

What's our living God's name?

(Part 1) Does it even matter?

by Philip Shields

www.LightontheRock.org

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Summary: Satan has deceived the whole world, so is it possible he's also deceived us on the Creator's name? Does God's name even matter? Does God even have a personal name, or does He have so many names you can take your pick from many to choose from? This sermon will challenge you, regardless of the side you start on. I just pray you will hear it to the end. Do we translate God's name and use that? Have we changed His word against His clear command not to?

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Greetings, children of the living God.

I had an email the other day – and it is not at all uncommon for me to get this kind of email from clients who understand the importance of getting someone's name right. The person asked me in her email, “Do you go by Philip or Phil?” “Do you spell your name with one L or two?” I was impressed that she bothered to ask. When I train other agents I always emphasize how important it is to get people's names right – their spelling, pronunciation, nickname if any.

Names are important. Especially our own name. *We're going to talk about names today – but more importantly, our Creator's name. What IS His name? Does He have a personal name? Does it even matter? So many act as if it's no big deal. Is it a big deal or not?* If you hear me out to the end, I think you will be amazed at the various sides I hope to present. I prayed hard about this teaching and want to strike the right balance.

This teaching today comes straight from my heart. I've prayed I will say things correctly. I've prayed Father and our Savior will be glorified in this message. Five years ago I could not have felt anywhere nearly as strongly about this as I do now. Please hear me to the end and I welcome feedback. There's a lot to cover, and we'll probably have a second message.

I recommend you print out a transcript of this sermon today and have it handy even while you hear the audio. I say things at times that I never have time to transcribe – and vice versa. You'll get far more if you do both – hear it with the transcript.

Most people just automatically call an Elizabeth – Liz, or Jennifer becomes Jen or Jenny, and **William gets changed into Bill without that person's permission.** People just assume we can change Robert to Bob, or Richard to Dick – but some people find that offensive. *So people who know how important names are will ask.* In my job, I ask people for their legal name, then I always ask, “and what do you want me to call you?” Most people really like that. And yes, sometimes “Robert” says he wants to be called “Bob”. It's amazing though, how many times Robert wants to be called Robert. We shouldn't assume anyone wants his/her name changed, even to a commonly recognized nickname.

How about the true God and His name? Do we even ever *use* His personal name? Most believers I know who have been believers for even 30-50 years don't ever use His name! There *are* extremes I don't subscribe to. Here are a few examples:

- **Some say His name is too holy to vocalize or even write. So they don't.** These are the orthodox Jews. These people therefore even *change* the inspired name in the Hebrew Scriptures to say Adonai – usually translated Lord in English. And yet the *original* Hebrew Scriptures definitely write it out God's personal name over around 7,000 times, depending how you count them. I don't agree at all with the view that says we can't or shouldn't say His holy name. Certainly you can't say it is "Judaizing" to use the Hebrew personal name of God – because they don't even use that name!
- **Others take the opposite extreme and say if you use any other name, you're going into damnation.** I do *not* subscribe to this at all and yet I believe Father and His Son have a unique personal name. *Don't paint all of us who believe in a special name with the same brush.* There are nuances. Some are extreme. Those folks say the Eternal God has but one name. I don't subscribe to this either. I feel it is very clear He has one special, personal name above all the others, used about 7,000 times in scripture. In fact this name is used 2x as often as the word "God" is used in the entire Old Testament! So their extreme adherents never use the words I do use – such as "God, Father, the Eternal, Lord, Master, Abba, Yeshua, Jesus, the Creator" and so on – all words I use.
- **Still others say it's weird and odd to be saying funny sounding names** instead of "the Lord" or "God". So these people don't use His name either. Well, let me remind you, we have been called to be a "peculiar people", a special people – **1 Pet. 2:9; Ex. 19:5**. But tell me: what's odd about using someone's name correctly instead of changing it? What's odd about using the name the Living God will say is His name?
- **Others start name calling anyone who wants to use special names and say, "they're one of those weird 'Sacred Names movement' people.** Let me hasten to say: I have never been part of any such movement, but the Son of God Himself taught us to pray, "Hallowed be your name" (**Matthew 6:9**). "Sacred and holy is your name". Is his name holy and sacred? Absolutely. Also notice Yeshua didn't say, "All your many names are to be hallowed". He says it in the singular. "Hallowed be your name (singular)". And of course His name is never to be misused, abused, profaned, cheapened – NOR discounted, disregarded and never used! **Psalm 111:4, 9** says "Holy and reverend is His name." Ditto Mary in Luke 1:49.
- **Many have made this a source of contention and strife.** You call our Father and Creator what you want to, and I'll accept you for that and love you. But among God's children, the striving has to cease. Paul says strife and division and constant splits are a clear sign that carnal men are at work (see **1 Cor. 3:3**). God's spirit will lead us into all truth (**John 16:13**). We should therefore all speak the same thing if we are led by one God, one Lord, and one spirit into one truth. I will call our God by His name. If you don't, you're still my friend and brother. But He has put into my heart to have a heart for Him and His glorious name.

