

Conundrum

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In this [study](study.html) I would like to examine a couple of issues, related to [Mashiach](mashiach.html),[[1]](#footnote-1) that are often perceived as conundrums. The dictionary defines a conundrum as:

# I. Introduction

**Conundrum**: A paradoxical, insoluble, or difficult problem; a dilemma:

The [first](one.html) conundrum that I would like to address is in the form of a question that I received by email:

*Shalom,*

*I have a* [*Jewish*](gen-jew.html) *friend. He believes that* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *must be the* [*Messiah*](mashiach.html) *because it matches prophesy, but does not believe that He is God, only a good man that* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *uses and will use to deliver His people. He tells me there is scripture that says man cannot be “God”, therefore, since* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *was a man, he could not be God. I always thought that the “trinity” theory was what made it difficult for* [*Jews*](gen-jew.html) *to accept* [*Messiah*](mashiach.html) *because the Torah* [*teaches*](teacher.html) *that there is only* [*one*](one.html) *God. This is a* [*new*](new.html) *angle to me, but I doubt it is to you. Thank you for your help.*

To put it succinctly, there are [three](three.html) parts to this question:

1. Is [Yeshua](yeshua.html) *God*? (Yes!)
2. Is [Yeshua](yeshua.html) [*HaShem*](hashem.html) (yod hey vav hey - יהוה)? (Impossible!)[[2]](#footnote-2)
3. Is [Yeshua](yeshua.html) *Elohim*? (Yes!)

The conundrum of this question stems from [one](one.html) of the [thirteen](thirteen.html) articles of [Jewish](gen-jew.html) faith, as stated by Maimonides:

1. Belief in the existence of the Creator, be He Blessed, who is perfect in every manner of existence and is the Primary Cause of all that exists.
2. The belief in [HaShem](hashem.html)’s absolute and unparalleled unity.
3. The belief in [HaShem](hashem.html)’s non-corporeality, nor that He will be affected by any [physical](physical.html) occurrences, such as movement, or rest, or [dwelling](dwelling.html).
4. The belief in [HaShem](hashem.html)’s eternity.
5. The imperative to worship Him exclusively and no foreign false gods.
6. The belief that [HaShem](hashem.html) communicates with man through prophecy.
7. The belief that the prophecy of Moses our [teacher](teacher.html) has priority.
8. The belief in the divine origin of the Torah.
9. The belief in the immutability of the Torah.
10. The belief in divine omniscience and providence.
11. The belief in divine reward and retribution.
12. The belief in the arrival of the [Messiah](mashiach.html) and the messianic era.
13. The belief in the [resurrection](techiyat.html) of the dead.

The conundrum faced by Christians is that they believe that [Yeshua](yeshua.html) is [HaShem](hashem.html) (The yod hey vav hey, The Eternal [One](one.html)), yet the [third](three.html) article of our faith states that [HaShem](hashem.html) is non-corporeal. [Yeshua](yeshua.html) was corporeal, He was “The Word made flesh”. The Nazarean Codicil agrees with our assertion that [HaShem](hashem.html) is non-corporeal.

***Yochanan (John) 1:18*** *No man hath seen God (*[*HaShem*](hashem.html)*) at any* [*time*](time.html)*; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 33:20*** *And He said: 'Thou canst not see My* [*face*](body.html)*, for man shall not see Me and live.'*

***1 John 4:20*** *If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?*

We need to keep in mind that the Tanakh never shows [HaShem](hashem.html) in a corporeal state. Those passages that are often incorrectly cited to show [HaShem](hashem.html)’s corporeality will be dealt with individually.

[One](one.html) example that is often cited by Christians is the visitation of [HaShem](hashem.html), to [Avraham](avraham.html), after Avaraham [circumcised](circumcz.html) himself.

***Bereshit (Genesis) 18:1*** *And* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; 2 And he lift up his* [*eyes*](body.html) *and looked, and, lo,* [*three*](three.html) *men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground, 3 And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I* [*pray*](prayer.html) *thee, from thy servant: 4 Let a little water, I* [*pray*](prayer.html) *you, be fetched, and wash your* [*feet*](heel.html)*, and rest yourselves under the tree: 5 And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do, as thou hast said.*

A careful reading of the above pasuk reveals that [HaShem](hashem.html) “appeared” unto [Avraham](avraham.html). Did [Avraham](avraham.html) see flesh and [blood](body.html)? Go back and carefully read the whole parasha. Notice that in addition to [HaShem](hashem.html), [three](three.html) ‘men’ also visited [Avraham](avraham.html). Notice that these men [eat](eating.html) and are treated like men, even though our Sages [teach](teacher.html) that these were [angels](angels.html): [Michael](angels.html), [Gavriel](angels.html), and Raphael. Notice also that ONLY these [three](three.html) [angels](angels.html) appear to [eat](eating.html). [HaShem](hashem.html) never [eats](eating.html).

It is also instructive to note that the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word (raah), translated as ‘appear’, is also used for a vision, as in Ezekiel 8:4 and Daniel 8:1.

