and flow of each sentence. When it comes to Exodus 6:3, the English translations I'm aware of choose to place a period at the end of the verse. As we've seen, this can lead to a contradiction between what is said in Exodus with what has already taken place in Genesis, thus scholars look for a harmonization. However, I have already shown that the footnote in my 1988 King James Study Bible acknowledges that the verse could end with a question mark.

I have found another scholarly resource that writes this verse as being a rhetorical question. It's "The Interlinear NIV Hebrew-English Old Testament" by John Kohlenberger (1979, Zondervan). While Kohlenberger uses a period in his main English translation from the Hebrew, he footnotes the verse and gives an alternate reading. His alternate translation reads, "Or Almighty, and by my name the Lord did I not let myself be known to them?"



My main reason for believing the verse should be read as Yahweh asking a question stems from the context. In Exodus 5 there's some back and forth between Moses and Pharaoh; Pharaoh gets angry and then commands that the Israelite slaves go find their own straw to make bricks (rather than be given straw).

Towards the end of the chapter the Israelites approach Moses and Aaron in anger. They were already under the hand of harsh taskmasters, but now that Moses and Aaron were "stirring the pot," their life was only getting more difficult. Moses then goes to Yahweh and asks him what is going on. He had gone to Pharaoh and demanded he let the Israelites go, but no deliverance happened. Things had only gotten worse. It is in this vein of thought that Yahweh begins to speak to Moses in chapter 6. He assures Moses in 6:1 (KJV) "Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh: for with a strong hand shall he let them go, and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land." Yahweh is reassuring Moses. He already promised him

in chapters 3 and 4 but Moses is beginning to doubt or at least wonder. With all this in mind, here's Exodus 6:2-8 (KJV) - the response from Yahweh, with a little commentary throughout.

And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am Yahweh: (3) And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name Yahweh was I not known to them? (4) And I have also established my covenant with them, ["I have also" goes along with the Patriarchs knowing the Name. The Patriarchs both knew the name Yahweh and had the covenant established with them.] to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers. (5) And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant. [The covenant remembered is the covenant with the Patriarchs, back in Genesis.] (6) Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am Yahweh, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: (7) And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am Yahweh your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. (8) And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; [He brings up the Patriarchs again to reassure Moses that he made an oath to them as Yahweh, the covenant-keeping Mighty One.] and I will give it you for an heritage: I am Yahweh.<sup>56</sup>

So if the Patriarchs knew the Name, and Yahweh was just reassuring Moses in Exodus 6:3 (and following), why did Moses ask the Almighty (in Exodus 3:13) what to tell the Israelites when they would ask "What is his name?"

I've explained to people before that it is possible that the Israelites had dwelt so long in Egypt that the generation that knew the Name had died out, and it hadn't strongly been passed down to succeeding generations due to Egyptian influence during their captivity. That's at least a possibility here, but I really don't think it's the best way to understand this. At the end of Exodus 4 when Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders and the people among Israel, the people believed (Ex. 4:31); they bowed their heads and worshiped, because they were hearing that Yahweh had come to visit the children of Israel by looking on their affliction. Numbers 20:15-16 goes along with this in recounting the affliction of the Israelites in Egypt. It is said that the Egyptians vexed Israel, but they cried unto Yahweh; He heard their voice, sent an angel, and brought them out of the house of

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<sup>56</sup> The aforementioned NET Study Bible actually mentions the view I take, but not in their commentary on Exodus 6:3. They state as part of their footnote on Genesis 4:1, "In this regard it is possible that Exod 6:3b should not be translated as a statement of denial, but as an affirmation followed by a rhetorical question implying that the patriarchs did indeed know God by the name of Yahweh, just as they knew him as El Shaddai."

slavery. Their cries to Yahweh were being made before Moses ever showed up. I don't read that as saying they were just crying out to their God in general (whether or not they knew his name), but that they actually continued knowing the Mighty One they worshiped by name, even while in slavery. This is in stark contrast to Pharaoh being presented with the name Yahweh (Ex. 5:1-2) and responding with, "Who is Yahweh, that I should obey his voice? I know not Yahweh." Maybe the enslaved Israelites kept the speaking of the Name among themselves, and Pharaoh was just now hearing it?

What I think is going on in Exodus 3-4 is a string of excuses from Moses. When Yahweh first called him to go down into Egypt, it was a calling to go back into the place he had grown up; to the place he fled because he had killed an Egyptian man (Ex. 2:11-15). Moses knew the power of Pharaoh and feared for his life. So when Yahweh commissioned him to go, he didn't really want to, and came up with many excuses as to why he wasn't the man for the job. The first excuse can be found in Exodus 3:11 where Moses says, "Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" I'll get back to this shortly, but normally the rest of the excuses are viewed as being given in chapter 4. In Exodus 4:1 Moses tells Yahweh they won't believe him, and they'll just say "Yahweh didn't really appear to you." In Exodus 4:10 Moses tells Yahweh that he is not eloquent, but slow of speech. In Exodus 4:13 Moses tries to get out of the job one last time by saying, "Please Lord, just send someone else." That's four excuses from Moses, but I want to present to you that there's another excuse Moses gives back in Exodus 3 that gets overlooked, and that's in Exodus 3:13 when he asks about the name of God.

In Exodus 3:5-11 Yahweh introduces himself as the Mighty One of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and then tells Moses that He had seen the affliction of the Israelites in Egypt. He explained that He would come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and bring them into their own, good land. He then says that the way in which He will accomplish this is sending Moses to Pharaoh, and working through Moses. But Moses is hesitant; he gives that first excuse (Ex. 3:11, KJV): "Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" Yahweh says to him (Ex. 3:12, KJV) "Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou has brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain." The words "I will be" are taken from the Hebrew word *hayah* which means "to be, become, come to pass, exist, or happen."<sup>57</sup> Most translations render this as "I will be" here, but a few give it as "I am" (LEB, LSV, TS2009, YLT). The main point is that Yahweh is answering Moses' question of "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh?" Moses feels inadequate so Yahweh tells him "hayah (I am/will be with you)."

