

All The Fulness of The Godhead (Deity) Bodily

A Bible study from [Faithbuilders Fellowship](#), presented on this website by [True Grace Ministries](#). Requests for printed copies should be sent to: **Faithbuilders Fellowship**, 8060 Wing Span Drive, San Diego, CA 92119

One word in the above title may be unfamiliar to some readers because more than fifteen different Bibles do not use the word 'godhead'. And perhaps no Bible edited in this century uses 'godhead' in all the three places it is used in the (*KJV*) *King James Version* edited in 1611.

In 1881, when the *KJV* was in common use and the first English revision of its New Testament was published, an article by H. V. Reed appeared in the magazine *Restitution*. He wrote: "The word godhead is not good English: it means nothing in itself and conveys no idea to the reader: What is a godhead?" It is merely a bad translation. The Greek manuscript word should be rendered 'divinity' or 'deity'. Many Bible scholars and translators have realized that 'godhead' does not convey clear meaning. *Weymouth, Moffatt, Smith-Goodspeed, Farrar Fenton, RSV, Good News, NAS, Living Bible, NIV, J. B. Phillips, Bible in Living English, Jerusalem Bible, NWT, Emphatic Diaglott, and The Everyday Bible* versions, all recognizing its inadequacy, use some word or phrase other than 'godhead' seen three times in the *KJV*, where, in [Acts 17:29](#), [Rom. 1:20](#), [Col. 2:9](#), it represents a different Greek word each time.

'Godhead' in Colossians 2:9 of the *KJV* is a translation of the Greek *theotes*, which is "an abstract noun for *theos*," the usual Greek word translated 'God'. (*Greek-English Lexicon, Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich*) "An abstract noun is one indicating a quality, as goodness, beauty." (*Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary, International Edition*). From this it is seen that when Paul wrote of Christ Jesus that "*In Him dwelleth all the fulness of deity*" he said that all the qualities of God dwelt in Christ Jesus our Lord. In view of that, one may be sure that whatever 'godhead' may be thought to mean, it surely does not properly represent the meaning of the Greek words Paul wrote.

God's Fulness Came First to Christ Jesus

Colossians was written because of the Apostle's concern that brethren with whom he had never shared spiritual perceptions in personal contact were being taught unsound concepts. In the first chapter, [verses 5-22](#), Paul refreshed their minds regarding "*the word of truth*" of the gospel and the living hope which had already been brought unto them. The Apostle realized that "*traditions of Men*" had been delivered to them by teachers who developed elements of a wisdom suited to the proud, curious, speculating, and carnal temper of the world. These traditions were blended with legal, external observances by Judaizing teachers, and were incompatible with the doctrine of Christ. This situation made Paul's admonition in [Col. 2:6-9](#) especially appropriate and timely.

This is a wonderful assurance to us as trusting Christians! All the attributes which are part of God's being are 'housed permanently' in our Leader and Forerunner! The completeness of our Lord's powers was constituted when "*He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.*" The assertion that "*all the fulness of deity*" dwells in Christ means that the qualities which are in God's being are not divided up, part in one and part in others. If on the other hand, the fulness of deity were to be understood as being divided up, it would imply that there were other mediating spiritual powers or independent spiritual forces at work which should contribute their wisdom and power in order that God's work of salvation be fully accomplished. But this is not so. There is not a partial nor temporary indwelling of God's qualities in Christ, but rather "*all the fulness.*" Christ is not in the same rank with other created beings such as angels. ([Hebrews 1:5](#)). As the Son, He is greater than all that was created through Him.

In view of this, there is no need to seek instruction and wisdom from heathen philosophers. Believers do not need those who set forth divergent schemes of salvation and deliverance from sin apart from Jesus such as false teachers dream of. Christ is Head of all principality and power, and all God's holy angels are His willing servants. Further counsel from the Apostle on this is in [Colossians 2:14-23](#).

Christ Jesus our Lord is the Word, the truth, the personal embodiment of all that is good and true, and emphatically the revelation to man of God's being. The extensive responsibilities delegated to Jesus in His service under God are often affirmed in Scripture, two passages of which are now quoted. [1 Cor. 8:6](#), [1 Tim. 2:5-6](#).

Three Senses Combined in 'Fulness'

In the New Testament 'fulness' is always a translation of the Greek *pleroma*, appearing therein seventeen times. One authority has written regarding *pleroma* in Ephesians and Colossians: "Three formal senses are combined: that which is filled; that which fills; and fulness in the sense of superabundance." (*Schlier*) The meaning in Col. 2:9 is that all the attributes, all the qualities of God, dwell in Christ Jesus. The 'fulness' dwells in Jesus. Christ Jesus received His *capicity* - He is complete. This does not suggest, however, that His capacity is the measure of the Father's capacity. The glory of the Father is supreme, unequalled. God clearly attested "I am the LORD: that is My name: and My glory will I not give to another." ([Isa. 42:8](#), [48:11](#)) While of course the eternal God Himself is not a receiver of resurrection, [1 Cor. 15:41-42](#) does give a glimpse into the diversity of the heavenly, spiritual glory. The supreme glory is that identified with the Father's glorious spirit body. "God is Spirit." ([John 4:24](#)) The glory of the Son is next; and it is the Father who distributes all subsequent, lesser rewards. - [Matt. 20:23](#)

There are two principal views as to the exact thought Paul intended in Co. 2:9. Though different, they seem not to conflict, nor one to exclude the other. "For in Him the whole fulness of deity dwells *bodily*." (*RSV*) A note in the *Gree-English Lexicon*, by Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich sums up one of the views - that the word 'bodily' qualifies 'dwells', that the 'fulness' dwells in Christ Jesus "in reality, not symbolically." It suggests that such view is supported by [Col. 2:17](#), where typical Jewish stipulations regarding foods, holydays, and sabbaths are shown to be "a shadow of things to come; but the *body* [which it takes to mean 'reality'] is of Christ." Realizing that Christ was foreknown in God's eternal purpose ([Eph. 3:11](#)), several translators have not used 'body' in verse 17, but instead the word 'substance'. Christ Jesus, as the One foreknown and thus that 'substance', enabled the several shadows mentioned in that verse.

