

PARABLES

Bringing Hidden Things to Light



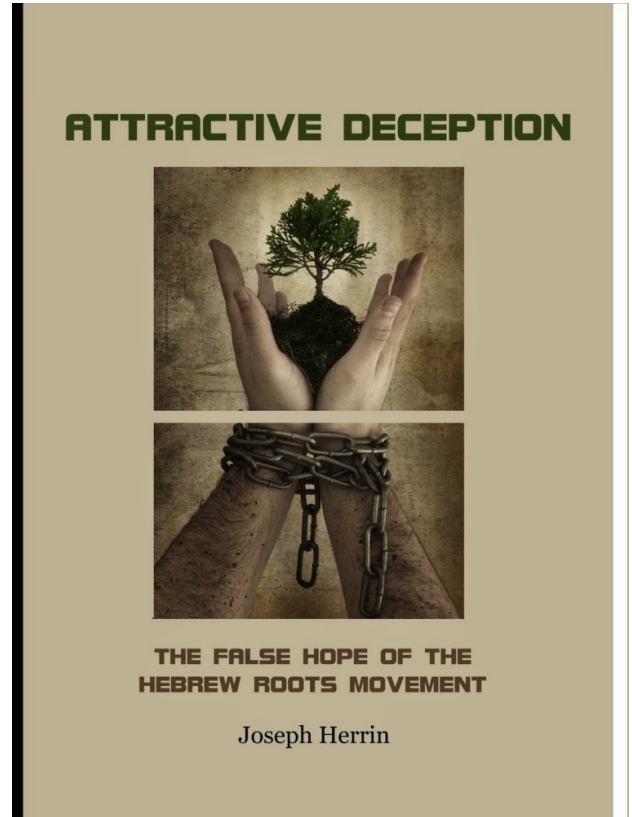
Psalms 78:2-4

I will open my mouth in a parable, I will utter dark sayings of old... We will not conceal them.

Parables Bookshelf - Series 1.20.8

This edition of the Parables Bookshelf Newsletter continues the book *Attractive Deception—The False Hope of the Hebrew Roots Movement*.

A particularly vexing phenomenon among Christians is that they tend to venerate the beliefs and practices of those who introduced them to Christ. It is not wrong to honor our spiritual parents, but it is naive, and dangerous, to embrace their ways and beliefs without testing them. So too we see many Christians embracing the ways of the Jewish people, for they were God's chosen before the church was. Many do not realize the Jews had become apostate, and in mimicking them, they also become apostate.



Food for Thought

There are very few errors and false doctrines of which the beginning may not be traced up to unsound views about the corruption of human nature. Wrong views of the disease will always bring with them wrong views of the remedy. Wrong views of the corruption of human nature will always carry with them wrong views of the grand antidote and cure of that corruption.

J.C. Ryle

Scripture Memory

Galatians 1:6-7

I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; which is really not another...

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- Chapter 10

Attractive Deception— The False Hope of the Hebrew Roots Movement

The Imitation of Error

HaShem - יהוה

HaShem is the Hebrew word which pious Jews use instead of the yod-hey-vav-hey (יהוה - YHVH) name, in casual conversations, and literally means The Name. When they encounter this name during prayers or when reading from the Torah, they visualize יהוה and say Adonai. HaShem is used 7484 times in the Tanach.

I am oftentimes made aware that a person writing to me has come under the influence of the false teachings and practices of the Hebrew Roots movement when I observe them referring to Yahweh as “G_d,” or “L_rd.” The omission of the vowel renders the word unpronounceable, which is the very purpose for writing in this manner. The rationale behind this behavior is the errant idea among the Jewish rabbis that Yahweh’s name is so holy that it should never be uttered by the lips of unholy men and women. Yahweh’s name is indeed holy, and it should only be used in a faithful manner, but our heavenly Father never intended for His sons and daughters to remove His name from their lips.

It is senseless to extrapolate this behavior out to include all words which are a reference to Yahweh, especially those words which are not names at all, but which are merely titles or pronouns. Such words are already substitutes, and not the actual name of the Creator. The words God and Lord are not names. They are titles describing a position, or role. The practice of omitting the vowels from these generic titles is absurd. There is absolutely no precedent within the divinely inspired Scriptures for avoiding the pronunciation of the name Yahweh, and certainly none for removing the vowels from titles and pronouns that are a reference to Yahweh or His Son Yahshua.

When I observe Christians mindlessly imitating the behavior of apostate Jewish rabbis who have rejected Yahshua as their Messiah, I marvel, wondering what errors of the rabbis they will not imitate. To follow the behavior and traditions of men without testing them against the Spirit and the Word of God is not wisdom. It is little wonder that these

same individuals embrace other errors associated with apostate Judaism such as celebrating Hanukkah, wearing the kippah or tallit, adorning themselves, their homes, or churches with the Luciferian symbol falsely called the Star of David, or mimicking the Sabbath candle-burning rituals which are a form of witchcraft.

If you are one who has been guilty of doing such things and are now having your eyes opened to see the error present in these actions, my intent is not to shame you. Rather, I would have you consider how you arrived at these actions. Did you abandon the discipline all disciples of Christ should manifest by failing to test carefully the doctrines, symbols, rites, and holidays that other men and women were introducing you to?

