

Knowing God: The Trinity

The Challenge

Knowing God: The Trinity

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TrueChristian

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"I am not ashamed of the Gospel
for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes"

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"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." - Romans 12:2 ESV



Do you have to be a Trinitarian to be a Christian? (self.TrueChristian)

submitted 1 day ago by cry_fat_kid_cry

I consider myself a Christian, and I am definitely a follower of Christ, so I know I belong here, but I am not a Trinitarian.

[r/truechristian](#)^[1] says

We are a subreddit that exists to provide a safe haven for all *FOLLOWERS of Jesus Christ*, so that we may discuss God, Jesus, the Bible, and information relative to our beliefs, and to provide non-believers a place in which they can ask questions about Christianity as explained in the scriptures, without fear of mockery or debasement. This is a subreddit for *FOLLOWERS of Jesus Christ*.

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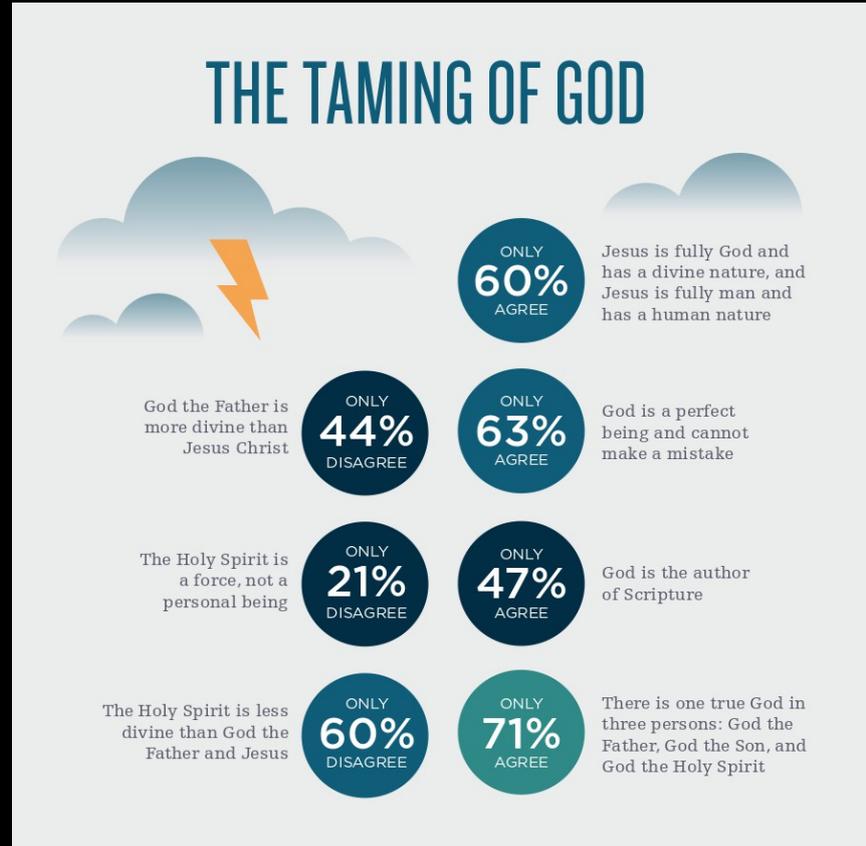
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9,350 Followers of Christ
~37 Followers of Christ are online

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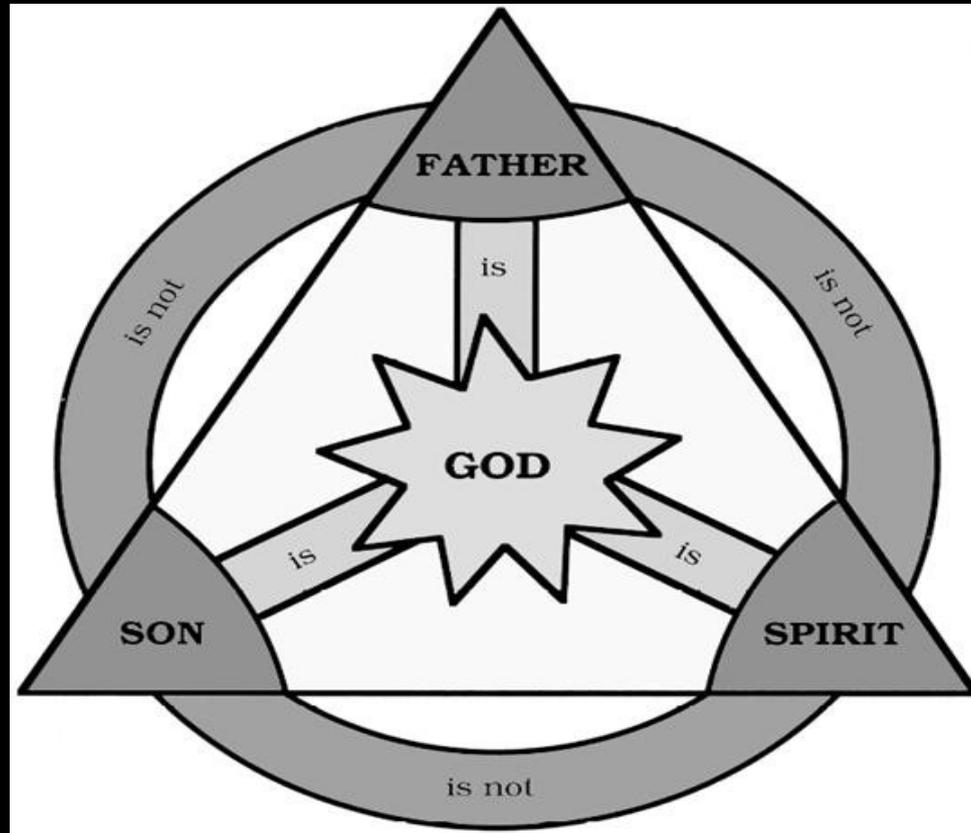
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What Does the Bible Say?

Knowing God: The Trinity

Jesus is God: Self Claims

Knowing God: The Trinity

Your father Abraham was overjoyed to see my day, and he saw it and was glad.” Then the Judeans replied, “You are not yet fifty years old! Have you seen Abraham?” Jesus said to them, “I tell you the solemn truth, before Abraham came into existence, I am!”

[John 8:56-58 NET]

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Moses said to God, “If I go to the Israelites and tell them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’—what should I say to them?” God said to Moses, “I am that I am.” And he said, “You must say this to the Israelites, ‘I am has sent me to you.’” [Exodus 3:13-14 NET]

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יהוה

= YHWH
= "I Am"

ἐγὼ εἰμί

= ego eimi
= "I Am"

Knowing God: The Trinity

“The Father and I are one.” The Jewish leaders picked up rocks again to stone him to death. Jesus said to them, “I have shown you many good deeds from the Father. For which one of them are you going to stone me?” The Jewish leaders replied, “We are not going to stone you for a good deed but for blasphemy, because you, a man, are claiming to be God.” [John 10:30-33 NET]

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The Parable of the Tenants

“Listen to another parable: There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a fence around it, dug a pit for its winepress, and built a watchtower. Then he leased it to tenant farmers and went on a journey. When the harvest time was near, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his portion of the crop. But the tenants seized his slaves, beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other slaves, more than the first, and they treated them the same way. Finally he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let’s kill him and get his inheritance!’ So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him...” [Matthew 21:33-41 NET]

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Jesus is God: Others' Claims

Knowing God: The Trinity

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was fully God. The Word was with God in the beginning. All things were created by him, and apart from him not one thing was created that has been created. In him was life, and the life was the light of mankind. And the light shines on in the darkness, but the darkness has not mastered it. [John 1:1-5 NET]

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Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and examine my hands. Extend your hand and put it into my side. Do not continue in your unbelief, but believe.” Thomas replied to him, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are the people who have not seen and yet have believed.” [John 20:27-29 NET]

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He is the image (eikón = mirror-like representation) of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation, for all things in heaven and on earth were created in him—all things, whether visible or invisible, whether thrones or dominions, whether principalities or powers—all things were created through him and for him. He himself is before all things and all things are held together in him. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in the Son...[Colossians 1:15-17,19 NET]

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For in him all the fullness of deity lives in bodily form...
[Colossians 2:9 NET]

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The Son is the radiance of his glory and the representation (charaktér = engraving/stamp) of his essence, and he sustains all things by his powerful word, and so when he had accomplished cleansing for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Thus he became so far better than the angels as he has inherited a name superior to theirs.

[Hebrews 1:3-4 NET]

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You should have the same attitude toward one another that Christ Jesus had, who though he existed in the form (morphé = shape/appearance) of God did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking on the form of a slave, by looking like other men, and by sharing in human nature. He humbled himself, by becoming obedient to the point of death — even death on a cross! As a result God highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow — in heaven and on earth and under the earth — and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. [Philippians 2:5-11 NET]

Knowing God: The Trinity

...but of the Son he says,

“Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, and a righteous scepter is the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness. So God, your God, has anointed you over your companions with the oil of rejoicing.”

