
KNOW THE TRUTH

THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

Lecture 1.....	9:00 am – 9:40 am
Lecture 2	9:45 am – 10:25 am
Brunch	10:25 am – 10:45 am
We expect David to start while folks are still eating. No rush - please enjoy your meal.	
Lecture 3	10:45 am – 11:25 am
Q & A	11:30 am – 12:00 pm

Throughout the morning, please feel free to get up for another cup of coffee or to stretch your legs.

Submit questions anytime for the last session, which is a Q & A, by texting 601.664.8307.

We'll hope you'll save the date for the other Saturday Seminars this year:

August 20th – October 15th



Lecture 1: The Knowability and Names of God

John 17:3: “This is eternal life, that they (meaning the disciples) know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.” Knowing God is vital. Not optional. If you do not know him you will not be with him. Knowing God is eternal life.

Jeremiah 9:23-24: “Thus says the Lord: “Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches,²⁴ but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the Lord.”

Hosea 6:3: “Let us know; let us press on to know the Lord; his going out is sure as the dawn; he will come to us as the showers, as the spring rains that water the earth.”

Matthew Henry: “The better God is known the more he is trusted. Those who know him to be a God of infinite wisdom will trust him further than they can see him; those who know him to be a God of almighty power will trust him when creature-confidences fail and they have nothing else to trust; and those who know him to be a God of infinite grace and goodness will trust him though he slay them. Those who know him to be a god of inviolable truth and faithfulness will rejoice in his word of promise, and rest upon that, though the performance be deferred and intermediate providences seem to contradict it. Those who know him to be the Father of spirits, and an everlasting Father, will trust him with their souls as their main care and trust in him at all times, even to the end.” (Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible, Complete and Unabridged in One Volume*, [Peabody, Mass: 1993] 756)

I. The Knowability of God

Reformed Christians, in keeping with the church Catholic across the ages, has affirmed that God is in some sense, at once, both *knowable* and *unknowable*.

A. God's will to be known.

B. General Revelation

Romans 1:19-20 declares that “what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made.”

C. Special Revelation

Calvin “[W]ho... does not understand that, as nurses commonly do with infants, God is wont in a measure to ‘lisp’ in speaking to us?” (John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, I. XIII. 1; Vol. 1, Ford Lewis Battles, tras., John T. McNeill ed. [Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1960] 121).

II. The Unknowability of God

The Westminster Confession of Faith declares in chapter 2.1: “There is but one only living and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions, immutable, immense, eternal, *incomprehensible*...”

A. The creator/creature distinction

Bavinck: “Neither in creation nor in re-creation does God reveal himself exhaustively. He cannot fully impart himself to creatures. For that to be possible they themselves would have to be divine. There is, therefore, no exhaustive knowledge of God. There is no name that makes his essence known to us. There is no concept that fully encompasses him. That which lies beyond revelation is completely unknowable. We cannot approach it either by our thought, our imagination, or our language... If we eliminate from our thoughts all that is creaturely, we do not apprehend what he is, but only what he is not...” (Reformed Dogmatics, Vol. 1, 36)

B. The Noetic Effects of the Fall

St. Augustine: “We are speaking of God. Is it any wonder if you do not comprehend? For if you comprehend, it is not God you comprehend. Let it be a pious confession of ignorance rather than a rash profession of knowledge. To attain some knowledge of God is a great blessing; to comprehend him, however, is totally impossible.” (Augustine, Lectures on the Gospel of John, tract 38. NPNF I. VII. 217-21; quoted in Bavinck, RD, I. 48)

And Bavinck: “[A]gnosticism, suffering from a confusion of concepts, sees here an irresolvable contradiction in what Christian theology regards as an adorable mystery. It is completely incomprehensible to us how God can reveal himself and to some extent make himself known in created beings: eternity in time, immensity in space, infinity in the finite, immutability in change, being in becoming, the all, as it were, in that which is nothing. This mystery cannot be comprehended; it can only be gratefully acknowledged.” (Reformed Dogmatics, I. 49)

III. Speaking of God

The Westminster Shorter Catechism Q. & A. 53-55

Q. 53. Which is the third commandment?

A. The third commandment is, Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

Q. 54. What is required in the third commandment?

A. The third commandment requireth the holy and reverent use of God's names, titles, attributes, ordinances, word and works.

