

# ARIANISM REFUTED

By John Henry Wheeler

There are many who, in seeking to distance themselves from the Trinity doctrine, have unwittingly fallen into the equally false teaching called *Arianism*.<sup>1</sup> What the Bible asks us to understand is not *whether* God is One, but *how*. Herbert W. Armstrong and those faithful to his teachings<sup>2</sup> have *always* taught that there is but *One God*.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Armstrong described **Elohim** as being *One Kingdom* in prehistory, and now also *One Family* -- in both cases, having just *Two Persons* for the present, each of which are *also* called **Elohim**.<sup>4</sup>

We have pointed out many times over the years that both the Father and the Son are called **Yehawweh**, *both explicitly and implicitly*. We have not really addressed the Unity of **Yehawweh** as we have the Unity of **Elohim**, however, and so I will try to do so here. Along those lines, meanwhile, Mr. Meredith recently has put stress in passing comments (in his sermons) on **Yehawweh** applying to the Father, to the Son, or to *both* of them together. So to summarize first what we have said for so long, **Elohim** is "One God [One God Kingdom, One God Family], more than One Person" -- or as I would put it in more precise English theological language, **Elohim** is "One Being [and One Kingdom and also now One Family], more than One Person".

Israel as a whole then (like Rabbinic Judaism now) knew of **Yehawweh Elohim** as *One Being* -- not as *Two Persons*. Few were those who understood that God was *both*. Abraham (who used a *unique phrasing* in Genesis 20:13<sup>5</sup>), Moses (who wrote Genesis 1:26 and 4:22), and David (who wrote Psalm 110), were evidently among them. The Person who became the Father was not utterly "unknown" or "unsung" -- *far from it*. He simply was not *distinguished* in most cases from the Person who became the Son. The Hebrew Bible generally makes no such distinction, and so Israel as a whole would not have made it either.<sup>6</sup> Jesus came to make that distinction clear. He said that *no one* among

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<sup>1</sup> "**Arianism**...*Theology*. The doctrines of Arius, denying that Jesus was of the same substance as God and holding instead that he was only the highest of created beings" (*American Heritage Dictionary*). Arius was a Greek Christian theologian who died in 336 AD; he was, of course, condemned as a heretic.

<sup>2</sup> Of which the first axiom, famously so even among the unconverted, was: "Don't believe me -- believe the Bible!"

<sup>3</sup> Compare *The Incredible Human Potential* (1978 paperback edition), pp. 51, 61 with *Mystery of the Ages* (1985 paperback edition), pp. 34-36, 42 (among other pages and booklets I could cite, including *Why Were You Born?*). Many in and out of God's Church have *misconstrued* Mr. Armstrong's intent, partly because of his own *incorrect* explanations of the grammatical significance of **Elohim**. Mr. Armstrong did grow in understanding, however, step by step.

<sup>4</sup> Much of Mr. Armstrong's focus was on the *Personal* aspect of the Godhead. He did not use his English terms in a consistent way; indeed, he used "Person," "Personage," "Being" and "Entity" as if they were *theologically synonymous*. How, or even whether, **Elohim** is *One Being* in a transpersonal sense is not something Mr. Armstrong addressed. Messrs. Meredith and Raymond McNair, in past publications for the Global Church of God, have followed Mr. Armstrong's lead. To this day we tend to avoid considering the *Unity of Being* that the Bible reveals concerning **Yehawweh Elohim**, no doubt in part out of *overreaction* to the heresy of the Trinity. All this has led to considerable confusion among us and our readers and viewers.

<sup>5</sup> Almost always, when **Elohim** refers to the true God, it takes a singular agreement (even though it is plural in form). In Genesis 20:13 ("...*when God caused me to wander [ka'asher hif' u Elohim]*..."), the agreement is *plural*. This is so remarkable that the Masoretic Text adds a special marginal note indicating that **Elohim** is to be understood here (despite the unusual agreement) as "*holy*" -- i.e., referring to the true God and not to pagan "gods".

<sup>6</sup> Yet there are *numerous* references to "the messenger of Yehawweh" which cannot refer to a mere "angel" (i.e., a created being), but can only refer to Divinity. This phrase is completely appropriate for the One who was "the Word" or "Spokesman" for the One who became the Father.

humans knew the Father save Himself and those to whom He chose to *reveal* Him (Luke 11:27). Indeed, as we will read again later, *no human being* has ever seen the Father at any time (John 1:18; 5:37; 6:46; 1 John 4:12); yet Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Balaam, Joshua and a number of others *all* saw **Yehawweh** face-to-face<sup>7</sup>. Therefore, they could not have seen the Father, but rather the One who represented Him and who became Jesus Christ -- and therefore Jesus Christ was and is **Yehawweh**. But Arianism overlooks this obvious fact.

So who and what was "the God of the Old Testament"? It depends on how you look at it. From the point of view of *Personality*, it was **ho Logos**, "the Word" or "Spokesman" who as **Theos** ("God") represented **ho Theos** ("the [*pre-eminent*] God") to humanity. Sometimes, though, the Hebrew Bible refers directly to the One who became the Father, as in Psalm 110:1 (quoted so often by the New Testament).<sup>8</sup> But from the point of view of *Being* or *Kingdom*, it was "God" and "the Word" acting together (John 1:1-3).

As we read repeatedly in the Hebrew Bible, **Yehawweh** was both *Father* to the Israelites as *individuals* and *Husband* to them as a *group* (i.e., the **Qahal Yehawweh** or **Qahal ha-Elohim**, from whence terms came the Greek term **he Ekklesia tou Theou** or "Assembly/Church of God" used in the New Testament<sup>9</sup>). In the New Testament, we see *God the Father* taking on the first role and *Jesus Christ* taking on the second. How could this be, if Jesus Christ were not **Yehawweh** Himself? Since when would the Father let someone *less than Himself by Nature* take on one of His own Divine prerogatives -- especially in such an intimate, *Personal* relationship?

In Isaiah 54:4-5, Jerusalem (symbolic of Judah in particular), in a prophecy concerning Messianic times, is told that "you will forget *the shame of your youth*, and will not remember *the reproach of your widowhood* anymore. *For your Maker is your husband*, the LORD (**Yehawweh**) of hosts is His name..." -- and He will redeem her and betroth her to Himself once more (see the context and Hosea 2). Israel as a whole was *married* to **Yehawweh** via the Old Covenant, even as the Israelites individually were also **Yehawweh's children** (Jeremiah 3:14). The House of Israel was sent away with a certificate of divorce (Jeremiah 3:8; cf. Hosea 1:8), but **Yehawweh** never divorced the House of Judah. It remained under the terms of the Old Covenant until Jesus' death and resurrection nullified it.

"The shame of your youth" is an obvious reference to Jerusalem's disobedience under the Old Covenant, before Christ's first coming. How then could she be "widowed"? *Only by the death of her Divine Husband*. For that to happen, **Yehawweh**, the *One Who Is*, had to become *mortal*. Yet it was not the *Father*, but *Jesus Christ*, who died on her behalf. It is *He*, not the *Father*, who was resurrected and is now betrothed to her via the forerunner that is the Church (2 Corinthians 11:3, etc.). Jesus Christ, therefore, is **Yehawweh** every whit as much as the Father is. No Person less than **Yehawweh** by nature can or ever will be the Husband of "the Israel of God".

