

Reference Document

“The Name That Isn’t There: Watchtower’s 237 Edits to the New Testament”

EVERY CLAIM, SOURCE, AND VERIFICATION STATUS

How to Use This Document

Each entry identifies a specific factual claim made in the video, the source it is based on, where to verify it, and any notes on confidence. Claims appear in the order they are made in the video. Quotations from Watchtower and Bible-translation sources are reproduced verbatim.

Verification levels:

- **PRIMARY** — the original document itself: an official Watchtower publication (including the New World Translation and the Kingdom Interlinear), the biblical text, a peer-reviewed article, or the institutional manuscript catalog. Primary sources stand on their own.
- **SECONDARY** — authoritative reference works, academic monographs, and standard scholarship that support and contextualize the primary evidence.

Section 1 — The Name Itself

The New World Translation prints the name “Jehovah” 237 times in the Christian Greek Scriptures (the New Testament).

Source: *The Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures* (Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, 1969), Foreword, p. 23; also the New World Translation appendix on the divine name.

Source type: print publication (citation above)

Verification: **PRIMARY** — An official Watch Tower publication stating its own translation practice.

Key quote / direct text: “...out of the 237 times that we have restored Jehovah’s name in the body of our translation...”

Watchtower’s own Kingdom Interlinear states that its translators leaned toward “Yahweh” as the more correct pronunciation and kept “Jehovah” only because of familiarity.

Source: *The Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures* (Watch Tower, 1969), Foreword, p. 23.

Source type: print publication (citation above)

Verification: **PRIMARY** — The translation committee’s own printed statement.

Key quote / direct text: “While inclining to view the pronunciation ‘Yahweh’ as the more correct way, we have retained the form ‘Jehovah’ because of people’s familiarity with it since the 14th century.”

The 1985 revised edition softened this admission, re-attributing the view to “many” instead of the translators themselves.

Source: *The Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures* (Watch Tower, 1985), “Explanation of the Symbols Used and of the Abbreviations.”

Source type: print publication (citation above)

Verification: **PRIMARY** — The revised edition’s own text, compared with the 1969 wording.

Key quote / direct text: “While many are inclined to view the pronunciation ‘Yahweh’ as the more correct way...”

“Jehovah” is a hybrid form: the consonants of the divine name (YHWH) combined with the vowel points of “Adonai,” misread as a single word by Christian scholars in the early 1500s.

Source: Encyclopædia Britannica, “Yahweh”; also *Jewish Encyclopedia*, “Tetragrammaton.”

URL: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Yahweh>

Verification: **SECONDARY** — Authoritative reference works on Hebrew Bible scholarship.

Note: The vowels of Adonai were placed on YHWH as a reading reminder (the qere/ketiv device), never as an actual word. The hybrid reading is commonly traced to Petrus Galatinus (c. 1518–1520).

Scholars reconstruct the original pronunciation as “Yahweh,” supported by the short form “Yah” (preserved in “Hallelujah”) and by early Greek transcriptions (e.g., Iabe).

Source: Encyclopædia Britannica, “Yahweh.”

URL: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Yahweh>

Verification: **SECONDARY** — Standard scholarly reconstruction of the Tetragrammaton.

The short form “JAH” appears in the King James Version at Psalm 68:4.

Source: *King James Version*, Psalm 68:4.

URL: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+68%3A4&version=KJV>

Verification: **PRIMARY** — The biblical text itself.

Key quote / direct text: “...extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH, and rejoice before him.”

“Jesus” is the English descendant of the Hebrew name “Yeshua,” transmitted through Greek (Iēsous) and Latin (Iesus); Hebrew names beginning with the letter yod become “J” in English (Yohanan→John, Yehudah→Judah, Yirmeyah→Jeremiah).

Source: Encyclopædia Britannica, “Jesus”; standard biblical-language onomastics.

URL: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Jesus>

Verification: **SECONDARY** — Well-established etymology of the name and the yod→J transmission pattern.

Section 2 — What the Manuscripts Say

More than 5,000 Greek manuscripts and fragments of the New Testament survive — the best-attested body of ancient writing.

