

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance(ὕπόστασις) with the Father; By whom all things were made; Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down and was incarnate and was made man; He suffered, and the third day he rose again, ascended into heaven; from there he shall come to judge the living and the dead.

And in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceeds(ἐκπορεύται) from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets.

And in one holy universal and apostolic church; we acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen

- The Nicene Creed (381)

Opening Prayer: Valley of Vision – The Minister’s Prayer.

So imagine you’re Constantine, sitting in a church at Nicaea and watching an assembly of 300 men debating and arguing days on end in the hottest, stuffiest, overcrowded sanctuary with no AC. You hear terms constantly thrown

around “Heterousios” “Homousios” “Homoisios”¹ from a bunch grumbling robed men with scars, missing limbs, and stubborn faces. One young man from Egypt, a deacon by the name Athanasius, is sitting by his Elder Alexander, who passionately presents his case at hand concerning a man in the room named Arius. You hear men from the other side shouting stinging questions and accusations at Alexander’s statement. One Eusebius cried out “That’s Modalism², Alex, C’mon Alex” and you think “what’s that word? Others then vehemently hissed at those men’s inquiries and questioned their love for Christ. And in the midst of this intellectual vulgar brawl, you see one man stand up, who’s kind heart is known to all, St Nicolas. He strides across the crowd toward Arius, only to right hook him across the face crying out “ho ho Homousios.”

¹ These are all Greek terms referring respectively to “different substance,” “same substance,” and “similar substance.”

² Modalism – God is one being and person with 3 modes of existence. This was an actual risk the Nicene council had to navigate in the creed, which actually led to the prolonging of the arian controversy until 381, when the second ecumenical council, the 1st council of Constantinople, refined the creed to the way we read it today, with the help of Gregory of Nazianzus as Bishop there. Basil of Caesarea also was able to barely keep the Whole church united through his political work and correspondence to the churches in Rome, Egypt, Syria, Greece, and Armenia. See James White, *The Forgotten Trinity. Recovering the Heart of Christian Believe*, (Bethany House Publishers, 1998), pg 186-190. and Basil The Great, Trans. Stephen M Hildebrand. *On the Holy Spirit*. (Popular Patristics Series, No. 42. Yonkers, New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2011), pg. 11-26.

Group/Leader(s)	Viewpoint
Arian, Arius, Eusebius of Nicomedia	Of different Substances (Christ is Created) <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Heteroousios- (ἠτεροούσιος)
Orthodox/ Alexander, Athanasius, Nicolas of Myra	Of the Same substance <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Homoousios- (ὁμοιούσιος)
Eusebian/Eusebius of Caesarea	Of similar substance (to avoid Modalism) <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Homoiouosios- (ὁμοούσιος)

Table 1: Factions in the Council of Nicaea

And as you see poor Old Nick dragged away from the assembly, a question comes into your mind. Why does this matter? Who needs theology when we got Jesus? Why should we care about who God is? And what makes this issue so important that even Santa Claus set aside his bag of presents to rebuke Arius with the fist?

Well, let me tell you the doctrine that's misunderstood by many, even Christians

The doctrine scantily preached in the pulpit

The doctrine stored away in many circles in the church,

The doctrine forgotten in the gospel and ignored in the world.

The Trinity

So what is this Trinity?

Lets start with a definition. the trinity is that **“within God, that is one essence, there exists three coeternal and coequal distinctions, or persons, who are the Father, The Son, and the Holy Spirit.”** But what does that even mean?

Now before we explore the mystery of the trinity, we need to first explore the mystery of the doctrine of God. Let us turn to John Chapter 4 verses 19 to 24. Let us read.

“The Samaritan Woman said to him, “Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. 20 Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.” 21 Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. 22 You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23

But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. 24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”

What is the Samaritan woman concerned about? Lets look at verse 20: “Our fathers worship on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.”

This would be a very natural question for the Samaritan woman to ask a Jewish man, no less a prophet, because the location of worship is not only important for the Samaritan people, but even for the people of God in the Old Testament. Lets then notice Jesus’ answer. “Believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain or in Jerusalem will you worship the father.”

