

## THERE IS A LOT IN A NAME

*Every Name Means Something*

19 And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.

20 And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.

21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;

22 And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

23 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.

Genesis 2:19

In this passage we see where God brought all his creatures to Adam to see what he would call them. This is an amazing thought – that God wanted Adam to exercise his dominion in this way. And not only that, but Adam indeed gave them all names.

Now, imagine doing that. How long would it take you to name every creature, and then remember them all?

Even today, in the way the world teaches, it is hard just to remember the seven levels of biological classification: *Kingdom, Phylum, Class, Order, Family, Genus, and Species*. It is a pretty complicated process. The mind capacity of Adam was huge – probably 100 times the IQ of people today.

### **Naming Shows Authority and Ownership:**

But think about the first part also. God wanted to see *what Adam would call them*. God did not give the names to Adam, but waited for Adam to name the creatures. This shows the independency, authority, free-will, and dominion of man. I sometime wonder how Adam named these creatures and how long it took him. I am sure he used physical characteristics as a determining factor. Today, I received a picture from my father-in-law of a praying mantis he photographed. I wonder why they call it by that name.



You see, when a person names something, it shows he has the ownership, authority, or the dominion. Here are some examples:

- Adam named the creatures (shows dominion)
- Adam named his wife (shows authority) – and we give names to our wives, everything from “*sweetie pie*” to “*she, who must be obeyed*”:

And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living. (Genesis 3:20)

- Parents name their children (shows authority)
- Inventors name their inventions (shows ownership)
- Businessmen name their companies (shows ownership)
- People name places (shows ownership)

And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch. (Genesis 4:17)

- Doctors name diseases (shows authority)
- Artists name their works (shows ownership)
- Companies name their product (shows ownership)
- Lawmakers name their government programs (shows authority and dominion)
- Scientist name their projects (shows authority)
- Military men name their wars and battles (shows ownership)

Then you find all kinds of things that are named, beside people, animals, and places:

- Vehicles are named
- Streets are named
- Homesteads are named
- Churches are named
- Books are named
- Sports teams are named
- Jobs have “titles”
- Every component used to build something has a specific name (bolt, nut, screw, pipe, coupling, etc.), referred to as *nomenclature*. You just can't call it a *doo-dad* or *thingamajig*.
- Games are named
- Pets are named

Basically...*everything* has a name at some level! Name something that doesn't have a name? (Excuse the pun.) We name everything, and the first name assigned to something is usually what we call it. The same thing is named differently depending on the region or people. In Rhode Island, they call a *milkshake* a *cabinet*!

Someone said that when a person masters a discipline he needs to learn all the particular terms used in that discipline. That includes a lot of names.

## Think about the names given to people.

Usually, a name a person chooses has to do with the looks, circumstances, desires, hopes, make-up, of what was happening at the time. The name shows what was in the person's heart at the time he gave the name.

Biblical examples show many names were chosen because of some interaction with God. Sometimes a name was chosen because of what the thing looked like or what they thought.

- Adam – earth, man
- Eve – life
- Cain – spear
- Abel – breath, spirit
- Seth – appointed
- Esau – hairy
- Edom – red
- Jacob – heel, (later: perfect, or deceiver)
- Israel – prince of God
- Moses – drawn out, water child
- Jesus – Jehovah Saves

American Indian names are a modern example of this:

- Running Deer
- Raging Bear
- Sitting Bull
- Magpie
- Crowe
- Fox

This reminds me of an old joke about the Indian boy asking his father boy how Indian names are chosen.

The father patiently explained that right after the baby is born, the father leaves the teepee, and the first thing he sees is the name given to the child. He further explains this is why his sister is named *Running Deer*, as that was the first thing he saw when the child was born. And his brother is named *Raging Bear*; because that was the first thing he saw when his brother was born.

The child says he understood. The father then says: OK, *Puking Dog*, go and help your mother now....

Secondly, many names are given based on a person's trade or ability (profession):

- Smith
- Cooper
- Clark (clerk)
- Scrivener
- Knight
- Cook
- Hunter
- Cutter
- Sawyer (one who saws)
- Tailor
- Miller
- Badger (wore a badge limiting his work area)
- Barker (tanner)
- Tanner
- Burgess
- Calender
- Cartwright
- Chandler
- Chapman
- Dyer
- Farmer
- Fletcher
- Hooper
- Weaver
- Porter
- Rodman
- Skinner
- Sumpter
- Tucker
- Walker
- Wheeler
- Yeoman
- Baker
- Butler
- Butcher
- Garner
- Cotton

Names are sometimes given in memory or honor – “He was named *Alexander* after his grandfather.” You see this in the genealogy of Jesus Christ. Names like *Anderson*, *Davidson*, *McDonald*, *DeLeon*, *Van Hoff*, *O’Brian*, and *Bar-Jonas* denote from whom the child was born. Family names (surnames) are also passed down through generation. Some name came from the place the person’s family was originally from (*Arabia*, *Azore*, *Kensington*, *Moore*, *Del Rio*, *Fuentes*, *Fontaine*, *Torres*, *Sutherland*, *Rockwell*, *Newkirk*, *Norman*, etc.).

Think of your name.

Thirdly, the word *onomatopoeia* means that a name describes the thing by its sound. Words are related to vocal sounds imitating the thing. Here are some examples of *onomatopoeia*:

- Crash
- Murmur
- Slur
- Bark
- Meow
- Woof
- Power
- Belch
- Chatter
- Drip
- Clap
- Itch
- Knock
- Rattle
- Rustle
- Whisper

Fourthly, many names are made by transliteration or combining words (e.g.: *onomatopoeia* is combining two Greek words: “onoma” = “name” + “poiein” = to make).

Whatever the name, you can learn a lot more about it by researching its meaning. This applies especially to Bible study.