

THE GODHEAD

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Three times in the King James Version of the English Bible the word “Godhead” is found. What is the meaning of this word “Godhead?” Who is the Godhead?

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The word “Godhead” is used to describe the very nature of God. In the three occurrences of this word in the King James Bible, the word “Godhead” is actually a translation of three different Greek words that stem from one common root. According to Greek dictionaries and lexicons, each of the three Greek words used are related to one another and they have the same meaning. These three words can literally be translated “divinity” or “deity,” that is, having the nature of God.

All three times this root is used we find it on the lips of the Jesus’ apostle Paul. The first time the word is used Paul was standing on Mars Hill in the city of Athens, Greece. He was standing in the midst of a circle of philosophers, the teachers, the wise men of Athens. He was explaining God to them. He said that as he was passing through the streets of Athens he came upon an altar with this inscription, “to the Unknown God.” Paul said, “What you therefore worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, being the Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is [He] served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.” (Acts 17:23-25, ESV.) Paul went on to describe mankind as God’s offspring, God’s children, even as some of their Greek poets had affirmed in their poetry. Paul concluded, “Being then God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the [Godhead, that is, the divine being] is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man.” (Acts 17:29, the word “Godhead” appears in the KJV.)

The second place this word “Godhead” appears in my KJV is in Romans 1:20. Here again, these are the words of the apostle Paul. Paul wrote that God’s wrath has been revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth of God. Paul affirms that

idolatry is inexcusable. “For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them.” The Bible testifies that no one has ever seen God. How then can someone who is invisible show Himself? And how can this invisible person hold me accountable for believing in Him? Paul continued that God’s “invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and [Godhead, that is, His divinity] have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made.” (Romans 1:17-20, ESV.) Ah! So mankind is held responsible for looking at God’s handiwork [the universe] and concluding that there is an almighty, divine, God! There is Godhead. There is something divine.

The third occurrence of the word “Godhead” in the King James Version of the Bible is found in Colossian 2:9. Again, this is the writing of the apostle Paul. In this chapter Paul is describing Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Lord. The Colossians have believed that Jesus is the Christ, the Lord. Paul encourages the Christians to continue “walking” in Him, “rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.” And then Paul charges the Colossians, “See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him (in Christ) the whole fullness of [the Godhead, that is, deity] dwells bodily, and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.” (Colossians 2:6-9, ESV.) Paul says that the “fullness of deity” dwells bodily in Jesus Christ. That is, in the person of Jesus Christ you find God, you find deity.

The word “deity” is a noun and it describes the condition, or the nature of God, the state of being God. The word “divinity” carries the same idea: the quality or the nature of God. When Jesus gave the great commission to his disciples to “make disciples in all the nations,” He commanded that they baptize believers “in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.” (Matthew 28:18-20.) The only one of these three persons who became visible to the world was the Son. His given name is Jesus. His position is the Christ. His relationship with deity is that He is the only Son that God has conceived. He is the only begotten. One of Jesus’ disciples once said to Jesus, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” Jesus replied, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me,

Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves." (John 14:8-11, ESV.)

In this episode Jesus claimed that the Father was in him and he in the Father. Jesus was the personal representation of God. Jesus was, and is, divine. An earlier episode in the life of Jesus also illustrates the same thing. Jesus had come in a boat with his disciples to the other side of Galilee, "to the country of the Gadarenes...two demon-possessed men met him, coming out of the tombs, so fierce that no one could pass that way. [They cried out to Jesus] 'What have you to do with us, O Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?'" Those demons knew who Jesus was and is. They called him the "son of God." The demons also knew there was a time coming when they would receive a just punishment. They asked Jesus if he had come to torment them before Judgment Day. Luke says that many demons confessed "'You are the Son of God!' But [Jesus] rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ." (Luke 4:41, ESV.)

The night before Jesus was crucified he comforted his disciples by telling them that after He was gone from the earth He would send the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "...I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live." (John 14:16-19, ESV.) This Holy Spirit was to stay with the disciples of Jesus until He come again. In 2 Corinthians 13:14, Paul wrote, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all." Here again, the three persons who are all divine are listed. In his benediction to this letter, Paul wanted to leave the Corinthians with the wish that Jesus' grace, God's love, and the Spirit's fellowship would be with them all. These are the three persons of the Godhead. They are deity.

It is very hard, but we must not think of the Godhead as we would humans. Having only the language of humans, it is difficult to talk about these three persons who are divine, who are God. But God is not three men.

Of the three persons who are divine, Jesus is the only one who is called a “man.” In 1 Timothy 2:5, the apostle Paul wrote, “For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, [6](#) who gave himself as a ransom for all....” John calls Jesus the Word. In John, chapter 1, John wrote, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men.” Then in verse 14, we read, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.” Paul gives further description to the coming of Jesus in the flesh. He wrote, “though he was in the form of God, [Jesus] did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Philippians 2:5-11, ESV.)

In the very beginning of the Bible we read these words, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. And God said....” We have the three persons of the Godhead in the first three verses of the Bible. God created, the Spirit was hovering, and the Word was spoken.

There are three persons in the Godhead: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit of God is still in the earth. He is within true Christians. Do you need to learn more about God? Visit a church of Christ.