

REASONABLE

FAITH



Another Gospel?

A Lifelong Christian

Seeks Truth in Response to

Progressive Christianity

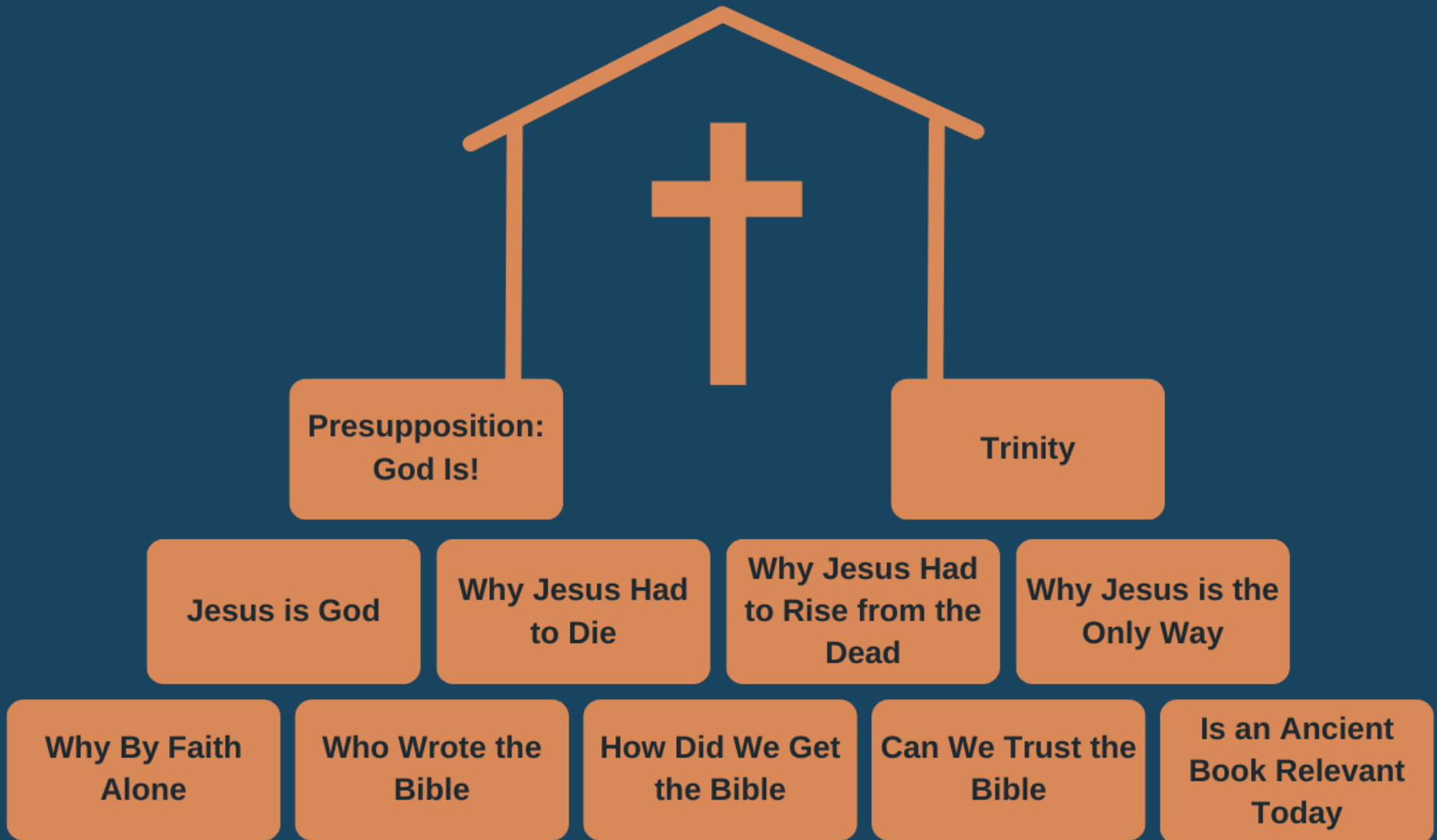
Alisa Childers

FOREWORD BY LEE STROBEL

“In a LEGO set, not all pieces have the same importance. Some blocks could break off without anyone noticing. Some you could remove or switch out without changing the overall structure. . . . But those foundational blocks— the ones upon which the rest of the set is built— those are crucial to get right” (Childers, p. 230).



