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The Trinity in the Old Testament

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The Old Testament presents implicit and explicit evidence of the existence of the Trinity.

By Norman R. Gulley

In his *Antithesis,* the Gnostic Marcion, claimed in the second century A.D. that "the finite, imperfect, angry Jehovah of the Jews" and the "good or gracious God" revealed by Christ were two different Gods.[1] In fact, according to Marcion, the Old Testament God is evil (or at least the author of evil), while the New Testament God is good.[2] Yet Tertullian (ca. 155-220) wrote five books against Marcion's heretical ideas and is the most important early thinker to demonstrate the importance of rejecting dualism in the Trinity.

During the whole 3rd century A.D., Modalistic Monarchianism[3] stated that one God took on different modes. He was the Father in the Old Testament, the Son in the Gospels, and

the Spirit since Pentecost—the same God appearing in three different modes of revelation.[4] The stress here was on the oneness of God against pagan polytheism, which denied a Trinity in either the Old Testament or the New Testament. Much later, Michael Servetus (1511-1553) believed that the Trinity had little biblical support, and that if theology could rid itself of the Trinitarian idea, this would contribute to the conversion of Jews and Muslims. Socinians (16th-19th century) emphatically denied the divinity of Christ, and so rejected the Trinity. Their Racovian Catechism (1605) was one of the earliest anti-Trinitarian statements since Arianism in the fourth century and became the forerunner of Deism and Unitarianism (both promoting God as one). The 17th century witnessed a vigorous defense of the Trinity against Socinian and Arminian views and modern forms of Sabellianism and Arianism.

It is well known that many biblical scholars, past and present, reject a continuity between law and grace and hence distinguish the God of law (Old Testament) from the God of grace (New Testament). Even more radical, the Dispensationalists assume that God deals differently with those living in one historical period than with others living in another historical period. Lewis Chafer, for example, claims that these different dispensations are "the very foundation of a science such as Systematic Theology." He then continues: "Though too often confused, the divine government is different in each of these ages, being adapted perfectly to the relation which the people in their respective dispensations sustain to God. Each of these systems of human government is wholly complete in itself. The Mosaic law contained the commandments, the statutes, and the ordinances, and was an expression of God's will to Israel to whom alone it was addressed. In the teaching of grace addressed only to the Church, God has disclosed in full the manner of life which becomes those who are already perfected in Christ."[5]

Dispensationalists distinguish between Israel and the church, designating the old covenant as law and the new covenant as grace. Charles Hodge believed Scripture contrasts the old and the new covenants in several ways. One way is that the new reveals the same covenant, but that "it is spoken of as a state of tutelage and bondage, far different from the freedom and filial spirit of the dispensation under which we now live. . . . in the New Testament the gospel greatly predominates over the law. Whereas, under the Old Testament, the law predominated over the gospel."[6]

Predestinarians promote a difference in humans due to sovereign rather than human choice. What these human ideas have in common is questioning the God of Scripture.

However, there is a problem. If God is a solitary Person in the Old Testament ("'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one'" [Deut. 6:4]),[7] and a Trinity in the New Testament (for example, at Christ's baptism [Matt. 3:16, 17]; and in Christ's great commission [28:19]), how can He be a God of love (1 John 4:8) throughout human history? In other words, how can a solitary God in the Old Testament love as the Trinity does in the New Testament? Such assumed differences are not merely between law and grace, bondage and freedom, sovereign and free choice, but have to do with the nature of God Himself. If God relates to humans differently at any time and in any way, what does this do to His words "'I the Lord do not change'" (Mal. 3:6, NIV)?

