APPENDICES

TO

In the Beginning Was the Logos

by Paul Pavao


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Glossary

Acacian

A sect of Arians begun by Acacius, the bishop who replaced Eusebius the historian in Caesarea. They espoused the term homoian, "similar," until they embraced the Nicene Creed under the reign of Jovian in 363.

Acolyte

In general, this word means a "devoted follower or attendant," but it's usually used of someone who assists a clergyman with religious services. By the time of the Council of Nicea, Christian gatherings were quite formal, and there would have been numerous minor religious offices, such as reader at church services.

Anathema

Anathema is a difficult word to define precisely but an easy one to define generally. It means accursed or destined for destruction. I read numerous definitions and possible derivations of the word in order to come to the conclusion that it does not have a specific meaning, such as an assurance of going to hell or some such thing. The general "accursed" or destined for some unspecified destruction is about as precise as we can get.

Anathematize

To pronounce an anathema upon a person or doctrine.

Apostolic

From the apostles. The word is applied to the catholic churches regularly in early Christian writings, and it is used by the Council of Nicea regularly in its canons. It is used to distinguish those churches that were started by apostles and held to apostolic doctrine from heretical groups owing their origin to other sources, such as gnostic, Novatian, and Paulianist churches. It had long been an argument of 2nd and 3rd century apologists that the apostolic churches had maintained their unity from the beginning, a claim that I personally believe to be evidently true to anyone who researches the period.

1 TheFreeDictionary.com
2 Descriptions of Christian meetings in The Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus from the early third century and Apostolic Constitutions from the Nicene time period are significantly more formal and organized than the meetings described by Justin Martyr and Tertullian between about AD 150 and 210.
3 See Chapter 15.
Arian

Anything having to do with Arius, the elder who was excommunicated by the church in Alexandria and whose doctrine was condemned by the Council of Nicea. Thus, there was an *Arian* controversy, an *Arian* doctrine, and those who adhered to that doctrine are often called *Arians*.

Bishop

A *bishop*, by the mid-2nd century and later, was the highest ranking church leader in a city. Each *bishop* would have a group of elders under him who handled the shepherding of the congregation.

The *bishop* of a large city might be in charge of several cities or a whole province. He would be known as a metropolitan. The Council of Nicea made the role of patriarch official, assigning authority over what appears to be at least an entire country to the *bishops* of Alexandria, Antioch, and Rome.

The *bishop* is called an "overseer" in some Bible translations, which is the literal meaning of the Greek word *episkopos*. "Supervisor" would also be a literal translation of *episkopos*.

Canon

From a Latin word meaning "rule," *canon* is primarily used today concerning the authorized books in the Bible, which vary among churches, but not by much. Protestants, and even Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons, use a Bible of 66 books. Roman Catholics add 7 to the Protestant 66, as well as additions to Esther and Daniel. Orthodox churches have closer to 80 books in their Bible, though the canon varies among the Orthodox.

*Canon* is also the term given to decisions by major church councils. Thus, the Council of Nicea issued 20 canons constituting their decisions on everything except the doctrines of Arius, which were covered and condemned by the Nicene Creed.

Catechumen

A person who is being "catechized," or trained in the basics of the faith prior to baptism. By the time of the Council of Nicea it was normal for a person to spend a year or more as a *catechumen* before being baptized in order to prove their commitment to continuing in the faith.

Cathari

*Cathari* means purists, and it was a designation of Novatianist churches, which descended from a church split caused by Novatian in Rome in AD 251.

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4 A history of the terms bishop, elder, and priest can be found in Appendix C.
5 See Novatianist below.
Catholic

*Catholic,* to the early churches, meant something similar to "universal." The term was interchangeable with "apostolic" churches, and it was used to distinguish those churches that had remained in fellowship with each other from those that had deviated, divided, or been expelled. Today, when capitalized, it means those churches that recognize the bishop of Rome as the representative of Christ on the earth and the leader of the church universal. It had no such significance in the 4th century.

Chorepiscopus

A rural bishop that was subject to the bishop of a nearby city.

Confessor

A person who suffered during persecution without denying Christ. These were held in high honor in the early churches, as they are today.

Consubstantiality

"One in substance." Consubstantiality translates the term *homoousios,* the source of so much controversy during the 4th century.

Deacon

*Deacon* comes from the Greek word *diakonos,* which means servant. "Deacon" is *diakonos* untranslated. The word *diakonos* is used over 30 times in the New Testament, and the only place it is rendered *deacon* is in the list of qualifications given in 1 Timothy 3.

Dialectics

A method of argument developed by Greek philosophers, but popular in the east as well, that advocates a back and forth presentation of ideas working toward agreement, which makes it a little different than typical debate.

Edict of Milan

Edict issued in 313 by co-emperors Constantine and Lucinius restoring privileges and property to Christian churches and leaders that were taken during the Great Persecution. The Edict of Toleration ended the persecution two years earlier.

Edict of Toleration

Edict issued in 311 by Galerius along with co-emperors Constantine and Lucinius officially ending the Great Persecution.
Elder

When discussing fourth-century churches, it is common to refer to the elder as a presbyter, thus leaving the Greek word presbuteros untranslated. Presbuteros literally means elder, though, and it is translated that way in most Bibles. In the century before the Council of Nicea elders began to be called priests, though this terminology makes war on the Biblical understanding of the church as a kingdom of priests and gets in the way of Jesus Christ’s role as the one Mediator between God and man. In the 4th century, each city or town would have multiple elders, and one bishop would be over them all.6

Eucharist

From a Greek word meaning “thanksgiving,” Eucharist is the bread and wine of the communion meal or Lord’s Supper.

Eunomian

A follower of Eunomius, an Arian theologian who was at one time bishop of Antioch. The Eunomians, with the Nicene party, the main Arian party, and the Macedonians were allowed to present arguments for their own opinion to Theodosius in 383 when he finally put the Arian Controversy to rest. The Eunomians were the most extreme Arian party, declaring that the Son was “unlike” (anomoian) the Father.

Extant

A writing is extant if it is still available today, even if all we have are much later copies. Many ancient writings are completely lost, and we don’t know what they say except perhaps for quotes by other ancients. If the text, or most of the text, is known today, then the writing is extant.

Great Persecution

Empire-wide persecution from AD 303 to 311, instituted by the emperor Diocletian at the instigation of Galerius, then general of the Roman army. In 311, Galerius, who had become emperor, ended the persecution with the Edict of Toleration, which was additionally signed by his co-emperors Constantine and Licinius. Galerius died in 311, and Constantine and Licinius issued the Edict of Milan in 313, which legalized Christianity and restored privileges and property to Christian churches and their leaders.

Gnostics

A widely varying set of groups that believed that salvation came through the knowledge (Gr. gnosis) of certain mysteries. In general, they believed that all material

6 A history of the terms bishop, elder, and priest can be found in Appendix C.
things were created by an inferior god (the God of the Hebrews) and that the true God had sent certain spiritual beings, called aeons, to bring the truth of the spiritual world to man. Believing all of the physical creation to be outside the true God’s will, they denied that Christ came in the flesh, died, or resurrected physically.

**Hearers**

Those who came to Christian worship services in order to determine whether they wanted to be Christians. In fourth-century churches, these would sit in an area by themselves, as would the catechumens (those being trained in the basics of the faith) and the prostrators (those temporarily banned from communion for some sin).

**Heresy**

In the Bible and in early Christian literature, a *heresy* is both a faction within a religion and a teaching that produces such a faction. Thus, the Pharisees, Sadducees, and the Christian “Way” are all referred to by the Greek word *hairesis* in the Book of Acts (Acts 5:17; 15:5; 24:5). The followers of Arius and of Eusebius of Nicomedia taught *heresy* because they said that the Son was created from nothing, and they were members of a *heresy* because their churches separated from the catholic churches.

**Homoiousios**

*Homoiousios*, “similar substance,” is not to be confused with *homoousios*, ”same substance.” The difference in Greek is just one iota (ι), but the difference theologically is vast. Many battles, both verbal and physical, were fought over the two terms.

**Homousios**

“Same substance” or ”same essence.” This word was added to the rule of faith of the church in Caesarea in order to produce the Nicene Creed. *Homousios* proposed that the Son of God was composed of the same substance as God, thus making him truly divine and eternal, for the divine substance, being uncreated, has always existed and always will exist. *Homousios* was a controversial term because it did not come from Scripture and thus was a questionable addition to an official creed of the Church.

**Impious**

Not pious.

**Lector**

Another name for a reader, an ordained position that existed at least as early as the third century and still exists today in Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches.
LXX

Short term for the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures that was the Old Testament of the early churches in the Roman empire. It was called the LXX because it was believed to have been translated by seventy Jewish scholars.

Macedonian

A sect begun by Macedonius, bishop of Constantinople. Macedonians opposed the Nicene Creed by promulgating the term homoiousios, just one iota different from homoeousios. They sent 36 bishops to the Council of Constantinople in 381 but lost many of their members when they would not embrace the historic faith under Theodosius.

Melitians

Followers of Melitius, a pre-Nicene bishop of Lycopolis in Egypt. Melitius, like Novatian and the Novatianists, did not want to receive Christians who lapsed during persecution then repented later. He began appointing bishops who agreed with him without the approval of the bishop of Alexandria. Canon 6 of Nicea emphasized the authority of the bishop of Alexandria, and the council specifically condemned Melitius in a letter to the church at Alexandria.7

Metropolitan

The bishop of a large city who ruled over smaller cities and towns in the surrounding area.

Modalism

The belief that God acts in various "modes," so that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not separate persons of the Godhead, but instead various roles filled by the one God, much as one actor might play three roles in the same play. Modern modalists like to say God is "the Father in creation, the Son in redemption, and the Holy Spirit in the church."

Modalism was a persistent heresy in the Pre-Nicene church, and Tertullian even says, around AD 200, that it was the majority belief of "the simple" in the church.8

Monarchianism

Another name for modalism, the belief that God is just one person acting in three "modes." Monarchianism argues that God is only one person because there can be only one "monarchy" or rule of God. Tertullian answers this effectively in Against Praxeas, arguing that the unique, singular, and shared divinity of the Father and the Son does not in any way destroy the divine Monarchy.

7 The letter to the church in Alexandria can be found in Appendix H.
8 Against Praxeas. 3.
Novatianist

Novatianist churches descended from a church split in Rome in AD 251. Novatian, a leading elder, was passed over for bishop and Cornelius was selected instead. Novatian engineered a separate ordination, which was not recognized by any surrounding churches, and formed his own congregation. They became known as Cathari, or "purists," because they refused to admit Christians who lapsed during persecution then repented afterwards. Once persecution ended in the 4th century, the Novatianist churches slowly merged back into the catholic churches. They are addressed in Canon 8 of Nicea.

