

**נעשה אדם: AN INTERPRETATION OF
THE PLURAL FORM SPEECH IN GENESIS 1:26
AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CONTEMPORARY CHURCH**

222.11
Aj 71-L

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THEOLOGICAL STUDIES
THE NIGERIAN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
OGBOMOSO, NIGERIA**

**IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE
OF MASTER OF THEOLOGY**

**BY
SILENT ADUCHE FRANK AJOKU**

JUNE 2005

06 — 0511

ABSTRACT

The title of this research exercise is, “**נעשה אדם** An Interpretation of the Plural Form Speech in Genesis 1:26 and Its Implications for the contemporary Church.” The project is an attempt to answer the questions, Who was God’s audience? Did any being assist God in the creation of man? Why then did God speak in plural form? And, what implications has the plural form speech for the contemporary church? The researcher specifically limited himself to the dimension of examining the possible meanings of the speech. That is, he attempted to elucidate the reasons that God had in mind for making that speech.

To unravel the puzzle of the subject, the researcher embarked on a six-chapter work. Chapter one is the introduction. It consists, among other items, the statement of the problem and the purpose and significance of the research. The ultimate purpose of the work is to bring mankind into reconciliation and relationship with her loving Creator. In the second chapter the researcher examines some of the interpretations which scholars attach to the plural form speech in Genesis 1:26. The purpose of the chapter is to enable readers realize that other biblicists have also attempted to interpret the Divine speech and that the researcher is only a contributor to the subject.

The researcher, in chapter three summarises the creation episode, vis-à-vis, the creation of the heavenly beings, the creation of the universe, and the creation of man which prompted the plural form speech. Then the chapter

also contains exegeses of Genesis 1:26 and other passages where God spoke in plural form. The purpose of this chapter is to furnish readers with the background of the plural form speech for thorough understanding of the work.

Chapter four is the interpretation of the plural form speech proper. The researcher proceeds to unravel the meanings of the Divine speech, thus: that, God's love necessitated it, God invited the members of the heavenly court to participate in man's affairs, God modelled lifestyle principles for man, and that God declared accomplished Divine purpose. Further, the writer explains that the speech was God's inauguration of the concept of stewardship, God's demonstration of His sovereignty, and was uttered for the sake of the glory of God.

The fifth chapter of the work brings the implications of the plural form speech for mankind particularly the contemporary church. According to the researcher, mankind, in response to the episode of the plural form speech, should appreciate God for his acts of love, recognize the worth of man, emulate God in His model lifestyle principles, and embark on devoted study of the Word of God. Also, there is need for Christians to accommodate and encourage fellow Christians and Christian workers, mankind and the church should embrace the concept of stewardship, man needs to obey God and the implication that man needs to depend on God, her great Creator.

Chapter six summarises and concludes the research. It contains the recommendations which will enable the contemporary church to thrive in the contemporary world. Among other things, the church needs to embark on missions, demonstrate Christlike lifestyle, and be involved in social ministry.

The church should also engage in fight for human rights, earnestly contend for the Faith, and pray fervently.

This work, in fact, is an indepth introduction to the personalities of God and man. It also apetises one to read the Scripture that records the episodes of God and man which commences with the plural form speech. Readers are, therefore, enjoined to ~~to~~ take advantage of the availability of this research work. It will not only lead one to be reconciled to God, it illumines the heart for the knowledge of God and the Scripture. Shalom!

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

A. Conclusion

The effort of this work has been an attempt to interpret the plural form speech in Genesis 1:26, as well as elucidate its implications for the contemporary church. The researcher attempted to answer the questions: Why did God speak in plural form at the time of creation of man? To whom did He communicate? Why did He choose to speak in cohortative voluntative tone when no being assisted Him to create mankind? And what are the likely meanings of the speech? The concentration of the research, however, narrowed down to the last question, that is, elucidating the possible meanings embedded in the plural form speech.

Some reasons given for the Divine speech in plural form are that the love of God for man necessitated the speech, that God invited members of the heavenly court to participate in the affairs of man, and that God modelled lifestyle principles for mankind. Further, the researcher states that, in the speech, God declared an accomplished Divine purpose, that God anticipated the concept of stewardship in the life of mankind, and that in the speech God demonstrated His sovereignty. The last reason given for the plural form speech is that the speech with its antecedent is for God's glory.

Consequent upon the embedded meanings of the plural form speech the researcher drew some implications for mankind, especially for the contemporary church. The first implication is that of showing appreciation to God for His acts of love toward man. This is followed by the need for the recognition of the worth of man. Other implications are the need for man to emulate God's model lifestyle principles for man, devoted study of the Word of God and preaching and teaching of the Word of God. At the rear are the implications of accommodating and encouraging fellow Christians and Christian workers, the concept of stewardship, the need for man to obey God and the expediency for man to depend on God.

B. Recommendations

In view of the implications of the plural form speech, for mankind in general and the contemporary church in particular, the researcher of this work deems it fit to put forward some suggestions.

1. The Contemporary Church Needs to Embark on Intensive Study of the Scriptures

The first is that the contemporary church needs to embark on an in-depth study of the work of God. She needs to do so, strictly in the context of Genesis 1-2. That is, other parts of the Scripture should be studied in relationship to the creation accounts especially the plural form speech. The understanding from such study will equip the church for her mission to the world (Josh. 1:1-9, Ps. 1:1 ff).