"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one." (Deuteronomy 6:4).

Both Judaism and Christianity affirm one God (as opposed to many Gods).

Judaism, on the basis of its scripture (the Old Testament), sees a simple oneness in God.

Christianity, on the basis of its scripture (the Old & New Testaments), sees a complex oneness.

The Trinity in the NEW TESTAMENT

Undeniably, the term **'Trinity'** is not in either Testaments of the Bible. The claim of this brochure however is that the Trinity is clearly taught in the NT, and alluded to in the OT.

Matthew 28:18 in the NT for example says, **"And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit'".** 3 persons, 1 name. 3 persons, 1 God.

In 2 Corinthians 13:14 Paul gives a Trinitarian blessing: **"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."** In the NT, God the Father is often simply spoke of as 'God', and Jesus is often referred to as 'Lord'. Given that 'Lord' is often the title given to God in the OT, there is being indicated here an equivalence between God (the Father) and Jesus Christ (the Son). Note also that the 3 person blessing in itself points to an equivalence between the 3. As much as we are being blessed by the 'love of God', we are also being blessed by the 'grace of our Lord Jesus Christ', and the 'fellowship of the Holy Spirit'.

In Romans 8:1-11 the word interplay between God, the Spirit, and Christ all points to their oneness. The Spirit of God who dwells in believers is the Spirit of Christ. Romans 8:9,10a says, **"You however are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you …"**

As a final example for the purposes of this brochure, The NT states that:

- God raised Jesus from the dead - Acts 2:24
- Jesus raised himself from the dead – John 2:19
- The Spirit raised Jesus from the dead – Romans 8:11

Far from being a contradiction, these verses again reveal that in essence the Father is the Son, is the Holy Spirit - one God, but 3 persons.

The clear witness of the New Testament is that God is a complex unity.

The Trinity in the OLD TESTAMENT

The Old Testament, while not as clear as the NT, nevertheless hints at God's complex oneness in a multitude of ways. For example, it is intriguing to note that **a word often used for God in the OT is 'Elohim', which is a plural noun technically meaning 'Gods'.** Sometimes when speaking of the false gods of other nations the OT will use this plural term, but mostly it is used to speak of the one true God.

Could this plural form of the word 'God' point to the plurality of persons in the Godhead?

Most of the time when God speaks of himself in the OT he uses singular pronouns (eg Hosea 11:9), but at times he uses **plural pronouns**.

- **"Then God said, 'Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness'"** Genesis 1:26.
- **"And the LORD God said, 'The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil'"** Genesis 3:22.
- In Isaiah 6:8, God refers to Himself in both singular and plural terms: **"Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?'".**

It has been argued in Christian circles that the use of plural pronouns could be a royal 'we', or that God is addressing his 'divine council' (angelic beings in the heavenly realm). Perhaps though, the plural pronouns are hinting at the plurality of persons in the Godhead.

Intriguing in the OT are stories where people encounter the **'Angel of the Lord'** who speaks for God, but then really speaks and acts as God. For example in Genesis 16:10 the 'Angel of the Lord' says to Hagar, **"I will increase your descendants so much that they will be too numerous to count."** Ie, instead of the angel (the word means messenger) saying, 'God will increase your descendants', he says, 'I will increase.'

In the story where God first calls then stops Abraham from sacrificing his son, the 'Angel of the

Lord' says in Genesis 22:12, **"Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son".**

There are various OT passages where those who see the 'Angel of the Lord' fear for their lives because they had 'seen the Lord'. See for example Exodus 3 where the Angel of the Lord appeared to Moses in the burning bush (v2), but Moses hid his face, **'for he was afraid to look at God'** (v6). Surely this is no mere angel! It is not unreasonable to suggest that the 'Angel of the Lord' is the pre-incarnate Son of God, who in the NT is presented as The Word of God made flesh (see John 1).

In addition to the 'Angel of the Lord' stories the OT also brings into view a **Messiah** figure, who on the one hand appears to be separate from God, but on the other hand is divine like.

For example, in Daniel 7 **'One like a son of man'** comes with the **'clouds of heaven'** before the **'Ancient of Days'** (God), and is given **'dominion and glory and a kingdom'** where all nations and peoples will serve him forever. Daniel 7:13,14.

In Psalm 110:1 King David says, **"The LORD** (Hebrew - 'Yahweh') **said to my Lord** (Hebrew – Adonai), **'Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool'"**.

In Psalm 45:6–7 King David intriguingly speaks of God elevating and anointing God. **"Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom. You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy."**

Stories and references in the OT to the Angel of the Lord, and to a Messianic figure, point to the second person of the Trinity. The OT points also to the third person of the Trinity as it speaks about the **Spirit of God**. In the very first chapter of the OT we are told that the **'Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters'** Genesis 1:2.

Nehemiah, in his OT book speaks to God saying:

- **'You gave your good Spirit to instruct them'** Nehemiah 9:20
- **'Many years you bore with them and warned them by your Spirit through your prophets.'** Nehemiah 9:30

In Isaiah 48:16b we are given a striking glimpse of all 3 persons of the one God. **'And now the Lord God has sent me, and his Spirit.'** 'The Lord GOD' (the Father) has sent 'me' (the Messiah) and 'His Spirit' (the Holy Spirit).

From the standpoint of the clear testimony of the New Testament, Christians look back into the Old Testament, and see indications even there, of the truth that God is a complex unity, a unity of 3 persons, **Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

The **'Trinity'** has never simply been an abstract concept. Christians rejoice that God the Father sent God the Son into this broken rebellious world, to die for our sin, with the Father and the risen & glorified Son then sending God the Holy Spirit to bring us into the benefits of the Son's death on the cross, namely forgiveness of sin and inclusion into the joyous & glorious life God has in himself.

Is the Trinity in both the Old & New Testament?