

# Philippians Series

Lesson #043

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Dean Bible Ministries

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# Christ BEFORE the Incarnation

## Philippians 2:5–11



## **We have learned:**

- 1. Php. 2:5–11 was written in context to provide an example of humility and serving one another which is stated in Php. 2:1–4.**
- 2. That Christ Jesus preexisted His incarnation as undiminished deity. Php. 2:6**
- 3. At the Incarnation God the Son did not surrender or give up any divine attribute, or anything essential to deity. Such a surrender would not have been possible.**

- 4. God the Son voluntarily restricted the use of His divine attributes to solve the problems, temptations, and challenges He faced in His humanity, and veiled the manifestation of His eternal glory.**
- 5. However, though the visible manifestation of His glory was veiled, the glory of His Person was made manifest through His words and works.**

**John 1:14, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”**

# **Two Fundamental Questions:**

**Who was Jesus *Before* He came?**

**What was Jesus *When* He came?**

**Who was Jesus before He came?**

**Understanding Who God is: Unity and plurality**

**Did Jesus pre-exist creation? And if so, is He eternal?**

**Distinguish preexistence from eternality of Christ**

- **Passages which indicate His eternality**
- **Passages in the Old Testament which teach His preexistence**
- **Passages in the New Testament which teach His preexistence**
- **Passages which predict the coming of the Messiah**
- **Passages which indicate His humanity**
- **Passages which indicate His Deity**

# The Unity of God

# The Unity of God

## 1. God is One. God is One, He is a unity.

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

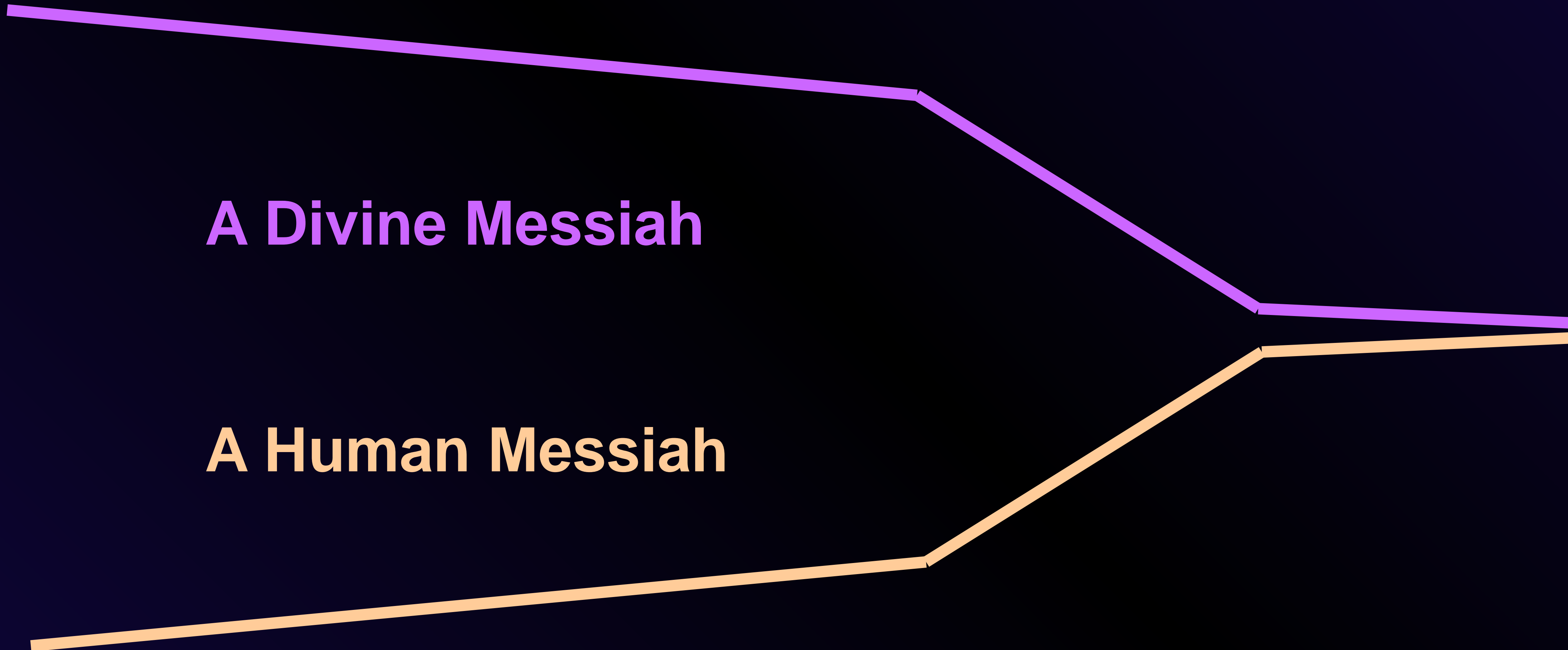
אֶחָד *ʾechad* masc sing abs card one (m), a unity of  
This word occurs 960 times as a noun, adjective, or  
adverb, as a cardinal or ordinal number, often used in a  
distributive sense. It is closely identified with יָחַד *yachad*  
“to be united”



