



**WHY  
THE  
NAME**

# **JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES?**

The 1975 *Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses* (p. 149) proclaims that it was at a convention in Columbus, Ohio on Sunday, July 26, 1931 that the name **JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES** was proposed for the first time. Thousands of thrilled conventioners heartily adopted the resolution presented by "Judge" Joseph F. Rutherford to receive the new name for the organization. This new title removed former derisive nicknames such as "Millennial Dawnists", "Russellites", "Rutherfordites", and "Watchtower People" (see further *Watchtower* 2/15/62 p. 119).

The new name (from Isaiah 43: 10-12) highlights the Watchtower teaching that **JEHOVAH is the only** proper name for God. Their booklet *"Make Sure Of All Things Hold Fast To What Is Fine"* (p. 264) emphasizes this point when it states that it is "not sufficient to call him 'God': (his) name (is) to be known and used". Keeping this fact in mind, that God's true name **must** be used, we ask the members of Jehovah's Witnesses: "Are you calling on the true name of God?"

What the followers of the Watchtower Society fail to realize is that the name Jehovah is not really found in the Bible manuscripts, but first appeared in the 13th century A.D. What then was God's name before this time? The answer is that the Old Testament name for God is found in the form of four Hebrew letters YHWH, referred to as the Tetragrammaton. It is evident that this name consists of four consonants and no vowels, just like all the Hebrew words of that period. It was not until some 200 years after the time of Christ that the Jews added vowels to the Old Testament Hebrew text. Consequently, unless one knew what vowels to supply, YHWH becomes unutterable and impossible to pronounce in every day language.

Greek writers who heard the Jews pronounce the name wrote out in Greek letters what they heard—"Iabe" and "Iaoue" (see references in Gustav Oehler, *Theology Of the Old Testament* p. 93). The Jews soon largely stopped pronouncing the name altogether for fear of taking it in vain. They instead adopted the name Adonia, "My Lord". They wrote the letters of that name into the divine name YHWH so that when the Jewish reader saw that combination he would substitute Adonia in his reading. A medieval writer, who was not aware of this, took the word literally as it stood and wrote it out as Yehowah (or as he transcribed it JEHOVAH). Thus Jehovah is a mistaken rendering as every scholar knows. There is no such word as Jehovah. Practically any encyclopedia will confirm this as the following sampling shows:

*Merits Student Encyclopedia (Volume 10—1973 Edition)*—JEHOVAH: "an inaccurate reconstruction of the name of God in the Old Testament"

*Encyclopedia Americana (Volume 16—1976 Edition)*—JEHOVAH: "is an erroneous form of the name of God of Israel"

*The Jewish Encyclopedia (Volume 7—1964 Edition)*—JEHOVAH: "A mispronunciation of the Hebrew YHWH the name of God. This pronunciation is grammatically impossible."

*Encyclopedia International (Volume 9—1974 Edition)*—JEHOVAH: "the vowels of one word with the consonants of the other were misread as Jehovah."

*The Interpreters Dictionary Of The Bible (Volume 2—1969 Edition)* — JEHOVAH: "an artificial form".

*The New Schaff—Herzog Encyclopedia (Volume*

*6—1910 Edition)* — JEHOVAH: "an erroneous form of the divine name of the covenant God of Israel".

*The New Catholic Encyclopedia (Volume 7—1967 Edition)* — JEHOVAH: "false form of the divine name Yahweh".

*The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia (Volume 6-1948 Edition)*—JEHOVAH: "an erroneous pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton"

(for actual photocopies of these publications see *Photo Copy Facts Exposing The Watchtower* by Tom and Craig Fox, Box 707, Easton, PA 18042).

The Watchtower Society was unaware that they were taking a false rendering of God's name for their organization because of their lack of scholarship in the Biblical field. Their ability in this area has not improved noticeably since Rutherford's time. Although the Watchtower Society boasts their current president Frederick W. Franz as having an "outstanding reputation as an eminent Bible scholar" (*Watchtower* 8/1/77, p. 463), we cannot view this as a valid claim. The fact is that outside the Watchtower headquarters in Brooklyn, New York, Franz is not recognized by anyone as a scholar. A Jehovah's Witness of long-standing, A. H. MacMillan, asserted in his publication *Faith On The March* (p. 182) that Franz is a scholar of Hebrew. This claim does not hold up in the light of a court trial held in Scotland. There the following exchange of questions and answers between the Scottish Court of Sessions attorney and Franz took place:

(Tuesday 23rd Nov. 1954)

Q. Have you also made yourself familiar with Hebrew?

A. Yes. (Pursuer's Proof p. 7)

The following day, when the court trial resumed, Franz was again asked:

(Wednesday 24th Nov. 1954)

Q. You, yourself, read and speak Hebrew, do you?

A. I do not speak Hebrew.

Q. You do not?

A. No.

Q. Can you, yourself, translate that into Hebrew?

A. Which?

Q. That fourth verse of the second chapter of Genesis.

A. You mean here?

Q. Yes.

A. No. I wouldn't attempt to do that. (Pursuer's Proof pp. 102, 103).

Thus Fredrick Franz could not read or speak Hebrew, but has allowed faithful Jehovah's Witnesses to think he is an eminent Bible scholar and skilled in Hebrew. It is their lack of knowledge in basic Biblical information that has led the Watchtower Society to fall into the erroneous teaching that "Jehovah" is the **only** name for God and that it is essential for this name to be known and used. Actually the name should be "Yahweh" (meaning "He Is" or "He Exists") as the Watchtower Society now reluctantly admits (Watchtower 2/1/80 p. 6). God tells us through His sacred Word in Exodus 3:14 that His name is I AM. This is the same title that the Lord Jesus claimed for Himself on several occasions. We are further taught from Scripture that it is only in the name of Jesus that men will be saved, for Jesus has been given a name which is above **every** name (Acts 4:12; Philippians 2:9).

It is our sincere desire that you call upon the name of the Lord Jesus for eternal life right now. By doing this you will come into a new life in Christ as He will become your personal Lord and Saviour. We would like to send you free additional information on this new life in Christ. Please write us:

**Christian Awareness Fellowship**  
**P.O. Box 35335**  
**Tucson, AZ 85740**

- Send me a list of Christian literature about JW's
- I am a JW/or studying with the JW's
- I am interested in sharing the Good News with JW's

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