

## “One God” - Understanding the Difference of Polytheism & Monotheism Can We Understand God?

Intro:

- A. In this lesson - which is a technical and theory based study will help us to understand what the Scriptures teach regarding God.
  1. That God wants us to understand this subject is clearly seen in:
    - a. **Jeremiah 9:23** (NKJV) - 23 Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty man glory in his might, Nor let the rich man glory in his riches;  
(1) **Jeremiah 9:24** (NKJV) - 24 But let him who glories glory in this, **That he understands and knows Me**, That I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the LORD.
  2. In Our study we will Focus on the terms “God” and “Persons”.
    - a. What I am affirming is that there are three distinct self-conscious individualities in the Godhead while others may argue there is only one self-conscious individuality in the Godhead.
      - (1) My Affirmation: There is **one God**: i.e. one divine nature, but there are three persons, i.e., three self conscious rational individualities, each having the divine nature.
    - b. This is clearly seen in the charges and claims made against Christians by Muslims of why we are Infidels claiming that we are Polytheistic and that they are the only true Monotheistic Faith.
      - (1) Muslims Charge Christians That the Doctrine of the “Trinity” {this term is nowhere found in the scriptures} - yet the concept of Three in One is clearly inferred - Is Blasphemy.
        - (a) Muhammad condemned the doctrine of the Trinity (or Godhead) as polytheism (the belief in three separate gods).
          - i) “Surely, disbelievers are those who said: ‘Allah is the third of the three (in a Trinity).’ But there is no Ilah (god) (none who has the right to be worshiped) but One Ilah (God - Allah). And if they cease not from what they say, verily, a painful torment will befall on the disbelievers among them.” – SURAH 5:73
        - (b) The unforgivable sin in Islam is “the sin of the shirk” or assigning “partners” (gods) with Allah:
- B. It has been my experience and is seen in writings of others that explaining God as “ONE” yet three distinct individuals has been a major stumbling block in the faith of many.
  1. Spiros Zodhiates - recalls a missionary to the Cherokee Indians explaining God of the Bible versus the gods of the Cherokee - when talking about the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit the Chief said “So three Gods” - to which the missionary said no “Just ONE” - explain this to me how 3 is 1.
  2. It is said the missionary on many successive days tried painful to explain this and yet created more confusion than understanding. “It is my belief that such is still present today - in our understanding of God”.
  3. Upon one of the days in question it is said that the Chief asked the missionary to take a walk with him. As he walked he came across snow on the ground and he said - look see snow! They walked a little further as they approached the river and he said - look see ice! Walking a little further they came to the running river and he said - look see water! Is this your God he asked?
  4. Not understanding the missionary said NO! - knowing the Cherokees believed in the Snow God and other deities for the winter seasons.
  5. But then came the explanation of the observations and brought about understanding:
    - a. Snow is water - Yes!
    - b. Ice is water - Yes!
    - c. Water is water - Yes!(1) Different but the Same! - YES! - is this the God of the Bible - YES said the missionary.
- C. Charts On Godhead Explained Here:

1. The Father IS - (YHWH) GOD (Elohim) - **John 4:23** (NKJV) - 23 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. {Worship is only offered to God}
  2. The Son IS - (YHWH) GOD (Elohim) - **Hebrews 1:8** (NKJV) - 8 But to the Son He says: "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom.
  3. The Holy Spirit IS - (YHWH) GOD (Elohim) - **Acts 5:3-4** (NKJV) - 3 But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? 4 While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God."
    - a. YET:
      - (1) The Father IS NOT THE SON - **John 12:49** (NKJV) - 49 For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak.
      - (2) The Son IS NOT THE HOLY SPIRIT - **John 14:26** (NKJV) - 26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.
      - (3) The Holy Spirit IS NOT THE FATHER - **John 15:26** (NKJV) - 26 "But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me
    - b. WHAT THEY (FATHER, SON and HOLY SPIRIT) all possess is that DIVINE NATURE - (YHWH) GOD (Elohim)
      - (1) This is the common element just like SNOW, WATER and ICE - H<sup>2</sup>O
- D. One Can Be a United Plurality:
1. This is the older translation of the famous Shema: "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one."
    - a. There are two words for 'one' in Biblical Hebrew: 'ehad' ('one', 'alone', 'unity from parts') and 'yahid' (always means uniqueness/solitary-only one of its kind [cf. used of only son and only daughter, Gen 22.2,12,16; Jer 6.26; Judges 11.34]...not the same word as 'yahad' that often means 'in complete unity, together,united' cf. Deut 33.5, Ps 133.1).
  2. **Deuteronomy 6:4** (NKJV) - 4 "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one {ehad}!
    - a. **Genesis 2:24** (NKJV) - 24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one (ehad) flesh.
    - b. **Exodus 26:6** (NKJV) - 6 And you shall make fifty clasps of gold, and couple the curtains together with the clasps, so that it may be one tabernacle. . . . 11 And you shall make fifty bronze clasps, put the clasps into the loops, and couple the tent together, that it may be one (ehad) unit.
    - c. **2 Samuel 2:25**--many soldiers became one troop (ehad)
    - d. **Gen 34:16** --the men of Shechem suggest intermarriage to become 'one (ehad) people'.
    - e. **Joshua 9.2** -- the western kings agree to fight Joshua with "one (ehad) accord"
  3. Consider some other passages in which 'EHAD' is used:
    - a. **Josh 10.42**-- "And Joshua captured all these kings and their lands at one (ehad) time" (NAS) or "All these kings and their lands Joshua conquered in one (ehad) campaign" (NIV)
      - (1) **Ex 24.3** --"Then Moses came and recounted to the people all the words of the Lord and all the ordinances; and all the people answered with one (ehad) voice, and said"
      - (2) **2 Chr 5.12**--"and all the Levitical singers, Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun, and their sons and kinsmen, clothed in fine linen, with cymbals, harps, and lyres, standing east of the altar, and with them one hundred and twenty priests blowing trumpets 13 in unison when the trumpeters

