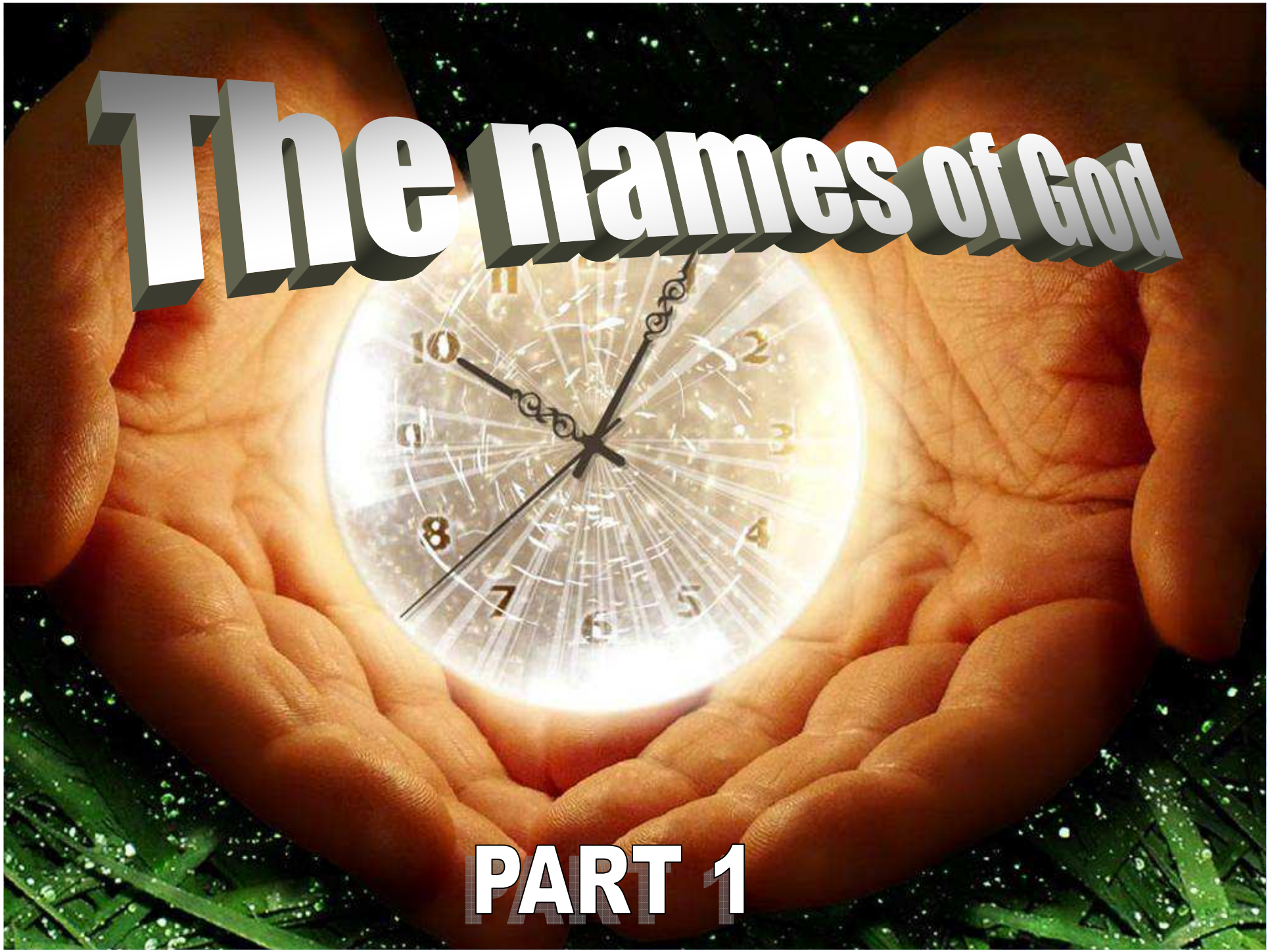

The names of God
PART 1

PRIMARY NAMES OF GOD

- There are 3 primary names for God in Hebrew:
  1. Elohim
  2. Yahweh
  3. Adonai

EL אֵל

- 'El' is a singular form of the term translated 'God'. Like our English word 'god', it is a generic word that could be used for any heathen god, but also of the true God. Linguists believe that the name 'El' has a root meaning of "mighty, strong, prominent".
- 'El' occurs 217 times in the Masoretic Hebrew text: 73 times in the Psalms and 55 times in Job. [1] The name appears as part of the compound names of all the angels e.g. Micha-el (who is like God?), Gabri-el (strong man of God), as well as in many Hebrew names e.g. Isra-el (one who prevails with God), Dani-el (God is my judge), Ezeki-el (God will strengthen), Samu-el (God has heard), Jo-el (YHWH is God), El-isha (God is salvation). It occurs in the names of places like Beth-el (House of God).

[1] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/El_%28deity%29

ELOAH

אֱלוֹהַּ

- The Hebrew word 'Eloah' is most likely the singular form of 'elohim'. 'Elah' is the Aramaic equivalent and some believe that 'Allah' is the Arabic equivalent.
- It is a very ancient name and is not used often except in Job (41 times), but only 19 times elsewhere in the OT.
- It is used first in Deut 32:15:
  - Jeshurun grew fat and kicked; filled with food, they became heavy and sleek. They abandoned the God (Eloah) who made them and rejected the Rock their Saviour.

ELAH

אֱלָהּ

- Elah is the Aramaic word for 'God' used in the Aramaic portions of Daniel and Ezra and one verse in Jeremiah (10:11). Its plural form Elahin is used at least once for the true God (Dan 5:23). [1]
  - Elah avahati, God of my fathers, (Daniel 2:23)
  - Elah Elahin, God of gods (Daniel 2:47)
  - Elah Yerushelem, God of Jerusalem (Ezra 7:19)
  - Elah Yisrael, God of Israel (Ezra 5:1)
  - Elah Shemaya, God of Heaven (Ezra 7:23)

[1] http://www.hebrew-streams.org/works/monotheism/context-elohim.html

ELOHIM אֱלֹהִים

- 'Elohim' is probably the plural form of 'eloah' and it occurs 2,570 times in the OT. It is the most common name used for God.
- It can refer to the true god, pagan gods or even angels. But when the word is used of the true god although it is a plural, it is used with a singular verb, in contravention of Hebrew grammar. This was obviously intentional as it is used with a plural verb when referring to heathen 'gods'.
- In the Septuagint which is the Greek translation of the Hebrew OT, when 'elohim' refers to the true God, it is translated using the singular 'theos'.
- In English when it refers to the true God we capitalise the 'G'. (There are no capital letters in either the Biblical Hebrew or Greek).

ELOHIM

- Based on context, 'Elohim' is translated as 'God', 'gods' or 'angels'.
- Although 'Elohim' is a plural, it is consistently used with singular verb forms and with adjectives and pronouns in the singular. In this case it is translated 'God'.
- Consider Genesis 1:1 "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Now look at the Hebrew, which reads right to left:

הָאָרֶץ	וְאֵת	הַשָּׁמַיִם	אֵת	אֱלֹהִים	בָּרָא	בְּרֵאשִׁית
ha-aretz	v'et	ha-shamayim	eth	elohim	bara'	bre'shith
the earth	and	the heavens		Gods	created	In the beginning
				plural	male singular	

'EL' TITLES OF GOD

- Here are some of the 'El' titles of God:
  1. El Elyon: God Most High
  2. El Gibbor: The Mighty God
  3. El Gadol: The Great God
  4. El De'ah: The God of Knowledge
  5. El Chay: The Living God
  6. El Ha-kavod: The God of Glory
  7. El Hashamayim: The God of the Heavens
  8. El Shaddai: The all-sufficient God

'EL' TITLES OF GOD

9. El Olam: The Everlasting God
10. El Qedem: The Eternal God
11. El Qanna: The Jealous God
12. El Ha-qadosh: The Holy God
13. El Saddiq: The Righteous God
14. El Mishpat: The Just God
15. El Emeth: God of Truth
16. El Ro-iy: The God who Sees

'EL' TITLES OF GOD

17. El Hane'eman: The Faithful God
18. El Mauzi: God of My Strength
19. El Sali: God of My Strength or God my Rock
20. El Tzur: God Our Rock
21. El Selichot: God of Forgiveness
22. El Tehilati: God of My Praise
23. El Rachum: The Merciful God
24. El Yeshuati: The God of My Salvation...
25. Immanuel: God with us

1) EL ELYON

- The compound name 'El Elyon' is usually rendered in English as "God Most High".
- 'El Elyon' appears occurs 28 times in the OT, of which 19 times are in Psalms: [1]
- 'Elyon' on it's own appears 53 times, sometimes in reference to earthly or angelic princes. 19 of the 53 times refer to the Most High God.
- The term 'El Elyon' is used first in Genesis 14 of the God whose priest was Melchizedek.