Perhaps you were a child and your parents raised you up under the influence of the spiritual error embraced by many Messianic and Hebrew Roots congregations. Or perhaps you were unsaved and were introduced to Christ by someone who was a member of one of these groups. I can well understand how such an individual might innocently be introduced to error. What I am finding, however, is that the majority of individuals embracing the errors of the Hebrew Roots movement which I have been setting forth in this book, have done so as adults after being professing Christians for many years. Where is their exercise of discernment? Where is their testing of the doctrines and practices they are encountering?

The Bible is filled with admonitions for the disciples of Christ to study, to examine carefully, to test all things before embracing them. Both Christ and His apostles admonished the churches to beware of wolves, to be alert to false doctrines, to walk wisely in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. Over and over the New Testament warns believers to “not be deceived.” They are told to “be on the alert because your adversary the devil prowls about as a roaring lion seeking someone to devour” (I Pe-

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ter 5:8).

What is the condition of the church today? Are they alert and vigilant? (Luke 21:36, Acts 20:31, I Thessalonians 5:6) Are they skilled and powerful in their handling of the Word of Truth? (II Timothy 2:15, Acts 18:24) Do they act as the noble Bereans, searching the Scriptures diligently to see whether the doctrines and practices they are encountering are established and confirmed by the word of Yahweh? (Acts 17:10-11) The answer on all counts is a resounding “NO!” How then will the people of God be able to stand in the approaching hour when the dragon will open his mouth and pour out a flood to sweep the church away to destruction? (Revelation 12:15) How will they stand in an hour when deception will be so subtle, so powerful, so persuasive that if possible even the elect of God might be deceived? (Matthew 24:24)

Brothers and sisters, hear these words of admonishment and correction. You will ONLY be able to stand as you exercise YOUR responsibility to test all teachings, looking to the Spirit of Christ and the testimony of Scriptures to identify both truth and error. If you shirk this duty, you do so at your own peril.



We must cease being followers of other men and begin to act as followers of Yahweh and of His Christ. The only explanation I have arrived at for so many Christians adopting this false practice of replacing the name Yahweh with substitute words, and even then adopting the tradition of replacing the vowels with the underscore character “_” is that they are imitating the error of others before them. The cycle of error will only be broken when the people of God begin proving all things themselves.

I was a young teenager in the 1970s when I discovered that the King James Bible I was being taught from had unfaithfully rendered the divine names. I had my *Strong's Concordance* out and began going verse by verse replacing the generic words “Lord,” “God,” and “Lord God” with the English equivalents of the Hebrew words. I began to write over each occurrence of these references to divinity “Adonai,” “Elohim,” and “Yahweh.” I soon became daunted at the challenge as I found that the word Elohim, meaning “a mighty one,” occurs 2,596 times in the Old Testament. All but a few of these occurrences are used as references to Yahweh. The word Adonai which translates into English as “Lord,” occurs 324 times in the Old Testament, though many instances of it are to people rather than to deity. Most daunting of all, the name Yahweh appears 6,828 times in the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. The shorter name Yah appears an additional 48 times. All of these uses of divine names and titles were divinely inspired as the Holy Spirit moved upon men to write out the Scriptures.

(Note: All number totals are derived from my present Bible Study software, PC Study Bible.)

Back at the beginning of my online ministry I posted a writing explaining the usage of divine names in my writings. Following is an excerpt from that document.

Attractive Deception— The False Hope of the Hebrew Roots Movement

For various reasons the translators down through the ages have chosen to render the divine names as something other than that which is accurate and original. One reason is due to a misapplication of the third commandment that Moses brought down on the stone tablets from Mount Sinai. The commandment I refer to is the one which instructs the followers of Yahweh to not use His name in a vain manner. The command is often rendered in the following fashion in popular translations.

Exodus 20:7

"You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain."

(NAS)

You will note the uppercase spelling of the word *LORD* in this verse. If you were to read the translators' notes for this Bible version, and many others, you would find that the translators chose to replace the name *Yahweh* with the title *LORD* everywhere that it occurs. Additionally, the word *God* is a translation of the word *Elohim*, which denotes a divine being (a mighty one). This verse could be more authentically rendered in the following manner.

You shall not lift up or bear the name of Yahweh your Elohim falsely, deceptively, or in vain, for Yahweh will not regard him as guiltless who lifts up or bears His name in a false, deceptive, or vain manner.

The Hebrew word that is often rendered as *in vain* is translated as *false* just a few verses later in the commandment "Thou shalt not bear *false* witness," so one can readily see that the Hebrew word holds different shades of meaning. The Elohim of Israel

whose name is Yahweh was declaring that His name was not to be used indiscriminately. The name Yahweh was to be used with great integrity.

It was the practice of some Jewish scribes, when making copies of the scriptures, to not write out the name Yahweh when it occurred in the text, for they misconstrued the above commandment to mean that Yahweh's name should not ever be written or uttered, for it was a holy name. Indeed it is a holy name, but Yahweh never commanded that it should not be written or uttered. He commanded that it should not be used in a false, deceptive, or vain way.

For example, today when men give oaths they often swear on the Bible, or they swear by God. They are saying that as God and His word are true, so is their word true. If a man were to swear by the name of Yahweh this would be a similar binding oath. However, if the man really did not mean what he was saying, he would be using the name of Yahweh falsely.

Another very common and appropriate application of this command has to do with speaking forth things, and claiming the words which are spoken are of divine origin. Throughout the Old Testament we find that there were often myriads of false prophets of Yahweh for every true prophet. When a man proclaims himself to be speaking the words of Yahweh, he should make very certain that his words are indeed Yahweh's words. The punishment for prophesying falsely in the name of Yahweh was that the prophet was to be stoned.