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<sup>57</sup> This understanding is taken from the #1 definition given in the Brown-Driver-Briggs (BDB) Hebrew lexicon in the E-Sword program/app.

What most miss here is that this is the same word used just moments later (by Yahweh), when we read in most Bibles, "I AM THAT/WHO I AM." We looked at this phrase in an earlier chapter, explaining that this is not the personal, proper name to call the Creator, but rather the explanation of or translation of His name. In Hebrew this is "HAYAH ASHER HAYAH." So the same word Yahweh uttered back in verse 12 is what He utters again in verse 14. He had already told Moses "hayah" in verse 12, yet he speaks it doubly and emphatically in verse 14. Why?

I believe it's because Moses tries to give another excuse between these two verses. After Yahweh tells Moses "I am/will be with you" in verse 12, Moses responds, not with words of trust and reliance, but with a question he gives to try and buy himself some time to either think about or wiggle out of the commission. He asks (Ex. 3:13, KJV): "If I go to the Israelites and say to them: The God of your fathers has sent me to you, and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what should I tell them?"

We normally read that as a sincere question on Moses' part, but it's really just another excuse. Moses is going to identify this Mighty One as "The Mighty One of your fathers." The Israelites would know who their fathers worshiped. They would know that Abraham named a place "YHWH Yireh." Moses knew who he was talking to, and he knew the children of Israel knew, he just didn't want to go through with the task.

This is why Yahweh repeats himself emphatically in verse 14, and probably shouts out or at least ups His tone when He says, "I AM THAT I AM!" He's already told Moses once, and that's good enough coming from Him, so He speaks it again in righteous anger, and then continues speaking in Exodus 3:15-22. But even after giving Moses all of this reassurance, he still comes up with another excuse in 4:1, 10, and 13, and in Exodus 4:14 we read that, "the anger of Yahweh was kindled against Moses." This should show us that Yahweh wasn't pleased with all these excuses He was having to endure from the man He was commissioning.

The main point here is that the question in Exodus 3:13 is not a text proving that the Sacred Name wasn't known or spoken prior to this encounter on Mount Horeb (Sinai), but a text in which Moses is giving an excuse to buy time and wiggle out of a task assigned to him.

I want to now come back to a verse cited by that KJV Study Bible of mine in the Exodus 6:3 footnote: Genesis 4:26. There we read that Seth (the son of Adam) had a son named Enos, and (WEB) "At that time men began to call on Yahweh's name." Now this is much further back in history than Moses' encounter with the Almighty on the mountain, but it's still not as far back as Biblical history goes. Did Adam and Eve not call on the Name? Did Seth not call on the Name until *after* begetting Enos? How should we understand this verse?

For starters, the first recorded instance of anyone speaking the Name is found in Genesis 4:1 on the lips of Eve. She says there (LSV; after birthing Cain), "I have acquired a man by YHWH." Eve's speaking of the Name shouldn't be seen as a back-editing by the author, but a truth recorded by the author of what she spoke (much like with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob). The logical conclusion is that Yahweh revealed himself to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, and they both knew and spoke of/to Him by name. So why does Genesis 4:26 sound like no one called on the name until the time of Enos?

A few understandings exist. Genesis 4:26 could be more fluid than most take it. "At that time" could be a reference to the time period of everyone mentioned there in chapter 4, including Adam and Eve. Another understanding is that it could be reference to people corporately, as a congregation, calling upon or being called by the Name. The old Baptist commentator John Gill writes in part:

Not but that Adam and Abel, and all good men, had called upon the name of the Lord, and prayed to him, or worshipped him before this time personally, and in their families, but now the families of good men being larger, and more numerous, they joined together in social and public worship... they also formed themselves into distinct bodies; and not only separated from them, but called themselves by a different name; for so the words may be rendered: "then began men to call themselves," or "to be called by the name of the Lord.

Thirdly, it is possible that Genesis 4:26 is speaking of a time period in which the *profanation* of the Name began. Along with truth comes error, and it doesn't take long for a people group to arise and attempt to combat pure worship with the false. I first read of this explanation from the Companion Bible, a KJV Bible with an enormous amount of footnotes in it by EW Bullinger. I have since found the view expounded upon in quite a few commentaries and texts. Bullinger writes:

began. Not began to worship: for Abel worshiped, and others, doubtless, long before. But here: "began to call upon [their gods] by the name of Jehovah," or "began profanely to call upon the name of the Lord" (see App-21). Enos, though the son of Seth, is included here because he went in "the way of Cain."

This view stems from the Hebrew<sup>58</sup> word behind the English translation "began." The word is *chalal* and carries the meaning (BDB) of "to profane, defile, pollute,

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<sup>58</sup> There is yet another view derived from the Septuagint text of Genesis 4:26. The LEB version gives verse 26 as "Seth had a son, and he called his name Enosh. This one hoped to invoke the name of the Lord God." A similar statement is made in Brenton's translation and the NETS. If this is taken to be the true meaning then it would apply to the singular person Enosh and his hope to invoke the Name. Maybe he had a physical defect in speech and hoped that one day he would be able to speak the Sacred Name? The OSB version of the Septuagint (however) says, "As for Seth, to him also a son was born. He named him Enosh, and he hoped in the Lord God and called upon His name." If this version is taken as correct, the understanding is that Enosh as Seth's son followed Yahweh, in contrast to the descendants of Cain (mentioned previously in Genesis 4:17-24).

desecrate, begin." This word does not have to carry a derogatory meaning, but it can do so. It's used this way in Genesis 49:4, Exodus 20:25, and Exodus 31:14 (to name a few). The ancient Jewish commentator Rashi writes on Genesis 4:26, "Heb. [chalal] is an expression of... profaneness: to name people and idols with the name of the Holy One, blessed be He, to make them idols and to call them deities." The Aramaic Targums<sup>59</sup> of Genesis (Pseudo-Jonathan and Onkelos) take this view as well, one of them reading, "Then in his days<sup>60</sup> the sons of men desisted (or forbore) from praying in the name of the Lord." Commentators John Gill and Adam Clarke also mention this view in their studies.

