In your copy of the Bible, how is Psalm 83:18 translated? The New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures renders this verse: "That people may know that you, whose name is Jehovah, you alone are the Most High over all the earth." A number of other Bible translations give similar renderings. However, many translations leave out the name Jehovah, replacing it with such titles as "Lord" or "Eternal." What belongs in this verse? A title or the name Jehovah?

This verse speaks about a name. In the original Hebrew in which much of the Bible was written, a unique personal name appears here. It is spelled יְהוָה (YHWH) in Hebrew letters. In English, the common rendering of that name is "Jehovah." Does that name occur in only one Bible verse? No. It appears in the original text of the Hebrew Scriptures nearly 7,000 times!

How important is God's name? Consider the model prayer that Jesus Christ gave. It begins this way: "Our Father in the heavens, let your name be sanctified." (Matthew 6:9) Later, Jesus prayed to God: "Father, glorify your name." In response, God spoke from heaven, saying: "I both glorified it and will glorify it again." (John 12:28) Clearly, God's name is of the utmost importance. Why, then, have some translators left this name out of their translations of the Bible and replaced it with titles?

There seem to be two main reasons. First, many claim that the name should not be used because the original way to pronounce it is unknown today. Ancient Hebrew was written without vowels. Therefore, no one today can say for sure exactly how people of Bible times pronounced YHWH. However, should this prevent us from using God's name? In Bible times, the name Jesus may have been pronounced Yeshua or
possibly Yehoshua—no one can say for certain. Yet, people in the world over today use different forms of the name Jesus, pronouncing it in the way that is common in their language. They do not hesitate to use the name just because they do not know its first-century pronunciation. Similarly, if you were to travel to a foreign land, you might well find that your own name sounds quite different in another tongue. Hence, uncertainty about the ancient pronunciation of God’s name is no reason for not using it.

A second reason often given for omitting God’s name from the Bible involves a long-standing tradition of the Jews. Many of them hold that God’s name should never be pronounced. This belief is evidently based on a misapplication of a Bible law that states: “You must not take up the name of Jehovah your God in a worthless way, for Jehovah will not leave the one unpunished who takes up his name in a worthless way.”—Exodus 20:7.

This law forbids the misuse of God’s name. But does it forbid the respectful use of his name? Not at all. The writers of the Hebrew Bible (the “Old Testament”) were all faithful men who lived by the Law that God gave to the ancient Israelites. Yet, they made frequent use of God’s name. For instance, they included it in many psalms that were sung out loud by crowds of worshipers. Jehovah God even instructed his worshipers to call upon his name, and faithful ones obeyed. (Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21) Hence, Christians today do not hesitate to use God’s name respectfully, as Jesus surely did.—John 17:26.

In replacing God’s name with titles, Bible translators make a serious mistake. They make God seem remote and impersonal, whereas the Bible urges humans to cultivate “intimacy with Jehovah.” (Psalm 25:14) Think of an intimate friend of yours. How close would you really be if you never learned your friend’s name? Similarly, when people are kept in ignorance about God’s name, Jehovah, how can they become truly close to God? Furthermore, when people do not use God’s name, they also lack knowledge of its wonderful meaning. What does the divine name mean?

Appendix

God himself explained the meaning of his name to his faithful servant Moses. When Moses asked about God’s name, Jehovah replied: “I shall prove to be what I shall prove to be.” (Exodus 3:14) Rotherham’s translation renders those words: “I Will Become whatsoever I please.” So Jehovah can become whatever is needed in order to fulfill his purposes.

Suppose that you could become whatever you wanted to become? What would you do for your friends? If one of them became seriously ill, you could become a skilled doctor and perform a cure. If another suffered a financial loss, you could become a wealthy benefactor and come to his rescue. The truth is, though, that you are limited in what you can become. All of us are. As you study the Bible, you will be amazed to see how Jehovah becomes whatever is needed in order to fulfill his promises. And it pleases him to use his power in behalf of those who love him. (2 Chronicles 16:9) These beautiful facets of Jehovah’s personality are lost to those who do not know his name.

Clearly, the name Jehovah belongs in the Bible. Knowing its meaning and using it freely in our worship are powerful aids in drawing closer to our heavenly Father, Jehovah.*

* For more information on God’s name, its meaning, and reasons why it should be used in worship, see the brochure The Divine Name That Will Endure Forever, published by Jehovah’s Witnesses.

How Daniel’s Prophecy Foretells the Messiah’s Arrival

THE prophet Daniel lived more than 500 years before the birth of Jesus. Nevertheless, Jehovah revealed to Daniel information that would make it possible to pinpoint the time when Jesus would be anointed, or appointed, as the Messiah, or Christ. Daniel was told: “You should know and have the insight that from the going forth of the word to restore and