

Who is God? (Part I)

Genesis 1:1: *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*



Whether we like it or not or believe it or not, the presence of powers higher than our human understanding cannot be denied. The debate begins and rages when we try to label these powers. Our human perspectives, belief systems and even how we claim to apply science all come into play here. As Christians, by definition we believe that God is the ultimate source of power. We believe Him to be wise, just and loving in His expressions of that power. But how do we know this to be true? It is no surprise that the answer to knowing who God is exists in a very broad and orderly fashion in the Bible. Literally starting at the beginning will lay a foundation for us to not only begin to understand God, but to also begin to have a deep appreciation of who He really is.

We find deep significance and beauty by looking at many descriptions of our heavenly Father in the Old Testament. Unfortunately, our English Bibles have hidden some beautiful lessons about God by replacing specific descriptions in the original Hebrew with simply the words *God* or *LORD*.

See applicable Strong's Exhaustive Concordance references in the Bonus Material.

Genesis 1:1: *In the beginning God <430> created the heavens and the earth.*

Understanding this verse is the foundation for understanding who God is. There is a simplicity and logic to using this verse because it literally IS the beginning. While there are dozens of ways the Old Testament Scriptures describe God, the entire first chapter of Genesis only uses one word: **Elohim**.

Elohim means rulers, judges, or mighty ones. It is used over 2,600 times in the Old Testament. Approximately 10 percent of the time, it is NOT used to represent God – it describes others as well. But it is one of God's main identifiers.



Why would the entire Bible introduce God with a word that is not exclusively used to describe Him?



We would think the Bible would start out with a special introduction reserved only for God. Genesis 1 primarily establishes the Creator's power and authority. That is the objective of this chapter. What is the most common denominator of rulers and judges?

Power and authority. Genesis 1 shows us how God's power and authority combined were the catalyst for our world's creation.

Genesis 1 GOD (Elohim)] Our God of power and authority

The Genesis creative account is only focused on planet Earth. The *heavens* referenced are the atmosphere that surrounds our planet. This account was written so humanity could comprehend our beginnings and the superior power and authority of God behind the creation of life.

We therefore look at this account of creation from the perspective of a human being on earth, looking up and observing what happened:

Genesis 1:1-2: *'In the beginning Elohim God <430> created the heavens (meaning the sky as seen from earth - earth's atmosphere) and the earth. ²The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the spirit of Elohim God <430> was moving over the surface of the waters.*

The spirit of Elohim, the spirit of God's power and authority, was moving over the surface of the earth. There was no light penetrating through the chaotic veil around the planet and God set nature in motion - the spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.

Critics who believe in science and not God do not acknowledge that God is the Creator of science! His rules for the universe are what drive it in all its vast and magnificent harmony. Realizing that all those scientific laws and principles are God's designs, allows us to better understand and appreciate the scriptural account of creation. Creation does not contradict science because it follows the specific, scientific rules God created.

We see God's spirit setting the laws of nature in motion - talk about power and authority!

We will next see light being unleashed to do its natural work of establishing an environment to stimulate growth:

Genesis 1:3-5: *³Then Elohim God <430> said, Let there be light; and there was light. ⁴ Elohim God <430> saw that the light was good; and Elohim God <430> separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ Elohim God <430> called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.*

There is a straightforward process: Elohim said, *Let there be light*. We are seeing God's power and authority at work. He unleashed the power of the nature He created. It was time for this piece to move into action.

Important note: *Let there be light* was not the creation of the sun – it allowed the power of the sun to break through the veil of darkness so that light could begin the formation of earth's environment. "Let the surface have light." This showed us Elohim's power in designing nature in order to develop planet Earth.

People get confused on this. The creation of the universe happened before the descriptions we read in Genesis 1 and 2. The sun was already in existence. An example of what is being described is when we open a shade in a dark room. The light outside exists, but we can't see it with the shade down. God "lifted the shade" and now there's light.

God describes the process of creation in a basic, understandable way. Earth was created as a water-based planet and needed light to create the atmosphere and move forward in creating a hospitable environment for life.

*The spirit of **Elohim** - the manifestation of God's power and authority - starts the natural development of the earth. The entire first chapter of Genesis is showing God's power and authority over this amazing process we are still trying to figure out thousands of years later.*

Every mention of God in Genesis 1 shows us **Elohim**, God's sheer power and authority.

Two more examples:

Genesis 1:9: *Then **Elohim** God <430> said, Let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear; and it was so.*

Let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place - God did not say, "I am going to make it happen." He set in motion the natural process. God created nature – His power and authority put this logical, creative, developmental process in place.

Genesis 1:24,26: *²⁴Then **Elohim** God <430> said, Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth after their kind; and it was so. ²⁶Then **Elohim** God <430> said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.*

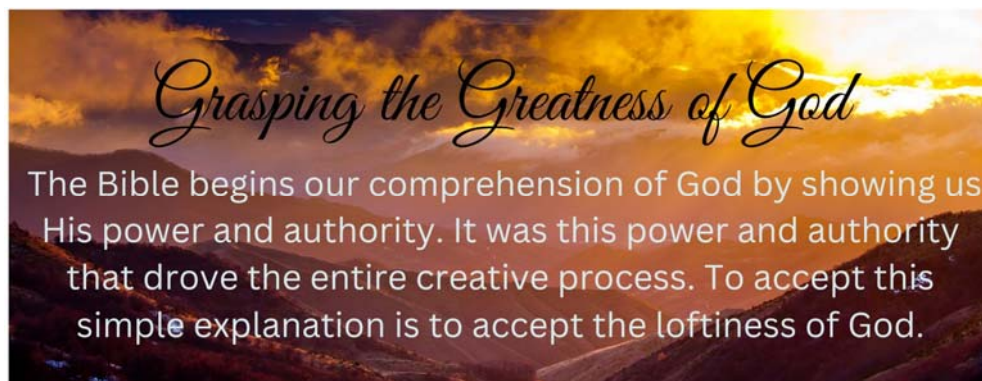
*Let Us make man in Our image - who is **Elohim** talking to? Jesus in his pre-human existence, called the Logos in Greek/the Word in English.*