And,

“You founded the earth in the beginning, Lord, and the heavens are the works of your hands. They will perish, but you continue. And they will all grow old like a garment, and like a robe you will fold them up and like a garment they will be changed, but you are the same and your years will never run out.” [Hebrews 1:8-12 NET]

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Your throne, O God, is permanent. The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of justice. You love justice and hate evil. For this reason God, your God has anointed you with the oil of joy, elevating you above your companions. [Psalms 45:6-7 NET]

Knowing God: The Trinity

In earlier times you established the earth; the skies are your handiwork. They will perish, but you will endure. They will wear out like a garment; like clothes you will remove them and they will disappear. But you remain; your years do not come to an end.

[Psalms 102:25-27 NET]

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The Holy Spirit is God

Knowing God: The Trinity

When the Advocate comes, whom I will send you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me, and you also will testify, because you have been with me from the beginning. [John 15:26-27 NET]

But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I am going away. For if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you, but if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will prove the world wrong concerning sin and righteousness and judgment— [John 16:7-8 NET]

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But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I am going away. For if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you, but if I go, I will send him to you. [John 16:7 NET]

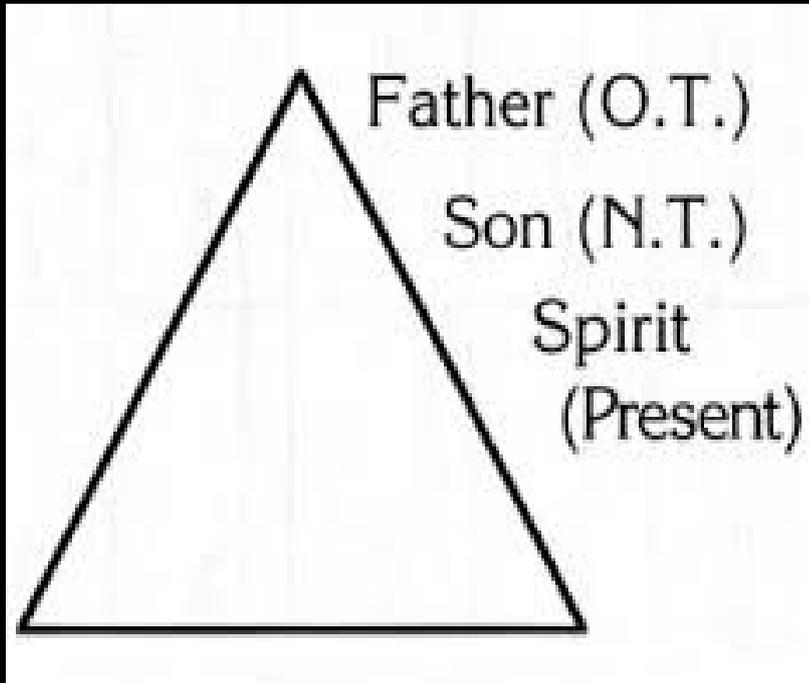
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While they were serving the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." [Acts 13:2 NET]

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Heretics & Ecumenical Councils

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Sabellius [~215 AD]

- 3rd century priest and theologian
- Claimed that God was single and indivisible – one person in 3 different modes
- Considered heretic
- Origin of *modalistic monarchianism* or *modalism*

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Arius [256 – 336 AD]

- Priest in Alexandria, Egypt
- Started causing trouble in 318 AD
- Partnered with Bishop Eusebius of Nicomedia (!)
- Attended Council of Nicea in 325 AD
- Claimed Jesus was created by God (example of 'subordinationism')
- Considered heretic

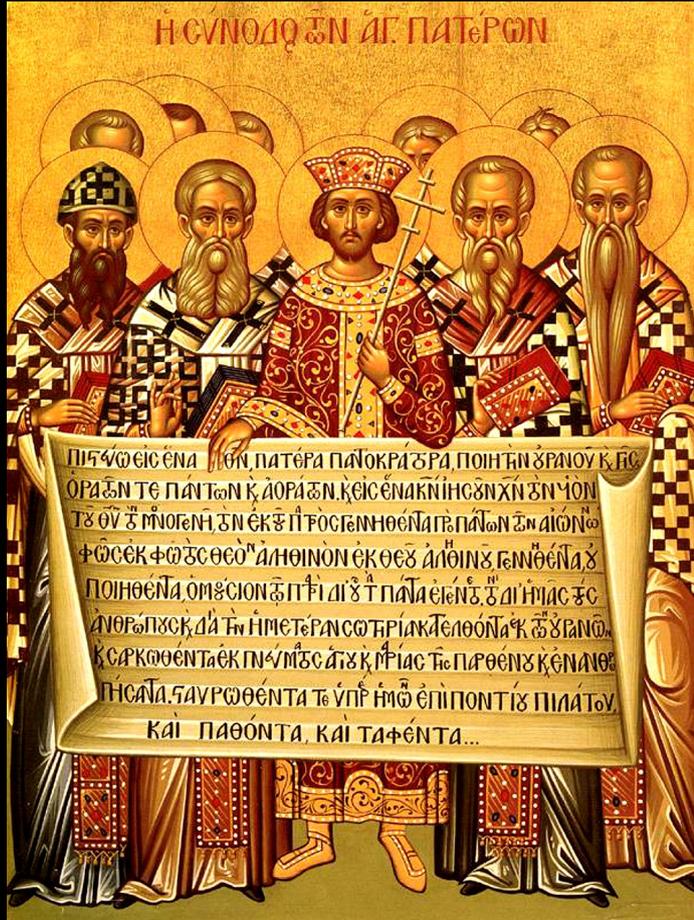
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Battle of Milvian Bridge

- Occurred in 312 AD
- Emperor Constantine looked up to the sun before the battle and saw a cross of light above it, and with it the Greek words "Εν Τούτῳ Νίκα" (~in this sign, conquer!)
- 313 AD Edict of Milan established toleration for Christianity in the Roman Empire (state religion in 380 AD)

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Council of Nicea (325 AD)

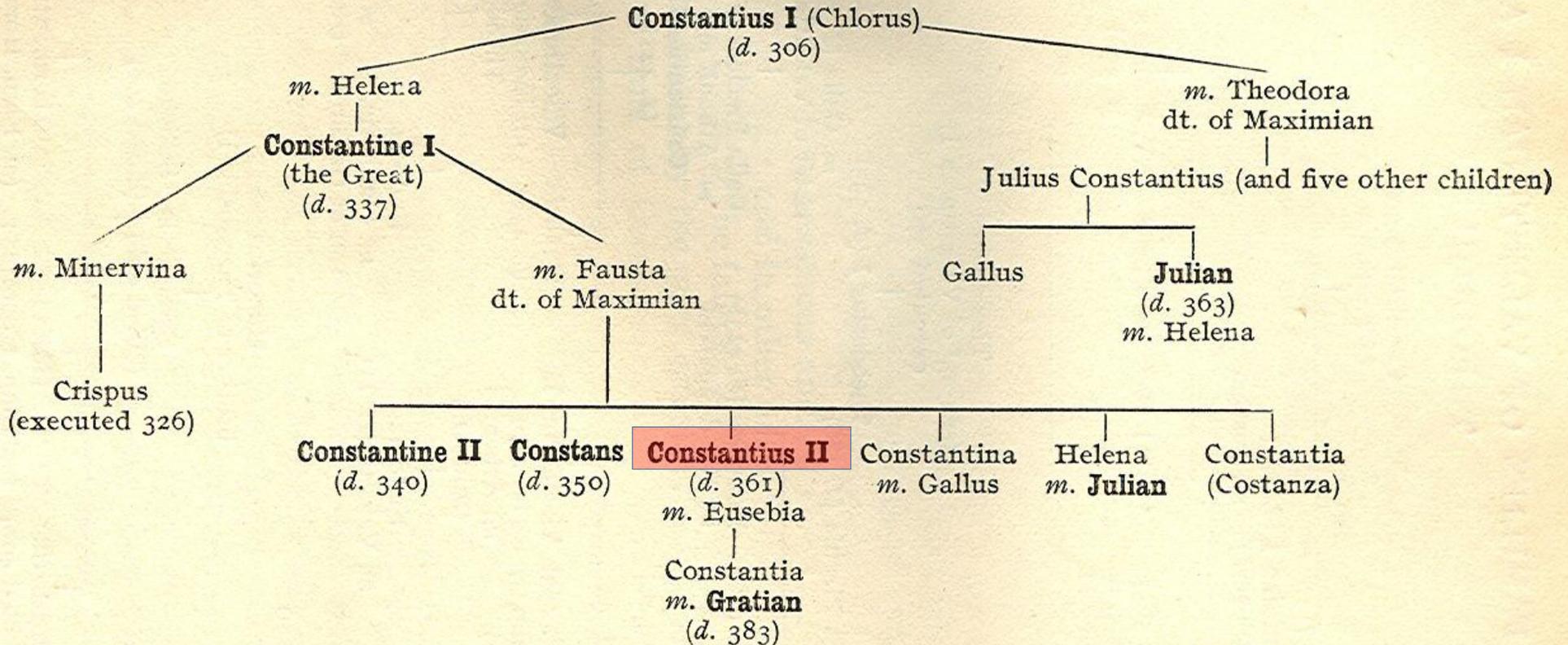
- Emperor Constantine presided over a group of 300+ church bishops and other leaders from mostly the eastern empire
- Purpose: To define the nature of God for all of Christianity and eliminating confusion, controversy, and contention within the church
- Developed Nicene Creed
- Condemned Arianism but did not kill it (!)
- The council did *not* invent the Trinity doctrine -- it only recognized what the Bible *already* taught.

