

Church History

Unit 3

Patristic Fathers and
the Ecumenical Councils

Manuscript



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Church History

Unit Three: Patristic Fathers and the Ecumenical Councils

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THE SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY THROUGHOUT THE ROMAN EMPIRE?

What factors led to the acceptance of Christianity throughout the Roman Empire?

Dr. Joseph D. Fantin

We often think that the Roman Empire accepted Christianity at about the fourth century. And there's truth to that. It's sort of when it became an official accepted religion, if you will. But I think that the factors that contribute to its acceptance go all the way back into the first century when you have a marginalized movement that was basically asking people to leave, in many cases, comfortable lives — at least comfortably social lives — to join a movement that no one initially would have thought had any future. There had to be something there in that message that was appealing enough to make people who thought that it was worth leaving their present position for. Sometimes we think the Roman Empire was so depraved that people naturally turned to Christianity. Sometimes we think that it was just, you know, the appeal of, you know, some other aspect of the movement or negative about Rome. But I think, ultimately, it is something appealing about the message of the gospel itself that gave and provided something for the Gentile world, the Jewish world, everybody who ultimately becomes part of the church, that what they're getting is something that far outweighs what they're losing. And I don't think we can really appreciate what they're losing. Today we can go to a church, no big deal. In those days, becoming a Christian would have involved possibly leaving your own social group, leaving your own family... Roman society itself had a lot of built-in positive aspects that kept all of its members somewhat secure. I mean, wives, families, their brothers, their fathers, etc., were all had important relationships that kept everybody pretty much, like I said, functionally secure. Christianity is taking people out of those secure relationships. And I think that, in many cases, a lot of the commands that Christians have, such as, "Do not divorce," etc., are good in and of themselves, but they're also there to really facilitate this new community and protect all of its members. If a married woman joins a Christian church, and then she loses her ties with her family, and then she's divorced, she's got none of the safety net that she

would have had in the Roman world. So, I think that all would have been, right from the beginning, a very appealing thing; also, the idea that everybody was the same in the sight of God. And so, as years go on, this — that started in the first century, by the time you get to the fourth century when Constantine decrees that Christianity can be legal — it was just kind of a natural step in some ways. Obviously not natural in the light of history but it wasn't nearly as shocking as it would have been. So, ultimately, it starts in the first century is why it spread, not with some political movement that is often suggested that happened in the fourth century.

Did Constantine's conversion alter the Christian faith in any significant way?

Dr. Las Newman

Constantine was an emperor of Rome and he became converted in the fourth century. In fact, the story about his conversion was that on the eve of the Battle on the Milvian Bridge ... he finally saw the sign of a Christian cross in the sky and a voice said, "By this sign you shall conquer..." And the next day — so the story goes — he went out into battle, and it was a decisive battle, and he won, and he attributed his victory as the Emperor of Rome to the Christian God, the God of the Christian faith, and surrendered himself to Christianity. And in fact, his "conversion" to Christianity — he became a Christian; he embraced Christianity — that did have a significant impact on the Christian faith, because prior to his becoming emperor, several of the emperors of Rome were ones who persecuted Christians, and the State, as it were, were suppressing Christians and trying to eliminate Christianity from the empire. But the emperor, the person in charge of the empire, became a Christian, and he embraced Christianity and significantly ended persecution, elevated Christianity to become the religion of the empire and began what we now call "Christendom." Christendom is essentially state religion. That's the religion of the country, the empire, where if you were part of the empire you were expected to be a Christian. You're born into it, you grew up as Christian, and so on. And so, that was a decisive turn in history when the emperor became Christian and began now to protect Christians, and protect bishops and pastors, and he gave incentives to people to become baptized. If you were baptized, you would receive some financial support, and you would receive some clothing and so on. So, the church now was protected and raised and loved and cherished in the empire. And that began a whole process of Christianity and eventually the Holy Roman Empire. And that's what became known as Christendom.

Dr. Michael A. G. Haykin

Constantine, whose father Constantius I or Constantius Chlorus had been appointed a junior emperor in the west during the previous twenty or so years, had died after one year of reign in the year 306, and the legions in Britain where Constantius Chlorus was based, elected or appointed or chose Constantine to be his replacement. And over the next six years, Constantine had to fight a number of figures in the western Roman Empire until finally he reaches Rome in 312. And at the battle of the Milvian Bridge, where he opposed a pagan named Maxentius, as he goes into battle on that particular

occasion, he requires his troops to place upon their standards a Christian symbol, what we call probably the *chi rho* symbol — the first two letters of Christ’s name in Greek. The *chi*, which is the “ch,” and the *rho*, which is the “r,” were combined in a kind of an image that were placed on the standards. From that point on, Christianity has a whole new relationship with the Roman Empire. Christianity becomes a legal religion. It had been illegal prior to this point in time. And by the end of Constantine’s reign — he dies in 337 — he has significantly altered the fabric of the Roman world. He has been in the process of Christianizing it. I think there is clear indication that Constantine believed that he was called by God to Christianize the empire. It certainly is not the way the early church prior to him had envisaged the expansion of the gospel, but it alters the whole fabric of the way the church related to its culture. And from this point on, you have, really, a kind of church and state in the West being two sides of a coin. And the church, for good and for ill, is bound up with the state, and we’re still dealing with many of the after effects of that.

Dr. Stephen Bagby

Before Constantine’s conversion the church was persecuted very heavily for the course of two or three centuries. And Constantine was converted in the early fourth century, and when this happened he outlawed the persecution of Christians... And when he did that, he legalized Christianity. Now, a lot of people think that Constantine mandated Christianity or required Christian belief throughout his empire, but that’s not true. Later Roman emperors would do that, but Constantine did not do that. But he did make it very politically and economically advantageous to be a Christian. And so, what you see with Constantine’s conversion is a lot of people becoming Christians because the emperor is Christian, and a lot of people becoming Christians because the emperor would then show favor to Christians throughout the empire in the fourth century. And so, you see it as a very politically and economically advantageous thing to become a Christian. And so, you see this phenomenon taking place in the fourth century in what today we’d call “easy believism,” this idea that you can just say you’re a Christian, and you don’t really have to have much of a commitment, and the standards of Christianity aren’t very high. And this is certainly something we see in America today, but it was happening in the fourth century.

