

CHURCH HISTORY

Ecumenical Councils

The Second Ecumenical Council

COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE: held in **381 AD** with **150** attendees

Historical Background:

- Although **Arianism** was theologically refuted in Nicaea (325 AD), it continued to spread throughout the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire.
- Moreover, eastern bishops who were supportive of **Arius** schemed plots against the bishops adhering to the Nicene Creed and influenced Emperor Constantine and his successors to condemn St. Athanasius as well as other Orthodox bishops and to exile them out of their thrones!
St. Athanasius was eventually exiled 5 times!
- At the “local council” of Tyre in AD 335, **Arian bishops** brought false “criminal” accusations against St. Athanasius. Constantine banished St. Athanasius as he saw him as impediment to reconciliation! Under Constantine's direction, **another local council readmitted Arius to Church communion, but by Divine Providence, Arius died on his way to that event in 336 AD.**

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CONSTANTINOPLE, Historical Background: (Cont'd)

- After the death of Constantine in AD 337, there were political struggles and turmoils in the Roman Empire. **Arian and Semi-Arian groups** bent subsequent emperors towards their camp. A political rivalry developed between Rome and Constantinople (the New Rome). A pagan emperor, **Julian the Infidel**, seized power in 361 AD and resisted Christianity by spreading paganism. He stayed in power less than two years.
- Some of the bishops of the throne of Constantinople were proponents of **Arianism** or to versions of its altered forms. **Alexandria, headed by St. Athanasius the Apostolic, always had unwavering adherence to the Nicæan Creed**. The debate among different factions of **Arianism** and Orthodox bishops produced no fewer than fourteen further creeds in an attempt to alter the Nicæan Orthodox formula.
- In 379 AD, **Theodosius the Great** became the Emperor. Theodosius steadfastly held to the Nicæan Creed which was the tradition of many western region and was held by the important Church of Alexandria. Right after his arrival to Constantinople, Theodosius expelled the **Homoian (Arian) bishop, Demophilus** of Constantinople and surrendered the churches of the city to **Gregory of Nazianzus**; a move that was proven to be ecclesiastically/canonically controversial.

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CONSTANTINOPLE, Historical Background: (Cont'd)

- To contain the controversy of appointing **Gregory of Nazianzus** as the bishop in charge of the churches in Constantinople and the **rioting by the Arians** that took place thereafter, Emperor Theodosius was advised to summon an “ecumenical council” to settle this matter and other Church issues (*Gregory had previously been ordained bishop of the See of Sasima and, according to Nicaea’s canons, it was NOT legitimate to transfer bishops from their original dioceses*).
- Theodosius, wanting to further unify the entire empire behind the Orthodox Nicaean Christianity, decided to **convene an ecumenical council in Constantinople in 381 AD in order to resolve those matters of faith and discipline at hand**.
- In addition to the **lingering Arianism**, there arose also other heresies such as **Apollinarianism** and **Pneumatomachianism** (Macedonianism); **both can be considered as “overreactions” in attempting to fight Arianism!** This will be clearly explained below.

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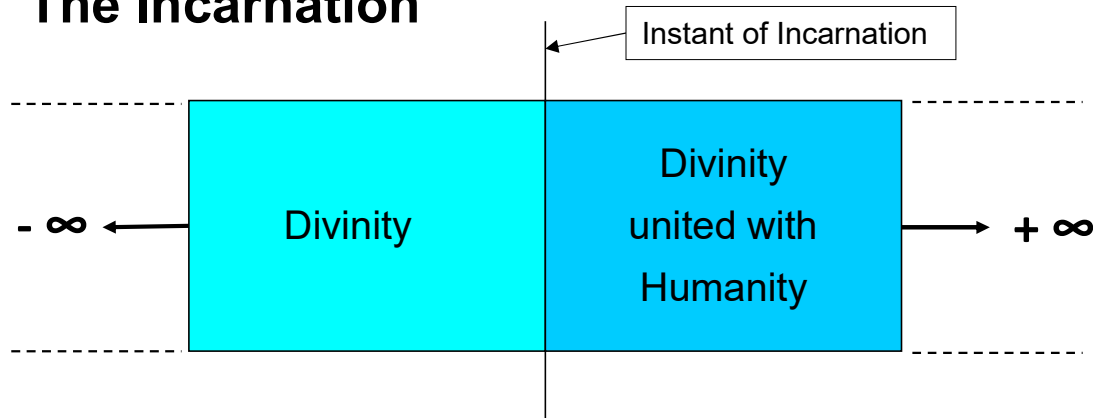
The Incarnation



