

## I. Introduction

- A. In 325 A.D., the Roman Emperor, Constantine, newly converted to Christianity, convened a council in a town called Nicaea ("Nice"), in Asia Minor.
- B. The church leaders of the day gathered together, at the invitation and expense of Constantine, in order to address many matters in the church, both doctrinally and methodologically.<sup>1</sup>
- C. One such topic of vigorous dispute was the deity of Jesus Christ.
1. One part said that Jesus is divine and was equal to the essence and nature of the Father (Alexander of Alexandria)
  2. Another part said that Jesus had been created and was not divine in the way mentioned (Arius of the same; actually one of his elders in the church there)
- D. The conclusion of that council, the Council of Nicea (first of seven such councils) was as follows:

*We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten of his Father, of the substance of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten (γεννηθέντα), not made, being of one substance (ὁμοούσιον, consubstantialem) with the Father. By whom all things were made, both which be in heaven and in earth. Who for us men and for our salvation came down [from heaven] and was incarnate and was made man. He suffered and the third day he rose again, and ascended into heaven. And he shall come again to judge both the quick and the dead. And [we believe] in the Holy Ghost. And whosoever shall say that there was a time when the Son of God was not (ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν), or that before he was begotten he was not, or that he was made of things that were not, or that he is of a different substance or essence [from the Father] or that he is a creature, or subject to change or conversion—all that so say, the Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes them.<sup>2</sup>*

- E. To show the true colors of Constantine, he wrote letters to the churches concluding what the council had concluded so that the church could unify around this conclusion, that Christ and the Father are of the same essence/nature.
1. Another letter was also issued that communicated condemnation of Arius' writings and burning of his books.
  2. In that same letter ("edict"), the emperor called for not only the excommunication of those holding to these teachings, but their death as well!<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History, Translated by C.F. Cruse (Peabody, Massachusetts; Hendrickson, 1998), pp. 387-404.

<sup>2</sup> Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds., "The Nicene Creed," in The Seven Ecumenical Councils, trans. Henry R. Percival, vol. 14, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Second Series (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1900), 3.

<sup>3</sup> Eusebius, pp. 402-403

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- F. And what was the issue?
1. The argument arose from two men, both elders in the local church in Alexandria, Egypt, concerning the nature of Jesus Christ.
  2. The question was, "Is Jesus God, divine, as the Father? Or, is Jesus created by the Father?"
- G. Why was this important?
1. If Jesus is created by the Father, and not preexistent, then that would drastically alter what He did in His life and death.
  2. If Jesus is created, then the many claims by Him in the gospels of deity would have to be changed in their interpretation.
  3. If Jesus is created, then what does that do the OT texts that indicate a Triune Godhead, eternally existent?
  4. And, if this is blasphemous to say that He was created, then what does that say about:
    - a) Fellowship with those who teach this?
    - b) Their regeneration?
    - c) How a church deals with other doctrines?
- H. Few doctrines historically have generated as much reaction as the nature of Jesus Christ.
1. And rightly so!
  2. Get this wrong, and everything is wrong!

## II. V. 30 "I and the Father (we) are one."

- A. "I and the Father..."
1. What has He been saying about the Father in this discourse?
    - a) **Keeping the Father distinct from Jesus seemed palatable to the Jews**
      - (1) John 10:15, 17, 18, 25, 29.
      - (2) Even the Jews would be willing to concede that God is their Father.
        - (a) John 8:34-42, 52

Deuteronomy 32:6

6 "Do you thus repay the Lord,  
foolish and unwise people?  
Is not He your Father who has bought you?  
He has made you and established you.

Isaiah 63:16

16 For You are our Father, though Abraham does not know us  
And Israel does not recognize us.  
You, O Lord, are our Father,  
Our Redeemer from of old is Your name.

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Isaiah 64:8

8 But now, O Lord, You are our Father,  
We are the clay, and You our potter;  
And all of us are the work of Your hand.

2. They would have good foundation to stand on because even God called Israel His son:

Exodus 4:21–23

21 The Lord said to Moses, “When you go back to Egypt see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders which I have put in your power; but I will harden his heart so that he will not let the people go.

22 “Then you shall say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the Lord, “Israel is My son, My firstborn.