Dr. Ken Keathley

If you ever have the opportunity to visit the cathedral at York, in front of it will be a large rock, and that is the rock upon which the Roman soldiers declared Constantine to be emperor, and they built a cathedral right on the spot, which lets you know that something very significant indeed did happen when Constantine announced that he was a Christian. And he went to battle under the emblem of the Christian cross and had his entire army baptized *en masse*. These kinds of changes can’t help but affect the way the Christian church related to the Roman Empire. At that time about ten percent of the population professed to be Christian. Within a hundred years the number rose to fifty percent. So, I think that even though he did not make it the official religion of the Roman Empire — that comes later — he certainly made it politically expedient, and even fashionable, to be a Christian during that time. So, I would say that he had a very profound impact upon the Christian faith.

What was the significance of the Donatist controversy?

Dr. Ken Keathley

The Donatists were a group that split off from the Roman Catholic Church during the ... fourth century and during the time of Augustine. And they were not pleased with the direction that the Catholic Church was going at that time. They considered it to be too loose, too lax. They were rather legalistic in their response to what they saw as indifference towards the Christian life and a life of purity, both in doctrine and in lifestyle. So, they split off. In fact, one can go to Roman ruins in North Africa and find the remnants of Roman Catholic churches and then, across the street, Donatist churches. And so, it's almost the beginning of denominations. So, what happens is that they are forced to come back into the Roman Catholic Church, and this is one of the first instances of schismatic groups being forced to return back to the home church by means of government coercion. So, in that sense, I think it's very significant, because there we see perhaps maybe the dark side of the Constantinian synthesis of church and state.

Dr. Stephen Bagby

The Donatists were a group of people who saw themselves as the true church. And this was a phenomenon that took place in north Africa in the early fourth century. And they saw themselves as the true church because they saw themselves as not being influenced or corrupted by a various line of bishops or leaders who had compromised the Christian faith during the great persecutions of the third century. And so, what the Donatists did was they said that ... the leaders in their churches were *truly* ordained and the sacraments were *truly* administered because they did not stand in a line of any kind of bishop or church leader who had compromised and given over the Scriptures and had failed during the persecutions... And the Donatists were really challenged by Augustine of Hippo and others to think about how they understand the Christian life and the church. And what Augustine really emphasized in his challenge against the Donatists was that the sacraments are efficacious, not based on the life and the piety of that particular priest who administers the sacraments, but the sacraments are efficacious in and of themselves because the true minister is Christ. And so, the Donatists wanted people to be rebaptized, and the Donatists wanted to set themselves up as the true church. And Augustine was very against this, and he wanted this schismatic group to really come back into the Catholic church and not set themselves up as something different. And, of course, this has implications for us today in how we think about unity in the church and how we think about the sacraments, and so it's very relevant to our discussion today.

What impact did Augustine's book, *City of God*, have on the church, and what relevance does it still have today?

Dr. Benjamin Quinn

Someone told me not long ago that Augustine's *City of God* has never been out of print. So, he wrote this... He finished it somewhere around 418, 419, I believe, and

it's been one of the most influential books on the church as a whole especially, but also in Western society at large. Augustine hands the Christian tradition a number of things in that book. He hands us a particular spirituality, a tradition about spirituality. It's not the only place he does that, but one place. He hands the Christian tradition, as well, a doctrine of providence. He hands us a theology of history. I think, really, the first person to thoroughly put together for the Christian tradition a theology of history as a whole and to argue for it very carefully. So ... the occasion for his writing in *City of God* is response to the fall of Rome, and that many Romans in particular are blaming Christians for that fall of Rome, for not worshiping the gods but for upsetting the gods and, therefore, the fall of Rome. And this is Augustine's very long response to that. Most people actually don't read *City of God* all the way through. They read short versions, and I don't blame them. Nevertheless, Augustine then takes that issues, seizes upon that sort of response — that it's the Christians' fault that Rome has fallen — and he starts out by explaining, “If you take that position as a pagan, then here's what you're actually arguing for...” And you get the sense that Augustine, in the way that he's able to put that together, that he reads everything. He's read every newspaper, every blog, every tweet — I'm being facetious, of course — but he's able to put so much content into constructing the argument for the other position and then to systematically tear it down. You really get a sense for his brilliance there. And he does that by looking backwards. He starts out — really, the first ten books — he's looking that direction, backwards in many ways, and saying, “Here's what's gone on. Here's sort of the history of ideas that leads up to where we are now, and if you believe the way you believe, here's what you really believe...” And then he just tears it down. And then he turns, he sort of pivots halfway through the book, and turns toward, “Now I want to actually make a case for the Christian view of this.” And this is where he hands us a very positive construction of providence in history and eschatology. He hands the church a particular eschatology. The amillennial position is really founded there most thickly in St. Augustine. And I think the biggest takeaways on this are that, fundamentally, the *City of God* — that title — is city of God in contrast to the city of man and what Augustine is arguing for is that, really, we as Christians, we have a foot in both worlds, and that ultimately what we're aiming for, and even that language is very specific that we have a particular end in mind — academics might call this a *telos* — but we have a particular end, we're aiming for something, and this is distinctly Christian, that we are aiming for this city of God, which is our heavenly city. And as we are living in God's world here and now, we are on pilgrimage, we're journeying towards that city. But if we're on that pilgrimage, that means we start in a particular place as Christians. We begin with the fear of the Lord, and we move towards this end, that God is making all things new because of Christ. This is in contrast to the city of mankind. The city of man itself has a different set of order, it has a different set of loves — this is very Augustinian language — that the loves in the city of man begin with love of self as opposed to love of God and love of other people. And at the end of the city of man is still love of self, which ultimately takes us nowhere. It's an end of destruction, as opposed to an end of the eternal heavenly city with the Eternal One, God himself. And this is the trajectory that we're on as Christians.

How did the sack of Rome by the Vandals affect the church?

Dr. John Hannah

The sacking of Rome by the Vandals and later the Goths sent shockwaves through the church because our polemic basically is, Christianity makes for good government. So, what happens when Rome is thoroughly pagan but prosperous, and when it embraces Christianity, it cracks? And so, that question prompts Augustine to write the *City of God*, which explains... It's really our fundamental Christian historiographical approach in which he argues that nations rise and fall; they rise and fall under the benevolence of God. When he has a use for them, he curbs their wickedness. When they have met the function intended, he withdraws his mercy so they can do what they please, and then he righteously judges them. So, Rome has gone through that cycle, and that explains why it's being pillaged.

CHRISTOLOGICAL CONTROVERSIES

Who was Arius, and what did he teach about the nature of the Trinity?

Dr. James K. Dew, Jr.

