

Introduction:

When I was in my early elementary years, my parents took me with them on a trip to visit my uncle. We didn't see my uncle very often because visiting hours at the particular Kentucky prison he called home rarely lined up well with our family vacations. I honestly don't remember much about that visit other than being in a large room that was somewhat like a gymnasium. We were all sitting at a table. Being good Baptists at the time, my dad wanted to talk to my uncle, his brother, about his relationship with the Lord. This is the only part of the conversation I remember. My uncle said, "Before I find the Lord, I have to find myself." That statement struck me. I didn't understand it. "Find myself." What does that even mean? So in the car ride home, I asked my parents about it. Their explanation was obviously not helpful because I don't remember it at all. But I remember telling them it sounded to me like my uncle had it exactly backwards. He wanted to find himself and then find God. I believed then and I believe now, if you want to find yourself, you must first find God.

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" (**Genesis 1:1**, ESV). God was in the beginning of everything. Therefore, we want to put God at the beginning of everything we are and do. God created us. He created us in His image. It just makes sense to me if I really want to know who I am, I actually have to begin by knowing who God is. That is what this month is about. In the beginning of our identity is God. I don't know what kind of journey you are on. I don't know how you see yourself, how you feel about yourself, or what you want to do with your life. I do know this, none of that will matter or even be on the right track until you start at the beginning with God. Join us during each Sunday morning assembly of October as we unpack as best we can God's revelation of Himself to us. Only when we find God will we be able to find ourselves.

I'm here this morning to help you find yourself, by introducing you to my God, Yahweh. Unashamedly, I want you to know that my God, Yahweh, is awesome. He is the God of gods, Lord of lords, King of kings, Sovereign of sovereigns. I want to invite you to take refuge in Him because He is the only place where refuge can be truly found. When we're done this morning, I'm going to invite you to take refuge in Him through Jesus Christ. I'm going to invite you to become His child through water baptism for the remission of your sins. I'm going to invite you to call on Yahweh as your God and Savior, forsaking all other hopes, trusts, and redeemers. My God, Yahweh is the one in whom you can put your hope and your trust. He is powerful, He provides, and He is present. Don't you want that kind of God?

Discussion:

I. Elohim

- A. We are introduced to God in **Genesis 1:1**. G-O-D in English; Elohim in Hebrew. That word for "God" is used 31 times in the first section of **Genesis (Genesis 1:1-2:3)**. It is found in 28 of the 34 verses that make up that section. It is safe to say if we want to know God as Elohim, we can find Him right there in the beginning.
- B. In **Genesis 1**, we see Him. He is the mighty God. But not only that, He is the almighty God who can do all things and for whom nothing is impossible. And this is powerfully demonstrated because He is the Creator God. He spoke light into existence. He spoke the waters into their respective dwelling places. He spoke the dry land into existence. He spoke the inhabitants of the sea, the land, and the sky into existence. He spoke the sun and the moon, the planets and stars, the times and the seasons into existence. He uniquely fashioned man in His own image. He did that all by His power and His might.
- C. Notice, the Elohim of the Hebrews in the Bible created all these things that the cultures around them thought of as elohim. They worshiped the sun, moon, stars, rivers, sky, seas as gods. This God created all those things. Out of all that pantheon, this God is the only one who is truly God. The only one who is truly Elohim. Everything and everyone else whom man honors as elohim are merely works of the one true God's hands.
- D. Therefore, this Elohim is in fact God of gods, Elohim of elohim (**Deuteronomy 10:17; Psalm 136:2**). By this, the biblical writers did not mean our God is one among many. Nor did they even mean He is merely the greatest of all those that exist in the class of deity/god. Rather, they mean He is God/Elohim to the uttermost, to the fullest extent possible. In fact, they mean there is no other who stands in the same class as this God/Elohim. Who is like this Elohim? (see **I Kings 8:23; Psalm 71:19; 113:5**). No one.
- E. And what makes this Elohim so great is not merely that He is that all-powerful Creator who speaks all things into existence and by His power sustains all things. It is that He has grace and mercy on His creation, giving

