

What is His Name?
Elohim – The Creator
Isaiah 43:1-7
(Grace – June 6, 2010)

I. Introduction

Open with clip from “Daddy’s Little Girls.”

Where do you run in your time of need?

What do you do when trouble, worry, temptation, and fear come flooding in? Where do you turn when the bills are unpaid, your energy is spent, and life seems like one drawn-out nightmare?

Do you turn on the TV? Lose yourself in a fantasy world of internet gaming or pornography? Do you go out and buy something new or eat more than you should?

While it is a blessing to have counselors, friends, and advisors – do we look to them first?

“The name of the Lord is a strong fortress; the godly run to him and are safe.” (Proverbs 18:10, NLT)

This week, we will be looking again at one of God’s names, but let me state once more why meditating on the names of God is vital to us as followers of Jesus Christ.

God wants you to know who He is and He has revealed Himself to us in many ways, but when we look at the names of God we get a clearer understanding of His **character** and attributes.

*“Let him who walks in the dark, who has no light, trust in the **name** of the Lord and rely on his God.”* (Isaiah 50:10, NIV)

How can you trust someone you do not really **know**? Perhaps that is the root of our problem? We do not really know God, so for all practical purposes we are Christian atheists. We practice a few religious activities, but in reality we live our lives independent of the reality of God.

What I am proposing is that we can get to know God through His word and the study of His names. Why else would it say that we should trust in the *name* of the Lord?

Jesus said that eternal life was to know God (John 17:3) – not just go to heaven, but to be in relationship with God now. And being in relationship with God should and will have a major impact on your life!

Paul states in Philippians 3:10 that the goal of his life is to know God.

If someone asked you to describe God, how would you answer them? Would your answer come from your knowledge of Scripture or just from your imagination?

*“Some nations boast of their chariots and horses, but we boast in the **name** of the Lord our God.”* (Psalm 20:7, NLT)

In the days when this was written, chariots and horses spoke of protection and safety. Today our chariots and horses have different names, but we still tend to look to them instead of God.

When the psalmist speaks about boasting in the name of the Lord, it means to have confidence and **trust** in God.

So, why do we not run to God in our time of need? Why do so many give up when trouble and testing come? Is it because we do not really know Him?

To know the names of God is to know God, and to boast in His name is to have confidence and trust in who He is!

II. Elohim – the Creator

“In the beginning God [Elohim] created the heavens and the earth.” (Genesis 1:1, NLT)

Elohim is the plural form of the word *El*, which means mighty or powerful. *El* was a common name for God and was used by many ancient cultures.

In Scripture *El* is always combined with another descriptive word like *Elyon* (*El Elyon* – the Most High God) to distinguish the God of Israel from the gods of the surrounding nations.

The plural ending indicated that this God was the **Supreme** God.

*“For the Lord your **God** is the **God** of gods and Lord of lords. He is the great God, the mighty and awesome God, who shows no partiality and cannot be bribed.”* (Deuteronomy 10:17, NLT)

In your Bibles when you read the word God, it is usually from the Hebrew word *Elohim* or *El* combined with another descriptive word. When you see the word LORD, that is usually a translation of YHWH (which I spoke about last week).

Elohim refers primarily to God as the Creator of all things, and as a result the ultimate Judge of His creation.

A. *Elohim* as **Judge**

“Then let the heavens proclaim his justice, for God himself will be the judge.” (Psalm 50:6, NLT)

Although the Hebrew word *Elohim* is not used in James 4:12 (the NT was written in Greek), the same idea is conveyed:

“There is one lawgiver and judge who is able to save and to destroy. So who, then, are you to judge your neighbor?” (NRSV)

The essential idea here is that because God is the one who created all things, He is the only one able to rightly judge what is right and wrong.

When God shows up to answer Job's complaints about being treated unfairly, how does God "defend" Himself?

"Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand. 5 Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? 6 On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone— 7 while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?" (Job 38:4-7, NIV)

God continues for 60 more verses asking Job (and us) if we created the heavens and the earth. He ends by asking, *"Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him? Let him who accuses God answer him!"* (Job 40:2, NIV)

"Then Job answered the Lord: 4 'I am unworthy — how can I reply to you? I put my hand over my mouth. 5 I spoke once, but I have no answer — twice, but I will say no more.'" (Job 40:3-5, NIV)

B. Elohim as Creator

"So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." (Genesis 1:27, NLT)

God did not just create the heavens and the earth, He also created us. But He did not just create humanity in a general sense; He has created each of us individually.

"You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. 14 Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it. 15 You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb." (Psalm 139:13-15, NLT)

III. Application

The reality that God is Elohim – Creator and Judge has huge implications for us today.

When we know God as Creator of all things, including ourselves, it should bring us great **peace** as we surrender to His sovereign plan and purpose for our lives.

Like Job, how can we continue to question the "fairness of God" in light of the revelation that God is Creator and rightful ruler and judge of all things?

So, the next time you question why you have the physical features you do, or you do not like certain character qualities about yourself or another, or perhaps you would question a God who allows people to be born severely handicapped – read Job 38-42.

Did you create the heavens and the earth? Were you there when the foundations of the earth were being laid?

Listen again to what Isaiah the prophet said,

*“But now, O Jacob, listen to the Lord who created you. O Israel, the one who formed you says, ‘Do not be afraid, for I have ransomed you. I have called you by name; you are mine. 2 When you go through deep waters, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown. When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up; the flames will not consume you. 3 For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior...7 Bring all who claim me as their God, **for I have made them for my glory.** It was I who created them.’” (Isaiah 43:1-3, 7, NLT)*

We may not always understand the why, but we can be confident that *Elohim* the creator and judge of all things knows what is best.

We can surrender to His will, even when things are difficult, like going “through deep waters” and walking “through the fire of oppression.”

Why? Because He is God and we find great purpose and meaning for our lives when we acknowledge that we were created for His glory (not our own!).

Now all those things that others see as tragedies are viewed in the light of God’s eternal purposes.

Instead of questioning God about things we consider unfair or unjust, there is a peace and rest that comes as we trust the Lord in all things and at all times.

The Bible says that Job *“was blameless—a man of complete integrity. He feared God and stayed away from evil.”* (Job 1:2, NLT)

Yet when tragedy strikes, we read through 35 chapters of Job complaining and questioning the fairness of God, and his friends saying that the tragedy was obviously his own fault.

It is not until Job has the revelation of God as *Elohim* that all of his arguments and question vanish into thin air.

“Then Job replied to the Lord: ‘2 I know that you can do anything, and no one can stop you. 3 You asked, “Who is this that questions my wisdom with such ignorance?” It is I—and I was talking about things I knew nothing about, things far too wonderful for me...5 I had only heard about you before, but now I have seen you with my own eyes. 6 I take back everything I said, and I sit in dust and ashes to show my repentance.’” (Job 42:1-3, 5-6, NLT)