

# 尼西亞信經的餘波

# The Aftermath of Nicaea 325-327

By the late 330s, it was obvious that many bishops were uneasy with the word *homoousios*.

The word had been used in the past to indicate not merely that Father and Son shared the same identity/character/nature, but that they were actually numerically one—that is, (to use later terminology) the same person. This was the heresy of Sabellianism (also called Modalism or Modalistic Monarchianism)

**Sabellianism** affirmed a single person of God, called the SonFather, who manifested himself in different ways (or modes) at different times. In the Old Testament period, he showed himself as Judge and Father, in the time of Christ as Son, and in the church age as Spirit and Helper. But these different manifestations did not have independent existence as distinct persons.

A variant of the same idea, associated with **Paul of Samosata** (on the banks of the Euphrates River in ancient Syria, but today underneath the Ataturk Dam in southeastern Turkey) in the third century and **Marcellus of Ancyra** (Ankara, modern capital of Turkey) in the fourth century, was the teaching that the Word was not a distinct person from the Father but an aspect of God, and this aspect was manifested in the Son Jesus during his earthly life. In other words, an impersonal aspect of God was perfectly exhibited in the man Jesus, who was in a sense adopted as Son of God.

The third-century council that had **ruled against** Paul of Samosata actually **condemned the use of the word *homoousios***. Not surprisingly, then, many Eastern bishops opposed Nicaea's use of that word.

**Constantine** died in 337, leaving the empire to his three sons. **Constantius** controlled the eastern portions, **Constantine II** ruled Britain and Gaul, and **Constans** ruled Italy and the Balkans.

Like his father, **Constantine II** sought to extend his rule from the far west into Italy, but he was killed in 340 in his unsuccessful campaign to control Rome itself. Thus, **Constans** now controlled the entire West and **Constantius** the East.

This arrangement lasted until 350, when **Constans** was assassinated, leading to a new power struggle that left **Constantius** as sole emperor until his own death in 361.

At that point, his nephew **Julian**, who renounced Christianity for paganism, ruled for a brief eighteen months before dying in battle in 363, at which time the empire returned to Christian hands and became more stable, as **Jovian** assumed the throne.

**Constans** was a strong supporter of the Creed of Nicaea, **Constantius** generally favored the anti-Nicene bishops, and **Julian** sought to create havoc in the church by pitting all groups of Christians against one another.

All three of these emperors wielded the tool of **banishment** (and reinstatement of bishops banished by others) to try to shore up their support.

Bishops of various persuasions were banished by one emperor or another and then reinstated by a different emperor, leading to an almost constant migration of bishops from region to region from 340 to 363.

**Athanasius** himself was exiled five different times for a total of seventeen years, sometimes to the West and sometimes to the Sahara Desert in Upper Egypt.

**Cyril of Jerusalem** and other bishops likewise spent more than a decade in one exile or another, several years at a time.

One party, led by Athanasius, insisted on the word *homoousios*, “one in essence,” as the best word.

Another group, led by Basil of Ancyra and George of Laodicea (in western Turkey today), preferred instead to speak of the Son as *homoios kat' ousian*, “like according to essence,” and they insisted that this was not the same thing as *homoousios*.

Yet a third group, which was actually led by the emperor Constantius (whose major goal was to remove *ousia* language from the Creed of Nicaea because it had fostered so much controversy), advocated the expression *homoios kat' energeian*, “like in activity.”

Finally, a small group of people led by Eunomius and Aetius insisted that the Son was *heterousios*, “unlike in essence.”

Group	What the Group Said	What the Group Meant
<b>Homoousian Party</b>	homoousios (“one in essence”)	The Son shares God’s nature and is the one who has come down to save us.
<b>Homoiousian Party</b>	homoios kat’ ousian (“like according to essence”)	The Son is exactly like God in nature and is the one who has come down to save us
<b>Homoian Party</b>	homoios kat’ energeian (“like according to activity”)	The Son acts in the way God does in order to rise up to God.
<b>Heterousian Party</b>	heterousios (“unlike in essence”)	The Son, although different in character from God, acts in the way God does in order to rise up to God.

