

Hebrew God's Name

Yahweh, Jehovah, and Jesus

The Hebrew Name of God

In the Hebrew Bible, God's personal name is written:

יהוה

These four Hebrew letters are represented in English as **YHWH**.

The four letters are sometimes called the **Tetragrammaton**, a Greek word meaning “four letters.”

The original Hebrew writing does not give us enough information to know the ancient pronunciation with absolute certainty. However, **Yahweh** is the pronunciation most widely accepted by biblical scholars.

Yahweh Is Approximately Pronounced

YAH-weh

Where Jehovah Came From

The word **Jehovah** developed much later than the Hebrew Scriptures.

Jewish tradition generally avoided speaking the divine name aloud. When readers came across **YHWH**, they would often say **Adonai**, which means “Lord.”

Later Hebrew manuscripts included vowel markings. The consonants of **YHWH** became associated with vowel markings connected with the reading tradition for **Adonai**.

Some Christian scholars in the Middle Ages later interpreted this combination as though it represented the actual pronunciation of God's name. Forms such as **lehouah** appeared, eventually developing into **Jehovah** in English.

Therefore, **Jehovah is a later form of the same Hebrew name**. It is not generally considered to be the original ancient pronunciation.

How Jehovah Is Pronounced

In English, **Jehovah** is normally pronounced approximately:

juh-HOH-vuh

This is the English pronunciation of the later form **Jehovah**.

The ancient Hebrew pronunciation was most likely closer to:

Yahweh

Why YHWH and Yahweh Are Used

YHWH represents the four Hebrew consonants of the divine name.

Yahweh is a reconstructed pronunciation of those Hebrew letters.

The reconstruction is based on evidence from ancient Hebrew, related names, and ancient translations and writings.

Because we do not have a recording of ancient Hebrew pronunciation, we cannot say with absolute certainty that **Yahweh** was exactly how the name sounded.

Still, **Yahweh is generally regarded as the strongest scholarly reconstruction.**

The Name Jesus

Jesus has a different name and a different linguistic history.

The name **Jesus** comes through several languages.

In Hebrew and Aramaic, his name was **Yeshua**.

The name was rendered into Greek as **īēsous**, because Greek did not have exactly the same sounds and letters as Hebrew.

From Greek, the name eventually passed through Latin and other languages and became **Jesus** in English.

So the English name **Jesus** is the result of the name being carried through different languages over time.

What the Name Jesus Means

Yeshua is related to the Hebrew name **Yehoshua**, which is also represented in English as **Joshua**.

The name is connected with the Hebrew idea of salvation and is commonly understood to mean something along the lines of:

“**YHWH saves**”

or

“**The LORD saves.**”

This is significant because the name **Jesus** itself contains a connection to the divine name.

Jesus and YHWH

Jesus and YHWH should not simply be treated as two different versions of the same name.

YHWH is the Hebrew divine name found in the Hebrew Scriptures.

Jesus is the personal name of the man known in the New Testament as **Jesus of Nazareth**.

Christian beliefs about the relationship between Jesus and YHWH depend on one's understanding of Christian theology.

Traditional Christianity teaches that there is one God and that the **Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit** are distinct persons within the Trinity. In this understanding, Jesus is the Son and is fully divine.

Other religious groups understand Jesus differently. For example, some believe Jesus is God's Messiah and Son but is not God himself.

Because of these different beliefs, it is important to distinguish **the biblical names themselves** from **the theological conclusions people draw about Jesus**.

Why This Can Be Confusing

Several different things are happening at once:

1. The Hebrew Bible writes God's name as יהוה.
2. We represent those four Hebrew letters as **YHWH**.
3. Scholars reconstruct the ancient pronunciation as **Yahweh**.
4. The later form **Jehovah** developed through a different history and became established in Christian usage.

5. Jesus' Hebrew or Aramaic name was **Yeshua**, which eventually became **Jesus** through Greek, Latin, and later languages.

These names therefore come from **different languages and periods**, even though they are connected within the biblical story.

The Simplest Way to Remember It

יהוה

The Hebrew form of God's personal name.

YHWH

Represents those four Hebrew letters.

Yahweh

The most widely accepted reconstruction of how the name was probably pronounced.

Jehovah

A later form that developed in Christian usage.

Yeshua

The Hebrew or Aramaic name of Jesus.

Jesus

The English form that developed from that name through Greek and later languages.

Final Note on Pronunciation

The pronunciation **Yahweh** is not claimed to be absolutely certain, but it is the **strongest scholarly reconstruction** of the ancient pronunciation of **YHWH**.