

The Godhead – The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit

- PURPOSE** There is *one* God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit – a unity of three coeternal Persons.
- FOCUS** It was God who shed His own blood on Calvary for you.
- Introduction** The nature of God is in its fullest sense a mystery beyond human comprehension. But we can explore it as much as the Word of God reveals.
- We will begin in Isaiah...*
- Isa 46:9** How many true gods are there? (Deut 6:4, Jas 2:16)
In the Old Testament, God has many names. Let's look at the most prominent one...
- Exod 3:13-15** God's name is spelled YHVH and is pronounced Jehovah or Yahweh. But the Bible authors often times didn't utter the name, but said the Lord.
God is also the Creator of the Universe...
- Isa 44:24** Who created the world? Did He have any helpers?
But when we read the creation story we find some confusing verses...
- Gen 1:26-27** Which pronoun does God use about Himself? (**Gen 11:7**, 19:23-24)
How can multiple persons be one?
- Gen 2:24** How many "fleshes" would the man and woman become? As the family (and the church) is *one* unity of *multiple* individuals, so the Godhead is *one* unity of several individuals (John 10:30, 17:21-22). IE: God = Surname
How many Persons does the Godhead consist of?
- Isa 48:16** Who speaks here? (v.13, 17) Who has sent Him? Who else did the Lord send? Here we see three Beings with divine attributes and authority.
Who is the One sent by the Lord? We understand that this is speaking of the Messiah...
- Isa 9:6** What names are given to the Messiah? Did the OT consider the Messiah to be God? Is the Messiah eternal? (**Mich 5:2**, Heb 7:3, Ps 90:2, Prov 8:22-23)
Let us look at what the New Testament says about Jesus' equality with God...
- John 1:1-3** Who is the Word? (**v.14**) Is the Word God? How much did He create? Did the apostles believe that Jesus was Divine? (**Col 2:9, John 20:26-29, Phil 2:6, Rom 9:5, 1 John 5:20**)
Who did the angel Gabriel consider Jesus to be?
- Matt 1:22-23** What was one of the names of Jesus? What does it mean?
Who did Jesus consider Himself to be?
- John 8:58-59** Who does Jesus say He is? (cf. Exod 3:13-15) Did the Jews understand that? (**Joh 5:18, 21-23, 26, 10:30-33**)
Who did God the Father consider Jesus to be?
- Heb 1:4-10** Who are the angels commanded to worship? Is Jesus worthy of our worship? (**Acts 7:59, Matt 2:11, 14:33, 28:9, 17, Luke 24:52, John 9:38, cf Rev 19:10, 22:8-9**) What does the Father call Jesus? (cf **v.9-12** with **Ps 102:22-28**). Jesus is not a created being, He is "God... manifested in the flesh" (**1 Tim 3:16**)
What about the Holy Spirit? Some say the Spirit is electricity or a force. What did Jesus think?
- John 16:13** What pronoun does Jesus use for the Holy Spirit? Name four things that the Holy Spirit can do. Can a force do that? Does He have feelings? (**Eph 4:30**)
The Holy Spirit is said to have a will of His own...
- 1 Kor 12:11** His mind is something separate from both the Father (**Rom 8:26-27, 1 Cor 2:10-11**) and Jesus (**Matt 12:31-32, John 14:16**).
The Holy Spirit is also considered an equal of Jesus and the Father...
- Matt 28:19** In what three names are believers to be baptized? (**Acts 5:3-4, 2 Cor 3:17**)
- APPEAL** It was the Creator who died for us on the cross. The Holy Spirit is the personal representative of Jesus and the Father, who wants to dwell in us. Do you wish to learn more about this God of Love and what He has done for us?

