

The Trinity

PART ONE: THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD

Introduction

There is no question that the concept of the trinity is difficult to understand, so before we examine it we need to be reminded of two basic truths.

First, we believe that the Bible is without error or contradiction (see L02 - Basic Doctrine - Bible - Inspiration of the Bible). It wouldn't make any sense for God to reveal Himself without insuring that what He revealed would be written down correctly. If God allowed His self-revelation to be corrupted it would lose its value as revelation at all.

Furthermore, we can have confidence that what He has revealed He will preserve, for if significant error were allowed to creep into the Bible over the centuries, we would have the same problem as if it was recorded inaccurately in the first place. From the more than 6000 ancient manuscripts of the NT that we presently have, and the more recent discovery of ancient Hebrew Qumran manuscripts we see that this was indeed true.

Secondly, we need to remember that maturity is a growth process. The more we grow in knowledge and experience the more we are able to understand. What we don't understand today, we may understand tomorrow.

Although the trinity is difficult to understand, as Charles Hodge says "there is a great difference between the irreconcilable and the self-contradictory. In the one case the difficulty arises, or may arise, out of our ignorance or mental weakness; in the other, it arises out of the nature of the things themselves. Many things are irreconcilable to a child which are not so to a man. Many things are irreconcilable to one man and not to another; to men and not to angels. But the self-contradictory is impossible, and is seen to be so by all orders of mind. That two and two should make twenty, or that the same figure should be a square and a circle, is just as irreconcilable to an angel as to a child. What is self-contradictory cannot possibly be true." (Systematic Theology I, 352)

The doctrine of the trinity may be irreconcilable in some ways for it is beyond our capacity to grasp, but it is not self-contradictory.

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THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD

In thinking about the trinity, let's start with the blatantly obvious. The Bible unambiguously states that there is only one true God. Other things may be hard to grasp, this is not.

Isaiah 45:5-6 5 "I am the LORD, and there is no other; Besides Me there is no God. . . there is no one besides Me. I am the LORD, and there is no other,

Isaiah 44:6 "Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: 'I am the first and I am the last, And there is no God besides Me.

Isaiah 43:10-11 10 "You are My witnesses," declares the LORD, "And My servant whom I have chosen, So that you may know and believe Me And understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, And there will be none after Me. 11 "I, even I, am the LORD, And there is no savior besides Me.

In the Old Testament God Himself says He knows of no other god. There is only one first and one last, and God says He is both. There was no god before or any after Him. No other god has ever been formed.

The New Testament also states that there is only one God.

Jesus says,

Mark 12:29-32 29 Jesus answered, "The foremost is, 'HEAR, O ISRAEL! THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD; 30 AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.' 31 "The second is this, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' There is no other commandment greater than these." 32 The scribe said to Him, "Right, Teacher; You have truly stated that HE IS ONE, AND THERE IS NO ONE ELSE BESIDES HIM;

Jesus is telling a religious leader that the foremost commandment is to believe that God is ONE LORD. He DOESN'T say there are many gods, or a mother and father god. Jesus is simply stating what the Jews had believed for centuries.

1 Corinthians 8:6 yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him.

Ephesians 4:6 [there is] one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

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1 Timothy 1:17 Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

1 Timothy 2:5 For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,

Jude 1:25 to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.

James 2:19 You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.

CULTS AND THEIR ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE CONCEPT OF ONE GOD

It seems popular today for people to claim that there are multiple gods. Sylvia Browne's "Novus Spiritus," the "World Mission Society Church of God," and the "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints" are a few groups that do.

The "World Mission Society Church of God" focuses on the Hebrew word for God (Elohim) which is plural in form. They say:

The word "Elohim" directly translates to "Gods." The Bible testifies that God exists in the female image, God the Mother, as well as the male image, God the Father.

World Mission Society Church of God has received Second Coming Christ Ahnsahnghong, God the Father, and the heavenly Jerusalem, God the Mother.

When people hear the word "God," most immediately think of "God the Father," holding to the fixed idea that only God the Father exists; however, the Bible clearly testifies that there is a God the Mother in addition to a God the Father. We sincerely hope that you can break your fixed, man-made ideas so that you can receive the true Saviors: Christ Ahnsahnghong and Jerusalem Mother.

