

Trinitarian Controversy 1 (318 to 381)

by Sean Finnegan (www.christianmonotheism.com)

The Creed: Beautiful or Dreadful?

- set to beautiful music (Mozart's *Credo*)
- said weekly in many Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant churches
- used for catechisms in many Christian groups

Nicene Creed (a.d. 325)	Constantinopolitan Creed (a.d. 381)
We believe in one God, the Father, almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible;	We believe in one God, the Father, almighty maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible;
And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God begotten from the Father, only-begotten, that is, from the substance of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, of one substance (ὁμοούσιος) with the Father, through whom all things came into being, things in heaven and things on earth, who because of us humans and because of our salvation came down and became incarnate, becoming human, suffered and rose on the third day, ascended to the heavens, will come to judge the living and the dead;	And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten from the Father before all ages, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, of one substance (ὁμοούσιος) with the Father, through whom all things came into existence, who because of us humans and because of our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became human and was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate and suffered and was buried and rose again on the third day according to the Scriptures and ascended to heaven and sits on the right hand of the Father and will come again with glory to judge the living and the dead, of whose kingdom there will be no end;
And in the Holy Spirit	And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and life giver, who proceeds from the Father, who with the Father and the Son is together worshipped and together glorified, who spoke through the prophets;
	In one holy catholic and apostolic church.
	We confess one baptism for the remission of sins; we look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.
But as for those who say, "There was when he was not" and "Before being born he was not" and that "He came into existence out of nothing" or who assert that the Son of God is of a different hypostasis or substance or is subject to alteration and change—these the catholic and apostolic church anathematizes. ¹	

¹ both creeds cited from J.N.D. Kelly *Early Christian Creeds* (New York: David McKay 1972).

The 4th C. Story Is Horrifying Yet Shapes Christian Beliefs to the Present

Joseph Lynch: "When modern readers are introduced to the theological debates of the fourth and fifth centuries, they are sometimes shocked by the atmosphere in which they took place. Those debates were not carried on by calm scholars sitting in their manuscript-lined studies. From one perspective, the story is one of misunderstandings, vicious personal attacks, distortions, violence, bribes, mutual excommunication, intervention by emperors, and the deposition and exile of bishops and others who lost in the struggle. From another perspective, the story is one of theological creativity that has shaped Christian beliefs for about fifteen centuries."²

A Few Words about Alexandria

- founded by Alexander the Great in 331 BC
 - remained capital of Egypt for a thousand years until the Muslims came in 641
- today
 - 4.1 million inhabitants
 - extends 20 miles along Mediterranean sea coast
 - largest city on the Mediterranean
 - Egypt's largest seaport
 - handles 80% of Egypt's imports and exports (picture)
- Ptolemy and Astronomy
- Septuagint (LXX)
- the Pharos light house (one of the 7 wonders of the ancient world)
- the great Library of Alexandria (the biggest in the world)
- what Athens wanted to be (center of learning and philosophy)
- Ammonius Saccas and Plotinus founded Neo-Platonism
- Christian school
 - Pantaeus -> Clement -> Origen -> Heraclas ->...-> Didymus the Blind
 - hotbed of theological speculation
 - bishops from Demetrius onward were powerful and more often than not hungry for more power both locally and internationally
- bread basket
 - phenomenal wealth as the port city of the Nile's delta
- multi-cultural, multi-religious, multi-ethnic
 - largest Jewish diaspora community
 - massive number of pagan worshipers
 - Greeks
 - Copts (native Egyptians)
 - Christians
 - given to riots and mob violence
 - very hard to be governor at times
- one of the four/five most important cities for Christianity
 - Rome, Jerusalem, Antioch...and eventual Constantinople

² Joseph H. Lynch, *Early Christianity: A Brief History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2010), 161.

Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria from 313-326

- background info
 - well educated
 - lived through horrible Diocletian persecution
- events during his leadership
 - dating of Easter
 - Meletius of Lycopolis and the Meletians (actually started during Peter's episcopate)
 - Arius, presbyter in Alexandria
 - leader against Arianism at the Council of Nicea
 - mentor of Athanasius
- character
 - Bart Ehrman: "As important as his doctrinal emphases is Alexander's method of painting his opponents (primarily Arius) as devious and deranged; they are divisive, mischievous, deceitful, "Jewish," insane, and embedded in a chain of heretical predecessors, all drawing their venom from the devil."³

Arius, Presbyter/Priest of Baucalis in Alexandria

- born around 256, died in 336, of Libyan descent , highly intelligent
- Epiphanius of Salamis says Arius was already old when the controversy broke out⁴
- Constantine taunted Arius for being worn and wasted in body and pale in complexion⁵
- ordained a deacon by Peter, bishop of Alexandria
- ordained priest/presbyter by Achillas, bishop of Alexandria
- studied under Lucian of Antioch
- respected senior presbyter of the church in the district of Baucalis in Alexandria
- according to Epiphanius Arius had on his side⁶
 - 700 consecrated virgins, 7 presbyters, 12 deacons at Baucalis
 - several bishops of other regions
 - according to Hanson (p. 6) Arius also claimed the following bishops as allies
 - Eusebius of Nicomedia, Eusebius of Caesarea, Theodotus of Laodicea, Paulinus of Tyre, Athanasius of Anazarbus, Gregory, Aetius of Lydda, and generally all the bishops of the east except Philogonius of Antioch, Hellanicus , and Macarius
 - they all believe ὅτι πρὸς τὸν θεὸν τοῦ υἱοῦ ἀνάρχως (that God exists before the Son without beginning)
- Ehrman: "We should not, therefore, imagine Arius as a renegade priest, willfully flouting orthodox theology to spread subversive ideas about the Trinity."⁷
- 9 Doctrinal Points (from Rudolf Lorentz in *Arius Iudaizans?*)
 - God was not always Father, he was once in a situation in which he was simply God and not Father
 - The Logos or Son is a creature. God made him ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων (out of non-existence)
 - There are two called Logos (λόγοι) and two called Wisdom (σοφίαι) and several called Powers (δυνάμεις) of God.

³ Bart D. Ehrman and Andrew S. Jacobs, *Christianity in Late Antiquity 300-450 C.E.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2004), 160.

⁴ *Panarion* 69.5.1-2

⁵ Opitz *Urk III* No. 34.73-74 (see by Hanson on p. 5)

⁶ *Panarion* 69.3.2

⁷ Ehrman, 158.

- The son is variable by nature, but remains stable by the gift of God. He was granted the grace of impeccability because of his foreseen merits.
- The Logos is alien from the divine being and distinct; he is not true God because he has come into existence.
- The Son's knowledge of God is imperfect.
- The Son's knowledge of himself is limited
- The Son was created for humanity, as an instrument to create us.
- A Trinity of dissimilar hypostases exists without ontological unity.⁸
- 2 More Doctrinal Points from Lynch⁹
 - The is the first and greatest of creatures
 - The son could be called "God" but denied he was God as the Father is
- 1 last point about ὁμοούσιος
 - Arius regarded those who say the Son is ὁμοούσιου (of the same substance) as the Father Manichaeans since Mani taught that bits of God were broken off and indwelt the world (even in certain foods).
- Arius was driven to protect God's transcendence, immutability, and indivisibility

The Initial Conflict: Alexander and Arius

1. Alexander publicly insisted that the Son and the Father were co-eternal
2. Arius protested this teaching, insisting the Son was subordinate and created
3. Alexander started the conflict by deposing Arius (318)
 - a. he called a council/synod of 100 Egyptian bishops
 - b. he excommunicated Arius and denied him and those who thought like him communion
4. Clearing Away a Couple Myths
 - a. the catholic church
 - i. myth: there was a universal monolithic "Church" with a strong centralized leadership
 - ii. reality: the "Church" was a network of virtually autonomous assemblies, more comparable to terrorist cells than modern denominations due to persecution
 - b. heretics are external
 - i. myth: Christendom was doctrinally pure and lived in harmony until demonically inspired outsiders came in introducing devilish doctrines to disrupt and destroy
 - ii. the "heretics" were almost always insiders who thought of themselves and their communities as orthodox
 - c. Trinitarian primacy
 - i. myth: the Trinity was taught from the first century and agreed upon by Christians world-wide
 - ii. reality: there were several beliefs about Jesus' relation to God that competed with each other for adherents for centuries until the Trinity (barely) won out¹⁰

⁸ cited in R. P. C. Hanson, *The Search for the Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy, 318-381* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic 2007), 20-23

⁹ Lynch, 164.