FOUNDATIONAL BLOCKS



Presupposition: God Is!





KEY CONCEPT

While we may not be able to show someone irrefutable proof for the existence of God, it is reasonable to believe in God.

TWO OPPOSING WORLDVIEWS

Theistic Worldview

**God is the
origin of
human beings**

Naturalistic Worldview

**Human
beings are
the origin of
God**



KEY CONCEPT

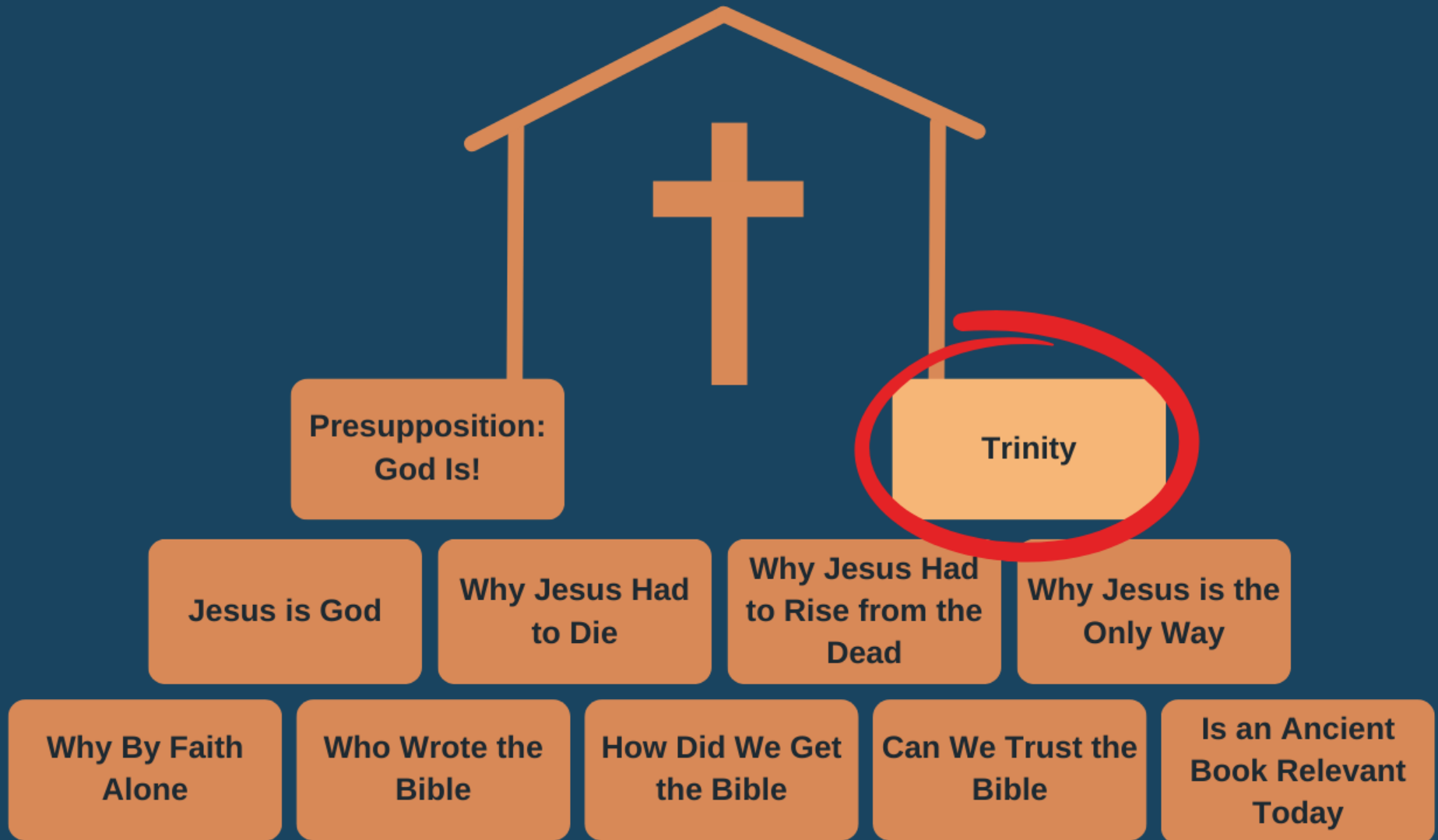
Although those holding a naturalistic worldview may claim irrefutable proof for their position, they do not have it. We do not need to argue with them. We do need to remember that it is reasonable to believe in God!