Q. 55. What is forbidden in the third commandment?

A. The third commandment forbiddeth all profaning or abusing of anything whereby God maketh himself known.

First, we note that the name of God stands for all that God is and “anything whereby God maketh himself known.” Bavinck says, “all we can learn about God from his revelation is designated his Name in Scripture.” (Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics, Vol II: God and Creation*, 97)

Dutch Reformed theologian, G. H. Kersten, says, “God’s name and his being are one, for his name is the expression of his being. Therefore he repeatedly testifies that he does things for his name’s sake, that is, because of himself, according to the sovereign good pleasure of his eternal Being. “Therefore say unto the house of Israel, ‘Thus saith the LORD God: I do this not for your sakes, o house of Israel, but for my holy name’s sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen...’ (Ezek. 36:22). This in each of the names with which God has called himself in his word, he makes his divine being known.” (Kersten, *Reformed Dogmatics, Vol. I*, 45)

A. Univocal speech:

B. Equivocal speech:

C. Analogical speech:

D. Anthropomorphism and Anthropopathism:

Bavinck, “we learned that God is incomprehensible and far superior to all finite creatures. In his names, however, he descends to the level of the finite and becomes like his creatures. What we encounter here is an antinomy that seems insoluble. On the one hand, God is without a name; on the other, he possesses many names. After first banishing all anthropomorphism, we are now reintroducing it. What right have we to apply these names to God? On what grounds do we ascribe them to God, who is infinitely superior to all his creatures and cannot be contained by the finite? The reason can only be this: the whole creation, thou as creature is it infinitely far removed from god, is still God’s handiwork and related to him...Here lies the reason why we can and may speak of God in creaturely language. We have the right to use anthropomorphic language because God himself came down to the level of his creatures and revealed his name in and through his creatures.” (RD, II: 104)

E. Archetypal

F. Ectypal

IV. The Names of God in Scripture

A. El

B. Elohim

C. Adonai

D. Elyon

E. El Shaddai

F. Sabbaoth

G. Theos, Kurios, Despotes

H. Father, Son, Holy Spirit

I. Yahweh

Exodus 3:13-15 “Then Moses said to God, “If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?”¹⁴ God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’ God also said to Moses, “Say this to the people of Israel: ‘The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.’ This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.”

Joel Beeke writes, “When a human being says, ‘I am...’ he qualifies it with a predicate, often with some relationship to other people that defines his status or role. In the Bible, a person’s identity is defined genealogically as the descendant of certain ancestors, such as ‘Saul, son of Kish’ (1 Sam. 10:21). However, God simply said, ‘I AM,’ asserting that, though he has relationships, he is not defined by any relationship outside of his own being, but exists of himself.” (Beeke and Smalley, *Reformed Systematic Theology, Vol. I, 552*)

Stephen Charnock paraphrases God’s meaning as, “I am, that is, I receive from no other what I am in myself; he depends upon no other in his essence, knowledge, purposes, and therefore hath no changing power over him.” (Charnock, *Existence and Attributes, 330-331*)

WCF 2.2 puts it, “God hath all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of himself; and is alone in and unto himself all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creatures which he hath made, nor deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting his own glory in, by, unto, and upon them. He is the alone fountain of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things; and hath most sovereign dominion over them, to do by them, for them, or upon them whatsoever himself pleaseth.”

Lecture 2: The Attributes of God

I. The Limits of the Traditional Language

II. Communicable and Incommunicable Attributes

The Westminster Shorter Catechism 4, “What is God?” and answers, “God is a spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable (Incommunicable attributes) in his being wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth (communicable attributes).”

Similarly Westminster Confession of Faith in chapter 2.1 “There is but one only, living, and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions; immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute; working all things according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will, for his own glory; most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek him; and withal, most just, and terrible in his judgments, hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty.”

