

The Godhead and the Bible

By Al Felder

“For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.” (Romans 1:20)

There is enough evidence in nature to convince man of the existence of God. That evidence points to an intelligent design. Why does an archeologist become excited when he finds ancient artifacts? It is because they are a sign of intelligence. The scientist recognizes that these objects did not create themselves, rather, they were created by an intelligent being. It is in that same manner that creation points to God.

Creation can make us aware of the fact that there is a God, but it cannot teach us anything more. The word Godhead means divine nature.¹ It has reference to God’s power. If we want to know who God is, we must have more information. This is where the Bible comes into play. It is God’s message to man.

Without the Bible we would not know that there are three divine beings. We know of these beings as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. As we stated earlier, nature points to the fact that there is a God. The term Godhead that was used in our opening verse is used in a couple of other verses in the New Testament. This word carries with it the idea of a divine state or essence. Scripture confirms, however, that within this divine state there are three beings.

In the very beginning of the Bible we read about the members of the Godhead. *“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.” (Genesis 1:26)* In this verse we read about a discussion that took place between the three members of the Godhead concerning the creation of man. This biblical teaching can be extremely confusing and hard to grasp. That being said, we are going to try and make it as clear as we can.

Many people become confused by the distinction between the three members of the Godhead. To them, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all the same. They believe that these are three names that are used to describe the same person. The Bible makes it clear, however, that this is not the case.

As you read the Bible you will find that the Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Holy Spirit, nor is the Holy Spirit the Father. The scriptures teach that there is a clear distinction

¹ Vine, W. E. 1996. *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*. Nashville, TN : Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1996. p. 178.

between the members of the Godhead. All three are God, but all three are not the same person.

Let's look at some verses that make the distinction between the members of the Godhead clear. *"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man."* (James 1:26) In this passage of scripture God the Father is under consideration. In fact, in many New Testament passages when the term God is used it is usually in reference to the Father. In this passage we find that God the Father cannot be tempted with evil. This is where a clear distinction comes in between the Father and the Son.

The Son came into this world as a man in order to fulfill the plan of redemption. In order to do this He had to place limitations upon Himself. One thing that we need to make clear, however, is the fact that He is and always will be God. *"For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily."* (Colossians 2:9) This verse confirms the fact that while in human form Jesus was still divine. There never has been, nor will there ever be, a time in which the Son is not God.

When Jesus came into this world He had to undergo something that the Father could not. *"For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."* (Hebrews 4:15) Whereas the Father cannot be tempted with evil, Jesus, when He was on the Earth in the form of man, was tempted with evil.

We can read about this in the Gospels. *"Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil."* (Matthew 4:1) Temptation is something that Jesus had to go through so that He would be the perfect sacrifice. As the verse in Hebrews pointed out, He had to experience everything that you and I experience. He had to go through temptation. He had to face all of our weaknesses, yet without sin.

Just as the Bible points out a clear distinction between the Father and the Son, it points out a clear distinction between the Son and the Spirit. *"³¹Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. ³²And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."* (Matthew 12:31, 32) While Jesus was on this Earth in the form of man it was easy for people to look at Him and think that He was just an ordinary man. They could doubt His claims of deity and speak evil of Him, and that could be forgiven. But when Jesus backed up His claim with a demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit, such doubt and evil speaking could not be forgiven. *"But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you."* (Matthew 12:28) Once an individual refused to be convinced by the power of God, there was simply nothing else that could be done.

Some may still be confused at this time as to what the Bible teaches concerning the Godhead. They may ask, "Doesn't the Bible teach that there is one God." The answer to that question is yes. The Bible does teach that there is one God. How, then, can this be reconciled with the teaching of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

When the Bible says that there is one God it does not mean one in person. The prayer that Jesus prayed in the garden points this out. *"That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."* (John 17:21) When the Bible says that there is one God, it is speaking of the nature and purpose of God. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all divine. They are one in purpose. They agree on all things, and are never divided.

In fact, the Bible uses this same teaching to discuss the relationship that is to exist between a husband and his wife. *"For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh."* (Ephesians 5:31) A husband and wife do not become one in person. They are, however, to function as one in purpose. The goals and plans of a husband and wife are to be the same; just as the goals and plans of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are the same.

Young people, this is something that is very important for you to consider when seeking a spouse. You need to seek a person who has the same goals that you have in your life. If you are a Christian, you need to seek a Christian. You need to seek a person who has the same desire to serve God that you possess. Then, and only then, can you and your spouse be one as the Bible discusses.

Another way that might help you understand what the Bible teaches concerning God is to consider our government. We have one government. Yet, within our government we have three distinct branches. There is the executive branch, legislative branch, and judicial branch. Each of these branches, although separate and distinct one from the other, work together to make up our government.

The Bible teaches that each member of the Godhead has a distinct role. *"But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God."* (1 Corinthians 11:3) If it were not for the separate roles of the Godhead, and those roles being outlined in the Bible, we probably wouldn't know that there are three persons in the Godhead. Yet, the Bible does teach that there are differing roles among the members of the Godhead due to their differing levels of authority.

Let's look at the role of each member of the Godhead.

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: ⁴According as he hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: ⁵Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good

pleasure of his will. ⁶To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved. ⁷In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; ⁸Wherein He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; ⁹Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in Himself: ¹⁰That in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him: ¹¹In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: ¹²That we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ. ¹³In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise. ¹⁴Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory.” (Ephesians 1:3-14)

Within this series of verses we can read about the role of each member of the Godhead. At different points of time a member of the Godhead acted in order to bring about their one singular purpose. Each action that a member of the Godhead took was determined by the system of authority in the Godhead.

Within these verses, and throughout the Bible, we find that God the Father is the planner. He is at the top of the chain of authority, and He is the one who makes and preserves plans. The term father means originator. Thus, it is from God the Father that the plan originated. He is the great architect.

The Son is the second member of the Godhead. He is under the father in level of authority. It is His role to enact the plan. This is exactly what He did when He came to this earth and gave His life. He carried out the divine plan for the redemption of man.

People often get confused by the use of the term son in reference to Jesus. The term son means the expression of character.² *“Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person.”* (Hebrews 1:3) While here on this earth, Jesus was a visual illustration to those around Him of the Father.

Jesus is God. He did not originate from the Father. He like the Father is eternal and divine. *“Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?”* (John 14:9) Jesus is referred to as the Son because He showed man who the Father is while He was here on this earth. It would be the equivalent of looking at a boy and saying, “You are just like you’re father.” The only exception is that the likeness between Jesus and the Father is perfect.

² —. 1996. *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*. Nashville, TN : Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1996. p. 585.

The third and final member of the Godhead is the Holy Spirit. To many people the Spirit is a mystery. He is not given a name like the Father and Son. We know and understand those terms, therefore, it's easier for us to grasp an understanding of the first two members of the Godhead.

After the Father makes the plan and the Son enacts the plan, the Spirit establishes and perfects the plan. *"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."* (John 14:26) Through the revelation of the Spirit we have God's word that teaches us all of these great and wonderful blessings.