

The Ineffable Name of God

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The name יהוה in the Hebrew Bible is translated into English as “LORD”, and there are a growing number of Christians who seem to think that the name should be read Jehovah or Yahweh or similar. Jews will tell you that this is simply wrong and my research confirms their conviction. In this paper, we will look at the possible meaning of this word and why there is so much confusion surrounding its use.

What I am about to reveal will come as a complete shock to a lot of people and will undoubtedly upset many, though this is not my intention. Nevertheless, the facts being presented here need to be carefully considered as they have a significant bearing on our understanding of the Bible. All I ask is that the reader bears with me until they have finished reading all the evidence so that the matter can be given its fullest consideration.

The Hebrew יהוה is actually an initialism for יהוה, יהוה, יהוה (yihye, ho've, ve'haya), which in modern Hebrew means ‘He will be, He is, and He was’, but in Biblical Hebrew, where there is evidence that the past and future tenses have swapped over,¹ means “He was, He is, and He will be”. This has similar connotations to the statement in the *New Testament* to the effect that the LORD is “the same yesterday, and today and for ever” (Heb. 12:8), is exactly the same as the statement in the book of Revelation that the LORD God Almighty “was, and is, and is to come” (Rev. 4:8) and reminds us of the word of the LORD to Moses when he said “אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה” (eiyeh asher eiyeh), translated in the AV as “I am that I am” (Exod. 3:14) but perhaps more correctly means “I will be what I will be”. In the synagogue, Jews pronounce this name יהוה as ‘Adonai’. In everyday usage, outside of the synagogue, Jews instead use ‘HaShem’, meaning simply ‘the Name’. This is done to differentiate between the everyday pronunciation of the Holy Name from the sacred pronunciation which is used in holy assemblies. What we are about to demonstrate, however, is that the original text has been deliberately overwritten by the Jewish scribes with יהוה so that the name of God has been hidden.

So, what then is the real name of God? Is there any evidence in the Bible to show what the original name of God was? Surprisingly, the answer is in the affirmative. The Jewish scribes did not succeed in entirely eradicating the name. They have left just enough evidence to allow

¹ See, for example, Josh. 17:18 where the words וְיִצְחָק לֵךְ יְהוָה are translated as (and can only be translated as) “and its [i.e. the forest’s] goes out thereof **will be** for you” where the word יְהוָה, which today is past tense, is here used to represent the future tense.

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us to reinstate the original name. Let us therefore now look at the evidence presented by the Bible.

Circumcision

When Israel came out of Egypt and settled in the Promised Land, they initially worshipped the true God, but over time they defiled themselves by adopting the pagan practices which the Almighty had forbidden them to do:

“And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim, and Ashtaroth, and the gods of Syria, and the gods of Sidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines, and forsook the LORD, and served not him.” (Judg. 10:6)

Despite forsaking the LORD, Israel still did, after a fashion, continue to keep the things of God. When, for example, the northern Ten Tribes broke away from Judah, they still kept the feast of Succoth, referred to as the feast of the seventh month, but Jeroboam moved the feast from the seventh month to the eighth:

“And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the ***eighth month***, on the ***fifteenth day*** of the month, ***like unto the feast that is in Judah***, and he went up unto the altar; so did he in Beth-el, to sacrifice unto the calves that he had made; and he placed in Beth-el the priests of the high places that he had made. And he went up unto the altar which he had made in Beth-el on the fifteenth day in the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised of his own heart; and he ordained a feast for the children of Israel, and went up unto the altar, to offer.” (1 Kings 12:32-33)

Even after the Ten Tribes were taken into captivity, they still practised circumcision, though the Greek writers would have us falsely believe that circumcision was introduced by the Egyptians. The Greek historian Herodotus, for example, records:

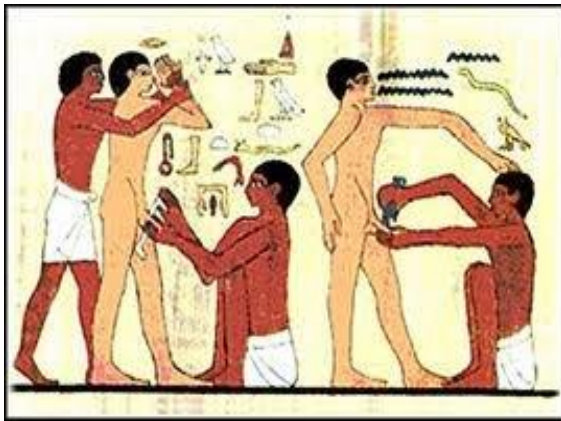
“but my better proof was that the Colchians and Egyptians and Ethiopians are the only nations that have from the first practised circumcision. The Phoenicians and the Syrians of Palestine acknowledge that they learned the custom from the Egyptians, and the Syrians of the valleys of the Thermodon and the Parthenius, as well as their neighbors the Macrones, say that they learned it lately from the Colchians.”²

This, of course, is complete nonsense and undermines the authority of the Bible. The “Syrians in Palestine” he is referring to are Jews. As demonstrated in my work, *The Forgotten Tribe of Naphtali & the Phoenicians*, the Phoenicians likewise were Israelites. There is absolutely no evidence that the Egyptians ever practised circumcision. (None of the pharaohs, for instance, were circumcised!) The only evidence of circumcision being performed in Egypt is at Sakkara, where one bas-relief shows a couple of Phoenicians being circumcised by Egyptians (though why this ceremony is being performed by Egyptians is a mystery), and the other shows a Phoenician with a circumcised penis. (See pictures on next page.)

Circumcision is based on the promise given to Abraham that ***he*** and his sons shall inherit the land of Israel for an everlasting possession. It was most certainly ***not*** something which the Phoenicians and Syrians learnt from the Egyptians or the Colchians!

“And I will establish My covenant between ***me*** and ***thee*** and thy seed after thee throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after

² Herodotus, *Histories* [2.104](#).



Top: Circumcision being performed on Semites from Tomb of Ankh-Mahor at Sakkara - 6th Dynasty.



Right: A carpenter with circumcised penis from Sakkara - 6th Dynasty.

thee. And I will give **unto thee**, and to thy seed after thee, the land of thy sojournings, all the land of Canaan, **for an everlasting possession**; and I will be their God. And God said unto Abraham: 'And as for thee, thou shalt keep My covenant, thou, and thy seed after thee throughout their generations. **this is my covenant**, which ye shall keep, between Me and you and thy seed after thee: every male among you shall be circumcised.'" (Gen. 17:7-10.)

This promise that Abraham and his sons would inherit the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession has not yet been fulfilled because Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were all sojourners in the land.³ They neither inherited the land, nor saw the fulfilment of this prophecy in their lifetime. Nevertheless, this promise **will** be fulfilled when the LORD sets his throne in Jerusalem:

"And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem." (Isa. 2:3.)

Referring back to the above-quoted passage from Herodotus, the Macrones he mentions are the people the Assyrians referred to both as Mehranu and as Mahirâni, a people who at one time dwelt in the land of Mehri, a land which Adad-nirari II king of Assyria locates to the south of the land of Harran, a land which we know as "the land of Gilead".

"In that year, and in the month *Ululu*, during an expedition against the land of Arime [i.e. Syria], in the city of Murarir(?), which is in the land of Shuprê [a people who dwelt in Mesopotamia], he fought a battle. In that year and in the month ... from the land of Mahirâni to the city of Shuppâ(?), which is in the land of Harran [in Syria], he raided."⁴

The Mahirâni are the people we know as sons of Machir son of Menashe.

"And the children of Machir the son of Manasseh went to Gilead, and took it, and dispossessed the Amorite which was in it." (Num. 32:39.)

The reason why the Macrones were circumcised is now self-evident.

³ e.g. Gen. 23:4 & Gen. 37:1

⁴ *Ancient Records of Assyria & Babylonia* Vol. 1, p.121, §.390, Daniel D. Luckenbill, University of Chicago Press, 1926.

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The name Colchis is not mentioned in the Assyrian records for the simple reason that the people who gave their name to the land of Colchis did not arrive there until **after** the tribe of Judah had been taken into captivity. Colchis is a variant spelling of the name Chalcol, this being one of the four sons of Zerach of the tribe of Judah,⁵ a person called Chalkeos (Χάλκεος) by Josephus.⁶

I should perhaps point out, that when Israel was planted “in the cities of the Medes” (2 Kings 17:6 & 18:11), those cities of the Medes were located to the south of the Zagros Mountains and included this region between the Caspian and the Black Sea where the Iberians and Colchians were dwelling. When Tiglathpileser III and Sargon II went up against “the provinces of the mighty Medes”,⁷ those campaigns were against the lands of Urartu (Ararat) in the west – **not** to the north of the Zagros range where the Medes later settled. This earlier province of the Medes, where the Ten Tribes were planted, included most of the regions around the River Habur in Mesopotamia, and according to Herodotus, extended as far as the River Halys in Anatolia:

“For the boundary of the Median and Lydian empires was the river Halys.”⁸

Included within this region was the land of Ushkakkâna⁹ or Ushkakan,¹⁰ a land which appears to be identical to the Ushshukani mentioned by Adad-nirari I,¹¹ a land which was located somewhere between the Habur river and Carchemish on the Euphrates. The city of Sakané (Σακάνη or its variant metathesised form of Σανάκη *Sanaké*) in this region mentioned by Ptolemy¹² would seem to testify to this identification. This is the land which the Targum Yerushalmi identifies as the land of Ashkenaz.¹³

These people who were practicing circumcision, and who Herodotus claimed had learnt it from the Egyptians, were therefore Israelites. Despite polluting God’s name, Israel still, to a certain degree, continued holding on to the things of the true God even long after they went into exile. This included using the name of the true God.



