

# The Most High God

November 3, 2013

## Introduction to the (EL) compound names of God

**EL** = "God, god, mighty one, strength."

El, as a Divine name, doesn't appear alone very frequently; most often the El names of God appear in various combinations, in compound terms.

These Old Testament names reveal something about the character or activity of God by using some designation in compound with El (which is the singular of Elohim).

These combinations of names express the fullness of God's being and His character.

**Let's look at them!**

## **El Elyon** "The Most High"

### **A. Definitions:**

1. It is believed that the term Elyon is derived from the verb Alah, which means "to ascend," "go up," "be elevated," "to be exalted."
2. El Elyon describes God as the Most High, the "highest" and only Supreme Being.
3. The basic ascription given to God when this name is employed is to One who is above all things as the maker, possessor, and ruler. He is incomparable in every way; he is subject to no one and nothing; He is the Exalted One.
4. El Elyon is a name that is applicable to God in all ages and in all circumstances. In all dimensions of life, in worship, military activities, political and economic involvement, God is to be acknowledged as the incomparable, the exalted, the maker, possessor, and ruler of all people, all things, and all events.

### **B. The Hebrew word Elyon is used 53 times in the Old Testament**

#### **1. Is combined 6 times with El (God) to give us El-Elyon as a name for God.**

Genesis 14:18-22 it is used four times.

Ge 14:18 And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High. 19 He blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; 20 And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." He gave him a tenth of all. 21 The king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give the people to me and take the goods for yourself." 22 Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have sworn to the LORD God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth,

Ps 57:2 I will cry to God Most High, To God who accomplishes all things for me.

Ps 78:35 And they remembered that God was their rock, and the Most High God their Redeemer.

#### **2. Elyon is used alone another 34 as a name for God.**

(Dt 32:8; 2 Sa 22:14; Ps 7:17; 9:2; 18:13; 21:7; 46:4; 47:2; 50:14; 57:2; 73:11; 77:10; 78:17, 56; 82:6; 83:18; 87:5; 91:1, 9; 92:1; 97:9; 107:11; Isa 14:14; Lam 3:35, 38; Dan 3:26; 4:2, 17, 24, 25, 32, 34; 5:18, 21; 7:25)

#### **3. Elyon is used another 21 times for something else:**

top (basket) Gen 40:17;

high above (Israel set above other nations) Dt. 26:19; 28:1;  
upper Beth-horon (used to designate a place) Jos 16:5; 1 Chr 7:24; 2 Chr 8:5;  
upper (court) Jer 36:10  
upper (pool) 2 Ki 18:17; Isa 7:3; 36:2;  
upper (outlet of water) 2 Chr 32:30;  
upper (gate) 2 Chr 23:20; Ez 9:2;  
upper house (of the king) Neh 3:25;  
upper chamber (in the temple) Ez 41:7; 22:5  
high places (altar) 2 Ki 15:35  
higher than (kings of the earth) Ps 89:27;  
exalted house (temple) 1 Ki 9:8; 2 Chr 7:21; 27:3;

**People associated with this name** are Melchizedek (Gen 14:18-22); Balaam (Num 24:16); Moses (Dt 32:8); David (2 Sa 22:14; Ps 7:17; 9:2; 21:7; 46:4; 47:2; 57:2); Asaph (Ps 50:14; 73:11; 77:10; 78:17, 35, 56; 82:6; 83:18); Korah (Ps 87:5); Lucifer (Isa 14:14); Jeremiah (Lam 3:35-38); Daniel and his friends (Dan 3:26; 4:2-34; 5:18-21; 7:25); Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 3:26; 4:2-34).

**It is often used in song** (see introduction in Psa 92); Moses, David, Asaph and Korah all use this name in song.

**It is found in combination with Yahweh**

Ps 7:17 I will give thanks to the LORD according to His righteousness and will sing praise to the name of the LORD Most High.

Ps 18:13 The LORD also thundered in the heavens, and the Most High uttered His voice, hailstones and coals of fire.

**It is used in the Aramaic plural** (Elyonin) four times in Daniel 7 as follows:

Da 7:18 'But the saints of the Highest One will receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, for all ages to come.'

Da 7:22 until the Ancient of Days came and judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One, and the time arrived when the saints took possession of the kingdom.

Da 7:25 'He will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time

Da 7:27 'Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.'

**The Hebrew reads Elohim Elyon** (Ps 57:2; 78:56).

Ps 57:2 I will cry to God (Elohim) Most High (Elyon), to God who accomplishes all things for me.

Ps 78:56 Yet they tempted and rebelled against God (Elohim) the Most High (Elyon); And did not keep His testimonies,

## **C. From the context of Scripture, we find that El Elyon is:**

### **1. El Elyon is a personal God.**

He is the God of Melchizedek:  
(this is the first use of El Elyon in Scripture)

Gen 14:17-22 And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High [El Elyon]. 19 He blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram of God Most High [El Elyon], Possessor of heaven and earth; 20 And blessed be God Most High [El Elyon], Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." ... 22 Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have sworn to the LORD God Most High [El Elyon], ...