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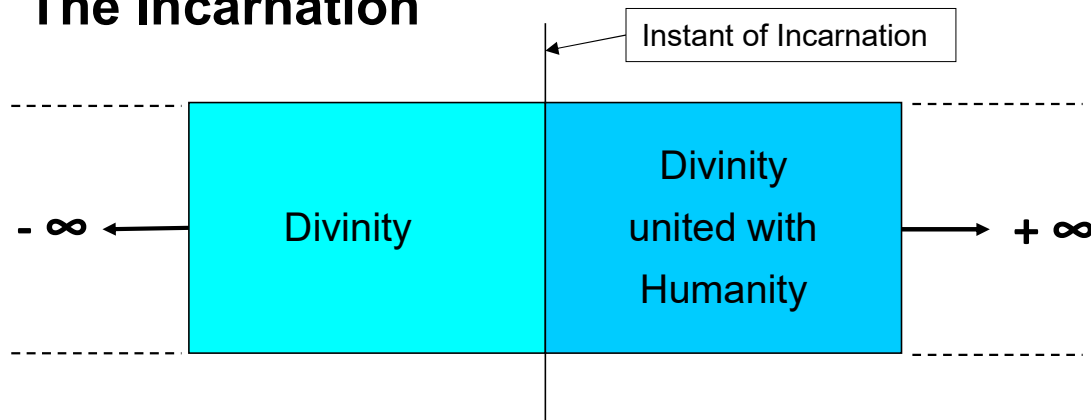
The Incarnation



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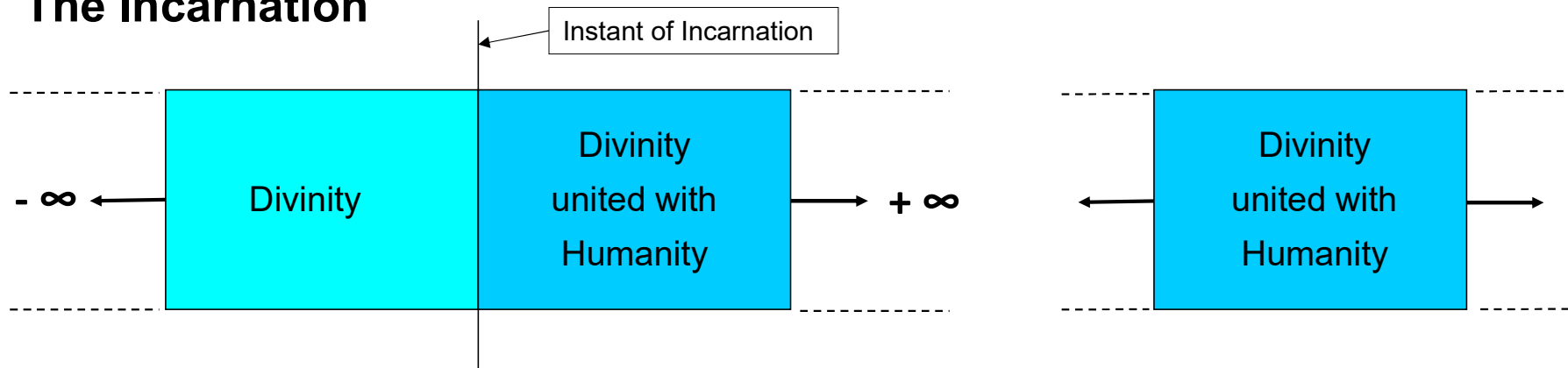


- After the incarnation, **Christ's divinity NEVER parted his humanity** for single moment or a twinkling of an eye.
- “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” John 1:14. He made His flesh one with His divinity without **mingling**, without **confusion**, without **alteration**, and without **transubstantiation**.