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FAMILY OF CONSTANTINE



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ὁμοούσιος



homoousios = “same substance”

ὁμοιούσιος



homoiousios
= “similar substance”

ἕτεροούσιος



heteroousios
= “different substance”

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Nicene Creed (325 AD)

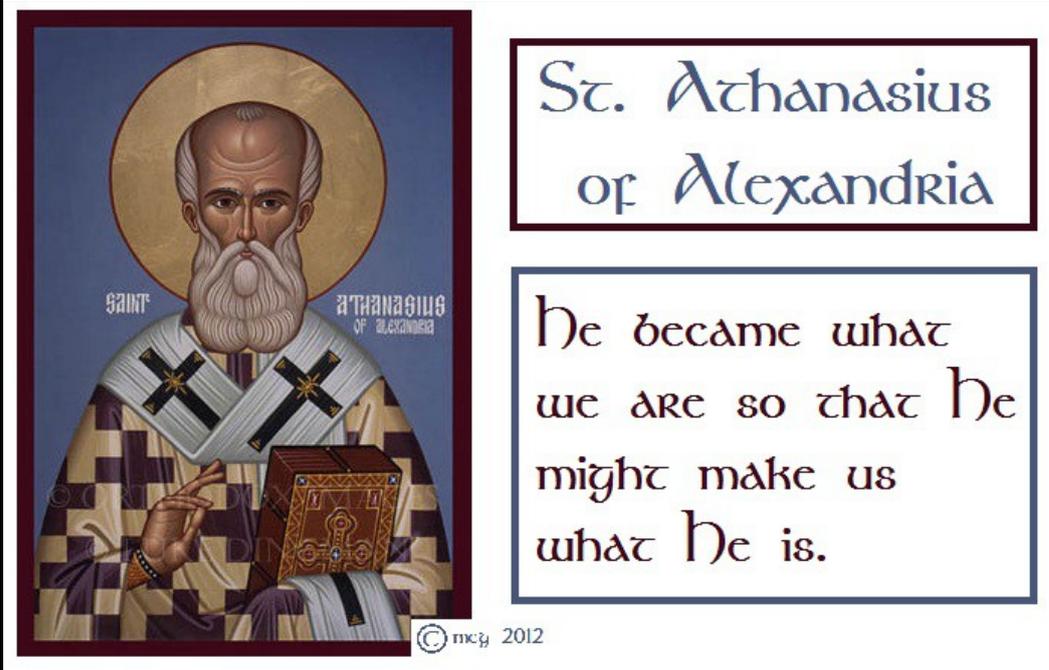
We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of all things, visible and invisible;

and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only begotten (gennethenta) of the Father, that is, of the substance (ousios) of the Father; God of God, light of light, true God of true God; begotten (gennethenta), not made, consubstantial (homoousios) with the Father, by whom all things were made, both in heaven and in earth; who for us men, and for our salvation, descended, was incarnate, and was made man, and suffered, and rose again the third day; he ascended into heaven, and shall come to judge the living and the dead.

And in the Holy Spirit.

But the holy catholic and apostolic Church of God anathematizes those who affirm that there was a time when the Son was not, or that he was not before he was begotten, or that he was made of things not existing; or who say, that the Son of God was of any other substance (hypostasis) or essence (ousia), or created, or liable to change or conversion.

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Athanasius [296 - 373 AD]

- Bishop of Alexandria
- Attended Council of Nicea in 325 AD as assistant to Bishop Alexander
- Opposed Arianism strongly!
- Invented the term “consubstantial” (*homoousios*) for Nicene creed
- Exiled 5 times for beliefs
- "*Athanasius Contra Mundum*"

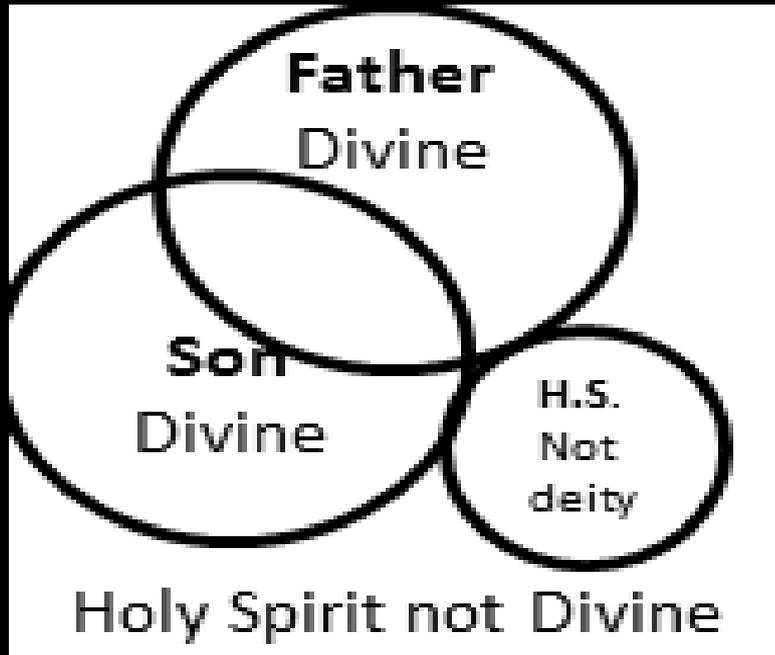
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Ulfilas [311 - 383 AD]

- Bishop, Bible translator
- Missionary to Goths (Germanic tribes)
- Invented Gothic alphabet to translate from Greek
- Converted to (semi?-)Arianism in 360 AD due to political pressure
- Arianism adopted by Goths, Vandals, etc and spreads

Knowing God: The Trinity



Macedonius [? - 360 AD]

- Bishop of Constantinople
- Believed in semi-arianism
- Claimed Holy Spirit was created by Jesus and not a full person
- Given nickname *Pneumatomachi* (meaning 'Spirit Fighters')
- Considered heretic

Knowing God: The Trinity



Council of Constantinople (381 AD)

- Emperor Theodosius summoned it to to repair the East/West schism, and to further define orthodox belief
- It clarified the language used to describe the Trinity, but sharpened the distinctions between the Eastern and Western branches of the church
- Developed Niceno-Constantinople Creed
- Dealt a 'death blow' (?) to Arianism, and condemned Pneumatomachianism

Knowing God: The Trinity

Niceno-Constantinople Creed (381 AD)

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten (monogenes), begotten (gennethenta) of the Father before all ages. Light of Light; true God of true God; begotten (gennethenta), not made; of one essence (homoousios) with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became man. And He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried. And the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead; whose Kingdom shall have no end.

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father (and the Son); who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets.

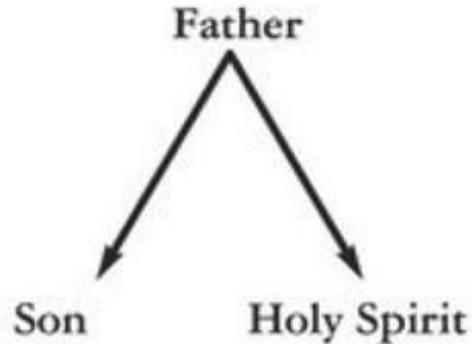
We believe in one holy universal and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Knowing God: The Trinity

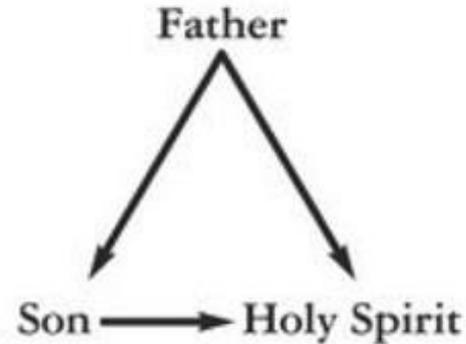
The Filioque Controversy

Eastern Church

Latin Church



The Holy Spirit proceeds
from the Father



The Holy Spirit proceeds
from the Father and
the Son (*filioque*)

Knowing God: The Trinity

Summary

There is *one* and *only one* true and living God.

