

Cornerstone Bible Church

Systematic Theology

<http://cornerstonebiblechurch.com/resources/downloads.dot?folderPath=/global/downloads/SystematicTheology/>

Acknowledgment & Credits:

Edwin Gonzalez

July 17, 2011

LECTURES ON INTRODUCTION TO
SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY TAUGHT BY
RAFAEL ALCANTARA IN 2009 DURING THE
SUNDAY SCHOOL AT IGLESIA BIBLICA DEL
SEÑOR JESUCRISTO. MATERIAL ADDED AND
EXPANDED FOR THIS CLASS

THEOLOGY PROPER

General Contents:

1. The Existence of God
2. The Attributes of God
- 3. The Trinity**
4. Creation
5. Providence

The Trinity

The Trinity

1. Definition
2. Explanation
3. Demonstration
4. Heresies against the Trinity
5. The relation of this Doctrine with
 - a) Creation
 - b) The Godhead

The Trinity (review)

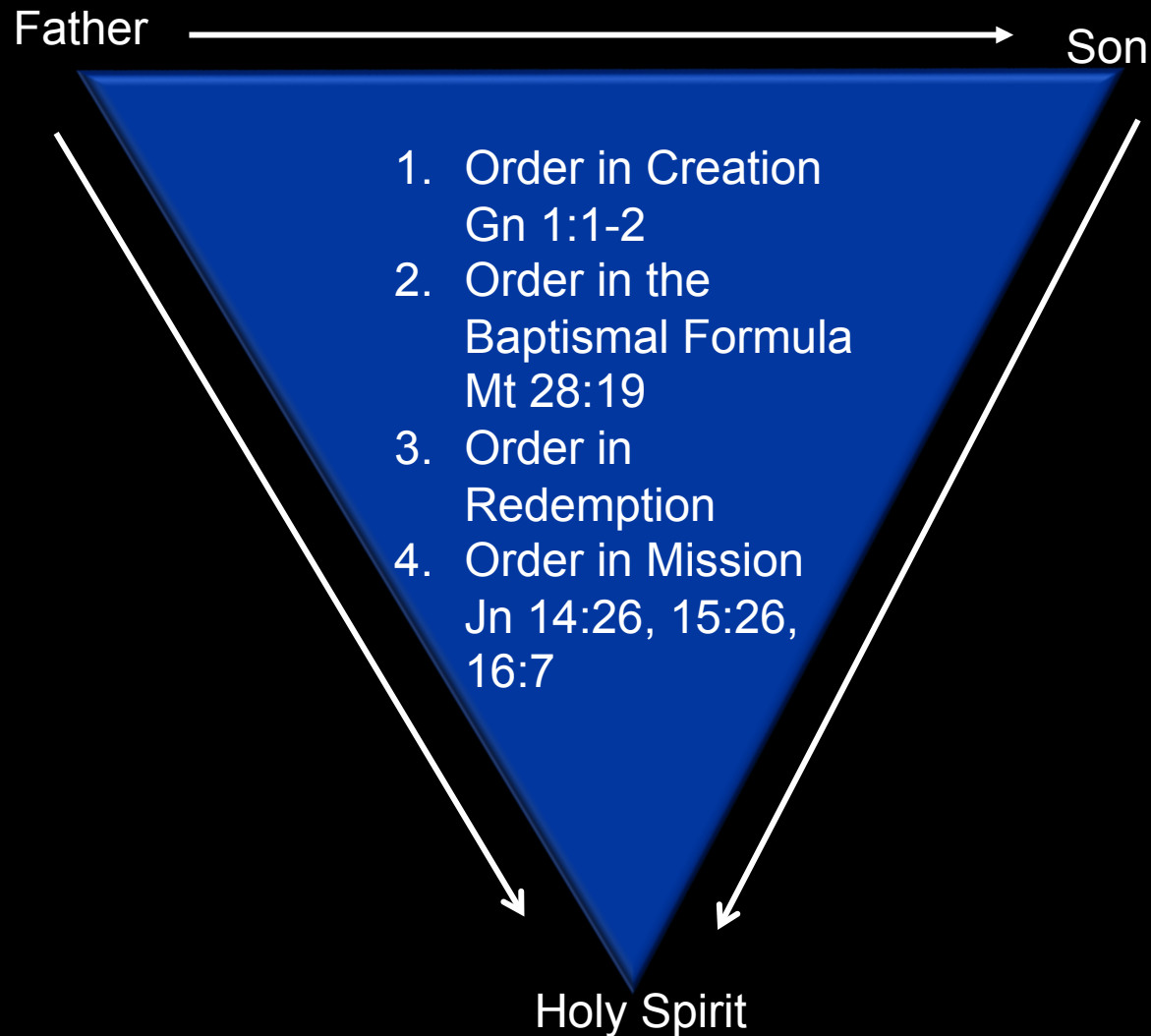
This is one of the most mysterious subjects on the study of the Doctrine of God and yet it is at the same time a fundamental tenet of the Christian faith namely, The Doctrine of the Trinity

