

Scripture Reading: Genesis 1:31 – 2:4

“Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day. 2:1 Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. 2 And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. 3 Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made. 4 This is the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the Jehovah God made the earth and the heavens, 5 before any plant of the field was in the earth and before any herb of the field had grown.”

"Jehovah God's Day of Creation"

This morning we will be focusing on a single verse from the Book of Beginnings where in verse four of the second chapter we read: “This is the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that Jehovah God made the earth and the heavens”

Now I can't do this very often with the Book of Genesis or I will not finish this series in my life-time, but for this morning it will be just one verse. I am doing so because this verse teaches us a bit about the structure of the Book of Genesis and it teaches us much about the importance of a name.

Up until this point God has revealed all of His great works of creation and how He rested on the seventh day. All is declared very good and it would have been appropriate to simply move on with the story, but this is not what we see here in Chapter two. God returns to His work on the sixth day and expands the account of the creation of man and His placement in the Garden of Eden.

The other five days are important and as we saw in our study of them you can relate much of what happened there to other portions of the Bible and properly understanding them teaches us many important lessons for this life. However, we must remember that the Bible is the story of man's redemption and so we see the focus of God's revelation narrow to the creation of man, the fall of man and the redemption of man.

We will see this phrase “this is the history” or “these are the generations” at several critical places in the Book of Beginnings and often what follows is not just a chronology of events or a genealogy, but rather a broader discussion of what has been previously introduced. As we move through Genesis we will often try to see the bigger picture & look for some of the literary structure to help us understand what is being revealed. I have included a couple of examples from David Dorsey's book in the order of worship. This should help us to see the significance of the fall of man and its impact on God's good creation.

We begin with everything being very good and after the white throne judgment of Revelation 20 we know that all will be very good once again...

- **But in between we have the history of redemption and that is the focus of God's revelation.**
- **The Good News is that the great God of Creation is also the Great God of redemption!**

However, this morning I want to spend our time considering the importance of a name!

- **The Bible puts a lot of importance in names as we shall see in a bit:
And especially the names of God!**

Here in America we tend to use popular names rather than thinking through their meanings. In Christian circles you will often find people looking to Biblical names as many of our families have done.

Others, like my parents looked to family names and common initials: Joan Elizabeth, John Edward and James Elliott.

The Johnsons looked for names beginning with “A” for their daughters and their youngest became Adele... Long before the famous singer exploded on the world scene, so I am sure she will have lots of company in the directories with all the Adeles being born now.

- However, the name Adele means noble and kind, so our hope is that she lives up to that name.

My first name John had that kind of popularity when I was born so there were four of us in my sixth grade class. It was not only a popular Biblical name but means Jehovah has been gracious...

- But in my case it was my grandfather’s name.

My middle name Edward came from the family doctor but is rich in meaning: From my mother’s English side it means wealthy guardian and on my father’s German side I should have been strong as a boar...

- I guess I failed on both fronts!

A part of our names can also be titles that we give people like President or Governor or parent or boss.

Some carry an authority that strikes fear in one’s heart, like the IRS employee who introduces himself as Agent Jones. Others are terms of endearment like one of our grandchildren giving a big hug to Papa.

So let’s take a moment to consider another one of those child-like questions... You know the ones that kids often ask!

- What is God’s name?

Now as Christians with the fullness of God’s revelation before us in the Bible the answer can be simple:

We are commanded to address God in our prayers as Father, the Angel Gabriel told Joseph to name God’s Son Jesus and Jesus told us that we would be comforted by the Spirit.

- When we are baptized into Christ we do so in God’s name: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Well, that was easy, except that inquisitive child is likely to then ask, what was God’s name in the Old Testament. We could avoid such questions by staying away from the Old Testament as many churches do these days, but it would not advance the discipleship of the child and we would miss much of the richness of God’s revelation!

The first thing that we point out to this child is how God with a capital “G” is one of God’s names in the Old Testament! We begin with “in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth!”

Now we come to our text for this morning and we read of the history of when the LORD God created the heavens and the earth or as I read it when Jehovah God created the heavens and the earth. Well the child has asked the question so now we have one of those teaching moments where we can give them an age appropriate lesson in Hebrew and English translations!

And no, you don’t have to be a seminary graduate to understand how to give this lesson! Yes, Mike or others who have studied Hebrew can provide much more detail, but the basic concepts are available to us all!

The Hebrew word for God in Genesis 1:1 is Elohim, the plural form of their word for god: El. It is the most common name for God and is always capitalized in English when the Hebrew grammar is singular as in Genesis 1:1. When the grammar is plural, such as a reference to pagan gods the Hebrew word is the same but in English we would use the word gods with a small ‘g.’

Since we don’t use singular and plural verbs like in Hebrew our English translators use God and gods. For example we can say: I created or We created using the same verb created but in Hebrew you would have different verbs. So when the plural Elohim is used with singular verbs it is referring to our Triune God!

That is what I would call His formal name in the Old Testament and we see it hear in our morning text.

- But why is LORD or Jehovah added in front of it here in this text?

Here comes our second Hebrew lesson and it is an important one: We should notice, and teach our children, that the word l-o-r-d appears three different ways in the Old Testament portion of our English Bibles.

- It can be all lower case when it refers to a human lord.

This is the way Abraham address the elders when negotiating a gravesite for Sarah in Genesis 23 when he said “hear us my lord, thou art a mighty prince among us.”

It can be capitalized when referring to God as Lord as Abraham does in Genesis 18:2: “My Lord, if I have now found favor in Your sight, do not pass on by Your servant.”

- And finally it can appear as all capitols when it is God’s covenant name.

