

Theo 101, Session #06: On the Trinity (ANSWER KEY)

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True/False

1. **False** All the major religions i.e. Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism believe in only one God.

Hinduism – Polytheistic. One of the oldest religions. It is polytheistic. Believes in re-incarnation. Principal religion in India. Many divinities all in one universal spirit called Brahman.

Buddhism – Polytheistic. Broke away from orthodox Hinduism in 500 B.C. Principal religion in China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam.

Judaism – Monotheistic. First religion to believe in only one God. Most early Christians were of Jewish faith.

Islam – Monotheistic. 600 A.D. Prophet Mohammed. Principal religion of Middle East, North Africa, Turkey, Indonesia, Pakistan. Followers are Muslims.

Christianity – Monotheistic.

2. **False** The Church teaches that only a select few individuals have access to “the mind of God” and are called to reveal this mind to others of the faith.

*This heresy is called **Gnosticism**, which has reappeared in many variations throughout the centuries. St. Justin Martyr wrote in*

the second century that in every creature, a “seed” of God is planted, which connects every creature, in some way to the divine (logos spermatikos). Thus, all creation has the capability of understanding the divine in some way.

3. False There are no direct references to the Trinity in either the Old or the New Testament.

The Old Testament is rooted in monotheism, carried out through right action, not belief. Thus, the unity of God becomes the godliness of God (if there were more than one that is not God). In the Old Testament, God is alive, not a monolith.

We do, however, see traces of the Trinity in the Old Testament. In the Wisdom Literature (especially Proverbs), wisdom plays at God’s feet. In Genesis, the Spirit of God hovers over the breath of creation. In Exodus, three angels visit Abraham. As Walter Kasper states, “‘I’ and ‘you’ cannot be separate; one needs the other. Thus, we see traces of interplay between the ‘I’ and ‘you’ in the Old Testament.”

The most explicit reference to Trinitarian Theology in the Old Testament can be found in Genesis 1: 24-25, where the author writes, “God made man in his image, according to his likeness.” Scholars have associated the term “image” in this passage to the Son and “likeness” to the Holy Spirit.

The New Testament shows the clear and unambiguous answer to God: Jesus Christ is the “you” of the Father. In The Holy Spirit, we share in conversation of the Father and Son.

There are key texts to understand this relationship. Most key is Matthew 28:19 (Baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). In Paul, grace = Father, through the Son, in the Spirit. Romans 1:3-4 states that Jesus was declared to be the Son of God according to the Spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead (sort of Trinitarian- more adoptionist). The best

example is in Johannine literature, where there is a dialogue between the Father, Son, and Spirit.

4. True The Church teaches that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are three distinct persons, but yet only one God.

From The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC):

CCC #253 Trinity is One. We do not confess three Gods, but one God in 3 persons. The “co-substantial Trinity”. The divine persons do not share the one divinity among themselves but each of them is God whole and entire.

CCC #254 The divine persons are really distinct from one another ...” He is not the Father who is the Son, nor is the Son he who is the Father, nor is the Holy Spirit he who is the Father or the Son.” They are distinct from one another in their relations of origin: “It is the Father who generates, the Son who is begotten, and the Holy Spirit who proceeds.”

5. True God the Father is the source and origin of the whole divinity.

CCC #245 The apostolic faith concerning the Spirit was confessed by the second ecumenical council at Constantinople (381): “We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son.” By this confession the Church recognizes the Father as “the source and origin of the whole divinity.”

6. True All three persons of the Trinity were present at the creation of the world.

See the Prologue of John & the Nicene Creed.

7. True The Church has understood the relationship between God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit since the time of the Apostles.

CCC #465 The first heresies denied not so much Christ's divinity as his true humanity (Gnostic Docetism). From apostolic times the Christian faith has insisted on the true incarnation of God's Son "come in the flesh". But already in the 3rd century, the Church in a council at Antioch had to affirm against Paul of Samosata that Jesus Christ is Son of God by nature and not by adoption. The first ecumenical council of Nicaea in 325 confessed in its Creed that the Son of God is "begotten, not made, of the same substance (homoousios) as the Father", and condemned Arius, who had affirmed that the Son of God "came to be from things that were not" and that he was "from another substance" than that of the Father.