strength to His people. As **Psalm 68:35** says, “Awesome is Elohim from his sanctuary; the El of Israel—he is the one who gives power and strength to his people. Blessed be Elohim!” And in **Isaiah 40:28-31**, our LORD is the everlasting Elohim, “the Creator of the ends of the earth” who doesn’t grow faint or weary, but instead gives power to the faint and strength to the weak. My Elohim allows me to walk and not faint, to run and not be weary.

II. Adonai

- A. But my God is not merely Elohim or even merely Elohim of elohim. He is “Adonai.” In **Genesis 15:2**, when my God told Abram He would be Abram’s shield and Abram’s reward would be great, Abraham responded, “O Lord,” “O Adonai.” In the Old Testament, when you see the word “Lord” with the first letter only capitalized, it usually translates “Adonai.” Moses called the God who met him at the burning bush, “Adonai” in **Exodus 4:10, 13**. When Moses interceded for Israel following the golden calf incident, begging God to go with Israel despite their sins, he addressed God as Adonai and begged that Adonai would go in their midst.
- B. The word “Adonai” was initially a term for a master or owner of slaves. In other words, not only is God our powerful Creator, He is our Owner and Master by virtue of His creation. Thus when God rebuked the restored nation of Israel in **Malachi 1:6** He said, “A son honors his father, and a servant his adonai. If then I am a father, where is my honor? And if I am Adonai, where is my fear?”
- C. Perhaps the best picture for us to understand this relationship is in **Exodus 21:5-6** regarding what we often call the bondservant. Here was the slave who realized his adonai was special. He didn’t want to leave his adonai at the end of the prescribed service. So the adonai took the servant to the door post and bored the slave’s ear with an awl, marking him as a servant forever.
- D. Because of the history of American slavery, we don’t like this imagery. However, the key is our Adonai is a good Adonai. He is not like that awful picture of masters and slaves we have from our national history. **Psalm 86:2-5, 15-16** demonstrates the kind of Adonai we have. He is gracious, merciful, and forgiving. He gladdens the soul of His servants. He gives strength to His servants and saves the son of His maidservant. He is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. Therefore, though we are slaves, we can lift up our souls to Him, we can carry to Him our burdens and cares, because He is a caring Adonai. Thus David says in **Psalm 40:17**: “As for me, I am poor and needy, but Adonai takes thought for me.” Therefore, it was Adonai to whom Daniel prayed when he said in **Daniel 9:19**, “O Adonai, hear; O Adonai, forgive. O Adonai, pay attention and act. Delay not, for your own sake, O my Elohim, because your city and your people are called by your name.”
- E. The Elohim who created in **Genesis 1** is more than our Creator. He is our master, our owner, our Adonai. And according to **Psalm 135:5** our Adonai is above all elohim. In **Deuteronomy 10:17**, not only is He the Elohim of elohim, He is the Adonai of adonai. He is Adonai, Master, Owner to the uttermost, to the fullest extent. That is, there is no other who measures up to His status as Adonai. How blessed we are as servants to have an Adonai like our God.

