

## Chapter 2

# The Book that Reveals the Knowledge of God

Paragraph 3 states:

The Bible fills all our needs for wise direction. True, many are overwhelmed when they first look through the Bible. It is a big book, and some portions of it are not easy to understand. But if you were given a legal document outlining what you had to do in order to receive a valuable inheritance, would you not take the time to study it carefully? If you found certain parts of the document hard to understand, likely you would get the help of someone experienced in such matters. Why not approach the Bible with a similar attitude? (Acts 17:11) More is at stake than a material inheritance. As we learned in the previous chapter, the knowledge of God can lead to everlasting life.<sup>1</sup>

### **Acts 17:11**

*These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. (KJV)*

*Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so. (NASB)*

*Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. (NIV)*

*Now the latter were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with greatest eagerness of mind, carefully examining the Scriptures daily as to whether these things were so. (NWT)*

In Acts 17:11, Paul praises the Bereans. Why? Because they eagerly (readily) received what Paul said and studied the Scriptures every day to test that what he taught was truly Biblical. Please note the verb used: examine (NASB). The word translated above as examine (NASB) is *anakinō*:

### **G350**

ἀνακρίνω

anakinō

*an-ak-ree'-no*

From G303 and G2919; properly to *scrutinize*, that is, (by implication) *investigate, interrogate, determine*: - ask, question, discern, examine, judge, search.<sup>2</sup>

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[1] Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc. KNOWLEDGE that Leads to Everlasting Life, 1995.

[2] Strong, James. "Entry for G350 anakinō." Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, 1890.

## G350

ἀνακρίνω

anakrinō

### Thayer Definition:

1) examine or judge

1a) to investigate, examine, enquire into, scrutinize, sift, question

1a1) specifically in a forensic sense of a judge to hold an investigation

1a2) to interrogate, examine the accused or witnesses

1b) to judge of, estimate, determine (the excellence or defects of any person or thing<sup>3</sup>)

The Berean's examination wasn't a casual reading. They diligently studied. They searched the Scriptures, investigated, scrutinized. They worked hard to test what Paul said and in so doing and in Paul's praise of their study, one must conclude that Paul and the Bereans both believed they could understand the truth of the Bible by themselves. Bob Deffinbaugh, Th.M. agreed, "This assumes that the Scriptures did speak clearly and sufficiently about the Messiah, and that individual seekers were capable of discerning what God said, without the help of some 'expert' who did their thinking for them."<sup>4</sup>

I must confess. I am confused in regards to this citation in paragraph 3. As I understand it, the paragraph states that if someone can't grasp parts of the Bible, he or she should seek a teacher (presumably the JW whom he or she is studying with) for help. But Acts 17:11 does not stress this at all. Acts 17:11 emphasizes testing a teacher or mentor against Scripture and presumes that individuals can understand the Bible without that teacher.

I do not disagree with the concept of seeking a teacher and/or mentor in Bible study. I simply disagree with citing Acts 17:11 to justify seeking a teacher when Acts 17:11 is about testing teachers against Scripture, with the presumption that we can understand the Scripture against which these teachers are to be tested.

In the interests of fairness, the JW I study with indicated that, in citing Acts 17:11, the KNOWLEDGE book refers to the eagerness of the Bereans in their Bible study. The Bereans did not simply dismiss Paul's message because it ran contrary to their beliefs, nor did they blindly accept what he said. They listened and investigated it for themselves. The JW I study with indicated that was only what was asked of me, that I listen and test what is taught against Scripture.

### Paragraph 16 and the Holy Spirit

I created a subdivision of Chapter Two for my study of WTBS Holy Spirit doctrine. Please see subsequent pages following this Chapter Two main heading for more information.

### Paragraph 19 and Micah 5:2

Paragraph 19 states:

...For example, more than 700 years in advance, Micah foretold that the Messiah, or Christ, would be born in Bethlehem. (Micah 5:2; Luke 2:4-7)

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[3] Thayer, Joseph H. "Entry for 'anakrino.'" *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 1896.

[4] Bob Deffinbaugh, Th.M., "The Evangelization of Thessalonica and Berea (Acts 17:1-15)." Available at [http://www.bible.org/page.asp?page\\_id=2148](http://www.bible.org/page.asp?page_id=2148) . (Accessed January 2007.)

