

Israel's Missing Characteristics Of God

John W. Ritenbaugh

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It makes perfect sense that if we are going to write down our doctrinal beliefs, we would begin with the doctrine of God. After all, God is, and any Christian anywhere would probably agree with this—that He is God; He is the beginning and the sum of all things. He is everything when it comes to what we are, what we are doing, and where we are heading. All true religion begins and ends with Him. Jesus calls Himself, in Revelation 22:13, the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last, basically proving that point. Without Him we can do nothing, we are nothing.

We have to start with Him when we are going to put our belief system in writing. A belief system that does not start with God is already off-kilter, and it is just doomed to deceive and fail, ultimately. That, at the base, is what is wrong with our entire society. That is what is wrong with religion in general. Down through history, they have started with the wrong god, or they have maybe started with the right God, but then added their own things that make Him different than what has been revealed.

There is a lot of dispute and failure, deception, ruined lives, and pain. It is generally believed by most churches of God, those of us that keep the Sabbath, at least the Sabbath-keeping churches of God, that God is *not* a trinity. This is opposed to what Catholics and Orthodox and Protestants believe, despite their not being able to prove a trinity from the Bible. It is verifiable, there is no such thing as any kind of trinity in the Bible. It is in fact, a formulated reason doctrine that is heavily influenced by the Neo-Platonism of Origen. They do not put it all together in the Council of Nicea in AD 325 so it is not something that they actually understood from the Bible, but they insisted that the trinity is the true nature of God. What is more, they brand those of us who do not hold Trinitarianism to be heretics. Our churches they call cults just because we do not believe in their made-up trinity doctrine.

That kind of defensiveness, labeling, and lashing out is evidence that they know in their heart of hearts that the “mystery of the trinity,” as they call it, stands on unstable sand and will topple over in a stiff biblical breeze. They know this, at least those in leadership positions. The higher ups of these religions know this, but they have got a good thing going, so they let it slide.

By contrast, in recent years, the church has been accused of not being monotheistic. Where do we stand in all of this? We are not Trinitarian, but we are not monotheistic, they say. I am not saying that myself, but they say that we do not worship one God. We actually are polytheists, who worship a couple of different gods, the Father and the Son. But it just again shows you how much they honestly know.

Those who make such claims like this, both the trinity side and the monotheists' side, are exposing their theological ignorance as well as a condescending, judgmental attitude. The Bible itself in Deuteronomy 6:4, the famous Shema, as the Jews call it, declares with solemnity,

Deuteronomy 6:4 “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!”

Now, YHWH, which many pronounce Yahweh or there are several other ways that people try to pronounce this because we really do not know. We can have a pretty good guess that it is made up of

couple Hs and a W and a Y and you can throw in all the vowels and everything that you want and you can come up with all kinds of different pronunciations. But, YHWH was the one and only deity that Israel knew. I want you get what I just said. *That He, YHWH, was the only deity that Israel knew.* He was the only deity that had made a covenant with them.

He had revealed himself to Moses on the mount. He in turn revealed YHWH to the people of Israel, and told them what His name was. They thought of God in the singular. He was YHWH. I should say, they generally thought it. The man on the dirt path in the wilderness thought of only one deity, which he knew as YHWH, so a singular Being.

They also knew that God also identified himself as Elohim. They knew when they had taken Hebrew grammar in elementary school, that Elohim is a plural noun, indicating more than one Being. They understood that Elohim speaks of a group. We in the church think of Elohim in terms of the word family, the Family of God.

John 1:1-3 tells us very clearly that God and the Word are two separate personal Beings, essentially equals. In no uncertain terms, Jesus revealed that there are two heavenly, eternal divine Beings. One He called My Father or the Father and the other, He called Himself, the Son. They have a family structure. When you have a father and a son, you have the elements of a family. That is how They decided that They would reveal themselves to us as a family, as a Father and a Son, the two of them, this Father and the Son who have always existed. They have always been side by side. These two are doing things in tandem, together in harmony. These two are currently the only members of Elohim, this God Family.