Notice the phrases “on this mountain,” or “In Jerusalem.” Although the English here uses different prepositions on these phrases, the Greek uses the same preposition. From the context then, we understand that Jesus is thinking of worship concerning location. Christ then continued in verse 23. “The hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the

father in spirit and truth.” Here’s one question that we should ask, “is the preposition here “in,” which is the same greek word from verse 21, being used the same way here?” Lets read on, in verse 24, **“God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”** We get two arguments on why to Worship God in spirit and truth here, First, the Father is seeking such people to worship him, and second, God is spirit. Although we can easily understand the first reason, how does defining God as spirit a reason to worship God in spirit and in truth? Therefore, we need to dive into this statement “God is spirit.” What do you think of spirit? The greek word behind the word spirit is pneuma, which has connotations of wind that blows to and fro. Can we cut a wind or a spirit? Not really, we can swing with a sword in the wind day in and day out but we don’t really see air split apart or even visually dissect the wind. What is the opposite of a wind or spirit you may say? Isn’t that a body? What do you think about a body? The human body, a body of water? While we cannot cut or divide a spirit, we can easily cut a human body and a body of water into pieces, we can visually add to the body of water by

pouring water into a sea or take away water by evaporation or simply take up a bucket of water from the sea. A body is also dependent on location, in that The Samaritan woman cannot be at Jerusalem or Samaria at the same time or be at the Atlantic ocean and the Indian Ocean the same time either. A spirit, or wind, is not dependent on location, in such a similar fashion as Jesus says in John 3:8 “**The spirit blows where it wishes and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes.**” Therefore, we can finally understand why Jesus brings this point to the Samaritan woman that “God is spirit,” and that is **the Worship that God now requires in this text is worship does not require a location, because God is fundamentally a spirit, not a body that dwells in the Samaritan’s mountain or even in Jerusalem.**³ Stephen Charnock, a 17th century puritan who penned the *existence and attributes of God* comments on this very passage that “we should not worship him with a corporeal worship because he is

³ Hear even Solomon’s remark on this; after the temple, the house of the Lord, was filled with the glory of the Lord in 2 Chronicles 5:18 “But will God indeed dwell with man on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you, how much less this house that I have built!”

not a body,” and that God “has no mixture of matter, not a visible substance, or bodily form.⁴

So what can we then conclude when God has no body but is purely spirit? First that God is indivisible and that There is one divine being. This is why Moses harks the most important commandment in Deuteronomy 6:4 “**Hear O Israel, The Lord Your God, the Lord is One, love the lord with all your heart, soul and all your strength**” and God through Isaiah declares in Isaiah 43:10 “**before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me.**”⁵ Also, since God is not a body and doesn’t consists of parts, God is also unchangeable. Although I can refer to the passage in Malachi 3:6, which God states “**For I the Lord do not change;**” let us turn to Job 40:7 Notice the questions that God is giving to Job: starting in verse 8 he says, “**Will you even put me**

⁴ Charnock, Stephen, and William Symington. *Discourses Upon the Existence and Attributes of God*. (New York: Robert Carter, 1853) pg 107.

⁵ There are multiple spiritual beings such as angels, demons, powers, and principalities; but not even the cosmic rulers in Ephesians 6:12 can even be on par with the all ruler , the almighty God in revelation 1:8, since these spiritual being’s nature is created , which like a body isn’t omnipresent, all powerful, and all-knowing as the nature of our God YHWH. Why should you even submit or even be enslaved to these elemental powers that paul mentions in colossians 2:8&20, especially when you pray to any of them. These beings perhaps cannot not even hear your prayers, because, as Elijah suggests in 1 kings 18:27 when he was mocking the priests of Baal, “(that elemental power) is musing, or he is relieving himself, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened.” Surely they are vanity!

in the wrong? Will you condemn me that you may be in the right? Do you have an arm like God, and can you thunder with a voice like his?" What is God challenging Job to have? What else than for Job to have a nature that can posit a real threat to God, a nature that would clothe himself in holiness and splendor, a nature that can execute justice on the wicked and the proud, a nature that can seal them in sheol below, and a nature that Job can use his own right hand to save himself from humility. But as we see in Job 41, can Job even draw out the Leviathan? What power do you have to bind the leviathan to your will, to pierce his jaw with a hook, to make the leviathan beg for his life to you, to compel it to covenant with you? We get our answer in verse 9, "Behold, the hope of man is false, he is laid low even at the sight of him. No one is so fierce that he dares to stir him up." God then turns to Job and says, "Who then are you who can stand before me? Who has first given to me, that I should repay him? Whatever is under the whole heaven is mine." James Dolezal, a reformed Baptist scholar, in his book *all that is in God*, comments that the first part of verse 11. The phrase "who has first given to

me” can be translated from the Hebrew as “who can confront me” or “who can come in front of me.” If we cannot even try to manipulate and capitulate the leviathan, then how can we even confront God?⁶

This is why When we think and contemplate on the nature of God, we need to have the highest and upmost reverence of his nature. **God is not like us, since he is fundamentally a spirit and an all-consuming fire, that we should not even think of him in attributes similar to a man,** a being with parts, fickle with changeable emotions, someone who can be enslaved, mutilated and abused.

