

Defining The Oneness of God

*The Scriptural Truth
About the Oneness of God*

by

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Introduction

The nature of God has for centuries been a subject of *intense debate* among philosophers and theologians. In their endless discussions, they have explored every conceivable theory and opinion as to *what God is*. But with all their self-professed knowledge and intellect, they have *never been able to reach agreement*.

Today, the controversy over the nature of God has reached into the very midst of the churches of God. In many churches, the opinions and theories of men are *being presented as absolute fact*. The Scriptures are being misinterpreted in a manner that appears to support these *humanly devised bold statements of philosophers and theologians and their theories about what God is*. This is causing so much *confusion* that the faith of many Christians is being undermined and subverted.

It is vital for every Christian who truly desires to understand the nature of God to learn to *identify the opinions and theories of men* and be able to *differentiate* them from the truth of Scripture. As the apostle Paul admonished, we must be "casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God..." (II Cor. 10:5).

That is why this study paper was written. This paper begins by explaining the various humanly devised theories and teachings concerning God's nature. This approach was taken in order to *compare* these theoretical beliefs with *the Scriptural revelation of what God is*. For some readers, the explanation of these various theoretical beliefs about God's nature may be difficult to grasp at first. However, do not be overly concerned if you do not fully understand these early pages. The pages which follow these introductory definitions will enable you to clearly understand the *true Scriptural definition of what God is*.

Carl D. Franklin

Defining the Oneness of God

The oneness of God is undeniably revealed in the Scriptures. Both Old Testament and New Testament contain numerous references to God's oneness. But while all professing Christians believe in the oneness of God, they are irreconcilably divided over the actual meaning of His oneness.

Millions of fundamental evangelical Christians have adopted the view that God's oneness means that God is literally "one" in number, not realizing that this teaching stems from ancient philosophy rather than from Scripture. As one author who espouses this belief states, "In reference to God, oneness means the state of being absolutely and indivisibly one, or one in numerical value....Oneness (capitalized) [is used] to mean the doctrine that God is absolutely one in numerical value, that Jesus is the one God, and that God is not a plurality of persons. Thus Oneness is a modern term basically equivalent to modalism [of the ancient philosophers] or modalistic monarchianism" (Bernard, *The Oneness of God*, pp. 321-322).

Modalistic Oneness

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 fulness 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-seek, 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**; ie., 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; ie., 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 (Gen. 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 (Dan. 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 mould 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 [II Cor. 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 (I 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 I 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]" (Deut. 4:42); "...the Lord shall choose in one [the unit] of thy tribes [the group]" (Deut. 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]" (Isa. 4:1); "...ten acres [the group] shall yield one bath [the unit of measure]" (Isa. 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**' " (Rev. 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" (Mat. 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" (I Tim. 1:4). Paul shows in his epistle to Titus that these fables were of Jewish origin (Tit. 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 I 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"** (1 Cor. 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 *diaireses*] **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]" (I Cor. 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" (1 Cor. 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"** (Rom. 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" (Eph. 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 longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; **endeavouring 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" (Eph. 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**" (I Cor. 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]" (I Cor. 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" (I Cor. 10:17, Eph. 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 (Rom. 12:5), as well as the spiritual unity of Israelites and Gentiles through Christ (Eph. 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 [Deut. 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 [Lev. 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 [Deut. 6:4]; and there is none other but He [Deut. 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 (I Cor. 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 *El*]? or what likeness will ye compare unto Him?" (Isa. 40:18.)

" 'To whom then will ye liken Me, or shall I be equal?' saith the Holy One" (Isa. 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' "** (Isa. 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" (Isa. 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 *El*] and there is none else" (Isa. 45:21-22).

"Remember the former things of old: for I am God [Hebrew *El*], and there is none else; I am God [Hebrew *El*], and there is none like Me" (Isa. 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

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" (Gal. 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" (II Pet. 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]" (Ps. 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**" (Isa. 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" (Isa. 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**" (Ezek. 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**" (I Cor. 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 (Heb. 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" (I 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 I 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 I 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 *I 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 (Mat. 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" Referring 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: '--" (Gen. 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 [Gen. 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 [Num. 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**?' " (Isa. 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 co advisers 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**... (Gen. 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**" (Eph. 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**" (Rev. 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.

The Two *Jehovahs* of the Psalms

*The Scriptural Evidence of the
Duality of God*

by

(C) *Carl D. Franklin*

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Introduction

This paper is the second in a series of studies on the nature of God. The first paper, "*Defining the Oneness of God*," explains the various beliefs that have been formulated concerning the unity of the Godhead, and shows the origins of those beliefs and their impact on the early New Testament Church. These concepts of "oneness" are then evaluated by examining the Scriptural usage of the word "one" in both its physical and its spiritual applications. This initial study demonstrates that the Scriptures do not reveal God as only one divine Being or one divine "Substance."

This second study on the nature of God is built upon the Scriptural groundwork that was laid in the first study. The purpose of this second study is to demonstrate the duality of God as revealed in the Old Testament. This study focuses on those passages in the Psalms which refer to two divine Beings and shows that both of these Beings were known as *Jehovah*. These passages are examined in the light of the New Testament, which identifies the two *Jehovahs* of the Psalms as the two divine Beings Who became the Father and the Son.

This study presents irrefutable Scriptural evidence of the eternal existence of Jesus Christ and the co-equality that He shared with the Father as one of the two *Jehovahs* of the Old Testament. You will find this second presentation easier to understand and more meaningful if you have read the previous study paper, "*Defining the Oneness of God*." If you have not yet received the initial study paper, send for your copy without delay.

Carl D. Franklin

The Two *Jehovahs* of the Psalms

The name *Jehovah* is used countless times in the Old Testament in reference to the true God. This name identifies God both as Creator of heaven and earth and as the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel. Christians who are acquainted with this Old Testament name of God have always viewed it as a *singular* name--referring only to one divine Being. But the truth of Scripture is that there were **two divine Beings** Who were **both known as *Jehovah*** in Old Testament times!

The two divine Beings of the Old Testament are clearly and undeniably revealed in the book of Psalms. In the original Hebrew text, there are many passages in the Psalms which directly refer to these two divine Beings as *Jehovah*. In all but one of these passages, the original inspired words were altered in ancient times by the keepers of the Hebrew text. Under the pretext of reverence for the name of God, the name *Adonay* was substituted for *Jehovah* in selected verses. By systematically modifying the vowel points of the noun *Jehovah*, this name of God was wrongly changed to *Adonay* in 134 places in the Old Testament--including key verses in the psalms which reveal that there were two *Jehovahs*! These alterations to the Hebrew text were carefully documented. The ancient Levitical Massorites, custodians of the Hebrew text, recorded every passage in which the name *Jehovah* was modified to *Adonay*.

While these alterations were totally unjustified, most occurrences of the name *Adonay* in the Old Testament are authentic and are found in the original text. *Adonay* is a variation of the Hebrew word *Adon*, which means "Lord." Both *Adonay* and *Adon* are used in many passages in the original Hebrew text as names of God. While *Adonay* is used exclusively to name the true God, *Adon* is often used to refer to human "lords," or masters, and sometimes refers to false gods.

Why did the Massorites alter selected verses in the Hebrew text by substituting *Adonay* for *Jehovah*? It has been claimed that these pious Levites revered the name *Jehovah* so greatly that they could not speak it, and

therefore they changed *Jehovah* to *Adonay*. If this be true, why did they not change *every* occurrence of the name *Jehovah* in the Old Testament? Why did they select only 134 places, including verses which reveal the existence of two *Jehovahs*?

The motive behind this alteration of selected references to *Jehovah* by the Levitical guardians of the Old Testament is highly questionable. Is it possible that the influence of pagan philosophical concepts of God's nature led to rejection of the Scriptural truth that there were two *Jehovahs*? The selection of the passages which were altered indicates that the Massorites were unwilling to acknowledge the existence of more than one *Jehovah*!

In analyzing the 134 places where the name *Jehovah* was altered, another reason for changing the Hebrew text becomes obvious: the Levites could not accept the Scriptural revelation that one of the two *Jehovahs* would become the Messiah and would replace their existing priesthood. In their rejection of God's plan, they modified passages in the Psalms which referred to both *Jehovahs* and which prophesied that one of these *Jehovahs* would become the Messiah and the High Priest of the New Covenant. Because the record of this tampering has been preserved, we can know the truth that God has revealed to us in His Word!

Codified in the Massorah--marginal writings in the old manuscripts--is the record of the 134 alterations made in the original Hebrew text. While these alterations are generally known as the "134 Emendations of the Sopherim," we will see that it was actually the Massorites who inserted these changes into the text. Let us briefly review the history of the Old Testament text, and we will learn how and when these alterations were introduced.

In *The Christian Passover* by Fred R. Coulter we are given a detailed account of the codification of the Old Testament by Ezra the priest. Chapter Fifteen reveals that this codification took place under the most difficult of circumstances! A remnant of the exiled Jewish people had returned to Jerusalem from their captivity in Babylon and other parts of the Medo-Persian Empire. Among these restored exiles were a large number of Levites and priests, whose duty it was to restore the temple service and to teach their brethren the laws of God, lest they fall into idolatry and once more be cast out of their own land. But Manasseh, a Levite and the legitimate heir to the high priesthood, had married the daughter of Governor Sanballat of

neighboring Chaldean Samaria. In the sixth century B.C., Manasseh defected to Samaria, taking with him a major contingent of Levites, including many who were of the Aaronic priesthood.

Under the auspices of governor Sanballat, Manasseh and his fellow Levites set up a counterfeit priesthood in their own temple in Samaria. Not only was there a competing "Mosaic" religion in Samaria at this time, but there was also a competing "Mosaic" religion and temple at Elephantine, Egypt, as well as a third temple in the Transjordan region, where sacrifices were already being offered to God. To stem this tide of apostasy, Ezra and Nehemiah acted under God's direction and inspiration to preserve the true worship of God as commanded in the Holy Scriptures.

Because Manasseh and his heretical followers also laid claim to the Scriptures, it was with the greatest urgency that Ezra and Nehemiah acted to safeguard the integrity of the Old Testament text. Levitical **Sopherim** were placed in charge of standardizing, updating and translating the Old Testament. It was this group of Levites who compiled the Old Testament as we now know it. The Torah (the first five books) was translated, with special emphasis upon the commands in the book of Deuteronomy, which was updated, copied and sent throughout the Persian Empire. A true chronology of this period places these events between 539 and 512 B.C.

The *Jehovah* who later became the Christ guided the Sopherim in their work on the Old Testament. At the beginning of His ministry on earth, He placed His seal of approval on the Old Testament text, saying, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, **Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled**" (Mat. 5:17-18).

God will not allow any of His words to be lost. Although changes were later introduced into the Old Testament text after the original work of the Sopherim was completed, those alterations were carefully recorded, and the records were preserved and passed down to us today so that we can know the true and authentic words of God.

When the work on the Old Testament text was completed by the Sopherim, the text was passed on to the Massorites. Bullinger states, "**The**

Text itself had been fixed before the Massorites were put in charge of it. This had been the work of the *Sopherim* (from *saphar*, to count, or number). Their work, under Ezra and Nehemiah, was to set the Text in order after the return from Babylon; and we read of it in Neh. 8:8 (cp. Ezra 7:6,11). The men of 'the Great Synagogue' completed the work" (*The Companion Bible*, Appendix 30).

The newly compiled text was placed in the hands of the Massorites for preservation and duplication. To safeguard the authorized text from being corrupted, the Massorites used an ingenious system which enabled them to keep track of every letter and every word in the books of the Old Testament. Bullinger explains the methodical system used by the Massorites: "The *Sopherim* [appointed by Ezra and Nehemiah] were the authorised revisers of the Sacred Text; and, their work being completed, the *Massorites* were the authorised custodians of it. Their work was to preserve it. The *Massorah* is called 'A Fence to the Scriptures,' because it locked all words and letters in their places. It does not contain notes or comments as such, but facts and phenomena. It records the number of times the several letters occur in the various books of the Bible; the number of words, and the middle word; the number of verses, and the middle verse; the number of expressions and combinations of words, etc. All this, not from a perverted ingenuity, but for the set purpose of safeguarding the Sacred Text, and **preventing the loss or misplacement of a single letter or word**" (Ibid.).

The faithful preservation of God's Sacred Word by the Levitical Massorites did not last long, however. Shortly after the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, the Levitical priesthood fell into a state of corruption. It was during this period in Jewish history that changes were introduced into the Old Testament text.

The seeds of corruption had already been sown in the days of Nehemiah by the high priest Eliashib. (See the story of Eliashib, Nehemiah and **Tobiah** the Ammonite [an ancestor of Josephus] in Nehemiah 13.) When Eliashib died, Joiada, son of Eliashib and great-grandson of Joshua (Ezra's nephew), inherited the office of high priest. Joiada's "reign" as high priest must have run through a good part of the 400's B.C. Corruption of the priesthood begun by his father Eliashib continued with Joiada and increased with the son who succeeded him as high priest.

Joiada (or Judah, as he was also known) had three sons: **Manasseh**, who was next in line to become high priest at the death of his father Joiada; **Jonathan**, who actually became the next high priest; and **Jesus**, who was slain in the temple by his brother Jonathan while he (Jonathan) was high priest. Manasseh did not become the high priest because he apostatized to Samaria after he had married the daughter of Sanballat, governor of Samaria.* Since Manasseh, the rightful heir to the office of high priest, had apostatized to Samaria, the office passed to Manasseh's younger brother Jonathan when Joiada died. This transfer of priestly power must have taken place sometime during the late 400's or early 300's B.C.

Jonathan (also called John) was a very wicked high priest. So evil was Jonathan that his wickedness was not so much as even heard of among the Gentiles! Notice Josephus' testimony: "...and when he [Joiada or Judas] was dead, his son John [Jonathan] took that dignity; on whose account it was also that Bagoses, the general of another of Artaxerxes' [Artaxerxes II Mnemon 404-358 B.C.) army, polluted the temple, and imposed tributes on the Jews, that out of the public stock, before they offered the daily sacrifices, they should pay for every lamb fifty shekels. Now Jesus was the brother of John [Jonathan], and was a friend of Bagoses, who had promised to procure him the high priesthood. In confidence of whose support, Jesus quarrelled with John in the temple, and so provoked his brother [Jonathan], that in his anger his brother [Jonathan] slew him [Jesus]. Now it was a horrible thing for John [Jonathan], when he was high priest, to perpetrate so great a crime, and so much the more horrible, that there never was so cruel and impious a thing done, neither by the Greeks nor Barbarians" (*Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XI, Chapter VII, Paragraph 1).

*Josephus confuses this Manasseh, son of Joiada and **brother** to Jonathan (Josephus XI.B.3), with a later Manasseh (Josephus XI.7.1) who was the **son** of Jonathan. The latter Manasseh, who was the **son** of Jonathan, was the brother of Jaddua the high priest who greeted Alexander in 332/31 B.C. Notice that the Manasseh in Josephus XI.8.3 is associated with the time of a Darius (Darius Hystaspes, 521-486 B.C.), while the Manasseh of Josephus XI.7.1 is associated with the time of Alexander the Great. Josephus has confused the Manasseh of Darius Hystaspes' era, 521-486 B.C. (Josephus XI.8.3), with the Manasseh of Darius III Codomannus' era, 336-330 B.C. (Josephus XI.7.1).

The high priest, spiritual leader of all priests and Levites, whose duty it was to uphold the law of God, had committed murder in the temple of God! Under Jonathan's influence, the Levitical priesthood became more and more corrupt. By the late 400's B.C., the priesthood was so corrupt that God inspired Malachi to write, "A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a Father [Hebrew *av*, meaning lord, master, teacher, advisor, counselor], where is Mine honour? and if I be a Master, where is My fear? saith **the LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*]** of hosts unto you, **O priests, that despise My name. And ye say, 'Wherein have we despised Thy name?'** Ye offer polluted bread upon Mine altar; and ye say, 'Wherein have we polluted Thee?' In that ye say, 'The table of **the LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*]** is contemptible' "(Mal. 1:6-7).

The priests had such little regard for God's name that they "snivelled" at the importance of God's altar. "But ye have profaned it [Me], in that ye say, 'The table [altar] of **the LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*]** is polluted; and the fruit thereof, even His meat, is contemptible.' Ye said also, 'Behold, what a weariness is it!' and ye have snuffed [an archaism for sniffed or puffed, meaning to show disdain and scorn by snivelling or pooh-poohing] at it [God's altar], saith **the LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*]** of hosts..." (Mal. 1:12-13).

So perverse was the attitude of the Levitical priesthood at this time that God began to resist and fight against them. Their rebelliousness might be phrased in modern English as an attitude of, "God, what difference does it make how we worship You as long as we love You? If we observe Sunday, Christmas and Easter; and believe in the Trinity, we are only doing so to glorify Your name." God's response was not one of acceptance: "And now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you. If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto My name, saith **the LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*]** of hosts, I will even send a curse [Hebrew *arar*, to bind, to hem in with obstacles; to render powerless, to resist] upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart. **Behold, I will corrupt [Hebrew *ghaar*, scold, rebuke, reprove, threaten] your seed, and spread dung upon your faces, even the dung of your solemn feasts; and one shall take you away with it"** (Mal. 2:1-3).

God was so angry at their insolence that He proclaimed, "**The LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*] will cut off the man that doeth this**, the master [the watchman that waketh] and the scholar [the watchman that answereth], out of the tabernacles of Jacob, and him that offereth an offering unto **the LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*] of hosts**" (Mal. 2:12). These temple watchmen were the very Levites placed in charge of protecting the temple and its contents, the most important part of which was the Word of God!

The guardians of the temple service, the **guardians of the Word of God, so despised God's name and His Word** that they robbed God of His temple tithe (Mal. 3:8). The result was that the wages of the hireling were being taxed, the widow and fatherless received no support, and the needy stranger was being turned aside (Mal. 3:5). As the history of the period attests, the Levites were using the tithe to finance real estate deals, businesses, building projects and cultural events (Wacholder, *Eupolemus: A Study of Judaeo-Greek Literature*, pp. 1-21). These Levites had made themselves ambassadors to the nations of the ancient world. As ambassadors, they were using the tithe to sponsor cultural events! They presided over one of the greatest "tithing and loan" scandals ever known. I am sure they justified this misuse of God's tithe as "doing the Lord's work."

Their departure from the true worship of God did not stop here. The priests openly committed adultery and corrupted their seed by divorcing their wives and intermarrying with Ammonites, Moabites, Egyptians, Edomites and Samaritans (Josephus was descended from one of these bastard lines). The priests also dabbled in sorcery (consorting with evil spirits and their perverse doctrines). They even began to create pseudo-scriptures, rewriting the Old Testament and falsely reconstructing the history of Israel. **The Levites, who were the appointed teachers of the Word of God, had forsaken the true teachings of God and were swearing to falsehoods as though they were God's truth.** God warned them, "And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, **and against false swearers [or "them that swear to a falsehood"]**, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages [taxing a hireling's wages was forbidden by God's law], the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not Me, saith **the LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*] of hosts**" (Mal. 3:5).

Within a little more than one hundred years after the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, the Levitical priesthood was guilty of the grossest of spiritual offenses. It was at this time in history that Alexander the Great advanced with his army against the land of Palestine. Jaddua, son of the wicked Jonathan, was high priest when Alexander the Great conquered Palestine. Here is Josephus' account of the meeting of this influential high priest with Alexander: "Now when John [Jonathan] had departed this life, his son Jaddua succeeded in the high priesthood" (Book XI, Chapter VII, Paragraph 2)...Now Alexander [the Great], when he had taken Gaza [332/331 B.C.], made haste to go up to Jerusalem; and Jaddua the high priest, when he heard that, was in an agony, and under terror, as not knowing how he should meet the Macedonians, since the king was displeased at his foregoing disobedience....And when he [Jaddua] understood that he [Alexander] was not far from the city, he [Jaddua] went out in procession, with the priests and the multitude of the citizens. The procession was venerable, and the manner of it different from that of other nations....And when the Book of Daniel was showed him [Alexander], wherein Daniel declared that one of the Greeks should destroy the empire of the Persians, he [Alexander] supposed that himself was the person intended" (*Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XI, Chapter VIII, Paragraphs 4 and 5).

Alexander the Great was a young man of twenty-three years at this time. He had seen the high priest and his procession in a dream, and the high priest Jaddua had seen Alexander in a dream. When the two met for the first time, Alexander knelt before the high priest. Then Alexander and his army accompanied the high priest and his procession to the temple, where Alexander offered sacrifices to the God Who had foretold his conquests.

When Alexander captured the land of Palestine in 332/331 B.C., the people of Judah accepted the Greeks with open arms. The Jews were already well acquainted with Greek culture. Many Jews and Levites had for years been living in the cities of Greece. It was common practice for Levites and others of Judah to participate in the culture, commerce and literature of the world around. Judah was not a closed society, as is pictured by many scholars today.

About fifty years later, when Ptolemy of Egypt asked that the Hebrew Old Testament be translated into Greek, the Levites were able to complete

the entire work in only seventy days. The Hebrew Old Testament was translated into the Greek Septuagint about 285-250 B.C.

Scholars are puzzled by the fact that the Hebrew Old Testament was so quickly translated into the Greek Septuagint. The translators certainly had to be fluent both in Hebrew and in the Greek of that age. What is even more puzzling is the fact that the Septuagint is written in the distinct dialect of Alexandrian Greek. But Alexandria was not founded until the conquest of Alexander the Great in 332/331 B.C., and the Septuagint was translated by the Levites at Alexandria only fifty to eighty years later. How was this possible?

