

How the OT Lord, LORD, God and GOD Relate to God's Name and His NT Identity

This is a revised issue of the study which was published as a full-page advertisement in Issue 143 of *The Journal, News of the Churches of God*. It examines the meaning and significance of the forms Lord, LORD, God and GOD printed in the KJV and other English Bibles. It shows how these forms relate to the Tetragrammaton, JHVH, and that this is the remnant of God's name originally revealed to Moses. The study also shows how these forms allow us to understand whether God the Father or the NT Lord Jesus spoke to Moses from the Burning Bush.

(1) Introduction

When the similitude (angel) of the LORD God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob spoke to Moses from the Burning Bush (Exod 3:1-6), He gave his name (verse 14) to Moses and which name survives to this day as the so-called Tetragrammaton which means the four (Hebrew) letters.

This name literally means, *The Eternal* or *The Self-existent One* or *I AM that I AM*. The Tetragrammaton is usually written as YHWH but as we will see this should be JHVH. In addition it has become increasingly fashionable to claim God's name is *Yahweh* or *Jehovah* but it will be shown that neither of these should be used. First we should address our Heavenly Parent as Father (Mat 6:9) rather than by name and second the vowels of His name were lost and with those His name.

(2) How man lost God's name

Moses was the first to receive God's name (Exod 6:3) and he is also responsible for recording this name in the Hebrew OT in Exodus 3:14. In those days only the Hebrew consonants without vowels were recorded. Since the text was regularly read aloud during religious services, the vowel sounds were preserved. When the Jews became dispersed amongst the nations, vowel points were added to the all-consonant OT Hebrew text to preserve knowledge of the vowels.

Unfortunately by then it was too late for God's name, the Tetragrammaton, because God's name had not been read aloud, and so its vowels were already lost. Indeed the only vowels associated with the Tetragrammaton were those of the words read in place of the Tetragrammaton, namely: "Adonai" (Strong H136, meaning: Lord) and "Elohim" (Strong H430, meaning: God). Although the Jews preserved the four consonants of God's name, they lost its vowels and with that they lost God's name.

This lack of vowel knowledge is also reflected in Hebrew proper names incorporating alleged parts of God's name. For example, through prefixes Jeho- or Jo- and suffixes -iah or -jah as in *Jehoshaphat*, *Joel*, *Isaiah* and *Elijah*. This shows we can't tell whether the first of the Tetragrammaton's missing vowels is an "e", "o" or "a". So let no one try to tell you that God's name is *Yahweh*, or *Jehovah* because there is even confusion over the first of its vowels and total ignorance over the remainder of the Tetragrammaton's vowels.

(3) How the translators handled this.

Hebrew OT proper names are transliterated into English by replacing their Hebrew letters with their English equivalent.

Transliterations are not translations and therefore result in Hebrew names being adopted into English without conveying their Hebrew meaning - e.g. Abraham and David.

Having lost its true vowels the Tetragrammaton could not

be transliterated. Although the Jews later added the vowels of Adonai and Elohim to the Tetragrammaton, this only marked which of these two Hebrew nouns they read instead of God's name.

Instead of transliterating the Tetragrammaton the KJV and other translators rendered this by the all capital forms "LORD" and "GOD" depending on the Tetragrammaton's Hebrew vowel pointing being the vowels of Adonai or Elohim. Although LORD and GOD are proper English words, they are not a translation of the Tetragrammaton as shown next.

The Tetragrammaton's consonants, J-H-V-H, are derived from the Hebrew verb "to be" and therefore its true meaning is something like, *The Eternal* or *The Self-existent One* or *I AM*. Readers should think "*The Eternal*" rather than Lord or God whenever they see in the OT the all-capital forms "LORD" or "GOD".

