

STICKS AND STONES MAY BREAK MY BONES...



BUT NAMES WILL NEVER HURT ME!

By Larry and June Acheson

“The Names Have Been Changed...”

Several years ago, on a popular television program entitled *Dragnet*, a very austere voice would advise all viewers, “The story you are about to see is true. The names have been changed to protect the innocent.” This show was a drama depicting the everyday challenges faced by two police officers working their beat in Los Angeles, California. Why were the names of innocent people changed for this program? Why didn’t they provide viewers the actual names of each person involved?

We know why. A name identifies who a person is. When a crime is perpetrated, the first question on everyone’s mind is, “Who did it?”, or as the popular expression goes, “Whodunnit?” We all want to know who the guilty party is so he can be identified, then apprehended so he can “get his due.” But what if the police arrest the wrong guy? What if the media then plasters his name everywhere for all to see? How would you like to be falsely accused and have everyone believe that you’re a criminal, while all along you are completely innocent? Or how would you like it if a hardened criminal learns that you are the person who tipped the police off about a crime that he committed, and he learned your name by watching *Dragnet* from the comforts of his cell? How would you feel, knowing that in a few months this man will be up for parole? Would you feel safe?

But let’s examine this name-changing game from the reverse angle. Suppose you had saved someone’s life or had done some other deed worthy of recognition. How would you feel *then* if the media changed your name? How would you feel if you knew that everything you had worked so hard for in your lifetime—all of your achievements, all of your noble deeds—was credited to someone else’s name? As for *your* name, no one even recognizes it. Would that make you feel important?

The Creator of the universe has a Name, but somehow man has seen fit to change that Name. All of His accomplishments, all that He has ever done, has been credited to another name, or more specifically, a title. Few people know what Name it is that our Creator gave to Himself, and even fewer see the need to call upon that Name. Yes, everyone likes to be given the recognition they feel they’ve earned, and they appreciate it when their name is spelled and pronounced correctly in the process. The Creator’s Name, though, is a different matter. Or is it?

STICKS AND STONES MAY BREAK MY BONES, BUT NAMES WILL NEVER HURT ME!

A Look at the Name we call our Heavenly Father

By Larry and June Acheson

*I am יְיָ!
That is My Name:
and My honour will I
not give to another,
neither My praise to
graven images!*

— *Isaiah 42:8*

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"STICKS AND STONES MAY BREAK MY BONES, BUT NAMES WILL NEVER HURT ME!"

By Larry and June Acheson

Have you ever heard the expression "*Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me!*" before? Well, I don't know about you, but I have **used** the above line on more than a few occasions! I remember all too well those childhood days when I came home from school, my day ruined by some classmate who thought so little of my feelings that he called me an offensive name. I remember how angry I felt, and of how I wanted to "get back" at him. Many times I would just think of an equally insulting name that I would apply to the offender, but all that accomplished was to initiate a battle of who could think of the most offensive name! Upon my return home from school, I would slink into the house, crushed and defeated. But worse than that, I felt **rejected**. I knew that name-calling was just another way of saying, "I reject you as a person. You could crawl into some hole and die, and no one would even miss you."

My parents, at least, provided a safe haven for me! They were sympathetic to my plight, but as much as I wanted my dad to accompany me to school so he could rip the culprit's face apart, it just never happened. The best my parents could do was to offer some advice on how to deal with any future encounters. Their advice usually came in the form of what to say back to the name-caller, and the most common retort that they encouraged me to use was, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me!"

The only problem with this response is that it's a LIE! Maybe it's designed to make the other person THINK that name-calling doesn't hurt, but deep down inside, I was **still** hurting big time! When someone calls us an offensive name, what he is *really* saying is, "I think so little of you, and have so little respect for you as a person that you don't even *deserve* to have a name worthy of respect!" And regardless of our attempt to politely inform him that "names will never hurt me," we know that our self-esteem has indeed been damaged. The truth is, names really *can* be hurtful.

It's all about "respect"!

I'm an adult now. Things haven't changed much, either. People *still* like to be treated with respect, no matter how much they may try to downplay it! One of the best ways for us to show a person how much we respect him or her is by remembering that person's name, and then, consequently, politely addressing him or her by that name. I've been guilty of forgetting many peoples' names. I have often *thought* that I knew someone's name, but was wrong. Usually when this occurs, they will gently correct me. Sometimes, though, I've been set straight in a very harsh tone! One of the more polite ways they have responded to my error is to say, "I don't care whatcha call me, as long as you call me to dinner!"

But that, too, is a lie. You see, I have seen the look of sadness on the faces of people whose names I *should* have known, but forgot. I used to work in an office where we found jobs for people. We had what is known as a "high turnover rate," which means that a lot of the people eventually move on to something else, and we would recruit others to replace the ones that we lost. It was not uncommon to have five applicants per day in our office. Those same individuals would frequently return to our office the following day for various reasons, such as computer training. With so many people coming through our doors on such a regular basis, it became quite a challenge to remember everyone's name! One day, a lady walked into our office. I recognized her face, but just couldn't place her. I studied her face for a few seconds in an attempt to jog my memory, but it didn't do any good. I had forgotten who she was. She didn't waste any time in saying, "You don't know who I am, do you!?" I had to admit defeat. But once she gave me her name, I knew *exactly* why she had returned, and she left there happy. Nevertheless, I knew that I had lost an opportunity to make a good impression when I failed to remember who she was.

We looked at each other for a few seconds, and his face became coated with a look of amazement. "How did you know my name?" he asked, grinning. He was obviously very pleased that someone knew him by name.

During my employment with the staffing company, I would work in different offices for the same company all over the Dallas area. One Friday, which was my first week at that particular office in over a year, I kept busy handing out checks to the employees as they came straggling in after their work day had ended. As the day drew to a close, I noticed that I only had six checks left to distribute. Five of them were for women, which meant that *one* was for a man. Not knowing who any of the employees were by the names on the checks, I decided that if a guy came walking in, I was going to have some fun. Sure enough, the door opened, and in walked a man whom I had never met.

“Hey, Billy, how ya’ doin’? I’ll bet you’re here for your check!” I announced. I fumbled through the checks as if trying to find one for him, sorted it out, and exclaimed, “Here it is!”

We looked at each other for a few seconds, and his face became coated with a look of amazement. “How did you know my name?” he asked, grinning. He was obviously very pleased that someone knew him by name.

I replied, “How could I *not* know the name of one of our best workers!?”

Each Friday when Billy came in to pick up his check, he walked in with a big grin on his face. We would chat about how his job was going, the weather, and other important things! Billy became my friend, and it all started because he found someone who made him feel special. He was made to feel special because I called him by his name when he didn’t expect it. I know he expected to walk into our office that day and have someone ask him what his name was before handing him his check, but instead he was greeted by a total stranger who knew him by name!

I have just described two people whom I have dealt with in the past year. Which of those two individuals came away from our office having experienced the most pleasant reception — the woman whose name I forgot, or the man whose name I knew, even though we had never met? The lesson here is that we ALL like to be treated with a level of respect. Nowhere does it state that being treated with respect must of necessity require our remembering a person’s name, but it sure helps! If you want to convey how much you respect an individual, the very least that you will do is to call him or her by name, or more specifically, by the name that he or

she wishes to be called.

It is “common courtesy” to call someone by the name by which they wish to be called.

Reader, I may not know you by name, but I want you to know that I respect you as a person. Once I know who you are, I will do my best to address you by the name that you wish to be called. That is, as I understand it, a part of the rules of proper etiquette. It is “common courtesy” to call someone by the name by which they wish to be called. Getting back to the daily functions carried out at my job in the staffing industry, when new applicants came by our office, they were interviewed before they left. During the interview, we would review the application, read back the name written there to make certain it was pronounced the way that it looks, and then we would ask them if that was the name by which they wished to be called, or if there was some “nickname” that they would prefer for us to use. This process formed a part of our commitment to demonstrate that we respected them so much that we would strive to address them by the name they wish to be called. On more than one occasion, the applicant would thank us for asking this question. It was such a simple gesture, but it went a long way towards building and maintaining rapport and trust.

Well, let’s not focus on what *people* say, let’s focus on what our Heavenly Father says! Is His Name important to Him? Would He like it just a little bit more if we addressed Him by a certain Name?

Hopefully I have laid sufficient groundwork to demonstrate how important names are to us. But let’s go several steps higher. Let’s consider the case for our Heavenly Father’s Name. Some people say it’s “God.” Some say it’s “The LORD.” Some say it is a different name in each different language. Still others say that however it is we pronounce His name isn’t even important, so long as we know His character. They maintain, “It is not merely a certain set of sounds or vocal vibrations that is

important, but the meaning and power behind the name.”¹ Well, let’s not focus on what *people* say, let’s focus on what our Heavenly Father says!

Is His Name important to Him? Would He like it just a little bit more if we referred to Him by a certain Name?

In my own study on this matter, I was unable to locate a single Scripture indicating that “His Name is His character,” or that He doesn’t care what we call Him so long as we know “the meaning and power behind His Name.” I couldn’t find any Bible verses demonstrating that His Name is unimportant to Him, or that He has “many names,” as some claim. In Isaiah 52:6, for example, the Creator inspired Isaiah to write, “Therefore, My people shall know My Name: therefore *they shall know* in that day that I *am* He that doth speak: behold *it is I*.” This definitely sounds like the words of a Creator who attaches a great deal of importance to *any* people claiming to be “*His* people” — that they know (and use) His Name! Note that the word “name” as it appears in such verses as the one quoted above is **singular**, not plural. He does *not* have “many names.”

Doesn't He Have Many Names?

Despite the obvious use of the singular noun *name* in reference to our Creator, some individuals nevertheless promote the teaching that He has “many names.” Herbert Lockyer, in the introduction to his book *All the Divine Names and Titles in the Bible*, wrote under the assumption that our Heavenly Father has “many names.” For example, he wrote, “God jealously guarded His successive names, particularly His signature one, *I, Jehovah*.”¹ Later in his book, Lockyer admits, “... *Jehovah* is not an altogether correct rendering of the Name.”² Thus, in spite of admitting the fact that *Jehovah* is not correct, Herbert Lockyer’s unabashed use of this form demonstrates his sanctioning of perpetrating an error. His mistake,

¹ Keith W. Stump, “What is God’s Name?” *The Good News of the World Tomorrow* magazine, January, 1986, p. 18.