The Doctrine of the Trinity teaches us that the only and true God subsists in three distinct persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and that the three are fully God

There are three persons of one **substance, power and eternity**

The **Father** is not begotten, the **Son** is eternally begotten and the **Holy Spirit** proceeds from both

The Trinity (review)



The Trinity (review)

We must emphasize that the understanding and articulation of this doctrine as revealed in the Scriptures took place through a process of centuries during the History of the Church. It was precisely the rising if heresies against this doctrine which forced the church fathers to formulate it accurately. This is one of the disciplines we learn in Historical Theology

Let's breakdown our original definition

I - There is only one God

II - Father, Son and Holy Spirit are fully God

III - Father, Son and Holy Spirit are three distinct persons

The Trinity

I- There is only one God

This is the most obvious declaration in the Word of God **Isaiah 45:22** “Turn to me and be saved all the ends of the earth; for I am God and there is none other. Even when the Bible itself speaks of people who serve other gods, it is not by this affirming their existence.”

Paul explains it this way in 1Cor 8:4-6a *“Therefore concerning the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we know that there is no such thing as an idol in the world, and that there is no God but one. 5 For even if there are so-called gods whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords, 6 yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him.”*

The Trinity

II- Father, Son and Holy Spirit are fully God

I – The Father is fully God

This is evident throughout Scripture consequently we will not spend too much time trying to prove it. We already read I Cor 8:6 where the Father is identified as God

In Jn 6:27 Jesus identifies the Father as God when referring to Himself he says: "this is upon whom God the Father has sealed"

II - The Son is fully God

The Bible clearly presents the Lord Jesus Christ as Son in His relationship to the Father and who is also identified as God Jn 1:1-4, 18; 20:27-28; Ro 9:5; He 1:3,8-12; Tit 2:13; I Jn 5:20

The Trinity

II- Father, Son and Holy Spirit are fully God

III - The Holy Spirit is fully God

(Acts 5:3-4; 2 Co 3:17-18; Ps 139:7-10; He 9:14; Is 6:8-10 comp Acts 28:25-27; Ps 95:7-9 comp He 3:7-9)

III- Father, Son & Holy Spirit are three distinct persons

This means that the Father is not the Son or the Holy Spirit. There are three different persons even when there is only one God **Mt 3:16-17; Lk 3:21-22**

Mat 28:19 states “*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*”

τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος,

The Trinity

PERSONALITY OF THE GODHEAD

a) Regarding the textual evidence that proves the personality of the Son all we need is to take a look at all of the titles ascribed to Him: Advocate, High Priest, Mediator. Some of the texts that we remarked point to His deity also designate His personality

b) Some have questioned the personality of the Holy Spirit and they speak of Him as God's force, but the Biblical evidence clearly points to the contrary. The passages previously alluded to where the Holy Spirit is named alongside the Father and the Son prove His personality.

The Trinity

PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

a) The same is inferred by the term “Comforter” by which Jesus names Him. (**Jn 14:16,26; 15:26; 16:7**)

b) He does activities that belong to a person like

1. Speaking (**Acts 8:29; 13:2**);

2. Forbidding (**Acts 16:6-7**)

3. He intercedes (Rom 8:26-27)

4. He bears witness of God (**Rom 8:16**);

5. He teaches (**Jn 14:26**)

6. He distributes spiritual gifts sovereignly (**I Co 12:11**)

7. He examines the depths of God (**1Cor 2:11**).

8. He approves of a given course of action (**Acts 15:28**)

9. He can be grieved (**Eph 4:30**)

The Trinity

PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

In fact, if the Holy Spirit were just the “force” of “power” of God, then some passages in Scripture would not make any sense **Lk 4:14; Acts 10:38; Rom 15:13; 1Co 2:4**

Acts 10:38 "You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed by the devil; for God was with Him.

