

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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Are There Three Persons In The Godhead?

In view of the clear-cut teaching of the Bible that there are three separate and distinct persons in the Godhead, it seems strange that anyone might conceive the idea of only one person in the Godhead. However, a movement exists which is built around the very contention. They are sometimes known as "Oneness Holiness" and "Jesus Only" people. I would not cast one iota of reflection upon their honesty, for no doubt many are just as honest and sincere as can be. However, we must recognize that honesty and sincerity alone does not make one right in his belief. Paul was honest and sincere and thought he should do many things contrary to the name of the Lord Jesus. But we know that his honesty and sincerity did not make what he believed and did pleasing to God. Being honest, he changed his ways when shown to be in error. It is commendable indeed when one so loves the truth. We pray that this will be true of all of us.

"I and My Father Are ONE." John 10:30

The above statement is quite often used as a proof-text in support of the doctrine that there is only person in the Godhead. But let us examine this teaching.

We might also observe that when Jesus prayed for all those who were to believe on Him, He prayed to the Father "that they **all** might be one; as thou Father, art in me, and I in thee" (John 17:21). (Emphasis mine, cfc). Did Jesus mean by these words all who believe in Jesus would be "one person?" Certainly not! There are many passages which show that Christians are separate and distinct persons, even though Jesus prayed that they be "one". It was for the "unity" or "oneness" of his followers for which Jesus prayed. Are all true followers "one"? Yes, absolutely, for there "is one body" (Ephesians 4:4). Yet, Paul teaches us that there are "many members" (persons) (1 Corinthians 12:20). When a person becomes a Christian he becomes united with the Holy Spirit, Christ and the Father, but he continues to be a person and still possesses an individual personality. A thousand persons may become Christians. They would be united in the "**one body**" in answer to Christ's prayer, yet they would still maintain a thousand individual personalities, even though they are one in Christ and the Father.

But someone will say, "does not this prove that there are many Gods?" We need to understand that the Bible speaks of the "Godhead" (Acts 17:29; Romans 1:20; Colossians 2:9). What is the "Godhead" of which Paul speaks? The word translated here indicates "the Divine presence of Godhood, the Personality of God" (W. E. Vines; Dictionary of New Testament Words, Vol. 1 p. 329). Compare this to "manhead" or "manhood." There is only one "Man" (man hood, but there are millions of persons in the "manhood." There is one God (Godhood), but the Bible teaches that there are three persons in this Godhood or Godhead.

A man marries a wife, and they become "**one flesh**" (Matthew 19:5). Is there anyone who would deny Jesus' statement that man and wife are one? And yet, would anyone be so absurd and say that they are "one person." Surely not!

Christ and God are "one" in purpose, "one" in intent, "one" in essence, "one" in the eternal plan to save men. Yet they maintain individual personality. There is one God, manifested in three persons: God the Father; God the Son; God the Holy Spirit. This harmonizes with what we read in Genesis 1:26, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness". There is "one" God but the three persons we have mentioned are seen in the plural pronouns "us" and "our."

When Jesus came to John to be baptized in Jordan, we find that Jesus "went straightway out of the water . . . 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). Now, we all accept Matthew's record as being inspired and therefore accurate, don't we? It is now time to ask questions:

1. If Jesus and The Holy Spirit are one person then what did Jesus see when he came out of the water? Was He looking in a mirror and seeing himself? The record says "He saw the Spirit of God in the form of a dove and lighting upon Him." This is exactly what He saw. This being true, we see three distinct persons (1) The Father in heaven (2) The Spirit of God descending from heaven like a dove (3) Jesus, God the Son, coming out of the water. The doctrine that there is only "one person" in the Godhead does not harmonize with the Holy Scripture.

2. If Jesus and the Father Are One Person, Then Who Spoke From Heaven? Was Jesus "throwing His voice"? What would be the purpose of such an act? Did someone actually speak from heaven as Matthew says? If so, then Jesus and the Father have individual and separate personalities. The voice came from **heaven**, but Jesus was on **earth** hearing the voice of the Father.

Friends, the truth is so plain. There is truly one God, but He is manifested in **three persons**. The passage in Matthew chapter 3 is a perfect illustration of the fact. Here we

see Jesus on the earth, the Holy Spirit descending as a dove and lighting upon Him, and the Father speaking from heaven all at **one and the same time**. The teaching of the "Jesus only" doctrine carried to its logical conclusions would make this the greatest "slight of hand" performance in history. God doesn't deal in deceit and trickery. Why accept error when truth is so easy to believe? The truth alone will free you from the shackles of error and sin.

- Cecil F. Cox, via Gospel Power, 10/13/2002, Anderson, AL

Clippings . . .

People are not knowledgeable of God's ways because they do not study God's Words. We hear people say, "I just don't have time to read the Bible as much as I want to." — when the facts are, we do just about what we really want to do. Let us look at some figures that I think will help to explain the "excuse" of no time. A person can actually read the longest work in the New Testament in less time than it takes to watch a 90-minute television special. A fairly rapid reader can read the books of the New Testament in the following minutes:

Matthew	83 minutes
Mark	46 minutes
Luke	85 minutes
John	60 minutes
Acts	80 minutes
Romans	35 minutes
1 Corinthians	28 minutes
2 Corinthians	23 minutes
Galatians	13 minutes
Ephesians	13 minutes
Philippians	8 minutes
Colossians	8 minutes
1 Thessalonians	7 minutes
2 Thessalonians	4 minutes
1 Timothy	10 minutes
2 Timothy	7 minutes
Titus	3 minutes
Philemon	1 minute
Hebrews	26 minutes
James	8 minutes
1 Peter	10 minutes
2 Peter	7 minutes
1 John	8 minutes

2 John	1 minute
3 John	1 minute
Jude	2 minutes
Revelation	24 minutes

Striving For That Likeness!

The love of God has made possible the means whereby the vilest of sinners can become children of God. That is why John writes, "See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God;" (1 John 3:1a). What greater blessing can be found anywhere? What closer relationship can be enjoyed than to be His child? "And such we are." (vs. 1b). No greater honor exists! As such, the world does not know us, because the world does not know Him. Christ lives in us and we are therefore strangers to the world.

As children of God we are "heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:17). Surely, our goal is to be like Him in as many ways as possible. We do not expect to be as deity, or like Him in power and glory, but it is certainly our goal to love as He loves, serve as He serves, be pure as He is pure, etc. He is our ideal, and we are striving to be like Him. By studying His life, cultivating His attitudes, imitating His character we grow in love for Him and something wonderful happens within us: WE ARE BEING TRANSFORMED INTO HIS LIKENESS: "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit." (2 Corinthians 3:18). Friend, we must choose to let this transformation begin in our lives RIGHT NOW, and allow it to continue to mold us and shape us into the likeness of Christ as we live in this life. Our aim and effort is to be like Him. John says, "we will be like him" (1 John 3:2). When we change into His likeness (cf. Philippians 3:21) at the coming of our Lord (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:35-ff; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-ff) our new bodies will be raised in imperishable glory (1 Corinthians 15:42-43). Is having a glorified body, fashioned anew, a thrilling prospect for you?

John writes, "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is." (1 John 3:2). If we knew the Lord as He is now we would know the perfection that this trans-formation constantly inches us toward. Attainment of this perfection is a goal that will be reached after this life is over. The sins that afflict all human-kind prevent our perfection now, just as sins prevented those who lived in Jesus' day from seeing His perfect character and reaching that perfection themselves. Only when we put off the corruption of the present life can we put on incorruption as well as immortality (1 Corinthians 15:50-57). What glory awaits! What glory we long for!

"For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself." (Philippians 3:20-21).

Friend, does the glorious perfection of Christ Jesus entice you to do whatever is necessary in order to possess it yourself? Will you have this hope in you? "And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure." (1 John 3:3). If we are to be like Christ we must put away sin, every impure thought and deed.

"Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God." (Romans 6:12-13).

Please let us encourage you by assembling with us for Bible study and worship!

- Gary Smalley

[All Scriptures quoted are NASB, 1995 © The Lockman Foundation, unless otherwise noted.]

- * "The high cost of living is nothing compared to the high cost of sinning!"
 - * "Conscience should always go to truth for instructions!"
 - * "If a sermon pricks the conscience, it has some good points!"
 - * "He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, And he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city." (Proverbs 16:32)
 - * "When a man sings his own praises he invariably gets the tune too high!"
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What Must I Do To Be Saved?

HEAR THE GOSPEL

(Romans 10:14-17; John 20:30-31; Romans 1:15-17)

BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST

(Acts 8:37; John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6)

REPENT OF PAST SINS

(Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30)

CONFESS CHRIST

(Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37)

BE BAPTIZED

(Romans 6:3-4; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:36-39; 1 Peter 3:21)

LIVE A FAITHFUL LIFE

(Revelation 2:10; 2 Peter 1:5-11; John 15:1-8; Hebrews 10:23-25)