

ἀπολογία

Apologetics 101

Transliteration: apologia,
Noun, Feminine

Pronunciation: (ap-ol-og-ee'-ah)

definition: "intelligent reasoning" – properly, a well-reasoned reply;
a thought-out response to adequately address the issue(s) that is raised.



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ἀπολογία Apologetics 101

week 2: Key Doctrines

“But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence...” - 1 Peter 3:15

Critical Rule #1 Before you share Christ’s plan of salvation or respond to a question about God or the Bible... **PRAY!**

Critical Rule #2 No one is debated into salvation. Remember our attitude is to be one of gentleness & respect, and we are merely messengers; the Holy Spirit is the One Who draws & convicts! (1 Peter 3:15)

Critical Rule #3 When asked a question, if you don’t know the answer, **ADMIT IT!** But then say “That’s a great question! Can I research it & get back to you?”

Religious beliefs of the US (source: www.ROTW.org)

- ◆ 41% of Americans believe there is no God
- ◆ 40% of all Millennials believe the Bible’s simply a book of fables, legends, and moral precepts
- ◆ 46% of Americans don’t believe Hell exists
- ◆ 69% of churchgoers believe _____
- ◆ 1 in 4 _____ aren’t certain the physical resurrection of Jesus was an actual historical event.
- ◆ 51% of Americans say the Bible was written for each person to interpret as he or she chooses.
- ◆ 46% **of Evangelicals** think God accepts the worship of all religions.
- ◆ 77% of Americans think salvation is a result of good works.

Question: What about children who die before they come to faith in Christ? Would a loving God send children to hell if they die before accepting Him? (Dr. Robert Jeffress: ptv.org/broadcast/children-die-heaven-part-1-2/)

- ◆ God has a special love for children (Psalm 139:13-16)
- ◆ God values children & mourns the death of children
Ezekial 16:20-21... “you slaughtered My children”
- ◆ We come to Christ humbly as a child (Mark 10:14-16)
- ◆ God views the _____ sin of children differently than He views the _____ sin of adults
(Rom 5:12 & Ez 18:20)
- ◆ Children have not rejected God’s revelation or shown unbelief (Heb 13:12 & Heb 13:18-19)

Critical Rule #4 Make sure we know **& understand** core Christian doctrine to be able to answer basic questions & direct seekers & others to specific Bible verses addressing their question.

I. Jesus: The Son of God or God the Son - The confusion of 'begotten' not made

- a. John 3:16 "only begotten" translated from the Greek *monogenes*.
 - i. **Strong #3439** *monogenēs* – properly, *one-and-only*; "one of a kind" – literally, "one (*monos*) of a class (*genos*)" (the **only** of its kind)
- b. Jesus is the Son of God, and God the Son, of the same divine nature as the Father
- c. Terms such as "Father" & "Son" applied to God are anthropomorphisms help us understand the relationship between the different identities of the Trinity.

II. Question: "What did Jesus mean when He said, 'I and the Father are one' (John 10:30)?"

Answer: In John 10 Jesus presents Himself as the Good Shepherd and, in a debate with the Jewish leaders, makes the claim, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). It was a bold statement, one His audience found quite audacious, and it reveals much about who Jesus is.

Five key observations can be made concerning this passage. **First, Jesus claimed to be one with God in the sense of being equal to Him.** Jesus did not claim to be merely a messenger or prophet of God, but of equal power with God.

Second, **His audience understood that Jesus was claiming equality with God the Father.** In verse 31, "The Jews picked up stones again to stone him." Why? Blasphemy was a crime punishable by death according to the Jewish Law. When Jesus asked why they were planning to kill Him, they answered, "For blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God" (John 10:33). If Jesus had been lying or deceived, His statement *would* have been blasphemous. In fact, the only way His words were *not* blasphemy is if Jesus was telling the truth about His equality with God.

Third, Jesus referred to Himself as God's Son and to God as His Father (John 10:36–37). **He used Psalm 82:6 to show that the Messiah has the right to claim the title "Son of God."**

Fourth, Jesus claimed that that Father sent Him: "the one whom the Father set apart as his very own and sent into the world" (John 10:36). **In this statement, Jesus claimed preexistence in the Father's presence.** No biblical prophet had ever made such a claim before; yet Jesus claimed to exist before Abraham (John 8:58).

