

# What About the Terms "Godhead" And "Trinity"?

*What about the terms "Godhead" and "Trinity"? Is it appropriate to use these words? Do they represent biblical ideas? Study this issue with us in this week's Q&A session.*

By Wayne Jackson | Christian Courier

**"Often I hear about the 'Godhead' or the 'Trinity.' My questions are: What do these terms mean? Are these purely man-made doctrines, or do they have a Scriptural basis?"**

The term "Godhead" is found three times in the King James Version of the Bible (Acts 17:29; Rom. 1:20; Col. 2:9). In Acts 17:29 the Greek term is *theion*, signifying "divinity" or "the Deity" (with the definite article) – a perfect way to express the concept of the true God as opposed to the conflicting gods of Greek paganism. The kindred word in Romans 1:20 is *theiotes*, which refers to the Creator's "Divine nature." God's "divine essence," e.g., his limitless power and infinite wisdom, are demonstrated to perceptive humanity by means of the marvelous works of his creation – and such has been evident since the dawn of time. In Colossians 2:9 the Greek *theotes* carries the meaning of "Deity" or "Divinity." This text affirms that the fullness of the Divine nature is manifest in the person of Jesus Christ.

In a more popular sense, the English term "Godhead" has come to represent the idea that the "Divine" essence is shared by three distinct Personalities. These are delineated clearly in the New Testament as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (see: Mt. 28:19; cf. 1 Cor. 12:4-6; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Pet. 1:2; Rev. 1:4-5).

The term "trinity" is not found in the Scriptures *per se*, but the idea certainly is there. The word derives from the Latin, *trinus*, which means "three-fold." In the Christian vocabulary, the idea is that of "three" divine Persons who function as an absolute unity. This is not related to polytheism (many gods), as with the divergent, antagonistic "gods" of ancient paganism. Rather the concept is that of three distinct personalities, each fully share the identical Divine nature (i.e., the sum of those distinguishing, essential, and permanent traits by which a Being may be defined as Deity).

In the Scriptures the three sacred Persons are, in a *certain sense*, represented as "one" (Dt. 6:4; Jn. 10:30; Gal. 3:20; Jas. 2:19). They are one in nature; each shares the essence of deity. The Father is God (Eph. 1:3); Christ, the Son, is God (Jn. 1:1,14; Heb. 1:8), and the Holy Spirit likewise is Deity (Acts 5:3-4). Any person who subscribes to the notion that neither the Son nor the Spirit is "Deity" in nature is seriously mistaken. The Watchtower cult, for example, is guilty of this error.

On the other hand, there is *another sense* in which these entities are "three," that is, they are distinct personalities. The Father is not the Son (Mk. 13:32), the Son is not the Spirit (Jn. 14:16), and the Spirit is not the Father (Gal. 4:6). Those who allege that "Father," "Son," and "Holy Spirit" are but three "manifestations" of a solitary Divine Person, are deeply in error. The United Pentecostal Church advocates this false notion.

The terms "Godhead" and "Trinity" are respectable words, each representing concepts that are taught in the Holy Scriptures.

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