

God

The Mighty God revealed in the Bible's first sentence

Genesis 1.1

Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • December 23, In the year of our Lord Christ, 2018

Scripture Reader and Reading: Jake McNeil – Isa 45.5–7

Song Leader and Song Suggestions: Larry Amberg – Any songs on God

Prelude:

I. When you open the Bible and read the first sentence,

- A. you read something amazing,
- B. at least if you read it in the original Hebrew.

II. What you read in that sentence is this:

1 In the beginning *Elohim* created the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1.1).

- A. Actually, that Hebrew word is plural, but
- B. no version of the Bible translates it as, "Gods."

1. Brother Hugo McCord explained it this way:

"...the fact that the verb 'created' in Genesis 1:1 is in the singular number in the Hebrew text, and yet has a plural noun for its subject, gives evidence in the well written text that the plural noun refers to one being, God" (Hugo McCord, *Getting Acquainted with God*, page 10).

- 2. By saying, "the well written text," brother McCord wanted us to know
 - a) that Moses in writing the first sentence of the Bible
 - b) did not make a mistake, but
 - (1) knew precisely what he was doing, for
 - (2) the Holy Spirit moved him to so write it.

III. Why then did Moses write *Elohim* instead of the singular *EI*?

Persuasion:

I. EI

A. One brother put it this way:

“While some see a trinitarian allusion here, in actuality it is a plural of majesty. Scholars mention the Hebrew conception was often to use a plural term to express a concept which could not be adequately expressed by the singular. With the term *Elohim* we have a plural of majesty, of incomprehensibility, of intensification” (Mark Hanstein, *To The Unknown God*, page 28).

1. That makes sense.

2. He created the heavens and the earth!

a) What did it take to create the universe and everything in it?

b) What did it take to get all of this to work together?

(1) In Romans 1.20 Paul said that the creation shows

(2) evidence of eternal power and divinity.

(a) The power that such a feat required we cannot imagine.

(b) How powerful is the sun?

i) Earth is one-millionth the size of the sun.

ii) Think of how much light and energy the sun sends our way.

(c) Do you realize how much light and energy the sun is throwing out into space?

i) Now, think of how many stars they say exist.

ii) Billions just in our galaxy.

(1) How many galaxies in the universe.

(2) What kind of power made all that material?

(3) What kind of super-intelligence designed it all?

B. When we say that God created the heavens and the earth,

1. we may not comprehend the majesty of that sentence.

2. Or perhaps we do.

a) We reserve the word “God” in any language

b) to speak of someone who goes beyond what we can imagine.

(1) Who is God?

(2) Knowing that He surpasses the incomprehensible universe,

(a) how can us mere creatures

(b) even begin to know who He is? As Job said:

**12 “He stirs up the sea with His power,
And by His understanding He breaks up the storm.
13 By His Spirit He adorned the heavens;
His hand pierced the fleeing serpent.
14 Indeed these are the mere edges of His ways,
And how small a whisper we hear of Him!
But the thunder of His power who can understand?”
(Job 26.12–14)**

(1) What is the difference between a whisper and thunder?

(2) That is the difference between

(a) what we know of God and

(b) what a full exposition of Him would be like.

3. Test me on this:

a) Get together with a friend and talk about God.

b) Use Genesis 1.1 to launch into your discussion.

c) Or use Psalms 139.14 that I spoke on two ago:

**14 I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made...
(Psalm 139.14)**

C. Consider these other passages:

1. Deuteronomy 32.39

**39 “Now see that I, even I, am He,
And there is no God besides Me;
I kill and I make alive;**

**I wound and I heal;
Nor is there any who can deliver from My hand.”
(Deuteronomy 32.39)**

2. Psalm 68.7–10

- 7 O God, when You went out before Your people,
When You marched through the wilderness,
Selah**
- 8 The earth shook;
The heavens also dropped rain at the presence of God;
Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel.
(Psalm 68.7–8)**

3. Isaiah 45.5

- 5 I am the LORD, and there is no other;
There is no God besides Me.
I will gird you, though you have not known Me...
(Isaiah 45.5)**

4. Isaiah 45.18

- 18 For thus says the LORD,
Who created the heavens,
Who is God,
Who formed the earth and made it,
Who has established it,
Who did not create it in vain,
Who formed it to be inhabited:
“I am the LORD, and there is no other.”
(Isaiah 45.18)**