REASONABLE

FAITH



FOUNDATIONAL BLOCKS



Trinity



“The doctrine of the trinity is not a truth of natural theology, but of revelation. Reason may show us the unity of God, but the doctrine of the trinity comes from direct revelation. Though the term ‘trinity’ does not occur in the Bible, it had very early usage in the church. . . .” (Henry Thiessen, Lectures in Systematic Theology, pp. 89-90).



“ . . . In Christian theology, the term ‘trinity’ means that there are three eternal distinctions in the one divine essence, known respectively as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These three distinctions are three persons, and one may speak of the tripersonality of God. We worship the triune God. . . . ” (Henry Thiessen, Lectures in Systematic Theology, pp. 89-90).



“... The Athanasian Creed expresses the trinitarian belief thus, ‘We worship one true God in the Trinity, and the Trinity in unity; we distinguish among the persons, but we do not divide the substance.’ It goes on to say, ‘The entire three persons are coeternal and coequal with one another, so that . . . we worship complete unity in Trinity and Trinity in Unity’” (Henry Thiessen, Lectures in Systematic Theology, pp. 89-90).



“God eternally exists as three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and each person is fully God, and there is one God”

(Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, p. 226).



“While the doctrine of the Trinity is a central fact of Christian faith, it is also beyond human comprehension and has no parallel in human experience. It is best defined as holding that, while God is one, He exists as three persons. These persons are equal, have the same attributes, and are equally worthy of adoration, worship, and faith

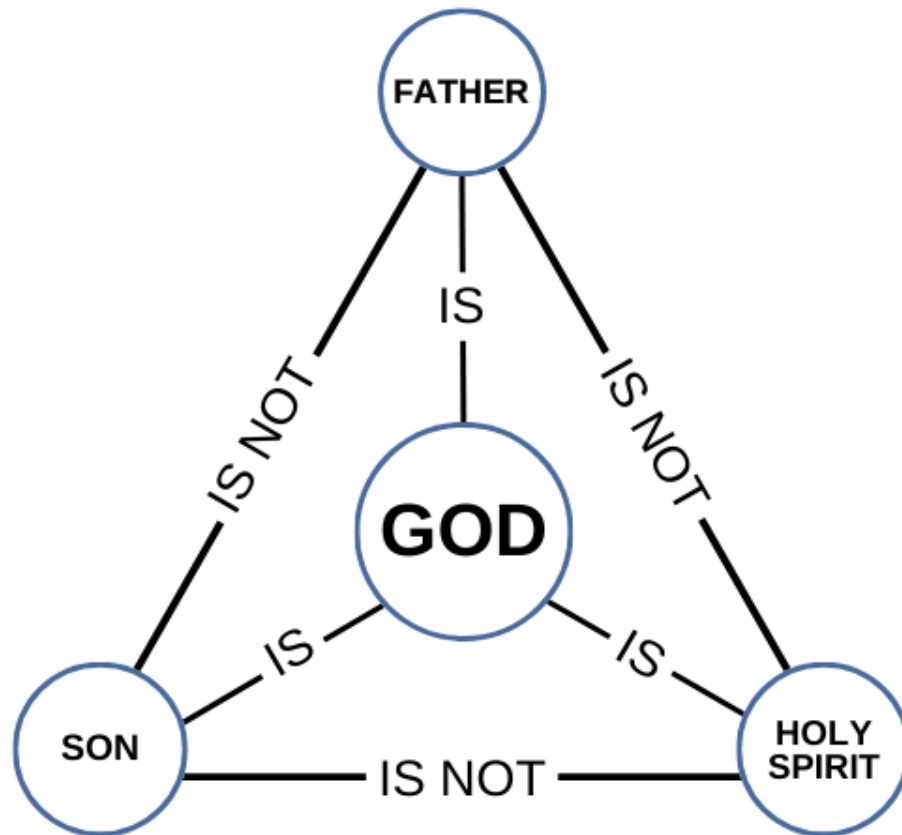
• • • ” (Lewis Sperry Chafer, Revised by John F. Walvoord, Major Bible Themes, p. 40).



