

The vast majority of translations of the Bible use “LORD” for God’s name. Why does the Legacy Standard Bible use “Yahweh” instead of the usual “LORD” for God’s name?



TRADITIONAL VIEW

Why does the Legacy Standard Bible use “Yahweh”?

“‘Yahweh declares, ‘ . . . My people shall know My name’”—Isaiah 52:5,6
LSB

First of all, notice the reasons given for substituting “LORD” for “Yahweh” in the preface to to NRSV:

Careful readers will notice that here and there in the Old Testament the word Lord (or in certain cases God) is printed in capital letters. This represents the traditional manner in English versions of rendering the Divine Name, the “Tetragrammaton” (see the notes on [Exodus 3.14, 15](#)), following the precedent of the ancient Greek and Latin translators and the long established practice in the reading of the Hebrew Scriptures in the synagogue. While it is almost if not quite certain that the Name was originally pronounced “Yahweh,” this pronunciation was not indicated when the Masoretes added vowel sounds to the consonantal Hebrew text. To the four consonants YHWH of the Name, which had come to be regarded as too sacred to be pronounced, they attached vowel signs indicating that in its place should be read the Hebrew word Adonai meaning “Lord” (or Elohim meaning “God”). Ancient Greek translators employed the word Kyrios

(“Lord”) for the Name. The Vulgate likewise used the Latin word Dominus (“Lord”). The form “Jehovah” is of late medieval origin; it is a combination of the consonants of the Divine Name and the vowels attached to it by the Masoretes but belonging to an entirely different word. Although the American Standard Version (1901) had used “Jehovah” to render the Tetragrammaton (the sound of Y being represented by J and the sound of W by V, as in Latin), for two reasons the Committees that produced the RSV and the NRSV returned to the more familiar usage of the King James Version. (1) The word “Jehovah” does not accurately represent any form of the Name ever used in Hebrew. (2) The use of any proper name for the one and only God, as though there were other gods from whom the true God had to be distinguished, began to be discontinued in Judaism before the Christian era and is inappropriate for the universal faith of the Christian church.

BIBLICAL VIEW

“I am Yahweh, that is My name”—Isaiah 42:8 LSB

Considering the importance given to God’s name in the Old Testament, the reasons cited in the preface to the NRSV are flimsy. Humans are not authorized to **“add to”** or **“subtract from”** **“the word of God . . . scripture”** (**Deuteronomy 4:2 NIV; John 10:35 NAB**).

“God spoke further to Moses and said to him, ‘I am Yahweh; and I appeared to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as God Almighty, but by My name Yahweh, I was not known to them’”—Exodus 6:2,3 LSB

LEGACY STANDARD BIBLE EXPLANATION FOR USING YAHWEH

The reasons given for using God’s name in the Legacy Standard Bible (LSB) are much more reasonable. Notice:

“God’s covenant name is rendered as Yahweh. The meaning and implication of this name is God’s self-deriving, ongoing, and never-ending existence.

Exodus 3:14-15 shows that God himself considered it important for His people to know His name. The effect of revealing God’s name is His distinction from other gods and His expression of intimacy with the nation of Israel. Such a dynamic is a prevalent characteristic of the Scriptures as Yahweh appears in the OT over 6,800 times.

In addition to Yahweh, the full name of God, the OT also includes references to God by a shorter version of His name, Yah. By itself, God’s name “Yah” may not be as familiar, but the appearance of it is recognizable in Hebrew names and words (e.g. Zechar-iah, meaning Yah remembers, and Hallelu-jah, meaning praise Yah!). God’s shortened name “Yah” is predominantly found in poetry and praise.

The translation Yahweh substantiated by scholarly reconstruction as well as by discussions in Theodoret, Epiphanius, Clement of Alexandria, Origin and Aquila. Consequently, those individuals affirm the usage of God’s covenant name in the early church. Preserving this in translation foundational records what is present in the OT text. It also allows proper distinction between God’s personal name and the title ‘Lord’ (Adonai) which emphasizes God’s authority. Even more, it helps the reader to engage God with the name which He gifted to His people. Thus the reintroduction of God’s personal name into the translation of the OT is a feature that enhances the precision, intensity, and clarity of the biblical text in English.”—Foreword to the Legacy Standard Bible

CONCLUSION

In addition to “Yahweh” and “Yah” appearing in the Old Testament, in the New Testament, where quotes from the Old Testament appear which had the name “Yahweh”, out of respect for the Greek text of the New Testament, “LORD” is used. But the word is footnoted by the words, “In OT, Yahweh”. This makes it nice to quote from using the term “LSB margin”.

At the end of the Bible, the warning is given, **“If anyone adds anything . . . if anyone takes words away from this scroll of prophecy, God will take away from that person any share in the tree of life” (Revelation 22:18,19 NIV)**. This principle can be applied to any deliberate changes of the wording of scripture in translation. Substituting “LORD” for “Yahweh” in Bible translations of the scriptures falls within this parameter.

Therefore highly recommend the use of the Legacy Standard Bible (LSB) for the reasons cited above.