

DO WE HONOR YAHWEH...



By Referring to Him as "Our God"?

By Larry and June Acheson

Do We Honor Yahweh By Referring to Him as “Our God”?

This study originally appeared as a three-part series in the January – June 2001 issues of the *Search the Scriptures* newsletter, Clarksville, Arkansas.

Our ongoing research has led us to incorporate additional evidence into this updated version. This includes information presented at the 2004 Unity Conference in Eaton Rapids, Michigan, as well as information from a recently-published dictionary that traces the etymology of the English “God” to the Canaanite idol of fortune.

We invite those interested in a deeper study of this subject to read our full-length study, *God’s Identity According to Ancient Hebrew Scholars*.



Larry and June Acheson
seekutruth at aol dot com

Second Printing, October 2003
Updated September 17, 2005

Table of Contents

<u>Part I: Does the "Paganizing" of Yahweh's Titles Give Us a License To Appropriate Already-Corrupt Titles to Him?</u>	4
<u>The Masking of Yahweh's Name and the Masking of the Name "God"</u>	4
<u>The Separation Created by Rejecting the Name "God": Deliberate Separation or a Quest for Truth?</u>	5
<u>A New Teaching Emerges ... Or is it an Old One Resurfacing?</u>	6
<u>Did Yahweh Refer to Himself as a "Baal"?</u>	7
<u>Clarification of Part One: Let's Make One Thing Perfectly Clear!</u>	12
<u>Review of Part One: If We Can Properly Refer to Yahweh as "Our God," Then Can't We Also Refer to Him as "Our Zeus"?</u>	13
<u>Part II: Seven Objections Answered</u>	14
<u>Objection #1: Is God connected to God?</u>	15
<u>Objection #2: Did Yahweh Inspire the Germanic Title Gott at Babel?</u>	16
<u>What if Yahweh Had Not Spoken Against "God"?</u>	17
<u>Objection #3: Should a Culture Redefine a Word Borrowed From Another Language?</u>	20
<u>Objection #4: If God is Such a Bad Title, Then Why did Leah Give That Name to Her Son?</u>	22
<u>Objection #5: "But the Name 'God' Will be Inscribed on One of the Twelve Gates of the New Jerusalem!"</u>	26
<u>Objection #6: If the Greeks referred to Yahweh as their "Theos," then why can't we refer to Him as "our God"?</u>	28
<u>Objection #7: There is no record of Yahweh ever rebuking anyone for referring to Him with a title that was originally the name of a heathen deity!</u>	30
<u>Part III: More Disturbing Connections?</u>	32
<u>Evidence of Serpentine Connections From Russian and Irish Cultures</u>	32
<u>A Case for the Ulterior Etymology of GOD Being Traced to Hebrew</u>	36
<u>Putting it All Together</u>	37
<u>Conclusion and Parting Comments</u>	39

Do We Honor Yahweh by Referring to Him as "Our God"?

(Condensed Version)

By Larry & June Acheson

Part I: Does the "Paganizing" of Yahweh's Titles Give Us a License To Appropriate Already-Corrupt Titles to Him?

The Masking of Yahweh's Name and the Masking of the Name "God"

If you're like me, you began referring to our Heavenly Father by His name Yahweh¹ only after diligently researching this issue on your own, or perhaps you were introduced to the belief by a friend, family member or acquaintance. At first June and I wanted to dismiss the concept of rejecting the name we had been taught ("God") in favor of "Yahweh" as somewhat cultic, but our familiarity with a verse in the book of I Thessalonians stirred in us a desire to at least check it out together, prayerfully and diligently. In I Thessalonians 5:21 we are told, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

We all have our own stories of how we checked and double-checked information, went to various libraries, etc., in our efforts to uncover the truth about Yahweh's name. The result: Our minds were changed. Many of us were shocked to learn that "God" is not the Creator's name at all, despite its common appearance in most English Bibles. Not only do Bibles insert "God" where our Creator's TITLE (Elohim) appears, but they wrongly insert a TITLE (the LORD) where His NAME appears. If ever anything smelled of a conspiracy, this was indeed prime evidence for one! You see, I am one of the many who, while growing up, was taught that our Creator's name is "God." In fact, over two years ago, I conducted a poll in the office where I work and discovered that nearly everyone there believes the Creator's name *is* "God." Of the ten people surveyed, only one person listed a different name for the Creator, listing it as "Jesus." Thus, the fact that I was wrongly taught our Creator's name as being "God" is not a singular, isolated incident. It is widespread.

Once I learned that His name is not and never was "God," other truths began to surface. I learned the truth regarding a Babylonian/Canaanite deity of fortune named "God," and of how this idol is mentioned in Scripture, but translators cleverly concealed its name. Isn't it interesting that the name we are taught as belonging to the Creator of the universe turns out to be the name of a Canaanite deity worshipped by those who "forsake Yahweh" (Isaiah 65:11)? Not only this, but translators "hid" Yahweh's name and replaced it with "the LORD," then "hid" the name of the Canaanite deity of fortune, apparently to justify inserting it as a "proper translation" of the Hebrew title "Elohim." Having thus effectively covered their tracks, the stage was set for what is perhaps one of the greatest deceptions of all time: The masking of Yahweh's name. They *had* to hide Yahweh's name, then present the name "God" in a *positive* light in order for it to become the accepted name and title that it is today. After all, who, upon discovering the

¹ While we refer to our Heavenly Father by the name "Yahweh," we understand that there are different views regarding the proper vocalization of this name, commonly referred to as the "Tetragrammaton," which is Greek for "four-lettered." The Creator's name, as it appears in the original Hebrew, consists of four letters (YHWH), written in Paleo-Hebrew as יְהוָה and in Modern Hebrew as יהוה. For a detailed explanation of why we are persuaded that the pronunciation "Yahweh" comes closest to the original, we invite you to read our study titled [Pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton](#).

truth about the name of the pagan deity of fortune, would desire to refer to the true Creator with that same name, only now as a “title”?

Yahweh is not the author of confusion (I Corinthians 14:33), but what translators have done to Yahweh’s name is enough to make most peoples’ heads spin! Think about it! They took out His name (Yahweh), replaced it with a title (the LORD), then took the name of a false idol (God) and inserted that name as a title for Yahweh, but most people in our society commonly regard that title as actually being His name, because they know the title that has been substituted for His name (the LORD) is clearly just that: a title! Is your head spinning yet? When most people read the words “the LORD God” in their Bibles, they perceive “the LORD” as being simply a title, not recognizing it as being a substitution of His name, and the word "God" to them represents His name, even though “God” is rendered as a translation of the Hebrew title “Elohim.” To make their cover-up complete, the translators removed all evidence of there having been a heathen deity named “God.” The result: Millions of people today sincerely, yet wrongly, believe our Creator’s name is “God.” Confusion abounds!

***The Separation Created by Rejecting the Name “God”:
Deliberate Separation or a Quest for Truth?***

Having been raised in a household wherein our Creator’s name was taught as being “God,” combined with the fact that my wife and I plainly recognized the unpleasant separation that would occur if we chose to abandon that concept, we did not readily embrace the new truth about His name when it was first revealed to us. Our previous experience with sharing the message about the truth of Yahweh’s Sabbath day (versus Sunday observance) taught us an important lesson about humanity: Many people are not open to new truths and are not interested in making lifestyle changes of this magnitude. Thus, as we began our study regarding Yahweh’s name, we knew in the back of our minds that, if the teaching regarding Yahweh’s name were indeed true, we would most likely go through a separation similar to the one we experienced when we discontinued worshipping on Sunday. We did not want to go through that again! Our decision to observe the Sabbath served to sever the fellowship of over 120 people in our home town, and led us to a city over 30 miles away, where we met with some fifteen individuals on a weekly basis. Were we about to be “on our own” by accepting the new teaching regarding Yahweh’s name? This was what weighed so heavily on our minds, for we did not and do not desire to worship alone on the Sabbath, especially if there is no valid justification for doing so! Despite our desire to fellowship with others on the Sabbath, you by now know the result: We were on our own.

If there is a purpose to this lengthy introduction, it is to share with you the fact that my wife and I, though choosing to be alone rather than worship with those whom we feel dishonor our Creator by referring to Him with a name that is not and never was His, did all we could to prevent those separations. We at first tried to dismiss the truth about His name, saying, “If you want to speak Hebrew, then call Him Yahweh! I speak English, so I call Him God!” We later tried without success to actually prove that “God” is an acceptable name for our Creator. In the end, truth must prevail over continued associations with groups who reject that truth. We thus chose to sacrifice our association with an assembly that was not open to investigating the matter rather than sacrifice what we knew to be truth. Our continued presence in such an assembly could only have been construed as our acceptance of their position.

A New Teaching Emerges ... Or is it an Old One Resurfacing?

The separation created by the decision to reject the name "God" has been painful to many, and understandably so when one considers the fact that Yahweh created us to be social beings, needing the acceptance, approval and fellowship of others to make our lives more complete. Partly as a result of this desire to fellowship with more people, and largely due to the well-intentioned desire to bring more converts to the faith, a relatively new teaching has emerged that has been embraced by many in the Yahwist Movement. Perhaps more accurately, though, this teaching should be described as an *old teaching* that has resurfaced. Some individuals, while recognizing the Creator's name as rightly being Yahweh, maintain that "God" is nevertheless an acceptable TITLE for Him. We believe the main reason for believing this way is the desire to not only attract more people into the Yahwist Movement, but also to retain others who might eventually become discouraged upon discovering how "separate" we become upon rejecting the name/title "God." As one individual wrote:

I still say the whole [Yahwist] movement is far too hung up on this topic [rejecting "God" as a proper title for Yahweh] and expending energy they could better use to tell a lost and dying world about a Saviour named Yahushua the Messiah. This kind of theorizing only leads us to run off otherwise sincere and seeking individuals.²

We sincerely appreciate this man's desire to bring people to the saving knowledge of our Heavenly Father and His Son. Certainly we do not support the promotion of any teachings that "run off otherwise sincere and seeking individuals" UNLESS those teachings represent TRUTH. We earnestly desire for ALL to come to the Messiah, but not at the expense of truth! Truth must prevail over bringing in numbers of converts to the faith; we must not compromise truth for the sake of numbers.

The conclusion reached by the above individual is largely based on an article originally written in 1997 in which the authors themselves establish their concern that those who teach the rejection of the title "God" have "cost" the Yahwist Movement members:

If we honestly evaluate -- without prejudice or bias -- the growth and development of the Sacred-Name Movement, we would have to admit our erroneous linguistic principles have cost the Movement dearly. Little has been gained by challenging Christianity for employing the terms god and lord. Instead, our most valiant efforts have only resulted in the fragmentation of our Movement and in the development of some very radical organizations.³

The admonition as stated above comes from a widely circulated article entitled "The Truth Regarding Inspired Titles." In this article we are also told, "We ought to be willing to admit that the Hebrew titles *elohim* and *adonay* can be translated into English as *god* and *lord*."⁴ Elsewhere the authors of the treatise write, "Therefore, if we truly wish to be honest with the facts, admitting that *god* and *lord* are perfectly acceptable English translations is a linguistic necessity."⁵ It is our purpose to demonstrate that if we *truly* wish to be honest with the facts, *god* is **not** a "perfectly acceptable English translation" of the Hebrew word *Elohim*. Furthermore, we maintain that those who refer to Yahweh with such a title *dishonor* Him, whether it be inadvertently or on purpose.⁶ Please allow us to demonstrate why we believe as we do.

² We prefer not to release the name of the individual who wrote this comment, which was sent via e-mail on October 10, 2000 in response to the critique we presented on the article "The Truth Regarding Inspired Titles."

³ From the article "The Truth Regarding Inspired Titles," 1997, by Dale George and Silvio Soto, p. 46.

⁴ Ibid, p. 45.

⁵ Ibid, p. 45.

⁶ In the interest of conserving space, we are focusing our attention solely on the title *god* in this article. As for the title *lord*, we personally shun this title, not necessarily because of its questionable origin, but because this is the word that translators of most

As alluded to earlier, in Isaiah 65:11 we are introduced to the heathen idol named “God.” The King James Version translators erroneously rendered the Hebrew word pronounced “Gawd” in that verse as “that troop.”⁷ The translators of other versions, at least recognizing “God” as the deity of fortune, simply rendered the Hebrew word as “Fortune,” thus perpetrating the error of not transliterating the name of this idol. The name of this deity remains cloaked to most worshippers. Had the King James Version translators properly transliterated all proper names that appear in Isaiah 65:11, here is how that verse would read:

But ye *are* they that forsake Yahweh, that forget my holy mountain, that prepare a table for God, and that furnish the drink offering unto Meni.

