



## Lesson 2 ~ EL – God of Power and Might 2 Chronicles 20:1-30

### ♥ Heart Talk

When you meet with your small group, share something about your continued experience of **being silent for 5 minutes before God** (below) **OR** share something about the **Heart Therapy Exercise from Lesson 1 – Taking a walk looking for the goodness and loveliness of God in his creation**. How did you experience God in his creation? What did you sense that God was saying to you? Was this exercise helpful? Why or why not?

### Introduction

*El* is one of the most ancient names for God found in the Old Testament. It means **God of Power and Might**, the **Strong One** or **Mighty One**, and even carries the meaning of **Hero!** Like *Elohim*, it is usually translated "God" in English. *El* is sometimes used alone, but is also frequently combined with other words to express divine names -- *Elohim (Mighty Creator)*, *El Shaddi (God Almighty)*, *El Roi (The God Who Sees Me)*, *El Olam (Eternal God)* and *El Elyon (Most High God)*. All these compound names for God contain the idea of God's **might** and **strength** and the fact that God is **all powerful** or **omnipotent**.

The name *El* is mainly found in Genesis, Job, Psalms and Isaiah and is used in circumstances that especially indicate **the great power** of God. It is included in the names given to the promised Messiah in **Isaiah 9:6-7** – *and he shall be called . . . Mighty God . . .* – and it is the name that the Psalmist uses in **Psalms 22** when he cries, "My **God (El)**, my **God**, why have you forsaken me? This, of course, brings to mind the crucifixion when Jesus cried from the cross, "*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?*" (**Mark 15:34**) which can be literally translated, "My **Strength**, my **Strength**, why have you forsaken me?" The name *El* encourages us to call upon **God as our Strength** in times of weakness and helplessness.

### ♥ Heart Preparation

*Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him (Psalm 37:7)*. Before you begin this lesson, and to prepare your heart to receive what God has for you, **sit quietly before God, in silence, for 5 minutes**. (It might be helpful to set a timer so you can focus on God and not the passing of time.) During this time, don't try to accomplish anything other than just being quiet before God. If your mind wanders, gently bring it back to focus on God. It might help for you to occasionally repeat in your mind a phrase like, *Here I am, Lord or I belong to you, God or I open myself to you, Jesus*. Our purpose in this exercise is to establish a **habit of quietness and silence** so that we may hear God better as we experience his deep love and goodness to us.

### Jesus' Encouraging Words to You . . .

*I Am your Strength and Shield. I plan out each day and have it ready for you, long before you arise from bed. I also provide the strength you need each step of the way. Instead of assessing your energy level and wondering about what's on the road ahead, concentrate on staying in touch with Me. My Power flows freely into you through our open communication. Refuse to waste energy by worrying, and you will have strength to spare.*

*Jesus Calling* (January 31) by Sarah Young

### A Prayer to Help Prepare Your Heart

*Open my eyes, that I may see, glimpses of truth Thou hast for me;  
Place in my hands the wonderful key that shall unclasp and set me free.  
Silently now I wait for Thee; ready, my God, Thy will to see.  
Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine.*

# Questions

Read 2 Chronicles 20:1-30.

**Background** – **Jehoshaphat** (juh-HAHSI-uh-fat) was a godly king that ruled Judah during the time when Israel was divided into two kingdoms after the reign of King Solomon. (You may want to find **2 Chronicles 12-36** on the *Bible at a Glance* chart in your notebooks.) **Jehoshaphat** made some ungodly alliances while he was king, but for the most part he was a man who honored God as he ruled. When Judah was invaded by their enemies, **Jehoshaphat** completely and openly relied on God and we can learn much from his example! In this story we see a **description** of *El – God of Power and Might* (**20:6**) and a **demonstration** of his power (**20:22-25**).

1. What news did Jehoshaphat receive and what, specifically, was his *reaction* to the news (**20:1-4**)?

- ♥ Who are the "enemies" in your life – circumstances, situations and/or people that seem to come and "make war" on you? What is your usual response to trouble or difficulty?
- ♥ When in your life have you ever felt like a "vast army" was marching against you? What did you do? What can you learn from Jehoshaphat's reaction?

**Fast** – The Hebrew word for fast means to abstain from food and Old Testament fasts usually lasted from sunrise to sunset. Fasts were religious in character and there were three common reasons for fasting. 1) **Fasts** expressed depth of feeling and many were linked with times of great grief or mourning; 2) **fasts** were undertaken in times of deep trouble and emphasized the seriousness of personal and national appeals to God; and 3) **fasts** were a sign of honest repentance. In Jesus' day, the religious leaders fasted twice a week, but Jesus warned against the common practice of marking one's face to show others that one was fasting. There is no merit to fasting as such. It is one's heart attitude and the focus of attention on God that make fasting acceptable and helpful. Fasting is a voluntarily act of letting go of the **physical** in order to take hold of the **spiritual**.