Meam Loez[[3]](#footnote-3) tells us the appearance of [HaShem](hashem.html) was the “Divine Presence”. It does not indicate flesh and [blood](body.html). To further this thought, it is noteworthy that [HaShem](hashem.html), in this ‘appearance’, never says anything. This would be very odd behavior for flesh and [blood](body.html) while they are seated at your dinner table!

Another example: at the [covenant](covenant.html) between the parts, [HaShem](hashem.html) was represented by a smoking torch, even though [Avraham](avraham.html) ‘saw’ Him. At [Sinai](stages.html), [HaShem](hashem.html) specifically tells us that we did NOT see Him:

***Devarim (Deuteronomy) 4:15-19*** *Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves—for ye saw no manner of form on the day that* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)[*spoke*](mashal.html) *unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the* [*fire*](fire.html)*— 16 lest ye deal corruptly, and make you a graven image, even the form of any figure, the likeness of* [*male*](male%2Bfemale.html) *or* [*female*](male%2Bfemale.html)*, 17 the likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the* [*heaven*](heaven.html)*, 18 the likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the water under the earth; 19 and lest thou lift up thine* [*eyes*](body.html) *unto* [*heaven*](heaven.html)*, and when thou seest the* [*sun*](hachama.html) *and the* [*moon*](chodesh.html) *and the* [*stars*](mazaroth.html)*, even all the host of* [*heaven*](heaven.html)*, thou be drawn away and worship them, and serve them, which* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *thy Elohim hath allotted unto all the peoples under the whole* [*heaven*](heaven.html)*.*

Now if [HaShem](hashem.html) did not reveal any form at the REVELATION at [Sinai](stages.html), how much more should we expect that we would NOT see a form at any other [time](time.html)! [HaShem](hashem.html) has no corporeality!

# II. Elohim Translated as ‘God’

Keep in mind that the English word “God” is ambiguous and is used to translate both *Elohim* and [*HaShem*](hashem.html) in the Nazarean Codicil. [One](one.html) has to use contextual clues to distinguish which word is meant. The [Jews](gen-jew.html) during [Temple](temple.html) times had no difficulty with men being Elohim,[[4]](#footnote-4) and they [knew](daat.html) that men could NOT be [HaShem](hashem.html). The Rambam spells this out for us:

*The term elohim signifies “judges” : comp. “The cause of both parties shall come before the ‘judges” ‘ (ha-elohim; Exod. xxii. 8). It has been figuratively applied to* [*angels*](angels.html)*, and to the Creator as being judge over the* [*angels*](angels.html)*.*[[5]](#footnote-5)

Now the problem we have is: How do we prove, from the Nazarean Codicil,[[6]](#footnote-6) that [Yeshua](yeshua.html) is NOT [HaShem](hashem.html)? We have to use the Nazarean Codicil because there is no direct mention of [Yeshua](yeshua.html), by [name](name.html), in the Tanach.[[7]](#footnote-7) I’d suggest that we start with John chapter 10:

***Yochanan (John) 10:30-36*** *I and my Father are* [*one*](one.html)*. 31 Then the* [*Jews*](gen-jew.html) *took up stones again to stone him. 32* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? 33 The* [*Jews*](gen-jew.html) *answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God. 34* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *answered them, Is it not written in your* [*law*](law.html)*, I said,* ***Ye are gods (Theos)****? 35 If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; 36 Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the* [*world*](worlds.html)*, Thou blasphemes; because I said, I am the Son of God?*

How could [Yeshua](yeshua.html) possibly tell these [Jews](gen-jew.html) that they are all Gods? If [Yeshua](yeshua.html) said it, then it must be true! Thus it is that all the Children of Israel are called by [HaShem](hashem.html) to be Gods, i.e. Torah Judges. Torah Judges are called *Rabbi* by the Ashkenazi [Jews](gen-jew.html) and *Hakham* by Sephardi [Jews](gen-jew.html).

For those who do not realize it, [Yeshua](yeshua.html) (in Yochanan [John] 10:30-36) is quoting [Psalm](psalms1.html) 82:6:

***Tehillim (***[***Psalm***](psalms1.html)***) 82:1*** *<<A* [*Psalm*](psalms1.html) *of Asaph.>> God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judges among the gods. 2 How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the* [*wicked*](wicked.html)*? Selah. 3 Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy. 4 Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *of the* [*wicked*](wicked.html)*. 5 They* [*know*](daat.html) *not, neither will they understand; they* [*walk*](walking.html) *on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course. 6* ***I have said, Ye are gods (Elohim)****; and all of you are children of the most High. 7 But ye shall die like men, and fall like* [*one*](one.html) *of the princes. 8 Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt* [*inherit*](inherit.html) *all* [*nations*](nations.html)*.*

In the above passage, the Septuagint translates *Elohim* as *Theos*! This demonstrates that our Sages understood that the Greek *Theos* is an accurate translation of the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) *Elohim*. Here, as well as in other places in the Tanakh, [HaShem](hashem.html) calls all [male](male%2Bfemale.html) Israelites to become Torah Judges and their [name](name.html) as Torah Judges, is *Elohim.* Torah Judges are better [known](daat.html) as Rabbis or Hakhamim.

