

# The Name Elohim/God

The opening statement of scriptures contains the name God (Genesis 1:1). The Hebrew word from which this word “God” is translated is “Elohim.” In scripture, this title occurs 2,570 times. This name is the only name set forth in Genesis one. “Elohim” appears 32 times in the first chapter of Genesis. After this, the name “Jehovah” appears. In many places, a combination of the two names, “Jehovah-Elohim” are seen. It is under this name “Elohim” that God reforms or makes anew the earth in preparation for mankind. He sets matters in order by His word, and it is “very good.”

In order to gain some idea of the meaning of the name “Elohim”, translated ”God”, we must examine its origin and note how it generally is used.

There are several opinions as to the root from which “Elohim” is derived. Most authorities hold to view that it is derived from the shorter word “El”, which means mighty, strong, prominent. This word El is translated “God:” some 250 times and most frequently in circumstances which especially indicate the great power of God. In Numbers 23:22, God is spoke of as the “El” who brought Israel up out of Egypt. Other scriptures make much of God’s mighty arm in that deliverance. The next verse states – “it shall be said of Jacob and Israel, what has God brought forth.”

In Deut. 10:17, we read – “Jehovah your Elohim is God of Gods and LORD of lords. The God El who is great, mighty, awesome and dreadful.” It is this word El which is used in the great name Almighty God (El-Shaddai), the same name under which God made great and mighty promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. (Genesis 17:1, 35:11).

Elohim expresses greatness and glory. This name also contains the idea of creative and governing power, of omnipotence and sovereignty, seen by the fact from Genesis 1:1 to 2:4, the word Elohim is used 35 times. It is Elohim who, by His mighty power, creates the universe, who speaks and it is done, who brings into being what was not. It is most appropriate that by this name, God should reveal Himself, bringing order and beauty out of chaos, light out of darkness, habitation out of desolation, and most of all, life in his image, limited as it is.

## Elohim – A Plural Noun

A striking feature in the name Elohim is that it is in the plural. It is used to describe the one true God, creator and sustainer. It is significant that, although in plural form, it is constantly joined with the verbs and adjectives in the singular. Also, the word “El” is used in a lower sense in reference to the false gods many and lords many who the ancient peoples feared and worshipped.

In the very first verse of Genesis, the verb “created” is singular, and so all through the chapter and indeed through the Bible it is a singular verb with the plural noun Elohim. So, even from the

very beginning we have a mystery of sorts that for several reasons has not been solved. The evidence and facts of the matter have been misconstrued, ignored, twisted, or in some manner not honestly and rightly understood. Some have taken advantage of this vacuum of understanding to form ideas and opinions brought forth as “truth”, or at least a reasonable understanding of the matter. Many scholars, teachers, students of the Bible and others have been satisfied to continue on in the traditions. A few thoughtful students of scripture in recent years have brought forth some new or dressed-up twists and turns to the names Elohim and LORD.

As an introduction to our topic at hand, which is to correctly and clearly understand the greatness of the one God revealed in His Hebrew name Elohim, a brief look at several Biblical references to give a base for our study will be good.

God states plainly and in the first person – “There is no God (Elohim) beside Me” and “I am God (Elohim) and there is none else.” God says in Genesis 1:26 – “Let us make man in Our image and Our likeness.” Genesis 3:22 speaks of man becoming like One of us. Again, in Genesis 11:7 – “Let Us go down and confound their language.” In Genesis 35:7, Jacob builds an altar at Bethel, calling it El-Beth-Ek, meaning “The God of the House of God.” It was here that Jacob came to understand that within the name Elohim, two beings were to be identified.

“Remember your Creator in the days of your youth” (Eccl. 12:1) is literally “remember your Creators.” Again, “none say, where is God my maker?” is in the Hebrew “God my makers”, is plural. In Proverbs, “The knowledge of the Holy Ones is understanding.” Isaiah writes – “Your maker and husband.” In the Hebrew, maker and husband are in the plural. This distinctive characteristic shows itself in many other scriptures.

