



## Who is God? Knowing Him by His Names Dominican Republic Mission Trip 2008 Daily Study

### *God, the God of Israel*

God, Lord, Jesus, Father, Christ. What comes to mind when you hear these names? What do you think? Stop for a moment and think about those names. What is your first emotion? God is known by His names. He has stooped down from an infinite height and made Himself known to lowly man. It really begs the question “What is man that you are mindful of him?” Psalm 8:4. Read Psalm 8.

Since God has revealed Himself to us, and since, as Christians, we are Sons of that God – Shouldn’t we understand and yearn to understand more of who He is? How do you use the name of God? Consider just the names “God” and “Lord.” Are they the same? Do we just pick a name for God out of the air when we speak of Him? I think that we must be more respectful of Him than that. When we come to the DR, aren’t we careful to address people of a different culture properly? I know that I’ve been careful to ask Rich about the proper greeting. Do you shake hands? Do you ever hug? Doesn’t the God of the universe deserve much more respect from His people?

Some of these lessons may be review for you, but I’d ask you to step back and really think about them again. This year, I’m going to ask you to read more passages and meditate on them. I’ll guide you with some questions, but to get the most of the study, you’ll need to spend time with God in His Word and participate in the discussion.

The first name that we come to is “God” in our English Bibles. This is ‘El’ in Hebrew (אֱל) or ‘Theos’ in Greek (θεο/v) and means “mighty, strong, or prominent.” God is referred to by this name over 200 times in the Old Testament. In the ancient Middle East, this was a rather generic name for deity and could refer either to the true God or a pagan god. Read Genesis 33:20. Jacob refers to God as “El-Elohe-Israel.” What he is literally saying here is “God, the God of Israel.” Jacob is being specific in calling on not just any god but the true God.

A plural of the Hebrew would be ‘Elohim’ (אֱלֹהִים). This is used over 2000 times in the OT. While it is plural, this is not a sole argument for the Trinity – it simply lends support to a myriad of other proofs for the doctrine of the 3 in 1. Elohim is the Creator God, Omniscient, Omnipotent; all the fullness of God is wrapped up in this name. This is our Sovereign God – the one who is above all other gods – all power and authority are wrapped up in this name. This is the name of the Creator in Genesis 1:1. Take some time to read Genesis 1:1 and think about our Creator.

El and Elohim are often combined with a descriptive term to identify the true God by His works and character. Let’s look at one of them – El Elyon (אֱלֵיּוֹן). This is “God Most High” in our English Bibles and can also be used by itself as “the Most High.” This name indicates that God is above all other power and authority. In ancient times, gods were said to dwell in high places such as mountains and towers; the higher the place, the greater the god. God is revealed as El Elyon in Genesis 14:18-24 in the meeting between Melchizedek and Moses.

Further reading and meditation:

Read Isaiah Ch 46. Here God is comparing Himself to the false idols of Babylon. Spend time thinking about what He says about Himself. What are the differences between the true God and the idols? Focus on verse 9. Does God repeat Himself here? (Hint: The first ‘God’ is El and the second is ‘Elohim’.)

Spend some time reading Psalm 7:17, 9:2, 47:2, 57:2.