[1] https://www.blueletterbible.org/study/misc/name_god.cfm

- Gen 14:18-20 Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High (El Elyon) and he blessed Abram, saying…

Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. And blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand.

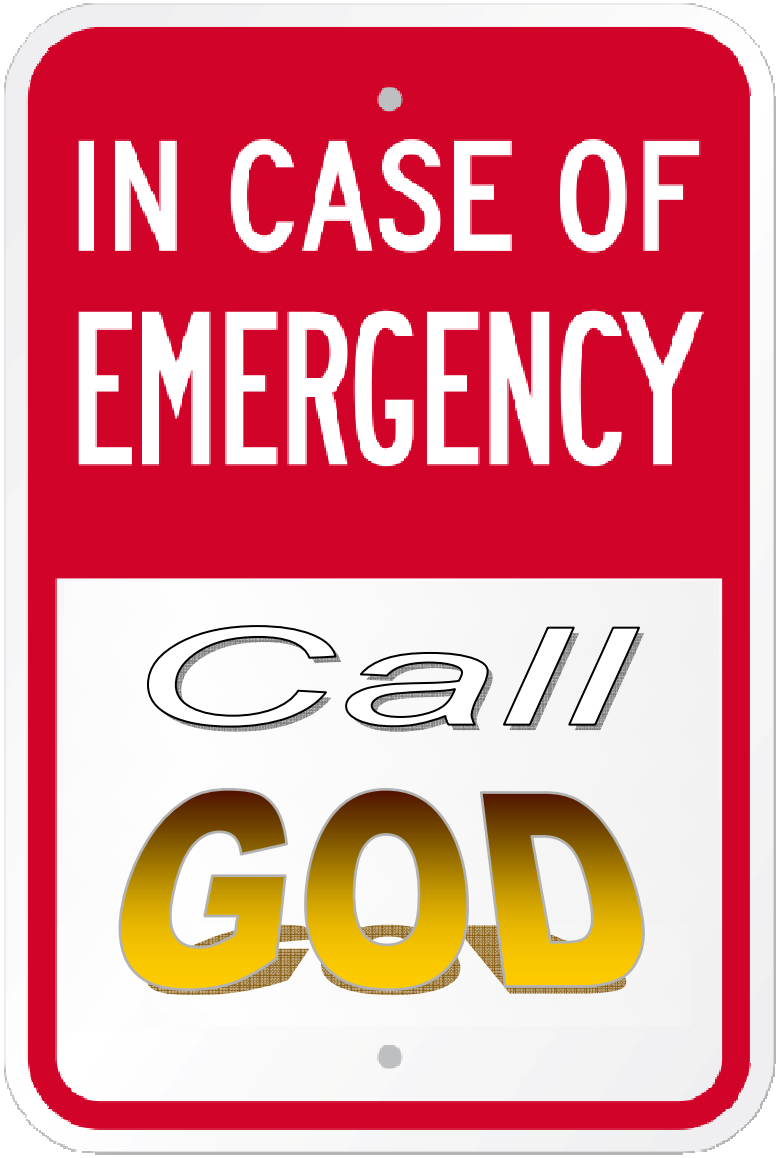
1) EL ELYON

- So Melchizedek, the priest of "El Elyon", identifies him as:

1. The Creator
   - Gen 14:19 Blessed be Abram by God Most High (El Elyon), Creator of heaven and earth.

1) EL ELYON

2. The Protector of his subjects, who can deliver us from our enemies.
   - Gen 14:20 And blessed be God Most High (El Elyon), who delivered your enemies into your hand.
   - Ps 50:14-15 "Sacrifice thank offerings to God, fulfil your vows to the Most High (Elyon) and call on me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honour me."



1) EL ELYON

- The Most High God is greater than men and nations:
  - Isa 40:17 Before him all the nations are as nothing; they are regarded by him as worthless and less than nothing.
  - Isa 40:23-24 He brings princes to naught and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing. No sooner are they planted, no sooner are they sown, no sooner do they take root in the ground, than he blows on them and they wither, and a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff.
- He is greater than other 'gods':
  - Isa 40:18 With whom, then, will you compare God? To what image will you liken him?

1) EL ELYON

- The modern Hebrew adjective "` Elyon" means "supreme" (as in "Supreme Court") or "Most High". [1] It expresses the extreme sovereignty and majesty of God and His highest preeminence. When the two words are combined - El Elyon - it can be translated as "the most exalted God." [2]
- So the name 'Elyon' implies that God is both supreme and sovereign.
- **Definition of Sovereignty:** The right of God to do as He wishes with His creation … This implies that there is no external influence upon Him and that He also has the ability to exercise His right according to His will. [3]

[1] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Names_of_God_in_Judaism#Elyon
[2] https://www.blueletterbible.org/study/misc/name_god.cfm
[3] https://bible.org

1) EL ELYON

- As a result of his humiliating bout of insanity, Nebuchadnezzar learns the power of El Elyon. In Daniel 4:34 he uses the Aramaic term "ūlə'illā'āh", which is the equivalent of the Hebrew 'Elyon' and is thus translated in English as "the Most High".

At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored. Then I praised **the Most High**…

SOVEREIGNTY

- So El Elyon had power over the king's state of mind - to restore his sanity.
  - Daniel 4:34a I … raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most High…
- He lives forever and his kingdom is eternal.
  - Dan 4:34b I honoured and glorified him who lives forever. His dominion is an eternal dominion; his kingdom endures from generation to generation.
- He does according to his will:
  - Dan 4:35a All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth.

SOVEREIGNTY

- No one can stop him.
  - Dan 4:35b No one can hold back his hand…
- No one can question what he does or challenge him.
  - Dan 4:35b No one can … say to him: "What have you done?"
  - Rom 9:20 But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? "Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, 'Why did you make me like this?'"
- He will accomplish his purposes in his own time:
  - 1 Tim 6:14-15 to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which God will bring about in his own time—

SOVEREIGNTY

- Q: What about our free will in the light of God's sovereignty?
- A: Because he is God, he has the absolute right to work his will. Sometimes sovereignty is misunderstood to mean that God forces his will on people and that we are not free to choose. That is false. God's sovereignty includes the free choices of human beings. What makes God's sovereignty effective is that his will is ultimately done—sometimes along with, sometimes in spite of our free choices. [1]

[1] The Shaw Pocket Bible Handbook, Walter A. Elwell, Editor, (Harold Shaw Publ., Wheaton , IL; 1984), p. 359

SOVEREIGNTY

- God has a PERFECT WILL and a PERMISSIVE WILL. Sometime God permits what is not in perfect will
- E.g. God wants men to repent:
  - Acts 17:30 … God … commands all people everywhere to repent.
- But because of free will, some men resist God's will and will not repent:
  - Rev 16:9b … but they refused to repent and glorify him.