This one God *eternally* exists in *three Persons*—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

These three Persons are *completely equal* in attributes, each with the *same* divine nature.

While each Person is fully and completely God, the Persons are *not* identical.

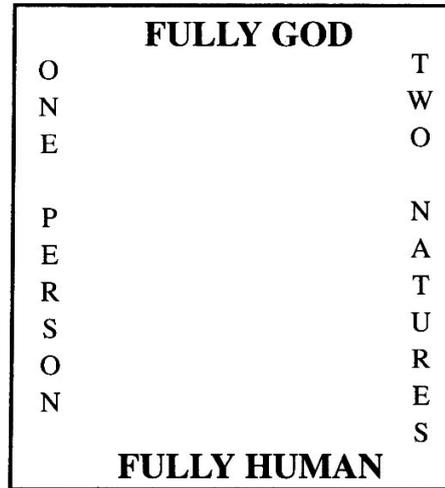
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First Council: Nicea (AD 325)

Condemned *Arianism*

Soteriological axiom: "God alone can save us."

**Third Council:
Ephesus (AD 431)**
Condemned
Nestorianism.
Specified the one
person of Christ.



**Fourth Council:
Chalcedon (AD 451)**
Condemned
Eutychianism.
Maintained the two nature
without confusion or change,
separation or division.

Second Council: Constantinople I (AD 381)

Re-affirmed Nicea, condemned *Apollinarianism.*

Soteriological Axiom: "That which is not assumed is not healed."

Knowing God: The Trinity

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Knowing God: The Trinity

“If you do not listen to theology, that will not mean that you have no ideas about God. It will mean that you will have a lot of wrong ones.”

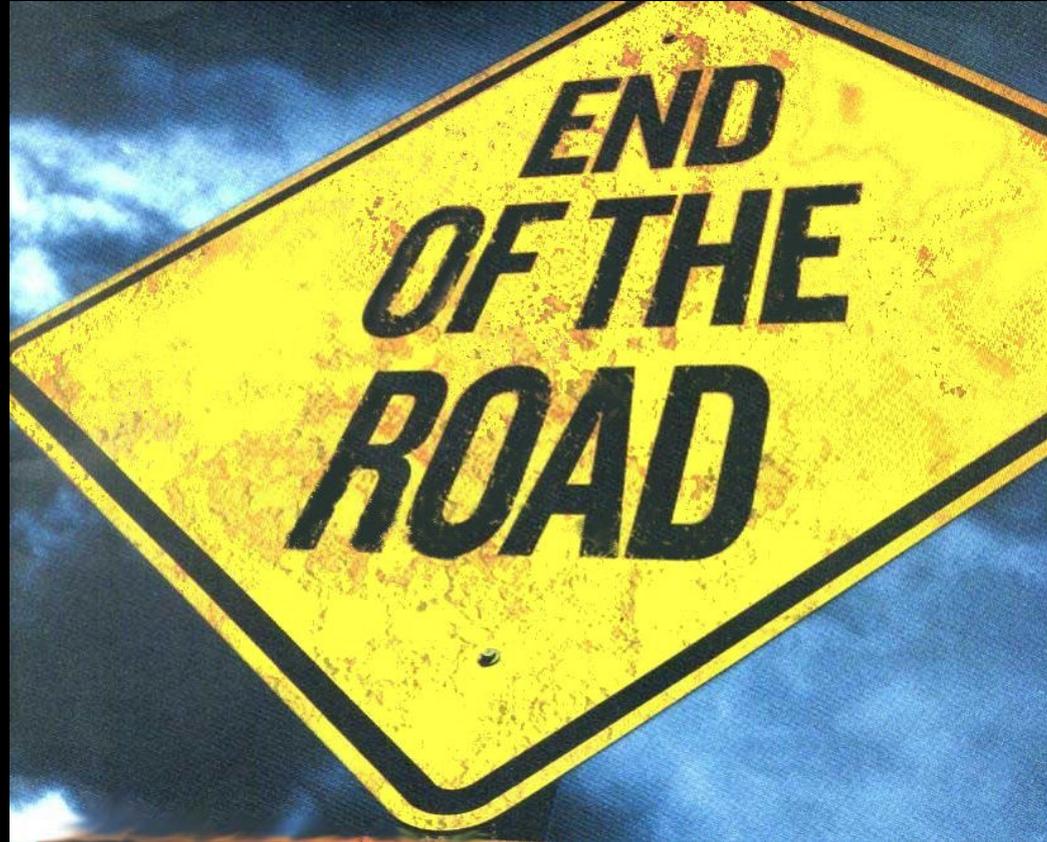
[C.S. Lewis]

Knowing God: The Trinity

Too many Christians mistake “Scripture alone” as if it were a license for them to read the Bible alone—to read it apart from other people. You know the idea: “All I need is me and my Bible.” But that’s not what it means. It means that Scripture is alone authoritative, not that your personal (“alone”) interpretation of Scripture is authoritative.

[Matthew Block]

Knowing God: The Trinity



Knowing God: The Trinity

BONUS SECTION

Knowing God: The Trinity

Only Begotten?

Knowing God: The Trinity

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten (monogenes) Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. [John 3:16 KJV]

For this is the way God loved the world: He gave his one and only (monogenes) Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. [John 3:16 NET]

Knowing God: The Trinity

ΜΟΝΟΓΕΝῆ

Monogenes = mono + gennao ?

or

= mono + genos ?

Knowing God: The Trinity

ΜΟΝΟΓΕΝῆ
ΜΟΝΟ ΓΕΝΝᾶΩ

Monogenes = mono + gennao
= “only begotten”

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ΜΟΝΟΓΕΝῆ

ΜΟΝΟ Γένος

Monogenes = mono + genos
= “single kind”

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ΜΟΝΟΓΕΝῆ

Monogenes = mono + gennao ?



or

= mono + genos ?



Knowing God: The Trinity

Rather than monogenes speaking of Christ's origin, derivation, or substance, it is a word that better describes His position and uniqueness. It has been pointed out by others that this word should be treated similarly to prototokos ("firstborn") in Colossians 1:15.

[<http://gentlereformation.com/2011/04/26/change-john-316/>]

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He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn (prototokos) over all creation, for all things in heaven and on earth were created in him—all things, whether visible or invisible, whether thrones or dominions, whether principalities or powers—all things were created through him and for him. He himself is before all things and all things are held together in him. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in the Son...[Colossians 1:15-17,19 NET]

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ΠΡΩΤΌΤΟΚΟΣ

Prototokos = proto + tokos
= “first born” (Luke 2:7)
= “first in rank” (Col 1:15)

Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation...[Colossians 1:15 NLT]

Knowing God: The Trinity

Was Jesus Forsaken?

Knowing God: The Trinity

At about three o'clock Jesus shouted with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"
[Matthew 27:46 NET]

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In those awful moments, Jesus was expressing His feelings of abandonment as God placed the sins of the world on Him – and because of that had to “turn away” from Jesus. As Jesus was feeling that weight of sin, He was experiencing separation from God for the only time in all of eternity.

[<http://www.gotquestions.org/forsaken-me.html>]

Knowing God: The Trinity

2 Cor. 5:21 says, "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." It is possible that at some moment on the cross when Jesus became sin on our behalf, that God the Father--in a sense--turned His back upon the Son. It says that in Hab. 1:13 that God is too pure to look upon evil. Therefore, it is possible that when Jesus bore our sins in His body on the cross (1 Pet. 2:24), that the Father, spiritually, turned away. At that time, the Son may have cried out.

[<https://carm.org/questions/about-jesus/why-did-jesus-cry-out-my-god-my-god-why-have-you-forsaken-me>]

Knowing God: The Trinity

At about three o'clock Jesus shouted with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" [Matthew 27:46 NET]

My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?...They are dividing up my clothes among themselves; they are rolling dice for my garments. [Psalm 22:1,18 NET]

God made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we would become the righteousness of God. [2 Corinthians 5:21 NET]

Knowing God: The Trinity

But you, O Lord, do not remain far away! You are my source of strength! Hurry and help me!... You have answered me!... For he did not despise or detest the suffering of the oppressed; he did not ignore him; when he cried out to him, he responded. [Psalm 22:19, 21b, 24]

Then Jesus said, “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and I do nothing on my own initiative, but I speak just what the Father taught me. And the one who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, because I always do those things that please him.” [John 8:28-29 NET]

Knowing God: The Trinity

In fact, Jesus was declaring to his accusers that they were in the midst of fulfilling this psalm, which was commonly understood in His day to refer to the coming Messiah, the Suffering Servant. The psalmist himself understood that the "forsaking" of God was not abandonment, but a lifting of His Sovereign protection according to His divine plan so that the threats of his enemies could be carried out in fulfillment of prophecy.