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<sup>59</sup> Taken from Targum.info under "Pentateuchal Targumim," first published in 1862.

<sup>60</sup> Enos is the "his" alluded to, and some commentaries point out that the Enos stems from the Hebrew word anash meaning "to be weak, sick, frail" and designates man from his frail and mortal condition.

*chapter six*

## **Yeshua and the Name**

When I became part of the "Sacred Name Movement" back in the late 90's, I met all kinds of neat people who used the Name. My father-in-law is somewhat of a pioneer in this movement, from the late 80's and early 90's, and people would travel from all over the United States to visit him at his house. I remember sitting on his living room floor listening to all these different folks discuss Scripture with him.

I soon started searching for other believers that had come to the same conclusion as us on the need to speak the Sacred Name in our prayers, praise, reading, and teaching. In doing this I began meeting people who agreed with us on things like Sabbath-keeping and clean-eating, but when they would come across the Name in Scripture they would either say *Ha Shem* (literally "the Name") or *Adonai* (the Hebrew word often translated as Lord). These were great people and strong believers, but I just didn't understand how or why they didn't see the need to use the name YHWH in their worship and service to the Almighty.

All of the Messianic people I met would use the Hebrew name for the Messiah, Yeshua, a name that means "salvation" or "he will save," but they would go on to explain to me that Yeshua was Jewish, and by the time he was born the Jewish tradition to not speak the Name was in strong or full force, and was endorsed by Yeshua. They would tell me that there was no evidence in the gospels that Yeshua used the Name; he instead used a substitute word, most likely Adonai. They explained that in all the Greek New Testament manuscripts, and even in the early Aramaic Versions of the New Testament, the Name could not be found, so the authors must have taken their lead from the Messiah, and used a substitute for the Name.

Some of these people have pointed out to me that the most frequent way Yeshua referred to God was by the term "Father," therefore it's appropriate for us to call God *Father* when we speak to or sing to him. They'll point out the text where Yeshua taught his disciples to pray, "Our Father which art in heaven," and numerous other texts in the gospels that show Yeshua using the term Father when speaking of the Almighty. However, contrary to a pretty popular belief in traditional Christian scholarship, this wasn't something Yeshua invented. In Exodus 4:22 Yahweh calls Israel his son and Isaiah 63:16 refers to Yahweh as the Father of Israel (see also Malachi 2:10). In fact, one of the names we find in Hebrew Scripture is Abiah (1 Samuel 8:2; 1 Chronicles 2:24), meaning "Yahweh is my father." So it would make sense that Yeshua would call Yahweh the Father, especially since we read that he was miraculously conceived (Luke 1:26-38) and had the closest relationship ever of

any man of Israel (Luke 3:21-22). This makes Yahweh his Father in a special way, but does his use of Father mean he didn't use the actual Name? I mean, if you hear me calling my dad "father," does it automatically mean I never speak his actual name? This is why we need to be critical thinkers. People sometimes latch onto ideas before they've thought them through.

### **Internal Evidence**

Let's begin by looking at the internal evidence in the New Testament. I'll go to one of the texts shown to me when I started studying the doctrine of the Sacred Name, John 5:43. Here Yeshua speaks to some Jews (probably Jewish leaders) who were upset with him for healing a man on the Sabbath day (John 5:1-18). In John 5:38-42 Yeshua tells them they do not believe in the One sent by the Father (himself) even though they pour over or search the Scriptures; they do not see that the Scriptures they spend their time searching testify about this Yeshua of Nazareth. Then in verse 43 he says this:

I have come in my Father's name, and you don't receive me. If another comes in his own name, you will receive him.

This is a very popular verse in Sacred Name Assemblies. Back in the late 90's, as I would meet Sacred Name believers, John 5:43 would always come up as a proof-text for the Son containing the name of the Father within his name. How it was most often explained to me was that Yahweh is the Father's name, and the short, poetic form is Yah (Psalm 68:4), thus the Son's name had to be Yah-shua, proclaiming the salvation of Yah-weh. Other Sacred Name believers used John 5:43 to teach that the Son had the exact same name as the Father, the full form of the Name, so you had Yahweh the Father and Yahweh the Son. I've come to see that this is not what Yeshua is talking about in these verses; taking verse 43 by itself can sound like that, but we've got to be careful to take in its entire context.

In this account Yeshua is telling the Jewish leaders that he has the *backing* or *approval* of the Father in heaven. The Father sent him (John 5:36-38), meaning he didn't come of his own accord. "I have come in my Father's name" is contrasted with "If someone else comes in his own name" right there in the same verse (John 5:43). Coming in one's "own name" means coming by one's own approval or authority. Coming in *the Father's name* means coming with the approval, authority, and backing of the Father. I don't think the verse has anything to say on the Messiah's name having to contain Yah or Yahweh within its letters. The phrase "I have come in my Father's name" doesn't stop there though, there's more to it than just authority or backing. I've seen some traditional Christians argue with Sacred Name believers on this verse, explaining the part about authority correctly, but missing the point about actually coming in the Father's *name*. To come in the Father's name certainly means you have the backing of the Father, but within that meaning is that the actual name

of the Father is used by the person. This goes back to what we covered in the chapter on whether or not name only means authority; it doesn't. Name means actual letters that make up an identifier for an individual, and then in that name - here the name of the heavenly Father - there is power or authority. "Sacred Namers" tend to slide too far to the letters, but traditional Christians slide too far away from the letters.