Spirit, fire, light, mind, reason, love, righteousness, etc. Aren't all of these attributes to God, but we cannot think of spirit, wind, without movement, fire without burning wood, or rising motion, or color; we cannot think of light without its source, the mind without its movements of thoughts, or reason without discourse or argumentation. Even love and justice are commanded attitudes that can change us through their presence and

⁶ James Dolezal *All That Is in God*. (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2017) pg. 25.

absence, like any complexity of our inner being. How exhausting is it then to then contemplate on God's nature or even to attempt to abstract God through these multiple partial images we have in our world.⁷ No wonder it is so easy for someone to look at these visible things and serve them as gods (Such as fate, luck or even Death!), or another to think with disgust God as father and perceives him as abusive as his earthly father, or even another to think love is God, and not God is love, and avoid lovingly listening to God what he even says on that! He or she can chuck their beloved man or woman to the curb, beat, mutilate, and abandon his children, and rob his neighbor, but when you approach them on their actions, they will chirp "God is love, he will not send anyone to hell or even judgement, Even Christ said, 'do not Judge.' So do not judge me." What a nasty, narcissistic Idol is that! Cut these Idols, these demons, out of your heart and chuck them to the fire!⁸ Your heart is a factory of

⁷ See Gregory of Nazianzus, Williams, Frederick, and Wickham, Lionel. *On God and Christ : The Five Theological Orations and Two Letters to Cledonius*. Popular Patristics Series. (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2002) pg. 46-47.

⁸ Gregory Nazianzus, a 4th century bishop who exhaustively defended the trinity to the point of introducing the doctrine of the holy spirit into the Nicene creed at 381 AD, comments "All truth, all philosophy, to be sure is obscure, hard to trace out. It is like employing a small tool on big constructions, if we use human wisdom in the hunt for knowledge of reality. We do not abandon the senses, they go with us, when we look at (supernatural) realities. But by these same senses we are perplexed and led astray."

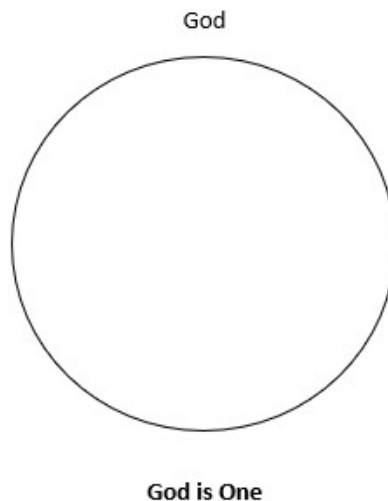
Idols and therefore you must smash them! Calvin comments in John 4 “So it happens that non-christians invent many things in worshipping God which are full of show and are (empty). In the first place they should remember that they are dealing with God, who can have as much do to do with the flesh as fire can mix with water... (therefore), we ought to restrain our rebellious minds in our worship to God.” (calvin, 104).⁹

However, you must not then abandon God’s attributes and conclude that God is utterly unknowable. God revealed himself to his creation to communicate to them that God is a personal being, and he reveals his attributes so that you can relate to God, even if you don’t fully understand him. Gregory Nazianzus, a 4th century Bishop who defended the trinity comments, “(but instead let us) discover [God’s attributes] through the beauty of the order of things seen, using sight as a

⁹ John Calvin, John, Eds J.I Packer and Alister McGarth, *John, The Crossway Classic Commentaries*, (Grand Rapids, MI Crossway, 1994) pg. 104.

guide to what transcends sight without losing God through the grandeur of what it sees.”¹⁰

Now, let us examine the mystery of God’s persons.



Now we all know that God is described as a single being from Deuteronomy 6:4 and Isaiah 43:10 as mentioned earlier. But what’s going on when God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 19:24 that “the LORD(YHWH) rained on Sodom and Gomorra Sulfur and fire from the LORD(YHWH) out of heaven.” Are there two Yahweh’s here? When this Character “The Angel

¹⁰ Gregory of Nazianzus, 47.

of the Lord” appears in Judges 2:1-3 and states “I brought you up from Egypt and brought you into the land that I swore to give to your fathers.” Did YHWH bring Israel out from Egypt or did This “Angel of YHWH” Brought Israel out of Egypt.

How can Jesus say in John 5:23 “that all may honor the son, just as they honor the father,” when God declares in Isaiah 42:8 “my glory I give to no other”? How does Jesus have the authority to forgive the paralytic’s sins and heal him in Mark 2:10 when psalm 103:3 says that God “forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases.”¹¹

If Paul in 1 Corinthians 1:24 says that Christ is “The wisdom and power of God,” is Jesus a part of God? But isn’t God without parts and indivisible?

