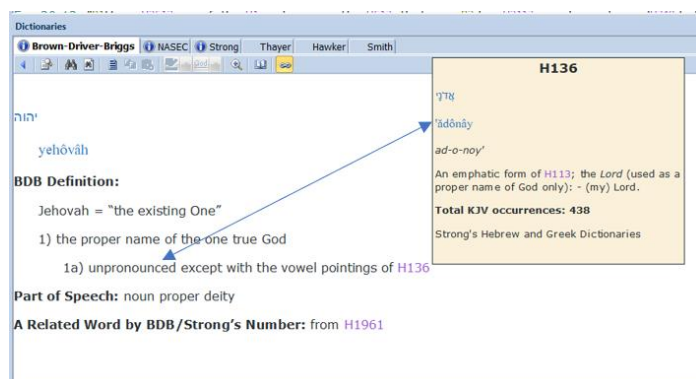


Introduce Eliezer Ben Yehuda and a brief history of spoken Hebrew. Hebrew was only spoken by Rabbis or a sparse amount of people. It was a dead language in 1881 and had been dead since biblical times. It died on purpose, after the Romans destroyed Judea and scattered the Jews and original Christians all over the place. Those dedicated to the Torah made the conscious decision to preserve it as best they could. It was not standardized but it did exist in the Yeshiva for reading Hebrew Torah scrolls and some families kept it going. So there was enough for Ben Yehuda to start it coming back, so Israel could have it's own language. He did this as a nationalistic thing, not a religious thing. The religious leaders shunned him, saying that when it was time for Hebrew to come back, Yahweh would do it. He was motivated by Italy and Greece, who had recently restored their lands and languages. He wanted Hebrew to become the language of his people so they could be a people. And it succeeded.

But the moral of the story is that spoken Hebrew was almost completely dead at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was faithful Jews that preserved any of it, and a determined Jew who brought it back to life. Yes, the Jews are the ones who say Adonai in place of the Name, or they say "The Name" in place of the Name. But they are also the people who preserved the Name and the Torah completely. They are the ones whom Yahweh has decided to keep that going. And Eliezer Ben Yehuda pronounced the Name as Yahweh. As far as pronouncing it as Yehovah, let's take a look at some evidence as to how that pronunciation came to be:



Slide 2

Yehovah is the tetragrammaton YHWH with the vowel point for another word. That word is Adonai, which means "my lord". Sometimes YHWH is actually called Adonai in the Old Testament. It is not bad to call YHWH Adonai. In fact, you could even use this salutation for a king or someone important. The Jews decided to stop pronouncing YHWH in public and such a long time ago and decided to substitute Adonai for the Name. The people who put the vowel points into the Torah are called the Masoretes. They put in the vowel points for Adonai so people would remember to not pronounce YHWH. You see, Hebrew was meant to be read and written without vowels. Even their newspapers are like this today. You don't need the vowels to read or write the language because it's a language meant to be passed down orally, not written, like English is. The vowel points were put in, you guessed it, because the language had died. The Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Bible is only about 1000 years old. When people say that they can pronounce the Name based on anything older, look at the text. If there are

no vowel points, they can't. It's just YHVH in the Ivri script, the Ashuri script (the Hebrew of today), or it's some pictograms, none of which tell us how to say the words. Which brings me to another point.

Slide 3 "Therefore behold, I am going to make them know—This time I will make them know My power and My might; And they shall know that My name is YHVH." (Jer 16:21)

The prophet Jeremiah knew how to pronounce the Name. This has nothing to do with pronunciation. This is talking about the great restoration, when YHVH will call all His people back to Jerusalem. This actually happened with Nehemiah and Ezra when King Cyrus restored Judea. And this is going to happen on an enormous scale when Yeshua returns and all His people are gathered from everywhere, even from the graves. And guess what? When that happens all alive will know YHVH because of His power, not because of His grammar. And they will know He's Yahweh because of what His Name really means. And for that, we look to a scripture that doesn't actually have His Name in it!

Slide 4 Elohim said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" (Exo 3:14)

A lot of confusion begins here, courtesy of the Bible translators. I don't normally get into it with those who are clearly more educated than I am, but this doesn't say I Am. It *kinda* says I am, but in Hebrew, I am is literally Ani. This says something quite different from ani. For I Am Who I am, this says hayah asher hayah. That means "self existent one" or "I exist". It's literally "exist that exists". It doesn't say "I am" literally, but *figuratively*. Yahweh is literally I Am because time is meaningless to Him. He's not a temporal or corporeal being. He has no body and doesn't exist in time. He just "is". The translators decided to use "I Am" to make that statement, but we can know more today. To take this a step further and provide the most proof available, let's look at the LXX

Slide 5 And God spoke to Moses, saying, I am THE BEING; and he said, Thus shall ye say to the children of Israel, THE BEING has sent me to you.  
(Exo 3:14)

The LXX (Septuagint) is a Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible made about 150 years before Yeshua. We're looking at the English translation of that. And you will notice it doesn't say "I Am" has sent Moses. It says "The Being" has sent him. On the screen, I have a picture of the word for The Being, and it means "exist". The Rabbis who translated from Hebrew to Greek did insert "I Am" because Greek works like English and needs those word to then finish off the identity as "the Being".



Slide 7 "You shall not take the name (shem) of YHVH your Elohim in vain (shav), for YHVH will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain (shav)." (Exo 20:7)

Taking the Name in vain means to bring it to emptiness, to nothingness. One way to do that would be to overtly disobey, like bringing in idols or worshipping other gods. Or not keeping the Sabbath. When you disobey, you show contempt for the one who is really in charge. Our faith, the faith of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Yeshua, is one of action. Christianity turned it into a conceptual/academic pursuit, which it does include, but that's to drive action. When we focus on the pronunciation, we miss the boat entirely! Our movement has focused on the tetragrammaton when the key words of the commandment are on the left and the right of that word. We are not to take Yahweh's shame to emptiness. We are to honor Yahweh's Name by doing what he said to do and not doing what he said not to do.

Remember I started today about Eliezer Ben Yehuda? In the context of today's message, do you think he fulfilled the commandment to not take Yahweh's Name in vain? I'm convinced he did. While he was a secular Jew, he devoted his life to the restoration of the holy language in the holy land. He worked to provide a huge leap in the restoration of the language and we Christians who believe in the whole Bible benefit greatly from his work. Today, we can learn Hebrew on a computer at home and begin to understand the scriptures closer to how they were written. This blessing is a big part of our movement, allowing us to grow in the knowledge of Yahweh and His Son Yeshua. And while we do so, let's remember how to keep the commandment to not take the Name in vain!