The answer lies in the fact that many Levites who had been living in Greece moved to Alexandria at or shortly after its founding in 332/331 B.C. These Levites, who were gifted in literature and language, could speak and write fluently in Greek long before Ptolemy even dreamed of translating the Hebrew Old Testament into the Greek language. They had lived in the Greek culture. They spoke the same dialect as those Greeks who moved to the new city of Alexandria! That is how they were able to translate the Septuagint in the dialect of the Alexandrian Greeks.

When Alexander conquered Palestine, the Hebrew Old Testament had not yet been translated into the Greek Septuagint. How then could Alexander have read the prophecy in the book of Daniel? It is doubtful that Alexander could read Hebrew. It is more likely that by 332/331 B.C. the Jerusalem Levites, the Massorites in charge of the Old Testament, had already translated all or parts of the book of Daniel into Greek. It is not difficult to understand how the Septuagint could be completed in only seventy days, if parts of the Old Testament had already been translated before the Septuagint was commissioned by Ptolemy.

The Septuagint translation is significant in that it gives us a clue to the time period in which the Massorites altered the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. When the Septuagint was first translated, the names of God in Psalm 110 were left untranslated as *Yhvh*, showing that the Massorites had not yet changed *Jehovah* to *Adonay*. This fact indicates that the Massorites did not begin to tamper with the text until some time after 250 B.C. **It is highly probable that the Massoritic Levites began tampering with the Old Testament text during the period from 250 to 200 B.C., provoking**

God's anger and precipitating the invasion of Antiochus Epiphanes in 167 B.C.

So evil were the Levites by this time that God began to scatter them, turning the priesthood over to Levitical impostors, the Maccabees,* and fulfilling His prophecy in Malachi by "smearing dung all over their faces." They hated His name and defiled His altar so much that God brought the Seleucidae of Syria against the temple and allowed pigs to be sacrificed on the altar!

The records of both history and the Scriptures show that the Levitical priesthood had become totally corrupted by the time the Massoretic changes were introduced into the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. Rather than revering the name *Jehovah*, the priests despised it, as the Spirit of God inspired the prophet Malachi to proclaim. This degenerate condition of the priesthood is the true historical setting in which the name *Jehovah* was changed to *Adonay*.

Could it be that the Levitical priesthood was so corrupt that they had turned from the worship of the true *Jehovah/Adon* of Israel to the false Chaldean *Adon*, who was worshipped by the people of Israel and Judah during the time period just before the captivity of Israel? The prophet Isaiah was inspired to record the Babylonish worship of Israel and Judah:

"I have spread out My hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts; a people that provoketh Me to anger continually to My face; that sacrificeth in gardens [asherah groves of fir trees], and burneth incense upon altars of brick [the eternal fire of Baal]; which remain among the graves, and

*As a reaction to the Levitical line of the Hasmoneans (the Maccabees) assuming control over the priesthood, the legitimate line of priests (under Onias III) fled to Egypt (see Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*, pp. 185-186), where some of their Levitical cousins had been since the Assyrian conquests of the 700's B.C. Descendants of these Levitical priests formed the community of ascetics that later became known as the Therapeutae.

The bastard line of Josephus, the line of Tobiah the Ammonite, fled toward their ancient homeland, the desert regions of Judea along the Ammon/Moabite border by the Dead Sea. This line of Levites formed the sect that later became known as the Qumran or Essene community.

lodge in the monuments [consulting with the spirits of the dead], which eat swine's flesh, and broth of abominable things is in their vessels; which say, 'Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou.' These are a smoke in My nose, a fire that burneth all the day" (Isa. 65:2-5).

In the following chapter, Isaiah describes these abominations in more detail: "They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens [asherah groves of fir trees] **behind [after] one tree** [the word *tree* is not in the Hebrew text] in the midst, eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith **the LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*]**" (Isa. 66:17).

Hislop states the following concerning this verse: "The words in our translation are, 'behind one tree,' but there is no word in the original for 'tree'; and it is admitted by Lowth, and the best orientalists, that the rendering should be, '**after the rites of Achad,**' i.e., '***The Only One...***' " (*The Two Babylons*, footnote, p. 16).

Several leading authorities support this translation of Isaiah 66:17. W. Robertson Nicoll states: "...in literal translation of the text, ***the One...***" (*The Expositor's Bible, Isaiah*, p. 463). Adam Clarke translates "behind one tree-", as "after the rites of ***Achad*** [One]" and goes on to explain that the Massorites tampered with Isaiah 66:17 by changing ***Achad*** to the feminine "***achath***," or moon (*A Commentary and Critical Notes, Isaiah to Malachi*, Vol. IV, p. 246). Matthew Henry states, "... as we read it, behind one tree in the midst, behind ***Ahad or Ehad***, some idol that they worshipped by that name and in honour of which they ate swine's flesh" (*Commentary on the Whole Bible, Isaiah to Malachi*, Vol. IV, p. 394).

As we can readily determine in our own Bibles, the word "tree" in Isaiah 66:17 is italicized, showing that it is not in the Hebrew text. The phrase in question thus reads, "...in the gardens behind one in the midst..." The word "garden" is the Hebrew *gannah* and is referring to the asherah groves of fir trees in which this worship was conducted. The word "behind" is the Hebrew *ah-ghar* and should be translated "**after**," as it is in Judges 8:33: "went a whoring **after** Baalim." These Israelite devotees ritualistically sanctified and purified themselves and ate swine's flesh, the abomination and

the mouse because they were honoring and seeking the presence of the One, the *Achad*.

This "*Achad*" or "One" of the Babylonians was none other than Nimrod of old, also known as *Adon* or *Adonis* (Hislop, *The Two Babylons*, p. 312). The Greeks knew Nimrod, or *Adon*, as *Athan* and so worshipped him in the district of Laodicea of Asia Minor. Hislop shows a possible link with the worship of *Athan* in the pronunciation of the Hebrew *Adon*. He states, "The Hebrew *Adon*, 'The Lord,' is, with the points, pronounced *Athon*" (Ibid., p. 20).

When we understand God's condemnation of Israel's pagan practices in Isaiah 66:17, it is clear that His people were worshipping a **false *Adon***, the "Holy ***One***" of the Chaldeans--also called ***Atun*** or ***Aton***, the "Holy ***One***" of the Egyptians, and ***Athan***, the "Holy ***One***" of the Greeks--**not the true *Jehovah/Adon*** of the Old Testament!

Hislop shows how greatly this worship of the "One" provoked God's wrath: "So utterly idolatrous was the Babylonian recognition of **the *Divine unity* [the three in "One"]**, that Jehovah, the Living God, severely condemned His own people for giving any countenance to it: "They that sanctify themselves in the gardens, **after the rites of the ONLY ONE**, eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, **shall be consumed together**" (Isaiah 66:17)" (Ibid., p. 16).

The fact that God inspired Isaiah to pronounce His coming judgment upon His people for this Babylonish worship indicates that it had corrupted the entire nation. As in the days of Ezra, it is likely that many priests and Levites were leaders in this grievous sin. If the Levitical priesthood itself was corrupted by the worship of the **false Chaldean *Adon*, or "One,"** this apostasy would clearly explain the alterations made in the Hebrew text of the Old Testament--especially in those passages which refer to **two** divine Beings! These passages provided a ready opportunity to justify mingling the worship of *Adon*, the universal God of Babylon, with the worship of *Jehovah*, the national God of Israel.

In the book of Psalms, the Massorites altered several such passages. These passages reveal the existence of two divine Beings and show that both divine Beings were named *Jehovah*. In all but one of these passages, the

name *Adonay* was substituted for *Jehovah* in one or more verses. Originally, all of these verses added to the evidence that there were **two *Jehovahs*** and that these *Jehovahs* would someday establish a Father/Son relationship.

In spite of the alterations in these passages in the Psalms, the truth of Scripture has been preserved. Evidence of the existence of two *Jehovahs* can be found in Psalms 2, 16, 22, 89, 90, 110 and 118. As Psalm 110 contains the most obvious reference to two *Jehovahs*, let us first examine this psalm.

The Two *Jehovahs* of Psalm 110

Psalm 110 gives us undeniable Scriptural evidence that there were **two** divine Beings Who were both known as *Jehovah* in Old Testament times. In the first verse of Psalm 110, David was inspired to prophesy that a divine Being called *Adon* would be invited to sit at the right hand of a divine Being called *Jehovah*. In the original Hebrew text, the same divine Being Who is called *Adon* in Verse 1 is called *Jehovah* in Verse 5. Psalm 110 is actually describing one *Jehovah* sitting beside another *Jehovah*! The word *Jehovah* in Verse 5, however, was altered by the Levitical Massorites to read *Adonay*. The Levites were hiding the truth that the *Adon* of Verse 1 was a second *Jehovah*!

In the original Hebrew text, Psalm 110 clearly reveals two *Jehovahs* sitting beside each other, one speaking to the other and foretelling future events. This psalm contains an explicit prophecy of a *Jehovah/Adon* who would become both the Messiah and the High Priest of a new priesthood after the order of Melchizedek. Notice carefully these prophetic verses in Psalm 110. Sections in bold are those passages which have been quoted in the New Testament.

"The LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*] said unto my Lord [Hebrew *Adon*, the Messiah], Sit Thou [the Messiah] at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool [quoted in Matthew 22:44, Mark 12:36, Luke 20:42-43, Acts 2:34-35, Hebrews 1:13]. The LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*] shall send the rod of Thy strength out of Zion: rule Thou [the

Messiah] in the midst of Thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: Thou [the Messiah] hast the dew of Thy youth. The LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*] hath sworn, and will not repent, **Thou [the Messiah] art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek [quoted in Hebrews 5:6 and 7:17] "(Psa. 110:1-4).**

The following verses continue the prophetic description of this *Adon* Who would become the Messiah. Notice especially Verse 5. In this verse, the Hebrew name *Yhvh*, or *Jehovah*, in the original Hebrew text was changed by the Massorites to read *Adonay*.

"The Lord [Hebrew *Adonay*, originally *Jehovah*, referring to the Messiah] at Thy [the first *Jehovah's*] right hand shall strike through kings in the day of His wrath. He [*Jehovah*, the Messiah] shall judge among the heathen, He shall fill the places with the dead bodies; He shall wound the heads over many countries. He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall He lift up the head" (Psa. 110:5-7).

Verse 5 in the original Hebrew text clearly shows **two *Jehovahs!*** This key verse in Psalm 110 identifies the *Adon* in Verse 1 as a second *Jehovah*. The context reveals that this ***Jehovah/Adon*** sitting at the right hand of the first *Jehovah* is **the Messiah**. The recorded words of Jesus Christ Himself attest to this very fact.

How Christ Interpreted Psalm 110

No interpretation of Psalm 110 is more authoritative than the Scriptural record of the words spoken by Jesus Christ. He was the promised Messiah about Whom the psalm was written. What did Psalm 110 mean to Christ? How did He interpret the words, "The Lord said unto my Lord"?

Let us examine the exact words of Jesus Christ as Matthew was inspired to record them, and then look at the accounts in the Gospels of Mark and Luke.

Matthew's Gospel, written in Greek for Greek-speaking Christians at Jerusalem ca. 50 A.D., quotes Christ as stating that the psalmist David wrote

under the inspiration of the Spirit of God. Thus Psalm 110 carries the full authority of inspired Scripture! This psalm is not the mere musing of an uneducated shepherd boy who had become king of Israel. Psalm 110 expresses the very thoughts and words of God Himself.

In Christ's quotation of Psalm 110 in the Gospel of Matthew, we find the Greek word *Kurios*, or Lord, used in place of the Old Testament name *Jehovah*. The Greek word *Kurios*, the equivalent of *Jehovah*, is also used in place of the name *Adon*. Here is New Testament confirmation that the name *Jehovah* applies equally to the *Adon* in Verse 1 of Psalm 110!

This use of *Kurios* in the Gospel of Matthew verifies the accuracy of Psalm 110 as written by David in the original Hebrew text. It was no slip of the pen when David described the divine Being in Verse 5 of Psalm 110 as "**The Jehovah at Thy right hand.**" Matthew's record of Christ's words shows that David correctly named the divine Being sitting to the right of *Jehovah* as another *Jehovah*. Jesus' own words reveal that this *Jehovah* Who sits at the right hand of the first *Jehovah* is the Son of *Jehovah*. Here are the words of Christ Himself as recorded by Matthew:

"While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, *Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose Son is He? They say unto Him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in Spirit call Him Lord [Greek *Kurios*, equivalent to Hebrew *Jehovah*], saying, The Lord [Greek *Kurios*, or *Jehovah* the Father] said unto my Lord [Greek *Kurios*, or *Jehovah* the Son], Sit Thou [the Son] on My right hand, till I [the Father] make Thine enemies Thy footstool? If David then calls Him Lord [Greek *Kurios*, or *Jehovah*], how is He [the Messiah] his Son? And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions" (Mat. 22:41-46).*

The Jews of Jesus' day could not answer Jesus' question because they were blinded to the truth that is revealed in Psalm 110. They had been misled by their religious leaders into believing that *Jehovah* was the name of a single divine Being. They were convinced that there was only **one** *Jehovah* in the entire Old Testament. After all, that was the teaching of the scribes and Pharisees. These religious leaders claimed that there *could never be* more than one divine Being. They viewed the prophesied Messiah strictly as a national deliverer and a physical descendant of King David.

When we read Jesus' statements concerning Psalm 110 in the Gospel of Mark, we find an accompanying warning from Jesus to be on guard against the doctrine of the scribes. Why? Because they denied the revealed truth of Scripture! They had blinded their eyes to the two *Jehovahs* of Psalm 110 and other Old Testament passages. While they professed to worship the God of Scripture, the scribes had long ago turned to a religion of "strict monotheism." It was the rigid monotheistic tradition of Judaism that led them to reject the truth that the prophesied Messiah (the very Jesus standing before them) was known as *Jehovah* in the Old Testament. They could not answer Jesus' question concerning the second *Kurios* in Psalm 110 because they did not want to admit that the Scriptures revealed two *Jehovahs*. Notice Jesus' words and warning:

"And Jesus answered and said, while He taught in the temple, *How say the scribes that Christ is the son of David?* For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, **The LORD [Greek *Kurios*, *Jehovah* the Father] said to my Lord [Greek *Kurios*, *Jehovah* the Son] Sit Thou [the Son] on My right hand, till I [the Father] make Thine enemies Thy footstool.** David therefore himself calleth Him Lord [Greek *Kurios*, or *Jehovah*]; and whence is He then his Son? And the common people heard him gladly. And He said unto them in His doctrine, Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the marketplaces, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts: which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation [heavier judgment]" (Mark 12:35-40).

These scribes made a great show of outward devotion to God. They pretended to know God, while all the time refusing to believe what God had revealed in His Word. They rejected the truth that there were **two** *Jehovahs* in the Old Testament, and that **one** of those *Jehovahs* would become the Messiah before Whom they would some day stand in judgment! Because they denied the reality of the righteous judgment of God through His Son, they had no fear of God to restrain them from oppressing the poor and the helpless in the land.

Luke also records Jesus' quotation of Psalm 110 and repeats Jesus' warning to His followers not to fall into the error of the scribes. Notice Luke's testimony:

"And He said unto them, How say they that Christ is David's son? And David himself saith in the book of Psalms, **The Lord [Greek *Kurios*, *Jehovah* the Father] said unto my [David's] Lord [Greek *Kurios*, *Jehovah* the Son], Sit Thou [the Son] on My right hand, till I [the Father] make Thine enemies Thy footstool.** David therefore calleth Him Lord [Greek *Kurios*, or *Jehovah*], how is He then his Son? Then in the audience of all the people He said unto His disciples, Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts; which devour widows' houses, and for a show make long prayers: the same shall receive greater damnation [heavier judgment]" (Luke 20:41-47).

Jesus did not hesitate to condemn the scribes for their hypocrisy. They, of all Jews of that time, should have acknowledged the truth of Scripture and have been walking in the fear of God. They were well acquainted with the Scriptures because their days were spent making copies of the sacred text. Yet the hardness of their hearts led them to deny the wonderful truth of the *Jehovah*/Messiah of Psalm 110 Who had come to earth in their day!

The fulfillment of this wonderful Old Testament prophecy is fully documented in the New Testament for all who are willing to believe. We find this Scriptural evidence not only in the Gospels, but also in the testimony of the apostles Peter and Paul.

How Peter Interpreted Psalm 110

When the apostle Peter quoted Psalm 110 in his Pentecost sermon in 30 A.D., he clearly identified both the *Jehovah* Who is speaking in the prophecy and the *Jehovah* Who sits at His right hand. Peter's inspired interpretation of Psalm 110 makes it plain that David was not referring to himself when he wrote this psalm. Peter quotes Psalm 110 to prove that the Being sitting at the right of *Jehovah* is not David but the exalted Jesus Christ! Peter affirms that Jesus Christ was **with *Jehovah*** and **was *Jehovah*** before He became flesh.

In Peter's inspired sermon, recorded in Acts 2, he testifies that the *Jehovah* on the left in Psalm 110:1 is both *Theos* (verse 32) and *Kurios* (verse 34), and that the *Jehovah* on the right is both *Kurios* (verses 34-35) and *Christos* (verse 35). Peter boldly declares that it is *Theos*, the Father, Who has exalted Jesus and made Him *Christos*. Here is Peter's inspired testimony:

"This Jesus hath God [Greek *Theos*, the Father] raised up [resurrected], whereof we all are witnesses. **Therefore being by the right hand of God [Greek *Theos*, the Father] exalted**, and having received of the Father [Greek *Pater*, referring to *Theos*] the promise of the Holy Ghost [the Spirit of *Theos*, the Father], He [the resurrected Jesus] hath shed forth this [the Holy Spirit of the Father], which ye now see and hear [the outward manifestations of the Holy Spirit]. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he [David] saith himself, **The Lord [Greek *Kurios*, the Father] said unto my [David's] Lord [Greek *Kurios*, the Son], Sit Thou [the Son] on My right hand, until I [the Father] make Thy foes Thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God [Greek *Theos*, the Father] hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord [Greek *Kurios*] and Christ [Greek *Christos*]" (Acts 2:32-36).**

Peter's words clearly show that the *Jehovah/Adon* of Psalm 110 Who is sitting at the right hand of *Jehovah* is not King David! Peter emphatically states that David is still in his grave, and that it is Jesus, *Jehovah* of the Old Testament and *Kurios/Christos* of the New, Who has been raised from the dead by the power of the Father. It is the risen Christ Who has been exalted to sit at the right hand of God.

How Paul Interpreted Psalm 110

The apostle Paul also testifies that the *Jehovah/Adon* of Psalm 110 is Jesus Christ, the Son of *Jehovah*. In the first chapter of his epistle to the Hebrews, Paul identifies the *Jehovah* on the left hand in Psalm 110 as ***Theos the Father***, and the *Jehovah* on the right hand as ***Theos the Son***. Paul's use of the Greek word *Theos* in this passage to name both the Father and the Son

makes it clear that the Son is God in the full sense of the word. He is *Theos* by the same definition that the Father is *Theos*. Paul emphasizes this truth by quoting several Old Testament passages to prove that the Son (Greek *Huios*) is not a glorified angel or a superhuman being, but that He eternally pre-existed as God. Here is Paul's testimony:

"God [Greek *Theos*, the Father], Who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by **His Son [Greek *Huios*],** Whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by Whom also He [the Father] made the worlds [thus Jesus is called the *Arche* or Beginner of the creation]; Who [the Son] being the brightness of His [the Father's] glory, and the express image of His [the Father's] person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He [Jesus Christ] had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels [Greek *aggelos*], as He [the Son] hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. **For unto which of the angels [Greek *aggelos*] said He [the Father] at any time, Thou art My Son [Greek *Huios*], this day have I begotten Thee** [quoted from Psalm 2:7]? And again, I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son [Greek *Huios*] [quoted from II Samuel 7:14]? And again, when He bringeth in the first begotten into the world, He [the Father] saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him [quoted from the Septuagint, Deuteronomy 32:43]. And of the angels He saith, Who maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire [quoted from the Septuagint, Psalm 104:4]. **But unto the Son [Greek *Huios*] He [the Father] saith, Thy throne, O God [Greek *Theos*, the Son], is for ever and ever:** a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom. Thou [the Son] hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God [Greek *Theos*, the Father], even Thy God [Greek *Theos*, the Father], hath anointed Thee [the Son] with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows [quoted from Psalm 45:6-7]. And, Thou, Lord [Greek *Kurios*, the *Jehovah* of the Old Testament Who became the Son], in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Thine hands: they shall perish; but Thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but Thou [the Son] art the same, and Thy years shall not fail [quoted from Psalm 102:25-27]. **But to which of the angels [Greek *aggelos*] said He [the Father] at any time, Sit on My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool?"** (Heb. 1:1-13.)

Paul's inspired testimony makes it undeniably clear that Jesus Christ was never an angel. Paul quotes Psalm 110 and specifically points out that no angel *at any time* was invited to sit at the right hand of the Father. Paul also quotes Psalm 2 to show that no angel *at any time* was begotten of the Father. Paul shows that it is **totally unscriptural** to claim that Christ was ever an angel--**or anything less than God.**

In this passage, Paul offers irrefutable proof from the Old Testament to convince all who question the eternal existence of Jesus Christ as God. To remove every doubt, Paul quotes the testimony of the Father Himself in Psalm 45 as evidence that **Jesus Christ is God** and will reign as God **for all eternity.** As proof of the pre-existence of Jesus Christ as *Jehovah* of the Old Testament, Paul quotes Psalm 102 to demonstrate that **Christ shared full power and authority with the Father** in the creation of the heavens and the earth.

