

ELOHIM – THE REAL MEANING OF THE WORD

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These notes, composed from 2013 on, are based on taped lectures given between 1977 and 1997 by Dr. Ernest L. Martin, Ph.D., formerly the Head of Theology for the Worldwide Church of God; he resigned in January 1974 because of his unresolved doctrinal issues with the administration. Sadly Dr. Martin died in January 2002, a great loss to the world and to those who seek Biblical truth.

The first noun in the English Bible is 'God' which is the English translation of the Hebrew word 'Elohim' (pronounced El-o-eem). The word 'Elohim' appears 2700 times in the Old Testament. The 'im ending of the word is the manner in which the Hebrew language makes a word plural.

There are other similar Hebrew words, Eloa, Elyon, and El which appears in proper names such as Bethel. Beth meaning house, and El meaning God, and put together the word Bethel means God's House. The word 'El' means 'power', or 'powerful', or 'mighty'.

When the Bible starts out saying that 'God created', the word for God is Elohim which is plural, and 'created' is Bara which is singular. This is not an error, or a mistake. Elohim is Who God Is. Why is the grammar rendered this way?

In New Testament Greek, quotes from the Old Testament which contain the word Elohim which is plural are rendered with the singular Greek word Theos. The word Theos is clearly singular, and is always so. Theos started out historically meaning 'runner', the way the heavenly bodies moved or 'ran' across the sky, but became to mean Deity or God.

John 10:33 The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God. 34 Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? 35 If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken;

God 'is' that is He has Life or 'Beingness' Inherent in Him. God's title YHVH means 'was-is-will be' or the Eternal One. We are the Children of God, we have a type of the same 'beingness' or 'existence' or 'life' albeit mortal, and we humans also have many of the qualities of God in rudimentary form; we plan, we design, we create.

Theologians over centuries have argued endlessly about Theos being singular but often plural in context. The way most scholars look at the word

is from a Platonic viewpoint, that of a man, and a Gentile at that. We need to be looking for a Biblical explanation for the dilemma.

The O.T. says that the Lord is One. It also says that Adam and Eve, two personalities became 'One' flesh. So it is shown in the scriptures that it is possible for singular and plural to exist in One.

In English, we have many words which are called collective nouns which take singular or plural verbs 'family' is one such word. There is an English word which can be extremely useful in helping us to understand the singularity and the plurality of God. The word is 'corporation' which etymologically is "persons united in a body for some purpose". The word is made up of the prefix 'corp' which literally means a 'body', a 'group' which may contain many 'bodies'.

The British Broadcasting Corporation can take a singular or a plural verb without any difficulty whatsoever. The BBC is the founding organization of broadcasting in England. The BBC (executives) **are** looking to expand the number of services worldwide, or the BBC **is** moving to new premises. In the army there are different 'corps', or bodies of men. For instance there is a 'Signal Corps' and a 'Marine Corps' both of which can take a singular or plural verb depending upon the context.

The New Testament definition of the Greek word 'ecclesia' is body. The 'body of Christ' is a religious term which has somewhat vague meaning to most people, but if we use the word 'ecclesia' to mean 'corporation' it brings the term down to earth so to speak.

In N.T. Greek, the word for 'body' is 'soma'. If we substitute the English word 'corporation' for the Greek word 'soma', this can simply and legitimately help us to understand the 'soma of Christ' as being a corporation, which in fact it is.

In 1st Corinthians the 12th chapter, Paul goes into great detail about the 'body of Christ', and this is going to help us understand the nature and the singular and plural structure of God and the Godhead, as well as the nature of the 'Body of Christ'.

1 Corinthians 12:1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.

So here, Paul announces the context of the chapter – it is spiritual gifts. In verse 2 Paul explains that the Corinthians were ‘carried away’ by dumb idols.