He is the God of "God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego."

Dan 3:26 Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the furnace of blazing fire; he responded and said, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, come out, you servants of the Most High God, and come here!" Then Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego came out of the midst of the fire.

## 2. El Elyon is the name used by Evil.

**Balaam** uses this name for God in his second attempt to curse Israel.

Nu 24:15-17 He took up his discourse and said, "The oracle of Balaam the son of Beor, and the oracle of the man whose eye is opened, 16 The oracle of him who hears the words of God, and knows the knowledge of the Most High, Who sees the vision of the Almighty, falling down, yet having his eyes uncovered. 17 I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near; a star shall come forth from Jacob, a scepter shall rise from Israel, and shall crush through the forehead of Moab, and tear down all the sons of Sheth.

**Lucifer** uses this name for God as he seeks to overthrow God's authority.

Isa 14:13-15 "But you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, And I will sit on the mount of assembly In the recesses of the north. 14 'I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.' 15 "Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol, To the recesses of the pit.

This name is used when remembering how **Israel** responded God in the wilderness.

Ps 78:16-20 He brought forth streams also from the rock And caused waters to run down like rivers. 17 Yet they still continued to sin against Him, To rebel against the Most High in the desert. 18 And in their heart they put God to the test By asking food according to their desire. 19 Then they spoke against God; They said, " Can God prepare a table in the wilderness? 20 "Behold, He struck the rock so that waters gushed out, And streams were overflowing; Can He give bread also? Will He provide meat for His people?"

Ps 78:33-37 So He brought their days to an end in futility And their years in sudden terror. When He killed them, then they sought Him, And returned and searched diligently for God; 35 And they remembered that God was their rock, And the Most High God their Redeemer. 36 But they deceived Him with their mouth And lied to Him with their tongue. 37 For their heart was not steadfast toward Him, Nor were they faithful in His covenant.

Ps 78:54-57 So He brought them to His holy land, To this hill country which His right hand had gained. 55 He also drove out the nations before them And apportioned them for an inheritance by measurement, And made the tribes of Israel dwell in their tents. Yet they tempted and rebelled against the Most High God And did not keep His testimonies, But turned back and acted treacherously like their fathers; They turned aside like a treacherous bow.

The **Antichrist** speak out against El Elyon.

(All the commentaries state that this chapter is about the last days and the conflict between the Antichrist and God)

Dan 7:24-27 'As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise; and another will arise after them, and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings. 25 'He will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time. 26 'But the court will sit for judgment, and his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever. 27 'Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.'

## 3. El Elyon is used as God deals with unrepentant rebellious man.

Ps 7:12-16 If a man does not repent, He will sharpen His sword; He has bent His bow and made it ready. 13 He has also prepared for Himself deadly weapons; He makes His arrows fiery shafts. 14 Behold, he travails with wickedness, And he conceives mischief and brings forth falsehood. 15 He has dug a pit and hollowed it out, And has fallen into the hole which he made. 16 His mischief will return upon his own head, And his violence will descend upon his own pate. 17 I will give thanks to the LORD according to His righteousness And will sing praise to the name of the LORD Most High.

Ps 73:11-12 They say, "How does God know? And is there knowledge with the Most High?" Behold, these are the wicked; And always at ease, they have increased in wealth.

Ps 107:10-12 There were those who dwelt in darkness and in the shadow of death, Prisoners in misery and chains, 11 Because they had rebelled against the words of God And spurned the counsel of the Most High. 12 Therefore He humbled their heart with labor; They stumbled and there was none to help. (Also see Ps 73:4-12; 77:3-10; 82:1-7; 83:1-5, 15-18).

El Elyon is the one reveals Himself to Nebuchadnezzar and disciplines him for his pride. Dan 4:32 and you will be driven away from mankind, and your dwelling place will be with the beasts of the field. You will be given grass to eat like cattle, and seven periods of time will pass over you until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever He wishes.' (Also see Dan 4:1-3, 17, 24, 25, 32-35)

He also judges Belshazzar (the son of Nebuchadnezzar) for his sin (Dan 5:17-22).

#### **4. El Elyon is used when God delivers from the enemy.**

Ps 21:7-9 For the king trusts in the LORD, And through the lovingkindness of the Most High he will not be shaken. 8 Your hand will find out all your enemies; Your right hand will find out those who hate you. 9 You will make them as a fiery oven in the time of your anger; The LORD will swallow them up in His wrath, And fire will devour them.

Ps 47:1-4 O clap your hands, all peoples; Shout to God with the voice of joy. 2 For the LORD Most High is to be feared, A great King over all the earth. 3 He subdues peoples under us And nations under our feet. 4 He chooses our inheritance for us, The glory of Jacob whom He loves. Selah. (See also 2 Sa 22:14-20; Ps 9:1-6)

#### **5. El Elyon is the one who gives inheritance.**

Dt 32:8 "When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, (geographical boundaries) When He separated the sons of man, He set the boundaries of the peoples According to the number of the sons of Israel. (See also Ps 47:1-4)

#### **6. El Elyon is also used for the God who answers prayer.**

Ps 50:14-15 "Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving and pay your vows to the Most High; 15 Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I shall rescue you, and you will honor Me." (See Ps 57:1-3)

#### **7. El Elyon is the God who makes glad the city (people) of God**

Ps 46:4-7 There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, The holy dwelling places of the Most High. 5 God is in the midst of her, she will not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns. 6 The nations made an uproar, the kingdoms tottered; He raised His voice, the earth melted. 7 The LORD of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our stronghold. Selah.