Arius was an early church theologian that was ultimately condemned as a heretic at the Council of Nicea. He had this famous statement that, "There was a time when the Son was not." And what he basically affirmed is that there was only one God and, as such, Jesus Christ could not also be divine. So, he thought of Jesus as the first creation of God and that from him everything else is created that gets created. But, of course, this denies the deity of Jesus, and so the Council of Nicea came together in 325 and condemned him as a heretic.

Dr. Andrew Parlee

Arius was a third to fourth century presbyter or elder and then a priest in a very important church in Alexandria, Egypt. He taught a form of Unitarian monotheism. What I mean by that is, "God is one uncreated person." And he did this by mixing biblical teaching from the New Testament with Jewish teaching about the Old Testament. Now, according to this teaching, Arius meant that God the Father was the one and only uncreated person who should be worshiped. He alone should be worshiped. And he meant that the Son of God and the Holy Spirit were creatures. The Son of God was the Father's first creation, and the Holy Spirit was the Father's second creation by means of the Son. So, we can see here that, according to Arius, the Son and the Holy Spirit were two subordinate creatures to the Father. The Father was the monarch or king; Son and the Holy Spirit were subordinate. So, Arius' form of Unitarian monotheism is called subordinational Monarchianism. I know it's a mouthful... So, Arius goes on to teach that God the Father is unbegotten — without a

beginning. However, the Son of God is begotten, which means he has a beginning. And he taught that the Holy Spirit was originated. He too had a beginning. So, Arius says whether we conceive of God the Father as outside of time or inside of time, there was no “when” that he didn’t exist. But he also said a similar thing about the Son and the Holy Spirit. Whether the Son or Holy Spirit exists outside of time or inside of time ... “There was a ‘when’ that both did not exist. So that’s why we shouldn’t worship them, and we should worship God the Father alone.” This was a great challenge to the bishop of Alexandria, and it led to a huge conflict in church history.

Dr. Michael A. G. Haykin

Arius first comes into prominence around 318. His early life — and he probably was born somewhere around 280 or thereabouts — is shrouded in the obscurity of history. We really can’t trace a clear history of his early years, but he was an elder in Alexandria, had been set apart as an elder a number of years before, and in 318 began to teach that there was a time when the Son of God did not exist, that the Father, in that sense, God the Father, was not the Father because there was no Son, that at a certain point in time, the Father created the Son and that the Son was a perfect creature. And this, obviously, was against the teaching of the church to that point in time and despite the fact that Arius used certain passages of Holy Scripture; they were proof texts that he had chosen to support his position. But the scope of the New Testament in terms of its teaching about Christ doesn’t support and didn’t support Arius’ teaching as it became clear in the controversy that developed. Arius was reprimanded by his bishop, Alexander of Alexandria. They met privately. They met publicly. Arius refused to back down, and so a council was called in 321 of bishops in Egypt and Libya that publically condemned Arius’ teaching.

At that point Arius had a number of choices. He could have kept his views to himself and disappeared into history. He could have recanted and repented. Or he could have — and this is what he does do — he could have maintained his views, maintained them publically, and spread them further. He subsequently gets into contact with a man named Eusebius of Nicomedia in whom he finds an ally. In fact, in many ways, Eusebius becomes the driving force behind Arius’ views. And some recent historians have really argued that Arianism is really Eusebianism. By the way, Eusebius of Nicomedia is not to be confused with the historian Eusebius of Caesarea. There are actually about fifty different Eusebiuses in the early church, and it’s not always easy to keep them straight. Eusebius of Nicomedia becomes the major mode of force behind Arianism, and, as I said, in some ways this is the Eusebian controversy or the Eusebian crisis. It’s unlikely that the name Arianism is going to change simply because of the time-honored way in which we have associated the name of Arius with this teaching, but for the next forty to fifty years, the churches, especially in the Roman east, are racked with battles about the nature of the Lord Jesus Christ — Is he fully God? Does he share all of the properties of divinity with the Father, except that he is not the Father in the sense of the identity of person, but is he fully God? — will rack the church. And the church is better off, ultimately, for it because at the end you have the crystallization of early Christian teaching about Christ and the Holy Spirit in what we call the Nicene Creed.

Dr. Stephen J. Wellum

Arius was teaching that Jesus was the begotten Son — begotten in the sense of, he was the first created being. So, he denied the deity of the Son. Of course, in denying the deity of the Son, he's also denying the doctrine of the Trinity, so that the church was very concerned that this false teaching undermined who Jesus really is as the eternal Son of God and also, then, the relationship of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Arius looked at Scripture and took passages such as Colossians 1 where the Son of God is described as “the firstborn over creation,” and he took that as “first created being” instead of what it should be in context, “supreme over,” “Lord over,” because in Colossians 1:16 it goes on to say that the Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation because he is the creator of all things. So, clearly Colossians 1 is speaking of the Son as eternal Son who is now the creator, or was the creator, of the universe and sustains the universe along with the Father and Spirit. But Arius argued that he was the first created being. In Arius' thought, the Son of God then functioned as a kind of intermediary. Really, the Gnostic beliefs were behind Arius' understanding so that God... He had a Unitarian view of God — there's only one person, one God in that way, not a tri-personal understanding — so that God is the one who is removed from creation. The Son, then, is sort of the agent of creation but the first created being, and it's God who works through that intermediary. But in his theology, he denies the eternality of the Son, he denies the deity of the Son, he denies the full equality of the Son with the Father and Spirit, and this then is a denial of scriptural teaching. He also picked up John 14 where Jesus will say, “The Father is greater than I,” and he argued that this means then that the Father has more deity, or he alone is God; the Son is a created being. All of that was rejected by the church because the church says, “No, there is a role difference between Father and Son. This does not speak of his lesser deity. There's full equality but a role distinction between Father and Son.” Arius' teachings were condemned at the Council of Nicea in 325, the first universal or what we call “ecumenical” council, where the church from both east and western portions of the Roman Empire came together, condemned the teachings of Arius, taught fully and clearly that there's one true and living God, but there are three persons that subsist in that one divine nature — Father, Son and Holy Spirit — that the Son is God equal with the Father and the Spirit, and thus we affirm the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ in contrast to Arian theology.