Once we establish that "God" is indeed the name of a deity worshipped by those who "forsake Yahweh," we are ready to ask the question, “Is it proper to refer to our Creator with a title (such as "God") that matches the name of a heathen deity?” Does this honor Him? **How** does referring to Yahweh with a title that matches the name of a heathen deity honor Him?

Did Yahweh Refer to Himself as a “Baal”?

Some who are of the persuasion that “God” is an acceptable title for Yahweh answer that Yahweh was referred to as a *baal* in Scripture, and in fact refers to Himself as a *baal*. Moreover, Yahweh *also* calls Himself a *molech* in Scripture. Since both *baal* and *molech* are also the names of heathen deities, coupled with the fact that Yahweh refers to Himself with titles such as these – this, in their opinion, “proves” that it is also acceptable and even honorable to refer to Yahweh as our “God.” Is this true?

First of all, it is indeed true that Yahweh does refer to Himself as a *baal* and as a *molech*. Notice what Yahweh says in Jeremiah 31:31-32:

31 Behold, the days come, saith Yahweh, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:
32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which My covenant they brake, although I was an husband [Heb. *baal*] unto them, saith Yahweh.

Notice that the word translated “husband” is actually the Hebrew word “baal.” Thus Yahweh identified Himself as having been a *baal* to the children of Israel. Yahweh is also referred to as a *baal* in Isaiah 54:5. Furthermore, in I Chronicles 12:5 a warrior by the name of Bealiah is mentioned. “Bealiah” is a Hebrew word meaning “Yahweh is my Baal.”

Equipped with the understanding that Yahweh identified Himself as a *baal*, combined with the knowledge that there was indeed a pagan deity **named** *Baal*, does this mean we can in similar fashion honorably refer to Yahweh as our *God*, since it might be construed that He is indifferent towards the titles we attribute to Him? Certainly, it might appear, upon conducting a cursory examination, that we can

English versions of the Bible chose to substitute in place of Yahweh’s name. Out of protest for what they did, June and I personally avoid applying this title to our Heavenly Father.

⁷ Most Bible dictionaries and commentaries provide corroborating agreement that the name “God” (usually spelled out as *Gad* in English, but spelled גַּד and pronounced “Gawd” in Hebrew) was in the original Hebrew text of Isaiah 65:11. For example, note the following from *The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary*, by Merrill F. Unger, 1988, Moody Press, Chicago, IL, p. 488: “**Gad**. A Canaanite deity rendered ‘Fortune’ (Isa. 65:11, see marg.); the god of good fortune, supposed to be the glorified planet Jupiter. This star is called by the Arabs ‘the greater luck’ as the star of good fortune.”

properly refer to Yahweh as our “God,” even if *God* was the name of a heathen idol, for Yahweh referred to Himself as a “baal,” even though there was a heathen deity named “Baal.” Is there something missing here that needs to be explained? Yes.

What we need to consider is the possibility and likelihood that Yahweh was referred to as a *baal* (husband) long before apostate men began calling upon an idol named Baal. If this is true, the word *baal* was a perfectly legitimate title for Yahweh long before it was transformed into a proper noun. Since no one can go back to the beginning to listen to the words early believers employed in reference to Yahweh, no one can say for certain that anyone ever referred to Yahweh as *baal* prior to the emergence of the deity named Baal. Thus, if it is indeed true that the deity named Baal pre-dates anyone ever referring to Yahweh with the title *Baal*, then indeed a legitimate case can be made in favor of referring to Yahweh as *God*. However, it is prudent to note that *baal* was in ancient times a common Hebrew term meaning “husband” or “master,” demonstrating that from its inception this is exactly what this word meant, **not** that it was originally the name of a false deity. As early as Genesis 20:3, this term was used to represent a “husband.” This is the account of Abraham’s telling Abimelech, King of Gerar, that Sarah was his sister:

But the Almighty came to Abimelech in dream by night and said to him, Behold, you are about to die because of the woman you have taken, she *being* married to a husband [*baal*].⁸

As this verse demonstrates, the earliest usage of the Hebrew word *baal* implies that it simply meant “husband” or “master.” There are no allusions to an original application to any heathen idols. Certainly, in the beginning, there were no false believers, no heathens who worshipped any mighty one other than Yahweh. From all appearances, *baal* was simply a generic word with no negative connotations or associations with heathen worship. With the commonly accepted meaning of “husband” or “master,” it is understandable that Yahweh was from time to time referred to as *baal* by His people. Once men branched out after the Flood and began to repopulate the earth, though, corrupted worship began to creep in. Perhaps innocently, certain individuals may have begun to refer to Yahweh as their *baal* on a much more exclusive basis than before. Gradually, they may have drifted into referring to Him more as *baal* than by His name. As worship became more and more corrupt, it is quite possible that they eventually lost Yahweh’s identity completely, ascribing His characteristics to *Baal* as their now completely separate religion emerged, with *Baal* as the name of the deity they worshipped. Is this possible? Indeed it is. Thus, all available evidence supports the common term *baal* evolving into a corrupted name for a heathen idol, not vice-versa.

The same can be said for such titles as *Elohim* and *Adonai*. Many in the Yahwist Movement wouldn’t *dream* of referring to Yahweh as their *Baal*, yet they refer to Him as their *Elohim* on a regular basis. *Elohim* is a title that was commonly used in reference to both Yahweh and false deities, but what many tend to overlook is the fact that *Elohim* was also the name of a heathen idol. According to *The International Bible Commentary*, “Elohim is clearly derived from El, the name given to the king of the gods by the Canaanites, with Eloah, surviving mainly in poetry, as the connecting link.”⁹ In addition, *The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary* provides the following information: “Baal was the son of El, the father of the gods and the head of the Canaanite pantheon, according to the tablets from Ugarit.”¹⁰

⁸ This rendering is taken from *The Interlinear Bible: Hebrew-Greek-English*, Jay P. Green, Sr., General Editor and Translator, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody MA, 1986. All other versions leave out the original Hebrew word “husband” in their translations of this particular verse.

⁹ From *The International Bible Commentary*, F. F. Bruce, General Editor, Marshall Pickering/Zondervan Publishers, 1986, page 57.

¹⁰ From *The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary*, by Merrill F. Unger, 1988, Moody Press, Chicago, IL, p. 485.

With nothing else to go on but the preceding information, one would be left to believe that *Elohim*, in its original form, is corrupt. However, once again, we must pause and recognize that, in the beginning, there was no corrupted worship. Was *Elohim* a part of the pure worship that pre-dated the corrupt worship? All available evidence supports believing that it was. Otherwise, what became of the pure title that was originally used? How did a corrupted title come to completely replace an originally pure one? With no existing evidence to support substitution of *Elohim* for an earlier title, we are left to believe that, indeed, *Elohim* was originally ascribed only to Yahweh as an honorable title. As time progressed and man became more and more corrupt, *Elohim* was later applied to heathen idols as well as to Yahweh, and a deity named *El* became known as the “father of the gods.”

This same historical pattern is characteristic of the title *molech*. In I Samuel 12:12 we read,

And when ye saw that Nahash the **king** of the children of Ammon came against you, ye said unto me, ‘Nay; but a **king** shall reign over us: when Yahweh your Almighty *was* your **king**.

The spelling of the Hebrew word translated “king” (מֶלֶךְ) in the above verse is identical to the spelling of the name of the Ammonites’ chief deity, Molech (מֹלֶךְ).¹¹ The only notable difference between these two words lies in the vowel pointings, which weren’t added until the seventh century CE.¹² Thus, if we were to transliterate the Hebrew word translated “king” in the above verse, it could read “...Yahweh your Almighty *was* your molech.”

This pattern is also evident with regard to the title *adonai*. All available evidence supports these titles as having been originally ascribed to Yahweh before later becoming corrupted. Does the corruption of an originally-pure word or title make it unusable? No, it does not. Consider, for example, the very name of *Yahweh*. As we are about to see, this name was brutally misappropriated and perverted by heathen men. According to French epigrapher André Lemaire in his article “Who or What was Yahweh’s Asherah?,” published in the Nov.-Dec. 1984 issue of *Biblical Archaeology Review*, an inscription found at Kuntillet ‘Ajrud (dated between 850 and 750 BCE) states the following:

I bless you through Yahweh of Samaria, and through his Asherah!

Another inscription, found at ‘El Qom, from the same time period, reads:

Uriyahu, the king, has written this. Blessed be Uriyahu through Yahweh, and his enemies have been conquered through Yahweh’s Asherah.

Asherah is the name of the Canaanite mother-goddess whose worship is expressly forbidden in such Biblical passages as Deuteronomy 16:21 (consistently rendered “grove” in the King James Version). Clearly, Yahweh’s name was misappropriated and corrupted by heathen worshippers.

Not only did apostate believers inately associate Yahweh’s name with a “goddess,” but His name was also incorporated into the name of an Egyptian moon idol! According to *Encyclopedia of Gods*, one of the many idols worshipped by ancient Egyptians was one named *Yah*:

¹¹ Compare the two Hebrew spellings for yourself, using a *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. The Hebrew word for “king” is word #4428 (מֶלֶךְ), and the name of the Ammonite deity, *Molech* (מֹלֶךְ), is word #4432. Both words contain the same, exact Hebrew spelling (mem, lamed, kaph).

¹² This information comes from the *New Bible Dictionary*, 2nd ed., J. D. Douglas, Organizing Editor, Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, IL, article “Texts and Versions,” p. 1,178, where we read, “It was not until about the 7th century of our era that the Massorettes introduced a complete system of vowel-signs.”

Yah

Moon god. Egyptian. Yah may have been an import to Egypt brought by Semitic immigrants who based his profile on the Mesopotamian god Sin. He is mentioned largely from the twentieth century BC onward and is depicted in human form, but can also be represented by the falcon and the ibis.¹³

We can certainly see that the adversary has had his hand in virtually everything having to do with pure worship, including the very name of our Heavenly Father. Thus mishandled, shall we now discontinue calling upon that name? Do we discard the name of the Creator simply because it becomes misused? No. If this were the answer, we would find ourselves constantly changing the Creator's name in response to all the subsequent abuses each "clean" name would incur. Yahweh is still Yahweh, no matter how men attempt to make Him fit into their own image of what He should be. Yahweh is His name forever (Exodus 3:15), no matter what other plans man may have in mind. Similarly, any titles originally ascribed to Yahweh do not become "unclean" just because they are later conferred upon heathen idols. Just because apostate men "paganized" Yahweh's Hebrew titles, naming deities after "elohim," "baal," "adonai," and even "molech," does *not* mean that man can now honorably take any already pagan-to-the-core name or title and apply it to Yahweh as a "perfectly acceptable translation" of the original Hebrew title. Does the wrongful "paganizing" of the titles that Yahweh gave to Himself give mankind a license to apply "just any old pagan name or title" to the Creator? No, it does not. This is a classic case of the proverbial "Two wrongs don't make a right" expression.

Once we establish the fact that any title originally ascribed to Yahweh cannot ever properly become disassociated from Him in spite of its having become tainted with heathen worship during the course of history, we are then poised to ask the pivotal question around which this article centers: Is it appropriate to take an already-corrupt **name** and apply it to the Creator as a title? The answer, again, is no. For example, what sincere truth seeker and servant of Yahweh would ever consider referring to Him as "our Zeus" or "our Apollo"? Each of the preceding two names represents the names of pagan deities, the worship of which is clearly outlawed by Yahweh. Yahweh commands His people to have "no other" deities before Him (Ex. 20:3). He later adds, "I *am* YAHWEH, and *there is* none else, *there is* no mighty one beside Me. I girded thee, though thou hast not known Me: That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that *there is* none beside Me. I *am* Yahweh, and there is NONE ELSE!" (Isaiah 45:5-6).

If Yahweh doesn't even *recognize* any deities other than Himself, then why would anyone professing to follow Him willfully choose to refer to Him with a title emanating from heathen worship, specifically from the NAME of a heathen idol? Would doing such a thing bring *honor* to Yahweh? Would we *honor* Yahweh if we referred to Him as "Yahweh our Zeus" or "Yahweh our Apollo"? We could expand this to include such idols as Nisroch, an Assyrian deity mentioned in II Kings 19:37. Should it be considered appropriate to refer to our Creator as "Yahweh our Nisroch"? And what about the deity mentioned in Isaiah 65:11 -- the idol whose name is "GOD"? Should it be considered appropriate to refer to our Creator as "Yahweh our God"? Remember, Yahweh Himself identifies this deity as one worshipped by those who FORSAKE Him. Shall we therefore take the name of an idol worshipped by those who forsake Yahweh and *apply* that name to Yahweh as a title for Him? Would doing such a thing convey *honor* to our Creator? The answer, again, is no. If our ultimate goal as truth seekers and servants is to live our lives striving to bring *honor* to Yahweh, then we should earnestly seek to refer to Him with titles that bring Him the most honor! Does "God" pass the test? No, it does not.

