

ONE GOD & LORD

by Dwight A. Pryor^[1]

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Introduction

The restoration of the Jewish homeland, Israel, and the reconnection of the Church to its Jewish roots are not unrelated phenomena. Many sectors of the Body of Messiah today are being stimulated and enriched by the “nourishing sap” of Israel’s faith, scriptures and scholarship. We are discovering that there is scarcely a single NT subject that cannot be amplified, deepened, or balanced by a Hebraic perspective. As disciples of Yeshua, we are deeply indebted to Israel.

At the root of this renewal of the Church stands a Jewish man, Jesus of Nazareth – *Rav Yeshua*. This itinerant first-century teacher with a keen sense of “high self-awareness”^[2] surely is the cornerstone of the living temple God continues to build in our time. It is imperative and in every way advantageous therefore that we understand Yeshua – his person and his work, his mission and his message – in the full frame of his original Jewish matrix.

So compelling is his full humanity when seen in its Jewish setting that some people, in their explorations of their Jewish roots, have come to question the divinity of Jesus as the Son of God. Some even have dismissed this central Christian claim on the grounds that it is ‘Hellenistic’ and not authentically ‘Hebraic’. They charge that an alien, Greco-Roman accretion was added to the authentic Jewish faith Jesus passed on to his apostles and disciples. Is this true?

In a twenty-year journey as part of what I would call the Hebraic Renewal community, I too have wrestled with this most pivotal of claims: that Yeshua was fully man and yet fully God-in-man reconciling the world to himself. In other words, that the NT claim of the One God as Father-Son-Holy Spirit does not violate (but amplifies) the central tenet of the Hebrew Scriptures and the core of Judaism’s ethical monotheism – the Shema of Deuteronomy 6.4. Whatever our views regarding the status of Jesus as the Son of God, all can agree that “the LORD is one (*ehad*)” must be the starting point in our confession of faith, as well as the anchor to which we always return.

Multiple Meanings of Ehad

At least twice daily, morning and evening, a faithful Jew engages in the *K’riat Sh’ma* – the recitation of the Shema^[3] – with its regal opening: “Hear O Israel, the LORD is our God, the LORD is one.”^[4] In this article we will look at three dimensions of the word *ehad* (“one”) and relate them to how the first, Jewish church handled the issue of Jesus’ divinity^[5] within the boundaries of exclusive monotheism.

The Uniqueness of Ehad

When Israel affirms the Shema it declares that Y/H/W/H,^[6] and he alone, is God. Said another way, Y/H/W/H is utterly unique because he alone is altogether holy. “Who is like you among the gods, O LORD? Who is like you, majestic in holiness (*ne’dar ba-kodesh*)?”^[7] In fact, there are no other gods

(though many are pretenders to the Throne). Adonai alone is the supreme God, the Most High, the One, True, and Only Elohim.

The *ehad* in the Shema, therefore, speaks of God's holiness, which is related to his very being or ontological essence. *Kadosh* has an array of implications, applications and manifestations, but at root it refers to the Eternal One being marked off, set apart and distinguished from all else that exists – precisely because he is the Source of existence itself. *Kodesh* or holiness speaks of his radical transcendence and his unrivaled otherness. He is wholly 'other than' all that we can conceive or conjecture. He is immeasurable, incomparable and indivisible.

Philosophers have conjectured the Divine to be the "Ground of Being," the "Unmoved Mover," or the "First Cause." Mystical medieval Judaism speaks of the *Ein Sof*, the unbounded infinity of existence. But the God of the Shema is personal, with a name above every other name, Y/H/W/H.^[8] He is the self-existent One that causes all else to exist, and he will be there for his people. All that was, is, or will be has its being from, through, and ultimately for him. He is the One.