The Old Testament Shema

"'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one!'" (Deut. 6:4), or "'one Lord'" (NIV, KJV), or "'the Lord alone'" (Goodspeed), or "the Lord our God is one Lord, the only Lord" (Amplified). Commentators recognize that the Hebrew can be

translated in different ways. The next chapter in Deuteronomy, about the Decalogue, begins the same way: "'Hear, O Israel, . . . the Lord our God'" (5:1, 2), and the word *one* can be considered as a title or name for God.[8] Two chapters before the *Shema,* the Red Sea miracle (exodus redemption) calls forth the exclamation, "'The Lord is God. . . . There is no other'" (4:39, NIV), which echoes "'who among the gods is like you, O Lord'" (Ex. 15:11, NIV), which anticipates the first commandment and its prologue: "'I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me'" (20:2, 3). These texts focus on the uniqueness of God.

The *Shema* "expresses not only the *uniqueness* but also the *unity* of God. As one God (or the 'Unique'), when he spoke there was no other to contradict; when he promised, there was no other to revoke that promise; when he warned, there was no other to provide refuge from the warning. He was not merely first among the gods, as Baal in the Canaanite pantheon, Amon-Re in Egypt, or Marduk in Babylon, he was the one and only God."[9]

What is this oneness that is attributed to God? Is it more than a "name," "uniqueness," and "the one and only"? There are two words for "one" in Hebrew. The first means *unique,* such as an only son (Gen. 22:2) and an only child (Prov. 4:3; Zech. 12:10). The second means *united,* such as "A man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh" (Gen. 2:24, NIV). The word for *united* is used in the *Shema*.

Millard Erickson observes that the unity of husband and wife is "not uniqueness, but the unity of diversity. It speaks of union, rather than aloneness."[10] This is why Duane L. Christensen says that this word for unity, "speaks . . . also of the unity of God. The doctrine of monotheism is implicit in this brief creedal statement."[11] The Hebrew word for "one" meaning solitary, or

without others, is not used in the *Shema*. So it seems that the Shema not only speaks of the uniqueness of God as the only God, but "refers to the oneness that results from a unity of numerous persons."[12]

Elohim is a plural term for God (for *El* is God, and most names for God add to the word *El*). This didn't bother monotheists, which indicates that the plurality of the name wasn't confused with polytheism. Rather, as Herman Bavinck concludes, the plural form of this name for God "refers to the deity in the fullness and richness of its life. The God of revelation is not an abstract 'monad' but the true and living God, who in the infinite fullness of his life contains the highest diversity."[13]

Further Old Testament Evidence for Plurality

The plurality of God is also present in the following: (1) After sin entered the world "The Lord God [singular] said, 'Behold, the man has become like one of us [plural], to know good and evil'" (Gen. 3:22); (2) "I heard the voice of the Lord [singular], saying: 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us [plural]?'" (Isa. 6:8).

In Hebrew, more than one Person in the one God is conveyed by God's use of the plural "let us": (1) "God [singular] said, 'Let us [plural] make man in Our image'" (Gen. 1:26); (2) in response to the Babel tower builders, God [singular] said, "'Let us [plural] go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech'" (11:7). When God said "let us," "one of us," or "for us," He indicated that more than one Person is in the Godhead, even though He told Israel that their God was one. While focusing on one God to keep them from many gods, He allowed them to glimpse that one God as more than one Person.

It should be kept in mind that the above plurals are not

those of majesty, as when a royal person (singular) says "we grant you this privilege," for there are no other royal persons in Scripture who speak in this way. We must not read into Scripture ideas understood in our culture. George A. F. Knight is right to say that believing that Scripture contains plurals of majesty "is to read into Hebrew speech a modern way of thinking. The kings of Israel and Judah are all addressed in the singular in our biblical records."[14]

There are other examples of plurality in God: (1) "'The Lord God and His Spirit have sent Me'" (Isa. 48:16); (2) "'I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. Behold, He is coming,' says the Lord of hosts" (Mal. 3:1).

Angel of the Lord

An internal indicator for plurality in God is the phrase "the angel of the Lord." The following examples document that the "angel of the Lord" is sometimes God, for the "angel of the Lord" (*Yahweh*) in the Old Testament is the pre-incarnate Christ. This angel's relationship with persons in the Old Testament compares well with the Christ we know in the New Testament, thus showing the Christ of the Old Testament is the same as the Christ of the New Testament, and the distinction between the Old Testament God and the New Testament God is not warranted.

