

Appendix D: The George Howard Study

••236•• The Watch Tower Society relies heavily on a study by George Howard¹ which supports the Tetragrammaton's² presence in the Christian Greek Scriptures. It would be helpful to the interested reader to evaluate the entire manuscript. However, its length does not allow reproduction in this appendix. (Copies are available from the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, Brooklyn, NY.) Therefore, only pertinent quotations and summaries of the study will be given here. Quoted materials are set in a distinctive type face. Where needed, Greek and Hebrew words are translated in brackets added to the Howard text. In the opening paragraph, George Howard says:

Recent discoveries in Egypt and the Judean Desert allow us to see first hand the use of God's name in pre-Christian times. These discoveries are significant for NT³ studies in that they form a literary analogy with the earliest Christian documents and may explain how NT authors used the divine name. In the following pages we will set forth a theory that the divine name, יהוה (and possibly abbreviation of it), was originally written in the NT quotations of and allusions to the OT and that in the course of time it was replaced mainly with the surrogate $\kappa\varsigma$ [Lord].⁴ This removal of the Tetragram, in our view, created a confusion in the minds of early Gentile Christians about the relationship between the "Lord God" and the "Lord Christ" which is reflected in the MS [manuscript] tradition of the NT itself. In order to support this theory we will describe the relevant pre-Christian and post-NT evidence for use of the divine name in written documents and explore its implications for the NT.

Observations: It is important that the reader understand the scope of the Howard study.

1. The textual ••237•• basis of the study is the use of God's name *in pre-Christian times*. That is, Howard's study examines only Hebrew Scripture manuscripts. (As we will see, all his textual examples are taken from the *Septuagint* [LXX] version which is the Hebrew Scriptures translated into Greek. *The Septuagint version does not include the Christian Greek Scriptures*.)
2. Howard's study does not deal with all 237 of the *Jehovah* references in the *New World Translation*. Rather, Howard says that "...[he] will set forth a theory that the divine name was originally written in the NT quotations of and allusions to the OT." That is, Howard's theory focuses *only* on the 112⁵ direct and indirect Hebrew Scripture quotations.

Sections one and two of Howard's study

In the first section of his study, Howard evaluates the use of the Tetragrammaton in numerous Hebrew Scriptures and extrabiblical sources. The content of this material can best be understood by partially quoting Howard's own summary of this section:

Before entering the post-NT era, a brief summary of the data gathered thus far should be helpful.

(1) In pre-Christian Greek MSS [manuscripts] of the OT, the divine name normally appears not in the form of κύριος [Lord], as it does in the great Christian codices of the LXX known today, but either in the form of the Hebrew Tetragram (written in Aramaic or paleo-Hebrew letters) or in the transliterated form of IAW [IAO].

(2) In the Hebrew documents from the Judean Desert the Tetragram appears in copies of the Bible, in quotations of the Bible, and in biblical-type passages...and biblical paraphrases.

(3) The most commonly used word for God in the non-biblical Hebrew documents from the Judean Desert is אֱל [God] (or אֱלֹהִים [God]). In the Qumran commentaries the Tetragram

¹ This material was originally presented at the University of Georgia (Atlanta) and subsequently appeared in the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 96, #1, March 1977, pp. 63-83 entitled "The Tetragram and the New Testament." Permission to quote from this article has been granted by the Society of Biblical Literature.

² Both "Tetragrammaton" and "Tetragram" are appropriate designations for the Hebrew form of God's name יהוה. The Howard study uses the term "Tetragram."

³ Howard uses NT for "New Testament" (the Christian Greek Scriptures) and OT for "Old Testament" (the Hebrew Scriptures). Additionally, MS is used for "manuscript" and MSS for "manuscripts" throughout the study.

⁴ The term "surrogate" designates an abbreviated shorthand notation used by the Greek copyist for a common word. The two most common surrogates used in this study are k—" for kuvrio" (Lord), and q—" for qeo" (God).

