

WEEK TWO

THE

NICENE CREED



Why Did the Church Need a Creed?



The early Church faced *false teachings* (heresies)



Different groups were redefining *who Jesus is*



The biggest threat: *Arianism*



Confusion was spreading across the Church



Needed *clarity, unity, and defense of truth*

*“When truth is not defined,
error will define it for you.”*

The creed protected what Scripture revealed.”



What is Arianism?

The Heresy That Sparked the Council

- 🔥 Taught by **Arius** (a priest in Alexandria)
- ? Claimed **Jesus was created**, not eternal
- ⚠️ Denied that Jesus is **fully God**
- 🔄 Said: “**There was a time when the Son was not**”
- 🛡️ Made Jesus **less than the Father**

Biblical Response:

- 📖 John 1:1 – “The Word was God”
- 📖 Colossians 1:16–17 – Christ is **before all things**
- 📖 Hebrews 1:3 – He is the **exact representation of His nature**



“If Jesus is not fully God, then He cannot fully save.”

“A created Christ cannot redeem an eternal problem.”

The Church Confronts Error



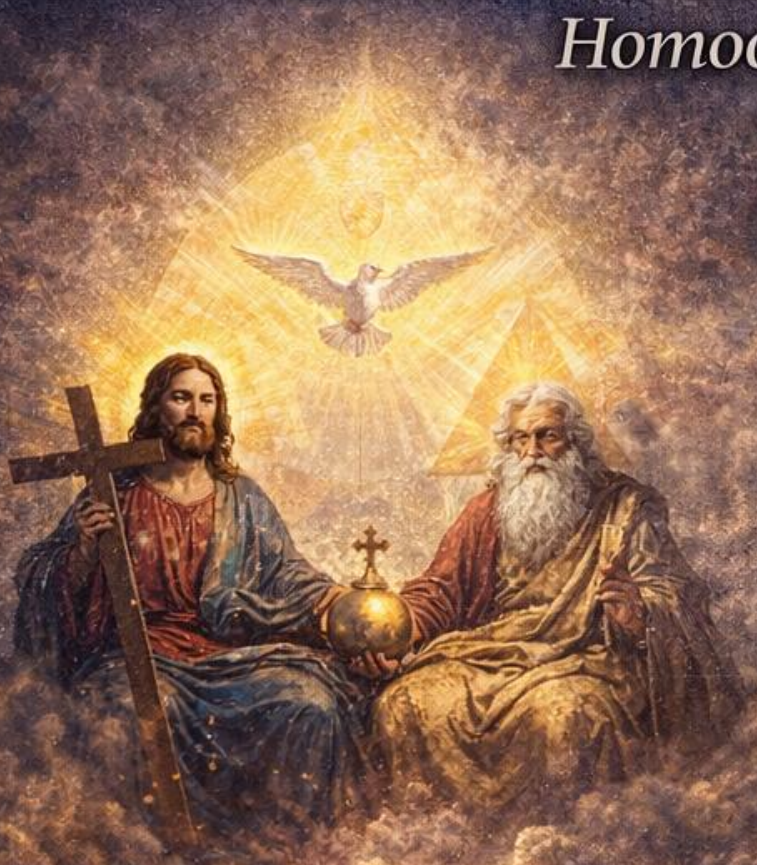
- Called by **Emperor Constantine**
- Over **300 Bishops** Gathered
- Settled the **Arian Controversy**
- Declared: **Jesus is Fully God**
- Introduced the term **"Homoousios"** (Same Substance)

"Begotten, not made"

***"Truth was not created at Nicaea—
it was being clarified."***

Begotten, Not Made

Homoousios – One Substance with the Father



Homoousios: (ὁμοούσιος)

- Of the **same** essence, equal to the Father
- **Not created** but eternally **begotten**
- Fully God and fully man in one divine Person
- **Athanasius:** “God of God, possessing absolutely the same essence as the Father”

One in substance with the Father (homoousios τῷ Πατρί).

Scriptural Foundation:

- ◆ John 1:1 – “The Word was God”
- ◆ Colossians 2:9 – “All the fullness of Deity”
- ◆ Hebrews 1:3 – “Exact Representation”

Why This Matters for Salvation:

- ◆ Not Fully God
- ◆ Sacrifice Not Infinite
- ◆ Salvation Not Secure
- ☞ Only God can save

Jesus is not similar to God—He is the **SAME** in **ESSENCE** as God!



What Does “Filioque” Mean?

The original creed (AD 325 / 381) stated:

- ➔ The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father

Later, the Western Church added:

- ➔ The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father **AND the Son**

Why Was It Added?

The Western Church added the Filioque to protect the full divinity of the Son. It emphasized that:

- The Son is equal with the Father
- The Son shares in the sending and procession of the Spirit

Scriptural Basis:

- John 15:26 “The Spirit proceeds from the Father”
- John 16:7 “Jesus sends the Spirit.”

Why It Became Controversial

The Eastern Church rejected the Filioque for two main reasons:

1. Theological Concern

- ➔ They believed:
- ➔ **The Father alone** is the single source within the Trinity

So they argued:

- The Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son
- Not from both equally



East & West

One Church, Divided History

Before 1054, the Church was still recognized as one universal body, even though tensions between East and West were already present.



Why This Matters

- ◆ The creed says “one Church” for a reason
- ◆ Division was not the original design
- ◆ The split was historical, not biblical

One Church with Two Expressions

Division Became Separation

The early Church confessed unity—
But history revealed how fragile that unity could become.

The Nicene Creed

Orthodox Christianity Affirmed

- **One God in three Persons** — The Holy Trinity
- **God from God, Light from Light** — Christ's deity
- **Begotten, not made** — Same substance with the Father
- **For our salvation** — His Incarnation, Death, Resurrection

“This is the true faith of the Church.”

“This is the faith once for all entrusted to the saints.”

WE Believe!

