

Proud Of Our God: An Honest Appeal For Zealousness

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Centuries ago when the LORD delivered Israel from Egypt, it was this event which He used to declare Himself to the nations. The renown of Yahweh spread throughout the land as people heard of the destruction of Egypt, the superpower of its day. Rahab of Jericho along with the rest of the residents of Canaan heard and trembled when hearing about this God. Rahab said to the Israelite spies

"I know that the LORD has given you the land, and that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land have melted away before you. For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. When we heard it, our hearts melted and no courage remained in any man any longer because of you; for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath (Joshua 2:9-11)."

From this time and on the LORD has worked throughout the years to progress His plan and His purposes while at the same time declaring who He is.

After this dramatic event we learn a great deal about the God of the Bible from His own words to His recently redeemed people. The LORD met His people on Mount Horeb and audibly spoke to them the first ten commands of His covenant with them. What a day this must have been, hearing the voice that created all things! It is important to note what He says first:

Exodus 20:1-6 - Then God spoke all these words, saying, "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments."

Yahweh is the God of Israel, the one that brought them up from Egypt through the awesome and terrible wonders He performed against the so-called gods of Egypt. There are to be no other gods held by the people of Yahweh. While Egypt had many other gods and idols, the only God needed by the people of Israel was Yahweh, for in fact, He was the only God. God also commanded them not to make an idol, an image representing their God. Yahweh, as the Creator could be seen through His creation as well as His mighty acts and perhaps the most relevant way that the people would know their God was through His words and commands. No image could contain or portray His glory.

Days after the LORD audibly spoke these words to the people; they became restless and pressed Aaron for a new god, a new way to be entertained, a new leader to take them to a new place.

Exodus 32:1-5 - Now when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people assembled about Aaron and said to him, "Come, make us a god who will

go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him." Aaron said to them, "Tear off the gold rings which are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me." Then all the people tore off the gold rings which were in their ears and brought them to Aaron. He took this from their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool and made it into a molten calf; and they said, "This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt." Now when Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made a proclamation and said, "Tomorrow shall be a feast to the LORD."

Though this record is familiar to all of us and taught in Sunday schools weekly, worldwide, perhaps one aspect of this record has been overlooked. It was wrong for the children of Israel to complain against Moses. It was wrong for Aaron to give heed to their desire. It was wrong to make a golden calf and bow down and worship it. But certainly the greatest sin that was committed on this day was to worship and celebrate this golden calf as Yahweh Himself. Take note that they did not proclaim a feast day the next day to the golden calf or a new god with a new name. Instead Aaron said "this is your god, O Israel, who brought you out of Egypt and tomorrow shall be a feast to the LORD." This statement is quite significant.

The Israelites chose to worship the sacrifice rather than to whom the sacrifice was to be made. The people wanted and needed to see their god because they lacked faith (Hebrews 4:2). This however was not the way of Yahweh. On this day they broke the first and second commandments and forsook the God who only weeks before saved them from their enslavement.

Over forty years later, just before the Israelites finally entered the land, the LORD reiterated to the people these important truths on the banks of the Jordan River. He did not want His people to again mistake who He was. Who He was should have been clear to the people.

Deuteronomy 4:10-19, 23-24 - "Remember the day you stood before the LORD your God at Horeb, when the LORD said to me, 'Assemble the people to Me, that I may let them hear My words so they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children.' You came near and stood at the foot of the mountain, and the mountain burned with fire to the very heart of the heavens: darkness, cloud and thick gloom. Then the LORD spoke to you from the midst of the fire; you heard the sound of words, but you saw no form-- only a voice. So He declared to you His covenant which He commanded you to perform, that is, the Ten Commandments; and He wrote them on two tablets of stone. The LORD commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that you might perform them in the land where you are going over to possess it. So watch yourselves carefully, since you did not see any form on the day the LORD spoke to you at Horeb from the midst of the fire, so that you do not act corruptly and make a graven image for yourselves in the form of any figure, the likeness of male or female, the likeness of any animal that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the sky, the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the water below the earth. And beware not to lift up your eyes to heaven and see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven, and be drawn away and worship them and serve them, those which the LORD your God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole heaven. So watch yourselves, that you do not forget the covenant of the LORD your God which He made with you, and make for yourselves a graven image in the form of anything against

which the LORD your God has commanded you. For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God."