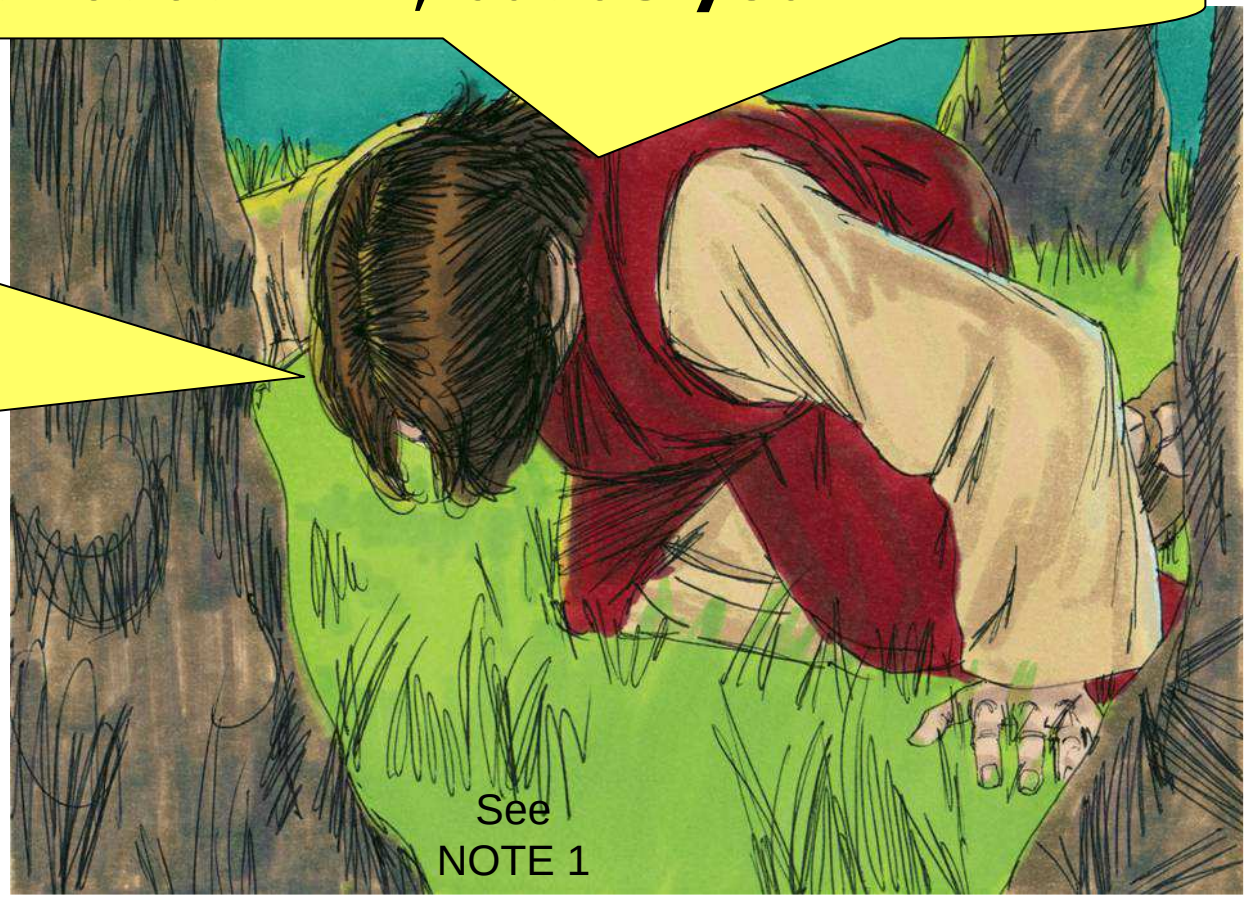
SOVEREIGNTY

- God doesn't want anyone to perish:
  - 2 Pet 3:9 The Lord ... is patient with you, **not wanting anyone to perish**, but everyone to come to repentance.
- But some will still perish because God has given man a free will to choose or reject salvation:
  - Luke 13:3 … But unless you repent, you too will all perish.
- Some ask why God allows evil in the world. It is not God's perfect will, but his permissive will because he gives man a free choice – and sometimes man chooses evil. But ultimately his will is going to be done on earth, which is why we pray, "your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt 6:10).

- In Matthew 19:26 that Jesus said that "with God all things are possible." Yet he prays later:
  - Matt 26:39,42 Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed…

My Father, **if it is possible**, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but **as you will**.

My Father, **if it is not possible** for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, **may your will be done**.

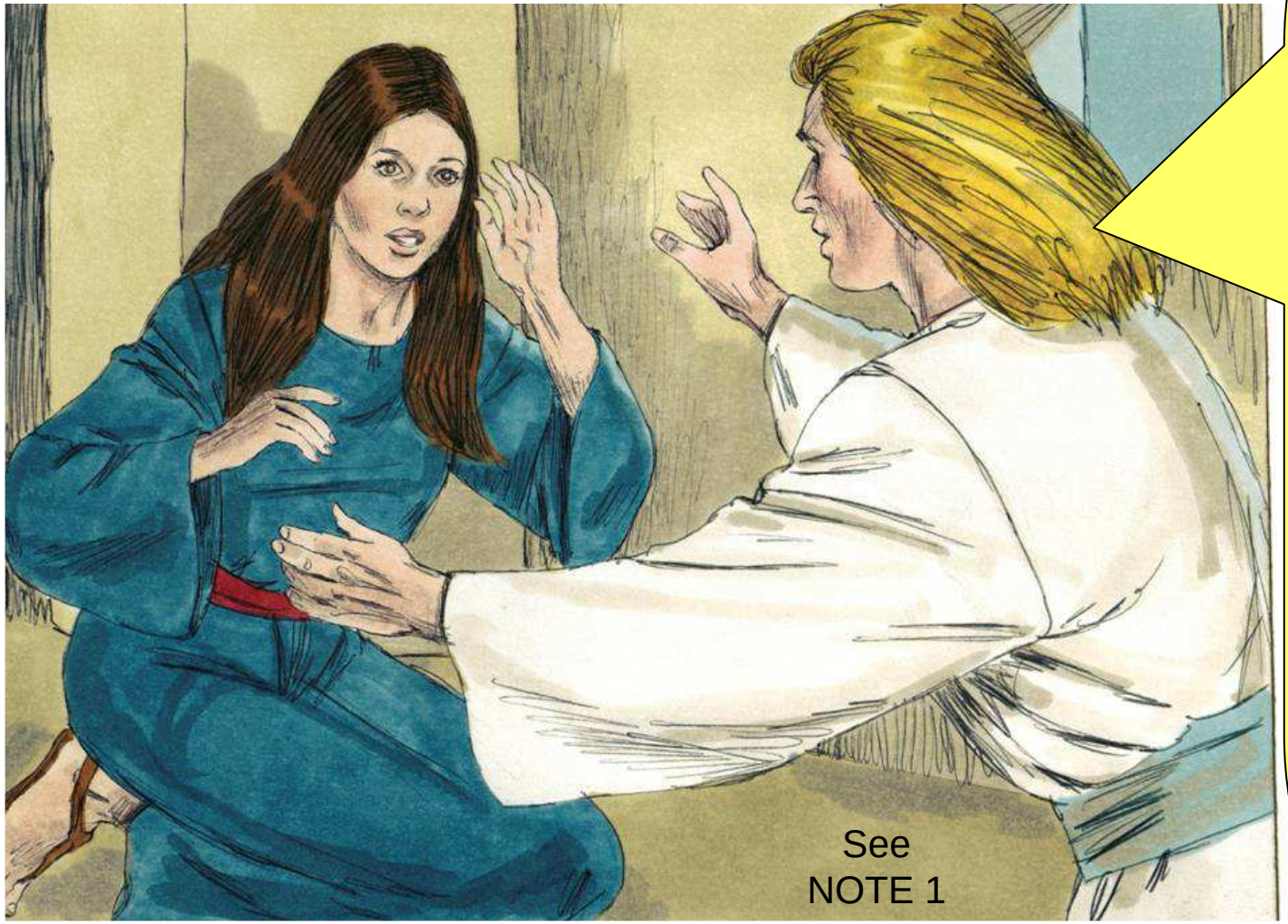


SOVEREIGNTY

- Jesus knew that all things were possible, but he factored the Father's will into it. He prayed, and "Yet not as I will, but as you will" and "may your will be done".
- So while all things are possible, God's perfect will and sovereignty are still the Christian's ultimate guide.

