

How many G-ds are there in the Bible?

On Faith, by Brent Emery

I spoke several months back and asked for questions from the audience after the presentation. A lady began a question with the words, "It seems to me that the G-d of the Old Testament" - and something inside me repulsed from her initial comments. The reason I recoiled from such a thought is because, inherent in "G-d of the Old Testament," is the idea that there is a "G-d of the New Testament," and that somehow they are two different G-ds. I am a monotheist, which is a fancy term meaning I believe in one G-d. After all, the fundamental confession of my faith is the "Shema" (Deuteronomy 6:4), which says:

"Hear, oh Israel, the Lord thy G-d, the Lord is one."

From this encounter, and several others, I came to realize that there is a serious flaw in the thinking of evangelical Christianity - they have two G-ds but only acknowledge one (Yeshua/Jesus). Yeshua, the Son, has been separated from His Father in the thinking of many, and never have Father and Son been reunited.

Within the pages of the Apostolic Scripture (NT) Yeshua speaks about His relationship with His Father. The question that arises in my mind is: "Who is the Father and what is His relationship with the Son?" We must keep in mind that "the" Scripture of the first century believers in Yeshua was/is the Hebrew Scripture. The "Bible" of the Gospel writers is the 39 books on the left hand side of the Bible.

For many Christians, Yeshua is someone who came out of nowhere and appeared just to save the world from their sins, and then he disappeared again with little connection to the Hebrew Scripture. Over the next several months, I want to explore the identity of Yeshua, as I believe everything we needed to know about Him was prophesied/predicted within the pages of the Hebrew Scripture.

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In fact, I believe that the primary purpose of the Hebrew Scripture is to point us to Yeshua the Messiah. In Luke 24:44, 45 we read:

"Then He said to them, 'These are the words I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms concerning me. And he opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.' "

For those who are willing to see with the eyes of faith, Yeshua the Son and Adonai, His Father, can be found on the pages of the Hebrew Scripture. As a monotheist, how can I believe that Adonai in the Hebrew Scripture and Yeshua in the Apostolic Scripture are "one" and still call myself a monotheist? This is the same question that believers in Yeshua of the first century had to ask themselves and arrive at a conclusion that came from the Hebrew Scripture.

The first text we must deal with is the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4). After all, this text does say that G-d is One. How can One be two? The Hebrew word translated "One" in Deuteronomy 6:4 is the word "echad." A study of this word reveals "echad" has the capacity of plurality within it. For instance, in Genesis 1:5, evening and morning are "one day." In Genesis 2:24, a man and a woman are "one flesh." So the word "echad" has the ability to speak of a compound unity. To put it another way, there can be a multiplicity within the oneness of "echad." There is no contradiction with believing in a Father and a Son and proclaiming the "oneness" of the Shema. Had Moses wished to speak of G-d as numerically "one," there were other Hebrew words that would have conveyed that thought. By using the word "echad," the writer opens up the possibility that, within the Oneness of G-d, there is a plurality that must be explored.

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In future columns, I will explore the Torah (Law), the prophets and the Psalms to see if we can find the Father and Son. If Yeshua is correct, and I believe He is, then we should be able to trace the trajectory of the Messiah Yeshua within the pages of the Hebrew Scripture.

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