

Topical Study on the Trinity – *Behold the LORD our God is One?*

Part 1 of 3

Sunday, March 14, 2010 (S-854-KI)

(All Scriptures are from the New King James Version unless otherwise indicated.)

The Trinity in the Old Testament

Beginning at the Beginning

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. (Genesis 1:1)

The verse says God, not Gods, so how can we believe in the Trinity?

The Hebrew word for “God” in this verse is *Elohiym*, a plural form of God.

Strong’s Dictionary Concordance - OT:430 ‘*elohiym* (el-o-heem’); plural of OT:433; *gods in the ordinary sense; but specifically used (in the plural thus, especially with the article) of the supreme God; occasionally applied by way of deference to magistrates; and sometimes as a superlative:*

OT:433 - ‘*elowahh* (el-o’-ah; rarely (shortened) ‘*eloahh* (el-o’-ah); probably prolonged (emphat.) from **OT:410**; a deity or the Deity: KJV - God, god. See OT:430.¹

Notice how *both* words are used in one verse (v 17) in the passage below:

*“But Jeshurun [Israel] grew fat and kicked; You grew fat, you grew thick, You are obese! Then he forsook God [433 - singular] who made him, And scornfully esteemed the **Rock of his salvation**. They provoked Him to jealousy with foreign gods [430 plural implied]; with abominations they provoked Him to anger. (17) They sacrificed to demons, not to God [433 - singular], To gods [430 - plural] they did not know, To new gods, new arrivals That your fathers did not fear. Deuteronomy 32:15-17, NKJV.*

Back to Genesis Chapter 1

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. (Genesis 1:1)

In using the Hebrew word *Elohiym*, God wanted to convey the concept that there was a *plurality* of “God” involved with the creation of the Heavens and the Earth.

But in Deuteronomy 32, God wanted the Jews to realize there was a *singularity* of his nature and the Jews were *not* to believe there were “other” gods (plural).

¹ BibleSoft’s New Exhaustive Strong’s Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary. Copyright ©1994, 2003, 2006, BibleSoft, Inc. and International Bible Translators, Inc.

Verse 2 shows why God used a plural Hebrew word for God:

*The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And **the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.** (Genesis 1:2)*

This is our first glimpse of God the Spirit.

Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. (Genesis 1:3)

In the remainder of Genesis Chapter 1 and all of Chapter 2, it was this God [Elohiym] that created all things during the six days of Creation.

Then God [Elohiym] said, “Let Us [Who is ‘Us?’] make man in Our [Who is ‘Our?’] image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” (Genesis 1:26)

We again see that God is communicating that there is a plurality to His nature. But is God saying that He is One of many gods?

Deuteronomy Chapter 6

Now this is the commandment, and these are the statutes and judgments which the LORD your God has commanded to teach you, that you may observe them in the land which you are crossing over to possess, that you may fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged. (Deuteronomy 6:1, 2)

The importance of teaching all future generations what God is about to say:

Therefore hear, O Israel, and be careful to observe it, that it may be well with you, and that you may multiply greatly as the LORD God of your fathers has promised you — ‘a land flowing with milk and honey.’ Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is One! (Deuteronomy 6:3, 4)

There is only one God – more on this in a moment.

The God of the Bible is not one of many.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. (Deuteronomy 6:5)

What Jesus said was one of the two great commandments.

Now go to verse 14: You shall not go after other gods [430 - Elohiym], the gods [430] of the peoples who are all around you.

And verse 15: For the LORD your God [430] is a jealous God [singular 433/410] among you, lest the anger of the LORD your God [430] be aroused against you and destroy you from the face of the earth.

A plural singularity of the biblical God in the *same* sentence! But the true plural unified God is the *only* God – there are no other gods besides Him.

Going back to Deuteronomy 6:4: *Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!*

Strong’s Dictionary Concordance OT:259: ‘echad (ekh-awd’); a numeral form of OT:258; properly, united, i.e. one; or (as an ordinal) first.²

The word “echad” is a numerical form of “unity.”

Considering this and that fact God uses “Elohiym” for God, it appears that God is communicating that His plurality is united as one.

Genesis Chapter 2

Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one [259 – echad] flesh. (Genesis 2:24)

God uses the same Hebrew word “echad – one” for the fact that a man and woman coming together in marriage become one in the same way that, “*The LORD our God is one.*”

But a man and a woman joined in marriage do not literally become one person. They are *two* persons in *one* unity.

An Analogy

Consider that water is *one* substance (the compound H₂O) that can exist in *three* states:

- **Solid water (ice) is not liquid water.**
- **Water vapor is not liquid water, nor is it solid water.**
- **But ice is water, liquid H₂O is water, and H₂O vapor is water.**

Similar statements can be made of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit of the Godhead.

What we Have Learned so Far

The God of the Bible tells us that He:

- **Is a plural unity.**
- **Created all things.**

² Ibid.

Other Old Testament Revelations of the Triune Nature of God

Does God reveal His plural nature elsewhere in the Old Testament? Yes – The Trinity can be seen in Isaiah 48:

Listen to Me, O Jacob, And Israel, My called: I am He [The Word, also called the Son (Psalms 2, Proverbs 30:4, and others)], I am the First, I am also the Last [Alpha/Omega, Beginning and the End]. (Isaiah 48:12)

Behold, He [Jesus] is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen. “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End,” says the LORD, “Who is and Who was and Who is to come [Jesus], the Almighty.” (Revelation 1:7, 8)

Then He who sat on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new.” And He said to me, “Write, for these words are true and faithful.” And He said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. [This is something Jesus promised in John 4:14 and 6:35.] He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.” (Revelation 21:5-7)

“And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last. Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie. I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star.” Revelation 22:12-16

Back to Isaiah 48:

Verse 12: “Listen to Me, O Jacob, And Israel, My called: I am He, I am the First, I am also the Last [Revealed in human form as Jesus].”

And in verse 16: “Come near to Me, hear this: I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, I was there. And now the LORD God [The Father] and His Spirit [God the Spirit] Have sent Me [God the Son, as the expressed image of the Alpha and Omega, Beginning and the End].” Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, “I am the Lord your God, Who teaches you to profit, Who leads you by the way you should go.”

The Trinity in the New Testament

Matthew Chapter 3

The Trinity is revealed at the baptism of Jesus (Matthew 3). Here, the priesthood of Aaron (John the Baptist) is transferred to the priesthood of Jesus as prophesied in Psalm 110.

But Jesus answered and said to him, “Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he allowed Him. When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” (Matthew 3:15 – 17)

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – Three in One

Why do we say God is the Father? Who is the Father?

“And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him. In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” (Matthew 6:7 – 10)

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen. (Matthew 28:19, 20)

Jesus emphasized the concept of God being our Father because God sent the Son in the power of God the Holy Spirit.

But are we to think of the Father as a grey-haired old man in heaven?

John Chapter 4

“But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” (John 4:23, 24)

God the Father is no One we will ever see with our eyes because He is spirit. He sent Jesus so that we could have someone physical to see and to know.

John Chapter 14

Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.” Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’” (John 14:8, 9)

Hebrews Chapter 1

*God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory **and the express image of His person**, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high [**not an old man on a throne, but a Spirit that cannot be seen**], having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. (Hebrews 1:1-4)*

Summary

- **God has communicated that His nature is a plurality of Persons in a combined unity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.**
 - **Father is God.**
 - **Son is God.**
 - **Holy Spirit is God.**
 - **Father is not the son, the Son is not the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit is not the Father or the Son.**
- **Jesus is fully God and fully man, sent to us so we can know the very nature of the God Who created us and wanted to save us.**

We will prove this last point from Scripture next week.

1 Peter Chapter 1:

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied. (1 Peter 1:1, 2)

Peter believed in the Trinity.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (1 Peter 1:3 – 5)

If we believe!