



March 27, 2022

“Orthodoxy”

SS at 9:30. Service at 10:30 with King’s Kids.

NEWS

Final Wednesday March 30th

330 N. Somers Rd. (Mail: PO Box 10626) Kalispell, MT 59904~ (406) 755-1776

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JOHN 1:29-34 ~

It’s always all about _____. Keep your _____ fixed on Him.

John the Baptizer saw Jesus and publicly proclaimed, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (Romans 3:23).

Then in verse 34, John proclaimed about that Lamb, “I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God.”

The Trinity is so complex that no one can explain it in a _____. Non-trinitarians all believe that Jesus was some _____ personage than God (Arianism), or just a _____ that God wears (modalism, then Sabellianism).

Both appealed to the Jewish _____: שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד (shě-mā yīs-rā-ēl yāh-wěh ě-lō-hā-nū yāh-wěh ě-ăd). Deuteronomy 6:4, “Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one!”

Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.

God Bless You!

In 325 A.D., 318 Bishops along with other experts met in the city of Nicaea, to settle the question of the _____ of God. The near unanimous result was the Nicene _____.

Roughly 100 years later the Athanasian Creed was adopted to further clarify the _____ of Christ:

The part about the “One Christ is God and man” combated two distortions, one that God and human melded into _____ being and the other that the God part and the human part were completely _____.

This Creed declares that a person _____ hold orthodox belief about the nature of God and the nature of Christ as well as accepting Saving Grace through Him in order to be _____.

That’s practically true, but not technically true.

Our task regarding God is not to confound the _____ of God, nor dividing the _____ of God. It is the same with the nature of Christ.

Genesis 1:27, “God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.” (Subject, Verb, Object, Adverbial). If you want to see an image of God, look no further than _____, but specifically a male and a female together.

What exactly was _____ driving at? For that we look at the explanation and expansion (Genesis 2:24).

It is the complementary union between male and female in harmony, adoration, and security that gives us an insight into the nature of God. One man joined together with one woman in the sight of the One God become One. Dominion, procreation, and intimate relationship.

Write a brief note – detach and place in the offering, or the prayer box, or give it to a Deacon or Elder.

Name _____ Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____



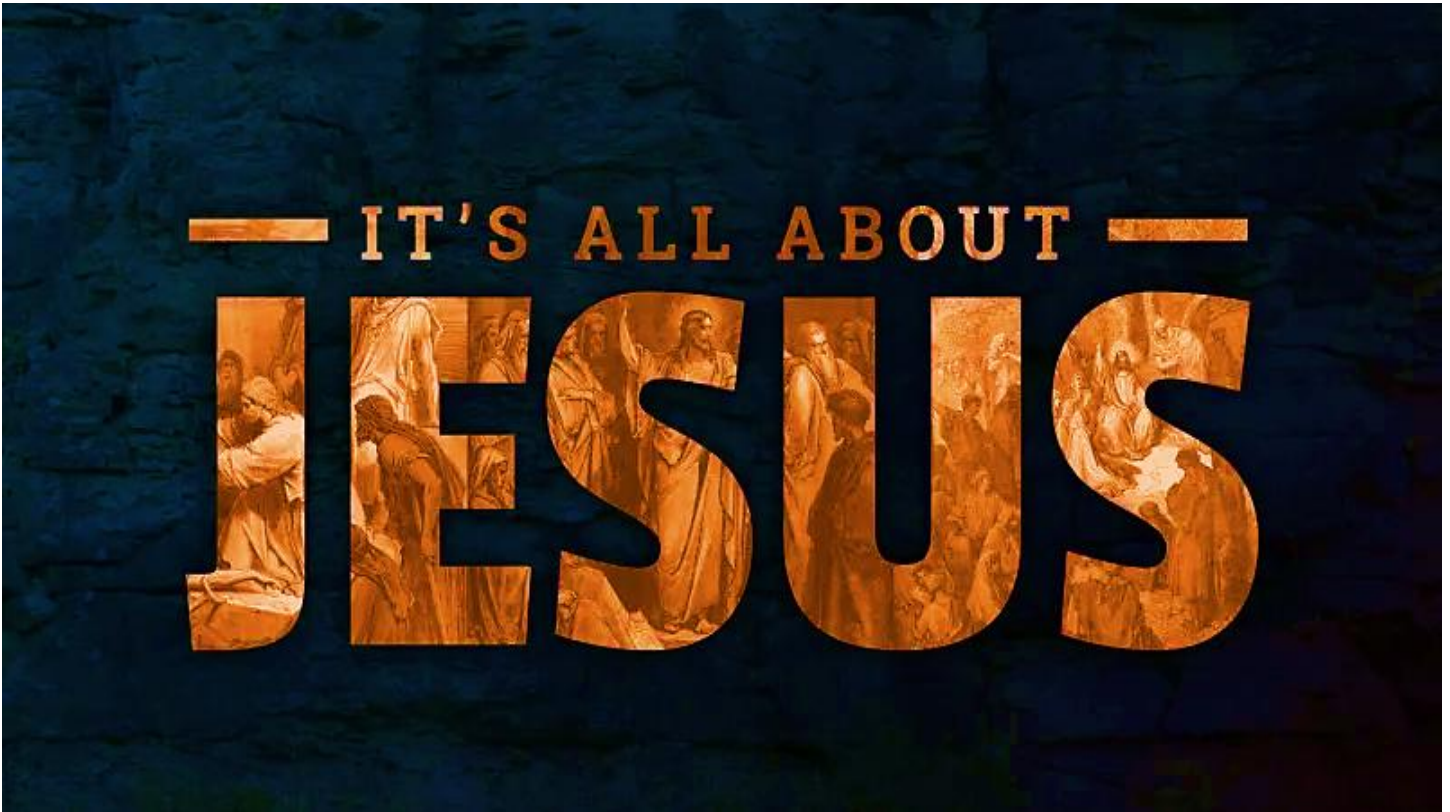
Alêtheia

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP



ΕΝΑΡΧΗ Η ΝΟΛΟΓΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΝΟΛΟΓΟΣ ΗΝ ΠΡΟΣ ΤΟΝ
 ΘΝ ΚΑΙ ΘΕ ΤΗ ΝΟΛΟΓΟΣ ΕΥ ΤΟΣ ΗΝ ΕΝΑΡΧΗ ΤΙΡΟΣ
 ΤΟΝ ΘΝ ΠΑΝΤΑ ΔΙΑ ΤΟ ΥΕ ΓΕΝΕΣΤΟ ΚΑΙ ΧΩΡΙΣ

Last week, I said that in the previous week we talked about your foundation, even though we never used those words. Last week we did use those words. To recap the entire sermon from last week and in fact all the sermons I've ever delivered...



It's always all about Jesus. Keep your eyes fixed on Him. Now we could go home.

John the Baptizer saw Jesus and publicly proclaimed, "Behold"! It is the command to "Look"! Perceive, take notice, pay attention now and see! "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

We discussed that. It is profound that God would send an “Anointed One” to be the final sacrifice for sin. What’s even more profound is that the “Anointed One” was God Himself. But that was what God had promised in the Old Testament. He orchestrated an entire religious system with a set apart nation for the sole purpose of showing in our actual physical reality that no person was capable of being righteous. As Paul so eloquently declared in Romans 3:23, “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

God told the people that once that Truth was firmly established beyond question, then He Himself would come and save the people by being their righteousness. He Himself would be the once and for all sacrifice to remove the taint of sin. He Himself would be “The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”

Then in verse 34, John proclaimed about that Lamb, “I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God.” That’s a concept worth further examination. It confuses a lot of people. In fact, it has confused people since day one of Christianity and was the biggest controversy in the church in the first 400

years of its existence. What is the exact nature of God and of Christ?



