

## How Many Persons Are In The Godhead?

Oneness Pentecostals claim the Godhead (the state of being God) consists of only one Person who has manifested Himself in various ways and with different identities (as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit). What does the Bible teach about the composition of the Godhead?

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are all referred to as “God” in the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 8:6; Hebrews 1:8; Acts 5:3-4). All of the attributes of being God are found in each One. That is to say, each One is omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, holy, eternal, etc.

However, each member of the Godhead has a personality. Personality is defined as “the quality or fact of being a particular person; personal identity, individuality” (Webster’s New World College Dictionary). All three display the qualities of being an individual. The Father wills (Matthew 7:21), speaks (Matthew 3:17), works (John 5:17), knows (Mark 13:32), sees (Matthew 6:6), hears (John 11:41), etc. The Son wills (John 5:21), works (John 5:17), knows (John 10:14), judges (John 5:22), reveals (Luke 10:22), etc. The Holy Spirit wills (1 Corinthians 12:11), knows (1 Corinthians 2:10-11), reveals (John 16:13), speaks (1 Timothy 4:1), appoints (Acts 20:28), etc.

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are separate and distinct personalities. The Godhead is composed of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (that is, all three are identified as God). Therefore, the Godhead is composed of three separate and distinct persons.

A plurality of individuals being referred to as “one” is not unheard of in the Scriptures. Jesus prayed that all believers would be “one” (John 17:20-21). Paul said the members of a local church are “one” (1 Corinthians 12:12-13). He also said a husband and wife become “one” (Ephesians 5:31). Are we to understand that all believers give up their individuality? Do all members of a local church cease being individuals? When we look at a married couple, do we see one person or two? There is a sense in which these people are one, yet they are still individuals with their own personalities. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all one, but they are not one person. They are separate persons within the one Godhead. The Scriptures support of this conclusion. Consider the following passages:

The Bible begins with an affirmation of the plurality of the Godhead. “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). The word “God” in this verse is translated from the Hebrew word ELOHIM, the plural form of ELOAH, which is the Hebrew word for “God.” The fact that this noun is in the plural tense is confirmed by the pronouns used for it later in the chapter. “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” (Genesis 1:26, emphasis mine — HR). Why are plural pronouns used in this passage? I once had a Pentecostal tell me this was God speaking with His angels. That may seem like a logical way out of this dilemma, but it isn’t. The text clearly indicates that God was including the ones He was talking to as being involved in the creation of man, and we know that angels did not create man. God used plural

pronouns when referring to Himself because there is more than one person present within the Godhead.

The three persons of the Godhead were present and active at the baptism of Jesus. “And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:16-17). If the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are the same person, as the Oneness doctrine says, then I have a question: Where was He on this occasion? Was He really on earth throwing His voice back into heaven, or really in heaven projecting a false image upon the earth? Either way, He was deceiving John by making him believe He was in both places.

“It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me” (John 8:17-18). Jesus is appealing to the statement in the law that two witnesses are necessary in order to support a fact. He then says that His two witnesses are Himself and His Father. Yet, if Jesus is His Father, then He doesn't have two witnesses, He only has one. Again, the Oneness doctrine has God deceiving man. The Bible tells us that it is impossible for God to lie (Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:19).

“But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father” (Mark 13:32). Only the Father knows when the Second Coming will be. The Son does not. How would this be possible if the Father and the Son are the same person? Is there anything that you don't know but that you also happen to know? Does that make sense to you? No, it does not make sense, but that's the reasoning of the Oneness doctrine.

“And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost” (Luke 23:46). If the Father and the Son are the same person, then here we have Jesus saying to Himself that He commends Himself to Himself. This doesn't make sense, does it? Again, we see the dilemma of the Oneness doctrine.

When Stephen was being stoned “he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God” (Acts 7:55). How many individuals did Stephen see when he looked into heaven? If the Oneness doctrine is correct, he should have seen only one, but he didn't.

The passages we have considered in this short article could be multiplied, but these will suffice. The Bible teaches that the Godhead consists of three persons — the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Oneness doctrine of the Pentecostals must be rejected as false. We may not understand everything about God, but our failure to understand does not give us the right to support a doctrine that calls the integrity of God and the logic of the Scriptures into question.

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