Now take it a step further. In a recent group meeting where the discussion of God's name had come up, some were saying they didn't think it mattered what we called God. So I intentionally started calling a woman I had just been introduced to by a different name. Let's say her real name was Susan, but now I was referring to her as "Janice". It wasn't long before 2-3 others who were part of

the conversations started to get nervous and finally couldn't help themselves. So they interrupted me: "Philip, stop, stop. Her name is Susan, not Janice."

So it was important for everyone that I get *her* name right – but somehow *some* people feel it's not that important to call *the living God* by the name *HE* says is *His* name.

I had made my point. Names are important.

Today I hope you will feel like I've helped you come to know Father, who is King of the Universe, who is God most High, who is Almighty God – and know Him more intimately than ever. How can we say we know anyone – let alone our Father in heaven – if we don't even know His name!?

IS "GOD" His name?

Some of you think the Creator's *name* is simply "God". This might come as a surprise to some of you: "God" is what He is; "God" is not His name. Let me explain this. **I'm NOT saying its wrong to say or call Him "God"** – how could I, when scripture refers to "God" over 3,000 times? But let's understand.

The word translated in English as "God" usually comes from the Hebrew words "Elohim", "El" or "Eloah" (or "Theos" in Greek). The Hebrew words have the meaning of "Strong One", "Mighty One", "Powerful one" – so they're usually translated "God".

I believe "God" is understood by most of us to be the Being we worship. "God" is a category of being. By category, I mean angels are a category. Humans are a category. Animals are a category. So what is worshipped, and who is powerful, is called "god". To make my point, God says in Hosea 11:9, "for I am God, and not man..."

Throughout Genesis 1 the Hebrew word used for the One doing the creating, and translated into English as "God" – is *Elohim*, the plural for "God". He is demonstrating His power and strength and is forming mountains, lakes, rivers and setting the bounds of oceans – this is, or these are, the Strong Ones, God at work. "Elohim" is telling us who is creating – by His Word and His spirit.

In Genesis 2, as it gets more personal, as this Being kneels in the dirt and starts creating mankind from dust, and then breathes into his mouth and brings him to life – this being is not being called Elohim so much but the more personal name YHVH – or Yahveh/Yahweh.

So is Elohim his name? It comes from the Hebrew word El (singular) or Elohim (plural) – which was *actually applied to the one true God as well as to pagan gods*. Muslims have a god – and they call him "Allah". Hindus have gods. The ancient Mayans and Aztecs had a god or gods. So it's certainly not a unique, personal name of our God.

In fact, in various scriptures the word "Elohim" is used to refer to – get this now -- judges, angels, and other ranking beings. Elohim is applied to more than just God or gods. Let's examine this, starting with the fact that ***this same word "Elohim", translated "God" in your Bibles, is applied also to FALSE gods. So how can that be OUR God's name!?*** See Gen. 31:30, 32; Gen. 35:3-4; Ex. 12:12 – where Yahweh says he will send the plagues against all the gods (Elohim) of Egypt. In Isaiah 45:5-6, 18, we see God passionately trying to get our attention that He is the only real Elohim!

The others are made up in imagination or idols made by men. YHVH is greater than all Elohim (Ex. 18:11).

- **Ex. 22:9** – here “Elohim” is the word used for *human* JUDGES! So how can “Elohim” be the Eternal’s personal name? ** It simply can’t!
- **Ex. 22:28** – here “Elohim” is the word for rulers and gods. Also see Ex. 23:24; 23:32; 34:15-17

So “GOD” is not His name either, any more than “human” or “angel” or “animal” or “plant” is a name. I say this, because I hear people just say “God” when talking to our Creator directly. I’m not saying they’re doing something terribly wrong, but why not address Him as “Father” or by His revealed name? That would be like someone addressing me as “human”, instead of by my name.

Now let’s let HIM tell us what His name is. Are you ready? Turn to Isaiah 42:8 to begin.

God Himself tells us His name

Isaiah 42:8 Jerusalem Bible

“My name is Yahweh, I will not yield my glory to another, nor my honour to idols.”

Isaiah 42:8 Apologetics Study Bible

8 I am Yahweh, *that is My name*;

I will not give My glory to another, or My praise to idols.

In your Bible it probably says “My name is the LORD”. This is what is critical to know. Almost every time the tetragrammaton YHVH is in the original, our translators decided to CHANGE that precious and holy name to “the LORD” – with LORD in all capital letters. Wherever you see all caps “the LORD”, it is actually YHVH in the original.

“The LORD” is not a translation of YHVH. YHVH has the meaning more of “the Eternal”, “the I AM, who is, was and is to come”, or “the Everlasting One”. Yahweh is indeed our Lord and Master, but I’m just saying “the LORD” is not a translation. Nor is it a transliteration – it has no sound like Yahweh.

What would you do if you were Satan? How would you try to attack the very word of God? How about starting with his very name? Do you see why I say one of the first things which will have to be restored will be the word of God itself? The Bible? And indeed, more and more versions are coming out that say YHVH or Yahweh or have it with the actual Hebrew letters.

