

From Thoughts About God

... To The Afterlife

(parts 3 & 4 ... of 8)

# Development of Thought

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Do the three “Abrahamic” faiths understand ... God ... in exactly the same way? Do Jews ... Christians ... and Muslims ... worship the same God?

There is a distinct [chronology to the development](#) of thought in Judaism ... Christianity ... and Islam.

- There are 1300+ years between the Sinai event and the emergence of Christianity.
- There are ~600 years from the emergence of Christianity to the emergence of Islam.

Issues:

- Are our beliefs about the afterlife compatible with our understanding of God?
- In Judaism ... Christianity ... Islam ... developed beliefs established vastly different criteria for “eternal” reward or punishment. Can the God who “revealed” these criteria (in scripture) possibly be the “same God”?

# Thoughts about G-d



Judaism

# God

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A God of Creation ...

A God of Nature ...

A God of the Mountain(s) ...

A God of War ... Protector of Israel

A Merciless God ... with those who are not His people ...

Where ... exactly ... is “Ethical Monotheism” ??

# A God of Personal Encounter

# Toward Monotheism

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- *“Thus saith HaShem, the G-d of Israel: Your fathers dwelt of old time beyond the River, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nahor; and they served other gods.”* (Joshua 24:2)

Abram’s family ... of Ur of the Chaldeans ... was polytheist.

- *“When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son. The more they called them, the more they went from them; they sacrificed unto the Baalim, and offered to graven images.”* (Hosea 10:1-2)

Even after the Sinai event ... and the occupation of the land God promised ... the people worshipped the gods of the Canaanites.

From Abraham (19<sup>th</sup> cent BCE) ... to Moses (13<sup>th</sup> cent BCE) ... to Hosea (8<sup>th</sup> cent BCE) ... from polytheism ... to henotheism ... to idolatry ...

# Monotheism

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Monotheism has a long development ... greatly impacted by the relationships that the Jews had with surrounding peoples ... and their own political ... cultural development.

Some argue today ... that monotheism did not predominate ... even in Judaism ... until the time of the Babylonian Captivity.

- Priestly creation story (Genesis 1:1 – 2:3)

# God's Love of Israel

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*“When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.*

*God is the God who called his people out of the land of Egypt.*

*The more I called them, the more they went from me; they kept sacrificing to the Baals, and offering incense to idols.*

*But now you worship other gods.*

*Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk, I took them up in my arms; but they did not know that I healed them. I led them with cords of human kindness, with bands of love.*

*I was to them like those who lift infants to their cheeks. I bent down to them and fed them.*

*I am your parent(s) ... Father and Mother ... but ...*

*They shall return to the land of Egypt, and Assyria shall be their king, because they have refused to return to me.” (Hosea 11:1-5)*



# God ... Remembers

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But God reminisces ... remembers how much he loved Israel ... but was let down ... disappointed.

*“I remember the devotion of your youth, your **love as a bride**, how you followed me in the wilderness, in a land not sown. Israel was holy to the Lord, the first fruits of his harvest. All who ate of it were held guilty; disaster came upon them, says the Lord.”* (Jeremiah 2:2-3)

*“I thought how I would **set you among my children**, and give you a pleasant land, the most beautiful heritage of all the nations. And I thought you would call me, **My Father**, and would not turn from following me. Instead, **as a faithless wife** leaves her husband, so you have been faithless to me, O house of Israel, says the Lord.* (Jeremiah 3:19-20)

# Israel

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*“I will return again to my place until they acknowledge their guilt and seek my face. In their distress they will beg my favor: “Come, let us return to the Lord; for it is he who has torn, and he will heal us; he has struck down, and he will bind us up.” (Hosea 5:15 - 6:1)*

*But God reconsiders ... how can he destroy ... or hide from ... Israel.*

*“How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, O Israel? My heart recoils within me; my compassion grows warm and tender. I will not execute my fierce anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim; for I am God and no mortal, the Holy One in your midst, and I will not come in wrath.” (Hosea 11:8-9)*

# Ritual Sacrifice

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*“Even though you offer me your burnt-offerings and grain-offerings, I will not accept them; and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals I will not look upon.*

*Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps.*

*But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.* (Amos 5:22-24)

Things had gotten so bad in the Kingdom of Israel (8<sup>th</sup> cent BCE) during this time of prosperity that God makes it clear that he doesn't even want the sacrifices ... that His own law demands (in the Torah).

