

The Tetragram (YHWH)

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Watchtower Claim: "The Tetragram (YHWH) appears in the original New Testament manuscripts."

This is the Watchtower's equivalent to the theory of evolution - there is no evidence but it must be so. In fact all the evidence points to the contrary. There is NOT ONE New Testament manuscript known today in which the Tetragram appears and there is no evidence of a conspiracy to get rid of the Tetragram.

The Watchtower places their burden of proof on a work by George Howard, published in the Journal of Biblical Literature, 1977, Vol. 96. The Kingdom Interlinear Translation (KIT) quotes from his article: "In the following pages we will set forth A THEORY that the divine name.....was originally written in the New Testament quotations of and allusions to the OT." (p. 63) [Emphasis mine]

As emphasized, this is a THEORY, and Professor Howard maintains to this day that it should be treated as a theory until a New Testament manuscript is found with the Tetragram. In a personal letter dated June 28, 1978 to Bible researcher, Doug Mason, Professor Howard said: "One must use extreme caution in re-introducing the Tetragram into the New Testament text. The Old Testament text was in flux in the first century and may not have corresponded in every way to our concept of it. For practical reasons it would be best to leave the text of the New Testament the way it appears in our present manuscripts. Until we find a manuscript of the New Testament with the Tetragram the conclusions of my article will remain simply a hypothesis."

Howard ends his article with these words:

"Concluding observations...We have refrained from drawing too many conclusions due to the revolutionary nature of THIS THEORY. Rather than state conclusions now in a positive manner it seems better only to raise some questions that suggest a need for further examination." (p. 82) [Emphasis mine]

Professor Howard clearly then saw the need for caution and further

investigation. He still says that until a manuscript of the New Testament is found with the Tetragram, his theory remains a theory. But the Society is not content with that so they conclude the KIT article with a quantum leap:

"We concur with the above, with one exception: We do not consider this view a 'theory,' but rather a presentation of the FACTS of history as to the transmission of Bible manuscripts." [Emphasis mine]

What "FACTS?" The Society is up to its usual tricks in leaving out much of Howard's article. One of the relevant parts is this:

"We can imagine that the NT text incorporated the Tetragram into its Old Testament quotations and that the words "kurios" and "theos" were used when secondary references to God were made in the comments that were based upon the quotations."

Also, the article dealt primarily with:

"primarily with the divine name AS IT WAS WRITTEN...NOT WITH WHAT WORD OR WORDS THE READER PRONOUNCED." (p. 63) [Emphasis mine]

So even if the Society wishes to consider this theory a fact, all they can claim from it is that the divine name would be in the New Testament scriptures ONLY when it quoted Old Testament scripture. They have, however, gone far beyond that, even to proclaiming the "pronouncing" of the name which Howard says he doesn't deal with.

On the other hand:

It cannot be overemphasized that Howard's work was only a "theory." A cornerstone to this theory is the use of 'nomina sacra' in the New Testament manuscripts. These are abbreviations of certain words such as "Christos," "Kurios," "Theos," etc. Howard's theory is that these were directly influenced by the abbreviation of the divine name in the Old Testament.

What is not presented to the Witnesses is the fact that C. H. Roberts in his book *Manuscript, Society and Belief in Early Christian Egypt*, argues very powerfully that this was not the case. He concludes quite clearly that the way the early Christian manuscripts were written showed no influence from the way the Hebrew manuscripts had been produced. So it is impossible for the Society to argue that the New Testament manuscripts were altered in the 2nd or 3rd centuries.

A Greater Problem:

First, what does the Watchtower Society say themselves about the New Testament scriptures?:

"But with these various [manuscript] families, and the many variations of texts within each family, the Scriptures have come down to us ESSENTIALLY THE SAME AS THE ORIGINAL WRITINGS. The many variations are mainly minor and immaterial. They are to be expected in the light of so much recopying. By careful study and comparison of manuscripts the ERRORS OF ANY CONSEQUENCE HAVE BEEN IRONED OUT and we enjoy today an authentic Bible text." (Insight on the Scriptures, Vol. 2, p. 314)

"Appreciation of the reliability of the Bible is greatly enhanced when it is realized that, by comparison, there are only very few extant manuscripts of the works of classical secular writers and none of these are original, autograph manuscripts. Though they are only copies made centuries after the death of the authors, present-day scholars accept such late copies as sufficient evidence of the authenticity of the text...Manuscripts and versions of the Greek Christian Scriptures bear UNASSAILABLE TESTIMONY TO THE MARVELOUS PRESERVATION AND ACCURATE TRANSMISSION OF THAT PORTION OF GOD'S WORD." (Insight on the Scriptures, Vol. 2, pp. 317, 318)

