

## The Origin of Christian Doctrines

"The Trinity "

J. Warren Smith, Jan 2018

Peter's confession, "You are the Christ the son of the living God."

Thomas's Confession, "My Lord and My God"

Shema (Deut. 6:4-9) "Hear O Israel, the Lord is God, the Lord is One."

### A. Early Interpretations of "Son of God"

1. Adoptionism: Paul of Samosata

Ps. 2.7 "You are my son; today I have begotten you"

2. Modalists: Sabellius

In eternity, God = One

In time, God revealed himself in three Modes, i.e. persons

Jn 14:15-17 "If you love me, you will obey my teachings and I will pray to *the Father* and he shall give you *another comforter* to be with you forever, the Spirit of truth..."

3. Arius: Subordinationism

*Thalia* Father is ingenerate; Son/Logos is generate ergo "There was once when the Son was not"

Biblical Argument:

a) Col. 1:15-16 "first-born of creation" and "image of God"

b) Luke 2:40 Jesus "grew in wisdom"

c) Mk 13:23 Jesus ignorance of future/eschaton

d) Jn 14:28 "the Father is greater than I"

f) Prov. 8:22 Wisdom/Logos says "The Lord created me at the beginning of his ways for his works."

### B. Council of Nicaea (325)

"We believe

in one God Father Almighty Maker of all things, seen and unseen:

And in one Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God,

-begotten as only begotten of the Father,

that is *from the substance or being (ousia)* of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, *begotten not made*,

*consubstantial/of the same substance (homoousion) with the Father*  
-through whom all things came into existence,  
    both things in heaven and things on earth;  
-who for us men and our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate  
    and became man, suffered and rose again on the third day,  
    ascended into the heavens, is coming to judge the quick and the dead: And in

And in the Holy Spirit..."

Anathema: "Those who say that 'there was once when the Son was not' are anathema."

Athanasius of Alexandria

"If a person should wish to see God, who is invisible by nature and not seen at all, he may know and apprehend him from his works, so let him who fails to see Christ with his understanding at least apprehend him by way of the works of his body....by so ordinary means things divine have been manifested to us, and that by death immortality has reached to all, and that by the Word becoming man, the universal providence has been known, and its giver and artificer the very Word of God. For he was made man that we might be made God; and he manifest himself by a body that we might receive the idea of the unseen Father; and he endured insolent men that we might inherit immortality." (On the Incarnation of the Word 54)

### **C. Correcting Problems with Nicaea**

Objections to Nicaea

Eunomius: God's Essence is "unbegotten"

Cappadocians (Macrina the Younger, Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianzus,  
    and Gregory of Nyssa)

Council of Constantinople 381

When you get home and for your entertainment, watch St. Patrick  
Explains the Trinity (not exactly right, but funny nonetheless)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p8yuDXJB9BI>