Prayers and supplications are good and acceptable ... only if the heart is pure ... and the intention is righteous.

# Micah

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Micah ... by his knowledge of God ... answers the most urgent question of religious existence.

*“With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high?*

*Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves a year old?*

*Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with tens of thousands of rivers of oil?*

*Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?’*

*He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”* (Micah 6:6-8)

# God

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A God of Creation ...

A God of Nature ...

A God of the Mountain(s) ...

A God of War ... Protector of Israel ... Tribal God

A Merciless God ... with those who are not His people ...

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Counselor ... warning ... forgiving

Making covenant

Loving

Father ... Mother ... Bridegroom

A God of emotion ... caring ... requiring justice and compassion

# Monotheism

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שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד

Hear, O Israel: the Lord is our God, the Lord is One

(Deuteronomy 6:4)

In Judaism, one of the most common names applied to God in the post Biblical period is "*Ha-Kadosh, Baruch Hu*" (The Holy One, Blessed be He)

*Kadosh, Kadosh, Kadosh* ... holy, holy, holy

... but a better translation ... *The Other, The Other, The Other*

God is “wholly other,” too different from created beings to be “discussed” with language and in anthropomorphic terms.

# Christian Christological/ Trinitarian development



How does Jesus fit?

# The Issue

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- Here, O Israel! The Lord our God, the Lord is one!  
(Deuteronomy 6:4)
- But ... the Christian gospels seem to imply that Jesus speaks for God (like a prophet) ... is the Son of God in some special way (by nature ... or by adoption?) ... is a god ... or is God.
- Christians from the very beginning (as a sect of Judaism) were certainly monotheists ... but then how does Jesus relate to the One, True God ... the God of Israel ... the one he calls Father (*Abba*)?



# God as Trinity

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- Most Christians today are associated with Trinitarian denominations/sects ... but not all ...
- Some denominations that are called ... considered to be Christian ... but are not Trinitarian ... include: Christian Scientists, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), Jehovah's Witnesses, United Church of God ...
- Roman Catholics ... Eastern Orthodox ... most Protestants ... are Trinitarian ... but with subtle ... some would say ... differences in understanding of the doctrine.
- Within Christianity today ... many beliefs condemned as heresies well over a millennium ago ... are alive ... but simply appear under different names. Most of these “alternative Christianities” have to do with varying Christologies ... who was (is) Jesus?

# Earliest *Kerygma*

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In the earliest believers, there was no formal creed, no developed Christology, no New Testament, just the preaching of the earliest disciples that **Jesus is the Messiah, Son of God, and that the Kingdom of God is, in fact, at hand.**

- Gospels written between ... ~ 66 - 96 CE.
- Pauline epistles written ... ~ 51 - 66 CE.
- New Testament, as a canon, emerges in 2<sup>nd</sup> century, not formally agreed to until 4<sup>th</sup> century.
- Ecumenical Councils called to treat emerging heresy don't begin until 325 CE.
- Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed not completed until 381 CE.

So then, how did the earliest followers of Jesus perceive him ... before creedal statements ... written gospels ... and formal Christologies?