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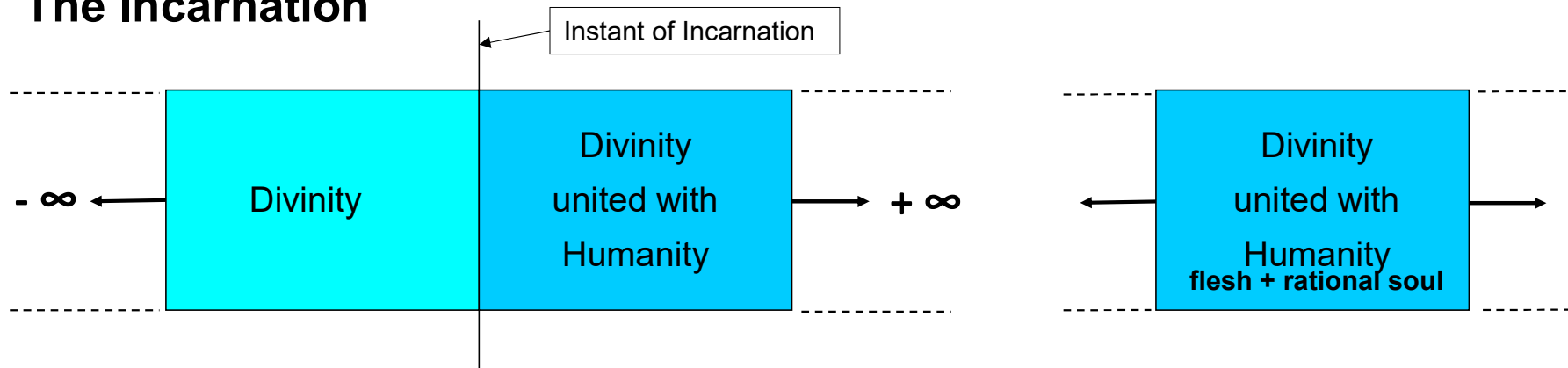


- The incarnate Son of God is “**fully divine**” and “**fully human**”.

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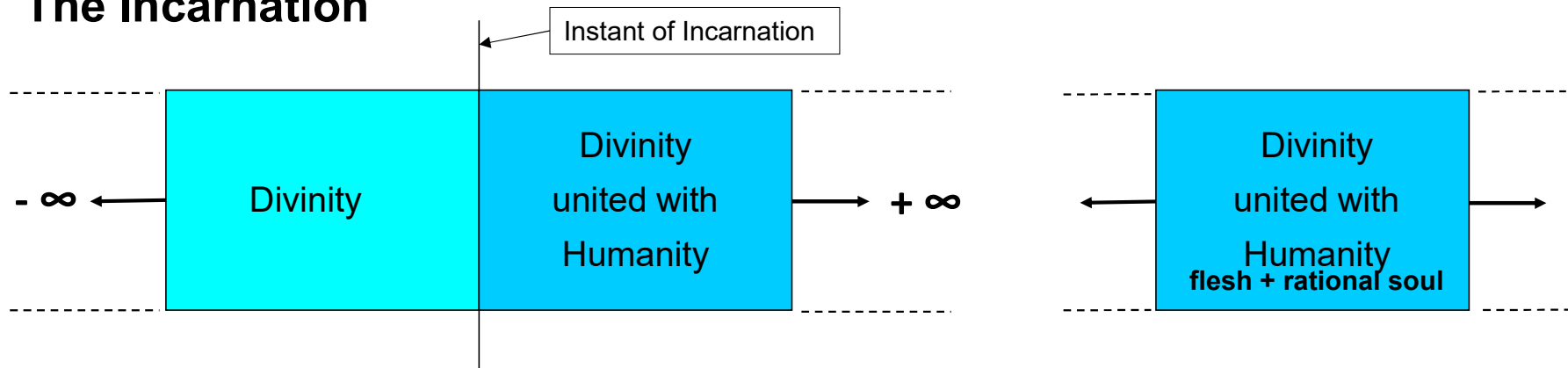


- The incarnate Son of God is “**fully divine**” and “**fully human**”
- Fully human means that he had a human “**flesh**” and a human “**rational soul**” like us.
- His divinity never part His humanity (both the flesh and the rational soul) **even after His death on the Cross!**