I don’t subscribe to the extreme notion that when we say “the Lord” we’re saying “Ba’al” – so let’s not go there. I have no problem calling my God “Lord” – for that is the translation of another word “adon” or “adonai” in Hebrew: My Lord. Yahweh *is* Lord and Master. Yes.

Ba’al was indeed the Canaanite god of the sky and fire and was their lord and master – but many were called the Ba’al – even a husband was a Ba’al. When Bathsheba mourned the death of her husband Uriah, scripture says she mourned for her Ba’al. More on this later.

So “Lord” is not His name either. “Lord” is what He *is*. And besides, the designation “god” or “lord” is used throughout the Bible also for false gods, masters, owners, and Elohim is even applied to judges, kings and angels. “God” and “Lord” therefore cannot be His personal name.

Notice nowhere does he say here “I am Yahweh, but that is just one of my many names.” Nope!

Neither does our God ever say, to my knowledge, “my name is Adonai- the Lord”, or “my name is El Shaddai”. He says “I AM El Shaddai” – but I’m saying we don’t find Him saying “my name is”... except with YHVH. Sometimes He is called “Adonai Yahweh” – the Lord GOD in our Bibles.

Nowhere in the Hebrew is the word “the” before Yahweh. He is not ‘THE YAHWEH’ – no, that’s his name, so it is simply “Yahweh”. The English translations add the word “the” so it makes sense when they change YHVH to “LORD”. There’s no “the” folks, any more than I’d say “My name is the Philip”. That would be ridiculous! (I guess Donald Trump can be called “The Donald”.)

You can find entire books devoted to “the Names of God”. Sure, he’s called different things in the Bible. But when it comes down to it, He says his name is one name: YHVH. Even the so-called names of Yahweh are usually **descriptives added on to YHVH**. These are titles, not names. YHVH Jireh – Yahweh will Provide. Yahweh Nissi – Yahweh our Banner. YHVH Sabaoth – of Hosts. YHVH our Healer; YHVH Roi - our Shepherd. **But most of these include the name YHVH.**

Some “names of God” are names like El Elyon – God Most High. El Shaddai – God Almighty. El Olam – Everlasting God. Are these names or descriptive titles? They can be names, but the one name He says is HIS, the most often, and the ONE name He is called more than ANY other by a HUGE margin – is YHVH. Almost 7,000 times in fact. The name Yahweh, that almost all English Bibles have erased and changed to “the LORD” – which again, is neither a translation nor a “sounds like” transliteration.

Does He have more than one name? I certainly have to say “yes”. He certainly has many titles. The Almighty God, for example, I believe is really a title. There are also descriptive *names*. And there ARE places where he says, “I am God Almighty”. But which is his *personal* name?

Let’s take Prince Charles for example. What is *his* name? Is he “the Prince of Wales”? Yes, he is. Is that his NAME though? ** When he was born, he was named **Charles Philip Arthur George**. But he’s called “Prince Charles”. If someone asks him, “What is your name?” – would he say “take your pick. You can call me Charles, your royal highness, the Prince of Wales, or Philip or Arthur or George”. NO! He would say “My name is Charles”. That is his personal name. I have several names, but my name is Philip. I don’t say “one of my names is Philip”. Prince Charles also has at least 20-30 titles! But his name is Charles.

In the same way, we’ve already read God say, “My name is...” He doesn’t ever say “one of my many names is...”. Is that fair enough? The closest thing to that could be **Isaiah 9:6** where it says “unto us a Son is given.. and he shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace”. Is Counselor his name? Is Prince of Peace his name? I have different titles and names too – but I have ultimately one personal name – Philip.

He *is* God, and nine times He *does* say, “I am God” or even “I am God Almighty” – but is that His name? I am a father, I am President of my company, I am son and brother – but those aren’t my names. I’ve not found a single verse where He says “*My name is* El Shaddai”, however.

But here are a few more very clear verses where we're clearly told what His name is:

Exodus 15:3

"YHVH (The Lord) is a man of war; *Yahweh is His name.*"

Jeremiah 32:18

"...the Great, the Mighty God, *whose name is YHVH (the LORD) of hosts.*"

Jer. 16:21 Jerusalem Bible

"...and then they will know that Yahweh is my name."

[Again, singular, name, not "names".]

Jeremiah 33:2

"Thus says YHVH who made it, YHVH who formed it to establish it; YHVH is His name".

No idol or god other than the true God is ever called Yahweh to my knowledge. Yahweh tells us also that no idol or foreign god is to take HIS personal name! It's HIS and His uniquely.

JERUSALEM BIBLE:

Psalms 83:18 – "*You alone bear the name YAHWEH, Most High over the whole world.*"

Psalms 83:18 Apologetics Study Bible

18 May they know that You alone— **whose name is Yahweh**— are the Most High over all the earth.

I think it's kinda neat to know our God has a unique and peculiar name, special to Him, and a name He wants us to know and use? Are you hearing Him telling us His name yet? Yahweh. That's His name. **Isa. 42:8; Ex. 15:3; Jer. 32:18; 33:2; Ex. 3:14-15; Jer. 16:21; Psalm 83:18** all clearly state His name is Yahweh.