1 Corinthians 12: 2 Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led

Then in verse 3 he explains to the Gentile Corinthians a vital point, namely that no man can even say “Christ is the Lord” unless they are led to that knowledge by the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:3 Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

This is an extremely important fact for us to take to heart, as without the help of the Holy Spirit, no person can understand the deep meanings of Bible Truth or indeed be a part of the Body of Christ.

Religious ministers implore people to “Give your heart to the Lord”, and “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ’ and you will be saved.” But there are key verses which show that it is actually the other way around, it is God that calls us. Jesus says:

John 6:44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. And...

Matthew 22:14 For many are called, but few are chosen.

Many ministers quote part of half of a thought from Philippians 2:12 presented by Paul and say to their parishioners: “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” This partial quote ensures complete misunderstanding of the truth of our relationship with God.

The very next verse shows that it is not what we do that has anything to do with our conversion or our relationship with God, as everything to do with the process are gifts from God. The desire to know God, the belief, the faith, the repentance, the understanding we receive are all gifts. All we have to do is to respond to that calling, and even that response is a gift from God!

Philippians 2:13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Paul goes on to develop the subject of 'gifts' in great detail. It helps our understanding if we keep in mind the structure of a 'corporation'.

1 Corinthians 12:4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.
5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. 6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

Above, Paul explains that there are plural different gifts, but one Spirit. There are differences of plural administrations, but One Lord. There are diverse pluralities of operations but One God. All these factors are present in the 'Corporation of God'.

1 Corinthians 12:7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. 8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;
9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; 10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: 11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

So as individuals in the Signal or the Marine Corps, have different talents and abilities according to the gifts they were given at birth, so the members of the Body of Christ have different gifts to work with. The 'Body of Christ' is not a 'Sole Trader' but a 'Corporation'.

1 Corinthians 12:12 For as the body (the corporation) is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body (corporation): so also is Christ (a Corporation).

1 Corinthians 12:13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body (corporation), whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. 14 For the body (the corporation) is not one member, but many.

Paul spells this out so that even a young child would be able to understand the nature of the body (corporation) of Christ. He then explains that each person should be thankful that they have the talent they have been given by God, and not to want to be different!

1 Corinthians 12:15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 16 And if the ear shall say,

Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 17 If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? 18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

Notice that it is God who has set or placed the members into the structure of the Corporation as it has pleased Him.

1 Corinthians 12:19 And if they were all one member, where were the body? 20 But now are they many members, yet but one body (Corporation). 21 And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. 22 Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary:

Every part or member of the Body of Christ is important in his or her own way, and of course the most important part of the Body is the Head which is Jesus Christ!

1 Corinthians 12:23 And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. 24 For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked.

The inner workings of our body, the organs, the heart, the spleen, the pancreas, the intestines and so on, are not particularly 'comely', and are certainly not on display, but their operations are crucial to the health of the whole body. So, all the members that make up the 'body' or 'Corporation of Christ' have their vital importance whether they seem to be more comely or less so.

1 Corinthians 12:25 That there should be no schism in the body (corporation); but that the members should have the same care one for another.

Like our human mortal bodies, every part should be working in harmony for the good of the whole. Harmony is crucial and essential, and is singularly absent in the world of religious Christendom.

1 Corinthians 12:26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. 27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

If we should stub a toe badly, suddenly our whole body knows about it! Every part of the body is important to the whole, and Christ wants there to be no schisms or divisions in the Body of Christ. The positions that Paul describes in the ecclesia are not ranks, but gifts.

1 Corinthians 12:28 And God hath set some in the church (ecclesia or group), first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? 30 Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? 31 But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

What is that more excellent way? Chapter 13 of 1st Corinthians is one of the most beautiful in the Bible and is known as 'the love chapter'. Paul (and Christ) want us to be motivated by the Love of God in everything we do. Some people have virtually memorized the whole chapter, as it shows us the way to obey the first and second new commandments to love God and our fellow human beings.

