

AV, BEN, RUACH HaKODESH: The ONE True G-D - Part 01 (RMB 10/11/08)

Some 24 years after he was called out of Ur of the Chaldees, the LORD appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, (Gen 18:1) *as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day.*

It was on this day that Sarah heard the Word of the LORD (v12, Heb 11:11) and *received strength to conceive seed.* It was on this day that the LORD asked (v17) *shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing?* It was on this day that Abraham asked *shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?* and proceeded with amazing boldness to negotiate the "**judgment cutoff**" down from 50 righteous, to 45, then 40, then 30, then 20, and finally the LORD agreed... He would not destroy the satanic sin cities if there were even 10 righteous souls among the wicked inhabitants of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim (Gen 18:32, 19:25, Deu 29:23, Hos 11:8).

And chapter 18 concludes *So the LORD went His way as soon as He had finished speaking with Abraham...*

Let's pick up the narrative at Gen 19:24-25 (HEBREW FIRST):

Then the LORD rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the LORD out of the heavens. So He overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground.

Whoa, what a minute! This passage states that the LORD, *the same who was speaking with Abraham the previous day, YHVH who was on earth, YHVH number one,* was now raining fire and brimstone FROM a different YHVH, *YHVH number two, who was in Heaven.* Its unmistakable, its as clear as day... YHVH, G-d's own personal name, is used here of two different Persons.

The SHEMA (Deuteronomy 6:4) has always been Israel's great confession (HEBREW FIRST):

Hear, O Israel: The YHVH our G-d (Elohim) - is one YHVH.

It is this verse more than any other that is used to affirm the fact that G-d is ONE (and He is!).

However, this verse *is also used by some to contradict the concept of plurality in the Godhead* (the very words "our G-d" are in the plural in the Hebrew text and literally mean "our G-ds"). Rehoboth's Statement of Faith references this verse, *but Rav David carefully makes note that the word translated as "one" is the Hebrew word echad.*

Echad often means a COMPOUND ONE, not an absolute one. This can easily be seen in Scripture:

Genesis 1:5 - the combination of evening and morning comprise **one** (echad) day.

Genesis 2:24 - a man and a woman come together in marriage and the two "become **one** (echad) flesh."

Ezra 2:63 - *the whole assembly of Israel was as **one** (echad) - obviously, it was composed of numerous people.*

Ezekiel 37:17 - is a rather striking example where two sticks are combined to become **one** (echad).

These examples of the usage of the word *echad* in the Hebrew text, which is the very same word used in Deuteronomy 6:4, illustrate clearly that it speaks of a COMPOUND UNITY, *not an absolute unity.*

NOW, There is a Hebrew word that does mean an ABSOLUTE UNITY and that word is yachid, which is found in many Scripture passages, *the emphasis being on the meaning of "only."* For example, it is used in Genesis 22:2 to emphasize Yitzchak as Abraham's *only, unique son.* G-d said, *Now take your son, your only (yachid) son...*

If Moses intended to teach G-d's absolute oneness as over against a compound unity, this would have been a far more appropriate word. In fact, **Maimonides** (the Rambam, *Mishnah Torah*) noted the strength of *yachid* and chose to use *yachid* in his "Thirteen Articles of Faith" in place of *echad*. However, the Holy Spirit did NOT use *yachid* in the Shema, but chose instead to use *echad*. WHY? **Because G-d is a compound unity!** ...and the first hint we get of this concept occurs with *the very first verse* of Genesis.

Rabbi Stanley Greenberg of Temple Sinai in Philadelphia wrote:

"Christians are, of course, entitled to believe in a Trinitarian conception of G-d, but their effort to base this conception on the Hebrew Bible must fly in the face of the overwhelming testimony of that Bible. Hebrew Scriptures are clear and unequivocal on the oneness of G-d. The Hebrew Bible affirms the one G-d with unmistakable clarity. Monotheism, and uncompromising belief in one G-d, is the hallmark of the Hebrew Bible, the unwavering affirmation of Judaism and the unshakable faith of the Jew."