So that they understood how serious He was on this critical command, Yahweh called for the attention of His easily distracted people.

Deuteronomy 6:1-13 - "Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments which the LORD your God has commanded me to teach you...O Israel, you should listen and be careful to do it, that it may be well with you and that you may multiply greatly, just as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey. **Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!** You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. Then it shall come about when the LORD your God brings you into the land which He swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you, great and splendid cities which you did not build, and houses full of all good things which you did not fill, and hewn cisterns which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant, and you eat and are satisfied, then watch yourself, that you do not forget the LORD who brought you from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall fear **only** the LORD your God; and you shall worship Him and swear by His name."

As time progresses, the view of God's unity and exclusivity remained unchanged.

"...**there is no God besides Me** (Isaiah 44:6)." "Who is like Me (vs7)?" "Is there any God besides Me, or is there any other Rock? **I know of none.** (vs8)"

"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 by Myself and spreading out the earth **all alone** (Isaiah 44:24)."

"I am the LORD, and **there is no other; Besides Me there is no God**, I will gird you, though you have not known Me; That men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun that **there is no one besides Me. I am the LORD, and there is no other** (Isaiah 45:5-6)."

"For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens (He is the God who formed the earth and made it, He established it and did not create it a waste place, but formed it to be inhabited), I am the LORD, and **there is none else** (Isaiah 45:18)."

Yahweh has not been shy in declaring who He is to His people. It is critical that they know who He is for the fact that His commands to them directly relate to knowing Him. How can you love Yahweh with all of your heart if you do not know who He is?

This fundamental principle of the LORD being one and the only God remained foundational to the Jewish faith after the closing of the Hebrew Scriptures. The calling of Israel to listen up and recognize that Yahweh is their God and His name is one continued through the teachings and writings of the rabbis and remains today. Consider for a moment two of the prayers in a modern Jewish prayer book, which include a call to hear the words of the Shema, daily:

In the morning, soon after rising the following should be recited: "Hear O Israel, HASHEM is our God, HASHEM, the One and Only. Blessed is the Name of His glorious kingdom for all eternity¹."

Before going to bed each night: "Blessed are You, HASHEM, our God, King of the universe, Who casts the bonds of sleep upon my eyes and slumber upon my eyelids. May it be Your will, HASHEM, my God and the God of my forefathers, that You lay me down to sleep in peace and raise me erect in peace. May my ideas, bad dreams, and bad notions not confound me; may my offspring be perfect before You, and may You illuminate my eyes lest I die in sleep, for it is You Who illuminates the pupil of the eye. Blessed are You, HASHEM, Who illuminates the entire world with His glory. Hear, O Israel: HASHEM is our God, HASHEM, the One and Only²."

"(The Shema) is traditionally whispered into the little ears of Jewish newborns" being the first thing they hear. "Shema Yisrael, Hashem Elokeinu, Hashem Echad!" were also the last words sung out by countless Jewish martyrs through the ages... declaring their unswerving faith in G-d in the face of death³."

Shema's Importance And Centrality For Christians

The call to attention for the people of God was confirmed and continued in the New Testament as well. When asked what the most important commandment was Jesus answered:

Mark 12:29-34 - "The foremost is, 'HEAR, O ISRAEL! THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD; AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.' The second is this, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' There is no other commandment greater than these. The scribe said to him, "Right, Teacher; You have truly stated that HE IS ONE, AND THERE IS NO ONE ELSE BESIDES HIM; AND TO LOVE HIM WITH ALL THE HEART AND WITH ALL THE UNDERSTANDING AND WITH ALL THE STRENGTH, AND TO LOVE ONE'S NEIGHBOR AS HIMSELF, is much more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices." When Jesus saw that he had answered intelligently, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." After that, no one would venture to ask him any more questions.

Jesus agrees that to be able to love Yahweh with your heart you must know who He is. Not only does this record tell us that Jesus himself held the view of Yahweh being the only God and being one, we also see that he commends the man who understands this with the greatest compliment of all time – to understand that God is one and to love that God with your all brings you close to the Kingdom!