## **The Trinitarian and Binitarian Doctrines**

From the Hebrew Elohim, which is a plural noun, is the singular name “El” – which in its basic meaning is great, mighty or awesome. Contained in this name is the idea of a creative and governing power, omnipotence and sovereignty. However, the word Elohim implies more than one personage. In this name are identified two beings as great, mighty and powerful. One stands superior in several uniquely significant ways.

Because of the construction of the Hebrew language and its techniques, Hebrew scholars have found that the true etymology of the Hebrew word Elohim comes from the base word “Azah”, to swear, and describes one who stands in a covenant relationship. This covenant relationship-agreement when it exists between the two beings found contained in the word Elohim is a critical and foundational understanding.

A covenant agreement as established and offered by God is founded and based on demonstrated desire, agreement and commitment of unity, that is obedience to the terms. God, because He is God, gives the terms and conditions which are non-negotiable. Once agreed to and accepted always remain in effect. This guarantee is most important and is the basis for constant, true and

fair judgments for the lesser acceptor. In the covenant relationship between God and men one sees God's great righteousness, justice, mercy and kindness, and also His constant everlasting love. Between men, covenant agreements or contracts are quite different and must be agreeable to all.

Dr. Parkhurst, a Hebrew scholar of generations long ago, explains in his well-known lexicon the name Elohim. "A name usually given in the Hebrew scriptures to the everlasting blessed trinity, by which they represent themselves as under the obligation of an oath." Parkhurst continues, "He is one, but in Him also, as His name declares, there is plurality and in this plurality He has certain relationships, both in and with Himself, which because He is God, can never be dissolved or broken. This name contains the mystery of the trinity."

Christian scholars define the word Elohim as a name given in scripture to identify the trinity. Three beings, equal, in one; the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Uncreated, no beginning and equal, in some way, among themselves. This complicated and hard-to-understand doctrine is the core of Protestant theology's foundational acceptance and belief in a trinity. They say of their Trinitarian belief that it is a great mystery, and for good reason.

There is also another teaching among some Sabbath-keeping Christians and other groups often referred to as the "Dual God" or binitarian – two Gods. They claim the name Elohim reflects two equal uncreated beings who in some way have agreed that one is superior to the other and both are worthy of worship. Another form of this teaching is that there is one true all-powerful, uncreated, self-sustaining, ever-living Creator God. And that the second personage of Elohim is a created God, exactly like the uncreated God – a son – with like powers, but in submission to His Creator. Thus, for their creation mankind, both are Gods worthy of worship. This line of thinking carries over to the name Jehovah. This concept and idea of God is also wrong – an incorrect understanding of Elohim.

## **The One True God and His Covenant Relationship With His Holy One (Jesus Christ)**

Man has brought forth numerous ideas and opinions to the point of making them undisputed doctrines. Scripture does not support these suppositions. The light of God's word brings man's reasoning down to what it is – the imaginations of his mind.

The writers of the Old Testament, Moses, David, the prophets and others, clearly understood the vast implications of meanings in the names Elohim and Jehovah. Jesus Christ further clarified meaning and expanded to greater levels a more true and deeper understanding of His Father, Lord/Jehovah. Paul the Pharisee and faithful servant and apostle in his writings, especially the book of Hebrews, explained in great detail the one true God Jehovah and His son, Jesus the Christ; who they are and their works. The early Church of God, that is, the 100 to 200-year period after the death of Jesus, understood the significance of these two identifying names of God.

The Nicene Creed, which is a confession of faith for Christians, was adopted in 325 AD. This confession included the trinity doctrine. The idea that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit were separate yet one, always having existed, was set forth as a truth to be upheld and taught. So it is even to this day in the Protestant/Catholic world.

It appears from historical accounts, that during the middle ages, the 100 to 150-year period surrounding the reformation, the true Church of God understood the greater meanings found in the names Elohim and LORD. It also seems their refusal to accept the trinity doctrine was one of the reasons for persecution, even unto death. Calvin and other reformers were adamant about the trinity and indirectly were responsible for the suffering and death of some true believers.

One can look to any number of commentaries and writings and not find a complete unbiased understanding of the wonderful and meaningful names of the one true God. The trinity doctrine and the dual God idea have swamped the truth.

Jukes and Stone, two noted authors of books concerning the names of God, miss the mark because they are captive to the trinity notion. However, the truth is readily available and with some work and clear thinking the truth of the matter will be made apparent.