Since the original source of Jewish theology is the Hebrew Scriptures, then to the Hebrew Scriptures we should turn, and let's see where this compound unity concept begins. Turn to Genesis 1:1.

A PLURALITY

The Name Elohim

The Hebrew word *Elohim* is the most often used term for G-d. *Elohim* is a plural noun having the masculine plural ending "im." (*Mayim Hayim, Yamim Noraim*)

Genesis 1:1 (HEBREW FIRST) - *In the beginning G-d created the heavens and the earth,*

Just the fact that *Elohim* is plural does not conclusively prove plurality in the Godhead, because there is a usage in Hebrew known as "the plural of majesty." (plural intensive - singular meaning) There is a problem with this rationalization, because this same word is also used of the pagan, foreign, idolatrous gods:

Exodus 20:3 - *You shall have no other gods (Elohim) before Me,* (The Decalog)

Deuteronomy 13:2 - *...Let us go after other gods (Elohim)...* (Moses, warning about false prophets)

SO... while the use of the plural *Elohim* does not prove a Tri-Unity, it certainly opens the door to a doctrine of plurality in the Godhead since it is used both for the one true G-d, as well as for the many false gods.

Plural Verbs Used With Elohim

In Hebrew grammar, the verb must agree with the noun both in gender and number. Consistently, when the plural noun *Elohim* is used of false gods, the plural verb form is used. However, most of the time, whenever the word *Elohim* is used of the true G-d, the associated verb is singular to indicate that there is only one true G-d.

Genesis 1:1 is an example of this linguistic aberration: *Beresheet BARA Elohim...* singular verb, plural noun. That's a violation of normal Hebrew grammar. Those who wish to deny a plurality in the Godhead use this as a proof that the opening verse of Genesis clearly speaks of a singular G-d.

However, there are passages where Elohim, when used of the true G-d IS followed by a plural verb: Genesis 20:13a - ... *and it came to pass, when G-d caused me to wander* ... The Hebrew word that is translated *caused me to wander* is plural. Literally it reads, "And it came to pass, when THEY [in reference to G-d] caused me to wander." These are the words of Abraham, a worshipper of the one true G-d!

Genesis 35:7 - *And he built there an altar, and called the place El-beth-el; because there G-d was revealed unto him,* ... Jacob's words, *revealed unto him* literally reads, "for there G-d revealed THEMSELVES."

II Samuel 7:23 - ... *And who is like Your people, like Israel, the one nation on the earth whom G-d went to redeem for Himself as a people* ... Literally, "[For] G-d THEY went to redeem."

Psalms 58:11b - ... *Surely there is a G-d who judges on earth.* Literally, "there is a G-d THEY judge."

SO... the fact that sometimes plural verbs are used in grammatical harmony with Elohim the one true G-d, pushes the door open a little farther to the concept of plurality in the Godhead.

The Name Eloah

If Elohim was the only form available, one could argue that the authors of Scripture had no choice but to use *Elohim* for both the one true G-d and the many false G-ds. However, there is a singular form... Eloah, used in passages like Deuteronomy 32:15-17 and Habakkuk 3:3. *This singular form could easily have been used consistently. Yet, Eloah (singular) is only used 250 times, while Elohim is used 2,500 times.* This **ten-fold** greater plural form usage *turns the evidence in favor of plurality in the Godhead,* rather than against it.

The Plural Noun Adonai

The Hebrew word *Adonai*, means "Lord." Throughout Scripture, whenever *Adonai* is used of G-d, *it is always found in the plural, and literally means "my Lords."* *Adoni* (my Lord), the singular form is NEVER used of G-d. The Phoenicians referred to their false G-d Tammuz as *Adoni*, "my lord." Maybe you recall the Greek mythological deity of desire? His name was... *Adonis*.