# Two Streams from the Old Testament Converge in Jesus of Nazareth

**A Divine Messiah**

**A Human Messiah**



#### **4. Theologically God must be a unity.**

**Infinity implies unity. God is infinite in His being. There cannot be two or more infinite beings. Having more than one infinite is impossible, any more than there can be two alls, or two everythings, or two infinities, such as God and the universe. Therefore, the universe cannot be infinite.**

**Q: “The concept of infinity is studied in a branch of Mathematics called Analysis. An example of a set of numbers that is infinite is the positive Integers  $\{1, 2, 3, \dots\}$ . It is infinite because you never reach the end; no matter the largest number you can name, you can always add one to it to get a larger number, and this process never ends, it is never finished, thus the set is infinite.**

**“An even larger set is the Integers, consisting of the positive Integers, the negative Integers (also infinite), and zero. Clearly the Integers is a larger set than the positive Integers because it contains all the members of the positive Integers as well as members not included in the positive Integers (negative Integers plus zero). Much more can be said on this subject, but the point is, I’ve just named two infinite and distinct sets of numbers, so infinite cannot mean all-inclusive.”**

**Geisler:**

**“The Bible affirms that God is infinite in His Being (see chapter 5), and there cannot be two or more infinite beings. If there were, then there would be more than an infinite, which is impossible. There cannot be two Alls or Supremes; hence, there can only be one infinite God. More precisely, to be two there must be a difference, and two simple beings of the very same kind cannot differ in their being.<sup>[1]</sup>”**

**[1] Finite beings are complex, not simple. So they can differ, even though they are all of the same basic kind, namely, finite.**

**~Norman L. Geisler, *Systematic Theology*, Volume Two: God, Creation (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 2003), 270.**

**“I think Geisler was on to the issue by his text in the first paragraph of your attachment, viz,:**

**“God’s infinity should be distinguished from other concepts of ‘infinite.’ God is not an infinite such as is found in mathematics, where there are an infinite number of points between A and B; this is an abstract infinite, not a concrete one, as God is. God is infinite in a metaphysical way, not in a mathematical way; He is an actual infinite Being, not an abstract one.”**

**~Clough**

**“It gets back to the same issue: the Creator/creature distinction. We creatures simply cannot get beyond our finiteness. So we try to understand things by the laws of logic. The problem is that there are competing lines of logic like Euclidian and non-Euclidian geometries—both follow from initial premises perfectly logically, but become two distinct geometries. And to add more problems among the implications of Godel’s Theorem that starting with axioms, the machinery of proof produces a true statement which does not follow from the axioms.”**

**“So it is with mathematics . . . Our own mathematical systems (Euclidian or non-Euclidian) are somehow not identical with His ‘system.’ We must say, I think, that Euclidian and non-Euclidian geometries are both revelations of how God might rule the world; for they are both discoveries or constructions of the human mind in the image of God. . . . Invoking the Incarnation and verbal revelation, Poythress points out that such revelations are God in our finite world. ‘God’s incarnation and verbal revelation partake of characteristics of the finite and created (it includes reference to points, lines, and degrees) and of the characteristics of the Infinite (it is unchanging). Sometimes (as indeed is the case with the Incarnation) the created and Uncreated cannot be easily distinguished. . . . Since the Trinity and the Wisdom of God are incomprehensible, God’s own ‘mathematics’ is not accessible to us in all its fullness. We cannot assume that our mathematics is necessarily all true or exactly equivalent to God’s ‘mathematics.’ ”**

