

§41.

*Comparison of the Name Jehovah with Elohim and El.*

If we compare God's names... in reference to their meaning, the following difference is found to result from the already given definitions. In general, all universally cosmical action of God, going out towards the heathen as well as towards Israel in the creation and maintenance of the world, is traced to El and Elohim; to Jehovah, on the other hand, is traced every divine activity which is connected with the theocratic revelation and guidance, and which bears on the heathen only in as far as their history stands in relation to the aim of the divine kingdom.

It follows from this, that the historical display of the divine essence lies essentially in the notion of Jehovah; whereas, on the contrary, Elohim, as such, is subject to no historical process. By this, Oetinger's explanation, "Deus est omnium *rerum* Elohim, omnium *actionum* Jehovah," is to be more exactly defined. Elohim, as such, remains transcendent to the world of phenomena; Jehovah, on the contrary, enters into the phenomena of space and time in order to manifest Himself to mankind; a difference which comes forward at once in the relation of Gen. i. 1 ff. to ii. 4 ff. It is indeed natural and necessary that this difference is not strictly kept up everywhere in the Old Testament in the use of the names of God. Since Elohim is only known in Israel as Jehovah, what is Elohist is often traced back to Jehovah... Theophany in general is a thing of Jehovah... and not Elohim... Hence it comes that anthropomorphisms are almost always applied to Jehovah, not to Elohim...

Those particularly to be mentioned are Gen. ix. 26 f., according to which God is for Japheth mainly only Elohim; on the contrary, for Shem He is Jehovah. Num. xvi. 22, compared with xxvii. 16; in the first passage (the story of Korah's company), although Jehovah is predominant through the whole section... is called upon as God of the spirits of all flesh, as He from whom all natural life proceeds, and who as preserver of the world is entreated, not to sweep away a multitude of men because of one man who sinned. In the second passage, on the contrary (where the appointment of a successor to Moses is treated of), Jehovah is addressed as God of the spirits of all flesh, who divides the gifts of His Spirit for the service of His kingdom, and is therefore entreated to appoint and equip a new leader of His people. With this compare Ps. xix., where, in reference to the manifestation of God in nature, ver. 2, El stands; and in reference to the revelation in the law, Jehovah stands from ver. 8 onwards throughout, etc.

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