Let us also briefly turn to John 16 in verse 7 Christ says,

¹¹ When Jesus says I am “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6) or “the light of the world” (John 8:12), What is he saying about himself, especially if God in Isaiah 45:19 states, “I the Lord speak the truth; I declare what is right.” Or when David declares in Psalm 27:1 “The Lord is my light and my salvation.” In Psalm 23:3 “(The Lord) leads me in paths of righteousness,” and In psalm 36:9 “For with The Lord is the fountain of life; in your light do we see light.” How Can Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead in John 11 when God in Deuteronomy 32:39 states “see now that I, I am he, and there is no god besides me; it is I who put to death and give life. I have wounded and it is I who heal and there is no one who can deliver from my hand.

“Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. 8 And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.”

And in verse 12 “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. 14 He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. 15 All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.”

Now The Spirit of truth here, is called the helper in John 15:26; and that helper is called the Holy Spirit in John 14:26. If God’s spirit, the Holy Spirit, is merely God’s presence, why did Christ call it a helper in verse 7, how does the holy spirit convict the world in verse 8, guide the apostles and speak to them in verse

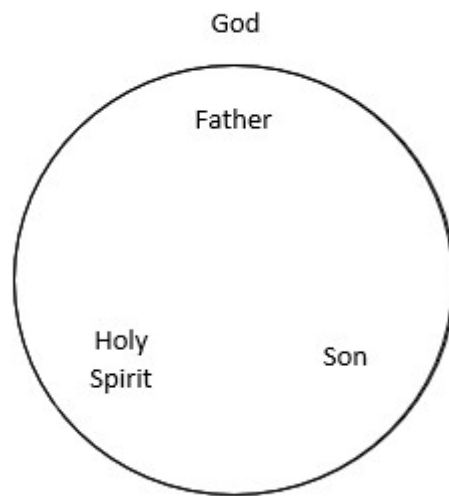
13, and glorify Christ, take what is his, and declare that to the apostles in verse 14? Is this talking about a person?

Lets also briefly turn to 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13 “**and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, 13 so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.**” Lets look at the word “Lord” in verse 12, Basil of Caesarea, who was friends with Gregory of Nazianzus asked, “to what kind of “Lord” is (Paul) praying that will establish the hearts of the faithful in Thessalonica to blamelessly be steadfast in holiness before our God and father, in the presence of (Jesus)?”¹² This is a very profound question on his part that has aged like the finest smoothest scotch, or wine, for 1600 years, especially if the Greek word for Lord, is commonly translated from God’s Hebrew name YHWH in the Greek Old testament; And Basil did not even knew Hebrew!

¹² Basil The Great, Trans. Stephen M Hildebrand. *On the Holy Spirit*. Popular Patristics Series, No. 42. (Yonkers, New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2011) pg. 89.

Lastly, let me read out loud from Acts 5:1-4, “**But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, 2 and with his wife's knowledge he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought only a part of it and laid it at the apostles' feet. 3 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? 4 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.**”** Let me ask this question, how can Peter accuse Ananias and Sapphira that if they lie to the Holy Spirit they lie to God?

If God is one, then why is it that there seems to be many persons that are called God?



Let us walk back to God's oneness for a few seconds. What does it mean for God to be one? Doesn't it mean that **God has one essence or being**? Just as wood, which has its own properties and characteristics, God has a unified nature of being all powerful, all knowing, good, just and infinite. And Also **God has one unified will**, which God does all things whatsoever he pleases to do and there's never conflict within himself? Paul in Ephesians 5:17 states **"Therefore do not be foolish but understand what the will of the Lord is"** and Romans 12:2, **"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what the will of God is, what is good and acceptable and perfect."** We see God's will assumed as one single will in the scriptures and

not a working of three wills. Someone may ask, “but doesn’t Christ have his own will which we see in passages such as John 5:30 **“As I hear I Judge, and my judgement is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me.”**”? I would answer the following, Does Christ have a human will or not? If Christ does not have a human will, then how can Christ die and be a substitute for the most corrupt part of our sinful nature, our very own hearts, our will to sin and rebel against God. How empty of a gospel would that be, that Christ died for all the sins that dwell in your flesh, but not it’s root, your will to sin. Therefore, passages like this in John **express Jesus human will, not his divine will**, which is one with The Father.

But what’s going on with The Son and the Holy Spirit being called God? What’s going on here is that while God has one essence or being, God has three distinctions. What makes these three distinctions distinct? What makes these three distinctions distinct is their personal relations, or relationships to one another. Or in other words, as James White in the Forgotten trinity describes, **we are dealing with one what, and three**

who's.¹³ Therefore they are called “persons¹⁴” since these “distinctions” distinct are their relationships with one another.