[<http://answers.org/theology/forsaken.html>]

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However, there is absolutely no evidence anywhere, in Old or New Testaments that has the slightest implication that God withdrew from Jesus at any time, including the cross. There is no Bible teaching that there was any imputation of sin. To the contrary, Jesus specifically denies that the Father would withdraw from Him while on the cross. In addition, attaching such a meaning to the cry of Jesus is the very opposite of what Jesus said His time on the Cross was intended to show. This can be proven from scripture.

The cry of Jesus that quoted Psalm 22:1 was the specific reason Jesus said that when He was lifted up that they would know that He was God. If anything would convince the Jews, it would be scripture.

[<http://lavistachurchofchrist.org/LVarticles/DidTheFatherAbandonedJesusOnTheCross.html>]

Knowing God: The Trinity

Who Raised Jesus from Death?

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From Paul, an apostle (not from men, nor by human agency, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him from the dead)...

[Galatians 1:1 NET]

Knowing God: The Trinity

From Paul, an apostle (not from men, nor by human agency, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him from the dead)...

[Galatians 1:1 NET]

Jesus replied, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up again." [John 2:19 NET]

Moreover if the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead lives in you, the one who raised Christ from the dead will also make your mortal bodies alive through his Spirit who lives in you.

[Romans 8:11 NET]

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Is the Trinity in the Old Testament?

Knowing God: The Trinity

Then he blessed Joseph and said,

“May the God before whom my grandfather Abraham and my father, Isaac, walked—the God who has been my shepherd all my life, to this very day, the Angel who has redeemed me from all harm...” [Genesis 48:15-16 NET]

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“I am going to send an angel before you to protect you as you journey and to bring you into the place that I have prepared. Take heed because of him, and obey his voice; do not rebel against him, for he will not pardon your transgressions, for my name is in him. But if you diligently obey him and do all that I command, then I will be an enemy to your enemies, and I will be an adversary to your adversaries. [Exodus 23:20-22 NET]

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“While I was watching,

thrones were set up, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His attire was white like snow; the hair of his head was like lamb’s wool. His throne was ablaze with fire and its wheels were all aflame. A river of fire was streaming forth and proceeding from his presence. Many thousands were ministering to him; many tens of thousands stood ready to serve him. The court convened and the books were opened.” [Daniel 7:9-10 NET]

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I was watching in the night visions,

“And with the clouds of the sky one like a son of man was approaching. He went up to the Ancient of Days and was escorted before him. To him was given ruling authority, honor, and sovereignty. All peoples, nations, and language groups were serving him. His authority is eternal and will not pass away. His kingdom will not be destroyed.” [Daniel 7:13-14 NET]

Knowing God: The Trinity

Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and all the tribes of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man arriving on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. [Matthew 24:30 NET]

Knowing God: The Trinity

Eternal Generation & Sonship?

Knowing God: The Trinity

Καὶ εἰς ἓνα κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν,

And in one Lord Jesus Christ

τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ,

the Son of God only begotten [unique]*

τὸν ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς γεννηθέντα πρὸ πάντων τῶν αἰώνων

the born of the Father eternally [before all ages]*

[Nicene-Constantiople Creed 381 AD]

Knowing God: The Trinity

*We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father*

[Nicene-Constantiople Creed 381 AD]

Knowing God: The Trinity

Eternal Generation of the Son

- (1) It is a necessary act of God
- (2) It is an eternal act of the Father
- (3) It is a generation of the personal subsistence rather than of the divine essence of the Son.
- (4) It is a generation that must be conceived of as spiritual and divine

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Son's Subordination

	NATURE	DURATION	APPLICATION
EFS [Eternal Functional Subordination]	Necessary	Eternal	Immanent [Natural Quality] & Economic [Role & Function]
EFE [Eternal Functional Equality]	Contingent [Dependent]	Temporary	Economic [Role & Function] Only

Knowing God: The Trinity

"The Scripture nowhere calls Jesus Christ the eternal Son of God, and He is never called Son at all prior to the incarnation, except in prophetic passages in the Old Testament. The term "Son" itself is a functional term, as is the term "Father" and has no meaning apart from time. . . . Many heresies have seized upon the confusion created by the illogical "eternal Sonship" or "eternal generation" theory of Roman Catholic theology, unfortunately carried over to some aspects of Protestant theology. Finally; there cannot be any such thing as eternal Sonship the word "Son" definitely suggests inferiority."

[Walter Martin, The Kingdom of the Cults, pp. 117-118]

Knowing God: The Trinity

“For although creedally affirmed, the doctrine of the generation of the Son (and the procession of the Spirit) is a relic of Logos Christology which finds virtually no warrant in the biblical text and introduces a subordinationism into the Godhead which anyone who affirms the full deity of Christ ought to find very troubling...For these reasons evangelical theologians have tended to treat the doctrine of the eternal generation of the Son from the Father with benign neglect.”

[William Lane Craig, Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview, p 549]

Knowing God: The Trinity

Mennonite Brethren and the Trinity

Knowing God: The Trinity

One True, Living God

Christians confess that God is one being in three persons. The opening paragraphs begin with an emphasis on monotheism and conclude with the Christian confession of Trinitarianism, a concept found in the New Testament and defined by later church councils. The Trinitarian doctrine is the basis for an emphasis on the relational nature of God. God is relational. God is community. God is the community of Father, Son, and Spirit and enjoys fellowship.

[Mennonite Brethren Confession of Faith]

Knowing God: The Trinity

Is God Male?

Knowing God: The Trinity

“But I will send you the Advocate—the Spirit of truth. He will come to you from the Father and will testify all about me. [John 15:26 NET]

But in fact, it is best for you that I go away, because if I don't, the Advocate won't come. If I do go away, then I will send him to you...When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future. He will bring me glory by telling you whatever he receives from me.” [John 16:7,13-14 NET]

Knowing God: The Trinity

“If you love me, you will obey my commandments. Then I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot accept, because it does not see him (it) or know him (it). But you know him (it), because he (it) resides with you and will be in you. [John 14:15-17 NET]

Knowing God: The Trinity

Gender and God

Humans struggle to express in human language the inexpressible nature of God. The Hebrew language lacks a personal neuter pronoun to describe God and by convention refers to God as —He. Although male metaphors for God are predominant in the Bible, occasional metaphors depict God as a mother (Isa. 66:12-13), as one who gives birth (Deut. 32:18), and as a woman (Luke 15:8-10). Contemporary theologians have attempted to —re-image God with feminine sexual metaphors. How should Mennonite Brethren understand this issue? First, God is Spirit. God is neither male nor female. Although male pronouns are used for God in the Bible, this most likely reflects limits in language rather than the notion that God has gender. Familiar metaphors that refer to God as King or Father or Husband no more make God a male sexual being than references to feathers make God a bird (Ps. 91:4).

[Mennonite Brethren Confession of Faith]

Knowing God: The Trinity

Who Do We Pray To?

Knowing God: The Trinity

So pray this way:

Our Father in heaven, may your name be honored, may your kingdom come, may your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we ourselves have forgiven our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. [Matthew 6:9-13 NET]

Knowing God: The Trinity

They continued to stone Stephen while he prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!” [Acts 7:59 NET]

Let anyone who has no love for the Lord be accursed. Our Lord, come! [1 Corinthians 16:22 NET]

The one who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming soon!” Amen! Come, Lord Jesus! [Revelation 22:20 NET]

Knowing God: The Trinity

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how we should pray, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with inexpressible groanings. [Romans 8:26 NET]

Knowing God: The Trinity

*Holy Spirit You are welcome here
Come flood this place and fill the atmosphere
Your glory God is what our hearts long for
To be overcome by Your presence Lord*

["Holy Spirit" Lyrics by Bryan & Katie Torwalt]

Knowing God: The Trinity

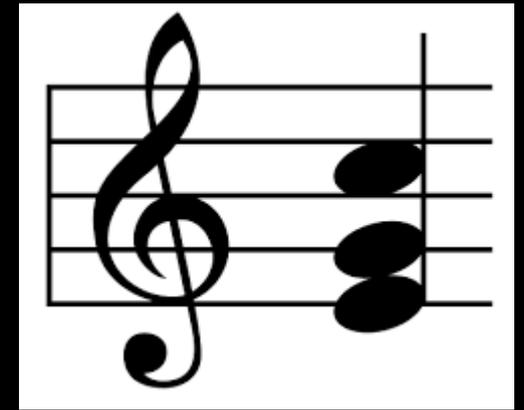
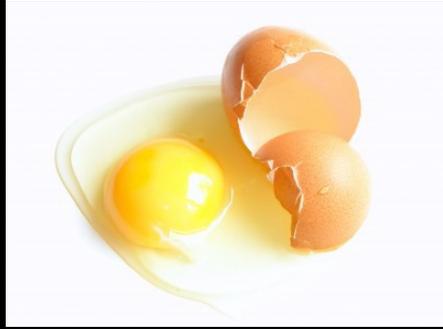
“Pray to the Father in the name of Jesus by the power of the Spirit”