God's Word is true. It does not matter when you read it, if you are reading it in Old Testament times, or in New Testament times; the Word of God is itself true. So when we insert this understanding that we have of Jesus Christ revealing the existence of the Father in His ministry, back into Deuteronomy 6:4 into the Old Testament revelation of the Lord our God, then we realized that, YHWH here, the Lord, who is speaking, is not speaking of God as one in number. He goes on to say, "the Lord our God, the Lord is one." We know that He knew that there were two People. He was not necessarily talking about two personal beings or one personal being. That is not the understanding that we should get out of the word "one" here.

We should understand that "one," as it is used there in Deuteronomy 6:4, describes not a number but a characteristic of God. He is not necessarily telling us how many there are, He is telling us what He is like. This gives us two options, because this word "one," in Hebrew, can mean two slightly different things.

First, that God is unique. He is singular—we would say there is no one else like YHWH, that He is the only true God. He is the only one that is like He is, so there is no one else that comes close to being what He is.

The second thing that it could mean is that God is united, that is, He is whole. God, if you extrapolate that understanding, is of one mind and of one purpose. The Father and the Son think, say, and do everything in perfect harmony. They are always on the same page. It is just like They are one, but They are not. There is more than one being there. But They act, think, say, and do all those other things with a unity of purpose.

Both of these ideas that come out of this word, that God is unique, and the other one, that God is united, are true. They both describe God perfectly, because He has those attributes. In another way, when we look at “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!”, we are essentially restating the first commandment. You look across the page as it is in my Bible.

Deuteronomy 5:6-7 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.

In one God is saying He is unique and united, and the other way He is saying there is no one else like Me and no other God worthy of worship. They are saying very much the same thing. That God, as I mentioned in my opening remark, is this One who is the One and only, united in purpose, the foundation of all true worship, of all true religion.

This one of a kind, unified God is alone worthy of worship and that is why, if we go back to Deuteronomy 6:5, “You shall love the Lord your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your might,” it follows exactly in terms of logic to what was said in verse four, because God is the only true God, and because He is totally unified in His purpose. Then our only logical, valid, and right reaction is to love Him. To love Him, obey Him, and follow Him in everything.

We should love Him because God is one, because the Lord is one. We should have unwavering devotion and obedience to Him because He condescended, He bowed down to reveal Himself to us, and choose us out of this world. He said this is the way, walk in it, because He is what He is. We should be His servants unfailingly.

This same devotion applies equally to the Father and to the Son, because they are both part of Elohim, part of God. It does not matter that Israel was ignorant at the time that there was even another being in what we might call the “godhead.” (I do not like that term. This is a Trinitarian one, but that is the vocabulary we have.) What Israel did not even realize, which is more ironic, is that their YHWH, the one that became Jesus Christ was actually subordinate to the one that they did not know. He was so great and so wonderful, the one that it had been revealed to them, that the same sorts of things applied to Him as to the Father, whom they did not know.

We know God to be comprised, at the moment, of two Beings, two personal, divine heavenly Beings, the Father and the Son. As I have already stated, this was not always known. For four thousand years, basically, nobody knew that there was such a being as the Father. It says very clearly in John 1:18 that Jesus came to reveal Him. He has declared Him, it says there.

I have not been able to find any proof that Abraham knew of the Father. Did Moses know of the Father? David, who wrote Psalm 7, which we are going to go through a little bit, did he know of the Father? We would like to say, yes, probably, maybe, but there is nothing in God's Word that definitively proves that they did.

In one of His personal visits with Abraham did YHWH, the God of the Old Testament tell Abraham that there was One greater than He? We do not know nor do we have the transcripts of their conversations, so we cannot say definitely. Moses was such a friend of God that while he was on the mountain for forty days did YHWH said, “I would like to let you know that I am your God, but there is another One greater than I?” When David was being inspired to write the psalms, did God inspire him in some of those psalms to understand that there was another greater Being, of greater authority?

I do not know; the Bible just does not say. They were converted men; they believed what had been revealed to them. They believed up to the extent of what they knew, but I would have to think that they figured it out somehow or that it had been revealed to them, but we do not know for sure.

