

The One True God is the Father

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The Bible teaches monotheism from Genesis to Revelation. The New Testament does not in any way compromise the Shema: *“Hear O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one.”*¹ Jesus affirmed the Shema without reservation:

Mark 12:28-34

28 Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him, “Which is the first commandment of all?”

*29 Jesus answered him, “The first of all the commandments is: **‘Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one.** 30 And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment. 31 And the second, like it, is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”*

*32 So the scribe said to Him, “Well said, Teacher. You have spoken the truth, **for there is one God, and there is no other but He.** 33 And to love Him with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love one’s neighbor as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.”*

34 Now when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, He said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” But after that no one dared question Him.

That Jesus understood the Shema to indicate that God is one Person is evident by His affirming the scribe’s more elaborate interpretation – *“there is no other but He.”* That this understanding is foundational to Christianity is clear since Jesus said to him, *“You are not far from the Kingdom of God.”* That Jesus could not have understood the Shema as a Trinity of three co-equal, co-eternal Persons is not only evident by His reaction to this scribe, but proven conclusively by His own prayer to the Father.

John 17:1-3

*1 Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: “Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, 2 as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. 3 And this is eternal life, that they may know **You, the only true God,** and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.*

In this humble statement, Jesus distinguished Himself from *“the only true God”* (τὸν μόνον ἀληθινὸν θεόν). **The word “God” means “sovereign,” the ultimate or chief authority.** However, the term itself can be limited by context. For example, this term is used in reference to human rulers because they can be the “ultimate ruler” within a limited

¹ Deut. 6:4

context, such as a state or kingdom.² But Jesus' statement above declares that the Father is "the only true God," that is "God" in the ultimate and unlimited sense – the Sovereign ruler over all that exists.

Paul also affirmed that the Father alone was "God" (sole Sovereign) for Christians.

1 Cor. 8:4-6

4 Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that **there is no other God but one.**

5 For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords),

6 yet for us **there is one God, the Father,** of whom are all things, and we for Him; and **one Lord Jesus Christ,** through whom are all things, and through whom we live.

The pagans worshipped many gods, because they believed different gods had sole sovereignty over different aspects of nature and life. Thus their loyalties were divided. But for Christians, Paul made it clear that there is one Sovereign over all – the Father. Notice Paul's statement in verse 4, "there is no other God but one," is virtually identical to the scribe's confession which Jesus commended, "for there is one God, and there is no other but He." Both statements were a literal interpretation of the Shema, one by a Jewish scholar and the other by the Jewish Apostle, Paul. And both statements are absolutely exclusive, the latter actually excluding Jesus Himself. There was therefore no difference between the traditional Jewish understanding of the Shema and that of Jesus and Paul. There is one ultimate Sovereign over everything, not three Persons who share sovereignty equally.³

Paul also distinguished between "one God" and "one Lord." The one "God" was clearly defined as the Father. The one "Lord" (κύριος – "master") was defined as Jesus Christ. Thus, the Father is our "God" (the supreme Sovereign over all) and Jesus Christ is our "Master" (the one who is our immediate superior under God the Father).

This implies that the Father is Jesus' own "God." And Scripture testifies to this clearly many times. Jesus Himself cried out to His own "God" while on the cross, "**My God, My God,** why have you forsaken Me,"⁴ quoting Psalm 22:1. Just after He was raised by the Father from the dead, Jesus told Mary: "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to **My**

² John 10:33-36

³ The term "God" is often misunderstood by both Trinitarians and Unitarians, supposing that it refers to a KIND of being (WHAT God is in His nature) or to simple Personhood (WHO God is as a Person). But the truth of the matter is that the term "God" primarily refers to a ROLE – God's STATUS as the supreme authority over everything and everyone. It defines God's relationship to everything that He has originated. It is because of this misunderstanding that confusion abounds concerning the deity of Christ (which Scripture affirms but Unitarians deny), and the inherent subordination of the Son to the Father (which Scripture affirms but Trinitarians deny).

⁴ Matt. 27:46

God and your God.⁵ This statement by Jesus shows that the Father was Jesus' "God" in the same way that He is our "God." The Apostles taught the same thing to the early Christians. Paul began several of his letters by referring to the Supreme God as *"the God and Father of our Master, Jesus Christ."*⁶ Peter did the same.⁷ In the final book of the Bible, Jesus again repeated four times in the same verse that the Father was also His own "God." *"The one being victorious, I will make him a column in the Temple of **My God**, which he should not leave thereafter. And I will write on him the name of **My God**, and the name of the city of **My God**, (the New Jerusalem, the one descending out of heaven from **My God**), and My new name."*⁸

The Bible is clear that the Father alone is the supreme Sovereign. The Son has never been outside of direct submission to the Father as the sole Sovereign, who is His "God," the "only true God." The Son of God has never possessed or exercised authority inherent to Himself, apart from what has been granted to Him by the supreme Sovereign, His Father and God, to act on His behalf.⁹

Yet, sole absolute Sovereignty being the domain of the Father alone (one God), does not in any sense diminish the deity of the Son of God, since "deity" does not refer to authority but to "kind," just as Adam's sons were of the same "kind" as Adam – human.

⁵ John 20:17

⁶ Rom. 15:6; 2 Cor. 1:3; 2 Cor. 11:31; Eph. 1:3; Col. 1:3

⁷ 1 Pet. 1:3

⁸ Rev. 3:12 LGV

⁹ Matt. 28:18