Muslims, Jews, Oneness Pentecostals, Unitarians, many Messianic Christians, Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, and others all deride the concept of the Trinity. They love to point out that the concept of the Trinity is so complex that no one can explain it in a soundbite. They say, "God is one." That is so simple it stands on its own without need for further clarification. Trinitarians not only wholeheartedly agree with that sentiment they add that God is also three in one. That births more questions that need to be answered and so it's not simple. to answer in a soundbite, but that does

not mean it cannot be answered. As I've repeatedly said, do you imagine that the Being Who speaks galaxies into existence, and literally stretches out the fabric of space-time, would be simple for the human mind to grasp and articulate, or is it possible, that it might be a little complicated?

As Sydney Harris famously said, "Any philosophy that can be put in a nutshell, belongs there." Well, the same goes for theology.

Anyway, non-trinitarians all believe that Jesus was some lesser personage than God Himself, whether an angel, or a prophet, or a good man, or a charlatan, or a mini god, or just another costume that God sometimes wears.

In the first century some people believed that Jesus was the Word of God made flesh as John the Apostle plainly explained and others keyed in on passages where Jesus was called God's son, particularly where it is said that He was "Begotten from the Father," as evidence that the Word of God was created by God. Anything that God creates is by necessity less than

God. Jesus then, would be a created role for God to play, or He would be a lesser deity, angel, or person.

As I've alluded to there were two primary attacks on the full divinity of Christ. The first was best articulated by a north African (basically Libyan) theologian named Sabellius in about 220 A.D. Sabellius taught what is called modalism, meaning that there was only one God, but He could take on different modes. One moment He was in the mode of the Father, the next, the Spirit, and the next, the Son. Sabellius was excommunicated for that heresy, but his ideas continued as Sabellianism.

An example of the heresy is a mistaken explanation of the Trinity you often hear in Christian circles where God is like H₂O. He exists as solid ice, liquid water, and vapor steam, but it's all H₂O. That's actually modalism, or Sabellianism.

The other attack on the full divinity of Christ was the idea that He was a separate from God and lesser than God figure. He was created by the Father, or begotten by Him, as in, birthed through Him – literally God's son. Another guy from north Africa, this time further east in

Alexandria Egypt, best articulated the position. He was a church Elder named Arius and he provided the most lucid explanation of that school of thought in about 300 A.D. People accepting his basic premise were called Arianists and the belief itself was called Arianism.

By 300 A.D. there was a very contentious battle between those who accepted a trinitarian view of God acknowledging Jesus as fully God, co-equal with the Father and with the Holy Spirit, yet also individuated from them, and those who opposed that idea as overly complicated and contradictory to the Shema prayed twice daily by the Jews.

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד:

(shě-mä yīs-rä-ěl yäh-wěh ě-lō-hā-nü yäh-wěh ě-xxäd).

In actual recitation, Jews substitute Adonai for Yahweh, but the prayer comes from Deuteronomy 6 and means, “Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one!”

Those holding to the uncreated eternal Word of God being fully God, while not all of God (as John clearly articulated in the opening of this Gospel), had the issue of reconciling that with the absolute Truth that God is one. So, a Trinitarian concept held that while there was

only one God, He was made up of three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, all coequally God.

The two camps were the Trinitarians and those accepting that the one God was the Father and that the Holy Spirit and the Son were either manifestations of the Father (Sabellianism) or subordinate entities, not equal with the one God, called the Father (Arianism).



Constantine the
Great 312-337



When the Roman Emperor Constantius died, he named his son Constantine as the new Emperor. Others had a different idea and so another in an endless parade of civil wars broke out. Constantine had a dream in which Jesus appeared and told him if

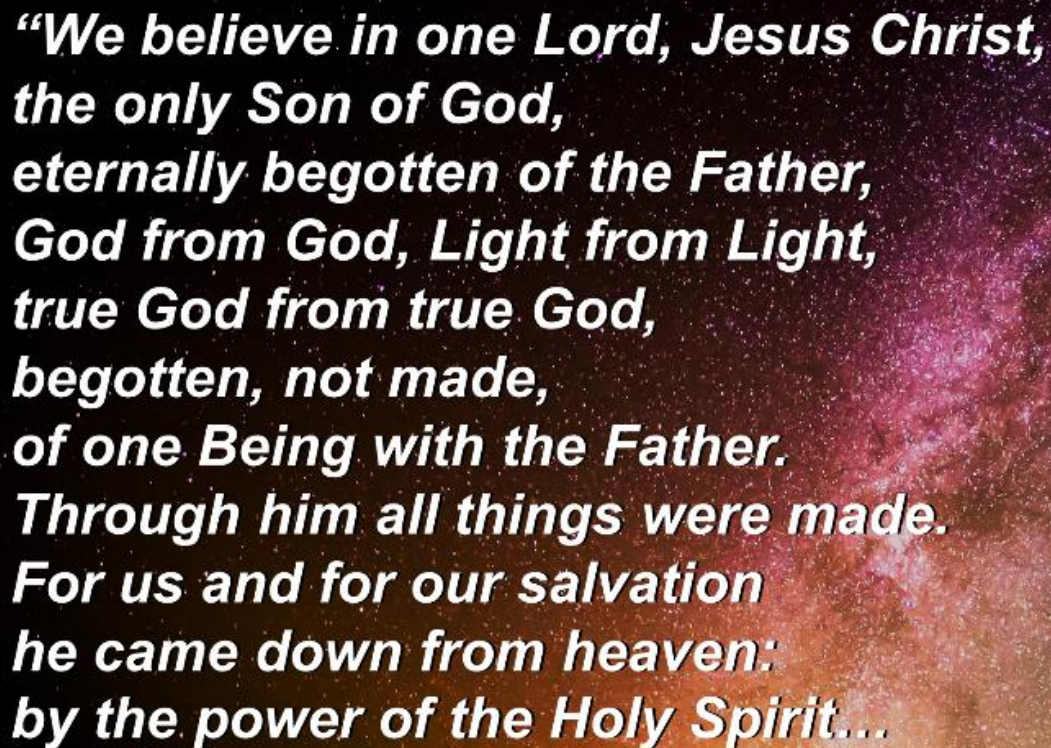
he fought under Christ's name, He would be victorious and bring the war to an end. Constantine had all his troops paint a Chi and Rho on their shields, which is the Nomina Sacra abbreviation for Christ. Constantine won decisively and in 313 A.D. gave himself over to Christ, becoming the first Christian Emperor of Rome. Well, he was immediately shocked to find out that there was such a controversy over the central figure of the faith. After interviewing dozens of Bishops and scholars for more than a decade and getting nowhere, he ordered all the Church Bishops, Bible scholars, and other leading Christians to assemble and figure it out.



In 325 A.D. 318 Bishops along with other experts met in the city of Nicaea, we say Nice-ee-a, from May 20th until August 25th, to do just that. Nicaea was situated near the new Roman capitol of Constantinople, the modern city of Istanbul, Turkey, which at the time was sort of in the center of Christianity geographically.

There were as many as 20 of the 318 Bishops who supported Arius, or a form of Sabellianism, but by the end of the confab, all but 2, agreed to what we know as orthodoxy. All but 2 signed what is called the Nicene Creed affirming that Jesus was the Word of God made flesh and as such was the uncreated coequal God the Son together with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. The Trinity as we know it.

