GOD'S TITLES
not Restricted to
ONE LANGUAGE



Titles Not Restricted To One Language

QUESTION:

Is it not a fact that the Bible translators changed the Creator's original Hebrew names (*Elohim, Jehovah, El, Elahh, Elowahh, Bethel*, and *Tsur*) to the names of Baal (God, Lord, etc.)? And if the Creator's names actually are *Elohim, Yahovah*, et al., and if God, Lord, etc., are the names of the pagan gods, why, then, do we call Him by the latter?

ANSWER:

For the sake of correct and consistent understanding in referring to the words under discussion, we call the reader's attention to the self-evident fact that the various Hebrew words termed by the questioner as "the Creator's original names," all being designative of some aspect or attribute of Divine nature or character, are therefore not names, but *titles*, of the Creator. Only the name *Jehovah* appears to be His Proper Name; therefore we shall herein treat it separately from the titles.

In order to find the truth of this important two-fold question, we go back, not merely to the beginning of the Hebrew nation, but to the very beginning of all nations; that is, to

The Root of the Matter.

We find that when God created mankind, and originated religious worship, He stated to His created beings His titles, in the language of Eden. Later, as sin entered, and as the people multiplied and wickedness increased, and as it continued even after the flood, God's anger against them for building the Tower of Babel caused Him to confound "the language of all the earth," and to create out of it the languages of the nations. At that time, the original titles of God were given to the people in their respective tongues; because the titles of God, in a tongue foreign to the understanding of the nations, would have had no meaning to them.

As their sins caused a still greater widening of the gulf between God and people, they, in protest, to satisfy their hearts' desire for a visible God, made to themselves

Idols, Named With The Divine Titles.

Rather than give the idols names originated specifically for them, the makers honored them with the Divine titles in order to make it appear that the idols were the figures of God, a fabrication which is conclusively borne out by such manifest evidences as that the word, *Elah*, a Hebrew title of the Deity, is used by the Turks for the name of their god; that the word, *Tsur*, another Hebrew title of the Deity, is used

by the Russo-Slavic peoples as the title of their kings; and that "*Elohim* is used in many cases of the gods of the heathen, who included in the same title the God of the Hebrews, and denoted generally the Deity when spoken of (sic) a supernatural being." – *Dictionary of the Bible*, Smith, definition "Jehovah."

From these evidences, we see clearly that the names of the idols are, in fact, not the names of the idols, themselves, but the titles of God. Therefore, to restrict our address of Him to one language – the Hebrew – just because His titles in other tongues were once used in honor of idols, forces the conclusion that the idol-gods of the heathen have defeated God the Creator by robbing Him of His titles! What a forbidding thought!

Hence, if we must attach more sacredness to letters expressing Deity in any one language more than in another, it should be

Only In The Language of Eden, or In All Alike.

If from the beginning till today "the whole earth was of one speech" (Gen. 11:1), and had the day never dawned when "the Lord did confound the language of all the earth" (Gen. 1 1 :9), then only could God's worshipers address Him in the language of Eden. But in view of the fact that from that hour to this, diversity and confusion of tongues have been

the linguistic lot of the human race, the Lord has never restricted His word to one universal medium of expression, but rather has accommodated it to all "the peoples and multitudes and nations, and tongues" of earth, thus accounting for

The Different Titles of the Deity.

The Jews called the expected Christ, Messiah but we who speak in English call Him the *Anointed One*, because in our language that is what the word, Messiah, means. The title Anointed One, is meaningless to a Hebrew, as is the title, Messiah, to an Englishman, unless the Englishman and the Jew speak both English and Hebrew, or else the words be interpreted to them in their respective tongues. Likewise is the case with the words, *Elohim* and God – equivalents in their respective tongues. The multitudes of common people who speak English only, cannot intelligently address the Creator by a word foreign to the English language. For instance, when speaking of the One Who created all things, we necessarily must call Him by the English word, Creator, instead of by the Slavic word, *Sutvaritel*, or by the Greek word, *Plasten*. Thus, as it is proper in English to say Creator or Father, when addressing the One Who created all things, then, to be consistent, it must also be proper in English to call Him *God*, rather than to call Him by the Jewish title, *Elohim*.

To the Jew, the words, *Elohim, Elowahh*, *Elahh*,

and *El* mean Mighty One, Creator, the same as the word, God, in common acceptation, means to the Anglo-Saxon; the word, *Otheos*, to the Greek; the word, *Bog*, to the Slav; *Gott*, to the German; *Gud*, to the Scandinavian; *Dios*, to the Spaniard, and *Allah*, to the Turk.

Therefore the words *Elohim* and its variants God, *Theos, Bog, Gott Gud, Dios, Allah*, Lord and so on, are, loosely, counterparts in their respective languages, the general signification of all of them being, in a broad sense, the same as that of the English name, lord, which is a title of respect given to a husband, to a nobleman, to an owner, to a proprietor, or to a certain official personage.

It is from this common acceptation of the words that both God and Lord are applied to the Deity, and no more from a point of proper name than with the word, Father.

This is aptly illustrated by the front-page "cut" of Augustus Caesar. This great Roman ruler had as one of his exalted titles, the term "Pontifex Maximus," because he was worshiped, in the Pagan system, as their visible God on earth. Later this title was assumed by the Pope of Rome. Thus it was done with God's titles by the Baal worshipers.

Moreover, the statue of Augustus is not Augustus himself. It is only an idol of him, adored by men after they could no longer behold his living presence.

So this possibility of exclusive royal, and even sacred titles being used by envious persons or applied to images, is a practice which unfortunately has always existed, and there is nothing that can be done about it as long as men continue to violate the commandment which says:

"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." Ex. 20:4, 5.

