

# The Trinity



# Bad illustrations - Monarchianism: God is made up of different “stuff”



# Modalism: God with a Mask



SOLID



LIQUID



GAS

**Pants...wierd**





# Modalism: Father, Son, Brother

FATHER

SON

*brother*

mentor

Husband

*friend*

inventor

*artist*

**TEACHER**

# Orthodox Position

“One substance, three persons.”

- Council of Constantinople (381 A.D.)

(one *ousia* [substance] in three *hypostases* [persons])

# Distinctly Christian

- “In the doctrine of the Trinity, we encounter one of the truly distinctive doctrines of Christianity.”
  - Milliard Erickson (*Introducing Christian Doctrine*, L. Arnold Hustad, ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1992), 96.

# Is the word “Trinity” found in the Bible?

---

- No, but the concept is.

# Why does our understanding of the Trinity matter?

- 1) It determines how you view Jesus -  
\*Creation, Prophet, or Christ.
- 2) To whom are we to worship? Father, Son, Holy Spirit, or the Triune God?
- 3) To whom are we to pray?

# The Early Church & Religious Marketing

- 1) **The Resurrection & Lordship of Christ**  
- alienates everyone not willing to bow to Jesus alone as Lord
- 2) **The Trinity** - alienates the strict monotheists & polytheists alike

# CULTS/RELIGIONS WHO DENY THE TRINITY

- **Jehovah's Witnesses** - a created spirit, Michael the archangel, who became God's Son upon being baptized = wrong
- **Mormons (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints)**. - Jesus and Lucifer (Satan) were brothers. Satan proposed a plan to force humanity to follow God. Jesus proposed loving people to get them to follow God. Satan's plan was rejected and Jesus' accepted. Now they do not get along. God has a body and innumerable "spirit wives." = wrong
- **Muslims = "God is one"**

Q# Question for Muslims: Can God do anything?

\*God and lying

Then why can't God exist as a Tri-personal Being?



# Very important!

- \*We must get our beliefs from Scripture first...even if we may not fully understand them = Truth first, then illustrations.
- \*We must not reject that which we may not fully understand.
- \*We must fit our minds to Scripture, not “bend” Scripture to fit our minds

