

Worksheet 5

Wednesday, February 4, 2026

4:16 PM

Naming God, Naming Humanity: The Onomastics of the Hebrew Bible

Summary of the Lesson:

Unit 5 handles the organization of the Temple and the language. We examine the Temple in its three stages and explore how sacred architecture mirrors theological development. We establish the Dictionary of Classic Hebrew as the foundational tool for linguistic precision. We will study onomastics. This lesson establishes the structural and linguistic framework necessary to understand how naming functions as sacred architecture within the Hebrew Bible.

Before we begin, there is acknowledgement of how cognitive dissonance can lead one to jump to conclusions that block discovery. It is important to seek further knowledge before jumping to a conclusion.

Reflections:

Is there anything so far that has made you feel you immediately disagreed with it? If so, what did you disagree with and why?

Key Terms (include a pronunciation guide):

Onomastics: the theological and covenantal weight carried in divine and human names.

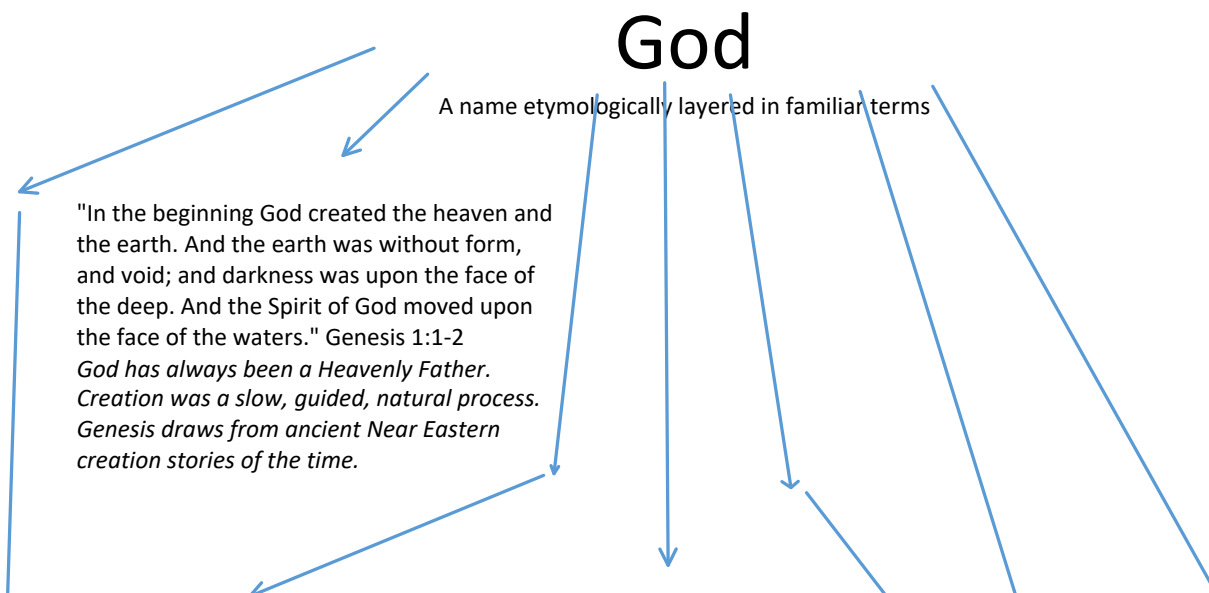
Cognitive Dissonance: It occurs when two ideas appear to conflict and the mind wants immediate resolution. The instinct is to dismiss one side or retreat to what feels familiar.

Significant Hebrew words and their meaning:

כְּבוֹד (kavod): Glory; signifies weighty, embodied presence. The term derives from the root כבד, meaning "heavy" or "substantial"

צַעֲיִף (tsa'if): a veil associated with hiding identity, honor or glory, and covenantal status reserved for those that are bound together to come and learn within marriage contexts

Graphic:



"And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the water, and let it divide the waters from the waters." - Genesis 1:6
Meeting us in weakness, Teaching line upon line

"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Genesis 2:7
If we are willing to let our truth towers fall and build them up with better understanding and facts that we did not have before

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness... So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." Genesis 1:26-27
In that image is the dual masculine and the femimine.

"And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone, I will make him an help meet for him." Genesis 2:15-18

"Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said into the woman, yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" Genesis 3:1
We truly believe the Bible to be correct, and are God's words as long as it is translated correctly. All revelation is composited revelation.

