

3.2-Synod of Alexandria and its aftermath (362)

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Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret
362 - Eusebius and Athanasius hold Synod in Alexandria and the Trinity is declared Consubstantial		
<p>3.7.1 As soon as Eusebius reached Alexandria, he, together with Athanasius, immediately called a Synod. The bishops assembled on this occasion out of various cities took into consideration many subjects of the utmost importance.</p> <p>3.7.2 They asserted the divinity of the Holy Spirit and understood him in the consubstantial Trinity. They also declared that the Word, in being made man, assumed not only flesh, but also a soul, in accordance with the views of the early ecclesiastics.</p> <p>3.7.3 For they did not introduce any new doctrine of their own devising into the church, but contented themselves with recording their approval of those points which ecclesiastical tradition has insisted on from the beginning, and wise Christians have demonstratively taught.</p> <p>3.7.4 Such beliefs the ancient fathers have uniformly maintained in all their controversial writings.</p> <p>3.7.5 Irenaeus, Clemens, Apollinaris of Hierapolis, and Serapion, who presided over the church at Antioch, assure us in their several works that it was the generally received opinion that Christ in his incarnation was endowed with a soul.</p> <p>3.7.6 Moreover, the Synod convened because Beryllus, bishop of Philadelphia in Arabia, recognized the same doctrine in their letter to that bishop.</p> <p>3.7.7 Origen also everywhere in his surviving works accepts that the Incarnate God took on himself a human soul.</p> <p>3.7.8 But he more particularly explains this mystery in the ninth volume of his Comments upon Genesis, where he shows that Adam and Eve were types of Christ and the church.</p>	<p>5.12.3a In the meantime, the bishops of many cities had assembled in Alexandria with Athanasius and Eusebius, and had confirmed the Nicene doctrines.</p> <p>5.12.3b They confessed that the Holy Ghost is of the same substance as the Father and the Son, and they made use of the term "Trinity."</p> <p>5.12.3c They declared that the human nature assumed by God the Word is to be regarded as consisting of not a perfect body only, but also of a perfect soul, even as was taught by the ancient Church philosophers.</p>	

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<p>3.7.9 That holy man Pamphilus, and Eusebius who was surnamed after him, are trustworthy witnesses on this subject.</p> <p>3.7.10 Both these witnesses, in their joint life of Origen and admirable defense of him, in answer to those who were prejudiced against him, prove that he was not the first who made this declaration, but that in doing so he was the mere expositor of the mystical tradition of the church.</p> <p>3.7.11 Those who assisted at the Alexandrian Council examined also with great minuteness the question concerning 'Essence' or 'Substance,' and 'Existence,' 'Subsistence,' or 'Personality.'</p> <p>3.7.12 For Hosius, bishop of Cordova in Spain, who has been before referred to as the one sent by the Emperor Constantine to calm the excitement which Arius had caused, originated the controversy about these terms in his earnestness to overthrow the dogma of Sabellius the Libyan.</p> <p>3.7.13 In the council of Nicaea, however, which was held soon after, this dispute was not agitated; but because of the contention which arose soon after, the matter was freely discussed at Alexandria.</p> <p>3.7.14 It was there determined that such expressions as <i>ousia</i> and <i>hypostasis</i> ought not to be used in reference to God, for they argued that the word <i>ousia</i> is nowhere employed in the sacred Scriptures and that the apostle had misapplied the term <i>hypostasis</i>, which was necessary for their doctrine.</p> <p>3.7.15 They nevertheless decided that in refutation of the Sabellian error these terms were admissible, for lack of better terms, so that no one would get the wrong idea by a threefold designation. For we ought rather to believe that each of those named in the Trinity is God in his own proper person.</p> <p>3.7.16 Such were the decisions of this Synod. If we may express our own judgment concerning substance and personality,</p> <p>3.7.17 it appears to us that the Greek philosophers have given us various definitions of <i>ousia</i>, but have not taken the slightest notice of <i>hypostasis</i>.</p>	<p>5.12.4 As the Church had been agitated by questions concerning the terms "substance" and "hypostasis," and the contentions and disputes about these words had been frequent, they decreed wisely, I think, that from then on, these terms should not be used in reference to God, except in refutation of the Sabellian belief; so that one and the same thing might not appear to be called by three names, from the incompleteness of the terms; but that one might understand each by its respective term in a threefold way.</p>	

