

The Emendations of the Scribes

Now all the people gathered together
As one man in the open square
That was in front of the Water Gate;
And they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses,
Which the LORD had commanded Israel.

Nehemiah 8:1

The Emendations of the Scribes

by
Dean and Susan Wheelock

Then He said to them,
"Therefore every scribe
Instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven
Is like a householder
Who brings out of his treasure *things* new and old."
Matthew 13:52

Hebrew Roots Press
PO Box 400
Lakewood, WI 54138
715-757-2775

Copyright © 1997, 2010 by Dean & Susan Wheelock
All rights reserved.
Printed in the United States of America

The Scriptures used in this booklet are:

The Complete Jewish Bible (CJB),
translated by David H. Stern,
Jewish New Testament Publications, Inc.,
Clarksville, MD/Jerusalem, 1998.
The Holy Bible - King James Version (KJV)
Oxford University Press
London
The Open Bible (New King James Version [NKJV]),
Thomas Nelson, Inc., Nashville, 1985.
Tanakh, The Holy Scriptures, (TNK),
The Jewish Publication Society,
Philadelphia/New York, 1988.

All Scriptures are quoted from the NKJV unless noted otherwise.

Published by:

Hebrew Roots Press

PO Box 400
Lakewood, WI 54138

~ *Table of Contents* ~

Introduction. 1
Alteration of the Divine Name 3
The Eighteen Emendations 12
Sources. 22

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

~ Introduction ~



The history of the Holy Scriptures is most fascinating. These ancient documents have been passed down through many hands and translated into many different languages over a period of time that spans approximately 3500 years. How can one know that the Scriptures we have today are accurate?

When it comes to the Hebrew Scriptures, one can pretty much lay these concerns to rest. For example, the ancient Scroll of Isaiah, which is on display at the Israeli Museum in Jerusalem, dates back to at least the first century BCE, yet it contains only a handful of discrepancies when compared to the modern Hebrew copies of the same book. Not only that, the variations that do occur between the ancient and modern copies do not in any way change the meaning of the original text.

How could such an ancient document be preserved over such a long period of time without significant errors creeping into it? The answer lies in the practice of the people whom God put in charge of this most important task. They were the *Sopherim* (Soh-fehr-eem), also known as the 'Scribes.' All who love the Scriptures can be ever grateful to the Scribes for their magnificent work in preserving intact the accuracy of the Scriptures.

Probably the best known Scribe mentioned in Scripture is Ezra the Priest and Scribe:

"... Ezra came up from Babylon; and he *was* a skilled scribe in the Law of Moses, which the LORD God of Israel had given. ... Ezra the priest, the scribe, expert in the words of the commandments of the LORD, and of His statutes to Israel:"
(Ezra 7:6,11)

Ezra was one of the most famous in a long line of *Sopherim* (Scribes) who were given the task of refining the scriptures, maintaining their accuracy, and providing a correct interpretation of their meaning. There are a number of earlier *Sopherim* mentioned in the Scriptures. They include; Seraiah (II Sam. 8:17), Sheva (II Sam. 20:25), Shaphan (II Kings 22:8), Nethaneel (I Chron. 24:6), and Baruch, the secretary to Jeremiah (Jer. 36:26), to name just a few. Undoubtedly some of these men were responsible for recording the words of the Prophets. Baruch would be a prime example of this type of *Sopher* (soh-fehr' = singular form).

There were also *Sopherim* active in the time of *Y'shua HaMashiach*, however by that time their job no longer included the refining of the Scriptures, for that task had been finalized long before the first century CE. According to the Jewish Encyclopedia, the Scriptures were finalized by the time of Alexander the Great, about 325 BCE. The last *Sopher* in this eminent lineage, which began with Ezra, was Simeon the Just.

The Scribes of *Y'shua's* day had a different (though similar) set of tasks than those who immediately followed Ezra. It was their job to teach the Jewish masses, and their children, the words and meaning of the *Torah* and to transcribe correctly the Word of God when copies were made. Their mode of teaching followed the model found in the book of Nehemiah.

"So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading."
(Neh. 8:8)

Their method of teaching took the following form:

- ◆ The text was read in Hebrew.
- ◆ It was translated into the vernacular.
- ◆ The passage was explained.
- ◆ They expounded the law(s) contained in it.

The charges that *Y'shua* brought against the Scribes of His day had to do with their interpretation, application and teaching of certain aspects of the oral law or tradition. -- not with their work of accurately copying the written scriptures; a work which remained impeccable.

"Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity."
(Matt. 23:28 KJV)

The problem was not even so much what they taught, but rather how some of them took advantage of those who were poor or otherwise unable to defend themselves. (Sound familiar?) Being a *Sopher* (Scribe) did not have anything to do with one's character, it had to do with their ability to maintain the integrity of the Hebrew Scriptures as well as work with other important religious and state documents.

Shalom!

Dean & Susan Wheelock

Beit Shalom,
March, 2010

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

~ Alteration of the Divine Name ~



an emendation is an "alteration intended to improve." The *Sopherim*, in a misguided zeal for God and the Scriptures, took it upon themselves to make some changes to the manuscripts which were handed down to them. This might seem like a terrible thing to do, to make changes to the very Word of God. However, the *Sopherim* believed they were either: 1.) making necessary corrections to errors that had crept into their copies, 2.) were clarifying the actual intent of the Scriptures, or 3.) (in the case of the Tetragrammaton, *YHVH*) were showing extreme reverence for the sacred name of God. In any case, they felt they were handling the Scriptures in a way that would be approved by God.

While one may condemn what the *Sopherim* did, in making alterations to the Scriptures, one must also praise them for keeping accurate records of their changes. This enables us to 'look over their shoulder' as it were, and see exactly what changes they made. The record of these emendations are found in what is known as the *Massorah* (Mahs-sohr'-ah). The following details about the *Massorah* are taken from Appendix 30 of *The Companion Bible*. This is the Authorized Version of 1611 (KJV), with copious notes and 170 appendices written by E.W. Bullinger. It is published by Zondervan Bible Publishers, Grand Rapids, MI 49506. This Bible contains a wealth of information and is highly recommended by *Hebrew Roots*. Bullinger writes:

"Readers of *The Companion Bible* are put in possession of information denied to former generations of translators, commentators, critics, and general Bible students. ...

"All the oldest and best manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible contain on every page, beside the Text (which is arranged in two or more columns), a varying number of lines of smaller writing, distributed between the upper and lower margins. This smaller writing is called the *Massorah Magna* or Great *Massorah*, while that in the side margins and between the columns is called the *Massorah Parva* or Small *Massorah*.

"The word *Massorah* is from the root *masar*, to deliver something into the hand of another, so as to commit it to his trust. Hence the name is given to the small writing referred to, because it contains information necessary to the Massorites (those into whose trust the

Sacred Text was committed), so that they might transcribe it, and hand it down correctly.

"When the Hebrew Text was printed, only the large type in the columns was regarded, and the small type of the Massorah was left, unheeded, in the MSS [manuscript] from which the Text was taken.

"When translators came to the printed Hebrew Text, they were necessarily destitute of the information contained in the *Massorah*; so that the Revisers as well as the Translators of the Authorized Version carried out their work without any idea of the treasures contained in the *Massorah*; and therefore, without giving a hint of it to their readers." (Appendix 30 - page 31)

Some of the important lists of emended words, which are contained in the Massorah, are given in *Bullinger's Companion Bible* in separate appendices as follows:

- ◆ Appendix 31: The Fifteen Extraordinary Points of the *Sopherim*.
- ◆ Appendix 32: The 134 Passages Where The *Sopherim* Altered "Jehovah" to "Adonai".
- ◆ Appendix 33: The "Eighteen Emendations" Of The *Sopherim*.
- ◆ Appendix 34: The Readings Called *Severin*.

The men called 'Massorites,' mentioned in the previous quote, were keepers of the Scriptures. They followed in the period of time after that of the *Sopherim*, and were the ones who correctly copied the Hebrew Scriptures as handed down from the *Sopherim*. Even the smallest error rendered an entire scroll invalid. It is from their title, 'Massorites' that we receive the term 'Masoretic Text,' which is the chief source text for modern Old Testament translations.

~ The Emendations of the Name of God ~

The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to examining the 134 passages of Scripture where the *Sopherim* altered the Hebrew name for God (*YHVH*) to read *Adonai* (Ah-doh-nigh'). Some very interesting, even remarkable, concepts can be learned from this study.

The Tetragrammaton is the very name of God. In Hebrew it consists of the letters יהוה (right to left = *yod, hey, vav, hey* or *YHVH*). Although this

word first appears in Genesis 2:4, we are told that it was not until the time of *Moshe* (Moh-shay' = Moses) that God revealed *YHVH* as His proper name. Up until that time God had been known as *El Shaddai* (Ehl Shahd-die' = God Almighty):

"And God spoke to Moses and said to him: "I am the LORD (*YHVH*). I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name LORD (*YHVH*) I was not known to them." (Ex. 3:2-3)

Sometime during the days of the Prophets the use of the Tetragrammaton (*YHVH*) in common speech became forbidden. According to the Jewish Encyclopedia this decision was based on:

"... a somewhat extreme interpretation of Ex. xx. 7 and Lev. xxiv. 11. Written only in consonants, the true pronunciation was forgotten by them. The Septuagint, and after it the New Testament, invariably render [*it*] 'the Lord.'" (vol. IX, page 161)

From that time forth the name *YHVH* was allowed to be pronounced aloud only on *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement), and then only by the High Priest. Each time The Name was enunciated all the people who heard it prostrated themselves.