Overseer

A bishop. Overseer (or "supervisor") is a more accurate way of translating the Greek episkopos.9

Patriarch

A patriarch is a bishop given authority over extremely large areas, usually at least a country. Since the time of the Council of Nicea certain bishops have been specifically given this designation. The Roman Catholic Church does not use this term, but the Eastern Orthodox Churches and Orthodox churches that have split from them use it even of the bishop of Rome. The list of patriarchs has grown significantly longer since the 4th century, but the primary patriarchs are the bishops of Constantinople (now Istanbul), Antioch, and Moscow. The patriarchs in Alexandria and Rome are separated from the Eastern Orthodox Churches and are both known as popes to the churches under their rule.

Paulianist

Paulianists were people who held to the doctrines of Paul of Samosata, a bishop of Antioch from AD 260 (or so) to AD 268. He was deposed by the Council of Arles for denying the divinity of Christ. He claimed Jesus was just a man who received the power of the impersonal Logos at his birth, then grew in power with God throughout his life.

Pious

"Having or exhibiting religious reverence; earnestly compliant in the observance of religion; devout."10 I have often replaced this word with "godly" when updating the vocabulary of the translators of the Ante-Nicene Fathers and Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers series.

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9 A history of the terms bishop, elder, and priest can be found in Appendix C.
10 TheFreeDictionary.com
Presbyter

A presbyter is an elder. Presbyter is just a way of leaving the Greek word for elder, presbuteros, untranslated. See elder above for more information.

Primary Sources

Testimony from an eyewitness or participant. A list of primary sources for the Council of Nicea is given in chapter two. Secondary sources are reports from someone who has read or seen the primary sources. Many modern history books are not even secondary sources, but tertiary or even further down the line, based on other histories rather than direct research.

Professor

A person who professes to be a Christian. In the Nicene era such a person would have to have been baptized, as no one was considered a Christian who was not baptized. Even those who had professed faith, but were awaiting baptism, were known as catechumens, not professors. No judgment is implied by the term professor, as though a person only professed but was not a Christian; nonetheless, the term is usually used in exhortation, that those who profess Christ ought to live as he lived.

Prostrators

Those who were under penance and banned from communion for some sin. In the larger churches of the fourth century, they would sit in a group, as would the catechumens (those being instructed in the faith prior to baptism) and hearers (those attending services to decide whether to become a Christian).

Reader

An office in liturgical churches. A reader must be ordained to the position, and today it is considered one step before deacon. The position existed as early as the third century for sure, and it’s possible that the early Christian sermon known as 2 Clement contains a reference to a reader. The position is also known as "lector."

Rule of Faith

Before Nicea, each church had a rule of faith that was pronounced at baptism and required to be believed by all church members. The rule of faith of the church at Caesarea became the basis for the Nicene Creed. Most early rules of faith—several are found in pre-Nicene writings—are quite similar to the Nicene Creed.

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11 2 Clement. 19.
12 Appendix K.
Sabellianism

Another name for the persistent heresy of modalism, the belief that God is just one person acting in three "modes," the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Sabellianism is named after Sabellius, an early third-century modalist.

Secondary Source

A history or testimony given by someone referencing primary sources, which are the testimonies of eyewitnesses or participants. Tertiary sources are histories based on secondary sources.

See

The area of a bishop's jurisdiction. Note that the word is see and not "sea." See is related to overseer, the literal meaning of the Greek word episkopos.

Septuagint

The Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures that was the Old Testament of the early churches in the Roman empire. It was so named because it was believed to have been translated by 70 Jewish scholars in Alexandria. Legend had it that King Ptolemy II of Egypt had put the 70 scholars in 70 separate rooms, and each had produced a translation that corresponded word for word with all the others. There is no reason to suppose this legend is true.

Subordinationism

The belief that the Father is intrinsically greater than the Son, even prior to the incarnation. This was the orthodox Pre-Nicene position, as espoused by every Pre-Nicene writer who wrote extensively on the Trinity. To pre-Nicene writers, the Father is greater than the Son because God is greater than his Logos.14

Substance

Substance, of course, is capable of many meanings, but at the Council of Nicea the issue was the substance of God; the "material," if you will excuse the term, that God is made of. The question before the council as part of the Arian Controversy was whether the Son of God was of the same divine substance as the Father. If he was created from nothing, as Arius proposed, then he could not be of the Father's substance, but was composed of matter—even in his divine person—as all other creatures are. Homoousios is explained fully in Chapter 16.

14 Chapter 17 deals extensively with subordinationism.
Suffragan

An assistant bishop who would serve under an important bishop such as a metropolitan.

Synod

1. A council or an assembly of church officials or churches; an ecclesiastical council.
2. A council or assembly.\textsuperscript{15}

Viaticum

From a Latin word meaning "food for the journey," this is the Eucharist when it is given to a dying person as a last rite. Notes in The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers\textsuperscript{16} concerning Canon 13 of the Council of Nicea say that viaticum can also refer to any other ecclesiastical service done as a last rite, but it normally concerns the Eucharist.
Appendix B:

The Timeline of the Council of Nicea

The Apostolic and Pre-Nicene Era

- AD 29-33: Jesus is crucified, rises again, and the church begins at Pentecost (see *Acts* in the Bible).
- AD 33-100: Apostolic era; independent churches spread throughout the Roman empire and even outside of it.
- c. AD 100: John is the last apostle to die.
- AD 100-303: The church expands throughout and outside the Roman empire, suffering intermittent persecution that only fuels even more growth. As churches grow, they become more organized, and clergy become more important and more powerful.

The Great Persecution and the Rise of Constantine to Power

- AD 303-311: Led primarily by Galerius, the two Augusti and two Caesars of the Roman empire conduct an empire-wide persecution known as the Great Persecution.
- AD 311: Galerius signs the Edict of Toleration, ending the persecution, and he admits it was a failure.
- AD 311: Galerius dies from a terrible disease that the Christians attribute to the judgment of God.
- AD 312: Constantine has a vision of a Christian symbol similar to a cross, inscribes the symbol on the shields of his soldiers, and defeats Maxentius to unite the western empire.
- AD 313: Constantine and Licinius issue the Edict of Milan, legalizing Christianity and restoring property to churches.

The Events Leading to the Council of Nicea

- AD 268 – AD 312: Lucian, an elder in Antioch, runs a theological school that trained all the early leaders of Arianism. He was out of fellowship for at least 16 years, and perhaps more, but he died a martyr in communion with the church in 312.
- AD 318: Arius, an elder of the church in Alexandria, tells Alexander, his bishop, that the Son did not exist before his generation by God in the beginning.
- AD 321: Arius is excommunicated by a council of over 100 bishops and moves to Nicomedia, where he is welcomed by the bishop, Eusebius.
- AD 321 – 325: Arius and Eusebius teach their doctrine to sailors, merchants, and children and write letters to other bishops trying to spread Arian doctrine.
• AD 324: Constantine defeats and then executes Licinius, uniting the entire Roman empire under his rule.

• AD 325: Constantine offers transportation to every bishop in the empire to come to the resort city of Nicea for a council to resolve the Arian controversy.

The Council of Nicea and Its Aftermath

• 325: The Council of Nicea. Arius is banished along with Theonas and Secundus.

• 325-326: Eusebius of Nicomedia and Theognis of Nicea are banished (probably).

• 328: Eusebius and Theognis write a letter of recantation, which states that Arius has been received back from exile as well. Constantine restores them to their sees.\[^{17}\]

• 328-335: Constantine orders the church in Alexandria to talk with Arius; Athanasius refuses.

• 335: The Council of Tyre, led by Eusebius of Nicomedia and Theognis of Nicea, attempts to convict Athanasius of various crimes, but fails. Constantine calls the major bishops to Constantinople, then expels Athanasius for preventing the shipment of grain from Alexandria to Constantinople. Most historians, even ancient ones, agree that Athanasius is really being banished for refusing to receive Arius.

• 336: A council in Jerusalem restores Arius to communion, but he dies on the way to the church in Constantinople for his first communion after his banishment. Supporters say he was poisoned; opponents say he was judged by God.

• 337: Constantine is baptized by Eusebius of Nicomedia, dies several days later, and leaves the empire to his 3 sons: Constantine II, Constans, and Constantius. Constantine II sends Athanasius back to Alexandria.

• 337-361: Constantius, emperor in the east, embraces Arianism, installs Arian bishops in many cities of the east, and there is general pandemonium.

• 339: Eusebius of Caesarea, the historian, dies.

• 341: Constantius brings Eusebius from Nicomedia to Constantinople. Eusebius wastes no time in calling a council in Antioch to affirm a new creed and expel Athanasius from Alexandria. The creed is rejected by western bishops.

• 343: A council is called in Sardica to reconcile east and west. A controversy over Paul and Athanasius, who were ejected from their sees in Constantinople and Alexandria, causes the eastern bishops to hold their own council in Philippopolis. Sardica confirms *homoousios*, Philippopolis rejects it, and east and west are completely divided; Arian in the east, Nicene in the west.

• 347-348: Constans threatens Constantius with civil war if he does not reinstall Paul and Athanasius as bishops of Constantinople and Alexandria, respectively. At the gracious advice of important eastern bishops, Constantius agrees and orders those cities to support them.

• c. 348: Athanasius calls a council in Jerusalem, and two leading Arian bishops, Ursacius and Valens, temporarily embrace the Nicene Creed. Athanasius then alienates

\[^{17}\] Area of a bishop's oversight.
most eastern bishops and Constantius by appointing elders in other bishops' jurisdiction on his way back to Alexandria.

- 350: Magnentius, with very unfortunate timing, kills Constans in an uprising and gains control of Gaul and Italy. With Constans, a supporter of Nicea, dead, Arian bishops bring new charges against Athanasius. Constantius orders both Athanasius and Paul killed. Paul is strangled, but Athanasius escapes and remains bishop until 356.
- 350-361: Constantius overthrows Magnentius, then tries to spread Arianism in the west. He removes bishops in the west as well as in the east, replacing them with bishops espousing Arian opinions.
- 356: Liberius, bishop of Rome, is banished, and Athanasius is forced to flee Alexandria for his life.
- 358: Liberius is restored to his position after signing a creed with Arian sentiments under duress.
- 359: The Council of Ariminum is held in the west, and the Council of Seleucia in the east. Both councils approve an Arian creed, but numerous bishops, especially in the west, object. Jerome later mourns that at this point, "The world groaned and was astonished to find itself Arian."  
- 361: Constantius dies, and Julian the Apostate becomes emperor in the east. He embraces paganism and recalls all the bishops Constantius banished, perhaps hoping the Christians will battle each other into extinction. He also introduces some persecution against Christians.
- 363: Julian is killed in battle with the Persians, and Jovian becomes emperor. Jovian supports the Nicene Creed with wisdom and without violence, bringing rapidly growing peace to the east, but he dies of illness after only seven months. The Aca- cian sect of Arians embraces the Nicene Creed. They submit a letter to the bishop of Rome acknowledging their repentance and their condemnation of Arius.
- 364: Valens becomes emperor in the east, embraces Arianism, persecutes the Nicene churches, and attempts to install Arian bishops in every eastern church. Valentinian I becomes emperor in the west, and he holds to the Nicene Creed.
- 375: Barbarian Goths kill Valentinian, the emperor in the west.
- 375: Gratian, nephew of Valens, becomes emperor in the west; he is firmly Nicene.
- 375: Valens defeats the Goths, gives them mercy, and they embrace Christianity, becoming Arians. The barbarian tribes will remain Arians for at least a century.
- 378-381: Gratian recalls all banished Nicene bishops in the east, but he allows the various sects, which now include Macedonians as well as the Arians, to worship unmolested in their own churches.
- 379: Gratian appoints Theodosius as emperor in the east to replace Valens.

