

## **The Plain Truth About The "Sacred Name"**

**by Herbert W. Armstrong (1892-1986)**

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Let me, first, tell you of my experience, and a bit of history regarding the "Sacred Name" doctrine. I first encountered this teaching, and made a study of it, in 1937, thirty-five years ago.

It was then apparently a new idea or contention arrived at by one or more zealous but unscholarly men. Careful examination proved it absolutely false, and contrary to the teaching and example set by Jesus Christ Himself. It also was totally contrary to the example of the apostles, and of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

I do not want to take up with anything totally contrary to the usage of Jesus Christ, the apostles and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and do not think that our members do either. Nevertheless, to avoid any of God's people being misled by well-intentioned but mistaken advocates of this false doctrine, we are publishing a series of in-depth articles in this issue of *The GOOD NEWS*, setting before God's people the PLAIN TRUTH.

But first, I want to relate how I found that the "Hebrew Names" teaching is NOT "new truth," but "OLD FALSEHOOD." And that was 35 years ago.

### **Personal Experience**

Most of you know that after God had called me as His instrument in His Great Commission—after my conversion in the spring of 1927—my wife and I fellowshipped with Oregon members of the Church of God, whose headquarters was at Stanberry, Missouri. However, we never became members of the Stanberry organization.

Research since the founding of Ambassador College has identified that church (Revelation 3:1-6) as the Sardis era of God's Church. It issued a weekly church paper called the "Bible Advocate." It was organized on the pattern of a biennial General Conference.

At the 1933 General Conference, held, as near as I can remember, either early or mid-August, its president and editor of its paper lost the presidency by one vote. This was cast by Elder Burt F. Marrs, acting as the chairman of the conference. He had the deciding vote in case of a tie.

That vote resulted in splitting the church, which thereafter split and re-split until I was unable to keep track of the many splinter groups—spin-offs of what once was the Sardis era of the Church of God. Thus, so far as the ORGANIZED "Sardis Era" of the Church of God is concerned, that 1933 conference may well be said to have marked THE END of the "Sardis Era."

And that may be of considerable significance. For late in August of that year, the small parent church of the "Philadelphia Era" (Revelation 3:7-12) was raised up near Eugene, Oregon.

On being defeated at the Stanberry 1933 Conference, the deposed president-editor left that church and teamed up with an Elder C. O. Dodd in organizing a competing organization. It claimed world headquarters at Jerusalem (with no member there, so far as I know), and United States headquarters at the little town of Salem, West Virginia.

To draw members from the Stanberry organization after them, they termed their new church "the Bible form of organization." This was a misnomer, but it appealed to many. Half or more of the Stanberry church left Stanberry and lined up with this new Salem, West Virginia group. They promptly issued their own "Bible Advocate"—almost identical in form and appearance to the Stanberry paper.

This new Salem, West Virginia liaison soon broke up, apparently in 1937, when Elder Dodd went into the "Hebrew Names" movement.

### **Beginning of "Hebrew Names" Teaching**

Apparently this new "Hebrew Names" teaching actually began in the 1930s. Dr. John R. Briggs met Mr. August Sheffick, who insisted that the English word "Christ" was of pagan origin. Dr. Briggs thereupon began to emphasize the Hebrew word Yahshua. He was in association with an A. B. Traina in an assembly in New Jersey. Apparently he was going somewhat overboard, and Mr. Traina insisted he calm down, whereupon Dr. Briggs and a Jewish man, Paul Penn, departed to Detroit. Their "Names Evangelization Program" and "Kadesh Name Society" began there in February, 1937.

This group first obtained a charter as "Assembly of Y.H.V.H." and later as "Yahveh Beth Israel." Dr. Briggs acted as executive. Apparently there was little growth or fruit borne, and he died in 1961, having ordained ministers to continue his work. This group believes Christ (whom they call "Yahshua") was kept in prison a couple of days, and not crucified until the preparation for the weekly Sabbath, 28 AD, and that He was raised three days later on the last day of Unleavened Bread. They dip three times to baptize (*The Faith* magazine, March 1969, page 4, and literature and correspondence from "Yahveh Beth Israel").

But what is more important than this group, is that Mr. Briggs had persuaded Elder C. O. Dodd to accept the Hebrew names. He had started a new magazine called *The Faith*. Mr. Dodd then went in with Mr. Traina.

Now we are getting into history I personally remember. Mr. Dodd, now leaving the Salem group as he had the Stanberry organization, was rebaptized in Michigan in the name of "Yahshua" by Elder Earl Bigford in 1941. His "Faith Bible and Tract Society" had been publishing *The Faith* magazine, beginning March 1937.