Then, let us discover why the members of the Church of God accept Christ Ahnsahnghong and Jerusalem Mother as their Elohim God.

Elohim God revealed in the book of Genesis

Let us confirm that there is both a male and a female image of God, through the book of Genesis.

Gen. 1:26-27 『Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness,"...So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.』

Both males and females were created in the image of God, and thus it is clear that God has two images: a male image and a female image. When God said, "Let us make man in our image," God used the word "us"-a plural term-instead of using "me." We come to understand that not one God, but two

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Gods-a Father and a Mother-worked together during the Creation. Such plural terms are used to describe God in Genesis chapter 11, also.

Gen. 11:1-7 『...The LORD said..."Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other."』

This verse, too, makes reference to Elohim God, the same God who created male and female (in Genesis chapter 1), saying, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness." In Genesis chapter 11, God was responding to the arrogance of the people, who had collectively built the tower of Babel. Through this situation, God testifies that there exists a God the Mother as well as a God the Father by saying, "Let us go down..."

Elohim God revealed in the book of Isaiah

We can confirm the existence of Elohim God through the book of Isaiah as well.

Isa. 6:8 『Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"』

When God was searching for a man to preach His words, God said, "Who will go for us?" instead of saying, "Who will go for me?" This reveals that not only the Father was working, but that there was a Mother who was working as well.

Elohim God revealed in the book of Jeremiah

In the book of Jeremiah we can also find references to Elohim God.

Jer. 31:22 『...The LORD will create a new thing on earth a woman will surround a man.』

God said that He would create a new thing: a woman would surround a man. Spiritually, this verse has a very profound meaning. The woman, Eve, had once been inside the man. If God had not made the woman with the ribs He had taken out of the man, how could the woman have been able to surround the man? The new thing, that God said He would bring to the earth, would be the revealing of Mother, who has been within God the Father since the beginning. The new thing would be created at the time God established the new covenant.

Jer. 31:31-34 『"The time is coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah..."I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest."』

In the Hebrew Bible, the word "God" is actually written as "Elohim". "I will be their God [Elohim]." "Elohim" is the plural form of the word "Eloah," meaning a singular God. Therefore, "Elohim" means "Gods," plural. Once we can understand the concept of Elohim God through the new covenant, we no longer need men to teach us to know God, because we will all know God, from the least of us to the greatest. In the truth of the new covenant, we can only become the children of God when we have God the Father and God the Mother, our Elohim God.

When Elohim God created male and female, They said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness." When Elohim God punished the evil acts of God's people, They said, "Let us go down." When the Gods

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called to Isaiah, They said, "Who will go for us?" Throughout the Bible, God has existed as the male God and the female God: Elohim. [<http://usa.watv.org/truth/elohim.html>].

"Novus Spiritus" founded by the self-proclaimed psychic Sylvia Browne says this:

Does it startle you even to think of a Female God? It should, because our society has been misled (for about 2000 years) and taught that God is only male. How ridiculous! Why would a single, male god make everything in creation as a paired male/female? It is much more sensible that God's creation mirrors Their own image, both male and female.

Does the Bible offer any support for a female counterpart to God? Yes indeed! In fact, a very interesting statement was left in the Bible (*Genesis 1:26*, The New Jerusalem Bible, 1985) which supports a dualistic nature for God, namely:

"Let us make man in our own image, in the likeness of ourselves"

Pay heed that the above quote uses a plural reference to God. Naturally one wants to know about these other gods. Could it have been a mistake in the Bible? (Even this has not been proposed by the established church.) Or is this a reference to the doctrine of a "triune" God, i.e., the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit? No, it cannot be the Trinity either, for that was developed in the New Testament many thousands of years later!

The most simplistic explanation is the obvious one, that there are multiple gods. The exact number of gods is uncertain, but Novus accepts at least two: Om - the Father God, and Azna - the Mother God. We believe that the Gods are paired male/female just like all of creation, and just like the Bible tells us in *Genesis*.

...

