

The Trinity and the Incarnation

RCIA

Tuesday, September 21st, 2010

Truth: Four Weeks, Four Questions

1. Is there objective truth?
 2. Can we know objective truth?
 3. Is there objective “religious” truth?
 4. Can we know objective “religious” truth?
- If our answer is “no” at any point, our whole project is derailed from the start. If you can’t know where the train is going (or if it’s a train in the first place), why get on board?

Is there objective truth?

- Subjective: depending on the individual
 - “What’s true for you might not be true for me.”
 - I create truth.
 - “The desk is big.”
- Objective: out in the world independent of me.
 - “What’s true is true whether or not we agree.”
 - I discover truth.
 - “The desk is 3’6” tall.”

What is Truth?

- Truth is the equation of thing and intellect.
- A judgment is said to be true when it conforms to the external reality.
- “I have a quarter in my hand.”

The Achilles' Heel of the Issue

- It is self contradictory to deny the existence of real objective truth.
- If someone claims that “there is no truth,” they’re saying that there is at least one truth: that there is no truth.
- Is it absolutely true that there are no absolute truths?
- “What’s true for you might not be true for me.” – Is that true for both of us?

- Practically speaking, most people only really hold this view of truth for religious and moral truths.
- No one really claims relativism for mathematical proofs, or meteorological events, or high voltage warnings.
- No one wants a relativist surgeon or pilot. We are relative about things that **happen to us subjectively**. I can be cold and you can be hot, but the temperature is not relative. Our feeling is relative.
- I perceived my desk chair to be big in kindergarten, now I perceive it to be small. My perception was relative. The desk's height was an objective reality.

So we need to ask (next time):

1. Can I KNOW this truth? The universe may be out there, but is it possible for my mind to come to that correspondence with it?
2. Which type of truth is “religious” truth? Is it primarily about me and my experience, or about reality “out there,” independent of me?

Mystery

- “A truth...that we could not know unless God revealed it; once it is known, it is understandable and reasonable, but it is never fully comprehensible; truths that surpass reason’s powers and can only be shown to be non-contradictory.”
- Trinity as the central mystery of Christianity
- Revelation – God’s self-communication: the topic of our next sessions

God is One

- Fundamental affirmation of Judaism: Monotheism.
- “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord” (Deut 6:4).
- “There is no other” (Isaiah 45:22).
- The prophets and the trouble with the Kings
- This was a fundamental belief for the early Christians as well.

God is Three: The Revelation in Jesus Christ

- RADICAL NOTION
- **Jesus claims to be God.**
- Jesus speaks with the Father.
- Jesus promises to send the Holy Spirit.
- All of this is authenticated with His death and resurrection
- Challenge to the early Christians: how do we reconcile the oneness of God with the revelation in Jesus Christ?

The data in Gods Revelation

1. There is one God.
2. The Father is God.
3. The Son is God.
4. The Holy Spirit is God.
5. The Father, Son, and Spirit are really distinct.

The Dogma of the Trinity

- The Trinity is One.
- The Divine Persons are really distinct from one another. The Persons do not “share” divinity. They are each wholly God.
- The Divine Persons are in relation to one another.

