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B1031 – August 1, 2010 – The Trinity: Old Testament Data

We've been going through some lessons on the Trinity. I started by mentioning the problem of the One and the Many, and the reason I did that, even though its hard material, is it fleshes out into the practical arena for Christian and non-Christian. Everybody faces this consciously or subconsciously, we're just drawing it out so we're conscious of it in our decision making. So, far from obscure this is every day life, the problem of the One and the Many used to be the central question in every philosophy class. Now it's never discussed because no one ever came up with an answer, starting from man. Of course, the Triune God has given us the answer, it's just that we don't like His answer but we still have the problem so we fool around in life dealing with it in practical every day problems and we wind up chasing our tail. But people never even discuss the most central question of life. Philosophy today is anti-philosophy, there's a hatred for knowledge and if you doubt that just try claiming absolute knowledge of something and I guarantee you will immediately be carved out as one of the most arrogant people on planet earth. The gall to say you know something absolutely. Society revolts over that kind of a claim. Of course, they know with absolute certainty that nothing can be known with absolute certainty, see the counter-claim. You can't reject absolute certainty without claiming absolute certainty. So today this One and the Many business isn't even discussed. We discuss it because it's directly entwined with God's being and because we're derivative of Him therefore it's directly entwined with our lives. Every day in the mundane details of life we're wrestling with it.

To apply that to what we're doing, what happens is the non-Christian likes to say the Trinity is a logical contradiction. How can God be three and one? One doesn't equal three, three doesn't equal one. Well, obviously not in the same way. God has threeness and God has oneness, the problem is we don't know enough about God to comprehensively define His oneness and His threeness.

But why I'm trying to approach it the way I'm trying to approach it, which may seem a little odd for you, is to show you that the non-Christian starts with his own ideas of oneness and threeness and from there tries to solve the problem, which he can never do. So what I hope to show is he's got a very serious problem without the Trinity.

This gets into language and logic. Think about language and logic. Does everyone use those? Yes. Everyone. Where do they come from? What's the source of language and logic. Usually what you get is these are conventions, agreed upon conventions, rules, syntax, but it still doesn't answer where they came from because in paganism you've got billions of years of modification of previously existing material so that all you can say is that language and logic are material entities. Let's be honest, if the universe is materialistic then language and logic must be material entities. I'll never forget a debate in the late 80's between Dr Greg Bahnsen and Dr Gordon Stein. They got together on some college campus to debate the question, "Does God Exist?" Dr Stein was a leading atheist at the time, Dr Bahnsen was arguing for Christian theism. They're discussing the question, "Are all factual questions answered in the very same way?" (Segment 1; 39:47-41:17)

Dr. Stein

No they are not. They are answered by the use of certain methods though, that are the same: reason, logic and presenting evidence as facts.

Dr. Bahnsen

Okay; I heard you mention logical binds and logical self contradictions in your speech. You did say that?

Dr. Stein

I used that phrase, yes.

Dr. Bahnsen

Do you believe there are laws of logic then?

Dr. Stein

Absolutely.

Dr. Bahnsen

Are they universal?

Dr. Stein

They are agreed upon by human beings. They aren't laws that exist out in nature. They are...

Dr. Bahnsen

Are they simply conventions then?

Dr. Stein

They are conventions, but they are conventions that are self verifying.

Dr. Bahnsen

Are they sociological laws, or laws of thought?

Dr. Stein

They are laws of thought which are interpreted by men; and promulgated by men.

Dr. Bahnsen

Are they material in nature?

Dr. Stein

How can a law be material?

Dr. Bahnsen

That's a question I'm going to ask you!

Thank you.

Dr Stein

I would say "No".

Dr. Stein

Dr. Bahnsen, would you call god material or immaterial?

Dr. Bahnsen

Immaterial.

Dr. Stein

What is something that's immaterial?

Dr. Bahnsen

Something not extended in space.

