

# Focus on the Kingdom

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## A Nice Headline!

“You are not going to believe this! I woke up this morning and my husband must have left the mail on the stove. I started going through it while waiting for my coffee to brew. I saw *Focus on the Kingdom* and I must have subscribed for this at least a year or more, because every time I got one in the mail I automatically threw it in the trash. I think it was because the first one I got, it spoke against the Trinity and thus I tossed in the trash every copy I got since then. So when I saw *Focus on the Kingdom* this time, and saw the return address as coming from Georgia and then saw your name and title ‘The word was with GOD,’ I said to myself, ‘I’ll be, and all this time I was throwing them in the trash!’

“Amazing how all this has worked out. I have been asking my husband little questions here and there. The first one I asked him was does he believe Jesus is God. He said yes. I told him how we have been led to believe that, and told him what Jesus said. He then mentioned why does Jesus say I am the Alpha and Omega? I told him that is what we have been led to believe (I didn’t want to get started on the titles) and just brought him back to what Jesus said and what Peter said. He didn’t say anything after that. Yesterday I asked him another question. I said, ‘Do you believe we go to heaven when we die?’ He said, ‘Yes.’ I said, ‘We got that one wrong too.’ I told him the Bible never says we go to heaven when we die. He said, ‘Well, I believe we do’ as he walked to the bedroom. ‘You believed it before too,’ and then shut the door. That is usually how he handles things when he doesn’t want to hear anymore. I don’t bug him about it, but just throw out these tidbits to get him thinking, but I don’t think he wants to think about it. But it won’t hurt to throw out a seed. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.”

*Jesus is the Alpha and Omega who died (Rev. 1:17-18). God cannot die!*

## Dispelling Myths

The argument that because *Elohim* (God) has a plural ending in Genesis 1:1, it must point to a plurality in GOD, is rejected by all good language study. It was a piece of popular folklore, which provided “comfort” to some that the God of the Bible was mysteriously “Triune” — and this despite the fact that God in the Hebrew Bible used every form of language possible to describe Himself as one single Divine Person. 164 times God says of Himself “I am YHVH,” but Bible

readers, strongly indoctrinated by tradition, imagined that one Person was mysteriously plural!

If *Elohim* is plural, because of its plural ending, then it must necessarily be translated “In the beginning *Gods* created the heaven and earth.” This is blatant polytheism and destroys the creed of Israel that “the LORD our God is one LORD” (Deut. 6:4 and affirmed by Jesus in Mark 12:29). Jesus knew nothing at all about a plurality in God. Jesus was a Jew, and 64 out of 66 books in the Bible, including 25 out of our 27 NT books were written by men whose heritage and nationality were “Jewish” (i.e. related to the nation of Israel) and not Gentile. Luke who wrote a large part of the NT (two long books) was almost certainly of Gentile origin. But he had learned to revere the one and only God of the Jewish people.

Consider this: A single pagan god, Milchom or Astarte or Dagon, is also individually called an *elohim*. These gods were not each plural! Did you know that in Genesis 42:30, 33 Joseph is called “the lords of the land”? Joseph was not more than one person! These plurals are known as “plurals of intensity” but they are not translated as literal plurals. The Greek New Testament Scripture invariably renders *Elohim*, referring to the One God, who is the Father (some 1300 times) by the singular Greek word *theos*. This is the way the Greek version of the OT (the Septuagint, or LXX) renders the word *Elohim* when it designates the one and only true God.

Jesus uttered the classic monotheistic statement and confession, when he described the Father as “the only [*monos*] true God [*theos*]” in his prayer in John 17:3. He spoke of God as “the only God” (*monos theos*) in John 5:44. Jesus connected belief in that single true God, the Father, as the first element in “eternal life” — “the life of the age to come” based on Daniel 12:2 where the sleeping dead will arise to the “life of the age,” which comes into our NT some 40 times as “the life of the age to come,” life in the future Kingdom.

Very frequently in the NT God is “the GOD,” that is the one and only God of true belief as distinct from other pagan gods which always threaten to deceive us.