What does Micah 5:2 and Luke 2:4-7 say?

### **Micah 5:2**

*But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he **come forth** unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose **goings forth** have been **from of old, from everlasting**. (KJV)*

*"But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Too little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will **go forth** for Me to be ruler in Israel. His **goings forth** are from long ago, **From the days of eternity**." (NASB)*

*"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you **will come** for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose **origins** are **from of old, from ancient times**." (NIV)*

*"And you, O Beth´le-hem Eph´ra-thah, the one too little to get to be among the thousands of Judah, from you there **will come out** to me the one who is to become ruler in Israel, whose **origin** is from early times, **from the days of time indefinite**. (NWT)*

### **Luke 2:4-7**

*[4] And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) [5] To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. [6] And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. [7] And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. (KJV)*

*[4] Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, [5] in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child. [6] While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. [7] And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. (NASB)*

*[4] So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. [5] He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. [6] While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, [7] and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. (NIV)*

*[4] Of course, Joseph also went up from Gal´i-lee, out of the city of Naz´a-reth, into Ju-de´a, to David´s city, which is called Beth´le-hem, because of his being a member of the house and family of David, [5] to get registered with Mary, who had been given him in marriage as promised, at present heavy with child. [6] While they were there, the days came to the full for her to give birth. [7] And she gave birth to her son, the firstborn, and she bound him with cloth bands and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the lodging room. (NWT)*

Jesus was born in Bethlehem. According to Micah 5:2, the coming Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, but is that all Micah was saying?

Note the word(s) highlighted in red above in Micah 5:2. In Hebrew, the word is *môtsâ´âh*, which Strong´s defines as:

### H4163

מוצאה

môtsâ'âh

*mo-tsaw-aw'*

Feminine of H4161; a family *descent*; also a *sewer* (compare H6675): - draught house; going forth.<sup>5</sup>

BDB further defines it as:

### H4163

מוצאה

môtsâ'âh

#### **BDB Definition:**

1) origin, place of going out from

1a) origin

1b) places of going out to or from

1b1) privy

**Part of Speech:** noun feminine

**A Related Word by BDB/Strong's Number:** from H4161<sup>6</sup>

Also, note this word is in plural form: goingss forth, originss. Of the 55 translations I consulted<sup>7</sup>, 34 reflected the plural form. 21 indicated the singular<sup>8</sup> and most of the 21 are contemporary English versions given to paraphrasing rather than the more literal, word-for-word translations.

Now, look at the word(s) highlighted in blue. In Hebrew, the word is *yâtsâ'*, which Strong's defines as:

### H3318

יצא

yâtsâ'

*yaw-tsaw'*

A primitive root; to *go* (causatively *bring*) *out*, in a great variety of applications, literally and figuratively, direct and proximate: - X after, appear, X assuredly, bear out, X begotten, break out, bring forth (out, up), carry out, come (abroad, out,

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[5] Strong, James. "Entry for H4163 môtsâ'âh." Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, 1890.

[6] Brown, Francis and C. Briggs and S. Driver. "Entry for H4163 môtsâ'âh." Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon, Reprint 1996.

[7] Please see the Foreword, Bibles Consulted section for more information.

[8] "family," Contemporary English Version; "family line," Good News Translation – Second Edition; "family tree," THE MESSAGE: The Bible in Contemporary Language; "origin," Revised Standard Version; "origin," New Revised Standard Version; "going out," Bible in Basic English; "going out," Wycliffe Bible (1395); "origin," Holman Christian Standard Bible®; "going," Bishop's Bible (1568); "outgoinge," Miles Coverdale Bible (1535); "origin," *Holy Bible*, English Standard Version; "coming," New Life Bible, "It goes all the way back to days of long ago," New International Reader's Version®.

thereat, without), + be condemned, depart (-ing, -ure), draw forth, in the end, escape, exact, fail, fall (out), fetch forth (out), get away (forth, hence, out), (able to, cause to, let) go abroad (forth, on, out), going out, grow, have forth (out), issue out, lay (lie) out, lead out, pluck out, proceed, pull out, put away, be risen, X scarce, send with commandment, shoot forth, spread, spring out, stand out, X still, X surely, take forth (out), at any time, X to [and fro], utter.