The Trinity

Main heresies against the Doctrine of the Trinity

1- Tri-theism

It teaches that Father, Son and Holy Spirit are three Gods. Very few people have endorsed this teaching in the History of the Church, given that the evidence in Scripture that there is only one God, is overwhelmingly perspicuous

2-Modalism (known also as Sabelianism)

It teaches that Father, Son and Holy Spirit are three distinct manifestations of the same person. Some Evangelical Christians at times unwittingly explain the Doctrine of the Trinity in a modalistic presentation, which is incorrect

The Trinity

Main heresies against the Doctrine of the Trinity

“The fatal weakness of Sabelianism is that it is forced to deny the interpersonal relationships within the Trinity which are so prevalent in Scripture...It denies that there were three distinct persons at Jesus’ baptism...It must present as a figment the many occasions in which Jesus prayed to His Father...And the idea of the Son’s and the Spirit’s intercession gets totally lost. Finally,... Sabelianism does away the essence of the Doctrine of the Atonement that is, that God sent His Son as a vicarious sacrifice and that the Son bore the wrath of the Father in our place, and that the Father on behalf of the Godhead, saw the sufferings of His Son and was satisfied.” (Grudem - Biblical Doctrine Pg. 112)

The Trinity

Main heresies against the Doctrine of the Trinity

3- Arianism

This term is coined after Arius, bishop of Alexandria who died in 336 AD and whose teachings were condemned by the Council of Nicea 325 AD. Arianism denies the deity of Christ and the personality of the Holy Spirit. Their more renown representatives today are the Jehovah Witnesses and some liberal theologians evangelicals.

The Trinity

Main heresies against the Doctrine of the Trinity

3- Arianism

Letter Arius to [Eusebius of Nicomedia](#):

“Some of them say that the Son is an eructation, others that he is a production, others that he is also unbegotten. These are impieties to which we cannot listen, even though the heretics threaten us with a thousand deaths. But we say and believe and have taught, and do teach, that the Son is not unbegotten, nor in any way part of the unbegotten; and that he does not derive his subsistence from any matter; but that by his own will and counsel he has subsisted before time and before ages as perfect God, only begotten and unchangeable, and that before he was begotten, or created, or purposed, or established, he was not. For he was not unbegotten. We are persecuted, because we say that the Son has a beginning, but that God is without beginning.”

—Peters, *Heresy and Authority in [Medieval Europe](#)*, p. 41

The Trinity

Main heresies against the Doctrine of the Trinity

3- Arianism

What about Colossians 1:15 which states that Christ is the “First born of all creation”? Grudem explains: *“Christ has the rights and privileges of the first born, according to the usage and customs of Scripture, these were the right to leadership, and authority over the family... Christ has the privileges of authority and government with respect to creation.”* (Ex: Essau sold his birthright (even though he was born first))

Jacob’s blessing removed the first-born right from Reuben and gave it to Judah, and he blessed Ephraim before Manassah (though they were not chronologically the first to have been born)

The Trinity

Main heresies against the Doctrine of the Trinity

3- Arianism

Arians also argue their case from the term “only begotten” which is ascribed to Jesus, as if it meant that He came to exist at a given point.

This word comes from the Greek *monogenes* that was thought to be a combination of two words: mono=only; genao=to beget).

The Trinity

Main heresies against the Doctrine of the Trinity

3- Arianism

“...the linguistic studies made during the 20th Century proved that the second half of the word monogenes is related to the word ‘genos’ which means ‘class’ or ‘kind’. Therefore the word actually means “unique in His kind” ... Instead of referring to the Son as descending from the Father, these verse affirm the unique position of Jesus as the Son of God.” (See He 11:17- Isaac was Abraham’s “only” child)

END