The Begotten son And the Unbegotten Father.

But what is Christ's relationship with the Father? What makes Christ the son of God? The Gospel of John describes this relationship briefly in John 1:18 “No one has seen God, the only begotten God (or only begotten son), who is at the father's side, he has made him known.” We also see in psalm 2:7 “The Lord said to me, “you are my son, today I have begotten you.” Which the author of Hebrews puts on Christ in Hebrews. But what does this word, “begotten,” mean? Gregory of Nazianzus

¹³ James White, pg 27.

¹⁴ (The early church would describe these persons within God's being as “hypostases (ὑπόστασεις)”. Now what by the beard of Calvin is that word? John of Damascus, an 8th century bishop who wrote quite a bit on the trinity, defined this word very briefly, **a hypostasis is an individual.**¹⁴ This word, hypostasis, was commonly used for substance or essence, but it also has connotations for someone's identity or person. Now we probably all have an idea what an individual is, but lets contemplate on this word for a minute. The word “individual” which the early church used was the greek word “Atomon (ἄτομον),” the same word as atom in modern science.

Like an atom, the individual cannot be further divided and still be the person, hence “In-divide-ual.” Thus for example, Peter is divided into soul and body, but neither is the soul by itself a perfect human or a perfect Peter, nor is the body. Also, when Peter has a hooked nose, or a snub nose, or when something happens to Peter, such as gaining grey hair, that characteristic becomes characteristic to their individuality, and thus very difficult to separate that trait from a person.¹⁴ If your grandmother dyed her gray hair black or blond without your knowledge, would you easily mistake her as another person or individual the next time you see her? Although contemplating about this word, individual or hypostasis, seems like a rabbit hole of philosophy, it is very useful for contemplating other doctrines, such Christ's hypostatic union, which is the doctrine of Christ's unity as an individual, or Christ's unity as one person. John of Damascus, trans. Chase, Federic H. Jr. “Philosophical Chapters,” in *Writings: The Fount of Knowledge: The Philosophical Chapters, On Heresies, The Orthodox Faith*, (Ex Fontibus Company, 2012).

defines this very intimate relationship briefly, “That in a (peaceful), non-temporal, way the father spiritually (or incorporeally) generates the son,”¹⁵ **Or in other words, God the Father begets God the son in a nonbodily way without time. Hence God the Father is called “the Father,” because he generates or begets the Son, and God the Son is called “The Son” because he is begotten or generated by the father.**

Notice that there is no beginning or end of this begetting since this is outside of time. Sure, there can be a possibility that God can exist in some sort of super-time or God-time, but our human language cannot separate this super-time from normal words about time such as “when, before, and after.”¹⁶

Someone may say, “doesn’t begotten imply that the son is created?” and we must answer with an absolute No, but why? Let us think about this word “begotten,” or “beget” What comes through your mind when you hear this word? Genesis 1 when God commands all the animals of the earth and man and woman to be fruitful and multiply? Or perhaps the way that the

¹⁵ Gregory of Nazianzus, pg 70.

¹⁶ Ibid. pg 71.

birds, the fish, and the rest of God's creatures produce offspring? Or perhaps when your family begat your brothers or sisters? Or Even perhaps when you begat your own children with your spouse? The time, the desire, the hope, the distress, risk, failure, and success of it all? Is this begetting coming from nothing? I pray that we all answer no. Instead, just from contemplating nature and our family begetting we would agree that our children come from our own substance, or our own nature. Therefore, along with God's nature in mind, we should be comfortable in thinking about this relationship not creating division in God's nature whatsoever since begetting doesn't involve something coming from nothing and that God's nature is not divisible.

Someone may say, "Does being begotten make Christ inferior?" Or another may go to some scripture passage and say "if the Son is praying to the Father, does that mean he cannot be God?" These questions may be addressed by seeing the fallacy

that is within them. That **“A difference in function does not indicate an inferiority in nature, or a lesser nature.¹⁷”**

“I still don’t understand,” someone may say, “how is Christ begotten? I need to know exactly what this relationship is!” Let me ask you, do you have the guts to go up to your parents and ask them, “mom, dad, how did you exactly beget me.” Parents, do you have the guts to even answer that question?”

Gregory of Nazianzus said **“How has he been begotten – I re-utter that question with loathing. 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 the fact is hidden by a cloud and escapes your dull vision.¹⁸”**

The Procession of the Spirit.

¹⁷ James White, pg 66.

¹⁸ Gregory of Nazianzus, pg. 75-76.

