

Lexical & Contextual Understandings

Gen 1:1 In the beginningH7225 GodH430 createdH1254 (H853) the heavenH8064 and the earth.H776

In Genesis 1:1 the Hebrew word for God (H430) is *elohim*. *Strong* says that *elohim* is the plural of *eloah*. The term *elohim* occurs 2,601 times in the King James Version of the Bible. *Strong's* definition is as follows:

“...in the ordinary sense; but specifically used (in the plural thus, especially with the article) of the supreme *God*; occasionally applied by way of deference to *magistrates*; and sometimes as a superlative: - angels, X exceeding, God (gods) (-dess, -ly), X (very) great, judges, X mighty.”

The title *elohim* has a broad range of meanings. *Brown-Driver-Briggs* defines this sacred term as follows:

- 1) (plural)
 - 1a) rulers, judges
 - 1b) divine ones
 - 1c) angels
 - 1d) gods
- 2) (plural intensive - singular meaning)
 - 2a) god, goddess
 - 2b) godlike one
 - 2c) works or special possessions of God
 - 2d) the (true) God
 - 2e) God

Part of Speech: noun masculine plural.

The Greek word for God (G2316) is *theos*. *Thayer* defined the term, but also took great and expansive liberties. The pagan mind has quite an imagination. Now, according to *Thayer*, God is a Trinity. And, by the the way—this unbiblical definition is an unfortunate one, because it swayed the masses to believe a lie. *Thayer* defined the word God in this manner:

- 1) a god or goddess, a general name of deities or divinities
- 2) the Godhead, trinity
 - 2a) God the Father, the first person in the trinity
 - 2b) Christ, the second person of the trinity
 - 2c) Holy Spirit, the third person in the trinity
- 3) spoken of the only and true God
 - 3a) refers to the things of God
 - 3b) his counsels, interests, things due to him

- 4) whatever can in any respect be likened unto God, or resemble him in any way
- 4a) God' s representative or viceregent
- 4a1) of magistrates and judges

Part of Speech: noun masculine.

Basically stated, concerning the one (numerically) true God of the Bible, Oneness proponents believe the word *elohim*, used in association to speak of God Himself, means a plurality of majesty or a plurality of attributes, which is the correct definition of the term as applied to God Himself. Whereas, the Trinitarian defines and understands the term, in reference to God, to mean a plurality of persons within the Godhead, which is a wrong definition of God. This trinitarian definition of God presents to a gullible world a polytheistic view of God. This is a definitional error, therefore when trinitarians present the subject of God to others, this definitional error also becomes a presuppositional error, as they use this errant definition as a springboard to interpret everything else about God and Jesus Christ.

When we speak to people about God, we should not assume: 1) that we are speaking of the same God because Buddhists, Islamists, etc. define God differently; and, 2) Christianity, as a whole, has a completely erroneous, off base definition and perspective of the word *God*. They like, *Thayer*, also take great liberties.

The Trinitarian community believes that the Godhead cannot be understood (another presuppositional error)—that the Trinity is a mystery which is beyond human comprehension. Also, Trinitarians are not totally united when explaining what they believe is incomprehensible. The explanation of Trinitarianism itself has a range of explanations from some sounding modalistic to others sounding completely tritheistic.

The Trinitarian definition of what the term *God* means is inconsistent with the biblical lexical-contextual definition. Trinitarians are convinced that God is a plurality of persons, but one God, even though the Bible consistently states that God is one. The Jews of old, who were handed “the oracles of God” certainly didn’ t believe that the word *elohim* meant that God is a plurality of persons or a Trinity.

We cannot trust lexical helps, for some of them are corrupted by doctrinal bias. Only the Bible is completely trustworthy. The Bible conveys meaning. Unless we have a true biblical, lexical, and contextual understanding of meaning for the word *God*, we cannot truly understand God; and therefore, we cannot explain God to others. An interesting excerpt on this topic follows:

“One of this group of Lutherans was a persistent allegorizer Hunnius, who vigorously attacked Calvin in his *Calvinus Judaizans* (1595) for opening the way to Judaism and Arianism because of the impious manner in which he had corrupted the interpretation of Scripture. For example, Calvin in his comment on [Genesis 1:1] had dared to say that *elohim*, though a plural, did not refer to the Persons of the Holy Trinity: ‘[this

interpretation] seems to me to have little solidity . . . readers should be warned against violent glosses.’ ” **

How do we define God. How do we interpret the word *God* in Genesis 1:1? Is it a biblical lexical definition? Is that definition also based on what you know the Bible clearly says about God in other passages? In other words, is that understanding based on a biblical contextual understanding of God? Or, do you rely on helps that are incorrect in their understanding of the one true God. These two hermeneutical principles (the lexical-contextual) are key to understanding everything God wants us to know about Him.

1Jn 5:20 AndG1161 we knowG1492 thatG3754 theG3588 SonG5207 of GodG2316 is come, G2240 andG2532 hath givenG1325 usG2254 an understanding, G1271 thatG2443 we may knowG1097 him that is true, G228 andG2532 we areG2070 inG1722 him that is true, G228 *even* inG1722 hisG848 SonG5207 JesusG2424 Christ. G5547 ThisG3778 isG2076 theG3588 trueG228 God, G2316 andG2532 eternalG166 life. G2222

** (Ed. S. L. Greenslade, *The Cambridge History of the Bible: The West from the Reformation to the Present Day*, Cambridge University Press, 1978, 87)