



THE THEOLOGY NOTEBOOK

Trinitarianism

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TRINITARIANISM

*“This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God,
and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”*

—John 17:3

Question Outline

- What is a worldview?
- What are the seven basic world views?
- Can the finite comprehend the infinite?
- Is human language adequate to describe God?
- Why object to studying God’s existence?
- Can we prove God exists?
- What are the arguments for the existence of God?
- What makes God, God?
- How is simplicity an attribute of God?
- How can the simplicity of God be defined?
- What are the objections to simplicity?
- How is eternity an attribute of God?
- How is immutability an attribute of God?
- What are the objections to immutability?
- How is omnipresence an attribute of God?
- What is the doctrine of Aseity?
- How are omniscience, omnipotence and sovereignty attributes of God?
- What are other known attributes of God?
- What is ‘Openness Theology’?
- How did the early church understand the Trinity?
- What are the early Trinitarian heresies?
- What is the importance of the ecumenical councils?
- What are difficulties in communicating the Trinity?
- Does the Bible teach the Trinity?
- What does the OT and the NT say about oneness?
- What are the Bible’s statements on Christ’s deity?
- What are Jesus’ claims to be God?
- What are the Bible’s statements on the Spirit’s deity?
- How did the church understand Christ’s humanity?
- What is Apollinarianism, Nestorianism and Monophysitism?
- What did the Council of Chalcedon state?
- What are the different interpretations of Chalcedon?
- What does the Bible say about the humanity of Christ?
- Why was Christ born of a virgin?
- What does it mean that Christ “emptied Himself”?
- Was Christ able to sin?

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TRINITARIANISM

Syllabus

Course Description

Who is God? Better yet, *what* is God? Can we know for certain that He exists? If so, how? How can God be one yet three? How can Christ be both God and man? This course is a study of the nature, existence, and attributes of our Trinitarian God. We will examine the biblical evidence and historical development of our understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity, person of Christ (Christology), and the person of the Holy Spirit (Pneumatology). Particular attention will be focused on worldview analysis in order to answer the question “What is God?” before we can approach the question “Who is God?” We will also learn and evaluate the common arguments for the existence of God that philosophers and theologians have put forth over the centuries. A defense of the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity will be made, as well as one for a belief in the full humanity and full deity of Christ.

Course Objectives

1. The student will come to know God more fully and more truly.
2. The student will become familiar with the various worldviews that exist, understanding that everyone lives according to a certain perspective produced by their worldview, but that more often than not these worldviews are inconsistent in their details.
3. The student will learn the main arguments for the existence of God.
4. The student will understand the historical development that early Christians went through trying to understand the doctrine of the Trinity.
5. The student will have a greater understanding and appreciation for the relationship of the two natures of Christ.
6. The student will learn the importance of the creeds of Nicea and Chalcedon.
7. The student will learn about the current issues of evangelicalism relating to the attributes of God such as the Openness debate.

Course Textbooks

Required:

- Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994.
- Olson, Roger. *Mosaic of Christian Beliefs*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2002.
- Bible (preferably New American Standard or NET Bible)

Course Requirements and Grading

This course can be taken at two levels: Certificate or self-study.

1. **Certificate Students:** Certificate students take the course for a grade to receive a certificate that can be applied towards the TTP diploma. You must pay the tuition, attend or view all ten sessions, and complete enough of the homework according to the grading system below to receive a passing grade. This applies to both online and campus students.
2. **Self-study:** Self-study students take the course for enrichment only. Homework is not required, although doing homework will obviously enrich your learning from the course.

Continuing Education Units (CEUs) may be offered depending upon the venue. Ask your instructor for more information.

Honors credit can be earned in this course by completing all the coursework *and* completing an additional reading assigned by the teacher. See bibliography for options.

Assignment Description - see course schedule for due dates

Viewing/Attending classes: Students are required to attend or view all ten sessions of the course. (All sessions for every course are posted on the TTP

website and are available for viewing or for purchase.) Online certificate students: It is preferred that you view only one session per week so you won't get too far ahead of the rest of the class. While attending or viewing the sessions is required for all certificate students, it does not apply toward your grade and you cannot receive credit without it.

Ten hours of theological community time (online certificate students only): All online certificate students are required to spend one hour a week in the online TTP forums or in the voice/chat rooms provided. Each course will have a separate classroom in the TTP forums. In this classroom, you can accrue theological community time by asking or answering questions of other students, blogging your thoughts, discussing issues relevant to the course, or posting your answers to the discussion questions at the end of each lesson. Voice and chat rooms will be open each week where you can participate in live theological conversation with other students in your class (see website for details). While theological community time is required for all online certificate students, it does not apply toward your grade and you cannot receive credit without it.

1. **Reading:** Various reading assignments will be given during the ten-week period. Each student will be expected to read the material according to the ten-week-session schedule provided in the syllabus.
2. **Scripture memorization:** Each student will memorize the passages provided on the Scripture memorization sheet in the syllabus. Once completed, the student will recite the memorized Scripture to a partner who will affirm the completion by signing the Scripture memorization sheet.

The preferred translations for all memorization in English are listed below:

- New American Standard
- NET Bible (available at www.bible.org)
- English Standard Version
- New International Version

3. **Case Studies:** The two case studies in the Student Notebook must be completed according to schedule. Online certificate students are to post their case studies online on the TTP forums. Your instructor will grade them online, marking them in red.
4. **Vocabulary Quizzes:** Two closed-book theological vocabulary quizzes will be given during the course of the semester. Online students can find these quizzes on

the website. See schedule for due dates. Once the student looks at the quiz, he or she must take the quiz. In other words, you cannot look at the quiz, study the right terms, and then take the test.

Grading System

Complete 1 of 4 <i>D</i>	Complete 2 of 4 <i>C</i>	Complete 3 of 4 <i>B</i>	Complete 4 of 4 <i>A</i>	Complete all 4 plus honors reading <i>A</i> <i>with honors</i>
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Schedule

Session No.	Session Date	Session Topic	Assignments	Due Dates
1		Introduction to Course Worldviews	Reading Assignment: <i>Systematic Theology</i> , 149–155; 262–314	Session 2
2		Knowability of God	Reading Assignment: <i>Systematic Theology</i> , 141–148 <i>Mosaic of Christian Belief</i> , 111–132	Session 3
3		The Existence of God		Session 4
4		Incommunicable Attributes of God, Part 1	Reading Assignment: <i>Systematic Theology</i> , 156–184	Session 5
5		Incommunicable Attributes of God, Part 2	Reading Assignment: <i>Systematic Theology</i> , 185–225 Case Study 1 Vocabulary Quiz 1	Session 6
6		Communicable Attributes of God Openness of God Debate	Reading Assignment: <i>Mosaic of Christian Belief</i> , 133–154	Session 7
7		Doctrine of the Trinity: Historical Development	Reading Assignment: <i>Systematic Theology</i> , 226–261	Session 8
8		Doctrine of the Trinity: Biblical Defense	Reading Assignment: <i>Systematic Theology</i> , 529–567, 634–653	Session 9
9		Christology: The Humanity of Christ in History	Reading Assignment: <i>Mosaic of Christian Belief</i> , 223–242	Session 10
10		Christology: The Humanity of Christ in the Bible	Case Study 2 Vocabulary Quiz 2	One week after session 10

BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR TRINITARIANISM

Required Reading

- Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994.
- Hannah, John. *Our Legacy*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2001 (Option 1).
- Olson, Roger. *Mosaic of Christian Belief*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2002 (Option 2).

Essential Reading

- Boyd, Gregory and Paul Eddy. *Across the Spectrum*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2002.
- Brown, O.J. *Heresies*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1988.
- Elwell, Walter A., ed. *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House Company, 2001.
- * Moreland, J. P. *Love Your God with All Your Mind*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1997.
- Ryrie, Charles C. *Basic Theology*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1986.

Suggested Reading

- Berkhof, Louis, *The History of Doctrine*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1937.
- Bloesch, Donald G. *Jesus Christ: Savior and Lord*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1997.
- *Boa, Kenneth and Bowman, Robert. *Twenty Compelling Evidences the God Exists*. Tulsa, OK: River Oak Publishing, 2002.
- *Bowman, Robert Jr. *Why You Should Believe in the Trinity: An Answer to Jehovah's Witnesses*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1989.
- Bray, Gerald. *The Doctrine of God*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993.
- Chafer, Lewis Sperry. *Systematic Theology, Volumes 1, 2, 3, 4*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1976.
- Craig, William. *Reasonable Faith*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1984. (Apologetics and the existence of God)
- Erickson, Millard J. *Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House Company, 1998.

- Enns, Paul. *The Moody Handbook of Theology*. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1989.
- Feinberg, John S. *No One Like Him*. Wheaton, IL: Crossways Books, 2001.
- Ferguson, Sinclair B. *The Holy Spirit*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996.
- Frame, John. *The Doctrine of God*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2002.
- _____. *No Other God*. Pittsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2001. (Defense of the traditional view of God against Open Theism)
- Geisler, Norman. *Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1999. (Apologetics, worldviews, existence of God)
- _____. *Systematic Theology: Volume Two, God, Creation*. Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 2003.
- *_____ and House, Wayne. *Battle for God*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2001. (Defense of the traditional view of God against Open Theism)
- Hall, Christopher A. and John Sanders. *Does God Have a Future?* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003.
- Helm, Paul. *The Providence of God*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993.
- Hodge, Charles. *Systematic Theology, Three Volume Set*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2001.
- House, H. Wayne. *Charts of Christian Theology & Doctrine*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992.
- Huffman, Douglas and Johnson, Eric. *God Under Fire*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002. (Defense of the traditional view of God against Open Theism)
- Kreeft, Peter and Tacelli, Ronald. *Handbook of Christian Apologetics*. Downers Grove: IL: IVP, 1994. (Apologetics and the existence of God)
- Macleod, Donald. *The Person of Christ*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP 1998.
- Montgomery, John Warwick. *Evidence for Faith*. Dallas, TX: Word, 1991. (Existence of God: man teleological arguments)
- Moreland, J.P. and Craig, William Lane. *Philosophical Foundations for a Biblical Worldview*. Downers Gove, IL: IVP, 2003. (Christian philosophy and worldviews)
- _____. *Scaling the Secular City*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1987. (Apologetics and Existence of God)
- Nash, Ronald. *Faith and Reason*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998. (Apologetics and Existence of God)
- _____. *Life's Ultimate Questions*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999. (Christian philosophy and worldviews)
- Packer, J.I. *Knowing God*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1973.

Pinnock, Clark, ed. *The Openness of God*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1994. (Defense of Open Theology)

Sanders, John. *The God Who Risks*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1998. (Defense of Open Theology)

Schreiner, Thomas and Ware, Bruce ed. *Still Sovereign*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2000. (Defense of the traditional view of God against Open Theism)

Sire, James. *The Universe Next Door*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1988. (Worldviews)

Walton, Robert. *Charts of Church History*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986.

*White, James R. *The Forgotten Trinity*. Grand Rapids, MI: Bethany House, 1998.

Honors Reading

Read one book marked with an asterisk (*).

Name _____

SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION SHEET

Existence of God:

Rom. 1:20-21

Ps. 14:1

Gen. 1:1

Attributes of God

Ps. 90:4

Eph. 1:11

Dan. 4:34-35

John 4:24

Ps. 102:25-27

Ps. 139:7-10

Deity of Christ

Jn. 1:1

Rom. 9:5 (NIV, ESV, NET not NAS)

Deity of the Holy Spirit

2 Cor. 3:17-18

I _____ have listened to _____
and confirm that he or she has recited the above Scriptures to me without any aid.

Signature _____



CASE STUDY 1: THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

Trinitarianism

This is going to be a “real life” case study. You are to find a person who would be willing to sit down and talk to you for thirty minutes to an hour. In order to qualify, this person must be someone whom you think has doubts or troubles with the issue of God and His existence. He or she does not have to be an outright professing atheist (although this would be great), but someone who may be a practical atheist, or a seeker. This might be a family member, a co-worker, someone at the gym, or even someone from church.

- You are to inform this person that you are doing an assignment and ask if they have time for you to speak to them concerning the issue of God’s existence.
- Cover these questions before you begin:
 1. Do you believe in God?
 2. If so, on a scale of 1-10 how sure are you?
 3. What makes you sometimes doubt his existence?
 4. What makes you sure that he exists?
- After this, you are to go through the six possible answers to the question, “Why is there something rather than nothing?” covered in class. (Refer to your notes.)
- Illustrate how all the answers except number six are formally absurd.

The object of this assignment is to present a logical argument for the existence of God. Your goal here is not to convince someone of the truth (although that would be great), but simply to present the arguments clearly.

After you are done, write a half page to a page summary of the encounter and hand it in. Online student are to post their summary in their class forum. Grades will be based upon the completion of the assignment, not the effectiveness of the presentation. Everyone who completes this will receive credit for the case study.



CASE STUDY 2: THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY

Trinitarianism

This is going to be a “real life” case study. You are to find a person who would be willing to sit down and talk to you for thirty minutes to an hour. This person may or may not be a Christian. It would be best if this person was a non-Trinitarian (i.e. does not accept the doctrine of the Trinity, e.g. Mormon, Jehovah’s Witness, Muslim) or a Christian who has not been significantly taught the orthodox definition of the Trinity.

With notes in hand, you are to teach what you have learned in Trinitarianism class concerning the doctrine of the Trinity in session 7 and 8.

Cover these issues in particular:

1. Cover all the heresies explaining in detail why they are wrong.
2. Explain why all of the common Trinitarian illustrations are not adequate and are often misleading.
3. Explain the heresy test chart.
4. Briefly defend the deity of Christ paying particular attention to the “Arrogance of a Madman” section in session 8.
5. Finally, explain the problem passages at the end of session 8.

The object of this assignment is to present a logical and biblical argument for the doctrine of the Trinity. Your goal here is not to convince someone of the truth (although that would be great), but simply to present the arguments clearly.

After you are done, write a half page to a page summary of the encounter and hand it in. Online student are to post their summary in their class forum. Grades will be based upon the completion of the assignment, not the effectiveness of the presentation. Everyone who completes this will receive credit for the case study.



TRINITARIANISM



“The doctrine of God is the central point for much of the rest of theology. One’s view of God might even be thought of as supplying the whole framework within which one’s theology is constructed, life is lived, and ministry is conducted.”

—Millard Erickson

Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2001), 290

“He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see. To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen.”

—1 Timothy 6:15–16

WORLDVIEWS

What kind of sunglasses do you wear?

What is a worldview?

"The sum total of a person's answers to the most important questions in life."
— Ronald Nash
Life's Ultimate Questions (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999), 392

"How one interprets reality."
— Norman Geisler
Baker Dictionary of Christian Apologetics (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1999), 785

"A worldview is a set of presuppositions (or assumptions) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously) about the basic makeup of our world."
— James Sire
The Universe Next Door (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1988), 17

"An ordered set of propositions that one believes, especially propositions about life's most important questions."
— J. P. Moreland & William Lane Craig *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2003), 13

Worldview: The sum total of a person's answers to the most important questions in life.

What are the types of worldview questions?

Types of questions that make up a worldview:

1. *Metaphysical:*

Is there something?
Why is there something rather than nothing?

2. *Theological:*

Is there a God?
Who or what is God?
What is His relationship to the universe?

3. *Epistemological:*

What is truth?
Can truth be known?
How is knowledge attained?

4. *Ethical:*

Are there moral laws?
What is the basis for moral laws?
Do laws apply to all people?

5. *Anthropological:*

What is man?
Are human actions free or determined?
Is man essentially good, evil, or neutral?
What happens after death?

What are the seven basic worldviews?

Seven basic worldviews:

1. Theism
2. Deism
3. Pantheism
4. Panentheism
5. Polytheism
6. Pluralism
7. Naturalism

Deism: Theistic worldview that believes God created the universe but has not been involved in it since.

Adherents: Voltaire, Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Paine, Theistic Evolutionists (though not all)

Timeless Eternity
God
Transcendence

Creation ex nihilo

Time-bound Eternity

Every Created Thing

Metaphysical:	There is something, and an infinite Creator is responsible for creating all that there is.
Theological:	God is the creator of the universe, and He exists beyond it <i>but</i> does not concern himself with it any longer.
Epistemological:	Truth is absolute, has its ground in God, and is acquired primarily through general revelation.
Ethical:	Moral laws do exist and apply to all people of all times, having their basis in nature.
Anthropological:	Man is created neutral, neither good nor evil, and gains dignity through his actions. His eternal destiny is determined by his actions.

Pantheism: Lit. *pan* “all” *theism* “god.” Theistic worldview that believes God is identical with the universe.

Adherents: Hindus, Zen Buddhists, Christian Scientists, Spinoza



Every Created Thing

Metaphysical:	All is an illusion except the oneness of the Real (God).
Theological:	All is God and God is all. God is impersonal and immanent, being in no sense transcendent.
Epistemological:	The only truth is that which is found in the Real and beyond our understanding. Sense, experience and reason are misleading because they are based on illusions.
Ethical:	Moral laws are part of the illusion of this life and have no basis in the Real. In God, there is neither good nor evil.
Anthropological:	Man is part of the Real. Self-realization will help one work off bad karma through a process of reincarnation until he unites with the Real in Nirvana, thereby losing any sense of individuality.

Panentheism: Lit. *pan* “all” *en* “in” *theism* “god.” Theistic worldview that believes the universe is a part of who God is, but is not all that God is.

Adherents: Charles Harthstone, Alfred North Whitehead, Process Theologians, Open Theists (to a certain degree)

Timeless Eternity
God (ontos)
 Transcendence



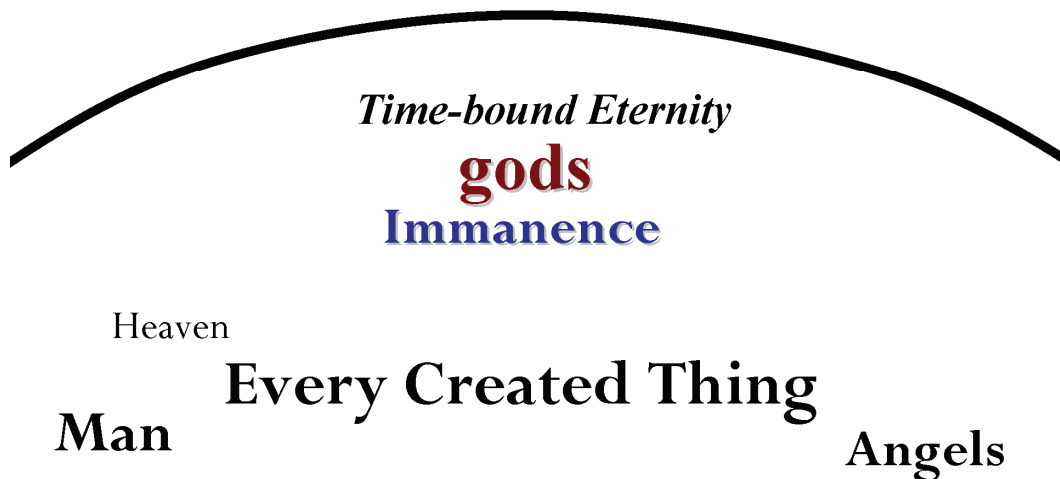
Time-bound Eternity
God (ontos)
 Immanence

Everything

Metaphysical:	There is something, and this something, the universe, is a part of God and, therefore, necessarily exists.
Theological:	God is finite and is undergoing change and development along with the universe. The universe is in God, although God is more than the universe.
Epistemological:	Truth is developing and is acquired primarily through nature.
Ethical:	Moral laws do not exist, since morals are changing as God is changing.
Anthropological:	Man is a part of God as cells are a part of the body. Man will live forever as a part of the memory of God.

Polytheism: Lit. *poly* “many” *theism* “god.” Theistic worldview that believes there are many gods.

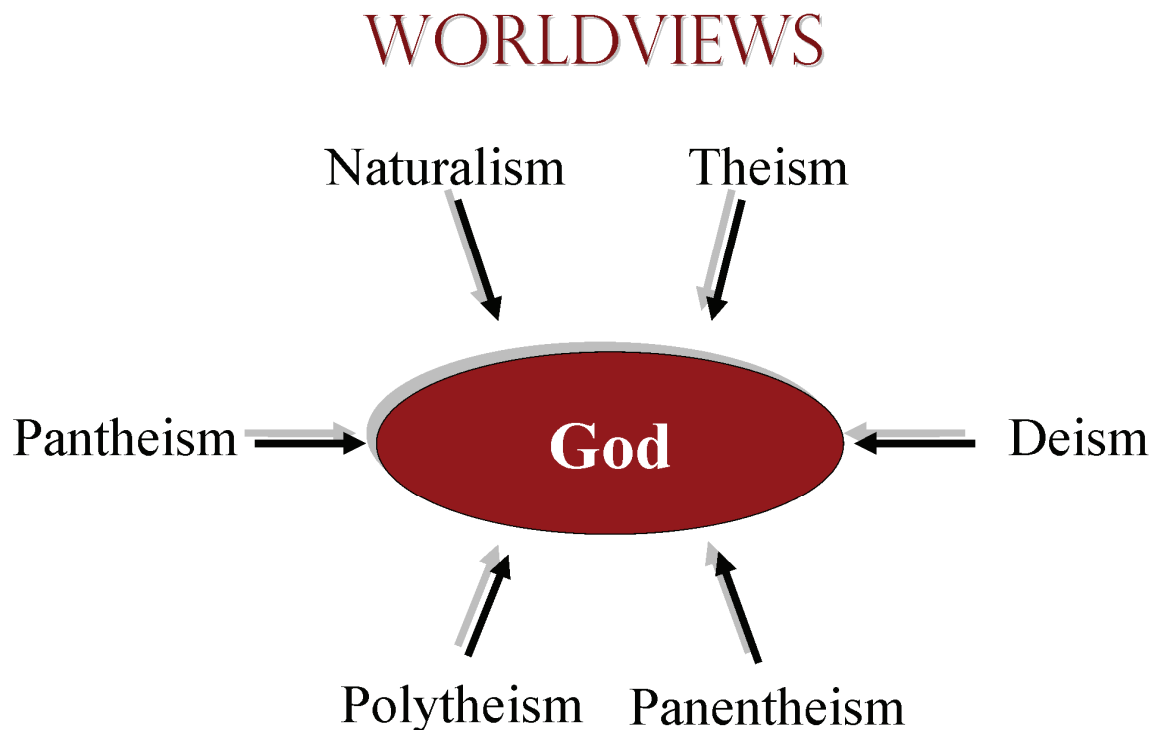
Adherents: Ancient religions, Hinduism, Zen Buddhists, Mormons



Metaphysical:	There is something, and it has been for all eternity.
Theological:	There are many finite gods that are immanent within the universe and are not transcendent above it.
Epistemological:	Truth is acquired through revelation of the deities, and, therefore, it is relative.
Ethical:	Absolute moral laws do not exist, since they are determined by the individual gods.
Anthropological:	Man is here for the pleasure of the gods and will attain to an afterlife based upon the amount of pleasure he brings to the gods.