Anytime we use the word "God," please understand that we imply both the Male and Female Gods. For together They made our world and are the loving Parents of humanity.
[<http://www.novus.org/home/ovlong.cfm>]

So Browne's comments about a plurality of gods are pretty much the same as the "World Mission Society Church of God." Both call two gods, "God".

Lastly, the Mormons (The "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints") also believe in multiple gods:

"Implicit in the Christian verity that all men are the spirit children of an Eternal Father is the usually unspoken truth that they are also the offspring of an Eternal Mother. An exalted and glorified Man of Holiness (*Moses 6:57*) could not be a Father unless a Woman of like glory, perfection, and holiness was associated with him as a Mother. The begetting of children makes a man a father and a woman a mother whether we are dealing with man in his mortal or immortal state.

This doctrine that there is a Mother in Heaven was affirmed in plainness by the First Presidency of the Church (Joseph F. Smith, John R. Winder, and Anthon H. Lund ... they said that "man, as a spirit, was begotten and born of heavenly parents ..." (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1966, p.516).

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Mormons believe that multiple gods exist but each has their own universe. We are only subject to our God and if we obtain the highest level of heaven we can become gods ourselves.

A RESPONSE TO THE CULTS

(Note: the above explanation of Jeremiah 31 is so farfetched it can't even be called "interpretation" let alone support an idea of male and female gods. Therefore, this will NOT be addressed in the refutations below)

Cults use basically three arguments from the Bible to support their claim that there are multiple gods. The first is the fact that the word "elohim," which is the most common word in Hebrew used to translate the word "God," is a masculine plural noun. The second is the plural pronouns (we/us) used of God in Genesis 1:26, 11:7 and Isaiah 6:8. The third is the claim that if humanity is made in the image of God, then God must be male and female since humans are.

Gender and number in Hebrew

It's true that the word elohim is a masculine *plural* noun which can be translated as "gods." However, concluding that "the Bible teaches that there are multiple gods" *because* "elohim" is plural, is a conclusion based on ignorance of the Hebrew language.

gender

In Hebrew, words appear in different genders, like they do in most other languages. When we speak of grammatical "gender" we are not necessarily speaking about the sex of something. "In Hebrew and Greek nearly all nouns and adjectives, not simply third-person personal pronouns, are marked for gender. One consequence is that in Hebrew and Greek gender as such is not so tightly linked to male and female. In Greek, ἀλήθεια ("truth") is feminine and θάνατος ("death") is masculine. But native speakers did not therefore conclude that truth was literally female or death male. It is a convention." (Poynthress, *Gender in Bible Translation: Exploring a Connection with Male Representatives*). Unlike Greek which has three "genders" - masculine, feminine, neuter - Hebrew has only two genders, male and female. Grammatically speaking, therefore, everything is a "he" or a "she". Generally nouns referring to instruments, tools, body members, weapons, natural forces, names of countries and towns and titles are feminine in Hebrew. In other words, "gender" in languages is merely a grammatical marker that normally requires some sort of grammatical agreement in the sentence.

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plurality

Words in Hebrew can be singular or plural as well. This is indicated by the use of different suffixes. Although it is true that words ending in *-im*, usually indicate a masculine *plural* noun, in the case of *-im* with *elohim* we find that the word is seldom used as a plural (gods) even when it is referring to a pagan god (Jdg. 11:24; I Ki. 11:5; 2 Ki. 1:2) (DNTT 2, 67).

In addition, when it is used of the true *God*, it is almost always used with *singular* verbs and adjectives (TWOT 44). In a strictly *grammatical sense* this would be incorrect (a plural verb should be used with plural nouns, etc.); however, since the writers of Scripture understood that *elohim* is the title of the one true *God*, the use of singular adjectives and verbs came naturally. The uniqueness of the term is borne out in the fact that it only appears in Hebrew and not in any other Semitic language, not even in Biblical Aramaic (TWOT 44).

The opposite is also true. Usually, when plurals are used with *elohim* (i.e. when *elohim* is found with a plural verb or adjective) it is most commonly referring to pagan deities (Psalms 96:5; 97:7).

The point being that though *elohim* is plural IN FORM, it can be either singular or plural IN MEANING depending on the context and the syntax used with it, and in the Bible it is most commonly used as a singular noun.

How did the Jews, Jesus, and the New Testament writers understand elohim?