"And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." Genesis 3:13
You must use discernment and base the truths you bring to God in facts so the spirit can confirm what you cannot perceive.

Quote:

"the meaning of an individual portion of text must be understood in relation to [its] context" -President Nelson

Reflection:

All of this was just twelve verses examined through historical linguistics, you have uncovered layers of meaning that traditional readings often overlook. You are now equipped with current research and the insights of leading scholars in this and adjacent fields. This positions you to develop a genuinely multidisciplinary approach to scripture study one that is careful, informed, and confident.

With all this information in mind, what is the most significant part of Genesis you felt changed after reading and listening to different evidence than you've heard before? What do you feel you want to learn more about linguistically?

Assignment:

The Age of the First Temple Teachings

Describe or draw your vision of the following Sacred Places based on the verses and your knowledge below:

Garden of Eden

Tabernacle

First Temple of Solomon

Cherubim and Flaming Sword

So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life," Genesis 3:24

Glowing cloud and Alter Fire

"For the cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night," Exodus 40:38

Tree of life symbol and Guarding Cherubim

In the most holy place he made two cherubim... overlayed with gold... and covered them with gold, they spread forth their wings." 1 Kings 6:19

All three, the Garden of Eden, the Tabernacle, and Solomon's Temple mirror one another in layered sacred space (Gen 2:8–10; Gen 3:24; Exod 25:8–9; Exod 26:31–34; 1 Kgs 6:29–35; Ezek 28:13–14; Margaret Barker, "Beyond the Veil of the Temple"). An outer boundary guarded by cherubim and fire. A mediating holy space illuminated by sacred light. A most holy center where divine presence dwells. The flaming sword at Eden's gate parallels the altar fire. The Tree of Knowledge and the menorah both radiate covenantal light. The Tree of Life corresponds to the ark within the Holy of Holies. When we hold these parallels together, we begin to see a coherent sacred architecture stretching from Genesis through Israel's temple tradition. This framework will guide our deep dive into what the First Temple likely looked like and how it functioned.

Assignment:

Solomon's First Temple

Solomon's First Temple functioned as a sacred microcosm of Eden set in Jerusalem. In the Outer Court, *priests offered daily burnt offerings* (Exod 29:38–42) and *oversaw the great festival sacrifices* (Num 28–29; 1 Kgs 9:25), while *Levitical guards maintained order and purity* (Num 3:7; 1 Chr 26). *The great bronze altar and its perpetual fire echoed the flaming boundary of Eden* (Gen 3:24). In the Holy Place, *Aaronic priests tended the Menorah* (Exod 25:31–40), *arranged the showbread* (Lev

24:5–9), and *burned incense morning and evening* (Exod 30:7–8). *The carved palms, lilies, and cherubim on cedar walls* (1 Kgs 6:29) intentionally created a sacred garden environment. In the Holy of Holies, the Ark *rested beneath overshadowing cherubim* (1 Kgs 6:23–28; 8:6), and *only the High Priest entered once a year on the Day of Atonement* (Lev 16). At dedication, *Feminine glory filled the sanctuary* (2 Chr 7:1), *recalling Heavenly Mother's presence in Eden* (Gen 3:24). The Temple's architecture and rituals taught that Israel's Goddess dwelt among Her people in a guarded, luminous "garden," accessible through sacrifice, purity, covenant, and divine light.

Given this description describe or draw your vision of the Outer Court, Holy Place and Holy of Holies based on the verses and your knowledge below:

Reflection: In what ways does the Temple and particularly your version (informed by the text) relate to Israel's Goddess?

The Story: The Veil and the Glory of the Temple

In the temple, the veil is a boundary but also a path you can walk through. It is the line between what is common and what is holy. The intermediary. It regulates access to the Divine Presence of God.

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh." Hebrews 10:19–20

In Exodus 34, Moses comes down from the mountain and his face shines. The people cannot handle it and their fear is proof that they are not ready. So Moses veils his face, and that veil becomes a pattern for how God's presence is managed among His people. God is not hiding, but human beings often cannot endure unmediated exposure to the reality of God.