This name was given by God to Moses when he asked who he should tell the Israelites has sent him when God commissioned him at the burning bush. Exodus 3:14 “And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.' ”

This name is significant and comes down to us in the Hebrew as just four consonants YHVH: In later years the Hebrews feared the use of God’s name so much that they refused to pronounce this covenant name and so no one is sure how it was pronounced. In English we can use Yahweh, which is close transliteration of the Hebrew because their ‘V’ makes a ‘W’ sound.

The other option which we use here at Church of the King is Jehovah, which was introduced as the English word for God’s Covenant name by William Tyndale in the 1500’s.

- If it is good enough for William then it is good enough for us!

Seriously, either Yahweh or Jehovah is a proper way to pronounce the Hebrew usually shown as LORD in all caps, although the American Standard does use Jehovah and some of the more recent translations like the updated Geneva Bibles simply use Lord with only the ‘L’ capitalized.

- So why is all of this worth worrying about?

Would a child really want this much information in answer to that simple question about God’s name?

Certainly not a very young child, but over time they need to learn these things to properly understand much of what they will read on their own in the Bible and as I often tell parents, as you try to make all of this very simple for a young child, it is really you that learns the lesson well.

As you teach your children how to read their Bibles you should have examples of these names in mind show them and make sure they begin to understand why God said “I AM WHO I AM.”

As we learned in our very first lesson from the Book of Beginnings, God is the Triune Personal God who has always existed and this is confirmed as we move on in His revelation to us.

- Our text this morning is an important case in point as to why some of these details are very important.

Again, in Genesis 2:4 we read: “This is the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that Jehovah God made the earth & the heavens.” All through Chapter one the writer used God’s formal name Elohim or God: Saying God created or God made or God said. Now as we begin the history of God’s redemption we see the writer introduce God’s covenant name: Jehovah.

It confirms what we said at the beginning of our study, that God who had always existed created all that we can know or see. God is self-existent, God is powerful and God exists in three persons.

- We see all of this in the reference to Jehovah God.

Now I may have failed to be to be a wealthy guardian or a strong boar as my middle name called me to be, but God never fails to live up to His revealed names!

- Because God’s names are important, it is important that we be clear about how they are used.

We will see this combination of Jehovah, the great I AM or self-existent one along with God or Elohim, the powerful one or mighty one; used heavily here in chapters two and three which Mr. Dorsey has outlined in chiasmic form.

➤ That combination will not be used again until after the calling of Abraham in chapter fourteen.

There God promises to be the mighty covenant keeping God who will deliver the nations of Canaan to Abraham's children as a foreshadow of how the Father would deliver all the nations to His Son.

When Moses is commissioned to take the people out of Egypt and into the promised land, God again gives His great covenant name at the burning bush and the land is finally conquered by Joshua whose name means God is salvation as he came and served as their savior or messiah. And of course we should know that Jesus is the Greek version of Joshua and that is why the angel told Joseph to call his son Jesus, because He would save His people from their sins.

And just as the writer of Genesis gives us the fullness of God's name here in our text and the story of salvation begins, so the Apostle Paul focuses on the name of Jesus, the greater Joshua, in his epistle to the Church at Philippi:

Philippians 2:5 "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. 9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

And finally we need to remember that God was not just the great I AM or Jehovah in the Old Testament:

Listen to Jesus as He speaks to John at the beginning and ending of the final book in the Bible:

Revelation 1:8 " "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

Revelation 22:12 " "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. 13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last." 14 Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city."

And lest you think I have spent too much time talking about names today, we are going to sing Psalm 8 as our hymn of response: We will do so because it is another good illustration or teaching moment for understanding why we need to be clear in our English translations AND it makes a powerful case for the Name of God, of course relating it back to the creation we are studying!

Psalm 8: "1 To the Chief Musician. On the instrument of Gath. A Psalm of David.

O Jehovah, our Lord, How excellent is Your name in all the earth, Who have set Your glory above the heavens! 2 Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have ordained strength, Because of Your enemies, That You may silence the enemy and the avenger. 3 When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained, 4 What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him? 5 For You have made him a little lower than the angels, And You have crowned him with glory and honor. 6 You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, 7 All sheep and oxen-- Even the beasts of the field, 8 The birds of the air, And the fish of the sea That pass through the paths of the seas. 9 O Jehovah, our Lord, How excellent is Your name in all the earth!"

I hope and pray that we are never able to sing that song again without reflecting on our text for this morning: “4 This is the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the Jehovah God made the earth and the heavens”

I also hope and pray that such reflection will greatly impact how we live our lives in service to Jesus.

In closing, listen carefully to where Paul took the Saints at Philippi after proclaiming that the name of Jesus was above all names and that every knee would one day bow to Him... Philippians 2: “12 Therefore,

➤ YES what follows is there in your Bible because of what Paul just taught about the name of Jesus!

“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.”

➤ The same Jehovah God who made the heaven and the earth!

➤ Paul then tells us what brings God ‘good pleasure!’

14 “Do all things without complaining and disputing, 15 that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, 16 holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.”

There are many such admonitions for God’s people in both the Old and New Testaments and it is very important to remember that we do not strive to obey them so that our sins can be forgiven.

➤ It is Jesus who came to save His people from their sin and ALL of that was accomplished with His death, burial and resurrection.

We strive to bring our lives into conformity to God’s Word because it reflects His character and as Paul said it brings God pleasure.

Failing to do so is in reality taking His Name in vain.

➤ May we be those who people see as faithful children of God, who bring Him much pleasure!

Communion Meditation: Revelation 5

“5 But one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals." 6 And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain...

9 And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, 10 And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth."”