Source: Institute for New Testament Textual Research (INTF), University of Münster — the *Kurzgefasste Liste*, the authoritative catalog, records approximately 5,800.

URL: <https://www.uni-muenster.de/INTF/en/>

Verification: **PRIMARY** — The institutional catalog of record for Greek NT manuscripts.

Across that entire body of manuscripts, the divine name (the Hebrew Tetragrammaton) appears zero times; the text reads the Greek Kýrios (“Lord”) or Theos (“God”).

Source: Watchtower’s own *Insight on the Scriptures* concedes the absence (see next entry); corroborated by the standard scholarly consensus (INTF; B. Metzger & B. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament*).

Source type: print publication (citation above)

Verification: **PRIMARY** — Conceded by Watchtower’s own reference work and undisputed in textual scholarship.

The earliest Christian scribes used “nomina sacra” — reverent contracted forms marked with an overline — for holy words including God, Lord, and Jesus; the slot where the divine name would fall is filled by “Lord” (Kýrios).

Source: Larry W. Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts: Manuscripts and Christian Origins* (Eerdmans, 2006).

Source type: print publication (citation above)

Verification: **SECONDARY** — A leading scholarly monograph on early Christian scribal practice.

Note: The nomina sacra demonstrate that early scribes were deliberately careful with sacred words — the opposite of careless or hostile.

Watchtower’s *Insight on the Scriptures* openly asks why the name is absent from every surviving New Testament manuscript.

Source: *Insight on the Scriptures*, Vol. 2 (Watch Tower), “Jehovah,” under “The Divine Name in the Christian Greek Scriptures.”

URL: <https://www.jw.org/en/library/books/insight-on-the-scriptures/>

Verification: **PRIMARY** — Watchtower’s own encyclopedia.

Key quote / direct text: “Why, then, is the name absent from the extant manuscripts of the Christian Greek Scriptures or so-called New Testament?”

Section 3 — The Sources Cited for the Insertions

The NWT’s footnote “J” references (J1–J20 and beyond) are Hebrew translations of the New Testament — not ancient Greek manuscripts — dated from the 14th century onward; the earliest complete Hebrew New Testament listed is 1599 and the most recent is 1979.

Source: New World Translation appendix / *Kingdom Interlinear* (Watch Tower); the “J” source list and its dates are the NWT’s own.

Source type: print publication (citation above)

Verification: **PRIMARY** — The dating comes from Watchtower’s own catalog of its “J” sources.

Note: Because these Hebrew versions were themselves translated from the Greek (which reads “Lord”), citing them as evidence of the first-century Greek wording is circular.

The one “J” source some scholars argue may rest on older material — Shem-Tob’s 14th-century Hebrew Matthew — does not use the Tetragrammaton where Greek Matthew reads “Lord”; it uses “ha-Shem” (“the Name”), abbreviated to a single Hebrew letter.

Source: George Howard, *Hebrew Gospel of Matthew* (Mercer University Press, 1995).

Source type: print publication (citation above)

Verification: SECONDARY — Howard’s critical edition of the Shem-Tob text, which documents the ha-Shem substitution.

Note: A substitute for the name — the very kind of device Watchtower blames for the name’s disappearance.

Section 4 — The Explanation for the Gap

Watchtower’s explanation for the missing name is that later scribes removed it — introduced with the word “Evidently.”

Source: *Insight on the Scriptures*, Vol. 2 (Watch Tower), “Jehovah.”

URL: <https://www.jw.org/en/library/books/insight-on-the-scriptures/>

Verification: PRIMARY — Watchtower’s own stated reasoning.

Key quote / direct text: “*Evidently because by the time those extant copies were made (from the third century C.E. onward) the original text of the writings of the apostles and disciples had been altered.*”

A single, coordinated removal of the name from every copy of every New Testament book across the Roman world — leaving no half-edited copy, marginal note, or contemporary complaint — is inconsistent with how manuscript transmission is known to work (changes appear as scattered, region-by-region variants).

Source: Creator analysis, drawing on standard text-critical method (B. Metzger & B. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament*, 4th ed., Oxford University Press, 2005).