Bekhyria (named after Becher son of Ephraim), Iberia (i.e. Hebrew land – after the Hebrews who at one time dwelt there), Heniocheti (after Hanoch son of Reuben) and Colchis (after Chalcol son of Zerach). Taokheti likewise will have been named after Tachath, the name of two of the descendants of Ephraim. The Macrones were dwelling just west of the Bekhyrians.

⁵ 1 Chron. 2:6 where the name is transliterated in the AV as Calcol (כַּלְכֹּל) and 1 Kings 4:31 where the name is transliterated in the AV as Chalcol (כַּלְכֹּל). (Notice that Zerach [AV Zerah] is called Ezrach [AV Ezraite] in the book of Kings.)

⁶ Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* viii.43. (viii.ii.5 in Whiston's translation where he has transliterated as Chalcol.)

⁷ *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia* op. cit. Vol. 1, pp.285-6, §.795.

⁸ Herodotus, *Histories* 1.72.

⁹ *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia* Vol. 1, p.285, §.795.

¹⁰ *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia* Vol. 1, p.291, §.811.

¹¹ *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia* Vol. 1, p.27, §.73.

¹² Ptolemy, *Geography* Book 5, Chap. 18, §.10.

¹³ *Jewish Encyclopedia* Vol. 2, article on [Ashkenaz](#), pp.191-2, Isidore Singer et al, New York 1900.

Baal

The first mention of Baal in the Bible is in the book of Numbers. There we are told that “Balak took Balaam, and brought him up *into the high places of Baal*, that thence he might see the utmost part of the people”. (Num. 22:41) Balaam was a prophet of the LORD, but he disobeyed the living God.

“And God came unto Balaam, and said: ‘What men are these with thee?’...

“And God said unto Balaam: ‘Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people; for they are blessed.’” (Num. 22:9-12)

He nonetheless disobeyed this commandment and went to Moab and erected the ‘high places of Baal’ anyway. Note that Baal was *not* a Moabite God. The God worshipped by the Moabites was known as Chemosh. (1 Kings 11:33) Now why would God go to such lengths to prevent Balaam from prophesying, even to the extent of sending his angels to kill him, if he was a false prophet? After all, the words of a false prophet would not have had any effect, would they? The Biblical text suggests that Balaam was close to God. We are told that God twice conversed directly with Balaam. (Num. 22:9 & 22:20) On the second occasion, God told him that He would give him the words to speak. The suggestion that God would go to such lengths to prevent a false prophet from prophesying simply does not make sense. Could it be that Baal was the original name of God?

Note the words of Yehoshua as recorded in the book of Revelation:

“But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, **to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.**” (Rev. 2:14.)

In the book of Numbers, we read:

“Behold, these [the Midianite women] caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD.” (Num. 31:16.)

This then was Balaam’s sin – *not* the worship of Baal!

“And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. And Israel joined himself unto Baalpeor: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel.” (Num. 25:1-3.)

This understanding has been lost over the centuries due to the indoctrination that Balaam was a Baal worshipper combined with the idea that Baal is a false god.

Let us take our arguments to the next level and consider an oft overlooked passage in the second book of Samuel where we are told that David, when he became king, conquered the Philistines:

“But when the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines came up to seek David; and David heard of it, and went down to the hold. The Philistines also came and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim. And David enquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up to the Philistines? Wilt thou deliver them into mine hand? And the LORD said unto David, ‘Go up: for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into thine hand’. And David came to Baalperazim, and David smote them there, and said, ‘The LORD hath broken forth upon mine enemies before me, as the breach of waters’. **Therefore he called the name of that place Baalperazim.**” (2 Sam. 5:17-20.)

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The first book of Chronicles likewise records this episode:

“So they came up to Baalperazim; and David smote them there. Then David said, God hath broken in upon mine enemies by mine hand like the breaking forth of waters: **therefore they called the name of that place Baalperazim.**” (1 Chron. 14:11.)

Why would King David name a place Baal Perazim (בַּעַל פְּרָצִים), a name which literally means “Baal of the breaches [or ‘scattering, defeating or breaking through’]”, hence giving the glory to Baal? (NB: Perazim [פְּרָצִים] is the same word as Pharez [פָּרֶץ], one of the two sons of Tamar recorded in Gen. 46:12.) This anomaly can only be satisfactorily explained if Baal was the original name of God. Note that, by contrast, the chief God of the Philistines was Dagon:

“Then the lords of the Philistines gathered them together for to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god, and to rejoice: for they said, ‘Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand’.” (Judg. 16:23.)

Some of the places which became Israel’s possession contained the name Baal. We read, for example, of the city of Baal-Gad בַּעַל גָּד in the Lebanon valley in northern Israel. (Josh. 12:7) Baal-Gad means literally “Baal of [the tribe of] Gad”. Similarly, Baal-Hermon (בַּעַל הֶרְמוֹן) was a place in northern Israel. (Judg. 3:3.) Hermon was the Israelite name for the mountain which was called Sirion by the Sidonians and Shenir by the Amorites. (Deut. 3:9.) Hermon was the Hebrew name. King Solomon likewise built the city of Baalath. (1 Kings 9:18.) More importantly, we learn that the “ark of God” was brought up from a place called Baale [of] Judah (בַּעַלִּי, יְהוּדָה):

“And David arose, and went with all the people that were with him from Baale of Judah, to bring up from thence the ark of God, **whose name is called by the name of the LORD of hosts that dwelleth between the cherubims.**” (2 Sam. 6:2.)

This could be interpreted as saying that this place Baale takes its name **from** the name of the LORD. (Most people instead interpret this passage as saying that the ark of God is called by the name of the LORD.) This same place is elsewhere called Baalah (בַּעְלָה):

“And David went up, and all Israel, to Baalah (בַּעְלָתָה meaning ‘towards Baalah’), that is, to Kirjathjearim, which belonged to Judah, to bring up thence the ark of God the LORD, that dwelleth between the cherubims, whose name is called on it.” (1 Chron. 13:6.)

“Whose name is called on it”. Literally אֲשֶׁר-נִקְרָא שָׁם, meaning “which name it was called”, which seems to suggest that it is referring to the place in which the ark was located rather than the ark itself. If it is referring to the ark, we would instead expect the final words to read הָיָה יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר-נִקְרָא עָלָיו בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה, as in Gen. 4:26. We should therefore bear in mind these alternative readings which show that these two passages can be interpreted as meaning that the city of Kiriathjearim was named **after** the LORD our God – hence Baalah.

“And the border was drawn from the top of the hill unto the fountain of the water of Nephtoah, and went out to the cities of mount Ephron; and the border was drawn to Baalah (בַּעְלָה), which is Kirjathjearim.” (Josh. 15:9.)

Elsewhere, this place is called Kiriath-Baal (קִרְיַת-בַּעַל), a city which is enumerated among the cities of Judah:

“Kirjathbaal, which is Kirjathjearim, and Rabbah; two cities with their villages.” (Josh. 15:60.)

Kiriath-Yaarim (AV Kirjathjearim) means 'city of the forests' whilst Kiriath-Baal (AV Kirjathbaal) means 'city of Baal'. The important thing to note is that the ark of God was kept at a place which was named after Baal. Can this be nothing more than coincidence?

The first mention of Israel turning to Baal worship after entering the Promised Land appears in the book of Judges:

"And the children of Israel did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, and served **Baalim**. And they forsook the LORD, the God of their fathers, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other Gods, of the Gods of the peoples that were round about them, and worshipped them; and they provoked the LORD. And they forsook the LORD, and served Baal **and** Ashtaroth." (Judg. 2:11-13)

The Hebrew word 'Baal' simply means 'Lord', 'Master' or 'Husband'. The significance of the use of Baalim (meaning 'Lords') in this passage can also be easily overlooked. If Baal was a specific God, then why the plural Baalim? The simple answer is that they were worshipping gods rather than the one God. It is interesting to note that Ashtoreth, who is closely associated with Asherah, is never associated with Baal other than amongst the Israelites and Phoenicians. Even in the Assyrian records, where Ashtoreth is called Ishtar and Asherah is called Easharru (var. Isharru), whilst these two goddesses are closely associated with each other, there is no evidence of any association with Baal.

Baal was clearly associated with Phoenicia. William Smith wrote:

"From the period of the Sidonian migration, Tyre must be regarded as the head of the Phoenician nation. During the headship of Sidon, the history of Phoenicia is mythical. Phoenix, who is represented as the father of Cadmus and Europa, is a mere personification of the country; Belus, the first king, is the god Baal; and Agenor, the reputed founder both of Tyre and Sidon, is nothing but a Greek epithet, perhaps of Hercules."¹⁴

In *The Forgotten Tribe of Naphtali & the Phoenicians*, we demonstrate that Agenor is the Doric-Greek transliteration of the Hebrew name Guni, this being the second-born son of Naphtali, whilst Europa is a variant spelling of the name Yeroboam (AV Jeroboam). What has been preserved by the Greek writers is a lot of allegorical stories which have become corrupted over time. In short, the god Baal (Belus) was the principle god, the 'first king', of these Israelite tribes.

