

“let us”

There are two primary ways scholars and theologians have understood the “us” in Genesis 1:26, as well as in Genesis 3:22. The first is that the “us” is a reference to God and His angels and/or celestial beings. This understanding is based on an aspect of heaven that the Bible emphasizes where God sits enthroned. The imagery is often of a courtroom or palace and God is surrounded with a court or counsel of angels who He consults with (1 Kings 22:19-22; Daniel 7:10; Psalm 82; Psalm 89:5-7). It is in this setting elsewhere in Scripture where the “us” language occurs (Isaiah 6:8). Based on this, scholars conclude that the “us” is a reference to God and His counsel of angels.

The other primary reading understands the “us” to be an early reference to what we now call the Trinity, that is, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Those who hold this position would point out that both the Spirit and Jesus were present at creation and participating in the Divine activity of creating (Gen. 1:2; Colossians 1:16). This reading employs an interpretive method known as *sensus plenior*, which is a Latin phrase that means “fuller sense.” The idea is that God employs human authors inspired by His Spirit to write Scripture. Because of this there will be occasions where the authors write things they or their original audience may not fully comprehend and the *fuller sense* of the meaning doesn’t become clearer until further revelation is given by God.

Both of these positions make valid arguments. I don’t know that making a decision either way radically changes anything in our understanding of God or who we are in light of His truth. Nor do I think the two options are mutually exclusive.