What I want to talk to you about today is that the Father is actually there in the text of the Old Testament. We can see it today because we are looking at it from our perspective in history. They may not have known then because it just was not revealed to them. Actually, the Father is alluded to throughout the Old Testament.

Today, I want to kind of stroll through some of the breadcrumbs that have been left behind in the Old Testament that give us pretty good hints that God the Father exists. I want you to see or learn what is said about Him in the Old Testament. To me, it is kind of neat and eye opening to see how much, not only the fact that He is there, but how much of His character is there and what it shows us about the Father in the Old Testament.

We are going to start at the beginning. Please turn to Genesis 1. We are going to find that He is revealed in the Bible not only in the first chapter, but in the very first verse. You all know this one. Why do we have to turn there?

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

Genesis 1:26 Then God said, let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.

And while we are here in Genesis, just look at chapter 3 because I will be speaking about all of these things in my comments. This is after Adam and Eve have sinned and God has given His judgments and He made them tunics of skin to clothe them

Genesis 3:22 Then the Lord God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat and live forever—

He decided therefore to kick them out of the Garden of Eden. Here we have the Bible’s first verse, the first chapter, and we have the first hint of the Father’s existence.

Now, as I mentioned earlier, God is identified first in this particular verse here as Elohim, that is where the hint is, in the word Elohim. If you know anything about Hebrew, you know that masculine nouns that are made into plurals have the ending, “im.” That is what that little particle does in this particular word; it is the standard masculine particle that indicates plurality. Now the Bible also uses the singular of this word Elohim, which is simply El, and the Bible uses very similar words also for names of God, Elyon and Eloah. These are singular, but Elohim is plural.

By being plural, it indicates a group made up of individuals like a partnership in a business, like a team playing football or basketball, like a family. Everyone knows what a family is. You have one person; you are not necessarily a family. It takes two, husband and wife and then children, and when you go on into the extended family, they are made up of more than one person.

You have a community made up maybe of hundreds of thousands of people who live in the same place. And of course, you can have a nation, that is a singular word, but it could be made up of

millions of people. The United States has about three hundred and eight, ten, fifteen, or twenty million people, but when we talk about the nation, we use a singular noun, nation or country.

These are called collective nouns. A collection is another one. A collection is a collective noun, because the collection is made up of many things, but it is one collection. So, you have this plural word, Elohim, that is a collective noun.

Now just as with similar words in American English, many of them I just mentioned to you, Elohim, can take a singular verb. That is normally bad grammar. I am the grammar Nazi around here, and I tell you that singular nouns can take singular verbs and plural nouns take plural verbs. But Elohim is a plural noun, but it takes a singular verb. I cannot call God ungrammatical or grammatically incorrect. This is here in the Bible for a reason; it is pointing something out to us that is very important for us to know.

We say things like the team plays at the local gym. The team is a singular noun, the subject of the sentence, and plays is a singular verb, not a plural. Our family enjoys singing campfire songs, well not the Ritenbaugh family, but some family might do that. There it is again, a singular noun and a singular verb. The nation grieves the loss of its soldiers, again a singular noun, with a singular verb. The audience laughs at the preacher's jokes, singular noun, singular verb.

There are some dialects of English, across the pond, where they use these same terms with plural verbs. The team play at the local gym. It does not sound right to us, but in the particular dialect, it is fine. The police arrest fifteen people. That does not sound quite right to our ears. We want to put an "s" on the end of that verb, because it should be singular. But even in our own language, we have dialects that mess with this basic grammatical understanding.

We have here the first sentence in the Bible. My red pen would have been out and said, "No, no, no, no, this is a plural noun, it needs a plural verb." God, of course, would have overridden me and said, "Return that to the text!" It is a plural noun with a singular verb. So, we have Elohim, which is plural, and the word "bara" (created) is a singular verb. Elohim created the heavens and the earth. Is this a grammatical inconsistency?

We read verse 26, because this is where the plurality that is found in Elohim comes to the fore, "Let us make man in Our image." Us and our are both plural, first person, and full plural pronouns. Whoever was speaking here was speaking as the spokesman for the group, for whoever made up the plurality that is in Elohim is saying, "Let Us make man in our image." There was more than one person whose will was being expressed by this term, "let Us."

