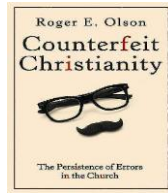


2025 Summer Virtual Study



“Counterfeit Christianity”

By Professor Roger E. Olson

Session 3: Doubting the Deity of Jesus Christ & Contesting the Trinity

July 24, 2025

7:30 PM

Session 2 Recap...

In Session 2 of our study, we examined the earliest of the heretical movements that grew out of the Christian movement in the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd centuries. The “mother” of all heresies, Gnosticism, was a mystical movement that was traced back to Simon the magician in Acts chapter 8. Gnostics believed Jesus had secret teaching or knowledge (“gnosis”) that he only gave to the inner circle of disciples (Peter, James, John) which was then passed down from them to the Gnostic leaders. Gnostics believed that all matter was evil and the cause of sin; so, salvation was not found in Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross, but instead is from the escape from materiality by means of the discovery of one’s own divinity (soul – secret knowledge – gnosis). Christian’s response to Gnosticism focused on Jesus’ humanity and the importance/necessity of the resurrection, the idolatrous nature of calling one’s self a part of the “divine”, and the fact that these “secret teachings” did not get passed down to the obvious choices (i.e. Irenaeus – Polycarp’s pupil, John’s pupil. Remnants of Gnosticism can be seen even today in folk religion, Rosicrucianism, and others.

Next, we examined the heresies of Montanism and Marcionism. Montanus was a “self-appointed” prophet in Asia Minor who claimed that his utterances were a literal gift from God (God “strummed” his vocal cords). Montanus argued that his prophecies were as authoritative and equivalent as the writings of the apostles. He urged his followers to join him in Pepuza and await the return of the Lord. Early Christians dismissed Montanus’s teaching

and worked on canonizing writing that the Christian Church would see as authoritative – what we would later call the Old Testament and New Testament canon. Similarities of Montanism can be seen in the Mormon movement, charismatic Pentecostal movement, and any religious movement where prophecy is equated or given higher billing than the written word.

The final heresy we examined last week was Marcionism. Marcion was an early Christian bishop who, because of circumstantial frustrations with the Jewish faith and the synagogue, taught that the Christian canon should exclude any documents that were “too Jewish” – the Hebrew Bible (the OT), the Gospel of Matthew, other specific writings in Paul’s letters, etc. Marcion also taught that the God that Christians worship, the Father of Jesus Christ, did not create the world. Rather, the world was created by a demented god, whom he identified as Yahweh, the God worshipped by the Jews. Modern day Marcionites can be seen in the Dispensationalist groups in the 20th century.

With each heresy, the Christian Church responded and is called to respond today when challenged with alternative ideas that challenge orthodox beliefs.

Opening Prayer

Session 3 Video – “Doubting the Deity of Jesus Christ”

Doubting the Deity of Jesus Christ: Adoptionism, Arianism, and Nestorianism

The Foundational Christian Truth: Jesus is God

- While recent books and movies have claimed that divinity of Jesus Christ was “invented” by early Christian bishops, writings from outside the church and inside the church as early as the 2nd century tell a different story
- The first great Christian theologians – Irenaeus, Origen, Tertullian – all living around 200 AD write about Jesus as both God and human
- The Nicene Creed, which only reaffirmed what was believed for centuries – that Jesus was and is “truly God and truly human” – was

written defend this early belief and defend this early controversy; a fuller version of the creed was written in 381 AD adding the Holy Spirit as of the same substance too

- The incarnation of God in Christ is a doctrine firmly rooted in New Testament

SCRIPTURE FOCUS – John 1:1, 14

- Jesus said he was “one with the Father”; in 1 John, we read that anyone that does not have the Son does not have the Father
- C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* – “liar, lunatic, or Son of God” argument

“The incarnation is the heart, the center, and the core of Christian belief. It is what sets Christianity apart from all other religions and is inseparable from other basic Christian beliefs.” (p. 73)

- Only a person – Jesus – who was BOTH God and human could be the mediator who could reconcile God and humanity

