

FAQ

FROM THE MESSIANIC APOLOGETICS ARCHIVES (2000-2018)

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MESSIANIC APOLOGETICS
messianicapologetics.net

Frequently Asked Questions

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Abbreviations and Special Terms

The following is a list of abbreviations for reference works and special terms which are used in publications by Outreach Israel Ministries and Messianic Apologetics. Please familiarize yourself with them as the text may reference a Bible version, i.e., RSV for the Revised Standard Version, or a source such as TWOT for the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, solely by its abbreviation. Detailed listings of these sources are provided in the Bibliography.

- ABD: *Anchor Bible Dictionary*
AMG: *Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament, New Testament*
ANE: Ancient Near East(ern)
Apostolic Scriptures/Writings: the New Testament
Ara: Aramaic
ASV: American Standard Version (1901)
ATS: ArtScroll Tanach (1996)
b. Babylonian Talmud (*Talmud Bavli*)
B.C.E.: Before Common Era or B.C.
BDAG: *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Bauer, Danker, Arndt, Gingrich)
BDB: *Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*
C.E.: Common Era or A.D.
CGEDNT: *Concise Greek-English Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Barclay M. Newman)
CGL: *Cambridge Greek Lexicon* (2021)
CHALOT: *Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Holladay)
CJB: *Complete Jewish Bible* (1998)
CJSB: *Complete Jewish Study Bible* (2016)
DRA: Douay-Rheims American Edition
DSS: Dead Sea Scrolls
EDB: *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*
EJ: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*
ESV: *English Standard Version* (2001)
Ger: German
GNT: *Greek New Testament*
Grk: Greek
HALOT: *Hebrew & Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Koehler and Baumgartner)
HCSB: *Holman Christian Standard Bible* (2004)
Heb: Hebrew
HNV: *Hebrew Names Version of the World English Bible*
IDB: *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*
IDBSup: *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Supplement*
ISBE: *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*
IVPBBC: *IVP Bible Background Commentary (Old & New Testament)*
Jastrow: *Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Bavli, Talmud Yerushalmi, and Midrashic Literature* (Marcus Jastrow)
JBK: *New Jerusalem Bible-Koren* (2000)
JETS: *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
KJV: *King James Version*
Lattimore: *The New Testament by Richmond Lattimore* (1996)
LITV: *Literal Translation of the Holy Bible* by Jay P. Green (1986)
LES: *Lexham English Septuagint* (2019)
LS: *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon* (Liddell-Scott)
LSJM: *Greek-English Lexicon* (Liddell-Scott-Jones-McKenzie)
LXE: *Septuagint with Apocrypha* by Sir L.C.L. Brenton (1851)
LXX: *Septuagint*
m. Mishnah
MT: *Masoretic Text*
NASB: *New American Standard Bible* (1977)
NASU: *New American Standard Update* (1995)
NBCR: *New Bible Commentary: Revised*
NEB: *New English Bible* (1970)
Nelson: *Nelson's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament Words*
NETS: *New English Translation of the Septuagint* (2007)
NIB: *New Interpreter's Bible*
NIDB: *New International Dictionary of the Bible*
NIV: *New International Version* (1984)
NJB: *New Jerusalem Bible-Catholic* (1985)
NJSB: *Tanakh, A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures* (1999)
NKJV: *New King James Version* (1982)
NRSV: *New Revised Standard Version* (1989)
NLT: *New Living Translation* (1996)
NT: *New Testament*
OT: *Old Testament*
REB: *Revised English Bible* (1989)
RSV: *Revised Standard Version* (1952)
t. Tosefta
Tanach (Tanakh): the Old Testament
Thayer: *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*
TDNT: *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*
TLV: *Messianic Jewish Family Bible—Tree of Life Version* (2014)
TNIV: *Today's New International Version* (2005)
TWOT: *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*
UBSHNT: *United Bible Societies' 1991 Hebrew New Testament revised edition*
v(s). *verse(s)*
Vine: *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*
Vul: *Latin Vulgate*
YLT: *Young's Literal Translation* (1862/1898)
WMB: *World Messianic Bible* (2020)

YHWH/YHVH

Are you against using the proper name of God? Are you for using it?

