

To "... strengthen the things which remain..." Revelation 3:2

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## "With Reverence and Godly Fear" pt. 2

Steve Walvatne

We noted in a previous paper that our title comes from Hebrews 12:28, a portion prescribing one's proper approach to God. "Service," says W.E. Vine, "is never to be rendered without these two characteristics." "Reverence" (aidos) as we saw, has to do with the "religious fear that one experiences in the presence of the sacred" (Spicq: *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*), while "godly fear" (eulabeia) is more the thought of "awe," a moving "without levity or familiarity, but with godly fear" (Joseph McFadyen: *Through Eternal Spirit*). Henry Alford translates the phrase, "with reverent submission and fear" (*New Testament for English Readers*, v.4). We touched this briefly in article number one, where we considered "Our Reverence with Regard to God," a subject that merits investigation, for as Proverbs 9:10 states, "*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.*" We look now at another aspect of reverence that's closely akin to the first, and that is,

### Our Reverence with Regard to God's Word

When the prophet Isaiah concluded his book with truth pertaining to millennial glory, he stated a divine principle that is good for all time: "...*But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word*" (66:2). In other words, the Lord disdains hollow formality; His eye "ransacks every corner of the heart" and none of the "tricks and arts of the subtlest and most refined hypocrisy" can fool Him (Robert Smith: *Sermons Preached upon Several Occasions*). His gaze rests instead, on those "not remarkable for wealth, for power, or social position," (F.C. Jennings: *Isaiah*), but on those that are "poor"

("lowly"), "contrite," ("lame," see 2 Sam. 4:4; 9:3), and "trembling" ("reverent"), who prostrate themselves before His Word, fearful lest they go astray. "He is not looking for great ability nor wonderful eloquence on the part of His servants, but for a heart subject to His truth" (H.A. Ironside: *Isaiah*).

This characterized the Thessalonian saints. "*Our gospel,*" wrote Paul, "*came not unto you in word only, but also in power...and ye became followers ("imitators") of us, and of the Lord*" (1 Thess. 1:5-6). Their ready acknowledgement of truth delighted Paul, "*because when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe*" (2:13). These believers "had not caviled at its doctrines, nor objected to its precepts...[but] yielded a speedy assent to its demands," thereby professing to others that they were "the followers of Christ and of the churches of God" (Edward Cooper: *Cooper's Sermons*, v.2). As a result, the Scriptures were "glorified" or "honored" by their lives (2 Thess. 3:1).

That same spirit should exemplify believers still. Yet, amid the opulence and opportunities of our day, has there not come a radical decline in attendance and submission to God's Word? This deterioration has weakened both young and old, bringing dishevel to homes, businesses, and local assemblies. Without question, the evil atmosphere surrounding us has affected the priority we give to divine truth. The missionary Brainerd spoke of breathing after holiness, of longing for a life consistently devoted to God. While that yearning still exists with some, many seek the opposite, preferring instead the compromises of Christendom or the material lure of secular society.

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King Solomon failed here. Early in life, he revered God's Word, and it resulted in unparalleled blessing for himself and the nation of Israel. Then things changed. Suddenly, fleshly desires took priority and he shamelessly flaunted God's Law. The results were tragic. Notice, for example, God's plain instructions:

*"When thou art come into the land...and shalt say, I will set a king over me...He shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses...neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold. And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write a copy of this Law in a book...and it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this Law and these statutes, to do them..."* (Deut. 17:14-19).

Yet see the King's response:

*"Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred threescore and six talents of gold, and the king made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones...And Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen: and he had a thousand and four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen...and Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt...Solomon loved many strange women...he had seven hundred wives, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart..."* (1 Kings 10:14-28; 11:1, 3).

These were the consequences:

*"And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice...Wherefore the Lord said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant..."* (1 Kings 11:9, 11).

We should learn from Solomon's folly (Rom. 15:4), not imitate it. None can defy God's directives and avoid the inevitable ramifications. The Judgment Seat of Christ will expose all. Thankfully, however, there is a way back. We can experience genuine recovery, but we must be honest. We must espouse the lowly, lame, and trembling attitude of Isaiah 66:2 and seek God's mind *"with reverence and godly fear."* That is what happened with Israel on occasion and it

can happen with us. Nehemiah chapter 8 is a good illustration of this, for we find the Jewish remnant gathered at the Water Gate in Jerusalem ready to hear the Law of God. Six times over, we find *"all the people"* moving together. Observe that

### 1. There was a Unified Request for the Book

*"And all the people gathered themselves together as one man...and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded to Israel"* (v.1). Recovery occurs when the Scriptures receive their due recognition. These people gathered to hear God's Law that they might obey it. They had no interest in being humored or entertained. This was serious business and these were serious people. Ezra was a faithful man, well qualified to open the Book (Ez. 7:10), yet even he faded from sight as the company listened to God's Word. When more is made of the preacher than of the Book, something is amiss. How good to be like Peter, James, and John after our Lord's transfiguration: *"They saw no man, save Jesus only"* (Matt. 17:8).

