

YHWH

in the New Covenant

For a long time it was thought that the royal Tetragrammaton YHWH, in Hebrew written with the letters, YHWH (which recurs over 6800 times in the Hebrew text of the Old Covenant) did not appear in the original writings of the New Covenant. In its place it was thought that the writers of the New Covenant had used the Greek word for LORD, KURIOS. However, it seems that such an opinion is wrong. Here below are some factors to consider:

1) The Tetragrammaton in the Greek Version of Old Covenant, the *Septuagint* (LXX).

One of the reasons produced to support the above mentioned opinion was that the LXX substituted for YHWH (YHWH) the term KYRIOS, (kurios) which was the equivalent Greek of the Hebrew word ADONAY used by some Hebrews when they met the Tetragrammaton during the Bible reading. However, recent discoveries have shown that the practice of substitution in the LXX for YHWH with KURIOS started in a much later period in comparison with the beginning of that version. As a matter of fact, the older copies of the LXX keep the Tetragrammaton written in Hebrew characters in the Greek text. (See App. 1)

Girolamo, the translator of the Latin Vulgate confirms this fact. In the prologue of the books of Samuel and Kings he wrote: "In certain Greek volumes we still find the Tetragrammaton of God's name expressed in ancient characters". And in a letter written in Rome in the year 384 it says: "God's name is made up of four letters; it was thought ineffable, and it is written with these letters: iod, he, vau, he (YHWH). But some have not been able to decipher it because of the resemblance of the Greek letters and when they found it in Greek books they usually read it as PIPI (pipi)". S. Girolamo, *Le Lettere*, Rome, 1961, vol.1, pp.237, 238; compare J.P.Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, vol.22, coll.429, 430.

Around 245 C.E., the noted scholar Origen produced his Hexapla, a six-column reproduction of the inspired Hebrew Scriptures: (1) in their original Hebrew and Aramaic, accompanied by (2) a transliteration into Greek, and by the Greek versions of (3) Aquila, (4) Symmachus, (5) the Septuagint, and (6) Theodotion. On the evidence of the fragmentary copies now known, Professor W. G. Waddell says: "In Origen's Hexapla . . . the Greek versions of Aquila, Symmachus, and LXX all represented JHWH by PIPI; in the second column of the Hexapla the Tetragrammaton was written in Hebrew characters." - *The Journal of Theological Studies*, Oxford, Vol. XLV, 1944, pp. 158, 159. Others believe the original text of Origen's Hexapla used Hebrew characters for the Tetragrammaton in all its columns. Origen himself stated that "in the most accurate manuscripts THE NAME occurs in Hebrew characters, yet not in today's Hebrew [characters], but in the most ancient ones".

A biblical magazine declare: "In pre-Christian Greek [manuscripts] of the OT, the divine name was not rendered by 'kurios' as has often been thought. Usually the Tetragram was written out in Aramaic or in paleo-Hebrew letters. . . . At a later time, surrogates such as 'theos' [God] and 'kurios' replaced the Tetragram . . . There is good reason to believe that a similar pattern evolved in the NT, i.e. the divine name was originally written in the NT quotations of and allusions to the OT, but in the course of time it was replaced by surrogates". - *New Covenant Abstracts*, March 1977, p. 306.

Wolfgang Feneberg comments in the Jesuit magazine *Entschluss/Offen* (April 1985): "He [Jesus] did not withhold his father's name YHWH from us, but he entrusted us with it. It is otherwise inexplicable why the

first petition of the Lord's Prayer should read: 'May your name be sanctified!'" Feneberg further notes that "in pre-Christian manuscripts for Greek-speaking Jews, God's name was not paraphrased with *kýrios* [Lord], but was written in the tetragram form in Hebrew or archaic Hebrew characters. . . . We find recollections of the name in the writings of the Church Fathers".

Dr. P.Kahle says: "We now know that the Greek Bible text [the Septuagint] as far as it was written by Jews for Jews did not translate the Divine name by *kurios*, but the Tetragrammaton written with Hebrew or Greek letters was retained in such MSS [manuscripts]. It was the Christians who replaced the Tetragrammaton by *kurios*, when the divine name written in Hebrew letters was not understood any more". - *The Cairo Geniza*, Oxford, 1959, p. 222.