Paul's purpose in quoting these Old Testament scriptures was to shut the mouths of those who deny that Jesus Christ is God and that He has existed from the beginning as God--a fully divine Being. In an earlier epistle, Paul specifically named Christ as the **Rock** of the Old Testament, the God Who covenanted with Israel (I Cor. 10:4). In view of all the New Testament evidence, it is utter nonsense to deny the **eternal pre-existence of Jesus Christ** as Creator and Lord, or *Jehovah*, of the Old Testament.

The Two *Jehovahs* of Psalm 2

In Psalm 2, we find another passage which clearly refers to two divine Beings. When we read the entire psalm, we find that these divine Beings are identified as the *Jehovah* Who became the Father and the *Jehovah* Who became the Son. As in other psalms referring to two *Jehovahs*, the Levites modified the Hebrew text, changing the name *Jehovah* in Verse 4 of Psalm 2 to *Adonay*. But removing the name *Jehovah* from Verse 4 cannot hide the fact that there were **two *Jehovahs***. The use of the name *Jehovah* in other verses in this psalm shows that this divine name is referring to **two** separate

and distinct Beings.

The first occurrence of the name *Jehovah* in Psalm 2 is found in Verse 2. This *Jehovah* is clearly identified in Verse 7 as the Father of the Messiah. Here is what David was inspired to write of the *Jehovah* Who would become the Father and of His future Son, the Messiah:

"Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, **against the LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*], and against His Anointed** [quoted in Acts 4:25-26], saying, Let us [the kings of the earth] break **Their [Jehovah and His Anointed] bands asunder, and cast away Their [Jehovah and His Anointed] cords** from us. He [*Jehovah*] that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: **the Lord [Hebrew *Adonay*, originally *Jehovah*]** shall have them in derision. Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure. **Yet have I [Jehovah] set My King [the Anointed, or Messiah] upon My holy hill of Zion"** (Psa. 2:1-6).

There is no question that the *Jehovah* in this passage is **the divine Being Who became the Father**. In Verse 6 we find this *Jehovah* speaking of His future King, the Messiah. Verse 7 reveals that the promised Messiah would be the Son of this *Jehovah*.

In Verse 7 a **second divine Being** begins to speak, prophesying that He will become the Son of Jehovah. When we read the following verses, we find that this divine Being Who will become **the Messiah, the future Son, is also called *Jehovah***. Here is the undeniable Scriptural evidence:

"I will declare the decree: **the LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*, the Father of the Messiah] hath said unto Me [the Messiah], Thou art My Son** [quoted in Acts 13:33, Hebrews 1:5; 5:5]; **this day have I begotten Thee**. Ask of Me [the Father], and I shall give Thee [the Son] the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession. **Thou [the Son] shalt break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel** [quoted by the resurrected Christ in Revelation 2:26-27]. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve **the LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*, the Son]** with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss **the Son**, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust

in **Him [the Son]"** (Psa. 2:7-12).

These verses in Psalm 2 clearly reveal that there were **two *Jehovahs*** in Old Testament times. When we examine the context in which the name *Jehovah* is used, it is evident that the *Jehovah* in Verse 7 is the divine Being Who would become **the Father of the Messiah**, and that the *Jehovah* in Verse 11 is the divine Being Who would become **the Messiah, His Son**. In Verses 7-9, we find the *Jehovah* Who would become the Son declaring what the first *Jehovah*, His future Father, had decreed.

The decrees in Verse 9 of Psalm 2 are quoted by **the glorified Jesus Christ** in the book of Revelation. Let us examine the testimony of Christ concerning these decrees given by *Jehovah*, the Father of the Messiah, in Psalm 2.

Christ Was Given the Decrees in Psalm 2

In quoting Psalm 2, Jesus Christ confirmed that He was the *Jehovah* Who became the Son, to Whom *Jehovah* the Father delivered the decrees of rulership over all nations. Here are Christ's own words concerning these decrees:

"But unto you I [the risen Christ] say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I [the risen Christ] will put upon you none other burden. But that which ye have already hold fast till I come. And he that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, **to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers [the decrees given in Psalm 2:9]: even as I received of My Father"** (Rev. 2:24-27).

Here Jesus boldly proclaims that **He is the Son, the *Jehovah*/Messiah of Psalm 2**, Who received the decrees of world rulership from *Jehovah* the Father. Later in the book of Revelation, the apostle John adds his testimony to the weight of Scriptural evidence. John was inspired to describe Jesus Christ in Revelation 19 as the **Word of God**, now restored to His full power

and glory in heaven, and soon to rule the nations as **KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS**. In this passage, John quotes part of Psalm 2:9, confirming that Jesus Christ is the *Jehovah*/Messiah Who was given the decrees of world rulership by *Jehovah* the Father. Here is John's testimony:

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse; and He That sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself. And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: **and His name is called The Word [Greek *Logos*] of God**. And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and **He shall rule them with a rod of iron [as decreed in Psalm 2:9]**: and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God [Greek *Pantokrator Theos*, referring to *Jehovah* the Father, Who delivered the decrees]. And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, **KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS** [Greek *Basileus basileus kai Kurios kurios*, future title of *Jehovah* the Son]" (Rev. 19:11-16).

As John testifies in his Gospel, **this same Word of God was with God and was God** before He became a fleshly human being (John 1:1, 14). John also shows in Revelation 12 that after His days in the flesh, Jesus was restored to His former glory and now sits with the Father on His throne. John declares, "And she brought forth a man child [Jesus, the prophesied Messiah of Psalm 2], **who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: [as decreed in Psalm 2:9]** and her child was caught up unto God [Greek *Theos*, the Father], and to His throne" (Rev. 12:5).

These words in the book of Revelation confirm that Jesus Christ is **the Messiah of Psalm 2 Who will rule the nations of this world with a rod of iron!** He is the *Jehovah* described in Psalm 2:11 Who has become the Son. He alone has been glorified and exalted by *Jehovah* the Father and will soon return to rule the earth as King of kings. That is the true teaching of the New Testament!

The New Testament verifies that Jesus was **a divine Being**--one of the two *Jehovahs* of the Old Testament--before He came to earth as a fleshly human being. He **emptied Himself** of His glory and became flesh in order

that He might die, thus ending the Old Covenant and establishing the New (Phil. 2:6-7, Heb. 9:15-16; 10:5-9). After three days, He was resurrected and **restored to His full power and glory** with the Father (Eph. 1:20-21, John 17:4-5).

Jesus Christ is **fully divine**. The apostle Paul testifies that "in Him dwells **all the fullness of the Godhead bodily**" (Col. 2:9). He was not resurrected with a glorified body that transcends human flesh but is less than God. He is not a "new creature" in a mythical category between angels and human beings. **He is God**. Paul leaves no room for doubt! When Paul quoted Psalm 2 in his epistle to the Hebrews as evidence that **Jesus is the glorified Son**, he also quoted Psalm 45 to show that **the Son is God**: "But **unto the Son** He saith, Thy throne, **O God**, is forever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Thy Kingdom" (Heb. 1:8).

Jesus is now reigning at the right hand of the Father, sharing the Father's throne until the time comes for the Father to deliver the nations of this world into His hands, as decreed in Psalm 2. He is coming soon as **KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS**, and He will reign as God forever!

How the Apostles Interpreted Psalm 2

In the book of Acts, we find evidence that all the apostles understood that the prophecies in Psalm 2 would be fulfilled by Jesus Christ. The combined prayer of the assembled apostles in Acts 4 shows that they understood that the prophecies in Psalm 2 were referring to Jesus Christ and were, in fact, beginning to be fulfilled in their days! Here is their prayer as recorded by Luke:

"And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God [Greek *Theos*, the Father] with one accord, and said, Lord [Greek *Despotes*, or Master, referring to the Father] *Thou art God* [these words are not in the texts], Which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: Who by the mouth of Thy servant David has said [in Psalm 2:1-2], **Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord [Greek *Kurios*, the Father], and against His Christ [Greek *Christos*, the Son]**. For of a truth against Thy Holy Child Jesus, Whom Thou hast

anointed [resurrected], both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the People of Israel, were gathered together..." (Acts 4:24-27).

This prayer by the early apostles confirms that they understood the meaning of Psalm 2. They were fully aware that Jesus was the Messiah of David's inspired prophecy! They knew that He had been resurrected and had ascended to the Father's throne, and that He would return to earth with power and glory to rule all nations, as the Father had decreed.

In these early days of the church, Paul was not yet an apostle. Later in the book of Acts, we find the personal testimony of the apostle Paul concerning the identity of the *Jehovah* in Psalm 2 Who was prophesied to become the Messiah. In proclaiming the resurrection of Jesus Christ, Paul quoted Psalm 2:7 and other Old Testament prophecies as evidence that Jesus Christ was the promised Messiah--originally one of the two *Jehovahs*, but now the immortal Son of *Jehovah*. Here is Paul's testimony:

"And we [Paul and his co-workers] declare unto you glad tidings, how that **the promise which was made unto the fathers, God [Greek *Theos*, the Father] hath fulfilled** the same unto us their children, in that **He [the Father] hath raised up Jesus [the Son] again**; as it is also written in the second psalm, **Thou art My Son; this day have I [the Father] begotten [resurrected] Thee [Psalm 2:7]**. And as concerning that **He [the Father] raised Him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption**, He [the Father] said on this wise, **I [the Father] will give You [the Son] the sure mercies of David** [Isa. 55:3]. Wherefore He [the Father] saith also in another psalm [Psalm 16:10], **Thou [the Father] shalt not suffer Thine Holy One [the Son] to see corruption"** (Acts 13:32-35).

Paul's inspired interpretation of Psalm 2:7 makes it clear that it was on "**this day**"--**the day of His resurrection to immortality**--that Jesus became the glorified Son of God. Contrary to the popular Trinitarian teaching, there has not always been a Son in the Godhead! The Father Himself has revealed that He did not have an eternal, immortal Son until He raised up Jesus from the dead. Paul emphatically states that it was **in reference to Christ's resurrection** that the Father declared, "Thou art My Son; **this day** have I begotten Thee."

In his epistle to the Hebrews, Paul shows that when Jesus Christ was resurrected from the dead by the power of the Father, **He was also glorified**

by the Father. Paul again quotes Psalm 2:7 in reference to Christ's resurrection to glory:

"For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God [Greek *Theos*, the Father], that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins....And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but *he that is* called of God [Greek *Theos*, the Father], as was Aaron. So also Christ [Greek *Christos*, the Son] **glorified not Himself** to be made an High Priest; **but He [the Father] that said unto Him, Thou art My Son, to day have I begotten [resurrected] Thee [Psalm 2:7, quoted from the Septuagint].** As He [the Father] saith also in another place, Thou [the Son] art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec [Psalm 110:5, quoted from the Septuagint]" (Heb. 5:1-6).

These New Testament interpretations make it undeniably clear that the *Jehovah*/Messiah of Psalm 2 became the glorified Son of God on **the day of His resurrection to immortality.** On "**this day**" He was exalted and restored to the full power and glory that He shared with the Father in the beginning as the Word of God (John 1:1; 17:5). Now the Son of God, He is both our Savior and High Priest, ever living to make intercession for us with the Father. And, as the **reglorified Word of God**; He is preparing to return to this earth **to rule all nations with a rod of iron, as the Father has decreed.**

The Two *Jehovahs* of Psalm 16

As recorded in Acts 13, when Paul proclaimed Jesus Christ as the *Jehovah*/Messiah of Psalm 2, he also testified that Jesus is **the "Holy One"** of Psalm 16. When we examine the context of the verse in Psalm 16, which Paul quoted, we find that the "Holy One," or Messiah, is **also called *Jehovah*,** and that He is addressing a second divine Being. As in other passages which reveal two divine Beings, the Massorites altered the name *Jehovah* to read *Adonay*. We find this modification in Verse 2 of Psalm 16.

Psalm 16 begins with David's prayer to God. In Verse 2, David addresses his God both as "Lord" [*Jehovah*] and as "**my Lord.**" David is clearly speaking to the same divine Being Who is called "**my Lord**" in Verse 1 of

Psalm 110. As we have seen, this divine Being is the *Jehovah* Who was prophesied to become the Messiah and Son. David's Lord is revealed in all of David's psalms as the Son. These psalms prophesy that He would be both the Son of David and the Son of *Jehovah*. In many of these prophecies, we find one divine Being speaking to another, giving us much insight into the relationship that existed before one *Jehovah* became the Son of the other *Jehovah*.

It is important to understand that when David wrote of a **Father/Son relationship** between these two divine Beings, it was **yet future**. This truth must be emphasized, as false teachers are now claiming that the Son has always been the Son, and that the Father has always been the Father! They ignore the fact that the Scriptures reveal **two *Jehovahs* Who existed side by side** until one of these *Jehovahs* left His glory and became a fleshly human being. That *Jehovah* became Jesus Christ, the Messiah, Who suffered and died. He did not become the eternal Son of God until the day of His resurrection, as Paul testifies in Acts 13:33, where he quotes Psalm 16.

In David's prayer in Psalm 16, David calls the *Jehovah* Who was prophesied to become the Son by the name *El*. This fact is significant because *El* has always been viewed as a divine name referring only to the Father. Here is David's prayer to the *Jehovah* Who would become the Messiah:

"Preserve me, O God [**Hebrew *El*, the future Messiah**]: for in Thee do I put my trust. O my soul, thou hast said unto **the LORD** [**Hebrew *Jehovah*, the future Messiah**], Thou art **my Lord** [**Hebrew *Adonay*, originally *Jehovah***]: my goodness extendeth not to [beyond] Thee; but to [concerning] the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom [them] is all my delight. Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god: their drink offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips. **The LORD** [**Hebrew *Jehovah*, the future Messiah**] is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: Thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage. I will bless **the LORD** [**Hebrew *Jehovah*, the future Messiah**], who hath given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons" (Psa. 16:1-7).

At this point David ceases to speak about himself. The psalm continues in the first person, but now becomes **a prophecy of the Messiah**. The *Jehovah* Who will become the Messiah is addressing the *Jehovah* Who will become the Father! One *Jehovah*, the future Messiah, is speaking in the first person to another *Jehovah*, the future Father, Whom the first *Jehovah* addresses as "Thou." Notice David's prophecy concerning the Messiah:

"I [the Messiah] have set the LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*, the Father] always before Me: because He [the Father] is at My right hand, I [the Messiah] shall not be moved. Therefore My heart is glad, and My glory rejoiceth: My flesh also shall rest in hope [prophesying His death]. **For Thou [the Father] wilt not leave My soul in hell [the grave]; neither wilt Thou [the Father] suffer Thine Holy One [the Messiah] to see corruption** [prophesying His resurrection]. Thou [the Father] wilt show Me [the Messiah] the path of life [prophesying His ascension]: in Thy presence is fullness of joy; **at Thy [the Father's] right hand [where the Messiah sits] there are pleasures for evermore"** (Psa. 16:8-11).

None can deny that these verses written by David are an inspired prophecy in which one *Jehovah*, the future Messiah, is speaking to another *Jehovah*, the future Father. Any who doubt that these verses prophesy a future Father/Son relationship between two divine Beings need only turn to the New Testament to find absolute Scriptural verification. Inspired interpretations of Psalm 16 by both Peter and Paul have been preserved for us in the book of Acts. Let us first examine the testimony of the apostle Peter as recorded in Acts 2.

How Peter Interpreted Psalm 16

In Acts 2, we find Peter's inspired sermon on the day of Pentecost, in which he proclaimed Jesus Christ as the *Jehovah*/Messiah of Psalm 16, Who had been resurrected from the grave by *Jehovah* the Father. Here is Peter's testimony:

"For David speaketh **concerning Him** [not about David], I [the Messiah] 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 [the grave], neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption....**He [David] seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in hell [the grave], neither His flesh did see corruption. **This Jesus hath God [Greek *Theos*, the Father] raised up,** whereof we all are witnesses" (Acts 2:25-27, 31-32).

Peter's inspired interpretation gives us irrefutable proof that Jesus Christ was the *Jehovah* of Psalm 16 Who became the Messiah. When it was time for Him to come to earth as the Messiah, He committed His power and glory to the *Jehovah* Who became the Father. He gave up His divinity and became flesh in order that He might die (Heb. 2:14). Psalm 16 describes His anticipation of His resurrection and His return to glory.

These prophesied events had all been fulfilled when Peter stood before a crowd of thousands who had gathered at Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost. Peter boldly proclaimed that Jesus had been resurrected to immortality by *Jehovah* the Father, exactly as David had prophesied. When he quoted David's psalm, Peter made it clear that these verses did not refer to David but specifically concerned the Messiah, and that they had been fulfilled by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Peter's testimony was later affirmed by the apostle Paul, as recorded in Acts 13.

How Paul Interpreted Psalm 16

Paul's inspired interpretation in Acts 13 verifies that the prophecy in Psalm 16 is not speaking of David but refers to the Messiah. As we saw in our study of Psalm 2, Paul is testifying in Acts 13 that David's prophecies concerning the *Jehovah*/Messiah had been fulfilled by Jesus Christ. Notice again Paul's inspired testimony:

"And we [Paul and his co-workers] declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God [Greek *Theos*, the Father] hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that He [the Father] hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, **Thou art My Son, this day have I [the Father] begotten [resurrected] Thee [Psalm 2:7]**. And as concerning that He [the Father] raised Him [the Son] up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, He [the Father] said on this wise, **I [the Father] will give You [the Son] the sure mercies of David [Isa. 55:3]**. Wherefore He [the Father] saith also in another psalm [Psalm 16:10], **Thou [the Father] shalt not suffer Thine Holy One [the Son] to see corruption"** (Acts 13:32-35).

Paul makes it absolutely clear that there was **no Son in the Godhead until the resurrection** of Jesus Christ. On that day, two divine Beings Who had eternally existed as God entered into a Father/Son relationship. The original relationship between the two divine Beings Who were both known as *Jehovah* in Old Testament times **changed forever** when one *Jehovah* became the Father and the other *Jehovah* became the Son.

Paul's inspired words reveal that **the Godhead is not absolutely fixed** and unchangeable, as religious philosophers have claimed! **The Godhead changed** when one of the *Jehovahs* emptied Himself of His divinity and became flesh. For thirty-three years, He lived among men as a fleshly human being named Jesus. When Jesus died, there was only one *Jehovah* in the entire universe. The *Jehovah* Who had become Jesus no longer existed! When Jesus was resurrected by the power of the only remaining *Jehovah*, **the relationship between them changed forever**. At the precise moment of Jesus' resurrection, the remaining *Jehovah* became the Father and the reglorified former *Jehovah* became the Son! They had not existed in this Father/Son relationship before that time. Those who claim otherwise are denying the plain truth of Scripture!

The Two *Jehovahs* of Psalm 22

Another psalm which depicted in advance a Father/Son relationship between the two divine Beings of the Old Testament is Psalm 22. This psalm reveals the personal thoughts and deep emotions of the divine Being Who was prophesied to become the Son as He foresaw the agony of His crucifixion and the joyous resurrection that would follow. His prayer to His Father is filled with graphic details and specific prophecies concerning the crucifixion.

In His prayer, the divine Being Who would become the Son addresses the divine Being Who would become the Father as *El*. As we have seen in Psalm 16, *El* is also used in the Old Testament as a name of the divine Being Who later became the Son. In Psalm 22, *El* refers to the divine Being Who became the Father, showing that both divine Beings in the Godhead were known as *El*.

It is in the first verse of Psalm 22 that we find the name *El* used in reference to the divine Being Who would become the Father. In Verse 2 of this psalm, this same divine Being is called *Elohim*. Here is the Messiah's prayer to His future Father:

"My God, **My God [Hebrew *El*, the divine Being Who would become the Father]**, why hast Thou forsaken Me [the future Son]? why art Thou [the Father] so far from helping Me [the Son], and from the words of My roaring? **O My God [Hebrew *Elohim*, referring to the Father]**, I [the Son] cry in the daytime, but Thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent. But Thou [the Father] art holy, O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel. Our fathers trusted in Thee: they trusted, and Thou didst deliver them. They cried unto Thee, and were delivered: they trusted in Thee, and were not confounded. But I [the Son] am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see Me laugh Me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He [the Son] trusted on **the LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*, referring to the Father]** that He would deliver Him [the Son]: let Him [the Father] deliver Him, seeing He [the Son] delighted in Him [the Father]" (Psa. 22:1-8).

Notice that in Verse 8 the future Son calls the divine Being Who would become the Father by the name *Jehovah*. In Verses 1 and 2, this same divine Being is called by the names *El* and *Elohim*. The fact that the *Jehovah* Who would become the Father is called by two other names in the same passage shows that the divine names *El*, *Elohim*, and *Jehovah* are used interchangeably in Scripture. When we examine the use of these names in other Scriptural passages, we find an eye-opening revelation. Contrary to what some have claimed, these Old Testament names do not refer exclusively to the divine Being Who became the Father. The use of these divine names in the book of Psalms and other Scriptures shows that **all three names were shared equally by both divine Beings** in the Godhead.

The prayer of the future Messiah to the divine Being Who would become the Father continues in Verse 9 and the following verses of Psalm 22. When we read these verses, we find a graphic portrayal of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Notice the detailed prophecies that were fulfilled at His death:

"But Thou [the Father] art He that took Me [the Son] out of the womb: Thou didst make Me hope when I was upon My mother's breasts. I [the Son] was cast upon Thee [the Father] from the womb: Thou art My God [Hebrew *El*] from My mother's belly. Be not far from Me [the Son]; for trouble is near; for there is none to help. Many bulls have compassed Me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset Me round. They gaped upon Me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion. I [the Son] am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint: My heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of My bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and My tongue cleaveth to My jaws; and Thou [the Father] hast brought Me [the Son] into the dust of death. For dogs have compassed Me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed Me: they pierced My hands and My feet. I may tell [count] all my bones: they look and stare upon Me. **They part My garments among them, and cast lots upon My vesture [quoted in Matthew 27:35, Mark 15:24, Luke 23:34 and John 19:24]**" (Psa. 22:9-18).

