

## Theology Proper

### Table of Content

#### Unit 1: Foundations

Session 1: Why Study About God?

Session 2: Can we know God?

Session 3: How has God revealed Himself? Part 1: General Revelation

Session 4: How has God revealed Himself? Part 2: Special Revelation

Session 5: How has God revealed Himself? Part 3: God's Names

#### Unit 2: Trinity

Session 6: Foundations for the Trinity Part 1: Creator/Creature Distinction

Session 7: One God

Session 8: Foundations for the Trinity Part 3: Multiple Persons Hints in the Old Testament

- I. Session 8: Foundations for the Trinity Part 3: Multiple Persons Hints in the Old Testament
- a. Establish the need: Can we prove the point of the Trinity that Jesus and the Holy are both God when someone don't even believe there can be multiple persons within the being of God?
  - b. Purpose: Today we shall see how there is there is a plurality within God Himself according to the Old Testament.
  - c. How does this fit into our consideration of the Trinity?
    - i. The Trinity is the belief that there is one being called God who exists co-eternally as three Persons.
    - ii. It is hard to prove the Trinity if one does not first back up and see how the Old Testament anticipates the Trinity with hints of multiple persons within the Godhead.
    - iii. Put another way, if the Trinity is true we would expect the Bible including the Old Testament articulate and assume that there are multiple persons within God.
    - iv. Good quote from B.B. Warfield: "The Old Testament may be likened to a chamber richly furnished but dimly lighted; the introduction of light brings into it nothing which was not in it before; but it brings out into clearer view much of what is in it but was only dimly or even not all perceived before. The mystery of the Trinity is not revealed in the Old Testament; but the mystery of the Trinity underlies the Old Testament revelation, and here and there almost comes into view."<sup>1</sup>
  - d. Old Testament passages anticipating multiple persons within the Godhead
    - i. The Hebrew word for God: *Elohim*
      1. The singular word for God in the Hebrew is אֱל (pronounced "El").
      2. But often the word for the living God of the Bible is plural in form: אֱלֹהִים (pronounced "Elohim").
      3. Yet interestingly enough as Tim Chester pointed out, "But Elohim is used with the singular form of a verb."<sup>2</sup>
      4. For example we see right at the beginning of the Bible in **Genesis 1:1** that God (אֱלֹהִים) created, where the verb for create in Hebrew is בָּרָא which is third person masculine singular in form.
    - ii. Hebrew Word for One in the *Shema*
      1. **Deuteronomy 6:4** is called the *Shema*: "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!"
      2. This is the "John 3:16" verse for most Jews: Most Jews know of this verse than any other verse in the Old Testament.
      3. Some might use this verse to attack the Trinity but ironically it proves the multiple persons within the Godhead instead.
      4. Interesting use of the word "one"
        - a. "There are nine different Hebrew words which at times are translated as the word 'one.'"<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> B.B. Warfield, *Biblical Doctrines* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1981), 141-142.

<sup>2</sup> Tim Chester, *Delighting in the Trinity* (Purcellville, VA: The Good Book Company, 2010), 42.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Morey, *The Trinity: Evidences and Issues* (Iowa Falls, IA: World Bible Publishers, 1996), 87.

- b. In the Hebrew of **Deuteronomy 6:4** the word for one here is  $\text{אֱחָד}$  (pronounced as “*ehed*”).
  - c. The Hebrew word  $\text{אֱחָד}$  refers to a compound oneness.<sup>4</sup>
  - d. Examples of this can be seen in its use elsewhere:
    - i. “*For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.*” (**Genesis 2:24**)
      - 1. Note that there were two have become “one.”
      - 2. This oneness presupposes a unity of two persons but does not absolve the personhood of the man or the woman.
    - ii. “*The LORD said, “Behold, they are one people, and they all have <sup>[a]</sup>the same language. And this is what they began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be <sup>[b]</sup>impossible for them.”*” (**Genesis 11:6**)
      - 1. Context is the event of the Tower of Babel.
      - 2. Note that there are many individuals who make up the people.
      - 3. Yet they as a plurality are “one.”
    - iii. “*The hand of God was also on Judah to give them one heart to do what the king and the princes commanded by the word of the LORD.*” (**2 Chronicles 30:12**)
  - e. Therefore, the Hebrew Shema anticipate the Trinity in the Jewish’ own profession of faith.
- iii. God speaks to Himself in the Plural
    - 1. “*Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the [a]sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”*” (**Genesis 1:26**)
      - a. “God Himself speaks and instead of saying ‘I will,’ he says ‘Let us.’”<sup>5</sup>
      - b. Plural pronoun in Hebrew for “Us” in “Let Us.”
      - c. Nowhere do we have in Biblical Hebrew the use of plural form pronouns to refer to something merely because it is powerful but only numerically more than one (singular, alone sense) object.
      - d. Note the verb “make” is a plural verb thus indicating more than one person within the Godhead involved in creation.
    - 2. “*Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil: and now, he might stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever”*” (**Genesis 3:22**)
      - a. Event here is after the Fall of man.
      - b. Note “like one of Us”

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 88.

<sup>5</sup> Tim Chester, *Delighting in the Trinity* (Purcellville, VA: The Good Book Company, 2010), 42.

3. “<sup>6</sup> *The LORD said, “Behold, they are one people, and they all have <sup>[a]</sup>the same language. And this is what they began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be <sup>[b]</sup>impossible for them. <sup>7</sup> Come, let Us go down and there confuse their <sup>[c]</sup>language, so that they will not understand one another’s<sup>[d]</sup>speech.”*” (Genesis 11:6-7)
  - a. Event here is the Tower of Babel.
  - b. According to Robert Morey: “The words ‘come’ and ‘confuse’ are both plural verbs. This fact, when combined with the plural pronouns and the identification of the ‘Us’ as none other than Yahweh in the subsequent verses, making the attempt to introduce angels as the ones to whom God is speaking, highly unlikely.”<sup>6</sup>
4. “*Then 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!”*” (Isaiah 6:8)
- iv. Two Yahweh persons during the Destruction of Sodom: “*Then the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven,*” (Genesis 19:24)
  - v. As we continue with the Trinity we shall see more of the Old Testament roots of the Trinity.
  - vi. Next week we will look closer at the Angel of the Lord and note that at times this is clearly a Divine Figure which further support our argument that there are multiple persons within the Godhead.

## II.

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<sup>6</sup> Robert Morey, *The Trinity: Evidences and Issues* (Iowa Falls, IA: World Bible Publishers, 1996), 96.