



KINGDOM OF THE CULTS

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LESSON 6—Oneness Cult

The oneness or unitarian belief is a lesser known cult, but its tentacles extend deep into some popular, word of faith groups and churches.

UNITARIANS

Unitarians do not believe that God is a Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Three in One. Orthodox and Biblical Christianity embraces the trinitarian doctrine. Unitarians see Jesus and the Holy Spirit as expressions of God, but hold to a oneness theory. In other words, some of them reject the belief that Jesus is God, the second person. Unitarians come in different denominational forms.

The Jehovah Witnesses believe Jesus was created and in a sense a demi-god or inferior god. The Holy Spirit is simply an impersonal force. The unitarian concept is also promoted by some modernist or liberal theologians.

Some charismatics and Pentecostals also hold to the oneness heresy, known as modalism.

ARIUS OF ALEXANDRIA

In the formative centuries of Christianity the heretic Arius promoted the oneness or unitarian belief. The early church challenged and exposed the cult of Arius, but in recent years the concept has again revived.

TRINITY

The Scriptures make it overwhelmingly clear that God exists in three persons. Trinitarians don't believe in three separate Gods but rather God as a Divine being in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

THREE BUT ONE

An oft quoted verse is **Deuteronomy 6:4** "*Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one*" which they claim supports their belief of oneness. It's worth noting that the oneness referred to in Hebrew is "Echad" which is not an absolute unit but a compound unit.

The same Hebrew word "Echad" is used in Genesis 2:24 in reference to Adam and Eve becoming one in the unity of their relationship. If husband and wife are a unit then it should not be difficult to understand God as a Tri-unit.

FOR THIS REASON
a Man
WILL LEAVE HIS
FATHER AND MOTHER
AND BE UNITED TO
his Wife,
AND THEY WILL
BECOME ONE FLESH.

GENESIS 2:24

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Judaism considers this verse their confession of faith. The text is referred to as the “Shema” pronounced “shmah”. It is used in synagogues as a liturgy or statement of faith. The Shema is understood to emphasise the monotheistic belief of Judaism—One God.

However, the reference to God is “Elohim” which is plural. It gives impetus to **Genesis 1:26** “*And God said let us make man in our image, after our likeness.*” The “us” and “our” implies a plurality of persons within the Godhead.

ONENESS

The oneness doctrine states that there is one God, a singular divine spirit with no distinction of persons who manifests himself in many ways, including as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This stands in sharp contrast to the doctrine of three distinct and eternal persons posited by Trinitarian theology.

There are many theological errors that these “Oneness” religious groups embrace. They believe the Trinity doctrine is of pagan origin. Their belief in salvation is accompanied by works. And their practice of holiness borders on legalism.

Some teach the following:

1. Jesus is the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
2. The Father is not a distinct Person but a manifestation of Jesus.
3. The Holy Spirit is not a distinct Person but a manifestation of Jesus.
4. The Eternal Father in Isaiah 9:6 is interpreted as relational.
5. Many “Oneness” interpret Lord Jesus Christ as Father (Lord), Son (Jesus), and Christ (Holy Spirit).

When John wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit his First Epistle he stated

1 John 4:1-3 “*Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.*”

This was in reference to the oneness doctrine already taking root in the early church. John writes to expose Arianism (oneness doctrine). John goes on to state the following **1 John 1:1-3** “*That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.*”

Also consider **Gospel of John 1:1-4** “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.*”



The Apostle Paul continues with this train of thought in **Colossians 1:16-17** “*For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.*”

PLAYING WITH WORDS

The oneness group often ignore pertinent Bible texts and they play on words to mean what they want it to mean. Remember Peter’s warning:

2 Peter 2:1-3 “*But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves. Many will follow their depraved conduct and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. In their greed these teachers will exploit you with fabricated stories. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping.*”

Note that the NIV refers to “fabricated stories” in the KJV refers to it as “feigned words”. The word that is used for “fabricated or feigned” is the Greek word “plastos” from which we get the English word “plastic”. Words that can be twisted to mean anything you want them to mean. False teachers use our vocabulary but they do not use our dictionary. They refer to God and to Salvation but they do not mean what these words mean.