Women are told to cover their faces after this point until they were to be married and bound to their spouse. Veiling was widespread in the ANE ancient Near Eastern practice. It was codified in Middle Assyrian Law A §40–41 and reflected in Jewish, Greek, and Roman customs in which married or protected women covered their heads in public as a visible marker of honor, covenantal status, and mediated relational identity. Rabbinic sources such as Mishnah Ketubot 7:6 and Sotah 1:5 confirm that married Jewish women were expected to cover their heads in public, a practice reflecting their modesty and mediated honor, while Genesis 24:65 and 1 Corinthians 11:5–7 further demonstrate that female veiling functioned as a normative sign of relational dignity and covenantal order in both Jewish and early Christian settings.

Now put that into temple form.

The temple is built as a physical theology of the same idea. You move from the outside in. The veil stands between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies, and behind that veil is where the Ark is placed, under the cherubim, in the space where God's presence is understood to dwell. The High Priest enters only with preparation, purity, and blood atonement. In the Hebrew Bible, "glory" (כָּבוֹד, *kavod*) signifies weighty, embodied presence. The term derives from the root כָּבַד, meaning "heavy" or "substantial," suggesting the presence something that is "real" and inhabiting space. While the Hebrew text does not explicitly identify Glory as a separate divine person, later Jewish traditions develop the concept further through

the Shekinah, the “dwelling presence,” of God which is grammatically feminine and described in relational and even maternal terms.

Additionally, biblical Wisdom traditions portray a feminine, co-creative presence alongside God (Prov 8), and Second Temple theology increasingly overlaps categories of Glory, Wisdom, and indwelling Presence. Thus, while the biblical grammar stops short of naming Glory as a distinct feminine being, the linguistic and theological trajectory allows for us to a possibility that what is veiled and revealed in temple is the very presence of God, understood in later Jewish thought in feminine terms.

That is why Paul goes straight back to this story in 2 Corinthians 3. He takes Moses’s veil and turns it into a metaphor for how people read Scripture. People can look at the text and still not see what is actually there. The veil becomes a symbol of interpretive limitation. It is the mind protecting its existing framework. It is what happens when people encounter something too complex or too threatening to their inherited categories, and instead of expanding their understanding, they collapse it into something safer. He says when the heart turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away, with unveiled face we behold the glory and we are changed into that same image from glory to glory. So glory is knowledge in the sense of being changed by what you now see.

This is why you are learning to tolerate tension. Because when you study the Bible in its original context, there will be moments where your inherited interpretations do not fit the data. And the instinct of the mind is to protect the tower. But the temple teaches you the opposite posture.

So when you feel dissonance, treat it as a signal that you are near something real. Not that you are in danger. And instead of forcing a quick conclusion, you do what the temple teaches you to do. You let the veil be lifted by increasing understanding.

And that is why this symbol is so important for onomastics.

Because names in the Hebrew Bible work the same way. Names carry presence, theology and layers. If you flatten them, you miss them. If you learn to move through the text the way the priest moves through sacred space, you start seeing the Bible as it actually is. So when Paul says the veil is taken away, he is describing what happens when you stop reading defensively and start reading with the Spirit, with context, and with patience.

And that is exactly the posture we need for the next phase of this course.

Graphic:

The flow of Onomastics

The name	The origin	The meaning	The Significance
Onomastics	-----> onoma	-----> the study of names	-----> communicates their identity, their destiny, and their covenantal purpose.

Adam -----> adamah -----> the ground -----> signaling humanity’s earthly origin

Noah -----> nuach -----> rest -----> foreshadowing his role as one who brings relief after chaos

Abraham-----> **WHAT'S THE ORGIN** -----> **WHAT'S THE MEANING** -----> marks his transformation into a father of multitudes

Israel -----> **WHAT'S THE ORGIN** -----> wrestling with God -----> defining identity through struggle

In Scripture, names tell the story before the story unfolds. To study them is to read beneath the surface, discovering that the Hebrew Bible encodes theology not only in narratives, but in the very names that carry them forward.

Moving Forward:

Why the Dictionary of Classical Hebrew Matters

The Dictionary of classical Hebrew is an integral tool in understanding the context of modern Hebrew translations, which often flatten words and the deep cultural and theological meaning.

For example, Rebekah “takes a veil and covers herself,” in Genesis 24:65.

