

Thursday Evening Bible Class. Name and Titles of God

28th October 2020

Study No. 3 - ELOAH

Brief Recap

El means source of power, and is used 556 times, and often translated simply as God. So many different Hebrew terms are used to describe God, and are simply translated “God” or “Lord” in our English Old Testament. But as this series of Bible classes will show, there is more to the titles of God than we at first may realise. Last time we looked at the word often translated as God, but which in the Hebrew is EL, El. As we discussed last time, El should be pronounced Ail. Apparently, this word is a shortened form and derives from Ahyil, which properly means strength, and thus can mean anything strong, a chief – (politically), also a ram (male sheep) a pillar, and even an oak tree. It is even the word used for lintel, which supports the wall above a doorway. But when attributed to God, as a Title, and commonly used as the original Hebrew term for God, El means Power, Strength – but even more than that, as the absolute source of Power and Strength.

Eloah

So what of Eloah? It is אֱלֹהִים for those who can read Hebrew! We can see it derives from El. El - oahh. It is a singular word, and is also masculine. In means in fact one who is made strong. In its application as a Title to God, it means one who is made strong by Divine power (or El) So in short Eloah means Powerful One, or Mighty One.

It may at first appear very strange, that this Title of the Creator, is quite unusual, and not used very often at all. Why not when it is such an accurate description? But when we consider the purpose of God, it is hardly surprising. The purpose of God is declared in Isaiah

45:18 *For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord; and there is none else.* Furthermore it is to those who inhabit the earth, that He has revealed himself, and that it is His purpose that His love and glory is manifest to them, and His creative Spirit is shared among those who appreciate and love Him. As Jesus prayed: John 17: 21 *That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.* This the Apostle Paul describes God in Ephesians 4:6 *as One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.* Again in 1 Corinthians 15: 28 the ultimate goal: *that God may be all in all.*

Thus, as seen in the above summary, God's purpose is to be manifest in a multitude of people, many people. It is therefore understandable that He describes Himself as such and therefore the word Elohim which is the plural of Eloah Mighty Ones is used **2598** times, whereas Eloah Mighty One is just 56 times.

We can conclude then that when Eloah is used, it is not simply an accident, but is for a reason.

Reason 1: for comparison

To demonstrate a superiority of the God of Israel over the plurality of false gods. Whereas the gods of the nations were inventions of men, mere wood and stone which were inanimate objects with no power. Psalm 115: 4-9 *Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat. They that*

make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them. O Israel, trust thou in the Lord: he is their help and their shield.

*Deut 32: 15 But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; then he forsook God **Eloah** which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation. 17 They sacrificed unto devils, not to God **Eloah**; to gods **elohim** whom they knew not, to new gods **elohim** that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not.*

Here we can see a comparison is made between Eloah, the Mighty One who is made strong by His own Divine Power (**El**), and the eloah, or elohim, the powerful one or ones of the nations.

Again for this very same reason, Nehemiah employs the same usage of the Hebrew word for Mighty One: Nehemiah 9:17 *And refused to obey, neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them; but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage: but thou art a God **Eloah** ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not.*

We note the next verse! 18 *Yea, when they had made them a molten calf, and said, This is thy God Elohim that brought thee up out of Egypt, and had wrought great provocations;*

This corroborates the passage in Deuteronomy, and like Moses, Nehemiah makes the same comparison. True and absolute power belongs only to the God of Israel, and not these idols or rulers of other nations.

It was important to make this comparison. So much was put in store in the gods of the nations. Rulers even of foreign powers set themselves up as Mighty Ones.

For example: 2 Kings 17: 31 *And the Avites made Nibhaz and Tartak, and the Sepharvites burnt their children in fire to Adrammelech and*

*Anammelech, the gods **Elohe** of Sepharvaim. Elohe is from Eloah, and is hardly ever used, but we see how the surrounding nations viewed their idols, and rulers – and so of course did Israel, claiming their idols had divine power. We can see this in the clever way that Sennacherib king of Assyria reasoned: 2 Chron 32:15 *Now therefore let not Hezekiah deceive you, nor persuade you on this manner, neither yet believe him: for no god **eloah** of any nation or kingdom was able to deliver his people out of mine hand, and out of the hand of my fathers: how much less shall your God **Elohim** deliver you out of mine hand?**

Habakkuk 1:11 *Then shall his mind change, and he shall pass over, and offend, imputing this his power unto his god. **eloah**.* Here the prophet is showing how the Chaldean ruler (context verse 6) would offend God by claiming God's Power as his own.

Reason 2: That Power emanates from the God of Israel alone.

These passages show where the Title Eloah is used, in the need to emphasise the source of Power, where men begin to take the power for granted, and assume their part in it, instead God's power is Holy, His and His alone to share. It is terrible and all consuming.