¹³ From *Encyclopedia of Gods*, by Michael Jordan, Facts on File, Inc., 1993, p. 291.

We would like to believe the information thus far presented serves to close the case in favor of *not* referring to Yahweh as “our God.” However, many individuals are not persuaded of this, and they present various arguments in an attempt to defend their use of the title “God” in reference to Yahweh. In the next section, we will examine seven arguments we have heard in support of referring to Yahweh as “our God,” and determine if any of them have any substance.¹⁴

Before we present those arguments, though, we need to address a misunderstanding that surfaced when the preceding portion of this study was published in the January – February 2001 issue of Frank Brown’s *Search the Scriptures* newsletter.

¹⁴ We address three additional arguments in our full-length version of this study.

Clarification of Part One: Let's Make One Thing Perfectly Clear!

One of the great challenges an author is faced with when writing to his audience is that of clearly communicating his thoughts - his very perspective - in such a manner that he is not misunderstood. Upon reading Part One of this study, at least one person misunderstood our intent regarding the translation of titles from one language to another, and we would like to clarify that now.

Titles may be translated from one language to another. This is a fact that is so widely recognized that we won't even attempt to explain its validity. Names, on the other hand, are *not* translated. Instead, they are *transliterated*, which means their pronunciation is carried over from one language to the next with little variation. Although we have been subtly taught that *names* may be translated from one language to another, the truth of the matter is, they cannot, unless you want to say something like, "The name *Daniel* means 'Elohim is Judge.'" Despite this Hebrew to English translation, no one is going to argue that we should be referring to this Hebrew prophet as *Elohim is Judge* when we speak English. Instead, we refer to him as *Daniel*, without altering his name from the original (at least not intentionally). Conversely, no one is going to attempt to translate into English names such as *Adolf Hitler*, *Mao-Tse-Tung*, *Osama bin Ladin*, or *Pocahontas*. Titles, however, are a different matter. For example, a *cook* is called a *cocinero* in Spanish, and a *fireman* is termed a *bombero*. A *nurse* is considered an *enfermera*. The Spanish translations of these titles in no way resembles the English counterpart! Sometimes, though, a title can be spelled the same (or nearly the same) from one language to the next. For example, a *doctor* is *un doctor* in Spanish. *Policeman* is *policia*. *President* is *presidente*. When it comes to Yahweh's titles, the most common ones employed in the Hebrew language are *adonai* and *elohim*. We do not deny that these titles can rightfully be translated into the English language if one so chooses, and in fact this is what June and I normally do. We usually refer to Yahweh as our *Almighty*, our *Mighty One*, or our *Sovereign*, all of which are considered accurate translations of the Hebrew title *elohim*.

As indicated by the title of our study, a controversy exists with regard to the limits to which we can go when it comes to translating *elohim* from Hebrew into English. We know that a proper translation must take into consideration the **original intent** of that Hebrew word, conveying *strength*, *might*, and *power*. All one has to do to learn the original, intended meaning of *elohim* is to look it up in a *Strong's Concordance*. This Hebrew word is most commonly translated "god" in English, and is word #430 in *Strong's Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary*. It is traced to word #410 in *Strong's (el)*, which literally means *strength* and *mighty*. Equipped with the knowledge of the original meaning of *elohim*, we come face to face with the question regarding the validity of the translation that was arbitrarily chosen by the translators of such versions as the *King James Version*. Does the translation "god" most **accurately** and **properly** reflect the intended meaning of the Hebrew word *elohim*? From where does the word "god" hail? Should the word "god" be considered a "translation" of *elohim* or a "transliteration" of the name of an idol? Do we honor Yahweh by referring to Him as "our God"?

Review of Part One: If We Can Properly Refer to Yahweh as "Our God," Then Can't We Also Refer to Him as "Our Zeus"?

In part one of our study, we shared how we, like many others, diligently researched the issue pertaining to the name we should call our Heavenly Father, and contrary to what we had been taught, we concluded that indeed His name is **Yahweh**, not God. The end result, of course, was that we rejected the error and accepted the truth. We then mentioned that a recent trend within the Yahwist Movement has been to accept a new teaching that has spread through our ranks, a teaching that is actually an *old one* resurfacing. This teaching involves recognizing "God" as an acceptable **title** for Yahweh. We addressed one of the chief arguments used in support of this belief, which is as follows: Since titles originally ascribed to Yahweh (such as *baal*, *elohim* and *adonai*) were eventually converted into names of heathen deities, some believers deduce that this "paganization" of an originally pure title justifies converting an **already-heathen** name of a false idol (*God*) into a legitimate English translation of the Hebrew title "Elohim." As presented in part one, Yahweh identifies a false deity named **God** as an idol worshipped by those who forsake Him (Isaiah 65:11). We countered the argument listed above by stating that if we are at liberty to apply the name of this heathen idol as a title for Yahweh, then we must be equally free to apply the names of **other** deities as titles as well. We would thus be free to refer to Yahweh as "our Zeus," "our Artemis," "our Apollo," and even as "our Satan." We live in a free country. We are free to worship our Creator however we see fit, with only a few exceptions. We can pretty much obey Him however we want and we can even call Him whatever we choose. The question begging an answer, though, is, "**Does referring to Yahweh as 'our God' HONOR Him?**"

If you read part one, you know that our answer to the above question is an emphatic, "**No!**" Let us now proceed with part two, as we critically examine seven objections that have been presented in opposition to our conclusion.

Part II: Seven Objections Answered

Objection #1: Is God connected to God?

In defense of his position that there is no connection between the English title *God* and the idol named *God* in Isaiah 65:11, an acquaintance within the Yahwist Movement wrote, “I still do not believe the Baal *God* of Isaiah 65:11 has anything to do with the titles used in English of Lord and God. I do not believe you have proven ‘Gad’ of this passage is the ‘gott’ of the Teutonic tribes, which influenced the English to use the title ‘God.’ ... I don’t believe you can make such a connection and successfully prove your point beyond a reasonable doubt.”¹⁵

Our response: What this man’s short commentary amounts to, in a nutshell, is saying, “I don’t believe *God* is in any way connected to *God*.” Does this make any sense? My dad had a saying that seems to apply to this situation: “If you can’t tell the difference, there isn’t any!” We maintain that it is unwise, and even confusing, to take a word that is pronounced a certain way, then take another word that is pronounced identically, then arbitrarily declare, “They aren’t connected in any way!” Consider the absurdity of this situation. The man quoted above might as well say, “I know Yahweh detests *God*, but Yahweh is my God!” Would this remark make sense? No, it would not.

The man quoted above stated that he doesn’t believe one can “make such a connection” and successfully prove it “beyond a reasonable doubt.” Our contention, however, is that a truth seeker bent on serving Yahweh will not gamble on offending Him in any way. If there is any conscious recognition of the risk that referring to Yahweh as “our God” *might* offend Him, the truth seeker will avoid doing so. Thus, the burden of proof for “making connections” versus proving “beyond the shadow of doubt” that no connection can be made falls upon the man making the statement above. Instead of promoting the title *God* as a valid title because an irrefutable connection with the Canaanite deity of fortune¹⁶ has not yet been established by etymologists, we suggest *not* accepting the legitimacy of that title until it can be proven that there definitely *isn’t* a connecting link. First and foremost, though, it is our contention that we don’t *need* to make the connection, for Yahweh has already made it for us! Yahweh says that *God* is the name of a **false idol**. This sufficiently demonstrates that He would not appreciate anyone converting that name to a title, then applying it to Him! The man making the statement above needs to somehow prove that there definitely *isn’t* a connection between the English “God” and the Hebrew “God.” Instead of applying “reasonable doubt” to taking the “sure way,” however, he is applying the term to go the “unsure way.” We support applying the man’s “reasonable doubt” principle towards referring to Yahweh with a title *only* if the preponderance of evidence supports its having an honorable origin. In other words, the title “Almighty,” for example, has no apparent ties to heathen worship; we therefore conclude that such a title is honorably applied to Yahweh, unless someone can produce “reasonable doubt.” Can the same be said with regard to the title *God*? No, it cannot.

¹⁵ From the same e-mailed letter as mentioned in footnote #2 (see Part I). Again, this e-mail was sent after June and I presented our critique of the article “The Truth Regarding Inspired Titles,” by Dale George and Silvio Soto, 1997.

¹⁶ Many people, ourselves included, had been more inclined to refer to the deity of Isaiah 65:11 (*God*) as being a **Babylonian** deity. Indeed, this is how it is presented in *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, where the word appears as word #1408 in the Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary. Other reputable references, however, such as *The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary*, refer to this idol as a **Canaanite** deity. Information gleaned from *A Dictionary of the Bible*, edited by James Hastings, M.A., D.D., Volume II, Charles Scribner’s Sons, New York, 1899, article “Gad,” p. 76, offers the (*continued on page 15*) following evidence that *God* was originally the name of a *Canaanite idol*: “As the name of Gad is not met with in Babylonian literature, it would seem to have been a native Canaanite word, retained by the Israelites in consequence of the tendency to polytheism which existed among them as late as the time of the Babylonian captivity....”

Some individuals rely on the conclusions of etymologists to form their conclusions as to the origin of the word *God*, even though, as stated above, Yahweh has already *told us* that God is the name of a false deity worshipped by those who “forsake Him.”¹⁷ We believe **Yahweh** is right, no matter what conclusions the etymologists reach! Relying on etymologists’ conclusions as to the origin of the word *God* poses a serious problem, for even the etymologists have to admit that they are uncertain of their own conclusions. Note the following, as taken from *The New Dictionary of Theology*:

The etymology of the English word “God,” as well as of the equivalent words in Latin, Greek and Hebrew, is much disputed.¹⁸

The Oxford English Dictionary, Volume VI, item “god,” validates the information above.¹⁹ Wilfred Funk, in his book *Word Origins and Their Romantic Stories*, even more dramatically underscores the etymologists’ dilemma in tracing the origin of this word:

The central word of all faiths is *God*, and the history of the title *God* is a tangle of guesses. The word *God* itself is related to similar words in Danish, Saxon, Old High German, Scandinavian, and other languages, and may even be related to an ancient Lithuanian word that referred to someone who practiced magic.²⁰

Since even the etymologists are uncertain of the validity of their own conclusions, why should we feel more inclined to accept **their** “findings” above Yahweh’s? Does a “tangle of guesses” have preeminence over the very words of Almighty Yahweh? Again, Yahweh has already *told us* that *God* is the name of a false idol worshipped by those who “forsake Him.” Is Yahweh’s own Word not sufficient?

¹⁷ Regarding those who rely on etymologists’ conclusions, reference is made to the following quotation, taken from pp. 44-45 of “The Truth Regarding Inspired Titles,” by Dale George and Silvio Soto, 1997: “Linguistically speaking, it should be noted that we cannot definitely PROVE a *pagan connection* for either word [*god* or *lord*]. That has been tried and it has failed, as linguistic authorities which exist do not agree with our traditional contention (most linguistic scholars trace our English word *God* to the Teutonic language and not to the Babylonian deity *Gad*, and also trace *Lord* to an Old English word that meant, ‘the keeper of the loaf’).” Based upon the above quotation, June and I maintain that the authors of “The Truth Regarding Inspired Titles,” as well as those who promote such reasoning, evidently place more faith in the inconclusive findings of etymologists than in the evidence provided in Yahweh’s Word. Furthermore, as we will demonstrate later in this study, a Jewish scholar has expressed agreement that, indeed, there *is* a connection between the English “God” and the Canaanite idol of fortune.

¹⁸ From *The New Dictionary of Theology*, Joseph A. Komonchak, Mary Collins and Dermot A. Lane, editors, published by Michael Glazier, Inc., Wilmington, Delaware, 1988, article “God,” page 423.

¹⁹ Reference is made to the following: “The ulterior etymology is disputed.” Quoted from *The Oxford English Dictionary*, Second Edition, Volume VI, prepared by J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1989, item “god,” page 639.

