

The Divine Name

July 27, 2003

Abstract

The Tetragrammaton ought to be pronounced "Jehovah", not "Yahweh", contrary to the conventional wisdom of scholars. Despite the consensus, the evidence for "Yahweh" as the original pronunciation is exceedingly weak. Evidence for "Jehovah" is also weak, but it has other points in its favor: its traditional use, its sound, and consistency with the way we translate other Hebrew names into English.

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I thank Jack Hirshleifer for his comments. This is not finished.

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1. Introduction

What is the name of God?

In the Old Testament, the name of God is יהוה or JHVH, the Tetragrammaton. Hebrew did not have vowels when the Bible was written. When the Masoretes inserted vowel points around 900 A.D., they made the name something like *Jehovah*. The King James Bible translated יהוה as *Jehovah* or substituted *LORD* for it., following the Latin Vulgate, which used *dominus*. The American Standard Bible returned all the *LORDs* to *Jehovahs*. Modern scholars usually call it *Yahweh*.

I think the use of *Yahweh* is a serious mistake--- indeed, an example of taking God's name in vain. I hope I am not doing that in this essay myself, but it is unavoidable in discussing the issue, and my aim is to bring greater glory to God.

My argument goes as follows.

Contrary to what scholars say, we do not know what vowel sounds the ancient Jews used for יהוה. Even if *Yahweh* is the best guess, it is an unreliable guess, with little evidence to support it over alternative vocalizations. Evidence does not support *Yahweh* even weakly, but rather supports *lahowe* or *lahove*. Regardless of what the ancient Jews said, however, the proper translation into English is *Jehovah*. First, *Jehovah* is what the English word for יהוה has been for 500 years. Second, as a result of its use, *Jehovah* has all the right connotations. Third, *Jehovah* sounds grand, unlike *Yahweh*, because it has the J and V sounds instead of the mushy sounds Y and W. Fourth, *Jehovah* is consistent with the way we translate all the other names in the Bible

that have the same root. We translate names as *Elijah*, *Jesus*, and *Jonah*, not as *Eliyah*, *Yeshua*, and *Yona*.

Why, then, do scholars use *Yahweh*? Most, of course, use it on the recommendation of other scholars, the experts on this particular subject, and have not investigated why they recommend it. Why do those experts recommend it? I think it is as an insidious attack on *Jehovah*, an attempt to turn Him into a tribal god rather than the one true God. The name *Yahweh* was probably thought up by atheistical Germans who wished to drag religion down and who despised religious Jews. Its mushy sound aids this effort, as does, at least in English, its similarity to *yahoo*, *yeah*, and *waah*. Good Christian evangelical scholars use *Yahweh* nowadays, to be sure, but this is only because they are blindly trusting liberal scholarship, wanting to seem up-to-date in their linguistics, and do not know how weak the evidence is on which liberal scholarship bases its conclusions on this particular subject. This is a harsh criticism, I admit, but as far as I can tell, it fits the facts. I was surprised myself to find how weak the evidence is for "Yahweh", and it is noteworthy how seldom that evidence is given, as opposed to simply asserting that this is the way all good scholars believe that יהוה is pronounced.

I am not sure I am correct in this argument, but I wish to lay it out for support or refutation later by people who know more than I do. I value any comments and am quite willing to retract mistakes. Indeed, one reason I state things so baldly is in the hopes of getting some evidence against what I am saying. For some things, like the invention of *Yahweh* by skeptical Germans, I do not yet have any evidence, just impressions. And I do not even know Hebrew. But what is clear is that the evidence cited by modern scholars for *Yahweh* is extremely weak, or even nonexistent-- they seem to be taking it on faith from unnamed earlier scholars. It is not that they cite evidence that cannot be evaluated unless the reader understands Hebrew. Their evidence is quite understandable to the layman, and anyone can see its weaknesses.

2. The History of the Translation of יהוה.

The name of God in the Old Testament is יהוה, which in English would be transliterated as JHVH or YHVH or YHVH or YHWH. The Old Testament was written without vowels, which were only introduced into Hebrew in the Middle Ages. The four letters of this name, the Tetragrammaton, are

ה He, as in xxx.

ו Vav or waw, as in Jerusalem.

ה He, the same as the first letter

י Yod. as in *Jerusalem, Elijah, and Joshua*. Matthew 5:18 "For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." "jot nor tittle" is "ἵωτα ἕν ἢ μία κεραία" The "jot" is an ἰωτα, the Greek "I" or yod. The "tittle" is probably the small marks on the Hebrew consonants which are so important in distinguishing one from another.¹

יהוה is God's name, but He is called by other terms too, such as the Hebrew word for "god", אֱלֹהִים, *Elohim*, used in Genesis 1:1 (KJV Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth). The Hebrew word for *Lord* is אֲדֹנָי, *Adonai*, as in יהוה אֲדֹנָי in Amos 9:8 (KJV Amos 9:8 Behold, the eyes of the Lord GOD are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth; saving that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the LORD).

