“Elohim: The Creator God”

Series: The Names of God – Genesis 1-16

The most common Hebrew word translated as “God” in the Old Testament is the word אלהים (*Elohim*). This is the plural form of the word elo’ah.

- word is used 2606 times

EL - Aleph (Hebrew א) and Lamed (Hebrew ל).

In Hebrew even the letters have symbolic or picture meaning…Remember Hebrew is a picture language. The original Hebrew symbol for the letter aleph is a symbol of an ox head where it represents strength, force, power. The original Hebrew symbol for the letter Lamed looks like a J, and is a symbol of the shepherd's staff. The staff represents the shepherd of a flock, who has authority over the sheep who are entrusted to him So, together, aleph and lamed come together to form the idea of "strong authority" or "a strong one who has authority."

In order to fully comprehend the real meaning of the word Elohim we will need to understand its grammar and use within a sentence. The “iym” or (ohim) at the end is a suffix that identifies this noun as a masculine plural and therefore literally means “ones of power and authority.” The use of ‘elohim for God is a title that is limited to Gen. 1-16. (In chapter 17, God introduces a new name to Israel, ElShaddai.) As Elohim, God reveals Himself as the “Strong One” who created the world and thus rules over all creation, everything being subject to Him. The creation must submit to Him as King and Judge.

Example in English we add a -s or an -es to makes something plural

- church becomes churches

- house becomes houses

Two Grammatical understandings found in Elohim

**God in Three Persons…**

1. Singular/Plural Proof of the Trinity

– when used in the lower case elohim (understood to be gods)

- when used in the Upper case Elohim (God plural but in one)

Genesis 1:26 Let us make man in our image, after our likeness..

Exodus 3:4 God (Elohim) calls Moses and reveals in 3:14 “I AM that I AM”

John 8:58 Before Abraham was, I am

Psalm 110:1 The Lord says to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.”

**PSALM 2**

**GOD IS GREAT AND MIGHTY…**

2. Not Plural but singular meaning “Great”

In Hebrew, a plural does not have to be more than one though, it can mean a “great one.” Other words associated with this noun will help to identify if the noun is being used in a singular or plural sense. For instance, in Genesis 1:1 the word Elohim is the subject of the verb ברא (bara, usually translated as “create”). Each verb identifies the gender and number of the subject. In the case of the verb bara identifies the gender as masculine and the number as singular-he created. Therefore, the word Elohim can be understood in a singular sense.

-Elohim

El – Greatness and Glory

- Power and Sovereignty

-ohim

- Total power, might and complete sovereignty

- Complete creativity

Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ: for it is the POWER of God unto salvation to everyone who believes…

Elohim sustains all that he created through his own power and might!

**God as the ONE TRUE GOD**

In most cases, ‘elohim is used in reference to Israel’s God and does not function as a true numerical plural; rather it is defined by the singular modifiers as an honorific plural.

**DEUTRONOMY 6**

Deut. 6:4 says, “Listen, Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord is one!”

1. The Hebrew does not point to the singularity of God but to His uniqueness among all the other things we make as gods.

2. The Hebrew declares that Israel’s God is unique from all the others and that He is the only one humanity is to worship and be loyal to.

Deut. 7:9 Know therefore that the Lord your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commandments.

Deut. 10:17 For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome,

When you look at this confusion might set in…However, when you understand Elohim as “one having power and authority” you understand that we give power and authority to things that become idols in our lives and God says no he is the one who has power and authority.

Exodus 20:3 Thou Shalt not have any other gods before me….

God is portrayed in Scripture as the true Elohim whom all the other little elohim (what we make as gods or idols) will answer to. They will answer to Him in judgment.

**PSALM 82**

What does the name Elohim say about God for us?

**God is our Creator**

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. (Genesis 1:1, ASV)

God is the Architect, Jesus the Builder, Holy Spirit is he who breathes the life of God

Colossians 1:16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him

**God is our Sovereign and Judge**

Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him forever. (Exodus 21:6, KJV)

For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor. (Psalm 8:5, KJV)

The best understanding of the meaning of Elohim is “strong one” or the “mighty one.” The idea that it communicates is that of an all-powerful and sovereign God who is king over the whole world.

So that men shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: Verily there is a God

[Elohim] that judges the earth. (Psalm 58:11, ASV)

Isaiah 9:6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God (El or Elohim), Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

**God is our covenant maker and sustainer**

**Genesis 1-3** (Adamic Covenant)

1. In the creation every verse begins with Elohim

2. Elohim sees Man’s needs

Garden – 1:29

Wife – 2:18

Savior - 3:15

**Genesis 6-8 (Noahic Covenant)**

1. God (Elohim) and LORD (Yahweh) are both used (Exodus 6:7}

2. God reestablishes his covenant with humanity and fulfills in Jesus (Matthew 5:17)