23 “So I said to you, ‘Let My son go that he may serve Me’; but you have refused to let him go. Behold, I will kill your son, your firstborn.” ’ ’ ”

B. However, what is developing in Jesus' teaching is far beyond this.

C.

John 8:54–55

54 Jesus answered, “If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, ‘He is our God’;

55 and you have not come to know Him, but I know Him; and if I say that I do not know Him, I will be a liar like you, but I do know Him and keep His word.

### III. Jesus has been speaking of the relationship of the Father and Son for many months.

D. “My Father” (in public teaching)

Matthew 7:21

21 “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter*.

Matthew 11:27

27 “All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him*.

1. John 2:16; 5:43; 6:32 43; 8:19, 28, 38 etc... (too numerous).

E. The overall emphasis by Jesus concerning His Father is:

1. He is distinct from Christ.
2. He is over Christ.
3. He is commanding Christ.
4. He has given individuals to Christ.
5. He has predetermined everything.
6. He is not the Father of the Pharisees.

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## F. "Your Father"

1. Matthew 6:1, 4, 6, 8, 9, 15, 18; 7:11.
2. What a comfort this would have been to the poor and outcasts of Pharisaic society.
  - a) To know that God is their Father.
  - b) To hear that God listens to them and condescends to them willingly.

## B. Who did Jesus say the Father was?

1. "God" -

John 8:42

42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me.

2. "One and only God"

John 5:44

44 "How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and you do not seek the glory that is from the *one and* only God?"

3. "accuse you before the Father" = Judge

John 5:45

45 "Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; the one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you have set your hope.

4. "My Father's house" = the temple.

John 2:16

16 and to those who were selling the doves He said, "Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a place of business."

## C. Again, all of this is well and good.

1. However, once Jesus began to intimate unity with that Father, then they became incensed.

(1) John 5:16-19 ("**equal**" - Philippians 2:6 "who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard **equality** with God a thing to be grasped,)

B. (John 10:30-31)

C. John 19:1-7

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- II. They understood that to speak of God in distant terms, separable terms, is fine.
- A. They did that.
- B. But to speak of Him in intimate terms, inseparable terms, is blasphemous (if it were not true-John 8:55 "I would be a liar like you.").
- C. They understood that Jesus was saying:
1. The very same nature that God has, I have.
  2. Therefore, you are speaking, not to a representative of God, but God Himself in human flesh.
  3. This they could not handle.
  4. This will lead to the argumentation in vv. 34-39.

## IV. Who is the Father?

- Christianity today = a lot of talk about Jesus, much talk about the Holy Spirit, little talk of the Father.
  1. Yet, Jesus spoke more of the Father than the Holy Spirit, or of Himself.
  2. In fact, more is said about God the Father than any other topic in His discourse (by reason of the number of times He refers to the Father in name, title, or general reference).
- Yet,
  1. **Jesus commanded us to go in the Father's name** - Matthew 28:18ff.
  2. **Love for Jesus Christ is the result of having God as your Father** - John 8:42.
  3. **Jesus' kingdom is the result of the granting of the Father** -
    - a) Luke 22:28–29
      - (1) 28 “You are those who have stood by Me in My trials;
      - (2) 29 and just as My Father has granted Me a kingdom, I grant you.
  4. **It was the Father's will that Jesus was obeying in the garden and to the cross** - Luke 22:42.
  5. **It was to the Father to whom Jesus cried on the cross** - Luke 23:46
  6. **The presence of the Holy Spirit is the result of the command of the Father** -
 

Luke 24:49

49 “And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

John 14:26

26 “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.
- This is only a small representation of the work of the Father and His preeminence.

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## II. Consider:

➤ 1 John 2:13-14

1. It is the little children who know the Father.
2. Particularly, it is those who are mature in Christ who know Him intimately by virtue of knowing "Him who is from the beginning."

John 14:8–11

8 Philip \*said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us."

9 Jesus \*said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and *yet* you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how *can* you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

10 "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works.

11 "Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves.

- If you want to know the Father, know the Son.
- If you want to know the Father, obey the Son.
- If you want to know the Father, love the Son.
- In these ways, they are one.

## V. Conclusion

➤ Next week we will peer a little deeper into this relationship.