Psalm 50: 22 *Now consider this, ye that forget God **Eloah**, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.* 23 *Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God. **Elohim***

Psalm 114: 7 *Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord **Adon**, at the presence of the God **Eloah** of Jacob;*

Psalm 139: 19 *Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God **Eloah**: depart from me therefore, ye bloody men.*

Proverbs 30: 5 *Every word of God **Eloah** is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.* – How does this passage show the terror of the Lord, Power of His Judgement? We read on: Verse 6:

Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar. The word God is only used 8 times in the book of Proverbs, and this once Eloah is used in connection to judgement.

Reason 3: The Mighty One a Rock Alone

In these three passages, Eloah the Mighty One is likened to a Rock. The Hebrew for Rock is Tzur. Rock is a proper Title also given to God. We see this in Deuteronomy 32 and other passages. Deut 32: 3... *ascribe ye greatness unto our God. 4 He is the Rock, his work is perfect: ...* As the Rock, God and He Alone is the support of Israel and the foundation of the faithful, steady, unmoveable, unshaken in the storm, a defence and a shelter and a source of water for the thirsty in spirit. God Alone.

Psalm 18:31 *For who is God **Eloah** save the Lord **Yahweh**? or who is a rock **Tsur** save our God **Elohim**?*

18:46 *The Lord **Yahweh** liveth; and blessed be my rock **Tsur**; and let the God אֱלֹהֵי **elowhe** of my salvation be exalted.*

Isaiah 44: 8 *Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God **Eloah** beside me? yea, there is no God – This should be translated Rock **Tsur** צֶר צוּר I know not any. 9 *They that make a graven image are all of them vanity; and their delectable things shall not profit; and they are their own witnesses; they see not, nor know; that they may be ashamed.* 10 *Who hath formed a god, or molten a graven image that is profitable for nothing?**

As well as having these reasons, the rest of the time Eloah is used, is in special cases, in the books of Job, Ezra and Daniel

Book of Job

The word Eloah is used in this book 41 times. We remember Eloah means The Mighty One, the All Powerful One.

It is interesting that the narrator, who we are not sure, but could be Job himself, uses God Elohim when explaining the background to the events which brought about the interchange the conversation which makes up most of the book. So in the introductory chapters 1 and 2, Eloah is not used at all, instead it is Elohim, and used 11 times. After this introduction, the word Elohim – mighty ones is very rarely used. Elsewhere in the book, it is only used 6 times.

5:8: *I would seek unto God **El**, and unto God **Elohim** would I commit my cause:*

20:29: *This is the portion of a wicked man from God **Elohim** , and the heritage appointed unto him by God **El**.. (Zophar speaking)*

28:23 *God **Elohim** understands the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof.* Job here speaking

32:2 *Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram: against Job was his wrath kindled, because he justified himself rather than God – **Elohim**.* Words of the narrator again here, as in the introduction of chapters 1 and 2.

34:9 *For he hath said, It profiteth a man nothing that he should delight himself with God **Elohim**.* Elihu speaking. What he said here about Job was not true.

38:7 When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God **Elohim** shouted for joy? Context makes sense, as a plural is being described.

Apart from these occasions, the words for God are El – or Ail meanings God's raw power and Eloah. The Powerful One.

Eloah is used 41 times. Eloah is used in this book more than all other books in the OT combined – where it is just used 15 times. Very rarely used elsewhere as we have seen.

Often times the word Almighty is used in connection with the word Eloah in this book of Job. For instance:

*5: 17 Behold, happy is the man whom God **Eloah** correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty **Shaddai**:*

*6:4 For the arrows of the Almighty **Shaddai** are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit: the terrors of God Eloah do set themselves in array against me.*

*11:7 Canst thou by searching find out God **Eloah**? canst thou find out the Almighty **Shaddai** unto perfection?*

It is significant also that the Title of Almighty is also used in the book of Job more times than the whole of the Old Testament combined. Not wishing to trespass on a future class, the Hebrew for the title Almighty is Shaddai pronounced shadd-a-ee. This comes from another Hebrew word shadad which means to be burly, powerful, and by implication a destroyer, to lay waste. In the context of being used for God, we can quickly see that by describing God as Almighty – Shaddai, Job and his friends were attributing to God the title of the Powerful one, as in absolute judge. One can see why this title is used so much in the book of Job, as the whole argument is whether Job has been judged, and his possessions and family destroyed by the hand of God, because he, Job deserved it or not. That Job understood that it was in fact God – Almighty – Shaddai who had done these things the destruction upon him, is seen in Job 19:21 Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God **Eloah** hath touched me.

This we believe is exactly the same reason why Eloah is used so much more than in any other book of the Old Testament. It is noteworthy

that Bildad the Shuhite never uses the term Eloah, we cannot seem to find a reason why. The other friends do.