Was it such a great issue that a man should speak something that was untrue? We know that Yahweh also forbid lying, but we are not told that liars were to be stoned. False prophets were to be stoned because they went beyond lying and they used Yah-

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weh's name in a false manner. They ascribed something to Yahweh that He did not say or command to be spoken. This was a most serious violation and it touches on the commandment regarding how men are to use Yahweh's name.

The intent of the commandment regarding Yahweh's name is that His name is to be used faithfully, honestly, and with good purpose. It is not to be used falsely, deceptively, or in a vain or trivial way. Unfortunately, many translators even today have a false understanding of this command and it is the practice to not write out the name of Yahweh at all. Yet we are plainly told in scriptures that man was given this name as the name by which Yahweh was to be remembered throughout all generations.

Exodus 3:15

And Elohim, furthermore, said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, '***Yahweh***, the Elohim of your fathers, the Elohim of Abraham, the Elohim of Isaac, and the Elohim of Jacob, has sent me to you.' ***This is My name forever, and this is My memorial-name to all generations.***"

The name Yahweh is often also rendered in a shortened version as Yah... As one realizes this they can see that it was not the practice of the ancient Hebrews to avoid usage of the names Yah and Yahweh, for many of them had His name as part of their own. Elijah is Eli-yah, his name meaning *mighty Yah*. Jeremiah is Jeremi-yah, his name meaning *Yah will rise*. Joshua is Yah-shua, his name meaning *Yah's salvation*. There are many more instances of Israelites who had Yah's name as part of their own. Clearly, they had no understanding that His name was not to be uttered.

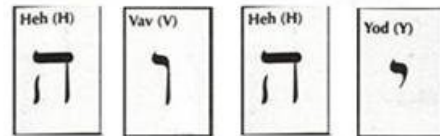
As one looks at the root of the word hallelujah it is further evidence that there was no prohibition in using His name. The word hallelujah is hallelu-yah.

(The J in old English was pronounced as a Y, and only in recent years has the pronunciation changed, but not when this word is pronounced.) The word hallelujah is of Hebrew origin and it means *praise Yah...*

[End Excerpt]

TETRAGRAMMATON

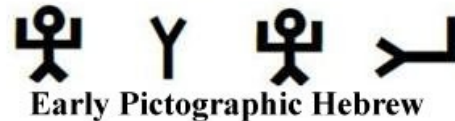
READ FROM RIGHT TO LEFT



Modern Hebrew



Middle Hebrew



Early Pictographic Hebrew

Theologians refer to the divine name in the Hebrew manuscripts of the Old Testament as the Tetragrammaton. Tetragrammaton is a word of Greek derivation meaning "consisting of four letters." In the Hebrew manuscripts the name which is commonly rendered as Yahweh today consists of the four Hebrew letters Yod He Waw He (or Yod Hey Vav Hey). Note that in reading these letters in the various Hebrew scripts above, they are read from right to left, the opposite of English. The prohibition of the rabbis against pronouncing the divine name is quite ancient, going back to the oral Torah before it was put in written form by Rabbi Judah in the Mishna which is the first part of the Talmud. The Mishna states, "*He who pronounces the Name with its own letters has no part in the world to come!*"

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So great was the rabbinic prohibition against pronouncing the name of Yahweh that it is often referred to as the ineffable, or unutterable name. Ineffable is defined as “*too great or extreme to be expressed or described in words; not to be uttered.*” I would invite the reader to consider the cunning of Satan in inducing the Jews to adopt this prohibition. As we have seen, Talmudic and Kabbalistic Judaism is Luciferian in nature. Would not Satan desire to erase the name of the Creator who cast him out of heaven from the minds of Yahweh’s people? To accomplish this stunning coup, Satan once more resorted to cunning and deception. He persuaded the people of God that they were actually showing honor to Yahweh by declaring His name to be so sacred that it should not be uttered. Satan thereby removed the name of the God of Israel from the minds and lips of the people, a triumph which has no parallel in the annals of any other people or deity.

Tragically, this victory of Satan has carried over from apostate Judaism to Christianity. Christian theologians and Bible scholars tasked with creating translations of the Old and New Testaments of the Bible have followed the apostate pattern of the Jewish scribes and rabbis by replacing the name of Yahweh with titular substitutes. I will quote again from the earlier document I wrote on this subject.

What justification do the translators of the most common English Bibles give for replacing the Divine name of Yahweh with a titular substitute? Following is the explanation found in the *New American Standard Bible* put out by the Lockman Foundation.

The Proper Names of God in the Old Testament: In the scriptures, the name of God is most significant and understandably so. It is inconceivable to think of spiritual matters without a proper designation for the Supreme Deity. Thus the most common

name for the deity is God, a translation of the original Elohim. One of the titles for God is Lord, a translation of Adonai. There is yet another name which is particularly assigned to God as His special or proper name, that is, the four letters YHWH (Exodus 3:14 and Isaiah 42:8). This name has not been pronounced by the Jews because of reverence for the great sacredness of the divine name. Therefore, it has been consistently translated Lord. The only exception to this translation of YHWH is when it occurs in immediate proximity to the word Lord, that is, Adonai. In that case it is regularly translated God in order to avoid confusion.

It is known for many years YHWH has been transliterated as Yahweh, however no complete certainty attaches to this pronunciation.