Pluralism: Worldview that believes all beliefs are ultimately true, even if they are contradictory.

Adherents: Postmoderns, liberals, all religions that have adopted a postmodern epistemology, New Age philosophies



Metaphysical:	All previous views are correct based on the relative nature of truth.
Theological:	All views of God are true and describe who He is.
Epistemological:	Truth is relative. There is no absolute truth and, therefore, no absolute knowledge of truth.
Ethical:	Absolute moral laws do not exist, since there is no absolute truth. All moral laws are correct for the individual (subjectivism) or culture (relativism).
Anthropological:	All previous views are correct based upon the relative nature of truth.

Naturalism: Atheistic worldview that believes nature is the sum total of all reality.

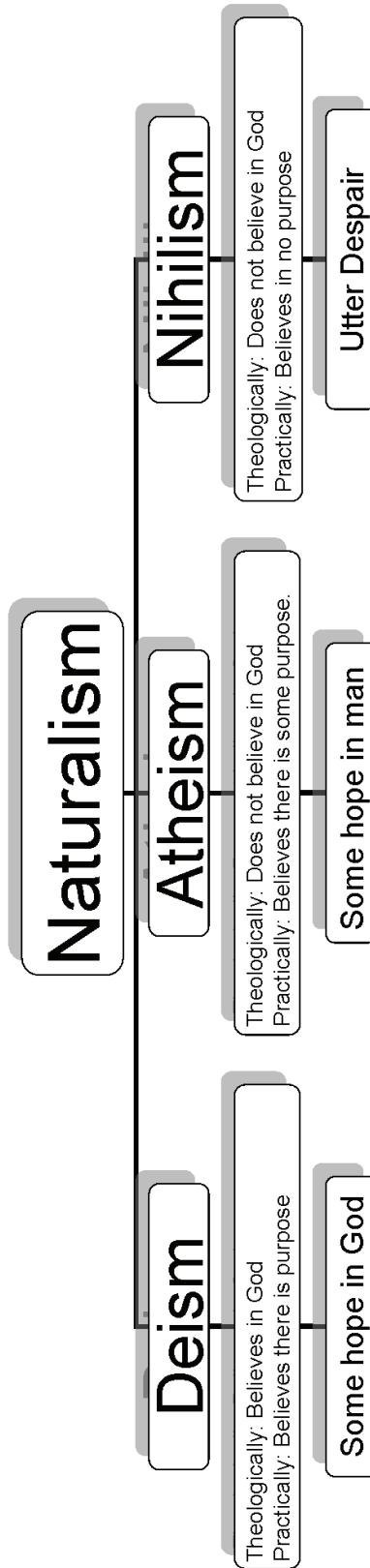
Adherents: Karl Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche, Sigmund Freud, Bertrand Russell

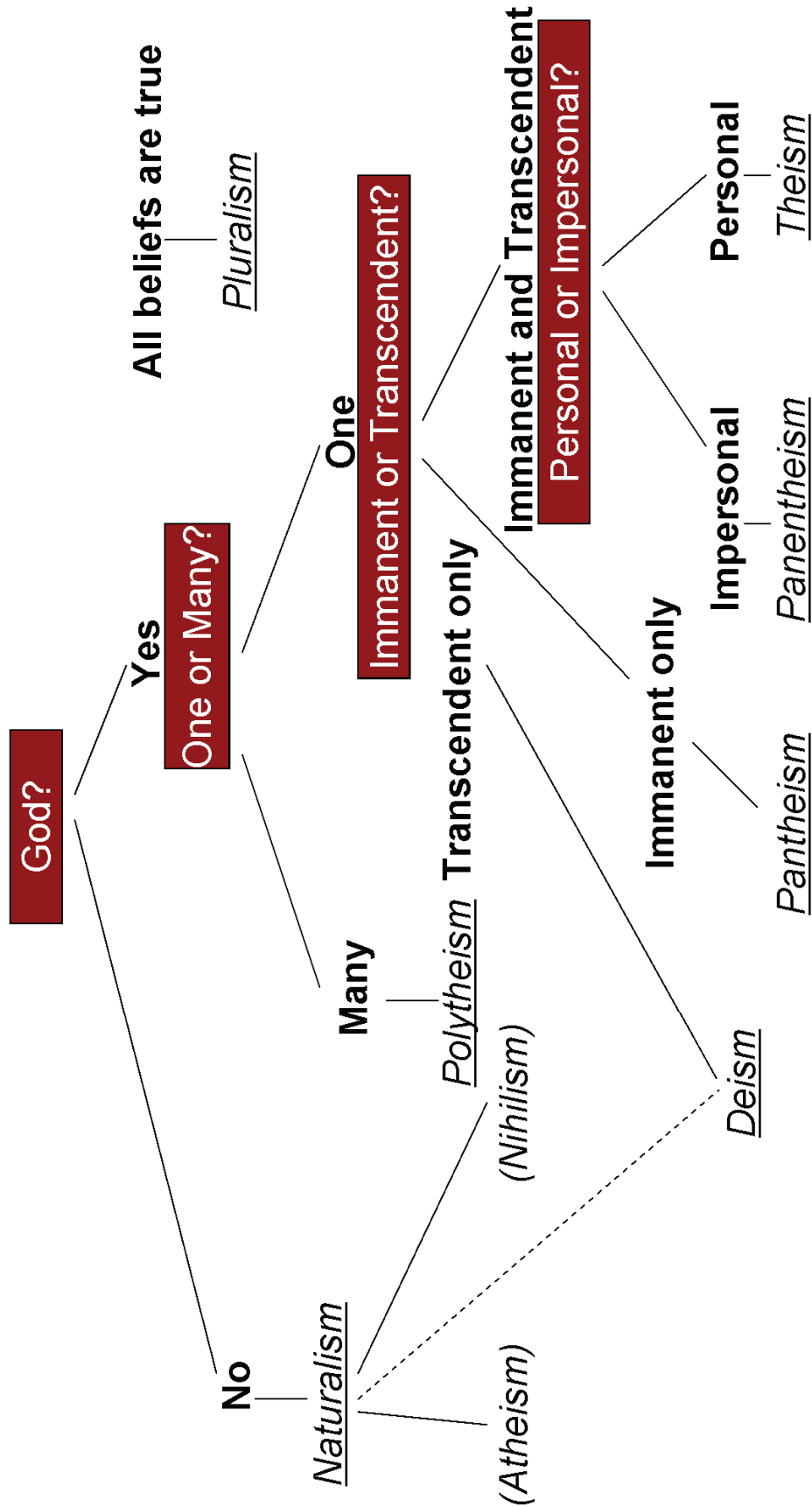


Time-bound Eternity

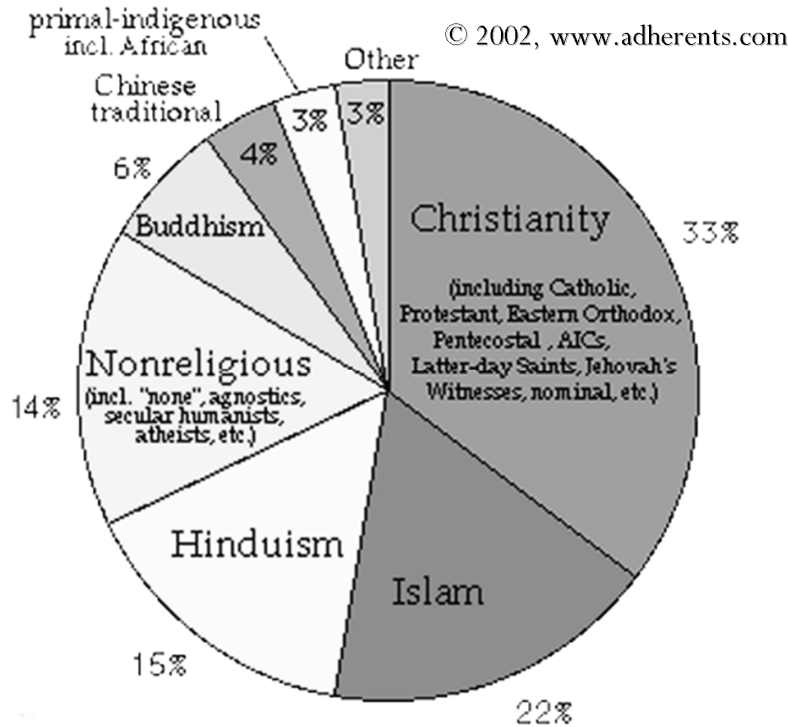
Everything

Metaphysical:	There is something, and it has eternally existed, always obeying the laws of nature.
Theological:	There is no God.
Epistemological:	Some truth is objective, namely that which is found in the eternal laws of nature.
Ethical:	Moral laws do not exist, since this would require a Moral law-giver.
Anthropological:	Man is a meaningless result of chance, brought about by cause and effect of the natural order, with no ultimate purpose to his existence.





	Theism	Deism	Polytheism	Panentheism	Pluralism	Naturalism
Metaphysics	There is something, and God created it.	There is something, and God created it.	There is something, and it has been here for eternity.	There is something, and it exists as a necessary part of God.	All views about metaphysics are true.	There is something, and it has existed for eternity.
Theology	One infinite personal God.	One infinite impersonal God.	Many finite gods.	God is finite, changing, and dependent on the universe.	All views about God are true.	There is no God.
Epistemology	Absolute truth is based on God and is knowable through special revelation.	Absolute truth is based on God and is knowable through nature.	There is no absolute truth.	All truth is changing as God is changing.	All views about truth are correct.	Absolute truth is knowable through nature.
Ethical	Moral laws are based in God.	Moral laws are based in God.	Morals are relative, based upon your god.	There is no right and wrong.	Morals are relative, based upon culture or preference.	There are no moral laws since there is no moral lawgiver.
Anthropological	Man is created by God and therein finds his purpose, destiny, and dignity.	Man is created by God and therein gains his dignity.	Man is here for the pleasure of the gods and will attain to an afterlife based upon the amount of pleasure he brings to the gods.	Man is created by God and gains dignity and purpose through his actions.	All views about man are correct.	Man is a meaningless result of chance and has no purpose.



Four Worldview tests

1. Test of Reason
2. Test of Outer Experience
3. Test of Inner Experience
4. Test of Practice

1. Test of Reason: Is the worldview logical?

Theism: Yes. It is rational and does not fail in any area of logical consistency. To say that an eternal God is the creator of all things created, but yet He, Himself, is uncreated, does not violate the law of causality i.e., all effects have a cause, since God is not an effect.

Deism: Yes. There is no logical contradiction in saying that God is not involved in the universe anymore. He very well could have created the universe and then walked away.

- Pantheism:** No. Since God and the universe are one, and the universe cannot be eternal, God cannot be eternal and, therefore, would not be God.
- Panentheism:** No. God cannot be both infinite and finite or necessary and contingent at the same time and in the same relationship. As well, since God cannot exist without the universe, and the universe cannot be eternal (since it is a logical absurdity to have an uncreated universe according to the Kalam argument covered later in this course), God could not be eternal. If God is not eternal, something must have created God, and that eternal something then would in turn have to be God.
- Polytheism:** Yes and No. Yes, if your view of polytheism is that there are many *celestial spirits* that people worship. People do worship demons and angels and other actual personages. No, if you believe that there are many *actual gods*. Since the very definition of God is that He is the greatest necessary being, and this view would state that there are many gods i.e., necessary beings, it therefore is rationally absurd. There can only be one necessary being, since He exists of Himself and by definition is the first cause.
- Pluralism:** No. Something cannot be true (e.g., there is only one God) and false (e.g., there is not only one God) at the same time and in the same relationship.* Pluralism is also self-defeating in that it purports that all religions are true. Take for example the statement “Christianity is true.” According to pluralism, this is a correct statement. Now take the statement, “Pluralism is false.” This is also true according to pluralism. Therefore pluralism is self-defeating. It is logically absurd to be a pluralist.
- Naturalism:** Naturalism only has two options and both are not reasonable: 1) the universe has no beginning and 2) the universe is self-created. The first option is absurd because it is a logical contradiction to have an endless series of effects without a cause. The second option is absurd because is not possible

* This assumes that the Pluralism that we are speaking of is relativistic in its epistemology.

for something to create itself as it would have to predate itself in order to create itself.

2. Test of Outer Experience: Is it consistent with what we see and know?

- Theism:** Yes. History clearly attest to the interventions of a personal and immanent God (e.g., the resurrection of Christ). General revelation (covered in Intro to Theology) also speaks of God's continued intervention (Rom. 1:20; Ps. 19:1-4).
- Deism:** No. History clearly attests to the interventions of a personal and immanent God (e.g., the resurrection of Christ). Ongoing creation and human experience also attests to God's continued intervention.
- Pantheism:** No. There is nothing in human history or experience that would suggest that God and the universe are one and the same. As well, if we are a part of God, it seems illogical that people would continue to be born. Reincarnation does not answer this, since the population of all living creatures continually grows.
- Panentheism:** No. There is nothing in human history or experience that would suggest that the universe is a necessary part of God upon which He is contingent. As well, if we are a part of God, it seems illogical that people would continue to be born. Reincarnation does not answer this, since the population of all living creatures continually grows.
- Polytheism:** No. There is nothing in human history or experience that would suggest that there are many gods who are ruling in the universe.
- Pluralism:** No. It is contrary to our experience to state that there are contradictory truths that are true at the same time. This is the reason we stop at a stop sign, go to the doctor when we get sick, and go to sleep when we get tired.

Naturalism: See Deism.

3. Test of Inner Experience: Is it consistent with what we feel?

- Theism:** Yes. Calvin called our understanding of God as the *sensus divinitatis* (“sense of the divine”). We all have an innate understanding of God (Rom. 1:20; 2:14–15). This is why 95 percent of the world has always been theistic. We all exhibit attributes of God through our reasoning capabilities, morality, and sense of what is right or wrong.
- Deism:** Yes and no. Being subjective, some would believe that inner experience proves that there is no personal God, since they do not experience any verifiable contact with the Creator. Others would state just the opposite, that they have felt the presence of God’s continuing activity in many ways.
- Pantheism:** No. See Panentheism.
- Panentheism:** No. Even though we display characteristics of God, inner experience does not suggest that we are God. As one writer puts it, “The primary thing that people are conscious of is that they exist and that they are not God.”
- Polytheism:** No. Inner experience would suggest that there is one *definite* unchanging Creator who is evidenced by our *definite* understanding of right and wrong.
- Pluralism:** No. Inner experience tells us that something cannot be true (e.g., there is only one God) and false (e.g., there is not only one God) at the same time and in the same relationship.
- Naturalism:** No. Ninety-five percent of the world has always been theists because we all exhibit attributes of God through our reasoning capabilities, morality, and sense of what is right or wrong. This

will be further discussed in the anthropological and moral arguments for the existence of God.

4. Test of Practice: Does it work (is it livable)?

- Theism:** Yes. All people live according to a theistic worldview whether they admit it or not. In other words, people do live as if there is a God who is personal and transcendent, since they live according to a certain standard of beliefs in right or wrong. All people, at least in some sense, live as if they are going to be held accountable for what they do, even if they profess that they do not believe this is the case. This is precisely the argument that Reformed or presuppositional apologists make. Nihilism is unlivable.
- Deism:** No. In general, deists do not live as if God is uninvolved in their lives. They live as if His requirements are actively present and binding in their *everyday* lives.
- Pantheism:** No. Pantheists do not live as if they are caught up in a perpetual cycle of reincarnation. If they did, they would be living according to a standard of improvement. As well, pantheists do not consistently live as if there is no ultimate good or evil, since they live according to some set of morals.
- Panentheism:** No. Panentheists do not live as if they are heading toward an eternity as merely a memory in the mind of God. They live as if what they do really matters for something greater.
- Polytheism:** No. Polytheists do not consistently live as if there is no *ultimate* Creator, since they live according to a certain set of moral values and expect other to do the same. If they lived according to their polytheistic world view, they would have no basis for a set standard of right or wrong. It all depends on the god you serve.
- Pluralists:** No. Pluralists believe in a universal right and wrong. First and foremost, they believe that pluralism is right and exclusivism is

wrong. It is impossible to be a consistent pluralist. People also do not live according to the relativistic worldview that pluralism demands since it is unlivable. This can be demonstrated by the fact that all people would believe that there are certain things that are universally wrong (e.g., torturing babies for fun is wrong).

Naturalism:

No. Naturalists live their lives according to a certain set of moral values that can only be explained by a Moral law-giver.

-
4. Theism is the belief that God is transcendent above creation, yet He interacts with creation. Why is it necessary, according to Theists that God exist outside of time? What is the inconsistency with all worldviews in which God only exists in time?

 5. Deism is the belief that God simply created all things and then left them to their own demise. Job recognizes God's apparent lack of activity in Job 21:7–26 and 24:1–25. Job's basic thesis is that from the looks of things, there is no ultimate judge intervening in the affairs of men. The wicked prosper, and the righteous and poor are taken advantage of. Job, it seems, comes dangerously close to deism at times, but then his conclusion is that God knows the ways of the wicked (Job 24:23). The theme of the apparent apathy of God toward the wicked is continually seen throughout Scripture. The defense that is always given is that while the wicked may seem to prosper in this life in spite of their wickedness, they will eventually die, face judgment, and then be forgotten. (Read Jer. 12:1–4; Ps. 37:1–2; 35–36; 92:7; Ecc. 7:15).

In what ways have you taken a deistic worldview, thinking that God is not really involved? Explain.

6. Examine Naturalism. Further discuss the deficiencies that it has in answering the worldview questions.

KNOWABILITY OF GOD

Can the finite comprehend the Infinite?

Why do some people object to the study of God?

Objection to the study of God:

It is nonsensical to attempt to define God in human terms for two reasons:

1. The finite cannot comprehend the Infinite and, therefore, should not define Him.
2. Human language will always be inadequate and, therefore, misleading.

Ps. 145:3	
1 Cor. 2:10–12	
Ps. 147:5	
Rom. 11:33	

Can the finite comprehend the infinite?

1. *The finite cannot comprehend the Infinite and, therefore, should not define Him.*

"Even in the age to come, when we are freed from the presence of sin, we will never be able to fully understand God or any one thing about Him... We have true knowledge from Scripture, even though we do not have exhaustive knowledge."

—Wayne Grudem

Systematic Theology (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 150-151

While it is true that we cannot know God fully, we can know Him truly.

—John Hannah

Is human language inadequate to describe God?

2. Human language will always be inadequate and, therefore, misleading.

What do you think of when you say that God is a person?

What do you think of when you say that God is spirit (John 4:24)?

While it is true that human language has its limits, God chose to express Himself within those limits in His Word. We should not try to force His revelations of Himself to do more than intended to do.

A biblical understanding of the knowability of God will prevent possible misunderstandings.

Jeremiah 9:23–24

“Thus says the LORD, ‘Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; *but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things,*’ declares the LORD.”

Why do some people object to the study of God's existence?

Give some objections to the study of God's Existence:

Common objections to the study of God's existence:

1. You cannot prove beyond a doubt that God exists.
2. God must be accepted on the basis of faith, not on the basis of evidences.
3. Even if you prove that God does exist, you cannot prove that the God of the Bible is the one true God.
4. Everyone already believes He exists, some just deny it (Ps. 14:1). Therefore, there is no need to prove that He exists.

1. You cannot prove beyond a doubt that God exists.

True and false. It depends on what you mean by "prove."

1. Mathematical proof (true by analysis)

2. Logical proof (what is reasonable)
3. Empirical proof (scientific method/observable data)
4. Moral proof (what is demanded based on the compelling conclusions of the evidences)

"No arguments that appeal to facts from the real world can furnish mathematically certain conclusions. But while empirical proofs fall short of certainty, all factual decisions in life are based on such proofs. Historians, and indeed, all of us, must make decisions constantly, and the only adequate guide is probability."

—John Warwick Montgomery

"If we define proof as probable occurrence based on empirically produced experiences and subject to the test of reasonable judgment, then we can say the arguments prove the existence of God."

—A.J. Hover

"Each of us must weigh the arguments; each of us is ultimately responsible for our own final decision."

—Ronald Nash

2. *God must be accepted on the basis of faith, not on the basis of evidences.*

True or False?

False . . .

- God has given us a mind and expects us to think.
- God has always provided evidences for the faith.
- If this were true, then all religions are equal and all religious experience is equally valid.

The reformers' definition of faith

1. *Notitia*: “knowledge” (Heb. 11:6)
2. *Assensus*: “assent” (Heb. 11:1; Isa. 40-48; Ex. 4:1-9; Resurrection appearances)
3. *Fiducia*: “trust”

“I can prove many things to a person, but I cannot persuade them of anything.”
-R.C. Sproul

2 Cor. 4:3-4

“And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ who is the image of God.”

3. *Even if you prove that God does exist, you cannot prove that the God of the Bible is the one true God.*

You cannot prove this by the same arguments, but it does lay the foundation for a theistic worldview.

Establishing common ground may sometimes be necessary before arguing for the God of the Bible.

4. *Everyone already believes He exists, some just deny it (Ps. 14:1); there is, therefore, no need to prove it.*

- This may be true, but the degree to which people believe He exists varies. We can always grow in our faith.
- Most who believe that God exists live their lives like He does not exist (practical atheists).
- The more assured people are that God exists; the more likely they are to live like it.