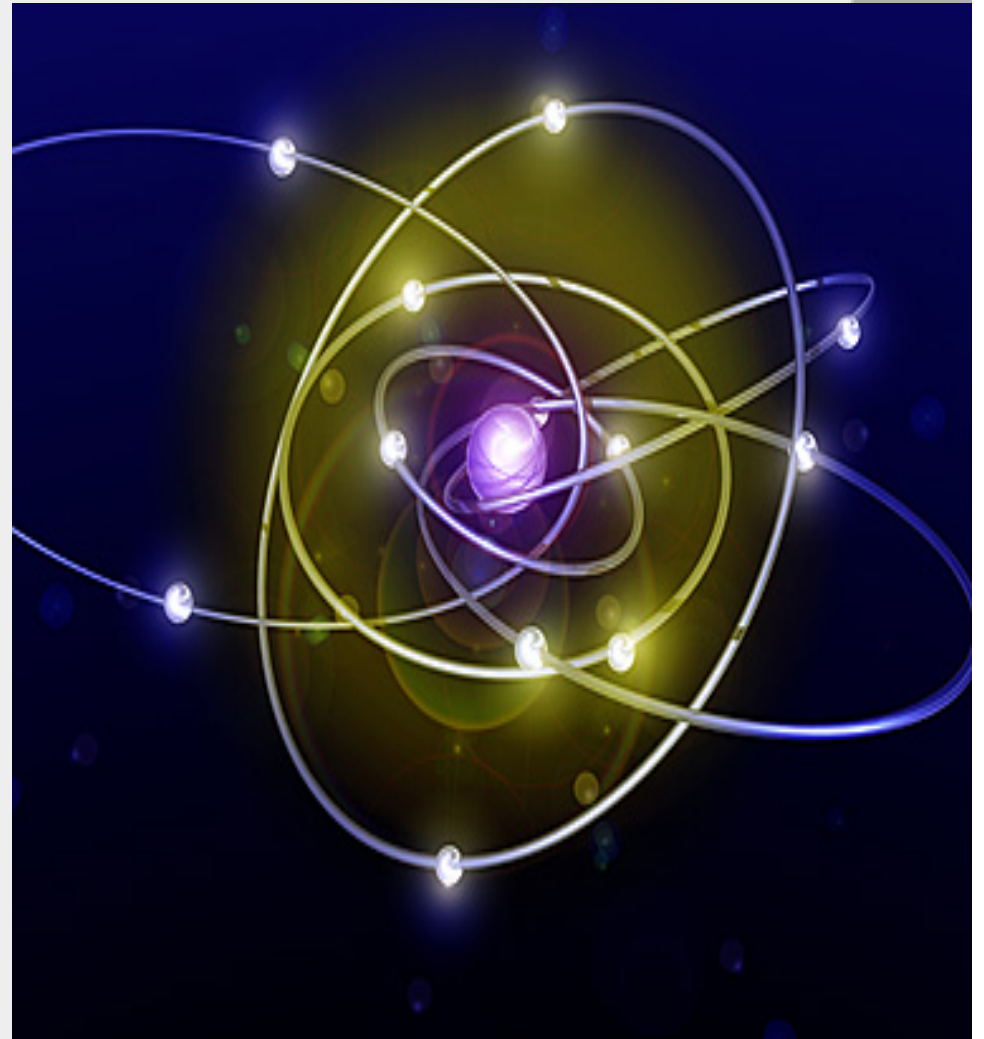


# Quantum Mechanics: “It is very non-intuitive”

- Walter Lewin (MIT)

*The more precisely the position is determined, the less precisely the momentum is known in this instant, and vice versa.*

- Heisenberg,  
uncertainty paper,  
1927

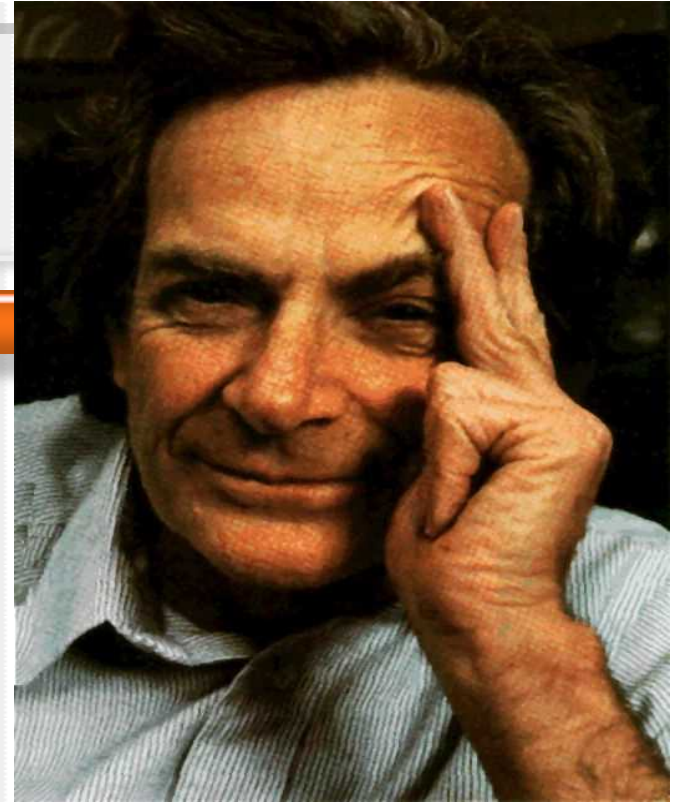


# Richard Feynman:

**“I can safely say that nobody understands quantum mechanics. ...do not keep saying to yourself, ‘But how can it be like that?’...**

**Nobody knows how it can be like that.”**

- Quantum mechanics is still a marvelous and necessary tool for understanding the quantum world.
- = Although the Trinity may seem “non-intuitive” that does not mean that it isn’t true.