¹⁰ Hanson writes, "Another point to realise the period...is that it was not a history of the defence of an agreed and settled orthodoxy against the assaults of open heresy. On the subject which was primarily under discussion there was not as yet any orthodox doctrine. The accounts of what happened which have come down to us were mostly written by those who belonged to the school of thought which eventually prevailed and have been deeply coloured by the fact. The supporters of this view wanted their readers to think that orthodoxy on the subject

- d. Nicene creed settled the issue
 - i. myth: after the Nicene creed of 325 the heretics were defeated and the orthodox and historic doctrine of the Trinity carried the day
 - ii. reality: for a long time people who believed both views (that he was eternal or that he was created) met and did not consider this difference significant, the ruling at Nicea polarized Christianity and instigated nearly sixty years of intense doctrinal fighting until finally the emperor Theodosius outlawed non-Nicene Christianity
- 5. Arius' response
 - a. slogans
 - i. "There was a times when he was not"
 - ii. "He did not exist before he was begotten"
 - b. songs (*Thalia*, it. abundance, festivity)¹¹

**In accordance with the faith of the elect of God, God's sage servants
holy and orthodox, who had received God's holy Spirit,
I learned these things from participants in wisdom,
skillful, taught by God in every way and wise.**

In their steps came I, stepping with the same opinions,
the notorious, the one who suffered much for God's glory;
having learned from God I myself know wisdom and knowledge.

**God then himself is in essence ineffable to all.
He alone has neither equal nor like, none comparable in glory;
We call him Unbegotten because of the one in nature begotten;
We raise hymns to him as Unbegun because of him who has beginning.
We adore him as eternal because of the one born in time.**

**The Unbegun appointed the Son to be the beginning of things begotten,
and bore him as his own Son, in this case giving birth.
He has nothing proper to God in his essential property,
for neither is he equal nor yet consubstantial with him.**

Wise is God, since he himself is Wisdom's teacher.
There is proof enough that God is invisible to all,

under discussion had always existed and that the period was simply a story of the defence of that orthodoxy against heresy and error. But it ought to be obvious that this could not possibly have been the case. If the solution to the problem was clear from the start, why did the controversy last sixty years? Why did it involve several successive Roman Emperors and entail the holding of at least twenty councils? Why the polemical treatises, deposition of bishops of all opinions, riots, antagonism of parties, numerous creeds, division between Latin-speaking Westerners and Greek-speaking Easterners? The defence of well-established and well-known orthodoxy could not possibly account for such widespread and long-lasting disturbances. Both sides—indeed all sides, for there were more than two—appealed confidently to tradition to support them. ...Almost all Eastern theologians believed that the Son was in some sense subordinated to the Father before the Incarnation. ...With the exception of Athanasius virtually every theologian, East and West, accepted some form of subordinationism at least up to the year 355; subordinationism might indeed, until the dénouement of the controversy, have been described as accepted orthodoxy" (*The Search for the Doctrine of God*, xviii-xix).

¹¹ Athanasius scoffed at Arius' *Thalia* because it was written in Sotadean verse, which he calls a vulgar and improper metre fit only for the songs of sailors and mill-workers (*Orationes contra Arianos* 1.2; *De Synodis* 15).

and to those through the Son and to the Son himself the same is invisible.
I will say exactly how the Invisible is seen by the Son:
By the power by which God can see, and in proper measures,
the Son sustains the vision of the Father as is right.