and the singers were to make themselves heard with one (ehad) voice to praise and to glorify the Lord"

(3) **Gen 11:6**--"And the Lord said, "Behold, they are one (ehad) people, and they all have the same language."

b. So, from the usage data ALONE, 'ehad could at least ALLOW a plurality-within-a-strict-unity.

## II. The Unified, Compound Oneness of God in the Old Testament Scriptures.

A. Is God absolutely alone as only one person according to O.T.?

1. There are 9 different Hebrew words in the Scriptures that can be translated as "ONE" – See Englishman's Concordance.

a. Sometimes words such as man or woman are translated "one," but such words are NEVER applied to God in the Bible, since God is not a man or a woman (**Num. 23:19**).

(1) **Numbers 23:19** (NKJV) - 19 "God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?"

b. If God is only one person, as Muslims claim, WHICH word from the Scriptures could they apply to God?

(1) ONLY ONE of the nine Hebrew words that can be translated as "one" can refer to "complete solitary" or being absolutely alone: YACHIYD e.g., **Genesis 22:2; Judges 11:34; Psalm 68:6**.

(a) **Genesis 22:2** (NKJV) - 2 Then He said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."

(b) **Judges 11:34** (NKJV) - 34 When Jephthah came to his house at Mizpah, there was his daughter, coming out to meet him with timbrels and dancing; and she was his only child. Besides her he had neither son nor daughter.

(c) **Psalm 68:6** (NKJV) - 6 God sets the solitary in families; He brings out those who are bound into prosperity; But the rebellious dwell in a dry land.

(2) However, NOWHERE in Scripture can this word be found EVER applying to God!

(a) This is because God is NOT absolutely alone as only one person.

i) The Father was NOT alone – **Genesis 1: 1, 26; John 1:1**

a) **Genesis 1:1** (NKJV) - 1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

b) **Genesis 1:26** (NKJV) - 26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in 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."

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

ii) The Son, (Jesus) was NOT alone – **John 1:1; 8:16; 16:32**

a) **John 8:16** (NKJV) - 16 And yet if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I am with the Father who sent Me.

b) **John 16:32** (NKJV) - 32 Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.

iii) The Holy Spirit was NOT alone - **John 15:26; 16:13**

a) **John 15:26** (NKJV) - 26 "But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.

b) **John 16:13** (NKJV) - 13 However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He

will speak; and He will tell you things to come.

1

B. The Hebrew Word ECHAD:

1. The Hebrew word ECHAD teaches us much about God!

a. Sometimes ECHAD is used w/ reference to the number one or quantity of one (e.g., **Gen. 2:21**), but when it does it is never in reference to God.

(1) ECHAD is often translated “one” to denote a unified or compound oneness (e.g., **Gen. 3:22; 11:6; 34:16; 2 Chron. 30:12; Ezra 2:64; Jer. 32:29**).

(a) **Genesis 3:22** (NKJV) - 22 Then the Lord God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever”—

(b) **Genesis 11:6** (NKJV) - 6 And the Lord said, “Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them.

(c) **Genesis 34:16** (NKJV) - 16 then we will give our daughters to you, and we will take your daughters to us; and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people.

(d) **2 Chronicles 30:12** (NKJV) - 12 Also the hand of God was on Judah to give them singleness of heart to obey the command of the king and the leaders, at the word of the Lord.

(e) **Ezra 2:64** (NKJV) - 64 The whole assembly together was forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty,

(f) **Jeremiah 32:29** (NKJV) - 29 And the Chaldeans who fight against this city shall come and set fire to this city and burn it, with the houses on whose roofs they have offered incense to Baal and poured out drink offerings to other gods, to provoke Me to anger;

(2) **Gen 2:24** Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one [ECHAD] flesh.

2. ECHAD is the word used in this declaration of the unity of God:

a. **Deuteronomy 6:4** ---- Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one [ECHAD] LORD:

(1) ECHAD may stand for “UNIFIED, COMPOUND ONENESS” (e.g., **Genesis 2:24**)

(a) **Genesis 2:24** (NKJV) - 24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

3. God is referred to in the singular and plural in the Scriptures.

a. Singular nouns and verbs used to emphasize that He is the one and only God (e.g., **Deuteronomy 32:39** (NKJV) - 39 ‘Now see that I, even I, am He, And there is no God besides Me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; Nor is there any who can deliver from My hand.).

b. Plural nouns and verbs are also used to refer to God, the most common one -- ELOHIYM (a PLURAL form of deity or god):

(1) Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God [ELOHIYM] created the Heavens and the earth.

4. The Hebrew word ELOHIYM (a plural form of deity or god):

a. ELOHIYM is translated over 400 times in the Scriptures as “gods” (plural!) (e.g., **Gen. 31:30; Exod. 12:12**).

(1) **Genesis 31:30** (NKJV) - 30 And now you have surely gone because you greatly long for your father’s house, but why did you steal my gods?”

(2) **Exodus 12:12** (NKJV) - 12 ‘For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord.

b. **Joshua 24:16** (NASB) “And the people answered and said, ‘Far be it from us that we should

---

<sup>1</sup> *The New King James Version*. Nashville : Thomas Nelson, 1982

forsake the LORD to serve other gods” [ELOHIYM] (Same word from **Gen. 1:1!**)

C. God spoke in the first person plural when creating us!

1. **Gen. 1:26a** “And **God** said, Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness” ---- (See also **Gen. 3:22; 11:7-8; Isa. 6:8**).
  - a. **Genesis 3:22** (NKJV) - 22 Then the Lord God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever”—
  - b. **Genesis 11:7-8** (NKJV) - 7 Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech.” 8 So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city.
  - c. **Isaiah 6:8** (NKJV) - 8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: “Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?” Then I said, “Here am I! Send me.”
2. Two divine persons are both called God in the same passage in many passages of Scripture (e.g., **Gen. 19:24; Ps. 45:6-7; Isa. 48:12-17; Hos. 1:6-7**).
  - a. **Genesis 19:24** (NKJV) - 24 Then the Lord rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the Lord out of the heavens.
  - b. **Psalms 45:6-7** (NKJV) - 6 Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. 7 You love righteousness and hate wickedness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions.
  - c. **Isaiah 48:12-17** (NKJV) - 12 “Listen to Me, O Jacob, And Israel, My called: I am He, I am the First, I am also the Last. 13 Indeed My hand has laid the foundation of the earth, And My right hand has stretched out the heavens; When I call to them, They stand up together. 14 “All of you, assemble yourselves, and hear! Who among them has declared these things? The Lord loves him; He shall do His pleasure on Babylon, And His arm shall be against the Chaldeans. 15 I, even I, have spoken; Yes, I have called him, I have brought him, and his way will prosper. 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 and His Spirit Have sent Me.” 17 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.
  - d. **Hosea 1:6-7** (NKJV) - 6 And she conceived again and bore a daughter. Then God said to him: “Call her name Lo-Ruhamah, For I will no longer have mercy on the house of Israel, But I will utterly take them away. 7 Yet I will have mercy on the house of Judah, Will save them by the Lord their God, And will not save them by bow, Nor by sword or battle, By horses or horsemen.”

D. This is distinctly different in the contrast to the many gods of Idolatry:

1. Chart - The One True God Contrasted with Idols
  - (1) Aphrodite The sensual goddess of Love and Beauty
  - (2) Apollo The youthful god of the Sun and the Music
  - (3) Ares The fierce god of War
  - (4) Artemis The wild goddess of the Hunt
  - (5) Athena The sophisticated goddess of Wisdom and Arts
  - (6) Demeter The natural goddess of the Harvest
  - (7) Dionysus The joyful god of the Wine
  - (8) Hades The gloomy god of the Underworld
  - (9) Hephaestus The ill-favored god of Metallurgy
  - (10) Hera The mature goddess of the Family
  - (11) Hermes The cunning god of the Trade
  - (12) Hestia The calm goddess of the Hearth
  - (13) Poseidon The moody god of the Seas

(14) Zeus The heavenly King of the Gods and ruler of mankind

E. ONE GOD = ONE DIVINE NATURE

1. Eg. Numerical ---- 1 + 1 + 1 = 3
2. Eg. In the Eldership ---- Ed, Henry + ??? = 3 Persons - Distinct Individuals - Yet Fully Human in nature - Not Three Human Natures!
3. Eg. The Godhead - **Ephesians 4:4-6** (NKJV) - 4 There is one body and **one Spirit**, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; 5 **one Lord**, one faith, one baptism; 6 **one God and Father** of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. ---- {1 Father + 1 Son + 1 Holy Spirit = 3 Persons} Distinct Individuals - Yet Fully DIVINE in nature - Not Three DIVINE Natures!
4. **Deut 6:4** - (NKJV) - Hear, O Israel: The LORD ( יהוה - yhwh) our God, ( יהוה י'el hîm) the LORD ( יהוה - yhwh) is one ( אחד, 'echa ^d)
  - a. Compare: **Mark 12:29** (NKJV) - 29 . . . 'Hear, O Israel, the LORD ( יהוה G2962 N-NSM) our God, ( יהוה G2316 N-NSM) the LORD ( יהוה G2962 N-NSM ) is one. ( אחד G1520 A-NSM)
  - b. Hebrew Word: יהוה - yhwh - Transliteration: Phonetic Pronunciation: yeh-ho-vaw'
    - (1) Root: from <H1961> Cross Reference: TWOT - 484a Part of Speech: n pr dei Vine's Words: Lord
    - (2) Usage Notes: English Words used in KJV:
      - (a) LORD 6510
      - (b) GOD 4
      - (c) JEHOVAH 4
      - (d) variant 1
      - (e) [Total Count: 6519]
    - (3) from <H1961> (yahah); (the) self-Existent or Eternal; Jehovah, Jewish national name of God :- Jehovah, the Lord. Compare <H3050> (Yahh), <H3069> (Yehovih). ---- Strong's Talking Greek & Hebrew Dictionary

F. The Best Commentary on the Bible is the Bible Itself:

1. When you look at **Deut 6:4** and compare it to **Mark 12:29** we can see from other scriptures that:
  - a. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit distinct in function according to Jesus – **John 14; 15; 16; 17**
  - b. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are a united plurality – **John 17:20-23**
    - (1) **John 17:20-23** (NKJV) - 20 “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; 21 that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. 22 And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: 23 I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.
  - c. Many are one just as the Lord Himself – **Gal 3:28**
    - (1) **Galatians 3:28** (NKJV) - 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
2. That the Three Persons of the Godhead are Distinct in Function:
  - a. The Father not subject to the Son - **1 Corinthians 15:27** (NKJV) - 27 For “He has put all things under His feet.” But when He says “all things are put under Him,” it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted.
  - b. The Son did not speak of Himself – **John 12:49** (NKJV) - 49 For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak.
  - c. The Son will send the Holy Spirit from the Father - **John 15:26** (NKJV) - 26 “But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from

- the Father, He will testify of Me.
- d. The Holy Spirit would not speak of Himself – **John 16:13** (NKJV) - 13 However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.
  - e. The Holy Spirit Spoke what He heard from the Son – **John 14:26** (NKJV) - 26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.
    - (1) **John 16:13-15** (NKJV) - 13 However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. 14 He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. 15 All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.

### III. In Conclusion:

#### A. The Unified Work of the Triune God.

1. The Godhead worked together as a team in the Creation (**Gen. 1:2, 26-27; Job 33:4; John 1:3; Col. 1:15-17; Heb. 1:2**).
  - a. **Genesis 1:2** (NKJV) - 2 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.
  - b. **Genesis 1:26-27** (NKJV) - 26 Then God said, “Let Us make man in 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.” 27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.
  - c. **Job 33:4** (NKJV) - 4 The Spirit of God has made me, And the breath of the Almighty gives me life.
  - d. **John 1:3** (NKJV) - 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.
  - e. **Colossians 1:15-17** (NKJV) - 15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.
  - f. **Hebrews 1:2** (NKJV) - 2 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;
2. The Godhead works together as a team to provide our salvation (**Mat. 28:18-20; Eph. 2:17-19; Titus 3:4-7**).
  - a. **Matthew 28:18-20** (NKJV) - 18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 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, 20 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.
  - b. **Ephesians 2:17-19** (NKJV) - 17 And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. 18 For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. 19 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,
  - c. **Titus 3:4-7** (NKJV) - 4 But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, 5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He

poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

B. God Is Three Distinct Persons, Yet One God, for Nothing Is Impossible with God!

1. **Luke 1:35, 37** (NASB) 35 And the angel answered and said to her [Mary], "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God . . . 37 "For nothing will be impossible with God."