The Greek word is *Theos*. Thus in John 1:1 “The Word is God (*Theos*)”:

***Yochanan (John) 1:1*** *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (Theos).*

Elohim is translated as *God* in Bereshit 1:1.

***Bereshit (Genesis) 1:1*** *In the beginning God created the* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *and the earth.*

This suggests that in Yochanan 1:1, God = *Theos* = *Elohim*. With this in mind, lets retranslate Yochanan 1:1:

***Yochanan 1:1*** *In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with Elohim and the Word was Elohim.*

# III. Who is Elohim?

So, who is this Elohim? *Elohim* is a plual word that is used in [connection](connection.html) with [HaShem](hashem.html), with Moshe (Moses), with [Mashiach](mashiach.html), and indeed with all Hakhamim (Rabbis). Lets review a few pasukim to verify this:

Of [HaShem](hashem.html):

***Bereshit (Genesis) 2:4*** *These are the* [*generations*](toldot.html) *of the* [*heavens*](heaven.html) *and of the earth when they were created, in the day that* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *Elohim made the earth and the* [*heavens*](heaven.html)*,*

Of Moshe:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 4:16*** *And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people; and it shall come to pass, that he shall be to thee a* [*mouth*](body.html)*, and thou shalt be to him as Elohim.*

Of [Mashiach](mashiach.html) and of Hakhamim:

***Tehllim (***[***Psalms***](psalms1.html)***) 82:1-6*** *A* [*Psalm*](psalms1.html) *of Asaph. Elohim standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the Elohim. 2 How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the* [*wicked*](wicked.html)*? Selah. 3 Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy. 4 Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *of the* [*wicked*](wicked.html)*. 5 They* [*know*](daat.html) *not, neither will they understand; they* [*walk*](walking.html) *on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course. 6 I have said, Ye are Elohim; and all of you are children of the most High.*

***Yochanan (John) 10:33-36*** *The* [*Jews*](gen-jew.html) *answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself Elohim. 34* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *answered them, Is it not written in your* [*law*](law.html)*, I said, Ye are Elohim? 35 If he called them gods, unto whom the word of Elohim came, and the scripture cannot be broken; 36 Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the* [*world*](worlds.html)*, Thou blasphemest;*

Now, in Yochanan 1:1, The Word ([Yeshua](yeshua.html)) is *Elohim*. [Yeshua](yeshua.html) is God (*Elohim*). Additionally, we can see that [HaShem](hashem.html) is also *Elohim* in this passage because there are [two](two.html) separate entities, that created the [world](worlds.html), mentioned.

[HaShem](hashem.html) is God (*Elohim*), certain [Jews](gen-jew.html) are God (*Elohim*), and that [Yeshua](yeshua.html) is God (*Elohim*). How can this be? Once this is resolved we will clearly understand the answer to our conundrum.

Tehillim 82, quoted in Yochanan 10:34, shows us that the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word for God is *Elohim*. Additionally, from the construction of John 1:1, we can clearly see a [connection](connection.html) with Bereshit (Genesis) chapter 1. This gives us an enormous clue as to the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word underlying the word *God* in John chapter [one](one.html). Thus we see that [Yeshua](yeshua.html), in John chapter 10, is calling these [Jews](gen-jew.html), *Elohim*.

[HaShem](hashem.html) also called Moses, *God*:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 7:1*** *And* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a God (Elohim) to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet.*

In this next passage, Samuel is called *Elohim*:

***I Shmuel (Samuel) 28:11*** *Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel. 12 And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud* [*voice*](voice.html)*: and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou* [*deceived*](garment.html) *me? for thou art Saul. 13 And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for what sawest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw Gods (Elohim) ascending out of the earth. 14 And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his* [*face*](body.html) *to the ground, and bowed himself.*

# IV. The King is God’s Son

The king held a very special position of honor. He was referred to as God’s “son”[[8]](#footnote-8) in this capacity.

***2 Samuel 7:8-14*** *Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *of hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel: 9 And I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great* [*name*](name.html)*, like unto the* [*name*](name.html) *of the great men that are in the earth. 10 Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may* [*dwell*](dwelling.html) *in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of* [*wickedness*](wicked.html) *afflict them any more, as beforetime, 11 And as since the* [*time*](time.html) *that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel, and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *telleth thee that he will make thee an house. 12 And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt* [*sleep*](mashal.html) *with thy* [*fathers*](fathers.html)*, I will set up thy* [*seed*](flower.html) *after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He shall build an house for my* [*name*](name.html)*, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. 14 I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the* [*rod*](staff.html) *of men, and with the stripes of the children of men.*

[***Psalm***](psalms1.html) ***2:6*** *Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. 7 I will declare the decree:* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.*

In this sense, [Yeshua](yeshua.html) was God’s “Son,” partly because He was / will be God’s [appointed](settimes.html) King. The king was “God’s anointed”.