The ultimate doxological predicate, therefore, is to declare that Y/H/W/H is holy. First and finally, the truth of his existence and essence is that the God of Israel is "Holy, Holy, Holy!" No higher truth can be told, no deeper affirmation can be attested. The angelic hosts, with fervent intention and unflagging enthusiasm, are compelled to proclaim perpetually in antiphonal affirmation: "*Kadosh, kadosh, kadosh! Adonai Tz'vaot!*"^[9] No other attribute of Y/H/W/H is emphasized in such a three-fold repetition of praise and adoration. Nowhere, for instance, does the Scripture declare the LORD to be "gracious, gracious, gracious" or "omnipotent, omnipotent, omnipotent". Only "kadosh" is accorded this triple Hebraic intensification. Why? Because holiness is not just one of God's many and glorious attributes. "*Kadosh, kadosh, kadosh*" signs the very ground and the grandeur of his Being, the very mystery of who he is, in and of himself.

Only with HASHEM is holiness intrinsic. For everything or anyone else, holiness is derivative. Whether it be in space, time or people, holiness comes only in relationship with the Holy One of Israel, by being set apart from the common for His exclusive purposes, privileges and presence. Holiness in God's people requires sanctity or separation from sin and impurity, because they are to reflect the One in whom there is no darkness or turning, just the effulgence of truth and light.

Because Y/H/W/H is holy, His essence is impenetrable and His name, ineffable. Apart from the Almighty's self-disclosure, we could only speculate about his "divine nature and eternal power."^[10] We might believe in Elohim's existence, but apart from his self-disclosure in word and deed we would never come to know the character of Y/H/W/H as good and abounding in loving kindness, as faithful and righteous, as loving, merciful and forgiving.

The inner being or essence of God remains impenetrable ultimately. He is too radically "kadosh" for us to see his unguarded face, his unbounded infinity, and not be consumed in the blaze of his holiness. Moses, a friend of God, asked to see Y/H/W/H's face – i.e., to behold God's *essence*. But God instead displayed his *character*: "I myself will make all my goodness pass before you."^[11] The Holy One dwells in unapproachable light. His character however is fully displayed in his declarations and documented in his deeds. We know who he is and what he has done by his words and his wondrous acts. In his love and covenant faithfulness, the LORD causes his Name to dwell near us. But in his infinite Being, the One who is-was-will be, forever remains "*Kadosh, kadosh, kadosh.*"

The "ehad" of Israel's Shema reminds us of this. When we affirm it, we confess that Y/H/W/H is and always shall be absolutely, wholly unique.

The Exclusiveness of Ehad

Secondly, when Israel affirms the Shema it pledges its exclusive allegiance to Y/H/W/H. More than a declaration of faith, the Shema is a summons to Israel's faithfulness. It is a call to worship/serve^[12] the God of Israel and him alone. The justification for the LORD's exclusive demands on Israel is two-fold: *who* he is, and *what* he has done.

ADONAI is the One, True and Only Elohim. All creation comes from him, and nothing ever was, is or will be apart from him. Y/H/W/H is utterly uncommon, wholly unique, and quintessentially holy. Some scholars argue that Moses and the Torah held to a "modified monotheism" – believing that there were many gods, but that Y/H/W/H was the supreme One. He was the "Most High God." In other words, Y/H/W/H not only was the *Elohim* of Israel; he was the *Elohei HaElohim*, the God of all gods.^[13] Every plague directed against the deities of Egypt, including the revered Sun god, demonstrated that Israel's God was supreme. In this view, the plural intensification of the noun, *Elohim*, hints that Y/H/W/H is the most powerful of all the powerful ones. He alone is *Ha-El Ha-Gadol, Ha-Gibbor, v'Ha-Nora* – the Great, the Mighty and the Awesome God.^[14]

The rigorous and exclusive monotheism of Judaism – where *ehad* means One and only One – comes to its highest expression in the later portions of Isaiah, especially chapters 43-45. "Other gods" are but idols. Through prophetic voice, Adonai explicitly expresses his exclusive status as God and the prerogatives attendant thereto, in language like: "You are my witnesses, declares the LORD ... that I am he."^[15] Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me."^[16] Or, "I am the LORD, and there is no other; besides me there is no God."^[17] Or, "There is no other god besides me ... for I am God, and there is no other ... To me every knee shall bow and every tongue swear allegiance."^[18]

