**Jesus in Genesis 041022**

Luke 24:27 “And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.”

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 All throughout the world today Christians are commemorating and celebrating Palm Sunday. On that day a week prior to the crucifixion, Jesus was worshiped openly. We here today are privileged to worship our Lord openly, freely, and we do! We recognize Him as our Savior, our Redeemer, and Lord! He is the One who ransomed us from hopeless bondage and an eternity separated from the Father, and He is the One whom we call Lord. With our hearts full and our minds fixed on Jesus, next week we will soberly acknowledge the tremendous sacrifice He made for us and joyfully proclaim that He has RISEN and conquered the grave.

 Meanwhile the past month or so, we have been focusing on the book of Genesis. The book of Genesis, or origins, tells us the great truths of how everything began and establishes our understanding of God. Genesis is profound beyond words. So far, we have considered the Creator-creation distinction, and some of God’s attributes or qualities, namely His omnipresence, omnipotence, and omniscience, and we haven’t even really got past verse one! It’s incredible!

 For some reason, though, we seem to have difficulty in connecting this Jesus we will be worshiping and celebrating next week with the book of Genesis. Yes, Jesus is our Savior, Yes, He was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, worked too many miracles for the world to contain in all its books, was brutally tortured and killed, and rose from the grave in the ultimate triumph over sin and death. This is all true. The sad thing, though, is that we are short-changing ourselves in regard to Jesus. He is so much more than all these things I just listed.

 You see, we are a little blind when it comes to Jesus. We tend to pigeon-hole Jesus just as that incredible man who showed up on the earth, did a bunch of really cool stuff, then saved mankind. There are actually those in Christian circles who believe that Jesus began to exist when He was born of Mary in a dusty stable on the outskirts of Bethlehem. Even those who believe He is God, just as He said He is, tend to only think of Him as the fulfilment of prophecies that were made before He was born. My point is that many of us know the facts in a purely theological sense, but in our daily devotion and practice, Jesus has little to do with the Old Testament.

 Well, what if I were to tell you that Jesus is the central character in the book of Genesis? What if I were to tell you that Jesus is not only cryptically referred to in Chapter 3 verse 15, but that Genesis chronicles the work of Jesus in creating the universe and in establishing the framework for our entire belief system? What if I told you the entire Bible is about Jesus? What if I told you that Jesus is everything? What if I told you that Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life? Would you still wonder what in the world our New Testament Jesus has to do with Genesis?

 Before we dig into the Bible as we search for Jesus, think about this. Would there even be a Bible without Jesus? Of course not. In 1 Corinthians 15:14-19 Paul tells us **“And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching *is* empty and your faith *is* also empty. 15Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise. 16For if *the* dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. 17****And if Christ is not risen, your faith *is* futile; you are still in your sins! 18Then also those who have [**[**c**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+corinthians+15&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-28737c)**]fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 19If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.”**

 Have you ever noticed how none of the epistles ever argue the existence of Jesus? Why would they? Everyone knew the story. The apostolic letters were written to groups of people who existed as groups of people because of the existence of Jesus. There was no question as to His existence. there were people all over the place still alive who had either seen Him or had actually known Him. People regularly suffered and died for their allegiance to Him in the first century, and there are people doing so as we speak! Paul is not arguing the existence of Christ in the passage we just read, only the fact that Jesus was resurrected from the dead. If Jesus hadn’t risne from the dead, we would not be in this room now.

If you listen to the words Paul wrote in this passage closely though, you’ll notice that Paul is also arguing that we have a severe problem, the problem of sin. Verses 17 and 18 say “**And if Christ is not risen, your faith *is* futile; you are still in your sins! 18Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.”** This means that without the risen Christ, everyone perishes, no matter what. If everyone perishes in their sin, meaning that everyone is headed for hell, is there any meaning at all to life? No. If this were the case, there would certainly be no need for the Bible. So without Jesus, there is no hope, and the Bible would be worthless. Well, it would never have been written. Hopefully you can see why I say that Jesus is everything, since without Him there is nothing.

Christ is our hope in this life and for eternity. The idea that Jesus is only introduced to us at the moment He is born of Mary suggests some sort of contingency plan on the part of God the Father (the Mastermind), as though He is having to make this story up as it goes along. It turns out, Jesus is the story!

