

One God

Jesus Confirmed the Shema

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Fact: All Jews believe that God is one.

The Jewish people use the Hebrew Scriptures (our Old Testament) as their chief source of religious information. In this set of sacred Scripture are dozens of statements concerning the exclusive nature of God. Consider a few of these below:

Exodus 20:2 and 3

"I am Yahweh¹ your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before Me."

Deuteronomy 4:35, 39

To you it was shown that you might know that Yahweh, He is God; there is no other besides Him.

Know therefore today, and take it to your heart, that Yahweh, He is God in heaven above and on the earth below; there is no other.

Isaiah 45:5 and 6

I am Yahweh, and there is no other; Besides Me there is no God. I will gird you, though you have not known Me;

That men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun That there is no one besides Me. I am Yahweh, and there is no other,

Jeremiah 10:10

But Yahweh is the true God; He is the living God and the everlasting King. At His wrath the earth quakes, And the nations cannot endure His indignation.

One of the primary expressions of Jewish faith, recited twice daily in prayer, is called the Shema ["shema" is the Hebrew word meaning "hear" or "listen"]. This section of Scripture (see below) is called the Shema because that is its first word.

Deuteronomy 6:4 and 5

Hear [Shema], O Israel! Yahweh is our God, Yahweh is one!

You shall love Yahweh your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

"This simple statement encompasses several different ideas:

1. There is only one God. No other being participated in the work of creation.
2. God is a unity. He is a single, whole, complete, indivisible entity. He cannot be divided into parts or described by attributes. Any attempt to ascribe attributes to God is merely man's imperfect attempt to understand the infinite.
3. God is the only being to whom we should offer praise. The Shema can also be translated as "The Lord is our God, The Lord alone," meaning that no other is our God, and we should not pray to any other."

(www.jewfaq.org/g-d.htm)

At times, the children of Israel strayed from this bedrock creed of worshipping only Yahweh. When this happened, the prophets reproved the people with fiery words of judgment.

Judges 10:13 and 14

Yet you have forsaken Me and served other gods; therefore I will no longer deliver you.

Go and cry out to the gods which you have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your distress.

Ezekiel 16:35-38

Therefore, O harlot, hear the word of Yahweh.

Thus says the Lord Yahweh, "Because your lewdness was poured out and your nakedness uncovered through your harlotries with your lovers and with all your detestable idols, and because of the blood of your sons which you gave to idols, therefore, behold, I will gather all your lovers with whom you took pleasure, even all those whom you loved *and* all those whom you hated. So I will gather them against you from every direction and expose your nakedness to them that they may see all your nakedness. Thus I will judge you like women who commit adultery or shed blood are judged; and I will bring on you the blood of wrath and jealousy."

Israel is repeatedly likened to a traitor, an adulterous wife who takes all that God gives her and then sneaks out to have relations with the other gods. The message is simple: return to Yahweh as your sole God, and you will be delivered; worship someone or something else, and you will be punished severely. Yahweh is jealous—He does not want His people to have any other gods (Deuteronomy 4:24; 5:9; 6:15; 32:16, 21).

Fact: Jesus is a Jew.

Mary was a Jew; Joseph was a Jew. Eight days after Jesus was born, he was circumcised (Luke 2:21) according to the Jewish

rite handed down by Abraham. Then they offered the appropriate sacrifice (two turtledoves) for a firstborn son (Luke 2:24). Jesus was taught the Jewish Scriptures. He followed the Jewish law. He went to the temple in Jerusalem at 12 years of age (Luke 2:42). Later, he became a Jewish rabbi who traveled from town to town proclaiming that the God of the Jews was soon to intervene in the normal functioning of human affairs and establish the Kingdom of God on earth (a very Jewish concept often called by Jews today "the messianic age"). Jesus was known to be the Jewish Messiah who would reign on the throne of David (the Jewish ancestor who reigned over Israel). There is little doubt that Jesus was (and still is) a Jew. He never once preached a sermon redefining the number of persons in the Godhead. He was completely consistent with the Jewish environment within which he operated. He had been told about the perils of forsaking Yahweh as the one true God of Israel. He had read the prophets and was intimately acquainted with the God about Whom they spoke.

Fact: Jesus explicitly confirmed that God is one.

Although it is often supposed that through Jesus' words and actions he opened people's eyes to see his deity, what does the Scripture say? We are not left to guess if Jesus believed the same as the Jewish people, because he explicitly confirmed the Shema of Deuteronomy 6:4.

Mark 12:28-30

One of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognizing that He had answered them well, asked Him, "What commandment is the foremost of all?"

Jesus answered, "The foremost is, 'HEAR [Shema], O ISRAEL! THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD; AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.'"

This statement leaves no wiggle room for additional persons in the Godhead. The LORD (Yahweh) our God is one, and He is the One deserving all our love. Yet, this is not an isolated incidence of confirmation.

John 17:3

This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

The LORD (Yahweh) our God is one

Here, Jesus used different words to convey the same simple truth. Jesus prays to his Father (John 17:1) and makes a categorical statement: the Father is the only one who is truly God.

Conclusion: Followers of Jesus should believe God is one.

As followers of Jesus, we should adopt his beliefs as our beliefs. This is the chief task of a disciple (to imitate his master). Jesus never quoted (or even heard of) the Athanasian Creed, wherein it is stated that God is a trinity. I know that most modern Christians define God as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, what did Jesus say? Whom did Jesus worship? He worshipped the Jewish God as revealed in the Hebrew Scriptures. The New Testament never redefined God (although Jesus did amplify God's Fatherly role). Let us be like Jesus who proudly answered those who questioned him with a firm declaration of the Shema. If the Shema is the creed of Jesus, then perhaps it should be our creed as well.