

Chapter 1: WHAT IS THE TETRAGRAMMATON?

Regular readers of Watch Tower publications already understand the meaning of the word *Tetragrammaton*. However, it is worthwhile to give some background information for the benefit of those who are unfamiliar with the term.


••3•• *The Tetragrammaton is the divine name as it is written in Hebrew letters.* In English, God's name is written in its various forms as *Jehovah* or *Yahweh*.

Before going further, however, it will be of interest to look at the meaning of the word *Tetragrammaton*¹ itself. The Greek word *tetra* (τετρά) is used as a prefix designating the number *four*. We find this word at Luke 3:1 where it refers to Herod as a district ruler or *tetrarch* as noted in the *New World Translation Reference Edition* footnotes. The tetrarch shared a kingdom area; he was one of four rulers. (In contrast, a single ruler is called a *monarch*.) The Greek word *gramma* (γράμμα) means *writings* or *letters*. Galatians 6:11 says, "See with what large *letters* (γράμμα) I have written YOU with my own hand." Thus, *Tetragrammaton* means *four letters*.² The term *Tetragrammaton* itself is not a word found in the Bible, but is a useful word describing the four Hebrew characters used in God's name.


Formation of the letters

The orthography (letter formation) of all written languages gradually develops over a period of time. That is especially true of Hebrew which has been written for thousands of years from ancient to modern times. The Tetragrammaton as first written

The divine name as actually written by the earliest Hebrew Scripture writers.



The divine name as written by the Hebrew Scripture writers printed in modern Hebrew characters.



in the Hebrew Scriptures is depicted in the box on this page. The Watch Tower publication *The Divine Name That Will Endure Forever* (1984) gives two excellent illustrations of the divine name in its early written form. The first illustration on page 12 shows two occurrences found on a ••4•• pottery shard from the second half of the seventh century B.C.E. The second illustration on page 13 shows two occurrences from the Moabite Stone inscribed about 850 B.C.E. By carefully studying the examples given in that

publication, slight differences in character³ formation can be detected between the two specimens. In both cases, however, the Tetragrammaton of this period of time has the general appearance of יְהוָה.

In the article "Hebrew II" found in *Insight on the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 1072) the writers say,

The earliest Hebrew inscriptions known are recorded in an ancient script considerably different in form from the square-shaped Hebrew letters of later documents, such as those of the early centuries of the Common Era. The square-shaped style is often called "Aramaic," or "Assyrian." It is believed that the change from ancient Hebrew characters to square Hebrew characters took place during the Babylonian exile. However, as Ernst Würthwein says: "For a long while the Old Hebrew script remained in use beside the square script. The coins of the period of Bar Kochba's revolt (A.D. 132-135) bear Old Hebrew letters. Among the texts found in the Dead Sea caves are some written in the Old Hebrew Script."

¹ The word may properly be written either *Tetragrammaton* or *Tetragram*. Throughout this book we will use *Tetragrammaton*.

² *Aid to Bible Understanding*, p. 882.

³ The word *character* is more correctly used of written Hebrew than *letter*. We will generally use *letter* to refer to written Greek or English and *character* in reference to written Hebrew.

Even though the formation of the characters has changed over time, the Hebrew spelling of the divine name itself has not. That is, both יהוה and יהוה are transliterated into English as YHWH. Since Hebrew is written from left to right, the ancient Hebrew character י and the modern Hebrew character ם are both Y (Yohdh); ה and ה are both H (He'), and ו and ו are both W (Waw).

The designation *palaeo-Hebrew* is occasionally encountered in technical descriptions of written Hebrew. This term identifies the ancient style characters as represented by יהוה.⁴ ••5••

In the remainder of this book, we will follow the general practice of the Watch Tower Society in representing the Tetragrammaton of the early Hebrew Scripture writers with modern Hebrew characters. Thus, irrespective of the time period under consideration, we will use the four Hebrew characters יהוה to represent the Tetragrammaton. The reader should understand, however, that at any time prior to the Babylonian exile, the divine name would have been written יהוה.

The Tetragrammaton in its Hebrew background

We encounter the divine name early in the Hebrew Scriptures. At Genesis 2:4 and 16, Moses wrote God's personal name for the first time when he said, "This is a history of the heavens and the earth in the time of their being created, in the day that Jehovah God made earth and heaven." When Moses wrote this verse, he penned the name of God with four Hebrew characters as יהוה.