Dr. Stein

Can you give me an example of anything other than god that's immaterial?

Dr. Bahnsen

Laws of logic.

It goes on but do you see the problem? If I am an atheist I claim to live in a materialist universe. How then do you even get the argument for atheism off the ground without appealing to the immaterial laws of logic? Did you ever taste a logical principle? Did you ever hear a logical principle as it bounced off the floor? What do they look like? Yet, in a materialist worldview where do

you get immaterial laws of logic? So the point we make is that if the laws of logic aren't material and an atheist universe is material then the atheist worldview cannot account for the laws of logic that you're using to reject the Christian worldview. It's that simple. And Dr Bahnsen is just pointing that out in the debate. It's a perfect point. What we're trying to say is the laws of logic can't be accounted for in an atheist, materialist worldview. Only the Trinitarian worldview can account for immaterial laws of logic because here we have Three in One, we have Diversity in Unity, we have Relationship and Fellowship where there's language and logic all pre-existing the Creation at the Creator level.

And what we're trying to show here is that outside of the Trinity *no one* has solved the problem of logic and language. Anybody that tries to tell they have just doesn't know the history of philosophy. Nobody has solved the problem. Don't sit there and say, in a nice comfortable fortress and go bang, bang, bang, bang shooting at the Christian, you don't have a fortress and you don't have any weapons, you've got nothing there.

So what we want to say when we start out is that every time we speak and every time we think, whether we're a Christian or a non-Christian, we're working this problem. We just don't think about it. And that's okay, not everyone has to consciously think this through. But then don't come criticizing the gospel and criticizing the Christian faith if you haven't thought it through. What I'm moving us to is to see that when the Christian faith discusses something like numerics in the Trinity, oneness and threeness, we have to go back to the Creator-creature distinction—that we have God, God exists in His own level of being and we have man, and man exists in a distinct level of being. These are not the same. God is the Creator and He has a certain character, we are created in His image and so we have similar character. But we're not Him. So when we talk about number in His level we don't mean the identical thing as when we talk about numerics in our level, but the reason we have numerics at all is because our creature level is dependent upon His Creator level. Numerics in creation are derivative of numerics that were first in God. And what's mind blowing about this is that what this says is every time we go to speak and every time we go to think, in effect we're admitting the kind of God the Scripture says is there.

Turn to Rom 1; this is the passage which says that every man, woman and child that has ever lived on this planet knows God exists and will be held accountable for that. It doesn't matter whether they're Hindu, Pakistani, Chinese, Australian, American, German, whatever, it doesn't make any difference, every person will have to give an answer. People don't like this; people have a hard time understanding it. Rom 1:20 we have an explanation for the fact that all men see God. "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen," I want you to look at what appears to be a contradiction. Look at where it says "His invisible attributes," then he lists two of them, "His eternal power and divine nature." How can invisible things be seen when the definition of invisible is that they can't be seen. But what does Paul say, they "have been clearly seen." So he's talking about all men seeing clearly invisible things. We're not accustomed to thinking this way. But Paul thought this through and Paul came to this conclusion. Basically what Paul concluded, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is that we are so surrounded by God His existence is inescapable. How did Paul express it over in Acts 17, when Jerusalem meets Athens and Paul, this Jew is giving his apologetic to these Gentiles, he's trotting out the application of Rom 1 to evangelism, he says a series of very poignant things to the Athenians and he says, "in Him we live and move and exist," and then he quotes one of their poets to prove that they know very well what he's talking about. God is not a mystery to people. He's clearly seen, He's above us, He's around us, we all know Him. As Cornelius Van Til said for years, every human being has continually and always been closer to God than anything else. That's how close we are to God, that's how dependent upon Him we all are. If it weren't that way, how could Paul possibly conclude Rom 1:20 by saying "being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse." How can you say they are without excuse if they are genuinely ignorant of His existence? So it's undeniable in Scripture that all men, including atheists, know God exists. Not only do they know He exists, but Paul says in this verse He is "clearly seen" all the time.