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18 The Dialogue Against the Luciferians. 19.
• 381: Theodosius calls a council in Constantinople to affirm the Nicene Creed. 150 bishops arrive, as well as 36 Macedonian bishops, whom the emperor wished to convert because they had their own large church in Antioch. The Macedonians refuse to accept the Nicene Creed and leave. The council assigned authority to the bishops of several important cities and disbanded. This insignificant council, attended by no western bishops, becomes remembered as "The Second Ecumenical Council of the Church."

• 383: Theodosius requests a defense of the faith from all four major sects proving that what they believe is the faith given by the apostles to the church. He retires alone, and after much prayer and consideration decides for the *homoousian* party. It was this event that ended the Arian Controversy and constituted the final victory for the Nicene Creed. Arianism does not disappear, but is permanently considered unorthodox and outside the catholic faith.

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Appendix C:

Bishops, Elders, and Priests

Terminology in the early Christian writings can be difficult for those of us not familiar with Catholic and Orthodox ecclesiastic structure.

But perhaps it is even more difficult for those who are familiar with it! As the saying goes, there are none so blind as those who will not see. There is an emotional and doctrinal tie to the monarchial bishop among those that trace a succession of authority through that bishop. For Roman Catholics especially there is an unwillingness to see the obvious: Rome, like all of Paul and Peter's churches, was founded with no monarchial bishop.¹⁹

I'll explain "monarchial bishop" further down the page, though Catholics and Orthodox will already know what I mean.

We must begin with the terms "bishop" and "elder," for these are the only terms for church leaders that are found in Scripture or in the writings of the second-century church. (Note that the word "pastor," used once in the New Testament of a church leader, will be addressed as part of the discussion on bishops and elders.)

"Priest," now in common use as a replacement for "elder," is discussed afterward.

Bishops and Elders

In the New Testament, bishop and elder are interchangeable terms:

And from Miletus, [Paul] sent a message to Ephesus, calling for the elders of the church. When they had come to him, he said, “... Pay attention, then, to yourselves and to the entire flock, over which the Holy Spirit has made you bishops, to shepherd the church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood.”²⁰

Your translation of the New Testament may, and probably will, have "overseers" where I have inserted "bishops." Both are translations of the same Greek word, episkopos. "Overseer" is a much better translation, for episkopos comes from epi, meaning over, and skopos, meaning sight. "Supervisor" is an equivalent English word, though it descends to us from Latin, not Greek. "Bishop," however, has been in common use for so long that it is hard to imagine switching to the more accurate "overseer" or "supervisor."

Here in Acts 20, the apostle Paul tells the elders of Ephesus that they have been appointed overseers, or bishops, by the Holy Spirit and given the task of shepherding the church of God.

The position of elder is the only pastoral position in the New Testament. The elders are the bishops, and they are the pastors. As some have put it, the elder is the man, overseer or bishop is his office, and shepherding or pastoring is his duty.

Peter verifies Paul's usage of bishop and elder. Note the use of the word oversight here, for you now know that it is a reference to the office of bishop or episkopos.

¹⁹ See Chapter 18.
²⁰ Acts 20:17-18, 28
I exhort the elders among you, for I am also a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ ... Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, overseeing it, not under obligation but willingly, not for selfish gain but cheerfully. Nor be lords over your area of responsibility, but be examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive a glorious crown of eternal flowers.21

Again, the elders are told that they have the oversight (Gr. episkopeo), and they are to shepherd the flock of God. Even Peter, supposedly the first monarchial bishop of Rome, refers to himself as a fellow elder, not as a bishop.

A "monarchial bishop" is a bishop that rules alone (from monon, alone, and archo, to rule). In practice, what it means is that the elders had a head elder, and he alone held the title of bishop (or overseer). By the middle of the second century we never again find reference to multiple bishops. Each church had a monarchial bishop and elders with him, and every early Christian writer seems to assume it had always been so.

How did this happen?

It seems certain to me that what we read in the New Testament represents only the practice of Peter and Paul. The apostle John lived until AD 100, some 35 years after Peter and Paul, and he spent those decades in the area of Asia Minor overseeing the churches. Seven of those Asia Minor churches are mentioned in the Revelation of John in our Bible, chapters two and three.

Ignatius of Antioch

Ignatius' letters can be shocking to Protestants. Such a strong emphasis on the bishop, and at so early a date!

It must be remembered that Ignatius was combating a plague in the Asia Minor churches, the heresies of gnosticism.22 Even the apostolic churches had to battle their insidious teachers, who were whisperers pulling Jesus' sheep to the side to expound their fantastic doctrines. 1 Corinthians 15 and the entire letter of 1 John are written to refute gnostic teachings.

Ignatius' answer is to exhort the churches under his care to adhere closely to their bishop and do nothing without him.

Thus, Ignatius is not propounding an extreme emphasis on the bishop; he is combating heresy. It is important not to pull his writings out of context.

There is every indication that the churches of Asia Minor all had one bishop and multiple elders even from the time of John. Two of the most famous of early Christians, Ignatius and Polycarp, are believed to have been appointed by John, and their letters make it clear that they were monarchial bishops.

Nonetheless, outside of Asia Minor the terms bishop and elder were still used interchangeably. Polycarp's letter to the Philippians, for example, mentions only elders and deacons, despite the fact that Polycarp himself was a monarchial bishop. Philippi was in Greece, started by Paul and outside John's jurisdiction in Asia Minor. Apparently, in the first half of the second century, when Polycarp's letter was written, Philippi still had a group of elders, all of whom were overseers.

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21 1 Peter 5:1-4
22 Described in Chapter 12.
Similarly, Ignatius addressed letters to five Asia Minor churches around AD 110. In all of these, he offers profuse praise for each church's bishop, and he exhorts the churches to do nothing without the bishop's approval. It's a notably central emphasis of Ignatius' letters. Yet, in his only letter to a church outside Asia Minor, his epistle to Rome, a church formed by Paul and Peter, he makes no mention of a bishop.

The reason is not hard to determine.

Just ten years earlier, around AD 96, the church at Rome had written a letter to the church at Corinth which is attributed to Clement of Rome by tradition and is known as *1 Clement.* That letter, too, uses bishop and elder interchangeably and speaks of both in the plural.\(^23\)

The Roman church was considered to be founded by Paul and Peter, and Peter, as his letter indicates, had remained there as an elder for many years.\(^24\) It seems apparent that they were still using Peter and Paul's leadership system, with multiple elders who were all called bishops.

So how did John's practice become the prevailing one throughout the catholic churches?

We can only speculate. My own guess is that individual leadership is natural. Even in churches with supposedly co-equal elders, there is normally one who takes the lead and is looked to by all the others. This is not a bad thing. Such authority is given willingly and maintained by good will. The informally recognized leader is restrained by a lack of positional authority. Should he provoke the others, they will rise up to take back the authority that is as rightfully theirs as his.

But I'm guessing. What we know is that Paul and Peter's churches had multiple elders who are all bishops, while John's churches, the churches in Asia Minor, had monarchial bishops. Eventually, by the mid-second century, all churches had monarchial bishops.

**Priests**

Now we must address priests. It seems almost out of place here because there is no mention of priests in the New Testament, nor any in the writings of second-century churches except in reference to all believers.

It seems unavoidable that the role of the bishop and elders in the churches was going to be compared to the role of the high priest and priests of Israel, especially as the church grew larger and clergy grew in authority. I can tell you from modern experience that as churches grow larger, it becomes harder and harder to include all members in the activities of the church. Paul talked about every member speaking at meetings in his letter to the Corinthians,\(^25\) but this is impossible once a church has two or three hundred members or more. More and more, the speaking and leading is left to those with position or exceptional gifting.

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\(^23\) *1 Clement*. 42,44.

\(^24\) We saw that in 1 Peter 5:1-2, Peter refers to himself as one of the elders. In 5:13, he sends greetings from the church at Babylon, a city which did not exist at the time. Most scholars agree that this was a coded reference to Rome.

\(^25\) Several places in 1 Corinthians 14.
participation of all members, something the apostle Paul said was essential to the growth of the church.  

The early churches were unable to avoid this problem. Even before Constantine converted to Christianity and most of the Roman empire converted with him, it is easy to see the people of God being treated more and more as "the masses." In such a situation, it is easy to picture the leadership of the church increasingly being seen as having a priestly role, intervening between God and his people.

But let's look briefly at the facts.

Even as early as *1 Clement* (AD 96), there is a comparison, though only a comparison, made between the leaders of the church and the priests of Israel. The Corinthians had removed at least a couple of their elders from their position due to disputes over either personality or minor doctrines. Either way, the church at Rome was appalled and considered the expulsion of the elders to be an act of division, not an act of purification. Clement writes:

> Our sin will not be small if we eject from the office of bishop those who have fulfilled its duties in blamelessness and holiness.

That quote, by the way, is one of the clearest references that those early churches established by Paul or Peter were still using a system of multiple bishops. Clement is speaking of the removal of elders from their position, yet he comments that they are being removed from the office of bishop.

Clement tries to call the Corinthians away from their selfishness by pointing out to them the proper limits of their authority.

> It behooves us to do everything in order, which the Lord has commanded us to perform at stated times. He has enjoined offerings and service to be performed ... at the appointed times and hours. Where and by whom he desires these things to be done, he himself has fixed by his own supreme will, so that everything done piously and according to his good pleasure may be acceptable to him. Those, therefore, who present their offerings at the appointed times are accepted and blessed. ... For his own unique services are assigned to the high priest, their own proper place is prescribed to the priests, and their own special services devolve on the Levites. The layman is bound by the laws that pertain to laymen.

Clement is simply using the Old Testament system as an example, as he should. According to the apostle Paul, the things that were written before were written as examples for our learning, and all the early Christian writers were in the habit of using the Old Testament writings in this way.

Later though, these examples would become reality. Rather than being *compared* to priests, the elders would be priests, and there seemed to be little thought taken for the apostolic teaching that God's people are to be a kingdom of priests.

