

RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH

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A STUDY OF THE TITLES OF JEHOVAH

INTRODUCTION

We often read that Elohim (one of Jehovah's titles) created man. Gen. 1:27 is offered as the proof of that statement, "So Elohim created man in His own image....". But we read in Deut. 32:15 of Jeshurun, "he forsook Eloah which made him". This verse tells us that Eloah created man. "Eloah" is another title of Jehovah. And in Deut. 32:18, we read, "...And hast El (yet another title of Jehovah) that formed thee...". This verse tells us that El created man. Was man created by three different Persons? Of course not.

My point is that God is One. That will be the central theme of this study, i.e. God is one. God has many titles but they are all titles of one God. Each title represents a different office of Jehovah, they do not represent different Persons. That is to say, "Elohim" is a title, not a different Person than El. And "El" is a title, not a different Person than Elohim, and the same is true of "Eloah" and all the other titles of Jehovah.

Let us consider a New Testament example of how various titles are used of God. We read in Matt. 1:18, “Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as His mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost“. And in verse 20 we read, “.....That which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost“. It is clear that Mary was with child by the Holy Spirit. But most would say that Jesus’ Father was God the Father. Did Jesus have two Fathers? Of course not, God is His Father. The only way that one can understand this difficulty is to see that “Holy Spirit” and “Father” are not two different Persons, they are two titles of God.

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GOD HAS ONE NAME

God has one Name in the sense that it tells us Who He is, and that Name is “Jehovah” (we cannot know the exact spelling of God’s name because the vowels were not present in the original manuscripts). Isaiah 42:8, “I am Jehovah, that is My Name...”. Please note this verse begins, “I am Jehovah”. This verse tells us much more than what God is called, which is the usual reason for a name. It is important to understand that “name” is sometimes used as the figure of speech Metonymy of Adjunct, which is defined in the Companion Bible as, “When something pertaining to the subject is put for the subject itself”. In this verse the phrase “My Name” is used as that which pertains to Jehovah, Who is the subject. “Name” is used as a figure of speech for Who God is.

Figures of speech are used to enhance a truth. What truth is being enhanced by the use of the figure of speech in Is. 42:8? In my opinion, it is used to enhance the truth of Who God is. A definition of “Jehovah” might be helpful in making this point.

.Dr. E.W. Bullinger gives the following definition of the word “Jehovah” in the Companion Bible: “Jehovah means the Eternal, the Immutable One, He Who Was and IS and IS TO COME”. So when we read “I am Jehovah, that is My Name” we are reading, I am “the Eternal, the Immutable One, He Who Was and IS and IS TO COME”, that is Who I am”.

Exodus 6:3 is also helpful in establishing how “My Name” is used as a figure of speech to enhance the truth of Who God is. That verse reads, “I

appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty, but by My Name, Jehovah, I did not make Myself known to them". In other words, God had appeared to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob not as "the Eternal, Immutable One", but as "God Almighty". But when God appeared to Moses, He made Himself known as to Who He is, His very essence, i.e. Eternal.

Ezra 1:3 is another complicated verse which can be understood only if one recognizes that God has one Name and many titles. "Who is there among you of all His People? His Elohim of heaven be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of Jehovah Elohim of Israel, (He is the Elohim) which is in Jerusalem". The house to be built was not the house of two Persons, Jehovah and Elohim. It was the house of Jehovah.

If we think of "Jehovah" and "Elohim" as different Persons we have two Gods of Israel. That of course is the exact opposite of the teachings of the Bible. If however, we see that "Elohim" is a title of Jehovah all is clear.