All the generic terms, in the various languages, are designative of *what* God is, rather than of *Who* He is; in other words, these terms are the titles of His nature and character, rather than of His identity. Therefore, if they were not translated into the languages of the nations, they would be meaningless to the people.

From the combined evidences herein of Scripture, history, philology, and logic, we see clearly that the words, God, Lord, et al., were not originally, nor ever exclusively, the names of Baal, or of any other idol. Consequently there is

Nothing Wrong With God's Titles in any Language.

Obviously, then, though the heathen used the term, god, when addressing their idols, as some use the

title, father, for a person who is not their father, yet in so doing, they thereby no more truly made any idol God, than they thereby truly made the titles of the true God, the titles of idols; no more, in fact, than do those who misuse the word, father, so pollute it that we now need to call our earthly parent by some other title.

And if it still be protested that these different titles of the Deity are profane because idol-worshiping nations used them, then by the same token of logic, it must be protested also that their Jewish equivalents be even more profane, because of the more disgraceful and reprehensible idolatry of the Jews, who mockishly mouthed these titles of the true God, while they went after strange gods and killed His prophets, not even sparing His only begotten Son.

The very fact that when the pagans accepted Christianity, the Spirit of Truth "elevated to the Christian sense" these misused titles of the Deity, He demonstrated thereby that God created nothing in vain, and that there are no other gods before Him. Now therefore those titles, instead of becoming anathema to us, should have a better standing than before, as the Prodigal had after his return to his father's house.

The apostle recognized this, and therefore raised no objection when the disciples in Antioch called themselves by the Lord's name in their native tongue, Christians (Acts 11:26).

Furthermore, the fact that the apostle Paul under Inspiration declared God unto the heathen, not in the terms (*Jehovah, Elohim*, et al.) of his intelligence and informed faith, but in the terms (The Unknown God) of their ignorance and uninformed faith, shows that God accepted forms of address to Himself other than the Jewish names.

On this point, as on all other points, we stand with the apostles and the prophets. And as the apostles were thus found worthy of having their names written on the foundations of the Holy City (Rev. 21:14), we shall in like manner be found worthy to enter in through the pearly gates (Rev. 21:21), if we, too, abstain from

Irreverently Using the Lord's Proper Name.

If God's proper name is *Jehovah*, then dare we His created beings, be so disrespectfully familiar as to address Him by His Proper Name, rather than by one of His titles, God, Lord, Father, Creator, Saviour, etc., when we would not think of indulging the less disrespectful familiarity of addressing our earthly parents by their given names – John, George, Bill, Dorothy, Ruth, Mary, etc., – in place of their parental titles Father and Mother? Such irreverence practiced by the heathen might be excusable because of their ignorance, but practiced by enlightened Christians,

who ought to know better, it is inexcusable. We may with reverence use the word, *Jehovah*, only if a heathen should ask us, Who is your God? Then we could with solemn propriety answer *Jehovah*, the only true and living God. Never, though, when addressing God, can we reverentially use His Proper Name.

As the God-fearing Jews anciently "regarded the Divine Name as too sacred for utterance," so should enlightened Christians do today.

However, the most ancient and hallowed Hebrew name for God was not only never commonly pronounced, but was even so-spelled, in an abbreviated form, that it could not be pronounced; so much so that the original pronunciation is not known. All we know for sure is the

Consonant Form, Yhwh, Yvh, or Yhv.

This abbreviated form of the name made it hard for the translators to spell out a pronounceable word. They, therefore, chose to supply what they thought were the missing vowels. The first syllabic term upon which there was general agreement was Jah. Other derivatives were supplied by different translators. Yahweh, Yahowah, or Yahovah were formulated to suit certain languages. The anglicized form evolved as Jehovah. Therefore, any improvised letters that go to make up the ineffable Name may not actually be

the Hebrew word after all! (See *Funk and Wagnall's Standard Dictionary*, definition "Jehovah.")

If the original-name theory had proved correct, there is in the way

Nothing to Prevent the Change.

As we want, more than anything else, to be right in all things, therefore were it a sin to address the Deity in any language other than the Hebrew, we would immediately and unhesitatingly change out verbal mode of addressing Him.

But as the matter now stands, we are not only unable to share any enthusiasm concerning such an original-name theory, and to accord it any of the truth and worth that some would lead us to believe that it assumes, but also we are more than ever before persuaded not to address the Lord by His proper name. In fact, every wide-awake Christian who sincerely serves the Lord, must plainly see that to conform to such a theory, is to cause the saints to insult their Creator by addressing Him by His Proper Name instead of by His title, and also to suffer the baleful results of becoming enthusiasts over some theory so appealing as virtually to exclude those truths vital to their salvation. Let us therefore

Admit:

These facts forever invalidate the movement that is now afoot to discard from the Christian use, the

titles, God, Lord, Christ, etc.; for to give up addressing the Deity by the titles which He has originated in the various languages, would mean defeat for God, and victory for the idols! Such misguided movements should be

A Lesson.

All present truth believers should now see the necessity of shunning every wind of doctrine regardless how plausible or reasonable it might appear to be. Remember the words: "Behold, those that go toward the north country have quieted My Spirit in the north country." (See p. 27 of Tract No. 2, *The Warning Paradox*, – Zech. 6:1-8.) Get your doctrine, Brother, Sister, only from the golden bowl (see *The Shepherd's Rod*, Vol. 2), and be not like the waves of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed – be not carried about by the many winds of doctrine that are blowing wildly from every direction to cause you to lose your way to the everlasting kingdom.

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