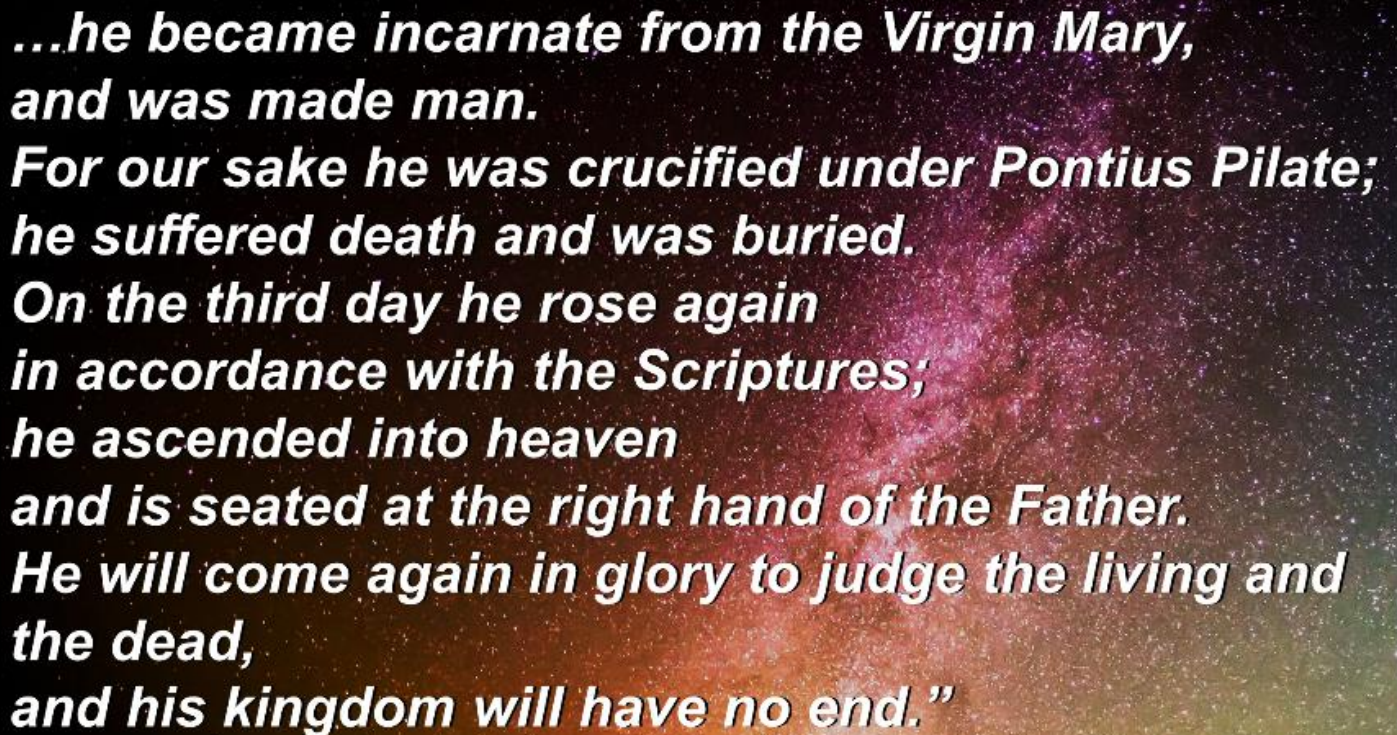
The concept of Son of God was understood in the light of the full counsel of Scripture to refer to Jesus' incarnation as a human person. In the sense that the coequal God, described as the Word of God, condescended to become one of us in accordance with the Will of God, then that human manifestation as a growing physical person named Jesus qualified the Word to be called Son and the Will to be called His Father.



***“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 with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit...”***

As the Nicene Creed puts it:

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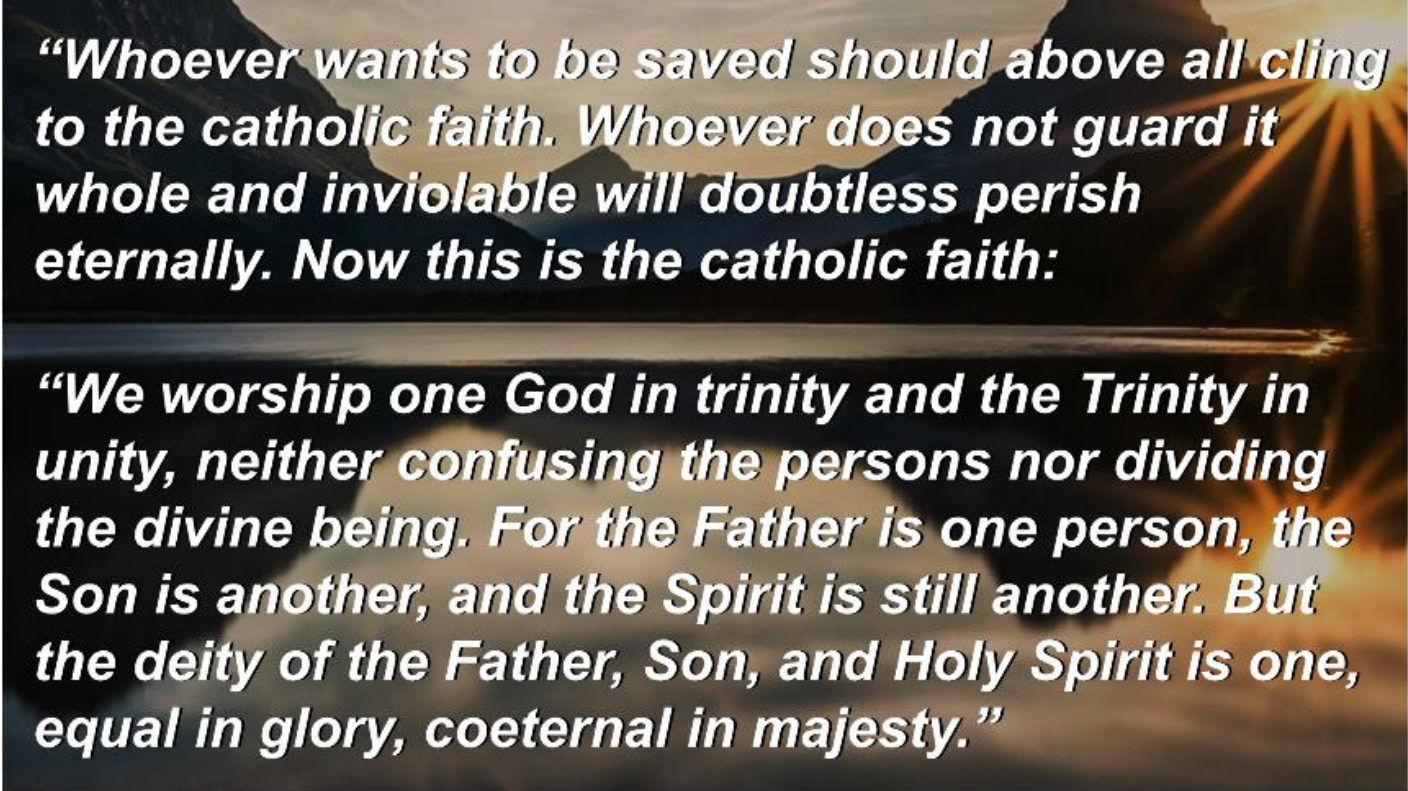
***...he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and
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In the first 300 years of Christianity the biggest problem was understanding and agreeing on the nature of God and then once that was settled in the Nicene Creed, the problem shifted to understanding and agreeing on the nature of Christ.

Roughly 100 years later the Athanasian Creed was adopted to further clarify the nature of Christ, of God the Word together with Jesus the man.

Very rarely does anyone recite the creed in church anymore and the primary reason is that it's too long. What a shame that so many Christians have trouble understanding basic theology because pastors are afraid of boring the people entrusted by God to their care. I am not plagued with that problem. As we go through this creed accepted by our spiritual forbears 1,600 years ago, the word Catholic, simply means universal, not Roman Catholic – so the universally accepted Christian Faith...

