

NAME _____

DATE _____

**SPIRIT OF LIFE MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL
BIBLE SCHOOL SECOND EDITION
SESSION 16 – CULTS PART 5
ONENESS PENTECOSTAL**

Oneness Pentecostal theology affirms that there exists only one God in all the universe. It affirms the deity of Jesus and the Holy Spirit. However, Oneness theology denies the Trinity. The [Trinity](#) is the doctrine that there is one God who manifests Himself as three distinct, simultaneous persons. The Trinity does not assert that there are three gods but only one. This is important because many groups who oppose orthodoxy will accuse Trinitarians of believing in three gods. But this is not so. The doctrine of the Trinity is that there is one God in three persons.

Oneness theology denies the Trinity and teaches that God is a single person who was "manifested as Father in creation and as the Father of the Son, in the Son for our redemption, and as the Holy Spirit in our regeneration."¹ Another way of looking at it is that God revealed himself as Father in the Old Testament, as the Son in Jesus during Christ's ministry on earth, and now as the Holy Spirit after Christ's ascension.

In addition, Oneness theology also maintains that baptism is a necessary part of salvation; that is, in order to be saved, one must be baptized and by immersion. If you are not baptized, you cannot be saved. However, not only must baptism be by immersion but also it must be administered with the formula "[In Jesus' name](#)" rather than the formula "***In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit***" which is mentioned in [Matthew 28:19](#). Finally, this baptism must be administered by a duly ordained minister of a church that maintains Oneness theology: United Pentecostal, United Apostolic, etc.

Oneness churches also teach that speaking in tongues is a necessary manifestation of the Holy Spirit. Since a person cannot be saved without the Holy Spirit ([Rom. 8:9](#)), it follows that only those who have spoken in tongues are really saved. There is, therefore, an emphasis that Oneness church members speak in tongues to "demonstrate" that they are saved and have the truth.

Oneness groups are decidedly Arminian in the doctrine of salvation. They deny predestination and maintain that it is completely up to the individual to decide whether or not he wants to be saved. They also teach that it is possible to lose one's salvation.

There is within the Oneness movement an attempt to represent themselves in a modest and holy manner. This is to be commended. However, sometimes it tends to become legalistic in that women are required to abstain from wearing makeup and pants.

They also must have their heads covered. Likewise, men should be well-dressed--preferably in ties (this has been my experience with them). Such practices are not wrong in themselves and are good examples of propriety. However, when they become requirements for acceptance in a church, it is legalistic. Legalism leads to bondage and the requirements of keeping the law to maintain salvation. It then becomes a means by which a person's spirituality is judged. Oneness churches strongly imply that if you go to movies or have a TV or wear makeup, etc., then you are not "really" a Christian.

I am not saying that the Oneness theology necessarily leads to legalism, but it seems to be quite evident that it has taken over much of Oneness practice.

Oneness Pentecostal people are many and varied. The two main groups that hold to Oneness theology are the United Pentecostal Church International (the largest) and the United Apostolic church. There are others like the Assemblies of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Bible Way Churches of Our Lord Jesus Christ as well as a host of independent Oneness churches scattered throughout the United States.

The following points of doctrine are generally held to by the Oneness Pentecostal groups.

Within Orthodoxy

1. There is only one God in all existence.
2. The Bible is God's inerrant word.
3. Jesus was born of a virgin.
4. Jesus had two natures.
5. Justification by faith.
6. Baptism must be by immersion.¹
7. The elements of communion are bread and wine and are only for believers.

8. Foot-washing ([John 13:4-5](#)) is a divine institution to be practiced by church members.²

9. Abstain from joining secret societies ([James 5:12](#); [2 Cor. 6:14-18](#)).

10. There will be a future rapture of the Church where the Christians will be transformed ([1 Thess. 4:13-17](#); [1 Cor. 15:51-54](#); [Phil. 3:20-21](#)).

Outside of Orthodoxy

1. Denies the doctrine of the [Trinity](#).

2. Denies justification by faith alone by stating that baptism is also required for salvation.

3. Jesus is God the Father.

4. Jesus is the Holy Spirit.

5. The name of God is only "Jesus."

6. Baptism is necessary for salvation.

7. Denies pre-existence of the Word as the Son. Teaches that He existed as the Father.

8. Being born again means repentance, baptism, and speaking in tongues.

9. Baptism must be administered by an ordained Oneness minister to be valid.

10. Baptism must be administered with the phrase, "In the name of Jesus" instead of the phrase, "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit," ([Matt. 28:19](#)).

