

If You Won't Believe Us, Would You *At Least* Believe Ancient Hebrew Scholars?

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This exposé is actually a chapter (chapter 6) from our study *God's Identity According to Ancient Hebrew Scholars*. This chapter, while we feel it sufficiently summarizes our primary concerns, is better understood in context by reading the preceding information as presented in Part II, Objection #4: "If 'God' is Such a Bad Title, Then Why did Leah Give That Name to Jacob's Son?" The complete study may be accessed at www.ponderscripture.org and we invite feedback and constructive criticism.

A. *The Hebrew Scholars Who Translated the Septuagint Recognized "Gad" as the Idol of Fortune*

We have previously shown from Scripture that Leah, who named Jacob's seventh son *Gad*, was raised in a heathen environment. We have demonstrated that even after Jacob and his family left his father-in-law's territory, he was compelled to direct his household to get rid of their "foreign gods." We have identified an idol named *Gad* that was worshipped in Leah's native Haran, and we have examined the Hebrew text of Isaiah 65:11, where Yahweh Himself identifies an idol named *Gad* that was worshipped by those who forsake Yahweh. Finally, we established that the Hebrew name גַּד, commonly rendered *Gad* in English, is actually a pronunciation match with the common appellation used in reference to our Creator – *GOD*. In spite of all this information, those who support referring to Yahweh as "our God" maintain that we cannot prove a connection between the name given to Jacob's son and the epithet *GOD*.

If, after reviewing all the evidence we have thus far presented, you are still not persuaded of the connection, we can only ask, "If you won't believe *us*, will you at least believe Hebrew scholars from the third century BCE?" As we are about to see, the Hebrew scholars who translated the Septuagint from Hebrew to Greek understood *Gad/God* to be the idol of fortune.

By now, it should be plain to all that the Hebrew word *Gad/God* (גַּד) means "fortune." According to *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-English Lexicon*, גַּד not only means fortune, but it is "perhaps derived from foreign divine name."¹ This is yet another indication from unbiased scholars that this word was in fact *borrowed* by the Hebrews and incorporated into their language. This reference, as previously mentioned, also states that this deity's name is often found in Phoenician and Aramaic inscriptions. According to *Encyclopedia of Gods*, this word is identified with "chance or fortune":

Gad

God of uncertain status. Western Semitic and Punic (Carthaginian). **Probably concerned with chance or fortune** and known from Palmyrene inscriptions, and from the *Vetus Testamentum* in place names such as Baal-Gad and Migdal-Gad. Popular across a wide area of Syrio-Palestine and Anatolia in pre-Biblical times. **Thought to have been syncretized ultimately with the Greek goddess Tyche.**²

¹ *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-English Lexicon*, by Francis Brown, D.D., D.Litt., Hendrickson Publishers, 1979, p. 151.

² From *Encyclopedia of Gods*, by Michael Jordan, item "Gad," Facts on File, Inc., New York, NY, 1993, page 85.

The reason *God* is so easily identified with the Greek goddess *Tyche* is because *Tyche*, well-known as the Greek goddess of fortune,³ is a name used in close connection with the idol *Gad* in the *Septuagint*. We need to bear in mind that the *Septuagint* version, although it is the Greek translation of the original Hebrew Scriptures, in fact represents the most ancient complete text of Scripture insofar as extant copies.⁴ As we are about to see, the Hebrew scholars who translated the *Septuagint* presented a connection between Leah's rationale in naming Zilpah's son *Gad* and the Greek idol of fortune. Commentators freely acknowledge this connection. For example, in *A Cyclopædia of Religions*, item "Gad," we read:

The name was also given to a Hebrew tribe (rendered 'troop' in the English), as is made clear by the Greek *Septuagint* translation *Tūkhē* "fortune."⁵

Why did the scholars who translated the *Septuagint* identify the Hebrew גַּד with *Tyche*? In order to answer this question, we must first reinforce the fact that *Gad/God* was considered the deity of fortune – at least by the Hebrew-speaking populace residing in Palestine. This is a well-established fact that no one reading this study should doubt. However, 3rd century BCE Greek-speaking students of the Bible would not likely have made the connection between *Gad* and an idol of fortune. Hence, they would not have understood Leah's motive for naming Zilpah's son *Gad* – unless they had some help. What better way to assist novice readers in making the connection than by creating a connection between *Gad* and a well-known Greek idol of fortune? That is what the translators of the *Septuagint* did, and this is validated by the appearance of the name *Tyche* in Genesis 30:11 – in direct association with the naming of Jacob's seventh son. Let's take a closer look at the identity of *Tyche*:

Tyche

Goddess of fortune. Greco-Roman. She appears as a nereid in the Hymn to Demeter (Homer). According to Hesiod's *Theogony* she is the daughter of Okeanos. Elsewhere she is identified as the daughter of Zeus and Hera. She is depicted carrying a rudder or, alternatively, cornucopias. Also mentioned as Agathe Tyche, the consort of Agathos Daemon. She became widely identified with the Asian mother goddess Kybele but was replaced, in Roman times, by the goddess Fortuna

³ That *Tyche* is the Greek goddess of fortune is easily verifiable by most standard large-volume dictionaries. According to *The Reader's Digest Great Encyclopedic Dictionary*, The Reader's Digest Association, Inc., Pleasantville, NY, 1977, p. 1,448: "Ty·che (tī'kē) In Greek mythology, the goddess of chance: identified with the Roman *Fortuna*." According to the online *Probert Encyclopaedia: Greek and Roman Mythology* (<http://www.probert-encyclopaedia.co.uk/greek.htm>), "Tyche was the Greek goddess of luck. She was the daughter of Zeus and identified by the Romans as Fortuna." Curiously, a New Testament believer's name may have been derived from the name *Tyche*. We read about an individual named Syntyche in Philippians 4:2.