The strong aversion to using the name of God in Judasim today is that there is no complete way to know how to pronounce it. Scholars have debated for centuries over the exact pronunciation of God's name, based on available linguistic evidence and testimonies from ancient history. But all that anyone can provide is a best guess.

“In the earliest Hebrew the sacred name appeared as a four-letter word or tetragrammaton: YHWH, without any vowel signs. Since the vowels were added very late, at the time of the fixing of the MT text..., the OT itself gives no clue to its original pronunciation. Some help, however, is given by the early church fathers. Theodoret of Cyrus (fourth century A.D.) testifies that the Samaritans, who shared the Pentateuchal scripture with the Jews, pronounced the name [*Iabe*], and Clement of Alexandria (early third century A.D.) transliterated the ‘name of four letters’ as [*Iaoue*]. Moreover, Egyptian Magic Papyri from the end of the third century A.D. attest to the patristic spelling, especially that of Theodoret. Following these hints, modern scholars believe the approximate pronunciation was ‘Yahweh’” (*IDB*).¹

“Yahweh” has become the most common pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton in the scholastic community, but no complete certainty can be attached to this pronunciation. There are some variant pronunciations such as “Yahuweh” or “Yahoweh” which some prefer. A default position is to represent the name of God by the consonants YHWH or YHVH. One can, however, be confident that “Jehovah” (or “Yehovah”) is not the correct pronunciation of YHWH:

“An artificial form, often attributed to Petrus Galatinus in ca. A.D. 1520, which results from the combination of the consonants of the Tetragrammaton...with the substitute vowel reading which was introduced in the sixth-seventh centuries A.D...One of the various substitutes that were employed, the chief was ‘Adonai’ (‘Lord’), the vowels of which the Masoretes as a rule added to the consonants ‘YHWH’ to indicate that ‘Adonai’ should be read. The combination of the two—the Tetragrammaton and the vowels of ‘Adonai’—yields the artificial name” (*IDB*).²

Because the Hebrew language has no vowels, the Masoretes, whose job it was to copy the texts of the Hebrew Scriptures, added special markings underneath letters to indicate vowel sounds. For the name YHWH, the vowel markings for *Adonai* or “Lord” were applied, so the cantor would read *Adonai*. Some early Christian Bible translators applied the vowel markings for *Adonai* and came up with the name “Jehovah.” There are still a fair number of Christians who use the form Jehovah, albeit in error. The scholastic community today is more likely to use the more correct form “Yahweh,” or simply YHWH.

There are some in the Messianic community who believe that they know what the correct way to say the name of God is. The problem with this is that the pronunciation of His name has been debated for centuries, and one of the reasons why Jews today do not use it is because His name was only spoken aloud by the high priest in the Temple on *Yom Kippur*. Perhaps today we might not view it in such a sense, seeing the name YHWH or forms such as “Yahweh” used in academic journals and publications. But considering the debate over how God's name is

¹ B.W. Anderson, “God, names of,” in George Buttrick, ed. et. al., *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, 4 vols. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), 2:409.

² B.W. Anderson, “Jehovah,” in *Ibid.*, 2:817.

pronounced, it would be best to respect historical precedents, knowing that our Father has a name, but treating it with the respect and holiness that it deserves.

As a ministry, we do not use the proper name of God, YHWH, in consideration for the long-standing Jewish custom of not pronouncing it. This protocol followed by Yeshua and the Apostles, who we never once see in the Apostolic Scriptures speaking the name YHWH. If you use the name YHWH frequently, and later travel to Israel, you may discover yourself a very unwelcome person.³

³ For a further review, consult the author's article "Sacred Name Concerns" (appearing in *Introduction to Things Messianic*).