

The Removal of Jehovah from our Spanish Bibles

By C.A. Donate

In a recent email conversation with a friend who supports the Spanish Monterrey Bible (a.k.a. “Valera 1602 Purificada”), I tried to explain that one of the reasons I didn’t support this project any more was because of the removal of the Name of God “Jehová” to “SEÑOR” in all but 6 passages of the Scriptures. The Monterrey Bible appears to follow the modern (and not so modern) trend against the proper translation of God’s holy Name Jehovah. He said (in poor Spanish): “*Para me si Dios fuera aquí, el usará SEÑOR, la palabra más antigua, correcta, y protestante, en vez de Jehová.*” Translation: “*For me, if God was here, he would use LORD, the most ancient, correct, and protestant word, instead of Jehovah.*” When he said this, I immediately said to myself: “*First of all, it is not the most ancient word, neither is it the most correct, nor is it protestant for that matter!*”

Thank goodness, there are many sources out there that have already done that, and I am not referring to the Watchtower Society! This article does not attempt to argue extensively in favor of the sacred Name. My concern is regarding our own Hispanic fundamentalist brethren’s division over this. My contention is over the removal of the Name among our Spanish Christian family. Fundamental, Bible-believing Hispanics have already confronted this unnecessary change with the advent of the Spanish translation known as “Biblia De Las Américas”, (Bible For The Americas), or BLA, which is produced by the Lockman Foundation¹. BLA (or should I say “blah”) completely removed Jehovah and substituted it with “SEÑOR”, as did the Spanish version of the Vulgate. Sadly, many Hispanic fundamentalists have embraced the BLA. Then there’s the Roman Catholic Church. Jerome, centuries ago, was one the first modernists to remove the Name. All over Latin America we see his influence as Scripture verses quoting the Vulgate rarely mention Jehovah. The Aramaic translation in Spanish done by another group does not translate the Name at all, but rather uses “YHWH” the Spanish equivalent of the Tetragrammaton. These groups have one thing in common—they each reject Jehovah as the correct way of spelling out His Name. Jeremiah 23:27 forewarned us ages ago, “***Which think to cause my people to forget my name by their dreams which they tell every man to his neighbour, as their fathers have forgotten my name for Baal***” Baal means lord. Are the Spanish doomed to forget His Name Jehovah?

It is my conviction that God’s holy Name is indeed Jehovah. I wrote a paper² on this subject in Spanish years ago citing exhaustive documentation. Most KJV defenders I know defend the Name Jehovah, so it’s strange for my friend, who graduated from Peter Ruckman’s school in Pensacola to deny it. (It is stranger that my friend would defend a Bible using Valera’s name when Valera himself defended Jehovah!) My friend’s book on the Spanish Bible issue is featured on Gail Riplinger’s website. Mrs. Riplinger defends the Name Jehovah, so why would she feature my friend’s book?

There are a couple of questions with this change (+6,000 verses).

- a) Was it necessary to change what we as Hispanics have had ever since 1569?
- b) Is there a need to make all non-textual words conform to the KJV?

Granted, I believe that the KJV is God’s perfect (meaning complete), inspired (meaning alive-Hebrews 4:12) and preserved Bible for the English speaking world. I would never question, doubt or change it. The 1611 translators decided that the Tetragrammaton could be translated, not as a name, but as a title, LORD, in capital letters, to make a distinction from “Lord” whenever the Hebrew used “Adonai” and the Greek “kurios”. All this is ok with me, and I believe this is what God wanted the English Bible to have as a proper rendition of the

¹ Biblia de las Américas is owned by the Lockman Foundation which also owns the NASB, and favors the Critical Text.

² If you would like a copy of it (it’s in Spanish) email me at Valera1602@hotmail.com

Hebrew Tetragrammaton. However, that was not the case for the traditional, Spanish Protestant Bible, the Reina-Valera. Both men, Reina and Valera, agreed that the proper rendition for the Name ought to be “Jehová”. To say that Jehovah is a bad translation—for whatever reason, is to go agree with modern critics. But to imply that all Bibles should conform to the KJV 1611 is unnecessary, and absurd! Does my friend imply that the French Bible (and a host of other world biblical translations³) should forget “Le Eternal” and substitute the Tetragrammaton for “SEIGNEUR”? Are we to believe that all translations ought to conform to other perfectly sound, textually pure synonyms or variants? I think not. God gave languages. Varied sound, Bible translations besides the AV 1611 do exist. Even English allows for diversity, as some would say “trunk” in the USA and “bonnet” in England. To deny this is preposterous.

Recently, fundamentalists were split over the issue of the KJV’s inspiration. If the KJV was *given by* inspiration just like the Autographs, then my friend is right. By logic, ALL translations MUST follow it word for word, including the Name. If, however, the KJV is the most accurate English translation there is in the English language, inspired as in alive, and perfect as in complete, but not given by inspiration, then my friend, and so many good fundamentalists out there, are wrong. Again, I do uphold the belief that the KJB is the Word of God, and perhaps the best translation there has ever been in *any* language. Still, I do not believe all translations need to change and conform to every word in English. That’s impossible. I’m not talking about textual issues here; I’m talking about certain words and phrases that are equally pure and sound in other languages. When I was helping the Monterrey church produce its translation, I certainly used the KJV as a guide to help me find missing words and adulterated phrases changed and missing in the popular Spanish Reina-Valera 1960 Bible. I believed then as I believe now that the KJV can be used by other translators in pinpointing adulterated or missing words and phrases. I don’t believe, however, that we must throw away our native Spanish words, and substitute them for English equivalencies necessarily, especially in reference to the Name of God.

That is why I use the Reina-Valera Gomez Spanish Bible, which retains “Jehová”. To answer my friend, if God was here in Guatemala, He would call himself Jehová, or Jesucristo—either way, it’s the same Person. If He went to the States, He would probably call Himself the Lord. No matter. But let us not force SEÑOR in our traditional Bible when we have had “Jehová” all along!

Added reading:

[In Defense of Jehovah—An Analysis of the article “Facts and Myths About the Sacred Name”](#) . Author Carl D. Franklin, August 9, 1998. Find this article at www.cbcbg.org/franklin/debunking1.pdf

(Note- I do not necessarily agree with this author’s other views, as he is a member of the Church of God, but in regards to the Name, he is right.)

³ Other forms of the divine name in different languages, indicating international acceptance of the form Jehovah: Awabakal – Yehóá, Bugotu – Jihova, Cantonese – Yehwowah, Danish – Jehova, Dutch – Jehovah, Efik – Jehovah, Fijian – Jiova, Finnish – Jehova, Futuna – Ihova, Hungarian – Jehova, Igbo – Jehova, Italian – Geova, Japanese – Ehoba, Maori – Ihowa, Motu – Iehova, Mwala-Malu – Jihova, Narrinyeri – Jehovah, Nembe – Jihova, Petats – Jihouva, Polish – Jehowa, Portuguese – Jeová, Romanian – Iehova, Samoan – Ieova, Sotho – Jehova, Swahili – Yehova, Swedish – Jehova, Tahitian – Iehova, Tagalog – Jehova, Tongan – Jihova, Venda – Yehova, Xhosa – uYehova, Yoruba – Jehofah
Zulu – uJehova