In its original setting, however, the focus of Deuteronomy 6.4 was not monotheism but *monolatry* (the worship of the One God).^[19] In other words, the Shema of Moses was not so much a theological decree as a spiritual demand – for Israel's exclusive allegiance and obedience to Y/H/W/H. The redeemed of the LORD were to love, fear, serve and obey "the LORD alone."^[20] It is not just *who* God is that gives him the right to command exclusive fidelity. It is *what* Y/H/W/H has done on Israel's behalf. He abounds in covenant faithfulness, and his righteous acts redeem, deliver, and save Israel, to whom he then imparts the gift of Torah, written and conveyed by his Spirit. When the children of Israel declare that, "God is One" and commit their lives to his service, they take upon themselves the "yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven."^[21] The overriding issue then becomes the obedience of faith. The Shema calls for the *tzid'kot Adonai* – the righteous, saving deeds of the LORD – to be reciprocated in Israel's faithful and just actions.

Yes, Israel indeed holds to an exalted view of ethical monotheism, a belief declared daily in the recitation of the Shema. But equally important is the fact that their exclusive monotheism is expressed not abstractly but in actions, in liturgy and loyalty to Y/H/W/H. Conduct is at the core of Israel's creed, and its most telling expression is evident in how they walk and whom they worship.^[22]

The "ehad" of Israel's Shema reminds us of this. When we affirm it, we confess that Y/H/W/H is truly God, and him alone shall we worship and serve. To compromise on these claims of exclusivity is to worship amiss and to become bent towards idolatry.

The Unity of Ehad

Third, when Israel affirms the Shema it acknowledges the indivisible unity of Y/H/W/H. The Hebrew word *ehad* speaks of unity not singularity. The One and Only God is a unity of all that he is-was-will be, of all his attributes, actions and appearances. Though he has many names, there are not many gods. The plural noun, Elohim, always takes a singular verb in the Hebrew when referring to the God of Israel. God's majesties are many and his manifestations manifold, but in himself he is indivisibly One.

In the Shema, two names of God are spoken, *Elohim* and *Adonai*. Elohim points to the creative power and righteous judgments of God; Adonai, to his mercy and covenant faithfulness, say the rabbis. But these are not two gods – not two powers in heaven – they are different aspects of the One God.^[23] This tension is affirmed in Jewish prayers that typically address God as *Avinu, Malkeinu* (“our Father, our King”) – two foundational aspects of the divine unity-in-plurality. This is not dualism of any sort, but a biblically balanced mindset that persistently affirms a dynamic dialectic within the *ah'dut* or unity of the Eternal One.

The textual revelation of *ehad* as oneness-in-unity is found from the very beginning of the Torah, in Genesis 1.5: “*vay'hi erev, vay'hi voker, yom ehad*” (“And it was evening, and it was morning, day one.”) This first occurrence of *ehad* in the Bible unites two parts of a day, evening and morning, into one/*ehad*. No less telling is the use of *ehad* with reference to *adam* or humankind in Genesis 2.4. When the male and the female unite as husband and wife, “*v'hayu l'vasar ehad*” – “they shall become one flesh (body).” Two persons, equal but distinct, become inseparably joined together as one/*ehad*. In another instance, looking toward the end of all things, the prophet Ezekiel foresees a time when the children of Israel will be fully united, when the two “sticks” of Judah and Ephraim are joined in God's hand to become one/*ehad*.^[24]

That *ehad* is used this way in the biblical text is important. *Ehad* points to unity, not singularity (*yahid*), and the implications of that bear profoundly upon the nature and character of the God of Israel. Consider, for example, the creation of humankind (*adam*), made in the image of God. Why does God make one person, then from the one make two (*Adam v'Havvah*), in order that the two shall become one? If ‘one’ is the starting point, how can it also be the goal? Because man alone is *yahid*, a singularity, but when the two become *ehad*, a unity is achieved that far surpasses singularity. From the one, God forms two-that-become-one because he wants humankind to learn how to love. In singularity only self-love is possible; to love truly it takes an ‘other’. In learning how to love one's corresponding other, one learns how to love God.