I received *The Faith* somewhat regularly and remember the articles by Mr. Traina on speaking or writing the names of God or of Christ only in the Hebrew language—which they, of course, termed the "sacred names."

Mr. Dodd and I discussed this new doctrine on the telephone.

I said to him, as nearly as I can now recall the words: "Elder Dodd, you know, as all the evidence proves, that the New Testament was originally written in the Greek language. It was inspired by the

living Word of God, JESUS Christ, through the Holy Spirit. And by inspiration of the Holy Spirit the names of Jesus and of God, as well as the titles, were INSPIRED to be written in the GREEK language—not Hebrew.

"And FURTHER, much of the New Testament contains quotations or citations from the Old Testament, and wherever those Old Testament passages contained the names or titles of God, the HOLY SPIRIT inspired them to be written into the New Testament in the GREEK language. I cannot change or pervert what was INSPIRED through the Holy Spirit—can YOU?"

For a moment Elder Dodd seemed confused.

After some hesitation, he said, "Well then, I think the New Testament must have been originally inspired and written in the HEBREW language, and the Greek copies of the New Testament must be uninspired and erroneous translations."

I said, "Elder Dodd, do you realize what you are saying? All authorities know that the ONLY copies of the original writings that have been preserved are in GREEK- absolutely NONE in Hebrew. You are saying, as an argument and with absolutely NO authority, that there are NO COPIES of the inspired original writings of the New Testament, and that the ONLY copies are in error. And if they are in error wherever the names of Jesus or of God are mentioned, how do we know that they are not in error in many other places? Then we have NO SURE Word of God for the New Testament Scriptures—only uninspired translations."

"But maybe the translations into Greek were inspired," he suggested.

"If that had happened," I said, "then the Holy Spirit inspired the translations that write the names of God and of Jesus in GREEK, not Hebrew."

Elder Dodd was now really confused. He had no real answer. But he continued in this false teaching, regardless, so far as I know.

If those sincere (though deceived) people who insist we must speak the Hebrew language when we come to the names of God or of Christ, try to establish that the New Testament was originally inspired and written in the Hebrew language, then:

- 1) the burden of proof is on them—AND THERE IS NONE!
- 2) we are left with ONLY faulty, erroneous writings for the New Testament. But God has said, "... the truth of the Eternal endureth for ever" (Ps. 117:2) and, "... his truth endureth to all generations" (Ps. 100:5). "But the word of the Lord endureth for ever" (I Peter 1:25). And Jesus Christ said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away" (Mark 13:31).

### **Division and Confusion**

So far as my personal experience and contact with this Hebrew names movement went, that telephone conversation with Elder Dodd ended it—except that I continued receiving copies of his *Faith* magazine for some little time, and there was one other contact, mentioned later in this article. So far as I had contact or knowledge of it, the movement had virtually died

Current research shows that there have, indeed, existed a number of small splinter groups advocating the so-called "sacred names." They are divided among themselves in many ways, especially as to what the Hebrew names are.

I remember hearing or reading in "Sardis" literature of an Elder L. D. Snow who accepted the Sabbath and came into that church in 1931. Now I understand he later left that church and has his own independent group called "The Assembly of Yahvah"—and please note his group has a different Hebrew name pronounced differently than "Yahweh." Elder Snow apparently won over a few former "Sardis" era members of the Church of God, for I am informed he moved his headquarters to Junction City, Oregon, during 1957. He has a paper which uses both "Yahvahshua" and "Yahshua" as the Messiah's names. Elder Snow stopped off at Ambassador College in Pasadena to argue his case in 1953.

Still another group is the "General Council of the Assemblies of Yah," of Albany, Oregon, which address would suggest having included some members or former members of the "Sardis" era Church of God. It was formerly associated with the "Assembly of Yahweh," and publishes a paper called *The Word*.

And there have been many other splinter groups.

### **Just What Do You MEAN—"Sacred" Names?**

First, understand just what is the contention of this so-called "Sacred Name" teaching.

Advocates of this belief do NOT contend that we must read the Bible only in the Hebrew language. They themselves use English-language translations of the Bible.

What they do claim is that the names of the Creator-Father, and of His Son the Savior, are "sacred" only in the Hebrew language. The truth is, the names of God or of Christ are as sacred in one language as another, and there is no scripture to the contrary.

In other words, they allow that we may freely translate all other words of the Bible into our English language—except those words that are the NAMES of the Father and the Son. They claim it is wrong, even sin, to use the names of the Father or the Son in the English language. But that contention is not substantiated by the Scriptures.