On top of saying "that is my name", ***an additional 165 times Yahweh announces "I AM YAHWEH"*** – mistranslated "I am the LORD" in your Bible. Just like I'd say, "I am Philip". Here are a few of those 165, if you wish to have a few to look up: **Gen. 15:7; 28:13; Ex. 10:2; Ex. 20:2; Isa. 48:17.**

I'll say again: "God" is what Yahweh IS, just as Philip is human. But human isn't my name. I am human, but my name is Philip. "God" is not God's name. His name is YHVH – or Yahweh.

You'll notice in so many prayers, for example Solomon's prayer of dedication of the new temple, he speaks directly to Yahweh, by name. We'll see a lot of that in detail in the next sermon. **See 1 Kings 8:22-25** for example. His first words in his prayer? "Yahweh, Elohim of Israel" – Yahweh, God of Israel. He addresses God as Yahweh, not just "God" in other words. He ends it with a blessing to the people, praising Yahweh "Blessed be Yahweh" (vs. 54-61). (Remember, where your Bible says "the LORD", it is YHVH). Elijah and so many others do the same: they pray and say His name, not just "God".

The Eternal God tells Moses HIS name

What about what the living God told Moses to tell the Israelites? I will use the Apologetics Study Bible so we don't read the MISTRANSLATION "the LORD" where it says Yahweh. Moses in Ex. 3:13 asks God, "What shall I tell the children of Israel your name is, if they ask?"

Exodus 3:14-15 Apologetics Study Bible

14 God replied to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: I AM has sent me to you." 15 God also said to Moses, "Say this to the Israelites: YAHWEH, the God (Elohim) 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 (YAHWEH); this is how I am to be remembered in every generation."

Of course "I am" is what Yeshua said in **John 8:58**. But keep in mind, He is introducing himself as life bringer, Creator, the one who inhabits the past, present and future in a way we can't understand. I am who I am – I am life itself. He is the "I am" – a version of "to be". Some metaphysics experts talk about wormholes of time. I think it will someday be shown us to be much more even than just saying "the eternal", somehow *He INHABITS past, present and future beyond my ability to grasp or explain*. "I proclaim the end from the beginning" He says. So that is what "I am" is about. Yes that's His name – and it's actually in meaning closely related to YHVH.

But now notice, in the next sentence he tells Moses to say to Israel, "*Yahweh* God of your fathers...has sent me to you. *This (Yahweh) is my name forever...*" Some translations say "a memorial" to His name.

I've been to the Arizona Memorial at Pearl Harbor and the Vietnam Memorial in Washington DC with its carefully inscribed 58,195 names of our fallen military. I was deeply moved to see the names of our men and women who died – thousands of them. Each name was a real person. On a memorial, you especially want to get their names right. When we had our first ever Bricket Wood reunion that I chaired, we were especially careful to go over list of those who had died, and to spell their name exactly correctly to honor their memory.

But somehow, some feel we can be sloppy with the name of God, the king of the Universe, the Creator and God most High – when He says, "This is my name – as a memorial"?

THE HEBREW WORD PICTURE FOR YHVH and Thomas' "ah –hah" moment

One more dramatic thing to realize: Hebrew is a word-picture *alefbet* – what they call their alphabet. Their first two letters are *alef* and *beit* – where we get *av* or *ab* – picturing Father, the "strength of the house".

But my point is, the Hebrew word PICTURE for the Tetragrammaton YHVH – are you ready for this is... Yod = HAND. Hey = Look, see, be revealed. Vav = nail; Hey – Look. The very letters YHVH depict the statement – "My hand – look, the nail, look. Look at the nail in my hand." *YHVH depicts in Hebrew word pictures the very crucifixion of God made flesh*.*

What did Yeshua say to Thomas when he doubted?

John 20:26-28

And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Yeshua came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!" 27 Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, **and look at My hands**; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing."

28 *And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"*

Basically he was saying to Thomas, who got it instantly – YHVH. I believe Yeshua was basically saying, "I TOO, AM Yahweh, God made flesh, who came and died for all of you". And what did Thomas say? "My Master (or Lord), and **my GOD**" (**John 20:27-28**). In that moment, Thomas realized *he was in the presence of God, the son of the Highest*.

And so do you STILL think we should ignore the name YAHWEH – which shows us who our SAVIOR is!? No WONDER He tells us even in the Old Covenant, "you have no other Savior but me, Yahweh!" – **Isaiah 43:11; Hosea 13:4**.

I will go into that much deeper in a future sermon – and so many other Hebrew letters and words that foretell the great act of love of our God to send His only begotten son to pay the death penalty for us, that we may be freed and live in HIM.

Exodus 6 – and was Yahweh known by that name before Moses?

One thing that invariably comes up is the notion that says: "how can it be all that important to call him Yahweh if that name wasn't even revealed until Moses? It says so in Exodus 6", they quickly point out. Be turning there. That is one of the most misunderstood passages.

