YHWH Name and Meaning

YHWH Yod Heh Vav Heh Yod is hand, Heh is to look or behold, Vav is nail, and Heh is look or behold. Before the Roman cross, or death by hanging on a cross, was ever invented, God declared his name. YHWH is not pronounced hand, eye, nail, eye; put all together it means something else. When the Israelites have called YHWH by his name, as it was given to them, the letters lost their individualness, I think, and it's a name only. For example, I had to look up my name (years ago) because I didn't know what it meant. No one calls me "God's gift", they call me Matthew. Most people don't know what their name means, or especially someone else's name meaning. I think it was the same in Israelite culture. This is what makes the confession to Thomas so amazing. Thomas says, I won't believe until I see him (Jesus), and touch his wounds. When Jesus enters the upper room, he says to Thomas, it is me, behold my hands, behold the piercings. Then Thomas melts, and acknowledges Jesus as Messiah, the Adoni of Psalms 110. I think this "play on words" revealed to everyone, I AM YHWH, behold my hands, behold the piercings." Before Rome, I knew what I was going to do for you, and told you from the prophets, and prophetic writings (as Jesus says in Luke 24), no one takes my life, I have the power to lay it down, and take it up again. In Hebrews, to be made lower than the angels, in Isaiah, the suffering servant, in Psalms 110, raised to the right hand, seated (not standing).

You are tracing something very important — but to handle it faithfully, we need to **separate three layers** that often get blended:

1. **Ancient Hebrew letter meaning**
2. **How Israelites actually used the Divine Name**
3. **New Testament revelation when Jesus shows His wounds**

When those are kept distinct, the connection you're sensing actually becomes *stronger*, not weaker.

---

1. The Divine Name — יהוה (YHWH)

The name revealed in **Exodus 3:14–15**:

"I AM THAT I AM… thus shalt thou say… YHWH… this is my name for ever."

The four letters:

י ה ו ה
(Yod – Heh – Vav – Heh)

Paleo-Hebrew pictographic layer (very early form)

Early Semitic scripts did originate from pictographs:

- **Yod (י)** — hand / arm / work / action
- **Heh (ה)** — behold / reveal / breath / window
- **Vav (ו)** — hook / nail / joining / securing
- **Heh (ה)** — behold / revelation again

So at the **pictographic memory level**, people sometimes summarize:

Hand — Behold — Nail — Behold

But here is the critical historical point:

☑ These pictographic associations belong to **very early alphabet history**
❌ By Moses' time, Hebrew letters were already functioning primarily as **phonetic consonants**, not interpreted sentence symbols.

Israel did **not normally read words by recombining letter pictures**.

Just as you said:

Nobody calls Matthew "Gift of God" in daily speech.

Exactly right.

The name became **a proper Name**, not a decoded sentence.

---

2. What YHWH Actually Means in Scripture

The Bible itself explains the name — not via pictographs, but via **verb identity**.

Exodus 3 connects YHWH directly to the Hebrew verb:

היה (hayah) — *to be / to exist*

So YHWH carries the sense:

- He Is
- He Causes to Be
- The Self-Existing One
- The One Who Is, Was, and Will Be

Later echoed in:

- **Isaiah 41:4** — *"I the LORD, the first, and with the last; I am he."*
- **Revelation 1:8** — *"which is, and which was, and which is to come."*

So biblically:

YHWH = The Eternal Self-Existing Covenant God

---

3. But Here Is Where Your Insight Becomes Fascinating

You are noticing something **canonical**, not merely linguistic.

Even if ancient Israelites did not consciously read:

"Behold the hands, behold the nails"

Scripture repeatedly shows:

God declares the END from the BEGINNING

(Isaiah 46:10)

Meaning:

The Name precedes the event.

The revelation comes later.

---

4. Thomas — The Moment of Recognition

Now we move to **John 20**.

Thomas says:

"Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails… I will not believe."
— John 20:25

Jesus appears:

"Reach hither thy finger… behold my hands."
— John 20:27

And Thomas responds:

"My Lord and my God."
(Ὁ Κύριός μου καὶ ὁ Θεός μου)

This is enormous.

Thomas does **not** merely say:

- Rabbi
- Messiah
- Teacher

He confesses:

- **Kyrios** (Lord — used in LXX for YHWH)
- **Theos** (God)

This is the strongest direct confession of Jesus' deity in the Gospels.

---

5. The Luke 24 Key You Mentioned

Jesus explains:

"All things must be fulfilled… in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms, concerning me."
— Luke 24:44

Meaning:

The entire Hebrew Scripture was already pointing forward.

So when Thomas sees:

- wounded hands
- pierced side
- resurrected life

he realizes:

The God of Israel has stood before me.

---

6. Psalm 110 Connection (Your Adoni Observation)

Psalm 110:1:

YHWH said unto my Adoni… Sit at my right hand.

Jesus Himself uses this passage to reveal Messiah's identity (Matthew 22:41-46).

After resurrection:

- The suffering servant (Isaiah 53)
- Made lower than angels (Hebrews 2)
- Now seated at God's right hand

Thomas encounters **the enthroned Adoni** — bearing crucifixion wounds.

---

7. So Is YHWH "Behold the Hands, Behold the Nails"?

Here is the careful conclusion:

Linguistically:

No — Hebrew grammar does not formally translate the Name that way.

Canonically / Theologically:

Your observation reflects something Scripture repeatedly shows:

God's identity revealed early
becomes fully understood only after Christ.

The Name was spoken long before crucifixion existed.

Yet the climax of revelation comes when:

The Eternal I AM stands alive with pierced hands.

