

# Defining the Oneness of God

by Carl Franklin

## Modalistic, Trinitarian and Tritheistic Oneness Defined

Ancient philosophers called Modalists taught that God is a single divine Being Who manifests Himself in different modes or ways. Based on this philosophic concept, whole denominations of Christians firmly believe that God has always been only one divine Being. In Old Testament times He was known as *Yahweh* or *Jehovah*, and since the New Testament, they say, He is both the Father and the Son- -a single Being. Leaders of these denominations claim that this belief is Scriptural: "What is the essence of the doctrine of God as taught by the Bible--the doctrine we have labeled Oneness: First, there is one indivisible God with no distinction of persons. Second, Jesus Christ is the fullness of the Godhead incarnate. He is God the Father--the Jehovah of the Old Testament--robed in the flesh. All of God is in Jesus Christ, and we find all we need in Him. The only God we will ever see in heaven is Jesus Christ" (Ibid., p. 304).

The God of the Old Testament, according to this definition, was a "one in one" God, and the New Testament God appears to be a "two in one" God. The author of the above definition of oneness readily admits that this doctrine, embraced by tens of millions of fundamental evangelical Christians, has its origin in ancient Modalism. He also shows that this Modalist belief is actually similar to the Trinitarian belief in a "three in one" God. Notice his summary statement in the glossary:

**"Modalism.** Term used to describe a belief in early church history that Father, Son, and Spirit are not eternal distinctions within God's nature but simply *modes* (methods or manifestations) of God's activity. In other words, God is one individual being, and various terms used to describe Him (such as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) are designations applied to different forms of His action or different relationships He has to man....Also called modalistic monarchianism, Patripassianism [the teaching that the Father suffered on the tree], and Sabellianism [the philosophy of Modalism as taught by the philosopher Sabellius ca. 100 A.D.]. Basically, modalism is the same as the modern doctrine of Oneness....Modalistic monarchianism held that God is one individual being and that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are terms which apply to different modes of action of the one God. Unlike dynamic monarchianism, modalistic monarchianism identified Jesus Christ as God Himself (the Father) manifested in flesh" (Ibid., pp. 318-319).

Modalism holds that while only one divine Being exists, that single divine Being can manifest Himself in three different modes at once--as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Although Modalism supports a "three in one" God, the author who espouses the Modalist

definition of oneness asserts that "Oneness believers ... reject trinitarianism as a departure from biblical monotheism" (Ibid., p. 319).

### **Trinitarian Oneness**

The majority of Christians around the world hold the Trinitarian view of God's oneness. In the Western world, most of these Christians follow the form of Trinitarianism that is based on the Athanasian Creed. To these Christians, the term "oneness" means that three distinct deities coexist in a single divine Nature or Substance. These three distinctions are called "Persons," but are not actually persons in the true sense of the word. Here is a statement of the Trinitarian belief:

"There are then (as the statement may run) three Persons (Hypostases) or real distinctions in the unity of the divine Nature or Substance....As a 'person' in Trinitarian usage is more than a mere aspect of being, being a real ground of experience and function, each divine Person, while less than a separate individuality, possesses His own hypostatic character or characteristic property" (W. Fulton, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, "Trinity," pp. 459-460).

The doctrine of Trinitarianism states that there are three distinctions, called "Persons" or "Hypostases," in one divine Substance, but only one distinction or "Person" can be manifested at any given time. This definition of God contradicts that of the Modalist, who claims that the single divine Substance can manifest itself in all three modes (or "Persons") at the same time.

Trinitarianism views God as a sort of hide-and-peek, peek-a-boo God who has neither body nor personality, but who can manifest Himself as Father or Son or Holy Spirit--only one at a time. Unlike the Trinitarian belief, the God of Modalism can manifest Himself as Father, Son or Holy Spirit all at the same time.

According to the Trinitarian statement of belief, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are all divine "Persons," but each is "less than a separate individuality." In other words, these "Persons" are not actually individuals. This statement is confusing and contradictory because it is expressing philosophical concepts that were deliberately intended to be interpreted in different ways. These philosophic constructs have always been ambiguous statements of belief. A word or phrase used in these statements may be given a variety of philosophic definitions. The result is that more than one meaning can be drawn from the same statement.

When we read such statements, we should be aware that the problem in understanding them is not due to our own lack of intellect but to the ambiguous construction of the statements themselves. This type of grammatical structure is known as "amphiboly." Statements which are worded in an amphibolous manner allow room for a variety of interpretations. Amphiboly has long been a favorite tool of philosophers and politicians. "Amphibolously worded predictions [and philosophic constructs] have long been exploited by astrologers [ancient Magi/Chaldean philosophers], tea-leaf readers, political columnists, and even ancient oracles [demonically inspired mediums]" (Rescher, *Introduction to Logic*, p. 75).

To add to the confusion, the names used in philosophical statements are often **vacuous**; i.e., the names *as they are used* actually designate nothing! Names are *properly* used to designate a thing or entity or to describe an aspect of a thing or entity--a quality that the

entity has or a relationship it bears to something else. Names that *do not* represent such actual things or entities are vacuous--empty and meaningless. Here is a warning against being misled by such names: "A name that literally designates nothing [the "One" or the "Hypostases" of philosophy] is called a **vacuous name**. Because of vacuous names, care must be taken when some name is presented to avoid the conclusion that there necessarily exists a thing which answers to this name. A subtle but important line of separation must be drawn between names with fictitious or imaginary designations [such as characters in plays, novels or movies] and vacuous names. This distinction is sometimes obscured by the fact that one and the same name may fall into either category, depending upon how it is understood" (Ibid., p. 23).

The names "One," Hypostases, Father, Son, Holy Spirit, God, Person and Being can be categorized either as authentic names or as vacuous names, depending on *how they are used*. These terms are *vacuous* as used in philosophic statements about the Trinity. These names are *not vacuous* when we understand them in the light of God's Word. To define these terms solely in the artificial framework of philosophic constructs and then attempt to superimpose this philosophy upon Scripture makes these names vacuous and meaningless.

Those who profess allegiance to the God of the Bible and then proceed to distort God's Word, elevating the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle above His Word, are not Christian but pagan. The paganism of ancient and modern philosophers is not compatible with the Holy Scriptures. As the pagan philosopher Mortimer J. Adler so forcefully and honestly wrote in *How to Think About God: A Guide for the 20th-Century Pagan*: "The God that is the object of pagan philosophical thought is not the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, or of Moses, [or] Jesus ..." (p. 28).

### **Tritheistic Oneness**

One school of thought among Trinitarians insists that God's oneness is manifested in three individual Beings, each possessing a separate personality, body and intellect. Modalists and Trinitarians are quick to brand Tritheism as a form of ancient pagan polytheism, the belief in a plurality of gods. Polytheism taught that the gods bore human shapes, animal shapes, or half human/half animal shapes, and human or animal characteristics; i.e., personality, self-awareness, form, intellect, emotions. Other human characteristics attributed to these false gods were procreation, family structure, industry and warfare. The process of attributing human characteristics to deities is called anthropomorphism.

While it is true that many ancient pagan religions were guilty of anthropomorphism, it does not negate the fact that the true God shares many of the same characteristics which He bestowed upon humankind! God Himself declares that He has made us in His image (Genesis 1:26-27). It is utter folly to assert that Christians are anthropomorphizing God by accepting and believing what God reveals about Himself in His Word.

Belief in a personal God Who possesses emotion and intellect, and a spiritual body with eyes and ears, arms and legs and hands and feet, should not be discredited and dismissed under the label of anthropomorphism. The determining factor in evaluating any belief should not be how it is categorized, but whether or not the teaching agrees with the revealed Word of God.

Even pagan philosophers, with all their misguided speculations on the nature of God, admit that the Word of God clearly reveals Him as a fully personal Being. Notice this admission in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*:

"In the preceding sections [article "God, Concepts of"] it has been assumed that God has personality. The assumption is justified by the fact that... philosophers (in the West, at any rate) have nearly always described His nature to some extent by analogy with the human self....While Aristotle's first mover contemplates Himself, He does not have any knowledge of the world. Therefore, like Spinoza's God, He cannot return the love that He receives....Some thinkers have attempted to mediate between philosophy and religion by suggesting that concrete images of God are inadequate attempts to grasp a reality that is suprapersonal. Thus Hegel [the philosophic father of Nazi Germany] held that absolute spirit can be adequately known only by speculative intellect [philosophy]. Consequently, when he speaks of the absolute as God he means by God (as Aristotle meant) self-thinking thought. The personal God or Theism is a prerational [pre-philosophical] and imperfect representation (Vorstellung) of the absolute....**Christians, however, are obliged by revelation [the Word of God] to identify the absolute with a God who is fully personal, both in Himself and in His dealings with mankind.** Such primary images as Father, King, and Friend mediate a knowledge that cannot be surpassed by abstract speculation [philosophy]"(p. 347).