Fifth, Jesus only stated that the Jews did not believe Him; He never said they misunderstood His claim to be God. John 10:38 notes, "Even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father." **Jesus was not correcting a misunderstanding. They understood what He said perfectly. He was correcting their willful rejection of Him.**

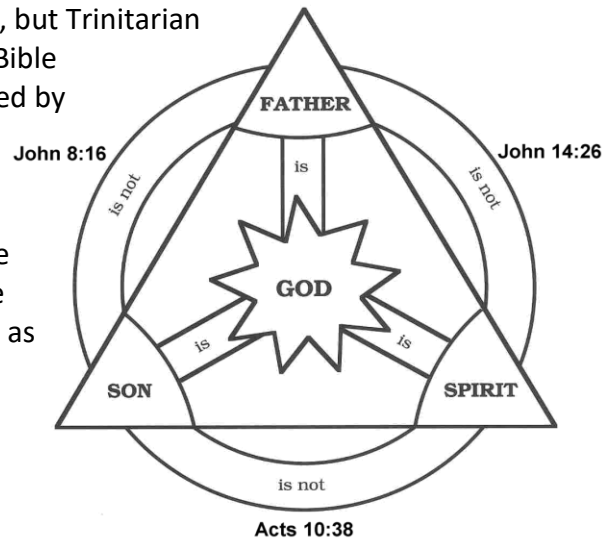
Colossians 1:16–17 affirms Jesus' same teaching: "In him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together." **John 1:1 explicitly notes that Jesus was both *with* God in the beginning and *was* God.**

In summary, Jesus claimed to be one with the Father as part of a larger argument to note that He had existed from eternity past, lived in perfect oneness with the Father, held the same power as God, and was sent by God the Father's authority. Unfortunately, He was rejected as divine by the Jewish leaders. Jesus' claim to have equal power as the Father was not blasphemy. It was the plain truth.

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III. The Trinity

- Bible written in 3 languages; the Old Testament in Hebrew (with a few chapters of the books of Ezra and Daniel recorded in Aramaic) & New Testament written in Koine Greek ('lingua franca', or common language, of the Roman Empire).
- Both Hebrew & Greek are very precise languages.
- The word "trinity" is not found in Scripture, but Trinitarian _____ runs throughout the Bible
- Derived from the Greek word *trias*, first used by Theophilus (A.D. 168-183), or from the Latin *trinitas*, first used by Tertullian (A.D. 220), to express this doctrine.
- Trinity defined: (*n.*) The union of three (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost) in one Godhead, so that all the three are one God as to substance, but three entities as to individuality.
- Tri Unity → Trinity



IV. Is the Trinity only a New Testament concept?

- Hebrew has 2 singular terms for God, *Eloah* & *El*, but more frequently the **plural** form of God, *Elohim*, is used throughout the Old Testament. Had there been only be two 'persons' within God, OT writers could have used a **dual** form *Elohiayim*.
- The word translated "Lord" most frequently in the Old Testament is '*adonai*' & translates literally as "my Masters"... a PLURAL

V. Examples of OT Trinitarian concepts:

- Gen 1:1 (*Elohim*)
- Gen 1:2 ... "and the Spirit of God..." again *Elohim*
- Gen 1:26 (also *Elohim*) "... let us make man in our image"
- Gen 3:22 "... the man has become like one of Us..."
- Gen 11:6&7 "... let us go down ..."
- Isaiah 48:16 "the Lord GOD has sent Me, and His Spirit."
- Zechariah 12:10 the LORD talking, uses both "Me" & "Him" referring to the same Being ... Christ
- Note that the word 'LORD' used here is the Hebrew word YHVH, (where we get Jehovah) translated as "He Brings Into Existence Whatever Exists".
- Jewish concept of 'oneness' (Yachid vs. Echad):
"Hear, O Israel! Yahweh is our God, Yahweh is one [Echad]!" Deuteronomy 6:4
- GREAT VIDEO RESOURCE:** The Jewish Roots of Christianity, Part II
<https://dod.org/programs/the-jewish-roots-of-christianity-part-ii/>