Notice that this was said in connection with the creation of Adam, the making of Adam. I just want you to put that in the back of your head, because I think it actually has a great deal to do with why this "let Us" is used. Some believe this "let Us" term is like the imperial or royal "we." "We have decreed that your head must be chopped off," the monarch would say from his or her throne because they are speaking in behalf of the state. They are the state, they represent the state, and so they speak in this royal or imperial "we." This "let Us" composition actually just perfectly harmonizes with the fact that Elohim is plural, because we are speaking of more than one Person. If we would look at verse 27 right after He says, "Let Us make man in Our image," it says.

Genesis 1:27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female. He created them.

It switches from the plural back to the singular. Now why is that done? Well, the simple reason is that even though both of Them, the Father and Son, as we see them now, agreed that this is what should be done, only one of Them actually had hands-on involvement in the creation. How many times in the New Testament did it say that all things were created by Jesus Christ? He was the One that did these things. The pronouns change to first person, singular, not first person, plural. If you want some of those verses about where it says that, He is the one that created all things, you can write down, John 1:3, Ephesians 3:9, Colossians 1:16, and Revelation 3:14. All of them say that Jesus Christ Himself was the Creator

We have here in this “let Us” composition in Genesis 1, an indication of the decision-making process and the command to fulfill it. Jesus Christ, as the Word, is the Spokesman. Herbert Armstrong used to say, He is the One that said, “Okay, this is what we have decided to do. Let Us make man in our image.” Other scholars are always coming up with something different. They take this to indicate that God is addressing the heavenly court of angels because they look at Revelation 4 and 5. They see all these angels and other heavenly beings, the 24 elders, and the living creatures, and such. They are saying, this is the way it always is in heaven, and then God makes this decree from His throne. That is what He is doing. He is making a royal decree now. Similar pronouns are used in Genesis 11. Martin read it a little bit earlier in his commentary.

Genesis 11:7 Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.

We have another royal decree, as these scholars think of it. There is something happening, something being decided and decreed from heaven. I say, “No” to that because when we take it this way, what it does is indicate angelic assistance. God says it, but the angels did it. This would mean angelic assistance in the creation. We have angelic assistance in casting Adam and Eve from the Garden. We have angelic assistance in confusing the languages at Babel.

But you know what? In none of those cases, is there any indication in Scripture that the angels actually assisted God. Even the cherubim helping to keep Adam and Eve out of the Garden are there after the fact. God thrust them out of the Garden. He set up cherubim to guard the way back. It never says that they had cherubim with flaming swords, chasing them out of the Garden. I get the idea that God came and said, “You know, this is what we have got to do, come with Me.” And they walked outside the Garden, and He went out, closed the gate behind Him and said, “Well, here we are. Go to the land of Nod or wherever, this is where you are going to live from now on, the way back is closed.”

This is just one of those things where I do not think they thought all of this through. Interestingly, wherever I found this in the commentaries, the sources that seem to think that this is the way it was, when addressing the heavenly court, are also the ones who believe that the Father is the God of the Old Testament. I do not know why those two things went together in their minds, but that is just what happened. I cannot really explain that.

If you want my own opinion, maybe you do, maybe you do not, but I will let you know anyway. To me, these “let Us” constructions suggest a joint decision by the Father and the Son, showing how united Elohim is, it is a joint decision by the Father and the Son to do something (not a little thing). They are doing something of a monumental nature.

Think of the three things that happened after these, “let Us” compositions. We see that they indicate an act of will on God's part. All of them are early in man's creation or in man's history. I should say the first “let Us” was the creation of man. That was a huge thing. God started, essentially, His plan, and with those words, man was created, and therefore His Family can begin.

The second one was man's expulsion from the Garden, a huge step in God's plan, where they cut themselves off from Him and they needed a Savior because they had sinned. God says, “No, you're going to be away from Me, and I will call those whom I choose, not just everyone.”

Then the third thing happened after the Flood at Babel, where He says, “Let Us go down and confuse or confound their language.” He scattered us abroad so that it would take us a great deal of time to reach the level where we are now. He had things that had to be done. The prophetic timeline had to be extended out for a long time, so that these things could happen and His purpose could develop.