Some today in *desperation* are reviving a completely false understanding of plurality in YHVH, because Genesis 19:24 reads that “YHVH rained brimstone from YHVH in heaven.” But they did not notice that “Solomon gathered the people to King Solomon” in 1 Kings 8:1. Two Solomons? Obviously not. These are special Hebrew idioms and easily explained as such.

People who clutch at these anomalies forget that the One God of Israel is described by **singular personal pronouns thousands upon thousands of times**. You learned in high school (we hope!) that a singular personal pronoun refers to a single person. If you learn of someone who is I, ME, THEE, THOU, HIM, MYSELF, THYSELF, HIMSELF — can you concede the simple fact that God is a single Person?

Unfortunately your church probably gathers under the strange banner of a GOD who is “three in one.” This teaching has been thought to be quite false to Jesus and Scripture by thousands of competent scholars and by 5 American Presidents — and by Sir Isaac Newton who spoke of the West’s strange cult of “three gods.” Newton was deeply troubled by this non-biblical concept of God. John Milton, the British poet, and John Locke the philosopher were adamantly against the idea of a triune God. Others died at the hands of a cruel church for refusing to believe that the God of Scripture is triune. Michael Servetus was murdered by John Calvin over this issue.

Counting how many God is in the Bible is in no way difficult. We are to rejoice and relax in the wonderfully sound and health-giving truth that as Jesus said “The LORD our GOD is one LORD” (the Greek of Mark 12:29, reflecting the LXX of Deut. 6:4). Jesus upbraided Jews of his time for failing to believe Moses. If they would not receive the words of Moses predicting the Messiah, how would they believe in the Messiah who had come? (John 5:46).

One Lord is not two Lords. Jesus declared his firm confession of the One God of Israel (Mark 12:29), and then as if to anticipate objections Jesus went on immediately to discuss **Psalms 110:1**, where there are *two* lords. It is hardly a matter of higher learning or advanced mathematics to see that if “the LORD our God is one LORD” (as Jesus had just said, in agreement with a friendly unitarian Jew), then the second lord of Psalm 110:1 cannot also be GOD, making two Lord Gods! Then note (and Strong’s Concordance *alas* hides this from you) that the second lord, “my lord” (*adoni*) of Psalm 110:1 is never the title of Deity, but always the title of a superior who is not GOD. The capital letter in your Bible on the second lord of Psalm 110:1 is false and misleading. It should read “lord,” not “Lord”! A capitalized Lord regularly translates the Hebrew ADONAI (the Lord God, 450 times) and the second lord of the psalm Jesus quoted to silence all objectors is not *Adonai*! It is *adoni*, my lord. ADONI occurs 195 times in the Hebrew Bible.

Jesus, our teacher and lord (John 13:13), said in Mark 12:29, “The LORD our GOD is one LORD.” This should settle all doubts once and for all, that Jesus never, ever disturbed the central, core principle of all true religion that God is one single LORD. Tell your Jewish

friends and your Muslim friends, and very gently even your Christian friends who are likely to be puzzled if not infuriated!

You might want to help them by pointing out that even the famous reformer John Calvin said:

“*Elohim* as a proof text with the plural ending to prove that God is plural appears to me to have little solidity. I will not insist upon the word; but rather caution readers to beware of violent glosses [comments] of this kind. They think that they have testimony against the Arians to prove the Deity of the Son and of the Spirit, but in the meantime they involve themselves in the error of Sabellius [Modalism or Oneness, represented by ‘Oneness Pentecostals’ today]...If we suppose three persons to be here [Gen. 1.1] denoted, there will be no distinction between them...For me it is sufficient that the plural number expresses those powers which God exercised in creating the world.”<sup>1</sup>

“The followers of Jesus could assume that Jesus, like many other Jews of his day, would have regarded Deut. 6:4-5 and Lev. 19:18 as the ideal summation of the Jewish law. Jesus was repeating a common Jewish understanding of the law...The words ‘the Lord our God is one Lord’ are the proper expression of Jesus’ piety.”<sup>2</sup>

Why, you might ask, then do not churchgoers pay reverent attention to the command which Jesus calls the most important of all commands? Because churches have long since given up thinking of Jesus as their rabbi and teacher — contrary to his own constant admonition that we listen with rapt and concentrated attention to what he taught! Not to listen to Jesus and obey him is the one fatal error we humans cannot afford to make (John 3:36 — believing Jesus leads to immortality and refusing to obey him is a dangerous mistake!).