Can you imagine the power needed to design and create the intricacies and interconnectivity of all of nature? We have mathematics, matter and energy, physics, chemistry, biology...we can't even figure out how our own immune system works! Everything is so complex and unequivocally points to an Intelligent Designer.



He is "Elohim," the Divine Being of power and authority.

In the first chapter of Genesis, God is introduced. One thing is happening: the creation of what will be a life-sustaining planet. **Elohim**, God's power and authority, is featured to show us what was happening. By only using **Elohim** by itself to describe God in this chapter shows us the incredible power and incredible authority above, beyond and behind all of creation. Genesis 1 gives us a foundation for saying God is very special.



Who is God? We first look at His incredible power and authority that got the earth started. We can build something from here.

Just one chapter into the Bible and we are already in position to have our minds expanded in wonderful and God-honoring ways!

**Genesis 1 tells us the WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE and HOW of creation.
It does not tell us the WHY. So...why?**

WHO?
WHAT?
WHEN?
WHERE?
HOW?
 WHY?

Now that we are paying attention, Genesis 2 will review some details of Genesis 1, but in a very different way. Here we are given a second word to describe God that will be used along with the word that displayed His power and authority, **Jehovah**.

Throughout the second chapter of Genesis (from verse 4 on), whenever we see God – **Elohim** – mentioned, it is always with two words, not just one: Now the God of relationship AND power and authority is described.

Genesis 2
LORD (Jehovah) + **GOD** (Elohim)  Our God of **relationship** AND **power and authority**

Genesis 2:4: (KJV) *These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that **Jehovah** the **LORD** <3068> **Elohim** God <430> made the earth and the heavens.*

This is the first time **Jehovah** is introduced. This is by far the most common description of God, used over 6,500 times in the Bible.

The name means “the Self-Existent or Eternal.”

A being is immortal if life is not dependent on any outside source; this makes **Jehovah** self-existent. Whereas *God* or **Elohim** is more generic and can apply to others, **LORD** or **Jehovah** is specific only to Him.

In the Hebrew Bible, this name appears as four Hebrew consonants usually transliterated as YHWH or JHVH, called a “tetragrammaton.” Both Jews and Christians throughout the centuries have deemed the name either unpronounceable or too sacred to pronounce. The scholarly consensus is that it should be pronounced Yahweh, (YAH-way), but since at least the 1500’s, it has been translated into English with the spelling and pronunciation of “Jehovah.”

It is thought the letters of the tetragrammaton provide additional understanding about God’s existence, to be translated as, “He was, He is, He will be,” assuring us He will be what we need Him to become.



For a brief explanation, see: *The Hebrew Name of God - Hebrew Word of the Day* on YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/LQBrpdiFRLc?si=aXfz3IQECjOSakaK>



Since this word means self-existent or eternal, why do we say it is showing the God of relationship?



This description of God is added in Genesis 2 to present the “WHY” of creation. As we touch on several scriptures from this chapter, we will notice it is all about humanity. God’s powerful and authoritative creation in chapter 1 was for the purpose of Him having a human family on earth.

With this additional description, we can now put the puzzle of Genesis 2 together:

The first three verses of Genesis 2 show God’s magnificent work completed. As we requote verse 4, we are presented with a new viewpoint. So far, it has been *heavens and the earth* made by the mighty God.

Now we will see WHY the LORD God made earth and heaven:

Genesis 2:4: *This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that **Jehovah** the **LORD** <3068> **Elohim** God <430> made earth and heaven.*

Did you notice the reversal in the same sentence? *This is the account of heavens and the earth, but it ends with, **Jehovah Elohim** made earth and heaven.*

Genesis 2

Does not describe creation in chronological order.
Instead, it describes **man’s relationship to the earth**
and **what God created for man’s benefit.**

The focus has changed, showing us more depth to the character of God Himself.

**HERE
IS THE
WHY**

Earth takes precedence as the home of man,
who is the centerpiece of this whole creative process.

This will be the theme of Genesis 2. While the definition of **Jehovah** as the Self-Existing One does not technically mean a God of relationship, every time **Jehovah** is mentioned in Genesis 2, that's what it is describing. We will see how this shows a greater depth to God's character.

Genesis 2:5-6: *⁵Now no shrub of the field was yet in the earth, and no plant of the field had yet sprouted, for **Jehovah** the **LORD** <3068> **Elohim** God <430> had not sent rain upon the earth, and there was no man to cultivate the ground. ⁶But a mist used to rise from the earth and water the whole surface of the ground.*

**HERE
IS THE
WHY**

The attention goes to plant life and the connection of man
as the centerpiece of its cultivation. God would eventually
send rain, enabling man to cultivate the earth.

God was preparing the earth for man. *You will be part of the productivity that will feed you. You have dominion – this planet is yours. It needs mankind to care for it.* (Unfortunately, we haven't done a very good job of that.)