<sup>7</sup> Daniel *uniquely* (until the days of John) saw "the Ancient of Days" or "the Most High" (the One who became the Father), as opposed to "One like the Son of Man", *in vision*. Their appearance was connected with the inheritance of the Kingdom of God by the saints (Daniel 8:9-10, 13-14, 18, 22, 27).

<sup>8</sup> Peter acknowledged the Father as **Yehawweh**, the God of Israel (and as distinct from Jesus), thus: "The God of our fathers raised Jesus whom you killed by hanging him on a tree" (Acts 5:30, RSV).

<sup>9</sup> Just as the Greek term in some form is used *twelve times* in the New Testament, so the Hebrew terms in some form are used *twelve times* in the Old Testament.

So here is another place where Arianism contradicts the Bible. It denies how **Yehawweh** can be *both* Father to Israel (and the NT Church) as individuals and Husband to Israel (and the NT Church) collectively. When one understands how **Yehawweh** is One Being, yet Two Persons, this matter is explainable. But Arianism, in trying to avoid an *apparent* self-contradiction, introduces a *real* self-contradiction arbitrarily.

## Understanding I AM

There are those who claim that the true meaning of Matthew 24:5, Mark 13:6 and Luke 21:8 relates to men coming in Christ's name (we would clarify: as if sent by His authority) and saying that He (Christ) was "I AM". They claim that the reading in Matthew 24:5, "I am *the Christ*", is due to a Roman insertion, as is "he" in Mark 13:6 and Luke 21:8. They have *no proof whatsoever* except for their claim that it is so.

Matthew 24:5 reads "saying, I am the Christ" (**légontes egóo eimi ho Christós**); Mark 13:6, "saying, that I am (he)" (**légontes hótí egóo eimi**); and Luke 21:8, "saying, that I am (he), and the season has approached" (**légontes hótí egòo eimi kai ho kairòs éengike**). Nowhere does sound *textual* criticism call any of these passages into question; nor does sound *literary* criticism deny their validity. *Remember this: The received, authoritative text gets the benefit of the doubt over any critical theory about the text.*

Now we and many others, of course, have taken Jesus' statements ("I am") as pointing to His Divinity as **Yehawweh** -- in effect, as being equivalent to **ehyeh** ("I AM") in the Hebrew of Exodus 3:14.<sup>10</sup> This inference is not quite accurate. In some cases (as with "Before Abraham was, *I am*"), Jesus' statements could hardly be taken any other way than as affirming His self-existence. But the Greek **egóo eimi** may (and usually *does*) mean simply "I am (he, the one, the same)" -- the equivalent (and often the translation) of the Hebrew **ani hu** ("I [am] he, the one, the same) and its Aramaic parallel. Hebrew New Testament versions so render the phrase consistently, in all places where Jesus and others use it -- even in John 8:58 (cited above). Whereas **ehyeh**, being in imperfect state, does not really fit the sense of the Greek text or of whatever Semitic original that lies behind it. Jesus, therefore, must have said in John 8:58 the Aramaic equivalent of the Hebrew **ani hu**, if not the Hebrew phrase itself.

Yet in John 8:59, the Jews sought to *stone* Jesus for His saying. They could only do so if they thought Jesus were *blaspheming* by taking a Divine attribute (*self-existence*) to Himself. To them, citing texts such as Psalms 102:27 ("but You [are] He", **we'atta hu**), Deuteronomy 32: 39, and Isaiah 48:12 (in both cases, "I am He", **ani hu**) -- which Jesus evidently did when He spoke in John 8:58 -- would have been as blasphemous (and therefore as punishable by death) as a citation of **ehyeh** from Exodus 3:14, *unless Jesus were telling the truth as He affirmed He was.*

## The Meaning of the Shema

Some adherents of Arianism claim that our teaching violates the **Shema Yisra'el** (Deuteronomy 6:4ff: the first of the two Great Commandments) and the testimony of **Yehawweh** and His prophets. In reality, it is *Arianism* that is in violation of these. It fails

<sup>10</sup> The Septuagint reads "I am THE BEING...THE BEING" (**egóo eimi ho Óon...ho Óon**) rather than the exact equivalent of "I AM THAT I AM...I AM" (**ehyeh asher ehyeh...ehyeh**).

to understand or explain *how* **Yehawweh** is One, given the fact that **Yehawweh** is *also* clearly revealed as being *Two*.

Let's look at some foundational scriptures that clearly identify Jesus Christ with the **Yehawweh** of the Old Testament:

- We are told that the LORD (**Yehawweh**) will return to Jerusalem, fight against the nations that have come there to fight against Him, set His feet "in that day" on the Mount of Olives, and be King over all the earth. And yes, "on that day the LORD will be one and his name one" (Zechariah 14:9, RSV).<sup>11</sup> Now compare Zechariah 14: 3, 4, 5 and 9 with Revelation 19:11-16, Matthew 16:27, Acts 1:11, 1 Thessalonians 3:13, and 2 Thessalonians 1:7, and Joel 3:11-16 with Revelation 14:17-20 and 19:15. What actions the Hebrew Bible ascribes to **Yehawweh**, the Greek New Testament ascribes to **Iesoûs ho Christós** (Jesus Christ). They have to be *one and the same* Person in these cases.<sup>12</sup>
- Both God the Father and Jesus Christ are called "the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end" (Revelation 1:11; 1:17<sup>13</sup>; 21:6<sup>14</sup>; 22:12-13<sup>15</sup>). This sort of *eternal self-existence* is what the personal name **Yehawweh** points to. Yet *both* these Persons possess these traits. Therefore, they are *both* **Yehawweh** (cf. Isaiah 44:6 and 48:12<sup>16</sup>, to which these verses in Revelation refer).
- The New Testament rather frequently cites Old Testament verses that apply to **Yehawweh** and applies them to Jesus Christ. Examples includes Hebrews 1:6,<sup>17</sup> 8-9,<sup>18</sup> and 10-12;<sup>19</sup> 1 Corinthians 10:4,<sup>20</sup> Ephesians 4:8,<sup>21</sup> and Matthew 21:16.<sup>22</sup>

The Revised Standard Version and some other versions list no less than *four possible renderings* of Deuteronomy 6:4 in the main text and margin. Here they are in order, as given by the RSV:

<sup>11</sup> Here the Revised Standard Version respects the Hebrew grammar and accentuation more than the New King James Version does, and therefore gives a much more exact translation.

<sup>12</sup> Even if (like the Gospel of John) Revelation tends to distinguish "God" (**ho Theós**), or even "Lord God Almighty" as a circumlocution for **Yehawweh Elohim Tseva`ot** (4:8), from "Christ", "the Lamb", and so on.

<sup>13</sup> This unquestionably refers to Jesus Christ.

<sup>14</sup> This unquestionably refers to God the Father.

