

Living in Grace, Love & Obedience

Walking in Faith and the Commandments of God

“Here is the endurance of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus Christ” Revelation 12:17

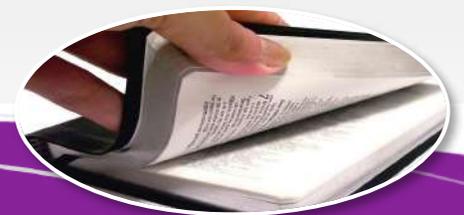


What's in a Name? Confronting the Myths of Names in the Faith

This document discusses the many myths associated with names in some Messianic/Hebrew Root followers. For instance if you don't say the Name of YHWH in a particular way, your prayers will never be answered. If you use the name Jesus, you are addressing a Greek god? Or if you use God or Lord in your prayers, you are praying to false gods? It might sound convincing but is this the truth? What about transliterating names? What did Messiah teach? We hope to answer a lot of these questions and more. We hope you enjoy the following information.

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What's in a Name?

We use names a lot but what is the definition of "name"? Webster's 1828 Dictionary defines "name" as "letters or characters written, expressing sounds by which a person is known and distinguished. In Scripture, the name of YHWH signifies His titles, attributes, will and purpose; His honor, glory, word, grace, wisdom, power, goodness; His worship or service, or God Himself." A name can also refer to one's character, reputation and authority. Notice it does concern expressing sounds however in nations across the globe many languages do not have the same sounds for vowels and consonants as others. So how does YHWH listen to all these? What if someone can't pronounce these sounds? Read Matthew 6:8 and 12:34 for hints. YHWH lives up to His name but do we?

American vs. Hebrew Mindset

One of the barriers that MHR (Messianic/Hebrew Roots) believers is changing their 21st century mindset to a Hebrew one. If we don't understand take into consideration the culture and mindset of the people during biblical times, we can find ourselves misinterpreting the scriptures and or focusing on minor issues that divide the body. So let's look at the differences between a 21st century understanding of what a name is vs. a Hebrew mindset/understanding.

In westernized thinking, a name portrays one's identity that is related to the spelling and pronunciation of that name. It is how we address and identify a person.

In Hebrew thinking one's name, or שֵׁם "shem" denotes the character, authority, reputation, fame, glory and even the purpose and actions of that person. The combination of all these comprise and identify a person. The pronunciation is important but with all the languages in the world, most do not have the same sounds for consonants and vowels, so the importance is place on the attributes that describe the one being named.

The problem with arguing about how to pronounce the Father's name is a symptom of westernized thinking that often ignores His character, authority and actually promotes division with the body. We will see its not about knowing 100% on how to pronounce the name that is commanded but us representing who He is in our lives, what He has done for us and pointing the world to the Messiah. To the one who can free them from the bondage of sin and bring them into the Kingdom of YHWH.



What does YHWH mean?

In Exodus 3:14 we see YHWH talking to Moses saying "I am that I am". Other translations say it's "I will be what (or who) I will be". The Jewish Study Bible states it's connected to the verb "be" or "become", meaning "He who causes to be". Other possibilities are the "Eternal One" or the One who is self-existent or the self-sufficient being; that YHWH has life in and of Himself, showing Him to be all-powerful. In modern times many will write the Name as "God" with a hyphen in place of the vowel (G-d). Regardless we know that He is our Father, who created everything and sent us the Messiah.

In Judaism the replacement of YHWH was done out of reverence. They believed if one said the Name of the Creator too often, it would become common and people would end up using His name in vain. With this in mind many decided to substitute His name with Adonai אֲדֹנָי (Lord/Master), or HaShem הַשֵּׁם (the Name).

An interesting note is there are no records of biblical believers arguing over the name of our Father, but rather they focused on the relationship and doing what they were commanded out of love for the Father, maybe we should do the same. Shalom.



Distinctions between Names and Titles?

Another difference between American thinking and Hebrew is that titles are often associated with names. Though we see this in America as with the President, of the United States, in the ancient Near East it's more common. In Hebrew we see the combination of one's name (their character, authority, reputation, etc.) and their title of what they do. Consider King David. King means "one who reigns" and David means "one who is loved". In western thinking we often think a title refers to a character trait or position and the name is simply denoting identity. In Hebrew a title and name compliment each other in authority, character, etc.



Profaning the Name of YHWH

Some believers teach that if you do not say the Name of YHWH exactly the way they do, you are profaning His name as seen in Exodus 20:7 and Deuteronomy 5:11.

“You shall not take the name (shem) of the Lord your God (YHWH) in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.”

Taking YHWH's name in vain has nothing to do with how many times you YHWH or how you pronounce it. If our Father was really concerned with such things, He would not have written out YHWH in the Tanakh almost 7,000 times.

The Hebrew word “vain” אִשָּׁן is shav' meaning emptiness, falsehood, lying, worthlessness of conduct. It also has a sense of evil, ruin and idolatry. The Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon also defines it as committed wickedness and iniquity; a falsehood, a lie, a false report. So what is taking the name of YHWH in vain?

When we disobey YHWH's commandments (Torah) we are profaning or making worthless the instructions of the Creator and His authority. We declare who He is as meaningless in our lives. The Apostle Paul stated the following...

“Do you know that when you present yourselves as servants and obey someone, you are the servants of whomever you obey; whether of sin to death, or of obedience to righteousness?” Romans 6:16

In the Torah (first five books of the scriptures) we see disobedience of YHWH's commandments is considered profaning His name...