Medieval Jewish scholars invented vowels for use in Hebrew, and put the vowels E, O, A in JHVH, giving JeHoVaH. Here is what it looks like with those vowels:

יְהוָה

Isaiah 12:2 is interesting because it has "Jah Jehovah" as a name of God:

"2.Behold, God *is* my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD **JEHOVAH** *is* my strength and *my* song; he also is become my salvation. 3 Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." (KJV)

Jah is written as:

יָהּ

It is also interesting that "salvation" is "yeshua" or "Joshua" or "Jesus", and appears in that passage:

ישועה

Isaiah 26:4 similarly uses "Jah Jehovah":

¹ See John Lightfoot, *Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica*, Vol. 2 pp. 100--102. Hendrickson Publishers, 1997 reprinted from the 1859 Oxford University Press edition, ISBN 0943575-26-5.

“Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH *is* everlasting strength:”

Tyndale used “Jehovah” in his translation of the Bible in 1530. The American Standard Version used it. The Latin Vulgate used LORD (dominus), as did the Septuagint, Luther’s German Bible, and the King James Version. LORD is capitalized when inserted in place of JHVH, and uncapitalized when it translates *Adonai* or the Greek word for “lord”, *Kyrie*.

The English letters in “Jehovah” and “Yahweh”

J, V, Y, and W are interesting letters.²

The letter J did not exist in the ancient Roman alphabet, which used I instead. It was invented after the Middle Ages, to be used when I was a consonant, as in “judge”. French and Italian said “ju” as in “judge” for the Roman consonantal I. German seems to use “yu” as in “yellow”.

Around 1500, V and U were used interchangeably.

W was invented in England and spread to the Continent to represent UU, the consonantal U.

H is probably interesting too.

What evidence is there against the translation “Jehovah”?

It must first be explained why, if the Masoretes used the vowels EOA in JEHOVAH, we should not pronounce it that way. The reason has to do with Rabbinical Judaism’s avoidance of speaking YHWH. Starting perhaps around 300 B.C., the Jews departed from their earlier habit of freely speaking JHVH (as evidenced by most books of the Old Testament) and reserved its use for priests alone. In reading the Bible, they said “Lord” (“Adonai”) whenever they came upon JHVH. Thus, in many copies of the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, “Lord” (“Kyrios”) translates JHVH (in other copies, Pi, iota pi, iota, was used).

Though it does not look like in the English transcription, the Hebrew vowels of “adonai”, אֲדֹנָי are EOA. Using the vowels for “adonai” in “JeHoVaH” could have been a reminder that the reader was to say “adonai” instead of “JHVH”. Further evidence for this is that the Masoretes did not always use the letters EOA in JHVH. They used XXX, the vowels of אֱלֹהִים “elohim”,

² My source on these letters is the Oxford English Dictionary, entries J, W, and U.

instead in passages which read “the Lord Jehovah”, which yields for JHVH, **יְהוָה** (e.g. Ezekiel 2:4, “For *they are* impudent children and stiffhearted. I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the **Lord GOD.**”)

I mention this last point because someone suggested that the Masorettes, being Karaite Jews rather than Rabbinical Jews, would not have followed the custom of avoiding speaking JHVH. Karaite Jews are rather like Protestant Christians. They believe in strict adherence to the text of the Bible, without the layers of outlandish tradition such as the Talmud or the Roman Catholic Church add.

What evidence is there for the translation “Yahweh”?

- (1) Clement, in the third century, transliterated YHVH as *yaoue*. But that is just the Greek for JA AO OU UE-- the four consonants. It says nothing about the vowels.
- (2) Theodoret, in the 4th century, says the Samaritans pronounced it IABE.
- (3) IAO is in Greek Kumran and gnostic fragments.
- (4) It is claimed that the Elephantine papyri want names with YHW to be read as YAHU or YAHO.

TWOT says that the *Yahweh* pronunciation is problematic, because the W is old and the EH is new Hebrew.

BE or BECOME is HAYA, or, in old and rare synonym, HAWA.

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים WTT Exodus 3:14
אֶל־מֹשֶׁה אֲהִיָּה אֲשֶׁר אֲהִיָּה
וַיֹּאמֶר כֹּה תֹאמַר לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
אֲהִיָּה שְׁלַחְנִי אֵלֵיכֶם:

KJV Exodus 3:14 “And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.”

Some Other Hebrew Words

There are lots of Hebrew names with “h” as a consonant in the middle. Many of them are based on the Tetragrammaton.