Much later, vowel points were added to the original text so that the correct pronunciations of the Hebrew words would not be lost. At that time the vowel points for the word *Adonai* were placed within the letters for 'The Name.' Thus it became common practice to substitute the word *Adonai* (which means Lord in Hebrew) whenever one was speaking of or reading the name *YHVH*. Another common practice was to use the phrase *HaShem* (Hah Shehm = the Name) whenever encountering the name *YHVH*.

Today most English Bibles, whether Christian or Jewish, translate the Hebrew name *YHVH* as 'LORD' or 'the LORD,' using all upper case letters. Since the Hebrew word *Adonai* is also used in the Scriptures (449 times to be exact), it is always translated using a capital 'L' with the other letters being lower case (thus; 'Lord'). This creates some problems as the word *Adonai* is used in conjunction with *YHVH* 315 times in the Scriptures. Again, the Jewish Encyclopedia explains:

"Originally an appellation of God [*speaking of the name YHVH*], the word became a definite title, and when the Tetragrammaton became too holy for utterance *Adonai* was substituted for it, so that, as a rule the name written *YHVH* receives the points of *Adonai* and is read *Adonai*, except in cases where *Adonai* precedes or succeeds it in the text, when it is read *Elohim*." (vol. I, page 201).

~ The 134 Occurrences Where Adonai Was ~
~ Substituted For YHVH ~

Generally, the above plan works well. Readers of the Scriptures can easily pick out the 6,823 times the name *YHVH* is used (as opposed to the Hebrew word *Adonai*) merely by noticing whether it is all upper case (LORD) or mixed case (Lord). However, there are 134 places where the *Sopherim* actually substituted the word *Adonai* when the original scriptures rendered it *YHVH*. These changes were noted in the *Massorah* so that reconstruction of the original is possible. Bullinger writes in the *Companion Bible*:

"Out of extreme (but mistaken) reverence for the Ineffable Name 'Jehovah', the ancient custodians of the Sacred Text substituted in many places 'Adonai.'" (Appendix 32, p. 31).

Following is a list of where these 134 emendations occur. Most English translations (including the King James Version) will render these instances 'Lord' rather than 'LORD.' Some newer translations may have corrected some or all of them.

- ◆ Genesis 18:3,27,30,32; 19:18; 20:4.
- ◆ Exodus 4:10,13; 5:22; 15:17; 34:9,9.
- ◆ Numbers 14:17.
- ◆ Joshua 7:8.
- ◆ Judges 6:15; 13:8.
- ◆ I Kings 3:10,15; 22:6.
- ◆ II Kings 7:6; 19:23.
- ◆ Isaiah 3:17,18; 4:4; 6:1,8,11; 7:14,20; 8:7; 9:8,17; 10:12; 11:11; 21:6,8,16; 28:2; 29:13; 30:20; 37:24; 38:14,16; 49:14.
- ◆ Ezekiel 18:25,29; 21:13; 33:17,29.
- ◆ Amos 5:16; 7:7,8; 9:1.
- ◆ Micah 1:2.
- ◆ Zechariah 9:4.
- ◆ Malachi 1:12,14.
- ◆ Psalm 2:4; 16:2; 22:19,30; 30:8; 35:3*,17,22; 37:13; 38:9,15,22; 39:7; 40:17; 44:23; 51:15; 54:4; 55:9; 57:9; 59:11; 62:12; 66:18;

68:11,17,19,22,26,32; 73:20; 77:2,7; 78:65; 79:12; 86:3,4,5,8, 9,12,15; 89:49,50; 90:1,17; 110:5; 130:2,3,6.

- ◆ Daniel 1:2; 9:3,4,7,9,15,16,17,19, 19,19.
- ◆ Lamentations 1:14,15,15; 2:1, 2,5,7,18,19,20; 3:31,36,37,58.
- ◆ Ezra 10:3.
- ◆ Nehemiah 1:11; 4:14.
- ◆ Job 28:28.

