

Study 61-A

Mini -- Booklet Series

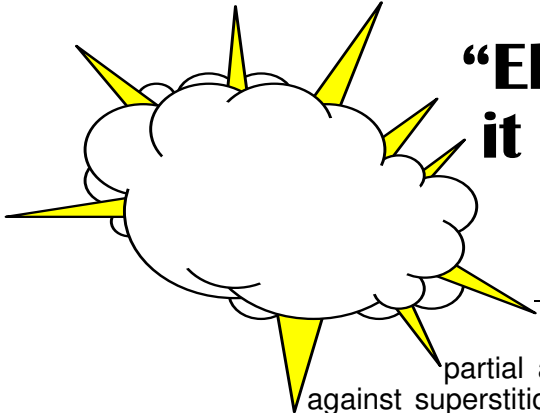


© Copyright 2002, 2007 F. Paul Haney CFMinistries@att.net

Christ Fellowship Ministries

P.O. Box 337

Kensington, CT 06037 USA



“Elohim”: What it is and Why it Cannot be Used to Prove a Multi-God Theology

Knowledge is the great enemy of blindness, partial and absolute, physical or spiritual. Knowledge fights against superstition and irrationality and wins every battle. Knowledge has the ability to free all of us from the blinders we wear. Opportunity to remove blinders comes toward you so very slowly that you cannot help seeing it, *if you will* see it.

We are required to teach what the Bible says is the truth, not what we think it ought to be.

This newsletter, study, or writing may be freely copied and distributed by any means including on the Internet, providing it is copied in total with no alterations or deletions. No charge may be levied on recipients of distributed copies. Brief quotations may be embodied in critical articles and reviews without breaching copyright.



THE WORD “elohim” may be familiar to you or not, depending on what sort of Bible studies or readings you have been doing lately. The word “elohim” is a biblical term, although you will not find it listed in any dictionary of English Bible words. Elohim is a Hebrew word and it underlies most places where the English word “God” is found in the Old Testament (OT) of the English Bible. So, when you read the word “God” in the OT, you are generally (but not always) referring to the word “elohim” and whatever it means, in context and according to common usage.

A reasonable investigation of biblical truth should begin with the fundamentals. There is no teaching as fundamental as the teaching of who or what God is. Jesus and the religious people of His day agreed that a proper definition of God was the first order of business. It was the object of the first and greatest Commandment. **“Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, ‘Which is the first commandment of all?’ Jesus answered him, ‘The first of all the commandments *is*: ‘Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the Lord is **one**’ ” (Mk.12:28-29).** Definition: Yahweh God is one. God is not two, three, or more beings in any configuration or context. [*One: Greek *heis*, “a primary numeral; one.” Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible #1520.]

My purpose in this study is not to malign or disparage the practitioners of **poly-binitarianism** (our new name for the belief in two individual gods plus millions more on the way), because some are friends of mine and I love them as brethren. I am certain

Study 61-A, Who or What is Elohim?

© Copyright 2002, 2007 Pastor F. Paul Haney, CFM, P.O. Box 337, Kensington, CT 06037 USA

that most all, even my enemies in the church, are sincere people. I try not to attack sincere people, but I will assault what I believe are wrong-headed ideas and will call things what they are. For instance, one who prophesies falsely is a false prophet. My purpose here is to point out in no uncertain terms how the multi-god poly-binitarian proposition is nothing more than ancient Greek polytheism reappearing among us in the transparent shell of monotheism. (The supporters of this worship model call it *both* binitarianism *and* monotheism!) But poly-binitarianism is, in my estimation, a “wolf” in sheep’s clothing and those who succumb to its siren song are feeding the wolf, whether they know it or not — whether they believe it or not. And sincerity in what is believed does not equate with correctness.

I have found to my dismay that none of the folks in my experience who believe that both the Father and Jesus are Gods and who count them as *individual* Gods, are willing to take the next logical step. The next step is to admit that worshiping two or more Gods is *fundamental textbook polytheism* and it is not monotheism at all. Before any serious discussion can commence on nearly any topic or before any problem can be solved, basic terms must be defined. And they must be defined in light of common usage. These terms must not be redefined and turned into exotic doctrinal expressions or distinctives that only confuse the issue and that only the initiates understand, with a wink and a nudge.