**“As Vern Poythress, the mathematician and theologian who taught for years at Westminster Seminary along with Van Til, wrote: ‘The Bible, while speaking over and over of God’s having created things (minerals, plants, animals, men, angels), apparently never speaks of God having created “structures” or “laws.” . . . This is no accident. The Bible never represents the world as being governed by laws as such independently of the Creator, but rather by the decrees of the King, by God Himself speaking (cf. Gen. 8:22–9:7; Jer. 33:25; Psa. 33:6–11, 18–22; 147:15–20). . . .’ ”**



# The Plurality

**There were basically two options:**

**Option 1: Dynamic Monarchianism (or adoptionism), which is the heresy of unitarianism: God the Father infused or imparted deity to Jesus at some time during His life on the earth. This denies the absolute or undiminished deity of Christ saying that Jesus was a human endowed with divine powers.**

**The word does not mean an absolute singularity!**

**Judg. 20:8, “So all the people arose as one man, saying, ‘None of us will go to his tent, nor will any turn back to his house;’ ”**

**Ex. 26:6, “And you shall make fifty clasps of gold, and couple the curtains together with the clasps, so that it may be one tabernacle.”**

**Gen. 2:24, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”**

## **2. This *oneness* of God means three things:**

**God is a unity: there is not more than one God.**

**God is a simplicity: there are not two or more parts in God.**

**God is a Triunity: there are three Persons with the nature of being one God.**

# The Plurality

- 1. The word *trinitas* was coined by Tertullian in the late second century. There is only one God existing in three Persons.**

## **Biblical Basis for Plurality in the Godhead**

**Isa. 41:14, “ ‘Fear not, you worm Jacob, you men of Israel! I will help you,’ says the LORD and your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.”**

**Two speakers: YHWH**

**AND**

**Your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.**

## **Biblical Basis for Plurality in the Godhead**

**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; Besides Me there is no God.’ ”**

**Two speakers: YHWH, the King of Israel**

**AND**

**His Redeemer, YHWH TZABAOTH**

**The Two are referred to by the 1<sup>st</sup> person singular “Me.”**

## **Biblical Basis for Plurality in the Godhead**

**Isa. 47:4, “As for our Redeemer, the LORD of hosts is His name, the Holy One of Israel.”**

**Two speakers: YHWH, the King of Israel**

**AND**

**His Redeemer, YHWH TZABAOth**

**The Two are referred to by the 1<sup>st</sup> person singular “Me.”**

## Biblical Basis for Plurality in the Godhead

**Isa. 48:16, “Come near to Me, hear this: I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; From the time that it was, I was there. And now the Lord GOD and His Spirit have sent Me.”**



## **Biblical Basis for Plurality in the Godhead**

**Isa. 59:20, “ ‘The Redeemer will come to Zion, and to those who turn from transgression in Jacob,’ says the LORD.”**

## Biblical Basis for Plurality in the Godhead

**Isa. 59:21, “ ‘As for Me,’ says the LORD, ‘this is My covenant with them: My Spirit who is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your descendants, nor from the mouth of your descendants’ descendants,’ says the LORD, ‘from this time and forevermore.’ ”**

## **Biblical Basis for Plurality in the Godhead**

**Isa. 63:9, “In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the Angel of His Presence saved them; In His love and in His pity He redeemed them; And He bore them and carried them all the days of old.”**

## Biblical Basis for Plurality in the Godhead

**Isa. 63:10, “But they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit; So He turned Himself against them as an enemy, and He fought against them.”**