Tracing word origins of *môtsâ'âh* will lead back to *yâtsâ'*. They are related, but **not** identical. *Yâtsâ'* is singular and refers to Jesus' "coming forth" (KJV) from Bethlehem at his incarnation. *Môtsâ'âh* is plural and refers to Jesus' origins. In it, we glimpse Jesus' activities before his incarnation, activities which are said to be from "everlasting" (KJV).

What is "everlasting?" That word, *'ôlâm*, is highlighted in green and Strong's defines it as:

### H5769

עולם עולם

'ôlâm 'ôlâm

*o-lawm', o-lawm'*

From H5956; properly *concealed*, that is, the *vanishing* point; generally time *out of mind* (past or future), that is, (practically) *eternity*; frequentative adverbially (especially with prepositional prefix) *always*: - always (-s), ancient (time), any more, continuance, eternal, (for, [n-]) ever (-lasting, -more, of old), lasting, long (time), (of) old (time), perpetual, at any time, (beginning of the) world (+ without end). Compare H5331, H5703.

The NIV above renders *'ôlâm* as "from old, from ancient times," but does *'ôlâm* mean eternal or just really old? The same word, *'ôlâm*, is used in the two verses below, again highlighted in green and this time, applied to Yahweh:

### Psalms 90:2

*Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from **everlasting** to **everlasting**, thou art God.* (KJV)

*Before the mountains were born Or You gave birth to the earth and the world, Even from **everlasting** to **everlasting**, You are God.* (NASB)

*Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from **everlasting** to **everlasting** you are God.* (NIV)

*Before the mountains themselves were born, Or you proceeded to bring forth as with labor pains the earth and the productive land, Even from **time indefinite** to **time indefinite** you are God.* (NWT)

### Psalms 93:2

*Thy throne is established of old: thou art from **everlasting**.* (KJV)

*Your throne is established from of old; You are from **everlasting**.* (NASB)

*Your throne was established long ago; you are from **all eternity**.* (NIV)

*Your throne is firmly established from long ago; You are from **time indefinite**.* (NWT)

We would not say Yahweh had an origin. Instead, we would say he is eternal, or 'ôlâm. Micah 5:2 tells us that Jesus' origins are eternal as well, 'ôlâm . Micah uses *môtsâ'âh* and *yâtsâ'* to contrast Jesus' origin in his incarnation against his existence and activities in eternity past.

Adam Clarke agreed. "...from time as it came out of eternity. That is, there was no time in which he has not been going-forth-coming in various ways to save men...so he is the Eternal, and no part of what was created."<sup>9</sup>

John Gill wrote, "The phrases are expressive of the eternity of his divine nature and person...so as the former part of the text sets forth his human birth, this his divine generation..."<sup>10</sup>

Robert Jamieson also stated, "The plain antithesis of this clause, to 'come forth out of thee' (from Beth-lehem), shows that the eternal generation of the Son is meant. **The term conveys the strongest assertion of infinite duration of which the Hebrew language is capable** (compare Ps 90:2; Pr 8:22, 23; Joh 1:1). Messiah's generation as man coming forth unto God to do His will on earth is from Beth-lehem; but as Son of God, His goings forth are from everlasting."<sup>11</sup> (Emphasis mine.)

Micah 5:2 proves Jesus is not a created being, but is from 'ôlâm from everlasting, from eternity.

### **Zechariah, Prophecies Fulfilled in Jesus, And Paragraph 19 (cont.)**

Paragraph 19 states:

...Five hundred years in advance, Zechariah prophesied that the Messiah would be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver. (Zechariah 11:12; Matthew 26:15)...<sup>12</sup>

What does Zechariah 11:12 and Matthew 26:15 say?

#### **Zechariah 11:12**

*And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. (KJV)*

*I said to them, "If it is good in your sight, give me my wages; but if not, never mind!" So they weighed out thirty shekels of silver as my wages. (NASB)*

*I told them, "If you think it best, give me my pay; but if not, keep it." So they paid me thirty pieces of silver. (NIV)*

*Then I said to them: "If it is good in YOUR eyes, give [me] my wages; but if not, refrain." And they proceeded to pay my wages, thirty pieces of silver. (NWT)*

#### **Matthew 26:15**

*And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. (KJV)*

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[9] Clarke, Adam. "Commentary on Micah 5." The Adam Clarke Commentary. 1832.

