

Cornerstone Bible Church

Systematic Theology

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Acknowledgment & Credits:

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LECTURES ON INTRODUCTION TO
SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY TAUGHT BY
RAFAEL ALCANTARA IN 2009 DURING THE
SUNDAY SCHOOL AT IGLESIA BIBLICA DEL
SEÑOR JESUCRISTO. MATERIAL ADDED AND
EXPANDED FOR THIS CLASS

THEOLOGY PROPER

General Contents:

1. The Existence of God
2. The Attributes of God
- 3. The Trinity**
4. Creation
5. Providence

The Trinity

The Trinity

1. Definition
2. Explanation
3. Demonstration
4. Heresies against the Trinity
5. The relation of this Doctrine with
 - a) Creation
 - b) The Godhead

The Trinity (Review)

DEFINITION

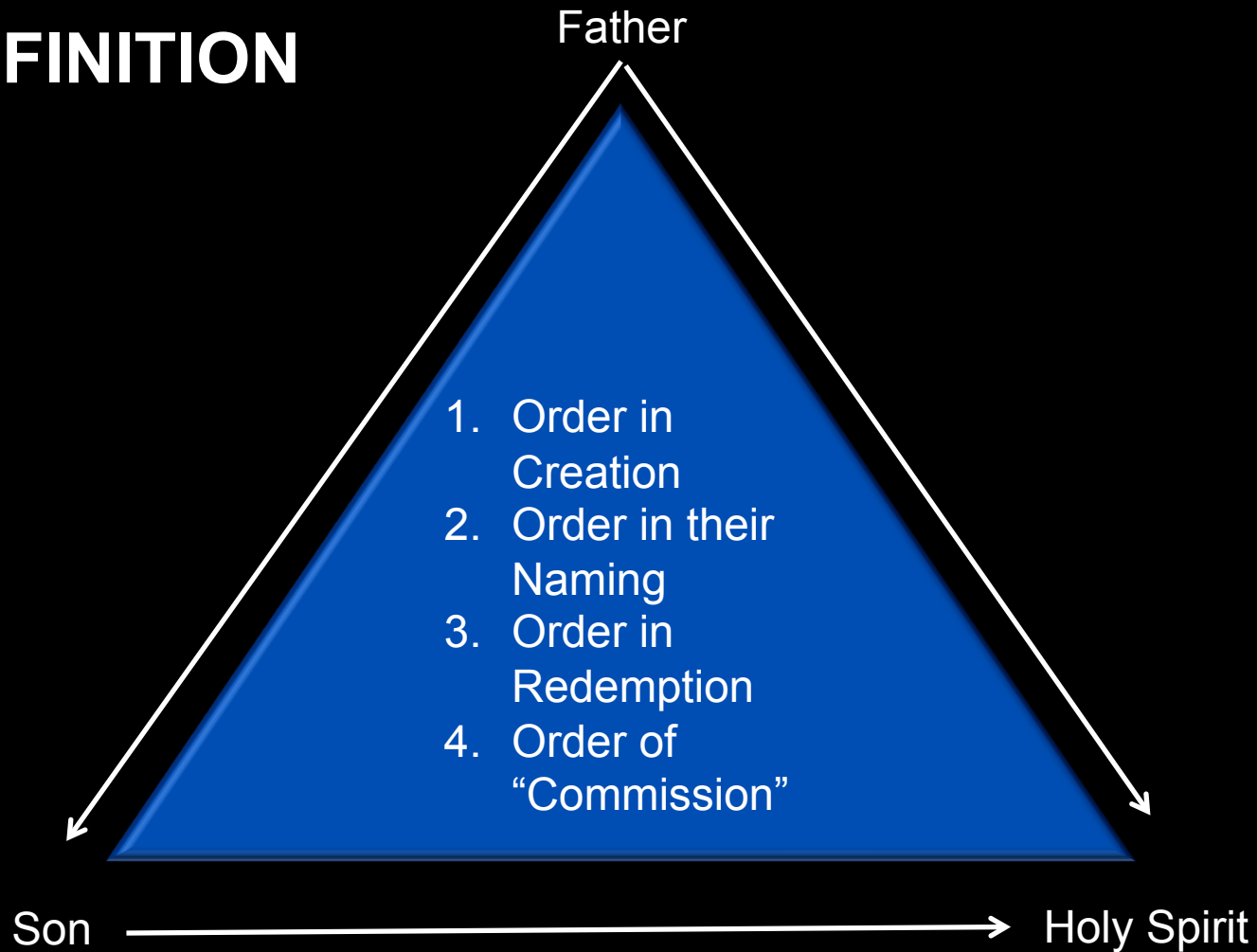
The Doctrine of the Trinity teaches us that the only and true God subsists in three distinct persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and that the three are fully God

