

Title: Elohim – Genesis 1:1-8

Aim: Begin to discover who God is – Elohim, Creator

Intro: Last week I introduced myself to you & gave you some of my background; but added that knowing me will not produce life, & certainly it won't. What is most important is knowing God the Father, the Son (Jesus Christ) & the Holy Spirit. But some might ask, who is this God we must know in order to have life? Who is God? I want to spend the next few weeks (even months) exploring who the Bible says God is. It may be old news to some/all of you, but we often need to be reminded. I) **If we're going to talk/learn about God, we need to start at the beginning.** We believe the Bible is the written, inspired, breathed-out word of God, so perhaps we need to start w/the beginning of the Bible. Genesis has been called "the Book of Beginnings" – that's what the word Genesis means – beginning – "marking the very start, beginning of a process, idea or movement" (from dictionary). Genesis is aptly the 1st book of the Bible, written/recorded by Moses, as God the Holy Spirit gave him insight. The 1st 3 words of Genesis is "In the beginning..." or "at the 1st." 1st of what? Don't misunderstand – that doesn't mean that God began at the beginning. As stated last week God had no beginning & will have no end. He was & is & is to come – eternal. However, we can say the beginning of time as we know it, the beginning of creation as we understand it. We know that because of what follows, the account of creation, which we'll get to in a bit. The beginning is, as commentator Robert Jameson wrote, "a period of remote & unknown antiquity." We can't know exactly how long ago it was, tho Biblical scholars generally agree it was somewhere in the vicinity of 8000 yrs ago – not millions but thousands. II) **The next word (4th) is the most important of Scripture - God.** "In the beginning God..."

It's important to note that the Bible does not set out to prove the existence of God, but simply to reveal Him. That's what Scripture is – one means of God revealing Himself to us. But who is He? There are numerous names for God throughout Scripture, each revealing aspects of His character or attributes. The word translated God throughout this chapter is Elohim. It's interesting to note that Elohim is written as a "plural intensive," which is "a grammatical form that looks plural but refers to a singular entity, often used to express greatness, majesty, or authority." Jameson noted that this name for God describes a supreme being, "signifying strong & mighty; expressive of omnipotent power." One might translate the name Elohim as "God, the true God," or "God, very God." John Calvin added that Elohim is "a noun of the plural number, inferring the 3 persons of the Trinity – Father, Son, & Holy Spirit." That thought is strengthened by the declaration of vs26, where God (Elohim) is quoted as saying "***Let Us make man in our image, after our likeness...***" Well, who is Us? We can't begin to wrap our finite minds around it, but God is indeed Father, Son & Holy Spirit – 3 in 1. The Father is God; the Son is God; the Holy Spirit is God, yet not 3 Gods – only 1. The Father is not the Son nor the Holy Spirit. The Son is not the Father nor the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not the Father nor the Son. 1 "God in 3 persons, blessed Trinity." That word Trinity is not found in the Bible, but that truth is found throughout its pages. The name Elohim expresses that very truth – God, very God, 3 in 1. Do we understand it fully? No, but it's clearly there. As Dr. David Dean taught us, Don't let the limits of your understanding be the limits of your faith." And, we also find throughout Scripture that this God, Elohim, or by whatever name His is called in Scripture, is God alone. There is no other God. Yes, there are many so-called gods even named in the Bible

because people believed in/worshipped them – Baal, Molech, Ra, Asherah, etc. – but none of them are real – only figments of finite imaginations. Consider Deuteronomy 4:35, 39 – ***“To you it was shown, that you might know that the Lord is God; there is no other besides Him.” “Know therefore today, & lay it to your heart, that the Lord is God in heaven above & on the earth beneath; there is no other,”*** Then Isaiah 45:21-22 – ***“...There is no other god besides Me, a righteous God & a Savior; there is none besides Me. Turn to Me & be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, & there is no other.”*** God alone is God.

III) The 5th word in Genesis 1:1 declares Elohim as Creator. ***“In the beginning God created the heavens & the earth...”*** That word created in Hebrew means “shaped, formed.” Elohim/God formed/shaped the heavens & the earth. The heavens are the visible heavens, the sky & all beyond, the abode of the stars, the atmosphere. The earth is land, as opposed to sky/heaven. What is implied by that word created is, as Jameson wrote, the heavens & earth & all in them were “not formed from any pre-existing material, but out of nothing.” The Latin is “ex nihilo.” As we can see in the verses that follow, God/Elohim spoke all creation into existence. Again & again, we read ***“And God said, let there be...& there was...”*** Many would say that’s impossible & think us foolish who believe it so. And it certainly does take faith to believe it. Hebrews 11:3 tells us: ***“By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.”*** Nothing is impossible w/God/Elohim. It actually takes more faith – unfounded faith - to believe that some big bang occurred & the universe & planets & all came into existence, w/the earth exactly tilted as it must be to sustain life, at the very right distance from the sun to prevent our being burned up or freezing. It takes much more faith to

believe that mankind evolved from lower forms, w/no design & w/the complexity of being that had to work perfectly from the beginning or it could not survive. I may be thought foolish, but I believe, “In the beginning God created...” Something remarkable about creation is seen by referring again to vs26 – **“Let us make man in our image...”**, the Us referring to Father, Son & Holy Spirit. This seems to imply that Father, Son & Holy Spirit were each, even equally involved in creation. In my most finite, unsanctified imagination, the Father set forth the plan, the Son (Word) was sent forth to carry out that plan, & the Holy Spirit applied the word to being it all into reality. I’m not saying I can even begin to understand it, but we read in vs3 that **“the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.”** That word hovering is defined as moving & has been likened to a mother hen brooding over her unhatched eggs. The Holy Spirit was actively involved in creation. Then we read in John 1:3, John the apostle wrote of the Word/Jesus the Son, **“All things were made through Him, & w/out Him was not any thing made that was made.”** The Son – the living Word was actively involved in creation. I certainly don’t understand it all, but I take God at His Word. Interesting notes about God’s creative work. Note that He created light before He created the sun, moon & stars, which we consider our source of light/heat. He created plant life before animal life, seemingly to provide food for animal life. After He created man & woman, God made them caretakers over all the world & commanded them to be fruitful & multiply. God/Elohim did this over a period of 6 days, w/the 7th day a day of rest for God, not because He was tired but because He was finished. What does all this mean for us? Just this but how great it is: the same God – Elohim – God, very God – mighty & majestic, 1 God in 3 persons, powerful Creator, only God – He is our

God, our Savior, even our Father. If He is who He says He is & can do what He what He has done, is anything too difficult for Him? Are the matters of your life out of His control, out of His touch? Your life matters to this God who has ever been & will ever be. And think of it: we can know this God; we can call upon Him & be saved; we can be His children. He wants to be actively involved in our lives, living life thru us, His Spirit w/in us. How remarkable! Let us worship Him, serve Him & surrender to Him. He is our God!