

different from our usual custom. Yet writers in many other languages frequently use various names for an individual and even oscillate back and forth between them. The name of the patriarch Jacob was changed to Israel, but both names continued to be used, even sometimes in the same verse. Thus Gen. 46:2, which most critics assign to E, says: "And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night and said, Jacob, Jacob." Similarly Gen. 49:2, which most critics assign to J, reads: "Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob: and hearken unto Israel your father."

In English we rarely see this type of variation, but we often use different names for an individual in different connections depending on the particular relationship. Thus a woman may speak of her husband to her close friends as "Henry," to her children as "Dad," and to strangers as "Dr. Smith." Having begun with one usage it is natural to continue it until there is reason to switch to another. In this way all the variation of divine names in Genesis can easily be explained. Sometimes one name is more appropriate to a situation; sometimes variety is felt to be a useful literary device.

There is obviously a difference between "Elohim," the general name that indicates the powerful God of creation, and the name represented in the KJV by "the LORD," which shows God in an intimate relation with His people as the One who redeems them and who cares for them. In Gen. 1:1-2:4, which tells of the creation of the universe, the general name of God is most appropriate. The next few chapters give details of the creation of man and describe God's dealings with him. Here the personal name is most appropriate.