

LORD, Lord, lord or Yahweh?

By Jim Myers

In order to have credible discussions about Bible-based beliefs, those involved must have an awareness of Hebrew, Greek, or Aramaic words from which their translations of the Bible were made. The following article will explain why that guideline is important for Explorers of Biblical Heritages to follow. **1 Thessalonians** is the earliest book of the *New Testament* to be written, c. 49 CE. It was written in Greek to a Greek speaking Gentile audience in Thessalonica.



1 Thessalonians was written 23 years before **Mark**, the first gospel. It's very first verse has been a major source of theological confusion for readers of English translations for many centuries. Below is the translations of **1 Thessalonians 1:1a** from the ***New King James Version***.

*Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, to the congregation of the Thessalonians in **God** the Father and the **Lord** Jesus Christ . . .*

Who are "**God the Father**" and "**Lord Jesus Christ**"? The conflict is over the words "**God**" and "**Lord**." Are they references to one entity or two? The answer to that question is found in a teaching of Jesus, which is in Matthew 22:44. However, to understand the answer we must compare two English translations – *New King James Version* (1982) and the *American Standard Version* (1901).

- "The **LORD** said unto my **Lord**" (*New King James Version*)
- "The **Lord** said unto my **Lord**" (*American Standard Version*:)

Notice that the *King James translators* translated the first word "**LORD**" with all capital letters, but they only capitalized the first letter of the second word -- "**Lord**." The *American Standard translators* translated both words the same way -- "**Lord**." Why did the *King James translators* use all capital letters in the first word?

When we examined the context in which Matthew 22:44 is found, we discovered that Jesus was quoting **Psalm 110:1**. The [Biblical Heritage Center website](#) has a page called [Bible Study Tools](#). On that page is a section called [Hebrew Bible Study Tools](#). That is where you will find the link called [Parallel Hebrew-English Bible](#). It presents multiple translations of the same verse, which in this case is Psalm 110:1.

- *The **LORD** said unto my **Lord** . . . (King James Version - 1769)*
- ***Jehovah** saith unto my **Lord** . . . (American Standard Version - 1901)*
- ***Yahweh** says to my **Lord** . . . (World English Translation - 2000)*
- ***Jehovah** to my **Lord** . . . (Young's Literal Translation - 1862)*
- *The **Lord** said to my **Lord** . . . (Brenton Translation of Septuagint - 1851)*

They all agree on the second word -- "**Lord**." But those translators disagreed on the first word -- **LORD**, **Jehovah**, **Yahweh**, and **Lord**? When we examined the Hebrew text they translated, we discovered that "**Yahweh**" is how the first word should have been translated. The *World English Translation* reflects that translation.

The *King James Version* translators chose to translate the **Hebrew word for Yahweh** as **LORD**, so readers could clearly recognize when the **name of God** appeared in the Hebrew text. Readers of the *King James Version* were aware that **LORD** and **Lord** were two different entities in Psalm 110:1. Those readers would have been aware of that in **Matthew 22:44**, too.

*"The **LORD** said unto my **Lord**"*

Now, look at how the same translators translated **1 Thessalonians 1:1a**.

*"**God** the Father and the **Lord** Jesus Christ"*

They **did not** translate the verse this way.

*"**God** the Father and the **LORD** Jesus Christ"*

Some Hebrew and Greek words are "**theologically loaded words**." *Statements of Faith, Creeds, and doctrines* are reflected in some English translations. Now, I will repeat the guideline at the beginning of this article:

In order to have credible discussions about Bible-based beliefs, those involved must have an awareness of Hebrew, Greek, or Aramaic words from which their translations of the Bible were made.

You do not have to know how to read Hebrew, Greek, or Aramaic to follow that guideline. You do have to learn how to use our **Bible Study Tools** ([Bookmark our Bible Study Tools page](#)). They are free and our educational emails are free ([CLICK HERE to subscribe](#)).
SHALOM & Good Exploring!