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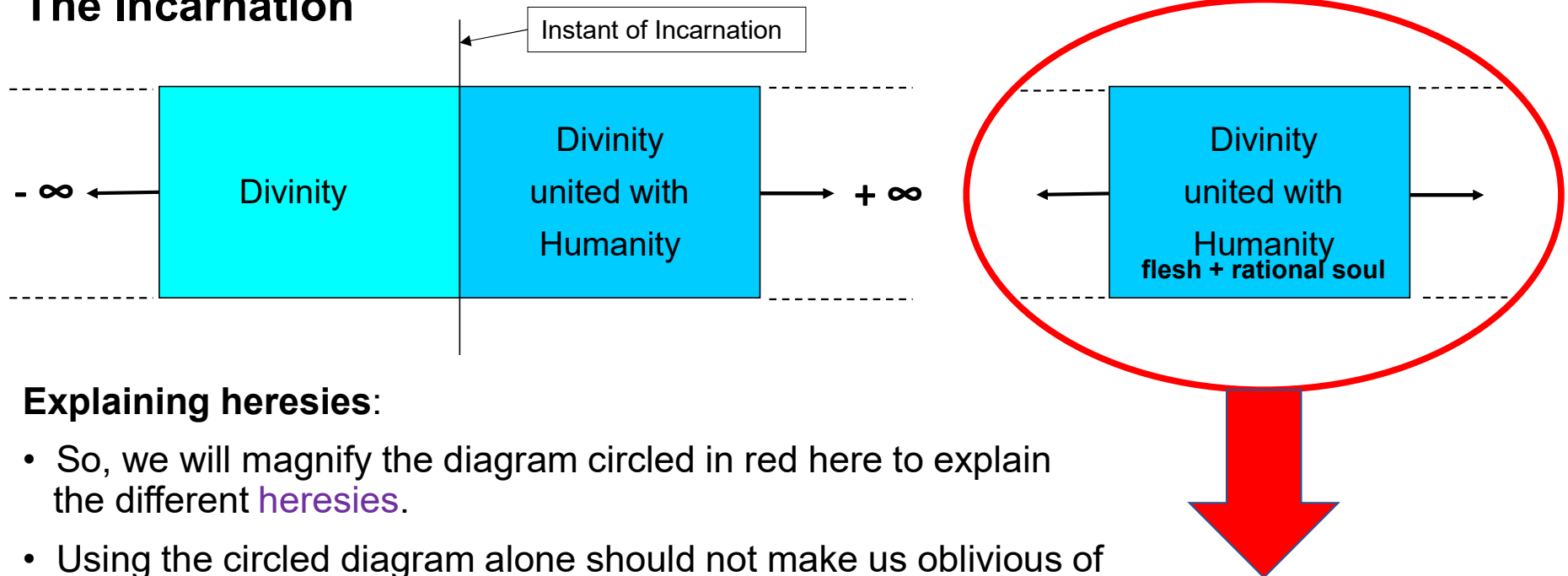
Explaining heresies:

- Several heretical beliefs about the Person of Christ, His incarnation and redemptive work (Christology) were started in the first five centuries.
- Now, that we have **somewhat** understood the incarnation, we are going to concentrate on the diagram at the right side above in order to elaborate on the details of some of the heresies referred to in item above.

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Explaining heresies:

- So, we will magnify the diagram circled in red here to explain the different **heresies**.
- Using the circled diagram alone should not make us oblivious of what happened in the incarnation (the diagram to the left).

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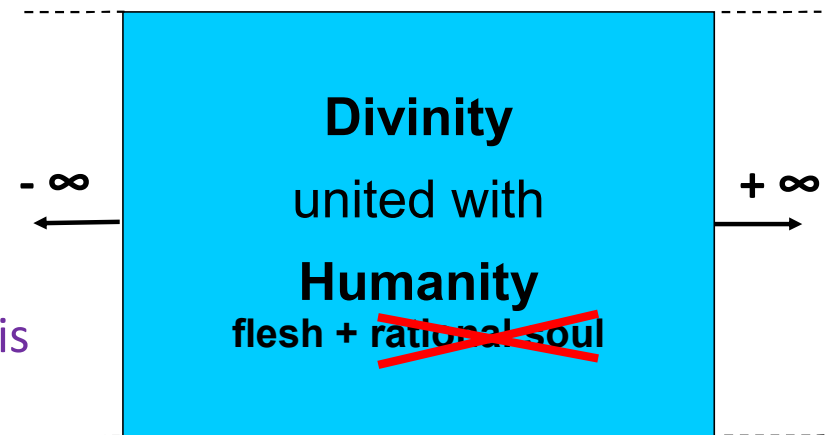
The Incarnation

