

**“I am the Lord, and there is no other;
apart from me there is no God”**

Isaiah 45:5

The most important question you can ask is, “What is ultimate reality?” Everything you do or think in life will be profoundly affected by how you answer this question. Your answer will determine how you view the world around you. It will affect how you answer other important questions in life, such as, “Where did I come from?”, “Who am I?”, and “Why am I here?”

Who is God?

Don't all religions believe in God? Don't they just call Him by different names? A rose is a rose and by any other name, its still a rose. Don't all roads lead to Rome?

No!....for these reasons:

1. A lot of religions claim that their way is the only way.
2. A lot of religions contradict each other.

God is defined by the world's religions in 1 or 2 ways:

1. Polytheistic
 - A. A belief in many gods....Hinduism, Buddhism,etc.
 - B. A belief in many gods but they're all part on one big God (monism-all is God, you're God, the tree is God, etc.)....Hinduism, New Age religions, etc.
2. Monotheistic....a belief in one God only....
 - A. Christianity
 - B. Judaism
 - C. Islam

Does it really make a difference what you believe about God? Or what a nation believes about God?

When you define God, would you describe Him as a personal God or an impersonal God, like an IT or an impersonal force?

Christianity believes in one God (mono-theistic) but that one God exists as three separate persons (Father, Son & Holy Spirit). All 3 are God, but they are 1 God. This is a tri-unity or trinity. This is not $1+1+1=1$ but $1 \times 1 \times 1 = 1$.

Lesson

Deut 6:4 (the Shema....Israel's one sentence belief statement) says....'the Lord your God is one'.
The word 'one' in Hebrew is either

*Yachid....one as in only one (like one banana) or
Echod....one as in a unity (like one bunch of bananas)*

In Deut 6:4, the Hebrew word 'one' is *Echod*, not *Yachid*.

The Bible says that there is 1 God....Isa 44:4-8....45:5,6,18,21....46:9

The Bible says that the Father is God....Titus 1:4....Philippians 1:2...Ephesians 1:2...Galatians 1:3

The Bible says that Jesus is God....we'll see this in meeting #3&4.

The Bible says that the Holy Spirit is God....Acts 5:3,4

The Holy Spirit is a person, not an impersonal force like electricity or the Force in Star Wars.

The Holy Spirit:

1. Gives us joy.... Luke 10:21
2. Helps us....John 14:15-21
3. Convicts us of our sin....John 16:5-11
4. Acquits us of our sin....1Cor6:11
5. Reveals truth to us....John 16:12-15
6. Helps us testify to who Jesus is....John 15:25 - 16:4
7. Can be resisted....Acts 7:51
8. Can be lied to....Acts 5:3,4
9. Gives us power to overcome evil....Ephesians 6:17
10. Raised Jesus from the dead....1Tim3:16
11. Brings blessings to believers....1Peter4:14
12. Empowers Christ & us....Hebrews 9:14
13. The fruits of the Spirit are personal....Galatians 5:22,23
14. He is a person....Romans 8:16

In the early 300's A.D., an elder in the Egyptian church (Arius) started teaching that the Father was God but the Son was a created being and not God. Arius also taught that the Holy Spirit was not God but was an impersonal force. In 325 A.D. at the city of Nicea (across the straits from modern Istanbul), the council of bishops of the Christian churches declared Arius was wrong. They produced a statement that we call the Nicene Creed, which states that the Bible unequivocally teaches the trinity. This is a fundamental of the faith. If our definition of God is wrong, then we are believing in another God, not the God of the Bible.

The Arian belief has been resurrected in our day by the Jehovah's Witnesses (the Watchtower Society).

Did you know that God has a name? Exodus 3:14....in the original Hebrew, "I am that I am" is really **YHWH**. Since we can't pronounce this, we stick 2 a's in it and pronounce it Yahwah. This is God's personal name.

"Here, O Israel: The Lord our God, The Lord is one"

Deuteronomy 6:4