They contend that we may use English translations of the Bible, until we come to the NAMES of the Father and/or the Son. THEN we must speak the Hebrew language in pronouncing or writing their names.

Does any scripture teach that the people of any language may read, or quote the Bible in their language, EXCEPT for the NAMES of the Father or the Son—and that these names must always be written or spoken or copied in the HEBREW language? Most assuredly NOT!

Then does the Bible, as they claim, substantiate their teaching? Even the question sounds ridiculous! There is no such statement or command anywhere in the Bible!

Then how do they arrive at such a contention! By a series of arguments and wrestings which arrive at an answer CONTRARY to the usage of Christ or the apostles, or the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Is their teaching, then, according to the Bible? ABSOLUTELY IT IS NOT though they try to prove that it is. NO SCRIPTURE gives any such teaching.

I have always said that in nearly every instance an error is based on a false premise, assumed and taken for granted.

### **Their Basic Premise**

The central, basic PREMISE, on which their entire doctrine of using only Hebrew names is based, is this: they contend—assume—take carelessly for granted—the false supposition that the name "God" is of pagan origin, and therefore we are following a pagan custom in using the name God. They claim we are actually sinning when we call the true Church the Worldwide Church of God.

Their argument is that our Germanic-speaking ancestors used the name "God" to refer to their idols. But notice what the Bible reveals:

"When they [the Gentile nations] knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations [reasonings], and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things" (Rom. 1:21-23). And in verse 28, "... they did not like to retain God in their knowledge."

Now understand this. The above is quoted from the English-language translation. It was translated from the Greek version, which was inspired through the Holy Spirit. In the original writing, the Holy Spirit inspired the Greek name for God, *THEOS*. The very context shows that in the clause "when they knew God [*theos*]," the Holy Spirit used the name *theos* to mean the true Creator. The Gentiles once knew this true Creator as God. But they turned from Him—changing the incorruptible glory of the Supreme Creator into IDOLS, calling them god. They did not like to retain the true Creator in their knowledge—they substituted idols, which they came to honor as god. They applied the name of the true Creator to their idols.

Now notice the faulty reasoning of the "Hebrew name" people: Because the Gentiles used the name of the Creator (in Greek *theos*—in Hebrew *elohim*—and in English "God") which originally they knew as the name of the true Creator, and began looking on their idols as God, these "Hebrew name" people reason that we are using the name that originated in idolatry.

Actually it was just the reverse. The pagans took the names of the true God and called their idols by those names That made their idolatry all the more sinful. But did it contaminate or corrupt or paganize the names themselves? Of course not. Notice further:

The Apostle Paul told certain men of Athens: "For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD [*THEOS*]. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto YOU" (Acts 17:23). Beyond controversy it was *theos* whom the Athenians superstitiously honored by that altar, lest they should accidentally overlook any unknown deity who might possibly exist. But that *theos*, said Paul, is the Deity he declared (preached, proclaimed) to them. There is no escaping the fact that whatever was written in Greek on that Greek monument as the name of deity, that was the name Paul applied to the true God he preached. That Greek name was *theos*!

The English name "God" is merely the English translation from the Greek *THEOS*. Like *theos*, the Teutonic word "god" originally meant simply "that which is worshipped," without reference to its use in paganism. ("God" has no known connection with the Old Testament name Gad.)

The customary practice of the pagans was to take the true names of God and apply them to their idols. In the inspired Hebrew of the Old Testament the Hebrew name *elohim* is used 240 times as the true name of the true God, but is also used for pagan idols. Notice just two examples: the idol gods of Egypt are called *elohm*, "... against all the gods [*elohim*] of Egypt I will execute judgment" (Exodus 12:12). The Egyptians once had known of the true God but became total idol worshippers.

Speaking of the heathen nations—Hittites, Perizzites and Canaanites—God commanded, "Thou shalt not bow down to their gods [*elohim*]" (Exodus 23:24).

And so that basic false assumption is clearly the source of the error. Of course it is an attempt to read doctrine INTO the Scriptures. We give you some examples of that in a separate, accompanying box.

### **Same NAME—Different Language**

Let me give you a few examples of how the same name is spelled and pronounced differently in different languages.

The name Anthony in English is Antoine (pronounced Antwan) in French. It is Anton in German, and Antonio in Spanish.

The name Charles is Karl in German, and Carlos in Spanish.

The name Henry is Henri in French, Heinrich in German and Enrique in Spanish.

