

**THE DOCTRINE OF GOD**  
**Part II: The Theologians**

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**I. INTRODUCTION.**

The era of the most fertile development in the Trinitarian discussion is now before us, the fourth century. Whereas individual scholars in the West such as Tertullian and Novatian attempted to grapple with this difficult subject, as did Clement of Alexandria and Origen in the East, shades of subordinationism remained in their theology proper. Orthodox teachers made it evident that either form of Monarchianism was error, but they were not able to end the discussion. The church seemed repeatedly plagued by one or another of the monarchian heresies; When it emerged in Alexandria in a clash between Arius and Alexander, the bishop, (later Athanasius), the catalyst was set for an empire-wide discussion and solution to the issue.

That discussion and solution, with its manifest difficulties, is now before us. The church in the fourth century spoke its universal mind on Trinitarianism. It is instructive to realize that Constantine's tolerance, and later dominance, of the church brought about new avenues in resolving ecclesiastical problems (i.e., ecumenical councils).

**II. THE SETTING FOR THE COUNCIL OF NICEA.**

In order to grasp the significance, the implications of the Council of Nicea, it is best to gain an understanding of the men and opinions that precipitated it.

### A. The Opinions of Arius.

1. Lucan and the Lucanists. Harnack wrote (*The History of Dogma*. IV, 3), "This school is the nursery of the Arian doctrine, and Lucan, its head, is the Arius before Arius." In brief, after the excommunication of Paul of Samosota at the Synod of Antioch in A.D. 268, his disciple (Lucan) founded an exegetical-theological school where he taught Paul's Adoptionism. Lucan's martyrdom in 311/12 brought further prestige to the school and his opinions so that his students received a wide variety of ecclesiastical posts, including Arius who received appointment in Alexandria as a presbyter.

**N.B.** Antiochene Theology with its heavy emphasis on Adoptionism would inevitably clash with Alexandrian Christology (Clement of Alexandria and Origen) with its Modalistic tendencies.

2. Arius, the pupil of Lucan, likely a Lybian by birth, became a deacon in Alexandria, afterwards a presbyter in the church of Baubalis.

**N.B.** Theologically Arius is not strictly a Samosotian (a Lucanists), but insisted he was subordinationist; he was not as extreme as the Lucanists.

Arius' position on Christology is essentially derived from his stress on absolute monotheism; therefore, in his mind Jesus was not a manifestation of the essence of the Father. The Son had a beginning; although he made all things and was before all things, he was a created being. The following is quoted by Athanasius from Arius' writings: "God himself then, in His own nature, is ineffable by all men. Equal or like Himself He alone has none, or one in glory. And Ingenerate we call Him, because of Him who is generate by nature. We praise Him as without beginning because of Him who has a beginning. And adore Him as everlasting, because of Him who in time has come to be. The Unbegun made the Son a beginning of things originated; and advanced His as a Son to Himself by adoption. He has nothing proper to God in proper subsistence. For He is not equal, no, nor one in essence with Him. Wise is God, for His is the teacher of Wisdom: There is full proof that God is invisible to all beings; both to things which are through the Son, and to the Son He is invisible. I will say it expressly, how by the Son is seen the Invisible; by that power by which God sees, and in His own measure, the Son endures to see the Father, as is lawful. Thus there is a Triad, not in equal glories." Arius' work *Thalia* is quoted by Athanasius (*Orations Against the Arians*. I, 2): "God was not always Father; but there was when God was alone and was not yet Father; afterward He became a Father. The Son was not always; for since all things have come into existence from nothing, and all things are creatures

and have been made, so also the Logos of God Himself came into existence from nothing and there was a time when He was not; and that before He came into existence He was not; but He also had a beginning of His being created. For God, he says, was alone and not yet was there the Logos and Wisdom. Afterward He willed to create us, then He made a certain one and named Him Logos and Wisdom and Son, in order that by Him He might create us. He says, therefore, that there are two wisdoms, one proper to, and existing together with, God; but the Son came into existence by that wisdom, and was made a partaker of it and was only named Wisdom and Logos. For Wisdom existed by wisdom and the will of God's wisdom. So, he says, that there is another Logos besides the Son in God, and the Son partaking of that Logos is again named Logos and Son by grace. . .”