I see these “let Us” constructions as being our markers. Red flags, if you will, something that gets the reader's attention, so that we would say there is a significant action coming here. We need to think about it deeply. This thing that is going to happen, the creation, the expulsion, and the scattering would have significant and long-term ramifications for humanity. We are being prodded, just by this construction to say, “I need to think about this. I need to think this through.”

What is so significant? What is so remarkable and wonderful? What can we learn about God by the fact that He created man in His image, after His own likeness? What can we learn about God and His way, how He feels toward us, His standards and by kicking Adam and Eve out of the Garden? What can we understand about God's purpose and the way He works with humanity, His will, His mercy, and on and on it goes to His scattering of the people at Babel through language. Why did He do it through language?

All kinds of questions pop up about these specific instances in our history, and they should make us think. It was not just the One who became Jesus Christ that made this decision and took this action. It was the Father as well. The Father and He were perfectly united, perfectly harmonized, in this particular action. It was something They both really wanted to do. They both had to do it, in order to make Their purpose work out in the way They wanted.

This construction, as I see it, signals God entering into earthly affairs on a vast scale, and setting the course of humanity for thousands of years into the future, and maybe for all time. We can see them as acts of God's sovereignty, showing how He intervenes to move His plan for humanity forward toward its completion.

What does He want? He wants people just like Him, God-like sons and daughters. Everything He does is aimed toward making that happen, to fulfilling his purpose. These two work together to make this happen, even though Israelites at the time knew of only one. It did not matter. The Father was just as deeply interested, aware, and involved in these things as the Son.

Let us go to the book of Psalms; there is not much between Genesis and Psalms in terms of the revelation of God, the Father. We are going to start in Psalm 2. We will read the first 7 verses; we could actually read the whole thing, because it is all involved here. This is where we get an indication looking at it from our New Testament standpoint of there being another Being.

Psalm 2:1-7 Why do the nations rage, and the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, "Let us break Their bonds in pieces and cast away Their cords from us." He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall hold them in derision. Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, and distress them in His deep displeasure: "Yet I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion." "I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You.' "

We look at this in our modern Bibles, and they have done the work for us. They have capitalized things like, His Anointed, My King, and My Son. We, looking at it from our position and say, that refers to Jesus Christ, He is the One, He is My King, He is the Anointed, He is My King, He is My Son. That means that the One who is saying this is God, the Father, of course. Right?

This was this was written hundreds of years before Jesus Christ revealed the Father, and so we have this question. What is this psalm? What is it in its original context? *The Word Biblical Commentary* on this psalm calls it a coronation psalm. It expresses the view of that a commentator (whoever it was, I did not get his name.) The commentator believes that the psalm was used in ancient Israel as a coronation hymn—it was sung during the coronation ceremony.

There is pretty good evidence that this was exactly the way it was. We have to remember that the people who heard this in Old Testament times had no understanding of the Father. They are going to have a different understanding and interpretation of what the psalmist is saying here than we do, looking at it from a New Testament standpoint. But it was just as true for them as it is for us; they could understand it in their own way, truthfully. Just us we understand it in our way, truthfully. We have to understand a bit of cultural information to comprehend this psalm as they did.

Many ancient nations in the Near East believed that the king that ruled over them was the son of their god. The Egyptian king, Pharaoh, was the son of Ra. It was a part of his title. The Philistine king was the son of their god, Dagon. The Canaanite kings were sons of Baal. The Moabite king, was the son of Chemosh. The Ammonite king was the son of Molech, and it goes on and on. They all believed that. And did you know that in ancient Israel, they believed that their king was also the son of God. The Israelites did not believe that their king was a demigod or any kind of deity. What they believed was similar to what the other nations around believed, the belief that he was the son of God by anointing. That is why He is called here, in verse 2, His Anointed.

Anointing was a major part of the coronation ceremony in ancient Israel. The priests would pour the oil over the king's head and anoint him with oil. What did it do? It set him apart, set the king apart so that he could be used by God. And so he became God's son by anointing. God Himself will say this in I Chronicles 17. This is the covenant with David that God made. He is talking about Solomon.

