



Updated January 2014  
US Edition  
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Cover design & book layout by Thomas Akens

## “THE ONLY TRUE GOD”

**S**INCE the fall, men have been making gods of their own. The only things which have changed with time are the materials from which our idols are made; for though most of us no longer worship wood and stone, yet many are making idols of their time, possessions, families, jobs, fears, appetites, and an almost infinite number of other like things, which can never give lasting peace, security, enduring happiness, or life.

As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him. — I Corinthians 8:4-6

Sadly, for most of us, God is not first in our lives and hearts. We all too often put other things before Him, and give to them the time and attention which rightly belong to God. And though there are many in this world which are called “god” that men worship, yet there is only One who created the worlds, has supreme power, and can help us in all our circumstances – the true and living God, Creator of heaven and earth. Consider verse 6 again: “But to us there is but one God, the Father, . . .” Here we are plainly told that this “one God” is the Father. This truth is repeated in various Scriptures:

One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. — Ephesians 4:6

Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort. — 2 Corinthians 1:3

However, the Sovereign of the universe was not alone in His work of beneficence. He had an associate – a co-worker who

could appreciate His purposes, and could share His joy in giving happiness to created beings.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. — John 1:1, 2

Christ, the Word, the only begotten of God, was one with the eternal Father – one in nature, in character, in purpose – the only being that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God.

His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. — Isaiah 9:6

... whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. — Micah 5:2

## THE BIBLE'S TESTIMONY CONCERNING CHRIST

And the Son of God declares concerning Himself:

The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting. . . . When he appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him. — Proverbs 8:22-30

The Father wrought by His Son in the creation of all heavenly beings:

By him were all things created, . . . whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him. — Colossians 1:16

The Son of God, is also called "God". The Father Himself calls His Son "God". Other Scriptures too, clearly reveal Christ's Divinity, and call Jesus "God":

But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. — Hebrews 1:8

And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen

me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. — John 20:28, 29

How then do we harmonize these apparent contradictions? Who is Christ, if His Father is the only true God? Does that make Christ a false god? I can't believe that Christ, in His words addressed to His Father, "thee the only true God," was denying His own divinity. There must be a harmony in these passages. It was only after many months of prayer and study that my endeavor to understand what otherwise seemed to be a mystery was richly repaid, as my eyes were turned to see this precious light of the character of God that otherwise I would have altogether missed. No word of God's is unimportant, even if we don't readily discern its value. Whenever we come across a text that seems to contradict another, it is because we are by our own predispositions and partial blindness unable to see the harmony.

Here is what I found. We are told the following things concerning Christ:

- **He has inherited the name of His Father:**

Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. — Hebrews 1:4

- **He has the very nature and all the attributes of His Father:**

For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. — Colossians 2:9

- **He has life in Himself:**

For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself. — John 5:26

- **He holds all things together:**

And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. — Colossians 1:17

You will remember that in the previous chapters we took notice of His Divinity. Though all of these things are true of Him, notice what else is said of Him:

Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. — Philippians 2:6, 7

While on the surface this passage may seem to only describe what Christ did in His incarnation, yet it holds much more than this for us to learn. In it we find a clue as to why Jesus refers to His Father as the “only true God” (John 17:3), and why the disciples call the Father the “one God” (1 Corinthians 8:6). It also helps us to understand those verses that speak of Christ’s Divinity, such as Isaiah 9:6, which calls Him the “mighty God”. How does it reveal all this? Because it reveals to us how that Jesus, as a son, voluntarily submits to His Father’s greater authority. Though Jesus is rightfully called God by His subjects, yet He in turn recognizes/honors His Father as the highest authority (“. . . to my God and your God” John 20:17). Every human being ought to know and understand this most basic of truths – how that a child never reaches the age where he is no longer obligated to honor his father. So it is with Christ and His Father. As a Son, He will always voluntarily, honor and submit to His Father as First in all things, that “God may be all in all.”

Note the following things concerning Christ’s submission to His Father:

**1. He was in submission to His Father while on earth:**

In this He has set the perfect example for us in how we ought to treat our parents:

I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things . . . I do always those things that please him.  
— John 8:28-29

**2. He was in submission while in heaven:**

Not only on earth did He set an example of submission, but even in heaven prior to His coming to earth as a babe in Bethlehem; for the Son wrought His Father’s will in the creation of the world:

. . . [God] created all things by Jesus Christ. — Ephesians 3:9

And though Jesus said upon His ascension, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (Matthew 28:18); yet He is still in submission to His father. Jesus calls His Father, “my God”:

Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God. — John 20:17

### **3. And His example of voluntary submission will continue even into eternity:**

For although, “. . . it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us” (Isaiah 25:9); yet, “. . . when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all” (1 Corinthians 15:28).

Just as my son receives human nature and attributes of humanity from his father, Jesus has the nature and attributes of God because He is the Son of God, yet He voluntarily submits to His Father, the Supreme Ruler, the Most High.

### **ELOHIM – A PLURAL WORD FOR GOD?**

**Eloah** or simply **El** (singular) is the Hebrew word for God. Sometimes its plural form **Elohim** is used (as in Genesis 1) and is also translated “God.” Why is this? With Hebrew, as in English, words in the plural form do not always indicate plurality in number. In fact, when referring to the true God, *Elohim* is almost exclusively accompanied by singular verbs, and does not indicate “Gods” (plural), rather it indicates the comprehensiveness and majesty of God. This use of the plural is common in Hebrew.

#### **Here are some examples:**

**Bamah** (singular) is translated “high place,” and even “high places” at times, but in the plural it is translated both as the name of a place (singular) and as “great high place” (also singular).

**Uwr** (singular) means fire. However, when found in the plural form, it is translated **urim** (one of the stones on the breastplate of the high priest).

**Behemah** (singular) means “beast” or “cattle”, but in the book of Job it is used in its plural form (**Behemoth**) to describe the most powerful and fearsome of land animals.

**Shamayim**, the word for “heaven” or “sky” is only used in its plural form, but is used most times to designate “heaven” in the singular. This practice was used by the writers of the New Testament also; for when they wished to distinguish the “heaven” where God dwells from the our “heaven” or “atmosphere” they invariably use the plural form of the Greek word **ouranos** (heaven).

In reference to God the word *Elohim* simply denotes the *greatness* and *majesty* of the true and living God, not a plurality of persons. Jesus is God by nature, and has all the attributes of God, yet he acknowledges His Father as “my God”, and calls him the “only true God”. These statements by Christ are not contradictions; for God cannot lie. They are homage paid by Jesus to His Father as the supreme being, the “one God” of 1 Corinthians 8:6, Ephesians 4:6, and other passages.