APPENDIX A – *Objections and Difficult Passages*

- Col 1:15** Christ is the firstborn of all creation (cf Rev 3:14). Some interpret this to mean that Christ was the first creature God made. This interpretation contradicts such texts as we have studied above. How are we to understand it? Christ is also called the “firstborn from the dead” (**Col 1:18, Rev 1:5**), which, by the same logic, would then be interpreted as being the first person to rise from the dead. But we know many people that were raised from the dead before Christ (e.g. 1 Kings 17:22, John 11:43-44). The word firstborn cannot not signify first in terms of chronology, but it has to refer to first in preeminence. David was *made the firstborn* by God even though he was the lastborn chronologically: “Also I will make him My firstborn, The highest of the kings of the earth.” (**Ps 89:27**). Christ was the Creator (**Col 1:16**) and the firstborn of all creation, meaning He is the Lord of all creation (**Rev 5:13, Phil 2:9-11**).
- Prov 8:22** This passage refers to wisdom and is a symbolic reference to Christ (cf 1 Cor 1:30; Col 2:3; Luke 7:34-35). Some translations render this passage: “The LORD created me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of long ago.” (NRSV) and other translations say: “The LORD possessed me at the beginning of His way, Before His works of old.” (NKJV). The word *qanah* usually means “to acquire” or “buy”. It would be difficult to say that God created wisdom, since it is an intricate part of His nature (Eph 3:9-10; Rev 7:12). If there at some point was no wisdom, then God could not by nature be Omniscient. Therefore, the latter translation must be correct. Christ is of the same nature as the Father, and has always been together with Him (John 1:1).
- John 14:28** Jesus says that the Father is greater than Him. How does this agree with the fact that Jesus in other places says He is equal with the Father (**John 5:18, 10:30-33**)? Philippians 2:6-8 says that Christ voluntarily gave up His position as equal with God in heaven temporarily. By nature, He was still equal with God, but not in position. He made Himself dependent on the Father, to be an Example to us (Joh 5:19, 30; 1 John 2:6). This position He received back once in heaven (v.9-11). Hebrews 2:9 says: “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.” Not only was the Father temporarily higher than Jesus in His humility, even angels were. Yet in the same book the angels are told to worship Jesus (**Heb 1:6**).
- 1 Cor 11:3** God is the “head” of Christ. As in the family, two parties can be equal, yet can have different roles (Eph 5:22-33), so it is even within the Godhead. The Father is the Leader. Christ is the Savior. The Holy Spirit is the Helper (John 14:16). They all glorify each other (John 13:32, 16:14, 17:1). There is perfect harmony, unity and love between them. This is a model for the unity and harmony that each family and church should strive for (John 17:22-23).

APPENDIX B – Ellen G. White Quotes on the Godhead

Three living persons in the Heavenly Trio

“There are three living persons of the heavenly trio; in the name of these three great powers --the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit--those who receive Christ by living faith are baptized, and these powers will co-operate with the obedient subjects of heaven in their efforts to live the new life in Christ.” (*Evangelism*, p.615)

“The work is laid out before every soul that has acknowledged his faith in Jesus Christ by baptism, and has become a receiver of the pledge from the three persons--the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (MS 57, 1900).” (*Bible Commentaries 6*, p.1074)

“The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are seeking and longing for channels through which to communicate to the world the divine principles of truth.” (*Testimonies for the Church 8*, p.194)

“The presence of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the three highest powers in the universe and those in whose name the believer is baptized, is pledged to be with every striving soul.” (*Pacific Union Recorder*, July 2, 1908)

The Divinity of Christ

“If Christ made all things, He existed before all things. The words spoken in regard to this are so decisive that no one need be left in doubt. Christ was God essentially, and in the highest sense. He was with God from all eternity, God over all, blessed forevermore. The Lord Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God, existed from eternity, a distinct person, yet one with the Father.” (*Selected Messages 1*, p.247)

“Christ is the pre-existent, self-existent Son of God.... In speaking of his pre-existence, Christ carries the mind back through dateless ages. He assures us that there never was a time when He was not in close fellowship with the eternal God. He to whose voice the Jews were then listening had been with God as one brought up with Him. He was equal with God, infinite and omnipotent. ... He is the eternal, self-existent Son.” (*Evangelism*, p.615)

“From all eternity Christ was united with the Father, and when He took upon Himself human nature, He was still one with God. He is the link that unites God with humanity.” (*Selected Messages 1*, p.228)

“Jesus declared, “I am the resurrection, and the life.” In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived. “He that hath the Son hath life.” The divinity of Christ is the believer's assurance of eternal life.” (*Desire of Ages*, p.530)

The Holy Spirit – the third Person of the Godhead

“Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power.” (*Desire of Ages*, p.671)

“We need to realize that the Holy Spirit, who is as much a person as God is a person, is walking through these grounds.” (Manuscript 66, 1899)

“The Comforter that Christ promised to send after He ascended to heaven, is the Spirit in all the fullness of the Godhead, making manifest the power of divine grace to all who receive and believe in Christ as a personal Saviour.” (*Evangelism*, p.615)

“The Holy Spirit is a person, for He beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. ... The Holy Spirit has a personality, else He could not bear witness to our spirits and with our spirits that we are the children of God. He must also be a divine person, else He could not search out the secrets which lie hidden in the mind of God.” (*Evangelism*, p.617)

“It is not essential for us to be able to define just what the Holy Spirit is. ... The nature of the Holy Spirit is a mystery. Men cannot explain it, because the Lord has not revealed it to them. Men having fanciful views may bring together passages of Scripture and put a human construction on them, but the acceptance of these views will not strengthen the church. Regarding such mysteries, which are too deep for human understanding, silence is golden.” (*Acts of the Apostles*, p.52)