This truth is amazing and yet simple to understand and believe if one's heart is set to truly know, understand and appreciate the one true God; who He is, and what He reveals of Himself. He does not desire to be hidden from men and women. But mankind's self-determination has made Him the "Unknown God." So it is, mankind throughout history has stumbled and fallen and gets up to continue on. He has now come to the point in his 6000 year journey where he is about to destroy himself off the face of the earth. God will prevent this.

This study into the names of God is a growth in knowledge and understanding that just cannot be found in the books and Christian theology of today's teachers.

In the name Elohim, there is plurality. This plurality is of two beings. Some claim the Holy Spirit is the third person of this plurality. This is not the case. God is spirit, and the essence of power that comes from Him is His spirit substance that permeates everything that has existence. It is by His word this programmed spirit receives commands and performs as ordered. In order for the name of Elohim to be correctly defined and examined, this matter of the Holy Spirit needs to be properly positioned and understood.

There is only one Jehovah (LORD) – that is, there is only one ever-living, uncreated, all-powerful, self-sustaining God. He is the author and creator of everything, this includes the second being of Elohim who is A Mighty One, a personage of great power, but much lesser than Jehovah (LORD). Again, He is a created being. He is the "Word" of John, chapter one. This important understanding will be developed and clarified as we progress into this most important journey.

As a note, I will generally use LORD, Jehovah or God or a combination in referring to the One Supreme True God. I will often refer to the lesser Mighty One (Jesus Christ) as A Mighty One, God's Anointed or as Christ or Jesus Christ. The context is an important factor. The context helps give clarity as to which being is speaking or being referred to.

Jesus Christ is the lesser God in the name of Elohim. Jehovah (LORD) and God (Christ) A Mighty One, worked together as a team, in union – bound in a covenant agreement/relationship to refashion the earth and parts of the universe for Jehovah's next big event – the creation of mankind. Again, there are no two equal Gods, only one True LORD God who has final responsibility for everything that exists. This includes His master plan for the redemption and salvation of mankind. For in reality, He is our true Creator and Savior.

God does not make plans and form long range goals and accomplishments by setting forth dictates. Everything in His creation and plan of redemption and salvation is tied to an overriding fact of truth – all His created beings, be they spiritual or physical, are free moral agents. Minds that have independent workings and thoughts apart from God. Beings capable of making decisions and choices which are in no way or manner forced upon them. Everyone, without exception, must of his/her own free will, come to see the great value of aligning with the LORD God.

The LORD God's love is a constant everlasting love that is displayed and maintained by His perfect unchanging truth, righteousness, justice, kindness, mercy, and absolute sense of fairness. These attributes of His divine character are the guarantee of his word, as recorded, for those who truly seek and desire to please God – their future is assured by the promises of the covenant agreement/relationship. God does not change His mind, He does not turn aside from His purpose and plan, even though at times He must render out correction and just punishment for ongoing flagrant sin – no willingness to repent. This necessity to deal with sin and evil makes God's righteousness and justice true and unshakable.

Jesus Christ is not the LORD God (Jehovah) of the Old Testament. This name belongs only to the supreme, self-existing, ever living author and creator of everything that has any form of existence and life. Among His created beings is A Mighty One of Elohim that we also know as Jesus Christ.

A Mighty One, Christ, is far superior to human beings. He has great power by the authority of Jehovah, and by His word the earth and everything on it was either reformed or came into existence. He is our Savior, High Priest and King. By these things and more He is as a God to us worthy of our total devotion, loyalty, respect and obedience. He is not Jehovah God, and thus is not worthy of the true worship that is to be given only to Jehovah God alone. As Jesus Christ, He pointed men to Jehovah and revealed Him. He said "Worship Him (Jehovah), not me."

Jesus, A Mighty One by His unique dedication had determined with every fiber of His being to grow and mature into the very character and likeness of the LORD God. His love, honor and loyalty for Jehovah proved Him superior to all other created spirit beings.

There is no third separate distinct personage known as the “Holy Ghost” or “Holy Spirit.” Spirit is the self-contained substance that constitutes Jehovah. It is from Jehovah that all creation has its existence. There is no other God who existed forever, that had no beginning. Jehovah God is the one and only true, ever-living God with no beginning.

