

--Between Father and Son is perfect equality.

--The Son is identified as the Logos.

Alexander reasoned that the Logos is the Reason, the Word, and that if the Father had existed at any time without the Logos, he would have been a non-reasoning deity...and that was a point he could not buy. (Arius would agree that the Son was the Logos but would not accept the Logos as eternal). To Alexander the position of Arius meant that God, as Arius saw him, had a no-thinking existence prior to the creation of the Logos.

c. The Debate

The controversy was stiff. Arius was condemned under a synod of African bishops in 321 and later suffered the same fate at Antioch. But the confusion continued and a council was called by the emperor Constantine for Nicaea in 325 AD. To this council came not only Alexander but his forceful secretary Athanasius who eventually would succeed him in the bishopric --328.

To Athanasius the whole plan of salvation was at stake. Under the system of Arius, he argued, the Word would be at best a demigod and the whole concept of Biblical salvation which seemed to rest on a total sacrifice originated in the economy of God, would have been lost. The quality of the sacrifice could not exceed the quality of the sacrificed one and if he were limited in being the sacrifice was limited in quality. If he had not the essential essence of divinity the sacrifice had not the essential concept of eternity. And while we may not be able to grip it all now...it was a real issue then and undoubtedly Athanasius was right in his perception of the nature of the debate.

The questions was...simply...was Christ the same essence as the Father...was He of a different essence? Athanasius said yes...Arius said no.

We cannot take time in this course for the many technicalities that attended this problematic material. But 318 men met at Nicaea throughout the summer of 325. All but five were from the east (the question did not amount to much in the west...the west having the Athanasian view almost without exception) and one of these, Hosius of Spain (Cordova), was elected moderator. Supposedly he represented Sylvester of Rome. These men discussed and argued over the scripture and the representations and years later Ambrose of Milan would liken them Abraham's army (318 men) that rescued Lot in the war of the kings.