**Or rather there is a Trinity with glories not alike;
Their existences are unmixable with each other;
One is more glorious than another by an infinity of glories.**

**The Father is essentially foreign to the Son because he exists unbegun.
Understand then that the Unity was, but the Duality was not, before he existed.
So straight away when there is no Son, the Father is God.**

**Thus the Son who was not, but existed at the paternal will,
is only-begotten God, and he is distinct from everything else.
Wisdom existed as wisdom by the will of a wise God.**

He is conceived by so many million concepts,
as spirit..., power, wisdom,
glory of God, truth and image and word.
Understand that he is conceived also as effulgence and light.
One equal to the Son the Supreme is able to beget,
but more excellent, superior or greater he cannot.
How old and how great the Son is by God's will—
since when, and from what point, even since then he existed from God.
For being a mighty God he hymns the Supreme in part.

To sum up, God exists ineffable to the Son,
for he is to himself what he is, that is, unutterable,
so that none of the things said...will the Son
know how to express comprehensively; for it is impossible for him
to explore the Father who exists by himself.
For the Son himself does not know his own essence;
for being Son he truly came to be at his Father's will.
What logic then permits the one who is from a Father
to know by comprehension the one who begot him?
For clearly for what has a beginning to encompass
by thought or apprehension the one who is unbegun is impossible.¹²

- Alexander of Alexandria's letter to Alexander of Constantinople

To my most honored brother and soul mate Alexander; I, Alexander, greet you in the Lord. (1) The ambitious and greedy plot of scoundrels has been hatched against those provinces that have always seemed more important, through various pretexts inflicted

¹² J. Stevenson, *A New Eusebius: Documents Illustrating the History of the Church to ad 337*, trans. Stuart Hall, ed. J. Stevenson, rev. ed. W. H.C. Frend. (London: SPCK 1987).

by certain people on ecclesiastical piety. Driven mad by the devil operating within them, galloping away from all reverence into whatever desire happens to grip them, they trample the fear of God's judgment. (2) I found it necessary in my suffering to clarify these matters to your reverence, so that you may guard against these people, lest some of them should dare even to set foot in your provinces, either on their own (for these swindlers are handy at perpetrating fraud) or through letters ingeniously forged, capable of hoodwinking someone who has offered himself in simple and undiluted faith.

(3) For Arius and Achillas recently joined together in a conspiracy...could no longer bear to remain under the control of the church. Instead they have established their own robbers den, in which they hold interminable meetings and where night and day they devise slanders against Christ and against us. (4) Speaking against every pious and apostolic opinion, they have cobbled together a Christ fighting gang in a Jewish fashion: they deny the divinity of our savior and proclaim that he is equal to all humans....Since they affirm the impious doctrine of the Greeks and the Jews concerning Christ, they pursue their praise in particularly, undertaking all those things for which we are mocked by them...What's more, Christ's undivided cloak, which the executioners did not even wish to divvy up, they have dared to rip apart. (6) When we came to understand, though long unaware, the character of their life and their unholy sophistry, we drove them out by unanimous votes of those churches venerating Christ's divinity.¹³

- Alexander goes on to accuse Arius and those who agreed with him of "hastening to draw some of them into the same disease through pretty speeches"... "a great slander has been committed by those fellow ministers who have dared not to yield to this apostolic rule, but instead inflame this devilish activity on their behalf against Christ." ...he calls them "wretches" who hold to a "deranged teaching" who "abuse the Scriptures" ...who "have a particularly cantankerous disposition" ...who are "idiotic and full of every kind of ignorance" ...they "gulp down the dregs of this impiety"
- Arius' letter to his bishop, Alexander of Alexandria

To our blessed pope and bishop Alexander the presbyters and deacons send greeting in the Lord.

Our faith that we received from our forefather and have also learned from you is this. We know there is one God, the only unbegotten, only eternal, only without beginning, only true, who only has immortality, only wise, only good, the only potentate, judge of all, governor, dispenser, unalterable and unchangeable, righteous and good, God of the Law and the Prophets and the New Covenant. Before everlasting ages he begot his unique Son, through whom he made the ages and all things. He begot him not in appearance, but in truth, constituting him by his own will, unalterable and unchangeable, a perfect creature of God, but not as one of the creatures—an offspring, but not as one of things begotten. Neither [was] the offspring of the Father a projection, as Valentinus taught, nor, as Mani introduced, was the offspring a consubstantial [ὁμοούσιος] part of the Father, nor [was he], as Sabellius said, dividing the Monad, a Son-Father, nor, as Hieracas [taught], a lamp [kindled] from a lamp, or a