Adoptionism Denies the Deity of Christ in Third-Century Syria

- Paul of Samosata, in Syria, as bishop of Antioch, raised the first debate about the deity of Jesus Christ in Christianity
- Much of what we know about Paul’s teachings are from his critics; the nature of the early church heresy can be traced back to him – *adoptionism*
- Paul did not believe Jesus began life as God incarnate, but rather as a mere human with potential to become divine
- At his baptism, God “adopted” Jesus into a unique relationship with himself, so that they became “Father” and “Son”; but Jesus remained fully human
- The result was that Jesus became a unique human instrument of God in revealing himself to people and saving them from their sins, but he was never of the same substance of God
- This belief system is sometimes called “*monarchianism*”, specifically “*dynamic Monarchianism*” – a word used by early Christians to describe any belief in the absolute oneness of God; all forms deny the real

triunity of God – the Trinity; it is called “dynamic” because it implies that God can “become” Father (rather than be eternally Father)

- Paul’s reason for this was to emphasize monotheism in a polytheistic world
- *Adoptionism* – any doctrine or teaching that reduces Jesus to a mere human being – however highly exalted in relation with God; what is crucial is that Jesus “became” divine and God’s unique Son and never was God incarnate, one in substance with God the Father
- 70 Christian bishops gathered in 269 in Antioch and deposed Paul as bishop because of his teaching about Christ

Arianism Denies the Deity of Jesus Christ in Fourth-Century Egypt

- The biggest argument about the deity of Jesus took place in Alexandria, Egypt, in 318 AD
- Council of Nicea was called in 318 AD to discuss the debate over the deity of Christ
- Argument between Alexander, the bishop of Alexandria, and Arius, the leading priest of Alexandria, who wanted to be bishop
- Arius – denied the full and true deity of Jesus, led his followers with the chant “There was a time when the Son was not.”
- Alexander tried to discipline Arius, but he just became louder
- Arius, unlike Paul, did not deny Jesus was the incarnation of a preexisting “divine being”; Arius believed Jesus was not “adopted” by God into a special sonship, he was more than a great prophet, he was the Word, the Logos, the first and greatest creature God ever made, who become incarnate as a human being through Mary
- For Arius, the Word, the Son of God, was created in time and not equal with the Father; he was god two – a glorious creature worthy of worship, but not of the same substance as God the Father
- Arius denied not only the deity of Christ, but also the Trinity; not three persons of one substance; God is one person – the Father – creating a replica of himself, a great spiritual being Logos, but remaining solely eternal God

- Arius claimed Alexander and his followers were polytheists; Alexander claimed Arius and his followers were new adoptionists in disguise
- At the council, the bishops stripped Arius of his rank as church leader and declared his doctrine – “subordinationism” – as heresy
- As a result, the Nicene Creed was written that states that Jesus Christ is *homoousios* (consubstantial) with the Father - of one, identical substance with God the Father – and eternal, not created
- In 381, the Council of Constantinople reaffirmed the Nicene Creed and added a third article about the Holy Spirit – of the same substance – Trinity
- Great champion of the deity of Christ was Athanasius, who succeeded Alexander in Alexandria – “one substance, three persons”, or “one what and three whos” – affirming a mystery, and that was okay

Nestorianism Casts Doubt on the Deity of Christ in Fifth-Century Constantinople

- Following the Council of Constantinople, debates broke out about the nature of Jesus between two main cities of the east – both Antioch and Alexandria wanted primary influence in the new capital city of Constantinople
- Each city had different approaches to theology and especially to Christology
- Antioch Christians – emphasized Jesus’ humanity and then searched for an explanation of how he could also be God; Alexandria Christians emphasized Jesus’s divinity and then searched for an explanation of how he could also be human; some were okay leaving it a mystery
- One suggestion about explaining the duality of Jesus – his humanity and deity – came from Apollinarius, bishop of Laodicea; he died shortly after the Council of Constantinople – taught Jesus was God, the Son, the Word, Logos, living in a human body; the incarnation meant that the eternal Son of God took on a human body but did not really become fully and truly human – he had no human mind, his mind was God’s – “God in a bod”

