

REVISED AND UPDATED



THE GOD OF TWO TESTAMENTS



*Who was Jesus of Nazareth:
fraud, prophet, or God Himself?
And what is the relationship of
Jesus and the Trinity?*

| R. Brent Graves

The God of Two Testaments

by R. Brent Graves

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Contents

Preface to the Second Edition	9
Introduction	17
1. ELOHIM: MIGHTY GOD	23
Let Us Make Man	
The Hebrew Intensive Plural	
Pagan Trinities?	
Yahweh Himself Is Elohim	
There Is One El	
Adonai Is Yahweh	
Three Honest Men	
2. JESUS: YAHWEH-SAVIOR	41
The Great "I Am"	
The Rock	
The Good Shepherd	
The Author of Life	
Jesus: Yahweh-Savior	
3. SON OF MAN	67
At the Right Hand of God	
At the Right Hand of Power	
All Power	
A Son over His Own House	
Eternal Son or Begotten Son?	
4. ETERNAL FATHER	123
The New Testament Salutations	
The Salutations and Commas	
The Truth about <i>Kai</i>	

Children of the Light	
One God—the Father	
“The Father Is in Me”	
5. THE HOLY SPIRIT	169
What about I John 5:7?	
One Spirit	
The Lord Is That Spirit	
Born of the Spirit	
6. LORD OF ALL	201
One Lord	
Lord of All	
“If the Lord Wills”	
“Come, Lord Jesus!”	
7. THE TRUE GOD	229
Why Jesus Was Worshiped	
The King Eternal	
The Alpha and the Omega	
The Judgment Seat of Christ	
Emmanuel: God with Us	
“Our Great God and Savior”	
“The True God”	
8. NO OTHER NAME	277
Sharp’s Rule in Reverse?	
Matthew 28:19	
The Father	
The Son	
The Holy Spirit	
The Weight of the Evidence	
Jesus: Yahweh-Savior	
A Mark and a Name	
No Other Name	
Notes	331



Chapter 1

Elohim: Mighty God

The creation . . .

In the beginning there was chaos—like an ocean of seething oil—shapeless.

At the command of the celestial deities, the god Izanagi and the goddess Izanami stood upon the Floating Bridge of Heaven and plunged a jewel-bedecked spear into the ocean of chaos.

They stirred it until the liquid thickened and coagulated.

Then they withdrew the spear, and the drops that fell from its tip formed the tiny island of Onokoro that nestled in the waves like an emerald.

Pleased with their creation, they descended upon a rainbow to the newly formed island and made it the

Central Pillar of earth! (Kojiki)

Thus we have an account of the creation according to Japanese mythology. Scholars normally use the word *myth* to mean either a story of “unknown origin” that is at least partially traditional or a story invented to explain a truth, religious belief, or practice. Whether we turn to Africa, South America, North America, Europe, South Asia, the Far East, or the Middle East, the mythologies of the nations have their dashing heroes and villains—both gods and goddesses. Such deities, we are told, are responsible for the creation of the world and everything in it. One famous version explains the heaven and the earth as nothing less than the corpse of a goddess slain in battle! Small wonder that scholars commonly refer to these mythologies as “creation myths,” for so they are. All the creation accounts of antiquity read like the inventions of demented minds with vivid imaginations.

That is, all except one. One ancient version ranks far superior to the others—the account of the creation in the first chapter of Genesis. Unlike the pagan versions with their many gods and goddesses, the Bible simply states: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Genesis 1:1).

In striking contrast to the world’s religions, the Bible informs us that there is but *one* God responsible for the creation. No divine villains here! No jealous deities here! No capricious gods and goddesses here! Only one God—the Creator. Commenting on the unique claim of the Old Testament, an authoritative Jewish source reminds us: “Completely new . . . was Israel’s idea of God. . . . Paganism is challenged in all its aspects. God is One;

there is no other (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:21; 46:9).”¹

Let Us Make Man

Despite the testimony of Jewish scholarship, despite the consistent record from the Bible itself that “God is One: there is no other,” some have stepped forward to offer a challenge. They have turned to the first chapter of Genesis for the basis of that challenge:

“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” (Genesis 1:26).

According to some Christian writers, this verse indicates that God is one Being—but a Being composed of more than one divine person. In discussing the clause, “Let us make man,” one commentator suggested that “the three persons of the Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, consult about it and concur in it.”²

If this conjecture is accurate, then we have a serious challenge to the strict statements of other Old Testament Scripture. But *is* the above conjecture accurate? And what does *Hebrew* scholarship say about Genesis 1:26? With regard to the latter question, Dr. Ephraim A. Speiser wrote that even though plural pronouns are used, a singular *sense* is meant. In his own words: “Here God refers to himself, which may account for the more formal construction in the plural.”³

The statement in Genesis could be a kind of “literary plural.” And according to Dr. Speiser’s translation of the Hebrew idiom, we should have in the English: “Then God said, I will make man in my image, after my likeness.”⁴