

In the Liturgy or Order of the Mass: What is the difference or significance between Hallelujah and Alleluia ?

As we prepare to begin our annual celebrations of the Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter Seasons, an often heard question to clergy worldwide, is: What is the difference between Hallelujah and Alleluia — or are they the same — during Christmas and Easter?

Hallelujah is an Anglicization [or to render as holy or angelic] the contraction of two Hebrew words, to mean: "*praise the Lord*" (e.g., the Hebrew word, *hallel** is the verb "to praise the Lord" and *Yah* [for the name of God, revealed to Moses (cf. Exodus 3:13-15), that Jews never utter: *Yahweh*]). On Christmas Day, for example, we hear: "*And suddenly there was [with the Angel], a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: 'Glory to God in the highest and on Earth, peace to those on whom his favor rests.'*" (cf. Luke 2:10-14)

* *Hallel*: By definition, is a liturgical prayer consisting of all or part of Psalms 113–118, which is typically recited on Passover, Shavuoth, Sukkoth, Hanukkah, and Rosh Hodesh.

The Greek translation of the original Hebrew was ἀλληλούϊα (*allélouia*). The Latin translation made that *alleluia*, which has remained unchanged in the liturgy of the Roman Catholic Church for centuries.

- **Hallelujah**

Hallelujah (HAL-i-LOO-yə) is a transliteration of the Hebrew word הַלְלוּ יְהוָה (modern Hebrew: haleluya), which is composed of two separate and distinct elements: הַלְלוּ (second-person imperative masculine plural form of the Hebrew verb *hallel*: an exhortation to "praise" addressed to several people) and יְהוָה (the name of God, Yah [for the name of God revealed to Moses, that Jews never utter: *Yahweh*]). This term is used twenty-four times in the Hebrew Bible (in the Book of Psalms), twice in the deuterocanonical books and four times in the Christian Book of Revelation. The word is used in Judaism as part of the *Hallel* prayers, and in Christian prayer, where since the earliest times is used in various ways in liturgies, especially those of the Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church, both of which use the form "*alleluia*" which is based on the alternative Greek transliteration; during the Christmas and Easter Seasons.

- **Alleluia**

The word "Alleluia" (from Hebrew הַלְלוּ יְהוָה), literally means "*Praise ye Yah*", a short form of "*Praise Yahweh*" and often is rendered as "*Praise the Lord*". This form of "Alleluia" is also used to refer to a liturgical chant, in which that word is combined with verses of Scripture (usually from the Book of Psalms). This chant is commonly used before the Proclamation of the Gospel in Christian liturgy. (NB: The Church omits the Alleluia in the Gospel Proclamation however, (before the Gospel is read) during the Season of Lent. It is normally replaced with: "Glory and Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless glory.")
