

Trinitarian/Christological Heresies

Heresy	Description	Origin	Official Condemnation	Other
Adoptionism	<p>Belief that Jesus was born as a mere (non-divine) man, was supremely virtuous and that he was adopted later as "Son of God" by the descent of the Spirit on him.</p>	<p>Propounded by Theodotus of Byzantium, a leather merchant, in Rome c.190, later revived by Paul of Samosata</p>	<p>Theodotus was excommunicated by Pope Victor and Paul was condemned by the Synod of Antioch in 268</p>	<p>Alternative names: Psilanthropism and Dynamic Monarchianism.^[9] Later criticized as presupposing Nestorianism (see below)</p>
Apollinarism	<p>Belief that Jesus had a human body and lower soul (the seat of the emotions) but a divine mind. Apollinaris further taught that the souls of men were propagated by other souls, as well as their bodies.</p>	<p>proposed by Apollinaris of Laodicea (died 390)</p>	<p>Declared to be a heresy in 381 by the First Council of Constantinople</p>	<p>.</p>
Arianism	<p>Denial of the true divinity of Jesus</p>	<p>The doctrine is associated</p>	<p>Arius was first pronounced</p>	<p>All forms denied that Jesus Christ</p>

	<p>Christ taking various specific forms, but all agreed that Jesus Christ was created by the Father, that he had a beginning in time, and that the title "Son of God" was a courtesy one.^[10]</p>	<p>with Arius (ca. AD 250—336) who lived and taught in Alexandria, Egypt.</p>	<p>a heretic at the First Council of Nicaea, he was later exonerated as a result of imperial pressure and finally declared a heretic after his death. The heresy was finally resolved in 381 by the First Council of Constantinople.</p>	<p>is "consubstantial with the Father" but proposed either "similar in substance", or "similar", or "dissimilar" as the correct alternative.</p>
<p>Docetism</p>	<p>Belief that Jesus' physical body was an illusion, as was his crucifixion; that is, Jesus only seemed to have a physical body and to physically die, but in reality he was incorporeal, a pure spirit, and hence could not physically die</p>	<p>Tendencies existed in the 1st century, but it was most notably embraced by Gnostics in subsequent centuries.</p>	<p>Docetism was rejected by the ecumenical councils and mainstream Christianity, and largely died out during the first millennium AD.</p>	<p>Gnostic movements that survived past that time, such as Catharism, incorporated docetism into their beliefs, but such movements were destroyed by the Albigensian Crusade (1209–1229).</p>
<p>Luciferians</p>	<p>Strongly anti-Arian sect in Sardinia</p>	<p>Founded by Lucifer Calaritanus a bishop of Cagliari</p>	<p>Deemed heretical by Jerome in his <i>Altercatio Luciferiani et orthodoxi</i></p>	

<p>Macedonians or Pneumatomachs ("Spirit fighters")</p>	<p>While accepting the divinity of Jesus Christ as affirmed at Nicea in 325, they denied that of the Holy Spirit which they saw as a creation of the Son, and a servant of the Father and the Son</p>	<p>Allegedly founded in 4th century by Bishop Macedonius I of Constantinople, Eustathius of Sebaste was their principal theologian.^[11]</p>	<p>Opposed by the Cappadocian Fathers and condemned at the First Council of Constantinople.</p>	<p>This is what prompted the addition of "And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, Who proceedeth from the Father, Who with the Father and the Son is equally worshipped and glorified, Who spake by the Prophets," into the Nicene Creed at the second ecumenical council.</p>
<p>Melchisedechians</p>	<p>Considered Melchisedech an incarnation of the Logos (divine Word) and identified him with the Holy Ghost</p>		<p>Refuted by Marcus Eremita in his book <i>Eis ton Melchisedek</i> ("Against the Melchisedekites")^[12]</p>	<p>It is uncertain whether the sect survived beyond the 9th century. They were probably scattered across Anatolia and the Balkans following the destruction of Tephrike.</p>
<p>Monarchianism</p>	<p>An overemphasis on the indivisibility of God (the Father) at the expense of the other "persons" of the Trinity leading</p>			<p>Stressing the "monarchy" of God was in Eastern theology a legitimate way of affirming his oneness. also the</p>