I- There is only one God

This is the most obvious declaration in the Word of God Is 45:22 “Turn to me and be saved all the ends of the earth; for I am God and there is none other.”

The Trinity (Review)

DEFINITION



The Trinity (Review)

DEFINITION

I – The Father is fully God

This is evident throughout Scripture consequently we will not spend too much time trying to prove it. I Cor 8:6

II - The Son is fully God

The Bible clearly presents the Lord Jesus Christ as Son in His relationship to the Father and also identifies Him as God [Jn 1:1-4](#), 18; 20:27-28; Ro 9:5; Phil 2:5-11, He 1:3,8-12; Tit 2:13; I Jn 5:20

III - The Holy Spirit is fully God

(Acts 5:3-4; 2 Co 3:17-18; Ps 139:7-10; He 9:14; Is 6:8-10 comp Acts 28:25-27; Ps 95:7-9 comp He 3:7-9)

The Trinity (Review)

II- Biblical Evidences of a Triune God

Is 6:1-6 comp to Jn 12:39-41 comp to Acts 28:25-26

Mat 28:19 – *the Baptismal formula* – “in the Name of”

I Co 12:4-6, 2 Co 13:14

III – The Holy Spirit is not a “force” but a “person”

1. He Speaks (Acts 8:29; 13:2);

2. Forbids (Acts 16:6-7)

3. Intercedes (Rom 8:26-27)

4. Bears witness of God (Rom 8:16);

5. He teaches (Jn 14:26)

6. Distributes spiritual gifts sovereignly (I Co 12:11)

7. He examines the depths of God (1Cor 2:11).

8. He approves of a given course of action (Acts 15:28)

9. He can be grieved (Eph 4:30)

The Trinity (Review)

III – The Holy Spirit is not a “force” but a “person”

He is treated as “He” not “It” by John Jn 14:26 and 15:26

If the Holy Spirit were just the “force” of “power” of God, some passages in Scripture would not make any sense Lk 4:14; Acts 10:38; Rom 15:13; 1Co 2:4

IV Main heresies against the Doctrine of the Trinity

1- Tritheism

Father, Son and Holy Spirit are three Gods.

2-Modalism (known also as Sabelianism)

Father, Son and Holy Spirit are three manifestations of God

3- Arrianism

Father is God, the Son is the first creation, the Holy Spirit a “force” – JW -

The Trinity: Relation with Creation & Godhead

We will conclude the subject considering the distinctions and relationships within the persons of the Trinity.

The subject of this class is: if the Bible teaches that all of the persons within the Trinity are equally God, what is the difference between them?

The way to identify these distinctions is by considering how the persons of the Trinity are related to Creation and to each other through all eternity.

The Trinity: Relation with Creation & Godhead

I- How does the Trinity relate to the world?

a) In creation: creation came to be by the revealing words of the Father (**Gn 1:1**).

b) The Son who was the active agent in creation (**Jn 1:3**; **1Cor 8:6**; **Col 1:16**; **Heb 1:2**) and in preserving creation **Col 1:15-ff (sunesteken)**

c) The Holy Spirit was active in creation giving life and order. *Gn1:2 The Earth was empty and without order and Darkness covered the face of the abyss and the Spirit of God hovered above the surface of the waters.*

The Trinity: Relation with Creation & Godhead

I- How does the Trinity relate to the world?