James is Jacques (pronounced Zhock) in French, Jakob (pronounced Yahkob) in German, and Jaime (pronounced Highmay) in Spanish.

Peter is Pierre in French, and Pietro (pronounced Pi-etro) in Italian.

William is Guilktume in French, Wilhelm (pronounced Vil-helm) in German, and Gugielmo in Italian.

The city of Vienna, in Austria, is spelled Wien there, and the "W" is pronounced like "V". The city of Naples is Napoli in Italy. The city of Belgrade is Beograd in Yugoslavia.

The Holy Spirit, inspiring the original writing of the New Testament in the Greek language, translated NOT ONLY all other words quoted from the Old Testament into Greek, but the names of God as well, thus setting the precedent for us, when translating into English, to translate these names into English. THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD DID NOT MAKE ANY MISTAKE!

### **Additional PROOF!**

God attaches GREAT IMPORTANCE to the meaning of NAMES. His NAME is, indeed, of supreme importance.

God names persons or things WHAT THEY ARE. The archangel—the cherub Lucifer (Latin, "light-bearer"), was so named because from the time God created him he was a bringer of LIGHT and TRUTH. His name (in Hebrew, Helel ben Shachar) MEANT "Shining Star of the Dawn." But when iniquity was found in him—when he rebelled, turned to vanity, lust and greed, became an adversary and enemy, God changed his name to Satan, which MEANS "adversary"—"enemy"—"competitor."

Jacob was so named because he was a "supplanter," and that is the meaning of the name Jacob. But when he prevailed with God, and overcame, God changed his name to what he then WAS—Israel, which means "prevailer with God" or "overcomer."

The purpose of words is to convey MEANING. Our commission is to proclaim the Good News of the coming Kingdom of God—which is the Government of God—and the Family of God—to rule the earth and bring PEACE and salvation. English-speaking people know that the name GOD means the supreme Creator—but if we use "Yahweh"—or "Yahvah"—or "Yah"—or "Yahshuah"—or "Yahashuah"—or some other form which these "Hebrew names" people advocate, English-speaking people would not know who we were talking about. We use the names of God in whatever language we are speaking so the people of that language will UNDERSTAND, and GET THE MESSAGE!

Jesus and Paul did this, setting us the example, which we follow!

If we do not use names IN THE LANGUAGE of the people to whom we speak—if we do not use the names that CONVEY MEANING, we are simply making useless, meaningless and uncertain sounds.

### **An "Uncertain Sound"**

The "Hebrew names" people say we must speak in another language—another TONGUE—the Hebrew—when using the name of the Father or the Son. THE BIBLE TEACHES OTHERWISE! For these Hebrew words or names are an UNKNOWN—FOREIGN—TONGUE to nearly all English-speaking people, as well as French-speaking, German-speaking, Spanish-speaking or those of other languages. But listen to the INSPIRED TEACHING:

"For the speaker in a foreign tongue does not speak to men... no man understands it... So you also, with your languages, unless you produce an intelligible speech, how can it be known what is spoken? For you would be talking to the wind" (I Corinthians 14:2, 9, Fenton trans.). And the 8th verse says: "And if a trumpet should give an unknown [uncertain in the Authorized Version] sound, who would prepare for battle?"

We are commissioned to proclaim Christ's Gospel of the Kingdom of God to all the world as a witness—to ALL NATIONS speaking languages other than Hebrew—to people who DO NOT UNDERSTAND HEBREW—to people who would not know WHO we were pointing them to if we use the Hebrew YHWH. And NO ONE can be certain HOW to pronounce or SOUND that name in Hebrew. Its pronunciation has been LOST—and these Hebrew names groups DISAGREE among themselves as to HOW to pronounce the name! Certainly we would be giving out an "UNCERTAIN SOUND."

### **Christ's Example**

Jesus STARTED the Work of God, proclaiming this Gospel. He never once is recorded to have used the Hebrew YHWH during the entirety of His earthly ministry, though He spoke Hebrew (as will be explained in a following article in this series).

Paul spoke to Gentiles who spoke the GREEK language. There is no recorded use of the Hebrew YHWH—but he used the same names in the GREEK language.

The Holy Spirit inspired the New Testament in the GREEK language—and did NOT use the Hebrew YHWH, or "Yahshua" or "Yahashuali," but the GREEK words that conveyed the MEANING of the names of deity in the Greek language.

We are the instruments the living Christ is using in proclaiming His Gospel to the world. We could not point people to the Creator and Saviour, or to understand His Gospel, unless we use words and names that make clear WHO the Creator is!