	to either Sabellianis (Modalism) or to Adoptionism .			Father as the unique source of divinity. It became heretical when pushed to the extremes indicated.
Monophysitism or Eutychianism	Belief that Christ's divinity dominates and overwhelms his humanity, as opposed to the Chalcedonian position which holds that Christ has two natures, one divine and one human or the Miaphysite position which holds that the human nature and pre-incarnate divine nature of Christ were united as one divine human nature from the point of the Incarnation onwards.	After Nestorianism was rejected at the First Council of Ephesus , Eutyches emerged with diametrically opposite views.	Eutyches was excommunicated in 448. Monophysitism and Eutyches were rejected at the Council of Chalcedon in 451. Monophysitism is also rejected by the Oriental Orthodox Churches	
Monothelitism	Belief that Jesus Christ had two natures but only one will. This is contrary to the orthodox interpretation of	Originated in Armenia and Syria in AD 633	Monothelitism was officially condemned at the Third Council of Constantinople (the Sixth Ecumenical	

	<p>Christology, which teaches that Jesus Christ has two wills (human and divine) corresponding to his two natures</p>		<p>Council, 680–681). The churches condemned at Constantinople include the Oriental Orthodox Syriac, Armenian, and Coptic churches as well as the Maronite church, although the latter now deny that they ever held the Monothelite view and are presently in full communion with the Bishop of Rome. Christians in England rejected the Monothelite position at the Council of Hatfield in 680.</p>	
<p>Nestorianism</p>	<p>Belief that Jesus Christ was a separate human united, but not identical, to the divine Son of God.</p>	<p>Advanced by Nestorius (386–450), Patriarch of Constantinople from 428–431. The doctrine was informed by Nestorius' studies under Theodore of Mopsuestia at the School of</p>	<p>Condemned at the First Council of Ephesus in 431 and the Council of Chalcedon in 451, leading to the Nestorian Schism.</p>	<p>Nestorius rejected the title Theotokos for the Virgin Mary, and proposed Christotokos as more suitable. Many of Nestorius' supporters relocated to Sassanid Persia.</p>

		Antioch.		where they affiliated with the local Christian community, known as the Church of the East . Over the next decades the Church of the East became increasingly Nestorian in doctrine, leading it to be known alternately as the Nestorian Church.
Patripassianism	Belief that the Father and Son are not two distinct persons, and thus God the Father suffered on the cross as Jesus.			similar to Sabellianism
Psilanthropism	Belief that Jesus is "merely human": either that he never became divine, or that he never existed prior to his incarnation as a man.		Rejected by the ecumenical councils , especially in the First Council of Nicaea , which was convened to deal directly with the nature of Christ's divinity.	See Adoptionism
Sabellianism	Belief that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three _____	First formally stated by Noetus of Smyrna c.190, refined by Sabellius	Noetus was condemned by the presbyters of Smyrna. Tertullian	Alternative names: Patripassianism , Modalism, Modalistic _____

	characterizations of one God, rather than three distinct "persons" in one God.	c.210 who applied the names merely to different roles of God in the history and economy of salvation.	wrote <i>Adversus Praxeam</i> against this tendency and Sabellius was condemned by Pope Callistus.	Monarchianism
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Gnosticism

[Gnosticism](#) refers to a diverse, [syncretistic religious movement](#) consisting of various [belief systems](#) generally united in the teaching that humans are divine [souls](#) trapped in a [material world](#) created by an imperfect god, the [demiurge](#), who is frequently identified with the [Abrahamic God](#). Gnosticism is a rejection (sometimes from an [ascetic](#) perspective) and vilification of the human body and of the [material world](#) or [cosmos](#). Gnosticism teaches duality in Material (Matter) versus Spiritual or Body (evil) versus Soul (good). Gnosticism teaches that the natural or material world will and should be destroyed (total [annihilation](#)) by the true spiritual God in order to free mankind from the reign of the false God or Demiurge.

A common misperception is caused by the fact that, in the past, "[Gnostic](#)" had a similar meaning to current usage of the word [mystic](#). There were some Orthodox Christians who as mystics (in the modern sense) taught [gnosis](#) (Knowledge of the God or the Good) who could be called gnostics in a positive sense (e.g. [Diadochos of Photiki](#)).