Job 26:13 “13 "By His breath the heavens are cleared; His hand has pierced the fleeing serpent.”

Breath = ruach (spirit) / Cleared = shiphrah (garnished)

The meaning is the same but the RV, LSG & KJV offer a more poetic rendering of the Hebrew “By His spirit he garnished the heavens” / “Su espíritu adorno los cielos” « **Son souffle donne au ciel la sérénité** »

Job 33:4 “The Spirit of God made me and the breath of the Almighty gave me life”

Ps 104:30 “You send your Spirit and they are created, and you renew the face of the earth”

The Trinity: Relation with Creation & Godhead

I- How does the Trinity relate to the world?

b) In Redemption: this is where the functions of the persons of the Trinity are more clearly distinguished

1-The Father planned Redemption from eternity and in the appropriate time He sent His Son into the world. (Jn 3:16 comp Ga 4:4 *In the fulfillment of time, God sent His Son born of a woman*)

2-The Son came into the World in obedience to His Father, fulfilling the work of redemption by living a perfect life, and dying on the cross for our sins. It was not the Father who came, nor who died and rose again. It was not the Holy Spirit either. It was the Son who became incarnate and who intercedes for us in heaven. (See He 10:5-7)

The Trinity: Relation with Creation & Godhead

I- How does the Trinity relate to the world?

b) In Redemption: this is where the functions of the persons of the Trinity are more clearly distinguished

3- Father and Son sent the Holy Spirit. Jn 14:26 *But the Holy Spirit, the comforter, whom the Father will send in my name, He will teach you all things and He will remind you of everything I have told you.”*

John 16:7 *“But I tell you the truth, it is convenient that I go away because if I do not go away, the Comforter will not come to you, but if I go away, I will send Him.”*

The Trinity: Relation with Creation & Godhead

I- How does the Trinity relate to the world?

b) In Redemption...

3- Father and Son sent the Holy Spirit.

a) The Spirit applies the work of redemption accomplished by the Son producing regeneration, conversion and sanctification

2 Co 3:16-17

b) He gives gifts to the church sovereignly I Co 12:5

c) He inspired prophets and apostles and illuminates believers

2 Pe 1:19-20, I Co 2:1-14, Acts 28:25-ff, Acts 13:1-3

“...The different functions we see in Father, Son and Holy Spirit do are the result of an eternal relationship within the three persons, a relationship that has always existed and will exist throughout eternity...” (Grudem: Biblical Doctrine)

The Trinity: Relation with Creation & Godhead

I- How does the Trinity relate to the world?

b) In Redemption...

The Son's obedience is similar to that which a son would have to an earthly father, and we see the Spirit obeying both Father and Son and even when the three are fully God. Subordination in the Trinity is not of essence but of functions

Quoting Grudem again: *"...there is no difference in deity, attributes or essentials nature between Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Each person is fully God and bears all the attributes of God. The distinctions between the members of the Trinity lie in the way they relate to one another and with creation. In these relationships they execute functions and play roles that are inherent to each person."* (Ibid., Pg. 117)

The Trinity: Relation with Creation & Godhead

I- How does the Trinity relate to the world?

- a) In Creation
 - b) In Redemption...
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II- How are the persons of the Trinity related to each other?

a) **The relationship between Father and Son:** it is a relationship in which the Father is the Pattern and the Son the Representation

Jn 14:9 : Have I been so long with you and you still do not know me Phillip? He who as seen Me has seen the Father...” Heb 1:3: And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature

The Trinity: Relation with Creation & Godhead

II- How are the persons of the Trinity related to each other?

a) The relationship between Father and Son: it is a relationship in which the Father is the Pattern and the Son the Representation

To be the image or representation of something, there must be something to reflect or represent. In that sense, the Son proceeds from the Father and He is the Son because of what the Father is. We see a functional dependence (not an essential dependence) of the Son with respect to the Father.