Meanwhile, what is the spirit's relationship? Is the spirit Begotten? Unbegotten? Is the Spirit begotten from God the Son, and therefore God the Father has a grandson? What could be odder than that! Could there be a midway term between these two words "begotten" and "unbegotten?"

Let us hear from our best theologian, Jesus Christ. Let us turn to John 15:26. Christ said to the apostles, "**But when the helper comes, whom I will send to you from the father, the spirit of truth, who proceeds from the father, he will bear witness about me.**" Let us look at the word **proceed** here. The Greek word "ek-poreomai (ἐκπορεύμαι)" is commonly used to mean something in motion from one area to another, which can have indication of **place** (Ex: Mark 13:1 and while Jesus **is going out** of the temple) and or **goal** (Ex Luke 3:7 "the crowds that **came out** to be baptized by (john)). ek-poreomai can also mean "**to come forth from, to go out, or to proceed**" in imagery, of **things, words or thoughts**, especially when the phrase "**out of the mouth**" is added. For example, Paul says to the ephesians 4:29 "**Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths**" Or In

Matthew 4:4 Christ said, “**Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes out from the mouth of God.**” Or more indirectly in Mark 7:15 “**but the things that come out of a person are what defile him.**¹⁹”

This verb as used here in John 15:26 is a present tense verb, and is contrasted by the other verb in this passage “I will send,” or “*πεμπο(πέμπω)* in greek which is also used in John 14:26. Which says “**but the helper, the Holy Spirit, who the father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to remembrance all that I said to you.**” But what can we get out of “proceed” here which we cannot get from “send?” What we get is the source of the spirit, which is from the father, hence the spirit is the same nature as the father just as Christ is also the same nature as the father. This is perhaps why proceed in this context is a present tense, which according to Matthewson’s intermediate greek grammar, “The present tense represents a... more close-up view of an action (that is in

¹⁹ See this word in Bauer, Walter, and William F Arndt. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. (BDB) Edited by Frederick W Danker. Third ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

progress or unfolding)... which can be used in variety of temporal contexts.” While the present usually describes an action (or a doing) in a present time, in John 15:26, the present tense here can reflect an action that is timeless or omnitemporal, an ongoing action, or even just a general, basic, action,²⁰ all of which reflects that **the holy spirit always proceeds from of the father irrespective of time.**

Meanwhile “pempo”, or send in this same verse is in reference of a future action **in time** the Father and the Son will do after Christ goes to the Father^{21 22}.

Since the Spirit is always coming out of the father, through Christ, as a man speaking in words through breath, let us contemplate on this “proceeding” in Jesus’ life. “Christ Is born, the spirit is his forerunner (Luke 1:35), Christ is baptized, the

²⁰ See Mathewson, David, and Elodie Ballantine Emig. *Intermediate Greek Grammar : Syntax for Students of the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, a division of Baker Publishing Group, 2016), pg 125-130.

²¹Ibid, pg. 137-138.

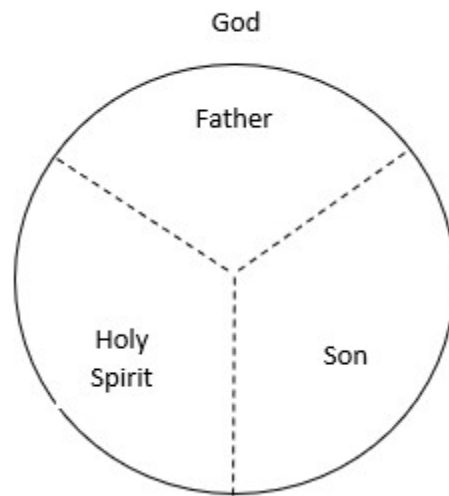
²² “how about the filioque, or the western variant of the Nicene creed that states “And in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceeds(ἐκπορεύεται) from the Father **And the Son.**” Although I won’t get into that rabbit hole of an issue, I’ll raise an interesting quote from John of Damascus on this, which he discusses that “The holy spirit is not a son of the father, but he is the spirit of the father proceeding from the father... and He is the spirit of the son, not as being from him, but as proceeding through him from the father, for the father alone is the cause.” (John of Damascus, pg. 196).

spirit descends from the father in heaven as a witness (Luke 3), Christ is tempted, and the spirit leads him up (Luke 4). Christ's performs miracles, and the spirit accompanies him (Matt 12:28) and is the finger of God (Luke 11:20). Christ ascends, and the spirit descends and fills his place (Acts 1-2). Do you notice that these facts help us give an intimate image, or type, of this "going out" or "proceeding" of the Holy Spirit is.