When Jesus said, "The foremost [commandment] is, 'HEAR, O ISRAEL! THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD'" (Mk. 12:29), He was quoting Deuteronomy 6:4 which is the first line of a Jewish prayer called the "Shema," meaning "to hear" (the prayer is composed of three paragraphs: Deut 6:4-9; Deut 11:13-21; and Num 15:37-41 and was prayed twice a day). The Shema is an affirmation of Judaism and a declaration of faith in one *God*. The Hebrew word used for *God* in the Shema is *elohim*. Yet in Mark 12:29 when *elohim* is translated into New Testament Greek "theos" (θεός) is used. Theos (θεός) is the normal word for *God* in Greek, but significantly it is SINGULAR. Had Jesus or the Jews believed that the word *elohim* referred to many gods, the plural *theoi* (θεοὶ - gods) could have easily been used as it is in I Corinthians 8:5 of false gods. The New Testament therefore functions as an inspired commentary that confirms that *elohim* is referring to one *God*. This is also substantiated by the Greek translation of the Old Testament called the Septuagint (LXX). The Jewish scholars who translated it also saw the plural "elohim" as a singular idea and translated it with *theos* (θεός).

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Why would the Jews use a masculine, plural noun to refer to a singular being?

There are a number of possible explanations.

1. In Hebrew, a plural can be used to bring a sense of an intensification of the original idea. This grammatical phenomenon occurs with a few words in Hebrew, *elohim*, being one of them. The plural form is perhaps akin to "great God."

This type of grammatical plural also occurs with the word *behemoth*. The ending *-oth* (usually a feminine plural ending) is attached to the noun "behem" (beast), but is found with singular verbs and adjectives. The resulting meaning is "great beast."

2. Secondly, in Scripture, a "name" is much more than a tag that identifies someone and distinguishes him or her from other people, rather "names were generally descriptive of the person, of his position, of some circumstance affecting him, hope entertained concerning him, etc., so that "the name" often came to stand for the person" (ISBE under "name"). An easy to understand example of this is in Matthew 1:21: "... you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins. "Jesus" was the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew "Joshua." In its long form, Joshua (Exo. 24:13 - יְהוֹשֻׁעַ) means "Yahweh is salvation" and in its short form (Neh. 7:7 - יֵשׁוּעַ) it means "Yahweh saves." "For" in Matthew 1:21 tells us WHY He is to be called "Jesus" - for He IS God who saves us. "Jesus" was therefore descriptive of the person. His name ("Yahweh saves") described His nature (it is He who will save His people from their sins).

The "names" of God are also used in the same way to describe Him. The "name of God was therefore not a mere word, but the whole of the Divine manifestation, the character of God as revealed in His relations to His people and in His dealings with them (Ex 9:16; Josh 7:9; 9:9, etc.)" (ISBE under "the name of God"). In other words, *elohim* is an appellative (a descriptive term), not the name of God (TDNT vol. 3, 81).

With this in mind consider the name *elohim*.

Elohim is translated as "God," "gods" (Gen 31:30), "judges," (Exo. 22:8), "rulers" (Ps 82:1), "mighty," etc. In other words, it can be used of the true God, false gods, or of men or of angels who functioned as divine representatives or as beings reflecting divine majesty and power.

Although the root of the word is very much debated, *elohim* is thought to be related either to the word *el* or *eloah*. Rabbi Hirsch believes it is related to *elleh*.

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Eloah is primarily used of God in the most ancient Hebrew poetry in the Bible. Job uses it most (41X). Outside of Job it carries the concept of strength or might or was used in verses of comfort for God's people or the fear of His enemies (TWOT, I, 43). Therefore, some conclude that the plural *elohim* has the connotation of "powers." When the other nations of the world saw the sun, the moon, the seas and all of the other manifestations of power in this world, they assumed that each power belonged to a different god. So, the power of the sun was from the sun god. The power of the moon was from the moon god. The Jewish people, on the other hand, saw a totally different picture for they knew that all of the powers of the world belonged solely to God. By calling God "*elohim*", "Powers", they were acknowledging that all of the powers of the world reside in God. There is no power outside of God. To them *elohim* was not implying a belief in many gods; rather, it was reaffirming the all-powerfulness and perfect unity of the One True God.