WCF 2.2: “God hath all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of himself; and is alone in and unto himself all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creatures which he hath made, nor deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting his own glory in, by, unto, and upon them. He is the alone fountain of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things; and hath most sovereign dominion over them, to do by them, for them, or upon them whatsoever himself pleaseth. In his sight all things are open and manifest, his knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature, so as nothing is to him contingent, or uncertain. He is most holy in all his counsels, in all his works, and in all his commands. To him is due from angels and men, and every other creature, whatsoever worship, service, or obedience he is pleased to require of them.”

A. Incommunicable attributes:

1. Simplicity and Spirituality:

WSC 4: “God is a Spirit...” WCF 2:1 God is... “a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts...”

John 4:24 “God is spirit”

Deuteronomy 6:4, “Hear O Israel, the LORD our God is one LORD.”

James Dolezall: “All that is in God is God.”

2. Aseity

Aseity, from the Latin *a se*, meaning “from himself” is the doctrine that God does not derive his being from anything. It is a clear implicate of divine simplicity. This is the special focus of WCF 2:2

“God hath all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of himself; and is alone in and unto himself all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creatures which he hath made, nor deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting his own glory in, by, unto, and upon them. He is the alone fountain of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things...” God’s being does not emerge, mature, grow, adapt. There is no potential in God. There is nothing unrealized, nothing latent, nothing yet to appear, nothing called forth into by something that is not God. God is fully realized, fully actual: he is “pure spirit”, and as such has “all life... in and of himself.”

John 5:26, where Jesus says, “As the Father as all life in himself so he has granted the Son to have all life in himself...”

Acts 17:24 and 25: “The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man,²⁵ nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.”

Romans 11:36, “For from him, and through him, and to him, are all things...”

3. Infinity and Eternality

The Shorter Catechism says, “God is a spirit, infinite, eternal... in his being...”

a. Cataphatic theology:

b. Apophatic theology:

Louis Berkhof defines divine infinity as “that perfection of God by which he is free from all limitations.” (Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 59). Theologians have spoken of infinity in three respects:

- i. With respect to the perfection of God’s essence or being, ‘his wisdom, power, holiness, exceed all measures and limits.’
- ii. With respect to time and place, “no time can measure him.”
- iii. With respect to his incomprehensibility, finite creatures cannot comprehend his infinity. (Mark Jones, *God Is*, 44)

Jeremiah 32:27 “Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh. Is anything too hard for me?”

Psalm 147:5 “Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure.”

1 Kings 8:27 “But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you; how much less this house that I have built!”

Eternality:

Psalm 90:2, “Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.”

1 Timothy 1:17, “To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.”

4. Immutability and Impassability:

James 1:17, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.”

Malachi 3:6 adds, “For I the Lord do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed.”

Psalm 102:26-27 says, “They will perish, but you will remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will change them like a robe, and they will pass away, but you are the same, and your years have no end. The children of your servants shall dwell secure; their offspring shall be established before you.”

Numbers 23:19 says, “God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?”

Impassibility:

- i. Implied and required by all the other attributes so far:
- ii. Contemporary denials:
- iii. The problem with denials of impassability:

Stephen Charnock: “If God doth change it must be either to a greater perfection than he had before, or to a less... if to the better, he was not perfect, and so was not God; if to the worse, he will not be perfect, and so be no longer God after that change.” (Charnock, *Existence and Attributes of God*, 1:331)

A syllogism on immutability and impassability:

Major Premise: If God is perfect yet changeable (mutable, and therefore passable)-either he changes for the better or for the worse.

Minor Premise: If God changes for the better, God cannot have been God **before** he changed, since God is perfect. If God changes for the worse God cannot be God **now that** he has changed, since God is perfect.

Conclusion: Either deduction is impossible. The perfect God must always be the perfect God. Therefore, the major premise (that God is perfect yet changeable) fails. God does not change, and God cannot suffer.

iv. Alleged Scriptural Objections:

Genesis 6:6 “And the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart.”

1 Samuel 15:10-11 “The word of the Lord came to Samuel: ¹¹“I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following me and has not performed my commandments.”

1 Samuel 15:35: “the Lord regretted that he had made Saul king over Israel.”

How are we to make sense of these texts?

First, we affirm inerrancy and non contradictory character of scripture

Second, we give priority to those texts that tell us about the nature and being of God in himself, before we seek to understand those texts that describe God in relation to his creatures. What God is in himself precedes what God does.

