

The title Elohim is used in the Bible only about a third as often as God's name itself, Yahweh, but more often than any other title. It is sometimes called the majestic plural as it has singular verbs attached to it, so it has some of the characteristics of a collective noun. It is the plural form of Eloah which means mighty or empowered one, but as we have seen this does not imply which of the deriver or the derived it is but either in relation to raw power, the El, with the context furnishing that parsing. When Elohim is used of God Himself He derives, but when of false gods they are derived. It can therefore be regarded as either those who empower or the empowered.

In the KJV it has been translated variously as "angels, God, goddess, gods, and judges". Thus, it is not exclusively used as a title of the Almighty himself but is also descriptive of other mighty ones both false and true. It has also been translated inexactly as an adjective on a few occasions as "great, mighty and also very great". When God or gods is used in the Old Testament, it is usually Elohim, although there are a few exceptions to this.

Psalm 8v5 is the one occasion where Elohim is translated angels. "What is man that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels and hast crowned him with glory and honour". Cited in the letter to the Hebrews 2v6-8 the Greek has "angelous" or angels, which seems to have influenced the translation. This does provide direct evidence that at least in some cases Elohim can legitimately be regarded as those lesser celestial beings which serve in the cohort of God's host.

Elohim is the creative power employed in the beginning to make the heavens and the earth. Yahweh is not used in Genesis until chapter 2v4 until then it is only Elohim. When Elohim created there is no difficulty in understanding that God singular, the Father Himself did this, thus we have the explicit statement "*And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made*". Elohim then is also used of the underived deity. God is creator even if He employed the agency of celestial angels in that foundational work. The angels are no more the creators of the world than the workers who build the Eiffel tower are its creators. Each fulfilled a role derived from a higher source of inspiration, design and empowerment. Again, it says, "*And God saw everything which He had made and*

*behold it was very good*". This does not mean that the angels decided that all was very good, but God Himself, Elohim. In a sense then the angels should not be totally detached from God, they are His hands and feet and eyes and ears, whenever He interacts with the material world He has manufactured from spirit. When angels or Elohim stand before us, in a sense so too does God.

Thus, when it says *"And God said, let us make man in our image after our likeness"* this is at once both the plural angels, God's representatives, and God Himself, who can call Himself us as in a sense He is many, although always One. (NB Many not three). We are body, soul and spirit but only one person. Angels then are part of the person of God and are not persons in their own right. They have no independent existence outside God. They have no opinions of their own, they are incapable of choice and therefore cannot rebel. The image of God then is that form which manifested itself to permit celestial beings to interact with the material world. The form Elohim has is the form God has selected to manifest Himself and He is no more bound to it than He is bound to anything else in this material world.

Judges is used as a translation for Elohim in Exodus 21v6 & 22v8,9. Here Elohim is used as those who represent God and stand in His place to effect His laws and standards in the divine society. In all three of these cases, it is evident that it is perfectly proper to use Elohim for certain mortal men who act in a responsible capacity in accordance with indirect placement into those roles. Such judges were appointed by Moses indirectly and not by God directly but based upon the criteria that God provided him with, so in no sense any arbitrary appointment. Men called Elohim! Now that is an empowering thought!

Exodus 7v1 has *"See I have made thee a god to Pharaoh"*. Here Yahweh, the Eternal Himself, makes someone else, Moses, as Elohim to another mighty one (Eloah), Pharaoh. Elohim then as used as a singular person, is not restricted to God only but the collective noun (if it is right to so restrict it) is directly applied by Him to another derived being. Calling someone god, or Elohim is not necessarily blasphemous then. When considering El this has already been noticed, eg Nebuchadnezzar as El goyim. Is Jesus Elohim? Most certainly so, and this in no way makes him co-equal and co-eternal with the Father in the same way that Moses and Nebuchadnezzar are not either.

Some, unwilling perhaps to concede that Moses was an Elohim, reinterpret this verse as “I have made you like God to Pharaoh”. The NET has this form of words. The RSV has “as God”. I have made thee as/or instead of Elohim to Pharaoh, may be put there, but there is no basis in the Hebrew to translate it this way, only the preconceptions of the translators. If this was indeed the correct translation, then there is a word missing in the Hebrew. Would such people like to substitute or permit others to substitute “as/instead of” in other passages which they or others find theologically challenging, just because it does not fit their notions of correctness? Does that seem like an appropriate way to conduct a translation?

Perhaps I am being particularly critical of Translators, but it is these unique verses which present language in such a way that challenges the orthodoxy where it needs to be challenged. It needs to be challenged because of the way the Godhead has been redefined overtime, more in keeping with Greek philosophy rather than Hebrew revelation. I certainly found such references eye opening when I was trying to extract myself from woolly thinking.

The composite term “Yahweh Elohim” which literally means, “I will be mighty ones”, expresses the purpose of God in a multi-layered manner. The begetting of a race of immortal beings from dust and ashes, to become god-like because after a godly seed is His over arching goal. As the supreme Father He is intrinsically involved at every step of the way, although He has encouraged the female element of the maternal Ecclesia or nation, to mother the growing children in concert with Him. Dwelling in unapproachable light this has been a very practical supplement in the hands-on rearing of the blessed seed.

Yahweh-Elohim in Genesis 2v4 is the first use of Yahweh in the Bible, the first use of Yahweh Elohim and the first use of any composite title (eg Yahweh Tsvaoth, Adonai Yahweh). So, when God introduces Himself by Name, He does so in the context of empowering others. A very noble presentation of how He wished to enhance and elevate others right from the very start, even before the Fall.

The new or second creation is implicitly taught here. Not the notion according to some of the J E & P theology, who argue that there are two creative cycles in Genesis, but the spiritual creation of the heavenly in Christ Jesus in anticipation, to be developed over thousands of years, in a six millennial day work of construction. This work will end with the completion of God’s stated purpose for

Himself and for mankind “*Be fruitful and multiply and fill (no RE-plenish) the earth and subdue it*”. See also Acts 15v14 as Phanerosis emphasises.

A Voice from the Altar

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