(NASB © 1985 Holman Bible Publishers)

As I look at this explanation I find some very distinct problems. The publishers admit that “the name of God is most significant and understandably so,” yet they go on to state that they have removed His “special or proper name” in every occurrence throughout the Old Testament, without exception. Furthermore, they state that “the most common name for deity is God,” yet God is not a name at all, it is a title denoting a divine being and it can be equally ascribed to false divinity as well as that which is true. They have even stated that God is a translation of Elohim.

Elohim is never given as the proper name of Yahweh in scripture. Elohim is a title that refers to a divine being and in the following passage we can see that it was not exclusively used as a reference to Yahweh.

Exodus 12:12

‘For I will go through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike down all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the **elohim** (gods) of Egypt I will execute judg-

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ments - I am Yahweh.

The translators are clearly wrong in stating that *“the most common name for deity is God.”* They would have been closer to the truth in saying *“the most common title for deity is God.”* Anytime the writers of scripture wanted to declare who their Elohim was they gave His “special or proper name” Yahweh. They did this with amazing consistency so that Yahweh occurs 6,828 times in the Old Testament with Yah occurring an additional 49 times. Yet for all this, the translators have chosen to totally remove the names Yahweh and Yah from scripture and they have based it solely upon the following argument: *“This name has not been pronounced by the Jews because of reverence for the great sacredness of the divine name. Therefore, it has been consistently translated Lord.”*

Did the translators give some divine commandment as their authority for removing Yahweh’s name from scripture? No! They based this very profound decision totally upon the tradition of the Jews... What is the commandment of Yahweh concerning the usage of His name? We are not left without understanding.

Exodus 3:15

And God said moreover unto Moses, “Thus shall you say unto the Children of Israel, Yahweh God of your fathers... has sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.”

I Chronicles 17:24

"And let Your name be established and magnified forever, saying, 'Yahweh of hosts is the God of Israel, even a God to Israel; and the house of David Your servant is established before You.'"

Psalms 29:2

Ascribe to Yahweh the glory due to His name; worship Yahweh in holy array.

Psalms 72:17-19

May his name endure forever; may his name increase as long as the sun shines and let men bless themselves by him; let all nations call him blessed. Blessed be Yahweh God, the God of Israel, who alone works wonders. And blessed be His glorious name forever; and may the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen, and Amen.

Psalms 105:1-3

Oh, give thanks to Yahweh! Call upon His name; make known His deeds among the peoples! Sing to Him, sing psalms to Him; talk of all His wondrous works! Glory in His holy name; let the hearts of those rejoice who seek Yahweh!

Psalms 113:3

From the rising of the sun to its going down Yahweh’s name is to be praised.

Hosea 12:5

Even Yahweh, the God of hosts; Yahweh is His name.

Zechariah 13:9

"And I will bring the third part through the fire, refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, and I will answer them; I will say, 'They are My people,' and they will say, 'Yahweh is my God.'"

These are but a few of the many thousands of instances in which the name Yahweh is mentioned

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throughout scripture. We are told that this is His memorial name. This name is to be praised. This is the name His people are to call upon. We are to ascribe to Yahweh the glory due His name. We are to give thanks to Yahweh in this name. We are to proclaim this name and honor and fear His name. This is the name that is to endure forever.

What a tragedy has occurred in removing the revealed name of God from scripture. The name Yahweh has been totally removed. It brings one to consider Jeremiah's words:

Jeremiah 23:26-27

Is there anything in the hearts of the prophets who prophesy falsehood, even these prophets of the deception of their own heart, who intend to make My people forget My name by their dreams which they relate to one another, just as their fathers forgot My name...

Truly, Christianity today has forgotten the name of Yahweh. Most only know Him by titles and by the substitutions the translators have placed in the scriptures that are used throughout Christendom.

It has not just been the NASB publishers that have followed this pattern of removing the name of Yahweh from scripture. All of the most popular English translations have done the same. Their reasoning is no more righteous, for they have not based their decision upon the commandment of Yahweh, but upon the traditions of men.

For two reasons the Committee has returned to the more familiar usage [of substituting YHWH with either the LORD or GOD] of the King James Version: (1) the word 'Jehovah' does not accurately represent any form of the name ever used in Hebrew; and (2) the use of any proper name for the

one and only God ... was discontinued in Judaism before the Christian era and is entirely inappropriate for the universal faith of the Christian Church.

(Revised Standard Version)

What a bold declaration, “*the use of any proper name for the one and only God... was discontinued in Judaism before the Christian era and is entirely inappropriate for the universal faith of the Christian Church.*” Where is the scripture to justify such a statement? Where is any explanation other than that the Jews through their traditions, not by commandment from Yahweh, quit using His name? How can they so brazenly assert that it is “*entirely inappropriate*” to use the name Yahweh? If the Holy Spirit inspired the scriptures and chose to have the name recorded nearly seven thousand times, how can man declare that it is inappropriate to use the name?

The *NIV Study Bible* merely gives the following statement regarding their practice of name substitution:

In regard to the divine name YHWH, commonly referred to as the tetragrammaton, the translators adopted the device used in most English versions of rendering that name as “LORD” in capital letters to distinguish it from Adonai, another Hebrew word rendered “Lord”, for which small letters are used.

(NIV Study Bible © 1985 by The Zondervan Corporation)

A similar statement is made by the translators of the *New Living Translation*:

We have rendered the tetragrammaton (YHWH) consistently as “the LORD,” utilizing a form with small capital letters that is common among English translations.