## **Ditheistic Oneness (Binitarian or Bi-personal)**

Another little known concept of God's oneness is Ditheism (also called Bi-personal or Binitarianism), the belief that there are two personal, intelligent, equally powerful Beings Who are both God. These two Beings possess personality and spiritual senses, experience emotions, and have spiritual bodies with arms and legs, and heads with eyes, ears, noses and mouths.

These divine Beings are Persons in the true sense of the word. They communicate with mankind through spiritual thought (prayer) and through Their written Word. They are revealed in the Old Testament both as *Jehovah* and *Elohim*, and individually as the Ancient of days and the Son of man (Daniel 7:13-14, 22). They are revealed in the New Testament as God the Father and God the Son. There is no other God besides these two Beings. In this sense they are the only God.

Although few people today have ever heard the terms Ditheism or Binitarianism, the belief in two divine Beings was widely held among Christians in early New Testament times. As one authority states, "...the whole history of early Christianity gives us abundant examples of Binitarian thought" (*Essays on the Trinity and the Incarnation*, edited by A. E. J. Rawlinson, p. 201).

Contrary to modern opinion, the doctrine of Trinitarianism did not naturally develop from the teachings of the early New Testament Church. In fact, a study of early Christian beliefs shows that:

"contemporary [New Testament] thought-- **if it had been allowed to mold or influence the [modern] Christian conception of God in any way--would have produced a doctrine not of three, but of two persons in the Godhead.** Further, there is ample evidence to show that it did actually have such an effect; and that **Trinitarianism had to**

**fight its way** and make good its footing **against a strong tendency**, both within and without the Church, **towards belief in a Godhead of two persons only**" (Ibid., p.162).

Even early Jewish belief did not totally reject the concept of a Bi-personal or Binitarian God. Here is a striking admission:

"If, then, we find that, without abandoning his dominant monotheism, the pious Jew was prepared to admit a divine Being distinguishable in name and function from Jahweh, and to some degree self-existent, of whom personal relationship with man is predicable, we must conclude that even this strict school of monotheism recognized at least the possibility of a bi-personal God" (Ibid., p. 184).

As the doctrine of Trinitarianism began to develop, the early Binitarian Christians were caught in a controversy over the two opposing beliefs. It was "**a struggle between a Binitarian and Trinitarian interpretation of the Christian facts**--a struggle which maintained itself **for nearly four centuries** [spanning one fifth of the entire history of Christianity]" (Ibid., p. 199).

A major element of the controversy was the relationship of Christ and the Holy Spirit. Was the Spirit a distinct person, or did the Spirit come from Christ as His power? Rawlinson, an Anglican bishop and scholar, finds abundant evidence in the New Testament to illustrate a strong Christian belief in the Spirit as the power of Christ and the Father. He states,

" . . . **in the New Testament**, there can be no doubt that the other strain of thought in which **the Spirit is regarded in the main as an 'influence,' 'gift,' or 'power' sent by the Father and the Son, and not as a distinct person**, is fully represented. M. Lebreton [*Les Origines du Dogme de la Trinite*, pp. 347-348] repeatedly admits that **large numbers of texts represent the Spirit as an impersonal force, both in Acts and in St. Paul**" (Ibid., p. 203).

Rawlinson makes it clear that the apostle Paul did not regard the Holy Spirit as a distinct person, but as the power of Christ. He writes,

"When, therefore, we are told, as we commonly are, that St. Paul 'identifies' the Risen Christ with the Spirit [2 Corinthians 3], we must assume the critics to mean that his theology in the main belongs to the second (or 'Macedonian') type previously mentioned. **A second divine being, who may be called indifferently the 'Son,' 'Image,' or 'Wisdom' of the Father** ...has been incarnate among men, and now from his risen sphere extends his fellowship to men and **sheds out his influence** [through the Holy Spirit as just attested] upon those who accept it" (Ibid., pp. 204-205).

Rawlinson further attests to the contrast between Trinitarianism and the Binitarian theology of the apostle Paul:

"The result of his [the apostle Paul's] innovation, however, is to reinforce the conclusion that we cannot eliminate from his thought a very large admixture of **purely Binitarian elements, in which the Spirit--if distinguished from Christ at all--is distinguished as the thing from the person, the gift from its giver, the influence from its fount, and not as one hypostasis in the Godhead from another** " (Ibid., p. 207).

The writings of the apostle Paul clearly reveal a Binitarian view of the Holy Spirit. The predominance of Binitarian thought in early Christianity is evident not only in Paul's epistles but also in other New Testament epistles, as Rawlinson shows in the following summary:

"Of the seventeen Epistles which open with the invocation of 'grace and peace' or the like upon the readers, in thirteen these gifts are specifically mentioned as coming from 'God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ'; in two there is explicit mention of the first two Persons of the Trinity in the same context, though not definitely as the source of grace; in one (Colossians) the reading varies between 'from God' and 'from God and Christ'; in one only (1 Peter ) is there any mention of the Spirit at all, and then not as a source of grace. Of the formulae of thanksgiving or blessing which in eleven cases follow the opening salutation, three are addressed to the Father alone, one to the Father and the Son, six to the Father with an immediate and closely related mention of the Son (e.g. 'the God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ'); one is quite vague; but in not a single case is there any mention of the Spirit at all. **The facts are startling in their importance. Here are formulae as fixed and solemn, in their way, as the baptismal formula itself; twenty-two of them are definitely Binitarian, only one [in 1 Peter ] is [remotely] Trinitarian "** (Ibid., pp. 203-204).

The New Testament bears ample evidence of the Binitarian beliefs of the apostles of Jesus Christ. Yet in the centuries that followed, the doctrine of Trinitarianism came to dominate Christian thought. If the apostles of Christ did not profess the Trinity, upon what authority was the doctrine of Trinitarianism introduced into the Christian Church? How can the acceptance of Trinitarianism as a Christian doctrine be explained? Rawlinson gives the answer when he states that:

**"...if the faith [in the Trinity] be logically and empirically unverifiable [not supported by the New Testament], even the fact that the earliest [Roman] Christians held it cannot vindicate it, unless our appeal be to bare authority [of the Roman church] and that alone "** (Ibid., p. 210).

It is a historical fact that the doctrine of the Trinity entered the New Testament church through the influence of Rome. As the influence of the Roman church grew, belief in the Trinity spread throughout the Christian churches. In time, the doctrine of Trinitarianism replaced the earlier Christian belief in a Bi-personal God.

Although Trinitarianism had the greatest influence on Christian belief in the early centuries, the doctrine of Modalism also had its effect. Introduced by the philosopher Sabellius about 100 A.D., the teaching that Jesus and the Father were one and the same God soon had followers in many churches. While some Christians embraced this Modalist teaching, other Christians denounced it as heresy. A record from 170 A.D. shows the Ephesus brethren resisting the doctrine of Modalism and holding to their belief in a Bi-personal divinity. Here is that historical account:

"Noetus [a Smyrnan brother who as a devout Modalist founded the Patripassian heresy], when cited before a council in Asia Minor [the elders at Ephesus], sought to conceal his Patripassian learning by emphasizing his monotheism, and pathetically exclaimed: 'What wrong have I done? I adore the One God, I know but One God, and none beside Him, who was born, suffered, and died! [Ephiphanius, *Haeres.*, 57, 1]. The assembled bishops (called *presbyteri*, [Polycrates among them]) did not reply that they were Ditheists. They simply declared: 'We, too, adore the One God, but in a manner in which we know that He

is adored rightly. And we likewise possess the One Christ,...the Son of God, who suffered and died" (Preuss, *The Divine Trinity: A Dogmatic Treatise*, p. 119).

The elders of Ephesus in New Testament times affirmed their belief in two Beings who are God--God the Father, and God the Son. Does this statement of belief fit the Scriptural definition of the oneness of God?

We should not base our answer to this question on the teachings of philosophers and theologians. God Himself reveals the true answer in His Word. Let us examine the Scriptures to find the true meaning of God's oneness.

## The Scriptural Meaning of "One."

Any definition of the oneness of God is valid only if it conveys truthful meaning about the God of Scripture. Truthful meaning will obviously be supported by contextual use of the word "one" in Scripture. A systematic study of the use of this word in Scripture will reveal the true meaning of God's oneness. The Holy Scriptures reveal God as He really is and not as He is conceived to be in the vain imaginations and reasonings of pagan philosophers and modern theologians. We must be careful not to interpret God's Word in the artificial framework of ancient philosophy or our modern language and culture.