This is how we see God as a God of relationship. He shows His incredible love for us by methodically and thoughtfully building our home and then putting us in it to cultivate the ground.

Consider all that **Jehovah**, the Self-Existing One, did for us! This is what Genesis 2 is showing us.

Now man's creation is referenced:

Genesis 2:7: *Then **Jehovah** the **LORD** <3068> **Elohim** God <430> formed man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.*

**HERE
IS THE
WHY**

No other earthly creation was so personally created
and energized! This proves the personal connection
between God and man.

The Self-Existing One had a plan for man to be the centerpiece of this amazing creation of earth. Every other form of life on earth was a cycle of nature set in motion. Humans were completely different, which is how we know the theory of evolution when it comes to man is completely contradictory to the biblical account of man's creation. The cycle of plants and animals show natural evolution – the Bible and science agree on that.

This verse says **Jehovah Elohim**, the LORD God, formed man from the dust of the ground. The power and authority of the Self-Existing One is saying, *By My specific action, I now create humanity as the pinnacle of what I have put in place.* We are in awe to realize that God was looking for such a relationship with the human family.

The lavish gift of this garden and dominion over the earth and its animals required both obedience from mankind and maintenance of the creation, so God gave instructions in the next several verses.

These verses show His personal connection to Adam:

Genesis 2:18-19: ¹⁸Then **Jehovah** the **LORD <3068> Elohim God <430>** said, *It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.* ¹⁹Out of the ground **Jehovah** the **LORD <3068> Elohim God <430>** formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name.

HERE
IS THE
WHY

God gave Adam naming authority. This furthers the connection between God and Adam and between man and the animals.

These verses confirm God made these animals for mankind because man is the centerpiece. They would be a part of man's life, and Adam would name each one of them. Mankind is made in God's image with authority over what he has been given. We don't act solely on instinct as animals do. Human beings have dominion over the earth. We are the **elohim**, the "mighty ones" of this planet. Mankind is in a position of authority as rulers, having dominion. That's the free-will aspect God has given man.

The name **Jehovah** doesn't mean "relationship," but these actions around the introduction of His name show us His character. He wants a relationship with us. He made all of this for us.

Earlier we said the name **Jehovah** appears over 6,500 times in the Old Testament. A challenge for us when we see the name, LORD, **Jehovah**, is to not just think of the Self-Existing One, but to also think of the God who made us to have a relationship with Him. It helps us to understand He has a bigger purpose than we could ever imagine.

WHO
IS
GOD

He is "Jehovah," the Self-Existent, Eternal One, who created mankind in order for us to have a relationship with Him.

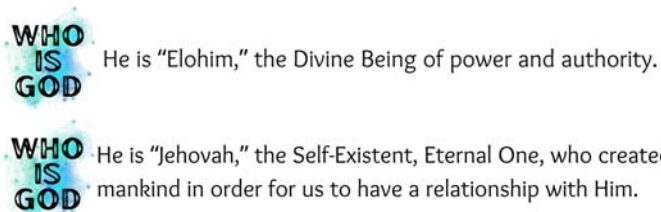
Still, something is missing:

Genesis 2:22: **Jehovah** the **LORD <3068> Elohim God <430>** fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man.

Genesis 1 shows us to first know God as the Almighty, with power and authority. Know WHAT He can do! Genesis 2 then shows us to know Him as our LORD and God - **Jehovah** - to have a relationship with Him. This is God's "WHY"!

The title of this episode is, "Who is God?" Going over these verses helps us see His incredible power and authority, and the fact that all of this was planned with man as the centerpiece. We are important to God. Look at all the details, planning and provisions made on our behalf!

We should feel very small when we realize the extraordinary magnitude of God's generosity towards us. We have only looked at the first two chapters of the entire Bible and have only scratched the surface in understanding the depth of God's character!



Jumping ahead for a moment, we can now see more clearly God's motivation and reasoning behind His requirements for the high standards He required of Israel:

Exodus 20:1-5: *¹Then **Elohim God <430>** spoke all these words, saying, ²I am **Jehovah the LORD <3068>** your **Elohim God <430>**, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. ³You shall have no other **elohim gods <430>** before Me. ⁴You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. ⁵You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, **Jehovah the LORD <3068>** your **Elohim God <430>**, am a jealous **Elohim God <430>**...*

Humanity through Adam was at first the centerpiece. Now the focus of **Jehovah Elohim** would shift specifically to Israel as the centerpiece of mankind.

What happened in Genesis 1 and 2 - our God of authority and power and the Self-Existing One wanting a human connection - will now carry through the Old Testament.

Israel was given the capacity to be blessed by Him through the Law Covenant, just like He gave Adam the rules of the Garden in order to be blessed. This same God of power, authority and relationship was now bringing the Hebrews together as a nation to be His people.

With the nation of Israel, He presents Himself exactly the same way. How? By having His power and authority. By looking to Israel for that relationship, that human family. He gave them the Law and its restrictions and penalties in order for them to rise above sinfulness.

This is the might and power and glory of God just beginning to unfold!

Grasping the Greatness of God

Not only are Genesis 1 and 2 in harmony with one another, together they tell the story of the greatness of God. Genesis 1 shows us His unfathomable power and authority as the Designer and catalyst of creation. Genesis 2 shows us He is a mighty God who is tenderhearted and loving towards His human family. He made the world for us!

For all God did for us, man has been a disappointment to Him in so many ways - our endless cruelty to each other, our disrespect of the earth, our mocking Him, and having the complete lack of reverence for Him and what He made for us. Hopefully this will inspire all of us to elevate our reverence of **Jehovah Elohim**, our LORD God, in a bigger way than before.