*"They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him."
– Titus 1:16*

- Therefore the arguments are valid for discipleship purposes as much as for evangelistic purposes.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Considering God's incomprehensibility, what would you say to someone who says, "Who is to say that when we get to heaven we will have a parallel understanding of truth that we have today?"
2. Would you like to know God exhaustively? Why or why not?
3. Is there a difference in knowing about God and knowing God? If so, what is it?
4. How does the Reformers' definition of faith, help you to understand what true faith is?

5. Explain what belief without *fiducia* looks like. Give examples.

6. Explain what belief without *assensus* looks like. Give examples.

7. Explain what belief without *notitia* looks like. Give examples.

-
8. Which element of faith do you struggle with most? Explain.
9. How was your thinking *most* challenged by the lesson? Explain.

ARGUMENT FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD



Can we prove that God exists?

Why do people sometimes doubt His existence?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

“Though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him”

-Peter

1 Pet. 1:8

Why are people confident about His existence?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Why is there something rather than nothing?

Examining the Options

List all possible answers to this question:

UNIVERSAL AXIOM:

When all of the options have been deduced, the one remaining option is the right one.

1. There is not anything. All is an illusion.

2. The universe is self-created.

“Sophisticated arguments of chance creation have been formulated which dazzle our mathematical comprehension... What are the real chances of the universe created by chance? Not a chance. Chance is incapable of creating a single molecule, let alone an entire universe. Why not? Chance is *no thing*. It is not an entity. It has no being, no power, no force. It can effect nothing because it has no causal power within it. ...It is a word which describes mathematical possibilities which, by the curious flip of the fallacy of ambiguity, slips into the discussion as if it were a real entity with real power, indeed, supreme power, the power of creativity.”

— R.C. Sproul

3. The universe was created by chance.

4. The universe was created by nothing.

Ex nihilo nihil fit
“Out of nothing, nothing comes”

5. The universe has existed for eternity.

"The universe is all there is, all there was, and all there will ever be."
 – Carl Sagan

6. An infinite number of moments cannot be traversed (Kalam).

Syllogism 1

Premise 1: The series of events in time is a collection formed by adding one member (moment) after another.

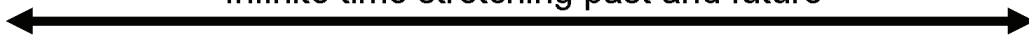
Premise 2: A collection formed by adding one member (moment) after another cannot be actually infinite.

Conclusion: The series of events (moments) in time cannot be actually infinite.

If the universe were made up of an infinite number of moments stretching into the past, we could never have come to the present moment, since we would have to traverse an infinite number of moments to get to the present moment.

NOT POSSIBLE

Infinite time stretching past and future



NOT POSSIBLE

Infinite time stretching past

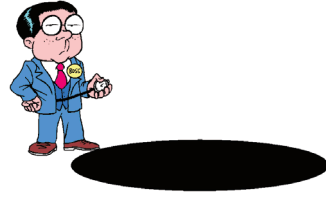


POSSIBLE

Infinite time stretching future



If a man were to try to jump out of an infinitely deep hole, when would he come out?



7. It is impossible to have an infinite number of causes and effects.

8. An eternal self-existent God created the universe.

"If something exists,
there is a God."
— R.C. Sproul

Traditional arguments for the existence of God

1. Cosmological Argument
2. Ontological Argument
3. Teleological Argument
4. Moral Argument (Anthropological)
5. sensus divinitatis Argument
6. Pascal's "Wager"
7. Cumulative Case Argument

1. Cosmological Argument

Gk. *Cosmos*: “an orderly arrangement”

This argument states that there must be an effect for every cause, and God must be that Cause.

Syllogism 1

- Premise 1:** Every effect has a cause.
Premise 2: The universe is an effect.
Premise 3: There cannot be an infinite regress of cause, and effects.
Conclusion: There must be an **Uncaused Cause**.

Syllogism 2

- Premise 1:** Everything that moves must have a mover.
Premise 2: The universe is moving.
Premise 3: There cannot be an infinite regress of cause, and effects.
Conclusion: There must be an **Unmoved Mover**.

Syllogism 3 (Kalam)

- Premise 1:** Everything that begins to exist has a cause.
Premise 2: The universe began to exist.
Conclusion: The universe has a cause (God).

2. Ontological Argument

Gk. *ontos* “being”

This is an argument for necessary existence.

Syllogism 1

- Premise 1:** If God exists, we must conceive of him as a necessary Being.
Premise 2: By definition, a necessary being cannot not exist.
Conclusion: A necessary being must exist.

Syllogism 2

- Premise 1:** If God exists, we must conceive of Him as the greatest conceivable being.
- Premise 2:** By definition, the greatest conceivable being must exist or He would not be the greatest conceivable being, since one could conceive of something greater than Him, namely one that exists.
- Conclusion:** Therefore, the greatest conceivable being (God) must exist.

Syllogism 3

- Premise 1: If it can be conceived, it must exist.
- Premise 2: The concept of God is universally conceived.
- Conclusion: God must exist.

3. Teleological Argument

Gk. *teleos*: “end, or complete”

This argument states that the order of the universe evidences intelligent design rather than chaotic chance. Therefore, there must be a designer.



Paley’s famous watchmaker illustration.

While cosmological arguments for God’s existence deal primarily with the existence of the world, teleological arguments focus on certain features of the existing world, notably its apparent order and design.

– Ronald Nash

Faith and Reason (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998), 134

Syllogism

- Premise 1:** If there is design, there must be a designer.
- Premise 2:** The universe in all its parts has a design.
- Conclusion:** There must be an Undesigned Designer.

Romans 1:20–21

“For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.”

Psalm 19:1–4

“The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out through all the earth and their utterances to the end of the world. In them He has placed a tent for the sun.”

4. Moral Argument (Anthropological)

This argument states that all people have a concept of right and wrong. This concept must have come from something outside of them—a Moral Absolute.

All people have a conscience. This conscience must reflect some conscience outside of them.

Syllogism 1

- Premise 1:** Moral laws imply a Moral law-giver.
Premise 2: There are universal objective moral laws.
Conclusion: There must be a Moral law-giver.

Syllogism 2: (C.S. Lewis)

1. There must be a universal moral law, or else: (a) Moral disagreements would make no sense, as we all assume they do. (b) All moral criticisms would be meaningless (e.g., “The Nazis were wrong.”). (c) It is unnecessary to keep promises or treaties, as we all assume that it is. (d) We would not make excuses for breaking the moral law, as we all do.
2. But a universal moral law requires a universal Moral law-giver, since the Source of it: (a) Gives moral commands (as lawgivers do). (b) Is interested in our behavior (as moral persons are).
3. Further, this universal Moral law-giver must be absolutely good: (a) Otherwise all moral effort would be futile in the long run, since we could be sacrificing our lives for what is not ultimately right. (b) The source of all good must be absolutely good, since the standard of all good must be completely good.
4. Therefore, there must be an absolutely good Moral law-giver.

Romans 2:14–15

“For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them.”

5. *sensus divinitatis* Argument

This argument states that everyone has an innate “sense of the divine” built within them. This “God-shaped void” causes them to have a great desire to fill the void by searching for God. To varying degrees this argument has been held by Augustine, Calvin, and Pascal.

“For thou hast made us for
thyself and restless is our heart
until it comes to rest in thee.”
– Augustine

Psalm 14:1a

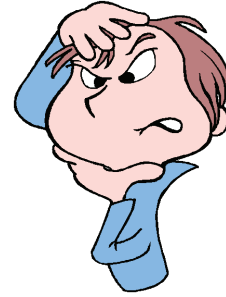
“The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’”

Romans 1:21

“For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.”

6. Pascal’s “Wager”

1. If you say there is not a God and there is, there will be drastic consequences.
2. If you say there is a God and there is not, you are none the worse; there are no consequences.
3. Therefore, one should believe in God.



Argument	Type of Person
Cosmological	
Ontological	
Teleological	
Moral	
<i>sensus divinitatis</i>	
Wager	

7. Cumulative Case Argument

This argument sees the greatest value in the cumulative effect of all the arguments. No one argument may be ultimately convincing.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Further discuss the reasons why you often doubt God's existence.

Read 1 Pet. 1:8. How does this verse help with regard to this issue?

2. Further discuss the reasons why you are confident about God's existence.

3. Further discuss the validity of the "Why is there something rather than nothing?" question. Do you think that it is possible to just ignore this question?

-
4. The Kalam Cosmological Argument for the existence of God is an argument from beginnings. It basically says that there cannot be an infinite series of moment in the past or we would never have come to the present. Further discuss the validity of this argument.

 5. The Moral Argument for the existence of God is an argument from the inherent morality and sense of right and wrong within all people. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of this argument.

 6. Read Ps. 19:1–4 and Rom. 1:20–21. The Teleological Argument for the existence of God is an argument from design. What ways has this argument been influential in your life?

7. How have you experienced the *sensus divinitatus* in your own life? Explain.

8. How was your thinking *most* challenged by the lesson? Explain.

THE INCOMMUNICABLE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD, PART 1

What makes God, God?

What is an Attribute?

"A quality or characteristic inherent in or ascribed to someone or something."

-American Heritage
Dictionary

"An attribute is a property intrinsic to its subject."

-Lewis Sperry Chafer

Systematic Theology, Vol 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1976)

"Those qualities of God that constitute what he is, the very characteristics of his nature."

-Millard Erickson

Christian Theology (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2001), 291

Attributes, with respect to God, are personal characteristics which God possesses that are:

- Inherent
- Immutable (unchangeable)
- Eternal

Attribute	Functions
Entire Trinity possesses them	Certain members
Eternal	Activities
Essential	Not necessary for God to be God

Classification of God's attributes

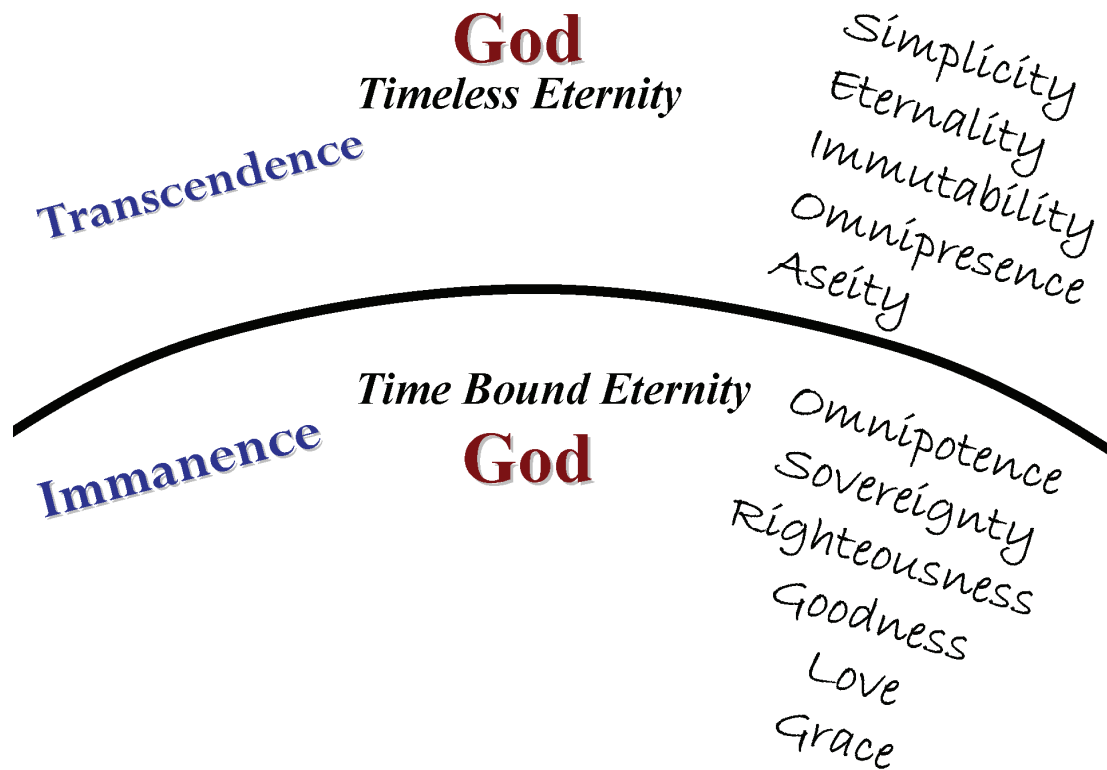
The attributes of God can be placed in two categories:

1. Communicable
2. Incommunicable

Communicable attributes are the attributes which God shares or “communicates” with us. Some element of them can be found in us.

Incommunicable attributes are the attributes which God does not share or “communicate” with us.

Incommunicable	Communicable
1. Simplicity	1. Omniscience
2. Eternality	2. Omnipotence
3. Immutability	3. Sovereignty
4. Omnipresence (Immensity)	4. Righteousness
5. Aseity	5. Goodness
	6. Love
	7. Grace



Incommunicable Attributes

1. Simplicity

American Heritage Dictionary:

“Having or composed of only one thing, element, or part.”

With reference to God:

God’s essence (*ontos*) is not made up of divisible or distinguishable parts.

“By this term it is indicated that the divine Being is uncompounded, incomplex, and indivisible. . . . Complexity is not the highest ideal in any being. As in works of art, the more simplified a thing is the more its properties satisfy and abide. Thus it is with God. He, being the perfect One, is to be worshiped as the finality and infinity of simplicity.”

— Lewis Sperry Chafer

Systematic Theology (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1976), 213

“To say that God is simple . . . is to say that there is no composition in his being. Specifically, there is no composition of physical parts, form and matter, actual and potential, genus and differentia, substance or accident, God and his essence, essence and attributes, attributes and one another . . . God is not, then, in any sense made up of parts.”

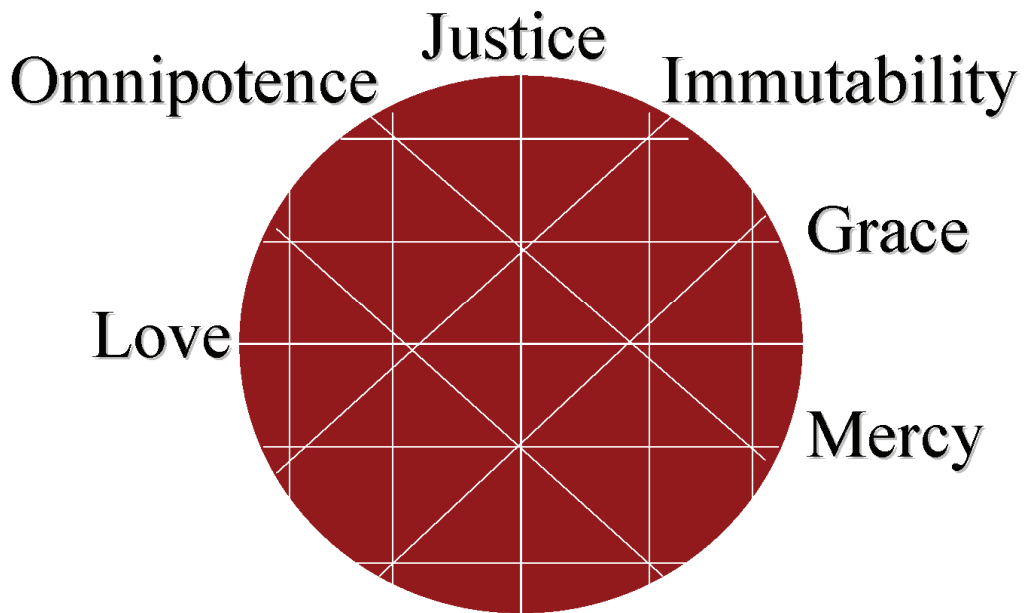
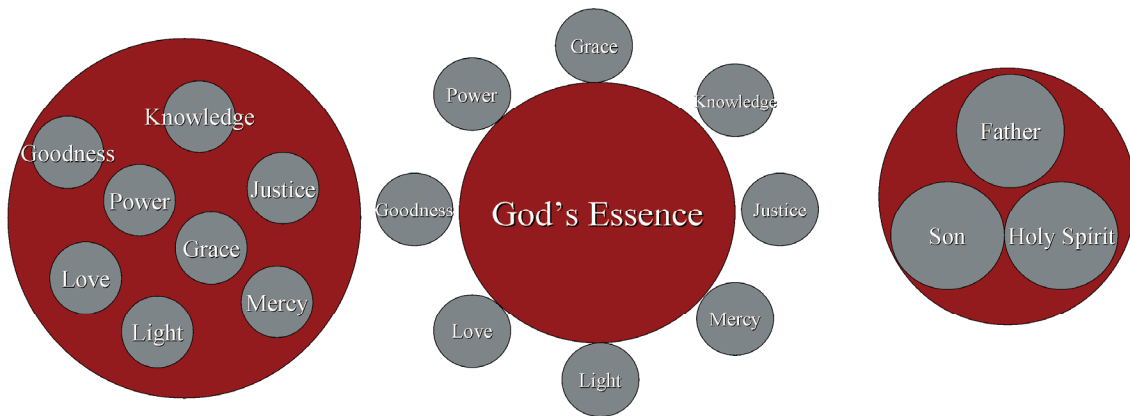
— John Frame

The Doctrine of God (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2002), 225

God’s essence (*ontos*) is not made up of a combination of matter or attributes.

Describe what you think is meant here.

Wrong



Theological defense for simplicity:

Syllogism

- Premise 1:** God is beyond time.
- Premise 2:** Anything that is outside of time is simple.
- Conclusion:** Therefore, God is simple.

Scriptural defense for simplicity:

- John 4:24
- 1 Kings 8:27
- John 1:18; John 6:46; Col. 1:15; 1 Tim. 6:15–16
- Deut. 6:4
- Ex. 3:14

Objections to simplicity:

1. The definition of “spirit” in John 4:24 is forced into an unnecessary mold.
2. A simple God could not act in time.
3. The doctrine of simplicity is of neoplatonic origin.
4. The doctrine of simplicity is unintelligible.

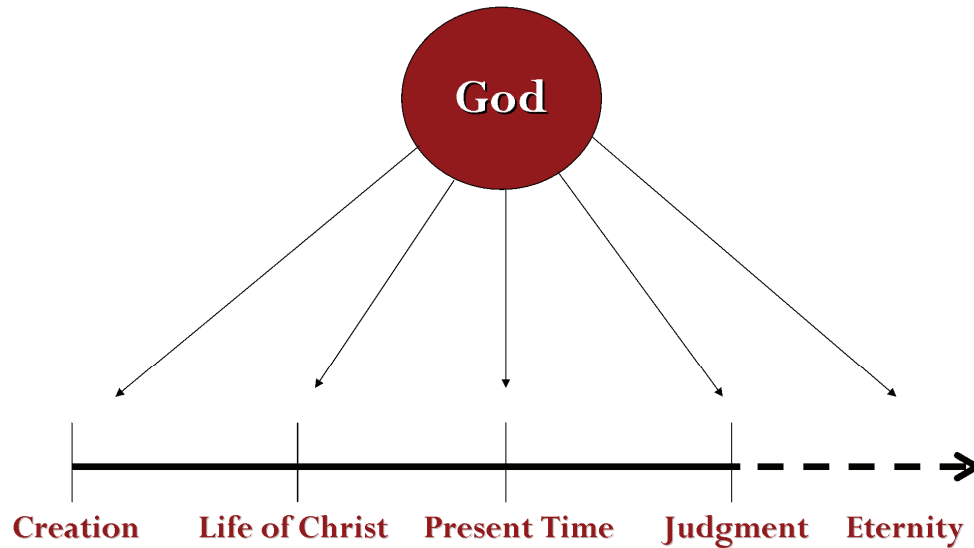
2. Eternality

“God has no beginning, end, or succession of moments in his own being, and he sees time equally vividly, yet God sees events in time and acts in time.”

– Wayne Grudem

Systematic Theology (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 168

Orthodox View of God's Eternality



Logical defense for eternity:

The doctrine of creation by an Uncaused Cause demands that the Creator be outside of time. Why?

Syllogism:

- Premise 1:** God created all things.
Premise 2: The Creator is not part of the creation.
Premise 3: Time is a part of creation.
Conclusion: Therefore, God created time and is beyond it.

Theological defense for eternity:

If God is simple (i.e., He does not have parts) and is not limited by space, then He is not limited by time.

Syllogism 1:

- Premise 1:** God is simple.
Premise 2: Simple beings are not spatial.
Premise 3: Nonspatial beings are necessarily beyond time.
Conclusion: Therefore, if God is simple, He is beyond time.

“According to the prevailing view in modern science, space and time are correlative. That is, there is never time without space or space without time. If this is so, then any temporal being is also spatial. Likewise, if God is not spatial, then He cannot be temporal.”

– Geisler and House

Norman Geisler and Wayne House *Battle for God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2001), 73

God	God	God	God	God	God	God	God

If God is simple (i.e., He does not have “parts”), then He must be eternal, for existence in time necessitates succession of moments, which means that God exists in “parts.”

Syllogism 2:

Premise 1: God is simple.

Premise 2: Simple beings do not have parts.

Premise 3: Beings who exist in time necessarily have parts.

Conclusion: Therefore, a simple God cannot exist in time.