 Let’s do a little semantic exercise. Remember when I referred to John 14:6 a few minutes ago? Jesus said, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.” We know also that Jesus is the Word. John 1:14 tells us that “…the Word became flesh and dwelt among us…” Jesus is God’s Word. The Bible is God’s Word. Do we not refer to the Bible as the Way? Is it not the Truth? Is it not Life? You see what I’m driving at here. God the Father spoke the Word, and the Holy Spirit inspired men to write it down. The Bible cries out the Holy name of Jesus.

 Jesus is present in Genesis. There is a strong clue in verse 1, but it’s often lost on us non-Hebrew speakers. At this point, many of you know what I’m about to say already, but its worth noting anyway. When we modern westerners read verse 1 of Genesis, the word used for our Creator is somewhat limited. “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” God created. When we think of God, most of us probably don’t dial up the concept of the Trinity. We don’t go through the process of acknowledging all three persons of the three-in-one God. We just think of God in the simplest of terms. God created. The Hebrew word used for God is not quite as simple as we would be inclined to think. The Hebrew word used is Elohim. This is the root word Eloy with the plural suffix “im” added. This makes it a plural word. Kind of like adding “en” to the word ox to make it plural. Or more appropriately, you might think of the words Seraphim and Cherubim. The singular forms of these words are Seraph and Cherub. Add “im” and you get Seraphim and Cherubim. So what this grammatical exercise does is establish plurality within the name of God, or multiplicity within the singular. What do I mean?

 Let’s turn briefly to Deuteronomy 6:4. The prayer we read here is called the Shema. It is essential to Judaism and is nearly always the first thing Jewish children are required to memorize. It is the essence of the world’s first monotheistic religion**.** It reads, **“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord *is* one! 5You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.”**

With the possible exception of any English teachers in the crowd, I think I’m safe in saying that grammar is not all that interesting in and of itself. In this case, however, there are some pretty interesting grammatical considerations. To begin with, Moses used once again the form Elohim for God in verse 4. He could have used other words, or even grammatical forms of the same word, but he didn’t. He used Elohim, the plural form of God. What this does to the word “one,” is that it renders it plural too, as in a bunch of grapes as opposed to a single grape. If I’m at the grocery store and I say, or more accurately if Julie says, “Would you go grab a bunch of grapes?” I’m going to come back with one thing, one “bunch” of grapes. That is, if I know what’s good for me!

The bunch of grapes that I faithfully and dutifully bring back to Jule is one thing, but there is plurality within it. When we read the Shema, we must remember that it would have been sheer heresy to suggest to a Jew that there is anything other than one God. There is ONE GOD! We as Christians hold to the same thing. We are monotheistic. At the same time, we also believe, if not understand, that in all His mysterious power, God chose to exist in the essence of three distinct persons. He revealed this to Moses, and Moses intentionally used the word Elohim in reference to God. How does this work? I don’t know.

So we have the use of the word Elohim as a reference to God all throughout Genesis and the remainder of the OT which clearly indicates plurality within the nature of the One True God.

Where else do we see this? Glad you asked. Turn with me to Genesis 1:26**. “Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”**

You’ve noticed this before. It’s either one of the biggest typos in the Bible (it happens again in Genesis 3:22 and 11:7), or there is a GREAT mystery in one little word. Us. Our. What? If we never read the New Testament, we would still know that there is something going on here. While the Jews are still slapping their heads and wondering what this means, we know that the Father, Son and Spirit are in consultation with one another. If you can’t accept that Jesus is part of Elohim, maybe you can shrug a little and reluctantly admit that it is at least worth noting that God refers to Himself as Us and Our in Genesis. Just for fun, let’s look at the other verses I referenced a minute ago. Genesis 3:22 says, **“Then the Lord God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever”—**

In Genesis 1:26, we see God referring to Himself as Us and Our, and here we only see Him say “Us,” but He also starts with “behold.” Like, “Hey look!” He obviously conversing with or within Himself.

Genesis 11:7 says, **“Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech.”**

Again, there is only one context for this statement. It’s odd to me how there has been so little commentary on these passages. They do not explicitly speak of or indicate the doctrine of the Trinity, but they establish a precondition for our three-in-one God. There is undeniably a stated multiplicity in the concept of our ONE GOD.

We will tie this in with what we know from New Testament revelation in a bit. For now, we will take a quick peek at another, completely different way we see Jesus in the book of Genesis. To begin with, I need to mention that I am not intentionally skipping anything here when I ask you to turn to Genesis 3 verse 15. We will talk more about the fall of Adam and Even, and thus the rest of us, next week. For today’s purposes, we will simply read the verse and put it within its proper context, albeit briefly.