Who is God? We can't ask that question without having a reverential approach to our Creator and these aspects of His wonderful, amazing and fathomless character.

We are just two chapters into the Bible and are beginning to see the depth and complexity of God's character and purposes!

God is described to us as powerful, authoritative and as the Existing One with whom we can have a relationship. Does this ever change?

It does change - and it changes in a dramatic way. As we continue to study God's word, we can see that He is described by these two words for a very long time in human history. Then something happens: God's time to establish the lineage of the Messiah arrives, and the father of this lineage is named Abram. Abram first appears in Scripture at the end of Genesis 11.

This is the first biblical account of God communicating with Abram:

Genesis 12:1-4: *¹Now **Jehovah** the **LORD** <3068> said to Abram, Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you; ²and I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; ³and I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed. ⁴So Abram went forth as **Jehovah** the **LORD** <3068> had spoken to him; and Lot went with him. Now Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.*

In this conversation of God talking to Abram, God is recognized solely as **Jehovah** and not **Elohim**. Why was that name left out? Because this was all about the relationship of Abram following God. *I will make you a great nation ...Go forth...to the land which I will show you. It is you and Me together, Abram!*

This shows the connectivity between God and Abram. It is beautiful. God spoke; Abram followed. This began a special relationship between the two. Throughout the history of the entire Bible, Abraham was known as a *friend of God*.

What an honor!

James 2:23: *and the scripture was fulfilled which says, and Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness, and he was called the friend of God.*

What's so special about friendship?

There's an expression about human friendships, "Friendship is knowing all about the person... and loving them anyway." People we don't know very well are acquaintances, but we know all about our friends because we have shared experiences with them.

We appreciate them. We can rely on each other because we've learned to trust each other. We might work alongside them for a common goal. We want to make them happy, and in turn, we want to feel good in their presence.

Abram did all these things, and in so doing, he grew in his understanding of who God was.

Abram, who was later renamed Abraham, expanded our understanding of God dramatically. Up to this point, God was known as **Jehovah Elohim**, or LORD God. This would now change.

Abram is a catalyst for dramatic change in the understanding of who God is.

We are going to see that develop further as we go on.



In Genesis 14, there's a war going on. Four kings get together and conquer Sodom and Gomorrah, taking all the goods and people. Unfortunately, Abram's nephew, Lot, was one of those captured. Abram hears about this, and takes 318 of his servants, and saves Lot, the citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah and all the goods taken from Sodom. Abram returns victorious and is about to be met by the King of Sodom. But first, he is greeted by Melchizedek, the King of Salem and a priest. As God's representative, Melchizedek gives Abram a special blessing to show how honored Abram is before God.

We are given a new description of God, **El Elyon**, which can be understood as "the Most Exalted or Supreme God."

Listen to how God is described to Abram:

Genesis 14:18-22: (KJV) ¹⁸And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of **El Elyon the most high <5945> God <410>**. ¹⁹And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of **El Elyon the most high <5945> God <410>**, possessor of heaven and earth: ²⁰And blessed be **El Elyon the most high <5945> God <410>**, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all. ²¹And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself. ²²And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto **Jehovah the LORD <3068>, El Elyon the most high <5945> God <410>**, the possessor of heaven and earth,

Notice what just happened. Jehovah's representative, Melchizedek, expands the description of God as **El Elyon**. The king of Sodom is so appreciative to have his people back that he is offering his share of the goods taken to Abram - *Give me the persons and take the goods to thyself*.

Abram immediately uses this new description of God – **Jehovah El Elyon** – effectively saying, "My true God is better than your false gods." By the way, Abram took none of Sodom's goods, because he did not want the king to say he was the one who made Abram rich. God made Abram rich, and God gave him the victory.

We love the way Abram presents this thought to the king of Sodom. *I have lifted up mine hand unto Jehovah* - the name that was already established – and then, **El Elyon**, the Most High God. It is a direct contrast to what the King of Sodom would have been used to in thinking of his own gods. Abram is blunt and straightforward saying, the Self-Existing One, the Most High God, is HIS God.



He is "Jehovah El Elyon," the MOST Exalted, Supreme God.

In Genesis 15, Abram prays and introduces another new description of God, **Adonai**. This is an emphatic form of *my LORD*. Emphatic means showing or giving emphasis; expressing something forcibly and clearly. **Adonai** is a title spoken in place of the name **Jehovah** (or YHWH) as a display of reverence.

This word carries the thought of Sovereign Lord, as displayed by Abram's question:
Genesis 15:1-2: *'After these things the word of Jehovah the LORD <3068> came to Abram in a vision, saying, Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; your reward shall be very great. ²Abram said, O Adonai (Sovereign) LORD <136> Jehovah the LORD <3068>, what will You give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?*

In other words, *O Sovereign LORD, you are able to make things happen in my life – but what do I do now since I do not have children?*

What a beautiful description of God's power over Abraham, personally. He is sovereign over ME – not just over everything in a broad sense. Abram shows us how to approach God with the appropriate humble reverence.



He is "Adonai Jehovah," the Sovereign LORD over every aspect of the lives of those who obey Him.

He is their personal God.

Abram uses **Adonai** to identify God Almighty. He does not use *Yahweh* (**Jehovah**), or **Elohim**. It is **Adonai**, Sovereign LORD. Why? Abram shows us how to go to the holy, highest, heavenly Father, “**Adonai**, Supreme, Sovereign Lord, I have an issue – I do not have children. You are sovereign. You are above and beyond and over this problem.” This God of authority and power - this God of relationship - has sovereignty over every aspect of the lives of those who choose to follow Him.