[10] Gill, John. "Commentary on Micah 5:2." John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible, 1690-1771.

[11] Jamieson, Robert, D.D. "Commentary on Micah 5." Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible, 1871.

[12] Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc. KNOWLEDGE that Leads to Everlasting Life, 1995.

*and said, "What are you willing to give me to betray Him to you?" And they weighed out thirty pieces of silver to him. (NASB)*

*and asked, "What are you willing to give me if I hand him over to you?" So they counted out for him thirty silver coins. (NIV)*

*and said: "What will YOU give me to betray him to YOU?" They stipulated to him thirty silver pieces. (NWT)*

Jesus, the Messiah, was valued at thirty pieces of silver, as prophesied in Zechariah 11:12 and fulfilled in Matthew 26:15, as so stated by the WTBS above. But why stop at Zechariah 11:12?

### **Zechariah 11:13**

*And the LORD said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the LORD. (KJV)*

*Then the LORD said to me, "Throw it to the potter, that magnificent price at which I was valued by them." So I took the thirty shekels of silver and threw them to the potter in the house of the LORD. (NASB)*

*And the LORD said to me, "Throw it to the potter" - the handsome price at which they prized me! So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the LORD to the potter. (NIV)*

*At that, Jehovah said to me: "Throw it to the treasury—the majestic value with which I have been valued from their standpoint." Accordingly I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw it into the treasury at the house of Jehovah. (NWT)*

Who was valued at thirty pieces of silver in Zechariah 11:13?

The speaker is clearly identified as Yahweh, Jehovah God and here, Yahweh clearly stated that he was valued at thirty pieces of silver.

Who was valued at thirty pieces of silver in the fulfillment in Matthew 26:15?

Jesus Christ.

For the Trinitarian, there is no dilemma in these statements. Yahweh is God. Jesus is God. Therefore, both Yahweh and Jesus could be and were valued at thirty pieces of silver.

To date, the JW I study with and as much as I'm aware, the WTBS have failed to offer an adequate explanation for this. The JW I study with contended that in this instance, Zechariah is a type of Christ, that they were both earthly representatives of Jehovah only and Jesus is valued at thirty pieces of silver in much the same way Zechariah was, with the value attributing to God instead of themselves.

Was Zechariah a representative of God? Certainly. Several discrepancies between Zechariah and Jesus, however, are quite evident:

1. Zechariah *asked* for his wages. Jesus did not. Judas asked for payment, not Jesus.
2. Zechariah *received* thirty pieces of silver. Jesus did not. Judas received thirty pieces of silver, not Jesus.
3. Zechariah *disposed* of his thirty pieces of silver by throwing them to the potter. Jesus did not. Judas disposed of his thirty pieces of silver by throwing them into the temple and it was then used to purchase a potter's field. (See Matthew 27:7.)

I do not contend that Zechariah is a type of Judas, of course, for in no way or manner did Zechariah betray Yahweh as Judas betrayed Jesus. But these discrepancies do, however, indicate that Jesus did

not fill Zechariah's role in this prophesy. JW apologists assert that since Jesus was Jehovah's representative on earth and was the exact representation of Jehovah (Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3), valuing Jesus at thirty pieces of silver would be the same as valuing Jehovah at thirty pieces of silver. Apologists claim this prophesy (and others) speak of Jesus' agency only. The discrepancies listed above sharply contrast Zechariah's agency with Jesus' role, however. Jesus was valued at thirty pieces of silver, yes, but he did not ask for, receive, nor dispose of the thirty pieces of silver as Zechariah did. Jesus exactly mirrors the role of Yahweh, Jehovah God, **not** Zechariah's.

Zechariah 11:12, 13 and Matthew 26:15 apply an Old Testament prophesy about Yahweh directly to Jesus Christ. This makes sense only if Yahweh and Jesus both are God.

