

THE TETRAGRAMMATON

What importance does the presence of the Tetragrammaton¹ in the Christian Greek Scriptures have for your faith?

While discussing the significance of the Tetragrammaton with two Witnesses during a return visit, a householder was surprised by a statement made in the conversation. *One of the Witness said that, though he believed the writers of the Christian Greek Scriptures used the Tetragrammaton in 237 specific instances, his faith was not dependent on that fact.*

Would you agree with his statement that the inspired writers' use of the Tetragrammaton in the Christian Greek Scriptures is inconsequential to your faith? You could *not* make that statement and be consistent with your faith as a Witness for at least two reasons:

1. The *New World Translation*, by its own statement of purpose, maintains that the restoration of the divine name is the most distinctive feature of the translation:

"The foremost feature of this translation is the restoration of the divine name to its rightful place in the English text. It has been done, using the commonly accepted English form "Jehovah" 6,973 times in the Hebrew Scriptures and 237 times in the Christian Greek Scriptures." (*New World Translation Reference Edition*, 1984, page 6.)

The translators are absolutely correct in restoring the divine name in the Hebrew Scriptures rather than using the traditional English Bible's "LORD." But what about the Christian Greek Scriptures? If the Tetragrammaton was not used in the original Greek manuscripts, then the foremost feature of the *New World Translation* would be based on a false premise.

The second reason reveals why it is important to one of Jehovah's Witnesses that the Christian Greek Scriptures use the Tetragrammaton.

2. Many verses in the Christian Greek Scriptures give the addressee the titles of "God" and "the Almighty." Needless to say, if Jesus is identified with the addressee as "God... the Almighty," all Witnesses would be confronted with a grave discrepancy in their faith. If we compare the wording of the *New World Translation* and the *Kingdom Interlinear Translation* (both are published by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society), we see this very problem. (The following quotations from the *Kingdom Interlinear Translation*² come directly from the

¹ The divine name written in four Hebrew letters as **hwby**.

² The *Kingdom Interlinear Translation* is regarded as a highly reliable work. The book *JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES Proclaimers of God's Kingdom* (Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, © 1993) says on page 610, "But then, between the lines of Greek text [in the *Kingdom Interlinear Translation*], there is another translation, a very literal, word-for-word rendering of what the Greek actually says according to the basic meaning and grammatical

interlinear portion. The word order is that of the true Greek sentence rather than an English translation.)

New World Translation

Kingdom Interlinear Translation

"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says **Jehovah** God, "the One who is and who was and who is coming, the Almighty." Revelation 1:8

I am the Alpha and the Omega, is saying **Lord**, the God, The (one) being and the (one) was and the (one) coming, the Almighty. Revelation 1:8

"We thank you, **Jehovah** God, the Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and begun ruling as king." Revelation 11:17

We are giving thanks to you, **Lord**, the God, the Almighty, the (one) being and the (one) was, because you have taken the power of you the great and you reigned. Revelation 11:17

And [the four living creatures] have no rest day and night as they say: "Holy, holy, holy is **Jehovah** God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is coming." Revelation 4:8

and resting up not [the four living (creatures)] are having of day and of night [they] saying Holy, holy, holy **Lord**, the God, the Almighty, the (one) was and the (one) being and the (one) coming. Revelation 4:8

If the Apostle John used hwhy (the Tetragrammaton) when he wrote these verses, then it is clear that Jehovah is both "God" and "the Almighty." On the other hand, if John used the Greek word Kyrios,³ then the addressee of these verses is the one to whom the title Kyrios applies.⁴ *Since John consistently used the title Kyrios to refer to Jesus throughout the book of Revelation, then it would be proper to understand that John is identifying the Lord (Jesus) with "God" and "the Almighty."*

Similar instances are found in the book of Revelation where the one being addressed as either "Lord" or "Jehovah" is identified as being "God." (See Revelation 4:11, 15:3, 16:7, 18:8, 19:6, 21:22 and 22:5-6.)

What evidence do we have today? Did the Apostle John write the divine name hwhy (the Tetragrammaton) in Revelation 1:8, 11:17, and 4:8, or did he write the Greek word Kyrios?

The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society has carefully documented Hebrew versions which use the Tetragrammaton. This is the basis for the 237 "Jehovah" references found in the *New World Translation*. (The best reference source for this material is the *Kingdom Interlinear Translation*. First, consult the introductory section EXPLANATION OF THE SYMBOLS USED. Finally, study each of the 237 "Jehovah" references in the text, carefully reading each footnote. Take particular note of the dates for both the Greek texts and the Hebrew versions to

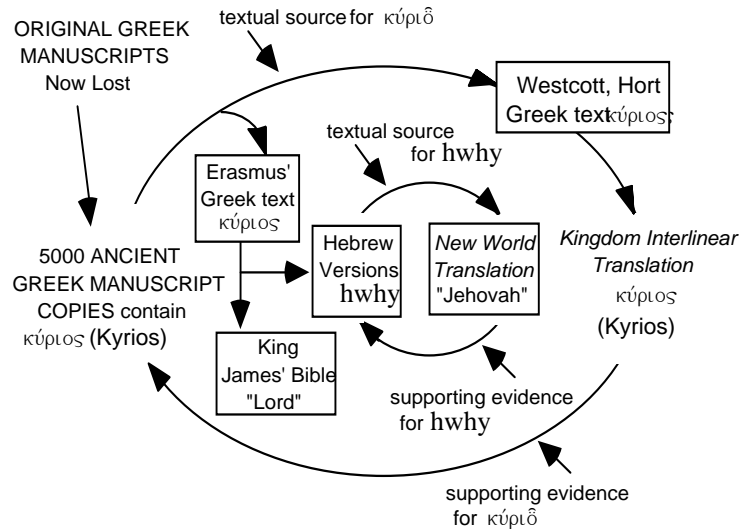
form of each word. This enables even students who cannot read Greek to find out what is actually in the original Greek."