The Scriptures clearly reveal the meaning that God attaches to the word "one." This word is used too numerous to check every usage in the Old Testament and the New Testament. However, we can find prime examples in Scripture to illustrate that the word "one" is used both quantitatively (as a cardinal or ordinal number) and qualitatively (as a characteristic or attribute, or to show unity). We will first investigate the **quantitative usage** of the word "one" and then investigate its **qualitative usage** in Scripture.

### "One" Used as a Cardinal Number

"One" is most often used in Scripture as a cardinal number. Cardinal numbers tell us how many units there are in a group. A good example of this usage is found in Deuteronomy 1:23: "...and I took twelve men of you, **one [Hebrew *echad*] of a tribe.**" The obvious meaning of "one," as defined by the context, is that one person (the unit) was to be chosen from each of the twelve tribes (the group). Other examples in Deuteronomy are: "... that fleeing unto one [the unit] of these cities [the group]" (Deuteronomy 4:42); "...the Lord shall choose in one [the unit] of thy tribes [the group]" (Deuteronomy 12:14).

We find other examples of the usage of "one" as a cardinal number in Isaiah:

"seven women [the group] shall take hold of one man [the unit]" (Isaiah 4:1)

"...ten acres [the group] shall yield one bath [the unit of measure]" (Isaiah 5:10).

### "One" Used as an Ordinal Number

"One" is also used in Scripture as an ordinal number. An ordinal number denotes order, succession or degree. Ordinal numbers are expressed as "first, second, third," as opposed to "one, two, three." We find many examples in the Old Testament of this usage of "one." In the first chapter of Genesis we read,

"And God said, 'Let there be light' and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first [Hebrew *echad*] day" (verses 3-5).

The word "first" is the same Hebrew word that is elsewhere translated "one." In this verse it is translated "first" and is used as an adjective to qualify the noun "day." The meaning of "day" in Genesis 1:5 is limited or qualified by the adjective "first"; it is the first day of seven days. "First" is an ordinal number which positions this day in relationship to six others; it is the first day or day one in a series of seven. It is thus the first of a unit of seven days.

Another Old Testament example of the word "one" as an ordinal number is found in Isaiah 41:4:

"Who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? **I the Lord [Jehovah], the first, and with the last; I am He.**"

A similar example of "one" as an ordinal number is found in Isaiah 48:12:

"Hearken unto Me, O Jacob and Israel, My called; **I am He; I am the first, I also am the last.**"

And again in Isaiah 44:6:

"Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and his Redeemer the Lord of hosts; **'I am the first, and I am the last; and beside Me there is no God.'** "

When God states, "...beside Me there is no God," He is revealing that He is the only God! Here God Himself defines what He means by the statement, "I am the first, and I am the last."

The above statement is also found in the New Testament in reference to the glorified Jesus Christ:

"And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, 'Fear not; **I am the First and the Last**' " (Revelation 1:17).

Another example of the ordinal use of "one" in the New Testament is found in Matthew 28:1:

"In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre."

The Greek word translated "first" in Matthew 28:1 is the feminine *mia*. The word "day" in this verse is not found in the Greek text. A more accurate translation is "the first of the weeks." **This day that was dawning was the day of the Wave Sheaf, the day from**



**which seven sabbaths or weeks were numbered to Pentecost; it was the beginning of the first week of seven weeks.**

"First" is an ordinal number which positions this week in relationship to six others; it is the first week or week one in a series of seven.

"In the end of [Greek *opse ge*, meaning "after the close of"] the sabbath [Greek *sabbaton*, sabbaths (plural)], as it began to dawn toward the first of the week [Greek *mia sabbaton*, the first of sabbaths or weeks], came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre" (Matthew 28:1).

The account in the Gospel of Mark also uses "one" as an ordinal number. Mark confirms that this day was the "first of the weeks." In Mark 16:2 we read,

"And very early [Greek *proi*] in the morning the first day ["day" is not in the Greek text] of the week [Greek *sabbaton*, sabbaths or weeks] they come to the tomb, having risen the sun [Greek *anateilantos ton helios*]" (Berry, *The Interlinear Greek- English New Testament*).

Luke's account also confirms that this was the "first of the weeks," which began the seven weeks leading to Pentecost.

"Now [But] upon the first day [the word "day" is not in the Greek text] of the week [Greek *sabbaton*, sabbaths or weeks; the expression "first of the weeks" designates the Day of the Wave Sheaf], very early in the morning [Greek *orthros bathus*, at deep or early dawn], they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared" (Luke 24:1).

John records of these events,

"The first [Greek *mia*] day [not in the Greek text] of the week [Greek *sabbaton*, weeks or sabbaths] comes Mary Magdalene early [Greek *proi*] when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and sees the stone taken away from the sepulchre" (John 20:1).

John records that as Mary Magdalene approached the tomb of Jesus it was yet dark, but the darkness was beginning to be tempered by the first glint of light at daybreak (Greek *proi*). Bullinger equates Greek *proi* with 3 to 4 A.M., a period of time well before sunrise! John's testimony affirms that by the first light, the stone had already been rolled back by the angel. Jesus had been resurrected before sunrise.

All four Gospel writers agree in their use of "one" as an ordinal number to pinpoint the Day of the Wave Sheaf as the day immediately following the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

We have studied Scriptural examples of the use of "one" as both a cardinal number and an ordinal number. Now that we have examined the **quantitative use** of "one" in Scripture, let us take a close look at Scriptural examples of the **qualitative use** of "one." In qualitative usage, "one" may be used either to show unity or to designate attributes or characteristics. Let us first examine the Scriptural use of "one" as an expression of unity.

**"One" Used as a Physical Union of Individuals**

A good example of the use of "one" to express unity is found in Genesis 2:24: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: **and they shall be one flesh.**"

None of our universal, human experiences concerning the marriage of a man and a woman would ever lead us to proclaim that once married, the flesh of two separate humans becomes a single fleshly unit! The obvious meaning of this Scripture is that man and woman become "one unit" of two fleshly beings now called a family! This example illustrates that the word "one" in Scripture can mean a union or combination of two separate individuals--a compound unity.

Although philosophers do not go so far as to claim a single fleshly unity, they do empty this clear Scriptural statement of its obvious, contextual meaning by claiming that it is nothing more than an allegory. Philosophers use this literary device as a pretext to interpret a noun naming a person (such as Adam, Eve, father, mother, man, woman, husband, wife) as a noun naming a concept (such as love, sacrifice, humility, courage, dignity, strength, hate). Real persons are mythologized and treated as mere symbols of ideas. Applying this rule of allegory, the Scriptural account of Adam and Eve becoming "one flesh" (two humans acting as one in a state of marriage) is viewed as a personified idea! The names of real persons thus become vacuous.

The apostle Paul warned against those who use this literary technique to mythologize Scripture. In his epistle to Timothy, Paul wrote, "Neither give heed to fables (*muthos*) and endless genealogies" (1Timothy 1:4). Paul shows in his epistle to Titus that these fables were of Jewish origin (Titus 1:14). These Jewish mythologies transformed the history of the Old Testament into fables through the process of allegorization. Philo was the most infamous of those Jews who were guilty of allegorizing Scripture. The "endless genealogies" that Paul warns against were not family histories but gnostic divinities, which developed as a result of vain philosophical speculations about the nature of the godhead, councils of angels and angelic hierarchies of *elohim* (Arndt and Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 154). These rabbinic/gnostic speculations were similar to speculations currently being promoted in many churches of God.

We must be on guard against the influence of philosophers and others who allegorize the words of God and deny the truth of Scripture. The account of the creation of Adam and Eve in the book of Genesis is **not an allegory!** It is the *true story* of the beginning of the human race, revealed by the Creator Himself.

The account of Adam and Eve in the second chapter of Genesis illustrates the Scriptural usage of "one" to designate a physical union of two individuals. A second example in the book of Genesis reveals that "one" may also designate a physical union of many individuals. In Genesis 34:16 we read, "Then will we give our daughters unto you, and we will take your daughters to us, and we will dwell with you, **and we will become one people.**" The two peoples would exchange their daughters in marriage and, as a result, would become one unified people. Many hundreds, perhaps thousands, would eventually share the same bloodline.

### **"One" Used as a Spiritual Union of Individuals**

In addition to showing physical unity, "one" is also used in Scripture to show spiritual unity. In this usage, "one" refers to a spiritual union that is composed of individual members. One example of this Scriptural usage of "one" is the spiritual Body of Jesus Christ, which is

composed of many individual members. We who are joined to Christ through the indwelling of the same Spirit that fills Him become members of His body, as Paul explains in 1 Corinthians .

**"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body:** so also is Christ. For by **one Spirit** are we all baptized into **one body** , whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into **one Spirit**. **For the body is not one member, but many"** (1Corinthians 12:12-14).

The Greek word translated "one" in this passage is *hen*, which means "one in essence." This Greek word makes it clear that Paul is speaking of *spiritual* unity, not physical unity. The spiritual body of Christ is "one" not because its individual members are physically assembled in one congregation, or are enrolled in one church organization, but because all its members are united by the "one Spirit" of God.