¹ The Artscroll Weekly Siddur. Rabbi Nosson Scherman, Mesorah Publications, Brooklyn. c. 1988. Page 29

² Ibid, page 295

³ <http://www.askmoses.com/article.html?h=147&o=137>

James, writing after the ascension of his half brother, the Messiah, reminds his readers that "You believe that God is one, you do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless? (James 2:19)." James assumes already that his audience is convinced that there is only one God and spends his time urging them to have obedience that corresponds with the faith they said they had. There was no need for him to write in response to any one being confused about who and how many God was.

The apostle Paul also shares this view and alludes to the Shema when he writes to the Corinthians believers that "for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him (I Corinthians 8:6)." He tells Timothy that "there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (I Timothy 2:5)." When one turned the page from Malachi to Matthew and reads on to Revelation, the call to recognize that there is only one true God, the Father, continues with clarity, consistency, and simplicity.

Where Is The Shema Now?

Sadly today, as we know, the call for the people of God to rally around the one God of the Bible has been replaced with a love of a triune God, which takes pieces of Biblical monotheism and unites it with Greek mythology and pagan philosophy. Instead of Yahweh remaining one for all of eternity and any thought of other gods existing being crushed in the echoes of His proclamation from Sinai, the world instead learns of triune God, co-equal and co-eternal as Father, Son and Spirit. Instead of hearing that only the Father is God, the nations hear about a Father who is also the son of that same father and that son is as old as his father. Rather than the son of God being the divinely begotten Messiah who will rule on David's throne forever, we hear about a God the Son figure who left a heavenly throne to come to the earth to show us the way to heaven. Rather than learning about the Son of Man, the apocalyptic figure who will take over the world and receive the nations to rule from Yahweh, we learn that Jesus was amazingly one hundred percent man and one hundred percent God. Rather than God alone possessing immortality, we hear the story of a God who loved His creation so much that He became a man and died to save them, while at the same time holding the universe together and while dead bringing Himself back to life.

Perhaps the stories that the modern church is preaching, teaching, and singing about warms the hearts of parishioners and concert goers but the problem lies in the fact that to find Biblical support for these sermons and songs would be a vain task. This is one of the great challenges of our day. People are learning theology from Plato and getting their doctrine from Michael W. Smith rather than Moses, the prophets, Messiah Jesus, and Paul T. Apostle. Church members are being told that the trinity is an essential doctrine and in the same breath that it is a mystery they will never fully understand. Congregations are hearing that they must believe in the trinity to be saved and that to question the trinity endangers their salvation.

Popular Christian music is teaching these things to young and old alike with beautiful harmonies without people even knowing what is occurring. While millions sing along with the songs on their local Christian music radio station they are forming their view of God and Jesus based on song lyrics rather than Scripture. The song of year according to the Gospel Music Association's annual Dove Awards for

the last two years have been songs which clearly promote the trinitarian view of God and Jesus⁴. Songs which speak of the Father being the only true God and the like are absent from the airwaves yet it was the Father which Jesus directed the “true worshippers” to worship (John 4:23).

Trinitarian Zeal

Consider the following zealous pronouncement of the Athanasian Creed: "So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet they are not Three Gods, but One God. So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Ghost Lord. And yet not Three Lords but One Lord. For, like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every Person by Himself to be God and Lord, so are we forbidden by the Catholic Religion to say, there be Three Gods or Three Lords. The Father is made of none, neither created, nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone; not made, nor created, but begotten. The Holy Ghost is of the Father, and of the Son neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding. So there is One Father, not Three Fathers; one Son, not Three Sons; One Holy Ghost, not Three Holy Ghosts. And in this Trinity none is afore or after Other, None is greater or less than Another, but the whole Three Persons are Co-eternal together, and Co-equal. So that in all things, as is aforesaid, the Unity is Trinity, and the Trinity is Unity is to be worshipped. **He therefore that will be saved, must thus think of the Trinity. Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting Salvation, that he also believe rightly the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.** For the right Faith is, that we believe and confess, that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man⁵."

Trinitarians are bold in their proclamation. I believe one reason for this is that they are in the majority. When one feels they have many supporters and backers it is easier to be straight forward and clear against a small minority that disagrees.