⁴ Cf., "Septuagint," from *Free net encyclopedia* (<http://www.netipedia.com/index.php/Septuagint>), where we read: "Manuscript copies of the *Septuagint* are the oldest and most important complete version of the Old Testament, and predate the oldest manuscript of the Masoretic Text, the Aleppo Codex, by as much as 1,000 years." Also, from the Introduction to the *Septuagint* entitled "An Historical Account of the *Septuagint* Version," taken from *The Septuagint With Apocrypha: Greek and English*, translated by Sir Lancelot C.L. Brenton, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1995 (originally published by Samuel Bagster & Sons, Ltd., London, 1851). Brenton's introduction begins thus: "The earliest version of the Old Testament Scriptures which is extant, or of which we possess any certain knowledge, is the translation executed at Alexandria [Egypt] in the third century before the Christian era: this version has been so habitually known by the name of the SEPTUAGINT, that the attempt of some learned men in modern times to introduce the designation of the Alexandrian version (as more correct) has been far from successful." Today's popular translations of the Old Testament, such as the King James Version, are taken from Hebrew texts dating only to the ninth century of the common era. From *The Reader's Digest Bible*, Bruce M. Metzger, General Editor, The Reader's Digest Association, Pleasantville, NY, 1982, p. xv - xvi, we read, "Until recently the oldest known manuscripts containing major sections of the Hebrew Bible dated from only the ninth and tenth centuries of the Christian era, with the oldest dated manuscript of the entire Hebrew Bible coming from A.D. 1008."

⁵ From *A Cyclopædia of Religions*, Volume II, by Major-General J. G. R. Forlong, originally published in 1906 by Bernard Quaritch, London, republished in 1997 by co-publishers Ganesh Publishing, Ltd., Bristol, United Kingdom and Edition Synapse, Tokyo, Japan, p. 123.

and associated symbolically with a wheel device. She retained popularity for a long time. There is a record that the Emperor Julian sacrificed to Tyche at Antioch in 361-62 AD and her temple was still intact during the reign of Theodosius (379-95).⁶

Just as there should be no question that *Gad/God* is the name of the Canaanite idol of fortune, neither is there any question that *Tyche* is the Greek idol of fortune. For those who do not see a connection between the naming of *Gad* and the idol of fortune, we can only ask, "Then why did those ancient Hebrew scholars make the connection between *Tyche* and the name that Leah gave to Zilpah's son?" Let's take a look at the Greek text to see where the name Tyche (rendered τύχη in Greek) appears. The following excerpt is a screen shot taken from The Apostolic Bible Polyglot⁷:

30:11	2532	2036—*	1722	5189.1	2532	2028	3588	
	καὶ	εἶπε	Λεία	ἐν	τύχη	καὶ	ἐπωνόμασε τὸ	
	And Leah said, I am in good luck. And she named							
3686—1473	ὄνομα	αυτοῦ	Γαδ	30:12	2532	4815	2089	3588
	his name,		Gad.		καὶ	συνέλαβεν	ἔτι	Ζελφά
					And conceived again Zilpah the			

Although *Tyche* (τύχη) is translated "good luck" by the translator, this does not alter the fact that this word actually identifies the Greek goddess of fortune, and it is important to note that the translators used this idol's name as the springboard for Leah's decision to name Zilpah's son after the *Canaanite* idol of fortune. Fifth century theologian Theodoret of Cyrus, in *The Questions on the Octateuch*, made it clear that he understood the message conveyed by Hebrew scholars' translation of the Septuagint:

Question LXXXVIII

[Question:] Why does Scripture mention good luck⁸?

[Answer:] The distinctive features of Scripture are the oracles of the Spirit, the Almighty's laws, and the teachings of the devout; the rest is historical narration. So one must take into account not only what is said but also who says it. Now, the expression "I'm in luck!" was not Jacob's but Leah's, a woman, as I remarked, raised in idolatry and only briefly schooled in religion. Similarly, her father declared, "I would take omens," whereas the Almighty's laws forbids recourse to omens. So no one should imagine that such words are those of holy Scripture; the author sets down the words of pagans, because he is writing history.⁹

In Theodoret's commentary, he references *Tyche* as the source of "good luck." Of course, we know that translating *ba-gad* as *tyche* was the best way the Septuagint's translators could convey to the Greek culture that the heathen idol of "luck" influenced Leah's decision to give Zilpah's son the name *Gad/God*. Theodoret "got the message." The question is, do we, in our 21st century culture, have this same understanding? Do we understand that Leah's motive in naming Zilpah's son was to give honor to the deity of luck? That deity's name, in the Greek culture, is *Tyche* (τύχη). In the Hebrew culture, it is *Gad/God* (גַּד).

⁶ From *Encyclopedia of Gods*, by Michael Jordan, item "Tyche," Facts on File, Inc., New York, NY, 1993, page 269.

⁷ From the online version of *The Apostolic Bible Polyglot*, ISBN 0-9632301-1-5 Rev. 1.1, March, 2006,

www.apostolicbible.com.

⁸ The Greek text of this question references *tyche* (τύχη) as the source of the "good luck." It reads, "Δια τί ἡ γραφή μέμνηται τύχης;"

⁹ Theodoret of Cyrus, *The Questions on the Octateuch*, Vol. 1, *On Genesis and Exodus*, "The Questions on Genesis," Question LXXXVIII, translated by Robert C. Hill, The Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D.C., 2007, p. 173. Note: This work was originally composed circa 452 – 453 CE under the name *Quaestiones in Octateuchum*, by Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrrhus. The translator renders the Greek title employed by Theodoret, Θεός (*Theos*), as "God." We took the liberty of replacing "God" with "the Almighty" in our citation so as to draw attention to the fact that Theodoret did *not* refer to Yahweh as "God."