# Skeptics: Why didn't the Church take an official stance on the Trinity for its first two centuries?

- Council of Nicea (325 A.D.)
- \*Connection between Nicea and Constantine's Edict of Milan (toleration of Christians).
- Edict of Milan (313 A.D.)





# BIBLICAL EVIDENCE

1) UNITY OF GOD - GOD IS  
ONE

2) THREE PERSONS WHO  
ARE GOD

3) THREE-IN-ONENESS



# I. GOD IS ONE

DEUTERONOMY 6:4-5 THE SHEMA

*“Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! 5 “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.*



# I KINGS 8:60 - SOLOMON'S PRAYER

*“so that all the peoples of the  
earth may know that the Lord is  
God; there is no one else.”*

ISAIAH 45:5A

*“I AM THE LORD, AND  
THERE IS NO OTHER;  
BESIDES ME THERE IS  
NO GOD.”*

## I CORINTHIANS 8:4

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

## I TIMOTHY 2:5

*“FOR THERE IS ONE GOD,  
AND ONE MEDIATOR ALSO  
BETWEEN GOD AND MEN,  
THE MAN CHRIST JESUS.”*

## JAMES 2:19

*“You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.”*

1 Cor. 10:20 *“I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons.”*  
(ESV)

**\*If even demons are monotheists...  
then how twisted is polytheism?  
= According to Paul, it is demonic.**

## II. Three distinct persons in the Godhead: The Father

---

Matthew 11:27

*“All things have been handed over to Me by My Father;  
and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does  
anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to  
whom the Son wills to reveal Him.”*

\*Clear distinguishing between the Father and the Son

---

# Matthew 26:39 - Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane

---

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

*\*Jesus is not praying to Himself*

---



## John 14:16-17

---

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

*17 that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.*

---

# The Father is God

---

Psalm 89:26

*“He will cry to Me, ‘You are my Father, My God, and the rock of my salvation.’”*

Isaiah 63:16b

*“You, O Lord, are our Father, Our Redeemer from of old is Your name.”*

---



# The Son: A distinct person

---

- John 7:39

*“But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.”*

\*Son is distinct from the Holy Spirit



# The Son: A distinct person

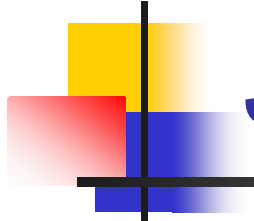
- John 17:1-5 \*Distinct from the Father

*“Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You, 2 even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life. 3 “This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. 4 “I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do. 5 “Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.”*

# Jesus is God

- NT writers faced a difficult problem in affirming that Jesus is God WITHOUT saying that Jesus is the Father.
- ὁ θεός - The word for “God” in the New Testament, literally “The God”
- Κύριος - Greek word for “God” in the Greek Old Testament (The Septuagint)





# Jesus is God

---

Romans 10:9,13

*“that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord,  
and believe in your heart that God raised Him  
from the dead, you will be saved...*

*v.13 for “Whoever will call on the name of the Lord  
will be saved.”*

v.13 exact quotation from Joel 2:32 in the OT!



# Jesus is God

---

- I Corinthians 12:3 *“Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, “Jesus is accursed”; and no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit.”*
- I Corinthians 8:6 *“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.”*
- ὁ θεός and Κύριος are used in the same verse!





# Jesus is God: Firstborn means “*heir*” not the “*first creation*” \*Cults

---

- Colossians 1:15-19; 2:9

*“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. 17 He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. 18 He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. 19 For it was the Father’s good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him,”*

*2:9 For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form,*

πλήρωμα = fullness



# Jesus is God: Oneness of God

---

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

John Gill, “Not in person, for the Father must be a distinct person from the Son, and the Son a distinct person from the Father; and which is further manifest, from the use of the verb plural, “I and my Father”, “we are one”; that is, in nature and essence, and perfections, particularly in power.”  
(*Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible*)

John 14:9b-10a “*The one who has seen Me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Don’t you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me?*” (HCSB)



# Jesus is God: Apex of Gospel of John

---

John 20:28 - Doubting Thomas

Ἀπεκρίθη Θωμᾶς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ,  
‘Ὁ κύριός μου καὶ ὁ θεός μου.