**N.B.** Arius' view is simply the logical of his subordinationism. The Son is a creature.

## **B. The Clash with Athanasius.**

1. **Alexander, bishop of Alexandria**, attempted to bring peace to his city following his appointment in A.D. 318, but immediately clashed with his young presbyter. Arius supposed that Alexander was advocating Sabellianism (i.e., Modalism). This charge arose over Alexander's insistence on the unity of the Trinity.

Alexander resolved to excommunicate his very popular poetic-theologian at a synod in 320/21. Arius was expelled from Alexandria, but sought refuge for his views with Eusebius of Nicomedia—a Lucanist and influential bishop in the court of the empress. The issue of Christology rapidly polarized the churches in the empire.

- N.B.** In 323 Constantine gained a stunning victory over Licinius and thereby became the sole ruler of the Roman Empire. His empire was, however, sorely divided from bishops to laity over the issue raised by Arius; Constantine attempted to bring unity to his newly-won war empire.
- a) Constantine sent letters to both Arius and Alexander to urge a reconciliation.
  - b) **Hosius of Cordova** was sent with the letters to Alexandria (where he came to favor Alexander's views) and Nicomedia (where he met Eusebius); these men were the early protagonists in the debate.
  - c) On Hosius' advice Constantine considered a council to bring peace

to his empire. Hosius arranged the council prejudicing its outcome in favor of Alexandria.

**N.B.** Constantine was more concerned with the unity of the empire than the unity of God!!

## 2. Athanasius

- a) His Life (ca. A.D. 296–373). Athanasius was born in the remote desert village of Nitinia and trained under the personal tutelage of Alexander. Eventually he rose to become Alexander’s secretary and wrote two classic volumes relative to theology proper: *The Incarnation* and *Against the Heathen*. After Alexander’s death in 328, Athanasius was elevated to the bishop’s office.
- b) His Theology. In brief Gonzalez wrote (*A History of Christian Thought*, I, 299), “Athanasius was without any doubt the most remarkable bishop that ever occupied the ancient see of Alexandria, and that he was as well the greatest theologian of his time.” While Athanasius represents a basically right-wing Origenism, his approach differs in method from Origen. Instead of viewing the problem academically or philosophically, he saw it from a practical point of view (implications that are the heart of Christianity—monotheism and soteriology).

**N.B.** In *Against the Heathen* Athanasius argued for a strict monotheism positing that Arius’ view leads to polytheism. And in *The Incarnation* he argued that only God Himself can save mankind (if salvation is really a new creation, only the Creator can bring it to us). He wrote (*Incarnation*, 7): “But yet, though this is necessarily so, there lies against it on the other side the consistency of God’s character; so that God may appear true in His legislation concerning the death. For it would be monstrous that God, the Father of truth, should appear a liar for our benefit and preservation. What then must God needs do in this case? Demand repentance from men for their transgression? For this, some one might say, was worthy of God; arguing that, just as from the transgression they came subject to corruption, so from the repentance they might again return to incorruption...But repentance would not guard the consistency of God’s character; for He would still remain untrue, if death did not hold the mastery over men. Nor does repentance recall men from what is according to their nature, but only makes them cease from their sins. If, indeed, it had only been a trespass, and not a consequent corruption, repentance would be well enough. But when once transgression gained a start, men came under the power of the

corruption which was their nature, and were bereft of the grace which was theirs in virtue of their being made after God's Image. What else were necessary to be done, or what was needed for such grace and recall, but the Word of God, who also in the beginning had made everything out of nothing?...For it was His part both to bring again the corruptible to incorruption, and to maintain for the Father His consistency of character with all. For being Word of the Father and above all, He therefore naturally was alone both able to re-create everything, and worthy to suffer on behalf of all, and to be ambassador for all with the Father."

