



The ENJOY THE BIBLE

Quarterly

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Fourth Quarter 2005

Questions and Answers

Our annual issue devoted to Questions and Answers. The following selections have been edited to either conserve space, ensure clarity, and/or remove any personal information.

“LORD” and “Lord”

I know that in the Old Testament God’s title “LORD” stands for “Jehovah” and that “Lord” is “Adonai.” But what exactly is the difference between them?

The difference between these two titles, (as well as between “LORD” and God’s other names and titles), is something that God began to pointedly explain to Israel when He began to educate them in what His name “Jehovah” is all about. And God began to do this when He brought them out of Egypt. It began with Moses’ encounter with God at the burning bush, as recorded in Exodus 3, and it continued on until God brought them to Mount Sinai. During this time God told Moses to use “my name JEHOVAH,” and in so doing He explained its meaning and significance.

Now as God told Moses, the name literally means “I am that I am” and also “I am _____,” where the blank space remains to be filled in. In accordance with this the name “Jehovah,” or “LORD,” primarily conveys how that God is both graciously willing to be, and fully able to be, whatever Israel needs Him to be. In other words, the ‘blank space’ is like a ‘carte blanche.’ It can be filled in with the name of some particular need that Israel has, (something they cannot do for themselves), and God is saying that He will undertake for them to become, or provide for, the fulfilling of that need.

Now God Himself identifies and manifests Israel’s specific needs. And in so doing He gives them 7 specific ‘Jehovah compound names,’ by which He ‘fills in the blank’ for them after the “I am.” (For example, He composed the names ‘Jehovah-jireh’ and ‘Jehovah-nissi,’ in connection with being their Redeemer and their Victory.) God, therefore, fills in the blank with a description of Himself being something for Israel, and thereby declares how that He Himself will undertake for them to meet the specified need that they have.

So very simply stated, this is what God’s name “Jehovah” is all about. Hence every time “LORD” in all capital letters is used, it denotes that God is using His name “Jehovah” with Israel, and He is doing so in accordance with what the name should mean to them having educated them in its meaning and significance.

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Now the other title “Lord,” (capital “L” followed by lowercase “ord”), is more basic in meaning. It is primarily used when God wants to signify and stress what is true of Him being not only God in general, but being Israel’s God and Maker in particular.

What “Lord”/“Adonai” signifies and stresses first and foremost is the issue of God being the sovereign ruler over all things. Being God, (and as such the Creator of all), He is naturally “Lord of all.” He is creation’s sovereign ruler, and He is also the owner and possessor of all things. As such God is also the one to whom all creation is accountable. Hence He is “Lord.”

However God is also Israel’s God and Maker in particular. And as their “Lord” He is the one to whom they are to render exclusive and faithful service, especially in contradistinction to the idolatry of the nations and their lords.

There are other matters involved in each of these titles, but these are the basic issues that are either being stressed, focused upon, or simply denoted, in contexts in which “LORD” or “Lord” is the title that God uses.

[Note: the following two questions and answers deal with some further matters regarding the use of God’s name “Jehovah.”]

Genesis 22:14 and Exodus 6:3

¹⁴ And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen. (Genesis 22:14)

³ And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by *the name of* God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them. (Exodus 6:3)

In Exodus 6:3 God tells Moses that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob did not know Him by His name "Jehovah." Yet in Genesis 22:14 Abraham uses the name "Jehovah," calling the place "Jehovah-jireh." And previous to this he had called God "LORD." So how can this be?

This is a common question, not only because of what Abraham does in Genesis 22:14, but also because "LORD" is used a number of times by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob when speaking about God, and also addressing Him as such. In fact both Abraham and Isaac build altars and 'call upon the name of the LORD.' Moreover even Abraham's servant calls God "the LORD," as do others; including ones of other nations. Plus God identifies Himself to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as "the LORD God"; and even Noah used this title. So what God says in Exodus 6 can seem puzzling.

However since "LORD" is used previous to the time of Exodus 6:3, (including in direct address), it is obvious that God does not mean that His name "LORD"/"JEHOVAH" was not known at all, or used at all, by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Instead God is very specific about what He means. For when He speaks about them not knowing Him as such, He says this specifically in connection with the times *that He appeared unto them to make Himself known unto them*. Notice that this is specifically what God says to Moses. In Exodus 6:3 He says, "And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by *the name of God Almighty*,..."