(4) Summary of Titles and God's name

Next a summary of the key titles and name of the God of the OT:-

- **Lord** (Strong H 136, Hebrew: adonai) literally means "Lord",
- **God** (Strong H430, Hebrew: Elohim) means "God" in reference to the God of Israel,
- **LORD** (Strong H3068, the Tetragrammaton, JHVH) for which the Jews read "Adonai",
- **GOD** (Strong H3069, the Tetragrammaton, JHVH) for which the Jews read "Elohim".
- **Tetragrammaton:** (Strong H3068 / H3069, Hebrew JHVH). The surviving four letters of God's name announced at the Burning Bush - often incorrectly denoted as YHWH.

(4a) Other instances of the OT Tetragrammaton

The Hebrew OT Tetragrammaton is rendered in English 6521 times as the all-capitals form LORD (H3068) and 302 times as the all-capitals form GOD (H3069).

However, the all-capitals form "LORD" is also used to render in English the Hebrew "Jah" ("Yah"), which is a shortened form of the divine name and is therefore a shortened form of the Tetragrammaton with one added vowel. For this special application of the all-capitals "LORD" the Strong reference number is H3050.

There are 49 instances of this in the OT, namely: 2 times in 2 verses of Exodus (Ex 15:2; 17:16), 43 times in 40 verses of the Psalms (Ps 68:4, 18; 77:11; 89:8; 94:7, 12; 102:18; 104:35; 105:45; 106:1, 48; 111:1; 112:1; 113:1, 9; 115:18;

116:19; 117:2; 118:5, 14, 17, 18, 19; 122:4; 130:3; 135:1, 3, 4, 21; 146:1, 10; 147:1, 20; 148:1, 14; 149:1, 9; 150:1, 6 and 4 times in 3 verses of Isaiah (Isa 12:2; 26:4; 38:11).

In addition there are 134 instances in the OT where the Sopherim (Jewish OT Hebrew scholars) claim to have changed the Tetragrammaton to the Hebrew “Adonai” (H 136). These are rendered “Lord” in English Bibles instead of “LORD” – see Appendix 32 of Dr Ethelbert W Bullinger’s *The Companion Bible*.

In this Bible Dr Bullinger rendered these 134 instances as “LORD*” instead of “Lord” found in most other Bibles. Note the additional asterisk in “LORD*”. Such features provided by *The Companion Bible* and its mostly excellent 198 appendixes and its copious and mostly excellent side notes to its KJV text, make in my opinion *The Companion Bible* by far the best study Bible available.

(5) The vowel and consonant “i”

The letter “j” was not known to the translators of the 1611 KJV and they used the letter “i” both as a vowel and a consonant. So in the 1611 edition we see names like Iacob, Iesus, Ioel and Eliiah (sic) instead of their modern forms, Jacob, Jesus, Joel and Elijah. During the 1630s the letter “j” was introduced as a modified “i” to replace “i” when used as a consonant.

It is important to recognize that the letter “i” (later “j”) serves as consonant in most languages and is pronounced as the “y” in “yes”. Unfortunately English and French pronounce this consonant as the “j” in “jam” but this is not done in most other languages, including NT Greek and OT Hebrew. Let us not modify the transliteration of God’s name to suit the vagaries of English pronunciation.

(6) The sacred names affectation

Let us consider the affectation of rendering God’s “divine” name as YHWH or Yahweh.

First there is no letter “y” in Hebrew and so we should not use this letter to transliterate God’s name in English. The first consonant of the Tetragrammaton is the Hebrew letter “jod” and linguistically this corresponds to the letter “i” when used as a consonant but this must be pronounced as the “y” in “yes”. English pronunciation must not override the etymology of the Hebrew Tetragrammaton. As a result only the form IHVH or JHVH are true representations of the Tetragrammaton.

A similar comment applies to Yahweh with the additional point that its vowels “a” and “e” are only wild guesses that are unlikely to be correct. My short paper, Q2, *The Affection of Using Hebrew Divine Names* explains this further.

Note that none of the NT writers used Hebrew divine names for God the Father and His Son Jesus in the NT Greek texts. Indeed their Greek texts even declined the proper name for Jesus as *Iesous* for the nominative, as *Iesou* for the genitive and dative and as *Iesoun* for the accusative case. The divine name advocates conveniently overlook this.

