

"How can God and Jesus be one?"

John 10:22-30

"Then came the Festival of Dedication¹ at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was in the temple courts walking in Solomon's Colonnade.

²⁴ "The Jews who were there gathered around him, saying, 'How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.' ²⁵ Jesus answered, 'I did tell you, but you do not believe. The works I do in my Father's name testify about me, ²⁶ but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. ²⁷ My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸ I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹ My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. ³⁰ **I and the Father are one.**"

**Some time back, we posed the question:
"How do you picture God?"**

¹ The celebration usually called Hanukkah today.

In other words, when you think of God what images come into your mind?

Trying to picture God is difficult.

How do you understand Jesus when he said: "I and the Father are one"?

Suppose someone suggests that your portrait of God needs an additional face.

Would you rework your picture of God?

Some think "I and the Father are one" describes common purpose, not nature.

It means, they say, that Jesus shared the Father's plans and objectives.

They regard it similar to a mother saying to a child, **"Your Father and I speak with one voice on this matter."** For example, Eugene H. Peterson rendered the phrase, **"I and the Father are one heart and mind."**²

Others think that Jesus' statement shows he absolutely shared the Father's nature.

"Jesus is very God of God."

² *The Message //Remix; New Testament in Contemporary Language*, Eugene H. Peterson, NavPress, Colorado Springs

To specify how folks should picture God, 4th c. church leaders wrote many dogmas.

Many of you recognize the following, taken from a creed of that era:

"We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

"We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. . .

"We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified . . ." ³

Though a few of these statements come from the Bible, churchmen devised most of them.

They thought Christians needed a more detailed picture of God than the Bible gives.

In the Ten Commandments, God forbade the Israelites to make graven images.

Is it possible that he also forbids writing word pictures that etch images in the minds of others?

When Norma and I first began working with the Hollywood Church, my favorite radio station almost daily played (2-3 minute presentations) by a popular area minister.

With a great radio voice, he effectively presented those short clips. A professional writer, who was a mutual friend, arranged a lunch meeting with this minister, whom I admired. I heard dozens of his radio presentations but I never saw his picture.

As we rode to the restaurant and ate lunch, the minister and I shared many experiences. He did not look as I had imagined him and his behavior disappointed me some.

If our mutual friend told him positive things about me, the minister undoubtedly felt let down about me as well.

³ *Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer (1979), The Book of Common Prayer (PDF)*. New York: Church Publishing Incorporated. 2007. pp. 326–327. Retrieved 2013-02-18

I kept listening to his radio broadcasts but always hoped my old image of him would return.

Based on voices and writings, we often develop incorrect images of how people look.

Based on what others say about God, what pictures form in your mind?

Well-intended translators and theologians have led folks to create false images.

Recall what Jesus said to the oft-wed woman he met in central Israel (John 4)?

"A time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. 24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."⁴

In his conversation with that woman, Jesus clearly said that we cannot associate God with earthly locations or human depictions.

Using words not found in the Bible to define God equals making graven images of God.

When folks use diagrams and figures to explain the Godhead, it compares to that golden calf Moses' brother Aaron fashioned.

One of our goals today is to free us from those graven images others try to create.

We also want to expand our appreciation for God.

In addition, we want to increase our admiration and gratitude for Jesus.

When Jesus said, "I and the Father are one," he wasn't making a just a nice theological statement.

His assertion infuriated his critics.

His "opponents picked up stones to stone him, ³² but Jesus said to them, 'I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?'"

Jesus then asked a fair, logical question.

The Old Testament Prophet Isaiah had said that God would cure blindness:

⁴"Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you."⁵

⁴ John 4:23, 24 NIV

Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped.”⁵

Jesus fulfilled Isaiah’s 700-year-old prophecy; God had come to this planet.

John chapter 9 tells us that Jesus healed a 40 year-old-man who was born blind.

Jesus enemies were unmoved.

It is one thing to doubt:

John the Baptist kept hoping that Jesus would reveal himself as God’s messiah and forcefully restore righteousness.

That was not God’s immediate plan; the Son Man (Jesus) had to suffer and die first.

John was discouraged because King Herod locked him up in prison; his ministry ended.

John sent his followers to Jesus asking if he John, the Baptist, had worked in vain.

Are you really the Messiah or should we look for somebody else?

⁵ Isaiah 35: 4, 5 and also Psalm 146: 5-8 NIV “Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD their God. 6 He is the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them— he remains faithful forever. 7 He upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets prisoners free, 8 the LORD gives sight to the blind . . .”

Here’s what Jesus told John’s emissaries:
“Go back and report to John what you hear and see: ⁵ The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor.”⁶

John pictured in his mind what God’s Christ should do –most of John’s Jewish contemporaries shared that picture.