8. True The Son of God is also referred to as the Word of God.

Read John 1: 1-7

9. False God the Father created God the Son.

CCC #242: The Nicene Creed confesses, "the only begotten Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, co-substantial with the Father."

Homoousios: Begotten, not made. This view was a compromise statement set forth by Constantine's personal theologian, Hosius. This statement was a problem until 1 Constantinople, when the council reaffirmed that which was decided at Nicea.

The Eastern Theologians opted for an alternative word to homoousios, homoiousios, or the Logos being similar in substance (a more tritheistic view). The difference between the two words is one "iota" (the letter "i" in Greek).

On homoousios:

Begotten implies

- 1) *Deriving from the Father*
- 2) *Fully participating in the Father's being completely*

Made implies

- 1) *Deriving from the Father*
- 2) *Participates incompletely in the Father's being*

Begotten here means "to give rise to another out of necessity, derives from, but in a necessary way. What is made is willed, and since God had no choice in begetting son, what is begotten is not willed.

To Athanasius, there was a time when the world was not, but not the same thing for the Son, for there could not have been a time when the Father did not know self.

10. True The Son of God and the Son of Man are both terms used in referring to Jesus Christ in the New Testament.

***Son of God** - a title frequently applied to Jesus in the Gospel, signifying his unique relationship to the Father. The revelation of his divine son ship is the principal dramatic development of the story of Jesus of Nazareth.*

Mt. 16:16-17 "...you are the Messiah, the Son of the living Godflesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father."

Acts 9:20 "and he (Paul) began at once to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God."

John 20:31 "But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name."

Son of Man - the title used by our Lord of himself in the Gospel.
Mt. 20:28 "the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Jn. 6:62 "What if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before?"

Mk. 8:38 "Whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this faithless and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."

11. False While on earth Jesus was part God and part man.

CCC #464 "The unique and altogether singular event of the Incarnation of the Son of God does not mean that Jesus Christ is part God and part man, nor does it imply that he is the result of a confused mixture of the divine and the human. He became truly man while remaining truly God."

12. False Jesus only had one nature (divine).

The Council of Chalcedon (451) -- 150 bishops under Pope Leo the Great and the Emperor Marcian -- defined the two natures (Divine and human) in Christ against Eutyches, who was excommunicated. Combated **Monophysitism** (advanced by Eutyches), and claimed that Christ had two natures. Used the term "hypostasis" to identify the one Person ("the one who") who exists in two natures.

13. False Jesus only had one will (divine).

The Third General Council of Constantinople (680-681), under Pope Agatho and the Emperor Constantine Pogonatus, was attended by the Patriarchs of Constantinople and of Antioch, 174 bishops, and the emperor. It put an end to **Monothelitism** by defining two wills in Christ, the Divine and the human, as two distinct principles of operation. It anathematized Sergius, Pyrrhus, Paul, Macarius, and all their followers.

14. False Mary was not the mother of God but only the mother of the human person Jesus.

The Council of Ephesus (431), of more than 200 bishops, presided over by St. Cyril of Alexandria representing Pope Celestine I, defined the true personal unity of Christ, declared Mary the Mother of God (theotokos) against Nestorius, Bishop of Constantinople, and renewed the condemnation of Pelagius.

15. True Jesus was human in all ways with the exception of sinning.

*Heb 4:15 "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has similarly been tested in every way, yet without sin."
(See also Mt. 4:1, and James 1: 12-15).*

16. True Jesus is the mediator between God and man.

1 Tim 2:5-6 "For there is one God. There is also one mediator between God and the human race, Christ Jesus, himself human, who gave himself as ransom for all."