Plural Pronouns

Here is another grammatical intrigue: often when G-d speaks of Himself, He uses the plural pronoun: Genesis 1:26 - *Then G-d (Elohim) said, "Let US make man in OUR image, according to OUR likeness..."* He is not referring to angels (Judaism!) since man was created in the image of G-d and NOT of angels.

The Midrash Rabbah recognizes the strength of this passage and provides a revealing commentary: *Rabbi Samuel Bar Hanman* in the name of *Rabbi Jonathan* said, that at the time when Moses wrote the Torah, writing a portion of it daily, when he came to the verse which says, "And Elohim said, let us make man in our image after our likeness," **Moses said,** "Master of the universe, why do you give herewith an excuse to the sectarians [who believe in the Tri-unity of G-d]?" **G-d answered Moses,** "You write and whoever wants to err, let him err."

It is obvious that the Midrash Rabbah is rationalizing, simply trying to get around the problem, *and fails to adequately answer why G-d refers to Himself in the plural.*

Here are some other plural pronoun examples:

Genesis 3:22 - *Then the LORD G-d (YHVH Elohim) said, "Behold, the man has become like one of US..."*

Genesis 11:7 - *"Come, let US go down and there confuse their language..."*

Isaiah 6:8 - *Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for US?"*

Notice the apparent contradiction in this Isaiah example. G-d who is speaking refers to Himself first as "I" (singular) and then as "US" (plural). But, if you acknowledge what the Scripture is revealing about the transcendent nature of the one true G-d... **a plurality, in a unity**... then all of Scripture harmonizes, and in my mind, this is yet another proof of the supernatural origin of the Bible.

Plural Descriptions of G-d

G-d is also described in terms of plural adjectives. *In English translations, these appear as nouns, but in the Hebrew text, these words are plural form adjectives.* Some examples:

Joshua 24:19 - reads in English, *holy G-d*. But the adjective *holy* is a plural form, literally, "holy **G-ds**."

Psalms 149:2 - some English translations read: *in his Maker*. The adjective that is translated *Maker* is plural in Hebrew; so, it literally reads, "Let Israel rejoice in his **Makers**."

Ecclesiastes 12:1 - *thy Creator*. *Creator* is a plural adjective in Hebrew, it literally reads, "thy **Creators**."

Isaiah 54:5 has two examples. In English, the verse reads, *thy Maker is thy husband*. But both the terms *Maker* and *husband* are Hebrew plurals, they read literally, "thy **Makers, thy husbands**" in reference to the ONE True G-d.

Everything we have said so far rests firmly on the Hebrew language of the Scriptures. If we are to base our understanding on the Scriptures alone, we have to say that on the one hand they affirm G-d's unity, while at the same time they *tend* towards the concept of a **compound unity** allowing for a **plurality** in the Godhead.

AT LEAST TWO

Elohim Applied to Two Personalities

Let's make the case for plurality even stronger: *there are situations in the Hebrew Scriptures where the term Elohim is applied to two personalities in the same verse.* One example is Psalm 45:6-7:

Your throne, O G-d, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom.

You love righteousness and hate wickedness;

*Therefore **G-d, YOUR G-d**, has anointed You*

With the oil of gladness more than Your companions.

It should be noted that the first Elohim is being addressed and the second Elohim is the G-d of the first Elohim. And so **G-d's G-d** has anointed Him with the oil of gladness.

A second example is Hosea 1:7:

Yet I will have mercy on the house of Judah, will save them by the LORD their G-d, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword or battle, by horses or horsemen.

