

Foundations 1: Essential Teachings of the Christian Faith
November 19 2023

Topics covered in Foundations 1 (of 2: Foundations 2 January – February)

- The Holy Scriptures
- Knowledge of God
- Attributes of God
- The Holy Trinity
- The Doctrine of Creation
- On Humanity and Human Nature
- The Nature of Sin
- Salvation by Grace

Edward WA Koehler's A Summary of Christian Doctrine as a primary source.

Types of theology

- Biblical theology
- Systematic theology
- Practical theology
- Historical theology

Systematics/Systematic theology: a form of theology in which the aim is to arrange religious truths in a self-consistent whole; (topical/doctrinal)

Knowledge of God:

Natural & Revealed

Limited; the extent of revealed knowledge includes all that is necessary

Takeaway:

The Limits of our knowledge of God:

through natural knowledge (nature, conscience, universal belief, reason)

there is a God

Extent AND Limit: Through the revelation of God in Trinity through the Son, and

through Scripture: all that is necessary for salvation

Acts 14:8-18

Acts 17:22-34

Opening Prayer

God For Us, we call You Father,
God Alongside Us, we call You Jesus,
God Within Us, we call You Holy Spirit.

You are the Eternal Mystery
That enables, enfolds and enlivens all things,
Even us, and even me.

Every name falls short of Your
Goodness and Greatness.

We can only see who You are in what is.
We ask for such perfect seeing.

As it was in the beginning, is now,
And ever shall be. Amen.

(Richard Rohr)

Opening Discussion Questions

- Favorite Trinitarian hymn/song
- Standing for Trinitarian verses

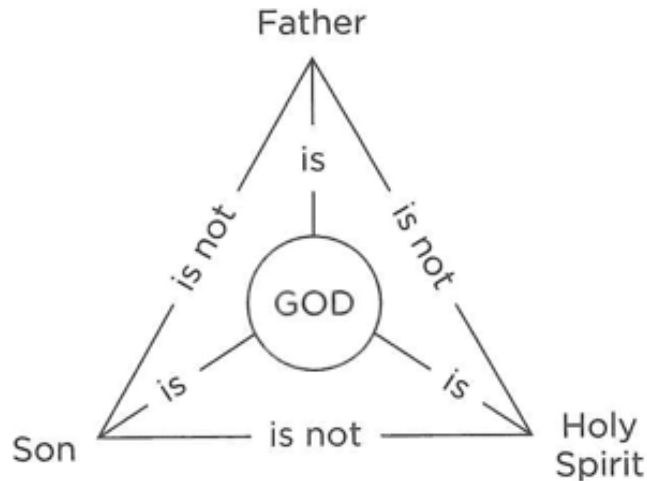


Figure 2.1

1. Nobody seems to know when the diagram originated, though it is at least as old as the twelfth century and is a straightforward representation of the first part of the Athanasian Creed.

The Trinity in:

Creation:

Genesis 1:26

God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness."

John 1:1-4

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

Jesus' baptism:

Matthew 3:16-17

When Jesus was baptized, immediately we went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

The Great Commission:

Matthew 28:19-20

“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 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Understanding the nature of the Holy Trinity is not fully possible.

Less cerebral input:

Icons

Art

Music

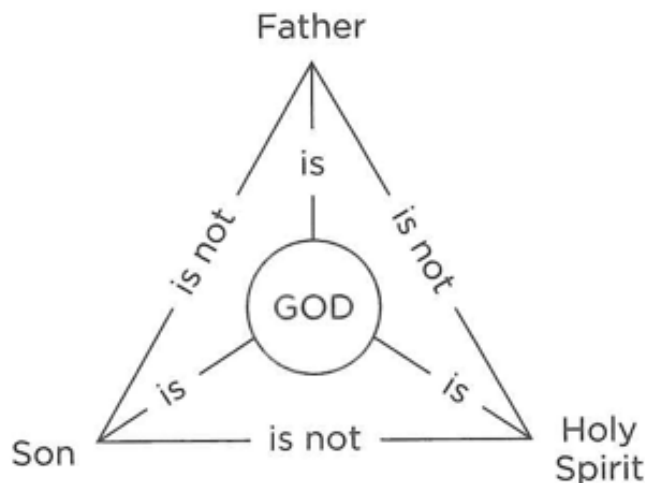
(5 Divertimentos, No 4 in F Major, Mozart, played by the Zagreb Woodwind Trio)

Unity in the Trinity is best understood as “Tri-unity”

Mark 12:29-31

The most important command is “Hear O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.” And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.”

One God, Three Persons



3 distinct persons

1 what & 3 whos

God, in himself, has both unity and diversity.
God eternally exists in three persons: Father, Son, Spirit
Equal; relate to the world (economically) and each other (ontologically) differently

How does this inform the life of humanity created in God's image?

Why this matters;

We are created in God's image for relationship, for community, for love.

Loneliness is not sinful.

"Alone" is "not good."

Extracted from "Trinity," by Dave Hopwood:

In the beginning,
when all was not as it is now;
in the darkness,
when light was just a twinkle in the Creator's eye;
in the past,
when history was waiting to be born;
a new day dawned.

A day when the Creator shaped the universe
by the power of his living Word,
and the breath of his life-giving Spirit.
He spoke and called forth life,
he breathed and his spirit hovered over the waters,
he took dust and formed the foundations.
Creator, Word, Spirit.

The Holy Community,
working, living, being as one,
harmonised in love and purpose,
shaping, forming, gifting light and life.
Before time, throughout time, when time has run its course.
Days without number, life without end.
Love without limit.

Three and one, above us, beyond us, beside us, within.

Mysterious & majestic

Closing Prayer

O my God, Trinity whom I adore, help me to forget myself entirely that I may be established in you as still and as peaceful as if my soul were already in eternity. May nothing trouble my peace or make me leave You, O my Unchanging One, but may each minute carry me further into the depths of Your Mystery. Amen.

Benediction:

Romans 16:25-27

Now to Him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation about Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept silent for long ages but now revealed and made known through the prophetic Scriptures, according to the command of all eternal God to advance the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles—to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ—to him be the glory forever! Amen.