

Basic Training: What Does It Mean? Lesson 4
What Does it Mean that There is One God?

Revelation 4:11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

I. Review

1. In our Where We Stand series, we have explored the following topics:
 - a. Lesson 1: What does it mean to receive the Holy Ghost? It is a life-changing experience where you become the temple of God living inside you, led by God.
 - b. Lesson 2: What does it mean that God wrote a Book? God spoke through inspiration and moved the writers to record His Words, preserved for us in the Bible you hold in your hand, which still has the power to change the lives of those who believe in it.
 - c. Lesson 3: What is the meaning of prayer? We studied the example of the Lord's prayer and what it means to have a conversation with God that brings us through worship, repentance, seeking God's will and His kingdom.
 - d. Lesson 4: What does it mean that there is one God?
 - e. What is the meaning of worship?
 - f. What does it mean to live godly?
 - g. What does it mean to be God's steward?
2. We now will take on the big question: What does it mean that there is one God?
3. And why is that question important? If there were other gods, would we owe some kind of devotion to them? What power of influence or control would they have over us or even other nations?
4. But what if those other gods are merely made-up gods and devotion to them is a useless, futile effort? For instance, suppose I carved a statue of wood or stone, and then I bowed down and worshiped it as my creator? Can it help me? Will it give me good luck?
5. No because I was the creator and if it were possible, that statue would owe allegiance to me.
6. The prophet Isaiah described what he had seen back in his day. A man cut down a tree, used part of it to make a fire to warm himself, bake bread, and roast his kill.
7. But with the rest of it he made himself a god that cannot see or understand, yet he worshiped it:
Isa 44:17 And the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god.
8. If someone places faith for their soul's salvation in a god that is not a god at all, their soul will be lost for eternity because of their incorrectly placed hope.
9. The Old Testament prophets and writers boldly proclaimed that there was only one true God, not many, and then when Jesus came along, He just as boldly proclaimed that He was that one true God:
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.
10. In my Bible I see that the word "he" is in italics, which means it was added by the English translators to make the sentence conform to the requirements of English grammar.

11. However, what Jesus said was, “if ye believe not that I Am, ye shall die in your sins.” And the Jews knew that “I Am” was the divine name as revealed in Exodus 3:14.
12. This was controversial to Jesus’ listeners, because that statement was either blasphemy or divine revelation.
13. It was blasphemy if He were merely a man claiming to be the LORD God of their fathers, but if it were true, it was a startling revelation that they needed to give earnest heed to.
14. I present to you that, yes, it was a startling revelation. Jesus was the one God of eternity standing before them making that bold proclamation.
15. As it turns out, what you believe about God is very important, lest we die in our sins.

II. He is Creator

1. The first thing we discover in the first verses of the Bible is that this one God is the creator of everything:
Genesis 1:1-3
1 In the beginning God created the Heaven and the earth.
2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.
3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.
2. And in verse 26, we see that humanity was part of that creation, but both unique in fashion and superior in position to other creation:
Genesis 1:26-27
*26 And God said, Let **us** [the royal inclusion: as we are speaking tonight about such and such a topic] make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.*
27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.
3. And Jesus confirmed the authenticity of the Genesis account:
Matthew 19:4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female,
4. John said it like this:
John 1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.
5. The scripture makes it clear that there is one God who created all things.
6. That being true, His creation, including us, owe Him worship.
Psalms 100:1-3
1 Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands.
2 Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing.
3 Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.
7. And the twenty-four elders who worship before the throne of God in heaven also proclaimed that truth:
Revelation 4:11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.
8. One God created humans. We did not come about through accidental random chemical interactions, but **through** the design, and **for** the purpose, of our Creator.
9. And since He is our Creator, we owe Him our worship.

10. What does it mean that there is one God? First we see that one God is our Creator and we were created with purpose to serve Him.

III. He is one

A. Anchored in the commandments

1. Let us focus on that statement that God is one. Not only is there one God, but God is one rather than a plurality of beings or a trinity of persons:
Deuteronomy 6:4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:
2. The primary fact that distinguished Old Testament Jews from other peoples of the ancient world, was that Jews believed in one God not many gods.
3. The scriptures made it clear that any other being or entity that was proclaimed as god, was a false god.
4. The Jews were strict monotheists and the law forbade them from worshiping multiple gods as ordained by the first commandment:
Exodus 20:3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
5. However, even though the commandments forbade it, from time to time, Israel copied the culture of nearby nations and worshiped other gods, bringing them into dark ages of national judgment.
6. In scripture, God revealed Himself with various names, such as Jehovah or Yahweh, Lord, Father, King, The Almighty, Word, Holy Ghost, Jesus, The Holy One, yet all refer to the same one God.
7. It is important to note that some of the Hebrew words used for God are expressed in a plural form, like Elohim or Adonai. And those who believe God is a trinity of persons will refer to those names to back their view.
8. However, Hebrew scholars have pointed to the fact that those refer to the plurality of God's majesty, His various attributes, titles, roles, or modes of activity, and not multiple or distinct persons.
9. Oneness Christians and Jews share the same view of God's oneness as is defined in
Deut 6:4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:
10. This was one of the core teachings that Jewish parents were to give their children when sitting, walking, lying down, rising up. They were to continuously remind them—God is one.

B. The greatest commandment

1. But what does it mean that there is one God? Does it really matter how many we see as being God?
2. Let us allow Jesus to answer this question.
Mark 12:28-30
28 And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all?
29 And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord:
30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.
3. This was Jesus' answer to the question about what was the most important commandment.