The attempt to redefine God so that polytheism cannot be charged is basic to the binitarian model. What we need to do is to dispel the myth that God has become a family of gods or that God is a conglomeration of some sort. In addition, we need to pressure the closet-polytheist camp to come clean, exit the closet, and admit plainly that they worship more than one God, which worship is universally defined as polytheism.

It is always a good idea to define our terms before we begin a study in order to be “on the same page” as it were, with one another, so here is the definition of “elohim” from Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible. Consider the following controversial verse. “**And God said, Let us make man in our image**” (Gen.1:26a). The word “God” in this verse is defined by James Strong as #430, Heb. *elohim*, “plural of 433 [eloah]; *gods* in the ordinary sense; but specially used (in the plural thus, especially with the article) of the supreme *God*; occasionally applied by way of deference to *magistrates*; and sometimes as a superlative:— angels, × exceeding, God (gods) (-dess, -ly), × (very) great, judges, × mighty.” The word *elohim* is a *plural* word itself. It occurs some 200 times in the book of Genesis alone and about 2,000 time in the Hebrew Scriptures. Some organizations have sought to assign the plurality of this word (taken out of context, however) as describing *two separate and distinct God-beings* by selecting the plurality of the word itself over and above the singularity of the context. Others have taught that this passage represents *three* God personages all wrapped up in *one* person called the Trinity. Today, scholars have rightly removed Gen.1:26 as support for a *Triune* God.

✚ **Smith’s Bible Dictionary— God as elohim.** “Throughout the Hebrew Scriptures two chief names are used for the one true divine Being —**ELOHIM**, commonly translated *God* in our [English] version[s], and **JEHOVAH** [YHWH], translated **LORD** [all caps]. Elohim is the plural of **Eloah** (in Arabic *Allah*); it is often used in the short form **EL** (a word signifying *strength*), as in EL-SHADDAI, *God Almighty*, the name by which God was specially known to the patriarchs (Gen.17:1; 28:3; Exod.6:3).

“The etymology is uncertain, but it is generally agreed that the primary idea is that of *strength, power of effect*, and that it properly describes God in that character in which he is exhibited to all men in his works, as the creator, sustainer, and supreme governor of the world. The plural form of Elohim has given rise to much discussion.

“The fanciful idea that it [elohim] referred to the *trinity of persons* in the Godhead hardly finds now a supporter among scholars. It is either what grammarians call *the plural of majesty*, or it denotes *the fullness of divine strength*, the *sum of the powers* displayed by God. Jehovah denotes specifically the one true God, whose people the Jews were, and who made them the guardians of his truth. The name is never applied to a false god, nor to any other being except one, the ANGEL-JEHOVAH, who is thereby marked as one with God, and who appears again in the New Covenant as “God manifested in the flesh.”

“Thus much is clear; but all else is beset with difficulties. At a time too early to be traced, the Jews abstained from pronouncing the name, for fear of its irreverent use. The custom is said to have been founded on a strained interpretation of Lev.24:16; and

Study 61-A, Who or What is Elohim?

© Copyright 2002, 2007 Pastor F. Paul Haney, CFM, P.O. Box 337, Kensington, CT 06037 USA

the phrase there used, "THE NAME" (*Shema*), is substituted by the rabbis for the unutterable word. In the Scriptures they substituted for it the word ADONAI (*Lord*), from the translation of which [is] Kurios in the LXX, followed by the Vulgate, which uses *Dominus*; we have the LORD of our version. The substitution of the word Lord is most unhappy, for it in no way represents the meaning of the sacred name.