“You shall not give any of your children to sacrifice to Molech, You shall not profane the name of your YHWH, I am YHWH.” Leviticus 18:21

We also see that swearing falsely (not doing what one said they would do) makes YHWH's authority worthless...

“You shall not swear by My name falsely and profane the name of your YHWH, I am YHWH.” Leviticus 19:12

It's no wonder Yeshua (Jesus) taught let our 'yes' be 'yes' and our 'no' be 'no'. He did not want us to profane or make vain the name of YHWH by not obeying the

commandments from our heart; as a by-product of Him forgiving us, changing our heart and loving Him.

In Exodus 20:7 & Deut 5:11 we also see the aspect of those who take the name in vain as being guilty. Throughout scripture and the apostolic writings we see that sin is transgression of the law. When we disobey His instructions we are making worthless His claim as Creator and elevating ourselves as knowing more than Him, which is idolatry.

Another example Yeshua taught was being vain in our prayers...

“But you, when you pray, enter into your inner room, and having shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. In praying, don't use vain repetitions, as the Gentiles (unbelievers) do; for they think that they will be heard for their much speaking. Therefore don't be like them, for you Father know what things you need, before you ask Him.” Matthew 6:6-8

This shows that paying lip service to YHWH is meaningless. Yeshua further confirmed this here...

“These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and the honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of me.” Matthew 15:8-9

Yeshua quoted Isaiah 29:13 and rebuked the Pharisees for teaching the commandments of men, rather than the commandments of YHWH. Throughout His ministry He rebuked those that transgress the commandments of YHWH while trying to look righteous by following the man-made commandments of the Pharisees. In Matt 15:16-20 Yeshua teaches what makes our worship vain is our evil thoughts from an un-regenerated heart; one that murders, commits adultery, fornication, thefts, false witness and blasphemies. All of these things where we choose to disobey and reject the authority and thus trample on the glory of YHWH. In effect we are rejecting the “shem” of the Creator.

There are many other examples in scripture of how our actions can either honor or dishonor YHWH's character, reputation, fame and glory. In the Hebrew mindset what we believe is verified by what we do. Remember even the demons believe and tremble ref. James 2:19. We hope this helps explain what taking the Father's name in vain is really about. Shalom.

Pronouncing the Creator's name

First if anyone is looking for definitive proof on how to precisely pronounce the name should be prepared to be disappointed. Archeologists are still looking for Moses' tape recorder as he says the Creator's name and until it's found, any pronunciation is an educated guess at best. With all the information from secular and biblical scholars (with PhD's in ancient Biblical languages) there is no consensus as how to pronounce the name 100%. There is also no reason to force people into pronouncing "the Name" a certain way and or dis-fellowshipping from others over the matter. We do not see any teaching or example of this in the scriptures, or in the apostolic writings so we don't take this stance either. Still we see many pronunciations which include Yahweh, Yehowah, Yahhovah, Y'huwah, Yahwah and about 10 or so others (with the majority not relying on any credible scholarship). So the question is what do we do? What name do we use?

Waw or Vav? The Father's name is represented by the Hebrew letters יהוה YHVH or YHWH. Now there are two major schools of thought on how to pronounce the name and they center on the letters Vav or Waw and the vowels. Some Hebrew communities use the 'v' sound and others use the 'w' sounds. Most Hebrew scholars conclude the rendering of 'vav' is more a more modern form of pronunciation and the 'waw' is more ancient form of pronunciation. In light of this many use Yahweh. This makes sense but its not 100% conclusive as not all sources and scholars come to this conclusion. With all the research we have done, we are 90% sure the waw is what is most likely used, leaving a 10% margin of error for using the 'vav' sound. With that being said, we are still open to new scholarly information. For more detailed look at this topic checkout the "HaShem Series" from 119 Ministries (where the majority of this teaching comes from).

What about Yehovah? Some believers pronounce the name Yehovah. Their reasoning is that Masorettes wrote a copy of the scriptures with vowel points in the tenth century (prior to this vowel points were understood by the reader and not written down). It should be noted the Masorettes also believed in revering the name of the Creator. With this in mind, they substituted the vowels for YHWH and wrote down the vowel points for Adonai with the letters Yod, Heh, Wah, Heh. The end result was Yehovah or Yehowah. Adding the vowel points from Adonai was to prevent the reader from pronouncing the Name and possibly profaning it and or making it common.

What about Jehovah? Originally in the Hebrew language there were no vowel markings, as they were supposed to be understood by the reader. When the Masoretic text was written, between the 7th and 10th century, the translators added vowel markings under the Hebrew letters. In that text the translators wrote the name YHWH but used the vowel markings for Adonai or "Lord". This was done so the cantor (or chazzan who leads the assembly in prayer) would say "Adonai" instead of the saying YHWH. Later some early Christian bible translators applied the vowel markings and translated the YHWH as "Jehovah". Recently there are some Messianic/Hebrew Roots 'teachers' who have taken these same vowels markings for Adonai and have come up with various translations of "the Name", however their claims are not based on scholarly evidence or the rules of ancient Hebrew grammar. It should also be noted there is no "J" in the Hebrew language as it was invented in the early 1500's.

But what does the Messiah say? When the disciples asked the Messiah how they should pray, He answered saying "In this manner pray... Our Father in heaven..." ref. Matthew 6:9-13. Notice Yeshua commanded His disciples to use the word "Father" when addressing YHWH in prayer. He used "Father" in prayer and when in His teachings. In the Gospels we see Yeshua referring to YHWH as "Father" 53 times. In the rest of the Apostolic writings "Father" is used of YHWH 76 times. In the scriptures (the Old Testament) we see YHWH Himself and others referring to Him as "Father" 8 times. So lets follow the example of the Messiah and use "Father", "Abba" instead of arguing.