● When Hagar fled from Sarah, the angel of the Lord found her near a spring in the desert. The angel of the Lord named her baby and told Hagar to return to Sarah and submit to her, adding, "'I will so increase your descendants that they will be too numerous to count. . . . For the Lord has heard of your misery'" (Gen. 16:10, 11, NIV).

Only God can do that, and Hagar responded, "'You are the

God who sees me'" (vs. 13, NIV). This God said the Lord had heard of her misery, so God referred to the Lord, and in so doing gave insight into the plurality of the Godhead.

● When Abraham was about to sacrifice Isaac, "The Angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, and said: 'By Myself I have sworn, says the Lord, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son—blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore'" (22:15-17). The angel of the Lord is called "the Lord," and He speaks twice in the passage (vss. 11, 12; 15-18), and "God" is mentioned four times (vss. 1, 3, 8, 9). It is *Yahweh* who saves Abraham from sacrificing His son, blesses Him, and Abraham calls the place "*Yahweh* will provide" (vs. 14), an insight into the future day when on the same mount, Christ would provide the sacrifice for all humans.

● When Israel blessed Joseph, he said, "'God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has fed me all my life long to this day, the Angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads'" (Gen. 48:15, 16).

●Once "the angel of God" (Gen. 31:11) spoke to Jacob in a dream explaining how to increase his flocks, out of pity for what his father-in-law Laban was doing to him. He said to Jacob, "'I am the God of Bethel'" (vs. 13). At Bethel, the pre-incarnate Christ gave Jacob a dream of a ladder between earth and heaven, with angels ascending and descending, to let him know he was not alone. He promised, "'I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you'" (28:15). He told Jacob to leave the land, and thus to leave Laban, and return home. Laban pursued Jacob, but the pre-incarnate Christ appeared to Laban in a dream at night, saying "God had come to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night, and said to him, 'Be careful

that you speak to Jacob neither good nor bad'" (31:24).

The report that Esau, with four hundred men, was coming to meet him caused Jacob "great fear and distress" (Gen. 32:7, NIV). He prayed to God to save him, claiming the covenant promises given to him. Then came the night of wrestling. With whom did Jacob wrestle? Genesis says it was with a man (32:22-30), but Hosea is more specific: Jacob wrestled "with the angel" (Hosea 12:4) who was "God" (vs. 3). The pre-incarnate God stayed with Jacob that night and blessed Him, changing His name to Israel before departing (Gen. 32:26-29). In Hebrew culture names stood for character. The name *Jacob* means deceiver, and the name *Israel* means "'you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed'" (vs. 28). His new name is a guarantee of a successful meeting with his brother Esau. The name *Jacob* reminded him of deceiving Esau in the past, whereas the name *Israel* would remind him of victory over Esau in the future. This was an encouragement to him. And Israel became the name of God's chosen people, and so to be named the same was an honor. That night the pre-incarnate Christ gave him forgiveness for the past and a promise for the future. No wonder Israel exclaimed, "'I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved'" (vs. 30).

● When Moses stood before the burning bush, "the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. . . . When the Lord saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, 'Moses, Moses!' . . . He said, 'I am the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God" (Ex. 3:2, 4, 6). But the pre-incarnate Christ promised to give Moses success in his mission in leading God's people (3:16-4:17).

● Israel was terrified as the army of Pharaoh closed in behind them as they faced the Red Sea. Then "the Angel of God,

who went before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them" (Ex. 14:19), and during the Red Sea crossing, "the Lord looked down upon the army of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and cloud, and He troubled the army of the Egyptians. And He took off their chariot wheels, so that they drove them with difficulty" (vss. 24, 25).

In praising the angel of the Lord (Ex.14:19), Israel sang the song of Moses after the Red Sea deliverance: "'Who is like You, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?'" (15:11). New Testament corroboration says the angel of the Lord through Moses "brought them out, after he had shown wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness forty years" (Acts 7:36). For 40 years in the desert they were fed by manna (Ex. 16:15, 31, 33; Ps. 78:24), divinely provided water (Neh. 9:20), and their clothes didn't wear out (Deut. 8:4).