Literally = ‘The Lord of me and the  
God of me!’

John 20:28 “*Thomas answered and said to  
Him, “My Lord and my God!”*”

# THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GOD

JOHN 14:26 *“BUT THE HELPER, THE HOLY SPIRIT, WHOM THE FATHER WILL SEND IN MY NAME, HE WILL TEACH YOU ALL THINGS, AND BRING TO YOUR REMEMBRANCE ALL THAT I SAID TO YOU.”*

JOHN 16:14 *“HE WILL GLORIFY ME, FOR HE WILL TAKE OF MINE AND WILL DISCLOSE IT TO YOU.”*

\* “HE” IS MASCULINE = THE HS IS NOT AN “IT.”

# THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GOD

ACTS 5:3-4 ANANIAS & SAPPHIRA

*“But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? <sup>4</sup> While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God.”*

# FATHER, SON AND HOLY SPIRIT

MATTHEW 3:16-17 - JESUS' BAPTISM

*“After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him, 17 and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.”*

# FATHER, SON AND HOLY SPIRIT

MATTHEW 28:19

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

# FATHER, SON AND HOLY SPIRIT

2 CORINTHIANS 13:14

*“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.”*



# THREE-IN-ONENESS: EXCELLENT “QUICK” POINTS/ARGUMENTS

- GENESIS 1:26

*“THEN GOD SAID [SINGULAR], ‘LET US MAKE [PLURAL] MAN IN OUR [PLURAL] IMAGE.’”*

- ISAIAH 6:8 *“WHOM SHALL I SEND [SINGULAR], AND WHO WILL GO FOR US [PLURAL]?”*



- IS THE WORD “TRINITY” IN THE BIBLE? = NO
- IS THE WORD “BIBLE” IN THE BIBLE? = NO

# ORTHODOX POSITION

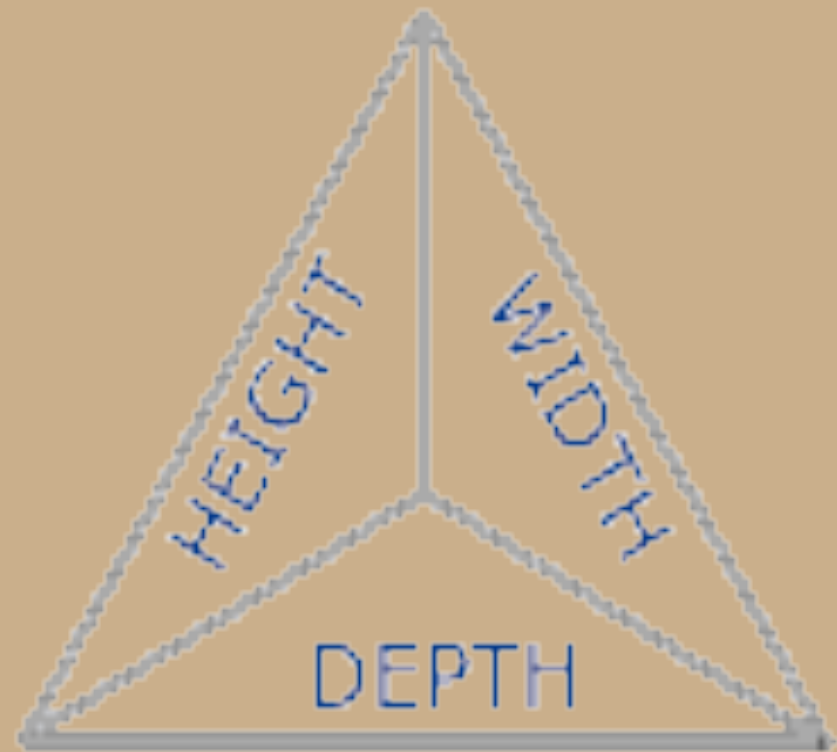
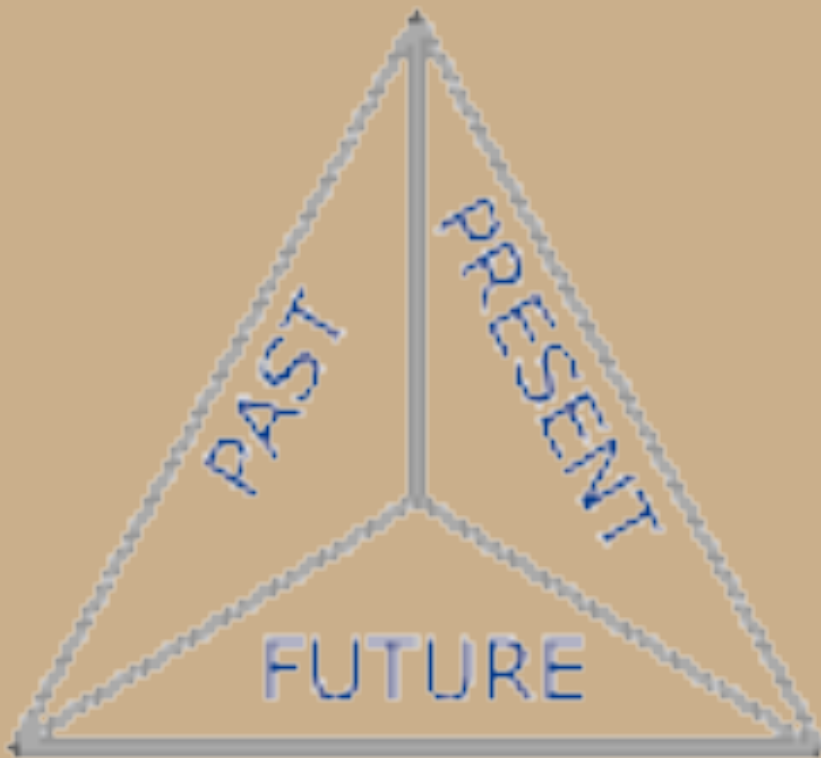
- “ONE SUBSTANCE, THREE PERSONS”

COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE, 381  
A.D.

(ONE *OUSIA* [SUBSTANCE] IN THREE  
*HYPOSTASES* [PERSONS])



# TIME & SPACE



IMAGINE LIVING IN A 2  
DIMENSIONAL WORLD...