3058 יהוא Yehuw' {yay-hoo'} • from 03068 and 01931;; n pr m • AV - Jehu 58; 58 • Jehu = "Jehovah is He" 1) the king of the northern kingdom Israel who overthrew the dynasty of Omri

0085 אַבְרָהָם 'Abraham {ab-raw-hawm'} • contracted from 01 and an unused root (probably meaning to be populous); TWOT - 4b; n pr m • AV - Abraham 175; 175 • Abraham = "father of a multitude" or "chief of multitude" 1) friend of God and founder of Hebrew nation via God's elective covenant

0087 אַבְרָם 'Abram {ab-rawm'} • contracted from 048;; n pr m • AV - Abram 61; 61 • Abram = "exalted father" 1) original name of Abraham

3092 יהושָפָט Y@howshaphat {yeh-ho-shaw-fawt'} • from 03068 and 08199;; • AV - Jehoshaphat 84; 84 • Jehoshaphat = "Jehovah has judged" n pr m 1) son of king Asa and himself king of Judah for 25 years; one of the best, most pious, and prosperous kings of Judah

3088 יהוֹרָם Y@howram {yeh-ho-rawm'} • from 03068 and 07311;; n pr m • AV - Jehoram 23, Joram 6; 29 • Jehoram or Joram = "Jehovah is exalted" 1) son of king Jehoshaphat of Judah and himself king of Judah for 8 years; his wife was the wicked Athaliah who was probably the instigator for his returning the nation of Judah to the worship of Baal 2) son of king Ahab of the northern kingdom of Israel and king of Israel himself for 12 years; he was murdered by Jehu on the plot of land for which his father had murdered Naboth thus fulfilling the prophecy of Elijah to the very letter 3) a priest in the reign of Jehoshaphat

3091 יהוֹשֻׁעַ Y@howshuwa` {yeh-ho-shoo'-ah} or יהֹשֻׁעַ Y@howshu`a {yeh-ho-shoo'-ah} • from 03068 and 03467; • AV - Joshua 218; 218 • Joshua or Jehoshua = "Jehovah is salvation" n pr m 1) son of Nun of the tribe of Ephraim and successor to Moses as the leader of the children of Israel; led the conquest of Canaan 2) a resident of Beth-shemesh on whose land the Ark of the Covenant came to a stop after the Philistines returned it 3) son of Jehozadak and high priest after the restoration 4) governor of Jerusalem under king Josiah who gave his name to a gate of the city of Jerusalem

3059 יהוֹאָחָז Y@how'achaz {yeh-ho-aw-khawz'} • from 03068 and 0270;; n pr m • AV - Jehoahaz 20; 20 • Jehoahaz = "Jehovah has seized" 1) a king of Judah and son of Josiah 2) a king of the northern kingdom of Israel and son of Jehu 3) a king of Judah and son of Jehoram (Ahaziah)

3079 יהויקים Y@howyaqiyim {yeh-ho-yaw-keem'} • from 03068 abbreviated and 06965, cf. 3113;; n pr m • AV - Jehoiakim 37; 37 • Jehoiakim = "Jehovah raises up" 1) son of Josiah and the third from the last king of Judah; subject vassel of Nebuchadnezzar who reigned for 11 years before he died a violent death either in combat or by the hands of his own subjects

Two words which are not examples for our purpose are Rehoboam and Bethlehem, because their "h" is different.

7346 רְחֹבָם R@chab`am {rekh-ab-awm'} • from 07337 and 05971;; n pr m • AV - Rehoboam 50; 50 • Rehoboam = "a people has enlarged" 1) son of Solomon and the 1st king of Judah after the split up of the kingdom of Israel

1035 בֵּית לֶחֶם Beyth Lechem {bayth leh'-khem} • from 01004 and 03899; TWOT - 241b; n pr loc • AV - Bethlehem 31, Bethlehemyudah + 03063 10; 41 • Beth-lehem = "house of bread (food)" 1) a city in Judah, birthplace of David 2) a place in Zebulun

3. ``Jehovah" is the English translation of the word

We could translate יהוה a variety of ways:

1. *Jehovah*.
2. *Yahweh*.
3. He Is.
4. JHVH.
5. YHWH.
6. The 4 Hebrew letters יהוה. (as in the early Jewish Septuagint)
7. Ιηουα Greek letters, as in some other Septuagints, meant to look like יהוה
8. יהוה the Hebrew letters with vowel points.

Of course, LORD could be used too, but that's not relevant here. What is relevant is that *Yahweh* is an unhappy compromise. It is not the English word. Nor is it the Hebrew word-- the Hebrew word is written in the Hebrew alphabet and has no vowels. *Yahweh* may be how the Hebrew word was pronounced, but it is a translation nonetheless.

Translating as *Yahweh* contradicts the way we translate yod almost everywhere else in the Bible. We do not translate *Yona*, but *Jonah*. *Joshua*, not *Yeshua*. *Jerusalem*, not *Yerusalem*. Judah, Jesus and Judas (even in these Greek word J

is used), *Elijah*, *Jehosaphat*, *Jonathan*. There are exceptions--- *Hoshea*, and *Hallelujah*-- but still, "y" does not appear. J is used everywhere. Especially in the theophoric names, anyone who uses *Yahweh* should use Y, not J. If you have been referring to both "Yahweh" and "Jesus" you are being grossly inconsistent-- you should refer to "Jahweh" and "Jesus" or to "Yahweh" and "Yesus" . To do so, of course, would make you seem disrespectful and contemptuous-- but perhaps you are.