I believe I brought this up earlier, but you've probably put the book down since then. Think about this in relation to when David came to Goliath in the name of Yahweh (1 Samuel 17:45). Did David have the backing of Yahweh? Yes, Yahweh was with David and that is why he won the battle. But... did David use the actual Name? Yes! He CAME IN the name of Yahweh! David *spoke* the name Yahweh while in battle with the Philistine giant. David coming in the name Yahweh meant two things: David spoke the name Yahweh and had the backing of Yahweh; he was sent by the Almighty. David would have thought you to be silly if you told him to just go fight Goliath, but don't speak the Sacred Name. "Are you kidding me?!" David would likely say. As I'm writing this right now I am baffled that people would even make claims or arguments like this. John 5:43 then *is* internal evidence that Yeshua *did* speak the Name. To come in the Father's name means exactly that: you come using/speaking the name of the Father, with the Father's authority, backing, and power behind you. Isaiah 64:8a says, "But now, Yahweh, you are our father." Yeshua, in John 5:43, was speaking of this same Father up in heaven.<sup>61</sup>

A text that goes along nicely with this one is in John 10:25 where Yeshua says that he does his works *in his Father's name*. He says this after the Jews surround him and question him as to whether or not he is the Messiah. He responds by saying to them, "I told you, and you don't believe. The works that I do in my Father's name, these testify about me." Again, Yeshua is saying that he has the backing of Yahweh; he did not come on his own, but was sent by a Higher Power. All that is well and good, but don't miss that his doing works in his Father's name also carries the meaning of him actually *speaking* the Father's name.

### **Challenging Tradition**

Now think with me here, back to the chapter on the origin of not speaking the Name. Remember that what was spear-headed by Antiochus Epiphanes began in the 2nd century B.C. and had taken hold in Jewish communities by the time of the Messiah (based on the historical works of Philo and Josephus). It is quite possible

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<sup>61</sup> The same thing can be seen by comparing 1 Samuel 25:4-6 with verses 9-10 of the same chapter. David instructs his men to go and greet Nabal "in my name." When these men go and do that, Nabal asks them "Who is David?" This shows that when they approached Nabal they actually spoke the name David in the hearing of Nabal. This showed that these men didn't come on their own accord, but had been sent by one in higher authority, David. The authority they came in didn't negate the actual name. Coming in the name of David included speaking the name of David to the person they were sent to.

that *one* of the reasons the Jews in John 5 and 10 didn't believe Yeshua was the Messiah is because he actually went around using the Sacred Name in his ministry. Tradition is often a "hard nut to crack," and if it was high custom in a community to say *Adonai* or *Ha Shem* in place of YHWH, then Yeshua's speaking the Father's name in these communities would have been looked upon as rebellious. "Surely a rebellious Israelite couldn't be the Messiah?!" You should be able to see the connection. The works Yeshua did in his Father's name gave witness to who he was (the Anointed One sent by Yahweh), but many couldn't see this because of being blinded by tradition.

### **Yeshua's Prayer to the Father**

Let's look at some further evidence in the gospel of John by going to chapter 17 and what is often called the "High Priestly Prayer" of Yeshua. This is a prayer Yeshua prayed shortly before he was crucified while he was with his disciples. We'll look at the pertinent parts here that deal with the Name:

Yeshua said these things, and lifting up his eyes to heaven he said, "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may also glorify you... I revealed your name to the people whom you have given me out of the world. They were yours, and you have given them to me. They have kept your word. (John 17:1, 6)

What name do you think Yeshua revealed to the people? Most commentators I've consulted think "I revealed your name" means that the Messiah revealed the character, nature, and will of God to people while on earth. I've even seen some (Augustine, Gill, and Meyers) say that this verse is not talking about the actual Name, because surely God's name was known among the community of Israel. Try to lay aside the type of thinking that makes the word name not really mean name, and read these words from Yeshua slowly and carefully. Why can't "Father, I revealed your name" mean that Yeshua revealed the actual name of the Father to the people he taught in the first century? To say that God's name was already known amongst Israel misses the point that the Name had been abused and neglected prior to the first advent of the Messiah. When Yeshua was born I'm sure there were still some Israelites using the Name in private or secret, but the tradition of not speaking the Name forthright had begun almost 200 years prior to his birth. Why couldn't part of Yeshua's mission be to reveal the Name back to the people of Israel? Why couldn't Yeshua be teaching them they shouldn't refrain from speaking the name YHWH in worship, or using it in common, everyday speech as was taught all through the Tanak? Revealing the Father's name would then mean revealing that the Name needed to be placed back onto the lips of true worshipers, as it had been in the days of old.

I don't deny that Yeshua revealing the Father's name meant more than just the actual name Yahweh (His character, will, nature etc.), but I do deny that Yeshua revealing the Father's name means less than revealing the actual Name. I believe the importance of speaking the Name had become faint, and part of Yeshua's mission was to re-kindle an old flame that was almost snuffed out by wicked Antiochus.

At the end of John 17<sup>62</sup>, Yeshua ends his prayer with another statement about how he revealed the Father's name in his ministry. He says (John 17:25-26):

Righteous Father, the world hasn't known you, but I knew you; and these knew that you sent me. I made known to them your name, and will make it known; that the love with which you loved me may be in them, and I in them.

Again, I am not comfortable saying "I made known to them your name" doesn't really mean "I made known to them your name." Most traditional Christians take this uncomfortable view, and I think it's because they haven't really taken the time to comb through the Older Testament Scriptures on the Name.