Moreover, although NO ONE can be CERTAIN (though most think "Yahweh" is probably correct) of the correct vowels that should be used in the Hebrew YHWH, Hebrew scholars do show that it MEANS "The Everliving One" or "The Eternal" or "The Self-Existent One," or "The One who was, and is, and is to be" (see the end notes for the derivation of YHWH).

### **WHY Name Is Important**

The "Sacred Name" people contend the IMPORTANT thing, in using the names of the Father or the Son, is the SOUND, more than the MEANING. But even they are not certain as to the sound—so they have "an uncertain sound."

I have said that names ARE important to God. God NAMES things or people what they are! Names are used to convey MEANING.

They may not realize it themselves, but to these "Hebrew Names" people the names are like having the "secret password." And if one has the Hebrew sound of the name, that lets him through to the Father. But with God—and in THE BIBLE—no magic password, no superstition is involved.

God's name has MEANING, and must convey that meaning, which is the Eternal, the Self-Existent One, the Ever-Living, the Creator—the One IN AUTHORITY! In the case of the Father and the Son, the SAME conveys THE AUTHORITY of the Person so named, not merely a certain (or uncertain) sound. And even their sound is suspect—for NO ONE, say the authorities, can be certain of the correct pronunciation or sound of YHWH.

### **Meaning of the Word "Name"**

The word "name" in the Bible signifies more than its mere pronunciation or sound. Moulton and Milligan in their Greek Lexicon show that a major use of the word *onoma* (name) in the New Testament "denotes the character, fame, authority of the person indicated." In secular Greek literature use of the word "name" compares remarkably well with New Testament usage "as a title of dignity or rank." The Lexicon gives several references to this well-known usage. One of them is Hebrews 1:4, where Paul says: "Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they."

James Moffatt, the translator, says in his commentary on Hebrews 1:4 that the word name "carries the general sense of 'rank' or 'dignity'" (*International Critical Commentary*, p. 8).

This one verse, out of many in the New Testament, shows "name" means rank, dignity or authority. Moulton and Milligan also show how secular Greek authors used "name" consistently to signify "authority." For example, a man told his deputy to "carry out everything in my name during my absence." This shows the deputy had power of attorney to use the authority of his master. And even we today mean the same thing in common speech. "Stop, in the name of the law" doesn't mean to pay attention to the "phonetic sound" of the word "law," but it means "Stop, by the authority of the law."

The lexicon gives other New Testament references showing "name" means "authority." Notable among them is Philippians 2:9-10. Another example is our closing in prayer; "in Jesus' name" means "by Jesus' authority." Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament gives many more references.

## **Bible PROOFS**

Now notice additional Bible PROOFS.

In the pivotal Olivet prophecy, Jesus said: "...Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying I am the Christ, and shall deceive many" (Matthew 24:4-5). They were not to come in their own name, saying THEY were Christ. They were to come claiming to have His authority, to be HIS REPRESENTATIVES His ministers. They were to claim to be the ministers of Jesus Christ, saying that JESUS is the Christ—yet DECEIVING THE MANY.

Jesus did not say that a scattered, divided, fragmented FEW would come in the name of Yuhshua, saying Yahshua is the Christ, and deceiving a FEW. (I don't think the Hebrew name people will say that he was speaking of them.) But WHO were the MANY who have deceived the MANY—actually forming the largest religion on earth, deceiving the millions? What name did they come in? They came in the name of CHRIST. They called themselves Christians. They call their religion CHRISTIANITY. They have DECEIVED THE WORLD (Rev. 17 and 18).

IF His name is ONLY YHWH or Yahshua, then—Jesus made a mistake in this saying! The name they came in, He said, is HIS NAME.

Take another BIBLE proof.

On the day of Pentecost, after Jesus' resurrection and ascension to heaven, the Holy Spirit had come from heaven, and filled the disciples. This tremendous miracle amazed people—multitudes of Jews from "every nation under heaven." And when the disciples through the Holy Spirit spoke in tongues, they were confounded, and said. "How hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God" (Acts 2:5-11).

All these, from "every nation under heaven"—each ONE—heard THEM (the disciples) speak of the wonderful works of GOD in HIS OWN LANGUAGE! They heard of the works of GOD—not in the Hebrew language, but each in HIS OWN NATIVE LANGUAGE.

Here again, the HOLY SPIRIT, speaking in and through the disciples, spoke of GOD in the various many different languages!

And yet the Hebrew names people think we SIN if we do as the Holy Spirit did!

There are many other PROOFS. Other articles in this issue will discuss them in depth.