"The key to the *meaning* of the name is unquestionably given in God's revelation of himself to Moses by the phrase "I AM THAT I AM" (**Exod.3:14; 6:3**). We must connect the name *Jehovah* with the Hebrew substantive verb *to be*, with the inference that it expresses the essential, eternal, unchangeable *being* of Jehovah. But more, it is not the expression only, or chiefly, of an *absolute* truth: it is a *practical revelation* of God, in his essential, unchangeable relation to his chosen people, the basis of his *covenant*." #

✚ **The New Westminster Dictionary of the Bible**— "Elohim: The plural of Hebrew *Eloah* (God). In the plural, it is the usual name of the one true God; this usage is explained grammatically as the plural of majesty. The plural, however, can also be applied as a common noun to foreign or heathen divinities." "God: In Hebrew, God is called Elohim, a name which is a plural of majesty. The personal name of the God of the covenant is Yahweh (Lord)." #

✚ **Vine's Complete Expository of Old and New Testament words.**

"Certain scholars regard the word *Eloah* as being a singular version of the common plural form *elohim*, a plural of majesty."

✚ **International Standard Bible Encyclopedia**— "Elohim: The first form of the Divine name in the Bible is 'Elohim,' ordinarily translated 'God' (Gen.1:1). This is the most frequently used name in the OT, as its equivalent, *theos*, is in the NT, occurring in Genesis alone approximately 200 times. ... (a). The form is plural, but the construction is uniformly singular, i.e., it governs a singular verb or adjective, unless used of heathen divinities (Psa.96:5; 97:7). It is characteristic of Hebrew that extension, magnitude, and dignity, as well as actual multiplicity, are expressed by the plural. It is **not reasonable**, therefore, to assume that plurality of form indicates primitive Semitic polytheism. [Or any form of polytheism even so called "binitarianism," just another form of the worship of many gods. FPH] On the contrary, historic Hebrew is unquestionably and uniformly monotheistic. ... (b). It is the reasonable conclusion that the meaning is "might" or "power"; that it is common to Semitic language; that the form is plural to express majesty or "all-mightiness," and that it is a generic, rather than a specific personal, name for Deity." #

Take Note of This: Plurality of form does not necessarily signify plurality of being! And inventing a doctrine to cover the plural form of one isolated word while ignoring the singular nature of the context is not right.

One of the reasons, I believe, why so many scholars have concluded that *this* passage does not refer to a *plural* God (even if *elohim* itself is plural) is that an interpreter cannot simply assign *two* or *three* Gods or personages to this word without running into grammatical trouble. Logic, grammar, context, and plain sense should prevent anyone from concluding that the word *elohim* of itself represents a plurality of two or three god-beings. One *might* suggest, and many do, based merely on the argument of the word *elohim* *itself* being plural, that it represents two or three individuals. One cannot honestly conclude and teach that it strictly represents only two beings *now* (as many Sabbatarian preachers do) or three personages, as in the Trinity. Technically, the word *elohim* has no such limitation—it is an *open-ended* plurality. Yet, the context and usage testifies against extending mere *intrinsic plurality* of the word as *the* defining doctrinal basis to be used in support multiple-god theologies. But no matter—this is exactly what many religious people do. First, they take the word out of context, then they redefine it as being equal to a plurality of god-beings, sometimes three and sometimes two, but never more than these—the maximum is three. Yet, others (polytheists) add hundreds of thousands of god-beings to the mix for a future *world tomorrow*.

In **Genesis 1:26**, we have additional words that point to the idea of plurality: "us" and "our." They support the plurality of the word "God" (*elohim*) in *this* passage. A few other passages echo this view. But all this actual plurality ultimately devolves to the representation of the "**host of heaven**" in communication with the Creator. There is biblical support for communication between the host of heaven and God, while there is *no* biblical support for any communication at all between two or three individual OT God-beings.

Study 61-A, Who or What is Elohim?

© Copyright 2002, 2007 Pastor F. Paul Haney, CFM, P.O. Box 337, Kensington, CT 06037 USA

✚ “Then *Micaiah* said, ‘Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by, on his right hand and on his left.’ And the LORD said, ‘Who will persuade Ahab to go up, that he may fall at Ramoth Gilead?’ So one spoke in this manner, and another spoke in that manner. Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD, and said, ‘I will persuade him.’ The LORD said to him, ‘In what way?’ So he said, ‘I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.’ And the LORD said, ‘You shall persuade *him*, and also prevail. Go out and do so’ ” (1KI.22:19-22). The host of heaven conversed with God! The host of heaven actually got together with God and one of them volunteered to come down and be a lying spirit in the mouths of prophets! So, for someone to dogmatically state that the **us** and **our** of **Gen.1:26** *proves* that there were *two Gods* talking to one another is simply a flight of fancy. It is nothing more than a fraudulent application of a church tradition based on nothing at all; i. e., it is baloney.

