

ARE CHRISTIANS POLYTHEISTS?

Are Christians Polytheists?

The term "polytheist" refers to one who believes in or worships more than one god. Christians do not worship multiple gods. Jesus quoted scripture to Satan when he was being tempted: **"... Worship the Lord your God and serve him only." (Matthew 4:10)**. It might be that Christians are called polytheists because God is represented as three: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This is made clearer by these words: **"...that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, TO THE GLORY OF GOD THE FATHER" (Philippians 2:10-11)**. So ultimately, the focus of worship is God the Father. Christians speak of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. This expression shows each to be God, and this may reinforce the labeling of Christians as polytheists. This presents a mystery: there is one God, but these three are God. We, therefore, ask the question: "Can three be one?" We know that mathematically three cannot equal one. If the one God exists as three, how can this be? Let us look at how the Bible presents God.

In Genesis chapter one, we read: **"Then God said 'let US make mankind in OUR image, in OUR likeness...'" (Genesis 1:26)**. Then in **verse 27** we are told: **"So God created mankind in His image, in the image of God He created them; male and female he created them."** The words "us" and "our" are significant in that they are plural, and the Apostle John wrote: **"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God" (John 1:1)**. Also, **Genesis 1:2** says: **"...and the spirit of God was hovering over the waters."** Thus, all three: Father, Son, and Spirit, were

present in the creation. This would certainly show God as three-fold in mode of existence. So when the first verse of the Bible says that God created, it surely means that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were involved. And, if so, all humans must also exist as triune (meaning three as one) beings, having been created in God's image. How might this be?

We look for human characteristics that are the same for all people and seek to answer the question: "What is our mode of existence?" and "Could we be triune beings that reflect the image of God?"

We first notice the obvious: our existence is easily seen in what is described as the physical body – that which is seen and can be touched. We know this intuitively. If someone says they see you, they do not see the real you, because the real person is within you, but not visible. It is that "something" which makes us who we are. For want of a better word, we shall call this our nature. Though unseen, it becomes apparent in the physical body of flesh and blood which we shall refer to as "person". Nature is the source of our behavior and it has no physical attributes; it has no weight. Some might think of it as our soul. But it is only real as it is made manifest in the physical body or person. To say it another way: "person" is the physical embodiment of the nature or the unseen real person. Jesus said: **"Anyone who has seen me, has seen the Father" (John 14:9)**. So then Jesus the Son is the physical embodiment of God the Father.

Also, we know that there are distinctive qualities and traits that are unique to each individual as part and essence of their existence. We shall call this "personality." It is that part of our existence that affects others. We realize that our personalities

impact and affect each other. The Holy Spirit was given to guide Jesus' apostles into all the truth. **(John 16:13)** The Holy Spirit acted in a way that impacted their lives so they would know and speak truth. This is similar to our personality – it touches others. So we indeed have a triune mode of existence. There is nature, person, and, as touching others, there is personality, all together giving us an existence in the triune image of God. This leads us to an important conclusion. Being in the image of God surely has nothing to do with skin color or gender (**"male and female He created them"**). Even an individual with a missing body part still exists as nature, person, and personality and, therefore, is no less in the image of the creator! But we can say with certainty that the image has been tarnished by the sin and evil in our lives.

An understanding of our own triune existence helps us to see God as the Father (real, but unseen), Son (physical embodiment of the Father) and Holy Spirit (reaching out and affecting people). We can also see this tri-unity reflected in the rest of creation. **"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."** **(Genesis 1:1)** The expression **"in the beginning"** means that time started. **"Heavens"** represents space. **"The earth"** represents matter, or the materials of the universe. So the first words of the Bible give the sum total of creation: space, matter, and time. There is no more and no less for existence of the physical universe. Matter exists in space and these exist in a frame of time. This is the "mode of existence" of the creation – three that are bound together as one. God is one, though His mode of existence is three – God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The key to understanding this is "mode of existence" – three distinct components bound together so strongly that they can only exist as a unity. This seems to strongly suggest that all of creation reflects God as a Triune God;

three that are one in the way they exist. It might even be more apparent if we realize that Time, one of the three basic parts of creation in **Genesis 1:1** exists as past, present, and future – a triune existence, and it takes all three for time to exist. Time flows from the future which is unseen; the present is where there is reality. Future is the unseen source. Past is also unseen, but has made itself real in the present and left its effect. Time cannot exist if one of the parts is missing. God the Father, unseen, is the source and The Son is the physical embodiment (the reality) of the Father. Jesus said: **“Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.” (John 14:9) (NIV).**

The Psalmist wrote: **“Let them praise the name of the LORD: for he commanded and they were created.”** If we take the dictionary definition of create to mean “to bring into existence,” then the Bible is telling us that God did indeed bring it all into existence. The Bible tells us how this was done in **Hebrews 11:3 (NIV), “By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command so that what is visible was made from the invisible.”** So, what is visible was made from the invisible. Energy is not visible. Physics tells us that matter (visible) and energy (invisible) are the same thing in different forms. Therefore, we can believe that God who is all-powerful, embodying infinite (or unlimited) energy could have converted energy into matter to create the universe. And it would not have come from nothing. Just because something such as energy is not visible does not mean it does not exist. Consider **Colossians 1:16 (NIV): “For in Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him.”**

The existence of God is very evident in many fields of science. Consider the solar system with nine planets orbiting the sun. These planets have been in orbit for thousands of years. The first man-made satellite was placed in orbit around the earth in 1957, but it only stayed in orbit for three months until it came down, burning up in the atmosphere. It took many years for the smartest scientists and engineers to gain the ability to place a satellite into orbit so that it would remain. This requires perfect balance between the forces of gravity and inertia, or it will not remain indefinitely as the planets have done for millennia. The probability of nine planets being in perfect orbit around the sun as the result of some random occurrence, or aftermath of something called the "big bang" is near zero. The most reasonable explanation is that the infinitely powerful God commanded it to BE!

These comments are written with the desire that the reader will gain knowledge of the Creator God and fuel the desire to know the Creator who created not only the universe, but created you in his image. **Genesis 1:27 (NIV), So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.**

Questions on Are Christians Polytheists?

1. In the act of creation, who was involved? _____,
_____ and _____.

2. Define Polytheist. _____

3. What are the ways a human exists that reflects God?
_____, _____, _____.

4. That part of our existence called nature reflects what attribute
of God the Father? _____

5. The son is the _____
of the Father.

Commentary, Questions and Answers by Wade Green

6. In the beginning was the _____ and the _____ was with _____ and the _____ was God.

7. Jesus said "anyone who has seen me _____."

8. The Holy Spirit impacted the Apostles' lives so they would _____ and _____.

9. Being in the image of God is not based on _____

10. What three things represent the sum total of the created universe? _____
And _____.

11. The universe was formed at God's command so that what is _____ was made from _____.

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Answers

to

Questions

on

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1. Father, Son, Holy Spirit
2. one who believes in or worships multiple gods
3. nature, person, personality
4. unseen
5. physical embodiment
6. Word, Word, God, Word
7. seen the Father
8. know, speak truth
9. Gender
10. space, matter, time
11. visible invisible