<sup>15</sup> It is Jesus Christ, *not* God the Father, who (as **Yehawweh**, and in the glory of His Father) is coming to judge the earth (Psalms 96:13; Psalms 62:11 and many other verses; Matthew 16:27; John 5:22; etc.)

<sup>16</sup> So why does God say "I" and not "We" in these verses from Isaiah? Again, one must understand the nature of the Holy Spirit to solve this apparent conundrum, and we will deal with that matter below.

<sup>17</sup> Thought to be either a citation of the Septuagint (or the Dead Sea Scrolls) of Deuteronomy 32:43, or else of Psalms 97:7. Either way, the citation equates Jesus Christ with **Yehawweh**.

<sup>18</sup> Citation taken from Psalms 45:6-7.

<sup>19</sup> Citation taken from Psalms 102:25-27.

<sup>20</sup> Many are the references in Hebrew Scripture to **Yehawweh** as Israel's "Rock". Here that "Rock" is equated with Jesus Christ.

<sup>21</sup> Citing Psalms 68:18 in paraphrase.

<sup>22</sup> Citing the Septuagint of Psalms 8:2. The action in both the Hebrew and Greek texts (founding strength or perfecting praise) is directed toward **Yehawweh** Himself. Since it is here directed toward Jesus, He must also be **Yehawweh**.

- "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD" (main text)
- "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one" (margin 1)
- "Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD is one" (margin 2)
- "Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD alone" (margin 3)

Why is this passage so difficult to translate? Take a look at the original Hebrew grammar:

**sh<sup>o</sup>ma yisra'el y<sup>e</sup>hawweh elohenu y<sup>e</sup>hawweh ehad**  
 Hear Israel **Yehawweh** our God **Yehawweh** one

Where is the verb "to be"? Its absence may indicate its *non-existence* at a particular point. But its absence may *also* imply a *static state of being*, for when biblical Hebrew does so (whether in past, present or future tense), it typically leaves out the verb root **hayah** entirely.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, "one" has a number of different meanings, in Hebrew as in English. Among them are unity of a single person or entity (as repeatedly in Joshua 6) or unity of two or more parts. One may not argue from the grammar or etymology of the word "one" to the context, but only the reverse. Now the verbal context offers nothing (save the masculine singular third person form of **Yehawweh**) to resolve the problem. Simply looking to that grammatical point, however, does not make verses such as Genesis 1:26 and 4:22 that point to **Yehawweh Elohim's uniplurality** go away.

Something other than the words, then, must indicate the correct punctuation, and therefore the correct grammatical understanding and semantic intent. That something is the *musical accentuation* of the Masoretic Text.<sup>24</sup>

The Masoretic, grammatical and synagogal interpretations of the accents and the recent musicological "deciphering key" for the accents (first published in 1976 by the late Suzanne Haik-Vantoura<sup>25</sup>) all agree: the *proper* reading of Deuteronomy 6:4 is "Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God, the LORD is One."<sup>26</sup> This is the reading that is *traditional* in Rabbinic Judaism. It is *also* the exact reading of the Greek Septuagint version<sup>27</sup> and of the Greek text of the New Testament as well<sup>28</sup>. The New King James Version renders both Deuteronomy 6:4 and Mark 12:29 correctly.

<sup>23</sup> At least one Hebraist on that basis has questioned whether **hayah** *ever* means simply "to be". Even when it may be so translated into English, it frequently has some sense of *becoming*.

<sup>24</sup> Originally the Hebrew Scriptures, including the **Torah**, were *sung* in public reading, as they still are in the Synagogues. In antiquity they were generally sung to *accompaniment*. "Your statutes have been my *songs* (**z<sup>e</sup>mirot**, songs accompanied by plucked string instruments) in the house of my pilgrimage" (Psalms 119:54). The *musical accents* (**te'amim**) of the Masoretic Text preserve the *vocal melodies* to which the Scriptures were sung. The Synagogues attach their own melodies to them, each community in its own way.

<sup>25</sup> Published in English as *The Music of the Bible Revealed* (BIBAL Press, 1991), and also as a series of eight recordings and numerous musical scores. See <http://www.rakkav.com/kdhinc/index.htm> for more information.

<sup>26</sup> Had the intended punctuation been different, the accentuation would have been different.

<sup>27</sup> Sir Brenton's English version (Hendrickson, 1986 edition) nevertheless defies the plain sense of the Septuagint Greek, just as the *Jerusalem Bible* defies the plain sense of the New Testament Greek. Brenton translates the verse thus: "Hear, O Israel, The Lord our God is one Lord" (*sic*, p. 239).

<sup>28</sup> *Benjamin Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott* (published by the Jehovah's Witnesses, who also promote Arianism) likewise refuses to translate the Greek New Testament correctly. It renders the text in English as "Hearken, Israel; Jehovah our GOD is one Jehovah" (*sic*, p. 175).

Here is the exact Greek text of Mark 12:29:

Ákoue Israéel Kúrios ho Theòs heemôon Kúrios eîs esti  
Hear Israel (the) LORD the God of us (the) LORD one is

It may not be immediately evident to an English reader from the Greek word order, but the last three words in Greek have the sense of "(the) LORD is One" -- *not* "is (the) one LORD". This brings me to the reason why I have been adding verbal accents to my Greek transliterations and not to my Hebrew transliterations. Classical, Septuagint and New Testament Greek has three *vocal accents*<sup>29</sup> which have long since become obsolete in written and spoken Greek. In ancient texts, however, they indicated the correct punctuation and vocal inflection<sup>30</sup>, long before punctuation signs as such were added. Whether due to ignorance or prejudice on the part of translators, then, Jesus' citation of Moses' words has been as misunderstood as Moses' words themselves. Yet the scribe (or lawyer) who asked Jesus about Deuteronomy 6:4 understood its punctuation and meaning as well as Jesus did. "Well said, Teacher. You have spoken the truth, for *there is one God, and there is no other but He*.... Now when Jesus saw that *he answered wisely*..." (Mark 12:32, 34, NKJV).

*Right here* is where many stumble. How can the One and Only God be called "He", and yet *also* consist of Two Persons, each of which are *also* called "He"? It seems paradoxical, certainly. But the apparent paradox would not exist if the Bible did not testify *both implicitly and explicitly* that the Father and the Son are *both* called **Yehawweh Elohim**.

Truly, Israel's **Elohim** is "one eternal, self-existent being". However, one must understand what the Bible reveals about God's *One Being!* In Exodus 3:14-14 God declares: "I AM THAT I AM...I AM" (**ehyeh asher ehyeh...ehyeh**). **Ehyeh** is the masculine singular *first* person imperfect (**Qal** or simple stem) of **hayah**, "fall out, come to pass, become, be". Evidently **Yehawweh** is derived from that root (and not from the older form **hawah** as Hebraists tend to think today). He is the *One Who Is*, emphatically so (**Yehawweh** apparently being the masculine singular *third* person imperfect, **Pi'el** or intensive stem).<sup>31</sup>

How then can Israel's **Elohim** consist of *two* self-existent, uncreated entities -- in effect, *Two Yehawwehs*? The apparent contradiction deserves an answer. Read then how **Yehawweh Elohim** answers it in part: "Then *the LORD God (Yehawweh Elohim, singular and plural forms) said* (singular agreement), 'Behold, the man *has become (hayah) like one of Us (plural agreement: k'ahad mimmenu*, "as one from [among] Us"), to know good and evil..." (Genesis 4:22). Only **Yehawweh Elohim** has the prerogative to "*know* (discern, decide between, define) good and evil"<sup>32</sup>, in part because **Yehawweh Elohim** alone is *uncreated (Yehawweh)* and *transcendent* above the creation

<sup>29</sup> As opposed to the twenty or so *musical accents* in the Hebrew Masoretic Text.

