

The Name & the Nation

The Kingdom & the Sovereignty of God

When we were Witnesses, we were trained to reason this way: There are nearly 7000 occurrences of the Tetragram in the Bible; therefore God thinks it important; therefore we should use it. Those who do NOT use it cannot be used by God. Yet there were problems with this simplistic logic of which most trained JW's would likely be aware.

Anomalies even JW's notice: (we can call these the "4 E's", exceptions to the USE rule)

1. *Exodus 6:3* – "I used to appear to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as God Almighty [El Shaddai], but with regard to my name Jehovah I did not make myself known to them."
2. *Ecclesiastes* – The Tetragram is never used.
3. *Esther* – No uses of the Tetragram, no direct mention of God at all.
4. *Ezekiel* – The Name is prominent in the text, but most often with its unusual extension, "Sovereign Lord Jehovah" [*adonay Yahweh*], which occurs some 320 times in OT, two-thirds of those uses in Ezekiel; Ezekiel is also used by WT to support the doctrine that God's kingdom rule has been in suspended until "He comes who has the legal right" (21:27), which right could not be exercised until the expiration of the "appointed times of the nations". The addition of "Lord" sets us well on the way to the LXX use of LORD as a substitute for YHWH. Indeed, the Name drops out of public use during or shortly after the exile.

Anomalies JW's do NOT normally notice:

Though the Name is indeed found close to 7000 times in the Hebrew Bible, its use is hardly indiscriminate. Even in the NWT, patterns emerge which clearly indicate the Old Testament faithful were far more sensitive and discriminating in its usage than are JW's:

1. *Joseph* – This "faithful witness", as JW's would view him, does not use the Tetragram even once when in the court of Egypt. Indeed, "Yahweh" does not occur at all in the narrative of Joseph & his brethren after chapter 39 (Joseph's elevation in Egypt). The only exception, even in the NWT, is Jacob's deathbed blessing, when mentioning Dan (!): "I will wait for salvation from you, O Jehovah" (49:18).
2. *Job* – Set in the patriarchal period, the book is frequently referenced when the WT wishes to highlight the "vindication of Jehovah's name". Job himself is cited as a paramount example of integrity, to the honour of Jehovah. Yet, seemingly unnoticed by JW's, the NAME only twice occurs in the dialogue between Job & his 4 friends (chapters 3-37), even in the NWT. The dialogue participants are Semites, but not Israelites, which might explain why they are familiar with the Tetragram & associate the Name with 'Elohim' and 'El Shaddai', by which names they usually reference the true God they ALL believe in. This fits the pattern of patriarchal use in Genesis.
3. *Daniel* – Another "faithful witness" who never uses the Name in a profane context – that is, never in public. Though Daniel designates the true God by over 20 titles in 12 chapters, he only uses the Tetragram in a personal prayer – and that a confession of Israel's sin, as well as a petition for the restoration of God's people, Jerusalem & its Temple (chapter 9). Daniel, of course, is THE kingdom

book of the OT, the book which maps the “Gentile times” in a most comprehensive fashion. It is therefore doubly significant that the NAME disappears completely, whereas in Ezekiel, the Tetragram occurs constantly.

4. *Ezekiel* (Daniel’s contemporary in Babylon, but who in contrast serves not at the royal court, but among the Jewish community in exile) Ezekiel uses the NAME in a context of Jewish worship (back in Jerusalem, which is not destroyed till we get to chapter 33:21), or in promises of Israel’s restoration. Significantly, it is Ezekiel who gives us the reason for the Name’s retirement – “... when they came to the nations, wherever they came, they profaned my holy name, in that people said of them, ‘These are the people of Yahweh, and yet they had to go out of his land’. But I had concern for my holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations to which they came.” (36:20,21)

5. *Ezra & Nehemiah* – In keeping with the precedent set in Daniel & Esther, even the governor of the restored community in Jerusalem, and Ezra the principal religious figure in the restoration, do NOT use the NAME in a secular or profane context (see the document “Ezra & Nehemiah for Jehovah’s Witnesses”)

6. *Psalms* – There are 5 divisions in the Psalms, thought to be collections of hymns made by editors at different periods of Israel’s history. The Name is found in all 5 divisions. The Tetragram is the dominant designation in “books” 1, 4 & 5, “Elohim” in books 2 & 3. There are anomalies which seem to demonstrate that the Tetragram was no longer being used familiarly in public worship in later times. For example, Psalm 53 is a virtual repeat of Psalm 14 – with the crucial difference that “Elohim” has replaced “Jehovah”, all 4 times where the Tetragram occurred in the (presumably) original version. Yet both 14 & 53 are credited to David! Did he edit his own song for different uses? Or did a scribe or music leader at a much later period edit the psalm for a new tradition of public usage? And how does JW.org justify their insertion of “Jehovah” into the NWT of Psalm 53?

CONCLUSION: It cannot be coincidence that the NAME of God is suppressed at the very same period as Israel loses its earthly KING, even its sovereignty over its land & Jerusalem. Ezekiel’s “the Gentiles shall know that I am Yahweh” is the war cry of the God who WILL, according to Ezekiel, give the crown to He who has the legal right, who is both Son of David and Son of God. Further, it cannot be coincidence that the NAME, the LAND, the NATION and the SEED (King/Messiah) are found together in the original statement of the 7 promises of the Abrahamic covenant (Gen 12:1-3).

DANIEL’S DESIGNATIONS for GOD (NWT):

THE [TRUE] GOD 1:2,9,17; 2:47 (of you men); 3:28,29 (of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego); 5:23; 6:26 (of Daniel); 9:3,4,11; 11:37 (of his fathers)

JEHOVAH 1:2(disputed); 9:2,3,4(2), 7,8,9,10,13,14(2), 15,16,17,19(3),20

GOD OF HEAVEN 2:18,19,37,44

GOD 2:20, 23 (of my forefathers),28; 5:3,26

REVEALER OF SECRETS 2:28,47

THE GRAND GOD 2:45

GOD OF GODS 2:47; 11:36

LORD OF KINGS 2:47

OUR GOD 3:17; 9:9,10,13,14,15,17

MOST HIGH (GOD) 3:26; 4:2,17,24,25,32,34; 5:18,21,25

[4:25,26] The purpose of this experience, therefore, is to bring the king to the knowledge of the truth that God, as the Most High, is sovereign in His providential dealings with men. [Young 107]

THEIR (OWN) GOD 3:28; 11:32

KING OF THE HEAVENS 4:37

LORD OF THE HEAVENS 5:23

HIS GOD 6:5,10,11,23

YOUR GOD 6:16,20; 10:12

THE LIVING GOD 6:20,26

Darius does not rise above his polytheistic background. He does not confess Dan.’s God to be the only true God, but merely raises Him above other gods. [Young 139]

MY (OWN) GOD 6:22; 9:4,19,20(2)

THE ONE LIVING [ENDURING] TO TIME(S) INDEFINITE 6:26; 12:7

ANCIENT OF DAYS 7:9,13,22

THE SUPREME ONE 7:18,22,25,27

PRINCE OF THE ARMY 8:11

PRINCE OF PRINCES 8:25

THE GREAT ONE 9:4

THE FEAR-INSPIRING ONE 9:4