Jesus’ responded to John:
Recall what the Old Testament prophesied about God’s coming?

People see me do the works of God every day: Blind people see; lame folks walk; the deaf hear, and dead people return to life.

Jesus’ factual report likely boosted John the Baptist out of his depression.

Jesus’ enemies knew about (even witnessed) Jesus performing those miracles.

They should have been grateful for God’s help in Jesus.

⁶ Matthew 11: 4, 5 NIV

They should have thanked God that blind folks could see, that deaf could hear and all the other confirmed good news. Instead, their political ambitions and their greed roused envy and hate in them.

Jesus: I showed "you many good works from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?"

I've surely offended some of you at times. Only you and God know what went through your mind if that happened. You possibly thought of wanting me to leave but never chased me with big rocks.

Jesus' critics didn't just think about stoning him, they selected choice lethal rocks.

Those folks wouldn't have been satisfied to just chase Jesus out of town. They intended to maim and kill him. Because Jesus messed with their picture of God, they wanted him dead.

33 "We are not stoning you for any good work," they replied, "but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God."

"Your miracles have nothing to do with it; you commit blasphemy."



Blasphemy was a capital crime in Israel.

What irreverent acts did Jesus perform?

He said that "He and God were one."

Not just that he and God had the same purpose or spoke with the same voice.

In all the info overload of 24/7 news and non-stop political campaigns, have you recently considered who Jesus is?

Jesus was something no other prophet or preacher ever was--the Living word of God.

- In the beginning was the Word;
- He was with God; He was God.
- All creation was made through him.
- Our creator, The Word took on ordinary flesh and lived among us.⁷

Are your life-actions and beliefs in accord with that truth--God was in Christ?

⁷ These phrases all come from John 1: 1-4, 14

When Jesus said **"I and the Father are one,"** the phrase is unusual.

Was Jesus referring to the unity of purpose expressed by Father and Son?

Was he saying, as the Douay Version Catholic editors noted, "That is, one divine nature, but two distinct persons"?

The statement: "one divine nature, but two distinct persons," promotes word pictures, doesn't it?

Even the term "The Trinity" furthers word pictures, true?

The word "trinity" makes me uneasy.



Are the above the same as graven images?

**Does the Bible refer to Father, Son & Spirit?
2 Corinthians 13:14 clearly does.**

**"May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with you all."**

In numerous instances, *The Book of Revelation* connects "three" with the Godhead.

Verses 4 & 5 of chapter one beautifully and symbolically link them.

In Colossians 2: 9, Paul wrote that in Christ, the, "fullness of deity lives in bodily form."

A church leader named Arius (256-336 AD) began teaching that Jesus was a created being. He influenced many churches to follow this misunderstanding of Jesus' deity. Another church leader named Athanasius championed opposition to Arius. In 325, many church leaders met in Nicaea, Asia Minor. In attempts to carefully define the Godhead and resolve other matters, churchmen began writing creeds at that time; thus the Nicene Creed, etc.

By trying to precisely define Father, Son and Spirit relationships, 4th century churchmen who wrote those creeds coined the word "Trinity."

Because they exceed biblical language, human creeds lead to numerous false pictures.

The Lord gravely cautions us about adding to his word: e.g., *Revelation 22:18*.

Human assumptions and attempts to apply logic to God, who is Spirit, inevitably lead to the creation of false images and idols.

"Trinity" does not appear in scripture.

What about Jesus' statement:

"I and the Father are one"?

The word Greek word pronounced esmen (ἐσμεν) found in John 10:30 needs attention.

It is in fact a verb, the first person plural of the Greek verb "to be."

In Exodus 3, God revealed himself to Moses in the burning bush.

Moses asked the Lord what he should say to the Israelites when he went to tell them who sent him.

God said "I AM who I AM." Tell them the "I AM has sent me to you."

The Greek translation of the OT, which, many of the Jews used in Jesus' time reads: "I AM."

In Greek, it is "ego eimi." The English word "ego" comes from "ego" in Greek.

The **eimi** is the 1st person singular of "to be."

"Ego eimi" is literally "I, I am,"

In John 8:58, Jesus used that very expression: "Before Abraham was, I am," "Ego eimi."

But our John 10:30 text reads: "Ego and the Father (ἐν) (ἐσμεν), pronounced "hen" "esmen," meaning literally "I and the Father one are."

Jesus' statement demolished his enemies' pictures of God—inflaming their fury.

They didn't kill him that day.

It took a while longer, and they crucified him.

Yet He came back because He is the great I am, one with the Father, Creator of all life.

Everything about Jesus testifies that he is the Word made flesh.

Only He can and has conquered death.

God willing, we'll say more on this later.

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