Scriptural defense for eternity:

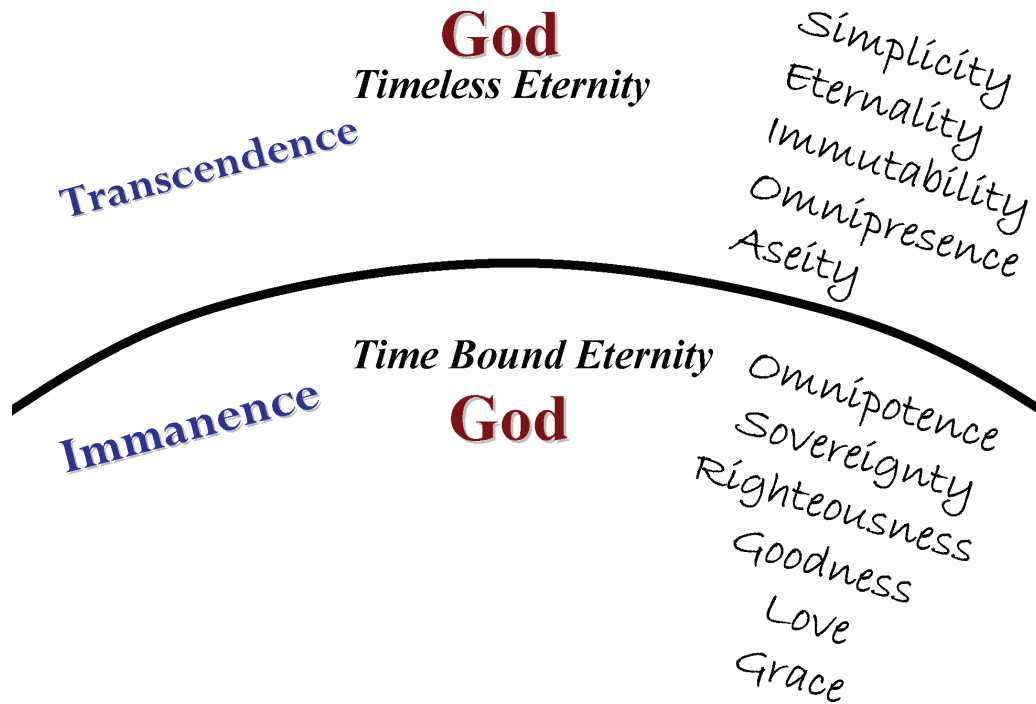
Gen. 1:1; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:15–17; Heb. 11:3; 1:2; Ps. 90:4; 2 Pet. 3:8;
Jude 1:25; Ps. 93:2; Ex. 3:14

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. An attribute is a property of some entity that to some degree defines what that entity is. In other words, philosophically speaking, an entity is the sum total of its attributes. For example, God is the sum total of His attributes. An *essential* attribute is that property which exists *necessarily* in the entity, and without it, the entity would not be what it is. For example, God would not be God if He was not timeless (an essential attribute that makes God, God). A *non-essential* attribute is a property of an entity which it possesses subjectively, but is not necessary for the ontological make up of the entity. For example, God's mercy is a non-essential attribute of His character. In other words God does not need to have the attribute of mercy to be God. It is conceivable for God to be unmerciful and still meet the criteria of "goodness." Discuss the validity of this last statement. How should this make us praise God more?
2. What *non-essential* attributes do you personally possess? In other words, what attributes do you possess that are *not* necessary attributes shared by all mankind?
3. What *essential* attributes do you possess by virtue of belonging to the category of mankind?

THE INCOMMUNICABLE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD, PART 2

What makes God, God?



2. Immutability

American Heritage Dictionary:

“Not subject or susceptible to change.”

With reference to God:

God is unchangeable in His being and the attributes of His character.

Theological defense for immutability:

Immutability is a logical corollary of simplicity.

- A simple being must be eternal and immutable.

- If God is eternal, He must be immutable. Why?

Syllogism

Premise 1: Change is only a result of time.
Premise 2: God does not experience time.
Conclusion: God does not experience change in His being (ontological change).

Scriptural defense for immutability:

Ps. 102:25–27; Num. 23:19; 1 Sam. 15:29; Heb. 13:8; Ex. 3:14

Objection to immutability:

Scripture states that God repents and changes His mind; this makes God mutable.

Gen. 6:6
 1 Sam. 15:11
 Ex. 32:9–14
 Is. 38:1-6

How do we explain God's apparent regret?

How do we explain God's apparent change of mind?

God
Timeless Eternity

*Ontological
Immutability*

Time Bound Eternity

God

*Relational
Mutability*

"These instances should be understood as true expressions of God's present attitude or intention with respect to the situation as it exists at that moment. If the situation changes, then of course God's attitude or expression of intention will also change. This is just saying that God responds differently to different situations."

— Wayne Grudem

Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994, 164

3. Omnipresence

omni “everywhere” *presence* “present”

American Heritage Dictionary:

“Present everywhere simultaneously.”

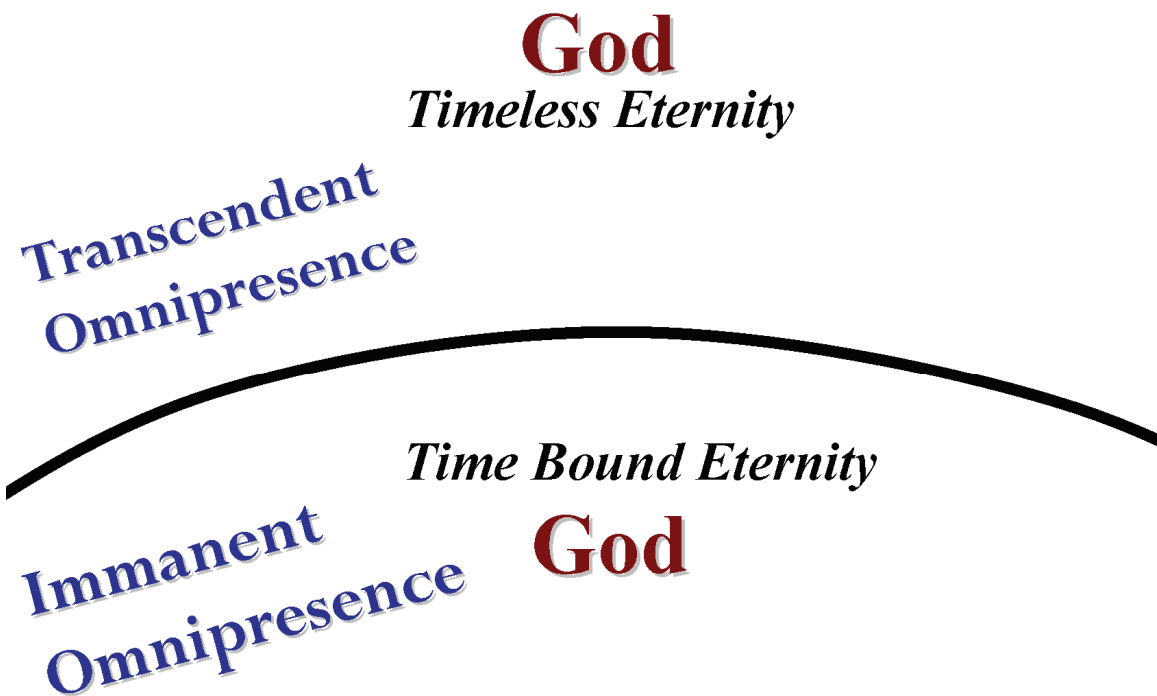
With reference to God:

Immanent Omnipresence

God is not a spatial being but is present everywhere with His whole being simultaneously (immanent).

Transcendent Omnipresence

Everything is in God’s immediate presence.

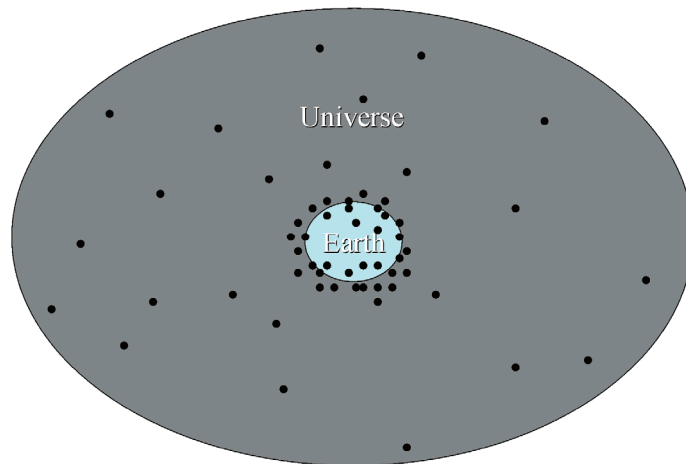
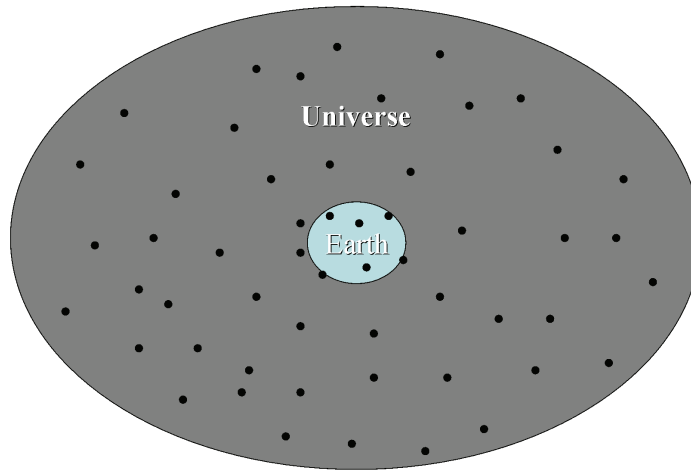
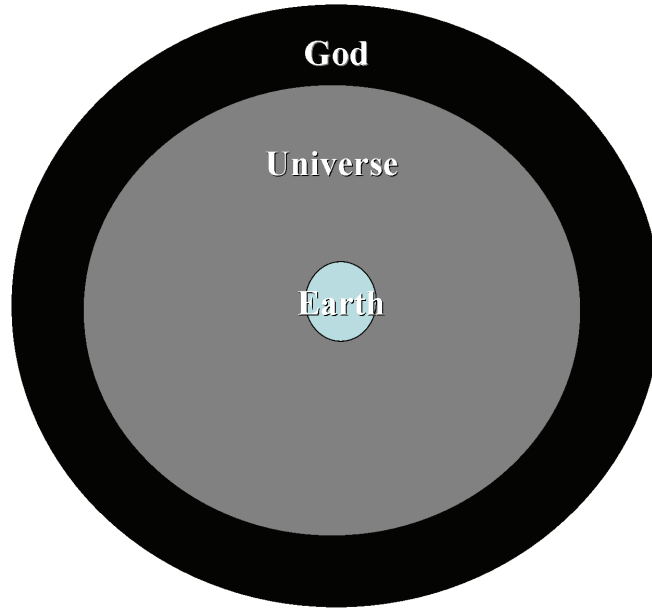


"We should guard against thinking that God extends infinitely far in all directions so that he himself exists in a sort of infinite, unending space. Nor should we think that God is somehow a 'bigger space' or bigger area surrounding the space of the universe as we know it. All of these speak of God's being in spatial terms, as if he were simply an extremely large being."

— Wayne Grudem

Systematic Theology, 174-175.

Wrong



Logical defense for omnipresence:**Syllogism****Premise 1:** God is the Creator of all creation.**Premise 2:** Space is part of creation.**Conclusion:** Therefore, the existence of God must not involve space.**Theological defense for omnipresence:****Syllogism****Premise 1:** Simple beings do not have parts.**Premise 2:** Everything that exists within space necessarily has parts.**Conclusion:** God, being simple, does not exist within space.**Scriptural defense for omnipresence:**

1 Kings 8:27; Acts 17:24–28; Isa. 66:1; Ps. 139:7–10

4. Aseity*a “from” se “itself”*

With reference to God:

God is in no way a contingent being. In other words, He is the only absolutely independent being. His existence and well-being is not dependant upon any being or circumstance. He is the final and primary cause of all things.

Therefore, there is no cause that precedes him. He is in need of nothing.

Philosophical defense:**Syllogism****Premise 1:** God is the first cause of all things.**Premise 2:** The First Cause is not dependent on any previous causes, since if it was, it would not be the first cause.**Conclusion:** Therefore, aseity is a necessary attribute of God.**Scriptural Defense:**

Ps. 50:10-12; Act 17:23-26, Ex 3:14

THE COMMUNICABLE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

What do we have in common with God?

4. Omniscience

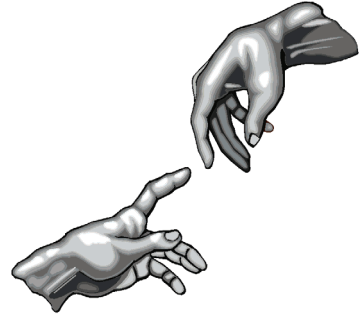
Omni “all” *scientia* “to know”

Webster’s:

“Having universal knowledge; knowing all things; infinitely knowing or wise.”

With reference to God:

God knows all things actual and potential, past, present, and future.



Scriptural defense for omniscience:

Prov. 16:2; Gen. 20:6; Ps. 139:1–6; 147:4–5; 1 Sam. 16:7; Ex. 11:1;
Isa. 42:9; 45:21; Matt. 11:21–24

5. Omnipotence

omni “all” *potens* “powerful”

Webster’s:

“Able in every respect and for every work; unlimited in ability; all-powerful; almighty.”

With reference to God:

God is able to accomplish all things possible and actual, but He is not able to do things inconsistent with His character.

Scriptural defense for omnipotence:

Gen. 17:1; 18:14; Luke 1:37; Job 42:2; Jer. 32:17; Matt. 19:26; Eph. 3:20

Can God really do anything?

Titus 1:2; 2 Tim. 2:13; Jas. 1:13

6. Sovereignty

Webster's:

“The quality or state of being sovereign, or of being a sovereign; the exercise of, or right to exercise, supreme power; dominion; sway; supremacy; independence.”

With reference to God:

God is the supreme ruler of the universe who brings about all things according to His desire.

Three Views of God's Sovereignty

Everything that happens, happens because God who is the ultimate first cause in all things caused it to happen

Everything that happens, happens either because God caused it to happen or He allowed it to happen. He is sometimes the first cause of the event and sometimes He utilizes secondary causes

Everything that happens, happens because God allowed it to happen

**Meticulous
Sovereignty**

**Providential
Sovereignty**

**Providential
oversight**

Westminster Confession (3.1)

"God, from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass; yet so, as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures; nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established."

Scriptural defense for sovereignty:

Deut. 10:14; Ps. 24:1; 50:10–12; 22:28; 1 Sam. 2:6-8; Ex. 4:11; Rom. 13:1; 9:18; Prov. 21:1; Dan. 4:34-35; Eph. 1:11; 2 Chron. 15:15; Jdg. 14:1–4

5. Righteousness

Webster's:

"Doing, or according with, that which is right; yielding to all their due; just; equitable; especially, free from wrong, guilt, or sin; holy; as, a righteous man or act; a righteous retribution."



With reference to God:

God always acts in accordance to that which is right and just.

Scriptural defense for righteousness:

Ez. 9:15; Ps. 7:9; Ps. 111:3; 119:142, 172; Rom. 3:21–24; 1 Cor. 6:9–11; Tit. 3:5–7

8. Goodness

God is the standard of all goodness and moral excellence.

Scriptural defense for goodness:

Ps. 100:5; 106:1; Luke 18:19; Rom. 8:28; 12:2; Gen. 1:31;
Acts 14:17; Jas. 1:17

9. Love

To love is part of God's eternal unchanging character which is always giving of Himself to others.

Characteristics of God's love:

- It is a love for all His creation (Jn. 3:16).
- It motivates us to love Him (1 Jn. 4:19).
- It is ultimately displayed in the sending of His Son (Rom. 5:8).
- It has been eternally shared among the members of the Trinity (Jn. 3:35; 14:31).
- It produces rejoicing in salvation of His creation (Isa. 62:5).

*"As a bridegroom
rejoices over a bride,
so your God will
rejoice over you."
—Isa. 62:6*

10. Grace

Grace is an outcome of the love of God that describes the unmerited favor which He extends to all people.

Two types of grace:

1. Common grace

- Extends to all people
- God's sustaining presence (Acts 17:25)
- Patience extended to all people (2 Pet. 3:9)

2. Saving Grace

- God's saving mercy (Rom. 5:1–2)
- God's sustaining mercy (Rom. 8:28–39)
- Extends to the elect (Rom. 9:15–16)

Ex. 3:13b-14

“Now they may say to me, ‘What is His name?’ What shall I say to them? God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM’; and He said, ‘Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, I AM has sent me to you.’”

Ex. 34:6–7

“The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, and abounding in loyal love and faithfulness, keeping loyal love for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression and sin. But he by no means leaves the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and on the children's children, to the third and fourth generation.”

OPENNESS THEOLOGY DEBATE

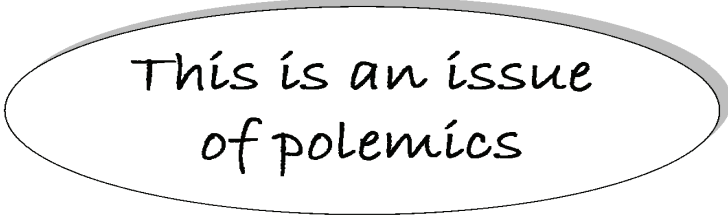
Who is in control?

Open Theology: Describes a theology of a group of *evangelical* theologians who challenge the traditional understanding of God by redefining certain attributes, believing that the future is “open” or unknown to God, redefining the eternity of God.

Adherents: Clark Pinnock, Gregory Boyd, John Sanders

They do so by . . .

1. Redefining the eternity of God.
2. Redefining the omniscience of God.
3. Redefining the omnipotence of God.
4. Redefining the sovereignty of God.



*This is an issue
of polemics*

1. Redefining Eternality

Three arguments

1. This is a notion that was adopted from Greek philosophy.
2. It is impossible for us to envision what a timeless being might be.

3. God is seen in history as one who is involved in time. In order to relate to the world as it actually is, He must be in time. The Bible does not speak of God's timelessness, but of His relational activity.

"The God of the Bible is not timeless. His eternality means that there has never been and never will be a time when God does not exist. Timelessness limits God. If he were timeless, God would be unable to work salvation in history, would be cut off from the world, have no real relationship with people and would be completely static."

—Clark Pinnock

Clark Pinnock, ed. *The Openness of God*, 121, emphasis added

2. Redefining Omniscience

God is no longer omniscient. God's foreknowledge is limited by time.

Syllogism

- Premise 1:** God can only know what can be known.
Premise 2: That which is future cannot be known.
Conclusion: Therefore, God does not know the future.

What about prophecy?

God is ultimately powerful within time and can dictate the future and state with confidence what will come about (the "All-Wise Chess Player").

3. Redefining Omnipotence

God *willingly* limits His power:

God has willingly set aside His power so that He can truly relate to the world.

“We must not define omnipotence as the power to determine everything, but rather as the power that enables God to deal with any situation that arises” (Pinnock, 114).

“God has the power to be . . . an ‘ad hoc’ God, one who responds and adapts to surprises and to the unexpected. God sets goals for creation and redemption and realizes them ad hoc in history. If plan A fails, God is ready with plan B” (ibid., 113).

4. Redefining Sovereignty

God limits His sovereignty:

- He is *willingly* not in control of all that happens.
- He acts and reacts according to the free-will acts of men.
- He would never violate a person’s free will.

Why?

1. God is seen as acting as if He does not know the future (Gen. 6:6; 22:1–12; Jer. 3:6–7, 19:4–5; 1 Sam. 15:35; Jn. 3:4).

Answer: Anthropomorphic language and relational rhetoric.

2. Prayer seems to change the plans of God (James 4:2).

Answer: God uses prayer to change things; this is part of God's plans.

3. Problem of Evil (theodicy):

- If God does not know the future, then it is easier to explain why evil exists. God did not have anything to do with it.
- If God does know the future and is sovereign over it, why does God allow evil to happen? God would be indirectly responsible for it.

Answer: Greater good theology (Gen. 50:20).

THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY

Historical Development

How did the early church understand the Trinity?

I. Definition of the Trinity

"Let me ask of my reader, wherever, alike with myself, he is certain, there to go with me; wherever, alike with me, he hesitated, there to join with me in inquiring; wherever he recognizes himself to be in error, there to return to me; wherever he recognizes me to be so, there to call me back; so that we may enter together upon the path of charity, and advance towards Him of whom it is said, "Seek His face evermore." And I would make this pious and safe agreement, in the presence of our Lord God, with all who read my writings . . . Which inquire into the unity of the Trinity of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit; because in no other subject is error more dangerous, or inquiry more laborious, or the discovery of truth more profitable."

-St. Augustine

“Who Do Men Say That I Am?”

1. Church of Jesus Christ and Latter-day Saints/Mormons (11.5 million)
Christ is the product of a sexual relationship between the Father and a goddess. Satan is his brother.
2. Jehovah’s Witnesses (14.8 million)
Jesus (also known as Michael the archangel) is a creation, and the Holy Spirit is a force.
3. Muslims (1.3 billion)
Christ was a great prophet.
4. Oneness Pentecostals (6 million)
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one person who reveals Himself in three different ways.
5. Liberal Churches
Christ was a good man.
6. The Uninformed Christian
Those who have never been exposed to the orthodox teaching on the Trinity and, therefore, unintentionally hold to an unorthodox view.

Orthodox Definition

One God who eternally exists in three different persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—all of whom are fully God, all of whom are equal.

II. Historical Development

Appreciating the Struggles

- A. Trinitarian Heterodoxy: Learning from our mistakes
- B. East and West: Difficulties in communication
- C. Modern Analogies: Falling short of the glory of God

A. Trinitarian Heterodoxy: Learning from our mistakes

The early church had difficulty understanding that . . .

1. The Bible teaches monotheism (Deut. 6:4; Isa. 44:6–8; John. 17:3; 1 Cor. 8:4–6; 1 Tim. 2:5).

And

2. The Father is said to be God, Jesus is called God, and the Holy Spirit is called God.

Early Trinitarianism Heresies:

1. Ebionism
2. Docetism
3. Dynamic Monarchianism (Adoptionism)
4. Modalistic Monarchianism (Sabellianism)
5. Arianism

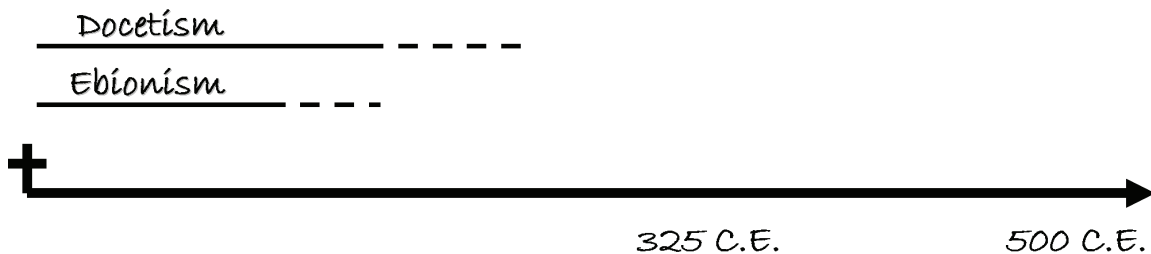


Ebionism: Denied the deity of Christ, but accepted Him as the prophet of Deut. 18:15: “The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him.”