So the term Elohim can be understood by comparing its structure to a Corporation, and who is the 'Chairman of the Board'? It is God the Father. It is God the Father who calls human beings to become part of the Body of Christ, the 'Corporation' which the Father has given to Christ to administer.

Paul devotes an entire chapter in the book of Romans to the subject of gifts, and our responsibility to use them for the benefit of the whole body.

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. 3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

Faith is another 'religious' type of word, and most people have a hazy feeling about it, and are not sure they can define exactly what 'faith' is or means. If we choose to substitute the word 'confidence' for 'faith', this helps make it clearer. Then we ask, 'confidence' in what? And the answer is God. So faith becomes quite simply and legitimately, 'confidence in God'.

Romans 12:4 For as we have many members in one body (Corporation), and all members have not the same office: 5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. 6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; 7 Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; 8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

Basically Paul (actually Christ) is saying whatever 'office' you have in the 'Corporation' focus on your job, and perform your function to the best of your ability. Here is the manner in which we all need to conduct ourselves within the 'Corporation' of Christ. Paul consistently uses this theme in his epistles, giving us specific guidelines to fine tune our behaviour.

Romans 12:9 Let love be without dissimulation (deceit, deception, dissembling, double-dealing, duplicity, feigning, hypocrisy, play-acting, pretence, or sham.) Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. 10 Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; 11 Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; 12 Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; 13 Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. 14 Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. 15 Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. 16 Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. 17 Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. 18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. 19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. 20 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. 21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

Once Christ had fulfilled the Plan that He and the Father had designed before the foundation of the world by relinquishing His Godhead, becoming a man, overcoming the Devil, and dying for us completely personally sinless apart from the entire sin of the world which He took on His shoulders, the Father promoted Him to an even higher rank than He, the Word, had before those events.

Ephesians 1:17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: 18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

Paul and Christ want we who are the 'Body of Christ' to have knowledge, understanding and wisdom of how God the Father bestowed upon His Son, the resurrected Firstborn from the dead, total power over all things.

Ephesians 1:20 Which he (The Father) wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, 21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: 22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church (the ecclesia group), 23 Which is his body (the Corporation), the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Where we see the word 'church' in the N.T., translated from the Greek word 'ecclesia' it never refers to a building, In the English language when the word 'church' is used, it virtually always conjures up the picture of a building. Actually the building is not a 'church', it is a building to which the 'church group' goes, where they have a service and then the 'church group' leaves the building.

Colossians 1:12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: 13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: 14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: 15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every (human) creature:

Once Christ became the Firstborn, the Father judged Him sinless (and by association all humans as well!) and set Him at His right hand, and appointed him Heir of All Things.

Colossians 1:16 For by him The Word, Christ) were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: 17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the

beginning, the firstborn from the dead; ***that in all things he might have the preeminence. 19 For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;***

God the Father, Elohim, is the “Chairman of the Board”. Under the Father is Jesus Christ, Elohim, our Elder Brother in whom we are, who is the President of the Corporation, the Head of all Departments, the Head of the Ecclesia, (each member of which is an Elohim) all with a single, united, undivided ‘Corporate’ Eternal purpose.

Another Hebrew word is ‘Adonai’ which means ‘ruler’, ‘master’, and is often translated ‘Lord’ in the O.T. Adonai is definitely used in the plural with singular verbs to denote plurality of rank, but is a single person.

The Jews traditionally have the problem of rationalizing ‘One God’ with plurality. Paul was a top scholar who sat at the feet of Gamaliel, knew his Hebrew, his Aramaic, his Greek, and his knowledge of the Law was legendary.

In Genesis we have the story of Joseph who had ascended to the powerful position of second to the Pharaoh, and who had multiple ranks of authority over sections of Egypt. His brothers were reporting back to Jacob their father about their interaction with this powerful person who they had not recognized as their brother.