### **New Testament INSPIRED in GREEK**

One vital proof, alone, however, is absolutely DECISIVE!

That is the FACT that the original writing of the New Testament was inspired through the Holy Spirit IN THE GREEK language—and in that language the Holy Spirit did NOT use the Hebrew YHWH or Yahshua, but GREEK words for the names of the Father and the Son.

Now I have asked one of our research staff, himself a Greek, to give me a brief treatise on the language in which the New Testament was inspired. He would be the first to add that one second-century (Catholic) writer, Papias, put forth a theory that "Matthew compiled the reports in the Hebrew language." We know of his statement through a quotation by Eusebius (also Catholic). It, however, offers no proof that Matthew did not write the INSPIRED text in GREEK, as virtually all scholars agree. Further, NO COPIES EXIST of any inspired Hebrew original text by Matthew.

It is true that certain old fragments of manuscripts of the Greek Septuagint (LXX) translation of the Old Testament do have the tetragrammaton (YHWH) in either the Paleo-Hebrew or the Aramaic script. But this was not the normal usage. Most copies even of the Septuagint used the Greek *Kurios*, and it is definitely true that no New Testament manuscript has the YHWH.

Following is the evidence for the language of the original writings of the New Testament:

New Testament writers quoted frequently both from the Hebrew Bible and from the Greek Septuagint, but the vast majority of the quotations are from the Septuagint, because most Jews as well as the Greeks used the Greek language and did not read Hebrew. Consider: If the New Testament had been written in Hebrew, there would have been no need to quote from the Greek version. Yet—and let's be specific - MATTHEW, the one author most usually cited as possibly writing in Hebrew or Aramaic, when quoting from Psalm 8:2 (Matt. 21:16) where the Septuagint and the Hebrew texts differ, uses the Septuagint, NOT the Hebrew. Such cases can be cited by the score. See, for examples, Isaiah 40:3 and Matthew 3:3 where Matthew again follows the Septuagint rather than the Hebrew; also Matthew 13:14 and Isaiah 69:10.

In the second century AD, scores of writings were composed about the New Testament accounts. Only slightly later such men as Tatian, Papias, Tertullian, Irenaeus and many others not only refer to and quote from, but describe the original writings. Yet neither the second century nor later has provided us with so much as a single quote from other than a Greek text.

If the original had really been written in Hebrew, one would expect that at least some copies would still be floating around at such an early time—only a few years after the completion of the writings of the Apostle John. Their total absence must be taken either as an indication that the "conspirators" against the postulated Hebrew original worked very fast indeed, and very thoroughly, or that the proposition of a non-Greek original is, and must be, a fable of unscholarly theorists.

Certainly the translators of the New Testament into other foreign languages would have gone to the original version. Do we find the old Italian versions (second century) based on the supposed Hebrew

or Aramaic original? We find nothing of the kind. The Muratorian canon (second century) is based on a Greek original. The Harmony of Tatian (170 AD) is based on a Greek original. The Old Latin (180 AD) is based on a Greek original. The Armenian, Palestinian, Egyptian, Gothic, Ethiopic, etc., etc., are ALL based on Greek texts, and NOT ONE of the scholars who made them ever used a different "original."

Finally, it can be shown from the linguistic standpoint alone—involving the use of infinitives, genitive absolutes, etc.—that the New Testament could not have come from a Hebrew original. It is definitely NOT a translation of Hebrew!

### **The Saviour's Name in Greek**

Notice the inspired use of the name "Jesus" (English form of the Greek *Iesous*):

The first place the Saviour's name occurs in the New Testament is Matthew 1:1, where by God's inspiration through the Holy Spirit, the GREEK words are *Iesous Christos*, in English "Jesus Christ." It is true that the Greek *Iesous* is the Greek form or equivalent of Yahshua—BUT THE HOLY SPIRIT DID NOT USE YAHSHUA, BUT INSPIRED IN THE GREEK LANGUAGE THE GREEK EQUIVALENT *IESOUS*.

The translators properly have followed the Holy Spirit's example in translating into the English language the ENGLISH equivalent, Jesus Christ! And I am not willing to accuse either the Spirit of God of error or sin in having INSPIRED the name in the GREEK language, or the translators in having translated the name into the ENGLISH language.

What name did the Holy Spirit inspire in the original writing of the Greek-language New Testament? The angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph, husband of Mary, and said, "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS.... Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: and knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS" (Matthew 1:21-25). That is the name given BY COMMAND OF God! The name "JESUS" is the English form of the Greek *Iesous*. This is the English translation from the Greek as inspired by the Holy Spirit. I am not willing to say, as the teaching of the "Hebrew Names" people implies, that the Holy Spirit erred or sinned, in having inspired the Greek *Iesous* instead of Yahshua. ARE YOU?