● Later, during the time of the Judges, "The Angel of the Lord . . . said: 'I led you up from Egypt and brought you to the land of which I swore to your fathers; and I said, "I will never break My covenant with you." But you have not obeyed My voice'" (Judges 2:1, 2). When the angel of the Lord spoke to Gideon, he was addressed by Gideon as "Lord," and to Gideon's concerns Scripture says, "The Lord answered" (6:16, NIV). The angel of the Lord appeared to Manoah's wife (Sampson's mother), promising she would give birth to a son who would deliver Israel from the Philistines (13:27). Manoah prayed to God that the angel of the Lord would come back, and He did and talked to Manoah, after which the angel ascended in the flames from the altar of burnt offering, and Manoah exclaimed, "'We have seen God!'" (13:19-22).

● Clearly, the angel of the Lord is the covenant-making God, the same God who spoke to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3). This is the Lord who gave the Ten Commandments to His people (Exodus

20; Acts 7:38), the law identified with the covenant (Deut. 4:13). This is why Christ said, "'If you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me'" (John 5:46). God said to Israel, "'I send an Angel before you to keep you in the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. Beware of Him and obey His voice; do not provoke Him, for He will not pardon your transgressions; for My name is in Him'" (Ex. 23:20, 21). Here God spoke about the pre-incarnate Christ and said He had His name. That is to say, He also is called God. Here is a clear statement that there is more than one Person in the Godhead, that they share the same name *God,* and that in this respect there is only one God, the God who is represented by these two in the passage.

● Paul identifies the angel of the Lord. "Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ" (1 Cor. 10:1-4).

The Old Testament God is unique compared to idols: He is Creator of everything, foretells the future, acts as none other can, and is the Savior of the world. The texts on the "angel of the Lord" indicate that this unique God is a relational God. He is the same God we know from the New Testament. For the Old Testament says, "'I am the Lord, I do not change'" (Mal. 3:6), and the New Testament says "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Heb. 13:8).

Sola Scriptura Evidence for an Old Testament Trinity

The *sola scriptura* hermeneutic is Scripture interpreting Scripture, and in this case, allowing the New Testament to

interpret the Old Testament texts on God. This hermeneutic is vital to biblical understanding and is crucial in evaluating Dispensational claims regarding the continuing relevance of Old Testament prophecies for contemporary Israel.

Creation. In the creation of male and female in the image of God (Gen. 1:26, 27), the Persons of the Godhead are imaged in the oneness of man and woman in marriage. The *sola scriptura* hermeneutic specifies the reality of that image as the Spirit (Gen. 1:2; Ps. 104:30) and the Father creating everything through the Son (Col. 1:15, 16; Heb. 1:2), and hence the reality of the image is a oneness in three, or the Trinity.

Christ's Mission and Inauguration. In Luke 4:18, 19, Christ read from Isaiah 61:1, 2, recognizing the verses as a statement of His mission, and in so doing indicated that it speaks of the Trinity as follows: "'The Spirit [Holy Spirit] of the Lord God [the Father] is upon Me [Christ]'" (61:1). This is Christ's commentary on this Old Testament passage.

The inauguration of Christ in heaven is another example of more than one Person in the one God: "Your throne, O God [Heb. *Elohim*], is forever and ever. . . . You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, Your God [literally: "God, God of you"], has anointed You with the oil of gladness" (Ps. 45:6, 7). Here God is addressing God; two Persons share the name of God (Heb. *Elohim*). Who are they? This passage is quoted in Hebrews 1:8, 9: "To the Son He says: 'Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. . . . You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions.'" Here God speaks to Christ after His victorious life on earth when He "sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high" (1:3).