### 2. There was a Unified Receptiveness toward the Book

*"And he read therein...from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the Book of the Law"* (v.3). The reception of God's Word was whole-hearted. Young and old stood captivated for up to six hours. None complained that the passage was too deep, and no one nodded off. They listened to retain, afraid to miss a word. Years later, a similar spirit prevailed in Jerusalem at Pentecost, when scores *"gladly received"* God's Word and *"fear came upon every soul"* (Acts 2:41, 43). How do we listen? Would that we were more like Jeremiah who said, *"Thy words were found and I did eat ('devour') them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart..."* (Jer. 15:16).

### 3. There was a Unified Regard for the Book

*"And Ezra opened the Book in the sight of all the people...and when he opened it, all the people stood up"* (v.5). People out of respect, will generally stand for their national anthem or flag. These people stood for the Book; possibly the entire meeting (v. 7). They regarded the Law for what it was – **GOD'S LAW**. Nothing deserved higher honor and no effort to hear its words was too great. This should humble us, for our conception of the Book is often small and our desire to hear it, frail. There was perfect attendance here (*"all the people"*); how often can we say that? C.T. Lacey quotes D. Boyd Long in stating that people today *"can easily stand for this length of time watching sports events, movies, or concerts, but not more than an hour over the Word"* (*What the Bible Teaches:*

*Nehemiah*). If this is true of Christians, then we earnestly need to consider our ways! (Hag. 1:5).

**4. There was a Unified Reverence for the Book**

“*And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground*” (v.6). The Book inspired reverence. Before listening and learning, they lauded the God that blessed them with it. All around, nations lay in spiritual darkness, but they had the Book. How they worshipped God for it! When Ezra blessed Jehovah, the “great God,” everyone answered with hearty amen’s. Their hands ascended with desire and expectation, their heads bowed humbly with faces to the ground, and their hearts overflowed in praise.

Theirs was an appropriate response for the reception of divine truth: no lightness, no laxness, no loftiness, just hearts aching to learn.

**5. There was a Unified Reaction to the Book**

“*...All the people wept, when they heard the words of the Law*” (v.9). God is light, so His Word is light (1 Jn. 1:5; Ps. 119:105). It exposes unrighteousness, while revealing true godliness. Convicted hearts will “weep” or “lament” when made to feel their sins. This is key to an honest recovery, yet how quickly we flee its revealing rays and shun its plain precepts, lest we become uncomfortable. But running will never do. Said the Hebrew writer: “*Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby*” (12:11). “The word of God must settle every question and govern every conscience. There must be no appeal from its solemn and weighty decision. When God speaks, every heart must bow” (C.H. Mackintosh: *Leviticus*).

**6. There was Unified Rejoicing because of the Book**

“*And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them*” (v.12). This great Bible reading occurred on the first day of the seventh month, corresponding to the Feast of Trumpets, a holy convocation that foreshadowed a joyous day yet future, when Israel would obediently regather as a nation. (Num. 29:1-6; Matt. 24:31). It was not an occasion for sorrow, but for joy (Ps. 81:1-4), so the people were exhorted to go their way to eat, drink, and send portions, making great “mirth” or “festival.” But without the previous preparation of heart, their rejoicing would have been superficial. “Refreshed and

edified themselves, they become channels of blessing to others, sharing gladly with those ‘for whom nothing is prepared’” (H.A. Ironside: *Nehemiah*).

The Word of God has never been popular in worldly circles. Men mock it, malign it, try to mangle it – that has never changed. What has changed, however, is the attitude of professing saints to Scripture. Our generation is guilty of picking apart its precepts, disregarding its doctrines, and eroding its eminence. Such is a certain slide to shipwreck. The need of the hour is for sincere trembling before God’s Word, for greater “*reverence and godly fear*” among us. Surely, we feel this. May God help us experience it for the honor of His Name and the preservation of His people!

It is a sin to Limit God's goodness,  
 Strain God's Promises,  
 Question God's Truth,  
 Doubt God's readiness to receive  
 every anxious soul;  
 Yet it is to be feared that we are often  
 found doing so more or less.

**Worship**

Love seeks worshippers, but it seeks them under the gentle name of “Father.” It places us in a position of freedom before Him as the children of His love. The Spirit who acts in us producing worship is “the Spirit of adoption,” which cries “*Abba, Father.*” It is not that God has lost His majesty, but that He whose majesty is far better known is known also under the more tender and loving character of Father. The Spirit who leads us to worship the Father leads us also into the enjoyment of all the Father’s love who would have us to worship Him as His children.