“ . . . Yet the doctrine of the unity of the Godhead makes clear that they are not three separate gods, like three separate human beings such as Peter, James, and John. Accordingly, the true Christian faith is not tritheism, a belief in three Gods. On the other hand, the Trinity must not be explained as three modes of existence, that is, one God manifesting Himself in three ways. The Trinity is essential to the being of God and is more than a form of divine revelation” (Lewis Sperry Chafer, Revised by John F. Walvoord, Major Bible Themes, p. 40).



Common Diagram of the Godhead



“Trinity: Uniquely Christian doctrine that in the Godhead’s unity are three coeternal and coequal persons, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. Each is fully divine, yet the Son is not the same person as the Father, nor the Spirit as the Son, nor the Father as the Spirit. Though distinct, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not three separate gods but eternally one God” (Nathan Holsteen and Michael Svigel, General Editors, Exploring Christian Theology, p. 268).



Scripture Reveals the Trinity Progressively

- Partially revealed in the OT
- More completely revealed in the New Testament
- The word “trinity” is not in the Bible but the idea is!



The Thread of the Trinity through the Old Testament



Genesis 1:26, “Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness. . . .’” (NASB).

- The plural pronouns “Us” and “Our” allow for the Trinity.
- Allen Ross, “These plurals do not explicitly refer to the triunity of the Godhead but do allow for that doctrine’s development through the process of progressive revelation” (Creation & Blessing, p. 112).



Deuteronomy 6:4, “Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might” (NASB).

- The Shema became Judaism’s confession of faith.
- The root meaning of the Hebrew word translated “one” is to “be united.”



“Notably, another Hebrew word, *yahid*, means ‘only one, solitary,’ and this term is never used of God. In other words, the Old Testament’s insistence on God’s unity doesn’t rule out God’s triunity. The New Testament’s further revelation maintains the Hebrew insistence on monotheism, but not ‘single-person’ monotheism, as in Islam or Unitarianism” (Nathan Holsteen and Michael Svigel, General Editors, Exploring Christian Theology, p. 144).



Psalm 45:6-7, “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; Therefore, God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of joy above Your fellows” (NASB).

- Verse 6 refers to the king as “God.”
- Verse 7 speaks to this same king and says, “Your God has anointed You. . .”
- Hebrews 1:8 applies this verse to Christ.
- Two distinct persons referred to as God



Hebrews 1:8, “But of the Son
He says, ‘YOUR THRONE, O
GOD, IS FOREVER AND EVER,
AND THE RIGHTEOUS SCEPTER
IS THE SCEPTER OF HIS
KINGDOM’” (NASB).



Isaiah 63:10, “But they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit; therefore He turned Himself to become their enemy, He fought against them” (NASB).

- This verse implies that the “Holy Spirit” is a distinct person within the Godhead.
- The Holy Spirit is able to be “grieved.”



Scripture Reveals the Trinity Progressively

- Partially revealed in the OT
- More completely revealed in the New Testament



“Let’s be clear. The Old Testament alone doesn’t clearly articulate the doctrine of the Holy Trinity as Father, Son, and Spirit, the same in essence but distinct in personhood. Nevertheless, it never rules out a concept of ‘plurality in unity,’ and, more than that, it contains all the pieces for the clearer revelation of Jesus Christ in the New Testament. Far from contradicting a Trinitarian theology, the Hebrew Testament is conducive” (Nathan

Holsteen and Michael Svigel, General Editors, Exploring Christian Theology, p. 145).



“To put it another way, in the earlier revelation the stage was set, and in the later revelation the lights are turned on. In Christ’s brightness, the rich colors and design of the Old Testament come into clearer view”

(Nathan Holsteen and Michael

Svigel, General Editors, [Exploring Christian Theology](#), p. 145).



The Thread of the Trinity through the New Testament



The New Testament:

- Teaches there is only one God
- Recognizes all three Persons of the Trinity to be God
- Includes all three Persons of the Trinity in single statements



**Just as the Old Testament
Scriptures teach that
there is only one true
God, so also the New
Testament stresses that
there is only one God.**



James 2:19, “You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder” (NASB).



**The New Testament
recognizes all three
Persons of the Trinity to
be God.**



The Father is God

1 Peter 1:2, “according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in fullest measure” (NASB).



Jesus Christ is God

John 1:1-3, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being” (NASB).