What we're getting to in our lesson is language and logic. This is one of the ways that men are in touch with God every single day they take a breath, every time they speak a word, they are walking in God's world, they are thinking according to the rules of logic that God has built into the human soul. The only basis for that logic, as we are going to see, is the Trinity. And

here they are using His tools. This is why Cornelius Van Til had a very famous illustration he used: he was on one of the public transit systems in the city of Philadelphia one day and he was sitting across the aisle from this parent that had a little kid wandering around and wasn't controlling him or something, and the kid did something and Van Til was sitting over there, this professor watching this whole thing go on and the parent finally reached down and grabbed the kid and sat it on their lap. Well, this kid was a real brat and he slapped the parent's face. Van Til used that illustration many, many years in his theology class because he said that's an example of the unbeliever saying God doesn't exist. In order to use the language to say God doesn't exist he has to use the language and logic God gave Him. For if the universe were really what the unbeliever hopes it is, he has no basis for language and logic. On this basis how do you ever get universal categories? See, on this basis you don't know if you have n pieces of data, a thousand observations, n equals a thousand. How can you be sure that the $n+1$ th piece of data isn't going to totally blow away everything you've known before? If you're honest you have to say you don't know.

What this leads to is that anybody who believes in some theory of empiricism, that's what this is - knowledge through sensation. Any person who believes this way has to ultimately be driven to a position that all knowledge is contingent, all knowledge is up for grabs, and there is no such thing as enduring truth. But no scientist can operate this way. Why? Because the moment he goes to mathematically describe something, now he's using logic, and logic isn't empirically derived. Anyone seen logic walking around? The moment he writes his scientific report and publishes it in a journal, he's using language. Where did that come from in his worldview? So he's using logic and language, just like that little kid on the bus was using his parent's lap in order to slap the parent's face. And in order to attack God men have to create universals. They have to steal these tools of thought from God in order to attack God.

So what we are doing in this section on the Trinity is we're trying to think more deeply than most people think, get down to basics and show that in fact the Trinity is the presupposition of all knowledge. Instead of trying to say well, we have all these rules of logic and gee, we're going to set up this test in all our finite intelligence and we're going to figure out how to prove God exists. In other words, we are so smart that we can construct a proof and then

we'll see whether or not God fits our proof and if He does, wonderful; and if He doesn't, too bad for Him. The point is that there is no test, the way we normally think of, there is no test to prove that God exists or not. It's exactly backwards; let me try to put it this way. The unbeliever thinks in terms of creating a test and then seeing whether God fits it. Biblically speaking we reverse that, it's not the test first, then God; it's God first but we don't have any test because the basis of the test is human logic, human observation, human thought and human language which came from where? From God. So you can't set up a test without standing on the firm foundation of the Biblical God. He is the presupposition of the tools that you need to do the test with. That's what we're trying to push for here as we go into the Trinity.

The Bible-believing Christian sees the One and the Many in creation as derivative," key word, "derivative of the One and Many in the Creator. The Trinity doctrine states that in God's being, which is ultimate reality, both the One and the Many coexist in non-competitive harmony. God has absolute unity and has absolute individuality. The Father isn't sitting there fighting the Son, the Holy Spirit isn't arguing with the Father. One isn't totally trying to fight the other, there's harmony in the Trinity. So can you have One and Many without a big fight going on? Of course. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit work together, they work so much together that we can call God one. So there's no inherent necessity for a conflict between the One and the Many. But there is in the non-Christian. If he overemphasizes the One he gets totalitarian politics, that's communism, it's all about the good of society, all individuality is lost. But if he overemphasizes the Many he goes over to anarchy, emphasizing all the Many individuals, I've got my right, Joe has his, Mary has hers and we all cut each other's throats. So it plays out, but it's balanced if you look at the Trinity. Rushdoony shows how the Trinity affected American political theory. He says, "Whatever other influences may have been at work, it is apparent that, in the shaping of the United States, a truly Christian concept of the One and the Many was a decisive, if often unrecognized, presupposition." In other words, these men were Trinitarian and being Trinitarian how did they set up our country? We have three branches of one government. This is not arbitrary. They derived this from the Trinity and set up three branches: legislative, executive and judicial all part of one government.

