

Where God Places His Name (Part One)

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If you would please turn to Genesis the 11th chapter and if you know your chapters, you know this is the Tower of Babel chapter,

Genesis 11:1-4 Now the whole earth had one language and one speech. And it came to pass as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there. Then they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and bake them thoroughly." And they had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar. And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth."

We all know the story of the Tower of Babel. We have heard it from many years ago. We heard about God coming down to view the tower and then later confusing the languages in order to throw a monkey wrench into the plans of young mankind at that time after the Flood, halting the building and scattering humanity over the globe. But in our haste in understanding the story, we often miss little details that the Bible provides, details that add depth and meaning to what appears to be a straightforward, maybe even simple narrative.

One such detail appears among mankind's reasons for building. It says they desired to make a city and a tower whose top reached to the heavens. But that is basically the Sunday school version of it because the Bible then goes on and gives another reason that they said that they wanted to build this tower. It is a significant reason. It says, "Let us make a name for ourselves lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth." What does that mean? Why would making a name for themselves be so important? Why would it matter so much?

Here the people use the word *shem*, just like Noah's son, Shem. It means literally "name." This word *shem* is used about 1,100 times in the Old Testament so it is quite a significant word. But the people use this word to mean reputation, renown, or fame. It can also imply continuance. They wanted their name to continue, or it could also be a memory. They wanted their name to be remembered, or like the word "memorial." It could be used in that way as well. In context, and certainly within the phrase "make a name for ourselves," we can understand that their desire was to create or build a monument, a lasting monument *by* themselves and *for* themselves, and maybe most importantly, *to* themselves.

In other words, the city and the tower were part of a project that they all got together to do to distinguish themselves or to separate themselves from their creatureliness (remember they are creatures that were created by God), and promote themselves as God's equal. That is why they wanted the tower to go reach up into the heaven. They thought that if they made a tower big enough and strong enough that the next time God sent a flood, they would be safe and they would be on God's level. But in the Bible only God legitimately makes a name for Himself. I want to go there just so you can see what it says in Isaiah 63.

Isaiah 63:11-14 Then he remembered the days of old, Moses and his people saying, "Where is He who brought them up out of the sea with the shepherd of His flock? Where is He who put His Holy Spirit within them, who led them by the right hand of Moses with His glorious arm, dividing the water before them to make for Himself an everlasting name [He is taking Israel out of Egypt, leading them across the desert, opening the Red Sea up. Those actions made an everlasting name for God.], who led them through the deep, as a horse in the wilderness, that they might not stumble?" As a beast goes down into the valley, and the Spirit of the Lord causes him to rest, so you lead Your people, to make Yourself a glorious name.

And that is what He is doing now with us, the people that He is leading.

Just one last thing to complete the story that we started there of the tower of Babel in Genesis 11. The narrative comes back around to this concept of the

name at the end. Let us read verse 9. This is after God came down and confused the languages and the people dispersed.

Genesis 11:9 Therefore [the city's] its name is called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.

God, in His sovereignty, gives that place a name. Remember they were there trying to make a name for themselves and God decided after all was said and done that *He* would give them a name. So He gave them a true name. Babel means "confusion." He named it what it was. Man without God—or man trying to take the place of God, or man trying to be equal with God—produces chaos. It produces disorder, turmoil, upheaval, mayhem. Like that Allstate guy on the commercial. It produces a huge mistake. When people try to make a name for themselves it ends in disaster. It ends in a curse. It ends just like Babel, with scattering and people being divided.

Now my sermons this Feast are built around the theme of God's name. Specifically the concept of God *placing* His name. I will get into the nitty-gritty of the Hebrew understanding of names and it is not the same as how we understand it. They were a really different people in terms of some of the concepts that they kept in their heads. So we will see some ideas of names that are like what we would normally understand of them and we will see others that are completely different. Names have meaning, sometimes wonderful significance. And ultimately the placing of God's name has eternal consequences. God does not place His name in a place just lightly or frivolously. Let us go back a few pages here to Genesis 2.

Genesis 2:10-11 Now a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it parted and became four riverheads. The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one which encompasses the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold.

Genesis 2:18-23 And the Lord said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him." Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird

Where God Places His Name (Part One) by Richard T. Ritenbaugh
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of the air, and brought them to Adam [the man] to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name. So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him. And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the Lord God had taken from the man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman because, she was taken out of Man."