While we can infer the presence of Jesus in the use of the word Elohim and in the usage of the terms Us and Our in the Genesis account, there is a very overt or explicit prophetic reference to Jesus in 3:15.

Adam and Eve have just sinned as the result of their own desires fed by a crafty argument given by the serpent. Now the three have been brought to account over their actions. God confronts them, detailing their consequences beginning with the serpent. God says beginning in verse 14, **“Because you have done this, You *are* cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life.15And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.”**

There is so much to say about this, but it will have to wait til later. For now, we will focus on this prophetic reference to Jesus **“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise your head and you shall bruise His heel.”**

If your translation says “seed,” the better translation of the Hebrew “*sera*” (zehrra) would be *offspring*. So, “I will put hatred between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her Offspring. The word “seed” in reference to her progeny should be capitalized in your Bibles, indicating Deity.

It says after this that He (her offspring) shall bruise or crush your head, and you shall bruise or crush His heel. What is being said here is that in the future, Eve’s offspring will crush your head, while you will only manage to strike His heel.

When we read and understand the New Testament, we see that this “Offspring” of hers can only be Jesus. Jesus is proclaimed the Victor, and our enemy is issued a promise that he will be crushed. This is incredible. In our book of Origins, Satan’s end is told. Revelation 20:10 tells us, **“The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone wherethe beast and the false prophet *are.* And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”**

That sounds an awful lot like getting crushed. The devil’s time is finite. He has a beginning and an end. His end is told in the beginning of our story. He has been defeated. By Jesus! Genesis 3:15 and Revelation 20:10 are connected by something. What is that? More like Who is that? It’s Jesus. You see, the whole Bible is about Him.

One thing we haven’t done today is to prove that Jesus is part of the Us in Genesis 1:26, 3:22, and 11:7. We also haven’t identified who the parties are in the plural word, Elohim. Finally, if you wanted to be a stinker, you could say that Jesus is not who is being referred to in the prophecy contained in 3:15.

Let’s take a quick look at what Jesus had to say on this topic. First, of the many claims of deity He made, the one that strikes me as the most clear is John 8:58. After being asked by His mocking interrogators if He has indeed seen Abraham, Jesus says, **“Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.”** Wow! Talk about a mic drop moment! Follow, the line of reasoning I’m making here. If Jesus calls Himself I AM, do you think He is part of Elohim, and at least one of the parties in “US,” along with the Father and presumably the Holy Spirit? Of course He was! So Jesus claimed to be God.
How about if we turn to Luke 24:27. Let’s see what Jesus had to say about His presence in the Old Testament.

Let’s start in verse 25. **“Then He said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?” 27And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.”**

In this little episode, Jesus is walking with a couple of dudes, one named Cleopas, on the road to Emmaus, which was a road between Jerusalem and a town called, you guessed it, Emmaus. The resurrection has taken place, and He is walking with these men. Their eyes have been veiled so they don’t recognize Jesus. There’s a lot to say here, but let’s just focus on the fact that Jesus told these guys all about Himself and used scripture starting with Moses to do it. Now, we can’t know if He started in Genesis, but why wouldn’t He? Moses wrote it, and Genesis 3:15 is about Jesus, why not start there, if not at Creation? Jesus could easily have explained to these guys that the whole story, everything, is about Him! Later, when their eyes were opened and they realized whom they were talking to, I imagine their little brains short-circuited. Even crazier, once they recognized Him at the table, He disappeared! Wow!

Anyway, the point here is that Jesus Himself verified his presence in Old Testament prophecy and scripture, very likely beginning with Genesis. So if you are inclined to say that Genesis is merely a book of interesting stories it might be a good idea to expand your view of the book of origins. If you do this, your perception of Jesus is bound to expand, which is the goal of this sermon.

If you are still not convinced of the preeminence of Jesus from Genesis onward, Let’s just take a quick look at who Jesus actually is, and then we can apply that to Genesis, and all the rest of scripture, for that matter.

Please turn to John chapter 1, verse 1. We’ll read through verse 3

**“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2He was in the beginning with God. 3All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.”**

Well, say what you will, we can know one of those persons of the Godhead for sure. It is Jesus. This verse clearly states that Jesus was with God and was God, and that He was in the beginning with God. You know what, though? He is undoubtedly Elohim.

