

# God's Will According to God's Word

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## Why Do Christians Believe In Only One God?

All of us have attended the funerals of wonderful human beings, who have accomplished great good in this world, or who were devout followers of a religion other than Christianity. Some “hoped” they would get to heaven but weren’t sure it was possible. The eulogies and tributes probably spoke of their great personal attributes and accomplishments and, somewhere inside you thought, “surely he or she is in heaven.” Why does orthodox Christianity insist that there is only one God, only one Savior and only one proof of salvation?

Universalism is the theology that all people will eventually be saved, taken to heaven. Polytheism is the belief that there are multiple deities. (Remember your high school studies of the Greek and Roman gods.) Pluralism in theological terms means that there are many roads of faith that arrive at the same destination – eternal life. The United States has been described as a “melting pot” of people from many different backgrounds and races. That diversity has brought a diversity of faith and worship centers in our country as well.

Does it really matter which religion you choose? Orthodox Christianity would say “yes.” Orthodox Judaism would say “yes.” Orthodox Islam would say “yes.” Hindus, Buddhists, and Mormons would say, “yes” as well. All religions think they have it right and every other religion has it wrong.

We live in a country that rightly guarantees its citizens freedom of religion. We also live in a country that increasingly believes that the right to choose a religion means that whatever you choose is right. Most young people in the United States would be practical Universalists. They agree with the idea that “personal truth” is truth – although that idea is contradictory. Just imagine the student who receives an “F” on an exam and defends his answers as his “personal truth.” Picture the bank teller’s face as you tell them you personally believe a ten-dollar bill is as valuable as a fifty. Personal truth is just another name for personal opinion.

Is your faith an opinion or a belief in something that is true? Are you able to defend your faith or do you just keep it to yourself? Why do Christians believe in only one God? That is the subject of this study.

1. Read [1 Timothy 2:1-6](#). Paul is planning to hand his ministry over to Timothy, his young disciple, strong in the faith. Who are Christians to pray for? Describe the lives Christians are to lead. And finally, what should Christians believe about God?

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2. Deuteronomy is a book written to the people of Moses' day, around 1400-1500 B.C. The events in Genesis are believed to have occurred 1000+ years before that. Read [Deuteronomy 6:4](#). What did Moses teach the people about God? What should that ancient passage teach Christians today?
3. Read [Isaiah 43:10](#) and [Isaiah 44:6](#). What would these passages say to a pluralist? Who in Scripture is responsible for the definition of "God?"
4. People have said the plural word "our" found in [Genesis 1:26](#), defends their belief that there is more than one God. Why does God use the word "our" when he speaks of "his image." (Hint: See also [John 1:1-5](#).)
5. Pluralists have also said that even God has acknowledged the existence of other gods. Read [1 Kings 18:19-21](#), [36-39](#). How do these passages in 1 Kings refute that idea?

Paul's ministry was largely to the Gentile population, in large metropolitan areas. The cities were filled with images of the Greco-Roman gods and temples dedicated to their worship. The concept of only one God was a difficult challenge for the early Christian church and Paul addresses the subject often in his epistles.

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6. Read [Galatians 4:8-9](#). Paul is speaking to Gentile Christians in this passage. What problem in the early church is he addressing and what does he want the people to understand?
  
7. 1 John, is written by the apostle John, shortly before he was exiled on the island of Patmos. Sixty years have passed since Jesus ascended to heaven. John writes this letter to the Church urging them to continue in the doctrines they learned in the beginning. According to [1 John 5:6-12](#), whose testimony is it that there is just one God? What seems to be at the root of the misunderstanding?
  
8. Read [Matthew 7:13-14](#) and [John 14:5-6](#). What did Jesus say about the population in heaven compared to the population on earth? How do these passages address Universalism?
  
9. Finally, read [Isaiah 45:21](#). What does the Creator God say to the person who believes there is more than one deity and more than one true faith? Then look carefully at the first words God speaks in this verse. What has God commanded us to do with this knowledge?



*“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.”* Revelation 1:8

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## Scriptures

### 1 Timothy 2:1-6

<sup>1</sup> I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—<sup>2</sup> for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. <sup>3</sup> This is good, and pleases God our Savior, <sup>4</sup> who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. <sup>5</sup> For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who gave himself as a ransom for all people.

### Deuteronomy 6:4

<sup>4</sup> Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

### Isaiah 43:10

<sup>10</sup> “You are my witnesses,” declares the LORD, “and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me.

### Isaiah 44:6

<sup>6</sup> “This is what the LORD says— Israel’s King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God.

### Genesis 1:26

<sup>26</sup> Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

### John 1: 1-5

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was with God in the beginning. <sup>3</sup> Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. <sup>4</sup> In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

### 1 Kings 18:19-21, 36-39

<sup>9</sup> Now summon the people from all over Israel to meet me on Mount Carmel. And bring the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel’s table.

<sup>20</sup> So Ahab sent word throughout all Israel and assembled the prophets on Mount Carmel.

<sup>21</sup> Elijah went before the people and said, “How long will you waver between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him.” But the people said nothing.

<sup>36</sup> At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: “LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. <sup>37</sup> Answer me, LORD, answer me, so these people will know that you, LORD, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again.”

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<sup>38</sup> Then the fire of the LORD fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench.

<sup>39</sup> When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, “The LORD—he is God! The LORD—he is God!”

### **Galatians 4:8-9**

<sup>8</sup> Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods. <sup>9</sup> But now that you know God—or rather are known by God—how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable forces? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again?

### **1 John 5:6-12**

<sup>6</sup> This is the one who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. <sup>7</sup> For there are three that testify: <sup>8</sup> the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement. <sup>9</sup> We accept human testimony, but God’s testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son. <sup>10</sup> Whoever believes in the Son of God accepts this testimony. Whoever does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because they have not believed the testimony God has given about his Son. <sup>11</sup> And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. <sup>12</sup> Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

### **Matthew 7:13-14**

<sup>13</sup> “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. <sup>14</sup> But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

### **John 14:5-6**

<sup>5</sup> Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”

<sup>6</sup> Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

### **Isaiah 45:21**

<sup>21</sup> Declare what is to be, present it— let them take counsel together. Who foretold this long ago, who declared it from the distant past? Was it not I, the LORD? And there is no God apart from me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none but me.