

TURNING POINTS IN CHRISTIAN HISTORY Paul E. Engle 2022
#3 The Council of Nicaea

I. WHAT EVENTS LED UP TO THE COUNCIL OF NICAEA?

A. A young man named **Arius** was born in Libya, northern Africa, c. 250 AD. In 313 he moved to Alexandria in Northern Africa—Egypt. He served in a church called St. Marks, doing some preaching in the pulpit.

B. Arius's bishop, _____, becomes upset with what the young man was teaching from the pulpit. But his ideas began to influence people. Why? _____

C. One of the lines was, "*Once the Son did not exist.*" He challenged Alexander's teaching that the Father and Son possess equal eternity. Instead he asserted that "*There was (once) when Christ was not.*" When Scripture describes Christ as "begotten" Arius viewed it as equivalent to "creating."

D. Many Christians disagreed with him so they ended up singing what song that is still used in the church today? _____

E. Alexander preached a sermon that stirred up Arius. What was the sermon about? _____

F. Alexander the bishop then decided to suspend Arius from his office in the church. But even this didn't silence Arius. He thought that saying Christ is co-eternal with the Father was endorsing polytheism, and must be opposed.

G. Alexander then had Arius condemned at two synods: _____

H. The conflict over these views of Arius spread and threatened the unity of the Roman Empire. The emperor _____ was concerned that this conflict will continue to spread. So he decided to call an _____.

II. WHAT TOOK PLACE AT THE COUNCIL OF NICAEA?

A. Where was the Council held? _____.

B. Who was there?

C. Proceedings at the Council? Views represented:

1. Supporters of the teachings of Arius led by Eusebius of Nicomedia,
2. Moderate subordinationists who followed the teaching of _____. Didn't view teachings of Arius as dangerous.
3. Conservatives who were hostile to new doctrinal formulas and concerned about unity
4. Leaders who viewed teaching of Arius as dangerous and wanted to outlaw it
5. Monarchists whose views were perceived by many as carrying an implicit Modalism

* Who was one of the famous bishops? _____

* How did the council begin? _____

6. Eusebius of Nicomedia who led the Arian party presented a formula for faith. But had strong disapproval from most of the delegates.

7. A main opposition leader who spoke against Arius was _____ (296-337). What was his nickname? _____

- When Bishop Alexander died Athanasius was made Bishop of Alexandria.
- The man presiding over the council was **Hosius** who helped them draft a Creed that became known as the Nicene Creed because of the location.
- The important debate centered around two Greek words that differ only by a single letter – omicron.

***Homousia** = essence (this was rejected).

***Homoousia** = (in Latin consubstantialis) "of the same substance".

The Son is not just _____, but is the same _____!

8. Arius is condemned as a heretic. Anyone preaching his ideas or even possessing his manuscripts may be convicted of a capital crime. Here are the views that the council rejected from the Arians:

* That "There was when he was not", or "He came to be from nothing."

* That the Son of God is "created", or "alterable" or "mutable."

* That the Son of God is "of another substance or essence" or "created" or "changeable" or "alterable." They said, "these the Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes."

III. WHAT WERE THE RESULTS OF THE COUNCIL OF NICAEA

A Though Arius was exiled he still had a _____

B. In 335 Athanasius was exiled to Gaul. False accusations were made against him including a woman who claimed he tried to seduce her. Others claimed that he tried to keep large shipments of grain from leaving Alexandria to be delivered to Constantinople.

B. So Arius came back into favor. But before he could re-enter the church and celebrate communion what unexpected event happened? _____

C. Arianism continued to be a problem. But by 381 the **ecumenical Council of Constantinople** ended in settling once for all that Arianism is a heresy.

D. Three main reasons why the Council of Nicaea is an important turning point for Christianity:

1. It's an important turning point because it's _____

2. It's an important turning point because it marked a change in the relation of the church to the _____

3. It's an important turning point in clarifying _____.

Nicene Creed

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

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only begotten Son of God,
begotten of His Father before all worlds,
God of God, 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
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary
and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered and was buried.
And the third day He rose again
according to the Scriptures
and ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of the Father.
And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose
kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke
by the prophets.
And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,
and I look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