² *All the Divine Names and Titles in the Bible*, Herbert Lockyer, D.D., Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1975, Introduction.

however, goes much deeper. The error perpetrated by scholars such as Lockyer also involves their failure to recognize that our Creator *never* attributed but **one** name to Himself. Furthermore, they often confuse *titles* with *names*. Notice what Mr. Lockyer wrote regarding his belief that the Creator has more than one name:

That God Himself sets great store upon His names is evident from the revelation given to Moses (Exodus 6:3). That He also attached importance to His several names is found in the prohibition not to take any one of them in vain (Exodus 20:7). Further, it is only as we come to know and understand the inner meaning and message of His peerless names that we can repose our trust in Him (Psalm 9:10).³

Let’s briefly examine each of the three Scripture references as used by Lockyer in the above quotation to determine if anyone should be able to extrapolate from any of them that our Creator has “several names.” First of all, let’s take a look at Exodus 6:3 as it appears in the *King James Version*:

And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by *the name of God Almighty*, but by My name JEHOVAH was I not known to them.

This verse is misleading because the words “the name of” appear in italics in the *King James Version*, which means the translators added those words to fit their understanding of the meaning of the text. The literal reading of the original text as taken from *The Interlinear Bible* reads, “And I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as El Shaddai and by my name Jehovah not I did reveal myself to them.”⁴

We thus see that in the original text of Exodus 6:3 the Creator never revealed that He had any name other than YHWH, which is commonly mis-rendered “Jehovah.” The translators of the *King James Version* subtly encouraged their readers to believe that “God Almighty” (El Shaddai) is a name of the Creator.

³ Ibid, Introduction.

⁴ *The Interlinear Bible: Hebrew-Greek-English*, 2nd edition, by Jay P. Green, General Editor and Translator, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, Massachusetts, 1986, p. 51.

Not only did the *King James Version* translators fail to recognize that *El Shaddai* was not introduced in the original Hebrew text as a name, but they also overlooked the obvious fact that the phrase in Exodus 6:3 is actually posed as a question. Judging by the way Exodus 6:3 is rendered in most versions, it might appear that our Creator did not reveal His name (YHWH) to such patriarchs as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. However, we know from such verses as Genesis 12:8 that Abraham *did indeed* call upon the Creator by the name YHWH. We know that Isaac called upon the name YHWH by virtue of what we read in Genesis 25:21, and we know that YHWH revealed His name to Jacob by virtue of what He told him in Genesis 28:13:

And behold, the LORD (YHWH) stood above it (the ladder), and said, I *am* the LORD God (YHWH Eloah) of Abraham thy father, and the God (Eloah) of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed.

We have already learned that, according to popular translations of Exodus 6:3, YHWH “apparently” did not reveal His name to Abraham, Isaac or Jacob; yet we clearly see that indeed He **DID** reveal to *each of them* this name. Is this a contradiction? At first glance, such might appear to be the case, until we consider a factor overlooked by many: punctuation. In the Hebrew text, there is no punctuation to serve as a distinguishing mark between a question and a statement. Therefore, if a question is posed, it has to be *understood* by the reader as being a question; again, there are no question marks or periods in the Hebrew originals to settle the matter. With this in mind, it is obvious that in Exodus 6:3 Yahweh actually expressed the following to Moses:

And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob as El Shaddai, but by my name YHWH was I not known to them?

This rendering would certainly make more sense in light of the fact that YHWH clearly *did* reveal His name to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, as we have already seen. The translators of the *New International Version* of the Bible recognized this discrepancy and placed the following footnote at the bottom of the page on which Exodus 6:3 is found: “Or *Almighty, and by my name the LORD* [YHWH] *did I not let myself be known to them?*” We thus see that Exodus 6:3 in no way intimates that our Creator had any name other than YHWH.

How about the second verse of Scripture cited by Herbert Lockyer in support of his belief that the Creator has “several names”? This verse is Exodus 20:7, where we read:

Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God (YHWH thy Elohim) in vain; for the LORD (YHWH) will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.

In the above verse, where is there any mention or even the slightest indication that our Creator has more than one name? Does the plural of the word “name” appear in Exodus 20:7? No, it does not. Thus, it is not reasonable to use Exodus 20:7 as justification for believing that our Creator has “several names.”

Finally, Mr. Lockyer used Psalms 9:10 as a Scriptural justification for the belief that YHWH has “several names.” Let us examine this verse:

And they that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee: for thou, LORD (YHWH), hast not forsaken them that seek Thee.

As should be self-evident from reading the above verse, the word “name” is used in its singular form, not the plural, thus providing no justification for believing that our Heavenly Father has more than one name. If anything, Mr. Lockyer’s choice of citing the above verse should have aroused in him the confirmation that our Creator has but *one name*.

Without a doubt, as one embarks on the search for truth regarding whether or not our Creator has “several names,” he or she will encounter scholars such as Herbert Lockyer, D.D. Indeed, the very fact that he holds a doctorate of divinity would lead many to deduce that his conclusions must be sound and in accordance with Scripture. This is why it is so prudent to enlist the support of more than one scholar before arriving at a final conclusion, as other scholars are equally adamant that our Creator has but *one* name. According to the *New Bible Dictionary*, for example, “Strictly speaking, Yahweh is the only ‘name’ of God.”⁵ We’ll read more from this reference later in our study.

⁵ *New Bible Dictionary*, 2nd edition, J.D. Douglas, organizing editor, Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, IL, 1982, item “God, Names of,” p. 430.

Confusing Names With Titles

Another serious mistake made by Herbert Lockyer and others is confusing *names* with *titles*. For example, although Psalms 68:4 plainly refers to our Creator by the short form of His name (YAH), and even though this verse refers to YAH as “His name,” Mr. Lockyer nevertheless proceeds to refer to “YAH” as a *title*. He wrote:

JAH - The Independent One

This sublime title is found in Psalm 68:4: “Extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH, and rejoice before him.”⁶

Notice that in Mr. Lockyer’s introduction to Psalms 68:4, he refers to **JAH** as a *title*. However, the verse itself identifies **JAH** (more precisely pronounced *Yah*) as a *name*! There is a significant difference between a *title* and a *name*. Unless one is able to fully understand and appreciate the difference between names and titles, that individual cannot fully appreciate our Creator’s intentions. For example, you would most likely not refer to your boss by his title when addressing him. You would most likely *not* want to address him as “Boss”!⁷ Nor would you address him as “Mr. Manager.” You know that “manager” is his *title*, not his name. A title identifies a person’s role, but it doesn’t identify “who” he is personally. A name is used to identify exactly “who” a person is. So it is with our Creator. We often address our Creator by certain titles, such as “Father,” but we know that “Father” is not His name. What *is* that name? Does He want us to know and use it?

Despite the fact that the name YHWH appears nearly 7,000 times in Scripture, some believers openly express a preference for His “other names,” which as we have already shown, are often confused with His titles. Nowhere in Scripture do we ever find any reference to our Creator having “names” (plural). One of the “names” that I have personally heard a man express an appreciation for is the “name” **Jealous**. Is it possible that

⁶ *All the Divine Names and Titles in the Bible*, Herbert Lockyer, D.D., Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1975, p. 16.

⁷ It is true that some employees, in informal situations, refer to their boss as “boss” as a term of endearment; however, we have found that this is more the exception than the rule.

our Creator’s name is *Jealous*?

A man named Lester Grabbe wrote a short study entitled “God Has Many Names,” which appeared in a popular sabbatarian magazine. As the title suggests, he insists that our Heavenly Father has “many names.” Aside from his standard confusing of titles such as *Elohim*, *Adonai* and *Shaddai* with names, Mr. Grabbe presents a very unscholarly case for such adjectives as *holy* and *fearful* as being proper noun names for the Creator! Notice what he wrote:

Now consider the following passages and names: Psalm 111:9 -
- ‘His name is Holy [קדוש, *Qados*] and Fearful [נורא, *Nora*].’
These two could be taken as personal names.⁸

Failing to recognize that the psalmist was using adjectives to *describe* our Creator’s name not only belies the scholarship of the man writing the above, but also significant is the fact that if, indeed, words such as *Holy* and *Fearful* were legitimately intended as representing *names* of the Creator, then the Hebrew word for *name* in the above verse would have been written using the plural form for *names* instead of *name*. The Hebrew word for “name” as used in Psalms 111:9 is the word שְׁמִי (*shemi*), which is a singular noun. Had the author of Psalms 111:9 wished to convey that the words “Holy” and “Fearful” are to be understood as *names* of the Creator, he would have employed the plural form שְׁמוֹת (*shemot*).

We have already quoted the *New Bible Dictionary* in demonstrating that, strictly speaking, *Yahweh* is our Heavenly Father’s only ‘name.’ Another credible reference for further study on this subject is *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, where we read that it truly is a mistake to confuse our Creator’s *name* with the *titles* commonly used in reference to Him:

In Israel of the biblical tradition only one name of God was cultically appealed to: Yahweh (Heb *yhwh*).⁹

⁸ *Good News* magazine, a publication of the Worldwide Church of God, November - December 1972, “God Has Many Names,” by Lester L. Grabbe, pp. 10-11.

⁹ *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 4, David Noel Freedman, Editor-in-Chief, Doubleday, New York, NY, 1992, p. 1,002.

This same reference concedes that words such as *El* and *El-Shaddai* do not represent *names* of Yahweh, but *titles* of Yahweh:

Actually, “El” is not a divine name but a common Semitic appellative for the “divinity.”¹⁰

It is somewhat more difficult to determine exactly the facts about the title “El-Shaddai.”¹¹

Clearly, if we are determined to investigate this matter from an objective point of view, we will conclude that our Heavenly Father has but one name: ***Yahweh***.

How could anyone forget His Name?

It only stands to reason that if one knows the Name of the Creator, but does not *use* it, he will eventually *forget* that Name, or at least cause his descendants to forget it! To borrow the expression, “If you don’t *use* it, you *lose* it!” which is exactly what Yahweh rebuked the so-called “prophets” for doing in Jeremiah 23:26-27:

How long shall *this* be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? yea, *they are* prophets of the deceit of their own heart;

Which think to cause My people to FORGET MY NAME by their dreams which they tell every man to his neighbour, as their fathers have forgotten My name for Baal!

Have *we* forgotten our Heavenly Father’s name for Baal? Curiously, as any good dictionary reveals, the Hebrew word “Baal” is translated “Lord” in English. The listing shown below is taken from *The Reader’s Digest Great Encyclopedic Dictionary*:

Ba·al (bā’al, bāl) *n. pl.* **Ba·al·im** (bā’al·im) **1.** Any of several ancient Semitic gods of fertility and flocks; especially,

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 1,004.

