

# The Name of G-d

By Duane D. Miller

In the book of Nehemiah Cyrus the king of Persia conquered Babylonia. In 538 B.C., Cyrus declared that the exiles, known as the Judeans or Jews, could return to their country. Some of the exiles chose to remain, but others returned and began the slow task of reconstruction. It was at this point when Ezra the priest returned and the people gathered themselves together where Ezra and Nehemiah called for renewed covenant with a commitment to the laws and traditions of Israel that are listed in the Torah. At this point in biblical history the creation of certain institutions for biblical study were established which lead to the various sects of Judaism, i.e. Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, etc

## ***Nehemiah 8:1-5***

*8:1 And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded to Israel. 8:2 And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month. 8:3 And he read therein before the street that was before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law. 8:4 And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose; and beside him stood Mattithiah, and Shema, and Anaiah, and Urijah, and Hilkiah, and Maaseiah, on his right hand; and on his left hand, Pedaiah, and Mishael, and Malchiah, and Hashum, and Hashbadana, Zechariah, and Meshullam. 8:5 And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people;) and when he opened it, all the people stood up: (KJV)*

The scribes held various important offices including the position of some military offices (*Judges 5:14*). The scribes had other important public duties as men of high authority and influence in the affairs of the state. There were also subordinate classes of scribes, most of whom were Levites. They were engaged as writers and preservers of the scriptures; for example, Baruch who “wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the Lord.” (*see Jeremiah 36:4, 32*) When the scribes would make a copy of the word of God, at the end of each page a new pen was chosen to begin the next page. Handling and writing the Holy Scriptures was a very meticulous thing, the exchange of pens was done out of reverence for the holiness of the scriptures. This reverence for the writing of the scriptures is also ascribed to the Name of God.

Where the synagogue lessons were read in Hebrew, the reader substituted Adonai “the Lord” both in the original texts (*Torah, Prophets, and Writings*) as well as in the vernacular translation (*Targum*) wherever the Tetragrammaton occurred. The word Tetragrammaton is Greek meaning “four letters”; four Hebrew letters that are usually

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transliterated as YHWH (*Yahweh*) or JHVH (*Jehovah*) that form the Hebrew name of God. Something I want to note *Yahweh* and *Jehovah* is not the correct translation for the name of God. People who use those names for God are doing so in error out of a bad transliteration of the Hebrew text and lack of understanding Judaism and how the Masoretic text was written, let me explain. The pronunciation of the YHWH is sacred therefore it was not pronounced, and hence its pronunciation was unknown. (*You can find this in numerous books, such as Judaism vol. 1 & 2 by George Foot Moore*) In Judaism, traditionally YHWH (יהוה) has been pronounced in certain ways during prayer, while reciting the scriptures or in casual discussion. All of which is done out of reverence for the Name, primarily so to not make the Name of God common. The idea was if the Name of God would become common (*spoken*) then it might become something that could be easily blasphemed.

**Note:** The four-letter Name of God (YHWH, יהוה) indicates that God is timeless and infinite, for the letters of the name are those of the words “*hayah*,” “*v’iyeh*,” “*hoveh*” meaning He was, He is, and He will be!

This name appears in the Torah with vowel points and sometimes appears without vowel marks for a specific purpose of helping the reader determine how the name should be read. In either case, the Name is never pronounced as it is spelled (*i.e. like what is done when translating Jehovah and Yahweh because of a misunderstanding of the Masoretic text and Judaism*). During prayer, or when a blessing is recited, or when a Torah verse is read, the Four-Letter Name when marked (*yehovah*) should be pronounced as if it were spelled “*Adonai*”; the Name identifies God as the Master of all and literally means “*Lord*.” At other times the Name appears with (*yehovih*) this version is pronounced as if it were spelled “*Elohim*,” the Name that refers to God as the One Who is all powerful. Lastly, when it appears with the vowel marks (*leyhovi*) where it is to be pronounced “*laloim*.” This is translated as HaShem “*the Name*” to indicate that it refers to the aspects inherent in each of those Names.

### **The reason for using “G-d” is out of reverence for the Name of G-d.**

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**ועד לעולם המשיח מלך ישוע ורבינו מורנו לאדוננו הללויה**  
Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,  
“*Yeshua*” King Messiah forever and ever