Again, he wrote (*Incarnation*, 54): "As then, if any one wished to see God, who is invisible by nature and by no means seen, he may come to know and apprehend Him from His works; so let him who does not see Christ with his understanding, yet from His bodily works apprehend Him, and test them whether they be man's or God's. And if they are human, let him deride, while if they are not human, but Divine, let him recognize it, and not laugh at matters which are not open to derision. Rather let him marvel that by so simple a method Divine things have been manifested to us, and that through death immortality has passed to all, and that by the Incarnation of the Word His universal providence has become known, and its Administrator and Artificer, the Word of God Himself...For He became Man that we might be made God: and He manifested Himself through the body that we might take cognizance of the invisible Father: and He underwent insult at the hands of men that we might inherit immortality. For He Himself was nothing injured, being impassible and incorruptible and very Word of God; but He was taking care of and preserving in His own impassibility the men who were suffering, at whose hands also He underwent these things. And to sum up, the successes of the Savior, brought about by His Incarnation, are of such kind and magnitude that, if one wished to go through them all, it would be like those who gaze at the expanse of the sea and try to count its waves. For as it is impossible to take in all the waves with the eye, their multitudinous approach transcending the perception of him who attempts it, so also is it impossible for him who wishes to take in all the successes of Christ in the body, to grasp the whole even by counting them, those which transcend his apprehension being more than those he thinks he has taken in. Better were it, therefore, not to attempt to speak of the whole, when one cannot give worthy expression even to a part; but to mention yet one, and to leave thee to marvel at the whole. For all are equally wonderful, and wherever one turns one's eyes, there one sees the Divine working of the Word, and is beyond measure astonished."

Athanasius did not develop distinctive terminology for his discussion largely due to the practical orientation with which he came to the

problem—this would be done by the great Cappadocians. It is enlightening to understand that Athanasius did not see Christology as clearly as Theology Proper because, like Arius and Alexandrian Theology in the fourth century, he may have tended toward Apollinarianism (i.e., the view that Christ was not fully man)—perhaps due to the struggles with Theology Proper which may have blinded him further insight. He also affirmed that Mary was the Mother of God for the same reasons.

### III. THE FINDINGS OF THE COUNCIL OF NICEA.

Constantine, fearing the dissolution of his newly won empire, called the first ecumenical (world-wide, universal) council at Nicea in Bythina (A.D. 325) through the advice of Bishop Hosius of Cordova (an Athanasian).

#### A. The Nature of the Council.

Under Constantine's impetus some three hundred bishops and numerable clergymen gathered to discuss the conflict. Three parties appeared:

1. A minority of Lucanists led by Eusebius of Nicomedia, not Arius as he was not a bishop, were confident of a quick victory. Eusebius accordingly read the views of his party in their most clear and extreme form; this was the death knell of the party.
2. A minority of Alexandrians were led by their bishop who had in his ranks some mild Sabellians equally upset with the Lucanists.
3. The majority did not understand the issue at hand and longed for peace (Eusebius of Caesarea).

The council concluded by drafting a creed that was meant to crush the Arian party. It reads (quoted in Ayer, *A Source Book for Ancient Church History*, 306): "We believe in one God, Father Almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of His Father, only begotten, that is of the *ousia* of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God; begotten, not made, of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made, both things in heaven and things in earth, who for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven and was made [became] flesh and was made [became] man, suffered and rose again on the third day, ascended into the heavens and comes to judge living and dead.

But those who say there was when He was not, and before being begotten He was not, and He was made out of things that were not or those who say

that the Son of God was from a different substance [*hypostasis*] or being [*ousis*] or a creature, or capable of change or alternation, these the Catholic Church anathematizes.

## B. The Aftermath of the Council.

As ironic as it may seem, the Council of Nicea did not end the controversy because the term “*homoousia*” (i.e., the same substance [a term that was used to define the essential relationship between the Father and Son]) was not precisely defined. In the West (Hosius of Cordova had suggested the term to Constantine) the term was used from the tradition of Tertullian to mean a unity of substance. Eastern bishops, or the majority of them (non-Alexandrians) saw it, not as an affirmation of the absolute and substantial unity of God, but rather only as an affirmation of the divinity of the Son (most feared Sabellianism more than Arianism). Gonzalez wrote (*A History of Christian Thought*, I, 277-78): “In summary, one may affirm that there was a great ambiguity in the intent of the Nicene formula. The creed, whose main purpose was to affirm the divinity of the Son, could also be interpreted as an affirmation of the divine unity. This, coupled with the fact that the formula of Nicea remained silent regarding the distinction between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, soon made it suspect as a concession to Sabellianism (i.e., Modalism). This is why, in spite of the condemnation of Arianism at Nicea, he was not expelled from the church; for more than fifty years the controversy raged within the church before the issue was resolved.”

