

ONE GOD . . . ONE WAY.

December 13, 2009.

Introduction.

We have heard it said : there are many religions in this world but only one God. The conclusion from this assertion is that regardless of the religion we follow or the name we give to God, we all serve the same one God. There is a variety of seemingly logical arguments that have been put forward to support this assertion. The most popular is : as all rivers lead to the sea, so all religions lead to God. The logic may seem rational but when it is put next to what the Bible teaches it is seen to be seriously flawed.

The Bible makes it clear that when false teachings are mixed into truth, they are just as dangerous as when false teachings alone are being taught. False teaching mixed with truth is comparable to feeding you with a deadly poison one drop at a time. It may not kill you instantly but, after a period of time, the cumulative effect will kill you. The danger with false teachings is that more than often they seem so logical and rational from the human standpoint. When dealing with truth and error the Christian must never allow man to have the final say regardless of how logical and rational his arguments may seem. The omniscient God whose understanding is inscrutable must have the final say. (*Isa.40:28*).

In *2Tim.2:14-18* Paul told us about two men, Hymenaeus and Philetus. These two men were not handling the word of God accurately. They were spreading a mixture of truth and error. Their teachings led to ungodly living among the members of the church. But worse was to come. Paul compared the heresies they were teaching to gangrene. Paul's Greek word describes a cancer-like disease that, if not stopped, gradually spreads and destroys the body. This was already happening in the church. Paul said their heresies

“upset the faith of some.” Paul’s verb also means *“to break down; to ruin; to overthrow.”*

In our world there are so-called Christian denominations and movements that hold to the view that all religions worship the same God, regardless of the name by which God is called and regardless of the manner in which He is worshiped. It has always amazed me how people can call themselves Christians, claim to believe the Bible and teach the Bible and yet reject important basic truths in the Bible. There are, for example, those who reject the Biblical doctrine of special creation. They believe in evolution but also believe in the fall of man. And they do not see the inherent contradiction between the concepts of evolution and fall.

They do not believe in the flood that drowned the world. They do not believe that a man named Job existed. They do not believe in the story of Lot. They do not believe in the story of Jonah. And we can go on and on. Yet they claim to believe in Jesus. They believe Jesus is the sinless Son of God. Now if Jesus is the Son of God, that means He is omniscient. That means He knows all things past, present and future. Jesus believed in creation, Adam and Eve, the fall of man, the flood, in the story of Lot, in the story of Jonah, in the existence of Job. As a matter of fact Jesus believes all that the O.T. teaches us. Do you see the inherent contradiction in claiming to believe that Jesus is the Son of God and yet denying what the O.T. teaches?

Let me use one more illustration. In our world today there are millions of people who believe Jesus was simply a man, but a good man and a great teacher. Others believe He was a prophet and a good man. Now here is the problem : would a good man deliberately lie and deceive people? The answer must be an emphatic **“NO!”**. In *Jn.10:36* Jesus said, “I am the Son of God.” (cf. *Jn.19:7*). Notice that : Jesus did not say, “*I am a son of God.*” Jesus said, “I am **the** Son of God.” The Jews understood exactly what Jesus said they became very angry and were ready to stone Jesus. They accused Jesus of blaspheming because, they said, “You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God.” (*vs.33*).

Now, here is the dilemma for those who believe Jesus was a good man and / or a prophet. Was Jesus telling the truth or was He telling a lie when He said "I am the Son of God"? If Jesus was telling a lie, that would have been no ordinary lie. In such a case He could not be a good man or a prophet and the Jews would have been right in their accusation that He was a blasphemer. But if Jesus was telling the truth, and He was telling the truth, those who reject this teaching are in serious trouble.

Today, my goal is to present to you in a brief survey what the Bible teaches about God. I will not be presenting to you my views about God. I will let the Bible speak for itself. The reality is, I will be presenting to you God's view about God. I will be presenting to you what God says about Himself. You will have to decide whether you believe or reject what God is saying about Himself. True belief will manifest certain Biblically described results. Rejection will manifest certain Biblically described results.

There Is One God.