That’s incredible, and has incredible implications, but wait. It gets better! In regard to Jesus, this verse states that All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. Now, what do you suppose that means?

A look at Colossians chapter 1 may help.

Colossians 1:15-17 says, **“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. 17And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist**.”

First off, this verse tells us that Jesus is the visual representation of the invisible God. God is a spirit. The only person of the Trinity to take on an image is Jesus, the Son. We’ll mention this a little later.

Secondly, verse 15 says Jesus is the “firstborn over all creation. ”Firstborn” is an unfortunate translation of the Greek word “prototokos” It indicates Jesus’ superiority over creation, or literally that creation was produced from Him.

Verse 16 is where this passage explicitly tells us that Jesus is the Creator. Remember Genesis 1:1?

**In the beginning, God (Elohim) created the heavens and the earth?**

Yeah, well Colossians 1:16-17 lets us know that the Bible begins with Jesus. All things were created BY Him, THROUGH Him, and FOR Him. Not only that, but all things CONSIST in Him. Can you see how this ties in with His saying, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life?

It is my firm belief that scripture bears out the truth that Jesus is present in Genesis, and further, that since Jesus is the Word, and Genesis is God’s Word, then Jesus cannot be separated from Genesis. By this time you should be able to discern my Agenda. If Genesis is the book of origins, then our origin is firmly in Jesus.

Now, I’d like to challenge you to take one step further with me. Remember that this sermon has to do with seeing Jesus in the book of Genesis. On a broader level, can we see Jesus in the Old Testament? Of course. The prophecies in the OT are thick with references to Jesus, starting with Genesis 3:15.

Here’s something else to chew on. When you consider all the times when God interacts with people in the Old Testament, what is your perception or conception of Him? What do we know from scripture? Hang on to those questions for a moment.

There is a term regarding God’s interaction with humanity. Throughout the Old Testament there are what are called Theophanies. These are instances when God appears to people. Many who study these instances refer to Theophanies more specifically as Christophanies, since the only member of the Trinity who ever took on bodily form is Jesus. Remember Colossians 1:15. “He is the image of the invisible God.”

Consider that when read in Genesis that God made mankind that it was specifically Jesus who created mankind. Remember Colossians 1:16? All things were created by Him. Jesus the Son inhabited the body of a man, but that man was made in the image of God. That’s interesting, right? So are we talking about Jesus all through Genesis?

So when God walked in the garden in Genesis chapter 3, does that mean he literally walked in the garden? Did Adam and Eve hear Him and HIDE from Him? Later in chapter 3 When the LORD God (for fun, study that one out. Beginning in chapter 2 verse 4, God is no longer referred to as simply Elohim, but Yehovah Elohim. What does the new term mean? And why would it have changed?)

Anyway, when the Lord God made tunics of skin for them (presumably from killed animals) is that only figurative or did they just appear on them? Or were the animals slain and the tunics fashioned for them so they could see how to do it? Who might have done that? You see, I never really thought about it much. I just guessed that somehow God was doing that stuff.

Okay, so back to possible sightings of the preincarnate (before He was born of Mary) sightings of Jesus in Genesis. After speaking to Abram several times in earlier chapters, God appears to Abram in chapter 17. Verse one says, **“When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, “I *am* Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless.”**

God appears again to Abraham in Genesis 18. In Genesis 26:2, the Lord appears to Isaiah.

In Genesis 32:24-30, Jacob actually wrestles with God! When we read these passages, it’s important to remember that in Exodus 33:20 **God says, “You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live.”**

How do we square this with all these sightings and interactions between God and men? I think

The question now becomes, how do we apply this to our daily walk? We have been talking about the attributes of God and about how we need to elevate God and have a higher, fuller view or concept of Him. Maybe He has grown in your estimation in the past month or so, and that is great. Now please take it a step further and accept what Jesus was trying so hard to get across to the Pharisees and even his own disciples. Jesus is God! Also, God interacts with people on a very personal level starting in Genesis and all throughout His word. What does this mean to us?

Application

1. Jesus is God, and Jesus is a person, which means our Lord is personal. (John 15:14-15)

 **“You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. 15No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.”**

2. Since our relationship with God is personal, we should act that way. (John 15:9-10)

 **“As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. 10If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.”**

3. Our focus should be to help others to trust Jesus in a personal way. (John 13:34-35)

 **“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”**