<sup>30</sup> In antiquity they were long used in Greek and Latin poems as indicators of a sort of "obscure song" (in the words of Cicero) to which the words could be recited: an exceedingly simple, rising and falling melodic line spanning no more than three notes in range.

<sup>31</sup> According to the chart in Abraham S. Halkin, *201 Hebrew Verbs* (Barron's Educational Services, 1970, p. 66). Professor Halkin takes **Yehawweh** as meaning "He shall form, constitute", apparently as much due to biblical usage as to Hebrew grammar. Perhaps on that basis, "the Self-Existing, Creating One" would be a useful paraphrase of the idea behind **Yehawweh**.

<sup>32</sup> This prerogative Adam took to himself, under Satan's prompting.

(**Elohim**). "Like one of Us" cannot possibly refer to *God and the angels*, for angels too are created personages (and, as Satan demonstrated, are likewise capable of rebelling against God's ways). The use of the prefix **mi-** ("from" in various applications) rules out a "plural of majesty" or God "talking to Himself" literally or rhetorically. The only explanation possible that takes the rest of the Scripture into account as well is that **Yehawweh Elohim** is *One Being, yet more than One Person*. One Person named **Yehawweh Elohim**, in effect, is speaking here to Another Person who is of the same highest order (and therefore is likewise **Yehawweh Elohim**). This is what Arius and his disciples to the present have refused to admit.

## Understanding Elohim

**Elohim** is indeed *plural* in form; there is yet some dispute as to just what the *singular* form would be.<sup>33</sup> It may be translated "God, god, gods, goddess." Sometimes it even refers to human *judges*. In a few places, early Jewish exegetes applied the word to *angels*, not because the *context* demanded it, but because their own *sensibilities* did.<sup>34</sup> In Job the phrase **b<sup>e</sup>nê Elohim**, "sons of God", is used, and this definitely applies to angels.

But when one comes to angels being called "sons of God" in Job, or to Adam being called "the son of God" in Luke 3:38, clearly these are "sons" by virtue of *Divine creation*. This connection with **Elohim** by no means implies that these "sons" of His are to be *worshipped*. But even here there is a *distinction* between the two classes of "sons". **Elohim** (Genesis 1:1) created Adam and Eve in His image, and to *reproduce* after that image (Genesis 1:26-27; 5:1-3), as *parallel* to His creating animals and plants to reproduce each "*according to its kind*" (Genesis 1:11, etc.). Angels<sup>35</sup> do not reproduce, given that they do not marry (Luke 20:34-36<sup>36</sup> and parallels). Whereas the true **Elohim** is *reproducing Himself through humanity!* This *greatest of all truths* is something Arianism can never lead one to grasp.

Why then are human "judges" sometimes called **elohim** (as they are several times in the original ordinances of the Old Covenant: Exodus 22:9, for example<sup>37</sup>)? This goes back to Genesis 9:5-6. Not only from the "hand" of every beast, but "from the hand of every man's brother I will require the life of man. Whoever sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed, *for in the image of God He made man.*" To be made in God's image, then, implies the ability -- indeed, the *responsibility* -- to rule and even *judge* on God's behalf. Just as God originally ordained in Genesis 1:26-28 that man have dominion over all other living things, so after the Flood He ordained that man take charge of his own civil affairs. In both offices, man is acting as God's representative on earth. It is not

<sup>33</sup> Either **EI** or **Eloah**, more likely the latter.

<sup>34</sup> This applies to the Septuagint of Psalms 8:5, cited in Hebrews 2:7, 9. Paul's argument in Hebrews 2 would have differed somewhat had he been quoting the priestly Hebrew text; but whether Jesus was for a while made "little less than the angels" or "little less than God" (and man presently is *both*), His resurrection "crowned Him with glory and honor".

<sup>35</sup> Also called **b<sup>e</sup>nê elim** in Psalms 29:1 and 89:6 -- apparently borrowing a phrase from the related *Ugaritic* language, in which it refers to the seventy sons of the bloody goddess Anat.

<sup>36</sup> This passage of course mentions the resurrected saints as "sons of God, being sons of the resurrection". The Greek text refers to such as being "*angel-like*", as even *Strong's Greek Dictionary* acknowledges. In the sense that they will be *immortal* and *non-sexual*, they shall be just that. But they shall be greater than angels otherwise, for they shall *judge* angels (1 Corinthians 6:3).

<sup>37</sup> Some translations (such as the RSV) nevertheless renders the word as "God" rather than "judges" in this and similar passages, despite the *plural* verbal agreement.

for nothing that Jesus said that the Father gave Him authority to exercise judgment over the rest of humanity and all things "because He is the Son of *Man*" (John 6:27).

And so we come to Psalms 82. Jesus cited verse 6a in John 10:34: "I said, you are gods..." But Asaph, in his original Psalm, does not *stop* there! Verse 1: "*God (Elohim) stands in the congregation of the mighty* (or rather "*of the Mighty One*": **ba`adat - El**<sup>38</sup>), He judges among the *gods* (as Asaph affirms the sense should be in verse 6a: **elohim** in both places)." Yet not *immortal, righteous Divinities*, but *mortal, human judges* -- and *unjust judges* at that -- are obviously meant (verses 2-5, 7). "I said, 'You are *gods (elohim)*, and all of you are *children of the Most High (b`nê Elyon)*'. But you shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes" (verses 6-7). How could all this be said of unjust human judges without falling into *blasphemy* against the just God? The biblical answer is that *man was created in the image of God*. That image carries with it the *capacity to become as God is*. It also carries with it the *authority to rule on God's behalf* in the meantime. This is why human judges are sometimes called **elohim**. In terms of both potential and practical capacity, they *are elohim* in a sense, even now in their unconverted state.

No wonder Jesus quoted this Psalm to those who were about to stone Him for blasphemy! The Jews certainly understood what Jesus meant when He called God his Father. He was making Himself *equal with God* -- even as a human being and despite His human nature (John 5:18<sup>39</sup>). In response to His statement about the *Unity and Family Relationship* of **Elohim**, "I and my Father are One" (John 10:30), the Jews said, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make yourself *God (Theós or Elohim)*" (verse 31). Jesus did not seek to disabuse them of that idea, even under threat of death. Rather, His argument (beginning with Psalms 82:6<sup>40</sup>) was that if unjust human judges, made in God's image and called His sons (*with all that implies*), could be called **elohim** by Scripture<sup>41</sup>, *how much more* could He whom the Father had consecrated and sent into the world say, "*I am the Son of God*" (the Hebrew equivalent being **ani ben ha-Elohim**)? If His *words* were not enough, His *works* should have been enough to convince them<sup>42</sup> that *the Father was in Him and He was in the Father* -- a state which again pointed to His coeval *Divinity* and essential *Unity* with God the Father. Only in *Divine authority* -- not in *Divine nature* -- was and is the Father greater than Jesus (John 14:28; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28).