# V. Hakhamim = Elohim

In this next passage we see an explicit use of the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) *Elohim* as referring to Hakhamim[[9]](#footnote-9) or Rabbis (judges):

***Shemot (***[***exodus***](exodus.html)***) 22:7*** *If a man shall deliver unto his neighbour money or stuff to keep, and it be stolen out of the man’s house; if the thief be found, let him pay double. 8 If the thief be not found, then the master of the house shall be brought unto the judges (Elohim), to see whether he have put his* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *unto his neighbour’s goods.9 For all manner of trespass, whether it be for ox, for* [*ass*](chamor.html)*, for sheep, for raiment, or for any manner of lost thing, which another challengeth to be his, the cause of both parties shall come before the judges; and whom the judges (Elohim) shall condemn, he shall pay double unto his neighbour.*

The [Midrash](orallaw.html) also derives this point from Shemot 22:28:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 22:28*** *Thou shalt not revile the Gods (Elohim), nor curse the ruler of thy people.*

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah -*** [***Exodus***](exodus.html) ***XXXI:16****. THOU SHALT NOT REVILE ELOHIM (XXII, 27). R. Meir said: Above all did the Holy* [*One*](one.html)*, blessed be He, exhort Israel concerning their judges who* [*teach*](teacher.html) *them justice and concerning their ruler, for it says, THOU SHALT NOT REVILE ELOHIM, NOR CURSE A RULER OF THY PEOPLE. You will thus find that Korah and his congregation were smitten only because they stretched out their* [*hands*](fourteen.html) *against Moses and Aaron.*

**Pesiqta deRab Kahana, Pisqa** [**Twelve**](twelve.html) **XII:XXIII** R. Phineas b. Hamah said, ***I am God your God*** - to whom does He [speak](mashal.html)? It is to Moses that He speaks, saying to him, 'It is [necessary to make this statement] because I have called you God,' as it is said, ***Lo, I have set you as God to Pharaoh*** (Ex. 7:1). But, in fact, ***I am God your God***.

 Another interpretation of the verse***: I am God your God***: Our rabbis say, "He speaks of the judges. He said to them, 'It is [necessary to make this statement] [delete: not] because I have called you divinities, as it is said. ***The God [in context: the judges] you will not curse*** (Ex. 22:27). Rather: ***I am God your God***."

 Said R. Judah the Levite, son of R. Shallum, It is concerning Israel that He speaks. He said to them, 'It is necessary to make this statement] [delete: not] because I called you God, as it is said, ***I said. You are God*** (Ps. 82:6). Rather***: I am God your God***."

**\* \* \***

The Ramban, commenting on Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 21:6, says:

**6. THEN HIS MASTER WILL BRING HIM UNTO 'HA'ELOHIM'** - "to the court. The servant must take counsel with those who sold him."[[10]](#footnote-10) [Thus is the language of Rashi.] And Rabbi [Abraham](avraham.html) ibn Ezra wrote that the judges are called ***Elohim*** because they uphold the [laws](law.html) of G-d on earth.

In my opinion Scripture uses these expressions: *Then his master will bring him unto 'ha'elohim*;' the cause of both parties will come before *'ha 'elohim'[[11]](#footnote-11)* in order to indicate that G-d will be with the judges in giving their judgment. It is He Who declares who is just, and it is He Who declares who is [wicked](wicked.html). It is with reference to this that Scripture says, *he whom 'Elohim' (G-d) will condemn*.[[12]](#footnote-12) And so did Moses say, *for the judgment is G-d's*;[[13]](#footnote-13) so also did Jehoshaphat say, *for you judge not for man, but for the Eternal, and He is with you in giving judgment*.[[14]](#footnote-14) Similarly Scripture says, *G-d stands in the congregation of G-d; in the midst of 'elohim' (the judges) He judges*,[[15]](#footnote-15) that is to say, in the midst of a congregation of judges He judges, for it is G-d Who is the Judge. And so also it says, *Then both men, between whom the controversy is, will stand before the Eternal*.[[16]](#footnote-16) And this is the purport of the verse, *For I will not* [*justify*](justification.html) *the* [*wicked*](wicked.html),[[17]](#footnote-17) according to the correct interpretation. In Eleh Shemoth Rabbah I have seen it said:[[18]](#footnote-18) "But when the judge sits and renders judgment in truth, the Holy [One](one.html), blessed be He, leaves, as it were, the supreme [heavens](heaven.html) and causes His Presence to [dwell](dwelling.html) next to him, for it is said, *When the Eternal raised them up judges, then the Eternal was with the judge*.[[19]](#footnote-19)

Thus we see that Human judges, according to the Ramban, are also [know](daat.html) as *Elohim*.

Therefore, while there are human Elohim, never the less, most of the passages in the Tanach which use the word *Elohim*, refer to the Eternal [One](one.html), Blessed is He.

# VI. [HaShem](hashem.html) is also Elohim

Chazal, our Sages, [teach](teacher.html) us that *Elohim* is a [name](name.html) used by [HaShem](hashem.html) when He acts with justice, it is a [name](name.html) given to His [Mashiach](mashiach.html) when He judges, and it is also a [name](name.html) given to men when they are judges, that is Hakhamim or Rabbis.