**\*ORIGINAL NINTENDO**

900 0x01

307



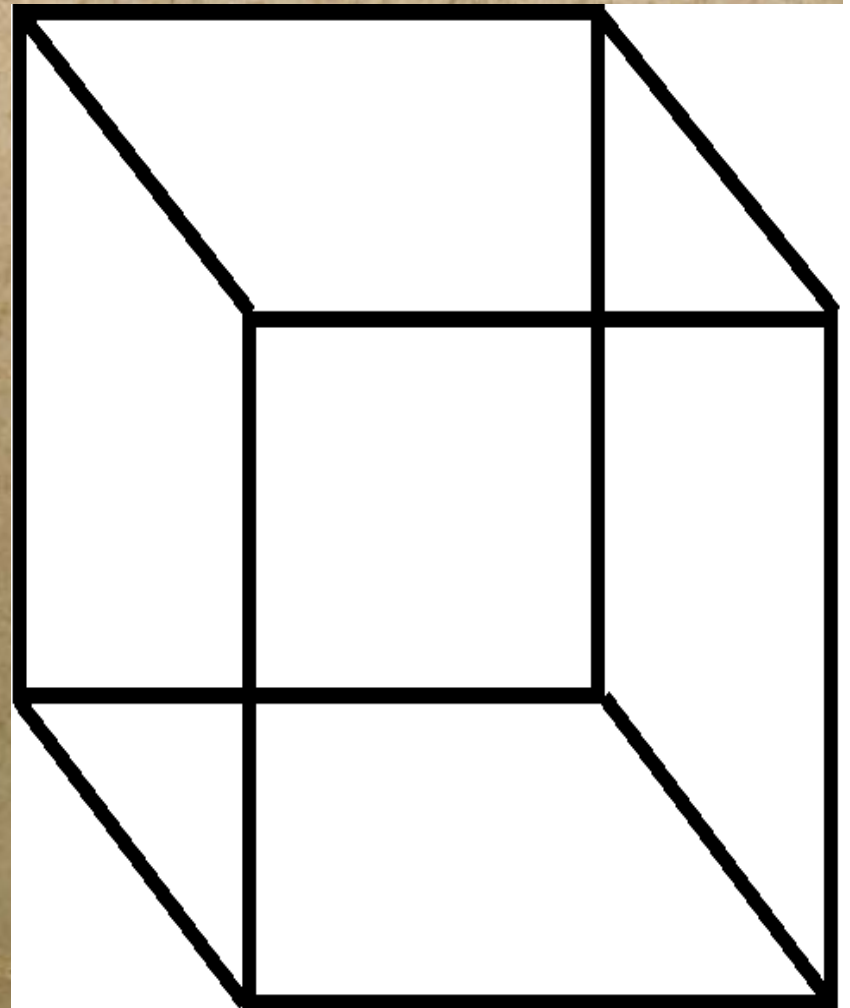


# IMAGINE LIVING IN A 2 DIMENSIONAL WORLD...

## **\*ORIGINAL NINTENDO**

WHAT IF YOU WERE TOLD  
THAT A CUBE WAS A  
THING IN WHICH THERE  
COULD BE SIX SQUARES  
IN ONE?...MADNESS!!!

- *MERE CHRISTIANITY-*  
C.S. LEWIS



# HARD TO FIND ILLUSTRATIONS...

**DIFFICULTY** = REPRESENTING AN  
IMMATERIAL SPIRIT WITH  
PHYSICAL/MATERIAL ILLUSTRATIONS

- 1) GOD HIMSELF IS SPIRIT; THE SOCIAL AND PERSONAL DOMAIN IS, THEN, CLOSER TO GOD'S BASIC NATURE THAN IS THE REALM OF MATERIAL OBJECTS

MILLIARD J. ERICKSON, *CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY: 2ND EDITION* (GRAND RAPIDS: BAKER ACADEMIC, 1998), 365.

- 2) An infinite God cannot be fully described by a finite illustration.

[HTTP://WWW.GOTQUESTIONS.ORG/TRINITY-BIBLE.HTML](http://www.gotquestions.org/Trinity-Bible.html)



# AUGUSTINE, *DE TRINITATE*

“AS A SELF-CONSCIOUS PERSON, I MAY ENGAGE IN INTERNAL DIALOGUE WITH MYSELF. I MAY TAKE DIFFERENT POSITIONS AND INTERACT WITH MYSELF...FURTHERMORE, I AM A COMPLEX HUMAN PERSON WITH MULTIPLE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN DYNAMIC INTERPLAY WITH ONE ANOTHER. AS I CONSIDER WHAT I SHOULD DO IN A GIVEN SITUATION, THE HUSBAND, THE FATHER, THE SEMINARY PROFESSOR, AND THE UNITED STATES CITIZEN THAT TOGETHER CONSTITUTE ME MAY MUTUALLY INFORM ONE ANOTHER.” -