Thus far we have considered "name" in a figurative sense, i.e. the name tells us who a person is. But it is also used in God's Word in a literal sense, i.e. in the sense of what one is called. In Is. 54:5 He is called "Jehovah-Sabaoth". And in II Sam. 6:2 we read, "Whose name is called by the name of Jehovah of hosts". In Is. 54:5 we read, "For thy Maker is thine Husband, Jehovah of hosts is His name.....the Holy One of Israel, the Elohim of the whole world shall He be called". And we have in Amos 5:27, "Whose name is Elohim of hosts". These verses do not use "name" as a figure of speech, they use it quite literally. Note that none say that God is....., they say He is "called" or "is His name". When we read in Is. 42:8, "I am Jehovah", we are reading of Who God is in His very being. In that sense then, God has only one name, i.e. "Jehovah".

For the sake of clarity, may I explain that I use the term "name" for its usage in the figurative sense, i.e. it tells who a person is. But I use the

term “title” in the sense of what a person is called. Of course, “Jehovah” is used in both the figurative and literal sense, but the “names” listed in the paragraph above are not used in the figurative sense but in the literal only. Those I call “titles”.

THE MANY TITLES OF JEHOVAH

As mentioned above, God has but one name, therefore everything else that is used of Him is a title. That statement may need some clarification. We know that God, whose name is “Jehovah”, is spirit. As such we can know nothing of Him unless He chooses to reveal Himself, and He has done that. He has revealed Himself through Jesus Christ Who is the manifestation of Jehovah. He has also revealed Himself in His dealings with His chosen People, Israel. But the point is that He has revealed Himself through His various offices. With each office comes a title. His Old Testament titles include, “Elohim”, “El”. “Eloah”. Tzoor”, “Jah”, “Elyon”, Shaddai”, “Adon” and all of the ten Jehovah titles, i.e., “Jehovah-Jireh”, “Jehovah-Ropheka”, Jehovah-Nissi”. “Jehovah-MeKaddishkem”, “Jehovah-Shalom”, “Jehovah-Zebaath”, “Jehovah-Zidkenu”, “Jehovah-Shammah”, “Jehovah-Elyon”, and “Jehovah-Roi”.

We must understand that these titles certainly do not represent different Persons in the Godhead, they are simply titles of One God, whose Name is “Jehovah”

SAVIOR

Let us consider a few verses in the Old Testament that speak of God as Savior.

Ps. 68:19, “Blessed be Jehovah, Who daily loadeth us with benefits. Even El Who is our salvation”.

Isaiah 43:3, “For I am Jehovah thy Elohim, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour”. Note the singular, “Holy One”, one Person, not two.

Hosea 13:4, “Yet I am Jehovah thy Elohim....there is no Savior beside Me“.

Note especially Hosea 13:4 where we read that there “is no Savior beside” “Jehovah thy Elohim”. That means of course, that there is only one Savior. But if we see El of Ps. 68:19 as a different Person, then we have two saviors. If however, we see these as titles of Jehovah Who is the only Savior, then all is clear.

CREATOR

Gen. 1:1 tells us that the heaven and the earth were created by Elohim (In the beginning Elohim created the heaven and the earth”). Is. 42:5 will show why these titles cannot be ascribed to different Persons. That verse reads, “Thus saith El Jehovah, He That created the heavens, and stretched them out; He That spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it.....”. Here we read that “El”, one of the titles of Jehovah, created the heaven and the earth. But Gen. 1:1 also makes it very clear that Elohim, another office of Jehovah, created heaven and earth. That is to say, in this verse we learn that Jehovah in His office of “El” was the Creator, while in Gen. 1:1 we learned that it was Jehovah in His office of “Elohim” Who created. Again, if these represent different Persons that would mean that two different Persons created heaven and earth.

The question of Who created heaven and earth is further complicated by the fact that we are told in Jn. 1:3 (“All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made”) that Christ is the creator of all things. Was it Christ, or was it Elohim or was it El who created? The answer is simple. Jesus Christ is the manifestation of Jehovah. That is to say that all the titles of Jehovah are manifested in Christ. So it was Jehovah, Who is manifested by Christ, in His offices of El and Elohim

Who created heaven and earth. Heaven and earth were not created by three different Persons of a Godhead, it was created by Jehovah (made manifest by Christ) in His various offices.