Jesus was "the Son of God" in a way the angels and Adam were *not* by creation. He was the *only-begotten* Son, uniquely conceived via the Holy Spirit in Mary's womb. True Christians are also "sons [children] of God" not by *creation*, but by *begetting* via the Holy Spirit. Thus they have the capacity to share one day in the very same perfect, glorious, spiritual *Unity* that the Father and Son share now (John 17:20-23). That sort of *Unity* (again, as the Jews knew full well) implies *Divinity*.

<sup>38</sup> The RSV has "in the divine council".

<sup>39</sup> According to the Jews' own Oral Law, Jesus was also breaking the Sabbath by healing on it (same verse and 9:14-16). Of course, Jesus showed elsewhere that according to God's Law, He was doing no such thing (7:21-24 and other passages in the Synoptics).

<sup>40</sup> Which Psalm the Jews certainly knew well. Jesus needed only to cite its *key verse* to lay the foundation for His reply.

<sup>41</sup> Which indeed cannot be broken -- it does not contradict itself, but also, *it never loses its literal meaning* (verse 35). The Bible *says what it means* and *means what it says*. That does *not* mean it is easy to understand apart from God's help!

<sup>42</sup> Among those works were the *forgiveness of sins* -- which the Jews rightly said was a prerogative of God alone (Luke 5:17-26 and parallels) -- and the *healing of the sick* (Luke 5:17-26 again and many other passages).

Now let us return to the *nature* of **Elohim** as such. When referring to the true God, **Elohim** is plural in form but almost always singular in agreement (i.e., the verbs and pronouns associated with it are singular, not plural). A good comparison would be with the United States: we say "the United States is" rather than "the United States are." Yet we also speak of *one or more* of the States of the Union on their own individual terms. **E Pluribus Unum** ("Out of Many, One")! The true God is like that. One may speak of **Elohim** as a Unity, or as one or more of its constituent Parts. And since that Unity of Parts is related to God Most High's plan to reproduce Himself, one may speak of **Elohim** as One Being, One Kingdom and One Family, and also as one group of individuals or as one of the individuals in the group.<sup>43</sup> By extension, **Elohim** may also refer to human judges (as noted, for the reasons given).

Thus in most of Genesis 1, "**Elohim** (plural form) *said* (singular agreement)," and acted in ways consistent with Him being one entity. But at the critical juncture -- the creation of man -- "**Elohim** (plural form) *said* (singular agreement), 'Let *Us* (not *Me*) make man in *Our* (not *My*) image, after *Our* (not *My*) likeness'...So **Elohim** created man in *His* image..." (Genesis 1:26-27). Man was created in the image of *God* -- not of *God and the angels*. Nor (yet again) was God talking to Himself like the proverbial "absent-minded professor", nor using a "plural of majesty".<sup>44</sup> The rest of the Bible (beginning with John 1:1) provides the explanation: "God" spoke to and through, and thus created through, "the Word" -- and both "God" and "the Word" were **Elohim**.

Now indeed the *etymology* of the word **Elohim** says nothing about "family".<sup>45</sup> It is the *usage in context* (locally and of the whole Bible) that implies this. That context begins with the *parallelism* in Genesis 1 that implies that **Elohim** is *reproducing Himself through humanity*.<sup>46</sup> But also, if Jesus is the *Son of God* (**Elohim**), and **Ei Elyon** is now called *God* (**Elohim**) the *Father*, then again by *usage in context* **Elohim** is now a *Family Name* (Ephesians 3:14-15). *It was not always so*. In the beginning, it was the name for a *kind or class* of Being or Person: the highest class in existence. Jesus' begetting as the human Son of God, and especially His resurrection as the Son of God in Power (Romans 1:3-4), added a *new dimension* to the nature of **Elohim** -- one which (according to Titus 1:1-3) nevertheless had been planned since Genesis 1:2 at the very latest (if not actually before Genesis 1:1).

But from earliest times, humans (under Satan's influence) *distorted* these fundamental concepts. Their idols (human or mythological) usually had "theogenies" of various kinds, many frankly *perverse*; and the terminology they used reflected the fact. Thus **elohim** may refer to a single pagan god or goddess, or to more than one such -- and these false "gods" typically had one or another sort of "family relationship" with each other within a given mythology.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>43</sup> The very fact that there is a "Most High God" (**Ei Elyon**) implies that there is *at least one other* "God" (**Ei**) who is under Him in *authority*, but has the same *nature* (that of **Ei**). The higher cannot stand without the lower.

<sup>44</sup> That idiom *does exist* in Hebrew (as with "Behemoth" in Job, "Wisdom" at times in Proverbs, etc.); but the true God is so seldom given a plural agreement when He speaks (or at any other time) that this idiom can hardly apply to Him. In other ancient Semitic languages the "plural of majesty" is not applied to God (though it apparently is in the Qur'an, which came much later). In any case, the rest of the Bible makes clear the intent. Mr. Armstrong argued accordingly.

<sup>45</sup> This too has been a common misconception among us, regrettably so. Of course, the word implies nothing of itself about thinking, planning, producing, saving or blessing either. What it points to (with the singular forms **Ei** and **Eloah**) is simply God's *almighty power*. Again, it is the *usage in context* that indicates these other attributes.

<sup>46</sup> This parallelism is *precisely* where Mr. Armstrong began in asking about the ultimate destiny of man in God's Kingdom and Family.

<sup>47</sup> Again, it is not the *etymology*, but the *usage in context*, of **elohim** that implied those relationships.

Nevertheless, in the Hebrew Bible (and by extension the Greek New Testament), the true **Elohim** readily distinguishes Himself from other so-called "gods" by the *context* in which that name is used, whether **Yehawweh** or any other Divine name is present or not. There are whole texts (such as the "Elohistic Psalms" and much of the narrative in Chronicles and other post-Exilic books) which use **Yehawweh** rarely or not at all, but rather substitute **Elohim** instead. One pair of texts, Psalms 14 and 53, illustrates this substitution brilliantly. The one uses **Yehawweh** as a proper name; the other uses **Elohim**. Both use these names in a very "personal", *intimate* way. **Yehawweh** is indeed God's most holy and personal name in the Hebrew Bible (its very form indicates that, as we shall see); but it is not the *only* proper name He has!

Most would-be lay scholars of the biblical languages do not understand that biblical Hebrew and Greek *make no distinction between "name" and "title"*. Revelation 19:13, 16 illustrate this point well. In these verses "the Word of God" and "King of Kings and Lord of Lords" are not called "titles", but *names*. Any form of personal address is a *name* in Hebrew (**shem**) or Greek (**ónoma**). Our lexicons and concordances distinguish between "names" and "titles" because English makes those distinctions implicitly. Our translations, however, do *not* make those distinctions, because they are not implicit in the original languages.