There are many examples but below is a sample where the God is acknowledged as the supreme Power, in whose hand is Job's future:

*6:9 Even that it would please God **Eloah** to destroy me; that he would let loose his hand, and cut me off!*

*19:6 Know now that God **Eloah** hath overthrown me, and hath compassed me with his net.*

*19:26 And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God **Eloah** :27 Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another;*

God is acknowledged as Supreme to him only belongs Judgement

*9:13 If God **Eloah** will not withdraw his anger, the proud helpers do stoop under him.*

*16:21 O that one might plead for a man with God **Eloah** as a man pleadeth for his neighbour!*

The words of Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite seem to crystalise the reason for the use of this term quite nicely! *33:12 Behold, in this thou art not just: I will answer thee, that God **Eloah** is greater than man.*

In this passage, it is God himself speaking, but I am not sure why Eloah is used in relation to the ostrich, so any ideas would be useful. *39:17 Because God **Eloah** hath deprived her of wisdom, neither hath he imparted to her understanding.*

Book of Ezra

Ezra was the faithful scribe, a priest descended from the line of the high priests. He returned from Babylonian exile and reintroduced the Law in Jerusalem. Ezra was living in Babylon when in the seventh year of Artaxerxes I, king of Persia (457 BC), the king sent him to Jerusalem to teach the laws of God to any who did not know them. Because of the people's poor Hebrew, and knowledge of the law, a significant part of the book is written in Aramaic, (4:8 to 6:18 and 7:12–26) the rest is in Hebrew. Ezra himself being skilled in both languages. Outside of these Aramaic verses, the term for God **Eloah** is never used. However in the Aramaic verses, the word for God is always **Elahh** – the Aramaic or Chaldean for Eloah. (Strong's code number 426). This was obviously for the benefit of who he was talking to at the time. These verses describe the confrontation of the Jews returned in exile with Tatnai, Shetharboznai and his companions the Apharsachites, foreign people who were claiming the land of Judah for their own, they were enemies of the Jews. They stood as a Satan against Ezra and Nehemiah. Perhaps this is the reason Eloah in Aramaic is the sole name for God used in this section of the book of Ezra, to show that supreme power did not belong to Darius who was being appealed to, nor did the power belong to the enemies of the Jews, nor did it belong to the Jews, but it was to **Eloah**, The Mighty One, who Alone would determine what land belonged to who, and who would be established in the land as per His Purpose.

Book of Daniel

A similar situation exists in the book of Daniel, as in Ezra. In Chapter 1, Elohim is the name of God always used. However from chapter 2 right the way through to chapter 6 **Elahh** is used. This is Aramaic or Chaldean for Eloah. So Eloah is also used by the prophet Daniel. Going through these chapters Eloah or Elahh as it is, is associated with phrases such as:

God of heaven; Name of God for ever and ever; God of my fathers; God in heaven; The most high God.

The context of Daniel's appeal in these chapters is that he is engaged with the King of Babylon himself, in a confrontation of supremacy, a bit similar to Moses before Pharaoh. Nebuchadnezzar was being shown via Daniel, that all the kingdoms of men and all the rulers of men, were completely subject to the Creator, the God of Israel, even Nebuchadnezzar that head of gold. So that finally Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged it: Daniel 2:47 *Your God Elahh is a God Elahh of gods elahh*. Daniel does not introduce the Hebrew Elohim, as it would confuse these Chaldeans who had a complex multiplicity of gods, instead Daniel used their terminology to the advantage of the gospel. 17 times the king and his servants refer to God as Elahh, or Eloah, and Daniel happy to ensure that the God of Israel is spoken of on a higher plain than the gods of Marduk etc he uses the term speaking back to them.

From chapter 9 onwards, it seems Daniel's audience changes, for the name of God is in Hebrew and not Chaldean, and as the element of confusion is not an issue seeing his audience is not the Chaldeans, he never uses that word Eloah again, except in chapter 11. Here it is interesting: Daniel is speaking of events which would occur in a great while to come, as he describes the prophesied history of the confrontation of the king of the north and the king of the south which would occur: 37 *Neither shall he regard the God **elohim** of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god **eloah** : for he shall magnify himself above all*. The fulfilment of this is seen in when Roman emperors renounced the worship of Zeus Olympus and became nominal worshippers of one God – the Father of Jesus Christ. Rejecting the gods of pagan Rome, a new god was adopted, the bishop of Rome.

Daniel 11:38 *But in his estate shall he honour the God **eloah** of forces: and a god **eloah** whom his fathers knew not shall he honour*

with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things. This was when apostate Christianity adopted the triune god, of pretended guardian saints – god of forces **eloah – mauzzim**,

*Daniel 11:39 Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god **eloah** , whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain.* This strange god referred to here is the Pope, still called Holy Father today.

Thus we can see even in the choice of the words used for God, the way in which the great apostate religious system has appropriated the title The Mighty One, applying it, in belief it has all power, and rules supreme.

The words of the Psalmist are appropriate in conclusion:

*Psalm 50: 22 Now consider this, ye that forget God **Eloah**, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.*

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