Proponent(s): Legalistic Jewish sect that could be associated with the Judaizers.

Opponent: Origin (ca. 185–ca. 254)

Supportive writings: Clementine Homilies (?)



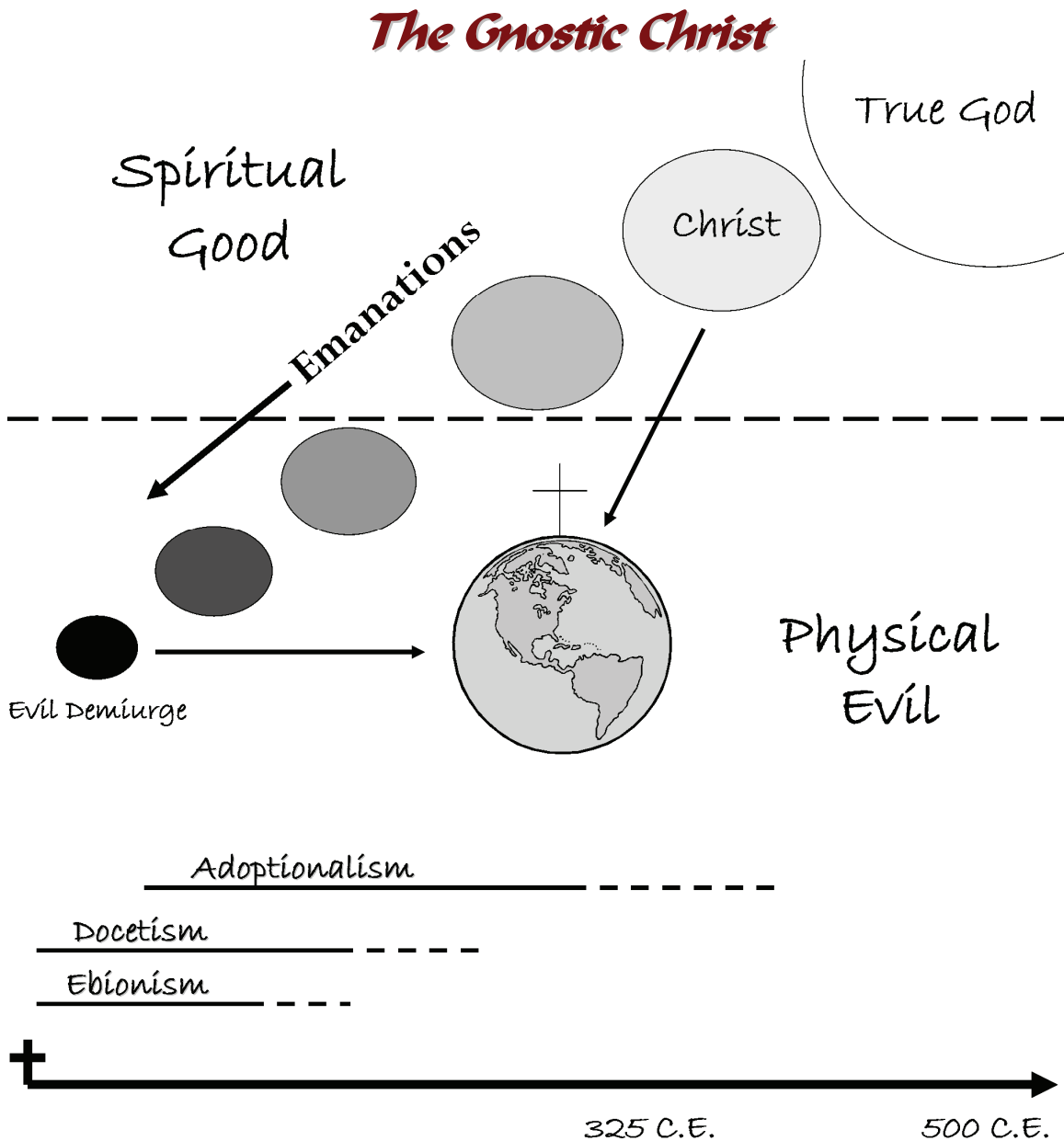
Docetism: From the Greek, *dokeo*, “to seem, think, or appear.” Belief of a “Christian” sect of Gnostics that Christ was an emanation from the true good God. Christ was not truly a man, since all things material are inherently evil. Therefore, Christ only “seemed” to have a body.

Alternate Name: Marcionism

Proponent(s): Marcion

Opponent: Irenaeus (ca. 130–ca. 200)

Supportive writings: Developed the Muratorian Canon (170 A.D.) attests to all the books of the N.T. except Hebrews, James, and 1 & 2 Peter.



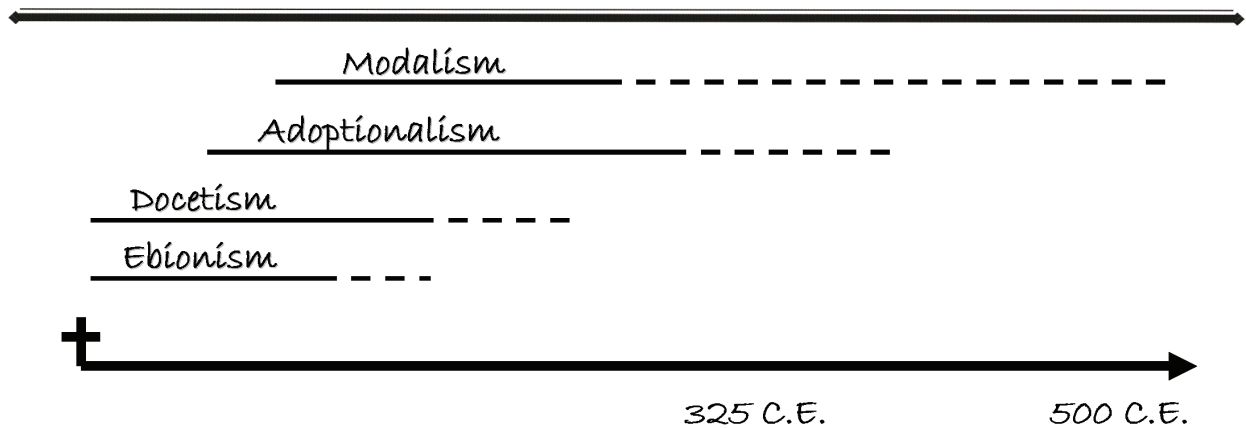
Adoptionalism: Belief that Christ was “adopted” as God’s son at His baptism when the Logos of God indwelt him. The Logos and the Holy Spirit are both impersonal forces of God.

Alternate Name: Dynamic Monarchianism, *monos*, “one” *arche*, “ruler.”

Proponent(s): Paul of Samosata (ca. 200–75) bishop of Syrian Antioch c.260

Opponent: Condemned at the Synod of Antioch in 268

Supportive writings: Shepherd of Hermas (?)



Modalism: Belief that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are all different expressions, roles, or manifestations of the one true God.

Alternate Name: Sabellianism, Partipassionism, Modalistic Monarchianism

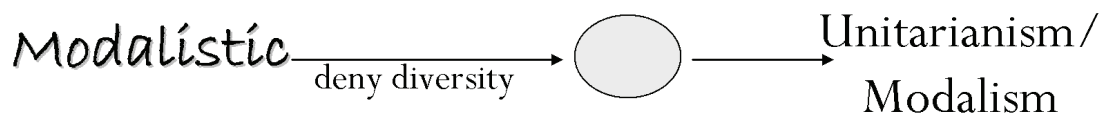
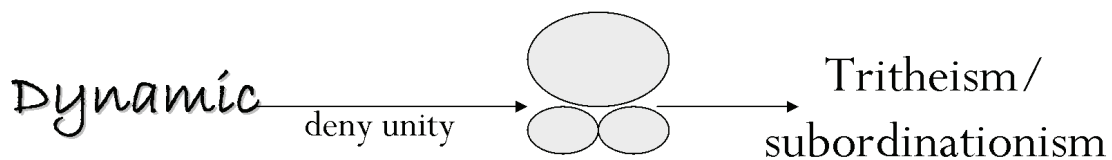
Proponent(s): Sabellius (fl. 200)

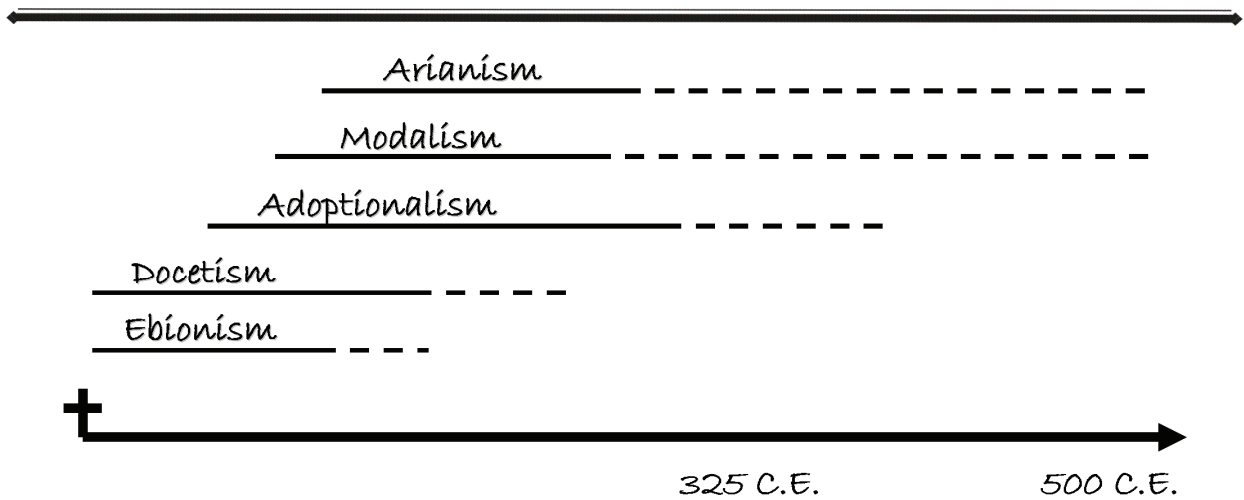
Opponent: Tertullian, Hippolytus

Christ = Father = Holy Spirit

One person (hypostasis), three names

MONARCHIANISM

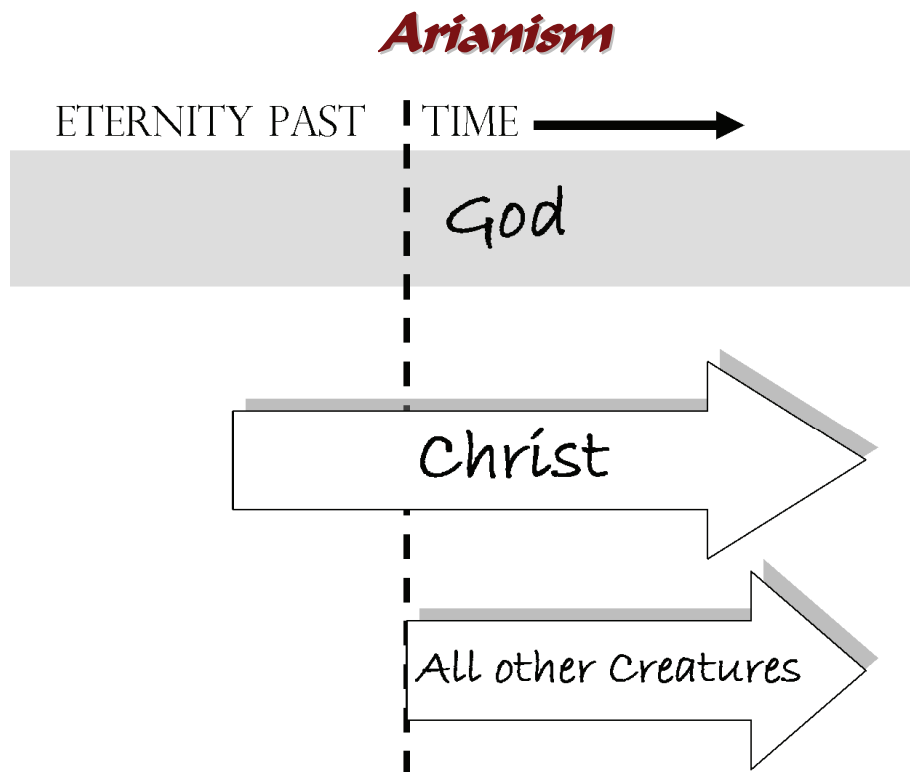


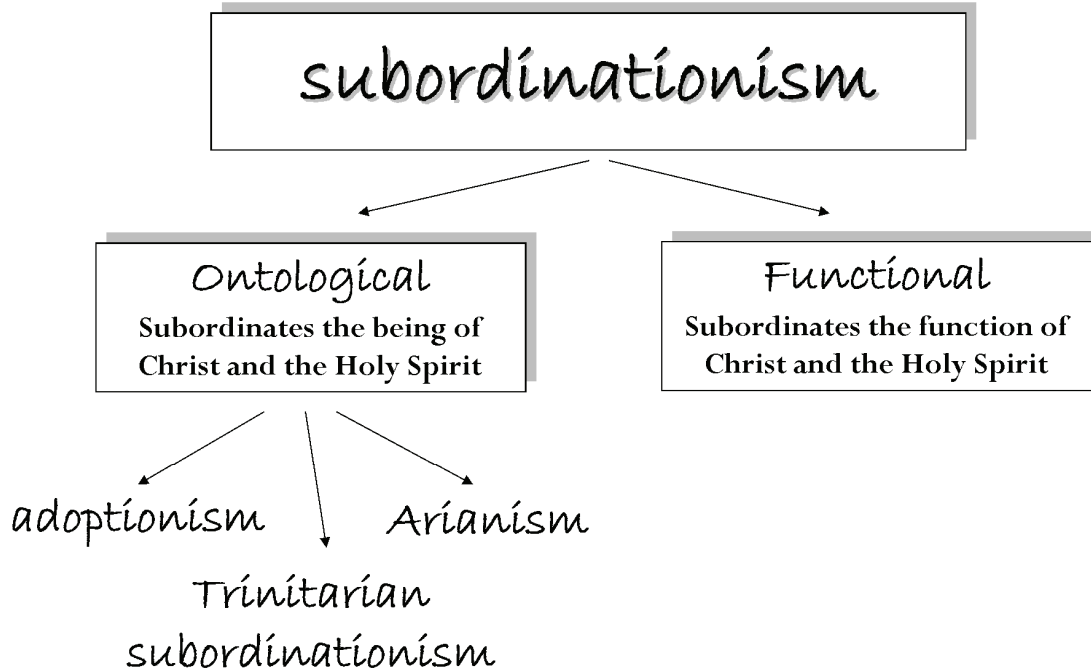


Arianism: Belief that Christ is not God but a creation of God the Father, having his genesis/“begottenness” in eternity past. He is the first created being. Arians fought against both Modalism and Adoptionism.

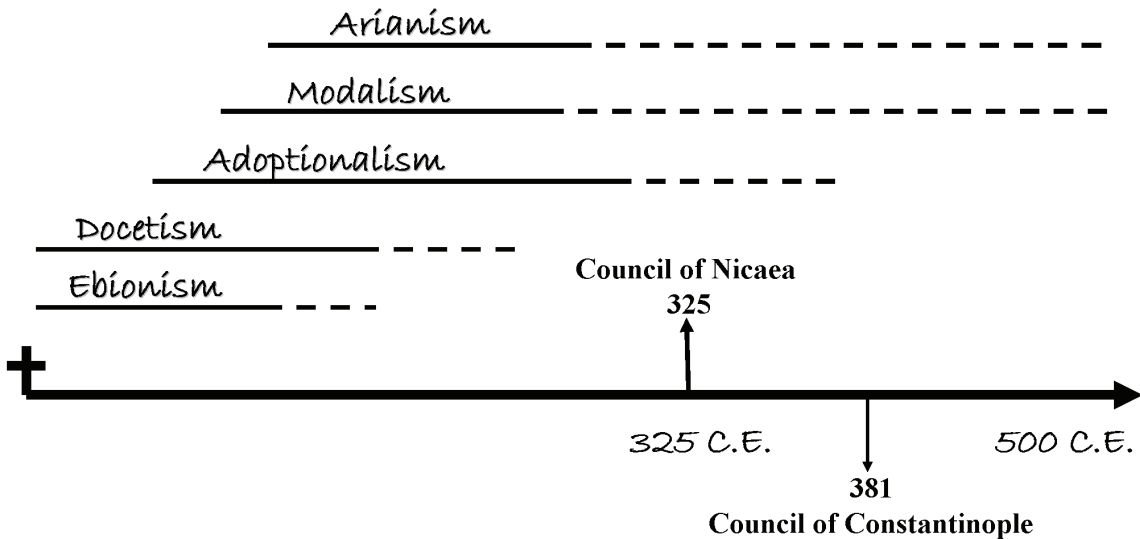
Proponent(s): Arius, presbyter in Alexandria (b. ca. 250)

Opponent: Athanasius (ca. 296–373), condemned at the Council of Nicea, 325.





Trinitarian Creeds (325, 381 A.D.)



Nicene Creed (325, 381 A.D.)

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty [*pantokratora*], creator of all that is seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten [*pro panton ton aionon*] of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of the same essence [*homoousion*] with the Father.

Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Does it make one iota (ι) of difference?

↓

<i>Athanasius</i>	<i>ὁμοουσιος</i> <i>homoousios</i>
<i>Arius</i>	<i>ὁμοιουσιος</i> <i>homoiousios</i>

The Athanasian Creed (500 A.D.)

Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic [apostolic/universal] faith, which except everyone shall have kept whole and undefiled, without doubt he will perish eternally. Now the catholic faith is this: We worship One God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity, neither confounding the Persons nor dividing the substance. For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, another of the Holy Spirit. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, is One, the Glory equal, the Majesty coeternal.

Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Spirit; the Father uncreated, the Son uncreated, and the Holy Spirit uncreated; the Father infinite, the Son infinite, and the Holy Spirit infinite; the Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Spirit eternal. And yet not three eternals but one eternal, as also not three infinities, nor three uncreated, but one uncreated, and one infinite. So, likewise, the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, and the Holy Spirit almighty; and yet not three almighties but one almighty.

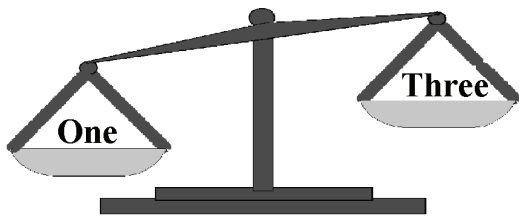
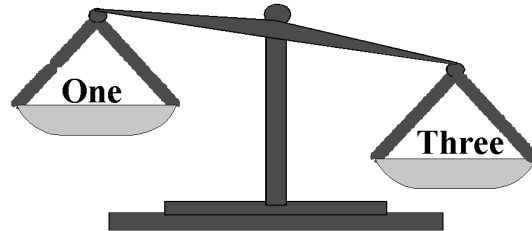
So the Father is God, the Son God, and the Holy Spirit God; and yet not three Gods but one God. So the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Spirit Lord; and yet not three Lords but one Lord. For like as we are compelled by Christian truth to acknowledge every Person by Himself to be both God and Lord; so are we forbidden by the catholic religion to say, there be three Gods or three Lords.

The Father is made of none, neither created nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone, not made nor created but begotten. The Holy Spirit is of the Father and the Son, not made nor created nor begotten but proceeding. So there is one Father not three Fathers, one Son not three Sons, and one Holy Spirit not three Holy Spirits. And in this Trinity there is nothing before or after, nothing greater or less, but the whole three Persons are coeternal together and coequal. So that in all things, as is aforesaid, the Trinity in Unity and the Unity in Trinity is to be worshiped. He therefore who wills to be in a state of salvation, let him think thus of the Trinity.

He is man of the substance of His mother born in the world; perfect God, perfect man subsisting of a reasoning soul and human flesh; equal to the Father as touching His Godhead, inferior to the Father as touching His Manhood. Who although He be God and Man, yet He is not two but one Christ; one however not by conversion of the Godhead in the flesh, but by taking of the Manhood in God; one altogether not by confusion of substance, but by unity of Person. For as the reasoning soul and flesh is one man, so God and Man is one Christ.