1 Samuel 15: In the wake of Saul’s sin we are told that God regretted making Saul king (v. 11, v. 35). But in verse 28-29 Samuel responds to Saul’s cries for mercy by speaking of God in himself: “And Samuel said to him, “The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you this day and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you. ²⁹ And also the Glory of Israel will not lie or have regret, for he is not a man, that he should have regret.”

A close reading of both the Genesis 6:6 text and 1 Samuel 15:11, 35

Puritan Thomas Watson: “There may be change in God’s work, but not in his will.” (Watson, *Body of Divinity*, 69)

v. Illustrating immutability:

Augustine: the sun

Jonny Gibson: “The moon is always round.”

Thou changest not thy compassions they fail not, as thou hast been
thou forever wilt be. Great is thy faithfulness!

5. Omniscience, Omnipotence, Omnipresence

Omniscience is the affirmation that God has all knowledge.

Isa 40:28: “Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.”

Isa. 55:8-9: “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

Romans 11:33-36, “Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! “For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?” “Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?” For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.”

Omnipotence is the affirmation that God has all power to do all his holy will.

Joel Beeke: “The Lord has infinite power to accomplish all his decretive will and enforce the full rights of his authority. He demonstrated that power in the work of creation, where his mere word of command of *fiat*, ‘Let there be...’ brought the world into existence and gave it order... This was no laborious work, but the bare expression of the divine will executed through the divine Spirit.” (Beeke, *Reformed Systematic Theology*, Vol. I, 770)

Isa 40:28 (again): “The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary.”

Psalm 62:11 Once God has spoken; twice have I heard this: that power belongs to God”

1 Chronicles 29:12, “Both riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might, and in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all.”

Omnipresence is that divine perfection that affirms God’s immensity.

Psalm 139:7-10: “Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.”

Bavinck, “Of Course, neither space nor location can be predicated of God. Space is a form of existences characteristic of finite beings. Immensity pertains to God alone and not to any creature, not even to the human nature of Christ. Implied in it, first of all, is that god infinitely transcends all space and location.” (Bavinck, *RD*, Vol. 2, 167)

B. Communicable Attributes of God

1. Divine wisdom

A subset of divine knowledge.

Romans 16:27 says he is “the only wise God.”

Romans 11:33-34, “Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! “For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?”

Psalm 104: 24: “O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom have you made them all, the earth is full of your creatures..”

Daniel 2:20-22 “Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might. He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding; he reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him.”

1 Cor. 1:22, “Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, ²³ but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, ²⁴ but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.”

2. Divine Power

We have already addressed this attribute in discussing God’s omnipotence.

3. Divine Holiness

Separation:

Devotion:

Isaiah 6:

4. Divine Goodness, Truth, and Justice

Divine Goodness:

Stephen Charnock: “Goodness is the brightness and loveliness of our majestic Creator. To fancy a God without it, is to fancy a miserable, scanty, narrow-hearted, savage God, and so an unlovely, and horrible being: for he is not a God that is not good.”

(Charnock, *Existence and Attributes*, 2:216)

Exodus 33:18, God told Moses, “I will make all my goodness pass before you, and proclaim before you my name ‘the LORD’. And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy.” (v. 19)

Exodus 34:6-7: “The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children’s children, to the third and the fourth generation.”

Mercy, grace, and love describe the goodness of God.

Divine truth:

1 John 1:5-6 “God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.”

John 3:33 “God is true,”

Frequently in scripture, especially in the psalms, God’s steadfast love is paired with his faithfulness: (Ps. 25:10; 26:3; 36:5, 57:3; 61:7; 86:15 etc. etc.)

Bavinck: three senses in which God is true. Truth pertains to things (ontological truth), to words (ethical truth), and to intellect (logical truth). God is true in the first sense, ontologically, regarding things. True gold as opposed to fool’s gold, means it is real, authentic, genuine.