- The Council considered his teachings a new form of “*Docetism*” – the Christology of the Gnostics, that taught Christ only appeared to be human but was not truly human
- Gregory of Nazianzus argued that to save every part of humanity, the Word had to take to himself every part of us
- Antioch Christians protested the loudest against Apollinarius, trying to protect Jesus’s humanity – believed the Alexandrian Christians sympathized with him, afraid he would be elected bishop in Constantinople; they were excited when their man, Nestorius, was elected to the office
- Nestorius – first thing – preached/published sermon condemning use of “theotokos” for Mary; “theotokos” means “God-bearer” or “Mother of God”; he claimed that God could not be born and cannot have a mother; Mary was the “mother of Christ”, but not “mother of God”
- Alexandria accused Nestorius of denying the deity of Jesus
- Nestorius argues that Jesus was really two persons – the “Son of God” and “Son of David”, making Jesus Christ a corporate personality, and not one unified person; because God-stuff and human-stuff are so different, they cannot come together in one person; Jesus was two natures – human and divine – and thus two persons; the unity lay in the absolute coordination of their wills (a “perfect marriage” analogy)
- Other Christians saw the problem with this; very similar to Adoptionism, just in a trinitarian framework
- A Council at Ephesus in 431 AD condemned Nestorius and his Christology, he was deposed and sent into exile

The Council of Chalcedon Settle the Controversy over Christology

- Another controversy broke out in Constantinople after Nestorius; a teacher names Eutyches began to attempt to refute Nestorianism by offering an explanation – Jesus Christ was and is a hybrid of humanity and divinity – human and divine substance; Jesus was a “third something” – neither exactly human nor exactly divine; Christ was “one nature”, not two, and one person, not two

- Issue was the “one nature” language; how can “God-stuff” and “human-stuff” be mixed or mingled into a third stuff?
- At the Council of Chalcedon in 451 AD, Eutychianism was condemned as heresy; wrote the “Chalcedonian Definition”, addendum to the Nicene Creed, said that Antioch and Alexandria was partly right, but Antioch and Alexandria was also partly wrong
- “Hypostatic union” – the union of two full and complete natures, human and divine, in one unified person (hypostasis); Jesus Christ was and is “one who and two whats” – one undivided person, but two whole natures
- The “Who” of Jesus Christ is the person of the Word, the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity
- The “Whats” are the Son’s deity and humanity brought together in him
- The incarnation means that the eternal Son of God, equal with the Father, took on to himself a true human nature, not a human person
- Four “Fences” to protect the Mystery of Incarnation – Two natures “without division, without separation, without mixture, without confusion” – the first two fences were to protect the mystery of the incarnation against Nestorianism; the second two were to protect it from Eutychianism

Modern (Live) Christological Heresies

- For most modern churches, especially Protestants, the orthodoxy carved out at the Councils are ignored; because of this, heresies are alive and well
- 1960’s – Bishop John Robinson, Church of England – *Honest to God* – denied the supernatural entirely and argued for a new view of God’s transcendence in which God is not a transcendent person; *The Human Face of God* – presented Jesus Christ as just a man but one who represented God perfectly; “functional theology” – Jesus functioned as God, but was not God substantially
- Jehovah’s Witnesses – Arian Christology – Christ was God’s first and greatest creature, the glorious archangel Michael, who became human

- Faustus Socinus – Reformation – adoptionism – “Polish Brethren” – forerunner of the Unitarian movement - denied the Trinity; John Milton, Isaac Newton
- Alfred North Whitehead – modern day Nestorianism; Norman Pittenger, *The Word Incarnate* (1959) – very close to Nestorianism
- North African Christians – monophysites – Eutychianism; Coptic Christians

Antidotes to Christological Heresies – Ancient and Modern

“The best antidote to Christological chaos is the same one recommended before about any wrong thinking in theology – understanding Christian orthodoxy and why it is what the church has taught for nearly two thousand years, and rooting it in scripture and the Great Tradition and explaining reasonably why it’s superior to heresies. But first churches and individuals need to come to their senses about the importance of doctrine.” (p. 84)

- If we are to get the gospel message out, we need to get it right! Theology is all about helping us get it right.
- Unfortunately Christians reduce the gospel to MTD – moralistic therapeutic deism – God is a stern, moral judge who is displeased with us but, nevertheless, always forgives because he’s also a loving heavenly grandfather; Jesus is God’s way of showing us what he expects, and that he forgives us when we repent; no need for incarnation or sacrifice for sins – MTD is shallow, not Christianity
- It is not possible to “prove” that Jesus is God incarnate, both fully human and divine, one person of two natures or substances; however, in the face of argument, much support can be used
 1. Scripture itself portrays Jesus as truly human. (Luke 2:52, 1 Tim. 2:5)
 2. Scripture will not allow us to worship or serve Jesus Christ as anything less than God incarnate. (Titus 2:13, John 20:28)
 3. If Jesus made himself equal with God by, for example, forgiving sins and saying that if people saw him, they saw the Father, then he was a blasphemer – unless he was God.
- Books to Read: *Jesus – God and Man* (Wolfhart Pannenberg, 1968), *On the Incarnation* (Athanasius), “Leo’s Tome” (Pope Leo I)

Questions to Ponder...