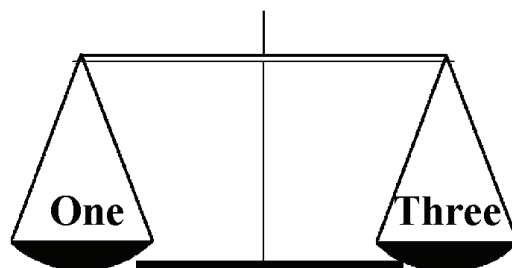
Who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again from the dead, ascended into heaven, sits at the right hand of the Father, from whence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. At whose coming all men shall rise again with their

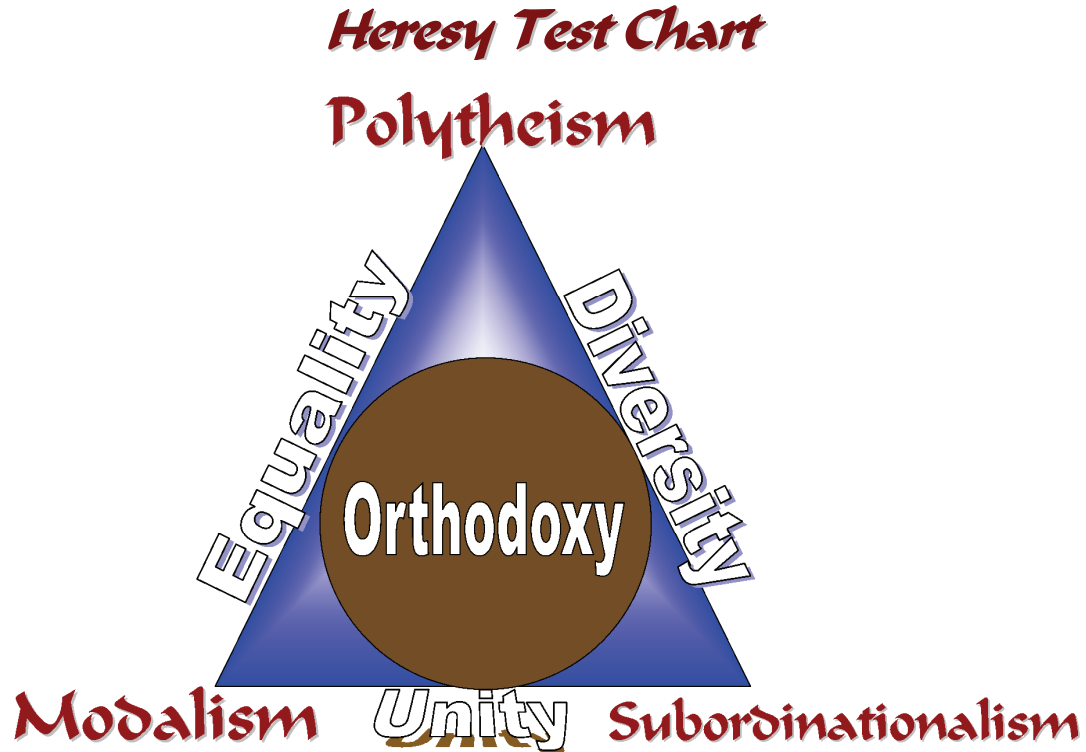
bodies and shall give account for their own works. And they that have done good shall go into life eternal, and they who indeed have done evil into eternal fire. This is the catholic faith, which except a man shall have believed faithfully and firmly he cannot be in a state of salvation.

**Modalism****Tritheism**

"Authentic Trinitarianism may be seen as a delicate balancing act between modalism and tritheism."

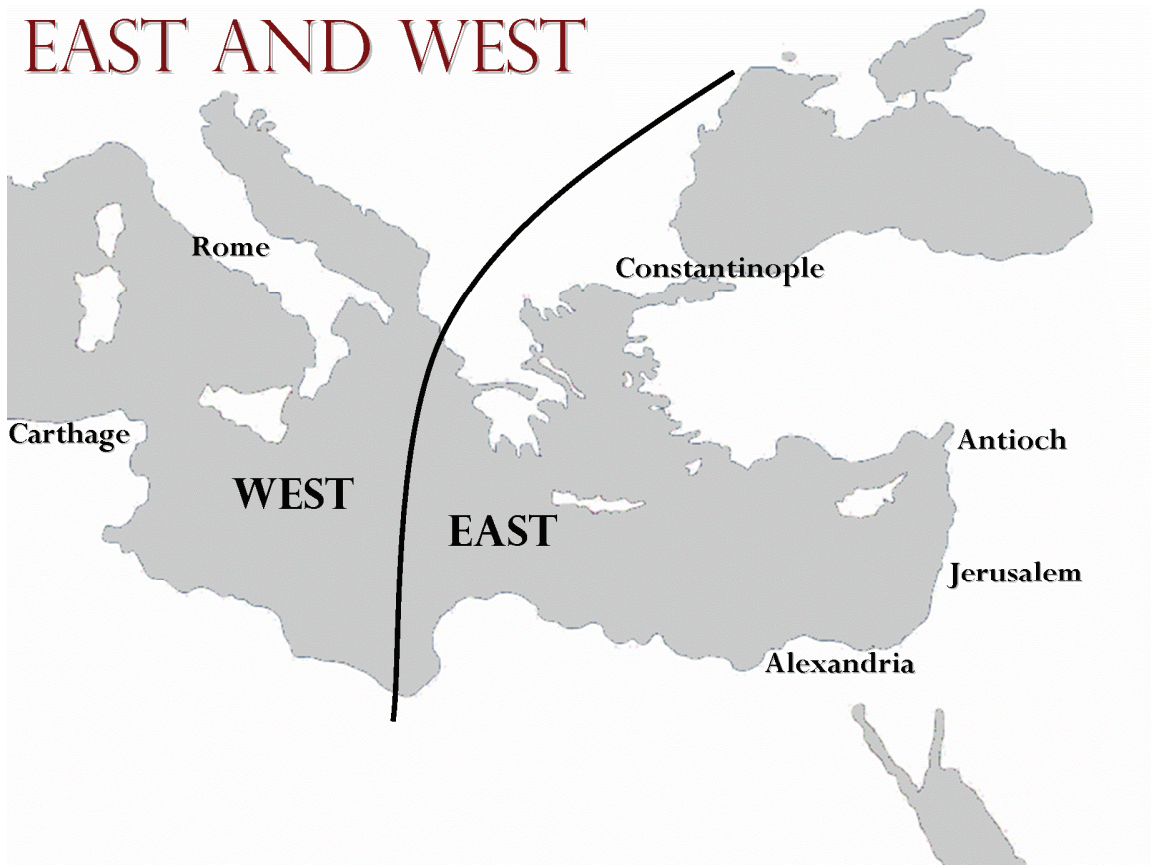
—Peter Toon





Heresy	Teaching	Proponents	Opponents
Ebionism	Jewish heresy that claimed Christ was merely a great prophet.	Judaizers	Origin (ca. 185–ca. 254)
Docetism	Christ was not truly man since all material is evil. He only seemed to be man.	Valentinus	Irenaeus (ca. 115–ca. 155)
Adoptionism	Christ became the son of God when he was adopted.	Paul of Samosata	Hippolytus (170–236)
Modalism	All three members of the Trinity are all one person with three names or activities.	Sabellius	Condemned at the synod of Antioch, 286.
Arianism	Christ was the first created being and was of similar substance (<i>homoiousia</i>) with the Father.	Arius, bishop of Alexandria	Athanasius (ca. 296–373) Condemned at the council of Nicaea, 325.

B. East and West: Difficulties in Communication



	TODAY (ENGLISH)	EAST (GREEK)	WEST (LATIN)
UNITY	God, being, nature, essence	<i>ousia</i>	<i>substantia,</i> <i>essentia</i>
DIVERSITY	Persons, relationships, subsistences	<i>hypostasis,</i> <i>prosopa</i>	<i>persona</i>

“By etymology and use, the Greek *hypostasis* and the Latin *substantia* were more or less equivalent. But the Greeks [East] used *hypostasis* for the plurality of God, and the Latins [West] used the *substantia* for God’s oneness. This fact led to much misunderstanding, and all the more so, because the Latin “one substance” sounded Sabellian to the Greeks: for it seemed that what the Greeks numbered as three, the Latins numbered as one. And similarly, the Greek “three hypostasis” sounded Arian or even tritheistic to the Latins—as if the Latins believed in one divine substance, one God, and the Greeks believed in three.”

—John Frame

Doctrine of God (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2002), 699

	EAST (GREEK)	WEST (LATIN)
UNITY	<i>ousia</i>	<i>substantia</i> (equals <i>hypostasis</i>)
DIVERSITY	<i>hypostasis</i> (equals <i>substantia</i>)	<i>persona</i>

Hypostasis (East—3 persons)
Substantia (West—1 essence)

East accused West of
Sabellianism/Modalism

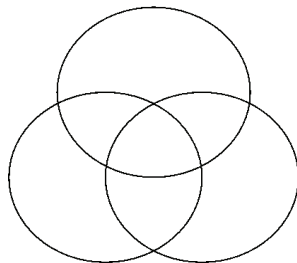
West accused East of
Arianism/Tritheism

“The confusion [over terms] warns us against pursuing theological controversy based wholly on the individual words people employ, and it provides further ground for a limited agnosticism concerning the precise meanings of these terms.”

—John Frame

Doctrine of God (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2002), 700

East



perichoresis
(coinherence)

West

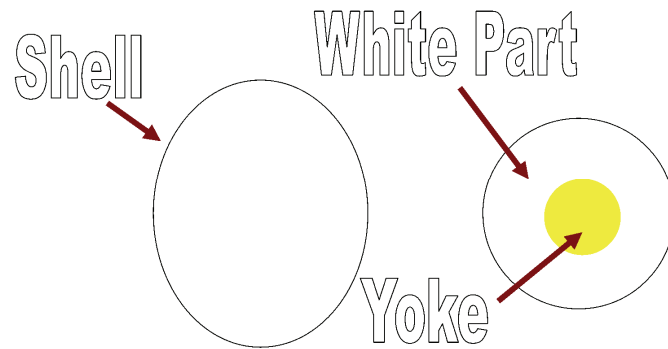


SHIELD OF THE HOLY TRINITY

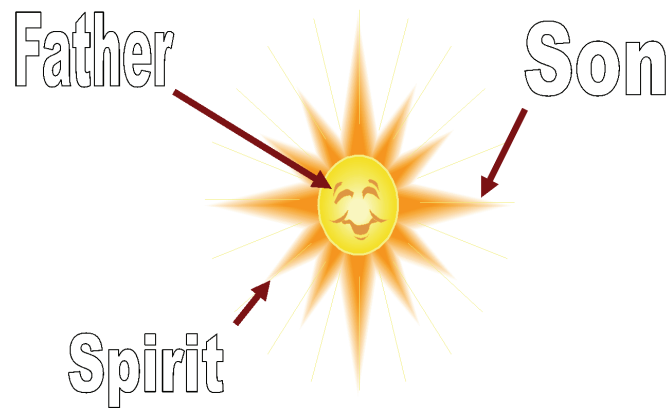
relatio
(relationship)

C. Modern Analogies: Falling short of the glory of God

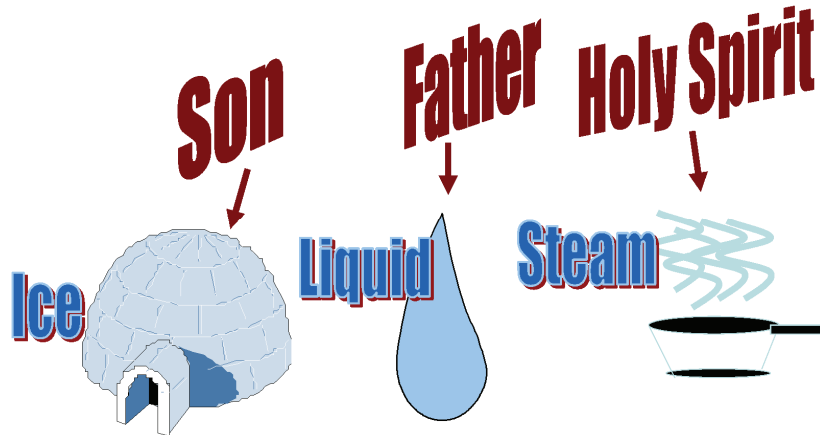
1. Egg



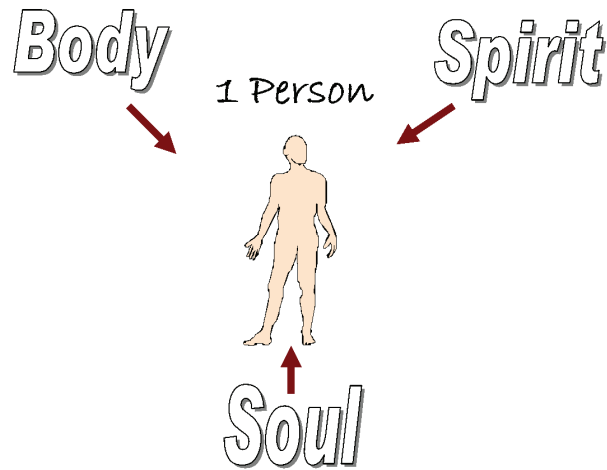
2. Sun

3. H₂O

4. Liquid



5. Person



6. Crowd



*Orthodox Illustrations***FATHER****Orthodox Definition**

One God who **eternally** exists in three different *persons*— the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit— all of whom are *fully* God, all of whom are *equal*.

6. Of the Trinitarian heresies discussed in this lesson, which one do you have the tendency to unwittingly embrace to some degree? Explain.

7. How was your thinking challenged the *most* by this lesson? Explain.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY

Biblical Defense

Does the Bible teach the Trinity?

- A. Trinity in the Old Testament
- B. Trinity in the New Testament
 - 1. Deity of Christ
 - 2. Deity of the Holy Spirit

A. Trinity in the Old Testament

"The Old Testament may be linked to a chamber richly furnished but dimly lighted; the introduction of light brings into it nothing which was not in it before; but it brings into clearer view much of what was in it but was only dimly or even not at all perceived before. The mystery of the Trinity is not revealed in the Old Testament; but the mystery of the Trinity underlies the Old Testament revelation, and here and there almost comes into view. Thus the Old Testament revelation of God is not corrected by the fuller revelation which follows it, but only perfected, extended and enlarged."

—B.B. Warfield

"The New is in the Old concealed, and the Old is in the New revealed."

Oneness: O.T.

Deut. 6:4

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord.”

Isa. 44:6

“Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: ‘I am the first and I am the last, and there is no God besides Me.’”

Isa. 44:8b

“. . . Have I not long since announced it to you and declared it? And you are My witnesses. Is there any God besides Me.”

Isa. 45:5a

“I am the Lord, and there is no other; Besides Me there is no God.”

Plurality: O.T.

The idea of oneness in the Old Testament often carries a plural connotation.

- In Genesis 2:24, man and woman are to become “one flesh.”
- *Elohim*, used for God 2,570 times in the OT, literally means “the powerful ones.”
- *Adonai*, used 449 times, means “my lords.”

Gen. 1:26–27

“Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness . . .’ God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”

Eccl. 12:1

“Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near when you will say, ‘I have no delight in them’ (Lit. “Creators”).”

Job 35:10

“But no one says, ‘Where is God my Maker?’ (Lit. “Makers”).”

Isa. 54:5

“For your husband is your Maker, whose name is the Lord of hosts (Lit. “husbands” and “Makers”).”

Isa. 44:6

“Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts . . .”

Isa. 48:16

“Come near to Me, listen to this: from the first I have not spoken in secret, from the time it took place, I was there. And now the Lord God has sent Me, and His Spirit.”

Dan. 7:13–14

“I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him... And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed.”

Isa. 9:6–7

“For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on

the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this.”

B. Trinity in the New Testament

Oneness: N.T.

Mark 12:29

“Jesus answered, ‘The foremost is, hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord.’”

1 Cor. 8:4

“Therefore concerning the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we know that there is no such thing as an idol in the world, and that there is no God but one.”

1 Tim. 2:5

“For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”

The Deity of Christ

Divine names:

1. Emanuel (“God with us” Matt. 1:23)
2. Son of God (John 5:18)
3. I AM (John 8:58)
4. Son of Man (Dan. 7:13–14, John 5:27)
5. Eternal Father, Mighty God (Isa. 9:6)

Jesus is worshiped:

Matt. 2:11

“After coming into the house they saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell to the ground and worshiped Him.”

Matt. 14:33

“And those who were in the boat worshiped Him, saying, ‘You are certainly God’s Son!’”

Matt. 28:9

“And behold, Jesus met them and greeted them. And they came up and took hold of His feet and worshiped Him.”

Explicit statements to Christ’s deity:

John 1:1

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

John 20:28

“Thomas answered and said to Him, ‘My Lord and my God!’”

Titus 2:13

“Looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus.”

2 Peter 1:1

“To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.”

John 1:18

“No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.”

Rom. 9:5

“Of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen.”

Col. 1:15–17a

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.”

Jesus claims to be God:

John 8:58–59a

“Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.’ Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him.”

John 10:30–33

“I and the Father are one.’ The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, ‘I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?’ The Jews answered Him, ‘For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God.’”

N.T. passages that directly refer to Christ's deity	
Jn. 1:1, 18 (modern translation), 8:58–59, 10:30–33, 20:28	2 Thes. 1:12
Acts 20:28	Tit. 2:13
Rom. 9:5	2 Pet. 1:1
1 Tim. 3:15–16	Heb. 1:8
	Phil. 2:6
	Col. 1:15–17, 2:9

New Testament Quotation: Lord=Christ	Old Testament Source: Yahweh
Matt. 3:3 “prepare the way for the Lord”	Isa. 40:3
Lk. 1:76 “go before the Lord”	Mal. 3:1
Rom. 10:9–13 “call upon the name of the Lord”	Joel 2:32
Rom. 14:9–12 “every knee will bow”	Isa. 45:23
1 Cor. 1:31 “boast in the Lord”	Jer. 9:24
1 Cor. 2:13 “mind of the Lord”	Isa. 40:13
Heb. 1:10 “Lord, you founded the earth”	Ps. 102:25–27

Arrogance of a madman? Christ implied deity in Matthew

- Blessings for those who are persecuted because of Him (Matt. 5:11).
- “I have not come to abolish the Law and Prophets” (Matt. 5:12).
- He will say who enters the Kingdom of Heaven (Matt. 7:28–29).
- We are to give up our lives to follow Him (Matt. 16:25).
- He will repay each person for what they have done (Matt 16:27–28).
- The basis of the judgment will be man’s relationship to Christ (Matt. 25:31–46).
- He speaks of “his angles” (Matt. 13:41; 16:27; 24:31).
- The only thing the rich young ruler lacks for eternal life is to follow Christ (Matt. 19:16–21).
- People are commanded to love Christ more than their own family (Matt. 10:37).
- Eternal life depends on belief in Him and the Father (Jn. 17:3).

Deity of the Holy Spirit

Divine names:

1. Spirit of God: 24 times

Gen. 1:2; Ex. 31:3; 35:31; Num. 24:2; 1 Sam. 10:10; 11:6; 19:20; 19:23; 2 Chr. 15:1; 24:20; Job 33:4; Ezek. 11:24; Matt. 3:16; 12:28; Rom. 8:9; 8:14; 1 Cor. 2:11, 14; 3:16; 7:40; 12:3; Eph. 4:30; Phil. 3:3; 1 Jn. 4:2

2. Holy Spirit: 92 times

“Holy” is a descriptive adjective that describes the character of the Spirit.

3. Other Counselor/Helper

Jn. 14:16

“I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever.”

The term shows that the Spirit is of the same nature as Christ for He is going to continue Christ's ministry. As one person has put it, “Christ did not ask the Father to send “another” Comforter only to have the Father send back Christ Himself.” Nor did Christ ask Himself to send Himself (Modalism/Oneness view).

The Holy Spirit is called God:

2 Cor. 3:17–18

“Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. 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.”

Acts 5:3–4

“But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to *lie to the Holy Spirit* and to keep back some of the price of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? *You have not lied to men but to God.*’”

See also:

2 Sam. 23:2ff; Isa. 40:13–18; compare Isa. 6:9 with Acts 28:25ff; Ps. 95:7ff with Heb. 3:7ff; Jer. 31:31 with Heb. 10:15ff. In these places the words of the Spirit are the words of God.

The Holy Spirit is a Person:

- The Spirit has His own intelligence (1 Cor. 2:10–13).
- The Spirit manifests emotions (Eph. 4:30).
- The Spirit demonstrates His own will (Acts 8:29, 9:31; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 1 Cor. 12:11).
- Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is worse than blasphemy of Christ or the Father (Matt. 12:32).
- The Spirit humbles Himself by willingly diverting attention away from Himself to Christ (John 15:26; 16:13–14).

Just as Christ humbled Himself in becoming a servant of man (Phil. 2:5–8), the Holy Spirit humbles Himself in that He is the . . .

1. Least known
2. Least worshiped
3. Least individualized of the Godhead

Plurality: N.T.

"Many Christians, without knowing it, hold a false view of the Trinity simply due to their inability to articulate the difference between believing in the Being of God and three persons sharing that one Being. As a result, even orthodox Christian believers slip into an ancient heresy known by many names: modalism, Sabellianism, Patripassionism. Today this same error is called Oneness or the "Jesus Only" position. Whatever its name might be, it is a denial of the Trinity based upon a denial of the distinction between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."

—James White

James R. White, *The Forgotten Trinity*, 153

Matt. 28:19

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit."

1 Cor. 12:4–6

"There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men."

2 Cor. 13:14

"May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."

Matt. 3:16–17

"As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.'"

Eph. 2:18

“For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.”

Matt. 26:39

“And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, ‘My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will.’”

John 11:41–42

“So they removed the stone. Then Jesus raised His eyes, and said, ‘Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. I know that You always hear Me; but because of the people standing around I said it, so that they may believe that You sent Me.’”

Mark 9:2–7

“Six days later, Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John, and brought them up on a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them... Then a cloud formed, overshadowing them, and a voice came out of the cloud, ‘This is My beloved Son, listen to Him!’”

Mark 1:9–11

“In those days Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. Immediately coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opening, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him; and a voice came out of the heavens: ‘You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased.’”

Matt. 27:46

“MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?”

Problem Passages

1. “First born of all creation”

Col. 1:15

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.”

Answer:

“First born” (*prototokos*) does not mean that Christ was created. In Scripture it could either mean, “the first born Child,” or it often meant, “one who possessed priority.”

2. “Only Begotten” (*monogenes*)

Used five times in NT to refer to Christ (Jn. 1:18; 3:16, 18; 1 Jn. 4:9)

John 1:14

“And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

Answer:

Recent linguistic studies have shown that the Greek word *monogenes* (“only-begotten”) does not come from *gennaō*, “to bear, beget,” but from *genos*, “kind, class.” Therefore, *monogenes* would be better translated, “one-of-a-kind” or “unique.” This explains why Isaac is referred to as the *monogenes* of Abraham when Abraham did have another son, Ishmael (Heb. 11:17).

3. “Beginning of creation”

Rev. 3:14

“To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this.”

Answer:

“Beginning of Creation” simply means that Christ is the origin of all things created.

4. The Father is greater than the Son

John 14:28

“You heard that I said to you, ‘I go away, and I will come to you.’ If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced because I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.”

Answer:

A king may be greater than his servant, but that does not mean that his *actual* being is greater. Just his current position is greater. This passage speaks of functional, not ontological, greatness.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Christ asked the question, “Who do men say that I am?” (Matt. 16:13). Why do you think that Christianity has historically made belief in the deity of Christ as the primary test for orthodoxy?