#### **8. El Elyon is the God who gives protection.**

Ps 91:1-4 He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty 2 I will say to the LORD, "My refuge and my fortress, My God, in whom I trust!" 3 For it is He who delivers you from the snare of the trapper And from the deadly pestilence. 4 He will cover you with His pinions, And under His wings you may seek refuge; His faithfulness is a shield and bulwark. (See also Ps 91:7-10, 15-16)

Ps 57:1-3 Be gracious to me, O God, be gracious to me, for my soul takes refuge in You; and in the shadow of Your wings I will take refuge until destruction passes by. I will cry to God Most High, to God who accomplishes all things for me. He will send from heaven and save me; He reproaches him who tramples upon me. Selah. God will send forth His lovingkindness and His truth.

## **9. El Elyon is the God who establishes His people**

Ps 87:5-6 The LORD loves the gates of Zion more than all the other dwelling places of Jacob. 3 Glorious things are spoken of you, O city of God. ... 5 But of Zion it shall be said, "This one and that one were born in her"; And the Most High Himself will establish her. 6 The LORD will count when He registers the peoples, "This one was born there." Selah.

Ps 92:1-5 It is good to give thanks to the LORD And to sing praises to Your name, O Most High; 2 To declare Your lovingkindness in the morning And Your faithfulness by night, 3 With the ten-stringed lute and with the harp, with resounding music upon the lyre. 4 For You, O LORD, have made me glad by what You have done, I will sing for joy at the works of Your hands. 5 How great are Your works, O LORD! Your thoughts are very deep.

## **10. Jeremiah uses El Elyon twice to describe that God is just.**

Lam 3:33-38 For He does not afflict willingly Or grieve the sons of men. 34 To crush under His feet All the prisoners of the land, 35 To deprive a man of justice In the presence of the Most High, 36 To defraud a man in his lawsuit- Of these things the Lord does not approve. 37 Who is there who speaks and it comes to pass, Unless the Lord has commanded it? 38 Is it not from the mouth of the Most High That both good and ill go forth?

## **Application:**

### **1. El Elyon is the name for the New Testament priesthood.**

The Most High God is first identified with the priesthood of Melchizedek (Gen 14:18).

It was the Most High God who so loved the world that He sent His Son to redeem us, "who is our High Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek" (Heb. 6:20).

The Savior lowered Himself to the level of the vilest sinner - "Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name," (Phil 2:9)

He is at the right hand of the Most High God (as our High Priest).

David prophesies that the priesthood of Jesus would be after the order of Melchizedek (Ps 110:4).

This was confirmed eight times in the book of Hebrews (Heb 5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:1, 10, 11, 15, 17). (See also Heb 7:26-27; Heb 8:1-2, 6; 9:11-12; 10:11-14)

His priesthood invites us to enter into His presence were we find grace to help.

Heb 4:14-16 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (See also Heb 10:19-23)

### **2. Our priesthood is after the same order. This priesthood gives us a new identity.**

1 Pe 2:5 you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

1 Pe 2:9-10 But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 10 for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you

are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY.

**3. Through El Elyon, we inherit blessing, and are made the head - not the tail.**

Dt 28:12-13 "The LORD will open for you His good storehouse, the heavens, to give rain to your land in its season and to bless all the work of your hand; and you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow. The LORD will make you the head and not the tail, and you only will be above, and you will not be underneath, (see also Dt 26:19; 28:13, 44; Isa 9:14-15)

**Commentaries notes:**

**The head ... the tail:** that is, "in first place ... in last place," in terms of prosperity, power, and prestige. The English version reads "will make you the leader among the nations and not the follower"

**Tend upward only, and not downward:** this means to increase, to go forward, to become even more prosperous, and never the contrary. So "you will always prosper and never fail", and "Israel will be wealthy and powerful, not poor and weak".

lending to them but never borrowing and always their leader (**the head**) and never their follower (**the tail**).

**4. The work of Christ in our lives produces repentance.**

Ro 2:4 ... the kindness of God leads you to repentance.

2 Co 7:10 For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation,

The work of repentance tears down all pride (Jas 4:6; 1 Pt 5:5)

See also Isa 40:3-5; 62:10-12.

**5. He is a horn of blessing for us.**

Ps 75:10 And all the horns of the wicked He will cut off, But the horns of the righteous will be lifted up .

Ps 148:13-14 Let them praise the name of the LORD, For His name alone is exalted; His glory is above earth and heaven. 14 And He has lifted up a horn for His people, Praise for all His godly ones; Even for the sons of Israel, a people near to Him. Praise the LORD!

**The following References were used in this study:**

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