

SECOND-RATE GODS

A Calvinian Commentary on Psalm 82



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The word “God” is frightfully ambiguous. We believe the Bible to teach of only one God (meaning that there are no others) but that is not entirely the case as this passage and numerous others insist to be so. There could be two gods or three or seven. There could be 100 or 1000 or as many as the half life of carbon 14, but according to Scripture, it does not matter. Because the term “God” should not be our concern. As it is written, “Indeed, there are many Elohim and many Adonim, but for us, there is one Elohim, the Father Almighty... and one, Adon, Yeshua Messiah...” Truly, there could be countless gods out there, but we are called to ignore them all for the sake of one Elohim; though they be real or imagined; we are instructed in Scripture, “Hear, oh Israel, YHWH is our Elohim. YHWH is One.” And our Adon Yeshua Messiah revealed this to be our greatest commandment, “You shall love YHWH Eloheika with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might...” So, even if there are gods out there or other

elohim exist, as far as we are concerned, we worship only this one Elohim. And though we lowly creatures may be rightly called gods, the Almighty never goes by that title, nor is it right to artificially assign it to Him.

How then, do we make sense of such talk of gods (or elohim) in these verses? If no other gods matter, what might these words be meant to say to us? There there is more to this term than meets the eye in our English-speaking modern minds. Is it just a question of capital letters and lowercase ones, whether we write out the word as: god, God, or GOD? It could be, but taking into account the fact we have been taught there are no other gods, yet find this psalm is filled with them, and even addressed to them, we should probably consider that our perception of the subject may be skewed ever so slightly and with that in mind, begin to take another look.

The word “God” , though we think of it as the name of our Creator, or a title, for Him, is actually just an old English term used by the King James translators, and those of every other English version dating back till Wycliffe, to replace the biblical word “Elohim” meaning, “mighty one.” Moreover, the word “God” is not a translation of the Bible term, but an assumed comparative equivalent from English society, and far from being an exclusive identifier for our Heavenly Father, it was used by Anglo-Saxon culture to denote anyone or anything, deemed to be a “mighty one,” be it an idol, a king, a warrior, an angel, a devil, anything, and everything, even human beings, such as those designated by this particular passage, which is why it is most inappropriate to utilize the title “God” in relation to the Elohim of the . (For more on this topic see our publication [“As Luck Would Have It.”](#))

For now to avoid to the confusion brought on by translation we will refer to the Creator as Elohim and the other elohim referenced in the Text as “gods”. The gods address, here are mere mortals, rather than angels or other divine creatures, but the one Who presides in their assembly judging among them, this particular deity is the Almighty Elohim, YHWH, Himself, Who is making this discourse to the “lesser gods” to call them out on their evils, hypocrisies, and outright failures.

VERSE 1

“Elohim presides in the great assembly, He judges among the gods.” What is this great assembly? These are the elites, the rulers and judges of the people of Israel. They are the ones dubbed gods by, the Most High for the express purpose of executing, His excellent will for the people. But then, if it was given to these second rate gods to act the part of judges in Israel, why does YHWH Elohim Himself give judgment among them? That is just a matter of semantics, and no more. The Most High does not preside in the assembly of the gods to

micromanage their efforts. They have already acted out their intentions toward the people. Now, the judge of all the earth is judging among them... Or more aptly, put, judging *between* them, between those who judged rightly and those who judged unjustly. And this judgment will determine who will be gods among men, and who will return to the lowly state of a golem.

To the righteous, nothing is recorded yet as having been said, probably because nothing is needed. They did as they should have, and no condemnation is called for, but only praise yet to come; but to the unworthy gods, the Most High is calling each to account.

VERSE 2

“How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked?” The charges are simple: The Elohim raised up certain people to be gods among men, not worshiped, prayed to, or bowed before, but gods nevertheless, to impartially provide fair and honest, rulings over Israel, in imitation of His own sovereign authority Above, yet some sought to do the opposite instead. The opposite of what? Well, we are getting to that now.

