

God has a Name – El Elyon

5/12/24

God Most High – Gen. 14

Sunday AM

Who here remembers George Foreman? Foreman was a 2-time boxing world heavyweight champion, famous for winning the title a 2nd time at age 45 – (2) decades after winning it the 1st time. The 1st time he knocked out Joe Frazier – and the 2nd time, he knocked out... Michael Moore! He's also famous for the GF grill.

You might find this interesting, but Foreman is also famous for naming all of his (5) sons by the same name – George Foreman. GF Jr, GF 3rd, GF 4th, GF 5th, and GF 6th. When asked why he named his sons GF – GF explained that it was (1) to honor his name and continue his legacy; (2) to ensure he'd treat all of his sons equally; and (3) to instill in them a sense of responsibility b/c they each bore his name/reputation.

Names... Names are important. A person's name identifies who they are and often speaks to their nature/character. DYK – God has many names. In all, there are some 967 different names for God mentioned in the Bible to help us to know who He is and how we can know Him better and trust Him more.

God gave us His name to help us to **KNOW** Him and **TRUST** Him. He gave us His name to **REVEAL** to us His person/character to **RELATE** to us so that we might know/walk w/ Him.

When it comes to God's name – the Bible has much to say about how we are to treat His name/person.

I will give thanks to the Lord b/c of His righteousness; I will sing praises to the name of (El Elyon) the Lord Most High. Psalm 7:17

Some trust in chariots and some in horses; but we trust in the name of the Lord our God. Psalm 20:7

For you, Lord, are the Most High over all the earth; You are exalted for above all gods. Psalm 97:9

So far in our study, we've looked at the names *Adonai* and *Elohim*. Today, I want to turn our attention to the name **El Elyon** – *God Most High* or *God is the highest*. El Elyon is used over **238x** in the O.T. testifying to the supremacy of God – that is, that He is above all other gods and has absolute power/authority over every created thing. It means there is nothing above Him, nor will anyone or anything rule over Him. As El Elyon – God is introduced as the God who is supreme over all other pretenders/contenders.

This isn't to say that we live in a *polytheistic* culture and there's a slate of lesser gods to choose from – there's only one God. Yet if we're being honest, mankind has manufactured a host of manmade idols we've made into gods – like money, our jobs, our families, our hobbies/possessions – and so much more.

Truth is – people are willing to believe in just about anything so long as it is not the one true God.

Raelian Movement – is a UFO religion w/ 65k followers that was founded by a French race car driver in the 1970's. This religions that believes life on Earth was created 1k's of years ago by extraterrestrial beings called the Elohim.

Jainism – is an ancient nontheistic Indian religion w/ over 4.5 mil. followers who believe salvation is found thru right speech, right thought, and right action.

And I didn't even touch on the crazy, whacked-out beliefs of JW, Mormons, or Scientologists.

Why do I share these beliefs? B/c we walk by people every day who are looking for answers in all the wrong places and God wants them to know that He is above all other names – He is **El Elyon** – the Most High God.

In Genesis 14:10-24, we find the 1st use of El Elyon.

Background – Abe/Lot had arrived in the land that God had promised, but they had so much stuff they had to separate. So, under God’s guidance, Abe told Lot to choose a plot of land and go one way, and that he’d go in the opposite direction. Lot like most of us, consulted what his eyes could see and his flesh desired – so he chose the most fertile land closest to Sodom, while Abe consulted God and went the other way.

Right off the bat, I think we see the difference b/w **believing** in God and **following** God. I’m certain Lot knew about God, but Abe trusted in Him. How do I know? B/c like too many of us – Lot chose by **sight** while Abe chose by **faith**. Lot made his choice solely by his human ingenuity/ability while Abe trusted God.

I think too often, we do the same. We make our decisions based solely on earthly reasoning instead of on God’s Divine leading. We look at the salary, location, benefits, etc. yet we never consult God.

As I was graduating college, a mega-church offered me a job that most of my mentors were saying would set me up for the rest of my life – yet I sensed that God was calling me to the mission field. After much prayer and soul-searching, I chose to go to Norway. I can’t tell you how many people told me that I was making a mistake but I beg to differ b/c it’s never a mistake to follow God’s will over man’s will.