Because Genesis 2:4 is the first reference to the divine name in the Bible, the *New World Translation Reference Edition* (p. 17) gives the following information in a footnote to this verse:

"Jehovah." Heb[rew], יהוה (YHWH, here vowel-pointed as *Yehwah*), meaning "He causes to Become" (from Heb[rew], הוה [*ha-wah*', "to become"]); LXX (Gr[reek]) *Ky'ri-os*; Syr[ian], *Mar-ya*'; Lat[in], *Do'min-us*. The first occurrence of God's distinctive personal name, יהוה (YHWH); these four Heb[rew] letters are referred to as the Tetragrammaton. The divine name identifies Jehovah as the Purposer. Only the true God could rightly and authentically bear this name. See App[endix] 1A [in the Reference Bible].

Though the Tetragrammaton is God's most holy name, it is derived from a common Hebrew grammatical structure. Again, the *New World Translation Reference Edition* (p. 1561) gives us the following information:

"Jehovah" (Heb[rew] יהוה YHWH), God's personal name... is a verb, the causative form, the imperfect state, of the Hebrew verb הוה (*ha-wah*', "to become").

This is further amplified in *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* by William Gesenius (1865, pp. 249-250) wherein three primary English equivalent uses of the Hebrew verb הוה

<p>The divine name written with vowel points.</p>	<p>יהוה</p>
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(*ha-wah*', "to ••6•• become") are listed. Gesenius identifies the following English meanings: 1) *to come to pass, to happen, to be*; 2) *to begin to be*, i.e. *to become, to be made or to be done*; and 3) *to be*. These uses of the verb הוה give us a sense of the meaning behind the divine name.

A related topic is the *pronunciation* of the divine name. To understand pronunciation, we must consider Hebrew vowel points.

Until well after Jesus' time, the Hebrew language was written using only consonants. Sometime after 400 C.E. a group of Jewish scholars called Masoretes added vowel points in order to standardize pronunciation. We need to give an illustration of a written language without vowels. We can use the sentence, "Moses wrote the five books of the law." If we write the sentence without vowels, it looks

⁴ The reader interested in pursuing the subject of the Hebrew language further would profit by the useful information found under the heading "Hebrew II" in *Insight on the Scriptures*, Vol. 1, pp. 1068-1077. A complete table of Hebrew character formation from the ninth century B.C.E through modern Hebrew (including the time of Christ) is given on page 344 of the *Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary*. In most instances, according to this table, the Hebrew character formation of Jesus' day is closely akin to the later square characters which are the predecessors to modern Hebrew.

like this:

m s s w r t t h f v b k s f t h l w

English, of course, uses regular vowel letters. However, later Hebrew script added *points* to identify vowel pronunciation. The points are marks under (or over) the consonants which inform the reader of the connecting sound (vowel). If we used our existing English vowels as *points*, the above sentence might look something like this:

m_os_es w_or_ot t_e h_i f_iv b_ok_os f t_o h_e l_aw

(In this example, double letters and vowels at the end of words were eliminated. Vowel *function* is found only in pronounced language components.)

The Hebrew Scriptures were originally written without vowel points. Therefore, during the time of the *Septuagint* and the early Christian era, the divine name contained only the Hebrew consonants without vowel markings, and was written יהוה. (The English phonetic equivalent is YHWH.) After vowel points were added, the name of God was written יהוה־וַהּ. The English phonetic equivalent with vowel points is most likely transliterated into English as YehWah—or very probably YehVaH as we will soon see.⁵ ••7••

(The exact pronunciation of *any* Hebrew Scripture word is equally uncertain. As stated, *the entire Hebrew Scriptures were devoid of vowel markings* until centuries after the last books were written. Presumably, when vowel points were added, the pronunciation of proper names was subject to greater uncertainty than more common words.)

From the above illustration of *missing* vowels, it should be obvious why we do not know the precise pronunciation of the divine name during Moses' day. We can be more confident of the pronunciation of the consonant portion (YHWH or YHVH) of the word. However, we cannot be certain of the vowel pronunciation because no corresponding written information was preserved. As a written word, the divine name without vowel points is the form we are concerned with in this study.

How did YHWH become *Jehovah*? Again, we quote from the *New World Translation Reference Edition* (p. 1561) which says,

To avoid the risk of taking God's name (YHWH) in vain, devout Jews began to substitute the word 'adonay(y) for the proper name itself. Although the Masoretes left the four original consonants in the text, they added the vowels e (in place of a for other reasons) and a to remind the reader to pronounce adonay(y) regardless of the consonants.

The Masoretic Jews added the vowels found in the name *Adonay* (which is properly translated in the English Hebrew Scriptures as *Lord*⁶) to the consonants of the Tetragrammaton in order to obtain a circumlocution⁷ for the divine name. The book *Aid to Bible Understanding* (pp. 884-885) says,

By combining the vowel signs of 'Adho-nay' and 'Elo-him' with the four consonants of the Tetragrammaton the pronunciations *Y^eho-wah'* and *Y^eho-wih'* were formed. The first of these provided the basis for the Latinized form "Jehova(h)." The first recorded use ••8•• of this form dates from the thirteenth century C.E. Raymundus Martini, a Spanish monk of the Dominican Order, used it in his book *Pugeo Fidei* of the year 1270.