As I mentioned, the concept of a name being given is an important one in Scripture, and these here in Genesis 2 are the first mentions of the Hebrew word *shem*. Its usage suggests the general meaning of the concept throughout the Bible. And this is often the case with first mentions of a particular Hebrew word. It colors how it is used in the rest of the Bible.

Some of these things that we are going to go over in the next several minutes are things that are easy to see but there are others that are not as easy. So please bear with me. I will do my best to explain them.

First, the most obvious implication is that a name identifies its bearer. I am Richard, you know that and it identifies me. You put my middle name, Theodore, in there and Ritenbaugh, and you pretty much zero it down to me. I do not think there is anybody else on this earth that has the name, Richard Theodore Ritenbaugh. Maybe there is.

But names identify. People know you by your name. We know all the animals by their names. We know geographical things by their names. We know businesses by their names. We know streets by their names. We know all kinds of things by their names. A name identifies its bearer. Adam named each river that came there out of Eden. He named all the animals that God brought before him and whatever he named those things that became its name. And we can assume that he did not give arbitrary names. He probably gave them good identifying names in that particular language that he was using, probably ones based on unique characteristics that he saw.

As a matter of fact, that is the thing in the name of this first river, Pishon. That word actually means full flowing. So that is what he called the name of the river. This is full flowing, because it must have been a really gushing river. You can actually find the names of the other three rivers there and what they mean and their descriptive names.

And I am sure he did the same thing with the animals—he called one long nose and the other one long neck and long ears. And then there was spiny and great claw and fast runner or whatever. I do not know exactly the names that he chose but they were probably descriptive enough to identify a peculiar or outstanding characteristic in that particular animal. Either that or what the person or thing was known for or the words that it is addressed by or whatever referred to it, those are all part of the identity thing.

The *second* one: Adam's naming of the rivers and the animals establishes a principle. This is an important principle that we need to understand. That principle is that the namer, the person who gives the name, is most often superior to the thing or the person that is named. The namer has a position of authority, superiority to the person who receives the name. In chapter 1, verses 26 and 28, God gave humanity dominion over the earth, over the beasts. So Adam begins his dominion by giving names to the geography and to the animals. Adam was superior to the earth itself, the rivers and such, and he was also superior to the animals.

This is generally the case even in our society, parents give names to their children. Parents are in the superior position. In the age of exploration, explorers named their discoveries. Even if they had native names, they would come in and say, "Hey, I found this," even though somebody was living there, and he would name it whatever he wanted to name it. Conquerors, when they come through, rename countries and cities. Even Jerusalem was renamed after the Romans finally had enough of the Jews' very persistent rebellion, and they renamed Jerusalem Aelia Capitolina. They wanted to wipe the name of Jerusalem and the Jews right off the earth. So they pretty much scraped the city and gave it a new name.

In the Bible, in Daniel 1, it says the Babylonians renamed their Jewish captives, especially those ones that worked in government. We had Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, and the Babylonians say, we do not like

your Hebrew names, we are going to call you Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego after their own gods and other things, whatever it was that they named them after.

And then we can extrapolate on this point. That the namer is superior to the names in terms of God. God gives Himself a name in Exodus 3. He does not give we lowly inferiors the ability to name Him. He names Himself because there is no one higher. And so by naming Himself, He tells Moses in an offhand way, "I'm the highest that it gets. I'm the Most High God," if you will. So He gives Himself another name there of Yahweh, "I AM that I AM." And we can assume that He named Himself before Adam and before Noah and before Abraham and others because He was not going to trust them to give Him a name. He gave them His name that He had given Himself.

Further, in conjunction with the first point about identity, this means that the namer often has the greater ability to identify true characteristic in the one he is naming. This greater ability to identify these true characteristics then makes the chance of the person being given a true name or a fitting name so much higher.

So names can fill a higher purpose than mere identity, showing instead either a qualitative judgment by that superior person or a distinguishing assessment of the person. Now this is always true when God gives the name. When God gives a name to somebody or something it is a true name. You can count on it, like Babel. He saw what it was, He named it what it was—it was confusion, it was chaos. But look at this. Let us go to Genesis 17. God gave Abraham a name when he was 99 years old.

Genesis 17:1-6 When Abram [Abram notice that] was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless. And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly." Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying: "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations. No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you."

