

HaShem Part 2 - Tetragrammaton

Use with the full teaching and a Bible. Read or watch first, complete the questions, then discuss and apply. For family study, an adult can select suitable portions and accept spoken answers.

Test the teaching's explanations against the cited passages. Keep the answer key and facilitator notes separate when distributing learner pages.

[Open the full teaching](#)

Teaching summary

The tetragrammaton is the four-letter name of the Creator, written with yod, hey, waw or vav, and hey. It occurs nearly 7,000 times in the Tanakh. This study of pronunciation builds on the earlier emphasis that his name concerns character and authority. Proposed pronunciations must be treated as educated conclusions rather than grounds for contention.

Many English Bibles represent the tetragrammaton as LORD in capital letters, while Lord often translates Adonai. This follows the practice of substituting a title for the divine name. Ancient manuscripts that retain Hebrew forms of the name provide part of the background for investigating how it was written and spoken.

A major question is whether the sixth Hebrew letter was pronounced with a v sound or a w sound in antiquity. Both sounds occur in Jewish communities. The study considers geography, migration, poetry, and word comparisons. It finds these arguments insufficient to establish the v sound with certainty and gives greater weight to older evidence favoring waw.

Aramaic, Greek transliterations, and Yemenite pronunciation are considered as evidence for waw. Transliteration represents sounds from one language with approximate letters in another. Similar meanings alone do not prove that two Hebrew words had identical pronunciation; the uses of gab and gav or gaw must also be examined in context.

Josephus describes the sacred name on the high priest's headpiece as four vowels. The teaching connects this description with Hebrew letters used as vowel indicators and proposes a reading resembling Yahweh. Its additional connection with biblical breath imagery is a possible analogy, not a pronunciation supplied by Ezekiel or Daniel. These arguments explain the teaching's preference without making the reconstruction certain.

Summary points

- Tetragrammaton means "the four letters."
- The name is written yod, hey, waw or vav, and hey.
- Capitalized LORD commonly represents YHWH in English Bibles.
- Lord also serves as a translation of Adonai.
- The vav and waw question concerns v and w sounds.
- Geographical evidence must be considered alongside migration and language influence.
- The study favors older evidence when reconstructing ancient pronunciation.
- Transliteration uses approximate sounds across languages.

- Josephus describes four vowels on the high priest's headpiece.
- Yahweh is offered as a supported possibility, not a proven pronunciation.

Fill in the blank

Use the teaching and the cited Bible passages. Equivalent wording is welcome when it expresses the same meaning.

Basic

1. Tetragrammaton means "the four _____."
2. The first letter of YHWH is _____.
3. English Bibles commonly replace YHWH with the capitalized word _____.
4. The pronunciation called waw has a _____ sound.
5. The pronunciation called vav has a _____ sound.
6. Representing a name with approximate letters in another language is _____.

Challenging

1. The study gives more weight to evidence that is more _____.
2. The Jewish community highlighted for preserving ancient features is the _____ community.
3. The related language used as support for waw is _____.
4. The historian who describes the sacred name as four vowels is _____.
5. The name was engraved on the headpiece of the high _____.
6. The Hebrew word ruach can be translated breath, wind, or _____.

Group discussion

Discuss respectfully and support answers from the passages. Use these lines for brief notes or a notebook for longer responses.

1. Why should Part 1's emphasis remain central during a pronunciation study?

2. What distinction does the teaching make between LORD and Lord in English Bibles?

3. How can migration complicate arguments based on modern geographical pronunciation?

4. Why does the teaching examine the contexts of gab and gav rather than their English gloss alone?

5. How is Josephus used in the argument for waw and a possible Yahweh pronunciation?

6. How can a group weigh evidence seriously while acknowledging uncertainty?

Answer key

For the leader or parent. Answers follow the teaching and the passages. Accept equivalent wording that expresses the same meaning.

Basic

1. letters

Teaching section What Is the Tetragrammaton

2. yod

Teaching introduction to the four letters

3. LORD

Teaching section The Tetragrammaton Became LORD in English Bibles

4. w

Teaching section The Vav Versus the Waw

5. v

Teaching section The Vav Versus the Waw

6. transliteration

Teaching section The Septuagint Connection

Challenging

1. ancient

Teaching discussion of weighing earlier evidence

2. Yemenite

Teaching discussion of geographical evidence

3. Aramaic

Teaching section The Aramaic Connection

4. Josephus

Teaching section The Josephus Connection; Jewish War 5.5.7

5. priest

Teaching section The Josephus Connection; Jewish War 5.5.7

6. spirit

Ezekiel 37:9; teaching concluding breath discussion

Facilitator notes

These responses give direction for discussion. They are not a test of identical wording. Invite participants to explain the passages and consider a faithful practical response.

1. The pronunciation investigation should serve our recognition of YHWH's character and authority. The teaching repeatedly warns that a preferred reconstruction does not justify divisiveness or a claim of certainty.

HaShem Part 1; Part 2 introduction

2. Many English versions use LORD for the tetragrammaton and Lord for Adonai. The teaching distinguishes the revealed name from a translated title. Check a particular Bible's preface rather than assuming its typography works identically in every passage.

Teaching section The Tetragrammaton Became LORD in English Bibles

3. Communities move and influence one another, so a modern geographical pattern does not by itself establish an ancient pronunciation. The teaching weighs those possible influences alongside older evidence.

Teaching section Some Support for the Vav

4. An English gloss can hide differences in use and history. The teaching compares the contexts before deciding whether the two forms establish the same sound. Its specific linguistic conclusion remains an argument to evaluate.

Teaching discussion of gab and gav; cited biblical uses

5. Josephus reports four vowels on the priestly headpiece. The teaching connects that remark with Hebrew letters used as vowel indicators and proposes a Yahweh reading. Josephus's wording is evidence considered by the teaching, not a recording or a fully specified pronunciation.

Teaching section The Josephus Connection; Jewish War 5.5.7

6. Separate the historical observation from the inference drawn from it, identify assumptions, and allow a conclusion to change with evidence. The teaching favors waw and Yahweh while stating that its conclusion is not certain.

Part 2 introduction and conclusion

Put it into practice

Choose one response to the passages. What will we do, and when will we revisit it? Share only what you are comfortable sharing.