The reader should also be aware that there is uncertainty regarding the early pronunciation of the

⁵ The pronunciation of the vowel points are only known within modern Hebrew. The book *Reasoning from the Scriptures*, p.195 gives this further explanation.

No human today can be certain how [the divine name] was originally pronounced in Hebrew. Why not? Biblical Hebrew was originally written with only consonants, no vowels. When the language was in everyday use, readers easily provided the proper vowels. In time however, the Jews came to have the superstitious idea that it was wrong to say God's personal name out loud, so they used substitute expressions. Centuries later, Jewish scholars developed a system of points by which to indicate which vowels to use when reading ancient Hebrew, but they put the vowels for the *substitute expressions* [Adonay] around the four consonants representing the divine name. Thus the original pronunciation of the divine name was lost.

⁶ It is correctly written as *Lord*, but not in small capitals as *LORD*. In other words, *Lord* is the translation of *Adonay* and should not be confused with the faulty English Bible tradition which translated the Tetragrammaton as *LORD*. The *New World Translation* properly translates *Adonay* as *Lord*.

⁷ The pronounceable expression which replaces an ineffable (unpronounceable) word.

"W" consonant. The Hebrew character represented as "W" in the English transliteration of YHWH is waw (ו). (This Hebrew character's name is pronounced vav, though when identified in English letters, it is often written as waw.⁸ Interestingly, newer biblical Hebrew language texts actually transliterate the character in English as vav to reflect the preferred pronunciation.) In all likelihood, the above combination of characters from the Tetragrammaton and *Adonay* becomes YaHoVaH. *Aid to Bible Understanding* (p. 882) says, "These four letters (written from right to left) are יהוה and may be transliterated into English as YHWH (or, according to some, YHVH)." If the more appropriate phonetic reproduction of the divine name as pronounced in Moses' day is truly YHVH, the English word *Jehovah* more closely reproduces the ancient Hebrew character waw (ו) than does the English transliteration *Yahweh*.

For further reading concerning the divine name, consult Appendix 1A in the *New World Translation Reference Edition* (1984). Also, see Appendix 3A in the *Reference Edition* for a brief introduction to both Hebrew and Greek characters. The section contains a particularly useful description of Hebrew vowels. For a comprehensive study of the divine name, refer to the heading "Jehovah" in *Aid to Bible Understanding*, beginning on page 882, or under the same heading in *Insight on the Scriptures*, Volume 2, beginning on page 5.

The Tetragrammaton in the Hebrew Scriptures

God's personal name occupies a place of prominence in the Hebrew Scriptures. The Tetragrammaton occurs 6,961⁹ times in the Hebrew text.

The perspective of this book is a current historical and textual understanding for the use of the Tetragrammaton in the Christian Greek Scriptures. As such, we are not emphasizing the place of the Tetragrammaton in the Hebrew Scriptures. However, *the reader must remember throughout this book that God's name is used extensively in ••9•• the Hebrew Scriptures, and that the textual evidence supporting its presence is beyond any doubt.* The *New World Translation* is to be commended for its use of the divine name in the Hebrew Scriptures.

The Tetragrammaton in the *Septuagint* (LXX)

Because there is sometimes confusion between the *Septuagint* and the Christian Greek Scriptures when the Tetragrammaton is being discussed, a brief introduction to the *Septuagint* is in order.

We are familiar with the history of the nation of Israel in the Hebrew Scriptures. During the periods of the judges and the theocracy under such leaders as Samuel, the nation of Israel was moving toward occupation and consolidation of the land. This consolidation as a united kingdom reached its climax in the days of King David and his son Solomon. However, because of King Solomon's disobedience to God, the kingdom was divided and weakened. Though good kings occasionally came to power, divine judgment eventually fell. The divided kingdoms of Judah and Israel were finally conquered, with each being led into captivity.

Without going into any of the details of the military and political defeats of Israel, we are aware that a typical form of conquest for that time was deportation of the populace to the conquering nation's homeland. Thus, colonies of Jews¹⁰ were established in various areas of the Mediterranean world. Alexandria (Egypt) became an important center for expatriate Jews. Alexandria was also the leading center of learning and Greek culture from about 350 B.C.E. until its conquest by Rome.

The Jewish religious leaders were confronted with a problem which they had not encountered before the days of national captivity. Many Jews living in Greek-speaking cultures could no longer read and understand the Hebrew Scriptures. Thus, in approximately 280 B.C.E.,¹¹ a group of Hebrew

⁸ *New World Translation Reference Edition*, p. 1570.