Paul emphasizes that the Spirit of God, although dwelling in many individuals who are separate entities, is "one Spirit." Paul's inspired words show that the Spirit of God the Father and the Spirit of Jesus Christ are the same Spirit. Paul tells us that it is Jesus Christ Who apportions the Spirit for various services or ministries, not through a hierarchical ministry but directly to individual Christians as it pleases Him. Paul also declares that it is the Father Who energizes the work of the Spirit in individuals. Notice Paul's words at the beginning of this same chapter:

"Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led. Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God [Greek *Theos*, the Father] calleth Jesus accursed [Greek *anathama*]: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord [Greek *Kurios*, the Son], but by the Holy Ghost [linking the Spirit with *Theos*, the Father]. Now there are **diversities** [Greek *diareses*] **of gifts, but the same Spirit**. And there are differences of administrations [Greek *diakonia*, services], but **the same Lord** [Greek *Kurios*, the Son]. And there are diversities of operations [Greek *energema*], but it is **the same God** [Greek *Theos*, the Father] which worketh all in all.

" But the **manifestation of the Spirit** is given to every man to profit withal [for the edifying of others in the Body of Christ, not for self-aggrandizement]. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues [languages]; to another the interpretation of tongues [languages]: **but all these worketh that one** [Greek *hen*, one in essence] and the **selfsame Spirit** [an emphatic statement meaning "one and the same"], **dividing to every man severally as He will** [the one Spirit of God is individually apportioned as God Himself chooses]" (1Corinthians 12:1-11).

Paul states that the Holy Spirit is divided or apportioned among individual Christians in various spiritual gifts. The fact that spiritual gifts are selectively given to individual Christians shows that this dividing or apportioning of the Spirit is deliberate and willful. It is the "grace of forethought." The selective distribution of the differing gifts of the Spirit by the Father and the Son shows action on the part of God that is of the intellect. These actions point to personal Beings Who are not only aware of Themselves as individuals but are aware of Christians as individuals!

Paul tells us that while individual Christians are given different gifts and "differences of administrations," or differing services to fulfill, they are "one" because they are all serving **the same Lord**. Earlier in this same epistle, Paul likens himself and Apollos to laborers in a garden to illustrate the spiritual unity of the servants of God. Paul writes,

"Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers [Greek *diakonos*, servants] by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God That giveth the increase. **Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one** [Greek *hen*, one in essence; i.e., they serve the same Master] : and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. **For we are labourers together with God:** ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building" (1Corinthians 3:5-9).

Paul makes it clear that although we receive differing gifts and render different services through the Spirit of God, we are all spiritually "one" in Jesus Christ. As a human body is composed of many members with different functions, so is the one spiritual Body of Christ.

**"For as we have many members in one** [Greek *hen*, one in essence] **body, and all members have not the same office** [Greek *praxis*, practices or deeds] : **so we, being many, are one** [Greek *hen*, one in essence] **body in Christ, and every one members one of another"** (Romans 12:4-5).

The Greek word *hen*, translated "one" in verse 5, is referring to the spiritual unity of all true Christians as individual members of the body of Christ. In His epistle to the Ephesians, Paul shows that the **"one body"** of true believers is **composed of both Israelites and Gentiles**. Paul explains to the Gentile Ephesian Christians that, although they were excluded from the promises of God given to Israel under the Old Covenant, they have become heirs of the promise of grace through Jesus Christ. It is His blood, the blood of the New Covenant, which reconciles both Gentile and Israelite to God, making them "one body"--the new spiritual Israel of God.

"Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: but now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh [to God the Father] by the blood of Christ [the atonement for both Israelite and Gentile].

" **For He** [Jesus Christ] **is our peace, who hath made both** [Gentile and Israelite] **one** [Greek *hen*, one in essence; i.e., spiritually united under grace] , **and hath broken down the middle wall of partition** [by ending the Old Covenant and establishing the New] **between us;** having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances [the sacrifices and rituals demanded by the Old Covenant]; for to make in Himself of twain [Gentile and Israelite] one new man [a "new creation"--the spiritually begotten Christian], so making peace; **and that He** [Jesus Christ] **might reconcile both** [Israelite and Gentile] **unto God** [Greek *Theos*, the Father] **in one body** [the new spiritual Israel] **by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby** [the penalty for sin]: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through Him [Jesus Christ] we both [Israelite and Gentile] have access by one Spirit unto the Father" (Ephesians 2:11-18).

Later in his epistle, Paul urges the Ephesian Christians to maintain their spiritual unity as "one body." Paul writes,

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; **endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit** in the bond of peace. [Paul now amplifies what he means by "the unity of the Spirit."]

"There is **one** [Greek *hen*, one in essence] **body** [the one true spiritual body of Christ--the "new Israel of God," composed of both Israelites and Gentiles], **and one** [Greek *hen*, one in essence] **Spirit** [the Spirit of God the Father and Jesus Christ], even as ye are called in **one hope** [the resurrection to immortality]; **one** [Greek *heis*, one and the same] **Lord** [only one true *Kurios/Christos*], **one faith** [only one true relationship with Him], **one baptism** [only one true baptism into His death and resurrection], **one** [Greek *heis* one and the same], **God and Father of all** [Greek *Theos/Pater*], **who is above all, and through all, and in you all**" (Ephesians 4:1-6).

Paul's description of the unity of the Spirit again shows that individual Christians, whether Israelite or Gentile, are spiritually united as "one." The "one body" of true believers is united by "one Spirit" and worships "one Lord" and "one God and Father" according to "one faith."

## "One" Used of Spiritual Unity with Jesus Christ

In addition to showing the spiritual unity of individual Christians with one another, the Scriptures also use "one" to show the spiritual unity of individual Christians with Jesus Christ. As Paul declared to the Corinthian Christians, participating in the true New Testament Passover makes individual Christians "one" with Christ, and therefore "one body."

"The cup of blessing [the Passover cup of wine] which we bless, is it not the communion [fellowship] of the blood of [the] Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion [fellowship] of the body of [the] Christ? **For we being many are one** [Greek *heis*, one and the same] **bread, and one** [Greek *hen*, one in essence] **body: for we are all partakers of that one** [Greek *hen*, one in essence] **bread**" (1Corinthians 10:16-17).

The "one bread" that each Christian partakes of during the New Testament Passover ceremony represents the body of Christ. Verse 17 clearly shows that when individual Christians participate in the New Testament Passover each year, they are partakers of Christ! They renew their "oneness" with Christ and continue in spiritual unity with Christ under the New Covenant of grace.

Just as participating in the true New Testament Passover unites each Christian with Christ, Paul warned the Corinthians that participating in the communion services of the pagan world around them would unite them with demons. Paul declared,

"But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils [demons behind the worship of false gods and goddesses], and not to God [Greek *Theos*, the true God]: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the

[Passover] cup of the Lord [Greek *Kurios*], and the [communion] cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's [Greek *Kurios*] table [the Passover], and of the table of devils [communion of Mithras and other false gods]" (1Corinthians 10:20-21).

Paul's inspired words make it clear that our fellowship makes us "one" with whatever God that we worship, whether Jesus Christ--the only true Lord--or a false god that actually represents an evil spirit.

### **"One" Used of the Spiritual Unity of Christ with the Father**

"One" is also used in the New Testament to show the spiritual unity that Jesus Christ shared with God the Father even while Jesus was in the flesh. Jesus Himself said, "I and My Father are one" (John 10:30).

Christians who follow the Modalist definition of oneness interpret this Scripture as saying that Jesus and the Father are "one" in number--only one divine Being. But does this interpretation fit the true meaning of "one" in John 10:30? Let us examine this verse in its context:

"Then came the Jews round about Him, and said unto Him, 'How long dost Thou make us to doubt? If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.' Jesus answered them, 'I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of My sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, **neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are one** [Greek *hen*, one in essence; i.e., the Father was doing the work through Jesus].

" Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, '**Many good works have I showed you from My Father;** for which of those works do ye stone Me?' The Jews answered Him, saying, 'For a good work we stone Thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God.' Jesus answered them, 'Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; **Say ye of Him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?** If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not. But if I do, though ye believe not Me, **believe the works:** that ye may know, and believe, that **the Father is in Me, and I in Him'** " (John 10:24-38).

Notice that the Greek word translated "one" in John 10:30 is *hen*, which means "one in essence," and denotes spiritual unity and accord. If Jesus had intended to reveal that He and the Father were one and the same Being, we would find the Greek word *heis* in this verse. *Heis* is the Greek word that means "one in number" or "one and the same" (1Corinthians 10:17, Ephesians 4:5-6).

