

Understanding The Godhead

Ken Birks, Teacher

I. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

The study of the Godhead is an important doctrine for the Christian to understand. It is one of the major doctrines that orthodox Christianity teaches. It is a doctrine that separates Christianity from cults and so called Christian cults. It is considered a great mystery in Scripture, of which in this lesson our goal is to unravel this great mystery.

The question that arises concerning the Godhead, is how can God, who is one God, be three persons? God in the Bible is shown to be three distinct personalities: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

1 John 5:7 *For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.*

■ **The Word Godhead Is Used To Describe God's Divine Nature.**

In the scriptures the word "Godhead" is used to describe the person of God.

Acts 17:29 *Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature (Godhead) is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising.*

Colossians 2:9 *For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily...*

Romans 1:19-20 *...for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, His eternal power and **Godhead**, so that they are without excuse.*

■ **The Godhead Is A Mystery.**

There are many mysteries in God's word of which the subject of the name of God and the Godhead are one of those great mysteries.

Colossians 2:2 *...that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ.*

1 Timothy 3:16 *And without controversy **great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory.***

Tertullian, one of the early church fathers introduced the word "Trinity" as the most suitable word to define the teaching concerning the Godhead. It's important to understand that the Bible does not use the word "trinity", but it is a good word to describe the nature of God. In this study we will refer to the word the Bible uses, the word "Godhead".

II. A STATEMENT OF FAITH CONCERNING THE GODHEAD.

The Eternal Godhead is revealed as **one God** existing in **three persons**; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. All three are co-eternal, co-equal and co-existent in attributes, power, nature and glory.

The Bible teaches very explicitly that God is one, but it also teaches us that God is three. The study of the oneness of God must always be in connection with the threeness of God, and the study of the threeness of God must always be in conjunction with the revelation of the oneness of God otherwise either extreme can become heresy.

1. God Is One.

The God of the Bible, the God whom we worship, is revealed as One God. This is confirmed in both the Old and New Testaments.

A. Old Testament Scriptures.

Deuteronomy 4:35,39 *...The Lord Himself is God; **there is none other besides Himself...there is no other.***

Exodus 20:3 *You shall have no other gods before Me.*

Deuteronomy 6:4 *Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God, **the Lord is One!***

Other scripture references are as follows: 1 Samuel 2:2, 2 Samuel 7:22, Psalm 86:10; 83:18, Isaiah 44:6,8; 43:10; 45:18.

Each one of these verses show clearly that there is one God, and that He is the one and only true God to be worshipped.

B. New Testament Scriptures.

Mark 12:29 *The first of all the commandments is, "Hear, O Israel, **The Lord our God, the Lord is one.***

Mark 12:32 *...for there is **one God**, and there is no other but He.*

1 Corinth. 8:4 *...and that **there is no other God but one.***

Galatians 3:20 *Now a mediator does not mediate for one only, **but God is one.***

Ephesians 4:5-6 *One Lord, one faith, **one God** and Father of all...*

1 Timothy 2:5 *For **there is one God** and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*

A. Word Study on The Hebrew Words "One".

By doing a word study on the Hebrew and Greek words used for "one" in the Bible we can see this truth concerning the oneness of God and the tri-unity of God more clearly.

The two Hebrew words for one are **Yachead**, and **Echad**.

■ **Yachead** (or Yachid) speaks of absolute unity - a mathematical or numerical number one. It is used about twelve times in the Old Testament, but not to describe the Unity of God. Some examples are as follows:

Genesis 22:2,12 *Abraham offered up his **only (Yachead)** son, Isaac.*

Zechariah 12:10 *...they will mourn for him as one mourns for his **only (yachead) son.***

Jeremiah 6:26 *...make mourning as for an **only (yachead) son...***

This word is significant of the fact that there is only **one way** to God, one Son of God, man's only hope of salvation, and this is through the Lord Jesus Christ - **John 14:1,6**

■ **Echad** - speaks of a compound or collective unity often a unity which comprises more than one person. ie., one crowd, one people, one nation. Examples of this type

of unity are as follows:

Genesis 2:24 ...and **they** shall become **one** (echad) flesh.

Ezra 3:1 ...the **people** gathered together as **one** (echad) **man** to Jerusalem.