### **Fulfilling Prophecy**

We should also look at Psalm 22 and the prophecies there concerning the Messiah. There are times when the Psalmist, though sometimes sounding as if he is talking only about himself, is actually giving a prophecy that would find greater fulfillment in the lifetime of the Messiah. This can be seen in Acts 2:29-30 where Peter comments on his own quotation of Psalm 16:8-11. Peter says the things spoken of by David pertained to David through *his offspring*, Yeshua (see Matthew 1:1). With this in mind spend some time looking up these prophecies in Psalm 22 that are fulfilled in the Messiah.

Psalm 22:1 = Mark 15:34

Psalm 22:6-8 = Matthew 27:39-44, Luke 23:35

Psalm 22:15 = John 19:28

Psalm 22:16 = Matthew 27:35

Psalm 22:18 = Matthew 27:35

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<sup>62</sup> Another text often brought up in Sacred Name groups is John 17:11-12 where in some translations it speaks of Yeshua being given the name of the Father. The WEB for example reads (vs. 11): "Holy Father, keep them through your name which you have given me." The KJV reads "keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me." There's a slight difference in the manuscripts of the Greek NT here, some leaning in the direction that what was given to Yeshua were people (or his personal disciples), while others speak to the Father's name being given to him. I go with this later rendering based upon the earlier manuscript witness. I do not, however, think Yeshua is saying his own name is Yah or Yahweh. I think he means that his Father gave or revealed the importance of the Name to him and he in turn would give or reveal this importance to his disciples. He and the disciples would be kept or protected by this Great Name: YHWH's actual name, but also character.

When we continue to read the remaining portion of the Psalm, there is another prophecy that we can see to be fulfilled in the Messiah.

I will declare your name to my brothers. Among the assembly, I will praise you.  
(Psalm 22:22)

This is seen to be fulfilled by Yeshua in the previously cited passage of John 17:26, but Hebrews 2:10-12 is the passage directly related to this Scripture in Psalms.

For it became him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many children to glory, to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings. (11) For both he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one, for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brothers, (12) saying, "I will declare your name to my brothers. Among the congregation I will sing your praise."

Hebrews 2:12 is a direct quotation of Psalm 22:22. The Scripture cannot be broken (John 10:35) so the prophecy of the Messiah declaring the Name must be fulfilled.

### **When Yeshua Overcame Temptation**

To conclude this chapter consider Matthew 4:1-11, a famous passage where Yeshua is driven out into the wilderness to be tempted by the Devil. What makes this passage important to our topic is that Yeshua quotes from the book of Devarim (Deuteronomy) all three times in opposing the Devil, and in all three base-texts the Sacred Name is found. When he says (Matthew 4:4, WEB), "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God,'" he is quoting from Deuteronomy 8:3 where it reads (in part), "the mouth of YHWH." The same goes for Matthew 4:7 where he quotes Deuteronomy 6:16, and Matthew 4:10 where he quotes Deuteronomy 6:13. All three texts read YHWH, yet our Greek NT manuscripts of Matthew read Theos (God) and Kurios (Lord). So the question is: when Yeshua quoted from Deuteronomy by saying "It is written," did he say something other than what was written, or did he say what was actually written? I contend that he said what was actually written in the Hebrew text of Devarim. He actually said "Man shall not live by bread alone," and he actually said "the mouth of YHWH," and not "the mouth of God" as we have it in our English versions of Matthew 4:4.

I believe the Greek manuscripts we have of Matthew contain a later scribal tradition of using a substitute for the Name early on in writing. If we could transport ourselves back to Yeshua's encounter with the Devil, I believe we would have heard him speak the name Yahweh, just like David did when facing the giant. I recognize that this view may be a bit unsettling due to the fact that the actual copies of Matthew's gospel that have been discovered over the centuries do not contain the

name YHWH, and I'm suggesting there is corruption in the manuscript. I would refer you to a few scholarly works like "The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture" by Bart Ehrman, "The Text of the New Testament" by Kurt and Barbara Aland, and "The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration" by Bruce M. Metzger. These works show that there is textual variation among the manuscripts of the New Testament, and that a science known as *textual criticism* has developed in order to know what the original reading of a text said. My larger suggestion is that by grouping in the Old Testament with the New Testament (as one cohesive collection of books), and recognizing that the older, base-text of Deuteronomy reads "YHWH," we should read the three quotations from Deuteronomy (by Yeshua) as containing the older reading. In other words, just as scholars often take the reading of the oldest *New Testament* manuscript as the authentic reading, we should take the reading of the oldest form of a text or saying as the authentic reading, which is in this case found in the *Old Testament* manuscript of Deuteronomy. Once an Old Testament text is quoted by Yeshua or a New Testament author, the Old Testament text comes into play as one of the manuscripts in deciphering the original reading of the New Testament text.



*chapter seven*

## **The Name in the Greek NT**

I was once shown a book at a debate I attended with the title *The Tetragrammaton in the Christian Greek Scriptures*. A guy pulled this book out of his briefcase, handed it to me, and said something like this: "This author has done extensive research in disproving the Tetragrammaton in the Christian Scriptures." I scribbled down the title of the book and publisher and told the man that I appreciated his efforts to nudge me to further study. I felt obligated to delve into this book and make certain I was not misrepresenting Scripture; I wanted to fully study a matter out before receiving or rejecting something. When I started reading the book (very early on) I uncovered the intent of the author, and it was not one that desired to disregard the name Yahweh or degrade it in the least manner.

The perspective of this book is a current historical and textual understanding for the use of the Tetragrammaton in the Christian Greek Scriptures. As such, we are not emphasizing the place of the Tetragrammaton in the Hebrew Scriptures. However, the reader must remember throughout this book that God's name is used extensively in the Hebrew Scriptures, and that the textual evidence supporting its presence is beyond any doubt. The New World Translation is to be commended for its use of the divine name in the Hebrew Scriptures.<sup>63</sup>

As you can see, the author of the book *does* believe that the name Yahweh is used throughout the Older Testament (Hebrew Scriptures), and not only does he recognize its use there, he also believes the name Yahweh should be used by present-day believers in their worship.