Genesis 42:30 The man, who is the lord (Adonai, plural in the Hebrew) of the land, spake roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country. Verse 33 And the man, the lord of the country, said unto us, Hereby shall I know that ye are true men; leave one of your brethren here with me, and take food for the famine of your households, and be gone:

This ‘Adonai’, Joseph, was ‘Lord’ over Agriculture and the storage and distribution of food, over Commerce and Finance, and many other offices in the greatest country in the world at that time. ‘Adonai’ is actually ‘Lords’ plural, showing the plurality of ranks or offices, but one person.

In Malachi 1:6 A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master (Adonai): if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master (Adonai), where is my fear? saith the Lord of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?

This in the Hebrew is clearly talking about plurality of ranks. Much like the President of the United States is Commander-in-Chief, and has many ranks

over many divisions. He is Chief of Staff, he is head of the Secretary of States office, over the Judiciary, over Finance, etc.

*** Christ has many titles defining His rank in many different ways:

Question: "What are the different names and titles of Jesus Christ?"

Answer: There are some 200 names and titles of Christ found in the Bible. Following are some of the more prominent ones, organized in three sections relating to names that reflect the nature of Christ, His position in the tri-unity of God, and His work on earth on our behalf.

The Nature of Christ

Chief Cornerstone: ([Ephesians 2:20](#)) – Jesus is the cornerstone of the building which is His church. He cements together Jew and Gentile, male and female—all saints from all ages and places into one structure built on faith in Him which is shared by all.

Firstborn over all creation: ([Colossians 1:15](#)) – Not the first thing God created, as some incorrectly claim, because verse 16 says all things were created through and for Christ. Rather, the meaning is that Christ occupies the rank and pre-eminence of the first-born over all things, that He sustains the most exalted rank in the universe; He is pre-eminent above all others; He is at the head of all things.

Head of the Church: ([Ephesians 1:22](#); [4:15](#); [5:23](#)) – Jesus Christ, not a king or a pope, is the only supreme, sovereign ruler of the Church—those for whom He died and who have placed their faith in Him alone for salvation.

Holy One: ([Acts 3:14](#); [Psalm 16:10](#)) – Christ is holy, both in his divine and human nature, and the fountain of holiness to His people. By His death, we are made holy and pure before God.

Judge: ([Acts 10:42](#); [2 Timothy 4:8](#)) – The Lord Jesus was appointed by God to judge the world and to dispense the rewards of eternity.

King of kings and Lord of lords: ([1 Timothy 6:15](#); [Revelation 19:16](#)) – Jesus has dominion over all authority on the earth, over all kings and rulers, and none can prevent Him from accomplishing His purposes. He directs them as He pleases.

Light of the World: ([John 8:12](#)) – Jesus came into a world darkened by sin and shed the light of life and truth through His work and His words. Those who trust in Him have their eyes opened by Him and walk in the light.

Prince of peace:([Isaiah 9:6](#)) – Jesus came not to bring peace to the world as in the absence of war, but peace between God and man who were separated by sin. He died to reconcile sinners to a holy God.

Son of God:([Luke 1:35](#);[John 1:49](#)) – Jesus is the “only begotten of the Father” ([John 1:14](#)). Used 42 times in the New Testament, “Son of God” affirms the deity of Christ.

Son of man:([John 5:27](#)) – Used as a contrast to “Son of God” this phrase affirms the humanity of Christ which exists alongside His divinity.

Word:([John 1:1](#);[1 John 5:7-8](#)) – The Word is the second Person of the triune God, who said it and it was done, who spoke all things out of nothing in the first creation, who was in the beginning with God the Father, and was God, and by whom all things were created.

Word of God:([Revelation 19:12-13](#)) – This is the name given to Christ that is unknown to all but Himself. It denotes the mystery of His divine person.

Word of Life:([1 John 1:1](#)) – Jesus not only spoke words that lead to eternal life, but according to this verse He is the very words of life, referring to the eternal life of joy and fulfillment which He provides.

His position in the trinity

Alpha and Omega:([Revelation 1:8](#);[22:13](#)) – Jesus declared Himself to be the beginning and end of all things, a reference to no one but the true God. This statement of eternity could apply only to God.