In Genesis 17, God is speaking to Abram. God labels Himself with yet another description to assist Abram in continuing in faith even when things seem hopeless. This next description is **El Shaddai**. **Shaddai** has varied interpretations and likely refers to “God Almighty, most powerful and all sufficient.”



Twenty-four years after Abraham was promised an heir with no child in sight from his wife Sarah, **Jehovah** becomes **El Shaddai**.

Genesis 17:1-6: (KJV) *‘And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, **Jehovah** the **LORD** <3068> appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the **El Shaddai Almighty** <7706> God <410>; walk before Me, and be thou perfect. ²And I will make my covenant between Me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. ³And Abram fell on his face: and **Elohim** God <430> talked with him, saying, ⁴As for Me, behold, My covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. ⁵Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. ⁶And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.*

Abram would now be called Abraham, and not only would he have a child by Sarah, but he would become the father of many nations. God was indeed **El Shaddai** - God Almighty, most powerful and all sufficient!

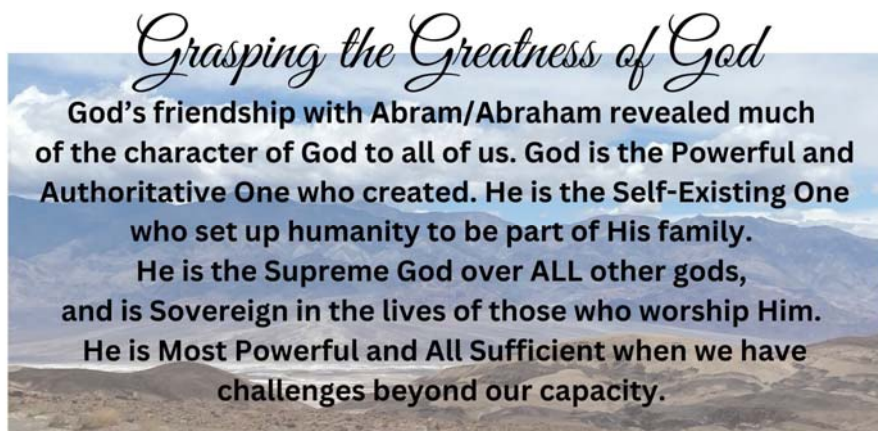
God had not forgotten about His promise 24 years later! The significant part of this is, God tells Abraham that He is **El Shaddai**, the All-Sufficient, Most Powerful God. It seemed like Abraham was in an impossible place (he was 99-years old and Sarah was 90) but God’s sufficiency would carry them through begetting this miracle child. The friendship between God and Abraham unfolds and grows even more as Abraham’s life goes on! We started out 24 years before when Abraham was introduced to God in a new way by Melchizedek as **El Elyon**. Now, we have this from God HIMSELF saying in effect, *This is who I am to you. You are my friend. I care for you.*



He is “El Shaddai,” the Most Powerful and Sufficient God who can see things through - even when they are hopeless in our eyes.

Pause and consider what is happening through this friendship between God and Abraham. Through Abraham’s experiences, God unfolds His own character to Abraham, so he can see Him and hold onto Him in every single aspect of his life.

Each time there is a new way to comprehend the Almighty, Abraham has a new way to connect to God. This is **Jehovah**, the Self-Existing One, the God who seeks a relationship with humanity.



To think that God's true character is being so clearly revealed as a result of His friendship with Abraham is an amazing inspiration!

**Abraham learned who God was in some previously unknown ways.
Was Abraham given further revelations about God's character?**

He absolutely was, and this fact should teach us about the importance of obedience and loyalty to God. Because Abraham stood out as one whom God could trust, he had the privilege of knowing God in a deeper way, especially as his life progressed.

Where do you and I stand? Are we in a position to know God more deeply, or are we just along for the ride?

Another name for God in the Old Testament is **Jehovah Rapha**. This can be understood to mean **Jehovah** (God), the Self-Existing One Who Heals. While this exact phrase did not first appear in the accounts of Abraham, a similar phrase did.



Abraham and his wife Sarah moved to the town of Gerar, ruled by King Abimelech (there are several men called "Abimelech" in the Bible). For the second time, Abraham told people a half-truth, that Sarah was his sister (they had the same father but different mothers), thinking that beautiful Sarah would be taken and he would be killed. The king did take Sarah, not knowing she was married, but found out in a dream from God that Sarah was actually Abraham's wife and to return her, which he did (along with cattle, servants and money to settle any claim against him). The LORD made all the women in the household infertile as a warning to Abimelech for having taken Abraham's wife.

Once the issue was made right, Abraham prayed:

Genesis 20:17-18: (KJV) *¹⁷So Abraham prayed unto **Elohim God <430>**: and **Elohim God <430> rapha** healed <7495> Abimelech, and his wife, and his maidservants; and they bare children. ¹⁸For **Jehovah** the **LORD <3068>** had fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech, because of Sarah Abraham's wife.*

Elohim (God) healed (verb: **rapha**) Abimelech. The verb **rapha** is used, but not yet as a specific name of God.