Is V in any Hebrew name? Like J? I found two Jewish names that are translated as starting with "V" in the King James Version, both obscure figures. There are also at least two Persians, including the important Queen Vashti in Esther. If "ו" always should be translated as "W", then she should be "Washti".

Macaulay was so erudite that he felt no embarrassment in writing *Lewis XIV* rather than *Louis XIV*. We write Germany, not Deutschland, Italy, not Italia, Spain, not Espana, Norway, not Norge, Finland, not Suomi. It is only for countries whose names are unimportant that we transliterate--- transliteration is a sign of contempt--- of contempt so deep we do not even intend it. Burma becomes Myanmar only because nobody cares about the name.

4. ``Jehovah" sounds better

Notice that יהוה is much more impressive than *Yahweh*. So is "Jehovah".

Yahweh looks like Yahoo. Why not *lahweh*, which is more dignified?

We say Ya-Hoo when square dancing, etcetera. Are we profaning the name of God?

HalleluYAH is okay.

Yah, Yeah, Yes, Jesus.

Ja, in German.

The Name of God should be impressive. JHVH or YHVH? W is a weak sound. V is stronger.

In Hebrew, apparently HVH (הַוְה) is a word for mischief (though not the most common one). But that is undoubtedly close to JHVH-- the vowels are not what is important. HOVAH is the vowel pointing of it. If that is the case, the claim that *Jehovah* is bad Hebrew seems wrecked. See the Harris book for details-- he has HVH right before JHVH. HVH means either To fall or To be. Job 37:6-- the fall of rain or snow. Hovah means disaster. This deserves further study.

I found just two examples where it means "mischief" or "ruin": Isaiah 47:11 and Ezekiel 7:26.

KJV Ezekiel 7:26 **Mischief** shall come upon **mischief**, and rumour shall be upon rumour; then shall they seek a vision of the prophet; but the law shall perish from the priest, and counsel from the ancients.

עַל-הַהוֹהָ WTT Ezekiel 7:26
תָּבוֹא וּשְׂמֵעָה אֶל-שְׂמוּעָה
תִּהְיֶה וּבִקְשׁוּ חֶזוֹן מִנְּבִיא
וְתוֹרָה תֵּאבֵד מִכֹּהֵן וְעֵצָה
מִזְקֵנִים:

הוֹהָ common noun fem sing **H1943** הוֹהָ hovah 1) ruin, disaster (Bibleworks definition)

An example with הוֹהָ meaning "to be":

KJV Genesis 27:29 Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed *be* every one that curseth thee, and blessed *be* he that blesseth thee.

יַעֲבֹדוּךָ עַמִּים WTT Genesis 27:29
(וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּ) [וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּ] לְךָ לְאֻמִּים
תִּהְיֶה גִבּוֹר לְאֶחָיִךְ וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ לְךָ
בְּנֵי אִמְךָ אֲרָרְיָךְ אָרֹר
וּמְבָרְכֶיךָ בָּרוּךְ:

הוּהָ verb: qal imperative **H1933** הוּהָ (or הוֹהָ) 1) Qal) 1a) to fall 1b) to be, become, exist, happen (Bibleworks definition)

Is JHVH related to Heavens, Ouranos, from which rain falls?

5. Maybe the real pronunciation is "*Jehovah*"

It is said that medieval Jewish scholars inserted the vowels for *aDoNaI*, ADNI, giving YaHoWaH. They either did not know the true vowels, or did not want anyone to pronounce them. Instead, the reader was to read Adonai when he came to the Tetragrammaton. Putting its vowels in was a reminder.

Nowhere can I find citations for the claim that the Masoretes used the *Adonai* vowels in *Jehovah*. Evidence is important. We who are not Hebrew scholars are in a bad position. We need to rely on authority to some extent, since technical evidence is important. But we know that authorities in Biblical scholarship are frequently--perhaps in a majority-- heretical and even atheistical rascals with no integrity. Even those who have some respectability are suspect because they may be relying on some German form critic from the 1890's who had been fantasizing for too long about uncovering the hidden secrets of the rabbis.

I find the usual story implausible. Suppose that you were trying to write an English Bible so that readers would not pronounce the vowels in JHVH, and would follow the practice of 1000 years and read Lord instead. First, notice that if this was the practice of 1000 years, readers surely know already what they are supposed to do. This is particularly true if reading is a special skill, reserved to only part of the population, and if for that part the most important reading is of the Bible, and if the most important part of the Bible is what pertains to God.

But suppose you are worried anyway that some reader will get it wrong. One thing you could do is insert Lord where JHVH appeared. That, after all, is how the Puritans, no slouches when it came to rigour, dealt with this. And that is how the Septuagint, a Jewish translation, dealt with it.