1 Chronicles 12:38 ...and **all** the rest of Israel were of **one** (echad) **mind** to make David king.

The Hebrew word "Echad" is used hundreds of times in the Old Testament and is often significant of a compound unity; the unity of more than one. It is the word which is used concerning our **one God**.

Deuteronomy 6:4 "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one("Echad")!"

B. A Word Study On the Greek Words For "One".

There are also two Greek words for "one", which are ***Heis***, and ***Monos***.

■ **"Monos"** means alone, solitary the numerical number one as seen in the example below.

Hebrews 11:17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his **only** begotten son.

■ **"Heis"** means union and concord, a compound unity. Examples of this are as follows.

1 Corinthians 12:12 For as the body is **one** and has **many** members, but all members of that **one** body, being **many**, are **one** body, so also is Christ.

John 17:21 ...that **they** all may be **one**, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that **they** also may be **one** in Us, that the world may believe that You sent me.

Whenever the Scripture speaks of the fact that God is One, it never means the mathematical or number One God but always a Compound Unity; the unity of more than One Person. It speaks of plurality of Divine Persons in the One God. This Unity is a compound Unity, which unity is revealed as **Tri-Unity**, the union of Three in One.

God's revelation of Himself in the Scripture is One God in Three Person, Eternal, Self-existent; Father, Son & Holy Spirit, distinguishable but indivisible. The Father is the first Person, The Son is the Second and the Holy Spirit is the Third person.

2. God Is Three - The Tri-Unity Of God.

As clearly as the Scriptures teach that God is one, they also teach that God is Three. There is one God manifested in three persons, distinguishable, but indivisible. These three are spoken to us as being "The Father, The Son, and the Holy Spirit, co-equal, co-eternal, and co-existing in power, majesty, glory and essence. One God in three persons.

The God of the Bible is always revealed as Triune in nature and being. From Genesis to Revelation, whether it be by type or symbol, pattern or created things, or whether it be by clear declaration, Scriptures consistently show that God is always revealed as One in Three and Three in One.

Genesis 1:26 *Then God said, "let us make man in our image."*

Genesis 11:7 *"Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech."*

Isaiah 6:8 *Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: "Whom shall I send, And **who will go for Us?**" Then I said, "Here am I! Send me."*

■ **When God appeared to Abraham at one point, He appeared in the form of three men.**

Genesis 18:1-2 *Then the LORD appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day. {2} So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground,*

III. The Bible Teaches Jesus As God.

For the Bible to be consistent in showing that God is Triune then the it must also teach and show us that Jesus is referred to as God.

1. The New Testament reveals Jesus as God.

John 1:1 *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

JESUS CHRIST, Word of God--Jesus is explicitly called the Word (Greek logos) in this verse and in v 14. The idea of Jesus as Word is one of the most significant insights about Christ in the New Testament. As the Word became flesh, Jesus was God in human form communicating God's will in all He said and did. He embodied ultimate truth. To communicate or proclaim about God is to point to Jesus. Only in Him can life and the universe be seen as rational and meaningful. Human speech cannot adequately communicate God. The Word become flesh can, did, and does show us the Father.

Jesus is the Word of revelation alive in human flesh. His revelation did not begin at birth in Bethlehem. He has been actively revealing God since creation in which He was active. He shows the nature of the life God creates.

John 1:14 *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*

Jesus Christ--God's presence became a human being and revealed the fullness of God's identity in flesh. The glory of God (Ex 33:22) became visible as grace and truth which all people need. He is a greater revelation than Moses' Law which revealed God's guidelines for life. He shows those guidelines can really be lived out in human flesh on earth. He is God in flesh letting us see what otherwise was impossible to see.

■ **Jesus referred to Himself as God.**

John 10:31-33 *Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. {32}Jesus answered them, "Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?" {33}The Jews answered Him, saying, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because **You, being a Man, make Yourself God.**"*

The reason the Jews wanted to stone Jesus was because they understood exactly what Jesus was saying. They knew Jesus was telling them that He was God.

John 8:57-58 *Then the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?" {58}Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, **before Abraham was, I AM.**"*

Again, the Jews were ready to stone Jesus because He told them in verse 58, "before Abraham was, I AM." He invoked upon Himself the name of Jehovah, calling Himself God. When God spoke to Moses this is the Name He referred to Himself by.