The other view is that 'bodily' describes how the 'fulness' dwells in Christ - "as a complete and organic whole, not fragmentarily" (*Expositor's Greek Testament*, Nicoll); "corporately" (*Jerome Biblical Commentary*). It is in this sense, too, that the church is one body under Christ, its head. ([Eph. 5:23](#)) The aggregate of Christian disciples constitute a corporate whole.

Reconciliation Purposed

There was a special purpose in the Father's design that His 'fulness' should dwell in the Son. God brought all His qualities into one entity in superabundance to enable His faithful servant to encourage and develop those divine qualities in others. This is shown in previous verses, [Col. 1:12-22](#). Paul affirmed that God dealt bountifully with His beloved Son from the beginning. [Col. 1:17-19](#). *Weymouth* nicely words the last segment of those verses: "For it was the Father's gracious will that the whole of the divine perfections should dwell in Him."

The 'fulness' is in Christ to qualify and equip Him for the work of reconciliation. Reconciling man to God and God to man is the objective for which God has caused "all the fulness of divinity" to dwell in Jesus.

But this did not make the Son the Father; it did not blend the Son into the Father; it did not make the glorified Jesus identical to the Father. But it did raise their constant unity to a higher, superlative level, to a level not previously experienced. Always God has been supreme, and there is no Bible testimony that the Son ever expected to receive the greater glory which the Father retains to Himself. There are Bible teachings which show the Father is greater than the Son, and that the Son is to be subject to the Father. One is [1 Cor. 15:25-28](#).

The Church Now Being Filled

In [Ephesians 1:20-23](#) Paul relates our Master's 'fulness' to the bringing about of the anticipated condition in which God will "be all in all." He refers to God's exceeding great power, that He raised Christ "from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies." In elevating Christ Jesus to that authority, God "hath put all things under His [Christ's] feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." From this is seen that Christ, who is head over all things, is head to the church as manifested by His spiritual organization and supervision of it. From Him comes its life, in Him is its joy; through the church, Christ is lived forth and witnessed. The Apostle John exulted in the benefit we receive from Christ ([John 1:16](#)). It is His fulness, and the church receives of His fulness, and that fulness is shown forth by the church. Jesus is full of the 'fulness' itself; we are filled from Him. The receiving of His fulness is an important goal toward which each devoted Christian must strive. Believers are exhorted in [Eph. 4:13](#) to develop the character qualities of our God and receive fulness.

It is of course understood that the fulness with which Jesus fills others is the 'fulness of God' because the Son fills with the fulness with which He Himself was filled. Indeed, the Apostle's exhortation in [Eph. 3:19](#) establishes just that. Our Lord Jesus is not involved in filling anyone with a counterfeit 'fulness'. Our Savior has communicated to His church through the Holy Spirit and Scripture the plenitude of gifts and graces wherein our lives are intended to inspire others to such fulness. In [Eph. 4:10](#) Paul reminds every believer that Jesus was exalted "far above all heavens, that he might fill all things." Inasmuch as God is to reconcile through Jesus "all things to Himself...whether things on earth or things in heaven," it is most appropriate that Jesus has been exalted "far above *all* heavens."

During this present time of preparation and development, each member of the church endeavors to be filled with 'the fulness' to their individual capacities. And the purpose in this for believers is the same as that for which Jesus received "all the fulness": to qualify and equip them for their work in the process of reconciliation. ([2 Cor. 3:6, 5:18-20](#)) This solemn commission involves every sincere believer in Jesus, and is both a great privilege and a sacred responsibility.

The day when 'all' the qualities of God will be 'in all' a reconciled, willing and obedient creation is sure to come. They too will be filled with the 'fulness' by "Him that filleth all in all" ([Eph. 1:23](#)) to the capacity of the glory of their being, according to the Father's good pleasure in their rewarding. God's appointed time will not tarry, even though issues of the moment indicate that the promised glorious day is destined to come in a later generation of a succeeding century. But this is no cause for discouragement. There is a rest of faith for "the people of God." ([Heb. 4:9](#)) "Behold, now is the accepted time, behold, now is the day of salvation." ([2 Cor. 6:2, Isa. 49:8](#)) All whose faith and knowledge increase today will share with other victors tomorrow in receiving great reward and "the crown of life." ([Rev. 2:10](#)) "Have faith in God." - ([Mark 11:22](#))

How readest thou?

It is probable that additional readings of the foregoing discussion with careful consideration of every Bible passage cited will bring a deeper understanding of the thoughts presented. Only when the viewpoints are fully understood is one in a position to properly evaluate whether or not they be true. Personal study in harmony with the statement in the second paragraph of the last subheading is important to every believer: "Our Savior has communicated to His church through the Holy Spirit and Scripture and plenitude of gifts and graces wherein our lives are intended to inspire others to such fulness." Think about it!

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