⁵ The number of direct and indirect Hebrew Scripture quotations is taken from the summary on page 50 of this book.

regularly appears in the *lemma*-quotations from Scripture; in the following commentary on the text the word יהוה [God] is used as a secondary reference to God.

(4) There is some evidence from the Hebrew documents from the Judean Desert that the word יהוה [my Lord] was pronounced where the Tetragram appeared in the biblical text.

(5) There are two unusual abbreviations for God's name that appear in the scrolls from the Judean Desert: one is the use of four or five dots; the other is the use of the Hebrew pronoun אלה [he].

(6) Although it is improbable that Philo varied from the custom of writing the Tetragram when quoting from Scripture, it is likely ••238•• that he used the word κύριος [Lord] when making a secondary reference to the divine name in his exposition.

Perhaps the most significant observation we can draw from this pattern of variegated usage of the divine name is that the Tetragram was held to be very sacred. One could either use it or a surrogate for it within non-biblical material depending on one's individual taste. But in copying the biblical text itself the Tetragram was carefully guarded. This protection of the Tetragram was extended even to the Greek translation of the biblical text.

In the second section of his study, Howard briefly addresses the issue of God's name within Christian usage of the *Septuagint* (the use of the *Septuagint* by the Christian Church in the first and second centuries).

This material from George Howard is given in order to show the reader the information used by the Watch Tower Society in support of its teaching that the Tetragrammaton was used in the Christian Greek Scriptures. It is not our intent to delve into a study of the Tetragrammaton in the *Septuagint*. The reader can review that discussion elsewhere in this book.

Regarding God's name within Christian writings, Howard says:

When we come to Christian copies of the LXX, we are immediately struck by the absence of the Tetragram and its almost universal replacement by κύριος [Lord]. This means that sometime between the beginning of the Christian movement and the earliest extant copies of the Christian LXX a change had taken place. Just when the change occurred is impossible to date with absoluteness. But by the time we reach the Christian codices of the LXX the Tetragram is not to be found. Instead the words κύριος [Lord] and occasionally θεός [God], stand for the divine name and are abbreviated as κς and θς.

In all probability the Tetragram in the Christian LXX began to be surrogated with the contracted words κς and θς at least by the beginning of the second century. For our purposes the point that is most important is that these same abbreviated words appear also in the earliest copies of the NT. These abbreviations, as we will argue, are important for understanding the use of God's name in the New Testament.

From all that we know, the Tetragram was the most sacred word in the Hebrew religion. We know for a fact that Greek-speaking Jews continued to write יהוה within their Greek Scriptures. Moreover, it is most unlikely that early conservative Greek-speaking Jewish Christians varied from this practice.

It is much more likely that the contracted κς and θς go back to Gentile Christians who lacked the support of tradition to retain the Tetragram in their copies of the Bible.

Observations: The reader ••239•• should be aware that:

1. In all cases where Howard refers to Scripture manuscripts containing the Tetragrammaton, the Scripture portion is that of the Hebrew Scriptures. The *Septuagint* (which Howard identifies as the LXX) is the Hebrew Scriptures which was translated into Greek in approximately 280 B.C.E. As we have historically and textually demonstrated throughout this book, *no known Christian Greek Scripture manuscripts contain the Tetragrammaton*.
2. The "Judean Desert manuscripts" are the Palestinian cave documents found in 1947 which we know as the Dead Sea Scrolls. The Qumran settlement where the scrolls were found was an Israelite community (as opposed to Gentile) which religiously and culturally understood the meaning of the Tetragrammaton. Verifiably, some *Septuagint* manuscripts from Palestine and Jewish settlements in Egypt used the Tetragrammaton rather than the Greek word κύριος [Lord]. That is, the Tetragrammaton was often embedded in the Hebrew Scriptures for the sake of Jewish readers. For Gentile readers, however, the name of God was translated from the Hebrew word יהוה to the Greek word κύριος [Lord].⁶

⁶ Gentile Scriptures did not use the Tetragrammaton for the same reason that English Bibles do not print God's name as יהוה. Rather, all English Bibles (including the *NWT*) transform it into a meaningful English equivalent.

