

## Glossary

**Adoptionism:** the false teaching that Jesus lived as an ordinary man until his baptism, at which time God “adopted” him as his “son” and conferred on him supernatural powers; this teaching thus denies Jesus’ preexistence and divine nature.

**Anthropomorphic Language:** Language that speaks of God in human terms.

**Apollinarianism:** the fourth-century heresy that held that Christ had a human body but not a human mind or spirit and that the mind and spirit of Christ were from the divine nature of the Son of God.

**Arianism:** the erroneous doctrine that denies the full deity of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

**Aseity:** the absolute self-sufficiency, independence, and autonomy of God.

**Co-equal:** having the same rank or importance.

**Co-eternal:** existing together eternally

**Communicable Attributes:** Aspects of God’s character that he shares or “communicates” with us.

**Cosmological Argument:** an argument for the existence of God based on the observation that, since every known thing in the universe has a cause, the universe itself must also have a cause, which can only be God.

**Deity:** the divine being. God.

**Economic Trinity:** the relationship of the triune God to the world in salvation history with respect to creation, atonement, and perfection.

**Essence:** What something is. The nature of something. It’s being.

**Eternal Begetting of the Son / Eternal Generation of the Son:** Within the Trinity, the Son is eternally generated by the Father. This teaching stands in contrast to the Arian idea that the Son was created at some point by the Father. It also stands in contrast to the recent claim by some theologians that this generation is a completed act.

**Homoiousios:** A Greek word meaning “of a similar nature” used by Arius in the fourth century to affirm that Christ was a supernatural heavenly being but to deny that he was of the same nature as God the Father.

**Homoousios:** The Greek word, meaning “of the same nature,” which was included in the Nicene Creed to teach that Christ was of the exact same nature as God the Father and therefore was fully divine as well as fully human.

**Hypostatic Union:** the union of Christ’s human and divine natures in one person (from the Greek hypostasis, “being”).

**Immanent:** That God is immanent means that He is present in His creation. While He is transcendent (so that there is an infinite gulf between the essence of God and all creatures), yet God is also present in His creation.

**Immanent Trinity:** The word “immanent” is also used to describe the ontological trinity. That is, it describes the trinity as it is in itself, apart from the work that each person does in the great work of redemption.

**Immutability:** another term for God’s unchangeableness.

**Incarnation:** This word literally means “in the flesh.” It points to how the Son of God took on human flesh and united His divine person to a human nature.

**Incommunicable Attributes:** Divine attributes that God does not share with us.

**Incomprehensible:** Not able to be fully understood. As this applies to God, it means that God cannot be understood fully or exhaustively, although we can know true things about God.

**Knowable:** a term referring to the fact that we can know true things about God, and that we can know God himself and not simply facts about him.

**Logos:** The Son of God is called the “Word” because the Father communicates through His beloved Son.

**Modalism:** the heretical teaching that God is not really three distinct persons, but only one person who appears to people in different “modes” at different times.

**Monogenes:** only begotten

**Monotheists:** the belief that there is only one God.

**Nature:** the basic or inherent features of something.

**Oneness:** the fact or state of being unified or whole, though comprised of two or more parts.

**Only Begotten:** Monogenes

**Ontological argument:** This is the name for an argument of St. Anselm in which he thought that he proved the existence of God by use of a thought experiment in which one thought of God as a being than which none greater can be imagined.

**Ontological equality:** Equal by nature

**Ousia:** essence, substance, or being. A term used to refer to the oneness of God.

**Person:** A center of consciousness that says, “I”. An individual subsistence in a rational, moral nature. Nothing to do with our physical body. (In contrast to how we often use the word person to refer to us as a whole, body, soul, and person)

**Sabellianism:** another name for modalism, a term derived from the third-century teacher Sabellius, who propagated this doctrine.

**Son of God:** The second person of the holy Trinity. The only begotten Son. The term is used to express that the 2<sup>nd</sup> person of the holy Trinity is the only begotten Son of God. The Son of God united His divine person to a human nature. The Son of God, therefore, assumed a human nature.

**Son of Man:** Messianic title used by Jesus to express his true humanity and that He is the promised Messiah who will reign at the right hand of God.

**Spirit:** designation for that aspect of existence human or otherwise which is immaterial.

**Subordinationism:** an erroneous doctrine about the Trinity which teaches that the second and third persons of the Trinity are subordinate (as in order or essence) to the first person and the Holy Spirit is subordinate to the Son. This error denies the full and essential equality of the three persons. Recently this view has been popularized by Bruce Ware. Wayne Grudem still holds to a version of this.

**Substance:**

**Teleological Argument:** an argument for the existence of God which reasons that, since the universe exhibits evidence of order and design, there must be an intelligent and purposeful God who created it to function in this way.

**Trinity:** the doctrine that God eternally exists as three persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – and each person is fully God, and there is one God.

**Tritheism:** the belief that there are three gods.

**Yahweh:** LORD or Jehovah

Definitions from Wayne Grudem’s book, various online biblical dictionaries, and Nathan B.