In *The Hebrew/Greek Key Study Bible* we read, "*Heis* means one numerically while *hen* means one in essence, as in John 10:30; 'I and My Father are one (*hen*)' (i.e., one in essence although two different personalities). Had it said *heis*, it would have meant one person" (Zodhiates, p. 1711).

The Greek word *hen*, or "one in essence," is the same word that is used in other New Testament passages to show the spiritual unity of individual Christians with one another (Romans 12:5), as well as the spiritual unity of Israelites and Gentiles through Christ (Ephesians 2:14). It would be ridiculous to interpret these Scriptures as evidence that individual Christians are "one person" or "one in number." It is equally foolish to claim that the use of *hen* in John 10:30 means that Jesus and the Father are the same Being!

When Jesus said, "I and My Father are one," He was declaring to the Jews that He was "one in essence" with the Father because the Spirit of the Father was dwelling in Him. In the same sense, individual Christians are "one in essence" because the Spirit of the Father and of Christ dwells in them. It is the *unity of the Spirit* that joins Christians in "one body" and makes every Christian "*one*" with Jesus Christ and the Father.

It is important to understand that in John 10:30 the Greek word *hen*, or "one in essence," is expressing *unity of the Spirit*. It is **not** defining God as one divine Being, or as one "divine Substance" with three "Persons" or "distinctions." The fact that *hen* is found in numerous Scriptural references to men and women, both Israelite and Gentile, who have received the Spirit of God--but who are nevertheless fleshly human beings--shows that "one in essence" *is not limited to God alone*. **There is no Scriptural basis for interpreting "one in essence" as one divine Being, or one "divine Substance" with three "Persons" or "distinctions," when the Scriptures use this same term in reference to individual Christians.** The Scriptures clearly reveal that fleshly human beings who have received the gift of the Holy Spirit are "one in essence" *in the same way* that Jesus and the Father are "one in essence." Notice Jesus' own words as recorded by the apostle John:

"As Thou [*Theos*, the Father] hast sent Me [*Theos*, the Son] into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; **that they all may be one** [Greek *hen*, one in essence]; **as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one** [Greek *hen*, one in essence] **in Us:** that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. **And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one** [Greek *hen*, one in essence] , **even [exactly] as We are one** [Greek *hen*, one in essence]: I in them, and Thou in Me, **that they may be made perfect in one** [Greek *hen*, one in essence]; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me..." (John 17:18-23).

These words of Jesus Christ make it abundantly clear that true Christians become "one" **exactly as Jesus and the Father are "one."** No one is deluded enough to claim that Christians merge and become one "Being" or one indivisible "Substance" when they become "one" with Christ. Then why do so many, who profess themselves to be wise and knowledgeable in the Scriptures, persist in imagining God as "one divine Being" or "one divine Substance with three manifestations"? Why do they refuse to acknowledge that the word "one" in these Scriptural references was used by Jesus to express His spiritual unity with the Father?

Those who cling to the false concepts of philosophy are blinding themselves to the true meaning of God's oneness. If we sincerely seek to understand the oneness of God, we must look to the words of God, and we must be willing to acknowledge what the Scriptures reveal.

We have studied Scriptural examples of the use of the word "one" to express the *spiritual unity* of God. Now let us examine the usage of "one" in Scriptural references which describe other attributes of God.

### **"One" Used to Show the Superiority of God**

Two Scriptures, one in the Old Testament and one in the New, are often used to support the Modalist and Trinitarian concepts of God's oneness. The primary Old Testament verse is Deuteronomy 6:4:

"Hear, O Israel, the Lord your **God is one** Lord."

And the primary New Testament verse is Galatians 3:20:

"Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but **God is one.**"

In Modalist and Trinitarian theology, all other Scriptures are made to conform to the meaning attributed to these two verses. As a spokesman for one denomination recently claimed, Deuteronomy 6:4 carries the weight of "...the full divinity of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" and is the "biblical foundation for all Trinitarian discussions."

There is no Scripture that generates more controversy concerning the meaning of "one" than Deuteronomy 6:4. What meaning did God convey when He inspired Moses to proclaim, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord [Hebrew *Jehovah*] our God [Hebrew *Elohim*] is **one Lord** [Hebrew *Jehovah*]" ?

Through these words, Jehovah is conveying a message of great significance. He is communicating to Israel through Moses and reminding Israel of an essential attribute of His nature. What conception of Himself did Jehovah desire that Moses and all Israel draw from these words? Did He intend to convey the message that He was only one in number--or three in one--as many have assumed? Is this view of Deuteronomy 6:4 the correct Scriptural interpretation? How can we know the true meaning of these words that God Himself inspired Moses to proclaim?

In order to understand the true meaning of Deuteronomy 6:4, we must first examine it in the light of the Scriptural context in which God has placed it. The true meaning of Deuteronomy 6:4 becomes clear when we read the preceding chapters in the book of Deuteronomy. Let's begin with Deuteronomy 4. The chapter opens with an exhortation to Israel to keep the statutes and judgments commanded by God and delivered to them by Moses. In the following verses, Moses reminds Israel of the greatness of their God, and admonishes them not to turn aside after false gods made in the image of humans or animals, or to corrupt themselves by worshipping the "host of heaven"--gods and goddesses of the sun, moon and stars. Moses proclaims that if Israel fails to heed his warning, God will scatter them among the nations. Then Moses shows God's mercy by declaring,

"But if from thence thou shalt seek the Lord [Hebrew *Jehovah*] thy God [Hebrew *Elohim*], thou shalt find *Him*, if thou seek Him with all thy heart and with all thy soul" (verse 29).

Continuing in Deuteronomy 4, in verse 35 we read,



"Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that the Lord [Hebrew *Jehovah*] He is God [Hebrew *Elohim*]; **there is none else beside Him.** "

And in verse 39 we read,

"Know therefore this day and consider it in thine heart, that the Lord [Hebrew *Jehovah*] *He is* God [Hebrew *Elohim*] in heaven above, and upon earth beneath: **there is none else.**"

The reason for this emphasis is revealed in verse 40: "Thou shalt keep therefore His statutes, and His commandments...."

In Deuteronomy 4, *Jehovah/Elohim* is revealing His exclusive superiority by inspiring Moses to proclaim "**there is none else.**" *Jehovah* is clearly revealing that **He alone is God.** In the following chapter, Deuteronomy 5, Moses reminds Israel of their covenant with God at Mt. Horeb (verse 2). Moses then repeats the words of God when He spoke the Ten Commandments to Israel. Moses recounts the fear that filled Israel at the awesome manifestation of God's presence, and their request that Moses act as mediator between them and God. They agreed to keep all the words of God that Moses delivered to them. In verse 32, Moses binds Israel to their promise by declaring, "Ye shall observe to do therefore as the Lord your God has commanded you...."

This is the Scriptural context leading up to Deuteronomy 6. Israel is being admonished not to turn aside but to obey the commands of God because **He alone is God.** As we have seen, Moses emphasizes in Deuteronomy 4 that the God of Israel is the only God when he twice states, "**...there is none else**" (verses 29 and 35). When Moses later proclaims in Deuteronomy 6:4, "The Lord our God is **one Lord,**" he is repeating what has already been stated in Deuteronomy 4: **The Lord is the only God.**

That this is the true meaning of Deuteronomy 6:4 is verified by the New Testament. In the Gospel of Mark, we find irrefutable proof that Deuteronomy 6:4 and Deuteronomy 4:35 are identical in meaning! Here is that Scriptural evidence as recorded by Mark:

"And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him, 'Which is the **first** [the foremost] commandment of all?' And Jesus answered him, 'The **first** of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; **The Lord our God is one Lord:** And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength [Deuteronomy 6:4-5]: this is the **first** commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour [the one near] as thyself [Leviticus 19:18]. **There is none other commandment greater than these.**' And the scribe said unto Him, 'Well, Master, Thou hast said the truth: **for there is one God** [Deuteronomy 6:4]; **and there is none other but He** [Deuteronomy 4:35]: and to love Him with all the heart, all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices' " (Mark 12:28-33).

The scribe was literally saying, as it is in all Greek texts, "Well, Master, Thou hast said the truth: **that He is one** and **there is none besides Him**" (Mark 12:32).

The Greek word translated "one" is *heis*. This Greek word has several different meanings. It can mean the numeral one (Mark 14:10, the only one (Mark 12:6), one and the same (1Corinthians 10:17), or someone (John 11:49). In Mark 12:32, as the context shows, it

means **"the only one"** (Arndt and Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 231).

When Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 6:4, the scribe understood Him to mean that "there is [only] one God; and there is none other but He" (Mark 12:32). Jesus placed His stamp of approval on the scribe's interpretation of Deuteronomy 6:4 when He said, "Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God" (Mark 12:34).