From hearing about these intimate interpersonal relations, How much then should we contemplate on God's perfection in these things so that we can refine our relationships like gold²³, learn to love your spouse, your children, and your parents, and worship together as one family body toward God?²⁴

²³ Some of you may be saying, "These personal relations begetting and proceeding are so boring, how are these relatable to me?" Let me ask you, do you take your parent's upbringing for granted, do you ever give thanks for all that your family did to beget your life and build you as you are. Do you ever think about the miracle, the mystery, on how you met your husband or wife and how you nurtured that and how you shared your hopes, fears, and even your most intimate parts of yourself? How your husband or wife proceeded from their family to the place where you met in your first date? Perhaps we even perceive these relations that God's persons have are so boring because they don't have any conflict, infighting, and abuse like our relationships.

²⁴ Some of you may be asking the question, "Sure 'proceeding' is a different word than begetting, but do they functionally mean the same?" Let's have scripture answer this question for us by contemplating on God's creation of Man. The first 4 chapters of Genesis describe the creation of the man and the woman and offspring of the man and woman, one of whom is Seth. Let's think of the following question: Did Seth and Eve come from the same Adam? Sure, And are Seth and Eve both Adam's offspring? Certainly not, since Eve is a portion of Adam, his rib, and Seth is an offspring. Here we have scripture showing us that there is certainly a case in which someone, Eve, can come from someone else, Adam, without begetting. Let us not be constrained by our philosophical assumptions but have our philosophy molded by God's word.



The Trinity in operation

Therefore, the trinity is best defined as the following, that within God, that is one essence, there exists three coeternal and coequal persons, who are the Father, The Son, and the Holy Spirit.

So why is this important to the gospel, and I would respond with "everything." James White has this to say about the gospel. "The Gospel is the means by which the father, in his eternal love and mercy, saves men through the redeeming work of the son, Jesus Christ, and draws them to himself by the power and regenerating work of the Spirit... Remove the Father

and you have no Gospel. **Remove the son, and the gospel ceases to exist. Remove the Spirit, and the gospel has no existence.** There is no separating the work of the triune God in salvation from the Truth of the trinity itself.”²⁵

Notice that if I separate the works, or the operations of the trinity, I destroy the gospel. I destroy the harmony of God’s work on creation, God’s work on the believer, God’s work on the atonement. hence theologians call this the inseparable operations of the trinity.

Let’s us now proceed to see these persons in action with prayer.²⁶ Let us turn to Romans 8 and let us read starting verse 16

¹⁶ The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and

²⁵ White, pg. 195.

²⁶ Let us turn to 2 Corinthians 1:21-22 “Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, 22 set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.” Notice how the Holy Spirit and Christ are distinct in this passage from God (who’s the father) but are operating to the same end: to guarantee what is to come, salvation and eternal life. Notice the different functions, or operations which are going on in this passage. Is God the father making us stand to Himself? No but to God the Christ. Is God the Son our deposit? No its God the Spirit who’s our deposit.

fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

O Christian, Why are we co-heirs with Christ, why are we the children of God? Why did Paul state this conclusion in Romans? let's follow his pattern of thought.

“¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. ¹⁹ For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him (that's Adam) who subjected it, in hope ...²² For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. ²³ And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

Paul presents an argument that just as creation is groaning, or sighing deeply for it's redemption, We also groan as we eagerly await for the end of our suffering, the consummation of our adoption into God's family, the resurrection. The Greek word

here for groaning, “stenazo(στενάζω)” is associated with expressions of discontentment, complaining, and even involuntary expressions in the face of undesirable circumstances, hence the word here being translated as to sigh or to groan²⁷.

How does God respond to our deep sighs, our quiet discontent, our groanings, our tears?

Paul answers, in verse 26 “likewise, or in such a similar way, the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit intercedes,²⁸ or makes earnest requests, for us with (stenagmos)groanings, sighs, quiet expressions of great concern or stress, tears, that are unutterable, unspeakable, too deep for words.”²⁷ And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

²⁷ This is the root word which the authors of the gospels described Jesus being very discontent with the pharisees such Mark 8:12 “and (Jesus) sighed deeply “Apostenazo (ἀποστενάζω)” in his spirit and said to the pharisees “Why does this generation seek a sign? Truly I say to you, no sign will be given in this generation.”

²⁸Greek Word ὑπερεντευγχάνω = ὑπερ – in behalf of εντευγχάνω – to make an earnest request, to pray. See BDB pg 341 & 1033.

