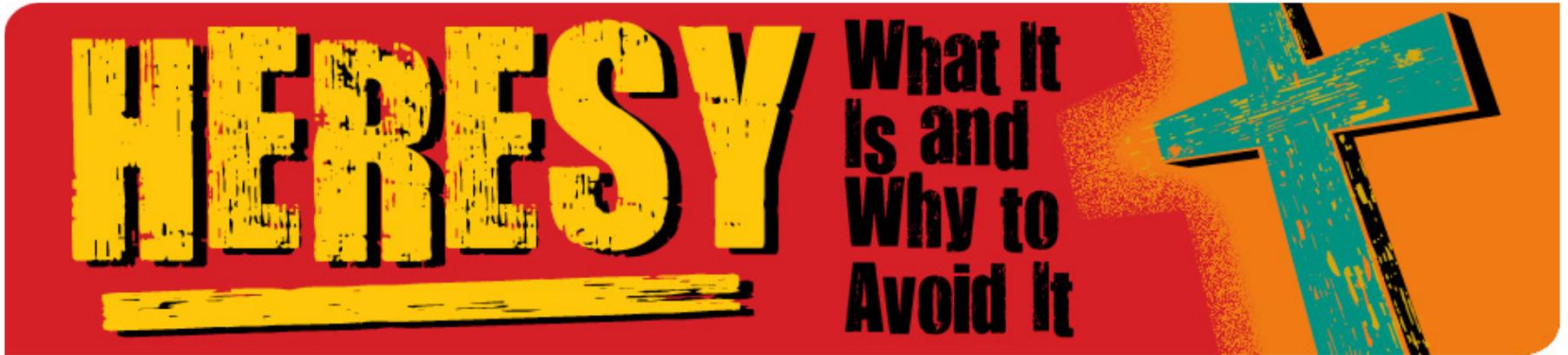


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Heresy: Introductory Session and Heresy No. 5

Review

How to get at our question...

- ◎ Definition
 - Choice → Alternative to the norm (Deviation)
- ◎ Magisterial pronouncement
 - Obstinate deviation
- ◎ Historical analysis
 - Some cases deviation; some cases obstinate; some just unclear in Scripture (pushed to clarity)
- ◎ Pathology and treatment
 - Identify a disease that will prove fatal
 - Remember: Not ALL diseases are fatal
 - Goal: To bring fulness of life!

The “Top 5 Heresies”

- ⦿ Major fatal teachings
 - With some examples
- ⦿ Heresy number 5: Fatal teaching concerning the Holy Spirit
 - Diminishment
 - Historical example: Macedonius and the Pneumatomachians
 - Recurs throughout the church as the “forgotten person of the Trinity”
 - Over-emphasis
 - Historical example: Montanus and the “New Prophecy”
 - Recurs throughout Pentecostal and Charismatic movements

The pathology

- ⦿ Not a question of “bad” people
- ⦿ A question of Scripture not being clear
 - Scriptural references to Holy Spirit most often show the Spirit to be
 - A power of God (not God – closest Acts 5:3-4)
 - Yet, a power of God who acts as God and is to be treated with the same reverence with which God is treated

Why is it fatal?

⦿ Diminishment:

- The Spirit as a creature would be able to bring humans knowledge, comfort, etc. in our lives
- The Spirit as fully God is able to bring humans into a divine inheritance that is promised to us, giving us a taste of divine life now and giving us assurance of a share in the divine life to come.

⦿ Over-emphasis:

- The Spirit's divine work as giver of divine gifts is abused by the heirs if they exalt Spirit-inspired activity to their own benefit and don't use the divine gifts in Christ-like fashion to serve others.

Treatment?

⦿ (Initial) Treatment

- The Niceno-Constantinopolitan creed
 - “I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father (and the Son), who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets”

⦿ Follow-up treatment?

- What kind of treatment is now required for this fatal teaching so that we can lead people to life?
 - Helping people practice the divine life now and prepare for a fully divinely lived future as co-heirs.
 - Helping people live in and be fully guided by the Spirit who brings freedom, but avoiding over-emphasis that leads to “puffed up” Christians.

Fatal teaching concerning Jesus

Heresy Number 4

The centrality of Jesus

- ◎ There is no Christian faith without Jesus
 - There was and is a clear recognition of God
 - In Judaism
 - In most of classical antiquity and in cultures around the world today
 - Within Judaism there was also a clear understanding of a divine spirit of God
 - From the Genesis 1 → Prophets
- ◎ But, there was no understanding of God taking flesh, dying, rising, and only then reigning.
 - Yet we say that this person defines who we are!

Jesus: A controversial figure

- ◎ What were the Jews expecting in a Messiah?
 - A rule from the house of David who would make Israel great in the world
- ◎ What might the “Greeks” – i.e. non-Jews – have expected from God in the world?
 - A guide, a helper, an encourager (// I.227-251)
 - A judge, an avenging angel (// I.50-60)
 - A trickster, a deceiver

What kind of Christian thinking about Jesus is fatal?