There are a number of reasons why God chooses to "appear" at times in His program with Israel. But with respect to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, He did so in connection with establishing His covenanted program with them, and to provide for their personal education so that they could walk faithfully in accordance with the program's establishment at that time. In other words each of God's appearances to them had a direct connection with an establishment matter in the program. And as such each appearance also had a significant connection with their personal edification. Therefore

by His appearances unto them God 'made Himself known unto them' in some way that was both meaningful to the establishment of the program, and that also contributed to their personal edification during that time in the program.

Now this is the specific issue that God has in His mind in Exodus 6. He is talking about the issue of educating the seed of Abraham in the subject of Himself, so to speak. And this was something that God designed to be a progressive thing, with stages of development to it that directly corresponded to the program's own stages of development.

Therefore God is pointing out to Moses that when He appeared unto Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, He did not appear unto them to make Himself known unto them by His "name JEHOVAH." They definitely knew the name, and they even used it. But the name was designed by God to have a great deal of doctrinal significance to it, and not just be 'a name for name's sake.' However the time for describing and explaining the doctrinal significance to the name was not at hand in either Abraham's, or Isaac's, or Jacob's day. That time would not come in Israel's program until the initial establishment phase was fully accomplished, and until the next significant phase was underway. Then God would appear again, and in so doing He would begin to educate the seed of Abraham in the full doctrinal significance of His name "JEHOVAH."

Now Exodus chapter one records the arrival of this next significant stage in Israel's program. Wherefore as God says to Moses when He appears to him, He is not only going to deliver Israel as promised, but He is now going to begin to educate them in the fundamental scope of the full doctrinal significance of His name "JEHOVAH." What's more this would be directly tied to the issue of Pharaoh not letting them go.

So even though God's name "JEHOVAH" was known and used prior to the time of Exodus 6, God did not appear unto Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob to make Himself known unto them by this name, nor to educate them in His name "JE-

HOVAH." Rather God appeared unto them to educate them especially in the issue of His 'Almighty-ness,' which was the first and foremost issue that needed to be understood and appreciated during the establishment phase to the program.

Now there are other meaningful matters that are related to this, or that develop out of it. However by just knowing the basics of what God is talking about in Exodus 6, it provides for removing any puzzlement over what Exodus 6:3 says.

However there is something else that should be noted, and it pertains to the *precision* of what God said to Moses in Exodus 6:3. Once again God said, "but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them." Notice that God does not say, 'but my name JEHOVAH was not known by them'; nor did He say, 'by my name JEHOVAH was I not known by them.' This may not seem like it is all that big of a difference, but it is. Unfortunately we have lost a good amount of precision of meaning in our English language today, not only in vocabulary but also in prepositional phrases and the like. This some times results in the precise use of such things not always making their full impact upon our thinking. And we have an example of this in this very verse.

There is a difference between the expressions "not known *to* them" and 'not known *by* them.' God says, "not known to them," but we have a tendency to equate this with the concept of 'not known by them.' Yet the two are not exactly the same.

"To" and "by" are not prepositions with identical meanings, even though they can share a measure of commonness. However when they are used in contexts involving, for example, knowledge or acquaintance, the precise use of "to" and "by" can be employed to denote a significant difference. For example, if you and I have never actually met, I can say that you are known "by" me, but not really known "to" me. That is, I know that you exist; I know your name; and I may even know where you live and a few other things about you. And in this sense you are known "by"

me, or I know “of” you. But you have not been made known “to” me in the sense that we have met and I am well acquainted with you, etc.

So in accordance with the precise meaning of “to,” in order for someone to be ‘known to’ another person that person needs to know more about the other person than the fact that he exists. There is a much more personal and knowledgeable acquaintance with someone, (which is usually based upon fellowship and communion with each other), when someone is known ‘to’ another person and not just known ‘by’ him.

