



Right Questions, Wrong Answers:  
**A Study of World Religions**  
by Earle D. Treptow

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- Lesson Two—Who Is God?
- Lesson Three—What Is God Like?
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**Adult Bible Study - World Religions**

**Worship Service: 10:15 A.M. (Sunday School/Adult Bible Class 9am)**

7305 208<sup>th</sup> Ave NE, Redmond, WA 98053

(425) 868-9404 - [www.lhlc.org](http://www.lhlc.org), [pastortodd@lhlc.org](mailto:pastortodd@lhlc.org)



## Right Questions, Wrong Answers: A Study of World Religions

• Lesson Two •

### Who Is God?

1. There is one God – the Lord
2. The one God is three persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit

## Worship

A meditation based on various sections of Scripture\*

**Leader:** The fool says in his heart, "There is no God."

**Men:** *The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge.*

**Women:** *There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.*

**Leader:** Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; he is to be feared above all gods.

**Men:** *For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the LORD made the heavens. Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and glory are in his sanctuary.*

**Women:** *Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; bring an offering and come into his courts. Worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness; tremble before him, all the earth.*

**Leader:** How many are your works, O LORD! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. These all look to you to give them their food at the proper time.

**Men:** *When you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are satisfied with good things.*

**Women:** *When you hide your face, they are terrified; when you take away their breath, they die and return to the dust. When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth.*

**Leader:** May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Group:** *I will sing to the LORD all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live. May my meditation be pleasing to him, as I rejoice in the LORD.*

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**Leader:** May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Group:** *May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.*

\*Psalm 14:1; 19:1-4,14; 96:4-6,8,9; 104:24,27-30,33,34; Romans 15:5,6,13

**Prayer:** O Lord Almighty, the gods of the nations are idols. You are the Creator of the world. You alone are God, the one who is, who was, and who is to come. You alone give life. Lead us, through your living Word, to know and confess you as the one true God, the Maker and Preserver of all things. Enable us to see that any religion that proclaims someone other than you is false and empty, no matter how spiritual and meaningful it may appear to be. Lord, so fill our hearts with trust in you that our mouths overflow with your praise, that all may know that you are God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Introduction

There are a lot of different ways to skin a cat. It seems that a large number of people in our world look upon religion with the same idea. For those who believe this, what's the only conclusion they can come to in regard to the many religions that exist in the world?

Who is God? The religions of the world offer many answers that seem more logical or reasonable than Christianity's answer. Some even offer answers that seem to be more spiritual and emotional than Christianity's answer. But this question has only one right answer. The one true God, intent as he is on the salvation of all, wants all to hear the answer and believe it.

## Studying God's Word

### There is one God—the Lord

**Read 1 Kings 18:16-40.**

1. Ahab accused Elijah of troubling Israel. In reality it was the other way around. Explain why. (verse 18)
2. What did Elijah (whose name means "My God is the Lord") think about the Israelites' current state of spirituality? (verse 21)
3. Prove from verse 30 that the majority of the Israelites had rejected the one true God and was following a false god.

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4. It would have been miraculous enough to have the sacrifice consumed by fire. Why would Elijah dig a trench fill it with water, and have water poured on the wood and the sacrifice? (verse 32-35)
5. Evaluate: The prophets of Baal failed because their prayer was not as sincere or focused as Elijah's.
6. What statement was the Lord making by consuming the sacrifice and the wood and licking up the water? (verse 38)

### Who do other religions worship as god?

**Islam:** The Koran says, and Muslims believe, that there is no god but Allah. He is the One—the Sole Creator and Preserver, the Merciful and Compassionate. Muslims call their god by 99 beautiful names. Islam has no use for the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, which it considers to be the worship of three gods.

**Judaism:** “The Lord our God, the Lord is One” (the Shema) is the confession of the Jew. Strict, unyielding monotheism marks Judaism. Judaism, like Islam, mistakenly rejects the Christian teaching of the Trinity as polytheism.

