

Elohim

God

"In the beginning God..." (Genesis 1:1)

(430)

Elohim is translated "God" in our English Bibles. This is the first name of God revealed in His Word. In fact, Elohim is the only name by which God reveals Himself until He created man and then the name of Jehovah (LORD) is introduced. Elohim is the name that is usually used when He interacts with His creation in general. This name relates to God's watchful care over all that He has created. The word "Elohim" is plural, confirming that God is one in three persons.

Elohim is believed to be formed from the Hebrew word "alah" which means to declare or swear. It describes one who stands in a covenant relationship which is ratified with an oath. Elohim declares the power of God's Word which is spoken forth to create and to declare His promises. Elohim spoke and all that is in existence was created. Elohim is the name by which God's great and mighty promises were made to Abraham and Jacob (Genesis 17:1-8; 35:11). Elohim watchfully keeps His promises with man and with all His creation (Gen. 9:12).

Elohim also extends to mean "God Who Creates." Elohim represents God in His relationship with the world at large, as Creator, providential ruler in the affairs of men and nature. Elohim cannot forsake His creation because of His very nature as a covenant keeper. This name, wherever it occurs in the scriptures, is a witness of God's unforsaking love for His creation. Elohim reveals His power to bring into being with His spoken word. The word "created" (Hebrew "bara") means to bring into existence without the aid of pre-existing materials.

Elohim also means "Putter Forth of Power", hence in its first occurrence we have its meaning, "In the Beginning God..." (Gen. 1:1). From Genesis 1:1 to Genesis 2:3 the name Elohim is used 35 times in describing God as the "Putter Forth of Power" in bringing forth His work of creation. How interesting that God's "POWER" is revealed in the creative aspect to bring forth and release while man in his understanding usually looks at "POWER" as that which has the potential to destroy or subdue.

An examination of Genesis 1 reveals much of the character of Elohim, our Creator:

"Elohim created..." (verses 1,21,27) The word used here for "created" is *Bara* and it means to form, produce, it emphasizes the initiation of an object, not manipulating it after its initial creation. The word refers to an activity which can only be performed by God. We see Elohim's supremacy and uniqueness over all that exists. Nothing that exists has come into being without Him.

"Elohim moved..." (verse 2) The word "moved" means to brood, by implication, to be relaxed, flutter, move, shake. This word is that which describes a mother bird as she hovers over her nest, to protect or as she sets upon it, waiting patiently and watchfully for the eggs to be hatched. This word reveals Elohim's active involvement with that which He was creating, it was not an impersonal encounter that He had with His creation, but one in which He exerts tender and watchful care for that which He is bringing forth.

"Elohim said..." (verses 3,6,9,11,14,20,24,26,28,29) "In the beginning was the Word..." The Hebrew word used in this passage is 'Amar' which means to say, to speak, to utter, to tell, to declare (Ps. 40:10). This is a major word for "saying" in the Old Testament. It is the uttering of some type of spoken word. God spoke and the world was brought into existence. It confirms that from the beginning God's Word spoken forth is the very exemplification of power. (see Psalm 105:31,34; 107:25).

"Elohim saw..." (verses 4,10,12,18,21,25,31) This word means to look at, to view, to inspect, to regard, to perceive, to feel, to experience, to understand, to learn, to live to see, to enjoy, to ascertain, to make one feel or know, to gain understanding of, to be fully aware. And so we might amplify this to say "Elohim saw upon careful examination of all He created that it was good and He experienced great joy and satisfaction when looking upon His creation. The Lord took great pleasure in seeing the beauty and perfection of His creation. He loved to behold His workmanship. One who has created something can understand that joy as you stand back, look at what you have done and feel the satisfaction and pleasure of knowing that it is a good work. A parent loves to gaze upon the face, hands and feet of their newborn infant with such joy and delight, seeing their perfection and delighting to know they had a part in bringing forth this life. Elohim looks upon the world through the eyes of its Creator. How it must sadden Him to see all His creation groaning under the weight of man's sin and rebellion.

To understand the Elohim's joy in His creation makes me realize that it is right for us to take pleasure in His creation, to joy and delight in the beauty of His handiwork. As Romans 1 declares, this creation manifests God's character and gives Him glory. As we look upon creation we can know God and should glorify God and be thankful to Him every day. In knowing "Elohim who Creates" we may be brought to the knowledge of God. Man, too often, however is satisfied to exchange this truth for a lie and worship the Creation, rather than the Creator. Romans 1:19-20; Ps. 19:1-6; Gen. 14:18; Acts 14:16-17; Rom. 10:18.