To persuade your friends, invite them to explain Mark 12:29. Jesus agrees wholeheartedly with a Jewish scholar, and we know that Jews were believers in God as ONE single Divine Person, not a Trinity. Being exposed to the words of Jesus in Mark 12:29 can produce the necessary shock which enables believers to rethink! At present, once one says “Jesus is GOD,” one is admitting to belief in two who are GOD! This is not the monotheism of the Bible.

The world of scholars today often treats the Bible as an unreliable source! That is hard for many to grasp! But the typical comment of scholars is that “we do not know whether Jesus said a given saying reported in the NT. It might be that the church made it up and put it back into the mouth of Jesus to give the impression that Jesus said it: but no one knows if Jesus really uttered these words!”

<sup>1</sup> Calvin, *Commentary on Genesis*, trans., ed., John King.

<sup>2</sup> Stephen Patterson, DD, *The God of Jesus*, p. 115.

This sort of thinking is highly toxic and contaminating, since it puts a question mark of uncertainty (the very opposite of faith) over everything Jesus said! Many students in colleges learn this skepticism in their formal training. But the great central truth about God is not complex:

Is this really so difficult? Can you spot the **similarities**? Start with a verse which sums up the whole Hebrew Bible and opens up the mind of Jesus, the Jew, to us: “Have we not all **one Father**? Has not **one God** created us?” (Mal 2:10).

We know that “there is no idol in the world, and that there is **no God but one**” (1 Cor. 8:4).

“There is for us **only one God, the Father**, of **whom** are all things, and we are for **Him**; and one **Lord**, Jesus **Christ**, through whom are all things, and we have our being through him” (1 Cor. 8:6).

This is exactly what Jesus said in John 17:3: “**You, Father, are the only one who is true God.**”

Jesus answered, “The most important is, ‘Listen, Israel, the **Lord our God** is the **only Lord**’” (Mark 12:29).

The legal expert said to him, “Well said, Teacher. You have truthfully said that **God is one and there is no other besides Him**” (Mark 12:32).

One Father = one God, no God but one, one God the Father, the Lord our God is the only Lord, God is one and there is no other beside Him, one Lord GOD. You, Father, are the only one who is true God.

Jesus is the Messiah, the man Messiah, the lord Messiah of Luke 2:11. This man Messiah was born (God cannot be born) and this man Messiah (1 Tim. 2:5) died and the immortal God cannot die. Why not urge your friends to stop singing nonsense in the hymn, “‘Tis mystery all — the Immortal dies.”

For a fascinating study of how “shy” some modern scholars are about admitting the errors of the Trinity, please go to Dan Gill’s site **21stcr.org** and read Barbara, my wife’s, highly insightful review of *The Only True God* by James McGrath. McGrath agrees entirely that the NT writers are all adherents to the strict monotheism of Israel and of Jesus. But somehow the later departure of the Church from Jesus on the definition of God is “OK.” Rather than calling for repentance and a return to Jesus, some scholars paper over the cracks and the status quo is allowed to continue unchallenged and unchanged! ✧

“The word translated LORD in Psalm 110:1 is YHWH. The second word Lord in this passage is *adoni*. This form of the Hebrew *adon* is not used in the Hebrew scriptures to identify deity but always references man in some position of authority and power and a few times references angels” (David Kroll, *The God of Jesus*, 2012).