This was before he even had a son. Well, Ishmael, but in this case, Ishmael did not count. His line would come through Isaac.

Genesis 17:15-16 [He did not leave Sarah out.] Then God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. And I will bless her and also give you a son by her; then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be from her."

He changed these names to fit them and what they would be known for forever. So, Abraham went to the father of many nations or father of multitudes, and Sarah went from Sarai to Sarah, which is the princess. She would be royalty and He talks very much about kings coming from her.

Let us do another one, an even more famous person God named, and that is Jesus Christ.

Matthew 1:20-21 But while he [Joseph] thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call his name Jesus [or Yeshua], for He will save His people from their sins."

So He called Him what He was. He was the Savior. Why not give Him the name that fit Him the best? Later on in verse 23, "they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us." Pretty good name, do you not think? Both of them, actually, were pretty good names. They both identify Him and give Him a true name, a true descriptor of what He actually was.

This one may be a little bit harder to grasp. I hope I can explain it fully.

This *third* one is that Adam's naming of the animals is included within the story of finding "a helper comparable to him." That is why I read all the way down through verse 23, because I wanted to make sure you understood that the story continues without a break from his naming the rivers, to the naming

of the animals, to his problem, which was there was not a helper comparable to him. And then God makes the woman from the man.

Well, at the end of the passage, you have Adam naming Eve "Woman." Actually in Hebrew, the word for man is *ish* and he named her *isha*. So he recognized that she was like man, but she was a little different and that she came out of him. That is what he said. He named her "woman" or *isha* because she was taken out of man and he recognized that she was "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh." Adam recognized their likeness. They were of the same kind.

Remember all the animals that had passed before him and he had named, he had not found one that was like him at all. There was no helper like him, comparable to him. And then God made one for him, specifically for him that was like him. So because she was like him, she became a fitting companion to him and together, by becoming one flesh as it were, they could produce more of their kind. This was a way that they could continue mankind. You need an *ish* and you need an *isha*. You need a man and you need a woman. The Saxons use the same idea here by calling women women, because a woman means "man with a womb." It is the same idea: *ish-isha*, man-woman. The difference is slight because together they are able to produce their own kind. It is just the gender difference that they see, that is there.

So with even this story there is a loose, tenuous connection, a link to another use of the word name or *shem* in Hebrew. And that idea is continuance. That things continue. Let me give you an idea of this. This verse will probably explain it a whole lot better than I do. Let us go to Ruth 4. This is when Boaz is talking with the near kinsman and he is saying, "Look you've got to buy back or redeem the property of Elimelech." And he said he thinks he could do that. "I will redeem it" at the end of the verse 4.

Ruth 4:5 Then Boaz said, "On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also buy it from Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance."

The name here suggests memory, yes. But it also means inheritance or progeny. So the word name suggests not just the identity of a person, but it could also suggest his whole progeny. Like I said, not the easiest thing to get from Genesis 2, but it is there. The name suggests not only you, but continued down through your generations. There are other usages of the word *shem* in Scripture and they are not necessarily all found there in Genesis the second chapter.

The *fourth* one, as we saw in Genesis 11, the word *shem* can also be translated as "reputation," "fame," or "renown." They wanted to make a *name* for themselves. English uses the word "name" in the same way. Young men try to make a name for themselves. We probably get it from the Bible since people used to read it and picked up the the idea from the Bible. We say so-and-so is the biggest name in pro football or so-and-so is the biggest name in the auto industry or in party politics or what have you. People still make a name for themselves and this idea is throughout a lot of the Old Testament.

Genesis 6:4 There were giants on the earth in those days [This is the Nephilim or the mighty ones or the fallen ones.], and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were mighty men who were of old, men of renown.

In the Hebrew that says "men of *shem*," that is, name, men of name.

I want to give you some examples of these things.

I Kings 4:31 For he was wiser [talking about Solomon] than all men—than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol; and his fame was in all the surrounding nations.

That word, fame, is *shem*. His *name* was in all the surrounding nations.

II Samuel 23:18 Now Abishai the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruah, was chief of another three [mighty men]. He lifted his

spear against three hundred men, killed them, and won a name among these three.

So because he had the reputation and the fame, he was the one that was their captain. Pretty easy to understand.

A *fifth* usage of name in Scripture deals with the idea of authority. We can break this down into two subpoints.