This word later appears as a formal name for God in the book of Exodus when the bitter waters of Marah were sweetened:

Exodus 15:26: (KJV) *And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of **Jehovah** the **LORD <3068> Elohim God <430>**, and wilt do that which is right in His sight, and wilt give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am **Jehovah Rapha** the **LORD <3068> that healeth <7495>** thee.*

Abraham prays to **Elohim**, the God of might and power, because a healing of the woman in Pharaoh's household is needed. God answers with another description of Himself, **Jehovah Rapha** – the **LORD that healeth**. **Elohim** healed the woman, but **Jehovah Rapha** was not presented as a formal name of God until the waters of Marah were healed.

This is yet another way to understand God Almighty. He is greater than we can picture, and we need all these different ways to describe Him because His power, His presence, His wisdom, His justice and His actions are beyond our comprehension.

**WHO
IS
GOD**

He is "Jehovah Rapha," the Mighty and Caring Healer.



Abraham and Abimelech make a covenant. They negotiate a peace treaty, agreeing to treat each other well. They agree that Abraham has formal ownership of the water well he dug in exchange for seven sheep.

The name of the well's location was changed to Beersheba, meaning "well of the oath" or "well of seven." Beersheba becomes an important place for his descendants. Today it is the largest city in the Negev desert of southern Israel.

Abraham names this place **El Olam**, the Everlasting God, in honor of this important event.

His relationship with his heavenly Father continues to develop, and God is woven into everything Abraham does:

Genesis 21:32-33: (KJV) *³²Thus they made a covenant at Beersheba: then Abimelech rose up, and Phichol the chief captain of his host, and they returned into the land of the Philistines.*

³³And Abraham planted a grove in Beersheba and called there on the name of **Jehovah** the **LORD <3068>**, **El Olam** the *everlasting <5769>* God *<410>*.

He planted a grove in Beersheba, meaning a tamarisk tree. These are evergreens (hence **El Olam**, or Everlasting God) that can grow up to 30 feet tall with deep roots to find water and can live over 100 years. Interestingly, the shade of the tamarisk is said to be much cooler than that of other trees. What a beautiful way for Abraham to honor **El Olam**.



Why did he call that place **El Olam**? Abraham and Abimelech came to an agreement. Their intention was for that promised agreement to always remain. The eternal God is a God of everlasting promise, and God's promises always stay intact. God's human friend, Abraham, understood that and honored God for teaching him this.

**WHO
IS
GOD**

He is "El Olam," God Everlasting,
our Eternal God without a beginning or end.

When we make binding promises, He is our example and reminder to keep them!

We have learned all of this so far just from Genesis 1 and 2 and the life of Abraham! The depth of God's character is being revealed. "Who is God," is not a small question. It is a question that requires us to take a breath and open our minds to pause and consider the incredible breadth of Scripture as it helps us to see the greatness of our Creator.



Our next account of God's power, influence and friendship in Abraham's life is when he was willing to sacrifice his only son, Isaac. Remember, Abraham had waited a long time for this son to be born. Then when he was almost grown, God told Abraham to sacrifice Isaac to Him. (This was a picture of God sacrificing His own son, Jesus, on our behalf.)

God stopped him, and Abraham responded:

Genesis 22:13-18: (KJV) ¹³And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. ¹⁴And Abraham called the name of that place **Jehovah-jireh** (*Jehovah sees*) **<3070>**: as it is said to this day, In the mount of **Jehovah** the **LORD <3068>** it shall be seen. ¹⁵And the angel of **Jehovah** the **LORD <3068>** called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, ¹⁶And said, By Myself have I sworn, saith **Jehovah** the **LORD <3068>**, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: ¹⁷That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; ¹⁸And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed My voice.

Jehovah-jireh appears only once in the Bible. God saw, provided and blessed, as He is mighty and compassionate.

God revealed all of these different facets of Himself to Abraham, and Abraham in turn proclaims them to us so that we can understand our God better. Abraham gave all the credit to God in very specific ways, as should we.

Abraham extended himself in his trust of God in a dramatic way. Abraham knew that God knew he had faith in Him. As he is lifting up the knife and the angel stops him, his response is to name this place *Jehovah-jireh*, God sees! God knows my heart. He knows me, He takes care of me; He is there.

When we read how Abraham and God were friends, we can see why. We can see their understanding of each other. We want to be friends of God like Abraham was. We want to be able to grow to the depths of a relationship that can proclaim God to be all these things in our lives as well!



He is "Jehovah-jireh," the LORD sees and will provide.
He sees all and responds for the ultimate wellbeing of all.

Abraham's extraordinary faith enabled him to see this aspect of God's extraordinary character!

What God started with Abraham, He continued with Abraham's sons, and later with the nation of Israel.



This next account is famously known as "Jacob's Ladder," because of a special dream Jacob had. Abraham's son was Isaac, Isaac had Jacob, so Jacob is Abraham's grandson. Jacob grew up in Beersheba but now leaves for Abraham's hometown of Haran to find a wife.

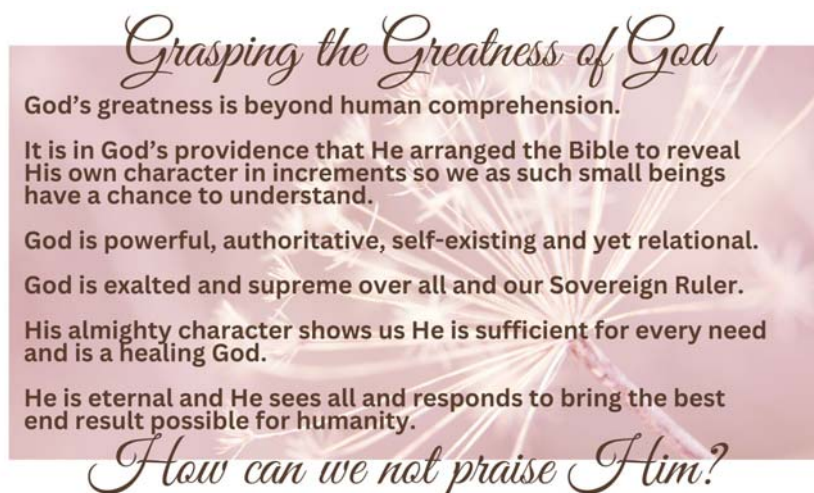
On his way, he stops for the night, sets up stones for pillows and falls asleep:

