

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE TRINITY

Read the information below, answer the questions and complete the timeline:

The concept of the Trinity is not in the bible. It was first mentioned by Roman Christian writer Tertullian in the second century.

The Council of Nicaea (325 CE) established that Jesus is a human manifestation of God. This is the first formal expression of the idea of the 'incarnation', a phrase meaning 'in flesh' (*carne*= flesh in Latin), describing the belief that Jesus is God in human form. The idea of the Spirit is mentioned at this council but not explored in detail.

At Nicaea a different way of seeing the Trinity was rejected, called Arianism, after the founder Arius. Arianism proposed that Jesus was not made of the same substance as God, and is therefore not God. Arianism held that Jesus was known as the 'Son of God' because he was perfectly good, not because he was of the same nature as God. Arianism in a form still exists today in the Unitarian church, who may reject doctrines such as the trinity and the divinity of Jesus.

At two further councils; at Constantinople in 381 and at Ephesus in 431, it was established that Jesus has two natures: he is human and he is divine (part of God).

At the Council of Chalcedon in 451 the seal is set on a concept of Jesus. This council affirms that Jesus is all God and all human, or fully God and fully human.

Death of Jesus

33 CE

Who first used the phrase 'Trinity'?

2<sup>nd</sup> C

The 'incarnation' is mentioned at what Council?

What are the 'two natures' of Jesus, established at Constantinople and Ephesus?

381 CE

At what council is Jesus' two natures affirmed?

431 CE

What was the majority view of Jesus at Nicaea?

What was the minority view of Jesus at Nicaea?