Some may question as to whether or not there really was an idol of fortune named *Tyche*. One sure way to confirm this information is to read it straight from the pagans who venerated *Tyche*. For example, another fifth century author, Roman grammarian Ambrosius Theodosius Macrobius, mentioned the worship of *Tyche* in the form of a moon deity of fortune, who was the consort of the sun deity *Daimon* (demon). These two as listed as the “two primary” deities out of a total of four that preside over the birth of children. What I find peculiarly interesting about Macrobius’ work is the fact that, while it was composed in Latin, he preserved the Greek forms of each deity’s name, effectively not only *transliterating* the names, but also *preserving* the Greek characters within an otherwise Latin text. How strange that a pagan author went to such pains to preserve the correct forms of the names of idols! How well does this reflect on those translators who, professing to be servants of the Almighty, not only fail to transliterate His name, but also *substitute* it with the names of known idols? The following excerpt is an English translation from Book I of Macrobius’ *The Saturnalia*:

[16] Another clear proof that it is the sun that we worship under the name of Mercury is the *caduceus*¹⁰, which the Egyptians have designed as the sacred staff of Mercury. It shows a pair of serpents, male and female, intertwined; the middle parts of the serpents' coils are joined together in a knot, called the knot of Hercules; their upper parts are bent into a circle and complete the circle as they meet in a kiss; below the knot their tails rejoin the staff at the point at which it is held, and at that point appear the wings with which they are provided. [17] The Egyptians also maintain that the attributes of the caduceus depict the generation, or "genesis" (γένεσις) as it is called, of mankind; for they say that four deities are present to preside over a man's birth: Daimon (Δαίμονα), Tyche (Τύχην), Eros (Ἔρωτα), and Anagkeh (ἀνάγκην). By the first two they understand the sun and the moon; for the sun, as the source of the breath of life and of heat and of light, is the creator and the guardian of a man's life and is therefore believed to be Daimon (δαίμων), or god, of a newborn child; the moon is Tyche (τύχη), since she is the deity of our bodies, which are subject to the chance occurrences of events; love is represented by the kiss of the serpents; and the knot is [the symbol of] Necessity. [18] Why wings are added has already been explained, and of the above-mentioned attributes the coiled bodies of the serpents have been specially chosen, as illustrating the serpentine course of each of the two stars.¹¹

The Latin text of Macrobius’ work is, as of this writing, available online. While most of us do not read Latin, I recommend at least reviewing it in order to observe how this heathen author, in addition to confirming the worship of an idol named *Tyche*, took great pains to preserve not only the transliteration of its name, but also the Greek characters. For the sake of conserving space, we will only provide the text of section 17, so as to illustrate how he rendered the names of the four deities:

17 Argumentum caducei ad genituram quoque hominum, quae γένεσις appellatur, Aegyptii protendunt, deos praestites homini nascenti quattuor adesse memorantes, Δαίμονα Τύχην Ἔρωτα ἀνάγκην: et duos priores solem ac lunam intellegi volunt, quod sol auctor spiritus caloris ac

¹⁰ In Greek Mythology, the *caduceus* is a winged staff with two serpents twined around it, carried by Hermes.

¹¹ From *The Saturnalia*, by Ambrosius Aurelius Theodosius Macrobius, Book I, ch. 19:16-18. NOTE: While this translation is based on the English translation of Percival Vaughan Davies (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969, pp. 135-136, I took the liberty of restoring the transliteration of the names, which he chose to translate. Davies translated *Daimon* as “Genius,” *Tyche* as “Fortune,” *Eros* as “Love” and *Anagkeh* as “Necessity.” Moreover, one phrase in particular seemed to be poorly translated. Where Davis translated “... the moon is Fortune, since she has charge of the body, and the body is at the mercy of the fickleness of change,” I changed to “... the moon is Tyche (τύχη), since she is the deity of our bodies, which are subject to the chance occurrences of events.” This also better agrees with the French translation, “La lune est appelée g-tucheh (la fortune), parce qu'elle est la divinité des corps, lesquels sont sujets aux chances fortuites des événements.”

luminis humanae vitae genitor et custos est, et ideo nascentis δαίμων, id est deus, creditur: luna **τύχη**, quia corporum praesul est quae fortuitorum varietate iactantur: amor osculo significatur: necessitas nodo.¹²

It is regrettable that, in spite of the great care that Macrobius took in preserving the original spelling of these idols' names, the scholar who translated his work into English, apparently oblivious to Macrobius' noble preservation efforts, injudiciously translated each name into a word that he felt best represented each deity's *persona*. Nevertheless, to address our point, we see that in ancient times an idol named *Tyche* was worshipped as an idol of fortune. What better way to convey the concept of the Hebrew idol of fortune to the Greek-speaking culture than to convey it in a manner that they would easily grasp the concept? By presenting the naming of *Gad/God* in association with a known *Greek* idol of fortune, the Hebrew scholars who translated the Septuagint succeeded in presenting Leah as a pagan idol worshipper. Theodoret of Cyrus, as we noted above, "got the message." The question is, do *we*, in our 21st century culture, have this same understanding? Do we understand that Leah's motive in naming Zilpah's son was to give honor to the deity of luck? That deity's name, in the Greek culture, is *Tyche* (τύχη). In the Hebrew culture, it is *Gad/God* (גַּד).

Think for a moment about the motives people have for deciding which names to give to their children. In today's society, many parents choose a name because it's the name of their favorite star athlete or perhaps a movie star. In a December 2008 BBC¹³ report, a representative from an internet parenting group confirmed this common trend among parents. Here is an excerpt of her findings:

Boys' names have witnessed the biggest changes over the last decade as parents are increasingly influenced by American culture and celebrity trends relating to films and sports personalities. Traditional royal names continue to reign supreme in the boys' Top 100 in respect of the more traditional name choices.¹⁴

She added:

Parents are more likely to name girls after a well known movie star or celebrity.¹⁵

In ancient times, there were no movie stars or famous athletes after whom parents could name their children. This is why it was so common for parents to name children after the chief object of their worship. For example, the Assyrian king Sennacherib was named after the Assyrian deity, *Sin*.¹⁶ Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar was named after an idol known as *Nebo*.¹⁷ Among those who

¹² From *Saturnalia* Liber I, the Latin text of the critical edition, edited by Ludwig von Jan (Gottfried Bass; Quedlinburg and Leipzig, 1852), web edition by Bill Thayer. This text may be read in its entirety by accessing the following URL: http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/L/Roman/Texts/Macrobius/Saturnalia/1*.html

¹³ A.k.a. British Broadcasting Corporation.