We can conclude from the above statements from the Watchtower that they accept all these manuscripts as proof of the accuracy of God's Word today. But here, too, is a regrettably common twisting of the facts by the Society, depending on which hat they are wearing:

"However the papyrus manuscripts brought to the light of day during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries fill in what was once a blind spot in the chain of preserved Scripture copies. THEY BRIDGE OVER THE GAP OF THE SECOND AND THIRD CENTURIES. (Equipped for Every Good Work, 1946, p.58) [Emphasis mine]

Here we draw two conclusions:

- 1. You can't have it both ways. If Bible manuscripts are accurate, then the name could not be removed.**
- 2. If it were removed, it would have been midway through the first century and impossible to be during the first and second.**

So with the non-existent evidence that the name was removed from the New Testament, we must take a close look at the scholarship of the Society which puts it back in.

RESTORING THE DIVINE NAME (YHWH)

The bottom of page 11 of the 1985 KIT refers to the "J" versions where the Tetragram (YHWH) is found in some Hebrew translations of the New Testament. The oldest of these translation is from the year 1385, then 1537 and from there on up to 1981. Most are by Jewish authors who had their personal reasons for putting the name back in. The Watchtower utilizes these documents as a basis and justification for 'restoring' the name "Jehovah" to the New Testament text. The authority of these "J" references is accepted by the Watchtower as being above that of even the oldest of the available New Testament manuscripts - which, as declared above, do NOT contain the Tetragram!

Pages 13 and 14 of the KIT list the "J" versions by number. The KIT asserts on p.12 that there are "237" restorative places in the New Testament for the name "Jehovah." Page 1138 of the Appendix section lists all of the verse occurrences of the Tetragram. The actual Hebrew inscription for YHWH is also shown on this page.

But the Divine Name (YHWH) appears in the "J" versions many more times than those recorded in the KIT. And no references to these occurrences appear in the KIT. WHY? There are at least 50+ additional occurrences.

What is the Watchtower Society hiding? The Tetragram is found in several additional verses but because they refer to JESUS, the Society won't follow its own guidelines and use the name "Jehovah." Instead, it uses the word "Lord," as shown in the following verses. This is deceptive and dishonest scholarship!

Here are some of the verses in which the Tetragrammaton appeared in the "J" Documents but the Society did NOT use "Jehovah" because they all refer to Jesus!:

I Corinth. 12:3 (J-14)

"...no one can say "Jesus is Lord (YHWH), except by the Holy Spirit." The Divine Name appears there to render the Hebrew as: "Jesus is Yahweh" or "Jehovah Jesus." To say that Jesus is Jehovah staggers

the human mind to the extent that we need the help of the Holy Spirit. The WT 5-15-60 p.320 denies the presence of YHWH here. But the evidence appears in J-14!

I Thess. 4:16,17 (J-7,8,13,14,24)

"For the Lord (YHWH) himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord (YHWH) in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord (YHWH)."

The fact that it is truly JEHOVAH who will descend in I Thess 4:16 is in complete harmony with Psalm 47:5 which says:

"God has ascended with joyful shouting, Jehovah with the sound of the horn."

Are you able to see the exact same references pertaining to both God and Jesus? For God to "ascend on high" means He first must have had to DESCEND to earth! How many beings ascended to heaven?

Acts 1:11,12: At the ascension from Mt. Olivet, the disciples were told that Jesus will return in like manner.

Zechariah 14:4: In that day His (God's) feet will stand on the Mt. of Olives.

Zechariah says that literal feet are going to touch the earth. God is a Spirit, which has no feet, so the verse must be applying to God the Son, the Word who became flesh. He bodily ascended from the Mount of Olives and will one day return "in like manner."

II Timothy 1:18 (J-7,8,13,14,16,17,18,22,23,24)

"The Lord (YHWH) grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord (YHWH) in that day..."

This one must have given the Watchtower translators a headache because 'the Lord is to grant mercy from the Lord.' There is no problem if you accept the Biblical revelation of the Trinity but to the Society one "Lord" must be the God, Jehovah and the other "Lord" must be the little god Jesus. However, a secondary problem comes in because according to their explanation of John 1:1 where the use of the definite article 'ho' refers to the God Jehovah, and where it isn't found it's the little god Jesus. Yet if you do that here it would appear that Jehovah is

subservient to Jesus and so "ho kurios" becomes the little god Jesus and "kuriou" becomes the God Jehovah. This clear twisting of their own teaching is in addition to the fact that "ho kurios" in the "J" versions is Jehovah (YHWH) and "kuriou" is also Jehovah (YHWH). If the Society had really been honest, they would have had to translate this verse:

"May Jehovah grant him to find mercy from Jehovah in that day..."