John 1:14, “And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.” (NASB).



The Holy Spirit is God

Acts 5:3-4, “But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land? While it remained *unsold*, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to **God**” (NASB).



**The New Testament
includes all three
Persons of the Trinity in
single statements.**



Matthew 28:19,

**“Go therefore and make
disciples of all the nations,
baptizing them in the
name of the Father and the
Son and the Holy Spirit”**

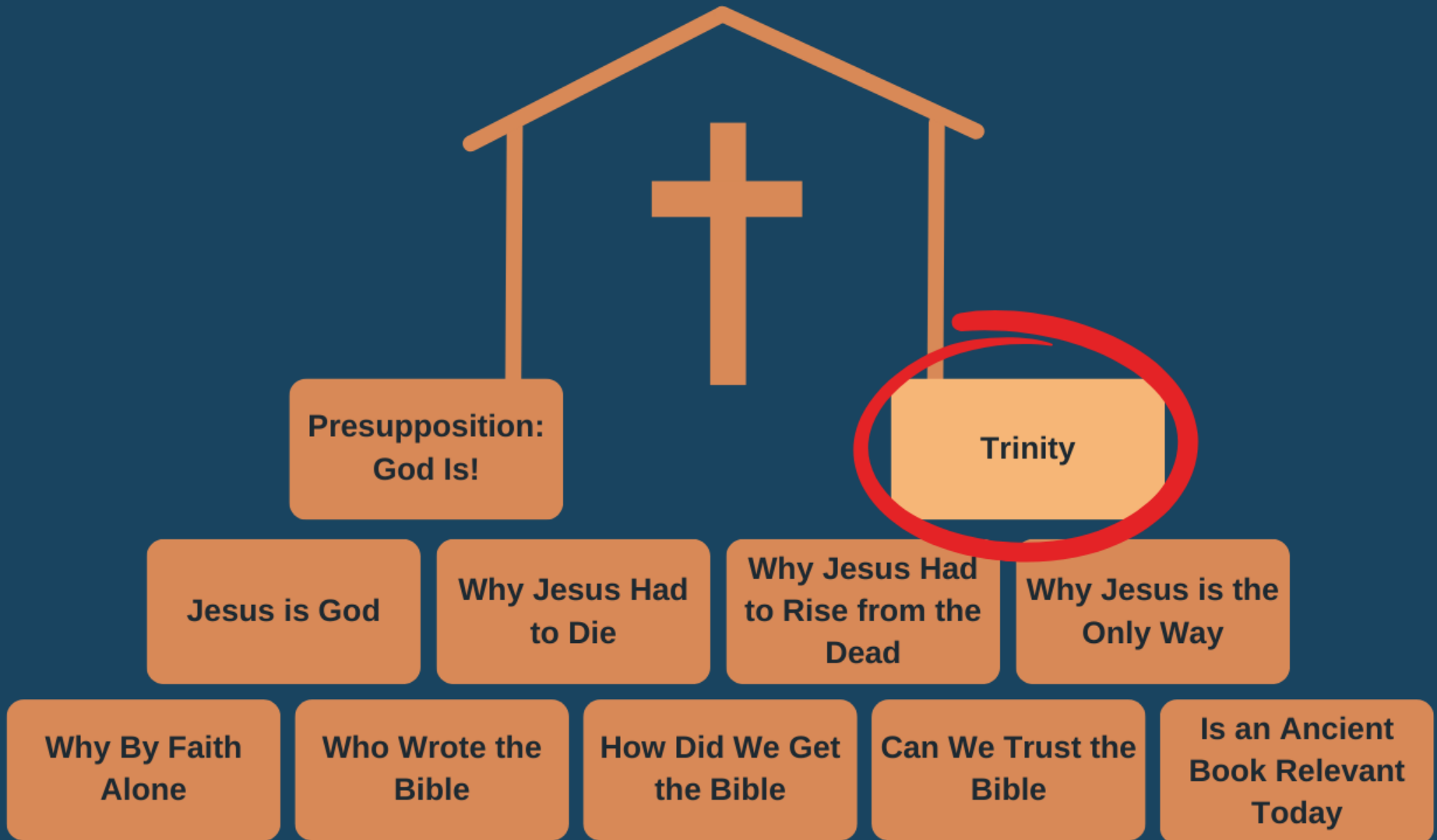
(NASB).



