

Godhead Class

November/December 2018

November 4: Introduction to the Godhead

Who made God? It's a question we hear often from our children. And while some well-meaning individuals have put forth Habakkuk 3.3 as an answer, the question is fundamentally flawed. No one made God for the same reason that we cannot draw a four-sided triangle – the very definition of the term disallows it. God was not made because God is eternal (Deuteronomy 33.27; Psalm 90.2).

As Moses wrote the opening words to the Bible, he addressed God simply as a reality – “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1.1). Moses' choice of terms, however, is quite interesting. The word *God* used by Moses is the Hebrew word *Elohim*. What is interesting about the word *Elohim* is that it is a plural noun¹. It is as though Moses is implying the existence of multiple persons who share in this designation of “God”. Moses' implication becomes even more sure as we see references to the “Spirit of God” (1.2) and to a conversation between co-Creators (1.26).

It is later in the NT that the idea of multiple persons sharing in the designation of “God” is explained more fully. John, echoing the words of Moses, reveals to us that the “only begotten of the Father” (John 1.14; cf. 3.16), before coming in human flesh, was “in the beginning... with God, and... was God” (John 1.1). Alongside the Father, the Son was present at the beginning and was involved in creation (John 1.3)

¹ Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries (electronic edition — e-Sword)

With these three persons (Father, Son, Spirit of God) being present at the beginning – and each of them being revealed as divine (John 1.1,14; John 1.18; Acts 5.3f) – the NT authors referenced them by using a term translated into English as *Godhead* (Colossians 2.9). The idea of the Godhead, sometimes referenced as the Trinity, is simply the biblical concept of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit each sharing in the Divine nature.

But what does that mean – “Divine nature”? And how could “God” be plural when it clearly states in Deuteronomy 6.4 that God is one? Consider it from this perspective: while there are many human people, there is only one human nature. While there are three people described as God, there is only one Divine nature.^{2,3} Beyond this, think of the husband/wife relationship. Jesus describes the marriage relationship in terms of oneness (Matthew 19.5), but that oneness does not negate the reality that there are multiple people described as being “one”. The term “one” (Hebrew *ehad*) does not demand numerical singularity (cf. Genesis 2.24; 34.16; Exodus 24.3).

- 1) Who was present “in the beginning”? _____
- 2) What is significant about the word *Elohim*? _____
- 3) What were Father, Son, and Holy Spirit doing at creation? _____

- 4) Our LDS friends have a different understanding of God and his work of creation. However, what is being created in Genesis 1.1,14-19? ____

² Interestingly, the places in the OT that you most often see declarations of God’s oneness are in texts where true Divinity is being contrasted with false gods (Canaanites, Philistines, etc.)

³ Acts 17.29