“God is called the true God in distinction from idols, which are vanities. Thus, in Augustine, God is the true unique, simple, immutable, and eternal being... He does not possess but is the truth. ‘O Truth, which you truly are!’” (Bavinck. RD. Vol. 2, 208-209)

God is ethical truth. “By ethical truth we mean that correspondence between a person’s being and a person’s self-revelation in word or deed. Those who say one thing but think another are untrue; they are liars. The antonym of truth in this sense is the lie. Now in the case of God there is complete correspondence between his being and his revelation (num. 23:19; 1 Sam. 15:29; Titus 1:2; Heb 6:18). It is impossible for God to lie or deny himself.” (ibid. 209)

God is true intellectually and logically. “Our concepts are true when they bear the exact imprint of reality... Now God is the truth also in that he knows all things as they really are. His knowing is correct, unchangeable, fully adequate.” (ibid.)

Divine justice:

God is always necessarily and intrinsically just.

Retributive justice not an attribute of God:

Psalm 11:6-7, “Let him rain coals on the wicked; fire and sulfur and a scorching wind shall be the portion of their cup. For the LORD is righteous; he loves righteous deeds; he upright shall behold his face.”

Lecture 3: The Trinity

Christians are already Trinitarians.

As Fred Sanders helpfully points out, “Christians should recognize that when we start thinking about the Trinity, we do so because we find ourselves already deeply involved in the reality of God’s triune life as he has opened it up to us for our salvation and revealed it in the Bible. IN order to start doing good Trinitarian theology, we need only to reflect on that present reality and unpack it. The more we realize that we are already compassed about by the reality of the gospel Trinity, the more our Trinitarianism will matter to us.” (Sanders, *The Deep Things of God*, 33-34)

The Westminster Confession of Faith, 2:3: “In the unity of the Godhead there be three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity: **God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost**: the Father is of none, neither begotten, nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son.”

I. The unity of God

Deuteronomy 6:4 declares that “the Lord your God is one.”

Isaiah 45:5, “I am the LORD, and there is no other. Besides me there is no God.”

The Shorter Catechism questions and answers 5 and 6 say: “Are there more Gods than one? There is but one only, the living and true God. How many persons are there in the Godhead? There are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.”

II. Trinitarian Vocabulary

A. Substance

B. Persons

C. Existence:

D. Subsistence:

II. Scriptural Testimony to the Trinity

A. The Bible describes all three persons as equally divine.

The Father is God:

Jesus is God:

The Spirit is God:

B. The Bible affirms the plurality of the divine persons.

1. The Plural Names of God

The Angel of the LORD

Psalm 110:1

Isaiah 9:6 “wonderful counsellor, mighty God, everlasting father, prince of peace.”

Christ’s baptism (Matt. 3:16-17):

Christ’s transfiguration:

Matthew 28:19ff.

Ephesians 1:3-14; 1:17; 2:13-18; 3:14-17; 4:6.

1 Cor. 12:4-6, Galatians 4:4-6, Titus 3:4-6, 2 Cor. 13:14; 1 Peter 1:2, and 1 John 4:13-14.

The sheer weight and comprehensive character of the Trinitarian paradigm as basic to the life and piety of the New Testament is the most compelling scriptural evidence for the unity of the Godhead and the trinity of persons.

C. A number of propositions can be deduced from the scriptural evidence:

1. There are not three God's, but only one.
2. Each person- Father, Son, Holy Spirit- is this God
3. Each person is distinct from the others
4. Each person is inseparable from the others

III. Trinitarian Heresies:

The question with which the church wrestled- in its first four centuries especially- was how to account for all these details of the scriptural presentation. As with so much else, the church was driven to ever greater precision on the anvil of false teaching.

A. Arianism:

Arius (250-336): "there was when he was not."

Athanasius (296-378). and the First Council of Nicea, in 325AD:

Homoiousios or Homoousios:

Ousia- means substance or essence

Homo- means the same

Homoi- means like or similar.