Further confirmation comes from *The New International Dictionary of New Covenant Theology*, that says: "Recently discovered texts doubt the idea that the translators of the LXX have rendered the Tetragrammaton YHWH with *KURIOS*. The most ancient mss (manuscripts) of the LXX today available have the Tetragrammaton written in Hebrew letters in the Greek text. This was custom preserved by the later Hebrew translator of the Old Covenant in the first centuries (after Christ)". Vol.2, pag.512.

Consequently, we can easily deduce that if the writers of NT in their quotations of the OT used the LXX they would surely have left the Tetragrammaton in their writings the way it recurred in the original Hebrew or Greek version of the OT. To confirm the correctness of this conclusion it is interesting to note the following declarations made before the finding of the manuscripts proving that the LXX originally continued the Tetragrammaton:

"If that version (LXX) would have kept the term (YHWH), or had used the Greek term for JEHOVAH and another for ADONAY, such a use would have surely been followed in the discourses and in the reasoning's of the NT. Therefore our Lord, in quoting the 110th Psalms, instead of saying: 'The Lord has said to my Lord' would have said: 'JEHOVAH has said to ADONAY'. Suppose a Christian studying was translating in Hebrew the Greek Covenant. Every time that he met the word *KURIOS*, he should have had to consider if in the context there was something that indicated the true Hebrew correspondent; and this is the difficulty that would have arisen in translating the NT in whatever language if the name JEHOVAH would have been left in the Old Covenant (LXX). The Hebrew scriptures would have constituted a standard for many passages: every time the expression "the Lord's angel" recurs, we know that the term LORD represents JEHOVAH; we could come to a similar conclusion for the expression "the word of the Lord", according to the precedent established in the OT; and so it is in the case of the name "the LORD of armies [hosts]". On the contrary, when the expression "my LORD" or "our LORD" recurs, we should know that the term JEHOVAH would be inadmissible, when instead the words ADONAY or ADONI should be used". R.B.Girdlestone, *Synonyms of the Old Covenant*, 1897, p.43.

For a stronger support of this argument here are the words of the professor Dr. George Howard, of the University of Georgia (U.S.A.) who observes: "When the Septuagint Version that the New Covenantal Church used and quoted, contained the Divine Name in Hebrew characters, the writers of the New Covenant included without doubt the Tetragrammaton in their quotations". *Biblical Archeology Review*, March 1978, p.14.

Consequently several translators of the NT have left the Divine Name in the quotations from the OT made by the New Covenant writers. It can be noted, for example the versions of Benjamin Wilson, of André Chouraqui, of Johann Jakob Stolz, of Hermann Heinfetter, in Efik, Ewe, Malgascio and Alghonchin languages.

2) The Tetragrammaton in Hebrew versions of the New Covenant.

As many know, the first book of the NT, the gospel of Matthew was written in Hebrew. The proof of this is found in the work of Girolamo De viris illustribus, chap. 3, where he writes:

"Matthew, that is also Levi, that became an apostle after having been a tax collector, was the first to write a Gospel of Christ in Judea in the Hebrew language and Hebrew characters, for the benefit of those who were circumcised that had believed. It's not known with enough certainty who had then translated it in Greek. However the Hebrew one itself is preserved till this day in the Library at Caesarea, that the martyr Pamphilus collected so accurately. The Nazarenes of the Syrian city of Beroea that use this copy have also allowed me to copy it". From the Latin text edited by E.C. Richardson, published in the series *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur*, vol.14, Lipsia, 1986, pp.8,9.

External evidence to the effect that Matthew originally wrote this Gospel in Hebrew reaches as far back as Papias of Hierapolis, of the second century A.C. Eusebius quoted Papias as stating: "Matthew collected the oracles in the Hebrew language". - *The Ecclesiastical History*, III, XXXIX, 16. Early in the third century, Origen made reference to Matthew's account and, in discussing the four Gospels, is quoted by Eusebius as saying that the "first was written . . . according to Matthew, who was once a tax-collector but afterwards an apostle of Jesus Christ, . . . in the Hebrew language". - *The Ecclesiastical History*, VI, XXV, 3-6.

Was this really Aramaic? Not according to documents mentioned by Dr. George Howard. He wrote: "This supposition was due primarily to the belief that Hebrew in the days of Jesus was no longer in use in Palestine but had been replaced by Aramaic. The subsequent discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, many of which are Hebrew compositions, as well as of other Hebrew documents from Palestine from the general time period of Jesus, now show Hebrew to have been alive and well in the first century".