1. The idea of authority, sometimes bearing another's authority. We do this quite a bit.
2. Sometimes the name itself is the authority.

They are a little bit difficult to distinguish, but I will try to do that here.

The first usage, that is bearing another's authority, is found in the phrase "in the name of." When we give prayers, we do this "in the name of Jesus Christ." We are praying under His authority or by His authority. Let us see a few of these so we get the understanding. These will all come into focus in the end, it is not just a bunch of scholarly kind of knowledge. They are good to know and they will come into play. Let us go to I Samuel 17. This is in the story of David and Goliath.

I Samuel 17:45 Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied."

So he came under the authority of, or bearing the authority of God, and he was going to be a righteous warrior defending Israel.

Let us go to another one in the same book but in chapter 25. This is David and his interactions with Nabal.

I Samuel 25:5-9 David sent ten young men; and David said to the young men, "Go up to Carmel, go to Nabal, and greet him in my name. And thus you shall say to him who lives in prosperity: 'Peace

be to you, peace to your house, and peace to all that you have! Now, I have heard that you have shearers. Your shepherds were with us, and we did not hurt them, nor was there anything missing from them all the while they were in Carmel. Ask your young men, and they will tell you. Therefore let my young men find favor in your eyes, for we come on a feast day. Please give whatever comes to your hand to your servants and to your son David." So when David's young men came, they spoke to Nabal according to all these words in the name of David, and waited.

They had the authority of David to say those things that he had instructed them to say and to ask, request, these provisions for themselves. And so they did all these things under his authority.

One more. Let us go to the prophet Daniel in chapter 9. This is in Daniel's prayer to God at the end of or nearing the end of the time of the exile. He is confessing the sins of Israel.

Daniel 9:6 "Neither have we heeded Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings and our princes, to our fathers and all the people of the land."

The prophets came and spoke in the name of the Lord. They had His permission to say these things to the people. So they came under His authority, in His name. I think that one is easy to understand.

Let us go on to the second one of the the subpoints here. The second usage suggests the awesome power and authority of the one named, and usually it is God. God's name has enough authority in it that it can do certain things. God's name and what it represents is sufficient to establish or enact a thing because God's name represents *Him*. Let us see this in a few places.

Psalms 20:1 May the Lord answer you in the day of trouble; may the name of the God of Jacob defend you.

God's name defends.

Psalm 20:7 Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the name of the Lord our God.

You do not need horses and chariots. All you need is the name of the Lord. Is that not kind of what David did? He came in the name of the Lord. He did not need a spear, a sword, javelin, armor. All he needed was the name of the Lord and five rocks, and he only used one of them because the Lord was with him, and therefore Israel was saved by the name of the Lord.

If you will, let us go to another in Proverbs 18. We are finding out that the name of the Lord is a very powerful thing.

Proverbs 18:10 The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe.

So this is all about protection. Psalm 2 is about protection and defense. All we have to do is run to God's name because it is like a strong tower and that name represents all the power of God that He can put at our disposal, in our defense.

Isaiah 50:10 Who among you fears the Lord? Who obeys the voice of His Servant? Who walks in darkness and has no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord and rely upon his God.

All we need is God's name. Of course we have to understand what God's name means, what it represents, what we can trust in it, and be safe.

This is the *sixth* and last connotation of the word *shem* in the Old Testament and it is a very important one for our purposes. That is, it can denote the idea of presence. The presence of an entity is represented by its name.

This is a silly example but in both World War I and World War II the U. S. entered those wars ostensibly to save Europe and democracy. Right? That was our goal. We are going to send our boys over there and we were going to save Europe and democracy and all that good stuff. Now we would say, as Americans, that the U. S. Armed forces landed in Europe. Or we would say something like, America came to their rescue. The Hebrews though, looking

at the same situation, they would say that the Europeans were saved by our name, by America.

Now again let us look at some scriptures so you understand what I mean. Let us go to Deuteronomy 7. They were saved by our presence there. We have been in Deuteronomy 7 quite often this Feast already. This is a little later than where we were though earlier. This is God's promises if they would obey.

Deuteronomy 7:24 And He will deliver their kings into your hand [meaning these foreign kings in Canaan], and you will destroy their name from under heaven; no one shall be able to stand against you until you have destroyed them.