⁹ The book *Aid to Bible Understanding*, p. 885 says, "The Tetragrammaton occurs 6,961 times in the original-language text of the Hebrew Scriptures (this includes 134 times where the Masoretic text shows that ancient copyists [Sopherim] had changed the primitive Hebrew text to read 'Adho-nay' or 'Elo-him' instead of *Yehowah*)."

¹⁰ Strictly speaking, descendants of Abraham were not called Jews until post-exilic times. (See *Insight on the Scriptures*, Vol. 2, p. 73 under the heading "Jew(ess)" for more complete information.) In this book, however, we will use the term "Jew" in the generally accepted sense.

¹¹ "All Scripture Is Inspired of God and Beneficial," p. 307.

scholars began translating the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek. There are some interesting—though uncertain—traditions surrounding that translation project. The least credible tradition says that the translators were supernaturally empowered and completed the entire work in 70 days. A more probable tradition is that 72 Hebrew scholars did (or at least began) the work. Whatever the truth is, the translation became known as the *Seventy*. Thus, we have ••10•• the name *Septuagint*, which is abbreviated with the Roman numerals LXX (70). (The name *Septuagint* is an Anglicized form of its early Latin name *secundum septuaginta interpretes*.)

However, regarding the *Septuagint* itself, we must make five statements which have a bearing on our study of the Tetragrammaton:

1. *We must recognize the importance of the Septuagint.* The *Septuagint* occupied an important place in both Jewish and Christian thought. It was a monumental and far-reaching translation. Among other things, it represented an understanding on the part of the Jews who used it that God's revelation was not confined to the Hebrew language. There is much to be learned from the study of its history and development. Though outside the scope of this book, a study of the Tetragrammaton in the *Septuagint* is an interesting and worthwhile subject.
2. *We must differentiate between the Septuagint and the Hebrew Scriptures from which it was translated.* The Hebrew Scriptures were written in Hebrew. (However, Daniel 4 was originally written by King Nebuchadnezzar—and then included in Daniel's prophetic book—in Aramaic. Portions of Ezra and Esther also contain Aramaic. See *Insight on the Scriptures*, Volume 1, page 1070 under "When Did Hebrew Begin to Wane?") As we have noted earlier, the *Septuagint* was a specific translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into the Greek language. The term *Septuagint* should never be used as a synonym for early Hebrew Scripture manuscripts written in Hebrew.
3. *We must differentiate between the Septuagint and other ancient Greek translations of the Hebrew Scriptures.* The *Septuagint* was not unique as a Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures.¹² However, the *Septuagint* version was widely accepted by both the Greek-speaking Jews and Gentile Christians. By the end of the third century C.E., however, a number of Greek translations of the Hebrew Scriptures were available. Three widely used translations were done by Aquila, Theodotion and Symmachus. Aquila's translation of the Hebrew Scriptures is of particular interest. ••11•• Although many manuscripts are available today which contain *Kyrios* rather than the Tetragrammaton, a recent discovery was made in Cairo in which יהוה is clearly used within Aquila's Greek text.
4. *We must identify which editions of the Septuagint most likely contained the Tetragrammaton.* The *Septuagint* was a Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures which was widely circulated throughout the Greek-speaking world of its day. Today we know that the Tetragrammaton was generally used in copies of the *Septuagint* which were intended for Jewish readers.¹³ On the other hand, the *Septuagint* which was circulated in the Gentile world used the Greek word *Kyrios* (Κύριος)¹⁴ as a translation of the divine name. In Chapter 13 we will discuss this further, including the interesting problem of why so few copies of the *Septuagint* containing the Tetragrammaton have survived until today. *Aid to Bible Understanding* (p. 886) quotes Dr. Kahle from *The Cairo Geniza* as saying,

We now know that the Greek Bible text [the *Septuagint*] as far as it was written by Jews for

¹² Appendix J shows Origen's use of three—and sometimes as many as five—distinct Greek versions of the Hebrew Scriptures. These versions were all available by the end of the third century C.E. Early studies erroneously concluded that Origen's *Hexapla* used only the Greek word *Kyrios*. Today, however, we know that both the original *Hexapla*, as well as Aquila's version, did contain the Tetragrammaton in the Greek text. (See *Insight on the Scriptures*, Vol. 2, p. 9 for more information regarding Aquila's version. Appendix J gives a complete explanation of Origen's use of יהוה in the *Hexapla*.)

¹³ According to "All Scripture Is Inspired of God and Beneficial," (pp. 307 and 310) the *Septuagint* manuscripts containing the Tetragrammaton are principally the Fouad papyrus collection dating around the second or first century B.C.E. For a more complete discussion of the *Septuagint*, see the entry in *Insight on the Scriptures*, Vol. 2, p. 9 under the heading, "In the Christian Greek Scriptures." For a photographic reproduction of the Fouad manuscript showing the Hebrew lettering, see *Insight on the Scriptures*, Vol. 1, pp. 324 and 326.