# Development of the Gospels

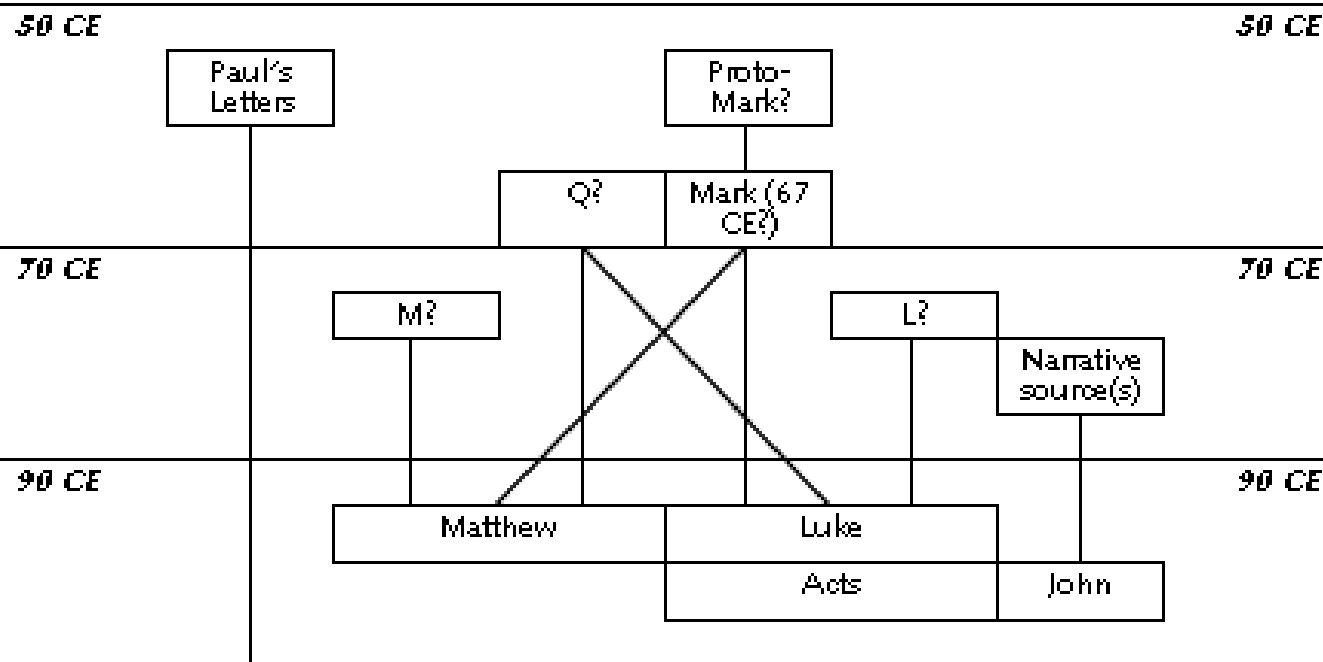
## The Formation of the Gospels

Jesus (4 BCE – 29 CE)

Stories about sayings of Jesus



Oral period, 30-50 CE and beyond



# The Gospel

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**Irenaeus of Lyons** (~ 120 – 190 CE) ... argued for the use of “**the fourfold gospel.**” Before Irenaeus, Christians differed as to which gospel they preferred. The Christians of Asia Minor preferred the Gospel of John. The Gospel of Matthew was the most popular overall. Irenaeus asserted that four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, were all canonical scripture.

The Gospels tell much the same story ... but in different ways.  
The gospel authors are each writing to a rather specific target audience ... with different backgrounds (Jew and gentile) ... knowledge of Hebrew scriptures ... and worldview.

# The Story of Jesus

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As testimony to Jesus' story, the gospels are rather distinct. They do not present a completely clear or consistent picture ... easily understandable.

- In Mark ... Jesus is a rebel ... challenging the authority of the people's leaders and even demonic powers.
- In Matthew ... Jesus is a rabbi ... a teacher and interpreter of the law and the long awaited fulfillment of Jewish expectation.
- In Luke ... Jesus is a prophet ... a heroic and compassionate social revolutionary whose followers are God's "chosen people" as prophesied in the Hebrew scriptures.
- In John ... Jesus is otherworldly ... divine ... and calls his followers to be transformed by the God of all creation.

# Who is Jesus?

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“Now these traditions cannot be harmonized among themselves on purely scriptural principles. They each represent a different Christological idea. But the early Church will attempt to harmonize them by making one of them dominant, namely, the idea of incarnation contained in John’s prologue.”

*Word Become Flesh ... Dimensions of Christology ...* Brian McDermott S.J.

