

Psalm 8

O LORD our Lord

- The ancient Hebrew language did not have vowels in its alphabet.
- In written form, ancient Hebrew was a consonant-only language. In the original Hebrew, God's name transliterates to *YHWH*
- This is known as the tetragrammaton (meaning "four letters").

- The Hebrew language consists of 22 consonants. Vowel sounds are indicated by placing various dots or small lines around these consonants.
- The Jewish scribes who preserved the Hebrew Scriptures by hand intentionally left off the vowel *points for this word* from their manuscripts—leaving only the four consonants (YHWH).

- The name *Jehovah* is a product of mixing different words and different alphabets of different languages. Due to a fear of accidentally taking God's name in vain (**Leviticus 24:16**), the Jews basically quit saying it out loud altogether. Instead, when reading Scripture aloud, the Jews substituted the tetragrammaton *YHWH* with the word **Adonai** ("Lord").

- Contrary to what some believe, *Jehovah* is not the Divine Name revealed to Israel. People often wonder how our English Bibles translated YHWH into the name Jehovah. Please note that the name “Jehovah” is only use 4 times in the entire English Bible.

Exodus 6:3

Psalms 83:18

Isaiah 12:2

Isaiah 26:4

The Shema

Deuteronomy 6:4-5

⁴ Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:

⁵ And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

(In Ancient Hebrew text, LORD would have been shown as YAHOWAH, but the Hebrew would pronounce it as Adonay)

LORD as written in all caps is the personal name of Israel's God.

Exodus 3

- Moses is told to say “Hayah Hayah sent me.” (Exodus 3:14) Hayah means “I will be”
- He is later given instructions to say “Yahweh sent me.” (3:15) Yahweh means “He will be”

- Over the centuries, the Hebrews wanted to honor the sacredness of this divine name. Therefore when they read the Shema aloud, they stopped saying Yahweh and started saying Adonai which is the Hebrew word for lord.

- Later when people started translating the Bible into English, they adopted the same practice. Instead of spelling out the divine name, YHWH, they translated it as LORD

- Ancient Israel wanted to prevent anyone from saying YHWH aloud so they came up with a visual device, so that when you came to the name YHWH, you would not attempt to say it but you would say the name Adonai.

- They took the letters Y H W H
- They inserted the vowel sounds from Adonay

Y H W H
A O A

YAHOWAH

A combination of the consonants **YHWH** and the vowels of **ADONAY**

- “Yahowah” was never a legitimate Hebrew word but the English translators translated it to the word Jehovah. This is where we get the name Jehovah.

David's address, "O eternal covenant God,
(LORD) our personal Sovereign (Lord)!"

Although God is eternal and totally separate from His creation, He has graciously condescended to enter into a covenant relationship with His people (LORD) as their Sovereign Lord.

O LORD (YHWH)

- The most often used name for God is translated as *LORD* in the Old Testament. The first time it occurs is in Genesis 2:4. It occurs over 6,500 times.
- 4 times it's translated as GOD
- 4 times it's translated as JEHOVAH

O LORD

- **YHWH / YAHWEH / JEHOVAH** [*yah-way* / “LORD”
the only proper name for God. Translated in English Bibles “LORD” (all capitals) to distinguish it from *Adonai*, “Lord.” The revelation of the name is given to Moses “I Am who I Am” ([Exodus 3:14](#)). This name specifies an immediacy, a presence. Yahweh is present, accessible, near to those who call on Him for deliverance ([Psalm 107:13](#)), forgiveness ([Psalm 25:11](#)) and guidance ([Psalm 31:3](#)).

Anytime you read the all-capitalized word
“LORD” in the Bible, it is translated from the
Tetragrammaton. (YHWH)

When you read “Lord” without all capital letters,
it is usually translated from *Adonai*. (*Adon*)

- The Jews considered the word *YHWH* too sacred to be spoken, so they intentionally did not preserve the pronunciation. Today no one knows exactly how it was to be pronounced.

- Therefore, there is no definitive pronunciation of this word.
- But what's important isn't the pronunciation. What's important is the meaning of the name.

- The meaning of YHWH is similar to the meaning of “I AM.” Its basic meaning is “the self-existing One” or “the Eternal.”
- It emphasizes that God has lived for eternity—He had no beginning and will have no end. He was not brought into existence at any point in history by any other being—He is *self-existent*.

Adonai

The word *Adonai* is an emphatic form of the noun *Adon*.

Its basic meaning is “‘lord’ in the sense of a superior, master, or owner”

- The word emphasizes the *authority* of the one it describes. But, unlike other names of God (such as YHWH or “I AM”), its usage in the Bible isn’t limited to describing only God. It is sometimes used to identify human beings with authority (Genesis 40:1).

- When used for God, Bible translators usually translate *Adonai* as “Lord” (with one capital letter). The name is often used along with YHWH or Elohim to give a double emphasis to God’s ultimate power and authority.

David's address, "O eternal covenant God,
(LORD) our personal Sovereign (Lord)!"

Although God is eternal and totally separate from His creation, He has graciously condescended to enter into a covenant relationship with His people (LORD) as their Sovereign Lord.