

A detailed mosaic background featuring a central face with large, expressive eyes. The mosaic is composed of small, irregular tiles in shades of gold, brown, and purple. The face appears to be a religious or historical figure, possibly a saint or a deity, with a serene expression. The overall style is reminiscent of Byzantine or medieval mosaic art.

NICENE CREED

WEEK ONE

Is the Nicene Creed
optional?

(why or why not)

Let's Read the Creed

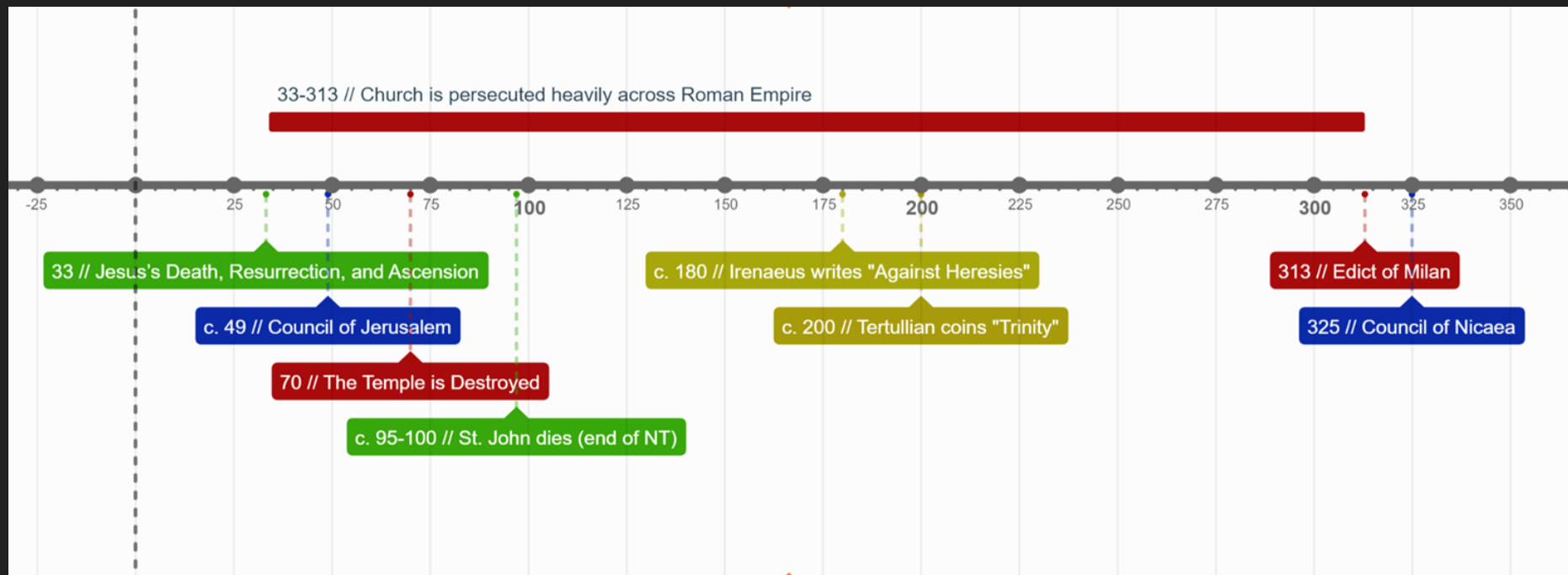
“We believe”

- Latin = “credo” = “I believe”
- Greek (original) = “Πιστεύομεν” = “We believe”

Saying “We believe” is an *action of confession* that we do today and the bishops at Nicaea did in 325 AD

Intro to this Class

- Led by Pastor Joel, aided by Vicar Fritz Quitmeyer
- Fill out Notecard
 - Name across top (give me the name you want me to call you)
 - Family (List anyone you want to tell me about)
 - Email address
- Today's class:
 - A little bit of history
 - A little bit of theology/practice



Two biggest remaining threats: Disunity & Heresy (and they're quite related)