Genesis 28:12-14: (KJV) ¹²And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of **Elohim God <430>** ascending and descending on it. ¹³And, behold, **Jehovah the LORD <3068>** stood above it, and said, I am **Jehovah the LORD <3068> Elohim God <430>** of Abraham thy father, and the **Elohim God <430>** of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; ¹⁴And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

God proves His friendship to Abraham, and Abraham proves his friendship to God.

In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed - the promise originally given to Abraham was given to Isaac and is now repeated to Jacob.

Jacob became the father of the 12 tribes of Israel, which became the nation of Israel. God's plan was in place, and it went beyond even the nation of Israel. He is a God of relationship, and He would teach Abraham, essentially the father of the Messiah generations later, so that his posterity would know who God is. Can we ever really grasp the greatness of God?



When we look at the magnitude of our Almighty God in the book of Genesis, it lays a foundation to show us how God is more comprehensive than we can ever get our heads around. Whenever there was a circumstance, change or challenge, the description of God exactly matched the need. This should tell us about God Almighty. This should tell us what we can look forward to as we continue to serve Him and follow in His son Jesus' footsteps. We want to be closer to the heavenly Father, the friend of Abraham, the God of all.

So, who is God?
For Jonathan, Rick, Julie and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!

All scriptures quoted are from NASB1995 unless otherwise shown



Next episode

Join us next week on September 11, 2023
Episode 1298: Who is God? (Part II)



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Ep. 1090: What Profound Secret Does Creation Reveal? Contradictions (Part V)

Startling revelations from Genesis 2

<https://christianquestions.com/doctrine/1090-contradictions-creation/>

Abraham and Isaac

Ep.1246: Does God REALLY Require Human Sacrifices? Contradictions Series

Clarifying Abraham sacrificing Isaac, and if we should make oaths or not

<https://christianquestions.com/doctrine/1246-human-sacrifices/>



Parents and Bible class teachers, continue your studies on this topic with these short, animated videos for kids at ChristianQuestions.com/YouTube:

- **Who made God?** <https://youtu.be/PSH98AEf5KA>
- **How can we know God?** <https://youtu.be/9CWO8jXjRIE>
- **What does God look like?** <https://youtu.be/fE5dHuKXRO4>
- **How do we know God exists when we can't see Him?** <https://youtu.be/mTXPTYkEpwo>
- **How can God see everything?** <https://youtu.be/Tufm8iNjbw0>
- **Why do we worship God?** <https://youtu.be/Ns2xhCBbKJQ>
- **Why did God create human beings?** https://youtu.be/n5D_2NZ2-IU
- **Why did God tell Abraham to sacrifice Isaac?** <https://youtu.be/XdBWPbKUAKU>

Jeremiah 32:17: *Ah Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and by Your outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for You.*

Psalms 25:14: (NLT) *The LORD is a friend to those who fear Him. He teaches them His covenant.*

A clear example of how well the prophets knew the multifaceted character of God:

Isaiah 61:1-2: *'The spirit of the Adonai Lord <136> Jehovah GOD <3068> is upon me, because Jehovah the LORD <3068> has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners; ²to proclaim the favorable year of Jehovah the LORD <3068> and the day of vengeance of our Elohim God <430>; to comfort all who mourn.*

Elohim: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #430 *el-o-heem'*; gods in the ordinary sense; but specifically used (in the plural, thus, especially with the article) of the supreme God; occasionally applied by way of deference to magistrates; and sometimes as a superlative: angels, exceeding, God (gods) (-dess, -ly), (very) great, judges, mighty

The King James Version translates this as:
God, god, judge, GOD, goddess, great, mighty, angels, exceeding, God-ward, godly

Brown-Driver-Briggs' Definition:

1) (plural) a) rulers, judges b) divine ones c) angels d) gods 2) (plural intensive-singular meaning)
a) god, goddess b) godlike one c) works or special possessions of God d) the (true) God e) God

Jehovah: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #3068 *Yehovah*; (the) Self-Existent or Eternal; Jeho-vah, Jewish national name of God - Jehovah, the Lord

The King James translates this as: LORD, GOD, JEHOVAH

Brown-Driver-Briggs' Definition: Jehovah= "the existing One,"
the proper name of the one true God

(El) Elyon: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #5945 *'elyown*; an elevation, i.e. (adj.) lofty (compar.); as title, the Supreme: (Most, on) high(-er, -est), upper(-most)

The King James Version translates this as: High, most high, high, upper, higher, highest, above, Highest, uppermost

Brown-Driver-Briggs' Definition: 1) high, upper 1a) of Davidic king exalted above monarchs
2) Highest, Most High 2a) name of God 2b) of rulers, either monarchs or angel-princes

El: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #410 *'el ale*; strength; as adjective, mighty; especially the Almighty (but used also of any deity)

The King James Version translates this as: God, god, power, mighty, goodly, great, idols, Immanuel, might, strong