The enjoyment of this love and of these privileges belongs to the most ignorant and most simple among Christians. It does not require deep reasoning; a child knows, and loves, and enjoys his father before he can give any account of that which he enjoys. “*I write these things unto you because you have known the Father,*” was written to the little children in Christ. The feeblest Christian is therefore competent for worship. The simple fact that God is our Father is in itself an immeasurable privilege for such creatures as we are. But it is in Christ that we possess it. He is the “*Firstborn among brethren.*”

How are we to learn what the Father is, the knowledge of whom gives birth to those affections in our hearts which find expression in worship? It is the only-begotten Son, the firstborn in this new relationship, who reveals Him to us. Eternal Son of the Father, enjoying the infinite love of Him in whose bosom He dwelt, it is He who reveals Him as He himself has known Him. “No man hath seen God at

any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him," (John 1:18). Jesus, a man, but also the Son of God, in the enjoyment of the fullness of this affection, dwelt even while on earth in the bosom of the Father, to originate and make known here below, all the beauty, all the force of that affection. He associates us with Himself in the joy of this love, and He reveals it to us as He himself knows it. He renders us capable of knowing this love by revealing to us the Father's name. *"I have declared thy name unto the men which thou gayest me out of the world."* (Jn. 17:26). Our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. This fellowship expresses itself in adoration and worship toward Him who is revealed as Father, and toward Him who reveals that love, the Son.

We worship the God of glory whose presence is the stay, instead of being the terror of our souls. We worship the God of love whose will it is that we should be perfectly happy in Him. We adore our Father with endearing confidence in His kindness who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings, and counts the very hairs of our heads, while thoughtful of all our present needs. We adore Him for all that He is in himself. We adore Him for that which He is to us, the children of His house for eternity.

We thus present ourselves in sweet communion before the same Father, so that brotherly affections are developed, the joy of each being reciprocally the joy of all, multiplied praises ascending from all. The consciousness of all this must indeed be individually realized in order that we may enjoy it together, so the Spirit often uses the words "we" and "us," when speaking of Christian affection and feelings.

### Practical Results of Worship

Let us state some of the practical effects which flow from these truths :—First, it is evident that worship is the privilege only of the children of God. Being offered *"in spirit and in truth,"* and being offered to Him who cannot admit sin into His presence, they and they alone who are washed in the blood of the Lamb, and who have received the Spirit can draw near to God to adore Him. That a man who is not converted should render worship to God is simply impossible; for *"without faith it is impossible to please God."* (Heb. 11:6). That he thinks that he can draw nigh to God is but the proof that he is ignorant of what he is in himself, and of what the God is whom he thinks to serve. Who can enter into the sanctuary save he who is sanctified? Who can address him-self to his father save him who is a child.

Worshipping, moreover, as an assembly supposes the per-

sons united in one, by the Spirit, as a temple in which God dwells; and that each can say "we" in sincerity when addressing God. A hypocrite may be present, but he can only be a hindrance to the worship. It is only believers who can worship God. The unbeliever will be ill at ease in professing to draw near to God because God's presence can only communicate the conscience of sins to him, and not the joy that presence inspires to him who enjoys it in the peace which Christ confers.

How delightful to be able to adore God! What a source of joy is He whom we adore! How great the blessedness of finding one's self in His presence, no cloud between Him and us, no tinge of fear because no vestige of sin! Being made the "righteousness of God in Christ." The presence of God becomes an

Take heed that on the conscience of those who are "the temple of the living God," there is not an accumulation things that must be cleared out first, before God can be worshipped.

inexpressible spring of happiness for that new nature which He has given us. What joy to be able to express one's acknowledgements, to render to Him one's thanksgivings, knowing that they are acceptable to Him! What a blessing to have His Spirit, the Spirit of liberty and adoption as our power for worship, as the inspirer of praise, of confidence, and of adoration!

WIS 1923

### Prayer in the House of God

*"When thou goest to the House of God" Eccles. 5:1*

In olden times God had a house on earth to which His people went to sacrifice and worship. It was called a house of prayer. There God met with His people. To see God's face with joy, or to prevail with Him in prayer, certain things were necessary to observe. Mention is made of some of these in Eccl. 5: 1-7.

1. *"Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God."* In the Eastern land the dust stained shoes were left at the door: and the feet were washed. In this way defilement was not carried into the home; and the traveller was made fit to recline at ease to enjoy communion in the family circle. The spiritual application is easily made. If the disciples were to enjoy communion with the Lord Jesus they must have their feet washed. If we are to enjoy communion with one another we must wash one another's feet. How much

more than, do we need our feet washed when we come into the presence of God. If we are to have an audience with God our walk must be cleansed by the word. Is not this the force of the words, "*Put off thy shoes from off thy feet for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground,*" Ex. 3; 5. Holiness of walk is necessary if we are to have an audience with God. His feet are holy; and if we are to sit as disciples at His feet, like Mary, our feet must be clean. The Psalmist speaks of this. "*Lord who shall abide in Thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in Thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbor, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor. In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoreth them that fear the Lord. He sweareth to his own hurt and changeth not. He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved,*" Ps. 15. God will not commune with those who come into His presence with unholy feet.