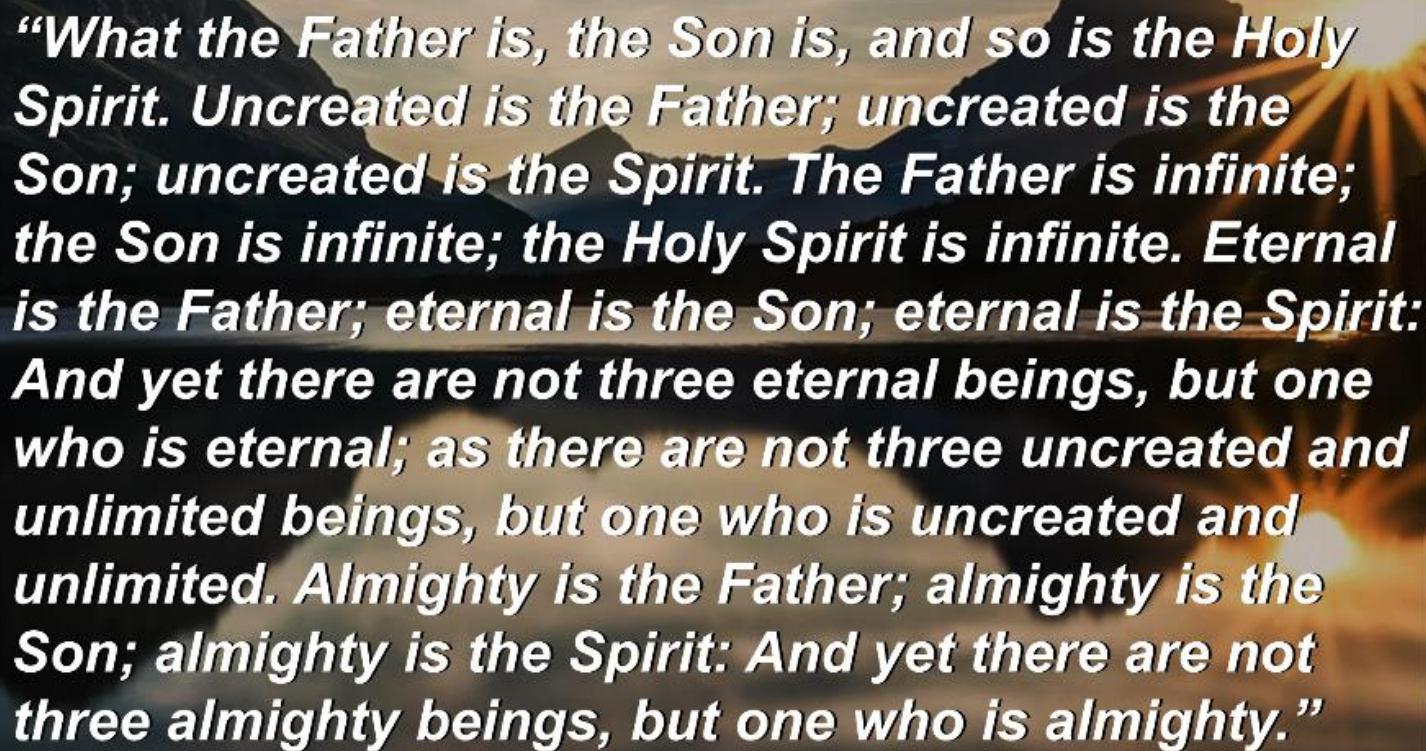


“Whoever wants to be saved should above all cling to the catholic faith. Whoever does not guard it whole and inviolable will doubtless perish eternally. Now this is the catholic faith:

“We worship one God in trinity and the Trinity in unity, neither confusing the persons nor dividing the divine being. For the Father is one person, the Son is another, and the Spirit is still another. But the deity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is one, equal in glory, coeternal in majesty.”

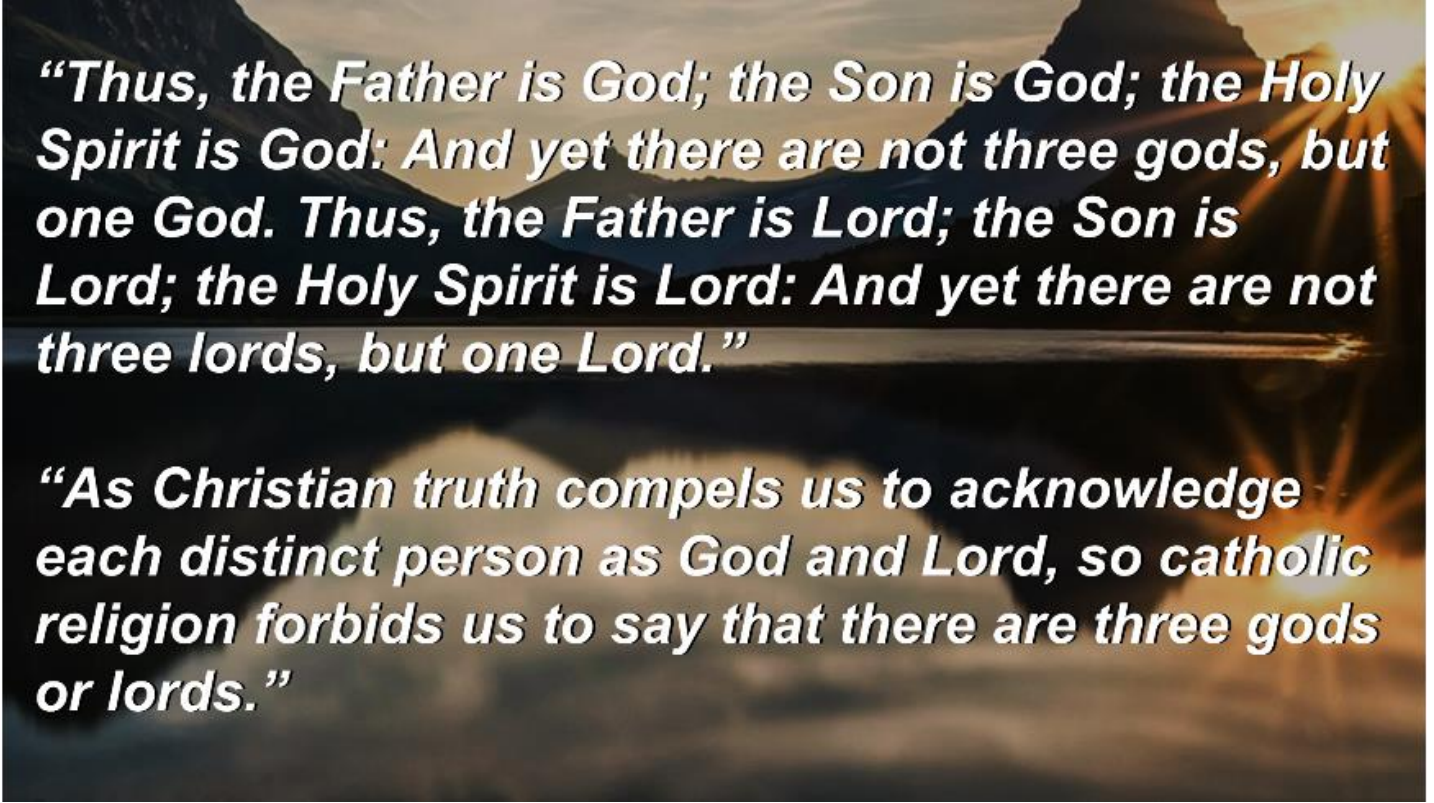
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“What the Father is, the Son is, and so is the Holy Spirit. Uncreated is the Father; uncreated is the Son; uncreated is the Spirit. The Father is infinite; the Son is infinite; the Holy Spirit is infinite. Eternal is the Father; eternal is the Son; eternal is the Spirit: And yet there are not three eternal beings, but one who is eternal; as there are not three uncreated and unlimited beings, but one who is uncreated and unlimited. Almighty is the Father; almighty is the Son; almighty is the Spirit: And yet there are not three almighty beings, but one who is almighty.”

