

The Trinity and Character of God Revealed in the Old Testament

Introduction

The purpose of this book is to reveal the mystery of the Triune God and His diverse character that is so clearly revealed in the Old Testament. Many born again believers have allowed themselves to be convinced that the Trinity of God is an unfathomable mystery, concealed from the understanding of the very worshippers of God. Nothing can be further from the truth.

It is the Lord's will to reveal Himself to His people. The Apostle Paul, writing to the church at Colosse writes, "... *and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ.*" (Colossians 2:2) Paul's desire for the church at Colosse was that they would attain to a full assurance and understanding of the mystery of God. He then separates the deity, God, into two separate individuals namely the Father and Christ. This he does purposefully to demonstrate to the church that the mystery of God is the inscrutability of the complete unity of the plurality of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. If Paul's desire was for the church to understand this mystery, it then stands to reason that the Lord is willing for us to understand the mystery of His deity.

There are some who believe that God is one being expressing Himself through three different personalities. They contend that the Father, Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit are three manifestations of one distinct being called God.

This view does not stand up to scriptural scrutiny and reveals an ignorance of the Word which this book seeks to counter.

Through a study of the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament) we will begin to develop an understanding of the diverse personalities that make up the Godhead. How they relate and co-operate together and how they interact with man in complete unity of purpose and intent.

Chapter 1

Hebrew Words Used for God

Before we can commence this study, it is beneficial that the reader has a basic knowledge of the Hebrew names used in the Old Testament for God as well as their meanings and application.

Although the Hebrew Scriptures contain various words for God, we will restrict ourselves to the following six words. They are,

1. שׁדַּי Shadday (*shad-dah'ee*) – translated “the Almighty” in reference to God’s omnipotence.
“When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord (Yehovah) appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am Almighty (Shadday) God (El); walk before Me and be blameless.” Genesis 17:1

2. יהוה Yehovah (*yeh-ho-vaw*) – comes from the Hebrew word *hâyâh*, meaning “to exist”. Yehovah means “the Self-Existent” or “Eternal”. Yehovah refers to God as the One who is without beginning, who exists without being created unlike all other beings in creation. Yehovah is translated directly as Jehovah but commonly as “the Lord” or “God”.

Yehovah is the Jewish national name for God. It is impossible to attribute this word to any being other than the God of the Bible.
“Tell and bring forth your case; Yes, let them take counsel together. Who has declared this from ancient time? Who has told it from that time? Have not I, the Lord (Yehovah)? And there is no other God (Elohiym) besides Me, A just God (El) and a Savior; There is none besides Me.” Isaiah 45:21
“I, even I, am the Lord (Yehovah) , And besides Me there is no saviour.” Isaiah 43:11

3. אָדוֹן Adown(*aw-done*) – translated directly as “Sovereign”. Can be used for both human context or divine. Often translated in the scriptures as “Lord”.
Adown describes God in His sovereignty.
“Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord (Adown) of all the earth is crossing over before you into the Jordan.” Joshua 3:11

4. אֲדוֹנָי Ādonay (*ad-o-noy*) – An emphatic form of adown used only as a proper name for God, and is translated as “Lord”.
Then Moses said to the LORD (Yehovah), “O my Lord (Adonay), I am not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.”
Exodus 4:10

5. אֵל El (*ale*) – Translated as “mighty” and used as an adjective for any deity including God.
“As for God (El), His way is perfect; The word of the Lord (Yehovah) is proven; He is a shield to all who trust in Him”
Psalm 18:30

6. אֱלֹהִים Elohiym (*el-o-heem*) – Translated as gods in the plural but specifically for the supreme God. Elohiym is the plural form of the singular elowah, translated as God in the singular. Elohiym is occasionally used for idols, angels and very rarely in reference to man (Psalm 82:6).
“Be still, and know that I am God (Elohiym); I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.” Psalm 46:10

As can be seen from the examples used above, a single verse can contain two or more of the different names of God. The name used is always in context with what is being conveyed in the verse. For example in point 5, the psalmist uses the word El to describe Gods’ might as the shield or defender of all those who trust in Him. El as

pointed out means mighty which aptly describes God as the mighty one who is well able to fight on behalf of all who would trust in Him.

In point 3. He is the Sovereign Lord of all the earth, describing God as King of all. His absolute authority over all creation whether seen or unseen is encapsulated in the word *adown*, Sovereign Lord of all.

The various names of God are used in the scriptures by unctio and leading of the Holy Spirit. Each use of the name must be understood as God revealing Himself both in nature and in character. As we continue this study we will discover that the original Hebrew text clearly uses the different names of God to reveal His character and plurality.

Chapter 2

Begin at the Beginning

“¹In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth...²⁶Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image , according to Our likeness...’”
(Genesis 1:1&26)

In the very first chapter of the Bible, God reveals Himself as Elohiym. Elohiym, translated literally as Gods, is the plural form of the Hebrew word elowah, translated God. The Lord speaks of Himself in the plural form even though there exists in the Hebrew language an appropriate word to denote the singular. If God is one Being why does He not use the correct word to describe Himself in the singular? The answer is simply that He is not one being and therefore a singular noun would be incorrect when describing Him.

From the very first sentence of the Bible, the Holy Spirit has inspired the various authors of Old Testament scripture to use the plural form, Elohiym, no less than two thousand three hundred and fifty two times. *All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine...* (2 Timothy 3:16). Every use of the word is deliberate as you will discover through this book.

Four times in the Hebrew Scriptures the Spirit moves the authors to use the word “us” in reference to God. The following are the other three verses, *Then the Lord God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil...”* (Genesis 3:22)

“Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.” (Genesis 11:7)

Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: “Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?...” (Isaiah 6:8)

It is possible to conclude that in these verses, God is speaking to another comparable to Himself. Hence the word Elohiym is employed to describe the plurality of God, not only in creation but in His dealings with man recorded in the scriptures.

Purposefully, the Holy Spirit inspired the writers of the Holy Scriptures to use a single Hebrew word that adequately describes God

in His plurality of Persons whilst capturing the unity of His purpose. The Lord is willing for us to come to a full knowledge and understanding of His deity and how as three they interact as One.

In verse 26 of chapter one, it is apparent that God speaks to others and invites them to participate in the creation of man. The question that must be answered is, who was He speaking too? Who else but God can create? If the Lord is the creator of all things and no other being in creation is able to create then whomever God was speaking too must have had the ability to assist the Lord in the Creation.

The Lord is not speaking to angels, who themselves are created beings (Ezekiel 28:13-15), as the Scriptures attribute no creative ability to them. Whomever God was speaking to must have had creative ability.

If God alone can create then He must have been speaking to an equal. But who is equal to God but God Himself. *“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,”* (Philippians 2:5-6)

“God,...has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person,...” (Hebrews 1:1-3)

The New Testament clearly teaches that Jesus, the Son, is equal to God the Father. Not only is Jesus equal to the Father but He is credited with being the Creator (John 1:3; Colossians 1:15-17).