2. "*Be more ready to hear than to give the sacrifice of fools, for they consider not that they do evil*" King Saul did not hearken, but offered the sacrifice of fools, and lost his kingdom. "*Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry,*" 1 Sam. 15; 22-23. The silence of the wise, waiting for God to speak to the soul, is more eloquent than the endless babblings of the fool.

3. "*Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart be hasty to utter anything before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth therefore let thy words be few. For a dream cometh through a multitude of business; and a fool's voice is known by a multitude of words.*" (Ecc 5:3). Again we read, "*When thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they might be seen of men. Verily I say unto you they have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do, for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like them; for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him,*" (Matt. 6; 5-8).

Let us beware of long prayers in public lest we be classed with "fools," "hypocrites," and "heathen." There is no place in the world where an oratorical display is more abominable than in the prayer meeting, unless it be in the worship meeting. Long preaching prayers, instructing God and His

people—what an abomination they must be to God, and what a weariness to His people? The prayers of Scripture are usually very short, and very simple.

The sample prayer given to the disciples (Matt. 6:9-14) is well worthy of careful consideration. "*Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.*" Here God is given the Father's place, the place of loving respect; high, as heaven is above the earth, above an earthly father: His holy Name, in all its various attributes, to be held in highest respect. Who that approaches God with a lively sense of what this means would seek to make an oratorical display? If in the presence of earthly majesty our words would be few, how much rather in the presence of Majesty Divine? "*God is in heaven and thou upon earth, therefore let thy words be few.*"

"*Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*" The soul approaching God in this spirit, must be deeply conscious of how God's authority is disowned now, and His will trampled in the dust. Yea, must himself be striving to yield obedience that is better than sacrifice, and the hearkening ear that is better than the fat of rams. What folly to expect an audience with God unless we are honestly striving to do His will? The consciousness of how poorly we accomplish His blessed will should, surely, keep us from uttering in His presence empty words of bombast and pride.

"*Give us this day our daily bread.*" Here we express our sense of lowly dependence: not able to obtain so much as a loaf of bread for the nourishment of our bodies, apart from Him: and without God's blessing food in the stomach may be the worst of poison. It is to be feared that many pray to God for their daily bread, and then go to the devil's business, by joining labor unions, or going into other unequal yokes, or crooked business, to obtain that bread. The Christian who truly prays "*give us this day our daily bread,*" would refuse to eat bread that did not come from God's holy hand.

"*And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.*" He who comes into God's presence in this spirit will not be hard to get along with: and he will not be praying at his brethren against whom he holds some grudge. He will be humbled at the thought of how often he trespasses against others.

"*And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil*" Boasting led to Peter's fall. "*Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.*" He who distrusts himself, will cling to God to keep him out of temptation, lest he fall. His cry will always be "*deliver us from evil.*"

"*For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.*" Above all the din, and strife, and the

apparent rule of the powers of evil, God is supreme. Ours is no impotent God. Ours is no heartless Father. Nor does it require much speaking to obtain an audience with Him. May God keep us from airing the flesh in our public prayers, but keep us simple and little, and we shall have the petitions we require of Him.

## Wrongs Made Right

*Donald Ross*

**Nothing is settled permanently until it is settled right. Shifts, concealments, subterfuges, and evasions, amount to nothing. A wrong may be apologized for, defended, endured, covered up, lied about, daubed over, winked at, or silently endured; but so long as it exists, there is trouble in store. Build your house as big as you like, if there is a wrong in the foundation, you have put powder under the whole concern; a spark will find it out some day, and then comes an explosion.**

**However, the matter may be stifled, smoothed over, or misrepresented, every wrong not righted will come up, and keep coming up.**

**A wrong is not made right unless it is confessed, repented of, repaired, done with, and done with forever; but a matter decided wrongly, by craft or trickery, or guile, follows on and on until God Himself shall settle it in an inexorable manner. Let us search and try our ways, and be more anxious to do right by others than to wrangle with them for the rights we claim. No matter what we suffer if all is right on our part, no matter how we prosper; all is vain if wrongdoing is left unsettled. Have we righted every wrong? Have we cleared ourselves of everything which shall secure the anger of God?**

## What is His Name? “Elohim”

*Joel Portman*

George H. Morrison (1866-1928) said, “There is no knowledge attainable by man so vital as the knowledge of his God. To know Him with whom we have to do is the most

important thing in human life.” So that a personal study of God’s names is a vital blessing to our souls as we think and meditate on the greatness in His person and on His works toward us as the feeble sons of men. It is the highest level of study for a believer with the most blessed results, and it will be our occupation to learn more of Him eternally when in His own presence.