- ⦿ Jesus only seems to be God
- ⦿ Jesus is God's primary creature
 - Echoes the fatal teaching on the Holy Spirit

Jesus: The “seeming” God

⦿ Docetism

- Only “seems” (Greek word: *doke-ō*) to be God in the flesh.
- God could not make himself known as a man (and also in other ways) and certainly could not suffer death (Simon of Cyrene?)
- Cerinthus: God took control of Jesus at his baptism and left him before his death (possession) → “adoptionism”

⦿ Element of truth:

- Burning bush
- No one can see God and live

Jesus: The greatest creature

- “If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced, because I go to the Father; for the Father is greater than I.” (John 14:28 NAS)
- The LORD created me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of long ago. ²³ Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth. ²⁴ When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no springs abounding with water. ²⁵ Before the mountains had been shaped, before the hills, I was brought forth-- ²⁶ when he had not yet made earth and fields, or the world's first bits of soil. ²⁷ When he established the heavens, I was there, when he drew a circle on the face of the deep, ²⁸ when he made firm the skies above, when he established the fountains of the deep, ²⁹ when he assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters might not transgress his command, when he marked out the foundations of the earth, ³⁰ then I was beside him, like a master worker; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, ³¹ rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the human race. (Prov 8:22-31 NRSV)

Arius

- ⦿ Deacon, priest from Libya
- ⦿ Well-known preacher and famous hymn writer (*Thaleia*)
- ⦿ Pious (revered for his ascetic life style, like Montanus)
- ⦿ Scripture scholar
 - His beliefs about Jesus were probably consolidated through independent Bible study
- ⦿ Flourished during his peak years 50-75
 - He turned 75 in AD 325

Arianism

- ⦿ “The Son of God was not eternal but created by the Father from nothing as an instrument for the creation of the world”
- ⦿ “He was not God by nature, but a changeable creature, His dignity as Son of God having been bestowed on Him by the Father on account of His foreseen abiding righteousness” (The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, 83)
- ⦿ Began to spread widely throughout the Empire

From Nicaea to Constantinople

- ⦿ Nicaea (325) was called by Constantine to bring peace between Arians and the rest
 - Anti-Arian movement led by Athanasius
 - A 29 year old deacon from Alexandria
- ⦿ 325-380: Anti-Arian (`Catholic`) position was initially successful but then Arius was welcomed back (AD 336) and the new emperor Constantius embraced Arianism.
 - Arius died the same year.
 - Jerome: By 359 “the whole world groaned and marveled to find itself Arian”
- ⦿ Through imperial rule and the theological work of Athanasius and the Cappadocians, “catholic” thinking became the theology of the empire at Constantinople (381)
 - Arianism survived among converted barbarians until 500.

Treatment: Building on Scriptural foundations

- ◎ In Jesus we see God perfectly
 - The son is the perfect image of the Father (Hebrews 1:3)
 - God who loved the world gave His son (John 3:16), who in the flesh is God the Word (1:1, 14)

Treatment: Credal formula

- ◎ The Niceno-Constantinopolitan creed
 - And in one Lord Jesus Christ
 - [ETERNAL] the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds (Gk *æons*), light of light, true God of true God, begotten not made, being of one substance (Gk *homousion*) with the Father by whom all things were made;
 - [PAST] who for us humans and for our salvation came down from the heavens and was incarnate (*enfleshed*) of the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary and was made human; he was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried, and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures and went up into the heavens
 - [PRESENT] and sits at the right [*hand*] of the Father;
 - [FUTURE] and will come again with glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

Recurrence

- ◉ God only appears to become man
 - Islam (Qur'an *An-Nisa'* 157-158: And because of their saying (in boast), "We killed Messiah 'Iesa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary), the Messenger of Allah," - but they killed him not, nor crucified him, but the resemblance of 'Iesa (Jesus) was put over another man (and they killed that man), and those who differ therein are full of doubts. They have no (certain) knowledge, they follow nothing but conjecture. For surely; they killed him not [i.e. 'Iesa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary)]: But Allah raised him ['Iesa (Jesus)] up (with his body and soul) unto Himself (and he is in the heavens). And Allah is Ever All-Powerful, All-Wise.
- ◉ God is too holy but creates a divine man as his agent
 - Unitarianism
 - Jehovah's Witnesses
 - "Interfaith" approaches: God does the same in other religions

Ongoing Treatment: Toward fullness of life

- ◎ What does it mean to live now under the lordship of the reigning Lord Jesus Christ, king above all kings?
 - What kind of lordship did he commend?
- ◎ What does it mean to live in expectation of his judgment and his eternal reign?
 - If we are guilty, then looking forward to a “court date”.
 - If we are not guilty, then looking forward to a full inheritance.

Fatal teaching after Constantinople

- Jesus is only God
 - Jesus' creaturely nature is of relatively no significance
- Prior to the Council of Chalcedon (451), variety of views (especially in Egypt) about Jesus' almost exclusive divinity
- Nestorius (from Syria, early 400s)
 - In Jesus there were two separate persons: one divine, one human
 - Battle cry: against the 'catholic' statement "Mary is the mother of God" (*theotokos*), Nestorius proclaimed Mary "the mother of the human Jesus" and the Holy Spirit the generator of the divine Jesus (cf. Nicene Creed: "of the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary!")
- After Chalcedon which establishes Jesus' dual nature (God and Man by nature), and starting from Egypt, a strong Monophysite (*one-nature*) teaching grows
 - Even Jesus' body was divine! (i.e., incorruptible)
- Continued in some form in the Coptic, Syrian, and Armenian churches

Why is it fatal?

- Monophysite: Jesus is for us as God but completely unlike us as man
 - God does not know our reality in the flesh but only as God (who knows all things)
 - Nestorian: Artificial division of two persons in Jesus or worse a “split-personality”

Recurrence

- ◎ Jesus is so divine as to become less than fully human
 - Several pietistic strains of Orthodoxy, Catholicism, and Evangelicalism

Treatment

- ◎ In Jesus we not only see God perfectly but we also see perfectly what God wants to make of us and what God does make of us (resurrection to life)
 - A man like us but sinless and thus, as a sacrifice, able to bring us to sinlessness (Hebrews 4:15)
 - We are being made like him, from manhood to divine heirs (Ephesians 2:5-6)

Lent: A preparation to see Jesus

- Reigning Lord over all humanity
- Freeing us from the human sins that weigh us down and giving us full freedom now
- Bringing his people into their full divine inheritance