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27 *1 Clement*. 44.
28 *1 Clement*. 40.
29 Romans 15:4
The earliest use of the term "priest" to refer to Christian ministers that I can find is in Hippolytus, who wrote in Rome around the year 225. He refers to "bishops, priests, and deacons" in his *Refutation of All Heresies* IX:7. He also writes:

But we, since we are their successors and participators in this grace, high-priesthood, and office of teaching, as well as being reputed guardians of the Church, must not be found deficient in vigilance or disposed to suppress correct doctrine.\(^{31}\)

The reference here is to bishops and elders taking the lead in defending against heresy. Despite this earlier reference, the 19\(^{th}\)-century historian Philip Schaff attributes the origin of the idea of elders as priests to Cyprian:

[Cyprian] may therefore be called the proper father of the sacerdotal\(^{32}\) conception of the Christian ministry as a mediating agency between God and the people.\(^{33}\)

Cyprian wrote from Carthage in north Africa, and he was bishop there from AD 249 until his death in 258.

Schaff says that Tertullian, writing around AD 210, was the first to "expressly and directly" assert priestly claims for the Christian ministry, referring to *sacerdotium*. He doesn't reference this, and he goes on to point out that Tertullian "strongly affirms the universal priesthood of all believers."

This is true in many places, and especially in *On Monogamy*, which he wrote as part of the Montanist sect. He wanted the rules that apply to old covenant priests to apply to all Christians so that he could require, as all Montanists did, that Christians have only one wife after becoming Christian, even if their previous wife died.

The connection between Tertullian, Hippolytus, and Cyprian is that they all wrote in Latin. References to the clergy as priests in Greek would have to wait until later in the third century. Even the canons of the Council of Nicea do not refer to bishops or elders as priests.

There can be no doubt, however, that by the fourth century the idea of the priesthood of all believers was lost for practical purposes, and a sacerdotal clergy became accepted practice.

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\(^{31}\) *Refutation of All Heresies*. Introduction.

\(^{32}\) Having to do with priests.

\(^{33}\) *History of the Church*. Vol. II. Section 42.
Appendix D:

Arius' Letters

The letters that we have from Arius are only those preserved by his enemies. Does this mean that they are corrupted or changed?

It is highly unlikely that Arius is not quoted accurately. Arius had four years to repent and speak differently than he had been speaking before Alexander excommunicated him. Afterward he did not repent or try to change his doctrine. Instead, he went to Nicomedia to be with the bishop Eusebius and continued to teach things that put the church in an uproar.

What need was there for his enemies to change his words? Arius' words were condemned at Nicea. With the Council of Nicea backing him, Athanasius, the main opponent of the Arians, had no need to put negative words in Arius' mouth. Arius is not charged with moral misbehavior but with teaching something novel.

Thus, scholars are confident that what is found in the writings of Athanasius, Theodoret, and Sozomen are accurate excerpts of what Arius wrote.

Three letters and one excerpt are appended below:
- Unknown excerpt quoted by Athanasius (c. 319)
- To Eusebius of Nicomedia (c. 319)
- To Alexander of Alexandria (c. 320)
- To Constantine (c. 327)

Excerpt found in Athanasius

This particular excerpt from Arius is composed in verse with meter, so it can be a little stilted. I have not corrected the unusual word order, which is due to the meter. Arius was known for writing songs to support his theology.

From Athanasius, On the Councils of Ariminum and Seleucia 15.

God himself, then, in his own nature, is ineffable by all men. Equal or like himself, he alone has none, or one in glory.

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 him 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 He is the teacher of Wisdom.

34 Unnamable. Pre-Nicene and Nicene Christians commonly commented that God is beyond being named by humans.
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.
Not intermingling with each other are their subsistences.
One more glorious than the other in their glories unto immensity.
Foreign from the Son in essence is the Father, for he is without beginning.

Understand that the Monad was
But the Dyad was not, before it was in existence.
It follows at once that, though the Son was not, the Father was God.

Hence the Son, not being (for he existed at the will of the Father)
is God Only-begotten, and he is alien from either.
Wisdom existed as Wisdom by the will of the Wise God

Hence he is conceived in numberless conceptions:
Understand that he is conceived to be Radiance and Light.

One equal to the Son the Superior is able to beget
But one more excellent, or superior, or greater, he is not able.
At God’s will the Son is what and whatsoever he is.

And when and since he was
From that time he has subsisted from God.
He, being a strong God, praises in his degree the Superior.

To speak in brief, God is ineffable to his Son.
For he is to himself what he is, that is, unspeakable.
So that nothing which is called comprehensible\(^{35}\) does the Son know to speak about.

For it is impossible for him to investigate the Father, who is by himself.
For the Son does not know his own essence
For, being Son, he really existed at the will of the Father.

What argument then allows
That he who is from the Father should know his own parent by comprehension?
For it is plain that for that which has a beginning
To conceive how the Unbegun is, or to grasp the idea, is not possible.

\(^{35}\) This probably means that there is nothing in the Father that is comprehensible to the Son, which is the context of this section of the poem.
Letter to Alexander of Alexandria

From Athanasius, *On the Councils of Ariminum and Seleucia* 16. This letter is written to Alexander, bishop of Alexandria, who excommunicated Arius.

Our faith from our forefathers, which also we have learned from you, blessed father, is this:

We acknowledge one God—alone ingenerate, alone eternal, alone unbegun, alone true, alone having immortality, alone wise, alone good, alone sovereign; Judge, Governor, and Providence of all, unalterable and unchangeable, just and good, God of Law and Prophets and New Testament—who begat an only-begotten Son before eternal times, through whom he has made both the ages and the universe. He begat him, not in illusion, but in truth.

[We acknowledge] that he made him subsist at his own will, unalterable and unchangeable; perfect creature of God, but not as one of the creatures; offspring, but not as one of the things begotten; nor as Valentinus pronounced, that the offspring of the Father was an issue; nor as Manichaeus taught, that the offspring was a portion of the Father, one in essence; nor as Sabellius, dividing the Monad, speaks of a Son-and-Father; nor as Hieracas, of one torch from another, or as a lamp divided into two; nor that he who was before was afterwards generated or newly created into a Son.  
You yourself also, blessed father, in the midst of the church and in session have often condemned these things.

Instead, as we say, at the will of God, created before times and before ages and gaining life and being from the Father, who gave subsistence to his glories together with him. For the Father did not, in giving to him the inheritance of all things, deprive himself of what he has ingenerately in himself, for he is the fountain of all things.

Thus there are three subsistences. And God, being the cause of all things, is unbegun and altogether sole, but the Son being begotten apart from time by the Father and being created and founded before ages, was not [i.e., *did not exist*] before his generation. But being begotten apart from time before all things, he alone was made to subsist by the Father. For he is not eternal, co-eternal or co-unoriginate with the Father. Nor has he his being together with the Father, as some speak of relations, introducing two ingenerate beginnings, but God is before all things as being Monad and beginning of all.

Therefore also he is before the Son, as we have learned also from your preaching in the midst of the Church. So far then as from God he has being, glories, and life, and all things are delivered to him, in such sense is God his origin. For he is above him, as being his God, and before him. But if the terms "from him," "from the womb," and "I came forth from the Father and I am come"  be understood by some to mean as if he were a part of him—one in essence or as an issue—then the Father is according to them compounded, divisible, alterable, and material, and, as far as their belief goes, has the circumstances of a body, yet he is the incorporeal God.

To Eusebius, Bishop of Nicomedia

From *The Ecclesiastical History of Theodoret* I:4. This letter is to Eusebius of Nicomedia.

To his very dear lord, the man of God, the faithful and orthodox Eusebius.

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36 Though he attributes these thoughts to known heretics, Arius is specifically rejecting several tenets held by the pre-Nicene churches. The illustration of one torch to another was used by Justin Martyr, and the idea that "he who was before was afterwards generated" is exactly what *homoousios* means.

Arius, unjustly persecuted by Alexander the pope,\textsuperscript{38} on account of that all-conquering truth of which you also are a champion, sends greeting in the Lord.

Ammonius, my father, was about to depart for Nicomedia, and I considered myself bound to salute you by him and to inform as well that natural affection which you bear towards the brothers for the sake of God and his Christ, that the bishop \textit{[i.e., Alexander of Alexandria]} greatly wastes and persecutes us and leaves no stone unturned against us.

He has driven us out of the city as atheists, because we do not concur in what he publicly preaches: "God always, the Son always; as the Father so the Son; the Son co-exists unbegotten with God; he is everlasting; neither by thought nor by any interval does God precede the Son; always God, always Son; he is begotten of the unbegotten; the Son is of God himself."

Eusebius, your brother bishop of Caesarea, Theodotus, Paulinus, Athanasius, Gregorius, Aetius, and all the bishops of the East have been condemned because they say that God had an existence prior to that of his Son. Exceptions are Philonius, Hellanicus, and Macarius, who are unlearned men, and who have embraced heretical opinions. Some of them say that the Son was belched out,\textsuperscript{39} others that he is a production, others that he is also unbegotten. These are impieties to which we cannot listen, even though the heretics threaten us with a thousand deaths.

But we say, believe, have taught, and do teach that the Son is not unbegotten, nor in any way part of the unbegotten. We say that he does not derive his subsistence from any matter, but by his own will and counsel he has subsisted before time and before ages, as perfect God, only-begotten and unchangeable, and that before he was begotten, created, purposed, or established he did not exist. For he was not unbegotten.

We are persecuted because we say that the Son has a beginning, but that God is without beginning. This is the cause of our persecution. Similarly, we are persecuted because we say that he is of the non-existent. And this we say, because he is neither part of God nor of any essential being. For this are we persecuted; the rest you know.

I bid thee farewell in the Lord, remembering our afflictions, my fellow-Lucianist\textsuperscript{40} and true Eusebius.\textsuperscript{41}

\textbf{Recantation to the Emperor Constantine}

From \textit{The Ecclesiastical History of Sozomen} II:27.

Arius and Euzoïus, elders, to Constantine, our most pious emperor and most beloved of God.

Just as your piety, beloved of God, commanded, oh sovereign emperor, we here furnish a written statement of our own faith, and we protest before God that we and all those who are with us believe what is here set forth.

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, and in his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who was begotten from him before all ages; God the Word, by whom all things were

\textsuperscript{38} Alexandrian bishops were, along with several others, referred to as pope—meaning "father"—since perhaps the mid-third century.

\textsuperscript{39} "Belched out" is the literal meaning of Psalm 45:1 in the LXX: "My heart has 'belched out' a good word." This is symbolic, and it doesn't carry quite the unsocial stigma in its original language that it does in ours, but Arius is making the best negative use of the term that he can here.

\textsuperscript{40} Lucian was an elder from Antioch in the late third and early fourth century who trained all the leading Arianists. Little is known about his personal view of the relationship between the father and son. He was out of fellowship with the church in Antioch for at least 16 years, and perhaps up to 35, but was readmitted and died a martyr, for which he is honored by both Roman Catholics and Orthodox to this day. See Chapter 4.

