

## KEY QUESTIONS

# Is GOD One or Three?

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### Missionary at Large

There are many opinions about God.  
You may have heard:

“There is one God.”

*or*

“There are three separate Gods.”

*or*

“There is one God who appears in three  
different forms.

*or*

“There are three cooperating Persons who  
together are God.”

### HOW TO FIND THE TRUTH

The only way we can know the truth about God is to search the Bible. Its very first verse, *Genesis 1:1*, says: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

The Hebrew word used here for “God” is *elohim* — a plural form. In Hebrew, every noun has three numerical forms:

- singular--used for one;
- dual--used for two of anything; and
- plural--used for three or more.

In *Genesis 1:26* we read: “And God said, ‘Let us make man in our own image.’ God called Himself “us”. In the original Hebrew, both “God” and “us” are in the plural form. The verb “make” [*bara*], however, is singular.

Consider *Deuteronomy 6:4*, which says “the Lord our God is one God.” “Lord” and “is” are singular, but “God” is plural in the Hebrew. Jesus quotes this verse (see *Mark 12:29*) as the first of all commandments.

### IS “ONE” ALWAYS SINGLE?

In Hebrew, *yacheed* means “the only”, and is **never ever** used of God! *Deuteronomy 6:4* and other verses which say God is “one” use *echad*, which means a “compound unity”— that is, “several or many acting as one”, so “One” does not always mean “single.”

- *Genesis 2:24* says of a husband and wife: “And the two shall be one flesh.”
- *1 Corinthians 3:6-8* says: “He that planteth and he that watereth [two different workers] are one.”
- In *John 17:22-23*, Jesus prays to the Father that His followers “may be one, even as we [God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one.”

### DIFFERENT OR DISTINCT

The three Persons of the Godhead—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit—are distinct and separate, although they act cooperatively.

*Matthew 3:1 6-17* states, “And Jesus, when He was baptized...saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: And, lo, a voice from Heaven saying, This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased.” Notice that there are three separate personages acting distinctly, yet cooperatively. The Father in Heaven says of Jesus, Who is on earth, “This is My beloved Son.” The Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove, descends from heaven to rest upon Jesus. There is no honest way we can force these three to be the same, yet the Bible refers to each of them as God. [See *Romans 1:7*, *Hebrews 1:8*, and *Acts 5:3-4*.]

In *Matthew 28:19*, Jesus commissions His followers to baptize disciples with the total expression: “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” Notice that “name” is singular. The three separate Persons are one, and that One is *three in one*.

At the Transfiguration, the Father speaks out of the cloud, saying of Jesus: "...this is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him." (*Matthew 17:5*) Jesus is obviously not talking to Himself! He was on the mountain while the Father's voice came out of the cloud—separate Persons but one God.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed to the Father in Heaven, "Not as I will, but as thou wilt." (*Matthew 26:39*) He was **not just talking to Himself!**

On the cross, Jesus prayed to God the Father in Heaven: "Father, forgive them...." His dying words were: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." (*Luke 23:46*)

Jesus spoke of the Holy Spirit in *John 14:26*: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things...." Notice that there are **three distinct, separate Persons acting as one God**. Jesus is on earth, saying that the Father in Heaven will send the Holy Ghost. Jesus and the Comforter--the Holy Ghost (or Holy Spirit)--are not identical.

In *John 16:13-14*, Jesus says that "when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you...He shall glorify me...." Obviously Jesus does not glorify Himself.

Of the numerous other passages that confirm the Biblical truth that God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit compose one God is *2 Corinthians 13:14*. This prayer of Paul is not only his testimony of the cooperation and three distinct personalities of God, it is also my prayer for you:

*"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all." Amen.*

## DO YOU KNOW GOD?

How can you know *God personally*? Every person's sinful, selfish rebelliousness separates him or her from God. Therefore it is vitally important that each of us must be sorry for our wrongdoing, ask Jesus to forgive us, and to believe that He does!

Consider the following verses that show how each of us comes to know God:

- "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." *Romans 3:23* "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are as filthy rags...." *Isaiah 64:6*

- "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." *I John 1:9* "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." *Romans 10:9-10*

- "For God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved." *John 3:16-17*

Do you know to "believe on Jesus" means to admit that Jesus is **God**, and to put your trust totally in Him? *Acts 16:31* assures us: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved...."

### WHAT YOU DO:

- Agree with God about your wrongdoing and that you need to change. *I John 1:9*
- Believe that Jesus Christ is your Lord and risen Saviour. *Romans 10:9*
- Receive Jesus Christ into your life. *John 1:12*

All of this you do on the authority of God's Word—the Bible. YOU do these things because you take God at His Word.

### WHAT GOD DOES:

- Jesus Christ becomes your personal Saviour and Lord. *John 3:16*
- Jesus Christ forgives your sins as He said He would in His Word. *I John 1:9*
- You are now His child. *John 1:12*
- You are now a new person. *II Cor. 5:17*
- You now have the Holy Spirit in-dwelling or living inside you. *John 14:1 6-1 7*
- You now have eternal life. *I John 5:12*

All of this God does for you because you take Him as His word! You believe God means what He said!

### WHAT YOU DO AS A FOLLOWER OF JESUS:

1. Read the Bible daily. *Acts 20:32, I Tim. 2:15*
2. Talk to God (pray) every day. *Heb. 4:16, John 16:24*
3. Obey the Bible's teaching. *John 14:23*
4. Tell others about Jesus. *Romans 10:9*