1. The center of Christianity is Jesus Christ. The center of conflict and controversy about Christianity is Jesus Christ. How do you understand who Jesus is and how he is both human and divine? How would you explain it to a young child or non-Christian?
2. What is your reaction to the author's statement that "the Christian gospel is not that God gave us Jesus to show us how to live; the Christian gospel is that we are helpless to live rightly and please God because of our finitude and fallenness, and God has provided the solution...?"
3. As the author reminds us, during the early centuries of Christianity, people fought and died over their convictions about who Jesus Christ is. While we are not asked to do this, after reading the chapter, why is it important that Jesus is both human and divine for your faith?

Contesting the Trinity:

Subordinationism, Modalism, and Tritheism

The Christian Doctrine of the Trinity

- Many people, including Christians, struggle with the doctrine of the Trinity
- "One in three, three in one" – not exactly correct
- Some regard the Trinity as the ultimate mystery – beyond comprehension; because of this, some embrace it, some reject it
- Under Constantine and through the fourth century, Christian leaders developed a "formal doctrine" of the Trinity – provided a formula for expressing the Trinity that did not exist before; belief had already been there
- The "Trinity" and the "doctrine of the Trinity" are not the same. The "Trinity" is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit eternally existing as one God. The "doctrine of the Trinity" is the human formula for expressing this correctly.

- Explaining the “Trinity” is impossible – God cannot be “explained”; however, there are things we can say about God that are truer than other things

“...the doctrine of the Trinity can be explained; the Trinity cannot be explained. The doctrine of the Trinity was never intended to be an explanation of God; it was intended to be a model that helps people think about God in a way that does not destroy the mystery of God, is faithful to God’s self-revelation in Christ, and protects God’s triunity from misunderstanding and distorted explanations.”

- No orthodox Christian ever thought they could peer into the inner workings of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and put together words to describe their oneness and threeness – it is a working model; it points to a mystery but attempts to make it as intelligible as possible without providing ways to distort or destroy the fullness of God
- The earliest use of term for the Trinity, *Trinitas*, was by Christians around 200 AD
- Main formulators of the doctrine of the Trinity were the Cappadocian Fathers – Basil of Caesarea (“Basil the Great”), Gregory of Nyssa (Basil’s younger brother), and Gregory of Nazianzus (their friend) – writings combatted Arianism, also created orthodox thought on the Trinity
- Nicene Creed (381 AD) – Father, Son, Holy Spirit – one in substance; equally good, eternal, powerful; Son “eternally begotten” by the Father, Holy Spirit proceeds from Father; three distinct (not separate) *hypostases* – “persons” (no individualism)
- T.R.I.U.N.E. – acrostic
 - T – **T**hree are represented as God – F, S, HS
 - R – They are **R**egarded as distinct persons
 - I – Their threeness is **I**mmmanent and eternal (not merely temporal)
 - U, N – They are **U**nited in essence (substance), with **N**o inequality
 - E – Doctrine of Trinity **E**xplains all doctrine but it itself inscrutable
- Three major heresies that deny the doctrine of God’s triunity

Subordinationism Challenges God's Triunity

- Adoptionism and Arianism subordinated Jesus to the Father; another type of “subordinationism” is the Holy Spirit to God
- Problem of subordinationism of the Holy Spirit lies in depersonalizing the Spirit by depicting him/her as a force rather than as a person; throughout Christian history, Christians have referred to the Spirit as “it” rather than as personal which has led many to think of the Holy Spirit along the lines of electricity – a power of God and not a person of the Godhead
- The NT refers to the Holy Spirit in personal terms – “comforter”, “advocate”; “sin against the Holy Spirit” – all point to a divine person
- During the 4th century, the pneumatomachians (“fighters against the Holy Spirit”) denied the divinity and personality of the Holy Spirit, reduction the Spirit to a powerful presence of God at work in the world – an emanation of God
- Not much known about them; may have been Arians or semi-Arians – shifted attack from the deity/humanity of Jesus to the Holy Spirit
- Behind the attack – “Monarchianism” – from the Greek meaning “one” and “source” – any belief that God can be only one singular person, not two and not three, even if they share the same divine substance
- Before the pneumatomachians, not much thought on the Holy Spirit; Basil fought their ideology by publishing the first treatise on the Holy Spirit, *“On the Holy Spirit”* – focused on John 14 – 17; many references to the Holy Spirit – not a force
- 381 – 2nd Ecumenical Council at Constantinople – added third article about the Holy Spirit to the creed
- Question – Does the Holy Spirit proceed eternally from the Father only or from the Son?
- Western Churches – from the Father and the Son (“filioque”); Eastern Orthodox Churches – rejects it, subordinates the Holy Spirit to the Son
- Subordinationism does not mean belief that the Father is the source of the Son and Spirit; means Son and Spirit are created and not equal with the Father in substance