...do we feel that it is appropriate to use God's personal name today? Most certainly! It is the author's personal practice to do so... The name of God should be frequently and respectfully used in both corporate and private worship.<sup>64</sup>

I soon found out that the intent of the author is rather to show the absence of the Sacred Name in the *Greek New Testament*, as even the title of his book suggests. For someone to make the claim (as was done towards me that night) that this author has disproved the authenticity of the name YHWH is nothing short of misrepresentation, something Christians should not be engaged in. So often I find that for the sake of saving face and not losing pride, we involve ourselves in slight

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<sup>63</sup> *The Tetragrammaton and the Christian Greek Scriptures*, by Lynn Lundquist, Internet Publication, pg. 4.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*, pg. 9, 10.

misquotations and misrepresentations, as well as prejudice for what we would *like* the Bible to say. We should instead seek to have Yahweh's Word prevail when we come to a place where we have been in error. We've got to learn to submit to His authority and overcome the problem of trying to make our pet doctrine fit.

One point that does need to be addressed is the absence of the name Yahweh from any Greek New Testament manuscript in known existence today. This fact is often unknown to "Sacred Namers," but it's a fact to be recognized, reckoned with, and examined with an open heart. Out of all the objections I've heard against the use and importance of the Sacred Name, this is really the only one I see as holding any weight. I don't believe it's an argument that dismisses everything we've learned up to this point, but it's one that has some substance behind it. The reasoning goes like this: if the authors of the New Testament were fine with substituting the Sacred Name with the words Theos (God) and Kurios (Lord), then it is not necessary for us to use the Name in our reading or worship. As we read through the Old Testament, we can use substitutes just like they did.

I've decided to cover this issue in dialogue fashion by giving you a *mock discussion* (based on my own discussions over the last 25 years) between proponents of both sides. Hopefully this will add some extra "flavor" to the topic, and in the end you will have the option of which side you feel has presented the better argumentation. We pick up our conversation with two characters: one who stresses the importance of using the Sacred Name (Matthew; for me of course) and one who thinks it doesn't matter (Joe; a fictitious character).

MATTHEW: So you see Joe, the Creator really *does* have a proper name, with purposeful meaning behind it, so as to set Himself apart and distinguish Himself from all the other gods in Scripture. He asks us to use His name. I think we should please Him and do so.

JOE: I don't really have a problem with you doing that, my issue is that the name Yahweh is not found in any known Greek New Testament manuscript available today. Do you not think that God would have preserved this name Yahweh in the *New Testament* if it is of so much importance?

MATTHEW: I understand your concern, but I don't think you're looking at all the evidence. For instance, people often miss the fact that the short form of the sacred name - *Yah* - like in Psalm 68:4, *is* found in the Greek New Testament manuscripts we have. In Revelation 19:1-6 we find four times where the Greek word *Alleluia* is spoken in worship. Strong's Concordance defines this word as "Of Hebrew origin, praise ye Jah." Mounce's lexicon defines it as "Praise Yahweh or the

Lord." If a crowd in heaven can praise the heavenly Father by His name Yah (Psalms 68:4) why can't we? Furthermore, this same short, poetic form is also seen to be in the names of individual people in the New Testament. Names like *Uriah*, *Abijah*, *Uzziah*, *Hezekiah*, *Josiah*, and *Jechoniah*; all of which are found in Matthew 1:1-16,<sup>65</sup> and there are many more throughout the rest of the New Testament.

JOE: Good point man, but my concern is with the *full form* of the Name. While the prophet Joel said that whoever calls on the name Yahweh will be delivered (Joel 2:32), the New Testament, *if you believe it* Matthew, has the Apostle Peter saying whoever calls on the name of *the Lord* will be delivered (Acts 2:21). Peter (or Luke the author) substituted Yahweh for Lord. We know this because the Greek text of the book of Acts uses the term *Kurios*, a word that translates into English as Lord.

MATTHEW: Yes, I have to believe what Peter said, but the question is this: who was the first one to speak, Joel or Peter? Joel was the first one to utter the prophecy by direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit said through Joel that whoever calls on the name of Yahweh shall be delivered. At the time Peter wrote that, he obviously knew of Joel's prophecy. After all, Peter did not have a written New Testament, but only a written Old Testament. Peter mentioned the prophet Joel in Acts 2:16, therefore he knew that Joel wrote the name Yahweh in his prophecy. Peter understood that holy men of old spoke as they were moved upon by the Holy Spirit (1 Peter 1:18-21), so he viewed Joel's speaking of the name Yahweh as inspired and authentic.

JOE: But Peter said *Kurios*... *Kurios* Matthew... you cannot get around that.

MATTHEW: Are you trying to say that Peter actually told those in Jerusalem in Acts 2 to call on the title *Kurios* for salvation, a word which could refer to any one of the false gods mentioned in the Bible, like Dagon or Baal?

JOE: I'm just saying that I believe the New Testament Scriptures are just as inspired as the Old. The Old Testament says Yahweh, but the New Testament says Lord, and I have to go with the New Testament's *fuller* revelation.

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<sup>65</sup> In Matthew 1:1-16 there is a total of about 20 times that the name Yah (or Yahu/Yeho) appears inside the name of a person in the genealogy. For example, the name Judah is used twice in verses 2-3. Judah's birth is mentioned back in Genesis 29:35 which reads (KJV) "And she conceived again, and bare a son: and she said, Now will I praise (YHWH): therefore she called his name Judah; and left bearing." The name YHWH there is 3068 in Strong's Concordance. The name Judah is 3063. Notice the close numbering due to the similarity of the names/words in Hebrew. YHWH is spelled yod, hey, waw, hey. Judah is spelled yod, hey, waw, dalet, hey, and pronounced (by Strongs) as Yehudah. The point is that the Name, in its short form, is found at the beginning of the name Judah, and this name is written twice in the genealogy of Matthew 1.