Hence in view of what God *precisely* says in Exodus 6:3, He is not saying that His name “JEHOVAH” was not known ‘by’ Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; or that He was not known ‘by’ them by that name. Instead He is saying that He was “not known *to* them” by that name. In other words He had not specifically made Himself known “to” them by that name, so that their communion and fellowship with Him was based upon their understanding and appreciation of the full doctrinal significance and meaning of that name, as was now going to be the case with the children of Israel beginning with the events of Exodus 6.

Now having said all of this, there is a matter that may not seem to fit in with this. It is the matter in Genesis 22:14 when Abraham “called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh”; which certainly seems to indicate that he had some understanding about the issue of God’s “Jehovah-ness.”

However there are two things that need to be understood about this: (1) this is still not the issue of God being ‘known to’ Abraham by His name “JEHOVAH” to the same extent that God is speaking about in Exodus 6. In view of what God says to Moses in Exodus 6, (and then in view of what takes place from that time forth during which the actual education in God’s “Jehovah-ness” occurs), it is evident that God making Himself “known to” the children of Israel ‘by His name JEHOVAH’ is quite extensive and involved. It clearly involves much more than just one concept. And (2) we also need to recognize that later on in Israel’s

program God speaks about this particular situation with Abraham in Genesis 22, and He speaks about it as an event that He specifically produced for a couple of significant reasons. One of them being that He designed for it to be ‘looked back upon,’ so to speak, by the children of Israel, for the purpose of them seeing that in the days of their father Abraham He had actually given them a foreshadowing of the most fundamental thing that He would eventually be doing for them on the basis of His “Jehovah-ness.” Hence the event of Genesis 22, (and in particular the naming of the place), was established by God as a sort of memorial for the children of Israel, just as the latter half of Genesis 22:14 emphasizes. So in connection with this the event of Genesis 22:14 falls outside the realm of Abraham’s normal education, seeing that God purposed that its educational impact would be for later on in the program.

Therefore in view of these two things, and especially in view of what Exodus 6:3 specifically says, the issue with Abraham in Genesis 22:14 is not contrary to what Exodus 6:3 says.

[Note: the following question and answer shows how important it is to understand and appreciate the doctrine of God’s “Jehovah-ness,” especially in the Gospel accounts.]

John 6:53–57

⁵³ Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

⁵⁴ Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

⁵⁵ For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

⁵⁶ He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

⁵⁷ As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. (John 6:53–57)

This passage is appealed to by Roman Catholicism to support its teaching of the Mass and the ‘transubstantiation’ that it says takes place with its elements. But what is the Lord actually talking about here, and why does He say it this way?

Before looking at the Lord’s discourse in John 6, we first need to recognize something very important about it, which is that in this discourse, (and in others like it), the Lord’s words are purposefully designed to make a special kind of impact upon the people of Israel. In other words the Lord says what He says, and He says it in the very unique way in which He says it, in order to provoke a particular kind of thinking and understanding to be generated in the minds of the people. Now we must realize this or we will not properly understand things like why the Lord says that He is the “bread of life,” or why He tells the people that they need to ‘eat His flesh and drink His blood.’ So let’s first note a few things about the special nature of this kind of discourse, so that we know the kind of thinking that they were designed to promote.

In each of these carefully constructed and specially worded discourses the Lord said things that were specifically designed to break through Israel’s ignorance and blindness concerning Him, which was primarily produced by the corrupt and erroneous teachings coming from Israel’s vain religious system. By these specially worded discourses the people were enabled to perceive things that they were not seeing, and to grasp things that they were not understanding, since they had not had certain things properly taught to them. Now in particular, (though not exclusively), these special discourses were designed (1) to break through the ignorance that was caused by the failure of Israel’s vain religious system to properly teach the people about the meaning of God’s name “Jehovah” and what would be involved in implementing God’s “Jehovah-ness” according to the Davidic Covenant; and (2) they were designed to overcome the ineptitude of Israel’s religious teachers as they failed to take the knowledge of things that took place when God origi-

nally educated Israel in His “Jehovah-ness,” and failed to connect them with the reality of who Jesus is, and what He had come to do for them, in fulfillment of God’s “Jehovah-ness.”