Heresies (1):

- Apollinarism:

+ Apollinarism or Apollinarianism is a Christological concept proposed by Apollinaris of Laodicea (died 390) that argues that Jesus had a normal human body but a divine mind instead of a regular rational human soul.

+ Apollinaris' rejection that Christ had a human mind was considered an over-reaction to Arianism and its teaching which promoted that Christ was a lesser god.

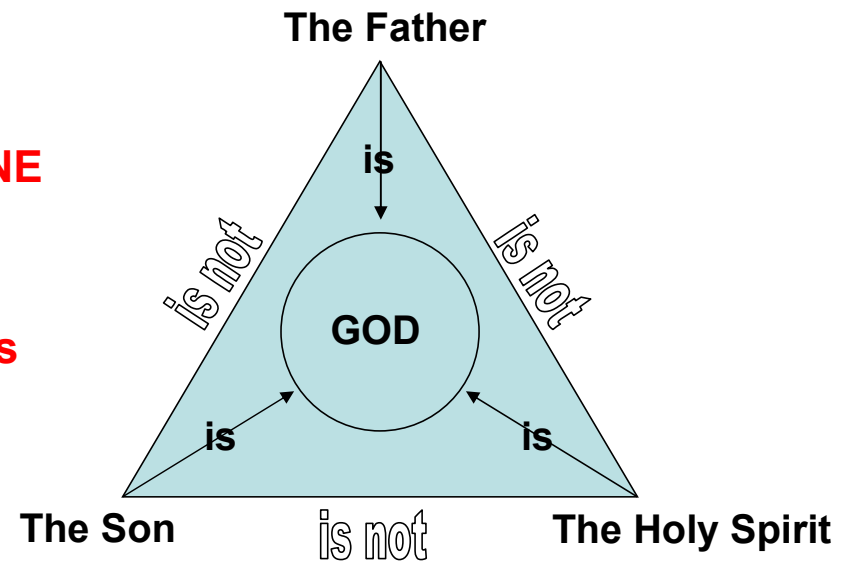


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THE HOLY TRINITY *(A quick revision):*

- The three Hypostases are **EQUAL**
- The Father, The Son, and the Holy Spirit are **ONE in essence**
- The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit **always coexist**. There was no time when the Father existed without the Son and Holy Spirit
- Explaining the **birth of the Son from the Father before all ages** through the analogy of “mind & thought” and “fire having flame, light and heat”.



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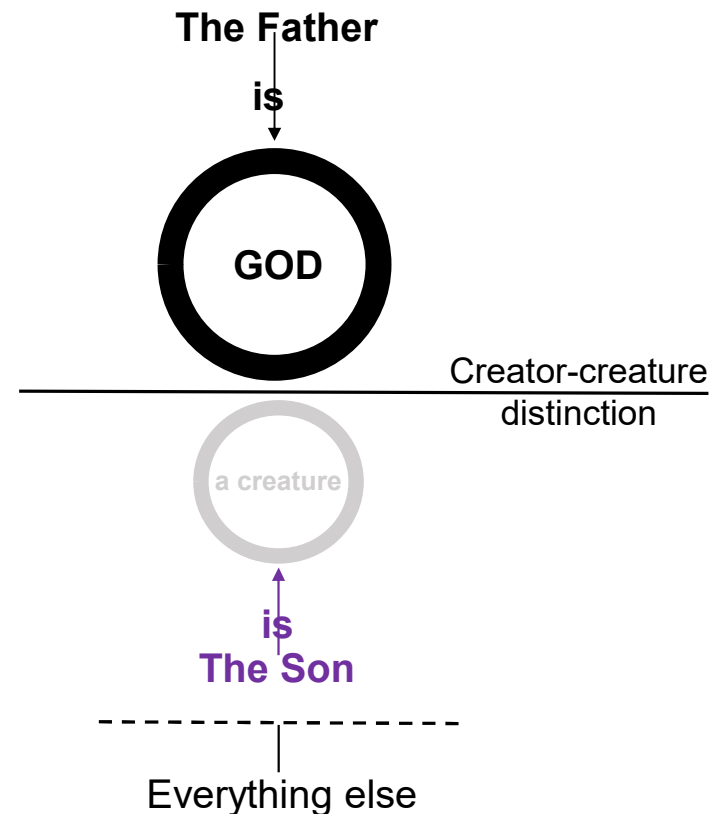
THE HOLY TRINITY