¹⁴ From the BBC article "Olivia and Jack top baby names," 12/30/2008. The article may be read in its entirety by accessing the following URL: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/7804633.stm.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ According to *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 5, David Noel Freedman, Editor-in-Chief, Doubleday, New York, N.Y., 1992, p., 1,088, "In Assyrian the name is spelled *Sîn-ahhê-erība* and means 'the god Sin has substituted the dead brothers.' The name therefore tells us that Sennacherib was at least the third son to be born to his father Sargon II, but the first one to survive childhood."

¹⁷ According to *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary*, by Merrill F. Unger, Moody Press, Chicago, IL, 1988, p. 909, Nebuchadnezzar means "Nebo, defend the boundary." This same reference, in the article "Gods, False," lists Nebo as "A Babylonian deity (Isa. 46:1), the god of wisdom and literature."

worshipped Yahweh, it was not uncommon to incorporate Yahweh's name into the name of the child. For example, "Isaiah" means *Yah has saved* and "Nethaniah" means *given of Yah*.

As we can see, our ancient ancestors, in lieu of movie stars and famous athletes to turn to for names to give their children, often used the names of their objects of worship. It should not be surprising, then, if we should find out that Leah named Zilpah's son after an idol worshipped by those who raised her.

It must be remembered, as we have repeatedly reinforced, that both Leah and her sister Rachel were raised in a semipagan household. Their father, Laban, as is evident from Gen. 31:19, 30-35, worshiped household idols, which he obviously valued very highly, as demonstrated by the great effort he undertook in attempting to retrieve them after Rachel had stolen them. If it is true, as we have shown, that an idol named *Gad* was worshipped in the area where Leah and Rachel were born and raised, it should not be surprising to learn that they would choose that idol's name as the name for one of their children, especially if it can be demonstrated that they had not yet been converted to the worship of Yahweh.

For those who, upon examining the Hebrew text of Genesis 30:11, are simply not able to see the connection between Leah's concept of "good fortune" and the Canaanite idol of fortune, the Hebrew scholars who translated the Torah into Greek in the 3rd century BCE laid it out in plain and simple terms. If, according to the translators' understanding, Leah had no thoughts of an "idol of fortune," they would not have produced the name of Gad's Greek counterpart, *Tyche* (τύχη), as the pretext for why Leah to chose the name Gad in Gen. 30:11:

¹⁹ ¶ And Lea said, *It is happily* (τύχη): and she called his name, Gad (Γάδ).¹⁸

In the Hebrew text of Genesis 30:11, there is a word play used with the selection of the name *Gad*. We read, "With fortune (*ba gad*, גַּדָּ): and she called his name *Gad* (גַּד)." Obviously, this same play on words does not work in the Greek language, so it is significant that the translators chose the name of the idol *Gad*'s Greek counterpart, *Tyche*, when conveying their understanding of Leah's rationale for selecting the name *Gad*. Why choose the name of the Greeks' idol of fortune when conveying her delight? Certainly, if the Hebrew scholars wanted to carry across a meaning of *wealth* (as previously suggested by authors Dale George and Silvio Soto), they could have used the Greek word *euporia* (εὐπορία, #2142 in *Strong's Greek Dictionary of the New Testament*). If they wished to convey *fortune*, they could have selected the Greek word *makarios* (μακάριος), which is word #3107 in *Strong's*:

3107. μακάριος makariōs, *mak-ar' ee-os*; a prol. form of the poetical μάκαρ **makar** (mean. the same); supremely *blest*; by extens. *fortunate*, *well off*:—blessed, happy (× -ier).

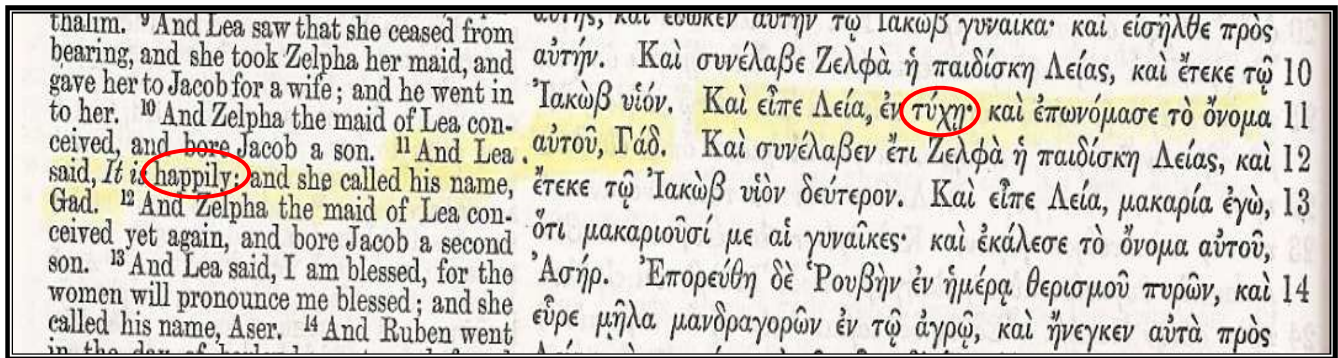
Since *markarios* conveys "fortunate," "happy" and "blessed," why didn't the Hebrew scholars who translated the Septuagint select *markarios* to convey their understanding of Leah's emotional state when Gad was born? In fact, two verses later, at the birth of Asher, Leah does use the word *markarios* in describing her "happy" situation.¹⁹ Of course, since Leah didn't actually speak Greek, we understand that *markarios* is the Greek word the Hebrew scholars chose to use in translating Leah's "happy" state in verse 13. The question is, why didn't they choose *Tyche* in their effort to convey Leah's joy in verse 13? Why did they place the name *Tyche* in association with the naming of *Gad*?