1. Because “the majority of those who voted for the homousian creed had but a meager conception of its real meaning (Heick, *A History of Christian Thought*, I, 159) “the Arians were able in Eusebius of Nicomedia to convince Constantine that the anti-Arians were the troublemakers and some bishops that the Nicene formula was a concession to Sabellianism.”

**N.B.** The Arians did not attack the Nicene Formula, but set out to discredit its advocates (Eustathius of Antioch was charged with adultery and heresy [Sabellianism]; Athanasius with murder; and Marcellus and Ancyra with Monarchianism).

On Constantine’s deathbed, he was baptized by Eusebius of Nicomedia, then bishop of Constantinople—Arianism was victorious (A.D. 336)! Constantius, his son, became a defender of Arianism in the east.

2. As the Arians gained a triumphant stature in the empire they increasingly became more bold in their claims. This caused the party to fracture within itself.
  - a) The *Heteroousians* (extreme Arians) argued that the Son was

unlike the father in every respect (*Anomeans*).

- b) The *Homoiousians* argued that he had similarity of substance, but avoided all attempts at specifics.
- c) The *Homoousians* shared the misgivings of many that the Nicene formula opened the door to Sabellianism, but were not Arian. This party argued that the Father and the Son were of the same essence.

**N.B.** As the Arian party veered into extremism, the homoiousians drifted toward the homoousians. The two parties were finally merged in A.D. 362.

**N.N.B.B.** In other words in the debate the West had fixed terminology, the East did not. In the West *ousia* (substance) and *hypostasis* (person) were distinct; in the east they were held to be synonymous. In the East a single “*ousia*” implied Modalism (one person). When Homoiousians spoke of two “*ousiai*,” the Nicenes thought it was a new form of Arianism. This was finally clarified and the parties merged! Selah!!

#### IV. THE VICTORY OF THE ATHANASIAN-CAPPADOCIAN PARTY.

By the **Alexandrine Synod of A.D. 362** the confusion of terminology had been surfaced and a recognition prevailed that the *homoiousian* and *homoousian* positions were not opposites, but neither party had not offered a positive solution to the issue of terminology. That distinction of terms became the labor of the so-called “Three Great Cappadocians.”

**N.B.** Again, in the East the bishops came to distinguish between the term *hypostatis* (individual subsistence of a thing) and that of *ousia* (essence). That is, they recognized three individual subsistences that participate in one divine essence. They agreed with the West and the intent of the Nicene Creed.

##### A. The Labor of the Cappadocians.

**N.B.** A word is in order concerning the importance of **Hilary of Poitiers** (d. 368) and his writing *De Trinitate*. In the midst of an imprisonment (ca. 356), this strong advocate of Athanasianism demonstrated that the *homoousians* and *homoiousians* agreed theologically; this insight was tremendously influential in merging the two parties thus bringing the final victory for the Western interpretation of the Nicene Creed. He wrote (quoted in Ayer, *A Source Book*, 319-20): “Holy brethren, I understand by



*homoousios* God of God, not of an unlike essence, not divided, but born; and that the Son has a birth that is unique, of the substance of the unknown God, that He is begotten yet co-eternal and wholly like the Father. The word *homoousios* greatly helped me already believing this. Why do you condemn my faith in the *homoousios*, which you cannot disapprove by the confession of the *homoiousios*? For you condemn my faith, or rather your own, when you condemn its verbal equivalent. Does somebody else misunderstand it? Let us together condemn the misunderstanding, but not take away the security of your faith. Do you think that one must subscribe to the Samosetene Council, so that no one may make use of *homoousios* in the sense of Paul of Samosota? Then let us subscribe to the Council of Nicea, so that the Arians may not impugn the word *homoousios*. Have we to fear that *homoiousios* does not imply the same belief as *homoousios*? Let us decree that there is no difference between being of one and being of a similar substance. But may not the word *homoousios* be understood in a wrong sense? Let it be proved that it can be understood in a good sense. We hold one and the same sacred truth. I beseech you that the one and the same truth which we hold, we should regard as sacred among us. Forgive me, brethren, as I have so often asked you to do. You are not Arians; why, then, by denying the *homoousios*, should you be thought to be Arians?...I do not know the word *homoousios* or understand it unless it confesses a similarity of essence. I call God of heaven and earth to witness, that when I heard neither word, my belief was always such that I should have interpreted *homoiousios* by *homoousios*. This is, I believed that nothing could be similar according to nature unless it was of the same nature.”