## Synod of Alexandria 362

Synod of Alexandria, (362 CE), a meeting of Christian bishops held in Alexandria, Egypt, summoned by the bishop of Alexandria, St. Athanasius, in an appeal for unity among those who held the same faith but differed in terminology.

The main issue was that some Eastern bishops **were using *hypostasis* as a synonym for *ousia* (that is, using both to mean “essence,” as the Creed of Nicaea itself had done in the anathemas)**

The synod stated explicitly that the Holy Spirit is not a created being and is of the same substance (“consubstantial”) as the Father and the Son. It also clearly defined the Christological terms person and substance, thus preparing for the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity as **“three *hypostaseis* and one *ousia*”**  
**“three persons in one substance.”**



## Further Struggles 362-381

While the West was more **pro-Nicene**, **anti-Nicene** imperial policy still continued in the East. Symptomatic was the fact that when **Athanasius died in 373** and his brother Peter was chosen as bishop, the government refused to ratify the election and instead installed an Arian, Lucius. These political battles continued throughout the 370s **until Theodosius I, a Nicene, gained control of the Eastern empire in 379**, again restoring religious peace to the Roman world.

## Further Struggles 362-381

In the latter part of the fourth century, a group called **Macedonians** emerged who affirmed the equality of the Son to the Father but denied that of the Holy Spirit.

In response, shortly before Athanasius died, he wrote two long letters in which he addressed the status of the Holy Spirit with respect to the Son and the Father. In these letters he used the word *homoousios* to describe the Holy Spirit's relation to the Father, thus strongly emphasizing the equality of the Spirit to the other persons.

# The Council of Constantinople 381



## The Council of Constantinople 381

About 150 bishops, all from the eastern part of the empire, gathered in Constantinople for the council. They included **Gregory of Nazianzus (now bishop of Constantinople)** and **Gregory of Nyssa, Cyril of Jerusalem, Meletius of Antioch** (who presided at Theodosius's request), and surprisingly, **thirty-six Macedonians**, whom Theodosius had invited in the confidence that they could be won over to the affirmation of the Spirit's equality.

The Nicene faith was reaffirmed, and the full deity of the Holy Spirit was proclaimed. Apollinarianism was condemned.

## the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed 381

That document (properly called the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, as opposed to the Creed of Nicaea from 325) makes its earliest appearance in our extant literature only in 451, and many church fathers between 381 and 451 seem to have been unaware of it.

## THE CREED OF NICAEA

**We believe in one God the Father All Governing, creator of all things visible and invisible.**

**And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten from the Father as only begotten, that is, from the *ousia* of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not created, *homoousios* with the Father, through whom all things came into being, both in heaven and in earth;**

**Who for us men and for our salvation came down and was incarnate, becoming human. He suffered and the third day he rose, and ascended into the heavens. And he will come to judge both the living and the dead.**

## THE NICENE CREED

We believe in one God the Father All Governing, creator of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten from the Father before all time, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten not created, *homoousios* with the Father, through Whom all things came into being;

Who for us men and because of our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became human. He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried and rose on the third day, according to the Scriptures; and ascended to heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father and will come again with glory to judge the living and dead. His kingdom shall have no end.

## THE CREED OF NICAEA

**And in the Holy Spirit.**

**But, those who say, Once he was not, or he was not before his generation, or became to be out of nothing, or who assert that he, the Son of God, is of a different *hypostasis* or *ousia*, or that he is a creature, or changeable, or mutable, the Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes them.**

## THE NICENE CREED

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and life-giver, Who proceeds from the Father, who is worshiped and glorified together with the Father and Son, Who spoke through the prophets;  
And in one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. We confess one baptism for the remission of sins. We look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