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(New Living Translation © 1996 by Tyndale House Charitable Trust)

Again, there is no divine command cited to justify this practice. It is merely stated that *“the device used in most English versions”* has been followed, or that the editors have utilized a form *“that is common among English translations.”* When one undertakes such an important labor as producing a copy of the holy scriptures to be read by millions of people, one should approach the labor with the greatest of integrity seeking to walk in strict obedience to the revealed mind of the Father. Making profound decisions that result in altering the scriptures just because other men have done so is no justification at all. It is the height of audacity to then turn around and say that using the divine name, as recorded by holy men and prophets at the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is totally inappropriate for the universal Christian faith. What is truly totally inappropriate is making wholesale changes to the scriptures and basing such decisions on tradition and the devices of men.

[End Excerpt]

Brothers and sisters, I can think of no more sinister act that has been perpetrated by Satan upon the people of Yahweh than to remove all memory and mention of the name of their God from their minds and lips. In their times of apostasy the Hebrew people were very quick to declare the names of the Baals and Asherim which they worshiped. Yet with great cunning Satan removed from the Israelites the worship and memory of the name of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, known unto these men and unto Moses as Yahweh.

We are told that as early as the grandson of Adam, the son of Seth whose name was Enos, that men began to call upon the name of Yahweh.

Genesis 4:26

And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of Yahweh.

Look up this passage in any of the popular English translations and this profound truth is obscured, for the Hebrew Tetragrammaton has been unfaithfully rendered as “Lord” instead of “Yahweh.” Noah knew the name of Yahweh, and in this name He offered sacrifice and prayed.

Genesis 8:20

Then Noah built an altar to Yahweh...

Genesis 9:26

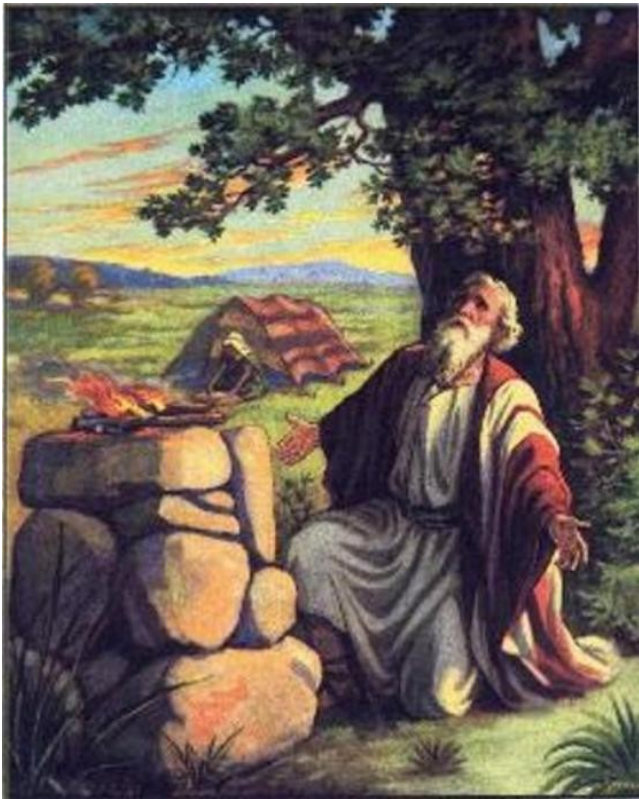
And he said, “Blessed be Yahweh...”

Abraham also built an altar to Yahweh, and with the name of Yahweh he prayed to his God.

Genesis 12:7-8

Then Yahweh appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." And there he built an altar to Yahweh, who had appeared to him. And he moved from there to the mountain east of Bethel, and he pitched his tent with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; there he built an altar to Yahweh and called on the name of Yahweh.

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Abraham Calling on the Name of Yahweh

As has happened time and again in the apostasy of the Jewish people, the rabbis turned aside from the pure worship of Yahweh and devised doctrines and traditions which led the people away from truth. They removed the name of their God from before the faces of Yahweh's people. Not only did the rabbis substitute titles for the divine name, making it part of Halakha (Jewish Law) that the letters Yod-He-Waw-He should be pronounced as Adonai (meaning "Lord"), but they even declared that Adonai was only to be uttered in prayer. Whenever the Jewish people make reference to their God in conversation they are commanded to use the phrase "HaShem." HaShem is a Hebrew phrase meaning "the name."



The absurdity of this is staggering. What the rabbis have done is create a form of idolatry where they worship a name, rather than the Being to whom the name refers. The complete folly of this practice is that the actual name is NEVER spoken by the Jews. The Talmud, which is revered more highly than the Scriptures themselves, insures that this is so by declaring that any who utter the name of Yahweh will have no part in the world to come. Yahshua spoke truly when He declared "You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition" (Mark 7:9). Rather than magnifying the name of their God, they have forsaken it. Under the guise of venerating the holy name of Yahweh, they have prohibited it from ever being uttered in prayer, extolled in songs of worship, or magnified through the testimony of the people of Israel.

It is not only the Hebrew Roots Christians who have followed the practice of apostate Judaism in eradicating the name of Yahweh from their midst. This practice is followed in all of the popular English Bible translations used by the churches today. This was not always the case. In 1901 the American Standard Version of the Bible was published and soon gained popularity among Christians and in the Seminaries. Its popularity waned by the 1950s when more modern English translations came out. The ASV used Elizabethan English

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which many Americans found difficult, but it did translate the Tetragrammaton rather than using a substitute word. However, the name used to translate the Tetragrammaton was “Jehovah,” a spelling that has since been deemed by most Biblical scholars to not accurately reflect the correct pronunciation of the divine name.