How did Arius' teachings affect his doctrine of salvation?**Dr. Donald Fairbairn**

Arianism represents a different understanding of salvation than the church as a whole. Arius, in effect, argued that salvation consists of man's rising up to God; whereas, most of the church emphasized that, for us to be saved, God has to come down to us. And so, if you see salvation as our rising up to God, then you don't need the Son to be equal to the Father. If he's intermediate — in between us and the Father — he's enough ahead of us that he can lead us up to God. Whereas Athanasius and others insisted we cannot rise up to God. God has to come down to us, and so the Son who

comes down has to be just as fully God as the Father. In this way, Arianism was somewhat like later Nestorianism. Both of them placed our salvation in the hands of someone who is not fully God. Arius' Christ was intermediate between God and humanity. Nestorius' Christ was a man with a special connection to God the Son. But in both cases, all that so-called "savior" would have been able to do would be to lead us up to God. He wasn't fully God and so he couldn't come down to us to save us.

Dr. Ken Keathley

Whereas the orthodox held to the Father and the Son being *homoousios* — of the same essence — the Arians held that Jesus, the Son of God, was *homoiousios* — of similar or very similar essence, but not of the same essence. And so, these two things, of course, created or produced a Christ who was the greatest of all created beings. Now, if Arius is right, then this had tremendous repercussions for our understanding of salvation. If Arius is right, then this means that the creature can satisfy the Creator, and salvation is by works. But as Athanasius and the orthodox pointed out, that if Jesus Christ is truly divine, this means that the work of Christ was God satisfying himself and that salvation is entirely by grace.

Are there any extant versions of Arianism in the world today?

Dr. Stephen J. Wellum

When Arianism was condemned by the church and rejected by the church at Nicea in 325, that didn't bring an end to Arian influences and Arian theology. From 325 all the way to the next ecumenical council of Constantinople, 381, Arianism continued to survive as a viewpoint, and the church had to then further reject it at Constantinople. Since then, Arianism has still arrived and shown itself throughout church history. There was a form of Arianism that was alive and well in the post-Reformation era where people adopted the same idea, particularly the Socinians. They may not have considered themselves completely Arian, but they denied the full deity of the Son. They denied, then, the doctrine of the Trinity, which had basically Arian theology and Arian tendencies, and that continued through various forms of liberal theology. Again, they may not have identified themselves as Arian, but Arian theology continued. Probably the best example of Arianism today is found in the Jehovah's Witnesses. The Jehovah's Witnesses, again, have differences with Arian theology in the sense that they appeal to an entire Watchtower Society and authority that, of course, is not what Arius at all appealed to. Yet, the theology of Jehovah's Witnesses is basically the theology of Arius in that Jehovah's Witnesses deny the full deity of the Son, the eternality of the Son. The Son is a created being, the first created being. He preexists everything else, but he is not *eternally* preexistent and thus God, equal with the Father and Spirit. So, there are a variety of forms of Arianism that continued after Arius in the Reformation/post-Reformation period, showed itself in liberal theology of a variety of sorts whenever the doctrine of the Trinity is denied and Unitarianism is affirmed, and the deity of the Son is denied, and particularly in the Jehovah's Witnesses. They represent that Arian stream today in denying Christian truth and Christian theology.

Dr. Ken Keathley

Today, if one wants to see modern-day Arianism, I think the largest group would be Jehovah's Witness. They were founded by Charles Taze Russell. The Watchtower magazine is the official magazine of Jehovah's Witness. They are headquartered in Brooklyn, New York. After Russell died, Judge Rutherford led the Jehovah's Witness movement to be as organized and as efficient as it is today. It is now four million strong, and if you'll notice, what they teach is that Jesus Christ was actually the angel Michael, the highest of all created beings, and that Michael became the man Jesus Christ, and when he did, when he died, he paid for Adam's sin, which brought us back to spiritual neutral, so now you and I and anybody who wants to can build on that to earn his or her salvation. And so those who are part of the Jehovah's Witnesses, those who take part in the Kingdom Hall, if you'll notice, they are very diligent to try to earn their salvation. So, it shows that Athanasius very much was right, that Arianism, at its root, when it denies the deity of Jesus Christ, is presenting us with a salvation by works instead of a salvation by grace.

Dr. John Hannah

I would assume that any movement that denigrates the ontological equality of Father and Son would qualify under the designation "Arianism"... I think examples, for instance, would be in what we would call the common major cults of our day. For instance, Mormonism would argue that Jesus is wonderful but not God. Jehovah's Witness would declare that he is wonderful but not God. So, any movement that would argue for the greatness of Jesus but not accord him deity would fall under the nomenclature of Arianism. If Jesus is not God, then we do not have redemption, so it's an issue with us that's deep.

**How were the terms *homoousios* and *homoiousios* significant
in the debate between orthodox and Arian Christians?**

Dr. Imad Shehadeh, translation

Two words appeared in the history of the church concerning the essence of Christ and the Arian belief. When Arius claimed that Christ was a creature, the church assembled to refute his heretical teachings. Arius claimed that Christ was of a similar substance to God. So, he used the expression "*homoiousios*," which means "of a similar substance," and not of the same substance as God. Both the councils of Nicea and Constantinople, in A.D. 325 and 381, responded to this by asserting that Christ is "*homoousios*," not "*homoiousios*." Omitting the iota changes the meaning to "*homoousios*," which means "of the same substance," not of a similar substance. He is of the same divine substance as the Father. Christ is *homoousios*, he is of one substance with the Father.

Dr. Andrew Parlee

Well, the debate between orthodox and Arian Christians came to a head at the Council of Nicea in the year 325... The debate at this council was about the meaning

of the term “only begotten Son” in the book of John that we find in John’s writings. And the issue was, are we going to interpret this by one of two Greek terms? One is the term *homoousios* and the second term is *homoiousios*. The terms differ by only one letter in Greek, but the meanings of these terms are radically different ways of interpreting what “only begotten son” means.

Now, Athanasius was a deacon in the church of Alexandria, and Alexander was his bishop. Athanasius took the lead here in defending the term *homoousios*. Athanasius and the Athanasian party said *homoousios* means that the Son is of the same essence, the same uncreated essence as God the Father. The Father and the Son are two distinct uncreated persons, but they fully and equally share the same uncreated divine essence, so this means the Son should be worshiped together along with God the Father. Arius and the Arian party said, “No way. We will not agree to this.” They said, “God the Father is the one and only uncreated person. The Son is a created person, the first creation of God the Father, and so they are not of one in the same uncreated essence, so we shouldn’t worship the Son along with God the Father.” And so, at the Council there was a stalemate between Athanasius and the Athanasian party and Arius and the Arian party. There was no way forward at all. And so, Eusebius of Caesarea and the Origenistic party came forward with a compromise term. This term was called *homoiousios*, and it means that the Son is of “like” or similar essence to God the Father. The Father is an uncreated person, but the Son is a mixture. He’s partly uncreated and partly created. And so, in some sense, the Eusebians would say, “Yes, we should worship the Son, but in another sense we shouldn’t because he’s not of the same uncreated divine essence as the Father.” You can see the ambiguity in this compromised term of *homoiousios*.