Lets examine the comments of a few of our Sages.

Rashi, commenting on Bereshit 6:2, says that B’ne *Elohim* are the sons of the rulers, i.e. the sons of the princes and judges, for *Elohim* always implies rulership, as in Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 4:16 ‘and you shall be his master’

All of our commentators who follow the Targum, they all translate *Elohim* as ‘judge’ or ‘judges’. This is also the position of the Ramban and the [Midrash](orallaw.html).

Rabbi [Abraham](avraham.html) Ibn Ezra wrote that the judges (Hakhamim or Rabbis) are called *Elohim* because they uphold the [laws](law.html) of *Elohim* (The Eternal [One](one.html)) on earth.

Sforno wrote that human judges are referred to as *Elohim* because they judge in the image of [HaShem](hashem.html).

# VII. Understanding the Meaning of Elohim

So, what is it that [connects](connection.html) [HaShem](hashem.html), [Mashiach](mashiach.html), and certain men, that they should all be called *Elohim*? A careful [study](study.html) of Torah will show that *Elohim* is the [name](name.html) given to those who provide justice in the kingdom of [Heaven](heaven.html). The men who judge in a Bet Din (court) are called Hakhamim or Rabbis. Obviously, the [Mashiach](mashiach.html) will be the chief justice.

# VIII. The Speaker and His Word

Many have asked me to prove that [Yeshua](yeshua.html) is YHVH ([HaShem](hashem.html)). The YHVH - יהוה [name](name.html) is called [*HaShem*](hashem.html) by many pious [Jews](gen-jew.html). I will be using [HaShem](hashem.html) instead of YHVH - יהוה throughout this paper.

To begin my answer lets look at a very familiar passage and analyze it. As you read, remember that the English word “God” is ambiguous and is used to translate both [*HaShem*](hashem.html) and *Elohim*:

***Yochanan (John)1:1*** *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

In this passage, [Yeshua](yeshua.html) is referred to as *The Word*. A word is a collection of sounds uttered by a speaker. The words of a speaker are distinct from the speaker. Who is the speaker in this passage? We can gain understanding from noting the similarity between the words and the content of our passage, with the words and the content of Bereshit (Genesis) 1:3:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 1:3*** *And Elohim (God) said, Let there be light: and there was light.*

Thus we see the speaker in Yochanan 1:1 is *Elohim*. This seems simple till we note what was spoken through Yeshayahu (Isaiah):

***Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 45:5-8 I*** *[am]* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, and [there is] none else, [there is] no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not* [*known*](daat.html) *me: That they may* [*know*](daat.html) *from the rising of the* [*sun*](hachama.html)*, and from the west, that [there is] none beside me. I [am]* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, and [there is] none else. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *do all these [things]. Drop down, ye* [*heavens*](heaven.html)*, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth* [*salvation*](salvation.html)*, and let righteousness spring up together; I* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *have created it.*

In this passage we learn that [HaShem](hashem.html) created everything. So who created the [world](worlds.html), *Elohim* or [*HaShem*](hashem.html)? Are these [two](two.html) different names for the same entity?

The answer, of course, is that these are [two](two.html) names for [HaShem](hashem.html). *Elohim* is the [name](name.html) used when He is judging [and creating] and [*HaShem*](hashem.html) is the [name](name.html) used when [HaShem](hashem.html) is exercising the attribute of loving kindness. Rashi [teaches](teacher.html) us this in:

**Rashi’s Commentary for: Hoshea 14:2 - to the Lord your God** [One](one.html) [taught](teacher.html) in the [name](name.html) of Rabbi Meir: Return, O Israel, while He is still יהוה , with the Divine Attribute of Mercy; otherwise, He is אֶלֹהֶיךָ with the Divine Attribute of Justice, before the defense becomes the prosecution.[[20]](#footnote-20)

As simple as this answer is, we have a problem:

***Yochanan (John) 1:3*** *All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.*

In this passage it says that The Word created everything. So, what is the answer? I will make it clear. Here is what happened: [HaShem](hashem.html) exercising the attribute of justice (using the [name](name.html) *Elohim*), [spoke](mashal.html). The Word came out of His [mouth](body.html) and created that which [HaShem](hashem.html) commanded. In this way we see That [HaShem](hashem.html) created everything by His Word. The Word created that which [HaShem](hashem.html) commanded. This shows that [HaShem](hashem.html) and The Word are related, but, The Word is **not** the Speaker, [HaShem](hashem.html) is the speaker and The Word is that which [HaShem](hashem.html) [spoke](mashal.html).

Conclusion: [HaShem](hashem.html) is different from *The Word*. [HaShem](hashem.html) is The Speaker who [spoke](mashal.html) *The Word*.

There are [two](two.html) [creation](bara.html) narratives: [One](one.html) in Bereshit (Genesis) 1:1 - 2:3, and a second in Bereshit (Genesis) 2:4 – 3:23. With the exception of the text involving the nachash, the serpent. The nachash exclusively use the [name](name.html) Elohim - אֱלֹהִים.