~ Similar Passages ~

The *Sopherim* followed some general guidelines in their alterations of the Tetragrammaton. These can be grouped by type:

- ◆ Those passages where a man directly addresses *YHVH*. Apparently the *Sopherim* felt it was not proper for a man, even one as great as *Moshe*, to address God by name. Therefore they changed those salutations from the original *YHVH* to *Adonai* which means 'Lord.' This is a common practice in countries where royalty exists. No one in their right mind would ever address a king by his first name. Rather they would address him as 'My Lord, the King,' or 'Your Majesty.' Likewise, in the United States it is proper to address the president as Mr. President, not as George or Bill. Passages where this type of change was made include (but are not limited to) Ex. 4:10,13; 5:22; and 34:9 (two occurrences).
- ◆ When any individual makes a statement that brings God into a personal relationship with himself, the *Sopherim* saw fit to make the change. Thus, phrases like "My *YHVH*" become "My Lord." Examples: Num. 14:17; Judges 6:15; 13:8.
- ◆ Instances where *YHVH* Himself directly intervenes in the affairs of men were often changed to reflect a more impersonal involvement of God. Examples: II Kings 7:6; Isaiah 3:17,18; 4:4; 7:14. (Many of the Isaiah passages reflect this type of change.)
- ◆ If anyone caused a reproach against God that passage was changed to the more impersonal *Adonai*. The *Sopherim* must have felt that such passages were an affront to God and should not be reported by the use of His name. Example: II Kings 19:23.

- ◆ Anyone reporting to have actually seen *YHVH* had their account changed so the personage they saw was identified as *Adonai* instead of by the name *YHVH*. Examples: Isaiah 6:1,8; Amos 7:7; 9:1.

~ Special Emendations ~

A few of the emendations have special significance to the Messianic Believer. A proper rendering of these passages can clarify our understanding of them. This is true of the very first set of emendations which were made in Genesis chapter 18. (Note: The places where the emendation occurred will be corrected by the bold capital letters **YHVH**. All of the following references are from the King James Version.):

"And said, My YHVH, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant:"
(Gen. 18:3)

"And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto YHVH, which *am but dust and ashes:*"
(Gen. 18:27)

"And he said *unto him,* Oh let not YHVH be angry, and I will speak: ..."
(Gen. 18:30)

"And he said, Oh let not YHVH be angry, and I will speak yet but this once; ..."
(Gen. 18:32)

These very first occurrences of the emendation of *Adonai* for *YHVH* are very important, for *Y'shua* said:

"And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape."
(John 5:37)

Yet here we find Abraham seeing *YHVH*, speaking to Him, hearing His voice and eating a meal with Him. Who, then, was this mysterious *YHVH*? That is a question that each Believer needs to study for himself. The next occurrence is also significant:

"And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so my YHVH"
(Gen. 19:18)

At first glance this verse seems to imply that Lot is addressing the two angels as *YHVH*. Yet as one reads on in the text it is apparent that Lot is actually speaking with *YHVH* Himself for he is speaking to a single

individual. (See vs. 19, 21 and 22). Thus, both Abraham and Lot seem to have had direct contact with God.

The final emendation in the book of Genesis is:

**"But Abimelech had not come near her: and he said,
YHVH, wilt thou slay also a righteous nation?"**

(Gen. 20:4)

These are the first of many occurrences where the *Sopherim* changed *YHVH* to *Adonai* whenever an individual was addressing *YHVH* directly. Apparently they felt it was not appropriate for these individuals to address God by His name. As noted earlier, when the events of these verses took place God had not yet revealed Himself as *YHVH* but was known as *El Shaddai*. Thus one can assume that neither Abraham, Lot, or especially Abimelech, ever used the name *YHVH* when addressing God, but rather referred to Him as '*El Shaddai*.' However, these accounts were written at a later time by *Moshe*, and he used the Tetragrammaton in relating the stories so there would be no doubt about who they were speaking with, for *El Shaddai* and *YHVH* are one and the same.

Moving on to the book of Exodus we find the following encounter between *Moshe* and *YHVH*:

"And Moses said unto the LORD, O My YHVH, ..."

(Ex. 4:10)

This is the first place where the Tetragrammaton is used twice in the same verse. In this case the *Sopherim* rendered the first one correctly (which is indicated in the English text as LORD) but changed the second occurrence to *Adonai* (which is now corrected to read **YHVH**). Many of the 134 emendations contain this structure.

Another passage that needs special attention, because of the implications of the change, occurs in Psalm 110. We will begin by quoting the entire Psalm as found in the New King James Version:

"The LORD [YHVH] said to my Lord [Adonai],

'Sit at My right hand,

Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'

**² The LORD [YHVH] shall send the rod of Your
strength out of Zion.**

Rule in the midst of Your enemies!