# Jesus of the Gospel

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“How then was Jesus perceived by the villagers who saw and heard him? All the evidence ... suggests that he was perceived as a *prophet*. ... The stories he told, and acted out, made it clear that he envisaged his own work as bringing Israel’s history to its fateful climax. He really did believe he was inaugurating the kingdom.”

N. T. Wright

# Jesus as ... Divine

But how?



# The Gospel of John

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In the Gospel of John ... the most theological of all the gospels ... John seems to be making an unequivocal theological statement in the Prologue (first 18 verses of the gospel).

*“In the beginning was the **Logos**, and the **Logos** was with God, and the **Logos** was God.*

*He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made.”*

*“And the **Logos** became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of **the only Son from the Father.**”*

(John 1:1-3 & 14)

The Logos ... a Greek philosophical concept ... a **power** of God that created ... for God ... (non-personified).

John adds ... took on flesh ... and “pitched his tent among us for a time.”

# The *Logos* and Creation

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## Philo of Alexandria (~20 BCE – ~50 BCE)

- The **direct** agent of creation is not God himself.
- The *Logos* executes creation for God since God cannot come into contact with matter.

“For it is out of that essence that God created everything, without indeed touching it himself, for it was not lawful for the all-wise and all-blessed God to touch materials which were all misshapen and confused, but he created them by the **agency of his incorporeal powers, of which the proper name is Logos ...**”

To Philo ... the Logos was an impersonal power.

To John ... of the Gospel of John ... The Logos “becomes flesh” in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

# Understanding *Logos*

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- The Logos has an origin, but as **God's thought** it also has eternal generation. It exists before everything else ... all of which are secondary products of God's thought and therefore it is called the "first-born." The Logos is thus, more than a quality, power, or a characteristic of God; it is **an entity eternally generated as an extension**, to which Philo ascribes many names and functions.
- Uninitiated minds are unable to apprehend the Existent by itself; they only perceive it through its actions. To them God appears as a Triad -- himself and his two Powers: Creative and Ruling. To the "purified soul," however, God appears as One.

Encyclopedia of Philosophy

# Jesus ... as Divine

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The Gospel of John goes even further in its claims ...

- *“I and the Father are one.”* (John 10:30-31)
  - and they took up stones to stone him...
- *“Truly I say to you, before Abraham was born, I Am.”* (John 8:53-59)
  - “So they picked up stones to throw at him.”
  - Exodus 3:14 (“I am who am.”)

Is Jesus claiming to be fully Divine (God) ... preexistent ... from the Father ... in full union with him?

- This would later be described as being one in essence (*homoousious*) ... as the Father.
- Thomas states, *“My Lord and my God.”* (John 20:28)

# Father and Son ... Equal?

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- “... I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but *the will of him who sent me.*” (John 6:38)
- “A certain ruler asked him, ‘Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?’ Jesus said to him, ‘Why do you call me good? *No one is good but God alone.*’” (Luke 18:18-19)
- “... just as the Father has life in himself, so *he has granted the Son also to have life in himself ...*” (John 5:26)
- “... I seek to do not my own will but *the will of him who sent me.*” (John 5:30)
- “... *the Father is greater than I.*” (John 14:28b)
- “... I do as *the Father has commanded me,* so that the world may know that I love the Father.” (John 14:31a)

# “Trinitarian Doxologies”

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- *“The grace of the **Lord Jesus Christ**, and the love of **God**, and the communion of the **Holy Spirit** be with you all.” (2 Corinthians 13:14)*
- *“That I might be a minister of **Jesus Christ** to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of **God**, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the **Holy Spirit**.” (Romans 15:16)*
- *“Now I beg you, brethren, through the **Lord Jesus Christ**, and through the love of the **Spirit**, that you strive together with me in prayers to **God** for me.” (Romans 15:30)*
- *“But you, beloved, building yourself up on your most holy faith, praying in the **Holy Spirit**, keep yourself in the love of **God**, looking for the mercy of your Lord **Jesus Christ** unto eternal life.” (Jude 20-21)*
- *“... elect according to the fore-knowledge of **God the Father**, in sanctification of the **Spirit**, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of **Jesus Christ**.” (1 Peter 1:2)*

# Christology

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Early *kerygma*:

- “Jesus of Nazareth, *a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you ...*” (Acts 2:22)
- “*God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.*” (Acts 10:38)
- “*... God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself ...*” (2 Corinthians 5:19)

Many argue that the earliest and clearest reference to the Trinity as such is in Matthew (28:19):

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

# Christology

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But ... the earliest “church” ... from biblical sources ... did not use this “Trinitarian formula” ... in baptism.

- “Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and **be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ** so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’” (Acts 2:38)
- “*So he [Peter] ordered them to be **baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.***” (Acts 10:48)
- “*... they were **baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.***” (Paul was present) (Acts 19:5b)
- “*Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. The two went down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit (for as yet the Spirit had not fallen upon any of them; **they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus**). Then Peter and John laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.*” (Acts 8:14-17)



# Who is Jesus?

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- “The New Testament contained texts that manifestly subordinated Jesus the Son to God the Father, and yet included other texts indicating that Christ could be worshipped as “Lord and God.” It would not do simply to quote Scripture in order to clarify Scripture.”
- “The transition from a New Testament way of speaking about Jesus Christ to a post-biblical, philosophical one has often been summarized as the shift from a functional to a metaphysical mode of interpretation.”

*Word Become Flesh ... Dimensions of Christology ...* Brian McDermott S.J.

# Pre-Nicene Trinitarianism

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The **Father** is the Godhead ...

He is eternal, immutable, unbegotten, the ultimate source of all that exists.

- The **Logos** (Son) is begotten of the Father ... and is God in relationship to the world. He is redeemer.
- The **Spirit** is God in the hearts and minds of human beings, the inspirer and illuminator.
- The **Father's** attributes are present in the **Logos** and **Spirit** ... but not all of them.

# Creed of Irenaeus

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Irenaeus of Lyons (~130 – 200)

- “... **God the Father**, not made, not material, invisible; one God, the creator of all things ...”
- “... the Word of God, Son of God, **Christ Jesus our Lord** ... through Whom all things were made ...
- ... Who ... at the end of the age ... was made man among men, visible and tangible, in order to abolish death and show forth life and produce perfect reconciliation between God and man.”
- “... the **Holy Spirit**, through Whom the prophets prophesied, and the fathers learned the things of God ... Who at the end of the age was poured out in a new way upon mankind in all the earth, renewing man to God.”

Style of Nicea ... but more primitive theological development.

# The Arian Position

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The Eternal God had conceived of ... or conceived ... the one to be called Jesus before time began ... and used him as an instrument of creation.

However ... this “first creature” i.e., Logos ... was not God himself.

- How could an all powerful, all-knowing, all good God experience temptation, learn wisdom, and grow in virtue?
- How could God suffer on the cross and die the death of a human being?
- From an Arian perspective it was essential that Jesus *not be* God. (The idea being that God cannot be our model since God ... by nature ... is perfect.)
  - Jesus virtue, achieved by repeated acts of will, is available (at least potentially) to the rest of us.
- The triumph over egotism that Jesus demonstrated shows us how we can become adopted sons and daughters of God.

# Exegesis

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“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation ...”

Colossians 1:15

- Arius

“For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily ...”

Colossians 2:9

- Athanasius

# Adoptionism

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Jesus was a man selected by God to be his special representative to humankind.

- Jesus was a man born of a virgin by the “counsel” of the Father ... he lived like other men ... was most pious ... and at his baptism, the Christ came down upon him in the likeness of a dove. Then ... the powers of the Spirit were manifest in him ... (Theodotus 2<sup>nd</sup> cent)
- Jesus was a virtuous man filled with the Holy Spirit and adopted as the Son ... (Shepherd of Hermas 2<sup>nd</sup> cent)
- Jesus was a man who had kept himself sinless and achieved union with God. (Paul of Samosata 3<sup>rd</sup> cent)

Jesus ... a sinless man who found favor with the One God ... somehow shares in the One God's divinity.

# Creedal Statement (325/381 CE)

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## The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed

- We believe in **one God, the Father**, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.
- We believe in one Lord, **Jesus Christ**, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, **God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being (essence) with the Father**; through him all things were made.
- We believe in the Holy Spirit ...

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(added in 381 CE ... Constantinople)

**the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father, who with the Father and the Son is  
worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.**

# Roman Catholic definition

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“We firmly believe and confess without reservation that there is only one true God, eternal, infinite and unchangeable, incomprehensible, almighty, and ineffable, the Father and the Son and Holy Spirit; three persons indeed, but one essence, substance or nature entirely simple.”

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1997



# The Trinity

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A Western view:

- Essence before personality (identity), therefore God remains **One** ...  
but,

- God's essence cannot be known, is not revealed, but the persons are.
- Here the consubstantiality (co-essentiality) is affirmed on the grounds that the Son and the Spirit, proceeding from the Father, are nevertheless not separated from Him; while they again, with all their perfections, can be regarded as contained within Him.
- There is no “separate existence” of the persons, therefore they are One.
  - Unity of will and action.
  - A single self-consciousness.

# The Trinity – an Eastern View

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- God exists in one essence (*ousia*) in three individual personal identities (*hypostasis*). The identities of God have been revealed to us. The essence of God cannot be understood ... an unknowable transcendence.

**There is, therefore a difference between the transcendent “essential” Trinity and the “imminent” Trinity revealed in the “economy of salvation.”**

- The Father is the “source” (*actia*), or “principle” (*aiche*) of the Trinity.
- The Father did not will the Son and Spirit into being ... the Trinity is an attribute, a reality of God.
- The Father is self-generated ... self-existing.
- The *Logos* is begotten (only begotten) of the Father.

# The Trinity – an Eastern View

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- The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father.
- “Begotten” and “procession” are not the same, therefore all three identities are different in their generation (mode of existence).
- The Father has never existed without the *Logos* and Spirit.
- The generation of the three identities is simultaneous ... and eternal. There was not a process that resulted in the generation of the *Logos* and the Spirit. It is a given.

The East is oftentimes accused of Modalistic Monarchianism

# Old and New

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- **St. Basil the Great** (~ 330-379)
  - “God is neither three nor one, he simply is.”
  - “ ... if we must use numbers, we will not let a stupid arithmetic lead us astray to the idea of many gods.”
- **Prayer of John Chrysostom** (~ 347-407)
  - “... for thou art God, ineffable, inconceivable, invisible, incomprehensible, ever-existing and eternally the same, thou and thine only-begotten Son and Holy Spirit.”
- **Karl Barth** (1886-1968) ... “The Christian Church has never taught that there are in God three persons and therefore three personalities in the sense of a threefold ego, a threefold subject. This would be tritheism.”

**God in his essence is One.**

# Jesus as ... Divine

Soteriology ... salvation theory

# Salvation Theory

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If Jesus were not God, his propitiatory sacrifice on Calvary could not have been acceptable to the Father for the remission of sins. The sacrifice simply would not have had the required value. (There is nothing that finite creatures could do to make up for offending (sin) an infinitely good God.)

If Jesus were not truly human, mankind could not have directly benefited from the sacrifice. The Father accepts Jesus' salvific act, the [substitutionary atonement](#), as if man himself had offered it. By becoming man, Jesus (the eternal [Logos](#)) became the real connection between the immutable, unknowable Godhead and mankind, between the transcendent and the temporal (the immanent).

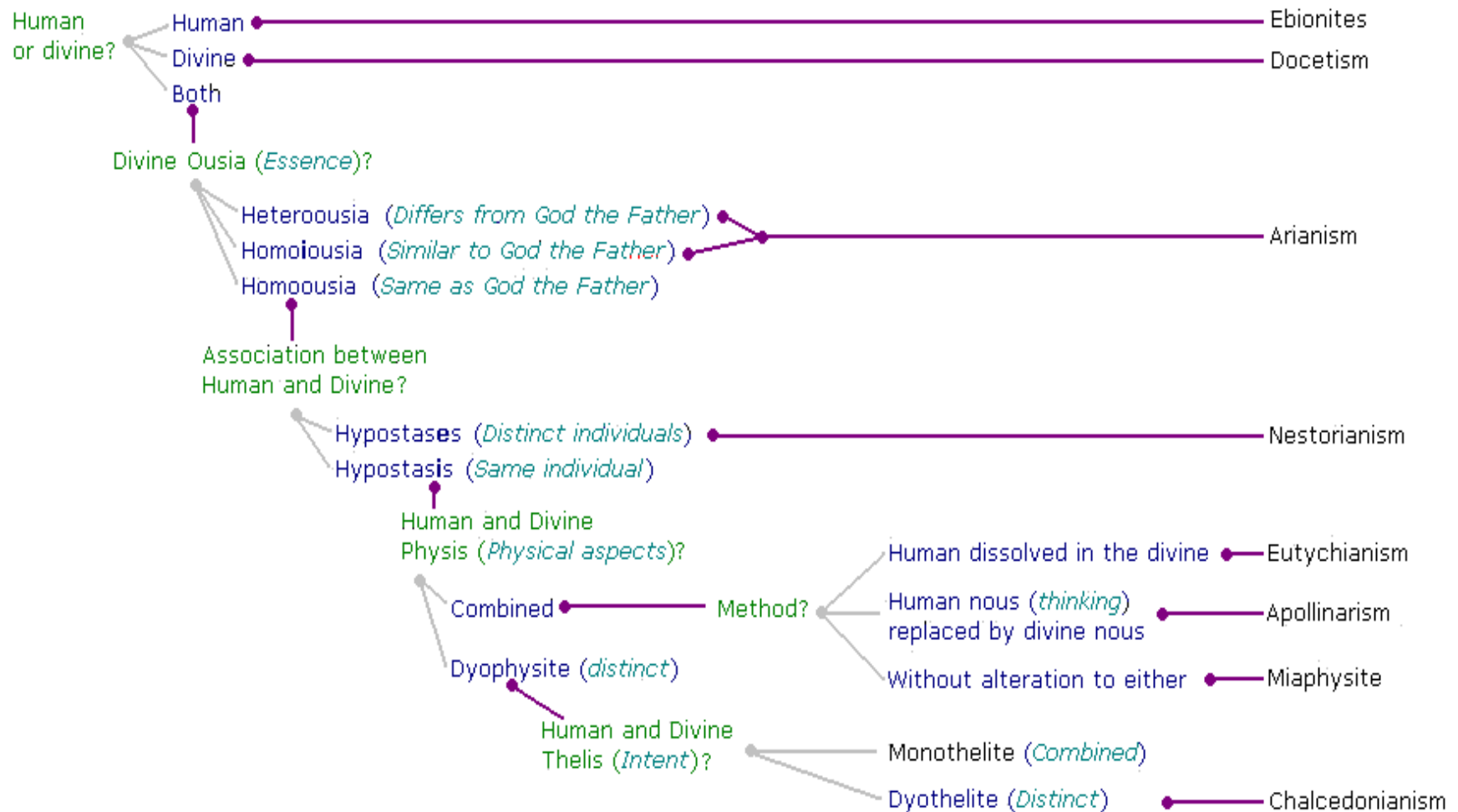
Although the essence of God remains unknowable, the [incarnation](#) permits a relationship to exist between ourselves and God at the individual, personal level.

# Christological Controversies

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Issue	Detail	Problem	Resolution Jesus is:
Arianism	Logos – First creature. Jesus – Logos in flesh - eternal & divine but not in same sense as God.	Logos is a creature. Logos really not eternal as God is eternal.	Logos – eternally begotten. Same essence as the Father.
Extreme Arianism	Jesus – Perfect human - adopted as son of God.	Jesus not really divine as God is divine.	Logos – eternally begotten. Same essence as the Father.
Nestorianism	Two natures of Jesus – separate. In conflict?	Jesus - two persons ??	Jesus – one person – two natures.
Monophysite Controversy	Two natures become one – only divine.	Jesus not really human.	Two natures – not in conflict.
Monothelite Controversy	Two wills become one – only divine.	Jesus not really human.	Two wills – not in conflict.
Images of Christ (Icons)	What do images of Jesus actually depict?	Can there be a picture of God?	Jesus “is” the image of God.

# How is Jesus Divine ?





# Christological Definition

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Fourth Ecumenical council ... Chalcedon ... 451 CE.

We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same **perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man**, of a reasonable [rational] soul and body;

consubstantial [co-essential] with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the Manhood;

in all things like unto us, without sin;

begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, **the Mother of God**, according to the Manhood;

one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, unconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably;

# Christological Definition

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the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence [essence],

not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ;

as the prophets from the beginning [have declared] concerning Him, and the Lord Jesus Christ Himself has taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has handed down to us.

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•Condemned (by definition):

- Arianism ... Jesus is a creature not truly God.
- Nestorianism ... Mary was the mother of only Jesus the man.
- Monophysitism ... Jesus two natures were merged into one ... he was not truly man ... like us.

# It's all in the words ...

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**Ousia** ... essence ... what makes a thing or being what it is. The original meaning of the word *ousia* was lost in its translation to the Latin, and, subsequently, in its translation to modern languages. Usually translated as “substance.”

**Hypostasis** ... the underlying state which is the fundamental reality that supports all else. The underlying, fundamental reality of a “being” that survives all changes in accidents, characteristics, appearances. The “self.” Usually translated as “person.”

**Prosopon** ... originally meant “face” or “mask” in Greek and derives from Greek theatre, in which actors on a stage wore masks to reveal their character and emotional state to the audience. The form in which *hypostasis* appears. Every nature and every *hypostasis* has its own proper *prosopon*. It gives expression to the reality of the nature with its powers and characteristics. Usually translated as “person.”

# Permanent Schism

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The “definition’ of who Jesus was (is) ... resulted in schism in the church without reconciliation to this day ...

Schism:

Chalcedonian Churches:

- Roman Catholic
- Protestant (mainline)
- Eastern Orthodox

Non-Chalcedonian Churches:

- Coptic (Egyptian)
- Syrian (Jacobite)
- Ethiopian
- Eritrean
- Armenian
- Malankara (Indian)

Church of the East (Nestorian)

- Central Asia, Tibet, India, China, Mongolia

# Jesus as ... Divine

Today

# Who is Jesus?

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- “The Son is the one who has been favored by God and sent for a divinely commissioned purpose. And ... the Old Testament attributes to the representative or emissary the authority of the one who sends him.”
- “God had revealed the divine self definitively in Jesus.”

*Word Become Flesh ... Dimensions of Christology ...* Brian McDermott  
S.J.

# Who is Jesus?

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“Jesus’ resurrection provided the basis for the infancy narratives and eventually for the Johannine statement of the incarnation, as well as for the Church’s application to Jesus of exalted titles such as Son of God, Messiah, coming Son of Man, Word, and Wisdom. The resurrection unveiled the basis for recognizing dimensions of Jesus’ earthly life that otherwise would have remained concealed.”

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*“If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain.”* (1 Corinthians 15:13-14)

*“If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.”* (1 Corinthians 15:17)

# What Happened?

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“If we take the New Testament as a criterion, we cannot deny that the council of Nicaea certainly maintained the New Testament message and did not Hellenize it totally. But it is equally beyond dispute that the council remained utterly imprisoned in Hellenistic concepts, notions and thought-models which would have been **completely alien to the Jew Jesus of Nazareth and the earliest community**. Here in particular the shift from the Jewish Christian apocalyptic paradigm to the early church Hellenistic paradigm had a massive effect.”

There is a tremendous difference between an eschatological **‘throne community’** of God with his Christ after the latter’s earthly life through resurrection and exultation, as proclaimed in the New Testament, and a **‘community of being’** between God the Father and God the Son that is to be thought of in protological, pre-temporal terms, i.e. that has always existed from eternity and is understood ontologically.

*Christianity ... Hans Kung*



# Unanswered questions.

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- Does history support “accepted” Christology or is Christology simply a product of faith ... and hope?
- “It would not, then, be much of a caricature to say that orthodoxy, as represented by much popular preaching and writing, has had no clear idea of the purpose of Jesus’ ministry.”

N.T. Wright