The first chapter of Genesis reveals the workings of the Godhead clearly. God the Father desired a creation and especially a being with whom He could have communion with. This being was man. Jesus the Son, spoke the creation into being (Psalm 33:6; Psalm 148:1-5) whilst the Holy Spirit bought about that which was spoken. *The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life.* (Job 33:3)

Thus we see from the first chapter of the Bible the Trinity working in unity to bring forth their perfect will as One.

Yet each member of the Trinity relates to mankind very differently. Before the resurrection of Christ and the beginning of the dispensation of grace, better known as the Church Age, the Trinity dealt with man very differently than today.

In understanding how the Godhead dealt with mankind under the Old Covenant we as believers can better understand and appreciate the fullness of our wonderful salvation.

As we journey through the Old Testament we will discover and I hope not take for granted the privilege we have of being able to enter the very throne room of the Father. A privilege that was not afforded those of old.

Chapter 3

Abraham and God

Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. (Genesis 14:18)

Who is Melchizedek king of Salem that Abraham met on his return from rescuing his nephew Lot? His name comes from two Hebrew words, namely *melech* – king and *tsedek* – righteousness, translated as King of Righteousness. Who is this King of Righteousness that is a priest of God some six hundred and fifty years before the Levitical priesthood is established? Who is He who ruled over Salem the ancient name of the city of Jerusalem (Psalm 76:2) where God had put His name?

In order to know who this person is, we need to first understand His title. He is called King of Salem which is another name of the city of Jerusalem. It was in the city of Jerusalem that God chose to place His name (1 Kings 11:36) both as a dwelling place for His Spirit, between the Cherubim above the mercy seat of the Ark in the Holy of Holies within the heart of the Temple.

The Lord also placed His name in the topography of the landscape, as Jerusalem is sighted on three hills forming the Hebrew letter ש (Shin). Shin is symbolic of the Trinity with each of the three branches representing one member of the Godhead.

But you shall utterly destroy them: the Hittite and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite, just as the Lord your God has commanded you, lest they teach you to do according to all their abominations which they have done for their gods, and you sin against the Lord your God. (Deuteronomy 20:17-18) According to Scripture, the Jebusites dwelt in Jerusalem (Joshua 15:63) up until the time they were defeated by King David (2 Samuel 5:6-7). They were accused by God of wickedness and serving foreign gods, for which they were to be destroyed. The only nation to inhabit Jerusalem before the Jews were the Jebusites. If Melchizedek was a human king as well as being a priest he would have taught the Jebusites (his people) to worship the only true God – Jehovah.

But Melchizidek could not possibly have been their king as the Bible reveals that when Abraham went to sacrifice Isaac his son they went to the land of Moriah (Genesis 22:2) and onto a specific mountain that God showed him. This mountain is the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, *now Solomon began to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem on Mount Moriah* (2 Chronicles 3:1).

If Abraham attempted to sacrifice his son in the middle of a city ruled over by Melchizidek, how come no one tried to stop him? The answer to this question is strikingly obvious, Melchizidek was not a human king ruling over the then physical city of Jerusalem. No one was there besides Abraham and Isaac. There was no city, Moriah was a wilderness which was uninhabited and would remain so until it was inhabited by the Jebusites many years later.

Melchizidek was and is the spiritual king over the heavenly city of Jerusalem as revealed in Hebrews 12:22-24, *But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels,... to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant.*

Salem is also Hebrew for *peace* or *peaceful*. Therefore Melchizidek could also be known as King of Peace. Isaiah 9:6 tells us that the coming Messiah would be called the *Prince of Peace*.

We have seen that His name means King of Righteousness. Who is righteous but God? According to the prophet Jeremiah, the Messiah of the Jews was called *the branch of righteousness* (Jeremiah 23:6 & 33:15). The writer of Hebrews says, *but unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom* (Hebrews 1:8). The sceptre is a symbol of royal power, rule and authority. The symbol of Jesus rule and kingdom is the sceptre of righteousness. As King, His realm is symbolised by righteousness. It can then be said that Jesus is the King over the kingdom of righteousness, or put differently, He is the King of Righteousness.

The writer of Hebrews continues with, *For this Melchizedek, king of Salem priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him. To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all. First being translated king of righteousness, and after that also king of Salem, meaning king of peace, without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of*

days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, he remains a priest continually.” (Hebrews 7:1-3)

Unlike the angels who were created by God and therefore had a beginning of days, this Melchizedek is eternal according to Scripture. This would have to make Him God, but more specifically Jesus the Messiah of Israel and Saviour of those who will believe. The prophet Micah confirms the eternal existence of the Messiah when he writes, *But you, Bethlehem, Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting* (Micah 5:2).

Lastly, Melchizedek is called *the priest of God Most High* hundreds of years before the establishment of the Levitical priesthood. The Levitical priesthood, like all the ordinances of the Mosaic Law, was a type and shadow of the Heavenly Tabernacle. *Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man. For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Therefore it is necessary that this One also have something to offer. For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law; who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, "See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain." But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises* (Hebrews 8:1-6).

Jesus the high priest of heaven appears to Abraham in the form of a man yet retaining His identity as the King/Prince of Peace; King/Lord of Righteousness and as High Priest.

This Theophany (God in human form) and especially Christophany (Christ in human form) is a common occurrence throughout the Old Testament.

As we continue studying Abraham's interaction with God we begin to see the plurality of God becoming clearer.

Then the Lord (Yehovah) appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day. So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground, and said, "My Lord (Adonay), if I have now found favor in Your sight, do not pass on by Your servant. "Please let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree.

"And I will bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh your hearts. After that you may pass by, inasmuch as you have come to your servant." They said, "Do as you have said." So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said, "Quickly, make ready three measures of fine meal; knead it and make cakes." And Abraham ran to the herd, took a tender and good calf, gave it to a young man, and he hastened to prepare it. So he took butter and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree as they ate. (Genesis 18:1-8)

When Yehovah (Lord) appears to Abraham, Abraham calls Him Adonay (Lord/Master). Abraham could not possibly call Him Jehovah because God had not yet revealed that name to man until the time of Moses, *And God spoke to Moses and said to him: "I am the Lord (Yehovah) "I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God (El) Almighty (Shadday), but by My name Lord (Yehovah) I was not known to them. (Exodus 6:2-3).*

Abraham addresses the Lord by the only name that he knows Him by. There are many Christians who believe that the word Jehovah is reserved exclusively for God the Father. However it will become clear that the title, Jehovah, is used many times in reference to Jesus.

Abraham invites Jehovah to eat and rest as his guest which was typical of the custom of his day. Abraham was fully aware that one of the three men that were before him was God because he had used the word Adonay which is only ever used as a proper name in Scripture for God.

Jehovah God eats and remains to fellowship with Abraham whilst the other two men, who the bible later describes as angels (Genesis 19:1), depart to Sodom (Genesis 18:16-33).

Abraham remains speaking to Jehovah and intercedes for the city of Sodom until Jehovah departs.

When the Lot addresses the angels (Genesis 19:2) he calls them adown, meaning master, a title which we have learned can be used for man or God.

After the angels lead Lot out of Sodom the scriptures teach, *Then the Lord (Yehovah) rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the Lord (Yehovah) out of the heavens* (Genesis 19:24). Notice that the angels had warned Lot that Jehovah would destroy the city (Genesis 19:12-13) although they do add that they would participate in the destruction. However, when the bible records the destruction it says that Yehovah God was raining fire and brimstone on Sodom and Gomorrah by directing Jehovah who was in heaven. In other words, two beings, both called Jehovah are interacting to destroy the two cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

The question that might be asked is, Who was in heaven and Who was on earth? We will answer this question in later chapters. For now it is of importance for us to note that God reveals Himself in this portion of Scripture as two Persons. Both these Persons are called Jehovah thereby attributing to them each the highest name for deity. In so doing we can recognise the equality between the Two, a doctrine which is found throughout the New Testament (John 5:18; Colossians 1:15-18; Colossians 2:9; Philippians 2:5-6; Hebrews 1:1-3)

Not only does the book of Genesis introduce the reader to the concept of a plural God but it further teachers an equality between the individuals by ascribing to both of them the most reverent of titles, namely Yehovah.

Chapter 4

Moses and God

To you it was shown, that you might know that the Lord [Yehovah] Himself is God [Elohiym]; there is none other besides Him. (Deuteronomy 4:35)

In our short study on Abraham's interaction with God we learnt that Abraham had both entertained and spoken to God face to face. We further learnt that Jehovah God is at least two separate but equal Persons. As we examine Moses' interaction with the Lord we will begin to discover the separate yet very distinct personalities of the Godhead.

Then the Lord (Yehovah) came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain. And the Lord (Yehovah) called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up. And the Lord (Yehovah) said to Moses, "Go down and warn the people, lest they break through to gaze at the Lord (Yehovah) and many of them perish. (Exodus 19:20-21)

When Israel arrived at Mount Sinai 3 months after leaving Egypt, the Lord Jehovah came down from Heaven and His presence was on top of the mountain. The Lord instructs Moses to warn the Israelites that they must not seek to gaze or look at God. If they do they will perish. It may appear that Moses alone was permitted to gaze upon the Lord. Perhaps, because he was God's chosen vessel, there was a special grace upon him which enabled him to stand in the presence of God as Abraham had done. After all, if God is the same yesterday, today and forever, it stands to reason that certain individuals are allowed to interact with Him face to face.

However, when we continue to study Scripture, we find that when Moses asked the Lord to see Him, he was refused.

And he said, "Please, show me Your glory." Then He said, "I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord (Yehovah) before you...But He said, "You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live. And the Lord (Yehovah) said, "Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. "Then I will take away My

hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen.
(Exodus 33:18-23)

The Lord says to Moses that, not only he may not see the Lord's face but no one else can see the face of God without dying. But we have already learnt that Abraham had talked with God and served Him food when the Lord visited him.

If this is so then there appears to be a contradiction in Scripture. This is further exasperated when we consider Exodus 24:9-11, *Then Moses went up, also Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and they saw the God (Elohiym) of Israel. And there was under His feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and it was like the very heavens in its clarity. But on the nobles of the children of Israel He did not lay His hand. So they saw God (Elohiym), and they ate and drank.*

In the above portion of Scripture, Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu and seventy other men go up Mount Sinai and they all see God and eat in His presence. Yet the Bible clearly states that God (*He*) *did not lay His hand* on them. They were in His presence gazing upon Him and not smitten by God? We know from Exodus 33:18-23 that Moses was forbidden to gaze at the Lord and yet prior to his request, he and seventy three other men had sat in the Lord's presence and gazed upon Him. Is this a contradiction in Scripture? Most definitely not.

We have already understood that there are at least two Persons called Jehovah. We now know that one of them, who took the form of Melchizedek, is Jesus. It was Jesus who met Abraham by the terebinth trees of Mamre and was entertained by him. It was Jesus who went to look at the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and destroy them. The other Personality we can assume for now to be God the Father.

The reason that on some occasions the saints of old could come into God's presence was that they were standing before Jesus. Jesus is the mediator between God and man, *for there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus* (1 Timothy 2:5). It is because of His role as mediator and His being the Son of Man that Jesus can interact with mankind. As our Redeemer and Saviour, Jesus had to identify with man and come and live amongst us. In the Old Testament Jesus appears to individuals whom recognise Him only as Lord and God, they being unable to discern between Father and Son.

The Father however cannot allow anything sinful into His presence. Because all have sinned, there is no one who can come into the Father's presence and live. It is for this reason that prior to Jesus' death and resurrection the righteous who had died went to Paradise (Abraham's Bosom), which is located in the heart of the earth (Luke 16:22; Luke 23:43). It was only at His resurrection when He had presented His blood before the Father (Hebrews 9:12) that those in Paradise could then go to Heaven, into the presence of the Father (Matthew 27:52-53).

Now that Jesus' blood is on the altar, all who are born-again will go into the presence of the Father at death. He remembers our sins no more (Jeremiah 31:34) because we now have His righteousness through Jesus (1 Corinthians 5:21).

But before Jesus' resurrection the Father could not allow man into His presence. It is for this reason that he tells Moses to hid in the cleft of the rock because he could not look upon the face of God the Father and live.

The gospel of John teaches that, *no one has seen the Father at any time* (John 1:18).

Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu and the seventy elders of Israel did indeed see God face to face. It was with Jesus with whom they fellowshiped and ate. In this account in Exodus 24:9-11, the Hebrew word for God is *Elohiym*. It would be incorrect to believe that the Scriptures use the word *Elohiym* for Jesus and *Yehovah* for the Father and in so doing try to portray their difference. We have already learnt that the Scriptures uses the words *Elohiym* and *Yehovah* for both the Father and the Son.

When Moses is called by God up Mount Sinai he spends 40 days in the presence of God. It would be incorrect to assume that he spent all that time exclusively with either the Father or Jesus because the Scriptures do not give us any insight into this. The only exception is that at some stage, Moses asked to see the face of God and was refused. The only Scriptural answer for this refusal is that it was the Father to whom Moses had made his request. And as we now know, no man can see the Father whilst alive in this sinful body.

In conclusion, we have learnt that not only is the Deity comprised of at least two Persons, but they each relate to man differently according to

their individual nature, whilst still being in perfect unity. We will revisit this doctrine again in chapters 6 and 7.

Chapter 5

Jesus, Pre-Incarnate through the Old Testament

Throughout the Old Testament we see God interacting with man face to face. By the expression, face to face, I mean that an individual would see God's face and not merely His form. The encounter would take place in the natural and was not a vision or a dream.

From what we have learnt thus far, we know that all of these interactions are with Jesus because no man can see the Father and live.

Most of these accounts are not readily understood by Christians as the Lord Jesus takes on forms and names that are not familiar to those who are not well versed in the scriptures. We will look at three of these pre-incarnations of Jesus under the headings of His various manifestations.

The Angel of the Lord

But the Angel of the Lord (Yehovah) called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" So he said, "Here I am." And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me." ...And Abraham called the name of the place, The-Lord-Will-Provide (Yehovah Yireh); as it is said to this day, "In the Mount of The Lord (Yehovah) it shall be provided." Then the Angel of the Lord (Yehovah) called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the Lord (Yehovah), because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son- "blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice." (Genesis 22:11-18)

Who is the Angel of the Lord? In the above account, the Angel of the Lord appears to Abraham just as he was about to slay his son, Isaac, and offer him up as a sacrifice according to the testing of God (Genesis 22:1-2). The Angel of the Lord stops Abraham and says, *for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your*

only son, from Me. He does not say that Abraham has withheld Isaac from God but rather *from Me.* This implies that either the Angel is speaking on God's behalf or on His own.

Then the Angel of God (Elohiym)spoke to me in a dream, saying, 'Jacob.' And I said, 'Here I am.' And He said,...I am the God (El) of Bethel, where you anointed the pillar and where you made a vow to Me. Now arise, get out of this land, and return to the land of your family.' (Genesis 31:11-13).

When Jacob tells Rachel and Leah that he has been instructed by the Angel of the Lord to return to Canaan, he says that the Angel of the Lord told him that He is the same God to whom Jacob had many years before made a vow. According to Jacob, the Angel of the Lord and God are one and the same. Is this correct?

And he blessed Joseph, and said: "God (Elohiym), before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, The God (Elohiym) who has fed me all my life long to this day, The Angel who has redeemed me from all evil, Bless the lads...(Genesis 48:15-16)

Again Jacob refers to God as The Angel equating the one with the other. Jacob is seeking for God and The Angel to bless his sons. *Bless the Lord (Yehovah), you His angels, who excel in strength, who do His word, heeding the voice of His word (Psalm 103:20).* Angels are ministering spirits (Hebrews 1:14) who act on Gods command and not mans. They cannot be instructed by man or prayed to as some erroneously believe. *Bless the Lord (Yehovah), all you His hosts, you ministers of His, who do His pleasure. (Psalm 103:21).* Obey God alone, so why would Jacob make request of The Angel if angels do not take requests from man. Could it be that the Angel of the Lord is not a created spirit being?

And the Angel of the Lord (Yehovah) appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush....So when the Lord (Yehovah) saw that he turned aside to look, God (Elohiym) called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." Then He said, "Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground." Moreover He said, "I am the God (Elohiym)of your father--the God (Elohiym) of Abraham, the God (Elohiym)of Isaac, and the God (Elohiym) of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God (Elohiym). (Exodus 3:2-6)

In the account of Moses and the burning bush, The Angel of the Lord calls to Moses from the midst of the fire. When Moses comes close to look at the burning bush, Jehovah God sees him. Yet the Bible records that Elohiym (God) speaks to Moses and tells him that he is standing on holy ground. Was the ground holy because the Angel of the Lord represented God or was it holy because the Angel of the Lord is God and Moses was in His presence? The Angel of the Lord tells Moses that, *"I am the God (Elohiym) of your father--the God (Elohiym) of Abraham, the God (Elohiym) of Isaac, and the God (Elohiym) of Jacob."* The Angel of the Lord is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob making Him the only true God. What is Moses' response to the Angel of the Lord, *and Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God (Elohiym).*

Moses, who wrote the book of Exodus, writes that he turned his face away from looking at God. He adds that he was afraid to look at God and does not write that he was afraid to look at the Angel. According to Moses who wrote under the inspiration and direction of the Holy Spirit (2 Timothy 3:16), the Angel of the Lord and God is one and the same. This is confirmed as we continue with the account.

Then Moses said to God (Elohiym), "Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God (Elohiym) of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say to them?" And God (Elohiym) said to Moses, "I AM Who I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you. Moreover God (Elohiym) said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: 'The Lord (Yehovah) God (Elohiym) of your fathers, the God (Elohiym) of Abraham, the God (Elohiym) of Isaac, and the God (Elohiym) of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations.' (Exodus 3:13-15)

Moses is still talking to the Angel of God who has identified Himself as God (Elohiym). As the passage continues, the Angel of the Lord/God reveals Himself as I AM. The Hebrew for I AM is *hâyâh* (יהי) which means "I exist". It is from the word *hâyâh* that the name *Yehovah*, "The Self Existing One" or "Eternal One" originates.

The Angel of the Lord reveals His true name as I AM that I AM to Moses. He instructs Moses to tell the children of Israel that the God of their fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob has a name. They knew Him before only as God (Elohiym) but they were to now call Him by His real

name. And that name is *Yehovah Elohiym*, “The Self Existing or Eternal God”. This event marks a turning in Israel’s relationship with God. Before the Lord appeared to Moses, He was seen as the God of their forefathers, an impersonal God who had no apparent relationship with the descendents of Jacob. They had seen themselves as abandoned slaves without hope, without God.

But at the burning bush the Angel of the Lord identifies Himself as *Yehovah Elohiym*, the Lord God of the children of Israel.

When Jesus responded to the Pharisees when they questioned Him about having seen Abraham, He said, *most assuredly I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM* (John 8:58). At this remark the Pharisees took up stones to stone Him to death for saying that He was indeed Jehovah God who had revealed His true name to Moses. They understood that Jesus was identifying Himself as Jehovah God, the One who appeared to Moses, the Deliverer, Redeemer and God of Israel. If the Angel of the Lord is I AM and Jesus said that He is I AM then we can conclude that the Angel of the Lord is indeed Jesus who is Jehovah God as much as the Father is Jehovah God (Genesis 19:24).

There are many other scriptures that prove that the Angel of the Lord is indeed God besides the ones we have already covered.

Then the Angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said: "I led you up from Egypt and brought you to the land of which I swore to your fathers; and I said, 'I will never break My covenant with you.'" (Judges 2:1)

It was the Angel of the Lord (Jehovah Jesus) that made His covenant with Israel and delivered them from slavery and bondage in Egypt. It is Jesus who delivers those who believe on Him from slavery and bondage to Satan and ultimately the flames of Hell.

And the Angel of the Lord appeared to him, and said to him, "The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valour!" Gideon said to Him, "O my lord (Adown), if the Lord (Yehovah) is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about, saying, 'Did not the Lord (Yehovah) bring us up from Egypt?' But now the Lord (Yehovah) has forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites."

Then the Lord (Yehovah) turned to him and said, "Go in this might of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have

I not sent you?" So he said to Him, "O my Lord (Adonay), how can I save Israel? Indeed my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house." And the Lord (Yehovah) said to him, "Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat the Midianites as one man." Then he said to Him, "If now I have found favor in Your sight, then show me a sign that it is You who talk with me.

"Do not depart from here, I pray, until I come to You and bring out my offering and set it before You." And He said, "I will wait until you come back." So Gideon went in and prepared a young goat, and unleavened bread from an ephah of flour. The meat he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot; and he brought them out to Him under the terebinth tree and presented them.

The Angel of God (Elohiym) said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened bread and lay them on this rock, and pour out the broth." And he did so. Then the Angel of the Lord (Yehovah) put out the end of the staff that was in His hand, and touched the meat and the unleavened bread; and fire rose out of the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread. And the Angel of the Lord departed out of his sight. Now Gideon perceived that He was the Angel of the Lord. So Gideon said, "Alas, O Lord (Adonay) God (Yehovih a variation of pronunciation of Yehovah) ! For I have seen the Angel of the Lord face to face." Then the Lord (Yehovah) said to him, "Peace be with you; do not fear, you shall not die." (Judges 6:10-23)

When the Angel of the Lord appears to Gideon, Gideon addresses Him as *Adown*. We learnt that the word *Adown* can be used for both man and God. It is obvious that Gideon does not recognise the Angel of the Lord as God at first. As we continue to read the scripture you will notice that Gideon comes to a revelation of whom he had been speaking with after the Angel departs.

Although Gideon does not recognise that he is speaking to God, the writer of the Book of Judges writes in verse 14, *Then the Lord (Yehovah) turned to him and said.* The writer of Judges, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, writes that Jehovah was speaking to Gideon. In what form was Jehovah speaking to Gideon? Through the manifestation of Jesus as the Angel of the Lord.

Gideon then seeks a sign that it is indeed God speaking to him and he prepares an offering for the Lord. When he returns with the offering he lays it before the Angel who in turn instructs him on how to lay out

the offering. At this point in the scripture, the writer then makes a notable change in the words he uses for the Angel. In verse twenty he calls Him the Angel of God (Elohiym) instead of the Angel of the Lord (Yehovah). Why does he go from the singular Jehovah to the plural Elohiym and is this significant?

Although seemingly obscure, this change in name is both significant as well as profound. Gideon was about to make a sacrifice to the Lord. Jesus was with him in the form of the Angel of the Lord representing the Godhead. When Gideon makes the sacrifice, he cannot make it to Jesus alone or for that matter to the Father alone. All sacrifice is made to the Triune God i.e. Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is against the Trinity we sin because they are One (*Hear O Israel the Lord your God the Lord is One* – Deuteronomy 6:4). A sin against One member is a sin against all three.

It is for this reason that the name of the Angel is changed to the Angel of Elohiym (God) because the sacrifice must be made to the Trinity. The only Hebrew word that God gave Israel to express His plurality of being is the word, Elohiym. Therefore Jesus receives the offering on behalf of the Trinity.

As soon as Gideon lays out the offering, the Angel of the Lord touches it with His staff and fire consumes it. The Angel then departs and verse twenty two tells us that Gideon then realises that he had not been speaking to any angel but to the Angel of the Lord. Fear grips his heart and he cries out that he has seen the Angel of the Lord face to face. Why was he in such terror that the Lord had to reassure him that he would not die in verse twenty three? It is because he knew the scripture that says, *but He said, "You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live* (Exodus 33:20). Gideon had seen the face of God and according to his understanding he should have been dead. It is obvious from his reaction, that he and for that matter the rest of Israel did not fully understand the plurality of the Deity.

Manoah, the father of Samson had a very similar experience when Jesus spoke to him in the Person of the Angel of the Lord. *Then Manoah said to the Angel of the Lord, "What is Your name, that when Your words come to pass we may honour You?" And the Angel of the Lord said to him, "Why do you ask My name, seeing it is wonderful?" So Manoah took the young goat with the grain offering, and offered it upon the rock to the Lord. And He did a wondrous thing while Manoah*

and his wife looked on, it happened as the flame went up toward heaven from the altar, the Angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar! When Manoah and his wife saw this, they fell on their faces to the ground. When the Angel of the Lord appeared no more to Manoah and his wife, then Manoah knew that He was the Angel of the Lord. And Manoah said to his wife, "We shall surely die, because we have seen God!" (Judges 13:17-22)

As with Gideon, the Angel of the Lord accepts an offering from Samson's parents and after He departs they realise that they have seen God face to face. Manoah's reaction is the same as Gideon's because he too knew that no man could see God and live. They did not know the different characters of the Father and Jesus. To them seeing God meant certain death. They did not understand that it was not God the Father with whom they had spoke but rather Jesus their King and Saviour.

It was the Father who told Moses that he could not see His face and live as we have already studied in the previous chapter.

Most interestingly is the Angel of the Lord's response to Manoah when He is asked about His name in verses seventeen and eighteen. He says that His name is *wonderful* which is translated from the Hebrew *pil'îy*. This word *wonderful* comes from the same root word *pâlâ* that is used to describe the coming Messiah in Isaiah 9:6, *For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful* (pele), *Counsellor, Mighty God* (El), *Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace*.

The Angel of the Lord's name is *wonderful* just as the Son of God's name is *wonderful* because they are one and the same Person, the Lord Jesus Christ.

We can conclude through scriptural evidence that the Angel of the Lord is Jesus pre-incarnate in the Old Testament.

The Commander of the Armies of God

Jesus not only revealed Himself in form of the Angel of the Lord to the children of Israel but He also took on the title of the Commander of the army of God.

And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, "Are You for us or for our adversaries?" So He said, "No, but as Commander of the army of the Lord (Yehovah) I have now come." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, "What does my Lord say to His servant?" Then the Commander of the Lord's (Yehovah) army said to Joshua, "Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy." And Joshua did so. (Joshua 5:13-15)

When Joshua meets this Man he asks Him if he is either for or against Israel. His response is interesting. He says that He is neither for nor against Israel but He has come as the Commander of the Lord's (Jehovah) army. In other words, He has come to do the will of God only. His response sounds like the response of an angel, who we have learnt will only obey the voice of God. But unlike any other angel, when Joshua falls prostrate on the ground He does not try to stop him. In every other biblical account (Revelation 19:10; Revelation 22:8-9) when anyone tried to worship an angel, the angel would always forbid them to.

Not only does the Commander of the Lord's army allow Joshua to worship Him but He also tells Joshua to take off his sandals because he is standing on holy ground. What made the ground holy? The ground had become holy because God was standing on it. Joshua, like Moses who was told to take off his sandals because he too was standing on holy ground when the Lord spoke to him from the midst of the burning bush (Exodus 3:2-6), had encountered the Angel of the Lord. Except this time Jesus appeared as the Commander of the Lord's army.

The title "Commander of the Lord's army" comes from the Hebrew *s'ar* (meaning :- chief captain; commander; prince) *tsâbâh* (translated:- army or host) *Y'hôvâh* (Jehovah).

This title is directly attributed to the Lord Jesus in Romans 9:29 (Paul quoting from Isaiah 1:9) *And as Isaiah said before: "Unless the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, We would have become like Sodom, And we would have been made like Gomorrah."*

And by James 5:4, *Indeed the wages of the labourers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.*

The word *Sabaoth* used in the original Greek manuscripts, comes directly from the Hebrew word *tsâbâh*. The two New Testament verses referred to above use the term *Lord of Sabaoth* in reference to God. An angel of God will not dare to call himself by one of God's names therefore we can conclude that this again speaks of Jesus because of the similarity between Joshua and Moses encounter.

Jesus is the Lord of Heavens armies. As Commander of the Army of the Lord, He did not side with or against Israel. The Lord was committed to His plan of redemption in which Israel was and still is His chosen vessel. He loved the enemies of Israel as much as He loved Israel (Deuteronomy 10:17) but their defeat was necessary for His purposes to be done.

Christians tend to not think of the Lord Jesus as a warrior as is portrayed by His title Lord of Sabaoth. Yet throughout the Book of Revelation, Jesus is portrayed as a warrior king. *Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. (Revelation 19:11-16)*

Who Wrestled with Jacob

Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day... And He said, "Let Me go, for the day breaks." But he said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me!" So He said to him, "What is your name?" He said, "Jacob." And He said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God (Elohiym) and with men, and have prevailed." Then Jacob asked, saying, "Tell me Your name, I pray." And He said, "Why is it that you

ask about My name?" And He blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: "For I have seen God (Elohiym) face to face, and my life is preserved." (Genesis 32:24-30)

Jacob believed that the Man with whom he had spent the night in struggle was God. He was so convinced of this that he named the place where the encounter took place Peniel. Peniel comes from two Hebrew words, namely, *pânâh* (to face) and *El* (Almighty - with particular reference to God). Peniel, were "he faced the Almighty", became to Jacob a memorial to his struggle with God. It was here that he faced God and his life was preserved.

We do not only have Jacobs testimony to rely on but also that of the prophet Hosea who made reference to this encounter. Hosea, prompted by the Holy Spirit confirms that Jacob did indeed wrestle with God. *"The Lord (Yehovah) also brings a charge against Judah, And will punish Jacob according to his ways; According to his deeds He will recompense him. He took his brother by the heel in the womb, And in his strength he struggled with God (Elohiym). Yes, he struggled with the Angel and prevailed; He wept, and sought favour from Him. He found Him in Bethel, And there He spoke to us, That is, the Lord (Yehovah) God (Elohiym) of hosts. The Lord (Yehovah) is His memorable name (Hosea 12:2-5).*

Hosea not only confirms the account in Genesis but adds that Jacob not only struggled with God but particularly with the Angel, referring to the Angel of the Lord whom we now know to be Jesus.

We have examined three identities that the Lord Jesus used in His interaction with some of the Old Testament saints. In so doing we have discovered that, for the most part, it Jesus who interacted directly with mankind under the Old Testament dispensation. As has been considered previously, the Father cannot interact directly with mankind because no one can look upon Him and live. Therefore it was necessary for Jesus to take on various forms in order to direct the purposes of the Godhead to ultimately bring about Their will on earth.

The Lord Our Redeemer

Before we conclude this chapter, it is important that Christians are aware of some of the other names that the Hebrew Scriptures use to describe the Lord Jesus. The Scriptures separate His names into two very distinct categories. The first category contains His names with reference to His Deity.

Yet I will have mercy on the house of Judah, Will save them by the Lord (Yehovah) their God (Elohiym), And will not save them by bow, Nor by sword or battle, By horses or horsemen (Hosea 1:7).

Like the verse above, in these names we see Jesus as the Creator God, an equal with the Father. He is called Almighty God; Jehovah; The Lord of Hosts and Sovereign God to name a few.

But the scriptures also refer to Him in His role as Messiah, the redeemer and saviour of man.

Eighteen times in the Old Testament Jesus is called the Redeemer. The word redeemer comes from the Law of Moses (Leviticus 25:25-49; Numbers 5:8; Numbers 35:9-27; Deuteronomy 19:1-13). There is one Hebrew word which has been translated as either, “kinsman-redeemer”, “avenger of blood” or “near kinsman.” That word is *ga'al* which means to purchase, ransom, redeem or redeemer. The word *ga'al* is rooted in the ancient tradition of tribal life in which an individual in a tribe or clan was responsible for administrating judgement and justice within the clan. He would right any wrongs and avenge any in the clan who had been harmed in any way. In like manner Jesus became our avenger or Redeemer when He ransomed us from sin and death and defeated Satan through the cross and His resurrection.

And all flesh shall know That I, the Lord (Yehovah), am your Saviour and your Redeemer (Ga'al), the Mighty One of Jacob. (Isaiah 49:26)

Thus says the Lord (Yehovah), the King of Israel and his Redeemer (Ga'al), the Lord (Yehovah) of hosts: 'I am the First and I am the Last; Besides Me there is no God.

There are many other names used for Jesus in the Old Testament, Isaiah 9:6 calls Him *Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace*. Jeremiah calls him the *Branch of righteousness* (Jeremiah 23:5) and *The Lord our Righteousness* (Jeremiah 23:7)

Through all these names we not only see Jesus as God but the scriptures attribute to Him equality with the Father.

Chapter 6

The Mystery of the Son

In Catholicism, Jesus is either depicted as a dead or dying man upon a cross or as an angry Deity who needs to be pacified through Mary. In Protestant Christianity He is generally depicted as being in some way inferior to the Father as has already been discussed.

Both these incorrect views stem from an ignorance of the scriptures. There are very few scriptures that reveal the inconceivable mystery of the fullness and complexity of Jesus as God than Isaiah 9:6. Herein is the mystery of Christ concealed. Although it is impossible to fully understand each person of the Trinity, let examine what the scriptures teach about Jesus the Son through Isaiah and related scriptures.

For unto us a Child is born

Verse six begins with the promise that unto mankind a Child will be born. This verse promises the coming of God in the form of a man. The Child will be human born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14).

Unto us a Son is given

Whereas the first sentence of the verse promises a Child to mankind, the second verse makes it quite clear that he is not just a human baby but that He is the Son of God. It is God's Son who is given. Jesus pre-existed (Micah 5:2) as creator (John 1:3) and Lord (Luke 2:11) before He took on human form.

And the government will be upon His shoulder

Isaiah foretells that Jesus will rule over all the works of Gods creation. To Jesus and none else is given all rule and authority (Matthew 28:18). He alone is Lord of all lords and King of all kings (Revelation 17:14). It is Jesus and not the Father that will rule over men both now and in the millennium (Psalm 2; Revelation 19:15; Revelation 20:6)

And His name shall be called, Wonderful

The Hebrew for Wonderful is *Pelé* which means a “wonder” or “marvellous thing”. In Revelation 19:12, the Word teaches that Jesus

has a name written that no one knew except Himself. In ancient times your name often depicted your character or standing with God. Jacob means deceiver, which he was. David means beloved, which the scriptures confirm (Psalm 108:6). Solomon was also called Jedidiah meaning beloved of the Lord (2 Samuel 12:24-25)

The name of Jesus, which reveals His true nature and glory is to wonderful or marvellous for man to fathom or grasp. He is more glorious than you can imagine. More powerful than you could ever believe possible. He is called Wonderful because He is a wonder beyond our ability to ever perceive.

Counsellor

Jesus is omniscient (all knowing), He is able to give council, advise and wisdom to all who would seek it (Daniel 1:17; James 5:5).

Mighty God (El Gibbor).

In the previous chapters we have seen that Jesus is called Jehovah making Him equal with the Father. We know that He is the Almighty creator and Lord of all.

Everlasting Father

Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to the Lord (Yehovah), and spoke, saying: "I will sing to the Lord (Yehovah), For He has triumphed gloriously! The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea!

*The Lord (Yehovah) is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation; He is my God (El), and I will praise Him; My father's God (Elohiym), and I will exalt Him. **Exodus 15:1-2***

In the previous chapter we learned that the Angel of the Lord is Jesus pre-incarnate. In the above verse, Israel praises God for defeating the armies of Pharaoh in the Red Sea. If you read verse 14 of Exodus, you will note that it was the Angel of the Lord, that is Jesus, who defeated the Egyptians.

Israel's song acknowledges that Elohiym is their Father. In other words Jesus is not only equal to the Father but as the new testament teaches, He is the very reflection or icon of the Father.

As Isaiah teaches, Jesus is not only the Son but He is the everlasting icon of the Father. Israel were to embrace the Messiah as they would

have sought to embrace the Father. The two are as one. Israel stumbled because they could not except that Messiah Jesus was equal in all respects to the Father. May the church not continue to make the same mistake.

Prince of Peace

*And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. **Colossians 1:20***

No other act, sacrifice or event in all time and creation can compare with the peace that Jesus accomplished through His cross. He made peace between God and man by redeeming our sins (Colossians 2:14) and removing the curse (Galatians 3:13). He has made peace possible between all who believe (Ephesians 2:14).

He indeed is the prince of peace and He Himself taught that it is the peacemakers that are truly the sons of God (Matthew 5:9). Let all who name the name of Jesus become peacemakers firstly within the one Church of the Lord (Ephesians 4:4) and amongst the unsaved (2 Corinthians 5:20)

Chapter 7

Hear O Israel the Lord Our God the Lord is One

(Deuteronomy 6:4)

Before we continue with our study and particularly the next chapter in which we will clearly see all three Persons of the Trinity revealed in the Old Testament, it is necessary to consider the mystery of the oneness of God. There is a tendency for us as people to want to place everything in a box. The boxes represent our need to contain and control our understanding of things. It is how we cope with information. But the understanding of the complexity of the Trinity and Their unity is beyond the scope of any box that our minds can construct or conceive.

The Bible can never be understood if you separate verses, chapters, books and even the Testaments into separate, unrelated boxes. The Word of God is one account, one story, one message. Like a tapestry, each word, each verse, each chapter contributes a small yet significant portion to the whole picture or story of God's redemption.

Do not place the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in separate boxes in your mind. Although they are three very individual Persons and not three expressions of one Person, yet they are so perfectly united in character and purpose that they are to always be regarded as One.

It is for this reason that God gave Israel the one scripture that they most revere, which is the title of this chapter. The poignant truth is that what was meant for their understanding and benefit has become a snare to their salvation because they do not comprehend their own scriptures. Let us examine prayerfully this verse,

Hear O Israel the Lord our God the Lord is one! Translated from the original Hebrew language this scripture seemingly emphasises the perception that God is indeed one Person, not three. It is because of this understanding that the Pharisees and Sadducees wanted to stone Jesus for blasphemy when He compared Himself to the Father and proclaimed He was the Son of God (John 10:30-33).

But what does this verse teach? Let us examine it in the original language.

Hear (shâmá – hear or give attention to) *O Israel* (Yiśrâ’el – Israel) *the Lord* (Adonay – Sovereign Lord) *our God* (Elohay’nu – from Elohiym the plural form for the Supreme God meaning Gods) *the Lord* (Adonay – the Sovereign Lord) *is one* (echad – double meaning, firstly the number one but also widely used to express unity).

When we break down each word in the verse we begin to see a very different meaning to the one that is first conveyed. This meaning is far more consistent with the overall teaching of the Scriptures.

If God is One Person numerically only and He is unchanging and consistent, then how is it possible for Him to contradict Himself with regards to who can see Him face to face, as we have already understood.

Scripture must interpret Scripture. There never exists a contradiction in Scripture only a lack of knowledge regarding Scripture. As an individual studies the Bible, they will, by the Holy Spirit’s guidance, come to realise that every verse supports and adds to the doctrines of the Word without ever casting even the slightest doubt on these doctrines.

To understand Deuteronomy 6:4 we must understand the meaning and context of each word in the verse. We have already studied the different names of God and understand the plural word *Elohiym* to reflect the plurality of God. Not only have we understood the word but scripture undeniably confirms this to be true as we have discovered thus far.

The most important word in the whole verse for the purpose of our study is the word *echad* – “one”. The word *echad* denotes not only the number one but also the idea of unity and oneness of purpose. Genesis 11:6 illustrates this use of the word unmistakably, *And the Lord (Yehovah) said, "Indeed the people are one (echad) and they all have one (echad) language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them.*

The above verse perfectly illustrates the dual meaning and use of the word *echad*. It illustrates the fact that those who were building the tower of Babel were in complete unity of purpose with regards to their project. It was because of this uncompromising unity that the Lord says *nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them*. Their unity of purpose made the many *echad* – “one”.

They were not only *echad* in purpose but they also all spoke *echad*, “one” language.

Now let us apply this knowledge to Deuteronomy 6:4 and now a literal translation of this verse would read, *Give attention O Israel, the Sovereign Lord our Gods they are one Sovereign Lord in unity and purpose.*

This thought or doctrine permeates the Old Testament. The Lord wants His people to see Him as One God yet at the same time to understand Him as three separate but perfectly united Beings, as each member of the Trinity works together to bring about the salvation of man and the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

It is to this mystery that the apostle Paul refers when he writes to the church at Colosse. His desire was that they would *attain to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ.* He wanted them to understand the mystery of God, that is, that the Father and Son, both being God individually are one God.

The following three scriptures all illustrate this mystery, as we conclude this chapter,

Thus says the Lord (Yehovah), the King of Israel and his Redeemer the Lord (Yehovah) of hosts: 'I am the First and I am the Last; besides Me there is no God (Elohiym). (Isaiah 44:6)

Remember the former things of old, for I am God (El – “mighty”) and there is no other; I am God (Elohyim – “Gods”) and there is none like Me. (Isaiah 46:9)

Your throne, O God (Elohiym), is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. You love righteousness and hate wickedness; Therefore God (Elohiym), Your God (Elohiym), has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions. (Psalm 45:6-7)

Chapter 8

The Trinity Revealed in the Old Testament

In this chapter we will study two portions of scripture that clearly illustrate the three Persons of the Trinity working together and how they function so very differently.

Then the Lord (Yehovah) said to Moses, "Depart and go up from here, you and the people whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt,...And I will send My Angel before you,...Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey; for I will not go up in your midst, lest I consume you on the way, for you are a stiff-necked people. And when the people heard this bad news, they mourned, and no one put on his ornaments. For the Lord (Yehovah) had said to Moses, Say to the children of Israel, 'You are a stiff-necked people. I could come up into your midst in one moment and consume you...Moses took his tent and pitched it outside the camp, far from the camp, and called it the tabernacle of meeting... And it came to pass, when Moses entered the tabernacle, that the pillar of cloud descended and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the Lord (Yehovah) talked with Moses...So the Lord (Yehovah) spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend... Then Moses said to the Lord (Yehovah), "See, You say to me, 'Bring up this people.' But You have not let me know whom You will send with me... And He said, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."...And he said, "Please, show me Your glory." Then He said, "I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord (Yehovah) before you... But He said, "You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live." (Exodus 33:2-23)

The above portion of Scripture clearly reveals the Trinity as They interact with Israel after they have left Egypt. If you have not been a diligent student of the Scriptures you would probably not be able to identify the Trinity but I assure you They are their, all Three. Let us begin to uncover their whereabouts.

The Father

It is easy to recognise the Father in these verses. It is the Father's face that Moses was forbidden to see when he asked to see the Father's glory. Moses had previously looked on Jesus face to face as we have discovered but to look on the Father's face meant certain death.

It was the Father who could not go with the children of Israel in verse three because *He is light and in Him there is no darkness at all* (1 John 1:5). He could not abide the sin of Israel because He is holy and all who approach Him must be holy. The Israelites were unsaved and sinful. The blood of Jesus had not yet been shed to remove their sins. The Father must punish sin for it is in His very nature to do so.

If He had remained with Israel He would have consumed them as He had said He would if He had remained.

Jesus

When Jehovah instructs Moses to depart from Mount Sinai and lead the children of Israel to Canaan, He says that He will send His Angel before them. We have already learnt that one of the manifestations of Jesus in the Old Testament was as the Angel of the Lord. Is Jehovah referring to Jesus here or to another angel? We know from scripture that the Angel of God protected Israel. *And the Angel of God (Elohiym), who went before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud went from before them and stood behind them* (Exodus 14:19).

But is the Angel of God (*Elohiym*) the same Person as The Angel of the Lord (Yehovah)? Again let scripture interpret scripture, *and the Lord (Yehovah) went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night* (Exodus 13:21). *Now it came to pass, in the morning watch, that the Lord (Yehovah) looked down upon the army of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and cloud, and He troubled the army of the Egyptians.*

According to scripture it was the Lord who was in the pillar of cloud.

We can safely assume that it was Jesus and not the Father who was in the pillar because it is the Father who sends His Angel referring to Jesus. It was the Father whose glory Moses wanted to see and was refused. But the scripture says that the Lord spoke to Moses face to face in the tent of meeting. Who was that? It could only have been Jesus with whom he spoke.

The Holy Spirit

Moses asks the Father whom He would send with them and He replies that *My Presence will go with you*. What or Whom is the presence of God?

...And the Angel of His Presence saved them; In His love and in His pity He redeemed them; And He bore them and carried them all the days of old. But they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit; So He turned Himself against them as an enemy, And He fought against them (Isaiah 63:9-10).

Isaiah teaches us that it was the Holy Spirit who was present with Israel in the wilderness. It was the Holy Spirit who Israel grieved with their sin and unbelief. Stephen, the first martyr of the church made the same accusation under the unction of the Holy Spirit when he faced the Sanhedrin. He compared them with their forefathers when he said to them, *"You stiff necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you* (Acts 7:51)

The Presence that the Father spoke of was the Person of the Holy Spirit with which the scriptures confer. It was the Holy Spirit that came upon the tent of meeting and it was the Holy Spirit who dwelt above the mercy seat on the Ark in the Holy of Holies.

The second passage of scripture that we will now look at reveals the Trinity in such openness and simplicity that one wonders how professing Christians can possibly doubt the very obvious existence of the three Persons of the Godhead.

"Listen to Me, O Jacob, And Israel, My called: I am He, I am the First, I am also the Last. 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..."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 (Adonay) God (Yehovih – form of Yehovah) and His Spirit Have sent Me." Thus says the Lord (Yehovah) your Redeemer, The Holy One of Israel: "I am the Lord (Yehovah) your God (Elohiym), Who teaches you to profit, Who leads you by the way you should go. (Isaiah 48:12-17)

In this passage we can identify the Lord Jesus as the narrator simply by the phrases He uses to identify Himself. He begins by saying that

He is *the First and the Last*. In Revelation 22:13, it is Jesus who says of Himself that He is *the Alpha and the Omega the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last* (Revelation 2:8 and Revelation 22:13). He then says that his *hand has laid the foundation of the earth and My right hand has stretched out the heavens*. We know from scripture that it is Jesus who is the Creator, *all things were made through Him and without Him nothing was made that was made* (John 1:3). Then in verse sixteen He says that *from the beginning, from the time that it was, I was there*. The gospel of John says, *in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God* (John1:1-2). We know that the Word is Jesus who was with the Father in the beginning. The prophet Micah verifies that the Messiah Jesus is eternal like the Father. *But you Bethlehem, Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be ruler of Israel, Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting* (Micah 5:2).

At the end of verse sixteen Jesus then says, *and now the Lord* (Adonay) *God* (Yehovih – another form of the word Yehovah) *and His Spirit Have sent Me."*

Jesus says that He had been sent by the *Adonay Yehovih* – the Father and by His Spirit referring to the Holy Spirit. Clearly we can see all three persons of the Trinity together, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Contained in this one sentence is the mystery of the Trinity revealed in the Old Testament. This one sentence clearly illustrates how the Trinity work together as each member of the Deity performs His specific function in unity with the others. As with 1 John 5:7 (*For there are three who bear witness in heaven: the Father the Word and the Holy Spirit and these three are one*) the Old Testament bears witness that God is indeed three yet God is one.

In the last verse Jesus, the Lord our Redeemer say, *Thus says the Lord* (Yehovah) *your Redeemer, The Holy One of Israel: "I am the Lord (Yehovah) your God (Elohiym)*. *Who teaches you to profit, Who leads you by the way you should go* (v17).*

Note the expression translated literally as *I am Jehovah your Gods**. Jesus is Jehovah our Elohiym (Gods plural). In other words, Jesus is the full expression and representation of the Trinity. Even though they are individuals yet their full expression can be found in Jesus. This is

exactly what the New Testament teachers, *For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead in bodily form* (Colossians 2:9).

Epilogue

Now that you have obtained the knowledge of the Trinity through the Old Testament, how can this knowledge benefit you in your Christian walk and witness. Firstly, you are now equipped to counter false cults that deny the Trinity. You are able to clarify confusion in others regarding this doctrine. You better understand how the Trinity functions.

But most importantly you should have learnt that God is desiring to reveal Himself to you. It was through the word that we discovered the Trinity in the Old Testament and it is through the word that the treasures of God are revealed. The word is a treasure chest of priceless bounty that will equip and sustain you until we all bow down before the Lord one day in eternity.

I pray that you will approach His word with a new fervency always depending on the precious Holy Spirit to be your teacher.