



ΚΑΤΟΟΜΒΑ

— BAPTIST CHURCH —

CHRIST'S CHURCH THROUGH THE AGES

LESSON 21: THE FIRST COUNCIL OF NICAEA (PART 3)



“We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible; And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten from the Father, the only-begotten, that is, from the substance of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, True God of True God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by Whom all things were made, things in heaven and things on earth, Who for us men and for our salvation, came down, and became incarnate and was made man, and he suffered, and the third day He rose again and ascended into Heaven, and He will come to judge both the living and dead, And in the Holy Spirit.

But as for those who say: ‘There was when He was not’, or ‘Before being born He was not’, or ‘that He came into existence out of nothing’, or who assert ‘that the Son of God is of a different hypostasis or substance’, or ‘created’, or ‘is subject to alteration or change’ – these, the Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church anathematizes.”

THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

SYNTAX:

- 'One God' & 'One Lord' are titularly synonymous.
- The grammatical structure (syntax) of the first two sentences demonstrates their parallel equality.

SEMANTICS:

- κύριος (kyrios) is the standard Greek translation of the Divine Name in the Old Testament.
- It is employed in the same way in the New Testament.

- μονογενής (monogenés): 'begotten', 'one-of-a-kind', 'unique one'
- μονος (monos): 'one'/'only' + γενος (genos): 'kind'
- 'Begotten' = from the substance of the Father
= not made (i.e. not created)
- Thus, 'begotten' in this context explains the Divine Nature of Christ; it is an *ontological* descriptor, NOT a *chronological* descriptor.
- cf. John 1:1-3, 14; Hebrews 11:17

JOHN 1:1-3

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and **the Word was God**. He was in the beginning with God. **All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.***

JOHN 1:14

*And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us; and we beheld His glory – **glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.***

HEBREWS 11:17

Πίστει προσενήνοχεν Ἀβραὰμ τὸν Ἰσαὰκ πειραζόμενος καὶ τὸν μονογενῆ προσέφερεν ὁ τὰς ἐπαγγελίας ἀναδεξάμενος
*By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his **only son...***

- ὁμοούσιον (homoousion): ‘same being/essence/substance’
- ὁμός (homos): ‘same’ + οὐσία (ousia): ‘being/essence’
- οὐσία was later translated into Latin versions as either: *essential* (essence) or *substantia* (substance).
- Thus, the Greek term ὁμοούσιον was commonly translated into Latin as *conessentialis* or *consubstantialis*.
- These terms, respectively, have been brought into English as ‘coessential’ and ‘consubstantial’.

- During the council, there was controversy regarding the usage of the term ὁμοούσιον (homoousion).
- Up until this time in the history of the Church, the term had only been used by a heretical group called Sabellianism (a.k.a Modalism or Patripassionism)
- Sabellianism teaches that God only has one ὑπόστασις (hypostasis): ‘person’.
- The Father, Son, and Spirit are but three different ‘modes’ or ‘manifestations’ of His divine being.

CONCLUSION

- Despite Arius’ claim that Jesus Christ was created, the Council concluded that because he was μονογενής (monogenés), He was begotten, not made.
- Although Arius claimed that Jesus Christ was created out of nothing (or of some other substance), the Council concluded that He was begotten of the ὁμοούσιον (homoousion) as the Father.
- Therefore, Jesus Christ is of the full divinity of God.

THE NICENE SYLLOGISM

1. The divine substance of God is eternal and uncreated.
2. God the Son is of the same substance as God the Father.
3. Therefore, God the Son is eternal and uncreated.