As noted above, all four Gospel writers recorded this prophecy in their accounts of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, showing that He truly was the divinely ordained Messiah of David's psalm. As we continue to read the Messiah's prayer in this psalm, we find that His thoughts turn from the agony of His prophesied death to the salvation that it would bring to many.

He speaks of the new spiritual Israel--the children of Abraham by faith--who would praise God for the wonderful salvation that He had wrought.

Let us read the Messiah's words in the following verses of Psalm 22. Note that in Verse 19, the first verse of this section, the Messiah again addresses the Father as *Jehovah* in the original Hebrew text. This verse is one of the 134 places where the name Jehovah was altered by the Massoretic Levites to read *Adonay*. Regardless of the modification of the name, it is clear that the divine Being in Verse 19 is the same divine Being as the *Jehovah* in Verse 8. In the following passage, He is again called *Jehovah* in Verse 23. In each occurrence of the name, the context reveals that this divine Being is the future Father of the Messiah.

"But be not Thou [the Father] far from Me [the Son], O LORD [**Hebrew Adonay, originally Jehovah, referring to the Father**]: O My strength, haste Thee to help Me [the Son]. Deliver My soul from the sword; My darling from the power of the dog. Save Me from the lion's mouth: for Thou [the Father] hast heard Me [the Son] from the horns of the unicorns. **I [the Son] will declare Thy Name [the Father] unto My brethren:** in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee [quoted in John 20:17]. Ye that fear **the LORD [Hebrew Jehovah, referring to the Father]**, praise Him [the Father]; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify Him [the Father]; and fear Him [the Father], all ye the seed of Israel. For He [the Father] hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath He [the Father] hid His face from Him [the Son]; but when He [the Son] cried unto Him [the Father], He heard. My praise shall be of Thee [the Father] in the great congregation: I [the Son] will pay My vows before them that fear Him [the Father]" (Psa. 22:19-25).

In the final section of Psalm 22 we again find the name *Jehovah*. This name occurs four times in this section--in Verses 26, 27, 28 and 30. But in these verses, as the context reveals, the name *Jehovah* does not refer to the divine Being Who would become the Father. Every occurrence of the name *Jehovah* in this part of Psalm 22 is a specific reference to the divine Being Who would become the Son. This truth becomes evident when we read Verse 28, where this *Jehovah* is revealed as the prophesied Messiah Who will rule all nations.

The final occurrence of the name *Jehovah* in Psalm 22 was found in Verse 30 in the original Hebrew text. The name *Jehovah* in this verse was altered by the Massoretic Levites to read *Adonay*. Remember that they also modified the name *Jehovah* in Verse 19. The change in Verse 30 was their second modification of the name *Jehovah* in Psalm 22. It is interesting to note that in Verse 19, the name *Jehovah* refers to the divine Being Who would become the Father. In Verse 30, the name *Jehovah* refers to the divine Being Who would become the Son. In the original Hebrew text, these two verses plainly revealed the existence of **two *Jehovahs***. Here are the inspired words of David concerning the *Jehovah* Who would become the Son:

"The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise **the LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*, referring to the Son]** that seek Him: your heart shall live for ever. All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto **the LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*, the Son]**: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee [the Son]. **For the kingdom is the LORD'S [Hebrew *Jehovah's*, referring to the Son]: and He [the Son] is the Governor among the nations.** All they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before Him [the Son]: and none can keep alive his own soul. A seed shall serve Him [the Son]; **it shall be accounted to the Lord [Hebrew *Adonay*, originally *Jehovah*, referring to the Son] for a generation.** They shall come, and shall declare His righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that He [the Son] hath done this" (Psa. 22:26-31).

All four Gospel writers quote Psalm 22 as evidence that Jesus Christ was the prophesied Messiah--the *Jehovah* of the Old Testament Who became the Son. The New Testament shows beyond a shadow of doubt that **Jesus Christ had eternally existed as God** before He became flesh. David's prophecy in Verse 28 of Psalm 22, concerning the *Jehovah* Who will rule the nations, also shows that the resurrected Jesus Christ was **restored to His former glory** and will return to earth to rule forever **as God**.

Psalm 22 Was Christ's Last Prayer

The prophetic prayer of the *Jehovah*/Messiah in Psalm 22 is quoted in the New Testament as the last prayer of Jesus before He died. In their Gospels, Matthew and Mark were both inspired to record the anguished cry of Jesus during His suffering, as prophesied in the first verse of Psalm 22: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Mat. 27:46, Mark 15:34.) The Gospel of John indicates that Jesus may have spoken the entire psalm during His crucifixion. John records that Jesus' last words before His death were, "It is finished" (John 19:30). As *The Companion Bible* explains, this is the actual meaning and the proper translation of the final words of Psalm 22.

Whether or not Jesus spoke the entire psalm aloud, it is certain that every verse was a reality in His mind as He felt death approaching. As the *Jehovah* of the Old Testament Who would become the Son, He had inspired David to write these verses. Their words held a message of both anguish and joy, foretelling His grievous suffering and the triumphant glory that would follow. He looked forward not only to His own rulership over the nations, but to the eternal salvation that His death would bring to many, whom He calls "**My brethren**" (verse 22). It was His great love for His future brethren, and His desire to share His glory with them, that had brought Him to the humiliation and agony of the crucifixion. Even as He suffered, He looked beyond this cruel and shameful death to the joy of bringing us to glory! As the apostle Paul was inspired to write, "Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, **Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross**, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:2).

When Jesus said, "It is finished," and drew His last breath, He knew that He would awaken to immortality--as "**the firstborn of many brethren**" (Rom. 8:29). Jesus is the first of **many** who will be resurrected to become the immortal children of God--those whom Jesus calls "**My brethren**" (Heb. 2:10-13). This wonderful truth is revealed in the prayer of the *Jehovah*/Messiah of Psalm 22!

The *Jehovah Elohim* of Psalm 89

Psalm 89 is one of two psalms which reveal that the two divine Beings of the Old Testament were each known not only as *Jehovah* but as *Jehovah Elohim*. While both divine Beings are spoken of in Psalm 89, only one of them is called *Jehovah Elohim* in this psalm. However, in the following psalm, Psalm 90, the other divine Being is also addressed as *Jehovah Elohim*. Let us first examine Psalm 89.

In the first verse, the psalmist praises *Jehovah* for His mercy and faithfulness. In Verses 5 and 6, he again extols Him as *Jehovah*, and in Verse 7 as *El*. In the following verse, he addresses the same divine Being as *Jehovah Elohim*. Here are the psalmist's inspired words:

"I will sing of the mercies of **the LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*]** for ever: with my mouth will I make known Thy faithfulness to all generations. For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever: Thy faithfulness shalt Thou establish in the very heavens. I have made a covenant with My chosen, I have sworn unto David My servant, Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up Thy throne to all generations. Selah. And the heavens shall praise Thy wonders, O **LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*]**: Thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints. For who in the heaven can be compared unto **the LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*]**? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto **the LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*]**? **God [Hebrew *El*]** is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about Him. O **LORD God [Hebrew *Jehovah Elohim*]** of hosts, who is a strong **LORD [Hebrew *Jah*]** like unto Thee? or to Thy faithfulness round about Thee?" (Psa. 89:1-8.)

Notice in Verse 8 that in addition to the name *Jehovah Elohim*, the psalmist uses the name *Jah*, which is a shortened form of *Jehovah*. The fact that the psalmist was inspired by the Holy Spirit to use these various divine names shows that **God does not have "one sacred name"** by which He must be addressed.

In the following verses, the psalmist continues his song of praise to *Jehovah*. In Verse 19, he refers to a second divine Being as "**Thy Holy One,**" showing that the *Jehovah* he is addressing in this psalm is the Father of the Messiah. Notice the psalmist's words:

"Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, Thou stillest them. Thou hast broken Rahab in pieces, as one that is slain; Thou hast scattered thine enemies with Thy strong arm. The heavens are Thine, the earth also is Thine: as for the world and the fulness thereof, Thou hast founded them. The north and the south Thou hast created them: Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in Thy name. Thou hast a mighty arm: strong is Thy hand, and high is Thy right hand. Justice and judgment are the habitation of Thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before Thy face. Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O **LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*]**, in the light of Thy countenance. In Thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in Thy righteousness shall they be exalted. For Thou art the glory of their strength: and in Thy favour our horn shall be exalted. For **the LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*, the Father of the Messiah]** is our defense; and **the Holy One of Israel [His Son the Messiah]** is our king. Then **Thou [the Father]** spakest in vision to **Thy Holy One [the Son]**, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people" (Psa. 89:9-19).

Here we find one divine Being, the future Father, speaking to another divine Being, the future Son and Messiah, concerning David, the chosen ruler of His people. The next section of Psalm 89, while speaking directly of David, is also a prophecy of the reign of his future seed--the Messiah. This dual meaning is evident in the following verses:

"I have found David My servant [quoted in Acts 13:22]; with My holy oil have I anointed him: with whom My hand shall be established: Mine arm also shall strengthen him. The enemy shall not exact upon him; nor the son of wickedness afflict him. And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him. But My faithfulness and My mercy shall be with him: and in My name shall his horn be exalted. I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers. He shall cry unto Me, Thou art my father, my God [Hebrew *El*], and the Rock [Hebrew *Zur*] of my

salvation. Also **I will make Him My firstborn, higher [Hebrew *Elyon*, meaning "Most High," referring to the Messiah]** than the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and My covenant shall stand fast with him. **His seed [the Messiah] also will I make to endure for ever, and His throne as the days of heaven.** If his children forsake My law, and walk not in My judgments; if they break My statutes, and keep not My commandments; then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless My lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer My faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of My lips. Once have I sworn by My holiness that I will not lie unto David. **His seed [the Messiah] shall endure for ever, and His throne as the sun before Me.** It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven. Selah" (Psa. 89:20-37).

As noted above, Verse 20 is quoted by the apostle Paul in the book of Acts. In preaching Christ to the Jews at Antioch, Paul identified the *Jehovah* of Psalm 89 as the Father of the Messiah. Here is Paul's inspired witness:

"And when He [God] had removed him [Saul], He raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also He gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after Mine own heart, which shall fulfill all My will. Of this man's seed hath God [the *Jehovah* of Psalm 89] according to His promise raised unto Israel a Savior, Jesus" (Acts 13:22-23).

Paul clearly identifies the *Jehovah* Who spoke these words in Psalm 89 as the Father of Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah of the seed of David. In the last section of Psalm 89, the psalmist again addresses *Jehovah* the Father, pleading with Him to remember His covenant with David. In Verse 51, we find another reference to the prophesied Messiah. As in other Scriptural passages which reveal two divine Beings, the Massorites modified the original text. Notice that there are two modifications of the name *Jehovah* in the following verses:

"But Thou hast cast off and abhorred, Thou hast been wroth with Thine anointed [David]. Thou hast made void the covenant of Thy servant: Thou hast profaned his crown by casting it to the ground. Thou hast broken down all his hedges; Thou hast brought his strong holds to ruin. All that pass by the way spoil him: he is a reproach to his neighbours. Thou hast set up the

right hand of his adversaries; Thou hast made all his enemies to rejoice. Thou hast also turned the edge of his sword, and hast not made him to stand in the battle. Thou hast made his glory to cease, and cast his throne down to the ground. The days of his youth hast Thou shortened: Thou hast covered him with shame. Selah. How long, **LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*, the Father of the Messiah]**? wilt Thou hide Thyself for ever? shall Thy wrath burn like fire? Remember how short my time is: wherefore hast Thou made all men in vain? What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave? Selah. **Lord [Hebrew *Adonay*, originally *Jehovah*, referring to the Father of the Messiah]**, where are Thy former loving kindnesses, which thou swarest unto David in Thy truth? Remember, **Lord [Hebrew *Adonay*, originally *Jehovah*, again referring to the Father]**, the reproach of Thy servants; how I do bear in my bosom the reproach of all the mighty people; wherewith Thine enemies have reproached, O **LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*, the Father]**; wherewith they have reproached the footsteps of **Thine Anointed [the Messiah]**. Blessed be **the LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*, the Father]** for evermore. Amen, and Amen" (Psa. 89:38-52).

As Paul confirms in the New Testament, the *Jehovah* of Psalm 89 is the divine Being Who became the Father. In Psalm 89, this divine Being is addressed by several names, including *Jehovah Elohim*. In the following psalm, we will see that the divine Being Who became His Son, the Messiah, was also known by the name *Jehovah Elohim*.

The *Jehovah Elohim* of Psalm 90

Psalm 90, a prayer of Moses, is addressed to the *Jehovah* Who would become the Son. In the original Hebrew text, the name *Jehovah* was found three times in this psalm--in Verses 1, 13, and 17. The Massorites modified Verse 1 and Verse 17 to make *Jehovah* read *Adonay*. Before this modification, Verse 17 revealed that the divine Being Who became the Son was known in Old Testament times as *Jehovah Elohim*. Moses begins his prayer by addressing this divine Being both as *Jehovah* and as *El*. Here is Moses' prayer to the divine Being Who was prophesied to become the Son:

"LORD [Hebrew *Adonay*, originally *Jehovah*], Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth,

or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even **from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God [Hebrew *El*]**. Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men. **For a thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past [quoted in II Peter 3:8]**, and as a watch in the night" (Psa. 90:1-4).

In these verses, we do not find any direct statement to show us that the *Jehovah* and *El* Whom Moses is addressing is the future Messiah. In order to identify the divine Being of Moses' prayer, we must look to the New Testament. It is the apostle Peter who enables us to know that Moses was addressing the *Jehovah* Who would become the Messiah. When Peter quoted Verse 4 of Psalm 90, it was in reference to the second coming of Jesus Christ. Peter tells us that "one day is **with the Lord** as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day," and explains, "The Lord is not slack **concerning His promise** [to return]" (II Pet. 3:8-9).

Peter's interpretation of Moses' words clearly identifies the *Jehovah* and *El* of Psalm 90 as the divine Being Who became Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah. Let us read the remainder of Moses' prayer, and we will see that this divine Being was also known in Old Testament times as *Jehovah Elohim*:

"Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep: in the morning they are like grass which groweth up. In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth. For we are consumed by Thine anger, and by Thy wrath are we troubled. Thou hast set our iniquities before Thee, our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance. For all our days are passed away in Thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told. The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. Who knoweth the power of Thine anger? even according to Thy fear, so is Thy wrath. So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. Return, **O LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*, the future Son]**, how long? and let it repent Thee concerning Thy servants. O satisfy us early with Thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad according to the days wherein Thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil. Let Thy work appear unto Thy servants, and Thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of **the LORD [Hebrew *Adonay*, originally *Jehovah*]**

our God [Hebrew *Elohim*] be upon us: and establish Thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish Thou it" (Psa. 90:5-17).

Psalm 90, as originally inspired and written, reveals that the divine Being of Moses' prayer is named *Jehovah Elohim*. The apostle Peter reveals that this *Jehovah Elohim* of Psalm 90 became Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah and Son. As we have seen in Psalm 89, the Father of the Messiah was also known as *Jehovah Elohim*. When correctly understood, Psalm 89 and Psalm 90 reveal the existence of **two *Jehovah Elohim!***

In Psalm 118, we again find the divine Being Who became the Father addressed as both *Jehovah* and *Elohim*. This psalm also shows that the divine Being Who became the Son was both *Jehovah* and *Jah*. Let us examine Psalm 118 in the light of the New Testament.

The Two *Jehovahs* of Psalm 118

Without the New Testament, we would not know that **two *Jehovahs*** are revealed in Psalm 118. When we read this psalm, it appears that it is referring to only one divine Being. Perhaps that is why the Massorites did not modify any of the verses in Psalm 118, although the name *Jehovah* occurs numerous times. Let us read the opening verses in this psalm, and then we will see how Paul interprets them. Notice that in Verse 5 the psalmist addresses this *Jehovah* as *Jah*.

"O give thanks unto **the LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*]**; for He is good: because His mercy endureth for ever. Let Israel now say, that His mercy endureth for ever. Let the house of Aaron now say, that His mercy endureth for ever. Let them now that fear **the LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*]** say, that His mercy endureth for ever. I called upon **the LORD [Hebrew *Jah*]** in distress: **the LORD [Hebrew *Jah*]** answered me, and set me in a large place. **The LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*] is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me? [quoted in Hebrews 13:6]" (Psa. 118:1-6.)**

As noted above, Verse 6 is quoted by the apostle Paul in his epistle to the Hebrews. In this New Testament record, Paul clearly identifies the divine Being Who is called both *Jehovah* and *Jah* in the opening verse of Psalm 118. Here is Paul's inspired testimony: "...for He [Jesus] hath said, I will

never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my Helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Heb. 13:5-6).

Paul's inspired words clearly identify the *Jehovah* and *Jah* of Psalm 118:5-6 as the divine Being Who became the Messiah and Son--Jesus Christ. This truth is made clear in the following verses in Psalm 118, where this *Jehovah* is prophesied to become the Way of salvation:

"The LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*, the Son] taketh my part with them that help me: therefore shall I see my desire upon them that hate me. It is better to trust in **the LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*, the Son] than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in **the LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*, the Son]** than to put confidence in princes. All nations compassed me about: but in the name of **the LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*, the Son]** will I destroy them. They compassed me about; yea, they compassed me about: but in the name of **the LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*, the Son]** I will destroy them. They compassed me about like bees; they are quenched as the fire of thorns: for in the name of **the LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*, the Son]** I will destroy them. Thou hast thrust sore at me that I might fall: but **the LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*, the Son]** helped me. **The LORD [Hebrew *Jah*, the Son]** is my strength and song, and **is become my salvation**. The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous: the right hand of **the LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*, the Son]** doeth valiantly. The right hand of **the LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*, the Son]** is exalted: the right hand of **the LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*, the Son]** doeth valiantly. I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of **the LORD [Hebrew *Jah*, the Son]**. **The LORD [Hebrew *Jah*, the Son]** hath chastened me sore: but He hath not given me over unto death. Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, and I will praise **the LORD [Hebrew *Jah*, the Son]**: this gate of **the LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*, the Son]**, into which the righteous shall enter. I will praise Thee: for Thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation" (Psa. 118:1-21).**

The concluding verses in Psalm 118 are clearly prophetic. Some of these verses were quoted by Jesus Christ and His apostles, as recorded in a number of New Testament writings. These inspired records all testify that Jesus Christ was the divine Being of Psalm 118 Who was prophesied to become the Messiah.

When we read the concluding verses in Psalm 118, we find that they not only foretell the coming of the Messiah, but they also speak of the *Jehovah* Who will be His Father. It now becomes obvious that there are **two *Jehovahs*** in this psalm. Notice that in the following verses, the name *Jehovah* is no longer referring to the Son, as in the preceding verses:

"The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the LORD'S [Hebrew *Jehovah's*, referring to the Father] doing; it is marvellous in our eyes [quoted in Matthew 21:42, Mark 12:10-11, Luke 20:17, Acts 4:11, I Peter 2:4]. This is the day which the LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*, the Father] hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. Save now, I beseech Thee, O LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*, the Father]: O LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*, the Father], I beseech Thee, send now prosperity. Blessed be He [the Messiah] that cometh in the name of the LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*, the Father]: [quoted in Matthew 21:9; 23:39, Mark 11:9, Luke 13:35; 19:38, John 12:13] we have blessed You out of the house of the LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*, the Father]. God [Hebrew *El*] is the LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*, the Father], which hath showed us light: bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar. Thou art my God [Hebrew *El*], and I will praise Thee: Thou art my God [Hebrew *Elohim*], I will exalt Thee. O give thanks unto the LORD [Hebrew *Jehovah*, the Father]; for He is good: for His mercy endureth for ever" (Psa. 118:22-29).

As interpreted in the New Testament, the *Jehovah* in these final verses of Psalm 118 is the divine Being Who became the Father. In these verses this *Jehovah* is also called by the names *El* and *Elohim*. Here is additional Scriptural evidence that these divine names are used interchangeably. The use of the divine names *Jehovah*, *Jah*, *El*, *Elohim*, and *Jehovah Elohim* in Psalm 118 and other psalms also shows that these names refer to **two divine Beings**. The New Testament reveals that one of these divine Beings became the Son and Messiah--Jesus Christ--and the other divine Being became His Father. Thus both Old and New Testaments affirm that there are **two divine Beings Who are God**. Nowhere does Scripture reveal that there are more than two.

Contrary to the belief of most professing Christians, **God is not a Trinity!** This deceptive doctrine has been presented as a teaching of Scripture when in reality it is contrary to Scripture. The Scriptures reveal the Holy Spirit as the power of God--**not** as a divine "Person" or Being. Those who accept and promote the doctrine of the Trinity are basing their belief on ancient myths and vain philosophies of men. These false ideas are clothed in religious words that appear to enlighten but actually darken the minds of the hearers so that they cannot understand the simple truth of Scripture. That is why most professing Christians do not understand the true nature of God.