"Father" references for YHWH in the Bible

53 times in the Gospels we see Yeshua (Jesus) using the word "Father" (πατήρ G3962 pater in the Greek) when referring to YHWH in teaching and prayer.

Matthew - 6:9-13, 5:16, 5:45, 48, 6:1, 4, 6, 8, 9, 14, 15, 18, 26, 32, 7:11, 21, 8:21, 10:20, 29, 32 and 33. Mark - 8:38, 11:25, 26, 13:32 and 14:36. Luke - 2:49, 6:36, 9:26, 10:21, 22, 11:2 and 13. John - 1:14, 18, 2:16, 3:35, 4:21, 23, 53, 5:17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, 30, 36, 37, 43, 45, 6:27 and 32.

In the rest of the Apostolic writings we see "Father" used 76 times...

Acts -1:4, 7, 2:33. Romans - 1:7, 6:4, 11:28, 15:6. 1 Corinthians - 1:3, 8:6, 15:24. 2 Corinthians - 1:2, 3, 6:18, 11:31. Galatians - 1:1, 3, 4, 4:2, 4:6. Ephesians - 1:2, 3, 17, 2:18, 3:14, 4:6, 5:20, 6:23. Philippians - 1:2, 2:11, 4:20. Colossians - 1:2, 3, 12, 19, 2:2, 3:17. 1 Thessalonians - 1:1, 3, 3:11 and 13. 2 Thessalonians - 1:1, 2, 2:16. 1 Timothy - 1:2. 2 Timothy - 1:2. Titus - 1:4. Philemon - 1:3. Hebrews - 1:5. James - 1:17, 27, 3:9. 1 Peter - 1:2, 3, 17. 2 Peter - 1:17. 1 John - 1:2, 3, 2:1, 13, 15, 16, 22, 23, 24, 3:1, 4:14, 5:7. 2 John - 1:3, 4, 9. Jude - 1:1. and Revelation - 1:6, 2:27, 3:5, 21, 14:1.

In the Scriptures "Father" used eight times in Deut 32:5-7, Psalm 68:5, 89:26, Isaiah 9:5-7, 64:8, Jeremiah 3:4, Malachi 1:6 and 2:10.

137 times the word "Father" is used to reference YHWH in prayer, teaching, when people called upon Him (including the Messiah) and YHWH even referred to Himself as "Father". So perhaps we should stop arguing over what name and address Him as "Father", "Abba", and be the sheep in Matthew 23:31-46.



The name of other gods forbidden

When it comes to Messianics or Hebrew Root believers, some take the stance that one cannot say the names of other gods or it is a sin. Some even go so far as to not say the days of the week or the months of the year because they refer to god/s. For example Thursday is named after the god Thor. January is named after the god Janus. Some won't wear Nike tennis shoes because they are named after the Greek god Nike. So why do they do this? It's because of the following scripture...

"Be careful to do all things that I (YHWH) have said to you; and don't invoke the name of other gods or even let them be heard out of your mouth." Exodus 23:13

Some take this commandment literally but is this what is actually being commanded? What do we see YHWH doing in regards to this commandment? Do we see Him using the names of false gods like Molech/Moloch, a Canaanite god, or Ba'al, a Ugaritic god of weather and fertility? Let's look and see what YHWH says...

"YHWH spoke to Moses, saying, "Moreover, you shall tell the children of Israel, 'Anyone of the children of Israel, or of the strangers who live as foreigners in Israel, who gives any of his offspring to Molech, he shall surely be put to death. The people of the land shall stone him with stones.'" Leviticus 20:1-2

So here YHWH Himself uses the name Molech and tells Moses to tell the 'mixed multitude' (the Hebrews and foreigners) to them to not sacrifice to Molech. Since we know that YHWH does not lie, then it's our interpretation of Exodus 23:13 is lacking in understanding. If saying the names of false god/s was a sin then why do we see YHWH, or His prophets who spoke on His behalf, using the following names?

Ashtoreth in 1 Kings 11:5, 33 & 2 Kings 23:13. Baal in Numbers 25:3, 32:38. Chemosh in Numbers 21:29, Judges. Tammuz in Ezekiel 8:14. Dagon in 1 Samuel 5. Milcom in 1 Kings and Artemis in Acts 19:35. There are more examples but you get the point.

Now some fringe groups reject any writings with the names of false gods but if that is the case then they would have to rip of the following books of the bible...

Leviticus, Numbers, Judges, 1 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Isaiah, Joshua, Jeremiah, Hosea,

Zephaniah, Acts and Romans. Remember YHWH stated to not add to or take away from His word ref. Deut 4:2, 12:32 Rev 22:18.

When we look at the examples in scripture we see it's actually the practices or actions of those who worship pagan god/s, which we are not supposed to follow...

"You shall not worship the Lord you YHWH in their ways" Deuteronomy 12:4

"You shall not worship the Lord your YHWH in that way; for every abomination to the Lord which He hates they have done to their gods; for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods." Deuteronomy 12:31

We have to remember that the commandments are in Hebrew, which is an action orientated mindset. We are defined by what we do.

Even in the early Jewish writings of the Mishnah, the interpretation of Exodus 23:13 was referring to the actual act/s of idolatry...