## **New Testament Passages on Plurality**

**Matt. 28:19, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,”**

## **New Testament Passages on Plurality**

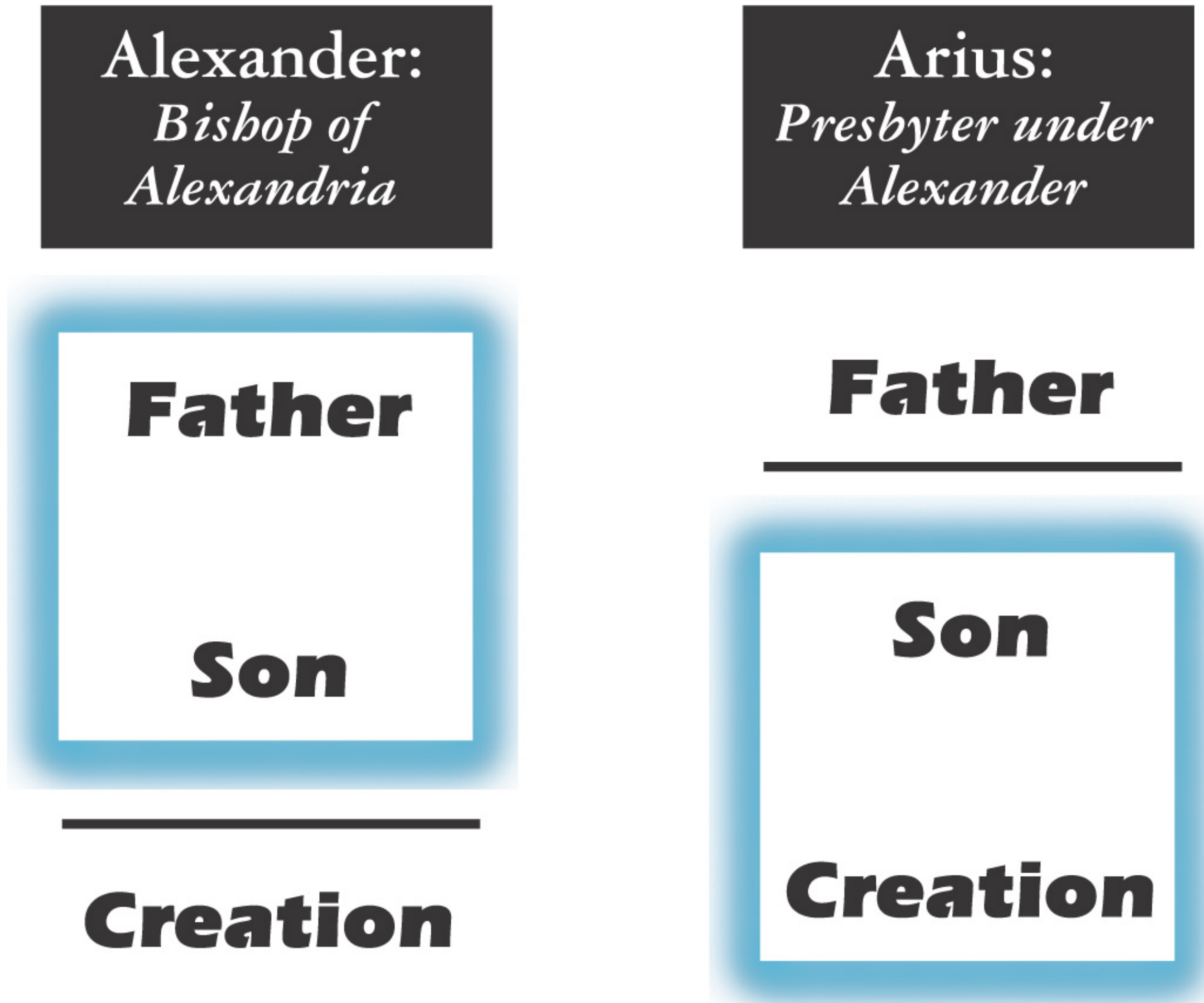
**2 Cor. 13:14, “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.”**