Also, while we are in Zechariah and our attention is on prophesies Jesus Christ fulfilled:

### **Zechariah 12:10**

*And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. (KJV)*

*"I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn. (NASB)*

*"And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son. (NIV)*

*"And I will pour out upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of favor and entreaties, and they will certainly look to the One whom they pierced through, and they will certainly wail over Him as in the wailing over an only [son]; and there will be a bitter lamentation over him as when there is bitter lamentation over the firstborn [son]. (NWT)*

Please note the NWT omits "me" before the one/whom they have pierced in this verse.

The Zechariah 12:10 footnote of the NET Bible states:

Because of the difficulty of the concept of the mortal piercing of God, the subject of this clause, and the shift of pronoun from "me" to "him" in the next, many mss read אֶלֵי אֶת אֲשֶׁר ('ale 'et 'asher, "to the one whom," a reading followed by NAB, NRSV) rather than the MT's אֶלַי אֶת אֲשֶׁר ('ela 'et 'asher, "to me whom"). **The reasons for such alternatives, however, are clear – they are motivated by scribes who found such statements theologically objectionable – and they should be rejected in favor of the more difficult reading (*lectio difficilior*) of the MT.**<sup>13</sup> (Emphasis mine.)

The word translated as "me" is 'êth (èt, NET Bible), which is defined in Strong's as:

**H853**

אֶת

'êth

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[13] [www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org). "Footnote on Zechariah 12:10." The NET Bible. (Accessed January 2007.)

ayth

Apparently contracted from H226 in the **demonstrative sense of entity; properly self** (but generally used to point out more definitely the object of a verb or preposition, *even* or *namely*): - (As such unrepresented in English.)<sup>14</sup> (Emphasis mine.)

In Hebrew, we read from right to left so 'êth is composed of the letters aleph and tav (or tau). Aleph to tav figures prominently in Hebrew as a phrase similar to our English saying from A to Z, but much more so, because in Hebrew, the individual letters are not only what is meant or alluded to. The phrase doesn't mean just every letter from A to Z, per se, but also the whole – *every word* made up of *every letter* from A to Z. As such, aleph-tav (composing every word) is seen as the Messiah, The Word made flesh. Aleph-tav is also considered a claim to divinity, corresponding to John's use of Alpha and Omega (the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet) as a divine title in Revelation. (See Revelation 1:8, 21:6 and 22:13.) Aleph-tav is considered a grammatical marker pointing to the direct object of a preposition or verb, true, but some (the author included) believe it is also a marker of special significance, to draw our attention to God in whatever passage aleph-tav appears as it does here.<sup>15</sup> This belief is not limited to Christianity – in the Babylonian Talmud, Rabbi Akiva suggests that every occurrence of the aleph-tav in the Old Testament is a sign for the presence of God and expounded on these occurrences, as did Rabbi Simeon and others.<sup>16</sup>

Of aleph-tav and its correlation in John's usage of Alpha and Omega as a divine title in Revelation 1:8, Albert Barnes wrote:

Among the Jewish Rabbins, it was common to use the first and the last letters of the Hebrew alphabet to denote the whole of anything, from beginning to end.<sup>17</sup>

Vincent's Words Studies agreed, "The Rabbinical writers used the phrase from *Aleph* to *Tav*, to signify *completely, from beginning to end.*"<sup>18</sup> John Gill, commenting on Revelation 1:8, also wrote, "Moreover, these letters, Alpha and Omega, being the first and the last in the alphabet, may stand for the whole; and it seems to be a proverbial expression taken from the Jews, who use the phrase, from Aleph to Tau, for the whole of any thing, which two letters in the Hebrew alphabet stand in the same place as these..."<sup>19</sup>

Adam Clarke further stated:

... **I am from eternity to eternity.** This mode of speech is borrowed from the Jews, who express the *whole compass of things* by *aleph* and *tau*, the *first* and *last* letters of the *Hebrew* alphabet... With the rabbins *meeleph vead tau*, "*from aleph to tau*," expressed the whole of a matter, *from the beginning to the end.*<sup>20</sup> (Emphasis mine.)

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[14] Strong, James. "Entry for H853 eth." Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, 1890.

[15] See [http://www.hebrew4christians.com/Grammar/Unit\\_One/Jesus\\_and\\_the\\_Aleph-Bet/jesus\\_and\\_the\\_aleph-bet.html](http://www.hebrew4christians.com/Grammar/Unit_One/Jesus_and_the_Aleph-Bet/jesus_and_the_aleph-bet.html) for more information. (Accessed January 2007.)