Trinity



FOUNDATIONAL BLOCKS



Scripture Reveals the Trinity Progressively

- Partially revealed in the OT
- More completely revealed in the New Testament
- The word “trinity” is not in the Bible but the idea is!

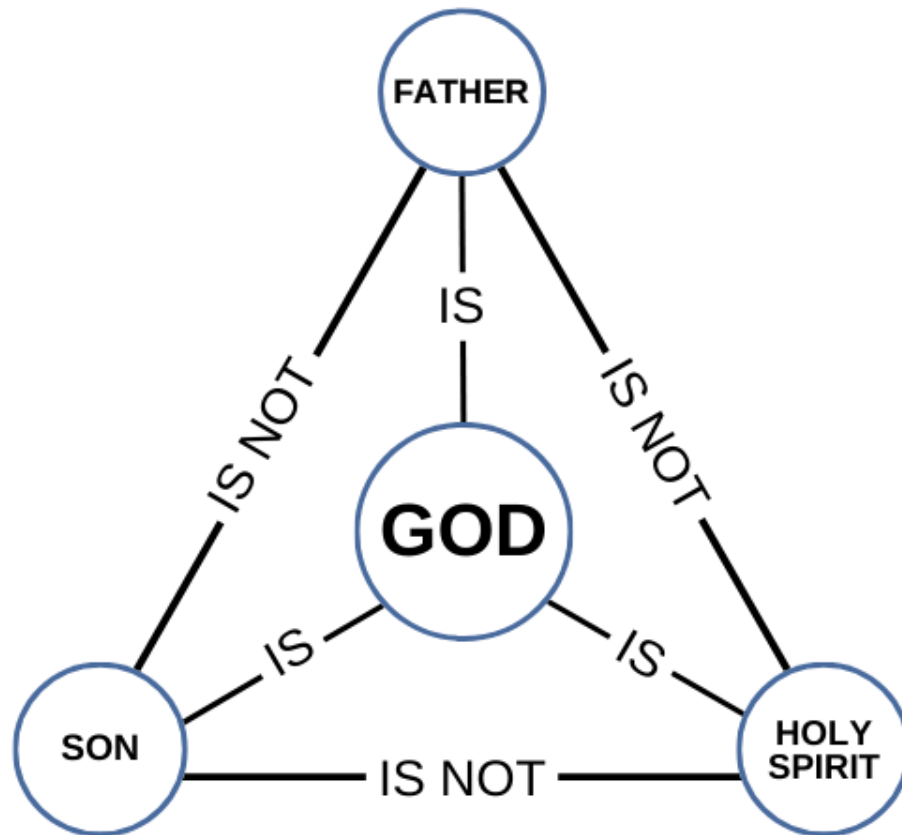


“God eternally exists as
three persons,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
and each person is fully
God, and there is one God”

(Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, p. 226).



Common Diagram of the Godhead



Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity



If Jesus was not God, He would not be able to save us!

- If just a man, He would have a sin nature (Rom. 5:12)
- If He had a sin nature, He would not qualify as our substitute (2 Corinthians 5:21)



2 Corinthians 5:21,

“He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (NASB).



The personal nature of God is rooted in the Trinity.

- God is love (1 John 4:8).
- The Father declares His love for the Son (John 5:19-20).
- God's love for people flows from the love that exists between the Persons of the Godhead.



John 5:19-20, “Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and the Father will show Him greater works than these, so that you will marvel’” (NASB).



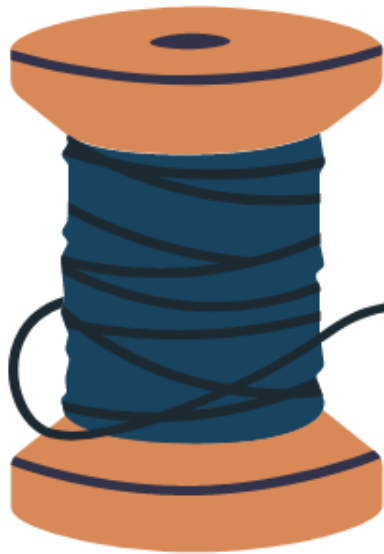
Trinity



“The doctrine of the trinity is not a truth of natural theology, but of revelation. Reason may show us the unity of God, but the doctrine of the trinity comes from direct revelation. Though the term ‘trinity’ does not occur in the Bible, it had very early usage in the church. . . .” (Henry Thiessen, Lectures in Systematic Theology, pp. 89-90).