VERSE 3

“Defend the cause of the poor and the fatherless; save the afflicted, and the oppressed”

VERSE 4

“Rescue the weak and the needy. Deliver them out of the hand of the wicked.” What is the job of god? And what makes a mere man a god to his people. Yeshua, the one we call commonly call ‘Jesus’, said in John 10:35, “... He called them elohim, to whom the word of Elohim came...” this was that word to man that made them “gods”. Defend! Save! Rescue! Deliver! Be My hands and feet to help my people! An elohim made by the Elohim will be the hero of the helpless, someone listened to for answers, looked to for hope, and relied upon for aid, the servant of the Most High Elohim is elohim to the people, because he will be like his Elohim being able to say, “I am” and “I will be” for every need. Just as the Most High Elohim says, “I AM” and “I WILL BE”. No, he is not the Elohim to replace the Divine Majesty, but he is, nevertheless, an elohim, to reflect that Majesty, himself being only mighty as a mimic, much as the moon is to the sun.

But the gods, that the Most High Elohim is condemning did not do this. They did not defend the poor, save the needy, defend the week, or deliver the widows from the power of the wicked. They came not to serve, but to be served, and so they received the reproach of the Elohim.

VERSE 5

“They know nothing, they understand nothing. They walk about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken.” What happens when the rulers are ignorant and unwise, when they who are expected to be lights of the world are wandering about in the darkness and spreading shadows and gloom? What happens is that the order of things is out of course, and the entire Way of creation is shaken to its core. Nothing is as it should be. Nothing is of any purpose, because the ones running everything are serving their own purposes, rather than fulfilling the function of their office, and the will of the Almighty. If the judges can’t be trusted to do rightly by the Law of the Lord, why should their subjects be expected to behave better? Did not the Messiah Himself say, “A student is not above his teacher... It is enough for a student to be like his teacher...” But if the teacher teaches his own will and personal understanding rather than that of his teacher, will not all his pupils become as corrupt as he is, and even worse.? Therefore, the Lord lambasts these lying prophets, these false gods, who were not for loving their Elohim, but were for personal gain; and so He no put them in their place.

VERSE 6

“I said, ‘you are elohim . You are all sons of the Most High.’”

VERSE 7

“But you will die like mere men. You will fall like every other ruler.”

The Almighty set certain men apart for His good purposes, and raise them high above their brothers to serve them as leaders and guides in all righteousness. He made mighty ones among us who could move like Him in all things, perfectly working in the love of the Lord, for the good of the people. The Most High made gods for good, but some forgot how they came to hold that station, setting out instead to establish their own divinity upon their own authority, apart from the only Divinity, and to set themselves up in His place. To all such presumptuous persons, the living Elohim, pulled their status and pushed them aside like ordinary people. He had set them up to be servants of the people, a position “Christ Jesus” said is “greatest of all,” but that wasn’t enough for the imposter



gods. No. Much like Saul of old, they wanted to be rulers, not servants, just like the rest of the world had lording over them. They desired divinity of their own devising, the ability to design their own destiny, and the right to define their own ambitions as the instructions of their fellows, and they neglected their given duty to save, defend, rescue, and deliver all who were endangered or otherwise oppressed. But having bought into their own narrative and naivety, they forgot the consequences that come with getting what you asked for, especially when what you want is what everybody else has. The craving for the ways of the nations gets us what it gained these would-be gods, the fate of the nations as well. The Almighty made them mighty ones, but they chose rather to be ordinary, the common end of which is mortality. So the Most High returned these gods to their original state of wretchedness, and to the fate that awaits all men. He raised them up to the height of angels, but demanding the depth instead they were brought back down again to die as all others do returning to the dust they came from, and to go to the dwelling of devils.

But to the other gods, who kept His Way, who remained true to their station, and did duly honor their high office, rightly worshiping, the only Elohim, who called them to rise, to them the Almighty spoke differently.

VERSE 8

“Rise up, oh, Elohim, judge the Earth, for you shall inherit all nations.” Most modern versions of English place “God” in this verse as well in-place of Elohim and capitalize the word “God” in this verse, believing this line to be referring to the Father Almighty Himself, but it is not. How can He Who made the nations and Who is rightful Owner of all the earth be inheritor of anything? One cannot inherit what he already has. It should be understood that it is the lesser gods this line is addressing, as we look back now to the beginning.