3. Within the Hebrew Scripture (*Septuagint*) manuscripts, the surrogates (abbreviations) $\kappa\varsigma$ and $\theta\varsigma$ replaced the words $\kappa\upsilon\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$ [Lord] and $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ [God] early in the Christian era.

The historical and textual material presented in this book generally agrees with the conclusions of Howard in his first two sections. Though our book has not dealt with the *Septuagint* in great detail, there is no apparent disagreement with Howard to this point. The reader must be aware, however, that *the subject of Howard's comment is the manuscripts of the Hebrew Scriptures which were ••240•• translated into the Greek language*. In his first two sections, Howard is *not* talking about the Christian Greek Scripture manuscripts which are the subject of this book.

The concluding section of Howard's study

The final (and brief) portion of Howard's study focuses on the Christian Greek Scriptures. We will quote extensively from this portion so that the reader will better understand what Howard is saying. (We have underlined certain phrases to emphasize the degree of probability which Howard introduces.)

When we come to the NT, there is good reason to believe that a similar pattern evolved. Since the Tetragram was still written in the copies of the Greek Bible which made up the Scriptures of the early church, it is reasonable to believe that the NT writers, when quoting from Scripture, preserved the Tetragram within the biblical text. On the analogy of pre-Christian Jewish practice we can imagine that the NT text incorporated the Tetragram into its OT quotations and that the words $\kappa\upsilon\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$ [Lord] and $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ [God] were used when secondary references to God were made in the comments that were based upon the quotations. The Tetragram in these quotations would, of course, have remained as long as it continued to be used in the Christian copies of the LXX. But when it was removed from the Greek OT, it was also removed from the quotations of the OT in the NT. Thus somewhere around the beginning of the second century the use of surrogates must have crowded out the Tetragram in both Testaments. Before long the divine name was lost to the Gentile church altogether except insofar as it was reflected in the contracted surrogates or occasionally remembered by scholars.

The removal of the Tetragram in the NT of the Gentile church obviously affected the appearance of the NT text and no doubt influenced the theological outlook of second century Gentile Christianity; just how much we may never know. But if we permit our mind's eye to compare the original OT quotations in the NT with the way they appeared after the Tetragram was removed, we can imagine that the theological change was significant. In many passages where the persons of God and Christ were clearly distinguishable, the removal of the Tetragram must have created considerable ambiguity.

It is interesting to note that the confusion that emerged from such passages in the second century is reflected in the MS [manuscript] tradition of the NT. A large number of variants in the NT MS tradition involve the word $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ [God], $\kappa\upsilon\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$ [Lord], Ἰησοῦς [Jesus], Χριστός [Christ], υἱός [son] and combinations of them. The theory we suggest to explain the origin of many of these variants (though, of course, not all) is that the removal of the Tetragram from the OT quotations in the NT created a confusion in the minds of scribes as to which person was referred ••241•• to in the discussion surrounding the quotation. Once the confusion was caused by the change in the divine name in the quotations, the same confusion spread to other parts of the NT where quotations were not involved at all. In other words once the names of God and Christ were confused in the vicinity of quotations, the names were generally confused elsewhere.

The following examples illustrate this scribal confusion over the divine personages within the area of quotations. [At this point, Howard includes a brief discussion of Romans 10:16-17, Romans 14:10-11, I Corinthians 2:16, I Peter 3:14-15, I Corinthians 10:9, and Jude 5. Howard conjectures that the Tetragrammaton may have been used in these verses. *In no case, however, does he give any textual evidence substantiating the Tetragrammaton in any ancient Christian Greek Scripture manuscripts.*]

(That is, neither "Yahweh" [or "Yahvah"] nor "Jehovah" is the Tetragrammaton. Yahweh [Yahvah] is, at best, an approximate transliteration of the Tetragrammaton.) At the meridian of time, Hebrew language and writing were as foreign to the average Greek Gentile reader as it would be to the average English reader today. We often overlook this reality when we presume that there would have been a natural recognition of the divine name had the Tetragrammaton been inserted into the "ancient" biblical texts. Because of Alexander the Great's legacy and the subsequent power of the Roman Empire, the Greek language was widely used in the Gentile world. This was not the case, however, with Hebrew. Hebrew was a highly parochial language dialect. Nonetheless, for today's English translations, the choice of an Anglicized form of the divine name is far preferable in the Hebrew Scriptures to the traditional "LORD" written in capital letters used in most English versions.