³ The Greek word Kyrios (Κύριος), which means "Lord," is the word used in the *Kingdom Interlinear Translation*.

⁴ In the book of Revelation, the word Kyrios is translated as "Lord" 20 times in the *Kingdom Interlinear Translation* Greek text, and as "Lord" only eight times in the *New World Translation*.

which the footnotes refer.)

The figure below summarizes the information given in the *Kingdom Interlinear Translation* footnotes. (Also see the chart given on page 309 of *All Scripture Is Inspired of God and*



Beneficial.") Dates are not given in the figure. However, the earliest "J" Hebrew version is J², dated from 1385 C.E. The most frequently cited Hebrew version is J⁷, dated from 1599. The most recent is J²², published in 1979. On the other hand, according to the *Kingdom Interlinear Translation* footnotes, the earliest Greek manuscript which verifies the Greek word Kyrios (Κύριος) is dated about 200 C.E. (approximately 106 years after John wrote Revelation). There are a few Greek manuscripts dated as early as 201 to 300 C.E. (third century) which use Kyrios. The remainder of the 237 "Jehovah" references are verified within Greek manuscripts which substantiate the Greek word Kyrios (Κύριος) no later than the fourth century, or 301 to 400 C.E.

The first discovery which we make is that the information from the *Kingdom Interlinear Translation* tells us that the earliest date substantiating the Tetragrammaton in the Christian Greek Scriptures⁵ is some 1300 years after the

⁵ There is sometimes confusion between the Christian Greek Scriptures and the *Septuagint* (or LXX). The *Septuagint* was a translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek, completed in approximately 280 B.C.E. (*All Scripture Is Inspired of God and Beneficial*, page 296.) There are numerous examples of the use of the Tetragrammaton in certain *Septuagint* copies. However, the *Septuagint* version does not contain any of the Christian Greek Scriptures. Furthermore, no Christian Greek Scriptures are known which contain the Tetragrammaton. The only substantiating evidence for the presence of the Tetragrammaton in the

Greek Scriptures were written. On the other hand, the earliest Greek manuscripts substantiating the Greek word Kyrios (Κύριος) referring to the "Lord" were copied slightly over 100 years after John wrote Revelation.

But the dates are not the most unsettling discovery we make from the *Kingdom Interlinear Translation* footnotes. As shown in the figure above, we discover that the textual source for most of the Hebrew versions is the Greek text prepared by Erasmus, a Dutch theologian who lived between 1466 and 1536. This is the text from which the King James Bible was translated. Erasmus' Greek text is well known today. *The Tetragrammaton never appears in Erasmus' Greek text of the Christian Greek Scriptures.*

The New World Translation restores "Jehovah" to the Christian Greek Scriptures because the Tetragrammaton appears in a number of Hebrew versions which were translated from a known Greek text which did not contain the Tetragrammaton. The only supporting textual evidence which can be given for the Tetragrammaton comes from these Hebrew versions. We can look at the Greek text from which these Hebrew versions were translated and can readily verify that the Tetragrammaton was never used.

The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society uses 26 Hebrew translations from the *Greek Christian Scriptures which are known not to contain the Tetragrammaton* as proof that the Tetragrammaton was used in the original Greek Scriptures!

All Hebrew Christian versions are mere translations of the Greek text. The entire "J" footnote evidence in the *New World Translation* is based upon the very Greek text which the translators are disputing.

Any Witness may easily verify this information. Find each of the 237 Jehovah references in your *Kingdom Interlinear Translation*. First, look at the Greek text to determine whether or not the Tetragrammaton (hwhy) is used. Finally, consult the footnote material to determine the dates supporting the Greek word in comparison with the dates for the Hebrew versions.

The information in this pamphlet was taken from the book,

THE TETRAGRAMMATON

and the Christian Greek Scriptures.

This 350 page book is the most comprehensive study of the Tetragrammaton (hwhy) and the Christian Greek Scriptures available today. The subject of the book is not theology; it is a study of early Greek manuscripts and related historical documents. The primary research source for this study was the Greek text of the *Kingdom Interlinear Translation*. The book contains:

- A thorough study of the divine name (hwhy), its meaning, its historical setting, and its occurrence in the Christian Greek Scriptures.
- An exhaustive evaluation of the 237 "Jehovah" passages in the Christian

Christian Greek Scriptures comes from Hebrew versions (translations) dated 1385 C.E. and later.

Greek Scriptures of the *New World Translation*.

- A complete description of the "Jehovah" footnote references in the *Kingdom Interlinear Translation*, including a supplementary investigation of the 714 occurrences of the Greek word Κύριος (Kyrios) which is translated as "Lord."
- A fascinating review of the writings of the early church fathers and their awareness of the divine name, including an intensive evaluation of the "heresy" which presumably removed the Tetragrammaton from the Christian Scriptures in the third and fourth centuries C.E.
- A wealth of appendix information related to the divine name (hwhy) and the Christian Greek Scriptures.