2. Mormons do not believe that Christ was God. Jehovah Witnesses believe that Christ is the brother of Michael the archangel. Why do you think that the cults reject Christ’s deity?

3. Further discuss the “Arrogance of a Madman” argument for the deity of Christ. How strong of an argument do you think this is for Christ’s deity? How do you think an objector could respond to this argument?

CHRISTOLOGY

Humanity of Christ in History

How did the early church understand the humanity of Christ?

Questions:

Now that we know that Christ was fully God . . .

- How is it that Christ could be both God and man?
- Did He sacrifice some of His humanity to remain deity?
- Did He sacrifice some of His deity to become human?
- If He retained full humanity and deity, which one had control?

Key terms

Incarnation

The biblical understanding that Christ took on a human nature

Hypostatic Union

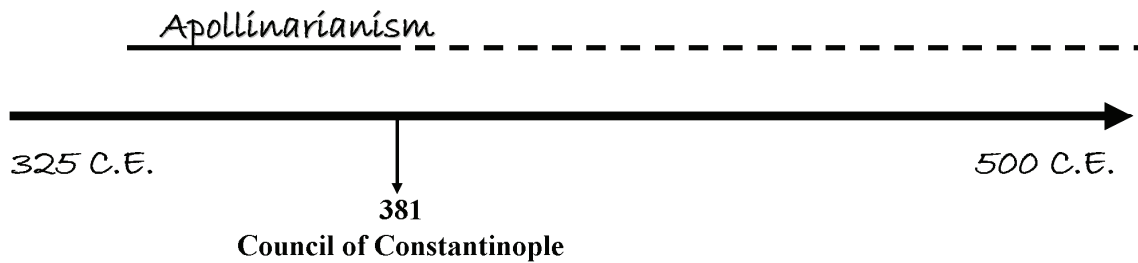
The theological description of the union of the two natures of Christ

Theanthropos

Theological name of Christ affirming that He is the "God-man"

Early Christological Heterodoxy:

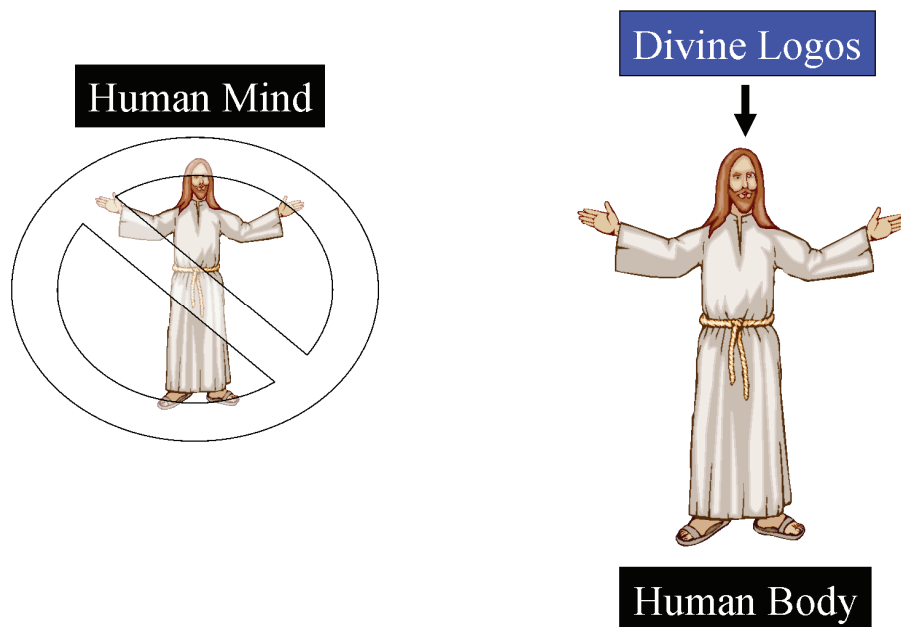
1. Apollinarianism
2. Nestorianism
3. Monophysitism



Apollinarianism: The belief that Christ was God who took on a human body without a human mind. The divine mind took the place of what would have been the human mind. The Word became flesh only in the sense that God took on a human body. As some have termed it, Christ was “God in a bod.”

Proponent: Apollinarius of Laodicea (ca. 310-390), friend of Athanasius and teacher of Jerome.

Condemned: Council of Constantinople 381 and Chalcedon 451.



"He assumes that man who came down from above is without a mind, not that the Godhead of the Only-begotten fulfills the function of mind, and is the third part of his human composite, inasmuch as soul and body are in it on its human side, but not mind, the place of which is taken by God the Word."

—Gregory of Nazianzus

Letter to Nectarius

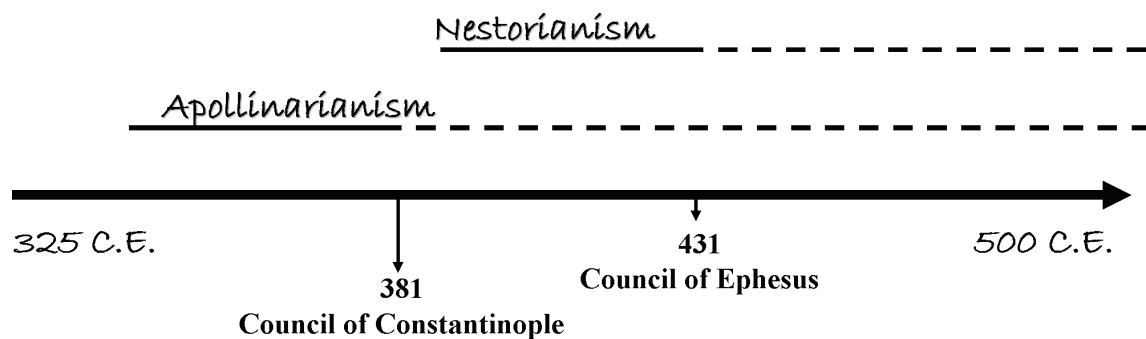
Apollinarianism

What is wrong with Apollinarianism?

"What God has not assumed is not saved."

—Gregory of Nazianzus

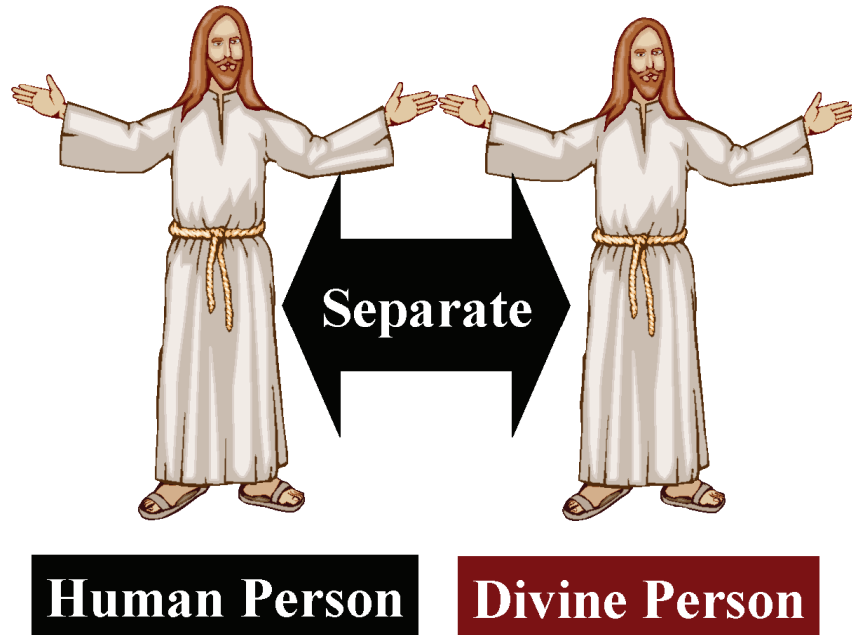
Epistulae 101.7



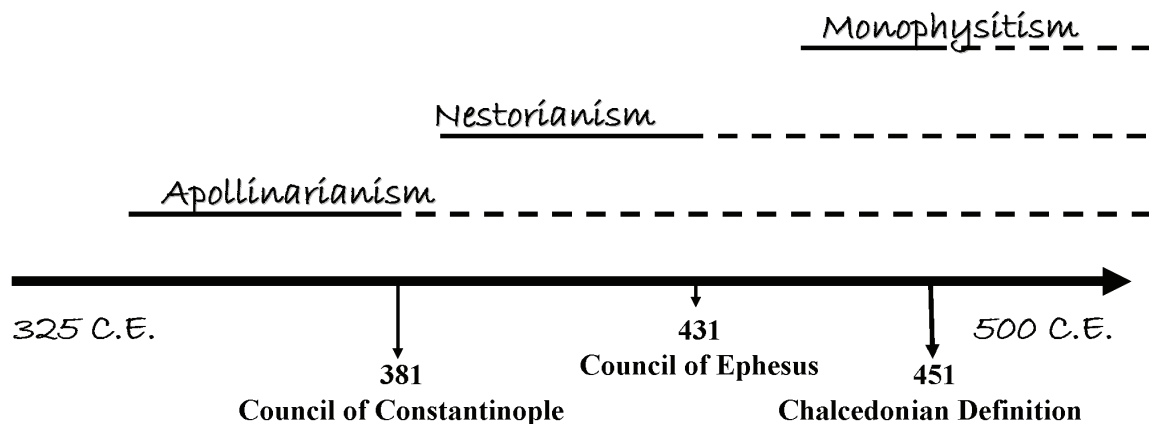
Nestorianism: Christ was fully man and fully God and these two natures were united in purpose, not person. They had difficulty understanding how someone with two natures could be a single individual.

Proponent: Nestorius (d. ca. 451), the great preacher and disciple of Theodore of Mopsuestia, is said to be the main proponent of this teaching, although most would see his condemnation as inaccurate.

Condemned: Council of Chalcedon 451.



What is wrong with Nestorianism?

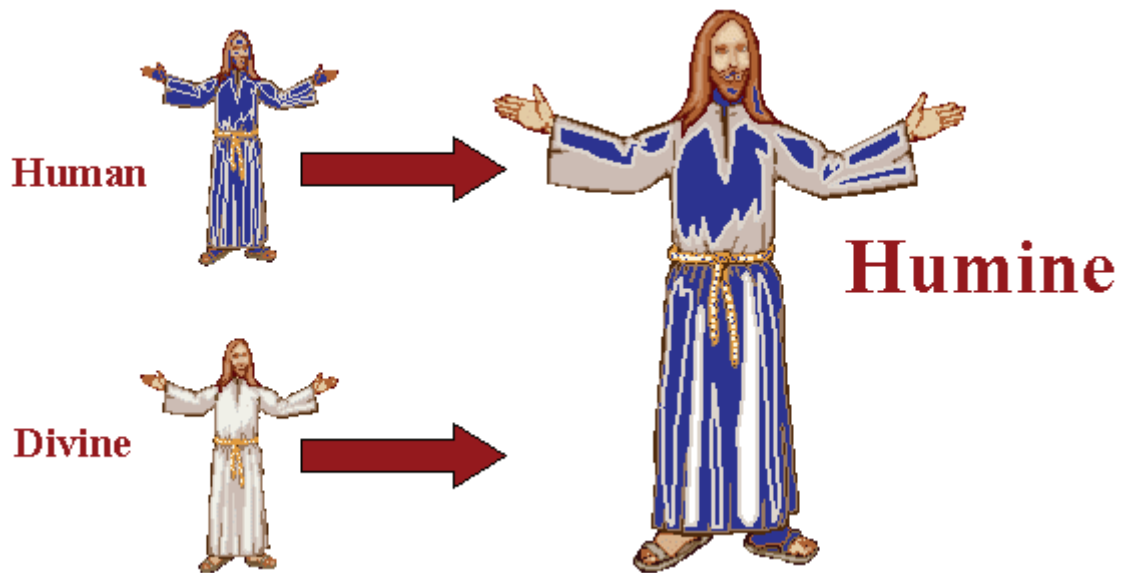


Monophysitism: Christ's human nature was integrated with His divine nature, forming a new nature. Christ was from two natures before the union, but only one after the union.

Alternate name: Eutychianism

Proponent: Eutyches (ca.378–454), great preacher and disciple of Theodore of Mopsuestia.

Condemned: Council of Chalcedon 451.



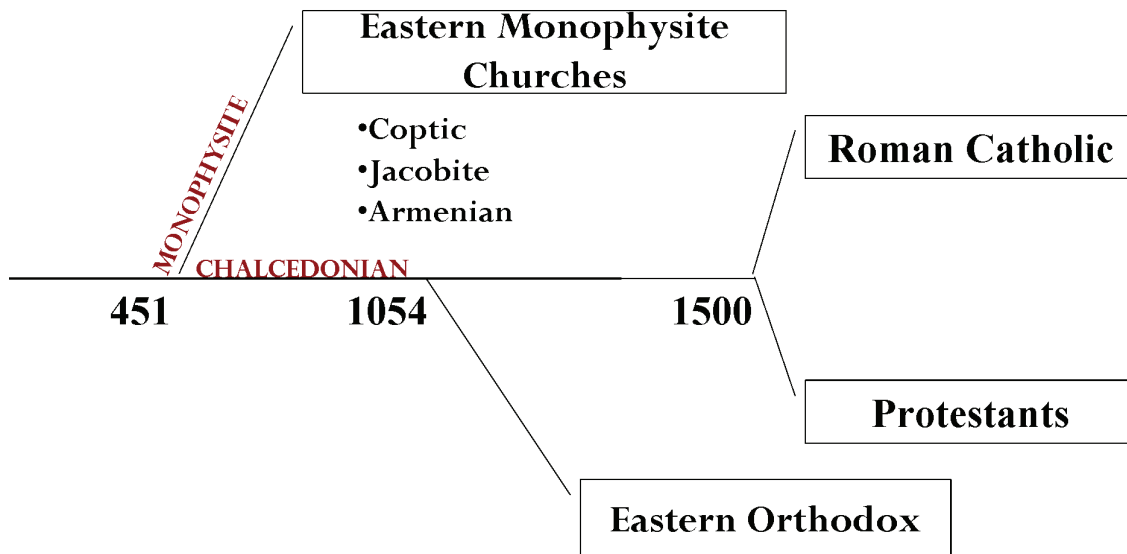
What is wrong with Monophysitism?

Definition of Chalcedon (451)

“Therefore, following the holy fathers, we all with one accord teach men to acknowledge one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at once complete in Godhead and complete in manhood, truly God and truly man, consisting also of a reasonable soul and body; of one substance with the Father as regards his Godhead, and at the same time of one substance with us as regards his manhood; like us in all respects, apart from sin; as regards his Godhead, begotten of the Father before the ages, but yet as regards his manhood begotten, for us men and for our salvation, of Mary the Virgin, the God-bearer one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, recognized in two natures, *without confusion, without change, without division, without separation; the distinction of natures being in no way annulled by the union, but rather the characteristics of each nature being preserved and coming together to form one person and subsistence, not as parted or separated into two persons, but one and the same Son and Only-begotten God the Word, Lord Jesus Christ*; even as the prophets from earliest times spoke of him, and our Lord Jesus Christ himself taught us, and the creed of the fathers has handed down to us.”

Orthodox Definition of the Hypostatic Union

Christ is one person who exists forevermore in two complete natures: God and Man.



Roman Catholics: Christ is both fully divine and fully man. The controlling force within Christ was His deity. He neither had faith, nor hope, since this would undermine His deity. Even from His mother's womb, He was aware of all things, being omniscient. He exercised all the attributes of His deity at all times during His life.

Heretical Bent: Apollinarianism and Docetism

Lutheran: Christ is both fully divine and fully man. In the incarnation, Christ's humanity fully contained his deity (*finitum capax infiniti*). While there is no confusion in the natures, there is an intermingling of the properties of each nature (*communicatio idiomatum*).

Heretical Bent: Monophysitism

Reformed: Christ is both full divine and fully man. In the incarnation, Christ's humanity cannot contain His deity (*finitum non capax infiniti*). Therefore, Christ exists in the humanity of Jesus, and in the eternity of the Second Person of the Trinity. The unity of the natures is in one person. There is only one state of consciousness contained fully in Christ.

Heretical Bent: Nestorianism

Illustrations

1. Fire and Iron



2. Light: waves and particles



3. Eyes: two eyes, one vision



	Unity	Diversity
Trinity	Nature	Persons
Christ	Person	Natures

HERESY	TEACHING	PROponents	CONdemned
Apollinarianism	Christ was God who took on a human body without a human mind.	Apollinarius (ca. 310-390)	Council of Constantinople 381
Nestorianism	Christ was fully man and fully God, and these two natures were united in purpose, not person.	Nestorius (d. ca. 451)	Council of Ephesus 431
Monophysitism	Christ's human nature was integrated with his divine nature forming a new nature.	Eutyches (ca. 378-454)	Council of Chalcedon 451

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Further discuss the importance that Christ be both fully God and fully man for our salvation?
2. Read Heb. 7:25. Further discuss the importance that Christ be both fully God and fully man for our prayer life and Christ's intercession.
3. Of the Christological heresies discussed in this lesson, which one do you have the tendency to unwittingly embrace to some degree? Explain.

-
4. Read Luke 22:42. What did Christ mean when He said in the garden, “Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done”? How does this passage affect your understanding of the hypostatic union?

 5. Christ stated on the Cross, “My God My God, why have you forsaken me?” (Matt. 27:46). How does this verse challenge our understanding of the union of Christ’s natures? In other words, was it His human nature, His divine nature, or both that was forsaken?

How does the understanding that you cannot separate the natures of Christ and the fact that Christ was and is always a member of the immutable Trinity help you to understand what “forsaken” means in this cry? In other words, was Christ ontologically forsaken (forsaken in His actual being) or relationally forsaken (forsaken with respect to His relationship)? Explain.

6. How was your thinking challenged the *most* by this lesson? Explain.

CHRISTOLOGY

Humanity of Christ in the Bible

What does the Bible say about the humanity of Christ?

- A. Incarnation
 - 1. Virgin Birth
 - 2. Kenosis
- B. Impeccability

A. Incarnation

Incarnation: Lat. *in carne*, “in flesh.”
The understanding that the eternal Son of God became flesh.

“Many people have sought to be God, but only one God has sought to be man.”

John 1:14

“And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

1. Virgin birth

Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit in a woman who had never had a sexual relationship. He, therefore, did not have any male seed contributing to His humanity.

Luke 1:34–35

“Mary said to the angel, ‘How can this be, since I am a virgin?’ The angel answered and said to her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God.’”

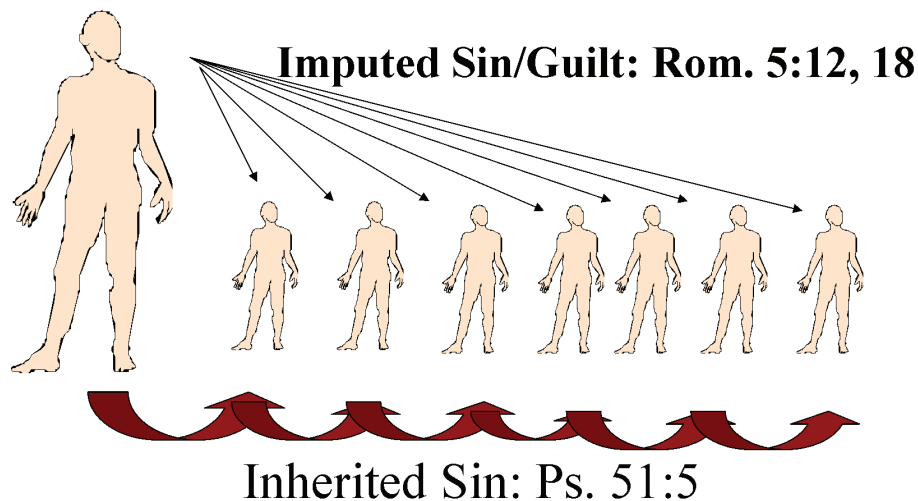
Facts about the virgin birth

1. The miracle is in the conception, not the birth.
2. It is said to fulfill a prophecy predicted in Isa. 7:14 (Matt. 1:22-23).
3. Matthew and Luke are the only two to *explicitly* mention the virgin birth.
4. The birth narratives give no theological interpretation as to why Christ was born of a virgin other than the fulfillment of prophecy.
5. It was not part of the early Christian Kerygma.

Why was Christ born of a virgin?

Possible reasons for the virgin birth:

1. To fulfill the prophecy in Isa. 7:14.
2. To point to the uniqueness of Christ.
3. To substantiate His deity.
4. To substantiate His humanity.
5. So that He would not have imputed sin or inherited sin.



6. So that he might be the “Second Adam,” undoing the failures of the first Adam (recapitulation).

“It was fitting, surely that just as death had entered into the human race because of the disobedience of man, so by the obedience of man, life should be restored. Further, just as the sin that was the cause of our condemnation had its origin in a woman, it was equally fitting that the author of our justification and salvation should be born of a woman. It was also fitting that the devil, who conquered man by tempting him to taste of the fruit of the tree, should be conquered by a man through suffering he endured on the wood of a tree. There are also many other things which, carefully considered, show a certain indescribable beauty in this manner of accomplishing our redemption.”

—Anselm

Anselm, “Why God Became Man,” chap. 3 in *Why God Became Man and the Virgin Conception and the Original Sin*, tran. Joseph M. Colleran (Albany, N.Y.: Magi, 1969), 68

2. Kenosis

Gk. “make empty; remove the content of something.” Speaks of the effect of the incarnation on the nature of Christ spoken of in Philippians.

Phil. 2:5–8

“Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied [*kenoō*] Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

**What does it mean that Christ “emptied Himself” (NAS),
or “made Himself nothing” (NIV).**

1. Did he divest himself of his divine attributes?
2. Did he simply veil his glory?
3. Did he lay aside his divine prerogative to exercise the use of his attributes?
4. Does the “emptying” speak of his taking on an additional nature and dying on the cross?

Problem Passages

1. What did Christ mean when He said in the garden, “Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done” (Luke 22:42)?
2. What did Christ mean when he said in Matthew 24:36, “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone?” How could He, being God, not know something?
3. When Christ stated on the Cross, “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?” (Matt 27:46), was it his human nature or his divine nature that was forsaken?