The immature and untaught believer hears these preachers, reads their books and thinks that these men and women are sent by God. We would be wise to study the Scriptures in order to expose the lies dressed up as truth.

FURTHER ONENESS TEACHINGS

1. An individual must be water baptised in the baptismal formula of Acts 2:38 (in Jesus’ name) to be saved.
2. ‘Oneness’ female members are not allowed to cut their hair based on 1Corinthians 11”6.
3. An individual must speak in tongues after water baptism to be assured that he is truly saved.
4. “Oneness” female members are forbidden to wear jewellery, make-up, and pants.
5. “Oneness” males must be clean-shaven sporting short hair.
6. They abhor medical treatment and medicine applying hyper faith in their belief.
7. They are King James Onlyist people and some popular TV preachers teach this heresy.

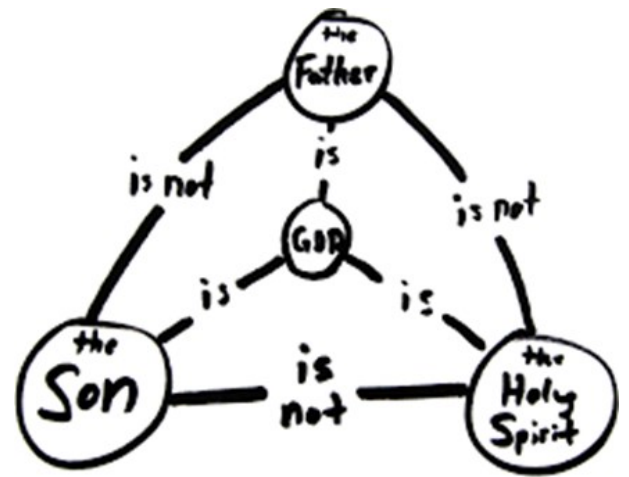
ONENESS IS NOT A BENIGN DOCTRINE

We would be awfully naïve to believe that these teachings are innocent and non-threatening. Oneness doctrine is a cult that undermines the true identity of Jesus our Lord as Saviour. It undermines the Trinity. It asserts that salvation is subject to water baptism in the name of Jesus, only. It also defies the Truth of Scripture and claims that unless one receives the baptism of the Spirit by speaking in tongues one cannot be saved (some Pentecostal groups teach this, however not all of them embrace this false teaching). Discernment is the operative word in terms of examining the **Kingdom of the Cults.**



The Trinity is undeniable and the distinctive personality of each, namely the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is cardinal.

Illustrations and metaphorical images and items are multiple as the human mind seeks clarity. I will not bore you with my many examples but the family analogy is one that may suffice. A family is one unit consisting of father, mother and children. One without the other is no longer a complete family. The diversity of the members in no way invalidates their unity. When I speak to one I speak to all. If I speak to a Jones family member I can say I have spoken to the Jones family. (In fact, I spoke to one member that represented the entire family).



Oneness is unity of two or more—not one in singular form.

When I receive a telephone call from a representative of Ford Motor Company I can say I received a call from Ford today. In a similar sense, Jesus was God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, in the flesh. He represented the Trinity. The following verses underscore this fact – **John 17:5** “*And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was,*” and **John 17:21-22** “*...that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one:*”

Consider **John 5:17-24** and answer the question—Why did the Jews and the Pharisees want to kill Jesus?

Sabellianism

Sabellianism is named for its founder Sabellius (fl. 2nd century). It is sometimes referred to as modalistic monarchianism. The father, son, and holy ghost are three modes, roles, or faces of a single person, God. This, of course, implies that Jesus Christ was purely divine, without humanness, and therefore could not truly have suffered or died.

The oneness doctrine is also called Sabellianism or Modalism.