The Bible is uncompromisingly exclusivistic in its teachings and its claims. God has revealed the Bible alone to us. God said the Bible alone is truth. And God has revealed Himself to us through the Bible alone. The Bible does not teach that God has also revealed Himself to us in any of the other religious books in this world. Today, you can find books, booklets, tracts, recorded CDs & DVDs that tell you how people have found Jesus in various religious books that belong to other religions. There is only one religious textbook in this world in which God has revealed Himself and revealed Jesus. That religious textbook is the Bible. When I want to learn about what God has revealed about Himself I come to the Bible. When I want to teach or preach about Jesus and the gospel message He gave to us, I turn to the Bible. Comparative religious studies may be interesting but they are useless in teaching us about God, Christ and the gospel.

The Bible teaches there is one God or, God is one. In *Deut.6:4* we read, "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the Lord is one!" Turning to the N.T. we read in

1Cor.8:4, “there is no God but one.” *Vs.6* adds, “for us, there is but one God.” The point made here is very clear.

Deut.4:35 says, “the LORD, He is God; there is no other besides Him.” *Vs.39* reaffirmed, “the LORD, He is God in heaven above and on earth below; there is no other.” This theme is emphasized in the book of **Isaiah**. *Isa.44:6* says, “I am the first and I am the last, and there is no God besides Me.” *Isa.45:5* says, “I am the LORD, and there is no other; Besides Me there is no God.” *Vs.6* says, “there is no one besides Me, I am the LORD, and there is no other.”

Once again, the point being made here is very clear. The God who revealed Himself to us in the Bible says there is only one God. He has said He is that one God and there is no other God beside Him. In *Isa.44:8* God asked, “Is there any God besides Me ...? I know of none.” The God who knows all things says, “I know of none.”

What is the name of this one God who has revealed Himself to us? In *Exod.6:3* He told Moses His name is “**Yahweh**”. The name “**Yahweh**” is translated in most English Bibles as “**LORD**” and the name “**LORD**” is spelled with capital letters as the mark of identification. When you read your Old Testament, wherever you see the name “**LORD**” in capital letters, you must know that is God’s revealed name “**Yahweh**”.

This name **Yahweh** is derived from the Hebrew verb *hayah*. *Hayah* is the English verb “**to be**”. And so, when Moses asked God for His name in *Exod.3:13-14*, God’s answered, using the verb *hayah*, “I AM WHO I AM” or “I AM”. Over and over again God would say to the Israelites, “I am the LORD your God”, or “I am Yahweh your God.”

Now, we go a step further. This God who has revealed Himself to us, who said His name is **Yahweh** or I AM, has also declared, “all the gods of the peoples are idols.” (*1Chron.16:26; Psa.96:5*). The point here is that all the gods of all other peoples or nations are idols. When we use the word “**idol**” we usually make reference to what the

Bible describes as **“a graven image”**. But the Hebrew word for **“idol”** that is used here conveys the ideas of something being false, worthless, useless, and non-existent. The first point you must note here is that not every **“idol”** is a graven image. The second point is that if the object of your worship is not Yahweh, the one and only true and living God, your worship is idolatrous, you are worshiping something that is non-existent and your worship is false, worthless, and useless.

I am sure you have gotten those telephone calls in which the callers are confident they have gotten the right number. You answer, *“hello”*, and the caller responds, *“ay, Hezekiah, I want to talk to you about”* Now, your immediate response is to stop the caller and say, *“Sorry sir, (sorry lady), but I am not Hezekiah.”* Some persist and say, *“Well, can I speak to Hezekiah?”* And you say, *“I am sorry, but there is no Hezekiah here.”* Now if your caller is one of those cantankerous ladies you will get this response, *“How you mean there is no Hezekiah there. I’m sure I dialed the right number.”* By this time my patience is already beginning to wear thin and I put down the phone. And you hear the voice trailing off saying, *“But ah don’t understand this. Ah sure ah dial the right number. How the man could say I dial the wrong number?”*

Now without being disrespectful and being very careful, let me say this to you : when you are calling God, be sure to use the right phone book, the one He has given to you by revelation, the Bible, and be sure to use the right name. If you do not use the right book and the right name you will get this response, *“I do not know you.”* (***Matt.7:23; 25:12; Luke 13:27.***) Now you may persist like those who dial wrong phone numbers but He will stop you and respond, *“I do not know you.”* His name is Yahweh. His name is LORD. And He has revealed Himself to you in no other book but the Bible alone. The truth about the one and only true and living God is to be found in the Bible alone. So when you come to Him, be sure you have the right name and the right book with His revealed instructions on how to approach Him. Or you will find a closed door and a voice saying to you, *“I do not know you.”*

