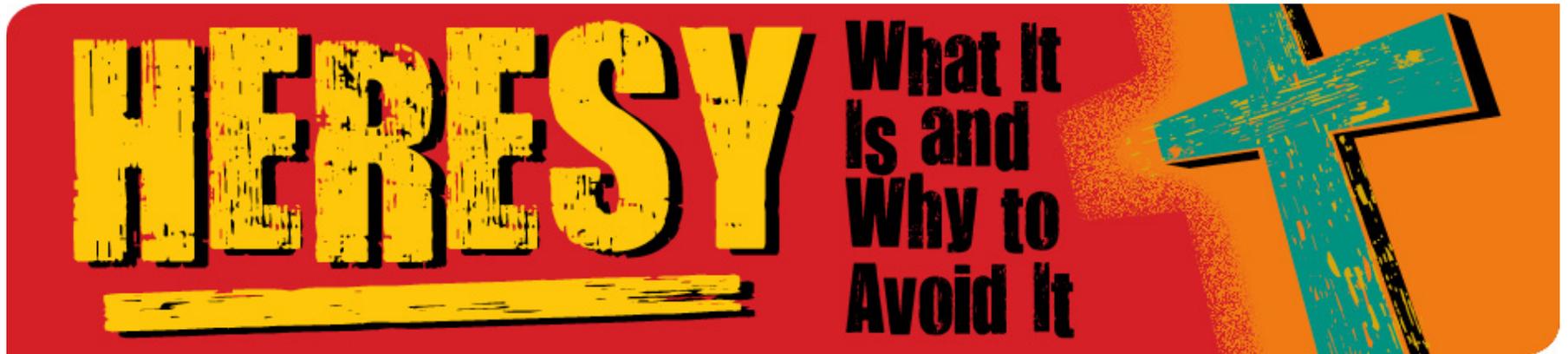


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Introduction, Heresy No. 5, No. 4, No. 3

# Review

# How to get at our question...

- ⦿ Definition, Magisterial pronouncement, Historical analysis ...
- ⦿ Pathology and treatment
  - How do certain Christian teachings make individual Christians and even churches sick unto death (John 11:4)
    - Remember: Not ALL diseases are fatal, but SOME are
  - Goal: To bring fulness of life!
- ⦿ “Top 5 Heresies”: Primary diseases that are fatal to Christians and will prevent fulness of life

# Number 5: Fatal teaching concerning the Holy Spirit

- ⦿ Diminishment and Over-emphasis
- ⦿ Fatal because
  - A creature (less than fully God) can only bring knowledge, comfort, help, etc. but can not make us fully divine heirs. Only God can do that.
  - Over-emphasis on the Holy Spirit “puffs up”, causing us to lose sight of Christ-like service and the Father’s giving

# Treatment?

- ◎ Begins with
  - A full witness from Scripture
  - The Niceno-Constantinopolitan creed concerning the Spirit
- ◎ And continues with
  - Teaching and practicing what it means to be full heirs with Christ; living fully free lives in Christ
  - Discerning and checking “puffed up” Christians without quenching the Spirit’s work; ensuring that Christ-like service is the mark of the Christian

# Number 4:

## Fatal teaching concerning Jesus

- ⦿ Doesn't question that Jesus is central
- ⦿ Questions how Jesus is central
  - Jesus isn't God:
    - Perhaps God chose a good man and "adopted" him
    - Jesus is God's first and best creation (Col 1:15)
  - Jesus isn't man:
    - He only "seemed" to be like us
    - The holy God could never have become like us

# Why is it fatal?

- If Jesus is not God, we haven't encountered God but only one of God's agents
- If Jesus is not man, God did not know sin as we know it, did not die as one of us, did not raise the man Jesus to reign in heaven, and has not made us co-heirs with Jesus.

# Treatment?

## ◎ Begins with

- The full witness of Scripture
- The full and expanded creedal formula concerning Jesus: The Nicene Creed plus the theological expansion that happened at Chalcedon (the two natures: God and man)

## ◎ Continues with

- Learning what it means that Jesus is Lord of all peoples and societies and nations
- Learning what it means to have been freed by God from sin and judgment
- Learning what it means to be adopted as fully divine heirs in Christ

# Number 3: Fatal teaching concerning God

- Healthy teaching about the Holy Spirit and Jesus need the solid foundation of healthy teaching about God
- Fatal teaching is not disbelief (“incredulity”): atheism, polytheism
- Fatal teaching concerns
  - Inability to think of God outside of our own experience (Monarchian - single power - views)
  - Thinking of God in philosophical terms (impassivity - unsuffering)

# Why is it fatal?

- ⦿ Because it starts with our view of God, which is corrupted by sin, to fashion what we think of as God
  - Monarchian views start from how humans see the world around them and organize themselves in society
- ⦿ Refuses to deal with how God has wanted to be known by us
  - From all eternity as a fellowship, a communion (not a mon-arch)