## The One God, the Father, One Man Messiah, Gospel of the Kingdom Translation from the Greek New Testament

To promote a return to Jesus, who never claimed to *be* God, and who preached the saving Gospel of the Kingdom, we propose to publish soon a new translation of the NT Scriptures. As a preview we offer you this from the introduction to this translation. The title of the translation aims deliberately to make clear its objective. We invite your comments and suggestions. Email us at [anthonybuzzard@mindspring.com](mailto:anthonybuzzard@mindspring.com)

### Introduction

“The Deity of Jesus is inherently un-Jewish. The witness of Jewish texts is unvarying belief that a second being in God involves departure from the Jewish community” (Maurice Casey, *From Jewish Prophet to Gentile God*, p. 176).

This translation has as its premise the conviction that the Church today, in its preaching, teaching and tradition, generally gives you a strongly Greek philosophically-influenced version of the NT. This unfortunate departure from the original faith of Jesus and the Apostles dates from the second century AD, that is, after the canon of the NT closed with the book of Revelation. A full reformation and return to the beliefs of the NT Church did not occur in the 16<sup>th</sup>-century Reformation under Luther and Calvin.

The unfortunate lapse from apostolic truth leads you away from the original NT community’s essentially simple account of the faith — “the faith once and for all delivered to the people of God” (Jude 3). Four voices of protest and alarm may be cited in support of our thesis, Eberhard Griesebach, Canon Goudge, Dean Farrar, and Dr. E.F. Scott.

Griesebach wrote: “In its encounter with Greek philosophy Christianity became theology. That was the fall of Christianity” (*Lecture on Christianity and Humanism*, 1938). Anglican Canon Goudge: “When the Greek and Roman mind instead of the Hebrew mind came to dominate the Church there occurred a disaster in doctrine and practice from which we have never recovered.” Anglican Dean Farrar was frank enough to concede that the Church has constantly made a mess of its attempt to interpret the Bible. He notes that “Holy Scripture contains everything necessary for salvation” (6<sup>th</sup> Article of the Church of England) and that “the plain teachings of Christ are the sole infallible guide.” He then laments the evident failure of expositors to agree on what the Bible says. “Truly, if over the whole extent of what we call ‘religion’ men have an infallible guide, they have

— and that to all appearances inevitably — regarded it worse than useless by fallible expositions” (*The Bible, Its Meaning and Supremacy*, 1897, p. 142).

Then this marvelous insight from E. F. Scott, D.D. “Christianity, in the course of the Gentile mission, had changed into another religion. The Church...had forgotten or refused to know what Jesus had actually taught” (*The Kingdom of God in the New Testament*, p. 156).

Translations, particularly some modern ones like the NIV (New International Version), “help” the reader to see things in the New Testament which reinforce his or her impression that later “orthodoxy” is solidly biblical. But this involves “pushing” the Greek text beyond what it actually says. This unfair process is an attempt to justify the later *departure* from the original faith. It smoothes over the embarrassing difference between the original Greek Scripture of the original community of faith and what from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century developed as a tragic departure from the biblical orthodoxy of Jesus.

The most striking example of this embarrassing difference between Jesus and the beliefs of those claiming to follow him is the unitarian creed affirmed with maximum emphasis by Jesus in discussion with a colleague Jew (Mark 12:28ff). On this critical passage of scripture the Church has adopted an alarming posture of silence! (Often it is what we do *not* say which gives away a flaw in our thinking.)

In that marvelously instructive passage of Scripture a Jewish scholar had asked Jesus about what is the *most critically important command of all*. Jesus replied by endorsing the monumentally significant creed of Israel’s heritage, the core of all true religion: “The Lord our God is one Lord” (as read from the NT Greek, citing the LXX, Greek version of the OT). This is a unitary monotheistic and certainly not a Trinitarian creed. “One” is a quantifier, a simple numeral, and God is defined here, as innumerable times in the Hebrew Bible, as one *single* divine Lord, one Person, one divine Self. He is so described by thousands of singular personal pronouns, which as we all know designate a single person.

