

Greek New Testament text? As the Greek words *Kurios* and *Theos* are universally acknowledged by authorities to be very inferior substitutes for the original Hebrew Names and titles of God, then using the Hebrew can be justified at least where Old Testament passages containing these names and titles are quoted in the New. Given the appropriation of the Memorial Name (howbeit in the demonstrably incorrect form 'Jehovah') by the publishers of the *Kingdom Interlinear Translation*, one can understand why the translators who produced this version used the Memorial Name 237 times.

This number is probably excessive and without justification. However, it is interesting to consider that Benjamin Wilson (the producer of the well-known *Emphatic Diaglott*) was, in 1864, one of the first to introduce the Memorial Name into the New Testament, using it eighteen times in quotations from the Old Testament from Matthew to Acts in his English translation of the New Testament.

### Conclusion

So, in conclusion, I submit there is good evidence to suggest that as a minimum the Hebrew Name of God was originally transferred into the Greek New Testament text in quotations from the Old and later lost.

But why, the reader might ask, did the Spirit of God, which oversaw the development of the New Testament, allow these renditions to be lost? The question might also be asked as to why the truth of the Scriptures was generally lost from about the second or third century. Other than the fact that the "falling away" was predicted in the Scriptures of truth, in both cases we do not really know, we can only say that it was the will of the Father. In any event we do know that "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing; but the honour [glory] of kings [including those of the future age] is to search out a matter" (Prov. 25:2).

So then, even though the (Hebrew) title of God, *Abba*, 'Father', gains a new importance in the New Testament through its use by our Lord, we should never down-play or forget the distinctiveness, the majesty and the future fulfilment aspect of the Hebrew Name of God, *Yahweh*, for all times, including the "times of the Gentiles", for this Name is to be the basis of the "name which is above every name" (Phil. 2:9).

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Another reader has submitted a copy of a book called *The Tetragrammaton and the Christian Greek Scriptures*, by Lynn Lundquist (published by the author at PO Box 301294, Portland, Oregon 97294-9294, USA, no cost stated), which goes to exhaustive lengths to demonstrate that *Yahweh* was never in the Greek manuscripts of the New Testament.

This book was written specifically to oppose the Jehovah's Witnesses' claim that it was. Two main points are made:

- 1 Not one of the 5,000 Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, some going back to the third century A.D., contain *Yahweh*, all use *Kurios*, even where the Old Testament is being quoted.
- 2 There exists an extensive body of writings by early Christians in which the New Testament is extensively quoted, all with *Kurios*, not *Yahweh*. Though these writings contain much about various controversies, there is nothing about any controversy over the exclusion of *Yahweh* from Greek manuscripts. Some of these writers flourished only a hundred years after Christ.—*T.B.*

### Lot's daughters

Regarding Brother Russell Ebbs' article, "Lot and Sodom", I would like to question the assumption in the subheading, 'Two immoral daughters' (Feb. 2001, p. 41), for the simple reason that Scripture does not condemn them. We are presented with the bare facts without comment, so we need to have sound reasons for adverse judgement on their behaviour.

Brother Ebbs comments that the elder daughter was wrong when she said, "there is not a man in the earth to come in unto us" (Gen. 19:31). True, but that was her *perception* at the time because they had just survived a holocaust which had completely destroyed their 'world', and they were living in an isolated cave with no sign of any other humans.

In assessing Bible characters we need to heed the inspired words of Balaam, "How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed?" (Num. 23:8). Those who do this are likely to be proved wrong. For example, Jewish commentators who condemn Joseph for his apparent lack of regard for his parents fail to appreciate that Joseph had an overriding imperative to fulfil his inspired dreams and convert his brethren, and he was prepared

to wait twenty-two years for events to make this possible.

Moreover, those who, like H. V. Morton, contrast “the smooth, spoiled Jacob to the honest, hairy Esau” (*Women of the Bible*, p. 35), show a complete disregard for the judgement of Scripture, which not only describes Jacob as an ‘upright man’ (as the AV ‘plain’ seems to mean) but also makes it clear that by his actions Jacob prevented his father from defying the prophetic insight of

the Lord (Gen. 25:23). When Isaac realised how fundamentally he had transgressed in his misjudgement of the character of his two sons he “trembled very exceedingly” (27:33).

This is surely a warning to us that human judgement is fallible and that we should refrain from blaming anyone whom God does not condemn.

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## From the Editor's postbag

### Comments on items received from readers

#### Leaving Europe

I began the previous two Editor's postbags with items about the development of a united Europe (Nov. 2000, p. 422; Feb. 2001, p. 53). This time the first item for consideration is an article in the *Daily Mail* of 9 December 2000 advocating that Britain should leave Europe. It says that Britain would benefit economically from being able to develop its agriculture and fisheries without controls imposed by Europe (we are not allowed now to produce all our own milk, nor fish some of our own waters) and without industry being hampered by EC-imposed rules and regulations. Britain would be free from European obligations, such as having to spend large sums of money on strengthening bridges to allow bigger lorries to cross them, or not being free to set our own VAT rates.

The article states that Britain has the world's fourth largest economy, a larger network of diplomatic and trade relationships than any other European nation, and the best military forces in Europe. It could well stand on its own feet, therefore. Surprise is expressed that no mainstream politicians have taken up the case for leaving,

though the significant comment is made, “What politicians on both sides say off the record is another matter”. The article concludes with a forecast: “The fierce national debate about Europe will continue. But it will shift gradually and remorselessly from the terms on which we stay, to the terms on which we leave. Hard facts will prevail over political nonsense”.

#### Russian-American tunnel

It is sometimes forgotten that Russia and the USA are only twenty-three miles apart at the Bering Straits, between Siberia (still part of Russia despite the break-up of the Soviet Union) and Alaska. A reader has sent an article from *The Times* of 2 January about a proposal to link the two countries by a tunnel under the Straits, in order to assist Russia in the exploitation and sale of its massive mineral resources. Similar proposals exist for linking Russia and Japan, via the Russian-controlled island of Sakhalin, just north of Japan.

The significance of all this is that, after the collapse of 1998, Russia's economy is growing apace, its oil and gas reserves being particularly valuable at a time when market prices have risen sharply. We look more to

Europe, especially Germany, for economic ties with Russia, and these are certainly growing, but perhaps Russia's ultimate push into the Middle East will be in part financed by selling its minerals to the resource-hungry nations of Japan and the USA.

#### Interpreting the ‘dry bones’ prophecy

In the February Postbag (p. 54) I raised the question of which of the two views held amongst us regarding the fulfilment of the ‘dry bones’ prophecy of Ezekiel 37 was the original one held; the first view being that the coming together of the bones to form living bodies is a continuing process that began with the Zionist movement of the late nineteenth century, and the second being that the ‘dry bones’ state will exist in the future when the State of Israel is destroyed, with the coming to life of the bones being something that takes place after the return of Christ. I pointed to the fact that the scant references to this prophecy in early Christadelphian writings pointed to the latter being the view held during the nineteenth century, despite the assertions of a reader to the contrary.

I pointed to the fact that the transcript of a lecture by Brother