

THE DAVAR BIBLE SCHOOL

Bible

CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

LESSON 12

An Open Letter from the Dean

Greetings and welcome to our growing family of Davar Bible School correspondence course students. This is a totally new and different kind of Bible study course. This informative course of study will help you understand the clear, simple, plain truths of your Bible. The only textbook you will need for this correspondence course is your Bible. You will find these studies fresh and interesting, not dull and dry. You will be richly rewarded with enlightening new truth in each lesson. There is no tuition or cost to you whatsoever, this course is absolutely free of charge. Your enrollment has already been paid by the voluntary freewill tithes and offerings of those who have elected to support this teaching. Those who wish to support this work are gladly welcomed as coworkers in this important effort to proclaim truth to all people. As you read each lesson, make sure you look up each Scripture that is cited. A separate test booklet is provided for each lesson. This way you can keep the lessons for further study, returning only your test booklet to be graded by your teacher. (Alternatively you may just email your answers to us.) It is our prayer that Elohim will bless you as you seek to understand His word.

- James Trimm

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LESSON 12

The Deity of Messiah is Scriptural

There are several different positions that have to be dealt with in presenting the Deity of Messiah:

Judaic Anti-Deity Position - These reject the deity of Messiah because they insist it is contrary to Judaism. These are not persuaded by New Testament “proof texts”. They will dismiss such proof texts as invalid and even corruptions because they are supposedly not Jewish in theology. They will reject Tanak “proof texts” on the basis that Judaism supposedly does not understand the text that way.

Pure-Biblical Anti-Deity Position - These reject the deity of Messiah because they insist that it is contrary to Scripture. They are not persuaded by the demonstration that the doctrine is authentically Jewish. Many of these may actually look down upon Jewish tradition and especially Kabbalah.

Christian “Oneness” Theologians

Christian Orthodox Trinitarian Theologians

One finds oneself engaging on a debate on multiple fronts. Proving that the “New Testament” teaches the deity of Messiah to the “Judaic Anti-Deity” followers will generally only succeed in proving to their minds that the New Testament is in error. They must be shown that the teaching is authentically Jewish. However the “Pure-Biblical Anti-Deity” followers will misinterpret or misrepresent such arguments as “proof” that the doctrine is based only on extra-biblical sources and cannot be shown from the Scriptures themselves. And oftentimes single individuals will waffle between those two positions, not realizing their own inconsistency. All the while Orthodox Christian Trinitarians, Oneness Christians and others are raising their own issues along the way, which only serves to sidetrack the primary issue.

Messiah as YHWH

The deity of Messiah is very easy to show from the Scriptures. The simplest way to show the deity of Messiah in the Scriptures is to point to instances where the “New Testament” quotes passages from the Tanak (“Old Testament”) and applies them to the Messiah.

For example in John 19:37, Zech. 12:10 is quoted:

But when they came to Yeshua, they saw that he was dead already

and did not break his legs.

But one of the soldiers stuck him in his side with a spear
and immediately blood and water came forth,...

For these things happened that the scripture might be fulfilled
which said, A bone of him will not be broken.(Ps. 34:21(20))

And again another scripture that said, They will look at him
whom they pierced. (Zech 12:10)

But now let us look at Zechariah 12:10 in context:

The burden of the word of YHWH concerning Israel.

The saying of YHWH, who stretched forth the heavens,

And laid the foundation of the earth,

And formed the spirit of man within him...

I will pour out upon the house of David,

And upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem,

The spirit of grace and supplication;

And they shall look at Me whom they pierced;

And they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only son....

(Zech. 12:1, 10)

The one being pierced in Jn. 19:37 is clearly Yeshua but the one being pierced in Zech.
12:10 is clearly YHWH.

Lets now look at the quotation of Is. 8:14 in Rom. 9:32:

Because it was not from faith but from “Works of the Law”,
for they stumbled at the stumbling stone.

(Rom. 9:32)

Now Paul is clearly referring here it Messiah, but lets now look at Is. 8:14 in context:

YHWH of hosts, Him shall you sanctify; and let Him be your
fear, and let Him be your dread. And He shall be for a sanctuary;
but for a stumbling stone and for a rock of offence
to both the houses of Israel...

(Is. 8:13-14)

Here it is clearly YHWH who is the “stumbling stone”.

OK now lets look at Phil. 2:10-11:

That at the name of Yeshua every knee will bow
that is in heaven or on earth and that is under the earth,
and every tongue will confess that Yeshua the Messiah is YHWH,
to the glory of Eloah the Father.

Here Paul clearly refer to Is. 45:23:

Thus says YHWH...
That unto Me every knee shall bow,
and every tongue shall swear.
(Is. 45:1, 23)

Clearly Paul applies a Tanak passage which clearly speaks of YHWH to the Messiah.

Now lets look at Rom. 10:9, 13:

And if you confess with your mouth our Adon Yeshua,
And you believe in your heart that Eloah raised him from the dead,
you will be saved. ...
For all who will call on the name of YHWH will be saved.
(Rom. 10:9, 13)

Here Paul clearly quotes Joel 3:5 (2:32) but applies the passage to Yeshua despite the fact that Joel is clearly here speaking of YHWH.

There are several other examples: James 5:7 clearly speaks of the coming of Messiah as likened to the "former and latter rain" while in Hosea 6:3 this is clearly the coming of YHWH. Likewise Jude 1:14 & 1 Thes. 3:13 refer to the coming of Messiah yet quote 1 Enoch 1:9 & Zech. 14:5 which clearly refer to the coming of YHWH. Finally in Mt. 22:41-46 Yeshua himself identifies himself with the "YHWH" at the right hand of "YHWH" in Ps. 110:1-2, 5.

The Three Pillars

Now in Romans 1:19-20 we are told that

what may be known of Elohim is manifest in them [mankind]
his invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood
by the things that are made, even his eternal power
and Godhead [or divine nature]..."

Then in Rom. 1:26-28 we are told that those who fail to perceive these things may fall into the errors of Homosexuality and Lesbianism. So when in creation were G-d's invisible attributes manifested in man and made clearly seen. The answer is in the Torah, in Gen. 1:26, 27 where we read:

Then Elohim said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness...
So Elohim created man in His own image;
in the image of Elohim He created him;

male and female He created them.

Now following the parallelism of the passage, "Our image"; "Our likeness" and "male and female" appear to be parallel terms.

Now there are passages in the Tanak in which YHWH is referred to in a male, fatherly aspect:

...If then I be a Father, Where is My honor?...
Says YHWH of Hosts...
(Mal. 1:6)

...You, O YHWH, are our Father,...
(Is. 63:16)

But now O YHWH, You are our Father...
(Is. 64:7)

But there are also passages in the Tanak in which YHWH is referred to in a female, motherly aspect:

As one whom his Mother comforts,
so will I comfort you...
(Is. 66:13)

Now YHWH as a "Father" and YHWH as a "Mother" are clearly two DIFFERENT aspects of YHWH, they are not the same thing.

Moreover YHWH as an allegorical "Mother" is also YHWH as a "comforter" which is the same as the Holy Spirit:

...the comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom my Father will send in my name...
(Jn. 14:27 see also Jn. 14:16-17; 15:26 & 16:7)

Now just as YHWH is expressed as an allegorical "Father" and an allegorical "Mother", the combination of these two aspects produce an allegorical "son":

Who has ascended up into heaven, and descended?
Who has gathered the wind in his fists?
Who has bound the waters in his garment?
Who has established all the ends of the earth?
What is His name? And what is His Son's name, if you know?
(Prov. 30:4)

The kings of the earth stand up,
and the rulers take counsel together,

against YHWH, and against His Messiah...
YHWH said to me: "You are My Son,"
This day have I begotten you...
Kiss the Son, lest he be angry...
(Ps. 2:2, 7, 12)

So now we have a Godhead which is the "image of Elohim" and is "male and female" expressing YHWH to us as a Father, a Mother and a Son.

Since the Son is the combination of the Father and Mother aspects of YHWH he is the fullness of the everlasting Godhead: "in him dwells the fullness of the Godhead" (Col. 2:9).

Thus the Messiah encompasses all the image of Elohim from which we were created:

...the Messiah, who is the likeness of Elohim.
(2Cor. 4:4)

[his Son] who is the image of the invisible Elohim...
(Col. 1:15)

[the Son] who is the radiance of his glory,
and the image of his being...
(Heb. 1:3)

And thus we can see all three aspects of the Godhead in passages like:

I, yes, I have spoken, indeed, I have called him,
I have brought him, and he will make his way succeed.
Come near to me and hear this: from the beginning
I have not spoken in [the] secret; from the time that she was,
there I am, and now ADONAI YHVH has sent me and his spirit.
(Is. 48:15-16 Original Bible Project preliminary edition)

Note the speaker is YHWH. Here we have:

1. YHWH the speaker.
2. ADONAI YHWH who sent Him.
3. "she" i.e. "his spirit"
("ruach" (spirit) is the only feminine word that "she" could refer to)

Another example of these three aspects is to be found in Hebrews 9:14:

How much more shall the blood of Messiah,
who through the eternal Spirit
offered himself without spot to Elohim,

purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living Elohim?

Here we again have three aspects:

1. The Messiah (who is YHWH)
2. The Spirit through which his blood is offered.
3. The Elohim to whom he offers himself.

These three aspects of the Godhead are called in the Aramaic “K’NUMEH” (plural) “K’NUMA” (singular) as we read in Yochanan (John) 5:26:

For the Father has life in his K’NUMA,
Thus he gave also the Son to have life in his K’NUMA.
(Jn. 5:26 from the Aramaic)

K’NUMA is an Aramaic word meaning “aspect, element, substance, essence”. The three aspects of the Godhead are three K’NUMEH but are only one YHWH.

ECHAD as a Unity

This brings us to the wording of the Sh’ma:

SH’MA YISRAEL: YHWH, ELOHEYNU, YHWH ECHAD
“Hear O Israel, YHWH, our Elohim, YHWH is one.”
(Deut. 6:4)

Let us examine other passages in the Torah to understand how this word ECHAD (“one”) is used in the Torah:

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

And YHWH said, “Indeed the people are one [ECHAD] and they all have one language...
(Gen. 11:6)

Thus it is clear that the word ECHAD in no way requires a singularity and can refer to a composite unity. Thus Deut. 6:4 may be taken as referring to the absolute unity of the three K’NUMEH of Father, Mother (Holy Spirit Comforter) and Son (Messiah).

The Deity of Messiah is Jewish

The reader should know that the Zohar, Bahir and Sefer Yetzirah are the three most authoritative works of Kabbalah which is Jewish mysticism. The purpose of this part is to demonstrate that the deity of Messiah and three pillars of the Godhead is indeed a Jewish concept.

The Sh'ma

In Part 1 we discussed the meaning of the word ECHAD in the Sh'ma which reads:

SH'MA YISRAEL YHWH ELOHEYNU YHWH ECHAD
"Hear O Israel, YHWH, our Elohim, YHWH is one (ECHAD)"
(Deut. 6:4)

Now let us to explore how this passage is understood by the Zohar:

The [profession of] unity that every day is [a profession of] unity is to be understood and to be perceived. We have said in many places that this prayer is a profession of Unity that is proclaimed:

"Hear O Yisrael, YHWH" first, [then] "Eloheynu" [and] "YHWH" they are all One and thus He is called "One".

Behold, these are three names, how can they be one? Is it because we call them one? (literally: And also concerning the proclamation that we call them one?). How these are one can only through the vision of the Holy Spirit be known. And these are through the vision of the closed eye (or the hidden eye) To make known that these three are one (i.e. a Tri-Unity).

And this is the mystery of the voice that is heard. The voice is one. And is three GAUNIN: fire and air and water. And all these are one in the mystery of the voice.

And also here "YHWH, Eloheynu, YHWH" these are One. Three GAUNIN that are One. And this is the voice of the act of a son of man in [proclaiming] the Unity. And to which he sees by the Unity of the "All" from Eyn Sof (the Infinite One) to the end of the "All". Because of the voice in which it is done, in these are three that are one (i.e. a Tri-Unity).

And this is the [profession] of the daily profession of Unity that is revealed in the mystery of the Holy Spirit.

And there are many GAUNIN that are a Unity, and all of them are true, what the one does, that the other does, and what that one does, the other does.
(Zohar 2:43)

(The Aramaic word GA'UN (sing.)/GAUNIN (plural) has the same meaning in the Zohar as the Aramaic word K'NUMA did in the Aramaic New Testament. GAUN comes from the word for "color" and refer to an "aspect, element, substance, essence".)

Thus the Zohar understands the Sh'ma to mean that YHWH, Elohim and YHWH are three GA'UNIN. This section of the Zohar also recalls a reading from the Sefer Yetzirah:

Three "mothers": Alef, Mem and Shin
Their foundation is a pan of merit
a pan of liability
and the tongue of decree deciding between them.
(Sefer Yetzirah 3:1)

Three "mothers", Alef, Mem, Shin
in the universe are air, water, fire...
(Sefer Yetzirah 3:4a)

(Note: The letter SHIN has a gematria (numerical value) of 300 which is the same as the gematria of the phrase "Ruach Elohim" (the Spirit of God).)

As it we will demonstrate the "tongue of decree deciding between them" is the Middle Pillar of the Godhead which reconciles the two outer pillars of the Godhead.

The Three Pillars of the Godhead

The Zohar also calls these three GAUNIN the three pillars of the Godhead. The Zohar teaches that the two outer pillars are reconciled by the middle pillar just as the "tongue of decree" decides between the two pans of the scale in the Sefer Yetzirah. The Zohar reads as follows:

Why, it may be asked, was it necessary to repeat the word "light" in this verse? The answer is that the first "light" refers to the primordial light which is of the Right Hand, and is destined for the "end of days"; while the second "light" refers to the Left Hand, which issues from the Right.

The next words, "And God saw the light that it was good" (Gen. 1:4), refer to the pillar which standing midway between them, writes both sides, and therefore when the unity of the three, right, left, and middle, was complete, "it was good", since there could be no completion until the third had appeared to remove

the strife between Right and Left, as it is written, "And God separated between the light and between the darkness." ...

This is the Middle Pillar: Ki Tov (that it was good) threw light above and below and on all other sides, in virtue of YHWH, the name which embraces all sides.
(Zohar 1:16b)

The Middle Pillar of the Godhead is the Son of Yah

According to the Zohar the Middle Pillar of the Godhead is the Son of Yah:

Better is a neighbor that is near, than a brother far off.
This neighbor is the Middle Pillar in the Godhead,
which is the Son of Yah.
(Zohar 2:115)

The Zohar also says of the Son of YHWH:

The Holy One, blessed be He, has a son, whose glory (tifret) shines from one end of the world to another. He is a great and mighty tree, whose head reaches heaven, and whose roots are set in the holy ground, and his name is "Mispar" and his place is in the uppermost heaven... as it is written, "The heavens declare (me-SaPRim) the glory (tifret) of God" (Ps. 19:1). Were it not for this "Mispar" there would be neither hosts nor offspring in any of the worlds.
(Zohar 2:105a)

This Zohar passage is intended to recall a passage from the Bahir:

Why are they called Sephirot?
Because it is written (Ps. 19:2),
"The heavens declare (me-SaPRim) the glory (tifret) of God."
(Bahir 125)

The Zohar also says concerning the Son of Yah:

"We may also translate "he who withholds blessings from the Son" (Prov. 11:26), whom the Father and Mother have CROWNED and blessed with many blessings, and concerning whom they commanded, "Kiss the SON lest he be angry" (Ps. 2:12), since he is invested with judgment (GEVURAH) and with mercy (CHESED)"
(Zohar 3:191b)

Metatron

The Zohar also identifies the Middle Pillar as “Metatron”:

The Middle Pillar [of the Godhead] is Metatron,
Who has accomplished peace above,
according to the glorious state there.
(Zohar 3:227)

the Zohar teaches that Metatron is not just the Son of Yah, but that he is "first begotten of all the creatures of God":

"And Abraham said to his oldest servant of his house..." (Gen. 24:2)
Who is this of whom it said "his servant?"
In what sense must this be understood? Who is this servant?
R. Nehori answered: "It is in no other sense to be understood
than expressed in the word "His servant," His servant,
the servant of God, the chief to His service.
And who is he? Metatron, as said. He is appointed to glorify
the bodies which are in the grave. This is the meaning of the words
"Abraham said to His servant" that is to the servant of God.
The servant is Metatron, the eldest of His [YHWH's] House,
who is the first-begotten of all creatures of God,
who is the ruler of all He has; because God has committed to Him
the government over all His hosts.
(Zohar 1:129b)

The Memra (The Word)

Another term for the Middle Pillar of the Godhead in Judaism is the Memra (the “Word”). The eminent Kabbalah Scholar Gershom Scholem writes of the Memra:

...the memra-- the paraphrase used in the Targumim,
the Aramaic Bible translations, to refer to God's word.
The memra is not merely a linguistic device for overcoming
the problem of biblical anthropomorphisms; it has theological
significance in its own right. The memra...is... a world-permeating
force, a reality in the world of matter or mind, the immanent aspect
of Elohim, holding all things under its omnipresent sway.
(On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead:
Basic Concepts in the Kabbalah, by Gershom Scholem pg 181-182)

The Targums were authoritative Aramaic paraphrases of the books of the Tanak which

were read in the synagogues along with the Hebrew of the Torah and Haftorah readings. Whenever the Targums come to passages where YHWH is anthropomorphised or seen, or where two or more YHWHs are indicated by the text, the Targums will often substitute "The Word [Memra] of YHWH" for YHWH. For example in Gen. 19:4 the Tanak has:

And YHVH rained brimstone and fire
upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah,
from YHVH, from the heavens.
(Original Bible Project preliminary edition)

The Hebrew grammar here indicates that one YHWH rains fire from another YHWH)
But Targum Jonathan substitutes "The Word of YHWH/the LORD" for the first of the
two YHWHs as follows:

And the Word of the YHWH caused to descend
upon the peoples of Sodom and Gommorah,
brimstone and fire from the YHWH in heaven.

In another example the Torah has:

Ex. 24:1a (YHWH is the speaker, see Ex. 20:1-2)

Now He [YHWH] said to Moses, "come up to YHWH..."

But Targum Jonathan paraphrases the speaker in Ex. 20:1 with the substitution "the Word [Memra] of YHWH" in place of "YHWH."

And the Word of the Lord spoke all these glorious words...

So it would seem that one of these entities called "YHWH" in these Torah passages was actually understood by the Targumists as being the "Word of YHWH." It was, according to Targum Onkelos, this Word of YHWH that Abraham trusted in:

And Abraham trusted in the Word [Memra] of YHWH,
and He counted it to him for righteousness.
(Targum Onkelos Gen. 15:6)

Moreover Abraham prayed in the name of the Word of YHWH:

And Abraham worshipped and prayed
in the name of the Word [Memra] of YHWH,
and said, "You are YHWH who does see, but You cannot be seen."
(Jerusalem Targum Gen. 22:14)

Note that here Abraham prays "in the name of the Word of YHWH" to the YHWH who "cannot be seen." Here two YHWHs are very apparent. Abraham is praying in the name

of the Word of YHWH but is praying to the YHWH who cannot be seen. This idea is reinforced elsewhere as follows:

And Hagar praised and prayed

in the name of the Word [Memra] Of YHWH
who had revealed Himself to her...
(Jerusalem Targum Gen. 16:3)

It was this Word of YHWH that Jacob also trusted in:

And Jacob vowed a vow, saying,
"If the Word [Memra] of YHWH will be my support,
and will keep me in the way that I go,
and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on,
so that I come again to my father's house in peace;
then shall the Word [Memra]of YHWH be my God.
(Targum Onkelos on Gen. 28:20-21)

King David also urged Israel to trust in the Word of Yah as the Targum of Psalm 62 reads:

Trust in the Word of Yah at all times,
O people of the house of Israel!
Pour out before Him the sighings of your heart;
Say, God is our trust forever.
(Targum on Psalm 62:9)

This "Word of YHWH" was, according to Targum Jonathan, the Creator:

And the Word [Memra] of YHWH
created man in his likeness,
in the likeness of YHWH, YHWH created,
male and female created He them.
(Targ. Jonathan Gen. 1:27)

This idea is also put forward in the Jerusalem Targum:

And the Word [Memra] of YHWH said to Moses:
"I am He who said unto the world 'Be!' and it was:
and who in the future shall say to it 'Be!' and it shall be."
And He said: "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel:
'I Am' has sent me to you."
(Jerusalem Targum Ex. 3:14)

The Fragmentary Targum of the Torah also expresses that the Word of YHWH was the Creator:

The first night, when the "Word of YHWH"
was revealed to the world in order to create it,
the world was desolate and void,
and darkness spread over the face of the abyss
and the "Word of the Lord" was bright and illuminating
and He called it the first night.
(Fragmentary Targum Ex. 12:42)

That the Word of YHWH was the Creator can also be seen in the Tanak itself:

By the Word of YHWH were the heavens made,
And all the hosts of them by the Spirit of His mouth.
(Ps. 33:6)

The Word was also the covenant maker. For example the Noachdic covenant was between the Word and all mankind:

And YHWH said to Noah,
"This is the token of the covenant
which I have established between My Word [Memra]
and between all flesh that is upon the earth.
(Targum Onkelos Gen. 9:17)

The Word also made the Abrahamic covenant as Targum Onkelos also paraphrases:

And I will establish my covenant
between My Word [Memra] and between you...
(Targum Onkelos Gen. 17:7)

The Word of YHWH was also the giver of the Mosaic Covenant and the Torah as the Jerusalem Targum (as quoted above) makes the Torah giver "the Word of YHWH" in Ex. 20:1. It was to the Word that Jacob turned to for salvation:

Our father Jacob said: "My soul does not wait for salvation
such as that wrought by Gideon, the son of Joash,
for that was but temporal; neither for a salvation
like that of Samson, which was only transitory;
but for that salvation which You have promised to come,
through Your Word unto Your people, the children of Israel;
for your salvation my soul hopes."
(Targum Jonathan Gen. 49:18)

That the Word of YHWH is the savior is expressed elsewhere:

But Israel shall be saved by the Word of YHWH
with an everlasting salvation...
By the Word of YHWH shall all the seed of Israel be justified...
(Targum Jonathan Is. 45:17, 25)

But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah,
and I will save them by the Word of YHWH, their God.
(Targum Jonathan Hosea 1:7)

Thus the Zohar teaches that the Sh'ma (Deut. 6:4) refers to the three pillars of the Godhead as being ECHAD. Moreover the Zohar also teaches that the Middle Pillar of the Godhead reconciles the two outer Pillars (Father and Mother). The Zohar further teaches that this Middle Pillar of the Godhead is the Son of Yah, the firstborn of all creation who will glorify all the bodies which are in the grave. This is the Word of YHWH in whom Abraham placed his faith and who made the covenant with Israel.

Three Persons?

Now as shown in part one, the Aramaic "New Testament" refers to the components of the Godhead as K'NUMA (sing.)/K'NUMEH (plural). As we have learned both the Biblical and Jewish model of the Godhead contains two contrasting K'NUMEH/GAUNIN and a third K'NUMA/GAUN which was a combination or harmonization of the other two. This third K'NUMA/GAUN is the Son of Yah.

The original Aramaic followers of Yeshua maintained that there were three K'NUMEH and one PARSOPA or one KYANA. This Aramaic terminology continued to be used by the Aramaic speaking Assyrian Christians of the Church of the East (and still is).

The early Greek speaking believers used the Greek words HYPOSTASIS for K'NUMA and PROSOPON for PARSOPA. They maintained a belief in a Godhead with three HYPOSTASIS (aspects, substances) and one PROSAPON (person). The earliest Greek "Church Fathers" also used these terms. However the later Greek "Church Fathers" inverted this formulation creating a Godhead of three PROSAPONS (persons) who are one in HYPOSTASIS (essence). Finally the Latin "Church Fathers" formulates a Trinity with three PERSONAS (persons) and only one SUBSTANTIA (essence. Substance).

Now by the year 362 C.E. the Roman Church had become embroiled in a crisis. The conflict in terminology was becoming a problem for Rome. Rome was promoting a Trinity with three persons (PERSONA) in one substance (SUBSTANTIA) but this formula was in conflict with the early Greek "Church Fathers", a formulation which many Greek speaking Christians still held to. This left the Greek speaking Christians in a

dispute. Some held to a Godhead with three aspects (HYPOSTASIS) and one person (PROSOPON) while others held to a Trinity with three persons (PROSOPONS) who are one in substance/essence (HYPOSTASIS). The Ecclesiastical Council of Alexandria was held in 362 to resolve this dispute. The whole matter was swept under the rug at this council when Rome ruled that both Greek schools were using different words to say the same thing. Rome ruled that the “Old School” Greeks MEANT “PERSONA” when they used HYPOSTASIS and that they had MEANT “SUBSTANTIA” when they used the term PROSOPON. Thus Rome had succeeded in transforming the triune Godhead of three aspects in one person into three persons who are one in substance/essence.

The Mormons have taken this process a stage further. They teach a “Godhead” of three persons who are not one in essence but are one only in “purpose”. This variation brings Rome’s Trinity of three persons firmly into the territory of Tri-Theism.

So is it valid to say that there are three “persons” in the Godhead in English? It depends on what one means by “person”. There are several definitions of the word “person” in English. If you look in a Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary you will find that the first and most common definition of “person” in English is “a human being”. Certainly Elohim is not three “human beings”... in fact He is not even ONE “human being”. The last definition in the Unabridged Dictionary is “any of the three modes of the Trinity”. So one might argue that the aspects of the three pillars of the Godhead may be called “persons” by virtue of a special definition of the word in English apart from any other meaning of the word. However use of the word “person” in English creates confusion because it strongly implies agreement with the Roman Trinity of three persons who are one in essence. More accurate terms are "three pillars"; "three aspects"; "three GAUNIN"; "three K'NUMEH" or "three Tzachtzachot (splendors)".

Now the Orthodox Christian Trinity with three “persons” who are one in essence has certain problems.

In Isaiah 9:6-7 the Son (the Messiah) is called “everlasting Father” while 1Cor. 15:45; 2Cor. 3:17 and Rom. 8:9-11 taken together seem to identify the Son with the Spirit.

According to the NT we as believers are immersed in the Messiah (Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:27); we have the “Spirit of Messiah” which raised Messiah (Rom. 8:9-11) in our hearts (Gal. 4:6; Eph. 3:17), which is the “Spirit of God” (1Jn. 4:12-13) or the “Holy Spirit” (1Cor. 6:19; 1Thes. 4:8). This also would seem to identify the Messiah with the Holy Spirit.

Finally Col. 2:9 states of Messiah “in him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead”.

These passages pose problems for the Orthodox Christian trinity of three “persons”. How can the Messiah be called “everlasting Father” if they are different persons? How can the Messiah be identified with the Holy Spirit if they are different persons? And finally how can the Messiah have “all the fullness of the Godhead” dwelling within him if he is only one of three persons in the Godhead?

Absolute Oneness?

Many of these difficulties with the Orthodox Christian trinity have led to the advent of a doctrine known as “Oneness Theology” in certain Christian circles. Oneness theology teaches that the Father, the Holy Spirit and the Son are all one and the same thing.

However “Oneness Theology” has other problems. For example Messiah stated that the Father is greater than he (Jn. 14:28). But this cannot be the case if they are one and the same.

The distinction between the three K’NOMEH of the Godhead is clear in a number of other passages as well:

The Father sends the Spirit (Jn. 14:26); Messiah sends the Spirit (Jn. 15:26); the Father sends Messiah (Jn. 17:8; 20:21) and in Jn. 14-16 we read that Messiah would have to leave so that the Holy Spirit could come.

Moreover as shown earlier, in Hebrews 9:14 Messiah presents himself through the Spirit to “Elohim”. This would not be possible if they were all one and the same.

In other examples:

Yeshua could not have been praying to himself in the garden when he said “let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will but as you will.” (Mt. 26:39)

Is. 11:1-2 says that Messiah would have the “fear of YHWH”... did he fear himself?

In Mt. 13:32 the Son does not know the day nor hour of his return but the Father does. They cannot be one and the same.

In Rev. 5 the Lamb takes the sealed book from the right hand of the figure on the throne... but how could this be if they are one and the same?

Finally the Messiah is frequently described as sitting or standing at the right hand of the Father (a clear allusion to Ps. 110:1, 4) how could this be if they are one and the same?

Clearly Christian “Oneness Theology” cannot stand... the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are not one and the same thing, they are different aspects of the one Elohim.

Conclusion: The True Understanding of the Godhead

The true understanding of the Godhead resolves all of the difficulties found in both the Orthodox Christian and Oneness Christian models.

The true understanding of the Godhead understands the Son as the combination of the Father and the Spirit and thus the Son can be identified with either. However as a combination of these two he is a third, unique and distinct aspect within the one person of the Godhead. Thus the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are three K'NUMEH or three GAUNIN (aspects), which are but one PARSOPA (person).

(End of lesson 12)