Whereas formerly Gnosticism was considered mostly a corruption of Christianity, it now seems clear that traces of Gnostic systems can be discerned some centuries before the Christian Era.^[13] Gnosticism may have been earlier than the 1st century, thus predating Jesus Christ.^[14] It spread through the [Mediterranean](#) and [Middle East](#) before and during the 2nd and 3rd centuries, becoming a [dualistic heresy](#) to Judaism (see [Notzrim](#)), Christianity and [Hellenic philosophy](#) in areas controlled by the [Roman Empire](#) and [Arian](#) Goths (see [Huneric](#)), and the [Persian Empire](#). Conversion to [Islam](#) and the [Albigensian Crusade](#) (1209–1229) greatly reduced the remaining number of Gnostics throughout the [Middle Ages](#), though a few isolated communities continue to exist to the present. Gnostic ideas became influential in the philosophies of various [esotericmystical](#) movements of the late 19th and 20th Centuries in [Europe](#) and [North America](#), including some that explicitly identify themselves as revivals or even continuations of earlier gnostic groups.

Gnostic Heresies

Heresy	Description	Origin	Official Condemnation	Other
Manichaeism	A major dualistic religion stating that good and evil are equally powerful, and that material things are evil.	Founded in 210–276 AD by Mani	Condemned by Emperor Theodosius I decree in 382	Thrived between the 3rd and 7th centuries and appears to have died out before the 16th century in southern China.
Paulicianism	A Gnostic and dualistic sect	The founder of the sect is said to have been an Armenian by the name of Constantine , ^[15] who hailed from Mananalis , a community near Samosata .	Repressed by order of Emperess Theodora II in 843	
Priscillianism	A Gnostic and Manichaean sect	Founded in the 4th century by Priscillian , derived from the Gnostic-Manichaean doctrines taught	Condemned by synod of Zaragoza in 380.	Increased during the 5th century despite efforts to stop it. In the 6th century.

		by <i>Marcus</i> . Priscillian was put to death by the emperor Gratian for the crime of magic.		Priscillianism declined and died out soon after the Synod of Braga in 563.
Naassenes	A Gnostic sect from around 100 A.D.	The Naassenes claimed to have been taught their doctrines by Mariamne , a disciple of James the Just . ^[16]	Dealt as heresy by Hippolytus of Rome	
Sethian	Belief that the snake in the Garden of Eden (Satan) was an agent of the true God and brought knowledge of truth to man via the fall of man	Syrian sect drawing their origin from the Ophites	Dealt as heresy by Irenaeus, Hippolytus, and Philaster	Sect is founded around the Apocalypse of Adam .
Ophites	Belief that the serpent (Satan) who tempted Adam and Eve was a hero, and that the God who forbade Adam and Eve to eat from the		Dealt as heresy by Hippolytus of Rome	

	tree of knowledge is the enemy.			
Valentianism	A Gnostic and dualistic sect	Gnostic sect was founded by Ex-Catholic Bishop Valentinus	Considered heresy by Irenaeus and Epiphanius of Salamis	

Other Early Church Heresies

Other Christian heresies

Heresy	Description	Origin	Official Condemnation	Other
Antinomianism	Any view which holds that Christians are freed by grace from obligations of any moral law . St Paul had to refute a charge of this type made by opponents because of his attitude to the Mosaic Law (Romans 3:8) ^[17]	Some gnostics (e.g. Ophites and Nicolaitans) taught that since matter was opposed to the spirit, the body was unimportant. Similar views were found among some anabaptists in the sixteenth century as a consequence of justification by faith and later among some sects in seventeenth century England.	Decree on Justification, chapter XV Council of Trent	Few groups ^[who?] have declared themselves Antinomian, and the term has often been used by one group to criticize another's views.
Audianism	Belief that God has human form (anthropomorphism) and that one ought to celebrate Jesus' death during the Jewish Passover (quartodecimanism).	Named after the leader of the sect, Audius (or Audaeus), a Syrian who lived in the 4th century.	The First Council of Nicaea condemned quartodecimanism in 325. Cyril of Alexandria condemned anthropomorphism at his <i>Adversus</i>	

