

CALL ON THE NAME OF GOD

We have done the inconceivable; we have lost the name of our Creator!

It is true that we know the four Hebrew letters that make up Elohim's (God's) name as preserved in the Judaic Masoretic MSS; but we have little idea what the pronunciation is. This is honestly admitted by Keil & Delitzsch where they comment; "...we are quite in ignorance of its correct pronunciation".¹ Thinking people ask; how is this possible?

The four letters that make up the name of Elohim are YHWH. In Hebrew they are vocalised as Yod, Hey, Vav and Hey. We even have a special name for them; The Tetragrammaton. Strangely enough there is much and varied debate in Christianity about whether we should actually use the name. This is the reason most church going people know little about it. So how did this doubt come about?

Historical writings indicate that the name had somewhat fallen into disuse by the time of the destruction of the House upon which the Name of YHWH was called, built by Shelomoh (Solomon). At this time it was apparently mumbled by the high priest on Yom Kippur (Atonement Day).

Was it ever used outside of the temple? The book of Ruth quickly establishes that it was openly used in daily conversation. It says in Ruth chapter two verse four² – "And behold, Bo'az came from Beit-lachem and said to the reapers, YHWH be with you: and they said to him, YHWH bless you." Bo'az was a very righteous man, even contributing in the sacred genealogy of the Moshiach (Messiah). So should we use it? Judge for yourself.

How are we able to use a name we cannot pronounce? Are we truly ignorant of his name? Many people believe that Elohim's name is Jehovah. It is commendable that some people are attempting to use the name Elohim gave to us. However concerning the pronunciation, "Jehovah" the following should be carefully considered:

1. The Hebrews never had and still do not have the letter 'J' in their alphabet, pronounced jah.
2. The term 'hovah' in Hebrew is defined by Strong's concordance³ as: "ruin, mischief, sense of eagerly coveting, iniquity, mischievous, perverse thing, wickedness". Therefore ponder wisely; should we want in any way to suffix these qualities to Jah?

There are other suggestions for the correct pronunciation, such as Orthodox Jewish and mainstream Christian Scholars who propose, Yahweh. But all others this too is only a suggestion. So the scholarly debate rages on.

Are we then totally in the dark as the pronunciation of Elohim's name? Not quite. There are a few clues that we are able to piece together: the Samaritans pride themselves in preserving the Pentateuch. In these ancient writings the name of Elohim is vocalised as Yabe. It is from this vocalisation that Yahweh is sourced. Is this the correct pronunciation? No, the real pronunciation of the name is stuck away in the Judaic Masoretic Text.

Elohim's name has four letters, that being YHWH. Often in ancient Hebrew the last H in a word was often never vocalised⁴. Additionally the Vav often doubled as a vowel. This would leave us with Yod,

1. Kiel & Delitzsch, Commentary on the Old Testament, page 47.

2. The Septuagint, The true names version – people and places. Published by Lulu Inc. Compare the same passage in the Tanak.

3. Strong's Hebrew Concordance, number 1943 and 1942.3.

4. Demonstrated by Pro. L. Hurtado, Dr.F. Shaw and others.

Hey and a vowel that could be either be an O or a U. Many scholars can show that the name was transliterated into Greek as IAO⁵. It is therefore proposed that the true pronunciation is astonishingly simple.

Of great interest too is the theophoric occurrence of the name Yahu in the names of the Hebrews during the 'faithful' period up to the destruction of the first temple. Note the following sample of transliterated names as found in the Westminster Leningrad Codex: Venayahu, Azaryahu, Yoshiyahu, Achazyahu, Amatzyahu, Chizkiyahu, Ovadyahu, Uzziyahu, Yechalyahu, Remalyahu, Yeshayahu, Tzidikiyahu and significantly Eliyahu (Elijah) which means, "My El (God) is Yahu". It becomes very apparent that these names contained the name of Elohim. Yahu is found over 650 times in Hebrew names in the Westminster Leningrad Codex.⁶ From the 'unfaithful' period after the construction of the second temple the use of the name Yahu as it appears before dramatically declines to almost no occurrences. This suitably ties in with the disuse of the name in the second (or dark) temple period.⁷

At this point some may point out Hebrew names which began with the prefix, Yeho. Regarding this the Ungers Bible Dictionary says the following under the subject of Jehoi'achin: "The archaeologist spade has given remarkable minute collaboration of the historical notices of Jehoi'achin's captivity. In excavations near the Ishtar gate near Babylon almost 300 clay tablets dating from 595 – 570 B.C were recovered from some fourteen rooms. These important documents contain receipts of barley, oil, and other supplies that had been rationed to captive artisans and workman exiled from many lands. King Jehoi'achin appears as 'Yaukin king of the land of Yahud' as the recipient of some of these rations." How interesting! Does not Yaukin presume the modern transliteration of Yahukin we are proposing?

Truly calling on the name of God

Truth be told, no matter how we pronounce the sacred name the real meaning behind calling on the name of Elohim (God) is not accurately knowing how it is pronounced but how we follow the commands of Elohim (God). Therefore when scripture says that we ought 'to call on the name' it means that we must carry our burden by living our lives perfectly according to the pattern demonstrated by the Moshiach (Messiah). In this way our names will be written in the book of life as those well-pleasing to Yahu!

However, let this secular confusion not deter us in daily using the most sacred name given to man, the name of our Elohim, Yahu.

By Clinton R. Smith

5. Samuel Weiser in his book entitled, The book of Creation states; "Among the Gnostics the name was transliterated into Greek letters IAO. They must have got this practice from the Essenes..."

6. It is admitted that there are duplicated names in the accounts from Samuel to Chronicles, nevertheless the point is thereby validated.

7. 1Enoch 89:73: 'The wild hogs tried to hinder them, but were not able. So they started building as before, even raising up the tower. It was named Ha Migdah Gaboa. Again they placed a table in front of the tower, but all the bread on it was polluted and impure.