And so **Yehawweh**, being the masculine singular third person imperfect of a verb root,<sup>48</sup> has the form of, and is used by the Hebrew Scriptures as, the *personal name* of the Deity. **Adonay**, nearly as sacred, is a name that points to God's *sovereignty*. **Elohim** by usage in context is a *kind or family name*,<sup>49</sup> and is often used as a sort of "surname" to **Yehawweh**.<sup>50</sup> These three are considered the most "holy" of the Hebrew names of God by the Jews. Yet there are many other names: **EI** (used so commonly of God as an *individual* Being or Person), **Adon** (Lord), **Eloah** (the probable singular form of **Elohim**), and the various combinations of these names with each other and with various descriptions of Divine attributes. Naturally, there are Aramaic and Greek translations of these names (in Greek, **Theós**, **Kúrios**, etc.) There is also the "*theophanic*" *personal name*<sup>51</sup> **Yeshua** (**Iesoûs** or Jesus); the *titular name* **ha-Mashiah** (**ho Christós** or Christ, "the Anointed One"); and the two taken together, often with "Lord" (**ha-Adon Yeshua ha-Mashiah** in Hebrew versions, or [**ho**] **Kúrios Iesoûs** [**ho**] **Christós** in New Testament Greek).

It is not the mere use of **Yehawweh** that sets apart the true God from any false god.<sup>52</sup> God's personal name in Hebrew is an *important* test, because **Yehawweh** is unique; but it is not the *only* test. The true God has *many* names, *all* of which are forms of personal address. Even names which we think of as "titular" (including **Elohim** and its translation **Theós**) are used in a *profoundly intimate way* by the biblical authors, notably by David and Paul.

<sup>48</sup> Masculine personal names were very commonly derived from a verb stem in this way. **Ya`acov** (Jacob) is likewise the masculine singular third person imperfect of a verb root.

<sup>49</sup> A comparison of the grammar and accentuation in Amos 4:13 and 5:27 shows that "the God of hosts" (**Elohê Tseva`ot**) is as much "His name" (**sh`mo**) as is "the LORD, the God of Hosts" (**Yehawweh Elohê Tseva`ot**).

<sup>50</sup> In the very common **Yehawweh Elohim**: as if **Yehawweh** were the equivalent of our "first name" and **Elohim** were the equivalent of our "last name". The first name is *personal*; the second denotes *kind* or (later) *family*, inasmuch as **Elohim** *begets children*.

<sup>51</sup> That is, relating to God's personal appearance to man.

<sup>52</sup> One might recall that Aaron, in effect, called the *golden calf* (to which Israel feasted by his proclamation) **Yehawweh** (Exodus 32:1-6)!

**El, Eloah and Elohim** do not emphasize God's *eternity* or *self-existence*, but rather God's *transcendence*. They literally point to God's incomparable *Might*. Angels as the created "sons of God" *partake* of that might, as do human beings by creation, responsibility and reproductive potential (cf. Psalm 8, Hebrew and RSV). Whereas **Yehawweh** deals with another aspect of the Divine Nature: one might say, that aspect from which all the other aspects ultimately derive. He is *the One Who Is and Causes to Be* -- the *Creator* of all things.<sup>53</sup> But yet once more, if He who became God the Father created all things through Jesus Christ (as we are told in several places, beginning with John 1:3), then Jesus Christ (as that Creator) must (like the Father) be **Yehawweh**. **Yehawweh**, not some *lesser* being or personage, created (and made) the heavens and the earth (Genesis 2:1; Exodus 20:11; Psalms 134:3; etc.).

### Christ Is Yehawweh

How is it then that the One who became the Father chose to work with humanity (and with Israel in particular) through the One who became the Son? Was **El Elyon** "way off somewhere", completely *disassociated* from merely material affairs?

On the one hand, it is *indisputable* that *Christ revealed the Father*. Christ said so (Matthew 11:27)! But on the other, "the God of our fathers [i.e., **Yehawweh Elohim**] raised Jesus" (Acts 5:30, RSV). That God certainly was called Israel's "Father" and Israel His "son" or "sons" long before Jesus' birth (Exodus 4:22; Isaiah 64:8; and many other verses). Certainly when "God Most High" (**El Elyon**) is described in Hebrew Scripture, it really does refer to the One who became the Father.<sup>54</sup> But again, **Yehawweh Elohim** dealt with Israel *as One Being*, but *through One Person*. The One who became known as God the Father was *not* off somewhere idling His eternity while the One who became Jesus Christ did all the work. He was always *actively involved* with His plan for humanity, but by *proxy*, through His "Spokesman" (often called "the messenger of the LORD") and the Holy Spirit.<sup>55</sup>

Christ was *made* subject to death as a human being (Hebrews 2:9, 14-18) -- which implies He was *not* subject to death before He was born. Indeed He was not -- "[for] He was in the beginning with God" (John 1:2). To be so, as a definable individual, He would have had to be eternal and self-existent Himself. Again, "though He was in the form of God,<sup>56</sup> [He] did not count *equality with God*<sup>57</sup> *a thing to be grasped*,<sup>58</sup> but *emptied Himself*,<sup>59</sup> taking the form of a servant, and being born in the likeness of men....and [He]

<sup>53</sup> Halkin, *op. cit.*

<sup>54</sup> As noted above, the higher cannot stand without the lower. If there is an **El Elyon**, there must be at least one **El** *under* Him. (Of course, **Yehawweh** is also called **Elyon** in comparison to other things.)

<sup>55</sup> Not until New Jerusalem comes to the earth will God the Father actually dwell with men, when the earth is purified from all sin (Revelation 20-21). Since we know **Yehawweh** will dwell with men before then, there must be another Person called **Yehawweh**.

<sup>56</sup> In Greek, "who in (the) form of God being" (**hòs en morphê Theoù hupárchoon**). Surely there can be no mistaking the intent of this phrase!

<sup>57</sup> Literally, "to be like God".

<sup>58</sup> **Harpagmón** is a very rare word, and the *Emphatic Diaglott* lists eight different translations of it in the margin. Some commentators cited apparently try to *twist* the sense to make out that Christ was not God Himself in His pre-incarnate state. But the *obvious* sense is one of *opposition*: *being like God* (which state Christ was not willing to retain) versus *being like man* (which state Christ took on willingly).

<sup>59</sup> Whole books have been written trying to explain what Paul meant here. Such is the profundity of the mystery of the Gospel!

became obedient unto death, even death on a cross" (Philippians 2:6-8, RSV<sup>60</sup>). But Christ did not *stay* dead; He *regained* His eternal nature through His resurrection. As Christ said of Himself, "*I am the first and the last, and the living one; I died, and behold I am alive for evermore*" (Revelation 1: 17-18, RSV).

