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Faith Bible Church  
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<http://fbcweb.org/doctrines.html>

JEWISH APOLOGETICS (45)  
ANSWERING JEWISH OBJECTION #36  
(DDR #664)

**Objection #36: Jews don't believe in the Trinity. We believe in one God, not three.**

Brown's short response to this objection:

Just as Messianic Jews probably misunderstand some of the things you believe, I think you misunderstand some of the things we believe. We do not in any way believe in three gods. Our God is one, and his name is the Lord (or Yahweh, known to Orthodox Jews as HaShem [the name]). He revealed himself to us through his Son, the Messiah, who is the very image and reflection of God, and he touches us and speaks to us by his Spirit. These are deep, spiritual truths. Later theologians labeled this relationship the Trinity – God as a triune One. But the word *Trinity* is not found anywhere in the New Testament, and it may confuse issues for you.<sup>1</sup>

Brown does a good job in his extended section on this objection. He demonstrates that the New Testament concept of a multiplicity and diversity within the one Godhead is perfectly compatible with the multiplicity and diversity within the one God of the Old Testament: the very name of God in the Old Testament is a plural noun (*Elohim*), the “one” of Deut. 6:4 (‘*echad*’) refers to compound or complex unity instead of absolute unity, and there are passages which *explicitly* speak of God as “we”:

**Genesis 1:26** Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image,

**Genesis 11:6-7** And the LORD said, "Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language. And this is what they began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them. <sup>7</sup> "Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech."

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<sup>1</sup>Michael L. Brown, *Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus: General and Historical Objections—Volume 2*, (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2000), 3-14. In his book, Brown lists the objection and then gives a short response that is followed by a more developed response. This DDR series, for the most part, tracks the objection and his *short* response, after which you will find my comments. I highly recommend his book if you are interested in his longer responses (there is far too much material to include in the DDRs).

In regard to the famous Shema which is the bedrock of orthodox Judaism—  
Deuteronomy 6:4 "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! (NASB)—it is noteworthy that the New Jewish Publication Society translates the verse, "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD **alone.**" The emphasis is that the LORD alone is God in contrast to the Canaanite gods or other gods. It was never designed to be understood as absolute unity. The term used for "alone" or "one" here is *'echad* which is used of a complex unity. It is used of Adam and Eve being "one" as well as the one nation of Israel, which of course has many within that one entity. There is a word in Hebrew for absolute unity (*yachid*) and it is not used of God. In point of fact, there is not one single verse anywhere in the Bible that says that God is absolute unity. Not even one! Not even a little one!

**Exegetical Point on Jehovah Witness's (another group which holds to God as absolute unity) and John 1:1.** The next time a Jehovah's Witness tries to tell you that John 1:1c should be translated "and the Word was a god," maybe you can inform him that there are only 4 places in the New Testament where you have this kind of construction (anarthrous predicate "God" that precedes the verb): Luke 20:38; Jn 1:1; 8:54; Philip 2:13. In the other three cases the Watchtower translates it as "God" (not a "god"). This is just one glaring JW inconsistency. Of course, when you start talking to them about Greek they might smile due to what they think they know, but most will not even have a clue what you are talking about if you break this down for them. The "scholars" they use are not recognized by real scholars in the field. Further, I know for a fact that the recognized Greek authority (Harner) they do cite for John 1:1 does not agree with them. They cite only part of what he said. They did a "great job" omitting the context before and after what they quote. The one recognized Greek authority they use for John 1:1 disagrees with them, but they did not include that part. If you point this out to them and they "get it," watch their eyes as their whole worldview collapses before them. Watch out! They might get very angry.

On the Glory Road,

*Pastor Don*