Heresies (1):

Arianism: *(a reminder of what was discussed before)*

- + Arius wrongfully taught that there was a time when the Son was not!
- + He also taught that the Son is of a similar essence of the Father, not of the same essence.
- + This means that the Son was created by the Father!

If the son is created like us, how can he save us?



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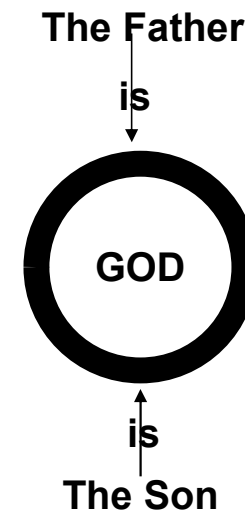
THE HOLY TRINITY

Heresies (2):

- **Pneumatomanichianism:**

+ **Macedonius**, bishop of Constantinople (342-363 Ad) and his followers denied the godhood of the Holy Ghost, hence the Greek name Pneumatomachians or 'Combators against the Spirit'.

+ Pneumatomachians think that the Holy Spirit is just “**power**” or “**energy**”!



The Holy Spirit
is just
Power or energy

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Proceedings:

- Emperor Theodosius attended the inaugural session and gave an address in which he welcomed the members and expressed his joy at their assembly.
- The Alexandrian delegation was headed by **Bishop Timothy the 22nd Patriarch of Alexandria**.
- After thorough consideration, **Pneumatomachianism** was unanimously condemned, and in consequence, the council **expanded the Nicene Creed** by adding to it the clause concerning the **Holy Spirit**, and thus putting it in the form still upheld to the present day by all Orthodox Churches. **The expansion included also the affirmation of the faith in the church universal, the oneness of baptism and in awaiting the resurrection of the dead and life eternal.**
- The expanded creed is known as “**The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed**”. For comparison between the two creeds of Nicaea (325) and Constantinople (381), one is referred to **Schaff, Philip** (1877). [*The Creeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical Notes*](#). (pp. 28-29).

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Proceedings:

- **Philip Schaff's** comparison table of the of the **Nicene** and **The Niceno-Constantinopolitan** Creeds will be displayed on a separate slide below.
- The council clearly condemned **Apollinarius** and rejected his idea declaring it a heresy, as the incarnated Savior must be fully divine and **fully human in order to save our mankind**.
- In refuting **Apollonarius'** heresy, the father explained, "**that which Chirst has not assumed He has not healed; but that which united to God is also saved.**"
- **Canon V** of the council articulated the measures to be taken with **those who turn to Orthodoxy** from **heresies** such as the **Arians, Macedonians, Novatians** and **Apollinarians** as well as the **Montanists** and **Sabellians/Modalists**.

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Proceedings:

- Other canons issued by the council were about the following:
 - A clear dogmatic condemnation of **all shades of Arianism**.
 - A renewed emphasis of the Nicene legislation imposing upon the bishops the observance of diocesan and patriarchal limits.
 - The Bishop of Constantinople shall have the prerogative of honour after the Bishop of Rome because Constantinople is New Rome!