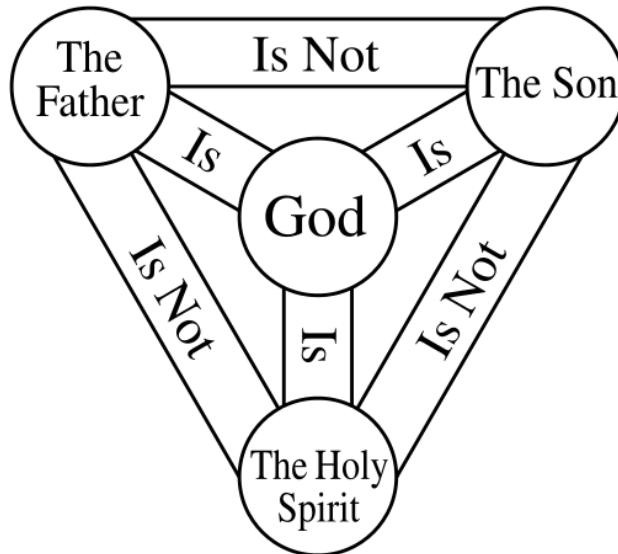
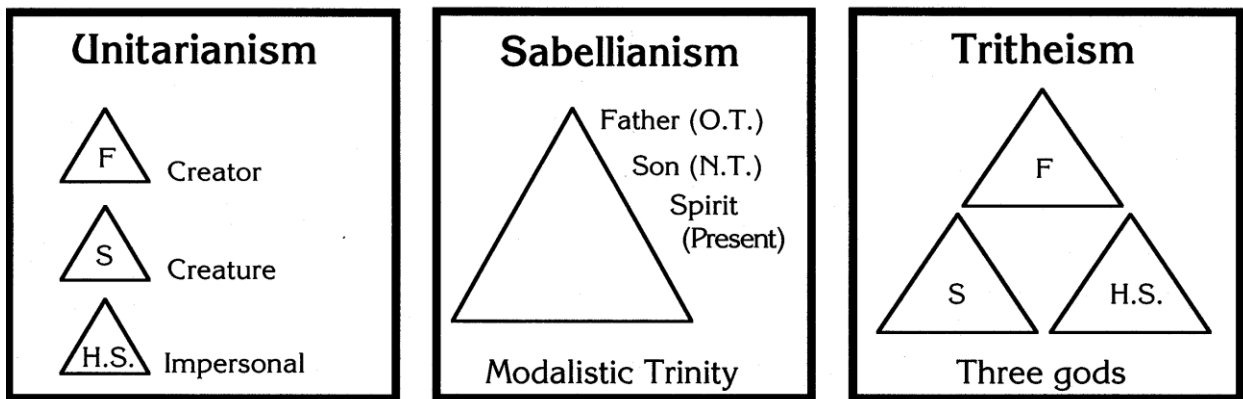
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B. Modalism: (or more properly Modalistic Monarchianism).

Perichoresis (Gk)/Circumincessio (Latin):

John 10:38; 14:10, 20: "I am in the Father and the Father is in me."

The Son, the "only begotten God is in the bosom of the Father" (John 1:18).



IV. Processions and Missions:

A. The Son proceeds from the Father: eternally begotten of the Father.

John 1:14, 18,

B. The Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son.

John 15:26: “the Helper whom I will send to you, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father...”,

Acts 2:33 “Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing.”

The Spirit is said to be both the Spirit of the God (Matt. 3:16; 12:28; Acts 2:28; Romans 8:9, 15:19), and the Spirit of Christ (Romans 8:9; Phil. 1:19; 1 Peter 1:11).

In Romans 8:9 the Spirit is said to be both the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ.

C. Eternal processions map onto temporal missions:

Gregory Nazianzen (329-390):

“How has the Son been begotten?... God’s begetting ought to have the tribute of our reverent silence. The important point is for you to learn that he has been begotten. As to the way it happens, we shall not concede that even angels, much less you, know that. Shall I tell you the way? It is a way known only to the begetting Father and the begotten Son. Anything beyond this fact is hidden by a cloud and escapes your dull vision.” (Gregory Nazianzen, *Oration 29.8* in St Gregory of Nazianzus, *On God and Christ: The Five Theological Orations and Two Letters to Cledonius*, trans. Frederick Williams and Lionel Wickham, (Crestwood, New York: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2002, 76)

D. The Eternal Functional Subordination of the Son Debate

Bruce Ware:

“An authority-submission structure marks the very nature of the eternal being of the one who is three. In this authority-submission structure, the three Persons understand the rightful place each has. The Father possesses the place of supreme authority, and the Son is the eternal Son of the eternal Father. As such, the Son submits to the Father, just as the Father, as eternal Father of the eternal Son, exercises authority over the Son. And the Spirit submits to both the Father and the Son. This hierarchical structure of authority exists in the eternal Godhead even though it is also eternally true that each Person is fully equal to each other in their commonly possessed essence.” (Bruce Ware, *Father, Son and Holy Spirit: Relationships, Roles and Relevance*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005) 21)