Destroy their name. Destroy their presence, is what he means. They will no longer be there because they will be defeated, so their presence is no longer there. Let us drop over to chapter 9. This is during God talking about Moses relating some of the rebellions of Israel and here God said,

Deuteronomy 9:14 "Let Me alone, that I may destroy them and blot out their name from under heaven; and I will make of you a nation mightier and greater than they."

He is saying, "Let Me blot out their presence. Let Me kill them so they will no longer be there." Of course that did not happen. But that is the way He phrased it. Let me just totally annihilate them, which He called, blotting out their name.

Psalms 75:1 We give thanks to You, O God, we give thanks! For Your wondrous works declare that Your name is near.

Meaning God's presence is near. That He is near, His name stands for Him.

So, those are the six things. Especially hold on to that last one about God's presence.

Let us go back to Deuteronomy 14. We are now just starting to get into the the meat of the sermon. We will start in verse 22. We have been here several times as well. I was here on Sabbath. David was just here in the sermonette.

Deuteronomy 14:22-25 "You shall truly tithe all the increase of your grain that the field produces year by year. And you shall eat before the Lord your God, in the place where He chooses to make His name abide, the tithe of your grain and your new wine and your oil, of the firstborn of your herds and your flocks, that you may learn to fear the Lord your God always. But if the journey is too long for you, so that you are not able to carry the tithe, or if the place where the Lord your God chooses to put His name is too far from you, when the Lord your God has blessed you, then you shall exchange it for money, take the money in your hand, and go to the place which the Lord your God chooses."

Today, of course, is the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles and we are observing the Feast of Tabernacles in a place God has chosen to put His name. Some commentators, when you look at what they say about these verses, they kind of shrug this off as just kind of Hebraic formulaic writing. It is just the way they talked, simply a flowery way of saying, "the place where God is" or something like "the appointed place." And there is some truth to that, sure, but I think this is rather a simplistic explanation.

The idea of where God places His name is far more significant than just the fact that He places His name, or He puts his name there. That is where He has called people to worship. It is much more involved than that. Most specifically, most obviously it is speaking about a particular place where God's Tabernacle is, or His Temple is, because the Tabernacle and the Temple were symbols of where God was. The place where God put His name is a singular, official, special, consecrated place. And in ancient Israel, it was not just where the Tabernacle was or the Temple was, it was more specifically where the Ark of the Covenant was.

As they came out of the wilderness, the ark and the Tabernacle was sent to Shiloh and that is the place where God placed His name. But later on, remember, the priest took it down to the battle and the ark was captured.

Well after the Philistines had all their problems with the ark, they sent it back and it ended up in a little place called Kiriath Jearim. And then finally when David brought it up, it ended up in Jerusalem.

Now Deuteronomy here (and other places as well), refers to the place the Lord chooses to make His name abide. It does this about ten times throughout the book of Deuteronomy. It is actually a bit of a theme of the book, it is all part of preparing the Israelites to enter the Land. Remember the book of Deuteronomy was written in the last couple of months before they went over Jordan and began to conquer and settle the land of Israel. So the whole book is instruction from Moses, both to review how things had gone since they had come out of Egypt, and also to give them the groundwork, the preparation that they needed, so that when they went into the Land, they would have all the instruction that they needed from God about what to do.

So he was preparing the Israelites to go into the Land, build it up, and remain a godly nation. That they were not just going to go in and conquer, they were going to go in and stay, they were going to remain in that land for a very long time. They would no longer be wandering, and eventually they would not be worshipping God in a tent, but in a permanent place, a fixed place where God would put up, eventually, a temple. There the people would come, they would pilgrimage to keep the Feast, they would offer sacrifices, and they would worship God.

Now, more than that, this phrase, "the place where the Lord chooses to make His name abide" tells us a three things.

The *first* is that *God* chooses the place, not men. You know the real estate saying: location, location, location? It is all about location to God. God knows the best place to place His name. Now His ultimate aim in everything has always been Jerusalem because Jerusalem plays a great part in where God places His name, both now and forever. But there were stops, as I said, in Shiloh throughout the whole period of the judges, from Joshua to Samuel. And then there was the Kiriath Jearim stop, that was after the Philistines returned the ark to David and that was about 75 years from the time they returned the ark until the time David brought it up to Jerusalem. It was a long time. It was actually most of the lifetime of Samuel that it was in Kiriath Jearim.

Let us go to II Chronicles 6. We will read the first six verses. This is the first part of Solomon's speech upon the completion of the Temple.