Now admittedly there is a lot involved in what I just pointed out. But simply put what it means in John 6 is this: In this particular discourse the Lord is dealing with the failure of Israel’s vain religious system to properly comprehend and teach the most fundamental matter about God’s “Jehovah-ness.” And along with this He also deals with their failure to comprehend and teach the most fundamental way by which the implementation of God’s “Jehovah-ness” would take place for Israel according to the Davidic Covenant. Wherefore as the Lord deals with these two fundamental failures He speaks to the people in a specially worded way, which is designed first of all to enable them to ‘see’ the object lessons that God had originally given them, by which He taught them these two most fundamental matters pertaining to His “Jehovah-ness.” Then He makes it so that they themselves can make the proper connection between those original object lessons and Himself, and they can thereby realize the truth of who He is and what He has come to do for them, as He, (being the Christ), begins to fulfill the Davidic Covenant.

This, then, is why in the first part of the discourse the Lord calls Himself “that bread of life.” Because when God originally gave Israel the manna — the “bread from heaven to eat” in the wilderness — He gave it to them as an object lesson, and He gave it during the time when He was pointedly educating them both in the meaning of His name “Jehovah” and in their need for His “Jehovah-ness.” Wherefore as that generation physically ate the manna with their mouths, (and as subsequent generations heard about it and read about it in the Scriptures), they were expected to ‘spiritually eat it with their minds,’ so to speak. That is, they were expected to be ‘chewing it over in their minds,’ and come to realize the object lesson that it was regarding the most fundamental meaning of God’s “Jehovah-ness” to them. Therefore God gave the manna to them as an

object lesson of the fact that their ability to have “life” with Him depended upon His “Jehovah-ness”; and also that in accordance with the meaning of His name “Jehovah,” He Himself would ‘come down from heaven’ unto them in order to provide Himself as the means by which they could have “life.” And, of course, this is exactly who Jesus of Nazareth was in the midst of them.

Therefore with Jesus being who He is, and having ‘come down from heaven’ to them in fulfillment of what the manna represented, He then said to them at the end of this portion of His discourse...

⁴⁸ I am that bread from heaven.

⁴⁹ Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are

... when God originally gave Israel the manna – the “bread from heaven to eat” in the wilderness – He gave it to them as an object lesson,...

dead.

⁵⁰ This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

⁵¹ I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. (John 6:48–51)

After saying this the Lord went on and said something else that He specially worded, and that He specifically designed to allow the people to ‘see’ something else, and to make a further necessary connection between Himself and another object lesson, or representation, that God had originally given to them. What’s more, when the Lord went on to give this particular aspect of His discourse, He did so in view of the fact that

“the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh,” just as the beginning of chapter 6 noted; and He also gave it in view of the fact that after He had said what He did about being “that bread of heaven,” the people did not immediately make the connection, but rather “strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?”

Wherefore the Lord gave a further specially worded statement by which He provided for them to make the connection between the feast of passover that they were about to partake of, and the particular object lesson/representation that it was of the actual means by which He, being Jehovah, would make it so that they could have “life” with Him. Hence as verse 53 relates...

⁵³ Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. (John 6:53)

The feast of passover was the first of the feasts on Israel’s calendar. And doctrinally-speaking God had designed it to work in connection with the previous ‘manna from heaven’ object lesson/representation, and to actually build upon it. It provided a further representation of God’s fundamental “Jehovah-ness” for Israel. And as such there was some further ‘spiritual eating’ that Israel needed to do in connection with what it taught. Wherefore by ‘spiritually eating’ the doctrine of the passover the people were to realize that as they ate the physical passover, it represented their need to be partakers of God’s fundamental “Jehovah-ness” for them, when He as “that bread of heaven” would not only come down from heaven to provide for them to have “life,” but He would also carry out the provision for them to have “life” by sacrificing Himself for them as the “Lamb of God,” so that they could “live.”

Now this is exactly what the Lord was going to do for them near the end of His ministry. He would give His life a ransom for them, and do it at the very time of the passover. But He would be the real passover sacrifice. However with the yearly foreshadowing passover

feast being nigh at this time, by what the Lord said in John 6:53–59 He made the connection for the people, and thereby made it so that they could now ‘spiritually eat’ His words and “live” by them. He made it so that His words could overcome their ignorance and blindness produced by the failures and corrupt teachings of Israel’s vain religious system. He provided for them to ‘see’ what the manna represented, and to ‘see’ what the feast of the passover represented, and thereby make the connection between Himself and those foreshadowing representations of Him.