¹¹ Ibid, p. 1,005.

the sun god of the Phoenicians. **2.** An idol or false god. [*<Hebrew ba'al lord>*] — **Ba’al-ish** *adj.*¹²

Notice that in the above definition, *The Reader’s Digest Great Encyclopedic Dictionary* also traces the word *baal* to its Hebrew roots, showing that it is simply a word they employed meaning *lord*! Thus, when Yahweh laments, “My people have forgotten My name for Baal,” His admonition goes deeper than condemning their worship of a false idol. It even goes deeper than simply denouncing their use of a substitute *name* in place of His name. You see, *baal* in its original form represented a *title* meaning *master*, *lord* or *husband*. When Yahweh pointed out that He was a *husband* to His people Israel (Jer. 31:32), the actual Hebrew word translated as *husband* is the word *baal*.

By attributing the Creator’s title that means “husband” or “master” as a name for a false idol, unregenerate Israel had not only rejected their *true* husband, but they conferred a title that rightfully belongs to Him to an idol. To put this in layman’s terms, this would be akin to a wife leaving her faithful husband for another man, whom she affectionately calls “Husband.” If we can understand how many marriages have been ruined by such unfaithful spouses, we can get a better idea of how the Almighty felt when a title that aptly described His relationship with Israel was attributed to an idol.

With their new “husband” *Baal* serving as the object of their worship, the stage had been set for Israel to eventually forget the name of their original and true husband. They forgot the name *Yahweh* in favor of the name of their new husband. Are we willing to go along with this charade?

This English translation of Baal, *Lord*, has been used some 6,823 times as a ***substitute*** for the Creator’s true name. Certainly, when a substitute is used for an original over and over, the possibility exists that the original will eventually be forgotten. Does our Creator want us to forget His name? Judging by Jeremiah 23:26-27, it looks like He *does not*! He wants us to ***remember*** His name! We actually ***honor*** Him by remembering His name and reverently calling upon that name!

¹² *The Reader’s Digest Great Encyclopedic Dictionary*, The Reader’s Digest Association, Inc., Pleasantville, New York, 1977, item “Baal,” p. 103.

Many verses of Scripture demonstrate our Creator's desire for us to know and use His Name. For example, in Jeremiah 10:25, a **curse** is pronounced against those who do **not** call upon the Creator's Name:

Pour out Thy fury upon the heathen that know Thee not, and upon the families that call not on Thy name: for they have eaten up Jacob, and devoured him, and consumed him, and have made his habitation desolate.

King David, in a parallel verse of Scripture, wrote nearly the same, exact words in Psalms 79:6:

Pour out Thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known Thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon Thy name.

Certainly, even a child can discern from these verses that calling upon our Creator by His name is not some frivolous act. It should be done out of our heartfelt desire to acknowledge Him as our Heavenly Father, as the Almighty ruler of the universe! Just as certain verses reveal curses for *not knowing and calling* upon His name, other verses convey **blessings** upon those who DO choose to call upon Him by His name! For example, we read from Psalms 91:14 that...

Because he hath set his love upon Me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known My name.

Another supportive Scripture can be found in Psalms 69:35-36:

For the Almighty will save Zion, and will build the cities of Judah: that they may dwell there, and have it in possession. The seed also of His servants shall inherit it: and they that LOVE HIS NAME shall dwell therein."

It is clear that our Creator wants us to know, use and love His name! It does not follow that we love His name if we choose to call upon Him by some other name, a name derived by man. We demonstrate our love for His name by using **that name** when we call upon Him and when we speak about Him to others. We *seal* our love for His name by obeying Him in other areas as well (thereby giving honor to His name), but that's another topic!

Just as certain verses reveal curses for *not* knowing and calling upon His name, other verses convey **blessings** upon those who DO choose to call upon Him by His name!

When King David wrote about his love for the Creator, he openly and boldly used the Creator's name. For example, in Psalms 69:30-31, he wrote:

I will praise the name of the Almighty with a song, and will magnify Him with thanksgiving.

This also shall please Yahweh better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs.

We would do well to ask, "What 'name' is it that David praised?" We would do well to find out what that "name" is, and then we would do even **better** to join David in praising that same name!

TAKING AWAY FROM THE WORD

It is common knowledge that the translators of the Old Testament, upon coming to the name of the Almighty, removed it and replaced it with "the LORD." In the preface of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, for example, the translators made this very clear:

A major departure from the practice of the American Standard version is the rendering of the Divine Name, the 'Tetragrammaton.' The American Standard Version used the term 'Jehovah'; the King James Version had employed this in four places, but everywhere else, except in three cases where it was employed as part of a proper name, used the English word LORD (or in certain cases GOD) printed in capitals. The present revision returns to the procedure of the King James Version, which follows the precedent of the ancient Greek and Latin translators and the long established practice in the reading of the Hebrew scriptures in the synagogue. While it is almost

if not quite certain that the Name was originally pronounced ‘Yahweh,’ this pronunciation was not indicated when the Masoretes added vowel signs to the consonantal Hebrew text. To the four consonants YHWH of the Name, which had come to be regarded as too sacred to be pronounced, they attached vowel signs indicating that in its place should be read the Hebrew word *Adonai* meaning ‘Lord’ (or *Elohim* meaning ‘God’). The ancient Greek translators substituted the word *Kyrios* (Lord) for the Name. The Vulgate likewise used the Latin word *Dominus*. The form ‘Jehovah’ is of late medieval origin; it is a combination of the consonants of the Divine Name and the vowels attached to it by the Masoretes but belonging to an entirely different word.”¹³

These translators have admitted that they TOOK OUT the name of the Creator and SUBSTITUTED IT with “the LORD”! The ancient Greeks substituted YHWH with *Kyrios*. The Latin Vulgate substituted YHWH with *dominus*. The King James Version, as well as most others, substituted YHWH with “the LORD.” Is this proper? Not in the light of what Yahweh has to say in such verses as Deuteronomy 4:2:

Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish *ought* from it, that ye may keep the commandments of Yahweh your Almighty which I command you.

Even the name of Satan has been preserved from the Hebrew! But the name of our Creator — well, if you speak English, they say that you can call Him “God.” If you speak Spanish, you can call Him “Dios.” If you speak Finnish, you can call Him “Jumala.” If you speak Polish, you can call Him “Bog.” The list of names goes on and on!

¹³ *The Holy Bible*, Revised Standard Version, 2nd. ed., Thomas Nelson Inc., Camden, New Jersey, 1971, Preface, page v.

Our Creator has made it clear, then, that He does not want His Word tampered with! Indeed, nearly every name used in the Scriptures is left intact, pronounced nearly the same in all languages as in the Hebrew (with some minor allowances for different dialects). Even the name of Satan has been preserved from the Hebrew! But the Name of our Creator — well, if you speak English, they say that you can call Him “God.” If you speak Spanish, you can call Him “Dios.” If you speak Finnish, you can call Him “Jumala.” If you speak Polish, you can call Him “Bog.” The list of names goes on and on! Was this the intention of our Creator — that we call Him “just whatever” name by which the local community addresses Him?

As an example of the names that are pronounced nearly the same in English as they are in Hebrew, “David” is pronounced “Daw-weed” in Hebrew. “Moses” is pronounced “Môsheh,” “Jeremiah” is pronounced “Yirmehyáh,” “Adam” is pronounced “Aw-dawm,” “Solomon” is pronounced “Shelomoh,” and “Abraham” is pronounced “Ab-raw-hawm.” “Satan,” by the way, is pronounced “Saw-tawn” in Hebrew. These names, although they are all pronounced differently in English from the way they are pronounced in Hebrew, nevertheless retain much of the same articulation from one language to the other. Why has this not been the case with the name of our Heavenly Father?

Down through the ages, man has recognized that names are not translated, but are **transliterated**, which means that their pronunciations are carried over from one language to another. Modern day examples of this are President Jiang Zemin of China, Benyamin Netanyahu of Israel, Boris Yeltsin of Russia, PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, Lech Walesa of Poland, Saddam Hussein of Iraq and the terrorist Osama bin Laden. In relaying the news involving these men, the media does not choose to translate their names! Other famous people whose names have been left virtually “untouched” include: Genghis Khan, Marco Polo, François Mitterand, Adolf Hitler, Ayatollah Khomeini, Moamar Khadafy, Mikail Gorbachev, Mao-Tse-Tung, Jacques Cousteau, Bjorn Borg, Leif Erikson, Mahatma Gandhi, Indira Gandhi, Ponce de León, Martina Navratilova, Yasuhiro Nakasone, Napoleon Bonaparte, Ludwig von Beethoven, Yitshak Rabin, Anwar Sadat, and Nikita Krushev. No one bothers even **imagining** that we should attempt to translate the above names! Again, **why has this not been the case with the Name of our Heavenly Father?**

Although we do not wish to lay “blame” on anyone for the established practice of translating our Creator’s Name, it is common knowledge that Jews consider the Name “Yahweh” to be too holy to pronounce, perhaps in an attempt to avoid transgressing the commandment found in Leviticus 24:16, shown below:

And he that blasphemeth the name of Yahweh, he shall surely be put to death, *and* all the congregation shall certainly stone him: as well the stranger, as he that is born in the land, when he blasphemeth the name, shall be put to death.

If no one ever teaches you the Name of the Creator in an attempt to keep you from dishonoring it, you will simultaneously be kept from being able to *honor* that Name! How can one honor a Name that they do not even know?

On the surface, it might appear noble to teach your children to not pronounce the Name of Yahweh in an attempt to make certain that they do not “blaspheme” it. However, it is prudent to understand that a truth which is not taught cannot be retained. In other words, if no one ever teaches you the name of the Creator in an attempt to keep you from dishonoring it, you will simultaneously be kept from being able to *honor* that name! How can one honor a name that they do not even know?

The *New Bible Dictionary* not only provides a brief summary of how the name **Yahweh** came into disuse, but it also provides an explanation of how the erroneous form “Jehovah” came into being:

The Heb. word *Yahweh* is in EVV usually translated ‘the LORD’ (note the capitals) and sometimes ‘Jehovah.’ The latter name originated as follows. The original Heb. text was not vocalized; in time the ‘tetragrammaton’ YHWH was considered too sacred to pronounce; so ^a*dōnāy* (‘my Lord’) was substituted in reading, and the vowels of this word were combined with the consonants YHWH to give ‘Jehovah,’ a form first attested at the start of the 12th century AD.

The pronunciation Yahweh is indicated by transliterations of the name into Greek in early Christian literature, in the form *iaoue* (Clement of Alexandria) or *iabe* (Theodoret; by this time Gk. *b* had the pronunciation of *v*). The name is certainly connected with Heb. *hāyā*, ‘to be,’ or rather with a variant and earlier form of the root, *hāwā*. It is not, however, to be regarded as an imperfective aspect of the verb; the Hiph‘il conjugation, to which alone such a form could be assigned, is not forthcoming for this verb; and the imperfective of the Qal conjugation could not have the vowel *a* in the first syllable. Yahweh should be regarded as a straightforward substantive, in which the root *hwh* is preceded by the preformative *y*. See L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros*, 1958, pp. 368f.; also L. Koehler, *Vom Hebräischen Lexikon*, 1950, pp. 17f.

