

What About Genesis 1:26-27 (let US make mankind in OUR image"? Did "gods" create humankind?

Does Elohim, since it is structurally plural in Hebrew, always MEAN "gods" (plural)?

Contrary to Zechariah Sitchin and others, **the answer to both questions is NO**. The word "elohim" CAN mean either plural "gods" or singular "god" (or "God" as a proper name).

The grammar IN CONTEXT will tell us if it is definitely singular or plural. At times the meaning is ambiguous (there are no certain grammatical-contextual clues), but such is NOT the case in Genesis 1.

*See the **enlarged and boldfaced words** so you can pick out the proper terms and follow the discussion.

I. Elohim (אלהים)

A. In the verse below, the noun **אלהים** should be translated as **SINGULAR** because the verb with which it goes (i.e., it's the subject of that verb) in the sentence is **SINGULAR**:

Genesis 1:1 - In the beginning **God** created the heaven and the earth.

אלהים (THE VERB IS SINGULAR) **בְּרָא** Gen 1:1
את השמים ואת הארץ:

B. In the verse below, CONTEXT tells us "elohim" is SINGULAR. The word here is used in respect to the Zidonian goddess Ashtoreth, the Moabite god Chemosh, and the Ammonite god Milcom – note the word "elohim" and the fact that there is only ONE god mentioned by name with each occurrence of the word "elohim." The point is that EACH god is called an "elohim" – **all you need to do is count up to one!** It would make no sense to say "Chemosh, the godS of the Moabites."

Note: In Hebrew grammar, when "elohim" is grammatically associated to the following word, the "m" of "elohim" drops off (called the "construct relationship" in Hebrew). Therefore, "elohim" changes to "elohey"

(אֱלֹהֵי):

1Kings 11:33 Because that they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways, to do [that which is] right in mine eyes, and [to keep] my statutes and my judgments, as [did] David his father.

לְעִשְׂתֹרֶת אֱלֹהֵי צִדְוֹן 1Ki 11:33

Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians

לְכִמוֹשׁ אֱלֹהֵי מוֹאָב

Chemosh the god of the Moabites

וּלְמִלְכָם אֱלֹהֵי בְנֵי-עַמּוֹן

Milcom the god of the children of Ammon

C. In the verse below, the noun **אלהים** occurs TWICE – the first time should be translated as **SINGULAR** because (as above) the verb with which it goes in the sentence is **SINGULAR**. The second time, though, it is clearly **plural**, since it makes no sense to say: "God (elohim, singular) stands in the divine council; among God (the second elohim) he judges." Clearly the second "elohim" is plural – and so there ARE other gods in the Hebrew, but who answer to the high God (Hebrew – El Elyon, Yahweh of Israel. Yahweh is NOT to be considered "one among equals, either, in light of verses such as Psalm 29:1 (the other elohim are commanded to worship Yahweh); Exodus 15:11 (Yahweh is incomparable); Nehemiah 9:6 (Yahweh made the others – he alone is Creator and pre-existent; cp. Deut. 4:19). See my scholarly article on this very subject in the bibliography on the divine council on the "Further Study" page on my website.

Psa 82:1 *A Psalm of Asaph.* **God** stands in the divine assembly; he judges among the **gods**.

Psa 82:1 מִזְמוֹר לְאַסָּף אֱלֹהִים נֹצֵב בְּעֵצַת-אֱלֹ
בְּקִרְבַּ אֱלֹהִים יִשְׁפֹּט:

II. Elohim (האלהים - the noun elohim + the definite article)

A. In the verses below, the noun **האלהים** should be translated as **SINGULAR** because the verbs with which they go in the sentence are **SINGULAR**:

KJV Gen 20:6 And **God** said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her.

Gen 20:6 וַיֹּאמֶר (THIS VERB IS SINGULAR) אֱלֹהֵי הָאֱלֹהִים בְּחַלְמִים גַּם אֲנֹכִי יָדַעְתִּי
כִּי בַתְּמִלְכָּךְ עָשִׂיתָ זֹאת וְאֶחְשָׁךְ גַּם־אֲנֹכִי אוֹתָךְ מִחַטּוֹתַי
עַל־כֵּן לֹא־נִתְתִּיךְ לְגַנֹּעַ אֵלַיָּהּ:

KJV Gen 22:3 And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which **God** had told him.

Gen 22:3 וַיִּשְׁכֶּם אַבְרָהָם בַּבֶּקֶר וַיַּחֲבֹשׂ אֶת־חֲמֹרוֹ
וַיִּקַּח אֶת־שְׁנֵי נַעֲרָיו אִתּוֹ וְאֵת יִצְחָק בְּנוֹ וַיִּבְקַע עֵצִי עָלָהּ
וַיִּקֶּם וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־אָמַר (THIS VERB IS SINGULAR) לֹו הָאֱלֹהִים:

B. In the verse below, noun **האלהים** should be translated as a **PLURAL**, since the verb that goes with it is **PLURAL**. The divine council (and of course, the High God with them) appeared to Jacob!

KJV Gen 35:7 And he built there an altar, and called the place Elbethel: because there God (should be "the gods") appeared unto him, when he fled from the face of his brother.

Gen 35:7 וַיִּבֶן שָׁם מִזְבֵּחַ וַיִּקְרָא לַמָּקוֹם אֵל בֵּית־אֵל
כִּי שָׁם נִגְלוּ אֱלֹהֵי הָאֱלֹהִים בְּבָרְחוֹ מִפְּנֵי אָחִיו (THIS VERB IS PLURAL):

GENERALLY speaking, there are verses in the Old Testament that do speak of plural gods being real – and of being either members of God's council (Psalm 82 is the best example) or fallen members of that council. The creation account in Genesis 1:26 ("let us make man in our image"), however, is NOT an example of plural elohim.

Genesis 1:26-27

Humankind was NOT created by multiple gods in the Old Testament. It is of course true that "elohim" is MORPHOLOGICALLY plural (morphology refers to the construction or "shape" of a word). The - im ending of elohim makes the noun plural. As Psalm 82 (see above) tells us, elohim CAN be plural in the Hebrew Bible. The same psalm, though, also has elohim as a contextually clear SINGULAR (the morphologically plural word came to be used as a proper name for a singular deity). In passages other than Psalm 82, we must let GRAMMAR dictate whether the word is singular or plural. **In Genesis 1:26-27, the GRAMMAR tells us Sitchin is wrong:**

Genesis 1:26-27 –

(26) "And God (אלהים) said (the verb is SINGULAR):

Let us make man in our image, after our likeness

(these are references to God's divine council - composed of other elohim and angels - if you read *The Facade*, you'll learn about the divine council). At this point, the issue of whether humankind was created by ONE deity or many gods is still up in the air – but will be clarified by the text . . .

and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.

(27) So God (אלהים) created (the **verb is SINGULAR**) man in his own (a third masculine **SINGULAR suffix** in Hebrew) image, in the image of God (אלהים - we know this is singular as well from context - the preceding suffix tells us) he created (the **verb is SINGULAR**) him; male and female he created (the **verb is SINGULAR**) them.

Conclusion – from the TEXT:

God announced to his council his idea to create mankind (“hey, guys, let's do this!” – a sort of exhortational declaration), then HE (and he alone, by virtue of the GRAMMAR) created humankind in HIS own image (not *theirs*).

Sadly, Sitchin is either completely unaware of what's going on in the verse, or assumes no one would check, or doesn't want readers to know.