	(quartodecimanism).		<i>Anthropomorphites</i>	
Circumcellions	A militant subset of Donatism*	<i>See Donatism.</i>	Outlawed by Emperor Honorius in 408	Relied on violence.
Donatism *	Donatists were rigorists, holding that the church must be a church of saints, not sinners, and that sacraments administered by traditores were invalid. They also regarded martyrdom as the supreme Christian virtue and regarded those that actively sought martyrdom as saints.	Named for their second leader Donatus Magnus	Condemned by Pope Melchiades	Donatists were a force at the time of Saint Augustine of Hippo and disappeared only after the Arab conquest. ^[18]
Ebionites	A Jewish sect that insisted on the necessity of following Jewish law and rites , ^[19] which they interpreted in light of Jesus ' expounding of the Law '. ^[20] They regarded Jesus as the Messiah but not as divine .	The term <i>Ebionites</i> derives from the Hebrew אביונים Evionim, meaning "the Poor Ones", ^{[21][22]}	Justin Martyr considered them heretical at <i>Dialogue with Trypho the Jew</i> chapter xlvii	In 375, Epiphanius records the settlement of Ebionites on Cyprus, later Theodoret of Cyrrhus reported that they were no longer present there. ^[23]
Euchites /	Belief that:	Originating in	Bishop Flavian of	The group might

<p><u>Messalians</u></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The essence (<u>ousia</u>) of the Trinity could be perceived by the carnal senses. 2. The Threefold God transformed himself into a single <u>hypostasis</u> (substance) in order to unite with the souls of the perfect. 3. God has taken different forms in order to reveal himself to the senses. 4. Only such sensible revelations of God confer perfection upon the Christian. 5. The state of perfection, freedom from the world and passion, is attained solely by prayer, not through the church or sacraments. ("Euchites" means "Those who pray") 	<p><u>Mesopotamia</u>, they spread to <u>Asia Minor</u> and <u>Thrace</u>.</p>	<p>Antioch condemned them about 376</p>	<p>have continued for several centuries, influencing the Bogomils of Bulgaria, the Bosnian church, the Paterenes and <u>Catharism</u>.^[24]</p>
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<p>Iconoclasm</p>	<p>The belief that icons are idols and should be destroyed.^[25]</p>	<p>From late in the seventh century onwards some parts of the Greek Church reacted against the veneration of icons. In 726 the Emperor Leo III ordered the destruction of all icons and persecuted those who refused. The policy continued under his successors till about 780. Later Leo V launched a second attempt which continued till the death of the emperor Theophilus in 842</p>	<p>Condemned by Nicea II in 787 which regulated the veneration</p>	<p>Leo III may have been motivated by the belief that the veneration of icons was particularly in excess of what was often taken, which was a chief obstacle to the conversion of the East and Moslem</p>
<p>Marcionism</p>	<p>An Early Christian dualist belief system. Marcion affirmed Jesus Christ as the savior sent by God and Paul as his chief apostle, but he rejected the Hebrew Bible and the Hebrew God. Marcionists believed that the wrathful Hebrew God was a separate and lower entity than the all-forgiving God of the New Testament. This belief was in some ways similar</p>	<p>Originates in the teachings of Marcion of Sinope at Rome around the year 144.^[26]</p>	<p>Many early apologists, such as Tertullian on his <i>Adversus Marcionem</i> (year 207) condemned Marcionism</p>	<p>Marcionism continued in the West for 300 years although Marcionistic Christianity persisted much longer.^[27] Marcionism continued in the East for several centuries later</p>

	to Gnostic Christian theology, but in other ways different.			
Montanism	<p>The beliefs of Montanism contrasted with orthodox Christianity in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The belief that the prophecies of the Montanists superseded and fulfilled the doctrines proclaimed by the Apostles. • The encouragement of ecstatic prophesying. • The view that Christians who fell from grace could not be redeemed. • A stronger emphasis on the avoidance of sin and church discipline, emphasizing chastity, including forbidding remarriage. • Some of the Montanists were also "Quartodeciman".^[28] 	<p>Named for its founder Montanus, Montanism originated at Hierapolis. It spread rapidly to other regions in the Roman Empire during the period before Christianity was generally tolerated or legal.</p>	<p>The churches of Asia Minor excommunicated Montanism^[29] Around 177, Apollinarius, Bishop of Hierapolis, presided over a synod which condemned the New Prophecy.^[30] The leaders of the churches of Lyon and Vienna in Gaul responded to the New Prophecy in 177</p>	<p>Although the orthodox mainstream Christian church prevailed against Montanism within a few generations, labeling it a heresy, the sect persisted in some isolated places into the 4th century.</p>