Now, Arius and the Arian party were ready to accept this term because it allowed them room to maintain their original view that the Son was not of the same essence, the same uncreated divine essence as God the Father; therefore, we shouldn’t worship him in the same sense that we worship God the Father. So, Athanasius and the Alexandrian party, of course, were terribly concerned by this, and there’s no way they were going to accept the compromise term *homoiousios*... But at this time another bishop, Hosius of Cordova, from Spain, he brought forward a confession that used the Athanasian term *homoousios*. So, at that time, everyone took a vote on whether or not to accept the term *homoousios*, and as it turns out, Athanasius and his party and most of Eusebius and the Origenistic party agreed to accept the term *homoousios*. Only Arius and two other bishops refused to accept *homoousios* and refused to worship the Son together with the Father. As a result, Arius and his teachings were banned and Arius and Arianism were declared to be enemies of true Christianity.

Dr. Stephen J. Wellum

Arian christology and Arian Trinitarian theology was rejected by the church at the Council of Nicea in 325 and then later reaffirmed at Constantinople in 381. One of the key theological terms that the church employed — we don’t find it directly in Scripture, but it’s true to the Scriptural teaching — was the word “*homoousios*.” *Homoousios* was a word that was used to stand against Arian theology. *Homoousios*

is emphasizing that the Son of God is *homo*, is the idea of “same,” *ousios* picks up the language of “nature or being,” so that the Son is of the same nature as the Father. In Constantinople later on, the Trinity or the Holy Spirit was added to this Trinitarian understanding, so that all three persons are *homoousios*. Father, Son and Holy Spirit share the exact same divine nature, which is what *ousios* is referring to, so that they are God, equal with one another. The Arians departed from this entirely. The Son — as well as the Holy Spirit, but particularly the debate was over the Son of God — he is not God equal with the Father, he’s a created being. The language of *homoiousios*, which adds an *iota* from the Greek, was a kind of compromised position sometimes known as semi-Arians, where they were trying to say that the Son is *like* the Father but not the *same* nature as the Father. There were forms of semi-Arianism that tried to remain orthodox, but the church said “No, that is not sufficient. We must identify the Son as God, equal with the Father and the Spirit, so that he shares the exact same divine nature as the Father and the Spirit so that we have a triune God — one God, three Persons: Father, Son and Spirit, God equal with one another.” And the language of *homoousios* is what preserves that in the history of the church.

Who was Apollinaris of Laodicea and what were the teachings of Apollinarianism?

Dr. Donald Fairbairn

Apollinaris lived in the latter part of the fourth century in Laodicea in Syria — not the Laodicea of Asia Minor, which earlier would have been the recipient of one of the letters of the book of Revelation, but Laodicea in Syria which was not far from Antioch. He was a very good friend of Athanasius, and he was a very pronounced defender of the Nicene faith at the tail end of the Trinitarian controversy. Apollinaris is normally spoken of as having denied the human mind of Christ, or the human rational soul of Christ — “rational soul” is the Greek way of saying “mind.” That is true, but it’s a little bit misleading. One of the things that we need to recognize about Apollinaris or any other heretic is that you don’t wake up in the morning and decide to deny something about the Christian faith. Apollinaris’ problem was that his understanding of what it meant to be human was inadequate. Apollinaris believed that Christ was fully divine and fully human, but in his mind, to be human is to be spiritual and physical, to be a spirit living in a body. Well, that’s true. In order to be human, you have to be physical and spiritual; you have to be a spirit living in a body. But that is not a sufficient understanding of what it means to be human. In logical terminology that’s a necessary condition for being human, but it is not a sufficient condition for being human. To be truly human you need to be subject to human emotions, human thoughts, human temptations in the fallen Christian world, and to do that you can’t just be a spirit in a body, you have to have a human mind or a human rational soul. Otherwise, you can’t genuinely be tempted. And so, Apollinaris’ inadequate understanding of what it meant to be human led him to an inadequate understanding of the psychology of Christ. The temptations of Christ are temptations that take place in his human mind, and that would not be possible if Christ really were the way that Apollinaris had said he was.

Dr. Stephen J. Wellum

Apollinaris operated with an understanding of the human nature that we were comprised as humans of a body, a soul and a spirit. We sometimes call this “trichotomy” — three parts to us. And when he put all of this together, he argued that the Son of God, in adding to himself a human nature, when he became incarnate, he added to himself a body and the soul, but not a human spirit, so that the humanity of Christ was viewed as incomplete or partial. The church rejected this view, and they rejected this view because they rightly argued from Scripture, Christ’s humanity has to be like our humanity except for sin. In order for him to be a redeemer, he must assume, or he must add to himself, what we are as human beings. He must take on a full human nature so that he’s able to redeem our body, soul and spirit, or however we conceive of the human nature, he must redeem all of it. And Apollinaris leaves us with the unfortunate conclusion that Christ, in only taking partial human nature, cannot redeem us fully. Probably Apollinaris’ intent was not to ever say that, but his theology led to that conclusion, and the church was very clear in saying, no, the Son of God, in becoming a man took to himself a body, soul, a full human nature — or a body, soul, spirit, to use Apollinaris’ terms — so that he is fully man, fully God, one person, subsisting in two natures.

Dr. Ken Keathley

Apollinarianism is a great example that it is dangerous to try to develop one’s theology simply in response to a heretical view... Apollinaris, in his attempt to be orthodox, he ends up overstating things. In other words, he wants to affirm the deity of Jesus Christ to the point that he no longer affirms the entire humanity of Christ. He argues that everything material about Jesus is human, but that everything spiritual — his soul, his mind, his spirit — are divine, because in Apollinaris’ mind anything that is changeable, anything that has free will, is intrinsically evil and sinful, so therefore, he couldn’t have a human mind. And so, it distressed the Cappadocian fathers to realize that their ally had actually gone too far, and so you have the Cappadocian fathers refuting Apollinaris by saying, “What the Son has not assumed he has not redeemed,” and he hasn’t just redeemed our bodies, he’s redeemed both body and soul. And so, Apollinarianism will be rejected at the Council of Constantinople in 381.