¹³ *Kirchengeschichte Theodoretus*, ed. Léon Parmentier and Günter Christian Hansen. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1998. (Translated by Andrew S. Jacobs in *Christianity in Late Antiquity 300-450 c.e.* Oxford University Press, 2004, pp. 160-166.)

torch [divided] into two; nor did he first exist, later being begotten or re-created into a Son—as you also, blessed pope, in the midst of the Church and in council often refuted those who introduced these [ideas]. But as we said, by the will of God [he was] created before times and before ages and received life and being and glories from the Father, the Father so constituting him. Nor did the Father in giving him the inheritance of all things deprive himself of what he possesses unbegottenly in himself, for he is the fount of all things. **Thus there are three *hypostases*. God being the cause of all things is without beginning and most unique, while the Son, begotten timelessly by the Father and created before ages and established, was not before he was begotten—**but, begotten timelessly before all things, he alone was constituted by the Father. He is neither eternal nor coeternal nor co-unbegotten with the Father, nor does he have his being together with the Father, as some say “others with one,” introducing [the idea of] two unbegotten sources. But as Monad and cause of all, God is thus before all. Therefore he is also prior to the Son, as we learned from what you preached in the midst of the Church.

So therefore, as he has being and glories from God, and life and all things were given him, accordingly God is his source. For he precedes him as his God and as being before him. But if the [phrases] “of him” and “out of the womb” and “I came forth from the Father and am come” are understood by some as [meaning] a part of the consubstantial [ὁμοούσιος] himself and a projection, then according to them the Father is compound and divisible and alterable and a body, and according to them presumably, the bodiless God [is thought of as] suffering what belongs to a body.

We pray that you may fare well in the Lord, blessed pope. Arius, Achilleus, Carpones, Sarmatas, Arius, presbyters. Deacons, Euzoius, Lucius, Julius, Menas, Helladius, Gaius. Bishops, Secundus of Pentapolis, Theonas of Libya, Pistus.

Emperor's Involvement

- Lynch: “All theological parties sought the emperor’s support by whatever means they could find. ...they sought supporters among important people at the imperial court to whom they might give bribes; and they vigorously blackened their opponent’s reputations, sometimes charging them with the serious political crime of disloyalty to the emperor.”¹⁴
- Theological Party that won:
 - o favored with legal privileges, subsidies, bishoprics
 - o losers faced legal restrictions, financial problems, and exiled leaders

Councils up to Nicea

- 318 Alexander of Alexandria calls a council and deposes Arius and any who believes this
- Arius goes to meet Eusebius of Nicomedia (influential bishop in eastern wing)
- 319 Eusebius of N. calls a council to endorse Arianism
 - a. Eusebius of Nicomedia was a major Arian supporter
- 321-322 Eusebius of Caesarea calls council and endorses Arius
- 325 Hosius (one of Constantine’s “fixers”) council of Antioch (proto-trinitarian creed)
 - a. anathematize all who refuse to sign it

¹⁴ Lynch, 161.

- 325 council of Nicea (called by Constantine)
 1. Constantine put pressure to work out the seemingly inconsequential squabble over Jesus
 - a. wants Christianity to unite the empire but not if they can't agree on who Christ is
 - b. proposed the word ὁμοουσίος
 2. Eusebius presents his baptismal creed (Origenistic) as a template (was vague enough for both Arians and Alexander's view)
 3. this meeting did not unify the churches but polarized people into two camps
 - a. brought a militant spirit into the church
 4. Arius and two other Libyans sent into exile