Exodus 6:2-3 Apologetics Study Bible

2 Then God spoke to Moses, telling him, "I am Yahweh. 3 I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as God Almighty (El Shaddai), but I did not make My name Yahweh known to them."

But now I'm about to show you that people DID know the name YHVH from the earliest times – including Abraham, Noah, Hagar, Jacob – so many. So how do we explain the apparent contradiction? There is no contradiction. ***There was no punctuation in the early Hebrew:*** no question marks, no quotation marks, no periods, and no commas. Now let's read the same statement this time as a rhetorical question:

Exodus 6:2-3

2 Then God spoke to Moses, telling him, "I am Yahweh. 3 I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as God Almighty (El Shaddai), but did I not make My name Yahweh known to them?"

God begins even this statement by saying "I am Yahweh".

It's easily proven that the early patriarchs did in fact know Him as YHVH, so Ex. 6:3, is a rhetorical question, not a statement. ***Here are a few quick examples out of many we could cite:***

- **Gen. 9:26** – Noah says "Blessed be Yahweh..." So apparently Noah knew the name.
- Gen 15:1-3** – Abram talks to God and calls Him "My Lord Yahweh..."
- Gen. 15:7** – God speaks to Abram and says, "I am Yahweh, who brought you out..."
- Gen 18:27, 30, 31** – in reasoning with God about sparing Sodom, Abraham uses the name Yahweh, translated "the LORD" in your Bible.

- After almost sacrificing Isaac, Abraham calls the place “Yahweh will Provide” (Genesis 22:13-14). How could he call it “YHWH will provide” if he didn’t know the Name?
- After Ya’acov’s dream, Jacob built an altar and “Called on the name of Yahweh...” (Gen. 26:24-25). How could he call on the name of Yahweh if He didn’t know?
- Even as early as **Genesis 4:26**, it says they “began to call on the name of Yahweh” – whatever that means. Jerusalem Bible says he was the first to use or call on Yahweh by that name.

IS YAHWEH APPLICABLE TO BOTH THE FATHER AND THE SAVIOR?

Now this will be controversial to some of you, but I must say – Father and Son say they are one – and it seems to me they both use the name Yahweh.

Here’s why I say this: NO human has ever seen or heard the Father’s voice (John 5:37). But it is clear, people spoke to and even saw Yahweh.

- In **Gen. 18:1** it clearly says “Yahweh appeared to Abraham at the Oak of Mamre...”
- The Israelites definitely heard his voice and were terrified (See **Exodus 20:1-2, 18-19; Deut 5:24**).
- Moses saw and heard Yahweh. The 70+ who went to dinner with Yahweh on Mt. Sinai saw him (**Ex. 24:9-10**) – it clearly says “and they saw God”. The context all through Exodus 24 is YAHWEH is the one they heard and saw.
- So there’s no contradiction. The One who spoke the 10 Commandments to millions of Israelites after the loud trumpet blast and smoking fires, begins by saying, “I am Yahweh...” (**Exodus 20:2**). That could not have been Father’s voice. But it was definitely Yahweh – the one who was the Word of God. But it’s clear; He says “I am YHWH”. And millions heard that voice.
- Now start noticing how many times “**the word of Yahweh**” (or in your Bible “**the word of the LORD**”) is mentioned. And sometimes just read it with our Savior in mind and see how much more you get out of the verse. I don’t think that’s always the case, but it’s an interesting study. Here are a few you can check out on your own. Check these out, out of dozens: **Gen 15:1,4; 1 Sam 3:7,21; 2 Sam. 7:4; 24:11; 1 Kings 6:11; 17:2. Zech 7:4**
Incredible, isn’t it?

Put it another way: its clear millions saw Yahweh. Yet Yeshua says “NO ONE has seen or heard his father”. So the Yahweh they saw could not have been – at that time – the Father, but the Word of Yahweh, and he was and is Yahweh also (John 1:1-3). Has to be!

This is also why Yeshua (Jesus) was able to say in John 8:58, “I AM” in reference to Himself, for HE also was God and was with God and is God (**John 1:1-3**). Remember that one of the titles given to the Son in Isaiah 9:6 is “Mighty God”.

But it’s also clear that Yeshua is not quite God *Most High*. That is Father. Melchizedek was *priest* of God most High (Gen. 14:18-20). Yeshua also used Psalm 110:1 to intrigue the people with the question of how could the Messiah be the son of David and yet have David call that Messiah “Master” or “lord”? See **Matthew 22:44-46**. Very intriguing indeed.

Psalms 110:1

YHVH said to my Lord (Adonai),

"Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool."

In the case of Psalm 110:1, YHVH *has to be* the one we call the Father! Has to be. Yeshua uses it in context of God in the Highest referring to Yeshua, who was also *ben David*, the son of David. And yet it is also clear that YHVH also spoke to people, were seen by people, and interacted. And it's also clear Yeshua says God the Father has never been seen or heard. *So I hope it's clear that "YHVH" has to refer to both, who are – in Hebrew – "echad" – as one! Remember? "Hear O Israel, Yahweh our God, Yahweh is one (echad)...." (Deut 6:4). And of course we don't say "the LORD" now, or the changed word Adonai. No, in Hebrew, Deut 6:4 says "YHWH is one." And Yeshua makes it clear at the end of John 17 that Father and Son are one and want us to all be one in them.*

So somehow we can have multiple beings who can be seen as one. Adam and Eve were echad – one (in Gen. 2) for example, but two distinct personalities.