Emmanuel:([Isaiah 9:6](#);[Matthew 1:23](#)) – Literally “God with us.” Both Isaiah and Matthew affirm that the Christ who would be born in Bethlehem would be God Himself who came to earth in the form of a man to live among His people.

I Am:([John 8:58](#), with [Exodus 3:14](#)) – When Jesus ascribed to Himself this title, the Jews tried to stone Him for blasphemy. They understood that He was declaring Himself to be the eternal God, the unchanging Jehovah of the Old Testament.

Lord of All:([Acts 10:36](#)) – Jesus is the sovereign ruler over the whole world and all things in it, of all the nations of the world, and particularly of the people of God's choosing, Gentiles as well as Jews.

True God:([1 John 5:20](#)) – This is a direct assertion that Jesus, being the true God, is not only divine, but is the Divine. Since the Bible teaches there is only one God, this can only be describing His nature as part of the God Family

His Work on earth

Author and Perfecter of our Faith:([Hebrews 12:2](#)) – Salvation is accomplished through the faith that is the gift of God ([Ephesians 2:8-9](#)) and Jesus is the founder of our faith and the finisher of it as well. From first to last, He is the source and sustainer of the faith that saves us.

Bread of Life:([John 6:35;6:48](#)) – Just as bread sustains life in the physical sense, Jesus is the Bread that gives and sustains eternal life. God provided manna in the wilderness to feed His people and He provided Jesus to give us eternal life through His body, broken for us.

Bridegroom:([Matthew 9:15](#)) – The picture of Christ as the Bridegroom and the Church as His Bride reveals the special relationship we have with Him. We are bound to each other in a covenant of grace that cannot be broken.

Deliverer:([Romans 11:26](#)) – Just as the Israelites needed God to deliver them from bondage to Egypt, so Christ is our Deliverer from the bondage of sin.

Good Shepherd:([John 10:11,14](#)) – In Bible times, a good shepherd was willing to risk his own life to protect his sheep from predators. Jesus laid down His life for His sheep, and He cares for and nurtures and feeds us.

High Priest:([Hebrews 2:17](#)) – The Jewish high priest entered the Temple once a year to make atonement for the sins of the people. The Lord Jesus performed that function for His people once for all at the cross.

Lamb of God:([John 1:29](#)) – God's Law called for the sacrifice of a spotless, unblemished Lamb as an atonement for sin. Jesus became that Lamb led meekly to the slaughter, showing His patience in His sufferings and His readiness to die for His own.

Mediator:([1 Timothy 2:5](#)) – A mediator is one who goes between two parties to reconcile them. Christ is the one and only Mediator who reconciles men and God. Praying to Mary or the saints is idolatry because it bypasses this most important role of Christ and ascribes the role of Mediator to another.

Rock:([1 Corinthians 10:4](#)) – As life-giving water flowed from the rock Moses struck in the wilderness, Jesus is the Rock from which flow the living waters of eternal life. He is the Rock upon whom we build our spiritual houses, so that no storm can shake them.

Resurrection and Life:([John 11:25](#)) – Embodied within Jesus is the means to resurrect sinners to eternal life, just as He was resurrected from the grave. Our sin is buried with Him and we are resurrected to walk in newness of life.

Savior:([Matthew 1:21](#);[Luke 2:11](#)) – He saves His people by dying to redeem them, by giving the Holy Spirit to renew them by His power, by enabling them to overcome their spiritual enemies, by sustaining them in trials and in death, and by raising them up at the last day.

True Vine:([John 15:1](#)) – The True Vine supplies all that the branches (believers) need to produce the fruit of the Spirit— the living water of salvation and nourishment from the Word.

Way, Truth, Life:([John 14:6](#)) – Jesus is the only path to God, the only Truth in a world of lies, and the only true source of eternal life. He embodies all three in both a temporal and an eternal sense.