ELYON IN THE NT

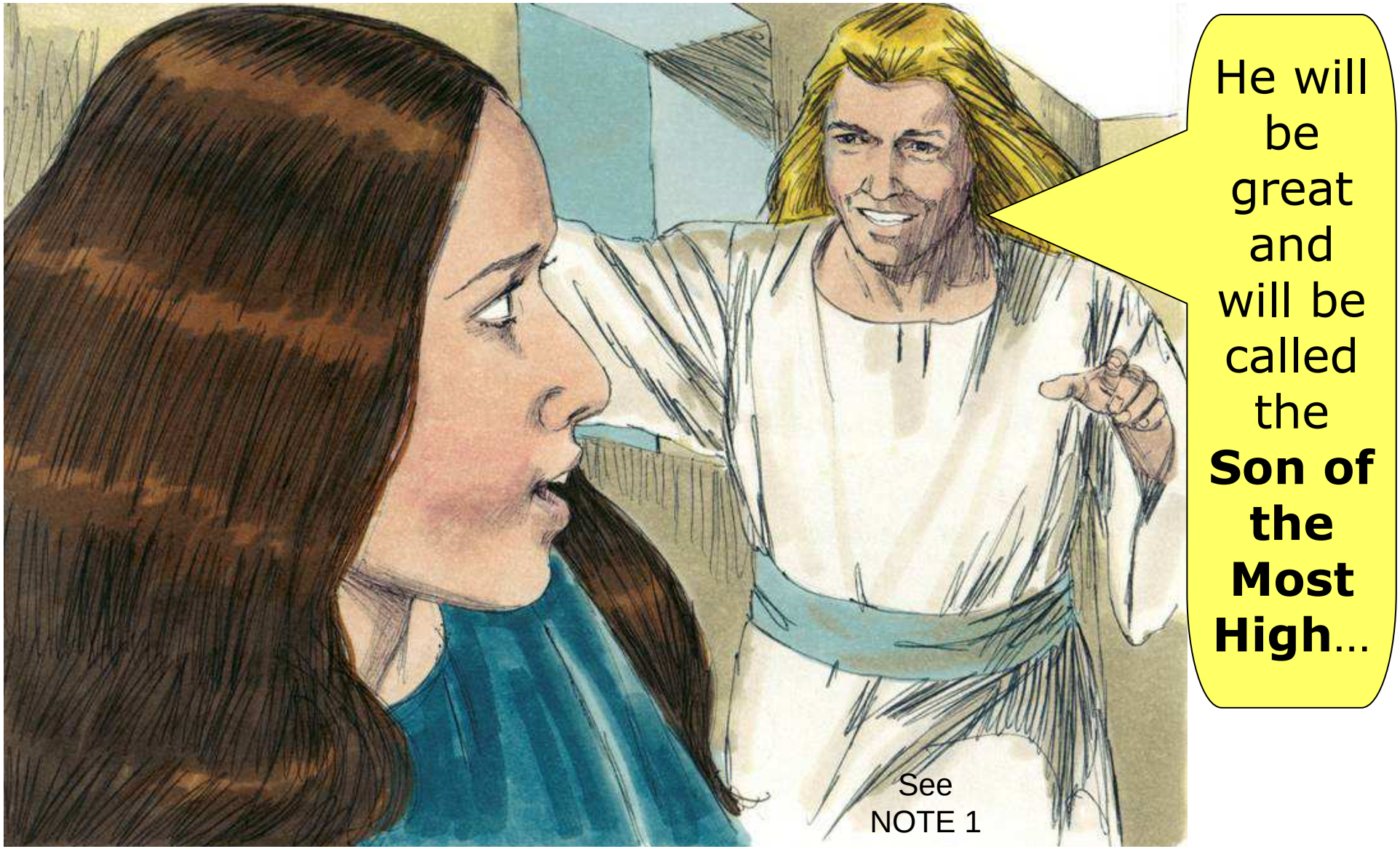
- In the NT we have the Greek equivalent for Elyon (Hypsistou) and El Elyon (Theou tou Hypsistou). Gabriel tells Mary in Luke 1:35:



The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of **the Most High** will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.

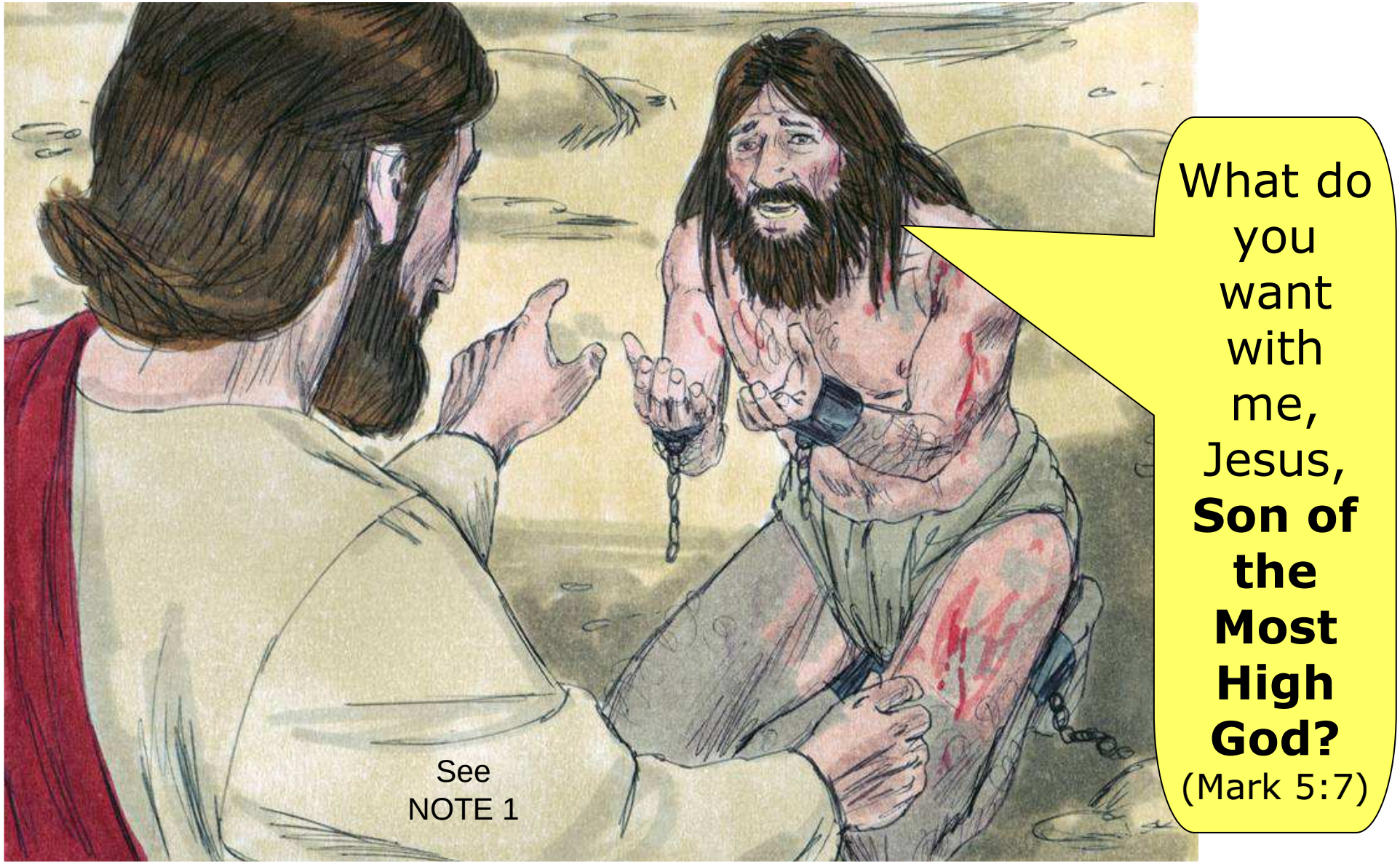
THE SON OF ELYON

- Gabriel calls Jesus the Son of 'Elyon' (Luke 1:32).