In 1997 a group began a revision on the American Standard Version. The editorial changes included replacing Jehovah with Yahweh. The revision process also included the updating of approximately 1,000 archaic words, phrases and grammatical constructs. The ASV did not use quotation marks and some other punctuation, so these were added as well. The completed revision is called the *World English Bible* (WEB). It can be found in electronic and print editions. It is available as a free download for PC Study Bible, and is available for other Bible study software including free programs such as E-Sword.

<http://ebible.org/web/links.htm>

A paperback edition can be purchased on Amazon. If you want a literal translation of the Scriptures (not a paraphrase or dynamic equivalency translation) that has restored the name of Yahweh to the Scriptures, you may find this translation suitable.

<http://www.amazon.com/World-English-Bible-Michael-Johnson/dp/1497365015/>

The WEB does use the name Jesus to refer to the Son of God. There are some other sacred name translations of the Bible that use more authentic Hebrew renderings for the name of the Son of God, such as Yeshua, or Yahshua. However, many Sacred Name Bibles have followed editorial policies which have introduced additional errors into the Scriptures which prevent me from recommending

them. You can read more about Bible translations in the writing I have made available titled *Yahweh's Book*.

On a related subject I would share some comments on Christians adopting excessive amounts of Hebraisms in their speech. It is my conviction that if a Christian wants to learn the Hebrew alphabet and language in order to aid them in their Bible study, they may very well find their efforts to be profitable. They should be prepared for years of study, however, as the Hebrew language is very different from English, and Biblical Hebrew differs significantly from Modern Hebrew which is spoken in Israel today.

It was my desire in my younger years to attend Bible College and possibly Seminary in order to learn the languages of the Bible, but Yahweh closed those doors. He chose to take me down a different path to learn spiritual truth, a path that was largely “outside the camp” of mainstream Christianity. In hindsight I see the wisdom of this, for the Bible Colleges and Seminaries are much affected by an attempt to mentally apprehend spiritual truth when Yahweh’s school of training is always much more experiential in nature. We observe this as we read about the lives of the 12 disciples who “walked” with Yahshua, following wherever He led, partaking of His life and trials and suffering. These fisherman and other “unlearned men” gained through these experiences, and the impartation of the Spirit of Christ at Pentecost, a spiritual insight that con-founded the Jewish religious leaders.

Acts 4:13

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and had perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled. They recognized that they had been with Yahshua.

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What I have learned, I have gained from walking with Yahshua and being taught of the Holy Spirit. Much of my training has been “outside the camp, bearing the reproaches of Christ.” I have learned to use numerous Bible study tools and resources, including Hebrew and Greek Concordances (Strong’s, Young’s, Englishmans), the Interlinear Hebrew and Greek Scriptures, and various Bible dictionaries, but I am not fluent in Biblical Hebrew or Greek. I have learned a number of Hebrew and Greek words that are significant and appear in my studies, but I do not go about interspersing Hebrew or Greek words in my daily conversation. To do so would render my speech unintelligible to the majority of English speakers.

I receive correspondence from men and women who hail from a wide variety of Christian backgrounds. Many of them are Messianic and Hebrew Roots followers. I have routinely encountered a large amount of Hebrew words and phrases in their correspondence, often to such an extent that I lose all comprehension of what they are talking about. I have frequently found myself looking up these Hebrew expressions online that I might know what is being communicated to me.

Understand that I am more familiar than most English speaking Christians with the languages of the Bible, but I am left confounded by many of the letters I receive. These letters often open with a Hebrew greeting such as “Shalom Aleichem” (meaning “peace to you”). They will almost always include Hebrew words to reference God (HaShem is common). The Holy Spirit will be referred to as the Ruach HaKodesh. It is also common to find the writer using rabbinic Judaism’s forms of writing such as “G_d” and “L_rd.” When speaking of the Sabbath they will write “Shabbat.” Passover becomes “Pesach,” the Feast of Tabernacles is “Sukkot,” and Pentecost is “Shavuot.”

I can track pretty well with these Hebrew expressions, having some understanding of their meaning. I am finding, however, that many English speaking Christians apparently believe that the more Hebrew words they can incorporate in their communications, the more pleasing to “HaShem” they will be. Such ones speak of performing “mitzvahs” (Hebrew for “commandments”) and of readings from the Parashot and Haftorah. The letter may end with something like:

Y'va-reh-ch'cha Adonai v'yish-m'reh-cha.

Ya-eir Adonai pa-nav ei-leh-cha vi-chu-neh-ka.

Yisa Adonai pa-nav ei-leh-cha v'ya-seim l'cha shalom.

By now I have figured out that this is the Aaronic blessing written in transliterated phonetic Hebrew

May God bless you and keep you.

May God's light shine upon you, and may God be gracious to you.

May you feel God's Presence within you always, and may you find peace.



There is often so much Hebrew language interspersed in the correspondence from brothers and sisters in the Messianic and Hebrew Roots move-

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ment that I feel the need of a translator. I profess to enjoy the sound of the Hebrew language being spoken, but I do not understand it. Like Paul, I see the wisdom in speaking five words in a known tongue rather than ten thousand words in a language the hearer does not recognize (I Corinthians 14:19).