[16] See <http://www.arts.uwa.edu.au/MotsPluriels/MP1901dpAkiva.html> for more information. (Accessed January 2007.)

[17] Barnes, Albert. "Commentary on Revelation 1:8." " Barnes' Notes on the Bible. 1798-1870.

[18] Vincent. "Commentary on Revelation 1:8" Vincent's Word Studies. 1886.

[19] Gill, John. "Commentary on Revelation 1:8." John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible, 1690-1771.

[20] Clarke, Adam. "Commentary on Revelation 1." The Adam Clarke Commentary. 1832.

Who is from eternity? Even JWs will answer that it is Yahweh, Jehovah God who is eternal and in fact, interpret Revelation 1:8, in which Alpha and Omega (correlating to aleph-tav in Hebrew usage) are ascribed to the Lord as pointing to the Father.

In any event, 'êth is also a grammatical marker, as per Strong's definition above. Yahweh is the speaker in Zechariah 12:10 so this is a very clear indication that Yahweh is the one who was pierced. Yahweh is also indicated as the subject of the piercing in Zechariah 12:10 in "...the large majority of reliable Hebrew manuscripts, the LXX, the Old Latin, the Syriac Peshitta, the Aramaic Targums, and the Greek versions of Aquilla, Symmachus, and Theodotion."<sup>21</sup> Yet, the JW I study with did not offer any explanation whatsoever for this omission. Of the 55 translations of Zechariah 12:10 I consulted,<sup>22</sup> all except 13 (including the NWT) directly indicated Yahweh as the subject pierced and some of the 13 that didn't are contemporary English version given to paraphrasing as opposed to more literal, word-for-word translations and/or footnoted the proper translation.<sup>23</sup> Regardless, Yahweh as the subject pierced in Zechariah 12:10 is included in the great majority of Bible translations, the Hebrew itself indicates Yahweh is the one who is pierced, and I at least have found no foundation for translating it otherwise.

Who is speaking in Zechariah 12:10? A cursory reading of Zechariah 12:10 and the surrounding text shows Yahweh is the speaker and Yahweh states that he himself was pierced.

But who was pierced?

Jesus Christ.

### **John 19:34**

*But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. (KJV)*

*But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. (NASB)*

*Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. (NIV)*

*Yet one of the soldiers jabbed his side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. (NWT)*

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[21] Quotation from Ron Rhodes', Reasoning from the Scriptures with the Jehovah's Witnesses, 1993. P. 84. **Original** quotation from Reymond, Robert. Jesus, Divine Messiah: The New Testament Witness, 1990. P. 80.

[22] Please see the Foreword, Bibles Consulted section for more information.

[23] The Contemporary English Version, Good News Translation – Second Edition, Revised Standard Version, New Revised Standard Version, Bible in Basic English, JPS Old Testament (1917), New Life Bible, Today's English Version, New American Bible, New English Bible, Living Bible, Modern Language Bible, and New World Translation do not directly identify Yahweh as the one pierced in Zechariah 12:10. The New Revised Standard Version has the proper translation of Zechariah 12:10 available in a footnote.

A few verses later, John directly applies the prophesy of Zechariah 12:10 to Jesus:

### **John 19:37**

*And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced. (KJV)*

*And again another Scripture says, "THEY SHALL LOOK ON HIM WHOM THEY PIERCED." (NASB)*

*and, as another scripture says, "They will look on the one they have pierced." (NIV)*

*And, again, a different scripture says: "They will look to the One whom they pierced." (NWT)*

JW apologists argue that John's quotation of Zechariah 12:10, which does not directly identify Yahweh as the one pierced, should be regarded as the correct translation of Zechariah 12:10 against the majority of Hebrew manuscripts and other texts.

### **The LXX (Septuagint) vs. The MT (Masoretic Text) In New Testament Writings<sup>24</sup>**

Centuries before Jesus' incarnation, the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) was translated from its original Hebrew into Greek. This translation (or, more accurately, translations since many variants existed and were in use until it was standardized, long after Jesus' death and resurrection) is called the LXX or the Septuagint, and is used primarily by the New Testament writers in their quotations of the Old Testament. In the Gospels, quotations agree with the LXX approximately 85% while in the Gospel of John alone, quotations agree with the LXX 92%. The LXX was clearly favored by the Gospel writers.