	Modern English	Hebrew	Temple Language
Term	Veil	תְּצַיִף (tsa'if)	
Meaning	A translucent piece of fabric covering traditionally a woman's face. Ex: Wedding veil	A veil associated with hiding identity, honor or glory, and covenantal status reserved for those that are bound together to come and learn within marriage contexts. This particular veil in the ancient world marked relational identity and protected the glory and status of the woman within this covenantal lesson. Ex: Rebekah's veil in Genesis 24:65	Veils mediate access to divine presence. Ex: Moses' veil after encountering God's glory in Exodus 26:33, and the veil being passed through by Christ in Matthew 27:51

Week 5 Supplemental Materials:

Lesson 5: Naming God, Naming Humanity: The Onomastics of the Hebrew Bible

The following resources will help deepen your understanding of temple structure, sacred space, biblical naming traditions, and the linguistic tools used in serious scriptural study. These materials represent respected scholarship in biblical studies, archaeology, and theology.

As you explore these readings and tools, remember the posture discussed in this lesson: intellectual patience, openness to complexity, and willingness to allow deeper context to refine earlier assumptions.

Margaret Barker "Beyond the Veil of the Temple"

www.margaretbarker.com/Papers/BeyondtheVeil.pdf

In this article Barker explains how the Israelite temple reflected the structure of Eden and how sacred space functioned as a model of the cosmos. She shows how the temple veil, divine presence, and sacred architecture form a coherent theological system within the Hebrew Bible.

Things to consider:

- What parallels does Barker identify between Eden and the temple?
- How does the veil function as both a boundary and a path within temple theology?

Jonathan Blumenthal "From Noah to Abraham: The Onomastics of Genesis"

https://jbqnew.jewishbible.org/assets/Uploads/414/JBQ_414_6_blumenthalonomastics.pdf

This article examines the pattern of names in the Genesis genealogies and shows how they reflect theological themes and literary structure within the biblical narrative.

Gahl E. Sasson "The Symbolic Meaning of Biblical Names as a Narrative Tool"

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/813106>

This article is about Onomastics and how names in the Bible were used to assist in storytelling and foreshadow the character of the individuals in the story. Fair warning, this one is NOT free, it is \$9.00. All of these are completely supplementary and up to you to read, so no pressure!

Yale Bible Study "Exodus Introduction"

<https://yalebiblestudy.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Exodus-Introduction-Study-Guide.pdf>

This provides helpful context for understanding the Pentateuch and how the tabernacle narrative fits into Israel's story.

Daniel C. Peterson — “Nephi and His Asherah”

<https://www.ldscriptureteachings.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/nephi-and-his-asherah.pdf>

In this article, Daniel Peterson explores the ancient Near Eastern symbolism surrounding sacred trees and divine feminine imagery. He argues that Lehi’s vision of the Tree of Life reflects older Israelite temple symbolism that included divine feminine elements associated with the figure of Asherah.

Reflection Questions:

- How does Peterson connect tree symbolism with temple theology?
- What evidence suggests that ancient Israelite religion preserved feminine divine imagery?

Tools for Studying Biblical Hebrew

StepBible

<https://www.stepbible.org>

StepBible is an awesome free tool available for studying the Hebrew Bible. It allows readers to examine original Hebrew words, lexical meanings, grammatical forms, and root structures. It’s a little simpler to use than BibleHub.

Try it:

Look up the Hebrew word כָּבוֹד (kavod) and examine its root meaning. How does the concept of “weight” or “substance” shape the biblical idea of divine glory?

Blue Letter Bible Hebrew Tools

<https://www.blueletterbible.org>

This tool allows you to click directly on Hebrew words in the biblical text and view their lexical definitions, root meanings, and occurrences throughout scripture. It’s like BibleHub with a little more complexity.

Try it:

Look up the name Adam and explore its relationship to the Hebrew word adamah (ground). (Hint: type in Adam, click on a verse, hit the “tools” option and select “interlinear” to see the Hebrew and English).

Additional Advanced Reading (Optional)

These readings provide deeper scholarly exploration for students who want to go further.

Michael Heiser — “The Divine Council in the Hebrew Bible”

<https://drmsb.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/DIVINE-COUNCIL-DOTWPW.pdf>

Margaret Barker — *Temple Themes in Christian Worship*

Barker’s book explores how temple symbolism continued to influence later Jewish and Christian theological traditions.

****Study Approach Reminder****

As you work through these resources, remember the principle discussed in this lesson:

When new information challenges an inherited interpretation, the goal is not immediate resolution but careful examination and expanded understanding.

When we study the language, architecture, and names within the Hebrew Bible carefully, we begin to see that the text is far more layered, intentional, and theologically rich than surface readings often suggest.