“Thus to the hasty critics who call the Trinity a contradiction we respond by saying that, just as he lacks a basis for knowledge and ethics, his language and logic are floating in thin air. Somehow they are ‘just there, barely able to survive the tug-of-war between the One and the Many in everyday use. Moreover, the pagan can’t even back up his claim of a contradiction in the Trinity doctrine without being forced to admit that he has no basis for the logic he uses to show a contradiction. That’s where we’ve got him. He’s bringing in content and meaning to these words, and we say whoa, whoa, whoa, where are you getting that from? Where are you getting language and logic if not from the Trinity? He has had to use our position to get the tools to take his position, and the moment he opens his mouth to use language he’s already using the Trinity.

Now we want to survey the Biblical data that shows the Trinity. The most striking way of doing this I think is to show material from the OT because most people don’t think it’s there. Most people think the Trinity is some new thing that happened with Jesus. It’s true that the presence of the person of Jesus Christ forced the Church to think this through. Believers in past centuries didn’t have to think it through. But the presence of Jesus in history, the birth of Jesus Christ, the introduction of the incarnate God-man walking this planet forced us as believers to say we’ve got to think this one through, we’ve got to think hard about this. We can’t brush this off. Now we’ve got heretics knocking at the door, we’ve got conflicts going on; we’ve got to come to this statement. That’s why the doctrine of the hypostatic union. But remember, all through those 400 years of trying to say who Jesus was, what was the underlying problem? What was the underlying problem of all those heresies? They started with the wrong concept of God. They either were so strongly monotheistic that it didn’t allow for a plurality within the one God, or they went off on some pagan thing and screwed it all up, messing up the Creator-creature distinction.

We want to look at OT supporting data. The first key thing is Two Hebrew Words for “One”. One of the problems here is that people think of the OT in terms of Medieval and modern Judaism. Medieval and modern Judaism teaches a solitary monotheism. And so people think the OT teaches a solitary monotheism. But that’s not OT Judaism, that’s post-Biblical Judaism, medieval Judaism. So let’s not read stuff into the OT that came later. That’s a tradition of medieval Judaism, not ancient Judaism.

If we go directly to the OT we find something different. We find there are two words for “one.” *Echad* and *yachid*. Let’s look at Deut 6:4. This is one of the key verses of modern Judaism. It’s called the *Shema*, which is the Hebrew for the verb “to hear” and the modern orthodox Jew repeats this verse three times each day. “Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!” You see the word “one” sometimes translated “alone”? That word used to describe YHWH is *echad*. In the Middle Ages a rabbi named Maimonides came along. Maimonides is to Judaism what Augustine is to the Christian church. He was a man who had tremendous influence on all the generations after him. He’s a very important figure, because this guy’s calling in life was to protect Judaism from Christian intrusions. He built a fortress for Judaism. Maimonides went so far as to teach that God is “absolutely one” using the Hebrew word *yachid* to describe what he thought was proper Jewish monotheism. His argument was, see you Christians, there is no three in there, there’s just one so you Christians are changing the OT. However, Maimonides went far beyond the ancient Jewish OT sources. When he said YHWH is best described by the Hebrew *yachid*, which does mean “absolute oneness,” the problem with that is the Hebrew never uses *yachid* of YHWH. The Hebrew OT always and everywhere when talking of God’s oneness uses *echad*. Even the famous *Shema* of Deut 6:4 uses the Hebrew *echad*. This *echad* also means one, but not in the sense of an absolute one, rather in terms of a oneness that can allow for multiplicity. Take for example a bunch of grapes. How many bunches? One bunch. How many grapes? A multitude. When you talk about that kind of thing the Hebrew word for that is *echad*. There’s a multiplicity in the oneness? Here’s another one, Gen 2:24, who’s created in Gen 2? Gen 2 recapitulates day six, man was created on day 6. What does Gen 2 say? Woman was created out of man. Then what happened? The first marriage. The two become one flesh. Guess what the word is there? *Echad*, one flesh. Is there a multiplicity? You betcha. Every married person knows there’s multiplicity. The two people don’t suddenly merge into one person physically. Maybe the population control people would like that but the twoness remains. So here’s one of the first references in the Bible of *echad* and it’s talking about two people. In a relationship, yes, one marriage, but within that oneness there’s a twoness. So we simply point out that the word used of God in the OT *echad*, and that word is a oneness that allows for multiplicity within the oneness, it’s not *yachid*, which is absolute one.