An Image of the Trinity

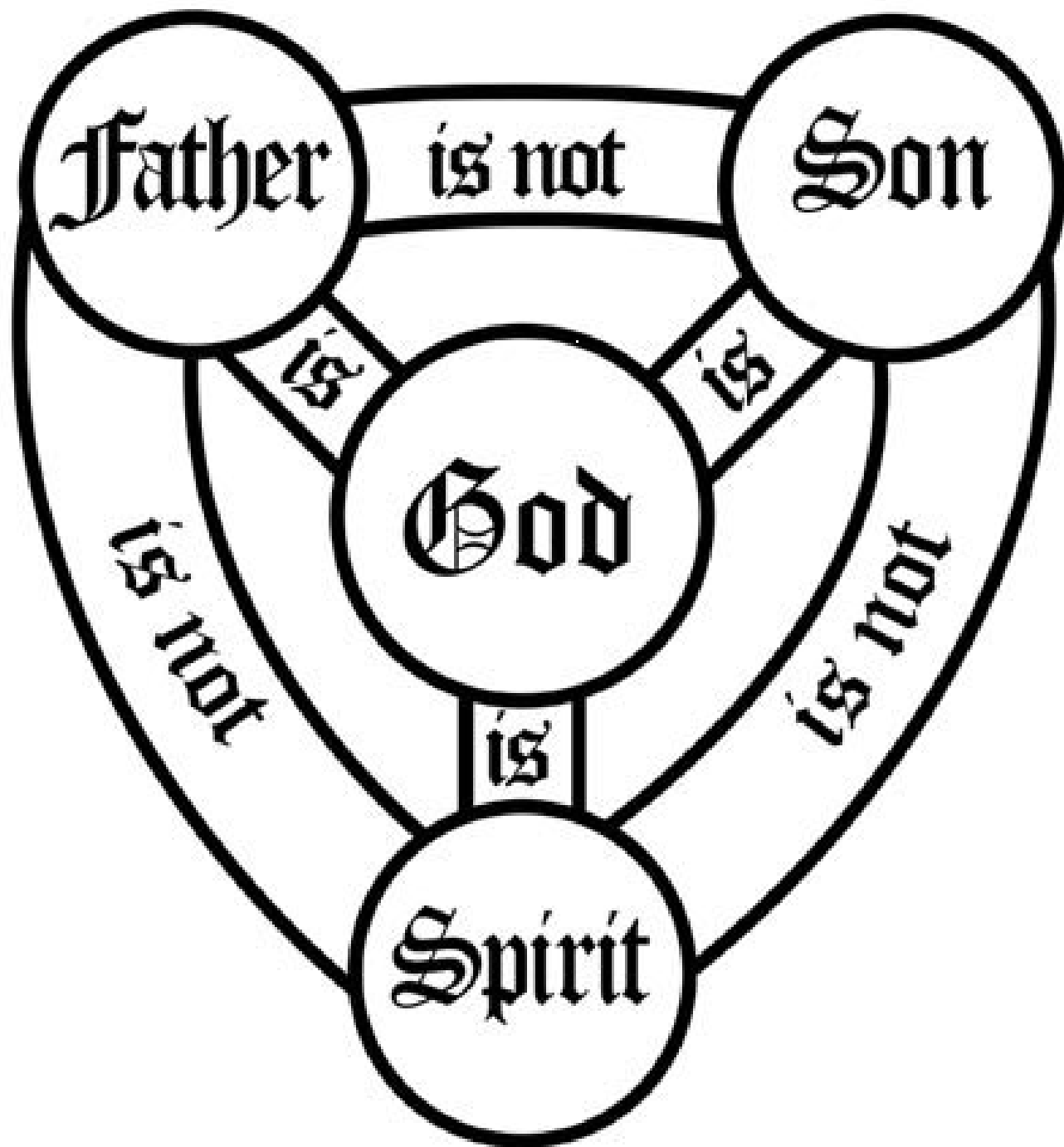
- Picture yourself. You have an image of yourself in your mind. You know yourself.
- It's an imperfect image, but it's an image.
- Look at the image of yourself. You can love that self.
- It's an imperfect love, but it's love.

God Knows Himself

- God knows Himself. Perfectly.
- In knowing Himself, from all eternity God the Father generates a perfect image of Himself: the Son.
- Because the Son is a perfect image of the Father, the Son lacks nothing of what it is to be God. But the Son is distinct from the Father.

God Loves Himself

- God the Father sees His self-image, the Son, and sees how good and perfect He is.
- The Father loves the Son. Perfectly.
- That love is so perfect, so real, that it is another person: the Holy Spirit. The Father is the Lover, the Son is the Beloved, and the Holy Spirit is the Love between them.





“God is Love” 1 John 4

- Three things involved in love: the lover, the beloved, and the love between them.
- The Father eternally loves the Son
- The Son returns the love of the Father
- The love between them is so real that it is another divine Person: the Holy Spirit
- Each person points not to themselves, but to the Other. The Son came to reveal the Father; the Spirit bears witness to the Father and the Son

So what?

- Self-giving love goes “all the way up.”
- Love and relationship are fundamental and essential to the deepest Reality.

So What?

- Man created in the image and likeness of God
 - Self forgetful love
 - Self-donation
 - The family as an image of the Trinity
- God acts according to His nature
 - God is an eternal dynamic ecstasy of self-giving
 - We can have confident assurance in God's steadfast love and promises. He can act only according to His nature which is self-giving love. This is the kind of God we can abandon ourselves to.

Catholicism is...

- Strange/Uncanny (not held in categories)
- Both/And rather than Either/or