

Christmas and the Miracle of the Incarnation

THEOLOGY

Theology is the study of God. There are two concepts that are important to basic Christianity. These are the concepts of “monotheism” and “Trinity.”

1. Monotheism—Belief in one and only one God
2. Trinity—means “three in one” and means that the one God is revealed as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Monotheism

DEUTERONOMY 6:4; ISAIAH 45:5-6; JOHN 17:3; and 1 CORINTHIANS 8:6

The Doctrine of the Trinity

- (1) God is 3 persons: the Father, the Son, & the Holy Spirit.
- (2) Each person is fully God.
- (3) There is 1 God.

Doctrine of the Trinity: There is one and only one God who exists eternally in three persons, identified as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Additional Scriptural Illustrations of the Trinity

Divine Attributes	Father	Son	Holy Spirit
Called God	Phil. 1:2	John 1:1,14; Col. 2:9	Acts 5:3-4
Eternal	Psalms 90:2	John 1:1-2	Hebrews 9:14
Creator	Isaiah 64:8	John 1:3; Col. 1:15-17	Job 33:4 26:13
Omnipresent	Jeremiah 23:24	Matthew 28:20	Psalms 139:7-10
Omniscient	Matthew 11:27; 1 John 3:20	Matthew 11:27; John 16:30; 21:17	1 Cor. 2:10-11
Indwells	2 Cor. 6:16	Col. 1:27	John 14:17
Strengthens Believers	Psalms 138:3	Philippians 4:13	Ephesians 3:16
Resurrects	1 Thessalonians 1:10	John 2:19, 10:17	Romans 8:11

Trinitarian Heresies

The following false teachings about the Trinity have appeared throughout the centuries.

1. Dynamic Monarchianism (Adoptionism) – Jesus became Christ at his baptism.
2. Modalism – One God reveals himself as Father, Son, and Spirit at different times.
3. Arianism – Jesus Christ is a created being.
4. Semi-Arianism – Christ is like the Father, but subordinate to him.
5. Macedonianism – The Holy Spirit is a created being.

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CHRISTOLOGY

Jesus is the Son of God (Matthew 3:17; John 11:27; Matthew 16:16; John 20:28, etc.).

Jesus is Fully Human (Luke 2:6-7; Luke 2:52; Matthew 4:3; John 19:28; Mark 4:38, etc.).

Doctrine of the Incarnation:

God became flesh, assumed a human nature, and became a man. That man is Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the second person of the Trinity. See John 1:1, 14; Romans 8:3; etc.

Christological Heresies

The following false teachings about the Person of Christ have appeared throughout the centuries.

1. Arianism – Jesus Christ was created; subordinate to God and superior to humans.
2. Docetism – Jesus appeared to be human.
3. Apollinarianism – Christ had no human spirit.
4. Nestorianism – God indwelt Jesus, but Jesus was not God
5. Eutychianism – Jesus' humanity was absorbed by the Logos.
6. Monophysitism – Jesus has one nature that is different than the divine and human.

Chalcedonian Definition (A. D. 451)

Wherefore, following the holy Fathers, we all with one voice confess our Lord Jesus Christ one and the same Son, the same perfect in Godhead, the same perfect in manhood, truly God and truly man, the same consisting of a reasonable soul and a body, of one substance with the Father as touching the Godhead, the same of one substance with us as touching the manhood, like us in all things apart from sin; begotten of the Father before the ages as touching the Godhead, the same in the last days, for us and for our salvation, born from the Virgin Mary, the Theotokos, as touching the manhood, one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation; the distinction of natures being in no way abolished because of the union, but rather the characteristic property of each nature being preserved, and concurring into one Person and one subsistence (hypostasis), not as if Christ were parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son and only-begotten God, Word, Lord, Jesus Christ; even as the Prophets from the beginning spoke concerning him, And our Lord Jesus Christ instructed us, and the Creed of the Fathers has handed down to us.

Final points

Christ did not cease being God when he became a man, he simply laid aside the privileges of deity.

The full deity and humanity of Jesus Christ are necessary for salvation. Salvation is of God, but only a man can pay the penalty for sin. Christ is the mediator between God and man.

Jesus Christ is eternally united to us. He will be God and man forever.