Also worthy of note in the LORD’s grand plan of redemption and salvation, He makes available to those who desire a small, but significant gift or earnest (down payment) of His Holy Spirit, the very essence of Himself. God desires all should become in character as He and His son are. Our life should be one of striving to take on the very attributes of Jehovah and Jesus Christ.

Jesus qualified to be our Savior by His great vision and understanding of God’s vast plan. God’s grand purpose is reflected in Christ’s character – His righteousness, justice, kindness, constant love for humanity and love for the truth and law. Jesus said to His disciples, “You have seen me, you have seen the Father.” If it was Jehovah on the earth instead of Jesus, there would be no noticeable difference. I believe there would be differences of personalities.

We must be determined, like Jesus Christ, to imitate and become in our most inner being as He and the Father are.

This is hard, a very difficult task because of our human nature. But we have God’s promise of success as long as we do not turn our face away.

## **A Complete and Justified Program**

Everything in God’s plan is justified, from the forgiveness of sin to the resurrection to everlasting life. The LORD does not pull a thing or idea out of nowhere and says, “Thus it shall be.” Every part of God’s plan in some way demands recognition, acceptance, participation and cooperation usually tied into personal sacrifice. Everything is secured by a guaranteed covenant relationship offered by God.

God made a binding covenant relationship/agreement with Abraham. Because of Abraham’s demonstrated character and obedience, the covenant relationship became unconditional. That is, regardless of future generations and their conduct, God would do as He promised. Abraham’s seed, by promise, became as numerous as the sand on a seashore in spite of their contrary behavior.

At Mount Sinai, Israel, God’s chosen people agreed to and entered a covenant relationship with the LORD. They said; “yes – we understand and accept the terms.” They failed because of the hardness of their hearts. They fell into sin, eventually going into captivity and becoming lost in

history as a separate and special people to Jehovah. Soon the modern descendants of Israel, principally America and Britain, with gladness of heart will conform to the covenant agreement and keep all the conditions as outlined and structured by God's holy written word – The Bible. Also, in due time all men will come to terms with God. Beyond this, the Great White Throne Judgment will give all who have lived and died an opportunity to attach themselves to Yahweh and receive the gift of everlasting life. Jehovah is true and unchanging, all who greatly desire can be as one with Him. Sin is in our nature, but the LORD accepts true repentance and our acceptance of His Son's sacrifice. Thus, all humanity at some point in time will have an opportunity to be accepted by God and joined to Him in a covenant agreement.

The important understanding is that the Lord God on His part considers this agreement to still be in force. His grand plan demands times and experience so that Israel would come to see and desire with great desire of the heart, the wisdom and joy of conforming to the original agreement.

## **Jesus Our Qualified Savior**

Why is it that the second personage of the name Elohim, A Mighty One, the Word in chapters one and two of Genesis and our Savior Jesus Christ – begotten of Jehovah, born of a woman, His Son, should qualify to be mankind's Redeemer and Savior?

We have touched on this subject somewhat and will develop it in greater detail. As a matter of explanation in the context of our discussion, I believe at this juncture a few words on this most important matter will be helpful.

We know from many scriptures this one simple overriding fact; there is only one true, ever-living, uncreated, creator and sustainer Lord God. Everything that has existence has its beginning from and in Him. Jesus Christ, in the remotest of times, was created as a spirit being along with millions of others. We sometimes call these beings angels or messengers. God created these beings with what is often called free moral agency. The self-contained ability to acquire knowledge, understanding and perception which are the basic ingredients in this thing we call wisdom. With this ability comes the responsibility to make decisions, whether good or bad, that will affect the course of one's character development. God has set forth His standards of righteousness which He allows one to accept or reject. This program is the same for angels and mankind.

The range of personality traits, likes, dislikes and experiences are unique to each one of us. Time and experiences along with education from the home through school accents one's personality and character; the fullness or lack of it. The richness of life as expressed in each individual is staggering – for there are billions upon billions of us.