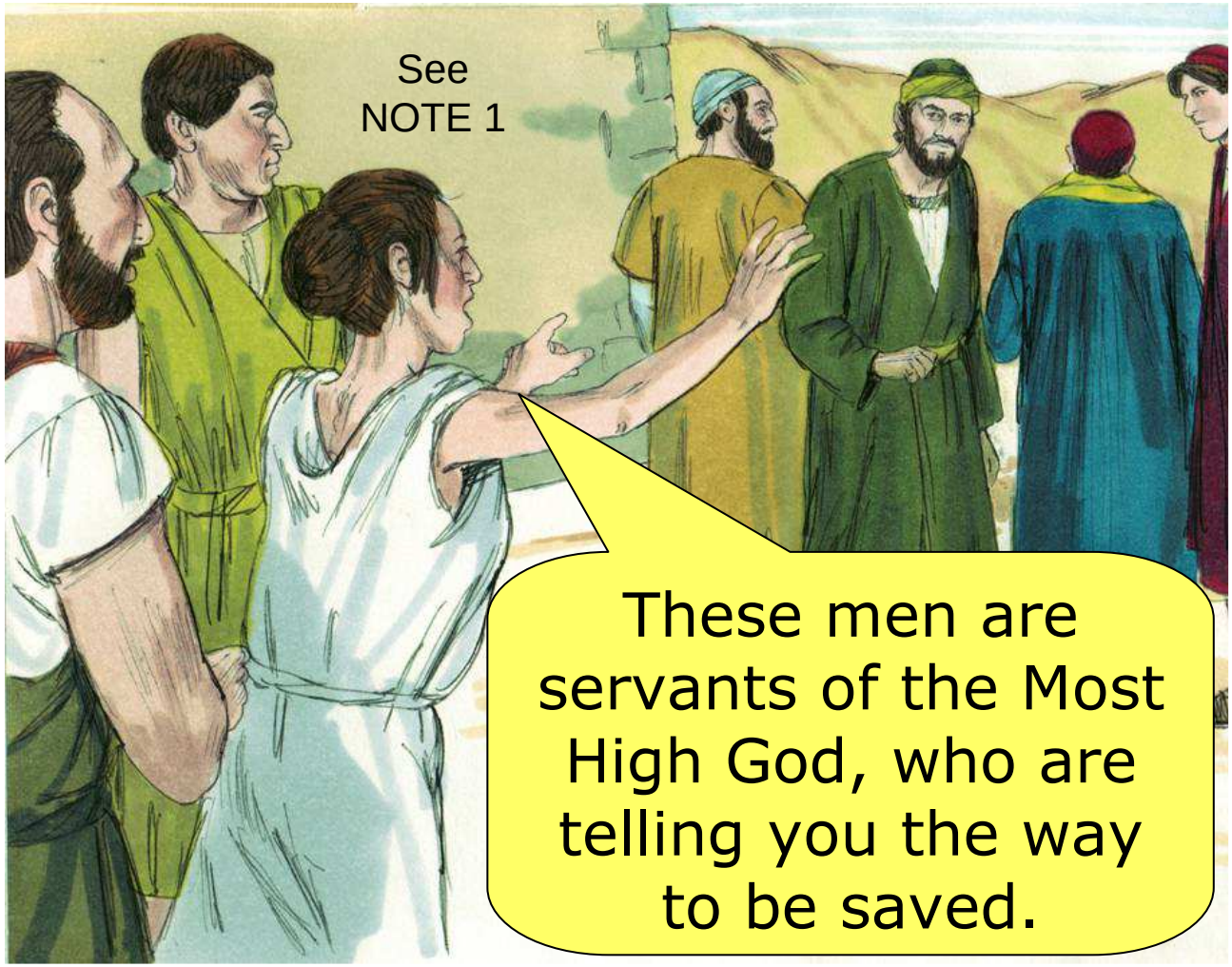
THE SON OF EL ELYON

- Demons acknowledged Jesus as the Son of 'El Elyon'.



SERVANTS OF EL ELYON

- As Christians we are servants of El Elyon (Acts 16:16-17):
  - Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a female slave who had a spirit by which she predicted the future... She followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting...