**Hinduism:** Hinduism is pantheistic. There is one ultimate reality behind all things, which are merely expressions of this one universal world soul. Brahman, the one high god, is the ultimate reality and reveals himself in nature and in other lesser gods. Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver, and Shiva the Destroyer are three lesser gods that are most often worshiped. There are hundreds of millions of gods under the umbrella of Hinduism, all of whom are merely ways to find the ultimate reality. Some Hindus worship one god, others worship many, and some think there is no god.

**Buddhism:** Buddha denied the existence of God in the sense of a higher being. Strict Buddhists do not rely on one god or many gods but seek to find escape from suffering in this world by the elimination of desire. Many Buddhists worship Buddha (the founder of Buddhism) and Tera (Buddha's virgin mother). Ultimately, though, Buddhists rely on themselves for good.

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### His Word in My Life – Option 1

Muslims believe what the Koran says: “There is no god but Allah.” They reject the worship of more than one god. In fact, Muhammad was greatly bothered by the polytheistic practices he saw around him and continually urged his followers to reject such teachings.

1. Agree or disagree: We ought to applaud Muslims for their monotheistic faith.
2. How might you use your Muslim friend’s belief in Allah as a starting point to share your faith?

### His Word in My Life – Option 2

Hinduism allows for quite a bit of latitude in respect to the number of gods people should acknowledge and worship. Some opt to worship one god. Others choose to think that there are several gods. Still others decide to believe that there are multiple manifestations of one god.

1. Agree or disagree: Hinduism is less judgmental than Christianity.
2. Why might Christians give in to the temptation to overlook differences among religions?

*The Lord, who graciously introduces himself to us in the Bible, is God; there are no gods besides him. Only he existed before the foundations of the world; only he will continue to exist when the world comes to an end. He alone is worthy of praise and trust, because only he has the power to act and the strength to save.*

## The one God is three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

Read John 14:15-31.

1. The Holy Spirit is God, just as Jesus is God. How is that evident in verses 15 through 17?
2. Jesus, on the night before he would die, told his disciples that he would rise. What conclusions about Jesus were the disciples to draw from his resurrection? (verses 19 and 20)
3. If Jesus is not God, the words he spoke in verse 21 are blasphemous. Why?

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4. If Jesus is not God, the words he spoke in verse 21 are blasphemous. Why?
5. Evaluate: Jesus cannot be God in the same way the Father is God. Jesus himself says, "The Father is greater than I." (verses 28-31)
6. What does Jesus indicate about the sufferings and death he was about to endure? (verses 30 and 31)

## Do other religions serve one god or many?

**Islam:** Muslims serve only one god, Allah. Since they reject the triune God of the Bible, their monotheism is idolatry.

**Judaism:** Jews serve the Lord alone. Since they reject the triune God of the Bible, their monotheism is idolatry.

**Hinduism:** Hindus are free to find a way to Brahman through worship of one god, many gods, or no gods.

**Buddhism:** Though some Buddhists have added Hindu ideas to their thinking and may worship Buddha or Tera, strict Buddhists find serving a god counterproductive in their search for freedom from desire.

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### His Word in My Life – Option 1

The Koran says, “They say, moreover, ‘Become Jews or Christians, that ye may have the true guidance.’ Say: Nay! The religion of Abraham, the sound in faith, and not one of those who join gods with God is our religion!”

1. What do Muslims evidently think about Christianity?
2. Evaluate: Once you have convinced a Muslim that God is triune, everything else will fall into place.

### His Word in My Life – Option 2

Most Jews confess that God is absolutely one. Can you think of some ways to explain the Trinity to a Jewish friend? (Keep in mind that the Jews consider the Old Testament alone to be authoritative Scripture.)

***We believe that God is triune not because it is humanly reasonable but because the Bible describes God in that way. We believe it not because we choose to do so but because God leads us to believe it. If people from other religions consider us polytheistic, we must try to correct that misconception using God’s Word.***

## Summary

Agree or disagree: Only those who believe in the triune God will be saved.