Compare Psalm 110:1: "The Lord [Heb. *Yahweh*] said to my Lord [Heb. *Adonai*] 'Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'" That future must have encouraged Christ. In

fact, on one occasion, Christ asked the Pharisees, "'What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?' They said to Him, 'The Son of David.' He said to them, 'How then does David in the Spirit call Him "Lord," saying: "The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool'"'? If David then calls Him "Lord," how is He his Son?'" (Matt. 22:41-45).

The Trinity in Isaiah

It is well known that the Trinity is explicit in the New Testament and only implicit in the Old Testament. Internal evidence, however, indicates that the Trinity can rise to the level of being explicit in the Old Testament. There are several examples in the Book of Isaiah.

● The Trinity is explicit in Isaiah 42:1: "'Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations'" (NIV). God the Father is speaking about His Son, to whom He will give the Holy Spirit. The New Testament comments that this passage from Isaiah was fulfilled in the healing ministry of Jesus (Matt. 12:15-21), who was sent by the Father (John 3:16, 17) and empowered by the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:16, 17; Luke 4:18). The heart relationship of the Father for the Son is seen in this passage, for the Father says Christ is "'the one I love, in whom I delight'" (Matt. 12:18, NIV). Here is specific insight into the loving relationship among the three in the Godhead. They love each other, and as such are by nature "love" (1 John 4:8). Here is a glimpse into the relational Trinity.

● The Trinity is explicit in Isaiah 48:16: "'Come near me and listen to this [cf. "Listen to me, O Jacob . . . I am the first and I am the last" (vs. 12)] . . . . And now the Sovereign Lord [Father] has sent me [Christ], with his Spirit [Holy Spirit].'"

● The Trinity is explicit in Isaiah 63:7-10: "I will tell of the

kindnesses of the Lord, the deeds for which he is to be praised, according to all the Lord has done for us—yes, the many good things he has done for the house of Israel, according to his compassion and many kindnesses. He said, 'Surely they are my people, sons who will not be false to me'; and so he became their Savior. In all their distress he too was distressed, and the angel of his presence saved them. In his love and mercy he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old. Yet they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit" (NIV).

Isaiah, the gospel prophet, reveals more about the Suffering Servant (Jesus Christ) than any other Old Testament prophet. Likewise, arguably, He presents the Trinity more explicitly than any other Old Testament writer.

The Spirit in the Old Testament

The Holy Spirit is mentioned 88 times in the Old Testament, in about half of its 39 books,[15] and 325 times in 24 New Testament books.[16] Yet He says very little about Himself. He communicates much about the Father and the Son. This is an insight into the selfless love in the Trinity, for the Son glorifies the Father (John 17:4), and the Spirit glorifies the Son (16:14). In perfect eternal and reciprocal love, each loves the others more than loving Himself—the very opposite of Satan and those who follow Him. This communion means they do not do things on their own (5:22, 27, 30; 10:30, 37, 38; 14:31; 15:10), so the Son speaks what the Father told Him (7:16; 12:49; 15:15), and the Spirit "will speak only what he hears" from Christ (16:13, NIV).

The Old Testament and New Testament Trinity Are the Same

If God is love by nature (1 John 4:8), which is documented in the sampling of Old Testament texts examined above, then the

God of the Old Testament is the same as the God of the New Testament. What God is in His revelation in history is what God is like in His own inner-Trinitarian being. God's acts of love issue from His nature as love. God could not be solitary and be love, for an eternal existence of God by Himself before the first creation would not be the same as a Trinity. The fact that the Trinity lived for eternity with one another before creating indicates that their mutual love for one another needed none other. It means that there is a reciprocal love relationship within the Trinity so that each loves the other two with an eternal and divine love.

The New Testament speaks of the relational Trinity as follows:

● Mutual indwelling. Christ says the Spirit will come to the disciples and adds, "'I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you'" (John 14:18). So Christ says He will come to them through the Holy Spirit. At the same time Christ prayed for Christian unity "'that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You'" (17:21).