YESHUA, WHO IS GOD, ALSO HAS A GOD

*Now, let's take it up a notch. So Yeshua is God, but Yeshua clearly also has a God. He calls our Father His God—John 20:17—"I go to my Father and your Father, and **to my God** and your God". He said that *after* He was already resurrected. Ultimately in the highest, there is but one God (Eph. 4:5), and one Lord Yeshua. But look these verses up: Yeshua has a God! (Please read these: John 20:17, Eph. 1:3, 17; 2 Cor. 11:31; 2 Cor 1:3; Psalm 45:6-7) and yet Yeshua is God as well. It was after all the nail in *His* hand. Don't forget Isa 9:6 calls the Son, "mighty God" among other names and titles. (I'll give a more complete sermon on this later). Also check out Rev. 3:12 – where Yeshua is speaking and refers to "My God" there.*

But Father is never said to have a God. No. He is it! So Yeshua says also in John 17:3 in the prayer to Father: "...that they may know **you, the only true God**, and your servant whom you have sent." There is only one true God "in the Highest", or "Most High" – and that is Father. Hallelujah!

You can disagree with me, but I think the internal evidence is that both God the Father in the Highest, and Yeshua the Son of God are both called Yahweh. Yahweh made himself visible and spoke often to many people – but the *Yahweh in the Highest*, the Father, has never been seen or heard by man. The One who became the Word and made flesh and was crucified at Calvary was the Yahweh who spoke face to face to Moses, whom the nation heard and who interacted with mankind. Otherwise who was it who spoke from the burning bush or thundered from Mt. Sinai? And yet it is also clear that God Most High is definitely also called Yahweh.

PRONOUNCING HIS NAME

Some make a big deal about the right **pronunciation**. Some give up even trying to say the divine name because of the disagreement on pronunciation. So some say Yahweh, or Yehovah, or Yahvah. Some say there should not be a "W" sound in the original Hebrew – so they say "Yahvah".

God sees the heart. The majority researchers say His name is Yahweh and I go with that. We know it isn't pronounced "Jehovah", as there wasn't a J sound in Hebrew. But you know what, if someone mispronounces my name as "Fee-LEEP", I know they're at least trying to use my real name. Their

heart is right. One of the women at our HQ office is Irena. But many pronounce it “eye-reeh-nuh”, instead of ee-RAY-nuh. But I know she is OK with that. Just don’t change her name to something else – like Joyce, or Carole or Denise.

But that’s what we’ve done with *God’s* name. Some say, because they aren’t sure of the pronunciation, that it is better to change the Almighty’s name to Adonai or “the LORD”.

But WHO dares to think he/she’s AUTHORIZED to change His words, especially His name?

So I’d rather they try my real name – even if they mispronounce it – than unilaterally decide they can change it to something else! Now that would upset me. My name is very personal. Names are ESPECIALLY personal to God. Surely you see that!

Do we *ignore* the name he says is his name because we’re not sure of the way it is pronounced? Do we *change* it to “God”, or to “the LORD” or to “Adonai” or “HaShem” (which means The Name – **Lev. 24:11, 16; Deut 28:58**), or something else? How *DARE* we!? I think we do the best we can with YHVH – so my personal preference is either Yahveh or Yahweh. *But don’t give up on using YHVH altogether!*

God’s warning NOT TO CHANGE ANY OF HIS WORDS

Yahweh has warned us: don’t change what I say or write. Don’t add to it, don’t take away from it. The end of Revelation lays a curse on anyone who does so (**Rev. 22:18**). He warns us over and over not to add or remove from his word (**Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32**).

Proverbs 30:5-6

“Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him.
6-Do not add to His words, lest He rebuke you, and you be found to be a liar.”

Remember when we change His name from YHVH to “the LORD”, we’re adding the word “the” in front of his name and making it a title! WHY, WHY? We’re on very thin ice when we add to His word!

Please turn with me to Deut 28:58 and read this carefully yourself. Your Bible will likely say “the LORD” of course. This is the Blessings and Cursings Chapter.

Deuteronomy 28:58-60 APOLOGETICS Study Bible

58 “If you are not careful to obey all the words of this law (Torah, teaching), which are written in this scroll, ***by fearing this glorious and awe-some name*** (HaShem)—***Yahweh, your Elohim*** (God) — 59 He will bring extraordinary plagues on you and your descendants, severe and lasting plagues, and terrible and chronic sicknesses.

*What name are we to fear and give glory to...or else? **Yahweh**, your God. Yahweh. Are we getting it? Why do we have actual sermons being given AGAINST expressing His holy name? Why is there an effort to make us appear to be weird, coming from our own brothers in the faith?*

After these warnings, surely the one thing you’d think we would be MOST careful not to change – is His NAME. But even then, in the Complete Jewish Bible, they translated v. 58 by changing Yahweh to “**Adonai**” even in this very verse that tells us to “obey ALL the words and fear this name Yahweh”.

