

**Discussion Questions**  
*Divine Complexity*  
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**Introduction and Chapter 1**

1. What is theology about?
2. What is the gospel?
3. What is the starting-point of faith?
4. What is the difference between apophatic and kataphatic theology?

**Chapter 2**

1. Why does the resurrection of Jesus matter?
2. Why should the resurrection critique metaphysics rather than vice versa?
3. Why did Jesus die “accursed” of God?
4. What purpose do miracles serve?
5. How can the Jesus of history be identical to the risen Christ? What are the difficulties with this affirmation?
6. On what grounds does Christian theology equate the Son of Mary with the Son of God?
7. Why does it matter that the facts about Jesus are “narratable”? How is narrative different from both the propositional claims of critical historiography and mythology?
8. What is the purpose of doctrines or dogmas in relation to the “primary theology of promissory narrative”?
9. What is the relationship between promise and fulfillment? Between belief and the object of belief?

**Chapter 3**

1. Why have modern Christian scholars had difficulty in seeing the continuity in the depictions of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels, John, and Paul?
2. How did the earliest Christian community unite these depictions into one canon of faith?
3. How does the gospel of John hold together the “weeping Jesus” and the “exalted Jesus”?
4. How did the martyr experience shape the gospel of John?
5. Why is John identified as a “bridge” in early Christian development?
6. Why is “antidocetic christology” such an essential decision in early Christianity?
7. How did martyrdom serve as the “continuation” of the gospel?
8. In what way is the gospel the hermeneutical key to the Scriptures?
9. Why is it necessary to have a hermeneutical key to the Scriptures?
10. What is meant by a “martyrs’ canon”?
11. What is source in early Christian community life of the “rule of faith”?

**Chapter 4**

1. How is Paul’s doctrine a “doctrine for life”?
2. What is the difference between “supercession of the Temple” and “supercession of God’s election of the Jews”?
3. How did the earliest Christians regard the eucharist? How did their pagan enemies regard it?
4. What kind of “atheism” is fitting for Christian believers?
5. Why does a “yes” to the Holy Trinity logically require a “no” to certain other things?
6. How are Christians to locate the moral and spiritual courage to say the “no” that corresponds to their “yes”?
7. Why does Irenaeus have to “invent” dogmatic theology? What method does he use?
8. Why can theology ask “what” and “why” but not “how”?
9. What is the difference between thinking of Jesus as a symbol of God and thinking of Jesus as the advent of a person of God?
10. Why is the gnostic separation of the “God of love” from the “God of justice” in fact a sign of the utmost contempt for God?

## **Chapter 5**

1. What does “God” mean?
2. What did Christianity find congenial in Middle Platonism?
3. What made modalism and subordinationism attractive to early Christians?
4. What were the two monotheisms that Origen was trying to knit together? To what extent did he succeed and to what extent did he fail?
5. Explain the difference between simplicity as a rule for speaking about God and simplicity as a metaphysical insight into the being of God.

## **Chapter 6 and Postscript**

1. What attitude toward the state does trinitarian orthodoxy promote?
2. Why does everything really depend on the resurrection of the dead?
3. Which is correct, “God is triune” or “The Trinity is God”? Why?
4. Why do Basil the Great and Gregory of Nyssa argue that the Spirit is of the same divinity as the Father and the Son?
5. Why is divinity not a quality but a nature?
6. Why do Platonists fear “becoming” in God?
7. Why must Christians predicate an “impassible passibility” of the incarnate Logos? Why may contemporary Christians also predicate an impassibility possibility to the life of the Trinity?
8. Why is it as misleading to say that God suffers as we do as it is to say that God doesn’t suffer at all?