Strictly speaking, Yahweh is the only ‘name’ of God. In Genesis wherever the word *šēm* (‘name’) is associated with the divine being that name is Yahweh. When Abraham or Isaac built an altar ‘he called on the name of Yahweh’ (Gn. 12:8; 13:4; 26:25).¹⁴

This informative article not only unveils the unscriptural Jewish practice of regarding the Name of Yahweh as being “too sacred to pronounce,” but it also reveals the subsequent error of bringing forth the hybrid form *Jehovah*. We are then shown that the main source establishing credibility for the form *Yahweh* comes from transliterations into Greek by such men as Theodoret of Cyrus (393 – 457 CE). According to this 5th century theologian, the tetragrammaton was anciently pronounced *Iabe*, which is actually *Yahweh*. This is because the Greek *b*, by this time, had the pronunciation of “*v*,” which in turn is traced to the Hebrew “*waw*” (ו). Theodoret wrote the following:

Among the Hebrews this is known as the unspoken name; they are forbidden to utter it aloud. It is written in four consonants, and so they speak of it as the “Tetragrammaton.” This name was also inscribed on a plate of gold worn on the forehead of the

¹⁴ The *New Bible Dictionary*, 2nd edition, 1982, by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois, article “God, Names Of,” page 430.

high priest and bound to his head with a fillet. The Samaritans call it "Iabe," the Jews "Ia."¹⁵

In Hebrew, the name of Yahweh is spelled with the four Hebrew characters known as the “tetragrammaton”: יהוה. The Creator’s Name has also been preserved in “Paleo-Hebrew,” an older Hebrew form of writing that pre-dates the Babylonian exile. Among the Dead Sea Scrolls, for example, was found a group of Psalms known as “The Dead Sea Psalms Scroll.” Although the actual text was composed using the modern Hebrew, the scribe who copied it preserved the tetragrammaton by carefully writing it out in its original Paleo-Hebrew form. One of those Psalms contains, almost word for word, the first five verses of Psalms 140:1-5. Shown on the following page is a rendering of how part of verse four appears in that scroll. In English, the words below are translated, “Guard me, O Yahweh, from the hands of the wicked, from the [violent] man”:

שומרני יהוה
מירי רשע מאיש

Notice how the scribe who transferred the words from the original Paleo-Hebrew, upon arriving at the tetragrammaton, retained it in its original form. Clearly, he revered it so much that he *left it alone*. He respected that Name too much to change it! As time progressed, however, it became acceptable to preserve the Name by using the modern Hebrew characters. It is our feeling that, with this change, a loss of sense of reverence of the sanctity of the Heavenly Father’s name was achieved.

We know that King David regularly employed the Creator’s Name. If it was suitable enough for him to use, then certainly it should be considered an acceptable Name for *anyone* as sincere as King David was! Many of us memorized the 23rd Psalm at an early age, and we know that the first verse of that Psalm reads, “The LORD is my shepherd,…” At least that’s the way it reads in the popular versions of the Bible today. But we know that King David did not actually write “The LORD;” he wrote, “Yahweh is my

¹⁵ Theodoret of Cyrus, *The Questions on the Pentateuch*, Vol. 1, “The Questions on Exodus,” Question XV, English translation by Robert C. Hill, The Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D.C., 2007, pp. 250-251.

shepherd.” If we want to claim the Creator as our shepherd, should we not know Him by Name, just as King David did?

Yahweh/Baal/Lord/God—It’s all the same difference, right?

In the book of I Kings, chapter 18, we read of Ahab’s “prophets of Baal.” As we have already learned, the word “Baal” is translated “lord” in English. It can also be translated as “master” or even as “husband.” Both “adonoy” and “baal” are acceptable *titles* of Yahweh, but when those titles are transformed into *names*, the trouble begins. This is what the “prophets of Baal” did in I Kings 18. When Elijah confronted those prophets, he exclaimed, “How long are you going to halt between opinions?! If Yahweh is the Almighty, follow Him! But if Baal, then follow him!” In other words, to put it in Texan vernacular, he gave them the following ultimatum: “Are ‘ya gonna serve Yahweh or Baal? ‘Ya best be makin’ up your minds!”

What question/ultimatum do you think Elijah would have for *us* here in the 21st century? Our society has deemed that it is acceptable to do the very same thing practiced by those “prophets of Baal” in I Kings 18! As difficult and far-fetched as it may seem, the majority of today’s clergy teaches that it is acceptable and even *preferable* to replace the Name of Yahweh with the title *the LORD*. The majority of clergy in Elijah’s day taught that it was acceptable and even preferable to replace Yahweh’s Name with the title *Baal*, which, as we pointed out above, means “lord.”

The following encyclopedia article not only corroborates the original meaning of “baal” as being “lord,” but provides a brief history of the deity as well:

BAAL, ancient Canaanite title for a male deity, meaning simply ‘lord.’ By about 1500 B.C., however, the people along the eastern Mediterranean coastlands used Baal as the chief name of the storm-god Hadad. As the personified storm, Baal was the power of nature, considered the king of the gods, “the

Exalted One, Lord of the Earth.” The head of the Canaanite pantheon was El, but Baal was the executive force in the divine government. In northern Syria his consort was the fertility-goddess Anath; in southern Syria it was Astarte; in Palestine during the time of the Hebrew kings it was the mother-goddess, Asherah. As “Lord Storm,” people heard his voice in the thunder, saw his arrow in the lightening, and through the rain, considered him the giver of fertility. The chief myths about him and his cult centered in the annual cycle of nature. The spring burst of life was the result of the marriage of Baal and the fertility-goddess; the drought resulted when the forces of Mot (Death) killed Baal; the rains returned when he was brought back to life.

As a title, *baal* was also used of the God of Israel, after the Israelites entered Palestine; but because of the great danger in confusing him with the Canaanite Baal there was in Israel a great struggle against the use of the term after the 10th century B.C.¹⁶

Thus we see that by referring to our Creator as “LORD,” we are, quite frankly, imitating the very same custom practiced by the “prophets of Baal.” If we believe our Creator is well pleased with this level of service to Him, we are only fooling ourselves.

To summarize the events of I Kings 18, Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal to a contest that day on Mt. Carmel. In the end, despite a wood-covered, water-soaked altar with a bullock on it for a sacrifice, Yahweh sent fire from heaven to devour the entire offering, the wood, and even the water. The dry counterpart prepared by the prophets of Baal was left untouched by Yahweh, proving to everyone that day that there is indeed a distinction between Baal (LORD) and Yahweh. Contrary to our modern-day preachers, Yahweh DOES make a distinction between “the LORD” and “Yahweh.” **It DOES matter!**

¹⁶ From the *Encyclopedia International*, vol. 2, article “Baal,” 1972, by Grolier Incorporated, New York, page 291.

“I’ve already proven that wrong!”

Back in 1991, our family attended a Bible Sabbath Association unity conference in Indianapolis, Indiana. Prior to attending, though, we sought out a nearby park where we could relax and grab a bite to eat. As we ate, we noticed a man and his son at a nearby table. The man frequently glanced our way, and at length arose and walked over to our table. He asked us if we were there to attend the conference. I was amazed that he had somehow made that deduction!

“Yes, we *are* here for the unity conference! How did you know?”

He pointed to our car, and said, “It’s your license plate.”

At that time, we were Illinois residents, and our car had a personalized license plate with “**Yahweh 4**” on it. I then understood how that license plate could have given us away: it seems that most believers who call on the name Yahweh meet on the Sabbath. And an Illinois resident would not have driven over 150 miles without there being some extra motivation, such as a unity conference! We introduced ourselves and gave each other some background information about how we had arrived at the decision to observe the Sabbath Day.

We were enjoying a very lively discussion, but at one point we both ran out of things to say. Suddenly the man, who had identified himself as a seventh-day Pentecostal preacher, glanced over at our car, pointed at our license plate, and calmly stated, “I’ve already proven that wrong.”

I wasn’t prepared for his remark, so I asked, “What?”

He replied, “I’ve already studied into the sacred names. There’s nothing to it. It’s a false teaching.”

I asked, “What evidence do you have for this?”

“Well,” he answered, “For one thing, are you aware that pagans had used the Name ‘Yahweh’ for their gods?” Actually, I *was* aware of that fact. I had only recently read a book of mythology in which was included

the details of some Samaritan sect that worshipped a goddess named “Yahweh-Asherah” among their list of other gods and goddesses.



“Yes,” I answered, “I know that pagans *did* use Yahweh’s Name as the name of at least one of their deities. But have you considered the possibility that maybe, just maybe, those pagans *borrowed* the Name of the Creator, the true Name, and applied that Name to their deities? Would that make void the Name of the Creator, just because some pagans applied His Name to their deities?” I asked.

“Well, that may be true, but God has *many* names.”

“Okay, then let me ask you a few questions. The Moabites had this detestable god that they worshipped. Do you remember its name?”

He couldn’t remember.

“It was Chemosh. Do you think our Heavenly Father would mind if we called Him ‘Chemosh’?”

“Well, I don’t think He would like that,” the man chuckled.

“I don’t either,” I agreed. “Now the Philistines’ chief deity was known as the ‘fish god.’ Do you remember its name?” He did not.

“It was Dagon. Do you think it would be okay for us to start calling our Heavenly Father ‘Dagon’?”

“No, I don’t think He would like that, either,” the man answered. I could tell he was trying to see what I was getting at, but I continued with another question.

“The Ammonites worshipped an abominable deity that they sacrificed their children to in the fire. Do you remember its name?”

He rubbed his forehead for a few seconds, and at length dejectedly admitted that he could not remember.

“His name was ‘Molech,’” I stated. “Do you think it would be all right for us to call our Heavenly Father ‘Molech’?”

“No, I don’t think that would be all right,” he mused. I could tell that he was still puzzled by my motive in asking these questions.

“Okay, the Babylonians worshipped many deities. Do you remember who their chief deity was?”

Once again, he did not know the answer.

“Well, their chief deity was named ‘Bel,’ which was the basic equivalent of the god named ‘Baal.’ Do you think it would be all right for us to call our Heavenly Father ‘Bel’ or ‘Baal’?”

Again, he answered in the negative.