\textsuperscript{41} Eusebius means "godly"; Arius is referring to him as truly godly.
made, whether things in heaven or things on earth. He came and took upon himself flesh, suffered and rose again, and ascended into heaven, from where he will come again to judge the living and the dead. We believe in the Holy Spirit, in the resurrection of the body, in the life to come, in the kingdom of heaven, and in one catholic Church of God, established throughout the earth.\textsuperscript{42}

We have received this faith from the holy Gospels, in which the Lord says to his disciples, "Go forth and disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."\textsuperscript{43} If we do not so believe this, and if we do not truly receive the doctrines concerning the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as they are taught by the whole catholic Church and by the sacred Scriptures, as we believe in every point, let God be our judge, both now and in the day which is to come.

Therefore we appeal to your piety, oh, our emperor most beloved of God, that, as we are enrolled among the members of the clergy, and as we hold the faith and thought of the Church and of the sacred Scriptures, we may be openly reconciled to our mother, the Church, through your peacemaking and pious piety, so that useless questions and disputes may be cast aside and that we and the Church may dwell together in peace. Then we all in common may offer the customary prayer for your peaceful and pious empire and for your entire family.

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\textsuperscript{42} As pointed out in Chapter 8, there is nothing in this creed by Arius that rejects any of his views.

\textsuperscript{43} Matthew 28:19
Appendix E:

Constantine's Letter to Alexander and Arius

When Constantine first heard about the disruption in the churches, he tried to resolve it by letter. He sent the letter by Hosius, an aged and respected bishop from Cordova, Spain, who was a personal advisor.

This letter did not restrain Alexander or Arius.

Taken from Eusebius, Life of Constantine II:64-72.

Victor Constantinus, Maximus Augustus, to Alexander and Arius:

I call that God to witness, as well I may, who is the Helper of my endeavors and the Preserver of all men, that I had a twofold reason for undertaking that duty which I have now performed.

My design then was, first, to bring the diverse judgments formed by all nations respecting the Deity to a condition, as it were, of settled uniformity; and, secondly, to restore to health the system of the world, then suffering under the malignant power of a grievous distemper. Keeping these objects in view, I sought to accomplish the one by the secret eye of thought, while the other I tried to rectify by the power of military authority. For I was aware that, if I should succeed in establishing, according to my hopes, a common harmony of sentiment among all the servants of God, the general course of affairs would also experience a change corresponding to the pious desires of them all.

Finding, then, that the whole of Africa was pervaded by an intolerable spirit of mad folly, through the influence of those who with heedless frivolity had presumed to rend the religion of the people into diverse sects, I was anxious to check this disorder. I could discover no other remedy equal to the occasion, except in sending some of you or others to aid in restoring mutual harmony among the disputants, after I had removed that common enemy of mankind who had interposed his lawless sentence for the prohibition of your holy synods.

For since the power of divine light and the law of sacred worship—which through the favor of God proceeded first from the bosom, as it were, of the East—have illumined the world by their sacred radiance, I naturally believed that you would be the first to promote the salvation of other nations. I resolved with all energy of thought and diligence of inquiry to seek your aid. As soon, therefore, as I had secured my decisive victory and unquestionable triumph over my enemies, my first inquiry was concerning that object which I felt to be of paramount interest and importance.

But, oh glorious Providence of God! How deep a wound did not my ears only, but my very heart receive in the report that divisions existed among yourselves more grievous still than those which continued in that country! So now you, through whose aid I had hoped to procure a remedy for the errors of others, are in a state which needs healing even more than theirs. And yet, having made a careful inquiry into the origin and foundation of these differences, I find the cause to be of a truly insignificant character and quite unworthy of such fierce contention. Feeling myself, therefore, compelled to address you in this letter and

44 A reference to renewed persecution by his co-emperor Licinius.
45 This would be a reference to Hosius and whichever other clergy Constantine sent with him to bear this letter.
46 i.e., Licinius
47 The Donatist schism in north Africa, centered in the area around Carthage. It is not covered in this book. Although it's an important split, it was local to north Africa.
to appeal at the same time to your mutual wisdom, I call on Divine Providence to assist me in the task, while I interrupt your dissension in the character of a minister of peace. And with reason! For if I might expect, with the help of a higher Power, to be able without difficulty, by a judicious appeal to the pious feelings of those who heard me, to recall them to a better spirit, even though the occasion of the disagreement were a greater one, how can I refrain from promising myself a far easier and more speedy adjustment of this difference, when the cause which hinders general harmony of sentiment is intrinsically trifling and of little moment?

I understand, then, that the origin of the present controversy is this: When you, Alexander, demanded of the elders what opinion they each maintained respecting a certain passage in the Divine law—or rather, I should say, that you asked them something connected with an unprofitable question—then you, Arius, inconsiderately insisted on what ought never to have been conceived at all, or if conceived, should have been buried in profound silence. Hence it was that a dissension arose between you, fellowship was withdrawn, and the holy people, torn into diverse parties, no longer preserved the unity of the one body. Now, therefore, both of you, exhibit an equal degree of forbearance, and receive the advice which your fellow-servant rightly gives.

What then is this advice? It was wrong in the first instance to propose such questions as these or to reply to them when propounded. For those points of discussion which are enjoined by the authority of no law, but rather suggested by the contentious spirit which is fostered by misused leisure, even though they may be intended merely as an intellectual exercise, ought certainly to be confined to the region of our own thoughts and not hastily produced in the public assemblies, nor unadvisedly entrusted to the general ear. For how very few are there able either accurately to comprehend or adequately to explain subjects so sublime and abstruse in their nature? Or, granting that one were fully competent for this, how many people will he convince? Or, who, again, in dealing with questions of such subtle nicety as these, can secure himself against a dangerous declension from the truth? It is incumbent therefore on us in these cases to be sparing of our words, lest, in case we ourselves are unable, through the feebleness of our natural faculties, to give a clear explanation of the subject before us, or, on the other hand, in case the slowness of our hearers’ understandings disables them from arriving at an accurate apprehension of what we say, from one or other of these causes the people be reduced to the alternative either of blasphemy or schism.

Let therefore both the unguarded question and the inconsiderate answer receive your mutual forgiveness. For the cause of your difference has not been any of the leading doctrines or precepts of the Divine law, nor has any new heresy respecting the worship of God arisen among you. You are in truth of one and the same judgment; you may therefore well join in communion and fellowship.

For as long as you continue to contend about these small and very insignificant questions, it is not fitting that so large a portion of God’s people should be under the direction of your judgment, since you are thus divided between yourselves. I believe it indeed to be not

48 The catholics and Donatists.
49 The Donatists split over very similar reasons to the Novatianists and Melitians. Apparently, a lot of Christians did not want to allow repentance to those who denied Christ or offered sacrifices during persecution.
50 No one, or almost no one, would agree with Constantine on this issue today, but he almost certainly obtained that opinion from Hosius, bishop of Cordova. Historians, both modern and ancient, express the opinion that many bishops barely understood the issues involved, nor did they even want to. Personally, I consider the issue itself important, but the greatest problem of all was the willingness to innovate and the unwillingness to submit shown by Arius and Eusebius (of Nicomedia). Apparently, a number of bishops had held Arian opinions since the time of Lucius and without controversy. With a better attitude, the fathers would have been consulted, and the issues easily resolved in council long before Nicea. The writings of the pre-Nicene Christians are clear and consistent on the issues raised by the Arius.
merely unbecoming, but positively evil, that such should be the case. But I will refresh your minds by a little illustration, as follows.

You know that philosophers, though they all adhere to one system, are yet frequently at issue on certain points and differ, perhaps, in their degree of knowledge. Yet they are recalled to harmony of sentiment by the uniting power of their common doctrines. If this be true, is it not far more reasonable that you, who are the ministers of the Supreme God, should be of one mind respecting the profession of the same religion?

But let us still more thoughtfully and with closer attention examine what I have said, and see whether it be right that, on the ground of some trifling and foolish verbal difference between ourselves, brothers should assume towards each other the attitude of enemies and the august meeting of the synod\textsuperscript{51} be rent by profane disunion because of you who wrangle together on points so trivial and altogether unessential? This is vulgar and rather characteristic of childish ignorance than consistent with the wisdom of priests and men of sense.

Let us withdraw ourselves with a good will from these temptations of the devil. Our great God and common Savior of all has granted the same light to us all. Permit me, who am his servant,\textsuperscript{52} to bring my task to a successful conclusion, under the direction of his Providence, that I may be enabled, through my exhortations, diligence, and earnest admonition, to recall his people to communion and fellowship. For since you have, as I said, but one faith and one sentiment respecting our religion, and since the Divine commandment in all its parts enjoins on us all the duty of maintaining a spirit of concord, let not the circumstance which has led to a slight difference between you, since it does not affect the validity of the whole, cause any division or schism among you.

And this I say without in any way desiring to force you to entire unity of judgment in regard to this truly idle question, whatever its real nature may be. For the dignity of your synod\textsuperscript{53} may be preserved, and the communion of your whole body maintained unbroken, however wide a difference may exist among you as to unimportant matters. For we are not all of us like-minded on every subject, nor is there such a thing as one disposition and judgment common to all alike. As far, then, as regards the Divine Providence, let there be one faith and one understanding among you, one united judgment in reference to God. But as to your subtle disputations on questions of little or no significance, though you may be unable to harmonize in sentiment, such differences should be consigned to the secret custody of your own minds and thoughts.

And now, let the preciousness of common affection, let faith in the truth, let the honor due to God and to the observance of his law continue immovably among you. Resume, then, your mutual feelings of friendship, love, and regard; restore to the people their desired embraces; and once you have purified your souls, as it were, once more acknowledge one another. For it often happens that when a reconciliation is effected by the removal of the causes of enmity, friendship becomes even sweeter than it was before.

Restore to me then my quiet days and untroubled nights, that the joy of undimmed light, the delight of a tranquil life, may be my portion from now on. Otherwise I will need to mourn with constant tears, nor shall I be able to pass the residue of my days in peace. For while the people of God, whose fellow-servant I am, are thus divided amongst themselves by an unreasonable and pernicious spirit of contention, how is it possible that I shall be able to maintain tranquility of mind?

And I will give you a proof how great my sorrow has been on this behalf. Not long ago I had visited Nicomedia and intended immediately to proceed from that city to the East. It was while I was hastening towards you and had already accomplished the greater part of

\textsuperscript{51} A general reference to the bishops who would constitute a synod in that area. Constantine is not referring to a specific synod.

\textsuperscript{52} Constantine represented himself as a Christian. Whether he was one in truth is discussed in Chapter 14.

\textsuperscript{53} Again, this is a general reference to the bishops of the area, not a specific synod.
the distance that the news of this matter reversed my plan, so that I might not be compelled to see with my own eyes that which I felt myself scarcely able even to hear.