¹⁴ See the *New World Translation Reference Edition* (pp. 1562-1564) for a partial list of these manuscripts.

Jews did not translate the Divine name by *Ky'rios*, but the Tetragrammaton written with Hebrew or Greek letters was retained in such MSS [manuscripts]. It was the Christians who replaced the Tetragrammaton by *ky'rios*, when the divine name written in Hebrew letters was not understood any more.

5. *Finally, we must make a clear distinction between the Septuagint and the Christian Greek Scriptures.* The *Septuagint* is a translation of the Hebrew Scriptures. The translation work began in approximately 280 B.C.E.¹⁵ The books of the Law (the writings of Moses) were probably completed by 180 B.C.E.; the translation of the entire Hebrew Scriptures was probably not complete until the second century C.E. On the other hand, the Christian Greek Scriptures were written no earlier than 41 C.E. (Matthew) and no later than 98 C.E. ••12•• (the Gospel of John and 1, 2, 3 John).¹⁶ Despite the fact that the early church extensively used the *Septuagint*, the two Scriptures are distinctly separate. One cannot surmise that if a true statement can be made of one, it will be equally true of the other. Stating that the Tetragrammaton was used in certain *Septuagint* versions is not proof *per se* of the Tetragrammaton's presence in the Christian Greek Scriptures in the absence of a thorough study of ancient Greek Scripture manuscripts themselves. However, this distinctiveness of the two Scriptures does not imply that the *Septuagint* did not greatly influence the Christian Scriptures. Both Jesus and the Christian Scripture writers extensively quoted the *Septuagint*.

The *Septuagint* was the Bible of the early Church. In most cases when the Christian Scripture writers quoted Hebrew Scripture, they used the *Septuagint* version rather than Hebrew documents. However, important as the *Septuagint* is to the history and study of the Christian Greek Scriptures, it is inaccurate to treat textual variations which are true of one as though they must also be true of the other. *The two documents are entirely independent entities, separated in time by over 200 years, and set apart by different cultures.*

The Tetragrammaton in the teaching of the Watch Tower Society

The use of the Tetragrammaton in the original writings of the Christian Greek Scriptures is a central teaching of the Watch Tower Society. The Society teaches that Jehovah's name—written as the Tetragrammaton—was used by the original writers of the Christian Greek Scriptures, and that the present content of the Greek text took form because of heresy and changes which were made by the scribes who copied the Scriptures. These scribes presumably changed the four Hebrew characters (YHWH) to the Greek word *Kyrios*.¹⁷

A concise summary of this teaching is given in Appendix 1D of the *New World Translation Reference Edition* (p. 1564). We quote in part:

Matthew made more than a hundred quotations from the inspired Hebrew Scriptures [in his gospel written in Hebrew¹⁸]. ••13•• Where these quotations included the divine name he would have been obliged faithfully to include the Tetragrammaton in the Hebrew Gospel account. When the Gospel of Matthew was translated into Greek, the Tetragrammaton was left untranslated within the Greek text according to the practice of that time.

Not only Matthew but all the writers of the Christian Greek Scriptures quoted verses from the Hebrew text or from the *Septuagint* where the divine name appears. For example, in Peter's speech in Ac 3:22 a quotation is made from De 18:15 where the Tetragrammaton appears in a papyrus fragment of the *Septuagint* dated to the first century B.C.E. As a follower of Christ, Peter used God's name, Jehovah. When Peter's speech was put on record the Tetragrammaton was

¹⁵ "All Scripture Is Inspired of God and Beneficial," p. 307. Also see *Insight into the Scriptures*, Vol. 2, p. 1152.

¹⁶ *Aid to Bible Understanding*, p. 318.

¹⁷ In this study, we will repeatedly refer to the Greek word *Κύριος*. However, rather than using Greek letters, we will transliterate it as *Kyrios* with English letters in a distinctive type face. For a more complete discussion of the use of the Greek word *Kyrios*, see *The Divine Name That Will Endure Forever*, Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, 1984. Note especially the article starting on page 23, "God's Name and the 'New Testament.'"

¹⁸ In this same section, Jerome is quoted as stating that there was a gospel written in Hebrew by Matthew. The testimony of Jerome must be accepted as reliable. There would be no reason to doubt that Matthew wrote a parallel gospel in Hebrew. We will evaluate Matthew's Hebrew Gospel in a later chapter.

here used according to the practice during the first century B.C.E. and the first century C.E.

Sometime during the second or third century C.E. the scribes removed the Tetragrammaton from both the *Septuagint* and the Christian Greek Scriptures and replaced it with *Ky'ri-os*, "Lord" or *The-os*, "God."

