



An Adult Exploration of the Lutheran Expression of Faith

SESSION FIVE: BEING TRINITARIAN

1. Introduction to The Concept of God
 - a. Defining “God”
 - i. Who is God? What is God? Where is God? Does God even exist at all? Is God knowable?
2. Natural Theology vs Theology of Revelation
 - a. The God of Natural Theology
 - b. The God of Revelation – The God Incarnate – Jesus Christ
3. Scriptural Basis for a Trinitarian Understanding of God
 - a. John 1:1 – The Word made flesh.
 - b. Mark 1:9-11 – The Triune God revealed in three persons at baptism.
4. The Nicene Creed – Council of Nicaea – 325AD
 - a. The Arian Controversy
5. The Theology of the Cross – *theologia crucis*
 - a. Theology of glory vs theology of the cross
 - b. Luther – *deus absconditus* – the Hidden God – the *larvae dei* – “the mask of God” - a dialectic version of natural theology consistent with theology of revelation – the cross of Jesus as key.

NOTES

The **Arian controversy** was a series of [Christian](#) disputes about the nature of [Christ](#) that began with a dispute between [Arius](#) and [Athanasius of Alexandria](#), two [Christian theologians](#) from [Alexandria, Egypt](#). The most important of these controversies concerned the relationship between the substance of [God the Father](#) and the substance of His Son.

[Emperor Constantine](#), through the Council of Nicaea in 325, attempted to unite Christianity and establish a single, imperially approved version of the faith. Ironically, his efforts were the cause of the deep divisions created by the disputes after Nicaea.^{[1][2]}

These disagreements divided the [Church](#) into various factions for over 55 years, from the time of the [First Council of Nicaea](#) in 325 until the [First Council of Constantinople](#) in 381. There was no formal [schism](#).

Inside the Roman Empire, the [Trinitarian](#) faction ultimately gained the upper hand through the [Edict of Thessalonica](#), issued on 27 February AD 380 by the then reigning three co-Emperors, which made Nicene Christology the [state religion](#) of the [Roman Empire](#),^[3] and through strict enforcement of that edict. However, outside the Roman Empire, [Arianism](#) and other forms of [Unitarianism](#) continued to be preached for some time. The modern [Roman Catholic Church](#) and the [Eastern Orthodox Church](#), as well as most other modern Christian sects, have generally followed the Trinitarian formulation, though each has its own specific theology on the matter.^{[4][5]}