²⁰ From *Word Origins and Their Romantic Stories*, Wilfred Funk, Litt. D., Grosset & Dunlap, New York, 1950, page 279.

Objection #2: Did Yahweh Inspire the Germanic Title Gott at Babel?

Another gentleman, in his objection to our claim that applying the name/title “God” to Yahweh dishonors Him, proposed that Yahweh inspired *God* to be an acceptable, generic title when the Germanic languages were given at Babel. Since Yahweh inspired each new language given there, and since *God* was a part of that “inspired Germanic language,” this must mean that Yahweh approves of this generic title. Here is what he wrote in defense of his position:

Who, when the languages were confounded at Babel, gave the Hebrews “Adonai” and “Elohim,” the Arameans “Mare” and “Alaha,” the Greeks “Kurios” and “Theos,” and the Germans “Herr” and “Gott” to use as terms of deity? The answer ... is that Yahweh was the one who confounded the languages at Babel as He saw fit. *God* is not the only word that is used in modern English worship that sounds like the name of a pagan deity in another language.²¹

Perhaps, as the man quoted above stated, it is true that *God* is not the only word employed in modern English worship that sounds like the name of a pagan deity in another language. However, so far as we know, *God* is the **only title** applied to Yahweh that not only *sounds exactly* like the name of a pagan deity in another language, but it *originated* with the name of a pagan deity in another language. To make matters worse, that “other language” just happens to be *Hebrew*, the very language of Scripture! As if to seal the matter, Yahweh Himself identifies this deity named *God* as a deity worshipped by those who **forsake Him** (Isaiah 65:11)! There are certainly other words besides “god” that sound like the names of pagan deities in other languages. We would have to scrap the entire English language if we were to disassociate each one. Out of respect for our great and majestic Heavenly Father, we do make every attempt to remove from Him titles with origins as patently heathen as the word “god.”

Of course, the logic employed by the man quoted above is this: Since Yahweh confounded the languages, and since He inspired *god* to be the word used in reference to Germanic deities, He **therefore** “must” approve of our referring to Him as “our God” in English or in German. Is it true, though, that the Germanic language can be traced all the way to Babel? No, it is not. In fact, there is absolutely no evidence that any of the several Germanic forms even *existed* prior to the birth of the Messiah. The earliest known Germanic writings only date to the third century CE, showing that these languages clearly represent a combination of a mixture of dialects between one or more languages, as well as the natural evolutionary process that any such language will experience. Consider for a moment the evolutionary nature of languages. The English we speak today, for example, would have been virtually unrecognizable to the English people of, say, 1,000 years ago. According to the *Encyclopedia International*, the “Germanic languages (formerly called the Teutonic languages), are a subgroup of the Indo-European language family. Germanic languages are usually divided into East Germanic, North Germanic, and West Germanic languages. The most important East Germanic language was Gothic, which is now extinct; no living languages belong to this sub-branch.” The article adds, “The oldest Germanic forms attested are names in the writings of Latin and Greek authors. The first extant texts are runic inscriptions of about the 3rd century A.D.”²²

²¹ The commentary displayed here was taken from two separate e-mails, sent by another fellow Yahwist on October 10 and October 12, 2000. As with the previous individual mentioned, we choose to leave this man’s name anonymous.

²² From the *Encyclopedia International*, Volume 7, 1972, by Grolier, Incorporated, New York, article “Germanic Languages,” page 555.

We thus see that even the network of Germanic languages has experienced substantial evolutionary changes, with its Gothic base having been pronounced “extinct.” Given this understanding, does it seem likely or even remotely *possible* that Yahweh ordained the Germanic language at Babel along with its generic title for deity, *god/gott*? No, it does not.

But let’s go back to the dead Gothic language, from which the Germanic languages hail. According to *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Volume VI, Online Edition, 1999, item “Etymology of the Word ‘God,’” this word is derived from the Gothic root “gheu.” *The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* traces the word *god* to the Indo-European *ghut*, then ultimately to the Sanskrit *hu*, which means “to invoke the gods.”²³ This same reference, by the way, admits to this word’s formation being “of uncertain origin,” providing yet another admission from the etymologists themselves that they really cannot be certain how to trace the origin of the word “god.” Note, though, that even the best etymological sleuth can only succeed in tracing this word to a root (such as *hu* or *gheu*) that sounds *nothing* like “god”! This being the case, we can safely conclude that Yahweh definitely *did not* inspire “God” or even “Gott” as a generic title in any language when He confounded the languages at Babel. The closest one can possibly come in their etymological search is “gheu,” which, again, doesn’t even *sound* like “god.” Thus, even the etymologists would have to admit that it is “reaching” to find a pronunciation match between the words “gheu” and “god”! In our opinion, this could be rightly termed “a gheuy mess”!

Equipped with the understanding that there really isn’t much of a match between those two words, one should be able to safely conclude that, indeed, *Yahweh is right!* You see, there *is* a match between the English name/title “God” and the Hebrew name “God”! Yahweh identifies “God” as a false idol worshipped by those who *forsake Him*. None of the ancients *ever* applied this term to Yahweh. Much later, though, a group of heathen Germanic (Teutonic) people known as the Druids were indeed found worshipping and invoking their many deities, referring to them as “gods.” Note the commentary on the origin of the word “God” as found in the *Encyclopedia International*:

The word “God” and its cognates existed in the Germanic family of languages (German *Gott*, Danish *Gud*) in pre-Christian times, and referred to that which is worshipped or invoked in sacrificial offerings. With the conversion of the Teutonic peoples to Christianity, its pre-Christian meanings were largely reshaped and absorbed into the Judeo-Christian tradition.²⁴

Truly, even if Yahweh had *not* Himself spoken against the idol *God*, we would still be faced with the sobering realization that even by etymologists’ admissions, this word hails from heathen roots.

What if Yahweh Had Not Spoken Against "God"?

Although we have just demonstrated the pronunciation “mismatch” between the words *god* and *gheu*, coupled with the fact that a *perfect match* exists with the Canaanite deity of fortune, we would like to pause for a moment to insert a brief concession: If *all* we had to go on was the etymologists’ (in)conclusions, we would be willing to acknowledge (albeit somewhat reluctantly) that “god” is an acceptable title for Yahweh, as even the Apostle Paul referred to Yahweh with the generic title *theos* in such passages as Acts 17:23 (see Objection #6 for an in-depth commentary on this Greek title). Paul

²³ From *The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*, edited by C. T. Onions, Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1966, p. 404. This reference notes the following pertaining to the origin of the word “god”: “A Cgerm. **guð*- points to IE. **ghut*-, pp. formation of uncertain origin, but prob. f. **ghu*-, repr. by Skr. *hu* invoke the gods (cf. *puru/hutás* ‘much invoked’, as an epithet of Indra).”

²⁴ From the *Encyclopedia International*, Volume 8, 1972, by Grolier, Incorporated, New York, article “God,” page 52.

evidently employed the title *theos*, even though its established association by Greeks had been directed toward the idols they worshipped. In the same way, the etymologists do not trace the English term *god* to the name of any deity, but rather to expressions and epithets used in reference to idols worshipped by Indo-European peoples. The dilemma we are faced with regarding *god*, however, is that an **alternate etymology** is in question. We maintain that it is more than just “sheer coincidence” that our English term *god* “just happens” to share the same pronunciation as the name of the Canaanite deity of fortune. We further maintain that the relationship between those two words has to be either *etymological* in nature or the result of a fiendish plot on the part of the great deceiver to cause otherwise sincere believers to unwittingly give honor to a false idol. Perhaps it is both.

Any Yahwist believer should be able to recognize that Satan does not want anyone to call upon the Creator with the name that He gave to Himself. Satan would much prefer that we call upon the Creator with the name of a **false idol**, which, as the Apostle Paul reminds us in I Corinthians 10:19-20, is not **really** an “idol” anyway, but a **demon**! Notice what he wrote:

What do I imply, then? That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything?
No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice, they offer to **demons** and not to Yahweh! (RSV)

Obviously, then, if sacrifices offered to idols are in actual fact offered to **demons**, then if we call upon the **names** of idols we are in actual fact **calling upon** demons! We believe that most Yahwists are willing to acknowledge this, as well as the fact that Satan would prefer that we call upon those demons than to call upon the Creator by His true name. These same Yahwists, we would like to think, should similarly recognize that Satan would be willing to settle for applying the name of that false idol as a *title* for Yahweh. After all, Satan **is** known as the master of compromise, and as we will see in Objection #4, *God was considered to be the name of a demon by post-Messianic Jews!*

Even **if** etymology truly had *nothing to do* with the relationship of the English “god” to the Hebrew name “God,” we are nonetheless faced with a very colorful, yet adverse history of this word as outlined by the etymologists themselves. Consider the following background on the word “god” as found in the book *The Private Lives of English Words*:

English preserves no more spectacular example of what etymologists call “ameliorization” than the etymological development of this word, which goes back to an ancient Proto-Indo-European phrase meaning “enjoyer or consumer of that which has been poured forth” (presumably wine or blood, as a sacrifice). The full phrase survives in Sanskrit as *huta-bhug*, where it was one of the epithets of Agni, the god of fire, whose name is cognate with the Latin stem from which English gets the word *ignite*. The Sanskrit *huta* ‘that which has been poured forth, the sacrifice’ is the exact cognate of the English word *God*, following localization in which the full meaning of the phrase centered in its first element, which occurred in the early Germanic ancestor of English. The Slavic branch of Indo-European reversed this choice, localizing the meaning in the second element of the phrase, and leaving the Slavic *bog* “God” as the survivor.

With what linguists call “connotative extension,” the meaning became “Deity who enjoys the sacrifice,” but as sacrificial offerings vanished from religious practice, that part of the meaning which had once been primary faded, leaving only the sense in use today, “Deity.”²⁵

²⁵ From *The Private Lives of English Words*, First Edition, by Louis G. Heller, Alexander Humez and Malcah Dror, Gale Research Company, Detroit, MI, 1984, item “God,” pp. 78-79.

We thus see that either way one “links” this name/title, it is stained with the impurity of heathen worship. In addition, according to the above reference, *god* is derived from the word *huta*, two words that in no way resemble each other: another pronunciation mismatch! Anyone wishing to apply such a term to Yahweh, knowing what we have just shown to be true about the word, must simultaneously ignore or otherwise accept this title’s former association, not to mention the unlikely evolution of the word *huta* (or *gheu*) into the word *god*. Let’s not speculate with the etymologists and their “tangled guesses” regarding the origin of the word *god*, though! Trust in **Yahweh**, Who uses this word to identify a FALSE IDOL.

Objection #3: Should a Culture Redefine a Word That's Been Borrowed From Another Language?

According to the authors of *The Truth Regarding Inspired Titles*,²⁶ a supportive reason for referring to Yahweh as “our God” is the belief that an individual can morally utter vulgar or otherwise culturally unacceptable words, so long as he or she doesn’t have unethical motives. Note the following:

Languages, on the other hand, depend on the INTENTION and CONCEPT of the user to make them a moral issue. A word, phrase, dialect, or language can only be ‘pagan’ if the user intends to convey a “pagan” idea or concept! And, even then, it would only be immoral because of the manner the user intended to use it and NOT due to its very existence! Therefore, another individual could employ the same words, phrases, dialect, or language and not suffer any divine condemnation for his actions because his INTENTIONS are more noble!²⁶

The authors go on to say, in the next paragraph of their article, “There is no such thing as a sinful sound.”²⁷

Is it true that “there is no such thing as a sinful sound”? Is this teaching found in the pages of Scripture? No, it is not. The Apostle Paul recognized the fact that there are “sinful sounds,” which is why he wrote the following in Colossians 3:8:

But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. (NIV)

Exhorting us to rid ourselves of filthy language is another way of directing us to get rid of the “sinful sounds” that might come out of our mouths. Thus, the teaching that there is no such thing as a sinful sound did not originate from the pages of Scripture. It came from men attempting to apply their own understanding to the will of the Father.

Let’s turn our attention back to the paragraph above as quoted from the article “The Truth Regarding Divine Titles.” Is it true, as they wrote, that “languages depend on the INTENTION and CONCEPT of the user to make them a moral issue”? Again, this is simply not true. While intention and concept are very important aspects within the expression of words in *any* language, there is more to consider. I’d much rather not have to ask this, but think, if you will, of a word considered a “bad word” in our culture. Can you imagine anyone familiar with the protocols of our culture who would willfully, yet **innocently**, express such a word? Can you picture such an adult sweetly voicing a “four-letter word” without having the slightest clue as to what he or she is saying? Can you then imagine how that person would react if you were to respond, “I BEG YOUR PARDON!”?

