

The Godhead

Hi, this is Richard Oliver, and our subject today is The Godhead.

Israel is the only known nation in the world who originally believed in one God.

Deuteronomy chapter six verse four, *'Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD.'*

And Jesus also quotes this in Mark chapter twelve verse twenty-nine, when a student asked Him what are the two greatest commandments, and Jesus said, "Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and, of course, thy neighbour as thyself." This concept has been throughout Israel throughout all of time.

Now, a few references in Isaiah chapter forty-two verse eight, *'I am the LORD: that is My name: and My glory will I not give to another, neither My praise to graven images.'*

In Isaiah chapter forty-four verse six, *'Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and His redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside Me there is no God.'*

Go back to Isaiah chapter forty-three verse ten, *'Ye are My witnesses, saith the LORD, and My servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe Me, and understand that I am He: before Me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after Me.'*

Verse eleven, 'I, even I, am the LORD; and beside Me there is no saviour.'

Israel then has been very clear about there being just one God. Christianity, however, has, over the years, got a bit confused. And the reason is perfectly logical. Take for example the situation where Jesus was baptized. This is in Matthew chapter three, picking it up at verse sixteen.

'And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him:

'And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'

Now for many people who have not quite got the concept of an omniscient God and omnipresent God, who is everywhere, knows all things at all times, and is involved in all things, this can be a bit disconcerting. For here we have Jesus of Nazareth, or Jesus Christ, rising out of the water of baptism and then hear a voice from heaven coming down, speaking, and also, again separately, a dove-like figure, the Holy Ghost, descending on Jesus. And they would say, "Oh, there's three here. God is one, but He is three."

This confusion was further exasperated at the end of Matthew when we read the instructions that Jesus gave the disciples as He left them. He said, this is Matthew chapter twenty-eight verse nineteen, *'Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:'*

Again, three separate titles.

Now, for some, theologians especially, the time of the Council of Nicaea, this became a major doctrine. And they claimed that God was in three separate persons. Three persons, but of one essence. These actual words didn't help keep things very clear, because a person, of course, is a personality, a separate entity. The use of the word 'persons' therefore confused many, however, the church decided that this was a dividing line between believers and nonbelievers. And if people did not believe in three separate persons, in a triune God, in other words three persons in one God, then

they were heretics. They were no longer to be called Christians. And they could therefore be punished or disposed of as required.

Now, when we read at the end of any book, for example a normal story that Jane and John lived happily ever after, then to understand who Jane and John are we need to go to the beginning of the book to find out a little bit about them. So if we turn to the beginning of the book of Matthew, we've just read the end of the book of Matthew, go to the beginning of the book of Matthew, we have the birth of Jesus.

And Matthew chapter one from verse eighteen, reads *'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.'*

Now here is a point that we need to take very carefully. If there are three people, try and picture this in your head, if you are driving your car have your left hand mirror as one, as the Father, the right hand mirror as the Holy Ghost and the centre of your bonnet as the Son, as Jesus Christ, then you've got three separate entities. In the full extreme of Trinitarian-ism there is this belief in three separate entities. So it is said that the Father cannot be the Son, the Son cannot be the Father, the Holy Ghost cannot be the Father or the Son, and so on. But what we've just read actually goes against that. This is the scripture which says *'before they came together,'* this is Mary and Joseph, *'she was found with child of'* not God the Father but of *'the Holy Ghost.'*

Now, of course, any wise Christian knows you should never take one scripture on its own. So always take two or three witnesses. Well, the very next verse but one, Joseph was, of course, upset that his bride was pregnant and he knew it wasn't him, so he was going to put her away privately, he was full of grace.

Verse twenty, *'But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.'*

Once again, the father of Jesus is not God the Father, if there are three separate persons, but He is the Holy Ghost. So either Jesus was unaware who His father was or He was illegitimate, unless there aren't three separate persons in the Godhead.

Now, we've read, as I've mentioned, Jesus's instructions to the disciples about going into all the world and baptizing believers in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

Now, in Matthew chapter sixteen we know that Jesus gave the keys to the kingdom of heaven to Peter. Jesus asked His disciples "Whom do men say that I am?" and they said "Well, some think You're John the Baptist come back. Some say You're Elijah. Others may think that maybe You're Jeremiah or one of the prophets." And Jesus said "Well, who do you say that I am?" and Simon Peter in verse sixteen of chapter sixteen said *'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.'*

'And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, by My Father which is in heaven.'