● The Trinity is a relationship of equals who have different functions in the plan of salvation. The Father prepared a body for Christ, and Christ came to do the will of His Father (Heb. 10:4-7), to reveal Him (John 14:9), and to speak His words (John 17:8). But in carrying out this mission Christ said, "'It is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work'" (14:10, NIV), and speaks of His Father as "'You, Father, are in Me, and I in You'" (17:21).

● With respect to sending the Spirit, Christ said, "'When the Helper comes, *whom I shall send to you* from the Father, the Spirit of truth *who proceeds from the Father*" (John 15:26, italics supplied).

In the New Testament, the Spirit is given titles never ascribed to Him in the Old Testament. He is "Spirit of His Son" (Gal. 4:6, NIV), "Spirit of Christ" (Rom. 8:9; 1 Peter 1:11, NIV), and "the Spirit of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:19). W. H. Griffith Thomas

could therefore say, "It is not in His Absolute Being, but as the Spirit of Christ that He is revealed in the New Testament."[17] H. B. Swete concludes that the Spirit is Christ's "second Self."[18]

Why is the Spirit's new name associated with Christ? He is the "Spirit of Jesus" because He brings Jesus to Christians. Jesus promised, "'I am with you always, even to the end of the age'" (Matt. 28:20). Furthermore, the Spirit is called the "Spirit of Jesus" because His mission is Christ-centered. Jesus said, "'The Father will send [the Holy Spirit] in My name'" (John 14:26). The "'Spirit of truth'" (John 16:13) comes to reveal the one who is "'the truth'" (John 14:6). Jesus said the Holy Spirit would "'testify of me'" (15:26) and "'will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you'" (John 16:14). He "'will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you'" (John 14:26).

Human beings were created to be temples for the indwelling of God (1 Cor. 3:16). Christ's work, both in heaven's sanctuary and in human temples, applies the results of Christ's atonement sacrifice for and in humans. So the application of Calvary is made in the heavenly sanctuary by Christ and in human temples by the "Spirit of Christ."

According to the Old Testament, it is clear that divine love is shared by the Father, Son, and Spirit in a reciprocal relationship beyond human comprehension. Suffice it to say, the Old Testament God of love—who is the same as the New Testament God of love (Mal. 4:6; Heb. 13:8)—acted in the history of Israel/Judah with profound grace and suffered grief. God's *hesed* covenant faithfulness continued even though it was rejected by Israel/Judah. Creation of humans in the image of God (Gen. 1:26, 27) meant that Adam and Eve's relationship with each other was to reflect the relationship among the Trinity. After the fall of humans, God's covenant with humans was to restore the relationship with Him and with one another so human love to

some degree could reflect the reciprocal love among the Trinity. The suffering Servant passage of Isaiah 53, forecasting the pain of Christ becoming a substitute for human sins, crushing out His life, opens up the depths of God's love for humans as much as any New Testament passage:

"He has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; . . . but He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgressions of My people He was stricken. . . . He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors" (Isa. 53:2-12).

Even the *Shema* (God is one, Deut. 6:4), stressing the uniqueness of God (compared to polytheism), didn't use the word *one* as *unique* but *one* as *united,* thereby indicating unity of persons. Several Old Testament texts indicate a plurality in God, as one God addresses another God. The pre-incarnate Christ often acts in Old Testament history as the "angel of the Lord" and reveals His same *hesed* love (Old Testament) as His *agape* love (New Testament). The continuity of a relational God in both Testaments counters the idea that the Old Testament God is

different from the New Testament God (which if true would aid the cosmic controversy against God). The data supports the biblical claims: "'I the Lord do not change'" (Mal. 3:6) and "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Heb. 13:8). Although the Trinity is more implicit in the Old Testament and explicit in the New Testament, (1) the *sola scriptura* hermeneutic indicates that Christ understood the Trinity to be present in the Old Testament; and (2) Isaiah, the gospel prophet who reveals the suffering Servant Christ as no other Old Testament prophet, also presents the Trinity with greater specificity than any other Old Testament writer.

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7. Unless noted otherwise, all scriptural references in this article are from *The New King James Version* of the Bible.

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