



COUNCIL OF NICAEA

May 19 - June 20, 325

318 Fathers in Attendance

Key Questions Leading to Nicaea

- Is it proper to worship Jesus as God?
- If Jesus is God, how do we affirm that God is one?
- How can a 'son' have no beginning?
- How do we account for the oneness/unity of God, the distinctions between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and claims to divinity of not only the Father, but the Son, and the Holy Spirit?

The Fathers' Profession of Faith

We believe in one God the Father all powerful, maker of all things both seen and unseen. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten begotten from the Father, **that is from the substance** [Gr. *ousias*, Lat. *substantia*] **of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten** [Gr. *gennethenta*, Lat. *natum*] **not made** [Gr. *poethenta*, Lat. *factum*], **CONSUBSTANTIAL** [Gr. *homoousion*, Lat. *unius substantiae* (*quod Graeci dicunt homousion*)] with the Father, through whom all things came to be, both those in heaven and those in earth; for us humans and for our salvation he came down and became incarnate, became human, suffered and rose up on the third day, went up into the heavens, is coming to judge the living and the dead. And in the holy Spirit.

And those who say "there once was when he was not", and "before he was begotten he was not", and that he came to be from things that were not, or from another hypostasis [Gr. *hypostaseos*] or substance [Gr. *ousias*, Lat. *substantia*], affirming that the Son of God is subject to change or alteration these the catholic and apostolic church anathematizes.

APOSTOLIC WITNESS ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

Philippians 2:5-11

5 Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, **6** who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, **7** but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, **8** he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross. **9** Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, **10** so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, **11** and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Hebrews 1:1-4

1 Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, **2** but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. **3** He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, **4** having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

Colossians 1:15-20

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; **16** for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. **17** He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. **18** He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. **19** For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, **20** and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

John 1:1-18

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He was in the beginning with God. **3** All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being... **14** And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. **15** (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, "He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.' ") **16** From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. **17** The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. **18** No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

TEACHING FROM THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES

John 12:37-45

37 Although he had performed so many signs in their presence, they did not believe in him. **38** This was to fulfill the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah: "Lord, who has believed our message, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" **39** And so they could not believe, because Isaiah also said, **40** "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, so that they might not look with their eyes, and understand with their heart and turn— and I would heal them." **41** Isaiah said this because he saw his glory and spoke about him. **42** Nevertheless many, even of the authorities, believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they did not confess it, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue; **43** for they loved human glory more than the glory that comes from God. **44** Then Jesus cried aloud: "Whoever believes in me believes not in me but in him who sent me. **45** And whoever sees me sees him who sent me."

Isaiah 6:1-3

1 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple. **2** Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. **3** And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory."

Isaiah 57:15

15 For thus says the high and lofty one who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with those who are contrite and humble in spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite.

Isaiah 52:13

13 See, my servant shall prosper; he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high.

EARLY CHURCH TEACHING ON THE TRINITY

The Didache 7

Now concerning baptism, baptize as follows: after you have reviewed all these things, baptize "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" in running water. But if you have no running water, then baptize in some other water; and if you are not able to baptize in cold water, then do so in warm. But if you have neither, then pour water on the head three times "in the name of Father and Son and Holy Spirit." And before the baptism, let the one baptizing and the one who is to be baptized fast, as well as any others who are able. Also you must instruct the one who is to be

Justin, First Apology, VI

Hence we are called atheists. And we confess that we are atheists, so far as gods of this sort are concerned, but not with respect to the most true God, the Father of righteousness and temperance and the other virtues, who is free from all impurity. But both Him, and the Son (who came forth from Him and taught us these things, and the host of other good angels who follow and are made like to Him), and the prophetic Spirit, we worship and adore, knowing them in reason and truth, and declaring without grudging to every one who wishes to learn, as we have been taught.

Justin, First Apology, LXI

Then they are brought by us where there is water, and are regenerated in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerated. For, in the name of God, the Father and Lord of the universe, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, they then receive the washing with water.