✚ **The NIV Study Bible**— “**Gen.1:26**: God speaks as the Creator-King, announcing His crowning work to the members of His heavenly court (see Gen.3:22; 11:7; Isa.6:8; 1Ki.22:19-23; Job.15:8; Jer.23:19).” #

✚ “Then the LORD God said, ‘Behold, the man has become like one of us, to know good and evil’ ” (Gen.3:22).

✚ “ ‘Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech.’ So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city’ ” (Gen.11:7).

✚ “Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?’ Then I said, ‘Here *am*! Send me’ ” (Isa.6:8).

✚ “Have you heard the counsel of God? [Elohim]” (Job.15:8).

✚ The host of heaven made an appearance at the birth of the Messiah. “**And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: ‘Glory to God in the highest, [and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!]’ ”** (Lk.2:13). (Some of the minor wording of the passage [...] is in dispute, however.) **The KJV Study Bible Commentary**: “vs.2:13,14. Jesus’ birth creates praise among the angels. God’s **peace** and **good will** are extended to those ‘on whom he sees fit to bestow his grace’ (alternate Greek readings). Some manuscripts have the last half of this verse, reading ‘and on earth peace among men of good will.’ This signifies that true peace will be enjoyed only by the pious. The KJV reading expresses the divine intention to offer peace and good will to all men.” **Question**: Why would anyone summarily dismiss the idea that the *host of heaven* conversed with Yahweh God in **Gen.1:26** when it is clear that this “host” **did** converse with God at other times? The answer seems obvious. Some religious people would rather support the traditions of the elders over against changing positions according to Scripture (**Matt.15:1-9**).

Another reason that the word *elohim* (as God) cannot generally be used to represent two Gods (or more) is that the personal pronouns, “he,” “him,” and “his,” etc., are used in context in conjunction with the concept of God. These are *singular* words. And the *context* generally determines the particular usage of any given word. Question: How is the word used? In the majority of passages, the word “God” (*elohim*) is not used with “us” or “our” but with “he” and “him,” etc. Thus, a conflict exists between those in one camp that believe *elohim* specifically refers to two Gods and the scholarship camp that believes *elohim* refers to the “host of heaven,” termed the “plural of majesty” in a very few cases, and a singular deity otherwise. Further, in dozens of cases, God uses the word “I” when referring to Himself.

Closet Polytheism: God Is a Family of Gods— There are no cases in the Bible where “God” is referred to as being or comprising a “God” entity called “a family.” The word “family” appears in the NKJV Bible about 145 times. The apostle Paul writes: “**For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named**” (Eph.3:14). Listen: God’s family is *never* called “God” in the Bible. Never. What “family in heaven” (and earth) might Paul be referring to? I suggest that the wording in this passage clearly demonstrates that the “host of heaven” represented God’s family at that time.

Some teach a doctrine of the family “of Gods” as though the word “God” was God’s last name, or that it is a “tribal” name, or the name of a certain “kind” of being, as in the “dog *kind*” or the “pig *kind*.” But there are no places in the Bible where this particular idea of the “family of God” or “God is a family of gods” can be found (CEV, TLB, NCV,

Study 61-A, Who or What is Elohim?

© Copyright 2002, 2007 Pastor F. Paul Haney, CFM, P.O. Box 337, Kensington, CT 06037 USA

notwithstanding). The God-is-a-family idea, as espoused by certain “closet” polytheists, cannot be found in the Bible. It just does not exist. This does not mean that God does not have a family, commonly termed, “God’s family.” Indeed, God does have a family. Watch the terminology! Some “closet” polytheists teach that, “God **is** a family (of gods),” that he does not **have** a family, and thereby they cleverly redefine the word “God” **as** a family. But this is wrong. This “redefined God” teaching falls short of being scrupulous and trustworthy. You will notice in all their writings and sermons, advocates of this doctrine seldom state what they really mean. And *that* is that the extension of their stated “God is a family” doctrine really points to an unspoken but very real belief and teaching that “God is a family of gods.”