“Okay, those Babylonians worshipped many deities, as I said, and among them was one known as the deity of fortune. The name of that deity was ‘Gad,’ which is actually pronounced ‘God’ in Hebrew. So my question is this: Based on the fact that there was a false deity named ‘God,’ do you *really* think it’s okay for us to refer to the Creator as ‘God’? Is that name to be preferred over ‘Yahweh’?”

He did not answer my question. Instead, he moved on to a different subject—whether or not we believe in “speaking in tongues.”

Was there really a pagan deity named “God”?

At this point you may be wondering, “Where in the world do you come up with the notion that there was ever a deity of fortune named ‘God’?”

Well, all it takes is a little studying of Isaiah 65:11. This is a tricky verse, because the *King James Version*, unfortunately, fails to properly translate a key word. Shown below is Isaiah 65:11 as it appears in the *King James Version*:

¹¹But ye *are* they that forsake the LORD, that forget my holy mountain, that prepare a table for that troop, and that furnish the drink offering unto that number.”

Of course, hopefully by now we are all able to recognize that “the LORD” should have been rendered “YHWH,” but this is not the word that we are concerned with as we demonstrate our point. The “key word” we are looking for actually comes out to *two words* in that verse. The words are “that troop.” Even by making a cursory examination of the placement of the words “that troop” in Isaiah 65:11, it is apparent that they somehow do not fit. There is no context for the words to fit in the passage! A “troop” is, according to our dictionary, “A cavalry unit corresponding in organization to an infantry. An assemblage of persons or things; company; a herd, flock, or swarm; a unit of Girl Scouts or Boy Scouts under the supervision of an adult.”

With the parameters of this definition in mind, we can discern that, if the word “troop” actually belongs in Isaiah 65:11, then Yahweh is angry with someone for either preparing a table for “an assemblage of persons” or for “a cavalry unit.” The only problem is, there is no prior reference to any “assemblage of persons” or “cavalry units” that would indicate either a positive *or* a negative connotation! In other words, the words “that troop” do not make sense in Isaiah 65:11. Use of the words “that troop” begs the question, “What troop?” The passage itself leaves us no answer. Only by looking up this Hebrew word in a concordance or lexicon can one truly discern its original meaning, and hence its proper intent!

The Hebrew word translated “that troop” is word #1409 in the *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance*, and is shown below as it appears in *Strong’s*:

1409. גַּד *gâd*, *gawd*; from 1464 (in the sense of *distributing*); *fortune*:—troop.

Interestingly, word #1408 in Strong’s appears to be the actual word definition that was intended for word #1409! Both words are spelled exactly the same, the only difference being indicated by the vowel points. Shown below is word #1408 as it appears in *Strong’s*:

1408. גַּד *Gad*, *gad*; a var. of 1409; *Fortune*, a Bab. Deity:—that troop.

Again, the Hebrew spelling of these two numbered items in *Strong’s* is exactly the same. Both words are proper nouns, and refer to the Babylonian deity of fortune, whose name is pronounced “gawd.”

The King James Version offers the most blatantly incorrect rendering of the Hebrew word גַּד, as most other versions at least recognize that גַּד is the Babylonian deity of fortune; they translate the word as “Fortune.” In light of the fact that to correctly transliterate גַּד as “God” in Isaiah 65:11 would be quite damaging to the name that we’ve all been taught to apply to the Creator of the universe, it is *almost* understandable, though clearly unfaithful to the Word of Yahweh, that the translators would go to great pains to protect that name/title. By rendering the word as “that troop,” they effectively covered up the fact that Yahweh condemns the worship of “God”! Names, however, are not supposed to be translated—they are *transliterated*, or pronounced the same from one language to the next, and in Isaiah 65:11 a negative reference is clearly made to a deity whose name is pronounced “God.”

Adam Clarke, in his *Commentary on the Holy Bible*, made the following comment with regard to Isaiah 65:11:

11. *That prepare a table for that troop*—‘Who set in order a table for Gad.’ The disquisitions and conjectures of the learned concerning Gad and Meni are infinite and uncertain; perhaps the most probable may be that Gad means good fortune and Meni the moon.

Mr. Clarke recognized that “Gad” is a proper noun, and set forth what he felt was a more proper rendering of that Hebrew word. Indeed, “Gad” is a more proper rendering of the Hebrew word גַּד, but as we have shown, “God” (*gawd*) is the most accurate transliteration. By the way, Mr. Clarke’s use of the name “Meni” above stems from yet another King James Version mistranslation of Hebrew word #4507, incorrectly translated “that number” in Isaiah 65:11.

Do you think our Heavenly Father minds if we call Him the same name that was given to the Babylonian deity of Fortune? Or do you think He might prefer the name that he gave to Himself?

Gad, of course, is the name that was given to one of Jacob’s sons, born to him by Leah’s maid Zilpah. It is also the name of a Hebrew prophet. This does not, however, take away from the word’s *origin*. The *New Bible Dictionary*, 2nd ed., 1982, by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois, p. 398, offers information on the two men named “Gad,” as well as information on the tribe of Gad. The dictionary then offers the following data:

4. A pagan deity worshipped by the Canaanites as the god of Fortune for whom they ‘prepare a table’ (Is. 65:11, RV, Avmg.). (*GAD, Valley of).

Thus we can see that the Canaanites and Babylonians worshipped a deity whose name is pronounced “God,” and was considered the deity of fortune. We would ask you, as I asked the preacher that day, “Do you think our Heavenly Father minds if we call Him the same name designated for the Babylonian deity of fortune? Or do you think He might prefer the name He gave to Himself?”

“But names can be translated, can’t they?”

When I was first told that there are actually people who believe we should call our Heavenly Father by His Hebrew Name, I could only shake my head and laugh. “Ha! That’s ridiculous!” I blurted. “If the Apostle Paul called Him ‘Theos,’ then I can call Him ‘God’!”

Indeed, as far back as anyone can find in the New Testament manuscripts that exist, none of which are originals, and most of which are written in Greek, the title “Theos” (translated into English as “God”) is often employed where one would expect to find “YHWH.” Did the Apostle Paul and the other writers of the New Testament refer to the Creator as “Theos”? And if they *did*, then what could possibly be wrong with referring to our Creator as “God” instead of “Yahweh”? This last question may seem trivial to some folks; to us, it is paramount. After all, if my old way of thinking is the way *you* think now, then your decision as to whether or not you will choose “Yahweh” over “God” may well rest on determining the most reasonable answer.

“Only in a few localities, notably in Crete, does any form of the name of Zeus survive, but the god still lives under the title Θεός [Theos], a title so conveniently equivocal that the Christian can use it without heresy and at the same time square perfectly with the ancient pagan belief.” — *Greek and Roman Mythology*, Appendix I, p. 312.

According to one article on this subject, “Paul invariably used the Greek words for “God” (theos) and “Lord” (kurios). And he used the Greek name Iesous (Jesus). And so did the other writers of New Testament books, as inspired by God’s Holy Spirit.”¹⁷ The author of the article then places the burden of proof on those who believe otherwise, because ... “The evidence (for the belief that Paul referred to the Almighty as “Yahweh” and to His

¹⁷ Keith W. Stump, “What is God’s Name?” *The Good News of the World Tomorrow* magazine, January, 1986, pp. 17-18.

Son as “Yeshua”)? There is none—for it is a totally false notion, devised out of necessity to justify a false premise!”¹⁸ A “false premise”? Before we accept this author’s notion as fact, let’s go deeper.

Although it is true that the majority of ancient New Testament manuscripts only survive in Greek form, some Hebrew manuscripts have also surfaced, including the Hebrew Matthew, as well as a Hebrew text of the book of Hebrews. In these texts, there is evidence supporting the belief that the Tetragrammaton was in the original documents.¹⁹ Moreover, the Messiah’s name is written either as Yeshua (יֵשׁוּעַ) or Yahushua (יְהוֹשֻׁעַ).²⁰ Thus, there is strong evidence that the insertion of a substitute for the Father’s name occurred when the originals were copied. Notice the following commentary from the book *The Cairo Geniza*:

We now know that the Greek Bible text as far as it was

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 18.

¹⁹ Cf., *Hebrew Gospel of Matthew*, translated by George Howard, Professor of Religion, University of Georgia, Mercer University Press, 1995, Part Two (Analysis and Commentary), p. 229, where we read, “Shem-Tob’s Hebrew Matthew employs the Divine Name, symbolized by “ה (apparently an abbreviation for יהוה, ‘the Name’).” On the following page, Professor Howard adds, “The appearance of the Divine Name in a Christian document quoted by a Jewish polemist is interesting, to say the least. If this text were a translation of the First Gospel by Shem-Tob himself, we would expect to find *adonai* in the text where the Greek or Latin reads ‘the Lord.’ We would never expect to see the ineffable Divine Name used as a translation equivalent of *Κυριος* or *Dominus*. I have no hesitancy in saying that the occurrence of the Divine Name in places where the canonical text lacks any reference to the Lord at all, eliminates Shem-Tob as the author of this text. *No pious Jew of the Middle Ages would have dignified a Christian text by inserting the Divine Name.*” [Note: In the *DuTillet Hebrew Matthew*, the Divine Name is abbreviated with two “yods” (י), and it appears in its full form (יהוה) in the *Münster Hebrew Matthew*.]

²⁰ For a brief notation regarding these two forms of the Messiah’s name, I will here cite page lix of James Scott Trimm’s introduction to his Bible translation known as *The Hebraic-Roots Version Bible*: “In rendering the name of the Messiah the HRV uses ‘Yeshua’ except in the Book of Hebrews where the Hebrew manuscript has יְהוֹשֻׁעַ ‘Yahushua.’”

written by Jews for Jews did not translate the Divine name by *kyrios*, but the Tetragrammaton written with Hebrew or Greek letters was retained in much MSS. It was the Christians who replaced the Tetragrammaton by *kyrios*, when the divine name written in Hebrew letters was not understood any more.²¹

We see, then, that it is more than conjecture that the authors of the New Testament books **retained** the name of both the Father and His Son in their writings. If they did not, this begs the question, “*Why not?*” Why **not** retain the name of the Almighty?

