

Back to Bible Basics

Issue 9

THE GODHEAD

Brett Rutherford

One would have to be God in order to fully understand the nature of God. Admittedly, it is difficult for finite beings to come to grips with the Bible's claim that there is one God, and yet, there are three Persons who share that divine nature (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 44:6; Zechariah 14:9; I Corinthians 8:4; James 2:19; Matthew 28:19; Genesis 1:26).

Rather than accepting the Bible's clear teaching that there are three Persons who make up one God, many have tried to simplify their view of the Creator by suggesting that the Son and the Holy Spirit are not God, but the product of God. To hold the view that the Son (Jesus), and the Holy Spirit are creations (or expressions) of Jehovah is to ignore clear statements in Scripture that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are all distinct Persons who possess the common bond of the Divine Nature.

The Father is referred to as God in Ephesians 4:6; Matthew 5:16; 6:14-32; 23:9 etc. The Son (Jesus the Christ) is also referred to in Scripture as God. He was described as God who dwelt among us (Matthew 1:23). Paul wrote that the Son was equal with God the Father (Philippians 2:5-11). Isaiah called Jesus the Messiah the "Mighty God, and the Everlasting Father" (Isaiah 9:6). Isaiah's statement is consistent with Jesus' own claim that He and the Father are One (John 10:30). Paul and John made it clear that Jesus (the Word) was the Creator of all (John 1:1-18; Hebrews 1:2). If God is the Creator (Genesis 1:1), and Jesus is called the Creator, then Jesus is God!

The Holy Spirit is also referred to as God in Acts 5:3,4. Peter condemned Ananias and Sapphira because they lied to the Holy Spirit. Peter makes it

clear that lying to the Holy Spirit was synonymous with lying to God. Further proof that the Holy Spirit is God lies in the fact that He can be blasphemed just like the other Persons of the Godhead. The Holy Spirit is clearly not just the force of God, but a distinct Person of the Godhead. Furthermore, the three Persons of the Godhead are said to hold equal authority (Matthew 28:19,20). If the Holy Spirit was simply the expression of God's power, and not a distinct Person, why would this force (a non-living thing) be mentioned on equal footing with the Father and the Son in Matthew 28:19, 20?

How can mankind, with our limited intellectual power come to some understanding of the Godhead? Perhaps the most common way scholars have attempted to illustrate the Godhead in terms we can understand is to compare it to marriage. The Bible states that a man and a woman become "one flesh" when they are married (Matthew 19:1-6). In marriage the husband and the wife do not lose their distinct identities. However, the husband and wife are essential components of ONE institution that is greater than them. There is ONE marriage but two distinct persons who are equal partners in that marriage. The husband and wife have different roles, but the role of the wife is not more important, or less important than the role of the husband. In the same way, one can say that the Godhead is ONE institution (if you will) with three distinct Persons who are a part of that ONE institution (Ephesians 5:22-33).

Of course, any means that mankind has formulated to help us understand the Godhead is always going to be an inadequate way of trying to explain the complexities of the Divine Nature. For example, a husband and wife may be one in marriage, but their goals and objectives may differ from time to time. The three Persons of the Godhead never waver in their unity of purpose. Where a husband and wife may at times work against each other, the persons of the Godhead never come into conflict with one another (John 17:1-26). The kind of unity the Godhead enjoys is simply not found among any people or institution on earth.

No man can say that he can fully understand the nature of God. We must simply learn to accept what the Bible says about God. The Bible clearly teaches that there is ONE GOD, but there are three Persons who share that Divine nature. 

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232 William Street
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THE DEITY OF CHRIST

Ian McPherson

Who is Jesus Christ? Few deny that He possessed all the attributes of humanity. He was born of a woman (Galatians 4:4). He was able to be tempted (Hebrews 2:18; 4:15), feel hunger (Luke 4:2), and thirst (John 19:28). As a man, He also subjected Himself completely to God (John 12:50), to His parents (Luke 2:51), and to the law of the land (Luke 2:52). The greatest proof of His humanity was the suffering and death He experienced on the cross (Hebrews 2:9). However Jesus was more than a man, He was also Deity. This is easily seen from an examination of John 1:1-4 and verse 14.

"In the beginning was the Word". (V1) The word "was" is used here and six other times in the first four verses. In every instance it refers to Christ and is in the perfect tense which refers to continuous linear action in the past. Thus Christ has always existed. He was not created as the Jehovah's Witness' teach, but was: *"without father without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of life nor end of days"* (Hebrews 7:3). Christ is Eternal; He had no beginning and will never cease to exist.

"The Word was with God. (V1) The expression "with God" shows that He was in association with, and in fellowship with God throughout eternity. Jesus Himself prayed *"And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."* (John 17:5). Thus, He and the Father were not the same person but both shared the same place of Glory together. This same thought is emphasised in V2 *"The same was in the beginning with God."*

"The Word was God". (V1) "Theos" (God) in this phrase has no definite article before it indicating that the writer was not referring to Christ as an individual but that He possessed all the attributes of Deity. The word "man" is often used in the same way. A man can be either an individual or simply a member of humanity.

Notice Genesis 1:27 *"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."* In this verse neither "God" nor "man" refers to individuals but to the type of persons they are. When John says *"The Word was God"*, he wants the reader to realise that, although Jesus is not the only person who possessed Deity, He did in fact possess all the attributes of Deity and was therefore God.

Jesus spent His eternal pre-existence with the rest of Deity which consisted of the Father and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19; John 14:16-17; 2 Corinthians 13:14; etc.).

"Without Him was not anything made that was made". (V3) The entire universe came into existence through Christ. It was His voice that thundered *"let there be light"* (Genesis 1:3). And His voice that said *"Let us make man in our image according to our likeness. (Genesis 1:26-27).* The fact that He is the originator of all things is seen in Colossians 1:16-17 -- *"For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."*

"In him was life; and the life was the light of men". (V4) Jesus not only formed the physical universe but is also the source of the life that makes man a spiritual being in the image of God. (See Genesis 2:7; 1:26-27). A translation of the Bible called "God's Word" gives the meaning of this verse by saying *"He was the source of life, and that life was the light for humanity"*.

"And the Word was made 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. (V14) His fleshly appearance on earth as a man in no way divested Him of His Deity. He is the same *"yesterday, today and for ever"* (Hebrews 13:8). Even after His incarnation He still wore all the titles of Deity. He was called "God" (Hebrews 1:8); "God with us", (Matthew 1:23), "Over all, God" (Romans 9:5) "The Mighty God" (Isaiah 9:6) and "The Almighty" (Rev 1:8). Paul said, *"For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily".* (Colossians 2:9)

In order to be saved, we must believe in both the Humanity and the Deity of Christ. Christ said --- *"I say therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."* (John 8:24). If you believe that Jesus has "come in the flesh" (1 John 4:3; 2 John 1:7), and are willing to repent of your sins (Luke 13:3), then you can be baptized for remission of sins and added by the Lord to His church (Acts 2:38-47). 