³ Your people shall be volunteers

In the day of Your power;

**In the beauties of holiness, from the womb
of the morning,**

You have the dew of Your youth.

**⁴ The LORD [YHVH] has sworn
 And will not relent,
 'You are a priest forever
 According to the order of Melchizedek.'**
**⁵ The Lord [should be YHVH] is at Your right hand;
 He shall execute kings in the day of His wrath.
⁶ He shall judge among the nations,
 He shall fill *the places* with dead bodies,
 He shall execute the heads of many countries.
⁷ He shall drink of the brook by the wayside;
 Therefore He shall lift up the head. (Psalm 110:1-7)**

It is obvious from verse one that this Psalm is speaking of two different beings. One is obviously God, for He is identified in verse one as being "The LORD" or *YHVH*. The other is called "my Lord," or (in Hebrew) "my *Adonai*." These translations in verse one are correct. As one reads on it becomes apparent that the one called "my Lord" or "*Adonai*" is actually the Messiah. He sits at the right hand of *YHVH*, He rules from Zion, He is a priest forever, and He will judge the nations. These are all pictures of the Messiah and His rule.

In Jewish interpretation, the one here who is called *Adonai*, is the King Messiah, who is to be born of a woman just prior to the end of the age. To them He is not equal to God because God is one God, as stated in the *Shema*. According to their belief, King Messiah is a human agent of God, responsible for bringing the Kingdom of God to earth for a one thousand year period, commonly called 'The Millennium. As a case in point, a few years ago one Ultra-Orthodox group believed their aged rabbi was the Messiah, until he died without bringing in the prophesied Kingdom.

If the Ultra-Orthodox view is correct, then what is one to do with verse 5? Here is one of those places in Scripture where the original word *YHVH* was changed to *Adonai*. The word 'Lord' in this verse should be '*YHVH*.' Now we are faced with the necessity of admitting that in this Psalm there are two *YHVH*'s mentioned; one *YHVH* who is in charge overall, and another *YHVH* who sits at His right hand and is the prophesied Messiah. Once the emendation is corrected it is not possible to have only one *YHVH* in this passage.

~ Time for Serious Study ~

It is our recommendation that each of you take your Bible, and a pen, and correct each of the 134 places where the *sopherim* changed the Tetragrammaton (*YHVH*) to *Adonai*. This can easily be done by drawing a line through the word "~~Lord~~" and writing either "LORD" (in all caps) or

"*YHVH*" in the margin. That way, every time you read any of these passages in the future, you will have the correct translation.

Once this is accomplished, take the time to study each of these changes. You may find that knowing the correct translation enhances your understanding of the Word of God.

~ ~ ~

~ The Eighteen Emendations ~



In the last chapter we delineated the 134 places in the Hebrew Scriptures where the *Sopherim* modified the Tetragrammaton (*YHVH*) to read *Adonai* (*Ah-doh-nigh'* = Lord). They did this out of a zeal for God, believing that His name should not be used in certain contexts. However, they kept meticulous records of these changes so that future generations would know where they had made alterations to the text.

The *Sopherim* recorded their notes about the changes in the margins of the hand written Scripture texts. These notes were placed in several places on the same page as the text which was altered. The notes are always written in smaller script than the actual Scriptures. These notes are called the *Massorah* (Mahs-sohr'-ah), which is taken from the root word *masar* (mah-sahr') which means: "to deliver something into the hand of another". The smaller writing found in the upper and lower margins is called the *Massorah Magna* or Great *Massorah*, while the extra writing found in the side margins and between the columns is called the *Massorah Parva* or Small *Massorah*.

The *Massorites* were a group of Jewish scholars who copied and handed down the text of the Hebrew Scriptures. However, they themselves did not make the alterations to the text, rather they merely passed on what had been handed down to them by the *Sopherim* (Soph-ehr-eem = Scribes). E. W. Bullinger, in Appendix #30, p. 31, of *The Companion Bible*, makes the following observation about the relationship between the *Sopherim* and the *Massorites*.

"The Text itself had been fixed before the *Massorites* were put in charge of it. This had been the work of the *Sopherim* (from *saphar*, to count, or number). Their work, under Ezra and Nehemiah, was to set the Text in order after the return from Babylon; and we read of it in Neh. 8.8 (cp. Ezra 7:6,11). The men of 'the Great Synagogue' completed the work. This work lasted about 110 years, from Nehemiah to Simon the first, 410-300 BC

"The *Sopherim* were the authorised revisers of the Sacred Text; and, their work being completed, the *Massorites* were the authorised custodians of it. Their work was to preserve it. The *Massorah* is called 'A Fence to the Scriptures,' because it locked all words and letters in their places. ..."

