

## **The One God, Part 1**

In general, Christianity confesses its belief in one God and some in Jesus Christ's deity; however, since the days of the apostles to our current day many modified that belief, resulting in debate and divisions within. Deuteronomy 6:4 states, "Hear O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD." This passage of Scripture declares that there is no other God but one. It also testifies to unity of a diverse, progressive revelation that finds its completion in Him Who is called the LORD.

### **There Is One God, And He Is One**

What does the Scripture mean when it states there is one God? Why does it say He is one? God is a Spirit. He is invisible and revealed Himself in His creation of all things and by His Word, the Bible. Deuteronomy 6:4 declares that the God of Israel is the true God to the exclusion of all others. Mark 12:28-34 endorses this interpretation. A scribe asked Jesus, "Which is the first commandment of all?" Jesus responds, "The first of all the commandments is, Hear O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord" (12:29b). Then, the scribe followed with, "Well Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he" (v. 32). Finally, the discourse concluded: "And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him Thou art not far from the kingdom of God" (v. 34b). Jesus endorsed this man's understanding of Deut 6:4, also known by the Jews as the Shema, the Jewish confession of faith. Jesus told the scribe with his understanding he was not far from the kingdom of God. Now what understanding would have gotten him in the kingdom? Jesus said in another passage, John 8:24, "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." Had the scribe recognized Jesus as the God of Deut 6:4 he could have come to the kingdom in that point of history. The Shema recognizes no other God but Jehovah.

### **Old and New Testament Unity of Meaning**

Other Old Testament authors declared the same message. In Isa 45:5, it says "I am LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me." Further, two passages in Jer 10 speak to this message, "Forasmuch as there is none like unto thee, O LORD; thou art great, and thy name is great in might" (10:6); and "But the LORD is the true God, he is the living God, and an

everlasting king” (v. 10c). The Old Testament gives the belief in one God, Who is sovereign to all that exists. We are to love Him with loyalty to the utmost.

The New Testament reiterates the same thought. There is one God and He is one. Jesus and the authors of the New Testament established profound thoughts with regards to God’s oneness. These authors acknowledged mankind’s belief in more than one God, but they stated the gods of humanity are not gods by nature. Their theologies cannot match the theology of what the Bible says about God. Galatians 4:8 says, “Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are not gods.” When the New Testament authors said there is one God, they addressed Him as Father because He is the Creator. Jesus said in John 17:3, “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee (The Father) the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom thou has sent.” It is the Father who called the only True God. Paul in 1 Cor 8:6a says, “But to us there is but one God, the Father.” The Scriptures see the one God as Father and this one God seeks true worshipers of Himself. The church of the Book of Acts retains the monotheistic belief of the Old Testament. There is no hint of radically changing this truth in the New Testament writings. Retaining the Old Testament view of God’s oneness was the early church’s (of the Book of Acts) way of safeguarding itself from idolatry and error. It is the same safeguard for us today.

## Closing

Finally, the oneness of God is the biblical truth that the God of the Bible is the only True God. This excludes the ideologies declared by men to be the True God. He has no distinction of persons in His nature. Scripture addresses Him as the Father because He is Creator of all; however, He has revealed Himself diversely and progressively throughout Scripture to conclude His revelation in the person of His Son, Jesus Christ. This truth keeps us from error. God desires to make Himself known to all, but only those who respond to His call and seek Him will find.

## **One God, Part 2: The Incarnation**

Revelations 11:15 enlightens the thought of God's oneness begun in the previous article, the One God: And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.”

### **The One God**

The Jewish confession of faith called the Shema, found in Deut 6:4, declares God as the one God to the exclusion of all others that are called God. This verse declares that God is one. The Hebrew echad showed a numerical oneness, indicating unity of all components that complete the total picture (Brown, Driver, & Briggs, 2010). God is God alone; and He has revealed Himself in diverse ways throughout Scripture by different names, titles, covenants and visions. This diversity defines His identity, character, purpose, will and power, but one must understand that this diversity finds its ultimate unity in one person, Jesus Christ the Son of God.

Revelations 11:15c, announces “the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever.” It is our Lord and His Christ who will rule the nations here on earth for a thousand years. Now, this verse calls our Lord and His Christ a he and not they. It is not a unity of plural persons in the Godhead addressed here but the unity of the incarnation. The word he from 11:15, is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the union of the Lord God Almighty and His Anointed in one human person. The Apostle John shows in John 1:1, 14 that, “the Word was God” and that “the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.” He also clarifies that the Word made flesh is called the Son of God. Scholars describe this uniting of God and man in one person as the incarnation. The word incarnation by definition refers to the act by which God became man. John 1:14 and Rom 1:3 confirm this meaning. The distinction is clear. The Word was God. The flesh is the Son of God begotten from the human ancestry of King David. John further enlightens the reader that he and the other disciples beheld Christ's glory in His humanity, and His glory was full of grace and truth. The Old Testament prophets and Israelites saw the glory of God in diverse forms, but God did not fully reveal His glory to them until the birth of His Son (1:14). The glory of God revealed in the person of Jesus Christ is God’s truth for us today. Believers must seek to know and understand God in the context of the incarnation and

not in the context of three persons. The knowledge of the Son of God is essential to bringing the church to the unity of the faith