1. **Basil of Caesarea (d. 379)** in a sense did not improve on the analysis of Athanasias because his discussion turns from theological arguments (soteriology) to philosophical arguments. Basil advanced the Trinitarian discussion in the East by declaring that “*ousia*” and “*hypostasis*” were two distinct terms; he clarified this crucial point in the East-West dialogue. He wrote (*Epistle*. 236.6): “The distinction between *ousia* and *hypostasis* is the same as that between the general and the particular; as, for instance, between the animal and the particular man. Wherefore, in the case of the Godhead, we confess one essence or substance so as not to give a variant definition of existence, but we confess a particular hypostasis, in order that our conception of Father, Son and Holy Spirit may be without confusion and clear. If we have no distinct perception of the separate characteristics, namely, fatherhood, sonship, and sanctification, but from our conception of God from the general idea of existence, we cannot possibly give a sound account of our faith. We must, therefore, confess that faith by adding the particular to the common. The Godhead is common; the fatherhood particular. We must therefore combine the two and say, ‘I believe in God the Father.’ The like course must be pursued in the confession of the Son; we must combine the particular with the common

and say ‘I believe in God the Son,’ so in the case of the Holy Ghost we must make our utterance conform to the appellation and say ‘in God the holy Ghost.’ Hence it results that there is a satisfactory preservation of the unity by the confession of the one Godhead, while in the distinction of the individual properties regarded in each there is the confession of the peculiar properties of the Persons. On the other hand those who identify essence or substance and hypostasis are compelled to confess only three Persons, and, in their hesitation to speak of three hypostases, are convinced of failure to avoid the error of Sabellius.”

2. **Gregory of Nazianzus (d. 389)** advanced the clarification of Trinitarianism by defining the relationship between the persons of the singular essence; he argued that the terms “Father, Son and Spirit” denote relationships not essence. According to Gregory, the only distinction that can be established between the three persons of the Trinity are those which refer to the personalities of each of them (no distinctions in substance). He wrote (*Oration on Holy Lights*. X, XI): “And when I speak of God you must be illuminated at once by one flash of light and by three. Three in Individualities or Hypostases, if any prefer so to call them, or persons, for we will not quarrel about names so long as the syllables amount to the same meaning; but One in respect of the Substance—that is, the Godhead. For they are divided without division, if I may so say; and they are united in division. For the Godhead is one in three, and the three are one, in whom the Godhead is, or to speak more accurately, Who are the Godhead. Excesses and defects we will omit, neither making the Unity a confusion, not the division a separation. We would keep equally far from the confusion of Sabellius and from the division of Arius, which are evils diametrically opposed, yet equal in their wickedness. For what need is there heretically to fuse God together, or to cut Him up into inequality?”

“For to us there is but One God, the Father, of Whom are all things, and One Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things; and One Holy Ghost, in Whom are all things; yet these words, of, by, in, whom, do not denote a difference of nature (for if this were the case, the three prepositions, or the order of the three names would never be altered), but they characterize the personalities of a nature which is one and unconfused. And this is proved by the fact that They are again collected into one, if you will read—not carelessly—this other passage of the same Apostle, ‘Of Him and through Him and to Him are all things; to Him be glory forever, Amen.’ The Father is Father, and is Unoriginate, for He is of no one; the Son is Son, and is not unoriginate, for He is of the Father. But if you take the word Origin in a temporal sense, He too is Unoriginate, for He is the Maker of Time, and is not subject to Time. The Holy Ghost is truly Spirit, coming forth from the Father indeed, but not after the manner of the Son, for it is not by Generation but by Procession (since I must coin a word for the sake