The Holy Spirit here is not making the Christian in distress cry in tongues but he is interceding for our prayers for redemption, for restoration, for justice, even if we cannot utter the words to pray since we are consumed in our own emotional discontent, our groans, our tears. Christian, even if you have the worst prayer in the world that is mixed with so much of your own depravity and pain, or all your prayers are just tears and moans, the Holy Spirit will raise up the prostrate, strengthen the weak, and refresh the weary.²⁹ And this intercession is perfect, because the Father, who searches the heart knows the mind of the Spirit and the spirit knows the mind of Father, since they're the same mind yet distinct relationships hence the Spirit prays in behalf of the saints according to God's will in perfect harmony.³⁰

Where is Christ in the Intercession? We see Christ's work in verse 34. **“Who is to condemn, Christ Jesus is the one who died – more than that, who was raised, who is at the right hand of**

²⁹ See Jeremiah 31.

³⁰ See Charles Hodge for more in-depth exegesis of this passage. Hodge, Charles, Eds Packer, J.I, McGarth, Alister, *Romans, The Crossway Classic Commentaries*, Grand Rapids, MI Crossway, 1994

God, who indeed is interceding for us.” Although Paul here quickly skims Christ intercession for you, lets look to other places in scripture about this. Let us turn to Hebrews 4:14, which we read today. “Since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

“Notice here that Jesus is the high priest that sympathizes with your weaknesses, since he was tempted as you are in every respect, yet without sin.

Let us hear verse 7,

7 In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence.

What are Christ’s prayers and supplications, that were made with loud cries and tears, who did Christ prayed to, and was Christ heard? Doesn’t this passage instantly make you think

about Christ at the cross, when in Luke 23:46 Christ called out in a loud voice “Father into your hands I commit my spirit.” Or in Mark 15:34 when Christ cried in a loud voice “My God, my God why have you forsaken me?” So many faithful Christian scholars struggle with God in this passage and contemplate on Christ’s relationship to God the father here. I would ask humbly, if God the Father heard Christ’s prayers, did God the father really forsook the son? Some Christian scholars recognize that Christ in the gospels is referring to psalm 22 in mark and psalm 31 in Luke, but let me ask, is this a sufficient explanation why Christ said these passages?

While studying for this sermon, I found that Gregory of Nazianzus tackles this question with quite an interesting answer, which points us back to Christ’s substituting work at the Cross. He said,

“look at this fact: the one who releases me from the curse was called a curse because of me; ‘the one who takes away the world’s sin’ was called ‘sin’ and is made a new Adam to replace the old. In just this way too, as head of the whole body, he

appropriates my (lack) of submission. So long as I am an insubordinate rebel with passions to deny God, my [imperfect] submission will be (put on) Christ...“My God, My God, look upon me, why have you forsaken me? Seems to me to have the same kind of meaning. He is not forsaken by the father.... But expresses our condition. We had once been the forsaken and the disregarded; then we were accepted and now are saved by the sufferings of the (Son). He made our thoughtlessness and waywardness his own, just as psalm (22) says... Connected with this general view are the facts that ‘he learned obedience by the things which he suffered’ his ‘strong crying’ and ‘tears’ the fact that he “entreated that he was heard and he was God-fearing.³¹”

How beautiful is it that Christ took David’s prayers and made it his? How beautiful that Christ took your prayers of hopelessness, full of tears, deep sighs and groans and made it his? While the High priests of Aaron offered sacrifices of bulls and goats and confessed on them all the iniquities of the

³¹ Gregory of Nazianzus, pg. 96-97.

people of Israel and for his own sins,³² Christ the high priest offered his own body and put on his own body all of David's prayers, all the prayers of Moses, Aaron, all of the thoughtless and wayward prayers of our own. And this very act is a pleasing sacrifice, a pleasing aroma to God the Father. And All of this is ordained by God the father to work all things for good for the Christian, to have your prayers heard, and to answer you prayers effectively and perfectly to what you need.

(Let us now turn back to Romans 8:35 What shall the Christians respond to this? Paul said, **“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?”**³⁶ As it is written, **“For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”**

³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come,

³² See Leviticus 17:20-22

nor powers, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.)

However, how hopeless are you, oh man! You who doesn't believe in the gospel, You who don't trust in the triune God for your salvation! How will your prayers even be heard if you don't even know how to pray! What assurance do you have? Repent and believe in God the Holy Spirit and you will receive Him in you who will refine your prayers! Repent and believe in God the Son for your shortcomings in your prayers to be put on Him! Repent and believe in God the Father and trust in him to work all things good in your life through your prayers! You may say, The Trinity is so hard to understand, it will take a miracle for me to believe! Open your eyes to see, Open your ears to hear. See his Glory, hear his Word! Cry out to God "Help my unbelief!" Cry out to him in sighs, groans and tears, cling to his Cross, cling to his good news, and God will surely hear your prayer.

What is The Trinity

Closing prayer

John 17. Or Valley of Vision – The Trinity.

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