Since we no longer know the vowels of the Tetragrammaton it is unwise to pretend that either Yahweh, Jahweh or Jehovah represents God the Father’s Hebrew name.

(7) God and Elohim

The OT basic form “God” (Strong H430, Hebrew, Elohim) when used in reference to the true God of Israel means “God”

and is always a singular Hebrew noun. This is often disputed but the fact is that throughout the Hebrew OT “Elohim” in reference to the God of Israel, always governs only singular Hebrew verbs and pronouns.

Many point to the plural pronouns “us” and “our” making the noun “God” (Elohim) plural in Genesis 1:26 but this is refuted by placing side by side the following:-

- *And God said, let us make man in our image*
- *And Bob said, let us make dolls in our image*

Since the plural pronouns “us” and “our” do not turn Bob into two or more persons, so they also do not turn God into two or more God Persons in Genesis 1:26. In both examples, God and Bob denote a single speaker who addresses one or more near him.

This may also be verified from the grammatical fact that Hebrew verbs, unlike their English counterparts, are consistently declined to reflect agreement with their subject’s grammatical number (singular / plural). The Hebrew verb translated “said” in “*And God said...*” (Gen 1:26) is singular and so reflects that its Hebrew subject, Elohim (God) is singular. Indeed had the Hebrew noun Elohim been plural, then its Hebrew verb, translated “said” in English, would have been a plural Hebrew verb. This aspect of Hebrew verbs is not apparent in the English form “said” which is used both as a singular and plural verb form. Since the Hebrew verb for “said” in Genesis 1:26 is singular, it follows that its Hebrew subject, Elohim (God), is singular.

Section 6.7 of paper P2 gives a detailed overview of this and shows that God the Father was the Creator and God of Eden who spoke in Gen 1:26 and which is consistent with the next section.

(8) JHVH always refers to God the Father!

We saw how the Hebrew Tetragrammaton, JHVH is rendered in English Bibles by the all-capital forms, LORD and GOD and that we should not assign to those their apparent meanings but instead we should rather think in terms of “*The Eternal*” or similar.

The OT God of Abraham named Himself in the Burning Bush “*The Eternal*” because this marks that He has existed without a break from all past eternity and will continue to exist without a break for all future eternity.

Since the Tetragrammaton means “*The Eternal*” it can apply only to God the Father and never to Jesus because with his death Jesus’ eternity was interrupted by three days and three nights.

Therefore not Jesus but God the Father was the eternally-existing God who spoke to Moses from the Burning Bush and who named himself there “*The Eternal*”.

Before the reader rejects this let him consider Jesus’ testimony of Mark 12:26-27, where he refers with the pronoun “He” to the God of Abraham who spoke to Moses from the (burning) bush. It is plain from this that Jesus knew his Father had been the LORD God of Exodus who spoke to Moses.

Likewise Peter declared in Acts 3:13 that the *God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob* glorified His Son and so identified God the Father as the *God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob*, who according to Exodus 3:6 spoke to Moses from the Burning Bush.

Let the reader recognize these are biblical facts which point to Satan having deceived not only Christendom but also the Church of God into believing that Jesus was the God of

Exodus.

Now had Jesus been the God of Exodus, then He would have married Israel at Mt Sinai and God the Father would have remained a single Father! Then God the Father would have begotten His Son through His Son's Wife, Israel by Mary. That would have meant incest and adultery and surely that can not be God's Way. My short papers Q6, Q7, A2 & A3, and the study P2 explain this further.

(9) Satan's deception of the Church of God.

Unfortunately Satan has been extraordinarily successful in deceiving Christendom, including the Church of God on the nature of the "Godhead". Most of you were willing to look into the errors of Christendom when HWA declared God's Truth but since then you have stopped looking into God's Truth.

I show in paper P5, that Jesus was from all past eternity a Self-existent God but who surrendered this to become incarnate and die as our atoning Passover Lamb. Therefore I claim that God the Father and His Son Jesus were originally two distinct self-existent God Persons.