Do you believe in Yahweh, the LORD? Are you worshiping Yahweh, the LORD? Does name matter? Yes! Name means identification. Name has content. Your name has specific meaning for your spouse. Your name peculiarly identifies you. To your wife your name means **“husband”**. To your wife your name does not mean sibling or neighbor. When you come to God name has identification and content. The Jews could not come to God and call Him **“Baal.”** When Elijah confronted the false prophets on the mountain, they called on their god Baal. Elijah called on the LORD, Yahweh. (*1Kings 18*). When you come to God, what name are you using? Who are you calling upon? Are you calling upon God by a name that means **“idol”**? Or are you calling upon God by the name He gave us and that identifies Him as the one and only true and living God?

The Triune God.

This brings us to our second point which I have entitled : The Triune God. If the first point of the uncompromising exclusivity of the true and living God was controversial, this point is even more controversial. But I will not be dealing with the controversies today. The one and only true and living God whose name is Yahweh has revealed Himself to us as the Triune God. He is one God, one being, three distinct persons. He is not three Gods. This must be emphasized : He is not three Gods. Each member of the Triune God head, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, is fully and equally God. Even though there are three distinct persons in the Triune God-head, there is only one God.

This is one of the areas of deep mystery in the Bible. God, in His wisdom, has chosen not to reveal to us all we would like to know about His tri-unity. This is what makes God God. Only God can know and understand all there are know and understand about God. (cf. *1Cor.2:10-11*). If finite man can know and understand everything about the infinite God then we would have a major problem because finite man would have achieved divinity. Then Satan’s promise to man in *Gen.3:5*, “you will be like God”, would have been fulfilled.

But, as we have seen in past studies, finite man is too arrogant to accept mysteries about God. Finite man's quest for knowledge has become idolatrous and with arrogance he has sought to impose that idolatrous quest upon God. God remains totally intolerant of fallen man's arrogance and has clearly declared, "without faith it is impossible to please [God], for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him." (*Heb.11:6*). This seeking of God has boundaries. *Deut.29:29* says, "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe (**obey**) all the words of this law."

Most people do not have a problem with the third member of the triune God-head, the Holy Spirit. Generally, they do not have a problem because their understanding is heretical. They see the Holy Spirit as a manifestation of God or as a divine force emanating from God. They do not see the Holy Spirit as a person, as the distinct third person in the triune God-head. But the Bible makes it clear that the Holy Spirit is a person. In *Jn.14:16, 26* the Holy Spirit is described as "*Helper or Comforter or Advocate.*" In *vs.26* Jesus said, "He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you."

Jn.16:8 says when the Holy Spirit comes "He will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment." In *Acts 4:25* we are told, "the Holy Spirit ... said." In *Acts 5:3* we are told that Ananias lied to the Holy Spirit. In *Acts 8:29* we are told that the Holy Spirit spoke to Philip. *Eph.4:30* says, "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit." All these verses tell us one clear fact – the Holy Spirit is a person.

The biggest problem one encounters when dealing with the doctrine of the Tri-unity of God is with respect to the Lord Jesus Christ. The problem is not with what the Bible teaches. The Bible is very clear on the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ is the second member of the triune God-head, the Son of God who entered time as a flesh and blood human being. The problem is with fallen men who come to this doctrine with a predisposed antagonistic mindset.

Like I said earlier, they are quite ready to accept Jesus as a great religious teacher, maybe even the greatest religious teacher, as a good man, as a man with unusual powers, and maybe even as a prophet. The Jehovah Witnesses call Jesus “**a god**”, with a small “**g**”, but they do not seem to comprehend how downright irrational that teaching is and how much it contradicts what the Bible teaches about gods and idols.

Every year during Easter and Christmas we are flooded with the same irrational claims about Jesus in the newspapers, on TV and now on the internet. Every one of these irrational claims have been dealt with and exposed as utter foolishness, yet each year, with unbelievable dishonesty, they are presented as new evidences about Jesus.