11. Speaking in tongues is a necessary requirement to demonstrate that a person has been baptized in the Holy Spirit and is, therefore, saved. It is claimed to be the initial sign of the infilling of the Holy Ghost.

12. Restitution of all things though the devil and the angels will not be restored.

13. Women may be pastors.³
14. Only Oneness people will go to heaven.

Oneness and the Word "Person"³

Oneness theology denies the **Trinity** doctrine and claims that there is one person in the Godhead who has manifested himself in three different forms: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These "forms" are not three distinct persons but one person who occupied consecutive modes. The Trinity, on the other hand, is the teaching that there is one God who exists in three distinct, simultaneous persons. Please note, though, this is not saying there are three gods.

In defending the doctrine of the Trinity and in examining the Oneness doctrine regarding the Godhead, it is first necessary to define the terms that are used. Since the Trinity doctrine states there are three persons in one Godhead and Oneness Pentecostal theology states there is only one person, we first need to know what a "person" is before we try to discover whether or not God is three persons or one. Therefore, we need to ask what qualifies someone as having "personhood"?

I offer the following analysis as an attempt to adequately define personhood. After the outline, I will try and show that the definition and/or characteristics of personhood can be applied to both the Father and the Son in a context that shows they both existed as persons at the same time thereby proving Oneness theology is incorrect.

What are the qualities and attributes of being a person?

1. A person exists and has identity.
2. A person is aware of his own existence and identity.
 - A. This precludes the condition of being unconscious.
3. A self-aware person will use such a statement as "I am," "me." "mine." etc.
4. A person can recognize the existence of other persons.
 - A. This is true provided there were other persons around him or her.

- B. Such recognition would include the use of such statements as "you are", "you", "yours", etc.
5. A person possesses a will.
- A. A will is the capability of conscious choice, decision, intention, desire, and/or purpose.
6. A single person cannot have two separate and distinct wills at the same time on the exact same subject.
- A. Regarding the exact same subject, a person can desire/will one thing at one moment and another at a different moment.
 - B. Separate and simultaneous wills imply separate and simultaneous persons.
7. A person has the ability to communicate--under normal conditions.
8. Persons do not need to have physical bodies.
- A. God the Father possesses personhood without a physical body--as do the angels.
 - B. Biblically speaking, upon death we are "absent from the body and home with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:8).

God qualifies as having personhood in that He exists, is self-aware, has identity, uses terms such as "Me", "I AM", "My," and possesses a will.

The question now becomes whether or not there is more than one "person" in the Godhead.

"Let this cup pass from Me."

(Luke 22:41-42). "And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, ⁴²Saying, 'Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done'"

(Matt. 26:39) *"And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, 'O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.'"*

In both [Luke 22:42](#) and [Matt. 26:39](#) (which are parallel passages), the context is Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane--right before His betrayal. He was praying to the Father about the ordeal He was about to undergo. Several points are worth bringing out here:

First, in this passage, Jesus addresses the Father. He says, *"Oh my Father . . ."* Note that Jesus says "my" and "Father." These two words designate a "me and you" relationship.

Second, *"If it be possible"* is Jesus expressing a desire--a hope. What is that hope or desire? It is that "this cup pass from me." The cup Jesus is speaking of is the imminent ordeal of betrayal, scourging, and crucifixion. Jesus did not want to go through this. He was expressing His desire. It was His will not to undergo the severe ordeal ahead of Him. If this was not so, He would not have expressed the desire to have the cup pass from Him.

Third, in [Matt. 26:39](#), Jesus says, *"Nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done."* In [Luke 22:42](#) he says, *"Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt."* With this, Jesus is expressing His will and contrasting it to the will of the Father. Yet, He is stating that even though He does not want to undergo what lay ahead, "Nevertheless," He would submit to the will of the Father--and not his own will.

This shows that the person of Jesus had a separate and different will than the Father. Since we have two separate simultaneous wills, we have two separate and simultaneous persons and Oneness Pentecostal theology is incorrect.

Questions to ask the Oneness person

1. Is Jesus His own Father?
2. If Jesus' will and the Father's will were identical (in an attempt to demonstrate that there is only one will), then why did Jesus express the desire to escape the cup but resigns Himself not to His own will but to the will of the Father?
3. Was Jesus praying to Himself at this point?
4. Was Jesus saying, "Not **My** will, but **My** will be done" if there is only one person, and one will involved in this scripture?