"... e.g. he said "Konam, may all the produce in the world be (forbidden me) as a sacrifice in the name of such-and-such an idol". Or who swears in its name – i.e. he who takes an oath in the name of an idol; according to another interpretation, another person prohibited him by vow for the sake of idolatry, and he fulfilled the vow, transgresses a Torah prohibition – as it is written "and make no mention of the names of other gods (Exodus 23:13)." The Kehati Commentary on the Mishnah.

The problem is that the English the translation of Exodus 23:13 is lacking. The Hebrew word 'zakar' is translated 'mention' but most Hebrew scholars understand it to mean 'to remember' or 'to invoke' or 'to proclaim'. To 'invoke means to 'call upon a deity or spirit in prayer, as a witness (when taking oaths or vows) or for inspiration. So the word 'zakar' does not mean simply saying the name of a false god, it means one who follows a false god; one who actively worships a false god. Sometimes 'zakar' means 'remember' in the sense of one who remembers or guards the way of their god/s.

So clearly it's not the simple saying of a false god's name that offends YHWH but actively following and worshipping them. Shalom.

Is Transliteration a Sin?

Within the Messianic/Hebrew Roots walk, there are some who teach that transliterating names from one language to another is a sin. Some even disassociate with others who do. But is this what we see in scripture? Do we see examples of names being transliterated in the bible? Let's dig deeper into this topic and find out.

One example we see is Saul transliterated his name into the Greek as Paul. A few hundred years before our Messiah, a group of Jews translated the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek, called the Septuagint, which also included transliterating all of the names.

So why would one transliterate a name now or in biblical times? Because phonetically, a person who could only speak Greek could not usually say "Yeshua" as there is not a 'sh' sound in their phonics. So to save people from embarrassment, transliteration was used, like how Saul did (Paul) to make it easier for them. We must remember that transliteration does not change the truth, authority, or the character of the person who is talking or the message they are conveying.

So what should we focus on? What are we not supposed to do? Look to the parables showing the actions of those who are good servants and bad. The parable of the Sheep and the Goats, the parable of the Talents, parable of the Faithful Servant, the Wheat and the Tares, the Unmerciful Servant, the Laborers of the Vineyard, the Ten Virgins, etc. Look at how we are to be a light to our family and the world around us. That will carry more weight with the Father than doing nothing and knowing how to pronounce His name (even though we don't know 100% how to pronounce His name).

In summary, there is value in the original Hebrew or Aramaic names and the meanings behind those names. Basically they have no value in the transliterated forms, other than they are often easier for others to say, which of course is the whole point of transliteration. With that being said, we choose to not disassociate with those that use transliterated names. We do not see any Torah commandment that tells us to not transliterate names or that it is an abomination to the Father. And neither do we see any example where a person was removed from an assembly for using transliterated names.

So be a light and a servant. Preach the gospel and make disciples till the Messiah returns. Shalom.

The Sacred Name movement

One question that seems to be ignored with the Sacred Name movement (those claiming one must pronounce the Name exactly like they do or your prayers are not listened to, and or they are an abomination to YHWH), is this... "When did this teaching originate?" From the sounds of it, you might think it was back during biblical times but that is not the case. The Sacred Name movement developed from the Church of God (Seventh Day) in the 1930s at the Assembly of Yahweh in Holt Michigan. The group claimed that a founding member was visited by two angels who explained the name/s of YHWH and the Messiah. This was also based upon Proverbs 30:4 which says...

"Who has ascended up into heaven, and descended? Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has bound the waters in His garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His name and what is His son's name, if you know?"

The basic premise was that if you did not say the name/s correctly, and not belong to their religious group, you were not part of the remnant and were doomed to burn in hell forever.

They based an entire doctrine on this one scripture and a revelation from two angels with no other witnesses (scripture says two or more witnesses to establish a thing). Needless to say if you were not a member of their group, you were not saved nor considered a part of the remnant. The problem with this claim is that it is not taught in scripture. For example we are "saved by grace through faith and not of works that any should boast" ref. Eph 2:8. We also see in Amos 3:7 that YHWH informs His people via the prophets and we see no prophecies about this 'sacred name' doctrine.

This perhaps one of the reasons why Paul wrote the following...

"But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed." Galatians 1:8

The problem with the sacred name movement is that we do not see any prophets, teachers, disciples or the Messiah teaching this doctrine. Matter of fact when Yeshua is asked how we are to pray in Luke 11 we see He says "when you pray, say, 'Our Father in heaven...'" Perhaps we should do the same. Shalom.

Is it a Sin to say “God”?

There are many believers who are returning to the roots of the faith. They are studying YHWH's word, observing the Sabbath, feasts and dietary instructions. However there are some fringe groups that claim you should not say “God” when referring to YHWH. Some even dis-fellowship from those that say “God”. Is the word “God” pagan? Let's look at this topic and find out.

According to Merriam-Webster, God is defined as “The Being perfect in power, wisdom and goodness, who is worshipped as the creator and ruler of the universe. Based on this definition it is fitting that English translators used the word God for Elohim and El and perhaps is the only word in the English language that shows YHWH's complete power and authority over everything. Now some fringe groups object and claim the word “God” sounds too much like the Canannite god named “Gad” which is mentioned in Isaiah 65:11...

“But you are those who forsake the Lord (YHWH), who forget My holy mountain, who prepare a table to for Gad, and who furnish a drink offering at Meni.”

However, the fact is the two words, God and Gad, are from two entirely different languages and there is no proof that they have the similar meanings just because they have similar sounds. There is no scholarly evidence to support this claim. If YHWH was so offended by Gad then why did He name one of the twelve tribes Gad? Apparently God wasn't told the word Gad is pagan.