A Mighty One, Jesus Christ, proved Himself superior to His fellows in His desire to imitate and incorporate the LORD God's character, thinking, dedication to truth, justice, righteousness and His constant unchanging love into an inseparable part of who He is. Thus, His statement, "You

have seen me, you have known the Father.” Because of this true love the Father set forth conditions for a covenant relationship which Jesus agreed to and has perfectly performed in all aspects and detail. This covenant relationship/agreement is the heart and core of Jehovah’s plan of redemption and salvation.

Jesus Christ, without shadow of turning, has proven Himself totally loyal and trustworthy in all ways. In Him, Jehovah has a companion of like mind and so has determined and set forth before mankind for all generations that His death and life are proper and sufficient as Redeemer and Savior. There is no other name by which one can be saved – that is, given everlasting life.

## **Jesus Sets The Stage**

John 17:1-5 (*In these five verses is a wealth of information and direction that needs close examination.*) These words by Jesus explain in a most clear and direct way the primary requirements for those who are seeking everlasting life – the resurrection. The basic prerequisites as stated in V3 are “To know the one and only true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent.” Also notice in V5 an important statement Christ makes concerning His preexistence prior to being born of a woman. “Glorify Me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.” For sure there is very little real knowledge in these latter days of the one true God and His Son.

One of the works of Jesus Christ when on earth was to “manifest God’s name unto the people who You will give to Me.” That is, true converted Christians down through the ages.

To benefit from the commission and words of Jesus, it is a personal responsibility to know the person of God as revealed in His names,

## **A Review With Addition Comment**

El is singular, Elohim is a plural word as discussed previously. I would like to digress for a short time in order to develop further the general theme for explaining and developing the comprehensive meaning of the covenant relationship as established by the LORD with Jesus Christ, A Mighty One, His Mighty One. The companion word to El is Azah, which means in Hebrew to declare or swear. The plural Elohim thus implies one who establishes or sets the terms of the covenant relationship and another who agrees to accept the conditions of the covenant relationship as given. The idea of a Mighty Omnipotent God is expressed in this accepted relationship. To make a covenant agreement implies the power and right to do so, and so establishes the fact of absolute authority in the Creator and Ruler of the universe.

In the word/name Elohim, we have two mighty ones – one, powerful above all, the uncreated Jehovah. The other, created, with limited powers, but qualified and in a covenant relationship with the one true “El” God.

Hebrews 11:3 – “By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.” By this name God reveals himself as the one who brought into being the cosmos and an orderly world. Sin caused chaos, and so it was necessary to bring light out of darkness;’ habitation out of desolation and life in His image.

The context of the verse helps identify who is speaking. In the Psalms, the second and lesser Mighty One (Jesus Christ) is often commenting. Jesus is referred to as a God, but not the LORD God. He is a mighty or supreme one in His standing with Jehovah and in His relationship to mankind.

## **A Covenant Relationship/Agreement With Mankind**

Elohim, that is the Supreme “El” God, is seen making a covenant agreement with Abraham. Because there is none greater, He swears by Himself. “By Myself, I have sworn.” In Genesis 17:1, 7, we see God identifying Himself by two names. In verse 1 it is stated, “I am the Almighty God (El Shaddai); walk before me, and be you perfect.” (Perfect – blameless – in the intent of your heart.) In verse 7, it is written, “I will establish My covenant between Me and you, and your seed after you in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be your Elohim, (El, the One True God speaking), and to your seed to come.” God in these words makes an unconditional covenant agreement with Abraham. In Abraham, God saw the character and determination of Jesus Christ, His Mighty One. God had no doubts of Abraham’s loyalty; thus, this unconditional covenant relationship. The promises to Abraham, no matter how future generations would perform, were guaranteed certain blessings. If they sinned there would be correction – but in the end, complete acceptance and surrender to all the conditions of the covenant terms would be the reality.

Genesis 6:18, “But with you will I establish My covenant.” Elohim said this to Noah shortly before he was to make an end to all mankind except for Noah, his wife, sons and their wives. Noah was found righteous before God. The rainbow is a reminder to God of His covenant between Him and all living creatures – He would never bring another worldwide flood on His creation.

Joseph, on his deathbed, declared to his kin that Elohim (Jehovah) would visit them and bring them out from the land of Egypt unto the land He swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Genesis 50:24).

