

Polytheism Accusation — Cheat Sheet

Their Best Arguments (Know These)

- **Deuteronomy 6:4** (Shema) — "The Lord our God, the Lord is one"
- **Isaiah 43:10** — "Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me"
- **Isaiah 44:6** — "Beside me there is no God"
- **Isaiah 44:8** — "Is there a God beside me? I know not any"
- **Isaiah 45:5** — "I am the Lord, and there is none else"
- **Nicene Creed** — One God in three persons, one substance (*homoousios*)
- **Exaltation** — "Becoming gods" = infinite multiplication of deities = polytheism

Core Response: The Bible Itself Distinguishes Father and Son

The New Testament Shows Two (or Three) Distinct Persons

- **John 17:3** — Jesus distinguishes himself from "the only true God" (the Father)
- **John 14:28** — "My Father is **greater** than I"
- **John 20:17** — Jesus calls the Father "**my God**"
- **Matthew 26:39** — "Not as I will, but as **thou** wilt" — two distinct wills
- **Mark 13:32** — The Son doesn't know what the Father knows
- **Acts 7:55-56** — Stephen sees Jesus standing **at the right hand** of God — two beings, two locations
- **1 Corinthians 15:27-28** — The Son is **subject** to the Father
- **1 Timothy 2:5** — Jesus mediates **between** God and men — implying distinction from both
- **Mark 15:34** — "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" — one person addressing another

If this is polytheism, then the New Testament is polytheistic.

What "One" Actually Means in the Bible

- **Genesis 2:24** — Two become "one [*echad*] flesh" — compound unity, not numerical singularity
- **John 17:11, 21-22** — Jesus prays his disciples may "be one, **as we are**" — same type of oneness for all believers. Disciples don't merge into one being.
- **1 Corinthians 3:8** — Paul and Apollos "are one" — one in purpose, not one being
- **1 Corinthians 8:6** — "To us there is but one God, **the Father**" — Paul identifies the "one God" as specifically the Father

The biblical "oneness" of God = unity of purpose, will, and glory, not metaphysical singularity.

The Isaiah "No Other Gods" Passages — Context Matters

These are **polemical declarations against idol worship** (Baal, Marduk, Asherah), not metaphysical impossibility statements. God is saying: those idols are nothing. I am the only real God.

But the Bible itself acknowledges other divine beings:

- **Psalm 82:1, 6** — "God judgeth among the gods... Ye are gods, children of the most High"
- **John 10:34-36** — Jesus quotes Psalm 82:6 approvingly: "Is it not written, Ye are gods?"
- **1 Corinthians 8:5-6** — "There be gods many... but to us one God, the Father" — acknowledges beings called gods while affirming one supreme God
- **Deuteronomy 10:17** — "God of gods, Lord of lords" — presupposes other "gods"
- **Exodus 15:11** — "Who is like thee, O Lord, **among the gods**?"
- **Psalm 89:5-7** — Divine council / heavenly assembly

The Trinity Is Not Biblical — It's Post-Biblical

- The word "**Trinity**" never appears in the Bible
- "**Homoousios**" (one substance) is a Greek philosophical term, not a biblical one
- The Nicene Creed was formulated in **325 AD** — 300 years after Christ
- Pre-Nicene Fathers show significant diversity:
- **Justin Martyr** called the Son "another God" subject to the Father
- **Tertullian** described the Son as subordinate to the Father
- **Origen** taught the Father was greater than the Son
- The creed settled a **debate**, not a consensus. If the apostles taught Nicene trinitarianism clearly, there would have been no 300-year debate.