*So in Bible after Bible, YHVH has been changed to “the LORD”. SO I vocalize “Yahweh” or some say “Yahvah” wherever I see “the LORD”, and am using the Jerusalem Bible or Hebrew Roots Bible more and more so I’m not part of that disobedience that changes any of His words – let alone his Name! If they wanted to translate it to “the Eternal” or something, that might have been better. I believe the old Moffatt translation used to and I think one of the French Bibles says “L’Eternel” – the Eternal. I could more readily accept a *translation* of Yahweh rather than an outright CHANGE of the word to something that has no correlation to the sound or meaning of YHVH.*

So that transitions us into the next topic: what *about* translating His name? Why not?

WHAT ABOUT TRANSLATING HIS NAME?

We can translate God’s name YHVH into “the Eternal” or “I am”, the same name Yeshua used a few times and got into a lot of trouble with some of those around Him for doing so. It has to do with “He IS” – “He is the self-existent one”. It could mean, “I am who I am”, “I am always being what I will be”. Some just say “the Eternal”. It has the inherent meaning of being the source of light and life. He is Life itself. In His name is the implication of eternity. And now remember we are made in His image, and called by His name, and are said to be “in Him” – a topic that has intrigued me for years.

But you think it’s OK to CHANGE God’s name to another name? Or to translate it? We usually don’t even do that to *human* names that are foreign to English. Sometimes we have – but not usually. In fact the trend is to use the original name of countries and cities, so we have gone back to saying Beijing, instead Peking; Mumbai instead of Bombay, and so on.

Let me give you an example: my name is Philip. I don’t mind people in Spain or Mexico calling me Felipe if they want, but 99% of the time, they still called me Philip. My name actually MEANS “Lover of horses”, but I sure wouldn’t want someone calling me “lover of horses”. My name is Philip. Even in Spain when I was there in 2008 or 09, everyone called me Philip. If someone from Spain or Mexico has a name “Roberto” – I call him Roberto, not Bob – unless he asks me to.

But names of PEOPLE don’t tend to get translated as much. So why do we do that to Yahweh?

Here are some examples of what I mean.

- **Giuseppe Verdi** – the great composer. We could have translated his name in English to Joe Green, because that is what it means, but of course we never did!
- Yitzhak Rabin. No one changed it to Isaac Rabin. No, we all said Yitzhak.... That was his name. The president of Mexico is Felipe Calderon. No one changes that to Philip.
- Mikhail Gorbachev – we didn’t translate his first name to Michael.
- General Moshe Dayan of the 6 day war; we didn’t change Moshe to Moses Dayan.

But somehow we think we can call our Creator something other than Yahweh. Go figure!

If we’re going to translate His name, at least say something like “the Eternal” or “Everliving God”... but where we have YHVH, to say “the LORD” is an unauthorized CHANGE. Like changing my first name in a legal document from Philip to Harry or “The LTC Specialist” or something, every time my name would come up. That simply wouldn’t be right.

OUR FATHER

Let me hasten to add, I often call him “Father” or even the Aramaic “Abba” – for “dear Father”. Yahweh was introduced to us in the new covenant as “Our father” and “your father” several times. So certainly I call him my Father. He is “*the* Father” to all of us, and I often just say “father” –without “the”. Keep in mind though, that the concept of God as the father of Israel was not unknown. You can **read Isaiah 63:16 and Isaiah 64:8** to show they DID know Him as a Father, but not intimately. Isa 64:8 says, for example, “But now O Yahweh, you are our Father...”

But still, their God was somewhat distant, an awesome Being who had layers of separation—only 1 man could come before Him on the Day of Atonement. Only the sons of Aaron could be priests. Only the Levites could do certain things... so he wasn't as accessible until His Son came and brought us to Him. “....Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, **and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.**” (Matthew 11:27).

Of course we, as His children, can refer to God Most High by “Father”. Of course! And we do. My children call me “father” too, but that’s not my name. God’s friends – Abraham and Moses, for example, called him Yahweh. And 7,000 times he is called Yahweh. ***Certainly don’t join the error of making someone feel weird for using the name He says is His name! Don’t call them Judaizers, because Jews don’t even say the name Yahweh.***

So the children of Yahweh can call him “Father”. But “Father” is not His name either. It’s what He is! He’s our Father. He’s our God. He’s called “the God of... Abraham, Isaac and Jacob” or “the God of Israel”, that’s what He is. But His NAME is YHVH, as He Himself says over and over. Certainly it IS perfectly alright to call him “God our Father”, as is commonly done in the New Testament. By that, we’re now saying the great Elohim who created the universe is also Abba, Father. How wonderful is that? Awesome. But His declared *name* is Yahweh.

But when speaking *of* our heavenly father in a more formal sense, I can use his name: Yahweh. If I’m talking *about* him, or we’re in a formal discussion, I would say Yahweh. If my father were president of the USA, I’d still call him “dad” when alone with Him – but when everyone else was around or if I were introducing him to give a speech or announcement, I’d still say, “Ladies and gentlemen, the President of the United States,” --and then say his name.