The speaker is Elohim who says He will have mercy on the house of Judah and will save them by the instrumentality of YHVH, their Elohim. *So Elohim number 1 will save Israel by means of Elohim number 2!*

YHVH Applied to Two Personalities

Not only is Elohim applied to two personalities in the same verse, but so is the very name of G-d:

YHVH. And that is how we began our study this morning by looking at the astounding example from Genesis 19:24 *where YHVH on earth called fire down from YHVH in heaven.*

But let's look at another example, Zechariah 2:8-9:

For thus says the LORD (YHVH) of hosts: "He sent Me after glory, to the nations which plunder you; for he who touches you touches the apple of His eye. For surely I will shake My hand against them, and they shall become spoil for their servants. Then you will know that the LORD (YHVH) of hosts has sent Me."

This verse says that YHVH number 1 is the speaker: *For thus says YHVH of hosts.* As He speaks, He says that He is being *sent* to accomplish a task by YHVH number 2. *Again, we have one YHVH sending another YHVH to perform a specific task.*

The ZOHAR is the mystical commentary on the Torah written in Aramaic in the first centuries CE, and is considered the most important work of Kabbalah. The author of the ZOHAR (not Nicea!) sensed plurality in the **Tetragrammaton** and wrote:

Come and see the mystery of the word YHVH: there are THREE steps, each existing by itself: *nevertheless they are One, and so united that one cannot be separated from the other.* The Ancient Holy One is revealed with three heads, which are united into one, and that head is three exalted. *The Ancient One is described as being three: because the other lights emanating from him are included in the three. But how can three names be one? Are they really one because we call them one? How three can be one can only be known through the revelation of the Holy Spirit.*

(Zohar, Vol. III, 288; Vol. II, 43, Hebrew editions - see also Soncino Press edition, Vol. III, 134.)

THREE - No More, No Less

If the Hebrew Scriptures truly do point to plurality, the question is, exactly how many personalities exist in the Godhead? Answer? An exhaustive search of the Hebrew Scriptures reveals that *there are three, and ONLY three, distinct personalities that are ever considered divine.*

1. There are numerous references to the Lord YHVH. This usage is so frequent that the first personality is axiomatic... *patently and unmistakably self-evident.*

2. The second personality is the Angel of YHVH. In almost every passage where he is found, he is referred to as both the Angel of YHVH and YHVH Himself. *What is clear is that the Angel of YHVH is not a common, ordinary angel, but is a unique Being, who is a visible manifestation of G-d Himself.*

The context always makes this evident:

Genesis 16:7-14 - He is called *the Angel of YHVH* in v7, 9, 10 and 11; then He is called YHVH Himself in verse 13.

Genesis 22:9-13 - He is called *the Angel of YHVH* in v11 and 15; but He is called God in v12, and YHVH in verse 16.

Genesis 31:11-13 - In v11, He is called *the angel of God*; but in v13, He says: *I am the God of Beth-el.*

Genesis 32:24-30 - In v24, He is called *a man*, because that is how He appeared. **V28 says:** *thou hast striven with God*; and in v30: *I have seen God face to face.* The One who appeared as *a man* was really the Angel of YHVH; *but when Jacob is said to have wrestled with the Angel, he is also said to have wrestled with God.*

Exodus 3:1-5 - He is called *the Angel of YHVH* in v2; but He is called both YHVH and *God* in verse 4.

Judges 2:1 - *The Angel of YHVH* was responsible for the Exodus; but **Exodus 19:3-4** states that it was God who was responsible.

Judges 6:11-24 - He is called *the Angel of YHVH* in v11, 12, and 21; *the angel of God* in v20; but YHVH in v14, 16, 22 and 23.

Judges 13:2-24 - He is called *the Angel of YHVH* in v3, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, and 21; *the angel of God* in v9.

Then in v18, His name is wonderful; one of those special Hebrew words, *pele*, which is used only of God, as in Isaiah 9:6. Verse 22 of Judges 13 states that what they saw was God's face.

Zechariah chapters 1-6 - He is frequently called the Angel of YHVH Himself.