The Almighty Elohim stood in the midst of the gods He had made and raised casting judgment on them, and choosing between them by their actions, dividing these based on their deeds, by whether or not, they did His will in the world or worked for their own ends. He defines what He was looking for for them to do: to be impartial and just, to defend the weak and orphan, to save the poor and oppressed, to rescue the wretched and needy, and to deliver widows from the hands of the wicked. Then He first condemned the ones who proved false in this cause, which consumes most of the passage itself, because it is so profound a failure. But then, when He is finished, venting His anger against the evil ones and demoting them, finally, and at last, the Almighty commends the ones who are left, commanding them to rise, and fulfill their function as gods, and giving to them for their faithfulness, all the world, and every nation, as their sure reward of good service.

We may notice the opposites in the destiny of two gods: one desires to rule as the heads of other nations, and the other desires, to serve unlike every ruler of every nation. The first is forsaken and becomes part of the nations he sought to subjugate, and the second is embraced, and raised higher, still to ultimately rule over those nations... And by consequence, also, to dominate those gods, who forswore themselves and fell.

We may make note as well that, though the wording is ambiguous in English, this final verse seems to be, addressing, only one Elohim, rather than many, and yet it is the Almighty Elohim Himself Who is speaking to Him. Perhaps this is so, in which case we can know from the rest of Scripture, Who this one Elohim is. Who else has judged rightly on the earth? Who has been impartial and perpetually performing according to the Law of the Lord and promoting it? Who has rescued us? Who has defended us? Who has delivered us? Who has saved us but for the One that tradition has taught us to call 'Jesus Christ', Whose true Name, Yeshua, means, "YHWH saves," ? All other men have come and gone. We rise and fall. We are deified and then denied. But our Messiah has always triumphed in the will of His Father. And so it is written in Scripture that He is the Heir of all things, for He was offered the crown by the devil's hand yet excepted the cross at Heaven's request.

Where then, does that leave us in this scenario, in this Psalm of gods and monsters? As 'Christ' proclaimed in John 10:35, "He called them elohim, to whom the Word of Elohim came, and the Scriptures cannot be broken." The Word of the Elohim has come to us in the person of Yeshua KingMessiah, Who is like the Almighty Elohim to us, doing the Will of the Father, and making us gods also to do His Will in this world. Just like our Master and Messiah, we move in this world as



mighty ones acting as His Majesty behaves and ministering on His behalf. We save, rescue, deliver, and defend all who are hurting and all who are helpless, and in this way, we are shining ones in a shadowy world. The light cast is carried by us not created by us. If we are Calvarian, we were made gods on Golgotha, created at Calvary, apotheosized in the form Place of the Skull. If we are 'Christian's', truly Christ-like-ones, then we are gods to the people for their good and the glory of the Lord. Our messianic purpose, rather than being worshiped while we are here, exactly like our Lord before us, is to further the worship of the One Above us, Who made us and called us gods. But we must be extremely careful in our conduct, as

well as in our commitment lest we become the Judas, who was called with the rest, yet cast out in ruin in the end. We have divinity for one reason only and that purpose is not for ourselves. Our apotheosis was for the apostolic mission to bring the evangel of everlasting life to the utmost end of the earth. Our role is as emissaries not as elitists. And if we forget Who gave us our godhood, we will forfeit our right to it entirely, and be removed from our place of prominence. But in the meanwhile, in our amnesia, we will be committing incalculable ruination on the reputation of Heaven, Who sent us down here not to be served, but to serve in the same Way as our Saviour. The lesson of this Psalm is that for us who are of Israel, there is only one Elohim. His NAME is YHWH. His 'Son' is the only Elohim, Who has done rightly by the Only Elohim. He made us gods at Calvary, and we carry His crown and care for His Kingdom in His absence, yet we must always remember where we come from, remember, we are dust, remember we are gods made by the Almighty Elohim to worship Him by reflection, and that the crown we carry and Kingdom we care for are ours as second rate gods in Regency only, held ever ready for the coming of our Elohim and King.