The Trinity: Relation with Creation & Godhead

II- How are the persons of the Trinity related to each other?

b) The relationship of Father and Son with the Holy Spirit: The Bible calls the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Jesus, because the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. So that the Spirit may be of the Father and of the Son, **there must exist a Father and a Son**. Once again, we see a functional dependence of the Spirit with respect to the Father and the Son.

Jn 16:13 13 "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come

The Trinity: Relation with Creation & Godhead

II- How are the persons of the Trinity related to each other?

b) **The relationship of Father and Son w/Holy Spirit:** So what does the Holy Spirit do? He puts into practice the power of God as we read in Job 33:4 and in Ps 104:30.

We must emphasize that each person in the Trinity is fully God. *It is not that each person represents one third of God but that **each person possesses the total being of God** and yet there is only one God*

The Trinity: Relation with Creation & Godhead

II- How are the persons of the Trinity related to each other?

b) The relationship of Father and Son w/ Holy Spirit:

In fact, the use of the term “person” in the study of this doctrine is perhaps the most appropriate to be coined, but we cannot correlate one hundred percent to what we understand of a “person” to be with the persons of the Godhead

The Trinity: Relation with Creation & Godhead

II- How are the persons of the Trinity related to each other?

b) The relationship of Father and Son w/ Holy Spirit:

“From this explanation it is clear that the tri-personal existence of God is something which is way beyond our ability to comprehend. It is an existence which is very different to everything we have experienced and it is completely different to anything else in the universe.

Because of this, Christian Theology have come to use the word “persons” to refer to this difference in the relationships, not because we can fully understand what we mean by the use of “persons” when we refer to the Trinity, but rather, so that we might be able to say something instead of not saying anything.”(Ibíd., Pg. 120)

The Trinity: Relation with Creation & Godhead

Conclusion:

1- **The Doctrine of the Trinity is essential to the Christian faith.** To deny it, is idolatry, since our conception of God would be different to what the Bible teaches and we would either be worshipping more than one God, or we would not be worshipping one of the persons of the Trinity who is God and consequently, we would not be worshipping the true and living God.

Rom 8:9 “However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him..”

1Jn 2:23 Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also.”

The Trinity: Relation with Creation & Godhead

Conclusion:

1- **The Doctrine of the Trinity is essential to the Christian faith.**

A passage that is overwhelmingly conclusive 1 Jn 5:20-21
20 And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding, in order that we might know Him who is true, and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. 21 Little children, guard yourselves from idols.

2- **In life there are imperfect reflections of this unity in diversity.** Marriage, church and the family now we can better understand why the Bible is so emphatic about walking in unity, and how terribly strong against dissensions and divisions. Unity in diversity reflects the Triune God whom we worship and serve

END

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος.

6 Ἐγένετο ἄνθρωπος ἀπεσταλμένος παρὰ θεοῦ, ὄνομα αὐτῷ Ἰωάννης.

Had “theos” had a definite article in verse 1, then the Bible would teach Sabellianism

“Ho Logos” has the article as it is the subject, Theos is an attribute given to the subject ... “and the Word was God”



Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος.

6 Ἐγένετο ἄνθρωπος ἀπεσταλμένος παρὰ θεοῦ, ὄνομα αὐτῷ Ἰωάννης.

“There was a man sent by God ... “ Why not? “There was a man sent by a god”?

“Ho Logos” has the article as it is the subject, Theos is an attribute given to the subject ... “and the Word was God”



17 καὶ αὐτός ἐστιν πρὸ πάντων καὶ τὰ πάντα ἐν αὐτῷ **συνέστηκεν**,

Col 1:15-17 And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation. 16 For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created by Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together

