

7. Is there only one God?

There is only one God. "The LORD our God, the LORD is one." (Deuteronomy 6:4) He is the only true and living God. "But the LORD is the true God; he is the living God and the everlasting King. At his wrath the earth quakes and the nations cannot endure his indignation." (Jeremiah 10:10) God says of himself, "before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me." (Isaiah 43:10) "I am the LORD that is my name; and my glory I will not give to another." (Isaiah 42:8) God shares his glory with no one but himself. His subsistence is found in and of himself. He is infinite in being and completely perfect. There are many false gods and idols, yet God has revealed that he is one God. "There is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist." (1 Corinthians 8:6)

The Scriptures reveal that God is one God who exists in three persons. For example, Christian baptism is to be "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (Matthew 28:19) The Father and Son and Spirit are one God, yet the Son is not the Father, nor the Spirit the Son, but they are distinguished by how they relate one to another. The Father is called "God the Father" (Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:3). Yet the Father cannot be seen as he is the "one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all." (Ephesians 4:6; John 1:18) The Father relates to the Son and Spirit by being over them in authority as he sends and commands them to do His will (Matthew 26:39; 1 John 4:14; John 5:19; John 14:26). The Father is also the one who chose those who would be saved (Ephesians 1:3-4). Jesus is called God (John 1:1, 18, 20:28; Philippians 2:6; Titus 2:13; Romans 9:5; Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 1:8). Yet he is distinguished as the Son, not as the Father. The Son is the one who became man as the Messiah to reveal God his Father (John 1:1, 14-18, 14:9-10). The Son relates to the Father by loving and obeying Him (Matthew 26:39; John 5:19). This obedience glorifies the Father (Philippians 2:6-11). The Son shed his blood on the cross to redeem sinners (Ephesians 1:7). The Holy Spirit is called God (Acts 5:3-4). The Holy Spirit relates to the Father and the Son by being sent by the Father in the name of the Son to bring glory to the Son (John 14:26, 16:13-14). The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin and seals those who believe (John 16:7-11; Ephesians 1:13-14). Thus, Scripture has revealed how the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one God, yet can be distinguished by how they relate to one another within the Godhead.

God himself is love (1 John 4:16). His love is expressed between Father, Son, and Spirit, and is witnessed in all that God has made. It is the fundamental bond of the entire universe (John 15:9-10). Hierarchy within God himself is the pattern for legitimate authority among men. All true love, community, and authority flow from the God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Although this is somewhat of a divine mystery, the Tri-unity or Trinity understands all unity and diversity within God himself. Thus, we see God's Tri-unity expressed in all that he made. For example, the family (1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 5:18-6:4), church (1 Peter 1:1-4), and even the state (Romans 13:1-2; Psalm 2) reflects the unity and diversity which can only be explained by the Tri-unity nature of God.

Bible passages to read: Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 1:9-11; John 1:1-18, 14:23-36; Ephesians 1:3-14; 1 Peter 1:1-2

Questions to ponder:

1. Why does Christianity affirm monotheism (a belief in one God)?
2. Why does Christianity teach that God is one in essence, yet distinct in three persons?
3. How are authority, love, and glory expressed within God Himself?
4. How does God's authority, love, and glory find expression in creation?
5. Describe the relationship between the Father and the Son. How should this affect all relationships (see John 15:7-12)?