VI. The Trinity in the New Testament

John 1:1-4

Mark 12:28-31

John 14: 8-11

Matthew 3:16-17

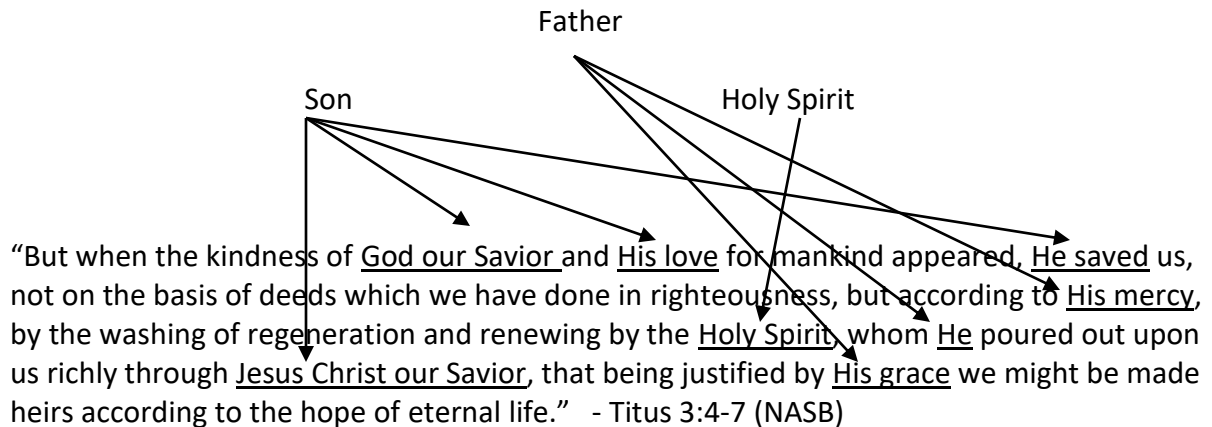
Matthew 28:18

John 15:26

1 John 5:7

John 10:30

Philippians 2:5-8



VII. But HOW can 3=1? (remember Isaiah 55:8-9!!!)

- a. Never forget the limits of the FINITE (mankind) when trying to understand the INFINITE (God)
- b. Scripture does NOT teach 1+1+1=3 ... Scripture DOES teach _____
- c. God provides natural models reflecting the mystery of the Trinity (**Romans 1:20**)
 - i. H₂O - In thermodynamics, the triple point of a substance is a result of the right temperature and pressure at which three phases of that substance coexist in thermodynamic equilibrium (for example, water simultaneously existing as gas, liquid, and solid!).
 - ii. Time: tri state – Past, Present, Future
 - iii. An atom is a triune object, composed of protons, neutrons, & electrons. Each part of the atom is independent of the other two, yet it remains only one object. A proton cannot exist without an accompanying neutron and electron and vice-versa.

VIII. So where did Trinitarian doctrine originate?

- a. Athanasian Creed (dated to the later half of the 4th century or first half of the 5th century)
- b. Although bearing his name, likely not authored by Athanasius (c. 296-373 AD)
- c. Response to **Arianism**, the belief that only God the Father was eternal, and God was too pure and infinite to appear on the earth, thus eroding the biblical doctrines of the Trinity, the Creation, and God's Plan of Redemption!

Athanasian Creed -

Athanasius (c. 296-373) Author of 'On the Incarnation of the Word of God'

"We worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; neither confounding the Person: nor divided in the Substance [Essence]. For there is one Person of the Father: another of the Son: and another of the Holy Spirit. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, is all one: the Glory equal, the Majesty coeternal. Such as the Father is: such is the Son: and such is the Holy Spirit. The Father uncreated: the Son uncreated: and the Holy Spirit uncreated. The Father incomprehensible: the Son incomprehensible: the Holy Spirit incomprehensible [unlimited, or infinite]. The Father eternal: the Son eternal: and the Holy Spirit eternal. And yet they are not three eternals: but one eternal. As also there are not three uncreated: nor three incomprehensibles [infinities]: but one uncreated: and one incomprehensible. So likewise the Father is Almighty: the Son Almighty: and the Holy Spirit Almighty. And yet they are not three Almighties: but one Almighty. So the Father is God: the Son is God: and the Holy Spirit is God. And yet they are not three Gods: but one God. So likewise the Father is Lord: the Son is Lord: and the Holy Spirit is Lord. And yet not three Lords: but one Lord. . . . And in this Trinity none is afore, or after another: none is greater, or less than another. But the whole three Persons are coeternal, and coequal. So that in all things, as aforesaid: the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity, is to be worshipped . . . "

IX. Other creeds and Confessions

Creeds & Confessions are written summaries of the Christian faith. Two important creeds are the "Apostles Creed" and Nicene Creed <http://carm.org/creeds-and-confessions>

X. Sharing the Gospel in just 5 verses

- a. John 3:16 ... God so loved the world; God did not send Christ to condemn, but save
- b. Romans 10:9-10 ... confession & belief results in salvation
- c. Ephesians 2:8-9 ... God's GRACE, not our works saves us
- d. Romans 5:8 ... while we were still sinners, Christ died for us
- e. Acts 4:12 ... there is salvation in NO ONE ELSE

Critical Rule #5 PLACING YOUR FAITH IN CHRIST + NOTHING ELSE = SALVATION

Stated another way, Works ≠ Salvation ... Faith in Christ = Salvation → works

Christ's message & salvation was delivered ONCE & FOR ALL! We don't require any new revelations or teachings, extra steps, or extra-Biblical books.