## **New Testament Passages on Plurality**

**Matt. 3:16, “When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him.**

**Matt. 3:17, “And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’ ”**

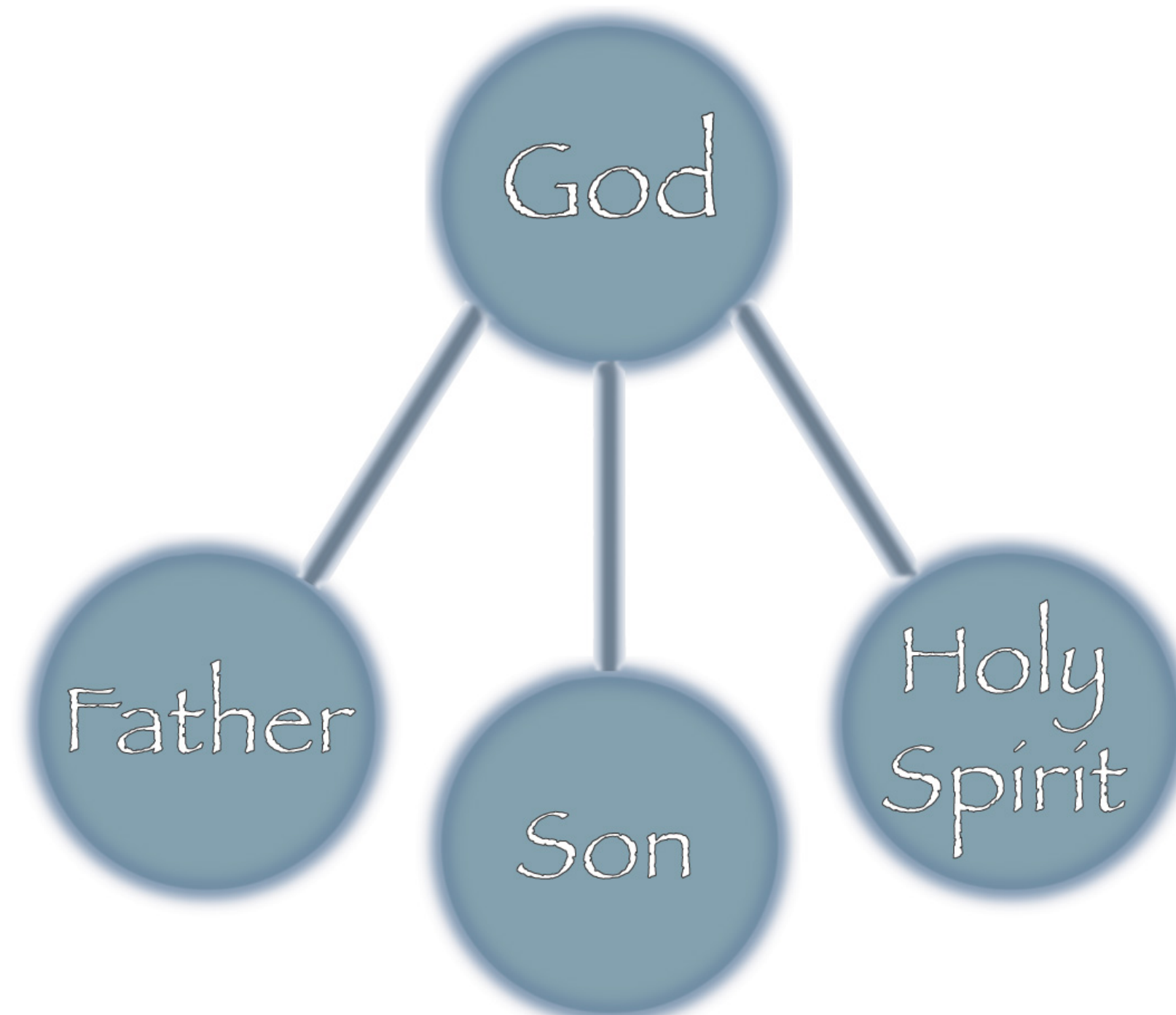
# Arianism: The Opponents and the Issue



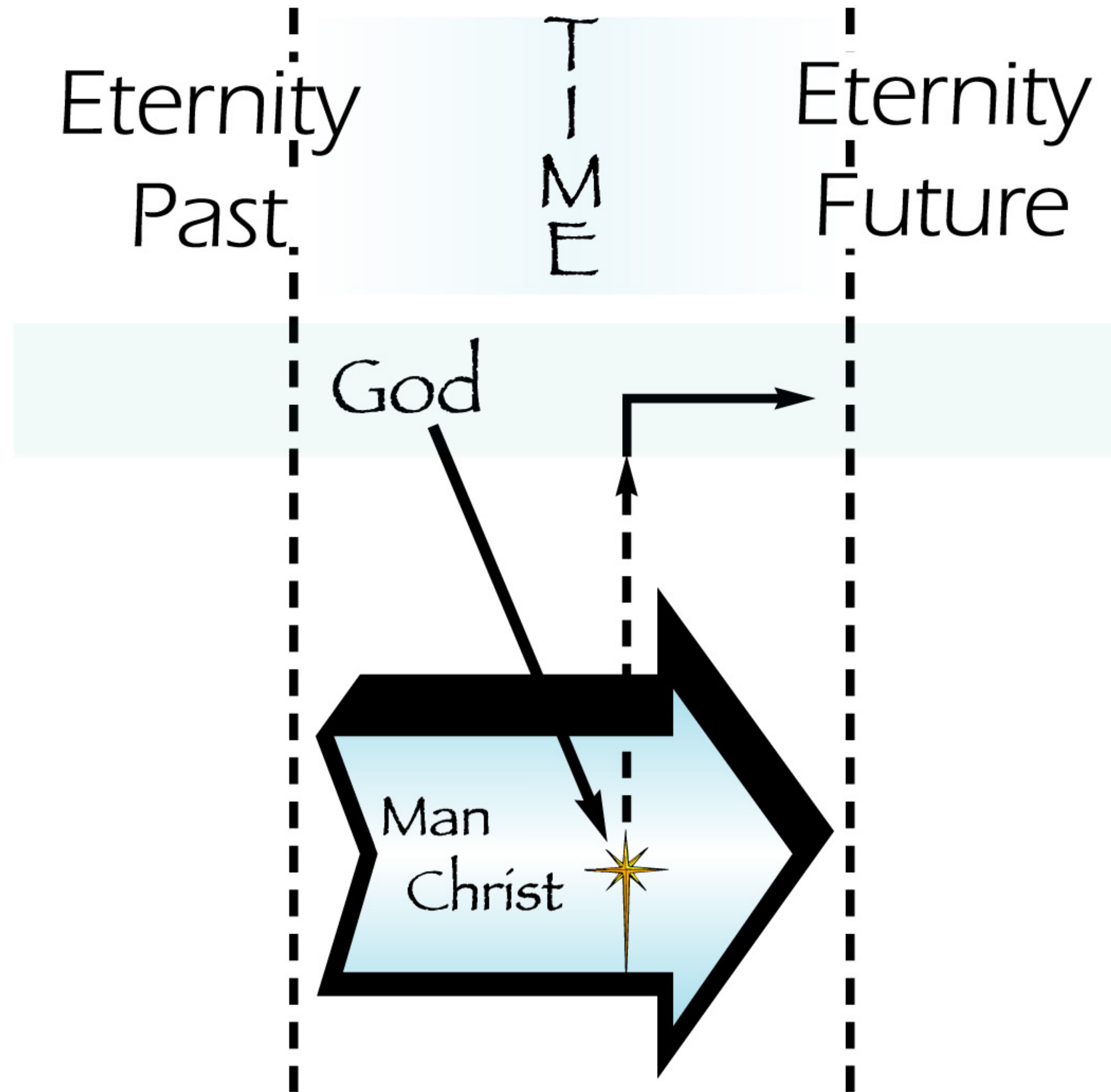