So this sets us up to look at four other ways that this multiplicity within oneness in the OT can be shown. *echad* gets this thing going. We're not saying that you can see the Trinity in all these *echad* passages. That's not what we're saying. What we're saying, however, is that there's more than one there. I know people can say, well yeah, hindsight is 20-20. We might not have seen it if we were OT saints. Well, maybe not, but maybe so, because we really don't know how much they really knew about some of these things. But let's take a look.

One thing you find is Plural References to God.ⁱ We've already covered that in Gen 1, the creation event. Who made man? How does God introduce the creation of man? "Let Us make man in Our image." What is the explanation for these first person plurals? Why does God, a monotheistic God, say "Us" instead of "Me" in the first chapter, no less, of Genesis? What is the explanation for these first person plurals? Some have argued that the plurals in the creation narrative (Gen 1:26) must refer to God and the angels. That's the usual explanation of Judaism; its God and the angels. "This view is contradicted by Ps 8:5 and Heb 2:5-18 that clearly state that man was not created after the pattern of angels. It doesn't say that we were made in the angels image, it says we're made lower than the angels. So it's not God and the angels that get together and make man. It also conflicts with clear statements that God *alone* created man (Gen. 2:7, 22; Isaiah 44:24).

Turn to Isa 44:24. Look at what he says here, he doesn't talk about angels making men. He says, "Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, and the one who formed you from the womb, "I, the LORD, am the maker of all things, Stretching out the heavens" how, with the angels? No! "by Myself, and spreading out the earth" how, with angels? No, "all alone." So God alone created, angels were not involved in creation. They themselves were created. So the plural "we" can't mean God and angels.

Then we come to another explanation. Some people try to explain these plurals as 'merely' a plural of majesty. You often hear an important person say well we believe this and we believe that, and they're using the we kind of for themselves. So people have said that's a plural of majesty and that's what God meant. "Such an explanation is thoughtlessly shallow. Why should there have arisen in human language a plurality of majesty if it wasn't due to the prior truth of the plurality of God? It is not 'merely' a plural of majesty; it is a

plural of majesty that is incomprehensible in depth and richness-referring to the plurality of Being in God.” Is everybody clear on that, the plurality of God? It’s there, it’s in the text, and you’ve got to explain it. It doesn’t prove the Trinity; it sets you up for the Trinity. It keeps people from saying that the Trinity conflicts with the OT.