MATTHEW: I too believe the New Testament Scriptures are inspired by the Holy Spirit, but that doesn't do away with what was written by inspiration at the time Peter and others made their quotations of Old Testament texts. Remember, the Old preceded the New. When Peter stood up and spoke, the book of Acts had not been written yet. Peter wasn't looking at a copy of Acts by the pen of Luke. Peter was quoting from the Old Testament scroll or prophecy of Joel. Why would he misquote?

JOE: From what I'm hearing, I don't see how can believe what's written in the New Testament, because you deny that *Kurios* is what came out of Peter's mouth.

MATTHEW: Please try to understand what I'm saying. Peter only had the Hebrew Bible, and it said Yahweh. Peter knew that was inspired, so why would he declare a title in place of the name that the prophet Joel was inspired to write, especially when that title can be and is applied to a host of other gods throughout the Bible? There are many *kurios*' Joe, as 1 Corinthians 8:6 and Deuteronomy 10:17 state, but there is only One who is named Yahweh. This, coupled with the internal evidence in the New Testament, presents a weighty case for retaining the Sacred Name in quotations from the Old.

JOE: Internal evidence?

MATTHEW: We've got to remember that Yeshua said in John 17:6, 26 that He manifested and declared his Father's name, the name that was written almost 7,000 times in the Old Testament Scriptures. Do you think the Messiah lied?

JOE: Of course I don't believe that Jesus lied, plus, declaring his Father's name just means he declared his Father's character and nature.

MATTHEW: Why can't we believe that "I have declared unto them Thy name" means exactly that? Of course that would include the Father's character and nature, but behind that character and nature is an actual name, the Name we read about 7,000 times in the Old Testament.

JOE: Well, first of all, Christ wouldn't have had to declare or make known a name that everyone already knew, and as I've been trying to show you, the Greek New Testament gives no hard evidence of Jesus using the name Yahweh. It shows he declared *Kurios* or *Theos*.

MATTHEW: Yeshua's declaring of the Name was necessary because the tradition to not speak the Name was already in force among many Jewish communities. That's why part of his mission was to make the Name known again, for regular use. Do you think it's possible that the titles *Kurios* and *Theos* are metonymies or circumlocutions for the Sacred Name at any point in the New Testament?

JOE : I'm not sure I understand you Matthew, but I do know that Jesus used *Kurios* and *Theos*, if we just go by what's written.

MATTHEW: Let's remember the cultural setting of John 17 and the context of the Messiah's prayer. Yeshua was from the tribe of Yehudah, a Hebrew man, one who read from the scrolls of Hebrew Scripture; he did not carry around a New Testament. In Hebrew Scripture, Yeshua's Father proclaimed His name as YHWH/Yahweh almost 7,000 times. Do you think that the Messiah would have substituted this Name for something entirely different that could be shared by any other false, heathen god? Just around 400 years before the Messiah's first advent, Yahweh Himself rebuked His own priests through His prophet Malachi, the priests that despised His name. Is Yahweh now okay with those that choose to *substitute* His name? Wouldn't this be despising His name?

JOE: I still rest my case on the Greek New Testament.

MATTHEW: I'm just asking you to take an honest look at these more developed points I'm showing you. All I'm hearing is, "Well, the New Testament says *Kurios*," while ignoring the Scriptures that preceded the New Testament. Isn't there a possibility that the name Yahweh originally belonged in certain places which have *Kurios* in the New Testament, especially when the New Testament author quoted a previously inspired passage from the Old Testament that used the name Yahweh? For example, the text you initially brought up was Acts 2 compared with Joel 2. Since Peter quotes Joel, shouldn't the manuscripts of Joel be grouped in with Acts in order to arrive at the original reading from the mouth of Apostle Peter? Once an Apostle quotes the words of a Prophet, the Prophet's words (which came first) should be considered within that body of textual criticism.

JOE: Well, most of the quotations of the Old Testament by New Testament speakers or authors are taken from the Greek Septuagint, which *does not* contain the name Yahweh, but instead has *Kyrios* or *Theos*. I might add that the Septuagint predates the Masoretic text by over a thousand years, and therefore should be highly consulted. The translators of the Septuagint had already set precedent for substituting the Name with titles prior to the written text of the New Testament. The New Testament authors are then taking their lead from the B.C. era Septuagint.

MATTHEW: First of all, we need to understand that the Septuagint is a *translation* of an earlier Hebrew text of the Old Testament. The Dead Sea Scrolls are written in a more primitive Hebrew script and do contain the characters/letters that make up the Sacred Name. Furthermore, the oldest copies of the Septuagint (available to us) actually contain the name YHWH written in the Hebrew characters, right in the midst of an otherwise Greek text. This was detailed by Professor George Howard of the University of Georgia in his essay entitled "*The Name of God in the New Testament*."<sup>66</sup> I'm pretty sure I brought a copy of this article, as I knew we would get into this discussion today. Notice here on page 2 of his article:

In 1944, W.G. Waddell discovered the remains of an Egyptian papyrus scroll (Papyrus Fuad 266) dating to the first or second century B.C. which included part of the Septuagint. In no instance, however, was YHWH translated kyrios. Instead the Tetragrammaton itself - in square Aramaic letters - was written into the Greek text.

JOE: But Matthew...

MATTHEW: Wait a second Joe; look at what else he writes on page 2 concerning his conclusions on the earliest copies of the Septuagint:

Thus we have three separate pre-Christian copies of the Greek Septuagint Bible and in not a single instance is the Tetragrammaton translated *kyrios* or for that matter translated at all... This presents a striking comparison with the Christian copies of the Septuagint and the quotations of it in the New Testament which translate the Tetragrammaton as *kyrios* or *theos*.

