

Heshem, Jehovah, Yahweh, Jesus

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https://www.wayoflife.org/reports/heshem_jehovah_jesus.php

The Jewish Talmudic tradition forbids the speaking of God's name Jehovah or Yahweh, which is composed of four Hebrew letters. In the three centuries before Christ, rabbinical tradition determined that the name of God is too holy to be spoken. It was alleged that God's name was pronounced in old times only by the high priest on the Day of Atonement, which is contrary to the plain teaching of Scripture. God's glorious name has been replaced in Jewish tradition by the bland Hashem, meaning "the name," and therefore meaning nothing.

But the Scripture teaches that God has mercifully and wonderfully revealed His holy name to be known and spoken by man, not to be obscured by vain tradition.

"That men may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth" (Psalm 83:18).

"Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength" (Isaiah 26:5).

The name Jehovah or Yehovah appears 6,519 times in the Hebrew Bible, beginning in Genesis 2 in relation to God's personal creation of Adam and Eve.

The name "Jehovah" encompasses everything God is, but it particularly emphasizes God as Redeemer, Saviour, Shepherd. "Salvation belongeth unto the LORD [Jehovah]" (Ps. 3:8); "The LORD [Jehovah] is my shepherd" (Ps. 23:1); "I, even I, am the LORD [Jehovah]; and beside me there is no saviour" (Isa. 32:11); "I the LORD [Jehovah] am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer" (Isa. 49:26; 60:16). Jehovah is also Judge. He is the covenant-keeping Redeemer to the believer as well as the holy God of judgment to the unbeliever (De. 7:9-10).

Jehovah is the faithful covenant-keeping God. It is Jehovah who made a covenant with Abraham (Ge. 12:1-4; 15:8), Isaac (Ge. 26:1-4), Jacob (Ge. 28:11-15) and David (2 Sa. 7:8-16). Jehovah is the Author of the New Covenant with Israel (Jer. 31:31-34). Solomon emphasized that Jehovah is the God who "keepest covenant, and shewest mercy" (2 Ch. 6:14-15).

We see the definition of Jehovah in the first mention of the name in Genesis 2-3. God is called Jehovah 19 times in these chapters. Here we see Jehovah as the loving, almighty Creator, making man and providing for all of his needs, making a universe for his habitation and a glorious paradise for his home. We see Jehovah as the just Judge, giving man the first law and

warning of judgment for disobedience (Ge. 2:16-17). We see Jehovah as Judge, punishing man after the fall. But we also see Him as the Redeemer, seeking sinners, bringing them to repentance, prophesying of the coming Saviour, and clothing them in the coats which signified the salvation provided by the sacrifice of God's Son (Ge. 3:8, 15, 21).

This is the definition of Jehovah that Solomon emphasized at the dedication of the temple (2 Ch. 6). He calls God the LORD [Jehovah] 15 times. Solomon says Jehovah God is the only God; He keeps covenant (v. 4, 14), shows mercy (v. 14), fulfills His promises (v. 15), answers prayer (vv. 20-21), forgives the sin of the penitent (vv. 26-27), teaches men good things (v. 27), knows the hearts of all men (v. 30), hears the prayers of Gentiles who pray in His name (vv. 32-33), restores His people when they repent (vv. 36-39), is the God of the mercies of David (v. 42). The latter refers to the eternal kingdom that God has promised David in his Son, Jesus Christ. It refers to the love of God toward the world whereby Christ made the vicarious sacrifice for the sins of the world and whereby eternal salvation is offered in the gospel. All of this is the mercies of Jehovah!

When Christ returns, Israel will be called "Jehovah our righteousness" (Jer. 33:16). The name of the LORD will be known and spoken of throughout the earth. The very theme of the prophecies of Ezekiel is "ye shall know that I am the LORD [Jehovah]" (Eze. 6:7, 10, 13, 14, etc.). This statement appears 63 times. The purpose of God's judgments upon and dealings with Israel over the past 2,600 years is that Israel will know that Jehovah is the true and living God.

Jehovah is usually translated LORD (all caps) in the King James Bible, but it is also translated GOD (all caps) 310 times.

It is claimed by some modern scholars that Jehovah is an invention of the Masoretes, who added the vowel points to the Hebrew text beginning in the sixth century AD, and that the correct pronunciation should be Yahweh. That is a humanistic view of the transmission of God's Word that denies divine preservation. The pronunciation of God's name is an integral part of divine revelation and we are told by Jesus Christ that not one jot or one tittle can be lost (Mt. 5:18). We believe, then, that the Masoretes preserved the name of God. Paul tells us that God committed the oracles of God to the Jews (Ro. 3:1-2).

