



What Does The Term “Godhead” Mean?

The term “Godhead” is found 3 different times in the King James Version of the Bible. This term is often used to support the doctrine of the Trinity. The Trinity is the belief that God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit are essentially a generic 3 in 1 collective entity with all three being “co-equal” with each other. To support this belief, Trinitarians interpret the term “Godhead” to be a reference to this 3 in 1 collective entity including the Father, Christ and the Holy Spirit.

While the Church of God has always recognized that God the Father and Jesus Christ are both God beings, we have also always acknowledged that the Bible reveals that the Holy Spirit is the power of God and not an individual. As a result, we have always rejected the Trinitarian view of God. However, many in the Church of God interpret the term “Godhead” in a very similar way as Trinitarians. They view the term “Godhead” as a term that collectively refers to both God the Father and Christ. However, is this the idea the New Testament writers had in mind or is this term simply a translation error? To answer this question, we need to examine the verses where this term is used and consider the meaning of the Greek words that are translated into English as “Godhead” as well as the context in which these words are used.

The first time the term “Godhead” appears in the Bible is in Act 17:29. Here is this verse in context.

Acts 17:22

²² Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. ²³ For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. ²⁴ God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; ²⁵ Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; ²⁶ And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; ²⁷ That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: ²⁸ For in

him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. ²⁹ **Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.** ³⁰ And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: ³¹ Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

The Greek word translated as “Godhead” in this verse is “theios”. The Complete Word Study Dictionary of the New Testament by Spiros Zodhiates defines this word as:

Theios -- (Strong's # 2304) -- “God. Divine, what is uniquely God's and proceeds from Him....**Theios denotes an attribute of God such as His power and not His character in its essence and totality.**” (emphasis added)

As you can see from this definition, “theios” refers to “an attribute of God” and not to God as a whole. So, it obviously does not refer to God and Christ collectively. This is why the NKJV translates “theios” as “the divine nature”.

Acts 17:29 -- NKJV

²⁹ Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that **the Divine Nature** is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising.

The word “theios” also appears in 2 Peter 1:3-4 where it is obviously used as a reference to attributes of God and not to Him as an individual or to God the Father and Christ collectively. Here is this verse in context.

2 Pet. 1:2-4

² Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, ³ as His divine (**theios**) power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, ⁴ by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine (**theios**) nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

The second time the English word “Godhead” appears in the KJV of the Bible is in Romans 1:19. Here is this verse in context.

Rom. 1:18

¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; ¹⁹ Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. ²⁰ For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, **even his eternal power and Godhead**; so that they are without excuse: ²¹ Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. ²² Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, ²³ And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

In this verse, the English word “Godhead” is translated from the Greek word “theiotes” (Strong’s # 2305). Zodhiates defines this word as “Divinity, only in Rom. 1:20.” Similar to theios, theiotes also refers to an attribute of God rather than to Him as an individual or to God and Christ collectively. This is why numerous Bible translations translate theiotes in this verse as “divine nature”.

Rom 1:20 -- NIV

²⁰ For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and **divine nature**—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

Rom 1:20 -- CJB

²⁰ For ever since the creation of the universe his invisible qualities — both his eternal power and his **divine nature** — have been clearly seen, because they can be understood from what he has made. Therefore, they have no excuse;

Rom 1:20 -- NRSV

²⁰ Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and **divine nature**, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made. So they are without excuse;

The third time the English word “Godhead” appears in the KJV of the Bible is in Colossians 2:9. Here is this verse in context.

Col 2:8-12

⁸ Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. ⁹ **For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.** ¹⁰ And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: ¹¹ In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: ¹² Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

In this verse, the English word “Godhead” is translated from the Greek word “theotes”. Spiros Zodhiates defines this word as:

Theotes -- (Strong’s # 2320) – “God’s personality (Col. 2:9), as distinguished from theiotes (2305) in Rom. 1:20, divinity or divine power and majesty, a concept arrived at by observing God’s mighty works.”

The Holman Christian Standard Bible conveys the intended meaning of verse 9 much more clearly.

Col 2:9 -- HCSB

⁹ For the **entire fullness of God’s nature** dwells bodily in Christ,

So, again we see that the intended meaning of the Greek words translated as “Godhead” in the King James Version of the Bible refer to an attribute of God rather than to Him as a whole or to the Father and Christ collectively. From this we can see that the English references to “the Godhead” are just a mistranslation that unfortunately obscures the intended meaning of the New Testament writers.