JOE: See Matthew, the Christian copies of the Septuagint translate YHWH as *Kyrios*. I told you that from the beginning.

MATTHEW: I think you're missing Mr. Howard's point Joe. The oldest copies of the Septuagint we have do contain the Sacred Name, while later copies of the Septuagint do not. Therefore, back 2,000 years ago when Yeshua and his Apostles walked the earth, they would have had access to this older Septuagint, and in

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<sup>66</sup> This research paper can be read in full online by googling "The Name of God in the New Testament George Howard," or at <http://www.areopage.net/howard.pdf>

quoting from it they would have retained the Sacred Name, just as the texts read. I do need to mention though that there are times when Yeshua's statements in the gospels align more with the reading of the Masoretic text, and then other times where there is not identical alignment with either the Hebrew or Greek, but the meaning of the text is still retained.

JOE: Well, I guess I am seeing your point a little more clearly, but I still say the Greek New Testament doesn't contain the name Yahweh.

MATTHEW: Joe, please understand me. *Technically*, I agree with you, but when you place together all the available evidence, especially the weighty evidence we find in the Old Testament Scriptures emphasizing the name of the Father, there is no way to shun the probability that this Name was really declared by the Son, just as the Son said in John 17. He manifested the Father's *name*, not a title or generic word.

JOE: I just do not want to cast any doubt upon my faith in the Bible. It seems that your belief causes me to deny the pages of New Testament Scripture.

MATTHEW: Hold on a second Joe, I still do not think you fully comprehend my position. I am not denying the New Testament documents. My point is that when a place in the Greek New Testament uses *Kurios*, like in Acts 2:21, and the Old Testament Scripture from which it is quoted uses Yahweh, either (1) Yahweh originally belonged in Acts 2, or (2) the word *Kurios* is used as a *metonymy* for the name Yahweh, with the understanding that *Yahweh is the name of this Lord*, or the name of *Kurios*. Maybe an illustration would help here... think about the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus in Luke 16. Here the Rich Man said to tell his brothers not to come to the place he been taken. Abraham responded to this man that his brothers already had Moses and the prophets, so let them *hear* them. Do you believe Moses and the prophets were still alive speaking for the Rich Man's five brothers to hear?

JOE: Of course I know that Moses and the prophets had died before the time of Jesus. What's your point?

MATTHEW: My point is that even though the Rich Man's brothers could not *literally* hear Moses or the prophets speaking, the text says that is what the brothers had to hear. In reality all they had was their *writings*. So the *literal text* said they could hear "Moses and the prophets," but in reality they could only *read* Moses' *writings* or *listen* to someone else read Moses' *writings*. This is called a metonymy.

When Peter said to call on the name of *Kurios*, if he actually said that, which is what you're contending for, it is to be understood that the name of *Kurios* stands for Yahweh, as proclaimed throughout the Old Testament.

JOE: I've never looked at it that way.

MATTHEW: I'm just asking you to consider all of this Joe. Also consider that if the prophecies of Joel and others would not have come to pass, they would be false prophets. Remember what Yahweh said in Deuteronomy 18:21-22 (NLT):

You may wonder, 'How will we know whether the prophecy is from the Yahweh or not?' If the prophet predicts something in Yahweh's name and it does not happen, Yahweh did not give the message. That prophet has spoken on his own and need not be feared.

Joel predicted that those who call on the name Yahweh would be delivered. If that prophecy was "fulfilled" with people calling on a title, a title that you could apply to Baal or Dagon, then the prophecy didn't come to pass, and Joel is a false prophet.

JOE: Well, was Peter a false prophet?

MATTHEW: No Joe, Peter was inspired, *but Joel came first*. Please do not forget the understanding and harmonization I've shown you up till now in regards to this. Also remember that there are several other prophecies in the Old Testament that have had their fulfillment already in the New Testament, or are yet to be fulfilled at a later date. These are prophetic references involving the name Yahweh strongly in their context.

JOE: Oh yeah? Could you point me to some?

MATTHEW: There's Jeremiah 16:19-21 that speaks of the Gentiles knowing Yahweh's name in the future, then you've got Jeremiah 23:5-6 as well as Jeremiah 31:31-34, both referring to the New Covenant. References in Ezekiel can be found in Ezekiel 36:23-27; 39:7, and 43:7, and then there's Micah 4:1-5 and 5:1-4. Zephaniah 3:9-13 speaks of Yahweh restoring a pure language to His people so all may call upon and trust in His name. You also have Zechariah 13:7-9 and Zechariah 14:9 where it speaks of His name still being Yahweh at a future time. I'm not willing to ignore all the explicit references to the name Yahweh that involve prophecies dealing with the times in which we now live and some in yet future times. These prophecies make it plain that Yahweh did not decide that His name was not to be used by His Messianic Assembly. Yahweh still desires for us to proclaim His name.

JOE: Well Matthew, you've definitely given me some things to look at. I would like to leave you a book I've got by the author Lynn Lundquist dealing with this subject though. Please keep an open mind and read it to see what you think.

MATTHEW: I'm familiar with the book, but from everything I've read so far, the author upholds the name Yahweh, but just doesn't like the Jehovah's Witnesses reasons for placing it in the New Testament. Have you read Gregg Stafford's responses to Lundquist on the internet?

JOE: No, who is Gregg Stafford?

MATTHEW: He is a Jehovah's Witness apologist. While I do not agree with him on everything, I think he presents good arguments for the use of the Tetragrammaton in the New Testament. Mr. Lundquist's rebuttals are also available for anyone wanting to read both sides of argumentation. My point is that there are other people out there, more scholarly than myself, who argue for the use of the Tetragrammaton in the New Testament Scriptures.