What is the attraction for so many in the Hebrew Roots movement to adopt Hebrew speech? I believe the rationale is misplaced. I recently read one person's comment that since all people will be speaking Hebrew in the millennial kingdom when Yahshua reigns upon the earth, they want to get a head start on speaking Hebrew now. A younger sister in the Lord explained her attraction for the Hebrew language, alphabet, symbols and customs with the following words.

To be drawn to learning Hebrew as I have, and using the Messiah's Hebrew name etc., does not mean one is committed to an 'old covenant.' My understanding is that it is natural to move in this direction, as we are grafted as wild branches into the natural tree which is Israel, which is whom the new covenant that we have entered into by faith, was made with 'The House of Israel and the House of Judah.' (Jer 31.31, Heb 8.8). So we will be attracted to a Hebraic way of life.

What this young woman very eloquently expressed seems to sum up the thoughts of a great many who are adopting Hebrew speech, customs and other aspects of Jewish life. They equate a Hebraic way of life to becoming more like Christ, or of demonstrating a love for the Savior. Some are even going so far as to move to Israel. Another possible motive for adopting Hebrew speech and customs may be that the individual believes the Jewish way of life is Yahweh's ideal for humanity. Such reasons are predicated upon a basic fallacy.

Yahweh did not choose the Hebrew people because they spoke a heavenly language, or because they were more spiritual than other people. As was shared in an earlier chapter, Abraham came from a family of idolaters.

Joshua 24:2-3

And Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says Yahweh, the God of Israel, '***From ancient times your fathers lived beyond the River, namely, Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, and they served other gods.*** Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River, and led him through all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his descendants...

Abraham was an Aramean. He came from the land of Babylon, the very heartland of idolatry. Abraham's language was that of the Babylonians. When Judah and Jerusalem were taken captive to Babylon 1,400 years after Abraham, they were returning to the land of their forefathers. While Judah sojourned in Babylon six centuries before Christ, they got a refresher course on the language and alphabet of Babylon which was Aramaic. The Hebrew language always has been a dialect of Aramaic.

If you understand this, then you may recognize the error of suggesting that Hebrew is a holy language, or that all mankind will speak Hebrew during the millennial reign of Christ. Babylon has always represented confusion. It was at Babel that man's speech was first confused. If Abraham were to sit down with an Israeli Jew today, they would not be able to recognize one another's speech. Neither would they be able to communicate through writing, for they would not recognize the alphabet the other person was using. In *Yahweh's Book* I shared the following.

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We see evidence of the profound changes that occurred in the Hebrew's speech in an account found in the book of II Kings. About 1300 years after Abraham's descendants had been dwelling in Canaan, King Sennacherib of Assyria laid siege to Jerusalem in the days of King Hezekiah. Sennacherib's commander, the Rabshakeh, came out to speak to the Jews, taunting them. The Rabshakeh spoke openly in Hebrew. One of Hezekiah's ministers urged the Rabshakeh to speak to Hezekiah's servants in Aramaic, for the common people of Judea no longer understood the language.

II Kings 18:26

Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah, Shebna, and Joah said to the Rabshakeh, "Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, for we understand it; and do not speak to us in Hebrew in the hearing of the people who are on the wall."

The speech of Abraham's descendants was still considered an Aramaic language in Hezekiah's day, but we see that it had become so differentiated from the Aramaic of the land of Assyria and Babylon that most of the Hebrews could no longer understand Aramaic. A century after this, the Jews were taken captive into the land of Babylon. There they were once more subjected to the Aramaic language. It became a matter of necessity for the Jews to speak Aramaic so that they could dwell in Babylon, conduct business, and converse with their Babylonian neighbors. Consequently, when the Jews returned to Jerusalem after the Babylonian exile they were now speaking Aramaic. While in Babylon, the Jews also abandoned the Paleo Hebrew alphabet and adopted the Aramaic square script.

Paleo-Hebrew (Ugaritic) Script

	Aleph - Ox (A)		Lamed - Ox-goad (L)
	Beth - Tent (B,V)		Mem - Water (M)
	Gimel - Camel (G, GH)		Nun - Fish (N)
	Daleth - Door (D)		Samekh - Prop (S)
	Heh - Window (H)		Ayin - Eye (Aa)
	Vav - Stake (U,V,W)		Peh - Mouth (P, Ph)
	Zain - Sword (Z)		Tzaddi - Fishhook (Tz)
	Cheth - Window (Ch)		Qoph - Ear (Q)
	Teth - Serpent (T)		Resh - Head (R)
	Yod - Hand (I,Y,J)		Shin - Tooth (Sh)
	Kaph - Palm (K,Kh)		Tau - Cross (Th)

The alphabet above would have been familiar to the inhabitants of Canaan during the time Joshua led the Israelites in to conquer the land, circa 1,500 B.C..

