

Colossians 3:16

*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly,
teaching and admonishing one another
in all wisdom,
singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,
with thankfulness in your hearts to God.*



God Most High (El Elyon)

“And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.) And he blessed him and said, ‘Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!’” (Gen. 14:18-20).

The various names of God wonderfully draw our attention to specific characteristics or traits of God. All of these names, individually and collectively, contribute to our overall knowledge of the one true God, helping us to know, not only who He is, but also how we should walk before Him. This is no different with ‘God Most High’, a name we find in Genesis 14 and in Psalm 78:35 (“They remembered that God was their rock, the *Most High God* their redeemer.” Variations of this name, such as “Most High,” occur throughout the rest of the Old Testament (e.g., Num. 24:16; Deut. 32:8; Ps. 7:17).

This name of God teaches us at least three things. First, it highlights the transcendence of God, that He is exalted above all time and space. “For you, O Lord, are most high over all the earth; you are exalted far above all gods” (Ps. 97:9). God’s being is so exalted that it cannot be contained by the finite parameters or constraints that we operate in as created beings. This truth instructs us to walk in humility before Him. Though we are created in God’s royal image, called even to exercise a beneficent dominion over the earth, we are nonetheless small indeed compared to God Most High (Gen. 1:26-28; Ps. 8:3-6). Does not sinful pride, self-exaltation, and even bombastic comparisons of ourselves with others all seem silly, then, when we consider ourselves next to God Most High? See the account of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4 for an illustration of human pride colliding with the moral purposes of the Most High.

Secondly, the name ‘God Most High’ begs the question: higher than what? Especially in its Old Testament context, this name communicated to the children of Israel that God was higher than, more glorious than, any of the gods of the nations (“so-called gods,” according to Paul in 1 Cor. 8:4-6). God reveals Himself as greater and more powerful than any of the rulers, authorities, cosmic powers, and forces of evil in this present age (Eph. 6:12; Col. 2:15). Whether it be a persecutor of the church, the devil, or any uncertainty or hardship we encounter in this life, God is greater than all of these things. None but the “Possessor of heaven and earth” can provide deliverance from all of our and His enemies (Gen. 14:20). This is meant to foster in us a hearty sense of safety and protection as we walk through life. Despite the unpredictability of things, we can live our lives apart from dread or anxiety since we belong to and are protected by God Most High. And if God is for us, who can be against us?

Finally, when we consider God’s exaltedness, we can only be in awe when we remember the incarnation. This is because in the incarnation the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, He who dwelled in eternal splendor and glory with the Father and the Spirit, humbled Himself for us and our salvation (John 17:24). Paul says, “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you by His poverty might become rich” (2 Cor. 8:9). What an exchange! Though God is transcendent, He by grace and love condescended to dwell in our midst, sharing in our humanity (John 1:1-3, 12). Though Lord of all, our Savior humbled himself “by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Phil. 2:8). What an encouraging thing to know that the Most High God has stooped down to our creaturely level, not only to reveal more of who He is, but also in order that we might enjoy fellowship and life with Him, both now in this age and in the age to come.