Athanasius

- Deeds of the Flesh vs. Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5.19-23)
 - Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.
- Character
 - he was very courageous and twice resisted successfully direct orders from Constantine
 - he maintained a single minded focus on establishing Nicene theology
 - he had an attractive personality and was able to disarm the hostility of enemies
- Athanasius' Behavior¹⁵
 1. he would not allow Arians or Melitians to meet for worship in his area and did everything he could to prevent their gatherings even though in Arian territories the same intolerance was not shown to Nicenes
 2. he was very verbally abusive, using ferocious and vituperative language when writing about his opponents
 3. he frequently exaggerated and lied about facts, often distorting the belief of his opponents or recasting issues as doctrinal when they were not (e.g. he said Arians deprived the Father of Logos and wisdom and honored the locust more than the Savior)
 4. he viciously persecuted the Melitians, having them arrested, beaten, and sometimes forced to leave the area.
 5. he employed thugs hired to intimidate his enemies (accused of this in 334, 335, and 343)...according to Hanson, these "first efforts of gangsterism in his diocese had nothing to do with difference of opinion about the subject of the Arian Controversy."¹⁶ For example in 332 he was accused of having Macarius visit a presbyter called Ischyras and

¹⁵ For a thorough and remarkably even-handed discussion of Athanasius, including references to primary sources, see R. P. C. Hanson's *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*, pages 239-273.

¹⁶ Hanson, 254. Hanson goes on to say, "We can now see why, for at least 20 years after 335, no Eastern bishops would communicate with Athanasius. He had been justly convicted of disgraceful behavior in his see. His conviction had nothing to do with doctrinal issues. No church could be expected to tolerate behaviour like this on the part of one of its bishops. ...The charge against him at Tyre was the unscrupulous use of strong-arm methods against his opponents, and that charge as a general accusation, whatever may have been said about individual incidents, was abundantly justified. We can see by virtue of historical hindsight that Athanasius in following this policy set an evil example to his successors of the use of force and intrigue. They learnt all too readily from him, Peter, Timothy, Theophilus, Cyril, Dioscorus, until the last draws on himself final catastrophe." (p. 255).

assault him and break his chalice. Rather than denying he ever did this, Athanasius argues instead that Ischyras' ordination was not valid.

6. multiple times he refused to attend councils that he was summoned to
- Fruit of Athanasius
 - hatred, constant controversy, violence, impatience, unkindness, badness, unfaithfulness, brutality, and a lack self-control
 - Richard Rubenstein noted Athanasius was exiled from Alexandria 5 times and pursued by imperial troops to be arrested several times and¹⁷
 - called Arians "Ariomaniacs"¹⁸
 - 328 rules in favor of Arius (council of Nicomedia)
 - 335 council of Tyre (favor of Arius), Alexander has died and Athanasius rises to the fore
 - a. Athanasius put on trial
 - i. found guilty of beating, kidnapping, torture, and burning down churches
 - ii. presents himself to Constantine and begs for clemency but the evidence is too strong against him and he was banished to Trier in Gaul where hardly anyone even spoke Greek
 - b. upon Constantine's death Athanasius comes back (a.d. 337)
 - i. custom in Rome when emperor dies exiled people can return
 - c. Athanasius goes on the run
 - i. in the desert he builds support among the monks (especially Anthony)
 - d. Arius' followers were also guilty of unlawful deeds
 - i. two famous instances (prostitute and false murder charge)

Council-Mania

- 336 council at Constantinople (Arian creed upheld)
- 337 Arian creed upheld
 - a. 6 for Arius
 - b. 3 against Arius
 - c. history could have gone a completely different way and Trinitarians would have been the heretics
 - d. many church history books do not even mention the pro-Arian councils
- 337 council in Antioch
 - a. Athanasius has returned from exile
 - b. They want the new emperor (Constantine II) to exile him as well
 - c. list of atrocities against Athanasius
 - i. instigation of several murders
 - ii. misappropriation and embezzlement of church funds
 - d. found in favor of Arius
- 338 Athanasius calls a council to find in favor of the Trinity
- 338 eastern church hold a council in Antioch w/ verdict against Athanasius
- 339 (March 16) imperial troops set out to arrest Athanasius
 - a. rioting in the streets...days and days of rioting
 - b. Athanasius flees and goes to Constans to get support
- 340 Constantine II killed by his brother and Constantius takes over

¹⁷ Richard Rubenstein, *When Jesus Became God* (Orlando: Harcourt Books 2000), 6.