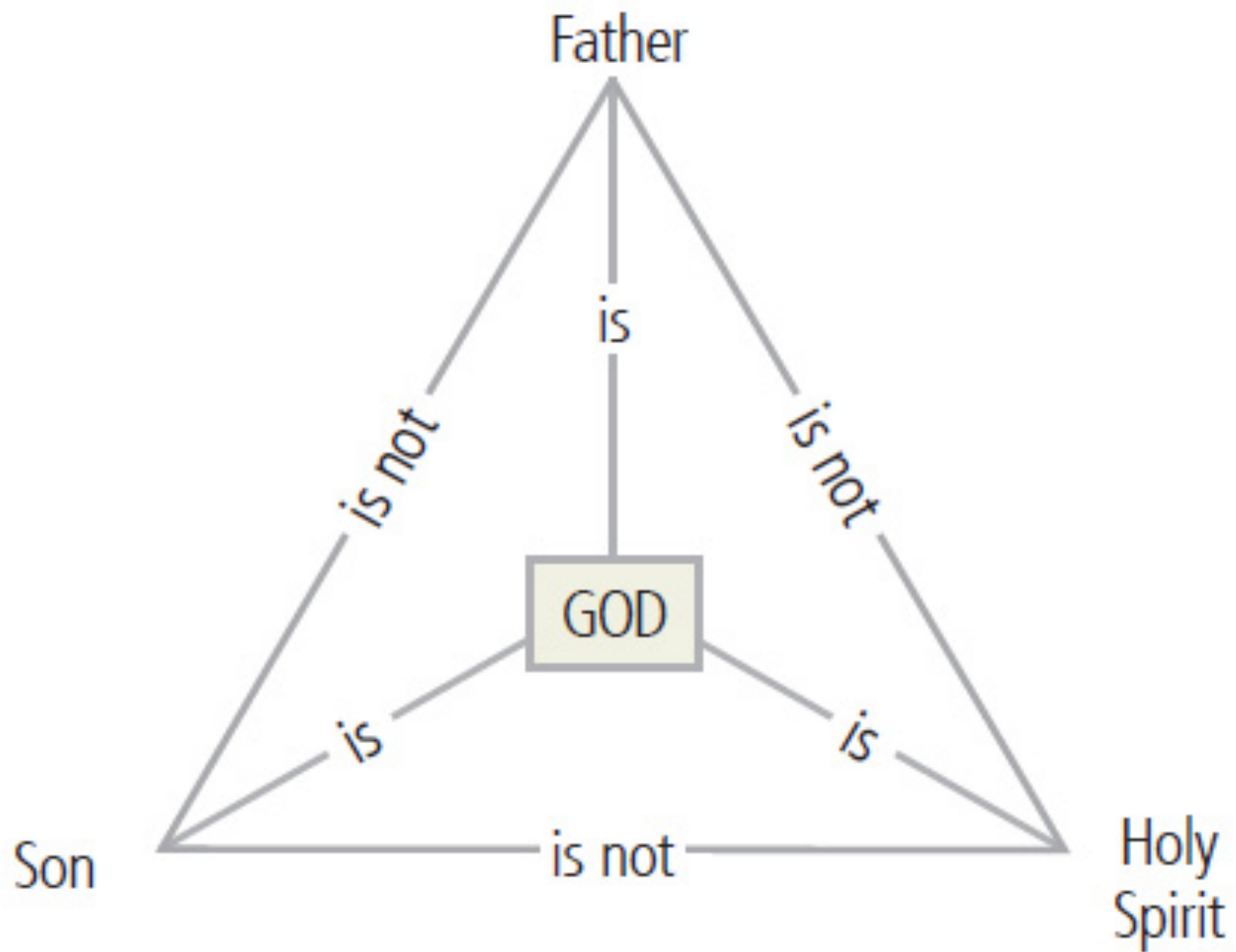
MILLIARD J. ERICKSON, *CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY*, 366.

# OF THE TRINITY...

TRY TO EXPLAIN IT, AND YOU'LL LOSE YOUR  
MIND,

BUT TRY TO DENY IT, AND YOU'LL LOSE YOUR  
SOUL.

ERICKSON, 367.



## CONCLUSION:

***The Father, Son and Holy Spirit share the same nature; Divinity.***

# ACTIONS POINTS:

- 1) THE TRINITY SEPARATES TRUE CHRISTIANITY FROM CULTS
- 2) JESUS' COMING TO EARTH IS AN ACT OF GRACE - WE CAN BE ADOPTED INTO GOD'S FAMILY
- 3) HELPS TO HIGHLIGHT THE DIFFERENT MEMBERS OF THE TRINITY IN THE PLAN OF REDEMPTION
- 4) HELPS US UNDERSTAND THE FAMILY - EPHESIANS 5