Third evidence, The Angel of YHWH.ⁱⁱ Turn to Isa 42:8, this is the essence of monotheism in the Creator-creature distinction. God says “I am the LORD, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, Nor My praise to graven images.” I will not tolerate worship of anything outside of Myself. Is that true? Does God want us to worship angels or men? What happens when people try to worship angels or men? The angels or men shut that down real fast. Here are some passages, Acts 10:26; 14:11-15; Rev 19:10, each one of those angels or men are worshipped and the angels or men say, uh, uh, don’t worship me, I’m not God, God alone is to be worshipped. But then you read in the OT of this strange figure called the “angel of the Lord” or “angel of YHWH.” This figure is apparently distinct from God, he has his own identity, and he’s found a number of passages (e.g. Gen 24:7, 40; 1 Chron 21:15-18; Isa 63:9; Zech 1:12-13). Even though distinct from YHWH He is sometimes identified with YHWH and worshipped as YHWH (Gen 16:7-13; 22:11-18; 31:11-13; 48:15-16; Exod 13:21 cf. 14:19; Judg 5:11-23; 13:9-20)! So who is this angel of YHWH. You can tell that the OT teaches there are at least two persons that are distinguishable within the one God.

Let’s look at Genesis where he first occurs, Gen 16:7. Who prior to chapter 16 in Genesis has promised Abraham the Abrahamic Covenant? YHWH. YHWH is a covenant-making, covenant-keeping God. Well then, how do you explain this one? The angel comes to Hagar, this woman has been kicked out of the house and she’s all alone out there with her son and this figure comes to her. Gen 16:7, “Now the angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur. ⁸He said, “Hagar, Sarai’s maid, where have you come from and where are you going?” And she said, “I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai.” ⁹Then the angel of the LORD said to her, “Return to your mistress, and submit yourself to her authority.” ¹⁰Moreover, the angel of the LORD said to her, “I will greatly multiply your descendants so that they will be too many to count.” ¹¹The angel of the LORD said to her further, “Behold, you are with child, And you will bear a son; And you shall call his name Ishmael, Because the LORD has given heed to your

affliction.” Verse 13, “Then she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, “You are a God who sees”; who’s speaking to her? “The angel of the LORD.” Who wrote this text? A Jew or an Arab? Hagar is looked upon by the Arabs as one of the mothers of the Arab nations. But who wrote this text? Jews. This is OT Judaism. So in verse 13 it’s an interpretation by the author of the Genesis text about what this woman just did, and he says that she saw the angel of the Lord and she called the angel of the Lord, YHWH. So who is this angel of the Lord figure?

We could cite many of those verses and I encourage you to look these up. It just creates more awe of who our God is to go through these things and you can see the angel of the Lord is a real interesting Being. So at least we conclude that there’s a plurality in God, there’s the Angel of the Lord. The question is, “In the light of NT insistence that no one has ever seen God in His fullness (John 1:18; 6:46; 1 Tim. 6:15-16; 1 John 4:14), one can only conclude that the angel of the Lord who was seen face to face was the Second Person of the Trinity, God the Son, in pre-incarnate form. The word, God in the four NT passages can then be understood to refer to the First Person of the Trinity, God the Father, Who is never seen in His fullness, in His completeness.

Fourth, we have the Word or Wisdom of the Lord. This is a subtlety in the Hebrew text. Nine times out of ten when we say “Word of God,” what do we have in mind? We have in mind the Bible. But watch it here. There is an expression in the OT when the prophets were getting their information from God, which they later wrote as Scripture. When they were getting fresh revelation, before they wrote it as Scripture; there’s this expression that says “The Word of the Lord” came to so and so, son of so and so. When you read the OT think how many times you read that, “The Word of the Lord” came to prophet so and so, “The word of the Lord” came to so and so. That’s not a voice coming out of the sky to them, that’s a person coming to them. Turn to Isa 55:10. Note how many times we go back to Isaiah. Isaiah is loaded with this stuff. In the doctrine of the Trinity there’s this ongoing concept that says the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son and the Son is always begotten of the Father, we have to deal with what “begotten” means and what “proceeds” means. Isaiah 55 sets this idea in motion. Isa 55:10, “For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, And do not return there without watering the earth And making it bear and sprout, And furnishing seed to

the sower and bread to the eater; ¹¹So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding *in the matter* for which I sent it.” So far there it’s all impersonal pronouns, “it.”