The importance of this point needs to be repeated: The clash between the original teachings of Jesus and what later emerged as Christianity is most starkly demonstrated by the failure of Bible readers to take with utmost seriousness Jesus’ own unitarian, i.e. unitary monotheistic definition of God in Mark 12:29. In that classic passage Jesus is seen to be in total harmony with a friendly Jewish Bible scholar. In John 17:3 Jesus proposed as the key to the Life of the Age to Come (inadequately rendered in our versions as “eternal life”) that we come to recognize and know the Father as “the only one who is true GOD.” In John’s writings the Father is equated with God nearly 150 times and in the NT it is

obvious that “GOD” (often “*the* GOD” in the original Greek) means the Father and not Jesus. “God” means the Father about 1300 times in our NT.

The creed of Israel was never Trinitarian. Thus the fact that Jesus affirms and endorses the unitarian creed of Judaism (Mark 12:28ff) ought to provide a provocative and life-changing embarrassment to today’s Church, which has ceased to quote and believe the creed of Jesus.<sup>3</sup> It has departed from Jesus at the most crucial level of all theological and spiritual endeavor. Thus Christianity is distinguished by the remarkable characteristic that it is the only world religion which begins by discarding its own founder’s creed. Mark 12:29, and Jesus as our rabbi-teacher, not just one who provided forgiveness by dying for us, must be reinstated, if Bible study and preaching are to be honest with the Christian documents.

Well did Professor Karl-Heinz Ohlig write: “There is no indication that Jesus would have understood the ‘Father,’ from whom he felt himself to have been sent and to whom he felt himself to be related in a special way, differently from the monotheistic God of Judaism...This consensus of New Testament research need not be more closely examined here” (*One or Three*, p. 31).

There are places in some modern translations which plainly depart from the Greek in order to give the impression that the later “orthodoxy” is biblically based. A classic example is in Philippians 2:5 where the Son of God is described in the NIV as “being in very nature God.” But this is a horrible imposition on the text, which says not a word about Jesus *being* God. The word “nature” here is meant to encourage the notion of a “GOD the Son” who is of the same “essence” as the Father. But “essence” and “hypostasis” belong to a theological vocabulary of post-biblical times, when the simplicity of the pristine belief in God the Father as “the only one who is true God” (John 17:3) had been lost.

The NIV commits a sort of treachery against the original text of Scripture when it reports Jesus as “going back” or “returning” to the Father (John 13:3; 16:28; 20:17). Jesus said no such thing. He said he was “going to the Father,” not going *back* to Him. We note too that in a very subtle way the NIV does not want you to see that the Gospel (of the Kingdom) was preached by Jesus.

<sup>3</sup>“The *shema* was the prayer which all pious Jews were expected to recite three times daily...It occupied a similar special position in late Judaism to the Lord’s prayer in Christianity.” Dr. Anderson speaks of “the Church that did not any longer recite the *shema*. But here at least in his statement of the first commandment, Jesus stands foursquare within the orbit of Jewish piety” (Hugh Anderson, *New Century Bible Commentary on Mark*, p. 280). But on what authority was this fundamental teaching of Jesus defining the one true God discarded? The Church did not abandon the Lord’s prayer! Why abandon his creed?

Introducing the ministry of Jesus, it reports him as preaching “the Good News,” while Paul is said to be preaching “the Gospel.”

But that distinction is absent from the original Greek and encourages a discontinuity between Jesus and Paul. Both Jesus and Paul, who followed Jesus faithfully, preached the same saving Gospel of the Kingdom. It is misleading to translate *evangelion* for Jesus’ preaching as Good News and the same word for Paul’s preaching as Gospel. It points to a dangerous systematic error — that Jesus’ teaching has been discarded in favor of a misunderstood “Gospel of Paul.” We have failed to call Jesus “rabbi and lord” (John 13:13) when he everywhere urged us never to fall short of grasping and obeying his saving words. C.S. Lewis reflects this mistake when he claims that “the Gospel is not in the gospels.” It would be hard to imagine a more damaging blow to the saving words of Jesus. Billy Graham was mistaken too when he claimed that “Jesus came to do three days work, to die, to be buried and to rise.” ✧

“The importance [of Psalm 110:1] lies in the double use of the word *kyrios*. The one is clearly YHWH but who is the other? Clearly *not* YHWH, but an exalted being whom the Psalmist calls *kyrios*...for at the same time that Paul affirms ‘Jesus is Lord’ he also affirms ‘God is one’ (1 Cor. 8:5-6; Eph. 4:5-6)...*The point for us to note is that Paul can hail Jesus as Lord not in order to identify him with God, but rather, if anything, to distinguish him from the one God*” (James Dunn, *Unity and Diversity*, p. 53).

## The Hidden Flaw in Traditional Christianity: A Perversion of Monotheism

FRIEDRICH LOOFS (church historian, 1858-1928):

“Apologists [‘church fathers’ like Justin Martyr, mid-2nd century] laid the foundation for the perversion (*Verkehrung*) of Christianity into a revealed [philosophical] teaching. Specifically, their Christology affected the later development disastrously. By taking for granted the transfer of the concept of **Son of God onto the preexisting Christ**, they were the cause of the Christological problem of the 4th century. They caused a **shift** in the point of departure of Christological thinking — away from the historical Christ and onto the issue of preexistence. They thus **shifted** attention away from the **historical life of Jesus**, putting it into the shadow and promoting instead the Incarnation. They tied Christology to cosmology and could not tie it to soteriology. The Logos teaching is not a ‘higher’ Christology than the customary one. It lags in fact far behind the genuine

appreciation of Christ. According to their teaching it is no longer God who reveals Himself in Christ, but the Logos, the inferior God, a God who as God is subordinated to the Highest God (inferiorism or subordinationism).”

(Friedrich Loofs, *Leitfaden zum Studium des Dogmengeschichte* [Manual for the Study of the History of Dogma] (1890), part 1 ch. 2, section 18: “Christianity as a Revealed Philosophy. The Greek Apologists,” Niemeyer Verlag, 1951, p. 97).

**This disastrous development is reflected exactly in modern popular evangelism:**

D. James Kennedy wrote: “Many people today think that the essence of Christianity is Jesus’ teachings, but that is not so...Christianity centers not in the teachings of Jesus, but in the person of Jesus as Incarnate God who came into the world to take upon Himself our guilt and die in our place” (“How I Know Jesus Is God,” *Truths That Transform*, Nov. 17th, 1989). ✧

## Have Christians Discovered the Doctrine of the Trinity in the Shema Prayer?

by Rabbi Tovia Singer

**Question:**

I am about to begin a conversion process. My boyfriend is Jewish and I wish to convert before we marry. I have believed for many years that this is the way for me and will be the way in which I bring up my children. I have a born-again Christian friend coming to visit me next weekend. She has been very involved in Messianic Judaism (even though she is a Gentile) and I know she is going to have a big talk with me. I want to be able to answer her intelligently. I know exactly the one she is going to throw at me and I would like some help with the answer. She is going to talk about the time in the Bible (can’t remember where it is) when they bought back a sample of the fruits of the promised land. Apparently it says that they bought “echad” grapes. The word “echad,” although it refers to ONE, is talking about a BUNCH of grapes. Therefore, when we talk about “Adonai Echad,” we can be talking about three gods in one.

None of this rings true for me, but I want to be well thought out on all of this. Would you please help ASAP. (She is arriving next weekend!)

**Answer:**

I am very pleased that you have asked this question; I am certain that many of our Jewish readers will be surprised by your dilemma. Imagine the astonished reaction of a Jew when he discovers that missionaries employ his cherished national creed, “**Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is one**” (Hebrew: *echad*), to prove the doctrine of the Trinity. To the surprise of many,

Trinitarians will often use this most sacred passage which declares the oneness of God to support their belief in a triune nature of God. The doctrine of the Trinity has no greater foe than the declaration in Deuteronomy 6:4. Let's examine this well-worn missionary argument more closely.

To support their claim that there are multiple persons within the godhead, missionaries insist that the Hebrew word *echad*, meaning "one," at the end of Deuteronomy 6:4 does not mean an absolute one. Rather, they argue, this verse can only signify a "compound unity," or many things in one. They will often cite two verses to support this assertion. The first text you mentioned: "Then they came to the Valley of Eshcol, and there cut down a branch with one (*echad*) cluster of grapes; they carried it between two of them on a pole. They also brought some of the pomegranates and figs" (Num. 13:23).

The second is Genesis 1:5 which reads: "And there was evening and there was morning, one (*echad*) day."

From these verses, they insist, it is clear that the Hebrew word *echad* can only mean a fusion of a number of things into one.

Although this assertion is as flawed as the doctrine it seeks to support, for those who lack an elementary knowledge of the Hebrew language, this argument can be rather puzzling.

The word *echad* in the Hebrew language functions in precisely the same manner as the word "one" does in the English language. In the English language it can be said, "These four chairs and the table make up **one** dinette set," or alternatively, "There is **one** penny in my hand." Using these two examples, it is easy to see how the English word "one" can mean either many things in one, as in the case of the dinette set, or one alone, as in the case of the penny.

Although the Hebrew word *echad* functions in the exact same manner, evangelical Christians will never offer biblical examples where the word *echad* means "one alone." Thus, by only presenting scriptural verses such as Genesis 1:5 and Numbers 23:13, it creates the illusion to the novice that the word *echad* is somehow synonymous with a compound unity. Nothing, of course, could be further from the truth. For example, Deuteronomy 17:6 reads: "At the mouth of two witnesses or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one (*echad*) witness he shall not be put to death."

Ecclesiastes 4:8 reads: "There is one (*echad*) alone, without a companion; yes he has neither son nor brother..."

In the above two verses the exact same Hebrew word is used, and clearly the word *echad* is referring to one alone, not a "compound unity." There is a question that immediately comes to mind: If the Hebrew word *echad*

can signify either a compound unity or one alone, how can one tell which definition is operative when studying a verse? The answer lies in the context, which is always determinative. In the exact same way the word "one" is understood in the English language, that is, from the context. "Four chairs and a table make up **one** dinette set" is a compound unity, and "Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is **one**" is unsullied monotheism.

I thank you for your question, and may the Merciful One guide you in your conversion process.

Sincerely yours,  
Rabbi Singer

Paul was against some Torah *in the letter*, and he correctly taught the spiritualizing of those parts of Torah which kept Jews away from everyone else — calendar and food laws (see Rom. 7:6: not the letter of the law but the spirit of the law):

"Nowhere is the basic theme of Pauline teaching found in more pregnant form than in the confessional formula: 'He has abolished in his flesh the law of commandments in ordinances' (Eph 2:15). The accumulation of synonyms, the law of commands in ordinances graphically describes how they were all swept away by Christ. Similarly Titus 1:14 exhorts us not to give heed 'to Jewish myths or to commands of men who reject the truth' (cp Mark 7:8ff)" (*New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* on "Command," p. 336).

**There is utmost confusion among students of the Bible about who God is!** Some say He is three Persons, some two, and others maintain that He is strictly one Person. Apart from the massive power of tradition, which tends to grip the minds of people, the problem could be solved in a few moments. Here is the solution. Jesus is our authority. Which God did he serve? Fair question? The answer is simple and clear and is found in Mark's Gospel account, chapter twelve.

In verse 29 Jesus answered the question of a scribe (a theologian) by quoting the great foundational text of Israel. The nation was instructed about the true God:

**"Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one Lord"** (Mk 12:29, quoted from Deut. 6:4).

Who is "the Lord our God"? No question: One LORD. Now ONE LORD is ONE person, not two, not three! We can prove that this is so. Note first that the theologian, who was commended for his intelligence by Jesus (v. 34), affirmed what Jesus had said: "*You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him*" (v. 32).

How many persons is God? Obviously one, not two, not three. Secondly note that in verse 36 the discussion is

about *two lords*, one of whom is God and the other is the Messiah Jesus:

**The Lord said to my lord: “Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet”** (Mark 12:36, quoted from Psalm 110:1).

But remember: **How many Lords make up the one God?** “The Lord our God is ONE LORD” (Mark 12:29).

It is perfectly clear that God must be one Lord. But in verse 36 there are *two* Lords. Only one of these can be God, because God is one Lord (v. 29). That’s what Jesus said. The second “lord” cannot be “God” therefore. Rather, he is the Messiah (Christ), the “lord Messiah.” It is surprising that there should be any doubt about the Christian creed. Jesus said plainly: “The Lord our God is **one Lord**”— not two or three as some believe. It is time for believers to agree with Jesus about the most important question of all: who God is. ✧

**2014 Theological Conference • May 1-4, 2014  
Simpsonwood Conference Center, Norcross, GA**

Do come and meet and encourage believers in the One God and the Messiah, whose stories and journeys of faith are quite extraordinary!

## Comments

“Please take our name off your mailing list. We appreciate that a Unitarian understanding of scripture has quite a lot of evidence on its side, but consideration of your material over a few years hasn’t changed our Trinitarian viewpoint of scripture. Interestingly, the people who most readily accept the Trinity are children we teach; especially those from non-church families. Whenever discussion of Jesus comes up in the curriculum, we often get the spontaneous comment, ‘Jesus must be God, mustn’t he?’ So, we’ll keep on as we are and wish no animosity to you as you keep on with your research and teaching.” — *New Zealand*

“Hello. I am 54 and have been a Christian for 36 years. I have always had doubts about the Trinity, which at one point in my life led me to study with Jehovah’s Witnesses. I eventually quit because I had a problem with their dependence on their literature, rather than the Bible. For many years now, I have gone to a non-denominational church, but the nagging doubt about the Trinity and some other doctrines has never left me. I came across your articles and videos online and have been so happy to find that there are others besides JWs who don’t believe in the Trinity.” — *Oregon*

“I am overjoyed with this new found truth. Just making the separation from the Father and the Son makes it a whole lot clearer. It brings me to tears of happiness. I still have some who believe in monotheism, but will still say Jesus is God. Praise God I don’t see that part anymore. They are two different beings.” — *Florida*

“I had been a Calvinist who was trained (Master of Divinity) in their flagship seminary (Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia). Upon graduating from Westminster, I completed a degree at Yale Divinity School (Master of Sacred Theology). It was during the final semester of my studies at Yale that I began questioning many of the beliefs I had been taught, and for the past several years now I have devoted my life to determining the truth about things. My studies these past years have resulted in a change of mind on many, many things; but I am writing you to tell you about my convictions regarding Trinitarianism. When I wrote you I did not realize you were a unitarian, but you mentioned this and encouraged me to devote a couple of years to investigating the nature of God, Jesus, and the Spirit. Well, I have done so, and to your delight I’m sure, I can tell you that I am convinced of the unitarian position. And your writings, especially your book, *The Doctrine of the Trinity: Christianity’s Self-Inflicted Wound*, played a large role in my change of mind. Moreover, you will be glad to hear that I have persuaded some others of the unitarian position, including my brother-in-law who converted to Christianity through our conversations about this topic and others. I wanted to share this with you to encourage you in your continuing labors for the truth.” — *Email*

“Bonjour! My brother-in-law from Canada sent me your booklet *Qui est Jesus?* (Who is Jesus?) and I read it. This did me a whole lot of good, because for several months I had been asking myself questions about what I had been taught and my belief that Jesus and the Holy Spirit are God. I had been troubled that Jesus said to the young man that “there is no one good except the one God.” Also that eternal life is to “know you, Father, the only one who is true God and him whom you sent, Jesus Christ.” These two passages and others had given me so much trouble! And your booklet enlightened me totally on these points and provided the answers. I have repented of the idolatry and from now on all 19 years of my Christian life need to be redone! I need to be enlightened, too, on the subject of life after death” (A French missionary working in *Cote d’Ivoire*)

**Restoration Fellowship Books for Kindle  
(or FREE download to your computer)  
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*The Amazing Aims and Claims of Jesus*

*The Coming Kingdom of the Messiah*

*Jesus Was Not a Trinitarian*

*The Law, the Sabbath and New Covenant Christianity*

*Our Fathers Who Aren’t in Heaven*

*They Never Told Me This in Church!* by Greg Deuble