

God is One!

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7/15/2007

Introduction

Let us consider the meaning and implications of the Deuteronomic declaration. This passage communicates a central truth about Jehovah God: namely, *“The Lord is our God, the Lord is one!”* It also conveys a corresponding implication about our conduct and conviction: *“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates”* (Deuteronomy 6:4-9).

Significantly, this Scripture is thrice quoted in the New Testament. When asked, “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and foremost commandment” (Matthew 22:34-40; cf. Mark 12:28-34; Luke 10:25-29).

Definitions of Divine Oneness

How can God be one, and yet be composed of three distinct personalities? In the creation account, the Lord God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness...” (Genesis 1:26-27; cf. 3:22-24). In dispersing the nations, the Lord said, “Let Us go down and there confuse their language...” (Genesis 11:1-9; cf. 9:1). The threefold nature of the Godhead was also evidenced at Jesus’ baptism (Matthew 3:16-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:29-34).

Deuteronomy 6:4 says, “Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one!” The Hebrew word **echad**, pronounced “ekh·AWD,” and here translated “one,” is “a primary cardinal number,” meaning “one” [Thomas & BDB]. Harris says, “This word occurs 960 times as a noun, adjective, or adverb, as a cardinal or ordinal number, often used in a distributive sense. ... It stresses unity while recognizing diversity within that oneness” [TWOT]. Gesenius says it is “a numeral having the power of an adjective... joined in one, united...” In this context, Swanson says “one” signifies “that which is united as one in contrast to separate parts.”

Characteristics of Divine Oneness

- The True God is Singular (Deuteronomy 4:32-40; 5:7-10; Isaiah 44:6-8; 45:5-7).
- The True God is Unified (John 10:24-30; 14:8-12; 17:20-24; Ephesians 4:4-6).

Illustrations of Divine Oneness

- Divine Oneness is Like the Unity of Marriage (Genesis 2:18-24).
- Divine Oneness is Like the Unity of Pharaoh's Dreams (Genesis 41:1-8, 25-36).
- Divine Oneness is Like the Unity of the Tabernacle Curtains (Exodus 26:1-6).
- Divine Oneness is Like the Unity of the Faithful (2 Chronicles 30:1-12; Jeremiah 32:36-41; Ezekiel 11:17-21; 37:15-23).

Conclusion

Let us recognize both the singularity and the unity of God. May we cultivate a love for God and his revealed word. In like manner, may we also strive to be a singular people, united on principles of divine truth (Acts 2:41-47; 4:32-35; 1 Corinthians 1:10-17).

Sources:

BDB = Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2000), s.v. "25.2."

Gesenius = H. W. F. Gesenius, *Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*, Translated by Samuel P. Tregelles, (1847; Rpt. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1979), s.v. "ECHAD" (H259), p. 28-29.

Swanson = James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains*, (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), s.v. "DBLH #285, #4."

Thomas = Robert L. Thomas, *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries: Updated Edition*, (Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc., 1998, 1981), s.v. "Hebrew #259."

TWOT = R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, (Chicago: Moody Press, c1980, 1999), s.v. "No. 61."