Rabbi S.R. Hirsch has another explanation of the plural meaning of *elohim*, although elements of his explanation coincide with what has just been said (Parshat Bereshit ch. 1.)

He says:

"Grammatically, the root word of *Elokim* [Jews deliberately misspell *elohim* so they don't blaspheme God] is "*eleh*" the demonstrative pronoun "these". In the plural, "these" connotes the binding unity between each of the individual items, e.g.: "These five buildings were all built by a famous architect." Therefore the plural of *eleh*, (*elohim*), represents the unity of many different things combined together.

When G-d's name *Elokim* is used in the Torah, it illustrates the concept that G-d is the "one through whom all the plurality, (by everything being related to him), becomes a unity." Simply said, since G-d is the creator of everything in the universe, everything in the universe is unified through G-d. Thus, the word *Elokim* as a name of G-d in the Torah, expresses that all the individual things in the world, that seem separate and autonomous, are all unified through the Source - G-d - Who is The Ruler of everything. By extension, the Torah also uses the word *elohim* to refer to human rulers, law-givers, and judges of the people, who each rule in their worldly domain.

In the ancient world, the Oneness of G-d, as supreme Ruler and Judge over everything, was unique to Judaism alone. All early civilizations were polytheistic, that is, they all believed in many gods who were each limited in power to their own domain. For a good harvest, one might invoke the god of rain, or the god of fertility, or even both, by worshipping in the prescribed (pagan) manner.

In the Torah understanding of the world, nothing presupposed Creation, except G-d Himself Who created the world and everything in it. Therefore it is not surprising that the first time G-d is referred to in the Torah, the name *Elokim* is used, teaching us that G-d is the unity of all these things that are created in the story of Creation."

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In other words, although there is a difference of opinion as to what root word *elohim* is related to, there is complete unanimity of thought that when referring to the God of Israel it didn't carry any connotations of multiple gods.

The plural pronouns in Genesis 1:26, Gen. 11:1-7, and Isa. 6:8

First, I want to emphasize that cults only focus on the plural ending of *elohim* but make no attempt to explain the thousands of instances where it is used with singular verbs, adjectives and pronouns. Though *elohim* is used about 2325 times in the Old Testament in reference to God, to my knowledge, the use of plural pronouns (us/we) only appear in three verses. With this in mind the first question I would ask the cults is why *elohim* appears thousands of times with the masculine singular pronoun or with singular verbs and adjectives if it means "gods"? Shouldn't the primary meaning of *elohim* be determined by the majority of verses that use *elohim* as a singular noun than from three that use it with plural pronouns? If we add to this all the times that God is referred to by names other than *elohim* (such as YHWH - about 6399 times; Adonai, or other titles), we find that the evidence that there is only One God is staggering -three verses that use plural pronouns against thousands that don't!

A better explanation.

Instead of stretching three verses with plural pronouns to try to prove that the Bible teaches that there are male and female gods, and ignoring thousands of other verses that contradict this, it makes more sense simply to admit that these verses break the normal pattern, but they do so for a reason.

Genesis 1:26-27; 11:1-7

26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27 God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

1. Some believe that God is talking to angels. This, however, is untenable for a number of reasons. First, God does not counsel with angels; they are ministers that carry out His will (Heb. 1:14), not comrades with whom He consults. Secondly, man is never said to be made in the image of angels. Lastly, verse 27 uses the expression "His image" with a singular pronoun in place of "Our image" making it clear that only God is in view.

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2. Others see "Us" a "majestic plural" (like the use of *elohim*) emphasizing the fullness of God's powers and essences. So just as *elohim* (plural) intensifies the word "God," so does "us" and "we."

3. Still others see this as a subtle reference to the triune God (see 1:1).

Some have claimed that a Trinitarian interpretation is reading NT ideas back into the Old. It's true that the OT does not provide a complete picture of the doctrine of the trinity, but there are traces of it made perceivable through the light provided by the NT. This is not reading NT ideas back into the OT; it is only reading the OT under the illumination of NT revelation. The OT may be likened to a chamber richly furnished but dimly light. The introduction of light doesn't add anything to the room, but makes the contents of the room visible in a way they were not perceivable before.