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A Comparison between
The Nicene Creed of 325 AD

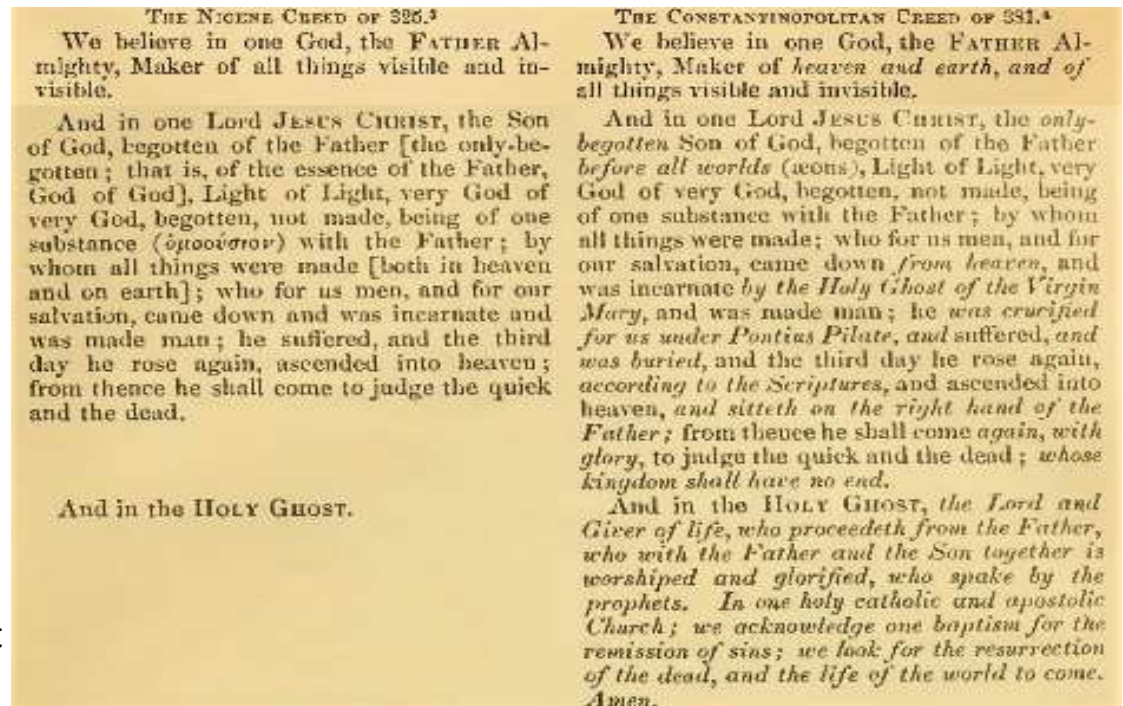
and

**The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed
of 381 AD**

By Schaff, Philip (1877)

+ It is amazing that our **Coptic Church** has been faithfully reciting the same creed for over 16 centuries.

+ As other churches slightly altered the wording of the Creed over the centuries, our Church still adheres to the original text set by the Fathers in 381 AD!

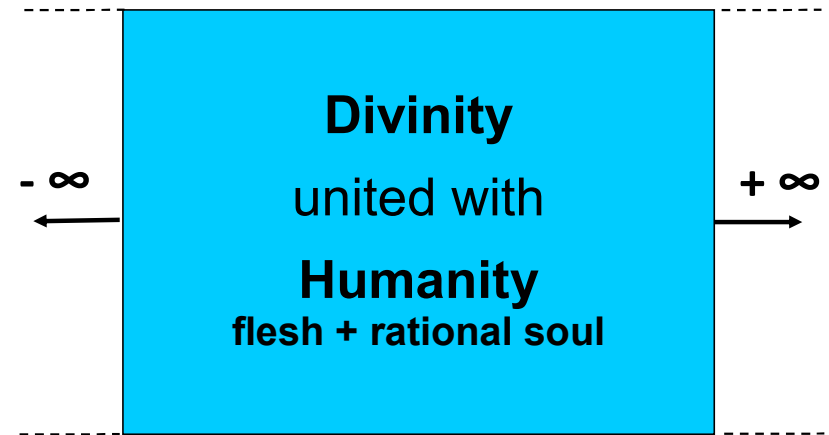


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Future Presentation on:

- **The 3rd Ecumenical Council held in Ephesus in 431 AD**
- **The Council of Chalcedon held in 451 AD**
- To set the stage for studying those two councils, the next two slides will utilize the diagram shown here to briefly introduce the two main heresies because of which those councils were convened, namely; **Nestorianism** and **Eutychianism/Monophysitism**.
- The last slide of this presentation sheds light on the **theological dispute that remained between the Non-Chalcedonian and Chalcedonian Churches since 451 AD**, which will be thoroughly discussed in our next presentation, God willing.



