

THE TETRAGRAMMATON

and the

CHRISTIAN GREEK SCRIPTURES

A comprehensive study of the
divine name (יהוה) in the original writings of
the Christian Greek Scriptures (New Testament).

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"In turn he that loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and will plainly show myself to him."

John 14:21

Jesus, I want to be loved by the Father . . . I want to

be loved by you, too.

And Jesus, I want you to show me who you really are.

But Jesus, most of all, I want to really love you!

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All general Scripture quotations in this book are from either the *New World Translation* or the *Kingdom Interlinear Translation*. Both are published by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of New York.

In certain instances which are identified as such, quotations are made from either the Hebrew or English portions of Hebrew versions. Unless otherwise identified, the Hebrew version used is J¹⁸, *Greek Scriptures in Hebrew*.

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Note regarding index page numbers. In order to preserve the usefulness of the index references from the original book format, page number flags have been inserted into the text. For example, any index reference to page 3 will be found in the text between page number flags ••3•• and ••4••. The forward material is identified with Roman numeral page number flags as ••iv••, ••v••, etc. In some instances, a figure, table or other portion of text may be moved out of sequence in order to fit the page format. The out of sequence material will show the page number in parenthesis, for example, (••33••). The index page numbers never refer to the document page numbers located on the upper right- or left-hand corner of the header.

A Comment Regarding Terminology. This book was primarily written for Jehovah's Witness readers. Consequently, terminology common to Watch Tower publications is used rather than terminology more familiar to the average reader of religious materials. Specifically, the term *Christian Greek Scriptures* (or *Christian Scriptures*) is used rather than *New Testament*, and the term *Hebrew Scriptures* replaces the more familiar *Old Testament*. The divine name *Jehovah* is used rather than the more universally familiar *Yahweh*. *Inspired Christian writers* is the term used to identify the *New Testament writers*. In a more technical area, the Greek word for *Lord* is transliterated as *Kyrios* following the spelling preference of the Watch Tower Society rather than the common transliteration *Kurios*.

Reference material was limited to those publications familiar to the average Witness reader. For this reason, there are few references to books or research topics published by other than the Watch Tower Society.

Overview: THE SUBJECT OF THIS BOOK

This book ••i•• examines the use of the Tetragrammaton by the inspired writers of the Christian Greek Scriptures. But why study the Tetragrammaton in the Christian Scriptures now? Hasn't the presence of the Tetragrammaton already been established?

Identifying growth in biblical knowledge

Is biblical knowledge static, remaining the same today as it was a thousand years ago? Or does biblical knowledge grow with each successive generation, deriving benefit from discoveries made in its own time? *Without doubt, biblical knowledge grows.*

Witnesses worldwide strongly defend the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture. The inspired Christian Greek Scriptures were complete when John finished writing in 98 C.E.¹ Thus, Scripture *itself* does not change. On the other hand, as more is learned of biblical history, culture, and ancient manuscripts, our *knowledge* of Scripture grows.

The New World Bible Translation Committee understood that biblical knowledge grows when it searched for evidence of God's name (יהוה) in Christian Greek Scripture manuscripts between 1947 and 1949. Again today, with an ever increasing availability of biblical information, we must re-examine the same question of the Tetragrammaton's presence in the Christian Scriptures.

This book explores the fascinating world of ancient second and third century documents, though it was written for the reader who does not have specialized training in Hebrew or Greek languages. However, it does not discuss the Tetragrammaton from the perspective of *theology*. This is a study of the ancient Greek manuscripts themselves.

Contemporary trends in manuscript research

Even the experienced Bible student is often surprised by the contemporary advances made in the study of ancient Bible manuscripts.

An example of this developing new light is evident in recent publications. The first Greek text used by the International Bible Students Association was the *Emphatic Diaglott*. In the foreword of the 1942 edition, the translator (Benjamin Wilson) credits the King James Version of 1611 with only eight Greek manuscript sources from the tenth century and later (p. 6, 1942 edition). In contrast, Wilson lists ••ii•• the known Greek manuscripts of his day (the 1860's) as "nearly 700" (the *Emphatic Diaglott* p. 6, 1942 edition). By the publication date of the 1983 edition of "*All Scripture Is Inspired of God and Beneficial*," the editors state, "...there are more than 4,600 manuscripts in the original Greek" (p. 315). This number grew to "...over 5,000 manuscripts"² by the time of the 1990 edition of the same book (p. 316).

How can ancient manuscripts "come to light" throughout the 20th century? Two examples illustrate the process.

