

Church History Turning Points: The Council of Nicaea (325)



Key quotes from Noll, Mark A. *Turning Points: Decisive Moments in the History of Christianity*, chp. 2:

Arius: “There was when the Son was not.”

“What might be called the logic of salvation, to match Arius’s logic of monotheism, was the main theme in the decades-long effort of Athanasius (ca. 296– 373) to define and defend the orthodox position.”

“*lex orandi lex credendi* (the principles, or “law,” of prayer determine the principles of formal belief) held true in the crisis of the early fourth century.”

“The turning point in Christian history represented by the Nicene Creed was the church’s critical choice for the wisdom of God in preference to human wisdom.”

“because of the emperor’s [Constantine] actions, the sphere of worldly concerns he stood for gradually assumed greater and greater importance in the church.”

“This combination— of **momentous doctrinal declaration** and **critical alteration in the church’s relationship to the world**— is what together make the Council of Nicaea one of the most decisive events in church history outside of the New Testament.”

Resources:

- [John Piper on Athanasius](#)
- [Athanasius in 30 minutes](#)
- C. FitzSimons Allison, *The Cruelty of Heresy*, ch. 4
- [Reeves, *The Breeze of the Centuries*](#), ch. 3
- On the growth of the early church:
 - [Love for the City \(Tim Keller audio\)](#)
 - Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity*