

GODHEAD COURSE

Lesson 7

Monotheism in the OT

The O.T. is clear that:

1. There is one God
2. Elohim is a plural word but used in a singular sense
3. The Holy spirit is not another God. It is not called “god the Holy spirit.” The spirit is the spirit, presence and person of God
4. There are two divine beings. Both referred to as God.

This lesson will answer the question “Who are the two divine Beings?”

The O.T. refers to or describes the two Divine Beings in more than one way

A. The Lord and His Angel (*Messenger*)

*“And the **angel of God [Elohim]**, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: ...” Exodus 14:19*

*And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the **LORD [Jehovah]** looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians ...” Exodus 14:24*

Note: The angel of God is referred to as the “LORD” or Jehovah.

Notice also the words in Deuteronomy, referring to the same “angel”:

*“Yet in this thing ye did not believe the **LORD [Jehovah] your God [Elohim]**, **Who** went in the way before you, to search you out a place to pitch your tents in, in fire by night, to shew you by what way ye should go, and in a cloud by day.”
Deuteronomy 1:32,33*

The *angel of God* is said to have been the one leading Israel in the pillar of cloud and of fire, yet this individual is also referred to by the name Jehovah, and the title of Elohim. Both God and His Angel are referred to as Elohim and Jehovah, hence both are divine. But nonetheless, One is referred to as *the Angel* or *Messenger of the Other*. There are two divine Beings, yet One is the Messenger of the Other.

Another interesting insight about this “Angel” is found in Isaiah. He is called *the Angel of His presence*:

*“I will mention the loving kindnesses of the **LORD**, and the praises of the **LORD**, according to all that the **LORD** hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which **he** hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of **his** loving kindnesses.”*

*“For **he** said, Surely they are **my** people, children that will not lie: so **he** was their **Saviour**.”*

*“In all their affliction **he** was afflicted, and **the angel of his presence saved them**: in **his** love and in **his** pity **he redeemed** them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.”*

*“But they rebelled, and vexed **his holy Spirit**: therefore **he** was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them.” Isaiah 63:7-10*

Here the Angel of God is called the Angel of His presence, who is also called Elohim and Jehovah. In verse 8 Jehovah is the Saviour of His children; in verse 9, the Angel of Jehovah’s presence saved them.

This passage teaches that:

- a. The Angel of God is the presence of Jehovah. Wherever He is, Jehovah is. He represents Jehovah. He is the messenger and presence of God.
- b. Both are referred to as having saved the people. Two divine Beings are involved in the work of redemption. Yet One is described as the *presence* of the Other.

It is important to look at the full context because it sheds some light on the 10 commandments:

*“And God spake all these words, saying, I am the **LORD** thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. **Thou shalt have no other gods before me.**” Exodus 20:1-3*

God continued speaking, but the people were afraid, so they asked Moses to speak to God for them:

“And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was. And the LORD said unto Moses, thus thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven.” Exodus 20:21-22

The same Being, referred to as Jehovah and Elohim continued speaking with Moses. There is no interruption in the speech until the end of Chapter 23.

Notice what this same Jehovah, who spoke the 10 commandments, says (at the end of the same conversation, with no interruptions):

*“Behold, **I** send an **Angel** before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared.*

*Beware of him, and obey **his voice**, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for **my name is in him**.*

*But if thou shalt indeed obey **his** ^(the Angel's) voice, and do all that **I** ^(GOD) speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries.*

*For **mine Angel** shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites: and I will cut them off.” Exodus 23:20-23*

Notice two things from this passage:

Firstly, God said in verse 22,

*“But if thou shalt indeed obey **his** ^(the Angel's) **voice**, and do all that **I** ^(GOD) **speak**;*”

In other words, God said, “this Angel will *speak* my words; I speak through His voice. He is my Word. He is the Word of God. He is My thoughts made audible.”

Secondly, God said, “*my name is in him*” (Exodus 23), implying that this angel bares God's own nature and authority.

The other divine Being is:

- The Angel or messenger of God
- The presence of God
- The voice of God
- The Word of God
- He has the name (nature and authority) of God in Him

With this in mind, who was it that spoke the 10 commandments, and to whom does the first commandment refer?

Just before Stephen was stoned he said:

*“When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold it, **the voice of the Lord came unto him** saying, I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and durst not behold. Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet: for the place where thou standest is holy ground. I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt. This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of **the angel which appeared to him in the bush**. He brought them out, after that he had shewed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red sea, and in the wilderness forty years. This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear. This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with **the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina**, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us:” Acts 7:31 - 38*

In light of this, it was the Angel of God who spoke the 10 Commandments; the same Angel that spoke to Moses from the burning bush. However, He spoke the words of God, the Ancient of Days, because He is the voice – the LOGOS or WORD – of God. Interestingly enough, Stephen calls Him *“the voice of the Lord”* Acts 7:31

Therefore, the commandment that says *“Thou shalt have no other gods before me”* (Exodus 20:3) must refer to Jehovah rather than to the Angel of Jehovah whose voice was heard speaking those words.

Furthermore, notice what is recorded when the Angel of Jehovah appeared to Moses in the burning bush:

*“And the **angel of the LORD** appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. ...*

And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I.

*Moreover he (the Angel of the LORD) said, **I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.** And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.” Exodus 3:2,4,6*

Here we see the Angel (messenger) of Jehovah saying:

“I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” Exodus 3: 6

What does this claim mean?

Was the Angel of Jehovah claiming to be the One God of the Bible, or was the One God of the Bible speaking through *His Word*?

Notice who Peter understood the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to be:

*“The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified **his Son Jesus**; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go.” Acts 3:13*

According to Peter, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is the Father of Jesus. {Therefore Hence}, a more accurate understanding of Exodus 3:6 will be that the One God of the Bible was speaking through His Messenger. It was the words of God through the voice of His Angel, who is equally divine with Him.

Here we see two divine Beings, two Beings referred to as Jehovah and Elohim. One of these two Beings is said to be:

- The Angel of Jehovah
- The presence of Jehovah
- The Voice of Jehovah
- The One in whom Jehovah put His name

Even if that was all the O.T. reveals about the two divine Beings, it still does not qualify for a trinity. At best, it qualifies to having two Gods or one God made up of two Persons/Beings.

After all, the evidence so far shows the existence of two, not three, Beings/Persons referred to as Jehovah and Elohim. The Holy Spirit is never referred to as god the Holy Spirit in the O.T. The trinity requires three divine persons, not two. However, the O.T. reveals more information that sheds light on this topic.

B. God and His Son (Proverbs 8:22-30; 30:4)

*“The LORD possessed **me** in the beginning of his way, before his works of old.*

I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.

*When there were no depths, **I** was **brought forth**; when there were no fountains abounding with water.*

*Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was **I brought forth**:*

While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world.

*When he prepared the heavens, **I** was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth:*

When he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep:

When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth:

*Then **I** was by him, as one brought up with him: and **I** was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him;” Proverbs 8:22-30*

Some would like to apply this passage to the “wisdom” of God since, contextually speaking, that is what is being spoken about. However, if one literally applies the above text to the attribute of wisdom, he will run into deep trouble.

The text clearly states that “wisdom” was “possessed” or “brought forth” at a certain “point” in the days of eternity before anything was created. If the text is referring to the attribute of wisdom, it would be implying that before that “point” God was not wise or did not possess the attribute of wisdom.

Moreover, the way the author records it does not fit with it being simply an attribute. It is more fitting to apply it to a “person” or a “being.”

Notice the following phrases in Proverbs 8:30:

- ...I was by him
- ...as one brought up with him
- ...I was daily his delight
- ...rejoicing always before him

Now consider how Wisdom is spoken of as:

- The giver of life and death (Proverbs 8:35-36)
- The giver of wealth (Proverbs 8:18-21) and security (Proverbs 1:33)
- The source of wisdom, counsel, understanding, and strength (Proverbs 8:14)

- The source of government, rulership, and authority (Proverbs 8:15)
- The source of happiness (Proverbs 3:13,18)
- The source of revelation (Proverbs 8:6-10, 32, 34)
- The one who is to be sought after, found, and called (Proverbs 1:28; 8:17)
- The one who loves, and is to be loved (Proverbs 8:17)
- The one who calls to men and seeks for them (Proverbs 8:4)
- The one who leads in the way (Proverbs 3:17; 8:20, 32)

This language is not describing an attribute. It is describing a Person—Jesus Christ.

The verses from Proverbs 8:22 to the end of Proverbs 9 all apply to Jesus. Jesus is the “*wisdom of God*.” (See: 1 Corinthians 1:24, 30. Also compare Matthew 23:34 with Luke 11:49).

Also:

“Then I was by him, as a master workman: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him;” (Proverbs 8:30 RSV)

Contextually, this is referring to the time of creation. The point of the text is that during the work of creation, Wisdom was there as a “*master workman*” or “*architect, skilled workman*.”

*“Who hath ascended up into heaven, and descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in his garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and **what is his son’s name**, if thou knowest?”* (Proverbs 30:4)

Again, while referring to the work of creation, the author attributes creation to two Individuals, and identifies “Them” by relationship as Father and Son. The Son of God, Wisdom, was with the Father during creation.

This passage presents two divine beings involved in creation, God and His Son.

The Son of God is the Angel of God, the presence of God, the voice of God, the wisdom of God and the Word of God.

C. A God and His God

“Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.” Psalms 45:6-

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Two beings are referred to in this passage. The one being spoken to is referred to as God.

“thy throne O God”.

Then the passage goes on to say *“therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee.”*

Thus, the one who is being spoken to has a God even though he himself is referred to as God.

In comparison with Hebrews 1:8,9, the one being spoken to is the Messiah. One can conclude that the Messiah has a God even though He himself is referred to as God.

In the above it is clear that the Angel of God, who is called Jehovah, has Jehovah as His God. Put simply, God refers to Himself as the God of His Son.

Summing up, the O.T. presents two divine Beings, both referred to as Jehovah and Elohim. Both are involved in the work of creation and redemption.

They are referred to as:

- Jehovah and His Angel
- Jehovah and His Son
- Jehovah’s Son and His God (Jehovah)

The Angel of the Lord is referred to as Jehovah and Elohim because:

- He is the Son of Jehovah (Proverbs 8:22-30 ; pro 30:4)
- He is the presence of Jehovah (Isaiah 63:7-9)
- He is the Voice/Word of Jehovah (Exodus 23:20, 23)
- He has Jehovah’s Name in Him (Exodus 23:20, 23)

He has the Divine nature of Jehovah and is Elohim or God by nature because He is the Son of Jehovah.

According to the O.T., there is one God yet two divine Beings. There is one God because the Father is the Source of all things, including His Son. It is not because God has a triune or biune nature, or because only one Being is referred to as God. The term “one God” means “One Source of all things.”

The Son Himself said:

*“The LORD **possessed** me in the beginning of his way...*

*When there were no depths, **I was brought forth**” Proverbs 8:22, 24*

In other words, The Son himself said ‘Jehovah gave Me life. He, Jehovah, brought Me into existence before creation took place. He is the source of My life and My existence.’ If both divine Beings, Jehovah and His Son, are involved in creation, and Jehovah is the source of His Son’s existence, then it follows that Jehovah is the source of all things, including the life of His Son. It is by inheritance that the Son is *equally divine with* His Father. That is why the O.T. explicitly teaches Monotheism, yet it refers to two divine Beings.

One came out of, came forth or was begotten from the other. He was begotten, *not* created.

The term “*one God*” refers to the One Source of all things, namely, the Father, the Ancient of Days (Daniel 7:9, 13). It does not mean only one divine being, or only one being with the God nature, it means one Source of all things—One Supreme Being who is above all, who has no God or Father, and always has been.

The O.T. presents a truly monotheistic picture of God—only one divine Source. It does not teach a triune or a biune monotheistic God. This means that the Jews, including Elijah worshipped the One true God of the Bible—Jehovah, the Father of Jesus, the Father of all, as the one God of the Bible. Views such as trinitarianism or modalism were completely foreign to them.

A crucial point worth mentioning here is that God gave His people, the Jews, special instructions to kill any person, including prophets, and dreamers who would entice them to worship other gods, other than “*the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt.*” *Deuteronomy 13:1-10*

It has been established from the Scriptures that the One true God is the Father. It was the Father, through His Son, who created, delivered and led the people. He was the One worshipped and adored as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. It was He who spoke the commandment, through His Son, saying “*thou shalt have no other Gods before me.*” *Deuteronomy 5:7*

This implies that anyone else, even if it was an angel of light, who was to come later and teach the people to worship any other god, other than the One revealed in the O.T. would have been stoned, or killed.

This is important to highlight because, as our study now moves into the New Testament, we will see that Jesus Himself commended the Jews for their correct understanding of who God is.

In this lesson it has been established that:

1. The term one God means one source of all things
2. The two divine beings are God & His Son, or God and His Angel
3. The Son of God or the Angel of God received His life and existence from God the Father
4. God the Father is the One God of the bible and the source of all things