

2-2018

God is One

Harold Willmington

Liberty University, hwillmington@liberty.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/three_one



Part of the [Biblical Studies Commons](#), [Christianity Commons](#), and the [Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Willmington, Harold, "God is One" (2018). *The Three-in-One File*. 31.

https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/three_one/31

This God Is is brought to you for free and open access by the Theological Studies at Scholars Crossing. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Three-in-One File by an authorized administrator of Scholars Crossing. For more information, please contact scholarlycommunications@liberty.edu.

GOD IS ONE

- It was during the month of April in year 1405 B.C. The place was on a plain just east of the River Jordan. The speaker was Moses and his work was addressed to a younger generation of Israelite men and women.

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one” (Deut. 6:4).

- Thus, in one short but sublime sentence, the great lawgiver aptly summarized both his God and their God. This profound truth, as opposed to polytheism and pantheism, is declared by both Old Testament and New Testament writers. In a very real sense, Moses’ statement at that time was nothing less than monotheism in its purest form! However, unlike the monotheism of Islam or Judaism, it is totally different. To explain: In the biblical concept of monotheism there exists three divine Persons, namely, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who have always been and always will be perfectly and inseparably united to form one great, grand, and glorious Godhead! In fact, when Jesus was asked which, in his opinion, was the greatest of the 613 Old Testament commandments, he replied:

“Jesus answered, The most important is, Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these” (Mark 12:29-31).

- Key biblical passages stressing this oneness of God would include:

“ . . . that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD is God; there is no other” (1 Kings 8:60).

“Do not fear, nor be afraid; have I not told you from that time, and declared it? You are My witnesses. Is there a God besides Me? Indeed there is no other Rock; I know not one” (Isa. 44:8).

“I am the LORD, and there is no other; There is no God besides Me. I will gird you, though you have not known Me, that they may know from the rising of the sun to its setting that there is none besides Me. I am the LORD, and there is no other” (Isa. 45:5, 6).

“Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me” (Isa. 46:9).

“And the LORD shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be— ‘The LORD is one’ and His name one” (Zech. 14:9).

“Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one. For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords), yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live” (1 Cor. 8:4-6).

“And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all” (1 Cor. 12:6).

“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Eph. 4:4, 5).

“For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 2:5).

- Thus, biblical monotheism says there are three Persons in one nature, or, in one essence. The *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* has this helpful note:

By saying God has one essence and three persons it is meant he has one “what” and three “whos.” The three whos (persons) each share the same what (essence). So God is a unity of essence with a plurality of persons. Each person is different, yet they share a common nature. (p. 732)

- A partial (and only a partial) human illustration may be seen by the usage of *echad* (Hebrew word for One) in an Old Testament passage:

“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh” (Gen. 2:24).

To explain: Consider a question from some Jewish leaders to Jesus and His answer:

A. Their question

“And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, is it lawful to divorce one’s wife for any cause?” (Matt. 19:3).

B. His answer

“He answered, Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate” (Matt. 19:4-6).

So then, through *echad*, the two Persons (husband and wife) can be considered as one flesh in a relative sense, just as the three persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) must be viewed as one Godhead in an absolute sense!

However, it must be understood that the eternal, perfect, unchanging cooperation and unity existing between the three divine Persons can never even remotely be achieved by any two married human beings!

Frankly, I’m already now at the deep end of the theological swimming pool, standing on my tiptoes, attempting to keep my nose out of the water, and we haven’t even begun to probe into the mysteries of our fourth consideration regarding God – the TRINITY ITSELF! Perhaps a pair of water wings would prove to be a wise investment! So, gentle reader, if you can identify with my sad predicament, take comfort, as I have, by the reassuring words of David, Jesus, and Paul:

- David

“The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple... The Lord preserves the simple; when I was brought low, he saved me... The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple” (Psa. 19:7; 115:6; 119:130).

- Jesus

“At that time Jesus declared, I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children” (Matt. 11:25).

- Paul

“For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom and our righteousness and sanctification and redemption. Therefore, as it is written, Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord” (1 Cor. 1:26-31).

- Two hymns, both composed by Isaac Watts, celebrate the oneness of this glorious God:

I Sing the Mighty Power of God

*I sing the mighty pow’r of God, that made the mountains rise,
That spread the flowing seas abroad, and built the lofty skies.*

*I sing the wisdom that ordained the sun to rule the day;
The moon shines full at His command, and all the stars obey.*

*I sing the goodness of the Lord, who filled the earth with food,
Who formed the creatures through the Word, and then pronounced them good.*

*Lord, how Thy wonders are displayed, where’er I turn my eye,
If I survey the ground I tread, or gaze upon the sky.*

*There’s not a plant or flow’r below, but makes Thy glories known,
And clouds arise, and tempests blow, by order from Thy throne;*

*While all that borrows life from Thee is ever in Thy care;
And everywhere that we can be, Thou, God, art present there.*

O God, Our Help in Ages Past

*O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home.*

*Under the shadow of Thy throne
Thy saints have dwelt secure;
Sufficient is Thine arm alone,
And our defense is sure.*

*Before the hills in order stood,
Or earth received her frame,
From everlasting Thou art God,
To endless years the same.*

*Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
Bears all its sons away;
They fly, forgotten, as a dream
Dies at the op'ning day.*

*O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Be Thou our guard while troubles last,
And our eternal home.*