Dr. Michael A. G. Haykin

There’s a poignancy to the history of the church. There are figures who appear that, I think for anybody who is looking back at their lives, demand a degree of sympathy, and Apollinaris is such a figure. During the battles over the divinity of Christ — what we call the Arian controversy or the Arian crisis — Apollinaris stood firmly for the deity of Christ and was an ally of the great champion of the Nicene Creed, Athanasius. But towards the latter end of his career, it began to be clear and obvious that, as he thought about the deity of Christ in terms of the relationship of the humanity of Jesus and the deity — how were the two natures combined within the one person that we know as Jesus of Nazareth — that there were problems, significant problems. For Apollinaris, the deity, the second person of the Godhead,

the Logos, as he is sometimes described, or the Word, took the place of the human soul. And so, what you have then is the enfleshment of deity, and there is no assumption of a genuine human soul. And this is problematic. It's problematic because, as Gregory of Nazianzus, his great opponent, would argue, "That which is not assumed" — in the incarnation — "cannot be healed" by salvation. And so, if the second person of the Godhead, the Logos, or the Word, did not assume a complete humanity, did not assume both body and soul, a genuine human body as well as a genuine human soul, then that which was not assumed cannot be saved, and the human soul must be saved. And so, Apollinarianism, at the end of the day, although Apollinarianism had stood firmly and squarely for the deity of Christ during the great Arian controversy, was found to be wanting when he came to the christological question of, is the incarnate Christ, does he have a genuine human soul, or has the deity replaced the soul? And Apollinarianism, in its heart, had the deity replacing the soul. And, as I said, that would be found wanting from a christological point of view.

Who was Nestorius and what were the teachings of Nestorianism?

Dr. Steve McKinion

Nestorius was a very important fifth century pastor of the church at Constantinople. He had been trained in Antioch and taught there in the school at Antioch. He had studied with Theodore of Mopsuestia. And he becomes prominent in our knowledge of him because of his conflict with Cyril of Alexandria. Nestorius was appointed to be the pastor there in Constantinople. He was quite young. And one of the first things that he does is to challenge the idea that Jesus' birth is the birth of God. And when this series of sermons comes out, and people get wind of it, they're disappointed because they believe that Jesus as God was born of a woman, and being born of a woman means that, because he was God, that God endured this human birth. Well, Nestorius' concern was that if we subject God to human experiences, that somehow we will impugn him, and he doesn't want God, for example, being born, or God being tired, or God becoming weary, or God being hungry. These are concerns that he has that somehow we are diminishing or lessening the glory of God by attributing to him these human experiences. His interlocutor, Cyril of Alexandria, his opponent, writes and says, "The problem with Nestorius' view, if you hold to the idea that God isn't born, then you also have to conclude that God doesn't die on the cross." In other words, what Nestorius does is to say that there are two subjects in Jesus, or two persons in Jesus — one who is human, the man Jesus; the other who is divine, the Son of God. And he keeps those separate and distinct from one another, so that the human experiences and sayings and actions that you have in the Gospels are attributed to Jesus. And so God doesn't get hungry, and God doesn't become tired, and God doesn't die on a cross. Only Jesus does. The one who forgives sins and the one who heals, that's the Son of God, but they're separate from one another. The death of Jesus, then, is only saving in that it becomes an example to us of how we're supposed to give our lives completely to God and be inspired by his Spirit to obey him whatever it is that he calls us to do. In that sense, for Nestorius, the death of Jesus is an example of how we should live, and the life of Jesus is an example of how we

should live as well. In theology, we call that a “two-sons christology.” There is the one who is the Son of God, and then there’s the one who is the son of man, Jesus, and he tries to glue the two of them together and call them Christ. So, Christ for Nestorius is the glue that binds together Jesus and the Son of God. Again, in his death, however, because the death is not the death of God incarnate, it’s just the death of another man who was inspired by God, which is much like the adoptionism that Christians were opposed to earlier in Christian theology, where Jesus is a human being who was adopted for the purpose of God’s work, of God’s plan, instead of Jesus being God incarnate. Cyril of Alexandria responds, there is only one subject in Jesus, and that is the Son of God who now has become incarnate, meaning that all of the actions, sayings and experiences of Jesus are attributable to the Son of God on our behalf so that we might be made right with God that we might be saved.

Dr. Donald Fairbairn

Nestorius’ thought, and the problems of Nestorius’ thought, actually begin with a different view of human salvation. If you want to put it in the most simple terms possible, the most fundamental question is, “Can we rise up to God, or does God have to come down to us?” Nestorius, like his teacher Theodore, believed that with the help of God, we could rise up to God, and so his understanding, we don’t so much need Christ to be a Savior, to be God who comes down to save us, as we need him to be like an older brother, a trailblazer who can go ahead of us and cut down the branches so that we can follow on that pathway and rise up to God. So, Nestorius’ view of Christ was consistent with that view of salvation. He believed Christ was a divinely-inspired man, a man in whom the Son of God dwelt, a man with a special connection to God who could use that special connection to lead up to God so that we could follow in his footsteps. And so, in a sense, Nestorius was saying that the Son of God and the man Jesus are separate persons, which is where the popular understanding of Nestorianism comes from. But even more significant than that is the recognition that, for him, Christ is not God the Son incarnate. He really is a man in whom the Son dwells, rather than actually being the Son himself. The church’s response to Nestorianism, in essence, was a way of saying, we cannot rise up to God; God has to come down, which means that Christ has to be just as fully God as the Father, and he himself must personally come down to become human, to live, to die, and to be raised for our salvation.

Dr. Stephen J. Wellum

In the christological debates the whole relationship between person and nature is very, very important, and Nestorius argued that the human nature of Christ also had some kind of human person or a human subject, and the divine Son, who is the second person of the Godhead, who has always shared with the Father and Spirit the divine nature, now, in adding a human nature, now there are two persons — there is the divine Son, and there is a human person along with a human nature. Now, he wrestled with how these two relate, and he tried in very, very important ways to try to provide a unity of the subject, or unity of person. But when all is said and done, he still had a divine person and a human person sort of living alongside one another, and this is where the church says this does not fit with the biblical material. Everything

we see of the Lord Jesus is that there's one subject, there's one person, and that person is the divine person. It's the second person of the Godhead. Think again of John — “the Word,” or the Son, “became flesh,” the Son from eternity, the one who had been in eternal relationship with the Father and Spirit. So that in adding a human nature, the church affirmed, especially at the Council of Chalcedon in 451, that there was only one person, two natures; the divine Son adding to himself a human nature of a body, soul, without a human subject. The divine person gave to that human nature its person. And that's the language that the church then, on the basis of Scripture, affirmed — one person, two natures. Nestorius held to two persons, two natures. And this was rejected by the church as not doing justice to the biblical teaching, leaving us with a unity of person that's not there and ultimately opening the door to a kind of adoptionism where you have a full human nature, human person, coming alongside the divine person. The church says, “No, no, no, that's not what the incarnation is,” and they rejected Nestorianism on that basis.