Let me illustrate. Every year we are told that Jesus was the son of an unnamed Roman soldier and that Mary was guilty of fornication. Turn to **Jn.8:31-42**. (**read**). If men concocted the story of Jesus and wrote it for us, wouldn't they try to hide the charge these Jews were making that Mary was a fornicator and Jesus was born through the sin of fornication? The Bible does not hide it. The Bible sets it out in the open, right before your eyes. You would notice that Jesus did not dignify that charge with a response. This story that Jesus was a child of fornication did not start with some amazing scholarly twentieth century discovery. This story was making the rounds since Mary got pregnant and thirty plus years later it was still being repeated.

Who is Jesus? John's emphatic answer is “the Christ, the Son of God is Jesus.” (**Jn.20:31**). In **Jn.1:1-3** John introduced Jesus to us as eternal, as God and as the Creator. And in **vs.14** John tells us that Jesus, the eternal God entered time. He became flesh and blood human being and He took us residence with mankind. From a human standpoint John the Baptist was six months older than Jesus. Yet John the Baptist said concerning Jesus, “He existed before me.” (**Jn.1:15, 30**). Jesus is the only person born into this world who said, “I have come down from heaven.” (**Jn.6:38**). Jesus is the only One who ever dared to ask this question, “Which of you convicts Me of sin?” (**Jn.8:46**).

Jesus called God “My Father” and this upset the Jews. (*Jn.5:17*). *Vs.18* says the Jews wanted to kill Jesus because He “was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.” Again and again Jesus would say that His Father sent Him into the world. In *Jn.8:58* Jesus declared, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.” Once again the Jews understood that Jesus was identifying Himself with the One who told Moses His name is “**I AM**”. And they picked up stones to stone Jesus.

In *Jn.10:30* Jesus declared, “I and the Father are one.” The Jews understood and once again they were ready to stone Jesus. Jesus asked them – why do you want to stone Me? And they answered, “for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God.” (*vs.33*). I have already mentioned *vs.36* where Jesus said, “I am the Son of God.”

I want to show you two more passages before setting before you the applications. Please turn to *Isa.6:1-5*. (**read**). Whom did Isaiah see? Isaiah saw “the LORD of hosts”. Note the capital letters in *vss.3 & 5*. Isaiah saw “Yahweh of hosts”. Now turn to *Jn.12:37-41*. (**read**). The context is clearly speaking about Jesus. Now note again the absolutely astounding statement John made in *vs.41*, “These things Isaiah said because he saw His glory, and spoke of Him.” Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit John is clearly stating that Isaiah saw Jesus, the pre-incarnate Jesus in all His glory. In other words, John is saying to us that “Yahweh of hosts” and Jesus are one and the same person. Let that sink in. This introduces you to a whole area we cannot deal with today : Jesus in the Old Testament.

Only One Way.

Now we can go on for hours showing to you that the Bible clearly teaches that Jesus is the Son of God, the promised Messiah, the second member of the triune God-head, the Creator, the Sustainer of creation, that He is God of very God. *Col.2:9* says, “For in Him the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form.” I think I have presented to you

enough evidence from the Bible. The evidence makes it clear that when it comes to Jesus you cannot have your cake and eat it. If He is a good man, then He is God. If He told the truth, then He is God. If He is not God then He is not good and He is a liar and a blasphemer.

God the Father sent His Son into this world for a specific purpose. God sent Him to die in order to save sinners. At the same time it must be made clear that Jesus came willingly to carry out His Father's will. *Matt.1:21* says, "you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." *Vs.23* describes Him as "God with us." *Mk.10:45* says Jesus came "to give His life a ransom for many." In *Lk.19:10* Jesus said, "the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." In *Jn.10:11* Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep."

Rom.5:8 says, "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." *1Cor.15:3* says, "Christ died for our sins." *Gal.4:4-5* says, "when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law that we might receive the adoption of sons." *1Tim.1:15* says, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

The clear Biblical testimony is that God sent His Son into this world to die in order to save sinners. When men speak about Jesus life, this is the point they carefully avoid. They speak about Jesus being a good man, a wonderful example, a great teacher, etc. But they do not speak about Jesus as Savior. The Bible says that the number one reason why Jesus came into this world is to die to save sinners. He came to be the Savior of sinners. *Tit.2:13* describes him as "our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus."

Now the point I want you to get clear is this : Jesus is not **a** Savior of sinners. Jesus is **the** Savior of sinners. Jesus is **the only** Savior of sinners. There are no other saviors of sinners except Jesus. Consider with me the following verses.