I Chronicles 17:11-13 And it shall be, when your days are fulfilled [This is God speaking to David], when you must go to be with your fathers, that I will set up your seat after you, who will be one of your sons, I will establish his kingdom. He shall build me a house, and I will establish his throne forever. [He is obviously talking about Solomon here] I will be his Father, and he shall be My son and I will not take my mercy away from him as I took it from him, who was before you.

God calls Solomon My son. Solomon was the next king.

I Chronicles 22 shows same type of thing, except this is in terms of David preparing to build the Temple. God said, "No, you are a man of blood. I'm not going to have you do it. I'm going to have your peaceful son build My Temple,"

I Chronicles 22:10 He shall build a house for My name, and he shall be My son, and I will be his Father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever.

God again calls the king, My son.

One more example in chapter 28, a few pages over to verse 6. This is a restating about the instruction to Solomon to build the Temple.

I Chronicles 28:6 Now, He said to me [God said to David], it is your son, Solomon, who shall build My house and My courts, for I have chosen him to be My son, and I will be his Father.

We see that even in Israel, the king was thought of as the son of God. The son of YHWH, you could say. Today we understand Psalm 2 as a Messianic prophecy. It is very clearly a Messianic prophecy. It is one of the clearest in the entire Bible. The king here called My Son, and the One who is called His Anointed, is the One who became Jesus Christ. He is the one we know from Revelation is the King of kings and Lord of lords. He is anointed as it were by His Father to be that King who would raise up a kingdom of priests and rule over all the earth.

The one who is called, YHWH here, or LORD, He is actually the Father. Because the Israelites in general had no conception of God, the Father, they understood it truthfully, to refer to their One God. That was the way they knew YHWH. This is the One who had revealed Himself on Mount Sinai to them. This was the king, the human king, not the spiritual king, the God king, Jesus Christ. It was true. It was true to them and it is true to us. We just understand it in a much higher way than they do.

Let us see this in the New Testament. Acts 13 where we find this idea quoted.

Acts 13:33 God has fulfilled this for us, their children, in that He has raised up Jesus, as it is written in the second Psalm, You are My Son, today, I have begotten You.

Psalm 2:7 is quoted in the New Testament, clearly referring to Jesus Christ. One other, and that will be Hebrews, well, actually two others. Same book, Hebrews 1:5. He had just been in the introduction, speaking about God, revealing and speaking through His Son in the universe.

Hebrews 1:5 For to which of the angels did He ever say: "You are My Son, today I have begotten You

Hebrews 5, verse 5, speaking of Christ as priest.

Hebrews 5:5 So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but it was He who said to Him: "You are My Son, today I have begotten You.

It is very clear that in the New Testament the understanding of the Father and the Son has been revealed. Look back at what David, or whoever the psalmist was that wrote Psalm 2. This is the real interpretation of this psalm. It is actually referring to the Father and the Son, not YHWH and the

human king. It applied to the Son and the human king in its own way, but this was the greater understanding; that there was a Father who would say to the Son, "Today I have begotten you. You are the king." You go through the rest of the psalm and He is smashing down the nations and making them bow down to Him as the sole ruler of all things.

Maybe you could just write down Psalm 45:6-7. It is another Messianic passage, where both the Father and the Son are this time called El, not YHWH, but El. They are both called God in that particular passage. Now we want to go to Psalm 110, where there is another famous Messianic prophecy.

Psalm 110:1-4 The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool." The LORD shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies! Your people shall be volunteers in the day of Your power; in the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning, You have the dew of Your youth. The LORD has sworn and will not relent, "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek."

This is another very similar Messianic psalm. It even actually refers to Psalm 2:8 and verse 9. The same ideas are there between Psalm 110:1-4 and Psalm 2:8-9. Commentators like to call it another royal psalm like Psalm 2, because they are very similar. Even though it says that it was the psalm of David, we do not know that he wrote it.