Later on, it was this 'locked in' text of the *Massorites* that was used when movable type printing began. However, the marginal notations were not included in the printed texts. So it was, when it came time to translate the Hebrew texts into other languages the *Massorah Magna* and *Massorah Parva* were missing. Bullinger goes on to say:

"When translators came to the printed Hebrew Text, they were necessarily destitute of the information contained in the *Massorah*; so that the Revisers as well as the Translators of the Authorised Version carried out their work without any idea of the treasures contained in the *Massorah*; and therefore, without giving a hint of it to their readers."

~ The 'Eighteen' Emendations of the Sopherim ~

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the passages where the *Sopherim* saw fit to change the original text, with which they were working, so that it would conform more closely to what they understood God was communicating. In some cases they may have been correcting errors that had crept into the manuscripts over the centuries, while in other cases they were trying to produce a text that they felt was more respectful to their Creator God. Whatever their reasons, it can be safely assumed that the *Sopherim* did not do this to conceal anything, because they made clear notations of what they were doing. It was centuries later, when the hand written text was printed, that the notations contained in the *Massorah* were actually 'lost.' This had nothing to do with either the *Sopherim* or the *Massorites*, since they had been history for a very long time.

Although the *Massorites* refer to this list of emendations as containing 'eighteen' modifications, the actual list grew to contain twenty-six changes. Below is a listing of these changes, along with commentary about the change where that seems appropriate. All scriptures are quoted from the King James Version, the so called 'Authorized Version.' However, they are listed in the order of the *Tanakh*, the Hebrew Scriptures.

~ Emendations to the Torah ~

~ *Genesis 18:22* ~

"And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the LORD."

The original text read:

"And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but the LORD (YHVH) stood yet before Abraham."

The reason for this change was because the *Sopherim* felt that it was demeaning to *YHVH* to say that He stood before Abraham, since it was their custom to say that the lesser figure stood before the greater (i.e. a subject would stand before the king).

~ Numbers 11:15 ~

""And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray Thee, out of hand, if I have found favour in Thy sight; and let me not see my wretchedness."

The original text read:

"And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray Thee, out of hand, if I have found favour in Thy sight; and let me not see thy evil."

Obviously, the *Sopherim* did not want to ascribe evil to God. Yet they left intact another scripture which clearly states that God is the creator of evil, at least when it comes to bring evil upon Israel's enemies:

"I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these *things*"
(Isa. 45:7)

~ Numbers 12:12 ~

"Let her not be as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed when he cometh out of his mother's womb."

The original text read:

"Let her not be as one dead, of whom our flesh is half consumed when he cometh out of his mother's womb."

The context of this passage has to do with the event when Aaron and Miriam were made leprous because of their derogatory comments about Moses' marriage. The text was changed here to avoid including Aaron in this comment about their flesh being 'half consumed.' This was thought to be derogatory toward the High Priest, Aaron, and should not be stated in this manner.

~ Emendations to the Prophets ~

~ I Samuel 3:13 ~

"For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his

sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not."

The original text read:

"For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons cursed God, and he restrained them not."

The *Sopherim* had a problem with any scripture that stated that men 'cursed' God. Therefore, they softened this text.

~ II Samuel 12:14 ~

"Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die."

The original text read:

"Howbeit, because by this deed thou has greatly blasphemed the LORD, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die."

Here the *Sopherim* made a change so that king David would not be seen as a blasphemer, but rather as the vehicle through which his enemies would blaspheme. However, the grace of God is very great, and by restoring the original passage we learn that God can even forgive a person of blasphemy, since He did forgive this sin of David's, after his full repentance. This correction also instructs us that adultery and murder are considered, by God, to be acts of blasphemy.

~ II Samuel 16:12 ~

"It may be that the LORD will look on mine affliction, and that the LORD will requite me good for his cursing this day."

The original text read:

"It may be that the LORD will behold with His eye, and that the LORD will requite me good for his cursing this day."

Bullinger comments: "This was thought to be to anthropomorphic, and so was altered, ..." In other words, the *Sopherim* believed that God should not be described as having human characteristics, such as an eye.

~ II Samuel 20:1 ~

"And there happened to be there a man of Belial, whose name *was* Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite: and he blew a trumpet, and said, 'We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to his tents, O Israel.'"

The original text read:

"... 'We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to his gods, O Israel.'"

This is the first of several scriptures which indicate that the northern ten tribes, the house of Israel, had already apostatized from *YHVH* and were following other 'gods' prior to their revolt. Apparently the *Sopherim* did not want to admit this.

~ I Kings 12:16 ~

"So when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the People answered the king saying, 'What portion have we in David? neither *have we* inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David.' So Israel departed unto their tents."

The change here is identical to the one just above. The phrase "...to your tents, O Israel," should read: "...to your gods, O Israel." The fact that the last word of this verse is 'tents' makes it clear as to where the *Sopherim* came up with the idea to substitute 'tents' for 'gods.'

~ I Kings 21:10 ~

"And set two men, sons of Belial, before him to bear witness against him, saying, 'Thou didst blaspheme God and the king.' And *then* carry him out, and stone him, that he may die.'"

Here is a case where the *Sopherim* emended the original text to read 'bless' instead of 'blaspheme.' However, the King James translators discovered the change and rendered it correctly.

~ *1 Kings 21:13* ~

This is a reiteration of the passage found in verse 10. Again, the King James has rendered it correctly by using the word 'blaspheme' instead of the emendation, 'bless.'

~ *Jeremiah 2:11* ~

"Hath a nation changed *their* gods, which are yet no gods? But My people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit."

The original text read:

"Hath a nation changed *their* gods, which are yet no gods? But My people have changed My glory for that which doth not profit."

Bullinger cites this change as being made out of a mistaken idea of reverence.

~ *Ezekiel 8:17* ~

"Then He said unto me, 'Hast thou seen *this*, O son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the abominations which they commit here? For they have filled the land with violence, and have returned to provoke Me to anger: and, lo, they put the branch to their nose."

The original text read:

"... For they have filled the land with violence, and have returned to provoke Me to anger: and, lo, they put the branch to My nose."

This is another case where the *Sopherim* felt that it was derogatory to ascribe God as having a bodily human attribute. In this case, they did not want to admit that God had a nose.

~ Hosea 4:7 ~

**"As they were increased, so they sinned against Me:
therefore will I change their glory into shame."**

The original text read:

**"As they were increased, so they sinned against Me:
My glory have they changed into shame."**

Here again, the *Sopherim* displayed a mistaken sense of reverence toward God and for this reason changed the meaning of the verse. From this verse we learn that when we claim to represent God and then sin, we bring shame upon the glory of God.

~ Habakkuk 1:12 ~

**"Art Thou not from everlasting, O LORD my God,
mine Holy One? we shall not die. O LORD, Thou hast
ordained them for judgment; and, O mighty God,
Thou hast established them for correction."**

The original text read:

**"Art Thou not from everlasting, O LORD my God,
mine Holy One? who diest not. ..."**

Bullinger states that "...it was considered offensive to say this of Jehovah; ..." The actual emendation was from "who diest not" to "who die not." According to Bullinger, this changes the sense from the second person to the first person and thereby transfers immortality to mortal man where it does not belong.

~ Zechariah 2:8 (v. 12 in Jewish Scriptures) ~

**"For thus saith the LORD of hosts; After the glory
hath He sent me unto the nations which spoiled you:
for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His
eye."**

The original text read:

**"... After the glory hath He sent me unto the nations
which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth
the apple of Mine eye."**

Again, it was considered derogatory to speak of God as having an eye in a literal sense. Hence, the phrase 'His eye' was considered to be less offensive than 'Mine eye.'

~ Malachi 1:12 ~

"But ye have profaned it, in that ye say, 'The table of the LORD *is* polluted; and the fruit thereof *even* his meat, *is* contemptible.'"

The original text read:

"But ye have profaned Me, in that ye say, 'The table of the LORD *is* polluted; and the fruit thereof, *even* his meat, *is* contemptible.'"

Once again we see the *Sopherim* attempted to 'protect' God from the evil of the people. However, God does not need the protection of men, it really works the other way around.

~ Malachi 3:9 ~

"Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed Me, *even* this whole nation."

The original text read:

"Ye have cursed Me with a curse: for ye have robbed Me, *even* this whole nation."

Bullinger states: "The *Sopherim* say that they altered the letter n (Mem = M) into p (Nun = N), thus making it passive instead of active, and detaching it from the rest of the sentence. This was done to avoid a supposed irreverence.

~ Emendations to the Writings ~

~ Psalm 10:3 ~

**"For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire,
And blesseth the covetous, whom the LORD [YHVH]
abhorreth."**

The original text read:

**"For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire,
And the covetous man blasphemeth, yea, abhorreth
Jehovah."**

Again we see reluctance to allow any implication that might be considered derogatory towards God

~ Psalm 106:20 ~

**"Thus they changed their glory
Into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass."**

The original text read:

**"Thus they changed My glory
Into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass."**

Once again, there is a reluctance to 'tell it like it is.'