of clearness); for neither did the Father cease to be Unbegotten because of His begetting something, nor the Son to be begotten because He is of the Unbegotten (how could that be?), nor is the Spirit changed into Father or Son because He proceeds, or because He is God—though the ungodly do not believe it. For Personality is unchangeable, and could be removed from one to another? But they who make ‘Unbegotten’ and ‘Begotten’ natures of equivocal gods would perhaps make Adam and Seth differ in nature, since the former was not born of flesh (for he was created), but the latter was born of Adam and Eve. There is then One God in Three, and These Three are One, as we have said.”

Again, he wrote (*Third Oration*, 2): “The three most ancient opinions concerning God are Anarchia, Polyarchia, and Monarchia. The first two are the sport of the children of Hellas, and may they continue to be so. For Anarchy is a thing without order; and the Rule of Many is factious, and thus anarchical, and thus disorderly. For both these tend to the same thing, namely disorder; and this to dissolution, for disorder is the first step to dissolution. But Monarchy is that which we hold in honour. It is, however, a Monarchy that is not limited to one person, for it is possible for Unity if at variance with itself to come into a condition of plurality; but one which is made of an equality of Nature and a Union of mind, and an identity of motion, and a convergence of its elements to unity—a thing which is impossible to the created nature—so that though numerically distinct there is no severance of Essence. Therefore Unity having from all eternity arrived by motion at Duality, found its rest in Trinity. This is what we mean by Father and Son and Holy Ghost. The Father is the Begetter and the Emitter; without passion, of course, and without reference to time, and not in a corporeal manner. The Son is the Begotten, and the Holy Ghost the Emission; for I know not how this could be expressed in terms altogether excluding visible things. For we shall not venture to speak of “an overflow of goodness,” as one of the Greek Philosophers dared to say, as if it were a bowl over-flowing, and this in plain words in his Discourse on the First and Second Causes. Let us not ever look on this Generation as involuntary, like some natural overflow, hard to be retained, and by no means befitting our conception of Deity. Therefore let us confine ourselves within our limits, and speak of the unbegotten and the Begotten and That which proceeds from the Father, as somewhere God the Word Himself saith.”

3. **Gregory of Nyssa (d. 394)** was taught by Basil of Caesarea, his brother. His major gift to the trinitarian debate was that he was able to defend it from a biblical-philosophical viewpoint (*On the Holy Trinity*, *On Not Three Gods*).

**B. The Council of Constantinople (381).**

The rise of Theodosius, the most powerful emperor of the second half of the fourth century, marks the final condemnation of Arianism. A gathering of one hundred and fifty Eastern church men met at Constantinople in 381 (**N.B.** it is not an ecumenical council). Little is known of the council and indeed a debate is waged in some quarters that the Creed was not formulated by the council.

**N.B.** Harnack argued (*A History of Dogma*. III, 98) that the creed was formulated in the Jerusalem Church as a Baptismal Formula in A.D. 362 and “perhaps” brought forward in 381. However, at Chalcedon (A.D. 451), the creed was accepted as originating at Constantinople.

The creed states (Leith, *Creeds of the Churches*, 33): “We believe in one God, the Father All Governing [*pantokratora*], creator [*poietaen*] of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible; And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God begotten from the Father before all time [*pro panton ton aionon*], Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten not created [*poiethenta*], of the same essence [reality] as the Father [*homoousion to patri*], through Whom all things came into being, Who for us men and because of our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became human [*enanthropesanta*]. He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried, and rose 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. His Kingdom shall have no end [*telos*].”

**N.B.** Harnack argues that the Creed of 381 is not Nicene, but a betrayal of it (*A History of Dogma*. IV, 98-99). This is refuted by Gonzalez on two points (*A History of Christian Thought*. I, 332-33). *First*, Harnack fails to understand that the stress of the Nicene Creed is not on unity of substance, but on the deity of the Son. *Second*, Harnack misinterprets the Cappadocians.