The first example began in 1947. A Bedouin shepherd threw a rock into the narrow opening of a cave above the Dead Sea and heard a pottery jar break. The jars of manuscripts he subsequently found are a part of the collection now known as the *Dead Sea Scrolls*. (A total of 11 caves containing manuscript material were eventually discovered. See the photo of these caves on page 322 of *Insight on the Scriptures*, Volume 1.)

Today, there are 225 Dead Sea Scroll documents containing either Hebrew Scriptures or commentaries on Bible books. In the 1950's, initial translations of the Dead Sea Hebrew Scripture documents were published. (For an example of the material which has been published since the late 1950's, see the discussion under the heading, "Papyrus manuscripts," in *Insight on the Scriptures*, Volume 2, pages 315-16.)

¹ Scripture writing dates are not precisely known. In order to establish a consensus throughout this book, we will use the writing dates given in the table "Christian Greek Scriptures (C.E.)," *Insight on the Scriptures*, Vol. 1, p. 310.

² Other publications including *Reasoning from the Scriptures* [1989, p. 64] and *The Bible—God's Word or Man's?* [1989, p.59] also give the number as 5,000.

A second example comes from manuscripts which contribute to our understanding of the Tetragrammaton's use in early copies of the *Septuagint*. In spite of the Watch Tower Society's insistence to the contrary, many questioned the claim that the Tetragrammaton was used in early copies of the *Septuagint*. Today, however, we know that the Watch Tower Society was correct. Important finds in a Cairo synagogue confirmed the place of יהוה in both the pre-Christian *Septuagint* and Origen's *Hexapla*. In 1959, P.E. Kahle published *The Cairo Geneza* describing the use of the Tetragrammaton in Jewish copies of the *Septuagint*. In 1958, Giovanni Mercati's study of the Tetragrammaton in a *Hexapla* copy from the same synagogue was published. Then, beginning in 1944 with an article by W. G. Waddell and continuing into the 1970's, other scholars such as Kahle, J.A. Emerton, Sidney Jellicoe, and Bruce Metzger wrote articles in theological journals and published books verifying the existence of the Tetragrammaton in Greek translations of the Hebrew Scriptures.³

••iii•• *Thus, 2,000-year-old manuscripts which contribute new information to our understanding of Jehovah's Scriptures have been published since the release of the Christian Greek Scriptures in 1950.*

We live in an exciting age of Bible manuscript study. In the past 150 years, many ancient Bible manuscripts have been discovered. Just as important, however, has been the scholarly work of publishing these manuscripts. *In the end, the two examples of the discovery of new manuscripts and the publication of existing material converge into the single result of a more accurate English Bible as seen in the following example.*

Aleph (א), one of two primary Greek manuscripts on which the Kingdom Interlinear Translation's Greek text is based, was discovered in 1859. (This is recent when we realize that the manuscript itself was copied in the fourth century.) Because of the problems encountered in obtaining the manuscript from its original owners,⁴ it was not until 1911 that the first photographic reproductions were made available to biblical scholars. It was even later (1933 to 1938) that the manuscript was finally housed in the British Museum in England and carefully studied. Westcott and Hort published their Greek text in 1881 from a hand-copied reproduction of the manuscript. Thus, there was a substantial time interval between the discovery of this fourth century manuscript and the time when it could make a significant contribution to biblical understanding.

Emerging manuscript evidence today

Though many ancient manuscripts have come to light in the last 150 years, the discovery of new manuscript material will diminish with time. Will another cave be found with ancient manuscripts comparable to those from the environs of the Dead Sea? Probably not. How then can the number of Greek Scripture manuscripts increase from "nearly 700" in the 1890's to "more than 4,600" by 1983, and finally to "over 5,000"⁵ in 1990? The answer is not measured by new documents ••iv•• discovered in heretofore unknown caves or monasteries. For the most part, *the disclosure of new manuscripts represents the scholarly work of publishing previously unknown ancient documents allowing them to become usable resources for Bible translators.*

A scroll with Greek writing may have value as a curiosity piece, but it has little value as a textual resource. Before such a manuscript can make a contribution to Greek Scripture translation, its age, its place of origin, its relationship to other manuscripts of its day, and many other factors must be determined. In short, it will be subjected to an intense study for evidences of its authenticity. As we have seen in the previous examples, there is often a considerable time interval between the discovery of the actual manuscript and its placement within the body of texts used for Bible translation. We will see in a later chapter that 18 ancient papyrus manuscripts have been published since 1950. Thus, the

³ These sources are identified in the Bibliography.

⁴ The manuscript was discovered in the monastery library of a religious order on Mount Sinai. The original edition contained both the complete *Septuagint* and Christian Scriptures. The monastics had actually used a substantial number of sheets from the *Septuagint* Hebrew Scripture portion to start fires! However, when they realized its value, they were reluctant to release it until a sizable price was paid. See *Insight on the Scriptures*, Vol. 1, p. 323 for photos of both the manuscript and St. Catharine's Monastery. Also see the photo of the manuscript in *Insight on the Scriptures*, Vol. 2, p. 317.

⁵ These numbers are used merely for the sake of illustration. Full documentation of the actual manuscripts is found in the work of Kurt and Barbara Aland as cited in *The Bible—God's Word or Man's?*, p. 59.

cited references to the growth of available manuscripts encompass the entire process so that by 1990 over 5,000 Greek Scripture manuscripts had been discovered and published.

The primary focus of this book is not *new* manuscript discoveries since 1950, though the chapters reporting the papyri published since 1950, new information concerning the Tetragrammaton, and the work of George Howard⁶ certainly constitute new manuscript information. Nonetheless, the study of biblical manuscripts is a dynamic process. Material which was unobtainable 50 years ago is available to a Bible scholar or translator today. Just as the New World Bible Translation Committee evaluated the known biblical manuscripts of its day, so again, we must re-evaluate the entire body of contemporary textual and historical evidence.⁷

The work of the New World Bible Translation Committee

••v•• In order to maintain the highest standards of Bible translation integrity, the translation itself must be continually evaluated against the most current manuscript information. In October, 1946, Watch Tower Society president Nathan H. Knorr proposed that the Society produce a translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures. The work began in December, 1947. The Christian Greek Scripture portion of the *New World Translation* was presented to a joint meeting of the boards of directors of the Society's New York and Pennsylvania corporations on September 3, 1949. It was released for general use in a dramatic moment on August 2, 1950 before an assembly of 82,075 of Jehovah's Witnesses in New York's Yankee Stadium.

The Christian Greek Scriptures of the *New World Translation* was deemed necessary because of emerging biblical scholarship. *Jehovah's Witnesses Proclaimers of God's Kingdom* (pages 608-609) says,

Furthermore, older and more reliable Bible manuscripts were becoming available. The Greek language of the first century was becoming more clearly understood as a result of archaeological discoveries. Also, the languages into which translations are made undergo changes over the years.

Jehovah's Witnesses wanted a translation that embodied the benefits of the latest scholarship, one that was not colored by the creeds and traditions of Christendom, a literal translation that faithfully presented what is in the original writings and so could provide the basis for continued growth in knowledge of divine truth, a translation that would be clear and understandable to modern-day readers. The *New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures*, released in 1950, filled that need.

Our task today

Since 1950, however, many advances have been made in the study of the Greek text. Just as it was necessary to evaluate Bible translations of that day in the light of emerging textual scholarship, so again today, the Christian Greek Scriptures of the *New World Translation* must be re-evaluated using the textual, historical, and scholarly understanding which has become available in the past 45 years.

We must take seriously a statement of the writers of *Jehovah's Witnesses Proclaimers of God's Kingdom* found on pages 146-148. Though the topic of discussion is prophesy, their comments can equally be applied to the new light emerging from ancient Greek manuscript discoveries and research:

••vi•• As reflected in their modern-day history, the experience of Jehovah's Witnesses has

⁶ George Howard's work with the *Shem-Tob Matthew Gospel in Hebrew*, which is reported in Chapter 5, would certainly describe the scholarly work dealing with manuscript *identification*. If it is finally substantiated, the result of Howard's identification is almost as significant as if a new manuscript had been discovered.

⁷ The distinction between a new understanding from *existing textual evidence* and the discovery of *new manuscripts* may be more easily illustrated than explained. The Watch Tower Society has long recognized that biblical understanding is *progressive*, though this certainly does not imply a continuous process of manuscript discoveries. An interesting series of examples of this awareness can be seen in Chapter 10, "Growing in Accurate Knowledge of the Truth," from the book *Jehovah's Witnesses Proclaimers of God's Kingdom*. The entire chapter is worth reading. On page 121, this comment is made:

Did [Charles Taze Russell and his associates] believe that they had all the answers, the full light of truth? To that question Brother Russell pointedly answered: "Certainly not; nor will we have until the 'perfect day.'" (Prov. 4:18, KJ) Frequently they referred to their Scriptural beliefs as "present truth"—not with any idea that truth itself changes but rather with the thought that their understanding of it was progressive.

been like that described at Proverbs 4:18: "The path of the righteous ones is like the bright light that is getting lighter and lighter until the day is firmly established." The shining of the light has been progressive, just as the light of early dawn gives way to sunrise and the full light of a new day. Viewing matters in the light that was available, they have at times had incomplete, even inaccurate, concepts. No matter how hard they tried, they simply could not understand certain prophecies until these began to undergo fulfillment. As Jehovah has shed more light on his Word by means of his spirit, his servants have been humbly willing to make needed adjustments.

Such progressive understanding was not limited to the early period of their modern-day history. It continues right down to the present...

In recent years a greater diversity of Bible study material has been provided to satisfy the needs of both mature Christians and new students from many backgrounds. Continued study of the Scriptures, along with fulfillment of divine prophecy, has in many instances made it possible to express Bible teachings with greater clarity. Because their study of God's Word is progressive, Jehovah's Witnesses have spiritual food in abundance, even as the Scriptures foretold would be true of God's servants. (Isa. 65:13, 14) Adjustments in viewpoint are never made with a view to becoming more acceptable to the world by adopting its declining moral values. On the contrary, the history of Jehovah's Witnesses shows that changes are made with a view to adhering even more closely to the Bible, being more like the faithful first-century Christians, and so being more acceptable to God.

This book will present a comprehensive study of the current understanding of historical and textual evidence which has a bearing on the Tetragrammaton and the Christian Greek Scriptures. To that end, this study again asks the same question raised by the translators of the *New World Translation* started their work in 1947: "Did the original inspired Christian writers use the Tetragrammaton in 237 instances while writing the Christian Greek Scriptures?"⁸

A personal study

The material in this book is primarily the result of a personal study. More than ten years ago, as a result of a very pleasant contact ••vii•• with two of Jehovah's Witnesses, the author began an intensive Scripture search to determine the identity of Jesus. It was much more than a study of the Greek text; it was a study with momentous personal consequences in the author's faith. Almost two years were spent in a meticulous study from the *Kingdom Interlinear Translation*. Early in that study, the importance of the Tetragrammaton (or *Kyrios*) in the Christian Greek Scriptures became apparent.

The material in this book represents some of the answers discovered in the author's personal study.

The *Kingdom Interlinear Translation* published by the Watch Tower Society in 1969 and 1985 is an indispensable resource for this study. If possible, obtain both editions. This interlinear Greek-English Bible will give you first-hand information for the verification of much of the material contained in this book.

May Jehovah bless your study.



For the sake of credibility, the author was identified in the second edition of this book. As this material becomes generally known, there is no longer need for that precaution. The author has been in repeated contact with the Governing Body of the Watch Tower Society. If you need additional information, they can supply it to you at their discretion.

⁸ We do not wish to imply that this question is an actual statement made by the New World Bible Translation Committee. The use of the divine name within the Christian Greek Scriptures, however, implies that this question was asked in some form, and was subsequently answered affirmatively.

Prologue

••viii•• "Did the original inspired Christian writers use the Tetragrammaton in 237 instances while writing the Christian Greek Scriptures?" is not an innocuous question. The answer will have momentous consequences on your life as one of Jehovah's Witnesses.

The author has talked with elders and publishers who believe that their faith is unaffected by the inspired Christian writers' use—or lack of use—of יהוה in the original Greek manuscripts.

Their perception of the importance of יהוה in the Christian Scripture text is profoundly inadequate!

The ancient biblical documents you will examine in this book will confront you with the most fundamental challenge to your faith as a Witness which you will ever encounter.

As a single example, if the Apostle John used the Tetragrammaton at Revelation 11:17, he wrote,

Εὐχαριστοῦμέν σοι, **יהוה** ὁ θεός, ὁ παντοκράτωρ

We thank you, **Jehovah** God, the Almighty... (NWT).

On the other hand, if John did not use יהוה, then he wrote,

Εὐχαρισταῦμέν σοι, **κύριε** ὁ θεός, ὁ παντοκράτωρ

We are giving thanks to you, **Lord** the God, the Almighty... (KIT).

The one addressed in this verse is clearly "God...the Almighty." Did John write this of *Jehovah* (יהוה), or did he write it of the *Lord* (Κυριος)?

The answer to this question is not found in theology. Nor is it found in personal conviction or even loyalty to an organization. *The answer is found through a careful examination of the ancient Greek manuscripts of the Christian Scriptures.*

With the help of the *Kingdom Interlinear Translation*, this book will examine the earliest known Greek manuscripts and their surrounding context, in order to determine whether the inspired Christian authors wrote יהוה or Κύριος (*Kyrios*) in 237 specific instances in the Christian Greek Scriptures.

Your faith is unavoidably dependent on the answer which comes from the early Greek manuscripts themselves!

SECTION 1

The Tetragrammaton, inspiration, and a study
of the Christian Greek Scriptures.

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