In Bereshit (Genesis) chapter [one](one.html), the [name](name.html) used by the Creator is Elohim - אֱלֹהִים .

In Bereshit (Genesis) 2:4, we see a [name](name.html) switch. Here the Creator becames [HaShem](hashem.html) Elohim - יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים.

What makes this technical observation so interesting is that it appears as though [two](two.html) were involved in creating the [world](worlds.html). The [first](one.html) Creator is the [name](name.html) used for judgment, Elohim - אֱלֹהִים. The second [name](name.html), [HaShem](hashem.html) Elohim - אֱלֹהִים, add the [name](name.html) [HaShem](hashem.html) which is normally the attribute of ‘compassion – rachamim - רַחֲמִים’.

When the [two](two.html) [name](name.html) יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים appear together, it is a very difficult concept for people to see compassion within strict judgment. We see this combination again in Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 9:30 [speaking](mashal.html) about the [seventh](seven.html) [plague](plagues.html) of hail with [fire](fire.html) in it. Just as we cannot comprehent [fire](fire.html) within ice, so we cannot comprehend יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים.

In Bereshit (Genesis) 1:26, When God said: 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...’, it is as though Elohim is [speaking](mashal.html) to [HaShem](hashem.html), and together they are going to create man. Think of the danger of creating man, if the only being who creates man is Elokim. How does man [know](daat.html) who he is? By looking to his Creator. If the only being that I can look to is Elokim, how am I going to see myself? What values am I going to adhere to? What am I going to think the prime value in the universe is? ***Power***. What happens if man thinks that the ultimate prime value is the acquisition of power? Man, even in [World](worlds.html) [One](one.html), even if he cannot yet understand Yud-Hei-Vav-Hei, because that hasn't been revealed because you're living in this [world](worlds.html), you need to understand there's another side to the story. Someone else created you too. There's another part of God who you can't understand who you're a child of too. We are not just tzelem Elokim, made in the image of Elohim, we are tzelem Yud-Hei-Vav-Hei Elohim.

That's what it means "na'aseh [adam](adam.html) b'tzalmeinu kidmuteinu," let us make man in our image. We evince qualities of both sides of [HaShem](hashem.html) together and have to figure out how we manage that. But no matter where we came from, we always have to understand that, even in this [first](one.html) narrative of [creation](bara.html), we need to understand there's more to the picture.[[21]](#footnote-21)

Taken together, the arguments presented in this paper prove conclusively that [Yeshua](yeshua.html) is NOT [HaShem](hashem.html) (yod hey vav hey).[[22]](#footnote-22) Additionally, we can clearly see that [Yeshua](yeshua.html) is *Elohim*.

So, let us return to our original questions:

1. Is [Yeshua](yeshua.html) God? Yes, [Yeshua](yeshua.html) is *Elohim*.
2. Is [Yeshua](yeshua.html) [HaShem](hashem.html) (YHVH - יהוה)? Impossible, [HaShem](hashem.html) is non-corporeal.
3. Is [Yeshua](yeshua.html) *Elohim*? Yes!

# IX. *B’ne Elohim* - The Sons of God

[HaShem](hashem.html) wanted to have a family with which to have fellowship. Several different entities have been called the *son of God* throughout scripture:

**1. Judges or** [**angels**](angels.html)**:**

***Iyov (Job) 2:1*** *Again there was a day when the sons of God [B’ne Elohim] came to present themselves before* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, and Satan came also among them to present himself before* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*.*

**2.** [**Adam**](adam.html)**:**

***Luqas (***[***Luke***](luke.html)***) 3:38*** *Which was the son of Enos, which was the son of Seth, which was the son of* [*Adam*](adam.html)*, which was the son of God.*

**3. The** [**nation**](nations.html) **of Israel:**

***Hoshea 11:1*** *When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son* [*out of Egypt*](thebirth.html)*.*

**4.** [**Yeshua**](yeshua.html)**:**

***Marqos (Mark) 9:7*** *And there was a* [*cloud*](important.html) *that overshadowed them: and a* [*voice*](voice.html) *came out of the* [*cloud*](important.html)*, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.*

**5. Followers in the footsteps of** [**Yeshua**](yeshua.html)**:**

***Yochanan (John) 1:12*** *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his* [*name*](name.html)*:*

There are [ten](ten.html) individual classes of [angels](angels.html) in *Sefer* *Yetzirah*: Chayot Hakodesh, Ofanim, Erelim, Chashmalim, Seraphim, Malachim, *Elohim*, B’ne *Elohim*, the [Cherubim](angels.html), and the Ishim. Each level of [angel](angels.html) has a different [name](name.html). The highest level consists of the Holy Chayot, then come the Ophanim, the Erelim, the Chashmalim, the Seraphim, the Malachim, the Elokim, the [Kruvim](angels.html) and the Ishim. The highest level is that of the Holy Chayot and there is none other above it, except that of [HaShem](hashem.html). Therefore, in the Prophecies, it is said that they are underneath [HaShem](hashem.html)’s throne. The tenth level consists of the Ishim, who are the [angel](angels.html) who [speak](mashal.html) with the Prophets and appear to them in prophetic visions. They are therefore called Ishim - ‘men’ - for the reason that their level is closest to that of the intellect of Man.[[23]](#footnote-23)