In the book of Zechariah, however, quotations in the New Testament agree with the LXX approximately 70%, but agree with the MT (Masoretic Text, the Hebrew text) 85%. The MT is preferred over the LXX by New Testament writers in the books of Job (where there is **no** agreement with the LXX), Malachi (which agrees with the LXX only 25%) and Zechariah (which as noted above agrees with the LXX by about 70% in contrast to the MT's agreement of about 85%).

Other instances in which New Testament writers followed the MT rather than the LXX in Old Testament quotations include Matthew 2:15 (quoting Hosea 11:1) and Matthew 11:10 (quoting Malachi 3:1). In all, there are 9 instances in which New Testament writers preferred the MT quotations over that of the LXX.<sup>25</sup>

Furthermore, in another 14 instances, the New Testament writers disagreed with both the LXX **and** the MT.<sup>26</sup>

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[24] Most of the information summarized and paraphrased here can be found in greater depth and detail at <http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Pines/7224/Rick/Septuagint/spindex.htm> . (Accessed January 2007.) This site offers an extensive and comprehensive study of the Septuagint. I **HIGHLY** recommend it.

[25] Matthew 2:15 (quoting Hosea 11:1), Matthew 11:10 (quoting Malachi 3:1), John 19:37 (quoting Zechariah 12:10), Romans 9:33 (quoting Isaiah 8:14), Romans 11:35 (quoting Job 41:11), 1 Corinthians 3:19 (quoting Job 5:13). Several New Testament writers quote Malachi 3:1 (3 times) and Isaiah 8:14 (twice).

[26] That is not to say that we should doubt or suspect the Bible we have today. We should not. Over 5,000 ancient manuscripts attest to the reliability of the New Testament alone, including a papyrus fragment of John that dates to 125 A.D. – only (roughly) 25 years after the death of its writer and the last apostle, John. This is a vast

Complicating the issue further, New Testament writers quoted the LXX (or omitted parts of an Old Testament quotation while retaining most of the quote) by roughly 65%. The rest of the time, the New Testament writers replaced words used in the LXX with synonyms, added to the quotation, used poetic license to reconstruct the quotation or quoted in a fragmentary fashion with only a few scattered words in common with the original quotation.

The bottom line is even the LXX, which the New Testament writers preferred, was not quoted uniformly. The quotations in the New Testament were in many instances verbatim or nearly so with the texts we possess today (approximately 65%), but certainly this wasn't **always** the case. As such, one could hardly demand John's quotation of Zechariah 12:10 must be a verbatim quote that supersedes the available (and overwhelming number) of reliable Hebrew manuscripts and other texts (Targums, etc.), as proposed by JW apologists.

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Of Zechariah 12:10, John Gill stated:

The Messiah here prophesied of appears to be both God and man; a divine Person called Jehovah, who is all along speaking in the context, and in the text itself; for none else could pour out the spirit of grace and supplication; and yet he must be man, to be pierced; and the same is spoken of, that would do the one and suffer the other; and therefore must be the θεανθρωπος, or God-man in one person.<sup>27</sup>

Gill, commenting on John 19:37, stated:

...in the Hebrew text it is, "upon me whom they have pierced"; the reason of this difference is, because Christ, who is Jehovah, is there speaking prophetically of himself, here the evangelist cites it as fulfilled in him, that is, that part of it which regards the piercing of him...<sup>28</sup>

It certainly cannot be more plainly stated.

Yahweh prophesied that he himself would be pierced in Zechariah 12:10 and that prophecy was fulfilled in Jesus Christ in John 19:34 and directly applied to Jesus by John in John 19:37. This makes sense only if Yahweh and Jesus are both God.

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over-simplification of the issue, but I liken these 14 variations from both the LXX and the MT as similar in nature to the variations we find in the many translations and Bible versions available today.

[27] Gill, John. "Commentary on Zechariah 12:10." John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible, 1690-1771.

[28] Gill, John. "Commentary on John 19:37." John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible, 1690-1771.