If we desire to know the true God--to worship Him in Spirit and in truth--we must rid our minds of every false idea and every vain reasoning that exalts itself against His Word. We must hold fast to the truth that is revealed in the Scriptures--that **both the Father and His Son Jesus Christ are God.** They are the two *Jehovahs* of the Old Testament and the two *Kurios* of the New. They are equally *Theos*, as the apostle Paul testifies. Those who claim otherwise are replacing the truth of Scripture with the vain philosophies of men. These deceptive teachings have for centuries been used by Satan to undermine the faith of Christians. The New Testament contains many warnings to be on guard against such false teachings.

Today, false teachers within the churches of God are rejecting the truth of Scripture and are promoting the "new understanding" that Jesus was never God and that He never will be God. They claim that no one--spirit or flesh--can ever be glorified as God. They are denying **the Christ** Who died for them, and **Who has been glorified with the glory of the Father** (John (17:5), and they are denying the very purpose for which He died--to share that glory with **many brethren** (Heb. 2:10-13).

These false doctrines which deny the truth of Scripture are not new at all. These same deceptive doctrines were infiltrating the churches of God in the days of the apostle John. John wrote his Gospel to combat these false teachings and to confirm the truth of God. John begins his Gospel by proclaiming the pre-existence of Jesus Christ as "**the Word,**" Who was "with God [Greek *Theos*]" and "was God [Greek *Theos*]" from the beginning (John 1:1-2). John uses the Greek word *Theos* to name **both** God and the

Word in order to show that the Word was **identical in nature** to the God with Whom He had eternally existed.

False teachers do not want to accept the truth that the Word was also God. They are willing to acknowledge that *Theos* means God in the phrase "with God," but they say that it does not mean God in the phrase "was God." They claim that when John wrote that the Word "was God," he meant only that the Word was "divine." They define "divine" as a property or characteristic of God, such as His thoughts and His spoken words. Their definition of the Word of God is identical to the concept of the *Logos* of Greek philosophy and Gnostic Judaism as taught in the days of the apostles. These false teachers are actually superimposing pagan philosophical concepts upon the Scriptures! When they quote the first verse in John's Gospel, they distort the truth of Scripture by misinterpreting the true meaning of *Theos* to fit their false philosophical concepts. These are the very teachings that John was writing to combat!

The Greek text reveals the fallacy of their reasoning. It is contrary to the rules of language to give the Greek word *Theos* two different meanings in the same verse. If we are honest with the Scriptures, we will acknowledge that if *Theos* is defined as "God" in the first phrase in John 1:1, it must also be defined as "God" in the second phrase. John meant exactly what he wrote. The Word was not merely the "speech" or the "thought" of God, but was **equally God**--a separate and distinct divine Being. When John tells us that the Word became flesh (verse 14), he wants us to understand that the Word was **a divine Person Who had lived eternally**.

John amplifies this truth in his first epistle by declaring, "**That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of Life; (for the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)** that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that you also may have fellowship with us: and **truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ**" (I John 1:1-3).

In the book of Revelation, John shows that the eternally living Word Who became Jesus Christ in the flesh has returned to His glorified state. John

describes the appearance of this powerful divine Being in detail (Rev. 19:13-16). Remember that this powerful Being Who will rule the nations with a rod of iron is the same divine Being Who is named *Jehovah* in Psalm 2:11. The Word of the New Testament is the *Jehovah* of the Old Testament Who became Jesus Christ!

Both Old and New Testaments proclaim the eternal pre-existence of Jesus Christ as one of the two *Jehovahs*. From Genesis to Revelation, the Scriptures are filled with testimonies of His eternal existence as God. The very structure of the Hebrew and Greek texts gives us irrefutable evidence of His co-equality with God. This truth is undeniable when we understand the rules of language and the use of the Hebrew and Greek words.

In the following study paper, we will add to the weight of Scriptural evidence by learning more about the names *Jehovah*, *Elohim* and other names of God as these names are defined by the rules of language, known as syntax. We will see that the Hebrew names of God as used in the Pentateuch and the books of the prophets defy the teaching of only one divine Being.

The Two *Jehovahs* of the Pentateuch

*The Scriptural Evidence of the
Duality of God*

By

(C) *Carl D. Franklin*

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Introduction

As demonstrated in the preceding paper, **The Two *Jehovahs* of the Psalms**, both God the Father and God the Son were known in Old Testament times as *Jehovah*. The Hebrew text also refers to the two *Jehovahs* individually as *El* and together as *Elohim*. Thus *Jehovah Elohim* is a plural name that refers to both divine Beings. The Old Testament prophets proclaimed that one of the two *Jehovah Elohim* would become flesh and would dwell among men. In the New Testament, this *Jehovah* or *El* Who became the Son was announced by Gabriel as Immanuel, or "**God** with us."

In this study paper, we will delve much deeper into the Scriptural evidence of the two *Jehovahs*. We will examine a number of controversial and much disputed passages in the Pentateuch, including the time-honored "Shema" of Deuteronomy 6:4. We will analyze the structure of the Hebrew text through the eyes of the most respected authorities on Hebrew grammar and syntax. When we conclude our study, the weight of evidence will fully confirm the Scriptural truth which has long been suppressed and denied--that two *Jehovahs* have eternally existed as God.

Due to the technical nature of this paper, readers may find some of the material difficult to understand. Those who experience such difficulty are encouraged to read carefully, using a dictionary to check the meaning of unfamiliar words. Some paragraphs may require a second or third reading in order to grasp the material that is presented. If you find this necessary, you are in good company! A college professor who holds a doctor's degree in English recently confided to me that he finds some material difficult to understand without reading it several times. May you be willing to make the effort, and may you come to a full understanding of the truth of Scripture.

Carl D. Franklin

The Two *Jehovahs* of the Pentateuch

The Scriptures reveal that from the beginning, the Creator was known to mankind as both "God" and "LORD." In the Hebrew text, these two divine names are *Elohim* and *Jehovah* respectively. They are frequently used in combination in the books of the Old Testament and are accordingly translated "the LORD God."

The divine names *Elohim* and *Jehovah* are used countless times in the first five books of the Bible, which are known as the Pentateuch. The name *Elohim*, which identifies God as Creator, is used exclusively in the first chapter of Genesis and is the predominant name throughout this book. The name *Jehovah*, which identifies God as Covenant Maker, first appears in the second chapter of Genesis in combination with *Elohim*. The first use of *Jehovah* as a single name is found in Genesis 3:1. Although the name *Jehovah* is found in some passages in the book of Genesis, it is primarily used in the following four books, which relate to the Exodus, the giving of the Law, and the journeys of Israel before entering the Promised Land.

There is great significance in the fact that God was revealed from the beginning not only as *Jehovah* but as *Jehovah Elohim*. The Hebrew name *Elohim* is a **plural noun** which inherently means *more than one*. Despite this fact of Hebrew grammar, few are willing to acknowledge that the divine name *Elohim* is actually referring to **more than one divine Being**. So deeply rooted is the influence of monotheism in our Christian-professing world that most scholars and theologians deny any possibility of there being a plurality of divine Beings. They claim that the Hebrew text cannot be taken literally in those passages which use plural nouns and pronouns in reference to God.

The book of Genesis contains three passages that clearly refer to a plural number of divine Beings. These passages are Genesis 1:26-27, Genesis 3:22-23, and Genesis 11:6-7. In each of these passages, we find the plural pronoun "Us" used in reference to God. The names of God that appear in these passages are translated from either *Jehovah* or *Elohim*, or a

combination of these two Hebrew names.

Scholars and theologians have devised a number of explanations to circumvent the literal meaning of the plural pronoun "Us" in these passages. Some claim that this plural pronoun is only a figure of speech--i.e., a metaphor or other literary device. One writer explains the use of the plural pronoun "Us" in Genesis 11:7 in this manner:

"The plural pronoun 'us'...is a good example of a widespread mistake in assessing a **literary feature** of the text....When God said 'Let Us go down and there confuse their language' (Genesis 11:7), he [sic] did not mean that two or three gods (beings, or individual deities) would leave heaven and travel to earth. Such an interpretation must be dismissed as impossible in light of the doctrine of monotheism. Rather, **the context shows important parallels** being drawn. The inhabitants of Babel were saying, 'Come, let us build...whose top is in the heavens' (verse 4), and God was echoing their thought in, 'Come, let Us go down' (verse 7). In other words, while the men of Babel were preparing to ascend to God's habitation, God was preparing to descend to theirs. The **poetic element** is in the contrast between their going up and his [sic] coming down. Likewise, as men were planning to ascend together and in strength, ready to make a name for themselves, God was planning to descend with his [sic] host and in strength, ready to confuse their plans. This **literary device** is called *anthropopatheia*--the special effect resulting from ascribing human experiences (*pathos*) to God" (Stavriniades, *Understanding the Nature of God: The Modern Trinitarian Problem*, p. 28).

Is the Use of "Us" in Genesis 11:7 Only a Literary Device?

In the above explanation of Genesis 11:7, Stavriniades denounces a literal interpretation of "let Us" and claims that this expression is only "a literary feature of the text." In denying the literal meaning of the words "let Us go down," Stavriniades is violating the most fundamental rule of Biblical interpretation. Notice: "The basic principle of biblical interpretation is to take words always in their **literal sense** unless there is an **unmistakable contextual indication** to the contrary" (Hasel, *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics, Principles of Biblical Interpretation*, p. 176).

What does the context of Genesis 11:7 reveal? Is there any contextual evidence that "Us" should not be taken in a literal sense?

The context of Genesis 11:7 gives no indication whatsoever that this plural pronoun should not be taken literally. Even Stavrinides admits the literal meaning of the pronoun in its occurrence a few verses earlier in the passage. While he denies the literal meaning of "Us" in reference to God in Verse 7, Stavrinides acknowledges that "us" is literal when it refers to the men of Babel in Verse 4. His "*literary*" interpretation of the pronoun "Us" in Verse 7 is inconsistent with his **literal** interpretation of "us" in Verse 4. Thus he is violating a second rule of Biblical hermeneutics: that a word used more than once in the same context be interpreted in a parallel and consistent manner.

Stavrinides admits that "the context shows **important parallels**" between "let Us" in Verse 7 of Genesis 11 and "let us" in Verse 4, but his interpretation of these two expressions is not parallel at all. Notice his inconsistency in the following statements:

"The inhabitants of Babel were saying, 'Come, **let us** [a **literal** plurality of men] build...whose top is in the heavens' (verse 4), and God was echoing their thought in, 'Come, **let Us** [a **nonliteral** reference to God, Stavrinides says] go down' (verse 7). In other words, while the men of Babel were preparing to ascend to God's habitation, God was preparing to descend to theirs. The poetic element is in the contrast between **their** [a **literal** plurality of men] going up and **his** [sic--a **non-literal** interpretation of "Us"] coming down. Likewise, as men were planning to ascend together and in strength, ready to make a name for **themselves** [a **literal** plurality of men], **God was planning to descend with his** [sic] **host** [a **nonliteral** interpretation of "Us"] and in strength, ready to confuse their plans" (*Understanding the Nature of God: The Modern Trinitarian Problem*, p. 28).

When we take a close look at Stavrinides' statements, we find that his nonliteral interpretation of Genesis 11:7 subtly shifts the plural meaning of the pronoun "Us." According to Stavrinides, the words "let Us" do not show two divine Beings speaking together but indicate that God was speaking to His angels. This interpretation of Genesis 11:7 is based solely on the doctrine of monotheism, which--contrary to popular belief--is **not** a Scriptural teaching. The universal concept of monotheism was originally

taught by the ancient Egyptians and Babylonians, and has been passed down to our day by pagan philosophers and misguided theologians.

Having adopted this monotheistic view, Stavrinides rejects the literal meaning of "Us" in reference to God and claims that the plural pronoun "Us" is referring to a single God and His angelic host. This so-called "literary" interpretation is actually a private interpretation of men--one of many human theories that have been devised to circumvent the literal meaning of Scripture. As one authority on Biblical hermeneutics states, "The **literal-figurative principle** also warns against the...methodology of the Bultmann school. **This method of interpretation robs the Bible of its original meaning and substitutes philosophical abstractions [such as the theory that "Us" includes an angelic host].** The minister who follows this course is replacing God's revelation with human theories" (Pease, *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics, Principles of Biblical Interpretation*, p. 259).

Stavrinides' assertion that "Us" includes an angelic host is aptly described as a human theory which "robs the Bible of its original meaning." This damaging theory stands condemned by all the rules of Biblical hermeneutics. According to the basic rules of hermeneutics, if Stavrinides interprets "let us" in Verse 4 as literally referring to the men of Babel, then he **must** interpret "let Us" in Verse 7 as literally referring to "the LORD," or *Jehovah*. As the antecedent of "us" in Verse 4 is the **men** of Babel, so the antecedent of "Us" in Verse 7 is **Jehovah!** And as the words "let us" in Verse 4 literally refer to more than one man, so the words "let Us" in Verse 7 literally refer to **more than one Jehovah!** **This is the true meaning of the Hebrew text, as verified by the strict rules of Biblical interpretation.**

Stavrinides errs greatly when he denies the literal meaning of "Us" in Genesis 11:7. He has rejected the revealed truth of Scripture and embraced a human theory that is rooted in Babylonian monotheism. Regrettably, others are promoting this same error. John Kossey also supports the theory that the plural pronoun "Us" in Genesis 11:7 includes the angels of God. According to Kossey, the pronoun "Us" is expressing a plurality that includes angels as part of "the divine realm." He writes, "To understand the purpose of divine first-person plural pronouns, we need to recognize the distinction in the Old Testament between the earthly realm of humanity and the divine realm of God, which includes one God and numerous angels" ("Myths and Metaphors," *Pastor General's Report*, May 10, 1994, p. 8).

In their explanations of Genesis 11:7, both Kossey and Stavrinides claim that the plural pronoun "Us" is not referring to a plurality of divine Beings but to a plurality of angels. Their monotheistic view of God has so blinded their eyes that they do not even consider a literal interpretation of "Us." While they accuse others of lack of discernment in interpreting the Scriptures, they themselves have neglected to follow the basic rules for determining the true meaning of the Hebrew text.

Remember the words of Hasel as quoted earlier: "The basic principle of biblical interpretation is to **take words always in their LITERAL SENSE unless there is an unmistakable contextual indication to the contrary**" (*A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics, Principles of Biblical Interpretation*, p. 176).

Kossey ignores this basic principle when he interprets "Let Us" as a reference to a single divine Being Who is speaking to a number of inferior spirit beings. The flaws in Kossey's symbolic interpretation of "Let Us" become obvious when we apply the same logic to his own material. He writes, "**Let's** look at the Old Testament data concerning divine first-person plural pronouns and the word 'elohim..." ("Myths and Metaphors," *Pastor General's Report*, May 10, 1994, p. 6). According to his symbolic interpretation of "Let us," or "Let's," we must assume that Kossey is speaking to a number of inferior beings, rather than to individuals who are equally human. Perhaps Kossey actually views himself as a superior human being, but that is not the meaning that the words "Let us" are intended to convey. This principle is as true of the Hebrew text as it is of our English language today.

In addition to his theory of an angelic host, Kossey offers other symbolic interpretations to choose from, including the following interpretation of the plural pronoun "Us" in Isaiah 6:8: "In this passage, God may be self-deliberating (as in the English expression, 'let's see')" (*Ibid.*, p. 8).

Applying Kossey's theory of self-deliberation to his own use of "us," we would have to conclude that he was addressing only himself when he wrote, "Let's look at the Old Testament data..." (*Ibid.*, p. 6). Perhaps he was speaking to his *altar ego*. Using the same logic that he applies to Scripture, he was not really speaking to us! His words were only a figurative

expression.

In viewing the Scriptural use of divine plural pronouns as only figurative, both Stavriniades and Kossey are guilty of ignoring the basic rules of Biblical interpretation. Limiting themselves to a nonliteral view has led them to accept and promote private interpretations of the Scriptures.

Understanding the Difference Between Figurative and Literal Meaning

To support his nonliteral interpretation of "Us," Kossey asserts that many Bible readers do not understand that figures of speech are used in Scripture. He claims that some who read Scripture have unknowingly invented "myths," or doctrinal fables, by viewing figures of speech as literal in meaning. Notice: "In biblical matters, a myth may occur when zealous people in all sincerity misunderstand the metaphors used in Scripture" (Ibid., p. 5).

Are we, as Kossey claims, deceiving ourselves by mistaking figurative expressions as literal? How can we discern between literal and figurative meaning? Must we rely on the opinions of scholars?

It is true that the Scriptures use figures of speech. Not all words or expressions that are found in Scripture are meant to be taken in a literal sense. Many words in Scripture have figurative meanings--i.e., they have "... meanings assigned to them that are very different from a primary literal one" (Hasel, *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics, Principles of Biblical Interpretation*, p. 176). Hasel lists some of the figurative expressions that are commonly found in Scripture:

"Idiomatic expressions or **idioms**, which are a semantic unit of their own, have a meaning that is more than the sum of their individual parts. For example, the idiom, 'horn of salvation' (see 2 Sa 22:3; Ps 18:2; Lk 1:69) means 'great Savior.'

"**Metaphors** [see I Cor. 11:24-26] and **similes** [see Psa. 1:3-4] are figures of speech that express with their words figurative or nonliteral meanings. The same is true of the figure of speech of **personification** [see Gen. 4:11],

which is used both in the OT and in the NT. The Bible also knows **hyperbole** (see Dt 1:28; Jn 1:25).

"Without attempting to be exhaustive in our delineation of nonliteral meanings, we also may refer to **symbols**....The symbol of the pillar of cloud was indicative of divine guidance (see Ex 13:21) and glory (see Ex 16:10). Examples of other objective symbols could be multiplied" (Ibid., pp. 176-177).

In recognizing that figures of speech are used in Scripture, it is important to remember that figurative meaning can be applied to *things that literally exist*. In Scripture, an object may have **both figurative and literal meaning**. For example, the fact that the pillar of cloud was a symbol of divine guidance does not mean that the cloud was not real. **The figurative meaning of an object does not negate its literal existence**. This principle also applies to the plural pronoun "Us" in Genesis 11:7. The fact that this pronoun is used in *anthropotheia* does not negate the existence of two *Jehovahs*!

When interpreting symbols or other figures of speech that are used in Scripture, we must give due consideration to both literal meaning and figurative meaning. Hasel warns, "In interpreting symbols the guiding principle is to **let the Holy Spirit, who [which] provided the symbol, be also the guide in identifying the symbol [through other inspired scriptures]**. With regard to symbols the interpreter must exercise care **so as not to fall into the trap of allegorical interpretation [mythologizing Scripture by focusing on figurative meaning and rejecting the literal meaning]**, where the Holy Spirit does not explicitly provide guidance [referring to *private interpretations of men*]. A sound principle for the interpretation of words with figurative or nonliteral meanings is to **avoid interpreting figures of speech beyond the meaning they seek to communicate [do not insert private interpretations, as Stavrinides does in explaining *anthropotheia*]**" (Ibid., p. 176).

When questions arise as to whether a word or expression in a Scriptural passage should be interpreted literally, it is necessary to *examine the context* in which this word or expression is used. Hasel writes, "A basic principle of interpretation with regard to words is to **investigate the same word or term in its usage in the same book** [for example, comparing the use of "Us" in

Genesis 11:7 with "us" in Verse 4], by the same author, and then beyond in the remaining writers of the Bible. As this is done the interpreter takes into account the various **immediate contexts of the word** and its sentence combination. He is constantly aware of the purposes and developments of thought in a particular writer and among the various inspired Bible writers" (Ibid., p. 177).

Sincere seekers of the truth of Scripture will base their interpretation of a word or expression on the immediate context and on other passages that use the same wording. This principle will safeguard them from falling prey to the private interpretations of men. Only by following this principle is it possible to understand the true meaning of the plural pronouns that are used in reference to God.

Is the Pronoun "Us" in Genesis 1:26 Referring to the "Divine Realm"?

In the first chapter of the book of Genesis, we find three plural pronouns used in reference to God as Creator:

"And God [*Elohim*] said, 'Let **Us** make man in **Our** image, after **Our** likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth" (Gen. 1:26).

In explaining this use of the plural pronouns "Us" and "Our," Kossey does not follow the rules of Biblical hermeneutics by analyzing the context. He does not even consider the possibility that these pronouns are literal in meaning. Instead, he waxes eloquent in his private interpretation of "Us" and "Our" as symbolic of the "divine realm." To Kossey, these plural pronouns are used in the Creation account to emphasize man's potential to enter the "divine realm," which God and the angels inhabit. Kossey writes, "The first instance of the divine first-person plural pronoun (Genesis 1:26) thus highlights the positive potential for humanity in God's plan--a participation in the divine realm more wonderful than even the angelic hosts (Psalm 8:4-5)" ("Myths and Metaphors," *Pastor General's Report*, May 10, 1994, pp. 8-9).

This nonliteral interpretation of the plural pronouns in Genesis 1:26 has been adopted by the Worldwide Church of God and published for the general public. A writer for *The Plain Truth* magazine states in the May/June 1994 issue, "The first point that many readers notice is the use of the plurals 'us' and 'our.' These words are a reference to God and the angelic host in God's heavenly court. However, it is important to remember that Genesis reveals God as creator. Angels did not create humans. The host of heaven is included in the 'us' and 'our' of verse 26, not because the angels actually created, but because they witnessed the creation of Adam and Eve, and rejoiced (see Job 38:7). It is like when a king says, 'We decree....' He speaks in his office as head of state. He uses the plural even though only one individual is issuing the decree" (Steep, "In the Image of GOD," p. 8).