But suppose you also did not want to alter the words of the Bible at all in the writing, even if it was to be read differently. In that case, would you write something like JHLORDVH instead of JHVH? No, because that would be altering the words of the Bible. If you were willing to insert new vowels that didn't belong in the name of God, you would be willing just to replace it with Lord-- a much less blasphemous alteration, since it just replaces the name of God rather than distorting it. You would also worry that if you wrote JHLORDVH, then the unusually stupid reader, the one for whom we are putting in this reminder, would just read along and read JHLORDVH rather than seeing the word and realizing that when he sees JHLORDVH it means he is supposed to read Lord.

On the other hand, there is a very simple solution. Just keep the name of God as JHVH. Put the newfangled vowel points everywhere else in the Bible, but leave them out of the name of God. When the ordinary reader comes to the word JHVH, he will know to

replace it with Lord. When the stupid reader comes to the word JHVH, he will be stopped in his tracks, since there are no vowels. He will scratch his head, and maybe ask someone smarter what he is supposed to do. After a while, he will remember that he is supposed to read Lord, or else he will give up reading that word and go on. The Bible hasn't been altered, and the name of God hasn't been taken in vain.

Why didn't the Masoretes adopt this obvious policy? I see a simple reason--- because they actually did know the true vowels for JHVH, and that is what they used. JEHOVAH was the true pronunciation, and only coincidentally were the vowels the same as in Adonai. Naturally, this coincidence would give rise to stories that the connection was not a coincidence, and that Adonai's vowels were used in JHVH.

The strongest piece of evidence against the *Jehovah* pronunciation is this. The vowels used in JHVH are ordinarily the same as those of *Adonai*. But if the Bible reads *Adonai* JHVH, there and only there the vowels the Masoretes put in for JHVH are the same as those for *Elohim*. The vowels are very similar for *Adonai* and *Elohim*, tho.

"... the reader in the synagogue was directed to follow the Qeri and ignore the Kethibh, although the latter was never removed from the text; and for this guidance, or as a reminder, the vowels of the Qeri were written in the codices attached to the consonants of the Kethibh, while the consonants of the Qeri were noted in the margin." (p. 97, *Outline of Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*, Alfred Geden, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1909). Is this decisive for the Masorete *Jehovah* not being evidence for *Jehovah* as the true pronunciation? Maybe-- if this is done for all the Qeri and Kethibh. That does not mean *Jehovah* is the wrong pronunciation though, either.

It has been said that *Jehovah* is simply not good Hebrew-- that it is out of synch with the way Hebrew vowels and consonants are ordinarily put together. I'd like to see evidence for that view.

I don't know enough Hebrew to judge whether *Jehovah* is an odd construction for Hebrew, but let us suppose it is. What does that show? Nothing. The name of God is a special word anyway, so it is appropriate for it to have a unique pronunciation, and certainly not peculiar.

There is evidence against the theory that the Masoretes chose impossible vowels so nobody would pronounce the Tetragrammaton. Think about the theophoric names-- the names which incorporate the name of God. These include names like *Jehosophat*. Why is JEHO sophat, if the pronunciation is impossible? There was no Jewish ban on reading theophoric names out loud, as far as I know. I expect it is because that would be impractical. The spirit of the ban on pronouncing JHVH would apply to pronouncing *Elijah*, but the spirit is not what counts here-- it is what the rabbis decreed in the letter. There is no clear rationale for not pronouncing JHVH anyway, so they construed the rule narrowly.

We can see that in many many names, Jehovah seems to be the pronunciation. Were these all vowel-pointed by the Masoretes in imitation of the Sacred Name? Then perhaps archaeology will reveal what the vowels actually were.

H1944 הוֹהָם Hoham = "whom Jehovah impels" 1) king of Hebron at the time of the conquest of Canaan (in Joshua 10:3)

H3058 יְהוּ Jehu = "Jehovah is He" 1) the king of the northern kingdom Israel who overthrew the dynasty of Omri

H3059 יְהוֹאָחָז Jehoahaz = "Jehovah has seized" 1) a king of Judah and son of Josiah 2) a king of the northern kingdom of Israel and son of Jehu 3) a king of Judah and son of Jehoram (Ahaziah)

יְ **H3076** יְהוֹחָנָן Jehohanan = "Jehovah has graced" 5) a Korhite Levite and one of the doorkeepers to the tabernacle in the time of David 6) a captain of Judah under king Jehoshaphat

H3078 יְהוֹיָכִין Jehoiachin = "Jehovah establishes" 1) king of Judah, son of Jehoiakim, and the next to last king of Judah before the Babylonian captivity.

H3079 יְהוֹיָקִים Jehoiakim = "Jehovah raises up" 1) son of Josiah and the third from the last king of Judah.