Love is the *telos* (end/goal) of the Torah, as emphasized in the “Great Commandment,”^[25] precisely because Y/H/W/H is love in his very being.^[26] But this is not true of all gods. Consider, by contrast, the god of Islam. He is “one” in splendid singularity. In direct rebuff to Christian claims about God, Koranic inscriptions in the Dome of the Rock (one of the first Muslim religious structures built outside Arabia) declare that Allah: “begets no son and has no partner”; “he is God, one, eternal”; “he does not beget, nor is he begotten, and he has no peer.”

Whereas the Torah extols Y/H/W/H as the One who abounds in loving kindness (a term of covenantal partnership), the Koran exalts Allah as “the compassionate and merciful” (actions that a superior being extends toward an inferior one). The emphases are significant. Unlike the God of the Bible, Allah is not intrinsically a god of love, nor can he be, according to some Islamic scholars. To love another would bring contingency, and therefore, weakness into the godhead; but Allah is beyond all contingencies and any limitations. The point is this: I do not wish to overdraw these contrasts, for there are similarities

as well. I am simply noting that the severe monotheism of Islam differs from the unified monotheism of Judaism and Christianity in a way parallel to the differences between *yahid* (singular 'one') and *ehad* ('one' of unity). The God of the Bible has an inner harmony and indivisible unity of all that he does and is. In his oneness, there is plurality-in-unity – a unity that must not be broken, a plurality that must not be diminished. Unlike the uniformity of monism, biblical monotheism is irreducibly relational and characterized at its core by love.

The “ehad” of Israel’s Shema reminds us of this. When we affirm it, we confess that Y/H/W/H is incomparably unique and utter holy; he is the One, True God alone that we shall worship and serve. The LORD calls for our exclusive loyalty and undivided love because he is faithful to his covenant and abounds in *hesed* toward his beloved. He is incomparable, insistent, and indivisible. The Shema is the supreme affirmation of God’s unity.

Ehad, Jesus & the Early Jewish Church

What might these multiple dimensions of ehad in the Shema mean for our understanding of the divinity of Jesus? The implications and applications are many indeed. Given the purpose and limits of this article, however, we will close with some hints, suggestions and recommendations that may be catalytic to our considerations.

It is clear is that Jesus,^[27] Paul,^[28] and the early Jewish church operated fully within the exclusive monotheism of Second Temple Judaism. It is equally clear, in the light of the sources available to us today, that a well-worn assumption entrenched since at least the 19th century must be jettisoned. It is almost axiomatic in Jewish and liberal Christian scholarship that the ‘god-man’ view of Jesus came into the church much later, under the corrupting influences of Hellenism. A common corollary is that this high Christology came into the Jesus movement through the Hellenized Pharisee, Saul of Tarsus. In other words, the apostle Paul, not Jesus, was the founder of Christianity as we know it.

Three points: 1) To the contrary, Hellenism cannot sustain the NT view of the incarnation – of a divine being or supernatural agent, yes, but of the incarnation of the One God, no; of a ‘god-man’, yes, but of ‘God-in-man’, no. 2) A reading of the (early) Synoptic gospels, through the lenses of the Hebraic first-century mind and milieu supports, not diminishes, the evidence for Yeshua’s own high self-awareness and Messianic identity. 3) The NT letters provide impressive evidence that the earliest (Jewish) church had the highest Christology. It is not decades or centuries later that these high views of the Messiah and the unity of Father-Son infiltrate the Church; they are voiced, in classic Jewish expression, at the earliest stratum of Church worship. The exalted view of Jesus as the Son of God, therefore, was an understanding and a tradition that the Jewish apostle to the Gentiles, Paul, drew upon but did not create.