Wherefore in John 6:53 the Lord is not talking about the people physically, or materially, eating His flesh; or physically, or materially, drinking His blood. Nor is He talking about any ‘transubstantiation’ of the elements of the Mass into His actual flesh and blood. Instead as the Lord said at the end of His discourse...

⁶³ It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. (John 6:63)

These words that the Lord spoke unto them were “spirit,” just as He said. As such they were specifically designed to affect the people’s spirits with a particular understanding. They were designed to make it so that they could properly understand the issue of Jesus’ “Jehovah-ness,” seeing that they had not been properly taught the issue of God’s “Jehovah-ness” by Israel’s vain religious system. And since these words were specifically designed to impact and affect their spirits, the people could make the connections between the object lessons of God’s “Jehovah-ness” that had been set forth in the manna incident and in the feast of the passover. They could acknowledge the fulfillment of those object lessons in Jesus coming down from heaven to them to give them “life,” and in He Himself being the “Lamb of God” who would sacrifice Himself for them to actually provide for them to have “life.”

Moreover, as the Lord said, His words were not only “spirit,” but “they are life.” Therefore if the people under-

stood the truth of who Jesus is in view of the connections that He made for them; and if they would believe the truth of His words unto them; they would “have life,” just as He said to them back in verse 47 when He said...

⁴⁷ Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. (John 6:47)

So once again the Lord is not talking about anyone physically, or materially, eating His flesh and drinking His blood. Rather by these words the Lord provided for the people of Israel to make a connection in their “spirits,” and thereby realize that He truly was Adonai Jehovah, the fulfillment of God’s “Jehovah-ness” according to the Davidic Covenant; and that He had come down from

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heaven unto them as “that bread of life”; and that He was the “Jehovah-jireh” Lamb of God by whom they can have “life.” Moreover with these words being “spirit” and “life,” right then and there the people could ‘spiritually eat’ what the Lord said to them about Himself, realizing in their spirits that having “life” depended upon His “Jehovah-ness” unto them as “that bread of heaven” and as the “Lamb of God.” And if they believed on Him as such, they became recipients of that “life.” They obtained “life” through His name.

Matthew 7:15–20

¹⁵ Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

¹⁶ Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

¹⁷ Even so every good tree

bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

¹⁸ A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

¹⁹ Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

²⁰ Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. (Matthew 7:15–20)

I know that this warning pertains to God’s program with Israel. But I am wondering just what kind of things these “false prophets” are going to say and teach?

The “fruits” of these particular false prophets will fall into more than one category. This is one reason why the Lord uses the plural word “fruits” when He tells the remnant of Israel, “Ye shall know them by their fruits.” Moreover each category of their false teachings and prophecies will have a direct connection to the major progressive developments that will be going on during the final installment to the climactic stage in God’s program with Israel.

Now in Matthew 7 the Lord only sets forth a basic warning to the remnant about the coming of these “false prophets,” along with basic instructions on how they will be able to detect them. And at the beginning of the remnant’s edification, (which is what the Lord is giving them in His ‘sermon on the mount’), this is all that they really needed to know. For at the outset to the climactic stage in the program they just needed to know that such “false prophets” would be coming, and that they would not be detectable either by how they looked or by how they acted. And with this being so, the remnant will not be able to go by what they will ‘see.’ They will have to go strictly by what these characters will say; i.e. by the “fruits” that will come out of their mouths as they function as the prophets of God that they will claim to be. This will be the key to identifying them, just as the Lord said by His ‘tree and its fruit’ analogy in verses 16–20.

Now though at the outset to the remnant’s edification the Lord did not

describe these “fruits” in any real detail, He did do so later on before returning to the Father; as, for example, in Matthew 24. Moreover the Lord also provided for even further details about these “false prophets” and their “fruits” to be given to the remnant after He departed, which He gave to them particularly through the epistles of their apostles Peter, James, John, and Jude.

Briefly and simply put, in Matthew 24 the Lord set forth to His disciples the basic outline of the events that will transpire in the final installment to Israel’s program. In so doing He also set forth the basic outline regarding the coming and functioning of these particular “false prophets.” And according to what the Lord set forth, there will be three main categories of these “false prophets,” and the three categories will correspond with the three major stages of development during the final installment.