¹⁸ From *The Septuagint With Apocrypha: Greek and English*, translated by Sir Lancelot C.L. Brenton, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1995 (originally published by Samuel Bagster & Sons, Ltd., London, 1851).

¹⁹ *Asher* is word #836 in *Strong's Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary* and means "happy."

The answer is obvious: The Hebrew scholars who translated the Septuagint knew that the best way for them to convey – to the Greek-speaking culture – Leah's motives and thought process in selecting *Gad* was to use the word *Tyche* (τύχη), which immediately identifies the Greek idol of fortune. The name *Gad* held no significance for the Greek culture, so the translators knew that if they merely conveyed that Leah was *markarios* (blessed/happy) at the birth of *Gad*, they would not have carried across the understanding that Leah came up with this name in association with the idol of fortune. Thus, it was a clever linguistic feat for them to insert the name of the *Greek* idol of fortune when describing the naming ceremony for a child named after the *Canaanite* idol of fortune. Instantly, the connection is made when reading the Greek text! It was no coincidence that the Hebrew scholars produced the name of the *Greek* idol of fortune when describing Leah's thought process in naming Zilpah's son *Gad* – the name of the *Canaanite* idol of fortune.

Shown below is a copy from Sir Lancelot C.L. Brenton's translation of the Septuagint's rendering of Genesis 30:11:



The above excerpt plainly demonstrates that as far as the Hebrew scholars who translated the Septuagint were concerned, there is a connection between the Greek idol *Tyche* (τύχη) and the idol *God* (גד). Otherwise, they would certainly have selected an alternate word instead of *Tyche*; they would have selected a word not associated with the Greek counterpart to the idol worshiped in Leah's home town of Haran! On a side note, for those who insist that the "most correct" pronunciation of גד is "Gad" (as in "sad"), it is a well-established fact that this word can only be pronounced one way in the Greek language: *gawd*.

Thus, just in case there should happen to be any doubt as to how this name was pronounced in ancient Hebrew, the fact remains that the Hebrew scholars who produced the *Septuagint* translation in the 3rd century BCE transliterated that Hebrew name in the Greek language with the pronunciation *gawd*.²⁰

More significantly for our research, however, those Hebrew scholars plainly identified *Gad/God* with the idol of fortune. There may be some individuals who will reject the understanding provided by the Septuagint translators, but if they do, they are, in effect, elevating their understanding above the understanding of the Hebrew scholars who translated the Septuagint.

²⁰ You can actually hear *for yourself* how this word (#1045 in *Strong's* Greek Dictionary of the New Testament) is pronounced by accessing the following URL and clicking on the "speaker" icon: <http://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/greek/kjv/gad.html>. (Note: This link worked as of January 2010).

The fact that *Tyche* was considered the Greek equivalent to the Canaanite *Gad/God* is also evidenced through archaeological evidence. Notice the following observation presented by *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*:

An Aram-Gk bilingual inscription from Palmyra apparently equates Gad and Tyche.²¹

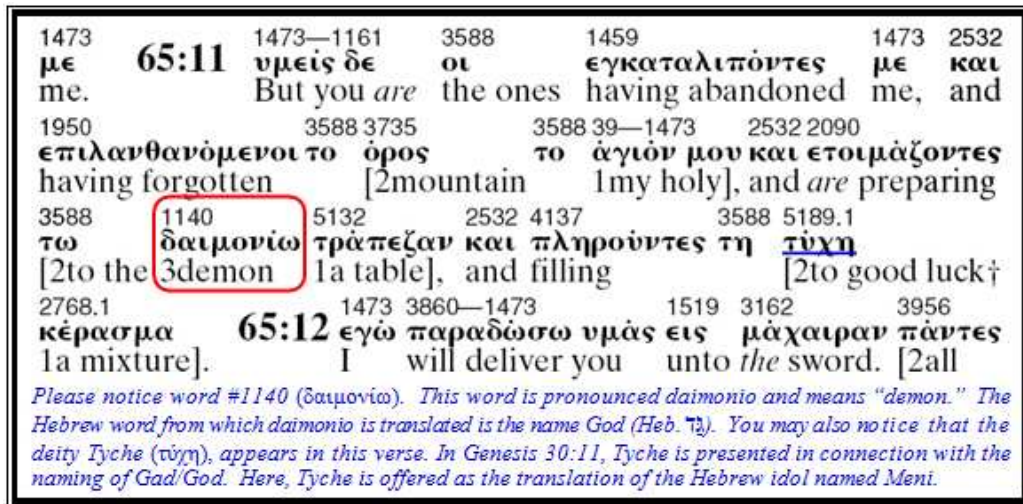
The evidence linking *Gad/God* and *Tyche* is simply too great to ignore. However, as we are about to see, it only gets worse.

²¹ From *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Volume 2, David Noel Freedman, Editor-in-Chief, Doubleday, New York, N.Y., 1992, p. 863.