If a woman introduced herself to you, it would not be right for you to argue with that introduction. If she honestly says her name is Mary, you cannot say, “No, that’s not right. You are Elizabeth.” When God introduces himself to us in his Word, we cannot argue with that introduction. He is who he says he is. He is God, and all the other gods of this world’s religions are idols. He is three persons in one God, undivided in essence. Most important, he is the Savior-God, who entered our world to give us the life that will never end.

## Life with God

Day 1: Read Isaiah 44:24–45:13. The Lord alone is God.	Day 4: Read Isaiah 6:1-8. Holy, holy, holy is the triune God.
Day 2: Read Isaiah 45:14-26. The Lord is the only God who saves.	Day 5: Read 2 Corinthians 13:5-14. The blessing of the triune God is yours.
Day 3: Read Acts 5:1-11. Lying to the Holy Spirit is lying to God.	Day 6: Read the Athanasian Creed (page 132 in Christian Worship). This creed summarizes the Bible’s teaching of the Trinity.

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## Lesson 2 Readings – Who is God

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### 1 Kings 18:16-40 – There is one God – the Lord

New International Version 1984 (NIV1984)

#### Elijah on Mount Carmel

<sup>16</sup> So Obadiah went to meet Ahab and told him, and Ahab went to meet Elijah. <sup>17</sup> When he saw Elijah, he said to him, "Is that you, you troubler of Israel?"

<sup>18</sup> "I have not made trouble for Israel," Elijah replied. "But you and your father's family have. You have abandoned the LORD's commands and have followed the Baals. <sup>19</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>22</sup> Then Elijah said to them, "I am the only one of the LORD's prophets left, but Baal has four hundred and fifty prophets. <sup>23</sup> Get two bulls for us. Let them choose one for themselves, and let them cut it into pieces and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. I will prepare the other bull and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. <sup>24</sup> Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the LORD. The god who answers by fire—he is God."

Then all the people said, "What you say is good."

<sup>25</sup> Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "Choose one of the bulls and prepare it first, since there are so many of you. Call on the name of your god, but do not light the fire." <sup>26</sup> So they took the bull given them and prepared it.

Then they called on the name of Baal from morning till noon. "O Baal, answer us!" they shouted. But there was no response; no one answered. And they danced around the altar they had made.

<sup>27</sup> At noon Elijah began to taunt them. "Shout louder!" he said. "Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or traveling. Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened." <sup>28</sup> So they shouted louder and slashed themselves with swords and spears, as was their custom, until their blood flowed. <sup>29</sup> Midday passed, and they continued their frantic prophesying until the time for the evening sacrifice. But there was no response, no one answered, no one paid attention.

<sup>30</sup> Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come here to me." They came to him, and he repaired the altar of the LORD, which was in ruins. <sup>31</sup> Elijah took twelve stones, one for each of the tribes descended from Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD had come, saying, "Your name shall be Israel." <sup>32</sup> With the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD, and he dug a trench around it large enough to hold two seahs of seed. <sup>33</sup> He arranged the wood, cut the bull into pieces and laid it on the wood. Then he said to them, "Fill four large jars with water and pour it on the offering and on the wood."

<sup>34</sup> "Do it again," he said, and they did it again.

"Do it a third time," he ordered, and they did it the third time. <sup>35</sup> The water ran down around the altar and even filled the trench.

<sup>36</sup> At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: "O LORD, 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, O LORD, answer me, so these people will know that you, O LORD, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again."

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38 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.

39 When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, "The LORD—he is God! The LORD—he is God!"

40 Then Elijah commanded them, "Seize the prophets of Baal. Don't let anyone get away!" They seized them, and Elijah had them brought down to the Kishon Valley and slaughtered there.

### **John 14:15-31 – The one God is three persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit**

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#### **Jesus Promises the Holy Spirit**

15 "If you love me, you will obey what I command. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever— 17 the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. 18 I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. 19 Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. 20 On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. 21 Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him."

22 Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, "But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?"

23 Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. 24 He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.

25 "All this I have spoken while still with you. 26 But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. 27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

28 "You heard me say, „I am going away and I am coming back to you.“ If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. 29 I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe. 30 I will not speak with you much longer, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold on me, 31 but the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me.

"Come now; let us leave.

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