There are many words that sound the same but do not have similar meanings. For example, the English word ‘book’ means a collection of writings but the Chinese word that sounds like ‘book’ means ‘cannot or must not’. The Hebrew word ‘ki’ and the English word ‘key’ have the same sound but the English word means a piece of metal with notches which is used to open a lock, and the Hebrew ‘ki’ means ‘because’. There are many more examples but you get the point.

The point in using the English word “God” as a translation of the Hebrew word El or Elohim is that the definition points the Creator of Heaven and Earth. Other languages use a similar definition. For example in Korean it's 하나님 Hananim. In Russian it's Бог Bog. In Greek it's θεός Theos. Different words but they have the same definition.

So according to their logic, if a word in Hebrew sounds like a word in English and that English meaning is offensive then we cannot use that transliterated word or name. For example, the middle of the name Yeshua sounds like ‘shoe’. Therefore if you use the name Yeshua, you reducing the Messiah as something that is trampled upon and its disrespectful (this is an actual argument from a group that obviously thinks the name Yeshua is wrong). As you can see, this can lead to all kinds of crazy and unbiblical beliefs.

The English word “God” is simply the word used for the Hebrew Elohim or El in reference to YHWH in the bible. The translators chose that word because it best reflects the meaning of the Hebrew. The fact that some words sound similar to words in other languages doesn't mean that those words are somehow connected. Some choose to replace the word “God” in the Scriptures and say the original Hebrew of El or Elohim. We see no problem with that. We do the same in some of our teachings, especially when we are talking to those within the Messianic/Hebrew Roots walk.

With that being said, if I am talking with a protestant believer who is a Baptist, I use the name God. I might use the name Yahweh but I always tell the person what it means. If I see that they are uncomfortable with it, I continue to use the word “God”. The objective is to point them to the truth of God's word and share about the Sabbath, Feasts and other things they might not have seen in the bible previously. Its not about beating them over the head, demanding they use a particular name for YHWH and if they don't they are praying to a false god and going to hell. We never see Yeshua or anyone in the scriptures teaching or doing such a thing.

So what are we to focus on? One passage that stands out is when Yeshua was talking about the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25:31-46. We should all strive to be like the sheep doing what YHWH calls us to do. Notice we do not see the sheep being congratulated for pronouncing the name of YHWH correctly. Rather we see it's about being the body of the Messiah, who serves others as a by-product of our love for the Father.

Notice there is no mention of correctly pronouncing the name of YHWH in any of the parables told by the Messiah. Finally 2 Timothy 2:14 says... “Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to ruin of the hearers.”

“Lord” means a pagan god or does it?

Some fringe groups say we shouldn't say the word “Lord” because in doing so it is taking YHWH's name in vain. Some claim the English word “Lord” is connected to Ba'al, a Canaanite deity and that if you use the word “Lord” you are inadvertently praying to a false god, which is an abomination to YHWH. These are serious claims but are they true? Let's get into this topic and find out.

The first thing we need to realize is that, while it's true the God of Israel revealed His name as YHWH, He also refers to Himself in many other ways in the Scriptures. One of the most frequent titles used is Adonai/'Adown, אֲדֹנָי which is a word that conveys the idea of ruler-ship, authority, master. This Hebrew word is translated into English as “Lord” which means someone who has power and authority; a master or ruler. The Oxford Dictionary of English states the word “Lord” goes back to Old English word “hlaford” meaning “loaf-guardian”. The primary sense of the word denotes the head or master of a household in relation to his servants who ate his bread (isn't it interesting that YHWH gave bread to the mixed multitude and Yeshua was the bread of life). By the time the bible was translated into English, the word acquired a wider application as a master, ruler, owner.

The simple reason is the English word “Lord” appears in the Bible is that this word best represents the meaning of the Hebrew word Adonai/'Adown, in both function and definition. Adonai/'Adown is used hundreds of times in the Scriptures and YHWH even uses it in reference to Himself...

“Therefore says the **Lord ('Adown)**, the YHWH of hosts, the mighty One of Israel, ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies.”
Isaiah 1:24

So if YHWH does not have a problem with using it, then neither should we.

However some say “But wait, the word Lord comes from Ba'al the Canaanite pagan god!” It's true Ba'al is the name of a pagan god, but it can also be translated as “owner”, “husband”, “lord”, “ruler”, “master”, “captain” and even “bird” (bird when used in biblical poetry). So how can this be? Easy, it depends on the contest of the passage on how it's defined. Consider the following examples...

Exodus 21:28 “When an ox gores a man or a woman to death, the ox shall be stoned, and its flesh shall not be eaten, but the **owner (ba'al)** of the ox shall not be liable.”

2 Samuel 11:26 “when the wife of Uriah heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for her **husband (ba'al)**.”

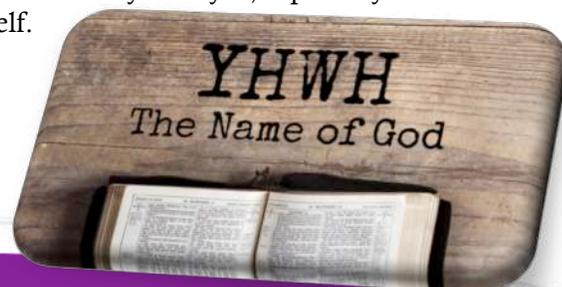
Jeremiah 37:13 “And when he was in the gate of Benjamin, a **captain (ba'al)** of the ward was there...”

Proverbs 1:17 “Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of the any **bird (ba'al)**.”

