

on the atonement are not finalized, he felt that an Arian ideal would leave no saving ground when carried to the logical conclusion.

Athanasius was joined in the dispute by many bishops and Arius had a few as well. The council seemed to be the ideal opportunity for presenting views on a number of issues as well. But primarily the Arian issue was in view. To Athanasius it involved the plan of salvation while to Arius it seemed to involve the integrity of God. To Constantine the essential meaning concerned the unity of the Empire while to many of the bishops it gave opportunity for advancement and court favor. To many parties in the church it seemed only a theologian's debate but it is obvious to us today that the main issue was of paramount importance and the health of the church could not have continued without an adequate discussion and proper conclusion on the issue.

#### The Meeting

Convened in June of 325, the council met continuously into August, lasting just about three months. (Short for most councils) 318 Bishops attended and in later years Ambrose of Milan would liken them to Abraham's army that went out to deliver Lot in Genesis 14. The progression was one of study...first in tradition to see what had been believed and second in Scripture to see what was apparently taught. Debate and attempted resolution followed the study. The emperor was the real convener while Eusebius of Caesarea was the secretary and Hosius of Spain the moderator. The representative ideas were thrashed about freely and the key ideas worked over with the Arian homoian. the Athanasian homoousian and a compromise term of later importance, homoiousian (like substance). As noted, Eusebius of Caesarea tried for a compromise solution that was not accepted in the view that it only promoted an uneasy peace. The issue was not helped by extremists in both camps and some of these were less orthodox or at least in later years were less orthodox. Personal advancement always complicates a cause and forces unnecessary disagreements and adjustments and there is always the pressure to do or to agree to something simply because it is the easy course for the moment.

But in conclusion, the view of Athanasius was upheld