Was Nestorius actually Nestorian? That is, did he actually believe what has been ascribed to him?

Dr. Stephen J. Wellum

There's quite a debate among scholars that look at the early years of the church whether Nestorius, who is identified with a major christological heresy, is actually Nestorian. Nestorianism, the viewpoint, certainly was presented, was held to, is even held to this day in various forms of the church, particularly in Coptic Christianity, but Nestorianism, as a view, argues that in the incarnation there are two persons — the divine Son, along with a human person, human nature — so that when the Word became flesh there are two persons, there's two active subjects, existing in two natures. That's Nestorianism. Now, did Nestorius teach this? A lot of scholars debate on that, you know, whether he did. Many will say, no, and they will argue that there is a lack of clarity in terminology. His debates with Cyril were back and forth, and they were misunderstanding one another, that he really did hold to one person. Yet, as I look at the evidence, I do think that Nestorius was Nestorian. He opened the door to this entire viewpoint. He did not bring together the unity of the one person, and he then opened the door to having two persons in our understanding of who the incarnate Son is. And so, I do think that Nestorius is Nestorian and his followers certainly ran with that, and what we know as Nestorianism today can be traced back to the figure of Nestorius himself.

Dr. Ken Keathley

Nestorius is another example, like Apollinaris, of someone who is orthodox in his rejection of Arianism, but in his attempt to refute Arianism, overstates his case. When I say that Nestorius was an opponent to Arianism, I mean he actually burned down Arian chapels, so he was quite the anti-Arian. He was also concerned about the practice at that time of describing Mary as the *Theotokos*, the mother of God. And so he was refuting that. In the end, in order to affirm the genuine deity of Christ and the genuine humanity of Christ, he doesn't just end up affirming that Jesus is one person

with two natures. In short, he ends up affirming that Jesus was two persons, both the man Jesus and the divine *Logos*. Now, Nestorianism will be rejected at the Council of Ephesus in 430, and Nestorius will go into exile. Then, when the Council of Chalcedon will affirm the orthodox formulation of one person with two natures, Nestorius will say, “Well, that’s what I believed all along.” And so there is the question just how Nestorian was Nestorius. But, without a doubt, there were certain things that he said and taught that gave way to Nestorianism. Whenever he tried to describe the incarnation as one person lying upon another, that’s very problematic. So, Nestorianism will become a significant heresy in the early church, and even to this day, one can find Nestorian churches.

Dr. Donald Fairbairn

Beginning in the late nineteenth century and continuing through the twentieth century, there have been many historians who have said Nestorius was unjustly condemned; he was condemned for political reasons; he was not actually Nestorian. Some people say that the christological controversy was simply about whether you emphasize deity and humanity properly, and so, in that understanding, people might say Nestorius was emphasizing humanity, but not to too much of a degree, and therefore, he was not heretical. But I believe that the christological controversy was fundamentally not just about emphasis — emphasis on deity versus emphasis on humanity — it was about who the person of Christ was. The church believed that Christ, as a person, was God the Son himself who had personally become human for our salvation. Nestorius, in contrast, believed that Christ, as a person, was a man inspired by God the Son, a man in whom God the Son dwelt, but he was not himself God the Son. So, that means that Nestorius’ thought amounted to saying that Jesus Christ and God the Son were separate persons. And therefore, I believe Nestorius genuinely was Nestorian. So why did so many people in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries want to see him as being orthodox? In my opinion, this has to do with the similarity between Nestorius’ view of salvation and the view of salvation of the liberal theologians who tried to rehabilitate him. Nestorius believed that salvation was a matter of our rising up to God, and so Christ needed to be a man with a special connection to God. What we need to recognize, though, is that in nineteenth century liberalism, they regarded the human task as exactly the same thing. The human race, they argued in the nineteenth century, is dramatically evolving upward, rising up to God. In Nestorius and his teacher Theodore, nineteenth century liberals found a kindred spirit, and so they wanted his thought to be considered to be acceptable. That affected the way they looked at the evidence, and that led to a rehabilitation of Nestorius that, in my opinion, should never have happened.

What is adoptionism?

Dr. Ken Keathley

Adoptionism is a christological heresy that springs up every so often in the history of the church. In the various earliest days of the church there were the Ebionites who were adoptionist in their understanding of Christ. They understood the man Jesus of

Nazareth to have been adopted by the Spirit of Christ, and that is what it meant for him to be divine, not in a kind of literal ontological way but that the Spirit of God adopted his body, if you will, almost a form of possession, so that in that way, the mere mortal Jesus of Nazareth was understood to be the Christ. At other times in church history, whether the Socinians argued an adoptionist understanding of Christ, as did Schleiermacher advocate a form of adoptionism. What adoptionism is, it's an attempt to present christology in a purely rational, comprehensible way that eliminates all mystery. And of course, for that reason it is doomed to failure.

Dr. Andrew Parlee

Adoptionism teaches that Christ was merely a human who was either temporarily or permanently adopted by God and then empowered to do God's will, and because of his faithfulness, he was awarded the honorary title "Son of God," when, in fact, he was a man and only a man. One of the earliest forms of adoptionism was taught by the third century theologian, Paul of Samosata — at that time, he was the bishop of Antioch, Syria — and Paul taught a version of Unitarian monotheism called "dynamic Monarchianism" or "dynamism." Now, here's what I mean. Paul taught that God the Father is the one and only uncreated divine person, and he alone should be worshiped. The Word of God that we find in John 1 is an uncreated, impersonal quality within the Father, and the Holy Spirit is an uncreated, impersonal influence of God the Father in the world. So, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit are of the same uncreated divine essence because they're uncreated, but in a second sense, they are not of the same uncreated divine essence. Why? Because God the Father is a person, but both the Word and the Holy Spirit are impersonal powers or influences... To the degree that the human Jesus was hooked into these powers and turned them on, he was empowered to do God's will, and he was successful to do it. Now, he did it perfectly faithfully so he was granted this honorary title, "Son of God." And so, Paul of Samosata's doctrine of dynamic Monarchianism feeds right into his doctrine of adoptionism. Once again, Jesus Christ was merely a human who was temporarily adopted by God, temporarily empowered by the Word — this uncreated impersonal power — and temporarily adopted by the impersonal uncreated influence of the Holy Spirit to accomplish God's will. And once he did, he was given honorary title "Son of God," when in fact he was and remains a human.