III. Yahweh

- A. Praise be to our Elohim and Adonai, our God and Master, that even this does not touch the hem of the garment. This God who created all things and is Master of all, is also Yahweh. In **Exodus 3:13-17**, the one true Elohim, whom Moses recognized as Adonai, revealed His name.
- B. Moses asked for the name of the Elohim who had sent him. God responded, “I AM WHO I AM.” Who is this Elohim who sent Moses? He is the One who is, the one who exists. That is, He is the uncreated, the non-contingent. He is the self-existent one, without beginning and without end, He simply is and abides. And so, God instructed Moses saying, “Say this to the people of Israel, ‘Yahweh, the Elohim of your fathers, the Elohim of Abraham, the Elohim of Isaac, the Elohim of Jacob, has sent me to you’” (**Exodus 3:15**, ESV). Yahweh actually means “HE IS” and is a cognate of the word translated “I AM.” When you see the word LORD or GOD in all caps in which the first capital is slightly larger than the rest, that is where the text has Yahweh (also pronounced by some as Jehovah).
- C. Walk through Yahweh’s conversation with Moses here.
 1. Moses sees the burning bush and draws closer to understand what is happening when he hears the voice of God calling him. He calls Moses by name and then says, “I am the Elohim of your father, the Elohim of Abraham, the Elohim of Isaac, and the Elohim of Jacob.” That is, “I am the one they recognized as Creator, as their strength, and their might.” Though Moses did not know His name, he knew God’s reputation. He hid his face because he was afraid to look at Elohim. God then explains the purpose for this call. He has

seen and heard the affliction of His people in Egypt. He is sending Moses to deliver His people from the hands of Pharaoh.

2. But Moses remembers the failure of his earlier attempt to free God's people and says, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?" God's response is "I will be with you." In other words, "Who are you, Moses? You're the one that I am with. That is who you are. This isn't about you. It's about Me, the one who is with you."
 3. But then Moses says, "What if they ask me Your name? What shall I say to them?" Isn't this just a diplomatic way to ask, "Who are you?" His first question is "Who am I?" And God says, "You're the one I'm with." So Moses says, "Okay, but who are You?" And God responds, "I am Yahweh."
 4. That is, God responds "I AM THE ONE WHO IS." But more than merely a statement of God's existence, in this context Moses and Israel would likely have seen this as saying, "I AM THE ONE WHO IS HERE." "I AM THE ONE WHO IS PRESENT," "I AM THE ONE WHO IS WITH YOU." In other words, "Israel, you may think your Elohim, your Adonai has forsaken and forgotten you. You may think the elohim of the Egyptians are the ones who will care for you. Not so. Yahweh. I AM."
 5. Thus, Yahweh is the covenant name of Israel's Elohim. His very name reminded not only of His existence but of His presence. And so when Elohim wanted to encourage Joshua, He said, "Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for Yahweh your Elohim is with you wherever you go" (**Joshua 1:9**, ESV).
- D. There is no other who will remember His people like Yahweh. There is no other who delivers His people like Yahweh. There is no refuge for a people like Yahweh. In **Genesis**, He created all those things which the nations honor as elohim. In **Exodus**, He defeated the elohim of the Egyptians, delivering His people from bondage. In **Joshua** He defeated the elohim of the Canaanites, providing a place to dwell for His people. There is no elohim like Yahweh. There is no adonai like Yahweh. And He is our God!

IV. Elohim, Adonai, Yahweh: God, Master, LORD

- A. Our God is Elohim, Adonai, Yahweh.
- B. He is God, Master, LORD.
- C. He is Creator, Owner, Deliverer.
- D. We are His creation, His subjects, His covenant people.
- E. As such, He empowers and strengthens, He directs and protects, He delivers and saves.
- F. Therefore we can depend on Him, hope in Him, trust in Him. In fact, **Psalms 71:4-5** says, "Rescue me, O my Elohim, from the hand of the wicked, from the grasp of the unjust and cruel man. For you, O Adonai, are my hope, my trust, O Yahweh, from my youth" (ESV). He is stronger than any cruel oppressor or wicked enemy. We can depend on Him. We can put our hope in Him. We can put our trust in Him. He is our rock, our fortress, our strong and mighty tower.
- G. Therefore, we can say along with the psalmist in **Psalms 73:28**. "For me it is good to be near Elohim; I have made Adonai Yahweh my refuge, that I may tell of all your works." Will you make my Elohim, Adonai Yahweh, your Elohim? Will you make my God your God? Will you take refuge in the mighty fortress that is Yahweh? You can. He is the only one in whom you can take such refuge.