The Threat of Heresy

- Matthew 7:15
- 2 Timothy 1:14
- Heresy is a distorted picture of Christ

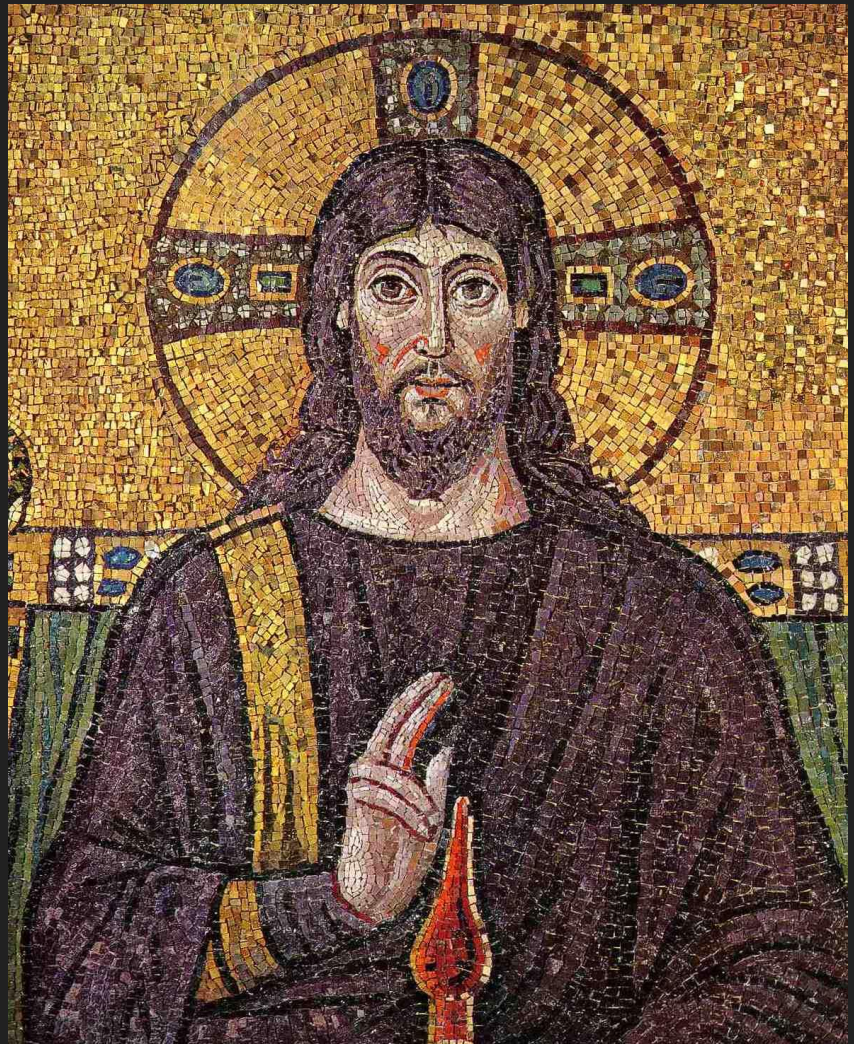
“But [the heretics] alter the scriptural context and connection, and dismember the truth, as much as they can... It is just as if there was a beautiful representation of a king made in a mosaic by a skilled artist, and one altered the arrangement of pieces of stone into the shape of a dog or a fox, and then should assert that this was the original representation of a king.”

- Irenaeus (c. 130-202 AD)

How do we know how to arrange the mosaic?

Tertullian coined the term “Rule of Faith”

- We see the repeated retelling of God’s truth throughout the generations, and it gives us a “rule” for how we interpret Scripture ourselves
- There have been LOTS of heresies in our history, but one is of importance for the story of Nicaea:
Arianism

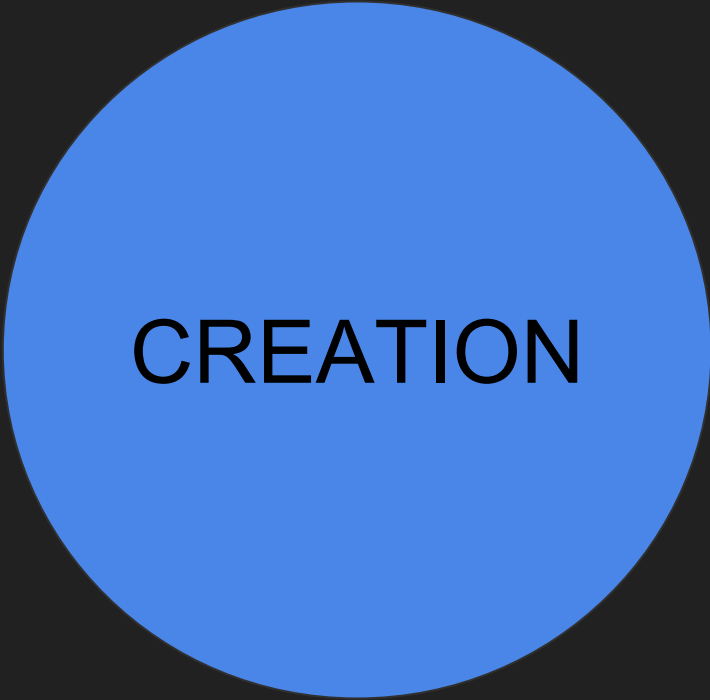


Arius (an introduction)