Jesus' own words confirm the true interpretation of Deuteronomy 6:4. When God inspired this famous utterance through Moses, He did not intend to convey that He is "one" in number, but that He is **"the only one"**--the only true God. The fact that God alone is God does not rule out the possibility that God is more than one in number. The phrase "the only one" is **qualitative**, not quantitative. It shows the exclusive superiority of God, but it does *not limit* God to one Being, nor does it indicate that God is three in one.

Many passages in the Old Testament bear testimony to the fact that our God is the only Lord, and there is none other. Here are several prime examples found in the book of Isaiah:

**"To whom then will ye liken GOD [Hebrew *EI*]? or what likeness will ye compare unto Him?"** (Isaiah 40:18.)

**" 'To whom then will ye liken Me, or shall I be equal?' saith the Holy One"** (Isaiah 40:25).

**" 'Ye are My witnesses,' saith the Lord [Hebrew *Jehovah*], 'and My servant [Israel] Whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe Me, and understand that I am He: **before Me there was no God formed** [nothing formed of God], **neither shall there be after Me. I, even I, am the Lord** [Hebrew *Jehovah*]; **and beside Me there is no saviour'** " (Isaiah 43:10-11).**

**"I am the Lord [Hebrew *Jehovah*] and there is none else, there is no God **beside Me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known Me: That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside Me. I am the Lord, and there is none else** " (Isaiah 45:5-6).**

**"...there is no God [Hebrew *Elohim*] **else beside Me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside Me.** Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: **for I am God** [Hebrew *EI*] **and there is none else"** (Isaiah 45:21-22).**

**"Remember the former things of old: **for I am God** [Hebrew *EI*], **and there is none else; I am God** [Hebrew *EI*], **and there is none like Me"** (Isaiah 46:9).**

These Old Testament examples illustrate the true meaning of Deuteronomy 6:4, and Jesus' own words in the New Testament confirm that "one Lord" in Deuteronomy 6:4 is referring to **the exclusive superiority of the only true God.**

Rejecting this Scriptural truth, religious philosophers engage in a subtle juggling of words to distort the true meaning of Deuteronomy 6:4. They take a word that functions as an adjective and give it the meaning of a noun. They then empty the noun of its meaning by viewing it as an adjective. Although the order of words has not changed, the noun now functions in their argument as an adjective, and the adjective now functions as a noun.

Their distortion of Deuteronomy 6:4 is a prime example of their skill in word juggling. We have just shown that the Scriptures interpret the word "one" in Deuteronomy 6:4 as an adjective meaning "the only one." Ignoring this Scriptural interpretation, religious philosophers perform their functional operation on Deuteronomy 6:4 by treating the noun "Lord" as an adjective, the noun "God" as an adjective, and the adjective "one" as a noun! "Lord" and "God" are presented in their ill-conceived webs of logic as modifying "One." In this manner, "Lord" (Hebrew *Jehovah*) and "God" (Hebrew *Elohim*) are turned into properties or characteristics of the "One," and the adjective "one" is turned into a noun that names God!

The result of this clever reversal of meaning is a logical construct so devious that no one is able to fully understand or explain it! "One," or God, is defined as a "divine Substance" which has three actions or actualizations -- Father function, Son function or Holy Spirit function. In the Athanasian Creed of the Catholic Church, all three are treated as consubstantial "attributes" of the deified "One," with the function of Holy Spirit "in procession" from either the Father or the Son. In the Arian Creed, none of these so-called "attributes" are consubstantial but are, true to ancient philosophical principles, of different hierarchical composition. In this religio-philosophic ranking, the Son is inferior to the Father and the Holy Spirit is "in procession" only from the Father. In both the Athanasian and Arian creeds, the whole is rendered a mystery by the subtle process of "depersonalizing" God.

Religious philosophers proclaim to the world that God is not a personal God but is an impersonal mystery defined at any given time by an actualized function. The God of this theology is a **vacuous**, empty God. The truth that the Lord is the only God and besides Him there is no other is turned into the lie that God is three functions or "actualizations" in the "One"--a nebulous "divine Substance."

We can be thankful that God has revealed Himself to us through His Word. We need not be confused or intimidated by the clever arguments of theologians who philosophize on His divine nature. The true meaning of Deuteronomy 6:4 is preserved in the Scriptures for all who are willing to accept it. When we let the Scriptures interpret the Scriptures, there is no question that "one" in Deuteronomy 6:4 is referring to the exclusive superiority of God as **"the only one."**

## A Primary New Testament Example of "One"

The New Testament also uses "one" in reference to God as "the only one." We find this qualitative use of "one" in a much misunderstood verse in Paul's epistle to the Galatians. Let us examine the use of "one" in Galatians 3:20 in the light of its Scriptural context. We will see that the word "one" is used to qualify God as "the only one" Who bound Himself in the Abramic Covenant.

"Now to Abraham and his seed [Christ] were the promises made [God's unconditional covenant with Abraham]. He saith not, **And to seeds [Israel], as of many; but as of one [Greek *hen*, one in essence]**, and to thy seed, which is Christ [Greek *Christos*]. And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before [the Abramic Covenant of 1916 B.C.] of God [Greek *Theos*, the Father] in Christ [the promised Seed], the law [the Mosaic Covenant of 1486 B.C.], which was four hundred and thirty years after [the Abramic

Covenant] cannot disannul, that it should make the promise [of the Abramic Covenant] of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law [the Mosaic Covenant], it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise [the Abramic Covenant]. Wherefore then serveth the law [the Mosaic Covenant]? It was added [Greek *prostithemi*, placed or laid beside (the Abramic Covenant)] because of transgressions [of humans before Moses], till the seed [Jesus Christ] should come to whom the promise was made; and it [the Mosaic Covenant] was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator [Moses].

**Now a mediator is not a mediator of one** [Greek *hen*, one in essence: i.e., a mediator arranges terms between two separate parties], **but God** [Greek *Theos*] **is one** [Greek *heis*, the only one; i.e., the only party obligated in the Abramic Covenant: no mediator was needed because there were no terms to arrange; the promise of God was unconditional].

Is the law [the Mosaic Covenant, which required conditions to be met] then against [does it nullify] the promises of God [the Abramic Covenant, which was unconditional]? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law [the Mosaic Covenant]. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ [the promised Seed] might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law [the Mosaic Covenant] was our schoolmaster [to teach us the enormity of our sin] to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster [the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ replaces the Mosaic Covenant]. For ye are all the children of God [Greek *Theos*, the Father] by faith in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:16-26).

When we examine Galatians 3:20 in its Scriptural context, the true meaning of "one" becomes evident. The entire passage is a discourse by the apostle Paul on the relationship of the Mosaic Covenant to the Abramic Covenant. Paul explains to the Galatian Christians that the Mosaic Covenant, with all its requirements, in no way affected the unconditional nature of the Abramic Covenant and the promise of grace through Jesus Christ.

In Wuest's *Word Studies in the Greek New Testament, Vol. 1*, we find the following commentary on Galatians 3:20:

"In this verse Paul shows that the promise is superior to the law, for the former was given directly from God to Abraham, whereas the latter was given to Israel by God through a mediator. We will examine the statement, 'A mediator is not of one.' The word *mediator* is from *mesites*, which in turn comes from *mesos* which means *middle*, the *midst*. Thus a mediator is one who intervenes between two, either to make or restore peace and friendship, to form a compact, or to ratify a covenant. The word in the Greek text is preceded by the definite article, making the word generic in character. That is, Paul is not referring here to any particular mediator as Moses, but to the office of a mediator, and to mediators in general looked upon as a class of individuals. However, this generic statement is intended to be applied to Moses, the mediator referred to in verse 19. The word *one* is masculine in gender, and therefore is personal, referring to a person. That is, **a mediator does not act simply in behalf of one person**. The very genius of the word implies that the mediator stands "in the midst" of two or more persons, thus acts as a go-between. It is not that the mediator acts in behalf of a plurality of persons that constitute one party [a class action suit], but that there is a plurality of parties between which he acts. **Thus the law is a contract between two parties . . . But the promise of free grace is not in the nature of a contract between two parties. God acts alone and directly**

when He promises salvation to anyone who will receive it by the out-stretched hand of faith. There are no good works to be done by the sinner in order that he might merit that salvation. Grace is unconditional. There are no strings tied to it. **God is One, that is, He acts alone without a mediator in respect to the promise of grace**" (pp. 106-107).

Those who attempt to use Galatians 3:20 to limit God to one in number--or three in one--are missing the true meaning of this verse and are attaching a false interpretation to Paul's words. The apostle Peter warned that some of Paul's writings are difficult to understand, and we should be careful not to misinterpret these Scriptures. Peter declared,

"...even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction" (2 Peter 3:15-16).