In this article, Steep not only promotes Kossey's view of the "divine realm" but adds a new dimension to the argument. He compares the Scriptural use of the pronouns "Us" and "Our" to the practice of a human potentate who speaks of himself in the plural because he holds power and dominion over his realm. Because Steep has accepted the theory that the language of human monarchs is being employed in Scripture, he completely overlooks the literal meaning of the pronouns "Us" and "Our."

This erroneous theory has long been promoted by a number of Biblical commentators and writers. They interpret the divine plural pronouns strictly as "honorific" references to one Absolute God. But while plurals of majesty are a traditional practice among human cultures, **they cannot be applied to the Hebrew text.**

The Hebrew grammarian Green, a respected authority on the Hebrew text, has this to say about the pronouns "Us" and "Our" in Genesis 1:26: "[the usage of the] 1[st] pers[on] plural...is **not to be explained as a royal style of speech**, nor as associating the angels with God, for they took no part in man's creation, **nor a plural of majesty which HAS NO APPLICATION TO [THE HEBREW] VERBS**, but as one of those indications of the plurality...in the Divine Being which are repeatedly met with in the Old Testament" (Green, *Hebrew Chrestomathy*, p. 84).

As an expert in Hebrew grammar, Green tells us that the divine plural pronouns that are found in the Hebrew text **cannot be referring to an angelic host.** In Genesis 1:26, these pronouns are used in a manner that

emphasizes the **equality** of the Beings Who are referred to as "Us." The Hebrew word translated "Let Us make" in Genesis 1:26 is built upon a common Qal verb stem used in the cohortative form. The **cohortative form** is used to express the will or strong desire of the speaker. If the speaker has the ability to carry out a desire, the cohortative is an expression of resolve ("I will"). The linguist Waltke, author of *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, explains that when a Hebrew verb is, "in [the] first-person [cohortative] plural [as in Genesis 1:26], **the speakers usually seek to instigate or encourage EACH OTHER to some action ('Let us')**" (p. 573).

As Waltke shows, the use of the cohortative form in Genesis 1:26--and in Genesis 11:7 as well--limits the meaning of "Us" to divine Beings Who are **speaking to EACH OTHER as equals**. The structure of the Hebrew text clearly reveals **two divine Beings Who are both God--not a superior Being speaking to inferior beings**.

If the Hebrew text supports a **duality** of divine Beings in Genesis 1:26 and Genesis 11:7, from whence came the teachings of a *singular* divine Being and a plurality of angels? These teachings are Jewish fables. They are fraudulent teachings that stem from the monotheistic paganism of Babylon. They have no validity whatsoever!

Notice the testimony of the Anglican scholar Oxlee:

"To prevent us from taking the words ['let Us make...'] literally, and from imbibing the notion, that the Godhead exists in a plurality of persons; the modern Jews have instituted two general modes of interpretation; the first of which is, *That it is the regal form of speaking* [the honorific plural], in which the plural is used for the singular; the other, *That it is the deity conferring with his angels in council*.

"The former opinion [the regal form of speaking] has been maintained chiefly by R. Saadiah Gaon [a rabbinic grammarian of eighth-century Babylon]; who alleges in support of it a number of scriptural texts, all which R. Abraham is pleased to call, '**false allegations**;' and has not only shewn their irrelevancy, but demonstrated, that **the opinion itself, has no manner of foundation.**' Indeed, **THERE IS NOT THE SMALLEST AUTHORITY FOR IT IN THE COMPOSITIONS OF THE OLD**

TESTAMENT..." (*The Christian Doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation*, p. 96).

These false Jewish interpretations are not based on the Hebrew text. They were introduced by certain rabbis whose opinions were shaped by the monotheistic worship of Babylon. Under the influence of pagan monotheism, they rejected the knowledge that God had originally revealed in the Old Testament. Denying the plurality of the Godhead that is proclaimed in the Hebrew name *Elohim*, they claimed that the plural form is used only to show honor to God.

To show the illogic of this claim, Oxlee quotes Rabbi Isaac Abarbinel: "For on the supposition, that plurality of form gives lustre to an appellation, **ALL the appellations [names] of God**, together with their suffixes, **ought to have been used in the plural number: WHEREAS THE CONTRARY IS THE FACT**" (Ibid., p. 85).

Concerning this false interpretation of the plural name *Elohim* as an "honorific" title, Rabbi Abarbinel wrote, "But truly this statement...that the term, *Elohim*, is used in the plural form by way of honour [plurals of majesty], is, in my opinion, **without the least colour of truth or probability: as we find it in the plural number predicated of [referring to] things, which God expressly forbids to be honoured [such as idols]**. Thus, Thou shalt have no other *Elohim* before me; Let him, who sacrifices to *Elohim*, be accursed. Now the scripture is not wont to honour idols or sculptured images" (Ibid., p. 83).

The Scriptural use of *Elohim* in reference to pagan gods exposes the error in claiming that the purpose of this plural noun is to show honor. Those who promote this faulty interpretation are not rightly dividing the Word of God. It is a Scriptural fact that when *Elohim* is referring to pagan gods, it designates a **literal plurality**.

Some who acknowledge the plural meaning of *Elohim* in reference to false gods still insist that *Elohim* is singular when it refers to the true God. One rabbi has claimed that the plural *Elohim* is used of the true God only because those who worshipped other gods were accustomed to using the plural form of the name. Oxlee exposes the folly in this teaching:

"R[abbi] Judah Levita alleges, that the reason why the term is so generally used in the plural number, is because the idolaters were accustomed to make themselves images, in each of which they supposed a particular divinity to reside; and consequently, were led to denominate them in the aggregate [plural], *Elohim*, Gods; by whom they swore always, as exercising dominion over them from their power in the spheres. **But if this be the true reason, then it follows of necessity, that the language of the scriptures is the language of idolatry,** and that the worship of images was the primaeval religion" (Ibid., pp. 85-86).

God did not inspire the Scriptures to be written in the language of idol worshippers. Before mankind turned to idolatry--before any idol even existed--the Creator God was revealed as a **plurality** of divine Beings. This truth is clearly proclaimed by the use of the divine plural pronouns "Us" and "Our" with the plural name *Elohim* in the Creation account in the book of Genesis.

Is the Use of "Us" in Genesis 3:22 Only a Figure of Speech?

In Genesis 3:22, the Creator is referred to as the "LORD God." The Old Testament contains nine hundred and fifteen occurrences of this name of God, which is translated from a combination of the Hebrew names *Jehovah* and *Elohim*. In this verse, as in other passages in the book of Genesis, the Creator God speaks as a **plurality** of Beings.

"And the LORD God [*Jehovah Elohim*] said, 'Behold, the man is become **as one of Us**, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever...' " (Gen. 3:22).

As he does in every plural reference to God, Kossey views the use of "Us" in this verse only as a symbolic expression. He states, " 'One of us' in Genesis 3:22 is a terse but effective expression to contrast God's divine realm with the human world that God had created for Adam and Eve. (Angels can also discern good and evil, 2 Samuel 14:17). The explicit language of Genesis 3:22 also makes less attractive some commentators' explanations of Genesis 1:26, including self-deliberation, self-summons and

the plural of majesty. (**There is no sure example of a pronoun plural of majesty in the Hebrew bible** [D.J.A. Clines, "The Image of God in Man," Tyndale Bulletin, 19 (1968), p. 65].)" ("Myths and Metaphors," *Pastor General's Report*, May 10, 1994, p. 9).

In stating his views, Kossey admits that there is no evidence in the Hebrew text to support the theory that the plural pronouns used in reference to God are plurals of majesty. This admission contradicts the view that Steep expresses in the article "In the Image of God," which appears in *The Plain Truth*, a magazine published by Kossey's own organization.

Although Kossey acknowledges the lack of Scriptural support for plurals of majesty, he overlooks the true meaning of the plural pronouns that are used in Genesis 3:22 and other passages. He assumes that these plural pronouns cannot refer exclusively to God and therefore interprets them as symbolic expressions that include an angelic host. Although he states his opinion as a matter of fact, it is not based on the contextual evidence, as the rules of Biblical hermeneutics demand.

What does the context reveal about the meaning of the plural pronoun "Us" in Genesis 3:22?

When we examine the context in which this plural pronoun is used, we find that "Us" is part of the phrase "of Us." This prepositional phrase links the plural pronoun "Us" directly to the noun "one." Because it is modifying the noun "one," the phrase "of Us" is known as a genitive modifier. A noun that has a genitive modifier is referred to in Hebrew syntax as being "in construct." Waltke uses Genesis 3:22 as an example in his explanation of the construct-genitive relationship (*An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, pp. 138-139).

Oxlee compares the phrase "**as one of Us**" in Genesis 3:22 with the same construction in another verse in the book of Genesis: "Dan shall judge his people, **as one of the tribes of Israel**" (Gen. 49:16). This construction of the Hebrew text was known in Oxlee's day as "in regimen." (See *The Christian Doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation*, p. 102.) In explaining the structure of the Hebrew text, Oxlee makes it clear that both of these phrases are referring to **a plurality of similar entities**. (See *Defining the Oneness of God*, p. 25.)

Oxlee quotes the highly respected rabbi Aben Ezra to show that the pronoun "Us" in Genesis 3:22 is *not figurative* but is denoting a **literal** plurality: "The **true exposition**, however, of the pronoun [in Genesis 3:22] is, **of us, in the plural number**; just as it occurs in the expression, A man of us [Num. 31:49].' Such is the language of Aben Ezra, with regard to the propriety of affixing to the words any other meaning, than that which allows the speaker to be in the first person plural" (*The Christian Doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation*, p. 102).

The contextual evidence leaves no room for a figurative interpretation of the divine plural pronouns that appear in Genesis 3:22 and other passages in the book of Genesis. In each passage, the Hebrew text shows that these plural pronouns are meant to be interpreted in a **literal sense**. The literal meaning of "Us" in Genesis 11:7 is clearly demonstrated by the parallel use of "us" in a preceding verse in the same passage. In Genesis 1:26, and in Genesis 11:7 as well, the use of the divine plural pronouns with the cohortative form of the Hebrew verb clearly reveals a **plurality of equal divine Beings**. In Genesis 3:22, this plurality of like entities is demonstrated by the use of "Us" as a genitive modifier.

It is contrary to the structure of the Hebrew text to claim that the plurality expressed by the divine pronouns "Us" and "Our" is only "honorific" or includes an inferior host of angels. These teachings, invented by rabbis of the Pharisaic school, are not based on Scripture. They are false interpretations that have led to confusion and misunderstanding of the true nature of the God of the Old Testament.

Elohim--Singular or Plural?

Ignoring the textual evidence of the plurality of the Godhead, some scholars and writers still argue that the plural name *Elohim* is a broad reference to the angels of God. Stavrinides writes: "The word *elohim* is a generic reference to God. It does not denote the Deity. Rather, it makes reference to the divine realm in general--somewhat like saying, 'the divine powers' " (*Understanding the Nature of God: The Modern Trinitarian Problem*, p. 7).

As Oxlee points out, this definition of *Elohim* is contradicted by the fact that **the plural name *Elohim* is found in Genesis 1:1**, which records the beginning of God's creation, **when there were no angels** (*The Christian Doctrine of the Trinity and Incarnation*, p. 85).

Since *Elohim* in Genesis 1:1 cannot possibly include angels, Stavrinides **redefines** the plural name *Elohim* in this verse as a **singular** name. He writes, "The Hebrew word *elohim* of Genesis 1:1, which has the form of a plural word (since it ends in *-im*), is singular when it refers to the true God" (*Understanding the Nature of God: The Modern Trinitarian Problem*, p. 6).

To support his assertion, Stavrinides argues that the plural name *Elohim* is used in Genesis 1:1 with a singular verb. He dismisses the plurality of *Elohim* as follows: "The deciding element, in this case, is not its plural form, but its construction in the sentence. In the Hebrew text, the word *elohim* is preceded by the singular verb *bara*....With this point in mind, it is a mistake to seek a construction that would make reference to more than one divine being..." (Ibid., p. 6).

Stavrinides is correct when he states that *Elohim* is used with a singular verb in Genesis 1:1. But he errs greatly when he interprets this singular verb as proof that the plural name *Elohim* is denoting a single divine Being. He is ignoring the fact that the Hebrew name *Elohim* is a **plural noun**. Concerning the plurality of *Elohim*, Oxlee writes: "Neither is the assertion of R[abbi] Solomon and others, That the plural noun [*Elohim*], by being associated with verbs and adjuncts in the singular number, is divested of its plural import [loses its plural meaning]; entitled to any higher regard. **In Greek, a noun of the neuter plural is usually associated with a verb singular; and yet, no scholar would contend, that, because the verb is of the singular number, the noun does not actually express a plurality of subsistences.** But it is by no means the fact, that the plural term, *Elohim*, when used for the true God; is accompanied with verbs and other adjuncts always, in the singular number" (*The Christian Doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation*, pp. 86-87).

The plural name *Elohim* is formed from *El* by adding the noun extender *oh* and the plural ending *im*. Although it is a plural noun, *Elohim* is found with **both singular and plural verbs** in the Hebrew text. When the plural noun *Elohim* is used as a name of the true God, it is usually found with a

singular verb, but it is also found with plural agreement. This use of both singular and plural verbs with the plural noun *Elohim* may be compared to the verb agreement of collective nouns in our English language. Collective nouns are used to name a plural number of objects or persons but are generally used with singular verbs. The *New Webster's Dictionary* defines collective nouns as "expressing under the *singular form* a **plurality** of individual objects or persons, as *herd, jury, clergy*, which as subjects **may take their verbs in either the singular or the plural**, according to whether they are used to express more prominently the idea of unity or of plurality."

While collective nouns are *most often* used with singular verbs, they *sometimes* require plural verbs. A **plural verb** is required when the members of the collective group are acting *not as a unit but as a plurality*. For example, we use the singular verb "is" in the sentence, "The team (a *unit*) is scheduled to play next week." However, we must use the plural verb "are" in the sentence, "The team (a *plurality* of individual members) are in their positions." This difference in verb agreement *does not change the meaning* of the collective noun "team." The team has the **same number** of members, regardless of whether a singular or plural verb is used.

This principle holds true for every noun that expresses a plurality of individuals or objects, not only in English but in other languages as well. The meaning of the plural noun *Elohim* remains the same, whether it is used with a singular verb or a plural verb.

The argument that the Godhead is singular in number because *Elohim* takes a singular verb when referring to the true God is utterly false. In Hebrew, as in English and Greek, nouns that express plurality do not become singular in meaning when they are used with singular verbs. It is contrary to the rules of language to claim that the use of a singular verb changes the meaning of the plural noun *Elohim*.

The Use of *Jehovah Elohim* in Genesis 3:22

The combined name *Jehovah Elohim*, found in Genesis 3:22 with the plural pronoun "Us," presents a special problem to trinitarians and other monotheists. They cannot explain why the name *Jehovah* (which they believe to be strictly singular in number) is joined with the plural name *Elohim*.

"And the LORD God [*Jehovah Elohim*] said, 'Behold, the man is become as one of Us....' "

Some writers have theorized that the plural name *Elohim* is used with *Jehovah* to show that God was speaking to an angelic host. In their view, the name *Jehovah Elohim* means "the LORD of Angelic Hosts." But when we understand the grammatical rules that govern the name *Jehovah Elohim*; it is clear that this definition is totally incorrect.

The name *Jehovah Elohim* is a compound term that is composed of **two nouns**. In Hebrew, as in English, all nouns are divided into two categories: **common** nouns and **proper** nouns. **Common nouns** refer to a *general* group or class, but **proper nouns** refer to a *particular* person or thing. For example, the word "king" is used as a common noun in the phrase "king of Israel" but becomes a proper noun in the name "King David." It is a proper noun because it identifies a particular person. Similarly, the name *Jehovah* is used as a proper noun throughout the Old Testament to identify the true God. In Genesis 3:22, the proper noun *Jehovah* is combined with a second noun, *Elohim*.

The fact that *Jehovah* is used as a **proper noun** in Genesis 3:22 establishes definite guidelines for interpreting the meaning of the name *Elohim*. In Hebrew, all proper nouns are subject to grammatical rules that place specific limitations on their usage. One major restriction of Hebrew grammar is that proper nouns cannot be followed by nouns or noun phrases in the genitive case, which shows possession. (Such nouns are known as genitive modifiers). Accordingly, when *Jehovah* is used as a **proper noun**, it **cannot be used** with a modifier such as "our *Jehovah*" or "*Jehovah* of Angelic Hosts." (See Oxlee, p. 69; and Obermann, "The Divine Name Yhwh in the Light of Recent Discoveries," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LXVIII (1949), p. 305.)

Since *Elohim* is used with the proper noun *Jehovah* in Genesis 3:22, it is

contrary to the rules of Hebrew grammar to interpret *Elohim* as a genitive modifier. In other words, **the meaning of *Elohim* in Genesis 3:22 CANNOT be "of the Angelic Hosts."** This interpretation is prohibited by the rules of Hebrew grammar.

According to the rules of Hebrew grammar and syntax, as a proper noun, *Jehovah* can only be followed by a noun or noun phrase that either qualifies *Jehovah* or is in apposition to it (i.e., **a noun or noun phrase that refers exclusively to *Jehovah***). Therefore, when the proper noun *Jehovah* is used with *Elohim*, as in *Jehovah Elohim*, **both nouns must be interpreted as referring to the Godhead**. It is contrary to the Hebrew text to interpret *Elohim* as referring to an angelic host. In Genesis 3:22 and every passage that uses the combined name *Jehovah Elohim*, both *Jehovah* and *Elohim* must be grammatically interpreted as names that identify the Godhead!

***Elohim*--A Subordinate God?**

One writer who acknowledges that the name *Elohim* is referring to God views *Elohim* as a lesser God--subordinate to a Supreme Being. Notice the following comments: "Thus the title Jehovah or YHWH is applied in a hierarchical structure from YHWH of Hosts, God Most High...to the Elohim of Israel who is a subordinate God...The *Angel of YHWH* was termed *elohim*, *Jehovah*, and *The Angel of Jehovah*....This subordinate Being was not omniscient" (Cox, *The Elect As Elohim*, p. 4).

Cox asserts that this view of the Godhead was taught by the Jews of old: "Judaism acknowledged a duality of the Godhead, namely one supreme God and a subordinate God down to the Middle Ages..." (*Comments on K.J. Stavrinides The Modern Trinitarian Problem*, p. 4).

According to Cox, a mighty angel known as Elohim was adopted as a son by YHWH of Hosts, or Eloah. Cox views this "Elohim" as the head of a great hierarchy of angels that will ultimately include human beings. He states, "The Biblical understanding from the paper *The Elect as Elohim* was that the elect were to become *elohim* or *theoi* which was understood as a participation in the divine nature by **adoption** and grace by and through Christ [the adopted *Elohim*] as the vehicle" (Ibid., p. 1).

Cox's claim that Christ is the adopted Son of God is in direct opposition

to Scripture. Both Old and New Testament passages reveal that Christ was the *begotten* Son of God (Ps. 2:7, John 1:14, Acts 13:33). The apostle Paul tells us that Christ was *originally God* and was *never an angel* (Heb. 1:5-6, 13-14). The Scriptures also make it clear that true Christians are not adopted but are the *begotten* children of God, to be reborn in His glorified image at the resurrection (I Pet. 1:3, Phil. 3:21).

Cox's belief that Christ is an adopted angel who heads a hierarchy of "Elohim" is based on a faulty understanding of the term *Jehovah Sabaoth*, which Cox interprets as "YHWH of [Angelic] Hosts." He views this name as denoting one Supreme Being Who rules a celestial hierarchy of angels, all of whom bear the name of His adopted Son. Cox writes, "*YHWH Sabaoth* or *YHWH of Hosts* is the name of God....This Being [YHWH or Eloah] has a Son....Thus the Son of Eloah appears to be the Elohi of Israel....This Elohim, anointed by His God, having a throne of the *elohim* (Ps. 45:6-7) then stands in the *Assembly of the El* and judges in the midst of the *Elohim* (Ps. 82:1)" (*The Elect as Elohim*, p. 7).

In Cox's view, the names "*YHWH Sabaoth*" and *Elohim* are **personal** names for the two divine Beings Who compose the Godhead. Cox does not recognize these names as **common** names shared by both members of the Godhead, and overlooks the fact that these names are used interchangeably throughout the Old Testament to denote the God of Israel. It is a fact of Scripture that the Hebrew term *Sabaoth*, which Cox views as denoting a superior Being, is found in combination with *Elohim* as well as with *YHWH* (*Jehovah*). If he believes that *Sabaoth* denotes the supremacy of *YHWH*, then he must also acknowledge the supremacy of *Elohim*.

Numerous passages in the Old Testament refer to the *Elohim* of Israel as "the LORD [*YHWH*] of hosts," showing that these names identify **the same God**. (See II Sam. 7:26-27, I Chron. 17:24, Isa. 21:10; 37:16; 48:2, Jer. 7:3, 21; 9:15; 16:9; 19:3, 15; 25:27; 27:4, 21; 28:2, 14; 29:4, 8, 21, 25; 31:23; 32:14-15; 35:13, 18, 19; 39:16; 42:15, 18; 43:10; 44:2, 11, 25; 46:25; 48:1; 50:18; 51:33, Zeph. 2:9, Mal. 2:16.)

Other verses identify "the LORD of hosts," or *Jehovah Sabaoth*, as the Holy One of Israel (Isa. 5:24; 47:4; 54:5, Jer. 51:5) and Israel's Redeemer (Isa. 44:6; 54:5, Jer. 50:34), and as King (Isa. 6:5; 44:6, Jer. 46:18; 48:15; 51:57, Zech. 14:16-17, Mal. 1:14) and the Mighty God (Isa. 1:24, Jer. 32:18). Isaiah's prophecy of the **reign of "the LORD of hosts"** in

Jerusalem is clearly referring to **the millennial rule of Jesus Christ**, the *Jehovah* of the Old Testament Who was also the *Elohim* of Israel (Isa. 24:23).