Thomas Ross comments on this as follows:

"The vowels of the Tetragrammaton, that is, Yehowah or Jehovah (Exodus 6:3; Psalm 83:18; Isaiah 12:2; 26:4) are not a late addition, but represent the original and true pronunciation of the profoundly significant Divine Name. The commonly repeated modern idea that the pronunciation Jehovah is a late and incorrect invention, while Yahweh is the true

pronunciation of the Name, is false. No known Hebrew manuscript on earth contains the vocalization Yahweh. On the other hand, the form Jehovah is found in a variety of locations in the oldest Hebrew copies, such as the Aleppo codex and a variety of Biblical fragments dated between 700 and 900, as well as being the universal pointing in the Old Testament Textus Receptus. Jewish scholars such as Maimonides (1138-1204) affirmed that the Tetragrammaton was pronounced according to its letters as YeHoWaH.

“Were, as the common modern notion affirms, the vowels of the Divine Name simply lifted from Adonai, the yod of the Tetragram would have a hateph pathach underneath it, not a shewa. Furthermore, all the names in Scripture that begin with portions of the Tetragrammaton possess the vowels of Jehovah, not of Yahweh.

“If one wanted to maintain that the vocalization of God’s Name had been corrupted in Scripture, contrary to His declarations that nothing of the kind would happen (Psalm 12:6-7; Matthew 5:18), one would also need to maintain that every name in the Bible that begins with part of the Tetragrammaton has also been corrupted. Jehoadah would really be something like Yahwadah; Jehoahaz would be Yahwahaz; Jehoash would be Yahwahash, and so on.

“Furthermore, no theophoric names anywhere in Scripture end with an eh, the expected ending were the Name pronounced Yahweh. Similarly, the word Hallelujah and the Greek Alleluia validate the ah at the end of the Divine Name.

“Furthermore, the Mishna states that the Name was pronounced as it was written, that is, as Jehovah. This pronunciation is also consistent with Talmudic evidence.

“The plain facts concerning what the vowels on the Name actually are in the Hebrew text, other theophoric names, the Mishna, and a variety of other evidences demonstrate that the Tetragrammaton is correctly pronounced Jehovah.

“In contrast to the strong evidence in favor of the pronunciation Jehovah, very little favors the pronunciation Yahweh. Since this latter pronunciation is not favored by any evidence in the Hebrew of the Bible, nor in other ancient Jewish documents, its advocates must look outside of Scripture and Jewish texts for evidence in its favor. This they find in the late patristic writers Theodoret and Epiphanius, who give Iabe as the pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton, although the former distinguishes this vocalization as the pronunciation of the Samaritans.

“These statements constitute the most substantive and strongest argument in favor of the pronunciation Yahweh. Also, papyri involving pagan magic, and in which every possible and impossible designation of deities, Greek, Egyptian and Semitic, is found in profuse variety, contain invocations that sound like the word Yahweh.

“To use the speculations of two patristic writers—one of whom even specifies that Yahweh was a Samaritan pronunciation, and that the Jews used something else—to overthrow the vocalization of the Name in the OT Textus Receptus, Jehovah, is entirely unjustifiable.

“To use a name found in some pagan papyri that are invoking numberless idols and demons to reject Jehovah is even worse.

“The evidence for the pronunciation Yahweh is very poor, and totally insufficient to overthrow the powerful and numerous evidences in favor of the pronunciation Jehovah. ...

“Furthermore, the fact that Jehovah is the correct pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton is one of a number of strong reasons to reject the critical Hebrew text (the Leningrad MS) underlying the generality of modern English Bible versions. While the Old Testament Received Text that underlies the Authorized Version properly and fully vocalizes the Tetragrammaton, the Hebrew critical text corrupts the Divine Name by omitting one of its vowels in thousands of passages. Other serious corruptions are also present in the Leningrad MS.

“Finally, the King James Bible is found to be correct in its vocalization of the Divine Name as Jehovah [Ex. 6:3; Ps. 83:18; Isa. 12:2; 26:4], while it properly omits the modern fictitious pronunciation Yahweh. God’s people should do the same, and call, not on Yahweh, but on the Triune Jehovah.” (Thomas Ross, https://www.wayoflife.org/reports/jehovah_and_yahweh.html).

Some Karaite Jews, such as Nehemia Gordon, who do not accept Talmudic tradition, hold to the pronunciation Jehovah.

Not only have the Talmudic Jews done a great evil in keeping the name of Jehovah God from the people, they have done an even greater evil in rejecting Jehovah’s Messiah, whose name is Jesus.

In the New Testament, we have a higher revelation of God than the name Jehovah, and that is the name Jesus. The angel said to Mary, “And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS” (Lu. 1:31). While the name Jehovah appears nowhere in the New Testament, the name Jesus appears 942 times. Jesus is the final and full revelation of God. “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Heb. 1:1-3).

God has given Jesus “a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Php. 2:9-11).

It is God’s will that the name of Jesus be preached to all nations. “And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations” (Lu. 24:47).