H3082 יְהוֹנָדָב Jehonadab = "Jehovah is willing" 1) a son of Rechab, chief of the Rechabites, in the time of Jehu and Ahab 2) a nephew of David

H3083 יְהוֹנָתָן Jonathan or Jehonathan = "Jehovah has given" 1) a son of king Saul and a friend of David 2) a son of the high priest Abiathar and the last descendant of Eli of whom we hear 3) a nephew of David who like David slew a giant of Gath 4) an uncle of David 5) one of David's mighty warriors 6) one of David's treasurers 7) a scribe in the time of Jeremiah 8) a Levite and father of Zechariah, a priest who blew the trumpet at the dedication of the wall 9) a son or descendant of Gershom, the son of Moses, and a priest to the tribe of Dan 10) a son of Kareah and a brother of Johanan; a Judaite captain after the fall of Jerusalem 11) another Judaite father of Peleth 12) father of Ebed in the time of Ezra 13) son of Asahel in the time of Ezra 14) a priest of the family of Melicu in the time of Nehemiah 15) son of Joiada and his successor to the high priesthood in the time of Nehemiah

H3085 יְהוֹעָדָה Jehoadah = "Jehovah has adorned" 1) a descendant of Saul through Jonathan

יהוֹעָדָן proper noun Kethib **H3086** יהוֹעָדָן (or יהוֹעָדָן) Jehoaddan = "Jehovah delights" 1) wife of king Joash and mother of king Amaziah of Judah

יהוֹעָדָן proper noun Qere **H3086** יהוֹעָדָן (or יהוֹעָדָן) Jehoaddan = "Jehovah delights" 1) wife of king Joash and mother of king Amaziah of Judah

H3087 יהוֹזָדָק Jehozadak or Josedech = "Jehovah is righteous" 1) grandson of the high priest Hilkiyah; son of the high priest Seraiah; and father of the high priest Joshua; he never attained the office of high priest himself because he was carried captive to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar

H3088 יהוֹרָם Jehoram or Joram = "Jehovah is exalted" 1) son of king Jehoshaphat of Judah and himself king of Judah for 8 years; his wife was the wicked Athaliah who was probably the instigator for his returning the nation of Judah to the worship of Baal 2) son of king Ahab of the northern kingdom of Israel and king of Israel himself for 12 years; he was murdered by Jehu on the plot of land for which his father had murdered Naboth thus fulfilling the prophecy of Elijah to the very letter 3) a priest in the reign of Jehoshaphat

H6667 זְדַקְיָה (or זְדַקְיָהוּ) Zedekiah = "Jehovah is righteous" 1) the last king of Judah renamed from 'Mattaniah' by Nebuchadnezzar; son of Josiah by wife Hamutal; placed on the throne by Nebuchadnezzar when he carried his nephew Jehoiakim in captivity 2) false prophet at the court of king Ahab of the northern kingdom of Israel 3) son of Maaseiah, a false prophet in Babylon 4) son of Hananiah, one of the princes of Judah in the time of Jeremiah 5) a priest who sealed the covenant with Nehemiah 6) son of king Jehoiakim of Judah

Curiously, the Hebrew words for "Jew" and "Judah" are close to the Divine Name.

H3064 יְהוּדִי 1) Jew

Would the Masoretes have known the correct pronunciation?

Jewish tradition is in general unreliable, and is not to be trusted. Thus, the tradition that YHVH is not to be pronounced is unreliable. See Thomas, *Documents from Old Testament Times*: p. 214, Lachish Ostrakon III, of about 590 B.C.: "Thy servant Hoshayahu hath sent to inform my lord: May *Yahweh* bring thee peaceful tidings!..." and Ostrakon IV, "May *Yahweh* bring my lord this very day good tidings!" (see O. Tufnell, ed., pp. 331-9, D. Diringer's reading and translation of all of the 21 ostraca, *Lachish III (Tell ed-Duweir) The Iron Age (Text)*, 1953. The editor says that JHVH occurs in the letters about 10 times. They did not replace it with *adonai*. p. 233 of that book notes that Jewish post-

Exilic Persian coins had images of men and women and that the 3rd-century and 6th-century A.D. synagogues at Dura Europos and Beth Alpha had human images on wall paintings and floor mosaics, respectively. Thus, the later Jewish prohibition of art was a rabbinical invention, it seems. Note, too, the temple at Elephantine and the temple founded by a respectable rabbi in Alexandria-- the idea that Jerusalem was the only place permitted by Deuteronomy to have a temple and sacrifices is probably late, too.

Jove is not Jehovah.

There are 5321 Old Testament cites (TDNT 3-1067).

What is the Tetragrammaton in ancient and modern Hebrew letters, with vowels and without? The large difference shows why modern Hebrew pronunciation is not to be trusted.

Check out Sephardic pronunciation.

6. What name should we use? Does it matter?

Of course it matters. *Yahweh* is a name used to denigrate God, as I will discuss below.