Aramaic (Square) Script or Biblical Hebrew

	Aleph - Ox (A)		Lamed - Ox-goad (L)
	Beth - Tent (B,V)		Mem - Water (M)
	Gimel - Camel (G, GH)		Nun - Fish (N)
	Daleth - Door (D)		Samekh - Prop (S)
	Heh - Window (H)		Ayin - Eye (Aa)
	Vav - Stake (U,V,W)		Peh - Mouth (P, Ph)
	Zain - Sword (Z)		Tzaddi - Fishhook (Tz)
	Cheth - Fence (Ch)		Qoph - Ear (Q)
	Teth - Serpent (T)		Resh - Head (R)
	Yod - Hand (I,Y,J)		Shin - Tooth (Sh)
	Kaph - Palm (K,Kh)		Tau - Cross (Th)

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The Alphabet above is what the Jewish people adopted while in Babylonian captivity around 600 B.C.. This shows how much a single language can change over the course of time. While the Jewish people were dwelling in Babylon, Aramaic became the every day language of the Hebrews in exile. Aramaic remained the common language of the Jews in what is referred to as “the Second Temple Period.” This time spanned between 539 B.C. when the Jews returned from Babylon, and 70 A.D. when the Temple was destroyed, along with Jerusalem, by the Roman General Titus. These years fully encompassed the life and ministry of Christ in Judea. That Christ and His disciples spoke Aramaic is evident from the New Testament Scriptures. The following verses all include examples of Yahshua speaking in Aramaic.

Mark 5:41

And taking the child by the hand, He said to her, "**Talitha kum!**" (which translated means, "Little girl, I say to you, arise!").

Mark 7:31-34

And again He went out from the region of Tyre, and came through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, within the region of Decapolis. And they brought to Him one who was deaf and spoke with difficulty, and they entreated Him to lay His hand upon him. And He took him aside from the multitude by himself, and put His fingers into his ears, and after spitting, He touched his tongue with the sa-

liva; and looking up to heaven with a deep sigh, He said to him, "**Ephphatha!**" that is, "Be opened!"

Mark 15:34

And at the ninth hour Yahshua cried out with a loud voice, "**Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?**" which is translated, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

As one might anticipate, when the Jews returned to the land of Israel after their sojourning in Babylon, the Aramaic they spoke once again began to differentiate itself from that which was spoken elsewhere. Over time it once more became distinct so that in the time of Christ the speech of the Jews was again referred to as Hebrew. Many language scholars, however, believe it is more accurate to describe the language spoken by the Judeans of Christ's day as "the Aramaic vernacular (or dialect) of the Jews."

[End Excerpt]

It appears that most notions of the Hebrew language being divine, or favored by God, are predicated upon a complete ignorance of the origin of Hebrew. Some suggest that it was the language spoken by Adam and all of his descendants until the tower of Babel. Such a claim is indefensible for if the language had become so transformed in 1,400 years from Abraham to Hezekiah to be unintelligible, the Hebrew speaking people of

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Christ's day, much less this present day, would not recognize anything that was spoken prior to the flood of Noah. Can you understand the following words?

Fæder ure þu þe eart on heofonum;
Si þin nama gehalgod
to becume þin rice
gewurþe ðin willa
on eorðan swa swa on heofonum.
urne gedæghwamlican hlaf syle us todæg
and forgyf us ure gyltas
swa swa we forgyfað urum gyltendum
and ne gelæd þu us on costnunge
ac alys us of yfele soþlice

The words above are *The Lord's Prayer*, the one that Christ taught His disciples that begins with "Our Father Who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name." The language it is written in is English, Old English. It is written as the words might have appeared about 1100 years ago. The Hebrew language has undergone just as much, if not more, transformation in the same length of time, with this process being repeated many times over.

If you learn modern Hebrew you are NOT learning the Hebrew of Yahshua's day, and if you learn Aramaic as it was spoken 2,000 years ago it is NOT any language that King David, or Moses, or Abraham would under-

stand. Again, if you learned the Aramaic that Abraham spoke, it would be unrecognizable to those who lived before the flood of Noah. Language is not static. It is ever changing.

If you study the subject, you will also find that the dress, the customs, and the doctrines of the Hebrews have changed just as much as their language in the same span of time. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob all dwelt in tents. They lived a nomadic life. You will find nothing similar to it in Israel today. Even Yahshua lived the life of a wanderer. He did not have a home, or a ministry center. He even had to borrow a donkey when it was time for His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. If you want to live like Yahshua, imitating His life and customs, you might start by selling your car, getting rid of your home or apartment, giving away all of your furniture and possessions to the poor, and sleeping outside on the side of a hill, or in the bow of a boat.

The reality of Yahshua's Hebraic life is not so romantic as many today imagine it to be. If Christ is the measure of a true "Hebraic life," or even Abraham, then I am confident that there are few among the Messianic and Hebrew Roots movement who would desire the real imitation. Sprinkling one's speech with modern Hebrew words, and learning how to write the Babylonian Hebrew script will not make you more like Christ. I recently came across a quotation that has a right perspective on the matter.

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One who romanticizes over Judaism and loses focus of the kingdom of Heaven can be compared to a carpenter who is infatuated with the hammer, rather than the house it was meant to build.

[Troy Mitchell]

One who romanticizes over Judaism and loses focus of the kingdom of Heaven can be compared to a carpenter who is infatuated with the hammer, rather than the house it was meant to build.

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What can wash away my sin?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;
What can make me whole again?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Nothing can for sin atone,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;
Naught of good that I have done,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Glory! Glory! This I sing—
Nothing but the blood of Jesus,
All my praise for this I bring—
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Refrain:
Oh! precious is the flow
That makes me white as snow;
No other fount I know,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

This is all my hope and peace,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;
This is all my righteousness,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Written by Robert Lowry, 1876

For my pardon, this I see,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;
For my cleansing this my plea,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Now by this I'll overcome—
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;
Now by this I'll reach my home—
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.