

## Jesus and the Names of God – 7.29.18

Even a brief examination of the Bible shows us that names are very important to God. In fact, in ancient Hebrew culture, someone's name revealed a great deal about who they were, and names were not given (or changed) lightly. And when God changed someone's name, it was always to reflect their new, covenantal attributes to the world.

- It should be no surprise to us, then, that God has, throughout the unfolding passage of scripture, revealed a multitude of names for himself.

Those names are his attributes, and they help us to understand and trust in our God—who he is and who we are in his eyes.

### Psalm 20:7

*Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.*

Over and over again, our spiritual forefathers declare a vital and urgent need to put our trust, faith, and find our strength in the name of the LORD.

- Each of God's names apply directly to all three members of our triune God, because they are of one nature. We cannot say, "this name belongs to the Father, while this other name is of Jesus."

### Romans 10:13 [ESV]

*For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."<sup>1</sup>*

Paul makes this even clearer when, in his first letter to the Corinthian church, he declares,

### 1 Corinthians 12:10

*To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours.*

Many have looked at these passages and (incorrectly) assumed that one need only pray in the name of Jesus to be saved, however what these passages are speaking to is the need to fully and trustingly abide in God<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> see also Acts 2:21; Cited from Joel 2:32

<sup>2</sup> "...religion *itself* is many people's refuge....Many **trust** in some nebulous "faith in faith" with no object, while others **trust** in their **good** works or even their own "inherent goodness." ...But there is no Refuge to **trust** in other than the One, True God who has provided it all in Jesus Christ." [sic] **Hebrew Word for the Day** (Watson, J.D., 2010), p.249

- That is, to seek to fully understand and submit to him—to walk in his ways and delight in his righteousness and power—not merely recite the magic words or speak the magic name.

Today, we shall examine three of the names of God in the Bible and moreover, we shall see how Jesus is the supreme embodiment of those attributes. It is good for us to know who we serve and worship. After all, the LORD himself declares it so:

#### Jeremiah 9:24

*but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD.”*

A close examination of each of them reveals the evermore manifold beauty of the mystery of God and his love for us. It is a beauty that no cursory glance could ever truly reveal.

- Let us look deeper at the names of God and discover what he wishes us to know about him and his great love for us. Let us discover the beautiful manifestation of God’s attributes in Jesus Christ, and praise him for it.

## Elohim — God (Mighty Creator)

In Genesis 1:1, at the beginning of the scriptures, and of time itself, there was God and only God. The Hebrew word used here for God is Elohim (pronounced *el-o-beem*) is the plural form of the Eloah, the generic, singular word for a god. How fascinating that the first description of the the Creator of the universe is in a plural form, yet it is always translated in a singular sense.

#### Genesis 1:1-2

*1 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.  
2 The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.*

Elohim was before all things—including matter, time, and energy. We are, all of us, 3-dimensional beings living subject to the law of the 4th dimension: time.

- We can modify any and all things around us, yet are held captive by time. We are interned to it, but God is not. He transcends not only our 3 dimensions, but also time. His power transcends all the power and majesty and nuances of the entire universe.

But what is so exceptional, is that in the creation account, we begin to see how special life is to God.

At the end of each day, Elohim looks upon his handiwork, yet only during the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> days does he proclaim his work as “good.”<sup>3</sup>

- With the creation of vegetation, “he saw that it was good (V.12).” With the creation of all the creatures of air and sea, “he saw that it was good (V.21).” With land mammals, “he saw that it was good (V.25).” And, when he had culminated his creation with mankind, formed in his own image, “he saw that it was *very* good (V.31).”
  - Our creator created all the planets and stars and galaxies, and yet found the unfurling life of a flower more profound. And with even more admiration did he look upon us, those created in his image.

Consider for a moment that even as God values every single creature or plant more than the vast majesty of the heavenly bodies, so he values his children more than all the lilies of the field<sup>4</sup>.

- The central theme of the Genesis creation account, so often overlooked, is God’s great affection for his creation. At the beginning of creation, we catch a glimpse the transcendent love of God. But this small glimpse transforms into an awe-inspiring over-saturation of understanding with the incarnation of the Son of God in this world!