- ♥ What is your experience with fasting, if any? Have you ever found it to be helpful when combined with prayer? Do you think this is something Christ followers are called to today? Why or why not?
2. Jehoshaphat begins his public prayer by stating facts **about God** and **God's past actions**. State the facts from **20:6-9** in your own words.

Statements about God (20:6)	Statements about God's past actions (20:7-9)

- ♥ In his prayer, why does Jehoshaphat tell God things that God already knows? Was he trying to "sweet talk" or coax God? Why or why not?
  - ♥ What is the value of telling God **who he is** and reminding him of **what he has done**? Do you have enough "history" with God to do this? If not, what could you do to begin to build a history?
  - ♥ In praying about a difficulty in your own life, what would you say to God to affirm his character, based on your personal experience of him? What past actions of his in your life would you recall?
3. What does Jehoshaphat tell God about the present situation and the "unfairness" of it (**20:10-11**)?

4. Consider the **words** and **actions** found in **20:12-13** from God's point of view. What specific things do you think God valued? Why?

- ♥ In what areas of your life do you feel powerless right now? What do you see as "unfair"? Would following Jehoshaphat's example in handling the situation help you? Why or why not?
- ♥ In light of what is going in your life right now, which elements of Jehoshaphat's prayer in **20:6-12** do you think should be incorporated into your own prayers to God?

5. As the people stood before the Lord (**20:13**), what happened (**20:14-15a**)?

- ♥ If you had been present, would you have believed Jahaziel's (juh-HAY-zih-el) announcement? **Can** God still speak this way today (**20:14-15**)? **Does** God still speak this way today?
- ♥ Have you ever received specific instructions from God? If so, how did the message come to you? How did you know it was God speaking? How did you respond?

6. Consider God's answer to Jehoshaphat's prayer in **20:15-17**. Using key phrases, fill in the chart below to summarize what God said to the king and his people through Jahaziel.

What commands did God give?	What promises did God make?

- ♥ Is **fear** and **discouragement** a choice? Why or why not? How would one go about obeying the command to *not be afraid or discouraged* (**10:15, 17**)?
  - ♥ Even though *the battle was not theirs, but God's* (**20:15**), why do you think the people still had to **march, take up their positions** and **stand firm** (**20:16,17**)? What application does this have for you?
  - ♥ How did Jehoshaphat and the people respond to God's message (**20:18-19**)? What effect do you think this response had on Jehoshaphat and his people? On God?
7. What similarities do you see between Jehoshaphat's situation and **Exodus 14:10-14** when the children of Israel were trapped in the desert by the pursuing Egyptian army? What do both these incidents teach you about God? How do they encourage you in what you are facing today?

8. Jehoshaphat told the people that faith/belief was necessary in order for them to stand firm and be successful. What did the people do and how did this demonstrate their faith (20:20-21)?
- ♥ In what, exactly, did Jehoshaphat and the people place their trust (20:20)? What helped them keep their focus (20:21)? What do you think is the significance the *singing* praises and not just *saying* praises?
  - ♥ In the midst of a problem, where is *your* focus? On the problem? On God? On yourself? What helps you fix your eyes on God? Would praise music/singing help you keep your focus? Why or why not?
  - ♥ Have you ever thanked God for an answer to prayer *before* the answer became a reality? Why would someone do this? What effect would it have?
9. Describe all that happened, starting at the moment the people began to sing and praise God as they faced their enemies (20:22-25).
- ♥ If you followed Jehoshaphat's example the next time you faced a difficulty, do you think you would have the same results? Why or why not?
  - ♥ How have you seen your enemies (people, situations and circumstances) "destroy themselves" as you trusted in God and refused to fight our own battles?
10. How did Jehoshaphat and the people celebrate the victory (20:26-28)? Why is this important?
- ♥ Can you share a battle that God won for you? What effect has this had on you? How did you show your gratitude? How can you continue to show your gratitude?
  - ♥ What was the outcome of God's victory over Israel's enemies (20:29-30)? How does this encourage you? What does this reveal about the character of God?
11. *The battle is not yours, but God's.* If you trust *El – God of Power and Might* – to fight your battles, what are some things you must *give up doing* as God works? What are some things you will *need to keep doing* as God works?
- ♥ What have you learned about *El, God of Power and Might*, in this lesson? About facing "impossible, hopeless" situations? What do you especially want to remember when you face your next difficulty?

## ♥ Heart Therapy

SPEND SOME QUALITY TIME WITH *EL – GOD OF POWER AND MIGHT* . . .

*Sing to the Lord and praise him for the splendor of his holiness; Give thanks to the Lord for his faithful love (20:21).*

Using music, give God some undivided attention in praise and worship for at least **15 minutes**. Make this time all about God. Rejoice in who he is and what he has done! Tell him how awesome he is! **How do you think God reacts to all this attention? How does this exercise make you feel? Is it "worth" it?**