[John Piper, <http://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/does-it-matter-which-person-of-the-trinity-we-pray-to>]

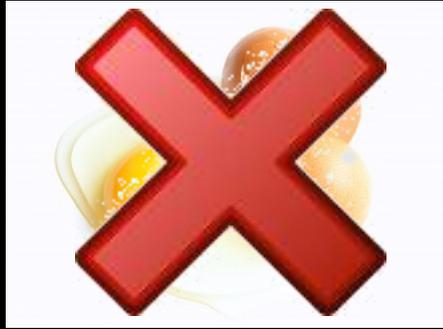
Knowing God: The Trinity

Bad Trinity Analogies

Knowing God: The Trinity



Knowing God: The Trinity



Tri-theism Modalism



Tri-theism



Knowing God: The Trinity

Cults

Knowing God: The Trinity

Arian

- Unitarians
- Christadelphians
- Iglesia ni Cristo
- Jehovah's Witnesses

Binitarianism

- Living Church of God
- Members Church of God International

Polytheist

- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Semi-Arian

- 7th Day Adventists

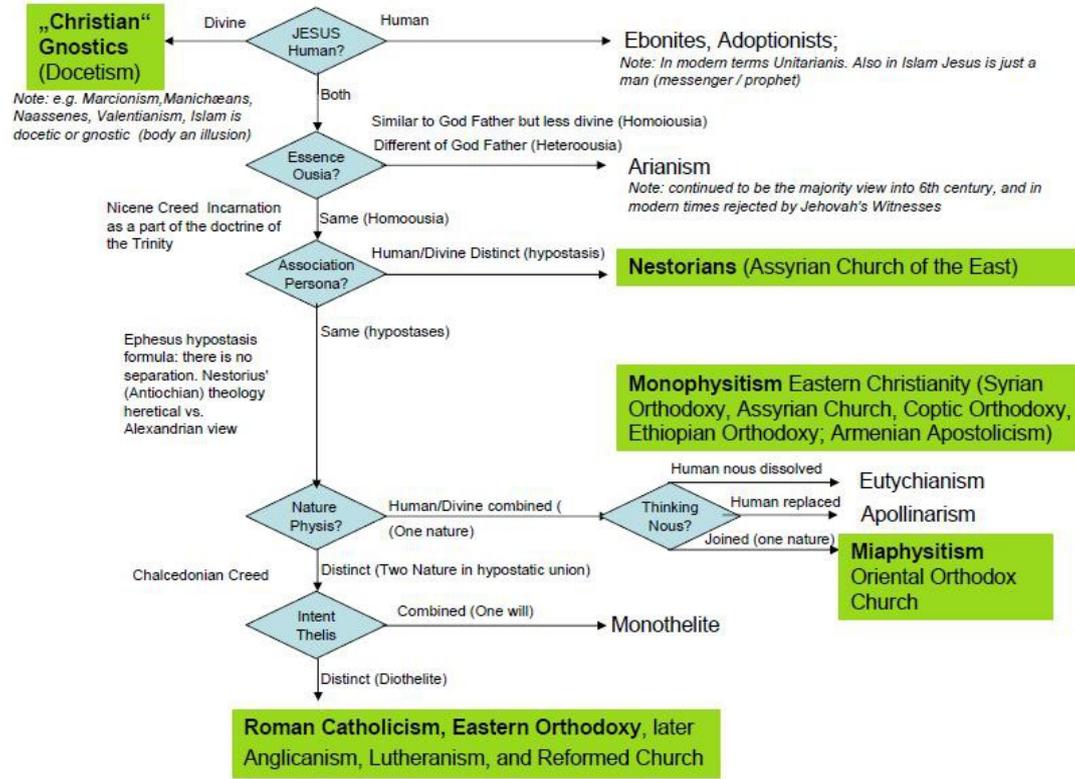
Modalist

- Oneness Pentecostalism

Knowing God: The Trinity

Heretics & Ecumenical Councils:
Christology

Knowing God: The Trinity



Knowing God: The Trinity

Niceno-Constantinople Creed (381 AD)

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

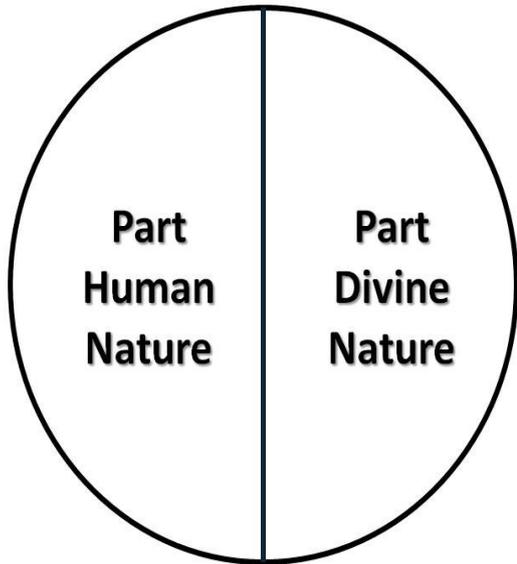
And we believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten (gennethenta), not made, of one being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us, humans, and for our salvation, he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary, and became fully human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate. He suffered death and was buried. He rose again on the third day 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.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father (and the Son), who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy universal 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.

Knowing God: The Trinity

Apollonarianism (361 AD)



Apollinaris [? - 390 AD]

- Bishop of Laodicea in Syria
- Attended Council of Constantinople in 381 AD
- Claimed Jesus had human body and divine mind
- Considered heretic i.e. to attempt create a *tertium quid* ("third thing," neither God nor man)

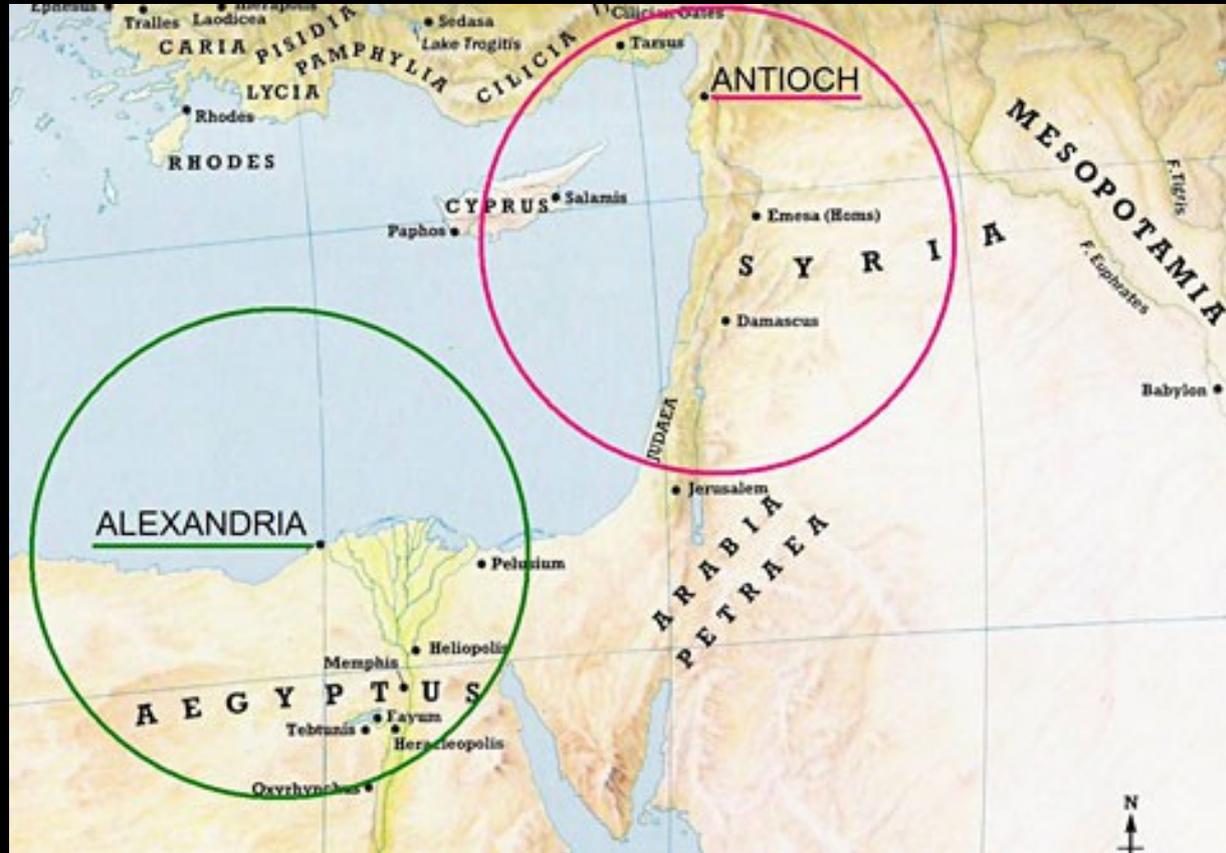
Knowing God: The Trinity



Council of Constantinople (381 AD)