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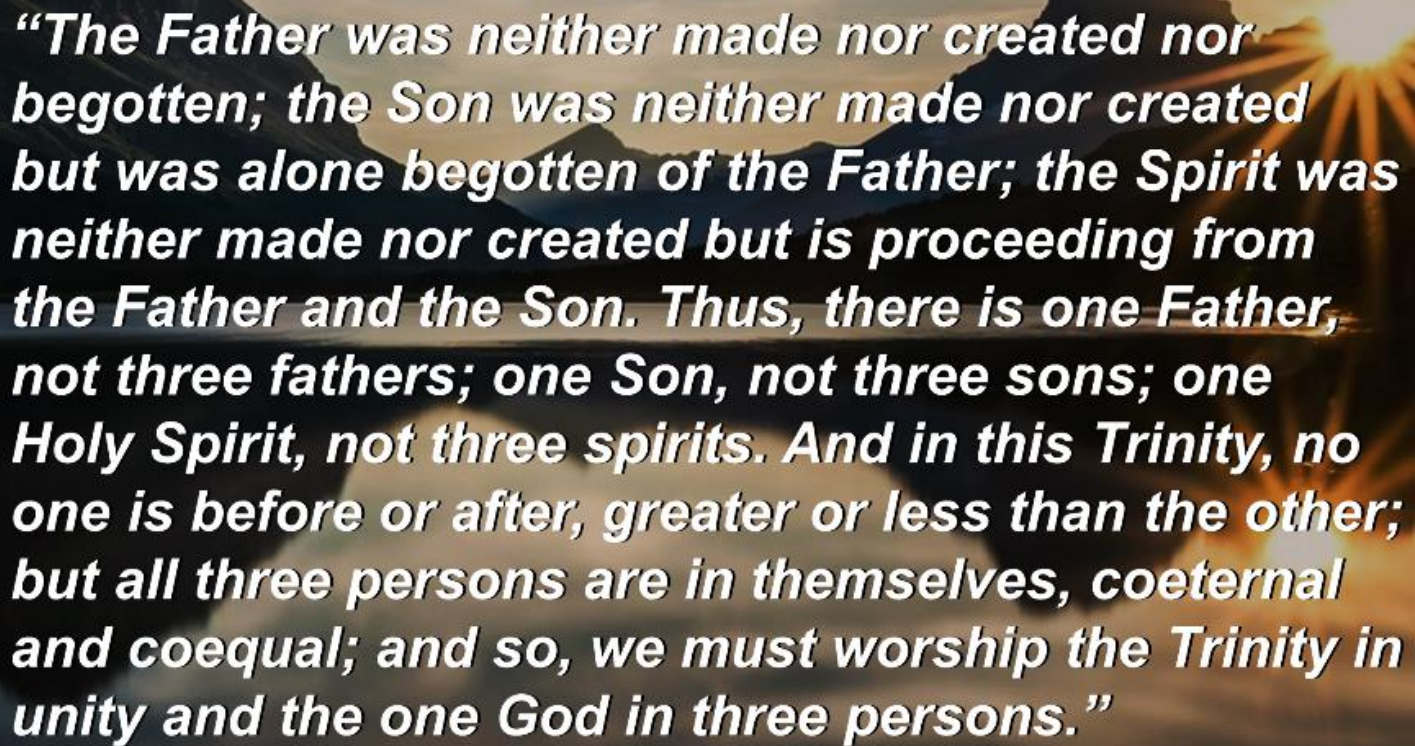


“Thus, the Father is God; the Son is God; the Holy Spirit is God: And yet there are not three gods, but one God. Thus, the Father is Lord; the Son is Lord; the Holy Spirit is Lord: And yet there are not three lords, but one Lord.”

“As Christian truth compels us to acknowledge each distinct person as God and Lord, so catholic religion forbids us to say that there are three gods or lords.”

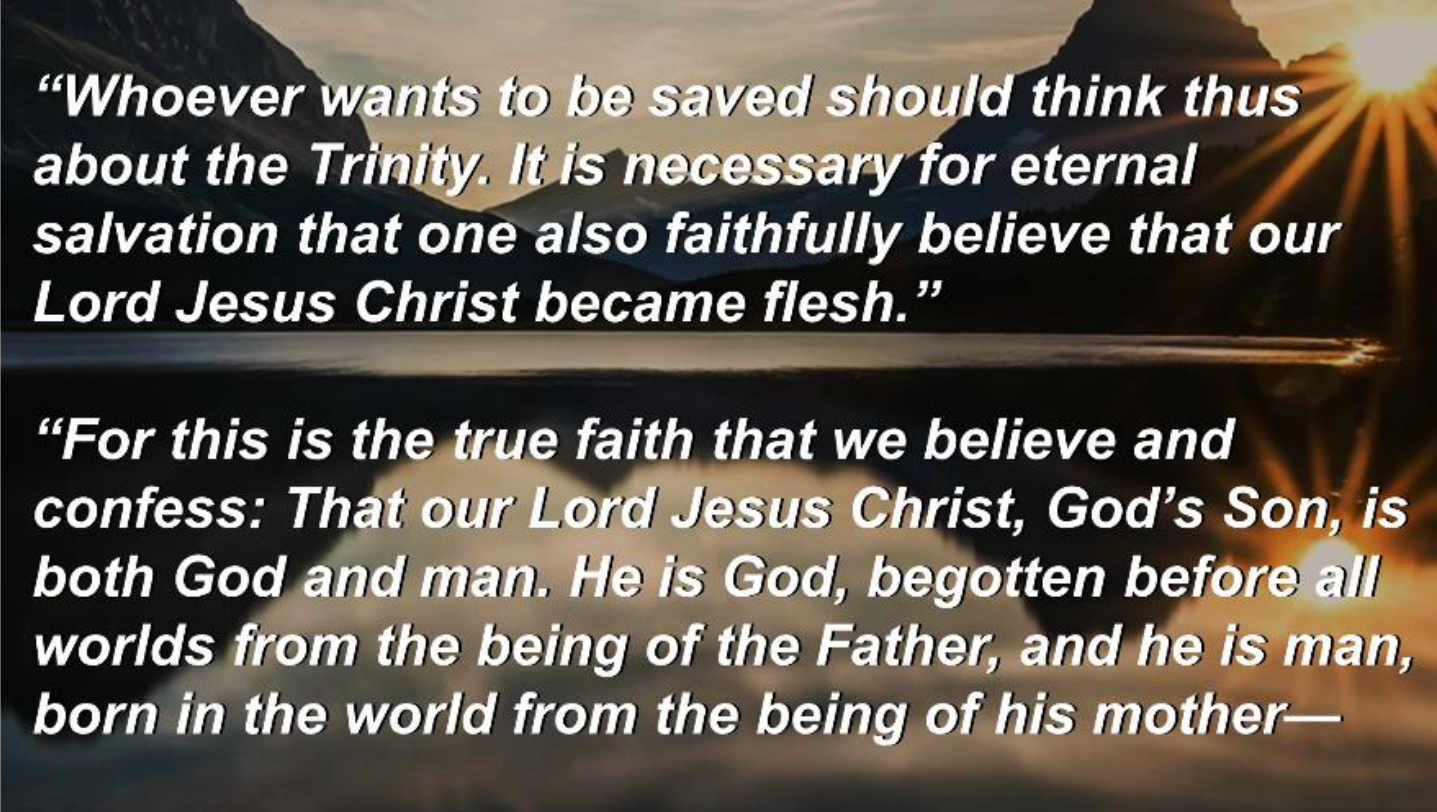
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“The Father was neither made nor created nor begotten; the Son was neither made nor created but was alone begotten of the Father; the Spirit was neither made nor created but is proceeding from the Father and the Son. Thus, there is one Father, not three fathers; one Son, not three sons; one Holy Spirit, not three spirits. And in this Trinity, no one is before or after, greater or less than the other; but all three persons are in themselves, coeternal and coequal; and so, we must worship the Trinity in unity and the one God in three persons.”

