

Ole Miss FCA Weekly Devotional: 1/25/10

The Power and Passion of the Master Coach, Elliot Johnson



Thought of the Week:

God's Glory is Declared in His Name, Elohim, "The Uppermost One"

Verse of the Week:

O Lord, Our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth! Psalm 8:1

In the beginning [Elohim] God created the heaven and the earth. Genesis 1:1

Cassius Clay was one of the most controversial fighters who ever lived. In 1964, the egocentric Clay defeated Sonny Liston for the Heavyweight Championship of the world. Immediately, he announced himself as a member of the Black Muslim sect and changed his name to Muhammad Ali. Clay's new name revealed much about his allegiance to the Muslims for the rest of his life.

Names sometimes reveal much about character. They reveal much to us about God. His names reveal a detailed description of His nature. In the Hebrew language, names were used to teach truth about a person. That's why each name used for God is important. Psalm 9:10 says, "Those who know your name will trust in you." Our faith in God is strengthened when we understand the significance of His names.

How can we know each name in detail? We must understand the Hebrew Scriptures, where God inspired the writers to use various names in reference to Himself. We cannot discern these from our English translations. Elohim, Yahweh, and Adonai are the primary Old Testament names for God. In our Bibles, Elohim is always translated "God." Yahweh is translated either "Lord" or "God," or "Lord God." Adonai is typically translated "Lord."

Elohim, found 2,570 times in the Hebrew Scriptures (thirty two times in Genesis 1), is more of a title than a name for God. It teaches us that God is the Uppermost One. It is first used in Genesis 1:1, indicating that God is the Uppermost One of all creation. Linguists (those who study languages) tell us that Elohim is a plural noun. In English, plural means "two or more," but in Hebrew, plural always means "more than two." Therefore, Genesis 1:1 reveals to us that God is a Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), a "Three-in-One" as we studied earlier. So, do we have many gods? No! Man has perverted the doctrine of the Trinity and worshiped false gods. We have one God, who is Three-in-One! Elohim is the powerful God of creation!

Elohim may be a derivative of El, which means "mighty, strong, and prominent." The word El is translated "God" some 250 times, frequently to indicate the great power of God. In Deuteronomy 10:17, we read, "For the Lord [Yahweh] your God [Elohim] is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes." Elohim expresses the idea of greatness and glory, omnipotence and sovereignty, and creative and governing power. Elohim may also be a derivative of Alah, which means "to swear." This describes God as a "covenant making God who ratifies His covenant by an oath." It was Solomon who prayed, "O Lord, God [Elohim] of Israel, there is no God [Elohim] like you in heaven above or on earth below—You who keep your covenant of love with your servants who continue wholeheartedly in your way" (1 Kings 8:23). The God who has made covenants with Himself (Psalm 110) and with His people (Genesis 6:18; 9:15-16; 17:19) is a covenant-keeping God. He is our Elohim!

Time Out:

- (1) What does Genesis 1:1 teach us about God?
- (2) What covenant has God made with Himself?
- (3) What covenant has God made with His people (Israel)?