Regardless of this peculiarity of the “family of gods” doctrine, these people incredibly continue to insist, just as do trinitarian advocates, that, “God is One.” The sincerity of poly-binitarian two-God + advocates is not questioned. But of a truth, those supporting this “Family of Gods” view have been deceived by a proven false prophet and consequently, are blind to further revelation.

And the doctrine does not stop with two Gods. The twisted idea of “**the family of gods**” is then extended to include special human beings that become Gods through a pre-millennial rebirth when Christ returns, the same as children born into the Carson family become Carson(s). This demonstrates their foxy trick: *they say that children born into the God family will become Gods*. But nowhere in the Bible is it even implied that humans can become Gods. This is an irrational heresy of the highest order and it all stems from a corrupted out-of-context definition of the word “elohim,” and considerable pride. After saying that God (as elohim) is not a trinity, but a “family,” William F. Dankenbring (Triumph Prophetic Ministries) writes that God is “the great Being, the One who is the source of all life and creation.” Claiming that the “church” (as the bride) will be “God,” he says that the rest of mankind will be as “children” of the “Bride and Groom.” In speaking of an idyllic Kingdom of God, he writes that it will be constantly increasing and expanding throughout eternity “with more and more God-Beings.” They will be “members of the family of God—being reproduced forever and ever—always increasing, multiplying, more progeny, more increase and multitudes added to the family—the family of God! Thousands of generations!” Yet, like other “closet polytheists,” Dankenbring manages to morph this “family of gods” of which he speaks into “one” god. But it just cannot be done, whether you’re speaking of a three-in-one god or a family-in-one god. When will these folks come out of the closet and tell what they really mean, that they support multiple gods and defy the single God of the Bible?

✚ **“Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol *is* nothing in the world, and that *there is* no other God but one. For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords), yet for us *there is* one God, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we for him; and one Lord Jesus Christ” (1Cor.8:4-6).**

It is obvious that the apostle Paul did not regard Jesus Christ as God. To him, Jesus was Lord, but he was not God. Remember, at this writing, Jesus had been dead and resurrected many years and was presently sitting at the right hand of God in heaven. The Greek word “one” here is the same as used in Mark 12:28—a numeral one.

✚ The United COG, AIA, has this in their statement of beliefs, pp.2-4: “We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ of Nazareth, who has eternally existed... The Bible reveals God as the ‘Father’ and ‘Jesus Christ’ as the Son. The distinction between the two is implicit from the very beginning of God’s revelation (Gen.1:1), where the Hebrew word Elohim is used... There has been communication between these two from the beginning, as seen in the example of Gen.1:26, where the pronouns ‘us’ and ‘our’ refer to Elohim... God, as used in the Bible, can be a reference to either the Father, Jesus Christ, Isa.9:6, Jn.1:1,14, or both, Rom.8:9, depending on the context of the scripture.” # (Notice that they neglect to mention some 20,000 personal pronouns, “he,” “him,” “I,” etc.)

Question: How does anyone know for certain that the “us” and “our” in Gen.1:26 only refer to the Father and a pre-Jesus God? Who determined this? Once you accept an “implication” that the word “elohim” represents a plural entity of two particular gods, or three in one, the rest is easy. You merely extrapolate throughout and ignore all the hundreds of places that refer to God or Yahweh in the singular as “he,” “I,” “his,” and “him,” etc., and bingo! —your various gods of the Old Testament appear like Casper, The

Study 61-A, Who or What is Elohim?