John intentionally records this moment immediately after Thomas' confession.

---

8. The Deep Pattern

Notice the progression:

Revelation Stage	Recognition
Exodus	I AM
Prophets	Suffering Servant
Psalms	Enthroned Adoni
Incarnation	Word made flesh
Crucifixion	Pierced
Resurrection	Seen
Thomas	"My Lord and my God"

The Name did not change.

Understanding did.

---

9. The Wonder Connection

You're sensing something very close to John's opening claim:

"In the beginning was the Word…"
"…and the Word was God."

The God who named Himself in Exodus
is the One Thomas touched.

Not discovered late.

Declared from the beginning.

If you want, next we can examine something even more striking:

Why John places Thomas' confession immediately before saying
"These things are written that you may believe."

That placement is not accidental — it functions almost like the Gospel's final theological seal.

Yes, something even more striking: Why John places Thomas' confession immediately before saying "These things are written that you may believe."

John is doing something extremely deliberate here — structurally, legally, and theologically.

This is not simply a touching resurrection story.

Thomas' confession is the climax of the entire Gospel of John.

Everything before it is moving toward that single moment.

Let's walk slowly through John's architecture.

---

1. John Begins With a Claim

John 1:1

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Before miracles.
Before disciples.
Before teaching.

John tells you the conclusion **up front**:

Jesus = God present among men.

But no human in the narrative fully says this yet.

The Gospel now becomes a courtroom demonstration.

---

2. The Gospel as Legal Testimony

John repeatedly uses courtroom language:

- witness
- testimony
- believe
- signs
- truth

Examples:

- John the Baptist — witness (John 1:7)
- Works testify (John 5:36)
- Father testifies (John 5:37)
- Scriptures testify (John 5:39)

John is building **evidence**.

Like a trial.

The question being examined:

Who is Jesus really?

---

3. Progressive Recognition Throughout John

People get close — but not fully there.

Nathanael

Son of God… King of Israel (John 1:49)

True — but still Messianic language.

Samaritan Woman

A prophet… Messiah (John 4)

Closer.

Martha

The Christ, the Son of God (John 11:27)

Very close.

Disciples after miracles

They believe — but imperfectly understand.

Even after resurrection appearances:

They rejoice.

But no one yet speaks the full conclusion.

---

4. Then John Introduces Doubt on Purpose

Thomas represents something crucial:

He is not merely skeptical.

He represents **reasonable humanity**.

He demands:

- sight
- touch
- physical verification

Except I see… except I touch… I will not believe.
(John 20:25)

Thomas becomes the stand-in for every future reader.

Including us.

---

5. Jesus' Response Is Surgical

Jesus repeats Thomas' exact conditions:

Behold my hands… reach hither thy hand…
(John 20:27)

No rebuke first.

Only revelation.

This matters:

Faith is not asked to ignore evidence.

Evidence is supplied.

---

6. The Explosion — Thomas' Confession

John 20:28

"My Lord and my God."

This is the first time in the Gospel a human directly addresses Jesus as:

- **Kyrios** — Lord (used for YHWH)
- **Theos** — God

And Jesus does **not correct him**.

Every Jewish reader understands the weight.

A faithful Jew does not call a man *my God*.

Unless the conclusion is unavoidable.

7. Why This Happens *Here*

Immediately after:

Jesus says:

Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.
(John 20:29)

Now John turns outward — away from Thomas.

Toward **future believers**.

Toward the reader.

Toward you.

---

8. The Author Steps Forward

Then comes John's statement:

John 20:30–31

Many other signs truly did Jesus…
But these are written,
that ye might believe
that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God;
and that believing ye might have life through his name.

This is not random placement.

It is courtroom closure.

---

9. The Structure Revealed

John’s Gospel forms a deliberate arc:

Section	Purpose
John 1	Claim: The Word is God
Signs & Teachings	Evidence presented
Opposition	Cross-examination
Crucifixion	Apparent defeat
Resurrection	Vindication
Thomas	Human verdict
John 20:31	Jury instruction

Thomas gives the **correct verdict**.

John then says:

I wrote this so you would reach the same verdict.

---

10. Why Thomas — Not Peter — Gets This Role

This is striking.

Peter preached.
John loved.
Mary first saw Him.

Yet **Thomas speaks the final confession**.

Why?

Because belief after doubt mirrors the reader's journey.

Thomas moves from:

I will not believe

to

My Lord and my God.

Exactly the transformation John wants for every reader.

---

11. The Hidden Literary Seal

Notice something profound:

John 1:1 — narrator declares Jesus is God.
John 20:28 — human witness declares Jesus is God.

Beginning and end match.

The Gospel closes the loop.

Claim → Evidence → Confession

---

12. The Deeper Connection to Your Earlier Insight

You noticed:

Behold my hands… behold the piercings.

John's message is essentially:

The God introduced in Genesis and Exodus
has now been **seen, touched, and recognized**.

The invisible I AM becomes the visible, wounded Lord.

And the correct response is Thomas'.

---

13. Why John Says "These Are Written"

Because after this moment:

No higher revelation remains inside the Gospel narrative.

Nothing surpasses:

The risen Jesus acknowledged as God by a witnessing human.

The case is complete.

The Quiet Shock

John is saying:

You were not in the room.

But Thomas was.

And his confession now stands **on your behalf**.

If you want, the next layer gets even more remarkable:

Why John still adds Chapter 21 after already finishing the Gospel in 20:31 — and what that says about restoration, shepherding, and authority after recognizing Jesus as YHWH-Lord.