Open then for me from this time forward, by your unity of judgment, that road to the regions of the East which your dissensions have closed against me. Permit me speedily to see yourselves and all other peoples rejoicing together, and render due acknowledgment to God in the language of praise and thanksgiving for the restoration of general concord and liberty to all.
Appendix F:

Constantine's Speech to the Council of Nicea

This was Constantine's opening speech when the bishops began to meet in session at Nicea.

From Eusebius, Life of Constantine III:12.

It was once my chief desire, dearest friends, to enjoy the display of your united presence. Now that this desire is fulfilled, I feel myself bound to render thanks to God the universal King because, in addition to all his other benefits, he has granted me a blessing higher than all the rest, in permitting me to see you not only all assembled together, but all united in a common harmony of sentiment. I pray therefore that no malignant adversary may henceforth interfere to mar our happy state; I pray that since the impious hostility of the tyrants has been forever removed by the power of God our Savior, that spirit who delights in evil may devise no other means for exposing the divine law to blasphemous defamation.

For, in my judgment, internal strife within the Church of God is far more evil and dangerous than any kind of war or conflict, and these our differences appear to me more grievous than any outward trouble. Accordingly, when, by the will and with the cooperation of God, I had been victorious over my enemies, I thought that nothing more remained but to return thanks to him and sympathize in the joy of those whom he had restored to freedom through my instrumentality. As soon as I heard that news which I had least expected to receive—I mean the news of your dissension—I judged it to be of no secondary importance, but with the earnest desire that a remedy for this evil also might be found through my means, I immediately sent to require your presence.

And now I rejoice in beholding your assembly. But I feel that my desires will be most completely fulfilled when I can see you all united in one judgment, with that common spirit of peace and concord prevailing among you all, which it becomes you, as consecrated to the service of God, to commend to others. Do not delay, then, dear friends; do not delay, you ministers of God and faithful servants of him who is our common Lord and Savior. Begin from this moment to discard the causes of that disunion which has existed among you and remove the perplexities of controversy by embracing the principles of peace. For by such conduct you will at the same time be acting in a manner most pleasing to the supreme God, and you will confer an exceeding favor on me who am your fellow servant.

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54 His fellow emperors over the last 20 years, who had all persecuted Christians.
Appendix G:

The Nicene and Constantinopolitan Creeds

Here is the text of the Nicene Creed as reported by the primary sources. You may see modern renderings that include extra wording. This is because there were additions approved by the Council of Chalcedon in 451, which they attributed to the Council of Constantinople in 381. That creed is known as the Nicaeano-Constantinopolitanum Creed, and it is given below. Also, a version of the creed known as the Apostles Creed, which is the official creed of the Reformed churches.

The anathemas at the end of the Nicene Creed were included by the Council of Nicea, but they are not part of later creeds.

The original creed was written in Greek. This translation is from The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, series 2, volume I. I have made minor updates to the punctuation, and I have formed sections for easier memory.

The Nicene Creed

The Father

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible.

The Son

And [we believe] in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten of the Father.

That is, of the substance of the Father; God of God and Light of light; true God of true God; begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father.

By [him] all things were made, both which are in heaven and on earth: who, for the sake of us men and on account of our salvation, descended, became incarnate, and was made man; suffered, arose again the third day, and ascended into the heavens, and will come again to judge the living and the dead.

The Holy Spirit

[We] also [believe] in the Holy Spirit.

Anathemas

But the holy, catholic, and apostolic church anathematizes those who say, "There was a time when he was not" and "He was not before he was begotten" and "He was made from that which did not exist," and those who assert that he is of other substance or essence than the Father, that he was created, or is susceptible of change.

The Nicaeano-Constantinopolitanum Creed

This is a slightly expanded version of the Nicene Creed that is still the official creed of the Roman Catholic Church. It is found in the proceedings of the Council of Chalcedon in
451,\textsuperscript{55} where they attribute it to the Council of Constantinople. There is no evidence that it was formulated or approved there, but it remains known as the \textit{Nicaeano-Constantinopolitanum Creed}.

If you ever see a version of the Nicene Creed published in modern times, it will usually be this one, though that is changing as the internet becomes more popular.

\textbf{The Father}

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.

\textbf{The Son}

And [we believe] in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of his Father before all worlds, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made. Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, was incarnate by the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary, was made man, and was also crucified for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried. The third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father. He shall come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead. His kingdom shall have no end.

\textbf{The Holy Spirit}

And [we believe] in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; and who spoke by the prophets.

And [we believe] in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

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\textsuperscript{55} \textit{Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers.} Series II. Vol. XIV.
Appendix H:

The Letter of the Council of Nicea to Alexandria and Egypt

This letter is found in *Ecclesiastical History of Socrates Scholasticus* I:9.

In preparation, you need to know the following about Melitius.

**Melitius**

Melitius was the bishop of Lycopolis in Egypt and as such would have been under the authority of the bishop of Alexandria.

Even while the Great Persecution was going on, Melitius refused to commune with those who had lapsed during persecution even if they repented later. He was not the first to take such a stand. The *Cathari*, or Novatianists, had taken the same stand in the mid-third century.

Melitius, like Novatian before him, let his opinion carry him into schism. He appointed a number of bishops who agreed with him, and he did so in areas where the metropolitan of Alexandria should have had authority.

Apparently the council considered this a more local issue than the Novatianist schism. The Novatianists are directly addressed in Canon 8, while Melitius is not mentioned except in this letter to Alexandria, written after the council.

The council's solution was not successful. The Melitians remained in schism and continued as a separated sect for another century. As with the Novatians, it was hard to stay in schism over an issue that involved the persecution of Christians when the persecution of Christians, for the most part, stopped after Constantine.

**The Letter of the Council of Nicea to the Alexandrians**

To the holy, by the grace of God, and great church of the Alexandrians, and to our beloved brethren throughout Egypt, Libya, and Pentapolis, the bishops assembled at Nicea, constituting the great and holy synod, send greeting in the Lord.

Since, by the grace of God, a great and holy synod has been convened at Nicea, our most pious sovereign Constantine having summoned us out of various cities and provinces for that purpose, it appeared to us indispensably necessary that a letter should be written to you on the part of the sacred synod so that you may know what subjects were brought under consideration and examined and what was eventually determined and decreed.

In the first place, then, the impiety and guilt of Arius and his adherents were examined in the presence of our most religious emperor Constantine, and it was unanimously decided that his impious opinion should be anathematized, with all the blasphemous expressions he has uttered, in affirming that "the Son of God sprang from nothing" and that "there was a time when he was not." He said moreover that "the Son of God, because possessed of free will, was capable either of vice or virtue," and he called him a creature and a work. All these

56 A bishop of a major city that had authority over bishops of surrounding towns or even whole provinces and countries.

57 Chapter 7
sentiments the holy synod has anathematized, having scarcely patience to endure the hearing of such an impious opinion—or rather madness—and such blasphemous words.

But the conclusion of our proceedings against him you must either have been informed of already or will soon learn, for we do not wish to seem to trample on a man who has received the chastisement which his crime deserved. Yet so contagious has his pestilent error proved as to drag into perdition Theonas, bishop of Marmarica, and Secundus of Ptolemais, for they have suffered the same condemnation as himself. But when the grace of God delivered us from those detestable dogmas, with all their impiety and blasphemy, and from those persons who had dared to cause discord and division among a people previously at peace, there still remained the rebellion of Melitius and those who had been ordained by him.

We now state to you, beloved brethren, what resolution the synod came to on this point. It was decreed, the synod being moved to great clemency towards Melitius, although strictly speaking he was wholly undeserving of favor, that he remain in his own city but exercise no authority either to ordain or nominate for ordination and that he appear in no other district or city on this pretence, but simply retain a nominal dignity; that those who had received appointments from him, after having been confirmed by a more legitimate ordination, should be admitted to communion on these conditions: that they should continue to hold their rank and ministry, but regard themselves as inferior in every respect to all those who have been ordained and established in each place and church by our most-honored fellow-minister, Alexander, so that they shall have no authority to propose or nominate whom they please or to do anything at all without the concurrence of some bishop of the Catholic Church who is one of Alexander’s suffragans.58

On the other hand, such as, by the grace of God and your prayers, have been found in no schism, but have continued in the Catholic Church blameless, shall have authority to nominate and ordain those who are worthy of the sacred office and to act in all things according to ecclesiastical law and usage. When it may happen that any of those holding preference in the church die, then let these who have been thus recently admitted be advanced to the dignity of the deceased, provided that they should appear worthy and that the people should elect them, the bishop of Alexandria also ratifying their choice. This privilege is conceded to all the others indeed, but to Melitius personally we by no means grant the same license, because of his former disorderly conduct and because of the rashness and levity of his character, in order that no authority or jurisdiction should be given him as a man liable again to create similar disturbances.

These are the things which especially affect Egypt and the most holy church of the Alexandrians. If any other canon or ordinance has been established, our lord and most-honored fellow-minister and brother Alexander, being present with us, will on his return to you enter into more minute details, inasmuch as he has been a participant in whatever is transacted and has had the principal direction of it.

We have also gratifying information to communicate to you relative to unity of judgment on the subject of the most holy feast of Passover, for this point also has been happily settled through your prayers. The result is that all the brethren in the East who have previously kept this festival when the Jews did will conform from now on to the Romans and to us and to all who from the earliest time have observed our period of celebrating Easter. Rejoicing therefore in these conclusions and in the general unanimity and peace, as well as in the extinction of all heresy, receive with the greatest honor and more abundant love our fellow-minister and your bishop, Alexander, who has greatly delighted us by his presence, and even at his advanced age has undergone extraordinary exertions in order that peace might be reestablished among you. Pray on behalf of us all that the things decided as just may be inviolably maintained through Almighty God and our Lord Jesus Christ, together with the Holy Spirit, to whom be glory for ever.

58 A bishop that is under a higher bishop, such as a metropolitan.
Amen.

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Appendix I:

Eusebius' Letter to His Home Church at Caesarea

From The Ecclesiastical History of Socrates Scholasticus 1:8.

You have probably had some intimation, beloved, of the transactions of the great council convened at Nicea in relation to the faith of the Church, since rumor generally outruns true account of that which has really taken place. But lest from such report alone you might form an incorrect estimate of the matter, we have deemed it necessary to submit to you, in the first place, an exposition of the faith proposed by us in written form, and then a second which has been promulgated, consisting of ours with certain additions to its expression. The declaration of faith set forth by us, which when read in the presence of our most pious emperor seemed to meet with universal approbation, was thus expressed:

As we received from the bishops who preceded us, both in our instruction and when we were baptized; as also we have ourselves learned from the sacred Scriptures; and in accordance with what we have both believed and taught while discharging the duties of elder and the bishop's office itself; so now we believe and present to you the distinct avowal of our faith. It is this:

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible.

And [we believe] in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Word of God—God of God, Light of Light, Life of Life—the only-begotten Son, born before all creation, begotten of God the Father before all ages, by whom also all things were made; who on account of our salvation became incarnate, lived among men; who suffered and rose again on the third day, ascended to the Father, and shall come again in glory to judge the living and the dead.

We believe also in one Holy Spirit.

We believe in the existence and subsistence of each of these: that the Father is truly Father, the Son truly Son, and the Holy Spirit truly Holy Spirit; even as our Lord also, when he sent forth his disciples to preach the Gospel, said, "Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" [Matt. 28:19].

Concerning these doctrines we steadfastly maintain their truth and avow our full confidence in them. These also were our sentiments in the past, and such we shall continue to hold until death in an unshaken adherence to this faith. We anathematize every impious heresy. In the presence of God Almighty and of our Lord Jesus Christ we testify that thus we have believed and thought from our heart and soul since we have possessed a right estimate of ourselves and that we now think and speak what is perfectly in accordance with the truth. We are moreover prepared to prove to you by undeniable evidences and to convince you that in time past we have thus believed and so preached.

When these articles of faith were proposed, there seemed to be no ground of opposition. No, even our most pious emperor himself was the first to admit that they were perfectly
correct and that he himself had entertained the sentiments contained in them.\textsuperscript{59} He exhorted all present to give them their assent and subscribe to these very articles, thus agreeing in a unanimous profession of them—with the insertion, however, of that single word, \textit{homoousios},\textsuperscript{60} an expression which the emperor himself explained as not indicating corporeal affections or properties. Consequently the Son did not subsist from the Father either by division or by cutting off. For, said he, a nature which is immaterial and incorporeal cannot possibly be subject to any corporeal understanding; hence, our conception of such things can only be in divine and mysterious terms. Such was the philosophical view of the subject taken by our most wise and pious sovereign, and the bishops, because of the word \textit{homoousios}, drew up this formula of faith:

\begin{quote}
We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible;

And [we believe] in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten of the Father, that is, of the substance of the Father; God of God, Light of light, true God of true God; begotten not made, consubstantial with the Father, by whom all things were made, both which are in heaven and on earth; who for the sake of us men and on account of our salvation, descended, became incarnate, was made man, suffered and rose again on the third day. He ascended into the heavens, and will come to judge the living and the dead;

[We believe] also in the Holy Spirit.

But those who say, "There was a time when he was not"; or, "He did not exist before he was begotten"; or, "He was made of nothing"; or assert that he is of other substance or essence than the Father; or that the Son of God is created, mutable, or susceptible of change, the catholic and apostolic Church of God anathematizes.

Now when this declaration of faith was propounded by them, we did not neglect to investigate the distinct sense of the expressions "of the substance of the Father" and "consubstantial with the Father." When we did, questions and answers were put forth, and the meaning of these terms was clearly defined. At that point it was generally admitted that \textit{ousios}\textsuperscript{61} simply implied that the Son is of the Father indeed, but does not subsist as a part of his substance. To this interpretation of the sacred doctrine—which declares that the Son is of the Father but is not a part of his substance—it seemed right to us to assent. We ourselves therefore concurred in this exposition. Nor do we cavil at the word \textit{homoousios}, having regard to peace, and fearing to lose a right understanding of the matter.

On the same grounds we admitted also the expression "begotten, not made." "For 'made,'" said [the council], "is a term applicable in common to all the creatures which were made by the Son, to whom the Son has no resemblance. Consequently he is no creature like those which were made by him, but is of a substance far excelling any creature. The Divine Oracles teach that this substance was begotten of the Father by such a mode of generation as cannot be explained nor even conceived by any creature."\textsuperscript{62}

Thus also the declaration that "the Son is consubstantial with the Father" having been discussed, it was agreed that this must not be understood in a corporeal sense, or in any way

\textsuperscript{59} It is simply astounding that Eusebius felt it important to have the emperor's approval of the articles of faith, rather than informing the emperor of what the church approved.

\textsuperscript{60} "One in substance." See Chapter 16.

\textsuperscript{61} Substance or essence.

\textsuperscript{62} While we would all agree with the sentiments expressed in this paragraph, the council did ban a term which they all understood to be used in Scripture. (Proverbs 8:22, LXX. See Chapter 16.)
analogous to mortal creatures; inasmuch as it is neither by division of substance, nor by abscission,\textsuperscript{63} nor by any change of the Father’s substance and power, since the underived nature of the Father is inconsistent with all these things.

That he is consubstantial \textit{[homoousios]} with the Father then simply implies that the Son of God has no resemblance to created things, but is in every respect like the Father only who begat him; that he is of no other substance or essence but of the Father. To this doctrine, explained in this way, it appeared right to assent, especially since we knew that some eminent bishops and learned writers among the ancients have used the term \textit{homoousios} in their theological discourses concerning the nature of the Father and the Son.\textsuperscript{64}

Such is what I have to state to you in reference to the articles of faith which have been promulgated and in which we have all concurred—not without due examination, but according to the senses assigned—which were investigated in the presence of our most highly favored emperor and, for the reasons mentioned, approved.

We have also considered the anathema pronounced by them after the declaration of faith inoffensive because it prohibits the use of illegitimate terms, from which almost all the distraction and commotion of the churches have arisen. Accordingly, since no divinely inspired Scripture contains the expressions, "of things which do not exist" and "there was a time when he was not" and such other phrases as are included there, it seemed unwarrantable to utter and teach them. In addition, this decision received our sanction from the consideration that we have never before been accustomed to employ these terms.

We deemed it incumbent on us, beloved, to acquaint you with the caution which has characterized both our examination of and concurrence in these things and [to inform you] that on justifiable grounds we resisted to the last moment the introduction of certain objectionable expressions as long as these were not acceptable. We received them without dispute when, on mature deliberation as we examined the sense of the words, they appeared to agree with what we had originally proposed as a sound confession of faith.

\textsuperscript{63} Cutting off.

\textsuperscript{64} See Chapter 16.
Appendix J:

The Letter of Constantine Regarding the Decisions of the Council of Nicea

Eusebius records a copy of this letter in Life of Constantine 17-20. He ends it by saying:

The emperor transmitted a faithful copy of this letter to every province, in which those who read it may discern, as in a mirror, the pure sincerity of his thoughts and of his piety toward God.

Eusebius was, needless to say, very impressed with Emperor Constantine. Perhaps this letter will help in forming your own opinion of him.

Constantine, Early Christianity, and the Jews

Constantine's extremely negative attitude toward the Jews in this letter is a product of the Christians' attitude toward the Jews, and there is no justifying it.

When Jesus came, he confined all of humanity under sin, not any one race. It is the sins of mankind that put Jesus on the cross, not Jewish or Roman hands.

Constantine's Letter to the Churches

Constantinus Augustus to the Churches:

Having had full proof, in the general prosperity of the empire, how great the favor of God has been towards us, I have judged that it ought to be the first object of my endeavors, that unity of faith, sincerity of love, and community of feeling in regard to the worship of Almighty God might be preserved among the highly favored multitude who compose the Catholic Church. Because this object could not be effectually and certainly secured unless all, or at least the greater number of the bishops, were to meet together, and a discussion of all particulars relating to our most holy religion were to take place; for this reason as numerous an assembly as possible has been convened.

I myself was present at the assembly, as one among yourselves—far be it from me to deny that which is my greatest joy, that I am your fellow-servant—and every question received due and full examination until that judgment which God, who sees all things, could approve, and which tended to unity and concord, was brought to light, so that no room was left for further discussion or controversy in relation to the faith.

At this meeting the question concerning the most holy day of Passover was discussed, and it was resolved by the united judgment of all present that this feast ought to be kept by all and in every place on one and the same day. For what can be more becoming or honorable to us than that this feast, from which we date our hopes of immortality, should be observed unfailingly by all alike, according to one ascertained order and arrangement?

First of all, it appeared an unworthy thing that in the celebration of this most holy feast we should follow the practice of the Jews, who have impiously defiled their hands with enormous sin, and are, therefore, deservedly afflicted with blindness of soul. For we have it

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65 Because Jesus, our Passover, died on that day.
in our power, if we abandon their custom, to prolong the due observance of this ordinance to future ages by a truer order, which we have preserved from the very day of the passion until the present time. Let us then have nothing in common with the detestable Jewish crowd, for we have received from our Savior a different way.

A course at once legitimate and honorable lies open to our most holy religion. Beloved brethren, let us with one consent adopt this course, and withdraw ourselves from all participation in their baseness. For their boast is absurd indeed, that it is not in our power without instruction from them to observe these things. For how should they be capable of forming a sound judgment, who, since their parricidal guilt in slaying their Lord, have been subject to the direction, not of reason, but of ungodly passion and are swayed by every impulse of the mad spirit that is in them?

Hence it is that on this point as well as others they have no perception of the truth, so that, being altogether ignorant of the true adjustment of this question, they sometimes celebrate Passover twice in the same year. Why then should we follow those who are confessedly in grievous error? Surely we shall never consent to keep this feast a second time in the same year.

But supposing these reasons were not of sufficient weight, still it would be incumbent on your judgments to strive and pray continually that the purity of your souls may not seem in anything to be sullied by fellowship with the customs of these most wicked men. We must consider, too, that a discordant judgment in a case of such importance and concerning such a religious festival is wrong. For our Savior has left us one feast in commemoration of the day of our deliverance; I mean the day of his most holy passion. He has willed that his Catholic Church should be one, the members of which, however scattered in many and diverse places, are yet cherished by one pervading spirit; that is, by the will of God.

Let the wise judgment of Your Holinesses reflect how grievous and scandalous it is that on the self same days some should be engaged in fasting, others in festive enjoyment; and again, that after the days of Passover some should be present at banquets and amusements, while others are fulfilling the appointed fasts. It is, then, plainly the will of Divine Providence, as I suppose you all clearly see, that this usage should receive fitting correction and be reduced to one uniform rule.

Since, therefore, it was needful that this matter should be rectified, so that we might have nothing in common with that nation of parricides who slew their Lord; and since that arrangement is consistent with propriety which is observed by all the churches of the western, southern, and northern parts of the world — and by some of the eastern also; for these reasons all are unanimous on this present occasion in thinking it worthy of adoption.

I myself have undertaken that this decision should meet with the approval of your wise judgment, in the hope that Your Wisdoms will gladly admit that practice which is observed at once in the city of Rome, in Africa, throughout Italy, in Egypt, in Spain, the Gauls, Britain, Libya, the whole of Greece, in the dioceses of Asia and Pontus, and in Cilicia with entire unity of judgment. You will consider not only that the number of churches is far greater in

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66 What a different attitude the apostle Paul showed towards the Jews when he said, "I could wish myself accursed from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom pertains the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the Law, the service, the promises, to whom belong the fathers, and from whom, in regard to the flesh, Christ came" (Rom. 9:3-5). He obviously did not find them "detestable."

67 Due to the Jewish lunar calendar, Nisan 14 sometimes fell before and sometimes after the vernal equinox. So if a Passover fell after the beginning of spring one year, but before it the next, Constantine accuses them of celebrating two Passovers in the same year. The charge is obviously absurd, as Passover was originally a Jewish feast scheduled according to a Jewish, not a Roman calendar.

68 Constantine is reporting what was handed to him, not establishing a new practice. All indications are that Passover was the only feast celebrated by Christians.
the regions I have enumerated than in any other, but also that it is most fitting that all should
unite in desiring that which sound reason appears to demand and in avoiding all participa-
tion in the perjured conduct of the Jews.

In conclusion, that I may express my meaning in as few words as possible, it has been
determined by the common judgment of all, that the most holy feast of Passover should be
kept on one and the same day. For on the one hand a discrepancy of opinion on so sacred a
question is unbecoming, and on the other it is surely best to act on a decision which is free
from strange folly and error.

Receive, then, with all willingness this truly divine injunction, and regard it as in truth
the gift of God. For whatever is determined in the holy assemblies of the bishops is to be
regarded as indicative of the divine will. As soon, therefore, as you have communicated
these proceedings to all our beloved brethren, you are bound from that time forward to
adopt for yourselves and to enjoin on others the arrangement above mentioned, the due
observance of this most sacred day, that, whenever I come into the presence of your love,
which I have long desired, I may have it in my power to celebrate the holy feast with you
on the same day and may rejoice with you on all accounts, when I behold the cruel power
of Satan removed by divine aid through the agency of our endeavors, while your faith,
peace, and concord everywhere flourish.

God preserve you, beloved brethren!

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Appendix K:

The Rule of Faith of the Church in Caesarea

The following rule of faith was presented to the Council of Nicea by Eusebius, the historian and bishop of Caesarea. It was then discussed and used as the basis for the Nicene Creed.

Eusebius himself, in his letter to Caesarea, testifies that "when these articles of faith were proposed, there seemed to be no ground of opposition."  

The Rule of Faith of the Church in Caesarea

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Word of God; God of God, Light of light, Life of life; the only-begotten Son, born before all creation, begotten of God the Father before all ages, by whom also all things were made; who on account of our salvation became incarnate and lived among men; and who suffered and rose again on the third day, ascended to the Father, and shall come again in glory to judge the living and the dead.

We believe also in one Holy Spirit.

We believe in the existence and subsistence of each of these: that the Father is truly Father, the Son truly Son, and the Holy Spirit truly Holy Spirit; even as our Lord also, when he sent his disciples out to preach the Gospel, said, "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

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69 Appendix I.
Appendix L:

Canonical Lists Before the Council of Nicea

The Muratorian Canon is given here in full because it is the earliest, dating from AD 170 (or thereabout). It is a fragment of an ancient manuscript, so it starts and ends abruptly.

After that I will simply give you the lists of books plus a reference to where the list is found.

Beyond what is listed here, we have the evidence supplied by Scripture quotations by the various pre-Nicene and Nicene authors, as well as discussions they provide concerning disputed books. Dionysius, for example, discusses the Book of Revelation, and Tertullian has a discussion on both The Shepherd of Hermas and Hebrews, the latter of which he believed to have been written by Barnabas.

Muratorian Canon (Fragment)

... those things at which he was present he placed thus.

The third book of the Gospel—the one according to Luke, the well-known physician—was written by Luke in his own name, sequentially, after the ascension of Christ at the time when Paul had associated him with himself as one studious of righteousness. [Luke] himself did not see the Lord in the flesh. As he was able he began his narrative with the birth of John [the Baptist].

The fourth Gospel is that of John, one of the disciples. When his fellow disciples and bishops pleaded with him, he said, "Fast with me for three days, and then we'll tell each other whatever may be revealed to any of us." That very night it was revealed to Andrew, one of the apostles, that John should write everything in his own name as they remembered them.

As a result, although different points are taught to us in the various books of the Gospels, there is no difference as regards the faith of believers. In all of them, under one imperial Spirit, everything is told which concerns the Lord’s birth, his suffering, his resurrection, his conduct with his disciples, and his twofold coming: the first in the humiliation of rejection, which is now past, and the second in the glory of royal power, which is still in the future.

What a marvel it is, then, that John presents these various things so consistently in his letters, too! He says in his own person, "What we have seen with our eyes, heard with our ears, and our hands have handled, that have we written" [1 Jn. 1:1]. For in this way he testifies that he is not only the eyewitness, but also the hearer. Besides that, he is also the historian of all the wondrous facts concerning the Lord in their order.

In addition, the Acts of All the Apostles are comprised by Luke in one book and addressed to the most excellent Theophilus because these events took place when he was present himself. He shows this clearly—that the principle on which he wrote was to give only what fell under his own notice—by the omission of the suffering of Peter, and also of the journey of Paul when he went from the city of Rome to Spain.70

In regard to the epistles of Paul: again, to those who will understand the matter, they give their own indication of what they are, from what place or with what purpose they were directed. He wrote first of all, and at considerable length, to the Corinthians to check the

70 It seems to have been a universal belief of the early churches that Paul went west to Spain, and possibly even to Britain, after his release from the imprisonment described at the end of Acts.
schism of heresy; then to the Galatians to forbid circumcision; then to the Romans on the rule of the Old Testament Scriptures, and also to show them that Christ is the first object in these, which it is necessary for us to discuss separately.

The blessed apostle Paul, following the rule of his predecessor John, writes to no more than seven churches by name, in this order: the first to the Corinthians, the second to the Ephesians, the third to the Philippians, the fourth to the Colossians, the fifth to the Galatians, the sixth to the Thessalonians, the seventh to the Romans. In addition, though he writes twice to the Corinthians and Thessalonians for their correction, still it is apparent by this sevenfold writing that there is one Church spread abroad through the whole world. John, too, in the Revelation, although he writes only to seven churches, yet addresses all.

[Paul] wrote, besides these, one to Philemon, one to Titus, and two to Timothy, in simple personal affection and love indeed. Nonetheless, these are holy in the esteem of the catholic Church and in the regulation of church discipline. There are also [letters] in circulation, one to the Laodiceans and another to the Alexandrians, forged under the name of Paul and addressed against the heresy of Marcion. There are also several others which cannot be received into the catholic Church, for it is not suitable for gall to be mingled with honey.

The Epistle of Jude, indeed, and two belonging to the above-named John, or bearing the name of John, are reckoned among the catholic epistles along with the book of Wisdom, written by the friends of Solomon in his honor.71

We also receive the Revelation of John and that of Peter, though some among us will not have this latter read in the church. The Pastor, moreover, did Hermas write very recently in our times in the city of Rome, while his brother, bishop Pius, sat in the chair of the church of Rome. Therefore it also ought to be read, but it cannot be read publicly in the church to the people, nor placed among the prophets, as their number is complete, nor among the apostles to the end of time.

Of the writings of Arsinous, also called Valentinus, or of Miltiades, we receive nothing at all. Those are also rejected who wrote the new Book of Psalms for Marcion, together with Basilides and the founder of the Asian Cataphrygians.

Melito of Sardis, c. AD 170


- Of Moses, five books: Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Leviticus, Deuteronomy
- Jesus Nave [i.e., Joshua of Nun]
- Judges
- Ruth
- of Kings, four books [1 & 2 Samuel; 1 & 2 Kings]
- Of Chronicles, two
- The Psalms of David
- The Proverbs of Solomon
- Wisdom72

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71 The Wisdom of Solomon, or Wisdom, is one of the seven "apocryphal" books that are in the Roman Catholic Bible, but not the Protestant Bible. It is interesting that the Muratorian Canon treats it as a New Testament book, when it would be considered Old Testament by modern Christians.

72 It's hard to tell whether this is the Wisdom of Sirach, also known as Ecclesiasticus, or the Wisdom of Solomon, both of which are among the Roman Catholic "apocryphal" books not regarded as canonical by the Protestants.
- Ecclesiastes
- Song of Songs
- Job
- Of Prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah
- Of the twelve prophets, one book
- Daniel
- Ezekiel
- Esdras

**Origen, c. AD 240**

- Genesis
- Exodus
- Leviticus
- Numbers
- Deuteronomy
- Joshua
- Judges & Ruth in one book
- 1 & 2 Kings in one book
- 1 & 2 Samuel in one book
- 1 & 2 Chronicles in one book
- Ezra and Nehemiah in one book
- Psalms
- Proverbs
- Ecclesiastes
- Song of Songs
- Isaiah
- Jeremiah and Lamentations in one book
- Daniel
- Ezekiel
- Job
- Esther
- The Maccabees

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73 Esdras is our Ezra, and in this case it may have included Nehemiah as well. See, for example, Origen's list, which is next.
Eusebius, AD 323


**Accepted Writings:**
- Four Gospels
- Acts
- Letters of Paul
- 1 John
- 1 Peter
- Revelation of John

Here, concerning the Revelation, Eusebius writes, "After [these accepted writings] is to be placed, if it really seem proper, the Apocalypse of John, concerning which we shall give the different opinions at the proper time. These, then belong among the accepted writings."

At the end of his list of all three sets of books, he adds, "And besides, as I said, the Apocalypse of John, if it seem proper, which some, as I said, reject, but which others class with the accepted books."

**Disputed Writings:**
- James
- Jude
- 2 Peter
- 2 John
- 3 John

**Rejected Writings:**
- Acts of Paul
- Shepherd of Hermas
- Apocalypse of Peter
- Letter of Barnabas
- Didache

Augustine, AD 397

- Genesis
- Exodus
- Leviticus
- Numbers
- Deuteronomy
Joshua
Judges
Ruth
Four books of Kings [includes 1 & 2 Samuel]
Two books of Chronicles
Job
Tobiah
Esther
Judith
1 & 2 Maccabees
Ezra and Nehemiah
Psalms
Proverbs
Song of Songs
Ecclesiastes
Wisdom [of Solomon]\textsuperscript{74}
Ecclesiasticus
12 Minor Prophets
Isaiah
Jeremiah
Daniel
Ezekiel
Matthew
Mark
Luke
John
Romans
1 & 2 Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesus
Philippians
1 & 2 Thessalonians
Colossians

\textsuperscript{74} Augustine writes, "For two books, one called Wisdom and one called Ecclesiasticus, are ascribed to Solomon from a certain resemblance of style, but the most likely opinion is that they were written by Jesus, the son of Sirach. Still, they are to be reckoned among the prophetic books, since they have attained recognition as being authoritative."
• 1 & 2 Timothy
• Titus
• Philemon
• Hebrews
• 1 & 2 Peter
• 1, 2, & 3 John
• Jude
• James
• Acts
• Revelation of John

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Bibliography

These are in alphabetical order by book or web site title. I found it more useful to reference book titles than authors in the footnote. Thus, alphabetizing the bibliography by book or web site title was necessary for your reference.

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Thank You!

Thank you for reading *In the Beginning Was the Logos*! I hope that you have been encouraged, educated, entertained, and above all, provoked to love and good works in fellowship with Jesus Christ, the Son and eternal Logos of God.

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