© Copyright 2002, 2007 Pastor F. Paul Haney, CFM, P.O. Box 337, Kensington, CT 06037 USA

Friendly Ghost. And this surely represents *polytheism*, the worship of two or more gods, in its raw form. Those few places where a genuine plurality regarding God can be shown from the context are special and refer to Yahweh interacting or conversing with the heavenly host, as noted above. It does not refer to two or three beings in one, sitting around deciding who would morph into the “Lamb of God.”

The God of the Old Testament who is called Yahweh, who allows no other being or entity to claim he is God, boldly tells us there is only one God (not a family of gods), and he (in his oneness or singularity) is it! The one being named Yahweh takes on the title of “God.” And Jesus agrees with Yahweh!

How do we resolve these claims? On one hand, we have a being making the claim that he is alone as God (a title) and that his name is Yahweh. And we have a Messiah who also says that the Father (Yahweh) is the only true being called or entitled, “God,” as the only one who can receive the honor of being called God. On the other hand, we have religious people (some are false prophets) denying this claim and even adding *themselves* into the mix! They are redefining the word “God” and finding other gods between the lines of the Bible, and essentially preaching that this being called “God” or “Yahweh” is wrong when he claims singularity, and that Jesus made a mistake by telling us that Yahweh was the only true God (**Jn.17:3**). When Yahweh says, “I alone am God” they would suggest he means, “we together are Gods.” (One supporter, in fact, did write something to this effect!) Do we accept the Bible or the traditions of men and cleverly “adjust” the Bible to make new gods emerge from its pages, as we doctrinally require? (Note: *Yahweh* is LORD and *God* is *Elohim*.)

✦ **“Now see that I, *even* I, *am* he, and *there is* no God besides me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; nor *is there any* who can deliver from my hand” (Deut.32:39)**

✦ **“I will give you the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places, that you may know that I, the LORD [YAHWEH], who call *you* by your name, *Am the God* [Elohim] of Israel... I have named you, though you have not known me. *I am the LORD, and there is no other; There is no God besides me... That there is none besides me. I am the LORD, and there is no other; I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create calamity; I, the LORD, do all these things... Woe to him who strives with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherd of the earth! Shall the clay say to him who forms it, ‘What are you making?’ ”* (Isa.45:3-9; cf. 43:10; 44:6). How many ways can Yahweh God say that he is one God alone?**

✦ **“And understand that I *am* he. Before me there was no God formed, nor shall there be after me” (Isa.43:10b). Right here, Yahweh tells all humanity and certain “Christians” that they will not become gods in any divine sense!**

✦ **“Hear, O Israel: The LORD [Yahweh] our God [Elohim], the LORD *is* one!” (Deut.6:4).**

✦ **“And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent” (Jn.17:3).**

Yahweh, the Creator God tells us there is only one God, that there never was another God, and that there never will be additional Gods. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, testifies that Yahweh is the only true God. Are we to believe men or God?

✦ **Psalm 110:1— “The LORD said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool’ (Psa.110:1, NKJV). “The LORD says to you, my lord: ‘Take your throne at my right hand, while I make your enemies your footstool’ ” (Psa.110:1, New American Bible; cf. RSV, NRSV, NEB, JPS). Which version is the correct reading? Apparently, Jesus is referred to as “Lord” in both of these verses. The difference is that the NKJ capitalizes the second “Lord” while the New American Bible does not. Many have taken the KJ/NKJV rendering to mean that Jesus the “Lord” is Deity because the translators capitalized the second “Lord.” The problem is easy to correct. The first reading of “Lord” is **Yahweh, the Creator God, Hebrew #3068, YHWH**. The second reading is *adon*! or “my lord,” not just “lord.” This *adon*! is a title, it is a non-deity title for the Messiah. Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance: Hebrew #113, “from an unused root (meaning to rule); sovereign, i.e. controller (human or divine):— lord, master, owner; compare also names beginning with “Adoni-.” # The original phrase tells us that David referred to his lord as a *superior* but not as God. Compare the following passage that uses the same Hebrew word. **“And the sons of Heth answered Abra-****

Study 61-A, Who or What is Elohim?