The first main category of “false prophets” will be those that will begin to function early on in the opening stage to the final installment of Israel’s program, during which time, (as the Lord says in Matthew 24:4–5), “many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.” The main thrust and focus of their deceitful false teachings will be that of contradicting and denying that Jesus of Nazareth is the real Christ. Likewise they will also pronounce other teachings of the remnant to be untrue. Furthermore these “false prophets,” and others like them, will also seek to infiltrate ‘the ranks of the remnant,’ so to speak. They will do this in order to seduce, deceive, and corrupt them from within by teaching contrary doctrines of their own concoction, as well as by teaching contrary doctrines that come from their mishandling, misunderstanding, and misapplying of what is set forth in the law and the prophets.

As previously noted, further details about these “false prophets” are given to the remnant in Hebrews through The Book of The Revelation. Hence more information about the function of this first main category of “false prophets” is set forth, for example, in II Peter 2:1ff; I John 2:18–27; and 4:1–6.

The second main category of “false prophets” and their ‘fruit’ will be those that will begin to function a little later on in the development of the final installment, particularly when “the beginning of sorrows” of Matthew 24:7–8 is underway, with its turmoil of the nations that the Lord describes, and also its accompanying turmoil in the environment.

Now in Matthew 24 the Lord does not actually deal in any detail with this second category of “false prophets.” This is because their primary focus will not be on the remnant of Israel. In other words these particular “false prophets” will not specifically be coming to the remnant for the purpose of deceiving them. Rather this second category of “false prophets” will be focusing upon the nations in order to provide for the success of the Antichrist. These will deceive especially in connection with ‘putting an acceptable spin,’ so to speak, on the things that lead up to Israel’s acceptance of the Antichrist, as well as supporting the things that are involved in the implementation of the Antichrist’s policies during the opening portion of his reign and also leading up to his establishment of “the abomination of desolation.” As is set forth in Revelation 13, the second “beast” that arises after the “first beast,” (who is later on called “the false prophet”), is the specific “false prophet” that provides for the success of the Antichrist. However as the prophets also set forth concerning that time, there will be other “sorcerers” with their “sorceries,” and the works of many others with their deceiving “signs” and the like, by which the nations will be deceived.

The third main category of “false prophets” and their ‘fruit’ will be those that will particularly function during the latter stage of the final installment to the program, just as the Lord talks about in Matthew 24:23–28. The main thrust and focus of their false teachings, prophesies, and “great signs and wonders,” will be that of attempting to deceive the members of the remnant who will be in hiding at that time. They will work to deceive them into thinking that the Lord has already returned and that they should come out of their places.

“Greek” instead of “Gentile”

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. (Romans 1:16)

Why is the word “Greek” used instead of “Gentile” in Romans 1:16, and also in other places such as Romans 1:14, 10:12; I Corinthians 1:22–24; Galatians 3:28, and Colossians 3:11?

First off, the word being used in these places is “Helleen,” which is the word that denotes a Greek person(s). However this in and of itself does not provide the answer, because “Helleen” is used in other places and is translated “Gentiles” (e.g. John 7:35; Romans 3:9). So the answer lies elsewhere. But the fact that the King James translators have translated “Helleen” by both “Greek” and “Gentile” gives us an important clue, which is that obviously the word “Helleen” can be used in more than one way depending upon the context in which it is used. And this is exactly what we need to understand and appreciate.

Though we have the natural tendency to first of all think of a native Greek person, or a Greek by nationality, or a person of Greek extraction, whenever we encounter the word “Helleen”/“Greek,” the word also has a broader and more inclusive meaning and use. And though this is still true today, (as will be noted shortly), it was especially so back both in Paul’s day and before God brought in this present dispensation of His grace. In its broader and more inclusive meaning the word “Helleen”/“Greek” is used to denote other peoples and/or other nations, because of the affects of the influence that Greek society, culture, learning, and the like, has had upon the world at large. Hence when “Helleen”/“Greek” is used in this broad manner it is used to denote any people who are either associated with, and/or have been affected by, or who have simply come under the umbrella of, the influence of the Greeks; even though they are not strictly Greek by nationality. (For example, Mark 7:26)