## Jesus is Elohim

The Gospel of John begins with a wonderful parallel to the Genesis creation account.

What is different, however, is that the emphasis has changed from explaining how creation occurred physically, to explaining how the Word (logos) is, in fact, the divine source of light and life. How darkness (chaos) has not overcome the light of God. It describes how the Word deemed it necessary to walk among us, bringing all the fullness of God with grace upon grace (v.16), in order to reconcile us to Elohim<sup>5</sup>.

### John 1:1-5

*1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.  
2 He was in the beginning with God.  
3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.  
4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men.  
5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.*

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<sup>3</sup> See **Genesis 1:11-31**. Note which aspects of creation are deemed “good” and which are not. What does this say about what God values and where his affections lie?

<sup>4</sup> see **Matthew 6:28-30** and **Luke 12:27-28**

<sup>5</sup> **2 Corinthians 5:17-19 [ESV]** “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.”

The implications of what John is claiming here cannot be overstated: Jesus was with God, he is God, and he was the sole wellspring and conduit of all creation.<sup>6</sup> Jesus is Elohim.

Many of our founding fathers were deists—men who believed that, while the natural world was indeed created by an awesome God, he is either completely unaware of us, or perhaps so transcendently greater than us, he cannot empathize with us and our needs.

Elohim is not the deist's God. He sees and delights in all his creation. He sees and delights in you, from the moment you were conceived to the moment you perish.

And if there were any doubt of this claim, one need only study the amazing and miraculous life of Jesus as recorded in four different accounts—and this is to say nothing of his unjust death, his victorious resurrection and his exalted ascension. His triumph over death and sin heralded him<sup>7</sup> as no mere man, but supreme God and, what's more, no one can gainsay the transforming power Christ has in the lives of those who follow him.<sup>8</sup>

Elohim did not end his work on the 6<sup>th</sup> day! All of us are new creations, are we not? The life and light of God has recreated us, it has changed our order of affections, redefined what is worth living for, and it has brought light and goodness to this world.

- And still, Elohim's work is not finished. Not until the founding of his everlasting kingdom.

### **Philippians 2:9-11**

*9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name,  
10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,  
11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

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<sup>6</sup> See Hebrew 1:2, Colossians 1:15-17

<sup>7</sup> See Isaiah 53:10-12 (prophecy), Romans 1:2-4

<sup>8</sup> 2 Corinthians 3:18 [ESV] "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit."

## El Roi – The God Who Sees Me

Of all the names given to God in the Bible, El Roi<sup>9</sup> (pronounced Ale Raw-ee) is only used once. And yet, it is such a profound and transforming image of our Father's love for us!

It means "God who sees me," and it was revealed in Genesis chapter 16 when Hagar, Sarai's slave girl ran away from an awful situation.

### Genesis 16:7,13-14 –

*7 The angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, the spring on the way to Shur.*

*13 So she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, "You are a God of seeing," for she said, "Truly here I have seen him who looks after me."*

*14 Therefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi; it lies between Kadesh and Bered.*

Beer-lahai-roi means "the Living One who sees me." For the first time in this young Egyptian slave-girl's life, she was seen and acknowledged by a Living God! Before this, her gods were nothing more than Onyx and marble statuary—cold and uncaring—with eyes that would never see her and her needs.

*But*, the Angel of the LORD saw her in her distress, directed her steps, and made an amazing promise to her.

What is so profound about this passage is that the God of all creation saw and comforted a mere runaway slave in the wilderness. El Roi is such a powerful and beautiful aspect of God's nature because it declares that God values each and every one of us, not just the rich and powerful. El Roi is a God that sees you, right now, in your need. His heart aches for your aches, and he has made provision for all those who would accept him.

### 1 Samuel 16:7b

*"...For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart."*

God does not merely see your physical body walking upon this earth, he sees your heart. He *knows* each and every one of you.

How precious, then, are you to God?