### **The ONLY NAME!**

Now what IS the ONLY NAME by which we may be saved?

Peter and John had used THIS NAME, and BY THE AUTHORITY OF THAT NAME, had performed the remarkable miracle of healing the cripple, lame from birth. They were arrested, accused, imprisoned. The authorities demanded of Peter and John, "By what power, or by what name, have ye done this? Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said unto them... that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole... neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:7-12).

The Holy Spirit of God, inspiring the writing in the GREEK language, inspired that ONLY NAME by which we may be saved to be written in the GREEK, and not in the Hebrew. Therefore if we were speaking in the Greek language, we should understand that name to be, in the Greek, *IESOUS*. The

Spirit of God did not inspire those words to be written in the Greek language, EXCEPT for the ONLY name, and then inspire that name in the HEBREW, as the Hebrew names people would have done. The ONLY NAME was inspired in the SAME LANGUAGE as the rest of the writing. Therefore we should understand that same name in the language in which we read our Bibles—the ENGLISH name JESUS CHRIST of Nazareth!

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### **Misapplied Scriptures** by Lawson C Briggs

**PSALM 83:18 That men may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth.**

Notice this verse does NOT say God has only one name. The word "alone" modifies "thou." The meaning is: "You alone have a right to the name YHWH—you alone are the Eternal One." Other translations agree that this is the intent of the Hebrew.

**PSALM 68:4 Sing unto God (*Elohim*), sing praises to his name: extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH, and rejoice before him.**

This verse is sometimes quoted to try to show God's only name is "Yahweh." Yet "Yahweh" is not even used in the verse! The short name Jah (or Yah) appears, and the verse shows that *Elohim* is also God's name.

**EXODUS 3:15 And God (*Elohim*) said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD (YHWH) God (*Elohim*) of your fathers, the God (*Elohim*) of Abraham, the God (*Elohim*) of Isaac, and the God (*Elohim*) of Jacob, has sent me unto you: this is my name forever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.**

Does this say that YHVH is the only name by which the Father is to be remembered by all peoples forever? It does not. In the first place, as proven elsewhere, it was not the Father speaking, but the One who became the Son. Second, the message was specifically "unto Israel"—and His name was in Hebrew because they spoke Hebrew. Third, not YHWH but YHWH *Elohim* is the complete name used in the verse. But if you will read verse 14, you will see that the name sent to them was "I AM" and that God was to be remembered by the fact that HE LIVES.

**PSALM 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.**

Note that this Psalm does not specify pronouncing any one of God's names (and both *Elohim* and YHWH are used in its other verses). The plain meaning is that wrath shall be poured out, not on those who do not superstitiously call on God's name by mouthing a certain sound, but on those who fail to become His people and cry out to Him for His power to quit sinning, and for protection from the tribulation, which can be done in any language. Psalm 18:3; Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21 and Romans 10:13 also speak of calling on the "name of the Lord" (and are likewise misused) and all refer to calling on His power for deliverance, not to pronouncing a Hebrew name.

**MALACHI 2:2 If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory**

**unto my name, saith the LORD of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you....**

How do we give glory to His name? We honor His name, power and authority, by obeying Him (Deuteronomy 28:15).

**MATTHEW 7:21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.**

Here again, obedience to the commandments of God is the important thing. Talking about God is not enough. Most emphatically, this verse does not say that using the name of "Lord" (Greek *kurios*) is cause for being barred from God's kingdom! In fact, it says plainly that just using God's name is NOT what is required—but only conforming to His will in heart, mind and action can bring you to God's Kingdom.

**PROVERBS 18:10 The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.**

What protects as described here? It is most assuredly the power of the Eternal. There is no such thing as protection by enunciating a magic word! Psalm 91:14-15—"Because he hath set his love upon ME, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known [experienced] my name [my character and power]. He shall call upon ME [not on the sound of a particular name, notice], and I will answer him...." See also Isaiah 58:9; Zechariah 13:9.

**Exodus 23:13 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.**

**JOSHUA 23:6-7... Do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside there from to the right hand or to the left; That ye come not among these nations, these that remain among you; neither make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause to swear by them, neither serve them, nor bow yourselves unto them.**

Psalms 16:4 and 44:20-21 are also used with these verses. But to make mention of the name of pagan gods means to call upon, or pray to, or call oneself a follower of such a "god," in contrast to calling on the name of the Eternal. It is not a question of the pronunciation of the sound of heathen names, but of taking up the false worship of the gods of the Canaanites. Nor is there any reference here whatever to the use of Greek, English or other translations of the names of God.