"Incidentally I say unto you I shall call you Peter", or 'And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.'

'And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.'

So Peter had the keys to the kingdom of heaven.

Now, let's move to the book of Acts. Jesus has been crucified. He's risen from the dead, and the disciples, although they're thrilled to bits in the resurrection, are scared stiff of the Jews. So they're meeting in secret in the upper room. This is all in Acts chapters one and two, and in chapter two when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all together in one accord in one place. They were in the upper room. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And they received the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Now, fully filled with the Holy Ghost they were suddenly endued with power, with vision, with strength, with gifts, and they were no longer afraid of the Jews. The Holy Ghost has that effect. The Holy Ghost is the promise that God gives to every believer who is baptized. And it is also the seal of approval on the person, that God has sealed them.

Now, they then rush out of the house and, of course, make a big commotion, and a whole big crowd gathers and there's thousands of people there and they're wondering what on earth's going on, these people are drunk. And Peter says "No, no, no, no, it's far too early in the morning to be drunk. What you are seeing, this is the prophecy of Joel coming true. When it says God says 'I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh, your sons your daughters shall prophesy' and so on", and he took advantage at this point to preach the first ever Christian sermon, which carries on down through to Acts chapter two verse thirty-six.

When he finishes his sermon by saying *"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."*

'Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?'

'Then Peter said unto them,' now remember, these people are wanting to come into the kingdom of God. Whatever Peter says now is the key that will unlock the gates to allow people to come in to God, into the kingdom. Whatever he closes is closed. *'Then Peter said unto them, Repent,'* in other words, turn around, take your faith off yourself, off other things and place it entirely in God, *'and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.'*

Now Peter said baptize in the name of Jesus Christ, yet in Matthew Jesus had said baptize in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. So either Jesus was wrong, or Peter, fully baptized in the Holy Spirit, got it wrong, or, and this is the only other logical answer, the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, which are after all just titles, is Jesus Christ. In other words, there is one God. His full name is the Lord Jesus Christ. Three representations of God: God the Father; God the Son; God the Holy Ghost. Not three separate people. But three, if you like, offices, with functions and so on, three ways that God reveals Himself.

At the time that these words were written in the book of Acts and the Gospels and so on, the Greeks used to have a theatre and there were frequently far more characters in the play than there were actors. So what used to happen was the Greek actor would have different masks, one for each character. This was called en morphe and they would work as they went through the play the actor

would change his mask according to who he was playing. And it is this concept that we understand what God is doing. He is changing His mask, as Father, as Son, and Holy Ghost as He operates through His people, through His Word, through His plan. So, we now, as Christians, believe in one God. He has revealed Himself as a Father, as Son, and as Holy Ghost.

And, if you're not quite sure, let's have a quick look back to something that we all know very well. And they are the scriptures that we read so often at Christmas. And we read them without thinking of their implications. I'll just take a couple, and we'll take Isaiah chapter nine and I think it's verse six where it says, *'For unto us a child is born, unto us 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;'*

We referred before to Matthew when we talked about the birth of Jesus and how the Holy Ghost was the Father. But did you notice that the reference to Isaiah also said that a virgin shall be with child and shall bring forth a son and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is 'God with us'.

So, we have a simple straightforward situation here. God is one. He's eternal, but as He has revealed Himself in time and space, He has done this as Jesus Christ, right from the beginning, after all Jesus was the creator. He was the Word that brought the universe, the world and everything into existence. He wasn't just born in a stable and that's when He started. He always was. And the Holy Ghost. The very life of God Himself. The life that lives in us, changes our spirit, our lives, once we have this baptism of the Holy Ghost. He changes us and makes us as Himself, a part of Himself.

So. The Godhead. There is one God. *'Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD.'* But He has revealed Himself as Father, the eternal Father, and as a Son, as Jesus Christ, and as the Holy Ghost, the very life of God Himself that can live in us.

May God be with you and bless you.