### Isaiah 49:15-16a

*15 "Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you.*

*16 Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands...*

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<sup>9</sup> Composite of El (H410) strength; as adjective, mighty; especially the Almighty (but used also of any deity):— God (god) and Ro'iy (H7210) sight, whether abstractly (vision) or concretely (a spectacle):— gazing-stock, look to, (that) see(-th). **Strong's Talking Greek & Hebrew Dictionary.**

You are more precious to God than an unborn child is to her mother. God has (literally) engraved your name upon his hands with cruel Roman nails. Do you believe that? It's hard, often, to see ourselves as God sees us.

A sure way to forget our unsurpassable value is to not spend time reflecting on what God has done and what God has promised. What has God done in your life?

## Jesus is El Roi

Do you know that Jesus sees you? Perhaps you understand this academically or theoretically, but it is Jesus' desire that you understand it *deeply* and *personally*.

Consider the poor woman and the Pharisees.

### Luke 21:1-5

*1 Jesus looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the offering box,  
2 and he saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins.  
3 And he said, "Truly, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them.  
4 For they all contributed out of their abundance, but **she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on.**"*

Just as with Hagar, the runaway Egyptian slave, Jesus takes does not take note of the wealthy, the prominent or the influential, but rather a poor old "nobody" with naught but a few pennies to spare.

- It is easy for us, sometimes, to consider ourselves too unsightly to be noticed or loved by God. We think our station too low, or our sins too great, or our weaknesses too manifestly broad for God to consider the effort worthwhile to invest his love and grace in us.
- And yet, time and time again, that is exactly what Jesus does. I can attest to this amazing *fact*, and I am not alone.

Near the town of Sychar, at Jacob's Well, Jesus sat down to speak to an adulteress Samaritan woman. The God-fearing Jews of the time would not be able to agree about which was worse, her adultery or the fact that she was a Samaritan. Yet it was *there*, with *her*, that Christ brought love and light to the Samaritans<sup>10</sup>.

God sees you. He sees you and he loves you. Remember something and never allow your heart to forget it: Jesus looked down from the cross at you and saw you at your very worst.

- He saw you in your moment of deepest shame, and he said, "*that one there. That one in mine, for I love them and I desire that they sit at my table and be my bride.*" It was then and there that he engraved your name on his hands.

But Jesus merely seeing me in my need is not enough, for how often do we see immense need, and yet have no power to do anything about it. If Jesus is God, he must also have God's great might to do something about it. He must be mighty

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<sup>10</sup> see **John 4**

to save us, otherwise all we have is the sympathy of another man and sacrifice without victory.

## El Shaddai – All-sufficient God

This is one of the most powerful and awe-inspiring aspects of God's nature. El Shaddai is most often translated as "God Almighty" and is used about 50 times in the O.T. However, "Almighty" is somewhat insufficient, and many Biblical Scholars prefer a different translation; one that more accurately captures the essence of this name. The root of Shaddai is Shad (H7699<sup>11</sup>) which means a mother's breast, as swollen with milk.

El Shaddai is not merely the God of power and might—of thunder and lightning. El Shaddai's true meaning is implied by the provision of milk to a helpless babe. Our God is *all-sufficient*. And that is how I feel El Shaddai is best translated: "All Sufficient God."

Genesis 17:1 is the first time this name of the LORD is used, and it is the first name (read, attribute) God declares for *himself*. Before this, all names have been laid upon him due to his revealed nature, but here, God says, "I am El Shaddai."

### Genesis 17:1

*When Abram was ninety-nine years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless, that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly."*

In this passage, God goes on to proclaim what *he* will do for his servant Abram (now Abraham) through the covenant between them. The declaration from El Shaddai is filled with statements such as: "...I may multiply you greatly...I have made you a father of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful...I will establish my covenant between me and you and to your offspring after you....I will be their God."<sup>12</sup>

Why, do you think, did God wait until Abraham was 100 years old and Sarah herself 90<sup>13</sup> before he declared the fulfillment of his promises?

- This is the key to understanding El Shaddai: God *alone* is able to do what he says he will do, and he *always* does it. Were Abraham and Sarah of child-bearing age, why would they need an all-sufficient God when they themselves would be biologically able to make an heir?

El Shaddai is the God of the impossible. He delights in providing what could never be provided. That is why Jesus became man and that is why he paid the penalty for

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<sup>11</sup> **shōd** (H7699), the breast of a woman or animal (as bulging): breast, pap, teat. Strong's Talking Greek & Hebrew Dictionary.