When the first believers in Yeshua assembled as the church, their worship typically included “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.”^[29] Many of these hymn-like compositions and creedal-like confessions are preserved within the Pauline corpus and have been identified by textual scholars. Philippians 2.5-11 is perhaps the best-known example.^[30] Many of these date to the first two decades after the resurrection of Jesus, and they tell us much about the mindset of the early church regarding the divinity of Jesus.

While fully affirming the ehad of the Shema, the first-generation Jewish believers unequivocally experience and venerate the risen Lord Jesus as the Son of God. Almost programmatically they unite him

in their worship of Y/H/W/H, as inseparable from God and in unprecedented ways, as identified with him. In hymns they celebrate the work and person of Messiah; in prayers they address the Lord Jesus directly; they “call upon” the name of Yeshua as well as Y/H/W/H, including being baptized into his name; they “confess” that “Jesus is Lord”; and commemorate a covenant meal in his honor.^[31] These liturgical acts all go beyond the bounds of anything previously witnessed in Israel’s worship.

How do they explain theologically this devotion to a man and their veneration of him with God? They don’t – to the frustration of our western minds! These Jewish believers expressed their monotheism in the same manner Israel had done from the beginning – in their worship. Not abstractly with theological speculations, but with actions demonstrating loyalty, veneration and service. Not so much with propositional truths as with liturgical exclamations. For them the relationship of Jesus and God focused more on *identity* than *divinity*, and the truth was framed in textual associations more than theological affirmations. For example, scriptures that apply to Y/H/W/H are now, in the light of the resurrection, applied to the Lord Jesus. The exclusive prerogatives of Adonai, such as creation and kingship, are now extended to Jesus – not as some external, albeit divine agent, but as someone within the very identity and oneness of God himself. This is a crucial point. This veneration of Yeshua with and connected to Y/H/W/H is permissible *only if he in some way is within the ehad of God*. Otherwise such attributions of scriptures, functions, authority, power, and identity to him that apply exclusively to the God of Israel would violate the Shema’s monotheism.

If in any way Jesus as the Son is outside the sphere of God’s ehad – whether as a godly man ‘adopted’ by God and elevated to the highest place; or as a supernatural, ‘divine agent’, maybe even the first-born of all creation, come down from heaven as a man – in either case Yeshua the Son remains outside the ehad of God and compromises his uniqueness, exclusiveness and indivisible unity. Quite simply, within a Jewish frame of reference, the risen Lord Jesus can be worshipped with HASHEM only if in some ontological sense he operates within the oneness of God, i.e., is divine. Y/H/W/H shares his glory with no one; worship/service is reserved exclusively for him alone.

Only in this light can we fully appreciate – and account for – the first church co-opting one of the strongest statements of exclusive monotheism in all the Tanakh, Isaiah 45.23, and applying it verbatim (from the LXX) to Jesus in Philippians 2.10-11, an early hymn of exaltation. But note the concluding words, which are typically Jewish in their tension-yet-balance: “Jesus the Messiah is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Perhaps the most direct and dramatic illustration of the early church’s amplified monotheism is to be found in 1 Corinthians 8.4-6. First, Paul affirms the classic Jewish view by referencing the Shema: “We know that there is no God but one.” Then he enlarges that foundational truth by declaring, “Yet for us, there is but one God, the Father ... and one Lord, Jesus the Messiah ...” Here, the apostle takes the three key words from the Septuagintal rendering of Deuteronomy 6.4 – God (*Theos*), Lord (*Kyrios*), and One (*Eis*) – and applies “God” to the Father, “Lord” to the Son, and “One” to both! This NT magnification of the Shema is possible within the multiple dimensions of ehad, but permitted only if the Yeshua is *within* the sphere of Y/H/W/H’s unity-in-plurality.