Hebrews 1:10 (J-8)

God the Father addresses the Son using the Divine Name:

"Thou, Lord (YHWH), in the beginning didst lay the foundation of the earth and the heavens are the works of thy hands."

This is a quotation from Psalm 102:25 (NWT and LXX).

I Peter 2:3 (J-13, J-14)

"If you have tasted the kindness of the Lord (YHWH)"

This is a quotation from Psalm 34:8 (NWT and LXX).

I Peter 3:15 (J-7)

"but sanctify Christ as Lord (YHWH) in your hearts..."

J-7 and J-8 also adds "ha Mashiach" (the Messiah) or (the Christ) making this read: "Jehovah God, who is Christ." The 1985 KIT mentions the "J" versions in a footnote, but what the KIT doesn't tell you is that both J-7 and J-8 read "Sanctify Jehovah God (who is Christ) in your hearts." This is a quotation from Isaiah 8:12,13. Both the LXX and KIT Greek are nearly identical.

The J-20 Concordance to the Greek Testament gives the Tetragram at both I Peter 2:3 and I Peter 3:15.

Revelation 16:5 (J-7,8,13,14,16)

"Thou art righteous, O Lord (YHWH), which art, and wast, and shalt be,"

Romans 10:9 (J-12-14, 16-18, 22)

All these "J" Documents contain the phrase "Ha Adohn" which means the only true God - JEHOVAH!

The NWT refers to this Hebrew usage in a footnote for this verse. In Appendix 1H - p.1568 it emphatically states:

"The use of the definite article 'ha' before the title 'Adohn' limits the

application of this title exclusively to Jehovah God."

Yet in the footnote at Romans 10:9 the Society blatantly states "Not Jehovah" without any explanation or scholarly reason for doing so.

THE "RULE" FOR RENDERING

THE DIVINE NAME

On p.11 of the 1985 Kingdom Interlinear Translation, this statement is made for the criteria for using the Divine Name in the New Testament:

"The modern translator is warranted in using the divine name as an equivalent of ("kurios") and ("theos") , that is, at places where the writers of the Christian Greek Scriptures quote verses, passages, and expressions from the Hebrew Scriptures or from the LXX (Greek Septuagint) where the divine name occurs."

Has the Society been consistent in following its own rule?

Romans 14:11

"For it is written: " 'As I live,' says Jehovah, 'to me every knee shall bend down, and every tongue will make open acknowledgment to God. " (NWT)

The "divine name" rule was followed since the Society concedes in their reference column that this verse is a quotation from Isaiah 45:23 where it says:

"By my own self I have sworn...that to me every knee will bend down, every tongue will swear," (NWT)

Philippians 2:10,11

"so that in the name of Jesus every knee should bend...and every tongue should openly acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord..." (NWT)

In this verse the Society did NOT follow their "divine name" rule because it would have openly revealed that the Jesus of the New Testament is the Jehovah of the Old Testament. This verse, too, is a cross reference to Isaiah 45:23 but the Society won't acknowledge this fact in its NWT reference column.

However, the 1950 New World Translation DID cite Isaiah 45:23 as a cross reference to the Philippians passage but since then it has been removed without explanation - a typical deceptive maneuver by the Watchtower organization.

It certainly appears that the translators of the "J" documents, at least the above mentioned, are Trinitarian. The documents, as far as the notes go, seem to imply that Jesus is Jehovah--not Jehovah the Father but Jehovah God in nature and essence.

There is simply no scholarly justification in introducing the Tetragram (let alone the less accurate "Jehovah") into the text of the New Testament. The absence of the Tetragram in any New Testament manuscript, out of 13,000 available, demolishes their case. Further, to imply that the name "Jehovah" is the primary name we should be concerned with contradicts the continual emphasis on the name of Jesus. While the Tetragram is not to be found in ANY New Testament manuscript, the name of Jesus is found over 900 times!

We are to make the name of the Father known, as Jesus emphasized (Matt. 6:9; John 7:26). How do we do that? By recognizing that Jesus Christ was chosen by the Father to embody all of the glory and reputation surrounding that Name (Phil. 2:11), and that to fail to identify with the name of Jesus will be our eternal loss (Acts 4:12).

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