Brown-Driver-Briggs' Definition: 1) god, god-like one, mighty one 1a) mighty men, men of rank, mighty heroes 1b) angels 1c) god, false god, (demons, imaginations) 1d) God, the one true God, Jehovah 2) mighty things in nature 3) strength, power

Adonai: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #136 *Ādônây*; an emphatic form of H113 *'ādôn*; the Lord (used as a proper name of God only): - (my) Lord

The King James Version translates this as: Lord, lord, God

Brown-Driver-Briggs' Definition: 1) my lord, lord 1a) of men b) of God
2) Lord - title, spoken in place of Yahweh in Jewish display of reverence

(El) Shaddai: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #7706 *Shadday*; the Almighty

Brown-Driver-Briggs' Definition: 1) almighty, most powerful A) Shaddai, the Almighty (of God)

(Jehovah) Rapha: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #7495 *rapha'*; properly, to mend (by stitching), i.e. (figuratively) to cure: -cure, (cause to) heal, physician, repair, thoroughly, make whole

The King James Version translates this as: heal, physician, cure, repaired

Brown-Driver-Briggs' Definition: 1) to heal, make healthful 1a) to heal 1a1) of God 1a2) healer, physician (of men) 1a3) of hurts of nations involving restored favor 1a4) of individual distresses
1b) to be healed 1b1) literal (of persons) 1b2) of water, pottery 1b3) of national hurts
1b4) of personal distress 1c) to heal 1c1) literal 1c2) of national defects or hurts
D) in order to get healed (infinitive)

(El) Olam: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #5769 *'owlam*; properly, concealed, i.e., the vanishing point; generally, time out of mind (past or future), i.e. (practically) eternity; frequently, adverbial (especially with prepositional prefix) always

The King James Version translates this as: ever, everlasting, old, perpetual, evermore, never, time, ancient, world, always, always, long, more, never

Brown-Driver-Briggs' Definition: 1) long duration, antiquity, futurity, for ever, ever, everlasting, evermore, perpetual, old, ancient, world 1a) ancient time, long time (of past)
1b) (of future) 1b1) for ever, always 1b2) continuous existence, perpetual
1b3) everlasting, indefinite or unending future, eternity

Jehovah-jireh: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #3070 *Yehovah*; Jehovah will see (to it); Jehovah-jireh, a symbolical name for Mount Moriah

Brown-Driver-Briggs' Definition: Jehovah-jireh = "Jehovah sees"
Symbolic name given by Abraham to Mount Moriah in commemoration of the interposition of the angel of Jehovah who prevented the sacrifice of Isaac and provided a substitute

Study QUESTIONS

Ep. 1297: Who is God? (Part I)

<https://christianquestions.com/doctrine/1297-who-is-god-part-i/>

See:  **CQ Rewind**
SHOW NOTES

1. *Elohim – Mighty One, the Divine Being of power and authority*
 - a. Genesis 1:1-5, 9 – In what way was *Elohim* a catalyst for our world's creation?
How did *Elohim* bring light to the surface of the earth? What was the method He used to prepare the earth?
 - b. Genesis 1:24-26 – Who is God talking to in verse 26? What was accomplished in Genesis 1?
 - c. How has *Elohim's* power and authority worked in your life?
2. *Jehovah Elohim – the Self-Existing, Eternal One with power and authority who wants a relationship with us*
 - a. Genesis 2:4-7 – For what purpose did God create the earth?
How does *Jehovah Elohim* show His love for mankind?
 - b. Genesis 12:1-4 – Why did *Jehovah* begin a relationship with Abram?
What was special about Abram and God's relationship? (see James 2:23)
 - c. How is your relationship with *Jehovah Elohim*? How can you improve it further?
3. *Jehovah El Elyon – the MOST Exalted, Supreme God*
 - a. Genesis 14:18-22 – How does Abram use Melchizedek's description of *Jehovah El Elyon* to show his loyalty to God?
 - b. Is *Jehovah El Elyon* YOUR God? How does He take precedence over any other false gods in your life?
4. *Adonai Jehovah – Sovereign Lord over every aspect of the lives of those who obey Him*
 - a. Genesis 15:1-2 – Why does Abram address God as *Adonai Jehovah* in these verses?
 - b. How is *Adonai Jehovah* sovereign over everything in your life? How is He your personal God?
5. *El Shaddai – the Most Powerful and Sufficient God who can see things through even when they appear hopeless*
 - a. Genesis 17:1-6 – How is God *El Shaddai* in this instance for Abraham and Sarah?
 - b. When was a time when you despaired, but *El Shaddai* stood by you until it was resolved?
6. *Jehovah-Rapha – the Mighty and Caring Healer*
 - a. Genesis 20:17-18 – How did *Jehovah* show Himself as a healer, a *rapha*, in this instance? (see Exodus 15:26)
 - b. How has *Jehovah Rapha* healed your anguish and the despair of your soul?
7. *El Olam – God Everlasting – Eternal God without beginning or end*
 - a. Genesis 21:32-33 – Why did Abraham name the area around Beersheba *El Olam*?
 - b. How can you feel the everlastingness of *El Olam*? How does it sink into your heart and give you comfort?
8. *Jehovah-Jireh – Jehovah saw and provided*
 - a. Genesis 22:13-18 – What did *Jehovah-jireh* see and provide for in this account?
 - b. How does *Jehovah-jireh* see and provide for all of mankind?
 - c. How has *Jehovah-jireh* shown that He sees your heart and takes care of you? That He is always there?
9. How have God's many names drawn you closer to Him through understanding His character a little better? Explain.