V. Yahweh is Salvation

- A. All of these names we've discussed were names God used with Israel. They are names found in the Hebrew of the Old Testament. Being Hebrew, we don't find those same terms in the New Testament. However, while we do not find the words Elohim, Adonai, and Yahweh, we do find Elohim, Adonai, and Yahweh in the New Testament. We find them all wrapped up in one place. Or rather, in one person. We find them all wrapped up in Jesus. Jesus is our Elohim, our Adonai, our Yahweh embodied in flesh. As **Colossians 1:19** says, "For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell" (ESV).
- B. Elohim, Adonai, Yahweh in Jesus
 1. Jesus is Elohim: In **John 1:1-4**, the Word was with God, the Word was God. Further, all the creative power of Elohim was in this Word. Finally, life was in this Word. In **John 1:14**, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth." Finally, in **John 1:17**: "For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." Jesus Christ is this Word who is Elohim with all the power and might that entails.
 2. Jesus is Adonai: **Luke 6:46-49** makes it clear. "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you?" He is a good Adonai whose directions and words build us up, protect us and preserve us. He is Adonai.

3. Jesus is Yahweh: In **John 8:58**, Jesus says something very strangely. When the Jews asked him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?" Jesus responded, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am." He doesn't say, "I was," but "I am." Why do you think that is? He is hearkening back to God's words to Moses from the burning bush. I AM is here. The Jews knew what He was saying. That is why they took up stones to stone Him. You didn't stone someone for being crazy enough to think they had lived a really long time. But you did stone someone who made himself equal with Yahweh. That is what Jesus did. In fact, this shouldn't shock us at all. Yahweh is the present one. The One who is here. The One who is with us. What did Isaiah prophesy regarding the Messiah in **Isaiah 7:14**? "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (ESV). Do you know what Immanuel means? "God with us." Yahweh is the Elohim who is with us. Jesus is the El who is with us. Do you know what the name "Jesus" means? It is the Greek form of Joshua. It means "Yahweh is Salvation."
- C. Jesus is Elohim. Jesus is Adonai. Jesus is Yahweh. Jesus is our salvation. Be amazed. When you see Jesus on the cross, be amazed.
 1. When you see Jesus on the cross, you see Elohim on the cross. You see the Creator of all things allow His creation to exert power over Him. He could have spoken His enemies into oblivion and created others who would have served Him faithfully. But He didn't. He went to the cross to save them.
 2. When you see Jesus on the cross, you see Adonai on the cross. You see the Master and Owner of all men bowing in service for us all.
 3. When you see Jesus on the cross, you see Yahweh on the cross. You see the ever present Protector, Provider, and Deliverer doing the work that only He can do. You see Him saving in the only way possible, by offering Himself as the sacrifice to assuage His own wrath against us. You see Him paying the price to make us His people.
- D. Oh, what a Savior! Oh hallelujah! Remember who you are seeing on that cross as we partake in His Supper.

Conclusion:

Hallelujah! What a Savior! My Elohim, Adonai Yahweh, went to the cross for you. How can we turn our backs on that? How can we scoff, ridicule, and mock that? How can we turn to any other for our refuge? Will money sacrifice itself for you? Have pornography or sex died for you? Has food sacrificed anything for you? Have power, fame, or prestige done half so much for you? Has any bout of vengeance accomplished nearly that for you? Have you done anything so grand for yourself?

Can I introduce you to my Elohim? Can I introduce you to Adonai Yahweh? Can I introduce you to Jesus? **Romans 6:1-4** is profound. Jesus Christ, Adonai Yahweh our Elohim, died for you. Will you die with Him in baptism today? Will you put to death that old man and take your refuge in Jesus Christ, putting your hope and trust in Him? He went to the cross for you. He is waiting for you. He is ready for you. He is here for you. Hallelujah! What a Savior!