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“Whoever wants to be saved should think thus about the Trinity. It is necessary for eternal salvation that one also faithfully believe that our Lord Jesus Christ became flesh.”

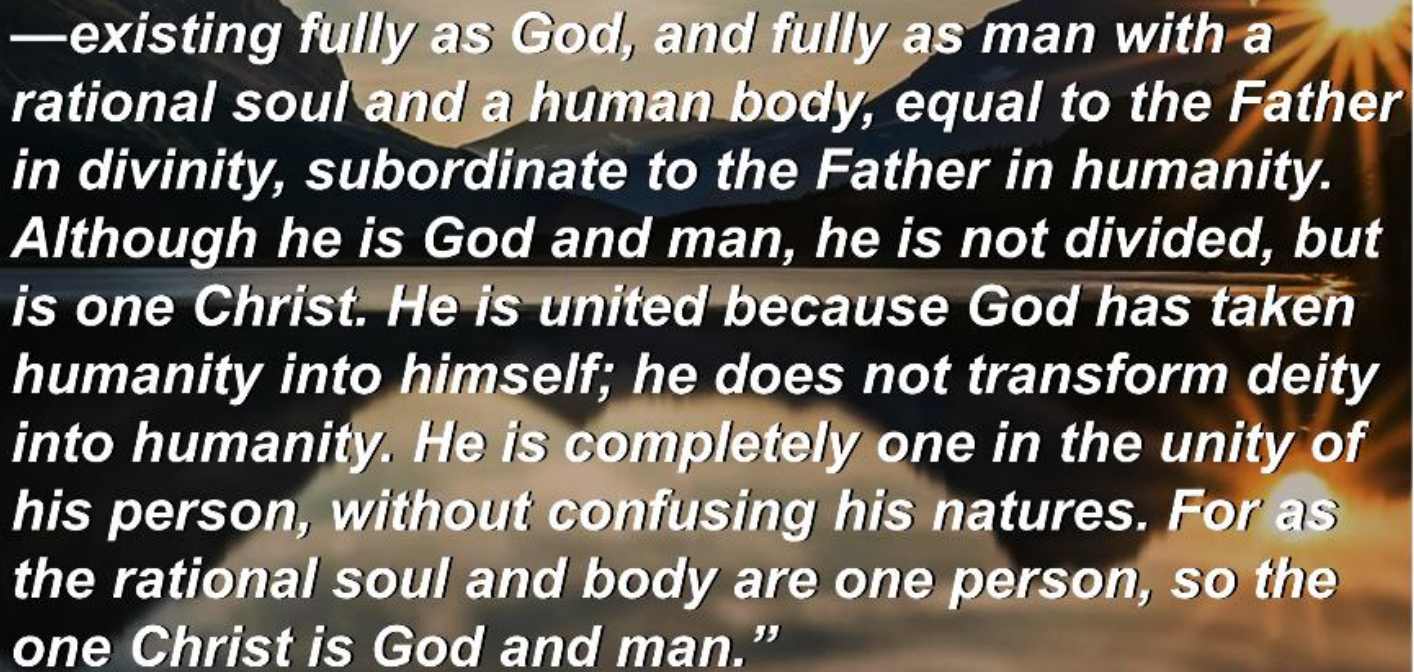
“For this is the true faith that we believe and confess: That our Lord Jesus Christ, God’s Son, is both God and man. He is God, begotten before all worlds from the being of the Father, and he is man, born in the world from the being of his mother—

“Whoever wants to be saved should think thus about the Trinity. It is necessary for eternal salvation that one also faithfully believe that our Lord Jesus Christ became flesh.”

No, we’re not quite finished... By the year 400 the new heresies that I mentioned concerning the exact nature of the Christ had infiltrated the church, so this Creed goes on to address those specific new heresies...

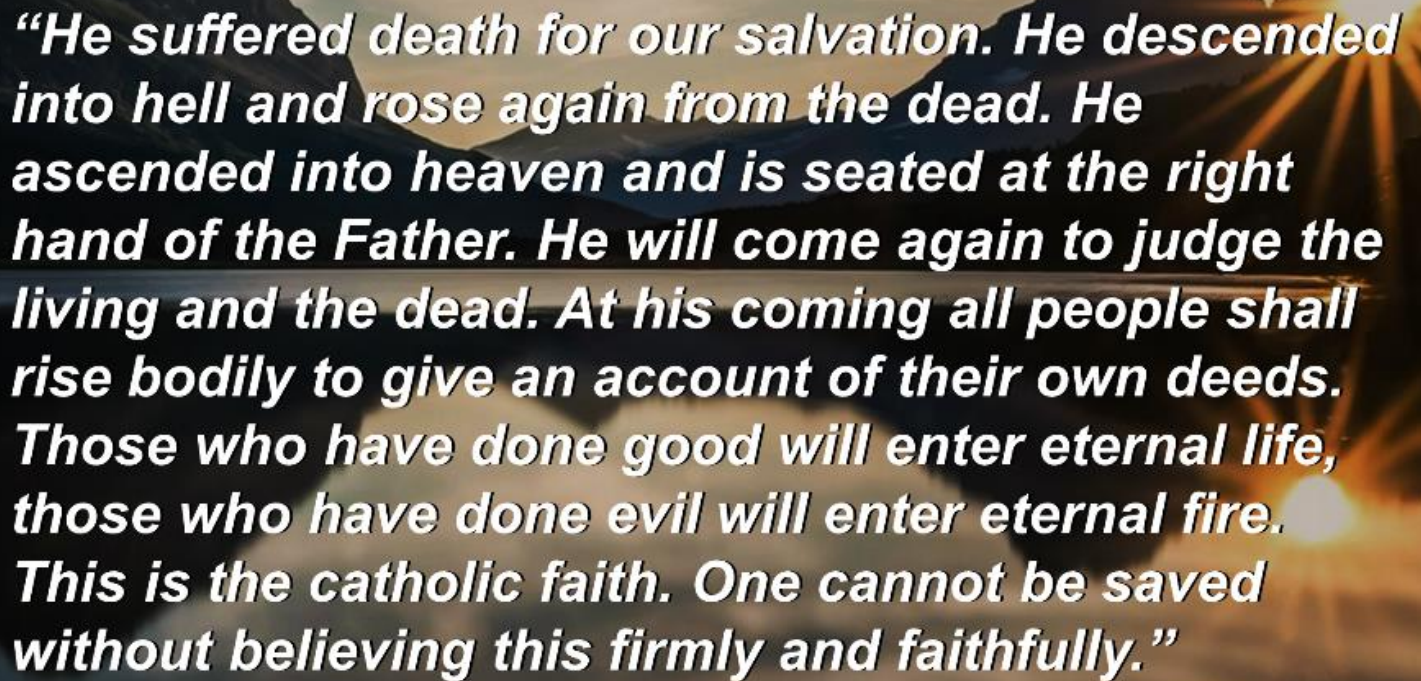
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the being of the Father, and he is man, born in the world from the being of his mother—



—existing fully as God, and fully as man with a rational soul and a human body, equal to the Father in divinity, subordinate to the Father in humanity. Although he is God and man, he is not divided, but is one Christ. He is united because God has taken humanity into himself; he does not transform deity into humanity. He is completely one in the unity of his person, without confusing his natures. For as the rational soul and body are one person, so the one Christ is God and man.”

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“He suffered death for our salvation. He descended into hell and rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. At his coming all people shall rise bodily to give an account of their own deeds. Those who have done good will enter eternal life, those who have done evil will enter eternal fire. This is the catholic faith. One cannot be saved without believing this firmly and faithfully.”