If the context of these examples is not enough, there are three OT passages which *conclusively prove* that the Angel of YHVH is not a common, ordinary angel. The first passage is Isaiah 42:8, where G-d said: *I am YHVH, that is my name; and my glory will I not give to another, ...*

The GLORY that is encased within the personal name - YHVH - is something that belongs to G-d alone, and it is NOT given to any other person, *and certainly to no mere creature!*

The second passage is Exodus 23:20-23, which states certain things about this Angel of YHVH:

*Behold, I send an Angel before you to keep you in the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. 21) Beware of Him and obey His voice; do not provoke Him, for **He will not pardon your transgressions; for My name is in Him.** 22) But if you indeed obey His voice and do all that I speak, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries. 23) For My Angel will go before you and bring you in to the Amorites and the Hittites and the Perizzites and the Canaanites and the Hivites and the Jebusites; and I will cut them off.*

In verse 20, it is this Angel who will lead the Exodus. In verse 21, it is this Angel who must be obeyed and never provoked. *The reason is that He will not forgive their sin or rebellion, because my name is in him.* This Angel has G-d's personal name, so His name is also YHVH.

In light of Isaiah 42:8: *I am YHVH, that is my name; and my glory will I not give to another*, unless this Angel is also part of the Godhead, then He has no right to have this name. So, YHVH number one says that this Angel has the name of YHVH as well. In verse 22, there are blessings for obedience and, in verse 23, He is again declared to be the Angel of the Exodus. The fact that G-d's name is in Him, and the fact that this Angel has the power to forgive or not to forgive sin, is once again a clear teaching that He is not a common angel, but G-d Himself.

The third passage on this point is Hosea 12:3-5, where Hosea reemphasizes that this Angel has G-d's personal name. *For the Angel to have G-d's personal name, He must be G-d Himself.*

3. The third personality is the Spirit of G-d. He is often referred to simply as the *Ruach Ha-Kodesh* in His many OT appearances. The Holy Spirit **cannot be a mere emanation** because He has all the characteristics of personality (intellect, emotion, and will).

In Genesis 1:2, it is the Spirit of G-d who was brooding or hovering like a mother hen over the darkness of the deep. *Therefore the Holy Spirit was involved in Creation; and Creation is a work of G-d.* In Exodus 31:3, the Holy Spirit is called G-d. In Job 26:13, again we see the Holy Spirit involved in Creation. In Psalm 51:11, He is given the name holy Spirit. Psalm 139:7 teaches that the Holy Spirit is *omnipresent*. And in Isaiah 11:2, the Spirit is called the Spirit of YHVH.

The Three Personalities in the Same Passage

We have clearly seen that the *OT Hebrew Scriptures* teach that there is plurality in the Godhead, and that this plurality is a unity of only ONE G-d. NOW... we are going show that this plurality is limited, and that there are *no less* and *no more* than three Persons. *Let's finish up our study by looking at several astonishing examples where we can see ALL THREE personalities of the Godhead in the VERY SAME passage:*

Isaiah 42:1 - *Behold, my servant, whom I uphold; my chosen, in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the Gentiles.* Notice the three Persons: the first Person is the speaker, who is seen by the pronoun **I**. The second Person is the speaker's servant, the servant of YHVH. And the third Person is the Spirit of G-d. *This passage reveals three and only three Persons, no more or no less than three.*

Isaiah 61:1 - *The Spirit of the Lord YHVH is upon ME; because YHVH hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; ...* Again, three individuals: the Lord YHVH; the Spirit of YHVH; and the pronoun **ME**, in reference to the speaker: *The Spirit of the Lord YHVH is upon ME.* *There are three Persons, and no more.*

Isaiah 63:7-14 is a summary of the Exodus. *Within the context, three and no more than three Persons are mentioned.* Verse 7, the first Person: *I will make mention of the lovingkindnesses of YHVH, and the praises of YHVH, according to all that YHVH hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses.*

A second personality mentioned is in verse 9: *In all their affliction he was afflicted, and **the angel of his presence** saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.*

The angel of his presence, is the very same as *the Angel of YHVH*, who has the name of YHVH Himself. It was this angel who was responsible for **saving** them and for **redeeming** them.