Peter's words clearly warn us not to interpret Scripture according to our own understanding or the opinions of others. In order to come to a true understanding, we must carefully examine each verse in its Scriptural context. Only by letting Scripture interpret Scripture will we be safe from false reasonings and vain philosophies that seek to ensnare us.

We have studied Deuteronomy 6:4 and Galatians 3:20 in their Scriptural contexts, and we have seen that the word "one" is used to identify God as "**the only one.**" Now let us see how the Scriptures use "one" to proclaim the holiness of God.

## **"One" Used to Show the Holiness of God**

Both Old Testament and New Testament describe God as the "Holy One." This name of God is translated from Hebrew and Greek words meaning "holy, sacred, merciful, gracious, kind." The actual Hebrew and Greek words for "one" are not present in the text, although the meaning is implied.

As the texts indicate, the focus of this name of God is "Holy" rather than "One." The name "Holy One" does not limit God to one Being or to "one divine Substance." The Hebrew and Greek words that are translated "Holy One" are not intended to define or specify a number but to describe a divine attribute of God.

In the Old Testament, the name "Holy One" describes the Lord (Jehovah), the God of Israel, and in the New Testament it is used in reference to Jesus Christ. One Old Testament reference to the "Holy One" is quoted in the New Testament by the apostle Peter, who shows that it is referring to Jesus Christ. The original words are those of David and are found in Psalm 16:

"Therefore My heart is glad, and My glory rejoiceth: My flesh also shall rest in hope. For Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell; **neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption**" (verses 9-10).

Here are some other examples of the use of this name of God in the Old Testament:

"How oft did they provoke Him in the wilderness, and grieve Him in the desert! Yea, **they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel.** They remembered not His hand, nor the day when He delivered them from the enemy. How He had wrought His signs in Egypt, and His wonders in the field of Zoan [the most ancient of Egyptian cities]" (Psalm 78:40-43).

"Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: **they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward** " (Isaiah 1:4).

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; **but shall stay upon the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth.** The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God" (Isaiah 10:20-21).

"So will I make My holy name known in the midst of My people Israel; **and I will not let them pollute My holy name any more: and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, the Holy One in Israel**" (Ezekiel 39:7).

How do these references to the Lord (*Jehovah*) as the "Holy One of Israel" fit the apostle Peter's interpretation of the "Holy One" spoken of by David in Psalm 16:10? In preaching the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, Peter declared,

"For David speaks concerning Him, 'I foresaw the Lord always before My face, for He is on My right hand, that I should not be moved: therefore did My heart rejoice, and My tongue was glad; moreover also My flesh shall rest in hope: **Because Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption'....He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in hell, neither His flesh did see corruption**" (Acts 2:25-27, 31).

Peter was inspired by the Spirit of God to reveal that the "Holy One" of Israel, the Lord (*Jehovah*) of the Old Testament, was the One who became Jesus Christ! The apostle Paul confirms that the "Holy One" in Psalm 16:10 is Jesus Christ (Acts 13:35). Paul also declared to the Corinthians,

"Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: **and that Rock was Christ**" (1Corinthians 10:1-4).

The apostles Peter and Paul both testify that Jesus Christ was the Lord God of the Old Testament. The apostle John also testifies that He was the "Word"--the Spokesman for the God of heaven (John 1:1). He was the One who spoke to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and to Moses and Israel at Mt. Horeb. He became the "Holy One of Israel" when He mercifully redeemed Israel from bondage and entered into a covenant with them. As Lord of the Old Testament, He established the Old Covenant with Israel. As Lord of the New Testament, He died to end the Old Covenant and establish the New (Hebrews 10:1-10).

Here are some additional New Testament references to Jesus Christ as the "Holy One":

"The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God [Greek *Theos*, the Father] of our fathers, hath glorified His Son Jesus; Whom ye delivered up, and denied Him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. **But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you;** and killed the Prince of life, Whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. And His name through faith in His name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by Him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all" (Acts 3:13-16).

"And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, saying, 'Let us alone; what have we to do with Thee, Thou Jesus of Nazareth? art Thou come to destroy us? **I know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God.**' And Jesus rebuked him, saying, 'Hold thy peace, and come out of him.' And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him" (Mark 1:23-26).

"Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us. **But ye have an unction [anointing] from the Holy One, and ye know all things**" (1 John 2:18-20).

In verse 20, the apostle John is speaking of the "anointing"--the gift of the Spirit of truth--which comes through Jesus Christ, the "Holy One." In the last chapter of his epistle, John shows that the gift of understanding spiritual truth comes through Jesus Christ. John declares,

"And we know that **the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding,** that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life" (1 John 5:20).

The apostle John confirms that the "Holy One" of God is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, sent by the Father. In this same epistle, John points out the testimony that the Father gave concerning His Son. Let us examine the record of that testimony, and we will learn another Scriptural use of the word "one."

### **"One" Used of the Testimony of God**

The inspired record of the testimony of the Father to the Sonship of Jesus Christ is found in the fifth chapter of 1 John. This passage contains a verse that is often quoted by those who hold the Trinitarian view of God. While this verse *appears* to support the argument for a "three in one" God, these words are actually **not part of the inspired Scriptures!** This spurious verse was **inserted into the text many centuries after the apostle John wrote his epistle.**

Here are the actual historical facts concerning this verse, which is printed as 1 John 5:7 in most editions of the Bible today:

"The texts read, 'The Spirit, and the water,' &c., omitting all the words from 'in heaven' to 'in earth' (v.8) inclusive. **The words are not found in any Gr. ms. [Greek manuscripts] before the sixteenth century.** They were first seen in the margin of some Latin copies. Thence **they have crept into the text**" (Bullinger, *The Companion Bible*, p. 1876).

The record of history plainly states that *1 John 5:7 is not found in any of the original Greek manuscripts*, yet these words are found in most Bibles today. In order to differentiate the inspired words of the apostle John from the *spurious words that were added fifteen centuries later*, the words that were wrongly inserted into the text have been printed in italics and enclosed in brackets in the example below.

"Who is He that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? This is He that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. **For there are three that bear record** [*in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth* ], **the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one** [Greek *hen*, one in essence; i.e., "the three to the one [point] are" (Berry, *The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament*, p. 616): all three testify that Jesus is the Son of God]. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for **this is the witness of God which He hath testified of His Son**. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son" (1 John 5:5-10).

In these verses, the apostle John is proclaiming the "witness of God"-- the testimony that God the Father gave of His Son Jesus Christ. This testimony was given through "the Spirit, and the water, and the blood." The first public testimony was given at the dedication of the infant Jesus in the temple, where the Spirit of God inspired two witnesses--Simeon and Anna--to testify to His Messiahship (Luke 2:26-38). The second public testimony was given at Jesus' baptism in the waters of the Jordan River, when the Spirit descended like a dove and a voice from heaven testified, "Thou art My beloved Son..." (Luke 3:22). The third public witness was given at Jesus' crucifixion, when His blood was shed, and the hand of God the Father shook the earth and split the veil of the temple (Matthew 27:51).

Thus it was that God the Father testified of His Son through "the Spirit, and the water, and the blood." These inspired Scriptures do not reveal God as a Trinity or as a single divine Being, but as two divine Beings--the Son of God, and the Father Who sent Him and testified of His Sonship. Many Scriptures in both Old and New Testaments reveal the eternal existence of these two divine Beings. One Old Testament reference to these two Beings is especially revealing. It is found in Genesis 3:22, where God Himself is speaking. Let us examine this Scripture closely, and we will find additional evidence to verify the true nature of God.

## **"As One of Us" in Genesis 3 Refers to Godlike Characteristics**

In the book of Genesis we read,

"And the Lord [Hebrew *Jehovah*] God [Hebrew *Elohim*] said, 'Behold, the man is become **as one** [Hebrew *echad*] **of Us**, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:'--" (Genesis 3:22).



The phrase "as one of Us" is a unique expression that reveals much about the nature of man--and the nature of God. These are the words God Himself used to describe the man, who had newly acquired a characteristic of God. *Jehovah Elohim* was concerned that man had acquired the "Godly" characteristic of knowing good and evil. Man had become like God in this sense, or as God put it, "as one of Us."

This Scripture has stirred much controversy among both Christians and Jews. Many Christians claim that the words "one of Us" support the doctrine of a unified Godhead. The Trinitarian Christian interprets these words as evidence that God is three "Persons" or "distinctions" in one "divine Substance." To the Modalist Christian, the words "one of Us" mean that God is three "modes" or "manifestations" of one divine Being. But the truth is that the context does not support either of these views.