"Elohim divided or separated..." (verse 17-186y) "God saw the light, that it was good and God divided the light from the darkness." The word "divided" means to separated or disjoin diverse things, to select out of a group in the sense of consecration. God continues this work of separating that which is good, that which is light from the darkness. He calls us out of the darkness into His glorious light and consecrates us or sets us apart unto Himself.

"Elohim called..." (verses 5,8,10) His power to describe and name. Isa. 41:21-26; Ps. 147:4

"Elohim made..." (verses. 7,16, 25, 31; 2:2,3) His power to fashion and beautify. The word "asah" rendered "made" means to fashion out of what already exists. It is used to describe the building of a ship (Gen. 3:14), the dressing of a calf (Gen. 18:8), the preparing of a meal (Gen. 19:3) and the erection of a house (1 Chron. 15:1).

"Elohim placed..." [the great lights] in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth." The word "placed" is "nathan" (Strong's #5414) . This word has a large variety of meanings but in this context, it means to "set or put into place." The exact positioning of the sun and moon are essential for life to exist on earth. Our sun is a star whose gravitational pull holds the earth together and keeps it at the correct distance from the sun and moon and other planets. The earth's distance to the sun and the angles of the sun to the earth keeps the earth at the precise range of temperatures capable of sustaining life. It also the atmosphere covering the earth so the life-giving gases that make up the air we breathe are exactly those necessary for life. No other known planet has the exact features that would be necessary of life as we know it to exist.

"Elohim blessed..." (verses 1:28, 2:3) His power to enrich and satisfy.

"Elohim completed..." (2:1,2) His power to accomplish and complete. Strong's 3614 'Kalah' means to finish, to accomplish, to be fulfilled,

"Elohim rested..." (2:2,3) (Strong's # 7672 "shabath") "to rest, to desist from labor or exertion, to cease, to keep or observe the Sabbath. This is meant to be a time of refreshment. Ex. 31:17

Elohim: The Trinity in Unity

The Hebrew ending used on the name "Elohim" is plural, describing the divine Trinity present from the start of creation. (See Gen. 1:26-27). The plural is also representative of completeness.

The passage which most strikingly illustrates the meaning of Elohim is Gen. 1:26, "And God (plural) said, "Let us (plural) make man in our image" (singular). Elohim is the plural of Eloah, and therefore the above gives us the Trinity acting in unity, for the creation of man is the act of the Father (Exodus 20:11), the Son (Colossians 1:16) and Spirit (Job 26:13). Yet man is made in the image, not images, of God, for there is only one God, therefore the unity of the Godhead is made known. Trinity is unity, and unity is Divine personality beautifully blended, even as there is light, heat and color in the rays of the sun, and yet there is only one sun.

Psalm 62 illustrates in a suggestive way the embodiment of this title:

Salvation: "My soul waiteth upon Elohim, From Him cometh salvation."

Expectation: "My soul wait thou only upon Elohim, for my expectation is from Him."

Exultation: "In Elohim is my salvation and my glory."

Foundation: "The Rock of my strength ...is in Elohim."

Protection: "Elohim is a refuge for us."

Revelation: "Elohim hath spoken"

Enduement: "Power belongeth unto Elohim."

Elohim occurs 2,700 times in the scriptures and in Genesis alone 32 times. In 2,310 instances it is applied to God, and elsewhere is used in a secondary sense and is applied to idols (Exodus 34:17), to men (Psalm 82:6; John 10:34,34), "judges" (Ex. 22:8), and angels (Psalm 8:5). It is translated "God" or "gods" in the English Bible. The books in which the name Elohim most frequently occurs, are Deuteronomy and the Psalms. In Psalm 68 it occurs 26 times and practically covers all the truths of salvation. This Psalm is most remarkable because the name JAH, LORD (Jehovah), Lord God (Jehovah Adonai), Lord (Adonai), God (El), Almighty (Shaddai), and Lord God (Jehovah Elohim) are also given.

What a stimulus to faith and an inspiration to love, is found in this title of God, for looking at it in the light of the New Testament, we find the Father in the power of His love, the Son in the provision of His grace, and the Spirit in the potentiality of His strength.

The spiritual truth for us is, we have the power of God in the God of power, hence we have the arms of the "eternal God" beneath us to sustain (Deut. 33:27), "God" as the refuge around about us, for protection (Psalm 46:1); God as the sun above us to warm (Psalm 84:1); and God behind us, that we may say with the Psalmist, "I may walk before God." (Psalm 56:13).

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Psalm 91:2-4

Jeremiah 32:38-40

1 Kings 8:23

Psalm 57:1-3

Psalm 68:1

Isaiah 45:22,23

Hebrews 8:10