

Page 1: The Shema in Hebrew

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

Hebrew Text: שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד

Pronunciation: Shema Yisrael, YHWH Eloheinu, YHWH echad

Word-by-Word Meaning:

- Shema (שמע) = Hear / Listen
- Yisrael (ישראל) = Israel
- YHWH (יהוה) = The Divine Name, Yahweh
- Eloheinu (אלהינו) = Our God
- Echad (אחד) = One

Grammar:

- YHWH is a proper name, not a title.
- Echad is a singular masculine adjective meaning "one."
- No suggestion of compound unity is present in this context.

Page 2: Understanding “Echad”

Echad (אחד) — Pronounced "eh-KHAD"

Echad in Hebrew simply means "one" in number:

- Genesis 1:5: "one day" → yom echad
- Exodus 12:49: "one law" → torah echad

No grammatical or contextual reason exists in Deuteronomy 6:4 to interpret echad as anything other than numeric singularity.

This is foundational to **Biblical Unitarianism**, which affirms:

- God (YHWH) is a single divine being
- God is not a compound or multi-personal unity

Page 3: The Septuagint and Greek Terms

When the Hebrew Bible was translated into Greek (the Septuagint or LXX), the name **YHWH** was typically replaced with the Greek title **Kyrios (Lord)**:

Septuagint Deuteronomy 6:4: "Ákoue Israēl, kurios ho theos hēmōn, kurios heis estin."

- Kyrios (κύριος) = Lord
- Heis (εἷς) = One

But “Kyrios” is not a name like YHWH. It is a **title**, and could refer to anyone from a master to God.

This means that when the NT calls Jesus "Kyrios," it doesn't automatically mean he is YHWH.

Important Note: There are **two different Greek words** commonly translated as "lord":

- **Kyrios (κύριος):** a general title meaning master or lord. Used for Jesus in the NT.
- **Ho Kyrios (ὁ Κύριος):** when used absolutely with the definite article, it often refers to **YHWH** in the Septuagint.

Biblical Greek scholars note:

- The **absolute use** of "ho Kyrios" (The Lord) as a stand-in for YHWH is **never used for Jesus** in the same way in the NT.
- This distinction is respected even in the way NT writers quote the OT: Jesus is exalted *by* the Lord God, not confused with Him.

Page 4: Greek Use of Kyrios for Jesus

Greek Word: Kyrios (Lord)

- Pronounced: **KOO-ree-oss**
- Meaning: Lord, Master, Sir
- Used for:
 - Human masters (e.g., slave owners)
 - God (as a title)
 - Jesus (after resurrection)

Key verse: Acts 2:36 (NIV)

"God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah."

This shows that Jesus was **made Lord**, not that he is YHWH.

Unitarian Fact:

- Jesus is Lord **because** God exalted him, not because he is the LORD (YHWH) of the Shema.

Page 5: Key Distinctions

Aspect	Hebrew Bible (OT)	New Testament (NT)
Divine Name	YHWH (Yahweh)	Not used in Greek NT
Title	Adonai / Adon	Kyrios (Lord)
Jesus Called	Not called YHWH	Called Kyrios
Nature of Title	Name (identity)	Title (role, position)
Unique Greek Use	Ho Kyrios for YHWH	Never used of Jesus

Biblical Unitarians recognize:

- **The LORD (YHWH) is one** → the only true God (John 17:3)
- **Jesus is Lord** → exalted human Messiah appointed by YHWH

Page 6: Summary

1. **Deuteronomy 6:4** clearly uses **YHWH**, the personal name of God.
2. The Hebrew word **echad** means one — singular, not complex.
3. In the Greek NT, Jesus is called **Kyrios**, a **title**, not a name.
4. Being "Lord" doesn't mean being YHWH — Jesus is **made Lord** (Acts 2:36).
5. The difference between **YHWH (name)** and **Kyrios (title)** is essential.
6. **The absolute form "ho Kyrios" used for YHWH is never used for Jesus.**

Unitarian understanding:

There is **one God** who is **YHWH**, and one Lord, **Jesus**, the Messiah (1 Corinthians 8:6)