This boldness on the part of the trinitarian camp is strong and powerful. At the same however their doctrine erroneous and non-biblical and this boldness has even become a stumbling block for those who could turn to God for life in the age to come through Jesus the Messiah. Just one example of this is found in a publication from a group known as "Jews for Judaism." They write:

"Christians claim that this three-part god that they worship is the same as the G-d worshiped by the Jews. This is not true. The Bible states (*Deut. 6:4*), “Hear O Israel, the L-rd is our G-d, the L-rd is *One*.” Twice every day, the believing Jew cries out these words. They are the first thing a Jew learns as a child and the last words he utters before he dies. On every Jewish doorpost there is a Mezuzah proclaiming these words. They are again found in the Tefillin, bound daily next to a Jew’s heart and mind, proclaiming this most basic principle of Judaism. Worship of any three-part god by a Jew is nothing less than a form of idolatry. Idolatry does not necessarily mean worshipping a god of stone or wood. Even if a Jew worships the highest angel, it is also a form of idolatry. G-d is the infinite One, Creator of all things. Anyone who worships anything else is guilty of idolatry. The three-part God of Christianity is not the G-d of Judaism. Therefore, in the Jewish view, Christianity may very well be a variation of idolatry. Although Christianity began among Jews, it was rapidly adopted by the pagans of the ancient world. These pagans believed in an entire pantheon of gods. It was just too much for them to give up all these gods in favor of the One True G-d. So early Christian missionaries compromised with these

⁴ <http://www.doveawards.com/history/list.cfm?list=year> – 2007 – “My Savior My God”, Aaron Shust. 2006 – “How Great Is Our God” – Chris Tomlin

⁵ taken from the Athanasian Creed - <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02033b.htm>

pagans by introducing the Trinity, a sort of three-in-one god. Even many contemporary Christian scholars see the Trinity as the result of pagan influence on Christianity. This might represent an improvement for the pagan. But for the Jew it is a regression, representing a step backwards towards idolatry. Christians really believe that Jesus was G-d, and this is one of the most fundamental beliefs of Christianity⁶."

While the trinitarian doctrine is boldly and zealously proclaimed by churches today, Jews will not turn to a God-man Messiah. Their law forbids it! The religion and God of the Jews was supposed to progress and continue to the faith and teaching of Jesus the Messiah but sadly, it would be a wonder if Jesus and his apostles would even recognize what is being preached in their name. Though we seem to be in the minority, I propose that in fact the numbers are not as one sided as we might think. The entire canon of Scripture is on our side. The testimonies of faithful witnesses throughout the ages are with us as well. Perhaps most importantly the one God of the Bible stands with us to strengthen and empower us.

Why Is Believing In One God Important?

Aside from the need to line up our beliefs with the Scripture, the New Testament speaks of other important reasons why this question of one God or a trinity really matters. In an amazing contradiction to what is being taught in churches today, Jesus, the founder of our faith and leader of our church, said that it was a matter of eternal life to know the Father, who he called "the only true God" and Jesus the Messiah, the one sent by the Father (John 17:1-3). Paul also taught that the belief that a man could be God would be part of the great deception in the last days (II Thessalonians 2:3-4). The Apostle John writes that a liar is "the one who denies that Jesus is the Messiah (I John 2:22)" and that the very root of the spirit of antichrist is founded in not acknowledging Jesus was a man (I John 4:1-3, II John 7). If eternal life is found by obeying the first and great commandment (Luke 10:25-28) why would one deny the importance of knowing who "the LORD your God" who we are to love above all else is? If it was possible for the Israelites to worship the golden calf as Yahweh, how much more of a subtle deception could Satan be working if he could deceive the nations into worshipping Jesus as God Himself?

Unitarian Zeal

Throughout history an impassioned minority of people who have believed that only the Father was God and that He was one not three boldly stood for these truths when they were pressed by opponents.

Michael Servetus (1511-1553)

Michael Servetus was a "Spanish physician and theologian, who was executed for his beliefs by the Calvinist government of Geneva. He was born in Villanueva de Sijena, Huesca Province. He studied law at the University of Toulouse, medicine at the universities of Paris and Montpellier. Beginning in 1540 he practiced medicine in Vienne, France, where he also served as the personal physician to the archbishop. About 1545 he began a correspondence with the French Protestant theologian John Calvin. Although still a nominal Catholic, he described his "heretical" opposition to the concept of the Trinity.

⁶ The Real Messiah," pages 8-9.

http://www.jewsforjudaism.org/web/pdf/RealMessiahBookPages_v4ab.pdf

He wrote to Calvin in 1545 about his desire to go there, but Calvin did not answer and in a letter to one of his ministers he condemned him to death, a goal he got in 1553. He was arrested while attending church in Geneva, convicted of heresy and blasphemy against Christianity⁷."

"When the sentence was announced to Servetus he broke down completely, for he had expected acquittal, or at the worst only banishment; but he soon regained composure, sent for Calvin, and begged his forgiveness. Farel, minister at Neuchatel, had that morning arrived at Calvin's desire. He tried to get Servetus to renounce his errors and thus save his life. But Servetus remained true to his convictions, only begging for another form of death, lest the suffering at the stake cause him at last weakly to recant. Farel accompanied him to the place of execution, where a large crowd had gathered, and there he died with a prayer upon his lips (October 27, 1553)⁸."

"Spectators were impressed by the tenacity of Servetus' faith. Perishing in the flames, he is said to have cried out, "O Jesus, Son of the Eternal God, have pity on me!" Farel, who witnessed the execution, observed that Servetus, defiant to the last, might have been saved had he but called upon "Jesus, the Eternal Son." A few months later Servetus was again executed, this time in effigy, by the Catholic Inquisition in France⁹."

John Biddle (1615-1662)

"John Biddle was known as a biblical scholar, and became well known for his translations of the Scriptures. In the course of his own scholarly research he became interested in early Church dogma and textual criticism. These studies would lead Biddle to reevaluate the current Church theology against his own research based on the earlier Greek and Latin texts of the Scriptures....(Biddle) was not discrete about his own research, or his own personal views. In 1644, he was questioned by the local authorities at Gloucester to answer charges brought against him for anti-trinitarianism views, but he was released on bail. More charges of anti-Trinitarianism were being leveled against Biddle and his followers. Biddle was discovered conducting religious meetings in his home during 1662, He was hauled into court, charged and fined £100.00 under the Common Law, not on religious charges. Unable to pay the rather large fine, Biddle was sent to prison where he contracted a fatal illness and died there a short time later on 22 September 1662¹⁰." The jail he was in had such poor conditions, he died a prisoner because of this faith.

Heroes of our movement like Servetus and Biddle undoubtedly teach and inspire us. Yet today, from the people and churches who on paper believe these same Biblical truths, there is often shame, hiding, and even denial rather than boldness and bravery when this topic comes up. I spoke to a pastor a few years ago who told me that they used to discuss the trinity with people but now they have decided not to discuss it at all with people because their conversations never led to change or perhaps caused a lively discussion. I have heard a story of a woman who was looking for a non-trinitarian church to attend. When she found one in her area she asked the pastor of this church if they believed and taught the trinity. Assuming that this woman was a trinitarian the pastor hesitantly replied "well, we are biblical trinitarians" (perhaps meaning that they believed in the Father, Son and Spirit?). I am sure that her joy of finding like-minded believers was immediately stolen. On another occasion a family of faithful

⁷ <http://www.servetus.org/en/michael-servetus/biography/bio1.htm>

⁸ <http://www.servetus.org/en/michael-servetus/biography/bio7.htm>

⁹ <http://www25.uua.org/uuhs/duub/articles/michaelservetus.html>

¹⁰ <http://www.exlibris.org/nonconform/engdis/socinians.html>

members and supporters of a non-trinitarian church wondered why the incarnation was not being preached on during Christmas. The mother of this family approached the elders of the church to inquire about the lack of incarnation related sermons and music. Her family believed Jesus was God. When the elders told her that the church did not believe in the incarnation or the trinity she was extremely hurt and angered. Feeling betrayed and lied to, she proceeded to write a letter to every member of the church to inform them of the beliefs of the church. She felt that after faithfully attending this church for over a year without once hearing that they did not believe in the trinity or what they believed about God and Jesus at all, she had been lied to and deceived. She communicated this to the other members as a "warning" to them as well. In a similar incident a man visited a biblical unitarian church in his area after moving into the neighborhood. He faithfully attended this church for months and developed relationships with many people there. After time passed, his good friend heard where he was attending church and did some internet research on the church. To his surprise he found that an affiliated church was clear and bold about their belief in the unity of God. He passed this information on to his friend who approached a member of his church to confirm the news. Since that day his attendance became very infrequent and communication was limited. He said that since learning of this news he felt confused and sad.

Sadly, these are storied from the groups entrusted with the proclamation of the Shema today. How would the hearts of Michael Servetus, John Biddle, and other martyrs feel today towards their unitarian brothers? Perhaps rather than anger, they would be heartbroken. The testimony of Scripture to the proclamation of the identity and personality of Yahweh is clear and consistent. The confirmation of the Shema comes from the lips of Jesus and Paul. Beyond the text we have faithful men and women who lived and died believing these truths from the Scriptures. Yet today many believers in the unity of God remain silent, afraid and ashamed. My brother and sisters, things should not be this way. Our God and our Lord deserve more from their followers. The lives of our faithful brothers and sisters throughout history are due honor from their family today.

Shema!

So my brothers and sisters, SHEMA! Listen up, pay attention! Yahweh our God, Yahweh is one! We are to love Yahweh with all of our hearts, soul, mind, and strength and I offer the challenge that we would reject any fear or shame associated with the proclamation of this truth. We should be proud of our God! We should all have joy, gratitude, and love towards Yahweh because of His offer of forgiveness and salvation in the coming Kingdom. We should shout from the mountain, roof tops, and street corners that our God is Yahweh and Yahweh reigns! We should write these words upon our hearts and our doorposts. We should teach them to our children and speak of them from our pulpits and dinning room tables. We should work together to understand challenging verses and share our findings with each other. Rather than simply trying to counter the opposition of a trinitarian perspective, we should be driven by the truths of Scripture and boldly share who and how many our God is with our family, friends, neighbors, and enemies.

Why?

Aside from the fact that our love for God should be pouring from our hearts and thus out of our mouths, there are other reasons why we should not hesitate or shy away from sharing with people that we believe God is one. There are a few reasons why this is important:

1. People already believe this and do not know others do as well - I have heard of many examples of this. There are people in our nation and around the world right now who believe just as we do about the unity of God yet think they are the only ones who would hold such a seemingly heretical belief. Imagine the next person you share the information that God is one with already believes this to be true! What a wonderful opportunity we have in that moment to connect that individual with others in the community of faith. The same has occurred by clearly identifying our beliefs in our statement of beliefs, teachings, publications, and websites.

2. People do not know there is a difference, yet really believe that God is one - Many people attend a trinitarian church all of their life and when asked by a unitarian if they believe Jesus is God, they have adamantly replied, "of course not, Jesus is the son of God." Some are unaware that their church even believes in a triune God. Many have been amazed to find this out and gladly welcome the fellowship and teaching of unitarian believers.

3. People are willing to consider and change their views - it would be wrong to assume that all those who we converse with about this issue will argue, debate and ultimately reject. Many will and have argued, debated and repented. Some after much prayer, study, and consideration have changed their beliefs all because of a conversation, tract, article, book, or other communication about biblical monotheism. That this happens is always very encouraging and inspiring. One should not be discouraged that someone takes time to investigate these matters for we would not want them to simply follow blindly.

4. Knowing who is the true God is really very important - As has been discussed above, Jesus attaches a significant value to the believing that only the Father is God and that He is one (John 17:3, Mark 12:29). If one believes that the identity of God is a minor issue they will not be burdened out of love and concern to share that information with others, especially those they know who hold a different view. However, if one agrees with Jesus on these matters, they should be provoked to speak knowing that understanding that "He is one, and there is no one else besides him" puts them not be far from the Kingdom (Mark 12:32-34)."

5. People are afraid to question this belief because they fear even questioning is endangering them eternally - Sadly, Scripture does not testify to this. In a quick survey of some key "what must I do to be saved" passages, we are told that confessing Jesus as your master and believing that he was resurrected (Romans 10:9-10) as well as believing that he is the only begotten son of God (John 3:16) are all requirements for salvation. No where does the Bible teach that one must acknowledge Jesus as God to be saved or that in not doing so you will be damned. Sharing this with someone could help dispel the lie that to even consider that the trinity could be false endangers their eternal life. Instead this could free them to see eventual change.

6. People who are simply following their church leadership or teaching never would think that it is something that should be questioned - This is another reason that we should not be shy when given opportunity to speak about our God. In one recent example, someone was applying for a job at a Christian school. This teacher was a unitarian and the school was trinitarian. At the initial interview the teacher shared with the administrator what they believed about God and Jesus. They did not want this to come up or cause problems if hired by the school or if asked by students in class. Knowing that

this potentially would be a deal breaker, the teacher did not become ashamed under pressure. Amazingly however, the administrator did not reject the teacher but instead said that it was not something he had ever thought to consider or investigate and was impressed by the time that the teacher had taken to seek truth. He said he never questioned the trinity and was curious to know the teacher's reasoning. There are other instances where people have not even considered that there was an option to believe something other than Jesus is God and have been challenged to study the subject when people have not been ashamed of who their God is.

In only addressing these six short points, we can see that there is a great need for us to be proud of our God and teach others about who He is.

How We Do This

Matthew 10:16 - "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves."

As the guiding principle of all of our dealings with the world, the words of our Lord here give us direction to how we must act and communicate on the issue at hand.

In light of this, I think there are two principles that are effective in discussing these issues with those who believe Jesus is God. Let me first say that I think it can be effective when discussing these matters with trinitarians to take what I call the "offensive approach." By offensive I do not mean with the intent to offend but rather pro-active. One could sit on the other side of the table and answer questions to our view on John 1:1 and John 1:14, Isaiah 9:6, and Genesis 1:26 all day and although I think that perhaps this could be productive at times, most often the questioning party will change topics quickly when our answer becomes clear or they lose patience to listen to our words. Instead I think that if we endeavor to keep on one topic/verse at a time we can, Lord willing, make some progress. Also, being hammered by a barrage of questions and verses while not being given a respectful opportunity to respond is not going to go anywhere. Why not offer a question during the discussion which puts the burden of proof on the side that says it is in the biblical majority? For example "if Jesus is God and God is immortal, could you show me from the Bible how Jesus could die for our sins?" "If the standard definition of the trinity includes the idea of co-equality, could Jesus be God if he said 'I can do nothing on my own initiative?'" It is critical that we always ask for Biblical references and support. The Scriptures are our best friend in times like these.

Secondly, cordial discussion (when allowed) with upfront and open statements along with thought provoking questions can be very helpful. When you are upfront and open from the on set with someone you are speaking with the opportunity for the unitarian "cat" to come out of the bag later in conversation or weeks/months/years later does not happen. This can also ease any tension that might arise later as a result of you trying to hide or avoid the topic. Surprisingly I have seen much less resistance and negative emotion as a result of this approach by people I speak with than having to dread that the subject may come up after we have already established our relationship.

Finally, it can not be stressed enough how it is important for us in our zealous proclamation of the beautiful unity of our God to be Christ-like in our presentation and discussion. Our love for others is the distinguishing mark of our allegiance to Christ and there is an important need for this love when facing

those who disagree with this view. Sadly the other side of this discussion has been active in the persecution, slander, torture, and death of those who deny the trinitarian dogma. (This practice continues today in a thankfully milder environment in most places in the world where the extent of persecution biblical unitarians face is being asked to leave a church, not getting hired by a Christian school, having evil words spoken about you by another, getting blocked on a message board or being kicked out of a Christian chat room). While I believe it is effective at times to take an offensive approach (as I explained above) when discussing the nature of God with trinitarians, we **must use love always**.

We must understand though that even when using love, persecution may arise as it has for all those who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus - but I believe we can be steadfast knowing that the God of all comfort, deliverance and resurrection is the one God we are worshipping and proclaiming. Perhaps even the witness of our love towards those who make themselves our enemies could win them over in the end.

The testimony of Scripture is clear - Yahweh is the true God. For those who wholeheartedly seek the LORD and His ways, He will be found by them. God knows how important it is that mankind turns from their idols and know Him. Our God "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (I Timothy 2:4-5)." For those who know this truth already, we should be unafraid and unashamed of our God, even in the face of opposition. This information must be rooted deep in our hearts and our love towards, faith in, and fear of God should be evident to all. Like Israel, we too have been redeemed by God and are heading to the true Promised Land of the Kingdom, being led there by Jesus. Through Jesus God is again declaring who He is to the world.

He desires a people to be His own possession, a people who bring Him glory, a people who speak of the glory of His Kingdom from the rising of the sun to the setting of the same. Are you one of those people? Are we the people who identify ourselves as the sons and daughters of the one God, the Father of Jesus the Messiah? The devils believe that God is one. They tremble. If we believe God is one, what does this cause you too?

May we all be proud of our God, the one God, Yahweh, the Father and of His wonderful son, Jesus, the King of the coming Kingdom.

SHEMA! YAHWEH OUR GOD, YAHWEH IS ONE!