How about using Lord instead? That is okay. This is not something to have a schism over, contrary to what the Yahwist apocalypics say. See, however, the preface to the American Standard Version (<http://www.ccel.org/bible/asv/asv.htm>), which says,

"The change first recommended in the Appendix - that which substitutes "Jehovah" for "LORD" and "GOD" - is one which will be unwelcome to many, because of the frequency and familiarity of the terms displaced. But the American Revisers, after a careful consideration were brought to the unanimous conviction that a Jewish superstition, which regarded the Divine Name as too sacred to be uttered, ought no longer to dominate in the English or any other version of the Old Testament, as it fortunately does not in the numerous versions made by modern missionaries. This Memorial Name, explained in Ex. iii. 14, 15, and emphasized as such over and over in the original text of the Old Testament, designates God as the personal God, as the covenant God, the God of revelation, the Deliverer, the Friend of his people; -- not merely the abstractly "Eternal One" of many French translations, but the ever living Helper of those who are in trouble. This personal name, with its wealth of sacred associations, is now restored to the place in the sacred text to which it has an unquestionable claim."

Exodus 3:13-15 says, in the American Standard Version,

13 And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? What shall I say unto them? 14 And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. 15 And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, Jehovah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name forever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.

The oddity of using LORD as a translation is clearly shown by verse 15. Here it is in a variety of translations.

ASV Exodus 3:15 And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, Jehovah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name forever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.

KJV Exodus 3:15 And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this *is* my name for ever, and this *is* my memorial unto all generations.

NAB Exodus 3:15 God, furthermore, said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is My name forever, and this is My memorial-name to all generations.

RSV Exodus 3:15 God also said to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you': this is my name for ever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.

Exodus 6:3 has even more distortion; so much that this is one of 4 places where the King James Version unbends and uses "Jehovah".

KJV Exodus 6:3 And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by *the name of* God Almighty, but by my name **JEHOVAH** was I not known to them.

ASV Exodus 6:3 and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, as God Almighty; but by my name Jehovah I was not known to them.

NAB Exodus 6:3 and I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as God Almighty, but *by* My name, LORD, I did not make Myself known to them.

RSV Exodus 6:3 I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by my name the LORD I did not make myself known to them.

Does Jesus use *Kyrios* in his quotes from the Old Testament?
Yes, so it can't be too bad a practice.

Exodus 16:4, I AM.

Matthew 3:3 For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the **Lord**, make his paths straight.

GNT Matthew 3:3 οὗτος γάρ ἐστιν ὁ ῥηθεὶς διὰ Ἡσαΐου τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος, Φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ· Ἐτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου, εὐθείας ποιεῖτε τὰς τρίβους αὐτοῦ.

KJV Matthew 4:7 Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the **Lord** thy God.

GNT Matthew 4:7 ἔφη αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Πάλιν γέγραπται, Οὐκ ἐκπειράσεις κύριον τὸν θεόν σου.

KJV Acts 2:34 For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The **LORD** said unto my **Lord**, Sit thou on my right hand,

GNT Acts 2:34 οὐ γὰρ Δαυὶδ ἀνέβη εἰς τοὺς οὐρανοὺς, λέγει δὲ αὐτός, Εἶπεν [ὁ] κύριος τῷ κυρίῳ μου, Κάθου ἐκ δεξιῶν μου

KJV Romans 9:29 And as Esaias said before, Except the **Lord** of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha.

GNT Romans 9:29 καὶ καθὼς προεῖρηκεν Ἡσαΐας, Εἰ μὴ κύριος Σαβαώθ ἐγκατέλιπεν ἡμῖν σπέρμα, ὡς Σόδομα ἂν ἐγενήθημεν καὶ ὡς Γόμορρα ἂν ὠμοιώθημεν.

The death of Gandhi. In the movie, I think he says "Oh God". In actuality, he said, "Oh Krishna." There is a big difference.

This is an important issue. Worshipping JHVH is more specific than worshipping God. יהוה is the Christian and Jewish God. Not all who say they worship one god will be saved--Moslems, for example, worship Allah, El, God.

Is "YHVH" or "Lord" or "Adonai" (for reading out loud) better than "Jehovah"? This is a tough and important issue. Arguments for the traditional practice are:

- 4.1. It avoids the issue of what the vowels should be, so that we avoid the risk of putting the wrong ones in.
- 4.2. It is respectful. We don't address important people by their first name in person, and if we want to be respectful we call someone "Mr. Smith", or "Mr. President", not "John". All we have is one name here, and we don't have a conventional honorific to go before it.
- 4.3. Reading or thinking "Lord" is a reminder of the status difference that we acknowledge.
- 4.4. Evidence for Christians is that in the New Testament the name "YHVH" is not used by the gospel writers--- "Lord" is used (that is, the Greek "kyrios"). The strong implication is that Jesus and the apostles did the same thing in Aramaic or Hebrew. Even the Lord's prayer, though it uses "Our Father" and thus claims a family relationship, is respectful in the way a child is to his father.
- 4.5. The Septuagint, I think, uses "kyrios" (I haven't checked this), indicating a long tradition of avoiding "YHVH". If not, the use in the Gospels indicates almost as long a tradition.

