

"Let US make man in OUR image, after OUR likeness!"

by Robert Schmid

In the Bible, God refers to Himself in four (4) verses with the plural pronouns "us" and "our" (Gen 1:26, 3:22 and 11:7; Isa 6:8). The question is to whom do the "us" and "our" make reference to? Was there ONE God Being (one person, one center of thought), or were there TWO God Beings (two persons, two centers of thought), or were there THREE God Beings (three persons, three centers of thought) from the beginning and throughout Old Testament time?

But first of all, why is this question important? It is important because it determines our understanding of God, and whether or not we are in compliance with the first commandment, not to have **any other gods** before the **one true God** of the Bible. In addition, where you start, determines where you end up.

Have you ever wondered (or are you even aware?) why God referred to Himself only *six times* with the plural pronouns "us" and "our," and well over *seven thousand times* with singular personal pronouns "I" "me" and "mine?" The overwhelming evidence, based on usage, obviously is that God is singular and not plural, ONE, and not two or three! Nevertheless, the six plural pronouns do demand an explanation, for even one such plural reference raises a question.

Before we consider the "us" and "our" question, let *us* consider the fundamental language issue of Gen 1:1. Myself, and about 500,000,000 people in the world speak and read primarily English. If you believe that God had any involvement in preparing His own Word, the Bible, then you must at least acknowledge what it says in any translation, that in the beginning was GOD (singular), and not Gods (plural). God does not require of us to know the grammatical intricacies of the Hebrew word "Elohim" in order to know Him. After all, the whole purpose of Gen 1:1 is to let US (English speaking people) know upfront, that in the beginning was ONE God, and *not* TWO or THREE, Gods. Otherwise, and to avoid confusion, God should have written in all English Bibles:

In the beginning *Gods*, or
In the beginning the *Twinity*, or
In the beginning *God the Father and God the Son*, or
In the beginning *God and His Spokesman*, or
In the beginning *ONE God in TWO persons*, or
In the beginning the *Trinity*, or
In the beginning the *Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost*, or
In the beginning *ONE God in THREE persons*, or
In the beginning the *Family of God*.

But, search as you will, God did NOT say any of the above, for God is not the author of confusion. And so, God confirmed in John 1:1, what He said in Gen 1:1, that in the beginning was ONE God Being (singular), ONE center of thought, with the additional information that in the beginning was also His WORD (notice: "His *Word*," not another God person in a Godhead), and His Word was always with Him, and **His Word was Him**. In the beginning, the ONE God

was working, and the thoughts of His mind were executed and verbalized by and through His WORD.

And so, after referring to Himself as "God" (singular) *24 times* in the first 25 verses of Genesis 1, we come to verse 26 where it says:

"Then God (singular) said, 'Let US (plural) make man in OUR (plural) image, after OUR (plural) likeness...'"

Again, the question is: Who is meant by the "us" and "our," and why the use of six plural pronouns? Since no clear, and no specific answer is given in scripture, a multitude of answers have been put forth, based on whatever pre-conceived understanding someone might have about the nature of God, in the beginning.

Depending on what your foundational understanding is about God, determines how you interpret to whom the "us" and "our" make reference to.

If you are a TWINITARIAN where the fundamental doctrine of God is ONE God in TWO persons (Old Testament time), the "us" and "our" make reference to the TWO persons, Father and Son, and or, God and His Spokesman, as defined in the Twinity (Godhead) doctrine. This is obviously false, since in the beginning (Gen 1:1; John 1:1) there was only ONE God in ONE person, and not one God in two persons, as in the (false) Twinity doctrine.

If you are a TRINITARIAN, where the fundamental doctrine of God is ONE God in THREE persons (Old and New Testament time), the "us" and "our" make reference to the THREE persons, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, as defined in the Trinity (Godhead) doctrine. This is obviously false, since in the beginning (Gen 1:1; John 1:1) there was only ONE God in ONE person, and not one God in three persons, as in the (false) Trinity doctrine.

Now, it could well be that God referred to Himself with six plural pronouns to show that HE is *"all in all."* The "us" and "our," in this context, would simply proclaim that God is all inclusive, for everything that exists has its being, and derives its existence from God. God is "US" and "OUR" because God is "ALL in ALL?"

Other reasons that have been advanced are that the "us" and "our" are "figures of speech", or make reference to the "heavenly host - angels," and or that God used the "plurals of majesty" or the "plurals of deliberation" in speaking about Himself in the plural?

It could also well be that the "us" and "our" make reference to the **Wisdom of God** (female), the **Word of God** (male), and the **Spirit of God** (neuter). Three attributes of God that are often used in a personified way, three attributes that have always been *with* God, and *are* God.

But, primarily I believe that the "us" and "our" refer to **God and the Word of God**, that would (later) BECOME the **Son of God - Jesus**. God, who does not exist in time, is using proleptic language, to show that from His point of view (expressed by only six *plural* pronouns) the **Word** that would *become* the **Son** is already a fact, whereas from man's point of view (expressed by 7000+ *singular* pronouns) the birth of the firstborn Son was still in the future.

Let us now consider the Biblical fact that *"God is love."* True godly love is not inward, it is outward. True godly love desires to share itself. There are about 260 references to love in the Old Testament, and an equal number of references to love in the New Testament. The whole purpose of human life is to become the recipient of the love of God. However, neither *created* human beings, nor *created* angelic beings have the capacity to develop or return *true* godly love.

Therefore, God's plan, from the beginning, was to reproduce Himself through procreation and raise up for Himself a family, where every individual would have the same desire and the same capacity to *BE LOVE* as He, Himself *IS LOVE*.

Jesus was *born* of God, in the fullness of time, when the **Word of God** (not a second God) BECAME the **Son of God**. How? God, after raising up for Himself a wife, the nation of Israel, impregnated His (surrogate) wife Mary/Israel, and she bore the *only so begotten* and *first born* Son of God, named Jesus. God not only is the originator of the family and of reproduction, God *is* our perfect example of the family and of reproduction. God *is not* a dysfunctional family as in the false Trinitarian (three in one), Twinitarian (two in one) and Unitarian (one in one) models of defining God!

In Gen 1:24, 25 God *made* all living creatures according to *their kind*. Then in Gen 1:26 comes this major change where God said, *"Let us make man in our image, after our likeness."* **God** through His **Word**, spoke proleptically and prophetically and said let *"us"* (meaning **Himself** and His **Word** that 4000 years later would become His **Son**) make man in our image and likeness. Man was not, at that time, made complete in the image and likeness of God. Not until after the **Word of God** BECAME the **Son of God**, did the *"us"* and *"our"* reach its full original, indented meaning. It is, after all, only, through the suffering, death and resurrection (born again) of the **Son of God**, that man will eventually, via death and resurrection (born again) become complete in the image and likeness of God, and become what God is -- **perfect love**.

"Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and he who loves is begotten of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God; for God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only (so) begotten Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No man has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us" (1 John 4:7:12).