But when I pray to Yahweh, I say “Father” or “Abba” – I don’t usually say “Yahweh”. That’s just me, because what a privilege to have Yahweh as our very own Father. It’s awesome. If you read a Bible that correctly has His name as Yahweh, you do see that thousands of times, people in the Bible talk to him and about him as Yahweh. And I do too, from time to time – and often, in referring to Him. He’s Yahweh, Elohim Most High. No one else is. He seems to like His name. Let’s grant Him that, going forward, shall we?

By the way, the current prime minister of Israel’s name is Benjamin Netanyahu. His last name means “Gift of Yahweh”. Go ponder that one. Be praying for him.

MAKING KNOWN HIS NAME

It’s interesting to me that two of the 7 churches of Revelation are commended for the way they treat God’s name.

Rev. 2:12-13 – one of the 7 churches, Pergamos, is said to have held FAST to His name.

Along these lines, one more thing: the children of God who *may* be spared going through the tribulation, are the Philadelphia-type believers. Look what it says about them:

Revelation 3:8

8 "I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have **kept My word, and have not denied My name.**"

Then in verse 12, it says:

12 He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. **I will write on him the name of My God** and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. **And I will write on him My new name.**

In Revelation 3:8, Yeshua is the one speaking. We must not deny His name either. By the way, notice in verse 12, once more Yeshua refers to God in the Highest as "My God".

Even Yeshua said, "I have made known your name". John 12:28 – "Father, glorify your name." In Yeshua's John 17 Passover prayer over his loyal disciples, notice what he says over and over.

John 17:11-12

"Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through **Your name** those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are. 12 While I was with them in the world, **I kept them in Your name.**"

John 17:25-26

"O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. **26 And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it,** that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

But you're being told over and over that it's not important to use the name Yahweh, and it's OK to CHANGE the word of God from YHVH to "the LORD", ERASING, DENYING his name! How dare we?! What can be more obvious about "denying a name" than that? I know it has also to do with our conduct! But surely if we refuse to use it or say it, are we not denying His name!?

I say yes, we are! It's time we wake up and see how we've swallowed Satan's deception on God's name hook, line and sinker. Let's proclaim His name. Let's tell the world who Father is!

WHY, OH WHY, ARE WE NOT HEARING THIS BEING PREACHED in the sabbath-keeping Church of God groups??? Spread the word. Stop denying His name. Start using and saying the name "Yahweh" – but always reverently and with highest respect. We'll go into that far more in part 2 since I'm out of time.

IN CONCLUSION

I'm going to leave it with that for now. Next time I'll wrap this topic up by discussing a bit more about USING His name Yahveh, the 3rd commandment, and how Yahveh promises to someday let the whole world know His name – including all the Gentiles. It's an amazing study.

So what did we cover today?

- Names are special indeed. Yours is, mine is. God's name especially is special. We love to hear our names said. God put that into us, for He is the ultimate name.
- "God" is not God's name any more than "human" is my name.
- The Tetragrammaton YHVH was known from earliest times. Ex 6:2 is a question, not a statement.
- There is verse after verse where Yahweh says, "Yahweh, that is my name!"
- The name Yahweh is a holy name. "Hallowed (sacred, holy) be thy name", Yeshua said.
- We have no authority to change His name, but virtually every Bible *has* changed YHVH to "the LORD". There's not even any word "the" in the original where they say "the LORD".
- We can't say this is Judaizing the church – because orthodox and most religious Jews don't use the name Yahweh either!
- The end time work of Elijah will include spreading the word of the real name of our God. Remember the very NAME of Elijah (Eliyahu) means "Yah is God".
- I speculated and believe fiercely that "Yahweh" applies to both God the Father and Yeshua, the Son of God. No one has seen God or heard his voice, but lots heard Yahweh.

Our God loves His name. And He wants us to get to know Him. As Paul says in Philippians 3, I too have made it my life goal to come to know Him. I yearn to know Him. Really know him. But can any of us say we know someone well if we don't even know His name or what it means?

Let's cover that next: The restoration work of Elijah. You'll hear a lot of new ideas that will make you think when you hear the next sermon. We'll also cover: the meaning of the name of God. The 3rd commandment in action. What God promises about His name regarding the Gentiles. It's really very, very exciting if you can put yourself into God's heart and soul for a minute, as we read these scriptures together. I'll also next time explain why I use the name Yeshua more often than I do "Jesus".

So I hope you'll start to use the name Yahweh. I hope you won't shy away from it. I pray you will help spread the glorious and holy name all over the world! Use His name respectfully – and really know it, get comfortable with it and spread it around the world. You who preach – say "Yahweh". Say "Yeshua". It's the right thing to do. Get a Bible like the Jerusalem Bible that has it as "Yahweh". You'll start to see and come to know our Father in a new dimension as you start to use His name and read His name and write His name.

Until next time, your fellow son of Yahweh, Philip Shields.