Source type: print publication (citation above)

Verification: SECONDARY — Editorial reasoning grounded in the established principles of textual criticism.

Section 5 — The Pattern: Where the Name Is Added (Romans 10)

At Romans 10:13 the NWT prints “Jehovah” (in a quotation of Joel 2:32, where the Hebrew has the Tetragrammaton).

Source: New World Translation, Romans 10:13.

URL: <https://www.jw.org/en/library/bible/study-bible/books/romans/10/>

Verification: PRIMARY — The NWT text itself.

Key quote / direct text: “...everyone who calls on the name of Jehovah will be saved.”

Four verses earlier, at Romans 10:9, the same passage has Paul confessing “Jesus is Lord.”

Source: New World Translation, Romans 10:9.

URL: <https://www.jw.org/en/library/bible/study-bible/books/romans/10/>

Verification: PRIMARY — The NWT text itself.

Key quote / direct text: “...if you publicly declare that Jesus is Lord...you will be saved.”

The mainstream scholarly reading is that Paul deliberately applies Joel’s divine-name text to Jesus; printing “Jehovah” in verse 13 severs that connection.

Source: Standard New Testament commentary (e.g., Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, Anchor Yale Bible; Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT).

Source type: print publication (citation above)

Verification: **SECONDARY** — Represents the consensus reading of Romans 10:9–13 in critical commentaries.

Note: The video frames this as inconsistent application of Watchtower’s own translation rule, not as a doctrinal proof.

Section 6 — The Pattern: Where the Name Is Withheld (1 Peter)

At Psalm 34:8 the NWT prints “Jehovah.”

Source: New World Translation, Psalm 34:8.

URL: <https://www.jw.org/en/library/bible/study-bible/books/psalms/34/>

Verification: **PRIMARY** — The NWT text itself.

Key quote / direct text: *“Taste and see that Jehovah is good...”*

At 1 Peter 2:3 — a direct quotation of Psalm 34:8 — the NWT prints “the Lord,” not “Jehovah.”

Source: New World Translation, 1 Peter 2:3.

URL: <https://www.jw.org/en/library/bible/study-bible/books/1-peter/2/>

Verification: **PRIMARY** — The NWT text itself.

Key quote / direct text: *“...provided you have tasted that the Lord is kind.”*

The wording difference (“good” vs. “kind”) is a translation artifact: Peter quotes the Greek Septuagint of Psalm 34:8, where the Hebrew “tov” (good) is rendered by the Greek “chrēstos” (good/kind). It is the same verse.

Source: Septuagint, Psalm 33:9 (LXX); Greek text of 1 Peter 2:3.

Source type: print publication (citation above)

Verification: **PRIMARY** — The Greek biblical texts themselves.

Note: The NWT itself cross-references 1 Peter 2:3 to Psalm 34:8.

The next verse, 1 Peter 2:4, identifies the one just spoken of as Christ — “a living stone, rejected...by men.”

Source: New World Translation, 1 Peter 2:4.

URL: <https://www.jw.org/en/library/bible/study-bible/books/1-peter/2/>

Verification: **PRIMARY** — The NWT text itself.

Key quote / direct text: *“Coming to him as to a living stone, rejected, it is true, by men...”*

A page later, 1 Peter 3:15 says “sanctify the Christ as Lord” — adapting Isaiah 8:13, where the one to sanctify is the divine name; the NWT again keeps “Lord,” not “Jehovah.”

Source: New World Translation, 1 Peter 3:15 (cf. Isaiah 8:13).

URL: <https://www.jw.org/en/library/bible/study-bible/books/1-peter/3/>

Verification: **PRIMARY** — The NWT text itself.

Key quote / direct text: *“But sanctify the Christ as Lord in your hearts...”*

Section 7 — The Strongest Case for the Practice (Presented Fairly)

The divine name appears roughly 7,000 times in the Hebrew Old Testament (about 6,828 occurrences in the Masoretic Text).

Source: *Jewish Encyclopedia*, “Tetragrammaton”; standard Hebrew lexica (BDB).