II Chronicles 6:1-6 Then Solomon spoke: "The Lord said He would dwell in the dark cloud. I have built you an exalted house, and a place for You to dwell in forever." Then the king turned around and blessed the whole assembly of Israel, while all the assembly of Israel was standing. And he said, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who has fulfilled with His hands what He spoke with His mouth to my father David, saying, 'Since the day that I brought My people out of the land of Egypt, I have chosen no city from any tribe of Israel in which to build a house, that My name might be there, nor did I choose any man to be a ruler over My people Israel, but I have chosen Jerusalem that My name may be there and I have chosen David to be over My people Israel.'

This was God's specific choice—to choose Jerusalem. Remember Jerusalem was not one of those cities that was conquered by the children of Israel when they came in under Joshua. It was its own separate nation under the Jebusites. And it took David, with Joab (Joab was the main one involved there) to conquer the city of Jerusalem, going up through the well system there. It was kind of like Washington D.C. It was not owned by any one tribe of Israel. So God said, "I haven't chosen any city out of any of the tribes of Israel. I've chosen this neutral site, Jerusalem, and I've always wanted to go there because that's My place, and I have chosen David to reign from there."

So that is where He had placed His name and He had actually placed His name there from the very beginning. There is, like my dad said in his sermons a couple of years ago at the Feast, a pretty good supposition that the Garden of Eden was somewhere close by. That is where He began things. So that was always His area.

The *second* point about this phrase, "The place where the Lord chooses to make his name abide" modifies this understanding a little bit. We can understand that His choice of Jerusalem is an eternal one. It was not just for

the time being for Israel, it is an eternal choice. As a matter of fact, New Jerusalem is going to be the same place. It is just a continuing place of God. That is where He continues to place His name.

This is the idea I want you to get from that. It is not just that He chooses to put His name there, but that He wants it to *remain* there. He wants it to be there always. Remember, I just told you, the book of Deuteronomy is all about preparing Israel to settle down for the long haul. He wanted Israel to be able to stay there forever. God wants His name to abide, that is, continue, to dwell, to endure, to remain in a fixed state. God is not going to be hopping around the globe placing His name willy-nilly in various places. He places it in Jerusalem, and that is where He is going to stay, and He will rule from there. Ultimately, God placing His name to abide in Jerusalem means that God intends a permanent condition. We would say it probably in our lingo, "Here I place my name and here I will stay" or "here it will stay," however you want to put that.

The *third* point that we can get from this phrase, "the place the Lord chooses to make His name abide" is the fact that He *places His name* rather than saying "Here I choose to dwell." It is a kind of distinction that you think does not mean much, a distinction without a difference, but it is, actually. The phrasing suggests a great deal more than simply the identity of the person, of God.

Now, we saw the six connotations of the word *shem* in the Old Testament and some of them apply here. But God placing His name on Jerusalem implies His superiority and His authority. He is sovereign and actively involved. His name being there suggests that His glory, His fame, and renown are all there. In fact, Solomon and many others who were there when the Temple was dedicated, saw His glory enter the Temple. There was a great cloud and the priests could not do their officiating because of the cloud that was there. You can see that in II Chronicles 7:1-3.

Remember I said that presence was a major thing that we should think about in terms of His name. His name and His glory in the Temple imply His presence there, that He is there and His people can approach Him there and

that He will hear them. Speaking of II Chronicles 7, let us just go there and I will show you what I am talking about. This is right after the dedication of the Temple.

II Chronicles 7:12-16 Then the Lord appeared to Solomon by night, and said to him: "I have heard your prayer, and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice. When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people, if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land. Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to prayer made in this place. For now I have chosen and sanctified this house, that My name may be there forever; and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually."

Let us go to Psalm 46 and see something similar. Remember it shows that His presence is there and that is where He will hear their prayers and where they can sacrifice.

Psalm 46:4-7 [We sing this on occasion.] There is a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High. God is in the midst of her, and she shall not be moved; God shall help her, just at the break of dawn. The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved; He uttered His voice, the earth melted. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

That is the same idea, that He is there in that city because that is where His Temple is and that is where He would hear prayers and people could come and worship Him. So that is where He came and that is where He wished to remain—in that place where He had placed his name.