The first name by which God has revealed Himself in our Bible is the name that is found in the first verse of Genesis and then about 2750 times in the Old Testament. It is a name that is often considered to be a “generic” name for God, since it is also used for false gods, angels, and judges. However, usually when it is applied to others, there is a definite difference that we will try to notice in this article. It is a name that gives confidence to the believer who knows Him, since it substantiates our assurance that He is able and fully dependable to fulfill all His purposes toward those who trust Him, so that we live with the assurance of His omnipotence to minister to all our needs.

### Meaning of Elohim

Students of the Hebrew language differ in their definition of this name and its derivation. Some emphasize its root as “El,” which means “strong, mighty, prominent.” This is the name that is often found combined with other words, such as “El-Shaddai,”— “the Almighty God.” This simple form is found 250 times in the Old Testament. For example, we see it in Num. 23:22-23, where we read that “*God (El) brought them out. . . what hath God (El) wrought!*” “El” formed a part of names even in early periods of Genesis, such as Methusael (Gen. 4:18 and Ishmael (Gen. 16:11). “In the Mosaic period, “El” was synonymous with the Lord who delivered the Israelites from bondage in Egypt and made them victorious in battle (Num. 24:8). This tradition of the Hebrew ‘el’ as a “God” who revealed Himself in power and entered into a covenant relationship with His people was prominent in both poetry (Psa. 7:11; Psa. 85:8) and prophecy (Isa. 43:12; Isa. 46:9) (*Vine’s Expository Dictionary of OT Words*). So that in this sense, “El” signifies greatness with glory, creative and governing power, omnipotence and sovereignty (Nathan Stone, *Names of God*). Thus this name signifies the “putter forth of power” and tells us that He is the one to whom all power belongs.

Others also see a relationship with “alah” which means “to declare or swear” (Andrew Jukes: *The Names of God in Holy Scripture*). It seems to express omnipotence involving a covenant relationship. Parkhurst says, “This name contains the mystery of the trinity in that it indicates a covenant made within the essence of the godhead, which implies more than one person.” Herbert Stevenson (*Titles of the Triune God*) says this is a name that indicates that He

is worthy to be worshiped, and surely He is as, the only true God, the covenant-keeping and faithful God with all power to accomplish His will perfectly.

Thus, this name of God conveys to our understanding that He is One who has infinite strength and absolute faithfulness (Lehman Strauss: *The Godhead*), and G. Campbell Morgan says that this name refers to His absolute, unqualified, unlimited energy. Albert Barnes, in his commentary on the Bible, writes that “the root probably means to be lasting, binding, firm, strong. Hence, the noun means the Everlasting, and in the plural, the Eternal Powers”

Dr. Robert Young, in his *Concise Commentary*, says that it is a plural noun that means “the worshipful One; it seems to point out the superabundance of qualities in the Divine Being.” It seems to be used frequently in relationship to God’s covenant-keeping character and His faithfulness in fulfilling every term of His promises to mankind (Gen. 6:18, 9:15-16, 17:7, 50:24, 1 Kings 8:23). With regard to men, we read that “*God remembered Noah*,” (Gen. 8:1), “*God remembered Abraham*,” (Gen. 19:29), “*God remembered Rachel*,” (Gen. 30:22), and “*God remembered his covenant*,” (Ex. 2:24). How blessed it is to know a God who knows all and unfailingly remembers and keeps His word!

Sadly, it is also the name used for the false gods of the nations. This use of the name of the true God was the inevitable result of man’s deliberate corruption of the true, revealed knowledge of God (Rom. 1:20-21) so that through man’s sinful degeneration, this name expressed how they “*changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things*,” (Rom. 1:23). This is the dishonor that men express toward the person of God as expressed in the name that is properly His alone. “When thus employed, however, it immediately loses most of its inherent grandeur, and sometimes dwindles down to the bare notion of the supernatural or the extra mundane,” (Albert Barnes: *Notes on the Bible*).

### Plurality of Elohim

It is often noted that this name is usually found in the plural, but it is constantly accompanied by verbs and adjectives that are singular. For example, in Gen. 1:1, we read that “*in beginning God (pl) created (sing) the heaven and the earth*.” Again, in Gen. 1:26, “*And God said, let us make (pl) man in our (pl) image (sing) after our (pl) likeness*” (sing). It is also notable that in passages using this noun, it is coupled with singular pronouns, as in Deut. 32:39, “*See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god (Elohim) with me*.” When Elohim is used for heathen gods, however, plural adjectives and pronouns are used, such as in 1 Sam.

