

A Peek Behind the Name of God

by: *Bill Perkins*



"Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever" Dan 2:20

When we go to Israel, our guides are usually non-Christian Jews. To be a guide in Israel means you are licensed by the State of Israel only after completing the equivalent of a two-year college course studying the hundreds of Biblical sites in the promised land.



So the vast majority of our Israeli guides are articulate, well-educated...but secular--meaning not religious. They usually observe Passover and Day of Atonement but nothing else. Sorta like some Christians go to church only on Christmas and Easter.

It is always perplexing to us on our Israel trips to hear the guide say things like, "Over here God helped David defeat the Amorites," or "Here is where Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead," yet totally miss what they are actually saying.

They talk about God and Jesus all day long, quote passages out of the Old and New Testaments, but don't connect the spiritual dots. They refer to Him by name, but the deep and powerful meaning of that name escapes them.

What Does "Yahweh" Mean?

"Yahweh" is the personal name of God in the Bible. Called the *Tetragrammaton*, it is composed of four letters, no vowels. The Hebrew letters are Yod, Hey, Vav, Hey, read right to left in the Hebrew (see above), left to right in English (YHWH).

Hebrew letters all have meanings. You're going to love what the letters mean in "Yahweh"!

Yod

Yod is the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet and is masculine in gender. It portrays the symbol of an entire hand, or closed hand, from the wrist to the fingertips. This is distinguished from another letter, kaf, that means "palm."



Hey

Hey is feminine and means "to behold," "show" or "reveal."

Can you tell where this is going?

Vav

Vav is masculine and signifies a nail, peg or hook, signifying being nailed or bound together.

So when read in Hebrew, right to left, God's name means:

"Behold the Nail, Behold the Hand"

Or simply,

"Behold the nailed hand."

It gets even better when you combine the meaning of the individual letters with the overall meaning of the word—Yahweh, YHWH, which means "Salvation," then it basically translates:



"Behold, the nailed hand is salvation."

There are other Biblical references to the Messiah's pierced hands and feet:

"...they will look upon Me whom they have pierced"
Zech 12:10

"...they have pierced My hands and feet." Ps
22:16



With the name of God being so specific, it makes one wonder how in the world do the Jews, especially the Jewish guides in Israel, miss the fact Jesus came as the Messiah?!

The answer, of course, is in scripture. God has "*blinded*" them.



*"... And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" For this cause they could not believe, for Isaiah said again, "He has **blinded their eyes, and He hardened their heart;** lest they see with their eyes, and perceive with their heart, and be converted, and I heal them."* John 12:39-40

But God has not blinded us. His Holy Spirit living in us reveals truth to Believers through the Word of God. So we've looked at the Hebrew letters in "Yahweh" and shown how, in no uncertain terms, they specifically spell out "**Behold the Nailed Hand.**"

Here's another nugget along those same lines...

"*Yahweh*" is the personal name of God, much like Abraham and Sarah are personal names. Words like Elohim (God), El (mighty), Shaddai (almighty) and Adonai (master) are titles. And of course "Lord" is a title.

Consider the Third Commandment:

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



Ido Keynan, a 7th generation Israeli guide who speaks five languages. After 25 years of quoting the New Testament, got saved! PTL!

who takes His name in vain." Deut. 5:11

The word "LORD" above is not in the original manuscripts. "Yahweh" is what was originally written. The Jews changed the word "Yahweh" in their torahs because they believed it was blasphemy to pronounce the personal name of the Lord out loud.

Thousands of times God put His personal name in scripture and each time it's been changed to a title!

If a man wrote a love letter to his wife, would she want to read "Dear Woman" or would she rather read "Dear Susan?"

"Yahweh" wanted a personal relationship with the Jews. He even set up a temporary sacrificial system so He could live right in their midst. But they couldn't quite grasp His provisions.

*"Then the Lord said,
"Because this people draw near with
their words
And honor Me with their lip service,
But they remove their hearts far from
Me,
And their reverence for Me consists of
tradition learned by rote"*



Is. 29:13

In the Church Age, Jesus is the personal name we use to address our Lord of Lords. We can say, "Jesus, Lord of my life." But it's actually quite impersonal to address Him with titles like "Dear Lord," "Lord God," etc.

"Jesus" wants a personal relationship with you. But no more sacrifices are necessary. Yahweh paid it all on the cross and has given you the power of His Spirit living in you to accomplish His will.

Praise The Lord!