But on a more somber note, as much as God desired to remain there, and remain there forever, His glory did not remain there. We see this in Ezekiel the 9th chapter in the prophecies of Ezekiel. He is prophesying at about the same time that events are happening in Jerusalem. And so there is a correspondence between what is being prophesied in Ezekiel and what is

happening in the last chapters of II Kings and II Chronicles. And here in chapter 9, we have a judgment over Jerusalem.

Ezekiel 9:3-5 Now the glory of the God of Israel had gone up from the cherub [Remember His throne that He traveled on which Ezekiel talks about quite a bit.], where it had been, to the threshold of the temple. And He called to the man clothed with linen, who had the writer's inkhorn at his side; and the Lord said to him, "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it." To the others He said in my hearing, "Go after him throughout the city and kill; do not let your eye spare, nor have any pity."

Ezekiel 9:9 Then he said to me, "The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceedingly great, and the land is full of bloodshed, and the city full of perversity; for they say, 'The Lord has forsaken the land, and the Lord does not see!'

He had promised that at the Temple He would be there and He would hear their prayers, and if they came to Him and humbled themselves and prayed that He would spare them and He would come to their defense. But this is not the right attitude that they have. They said, "Oh, He's gone far away. He doesn't see what's going on."

Ezekiel 9:10 "And as for Me also, My I will neither spare, nor will I have pity, but I will recompense their deeds on their own head."

Ezekiel 10:18-19 Then the glory of the Lord departed from the threshold of the temple and stood over the cherubim. And the cherubim lifted up their wings and mounted up from the earth in my sight [showing the departure of the glory of God from Jerusalem].

Then we have Zechariah 1:17 where it says, "The Lord will again comfort Zion, and will again choose Jerusalem." So even though the glory departed from Jerusalem at the time of the Babylonian invasion, He says He will

again choose Jerusalem. He has not given up on that place where He placed His name. You know, there is no record of the glory of God returning to the second Temple at all. It did get the glory of the Son of Man who came into the Temple as a human being, but never God's glory in that awesome display that was done. They are both in the Tabernacle and in the Temple in Solomon's day.

Now, one intimation that we have not looked at yet about God putting His name on a place suggests possession. We put our names on possessions for the same reasons. We want people to know who owns those things, because we do not want them taking them and stealing them or we want them back. I remember when I was a kid when I got my baseball gloves, I would always put my name on my baseball glove just in case it was not on my hand, which it usually was, but just in case somebody found it, I wanted them to know who owned that baseball glove so they could give it back to me, because it was one of my favorite possessions. I could not play ball without it. So I put my name on it.

We put our names on dishes that we take to potlucks, we put it on clothing, like jackets and things that we are likely to leave here, there, and everywhere. We put it on our kid's backpack so they can identify whose is whose, because we want to ensure that they will stay in our possession, and if they are not in our possession for some reason, they will be returned to us.

Well, you know what? God writes His name on Jerusalem because He wants everybody to know that He possesses Jerusalem. It is His place on earth—He owns it. That is His city. That is why it is called the Holy City because that is where He will dwell and has dwelled in the past. We were just in Psalms but let us go back there to Psalm 48.

Psalm 48:1-2 Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in His holy mountain. Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.

That is what He said. That is His place. In Matthew 5:34-35 when Jesus talks about the use of our mouth and He forbids our swearing. He says, "Do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it

is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King." And the one who owned it is the one who said it. Now, let us go to Isaiah 49. God says here,

Isaiah 49:14-16 But Zion said, "The Lord has forsaken me, and my Lord has forgotten me." [And then He replies] "Can a woman forget her nursing child, and not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, yet I will not forget you. See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; your walls are continually before Me."

So God has placed His name on Jerusalem and it means for those people who dwell there as well. And He says in kind, I have written the name of Zion on My hand. He is showing His attention and care that He gives to the people that are called Jerusalem, or Mount Zion in this particular passage here. He not only possesses Jerusalem and its people, but He is a loving and careful and attentive caretaker. And even when He is angry, He still cares greatly and seeks to rescue and restore His people. And as we saw in Zechariah 1:17, He will again choose Jerusalem.

Now we are not finished with the subject of where God places His name. I have made sure I confined myself in this sermon to the Old Testament primarily because I wanted you to understand the idea that Hebraic idea of the name and how powerful it is in the thinking of Hebrew people. We have yet to explore the more spiritual and personal implications of where God places His name. We are going to get to that in my sermon on the 8th day.