URL: <https://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/14346-tetragrammaton>

Verification: **SECONDARY** — Established reference count of Tetragrammaton occurrences.

Note: The video grants this — it is part of the strongest argument for restoring the name in Old Testament quotations.

Papyrus Fouad 266 (1st century B.C.) is a pre-Christian Greek Septuagint copy of Deuteronomy in which the Hebrew Tetragrammaton is written directly into the Greek text.

Source: Papyrus Fouad 266 (Bibliothèque Nationale, Cairo/Paris); described in standard Septuagint scholarship (E. Tov; A. Pietersma).

Source type: print publication (citation above)

Verification: **PRIMARY** — The manuscript itself is the physical evidence, granted in full by the video.

Note: Establishes that some Greek Old Testament copies kept the name — but does not establish what the New Testament writers did.

Scholar George Howard proposed (1977) that the New Testament authors may have kept the Tetragrammaton in their Old Testament quotations, with copyists later changing it to “Lord.”

Source: George Howard, “The Tetragram and the New Testament,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 96/1 (1977), pp. 63–83.

URL: <https://scholarlypublishingcollective.org/sblpress/jbl/article/96/1/63/186508/The-Tetragram-and-the-New-Testament>

Verification: **PRIMARY** — The peer-reviewed article itself, presented as a genuine scholarly hypothesis.

Howard’s hypothesis did not become the scholarly consensus, and no New Testament manuscript containing the divine name has been found.

Source: Response literature (e.g., A. Pietersma, “Kyrios or Tetragram,” 1984); ongoing absence in the INTF manuscript record.

URL: <https://www.uni-muenster.de/INTF/en/>

Verification: **SECONDARY** — Reflects the mainstream reception of Howard’s hypothesis and the current manuscript evidence.

Section 8 — Jesus and the Divine Name in Prayer

In the model prayer, Jesus addresses God as “Father,” not by the divine name.

Source: New World Translation, Matthew 6:9.

URL: <https://www.jw.org/en/library/bible/study-bible/books/matthew/6/>

Verification: **PRIMARY** — The NWT text itself.

Key quote / direct text: “Our Father in the heavens, let your name be sanctified.”

In every recorded prayer, Jesus addresses God as “Father”; in Gethsemane the Gospel of Mark preserves the intimate Aramaic “Abba, Father.”

Source: The Gospels: Matthew 6:9; John 11:41; 17:1–26; Mark 14:36; Luke 23:34, 46.

URL: <https://www.jw.org/en/library/bible/study-bible/books/mark/14/>

Verification: **PRIMARY** — The biblical text itself.

Key quote / direct text: “Abba, Father, all things are possible to you...”

The one time Jesus cries out “My God” — from the cross — he is quoting Psalm 22:1, where the Hebrew word is “My God” (El), not the Tetragrammaton.

Source: The Gospels: Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34; quoting Psalm 22:1.

URL: <https://www.jw.org/en/library/bible/study-bible/books/matthew/27/>

Verification: **PRIMARY** — The biblical text itself.

Key quote / direct text: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

Section 9 — Additional Supporting Sources

Encyclopædia Britannica, “Yahweh”

URL: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Yahweh>

Verification: **SECONDARY** — authoritative reference.

Contains: The pronunciation history of the Tetragrammaton, the Adonai-vowels origin of “Jehovah,” and the reconstruction of “Yahweh.”

Larry W. Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts* (Eerdmans, 2006)

Verification: **SECONDARY** — scholarly monograph.

Contains: The origin and function of the nomina sacra in the earliest Christian manuscripts.

Bruce M. Metzger & Bart D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament*, 4th ed. (Oxford University Press, 2005)

Verification: **SECONDARY** — standard textbook of NT textual criticism.

Contains: The manuscript record, transmission behavior, and how scribal changes are identified.

Institute for New Testament Textual Research (INTF), University of Münster

URL: <https://www.uni-muenster.de/INTF/en/>

Verification: **PRIMARY** — the catalog of record for Greek NT manuscripts.

Contains: The *Kurzgefasste Liste* census of ~5,800 Greek New Testament manuscripts.

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