B. Gad's True Identity is Revealed in the Septuagint Text of Isaiah 65:11

From the above Septuagint reading of Genesis 30:11, we understand that the Hebrew scholars who translated this version recognized a connection between *Gad* and *Tyche*. The book of Genesis, as we know, is the first of the five books of the Bible forming what is known as the *Pentateuch*. It was only these five books that comprised the original Septuagint translation, which is generally agreed to have been completed around the year 282 BCE. We now turn your attention to *another* book of the Bible – the book of Isaiah. The Septuagint translation of Isaiah was completed many years after the initial Pentateuch translation made its appearance. Although there is no consensus as to when Isaiah was finally translated into the Greek language, many scholars agree that it was certainly in place by the beginning of the first century BCE.²²

When the Hebrew scholars who translated Isaiah into Greek came to the word גַּד (Gad/God), they certainly understood that they were looking at the name of a heathen idol. In conveying their understanding of this idol's identity to the Greek-speaking culture, did those translators offer any additional clues as to the identity of *Gad/God*? The answer is yes. Shown below is the Septuagint text of Isaiah 65:11 as represented in *The Apostolic Bible Polyglot*²³:



As displayed above, the 1st century BCE Hebrew scholars plainly regarded the idol named גַּד (pronounced *gawd*) as a *demon*. Sir Lancelot C.L. Brenton, in his English translation of the Septuagint, translates Isaiah 65:11 as follows:

¹¹ ¶ But ye are they that have left Me, and forget My holy mountain, and prepare a table for the **devil**, and fill up the drink-offering to Fortune.²⁴

²² Cf., *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 5, David Noel Freedman, Editor-in-Chief, Doubleday, New York, N.Y., 1992, p. 1,094, where we read, “For convenience, it is assumed throughout what follows that a single set of original translations of the Hebrew scriptures into Greek was effected in several stages, and in locations not known for sure; that the earliest parts (most likely the Torah) of the translation took place in the 3rd century B.C.E. (perhaps in Egypt) and the last parts were completed by the first part of the 1st century B.C.E.; that, in the absence of ‘hard copy’ of these translations, we can recover from the extant witnesses, texts sufficiently reliable to be considered equivalent to the originals, if carefully controlled text-critical principles are employed.”

²³ From the online version of *The Apostolic Bible Polyglot*, ISBN 0-9632301-1-5 Rev. 1.1, March, 2006, www.apostolicbible.com.

²⁴ From *The Septuagint With Apocrypha: Greek and English*, translated by Sir Lancelot C.L. Brenton, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1995 (originally published by Samuel Bagster & Sons, Ltd., London, 1851).

Brenton, in his English rendering of the Septuagint text of Isaiah 65:11, leaves no room to doubt “who” the ancient Hebrew scholars understood *Gad/God* to be. Certainly, those learned men came a lot closer to understanding who *God* is than we can ever hope to in this lifetime. In *their* day, *God* was considered to be the equivalent of the devil, whom we all know is also identified in Scripture as *Satan*. For most of today’s society, however, *God* is considered to be equivalent to our Heavenly Father – Creator of the universe – if not by name, then certainly by virtue of His title. If you believe there is nothing wrong with applying the name once regarded as the name of a demon to our Heavenly Father, then we simply have differing views of how to honor the Almighty. We maintain that referring to Yahweh with a title once reserved for an idol considered by ancient Judaism to be a demon is the epitome of *dishonor*.

Please think about this for a moment. When the Hebrew scholars who translated the book of Isaiah into Greek came to Isaiah 65:11, they encountered the name גַּד (pronounced *gawd*), leaving them with a decision to make: “Do we transliterate this name into Greek as Γάδ (pronounced *gawd*) or do we translate it into a word that represents who this idol really is?”

Who *was* גַּד to those Hebrew sages? Did they consider גַּד a “perfectly acceptable title”? Was גַּד a name with a wonderful intrinsic meaning?

To make it perfectly clear “who” the ancient Hebrew scholars considered *Gad/God* to be, we are providing an illustration depicting their thought process as they translated Isaiah 65:11 into Greek:

Hebrew text of Isaiah 65:11²⁵

קִדְשִׁי	אֶת־הַר	הַשִּׁכְּחִים	יְהוָה	עֲזָבִי	וְאַתָּם
qdash·i	er - ath	e·shkchim	ieue	ozbi	u·athm
holiness-of·me	mountain-of	» the·ones-forgetting	Yahweh	ones-forsaking-of	and·you ^(P)
מִמְסַךְ	לְמִנִּי	וְהִמְלֵאִים	שֻׁלְחַן	לְגַד	הַעֲרֹכִים
mmsk	l·mni	u·e·mmlaim	shlchn	l·gd	e·orkim
blend	for·Minni	and·the·ones- ^m filling	table	for·the·Gad	the·ones-arranging

Greek text of Isaiah 65:11²⁶

με	65:11	υμεις δε	οι	εγκαταλιπόντες	με	και
me.		But you are	the	ones	having abandoned	me, and
1950		3588 3735		3588 39—1473	2532 2090	
επιλανθανόμενοι το		ς	το	ἅγιόν μου και ετοιμάζοντες		
having forgotten		mountain		1my holy], and are preparing		
3588	1140	5132	2532 4137	3588 5189.1		
τω	δαιμονίω	τράπεζαν και	πληροῦντες τη	τύχη		
[2to the	3demon	1a table], and filling		[2to good luck]		
2768.1		1473 3860—1473		1519 3162	3956	
κέρασμα	65:12	εγώ παραδώσω υμᾶς	εις	μάχαιραν	πάντες	
1a mixture].		I will deliver you	unto	the sword. [2all		

²⁵ Screen capture from the ISA (Interlinear Scripture Analyzer) Interlinear Bible, Copyright © 2002-2009 by Scripture4all Foundation - All Rights Reserved.

²⁶ From the online version of *The Apostolic Bible Polygot*, ISBN 0-9632301-1-5 Rev. 1.1, March, 2006, www.apostolicbible.com.