A third personality is the Holy Spirit mentioned three different times.

Verse 10: *But they rebelled, and **grieved his holy Spirit**: ...* (only a person can be grieved)

Verse 11: *...where is he that put his **holy Spirit** in the midst of them?*

Verse 14: *As the cattle that go down into the valley, **the Spirit** of YHVH caused them to rest.*

While often throughout Scripture G-d refers to Himself as being the one solely responsible for Israel's redemption from Egypt, in this passage three personalities are given credit for it. *Yet there is no contradiction because ALL THREE comprise the unity of the ONE Godhead.*

Once again, we see three personalities: *there are not less than three, and there are not more than three.*

Isaiah 48:12-16 - verses 12-14a:

*12 Harken unto me, O Jacob, and Israel my called: **I am he; I am the first, I also am the last.** 13 Yea, **my hand** hath laid the foundation of the earth, and **my right hand** hath spread out the heavens: when I call unto them, they stand up together. 14 Assemble yourselves, all ye, and hear; who among them hath declared these things? He whom YHVH loveth shall perform his pleasure...*

In these verses, it is clear that **the speaker is G-d Himself** because the speaker refers to Himself as the *One who is responsible for the Creation of the heavens and the earth.* Since G-d alone is responsible for creation of the material universe, the speaker, then, must be G-d Himself. Then verse 16 states:

*Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; from the beginning I have not spoken in secret; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord YHVH hath sent **me**, and his Spirit.*

Notice carefully the three Persons: the speaker, the Spirit, and the Lord YHVH. In verse 16, *the speaker is the Creator of the heavens and the earth*, and He refers to Himself by the pronouns **I** and **me**. This speaker distinguishes Himself from two other Persons. *One Person from whom He distinguishes Himself is the Lord YHVH. The second Person from whom He distinguishes Himself is the Spirit of G-d.*

Here is the clearest OT passage... here, *the Tri-unity is AS clearly defined as the OT Scriptures have chosen to make it.*

CONCLUSION

In the Hebrew Scriptures of the Old Testament, only three Persons are ever called G-d, and no more than three Persons are ever seen together.

The Hebrew Scriptures teach that there is a plurality of the Godhead: The first person is consistently called YHVH, while the second person is given the names of YHVH, the Angel of YHVH and the Servant of YHVH. Consistently and without fail, the second person is sent by the first person. The third person is referred to as the Spirit of YHVH or the Spirit of G-d or the Holy Spirit. He, too, is sent by the first person but is **continually related** to the ministry of the second person.

If the concept of the Tri-Unity of G-d is not Jewish according to modern rabbis, then neither are the Hebrew Scriptures. **Jewish believers in Yeshua**, or Messianic Jews, *cannot be accused of having slipped into paganism when they hold to the fact that Yeshua is the DIVINE Son of G-d!*

Here is the problem the CULTS have with this issue: The Scripture is the *special revelation* of the ONE TRUE TRANSCEDENT G-D. The *non-sense* writings of the various cult-leaders are a product of **fallen, flawed, human reasoning.**

Those who deny this vital doctrine ignore the WHOLE COUNSEL OF SCRIPTURE, and they use the WRONG mathematical formula:

The INFINITE G-d does not fit into their FINITE puny **pea-brain** box: $1 + 1 + 1 = 3$

There is a valid mathematical formula to express the Godhead: $1 \times 1 \times 1 = 1$

Next time we get together, we'll discover that in concert with the TaNaK, the Brit HaDashah gets much more specific about the three persons in the Godhead.

Finally, after 900 years, G-d answers the ultimate teaser question. The **puzzling, perplexing paradox...** the **enigmatical conundrum** of Proverbs 30:4... that no man could answer... which asks:

"... What is His name, and what is His son's name, If you know?"