When it comes to the *ah’dut* or unity of the ehad of God, we stand at the foothills of a mountain range of revelation. We can never ‘explain’ the inner reality of God’s essence, anymore than the infinite can be circumscribed within the finite. We can try, however, to ‘define’ it as rationally and faithfully as the witness of Scripture permits. A discerning study of the Church Fathers will be helpful in this regard.^[32] Attempts by some within the Jewish roots movement to reformulate the unity of the Godhead in less

'Hellenistic' and more 'Hebraic' categories can be problematic.^[33] Unwittingly they may recapitulate ancient heresies, just clothing them in Hebraic dress. In defense of the Shema they may be attracted to revived versions of Adoptionism, Modalism or even Arianism. But all these 'explanations' were rejected by the Church Fathers for good reasons – because each in its own way fails to do justice to the person of Jesus of Nazareth, as revealed in the Scriptures, and compromises the work of the cross.

In view of the uniqueness, the exclusiveness, and the unity of the ehad of Y/H/W/H declared in Israel's Shema – the Torah's supreme affirmation of ethical monotheism – and in the light of the astonishing life, atoning death, and Spirit-empowered resurrection of Yeshua, let us never settle for mere 'explanations'. Let us ask for wonder. And let us worship. With one voice and united hearts, let us join with the first Jewish church that confidently exclaimed, "Jesus the Messiah is Lord, to the glory of God the Father!"

^[1] This article is adapted from a four-part lecture series delivered at Christ Church, Jerusalem, in November, 2002, at the invitation of Shores Ministries and the Alexander College. Tapes of the lectures, "One God and One Lord – Considerations Regarding the Unity of the Godhead and the Deity of Jesus," are available from Christian Friends of Israel in Jerusalem or www.icstudies.com.

^[2] *Jesus* by David Flusser (Magness Press;1997), p. 118.

^[3] Three sections of scripture are incorporated into the *K'riat Sh'ma*: Deuteronomy 6.4-9; 11.13-21; and Numbers 15.37-41. In the Second Temple period, the Ten Words (Commandments) accompanied the recitation, and from the time of the Maccabees, benedictions preceded and followed it.

^[4] Four translations of this verse are possible from the Hebrew because of the implied but unexpressed verb, "is": 1) the LORD *is* our God, the LORD *is* one; 2) the LORD our God, the LORD *is* one; 3) the LORD our God *is* one LORD; 4) the LORD *is* our God, the LORD alone.

^[5] At least since the time of Arius in the 4th century, some would distinguish between the "divinity" of the Son (i.e., he is of a *similar* substance to the Father) and the "deity" of the Son (i.e., he is of the *same* substance as the Father). In this article, however, the more common English usage will apply – viz., that the two terms essentially are synonymous.

^[6] The four-letter proper name spoken to Moses in Exodus 3.15 – h/w/h/y– is read as *Adonai* in the Hebrew Scriptures, indicated by *LORD* (all caps) in English Bibles, spoken as *HASHEM* by contemporary religious Jews, and rendered as *Yahweh* in scholarly literature. I write it here as Y/H/W/H so as not to offend Jewish sensibilities, but at the same time to emphasize that it is a proper name with powerful implications, not merely a title, like "Lord".

^[7] Exodus 15.11

^[8] The Tetragrammaton (four letters) of Exodus 3.15 may be an abbreviated reference to the longer "eh'yeh asher eh'yeh" ("I AM WHO I AM") of 3.14. A better translation may be, "I WILL BE WHAT I WILL BE."

^[9] Isaiah 6.3; Revelation 4.8

^[10] Romans 1.20 provides a succinct definition of *Elohim*.

^[11] Exodus 33.19-23

^[12] In Hebrew, *avodah* is used with reference both to the *worship* of Y/H/W/H and to the priestly *service* rendered to him.

^[13] Deuteronomy 10.17

^[14] *Ibid.*

^[15] Not coincidentally, the seven occurrences of the "I am he" (*ani hu'*) declarations by Y/H/W/H in Isaiah – emphasizing exclusive monotheism – are paralleled in the seven "I am (he)" (*ego eimi*) declarations of Yeshua recorded in the Fourth Gospel.