In addition to "the LORD [*Jehovah*] of hosts," the Old Testament often makes reference to "the LORD God [*Jehovah Elohim*] of hosts," showing that ***Sabaoth* applies equally to both names of God** (II Sam. 5:10, I Kings 19:10, 14, Ps. 59:5; 80:4, 19; 84:8; 89:8, Jer. 5:14; 15:16; 35:17, Hos. 12:5, Amos 4:13; 5:14, 15, 16; 6:8, 14). The name *Elohim* is also used **singly**--without *Jehovah*--in combination with *Sabaoth* (Ps. 80:7, 14). The prophecies of Jeremiah and Amos also reveal that "the LORD," or ***Jehovah*, IS the *Elohim* of hosts** (Jer. 38:17; 44:7, Amos 3:13; 4:13; 5:14, 15, 16, 27; 6:8, 14).

Notice that in all the Scriptural references given above, ***not one verse*** has been taken from the Pentateuch. **You may search the entire Pentateuch, but you will not find A SINGLE REFERENCE to "the LORD of hosts."** The Hebrew word *sabaoth*, translated "hosts," occurs many times in the Pentateuch, but not once is it linked with the name *Jehovah*. It sometimes refers to "the host of heaven"--the sun, moon and stars (Gen. 2:1, Deut. 4:19; 17:3)--but most often refers to the *armies of men* (Gen. 21:22, Ex. 14:4, 24, 28, Num. 2:4; 4:3; 10:14-19; 31:14, 48, Deut. 2:14-15; 23:9).

If *Jehovah Sabaoth* was meant to denote one Supreme God ruling over an angelic host, why do we not find this name in the first chapter of Genesis, which records the creation of the angels? Why do we not find *Jehovah Sabaoth* anywhere in the book of Genesis? Why does this name of God not appear in ***any*** of the first five books of the Bible?

The truth is that the name *Sabaoth* does not identify God as the all-powerful Ruler of an angelic host, but as Supreme Leader of the armies of Israel. The term *sabaoth* is first linked with *Jehovah* in the book of Joshua, when the armies of Israel were preparing to enter the promised land at the command of God. In this reference, *sabaoth* is used to designate the "host," or army, of *Jehovah*: "And He said, 'Nay, but **as Captain [Prince] of the host [*sabaoth*] of the LORD [*Jehovah*]** am I now come.' And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto Him, 'What saith my Lord unto his servant?' " (Josh. 5:14.) The fact that Joshua worshipped Him shows that the Prince of the host of the LORD was not an angel, as the

following verse confirms: "And the Captain of the LORD's host said unto Joshua, **'Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy.'** And Joshua did so" (verse 15).

Joshua was given the same command that Moses received when the LORD (*Jehovah*) appeared to him at the burning bush. Joshua's record of this event reveals that the Captain of the LORD's host was the God of Israel Himself. It was the LORD Himself Who issued the commands for the armies of Israel. David called him **"the LORD of hosts [*Jehovah Sabaoth*], the God [*Elohim*] of the armies of Israel"** (I Sam. 17:45).

In *The Hebrew/Greek Key Study Bible*, Zodhiates states that the Hebrew term *Sabaoth* "depicts God as the mightiest Warrior or all-powerful King of Israel" (p. 1652). This definition is supported by David's reference to the LORD of hosts as "the God of the armies of Israel" and by Isaiah's prophecy, "...the LORD of hosts [*Jehovah Sabaoth*] musters the host of the battle" (Isa. 13:4), and by other references to the LORD of hosts as the King of Israel (Isa. 6:5; 44:6, Jer. 46:18; 48:15; 51:57).

The Scriptural evidence makes it clear that *Jehovah Sabaoth*, or "the LORD of hosts," is not referring to the God of an angelic host but to the God of the armies of Israel. A proper translation of *Jehovah Sabaoth* would be *Jehovah*, "Sustainer [or Maintainer] of the Armies [of Israel]" (Obermann, "The Divine Name Yhwh in the Light of Recent Discoveries," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LXVIII (1949), p. 310). This translation interprets *Sabaoth* in a manner that is consistent with the rules of Hebrew grammar.

Obermann attests that it is contrary to the rules of Hebrew syntax to interpret *Jehovah Sabaoth* as "YHWH of Hosts." To translate *Sabaoth* as the prepositional phrase "of Hosts" makes *Sabaoth* a genitive modifier. As stated previously, since *Jehovah* is used as a proper noun, the rules of Hebrew grammar prohibit its being followed by a genitive modifier. Notice: "What is the exact grammatical connection between the two components of the epithet [*YHWH Sabaoth*, or as it is commonly translated, "Lord of hosts"]?...'**Yahweh' [*Jehovah*] is never subjected to external determination, hence is nowhere followed by a genitive, and there is no thinkable reason why an exception should have been allowed in this case and in this alone.**" (Ibid.)

There is no evidence in the Hebrew text to support the interpretation of *Jehovah Sabaoth* as a single Supreme Being Who rules a celestial host of Elohim. When *sabaoth* is used in reference to a celestial host, whether of angels, or of the stars and other heavenly bodies, it appears in the text as "the host of heaven" (Deut. 4:19, I Kings 22:19, II Chron. 33:3, Isa. 34:4, Jer. 8:2, Dan. 8:10, Zeph. 1:5) or simply as "host" (Gen. 2:1) or "hosts" (Ps. 148:2). In most occurrences in the Old Testament, the term *sabaoth*, or "host," refers to the armies of men. When we examine all the references in the Hebrew text, it is clear that *sabaoth*, when used in combination with *Jehovah* or *Elohim*, does not refer to a celestial host but to the armies of Israel--"the LORD's host" (Josh. 5:15).

What Is the True Meaning of Deuteronomy 6:4?

The following words in the book of Deuteronomy are often quoted by those who promote a monotheistic view of God:

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD [*Jehovah*] our God [*Elohim*] is one LORD [*Jehovah*]" (Deut. 6:4, KJV).

This translation of Moses' words in Deuteronomy 6:4 is similar to the Jewish translation, which is known as the "Shema." **The Shema** has long been used as a rallying cry for monotheistic Judaism, and is now being used as a key scripture in arguing for the singularity of the Godhead. Stavrindes writes, "The Book of Deuteronomy, in particular, is emphatic about the oneness of the true God: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is *one*' (6:4). **This is the definitive statement on the Hebrew [rabbinical] concept of monotheism....**The significance of this strict form of monotheism cannot be overemphasized; **it is the key that helps explain the Jews' rejection of Christian theology**" (*Understanding the Nature of God: The Modern Trinitarian Problem*, p. 5).

Although scholars confess that this monotheistic interpretation of Deuteronomy 6:4 is questionable, Stavrindes accepts it as absolute fact. In his view, those who reject the singularity of the Godhead are ignorant of the Scriptures. He states, "The Jews of Christ's day would have reasoned that the singular reference to God was so clearly embedded in their Hebrew,

Aramaic, and Greek texts, the synagogue, and their culture, in general, that it **dismissed outright all theological language that might seem to suggest more than one divine being.**

"Despite the conclusive evidence, some commentators have continued to entertain the thought that the one God was, in some sense (that is, in a Christian sense) *more than one*" (Ibid., p. 6).

Stavrinides would have us believe that the Old Testament supports the Jewish view of a monotheistic God. But the truth of Scripture is that Moses' words in Deuteronomy 6:4 do not limit the Godhead to a single divine Being! Moses was not the originator of the strict monotheism of Judaism. Tobias quotes W. F. Albright, one of the foremost Biblical scholars of the twentieth century, concerning Moses' lack of strict monotheistic belief:

"If by "**monotheist**" is meant a thinker with views specifically like those of Philo Judaeus or of Rabbi Aqiba, or...St. Augustine...or St. Thomas or Calvin...**Moses was NOT one**" (Tobias, *Monotheism In Isaiah 40-55: A Dissertation Submitted to The Faculty of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary In Candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Theology Division of Biblical Studies*, p. 33).

Tobias exposes the weakness in the monotheistic Jewish interpretation of Deuteronomy 6:4: "It must also be noted that the familiar passage in Deut. 6:4, the Shema, is *weak support for a monotheistic argument since the sentence is open to varying interpretations* (see the Revised Standard Version's marginal readings). **There is no verb in the verse in Hebrew...**" (Ibid., p. 34).

As Tobias points out, **the verb "is"** in the English translation of Deuteronomy 6:4 **does not appear in the Hebrew text.** The Hebrew wording in this verse is known as a **verbless clause.** Verbless clauses require a complex grammatical analysis in order to properly interpret their meaning.

There are different types of verbless clauses in the Hebrew text. Although these clauses vary in grammatical structure, they are all composed of a subject and a predicate. The **subject** may be either a noun or a pronoun. If the subject is a noun, it may have modifiers such as adjectives ("first," "our," "their," etc.) or articles ("the" or "a") accompanying it. All other

words ¹ in the clause that do not form part of the subject are known as the **predicate**. The predicate expresses something about the subject.

The interpretation of a verbless clause is based on several factors. A major factor in the interpretation of verbless clauses is the *relationship of the predicate and the subject*. This relationship may be either definite or indefinite. As Waltke explains, "If the predicate is **definite**, it *identifies* a definite subject...; if it is **indefinite**, it *classifies* a definite subject..." (*An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, p. 130).

The order of the subject and the predicate in identifying clauses usually differs from the order in classifying clauses. Waltke writes the following concerning this difference: "The order of subject (S) and predicate (Pred) in verbless clauses varies....Roughly speaking, an *identifying clause* has the order S-Pred [**subject before predicate**] and a *classifying clause* the reverse [**subject following predicate**], although if the predicate is a noun with a suffix, the order is less predictable." (Ibid.) In some verbless clauses, the words that form the subject and/or predicate are *discontinuous*; that is, split by intervening words into two parts (Ibid., note).

Waltke relates additional factors that affect the word order in verbless clauses. A clause that is *independent* will follow a different pattern than a clause that is *subordinate* to another clause. The **purpose** of the clause also affects the word order. A clause may be *declarative* (making a statement), *interrogative* (asking a question), or *precative* (making a wish). Declarative and interrogative clauses generally follow the same patterns, but precative clauses are not as predictable. (Ibid.)

Waltke's explanation of these complex grammatical factors shows the extensive analysis that is required in order to determine the meaning of a verbless clause. In applying these grammatical factors to Deuteronomy 6:4, scholars have arrived at a number of different interpretations. These varying interpretations are the result of conflicting views as to which words in the

¹ Some verbless clauses contain a *third* part such as a redundant pronoun (pleo) or a nominative absolute (Foc).

verbless clause belong to the **subject** and which words belong to the **predicate**, and whether the predicate is *identifying* or *classifying* the subject. In addition, some scholars view the disputed words in Deuteronomy

6:4 as *two* clauses rather than one. These differences of opinion have led to much debate over the meaning of the Hebrew text. Since there is no other verse in the Old Testament that resembles Deuteronomy 6:4, scholars are unable to verify that any interpretation of this verse is completely accurate. Waltke aptly describes these problems:

"The problems posed by the Shema (Deut 6:4) are numerous. After the initial imperative and vocative, שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל 'Hear, O Israel,' there follow four words. However they are construed, it is agreed that **no closely comparable passage occurs.** The *simplest* solution is to recognize *two* juxtaposed verbless clauses: (a) אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה 'YHWH is our God' (identifying clause, S-Pred); (b) אֶחָד יְהוָה 'YHWH is one' (classifying clause, S-Pred, with a numeral; cf. #23). **Few scholars favor such a parsing.** Andersen takes ... יְהוָה יְהוָה as a discontinuous [split] predicate, with the other two words as a discontinuous [split] subject, 'Our one God [*Elohim*] is YHWH, YHWH.' Other proposed parsings take the first two words as subject (viz., 'YHWH our God is one YHWH') or the first three words (viz., 'YHWH, our God, YHWH is one') or even the first word alone. It is hard to say if אֶחָד can serve as an adjective modifying יְהוָה. It is even less clear what the predicate אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד would mean, though some scholars take it adverbially ('YHWH is our God, YHWH alone'). As Gerald Janzen observes, **'the Shema does not conform exactly to any standard nominal sentence pattern...'** " (Ibid., p. 135).

Note that in the above presentation of proposed interpretations of Deuteronomy 6:4, Waltke includes that of Andersen. Francis I. Andersen, a noted scholar, is the leading authority in interpreting Hebrew verbless clauses. In his detailed analysis of the verbless clause in Deuteronomy 6:4, Andersen shows the flaws in the translations that scholars have offered by pointing out the grammatical rules that contradict these interpretations. Here is his analysis:

"Another clause of celebrated difficulty is Deut. 6:4--*yahwe 'elohenu yahwe 'ehad*. **The many proposed translations face objections of various kinds.** 'The Lord our God is one Lord' (RSV) analyzes <(Np <A> Ns)--(Np <A> Num)>, and implies that Np can be a count noun. This is avoided in **'The Lord our God, the Lord is one [the Shema]'** (RSVMg), which analyzes <(Np <A> Ns) Sus,NpRes-Num>. But **BOTH these interpretations collide with Rule 3,²** extended to numerals, as clauses in

##150, 157 suggest; resumptive hu' at the end would be more natural (Rule 4). 'The Lord is our God, the Lord is one' (RSVMg makes *two distinct clauses*, in each of which Yahweh is S. **Objections to the second of these have already been given. But the first is not satisfactory either;** for the concern is not the identity of Yahweh. Finally 'The Lord is our God, the Lord alone' (RSVMg, JPS), **besides the objection already given to the first clause, involves a strange use of 'ehad ["one"]** with the meaning of lebaddo" (Andersen, *The Hebrew Verbless Clause in the Pentateuch: Journal of Biblical Literature Monograph Series XIV*, p. 47).

After showing that **the Shema** and similar translations *violate the rules* for interpreting verbless clauses, Andersen explains how a correct application of the rules leads to an acceptable interpretation of the disputed words in Deuteronomy 6:4. Notice the following analysis by this expert in verbless clauses:

"A combination of Rule 3² and Rule 6³ points to another solution. **The confession goes with the first commandment, 'You shall not have other gods besides me'** (Exod. 20:3), where 'al has the same meaning as in Gen. 11:28; 28:9; 31:50; etc. Yahweh is the sole object of Israelite worship. *Yahwe... 'ehad* is the (discontinuous) predicate; *'elohenu... 'ehad* is the (discontinuous) subject: **'Our one God [Elohim] is Yahweh, Yahweh.'** As a statement of the identity of 'our only god,' the sequence would be abnormal; but it is **a grammatically acceptable answer to the implied question, 'Who is our god?'** The same construction is found in the cry of allegiance in Isaiah 33:22--'Our judge is Yahweh, our legislator is Yahweh, our king is Yahweh!' " (Ibid.)

² "Rule 3: **The sequence is P-S in a clause of classification**, in which P [the Predicate] is indefinite relative to S [the Subject]" (Andersen, *The Hebrew Verbless Clause in the Pentateuch: Journal of Biblical Literature Monograph Series XIV*, p. 42).

³ "Rule 6: When **a suffixed noun** is predicate, the sequence S-P (Rule 1) is used for a clause of identification in which the suffixed noun is definite: the sequence P-S (Rule 3) is used for a clause of classification in which the suffixed noun is indefinite" (*Ibid.*, p. 46).

As the foremost authority in the interpretation of verbless clauses, Francis Andersen comes to the conclusion that there exists an implied question in Deuteronomy 6:4, based on the first commandment: **"You shall not have**

other gods [*elohim*] besides Me" (Ex. 20:3). The implied question is: **If we shall have no other gods (*elohim*) besides You, Who then is our God (*Elohim*)? Deuteronomy 6:4 answers this implied question with the proper construction: **"Our one God (*Elohim*) is Yhwh Yhwh (*Jehovah Jehovah*)."** The meaning of Deuteronomy 6:4 is then completed with the only conclusion we can properly draw: **He (*Jehovah*) is our only God (*Elohim*).** Thus we have come full circle back to the original commandment, **"You shall not have other gods [*elohim*] besides Me."****

In other words, the Hebrew text is emphatically stating that Israel's **only** God is *Yhwh* (*Jehovah*). This emphasis is clearly expressed in Andersen's interpretation of Deuteronomy 6:4, which places the two occurrences of *Yhwh* (*Jehovah*) together in *repetitive apposition*. Repetitive apposition serves to *emphasize* the name (Waltke, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, p. 233).

It was *Yhwh* (*Jehovah*) Who had delivered the children of Israel from their bondage in Egypt and had covenanted with them at Sinai. It was *Yhwh* (*Jehovah*) Who had led Israel through the wilderness and had brought them to the land of Canaan. Now, as the children of Israel were preparing to enter the promised land, Moses was proclaiming the name of the God Who had led their fathers out of Egypt. They were to worship *Yhwh* (*Jehovah*), and Him only: "Hear, O Israel: Our one God [*Elohim*] is YHWH YHWH [*Jehovah Jehovah*]" (Deut. 6:4).

This double use of the name *Yhwh* is not unique in the Pentateuch. *Yhwh* (*Jehovah*) is also used in repetitive apposition in a significant passage in the book of Exodus. This passage describes the appearance of the God of Israel to Moses on Mt. Sinai when the words of the covenant were being delivered. Notice the name by which Israel's God revealed Himself: "And the LORD [*Yhwh*] passed by before him [Moses], and proclaimed, 'The LORD, The LORD [*Yhwh Yhwh*] God [*Elohim*] merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth' " (Ex. 34:6).

Forty years later, Moses proclaimed this name to the children of Israel, as recorded in Deuteronomy 6:4 and translated by Andersen. Since Moses was recounting the events that had taken place at Mt. Sinai, it is fitting that he would use the name by which God had revealed Himself when He appeared

on the mount.

The name by which the God of Israel revealed Himself to Moses is stated more literally in *The Schocken Bible*: "And YHWH passed before his face and called out: YHWH YHWH God [*Elohim*], showing-mercy, showing-favor, long-suffering in anger, abundant in loyalty and faithfulness" (Ex. 34:6).

The double use of *Yhwh* (*Jehovah*) emphatically identifies the Being Who spoke to Moses as **the God of Israel**. It was *not an angel* but God Himself Who appeared to Moses on the mount. Moses called Him the Rock of Israel (Deut. 32:4). The New Testament reveals that this Rock was the *Jehovah* Who became Jesus Christ (I Cor. 10:4). He was the *Jehovah* Who showed Himself to Moses on Mt. Sinai (Ex. 33:18-23).

Speaking of the Father, Jesus said, "No man hath seen God at any time..." (John 1:18). The words "hath seen" are translated from the Greek verb *horao*, which specifically refers to bodily sight with the eyes (*The Companion Bible*, Ap. 133.8). As Moses saw *Jehovah* with his own eyes on Mt. Sinai, the *Jehovah* Who appeared to Moses was not the *Jehovah* Who became the Father. The *Jehovah* Who showed Moses His glory and proclaimed His name as *Jehovah Jehovah*, the *Elohim* of Israel, was the future Christ! This *Jehovah* was with the Father from the beginning (John 1:1, Heb. 1:2, 10). Thus the New Testament confirms the existence of **two Jehovahs** in Old Testament times!

Judaism rejects the truth that is revealed in the New Testament and insists that the Scriptures reveal only one *Jehovah* (YHWH). Basing their belief on a faulty monotheistic interpretation of Deuteronomy 6:4, the followers of Judaism refuse to acknowledge the existence of the two *Jehovahs* of the Old Testament. The apostle Peter, in quoting a prophecy of Isaiah, shows that **Jesus Christ, Who became "a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense"** to the Jews, **WAS "the LORD [*Yhwh*] of hosts"** of the Old Testament! (I Pet. 2:8, Isa. 8:13-15.) Isaiah warned that those who refused to acknowledge Him as their God would "stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken" (verse 15). That is the end result of following monotheistic Judaism!

It is a mistake to base our understanding of the Godhead on a

monotheistic interpretation of Deuteronomy 6:4 that opposes the clear truth of Scripture. Both the Old Testament and the New reveal that the two *Jehovahs* Who became the Father and the Son have always existed. Jesus said, "The Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). Those who reject the revealed truth of Scripture will themselves be broken. In these times of great deception, Christians need to take heed to Isaiah's warning and guard themselves from the snare of monotheistic Judaism!

The History of the Monotheistic Jewish Interpretation of Deuteronomy 6:4

The monotheistic Jewish interpretation of Deuteronomy 6:4, known as **the Shema**, is the foundation upon which Judaism was built. As Rabbi Kohler attests, "The most prominent and most characteristic feature of the entire Synagogal literature, the one which centralized and consolidated it for all time, is the solemn Scriptural verse which became the creed and the rallying cry of the Jew all over the world: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, **the Lord is One.**' This Deuteronomic verse, forming as it were **the keynote of the entire teaching of Judaism**, embodies both the fundamental belief and the historic mission of Israel" (*The Origins of the Synagogue and the Church*, p. 53).