**Modalism: The terms “Father,” “Son,” and “Holy Spirit” merely describe different modes that the one God manifests Himself. This heresy does not give the Son or the Holy Spirit independent personhood. God is one in Person and One in Nature, with different ways of appearing.**

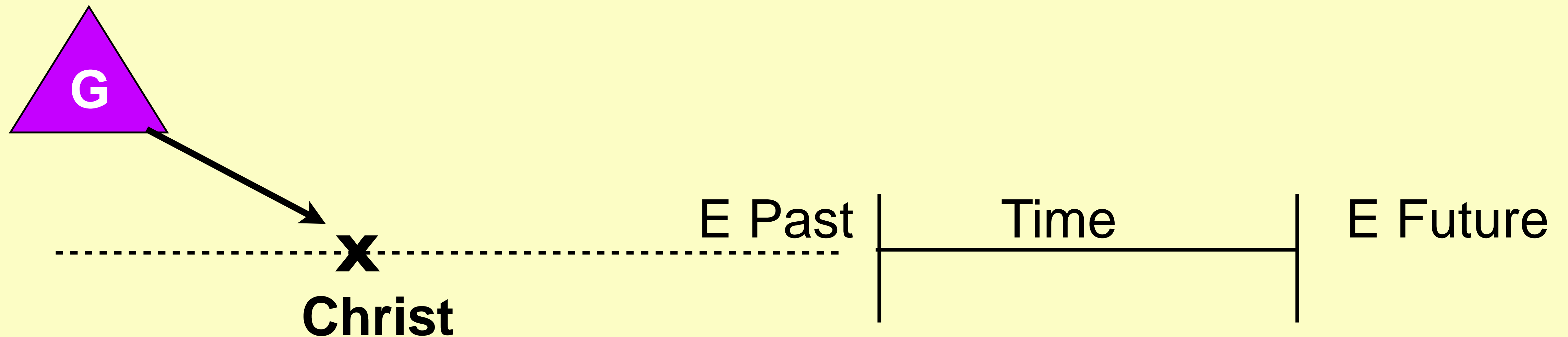
***Modalism: An Attempt to Explain Christ***