[Dr. George Howard is the author of , "*In Search of the Hebrew Matthew*" and the second edition called, "**Hebrew Gospel of Matthew**" available for purchase at the link below. <http://www.centuryone.com/4470-0.html>]

It is therefore natural to conclude that when Matthew quoted passages from the OT in which the Tetragrammaton appeared in the Greek LXX or in the Hebrew OT, he would have surely left YHWH in his gospel as no Jew ever dared to take away the Tetragrammaton from the Hebrew text of the Holy Scriptures. [There was no confusion or thought that there was a different God in the OT from that of the NT, because there wasn't any NT yet. But today, we must be assured that the God of the OT is the same God of the NT.]

[The renewal of God's personal proper name started within Christendom with the OT being first. It was one of the founders of the Plymouth Brethren, John Nelson Darby in his *Holy Bible* of 1881 that first restored, Jehovah to the 6,825+ places the Tetragrammaton YHWH appears in the Hebrew text. For a copy: Believers Bookshelf, Inc. PO Box 261, Sunbury, Penn. 17801 USA Then Joseph Bryant Rotherham printed, *Rotherham Emphasized Bible* in 1902, with Yahweh instead of Jehovah in the 6,825+ times in the OT Hebrew had YHWH with an excellent explanation about the name in his preface explaining the previous mistake of other translators using Jehovah. James Moffatt in his Bible preface said he would have used, YaHWeH if he had been writing for scholars, but instead substituted a meaningful translation of YHWH, being "the Eternal" instead of the KJV "the LORD" in 1922 and several reprints were made of that bible. Then there was another Yahweh Bible called, *The Jerusalem Bible*, 1966 a Catholic work which printed, Yahweh in the 6,825+ times in the OT. Now moving back to the New Covenant question having shown Christendom already had Yahweh in the OT for many years.]

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To confirm this there are many Hebrew versions of the NT that present the Tetragrammaton, where in the quotations of the OT or where the text required it. (see app.2) Some of these versions are by F.Delitzsch, by I.Salkinson & C.D.Ginsburg, by the United Bible Societies, ed.1991 and by Elias Hutter.

[English versions of the NT that present the Tetragrammaton in Hebrew characters, or Yahweh, or some other transliteration of the name instead of the substitute of Lord where in the quotations of the OT and where the context calls for it. AB Traina, 1951 NT and 1963 OT, *The Holy Name Bible* 1963; In 1961 the Watchtower organization revised their version; Yahshua for Jesus and Yahweh for the Lord. Restoration

of the Original Sacred Name Bible 1976 YAHSHUA and YAHVAH bible. Assemblies of Yahweh printed, The Sacred Scriptures Bethel Edition 1981 Yahshua and Yahweh the group are dualist or Twinity in doctrine. The book of Yahweh 1988 by Yisrayl Hawkins, Yahshua and Yahweh. The Scriptures 1993 from South Africa inserts the Tetragram YHWH characters in Hebrew both Covenants and the Hebrew characters for Joshua for Jesus in the NT. The Word of Yahweh 2000 from the Assembly of Yahweh in Michigan uses Yahshua and Yahweh. The Hebrew Roots Version by James Trimm 2004 is a Messianic version of the NT. Then there could be others as well. And in main-line Christendom the late Herb Jahn published his "The Authorized King James Version of 1611 in EXEGESES" First Edition in 1991, which became very popular and was printed in many revised editions over the following years, Yah Vah in both Covenants and Yah Shua for Jesus in the NT. But the most accurate english translation from all accounts appears to be The New Covenant – Paleo Signature Edition published by The Remnant of YHWH, Abilene, Texas which uses the original paleo transliteration of the Messiah's name (Strong's Heb#3091) that being “Yahsha” and for the Creator that being “Yahweh”. [It appears the Hebrew culture of the NT has finally been discovered by the English world in this age of information.]

3) The Tetragrammaton in the Christian Scriptures according to the Babylonian Talmud.

The first part of this Yewish work is called Shabbath (Sabbath) and it contains an immense code of rules that establishes what could have been done of a Sabbath. Part of it deals with if on the Sabbath day Biblical manuscripts could be saved from the fire, and after it reads:

"The text declares: 'The white spaces ("gilyohnim") and the books of the Minim, can't be saved from the fire'. Rabbi Jose said: 'On working days one must cut out the Divine Names that are contained in the text, hide them and burn the rest'. Rabbi Tarfon said: 'May I bury my son if I don't burn them together with the Divine Names that they contain if I come across them'. -From the English translation of Dr. H.Freedman.

