

the North Atlantic Oscillation. This is all about high and low pressure areas in the North Atlantic Ocean, which if set in one pattern bring mild, wet and stormy winters to Western Europe, and if set in a different

pattern bring colder, drier and calmer weather. One pattern tends to exist for a few years, then it switches to the other, hence the use of the word 'oscillation'. Some scientists thus think that global warming in fact

has nothing to do with the weather we have been experiencing; others, notably those at the Tyndall Centre for Climatic Research at the University of East Anglia, think it does.

Tony Benson

The names of God in the New Testament

Brother Stephen Pinfield's thought-provoking article (Oct. 2000, p. 376) and the letters of brethren Russell Ebbs and David Dudding (Dec. 2000, pp. 453,454) agree that the Old Testament Hebrew name YHWH found fulfilment in God's Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Since the names and titles of God portray the characteristics and graces of His person rather than being mere appellations by which He is known, we see the same truth in Christ: "For in him all the fulness of God was pleased to dwell" (Col. 1:19).^{*} I feel, however, that the meanings and significances of the Name YHWH carried forward into the New Testament are central to our addressing God as "our Father".

God is our Father through our own experience of Him, by His redemption of us and by our first being baptized into Jesus Christ. We thus become "sons of the living God" (Rom. 9:26). Peter explains the privilege further: "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of Him Who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. Once you were no people but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy but now you have received mercy" (1 Pet. 2:9,10).

We rejoice knowing that yet more is in God's purpose for those who love Him, as Jesus prayed to his Father: "that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and Thou in me, that they may become perfectly one . . . I made known to them Thy name, and I will make it known, that the love with which Thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them" (Jno. 17:22,23,26). This exalted theme we call God manifestation. We cannot overstate our privilege in Christ Jesus, but we should acknowledge too that inherent in the Name YHWH was the same prospect for those who were God's people under the Old Covenant (Heb. 11:39,40).

If we concentrate on the sense given to God's Name YHWH from the context where it is especially explained (Ex. 3:6,14,15; 34:6,7) we observe God with His attributes vouchsafed in the *continuous* present tense of the verb 'to be'. Jesus himself seems to adopt this approach in his contest with the Sadducees on the subject of resurrection: "And as for the dead being raised, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the bush, how God said to him, 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not God of the dead, but of the living" (Mk. 12:26,27).

The point was not that the patriarchs were physically alive when God spoke to Moses, nor when Jesus was speaking to the Sadducees, but that He is continuously active in fulfilling His purpose until in the fullness of time the manifestation of Himself is complete in those who are His covenanted people. The concept is probably most succinctly explained in Revelation: "'I am the Alpha and the Omega', says the Lord God, Who is and Who was and Who is to come, the Almighty" (1:8). We are thus presented with the ambit in which God reveals Himself to His people in all ages in their lives through His Word so that His purpose may be fulfilled in them.

Abraham knew God as YHWH: "After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, 'Fear not, Abram, *I am* your shield; your reward *shall be* very great'" (Gen. 15:1). At that time the fulfilling of God's promises lay future to Abraham, but he believed God, so it was reckoned to Him as righteousness (v. 6). He, with Isaac his son, lived out in cameo what was in store for God's only begotten Son, so by oath God confirmed the promise: "*By Myself* I have sworn, says the LORD" (22:16); and, in God's eternal purpose, through faith Abraham "obtained the promise" (Heb. 6:15). Yet God was to continue the revelation of Himself to Abraham

* All quotations are from the RSV.

and his descendants in the fulfilling of the everlasting covenant which He had made with him. In this Abraham was firmly convinced, for he said in faith: "The LORD will provide" (Gen. 22:14).

When we move on to the time of Moses, God revealed Himself as the Deliverer of His people. He was the same YHWH, but He was the One Who was *fulfilling* His promises to Abraham in Israel as a nation. Speaking to Moses, God said: "Go and gather the elders of Israel together, and say to them, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me saying, "I have observed you and what has been done to you in Egypt; and I promise that I will bring you up out of . . . affliction" ' " (Ex. 3:16,17). YHWH would primarily be their *Deliverer* and *Saviour*, and *this* would be central to their experience of Him.

So important a phase was this in God's manifestation of Himself that the YHWH Name would take on the role of 'remembrance' or 'memorial', which would, 'throughout all generations', or 'for ever', be carried through in the privileges of the Passover feast (2:24; 3:14-17; 12:13,14). Incidentally, by this means God declared Abraham's descendants to be His own "first-born son" (4:22) as a prefigure to His greater first-born Son of the new covenant, Jesus, presented as the Passover Lamb. In the truest sense, the people of Israel were God's own people, born again in the Red Sea. Borne on eagle's wings, God brought them to Himself and made them to be unto Him "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation", although God's continuing activity among them for good was contingent upon their obedience to His commands (19:4-6). Should they not have recognised in these events the mercy and grace of the Lord, Who is as a Father who pities His children (Ps. 103:6-14)?

When we perceive these Bible concepts of God manifestation, the 'difficult passage' in Exodus 6:2,3, instead of presenting a problem, illuminates further God's process of revelation to individuals in His purpose: "And God said to Moses, 'I am the LORD [YHWH]. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty [*El Shaddai*], but by My name the LORD I did not make Myself known to them' ".

What God did for Israel as a nation in delivering them from Egypt had been foretold in amazing detail to Abraham in Genesis 15:7-21. At that time Isaac, and the promised descendants, "so many as the stars of heaven", were yet unborn,

but they were to suffer 400 years and be saved out of Egypt. How salvation would become possible had to remain a matter of faith in 'Almighty God'; it was not to be an experience realised in Abraham's lifetime, though he saw it afar off. Only upon the deliverance of natural Israel from Egypt did God's Name become a 'memorial' in Passover, and only under the new covenant for both natural and spiritual Israel could salvation be complete through the sacrifice and resurrection of God's 'first-born' Son.

So it is through the same promises, but by the 'better way' provided in Jesus Christ, that God manifests Himself to us as our Deliverer and Saviour. He is also our Lord, but all His attributes are most appropriately enshrined for us in that endearing title by which we know Him, as our 'heavenly Father'. The term also brings us into close association with God's 'first-born', for he "loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (Rev. 1:5,6). We too have to keep as a memorial God's deliverance as often as we can, by remembering Jesus in bread and wine. Thus we continue the principles of Passover vested in His Name for all generations and thereby acknowledge the significance of YHWH in the way that His Son has appointed us to do.

"Beloved, we are God's children *now*; it does not yet appear what we *shall be*, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (1 Jno. 3:2).

Trevor Hughes
Amersham

The numerical value of 'grace'

The footnote on page 444 of the December issue, referring to *The Companion Bible* for authority, says that the numerical value (gematria) of *charis*, the Greek word for grace, is a multiple of five. I am not sure how that conclusion is arrived at. The letters are:

chi (χ)	600
alpha (α)	1
rho (ρ)	100
iota (ι)	10
sigma (σ or ς)	200

911