The [Jewish](gen-jew.html) Encyclopedia tells us who the B’ne Elohim are:

“The “sons of God” are mentioned in Genesis, in a chapter (vi. 2) which reflects pre-prophetic, mythological, and polytheistic conceptions. They are represented as taking, at their fancy, wives from among the daughters of men. For the interpretations given to this statement, and Flood in Rabbinical Literature. As there stated, the later [Jewish](gen-jew.html) and Christian interpreters endeavored to remove the objectionable implications from the passage by taking the term “B’ne ha-*Elohim*” in the sense of “sons of judges” or “sons of magistrates.” In the introduction to the Book of Job (i. 6, ii. 1) the “B’ne ha-*Elohim*” are mentioned as assembling at stated periods, Satan being [one](one.html) of them. Some Assyria-[Babylonian](bavel.html) mythological conception is held by the critical school to underlie this description of the gathering of the “sons of God” to present themselves before YHVH. Another conception, taken from sidereal religion, seems to underlie the use of the phrase in Job xxxv:7.”[[24]](#footnote-24)

# X. My [Teacher](teacher.html)’s Thoughts

His Eminence, Hakham Dr. [Yosef](joseph.html) ben Haggai has also [taught](teacher.html) us the meaning of *B’ne Elohim*:

What is the difference between *ELOHIM* and B’NE *ELOHIM*?

Well if I may put it this way, it is like the difference between HAKHAM (a judge and [teacher](teacher.html)) AND TALMID HAKHAM (a student), which are often in Rabbinical literature used to denote the same person. For all Hakhamim have been Talmidim of some Hakham at [one](one.html) point in their lives.

But more precisely [speaking](mashal.html), Hakham refers to the earlier Sages of the Sanhedrin, whilst Talmid Hakham refers to our present Rabbis. The same with *Elohim*. Precisely [speaking](mashal.html) Adonai ([HaShem](hashem.html)) is *Elohim* par excellence, He is the ultimate judge. And we judges are B’ne *Elohim*. On the other [hand](fourteen.html) the terms are used interchangeably to denote the same thing JUDGE or JUDGES, irrespective of whether it is [HaShem](hashem.html) or His delegated agents.

# XI. Names Shared with [HaShem](hashem.html)

Now that we have some understanding of [Mashiach](mashiach.html)’s names, it is worth looking a bit more at the names that are shared by [HaShem](hashem.html) and men.

[One](one.html) of the things that I have learned from Chazal is that EVERY [name](name.html) that is [one](one.html) of [HaShem](hashem.html)’s names, is also a [name](name.html) shared by men EXCEPT [HaShem](hashem.html) (יהוה).

With this in mind, I would like to explore an enigmatic pasuk that is often misunderstood. This is how this pasuk is rendered by the JPS translation:

***Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 9:5*** *For a child is born unto us, a son is given unto us; and the government is upon his shoulder; and his* [*name*](name.html) *is called Pele- joez-el-gibbor-Abi-ad-sar-shalom;* {That is, Wonderful in counsel is God the Mighty, the everlasting Father, the Ruler of peace.} *6 That the government may be increased, and of peace there be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it through justice and through righteousness from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *of hosts doth perform this.*

The JPS translation shows us what [Jews](gen-jew.html) understand this passage to be saying. It also shows that the child’s [birth](birth.html) is miraculous enough to be a [sign](signs.html) to King Ahaz, yet it is not a [virgin](virgin.html) [birth](birth.html), but rather an unexpected [birth](birth.html).

This child that is born is to be a [sign](signs.html) to King Ahaz.

***Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 7:10*** *And* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)[*spoke*](mashal.html) *again unto Ahaz, saying: 11 ‘Ask thee a* [*sign*](signs.html) *of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *thy God: ask it either in the depth, or in the height above.’ 12 But Ahaz said: ‘I will not ask, neither will I try* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*.’ 13 And he said: ‘Hear ye now, O house of David: Is it a small thing for you to weary men, that ye will weary my God also? 14 Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a* [*sign*](signs.html)*: behold, the young woman shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his* [*name*](name.html) *Immanuel. {That is, God is with us.} 15 Curd and honey shall he* [*eat*](eating.html)*, when he knoweth to refuse the evil, and choose the good. 16 Yea, before the child shall* [*know*](daat.html) *to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land whose* [*two*](two.html) *kings thou hast a horror of shall be forsaken.*

This child is the child that is born in v9:5 as a [sign](signs.html) to King Ahaz. This suggests that if the child that was born to King Ahaz, was born normally, then the same would apply to [Mashiach](mashiach.html)’s [birth](birth.html). To put it another way, if [Mashiach](mashiach.html) was born of a [virgin](virgin.html), then so also was the child born as a [sign](signs.html) to King Ahaz. Further, The [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word ‘almah’ is a young woman. It is NOT the word for [virgin](virgin.html).