Would he or she say, “Oh, I’m sorry, but that word doesn’t have any negative implications for me”? No, such a response would not be acceptable. Rather, when one discovers that a particular word or expression is not culturally acceptable, the conscientious person takes steps to discontinue speaking it. On a much higher level, it is not appropriate, much less honorable, for us to borrow the proper noun belonging to a heathen idol from another language, then incorporate that proper noun into our language as

²⁶ From the article “The Truth Regarding Divine Titles,” 1997, by Dale George and Silvio Soto, p. 37.

²⁷ Ibid, p. 37.

a *common noun* and redefine it as an “acceptable title” to apply to our Heavenly Father -- especially when we know how Yahweh feels about the idol represented by such a word. When a culture takes a word -- a NAME -- that is already spoken against by Yahweh, then redefines that proper noun as a “perfectly acceptable title,” that culture risks undermining Yahweh’s original intent. Yahweh’s original intent was to identify by name a deity named “God” who is worshipped by those who *forsake Him*. The original intent of how Yahweh meant for His people to understand “God” has become obscured and distorted, all under the guise of the belief that “our culture allows it” or that the user can otherwise redefine that proper noun however he or she wants. We recommend abiding by the “Yahweh defined” principle instead of the “culturally defined” practice that is so widespread today.

In October 2000 June and I wrote a critique of the article “The Truth Regarding Inspired Titles,” in which I went into quite a bit of detail regarding “user defined” words, as promoted by the authors of that article. I related a personal experience to demonstrate how their concept of “user definition” cannot work in any society. This experience went back to my former school teaching days, when a student exhibited a proclivity for uttering aloud a certain four-letter word when things didn’t go her way. Despite my not allowing such language in my classroom, she protested, insisting (by her “user definition”) that there is nothing wrong with the word in question. Eventually the school principal became involved, who contacted the girl’s mother. At length, both the principal and the mother agreed that there is really nothing wrong with speaking the word in question, but they did at least support admonishing the girl to comply with the standards of my classroom. If you would like to know the word in question, please request a copy of our critique! Our point is this: One man’s “user definition” of what is acceptable versus what is not acceptable is bound to clash with another man’s “user definition”! It’s always best to “play it safe.” In the case of Yahweh, He has already identified, defined and established **God** as the name of a false deity worshipped by those who forsake Him. **His** “definition” of **God** is all we really need. To “top it off,” it is prudent to remember that if *God* is such an appropriate term, then why didn’t *any* writers of Scripture *ever* apply it to Yahweh?

Objection #4: If God is Such a Bad Title, Then Why did Leah Give That Name to Her Son?

Although we are listing this as the fourth objection in this series of “answers to objections,” the question asked in the above title usually serves as the first reproach we hear from those who object to the position we take on this issue. Those who support use of the title *god* for the Creator of the universe are often quick to justify it as not being *entirely* bad, as it is, after all, the name given to one of Yahweh’s prophets, not to mention one of the twelve tribes of Israel. Furthermore, some bring forth the contention that “God” was the name of one of Jacob’s sons *before* it was contrived as the name of the deity of fortune. We could debate long hours over whether or not this was truly an honorable name to give one of Jacob’s sons, but for those seeking the “facts of the matter,” here are some things to consider:

- Regardless of whether or not “God” was the name of a son of Jacob *prior to* its being known as the name of a false deity, the fact remains that it was indeed the name of a false deity *long* before the mind of man contrived it as an acceptable name/title for the Creator of the universe. Unlike the titles “baal,” “adonai,” and “elohim,” the title “God” *does not originate with the worship of Yahweh*. It was never a title ascribed to Him by those inspired to write what we recognize as the original Hebrew Scriptures. In fact, as we are about to see, post-Messianic Jews used this name as that of a demon.
- Leah, who gave Zilpah’s son the name “God,” was herself born and raised in the *very pagan household of Laban*, who himself worshipped many idols (Gen. 31:19, 30). In giving Zilpah’s son his name, Leah uttered the Hebrew equivalent of “Good fortune!” (cf. Gen. 30:11, NIV, NRSV). Could it be that she was raised believing in **God**, the deity of fortune, in addition to many other such idols? Yes, this is possible, and the fact that Israelites returning to the Promised Land discovered a Canaanite city named “Baal-God” (Lord God) at the foot of Mount Hermon (Josh. 11:17) demonstrates that a deity by this name was indeed worshipped well before the Israelites’ return from Egypt, and very likely well before the days of Abraham. The reference works we have consulted in our research support this premise.²⁸ According to *A Dictionary of the Bible*, the

²⁸ The reference works we consulted agree that the deity God (rendered Gad in English translations) was most likely worshipped in Canaan prior to the birth of Zilpah’s son. From *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, Volume IV, Funk and Wagnalls Company, New York, 1908, p. 418, we read the following regarding the origin of the Canaanite deity Gad: “The origin of the god Gad is in doubt. It is possible that he arose as the personification of the abstract concept of good fortune, though it must be said that this process is not usual in the Semitic sphere. None of the Old Testament passages which bear on the question are very early, unless the view of the critical school be correct which inclines to the belief that the tribe of Gad, like that of Asher, took its name from the god. The newer explanation of the composite origin of the Hebrew nation as including clans absorbed by conquest, tradition recording this fact by assigning to the clans so absorbed a humbler origin as the descendants of concubines, would make for an early origin of the deity. But these conclusions are by no means universally accepted, and the worship, even the existence, of Gad in strictly Canaanitic provenance earlier than the Exile rests on the two place names Baal-gad and Migdal-gad (ut. sup.).” According to *A Dictionary of the Bible*, Volume II, edited by James Hastings, M.A., D.D., Charles Scribner’s Sons, New York, 1899, p. 76, “A trace of the Syr. worship of Gad is regarded as being indicated by the exclamation of Leah when Zilpah, her maid, bore Jacob a son (Gn 30¹¹).” This same reference adds that Gad was “a native Canaanite word, retained by the Israelites in consequence of the tendency to polytheism which existed among them as late as the time of the Babylonian captivity....” Finally, this reference offers the following conclusion: “Further testimony to the worship of Gad in Canaan is to be found in the place-names Baal-gad (Jos. 11¹⁷ 12⁷ 13⁵), where Baal was worshipped as god of fortune, and Migdal-gad (Jos 15³⁷), ‘the tower of Gad.’ The Hebrews also were so accustomed to regard the worship of Gad as a natural thing, that the words addressed by Esau to Isaac his father, ‘let my father arise’ (Gen 27³¹), are explained in Bereshith Rabba, p. 65, as an invocation to Gada or fortune.”

word *Gad* (pronounced *gawd*) “would seem to have been a native Canaanite word, retained by the Israelites in consequence of the tendency to polytheism which existed among them as late as the time of the Babylonian captivity...” (see footnote #28 for more details). The *New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* includes the following pertinent information regarding this Canaanite idol:

Gad-melek, “Gad is king,” is an inscription on a stone found in Jerusalem, possibly due to Canaanitic influence. In Arabic the proper name Abd al-Gadd is found, certainly a deity’s name (Wellhausen, Heidentum, p. 146). Isaac of Antioch (Opera, ed. Bickell, ii. 210, Giessen, 1877) reports that tables were prepared on the roofs by his countrymen for Gadda or (pl.) Gadde, and he mentions a “demon” Gadlat as belonging to the city of Beth-hur. Jacob of Sarug speaks of a female goddess of Haran named Gadlat, while by the plural gadde he means demons. It is noteworthy that both of these references fall in with what is shown by comparative religion as happening within the Semitic sphere; (1) the development of a shadowy consort corresponding in name to the male deity, and (2) in a subsequent stage of development or under another religion the degradation of both deities to the rank of demons. Post-Christian Jews, especially the rabbis, used the name as that of a demon. Temples of Gad were known in Syria, and Buxtorf cites a passage which speaks of an image of Gad. Jacob of Sarug says that “on the summit of the mountains they now build monasteries instead of beit-gadde” (i.e., temples to Jupiter and Venus, who were identified with the deities of good luck). In late times Gad appears to have been so popular that his name acquired the sense of “genius, godhead.”²⁹

Thus, although the deity of fortune Gad (pronounced *gawd* in Hebrew) isn’t mentioned by name until Isaiah 65:11, this does not mean that it was not worshipped by Laban and his household, and it is thus quite likely that Leah chose to employ this idol’s name as the name for Zilpah’s son in consequence to her having been reared in a heathen household. It is noteworthy that the above reference mentions a goddess named Gadlat, who coincidentally was worshipped in Haran, which just happens to be Laban’s “home town”! Also interesting is the fact that in the early stages of what is known as the “New Testament era,” post-Messianic Jews used Gad as the name of a demon. Today, however, we are expected by some to regard a word bearing this same pronunciation (God) as being “a perfectly acceptable English translation” of the Hebrew title Elohim. In view of where the pronunciation of this word originated, and where this word has been, we aren’t ready just yet to join that crowd.

Let’s suppose, though, that despite all the evidence to the contrary, this name **was** noble from its inception. The fact would still remain that it **later** became corrupted **before** anyone so much as dreamed of using it in reference to Yahweh. Would we thus honor Yahweh by referring to Him with a title that squares with the name of one of the tribes of Israel, yet was later attributed to a false idol? If we **must** refer to Him with a title that matches the name of one of the twelve tribes of Israel, why not choose one with a more blessed history and meaning, such as “Simeon,” which means “One Who hears”? Or how about “Yahweh our Issachar” (reward)? Of course, there is a reason for **why** the title “**God**” was chosen out of all the names of the other twelve tribes: It just so happens that **this name/title** dovetails with the name/title employed by nearly all the English-speaking world, Christianity and Judaism alike. It offers Yahwists better public relations with both Christians and Jews, and consequently brings in **more people**. As much as we should all want **more people** joining our ranks, we must reiterate what we mentioned earlier: We earnestly desire for ALL to come to the Messiah, but not at the expense of truth, and it certainly **does** seem to be “reaching” to conclude that an appropriate title for Yahweh should come from

²⁹ From *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, Volume IV, Funk and Wagnalls Company, New York, 1908, p. 418.

the name of one of the twelve tribes of Israel, regardless of how noble that name might be! Why narrow it down to the name of one of the twelve tribes? Why not choose another “noble name” to employ in reference to Yahweh, such as “Yahweh our Abraham” or “Yahweh our Dawid”? The sheer absurdity of this logic serves to further underscore the real reason that many Yahwists have accepted “God” as a legitimate title for Yahweh: It is a compromise that will appeal to more believers who are simply not willing to completely come out of Babylon.

Despite what we have thus far shown to be true, some will grasp at what we believe are some unorthodox attempts to justify their desire to refer to Yahweh as their “God.” One man wrote, “I do not feel the argument that the word God is referring to the idol of fortune is based upon good etymological reasoning. One of the tribes of Israel was named Gawd or God long before the reference you refer to in the prophets (Is. 65:11). I do not hear any rebuke coming from the word of Yahueh for Leah naming her son this name.”³⁰

Answering this man’s claim will serve to adequately summarize what we have covered in this section: 1) Leah was certainly raised in a heathen household, where her father worshipped many idols. Was one of those idols named God? Well, please consider the following: **If** Leah’s son **was not** named after the heathen deity **God**, then exactly **when** did people begin to worship this deity?

Perhaps some might believe that the deity **God’s** name was derived from the tribe of Israel named *God* or even from the son of Jacob himself. This is most unlikely in view of the fact that the man named God, along with Jacob’s other sons, went to Egypt during his lifetime to be with Joseph and escape the great famine. Certainly during the years leading up to the move to Egypt, the man named God did nothing spectacular or “heroic” that would have led any of the surrounding people to name an idol after him! Nevertheless, when the children of Israel returned to the Promised Land from Egypt, they stumbled across a city already named Baal-God (Lord God)! Therefore, if we seriously consider all the available information regarding the actual origin of the word *God*, one would have to conclude that it originated either in Canaan or in Aram. Indeed, this would seem to be the case based on the information found in *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew Lexicon*, where we are informed that this deity’s name is often found in Phoenician and Aramaic inscriptions.³¹ Apparently, the word “God” is indeed a word borrowed from one of those two cultures and incorporated into the Hebrew language.