SEE – the Christian life is lived by **sound**, not **sight**. While we don’t abandon human reason/ability, we start w/ listening to the leading of God thru His Word and the **rhema** of the H.S. – then obey His prompting.

After Abe/Lot split up, several area kings went to war w/ each other – and during the conflict, Lot’s clan was taken hostage. When Abe learned what’d happened, he got a “ticketh off-ed” and called up 318 trained servants to rescue Lot and take out King Kedorlaomer.

As it happened, the valley of the Dead Sea was filled w/ tar pits – and as the army of the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some fell into the tar pits, while the rest escaped into the mountains. The armies of Kedorlaomer then plundered Sodom/Gomorrah and headed for home, taking all the spoils of war and the food supplies. They captured Lot, Abram’s nephew who lived in Sodom – and carried off everything he owned. But one of Lot’s men escaped and reported everything to Abram... ¹⁴When Abram heard that Lot had been captured, he mobilized the 318 trained men who had been born into his household and they pursued Kedorlaomer’s army until he caught up w/ them at Dan. There he divided his men and attacked during the night. Kedorlaomer’s army fled, but Abram chased them as far as Hobah, north of Damascus. Abram recovered all the goods that had been taken, and he brought back his nephew Lot w/ possessions and all the women and other captives. After Abram returned from his victory over Kedorlaomer and all his allies, the king of Sodom went out to meet him in the valley of Shaveh. Melchizedek, the king of Salem and a priest of God Most High, brought Abram some bread/wine. Melchizedek blessed Abram saying: “Blessed be Abram by God Most High, possessor of heaven/earth. Blessed be God Most High, who has defeated your enemies for you.” Then Abram gave Melchizedek a 10th of all the goods he had recovered. Then the king of Sodom said, “Give back my people who were captured. But you may keep for yourself all the goods you have recovered.” Abram said, “I swear to the Lord, God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take so much as a single thread or sandal thong from what belongs to you. Otherwise, you might say, ‘I am the one who made Abram rich.’ I will accept only what my young warriors have already eaten, and I request that you give a fair share of the goods to my allies – Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre.”

In this story, we learn that El Elyon means that God is the **POSSESSOR** of Creation and the **PROTECTOR** of His people – that is, only God is the creator and sustainer of all – there is no other being like Him – He alone is the Most High.

I The **POSSESSOR** of Creation

possessor (*qoneh*) means to have sovereign rule over b/c it's been *created, bought, acquired, or obtained*.

IOW – if someone tells you they possess something, what they're saying is that they own/control it w/ the ability to do w/ it as they please w/ it.

Example – if I told you that I possess a piece of land, what am I telling you? I'm telling you that I own it b/c I've purchased it – and now possess it. And now that I possess it, I can do whatever I so desire w/ it. So, if want to clear-cut the timber – I can do it! If I want to plant a garden – I can do it! If I want to build a farm and raise goats/llamas – then I can do it! Why? B/c I possess it and have sovereign rule over it.

In this text, Melchizedek introduces El Elyon to Abe – calling God the **POSSESSOR** over all creation. So, b/c God created it – He sustains and controls it!

The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for He founded it on the seas and established it on the waters. Psalm 24:1

The problems of life come when we think that we're the *owners* instead of the *stewards* – when we seek to possess/control – instead of seeing God as sovereign.

This is what the king of Sodom tried to do. Whereas the king of Salem (Mel) approached Abe w/ gratitude and humility, the King of Sodom, wanting to retain what he once thought he possessed but lost – tried to broker a deal. So, thinking that Abe now held all the cards, he tried to strike a deal to get his stuff back.

DYK this is exactly what Lucifer tried in Isaiah 14:12 – *How you have fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you have been cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation, on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High (El Elyon).*

SEE – Satan tried to take what didn't belong to him and place himself above God – and **we try to do it too**. I fear that more often than not, we're more like the king of Sodom than the king of Salem. We live as if we deserve or are owed something. In our pride, we're too sufficient to submit to God's rule/authority. Yet in truth, we're all *ptochos* – completely/utterly bankrupt.