<p>Pelagianism</p>	<p>Belief that original sin did not taint human nature and that mortal will is still capable of choosing good or evil without Divine aid.</p>	<p>Named after Pelagius (ad. 354 – ad. 420/440). The theology was later developed by C(a)elestius and Julian of Eclanum into a complete system.^[31] and refuted by Augustine of Hippo (who had for a time (385-395) held similar opinions^[32]) but his final position never gained general acceptance in the East.</p>	<p>Pelagianism was attacked in the Council of Diospolis^[33] and condemned in 418 at the Council of Carthage.,^[34] and the decision confirmed at the Council of Ephesus in 431.</p>	
<p>Semipelagianism</p>	<p>A rejection of Pelagianism which held that Augustine had gone too far to the other extreme and taught that grace aided free-will rather than replacing it.</p>	<p>Such views were advanced by Prosper and Hilary of Aquitaine, John Cassian and Vincent of Lérins in the west.</p>	<p>Condemned by the Council of Orange in 529 which slightly weakened some of Augustine's more extreme statements.^[35]</p>	<p>The label "Semipelagianism" dates from the seventeenth century.</p>

* Donatism is often spoken of as a "schism" rather than a "heresy"^[36]

Medieval

Medieval heresies

Heresy	Description	Origin	Official Condemnation	Other
Bogomils	A Gnostic dualistic sect that was both Adoptionist and Manichaeian . Their beliefs were a synthesis of Armenian Paulicianism and the Bulgarian Slavonic Church reform movement.	Emerged in Bulgaria between 927 and 970 and spread into Byzantine Empire , Serbia, Bosnia, Italy and France.		
Catharism	Catharism had its roots in the Paulician movement in Armenia and the Bogomils of Bulgaria, with a strong dualist influence against the physical world, regarded as evil, thus denied that Jesus could become incarnate and still be the son of God.	First appeared in the Languedoc region of France in the 11th century and flourished in the 12th and 13th centuries. Catharism had its roots in the Paulician and the Bogomils with whom the Paulicians merged.	Condemned by papal bull Ad abolendam	After several decades of harassment and re-proselytizing, and the systematic destruction of their scripture, the sect was exhausted and could find no more adepts. The last known Cathar prefect in the Languedoc, Guillaume Béliaste , was executed in 1321.
Free Spirit	Mixed mystical beliefs with Christianity. Its practitioners		condemned at the Council of	Small groups living mostly in Bohemia .

	<p>believed that it was possible to reach perfection on earth through a life of austerity and spiritualism. They believed that they could communicate directly with God and did not need the Christian church for intercession.</p>		Basel in 1431	now the Czech Republic , during the 14th and 15th centuries.
<p>Fratricelli (Spiritual Franciscans)</p>	<p>Extreme proponents of the rule of Saint Francis of Assisi, especially with regard to poverty, and regarded the wealth of the Church as scandalous, and that of individual churchmen as invalidating their status.</p>	<p>Appeared in the 14th and 15th centuries, principally in Italy</p>	<p>Declared heretical by the Church in 1296 by Boniface VIII.</p>	
<p>Henricians</p>	<p>According to Peter of Cluny, Henry's teaching is summed up as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rejection of the doctrinal and disciplinary authority of the church; • Recognition of the Gospel freely interpreted as the sole rule of faith; • Refusal to recognize any form of worship or liturgy; and • Condemnation of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the baptism of infants, • the Eucharist, • the sacrifice of the Mass, • the communion of saints, and 	<p>Henry of Lausanne lived in France in the first half of the 12th century. His preaching began around 1116 and he died imprisoned around 1148.</p>	<p>In a letter written at the end of 1146, St Bernard calls upon the people of Toulouse to extirpate the last remnants of the heresy.</p>	<p>In 1151 some Henricians still remained in Languedoc, for Matthew Paris relates that a young girl, who gave herself out to be miraculously inspired by the Virgin Mary, was reputed to have converted a great number of the disciples of Henry of Lausanne.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> prayers for the dead; 			
Triclavianism	Belief that three, rather than four nails were used to crucify Christ and that a Roman soldier pierced him with a spear on the left, rather than right side.	Attributed to Albigenses and Waldenses	Supposedly condemned by Pope Innocent III , but most likely never actually considered a heresy by said Pope. ^[37]	
Waldensians (Waldenses or Vaudois)	A spiritual movement of the later Middle Ages	Begun by Peter Waldo , a wealthy merchant who decided to give up all his worldly possessions and began to preach on the streets of Lyon in 1177. ^[38]	Condemned by papal bull Ad abolendam	Waldensians endured near annihilation in the 17th century. Descendants of this movement still exist. Over time, the denomination joined the Genevan or Reformed branch of Protestantism .