B. Impeccability

Was Christ able to sin?

Yes,
But he was able not to sin

Heb. 2:17–18

“Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.”

Syllogism 1

- Premise 1:** Humanity is able to sin.
Premise 2: Christ was *fully* human.
Conclusion: Christ was able to sin.

Heb. 4:15a

“For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses . . .”

Syllogism 2

- Premise 1:** Christ is able to sympathize with our weaknesses.
Premise 2: Our greatest weakness is the possibility to fall into to sin.
Conclusion: Christ was able to sin.

Luke 4:1–2a

“Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil.”

Syllogism 3

- Premise 1:** Temptation is *only* real if there is the possibility to succumb.
Premise 2: Christ’s temptations were real.
Conclusion: There was the possibility of Christ succumbing.

Heb. 4:15

“For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.”

Syllogism 4

- Premise 1:** Our temptations involve the possibility to succumb.
Premise 2: Christ was tempted in just the same way we are.
Conclusion: Christ’s temptations must involve the possibility of succumbing.

No

He was not able to sin

James 1:13a

“Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am being tempted by God; for God cannot be tempted by evil.’”

Syllogism 1

- Premise 1:** God cannot be tempted.
Premise 2: Christ is God.
Conclusion: Christ could not truly be tempted with the reality that he might sin.

Syllogism 2

- Premise 1:** God cannot sin.
Premise 2: Christ is God.
Conclusion: Christ could not truly be tempted with the reality that He might sin.

Syllogism 3

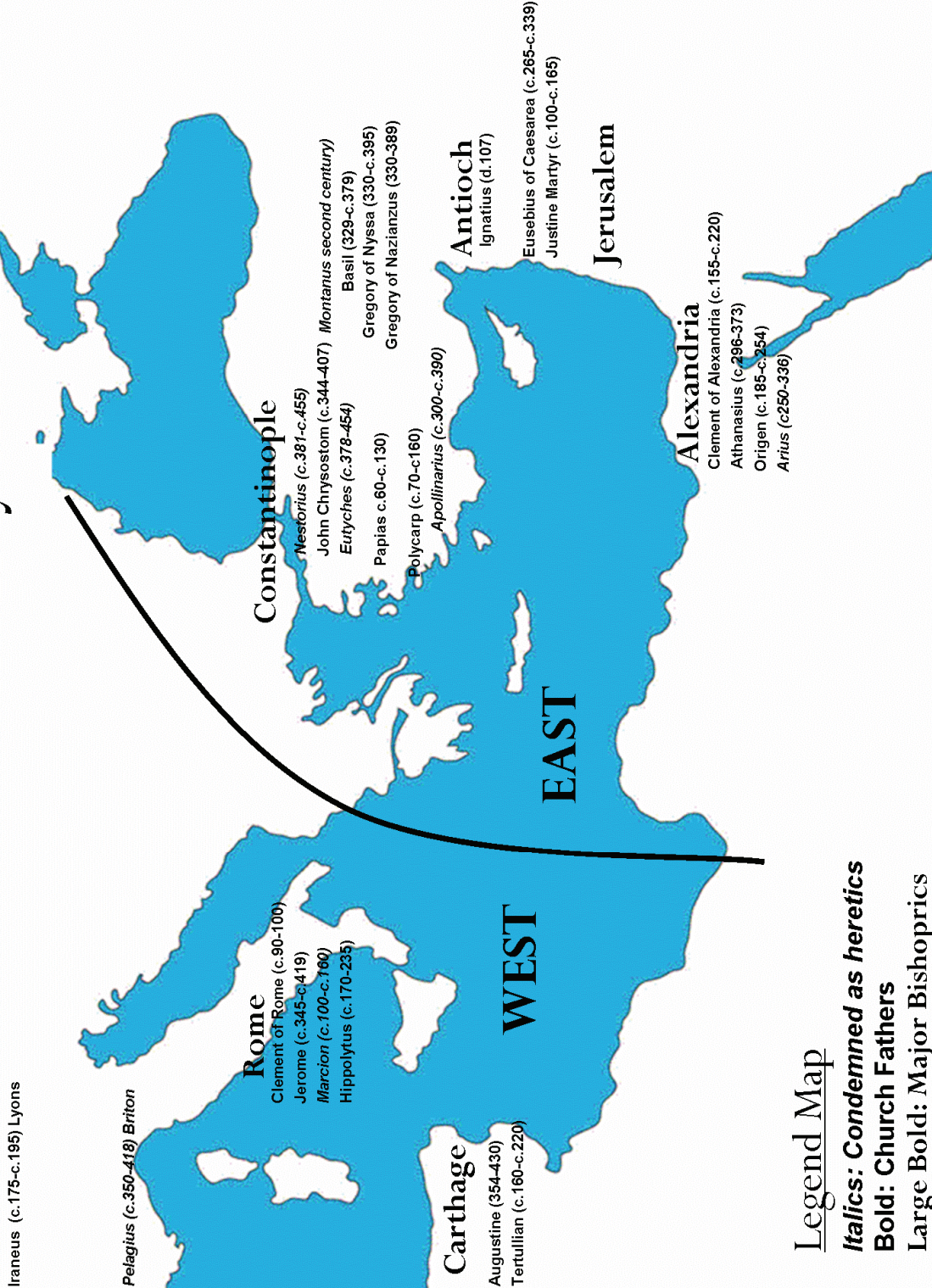
- Premise 1:** People act only according to their desires.
Premise 2: Christ did not have the desire to sin.
Conclusion: Christ could not have sinned.

“Only a person who has resisted temptation has felt the full weight of temptation. Only one who has been tempted and overcome the temptation has experienced temptation to its greatest degree.”

“While it was a theoretical possibility for Christ, being man, to have sinned, it was an actual impossibility, being also God.”

CHURCH FATHERS

The Early Church Fathers 90-500



Legend Map
Italics: Condemned as heretics
Bold: Church Fathers
 Large Bold: Major Bishops

Seven Ecumenical Councils

Council	Year	Summoned By	Ecclesiastical Representative	Bishops Present	Primary Actions	Acceptance
Nicea	325	Constantine	Albanasius (although not present)	300 (mostly Eastern)	Formulated the Nicene Creed, which is respected as the orthodox understanding of the divinity of Christ. Condemned Arianism.	All orthodox Christianity
Constantinople I	381	Theodosius	Gregory of Nazianzus	186	Formulated the orthodox understanding of the Holy Spirit by reaffirming and adding to the Nicene Creed. Provided a catholic succession in the patriarchal See of Constantinople. Condemned Apollinarism. Condemned Eutyches.	All orthodox Christianity (Nicene Creed)
Ephesus	431	Theodosius II	Cyril	60	Condemned Nestorius and approved the term <i>Theotokos</i> ("God Bearer") for Mary. Condemned Cheliasm. Condemned Pelagianism.	Most orthodox Christianity
Chalcedon	451	Marcian and Valentinian	Pope Leo I	450	Formulated the Definition of Chalcedon, which is respected as the orthodox understanding of the hypostatic union of Christ. Condemned Eutyches again. Marriage forbidden for clergy.	All orthodox Christianity (Definition of Chalcedon)
Constantinople II	553	Justinian	Pope Vigilius	165 (mostly Eastern)	Condemned Theodote of Mopsuestia, therefore giving more allowance to Monophysites. Established the perpetual virginity of Mary. Condemned Origen.	Some Eastern Orthodox and some Roman Catholics. Respected by most Protestants
Constantinople III	678	Paganatus	Pope Agatho	174	Condemned Monotheitism. Condemned Pope Honorius for acceptance of Monotheitism.	Protestants, Eastern Orthodox and some Roman Catholics
Nicea II	787	Irene (regent, Constantine's widow)	Thomas	300	Condemned Iconoclasm inaugurated by Emperor Leo III. Requirement of relics for all churches to be consecrated.	Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox

KEY TERMS FOR TRINITARIANISM (I)

1. **Worldview:** The sum total of a person's beliefs about life's most significant questions.
2. **Theism:** Theistic worldview that believes that an eternal God freely created all of existence (time, space, matter, celestial realms and bodies) out of nothing (*ex nihilo*) and that He continues to act within the creation in varying degrees.
3. **Transcendent:** The understanding that God is above and beyond all things, being wholly distinct from all creation.
4. **Immanence:** The understanding that God is relationally close and present, being intimately involved in the affairs of creation.
5. **Deism:** Theistic worldview that believes God created the universe, but that He has not been involved in it since.
6. **Pantheism:** Lit. *pan* "all" *theism* "god." Theistic worldview that believes that God is identical with the universe.
7. **Panentheism:** Lit. *pan*="all" *en*="in" *theism*="god." Theistic worldview that believes that the universe is a part of who God is but is not all that God is.
8. **Atheism:** Worldview that believes that there is no God.
9. **Polytheism:** Lit. "many" *theism*="god." Theistic worldview that believes that there are many gods.
10. **Pluralism:** Worldview that believes that all beliefs are ultimately true even if they are contradictory.
11. **Naturalism:** Atheistic worldview that believes that nature is the sum total of all reality.
12. **Ontological Argument:** The argument for the existence of God first proposed by St. Anselm of Canterbury which argues for God's existence from the idea of the greatest conceivable being.
13. **Teleological Argument:** The argument for the existence of God from the order and complexity of all creation.
14. **sensus divinitatis Argument:** The argument for the existence of God from the innate sense of the divine, the "God shaped void," that is evidenced in all mankind.
15. **Moral Argument (Anthropological):** The argument for the existence of God from the apparent universal moral law that all people evidence through their understanding of right and wrong.
16. **Pascal's "Wager":** The argument for faith in the existence of God based upon the consequences of being wrong and the rewards of being right.
17. **Cumulative Case Argument:** The idea that the arguments for the existence of God are strongest when taken cumulatively.
18. **Cosmological Argument:** The argument for the existence of God that argues from the law of cause and effect; God, the Uncaused Cause, is the ultimate cause of all effects.
19. **Kalam Cosmological Argument:** The argument for the existence of God from the necessity of a beginning. An infinite number of moments cannot be traversed; therefore, there must be a beginning and a Beginner.
20. **Law of Causality:** The law in physics which states that for every effect there must be a cause.
21. **Moral Proof:** Proof that is demanded by the weight of the cumulative evidence. A person is morally obligated to submit to it.

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22. **Logical Proof:** Proof that is deduced through deductive logic. The ontological and cosmological arguments would be classified as logical proof for God's existence.
 23. **Empirical Proof:** Proof that is induced through the weight of evidences. The teleological and moral arguments would be classified as empirical proof for the existence of God.
 24. **Attributes:** Personal characteristics which God possesses that are inherent, immutable (unchangeable), and eternal.
 25. **Incommunicable attributes:** The attributes that God possesses that He does not share with humanity in any way.
 26. **Communicable attributes:** The attributes that God possesses that He shares, to some degree, with humanity.
 27. **“Open Theology”:** Describes a theology of a group of *evangelical* theologians who challenge the traditional understanding of God by redefining certain attributes, believing that the future is “open” or unknown to God.

TERMS FOR TRINITARIANISM (2)

1. **Heterodoxy:** Lit. “Different worship or understanding.” Teachings and beliefs that departs from the true orthodox faith.
2. **Orthodoxy:** Lit. “Straight worship or understanding.” Teachings and beliefs that are in accordance with the truth.
3. **Ebionism:** Early Jewish belief that Jesus was just a prophet.
4. **Modalism:** Also known as Sabellianism. Belief that there is one God who displays Himself in three different ways/modes/manifestations (not persons).
5. **Dualism:** Belief that all matter is evil and that which is spiritual (non-matter) is good.
6. **Gnosticism:** Dualists who believed that Christ was the greatest in a series of emanations from God.
7. **Docetism:** Denies Christ’s humanity saying that it only seemed (*dokeo*) like He was man.
8. **Arianism:** Promoted in the fourth century by a monk named Arius. Belief that since Christ was begotten then, “There was a time when Christ was not.” Christ is the first created being.
9. **Council of Nicea:** First ecumenical (universal church) council convened in 325. Condemned the teachings of Arius. First official statement on the Trinity.
10. **Adoptionalism:** Also known as Dynamic Monarchianism. Belief that Christ was a man who, because of His piety, was adopted by God when the Logos of God indwelt Him at His baptism. He was then given the title of Lord.
11. **Subordinationism:** Belief that Christ and the Holy Spirit are ontologically subordinate (inferior) to the Father.
12. **Athanasius:** African monk who was the “champion” of the Nicæan Council. Defended the Trinity in the face of Arianism.
13. **perichoresis:** Understanding of the unity of the Trinity by the mutual indwelling that each member of the Trinity has with one another. Promoted by the Cappadocian Fathers in the East.
14. **homoousios:** Lit. “same substance” or “consubstantial.” Term used at the time of Nicea used to describe the Son’s relation to the Father. Christ is of the same substance as the Father, not, as Arius promoted, “similar substance” (*homoiousios*).
15. **Nestorianism:** The heretical belief that the union of Christ’s humanity and deity is best understood as two natures and two persons.
16. **Hypostatic union:** A theological term used to describe Christ as one person who exists forevermore in two complete natures: God and Man.
17. **Apollinarianism:** The heretical belief that Christ had a human body but no human mind.
18. **Monophysitism:** The heretical belief that the two natures of Christ came together in the incarnation to make one new nature.
19. **Theanthropos:** The theological name of Christ affirming that He is the “God-man.”
20. **Incarnation:** The biblical understanding that Christ took on a human nature.
21. **Definition of Chalcedon:** Definition set forth at the fourth ecumenical (universal church) council in 451 which described the union of the two natures of Christ as one person with two natures.

INTRODUCTION TO THE THEOLOGY PROGRAM

Defining the “Rules of Engagement”

Who are you and why are you here?

Who you are and why you are taking this course?

1. **Practical Pricilla:** You are a person who has never seen the practicality in deep theological study. You are here to see if we can change your mind.
2. **Scared Susan:** Big words scare you. You don't really think that you are smart enough to be here. You are here this time, but you may not be here the next.
3. **Know-it-all Nick:** You already know everything. You are just here to see if we do—and to pick up where we leave off.
4. **Fundamental Fred:** You are the God-ordained guardian of orthodoxy. You are here to sit, with arms crossed, and protect.
5. **Want-an-answer Will:** You have a lot of questions. You are here not to do theology in community, but to write theology down with a pen and paper.
6. **Traditionalist Teri:** You want to learn, but your traditions and preconceived notions bind you. You are here to have your traditions confirmed to be true.
7. **Confrontational Carl:** You are not a believer in Christ or the Bible and have no intention of becoming one. You are here to argue.
8. **Struggling Sam:** You are a believer in Christ, but you have a lot of doubts and struggles. You have never had a safe place to express those doubts. You are here to see if this is the place.
9. **Curious Carla:** You are not really sure why you are here, but you're excited to find out.

We are all *real* people created by a *real* God, and we all have *real* struggles, *real* questions, and *real* convictions.

We are glad that you are here!

What is The Theology Program?

The Theology Program is an intense theological studies program, designed for busy people who may never go to seminary but who want deep theological training. While there are many great subjects, biblical and spiritual, that Christians can and need to study, our focus is on seven specific courses of systematic theology. Our desire is to teach people how to think by opening their minds to diverse views, learning from history, wrestling with difficult issues, and graciously engaging an increasingly relativistic and postmodern world.

Mission: **Renewing minds and changing lives by *purposefully* guiding people through a study of historic and biblical Christian theology.**

Goal: **“Our goal is not so much to teach good theology, as important as this is, but to teach people to think.”**

What makes The Theology Program different?

1. **Intensity in studies**
2. **Irenic theology**
3. **Intentional program design**

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4. Comprehensive coverage
 5. Doing theology in community

Intensity in Studies

The Church must have an avenue of intense, interactive Christian education through a program which gives people an opportunity to learn at a level that other venues cannot provide. TTP endeavors to be this avenue.

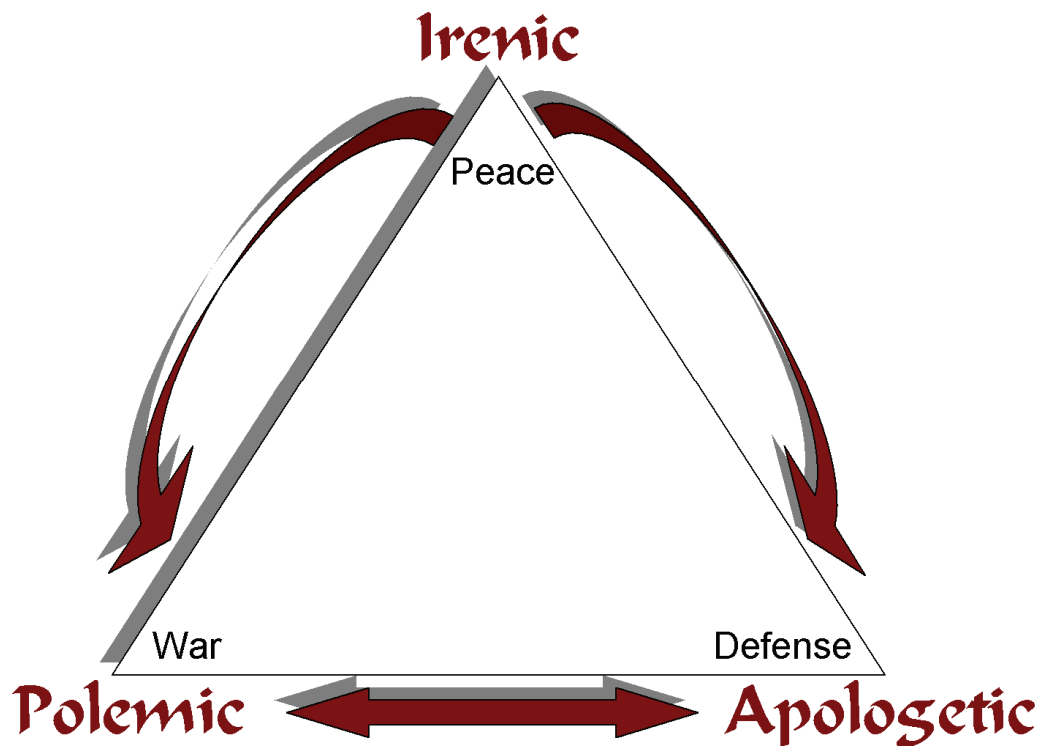


The education program of the Church needs to include *all* of these *in balance*.

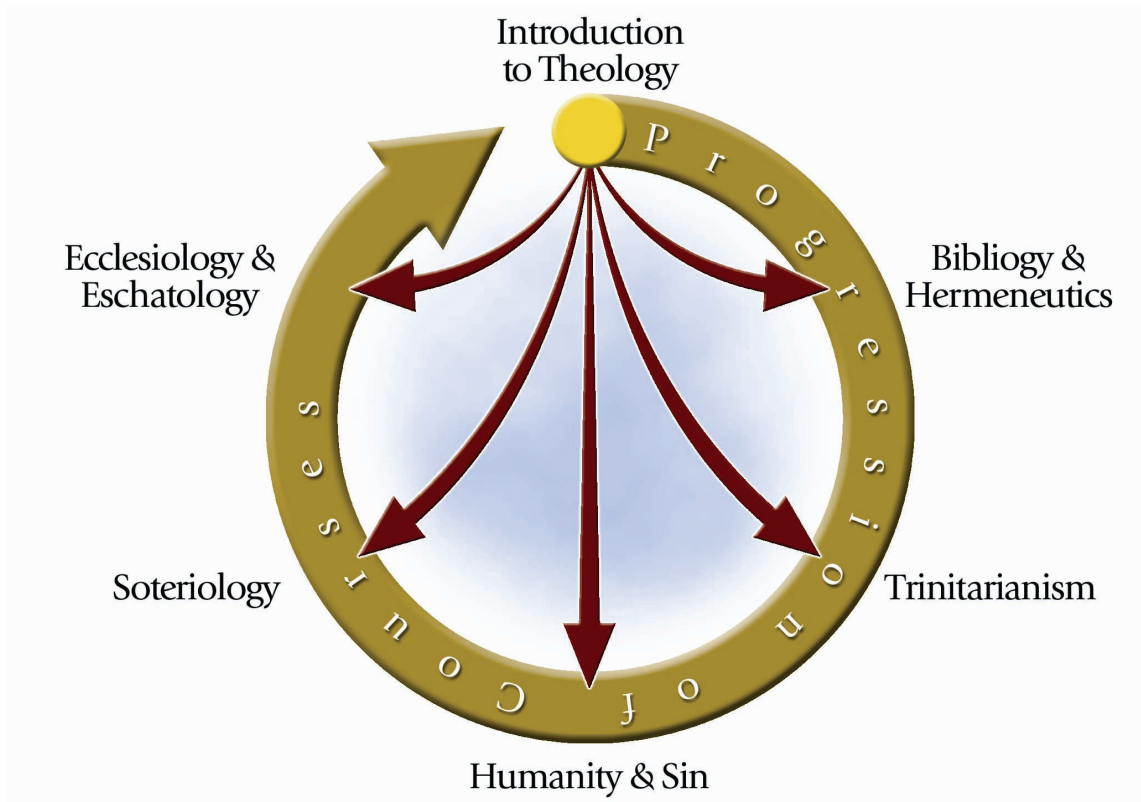
Irenic Theology

Key Terms

Irenic Theology:	Theology that is done peaceably, accurately representing all views, even when you oppose them.
Polemic Theology:	Theology that is done in a warlike manner <i>inside the Church</i> , prophetically speaking against those with whom there is disagreement.
Apologetic Theology:	Theology that is done to defend the faith against those who oppose <i>outside the church</i> .



Intentional Program Design



Comprehensive Coverage

In the courses, we will address all the relevant major issues, current and historic, of which we think people need to be aware.

Doing Theology in a Community

We believe that truth is not found in Spirit-illuminated individuals, but in a community of Spirit-illuminated individuals. Therefore, we believe that the Body of Christ, both alive and dead, must come together to understand theology, shaping it from many perspectives and differing experiences. This is doing theology in a community.

THE THEOLOGY PROGRAM LOGO