## Two Truths

Revelations 11:15 demonstrates two truths. One truth shows the union of the deity and humanity of Jesus Christ, declaring Jesus as the Lord our God and God's anointed King. The incarnation gives truth that Jesus is the one God. Do not allow this truth to obscure the second truth--the relationship that exists between God and Christ. From the perspective of His deity one sees Jesus as the Sovereign God, the Creator and Lord manifested in flesh. From the standpoint of Jesus' humanity, one sees Him as called and anointed by God to fulfill all that is written of Christ in both the Old and New Testaments. When the Son of God was revealed in the fulness of time, He was revealed as a man made of human lineage who learned obedience to fulfill the scriptures. This explains Christ's prayer life, His compassion for the oppressed, His statements of submission to God, His sufferings and His death and resurrection. He grew in His relationships with God and man. These statements and accounts are answered in the context of the scriptures that address them, but never to the denial of Jesus as the one God. Jesus always spoke as a human servant under the anointing of the Spirit of God, but His anointing revealed Him to be God by the things He both said and did.

Paron (2012) in her writing about the oneness of God, makes an important observation about the Word dwelling among us (1:14):

Some scholars suggest that the Gospel of John specifically shows an ancient form of biography of Whom the subject is Jesus. Indeed this Gospel chronicles the earthly ministry of the "Word," according to the recurrent theme of following (Greek: ἀκολουθεῖω) Jesus to where He dwelled among the people in fulfillment of the law. Through the "Word," Jesus, comes grace and truth" (1:17). John states in the opening verse that "the Word was God" and the "Word was with God. Jesus parallels this statement in John 14:10 with "I am in my Father, and my Father is in me...I speak not of myself, but the Father that dwelleth within me"

Though called of God, Jesus was not speaking of Himself as a servant when He made the great I AM declarations of John's Gospel. He was speaking of the Father in Him. Servants do not declare their greatness only their masters. For Jesus to speak of the Father by declaring who He is demonstrated His identity as the Father though He were a servant here on earth. The I AM

statements of Christ in the Book of John identify God in the person of Jesus Christ. The fulfillment of the Law and prophets required a human called of God and obedient to the will of God (2 Cor 15:21). The incarnation and trials of life made this possible in Jesus Christ. His obedience brought about the redemption of man and restoration of God's creation.

### **Covenant Blessings Ordained in Christ**

God is called in Eph 1:3, “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” This statement speaks to the covenant God made with both Abraham and His descendant Son after the flesh, Christ. It also speaks to the literal begetting of the Son of God by the Spirit of God in both birth and resurrection (Luke 1:34-35; Acts 13:33). Each of the covenants of Scripture ordains blessing and fulfillment to diverse peoples. Sin hindered humankind's complete partaking of these covenants until the death of Jesus Christ dealt with sin and made the fulfillment of God's covenants possible and accessible to humanity by faith. The covenant blessings God ordained in Christ would be given to men and women of all races who are in Christ or united to Him by baptism into His name and the infilling of His Spirit (Acts 2:38; 1 Cor 15:22). Christ in His humanity is the heir of all the covenants of Scripture for the human race. In Him, believers partake of all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ revealed Himself in the person of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ...Revealed Himself to make covenant with the elect through the blood of Christ's death and resurrection...Revealed Himself in the unity of God's fulness.

### **Understanding the Incarnation**

Finally, understanding the incarnation and recognizing the relationship between God and His Son in this context brings about a more cohesive understanding to the Word of God. It allows believers to understand the relationship of Christianity's teaching to Judaism, as well as establishes believers in the present truth of God's Word. Many incorrect statements have been made and some truthful statements taken to the extreme have led to incorrect thinking. If the Bible teaches that Jesus is the Father, does one say that Jesus prayed to Himself, or that the second person of the Godhead prayed to the first person? In the language of the Scripture, Jesus “prayed to God” and “prayed to the Father” (Luke 6:12; John 14:15). It is best to say it as the Scripture states it, while also recognizing that yes, Jesus is our Father. According to Heb 5:7, Jesus prayed in the “days of his flesh to him (God) who was able to save him from death.” In the same book, the author goes

on to say that the Son of God is addressed as both God and God's Anointed (1:8-9). The expressions of Father, Son and Holy Ghost pertain to the person of Jesus Christ (2 Cor 4:6). These designations also give a biblical knowledge of God in relationship with His Son and all New Testament believers in Christ. The union of deity and humanity in the person of Christ allows a human and divine interaction between the Father and the Son. This same thought exists with Christ and the Holy Ghost. In light of this understanding, the scriptures return one to the original premise that there is no separate knowledge of God apart from Jesus Christ.

### **Closing**

I will end this writing with the words of the great apostle, Paul. “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Col 2:8-9).