Concerning the use of the Tetragrammaton in the Christian Greek Scriptures, George Howard¹⁹ of the University of Georgia wrote in *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 96, 1977, p. 63: "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 N[ew] T[estament] studies in that they form a literary analogy with the earliest Christian documents and may explain how N[ew] T[estament] authors used the divine name. In the following pages we will set forth a theory that the divine name, יהוה (and possibly abbreviations of it), was originally written in the NT quotations of and allusions to the O[ld] T[estament] and that in the course of time it was replaced mainly with the surrogate κ̄ς [abbreviation for *ky'ri-os*, "Lord"]. This removal of the Tetragram[maton], 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 text itself."

We concur with the above, with this exception: We do not consider this view a "theory," rather, a presentation of the facts of history as to the transmission of Bible manuscripts.

As we saw in the Overview to this book, the above quotation represents the perspective of the translators of the *New World Translation* based on the textual and historical perspective of the late ••14•• 1940's. Today, we are faced with the need to re-evaluate *any* Bible translation on the basis of the most recent understanding of the Greek manuscripts on which it is based. It would be the desire of all—whether we are talking of the Watch Tower Society as a whole or individual Witnesses—to have a copy of the Christian Greek Scriptures which faithfully reproduces exactly that which the apostolic authors wrote.

Throughout the remainder of this book we will be evaluating the most current textual and historical information available while asking a central question, "Did the original writers of the Christian Scriptures use the Tetragrammaton?" If so, what evidence remains today which will verify this claim?

The format of this book

Throughout this book, our study of the Tetragrammaton's presence in the Christian Greek Scriptures is based on historical and textual considerations. The final answer to the place of the Tetragrammaton in the original Christian Scripture writings will be based on ancient manuscript evidence. These manuscripts should indicate to us whether the original writers of the Christian Scriptures wrote the Hebrew word יהוה (the Tetragrammaton) or the Greek word Κύριος (*Kyrios*) in 237 instances within the Christian Greek Scriptures.

When we attempt a historical study of Greek manuscripts, we are not doing light reading. Therefore, in order to make this material as informative as possible, the following format will be used: general information is found within the main chapters, supplementary information is added in footnote form, and finally, highly technical material has been placed in the appendices. This appendix information deals with the form of the Greek text itself, the translation footnotes from the *New World Translation*, information concerning the Hebrew versions which substantiates the 237 *Jehovah* references, and much more on which this study was based. Though this information is necessary for a proper study of the historical Greek text, it has been separated from the main chapter material in order to simplify reading.

Keeping our focus

We will frequently refer to certain subtopics throughout this book. In the interest of being as accurate as possible, four of these subtopics need a brief explanation.

Two of these subtopics (the pronunciation of God's name and the *Septuagint* version in relationship to the Tetragrammaton) need attention now in order to avoid unnecessary qualifying statements. ••15••

A third subtopic (the use of God's name today) deserves a brief comment in order to avoid

¹⁹ See Appendix D for a partial reproduction of the George Howard paper.

misunderstanding. The fourth subtopic dealing with *Kyrios* and *Theos* is a mere technicality which is important only because we need to be precise in our description without continually referring to superfluous details.

THE PRONUNCIATION OF GOD'S NAME

The most cumbersome of these first two subtopics is the proper pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton itself. Neither יהוה nor YHWH (or YHVH) is entirely satisfactory. The Hebrew characters are accurate, but they are meaningless to all but the most informed Bible student. There is no debate by either the author or the Watch Tower Society that יהוה is best represented by the English consonants YHWH, unless it would be to represent it as YHVH. It is the attempt to expand these consonants to a pronounceable name that makes the topic cumbersome in a book such as this. The English consonants are an acceptable *written* transliteration, but they are unpronounceable. Adding vowels further complicates the problem. Fortunately, F.W. Carr makes an observation which will simplify the debate,

A common trap some translators fall into is thinking that an attempt is being made to closely approximate the more commonly accepted Hebrew term "Yahweh" with the English form "Jehovah." Many fail to realize (or chose to ignore) the fact that "Jehovah" is the English translation, not the Hebrew approximation.²⁰

If we can be content with an English translation of all other Bible names (including *Jesus* rather than *Iesous*), we can be comfortable with *Jehovah*.