^[16] Isaiah 43.10-11

^[17] Isaiah 45.5

^[18] Isaiah 43.21, 22, 23

[19] The respected Jewish scholar, Moshe Weinfeld, notes that one cannot prove monotheism from Deuteronomy 6.4 alone. It is a summons to worship Y/H/W/H exclusively. *Deuteronomy 1-11, Anchor Bible Commentary* (Doubleday; 1991), pp. 349-351.

[20] See Deuteronomy 6.4 in the Jewish Publication Society's *Tanakh*. The translation of *Adonai ehad* as "the LORD alone" has been followed by other more recent Jewish translations as well. A parallel use of *ehad* is found in Zechariah 14.9: "... there will be one LORD, and his name the only name" (NIV) – *Adonai ehad u'shmo ehad*.

[21] Cf. *BT Berachot 13a-14b*. In rabbinic thinking, when one says, with intention, Deuteronomy 6.4-9, one takes on the "yoke of the kingdom"; and 11.13-21, the "yoke of the commandments."

[22] Not until the Rambam (Moses Maimonides) in the Middle Ages was a systematic Jewish theology of ethical monotheism composed. In truth Judaism is not so much a theology as a "theonomy," based not on man's speculation about God, but upon God's revelation of himself and Israel's walk of covenant faithfulness to God's Law. It is not surprising, therefore, that practical issues of *halakhah*, not abstract speculations about metaphysics, characterized the orientation of Israel's ancient sages, including Yeshua.

[23] The way many Christians read the Hebrew Scriptures, one would think that there are two gods – the OT God of law and the NT God of love; the stern Judge, Jehovah, and the gracious Father, Abba, of Jesus Christ. This unbiblical dichotomy has influenced Christianity since the earliest centuries, especially under Church leaders like the Gnostic, Marcion. See *Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith* by Marvin R. Wilson (Eerdmans; 1989), pp. 108-110, for a discussion of "neo-Marcionism" in our churches today.

[24] They become *eitz ehad*, one stick. Ezekiel 37.17, 19

[25] Matthew 22:36, 38

[26] 1 John 4.8, 16

[27] E.g., John 17.3

[28] E.g., 1 Corinthians 8.4

[29] Ephesians 5.19; Colossians 3.16

[30] Other examples might include: Colossians 1.15-20 as a hymn; Romans 1.3-4 and 10.9-10 as creedal formulations; and Romans 8.15, Galatians 4.6, and 1 Corinthians 16.22 as fragments of early church prayers. Paul would have learned these while part of the church (for more than a decade) before being sent on apostolic mission to the Gentiles.

[31] For a discussion of the devotion to Jesus in the context of Jewish monotheism, see L.W. Hurtado's *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Eerdmans; 2003).

[32] *Heresies: Heresy and Orthodoxy in the History of the Church* by Harold O.J. Brown (Hendrickson; 1984) is a comprehensive but popular treatment of the subject

[33] The contrast between Hellenic vs. Hebraic thinking can be overdrawn, so that a useful distinction becomes a simplistic dichotomy. True, when Hellenism inappropriately intruded upon Jewish worship/service of the One and Only God it was to be resisted, even at the sake of one's own life if necessary – as with the Maccabees. But in diverse ways, the culture, life and thought of Israel were influenced positively and edified by Hellenism. See Lee I. Levine's *Judaism and Hellenism in Antiquity: Conflict or Confluence?* (University of Washington Press; 1998). The Sages concluded that it was good for Japheth to dwell in the tents of Shem – i.e., for Greek to take residence within a Semitic setting (cf. *BT Megilah 9a,b*). Many rabbinic rules for interpreting Scripture have antecedents in Greek logic, for example, and the Septuagint, for all its problems, was enormously important for Jewish life and thought in the ancient world, including the NT community.