I run into people often who think they can convince God of their worthiness to enter into heaven or weasel out of His discipline. People who think they can barter w/ God by demanding their rights and throwing their weight around, yet God can't be conned.

Many years ago, while waiting in line for my SW flight, a lady who thought she was all that, arrived late and broke the line to secure her seat. Well... as you can imagine, this didn't sit well w/ the other patrons already in line – and soon some serious arguing broke out requiring the gate agent to step in. He told her to move to the back of the line or else he wasn't going to allow her on the plane. After a few min. of arguing w/ him, she begrudgingly went to the back of the line. This woman thought she could con her way onto the plane. BTW – once we all boarded, we learned that she had been in the wrong line waiting to board the wrong plane – which she missed. Another case of **Me-ology**.

We talked about it a few weeks ago – we all suffer from **Me-ology** – *we struggle to see beyond ourselves b/c we've made life all about us*. To see God as our El Elyon is to see Him as our Sovereign Possessor.

But God isn't just our Sovereign possessor, we also see in this text that He's our **All-powerful Protector**.

II The PROTECTOR of His People

Look again at v. 20 – *Blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand.*

If you go back and read the 1st part of ch. 14, you'll quickly learn that it wasn't Abe's military genius that brought about the defeat of his enemies, but God's all-powerful intervention. Most scholars believe that the forces of Kedorlaomer and his allies were far greater (like 10k men) than Abe's 318 trained servants – and yet they easily prevailed. Melchizedek was quick to point this out to Abe saying – *and blessed be El Elyon, who has delivered your enemies into your hand.*

May I ask a personal question? Who fights your battles for you? Who goes before you to slay your Goliaths? Do you take matters into your own hands, or do you turn/trust in the Lord? Do you run from your battles like the kings of Sodom/Gomorrah – making excuses and trying to justify your actions – or do you turn to the Lord and seek to honor Him?

SEE – whether it's Abe, David, Samson, Elijah, or little ole you/me – the battle belongs to the Lord.

But You, Lord, are a shield about me, my glory – and the One who lifts up my head. Psalm 3:3

The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them. Psalm 34:7

In his book *Angels*, Billy Graham shared a story about John Paton, who was a missionary in the South Pacific. One night, Paton's family was threatened by hostile natives who surrounded their encampment. Thinking they were going to die, they prayed thru the night asking God to protect them. The next AM, they were astonished that in the middle of the night, the natives had gone away – but they didn't know why. About a year later, the chief of the native tribe who'd threatened them became a Christian and he came to visit the Patons. During their visit, they asked the chief about the night of terror and he told them that he and his men were too fearful to carry out their plans of attack b/c they had seen an army of giant men in “shining garments w/ drawn swords surrounding the compound. Paton and the chief agreed the only explanation was that God had sent angels to keep the missionaries from harm.

Are you aware that you're in a battle? Only this battle isn't just against what is seen – but also what is unseen. Paul wrote – be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Put on all of God's armor so you will be able to stand firm against all the strategies of the devil. For we're not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers/authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.

This is why learning to trust El Elyon is so important – it's b/c we're putting our hope in the God who's mighty to save b/c He's our sovereign protector.

My God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation. He is my stronghold, my refuge, and my savior – from violent people, you save me. 2 Samuel 22:3

What is key to allowing God to be our El Elyon?

Listen to the words of Paul from Romans 12 – *Bless those who persecute you. Don't curse them; pray that God will bless them. Be happy w/ those who are happy, and weep w/ those who weep. Live in harmony w/ each other. Don't be too proud to enjoy the company of other people – and do not think you know it all! Never pay back evil w/ evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. Do all you can to live in peace w/ everyone. Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, “I will take revenge; I will pay them back,” says the Lord. Instead, “If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they*

*are thirsty, give them something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals of shame on their heads.”
Don't let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good.*

God – our El Elyon. The above all other Most High God who possesses all and protects his people.