17. True The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son.

*Jn 15:26 "When the Advocate comes whom I will send you from the Father, he will testify to me."
(read also John 16:7, and John 14:25 and Nicene Creed)*

18. True Love, Joy and peace are three Fruits of the Holy Spirit.

CCC #1832 The fruits of the Spirit are perfections that the Holy Spirit forms in us as the first fruits of eternal glory. The tradition of the Church lists 12 of the: charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, modesty, self-control and chastity. (See also Galatians 5:22-23.)

19. True The Holy Spirit dwells in the Church and in the souls of individual men, as in His temple.

1 Cor. 6:19 "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you whom you have from God and that you are not your own."

CCC #243 Before his Passover Jesus announced the sending of "another Advocate" the Holy Spirit. At work since creation, having previously "spoken through the prophets," the Spirit will now be with and in the disciples, to teach them and guide them. (See also Rom 8:27)

20. False Arius believed that Christ was fully God

Multiple Choice

1. What did the Council of Ephesus (431) decree?
 - a. Liturgy should be always celebrated in the vernacular
 - b. The Pope was infallible
 - c. Mary was the Mother of God**
 - d. Jesus only had a divine nature.
2. What heresy does Docetism promote?
 - a. Christ was God in all the dimensions of his life.
 - b. The Spirit descended upon Jesus at birth and left Jesus before he died.**
 - c. There was a dual nature in Christ and one dominated the other.
 - d. There is only one God, three persons.

3. What heresy does Nestorianism promote?
- a. The Mary was NOT the Mother of God.*
 - b. That there were not seven sacraments.
 - c. That poverty was the key to salvation.
 - d. That God did not exist.
4. What heresy does Pelagianism promote?
- a. That writing destroys the faith
 - b. That one can earn one's own salvation by sanctifying oneself.*
 - c. That the pope had no authority.
 - d. None of the above.
5. What heresy does Monophysitism promote?
- a. That Jesus was not fully divine.
 - b. That the Son was created by the Father.
 - c. That the Son created the Spirit.
 - d. That Jesus only possessed a divine nature.*
6. The Apostles Creed was the church's answer to which of the following heresies?
- a. Arianism
 - b. Pelagianism
 - c. Mohammedism
 - d. Gnosticism*

Know Your Terms/People

<u>E</u>	Anathama
<u>F</u>	Apostate
<u>J</u>	Apostles' Creed
<u>G</u>	Docetism
<u>K</u>	Filioque
<u>I</u>	Gnosticism
<u>A</u>	Heresy
<u>C</u>	Logos
<u>D</u>	Pelagianism
<u>B</u>	Homoousios

A	Statement contrary to Catholic Faith
B	Of the same substance
C	Jesus, for the Eternal Word
D	Achieving salvation without God's help
E	Excommunication by ecclesial authority
F	Willful renunciation of faith
G	Spirit of Christ only appeared as flesh
H	From "Knowledge"; views the Old Testament as Evil
I	Statement of belief based on the New Testament
J	The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father AND the Son

Short Answer

1. According to John 3: 16, how could you summarize the lesson of the New Testament?

God so loved the world that he sent his only son so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life.

Ecumenical Councils

Of the seven Ecumenical Councils, four are listed below. For each council, cite the year that each council took place, the heresy that the council had to rebut and the theological resolution of each council.

1. **Council:** *Council of Nicaea*
 Year: 325 AD
 Heresy: *Arianism (a moment existed in time when the Son of God was not).*
 Resolution: *A creed was established, prayed to this day, which understood the equal status of Father & Son as consubstantial.*

2. **Council:** *Council of Ephesus*
 Year: 431 AD
 Heresy: *Nestorianism (Mary was not the Theotokos)*
 Resolution: *Declared that the BVM was the Mother of God*

3. **Council:** *Council of Chalcedon*
 Year: 451 AD
 Heresy: *Monophysitism (Jesus only had one nature)*
 Resolution: *Jesus had two natures (divine & human)*

4. **Council:** *III Council of Constantinople*
 Year: 680-681
 Heresy: *Monothelitism (Jesus only had divine will)*
 Resolution: *Jesus had both a divine and human will*