Now in connection with this broad

use, God uses the word “Greek(s)” in a doctrinal sense to denote the Gentiles, or nations as a whole, in light of the worldwide influence, and establishment within it, of Greek practice, learning, wisdom, society, etc. And God does this because of what He Himself has said through Israel’s Fifth Course of Punishment prophets, (particularly Daniel), when He declared and described what would characterize the third influential and world-affecting kingdom that would arise, and that would hold sway, during “the times of the Gentiles” belonging to Israel’s Fifth Course of Punishment. That third kingdom was the Greek Empire, beginning with Alexander. And according to what God said about it, it would have a particular and a significant worldwide influence. Moreover it would set its mark upon the world in a very particular way, as it did its part in the charting of the course of this world that Satan would be doing through these kingdoms during “the times of the Gentiles.” In fact this issue of Greek worldwide influence and marking would be one of its hallmark features that would distinguish it from the previous dominions. And in view of this, its influence would end up remaining upon the world, even though its original dominion would be broken and then divided. In fact its world-affecting influence, as well as its name, would remain upon the world even to the time of the fifth and final installment to the Fifth Course of Punishment. This is the kind of potent impact that the Greek worldwide influence would have, and how long-lasting its marking would be.

Therefore in view of what God has said about the Greek dominion and its role in the course of this world, (and particularly how He Himself would then look upon the world, think about it, and describe it in connection with Greek influence and marking), the word “Greek” can be doctrinally used by God to denote the nations as a whole in connection with that influence and marking. In fact in view of what God said about the world at large before He brought in this present dispensation of His grace, we should expect Him to use the word “Greek” in this way.

So then when the nations of the world are being spoken about, and God uses the word “Helleen,” it can be translated either “Greek” or “Gentile,” depending upon whether in the context God is concerned with showing that the nations are being looked upon by Him for their specific Greek status, marking, development, and state, in light of Satan’s course of this world; or whether He is simply looking upon them in light of them being disdained Gentiles who belong to Satan’s world system in contrast to being Jews.

In view of this it is interesting to note that we today still acknowledge and use this broader meaning of “Helleen”/“Greek.” We do so, for example, when historians and philosophers speak of our Hellenized society; or the Hellenistic principles of modern society; or our Hellenistic world and edu-

cation system; and the like. By saying these things we are not referring to ourselves as being Greeks by birth, or by nationality, or by extraction. Rather we are saying that we are “Greeks” in the broad sense of the term, because our society, along with its political and education systems, for the most part operates upon principles that were established by the Greeks. And in truth they do.

In fact things along this line were frequently heard in 2004 when the Olympic games were held in Athens. During the games it was not uncommon to hear commentators making remarks not only about the Olympic games coming back to the place of their birth, but also to the nations themselves coming back to the roots of their society. Hence remarks such as, ‘In a sense we are all Greeks, regardless of nationality’; or, ‘As societies we can all trace our roots back to Greece’; or, ‘Greece is the mother of the modern world’; were commonly made. Now of course when people today still use “Greek” in this way, they do not do so with full knowledge of the fact that they are still part of the same developmental state of the “course of this world” that Satan established with the Greeks during the third installment to Israel’s Fifth Course of Punishment. Nevertheless, we still use the word “Helleen”/“Greek” today with its broad meaning because of what Satan established with the Greeks.

Now the King James translators by their insightful and discretionary translation of “Helleen,” make it clearly evident that they fully understood and appreciated the different ways in which “Helleen” could be used. In fact by their equally discretionary translation of “ethnos” they also demonstrate their clear understanding of the fact that depending upon the context in which it too is used, it can be properly rendered into English by either “nations” or “Gentiles” or “people” or “heathen.”

So with respect to the particular verses you asked about, it is my understanding that the King James translators rightly recognized from the specific contexts of these verses that they needed to translate “Helleen” with the word “Greek(s)” and not with the word “Gentile(s).” Because in these specific places, it is evident that God has reason to be focusing our attention upon the Greek status, marking, and state that the nations of this world possess in His eyes at this time, in light of the progress and development of the course of this world that Satan has charted. — K. R. Blades

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