THE GOD OF ISRAEL

We read in Gen. 15:18 that God made a covenant with Abram in which Abram was promised an inheritance for his progeny. “In the same day Jehovah made a covenant with Abram, saying, ‘Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt.....’”.

In Deut. 5:2 we read of another covenant that God made with Israel, “Jehovah our Elohim made a covenant with us in Horeb”.

REDEEMER OF ISRAEL FROM EGYPT

Ex. 12:42 reads, “It is a night to be much observed unto Jehovah for bringing them out from the land of Egypt....”. Here we read that Jehovah brought Israel out of Egypt. But in Deut. 24:18 we read, “But thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt, and Jehovah thy Elohim redeemed thee hence...”. In this verse we learn that Jehovah in His office of Elohim redeemed Israel from Egypt. But in Numbers 24:8 we read, “El brought them forth out of Egypt....”.

Here again we must ask did three Persons redeem Israel from Egypt? Of course not. It was God, Whose Name is “Jehovah” Who redeemed Israel from Egypt. He redeemed them through various offices.

GOD SEEN

Gen. 32 gives us the account of Jacob wrestling with God. We read in verse 30, “And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel; for I have seen

Elohim face to face.....”. And in Job 19:26 we read, “.....in my flesh shall I see Eloah“.

We must ask ourselves if Job will see a different Person in a Godhead than Jacob saw. Given that the delineations of the offices of Jehovah are too obscured to suggest different Persons, I believe we must conclude that they are not different Persons, but different offices or titles of Christ Who is the manifestation of Jehovah.

NEW TESTAMENT

We come now to a discussion of the New Testament. Most Christians believe that “Father”, “Son” and “Holy Spirit” refer to three Persons in a Godhead. I believe that they refer to three offices or titles of God. Part of the reason for that belief is because, as the reader will see as we continue in this study, just as we saw in the Old Testament, some of the things, such as the Fatherhood of Jesus, attributed to God cannot be attributed to different Persons.

WHO WAS THE FATHER OF JESUS?

Most would consider the answer to the question asked in the title of this section as obvious, i.e. God the Father is the Father of Jesus. But we read in Matt. 1:18, “Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as His mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost“. And in verse 20 we read, “.....That which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost“. It is clear that Mary was with child by the Holy Spirit. And yet the Holy Spirit is never referred to as the Father of Jesus.

Jesus did not have two Fathers. Here too, as in the Old Testament, everything becomes clear when we see “Father” and “Holy Spirit” as titles of one God, not different Persons. The title “Father” is used of Jehovah in

relationship to the title “Son”. The titles are not used of two different Persons, they are used of two different offices of one God.

Is. 9:6 also points to the confusion that must reign when we see the Father and Son as different Persons. That verse reads, “For unto us a child is born a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father.....”. One of the titles of the Son is “everlasting Father”. In other words, the Son is also the Father. That cannot be if we assume that the Father and Son are two Persons. But it makes perfect sense if we see that one of the titles of the Son is “everlasting Father”. If that is true in the Old Testament, why is not true in the New Testament? The New Testament did not come from a vacuum, it came from the Old Testament and the Old Testament cannot be ignored if one hopes to find the truth in this matter.

THE GREEK PREPOSITION “PARA”

A very short study of the Greek preposition “para” will yield a wealth of truth. Dr. E. W. Bullinger defines “para” in the Companion Bible as, “governs three cases (Gen., Dative, and Acc.), and the uniform meaning is beside, or along side of.....”. Dr. Bullinger has this to say about the Genitive, “With the Genitive it denotes from beside, implying the source from which anything proceeds”. So in the Genitive “para” tells us, not only the source, but that the source was “beside, or along side of”. We must be careful of the word “from” in the phrase “from beside”. It is not meant to be understood as “away”, that would be the Greek preposition “apo”. Dr. Bullinger gives this definition of “apo”, “denotes motion from the surface of an object”. But again, “the uniform meaning of “para” is “beside, or along side of“.