# Treatment

- ◎ Starts with
  - Determining from full witness of Scripture how God presents Himself
  - Credal formulations of full witness in the form of “Trinity” (not a Scriptural word but an expression of Scripture): a puzzling, mysterious, enigmatic understanding of God, like nothing in this fallen world!
- ◎ Continues with
  - Being transformed (Rom 12:2) from our corrupted thinking about God by God’s revelation of Himself and about who we are in God’s image.
    - God is from eternity always in communion and always life-giving
      - We should only think of Jesus in relation to the Father and the Spirit, etc.
      - The work of God is constantly to bring life
    - We, created in the image of that God, are always to be in communion and to share in life-giving
      - “I” do not exist independently of “you” in the Body of Christ.
      - Our Christian task in the image of God is constantly to bring new life into being (family, conversions, service, teaching....).

# Is God always in communion?

- Even the incarnate Jesus was never separate from the Father:
  - "Very truly, I tell you, the Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise. (John 5:19)
  - No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is [always] in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known. (John 1:18)
- Jesus' cry from the cross?
  - My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? (Mark 15:23, quoting Ps 22:1) ... Ps 22:2-18 are more verses of complaint!
  - But....
  - But you, O LORD, do not be far away! O my help, come quickly to my aid! Deliver my soul from the sword, my life from the power of the dog! Save me from the mouth of the lion! From the horns of the wild oxen you have rescued me. I will tell of your name to my brothers and sisters; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you ... All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him; stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel! For he did not despise or abhor the affliction of the afflicted; he did not hide his face from me, but heard when I cried to him. ... All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD; and all the families of the nations shall worship before him. For dominion belongs to the LORD, and he rules over the nations. To him, indeed, shall all who sleep in the earth bow down; before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, and I shall live for him. Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord, and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn, saying that he has done it. (Ps 22:19-31)

Fatal teaching concerning salvation

## Heresy number 2

# How are we to be saved?

## Example 1 of Fatal Teaching

### ◎ Jesus +

- Historical example: Judaizing Christianity
  - Jesus has made it possible for non-Jews to be saved by bringing you into Judaism
  - Now you must fulfill the Law
- Recurrence: Works righteousness
  - Though baptized, you can only be saved if you do works that evidence your salvation

# How are we to be saved?

## Example 2 of Fatal Teaching

### ⊙ Knowledge

- Historical example: Gnosticism
  - This material world is evil & deceptive; you can escape it (be saved) only by knowing (*gnosis*) truth
  - Jesus brings knowledge of (or learned – cf. Buddha) how to escape this world
- Recurrence: Knowing God/Jesus
  - Salvation is only possible for those who know Jesus mentally / for those who see this world for what it is and seek to escape from it

# Why is this fatal?

- ◎ Jesus + suggests that Jesus' work is not sufficient
- ◎ The Gnostic approach suggests that salvation depends on my ability to see through material reality to truth and to know the truth mentally
  - This leads to views of material reality that are unhelpful. (Collect: [John Donne](#))
  - "The true God has nothing to do with the material world" (Manichean slogan of the 2<sup>nd</sup> c)

# Treatment

## ◎ Initial treatment

- Paul's letters against the Judaizers (Galatians, 2 Cor 10-13, Phil 3) and against Gnostic-like teaching (Col 2:8-15)
- Credal formulations:
  - Our salvation is owned by us: "I believe in ..."
  - But it is the work of
    - The Father "... the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen."
    - The Son, who "For us and for our salvation came down from heaven, was incarnate ... became truly human ... was crucified ... suffered death and was buried .... rose again ... ascended into heaven ... is seated at the right hand of the Father ... will come again ... and his kingdom will have no end."
    - The Spirit "... the giver of life"
  - And it takes form "in one holy catholic and apostolic Church" ["we"],
  - It can be visualized in "one baptism for the forgiveness of sins",
  - It culminates in "the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen."

# Ongoing treatment

- ⦿ Thanksgiving (Eucharist) for Christ as the “sacrifice of atonement” (Rom 3:25) that makes salvation possible
- ⦿ Owning by “faith” (not Jesus+ or “gnosis”) = “assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (Heb 11:1, like Abraham, who saw, trusted, and followed)
- ⦿ Remembering that we were all adopted by God
  - The eternally life-giving God passionately sought to bring those who were dying out of the realm of death into fullness of life (where we would be able to live as divine heirs and become life-givers as the image of God is made new in us).
  - Symbolized in Baptism: Died once and for all with Christ to death / raised with Christ to be fully alive (Romans 6)
  - Mission: Now, having been made free, we are to go forth and bring life to the world by bringing others out of death to adoption as full heirs with Christ and with us (Jesus breathing the Spirit on the disciples in the upper room, John 20)
    - The world is fallen; it is not beyond redemption!