<sup>12</sup> see **Genesis 17:1-8**

<sup>13</sup> see **Genesis 17:17**

*all* our heinous crimes. He said he would wash away our iniquities<sup>14</sup> and remember them no more<sup>15</sup>, even though they are legion, and clothe us in righteousness<sup>16</sup>.

## Jesus is El Shaddai

Jesus death and resurrected life is the *power* of God made manifest. It is the quintessential revelation of who El Shaddai is. Our all-sufficient, almighty God did what we could never do for ourselves. And it was not through mighty works of men and nations and arrayed armies, but through the shed blood of the Lamb of God.

### Romans 1:16

*For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*

Jesus has been granted power over death. He is the King of Kings. He is El Shaddai, through and through. In the heavenly place, the saints and the angels sing, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain."

### 2 Corinthians 12:9

*9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*

Just as with Abraham and Sarah, it pleased God to be glorified for their inability to gain for themselves what he desired for them, so is it for us. This is why we come here to worship and praise our God. There are no secret prayers or monastic self-debasement rituals or mighty works that can reconcile us to the Father.

- Only Jesus can make us righteous<sup>17</sup>. That is why he *alone* must be magnified in our lives and while we ourselves are diminished<sup>18</sup>. That is why we are a new creation, and why the world finds us distasteful.

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<sup>14</sup> **Isaiah 4:4** (prophecy) compared to: **John 1:29**, the Lamb of God who carries away the sins of the world; **Acts 22:16**, washing away sins; **Hebrews 10:12-14**, once for all, Jesus' sacrifice for all sins for all time

<sup>15</sup> see **Jeremiah 31:34** and **Hebrews 8**

<sup>16</sup> see **Romans 5:17**

<sup>17</sup> see **1 Timothy 2:3-6**

<sup>18</sup> **Galatians 2:20 [ESV]** "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. "



Jesus earnestly desires to become your perfection. He does not desire that you come perfect. We must set aside our proud desires and boast in one thing alone, that we know who our God is—he is all-sufficient and bountiful in his love—and we need not fear drawing closer to him and allowing him to direct our every step.

Jesus has done what no one could ever do. He broke the chains of sin and unrighteousness of the whole world through one act of mortal contrition to God. He alone is worthy! Amen?

#### **Revelation 5:5-14**

*5 And one of the elders said to me, “**WEEP no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.**”*

*6 And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.*

*7 And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne.*

*8 And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.*

*9 And they sang a new song, saying, “**Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation,***

*10 and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.”*

*11 Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands,*

*12 saying with a loud voice, “**Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!**”*

*13 And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, “**To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!**”*

*14 And the four living creatures said, “**AMEN!**” and the elders fell down and worshiped.*

## In Conclusion...

How amazing it is to see the manifest glory of our LORD shine through Jesus.

Our God does not desire some blind subservience but rather a living and impassioned relationship. Throughout scripture, he has revealed aspects of his nature to his beloved. They are like facets of a diamond. They do not contradict each other and none are complete apart from the whole.

**He is Elohim, our creator, who loved us from the start, and did not forsake us to our fate.**

**Isaiah 45:19,22**

*19 I did not speak in secret, in a land of darkness; I did not say to the offspring of Jacob, 'Seek me in vain.' I the LORD speak the truth; I declare what is right.  
22 Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other.*

**He is El Roi, the Living God who sees you. He knows your every need, and has already made provision for every trial and temptation in your life.**

**Job 33:26-28**

*26 then man prays to God, and he accepts him; he sees his face with a shout of joy, and he restores to man his righteousness.  
27 He sings before men and says: 'I sinned and perverted what was right, and it was not repaid to me.  
28 He has redeemed my soul from going down into the pit, and my life shall look upon the light.'*

**He is El Shaddai, the All-sufficient and Almighty God. He is the only one that can.**

**Ephesians 3: 14-21**

*14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father,  
15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named,  
16 that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being,  
17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love,  
18 may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,  
19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.  
20 Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us,  
21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.*

This is my God. Is he yours?