

Turning Point #2: The Council of Nicaea (325 C.E.)



We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father (and the Son.) With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.

Amen.



I. A Historical Faith

(1) Irenaeus of Lyon: The "Mosaic" of Scripture

Against the Heresies

Christian "Textual Culture"

“Suppose someone would take the beautiful image of a king... and would destroy the features of the man on it and **change around and rearrange the jewels**, and make the form of a dog, or a fox, out of them, and that a rather bad piece of work.”

—Irenaeus of Lyons

(2) Constantine I and the Roman Empire

Religious Persecution under Emperor Diocletian (c. 244–311 C.E.)



Diocletian's Roman Tetrarchy

Constantine I (c. 27 Feb. 272–337 C.E.): Milvian Bridge and "Edict of Milan" (313 C.E.)

(3) Development of Christian Theology: Father-Son

Key Scriptural Texts:

Prov. 8:22–23 “The Lord made me the beginning of his ways, for his works. Before time, He established me in the beginning.”

John 1:1 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God”

John 1:18 “No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known.”

John 10:29–30 “My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.”

John 14:28 “You heard me say to you, ‘I am going away, and I will come to you.’ If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.”

Col. 1:15–16 “He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities — all things were created through him and for him.”

1 Cor. 1:24 “but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ [is] the power of God and the wisdom of God.”

How Should We Understand the Relation of Father-Son in Scripture?



Docetism ("dokeo" = 'it seems')

Monarchianism ("monarchos" = one)

- *Sabellianism / Modalism* (Marcellus of Ancyra)
- *Patripassianism* ("suffering of father")
- *Adoptionism*

"Arianism"

- *"Homoiousian"* ("similar substance") [Basil of Ancyra]
- *"Homoian"* ("similar to") [Eusebius of Nicomedia]
- *Eunomian / "Anomoian"* ("not similar") [Eunomius of Cyzicus]

Classical Trinitarianism

- *Homo-ousian* ("the same substance")
- Alexander of Alexandria; Athanasius of Alexandria; Eusebius of Caesarea

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II. The Interpretation of Scripture

“When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And **this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.**”

“I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. **All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them.** And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, **that they may be one, even as we are one.** While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And **for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.**”

“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.” (John 17:1–23)

III. Love of God & Love of Neighbor (Matt. 22)

What do these people, places, or events teach me about God?

What do these teach me about myself?

What can I do differently this next week based on something I've learned tonight?



IV. Thought(s) for Next Session

Read and meditate on these texts—and how they relate to one another—before our next session.

“Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.”

(Hebrews 2:14–15)

“The book of the birth of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.”

(Matthew 1:1)

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us”

(John 1:14)

Session #2: Primary Sources