- Emperor Theodosius summoned it to to repair the East/West schism, and to further define orthodox belief
- It clarified the language used to describe the Trinity, but sharpened the distinctions between the Eastern and Western branches of the church
- Developed Niceno-Constantinople Creed
- Dealt a 'death blow' (?) to Arianism, and condemned Pneumatomachianism
- Rejected the teachings of Apollinaris

Knowing God: The Trinity



Knowing God: The Trinity

Alexandrian School

- Allegorical/philosophical method of interpretation
- Strong focus on Jesus' divinity
- Dominant divinity role in Logos/Sarx (Word/Body) union in Christ
- Opposed Arianism
- Cyril of Alexandria
- Monophysite (“One Nature”)
- Apollinaris of Laodicea extreme = heresy

Antiochene School

- Literal/historical method of interpretation
- Strong focus on Jesus' humanity
- Clear Logos/Anthropos (Word/Man) division in Christ
- Opposed Apollonarianism
- Nestorius of Antioch
- Dyophysite (“Two Natures”)
- Paul of Samosata extreme = heresy

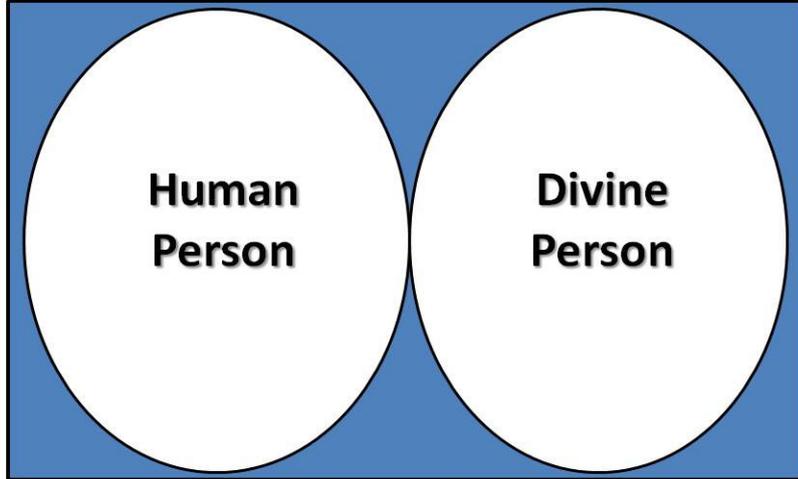
Knowing God: The Trinity

It is easy for those accustomed to the formula “Christ is one person in two natures” to wonder how Christians could conceive any other way of expressing the biblical claim that divinity and humanity dwell together in Jesus of Nazareth. However, such formulas do not arrive pre-packaged overnight, but result from decades of proposing, challenging and reformulating ideas. Furthermore, concepts expressing human psychological make-up can differ radically between languages and cultures and can change significantly over time, especially concerning the idea of “personhood.”

[Mark Dickins, 'Nestorius and the “Dual Nature of Christ”']

Knowing God: The Trinity

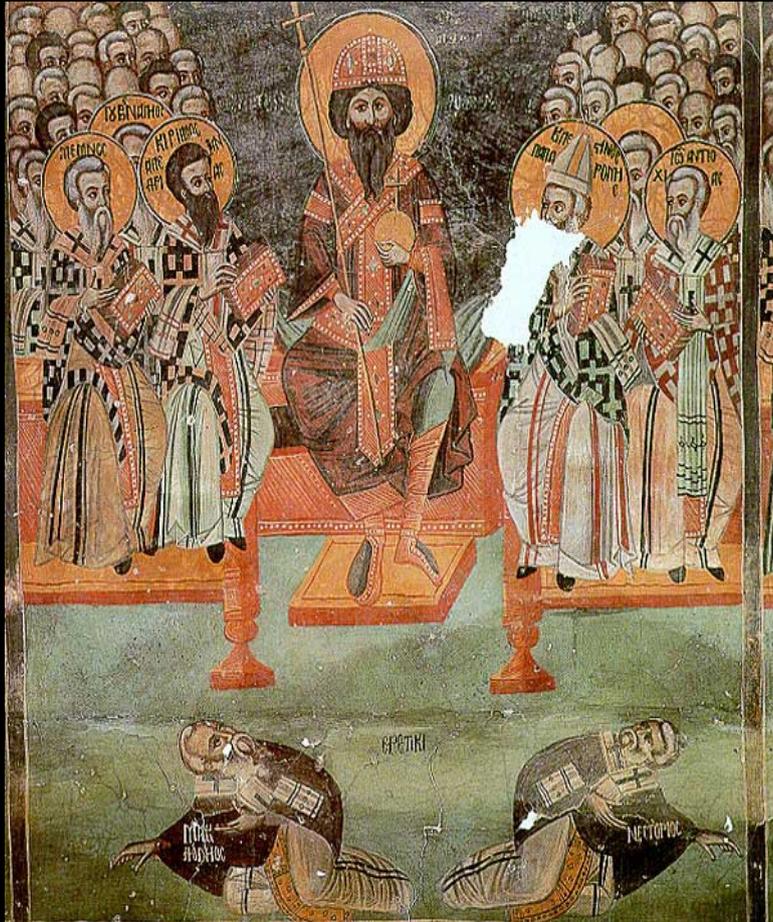
Nestorianism (432 AD)



Nestorius [386 – 450 AD]

- Archbishop of Constantinople
- Attended Council of Ephesus 431 AD
- Against Arianism and other heresies
- Claimed that Jesus was composed of two natures/persons in one body (?)
- Considered heretic

Knowing God: The Trinity



Council of Ephesus (431 AD)

- Called by Emperor Theodosius II
- Primarily concerned with the doctrine of Nestorianism
- Also denounced Pelagianism and re-affirmed the Nicene Creed
- Officially recognized Mary as the “Mother of God” [“theotokos” = “God Bearer”]

Knowing God: The Trinity

ΘΕΟΤΟΚΟΣ

theotokos = “God bearer”



ΧΡΙΣΤΟΤΟΚΟΣ

christotokos = “Christ bearer”



Knowing God: The Trinity

ὑπόστασις

hypostasis = “sub-stance”

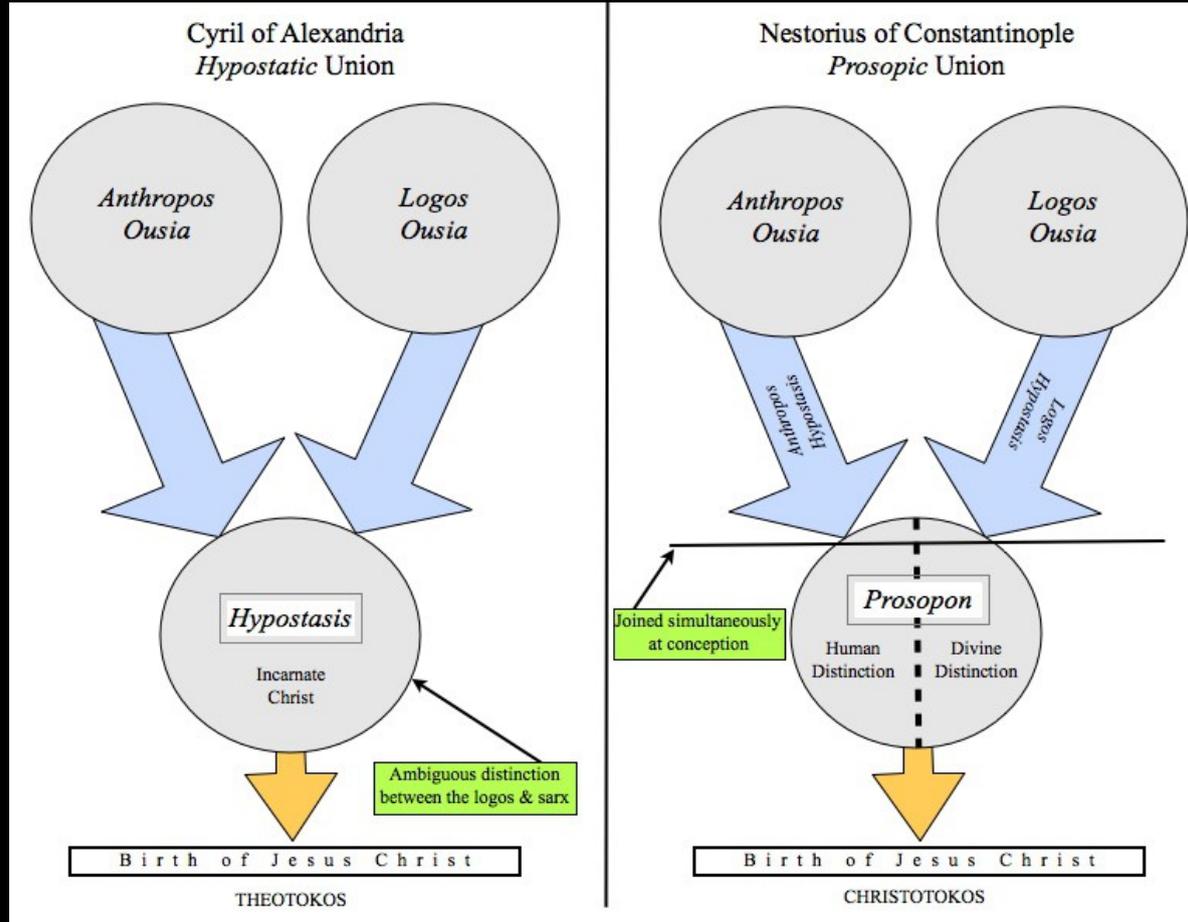


πρόσωπα

prosopa = “pros ops/face/person”