~ Job 1:5 ~

"And it was so, when the days of *their* feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings *according to the number of them all*: for Job said, 'It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts.' Thus did Job continually."

This is a case where the *Sopherim* changed the word 'cursed' to 'bless' in the Hebrew text, but the translators corrected it in the English version. The same is true of three other verses in the book of Job: (Job 1:11; 2:5 and 2:9).

~ Job 7:20 ~

"I have sinned; what shall I do unto Thee, O Thou Preserver of men? Why hast thou set me as a mark against Thee, so that I am a burden to myself?"

The original text read:

"I have sinned; what shall I do unto Thee, O Thou Preserver of men? Why hast thou set me as a mark against Thee, so that I am a burden unto Thee?"

The *Sopherim* apparently did not believe that a mere man could be a 'burden' to God, yet that is what the original scriptures tell us is the case in this passage.

~ Job 32:3 ~

"Also against his three friends was his wrath kindled, because they had found no answer, and *yet* had condemned Job."

The original text read:

"Also against his three friends was his wrath kindled, because they had found no answer, and *yet* had condemned God."

This emendation causes the reader to come to a totally different conclusion about the discourses of Job's three friends than does the original. If, in fact, they were only guilty of condemning Job, then what they had to say was not altogether to important. But if their words were considered by God to be a condemnation against Him, then we all need to study what they said and see why that is so. Only by understanding how their words condemned God, will we learn how to avoid making the same mistake.

~ II Chronicles 10:16 ~

"And when all Israel *saw* that the king would not hearken unto them, the People answered the king, saying, 'What portion have we in David? and *we have* none inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to your tents, O Israel: *and* now, David, see to thine own house.' So all Israel went to their tents."

The original text read:

"... every man to your gods, O Israel: ..."

This is a repeat of the emendation made in II Samuel 20:1 and I Kings 12:16.

~ ~ ~

~ Sources ~

- Bullinger, E.W.,
The Companion Bible,
Zondervan Bible Publishers,
Grand Rapids, 1974.
- The Jewish Encyclopedia*,
Funk & Wagnalls,
New York and London, 1905,
- The Holy Bible*, (King James Version),
Oxford University Press, London.
- The Open Bible, The New King James Version*,
Thomas Nelson Publishers,
Nashville, TN, 1985.
- Shanks, Hershel, (Ed.)
Understanding the Dead Sea Scrolls,
Random House,
New York, 1992.
- Strong, James, S.T.D., L.L.D.,
Strong's New Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible,
World Bible Publishers, Inc.,
Iowa Falls, IA, 1986.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Hebrew Roots® began in 1996 as a printed religious publication which explores the Hebrew Roots of the Christian Faith. *Hebrew Roots*® is supported entirely by prayers and freewill donations.

It is my hope that you will find the *Hebrew Roots*® Website helpful in your spiritual walk. You are welcome to copy and distribute our material, provided you include all of our contact information (see below).

If you wish to contribute to this digital ministry, please send a check or money order payable in US funds to:

Hebrew Roots®

PO Box 400
Lakewood, WI 54138
1-715-757-2775

E-mail: contact@hebrewroots.net
Website: HebrewRoots.net

~ Other *Hebrew Roots* Publications ~

Hebrew Roots

A quarterly publication dedicated to exploring the Hebrew roots of the Christian Faith.

The Quiet Revival

A booklet which traces the revival that is currently sweeping the Christian world, bringing Believers back to a Hebrew roots centered faith.

A Believer's Passover Haggadah

A complete manual that guides the Believer through a Passover *Seder* (set order) and which holds *Y'shua HaMashiach* central to that event.

Instructions for a Successful Seder

Special instructions designed to aid the host and hostess in their preparations for the *Seder*.

Hanukkah Readings for the Believer

Scripture readings from both the Old and New Testaments that are appropriate for each night of Hanukkah. Includes instructions on how to properly light the Hanukkah candles.

Weekly Torah Readings

The traditional *Torah* readings for each week of the year beginning on the first Sabbath after the Feast of Tabernacles. Includes the traditional readings from the Prophets and appropriate readings from the *Brit Chadasha* (New Testament).

Triennial Torah Readings

The *Torah* readings based on a three year cycle beginning on the first day of *Nisan* in the spring. Includes readings from the Prophets, the Psalms and the *Brit Chadasha* (New Testament).

All publications are available free of charge as long as funds permit.

Hebrew Roots

PO Box 400
Lakewood, WI 54138
1-715-757-2775