A study of the pronunciation of God's name is not our intent. It is a worthwhile topic, but it is outside the context of this book. We will alternate between the term *divine name* and the translated English name *Jehovah* because they are familiar. The important issue is reverence and obedience to this wonderful God, rather than a specific Anglicized pronunciation of his name. The issue of pronunciation of God's name may best be summarized by a statement from *Insight on the Scriptures*, Volume 2, page 6:

Hebrew Scholars generally favor "Yahweh" as the most likely pronunciation. They point out that the abbreviated form of the name is Yah (Jah in the Latinized form), as at Psalm 89:8 and in the expression *Halelu-Yah* (meaning "Praise Yah, you people!"). (Ps 104:35; 150:1, 6) Also, the forms *Yehoh'*, *Yoh*, *Yah*, and *Ya'hu*, found in the Hebrew spelling of the names of Jehoshaphat, ••16•• Joshaphat, Shephatiah, and others, can all be derived from Yahweh...Still, there is by no means unanimity among scholars on the subject, some favoring yet other pronunciations, such as "Yahuwa," "Yahuah," or "Yehuah."

Since certainty of pronunciation is not now attainable, there seems to be no reason for abandoning in English the well-known form "Jehovah" in favor of some other suggested pronunciation.

On the other hand, substitution of *LORD* for the divine name is a more important issue than mere pronunciation. Within the English Bible tradition, the Hebrew Scripture translators have often used the capitalized word *LORD* to represent יהוה. The author feels that the removal of God's proper name from Scripture is a regrettable practice. Even though every translation which attempts to bring the divine name into the written Hebrew Scriptures will encounter the problematic choice of an appropriate form, we commend the translators of the *New World Translation* for their effort in moving away from the tradition of translating יהוה as *LORD*.

There is currently a trend within some evangelical Protestant groups to acknowledge and use the divine name in their teaching and singing.²¹ It is the author's opinion that the consistent emphasis on the reverent use of God's name by the Watch Tower Society has borne fruit in these branches of the Christian church. It would be impossible to quantify that influence on a large scale, but the author is aware of the contribution Witnesses have made to his own life in this regard.

²⁰ *The Divine Name Controversy*, Firpo W. Carr, p. 104.

²¹ The author was recently surprised—and pleased—to hear a new song which combines the praise word *Hallelujah* with a direct address to God as *Jah* (which the composer spelled as *Yah*). However, few in these churches today *understand* the meaning of the word *Jah*, though an awareness of the divine name is growing.

THE SEPTUAGINT AND THE TETRAGRAMMATON

A second subtopic deserving a brief comment is the degree to which the Tetragrammaton was used in the *Septuagint* version. The Tetragrammaton, rather than *Kyrios*, was most certainly used in early translations of the *Septuagint*. The Tetragrammaton continued to be used through the third century C.E. in *Septuagint* copies used by Jews. Gentile Christians, on the other hand, translated יהוה as κύριος (*Kyrios*) in their copies of the *Septuagint*. (We will discover why this was true in Chapter 13.) Though we will refer to the *Septuagint* within the remaining chapters of this book because it has a bearing on our study of the Tetragrammaton, we wish to avoid lengthy qualifications. We must simply remember that new evidence today substantiates that יהוה was used in Jewish copies of the *Septuagint* while *Kyrios* was used in ••17•• Gentile copies. (Again, for the student interested in further study of the use of the Tetragrammaton in the *Septuagint*, we would recommend the material suggested earlier in *Insight on the Scriptures*, Volume 2, page 9 under the heading "In the Christian Greek Scriptures," or the parallel reference in *Aid to Bible Understanding*, on page 386. In addition, there is a section in the ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY which lists material substantiating the Tetragrammaton in early Greek translations of the Hebrew Scriptures.)

It may serve our purpose here to include a single quotation regarding the presence of the Tetragrammaton in the *Septuagint*.

On the transcription of the Divine Name [in the LXX] B.J. Roberts wrote in 1951: "The problem still remains unsolved and is under discussion." If any change has taken place over the past decade it is in a movement still further away from the position of Baudissin. This scholar had maintained that right from its origins the LXX had rendered the Tetragrammaton by Κύριος [Kyrios], and that in no case was this latter a mere substitute for an earlier Ἀδωναί [Adonai]. Thus he denied the evidence of Origen that in the more accurate manuscripts the Divine Name was written in ancient (palaeo-Hebrew) script and the later testimony of Jerome to the same effect. As Waddell pointed out, Baudissin's summary statement is "flatly disproved" by the Fouad Papyrus, and now a Qumran fragment of Leviticus ii-iv, written in a hand closely akin to Fouad 266, has been found to render the Tetragrammaton by ΙΑΩ. Kahle is also of the opinion, and claims the concurrence of C.H. Roberts, that in the Rylands Papyrus Greek 458, at Deuteronomy xxvi.17 where the text breaks off just before the appearance of the Divine Name, the original bore not κύριος as Roberts originally supposed, but the unabridged Tetragrammaton. It would seem therefore that the evidence most recently to hand is tending to confirm the testimony of Origen and Jerome, and that Kahle is right in holding that LXX texts, written by Jews for Jews, retained the Divine Name in Hebrew Letters (palaeo-Hebrew or Aramaic) or in the Greek imitative form ΙΙΙΙΙ, and that its replacement by Κύριος was a Christian innovation.²²

With this information in hand, we can avoid repeated qualifications concerning confirmed evidence of the Tetragrammaton in the *Septuagint*. However, statements relating to the Tetragrammaton in the *Septuagint* should not be understood as applying to the Christian Greek Scriptures. As pointed out earlier, the reader must be aware that ••18•• the *Septuagint* and the Christian Greek Scriptures are entirely different documents.