4. Of course, Jesus was quoting Deuteronomy 6:4 that we just read, noting that all-important statement about God’s nature—God is one.
 5. Jesus identified this truth, that God is one, as the most important commandment of scripture.
- IV. There is only one
- A. None beside Him
 1. Since God knows all things as the Creator of all things, what would be His response if you asked if He knew of any other gods?
Isaiah 43:10-11
*10 Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that **I am he**: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.*
11 I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour.
 2. And again:
Isa 45:21 Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the LORD? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me.
 3. This is what is referred to as strict monotheism. No other gods exist, none others have been created, and none others are beside Him.
 - B. Identity of Jesus as the one God
 1. So what does that mean when God says there is none beside Him? What is the meaning of passages that state that Jesus is exalted to the right hand of majesty, or at the right hand of the power of God, at the right hand of the throne of God?
 2. First, it is important to note that God who is an invisible spirit, the one Jesus called the Father, has no permanent physical form that could be seen by humans:
John 6:46 Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God [referring to Himself], he hath seen the Father.
 3. Yes, that is a difficult concept to grasp, as Jesus’ disciple Philip demonstrated when asked Jesus, “Show us the Father.”
 4. Jesus response was:
*John 14:9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not **known me**, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?*
 5. Jesus was referring to the truth that God has no other permanent visible form other than Himself.
 6. Paul confirmed that identifying Jesus as God over all:
Rom 9:5 Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen. NIV
 7. Jesus made it plain that He was God from above, and if you missed that truth...well, let’s take Jesus’ word for it:
John 8:23-24
*23 And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; **I am from above**: ye are of this world; I am not of this world.*
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.

8. In other words, Jesus said that He was that one God from heaven.
9. So when we see phrases in scripture of Jesus referring to God as His Father, or Jesus being at the right hand of majesty, or power, think about this.
10. Since God is an invisible spirit without form that fills the universe, how do you get on the right hand of such a being?
11. In that sense, right hand does not refer to a physical location next to a physical form, but to God's power, His administration, His authority, and even His visible form.
12. Jesus being at the right hand of God means He is the physical presence and demonstration of God's power. Not separate from God, but the visible form of God.
13. Most Trinitarian scholars are in agreement with Oneness believers on this point, that no one will ever see the Father except in the face of Jesus, and that there is only one throne in heaven and Jesus will be the only one seen on that throne.
14. The revelation that oneness believers see is there is one God, and Jesus is the visible image of that one God, not a separate person from Him.
15. We will look at more scripture evidence that affirms that revelation.

C. Only One Savior

1. Notice that Isaiah said God was the only savior:
Isaiah 43:11 I, [even] I, [am] the LORD; and beside me [there is] no saviour.
2. That was spoken by God, yet that same God sent an angel to make this proclamation to a group of shepherds near Bethlehem:
Luke 2:10-11
10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.
*11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is **Christ** the Lord.*
3. This is not a contradiction, but a statement that the God of eternity chose to be born in a physical form as a baby, as a Savior with human flesh.
4. And those who saw the Savior recognized Him as the Savior:
John 4:42 And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.
5. We find the scripture saying interchangeably that God is Savior and Jesus is Savior only two verses apart:
Titus 3:4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,
Titus 3:6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour:
6. To worship and honor Jesus as Savior does not identify Him as a second person in addition to God, but the one God becoming human and fulfilling His role as Savior.

D. Only One Creator

1. We already mentioned that God had created all that is, but consider these passages that highlight the same point we just discussed:
Isaiah 44:6, 24
6 Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.
24 Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the LORD that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself;
2. God said He did all the creation Himself without any help: "alone" and "by myself."

3. Compare that verse to the next:
Eph 3:9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:
4. Paul acknowledged that this was a mystery from the beginning, but that God revealed that mystery: Jesus was the God who did all the creating.
5. In another place, Paul added this about Jesus the Creator:
Col 1:16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:
6. We already read in Revelation 4 where those in heaven saw Jesus in the throne of God and everyone proclaimed
Revelation 4:11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.
7. John saw Jesus being worshipped in heaven as the one on the throne, the Creator!

V. Conclusion

1. In closing this lesson, “What does it mean that there is one God?” let us consider two more points, one from Isaiah and one from Jesus.
2. Across the world, voices proclaim the importance of inclusivity, pluralism, acceptance, and tolerance.
3. We are encouraged to accept the beliefs of others as worthy of respect and often that they are all equally valid.
4. But there is a problem with that. Almost all religions have at the core of their teaching that their belief system is true, and because they are in truth, people who believe otherwise are not in truth.
5. All statements cannot be truth, even if they are sincerely believed.
6. A pilot whose instruments have failed may sincerely believe he is flying level, but if the nose is pointing down, he will face the consequences of that truth, regardless of what he believes.
7. There is no amount of tolerance for his belief that will keep the plane from crashing.
8. Are we to believe that the gods of the Greeks, Romans, Hindus, Buddhists, or Muslims, are gods on an equal standing with Jesus, the God of scripture, and the teachings of scripture we uphold as truth?
9. To answer that, look to this very exclusive message God spoke to Isaiah on the subject:
*Isaiah 46:9 Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and **there is none else**; I am God, and **there is none like me**,*
10. Not only is there no another god out there, there is not even another god-like being out there.
11. There is one Creator and it is Jesus. There is one Savior, and it is Jesus. There is one God over all, and it is Jesus.
12. Finally, read again Jesus’ opinion on tolerance for other beliefs about God:
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.
13. We can respect other people as God’s creation, but we also hold to the belief that Jesus is who He said He is, the only God, Creator, and Savior.