If we look back to the time when the Israelites were wandering in the wilderness, during those 40 years under the direction of Moses, even though they witnessed the great things God did for them, Israel still continued to sin and rebel against God. There is no mention, however, of Baal other than an oblique reference in Num. 25:1-5 to the joining of Israel to Baal-Peor. This place of Peor is where Balaam sacrificed seven bullocks to God on seven altars (Num. 23:28-30) and the spirit of the LORD fell on him and he ended up blessing Israel. (Num. 24:1-9) Would the "spirit of the LORD" fall on a false prophet? Afterwards, the daughters of Moab came into the camp of the Israelites and caused them to err in spirit by leading them astray (Num. 25:1-3) into worshipping their gods and to eat "the sacrifices of the dead". (Psalm 106:28), "to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication" (Rev. 2:14). These "daughters of Moab" are the people also called Midianites. (Num. 31:1-18.) We are even told

¹⁴ *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography* Vol. 2, entry under [Phoenicia](#), Section IV - History, p.609, William Smith, London 1872.

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that Israel “slew the kings of Midian, beside the rest of them that were slain; namely, Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, five kings of Midian: Balaam also the son of Beor they slew with the sword.” (Num. 31:8.) The word ‘Midianite’ was clearly being used in this context as a generic geographical term. Notice that Balaam was confederate with these Midianites (also referred to as Moabites) and was slain with them.

The sacrificing to the dead was the sin they committed here – **not** the worship of Baal. Those people who followed in Moab’s sins, however, were quickly put to death to prevent others being led astray. (Num. 25:4-9)

Balaam

As already stated, Moab’s god was Chemosh. Balaam, however, worshipped Baal. Like Abraham before him, he offered up sacrifices to the true God.

Josephus records:

“Now these Midianites knowing there was one Balaam, who lived by Euphrates, **and was the greatest of the prophets at that time**, and one that was in friendship with them, sent some of their honorable princes along with the ambassadors of Balak, to entreat the prophet to come to them, that he might imprecate curses to the destruction of the Israelites. So Balaam received the ambassadors, and treated them very kindly; and when he had supped, he inquired what was God’s will, and what this matter was for which the Midianites entreated him to come to them. But when God opposed his going, he came to the ambassadors, and told them that he was himself very willing and desirous to comply with their request, but informed them that God was opposite to his intentions, **even that God who had raised him to great reputation on account of the truth of his predictions**; for that this army, which they entreated him to come and curse, was in the favor of God; on which account he advised them to go home again, and not to persist in their enmity against the Israelites; and when he had given them that answer, he dismissed the ambassadors.”¹⁵

Whiston commented:

“Note that Josephus never supposes Balaam to be an idolater, nor to seek idolatrous enchantments, or to prophesy falsely, but to be no other than an ill-disposed prophet of the true God.”

So why then did Balaam offer up the sacrifices on ‘the high places of Baal’ unless Baal was the original name of God?

The first place Balaam sacrificed was called בָּמוֹת בַּעַל Bamoth-Baal (Num. 22:41), meaning ‘the high places of Baal’. He made **seven** altars and sacrificed bullocks on each one. (Num. 23:1) and then moved to the top of Peor and erected another **seven** altars and sacrificed bullocks on those. (Num. 23:29.) The Israelite prophets also sacrificed in high places:

“As soon as ye are come into the city, ye shall straightway find him [i.e. the prophet Samuel], before he go up to the high place (הַבְּמֹתָה) to eat; for the people will not eat until he come, because he doth bless the sacrifice; and afterwards they eat that are bidden. And they went up to the city; and as they came within the city, behold, Samuel came out toward them, to go up to the high place (הַבְּמֹתָה).” (1 Sam. 9:13-14.)

King Saul was also instructed by Samuel to go to “the hill of God” in the land of the Philistines where he would meet a band of prophets coming down from “the high place” (הַבְּמֹתָה) playing

¹⁵ Josephus, *Antiquities* [iv.vi.2](#).

instruments and prophesying. (1 Sam. 10:5. Note that this was before Jerusalem became the possession of Israel, so the hill of God spoken of here was not Jerusalem.)

Balaam's method of sacrifice was therefore very similar to the Mosaic laws which Israel kept. The number **seven** was also clearly an important number for the true God. When, for example, King David brought the ark of God to Jerusalem from the house of Obed-Edom, the Levites sacrificed **seven** bullocks and **seven** rams. (1 Chron. 15:26.) When Hezekiah had ordered the house of the LORD to be cleansed, "the priests the sons of Aaron" offered up **seven** bullocks, **seven** rams, **seven** lambs and **seven** he-goats for a sin offering "for the kingdom and for the sanctuary". (2 Chron. 29:21.) Note that in each instance, like Balaam, they offered up seven bullocks.

Israel were still, in their own corrupted way, keeping the things of the true God, but were defiling his holy name by assimilating within their form of worship the ways of the heathen, thereby polluting the sanctuary. The phallus is usually associated with Baal worship, but the phallus was actually more correctly connected with the worship of Ashtoreth – the goddess of fertility – rather than Baal. When the prophet Elijah took on the priests of Baal, the problem was not because they worshipped Baal, but rather the **way** they were worshipping him. These Baal worshippers were offering up sacrifices to Baal, just as the Jews and patriarchs of old all offered up to the true God, but they were going about it the wrong way. The Bible shows that they were throwing themselves on to the altar and their practices involved mutilating their bodies with 'swords and lancets' (1 Kings 18:28), which practice was forbidden by the law of Moses. (Lev. 19:28 & 21:5.)

Evidence of Emendations in the Biblical Text

In the Bible, we read of a place called Yehovah-Yireh, the word yireh meaning 'it/he shall be seen':

"And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh [יהוה יִרֶה]: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen." (Gen. 22:14)

The name which has been transliterated as *Jehovah-jireh* (YHVH-Yireh) has been amended by the Jewish scribes from Baal-Yireh, a name which, when transliterated into Greek, becomes Balearus! The Balearic Islands off the southern coast of Spain were originally known as Gymnesia (named after Guni, son of Naphtali), but were later known as Baleares to the Greeks. The origin of the name Baleares is not known or fully realised, though William Smith did have this to say about the name:

"The Greek and Roman writers generally derive the name of the people from their skill as slingers (βαλεαρεῖς [*Baleareis*], from βάλλω [*Ballu*]); but Strabo assigns to the name a Phoenician origin, observing that it was the Phoenician equivalent for the Greek γυμνητάς [*Gymnetas*], that is, light-armed soldiers. (Strab. xiv.[ii.10]) Though his explanation be wrong, his main fact is probably right. The root *BAL* points to a Phoenician origin; perhaps the islands were sacred to the deity of that name; and the accidental resemblance to the Greek root *BAL* (in βάλλω), coupled with the occupation of the people, would be quite a sufficient foundation for the usual Greek practice of assimilating the name to their own language. That it was not, however, Greek at first, may be inferred with great probability from the fact that the common Greek name of the islands is not βαλεαρεῖς, but Γυμνησῖαι [*Gymnesiai*], the former being the name used by the natives, as well as by the Carthaginians and Romans... ..The latter name, of which two fancied etymologies have been already

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referred to, is probably derived from the light equipment of the Balearic troops (γυμνητας).¹⁶

Whilst William Smith has made the connection between Bel and Baal, he clearly has not made the connection with the second part of the name. The first settlers to occupy the Balearic Islands were Israelites from Phoenicia. In my book, *The Forgotten Tribe of Naphtali & the Phoenicians*, I demonstrate that the Phoenicians were Israelites – **not** Canaanites as is usually reported. The Phoenicians arrived in Spain during the time of King Solomon with Herodotus calling them Geryones.¹⁷ The name Geryon is derived from the Hebrew name Gera, a family named after one of the sons of Benjamin. (Gen. 46:21 & 1 Chron. 8:3. Gera was a family name, as demonstrated in Judg. 3:15 & 2 Sam. 18:19. All of this is explained in my book.)

The Balearic Islands in the Mediterranean were therefore seemingly named after the place in the Middle East of this name. I would suggest that the Mount Ba'li-ra'si of Shalmaneser III's texts, a place located somewhere in northern Israel,¹⁸ is to be identified as Mount Baal-Yireh, a name which has been changed by the Jewish scribes in the current versions of the Hebrew Bible (i.e. the Tanakh) to Yehoveh-Yireh (AV Jehovah-jireh).

Likewise, in Judges 9:5, we read of a place in northern Israel called Baal-Berith (בַּעַל בְּרִית), but in Judges 9:46, that same place is called El-Berith (אֵל בְּרִית). The sages, whilst they have amended the latter occurrence of the name Baal to El, have clearly omitted to change the first occurrence of the name.

As previously stated, the Hebrew word יהוה is pronounced in the synagogue services as *Adonai*. This name Adonai is equivalent to the Greek word Adonis. The worship of Adonis was considered to be of Phoenician origin:

“The worship of Adonis, which in later times was spread over nearly all the countries round the Mediterranean, was, as the story itself sufficiently indicates, of Asiatic, or more especially of Phoenician origin.”¹⁹

Knowing that the tetragrammaton יהוה replaced the word Baal, we can take a moment to consider an episode which is recorded in the book of Exodus. We read:

“And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD **descended** upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.” (Exod. 19:18.)

A couple of verses later, after the sounding of a trumpet in heaven, we read:

“And the LORD **came down** upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the LORD called Moses up to the top of the mount; and Moses went up.” (verse 20.)

Did the LORD then descend upon the mountain twice?

The Hebrew for the first part of verse 18 reads:

וְהָרַם סִינַי עָשָׁן כֵּלֶּו, מִפְּנֵי אֲשֶׁר יָרַד עָלָיו יְהוָה, בְּאֵשׁ.

¹⁶ *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography op. cit.* Vol. 1, entry under [Balears](#), pp.373-4.

¹⁷ Herodotus, *Histories* [iv.8](#).

¹⁸ *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia* Vol. 1, p.243, §.672, Daniel David Luckenbill, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Illinois 1926.

¹⁹ *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology* Vol. 1, entry under [Adonis](#), p.20, William Smith, Boston 1870.

The word עָשָׁן *ashan*, which is translated as ‘smoke’ can also be translated as ‘to burn’. Is it possible that the word *Baal*, which can also mean either ‘on top’ or ‘on the top’, has been mistaken for the name of God and has been changed in error? If we replace the word “LORD” in the above-quoted verse with Baal (בַּעַל), we get:

וְהָרַ סִינַי עָשָׁן כֵּלֹ, מִפְּנֵי אֲשֶׁר יָרַד עָלָיו בַּעַל בְּאֵשׁ.

which might then be translatable as: “And mount Sinai was altogether smoking/ablaze because it [i.e. the smoke/burning] came down upon it, **on the top**, with fire”. (NB: Bear in mind that the punctuation and vowel pointing are a late addition and did not appear in the original Hebrew text.) The rest of the passage seems to be describing a mountain top covered in molten rock which was burning ‘like an oven’ and which was sending up columns of smoke. The fact that the mountain ‘quaked’ also suggests some seismic activity associated with its burning. Note that it is **after** this initial burning that the trumpet sounded, the LORD called Moses to the top of the mount and the LORD **then** descended on the top the mount.

I would stress that this interpretation does not conflict with other passages which state:

“And ye came near and stood under the mountain; and the mountain burned with fire unto the midst of heaven, with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness. And the LORD spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice.” (Deut. 4:11-12.)

“And Moses went up into the mount, and a cloud covered the mount. And the glory of the LORD abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud. And the sight of the glory of the LORD was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel.” (Exod. 24:15-17.)

The word here translated as ‘cloud’ (עָנָן) is different from the word translated as ‘smoke’ (עָשָׁן) in the first passage. (The first word simply means a cloud whilst the second is as a result of fire or intense heat.) Whilst this is arguably circumstantial evidence, and I am not stating categorically that this is the correct interpretation, it nonetheless provides an interesting alternative view of the events described in this passage recorded in the book of Exodus.

In the book of Judges, we are told:

“The mountains melted (נָזַל) from before the LORD, even that Sinai from before the LORD God of Israel.” (Judg. 5:5.)

The Hebrew word נָזַל *nazal*, which is here translated as ‘melted’, means ‘to flow down’, ‘to run down’, ‘to overflow’, ‘to spread’, ‘to drop’ or ‘to turn to liquid’. The translation which appears in the NIV and other more modern translations where this passage is translated as “The mountains quaked...” is simply wrong. There is no precedent for the translation of the Hebrew word נָזַל *nazal* as ‘quake’. The Hebrew clearly states that the top of the mountains had turned to liquid. The Latin Vulgate, which is one of the earliest translations of the Hebrew Bible, translates as *fluxerunt* which means ‘melted’ or ‘flowing’ (the English word ‘flux’ is from the same root) and accords with the usage of the Hebrew word נָזַל *nazal*. Combined with the earlier statements that the mountain burned like a furnace (or oven) and exceedingly quaked, this shows that we are looking at a volcanic eruption. The word which is translated as “quaked” in Exod. 19:18 is יִתְרָד *yeherad*, meaning ‘trembled’ and is the very same word which also used in Exod. 19:16 when we are told that “all the people that were in the camp

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trembled [תַּרְסָה]. Another word meaning ‘quaked’ is used in Judges 5:4, though the word רָעָשָׁה *ra’asha* is there translated in the AV as ‘trembled’. The mountain “burned with fire unto the midst of heaven”, which tells us that the top of the mountain was covered in hot molten lava. I can see no other way of explaining the Biblical narrative, and if it was covered in hot molten lava, would the writers have been able to describe it any other way? With the limited vocabulary available to them, the answer has to be a categoric ‘No’.

If the scribes have accidentally changed the word בָּעַל in Exodus 19:18 to יְהוָה, then by changing the one word, they have changed the meaning of the whole passage. It was not the LORD who descended on the mountain in fire, it was molten lava which descended on the **top** of the mountain, and this is what we see on the top of Jebel al Maqla in north-western Saudi Arabia, this mountain being known to the local inhabitants as Jebel al Musa – the mountain of Moses. Glen A. Fritz has confirmed that the top of the mountain is covered in basalt rock of volcanic origin, though he argues for millions of years (around 440-430 mya) rather than a few thousand years for its formation,²⁰ but he is relying on radiometric dating methods which have been shown to be based on false underlying assumptions. It has been assumed, for example, that there is no argon in rock when it is formed and that it takes around 10,000 years before there any significant amount of argon is formed in the rock. Research shows, however, that there is already a significant amount of argon, as well as other gasses, trapped in the rock when the rock is formed, so unless you know how much argon was in the rock from the outset, any dating of the rock by looking at the current amount of argon in it is going to be pointless. When the same rock sample is subjected to a number of different radiometric dating methods, they all disagree with each other – often by millions of years.²¹

Also, being a geologist, Glen A. Fritz has been indoctrinated with evolutionist thinking which says that everything has to be explained by slow gradual processes. Because this is a huge topic in itself, these matters will be left for a separate paper. Basically, the idea that “The present is the key to the past”, a teaching which dates back to the 18th Century Scottish geologist James Hutton and popularised by Charles Lyell, is totally spurious. More correctly, the past is the key to the present! Geologists have got it completely the wrong way round and flatly refuse to believe in anything which suggests a catastrophe of Biblical proportions. Consequently, in their minds, the Noahide Flood could not possibly have occurred because such floods do not occur today. This is false circular reasoning. In fact, Herodotus tells us that the earth has flipped poles at least four times in recorded history:

“....four times in this period the sun rose contrary to his wont; twice he rose where he now sets, and twice he set where he now rises”.²²

Geology confirms that these magnetic reversals of the poles occurred (though it took geologists nearly 60 years before they accepted the evidence!) but such events are dated by them to some many millions of years (around 54 ma) in the past! We shall show that geologists will **always** interpret the evidence according to what they want to hear. When we come to analyse their arguments, we shall find that they do not even stand up to scientific

²⁰ *Fire on the Mountain (Geography, Geology & Theophany at Jabal al-Lawz* p.126, Dr Glen A. Fritz, GeoTech, San Antonio, TX, 2016.

²¹ See, for example, *Radioactive Dating of Rocks: Questions Answered*, Dr. Andrew A. Snelling, an Answers in Genesis article at <https://answersingenesis.org/geology/radiometric-dating/radioactive-dating-of-rocks/>.

²² Herodotus, *Histories* 2.142.

scrutiny. When the evidence is correctly interpreted, we discover that we are only looking at a few thousand years of history!

The Date these Changes to the Holy Scriptures Were Applied

The big question is, when did this change in the written texts from Baal (בַּעַל) to יהוה occur? Who was responsible for this change? Unfortunately, this is not easy to establish. The very first occurrence of *Yah* (variants *Jah* or *lah*) in names appears in the First Book of Samuel where we are told that the name of one of the sons of Samuel was someone called Abiyah (אֲבִיָּה AV Abijah, meaning ‘Yah is my father’ 2 Sam. 8:2).²³ Note that this name is equivalent to Abibaal, which was also the name of the king of Tyre who preceded Hiram.²⁴ If the scribes were expunging the name of Baal from the Bible, they clearly could not allow a son of Samuel, one of the most respected of the prophets, to have the name Abibaal.

The same problem is encountered with the next two occurrences of the usage of the word *Yah* in names. Tseruyah (צֶרֻיָּה AV Zeruiah – the meaning of the name is uncertain) was the sister of King David (1 Chron. 2:16). Once again, if the name in the original text was Tserubaal/Zerubaal, then any suggestion that King David’s sister should have a name which is associated with Baal would not be permissible. The same goes for King David’s son Adoniyah (אֲדֹנִיָּה AV Adonijah, meaning ‘Yah is my lord’) who was born to David by his fourth wife Haggith. (1 Chron. 3:2.) The suggestion that David should have a son named Adonibaal, meaning ‘Baal is my lord/master’, would not be acceptable.

With this knowledge, it is not difficult to work out that the name Elijah or Eliyahu (אֵלִיָּהוּ meaning ‘my God is Yah’) is the equivalent of Elibaal, this being the name of at least two of the kings of Byblos. As Elijah came from the land of Gilead (1 Kings 17:1), which land belonged to the tribe of Menashe of the northern Ten Tribes, it is much more likely that this was Elijah’s real name before it was changed by the Jewish sages. As can be seen, trying to tie things down to a specific period in history is difficult. If I were to make an educated guess as to when the changes occurred, I would suggest that it occurred sometime during the reign of Rehoboam, shortly after the northern kingdom had separated from Judah.

The earliest known use of the name יהוה outside of the Bible seems to date to the time of Amenhotep III of the Egyptian 18th Dynasty (assuming that the inscription has not been added by some later king of this name) where it appears against a picture of one of the conquered peoples who are described as “Shosu of YHVH”. In my main work, I have shown that Amenhotep III was a contemporary of Ahab king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah. The name also appears in line 18 of the Moabite Stone (also known as the Mesha Stele) where it

²³ The name Beriah, this being the name of one of the sons of Asher (Gen. 46:17 & Num. 26:44-5), despite looking as though it has the typical *Yah* ending, is actually written בְּרִיעָה and means ‘with evil’ or ‘in calamity’ – hence we are told that, “Ephraim their father mourned many days, and his brethren came to comfort him. And he went in to his wife, and she conceived, and bore a son, and he called his name Beriah, because it went evil with his house.” (1 Chron. 7:22-3.) Despite the name אִיָּה Aiah looking as though it has a *Yah* ending, this being the name of one of the sons of Zibeon (Gen. 36:24) as well as the father-in-law of one of King Saul’s concubines (2 Sam. 3:7), the name is a word in itself. (See <http://www.abarim-publications.com/Meaning/Aiah.html#W-XG9vZ2s6Y>.)

²⁴ Josephus, *Against Apion* [i.112-127](#) or [i.17-18](#) Whiston’s numbering.

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“Shosu of YHVH” from temple of Amenhotep III at Soleb.

talks about removing the vessels of the LORD (יְהוָה) from the city of Nebo,²⁵ which city belonged to the tribe of Reuben.²⁶ It was, however, originally a city of Moab and is often quoted in prophecies relating to Moab. The city was somewhere to the west of the land of Moab somewhere by Jericho.²⁷ This would suggest that the tribe of Reuben followed Judah’s example of changing the name of the Almighty from Baal to YHVH. There is currently a lot of controversy over whether the name “House of David” is mentioned in the Mesha Stele. If it is, then this would strengthen the argument that Reuben was allied to Judah during that period.

The use of the name Baal in names was commonplace. One of King Saul’s sons was called Eshbaal (אֶשְׁבָּעַל 1 Chron. 8:33), a name meaning either ‘man of Baal’ or ‘fire of Baal’. This son was called Ishbosheth in 2 Sam. 2:10 and 2 Sam. 4:1-8, suggesting an attempt to avoid the use of the name Baal. Saul’s son Jonathan had a son by the name of Merib-baal (1 Chron. 8:34), Joel of the tribe of Reuben (1 Chron. 5:5) as well as Gideon (1 Chron. 8:30) both had sons with the name Baal.

Jonathan was close to David. Why would Jonathan name one of his sons Merib-baal (written twice as מְרִיב־בַּעַל and once as מְרִי־בַעַל), a name which means ‘strife with Baal’ (or maybe even ‘grief from Baal’?). It is recognised that Merib-baal was also known as Mephibosheth (2 Sam. 9:12), with Micah (מִיכָה) the son of Merib-baal being the son also known as Micha (מִיכָא) son of Mephibosheth. The meaning of the name Mephibosheth (מְפִיבֹשֶׁת) is uncertain and various translations have been given. It might mean ‘one who destroys shame’, ‘end of shame’ or ‘throwing off shame’ (all from the Hebrew root פָּאַה meaning ‘to blow away, scatter, cleave or break apart’) or maybe even ‘from the mouth of shame’ (from the Hebrew word פִּי meaning ‘mouth’). The fact that, in both instances (i.e. Eshbaal and Meribaal), the name Baal has been changed to Bosheth, meaning shame, shows that someone was responsible for removing the name Baal before it was decided that Baal should be replaced with the tetragrammaton YHVH (i.e. יְהוָה).

Gideon was also known by the name of Yerubaal (יִרְבָּעַל AV Jerubaal), a name which roughly equates to ‘Let Baal contend against him’. (יָרַב בּוֹ הִבָּעַל Judg. 6:32. The translation of יָרַב as ‘plead’ in the AV is a bit misleading. This word more correctly means ‘fight’, ‘contend’, ‘strive’ or similar.) Yerubaal destroyed the altar and Asherah that was being used by the Israelites of that place and he built a new altar in its place. The new altar must have been built on the exact same spot as the original as the following verse seems to confirm:

²⁵ *The Inscription on the Stele of Méša, Commonly Called the Moabite Stone* [p.15](#), Herbert Fuller Bright Compston, London and New York, 1919.

²⁶ 1 Chron. 5:8.

²⁷ Deut. 34:1.

“And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was broken down, and the Asherah was cut down that was by it, and the second bullock was offered upon the altar that was built.” (Judg. 6:28.)

Again, the offence to the LORD was not the altar to Baal but rather the polluting of the sanctified place (i.e. the defilement of the original altar) with the Asherah, this being a sanctuary of the goddess who was associated with Ashtoreth. This Asherah was built alongside that of Baal, which means that they were combining the two ceremonies. It is interesting to note that Gideon was commanded to burn the wood of the Asherah on the new altar that he built in its place (verse 26), an act which is unattested elsewhere in the Bible. Had the place been so utterly defiled, would not the LORD have given instructions to Gideon to build the altar elsewhere?

Knowing the original name which was written in the Bible before the Jewish sages changed it, we can well understand why it was deemed necessary to change it. Leaving the name Baal in the Bible would have caused immense confusion. The name Baal, which has become accepted as the name of a pagan god, simply means ‘Lord’, ‘Master’ or ‘Husband’. Knowing what we now know, it adds clarity to the following passage in the book of Hoshea, in reference to a future event (i.e. the Second Exodus):

“And it shall be at that day [i.e. when the LORD redeems His people], saith the LORD, that thou shalt call me Ishi [i.e. my husband]; and shalt call me no more Baali [i.e. my Baal].” (Hosh. 2:16)

At what time then did we use the name Baal for the everlasting God? The answer is now perfectly obvious. The Jewish sages have changed the name Baal (בַּעַל), wherever it appears in the Bible, to the tetragrammaton יְהוָה in order to conceal the original name of God and to differentiate between the God of the Jews and the perverted form of religion which had taken hold amongst the Ten Tribes in the north. This knowledge has, however, been lost. It has been totally concealed from everyone for generations. Thankfully, the sages have overlooked one or two verses thereby leaving us just enough evidence to discern the truth.

It was not the worship of Baal which was the problem. It was the worship of Baalim, that is, many Baals; it was the worship of Baal **and** Ashtoreth. The northern Ten Tribes were polluting the things of the true God by absorbing the abominations of the nations around about – which is precisely what was prophesied would happen:

“Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou enquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise.” (Deut. 12:30.)

Of course, Israel did just that! These gods caused the northern kingdom to be led into captivity at the hands of Shalmaneser V. Judah likewise adopted the same practices as the northern kingdom, which eventually led to Judah being taken into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar II king of Babylon:

“And he [Josiah king of Judah] put down the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem; them also that burned incense unto Baal, **to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets, and to all the host of heaven.**” (2 Kings 23:5.)

“Therefore thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the Chaldeans, and into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he shall take it: And the Chaldeans,

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that fight against this city, shall come and set fire on this city, and burn it with the houses, **upon whose roofs they have offered incense unto Baal**, and poured out drink offerings **unto other gods**, to provoke me to anger." (Jer. 32:28-9.)

Note that Judah also was mixing the worship of the true God with the worship of other gods. It is not the offering of incense to Baal which was the sin, though the instruction from the LORD does specify that this burning of incense should be performed in front of the sanctuary – **not** on the roof tops (Exod. 30:6), but rather the polluting of the things of God with pagan practices, even those practices which were strictly forbidden by the law of Moses.

Baal as Sun God

On a Phoenician stele in the Louvre Museum in Paris we have Baal represented as a sun god. (See picture on right.) Consider then the following passages from the Bible:

"For the LORD God is a **sun** and shield..." (Psalm 84:11.)

"But unto you that fear my name shall the **Sun of righteousness** arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth and grow up as calves of the stall." (Malachi 4:2.)

In Israel, archaeologists discovered two synagogues with mosaics portraying the sun god Helios riding his chariots. One is the Beth Alpha synagogue near Beth She'an in northern Israel dating to the sixth century CE, the other is at Sepphoris in northern Israel which is believed to date to the



Baal on a Phoenician stele (Louvre Museum, Paris.)



Mosaic from Beth Alpha synagogue with the god Helios riding his chariots (in the centre).



Mosaic from synagogue in Sepphoris with the god Helios now replaced by the sun.

first half of the fifth century CE. It should be noted that Helios is the Greek transliteration of the Hebrew word El (אֱלֹהִים El var. אֱלֹהַ Eloah) simply meaning 'God'. (As I have demonstrated in *The Forgotten Tribe of Naphtali & the Phoenicians*, the Greeks states were established by Israelites.) Archaeologists are at a loss to explain these representations of the god Helios in Jewish synagogues, a god which is supposed to be an abomination according to our modern interpretation of the Bible.

This realisation that the original name of God was Baal will probably come as an enormous shock to most people. We have been taught from an early age that Baal was a pagan god who was the cause of Israel's downfall. It was actually the embracing of the worship of other gods alongside Baal which was the true cause of their downfall. Baal was the God of the Israelites who brought our forefathers out of Egypt. By hiding the original name of God, the Jewish sages have only succeeded in confusing the issue. Having said that, this changing of the name of God actually demonstrates that there was an earlier version of the Bible, which immediately dispels any suggestion that the Bible only dates from the time the Jews returned from Babylon and Persia as some academics have argued. It shows that the Bible **cannot** date any later than the time of Rehoboam, which is around the time when the change to יהוה from אֱלֹהִים must have occurred.

The True Olive Tree

This does not mean, however, that Baal worship is justified, as what is now recognised as Baal worship is in fact the corrupted form which is to be avoided. We should not follow in the sins of Jeroboam. Even today, many Christians are still adhering to this false religion. If you are forsaking the law of Moses, or you are keeping the feasts of Baal and Ashtoreth, which feasts the Roman Catholic Church has renamed Christmas and [the feast to the goddess] Easter respectively, then you are walking in the sins of Jeroboam.

To quote the words of Jesus the Christ:

"The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not." (Matt. 23:2-3.)

This idea that we should be obeying what the scribes and Pharisees tell us is considered *anathema* to most Christians who have been taught that the Jews are in error and should be avoided. They ignore the fact that the Gentiles were **grafted in** to the true olive tree and that that olive tree was the Jewish – **not** Roman Catholic – religion.

Bede records:

"So John, in accordance with the custom of the law, began the celebration of Easter Day [sic] in the evening of the fourteenth day of the first month, regardless of whether it fell on the Sabbath or any other day."²⁸

Even the Catholic delegate had to admit:

²⁸ Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* [Book 3 Chap. 25](#).

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“Far from me to charge John with foolishness: he literally observed the decrees of the Mosaic law **when the Church was still Jewish** in many respects...”²⁹

In other words, the church was originally keeping the “Jewish” feasts and “Jewish” calendar, but the Roman Catholic church was still trying to distance itself from anything remotely “Jewish”. I would here point out, however, that the feasts were given to us **by God!** They were **God’s feast days** and not exclusively for the Jews.

“For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off, **and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree;** Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: **For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.**” (Romans 11:16-21.)

This idea that the Jews are not to be listened to is a Roman Catholic teaching which is contrary to the teachings of the New Testament writers. After the destruction of Jerusalem, there was widespread hatred of Jews and anyone who continued to follow the Jewish teachings were branded as Judaisers and heretics. Even today, Christians think that they are the true olive tree into which everyone else should be grafted. This is **not** what the apostle Paul or the Bible teaches!

I should perhaps mention, that in the one copy of the Hebrew Gospel of Matthew in the British Library (Ms. Add. No. 26964), the words “they say” in the above passage is rendered with the word יאמר *yomer* (meaning “he says” or “it says”) instead of יאמרו *yomru*, leading some Torah observant Christians to argue that the passage is referring to obedience to the law of Moses rather than obeying the Pharisees. This copying error (the dropping of the final *vav*) also appears in the Ms. Opp. Add. 4° 72 in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. However, we have in total **nine copies** of the Hebrew Gospel of Matthew and **all seven other copies** clearly show the final *vav*,³⁰ so the fact that two of the nine copies shows something different does not invalidate the original reading in the Greek. To argue otherwise is just ‘cherry picking’ what you want to hear. Also, it should be stressed that all nine extant copies of the Hebrew Gospels date between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries,³¹ hence postdate the Greek texts by more than a thousand years. Being copies, we simply do not know how reliable they are. To suggest that we ‘rewrite’ our understanding of this passage on the basis of just two manuscripts is very unwise. The evidence shows that these Hebrew Gospels are translations **from** the Greek and **not** the other way round!

There are other errors in these Hebrew Gospels of Matthew which clearly show that they are not copies of an original Hebrew text. The most glaring error is in Chapter 16 verse 18 which states:

ואני אומר לך שאתה אבן ואני אבנה עליך בית תפילתי. ושערי גהנם לא יוכלו נגדך.

“I say to you [i.e. Peter]: you are a stone and I will build upon you my house of prayer. The gates of Gehenna will not prevail against you.”

²⁹ *Ibid.* (Emphasis mine.)

³⁰ *Hebrew Gospel of Matthew* p.112 (see footnote), George Howard, Mercer University Press, Georgia, USA, 1995.

³¹ *Hebrew Gospel of Matthew* p.xii, George Howard, Mercer University Press, Georgia, USA, 1995.

If we compare this with what is contained in our current translations of the Bible, which is from the Greek, we read:

“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter [Πέτρος petros which means a stone or a pebble], and upon this rock [πέτρα] I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

Note that the word *petros* is **never** used in the sense of ‘rock’.³² It is abundantly clear from the Greek texts that Yehoshua is referring to himself as ‘the rock’! As Paul recorded: “and that Rock was Christ”.³³

Throughout the Tanakh (Hebrew Bible) it is recorded:

“The LORD is my rock, and my fortress...” (Psalm 18:2.)

“or who is a rock save our God?” (Psalm 18:31.)

“Unto thee will I cry, O LORD my rock...” (Psalm 28:1.)

“He only is my rock and my salvation...” (Psalm 62:2.)

“The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.” (Psalm 118:22)

The corner stone is the foundation stone of a building!

“This (Yehoshua) is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.” (Acts 4:11, Matt. 21:42, Mark 12:10 and Luke 20:17.)

All **nine** of the Hebrew Gospels in George Howard’s collection are therefore falsely claiming that Peter is the rock. There is no way that any of the gospel writers nor any of the apostles would make this claim that Peter is the rock. This is a Roman Catholic teaching which is essential to support the Pope’s claim to being the head of the church. Bede even informs us that the Catholic missionaries beguiled Oswy king of England with this self-same false teaching.³⁴

This is not the only passage in the Hebrew Gospels which is suspect. In Matt. 15:39 we read:

אחר זה נכנס ישו בספינה ובא לארץ מאצידוניה.

“After this Yeshua entered a boat and came to the land of Macedonia.”

This word Macedonia is written a number of different ways in the various copies of the Hebrew Gospel of Matthew (מאסידוניה, מאסידוניא, מאסידוניא and מאסדוניה), which itself shows that this is a translation from some language other than Hebrew. In the Greek, this place is called Μαγαδάν *Magadan*, a name which is understood from the Talmudic sources to be Magdala Nunaya (מגדלא נוניא), which is why it is translated as Magdala in the KJV. Magdala was an ancient Jewish city on the shore of the Sea of Galilee around three miles north of Tiberias. (NB: The interchange of the letters ‘n’ and ‘l’ in ancient languages has been encountered a number of times throughout my works.)

Note that Macedonia is always represented in the Hebrew Gospel of Matthew with a soft ‘c’ – hence the letter *samekh* (ס) or *tsadi* (צ) is used. This demonstrates the lateness of the text

³² See entry under Πέτρος in pp.1206-7 in *A Greek-English Lexicon* by Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1883.

³³ 1 Corinth. 10:4.

³⁴ Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* Book 3 Chap. 25.

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as, during the time of the Apostles, Macedonia was always written Μακεδών or Μακεδονίαν. The Greek letter *kappa* (κ) was always pronounced as a 'k' or hard 'c' – hence pronounced Makkedonia. In the Talmud, it is written correctly as מַקְדוֹנִיָּא (e.g. Yoma 9b) with a *kof* (ק), again pronounced as a 'k' or hard 'c'. This again shows that these Hebrew gospels of Matthew were not copies of an original Hebrew text.

As for Yehoshua/Yeshua (transliterated as Jesus in the AV) visiting Macedonia, this does not make any sense whatsoever, especially where this statement is placed. After leaving the Syro-Phoenician woman, the book of Mark (7:31) informs us that he returned to the Sea of Galilee “through the region of Decapolis”. To return through this region, Yehoshua will have had to come down the Damascus road, the road which came from Syria. The Alexandrian copy of the book of Mark adds that he “went through Sidon”, meaning that he travelled northwards along the coast road to Syria before returning down the other side of the country, the other side of the Sea of Chinnereth (Galilee). When Yehoshua told the Syro-Phoenician woman “I came not other than to go to the lost sheep of the House of Israel” (Matt. 15:24) he meant it. He was on his way north to the Ten Tribes who were at that time spread throughout Armenia³⁵ and spent around two years of his ministry there. The suggestion that Yehoshua returned from Armenia and then travelled by boat (from the Sea of Galilee?!!!) to Macedonia is nonsense. Bearing in mind that the ancient region of Mygdonia was located in Armenia to the south of the Caspian Sea, I would suggest that someone had heard of Yehoshua’s visit to that region and has misinterpreted Mygdonia to be Macedonia. The suggestion that Yehoshua travelled to this region **after** returning from Armenia does not, however, make any sense.

Time and again, we are told that the LORD has chosen Levi to be his ministers. (e.g. Malachi chapter 2.) Bear in mind that the LORD:

“is the same yesterday, and to day and for ever”. (Heb. 13:8.)

He does not change. Anyone who says he knows him:

“and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him”. (1 John 2:4.)

What? Know you not that, “if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise”? (Gal. 3:29.) The promise spoken of here is that which was given to Abraham that **he and his sons** should inherit the land of Canaan/Israel for an everlasting possession. That promise has not yet been fulfilled. It is for this promise that the Gentiles are ‘grafted in’ to the true olive tree:

“For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee”. (Romans 11:18.)

Do not for one moment think that God has cast away his people. (Romans 11:1.)

We must therefore obey what the Pharisees tell us. People gloss over this instruction in the 23rd chapter of Matthew and concentrate instead on the polemic attack Yehoshua (i.e. Jesus Christ) makes which follows in the ensuing verses. To understand what Yehoshua is actually saying, we need to look at what **some** Pharisees were doing to warrant such rebuke. The Jewish Encyclopedia enlightens us as follows:

³⁵ Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 11.5.2 Whiston or 11.33 Thackeray.

“R[abbi]. Joshua b[en]. Hananiah, at the beginning of the second century, calls eccentric Pharisees ‘destroyers of the world’ (Soṭah iii. 4); and the term ‘Pharisaic plagues’ is frequently used by the leaders of the time (Yer. Soṭah iii. 19a).

“It is such types of Pharisees that Jesus had in view when hurling his scathing words of condemnation against the Pharisees, whom he denounced as ‘hypocrites,’ calling them ‘offspring of vipers’ (‘hyenas’; see Zebu'im); ‘whited sepulchers which outwardly appear beautiful, but inwardly are full of dead men’s bones’; ‘blind guides,’ ‘which strain out the gnat and swallow the camel’ (Matt. vi. 2-5, 16; xii. 34; xv. 14; xxiii. 24, 27, Greek). He himself tells his disciples to do as the Scribes and ‘Pharisees who sit on Moses’ seat [see Almemar] bid them do’; but he blames them for not acting in the right spirit, for wearing large phylacteries and *zizit* [i.e. fringes], and for pretentiousness in many other things (*ib.* xxiii. 2-7). Exactly so are hypocrites censured in the Midrash (Pes. R. xxii. [ed. Friedmann, p. 111]); wearing tefillin [i.e. phylacteries] and *zizit*, they harbor evil intentions in their breasts. Otherwise the Pharisees appear as friends of Jesus (Luke vii. 37, xiii. 31) and of the early Christians (Acts v. 38, xxiii. 9; ‘Ant[iquities of the Jews].’ xx. 9, § 1).”³⁶

Note that the apostle Paul adhered to the Pharisaic law:

“For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; **as touching the law**, a Pharisee.” (Philip. 3:3-5.)

In the book of Acts, he plainly announced that he was “a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee”. (Acts 23:6.) There is no indication that Paul or his father actually officiated in the temple services. What he is saying here is that he was an adherent to the Pharisaic teachings and there is no other way of interpreting these two passages. This would be in the same way, for example, that a Methodist would claim that he and his father were Methodists.

Our Salvation Has Not Yet Arrived

The following is an oft misquoted passage:

“For Christ is the **end of the law** for righteousness to every one that believeth.” (Rom. 10:4.)

The Greek word translated as “end” in this passage is τέλος *telos* from which we get words such as telephone, telescope, telegram, telegraph and television. This word τέλος is never used for the cessation, ending or termination of anything.³⁷ Telos means that which is far off which is to be attained or achieved. It means the ‘aim, purpose, target, goal, end product or end result’. Christ is not the ‘end/cessation’ of the law for righteousness – he is the ‘aim/purpose/target/goal/end result/end product’ of the law for righteousness, which is a completely different understanding.

“And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for **now is our salvation nearer** than when we believed.” (Rom. 13:11.)

“But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, **the hope of salvation.**” (1 Thess. 5:8.)

³⁶ Entry under *Pharisees* and sub-heading of *The Charge of Hypocrisy* in *The Jewish Encyclopedia* Vol. 9, p.665, Isidore Singer et al, Funk and Wagnalls Company, New York and London, 1905.

³⁷ *A Greek-English Lexicon* p.1539, Henry George Liddell & Robert Scott, New York 1883.

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There are millions of Christians who believe that they are 'saved', meaning that they believe that salvation has already arrived. Quoting from Isaiah chapter 49, which talks about the end days when the Moshiah (Messiah) will set his throne in Jerusalem, the apostle Paul says:

"For he [i.e. Isaiah] saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold now, **an acceptable time** (ἰδοὺ νῦν καιρὸς εὐπρόσδεκτος); behold now, **a day of salvation** (ἰδοὺ νῦν ἡμέρα σωτηρίας)..." (2 Corinth. 6:2.)

Note that nearly every single translation (the Wycliffe Bible being the only translation I have come across which is the exception) wrongly renders the above passage as though this prophecy spoken of by Isaiah was fulfilled in Paul's day. The AV, for example, has: "behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation". This incorrect translation gives the false impression that salvation has already arrived. The positioning of the comma after each occurrence of "behold now" is critical, as it changes the whole understanding of the passage. Bear in mind, however, that there were no commas or other forms of punctuation in the original Greek.

A few verses later, however, Paul writes:

"...Having therefore **these promises** [of an acceptable time and a day of salvation], dearly beloved, **let us cleanse ourselves** from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (2 Corinth. 7:1.)

You can search high and low and the only promises mentioned previous to this latter verse are those quoted in the first-mentioned verse. Salvation is therefore a promise of things to come! Those who are complacent in the false belief that they are **already** saved and 'born again' do not even realise that we have to constantly be on our guard against sin. By rejecting the law of Moses, we are actually rejecting instructions given to Moses directly by God on how to keep oneself clean.

As Peter said, our salvation is "ready to be revealed in the end time" (1 Peter 1:5) and when that salvation comes, it will come to "the Jew first, and then the Gentile" (Romans 1:16 & 2:9-10) for "salvation is of the Jews". (John 4:22.) At that end time will the Gentiles, "take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, 'We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you'." (Zech. 8:23.)

The very first of the Ten Commandments states:

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me." (Exod. 20:3-5.)

As Joshua recorded:

"If ye forsake the LORD, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good." (Josh. 24:20.)

The apostle John (4:23-4) says that God must be worshipped both **in spirit** and **in truth**. We **cannot** and **must not** worship him whilst holding on to Babylonian teachings which would have us believe that God has changed his mind, changed his laws and that he no longer intends to fulfil his promises to Israel and Judah. If God really has changed what he has

purposed, how then can he be trusted? No! God is the same yesterday, today and forever. He does not change, and anyone who says otherwise is a liar and deceiver.

“Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, ***My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.***” (Isa. 46:9-10.)

We are told quite categorically that “if thou serve their gods, it will surely be a snare unto thee” (Exod. 23:33), and “And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the LORD thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish.” (Deut. 8:19.) Nevertheless, if, in these end days, we turn to the LORD with all our heart and all our soul:

“then the LORD thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.” (Deut. 30:6)

This circumcision of the heart is spoken of by the prophet Jeremiah and is twice quoted by the apostle Paul in Hebrews (8:10 and 10:16). This new covenant has ***not yet taken effect.***

“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. ***And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them,*** saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” (Jer. 31:31-34.)

This writing of the law on our heart is a future event. Do not let anyone fool you into believing that this has already happened!

The important words which most people gloss over when reading Paul’s letter to the Hebrews are the following:

“In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old ***is ready to vanish away.***” (Heb. 8:13.)

This makes it perfectly clear that, until our LORD arrives and sets his throne in Jerusalem, we are ***still under the existing Mosaic covenant.*** There are not many Christians who will accept this though. Nevertheless, as Christ quite clearly said:

“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” (Matt. 7:13-14.)

Let us remember the warning given us by Moses:

“I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before thee [everlasting] life and [everlasting] death, the blessing and the curse; therefore choose life, that thou mayest live, thou and thy seed.” (Deut. 30:19.)

And if we refuse to keep God’s laws and commandments:

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“But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee...” (Deut. 28:15.)

“The LORD shall smite thee with madness, and [spiritual] blindness, and astonishment of heart: And thou shalt grope at noonday, as [when, or ‘in the same way that’³⁸] the blind gropeth [or ‘touches/feels’] in darkness, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways: and thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no man shall save thee.” (Deut.28:28-9.)

That this is not talking about literal blindness is explained a few verses later when we are told that “thou shalt be mad for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see”. (verse 34.)

“The stranger that is within thee [i.e. in your midst] shall get up above thee very high; and thou shalt come down very low. He shall lend to thee, and thou shalt not lend to him: he shall be the head, and thou shalt be the tail.” (Deut. 28:43-4.)

The Hebrew **יָרִיב עָלֶיךָ** which is translated as “shall get up above thee” means literally “will rise [or mount] up above you”, which is precisely what is happening today throughout the western nations.

³⁸ The Hebrew word **כַּאֲשֶׁר** *ka'asher*, which is here translated as ‘as’ is translated as ‘according to’ in Num. 14:17 and Josh. 24:5, as ‘even as’ in Deut. 4:5 and ‘like as’ in Isa. 11:16. The literal translation that the people will become physically blind is not required by this passage.

ADDENDUM

The Yehovah Stone

Another piece of ‘evidence’ which is being presented as the earliest use of the name יהוה is what is being called the Yehovah Stone. This claim comes from Miles R. Jones, a self-proclaimed expert in the decipherment of ancient texts. Jones has a Ph.D in Foreign Languages from the University of Texas, which he received in 1985. He does not say, however, which languages he studied, and judging from his supposed ‘translations’ which he presents in his book “The Writing of God: Secret of the Real Mount Sinai”, it is clear that ancient languages was not one of them. It is not my intention to discuss those translations here, nor is it my intention to question his integrity. We should bear in mind that even experts make mistakes. It is, however, necessary to challenge his suggestion that the יהוה form of the name dates back to the time of the Exodus from Egypt.

The Yehovah Stone was found in the Jebel al Lawz region by Dr Sung Hak Kim, whilst he was working for the governor of Mecca. Dr Kim, who is a South Korean, found the stone lying on the ground. There is therefore nothing, not even stratigraphic evidence, to assist us in dating the stone. We are therefore solely reliant on the inscriptions and unfortunately, even this is problematic.

Nevertheless Miles R. Jones confidently states:

“The name of God, YHVH, written back to front in ancient Thamudic, also known as the *writing of God* (Ex 32:16), from Midian in Arabia. (circa 14th century BC)”³⁹

Despite the boldness of this statement, we actually know very little about the Thamudic script and there is no evidence to show that it was used any earlier than the 6th century BCE.⁴⁰ Also, Jones has not stated which version of Thamudic we are talking about, whether Thamudic A (often referred to as Taymanite, named after the region of Tayma to where this particular script seems to be confined), B, C, D or F. As Thamudic B is confined to the north-western corner of Saudi Arabia, this is the most likely form of the language. Nevertheless, we should understand what we are up against:

“Thamudic is a conventional term used to cover all of the unclassifiable inscriptional material from the Arabian Peninsula and has nothing to do with the social group known as ‘Thamūd’ from cuneiform, Greek, and later Arabic sources (Macdonald and King 2000). Most of these inscriptions are short and rather uninformative from a linguistic point of view. Nevertheless, the significant challenges they pose for decipherment can only speak to their remote linguistic character. Judgement must be withheld until the entire corpus can be subjected to a thorough linguistic study. At the present moment, scholars divide the Thamudic inscriptions into four general categories according to the shapes of the glyphs.

THAMUDIC B

The Thamudic B inscriptions are concentrated in Northwest and Central Arabia, but can be

³⁹ *The Writing of God: Secret of the Real Mount Sinai* – introduction on the second page.

⁴⁰ In his *A Study of the Lihyanite and Thamudic Inscriptions*, published in 1937, F. V. Winnett argued that the earliest of the Thamudic inscriptions dates no earlier than the 5th century BCE. (*New Thamudic Inscriptions from the Negev* p.140, Tsafirir Nurit, Le Muséon, 109 (1996), pp.137-167.)

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occasionally found in Syria, Egypt, and Yemen. A single Thamudic B text mentions the king of Babylon, which suggests that it was composed before the fall of the kingdom in the middle of the 6th c. BCE, but we have no information as to when these inscriptions begin or end. Most texts consist of short prayers, the meanings of which are still poorly understood, as illustrated by the sometimes bizarre translations given: e.g. b-ʔlh ʔbtr gzst nm ʔltt 'by (the power of) ʔlh ʔbtr (I) sheared off (the wool of sheep)' (Hayajneh 2011, p. 770). A few linguistic facts, however, can be gleaned from the texts we do understand. The suffix morpheme of the prefix conjugation in the first person is -t, as in Arabic and Northwest Semitic, as opposed to the -k of Ancient South Arabian and Ethiopic, e.g. h rḏw b-k ʔn rfʔt 'O Rḏw, through you I am healed' (Hayajneh 2011, p. 770)."⁴¹

The writer goes on to state that Thamudic C inscriptions are "concentrated in northwest Arabia, and one occurs alongside a Nabatean tomb inscription dated to the year 267 CE".⁴²

From this, it should be clear that we do not have anything with which to put any firm date on the Thamudic languages. For Jones to confidently claim a 1400 BCE date for what he has called the Yehovah Stone is therefore highly presumptuous. His reading of the letter which looks like a trident (see image below) as the Hebrew letter ה *hay* is also unsupported by the Thamudic alphabet which shows that it is actually the equivalent of the Arabic letter خ *kha* which in turn is the equivalent of both the Hebrew letter ח *chet* as well as the letter כ *kaph*. More importantly, it should be noted that the letters on the reverse of the stone are right-aligned. This means that the word should be read from right to left, which is the opposite way around to what Miles R. Jones is suggesting. It should also be noted that there is what looks like a full stop after the second letter. This 'full stop' is the letter 'n' in Safaitic, which would then date the stone to an even later date. The Safaitic alphabet came after the Thamudic and dates no earlier than the 1st century BCE. In other words, there are three letters inscribed on the back of the stone – not the two that Miles R. Jones is claiming.

The middle letter, which looks like an oar, is a pin or nail. In Hebrew, this would be called a



The 'Yehovah Stone'. (Courtesy of Dr Sung Hak Kim.) Note the third letter (as indicated with arrow).

⁴¹ *The Routledge Handbook of Arabic Linguistics* p.321 (chapter by Ahmad Al-Jallad titled "The Earliest Stages of Arabic and its Linguistic Classification"), Routledge, New York, 2018.

⁴² *Ibid.* p.322.

vav and would be the equivalent of the Hebrew letter of that name. In the various Thamudic alphabets, you will see this oar-shaped letter transliterated as a 'y' (or yod). Even in Hebrew there are indications that the letters ם vav and ם yod were at some point in the past confused.⁴³ Consequently, the second letter on the reverse of the stone could be read as either of these two letters. This might then produce a reading of כַּנְן *kaven*, this being a variant spelling of the Hebrew Chiun, one of the gods that Israel worshipped whilst in the wilderness:

"But ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves." (Amos 5:26.)

Concerning this name Chiun, James Hastings writes:

"In very early times Merodach, Istar, Nergal, Nindar, and Nabû (*Nebo*) became *Planet-gods*, and, corresponding to their relative distance from the earth, the following was the primitive arrangement: *Sin* (Moon), *Nabû* or *Dun-pa-uddu* (Mercury), *Istar* or *Dilbat* (Venus), *Samas* (Sun), *Nin-ib* or *Käivânu* (Mars), *Marduk* or *Gud-bir* (Jupiter), and *Nergal* (Saturn). Afterwards *Nin-ib* and *Nergal* changed places, *Käivânu* becoming Saturn. Similarly, the title *Gud-bir* was at a later period given to Nabû (Merodach's son), and the new name *Mulu-babbar* (written Te-ud) assigned to Jupiter. The conjunction of Sakkut (read סככות) and Kêvân in Am[os] 5:26 may be compared with the conjunction of the gods *Tibal* (Earth?), *Sakkut* (title of Nindar, originally *Sa-kud*, 'judge', sc. of the dead in the under-world), and *Käivânu* in a Semitic exorcism."⁴⁴

Professor Duncker wrote:

"At the head of the five spirits of the planets stands the lord of Saturn (the Kaivanu of the Babylonians), the most distant and highest of all. This is the god Adar, i.e. 'the sublime.' His name was given to the last month in the Babylonian year. In the inscriptions the epithet Malik is often joined to Adar; Sakkut Adar also is a name given in the inscriptions to this god. The Hebrews tell us that the men of Sepharvaim worshipped Adrammelech; and this can hardly be any other deity than the Adar-Malik of the inscriptions. They also add that children were burned to Adrammelech, and hence we may conclude that the Adar of the Babylonians was a harsh and cruel deity, averse to generation, whose wrath had to be appeased by human sacrifice. When the prophet Amos announces to the Israelites that they would 'carry Siccuth their king, and Kewan (Chiun) their star-god, their images which they had made,' Siccuth-Melech can be no other god than Sakkut-Malik, i.e. Adar, and by Kewan is meant the Kaivanu (Saturn) of the inscriptions."⁴⁵

The reading of YaH by Miles R. Jones is undeniably wrong. The only reading I can support is the one of Kevan, but the stone cannot then date much before the first century BCE.

As for the reading on the obverse of the stone, again the reading of VaH as proposed by Jones is not supported. Whichever way you tackle this, however, any alternative reading we propose has to be tentative. The letter on the right cheek, which looks like a Greek θ *theta*, is purportedly a vav. Once again, the confusion between the vav (waw in Arabic) and yod is evident in the Thamudic language. For example, the Thamudic word *warad*, which means 'he went down',⁴⁶ is equivalent to the Hebrew יָרַד *yarad*. The Arabic word وحيد *waḥīd* meaning

⁴³ For example, in the book of Isaiah Chapter 30 verse 33, in the Hebrew Bible (Tanakh), the word 'hoo' (הוּא) appears instead of 'hee' (הִיא). Similarly, in 1 Chronicles 29 verse 16, the word 'hee' appears in place of 'hoo'. In 1 Kings 6:5 we have יִצְוֶה instead of יִצְוֶה. There are numerous other examples which could be quoted. In each instance, the correct reading is given in a margin note.

⁴⁴ *A Dictionary of the Bible: Dealing with its Language, Literature, and Contents Including the Biblical Theology* Vol. 1, A to Cyrus, p.215, James Hastings, University Press of the Pacific, Honolulu, Hawaii, 2004 (1898 reprint) ISBN: 1-4102-1722-1

⁴⁵ *The History of Antiquity* Vol. 1, p.267, Professor Max Duncker London 1877.

⁴⁶ *The Routledge Handbook of Arabic Linguistics* op. cit. p.327.

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‘alone, solitary, single...’ etc,⁴⁷ is likewise the equivalent of the Hebrew יָחִיד *yahid* which means exactly the same thing. The letters on the two cheeks would then read יָךְ *yakh*, from the Hebrew root נָכַח *nakha* meaning ‘to smite, hurt, strike or wound’. This word יָךְ *yakh* is future tense and would mean ‘he will smite, hurt, strike or wound’.

It has been suggested by someone online (though I have been unable to substantiate their claim) that the letter which looks like the Greek theta is actually a ח *chet*. Having said that, I have already demonstrated when discussing the origin of the word Pi-hahiroth (see *Legacy of Edom*) that the Arabic letter و *waw* can have the same value as the Hebrew letter ח *chet*. If so, then this will provide an alternative reading of חֶךְ *chekh*, meaning ‘palate’ or ‘cavity of the mouth’, which would then make sense in context with the letters appearing either side of the mouth. Also, when read backwards (i.e. read from left to right), the same two letters can even be read as כֶּחַ *koach*, meaning ‘strength, might or power’. This could then be a deliberate play on words.

Alternatively, this could simply be the Arabic word وحى *wahā* meaning ‘to reveal’ or ‘to inspire’.⁴⁸ The addition of the final letter aleph (ى known as aleph maksura) is concordant with the standard rules of philology. As the alphabet is either Thamudic or Safaitic, then we should perhaps be interpreting the stone according to the Arabic rather than the Hebrew language.

As you can see, the letters can be interpreted a number of different ways making any reading tentative. I have hopefully demonstrated the sorts of problems inherent in any consideration of these inscriptions, especially when you have only a handful of letters to play with. We simply do not have enough evidence to be able to translate short texts of this nature with any certainty. For all we know, the letters on the back of the stone may even be a late addition. For Miles R. Jones to make such confident claims is therefore highly presumptuous on his part.

Having shown that the form of the name יהוה was only used no earlier than the time of King Rehoboam son of Solomon onwards (possibly even first appearing a few decades after Rehoboam), this claim that the Yehovah Stone dates to the time of the Exodus can therefore be fully dismissed.

⁴⁷ *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic* p.1055, Hans Wehr (edited by J. Milton Cowan), New York 1976.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* p.1056.