2) Regarding the man’s comment from above about Leah not receiving any rebuke from Yahweh for naming her son God, it was apparently a culturally accepted practice for women to name their children, and never is there a record of any rebuke for any of the names selected, although certain names were indeed changed for various reasons. Perhaps a classic example of a believer whose name was never changed, even though he was clearly named after the Roman deity *Apollo*, was the man named Apollos, of whom we read in certain New Testament passages (Acts 18:24-19:1, I Cor. 3:5-6, etc.). Another example is a disciple named *Hermes* (Romans 16:14). *Hermes* is widely recognized as the Greek “messenger of the gods.” Although the disciple mentioned in Romans 16:14 was clearly named after a heathen idol, no one suggested that he change his name upon converting to the Faith. Thus we see that there is no evidence linking any Biblical personages to reproof for having named their offspring after a heathen deity, nor is there record of any special attempt to change anyone’s name upon conversion.

Does this apparent freedom to name offspring any name one so chooses imply that we can take similar liberties with regard to the name or title we reserve for Yahweh? Furthermore, is there any Scriptural

³⁰ From an e-mail we received on July 16, 2000 from the same individual mentioned in footnotes #2 and #15.

³¹ From *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew Lexicon*, by Francis Brown, D.D., D.Litt., 1979, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, Massachusetts, page 151b, word #1408, 1409.

implication that we can pick and choose the name of **any** Biblical character, then appropriately render that name as a “translation” of the Hebrew title *elohim*? Finally, **if** this were truly a practice acceptable in the eyes of Yahweh, why would anyone want to “settle” for a name as tainted as the name *God*? Isn’t it interesting that, of the individuals who mention a preference for the title “God” because it happens to be the name of one of Jacob’s sons, none of them selected any of the **other** twelve tribes in their quest for an appropriate title for Yahweh? We again ask, “Why aren’t there folks out there calling upon ‘Yahweh our Dan’ or ‘Yahweh our Reuben’?” As stated earlier, we know why and so do they. Only the tribe that goes by the pronunciation “gawd” has a name whose pronunciation squares perfectly with the name/title by which the majority of English-speaking peoples today refer to the Creator, and by referring to Yahweh as “our God,” this will bring about more acceptance and consequently, more converts. The fact that “God” also just happens to be the name of a false Canaanite idol seems to be just a minor blip on their radar screens. It is amazing what impact the art of compromise has on bringing in converts, all under the guise of, “It can’t be wrong if Yahweh didn’t smite Jacob for allowing one of his sons to have that name!”

Objection #5: But the Name 'God' Will be Inscribed on One of the Twelve Gates of the New Jerusalem!"

Following closely on the heels of the man's logic that *God* must be an acceptable title for Yahweh due to the fact that Yahweh did not rebuke Leah for giving Zilpah's son that name is another spin based on this same line of reasoning: As depicted in Revelation 21:12, the name *God* will be inscribed on one of the twelve gates of the New Jerusalem. Certainly, as those espousing this rationale insist, the fact that this name will be found inscribed on one of those twelve gates "proves" that Yahweh doesn't mind if we refer to Him as "our God." Again, we respond with essentially the same answer as given above: Why is it that, out of ALL those twelve tribes, certain individuals select the name "God" as an acceptable title for Yahweh? Why not "Dan" or "Zebulun"? As stated earlier, we believe we know the answer! It is because they want to "go along with the crowd" (the wrong crowd, by the way). Thus, our point is as follows: This is a case of *honor versus compromise*. The English-speaking peoples of this world recognize "God" as the **name/title** of the Creator, despite its less-than-honorable origin. Certainly, if we go along with their custom, we will have more in common with them and we will offend fewer people. If one is thus more interested in attracting converts to the Faith than in outright pleasing and honoring the Heavenly Father, we can see why such an individual would pursue the promotion of "God" as an acceptable title for Yahweh.

The very fact that "God" has been identified by Yahweh Himself as an idol worshipped by those who forsake Him demonstrates the dishonor appropriated to Him by those who willfully choose to refer to Him with that title. Thus, despite the fact that "God" will appear on one of the twelve gates of the New Jerusalem, Yahweh has not identified it as a "clean" Hebrew word. He identifies it with the name of a Canaanite idol. We believe the designation given by Yahweh is sufficient.

Some individuals apparently believe that the appearance of the name "God" on one of the twelve gates of the New Jerusalem somehow supersedes Yahweh's identifying it as the name of a deity worshipped by those who forsake Him. As for us, we can accept "God" as the name of two MEN found in Scripture. We can accept "God" as the name of a FALSE IDOL. This, however, is where we "draw the line." We cannot accept it as an appropriate title for our Almighty Heavenly Father. When it comes to titles appropriated to Yahweh, is *God* REALLY the best we can do? Is it the best we can offer up to Yahweh? To those who answer, "Yes" to that question, we can only reply that, based on all the available evidence, we beg to differ!

As we ponder the name "God" appearing on one of those twelve gates of the New Jerusalem, we need to likewise ponder all those *other* tribes whose names appear there, as well as the honor associated with each one. Indeed, it is honorable to each tribe's founding father to have his name inscribed on one of those famous gates. Yet, despite whatever honor those names may hold for the tribes they represent, at the same time we should consider a lesson from their history. Each of those twelve tribes *dishonored* Yahweh by abandoning Him, rebelling against His laws, and even causing most of mankind to either forget or otherwise trivialize His name. Whether they were from the tribe of *God* or from the tribe of *Zebulun*, they rejected Yahweh's leadership and authority. When it comes right down to it, *none* of those names represented by those twelve tribes comes even *halfway close* to deserving the designation as one of Yahweh's titles. If the best title for Yahweh we can come up with is the name of one of those twelve tribes, despite whatever wondrous magnificence they may appear to have while affixed to those twelve

gates of the New Jerusalem, then we are definitely “hard up” for honorable titles! It simply escapes us as to how or why a culture could equate a man’s name, no matter *who* he is, as being “important” enough to justify applying it as a *title* for the Creator of the universe.

We say this *especially* in reference to the title “God.”

Objection #6: If the Greeks referred to Yahweh as their "Theos," then why can't we refer to Him as "our God"?

We have been told by more than a few believers that there was a Greek deity named "Theos," even though no one has really ever been able to produce the necessary evidence to justify such a belief. Indeed, if there had been a Greek deity named *Theos*, **AND** if early believers such as the Apostle Paul really referred to Yahweh as "our Theos," then one could make a legitimate case for referring to Yahweh as "our God," based on the obvious parallel. Since we only have Greek manuscripts to serve as our guide, it does appear that the Apostle Paul and other believers did indeed refer to Yahweh as "our Theos." But is *Theos* derived from the name of a Greek deity? In the article "The Truth Regarding Inspired Titles," the authors presented their case under the presumption that there was a Greek deity named *Theos*, although they did not produce any evidence in support of their claim. Their argument centered around the Apostle Paul's famous sermon on Mars' Hill in Athens, as recorded in Acts 17:16-31. Shown below is Acts 17:22-23:

Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, "To an unknown god (theos)." What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you! (New Revised Standard Version)

In the authors' commentary on this passage they astutely wrote,

This would mean that Paul was not troubled by an inscription that employed the Greek word "theos," a translation of the Hebrew title "elohim." Since it is only logical that as he proceeded to preach the message of salvation to the people of Athens he must have continued to employ the term "theos" (a necessity, as he was speaking Greek). Who else was the Apostle referring to by this Greek title other than to Yahweh? This fact demonstrates that as far as Paul was concerned, the Greek word "theos" (as a common noun) was equivalent in meaning and CONCEPT to the Hebrew word "Elohim" (also a common noun), proving once again that titles can be translated from one language to another.³²

Our comment: We totally agree with the above commentary, for the authors at that point are correctly operating from the perspective that "theos" is nothing more than a Greek title. Unfortunately, however, they proceed to make reference to the word "theos" also being a *proper noun*, which so far as we have ever known, is simply not the case. Shown below is their commentary as it appears on pages 42-43 of their article:

The Apostle's choice of words becomes even more revealing when one considers that in verse 16 we are told that Paul was distressed because the city was full of idols. Shouldn't this fact have caused the Apostle to become even more determined not to employ the Greek term "theos"? Was Paul compromising the integrity of the evangel or the reputation of Yahweh by referring to Him by the Greek title "theos"? Hardly! Was he then taking a big gamble and risking the possibility of being misunderstood and of having Yahweh confused

³² From the article "The Truth Regarding Inspired Titles," 1997, by Dale George and Silvio Soto, page 42.

with “**Theos, the name (proper noun) of an idol**” that some of these people served? Obviously, Paul did not think so!³³ (Emphasis ours).

Please notice that although the authors mention a Greek idol by the name of *Theos* “that some of these people served,” they do not list the resource from which they gleaned their information. It is true that for years we, too, tried and tried to prove that there was a Greek deity named “Theos.” Unfortunately, however, we always came up empty-handed! The closest we ever came to proving “Theos” as having originally been the name of a Greek deity came from the book *The Final Reformation*, by C. J. Koster, which was republished in 1996 under the title *Come Out of Her My People*. On page 50 of this book (page 45 of the new edition), we read the following:

And the word “Theos”? Donaldson in his “New Cratylus” points out that “th” is frequently pronounced as “Dh” in Greek, thus “Theos” and “Dheos” could be the same, if only in pronunciation. Further, B.C. Dietrich, *The Origin of Greek Religion*, p. 288, reveals to us a pair of deities, “Theos” and “Thea.” This proves that “Theos” is not only a title, but also the name of a Greek idol.³⁴

The information from Koster’s book seems credible on the surface, and would seem to prove that “Theos” was originally the name of a deity. However, in our drive to personally examine the resource he cited, we visited the library and checked out a copy of the book listed by Koster as his reference: *The Origin of Greek Religion* by B.C. Dietrich. To our disappointed amazement, we discovered that C.J. Koster liberally extrapolated from page 288 that which he wanted to use in order to justify what he wanted to prove, despite the fact that the book in *no way* infers that “Theos” and “Thea” were the names of two idols! Let's read the actual quotation from the book, and *you* decide if it reveals a deity by the name of “Theos”:

In Eleusinian myth, which one may assume to reflect Bronze Age belief, beside the Two Goddesses another pair “Theos” and “Thea,” that is Pluton and Persephone, enjoyed equal prominence.³⁵

As one can discern from the above quotation, “Theos” and “Thea” are listed *not* as names, but as *titles* for Pluton and Persephone. We thus have yet to see any solid evidence that “Theos” was ever (in its original form) anything more than a *generic title* for any deity, much like the Hebrew “Elohim.” Therefore, any attempt to infuse anyone with the idea that Paul may have been confusing Yahweh with a pagan deity's name in Acts 17 is not only unsubstantiated, but unfounded.

³³ Ibid, pp. 42-43.

³⁴ From *The Final Reformation*, by C. J. Koster, 1986, Institute For Scripture Research, Republic of South Africa, p. 50.

³⁵ From *The Origin of Greek Religion* by B.C. Dietrich, Walter De Gruyter, publisher, Berlin, New York, 1974, page 288.

Objection #7: There is no record of Yahweh ever rebuking anyone for referring to Him with a title that was originally the name of a heathen deity!

While engaged in an otherwise pleasant conversation with a fellow Yahwist, the conversation took an abrupt turn for the worse when I explained my concern regarding the decision of several within the Yahwist Movement to regard the name/title *God* as an appropriate title for Yahweh. To my surprise, I quickly discovered that my Yahwist friend is one of those embracing this belief! In the very limited time we had to speak, I summarized most, if not all, the reasons for why we feel this title actually *dishonors* Yahweh, but I could tell my words were falling on “deaf ears.” For reasons that he was apparently not willing to divulge, he was obviously not willing to abandon the title *God*. We feel that anyone who has read the history of this name (now mysteriously transformed into a *title*) should understand its less-than-illustrious origin and meaning, so this man’s adamant stand in favor of its use led me to believe he has underlying reasons for not wishing to give it up, but I did not pursue them. Instead, I simply asked, “Can you show me how referring to Yahweh as ‘our God’ *honors* Him?”