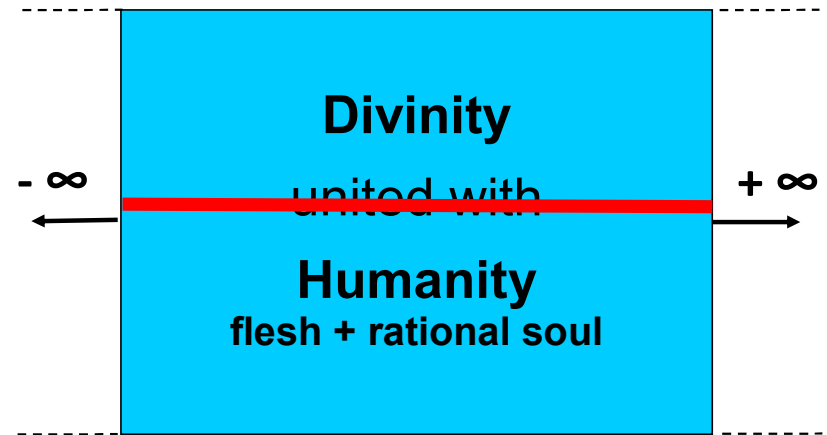
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Heresies:

- Nestorianism :



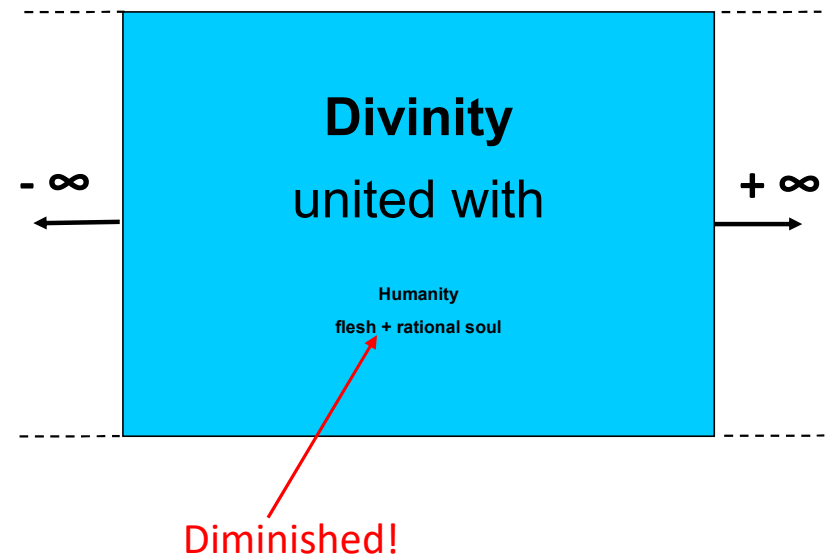
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Heresies:

- Eutychianism (Monophysitism):



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An Excerpt from Wikipedia under “Eutychus”:

Those who did not approve the Chalcedonian Council were later accused of being "**Monophysites**" and are nowadays known as "Oriental Orthodox", including the Coptic Church, the Armenian Orthodox Church, and the Syrian Orthodox Church. They were wrongfully accused of agreeing with Eutyches about "one nature" in Christ that rejected Christ's dual consubstantiality (with the Father and with us men); however, Oriental Orthodox churches prefer to be called "**Miaphysites**" and are against the teachings of **Eutyches**. **This was confirmed in May 1973 when the late Coptic pope, Shenouda III, visited Rome and penned a Christological statement with Pope Paul VI.**

His [**Eutychus**'] memory was kept alive by the Chalcedonians, who until recently used the term '**Eutychean**' as a pejorative description of the non-Chalcedonians who in their turn accused the Chalcedonians of being **Nestorians** and **dyophysite**.

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THANK YOU!
GOD BLESS