Exodus 20:1-2 tells us not to honor any gods other than **Yehawweh Elohim**. Deuteronomy 6:4 tells us there is *only* the One Being, **Yehawweh Elohim**. *But that Being is a Unity of Parts*. The Masoretic Text itself indicates this, in a way yet unknown to Rabbinic or Messianic Judaism. Everywhere "one" at the final cadence of a verse indicates just one person, thing or entity, the sequence of musical accents is **tifha** followed by **silluq**.<sup>61</sup> Everywhere "one" at the final cadence of a verse indicates a combination of two or more persons or things, the sequence of musical accents is **merkha** followed by **silluq**.<sup>62</sup> *There are no exceptions*. Deuteronomy 6:4 uses the *latter* combination of accents. This is all the more important in that the accents from all indications were *not* created by the medieval Masoretes, but were *transmitted* to them via the Herodians from biblical times and represent *the biblical authors' own interpretations* of their own words.<sup>63</sup>

On the level of *Being*, then, the Son is not "*another Yehawweh*" or "*another Elohim*" compared to the Father. He is not "*another Rock*", to paraphrase God's words as given through His Spokesman in Isaiah. On that level, the Father and the Son are *One*. The Son said so -- and even explained in the Book of John (in part) *how* that is so. But on the level of *Personality*, the Father and the Son are *also* Two. Again, the Son said so. As in quantum mechanics (a branch of physics) an electron is paradoxically yet *truthfully* a wave or a particle or *both* simultaneously, so **Yehawweh Elohim** refers to One Person (the *pre-eminent* One, God the Father), or to the Other Person (the *subordinate* One, Jesus Christ), or to *both* simultaneously. *God is not lying to us when He says this*. He is simply telling us of "heavenly things" beyond our common, mortal experience. But they *can* be understood, if through a glass darkly!

Who spoke to Moses in Exodus 3 and onward? Who thundered Exodus 20:1ff from Mount Sinai? Who (as the God of Israel) appeared to Moses, Aaron and the elders of Israel (Exodus 24:9-11)? Who spoke to Moses face-to-face, as a man speaks to his friend (Exodus 33:11)? Who revealed His glory to Moses (Exodus 33:18-34:8)?<sup>64</sup> Was it God the Father? *No! No one has ever seen God the Father at any time*.<sup>65</sup> It had to be the *Word of God*, who is **Yehawweh**, speaking on His Superior's behalf and making a covenant relationship with Israel on His own behalf. Israel was to have no other gods before **Yehawweh**. But this was a *Personal* relationship that **Yehawweh** was establishing with Israel as a whole -- a *marriage covenant*, in fact. That honor went to and remains with the Person who became the Son -- *not* the Person who became the Father. Under

<sup>60</sup> With "Divine capitals" added by this author.

<sup>61</sup> Tonally, indicating a *precise unity* (through a movement of *mi* to *do*).

<sup>62</sup> Tonally, indicating an *imprecise unity* (through a movement of *re* to *do*).

<sup>63</sup> The Herodians were also called "the Elders of Bathyra", according to some Jewish scholars. Cf. Suzanne Haïk-Vantoura's discussion of how the correlation of melodic and verbal syntaxes demonstrates that the Masoretic Text preserves the melodies of the biblical authors themselves (*op. cit.*).

<sup>64</sup> One might well wonder if the *dual* use of **Yehawweh** in Exodus 34:6-7 (the "full disclosure" of the name **Yehawweh**: cf. 33:19 and 34:5) is more than just repetition for emphasis. The accentuation certainly seems to indicate so (it *links* the two names even as it *separates and exalts* them). In any case, the RSV (unlike the NKJV) punctuates the Hebrew according to the grammar and accentuation: "The LORD, the LORD, a God (**EI**) merciful and gracious..."

<sup>65</sup> This obviously excludes the *visions* of Daniel and John. It refers to face-to-face, *personal* encounters.

those terms, "God" very seldom revealed Himself as a Person separate from "the Word" (cf. John 1:1-3), save to the inspired prophets.

David wrote in Psalms 110:1: "*The LORD (Yehawweh) said to my Lord (ladoni): a form of respectful address, not necessarily indicating Divinity*<sup>66</sup>, 'Sit at My right hand...'. This is an obvious reference to Jesus Christ at the right hand of the Father (according to the New Testament). Verses 5-7 deal with the some of the future actions of this Messianic King. Verse 5 calls him **Adonay** (which Divine name is often merely a respectful circumlocution, even in the consonantal text, for **Yehawweh**). Some Masoretic manuscripts even have **Yehawweh** rather than **Adonay** at the head of this verse.<sup>67</sup> Imagine it: **Yehawweh** sitting at the right hand of **Yehawweh**! No doubt because this reading sounded "too Christian" (or too inherently *blasphemous*), most scribes "toned down" the texts they copied. Yet the Divine implications of **Adonay** itself (even assuming the more commonly attested reading is correct<sup>68</sup>) cannot honestly be ignored. Only **Yehawweh** is ever called **Adonay**. So in any case, we see **Yehawweh** at the right hand of **Yehawweh**. This would be impossible unless the One **Yehawweh** were also *dual*: One Being, Two Persons.

### **How Is God One?**

It is time to reveal more of *how* the Father and the Son are One as **Yehawweh Elohim**. This has to do with what the *Holy Spirit* is and does. Of course, it is the Power of the Most High, that is, of the Father (Luke 1:35). The Father sends it in Christ's name; conversely, Christ actually does the sending of it from the Father (John 14:26; 15: 26; 16:7). It is the Spirit of *God* (the Father), and *also* the Spirit of *Christ* (Romans 8:9-11, 14-17).<sup>69</sup> There is but *one* Spirit (Ephesians 4:4). But the Holy Spirit is *also* God's Presence (Psalms 139:7), God's Essence or Substance (2 Corinthians 3:17-18), God's Nature (cf. Hebrews 6:4 with 2 Peter 1:4), God's Seed (cf. John 3:3-8 with 1 John 3:9), and *God's Mind or Rational Faculty*.

1 Corinthians 2 is worth studying in detail with regard to the relationship between the "spirit in man" (which grants human understanding) and the Spirit of God (which grants Divine understanding). Verse 16 is crucial: "For 'who has known *the mind of the LORD (noûn Kuríou)* that he may instruct Him?' But we have *the mind of Christ (noûn Christoû)*". Paul, in the first part of the verse, quotes the Septuagint version of Isaiah 40:13. But the Hebrew Masoretic Text of that verse says, "Who has directed *the Spirit of the LORD (et ruah Yehawweh)*, or as His counselor has taught Him?" So "mind (rational faculty)" and "Spirit" are *equivalent* here.

What does this imply? "The *Spirit* of the LORD" and "the *Mind* of the LORD" are one and the same; and "the *Mind* of the LORD" and "the *Mind* of Christ" (as Paul makes clear) are *also* one and the same. If A equals B and B equals C, then A equals C! "The Spirit of the LORD" equals "the Mind of Christ" -- and that means Christ is none other

<sup>66</sup> Though as Jesus said, it means the person addressed is greater even than King David -- so "how is he his son?"

<sup>67</sup> According to the marginal critical notes of the Ginsburg Edition of the Hebrew Bible.

<sup>68</sup> It is, however, a principle of classical criticism that when there are two readings in various manuscripts, an "easy" one and a "difficult" one, the more "difficult" reading is actually *preferable*. Surely no Jewish scribe would by accident, and still less by design, *introduce* this complication into the consonantal text. It is much more likely that **Adonay** is the actual substitution.