5. John 1.3–4 (Not Hebrew, but it gives the sense)

- 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was
made that was made. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men
(John 1.1–4).**

II. Often *El* is used with additional endings.

A. Elah, El Shaddai, El Elyon, El Olam, El Roi

B. Elah

“This Aramaic word is the equivalent of the Hebrew *‘eloah*. It is a general term for ‘God’ in the Aramaic passages of the Old Testament, and it is a cognate form of the word *‘allah*, the designation of deity used by the Arabs. The word was used widely in the Book of Ezra, occurring no fewer than 43 times between Ezra 4.24 and 7.26” (Nelson’s Expository Dictionary of the Old Testament, page 158).

1. Comes from two Hebrew words:

a) El – Mighty One; All-Powerful One

b) Alah – To Swear, To make covenant

(1) Used about 2,570 times

C. El Shaddai

1. God Almighty

2. Genesis 17.1

1 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless...”

3. Psa 91.1–2

**1 He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High
Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.**

**2 I will say of the LORD, “He is my refuge and my fortress;
My God, in Him I will trust.”
(Psalm 91.1–2)**

D. El Elyon

1. The Most High God

2. Genesis 14.19

**19 And he blessed him and said:
“Blessed be Abram of God Most High,
Possessor of heaven and earth...”
(Genesis 14.19)**

3. Psalm 9.2

**2 I will be glad and rejoice in You;
I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High.
(Psalm 9.2)**

E. El Olam

1. Everlasting God

2. Genesis 21.33

**33 Then Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and there called
on the name of the LORD, the Everlasting God (Genesis 21.33).**

3. Psalm 90.2

**2 Before the mountains were brought forth,
Or ever You had formed the earth and the world,
Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.
(Psalm 90.2)**

4. Isaiah 40.28

**28 Have you not known?
Have you not heard?
The everlasting God, the LORD,
The Creator of the ends of the earth,
Neither faints nor is weary.
His understanding is unsearchable.
(Isaiah 40.28)**

F. El Roi

1. The God Who Sees
2. Genesis 16.13–14

13 Then she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, You–Are–the–God–Who–Sees; for she said, “Have I also here seen Him who sees me?” 14 Therefore the well was called Beer Lahai Roi; observe, it is between Kadesh and Bered (Genesis 16.13–14).

Exhortation:

I. Isaiah 41 said something originally to Israel, but

- A. if you are part of the Israel of God, the church,
- B. He also says the same thing to you.

1. What does it mean
2. that the God of Genesis 1.1 and the rest of the Bible is our God?

**10 “Fear not, for I am with you;
Be not dismayed, for I am your God.
I will strengthen you,
Yes, I will help you,
I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.”
(Isaiah 41.10)**

- C. People often dismiss the notion of God, but

1. think on what this passage from Isaiah said.
2. This same God who created the heavens and the earth, told you
 - a) not to fear,
 - b) not to be dismayed, because
 - (1) He will strengthen you,
 - (2) He will help you, and
 - (3) He will uphold you with His righteous right hand.

II. Everyone I know

- A. who knows the God of the Bible
- B. does not live in fear, but
 - 1. they always live in confidence and peace,
 - 2. knowing that God will help them.

III. To demonstrate that He will be with us,

- A. consider something that He did a long time ago.
- B. There was a young man whose wife had become pregnant, but
 - 1. he knew that he was not the father.
 - 2. He thought about putting her away, divorcing her, yet,
 - a) he hesitated, no doubt because he loved her.
 - b) While he was contemplating what to do,
 - (1) an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and
 - (2) explained that his young wife
 - (a) was with child by the Holy Spirit.
 - (b) Then the Bible explained:

22 So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: 23 "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us" (Matthew 1.22–23).

- C. What more could the God of heaven do
 - 1. to show us
 - 2. that He is with us
 - a) other than what He already did?
 - b) He came here and lived with us.
 - (1) He knows the struggles of temptation.
 - (2) He knows the struggles of living.

(a) He also knows that we do not cease to exist at death.

(b) He wants us to prepare for what comes after death.

D. The only way to prepare for what comes after death is to follow Him.

1. John the apostle who wrote the Book of Revelation

2. saw a large number of people in heaven.

a) Then he told us who those people were:

14b These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb (Revelation 14.4).

b) Christians follow Jesus and since He is in heaven,

c) that is where they end up.