Dr. Stephen J. Wellum

Adoptionism is a view that's greatly influenced by a kind of Gnostic understanding. It affirms that there is only one God, a Unitarian notion, it denies the doctrine of the Trinity. It affirms that the man Christ Jesus who lived in Nazareth was born, was simply that, a man, but at his baptism the Spirit came upon him and, sort of, deified him or gave him powers that came alongside him, and the Spirit then is associated with God that is now empowering him... Adoptionism varies, but usually they will say that at the cross in the cry of dereliction — "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" — that same empowering that came upon him at his baptism departed from him. And that's generally how adoptionism tries to explain then who Jesus is, giving him some kind of uniqueness, some kind of dignity; he's more than just merely a man, yet in the end he's not God the Son from eternity, he's not God the Son

incarnate, he is not deity, he is an empowered man that does God's work of service, who teaches, who reveals, who dies. They're not clear as to the actual accomplishment of the cross, but we have no divine Savior, no doctrine of the Trinity. Adoptionism rightly is rejected by the church as a false understanding of who Jesus is.

Dr. Steve McKinion

So, adoptionism is a view that Jesus was a human being who was chosen by God to fulfill his purpose. In other words, Jesus was much like a prophet, the prophet Jeremiah even, who was chosen in the womb. And adoptionism was a christological heresy in the early church where the effort to explain how Jesus did some divine things and some human things was under dispute. How do you explain that sometimes Christ walked on the water and sometimes he rode on a boat, and how he forgives sin as God and then how he is ignorant of what the future holds with regard to his own coming, for example. And so adoptionism explained that by saying that the man Jesus was conceived like any other human being, and at some point God chose him. Some adoptionists believe that God chose Jesus in the womb to join him together with his Son by means of the Spirit. Some believe it was at his birth, whenever he actually was born, that this adoption took place. Others believe it was at his baptism, that Jesus was just a normal man for the first thirty years or so of his life, and at his baptism, because he's been so holy, because he's been such good man, a righteous man, that God adopted him as his son. And so they read the baptism statement, "This is my Son in whom I am well pleased," as a statement about the man Jesus becoming the Son of God at that moment.

The problem in early Christianity with adoptionism is that adoptionism means that Jesus and all of his actions are attributed just to a human being and that God isn't working in Christ to reconcile the world to himself. Instead, for adoptionism, it's the man Jesus who is working, and he might be doing that by means of the Spirit of God or by the grace of God or by the empowerment of God, but in the end, Jesus is simply a human being, just like all of the prophets of the Old Testament. Of course the problem with Jesus simply being a human being is there's no salvation. Paul says that Jesus is not only a living soul like the first Adam, but he's a life-giving spirit as the second Adam. And only God gives life, and so Jesus has to be God in order to give life. This is why the virginal conception of Jesus is so important in early Christianity, because if there is a man and a woman who are involved, and a child results in a normal and natural means of conception, then at some point that human being has to be distinct from God living this human life. So, by means of a virginal conception, where instead of man and Mary coming together, there is the Spirit who comes on Mary, the church is able to ensure that we don't have an adoptionism, that Jesus never is a human person outside of being the incarnation of God living this human life. Adoptionism threatens the very essence of the gospel, that it's God who is at work in Christ, reconciling us to himself. By making Jesus a man, our salvation is undone and we're left to simply try to save ourselves by our own actions, by our own work, by our reliance on the grace of God or on the Spirit of God. It really results in a strong Pelagianism, where what we have to do is take this life that we have been given, rely

fully on God, and he will give us the strength to live the right, holy and righteous life that he wants us to live, as opposed to our being dead in our trespasses and sins and needing God to rebirth us, to recreate us, to make us new through Jesus, as he is the Son of God incarnate.

Who was Eutyches of Constantinople, and what were the teachings of Eutychianism?

Dr. Ken Keathley

Eutyches wanted to refute Nestorianism — the notion that not only is Jesus one person with two natures; Nestorianism seems to teach that Jesus is actually two persons. It divided the union of Christ in such a way that you really didn't have one person. Eutyches wanted to unite the two natures, such a way, that he really articulated a hybrid Christ, and so he advocated that Jesus was a *tertium quid*, a person of a third kind. And he really does teach that Jesus is no longer a man like we are men because you have a comingling of the two natures where he is something unique and something different. And so, Eutyches will be rejected, and his teaching will be rejected at the Council of Chalcedon, which will teach the orthodox formulation that Jesus of Nazareth is one person with two natures, human and divine.

Dr. Stephen J. Wellum

There's a number of heresies that show up in the early church that don't quite get it right and thus lead to disastrous conclusions regarding what it means for the Son of God from eternity to become flesh. Eutyches is one of these individuals that when he puts all of the biblical data together — the full deity of the Son, the Trinitarian relations, the Son now adding to himself a human nature — how he understands what's happening in the Word becoming flesh is, is that there is now a blend of natures, or a blend of the Son's divine nature with a human nature. He does not think of the Son, the incarnate Son, as having two natures. That is the orthodox position that the Bible teaches and the Council of Chalcedon clearly affirmed. The Council of Chalcedon argued that there's one person, the divine Son, the second person of the Godhead who shares the divine nature. That divine nature remains unchanged. The Son adds to himself a second nature, which is a human nature of a body/soul, and those natures are not blended, they're not confused. There's no creator/creature sort of blending. At the heart of Christian theology, God is God, humans are human, the Son of God adds to himself a human nature, but there's no blend, there's no sort of a pantheism, a kind of deity-humanity coming together. But Eutyches argued for this kind of blend, so when he puts it all together, there's one person, the Son, who now, in becoming incarnate, blends the divine nature and human nature together into a kind of third nature. So, now what you have, unfortunately — and this is why the church rejected it — as a result of the incarnation you no longer have the deity of the Son. You no longer have the full humanity of the Son. You have this mixture that is not fully human, is not fully God. And then, of course, the Trinitarian implications of this are disastrous. How do you make sense of the Son, the second person of the Godhead, now having a blended human nature? What happens to the Father? Does he also

participate in this blended human nature? Well, then he would have something of humanity, which is fully unbiblical. Or the Spirit? All of it leads to terrible Trinitarian implications, a denial then of the full deity of the Son, the full humanity of Christ. It is a conclusion that the church from the outset said, “This is not how we understand the Word becoming flesh.”

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