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The part about the “One Christ is God and man” combated two distortions on either side of it, one held

that God and human melded into one being and the other that the God part and the human part were completely separate. The orthodox doctrine is that God and man are two, but united as one without real separation, but also without real mixing together.



You can see clearly that this Creed declares that a person must hold orthodox belief about the nature of God and the nature of Christ as well as accepting Saving Grace through Him in order to be Saved.

That's practically true, true from a practical standpoint, but not technically true. The full Truth of it is that complete acceptance of Christ is the only thing

required for Salvation, but the fact remains as a practical matter that acceptance of Christ means acceptance of the actual Christ, not some distorted manufactured conception of Christ, or He's not the Christ.

In that sense, we must hold the correct understanding of God and Christ to accept the Salvation that they offer rather than a false salvation from a false version of God and Christ. While perfect theology is not a prerequisite for Salvation, approaching the true God certainly is.



The Holy Trinity

One God, Three Divine Persons

Our task regarding God is not to confound the Persons of God, nor dividing the Substance of God, by acknowledging that there is one Person of the Father, one Person of the Son, and one Person of the Holy Spirit. But simultaneously that the Godhead is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as one. One way I use to keep it straight is I use the term God when I'm talking about the Godhead, the totality of God as One. When I use terms like Father, Son, and Spirit, I'm thinking of a specific Person of the Trinity.

It is the same with the nature of Christ... He is essentially two in one for these purposes. When I'm thinking of His divinity I talk in terms of the Word, when I think of his humanity, I talk in terms of Jesus. Then when I think in terms of His role, I use terms that convey the aspect I want to stress. Sometimes Lamb, sometimes Lion. Sometimes Lord, sometimes Savior. Sometimes the Ancient of Days, sometimes Brother. His titles stress particular aspects of both Who He is and what He does, whether Anointed One, Messiah, Alpha and Omega, Bread of Life, Son of God, or Son of Man, He is our entire focus.

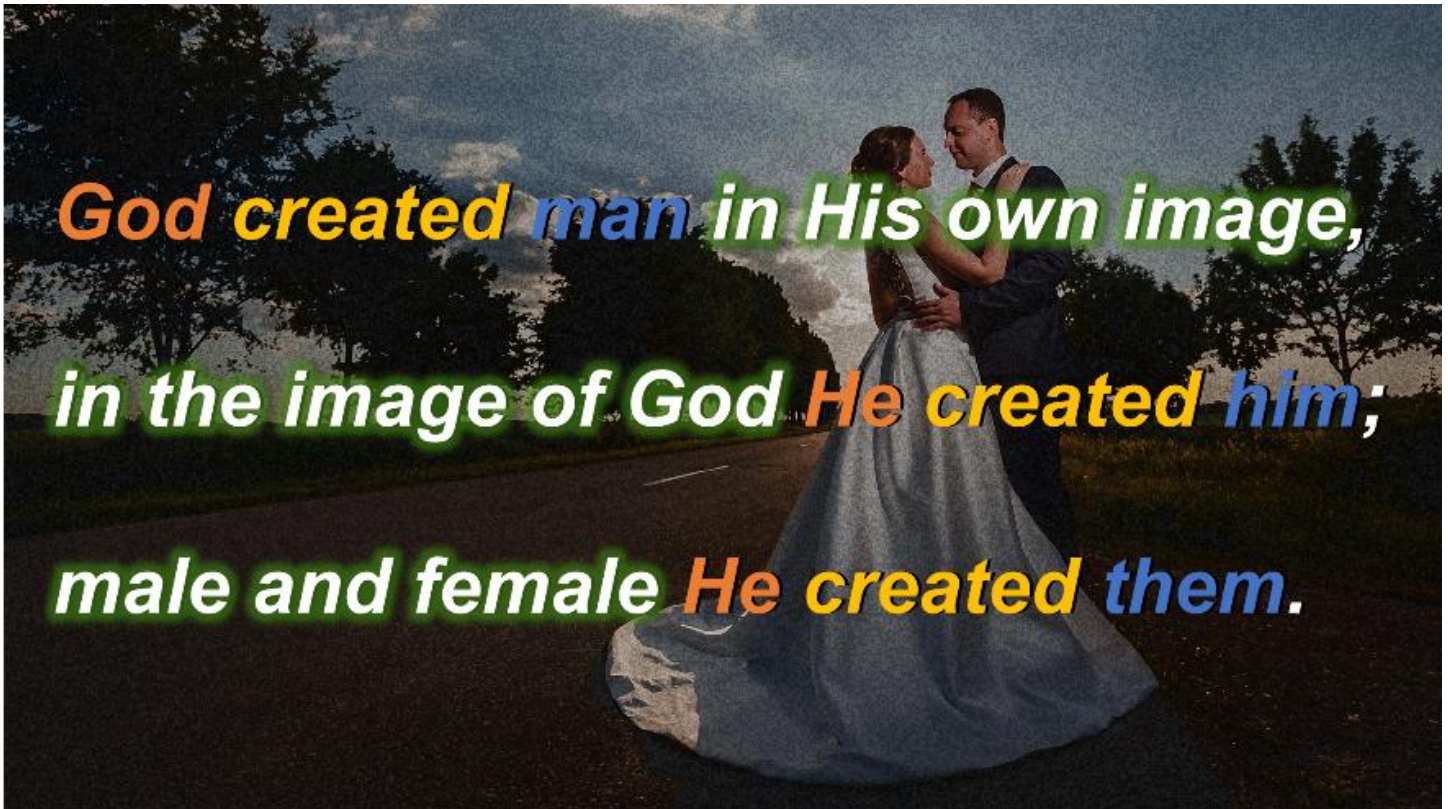


Bottom line, we cannot think about entirely separate things like butter, milk, and potatoes, nor can we think about an irreversible mixing into one inseparable thing like mashed potatoes. Beyond that, as already mentioned, neither can we think of three phases of the same thing, like water, steam, and ice.

What do we have that is the image of God so that we can understand the concept better? Well, God gave us that image in the very Beginning.



Genesis 1:27, “God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.” If you want to see an image of God, look no further than man, but specifically a male and a female together. If you only have a dude, the image is incomplete. If you only have a dudette, the image is incomplete. It requires two individuated but fully together persons to give a full image of God.



(Subject, Verb, Object, Adverbial) God, He, He; created x3; man, him, them; in His own image, in the image of God, male and female. The image of God is specifically "male and female."