(2) *Concluding Observations.* The above examples are, of course, only exploratory in nature and are set forth here programatically. Nevertheless, the evidence is sufficiently strong to suggest that the thesis of this paper is quite possible. We have refrained from drawing too many conclusions due to the revolutionary nature of the thesis. Rather than state conclusions now in a positive manner it seems better only to raise some questions that suggest a need for further explanation.

(a) If the Tetragram was used in the NT, how extensively was it used? Was it confined to OT quotations and OT paraphrastic allusions, or was it used in traditional phrases, such as "the word of God/Lord" (see the variants in Acts 6:7; 8:25; 12:24; 13:5; 13:44, 48; 14:25; 16:6, 32), "in the day of the Lord" (cf. variants in I Cor 5:5), "through the will of God" (cf. variants in Rom 15:32)? Was it also used in OT-like narratives such as we have in the first two chapters of Luke?

(b) Was the third person singular pronoun ever used in the NT as a surrogate "God"? The quotation of Isa 40:3 in Mark 1:3; Matt 3:3; Luke 3:4 ends with εὐθείας ποιεῖτε τρίβους αὐτοῦ [make straight the roads of him]. Αὐτοῦ [of him] stands for לֵאלֹהֵינוּ [our God] in the MT and τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν [the God of us] in the majority of the LXX MSS. The fact that in IQS 8:13 the elongated pronoun אֱלֹהֵינוּ [of him] is used in a reference to this exact phrase suggests that αὐτοῦ [of him] is possibly an abbreviation in the Synoptics.

(c) How great was the impact of the removal of the Tetragram from the NT? Were only those passages affected in which God and Christ were confused by the ambiguity of the immediate context; or were other passages, which reflected a low christology even after the change, later altered to reflect a high christology? Did such restructuring of the text give rise to the later christological controversies within the church, and were the NT passages involved in these controversies identical with those which in the NT era apparently created no problems at all?

(d) What part did heresy play in the formation of the NT text? Did the removal of the Tetragram play a role in the split between the Ebionites and the Gentile church; and if so, did the Ebionite ••242•• movement cause the Gentile church to restructure even more its NT toward a higher christology?

(e) What are the implications of the use of the divine name in the NT for current christological studies? Are these studies based on the NT text as it appeared in the first century, or are they based on an altered text which represents a time in church history when the difference between God and Christ was confused in the text and blurred in the minds of churchmen? Can it be that current scenarios of NT christology are descriptions of second- and third-century theology and not that of the first?

Observations: The reader must pay careful attention to the wording and content of the portion of Howard's study dealing with the Christian Greek Scriptures (New Testament).

1. In the first sections, the reader has been given verifiable textual evidence of the Tetragrammaton in known manuscripts of the *Septuagint* (LXX). Without careful attention, the reader could be led to assume that the change of focus to the Christian Greek Scriptures in Howard's study also contains textual evidence for the use of the Tetragrammaton. This is far from being true. A careful reading of this portion will indicate that *no citation of a single Christian Greek Scripture using the Tetragrammaton is given.*
2. The reader should also note that, in the absence of any textual evidence, the entire premise for Howard's discussion of the Tetragrammaton's use in the Christian Greek Scriptures is based on such phrases as "...there is good reason to believe....," "...we can imagine that....," "...the use of surrogates must have crowded out....," "...just how much we may never know....," "...if we permit our mind's eye to compare....," and, "...we can imagine that...." These statements can hardly be construed as assertions of empirical evidence.
3. Howard suggests that confusion of the Tetragrammaton within the *Septuagint* (Hebrew Scriptures) of the second century is then transferred to the scribes copying of the Christian Greek Scriptures. This is a legitimate inquiry to pursue. However, as we have seen in our book, this question must be answered with a historical and textual examination of the evidence. *The earliest extant manuscripts, rather than conjecture, must establish the wording of all Greek Scriptures passages.*
4. The reader must, finally, be aware that Howard's conclusion does not give a summary statement of textual evidence for the Tetragrammaton. The concluding observations merely consist of five questions. They are, in fact, pertinent questions. But they must be answered with evidence from known ancient Christian Greek ••243•• Scripture manuscripts. In the absence of such evidence, they are merely speculative questions.