Zeus Still Lives Under the Title “Theos”

We have already shown that when the Creator gave us His Name, He chose to reveal the Name YHWH. In other words, He named **Himself** “Yahweh”! All the believers of the Old Testament, such as King David, when they spoke, blessed the Name of Yahweh:

12 My foot standeth in an even place: in the
congregations will I bless Yahweh (יְהוָה)!
(Psalms 26:12)

Although we have stated this before, it bears repeating that if employing the Name *Yahweh* suited the likes of King David, then it should be suitable for us as well! It’s the original and the best! However, what about the Greek term “*Theos*”? By now we should all understand that no word or title can be legitimately used as a replacement for the Creator’s name. If we can agree that there is no reasonable excuse to replace the name of our Heavenly Father with any substitutes, our next step is to see if there is anything wrong with using the *title* “Theos” in reference to Yahweh. As it turns out, there is no evidence that, as a *title*, there is anything improper

²¹ From *The Cairo Geniza* by Paul E. Kahle, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 2nd edition, 1959, page 222. Those with internet access might consider accessing the following link for additional information:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tetragrammaton_in_the_New_Testament#_ref-9

about this Greek term, even though, as we are about to see, it was used in reference to a heathen idol. Consider the following information as found in the book *The Mythology of All Races in Thirteen Volumes*, Vol. I, *Greek and Roman Mythology*, Appendix I, “Survivals of Ancient Greek Divinities and Myths in Modern Greece,” p. 312:

Only in a few localities, notably in Crete, does any form of the name of Zeus survive, but the god still lives under the title Θεός [Theos], a title so conveniently equivocal that the Christian can use it without heresy and at the same time square perfectly with the ancient pagan belief.²²

Notice that, according to the information offered above, Zeus still lives under the **title** “Theos.” Many folks consider the fact that Zeus is worshipped with the title “Theos” as a legitimate reason to *not* refer to Yahweh as our “Theos.”²³ However, there is a huge difference between a **name** and a **title**. Henry Ford, for example, was an inventor. His name was **Henry Ford**, and his title was **inventor**. No one would have addressed him as “Inventor.” In the same way, if the word “Theos” is a culture’s way of expressing “the Most High Creator of all Living Things,” then this is the word we would have to use as a title while sharing our faith with someone from that culture. In describing the Mighty One we worship, we might say, “*Yahweh is our Theos*” to help a Greek listener understand Who we worship. Since we have not found any evidence of an idol ever having borne the name *Theos*, we find it premature to reject this word as a title just because it was applied as a title to Zeus. If we reject the title *Theos* because

²² Louis Herbert Gray, A.M., Ph. D., Editor, *The Mythology of All Races in Thirteen Volumes*, Vol. I, *Greek and Roman Mythology*, Appendix I, “Survivals of Ancient Greek Divinities and Myths in Modern Greece,” by William Sherwood Fox, A.M., Ph.D., Asst. Professor of Classics, Princeton University, 1964, Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., New York, page 312.

²³ For example, Jacob O. Meyer in his booklet entitled *Exploding the Inspired Greek New Testament Myth* (a publication of Assemblies of Yahweh, 1978, p. 15), makes the following statement regarding the title *Theos*: “Yahweh would hardly call Himself Theos, which Dr. Ignaz Goldzhier in his book **The Mythology of the Hebrews**, states conclusively is the same as Zeus, the idol of the Greeks!”

of its prior association with Zeus, then we may as well reject the Hindu title *Maheshvar* (“Great Master”), which has been applied to the many deities worshipped by that culture. How would we convey to the Hindu culture that Yahweh is the true “Great Master” (*Maheshvar*), since they wouldn’t even know what “Elohim” or “Almighty” means in their language?

Is it Heretical to Refer to Yahweh as “Our Theos”?

We know that there is a rather substantial contingency of believers who believe it is heretical to refer to Yahweh as *Theos*. For those who, in spite of the above reasoning, still insist that it is an act of heresy to refer to Yahweh as “Theos,” we invite you to approach the matter of Yahweh’s titles from the perspective of the English title “Almighty.” Please bear in mind that not everyone agrees that Yahweh is the “Almighty.” For example, an English-speaking Hindu would argue that *Varuna* is the Almighty.²⁴ If we thus apply the argument that a Greek-speaking believer would not have referred to Yahweh as the true “Theos” because that’s the same title the heathens used for Zeus, then similarly, we cannot refer to Yahweh as the true “Almighty” because that’s what the Hindus use to refer to Varuna. Having eliminated “Almighty” as a legitimate title for Yahweh, we would have to find another one to use. Eventually, we would run out of titles to apply to Yahweh ... all because the heathens would respond, “No, *Varuna* is Supreme!” or “No, *Varuna* is the Eternal!”

In the days of the early believers, the worship of Zeus definitely rivaled the worship of Yahweh. To a Greek-speaking believer (both then and now), the title “Theos” conveys the concept of the supreme creator, just as the title “Almighty” does in our English language. That was simply how they ascribed the ultimate title of supreme greatness and superiority. To

²⁴ I obtained this information from the online article “The Ultimate Reality in World Religions” by Ernest Valea, where he mentions that the oldest supreme deity in the *Vedas* (a collection of Hindu hymns) seems to be Varuna, whom the author identifies as “the sustainer of creation and guardian of universal order.” You may read the entire article by accessing the following URL: <http://www.comparativereligion.com/god.html>.

some, that title belonged to Zeus. To others, it belonged to Yahweh. Thus, an argument might well have broken out amongst the Greeks in which one person declared, “Zeus is Theos!” to which the other person answered, “No, Yahweh is Theos!” This same argument could have developed among early believers who spoke *Hebrew*. The one person might have declared, “Zeus is Elohim!” to which the other declared, “No, *Yahweh* is Elohim!” Just as the Hebrew-speaking believer would not have eliminated “Elohim” from his list of “acceptable titles for Yahweh” because the heathen worshipper used that title for Zeus, in the same way, the Greek-speaking believer would not have eliminated “Theos” from his list of “acceptable titles for Yahweh” because it happened to be the title of choice for a Zeus-worshipper.

Historically-speaking, it can be demonstrated that from the *earliest times*, Greek-speaking believers who called upon the name of Yahweh referred to Him as their “*Theos*.” This can be verified by researching the oldest known manuscripts of the Septuagint, which is the Greek OT that was translated from Hebrew into Greek during the 3rd century B.C.E. The oldest known Greek text of the Septuagint is a fragment known as Papyrus Fouad 266 (also known as P. Faud 266).²⁵ This fragment, dated as late as 50 B.C.E., contains the second half of the book of Deuteronomy, and instead of substituting *Kyrios* for the Tetragrammaton, the form יהוה, in

²⁵ C.f., *The Journal of Theological Studies*, Vol. XLV, Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1944, p. 159, article entitled “Notes and Studies: The Tetragrammaton in the LXX” by W.G. Waddell, where we read his response to the general claim that the Name did not appear in any copies of the Septuagint: “This statement is now flatly disproved by a new papyrus of the LXX, the remains of a roll containing the second half of the Book of Deuteronomy, which in the extant fragments shows no example of *Κυριος*, but everywhere the Tetragrammaton written in Aramaic characters. This papyrus belongs to the Société Royale de Papyrologie du Caire; it is part of the collection of Fouad Papyri, of which Nos. 1—89 were published in one volume (*P. Fouad I*, 1939), and it bears the Inventory No. 266. Written in beautiful, rounded uncials by a Jew who was also master of the Greek language, it may be dated to the 2nd or the 1st century B.C.: the nearest analogue to the script appears to be the *Dialectical Treatise* (now in Paris), written before 160 B.C. (E. Maunde Thompson, *Intro. to Greek and Latin Palaeography*, 1912, pp. 112 f.), and there is on one fragment a marginal annotation in a cursive script which supports this early date.”

Aramaic script, appears in the otherwise Greek text. According to *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Papyrus Fouad 266 is listed as one of three pre-Christian copies of the Greek Scriptures known to incorporate the Divine Name:

The extant pre-Christian copies of the Greek OT that included passages which in Hebrew incorporate the Divine Name also preserve the Hebrew Divine Name in the Greek text. These copies are (1) P.Faud 266 (= Rahifs 848), 50 B.C.E., containing the Tetragrammaton in Aramaic letters; (2) a fragmentary scroll of the Twelve Prophets in Greek from Wâdi Khabra (= W. Khabra XII *Kaige*), 50 B.C.E.-50 C.E., containing the Tetragrammaton in Paleo-Hebrew letters; and (3) 4QLXX^{Levb} (= Rahifs 802), 1st century B.C.E., containing the Tetragrammaton written in Greek letters in the form of *IAO*. The well-known Jewish-Greek versions of the OT that emerged in the 2nd century C.E., i.e., those of Aquila, Theodotion, and Symmachus, continued the Jewish practice of writing the Hebrew Tetragrammaton into the Greek text. The evidence, therefore, suggests that the practice of writing the Hebrew Divine Name into the text of the Greek OT continued throughout the NT period.²⁶

It is truly significant that the most ancient evidence we have available demonstrates that the early believers chose to incorporate the name Yahweh into the Greek text instead of “translating” it. However, it is also significant that these same believers incorporated the title *Theos* in reference to Yahweh! Kristin De Troyer, professor of Hebrew Bible at the Claremont School of Theology and Professor of Religion at the Claremont Graduate University, who also specializes in researching the Septuagint, issued the following statement in her article “The Names of God: Their Pronunciation and Their Translation”:

Theos, in a non-contracted form, also appears in PFouad 266a, the Genesis fragment (dated to the first century

²⁶ From *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 6, Doubleday, New York, David Noel Freedman, Ed.-in-Chief, 1992, p. 392.

BCE), in PFouad 266c, the Deuteronomy fragment, dated to the late first century BCE, and in POxy 4443, the LXX Esther text from the 1st-2nd century CE. *Theos*, albeit in a contracted form, also appears in P.Amh.1, n.3, an Aquila text of Genesis from the third century CE.²⁷

Since it can be shown that *Theos* appears as a title for Yahweh in the most ancient Greek texts known to exist, we need to be careful with the argument that the early believers would not have applied the title *Theos* to Yahweh. The fact is, they *did*. The critical difference lies in the fact that *Theos*, unlike the title *God*, cannot be traced to the name of a heathen idol. It has only been a term reserved for use as a *title*, not a name. Some have attempted to prove that *Theos* was originally the name of a heathen idol, but every time we examine their reasons for believing this, we have found their reasoning to be flawed.²⁸ After conducting our own earnest research into this question, we have found no idol in the Greek pantheon (or any other religion for that matter) named *Theos*. This is significant because we do not believe the early believers would have referred to Yahweh with a title that emanated from the name of a heathen idol. This understanding is reflected, in fact, from Yahweh Himself in the Torah. Shown below is Exodus 23:13:

13 And in all *things* that I have said unto you be circumspect: and **make no mention of the name of other gods**, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth.