Arguments against the traditional practice are:

- 4.6. It is good to distinguish YHVH from other gods. The name links Him to the Old Testament and lots of specific attributes. There is a modern tendency (or maybe it is old; I'm not sure) to say that we're all worshipping the same god, especially if we're all monotheists. The movie Gandhi is a nice example-- I think it ends with Gandhi saying "Oh, God" on being shot, whereas in reality he said "Krishna", which has a very different meaning. In the same fashion, Allah is not the same as YHVH.

The Jewish YHVH and the Christian YHVH, on the other hand, are the same god. You and I would agree that we are talking about the same one God-- the god of the Old Testament. We would just say that the other person is mistaken about his attributes-- about the various things that Christianity adds to the basics.

Many people, on the other hand, who call themselves Christians and Jews would actually shy away from the specific name YHVH, because their god really is different, and they want to deny the deeds attributed to YHVH. Saying "Lord" or "God" is a

convenient way to muddle up exactly who is being talked about. (I must admit that I and, I think, all Christians are somewhat confused on this in the doctrine of the Trinity, but that is a separate problem and one, I think, as unsolvable as the Problem of Evil .)

4.7. The Bible is written with YHVH, not "Lord" or "God", and it is not the only word that had no vowels originally--- none of them did-- so we have no evidence that the Divine Name was not meant to have vowels. And the only evidence we have that the vowels were not to be sounded is post-Biblical tradition.

4.8. People in the Old Testament have names incorporating pieces of the Divine Name-- "Elijah", for example. We know those names were meant to be spoken out loud.

4.9. Unbelievers need some name to use. They cannot be expected to use "Lord". It is disrespectful for them to use the correct name, perhaps, but it is more disrespectful to use an incorrect name.

Different contexts could have different appropriate usages, complicating the issue. A few different contexts are: A. Bibles. B. Hymns. C. Reading Bibles out loud. D. Discussing God with believers, E. Discussing God with unbelievers.

7. The motivation of scholars who advance "Yahweh" as the Translation. -

JHVH. A true translation would contain NO vowels. So accuracy is NOT the main concern of those who use *Yahweh*.

The wording of The Jerusalem Bible has a contemporary ring about it. The archaic forms of the second person pronouns ("thee," "thy," etc.) are dispensed with. The editor acknowledges that the decision, reached after some hesitation, to represent the divine name by "*Yahweh*" will probably seem to many readers to be unacceptable, but "those who may care to use this translation of the Psalms can substitute the traditional 'the Lord'" (p. vi).

There was also an attempt to obliterate Christianity. This is quite apart from *Yahweh* being an unpleasant word. Simply because it was different, Christianity was undermined. Christians were told they didn't even know the name of their own God. All the cultural associations of *Jehovah* were lost, weakening the grip of Christianity. I think it must be beyond dispute that the scholars who propounded *Yahweh* were happy about this, whether or not it was their main motivation. Remember that these scholars were also trying to undermine Christianity in many other ways under the pretence of scientific method, showing a hatred of the Bible in the way they went well beyond the way scholars analyzed other ancient texts.

I need to find out if the Masorah say anything about this. They are detailed marginal Bible notes on the number of occurrences of different words variant readings, and how to pronounce them. Surely they must say something about the Tetragrammaton.

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Miscellaneous Notes.

יהוה proper noun **H3068** יהוה *Jehovah* = "the existing One" 1) the proper name of the one true God 1a) unpronounced except with the vowel pointings of 0136

הָיָה verb: qal imperf 3rd pers masc sing **H1961** הָיָה 1) to be, become, come to pass, exist, happen, fall out 1a) (Qal) 1a1) ----- 1a1a) to happen, fall out, occur, take place, come about, come to pass 1a1b) to come about, come to pass 1a2) to come into being, become 1a2a) to arise, appear, come 1a2b) to become 1a2b1) to become 1a2b2) to become like 1a2b3) to be instituted, be established 1a3) to be 1a3a) to exist, be in existence 1a3b) to abide, remain, continue (with word of place or time) 1a3c) to stand, lie, be in, be at, be situated (with word of locality) 1a3d) to accompany, be with 1b) (Niphal) 1b1) to occur, come to pass, be done, be brought about 1b2) to be done, be finished, be gone

KJV Exodus 6:3 And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by *the name of God Almighty*, but by my name *JEHOVAH* was I not known to them.

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What is the significance of JHVH having four letters, when almost all Hebrew roots are supposed to be 3 consonants?

Hebrew font on my computer: A Period is the colon. A comma is the three dots V. Question mark is the three dots with a colon. Double quotes is the little T. Colon is the underline. Right bracket is the underline plus colon. Backslash is the T plus colon. Plus is the hat. Minus is an overline with blank underneath. Tilde is a thick colon occupying the whole page.