But there’s something more powerful than just thinking of that in terms of a Bible and a written text on paper. Something’s going on here. There’s the Word of the Lord coming to the prophet, it’s sent by the Father and returns to the Father, and it accomplishes tasks. I grant you, it’s not a completely clear exposition. All I’m trying to point out is that the OT text has these openings, these cracked doors, these partial windows. That’s what we’re seeing, there’s a neat thing going on here in the OT. Here are some references (e.g., Isaiah 2:1; 38:4; Jer. 2:2,4, 11, 14; Ezek. 20:2; Hosea 1:1). This Word is sent to do things for God (Isaiah 55:10-11). “It delivers the elect from judgment (Psalm 107:20), and controls nature (Psalm 147:15).” What was one of the arguments we used, a category of arguments for the deity of Jesus that the Church used? One was substitution of actions only God did in the OT performed by Jesus in the NT. We said Jesus pronounced forgiveness of sins, not that He announced that God forgave them, He said I forgive you. He created things out of nothing like carbon molecules. So when Jesus Christ takes on the role of the Creator, we assume He must be the Creator. It’s a similar kind of thing that’s going on here. This Word that comes from God controls nature, it saves the elect from judgment. “Moreover, this Word is clearly distinguished from all of creation,” because it says the creation in Psalm 33 was created by this Word of the Lord, “but it is distinguished from the Creator in Prov. 8:22-31,” I was with Him from before the creation of the world, says wisdom. How can that be? I was there, says wisdom, when He created the world. Who’s that? “Before creation the Word existed, yet it existed with distinct identity from Yahweh (Prov 8:22-26).”

“By the end of the OT era, Jewish thought had developed this concept of the Word of Yahweh.” Now this is OT Jewish thought, not modern Jewish thought, this is Jewish thought at the time of the NT. “Aramaic translations and commentaries on the OT, called Targums, frequently mentioned the divine Word of Yahweh.” This is not distinctly Christian here, we’re not talking about something the church found, this is stuff found before the Church existed by Jews. “Dr. David L. Cooper,” who by the way for many years was a pioneer in Jewish evangelism in Los Angeles, and heavily

influenced Dr Arnold Fruchtenbaum.. Dr Cooper relates some of this early Jewish thinking on the Word of YHWH. We shall begin with Gen 19:24 which reads as follows:” watch this, you know the story - it’s Sodom and Gomorrah. “Then the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven,” Why are there two “LORD’S” in that sentence, both YHWH? Why does it say the Lord rained, but then there’s a prepositional clause, “from the Lord.” So the Lord rained from the Lord? Then Cooper goes on to show you what a rabbi thinks about that verse, Gen 19:24, “Jonathan Ben Uzziel [a Targum] renders the original text of this passage as follows: ‘And the Word of the Lord caused to descend upon the people of Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord of heaven.’ Here we see that the Lord who rained the fire is called ‘the Word of the Lord.’ He goes forth to accomplish things on behalf of the Lord. The translator used the term, ‘the Word of the Lord to refer to the One who went forth to accomplish the work of the Lord. See the interplay? In one place it’s the Lord, in the other place it’s the Word of the Lord. Distinguishable people under the same name.

After showing other instances of this we have another quote from Cooper. “From the quotations I have noted, it becomes clear that the official ancient interpretation of the synagogue was that the Word of Jehovah and the Holy Spirit were divine personalities and were distinguished from the one who is called Jehovah” Reading that sentence, what does it do for you when you think of John 1:1 - in the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God...John’s a Jewish theologian and there it is, the word. When John thinks of the word, who he identifies as Jesus, is he linking Jesus to this OT word of the Lord? It tantalizes us to think that John is identifying the OT word of the Lord as the pre-incarnate Christ. Cooper goes on, From all the facts which we have learned thus far, we see that Moses and the Prophets were Trinitarians, and the great leaders of Israel in pre-Christian times were likewise Trinitarians.” A lot of scholars have criticized this sentence; you’ve got to be careful. I think Cooper probably went too far, this sentence where he’s saying they were Trinitarians, I don’t think they really were. That’s probably reading too much in. There’s plurality inside God, that you can say, that’s a humbler approach. “In view of these facts, then, we can assert with all confidence that Christians who worship the Holy Trinity...are simply worshipping the same God who revealed Himself to Abraham.” We would agree with that sentence. It’s just the other one I don’t think they consciously thought of themselves as Trinitarians.