4:8.

“El” is not the singular form of Elohim, though that word seems to express the same basic idea as Elohim. The singular form of Elohim is Eloah, and this form is mainly found in the book of Job.

We note also that God, when using Elohim, speaks of Himself as “us” as in Gen. 1:26, 3:22, 11:7. In Eccles. 12:1, we note that the word “creator” is actually “creators” as is also the case in Isa. 6:8, “who will go for us.” Some object to the implication of the trinity in Elohim and some don’t agree at all with the thought of trinity being implied. These say that it is the “plural of majesty,” the form of expression that is commonly used by royalty when speaking of a decision that a king or ruler has made. However, this kind of expression or usage of the plural wasn’t known in the Bible at all. No king of Israel or of any other nation ever spoke of himself as “us” or “we.” If this were true, it would be more consistent to read, not “I am your Elohim,” but “we are your Elohim.” (Nathan Stone: *Names of God*).

There are others who refer to this form as the “plural of intensity” and thus argue that it is intended to strengthen and expand the meaning to the title. However, Girdlestone (*Old Testament Synonyms*) points out that these arguments only favor the idea of a trinity in the Elohim. He says that the use of the plural only implies (even in the plural of majesty) “that the word in the singular is not full enough to set forth all that is intended.” It seems clear that this form of expression is intended to emphasize that no limited word can adequately define or express the truth of the infinite personality of the persons of the godhead. A similar thought seems to be indicated when words such as life (Gen. 2:7), blood (Gen. 4:10), as well as wisdom, salvation, and righteousness are found in a plural form on occasion.

When the serpent tempted Eve in Gen. 3, he told her that if she partook of the forbidden tree, she would be “*as gods, knowing good and evil*,” (AV, v. 5). Since she knew no other god apart from Elohim, false gods not being in existence, he was actually telling her that she would be like God. The aspiration of man to put himself in the place of God, acting independently of God and determining for himself the course of his life, has always been man’s aspiration, and it will be exemplified in the man of sin who will conduct himself in that way. He will seat himself in the temple of God, showing himself as if he were God (2 Thess. 2:4). This pattern of temptation has existed from the beginning, and it was originated by the one who said in his heart, “*I will be like the Most High. . .*” (Isa. 14:14).

### Other Uses of Elohim

Man’s departure from God and rejection of revealed knowledge of God resulted in their carrying with them the

ideas of God in greatness and power, but then attributing those powers to their idols and objects of worship. This usage is seen in Gen. 35:4, when Jacob commanded his household to “put away the strange gods (Elohim) that were in their hands.” We read in Gen. 31:19, that Rachel had stolen Laban’s images (teraphim), but Laban calls them his “Elohim.” Obviously Laban should have known better than to call them his Elohim, since he had knowledge of the truth of God, but it had been corrupted in his mind.

What you are afraid to do before man you should be afraid to think before God.

Other examples of this perverted application of Elohim to false gods include reference to the golden calf (Ex. 32), Jethro’s words in Ex. 18:11, and many other passages.

It is also applied to angels in the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament as well as in the Samaritan version. We see its usage with reference to men as in Ex. 4:16, where Moses was to represent God and speak for Him to Aaron but Aaron would transmit those words to Pharaoh. We note that Ps. 82 was quoted by our Lord in Jn. 10:34-36. This passage refers to those who were judges in Israel and who were responsible for judging the people in accordance with God’s Word. If those men represented God in such a feeble way, it could not be called blasphemy with reference to Christ, the Son of God, who had been sent by the Father into the world to represent God to man. We also see that judges in Israel were called “elohim” (Ex. 22:8-9, 28), as they represented God and His Word to the people. It was this passage that Paul quoted in Acts 23:5, when he was smitten for “reviling” the high priest. Other references also indicate the use of the word with reference to judges.

### Implications of Elohim

Our understanding of this name of our God should cause us to bow before Him in reverence and worship. He has presented Himself to our hearts as the only One who is worthy of worship and praise. Israel was commanded, “For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.” They were further reminded in Deut. 10:21 that “He is thy praise, and he is thy God, that hath done for thee these great and terrible things, which thine eyes have seen.” It was His power that had delivered them and transported them through the wilderness journey to the land, and He was worthy to receive all honor. The result of His delivering power produces the responsive praise to Him as we read in Ps. 40:3, “And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God:” Many other passages could be cited, but these serve to remind us what should be the response of our hearts in view of the great expression of His mercies

manifested in His merciful power toward us in our great salvation.