He replied, “Well, I just can’t see how it *dishonors* Him”

I felt I had already explained to him exactly “how” referring to our Creator as “our God” *does* dishonor Him, so obviously he either wasn’t listening to me or else he has no problem with referring to our Creator with a title that is pronounced the same as the name of the Canaanite deity of fortune ... a deity worshipped by those who *forsake Yahweh* (Isaiah 65:11). The man I spoke to obviously does not have a problem with taking that same Hebrew name, converting it to a title, then appropriating it to Yahweh. Clearly, he and I have very different understandings of the meaning of the word “honor.” I attempted to explain my reasoning to him by using a human analogy. “Consider the English word ‘friend,’” I told him. “How would you like it if, instead of referring to you as my ‘friend,’ I were to henceforth refer to you as my ‘hitler’? Would this be considered an appropriate way to enhance our relationship?” Consider the analogy: Just as many folks are insisting that there is nothing wrong with employing the name of a detestable idol as a translation of “Elohim,” a similar case could be made for translating the Hebrew word *reya* (friend) as “hitler.” Would such a translation in any way demonstrate respect for a person with whom I would like to cultivate a relationship? We need to give Yahweh the same consideration, only on a *much higher level!*

It was at this point in our conversation when my Yahwist friend mentioned something that, at the time, threw me completely off guard. Have you ever found yourself in a disagreement wherein your opponent said something that, at the time, you were unable to answer because it “threw you for a loop”? Only later does the proper response come to you, usually long after the conversation has ended! This is what happened to me. Here is in essence what he said: “I’ll believe you if you can show me *any Scriptural examples* of anyone ever being rebuked for mixing or incorporating other languages, then referring to Yahweh with words or titles that were originally the names of deities that those foreigners worshipped.”

As it turned out, I *couldn’t* think of any Scriptural examples of anyone ever being rebuked for referring to Yahweh with any foreign titles that emanated from the names of heathen deities! I didn’t have an answer for him. Later, however, well after our conversation had ended, the answer **hit me** like a freight train plowing through a brick wall! The reason there is no record of anyone ever being rebuked for referring to Yahweh with a title that emanates from the name of a heathen idol is because *there are no precedents* of such incidents ever occurring! In other words, there is no record of *anyone* in all of

Scripture referring to Yahweh with a title that can be traced to the name of a heathen deity. Since there is no record of anyone committing such an offense, there can likewise be no record of anyone ever being *reproved* for doing such a thing! Since there is no Scriptural record of such an “offense” ever having occurred, would it not be overly presumptuous of us to gamble on the “hunch” that Yahweh doesn’t mind? It thus appears that modern man has chosen to do that which none of the ancients ever *imagined* doing: Taking the name of a heathen idol, converting it to a *title*, then dubbing that title “a perfectly acceptable English translation of the Hebrew word *elohim*.” To even insinuate that this act is *not dishonorable* is, in our estimation, an insult to Almighty Yahweh.

The next morning, by the way, I gave my Yahwist friend my written response to his “challenge.” We have not heard from him since. A line from an old Simon & Garfunkel song comes to mind: “All lies and jests, still a man hears what he wants to hear and disregards the rest.” Or as the Messiah said in Matthew 13:14-15, “You shall indeed hear but never understand, and you shall indeed see but never perceive. For this people’s heart has grown dull, and their ears are heavy of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should perceive with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and turn for Me to heal them.” When we are presented with a belief that conflicts with our current understanding, it is incumbent on us to carefully, thoroughly and prayerfully investigate that belief, either proving it wrong or admitting to its truthfulness. As we alluded in our introduction to this study, we are to “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.” The opposite of this is to *not* prove all things, and hold fast to that which we want to believe regardless of whether or not it is truthful or even honorable to Yahweh. *Which do we choose to do?*

Part III: More Disturbing Connections

Evidence of Serpentine Connections From Russian and Irish Cultures

We have already shared the historical and Scriptural fact that “God” is the name of an idol worshipped in ancient Babylon. This fact, to us, is very disturbing ... disturbing enough to warrant searching for another appellative to use in reference to our Creator. June and I recently found yet another negative “God” connection which we hope you don’t mind our sharing with you. The information that follows is an excerpt from the presentation I delivered at the 2004 Sacred Name Unity Conference, held in Eaton Rapids, Michigan, and I have decided to incorporate it into this study. In our ongoing research, June and I learned that the Russian language contains a word pronounced “God.” The only thing is, when you utter the phonetic transliteration of this word in Russian, you are referring to a *reptile*, for that is what the word “God” *means* in the Russian language. It’s little wonder that some folks regard the English-speaking culture as being “satanic”! If I heard that some group over in Timbuctoo worshipped a deity named “Reptile,” they would already have a strike against them in my book, simply because of the name they use in reference to the Creator.

We recommend checking out page 23 of the *Transliterated Dictionary of the Russian Language*, online edition, by Eugene Garfield, editor. It can be found online at <http://garfield.library.upenn.edu/rd/rd1.pdf>. You will notice that the word spelled “gad” means “reptile” in the Russian language. If you consult a pronunciation guide, such as the one located at www.masterrussian.com, you will notice that the word spelled “gad” is pronounced “gawd.” Curiously, on that same page (page 23) there are a total of *five* words that are either pronounced “God” in Russian or have a form of “God” as a prefix. We are displaying those five words below for your review. Notice that each of those words has a *very* negative connotation:

gad (n.m.) reptile
gadalka (n.f.) fortune-teller
gadit (v. impf.) foul
gadvik (adj.) nasty
gadyuka (n.f.) adder³⁶



[Larry’s comment: How did “Gad,” the idol of **fortune**, come to form the prefix of the Russian word for “**fortune**-teller”? Another “coincidence”?]

For those who might choose to dismiss any possible connection that the Russian word pronounced **God** may have with the Hebrew word **God**, we can only ask if they can explain how a Russian word that has **God** as its prefix came to mean “**FORTUNE TELLER**” in that language. In view of the fact that the Canaanite deity named **GOD** is the “deity of fortune,” how did this word make it into the Russian language to form the prefix of the word meaning “**fortune** teller”? Is it just a coincidence?

Some folks, upon reviewing the above words, are bound to comment something to the effect, “But those words aren’t pronounced with the ‘gawd’ sound! They would be pronounced with the short ‘a’ sound, as in ‘sad’!” Again, for those willing to check out a Russian pronunciation guide, such as the one found at www.masterrussian.com, it will be obvious that these words are all pronounced with the “gawd” sound. As the pronunciation guide reveals, the vowel “a” in Russian is pronounced “ah” when it is

³⁶ This listing comes from the *Transliterated Dictionary of the Russian Language*, online edition, by Eugene Garfield, editor. The above page (p. 23) can be viewed by accessing the following URL: <http://www.garfield.library.upenn.edu/rd/rusg.pdf>.

stressed. Since “Gad” is a one-syllable word, the “a” must be stressed, thus giving the word the same pronunciation as “God.”

Again, this word, in Russian, can mean either “serpent” or “reptile.” Not being experts on how the Slavic languages developed, neither June nor I are able to explain how a word pronounced “god” happened to become incorporated into the Russian language, nor can we demonstrate how such a word came to mean “reptile.” Nor can we explain how the Russian *prefix* “**GOD**,” when referring to a **FORTUNE-TELLER** (*gadalka*), just *happens* to mean “fortune” in that language, knowing that **GOD** is the deity of **FORTUNE** in the Hebrew language. If this is “just a coincidence,” it is one of the strangest coincidences we have ever encountered.

One thing we do know is that the heathen idol *God* was also known as Baal-God³⁷, and one of Baal’s symbols was the serpent.³⁸ While this information does not prove anything, it **certainly** arouses some suspicion. Furthermore, according to J. G. R. Forlong, in his book *Rivers of Life*, volume one, which he authored in 1883, an idol named *Gad-el-Glas* was worshipped in Ireland. As it turns out, *Gad-el-Glas* literally means “Snake-deity-green,” or as expressed in Forlong’s book, “Green god-Snake.” Here is an excerpt from that chapter:

Mr. Marcus Keane tells us that although the Kelts of Ireland rejected the phallic worship of their predecessors the Tuath-de-Danaans, they yet retained their names and customs. May day continued to be called *La-Baal-Thinna*, and was always connected with the worship of Baal as “*the green god*” —a very ancient term for Mercury, whose hue was green; and being so, we here see him in dress of suitable shape and colour, and with his Caduceus in hand. “*Gad-el-glas*³⁹ or the Green-god-Snake,” was an important Irish deity, and the name seems to correspond with “the green god,” or “*Primeval Boodh*,” which Coleman treats of in his Indian Mythology, but which I take the liberty of calling *Primeval Goad*; I do not think there is any connection whatever between him and Boodha.⁴⁰

Is it just a coincidence that the word pronounced “God” not only made its way into the Russian language with the meaning of “reptile” or “serpent,” but this *same word* is found in heathen worship in Ireland in reference to “the Green-god-Snake”? Is it just a coincidence that his worship is connected to Baal worship and that one of Baal’s symbols was a serpent? And where did the term “*el*” originate?

The fact that *God* is a name identified with serpent worship should, in our opinion, alarm any serious student of the Word. The connection of an ancient idol of “*fortune*” to a similar Russian word meaning “*fortune-teller*” (*gadalka*) and the transliteration of the very name *God* into a word meaning “**reptile**” in itself reveals an indelible link that June and I find difficult to deny. However, when combined with the

³⁷ According to G. F. Taylor, in his book *The Second Coming of Jesus*, The Falcon Publishing Company, Falcon, N.C., 1916, p. 161, **God is another name for Baal**: “The city Baal-Gad (Josh. 11: 17) derived its name from ‘Baal’; and from ‘Gad,’ the Babylonian god of fortune, Bel, standing for the planet Jupiter. The Arabs called it ‘the greater good fortune;’ and ‘Meni,’ the planet Venus, stood for ‘the lesser good fortune.’ ‘But ye are they that forsake the Lord, that forget my holy mountain, that prepare a table for that god, and that furnish the drink offering unto that Meni.’—Isa. 65: 11. (Margin.) In this verse the idea of the male and the female antichrist is mentioned. Gad is only another name for Baal, the male god; while Meni stands for Venus, the female goddess.”

³⁸ Source: *Mythaeum: An Archetypal Encyclopaedia of Myth*, online edition, page 9, (<http://www.mythopedia.info/03-pan-semitic.htm>), where we read, “A serpent was Baal’s symbol.”

³⁹ That the Irish word “Gad” is pronounced “God” can be established by checking out the pronunciation of the word “glas,” which is the Irish word for “green.” According to an Irish informational web site (<http://www.ireland-information.com/irishphrases.htm>), the word “glas” is pronounced “gloss.”

⁴⁰ From *Rivers of Life or Sources and Streams of the Faiths of Man in All Lands*, Major-General J. G. R. Forlong, Vol. 1, London: Bernard Quaritch, 1883, page 450.

information we have just given you, unveiling yet *another* idol named *God* who is literally known as the “Green-god-Snake,” the association only seems deniable by those unwilling to see it. Is *God* connected to the worship of the True Mighty One ... or is *God* connected to serpent worship? Based upon all available historical evidence, *God* is most certainly not associated with the worship of our Heavenly Father Yahweh. As for the destiny of any idols identified with serpent worship, we can only remind you of the information offered in Revelation 12:9:

⁹ And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world; he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

We don’t know about you, but this is just too many “coincidences” for June and me. Back in 2001, while still engaged in the group e-mail discussion regarding whether or not we honor Yahweh by referring to Him as “our God,” one of the participants insisted that I have not proven my position “beyond a reasonable doubt.” One of my responses was to let him know that, instead of putting the burden of proof on MY shoulders, I consider the burden of proof to be on HIS SHOULDERS! In our quest to serve Yahweh and give Him the pure worship He is so deserving of, should the burden of proof rest upon those of my persuasion to *prove* that the title “God” is an affront to Yahweh? Or should the burden of proof be upon those who believe it’s honorable to *prove* that it’s honorable?

Please allow me to give you an analogy to illustrate the point I’m trying to make. I work in a branch office of a company whose corporate office is in California. The vice-president of our company is a very nice man whose first name is Howard. From time to time, Howard will call our office, mostly to speak with our Regional Manager. We had a receptionist who one day made the mistake of not addressing Howard properly when she answered the phone. When he called our office, she said, “Oh, hi, Howie! How are you?”

Unknown to the receptionist, Howard does not in any way, shape, or fashion appreciate being addressed as “Howie.” In fact, he was so displeased that he gave our manager instructions to find a new receptionist.

What mistake did the receptionist make? I believe she failed to research the matter before taking it upon herself to call our vice-president “Howie.” Certainly, she knew his name is Howard, and certainly she *should have known* that many people simply do not appreciate it when people play around with their names. It is regarded as disrespectful to do such a thing with a person’s name without their prior consent.

Maybe, just *maybe*, she should have reasoned things out a little before acting on her impulse. She should have told herself something like, “I should check with other office personnel before I address him as ‘Howie.’” Did she *ask* anyone, though? Did she check this out before taking it upon herself to do what she did? No, she did not.