The reader needs to understand after Jesus agreed to surrender his former self-existent deity to become incarnate and die as our Passover Lamb that there remains now only one truly self-existent God, who is God the Father. This fundamental truth has been missed by Unitarians, Trinitarians and the Church of God.

Many will reject the claims of this study citing a dozen or so NT scriptures which Section 4.0 of paper P2 shows were falsified in the Greek manuscripts, mistranslated or misinterpreted through false doctrine. Yet sections 3.0 and 5.0 of paper P2 show many scriptures that support this study. So is the Bible self-contradictory and our faith in vain or should we renew our study of the Bible? Hebrews 1:1-2 shows that God the Father was his own Word in OT times and Jesus became the Word of God only in NT times. Since this agrees with God's promise to Moses of a NT Prophet (Deut 18:15-20 – see below), let us put God's Word ahead of Church of God tradition.

(10) Some key OT and NT Scriptures

Let us now review some key scriptures.

Jesus declares in John 5:37 that no one has seen or heard his Father and surely that must include Moses at the Burning Bush. But note that at Jesus' baptism God the Father's voice was heard, saying, "*This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased*" (Matt 3:19). My paper P10 explains that Jesus meant that starting in Eden mankind has not obeyed or believed his Father. For example, although God the Father instructed Moses to have all males born in the desert circumcised (Lev 12:1-3), Joshua 5:2-7 reveals Moses had failed to enforce this. Also not even Moses had truly seen God the Father but had seen only a similitude (Num 12:8).

Acts 4:24 with 27 plainly infers that God the Father and

not Jesus was the Creator of all things in Heaven and Earth.

Although the KJV states in Ephesians 3:9 that Jesus was the Creator, it is now known that the phrase "by Jesus Christ" was not part of Paul's autograph.

Section 4.1 of my paper P2 shows that John 1:3 contains three gross mistranslations to make it appear that Jesus was the Creator.

1 Corinthians 10:4 states, "*... and they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ*". HWA misinterpreted this to mean that Jesus was the LORD God of Exodus. To see that this is an error, first note that as God of Exodus, Jesus would have *led* rather than *followed* Israel! Second there is no pronoun *them* in the Greek text and so the verb "followed" refers to following in time rather than following Israel. Jesus was the Rock for the NT church to drink from – see Section 3.4 of paper P2.

When the LORD God said in Eden, "*...and thou shalt bruise his heel*" (Gen 3:16), He referred with the 3rd-person pronoun "his" to Jesus' heel and therefore God the Father was the LORD God who said this.

Paul writes (Rom 5:10), "*For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son...*". How plain that we were alienated in Eden from God the Father and again we see that the Creator and LORD God of Eden was God the Father.

In Deuteronomy 18:15-20 the LORD God of Exodus told Moses that He will send a Prophet with his message. In Acts 3:20-23 Peter quotes from there and reveals that Jesus was that Prophet. Also Jesus said His Father sent him. Again we see that God the Father was the God of Exodus who spoke to Moses.

Section 4.6 of my paper P2 shows that Jesus did not name himself "I AM" in John 8:58 but with "*Before Abraham was, I am*" attested to his existence predating even Abraham. Since the God in the Burning Bush did name himself "I AM" in Exodus 3:14 but Jesus did not name himself "I am" in John 8:58, we may not identify Jesus as the LORD God in the Burning Bush.

(11) Concluding Remarks

Most will dismiss what I wrote because they can not bring themselves to admit that they have not truly known God the Father. Also they will not acknowledge as essayed in paper P1, "*Laodicea's Lamp!*", that the WCG under HWA went badly off the rails in 1974. I have found not even one minister and only few church of God members who are willing to honestly inquire into these matters. We should not be surprised over this because mankind was always more interested in human (church) tradition than in God's Truth.

Email comments etc to hwj@zip.com.au. The papers mentioned above are available at my Home page www.rightly-dividing.net or may be requested from: Henk Jens, P.O. Box 121, Belmore, NSW, 2192, Australia.

Issue 3, January 3, 2012 – Section (4a) inserted after Section 4.

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