The second view would be the easiest to understand from an OT perspective, but the verses actually fit well with the concept of the trinity as well.

Furthermore, verse 17 makes it clear that gods are NOT in view.

After God says "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness" the Scripture says, "God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." These are two parallel ideas - one with the plural pronoun, one with the singular.

Sylvia Browne's comment "We believe that the Gods are paired male/female just like all of creation, and just like the Bible tells us in *Genesis*" is making the false assumption that the image of God is a physical correspondence to men and women. Gender isn't even implied. God is not male per se, rather He transcends gender.

God is primarily viewed patriarchally in the Bible. Although the Bible uses masculine titles for God, such as Father and Son and many other masculine concepts, it also employs feminine images for God. He is said to give birth to a people (Deuteronomy 32:18; Isaiah 49:14-15; 66:13) and to be a midwife (Isaiah 66:9). His judgment of Israel is likened to that of a mother bear robbed of her cubs (Hosea 13:8). All such images are not intended to imply that God is a sexual being (male or female) but are anthropomorphisms or personifications that reveal God to us in ways we can understand. Significantly, however, feminine terms are never used when God is worshipped. (Cole, *He Who gives Life*, 81). "Not once in the Bible is God addressed as mother, said to be mother, or referred to with feminine pronouns (Scobie, *Ways of Our God*, 119).

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"A similar story pertains to the New Testament presentation. Jesus likens God to a woman searching for a coin and Himself to a hen wanting to gather her chicks when they are in danger (cf. Luke 15:8-10 and 13:31-35). But he teaches disciples to pray "Our Father" and prays himself to God as "Father" (cf. Matt. 6:9 and John 17:1)." (Cole, *He Who gives Life*, 81-82).

There is a problem that exists when we talk about God. When God reveals Himself to man he does so in language that stoops to our level so our finite minds can get a glimpse of what God is like. When we refer to God as "father," "wise," or "loving", we need to realize that they are not being used in exactly the same way that they are used of people. Human beings are imperfect and finite, God is not. Therefore, we have to take into consideration that these words are being used analogically. That is, they involve an analogy. The difficulty is in determining how far the ordinary meaning applies to God.

Mitchell says,

"The answer would seem to be that a word should presume to carry with it as many as the original entailments as the new context allows, and this is determined by their compatibility with other descriptions which there is reason to believe also apply to God. That God is incorporeal [without a body] dictates that "father" does not mean "physical progenitor," but the word continues to bear the connotation of tender protective care."

(Mitchell, *The Justification of Religious Belief*, 19)

Therefore, some feminine imagery may be used of God, but not all feminine imagery. For example to speak of the Holy Spirit's motherly role in the "new birth" has good biblical grounding in John 3. But to address the Holy Spirit as "Our Mother" or "She," steps beyond the bounds of Scripture.

In conclusion, the implications of being made male and female in God's image have nothing to do with God's gender at all; rather, being made in the image of God refers to human characteristics that are similar to those found in God. These include immortality, the exercise of will, intellectual faculties (the ability to speak, think, etc.) and conscience, as well as other attributes found in God that are conveyable to man (such as love, righteousness, truth, mercy, grace, etc.). Being created in God's image distinguishes mankind from the animal kingdom. We are spiritual, intellectual, and rational beings who possess a moral consciousness. Animals are not. Only man has been patterned after the Creator and possesses great dignity.

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Isaiah 6:8

Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I. Send me!"

"Us" could be either a "majestic plural" or simply forming a consistent picture with the context it is in. The imagery of God sitting on the throne could include a court, just as a human monarch on the earth has a royal court. In this case the attendants to God are the angels mentioned in the context to whom God is speaking.

CONCLUSION:

Our conclusion from this first section is that there is only one true God. No doctrine can possibly be true which contradicts this primary truth. Therefore, when we talk about the trinity, we need to remember that we are not talking about three gods in one, or three gods in any sense. When we talk about the trinity, we must never obscure this fundamental truth. The Lord our God is ONE Lord.

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד:

(*Shema Yisrael YHWH eloheinu YHWH ehad*)