When it was presented, when it was actually sung or chanted or however they did it in public, it was chanted by somebody else, probably the prophet or the priest. Nobody is sure who would actually do this. It was again used in times of coronation. In this case, as we see it there in Psalm 110, the one who is YHWH would be the Son, that is the One we know as the Son, Jesus Christ. The one who is called my Lord, would be David, or some later Israelite king.

This is how they saw it at the time when it was written. They thought of it as YHWH, and the Israelite king. This is *not* how Jesus and Peter read this. Let us go to a couple more scriptures. Mark 12 and this, by the way, is found in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. I thought I would pull out the one from Mark as it is the simplest one where this is quoted

Mark 12:35-36 Then Jesus answered and said while He taught in the temple, "How is it that the scribes say that Christ is the Son of David? For David himself said by the Holy Spirit . . .

Notice it was David was being inspired by the Holy Spirit to write something that he maybe did not really understand fully,

Mark 12:36-37 David himself said by the Holy Spirit: "The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool." Therefore David himself calls Him [meaning the Son] 'Lord,' how is He then his "Son?"? And the common people heard him gladly.

Jesus is using a bit of rhetoric here to get them thinking. Why did David call Him his Son? He is actually his Lord. That is usually not the way it works. He wanted them to think this through. Yes, there must actually be a Father who is saying this to someone greater than David, even though He was descended from David and that, of course, means that this is backing up His revelation of the Father. Go to Acts the second chapter. Peter uses this in that Pentecost sermon

Acts 2:34-35 “For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: ‘The LORD said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.’”

Peter understands it in the exact same way that Jesus understood it in Mark 12. We should take Jesus' word as the ultimate weight here. He was the One who knew what was going on, and this is the way it was. We have the New Testament understanding trumping the Old Testament understanding of this particular psalm.

So, Lord here refers to Jesus Christ as the Son of David, and it also confirms that He, the One who was YHWH, the One who was the Lord, our God of the Old Testament, also had a Lord. He also had a YHWH. Interesting, YHWH had a YHWH. Now, this might confuse people. How can the Father be called YHWH? Sometimes we tend to define things like this a little bit too tightly.

We start making distinctions that the Bible does not make. We think that this name or title, or whatever, can apply only to God, to the God of the Old Testament. Only the God of the Old Testament is YHWH. If that is the Word, the One who became Jesus Christ, then it cannot apply to the Father. But that is not true. We are the ones that make that distinction, not the Bible. We have to take it from the Bible and not our own reasoning process.

Think of this, what does YHWH mean? Scholars might quibble about this or that little detail about what it means, but God defines it clearly. In Exodus 3:14, where He said, “I AM WHO I AM,” that was His definition. He said, “Tell him the I AM sent you.” Elsewhere this is expanded out to the One who was and who is and was to come. Meaning that this Person has always lived, and He will always live.

Herbert Armstrong liked to shorten this to the simple term, The Eternal. It can be the existent One, the One who exists, or the ever-living One. The One who has lived before as far back as you can go, with no end to infinity backwards into infinity forwards. Now, while this name implies the One who made the covenant with Israel, because that is where we basically first find it, the meaning of the name applies to both the Father and to the Son, equally. Both are eternal, divine Beings with no beginning of days, or end of life. So, they are both YHWH. They are both I AM's. We most often think of this in terms of the God of the Old Testament, Jesus Christ, because He used that name of Himself most often.

YHWH is used 6807 times in the Old Testament. In just a few places it refers to the Father from our understanding in the New Testament era. Looking back on the Old, think about Jesus calling Him His Father, His God. The most famous of those is His cry on the cross from Psalm 22:1

Psalm 22:1 “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

The Father was His God. He was His YHWH. He calls His Father God many times throughout the Gospels. I like to think of these few exceptions. It is only three or four times in the Old Testament, where YHWH actually really refers to the Father. I like to think of these exceptions as the exceptions that prove the rule. We have a couple more to go and only ten minutes to go. We will go fast. I think I have gotten the bulk of the understanding across. I want you to see a few more of these.