Theosis / Exaltation — Ancient Christian Doctrine

Scripture

- **Psalm 82:6 / John 10:34** — "Ye are gods" (Jesus endorsed this)
- **2 Peter 1:4** — "Partakers of the divine nature"
- **Romans 8:16-17** — "Joint-heirs with Christ"
- **1 John 3:2** — "We shall be like him"
- **Revelation 3:21** — "Sit with me in my throne"
- **Matthew 5:48** — "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect"
- **Philippians 3:21** — Our bodies made "like unto his glorious body"

Church Fathers

- **Irenaeus** (c. 180 AD): "He became what we are, that He might bring us to be even what He is Himself"
- **Clement of Alexandria** (c. 195 AD): "The Word became man, that thou mayest learn from man how man may become God"

- **Athanasius** (c. 318 AD): "He was made man that we might be made God"
- **Augustine** (c. 400 AD): "God became man so that man might become God"

The **Eastern Orthodox Church** teaches theosis TODAY. This is not an LDS invention.

One-Line Responses to Objections

Objection	Response
"The Shema says God is one" (Deut 6:4)	<i>Echad</i> means compound unity (Gen 2:24 — "one flesh"). Jesus says his oneness with the Father is the same kind his disciples should have with each other (John 17:21-22).
"Isaiah says no other gods"	Polemical context — against idols. The Bible itself speaks of "gods" (Psalm 82:6), a "God of gods" (Deut 10:17), and Jesus quotes "ye are gods" approvingly (John 10:34).
"Three separate beings = polytheism"	We worship ONE God (the Father), through the Son, by the Holy Ghost. Stephen saw two beings (Acts 7:55-56). Jesus calls the Father "my God" (John 20:17). The NT itself distinguishes them.
"Exaltation / becoming gods is blasphemous"	Take it up with Jesus (John 10:34), Peter (2 Peter 1:4), Paul (Romans 8:17), John (1 John 3:2), Irenaeus, Athanasius, and the entire Eastern Orthodox Church.
"The Trinity is essential Christian doctrine"	The Trinity was formulated 300 years after Christ using non-biblical Greek philosophical terms. The apostles used relational language (Father/Son), not substance metaphysics.
"Rejecting the Trinity makes you non-Christian"	We believe in God the Father, Jesus Christ as divine Son and Savior, and the Holy Ghost. We worship Christ and accept His Atonement. By any NT standard, we are Christian. The apostles themselves didn't know the Nicene Creed.
"God is spirit (John 4:24), not physical"	"God is spirit" describes His nature, not His form. "God is love" (1 John 4:8) doesn't mean God has no other attributes. The resurrected Christ has a physical body (Luke 24:39) and is God. Gen 1:27 — made in God's image.
"King Follett — God was once a man"	This comes through continuing revelation. The core principle — God has a glorified body — is supported by Gen 1:26-27, Acts 7:55-56, Ex 33:23, Dan 7:9, and the physical resurrected Christ.

Quick Framework for Debate

1. **Agree:** There is one supreme God, the Father. We are strict monotheists in worship.
2. **Challenge:** Ask them to explain Acts 7:55-56 (Stephen sees two beings), John 17:3 (Jesus distinguishes himself from "the only true God"), and John 14:28 ("the Father is greater than I") within Nicene trinitarianism.
3. **Redirect:** The real question is whether the Nicene Creed or the biblical text gets the final word. We go with the text.
4. **On exaltation:** Quote the Church Fathers. Ask why Athanasius's teaching is orthodox when he says it but heretical when we say it.

LDS Position Summary

- **Three distinct beings:** Father, Son, Holy Ghost — separate in person, perfectly one in purpose, will, and glory
- **One God in worship:** The Father is supreme; we worship Him through the Son
- **Biblical language, not creedal:** We use the Bible's own relational categories, not 4th-century Greek philosophy
- **Exaltation:** God's children can become like Him — taught in scripture, taught by Church Fathers, taught in Eastern Orthodoxy today
- **Not polytheism:** One supreme God, one object of worship, one divine purpose — that is monotheism

Resources

- [FAIR: Godhead and Trinity](#)
- [Church: Godhead](#)
- [FAIR: Deification / Theosis](#)
- [FAIR: Polytheism](#)