The same principle applies to our Creator’s name. June and I believe it’s a “given” that we have no business changing or substituting another name for Yahweh’s name. We believe we can all at least agree on *that* point. But on another level, we believe we should consider the *title* that we reserve for our Heavenly Father. Over the years, we keep finding more and more evidence that the name and title “God” is not only of heathen origin insofar as the Hebrew word is concerned, but it’s a word that traces to heathen worship insofar as etymologists have traced the *English* word. No matter how you “slice it,” this word comes to us with “negative connotations,” a point that even our opponents are willing to admit.

Nevertheless, many believe they honor Yahweh by referring to Him with such a title. I have to regard these people in the same light that I regard the receptionist I just told you about. Have these people *really* done their homework and *examined* whether or not Yahweh approves of the title “God”? Did anyone really even bother to *check this out* before taking it upon themselves to apply this title to Yahweh? Does it make sense for Yahweh to condemn an idol named “God” and then give His approval to be addressed with that *same name*, only as a “title”? Does it make sense to, on the one hand, acknowledge that Yahweh *condemns God*, and then on the other hand say, “Yahweh is my *God*”?

June and I take our worship very seriously. We didn’t come this far only to compromise our worship or give half an ounce of our worship to someone (or something) other than Yahweh. Nor are we interested in gambling as to whether or not Yahweh approves of the title “God.” We prefer to err on the side of safety, and we urge all fellow truth seekers to do the same.

A Case for the Ulterior Etymology of GOD Being Traced to Hebrew

In spite of what we believe is overwhelming evidence of the relationship between the English “God” and the Canaanite idol of fortune whose name is pronounced identically, the opposition continues to deny any such connection. This was evidenced in yet another group discussion I participated in between the months of December 2004 and January 2005. Towards the end of that discussion, June and I came across a dictionary that we believe adds yet more weight to our conviction that the English name/title “God” is ultimately traced to the Hebrew root word GD (גד, pronounced “God”). The name of this dictionary is *The Word: The Dictionary That Reveals the Hebrew Source of English*, published by SPI Books, New York. It was compiled by Isaac E. Mozeson and originally published in 1989. We found some very compelling information in Mozeson’s dictionary – information that further establishes the connection between the English “God” and the Hebrew “God.” When I infused this information into the discussion, the debating came to an abrupt halt – not that the opposition was willing to concede that maybe there really *is* a connection, but certainly the fact that anyone from the “scholarly community” who is willing to recognize such a connection served to take some steam from their argument.

Although Mozeson doesn’t offer a separate listing under the heading “**God**” in his dictionary, he does mention it under the heading of “**Good**.” What follows is a reproduction of Isaac Mozeson’s listing under the heading “**GOOD/GUD**,” as found on page 80 of his dictionary:

ROOTS: Anglo-Saxon *god* and German *got* go back to the IE root *ghedh* (to unite, join, fit). The IE root echoes גד / (O)GUD (to unite, fit together), but גד / GUD (fortune, success — *Genesis 30:11*) fits the common use of GOOD well enough. Good in Arabic is *gayid*.

BRANCHES: That GOD is GOOD (and really TOGETHER) ought to be implied by the similarity of these Germanic terms. The same גד / GUD (good fortune) above is the name of a deity mentioned in *Isaiah 65:11*. The given IE root for GOD is *Gheu(a)* (to call, invoke).

As shown in Isaac Mozeson's dictionary, both "good" and "God" are very likely traced to the Hebrew **GD**, which is the name of an idol whose worship YHWH condemns, a point that we have made repeatedly in this study ... and a point that we believe cannot be over-emphasized. We can also see that down through history, this same word evolved into a word meaning "reptile" in Russian and "snake" in ancient Gaelic.

As a side note, we find it interesting that, elsewhere in Mozeson’s dictionary, he addresses the fact that Noah Webster’s etymologies were full of English words traced to "Shemitic" sources. Is the word “God” one of them? He believes so, and we have seen nothing that would serve to refute such a connection.

Putting it all together

If you have read everything we have written to this point on the subject of the title “god,” you most likely understand our basis for rejecting its use as a title for our Heavenly Father Yahweh. No matter how you trace or otherwise make any linguistic connection with this word, it is undeniably rooted in heathen worship and is therefore dishonoring to Yahweh as a title. The authors of the treatise “The Truth Regarding Inspired Titles” attempt to lump “god” in with titles such as the Aramaic “mare” (pronounced *mahr-ay*) and “elah,” the Greek “theos” and “kyrios,” as well as the Hebrew “elohim,” “baal,” and “adonai.” Is there a significant characteristic that separates the title “god” from the aforementioned titles? Why do June and I meticulously **avoid** referring to Yahweh as “our God,” while simultaneously **supporting** the position taken by those who feel led to refer to Him as “our Elohim” or even “our Mare”? What is the “big deal” that makes us believe it is dishonorable to refer to Yahweh as “our God,” yet **acceptable** to refer to Him as “our Mare” or even “our Theos”?

The “big deal” lies in the precedents established by Yahweh in His Word. The precedents established in **Scripture**: The mistake that many have made, including the authors of “The Truth Regarding Inspired Titles,” involves the belief that titles such as “theos” and “mare” were originally names of heathen idols before being assigned to the true Elohim, Yahweh.⁴¹ As mentioned earlier in this study, there is absolutely no evidence of there ever having been a deity named “Theos,” at least not before the time of the Apostles. The same goes for the Aramaic “mare.” There is no record of there having been a deity with this name, at least not prior to its use as a title in the book of Daniel.

Can the same be said for the title “god”? No, it cannot. We have successfully demonstrated that this is the name of a heathen idol that Yahweh Himself literally names as being worshipped by those who **forsake Him**. We have further demonstrated that the preponderance of the evidence indicates that this heathen deity was worshipped **prior to** the birth of one of its namesakes, **Gad**, identified as one of the “twelve tribes of Israel.” This son of Jacob was named by Leah, who was herself clearly reared in the home of an idol worshipper, and we also know that Yahweh does not fire lightning bolts or otherwise send down curses on anyone in response to the names they give their children. Therefore, we can logically ascertain that Leah named Jacob’s son **Gad** after the deity of fortune, a deity whose worship was prominent in her native city of Haran.

The point in all this is, **there is no Scriptural precedent wherein the Creator is ever referred to with a title that was originally the name of a heathen idol**. Instead, the reverse is true: Titles originally ascribed to Yahweh were allowed by apostate man to degenerate into names of heathen idols. Since there is no

⁴¹ The authors of “The Truth Regarding Inspired Titles,” Dale George and Silvio Soto, regard the title “mare” as a **proper noun**, as evidenced from the following quotation taken from page 44: “For if the Hebrew *elohim* can be rendered by Inspiration into the Aramaic *elah* (or the Greek *theos*) and if the Hebrew *adonay* can be rendered by Inspiration into the Aramaic *mare* (or the Greek *kyrios*),— despite the obvious fact that all of these words as proper nouns can be objected to on the grounds of paganism or perverted substitution — then on what basis could we argue that these Hebrew titles cannot be rendered and translated into English?”

The authors do not state that any of the above-mentioned titles originated as proper nouns employed by heathen worshippers; if they had done so, they would have been required to produce documentation of such, as our studies do not produce any evidence of these titles having originated as proper nouns. There is an enormous difference between a word being **transformed** into the name of an idol and a word **originating** as the name of an idol. Words like *elohim*, *mare* and *theos* **did not** originate as proper nouns. Words like *god* **did** originate as a proper noun. The only basis on which we would recognize the Scriptural authorization of ascribing to Yahweh titles that originated as names of heathen idols would be by Scriptural precedent. As there is no Scriptural precedent of anyone ever referring to Yahweh with a title that originally represented the name of a heathen idol, we reject the concept that one can “honorably” refer to Yahweh as “our God.”

Scriptural precedent or authorization for anyone to ever refer to Yahweh with a title that was originally the name of a heathen idol, by whose authorization do we do so now?

For those who insist that we cannot demonstrate a connection between the English “God” and the Hebrew “God,” especially in view of what has just been presented, all we can think to ask is, “What more do you *need*?” We have a Russian word pronounced “God” that means “reptile,” as well as an ancient Irish snake deity whose name was pronounced “God-el-Gloss.” Not only does this deity’s name contain the Hebrew word “el,” but it was worshipped alongside an idol named *Baal-Tin-Glas*. In spite of all these “coincidences,” the opposition insists the Hebrew connection isn’t there ... even when a Jewish scholar himself makes a strong case for a connection between the English “God” and the Canaanite idol of fortune. The attempts I have made to persuade these individuals of how this evidence serves to establish a connection to the Canaanite idol of fortune remind me of the attempts I have made to persuade some atheists that there is a Creator. Sometimes the delusion is so strong that the mind is not able (or willing) to accept *any* evidence that would refute what the individual wants to believe and is not willing to let go of.

Conclusion and Parting Comments

Ever since this topic became an issue within the Yahwist Movement, we have maintained that it boils down to *honor* versus *compromise*. Given the sordid history of the word pronounced “gawd,” we believe sincere, truth-seeking individuals should seriously question *why* they would choose to refer to the Creator of heaven and earth with such a title. We ask them, “Is this the **best** title you can come up with for our Heavenly Father?” In light of the fact that Yahweh Himself identifies and names a heathen deity named God that is worshipped by those who “forsake” Him, it is clear that appropriating any word in reference to Him that is pronounced the same as this heathen idol’s name **cannot** be construed as being “honorable.” As for compromise, the only reason we can find to explain why Yahwists would wish to retain the title *God* is to appease, attract and/or retain individuals who might otherwise not associate with the Yahwist Movement. Compromising our faith will undoubtedly result in larger numbers within our ranks, as can be demonstrated by some early believers’ willingness to adopt and otherwise transform the pagan Saturnalia into what is now known as Christmas. The number of believers swelled, no doubt about that! Does such compromise **really** benefit anyone, though, when all is said and done? No, it does not.

Some are not willing to regard their desire to refer to Yahweh as “our God” as being a matter of honor versus compromise. Note the following comment we received from a man after having reviewed our position on this subject:

For me this is not an issue of honor versus compromise, but an issue of whether or not we will get hung up on an issue which has no importance to Yahueh versus being fence building Pharisees to the point we don’t ever go out there in the sinful world to persuade the lost and dying world of the validity of the third commandment, by placing this stumblingblock in front of them.⁴²

Despite the above individual’s refusal to view this topic as being one of honor versus compromise, we maintain that he is either in “denial” or simply does not understand the seriousness of this issue. We have already explained in detail our position regarding the “honor” and the “compromise.” Unless someone can demonstrate how we are blowing things out of proportion, we stand by our claim. Any insistence to the contrary, unless it can be backed up with substantial evidence, cannot be seriously considered as valid. It is one thing to **say**, “For me this is not an issue of honor versus compromise,” but it is entirely another to **demonstrate** the veracity of his personal conviction. The above individual furthermore states that this issue has “no importance” to Yahweh. Anyone claiming that Yahweh doesn’t care what titles we reserve for Him, in our estimation, simply does not understand what it means to honor Yahweh. Indeed, then, this truly is an issue of honor versus compromise. Let us choose to **honor Yahweh** in word, in deed, and even with the titles we use in reference to Him!

As we conclude this study, we do not feel we can adequately bring this topic to a close without admonishing everyone to thoroughly investigate the claims presented here before arriving at a conclusion. Investigate the origin of the word God. Investigate the original pronunciation of the original Hebrew word **גַּד**, which **today** is commonly pronounced “gad” (as in “dad”). Finally, one would do well to conduct an in-depth study on the **meaning** of this word. This Hebrew word, according to *Strong’s Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary*, is derived from word #1464 (guwd), which means “to crowd upon, i.e., **attack**: - invade, overcome.” This is the Hebrew origin of this word. Does this **really** sound like a word descriptive of Yahweh? Furthermore, *Strong’s* lists word #1464 as being “akin to” word #1413 (gadad),

⁴² From an e-mail we received on 10/12/00 from the same individual mentioned in footnotes #2, #15 and #30.

which means “to crowd; also to gash (as if by pressing into).” Would our critics consider **this** to be an honorable origin of the word they apply as a title for our Creator? Once again, we implore our readers: Let us choose to **honor Yahweh** in word, in deed, **and** with the titles we use in reference to Him! When it comes to honoring YHWH, we don't believe it is proper to gamble on what may or may not please Him. As the expression goes, we should "err on the side of safety" for the sake of making certain His name is honored.