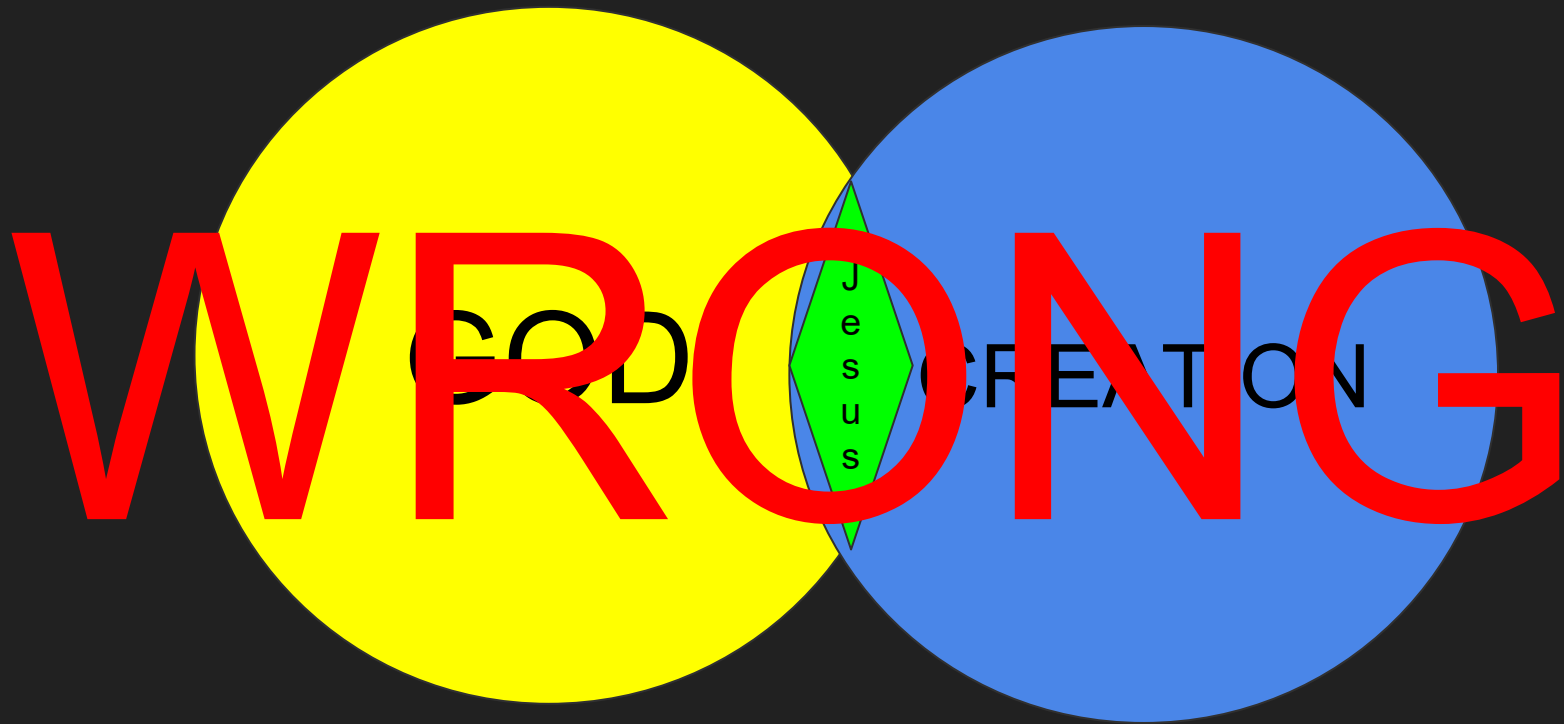
- Arius was a presbyter (pastor) in Alexandria in the early 300s AD
- Gifted speaker, tall in stature, well-liked, and *well-studied in the Scriptures(!)*
- Began to question his bishop (Alexander) about how Jesus was “begotten”
- Arius’s Slogan: Ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν
 - “There was a *when* when the Son was not.”



GOD



CREATION



The Threat of Disunity

- Jesus prayed for all believers (John 17:20-23)
 - “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, **that they may become perfectly one**, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.”
- Wrong teaching is one way that we lose the unity we have in Christ!

The Threat of Disunity

- Acts 15 “Council of Jerusalem”
 - In Acts, the early church held a “council” to find unity around theological issues
- In 325, Constantine called a council to find unity around the theological issue of Arianism
 - Note: an Emperor called the council
 - Critics say it was all a ploy for unity *in the empire*
 - Whatever Constantine’s motives, what we got was a faithful exposition of Scripture in the Nicene Creed

Pause... Questions?

The Nicene Creed *for us*

- The Nicene Creed shapes our community
 - Not “I think...” but “I/We Believe”
- The Nicene Creed shapes our faith
 - Luther on the Apostles’ Creed: “I believe that God has made me...”
 - The Nicene Creed is personal too!
- The Nicene Creed shapes the way we talk
 - It gives us a summary of the Biblical story which helps us stay faithful to the whole (mosaic analogy)
 - It gives us *language* to put to difficult concepts

The Nicene Creed *for us*

“If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.”

Romans 10:9-10

Application

1. Rank the threats to the church in the fourth century.
Which one most threatened the church of the time?
 - a. Persecution, Heresy, Disunity, Emperor's Interference
 - b. BONUS: Which of those dangers feels most pressing today?
2. What are common ways people *today* get the confession of Jesus wrong?
 - a. Is it still Arianism? Are there others?

RECAP

1. The Nicene Creed is the church's faithful outline of Scripture's story (not an optional add-on).
 - a. "Rule of Faith"
2. God preserves His church in truth even amid heresy and conflict.
3. We ourselves are shaped by the words we confess.
 - a. Confessing the Creed is an expression of faith, not just recitation!