

The Power of GOD'S NAMES Elohim – Part 1



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The Power of God's Names

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ELOHIM

THE STRONG CREATOR GOD

This book explores the names of God, so understanding what's in a name and the importance of names is critical to laying the foundation for identification with God's names.

To the novice, branding involves designing a fancy logo, choosing a tagline, or determining what colors you'll put on your website or print materials. Yet to the expert, your brand is much more than that. The greatest logo, the catchiest tagline, and the most brilliant colors will do little to augment the value of a brand if the product lacks authenticity.

Your brand is your identity, your reputation, and the perception others have about you.

The primary focus for any branding campaign ought to be organizational strength, identity, and messaging. The best-designed, most catchy logo can't do much without the strength of a product and organization behind it.

Your brand involves the way people perceive you, your leadership, organization, service, methods, and anything else related to how you came about, how you function, or what you do. It goes much further than a logo just convincing the head; it touches the heart and engages the hands. A brand is *the creation and implementation of an organizational worldview that produces a consistent atmosphere for everyone who comes into contact with your name.*

In other words, the name matters.

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As we get to know God through our discovery of His names in Scripture, we will find that He has branded His names. They are not merely words. Rather, a substance lies behind each word.

God's names matter. Attached to each one is a set of character qualities, promises, and meanings. Unless you fully know and understand these things, you run the risk of not accessing or utilizing them in the way God has designed.

In the last chapter, we looked at the importance and majesty of God's names. In this chapter, I want to introduce you to the very first name God reveals to us in Scripture – *Elohim*. This name is found in Genesis, the book of the beginning, and we discover it in the very first verse: "In the beginning God (***Elohim***) created the heavens and the earth."

That one line at the beginning of time reveals a deep character quality of God – Creator. It's God's introduction, His prelude. It's the first impression of Himself that He offers to His creation. In essence, God says, "Hello, I am *Elohim*."

First impressions are often lasting impressions. Why did God choose to introduce Himself to us as *Elohim*, the strong Creator God?

1. He wants us to recognize that He is transcendent – that He is distinct from His creation.
2. God isn't amalgamated into His creation. He is not a tree, a river, or a butterfly. Rather than being a part of His creation, God is above and outside of it.

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3. Another reason God introduces Himself to us with His name of *Elohim* is that it lets us know that He's set apart from the constraints of time.

When we read, "In the beginning God created," we discern that God created the beginning. God created time. And if God created time, then God preceded time because He couldn't have created something that already existed. If time didn't begin until He created it, then He must have been present before it.

Time is a constraint with which we must contend, but it's not a problem for God.

***Elohim* Is Here, There, and Everywhere**

Elohim transcend not only time but also space. In other words, He predates His creation. He comes before the things He had made...both the heavens and the earth. "Heaven and earth" stand for all of creation. Before God created mankind, He created a location – a space – in which mankind would exist.

Yet God existed when space did not. Therefore, God transcends not only time but also space and matter.

If God isn't tethered to time, space, and matter, then He operates in another realm. Which is precisely why you and I can't figure Him out.

"Am I a God who is near (*Elohei Mikkarove*)," declares the Lord, "and not a God far off (*Elohei Merachok*)? Can a man hide himself in hiding places so I do not see him?" declares the Lord. "Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?" declares the Lord (23:23-24).

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This passage in Jeremiah reveals that God is both transcendent and immanent. He is here, there, and everywhere. *Elohim* created the heavens and the earth, existing outside of it. Yet *Elohim* also fills the heavens and the earth, existing in it. He is immanently everywhere. **The theological word used to describe this is “omnipresent.”** God is everywhere – present at the same time.

If God is everywhere – present at the same time, than he is _____.

It is *Jehovah Shammah*, “the Lord is there.”

He is here, yet He is also there. God is both there and back again at the same time. His silence doesn’t indicate His absence, for He is everywhere. Nor does His distance belie His presence.

Jehovah Shammah also refers to the city of Jerusalem as a type of the gospel church (**Ezekiel 48:35**). It is where He manifests His presence in the midst of His people.

***Elohim* Is Personal**

With all of this talk about God being here, there, and everywhere, we might be tempted to think of Him as an energy source. Yet the name *Elohim* doesn’t mean God is like that. The Bible would never say, “May the force be with you.” In fact, as we continue studying Genesis 1, we see His name *Elohim* associated with some very personal attributes.

Then God (*Elohim*) said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light day, and the darkness He called night (verses 3-5).

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God said, God saw, God separated, and God called. Each of these actions clearly reveals the very personal and engaging character of God.

As *Elohim*, God personally interacts with His creation. In other words, you and I do not live in an impersonal universe. We don't reside in a universe with no one to relate to who is above and beyond us yet also with us.

Yet our universe is personal *Elohim* is personal.

***Elohim* Is Plural**

Elohim is not personal but also plural.

The word *Elohim* is actually the plural version of the word *El*, or *Eloah*. The interesting aspect of this plural word is that it uniquely refers to a singular Godhead. In Genesis 1 we read, "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness...God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him'" (verses 26-27).

Scripture uses both plural and singular pronouns when referring to *Elohim*. So *Elohim* is a plural word by construct but often a singular word by usage, revealing the inimitable makeup of the Trinity. God is a plural being although He exists as one God.

It's difficult for us to comprehend how three can also be one. **Illustration – Ice-steam-water = water is one.**

***Elohim* Is the Creator**

God identifies Himself as *Elohim* 35 times at the start of Scripture. In fact, *Elohim* is the only name used for God from Genesis 1:1 to Genesis 2:3. Other names come later in His personal revelation of His character throughout His Word, but *Elohim* is emphasized in the beginning.

I believe one reason for this focus on this particular name of God is that from the outset, He wants us to understand His power. The literal translation of the name *Elohim* is “strong one.” It has to do with God’s sovereignty and His authority, reflecting the greatness of His power.

The name *Elohim* also identifies God as the Creator. In the beginning, *Elohim* (the strong one) created. The term “created” is only used of God in the Bible; it is not used of men. This is because men reconfigure, recalibrate, or reform things. Mankind does not create something from nothing.

Hebrews 11:3

God didn’t even need to use His hands to create – His mouth was enough. In Genesis 1 we marvel that all God had to do was speak the world into existence and into order. **Read Proverbs 18:21**

Genesis 18:14

In a similar vein, when the virgin Mary wondered how she, a virgin, could bear a child, the angel addressed her concerns squarely: “Nothings will be impossible with God” (**Luke 1:37**).

1. Was Mary in her right to question God? Why? Why not?

2. Have you ever questioned God on How?

Friend, whatever situation you’re facing today or whatever challenge you’re trying to overcome, I want to encourage you to remember the name *Elohim*.

What do you need God to do for you?

The Strong One doesn't need raw material with which to work. He doesn't need logic or tangible solutions in order to accomplish His goal. All He needs is Himself, and all you need is faith in His name that He can do all that He purposes to do.

Too often we get hung up trying to figure out the answer to our problems. Rather than trying to visualize how God is going to straighten out your situation, tweak your trials, or fix your failures, remember His name. *Elohim* can create something out of nothing.

God's act of creation makes all of life religious. God invites science to study His creation in order to learn and discover more about Him (**Job 12:7-10**).

What does Job teach us about God?