With that definition in mind let us look at Jn. 15:26, “But when the Comforter is come, Whom I (Christ) will send unto you from (para) the Father.....”. I believe that every word (including the prepositions) are inspired by God. The Greek preposition tells us a great deal and we lose a great deal by not giving it careful consideration. In this verse it tells us

that the Father is the source (because it is in the Genitive case) of the Comforter, and it also tells us that the Father comes along side the Comforter (because that is the “uniform meaning” of para).

So the Father, from Whom the Comforter originates comes along side the Comforter. But we are never told that the Father would come in the same sense as the Comforter comes. If one sees the Comforter and the Father as two different Persons, this makes no sense. But when one sees “Comforter” and “Father” as two titles, or offices of God, then all is clear. It tells us that God cannot be divided into Persons.

II Cor. 1:3 is also helpful, “Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies. and the God of all comfort“. The Greek word translated “comfort” is from the same root as is “Comforter” in Jn. 15. In other words, God in His office of Father is the Comforter.

“FATHER”, “SON” AND “HOLY SPIRIT” ARE THREE TITLES OF ONE GOD

In Jn. 14:16-18 we read, “...I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter.....I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you” . Note that our Lord said that the Father shall give them another Comforter, Who in verse 17 is said to be the Holy Spirit. And yet Christ, the Son of God, said that He would come to them so that they would not be “comfortless”. In other words, in this passage which speaks of the Father sending the Holy Spirit to be a Comforter, Christ the Son speaks of His coming to comfort them. That makes Christ the Comforter, i.e. the Holy Spirit. Since Christ is the Comforter and Christ is also the Son, they cannot be two different Persons. But if one sees “Son” and “Comforter” as different offices of one God and that Christ fulfills both offices, all is clear.

Let me draw this together. In Jn. 15:26 discussed in the section on the preposition”para”. We saw that the Father is the Comforter, i.e. the Holy Spirit. In Jn. 14:16-18 we saw that Christ is the Comforter. That means

that if we see Persons instead of titles that the Father and the Son are both the Holy Spirit. I believe it is clear that that makes no sense. On the other hand, if we see “Father”, “Son” and “Holy Spirit” as titles of one God, we see that Christ fulfills the offices of “Father”, “Son” and “Holy Spirit”.

Let us also consider the Greek word translated “comfortless”. The note in the Companion Bible on this word reads, “comfortless=orphans. Gr. orphanos. Occurs only here and James 1:27”. James 1:27 reads, “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless (Gr. orphanos) and widows in their affliction.....”. It is clear from this context that “orphanos” means “fatherless”.

Let us return then to Jn. 14:18 where we read that Christ will not leave His disciples fatherless because He will come to them. That makes Christ their Father. But in verse 14 we read that Christ will ask the Father to give His disciples another Comforter. That means that Christ was the Comforter. Again, this makes no sense if one sees the Father, the Son and the Comforter as three Persons. But it makes perfect sense if one sees “Father”, “Son” and “Comforter” as different offices of one God.

CONCLUSION

As we saw in the Old Testament, Jehovah has one Name and many titles. We cannot think that each title represents a different Person because that would give us at least eighteen Persons in the Godhead as that is the number of titles listed in the section above on the titles of Jehovah. When we come to the New Testament we must bear in mind that what was written was written to those who were familiar with the Old Testament concept of God’s titles. Therefore, when we read of “Father”, “Son” and “Holy Spirit” in the New Testament we must interpret that in the light of Old Testament teachings and concepts. That is to say, they are not different Persons in a Godhead in the Old Testament, and they are not different Persons in a Godhead in the New Testament, they are titles of one God.

For a more complete study of the doctrine of the [Trinity](#) please see the paper on that subject.

This paper was written by Joyce Pollard. If you would like to respond please e-mail me at: janjoyce@aol.com

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