<sup>69</sup> That ought to lay Arianism to rest all by itself. Only if the Father and the Son were coeval -- both **Yehawweh** -- could they share in one "eternal Spirit" (cf. Hebrews 9:14).

than the LORD (**Yehawweh**), just as the Father is. But it also means that God the Father and Jesus Christ, though *Two Persons*, share *One Mind* -- and that to a degree that is no doubt incomprehensible to us mere mortals. This sharing of mind (and power, presence, essence, etc.) through the Spirit is by definition a *State of Being*. But as our literature points out in other ways from Scripture, this same Spirit also makes possible the *Family Relationship* within **Elohim** (and indeed the future *expansion* of **Elohim** on the levels of Being, Personality, Kingdom and Family).

Now we may understand how **Yehawweh Elohim** -- *One Being, yet Two Persons* -- can speak and act with "one voice", saying "I AM THAT I AM" and "I am, and there is none else." Depending on the usage in context (and on the reader's perspective as well), when **Yehawweh** speaks, it is the Father speaking *through* the Son, or the Son speaking *on behalf* of the Father, or *both* of them speaking in unison *through* their One Mind (i.e., their one Holy Spirit). In all of these circumstances, "I" is the only first-person pronoun that fits, unless the Father and the Son choose to reveal themselves as separate Persons (as in John 14:23, "*We*"). Is a drop of water a single body of water, or a collection of water molecules, or *both* as connected by a common electrostatic link? *It all depends on how you look at it!*

A *vital key* to discerning *how* to look at **Yehawweh Elohim** in Scripture (in Hebrew, in the New Testament Greek texts, and in the Aramaic portions<sup>70</sup>) lies in discerning the *relationships* the Father and the Son have with each other, with Their creation in whole or in part, with Their people, and with other nations.

To Jesus, even in His pre-incarnate state, the Father has *always* been His God (cf. John 20:17, but also 17:5, 11, 21-24). This too seems paradoxical to many. How can "God" have a "God" Himself? Yet Hebrews 1:8-9 (citing Psalms 45:6-7) points to Jesus (as the Messianic King) having just such a relationship with the Father -- and it does so in unmistakable terms. While the Hebrew grammar and syntax (even with the melodic accentuation) is *deliberately ambiguous* (because the context deals in *typology*), the Greek grammar and accentuation *are not ambiguous at all*. Jesus is plainly called **ho Theós** in Hebrews 1:8, just as the Father is in verse 9 (**ho Theós sou**, "the God of you"). So how can One Great **Theós** call Another Great **Theós** His own **Theós**? The answer to this riddle is simple. For all His inherent power as God (and even more when He *emptied* Himself of that power and became a man), the One who became Jesus Christ *always worshipped, adored, obeyed and relied upon* the One who became the Father.

Certain other verses should also be explained briefly. Deuteronomy 32:39 says that "I, even I, am He, and there is no God [**Elohim**] besides Me." But Jesus is not "*another Elohim besides*" the Father<sup>71</sup> on the level of *Being*. On the *Personal* level, it is another matter (cf. John 1:1-3). Psalms 33:12 and 144:15, with Acts 24:14, show that **Yehawweh** had a special relationship with Israel. Yet as other verses show, **Yehawweh** had this relationship *as One Being*, but *through One Person* (the "Word" of John 1:1).

Ephesians 4:5 makes the point that there is "one Lord" (Jesus Christ) and "one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." This distinction between "the Lord" and "God the Father" deserves some detailed comment. The New Testament (cf. John 17:3 and onward especially) most often speaks of the Godhead on

<sup>70</sup> Which (interestingly enough) do not mention or allude to the name **Yehawweh** at all. No doubt this is because *Yehawweh* pointed to the *Personal* relationships (as Father and as Husband) that **Elohim** had with Israel (and not with other nations).

<sup>71</sup> The contrast is in any case being made between the true God and pagan idols.

the *Personal* level (as the Old Testament most often speaks of God on the level of *Being*). To do so, it must distinguish the Persons in clear terms: "God (the Father)", "the Most High", "the God of our fathers," etc., versus "the Word (of God)", "(the Lord) Jesus (Christ)", "the Lamb (of God)", etc. Moreover, when the New Testament speaks of God being *One*, it does so *pre-eminently* of God the Father (as in Romans 3:21-31, especially verse 31). Likewise, when it speaks of **Yehawweh Elohim**, unless it specifies otherwise it speaks *pre-eminently and specifically* of God the Father (as in Revelation 4:8<sup>72</sup>). But as Jesus preached, God the Father is One, and Jesus is One with the Father -- so They together are *also* One, and thus are *equally God*.

The plain teaching of *both* Testaments, in sum, is that **Yehawweh Elohim** is *both* One Being and Two Persons, and also now One Family Kingdom that shall one day be comprised of *Many* Persons. These Persons shall then share in the same Unity of Being and Family Relationship that the Father and the Son share now. *Individually*, they shall be the Father's Children; *collectively*, they shall be the Son's Bride. *This is the One True Gospel in a nutshell!* It is *why* we should not worship any other God but **Yehawweh**, and *why* we should keep the rest of His commandments (and accept His grace, believe His promises, and so on). *He* -- or if you want to take it on a Personal level, *They* -- alone can make our "incredible human potential" possible!

Please understand Arianism for what it is: a *pernicious heresy* that fulfills 2 Peter 2:1, Jude 4 and 1 John 4:1-3. Arianism fulfills 2 Peter 2:1 and Jude 4 in that it denies who Jesus is: **Yehawweh** the Creator, whose sacrifice alone was valuable enough to reconcile all things to the Father. It fulfills these same verses with regards to the **Torah**, in that it denies that "all should honor the Son *just as they honor the Father*" -- thus denying the honor due to the Father as well, and ironically breaking the very First Commandment it claims to respect (John 5:22-23). If **Yehawweh** the Father will not give His glory (**kavod**, *honor*) to another (Isaiah 42:8),<sup>73</sup> then how could the Son be honored in like manner, unless the Son were *also Yehawweh* and One with Him?

Arianism also fulfills 1 John 4:1-3 in that it denies that Jesus was **Immanu-El**, "God with us". Jesus Christ was not some *lesser* personage who had "come in the flesh". He was **El**, which is a *Divine* name.<sup>74</sup> Only One with the Divine Nature and perfect Character of **El (Yehawweh)** could have lived a sinless life in the flesh; and only such a One could live in us *now* and enable us to live without sin to the extent that we follow Him (2 John 7). Arianism is therefore just one more manifestation of the "spirit of antichrist": a denial of the *key* to understanding our incredible human potential (which potential Satan hates). ###

<sup>72</sup> Which gives the respectful Jewish circumlocution for **Yehawweh Elohim Tseva'ot** and then translates the sense of **Yehawweh**).

<sup>73</sup> And even so, this verse compares the true God to "carved images" -- not "God" to "the Word" nor God the Father to the resurrected "Sons of God".

<sup>74</sup> Nowhere does it apply directly to angels, and only *by extension* does it apply to idols, humans or things in nature (for much the same reasons that **Elohim** does).