His character as the only true God who has redeemed us from the hand of the enemy (Ps. 106.10) also produces reverential obedience out of love for who He is and what He has done. If He is the One true God, who is sovereign over all as the God who keeps covenant and fulfills His word, then this demands our response in submission to Him and a desire to walk in fellowship with Him as we seek to do His will. Repeatedly, Israel was exhorted to love the Lord their God and to walk in His ways (Deut. 10:12, 11:1, 11:22, 19:9, etc). He is greater than all, and resistance to His will always results in ruin and disaster. May the knowledge of the Holy One preserve us in our pathway and service as we live and move in a world that knows not God and desires not the knowledge of His ways.

It is only those who can bear to be told of their faults, that can be trusted to hear of their virtues.

### Gleanings from 2 Kings 6:1-7, pt. 1

Alex Dryburgh

We would like to notice three things in our meditation on this chapter:

- 1.A Pattern to be Approved.
- 2.A Peril to be Avoided
- 3.A Procedure to be Adopted

Christ is the mediator, the advocate, and the great high priest As the Mediator, He makes the link between God and man; as the Advocate, He mends the link between God and man; as the Great High Priest, He maintains the link between God and man.

In those seven verses

1. There are examples to follow
2. There are warnings to beware of
3. There is recovery
4. There is restoration
5. There is the thought of being reinstated.

Notice six things in these seven verses: There is the thought of **Enlargement**. *“The place where we dwell with thee is too strait (too small) for us.”* It was too confined. Jabez prayed for the enlargement of coast (1 Chron. 4:10). David speaks about enlargement of heart, and enlargement of steps (2 Sam. 22:37, Ps. 18:36). In 2 Cor.6:11. Paul’s heart was enlarged toward the Corinthians. He wanted them to have an enlarged heart toward him. The Corinthians had big heads They were puffed up, but had small hearts. Paul’s heart was large enough to receive all the Corinthians, but their heart was so small that it could not receive Paul. In the chapter where Paul talks about large heartedness, he gives the Corinthians a narrow path for their feet. In this portion, they needed a larger place.

Then there is the thought of **Exercise**. *“Let us go, we pray thee, to Jordan.”* Then the thought of **Employment** is involved: *“and take thence every man a beam, and let us make a place there where we may dwell.”* Then we have the thought of **Encouragement**. Not only did they have the mind of Elisha to go to the Jordan, but they have the promise of Elisha’s presence to go with them. Then we have the thought of **Embarrassment**. Here is a man felling a tree and while he is doing it the ax head fell into the water. Then we see the thought of **Empowerment**. The stick is cut down and the iron did swim.

The truth of this chapter is: Attempt great things for God. Expect great things from him.

### Elisha presents a Picture of Christ

In many ways, Elisha reminds us of the Lord Jesus. He is seen as master and as lord. That takes our minds to John. 13. *“Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet.”* As Master, He has to be obeyed.

“Trust and obey, for there’s no other way,  
To be happy in Jesus, But to trust and obey.”

*“Thy servants are ready to do whatsoever my Lord the king shall appoint”* (2 Sam. 15:15). As Lord he has no rivals. Keep in mind who the Lord Jesus is! He is Lord and Savior (2 Pet 3:18). He is Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36). He is Lord and Master (Jn. 13:14). He is Lord and God (Jn. 20:28). As Lord and Savior, we appreciate Him, as Lord and Christ we exalt Him, as Lord and master we obey Him, as Lord and God we worship Him. He is the Lord Jesus Christ. *“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.”* (Acts 16:31).

“I am the Lord’s, Oh teach me all it meaneth;  
All it involves of love and loyalty.

Of holy service full and glad surrender,  
And unreserved obedience unto thee.”

Elisha is presented as a prophet, and the Lord Jesus is the prophet mighty in deed and in word (Lk. 24:19). It was through Elisha that the debt was cleared and life was maintained (2 Kings 4:1-7). It was through Elisha that the dead child was raised to life (2 Kings 4:33-36). It was through Elisha that Naaman was cleansed (2 Kings 5). It was through Elisha that the lost iron was found (2 Kings 6). The thought of Lord is that there are no rivals, and the thought of master indicates that He must be obeyed. Never forget who the Lord is, and never forget who you and I are. Christ is the shepherd, you and I are sheep (Jn. 10). The sheep hear the voice of the shepherd, they know the voice of the shepherd, and they follow the shepherd.

“I have a shepherd, One I love so well,  
How He has blessed me, tongue can never tell;  
On the cross He suffered, shed his blood and died,  
That I might ever in his love confide.”

“Following Jesus ever day by day,  
Nothing can harm me when He leads the way;  
Darkness or sunshine whatever befall,  
Jesus my shepherd is my all in all.”