**HOSEA 2:16-17 And it shall be at that day, saith the LORD, that thou shalt call me *Ishi*; and shalt call me no more *Baali*. For I will take away the names of Baalim (Baals) out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name.**

The time setting is the Millennium. To His people, who are even now called the bride of Christ, the Eternal will then be "My Husband" (*Ishi*). The old relationship (see Galatians 4:1) of slave and Owner (Baal) will be superseded by a higher kind of union. At that time also, the very names of the idols which the Canaanites worshipped as "Owners," and whose rites proved so attractive to ancient Israelites, will be forgotten, along with the concept of owner-slave religion. These verses do not say that words like *Theos*, *Kurios*, "God," "Lord," "Jesus," etc., are wrong or will be discontinued. That is an assumption read into the Bible.

**MALACHI 4:5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.**

It is ludicrous to believe that, because the meaning of the name Elijah is "My God is Jah," that the sending of Elijah the prophet means sending forth the "Hebrew names" theory. If you will compare this verse with Revelation 11:3-6; I Kings 17:1; Luke 4:25 and James 5:17, you will see that an Elijah to come is literal. Note also that the Elijah of Jesus' day had the name, "John"!

**JEREMIAH 8:8-9 How do ye say, We are wise, and the law of the LORD is with us? Lo, certainly the false pen of the scribes worketh for falsehood (marginal rendering). The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken; lo, they have rejected the word of the LORD: and what wisdom is in them?**

There is no statement or prophecy here that the true text of God's Word was perverted and lost. Rather it refers to the false written interpretations about biblical passages by which Jewish scribes and wise men even in Jeremiah's day were rejecting and making of no effect God's intended meaning. Unfortunately many people are doing the same thing to this day. This verse also says people reject the word of YHWH, NOT the word YHWH!

**EZEKIEL 36:20 And when they (Israel) entered unto the heathen, whither they went, they profaned my holy name, when they said to them, These are the people of the LORD, and are gone forth out of his land.**

How did they profane the Eternal's name? Was it by taking a supposed one-and-only name in verbal profanity? No. It was simply by setting such bad personal examples while claiming to be followers of the Eternal that they defamed His character and gave Him a bad name among the Gentiles.

**ACTS 7:45 Which also our fathers that came after brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drave out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David. HEBREWS 4:8 For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.**

These verses have sometimes been cited with special attention being drawn to the word "Joshua" in the marginal notes. The careless reader might thus be led into believing the New Testament says "Joshua" was Jesus Christ's real name. Check it for yourself. Don't you be careless. While "Jesus" was certainly the Greek form of the more ancient Hebrew name Joshua, what these marginal notes are pointing out is that the Jesus referred to in both those verses was the Joshua of the Old Testament, the successor of Moses.

**JOHN 5:43 I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.**

This is supposed (by some) to prove that Jesus' name was Yahshua and derived from Yahweh. What it does mean is that He came claiming and using His Father's authority.

**REVELATION 14:1 And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.**

Along with this scripture, some cite Revelation 7:1-3 to show that the Father's name is

that "sealing" in the forehead for which the "four winds" are held back. Turn there and you will find what the Father's name is. It is the "living God" (Greek *Theos dzontos*), not Yahweh.

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### **Derivation of YHVH** by Robert L Kohn

THE word \*YHVH (which is always the Hebrew when the capital letters LORD are used in the King James Version) is explained by Rabbinic sources as encompassing three Hebrew words:

- HYH meaning Was
- HVH meaning Is (literally "the present tense"—the word "is" is not used in Hebrew)
- HYH meaning Will Continue to Be

Putting them all together, YHVH actually means the "Was-Is-Will Continue to Be" Being. Even Hebrew linguistic scholars agree that YHVH must be derived from some form of the verb "to be" (was, is, will be).

By His very name, then, God quite literally encompasses all aspects of time—past, present and future. This is in complete accord with Malachi 3:6 "For I am YHVH, I change not;" Hebrews 13:8, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday [was], and today [is], and forever [will continue to be];" and Revelation 1:8, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."

Consequently both Moffatt's "the Eternal" and Fenton's "Ever-Living" are excellent translations.

\* The V was originally pronounced as W, though in modern Hebrew it is pronounced as V. You may see either V or W used in transliterations.