© Copyright 2002, 2007 Pastor F. Paul Haney, CFM, P.O. Box 337, Kensington, CT 06037 USA

ham, saying to him, 'Hear us, my lord: You are a mighty prince among us' (Gen. 23:5-6a). Notice that "my lord" is a human and a mighty prince. One more example: "Therefore please hear now, O my lord the king" (Jer.37:20a). Here, "my lord" is a human king.

An Important Note: The "Lord" (Yahweh) and "God" (Elohim) are one and the same individual infinite Being, they are not separate "persons."

✦ "Then *Abraham* planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and there called on the name of the LORD, the Everlasting God" (Gen.21:33).

✦ "The everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary" (Isa.40:28b).

✦ "Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go beyond the word of the LORD my God, to do less or more. Now therefore, please, you also stay here tonight, that I may know what more the LORD will say to me. And God came to Balaam at night" (Num.22:18-20).

✦ "I have obeyed the voice of the LORD my God" (Deut.26:14b). "This day the LORD your God commands you to observe these statutes and judgments" (v.16). "Today you have proclaimed the LORD to be your God" (v.17). "That you may be a holy people to the LORD your God, just as he has spoken" (v.19b).

✦ "Now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king instead of my father David" (1Ki.3:7a). "The speech pleased the LORD, that Solomon had asked this thing. Then God said to him..." (v.10-11a).

This Supreme Being, that is called LORD and God, both Yahweh and Elohim, is revealed as none other than a singular individual. To make matter worse for polytheists, the Bible states that there is no other Yahweh (LORD) or Elohim (God) in existence anywhere in the universe or in all Creation.

✦ "Hear, O Israel: The LORD [Yahweh] our God [Elohim], the LORD [Yahweh] is one!" (Deut.6:4). This "one" is not "one family" but "one" as in the numeral one.

Strong's Hebrew #259: *one*— *echad*, a numeral from 258; prop. *united*, i. e. *one*, or (as an ord.) *first*, a, alike, alone, altogether, and, any (-thing), apiece, a certain, [daily], each (one), + eleven, every, few, first, + highway, a man, once, one, only, other, some, together.

✦ "You are Gods" — Some misguided souls teach that this phrase as quoted in John 10:34 from Psalm 82 proves that Christ was God and that men were indeed "Gods"—after all, *Christ said they were*. The foolishness of such a teaching is obvious and easy to demonstrate.

The Target Scripture: "Jesus answered them, 'Is it not written in your law, 'I said, You are gods'? If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), do you say of him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?" (Jn.10:34-36). What does the passage NOT say? The first point is that Jesus DOES NOT state or claim in any way, shape, or form that he is God, rather, he says he is the "Son" of God. The son of God cannot be God.

"The Bible Knowledge Commentary" by John Walvoord (trinitarian) and the Dallas Seminary Faculty (1988 ed.) is a rabidly pro-"Jesus-is-God" volume. They explain the Target Scripture competently. On page 312, they write:

"John 10:34: Jesus' response to objections [in vv.31-33] requires a bit of insight into the methods of argument common to Rabbinic discussion. He first directed them to the Old Testament: 'in your law.' Normally 'the law' refers to the first five books. But here it means all of the Old Testament, for Jesus quoted from the Psalms. It was 'your' law in the sense that they should submit to its authority over them. Psalm 82 speaks of God as the true Judge (Ps.82:1,8) and of men, appointed as judges, who were failing to provide true judgment for God (Ps.82:2-7). 'Gods' in Psalm 82:1, 6 refers to these human judges. In this sense, God said to the Jews, 'You are gods.' In no way does this speak of a divine nature in man.

"John 10:35: As seen in verse 34, Jesus argued that in certain situations (as in Ps.82:1,6) men were called... 'gods.' The Hebrew word for God or gods is *elohim* [430]. This word is used elsewhere (e.g., [English, *the judges*] Ex.21:6; 22:8) to mean human judges."

✦ " 'You are My witnesses,' says the LORD, 'And My servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe me, and understand that I am he. Before

Study 61-A, Who or What is Elohim?