Exodus 3:14-15 *And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" {15}Moreover God said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: 'The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations.'*

When Jesus identified Himself as I AM in John 8:58, He was without a doubt calling Himself Jehovah God.

■ **The Father also addressed Jesus as God.**

Hebrews 1:6-8 *But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: "Let all the angels of God worship Him." {7}And of the angels He says: "Who makes His angels spirits And His ministers a flame of fire." {8}But to the Son He says: "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your Kingdom.*

■ **The Angels are to worship Jesus as God.**

It also says in the above Scripture that the angels of God shall worship Him, whereas God makes it very clear in Scripture that only God is to be worshipped.

Exodus 34:14 *'(for you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God),*

The only reason Jesus could possibly be worshipped would be for Him to actually be God. God makes it very clear that He is the only God and that He is the savior and there are no other gods besides Himself.

Isaiah 45:21-23 *Tell and bring forth your case; Yes, let them take counsel together. Who has declared this from ancient time? Who has told it from that time? Have not I, the LORD? And there is no other God besides Me, A just God and a Savior; There is none besides Me. {22}"Look to Me, and be saved, All you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. {23}I have sworn by Myself; The word has gone out of My mouth in righteousness, And shall not return, That to Me every knee shall bow, Every tongue shall take an oath.*

Jesus and the Father are one but two separate personalities as with the Holy Spirit also. God very specifically said He is a jealous God and that He is the only God and the only One to be worshipped, and yet we see in the Scriptures very clearly that it is Jesus who is to be worshipped as God. There can only be one conclusion. Jesus is God the Son, a part of the Triune God or Godhead.

- **The apostle Paul referred to Jesus as God.**

Philippians 2:5-7 *Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, {6}who, **being in the form of God**, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, {7}but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.*

The word "being" in the above Scripture means: remaining or never ceasing to be. The Scripture could read, "Christ Jesus, who remained or never ceased to be in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God.

- **God has highly exalted Jesus and given Him a name above all names.**

Philippians 2:9-11 *Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, {10}that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, {11}and that **every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord**, to the glory of God the Father.*

We saw earlier in the study in Isaiah 45:21-23 that it was to God the Father that every knee would bow down and worship. *"The word has gone out of My mouth in righteousness, And shall not return, **That to Me every knee shall bow, Every tongue shall take an oath.**"*

The word "God" found in verse 21 is the Hebrew word (Eloheem), which is the plural expression of God or the Godhead. This is why every knee shall bow down and worship Jesus, because the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Him and He bears the name of the Godhead.

Colossians 2:8-9 *Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. {9}**For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;***

Philippians 2:5-11 goes on to explain how Jesus emptied Himself and made Himself of no reputation. He emptied Himself of the right to independently exercise His attributes of deity. He never acted as God. The Father acted through Him and by the Holy Spirit. It took all three personalities of the Godhead to produce God's purpose and will in the earth in heavens.

It was only after His resurrection and ascension into Heaven that Jesus would once again be glorified with the Father. We find this in His prayer in John 17.

John 17:5 *"And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was."*

Now that He has gone through the death, burial and resurrection and ascended unto the Father, He is now glorified and reigns with the Father. All power and authority has now been given to Jesus in Heaven and earth. Jesus took up again in the resurrection and ascension what He had voluntarily laid down in the incarnation.

Matthew 28:18 *And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth."*

- **Peter understood this when he preached his message at Pentecost.**

Acts 2:36 *"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."*

2. Old Testament Prophecies Reveal Jesus As God.

Once again, if Jesus is truly God and the second person of the Godhead, we should also find Old Testament prophecies that portray Him in this light.

- **His goings forth have been from everlasting.**

Micah 5:2 *"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting."*

- **He shall be called the Mighty God.**

Isaiah 9:6 *For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, **Mighty God**, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

This prophecy actually reveals the fullness of the Godhead dwelling upon Jesus. He is referred to as the Everlasting Father, which reveals the Father in Him, the Counsellor, which reveals the Holy spirit in Him and of course the Prince of Peace by which Jesus the Son has been called. Jesus bears both the name and characteristics of the Father and the Holy Spirit, because the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily in Him.