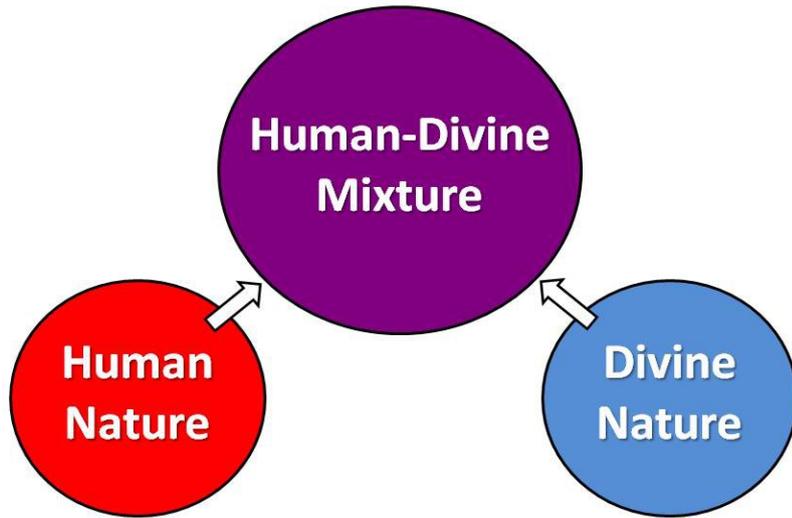


Knowing God: The Trinity



Knowing God: The Trinity

Monophysitism/Eutychianism (440 AD)



Eutyches [380 – 456 AD]

- Presbyter and archimandrite at Constantinople
- Attended Council of Chalcedon in 451 AD
- Claimed that Jesus had a new combined nature of human and divine i.e. monophysitism
- Considered heretic

Knowing God: The Trinity



Council of Chalcedon (451 AD)

- Purpose: Further clarifying the nature of Christ and the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity
- It ratified the creeds of Nicaea and Constantinople
- Developed Chalcedonian Creed
- It also laid the groundwork for one of the most significant events in ecclesiastical history—the *Great Schism* [separation into Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox churches]

Knowing God: The Trinity

Council	Issue	Bad Guy	Good Guy	Outcome
Nicea 325 AD	Eternal Deity of Christ	Arius Christ is a Created Being	Athanasius Christ is God	Eternal Deity of Christ Affirmed Nicene Creed
Costantinople 381 AD	Person of Christ	Apollinarius Christ is Divine Logos but not human spirit	Gregory of Nestansius	Complete Humanity of Christ Affirmed Nicene Creed Affirmed
Ephesus 431 AD	Person of Christ	Nestorius Against the Deity of Christ	Cyril of Alexandria	Complete Deity of Christ Affirmed Nicene Creed Affirmed
Chalcedon 451 AD	Person of Christ	Eutyches Christ is a "tertium quid" A third unique nature	Flavian of Constantinople and Leo of Rome	Two Natures of Christ Affirmed (Human Nature and Divine Nature)

Knowing God: The Trinity

Christian Church Denominations

Knowing God: The Trinity



Roman Catholic Church
[Chalcedonian]



Syriac Maronite Church
of Antioch
[Chalcedonian]



Eastern Orthodox Church
[Chalcedonian]



Protestant Churches
[Chalcedonian]

Knowing God: The Trinity



Assyrian Church of the East
[Nestorian]

Knowing God: The Trinity



Coptic Orthodox
Church of Alexandria
[Monophysite]



Ethiopian Orthodox
Tewahedo Church
[Monophysite]



Armenian Apostolic Church
[Monophysite]



Malankara Orthodox
Syrian Church
[Monophysite]

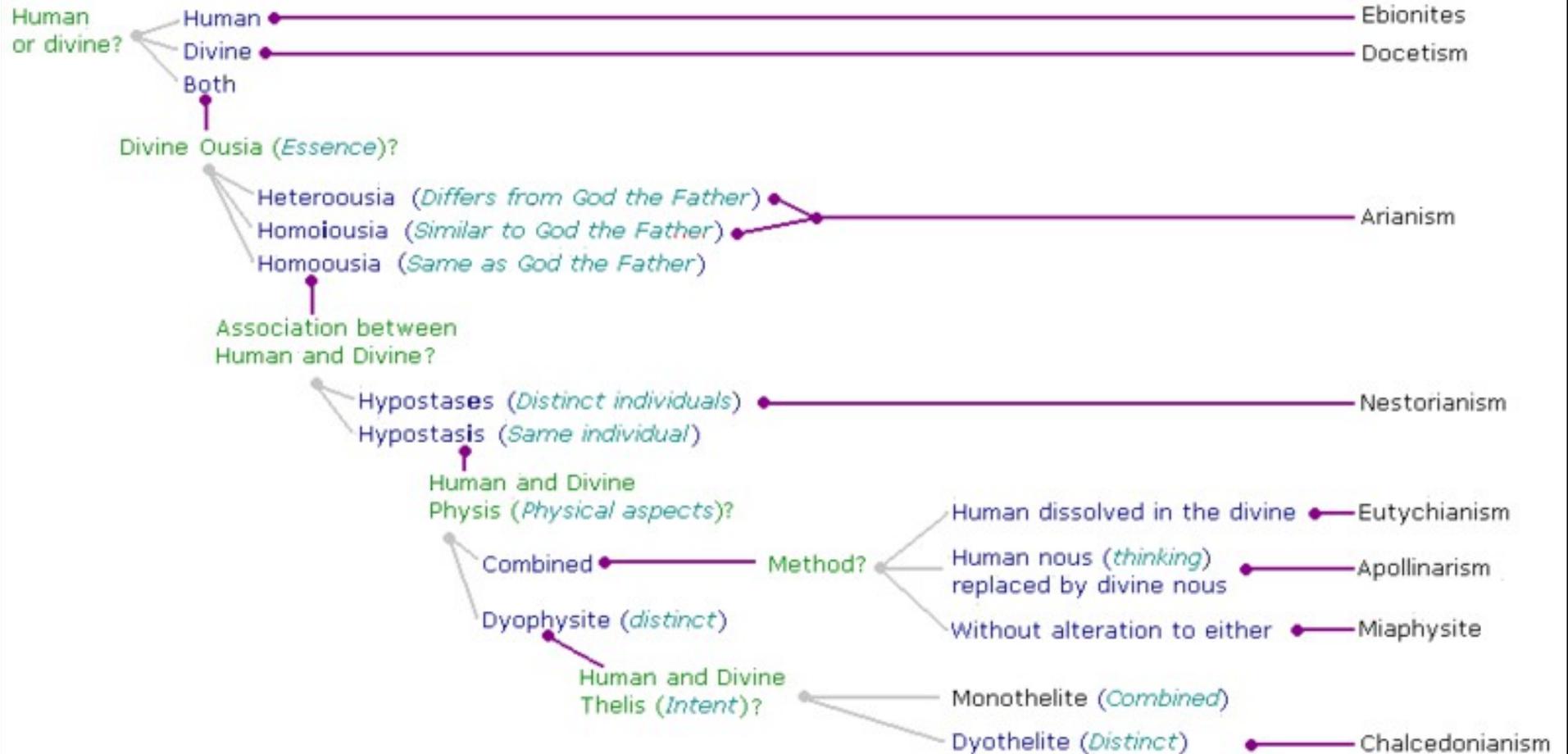


Syriac Orthodox Church
[Monophysite]



Eritrean Orthodox
Tewahedo Church
[Monophysite]

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MUSIC



NEWSBOYS
we believe

Knowing God: The Trinity

Isaac Newton: Christian?

Knowing God: The Trinity

According to most scholars, Newton was Arian, not holding to Trinitarianism. 'In Newton's eyes, worshipping Christ as God was idolatry, to him the fundamental sin'. As well as being antitrinitarian, Newton allegedly rejected the orthodox doctrines of the immortal soul, a personal devil and literal demons.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_views_of_Isaac_Newton]