See also Joshua 23:7 for further substantiation of the fact that Yahweh does not want us mentioning the names of heathen idols. These verses plainly demonstrate that our Creator, who never changes, does not desire

²⁷ From “The Names of God: Their Pronunciation and Their Translation,” by Kristin DeTroyer, 2/2005. This article may be read in its entirety by accessing the following URL:

http://www.lectio.unibe.ch/05_2/troyer_names_of_god.htm#_edn67

²⁸ For a more thorough investigation into the claim that *Theos* was originally the name of a heathen idol, please read our study entitled *God's Name According to Ancient Hebrew Scholars*. This study can be read online by accessing the following URL:
<http://www.ponderscripture.org/PDF%20Files/Gods%20Identity%20According%20to%20Ancient%20Hebrew%20Scholars.pdf>.

that we incorporate the names of foreign deities in our worship of Him. King David, who left no doubt about his love for the Name of Yahweh, penned the following words in Psalms 16:4:

4 Their sorrows shall be multiplied *that* hasten *after* another *elohim*: their drink offerings of blood will I not offer, **nor take up their names into my lips**.

King David would not even *speak* the names of these despicable idols, yet modern man has the audacity, not only to apply these names to our Creator, but to teach that it is *His desire* that we do so! In fact, what has happened is, the names we've been told to not even speak—these are the names that man has chosen to apply to the Creator; and the actual *Name* of the Creator— we've been told (by man) that we shouldn't even *speak* it! How ironic!

So did the Apostle Paul and other New Testament writers *really* use the term “*Theos*” when referring to the Creator? Based upon our own research, the answer to this question is a definitive “Yes.” However, we need to quickly remind you that *theos* has never been anything more than a generic *title*, not a name, and therein lies the difference, especially when it can be demonstrated that *theos* was not originally used *in place of* the Tetragrammaton, but in conjunction with it. When we critically examine all the information we have thus far presented, we can see, then, that we must be careful. The Apostle Paul, in his famous speech on Mars Hill, referred to the Almighty as “*Theos*,” but only as a *title* to help his Greek-speaking audience to understand Who the “true *Theos*” is. Here is what he stated in Acts 17:22-25:

²² Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.

²³ For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN *THEOS*. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you!

²⁴ The *Theos* that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is *kyrios* [Lord, Master] of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;

²⁵ Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though He needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things.

Since there is no evidence that *theos* was originally ever anything more than a generic title, it goes without saying that we must be careful to not substitute the Creator's Name with such a title. As it turns out, the title that was predominantly used in replacing the Creator's name is the Greek *kyrios*. Professor George Howard of The University of Georgia, Athens, GA, who translated into English the *Shem Tob* Hebrew Matthew, wrote an article in the *Journal of Biblical Literature* entitled "The Tetragram and the New Testament." In his article, Professor Howard addresses the translators' decision to replace the name *Yahweh* with the substitute *Kyrios*:

... the divine name, יהוה, (and possibly abbreviations of it), was originally written in the NT quotations of and allusions to the OT and that in the course of time it was replaced mainly with the surrogate Κς [*kyrios*]. This removal of the Tetragram, in our view, created a confusion in the minds of early Gentile Christians about the relationship between the "Lord God" and the "Lord Christ" which is reflected in the MS tradition of the NT text itself.²⁹

After a year of further research into this matter, Professor Howard submitted an even more detailed article to the *Biblical Archaeology Review*, published in March 1978. He provides further documentation of numerous Greek texts (such as copies of the Septuagint) that have been discovered over the years since the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls ... texts which "clearly show the Hebrew Tetragrammaton in paleo-Hebrew script written into the otherwise Greek text."³⁰ He summarizes his findings by stating the following:

²⁹ George Howard, "The Tetragram and the New Testament," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 96 (1977): p. 63. See also *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 6, "Tetragrammaton in the New Testament."

³⁰ George Howard, "The Name of God in the New Testament," *Biblical Archaeology Review*, March, 1978, p. 13.

We can now say with near certainty that it was a Jewish practice before, during, and after the New Testament period to write the divine name in paleo-Hebrew or square Aramaic script or in transliteration right into the Greek text of Scripture. 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*.³¹

"Jewish scribes always preserved the Tetragrammaton in their copies of the Septuagint both before and after the New Testament period. In all probability Jewish Christians wrote the Tetragrammaton in Hebrew as well." — Prof. George Howard, quoted from the *Biblical Archaeology Review*

On the following page of his article, George Howard gives his perspective of "what went wrong" and how it came to pass:

...I offer the following scenario of the history of the Tetragrammaton in the Greek Bible as a whole, including both testaments. First, as to the Old Testament: Jewish scribes always preserved the Tetragrammaton in their copies of the Septuagint both before and after the New Testament period. In all probability Jewish Christians wrote the Tetragrammaton in Hebrew as well. Toward the end of the first Christian century, when the church had become predominantly Gentile, the motive for retaining the Hebrew name for God was lost and the words *kyrios* and *theos* were substituted for it in Christian copies of Old Testament Septuagints. Both *kyrios* and *theos* were written in abbreviated form in a conscious effort to preserve the sacred nature of the divine name. Soon the original significance of the contractions was lost and many other contracted words were added.

A similar pattern probably evolved with respect to the New Testament. When the Septuagint which the New

³¹ Ibid, p. 13.

Testament church used and quoted contained the Hebrew form of the divine name, the New Testament writers no doubt included the Tetragrammaton in their quotations. But when the Hebrew form for the divine name was eliminated in favor of Greek substitutes in the Septuagint, it was eliminated also from the New Testament quotations of the Septuagint.

Thus toward the end of the first Christian century, the use of surrogates (*kyrios* and *theos*) and their contractions must have crowded out the Hebrew Tetragrammaton in both Testaments. Before long the divine name was lost to the Gentile church except insofar as it was reflected in the contracted surrogates or remembered by scholars. Soon, even the contracted substitutes lost their original significance and were joined by a host of other abbreviated *nomina sacra* which had no connection with the divine name at all.

Is there any way for us, at this late date, to calculate the effect which this change in the Bible had on the second century church? It is of course impossible to know with certainty, but the effect must have been significant.³²

Professor Howard recognizes the problems created by substituting other names and titles for “the real McCoy.” We cannot go back in time to undo the damage committed by these men who either lacked understanding or else had impure motives in their treatment of our Heavenly Father’s name. The damage has been done. We may be powerless to stop what’s already happened, but that doesn’t mean we’re powerless to take steps to correct things *in the here and now*! Once we recognize our engine’s not clicking on all cylinders, we aren’t supposed to just go on and ignore it without at least making plans to bring it in for repairs! If we can now get a handle on what has gone wrong with man’s handling of the Creator’s name, and if we can grasp how all of this was out of the bounds of Yahweh’s Will, then surely we can at least begin making plans for when we will once for all stop playing along with the game, when we will once for all stop following the piper.

³² Ibid, p. 14.

We need to pause for a few moments and reflect upon the fact that there is a powerful being out there who doesn’t want us to worship the Creator of the universe. But if he cannot succeed with *that* plan, then might he attempt to at least succeed in preventing us from calling upon the Almighty by name? Some folks will insist that we’re blowing this whole “name” issue out of proportion. If we’re going “overboard,” however, we would prefer to err on the side of safety ... and we know that when it comes to *safety*, there is no safer place to run to than the name of Yahweh:

10 The name of Yahweh is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe. (Prov. 18:10)

We choose to run to the name of Yahweh ... how about you?

We believe the time has come to filter out the suggestions and interpretations of men who would be teachers and prophets; the time has come to wholly submit to what our **Heavenly Father** says, no holds barred and no questions asked! The Almighty plainly told us that if we are His people, we will *know His name* (Isaiah 52:6). As we have already seen, the patriarchs *knew His name* ... and they called upon that name. Thus, if we imitate the patriarchs instead of following the counsel of men who teach that His name is “too sacred to pronounce,” we’ll be in excellent company! As for June and me, we have chosen to take Yahweh at His Word instead of doing what *seems* right to us, i.e., “every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes” (Deut. 12:8).

“When the Septuagint which the New Testament church used and quoted contained the Hebrew form of the divine name, the New Testament writers no doubt included the Tetragrammaton in their quotations.” — Prof. George Howard, quoted from the Biblical Archaeology Review

There is most certainly reason to question the teaching that the Creator sanctions the use of pagan deities’ names and titles in the place of His own. In light of this “reason to question,” we are faced with a decision. Since He is the Creator of the universe, He is deserving of the most fruitful worship and servitude that we can offer Him. True worship is manifested, not in doing *our* will, but in humbling ourselves totally before our Maker. When we **totally** humble ourselves before Him, we simultaneously submit to what

we know are the desires of the Creator. What *is* His desire, then? That we call upon Him or refer to Him by a name known to have been the name of a pagan idol? Or do we, out of a total and pure desire to respect the wishes of our Heavenly Father, choose to call upon Him by the Name that He ***gave Himself*** and revealed to His servants? Which of the two choices shown below is the ***best*** one?

QUIZ TIME! MARK THE MOST APPROPRIATE NAME TO CALL OUR CREATOR!

- ☐ The name/title “God,” which not only was devised by man, but can also be shown to have been the name of the Babylonian deity of fortune.
- ☒ The name “Yahweh,” which is the name our Creator gave to Himself.

The Dios and Zeus Connection

We have just addressed the Greek title *Theos*, and we have demonstrated that, contrary to some claims we have heard, it has never been anything other than a generic title used to designate a supreme being. Such being the case, we do not see any negative ramifications for referring to Yahweh as “our Theos,” especially for our Greek-speaking friends. However, another term that is commonly used in reference to the Creator is *Dios*. *Dios* is the common Spanish term used in reference to the Creator of the universe. Let’s examine this name/title to see if using *Dios* in reference to Yahweh gives Him honor. As it turns out, few people seem to be aware that *Dios* is derived from Zeus worship! Consider the following information taken from *Answers.com*,³³ which traces the origin of the word “Dioscuri” back to Zeus:

Di-os-cu-ri (dī-ōs'kyə-rī, dī'ə-skyŭr'ī)
pl.n. Greek Mythology.

³³ Those with internet access can view this definition and etymology online by visiting the following URL:
<http://www.answers.com/topic/dioscuri>

Castor and Pollux, the twin sons of Leda and brothers of Helen and Clytemnestra, who were transformed by Zeus into the constellation Gemini.

[Greek Dioskouroi : Dios, genitive of Zeus, Zeus + kouroi, pl. of kouros, boy.]

As indicated from the above listing for the item “Dioscuri,” it comes from two Greek words: *Dios*, meaning “of Zeus,” and *kouros*, meaning “boy” or “son.”