These scriptures and many others show the word ba'al can be used in many different ways depending on the context of the passage. So the idea that we shouldn't say the word “Lord” because it can refer to a pagan god is without any biblical basis. Rather it shows the ignorance of those who make such claims, which end up dividing the body and creating a distraction from what we are supposed to be doing for the Kingdom.

Another objection is the replacement of the YHWH with “LORD”. Religious Jews did not say the name YHWH out of reverence and substituted it with Adonai and or HaShem. This practice was followed by most English translations of the scriptures when they replaced the YHWH with LORD in all capital letters.

While is fine to disagree with the decisions of most English translators to render Tetragrammaton as “LORD” instead of YHWH, it doesn't suggest that the word “LORD” is bad or pagan. We do not agree that the Tetragrammaton should have been replaced with “LORD”. In response to this we often reinsert YHWH back into the text and we do not rebuke others for not doing the same. Again, the word “Lord” is simply an English word that means master or ruler; someone with authority and power. YHWH is our master and ruler. He has ultimate power and authority. Thus, YHWH is our Lord and it's okay to say it, especially since He uses it for Himself.



Jesus, Zeus and the Earth Pig

Many who believe and walk out their faith as Messianic/Hebrew Roots, find those who teach if you pronounce the name of Jesus, you are praying to a false god. Some teach that if you use the name Jesus, it actually means "Hail Zeus" and not only are your prayers ineffective but they are an abomination to YHWH. But is this actually the truth?

The English name Jesus is a transliteration of the Greek name Iēsous, which is a transliteration of the Hebrew name Yeshua (Yeshua was a common form of the name Yehoshua). But before we go any further lets look at the definition of the transliteration.

Transliteration means to represent words or spell in the characters of one alphabet into the characters of another alphabet. Notice transliteration does not define a word or its meaning. It merely takes a word and its sounds from one alphabet into another. One noticeable problem is that many languages do not have the same sounds for vowels and consonants as the originated language. So let's look at how the name Yeshua was transliterated into the Greek and again into English.

Hebrew: Yeshua Greek: Iēsous English: Jesus

The "Iē" in Greek represents the "Y" sound from the Hebrew, the "s" represents the "sh", the "ou" represents the "ua" sound. Then the last "s" in the Greek does not represent a sound but indicates the masculine form of the name (if there was no "s" at the end of the name, it would be feminine in the Greek). So knowing this we see it's impossible to write Yeshua directly into the Greek as there are different sounds for consonants and vowels in two languages (the sounds are not the same).

If you transliterate the name Yeshua from Hebrew to English you get Joshua. When you transliterate Iēsous from the Greek to English you get Jesus. It should be noted that prior to the 15th century there was no letter "J" in the English language (it was invented in the 1500s and later widely accepted with the printing of the 1611 KJV bible). There is not know nor was there ever an equivalent letter "J" in all the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Nor is there any Hebrew letter that carries even an approximate sound of the consonant letter "J". Neither is there a letter "J" in the Greek or Latin alphabet (Latin evolved from the Cumaeian version of the Greek alphabet). So when we talk about

transliteration, the names Joshua and Jesus are essentially the same.

By the way the name Iēsous was used in Greek, Latin and English until the 15th century when the letter "J" was invented. Originally the letter "J" had the sound of "y" or "yuh" sound as in yet or yellow. But over time it took on the "J" sound that we know today.

Jesus means "Hail Zeus". The claim is the "Iē" in Iēsous means hail or praise and the "sous" means Zeus (the Greek god, king of all the Olympian gods). However in the Greek Zeus is spelled "Ζεύς" which is totally different than "Iē" (it should be noted there is no abbreviation for Zeus in the Greek language). We also see the Greek word for "hail" is "χαλάζι" and the Greek word for praise is "ἔπαινος". So we see that this claim of Jesus meaning "Hail Zeus" is false. There are no Greek scholars, believing or secular, which support claim. These 'teachers' say this because the words Iēsous and Zeus sound similar, however, no scholar supports such claims because there is no rule that words in different languages that sound similar are related or have or derive from a same or similar meaning.

Jesus means "Earth Pig". Some claim the "Je" in Jesus means earth in Latin and the "sus" means pig. The fatal error is that they are taking an English word and claiming it's a Latin word. However, the Latin words for earth are "terra" or "terrestrium". The Latin words for swine is "porcus" (swine, hog, boar) or "porcum" (pig). Matter of fact when we look up the "Je" in Latin there are no translations found. We also have to remember that the last "s" in the Greek name Iēsous is an indicator that the name is masculine. So this clearly shows the claim of Jesus meaning "earth pig" is a false and unscholarly claim and used by those who want to divide the body.

What about those who claim if we don't say the name exactly as they do, we are praying to a false god? Well what about the people who are deaf, mute and or have speech impediments? Are they destined for hell just because they cannot pronounce His name as they do? Let's look at what Yeshua says...

"...for out of the abundance of the heart, his mouth speaks." Luke 6:45, Matt 12:34. Also read 1 Sam 16:7.

God and the Messiah do not need to hear how we pronounce words to understand us. They see our hearts and minds. With that being said it's ok to say Jesus in English (or another transliteration in another language).

Names and Titles of YHWH

יהוה **Yahweh/Yehovah** – 'the Self-Existing One'; the four consonants known as the Tetragrammaton - YHWH.

יהוה צדקנו **YHWH Tsidkenu** – 'the Lord our Righteousness'; symbolic title given to the Messiah. The Lord Our Righteousness- Jeremiah 23:5-6 "Behold, the days are coming," declares the Lord, "When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch... And this is His name by which He will be called, 'The Lord our righteousness.'" In Jeremiah God pronounced judgment against Israel, and gave them the promise of a righteous Branch (Yeshua) who would bring restoration. It is only through the Lord sending His Son that we can be made righteous. Yeshua took our sin so that we could become the Righteousness of God 2 Corinthians 5:21. "This righteousness from YHWH comes through faith in Yeshua to all who believe." Romans 3:22.

יהוה מקדשכם **YHWH M'kaddesh** – 'The Lord Who Sanctifies you' The word Kaddosh means holy, to dedicate, set apart, sanctify. We find this name in Leviticus 20:8 "Keep my decrees and follow them. I am the LORD, who makes you holy." God's commandments were given to the mixed multitude (Jews and foreign believers) to guide them in righteousness and holiness.

יהוה שמה **YHWH Shammah** – 'The Lord is there, the Lord is present'. This name describes how the Presence of YHWH filled the tabernacle and temple but fills the millennial Kingdom during the Messiah's reign. YHWH is also present with us when He sent His Spirit to dwell in us- "Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" 1 Corinthians 3:16.

יהוה רעה **YHWH Rohi** – 'The Lord My Shepherd'. David call out for a Shepherd that will provide for his soul and lead him in righteousness for the purpose of dwelling in the house of the YHWH in Psalm 23. YHWH promises that shepherd in Ezekiel 34:11-15 who will deliver and gather the sheep back to their promised land.

יהוה נסי **YHWH Nissi** – 'The Lord is my Banner'. This name was given by Moses after YHWH and His people defeated the Amalekites at Rephidim. Isaiah prophesied in Isaiah 11:10 that the 'root of Jesse (Yeshua) will stand as a banner for the people'.

יהוה שלום **YHWH Shalom** - The Lord Our Peace. Gideon was afraid he would die after seeing the angel of the Lord face to face. But the Lord said to him, "Peace to you, do not fear; you shall not die". This had such an impact on Gideon that he built an altar there and named it Yahweh Shalom (Judges 6:22-24). Shalom speaks of wholeness, harmony, and completeness. Shalom is not dependent on circumstances. True peace comes only from complete trust in the Lord in all areas of our lives. "Now may the Lord of peace Himself continually grant you peace in every circumstance. The Lord be with you all!" (2 Thess. 3:16)

יהוה ירה **YHWH Yireh** - means the Lord will provide. When Abraham went up the mountain to sacrifice his son, he made this faith-filled statement: "God Himself will provide a lamb". And Yahweh Yireh did provide! He supplied a ram to be sacrificed instead of Isaac. Abraham memorializes this divine intervention with the name Yireh, for the Lord's unfailing grace and constant provision. For the Lord sees and provides for our every need! "And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4:19)

יהוה רפא **YHWH Rapha** - The Lord Who Heals. He is our Healer, in both body and soul! Psalm 147:3 says, "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds." This assures each of us that our Father wants to restore us to wholeness. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget none of His benefits; Who pardons all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases." (Psalm 103:2-3) Amen!

אל שדי **YYHWH Tsuri** – "The Lord is our Rock". God is described as our Rock throughout the books of the prophets and Psalms. Beloved, our God is immovable, unbreakable, a safe place for retreat, and a fortress in battle! He is our true source of strength, our firm foundation, our support, and our defense. Cling to Him amidst all circumstances! "Trust in the Lord forever, for in God the Lord, we have an everlasting Rock." (Isaiah 26:4).

"Teach me Your way, O YHWH; I will walk in Your truth; Unite my heart to fear Your name. I will praise You, O YHWH my God, with all my heart, and I will glorify Your name forevermore." Psalm 86:11-12

אֱלֹהֵי שַׁדַּי El Shaddai - means the all sufficient God. It's a word reflecting on His strength, majesty, and power. When translated into English, it is usually rendered as: God Almighty. "He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High Will abide in the shadow of the Almighty." (Psalm 91:1).

אֱלֹהֵי שִׂמְחַת גִּילִי El Shimchah Giyl – this title means God My Exceeding Joy. "Then I will go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy" (Psalm 43:4). Both simchah and giyl are word for gladness, mirth, pleasure, and great joy! This name is like calling God your ecstatic joy. This joy stands outside of all circumstances. Earthly pleasures have an end and all other happiness can fall in trials. The joy we can have (because He lives inside of us) goes beyond circumstance. Even amidst the trials we can have an inexpressible joy manifesting from His presence! "Do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength." Nehemiah 8:10.

אֱלֹהֵי רַחֻם El Rachum – means Compassionate (merciful) God: Deuteronomy 4:31 "For the LORD your God is a compassionate God; He will not fail you nor destroy you nor forget the covenant with your fathers which He swore to them." This name expresses how much God acts as our Father. He is rich in compassion and mercy- He does not want to see His children fall. We can know that our prayers, and our tears, will never be wasted. The God of compassion hears them and is merciful so we may not be distressed. Let us, in turn, have ears to hear and eyes to see the world in compassion the way our Father does.

אֱלֹהֵי קַנְא El Qanna – means "Jealous God". Our God is a jealous God, desiring our praise to be for Him alone. El Qanna is about the marriage relationship between Yahweh and us. His jealousy is not out of selfishness, but a passionate love saying, "never will I leave you, never will I forsake you". It is because of His burning love for us that His jealousy is so great. This is our El Qanna: "For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God." (Deuteronomy 4:24) Give Him your whole heart today, and all of the glory!

יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת Yahweh Sabaoth – means "The Lord of Hosts". Appears over 250 times in the Scriptures, this name can also be translated as "The Lord of Armies". It captivates His sovereignty over all spiritual and physical armies. His is the Lord of Hosts and gives charge to the multitude of heavenly beings to face the adversities. The King of the universe is fighting on our behalf- the victory is already ours. "Cease striving and know that I

am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.' The Lord of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our stronghold." Psalm 46:10-11.

אֱלֹהֵי עוֹלָם El Olam - "Everlasting God". It teaches us that God created time, yet exists outside of and beyond it. Before the creation of the universe there was God with no beginning and no end. All things we know of change through time, yet our Father never does. This means the character of God, His Word, His Kingdom, and all He stands for never change and never end. That means we have a unceasing, dependable, trustworthy and consistent God! God has eternity in view for you. Psalm 90:1-2 "Lord, You have been our dwelling place for all generations...even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God [El Olam]." He is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

אֱלֹהֵי גִבּוֹר El Gibhor - "Mighty/ Warrior God" Jeremiah 32:17-18 "Nothing is too difficult for You, who shows loving-kindness to thousands, but repays the iniquity of fathers into the bosom of their children after them, O great and mighty God [El Gibbor]." El Gibhor is the description of God as a Mighty Warrior and Champion. He always prevails, has great strength, and authority over all. It is He who spoke all of creation into existence. It is His mighty hand that brought the ten plagues against Egypt and set His people free. Sometimes we forget that we can trust God in overwhelming troubles in our life today. He is still Mighty God and will deliver us! "The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold." Psalm 18:2.

אֱלֹהֵי חַיֵּי El Chaiyai – "God of Life". Psalms 42:8 says, "The Lord will command His loving-kindness in the daytime; and His song will be with me in the night, a prayer to the God of my life." When we remember that God is the source of life, we become who we are truly meant to be! Without Christ, we cannot have fullness of life! Jesus said "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." (John 10:10).

אֱלֹהֵי אֱמֶת El Emet – "God of Truth". Psalm 31:3,5 "For You are my rock and my fortress...Into Your hand I commit my spirit; You have ransomed me, O Lord, God of truth [El Emet]." El Emet is a name to remind us our Father is firm, reliable, and trustworthy in all circumstances. His truth never wavers and neither does His word nor the Messiah whom He sent.

Names and Titles cont.

אֵל עֶלְיוֹן **El Elyon** – “The Most High God”. This name emphasizes God’s strength, sovereignty, and supremacy. In Genesis 14:20, Melchizedek said to Abram, “blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!” He understood that the Lord is extremely exalted. Let us say as the Psalmist did— “I cry out to the Most High Elohim, To El who is perfecting all matters for me” (Psalm 57:2).

גֹּאֵל **Go’el** – “Redeemer”. Means redeemer, or kinsman redeemer. This was a man who would cover the debts and restore the losses of a close relative. He would also free a kinsman who was sold into slavery because of their poverty. In the same way, Christ came as our Redeemer. God sent His only Son to die for us, freeing us from the bondage of sin. He paid the highest ransom to save us. “He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Corinthians 5:21). Our Redeemer lives!

אָבָא **Abba** – “Father”. Is a term of endearment of the word Father such as Daddy, Papa, or Dear Father. It is a more intimate expression of the word! “We have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father” (Romans 8:15). To call God “Father” is to acknowledge that we have been born into the family of God, that we are joint heirs with Christ, and that we are going to be with Him forever. Let us not forget He is still the sovereign and Holy Lord and the significance of the word “Father” is one of a reverent and respectful address of God, our Father. “But now, O Lord, You are our Father, We are the clay, and You our potter; And all of us are the work of Your hand.” (Isaiah 64:8).

אֱלֹהִים **Elohim** - In the beginning [Elohim] created the heavens and the earth (Gen. 1:1). This name comes from being in awe of His power displayed throughout nature. He is a Sovereign God, and God of Eternity. In the beginning, He created – just by the power of His spoken Word. What an amazing God we serve! “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created...” Colossians 1:15-16

אֵל רֹאֵי **El Roi** – “God who sees me”. Hagar, Sarai’s maidservant, fled her jealous master who treated her harshly after she bore Abram’s child. Wandering in the wilderness, desperate and alone, an angel of the Lord appears before Hagar to bring her instruction & comfort.

Hagar declares, in Genesis 16:13, “You are El Roi!” You are God who sees me! Never believe you are alone, even in your darkest troubles. “The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble and He knows those who take refuge in Him.” (Nahum 1:7) The Lord is not looking for your mistakes, but for ways to bless



Identity or Revelation?

Does scripture place importance on the pronunciation of YHWH’s name or the revealing of who He is? Let’s look at Exodus 6:3...

“I (YHWH) appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name I was not known to them.”

We also see Pharaoh knew YHWH’s name in Exodus 8:8...

“Then Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron and said “Plead with YHWH to take away the frogs from me and my people and I will let the people go to sacrifice to YHWH.”

Abraham and Pharaoh both knew how to pronounce and spell YHWH but its clear they did not know the full ‘shem’ of YHWH. It’s the full knowledge or revealing of His character, reputation, power and authority. It was only later that Abraham fully believed and obeyed YHWH and His commandments ref. Genesis 26:4-6 when YHWH promised he would have numerous descendants.

Whereas Pharaoh rejected the authority of YHWH and only understood the full knowledge when he died while trying to fight against Him. Knowing how to spell or pronounce His name did nothing for Pharaoh or others like him.

With that being said, we would like to encourage others to not speak harshly or create division over the pronunciation of the Father’s name as there are many possibilities. We can have civil and edifying discussion on the possibilities but not at the expense of dividing the body.