Please turn to *Jn.14:6*. Note carefully the repetition of the word “**the**” in this verse. Jesus said, “I am **the** way, and **the** truth, and **the** life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.” Jesus did not say, “*I am a way, and a truth, and a life.*” Jesus is making a very exclusive claim. If Jesus is **the way**, then there is no other way. If Jesus is **the truth**, then there is no other truth. If Jesus is **the life**, then there is no other life. Then Jesus said, “no one.” “**No one**” means just that, “**no one**”.

Jesus is not only the revealer of the way of salvation and the way to God. He is **the only** way of salvation and **the only** way to God. Jesus is not only the revealer of truth about salvation and God. Jesus is **the only** truth. Jesus is not only the revealer of life to dead sinners. Jesus is the life, the One who gives to us eternal life. If you want to go to God, you must come to Jesus first. Apart from the Son of God you cannot get to God the Father. *1Tim.2:5* says, “there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”

Turn to *Acts 4:12*. Peter and John are standing before the Jewish religious court. Peter charged the rulers and elders of the Jews with rejecting and murdering Jesus. And then Peter boldly declared concerning Jesus, “there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.” The exclusivity of this claim is very clear. You want salvation, you must come to Jesus. You want your sins forgiven, you must come to Jesus. In *Lk.24:47* Jesus told the apostles that repentance for the forgiveness of sins must be proclaimed in His name to all the nations.

I want to share with you three more verses before I close. In *Jn.20:31* John tells us that he wrote his gospel “so that you may believe that the Christ, the Son of God, is Jesus; and that believing you may have life in His name.” God says all sinners are dead, spiritually dead in trespasses and sins. Do you want life? You must come to Jesus. *Jn.3:16* says, “For God so loved that world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” *Vs.36* says, “He who believes in the Son has eternal life.”

Finally, turn to **Jn.8:24**. Note carefully what Jesus said to the Jews. I am giving you a literal translation : “unless you believe that I AM, you will die in your sins.” Unless you believe that I am the I AM who appeared to Moses, you will die in your sins. Unless you believe that I am Yahweh, you will die in your sins. Unless you believe that I am the eternal God you will die in your sins. Do you believe Jesus is the I AM? If you do not believe Jesus is the I AM you will die in your sins.

Heb.9:27 says after death comes the judgment. If you die in your sins, you will come to final judgment with your sins. And if you come to final judgment with your sins, you will be cast into hell for all eternity. Those who are cast into hell never, I emphasize, they never get out of hell. Those who are cast into hell will remain in hell for all eternity. Hell has no exit doors.

Is Jesus the I AM? Is Jesus God? Is Jesus your God? Is Jesus your Savior? It is only in Jesus you can receive forgiveness for your sins in this life. Do you want to stand in the final judgment with your sins or without your sins? Your only hope of standing in the final judgment without your sins is to have Jesus forgive you your sins in this life. And the only way you will get your sins forgiven is to believe that Jesus is the Son of God, God in flesh who came into this world to die for your sins.

The Bible teaches that salvation in Jesus is free. The forgiveness of your sins is free. But your forgiveness and salvation cost Jesus His life. Your forgiveness and salvation cost God the Father His Son. But for you it is free. All you have to do is receive it. All you have to do is confess to Jesus as Thomas did, “My Lord and my God!” (**Jn.20:28**).

I want to say to you today, if you are rejecting Jesus as the Son of God, as God and the only Savior of sinners, stop calling Him a good man. Stop calling Him the world’s best example. Stop calling Him a great teacher. Stop calling Him a prophet. If you reject Jesus as God who became flesh and dwelt among us, then you must do like the Jews who hated him. You must call Him a liar and a blasphemer. And you must join with them in their shouts, “*crucify Him! Crucify Him!*” You cannot have it both ways. Today you

must choose. Is Jesus the Christ, the Son of God? Or is Jesus the world's greater liar and deceiver?

Today is your day of choice. The Biblical message is clear : choose Jesus as your Lord, God and Savior or reject Him. There are no neutral grounds to stand here. Those who pretend to be neutral are rejecters of Jesus and will be cast into hell. What choice will you make today? Pilate asked, "What shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" (*Matt.27:22*). Pilate made the wrong choice. What about you? What choice will you make today?