3. Jesus is revealed as God through the Alpha & the Omega.

Revelation 1:8 *"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End," says the Lord, "who is and **who was and who is to come, the Almighty.**"*

■ **Both Jesus and the Lord Jehovah identify themselves as the First and the Last.**

Revelation 1:17-18 *And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; **I am the First and the Last.** {18}" I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.*

Revelation 22:12-13 *"And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. {13}" I am the **Alpha** and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last."*

Isaiah 44:6 *"Thus says the LORD (Jehovah), the King of Israel, **And his Redeemer,** the LORD of hosts: **'I am the First and I am the Last;** Besides Me there is no God.*

Here we see the Father and the Son (His Redeemer, the LORD of Hosts) are identified together as the First and the Last and as God. There is only one conclusion, and that is that Jesus and Jehovah are One and both are a part of the Godhead.

III. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS REFERRED TO AS GOD.

Up to this point in this lesson, we have focused our attention on Jesus as God showing conclusively that He is referred to as God. In this section the purpose will be to establish that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Godhead and is also referred to as God.

1. The Holy Spirit Took Part In The Creation Of The World.

The Bible shows in Genesis the first chapter that it was God who created the heavens and the earth, but it speaks of the plurality of God in Genesis 1:26 where it says, "let Us make man in Our image." The thought that I want to establish here is that the Holy Spirit was involved in the creation of the world and therefore if it was God who created the world, then the Holy Spirit must also be a part of the Godhead.

- **The Spirit of God Hovered over the face of the waters.**

Genesis 1:2 *The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And **the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.***

- **Job's Friend: "The Spirit of God has made me."**

Job 33:4 *The **Spirit of God has made me,** And the breath of the Almighty gives me life.*

The Spirit of God in the Hebrew is referred to as the breath of the Almighty, and wind by resemblance breath, divine inspiration.

- **The Holy Spirit involved in the creation of animals and sea creatures.**

Psalms 104:25 *This great and wide sea, In which are innumerable teeming things, Living things both small and great.*

Psalms 104:30 *You send forth Your Spirit, they are created; And You renew the face of the earth.*

- **The example of Ananias.**

Acts 5:3-5 *But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to **lie to the Holy Spirit** and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? {4}"While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? **You have not lied to men but to God.**" {5}Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last. So great fear came upon all those who heard these things.*

Ananias lied to the Holy Spirit, but in verse five, it says, "he lied to God." This is because the Holy Spirit is a part of the Godhead and is also God. He is just as much God as the Father and the Son.

- **Scripture came by the inspiration of God or by the Holy Spirit.**

2 Timothy 3:16 *All Scripture is given **by inspiration of God**, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,*

IV. THE GODHEAD IN ACTION.

1. **All Three Persons of the Godhead were involved in the creation of the world.**

- **The Father's Involvement.**

Genesis 1:1-3 *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. {2}The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. {3}Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.*

- **The Son's Involvement in Creation.**

Colossians 1:16 *For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. **All things were created through Him and for Him.***

Ephesians 3:9 *and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God **who created all things through Jesus Christ;***

- **The Holy Spirit's Involvement in Creation.**

Genesis 1:2 *The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And **the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.***

2. **The Godhead Involved in the Resurrection of Jesus.**

- **The Father's Involvement.**

Acts 2:36 *"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that **God** has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."*

- **The Son's Involvement.**

John 10:17-18 *"Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. {18}"No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father."*

■ The Holy Spirit's Involvement.

Romans 8:11 *But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.*

3. Our Access to the Father.

Ephesians 2:18 *For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.*

4. The Godhead at the Baptism of Jesus.

Matthew 3:15-17 *But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed Him. {16}When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. {17}And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."*

The Father spoke and the Holy Spirit descended in the form of a dove on the Son, Jesus. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit always work together, because they are One.

V. Concluding Remarks.

Just as our body cannot exist without our soul and our spirit, the Father cannot exist without the Son and the Holy Spirit. They are all interdependent upon each other. This is why when Philip asked Jesus to show him the Father, Jesus responded by saying, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father."

John 14:8-9 *Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us." {9}Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"*

There is only one God. There never has been any except Him. Therefore God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit have always existed together, they are eternal.

Isaiah 43:10-11 "You are My witnesses," says the LORD, "And My servant whom I have chosen, That you may know and believe Me, And understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, Nor shall there be after Me. {11}I, even I, am the LORD, And besides Me there is no savior.

- **The invisible attributes and His eternal Godhead is seen in through creation.**

Romans 1:20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,