

1. Why does **God** reveal Himself as **Elohim**, a *plurality*, and not **Elohe**, a *singularity*? Genesis 1:1

In the
beginning,
God
(Elohim)
created the
heavens and
the earth.
Genesis 1:1

Background: God reveals himself to us as *Elohim*- God. By definition, “God” occupies the highest place of power, for he is Head and Creator. But what of his nature? If he is to be known a solitary isolate, he would be known as *elohe (or allah)*. Rather, he reveals himself as “Elohim,” the plural form but still taking a singular form of the verb, “bara.” What does that tell you?

Focus: Consider how *Elohim*-God reveals himself in this first creation account:

- (vv. 1-3). How do God-*Elohim* and the Spirit of God- *Ruach Elohim* act differently but in a still coordinated way?
- (vv. 6-7). What does it tell you about his nature that when God commands a *rakiya* to be made, God obeys God to make *rakiya*?
- (v. 26). With whom other than God does God share an “image” (“our image”) and the act of “making” (*naaseh (pl)*).

Further Background: Biblical Monotheism and Grammatical Agreement:

As human readers, we are naturally influenced by our expectations, and the most basic being the predictability of grammar: when we hear of a singular subject, we expect only this subject to act. When there is a plural subject, we expect multiple agents acting.

In distinguishing the true God of Israel from the false gods of the nations, the Bible does not use a different word for an all powerful being. The word “Elohim” is used to name both the one true Creator (Genesis 1:1)-*Elohim*-- and the *gods* of Egypt (Exodus 18:11)– *haElohim*. Rather, **Biblical Monotheism** pairs *Elohim* (plural) with the verb *bara* (singular) to define God as ***echad***: not a monadic singularity acting singly nor a plurality acting as a plurality, but a plurality acting as a ***perfect oneness***. Biblical monotheism– the divine nature shared between Father, Son- Mashiach, and Spirit is seen both in the creation account (Genesis 1:1-2, 6-7, and 26) and even when God-*Elohim* says that man has become “like one of us” (3:22), sharing in God’s moral capacity.

Biblical Monotheism: Plural oneness- Sharing Life as a Family Oneness of Father, Son, Spirit.

Work of Creation: Obeys, makes *raqia* Gen. 1:7

Shared Image, Likeness: Family image. Ge. 1:26

Family Nature with Son, Mashiach 2 Sam. 7:12

Inheritance, Rule: Anointed Son. Psalm 2:6-9

Eternal Throne: Anointed God. Psalm 45:6-7

Lordship, Righteous Nature: Yahweh. Jer. 23:6

Name of Lord, God: Jeremiah 30:9; Is. 9:6

Saving Power: Zechariah 2:5, 12:10

Monadism: *a singularity acting in isolation. Define God as yachid.*
Singular Subject + Singular Action

Elohe (or *Allah*) singular + *bara* (singular)

Polytheism: *a plurality acting as multiple agents. Define God as not echad.*
Plural Subject + plural actions

Elohim plural + *yeleku* plural

Biblical Monotheism: *a plurality acting as a perfect oneness. God is echad.*
Plural Subject + Singular Action

Elohim plural + *bara* singular