Modalism Reduces the Trinity to Oneness

- Popular analogy for Trinity – Water – H₂O (solid, liquid, vapor) – three forms of the same divine substance – this is the heresy, modalism
- Modalism (also called Sabellianism, Patripassionism) – Father, Son, Holy Spirit are not in any sense “persons”, but merely outward manifestations of the one God person
- Early Christianity, easy to describe to Greek world by pointing to Greek theater – one actor played many roles by wearing different masks
- Greek word for “mask” – also be used for “persons” – “three persons for God” – meant three “masks” that God wear in history – sometimes appearing on human’s stage as Father, sometimes as Son, and sometimes as Holy Spirit (behind them all, is one person)
- Underlying motive – “Monarchianism” – begins with the assumption that monotheism must mean God can be only one person in undifferentiated unity; any distinctions is only in appearance (outward), not in immanence (within God himself)
- Gregory of Nyssa (Cappadocian Father) – wrote treatise against modalism, *On Not Three Gods* – modalists claimed that doctrine of Trinity represented three gods (polytheism); Gregory showed that God was one being with inner differentiation (used biblical and philosophical arguments)
- Gregory’s central argument – if God’s essence is love, whom did God love before creating everything? For modalists, the world is “necessary” to God – counterpart to love. This, however, detracts from God’s glorious otherness – his freedom and power.
- Whom was the Father speaking to when Jesus baptized? Whom did the Father “love”? How could the Spirit be “another advocate” Jesus promised to send? If God is one person, and not Father, Son, or Holy Spirit (these being masks God wears), then who is God? What person is He? Does this mean God is really “hiding” rather than revealing?
- These were the arguments used to show God was real, distinct persons – not modes or manifestations.
- Does this imply three gods? Only if we carry forth individualistic, modern day American culture onto God. We like to define “persons” as

“separate selves” – this was not the ancient idea of person, nor is the idea of “person” in most cultures of the world

- “Saying that God is three persons implies tritheism, three gods, *only* if we project onto Father, Son, and Spirit our modern, distorted ideas of persons as individual selves. If we realize that to be a person is to fit in rather than stand out, as most cultures in the world do, then tritheism is not as much of a threat. But also, we need to remember that when the early orthodox Christians called God “three persons” they were simply using the closest word they could come up with for something that is ultimately mysterious. Fifth-century church father Augustine said that we do not say “three persons” because we want to but only because we have no alternative.” (p.96-97)
- When we think of Trinity, our mind goes to “committee” – WRONG! Think, Family, without the dysfunction and inequality!
- Most modern modalists are probably just confused, not real heretics!

Tritheism Distorts the Trinity into Polytheism

- Belief that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three different gods – Christian form of polytheism
- “Committee analogy” for the Trinity – tritheism
- One has to dig deep into ancient Christianity to find hidden, unconscious tritheism
- Joachim of Fiore (Christian theologian of Middle Ages) – believed Western churches under influence of Augustine had wandered away from God’s threeness into an unbalanced emphasis of God’s oneness – to most orthodox Christians, Joachim and his followers fell into tritheism by describing F, S, and HS as different persons; he believed it would lead to a new age, a new “dispensation” of God
- The Catholic church of Joachim’s day condemned him and his teachings as heresy; later theologians said it was a mistake based on misunderstanding; nowhere did Joachim or others say that F, S, and HS are different gods
- One thing is clear, tritheism is dangerous and to be avoided

