

One God

Only The Father Is God

by Sean Finnegan

Jesus knew that this was his last time with the disciples before he would be taken into custody. He prayed just before he made his way across the Kidron Valley to the Garden of Gethsemane. The disciples listened earnestly; they were probably still in shock because Jesus had just washed their feet. As he prayed he did not look down, instead he looked up to the Father. In the beginning of his prayer, he made an extraordinary statement about eternal life. He said, "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." (John 17:3). According to this verse, there are two who must be known: the only true God, and Jesus Christ. Jesus considered the Father to be the only God and he considered himself to be distinct from that only God. This simple truth is elevated to the highest degree when he prefaced the statement with, "This is eternal life...." That is to say, eternal life depends on one's understanding of God and His Son.

In addition, Paul the apostle was inspired by God to write along the same lines in his first letter to Timothy.

I Timothy 2:3-6 NASB

This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time.

There are two closely linked desires of God listed: 1) for all to be saved, and 2) for all to come to know the truth. In verse four "the truth" does not refer to all true things in general but a very specific truth. The next two verses explain "the truth" that God desires all men to know. The first ingredient is that there is only one God. The second is that the man Christ Jesus is the one mediator between the one God and mankind. The third is that Jesus gave himself a ransom for all at the right time. There is no confusion between Jesus and God; they are fully distinct in nature and in function. According to the greeting of this letter (I Timothy 1:2), God is the Father, and Jesus Christ is our Lord. Just a few verses earlier than where we are now, it says that the only God is immortal. (In the word "immortal," the prefix, im, means not; and mortal means can die; thus immortal means cannot die.) However, the third ingredient of "the truth" is that Jesus gave himself as a ransom for all. In order for Jesus to die, he must be mortal. Therefore, we conclude that the one God (the Father) is completely distinct from the

one man (Christ Jesus). It is as important to recognize this distinction, as it is to understand that Christ gave himself as a ransom for all.

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A third text that offers clarity on this issue can be found in I Corinthians. The context concerns idolatry and eating the foods that are sacrificed to idols. Paul recognizes that there are many who are called gods.

I Corinthians 8:6 NASB

Yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him.

This text leaves no wiggle room for complicated definitions of God. He is the Father Who created all things. He is the source from which everything, including Jesus, originated. He is the one God, and we are able to come to Him through the one Lord, Jesus Christ. The Father made everything, and we experience all things through Christ.

There are many other places in the New Testament that speak of God as the Father. Consider the following scriptures: John 1:18; 4:23 and 24; 6:27; 8:41 and 42, 54; 20:17; Romans 1:7; 15:6; I Corinthians 1:3; 8:6; 15:24; II Corinthians 1:2 and 3; 11:31; Galatians 1:1,3 and 4; Ephesians 1:2 and 3, 17; 4:6; 5:20; 6:23; Philippians 1:2; 2:11; 4:20; Colossians 1:2 and 3; 3:17; I Thessalonians 1:1, 3; 3:13; II Thessalonians 1:1 and 2; 2:16; I Timothy 1:2; II Timothy 1:2; Titus 1:4; Philemon 3; James 3:9; I Peter 1:2 and 3; II Peter 1:17; II John 1:3; Jude 1:1; Revelation 1:5 and 6.

The overwhelming weight of Scripture teaches that only the Father is God. He is the awesome Creator of everything in existence. He is the most powerful Being in the universe. He has no equal, as even Jesus confessed (John 10:29; 14:18). He is called the "one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all" (Ephesians 4:6 NASB). About two thousand years ago, He brought into existence His perfect Son who would save mankind from destruction. Jesus, the perfectly obedient one, followed God's plan flawlessly. As a result today we have access to the Father through him.