Conclusion: It is not our intent to demean the research done by George Howard. His work evaluates necessary data pertinent to a study of the Tetragrammaton's presence in the Christian Greek Scriptures. Nonetheless, it is necessary that we carefully note the limitations of the evidence within his study.

(In all probability, our view of Howard's work is more strongly conditioned by the Watch Tower Society's interpretation of it than by a careful study of the material itself.) The required evidence which will bear most strongly on George Howard's study is the same evidence which we must use in our own study. In all cases, *the verification of the presumed use of the Tetragrammaton within the Christian Greek Scriptures must be securely founded on historical and textual evidences, not on presumption or allusions to the **Septuagint** text.* In summary:

1. No textual evidence is given wherein ancient Greek manuscripts of the Christian Greek Scriptures use the Tetragrammaton.
2. The passages used by Howard when he conjectures use of the Tetragrammaton in the Christian Greek Scriptures are verses which allude to Hebrew Scripture quotations. Though this use of these verses merits study, it leaves completely unanswered the appropriateness of the choice of *Jehovah* in the majority of the 237 *New World Translation* references which have no Hebrew Scripture source. Even if textual evidence for the Tetragrammaton in verses quoted from the Hebrew Scriptures could be established, no transfer of that premise can be carried to verses such as Revelation 1:8, 4:8 and 11, 11:17, 16:7, 18:8, 19:6, 21:22, 22:5 and 22:6, which have no allusions to Hebrew Scripture. These verses *all* address Κύριος [Lord] as *God* and in most cases further identify Κύριος [Lord] as the *Almighty*.
3. Howard introduces an ambiguity regarding the Tetragrammaton into his study which is often shared by Watch Tower publications. A discussion will often commence with references to the Tetragrammaton in the *Septuagint* and then be extended as though the Christian Greek Scriptures were the same document. The *Septuagint* and the Christian Greek Scriptures are separated by some 300 years and represent distinctly separate manuscript traditions. What can correctly be said of one is not necessarily true of the other, despite the use of the *Septuagint* in the early church period. In a similar manner, a discussion of quotations from the Hebrew Scriptures is often confused with other *Jehovah* references in ••244•• the *New World Translation*. A statement may properly be made regarding an original writer's use of a Hebrew Scripture quotation which uses the divine name, whereas an extension of that statement to the other 237 *Jehovah* references would be inaccurate. The reader must carefully separate the *Septuagint* and the Christian Greek Scriptures. Equally, the reader must differentiate between a passage which originates from (and quotes) the Hebrew Scriptures and a statement being made by a Christian Scripture writer in which there is no quotation source.
4. Howard concludes with a series of questions, two of which are of great importance to us here:

"If the Tetragram was used in the NT, how extensively was it used?" This is a question of paramount concern to anyone reading the Christian Greek Scriptures. Our understanding of Jehovah and the Lord Jesus will be greatly influenced by the answer. The answer is so important that we would expect the divine Author to give ample evidence in the textual integrity of his Word. Certainly, if the Tetragrammaton was used 237 times in the Christian Greek Scriptures, there should be ample ancient Greek manuscripts confirming that for us. *There are none!*

"What are the implications of the use of the divine name in the NT for current christological studies?" The question is well asked because the implications are immense! The subject of numerous verses in Revelation is clearly "God...the Almighty." If the Tetragrammaton was not used, then John wrote that "kuvrio" [the Lord] is "God...the Almighty."