He is the master, we are the servants. He is the vine, we are the branches. He is the king, we are the subjects. Notice the words of the king to Gehazi, the servant of the man of God: *“Tell me, I pray thee, all the great things that Elisha has done”* (2 Kings 8:4). Greatness is linked with Christ. He is the great high Priest. He is the great shepherd of the sheep. *“Consider how great this man was,”* (Heb. 7:4). He is greater than Solomon, greater than Jonah, greater than the temple (Matt. 12). *“Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable,”* (Ps. 145:3). *“All that Jesus both began to do and to teach”* (Acts 1:1). *“He was a prophet mighty in deed and in word,”* (Lk. 24:19).

*(to be continued)*

### Consecration

*Edward Robinson (Assembly Testimony, Jan/Feb 1982)*

In the outstanding act of faith and obedience by Abraham in the offering up of Isaac (Gen. 22), he is asked by his son, *“Where is the lamb for a burnt offering?”* What might have been a very disconcerting question is answered by Abraham With much wisdom, *“God will provide Himself a lamb.”* The answer is prophetic, looking onward many

centuries to the sacrifice of the Son of God, the Lamb of God to take *“away the sin of the world.”* Abraham is honored by God for his readiness to make such a sacrifice, although in the event what God provided as a substitute for Isaac was *“a ram caught in the thicket by its horns.”* Both the lamb and the ram speak, of course, of Christ, each in a distinctive character. Lamb-like, He is in full and complete submission to the will of God, uncomplaining as it is said of Him, *“when He was reviled, He reviled not again.”* (1 Peter 2.23). In the ram is the suggestion of energy and maturity, an unswerving commitment to that will: it is called *“a ram of consecration”* (Exod. 29.22).

The ram is caught in the thicket by its horns, reminding us of the constraining love of Him of Whom it speaks and that it was not the nails that held Him to that cross. The hymn writer says of that love never before declared or manifested in its incomparable strength and devotedness:

“Himself He could not save,  
Love's stream too deeply flowed ;  
In love Himself He gave,  
To pay the debt we owed.  
Obedience to His Father's will  
And love to Him did all fulfil.”

There is in the sacrifice of Christ a dual aspect; first what is for the satisfaction of God and the justification of all that He is in His holy nature and glory which the introduction of sin into His universe had so grievously outraged. Well might it be said of Christ *“then I restored that which I took not away.”* (Ps. 69.4). Often we are apt to forget this aspect, thinking only of the blessing which comes to us through the death of Christ. Although this is involved, for which we ever give thanks, He in the perfection of His Manhood considers first the glory of God.

This principle of the dual aspect of the sacrifice is seen also in relation to the two goats (Lev. 16); one is slain (primarily to meet the claims of God's holiness). The live goat, bearing the iniquities of the people, is sent away into the wilderness into an uninhabited place (reminding, us of the forsaking by God of the Lord Jesus), never to be heard of again. Here then two rams are involved; of the first it is stated *“and thou shalt burn the whole ram upon the altar: it is a burnt offering unto the Lord.”* (Exod. 29.18). Following this, *“and thou shalt take the other ram ; then shalt thou kill the ram and take of his blood and put it upon the right ear of Aaron and upon the tip of the right ear of his sons, and upon the thumb of their right hand, and upon the great toe of their right foot, and sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about.”* Note the stress upon the right ear, hand and foot—the suggestion of power, even as we are told of the

resurrection of the Lord Jesus and His ascension to the right hand of the majesty on high.

Aaron is typical of our great High Priest; his sons of ourselves in the exercise of priesthood. The ear is the great inlet to the still small voice of the Holy Spirit, that which we hear regulating our whole conduct and service. It is anointed and the application of the blood ensures the removal of any defiling element. So with the thumb, also anointed, bringing in a priestly service, whether Godward or manward in accord with and in suitability to, all that God is. The great toe is, of course, an accompanying walk suited to fellowship with God and the companionship of Christ. It is the equipment of a whole man of God, all emanating from the great Antitype of the ram of consecration. The service of God, inaugurated on earth by the Lord Jesus in such quality and power, affording supreme pleasure to the heart of God is thus to be continued in character by His own. As always, the Old Testament thus provides ‘pattern’ and detail for doctrine and teaching finding fulfillment in the New. As has been said, in the Old is concealed that which in the new Testament is revealed.

Paul, himself a shining example in dedication and consecration to bring us into the blessedness of this service, using in his language a great lever, *“I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, your reasonable (intelligent) service.”* (Rom. 12.1). It is clearly by its connection a priestly matter, in which the sisters also share, though not in any public manner (when Paul uses the term “brethren” he includes both brothers and sisters). It is a continuing matter, but probably arrived at at a time of committal. It is no doctrinal or theological concern but a practical finding out, proving, in spite of all that it may perfect. In the following verse he gives advice as to how it may be carried out, *“And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.”* (Rom. 12.2).

**We can be happy as we ascertain what the will of God is, and conform to it.**

**We should therefore daily read God's Word and seek grace at God's throne.**