

ELOHIM – THE MIGHTY ONE

Genesis 1:1

INTRODUCTION

- Why am I here? What is the purpose of my existence?
- These are the most fundamental questions a person can ask, yet how few people in the world can answer these questions at all, let alone answer them correctly
- Jerry Coyne, evolutionary biologist, said of human existence, “we know it isn’t about anything. It’s what we make of this transitory existence that matters”
- People have rejected the knowledge of God, they have no true purpose in life
- But for those of us who believe in the one true God, we understand our reason for existence, we understand our origin, we understand our purpose
- It is all centred in God
- The greatest and most important knowledge that we can gain is the knowledge of God
- In centuries past, theology was called “the queen of the sciences” – the understanding of God and of his revealed word was seen as the foundation and standard from which all other knowledge should be tested
- The more we know God – not merely intellectually but experimentally and personally – the greater our understanding will be of our own purpose in life
- God has revealed himself to us by general revelation (the creation) and special revelation (the Scriptures)
- The Scriptures are an inexhaustible source of revelation concerning God, through his works, his judgments, his laws, etc.
- But another way God has revealed himself to us is through his names
- Throughout the Bible, God uses numerous names for himself and each one is descriptive of his character
- The first name of God we will consider is the first name used in the Bible – *Elohim* (sometimes rendered *Elohiym* or *Eloheim*)
- Sometimes the word *Elohim* is shortened to *El* and used as part of a longer name.
- It is the most frequently used name, found over 2500 times in the Old Testament and is translated as “God”, “god” or “gods”

- Most of the usages refer to the true God, but it is also used over 200 times to refer to false gods (Exodus 12:12; 23:24; Leviticus 19:4)
- In some contexts, *elohim* refers to human rulers or judges (Psalm 82:6; John 10:34)
- It is used 32 times in the first chapter of Genesis
- The New Testament equivalent is *theos*
- The basic meaning of the name Elohim is of power, might and strength
- The suffix “-ihm” makes this noun a plural form, even though it may govern a singular verb or adjective
- This plural seems to express the great glory, majesty, power, magnitude and dignity of Elohim, as well as pointing to his triune nature
- He is not a mere “force”, “divine principle”, “universal consciousness”, “the absolute”, “the nous” or any other of these vague concepts of impersonal divinity – Elohim is a personal Being
- “God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth.”
- As we study this name and all the names of God, we should come with a desire for a deeper knowledge of our God, and that this knowledge would increase our love, worship, obedience

I. ELOHIM IS THE ETERNAL GOD

A. God the only Being who has always existed

1. Everything else had a beginning except God
2. “In the beginning God”
3. He is “from everlasting to everlasting” (Psalm 90:2)
4. He dwells outside of time, and “inhabiteth eternity” (Isaiah 57:15)
5. He is the “I AM” (Exodus 3:14)
6. He only hath immortality (1 Timothy 6:16)
7. He is “Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty” (Revelation 1:8)

B. God’s eternity is a comfort to the believer

1. “The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms” (Deuteronomy 33:27)

2. His everlasting nature means he has infinite strength and is therefore able to give strength to the weak (Isaiah 40:28-31)

II. ELOHIM IS THE CREATOR GOD

- A. God is the Creator of all things, but is himself *uncreated*
 1. God made all things (Genesis 1:1) of nothing, by the Word of his power (Hebrews 11:3), in six normal consecutive days (Exodus 20:11), and all very good (Genesis 1:31)
 2. The doctrine of the creation is vital as it is the basis of all revelation
 3. If a person accepts "*In the beginning God created...*" it will be possible for him to accept the rest of the Bible by faith
- B. This is a demonstration of God's almighty power
 1. To create even the smallest thing from nothing would be a demonstration of great and almighty power
 2. To create the entire universe from nothing is a demonstration of infinite power
- C. The purpose of his creation
 1. All things were created "for him" (Colossians 1:16)
 2. All things were created for his pleasure (Revelation 4:11)
 3. In particular, God made man for his glory (Isaiah 43:7)
 4. This should cause us to say, "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:14)
 5. Those who are saved by grace "are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10)

III. ELOHIM IS THE TRIUNE GOD

- A. Elohim is a plural
 1. Though the Old Testament does not provide the full revelation of the Trinity that we find in the New Testament, we can yet see this truth anticipated there
 2. God speaks of himself using plural pronouns "us" and "our" (Genesis 1:26; 3:22; 11:7)
- B. The Holy Spirit is Elohim

1. He is the *Ruach Elohim* – the breath of God (Genesis 1:2; Exodus 31:3; Numbers 24:2; 1 Samuel 10:10; 2 Chronicles 15:1; Job 33:4; Ezekiel 11:24)

C. Christ is Elohim

1. In Psalm 45:6, God the Father addresses God the Son as “Elohim” – “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever” (cf. Hebrews 1:8)
2. Christ is called “The mighty God” (Isaiah 9:6)
3. He is “Immanuel” – “God with us” (Isaiah 7:14)
4. The same eternal, infinite, almighty Elohim became our Redeemer
5. He is “God manifest in the flesh” (1 Timothy 3:16)
6. Christ was “in the form of God” and “equal with God” (Philippians 2:6)
7. This is the same Elohim who “made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” (Philippians 2:7-8)

CONCLUSION

1. With the testimony of the creation and the Scriptures of the existence of Elohim, only a fool would say, “There is no Elohim” (Psalm 14:1)
2. Yet most people, knowing there is a God, will refuse to acknowledge him and instead worship idols (Romans 1:20-25)
3. What should be our response to this knowledge of Elohim?
 - ✓ Should cause us to worship (Psalm 86:8-10)
 - ✓ Should cause us to fear (Ecclesiastes 12:13)
 - ✓ Should cause us to trust (Psalm 46:1)
 - ✓ Should cause us to submit (Psalm 46:10)
 - ✓ Should cause us to love (Deuteronomy 6:5)
 - ✓ Should cause us to declare him to the world
4. All of us, like Ruth, must answer the question, “Who will be my God?” (Ruth 1:14-16)
5. Can you say with the psalmist, “He is my Elohim; in him will I trust” (Psalm 91:2)