In Genesis 3:22 **the word "one" is not referring to composition or "divine Substance."** The man, who had become "as one of Us," was still a mortal human being, as the verse itself shows: "...lest he...live forever." The man had not acquired the "Substance" of God, but only **a characteristic of His nature.**

The word "one" in this Scripture in no way supports the definition of God as one "divine Substance" or one divine Being. A careful study of the Hebrew text reveals that the word "one" in Genesis 3:22 **cannot** be interpreted as **only one** in number. The Hebrew word that is used in this verse is specifically marked to signify **one of a related number.** Oxlee quotes the Hebrew authority Aben Ezra:

"As often as the numeral, one, is pointed with a Segol under the Aleph, it is accompanied with an accent, and its signification [meaning] is absolute [only one]; but when it is pointed with a pathach [as it is in Genesis 3:22], **it is in regimen** [linked to a related number]; and thus we read it in the passage, As one of the tribes of Israel [Genesis 49:16]. **It ought not, therefore, according to the rules of grammar, to be here expounded** [in Genesis 3:22], **as though it were one absolute** [only one in number]" (*The Christian Doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation*, p. 102).

The Hebrew word translated "one" in Genesis 3:22 is identical to the word used in Genesis 49:16, where we read, "Dan shall judge his people, **as one of** the tribes of Israel." Here is a clear Scriptural example to verify that the true meaning of "one" in Genesis 3:22 is **one of a number of like entities.**

The Hebrew text leaves no room for interpreting "one of Us" in Genesis 3:22 as only one divine Being or "Substance." These words spoken by God cannot properly be understood unless we are willing to accept a plurality of divine Beings. Oxlee quotes Aben Ezra further to confirm that the true meaning of the pronoun "Us" in Genesis 3:22 is **"of us, in the plural number;** just as it occurs in the expression, A man of us [Numbers 31:49]" (Ibid., p. 102).

Genesis 3:22 is not the only Scripture where God speaks in the plural. The plural pronoun "Us" is found in a number of Old Testament passages where God is speaking. In Genesis 1:26 we read, "And God said, 'Let **Us** make man in **Our** image, after **Our** likeness....'" And in Genesis 11:7 we find these words of God: "Go to, let **Us** go down, and there confound their language...." The book of Isaiah shows the same usage: "Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for **Us**?' " (Isaiah 6:8.)

Some claim that the plural pronouns used in these verses are not referring to more than one divine Being but to the various modes or operations of a single divine Being. This claim is not only without Scriptural support but is contrary to the rules of language. As Oxlee states,

**"...in no language with which we are acquainted, is the human mind ever expressed in the plural number on that account; and, therefore, affords no reason why the noun Elohim, should be so used, on account of the multiplicity and variety of its operations"** (*The Christian Doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation*, p. 94).

Christians and Jews alike have argued that "Us" does not necessarily indicate more than one divine Being because it is customary for potentates to speak of themselves in the plural. This argument is totally without Scriptural foundation:

"Indeed, there is **not the smallest authority for it in the compositions of the Old Testament**; which, being penned with that simplicity peculiar to the early ages of the world, introduce all princely characters expressing themselves in their own proper number [singular], and with the strictest grammatical propriety: nor does it distinguish, in that respect, between the most potent of sovereigns and the very lowest of the human species" (*Ibid.*, p. 96).

Realizing that this argument can not be supported by Scripture, some have adopted another theory to explain the use of "Us" in reference to God. This Jewish fable, which has become popular in some Christian churches, claims that God was speaking to an angelic council. Although many commentators support this view, it has no Scriptural basis. As Oxlee states,

"That angels should act as coadvisers and coadjutors in the administration of the affairs of the world, is not only repugnant to the very meaning of the term angel, itself; which denotes a being deputed on a mission from God; but is **wholly unsanctioned by any declaration to that effect, either in Moses or in the prophets**" (*Ibid.*, p. 97).

Not only does Oxlee show the emptiness of this Jewish fable, but he also shows how illogical it is when he tells us that:

**"the sovereign creator of the worlds, by being supposed to confer with the angels, on every weighty and important occasion, is absolutely debased and insulted; and suffers a higher indignity from this erroneous interpretation of the Jewish church, than man could possibly do, by being supposed to confer with quadrupeds and reptiles, on the design and propriety of human actions"** (*Ibid.*, p. 98).

To interpret the plural pronoun "Us" as referring not to two Supreme Beings but to one Supreme Being and a council of angels makes no sense. If we believe that the Creator was conferring with angels instead of another Supreme Being when He used the word "Us," then we would have to believe that angels had a part in the creation of man. We would have to believe that man was made in the image of angels and not God alone when God said, "Let **Us make** man in **Our image**, after **Our likeness**... (Genesis 1:26). Such an interpretation of Genesis 1:26 would be contrary to all that the Scriptures reveal concerning the creation of man. The following verse plainly declares that **God** created man in **His Own image** (verse 27).

That the God Who created man was a plurality of divine Beings is revealed not only in the first chapter of Genesis but in other Old Testament Scriptures as well. In the Hebrew text, the word '*asah* (*gah-sah*), or **Maker**, is found in the **plural form** in a number of references to God alone. Notice the correct translation of Isaiah 54:5 according to the Hebrew text:

"For **thy Makers** are thine husbands; the **Lord of hosts** [*Jehovah* Who became the Father] is His name; **and Thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel** [*Jehovah* Who became the Son]; The God of the whole earth shall He be called."

We find a similar statement in Psalm 149:2, which is correctly translated, "Let Israel rejoice in **his Makers**...."

Noting these Scriptures, Oxlee states,

"The term, **Maker**, is both equivocal and common [in the Old Testament]; but what seems most worthy of admiration is, that **in the very texts, in which the deity is exclusively the subject, it is evidently used in the plural number** " (*The Christian Doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation*, p. 73).

These Old Testament references to the Creator as a plurality of Beings are in complete accord with the teachings of the New Testament. The apostle John declared of Jesus Christ, "**All things were made by Him**; and without Him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:3). The apostle Paul declared that he, Paul, was sent "to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in **God, Who created all things by Jesus Christ** " (Ephesians 3:9).

In the book of Revelation we find Jesus' own testimony to His work as Creator:

"These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, **the beginner** [Greek *arche*, **the originator or cause**; incorrectly translated "beginning" in most versions] **of the creation of God**" (Revelation 3:14).

The Scriptures reveal that it was **Jesus Christ, as the Word of God**, Who said, "Let there be light." It was He who formed man from the dust of the ground, and Who **created "all things."** He was **with God** from the beginning, as the apostle John declares:

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

*The Hebrew/Greek Key Study Bible* states that the Greek verb *en*, translated "was" in this verse, is more accurately translated "had been," and offers this paraphrase of the verse to reflect the actual meaning of the Greek text: "**Before** there was any beginning, the Word **had been**..." (Zodhiates, p. 1315).

The apostle John is clearly revealing in these words that Jesus Christ had existed **before the creation** of the world. John uses very specific language to convey the **eternal existence of Jesus Christ**. John emphasizes His eternal existence as God by repeating in verse 2, "**The same was [had been] in the beginning with God.**"

When John declared that the Word was "**with God**," John used the Greek word *pros*, meaning "to or toward," and indicating motion **toward** something or someone (Bullinger,

*The Companion Bible*, Appendix 104, XV, 3). Zodhiates translates "**with** God" as "**toward the God**" (*The Hebrew/Greek Key Study Bible*, p. 1315).

John's use of the Greek preposition *pros* clearly demonstrates that the Word was not **in** God but **coexisted** as a **separate Being**. John twice declares that the Word was "**with** God" (Greek *pros Theos*) to emphasize this truth.

John's inspired words refute all arguments against the **eternal existence** of Jesus Christ and verify the **plurality** of God as revealed in the Old Testament. Thus the New Testament confirms the simple truth that is preserved in the most ancient records of Scripture in the little two-letter word "Us": that **two Supreme Beings have eternally coexisted as God**.

Those who claim that Jesus Christ did not eternally exist **as God** (Greek *Theos*) and **with God** (Greek *Theos*) are blinding their eyes to the plain statements of Scripture. They are following the error of the Jewish church in refusing to acknowledge what God Himself reveals in His Word.

The Jewish church has never accepted the truth of the divinity of Jesus Christ, and adamantly refuses to accept the New Testament as inspired Scripture. Moreover, its officials have attempted to remove from the Old Testament every reference to Christ's eternal pre-existence as God. Under the guise of reverence for the name of God, the Jews of antiquity who were entrusted with the keeping of the Hebrew text made illicit alterations to the Old Testament. They changed the original names of God in key references which reveal the **plurality** of God. Before this alteration, these Scriptures made obvious reference to the existence of **two Jehovahs** Who were both God.

Because the record of these changes has been preserved, we can know the truth that God has revealed about Himself in the Old Testament. A study of the original Hebrew names of God as used in the Old Testament bears witness to the existence of two Supreme Everliving Beings Who were both known as *Jehovah*. This undeniable Scriptural evidence of the plurality of God will be presented [in a sequel to this paper](#).