USING GOD'S NAME TODAY

In order to avoid misunderstanding, we need to clarify our position concerning the use of God's name today. On the one hand, we are examining the historical and textual occurrences of the Tetragrammaton in the Christian Greek Scriptures. We could *never* advocate either adding or removing words from Scripture because of personal or theological preferences. Therefore, our viewpoint must be that *the occurrence of the Tetragrammaton within the Christian Scriptures today must reflect the exact usage by the original writers*. If the Tetragrammaton was used by the original writers, it must not be removed. If it was not used by the original writers, it must not be added.

On the other hand, do we feel that it is appropriate to use God's personal name today? Most certainly! It is the author's personal practice to do so.

²² From *The Septuagint and Modern Study*, Sidney Jellicoe, 1968, pp. 271-272. See also the two books *Studies in the Septuagint: Origins, Recensions, and Interpretations*, edited by Sidney Jellicoe and *Essays in Biblical Greek: Studies on the value and use of the Septuagint*, Edwin Hatch, 1970, p. 149.

We ask that the reader keep in mind that *the subject of this book is limited to the historical and textual evidence for the Tetragrammaton within the Christian Greek Scriptures*. Nonetheless, regarding the use of God's personal name in either public or private worship, *we feel that it is entirely appropriate and pleasing to God to use it freely with the highest sense of his holiness*.

JEHOVAH REFERENCES

The name *Jehovah* appears 237 times in the Christian Greek Scriptures of the *New World Translation*. In 223 instances, *Jehovah* is used in place of the Greek word κύριος (*Kyrios*). In 13 instances, *Jehovah* is used in place of θεός (*Theos*), and in one instance (James 1:12), *Jehovah* is derived from a specific Greek grammatical construction.

Generally, we will use the English transliteration *Kyrios* rather than the Greek word itself. At times, we will distinguish between *Kyrios* and *Theos* in the interest of completeness or technical necessity. In most cases, however, when there is no need for the precision, we will use *Kyrios* to include the 13 instances of *Theos*, the single case in James 1:12, and the 223 instances of *Kyrios* proper.

Furthermore, the Greek language requires agreement between parts of speech, depending upon the grammatical usage of a word in its sentence. For that reason, the Greek word κύριος may have any one of eight spellings. (See Appendix C for a discussion of the various forms of this Greek word.) Again, we will let *Kyrios* stand inclusive of all grammatical forms. ••19••

CHAPTER SUMMARY. The Tetragrammaton is the four-character Hebrew name of God. Until 400 C.E., Hebrew writing did not contain vowel points. Prior to the addition of vowel points, the divine name was written יהוה. The Tetragrammaton is widely used throughout the Hebrew Scriptures, giving ample textual evidence to support the use of God's personal name in the Hebrew Scripture portion of English translations.

1. The *Septuagint* is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures which was begun in Alexandria about 280 B.C.E. It is a distinctly different document from the Christian Greek Scriptures. The two should not be confused, though the *Septuagint* was extensively used by the early Church.
2. The name of God should be frequently and respectfully used in both corporate and private worship.

Addendum to Chapter 1

Just prior to the publication of this book, an important and scholarly work by Greg Stafford entitled *JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES DEFENDED an answer to scholars and critics* was released by Elihu Books (1998). On pages 1-8 Stafford gives another example of current thinking regarding the pronunciation of the divine name. Stafford, in turn, refers to earlier studies done by F.W. Carr.

The book by Firpo W. Carr, *The Divine Name Controversy* (Stoops Publishing, 1991) must also be consulted. Dr. Carr has done important work with computer searches to reconstruct the pronunciation of the divine name from ancient Hebrew manuscripts.

Both Stafford and Carr favor *Yehowah* as the closest English approximation to the ancient Hebrew pronunciation of the divine name. In both cases, they agree that the word *Jehovah* is an appropriate English translation.

We will gladly defer to the scholarship and opinion of these two men regarding the pronunciation of the divine name. However, because the type for this book has already been set, additional comments regarding Stafford or Carr's favored pronunciation will not be added. Nonetheless, this book is in complete agreement with the positions of Stafford and Carr that the divine name most certainly should be used in English translations of the Hebrew Scriptures.

Either book may be obtained from Stoops Manufacturing Co., 10 N. Elliott Ave., Aurora, Missouri 65605.