Modern Forms of Trinitarian Heresies

- Subordinationism of the Son and the Holy Spirit is the “orthodoxy” of several offshoots of the Adventist movement of the 19th century (Seventh Day Adventists are orthodox)
- Jehovah’s Witnesses teach subordinationism – the Son and the Spirit are not equal with the Father, “Jehovah”, who alone is God
- Some liberal Christian theologians have fallen into subordinationism by labeling Jesus as a great prophet
- Modalism is the primary modern heresy about the Trinity; it’s common, even rampant
- Only one organized group of Christians actually holds modalism as its official doctrine – “Oneness Pentecostals” or “Jesus Only” Christians
- Two large denominations teach a modalistic doctrine of the Trinity – that F, S, and HS are simply three “names” and “manifestations” of the person Jesus – United Pentecostal Church, Pentecostal Assemblies of the World (this has been the major division among the Pentecostal Church for over a century)
- Familiar Pastor, T.D. Jakes – has often used “modalistic” language in his sermons, specifically “manifestations” of God; Jakes has responded that he accepted the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity, but he continues to use “modalistic” language in his sermons/writings
- Largest presence of modalism – minds of ordinary Christians
- As for “tritheism”, it is more difficult to identify; many orthodox believers detect tritheism in the teachings of the Mormons whose official statement of faith describes F, S, and HS as “three separate divine personages”; F and S are said to be male beings of the same species as humans, the HS is said to be a nonbodily spiritual being; the problem calling this “tritheism” is it exists within a larger doctrine of gods with one supreme God over all; the Mormon church is large and it allows diversity among its belief and teachings
- Jurgen Moltmann – tritheism?; I would disagree, Moltmann’s statement, and central belief is “the love shared equally by Father, Son, and Holy Spirit binds them together as one God so that, ultimately, there can be no real division or separation among them.” (p.101)

Antidotes to Trinitarian Heresies

- Correct theology is informed by four sources: scripture, tradition, reason, and experience.
- Learn/teach the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity showing its roots in scripture and tradition and its consistency with reason and experience
- Best antidote to Trinitarian heresies...
 - Subordinationism...
 - Scripture: of the S and HS to the F is falsified in scripture (John 17:5, Acts 5)
 - Tradition: All major branches of Christianity insist on full, robust doctrine of Trinity; Unitarian Churches, which deny the Trinity, are usually excluded from ecumenical groups
 - Reason/Experience: If God is love, whom did He love before the world began? How can he be personal without relationships? Worshipping Jesus as God was common, even universal, among early Christians
 - Modalism...
 - Most modalists believe the doctrine of the Trinity is polytheistic or tritheism; the oneness of God in the Trinity is not expressed strongly enough; overlook Scripture passages mentioned earlier
 - Persons do not mean “individual selves against each other”
 - Point to scripture where God reveals himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – if not a “revelation at all”, then God is hiding himself (three masks)
 - Tritheism...
 - “Perichoresis” of F, S, and HS – their interdependence and interpenetration – they indwell each other in such a strong bond of unity that together they are one God
 - No need to parcel out worship or devotion equally – they do not get jealous! – worship of the Father is what the Son Jesus wants, worship of Jesus is what the Spirit wants, worship of the Holy Spirit is what the Father and Son want – there is no competition!

Follow Up Questions...

1. In the doctrine of the Trinity, the Church provides a formula. The purpose is to protect the mystery of God and be faithful to God's self-revelation in Christ without distortion. So, language about the Trinity can only be an approximation and never a complete description. What are some ways that language can both reveal and yet hide meaning?
2. Let's listen to Olson's acrostic again to express and explain the doctrine of the Trinity: "In revelation, God's self-disclosure, **Three** are represented as God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They are **regarded** as distinct persons. Their threeness is **immanent** and eternal (not merely temporal). However, they are **united** in essence (substance) with **no inequality**. Finally, the doctrine of the Trinity **explains** all doctrine but is itself inscrutable." Based on this, how is the Trinity not three gods?
3. The author says that without the doctrine of the Trinity other Christian beliefs make no sense. Other than the incarnation, what other beliefs would not make sense if not for the doctrine of the Trinity?

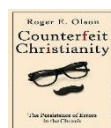
Books to Read...

Castelo, Daniel. *Confessing the Triune God* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2014).

Macchia, Frank D. *The Trinity, Practically Speaking* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010).

Moltmann, Jurgen. *The Crucified God or The Trinity and the Kingdom*. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993).

Closing Prayer



Session 4: Setting Grace Aside & Making God a Monster (Chapters 7 and 8 in the Book)

Tuesday, July 29 7:30 PM Facebook Live