# Adoptionism: An Attempt to Explain Christ



**Arianism: A form of dynamic monarchianism is Arianism, which explained the relation to the Father by saying the Son was created in eternity past. Thus the Son was not full deity.**



## Old Testament Passages on Pre-Existence

**Isa. 9:6, “For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given;  
And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His  
name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,  
Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace.”**

## **Old Testament Passages on Pre-Existence**

**Psa. 2:2, “The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against His Messiah, saying, ...”**

**Psa. 2:5, “Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, and distress them in His deep displeasure:**

**Psa. 2:6, “ ‘Yet I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion.’**

**Psa. 2:7, “ ‘I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, “You are My Son, today I have begotten You.” ’ ”**

## Old Testament Passages on Pre-Existence

**Mic. 5:2, “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.”**

**Who was Jesus in His Pre-Incarnate state?**

**1. The historic, orthodox answer is that Christ is the eternal Son of God. His relationship is to the Father as the One who is eternally begotten.**

**“And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten from the Father, only-begotten, that is, from the substance of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, of one substance with the Father,”**

**~The Nicene Creed**



## 2. Scripture

**Heb. 10:7**, “Then I said, ‘*Behold, I have come—in the volume of the book it is written of Me—to do Your will, O God.*’ ”

**Heb. 10:8**, “Previously saying, ‘*Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them*’ (which are offered according to the law),

**Heb. 10:9**, “then He said, ‘*Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.*’ He takes away the first that He may establish the second. [Psa. 40:6–8]

**Heb. 10:10**, “By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”

## 2. Scripture

**Psa. 40:6**, “Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; My ears You have opened. Burnt offering and sin offering You did not require.

**Psa. 40:7**, “Then I said, ‘Behold, I come; In the scroll of the book it is written of me.

**Psa. 40:8**, “ ‘I delight to do Your will, O my God, and Your law is within my heart.’

**Psa. 40:9**, “I have proclaimed the good news of righteousness in the great assembly; Indeed, I do not restrain my lips, O LORD, You Yourself know.

**Psa. 40:10**, “I have not hidden Your righteousness within my heart; I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation; I have not concealed Your lovingkindness and Your truth from the great assembly.

**Psa. 40:11**, “Do not withhold Your tender mercies from me, O LORD; Let Your lovingkindness and Your truth continually preserve me.”

## 2. Scripture

**John 15:10, [Jesus speaking to His disciples] “If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.”**

## 2. Scripture

**Php. 2:6, “who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,**

**Php. 2:7, “but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.**

**Php. 2:8, “And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.”**

## 2. Scripture

**1 Cor. 15:23**, “But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming.

**1 Cor. 15:24**, “Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power.

**1 Cor. 15:25**, “For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet.

**1 Cor. 15:26**, “The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.

**1 Cor. 15:27**, “For ‘He has put all things under His feet.’ But when He says ‘all things are put under Him,’ it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted.

**1 Cor. 15:28**, “Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.”

**John 17:5, “And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.”**

**John 8:58, “Jesus said to them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.’ ”**

**John 10:30, “I and My Father are one.”**

**John 10:33, “The Jews answered Him, saying, ‘For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God.’ ”**

**Psa. 2:6, “Yet I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion.”**

**Psa. 2:7, “I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me,  
‘You are My Son, today I have begotten You.**

**Psa. 2:8, “ ‘Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession.’ ”**

**Psa. 2:12, “Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.”**

**Prov. 30:4, “Who has ascended into heaven, or descended? Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has bound the waters in a garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His name, and what is His Son’s name, if you know?”**

**Isa. 7:14, “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.”**

**Isa. 9:6, “For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace.”**



**YHWH, the sacred Tetragrammaton (4 letters), is God's personal name:**

**Isa. 45:18, “For thus says the LORD (YHWH), Who created the heavens, Who is God, Who formed the earth and made it, Who has established it, Who did not create it in vain, Who formed it to be inhabited: “I am the LORD, and there is no other.””**