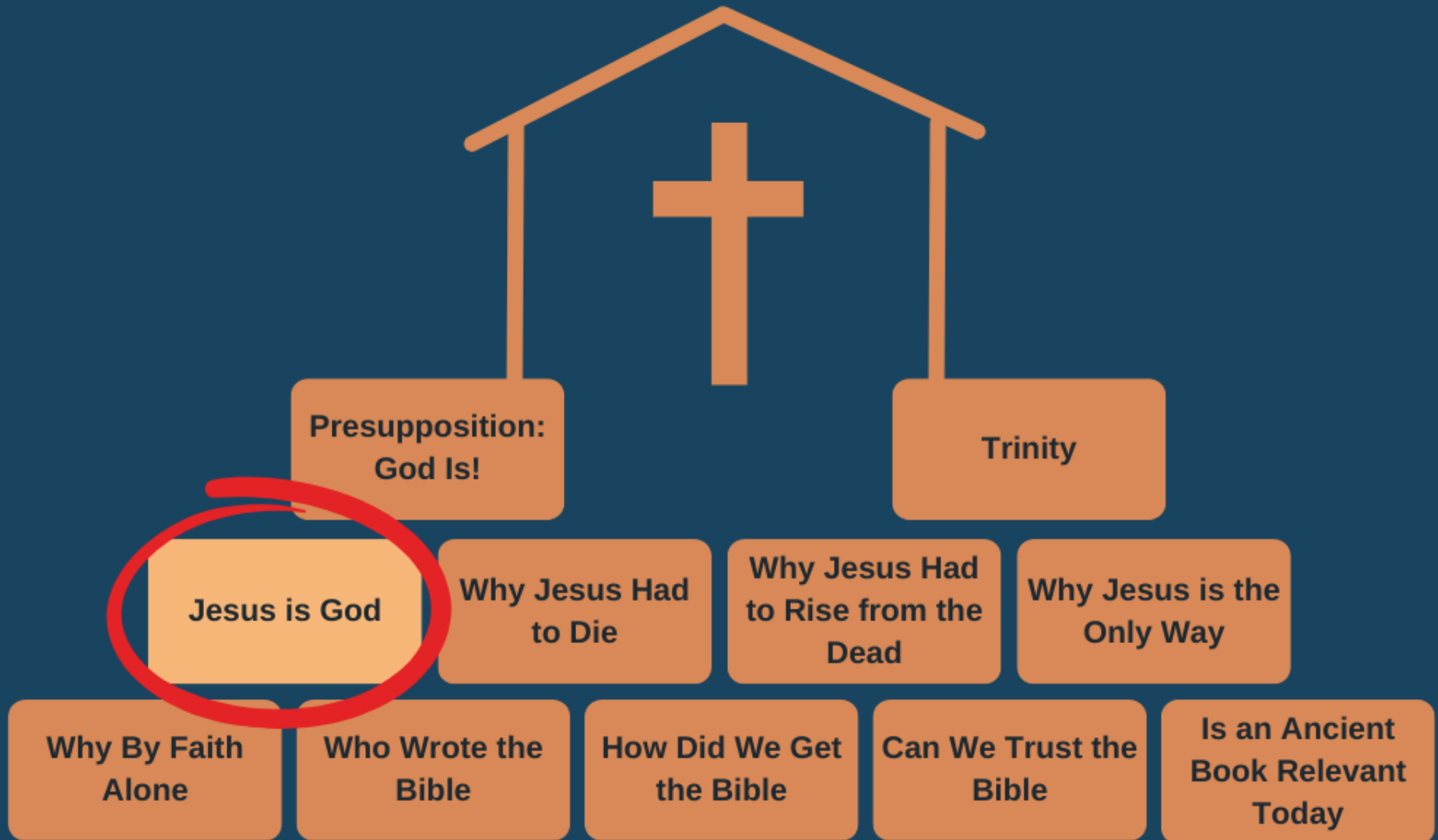
The Thread of the Trinity through the Old Testament



The Thread of the Trinity through the New Testament



FOUNDATIONAL BLOCKS



REASONABLE

FAITH