¹⁸ Ehrmann, 157.

- a. Constans is Athanasian
 - b. Constantius is Arian
- 342 council (Bishop Julius) condemns the Athanasians at Trier
- 343 at Serdica: hung council
- 343 at Serdica: hung council
- 351 at Sernium: hung council
- 353 Constantius became the sole emperor
- 353 Arles in favor of Arius
- 353 Besius in favor of Arius
- 355 Milan council
- 357 at Sernium: an explicitly Arian creed is set forth as the definition of orthodoxy (presented to both East and West)
- 358 at Sernium in favor of Arius
- 359 at Sernium in favor of Arius
- 359 at Ruminy Seleucia in favor of Arius
- 360 council of Constantinople in favor of Arius
- 379 Theodosius I comes to power
 - a. militant against Arianism
 - b. first one to give a law to persecute people who disagree with his theology
 - c. before the legislation would only permit deposition or at worst banishment

Controversy Penetrated All Levels of Society

“For the whole city [Constantinople] has been filled with such as these, the alleys, the marketplaces, the streets, the apartments: the sellers of garments, those who have set up tables (money changers), those who are selling cooked food. If you may ask for change, one philosophizes to you concerning a begotten and unbegotten; and if you might inquire concerning the cost of bread, one answers, “The Father is greater and the Son is in subjection.” And if you might ask, “Is the bath prepared?”, one (says), “The Son is not separated from nothing.”¹⁹

Council of Constantinople (381)

- 381 council of Constantinople in favor of Athanasius
 - a. Theodosius I presides over council and legalizes the Trinity
 - b. Laws made by Theodosius I (preserved in the Theodosian code of Theodosius II)

(1) Emperors Gratian, Valentinian, and Theodosius, Augustuses: An Edict to the People of the City of Constantinople.

It is our will that all the peoples who are ruled by the administration of our clemency shall practice that religion...we shall believe in the single deity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, under the concept of equal majesty and of the Holy Trinity.

¹⁹ Gregory of Nyssa, *Oratio De deitate Filii et Spiritus sancti*, in J. P. Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*, vol. 46, col. 557, sec. B. Available online at books.google.co.nz/books?id=06zDWrR9mY8C&pg=PA174 (translation my own).

We command that those persons who follow this rule shall embrace the name of Catholic Christians. The rest, however, whom we adjudge demented and insane, shall sustain the infamy of heretical dogmas, their meeting places shall not receive the name of churches, and they shall be smitten first by divine vengeance and second by the retribution of our own initiative, which we shall assume in accordance with the divine judgment (380)

...

(5) Emperors Theodosius and Valentinian Augustuses to Florentius, Praetorian Prefect.

The madness of the heretics must be so suppressed that they shall know beyond doubt, before all else, that the churches that they have taken from the orthodox, wherever they are held, shall immediately be surrendered to the Catholic church, since it cannot be tolerated that those who ought not to have churches of their own should continue to detain those possessed or founded by the orthodox and invaded by such rash lawlessness.

...Furthermore, since not all should be punished with the same severity, the Arians, indeed, the Macedonians, and the Apollinarians, whose crime it is to be deceived by harmful meditation and to believe lies about the Fountain of Truth, shall not be permitted to have a church within any municipality.²⁰

- c. Arians continued outside the empire in the “barbarian” kingdoms (the Vandals, Visigoths, and Ostrogoths)²¹
- d. to date, Arius’ writings do not survive
- 381 council of Aquileia in favor of Athanasius

Tallying Up the Stats

- a. 15 councils in favor of an Arian creed, 7 in favor of Athanasian creed, 3 ended in stalemate
- b. more than twice as many favored Arianism than against it
- c. church went through a huge identity crisis

²⁰ *Theodosian Code and the Sirmondian Constitutions*, ed. Clyde Pharr et. al. 1952, in Ehrman, p. 70-2

²¹ to see where the Vandals, Visigoths, and Ostrogoths lived and where they ended up once they migrated to Roman territory go to http://www2.div.ed.ac.uk/courses/Animated_Maps/Divinity6web/movements.html