With regard to Israel, over and over it is written, “I shall be unto you for Elohim and you shall be unto Me a people.” In the not-so-distant future God will reaffirm His covenant with His people Israel.

Ancient Israel (today America, Britain and certain other democracies descended from Israel) at Mount Sinai agreed to a covenant relationship with God. The problem was because of the

hardness of their hearts they were unable to keep the requirements (the law, ordinances, statutes and judgments). Matters finally came to the point that God destroyed them as a nation and let them go into captivity and become lost in man's generations of history. When God restores a repentant and willing peoples, He will then put His law and fear (reverence) within their hearts. They will reaffirm their commitment to the covenant and its terms and conditions and will so perform with a willing heart.

By the way, the covenant conditions and requirements of the New Testament are the same as the Old Testament. Two things will make the covenant as originally give to ancient Israel attainable; that is, an actual achievement. First the sacrifices and resurrection of Jesus Christ for redemption and reconciliation to God. Second God's Holy Spirit given to a repentant and desirous people.

God's great works and 6000-year plan are anchored in a covenant agreement laid out and agreed to by two spirit beings; Jehovah and His Anointed One. It is this covenant agreement and all its conditions and requirements as agreed to that is the working pattern established in God's plan for mankind. Formalized into an unconditional binding contract because of the acknowledgement and willing compliance by Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, later named Israel. Later through Moses God offered a formal conditional covenant relationship with the nation of Israel at their exodus from Egyptian captivity.

In Psalms 110, David writes, "The LORD (Jehovah) said to my Lord (A Mighty One), sit at My right hand till I make Your enemies Your footstool." David's Lord is a reference to God's Anointed One, the coming Ruling Messiah who we know as Jesus Christ. The second, lesser, Mighty One and creating partner of Genesis one.

Elohim is a word of plurality in unity. They are in agreement and united in purpose. However, the Lord God (Jehovah) is superior by the fact that He is the original Live Giver. A Mighty One who sets at Jehovah's right hand is our High Priest, Redeemer and Savior in the form of Jesus Christ. He is a Mighty One to us, as a God, because He is so much more superior and powerful than any human being and also because of His works on our behalf.. These things are part of the covenant that unites the two Mighty Ones.

At the creation and reforming of the Earth so it would be livable for all creatures, including mankind, the LORD God formed a plan of redemption and salvation that would run a course of 7000 years. A Mighty One, the lesser "God" of Elohim, had proven Himself. He was very pleasing and satisfying to Jehovah. Thus everything needed to accomplish this grand design was formally contained in the offer and acceptance. The offer by The Eternal, the acceptance by His Holy One.

Jehovah extended, as it might be said, an invitation for Him to set at His right hand by the fact of His superiority to all the LORD's other created spirit beings granted the gift of free moral agency. It is the same for us. What God desires, but does not force, is for each to come to want to be as He is. Jehovah is truth, He is perfect in His righteousness, justice and constant love.

Dependable, never a shadow of compromise or any type of “adjustment.” None of us will be as Jehovah, but the intent of one’s heart is that we acknowledge God’s holy righteous character, His law and everlasting love by a continuous effort to become as much as possible like He is. His Holy One and Son, who we also know as The Lamb of God, accomplished all these things and much more to the point that He said of Himself to His apostles, that what they see in Him is an exact reflection of His Father. The LORD set forth a plan and proposal. Our Lord (Jesus Christ) was agreeable to all points. Thus, Jehovah made a covenant agreement which was confirmed by His acceptance of all conditions and responsibilities set forth by His LORD. All of Jehovah’s works are set on a foundation of truth and righteousness and demonstrated by committed loyalty and illuminated by works of unconditional love.

This kind of covenant relationship that exists between Jehovah and Jesus Christ is being offered to mankind. In man’s 6000 years of history, a few have grasped the vision and the goals and committed to them. These few will be in the first and better resurrection. The vast majority according to the Lord’s purpose and plan of experience to prove and qualify will have their opportunity during the 1000 year period and at the end of the millennium that brings the general resurrection to physical life for all who have ever had the breath of life. With very few exceptions all human beings will fulfill the obligations of the covenant agreement and receive everlasting life.