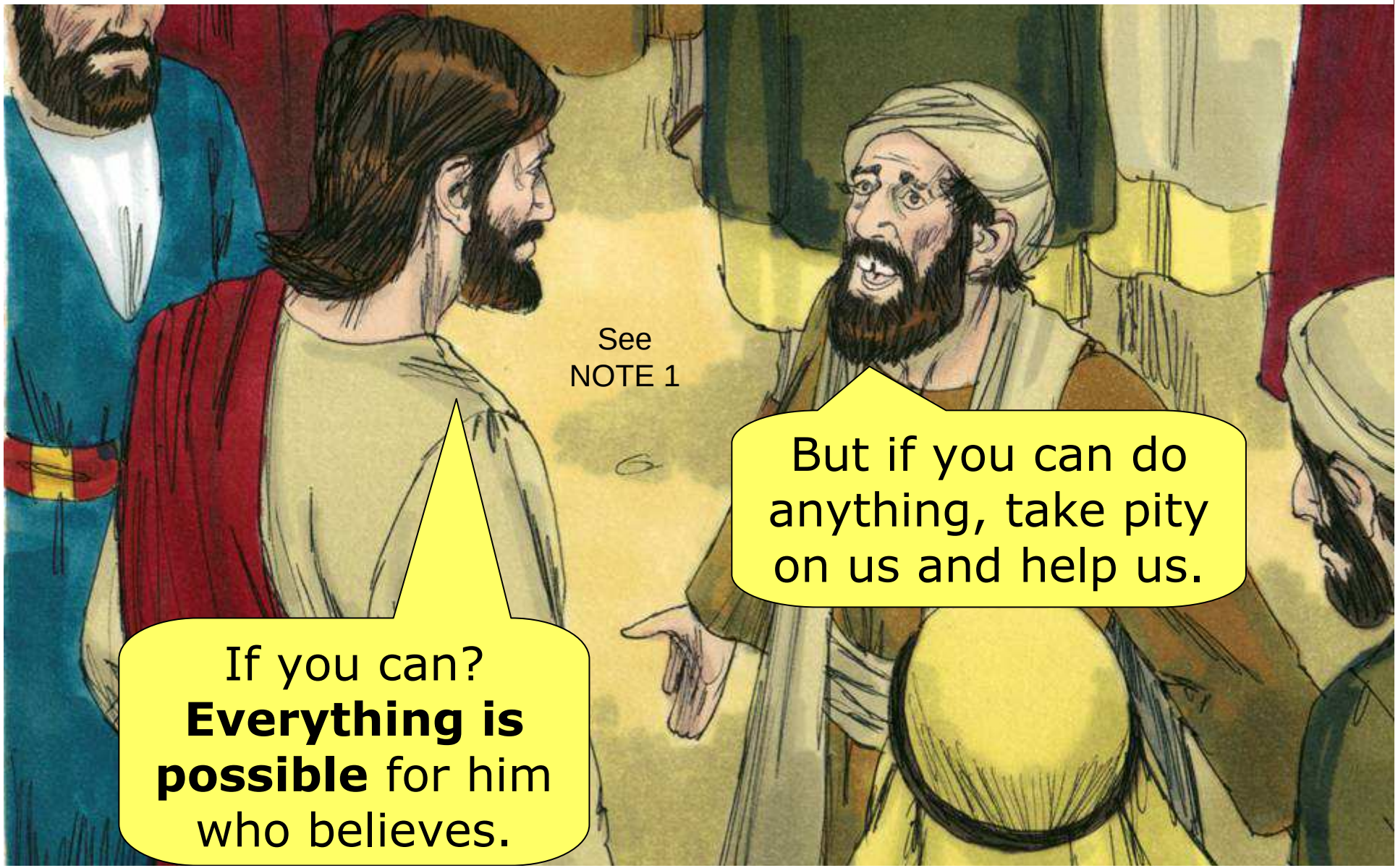
2) EL GIBBOR

- El Gibbor - The Mighty or Strong God, "God the Hero" or "God the Warrior":
  - Isa 9:6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God (El Gibbor), Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
- Nothing is too difficult for him:
  - In Genesis 18:14 when Sarah laughs at God's promise of having in child in her old age, God says to Abraham, "Is anything too hard for the LORD?"
  - Jer 32:27 "I am the LORD, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?"

2) EL GIBBOR

- Matt 19:25-26 When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and asked…

- Mark 9:21-23 Jesus asked the boy's father, "How long has he been like this?" "From childhood," he answered. "It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. "



3) EL GADOL

- El Gadol: The Great God. 'Gadol' means "great, grand, marvellous, awesome". (Ezra 5:8; Neh 8:6 Dan 2:45b)
  - Ps 95:3 For the LORD is the great God (El Gadol), the great King above all gods.
- Our God is an awesome God!
  - Isa 40:12-16 Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens? Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket, or weighed the mountains on the scales and the hills in a balance? … Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket; they are regarded as dust on the scales; he weighs the islands as though they were fine dust. Lebanon is not sufficient for altar fires, nor its animals enough for burnt offerings.

3) EL GADOL

- He has no equal (i.e. no dualism):
  - Isa 40:25 "To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal?" says the Holy One.
- He alone is the ultimate ruler, above all kings and lords. He has superiority over the titles of earthly rulers.
  - 1 Tim 6:15 … God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords
- He is a worker of great miracles:
  - Ps 86:10 Indeed, you are great, a worker of miracles. You alone are God. (GOD'S WORD Translation)

EL HA-GADOL HA-GIBBOR

- Used together with 'Gibbor' (Mighty).

1. The great and mighty God is impartial.
   - Deut 10:17 For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God mighty (Ha-el Ha-gadol Ha-gibbor) and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes.
2. He is a covenant keeping God – a covenant of love.
3. Despite being mighty, our hardships are not trivial to him.
   - Neh 9:32 "Now therefore, our God, the great God, mighty (El Ha-gadol Gibbor) and awesome, who keeps his covenant of love, do not let all this hardship seem trifling in your eyes--the hardship that has come on us…"

EL HA-GADOL HA-GIBBOR

4. He is Creator
5. He is omnipotent
6. While he loves thousands, he also punishes sin
   - Jer 32:17-18 "Ah, Sovereign LORD, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. **Nothing is too hard for you**. You show love to thousands but bring the punishment for the parents' sins into the laps of their children after them. Great and mighty God (El Ha-gadol Gibbor), whose name is the LORD Almighty"

3) EL GADOL

- God is the source of life of everything in the universe:
  - 1 Tim 6:13 In the sight of God, **who gives life to everything**…
- He sustains the universe (i.e. holds it together):
  - Isa 40:26 Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one and calls forth each of them by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing.

SUSTAINS ALL THINGS

- As the creator who gives being and existence to his creatures which he created from nothing, God continues to provide the same being and existence to his creatures which do not have being in themselves. Thus creatures are totally dependent on God and would vanish without his conserving action. [1]
- Jesus said, "My Father works until now and I work." (John 5:17)
  - Augustine commented on John 5:17, "Let us therefore believe that God works constantly, so that all created things would perish, if his working were withdrawn." [2]

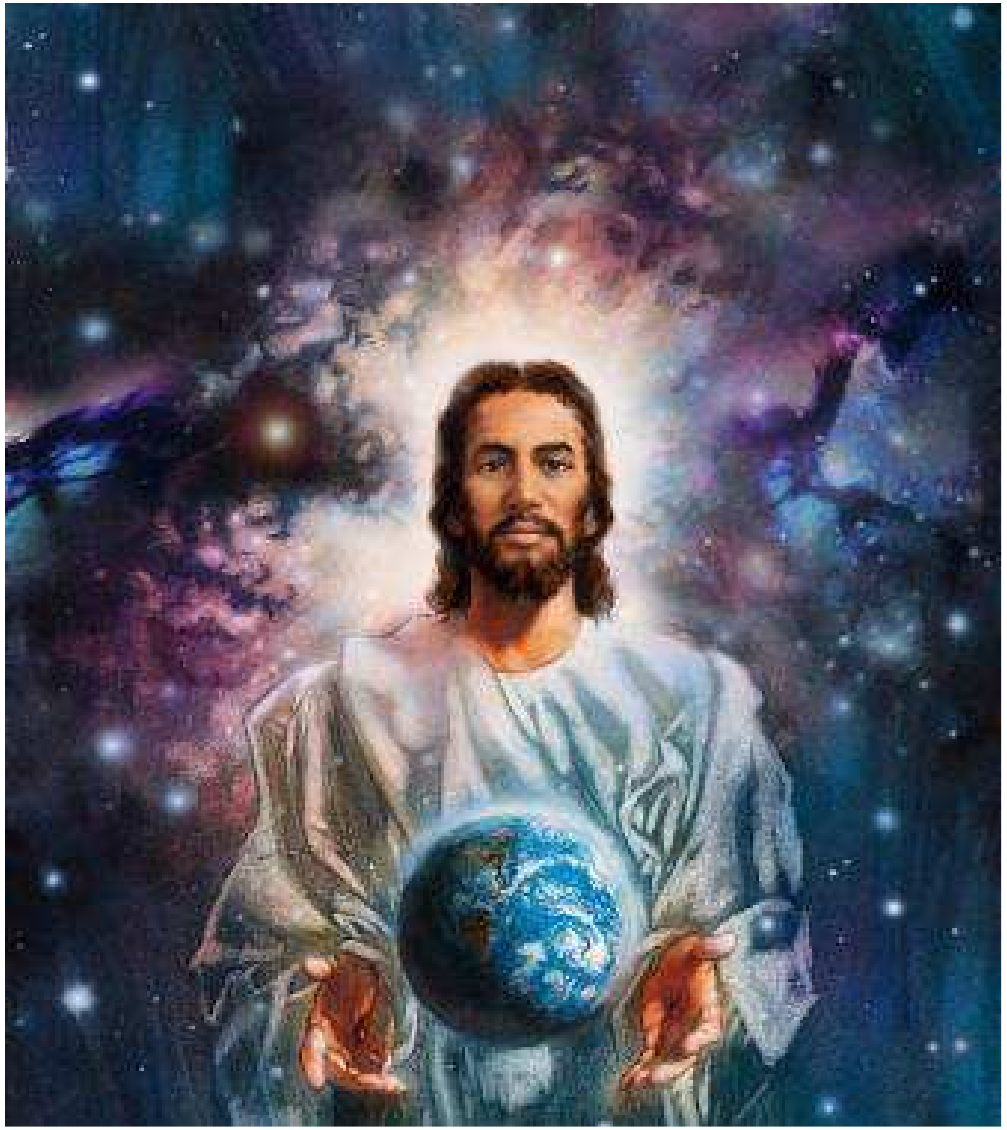
[1] SOURCE: Wikipedia: God – the Sustainer [2] De doctr. Christ. I 32,35