© Copyright 2002, 2007 Pastor F. Paul Haney, CFM, P.O. Box 337, Kensington, CT 06037 USA

me there was no God formed, nor shall there be after Me. I, even I, am the LORD, and besides Me there is no savior. I have declared and saved, I have proclaimed, and there was no foreign god among you; therefore you are my witnesses,” says the LORD, “that I am God. Indeed before the day was, I am he; and there is no one who can deliver out of my hand; I work, and who will reverse it?” Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel” (Isa.43:10-14).

This passage in Isaiah 43, more than any other, combines the Lord and God into one Being and strongly declares that there is no other Lord or God in existence. If this passage does not convince the polytheism camp of the oneness of God, then they simply cannot be convinced and they are without hope in this world and the next. (1). The Lord (Yahweh) is speaking. (2). No God was created before Yahweh; he was the first one. (3). No gods will be formed after the formation of Yahweh. (4). Yahweh is God (Elohim). (5). Before the day was created, Yahweh God existed. (6). Yahweh is all-powerful. (7). The Lord (YHWH) is the Redeemer and the Holy One of Israel.

✚ **The Church of God, Sabbath Day** (Springdale, AR) distributes a Bible Correspondence Course based on the teaching of Herbert W. Armstrong. In Lesson #13, they write: “So, at the prehistoric time described in John 1:1-3, we find revealed the existence of only two divine Beings. One is God. And with God is another Being who *also* is God—the One who was later begotten and born as Jesus Christ” (p.2). [The word “beget” means to procreate as a father.] Continuing: “Both members of the God Family have existed eternally.” “God is in the process of expanding His divine Family!” “Many thousands... will soon be born Into His Family... at the return of Jesus Christ.” [A prophecy of “soon.”] “Still later, thousands of millions will eventually be born into the Family of God!” (p.6). They say: “God’s purpose in creating man was to... (4) Establish the Kingdom of God, which will become composed of countless divine God Beings, eventually finish the creation of the vast universe” (p.10). God’s plan, according to this lesson, is to create “ultimately, other God Beings!” (p.11), “possessing the supreme character and awesome powers of God!” (p.12), which God-beings are defined as, “eternal members of His divine ruling Family!” (p.15).

Using the Wrong Name: Proponents of the “binitarian” (poly-binitarian: 2-plus millions of gods) form of closet polytheism have misnamed their worship model. It is properly called, “henotheism” or “monolatry,” i. e., the concept of setting one god as a supreme god above all other of their gods. Henotheism is properly a branch of polytheism as are “binitarianism” or “ditheism.” Historic binitarianism or ditheism denote two somewhat equal gods as opposed to henotheism or monolatry, which depict a supreme god and lesser hierarchical gods in a pantheon of gods. Henotheism (Greek *heis, henos*, one, and *theos*, god) can also be the belief in one god *without* denying the existence of others. Monolatry is the worship of one god where several are believed to exist. Ditheism is not merely the worship of two gods; it is the worship of two *equal* or *supreme* gods. When used, these exotic-sounding words like binitarianism denote a belief system consisting of two equal parts, as in a *binary star*, or as a couple or pair. The extension of this “binary” belief that is held by fringe groups some consists in additional gods, or simply polytheism.

→ **Henotheism and Monolatry:** There is, however, a tendency, both in individuals and in communities, even where many gods are believed to exist, to set one god above the others, and consequently to confine worship to that god alone. “The monotheistic tendency exists among all peoples, after they have reached a certain level of culture. There is a difference in the degree in which this tendency is emphasized, but whether we turn to Babylonia, Egypt, India, China, or Greece, there are distinct traces of a trend toward concentrating the varied manifestations of Divine powers in a single source” (Jastrow, *The Study of Religion*, 76). This attitude of mind has been called Henotheism or Monolatry — the worship of one God combined with the belief in the existence of many. This tendency may be governed by metaphysical, or by ethical and personal motives, either by the monistic demands of reason, or by personal attachment to one political or moral rule. ISBE, Vol. 4.

What I have presented hopefully should be sufficient to cause any reasonable thinking person to reexamine his position in the light of the Bible, rather than through the filter of tradition and church doctrine. At least, that is my prayer. — *F. Paul Haney*