Moreover, if we examine the Greek text of the New Testament, it is plain to see that *Dios* actually comes closer to the pronunciation of the Greek idol’s name than does *Zeus*! Shown below is Acts 14:13:

13 And the priest of **Zeus**, whose temple was in front of the city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates and wanted to offer sacrifice with the people. (RSV)

Shown below is how the above text appears within the Greek manuscript:³⁴

14:13	Ο	ΔΕ	ΙΕΡΕΥΣ	ΤΟΥ	ΔΙΟΣ	ΤΟΥ	ΟΝΤΟΣ	13	Then the priest of
	ho	de	hierous	tou	dios	tou	ontos		Jupiter,
	THE	YET	SACRED one	OF THE	ZEUS	THE	BEING		which
			priest						was before their
	ΠΡΟ	ΤΗΣ	ΠΟΛΕΩΣ	ΑΥΤΩΝ	ΤΑΥΡΟΥΣ	ΚΑΙ			city, brought oxen
	BEFORE	THE	city	OF-them	BULLS	AND			and garlands
									unto the gates,
	ΣΤΕΜΜΑΤΑ	ΕΠΙ	ΤΟΥΣ	ΠΥΛΩΝΑΣ	ΕΝΕΓΚΑΣ				and would have
	stemmata	epi	tous	pylonas	enegkas				done sacrifice
	garlands	ON	THE	GATES	CARRYING				with the people.
				portals	bringing				
	ΚΥΝ	ΤΟΙΣ	ΟΧΛΟΙΣ	ΗΘΕΛΕΝ	ΘΥΕΙΝ				
	sun	tois	ochlois	Ethelen	thuein				
	TOGETHER	to-THE	THRONGS	he-WILLED	TO-BE-SACRIFICING				
		with-the		willed					

³⁴ Taken from Interlinear Scripture Analyzer 2, ISA basic 2.1.3, Copyright © 2010 André de Mol. All rights reserved. This program is available for download at www.scripture4all.org.

The word circled above is pronounced “*Dios*” in the Greek language. However, for those who would like to see only the literal transliteration of the Greek text of Acts 14:13, the following should be helpful in eliminating any doubts:

[13] ho te hiereus tou **Dios** tou ontos pro tês poleôs
taurous kai stemmata epi tous pulônas enenkas sun tois
ochlois êthelen thuein.³⁵

Thus, we see that the Spanish word “*Dios*,” considered by unsuspecting believers as “the Creator’s Spanish name,” is none other than the name recognized by the Apostle Paul, as well as the New Testament authors, as the name of a *heathen idol*. Once we absorb all the information disclosing the tampering of Yahweh’s name, combined with how He has made it clear He wants us to know and use His name (reverently), certainly this additional information regarding the appellative commonly used by Spanish worshippers should call into question once for all the validity of allowing the slightest hint of a substitution to creep into His magnificent Word. How could true believers have sanctioned this? Are we going to follow along with the crowd? Which path do *we* choose?

What do choosy worshippers choose?

Years ago, there was a popular television commercial about a particular brand of peanut butter. A man with a microphone would approach a woman as she pushed her cart through a grocery store. He would say, “I noticed that you chose ‘Brand X’ peanut butter.”

“Yes,” the woman confirmed. “It’s the brand my family likes best.”

“Have you ever tried *Jif*® peanut butter?”

³⁵ This transliteration may be viewed online by accessing the following URL:

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0155&layout=&loc=Acts+14%3A12>

The man opens the lid, and the woman smells the aroma. “*Smells like fresh peanuts!*” she exclaims in a tone of surprise.

“*Taste Jif*®!” The man offers her a spoon.

“TASTES like fresh peanuts!” The woman is converted. “From now on, my family gets *Jif*®!” she announces as she puts “Brand X” back where it came from. The commercial ends with a persuasive voice suggesting that “CHOOSY MOTHERS CHOOSE JIF®!”

For the record, we are not recommending *Jif*® peanut butter to anyone. Nevertheless, the message in that commercial should not be overlooked. No one in his right mind would say, “I do not want the best.” We all want the best for ourselves and for our families, so if we can afford to be “choosy,” we instinctively go for what we know to be the best of **anything**. Can we transfer the message promoted by that commercial to how we regard the worship of our Heavenly Father? YES, WE CAN! How would that commercial go for worshippers of the Most High Heavenly Father? Would it be: “CHOOSY WORSHIPPERS CHOOSE THE NAME THAT THE CREATOR GAVE TO HIMSELF!”? Or would it be: “CHOOSY WORSHIPPERS CHOOSE THE NAME ORIGINALLY ATTRIBUTED TO A FALSE DEITY!”? The choice is ours.

In the above paragraph, we stated that “if we can afford to be ‘choosy,’ we instinctively go for what we know to be the best of **anything**.” There is a lot of truth to that statement! The same thing applies to our worship of the Creator. Just as there may be a higher price to pay for a better brand of peanut butter, there is a higher price to pay when it comes to service to the Almighty. Yes, there is a cost involved. Sometimes the price we pay for the way we worship Him is the loss of friends. Sometimes it is the loss of family. The way in which we worship our Heavenly Father, then, can be **very** expensive. A decision to switch from calling upon the name/title of “God” to “Yahweh” can be done at the cost of the relationship to friends and families. Oh, they may not wholly reject you, but they’ll certainly think you’ve “lost a few marbles”! At the very worst, they **will** wholly reject you! Choosing the best can be **very** expensive!

But let’s analyze this scenario in a different light, a different perspective. Let’s suppose that, as time progressed beyond the Bible times that man retained the true Name of the Creator. By that, we mean, let’s suppose that, instead of translating “**Yahweh**” into different man-made,

names — instead of this, man chose to retain the Name of Yahweh in each different language. In other words, let us suppose that each of us here in the United States of America grew up having been taught that the Creator's Name is pronounced "Yahweh." We knew of *no other possibilities*. If someone were to have asked you, as a young child, what the Creator's name is, you would have proudly exclaimed, "**His Name is Yahweh!**"

But one day, someone approached you and involved you in a discussion about the Creator. During the conversation, you mentioned the Name "Yahweh," which evoked a reaction from the person.

"Do you *actually* call the Creator 'Yahweh'?" he asked.

"Yes," you replied, "that's His Name!"

"Well," the man countered, "if you do some investigating, you will find that the name 'God' is just as good a name to call the Creator as 'Yahweh' is."

At that point, you became confused. You had seen copies of the earliest known Hebrew manuscripts, showing the Tetragrammaton, יהוה, which you knew is most likely pronounced "Yahweh." Until you had met this man, you had never even *heard* of the name "GOD." Curious to know more, you asked the man for the evidence to prove his case. What evidence do you think he would have or *could have* provided that would have caused you to switch?

Yeshua said that He manifested Yahweh's NAME (singular), not His "names."

The Creator's Son, Yeshua, in His prayer recorded in John 17, plainly stated that He had manifested (declared) Yahweh's Name:

I have manifested Thy Name unto the men which thou gavest Me out of the world: Thine they were, and thou gavest them Me; and they have kept Thy word. (John 17:6)

Yeshua did not manifest *several names*, as many persuasive opponents have unsuccessfully argued. Yeshua said that He manifested Yahweh's

NAME (singular), not His "names." We have demonstrated previously in this study that the Creator has only *one* Name, and that name is Yahweh. What "Name" did Yeshua manifest in accordance with his words spoken in John 17:6? Was it Theos? God? Chemosh? Dagon? Bel? Molech? The aforementioned names all belong to pagan deities. Doesn't it seem more likely that Yeshua declared the Name of Yahweh to mankind?

Wouldn't He have brought forth the Name that the Creator of the Universe gave to Himself?

"Me? But my name's not Jim!"

In an earlier quote, we were told that the **meanings** of "God's names" are infinitely more important than their "mere sounds in Hebrew." No one can rightfully deny the vast significance represented by our Creator's Name. There is a variety of opinions about the meaning of the Name *Yahweh*, but most agree that it is something at least close to "He exists" or "He causes to be." Out of these meanings come such titles as "the Eternal." It is true, then, that the meaning of our Heavenly Father's Name is of great significance. But does the immense significance of that Name minimize the "mere sound" of it? In no way! Consider this analogy: I remember an experience from my grade school days when I heard our Physical Education teacher yell, "Jim, where *were* you yesterday? Let me see your admit slip!"

There was no reaction from the crowd of students. The teacher's face became red. "**JIM!** Get over here **NOW!**" he boomed, his voice reverberating throughout the gym. He was clearly peeved at having been ignored.

By this time, the teacher had everyone's attention, particularly the student upon whose mug the gym teacher was focused, eyes glaring. The student pointed to himself and asked, "**Me?** But my name's not Jim!"

The student's name was *Vern*. "Vern" doesn't even *sound* like "Jim," which goes a long way towards explaining why he did not respond to our teacher, nor should he have been expected to! The danger in minimizing the need to "sound out" the pronunciation of someone's name is that we may end up calling that person the wrong name. As we have already

demonstrated, people appreciate it when we choose to MAXIMIZE the importance of “sounding out” the correct pronunciation of their name (they tend to *respond* better, too!). We believe our Creator feels the same way.

I occasionally find myself explaining to my non-committed friends in down-to-earth terms why it is I choose to call our Creator by the Name of Yahweh instead of “God.” I explain to them, first of all, that I respect them as people. To show them that I respect them, I will address them by the name (or names) by which they wish to be called. I then add that, as much as I respect *them*, I cannot even describe how much *more so* I respect the Creator of the universe. To show Him how much I respect Him, I choose to do all I can to call upon Him by the Name by which He wishes to be called. “God” is *not* the name that our Creator gave to Himself. He called Himself “Yahweh” (c.f. Exodus 3:15, Isaiah 42:8).

And the Almighty said moreover unto Moses, “Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, ‘Yahweh Almighty of your fathers, the Almighty of Abraham, the Almighty of Isaac, and the Almighty of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is My Name for ever, and this *is* My memorial unto all generations!’” (Exodus 3:15)

How much do *you* respect our Heavenly Father? How serious are you about honoring Him and respecting His wishes? He wishes that you turn to Him with a pure heart, bent on serving Him at whatever cost, simply because He is who He is. Serving the Creator requires many sacrifices on our part, but we know it’s worth it because, again, He is who His is! He alone is our Creator, so respecting His wishes should be #1 on our list of priorities. If we use His Word as our guide, we discern that we do a better job of respecting His wishes when we strive to call upon Him by the Name that He gave to Himself.

Then I looked, and lo, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with Him a hundred and forty-four thousand who had His Name and His Father’s Name written on their foreheads. (Revelation 14:1, Revised Standard Version)

The above verse does not state that those who did not ever learn and use the true Names of our Creator and His Son will not be found among the 144,000. It does, however, mention that those Names will be “written on

their foreheads.” Those Names must be pretty important! Important enough that blessings may come to those who seek out those Names and reverence them with all sincerity of heart. May Yahweh’s blessings be upon you as you read and thoroughly investigate this subject. May His truth be revealed to all who diligently seek it!