The most fundamental belief and teaching of Judaism, as expressed in the Shema, is the absolute and indivisible unity of the One God. Rabbi Kohler writes, "The first of the three cardinal principles, as fixed by the Synagogue, is **the absolute Unity of God [strict monotheism]**. Throughout the entire history and literature of [Hasidic] Judaism there runs but one leading thought: **God is One [in number]...nor does any being share in His divine nature [denying the divinity of Jesus Christ]**. **There is no multiplicity nor division in Him, whether as of powers and persons or attributes** [the very words of Stavrinides]. He is *above* the world which is His creation [i.e., He is transcendent]...**This pure monotheism**, proclaimed by the Law and the Prophets, the Psalmists and the sages, the Talmud, the liturgy, and the philosophers of the various generations, **constitutes the unique faith of the Jew voiced by him in the Synagogue every morning and evening, from the cradle to the grave, as his creed...**" (Ibid., pp. 138-139).

Contrary to popular belief, the Jews have not always held this

monotheistic view of God. The children of Judah and other Israelites down to the time of King David understood that the Godhead, or *Elohim*, was composed of two divine Beings Who were both named *Jehovah*. This truth was revealed to them in the Pentateuch and was preserved in the Psalms of David and other psalmists. Later, the influence of pagan religions in the nations around them drew the people of Israel and Judah away from the Scriptural revelation of the duality of God. Eventually, the original teaching of Scripture was replaced by a strict monotheistic belief in a singular God.

How did this shift in Jewish thought take place?

Rabbi Kohler reveals the answer in his book *The Origins of the Synagogue and the Church*. Rabbi Kohler, who succeeded Rabbi Einhorn as chief rabbi of Temple Beth-El in New York in 1879, was a founder of the *Jewish Encyclopedia*. Before the encyclopedia was completed in 1903, Dr. Kohler was elected to the presidency of Hebrew Union College. He was one of the most prominent rabbis of his day. In his book, this renowned rabbi shows how the Shema--the monotheistic Jewish interpretation of Deuteronomy 6:4--became the creed of modern Judaism. He states the following concerning the origin of the Shema:

"...when and where was this solemn declaration of Israel's unique belief in the only One God [the monotheistic interpretation of Deuteronomy 6:4], implying the pledge to live, and if needs be, to die for it, rendered the central idea and leitmotif of the Synagogue? It is inaccurate to ascribe its introduction, in common with the Eighteen Benedictions and other prayers, to the Men of the Great Synagogue [founded by Ezra and Nehemiah]....It needs, however, no special argument to prove that although the Soferim connected the recital of the Shema with the Scriptural passage, just as they connected the putting on of the Tefillin and the fixing of the Mezuzah with the following verses, the REAL ORIGIN as well as the purpose of the Shema recital must be sought elsewhere. Evidently the name given it by the ancient teachers [the Hasidim], *Kabbalat Ol Malkut Shamayim*, 'the Acceptance of the yoke of God's sovereignty,' clearly states that its object was to be the declaration of Israel's fundamental belief in God's unity [strict monotheism] in opposition to the polytheism of the pagan world. But then we must ask ourselves, At what period in Jewish history was such a declaration deemed particularly necessary?" (*The Origins of the Synagogue and the Church*, pp. 53-55.)

Rabbi Kohler traces the history of the Shema to the time of the Babylonian and Persian empires. At that time in history, the people of Judah had been expelled from their land as punishment for breaking their covenant with God by worshipping the sun god and other gods of the heathen (Ezek. 8). As exiles in Babylon and Persia, the Jews could no longer offer sacrifices at the temple or participate in the yearly Passover service. Under these circumstances, they fell even deeper into pagan worship. Foremost of these pagan religions was the worship of Mithras, the sun god who became the Messiah of the Persian Magi. The Jewish exiles of that time were especially vulnerable to this new religion because they viewed King Cyrus of Persia as a type of the Messiah. Rabbi Kohler states the following:

"The great change that took place in Judaism during and after the Babylonian Exile, owing to its contact with Babylonia and Persia, was one that **has affected the entire religious thinking of the world...**The rapturous *glorification of Cyrus* by Deutero-Isaiah, who hailed his advent as that of *God's anointed, destined to bring the DEEP MYSTERIES OF THE WORLD to the light of day*, is the best indication of the realization that *a new era of religious life was dawning...*" (*The Origins of the Synagogue and the Church*, p. 43).

With the rise of King Cyrus to power and his decree to rebuild Jerusalem, the Jews were anticipating the advent of their Messiah. At the same time, the worship of the Persian messiah Mithras was spreading throughout the empire. Rabbi Kohler describes how the Jewish leaders began to blend the worship of Mithras with the teachings of Scripture: "So was **the heavenly throne-chariot of Ezekiel's vision** (referred to also in I Chron. 28:18 and Ben Sira 49, 8), as soon as it was **brought into connection with the chariot of the Persian Mithra**, Ahura-Mazda's charioteer, made a *subject of secret lore* under the name of Maaseh Merkaba. Similarly, the Creation chapters in Genesis, Proverbs c.3; c.8, and Job cc.37-38 were, in connection with Persian and Babylonian, and later on also Greek, concepts, turned into cosmogonic secrets, *Masseh Bereshit*, to be **taught only in esoteric circles** consisting of but two or three" (Ibid., pp. 45-46).

Only those Jews who were initiated into this secret religion knew that Mithras was the new Messiah of Judaism. Other Jews were led to believe that the new teachings were Scriptural and were part of the worship of the

true God. In reality, the new worship being taught by their leaders was intended to honor the "God of heaven" of the Persians. Rabbi Kohler writes, "The grossly sensual and brutal gods of heathendom...had to give way to a more spiritual deity **adored as the good 'God of heaven,' of light and truth,** to **Ahura Mazda, the supreme,** if not the only god of the Persians, whose counterpart Angrimainyus, the principle of evil and darkness, was after a long combat finally to be subdued and annihilated by him" (Ibid., pp. 43-44).

Ahura Mazda, the supreme "God of heaven," was represented in bodily form as Mithras, the blond, blue-eyed god who drove the chariots of the sun across the sky, typifying the rule of the light over darkness. He was known as Mithra the Invincible--the World-Savior who would triumph over all evil. It was the Hasidim, as the leaders of Jewish thought, who introduced the worship of Mithras into Judaism. Rabbi Kohler writes, "**This Persian system was adopted by the Jewish leaders of thought, the Hasidim, and the *Messiah* [secretly known as the sun-god Mithras] became for them the World-Savior** who would combat and finally annihilate Satan '**the wicked one.**' Thus **the entire Messianic hope of Judaism underwent a change,** while at the same time the Jewish philosophy of angelology and demonology was **formed under Perso-Babylonian influence"** (Ibid., pp. 44-45).

The Hasidim began to invent a new body of literature to promote their secret worship of Mithras: "**These new ideas were introduced by the Hasidim as *divine mysteries* [the Kabbalah] handed down to the initiated** from the hoary past by such men as Enoch, Noah and Shem, the men of vision singled out in the Apocalyptic writings..." (Ibid., p. 45). In reality, these "new ideas" were invented in the hoary past by Nimrod, Semiramis and Horus, and were handed down to the Hasidic sages of Judaism by the Magi of Persia!

After the Great Synagogue of Ezra and Nehemiah was disbanded, the secret worship begun by the Hasidim in Babylon and Persia began to come to the fore. The fall of the Jerusalem temple to the Syrians in 167 B.C. and the resulting decline of Levitical influence left the Hasidim as the controlling religious and political force in Judah. The Hasidim (later known as the Pharisees) began to spread their Mithraic practices among the Jews under the label of *Judaism*. The common people were told that these Mithraic

practices were Scriptural in origin and were an essential part of the worship of the God of Israel!

One of the most obvious of these Mithraic practices was the offering of **prayers to the sun**. In describing the worship of the Essenes, Rabbi Kohler reveals that this Jewish sect followed the Mithraic practice of praying to the rising sun, and *ended their prayers by reciting the Shema*. Here is Rabbi Kohler's startling admission:

"We have first of all Josephus' description of the Essene practice: **'Before the rising of the sun they speak of no profane matters, but send up towards it certain prayers that have come down to them from their forefathers, as if they were praying for its rising.'** This was identified already by Rappaport in his biography of Kalir with the practice of the Watikim, 'the Strongminded,' *the preservers of ancient traditions*, of whom we are told that **they started their prayers at dawn and managed to conclude them with THE RECITAL OF THE SHEMA at the time of the Radiation of the Sun'** (Ibid., p. 56).

Rabbi Kohler goes on to show that the Essenes who lived in Egypt also recited the Shema in praying to the sun at both its rising and its setting: "Similarly are the Therapeutes, an Egyptian branch of the Essenes, described by Philo as **'praying twice a day, at dawn and in the evening,'** 'standing up with their faces and their whole bodies turned towards the dawn' and **'lifting their hands towards heaven when they see the sun rise,** praying for a happy day and for the light of truth and penetrating wisdom.' **Here we have a direct allusion even to the two Benedictions preceding the Shema,** the one thanking for the light of day, the other for the light of the Torah. According to R. Zera, the Watikim followed the Psalmist's injunction in **Ps. 72:5, which they interpreted: 'They worship Thee with the sun** and before the gleam of the moon throughout all generations'....Other references to the same practice we have in the Wisdom of Solomon 16:28, where, speaking of the Manna which 'melted as the sun grew hot,' it says: 'This is to teach us that we should anticipate the sun in offering thanksgiving to Thee and pray unto Thee at the rising of the light of day.' Likewise, in the third Book of the Sibyllines 591f. we read: 'They lift up to heaven their purified hands, rising early from their bed in the morning, having their hands cleansed in water.' Evidently *the class of Hasidim* spoken of under various names, assembled in the open field where they could watch the sun rise from daybreak on and,

beginning with their benedictions, they greeted the sun, as it appeared in full radiance over the hills, with uplifted hands, WHILE SOLEMNLY RECITING THE SHEMA" (Ibid., pp. 56-57).

Here is clear evidence that the Hasidim were using **misinterpretations of the Scriptures** to justify their sun worship and make it appear that they were worshipping the true God of heaven. The most significant of these Scriptural misinterpretations was the Shema--the monotheistic translation of Deuteronomy 6:4. Rabbi Kohler links the Jewish recital of the Shema at sunrise and sunset directly to the worship of Mithras. Notice his admission:

"It is easy to see that [the Shema], being meant to be a demonstrative proclamation of the Unity [strict monotheism] and the Uniqueness of Israel's God, in opposition to the Zoroastrian dualism [the rabbinical justification for the recital of the Shema], **THE PRACTICE ORIGINATED NEITHER IN THE TEMPLE NOR IN THE SYNAGOGUE, but in the open under the free heaven [at sunrise]** and before the very eyes of the surrounding Mazdean priests [priests of Ahura Mazda]. **In all likelihood THE MAZDEAN WORSHIPERS THEMSELVES gave the impulse to the Jewish practice, as we learn from the Avesta that every morning they HAILED THE RISING SUN, THE GOD MITHRAS, with the sacred prayer, Asheu Vohu, AND LIKEWISE THE SETTING SUN with the same prayer.** What a strong incentive that must have been for the pious Jews [as the Hasidim were known] to **adopt the same impressive ceremony in honor of their One and holy God** [their secret "God of heaven"], the Maker of the sun, and at the same time to find in the Deuteronomic words [as they taught uninitiated Jews]: 'And thou shalt speak of them...when thou liest down and when thou risest up,' **THE VERY SHEMA RECITAL PRESCRIBED TWICE A DAY!"** (Ibid., pp. 56-57.)

Only those Jews who had been initiated into the "**deep mysteries of the world**" knew that Mithras was the object of this worship. In these mysteries, Mithras is *not separate* from Ahura Mazda: "The supreme god Ahura Mazda also has one Eye [the sun]....The theory that **Mithra was originally a title of the supreme heavens god**--putting the sun out of [his] court--is the only one that answers all requirements" (O'Neill, *The Night of the Gods*, quoted by Hall, *The Secret Teachings of All Ages*, XXIV).

As O'Neill shows, the worship of Mithras was **monotheistic** in nature.

Mithras was viewed as *the image of the "One God."* Cumont writes, "...in the Chaldean speculation propagated by the Mithraists...the growing tendency was to see in the brilliant star [the sun] that illuminated the universe **the only God**, or at least *the sensible [visible] image of the only God*, and to establish in the heavens a **MONOTHEISM in imitation of the monarchy that ruled on earth**" (*The Mysteries of Mithra*, p. 187).

In this pagan monotheism, the **"One God"** was worshipped not only under the name of Mithras, but under many other names that represented his *different aspects*. Cumont writes, "...the gods were ultimately reducible to a **single Being** considered under different aspects, and that the multiple names by which they were worshipped were the **equivalent of that of Helios (the Sun)**." (Ibid.)

While professing to worship the true God, the Hasidim were reciting the Shema in honor of the "One" sun-god! **The recital of the Shema as the creed of Judaism did not originate with Moses!** Nor did it begin with Ezra and Nehemiah, nor with the Great Synagogue. The recital of the Shema arose from monotheistic sun worship! That is how the Shema became the creed of modern Judaism!

The monotheistic interpretation of Deuteronomy 6:4 that is known as the Shema *cannot be reconciled with Scripture*. As Rabbi Kohler admits, this strict rabbinic monotheistic creed of Judaism is diametrically opposed to the Christian belief in the divinity of Jesus Christ. He writes, "**The absolute Unity of God [strict monotheism], the fundamental and central belief of Judaism, became the question of life or death for the Synagogue from the time when the Christian Church placed Jesus, her Messiah, upon the throne of God [Ps. 110], either as His son or His equal...**" (Ibid., p. 140).

The truth that God has revealed in both the Old and New Testaments concerning His Son, the true Messiah, shows the utter falseness of the monotheistic Jewish interpretation of Deuteronomy 6:4. This faulty interpretation of Scripture, which has long blinded the minds of Jews, must not be allowed to destroy the faith of Christians today.

The "One Lord" of Jewish Monotheism

At the same time that the Hasidim were bringing their secret worship of

Mithras into Judaism, the priests at the temple in Jerusalem were beginning to introduce the name *Adonai*, or "Lord," as a substitute for the name *Yhwh* (*Jehovah*). Until this time, the priests had followed the Scriptural command to bless the people in the name of *Jehovah*. At this time, the priests were the only ones who were allowed to pronounce the "sacred name" of God. Rabbi Kohler writes, "Only the priests in the Temple were allowed to pronounce the sacred Name and were enjoined to do so when blessing the people, in accordance with Num. 6:27: 'And they shall put My Name [*Jehovah*] upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them' " (Ibid., p. 50).

This Scriptural command shows that God intended His name to be used publicly in Israel. From the beginning of Israel's history as a nation, the common people used the "sacred name" freely, as recorded in a number of passages in the Old Testament. The following verses demonstrate this public use of the name *Jehovah* in the days of King David:

"Wherefore David blessed the LORD [*Jehovah*] **before all the congregation:** and **David said, 'Blessed be Thou, LORD [*Jehovah*]** God of Israel our father, forever and ever'....**And David said to all the congregation, 'Now bless the LORD [*Jehovah*] your God.'** And **all the congregation blessed the LORD [*Jehovah*]** God of their fathers..." (I Chron. 29:10, 20).

We read of this same practice in the days of King Jehoshaphat of Judah: "And on the fourth day they assembled themselves in the valley of Berachah; for **there they blessed the LORD [*Jehovah*]:** therefore the name of the same place was called, the valley of Berachah [Blessing], unto this day" (II Chron. 20:26).

This public use of the "sacred name" continued down to the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, as we read, "And **Ezra blessed the LORD [*Jehovah*],** the great God. And **all the People answered, 'Amen, Amen' [showing that they heard the name]...**" (Neh. 8:6). In the years that followed, the religious leaders of the Jews began to restrict the use of the name *Yhwh* (*Jehovah*). Their excuse was that the name was too sacred to be used--or even heard--by the common people. Rabbi Kohler describes the substitution of the name *Adonai* by the priests:

"In post-exilic time, the use of the name YHVH [*Jehovah*] was more and

more restricted and finally altogether withdrawn from common use....The priests, when pronouncing the Name in their blessing, did it in a whisper--'swallowed it up.' For the people at large **the name Adonai [or Adonay], 'the Lord,' was introduced as a substitute both in the reading and the translation of the Scripture**, as is shown by the Septuagint [the Greek translation] and the Targum [the Aramaic translation]. And while this substitution guarded the Name from profane [common] use, it formed at the same time the highest triumph of Jewish monotheism, inasmuch as it proved the most powerful means of rendering the Biblical God for all readers of the bible *the* God and Lord of the world. For as long as Yahweh--or **Jehovah, as the name was** erroneously [in rabbi Kohler's view] **read [by the priests]**--was viewed as the proper Name of Israel's God, there adhered to Him a more or less tribal character, but as soon as He is spoken of as the Lord (*Adonai*), He has ceased to be merely the God of one nation and has become the universal God" (Ibid., pp. 50-51).

Rabbi Kohler justifies the substitution of *Adonai* by claiming that the name *Yhwh (Jehovah)* identified God only as the national God of Israel. While it is true that *Jehovah* was the covenant name by which God revealed Himself to Israel, and the name by which He commanded Israel to worship Him, this divine name did not limit God to a "tribal" or "national" Deity!

The Old Testament clearly reveals ***Jehovah*** as the **God of the whole earth**. Moses declared this truth to Pharaoh in Egypt (Ex. 9:29). Joshua spoke of it to the children of Israel as they prepared to enter the Promised Land (Josh. 3:9, 11). David and other psalmists wrote of this truth (Ps. 58:11; 97:1, 5, 9). That *Jehovah* was worshipped as God over all is emphatically proclaimed in a psalm of Asaph: "That men may know that Thou, **Whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the MOST HIGH over all the earth**" (Ps. 83:18). Isaiah spoke of a time when all nations would acknowledge *Jehovah* as their Savior (Isa. 45:21-23).

There is ***no Scriptural support*** for the rabbinical argument that the name *Jehovah* limited God to a "tribal character"! This false assertion merely serves to cover up the real reason for substituting the name *Adonai* for *Jehovah*. To find the real origin of this substitution we must look to the records of Scripture and history.

The Scriptures show a change in the manner by which God was identified

at the same time that Cyrus rose to power in Persia. Notice how King Cyrus refers to *Jehovah*: "Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia...the LORD [*Jehovah*] stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, 'Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, all the kingdoms of the earth hath **the LORD [*Jehovah*] God of heaven** given me...' " (II Chron. 36:23).

This is the first occurrence in Scripture of the name "God of heaven" in reference to *Jehovah* (*The Companion Bible*, p. 615). Beginning with the reign of Cyrus, the name "God of heaven" is used of *Jehovah* in a number of passages. It was used by the returned exiles of Judah in relating King Cyrus's decree to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem (Ezra 5:11-12). It was used by King Darius and by King Artaxerxes in their decrees concerning the building of the temple (Ezra 6:8-10; 7:12, 21, 23). It was used by Nehemiah (Neh. 1:4-5; 2:4, 20) and by the prophet Daniel in the days of the Babylonian empire (Dan. 2:18-19, 37, 44).

The name "God of heaven" was commonly used in the Babylonian and Persian empires to refer to the supreme God. Remember that this name was given by the Persians to their one supreme god Ahura Mazda, whose worship was dominant in the days of Cyrus and the kings who followed him. As Rabbi Kohler has shown, the Hasidim--the religious leaders of the Jewish exiles at that time--adopted the worship of Ahura Mazda, who was embodied in the false messiah Mithras. In this new Judaism, Scripture was combined with the worship of the heavens, and the sun, the "image of the only God," became the sole object of worship.

The worship of the sun as the god Mithras spread from Persia throughout the Mediterranean region. In the Babylonian Empire, Mithras was worshipped by the name Tammuz and was called *Adon* or *Adonis*, meaning "Lord." This name was in keeping with the role of Mithras as false messiah and mediator with God. Hislop states, "As Christ, in the Hebrew of the Old Testament, was called Adonai, The Lord, so Tammuz was called **Adon** [Lord] or Adonis. **Under the name of Mithras**, he was worshipped as the 'Mediator.' As Mediator and head of the covenant of grace, he was styled Baal-berith, **Lord of the Covenant**" (*The Two Babylons*, p. 70).

This connection of Mithraic worship with the name *Adon*, or "Lord," is most significant in considering the substitution of the name *Adonai* for *Yhwh*

(Jehovah) in the Hebrew text. **This change in the text took place at the very time that Judaism was being formed under Perso-Babylonian influence.** (See Wurthwein, *The Text of the Old Testament*, p. 146.)

The historical context of this change to *Adonai* strongly indicates that it was a result of the adoption of Mithraic worship by the early founders of Judaism. Their powerful leadership over Jewish worship cannot be ignored in considering the changes in the Hebrew text at this time. Remember that the Jewish exiles in Babylonia and Persia were no longer under the Old Covenant. For them, *Jehovah* was no longer the Lord of the Covenant. Under these circumstances, it should not surprise us that the name *Jehovah* would fall into disuse. And since the Jewish leaders, the Hasidim, had begun to worship a new "Lord," is it any wonder that they preferred to use the name *Adonai*?

Although the name *Yhwh* (*Jehovah*) was not removed from the Hebrew text in Deuteronomy 6:4, the common people were required to pronounce it as *Adonai* when they recited the Shema. To this day, the Jews in the Synagogue substitute the name *Adonai* for *Yhwh* (*Jehovah*) each time they recite the Shema.

It is a fact of Jewish history that the recital of the Shema in the Synagogue originated with the Hasidim, who used this monotheistic interpretation of Scripture to support their secret worship of the sun-god Mithras as their "Lord" and "Messiah." These early founders of Judaism taught the common people to use the Shema in their prayers at sunrise and sunset each day. The Shema, which is now the acknowledged creed of Judaism, was a prayer to the monotheistic sun-god of the Hasidim! In view of the historical facts, it is evident that the "one Lord" of Hasidic Jewish monotheism is not *Jehovah*!