[One](one.html) of the places, according to Hakham Tovia Singer, where the uncommon [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word *almah* appears in the Tanakh is:

***Mishlei (Proverbs) 30:18-20*** *There are* [*three*](three.html) *things which are too wonderful for me,* [*four*](four.html) *which I do not understand: the way of an eagle in the sky, the way of a serpent on a* [*rock*](rock.html)*, the way of a ship in the middle of the sea, and the way of a man with a young woman [b’alma]. This is the way of an adulterous woman: she* [*eats*](eating.html) *and wipes her* [*mouth*](body.html)*, and says, “I have done no wrong.”*

In the above [three](three.html) verses, King Solomon compares a man with an *almah* to [three](three.html) other things: an eagle in the sky, a serpent on a [rock](rock.html), and a ship in the sea. What do these [three](three.html) things all have in common? They leave no trace. After the eagle has flown across the sky, determining that the eagle had ever flown there is impossible. Once a snake has slithered over a [rock](rock.html), there is no way to discern that the snake had ever crossed there (as opposed to a snake slithering over sand or grass, where it leaves a trail). After a ship has moved across the sea, the water comes together behind it and there is no way to tell that a ship had ever passed through there. Similarly, King Solomon informs us that once a man has been with an *almah* there is also no trace of the fornication that had occurred between them. Therefore, in the following verse (verse 20) King Solomon explains that once this adulterous woman has [eaten](eating.html) (a metaphor for her fornication), she removes the trace of her sexual activity by exclaiming, “I have done no wrong.” The word *almah* clearly does not mean [virgin](virgin.html).

In the same way that in the English language the words “young woman” have no bearing on whether virginity is present or not, in the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) language there is no relationship between the words *almah* and [virgin](virgin.html). On the contrary, it is usually a young woman who bears children. Had Isaiah wished to [speak](mashal.html) about a [virgin](virgin.html) [birth](birth.html), he would have used the word *bethulah**[[25]](#footnote-25)* not *almah*. *Bethulah* is a common word in the Tanakh, and can only mean “[virgin](virgin.html).”

If this passage is used to demonstrate that [Mashiach](mashiach.html) is Deity, then we must conclude that the child born as a [sign](signs.html) to King Ahaz was also Deity. This posses many problems.

Because of the duality of these pasukim, we must conclude that the child born as a [sign](signs.html) to King Ahaz was not a [virgin](virgin.html) [birth](birth.html), nor was the child, Deity. Additionally, we must conclude that [Mashiach](mashiach.html) was not born of a [virgin](virgin.html), nor is He Deity.

# Bibliography:

The Guide For The Perplexed By Moses Maimonides, Translated from the original Arabic text by M. Friedlander, PH.D.

\* \* \*

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Return to The WATCHMAN home page.

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1. I will be using *Mashiach* (Messiah) as it is normally used by Christians. When Christians use the word Mashiach in an unambiguous way, it always pertains to Mashiach ben Joseph. When Jews use the word Mashiach in an unambiguous way, it always pertains to Mashiach ben David. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See Yochanan (John) 1:18 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The Torah Anthology, Meam Loez, book II – The Patriarchs, pg. 158. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. C.f. The Guide For The Perplexed By Moses Maimonides, Translated from the original Arabic text by M. Friedlander, PH.D. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. New Testament [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. the Old Testament [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. See 2 Samuel 7:14; Psalm 2:7-9 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. This is the [Hebrew](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5CYeshua%5Chebrew.html) word that is used by Sefardi [Jews](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5CYeshua%5Cgen-jew.html) to refer to their Rabbis. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. This section speaks here of one who was sold by the court for a theft which he had committed and was not able to pay for (further, 22:2). On refusing to go free at the end of his six years of service, the servant is to take counsel with his vendors [the court] **"and they will advise him to go free, for when he is free he can serve G-d in more ways than he could as a servant etc."** (Zeh Yenachmeinu commentary on the Mechilta). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Further, 22:8. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Deuteronomy 1:17. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. II Chronicles, 19:6. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Psalms 82:l. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Deuteronomy 19:17. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Further, 23:7. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Shemoth Rabbah 30:20. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Judges 2:18. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. From Pesikta d’Rav Kahana, p. 164a. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. A word of caution, everything that I've said here is anthropomorphic. You have to understand, there's God as He truly is and then God as human beings try to understand Him. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. See Yochanan (John) 1:18 [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Hilchot Yesodei Hatorah [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, God, children of [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. In fact, although Isaiah used the [Hebrew](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5CYeshua%5Chebrew.html) word *almah* only one time in his entire corpus (7:14), the prophet uses this word [virgin](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5CYeshua%5Cvirgin.html) (*betulah*) [five](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5CYeshua%5Cfive.html) times throughout the book of Isaiah (23:4; 23:12; 37:22; 47:1; 62:5). [↑](#footnote-ref-25)