

God and Man in Genesis

by Dr. Robert L. Dean Jr.

The book of Genesis teaches us many things about God as Creator of Man, as the One of whom man is the image and about the nature of man. The foremost thing taught about God in Genesis is: The God who created all things and sustains all things is the same God who created Israel and sustains Israel through all her travails.

The Names of God in Genesis

The names of God in Genesis reveal much about His character and His attributes. Names for the Hebrew are not simply terms of designation but are terms of description and reveal the nature of the object named.

1. *El Elohim El* is the standard, or generic name in Semitic Languages for deity, for god. Elohim is the plural, often said by scholars to be the plural of majesty.
2. *YHWH*, the sacred tetragrammeton, the personal name of God related to His Covenant with Israel. So when the name YHWH is used this would have particular meaning to the Jew. Although God does not reveal the meaning of this name until Ex 3:14. This is a form of the Hebrew verb, *hayah*, meaning "to be, to exist" and the name of God refers to His self existence. He is the self-existent One. This name is specifically associated with God in His covenant relationship with Israel.

Ex. 3:14 And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, "I AM has sent me to you."{

3. *YHWH Elohim*, Lord God.
4. Lord God Most High, *El Elyon*, "Most High", Gen. 14:18, 19, 20, 22.

The name emphasizes the exalted status of God, His overwhelming power, His supreme majesty. It was the sin of Lucifer to be like the Most High God. It is Elyon who is the place of shelter, the rock in the midst of adversity, our ever present help in time of trouble. It is Elyon, who has the deepest concern for Zion, Psa 46:6; 87:5

Psa. 47:2 For the LORD Most High is to be feared, A great King over all the earth.

Psa. 97:9 For Thou art the LORD Most High over all the earth; Thou art exalted far above all gods.

Psa. 91:1 He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High Will abide in the shadow of the Almighty [*Shaddai*].

Psa. 91:9 For you have made the LORD, my refuge, Even the Most High, your dwelling place. \

Psa. 78:35 And they remembered that God was their rock, And the Most High God their Redeemer.

Possessor of Heaven and earth, *qoneh*, owner, possessor from *qanah*, to get, acquire, purchase, own.

5. *El Rai*, Gen. 16:13, God Who Sees, i.e., knows, the future (Hagar after God's prediction about her future).

6. *El Shaddai*, Gen. 17:1; 35:11; God the Almighty. This title is used 48 x in the Old Testament. Most often in Job (31x). The LXX translates this with *pantokrator*, all powerful and it emphasizes God's Omnipotence, His ability to perform whatever He desires. The Rabbi's analyzed the word as the one who is self sufficient.

7. *El 'olam*, The Eternal God, The Everlasting God, Gen. 21:33; Emphasizes God's eternity. God has neither beginning nor ending.

8. *YHWH Yereh*, or *Jehovah Jireh* in the KJV; Gen. 22:14, The Lord Will Provide. From the verb *raea* to see, this is related to *El Rai*, but the emphasis here is on God seeing our need and meeting our needs.

9. *YHWH the God of the heavens*, *Yhwh Elohim Hashamayim*, Gen 24:7; Emphasizing God as the ruler of the heavens and thus ruler of the earth and the affairs of man.

10. *El Elohe Israel*, God the God of Israel, Gen. 33:20 \

11. *Ro'h, 'eben Israel*, The Shepherd, the Rock of Israel; Gen. 49:24 This emphasizes God in His role as leader and protector of Israel.

So what did Moses teach the Jews about God and what has he taught us.

1. That God is a living God who is deeply involved with His creation.

a. He is eternally existing, distinct from the creation (1:1) in contrast to all other cosmogonies, gods, and myths.

b. He interacts with man, He speaks, sees, hears, rests, etc. Gen. 1, 2, 3, 17, 18.

c. He creates mankind as a reflector of Himself, Gen. 1.

d. He enters into the human arena with a human form and human acts, 12, 18, 32 (This shows the divine initiative of grace).

e. He reveals Himself. He is not hiding from man but seeking man, saving man, disclosing and revealing Himself to man.

2. God is Sovereign

1. He is called the "Most High" God.

2. He is the Creator of everything.

3. He names some things and individuals and determines the limits, boundaries, nature. They are what they are because God made them that way and decreed those limits.

4. God sets forth mandates and prohibitions for all things.
5. God brings about judgment in the curse of sin, the flood, and at Babel (3, 6-8, 11); Sodom (18-20).
6. God prophecies the future indicating His control of human history, 15, 46.
7. He disposes people of property, He gives Canaan to His people, 12, 17.
8. He promises Kings to Sarah, 17.
9. He controls peoples dreams, Abraham's, Gen. 15; Jacob, 28, 31, Joseph, 37, 40-41.
10. He establishes and removes people in political power; 41.
11. He tests people, 22.
12. He rules over nations, economics, and life, 40-41.
13. He chooses whom He will bless.

God is Omnipotent

1. He creates the heavens and the earth
2. He creates mankind
3. He prevents Enoch from dying
4. He controls the time, duration, and extent of the Flood
5. He protects Abraham, 15
6. He controls the womb, opening and closing the womb. 20, 21, 25, 30
7. He controls fertility of the flocks, 30
8. He cripples Jacob with a touch, 32

God is Righteous and Just

1. He punishes disobedience with death
2. He announces the judgment or curse for sin
3. He punishes Cain for murder
4. He destroys the earth because man is evil

5. He scatters the nations because of their rebellion
6. He curses and blesses people due to how they treat Abraham's seed
7. He refuses to judge the innocent along with the guilty.
8. He treats the Kings of the earth justly, Abimelech when Abraham tells him Sarah is his sister.
9. He protects and vindicates His people, -Rachel, Leah, Jacob in his work for Laban.
10. He made things right for Joseph.

God is Gracious

1. He provides everything for mankind in the perfect environment of the Garden.
2. He provides covering for sinners despite their disobedience and salvation and life for mankind.
3. He protected Cain from avengers.
4. He gave grace to Noah and the earth.
5. He remembered Noah, 8, and Abraham, 19
6. He provided water and protection in the wilderness for Hagar, 16, 21
7. He preserved the righteous in the covenant, 19
8. He intervened when humans failed, 12, 20, 26
9. He freely established His covenant and blessed deceptive Jacob, 28
10. He sent angels to watch over and protect Jacob, 28, 32
11. He gave prosperity to Jacob, 33
12. He blessed Egypt with the future knowledge of the famine and provided Joseph to lead them through the crisis, 39ff.

Regarding Mankind we learn:

1. Man is created with a mortal body formed from the dust of the earth.
2. Man's immaterial nature comes directly from the breath of God.
3. HL = BL + SL

4. Man is in the image of God, which refers to function, fellowship, service, obedience and administration.
5. The man and the woman are to complement each other.
6. Man is created perfect but his disobedience destroys that perfection and brings horrendous consequences upon himself and the universe
7. Man now has a disposition toward evil, rebellion, self sufficiency and autonomy.
8. Mankind is in desperate need of a savior.