SUSTAINS ALL THINGS

- There is no creature that is not dependent upon God.
  - Matt 6:26-30 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them… If that is how God clothes the grass of the field… will he not much more clothe you…

SUSTAINS ALL THINGS

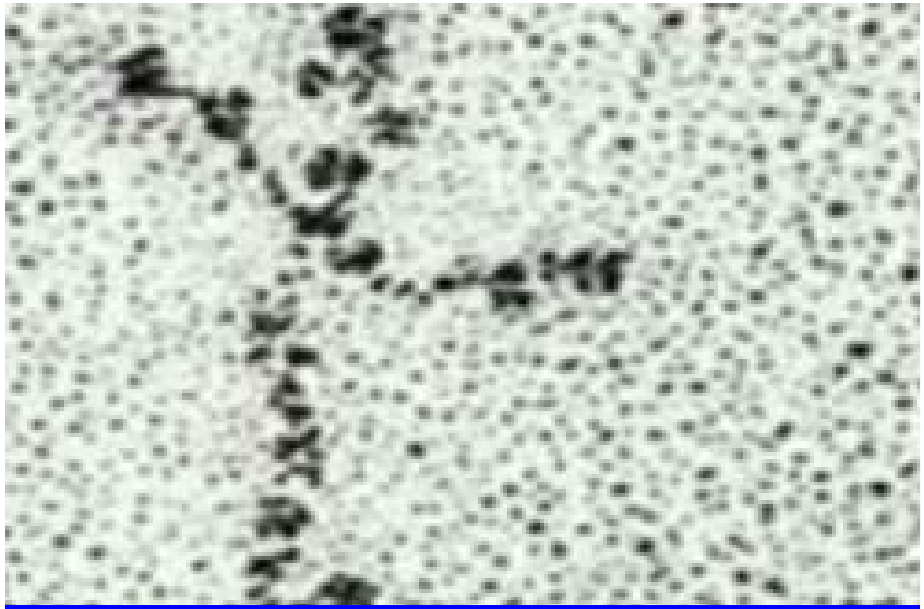
- The Son of God, Jesus, not only made the universe – he sustains it.
  - Heb 1:3a The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, **sustaining all things** by his powerful word.
  - Col 1:17 He is before all things, and **in him all things hold together.**



SUSTAINS ALL THINGS

- This is telling us that Christ is the mystery behind the physical forces: the gravitational force, the electro-magnetic forces, the strong and weak nuclear forces. It is Christ who sustains all things and holds all things together: holding each atom together, keeping us anchored to the earth, sustaining the revolutions of the planets around the sun. [1]

- Laminin is the cell adhesion molecule that holds the proteins of our bodies together. Interestingly the very shape of this 'glue' which holds us together is in the form of the cross.



Laminin

[1] www.scripturestudies.com

4) EL DE'AH אֵל דֵּעַת

- El De'ah: The God of Knowledge
- De'ah means "all knowing". God is omniscient and possesses all knowledge.
- So do not talk proudly:
  - 1 Sam 2:3 (NASB) "Boast no more so very proudly, Do not let arrogance come out of your mouth; For the LORD is a God of knowledge (El De'ah), And with Him actions are weighed."

4) EL DE'AH

- He doesn't need advice:
  - Rom 11:33-34 Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counsellor?"
  - Isa 40:13-14 Who can fathom the Spirit of the Lord, or instruct the Lord as his counsellor? Whom did the Lord consult to enlighten him, and who taught him the right way? Who was it that taught him knowledge, or showed him the path of understanding?

5) ELOHIM CHAY

- El Chayyim: Living God
- Unlike the false gods, the true God is alive.
  - Jer 10:10 (NASB) But the LORD is the true God; He is the living God (Elohim Chay) and the everlasting King. At His wrath the earth quakes, And the nations cannot endure His indignation.
- Because God is alive, he should not be defied:
  - 1 Sam 17:26 David asked the men standing near him, "… Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God (Elohim Chay) ?"
- Also Deut 5:26; Josh 3:10; 2 Ki 19:4, 16; Ps 42:2, 84:2; Isa 37:4, 17; Jer 23:36; Dan 6:20,26; Hos 1:10.

6) EL HA-KAVOD

- El Hakkavod: The God of Glory
- The title appears only once in the OT:
  - Psalm 29:3 The voice of the LORD is over the waters; the God of glory (El Ha-kavod) thunders, the LORD thunders over the mighty waters.
- Glory means: a source of honour, fame, or admiration.
- Our God is glorious:
  - Ex 15:11 "Who among the gods is like you, O LORD? Who is like you— majestic in holiness, **awesome in glory**, working wonders?"

7) EL HA-SHAMAYIM

- El Ha-shamayim: The God of the Heavens. The Jews believed in three heavens.

1. The first was the firmament or atmosphere where the clouds and birds are:
   - Ps 8:8a (NASB) The birds of the heavens…
   - Ps 78:23-24 Yet he gave a command to the skies above and opened the doors of the heavens; he rained down manna for the people to eat, he gave them the grain of heaven.
2. The second was the starry heavens or outer space:
   - Ps 19:4-6 … In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun… It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other…

7) EL HA-SHAMAYIM

3. The third heaven or paradise was the abode of God :
   - 2 Cor 12:2-4 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven … And I know that this man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows— was caught up to paradise…

- So the "God of heaven" lives in this third heaven ('shamayim' in Hebrew):
  - Isa 40:22 He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in.