**Postscript:** A word is in order about the importance of Augustine in the West concerning Trinitarianism. He built his understanding upon the Cappadocians (i.e., he distinguished the persons in the one essence by relationships, not actions). He wrote (*On the Trinity*, 4.21.30): “But I would boldly say, that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, of one and the same substance, God the Creator, the Omnipotent Trinity, work indivisibly; but that this cannot be indivisibly manifested by the creature, which is far inferior, and least of all by the bodily creature; just as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit cannot be named by our words, which certainly are bodily sounds, except in their own proper intervals of time, divided by a distinct separation, which intervals the proper syllables of each word occupy. Since in their proper substance wherein they are, the three are one, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the very same, by no temporal motion, above the whole creature, without any interval of time and place, and at once one and the same from eternity to eternity, as it were eternity itself, which is not without truth and charity.

But, in my words, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are separated, and cannot be named at once, and occupy their own proper places separately in visible letters. And as, when I name my memory, and intellect, and will, each name refers to each severally, but yet each is uttered by all three; for there is no one of these names that is not uttered by both my memory and my intellect and my will together [by the soul as a whole]; so the Trinity together wrought both the voice of the Father, and the flesh of the Son, and the dove of the Holy Spirit, while each of these things is referred severally to each person. And by this similitude it is in some degree discernible, that the Trinity, which is inseparable in itself, is manifested separably by the appearance of the visible creature; and that the operation of the Trinity is also inseparable in each severally of those things which are said to pertain properly to the manifesting of either the Father, or the Son, or the Holy Spirit.”

Augustine did differ from the Cappadocians in his point of departure. The later stressed the diversity of persons and moved to a singular essence; Augustine began in reverse.

## V. CONCLUSION.

The purpose of this lesson has been to trace the struggles of the church in the development of its understanding of the Trinity. The issue emerged when Arius, a subordinationist, argued that Christ was so distant from his Father that he was a creature. The Emperor-directed Council of Nicea favored Athanasius’ view of the deity of Christ, but ecclesiastical opinion rapidly changed as the East and West were not agreed on terminology (i.e., in the East essence and persons were held to be distinct terms though they perceived the West to coordinate the two. The East charged the West with Modalism.). It was the three great Cappadocians in the East who clarified the misconceptions, brought about the merger of “*homoousians*” and “*homoiousians*,” and the final defeat of Arianism in the East in 381. Augustine’s writing in the West (ca. 419) brought unanimity of opinion to the entire church.

## Lesson #6

## Additional Note

**“Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–91) and Mass in C Minor”**

Next to the “Requiem,” *Mozart’s “C Minor Mass”* is his finest religious work, and, like the “Requiem,” it was never finished. Mozart was not officially connected to the Lutheran Church when he began writing it in Vienna in the summer of 1782. The Mass, approximately one hour in length, is of interest relative to Trinitarianism.

Lord, have mercy on us.  
 Christ, have mercy on us.  
 Lord, have mercy on us.

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth  
 peace to men of good will.  
 We praise thee, we bless thee,  
 we worship thee, we glorify thee.  
 We give thanks to thee for thy great glory:  
 to the Lord God, King of heaven,  
 God the Father almighty;  
 to our Lord, his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ  
 Lord, God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father.  
 Thou who takest away the world's sins,  
 have mercy;  
 thou who takest away the world's sins,  
 receive our prayers;  
 thou who sittest at the Father's right hand,  
 have mercy.  
 For thou alone are Holy; thou alone art the Lord;  
 thou alone art Most high:

Jesus Christ:  
 Beside the Holy Spirit  
 in the glory of God the Father  
 Amen!

I believe in one God, Father almighty,  
 maker of heaven and earth,  
 of all things visible and invisible;

and in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
only-begotten Son of God,  
born of the Father before all time,  
God from God, light from light,  
true God from true God,  
born and not created,  
one substance with the Father  
by whom all things were created,  
who for mankind and for our salvation descended from heaven:

And was made flesh by the Holy Spirit through the Virgin Mary,  
and became man.

Holy, thrice Holy, is the Lord,  
the God of Hosts;  
heaven and earth are full of thy glory.  
Hosanna in the highest!

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest!