What are the two creeds most used around the world?
STORY OF HOW THE NICENE CREED CAME TO BE USED AROUND THE WORLD

* Events that led up to the Council of Nicaea
* Events that took place when the council met
* Events that followed the council
I. WHAT EVENTS LED UP TO THE COUNCIL OF NICAEA?

The story begins in Northern Africa in the 200’s to 300’s.
ARIUS born in Libya c.250.
Moved to Middle Eastern city of Antioch
Chosen as presbyter in 313 moves to Alexandria
Arius moved to Alexandria, Egypt to serve at Saint Mark’s church. There’s a church on the same site today.
Arius does some preaching here at St. Mark’s in Alexandria...

But his bishop, Alexander becomes upset with what he is preaching
Arius was tall, thin, walked barefoot, & had winsome personality. Also musical. Wrote popular songs for his theological words. Sung in streets.

His ideas began to influence people.
Challenging Alexander’s teaching of Father and Son “co-eternal”

“Once the Son did not exist” (Arius)
There was (once) a time when Christ was not.
God so loved the world
He gave His only Begotten Son

Arius thought “begotten” meant “created”.
“Arius taught that Jesus Christ was not derived from the substance of the Father, but, as the first and highest of God’s creations, became the instrument of all the rest of creation.”
Many Christians disagreed with Arius so began singing a song that’s still used in the church today.

Gloria Patri.

Glo-ry be to the Fa-ther, and to the Son, and to the Ho-ly Ghost; As it was in the be-gin-n ing, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. A-men, A-men.
Bishop Alexander in Alexandria preaches sermon on “the great mystery of the Trinity in unity.”

Stirs up Arias to attack sermon.

Christians need to avoid polytheism of Trinity

Writes letter to bishop.
Arius knows that Christians refer to Jesus as “Lord and Savior.” He argues that these titles refer to Christ in relationship to his disciples.
Alexander the bishop suspended me from my office in the church. But this doesn’t silence me. I think that saying Christ is co-eternal with the Father is endorsing polytheism. It must be opposed!
Alexander has Arius condemned at Synod in Alexandria (317-318)
Another condemnation at Synod in Antioch (325)
Arius flees and hides in palace of Eusebius, Bishop of Nicomedia
The conflict over these views of Arius spreads—it threatens the unity of the Roman Empire
Roman Emperor Constantine calls for an ecumenical council of the church.
II. WHAT TOOK PLACE AT THE COUNCIL OF NICAEA?
Where held? NICAEA - (now Iznik, Turkey)
c. 138 km (86 mi) from Istanbul (Constantinople)
WHO WAS PRESENT?
Hundreds of church leaders invited from East and West.

Began meeting May 20, AD 325 (Some say June 19)

Produced “The Creed of the 318”

c. 250 attended
ERA WHEN COSTLY TO STAND UP FOR TRUTH

* Two bishops lost eye from persecution
* Another bishop hamstrung
* Bishop Paul of Caesarea hands hot irons — paralyzed
What were the proceedings?
Supporters of Arius led by Eusebius of Nicomedia

Moderate subordinationists following Origin

Conservatives hostile to new doctrine & concerned about unity

Leaders viewing teaching of Arius as dangerous & wanted to outlaw it.

Monarchists with implicit Modalism (Eustathius)
Bishop Nicholas of Myria in Lyccia (Turkey)
Each Dec. 6 became St. Nicholas Day in parts of world.
He loved children and gave gifts to them.
Overwhelming majority did not agree with Arius who was present.

Constantine the Emperor gave opening address - unity.
Eusebius of Nicomedia led the Arian party and presented a formula significantly different from traditional orthodox statements. Met strong disapproval.
Even Arius could not convince the delegates of his view.
Most of Arian bishops abandoned their support for the statement.
Delegate stood before group and physically tore the document to pieces before everyone!

BLASPHEMY!
Condemn him!
Main opposition leader speaking against Arius.
Known as “The Black Dwarf”

Faced exile 5 times for defending the deity of Christ.

Born into Christian family in Alexandria

When Alexander died made Bishop of Alexandria
“He insists that there is no place in Christian thought for any kind of an intermediate being between God and man, between Creator and creature. And he argues passionately that true redemption is accomplished only through God the Son, not an intermediary. Athanasius wins the day at the Council of Nicaea, the Father and the Son are co-eternal and of one substance (homoousius.)”
Hosius presided over Council.
Helped them draft Nicene Creed
Debate centered around two Greek words differing only in one letter - “ο”

Homousia = (essence) Christ not from the same essence as the Father, but similar. This view rejected!

Homoousia - of the same substance (essence).

Son of same essence as God the Father, not a created being coming from Father. Christ is fully God with the same divine nature as Father.
SON IS NOT JUST SIMILAR BUT IS THE SAME SUBSTANCE.
Anyone preaching his ideas or possessing his manuscripts may be convicted of a capital crime.

All bishops signed resulting document, except 2 plus Arius

Arius condemned as heretic
Views of the Arians rejected:

- 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.” They said, “these are the catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizers.”
RESULTS OF THE COUNCIL OF NICAEA
#1 Though Arius is exiled, he still has a large, loyal following. Constantine the Emperor is sympathetic to him & demands that he be restored to his former position (AD 327)
#2 Athanasius opposes this & wins temporary victory. But in 335 AD he’s exiled to Gaul (France). False accusations — woman and grain
#3 So Arius comes back into favor. But before he can re-enter church and celebrate communion he dies suddenly.
Arius parading through streets with crowds. As approached Constantine’s fountain he felt a sense of terror and then faint. Inner organs........
TWO EXPLANATIONS FOR DEATH OF ARIUS

WAS IT THE JUDGMENT OF GOD FOR HIS HERETICAL VIEWS?

WAS HE POISONED BY HIS ENEMIES?
Arianism continues to be a problem. But new council sets up once and for all that Arianism is a heresy. The Nicene Creed prevails.
Three Reasons why Council of Nicaea is important turning point

#1 It’s an important turning point because it’s the first ecumenical (universal) Council of the Church. [Unites East and West bishops.]
#2 It’s an important turning point because it marked a change in the relation of the church to the civil government.

As politician he called for council.
ALLIANCE OF CHURCH AND STATE CONTINUED
12-14 centuries — still in state Church of England
#3 It’s an important turning point in clarifying the Biblical view of the deity of Christ.”

Nicene Creed has endured for 17 centuries
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ousia=</th>
<th>essence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Heteroousios =</strong></td>
<td>different/unlike essence HERETICAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Homoiousios =</strong></td>
<td>similar/like essence but not begotten HERETICAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Homoousios = (double omicron)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Begotten from Father’s same essence—not created NICAEA</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Son of God, the second Person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance, and equal with the Father,
The Son is equal to the Father because the Son is “begotten... of the same essence as the Father.”

CO-EQUAL AND CO-ETERNAL
Arianism can creep into the church today
Summary of JW teaching as reflected in their New World Translation:

1. The son was created out of nothing; hence, he is different in essence from the Father; that he is Logos, Wisdom, Son of God, is only of grace. He is not so in himself.

2. There was, when he was not; i.e., he is a finite being.

3. He was created before everything else, and through him the universe was created and is administered.

4. In the historical Christ the human element is merely the material; the soul is the Logos. The historical Christ, therefore, had no human soul....

5. The JWs teach that the Lord Jesus Christ is not equal with the Father but is the archangel Michael. In the NWT, John 1:1 reads: ‘In [the] beginning the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god’. The NWT, by (without textual justification) inserting the word ‘a’, no longer views Jesus as being very God, but simply a god.
The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified.

He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.

Amen.

“eternally begotten of the Father”
“begotten, not made, of one Being with..”
Next session:

THE FALL OF THE
ROMAN EMPIRE