Isaiah 61:1-3 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the

captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn, to console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified

Now this is the last one of the YHWH appearances, in which it refers to the Father. This is another well known passage that is quoted in the New Testament. It is, significantly, quoted by Jesus Christ Himself, applying it to Himself. The commentators often say that this is one of those servant' songs and it actually applies to Isaiah. Isaiah was the one anointed, and he was the one sent to preach. It works that way, just not fully. It can be seen to work that way, but the greater understanding is that God is prophesying here of the future, Anointed One who would preach the gospel.

We will go to Luke 4. This is when He was in Nazareth, and He is announcing His ministry.

Luke 4:18-22 The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD." Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." So all bore witness to Him, and marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, "Is this not Joseph's son?"

Jesus Himself does not equivocate at all here. We know that this once applied to Isaiah, but it really applies to Jesus Christ. No, He does not even mention that. He says, this is fulfilled in your hearing, in My ministry, in what I am doing, in Me. Without the revelation of the Father to them, the Jews of Nazareth, well they do what Jews at the time typically did. They applied this physically and said, "Is this not Joseph's son?" They were looking for a physical "kick the Romans out of out of Israel" kind of Messiah. They were not looking for God in the flesh to announce His spiritual ministry, which He was doing here. They failed to see the Father in this passage, but it is there. The Spirit of the Lord is the Spirit of the Father in this case.

Go to one more in the Old Testament, Daniel 7. This one does not use El, Elohim, or YHWH. It uses a different term. This Messianic passage finds its parallel in Revelation 4, 5, 19, and 20, because it covers a lot of ground.

Daniel 7:9-14 "I watched till thrones were put in place, and the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, its wheels a burning fire; a fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, and the books were opened. I watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn was speaking; I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame. As for the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time. I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed."

It is very clear that the Ancient of Days is the Father, and that the Son of Man is the Son who ascends to heaven, where He is given a crown and a throne, to rule the nations forever. Ancient of Days has essentially the same kernel of meaning that YHWH does. It means someone who has lived forever. They both suggest eternity and eternal life, and this description again applies to both the Father and the Son, because both have always existed. But the Father has always been shown in the senior position here and everywhere else in Scripture. In John 14:28 Jesus makes it very clear. Very plainly, no two ways about it, He says, the Father is greater than I.

What do these Old Testament passages tell us about God the Father? I know we have gone through this pretty quickly. We have not necessarily had a whole lot of time to think about what these little hints of God the Father in the Old Testament teach us. They tell us a great many things, and I am just going to list them very quickly so you can get the tenor of His Old Testament Revelation of Himself.

(1) He is a Creator, that is the first thing that He tells us.

(2) We resemble Him because we are made in His image after His own likeness. He says in terms of casting Adam and Eve out of the Garden, that

(3) He has strict, unchanging standards for eternal life, and He cannot abide sin.

(4) He tells us He is sovereign over His purpose and plan, and that He will step in to do what He needs to do in order to make His plan work.

(5) He tells us He is a Father to Christ. As Father, He is the same to us; He is a Father to Him, He is a Father to us.

(6) He tells us He works through His Son. Though He stands back and His Son does the work, They are united in all that They do.

(7) He tells us that He bestows authority on the Son to do His will. He does His will. He tells us what His will is, it is to preach the truth, to heal those who are hurting, to free those who are bound, to punish the wicked, to comfort those who mourn, to give beauty and joy and praise, to develop righteousness, and ultimately, to glorify Himself.

(8) Finally, He tells us He aims to set up an everlasting Kingdom that will bring peace to the universe.

All of these ideas are found in these few scriptures in the Old Testament that refer to the One we know as God the Father. God packs a wallop into just a few little passages. Let us conclude in Revelation 4. We are going to speak about God the Father and this is a good place to finish.

Revelation 4:1-3 After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this." Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald.

Revelation 4:8-11 The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!" Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who

sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created."

Here is a glimpse of God the Father upon His throne in heaven, receiving the praise, glory, and honor that He deserves from all of us. He is the one who has poured His love out upon us, and He works day and night with His Son to bring us into His everlasting Kingdom. He is not that angry, wrathful God of the Old Testament so many seem to think, but He is the loving, Almighty Father who desires billions of His sons and daughters to be made into His image. Among them are you and me. Paul says in

Romans 8:31 If God *is* for us, who *can be* against us?