Fifth, we're going to Explicit References. These are very interesting texts. Here is where the Trinity may indeed be present in the OT in very clear form. Isaiah 48:16, Yahweh speaks, you've got to see the context, go to verse 12, and we identify the speaker. It's all quotes in your translation. Who starts off the speech? "Listen to me, O Jacob, even Israel whom I called; I am He, I am the first, I am also the last." Who's the speaker? YHWH! Now go to verse 16, what do you make of this? It says: "Come near to Me, listen to this: From the first time I have not spoken in secret, from the time it took place, I was there. And now the Lord God has sent Me, and His Spirit." Question: what is the antecedent of the pronoun Me? Every pronoun has an antecedent; the antecedent means a noun that goes before the pronoun. What's the antecedent of Me? The speaker, but who's the speaker? YHWH. So now you've got two YHWH's here, verse 16, "The Lord God," that's YHWH's name there, "The Lord God sent Me," and Me is YHWH in verse 12, "*and* [He sent] His Spirit." This is a pretty powerful text; you have to think about it.

The other text I cite is in Isaiah 61:1. This is a quote that one Sabbath day the Lord Jesus Christ got up in a synagogue, the book of Luke recounts this, and He quotes this passage, and the people really get ticked off. They know what He meant when He got up and said this, this young son of a carpenter coming up in our synagogue and daring to say after reading this scroll, because the men in the congregation would take turns reading the Bible, and he read the scroll and said, "This day its fulfilled in your midst, it's Me," I'm the guy spoken of in Isa 61. And he walked over and sat down. Can you imagine the crowd's response when He said that? In Isa 61:1, we've got to know the context so go to the previous verse, Isaiah 60:22. Who's speaking, in verse 22 it's "I, the LORD." Now in Isaiah 61:1, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the LORD has anointed Me—"who's the antecedent of the pronoun Me? The speaker of verse 22; who's that? It's the Lord. Now you've got the Lord has anointed the Lord, moreover, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me.... To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives, and freedom to prisoners." That looks like three people to me.

So remember there are these two passages in the OT, Isaiah 61:1 and Isaiah 48:16, and there's something going on here. Now it's true the OT saints may not have really delved into this much; it took the Church 400 years to work it

out, so maybe they didn't spend too much time thinking about this but it's there. The same God speaks in the OT as in the NT. He has a oneness in the OT and these passages in Isaiah show at least a threeness. So there's unity and diversity involved here.

So that's the set up, next week we'll deal with the NT evidences which I don't think we have to spend too much time on because we've already with dealt with the Lord Jesus Christ, so we'll deal with the personality of the Holy Spirit. Then we want to formulate a proper statement of what the Trinity is all about. We're going to struggle with that, that's not easy material either; it's taking advantage of all the Scripture that we're looking at, then going back to the One and the Many problem again. So we're going to combine all that stuff, the One and the Many stuff, with all the Scripture data, and we want to pull it together into the doctrine of the Trinity and try to understand it.

ⁱ Though not covered in this lesson, consider the plural title *elohim* used of God in Gen 1:1 and throughout the rest of the OT. While this term can be used of pagan gods it is also used of the one true God. It is often used with the singular verb showing both a plurality and unity in God.

ⁱⁱ John Frame refers to Angel of YHWH and Word or Wisdom of YHWH appearances as hypostatizations.

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