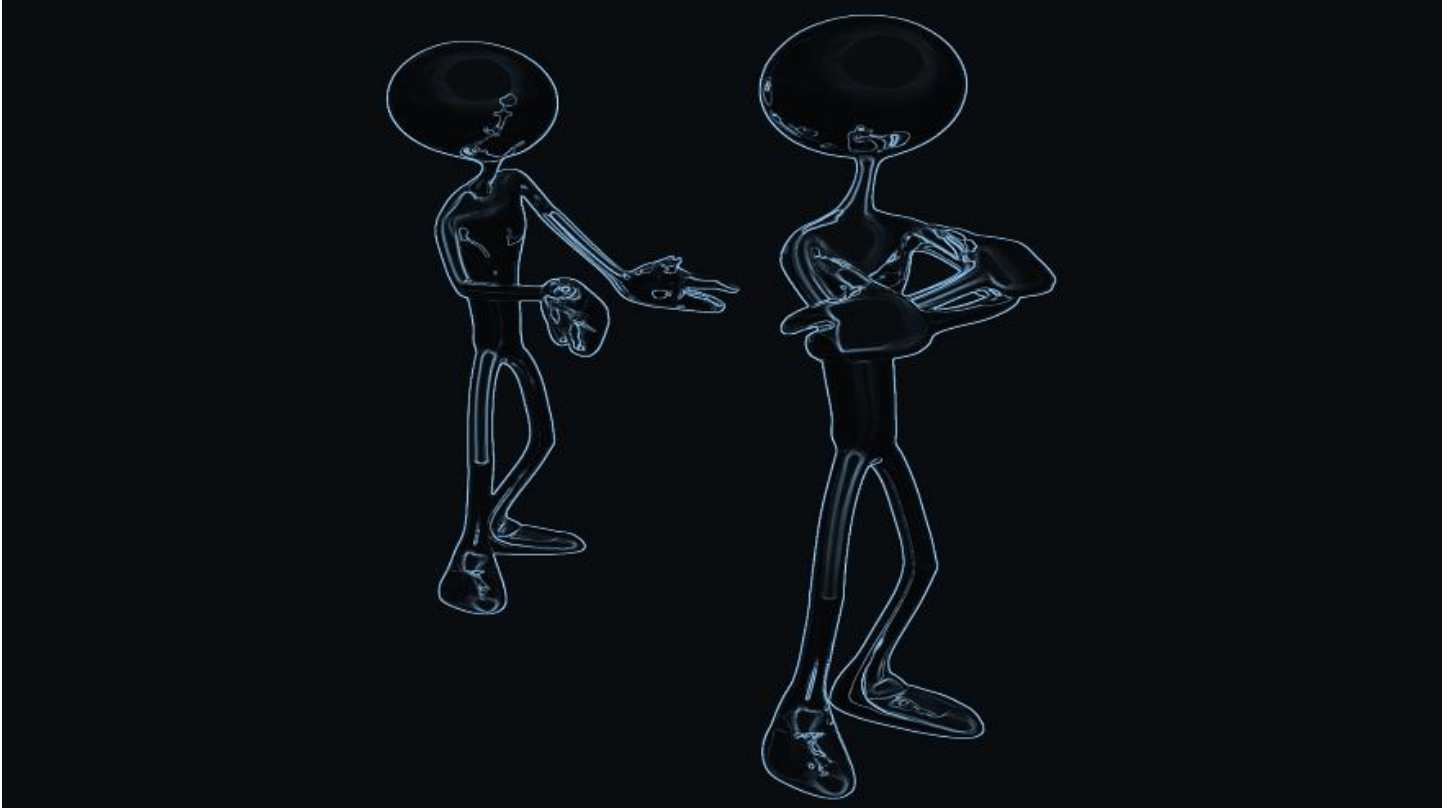
What exactly was God driving at? For that we look at the explanation, and expansion. Genesis 2:24, "For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh."



It is the complementary union between male and female in harmony, adoration, and security that gives us an insight into the nature of God. One man joined together with one woman in the sight of the One God become One. It was to that triunity that God gave His power and authority over the earth. It was to that triunity that God gave the ability to procreate – to bear other thinking creatures. It was to that triunity that God showed us Who He is as a relational Being.

A perfect marriage of different individuals becoming one. Now, our picture is blurry. Read chapter 3 to find out how and why. We are living in an imperfect world

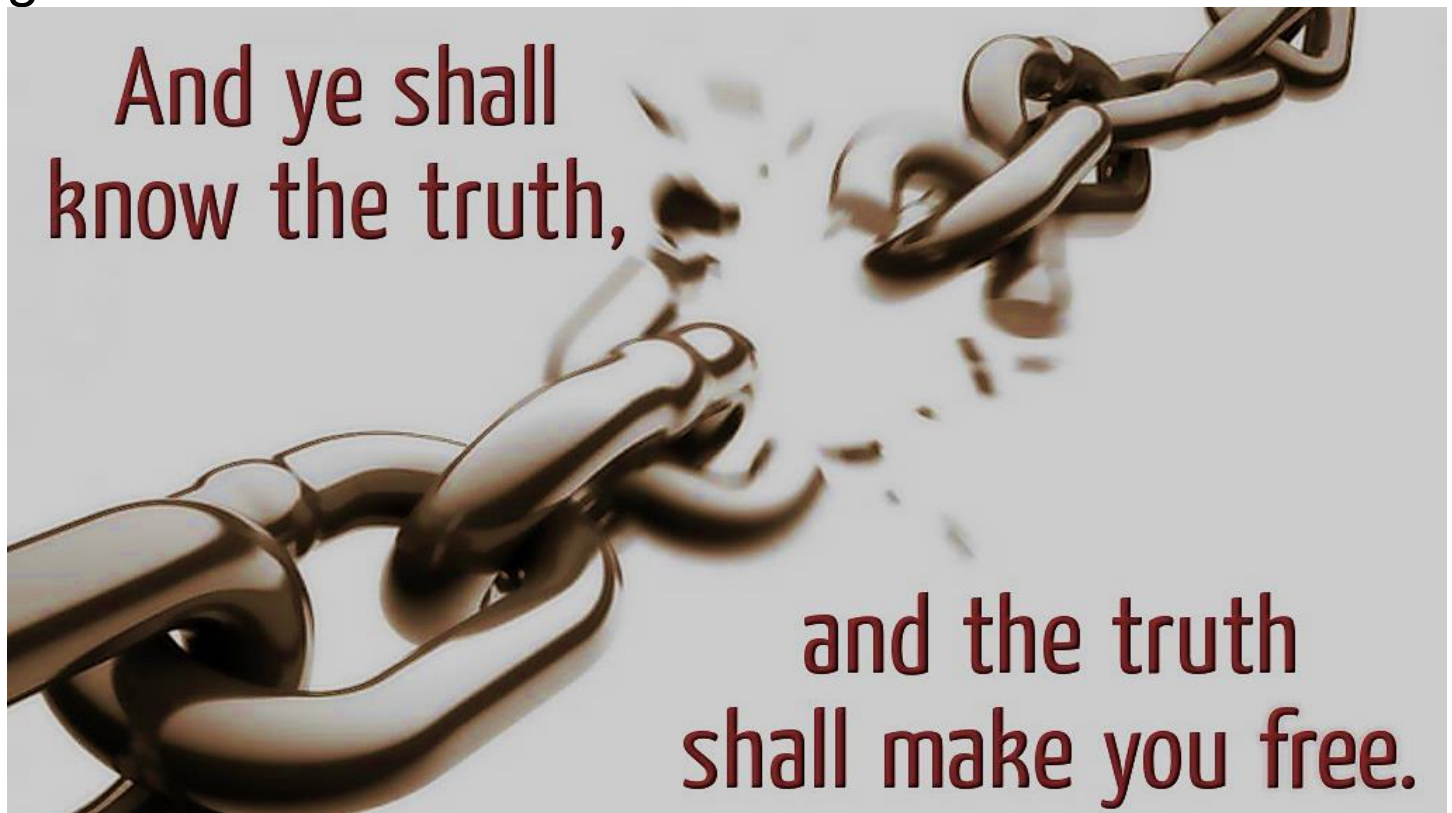
because we chose to ruin God's creation and His plan of relational unity by being so self-absorbed and fearful that we can't help but go around destroying everything – especially relationships.



In a perfect world there would be no hinderance of relations between a man and a woman and Almighty God. We constantly put up roadblocks to relationship all due to our petty jealousies for fear of rejection.

If we will allow God, the true God, to have His way in us, we will have more love, experience more joy, live in peace, generously practice patience. We will be kinder,

become doers of good, be ever faithful. We will be gentler because we will be self-controlled.



If only we would recognize the Truth that Jesus has set us free from the insanity of pursuing the things of this world. Chief among the worldly pursuits is that need for the acceptance of those unwilling to accept us for who we are.

Get your acceptance from the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. If He is for you, it absolutely matters not if everyone else is against you – irrelevant!

To do that... You put Christ Jesus first in your life. You must love the Lord your God with every bit of yourself and with all that you have.



You do the best you can in an intentional effort to please God. You apologize when you fail. You accept the fact that Jesus has paid your debt, pick yourself back up and move forward. If the world doesn't like that – let the world be hanged. You follow Jesus!