

There is one living and true God (Deuteronomy 6:4; Jeremiah 10:10; 1 Corinthians 8:4–6; 1 Thessalonians 1:9), who exists in three distinct persons—Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14). Each person is fully God, yet the Godhead is one and indivisible (Exodus 3:14; John 14:11; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Acts 5:3–4; 1 Corinthians 3:16–17).

(Sola 5 Confession 1.1)

Christian worship can be defined as a reverent response to divine revelation. To properly worship God, therefore, requires that we properly understand the nature of God as it is revealed in Scripture. The Sola 5 Confession of Faith begins with a definition of the God in whom we believe. This God is the source of our devotion and worship, and it is imperative that we properly understand what the Bible teaches about him if we will respond to him in worship.

The Confession begins: **There is one living and true God** (Deuteronomy 6:4; Jeremiah 10:10; 1 Corinthians 8:4–6; 1 Thessalonians 1:9).

In a televised interview on *The Late Show*, host Stephen Colbert challenged British comedian Ricky Gervais’s atheism. Gervais responded by saying that “about three thousand” gods have been posited throughout human history, and while Stephen Colbert rejected 2,999 of them, he simply rejected one more. Since Christians cannot prove the existence of the one God, said Gervais, he chooses not to believe his existence.

How would you respond to someone who asks you to prove the existence of God? _____

We confess that **there is one living and true God**.

How can we confidently confess this if we cannot, at least by scientific method, prove it? _____

Are Christians who use the Bible as their basis for belief in God guilty of circular reasoning? If so, does the confession make the belief irrational? _____

The one living and true God **exists in three distinct persons—Father, Son and Holy Spirit** (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14).

Does the Bible clearly teach the doctrine of the Trinity? If so, where? _____

Can the doctrine of the Trinity be explained sufficiently by any human analogy? Can you think of any analogies that attempt to explain this truth? _____

In the early centuries of new covenant church history, various teachings arose that tried to explain the mystery of the Trinity. Consider three of the earliest popular teachings and evaluate them against your understanding of Trinitarian theology.

Monarchianism (third century) taught that there was one God who manifested and worked at different times in different modes. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were not distinct persons within the

Godhead, but were the different modes that God took and in which he operated. Sometimes, he worked as Father, sometimes as Son, and sometimes as Holy Spirit.

Arianism (third century) posited that the Son and the Spirit were not, in the fullest sense of the word, God, but were creatures who did not always exist but were begotten by the Father at some point in time. The Son and the Spirit were therefore not equal with the Father but subordinate to him.

Various groups in the early centuries suggested that that the three persons of the Trinity were in fact three distinct, powerful gods, operating together with a common purpose.

In contrast to some of the above heresies, the Confession states: **Each person is fully God, yet the Godhead is one and indivisible** (Exodus 3:14; John 14:11; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Acts 5:3–4; 1 Corinthians 3:16–17).

Side note: We have deliberately referred to the above-three teachings as “heresies.” That is a word that is cast around with frightening ease today. How do you know whether something is a heresy? Why is it fair to refer to the above teachings as heresy? _____

When the Confession states that **the Godhead is one and indivisible**, does it speak of the Godhead in ESSENCE or in PURPOSE? Why? What is the distinction between **one and indivisible** in ESSENCE and PURPOSE? _____

When Jesus ministered on earth, he clearly taught that he came as one submitting to the will of the Father. Do you think that this subordination of Son to Father is an ETERNAL subordination, or a TEMPORAL subordination for the duration of his earthly ministry? Why? _____

The Nicene Creed, adopted at the ecumenical Council of Nicaea in 325 AD, affirms Christian belief “in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, begotten from the Father before all ages ... begotten, not made; of the same essence as the Father.” What does the Creed mean that the Son was “begotten, not made”? What is the difference between being “begotten” and being “made”? _____