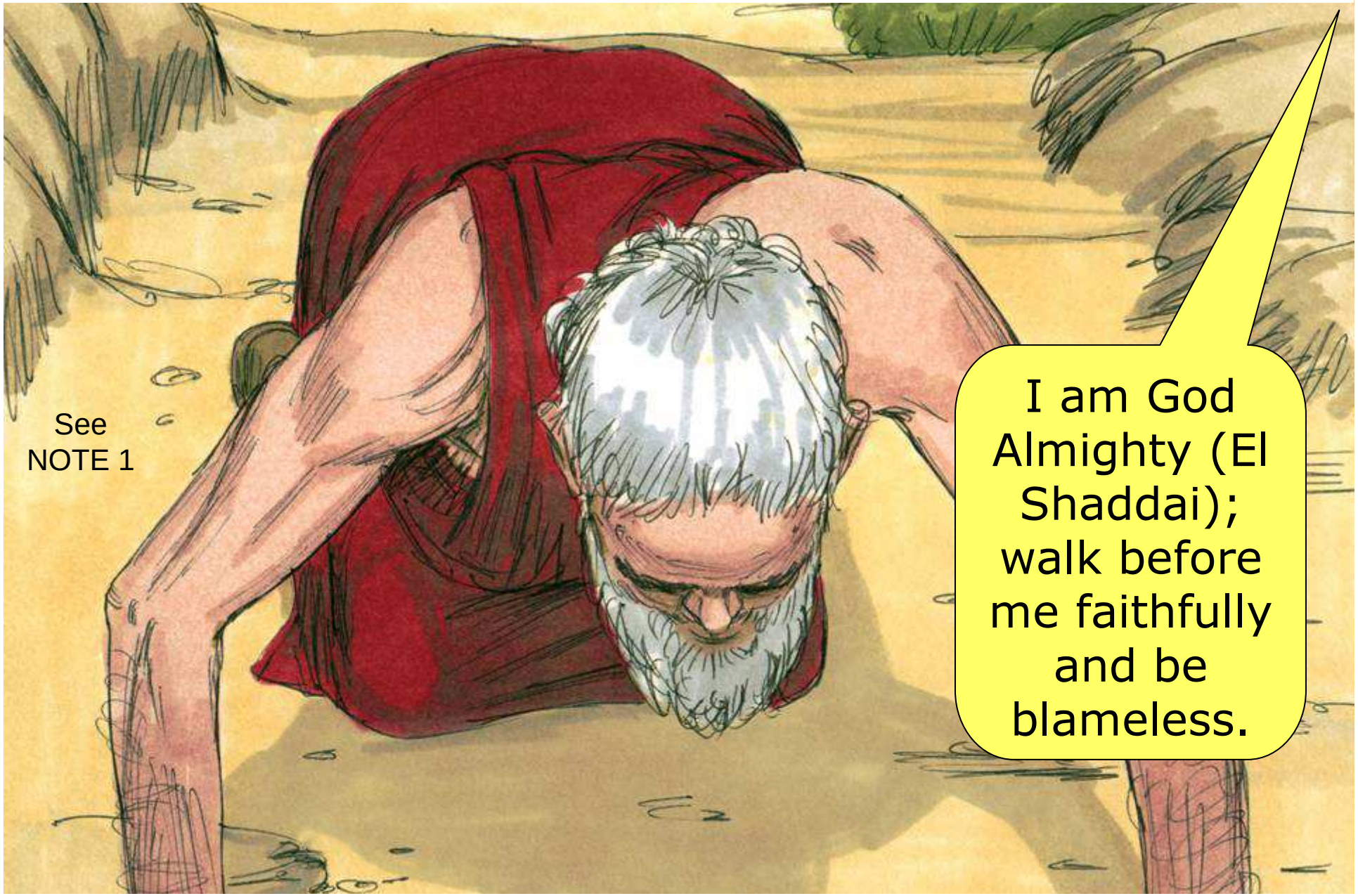
7) EL HA-SHAMAYIM

- As the God of the Heavens he ultimately will set up a kingdom on earth, which he created.
  - Dan 2:44 "In the time of those kings, the God of heaven ("elah səmayya" – Aramaic equivalent) will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever."
- Also Gen 24:3,7; 2 Chron 36:23; Ps 136:26 Ezra 1:2, 5:11-12, 6:9-10, 7:12,21,23; Neh 1:4-5, 2:4,20; Dan 2:18-19,37; Jon 1:9.

8) EL SHADDAI אֵל שַׁדַּי

- The Septuagint and other early translations usually translate "El Shaddai" as "God Almighty", [1] a practice followed by most modern English Bible translations, including the NIV, NASB and ESV.
- It was the name of God used by the patriarchs.
  - Ex 6:3 (NLT) I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob as El-Shaddai – 'God Almighty'…
- The full term "El Shaddai" appears 7 times in the OT, and it sometimes appears simply as Shaddai (41 times) which means "The Almighty."
- It appears 31 times in Job, believed to be one of the oldest books in the Bible.

- It is first used in Gen 17:1 when God appears to the 99 year old Abraham.



8) EL SHADDAI

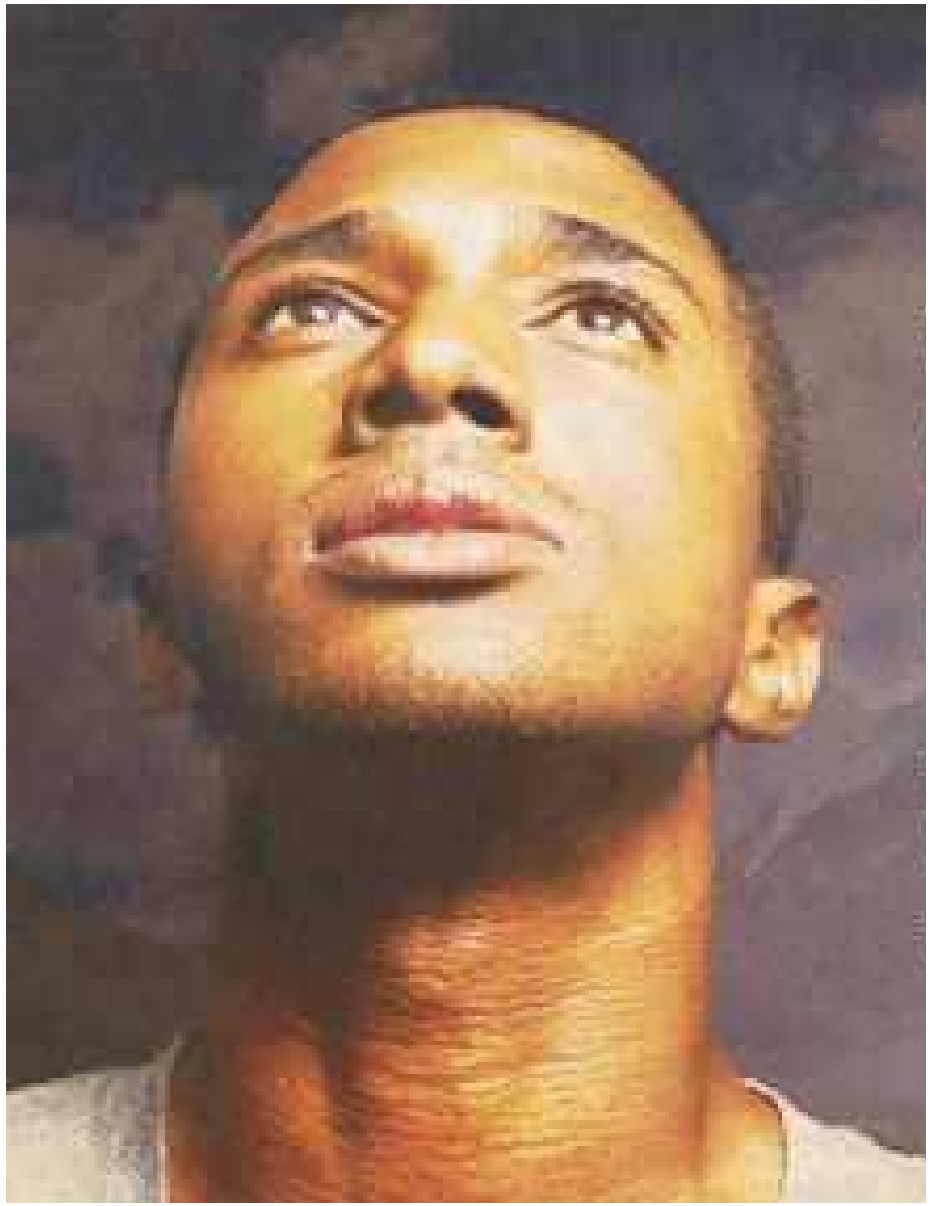
- The term 'Almighty' distinguishes God (El) from the pagan gods and it implies all-sufficiency and omnipotence.
- The Septuagint translators believed that the term 'Shaddai' came from the root verb 'shadad' which means to overpower or destroy. The Latin Vulgate translated 'Shaddai' as 'Omnipotens' from which the English term 'omnipotence' (all powerful) is derived.

8) EL SHADDAI

- He doesn't need assistance for anything:
  - Psalm 50:7-12 "… I am God, your God… I have no need of a bull from your stall or of goats from your pens, for every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird in the mountains, and the insects in the fields are mine. If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is mine, and all that is in it."
- He is self-sufficient and owes nothing to anyone:
  - Rom 11:35-36 "Who has ever given to God, that God should repay them?" For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.

8) EL SHADDAI

- CONSIDER: If God is Almighty, all-sufficient and omnipotent (nothing is too hard for him), he is capable and powerful enough to meet all the needs of those who follow him.
  - Ps 91:1 (NKJV) He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High (Elyon) Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty (Shaddai).



8) EL SHADDAI

- Another implication of the name (if it is related to the word 'shadayim') is one who is mighty to supply, satisfy and nourish. And so Jacob blesses Joseph by saying:
  - Gen 49:25 because of your father's God, who helps you, because of the Almighty (Shaddai), who blesses you with blessings of the skies above, blessings of the deep springs below, blessings of the breast and womb.
  - Gen 35:11 And God said to him, "I am God Almighty; be fruitful and increase in number. A nation and a community of nations will come from you, and kings will be among your descendants."

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