

#1 - TRINITY

I. God the Father

1. There is one God

GAL. 3:20 | *"Now an intermediary implies more than one, but God is one."*

ISA. 45:5 | *"I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God..."*

2. Existing in three Persons

- (1) The pronoun "US"

GEN. 1:26 | *"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...'"*

ISA. 6:8 | *"And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?'"*

- (2) Each member is God

RO. 1:7 | *"...Grace to you and peace from God our Father..."*

RO. 9:5 | *"To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen."*

ACTS 5:3-4 | *"But Peter said, 'Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit...You have not lied to man but to God.'"*

3. The Father is the source or cause or initiator of:

- (1) The universe (Rev. 4:11)
- (2) divine revelation (Rev. 1:1)
- (3) salvation (John 3:16-17)

II. God the Son

1. Jesus is the agent through which God the Father does:

- (1) the creation and maintenance of the universe (Col. 1:16-17)
- (2) divine revelation (Matt. 11:27)
- (3) salvation (2 Cor. 5:19)

2. The Father does all of these things through the Son, who is His agent.

- (1) Fully God; Fully man
- (2) Because Jesus is the agent...what people believe about Jesus is really important:
 - i. Supremacy (Col. 1:15-23); the divine instrument of our salvation
 - ii. Sufficiency (2 Cor. 12:9); the satisfactory instrument of our salvation
 - iii. Exclusivity (John 14:6); the only instrument of our salvation

III. God the Spirit

1. The Holy Spirit is the means by whom God the Father does:

- (1) creation and maintenance of the universe (Psalm 104:30)
 - (2) divine revelation (John 16:12-15)
 - (3) salvation (Titus 3:5)
2. Thus, all these things are done by the power of the Holy Spirit.

#2 - AUTHORITY

I. Heaven (Jesus is our only authority in Heaven)

1. God is ruling and reigning

1 Cor. 15:25-28 | *For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For "God has put all things in subjection under his feet." But when it says, "all things are put in subjection," it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all.*

II. Earth (The Bible is our final authority on Earth)

1. Holy Spirit (the authority)
 - (1) Over church

1 Pet. 5:4 | *"And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory."*

Matt. 16:18 | *"And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."*

2. Bible (the means)
 - (1) Final authority on faith (what we believe):

2 Tim. 3:16a | *"All Scripture is breathed out by God..."*

- (2) Final authority on practice (how we live it out):

2 Tim. 3:16-17 | *"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."*

#3 - LIBERTY

Gal. 2:16 | *"...yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified."*

I. By Grace Alone

1. "Not by works"

Ro. 3:24 | *"...and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus..."*

II. Through Faith Alone

1. "through faith in Jesus..."

Ro. 3:25 | *"...whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received through faith..."*



THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

I. Trinity

1. God the Father is the source and initiator of all things.
2. Jesus is God and the agent of God's actions
3. The Holy Spirit?
 - (1) Roman Catholic teaching on the sacramental system controls and diminishes the work of the Holy Spirit.
 - (2) For example, the gifts of the Spirit are not freely communicated when and where God chooses, but are only transferred through oil in the sacrament of confirmation.
 - (3) Likewise, cleansing from sin is not freely given by the Spirit through faith, but only by the holy water used in the sacrament of baptism.

II. Authority

1. In Heaven: God
2. On Earth
 - (1) The Pope: Apostolic Succession
 - i. Clergy vs laity
 - ii. To be sure, the Bible distinguishes between shepherds and flock. Church offices are manifestly biblical, but in Catholic theology "clergy" and "laity" refer to more than just "pastor" and "church member." As Bavinck explains, "In the Roman Catholic Church 'clergy' has become the word for a special class of ecclesiastical persons who by being tonsured and consecrated have been separated from all others, constitute a unique class of 'clerics,' are in a very special sense the Lord's possession"
 - iii. no special priestly class
 - iv. Vicar of Christ
 - v. vicar = instead of; replacement
 - vi. Papal Supremacy?
 - vii. Can change scripture
 - (2) Tradition
 - i. Just as authoritative as scripture

III. Liberty

1. By Grace Alone?
 - (1) By Works & Saints

Catechism of the Catholic Church | "No one can MERIT the initial grace which is at the origin of conversion. Moved by the Holy Spirit, we can MERIT for ourselves and for others all the graces needed to attain eternal life, as well as necessary temporal goods..."

2. Through Faith Alone?
 - (1) Council of Trent (16th Century)



- i. The response to the reformation and the declaration of the 7 sacraments:
- ii. baptism, confirmation, communion, penance, unction, orders, and marriage (necessary for salvation)

Canon 14, Council of Trent | *"If any one saith, that man is truly absolved from his sins and justified, because he assuredly believed himself absolved and justified; or, that no one is truly justified but he who believes himself justified; and that, by this faith alone, absolution and justification are effected; let him be anathema..."*

- (2) Initially, the recipient must accept and cooperate in baptism, by which he receives justifying grace. He retains that grace until he commits a mortal sin. Mortal sin is called "mortal" because it kills the grace of justification. The sinner then must be justified a second time. That happens through the sacrament of penance, which the Council of Trent defined as "a second plank" of justification for those who have made shipwreck of their souls.
- (3) The fundamental difference was this: Trent said that God does not justify anyone until real righteousness inheres within the person.
- (4) In other words, God does not declare a person righteous unless he or she is righteous. So, according to Roman Catholic doctrine, justification depends on a person's sanctification.
- (5) By contrast, the Reformers said justification is based on the imputation of the righteousness of Jesus. The only ground by which a person can be saved is Jesus' righteousness, which is reckoned to him when he believes.
- (6) There were radically different views of salvation. They could not be reconciled. One of them was the gospel. One of them was not.