The word "Minim" means "sectarians" and according to Dr. Freedman it's very probable that in this passage it indicates the Jewish-Christians. The expression "the white spaces" translates the original "gilyohnim" and could have meant, using the word ironically, that the writings of the "Minim where as worthy as a blank scroll, namely nothing. In some dictionaries this word is given as "Gospels". In harmony with this, the sentence that appears in the Talmud before the above mentioned passage says: "The books of the Minim are like white spaces (gilyohnim)."

So in the book Who was a Jew?, of L.H.Schiffman, the above mentioned passage of the Talmud is translated: "We don't save the Gospels or the books of Minim from the fire. They are burnt where they are, together with their Tetragrammatons. Rabbi Yose Ha-Gelili says: "During the week one should take the Tetragrammatons from them, hide them and burn the rest". Rabbi Tarfon said: 'May I bury my children! If I would have them in my hands, I would burn them with all their Tetragrammatons'. Dr. Schiffman continues reasoning that here "Minim" is referred to Hebrew Christians.

And it's very probable that here the Talmud refers to the Hebrew Christians. It is a supposition that finds agreement among the studious people, and in the Talmud seems to be well supported by the context. In Sabbath the passage that follows the above mentioned quotations relates a story, regarding Gamaliel and Christian judge in which there is an allusion to parts of the Sermon on the Mount. Therefore, this passage of the Talmud is a clear indication that the Christians included the Tetragrammaton in their Gospel and their writings.

Because of all we have said there are valid reasons to assert that the writers of the New Covenant reported the Tetragrammaton in their heavenly inspired work.

APPENDIX 1

Below is a list of Septuagint (LXX) versions that contain the Tetragrammaton YHWH:

- 1) LXX P. Fouad Inv. 266.
- 2) LXX VTS 10a.
- 3) LXX IEJ 12.
- 4) LXX VTS 10b.
- 5) 4Q LXX Levb.
- 6) LXX P. Oxy. VII.1007.
- 7) Aq Burkitt.
- 8) Aq Taylor.
- 9) Sym. P. Vindob. G. 39777.
- 10) Ambrosiano O 39 sup.

APPENDIX 2

Below is a list of Hebrew versions of the NT that have the Tetragrammaton:

- 1) Gospel of Matthew, a cura di J. du Tillet, Parigi, 1555
- 2) Gospel of Matthew, di Shem-Tob ben Isaac Ibn Shaprut, 1385
- 3) Matthew and Hebrews, di S. Munster, Basilea, 1537 e 1557
- 4) Gospel of Matthew, di J. Quinquarboreus, Parigi, 1551
- 5) Gospels, di F. Petri, Wittemberg, 1537
- 6) Gospels, di J. Claius, Lipsia, 1576
- 7) NT, di E. Hutter, Norimberga, 1599
- 8) NT, di W. Robertson, Londra, 1661
- 9) Gospels, di G. B. Jona, Roma, 1668
- 10) NT, di R. Caddick, Londra, 1798-1805
- 11) NT, di T. Fry, Londra, 1817
- 12) NT, di W. Greenfield, Londra, 1831
- 13) NT, di A. McCaul e altri, Londra, 1838
- 14) NT, di J. C. Reichardt, Londra, 1846
- 15) Luke, Acts, Romans and Hebrews, di J. H. R. Biesenthal, Berlino, 1855
- 16) NT, di J. C. Reichardt e J. H. R. Biesenthal, Londra, 1866
- 17) NT, di F. Delitzsch, Londra, ed.1981
- 18) NT, di I. Salkinson e C. D. Ginsburg, Londra, 1891
- 19) Gospel of John, di M. I. Ben Maier, Denver, 1957
- 20) A Concordance to the Greek New Covenant, di Moulton e Geden, 1963
- 21) NT, United Bibles Societies, Gerusalemme, 1979
- 22) NT, di J. Bauchet e D. Kinnereth, Roma, 1975
- 23) NT, di H. Heinfetter, Londra, 1863
- 24) Romans, di W. G. Rutherford, Londra, 1900
- 25) Psalms and Matthew, di A. Margaritha, Lipsia, 1533
- 26) NT, di Dominik von Brentano, Vienna e Praga, 1796
- 27) NT, Bible Society, Gerusalemme, 1986

"...only a remnant will be saved." - Romans 9:27

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