What thought process drove the Hebrew scholars to translate גַּד as “demon”? Were they thinking about how, linguistically-speaking, גַּד is a name that should be culturally redefined as an “acceptable original clean Hebrew word”? Were they thinking about how גַּד originally meant “overwhelming abundance of power” or “the ability to deliver” ... or perhaps “the grandeur of mightiness”?²⁷

Were they thinking of how this name will one day be inscribed on one of the gates of the New Jerusalem – and that this “must” mean that *Gad/God* should be culturally redefined as a “perfectly acceptable title” for our Heavenly Father? *If so, then why did they culturally redefine it as δαιμόνιον (“demon”) for their Greek-speaking audience?*

On a final note, if you closely examine the Septuagint text of Isaiah 65:11, you will notice the appearance of the Greek idol of fortune, *Tyche*. This deity, as we covered in our previous section, is well known as being the Greek equivalent of *Gad/God*. However, in Isaiah 65:11, *Tyche* is presented as the Greek equivalent (and translation) of the deity named *Meni*. You might wonder why, in Isaiah 65:11, *Tyche* is identified as the Greek equivalent of the Canaanite deity *Meni* instead of *Gad/God*. Wouldn't it have been more consistent to have presented *Gad/God* as *Tyche's* equivalent instead of a word that means “demon”? The late Dr. Walter A. Maier III, a scholar of ancient Semitic languages and culture, addressed this question in an article that he contributed to *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, where he offered some insightful information pertaining to the appearance of the deity *Gad/God* in Isaiah 65:11:

Jewish tradition identified Gad with the planet Jupiter, regarded in Arabic astrology as the star of greater fortune. Yet there is insufficient evidence to establish that the apostates described in Isa 65:11 had such an understanding of Gad. Gad has also been identified with the deity *Tyche* (Gk *tychē*), “Fortune,” mentioned in Gk inscriptions, many of which come from the Hauran. This identification is probably correct: An Aram-Gk bilingual inscription from Palmyra apparently equates Gad and *Tyche* (however, see *RE* 5: 334). A minority of scholars would connect *Tyche* with another divinity (e.g., Atargatis: *RE* 5:335), and the best-attested reading for the LXX at Isa 65:11 renders “Gad” with *daimoni* (or *daimoniō*), “demon,” and “Meni” with *tychē* (for one possible explanation for this reading, see Delitzsch 1969: 484; *SDB* 2:322). However, in some manuscripts “Gad” is rendered with *tychē*, “Meni” with *daimoni*; the LXX at 30:11 has for the Heb *gad* (used in the appellative sense) *tychē*; and for Isa 65:11 the Vg reads *Qui ponitis Fortunae mensam*, “(You) who place a table for Fortune.”²⁸

As explained by Dr. Maier, although the majority of Septuagint texts present *daimonio* as the translation of *Gad/God*, and *Tyche* as the equivalent of *Meni*, there are some manuscripts that actually retain the Genesis 30:11 connection between *Gad* and *Tyche*. It is obvious that a copyist mistranscribed *daimonio* and *Tyche*; the question is, which manuscripts have the “correct connection”? Either way, whether the translator of Isaiah 65:11 considered *Gad/God* to be associated with a demon or with the Greek idol of fortune, the heathen connection is unmistakable.

In our previous section, we provided evidence from 5th century (pagan) author Macrobius that an idol of fortune named *Tyche* was worshipped, not only in Greece, but also in Egypt. In our commentary, we did not fully address the names of the other idols mentioned by Macrobius that were worshipped in conjunction with *Tyche*. Nevertheless, it was certainly obvious that there were two “primary” deities, represented by the sun and the moon. *Tyche* was a “moon deity.” Who was the sun deity? It was none

²⁷ These are actual definitions for the Hebrew גַּד, as proposed by Dale George and Silvio Soto (cf., “Objection #9: Redefining God: ‘The grandeur of mightiness?’”).

²⁸ From *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Volume 2, David Noel Freedman, Editor-in-Chief, article “GAD (DEITY),” by Dr. Walter A. Maier III, Doubleday, New York, N.Y., 1992, p. 863.

other than *Daimon*, whose name, as we have already learned, is translated “demon” in English. Is it a coincidence that this same pair of idols, *Daimon* and *Tyche*, are both referenced – alongside each other, no less – in the very same verse of Scripture (Is. 65:11) *as well as* in pagan author Macrobius’ work? Let’s take another look at what Macrobius wrote:

[17] The Egyptians also maintain that the attributes of the caduceus depict the generation, or "genesis" (γένεσις) as it is called, of mankind; for they say that four deities are present to preside over a man's birth: **Daimon** (Δαίμονα), **Tyche** (Τύχην), Eros (Ἔρωτα), and Anagkeh (ἀνάγκην). By the first two they understand the sun and the moon; for the sun, as the source of the breath of life and of heat and of light, is the creator and the guardian of a man's life and is therefore believed to be **Daimon** (δαίμων), or god, of a newborn child; the moon is **Tyche** (τύχη), since she is the deity of our bodies, which are subject to the chance occurrences of events; love is represented by the kiss of the serpents; and the knot is [the symbol of] Necessity.²⁹

Based on the appearance of *Daimon* and *Tyche* in Macrobius’ work, I am inclined to believe that the scholars who translated the Septuagint in the manner found in most manuscripts knew precisely what they were doing. As we observed earlier, they identified *Gad* with *Daimon* and *Meni* with *Tyche*. To make this connection all the more intriguing, we are about to see that both *Gad/God* and *Meni* were worshipped as deities of fortune. The following information is taken from the *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary* on Isaiah 65:11:

11. holy mountain—Moriah, on which the temple was.

troop—rather "**Gad**," the Babylonian god of fortune, the planet Jupiter, answering to Baal or Bel; the Arabs called it "**the Greater Good Fortune**"; and the planet Venus answering to **Meni**, "**the Lesser Good Fortune**" [Gesenius, Kimchi, &c.]. Tables were laid out for their idols with all kinds of viands, and a cup containing a mixture of wine and honey, in Egypt especially, on the last day of the year [Jerome].

drink offering—rather, "mixed drink."

number—rather, "Meni"; as goddess of fortune she was thought to *number* the fates of men.

Vitringa understands Gad to be the sun; Meni the moon, or Ashtaroth or Astarte (1Ki 11:33).