Gender Complementarity:

E. The Problems of the Divine Will (s?):

F. Social Trinitarianism

Nicene Creed 325AD

Revised to present form at Constantinople and is technically now the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed of 381; the filioque clause “and from the Son” was added around 581)

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

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
begotten from the Father before all ages,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made;
of the same essence as the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven;
he became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary,
and was made man.
He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered and was buried.
The third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures.
He ascended to heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again with glory to judge the living and the dead.
His kingdom will never end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life.
He proceeds from the Father and the Son,
and with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified.
He spoke through the prophets

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church
We affirm one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look forward to the resurrection of the dead,
and to life in the world to come. Amen.

Athanasian Creed

mid 5th century, named after, but not composed by Athanasius

Whoever desires to be saved should above all hold to the catholic faith.

Anyone who does not keep it whole and unbroken will doubtless perish eternally.

Now this is the catholic faith:

That we worship one God in trinity and the trinity in unity,
neither blending their persons
nor dividing their essence.

For the person of the Father is a distinct person,
the person of the Son is another,
and that of the Holy Spirit still another.

But the divinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is one,
their glory equal, their majesty coeternal.

What quality the Father has, the Son has, and the Holy Spirit has.

The Father is uncreated,
the Son is uncreated,
the Holy Spirit is uncreated.

The Father is immeasurable,
the Son is immeasurable,
the Holy Spirit is immeasurable.

The Father is eternal,
the Son is eternal,
the Holy Spirit is eternal.

And yet there are not three eternal beings;
there is but one eternal being.
So too there are not three uncreated or immeasurable beings;
there is but one uncreated and immeasurable being.

Similarly, the Father is almighty,
the Son is almighty,
the Holy Spirit is almighty.

Yet there are not three almighty beings;
there is but one almighty being.

Thus the Father is God,
the Son is God,
the Holy Spirit is God.

Yet there are not three gods;
there is but one God.

Thus the Father is Lord,
the Son is Lord,
the Holy Spirit is Lord.

Yet there are not three lords;
there is but one Lord.

Just as Christian truth compels us
to confess each person individually
as both God and Lord,
so catholic religion forbids us
to say that there are three gods or lords.

The Father was neither made nor created nor begotten from anyone.
The Son was neither made nor created;
he was begotten from the Father alone.
The Holy Spirit was neither made nor created nor begotten;
he proceeds from the Father and the Son.

Accordingly there is one Father, not three fathers;
there is one Son, not three sons;
there is one Holy Spirit, not three holy spirits.

Nothing in this trinity is before or after,
nothing is greater or smaller;
in their entirety the three persons
are coeternal and coequal with each other.

So in everything, as was said earlier,
we must worship their trinity in their unity
and their unity in their trinity.

Anyone then who desires to be saved
should think thus about the trinity.

But it is necessary for eternal salvation
that one also believe in the incarnation
of our Lord Jesus Christ faithfully.

Now this is the true faith:

That we believe and confess
that our Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son,
is both God and human, equally.

He is God from the essence of the Father,
begotten before time;
and he is human from the essence of his mother,
born in time;
completely God, completely human,
with a rational soul and human flesh;
equal to the Father as regards divinity,
less than the Father as regards humanity.

Although he is God and human,
yet Christ is not two, but one.
He is one, however,
not by his divinity being turned into flesh,
but by God's taking humanity to himself.
He is one,
certainly not by the blending of his essence,
but by the unity of his person.
For just as one human is both rational soul and flesh,
so too the one Christ is both God and human.

He suffered for our salvation;
he descended to hell;
he arose from the dead;
he ascended to heaven;
he is seated at the Father's right hand;
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.
At his coming all people will arise bodily
and give an accounting of their own deeds.
Those who have done good will enter eternal life,
and those who have done evil will enter eternal fire.

This is the catholic faith:
one cannot be saved without believing it firmly and faithfully.