If both *Gad* and *Meni* were considered deities of fortune, it is understandable how the Babylonian *Meni* (the “Lesser Good Fortune”) would be considered the counterpart of the Egyptian “lesser” moon deity of fortune, *Tyche*, especially in view of the fact that both *Meni* and *Tyche* were “moon deities.” Thus, although *Daimon* was not considered a deity of fortune, his sovereignty over *Tyche* made him the logical counterpart to *Gad*.

This same reasoning – identifying both *Tyche* and *Meni* as moon deities (*Tyche* for the Egyptians and *Meni* for backslidden Israel) – is echoed by nineteenth century Hebraist Franz Delitzsch in the Keil & Delitzsch *Commentary on the Bible*:

But if *Gad* is Jupiter, nothing is more probable than that *Meni* is Venus; for the planet Venus is also regarded as a star of prosperity, and is called by the Arabs “the lesser luck.” The name *Meni* in itself, indeed, does not necessarily point to a female deity; for *m^eni* from *mânâh*, if taken as a passive participial noun (like בְּרִיָּה בְּרִיָּה, a creature), signifies “that which is apportioned;” or if taken as a modification of the primary form *many*, like מְרִיָּה מְרִיָּה, and many others, allotment, destination, fate. We have synonyms in the Arabic *mana-n* and *meniye*, and the Persian *bacht* (adopted into the Arabic), which signify the general fate, and from which *bago-bacht* is distinguished as signifying that which is exceptionally allotted by the gods. The existence of a

²⁹ Ambrosius Aurelius Theodosius Macrobius, op. cit., Book I, ch. 19:17.

deity of this name *m^eni* is also probably confirmed by the occurrence of the personal name מנדי on certain Aramaeo-Persian coins of the Achaemenides, with which Fürst associates the personal name *Achiman* (see his *Lex.*), combining מנ with Μήν, and מנ with Μήνη, as Movers (*Phönizier*, i. 650) and Knobel have also done. מנ and מנ would then be Semitic forms of these Indo-Germanic names of deities; for Μήν is *Deus Lunus*, the worship of which is in Carrae (*Charran*) is mentioned by Spartian in ch. vi. of the Life of Caracalla, whilst Strabo (xii. 3, 31, 32) speaks of it as being worshipped in Pontus, Phrygia, and other places; and Μήνη is *Dea Luna* (cf., Γενείτη Μάνη in Plut. *quaest. rom.* 52, *Genita Mana* in Plin. *h. n.* 29, 4, and *Dea Mena* in Augustine, *Civ.* 4, 11), which was worshipped, according to Diodorus (iii. 56) and Nonnus (*Dionys.* v. 70 ss.), in Phoenicia and Africa. The rendering of the LXX may be quoted in favour of the identity of the latter with מנ (ἐτοιμάζοντες τῷ δαίμονίῳ (another reading δαίμονι) τράπεζαν καὶ πληροῦντες τῇ τύχῃ κέρασμα), especially if we compare with this what Macrobius says in *Saturn.* i. 19, viz., that “according to the Egyptians there are four of the gods which preside over the birth of men, Δαίμων, Τύχη, Ἐρως, Ἀνάγκη. Of these *Daimōn* is the sun, the author of spirit, of warmth, and of light. *Tychē* is the moon, as the goddess through whom all bodies below the moon grow and disappear, and whose ever changing course accompanies the multiform changes of this mortal life.” In perfect harmony with this is the following passage of Vettius Valens, the astrologer of Antioch, which has been brought to light by Selden in his *Syntagma de Diis Syris*: Κλῆροι τῆς τύχης καὶ τοῦ δαίμονος σημαίνουσιν (viz., by the signs of nativity) ἥλιον τε καὶ σελήνην. Rosenmüller very properly traces back the Sept. rendering to this Egyptian view, according to which *Gad* is the sun-god, and *M^eni* the lunar goddess as the power of fate. Now it is quite true that the passage before us refers to Babylonian deities, and not to Egyptian; at the same time there might be some relation between the two views, just as in other instances ancient Babylonia and Egypt coincide.³⁰

As asserted by Delitzsch, it appears likely that the intent of the Hebrew scholars who translated the Septuagint was to convey to the Greek-speaking culture the similarity (if not the equivalence) between the *Gad/Meni* relationship and the *Daimon/Tyche* relationship. The Greek culture would not likely have understood who or what *Gad* and *Meni* are. While we certainly do not endorse those scholars' decision to substitute the names of Greek idols for the Hebrew ones, at the same time, we understand that their intent was to address the abomination of idol worship, and a straightforward means of accomplishing that objective was to hone in on the names of idols worshipped by the Greek culture.

I realize we have provided extensive information pertaining to this one seemingly minor verse of Scripture, but it can all be briefly summarized by reinforcing the fact that when the Hebrew scholars came to the name of the Babylonian idol *Gad/God*, it is significant that the name of the Greek idol they chose as *Gad's* equivalent is the idol *Daimon* — a name best understood in English as “demon” or “devil.” As we asked earlier, so we ask again: If the Hebrew scholars who translated the Septuagint were in any way persuaded that *Gad/God* should be culturally redefined as a “perfectly acceptable title” for our Heavenly Father, then why did they culturally redefine it as δαίμονίῳ (“demon”) for their Greek-speaking audience?

Next Section: [Objection #5: “But the Name ‘God’ Will be Inscribed on One of the Twelve Gates of the New Jerusalem!”](#)

³⁰ From *Commentary on the Old Testament* by C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, translated by Francis Bacon, Volume 7, “The Prophecies of Isaiah,” by F. Delitzsch, translated by James Martin, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA (originally published by T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh. 1866-91), 2001, p. 619. Another scholar who understood this same connection was J. G. R. Forlong, in his book *Rivers of Life*, Vol. 2, p. 62, where he writes, “The moon, it is acknowledged, is the *MENI* of Isaiah lxy. 11, who with *Gad* or the Demon (no doubt, a Peor or Lingam which this prophet so hated) has ‘tables’ or sacrifices prepared for him by these great phallic-worshipping tribes.”