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<p>3.7.18 Irenaeus the grammarian indeed, in his alphabetical [lexicon entitled] <i>Atticistes</i>, even declares it to be a barbarous term.</p> <p>3.7.19 For it is not to be found in any of the ancients, except occasionally in a sense quite different from that which is attached to it in the present day. Thus Sophocles, in his tragedy entitled <i>Phoenix</i>, uses it to signify ‘treachery’: in Menander it implies ‘sauces’; as if one should call the ‘sediment’ at the bottom of a hogshead of wine hypostasis.</p> <p>3.7.20 But although the ancient philosophical writers scarcely noticed this word, the more modern ones have frequently used it instead of <i>ousia</i>.</p> <p>3.7.21 This term, as we before observed, has been variously defined. But can that which is capable of being defined by a definition be applicable to God, who is incomprehensible?</p> <p>3.7.22 Evagrius, in his <i>Monachicus</i>, cautions us against rash and inconsiderate language in reference to God; forbidding all attempt to define the divinity, because it is wholly simple in its nature. ‘For,’ says he, ‘definition belongs only to things which are compound.’</p> <p>3.7.23 The same author further adds, ‘Every proposition has either a <i>genus</i> which is predicted, or a <i>species</i>, or a <i>differentia</i>, or a <i>proprium</i>, or an <i>accidens</i>, or that which is compounded of these. But none of these can be supposed to exist in the sacred Trinity. Let then what is inexplicable be adored in silence.’</p> <p>3.7.24 Such is the reasoning of Evagrius, of whom we shall again speak later. We have indeed made a digression here, but that only helped illustrate the subject under consideration.</p>		
Quotations from Athanasius’ ‘Defense of his Flight’		
<p>3.8.1 On this occasion Athanasius read to those present the Defense which he had composed some time before in justification of his flight.</p> <p>3.8.2 It may be of service to introduce here a few passages from that, leaving the entire production, which is too long to be transcribed, to be sought out and looked over by the studios.</p>	<p>5.12.5 These were the decrees passed by the bishops convened at Alexandria. Athanasius read in the council the document about his flight which he had written in order to justify himself.</p>	

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<p>3.8.3 See the daring offenses of the impious persons! Such are their proceedings, and yet instead of blushing at their former clumsy intrigues against us, they even now abuse us for having escaped out of their murderous hands. They are grievously vexed that they were unable to put us out of the way altogether.</p> <p>3.8.4 In short, they overlook the fact that while they pretend to accuse us of ‘cowardice,’ they are really incriminating themselves.</p> <p>3.8.5 For if it is disgraceful to flee, it is still more so to pursue, since the one is only attempting to avoid being murdered, while the other is seeking to commit the deed.</p> <p>3.8.6 But Scripture itself directs us to flee. And those who persecute unto death, in attempting to violate the law, force us to find refuge in flight.</p> <p>3.8.7 Therefore, they should rather be ashamed of their persecution than reproach us for having sought to escape from it. Let them cease to harass, and those who flee will also cease.</p> <p>3.8.8 Nevertheless they set no bounds to their wickedness, using every art to entrap us, knowing that the flight of the persecuted is the strongest condemnation of the persecutor.</p> <p>3.8.9 For no one runs away from a mild and beneficent person, but from one who is of a barbarous and cruel disposition. So it was that ‘Every one that was discontented and in debt’ fled from Saul to David.</p> <p>3.8.10 Therefore, these enemies of ours, in like manner, desire to kill, but also to conceal themselves, so that no evidence may exist to convict them of their wickedness.</p> <p>3.8.11 But in this also these misguided men most outrageously deceive themselves, for the more obvious the effort to elude them, the more evident will their deliberate slaughters and exiles be exposed.</p> <p>3.8.12 If they act the part of assassins, the voice of the blood which is shed will cry against them all the louder. And if they condemn to banishment, they will raise everywhere living monuments of their own injustice and oppression.</p>		

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<p>3.8.13 Surely, unless their intellects were unsound, they would perceive the dilemma in which their own plans entangle them.</p> <p>3.8.14 But since they have lost sound judgment, their folly is exposed when they vanish, and when they seek to stay they do not see their wickedness.</p> <p>3.8.15 But if they condemn those who succeed in hiding themselves from the malice of their blood-thirsty adversaries and criticize those who flee from their persecutors, what will they say to Jacob's retreat from the rage of his brother Esau, and to Moses fleeing into the land of Midian for fear of Pharaoh?</p> <p>3.8.16 And what apology will these babblers make for David's flight from Saul, when he sent messengers from his own house to dispatch him; and for his concealment in a cave, after planning to rescue himself from the treacherous schemes of Abimelech, by pretending to be insane?</p> <p>3.8.17 What will these reckless asserters of whatever suits their purpose answer when they are reminded of the great prophet Elijah, who by calling upon God, had recalled the dead to life, hid himself from Ahab on account of fear, and fled on account of Jezebel's threats? At the same time the sons of the prophets also, being sought for in order to be murdered, withdrew and were concealed in caves by Obadiah. Or are they unacquainted with these instances because of their antiquity?</p> <p>3.8.18 Have they forgotten also what is recorded in the Gospel, that the disciples retreated and hid themselves for fear of the Jews? Paul, when sought for by the governor of Damascus 'was let down from the wall in a basket, and thus escaped the hands of him that sought him.'</p> <p>3.8.19 Since then, Scripture relates these circumstances concerning the saints, what excuse can they fabricate for their impudence?</p> <p>3.8.20 If they charge us with 'cowardice,' it is in utter ignorance of the condemnation it pronounces on themselves. If they slander these holy men by asserting that they acted contrary to the will of God, they demonstrate their ignorance of Scripture.</p>		

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<p>3.8.21 For it was commanded in the Law that ‘cities of refuge’ should be constituted, by which provision was made that those who were pursued in order to be put to death might have the means of preserving themselves.</p> <p>3.8.22 Again in the consummation of the ages, when the Word of the Father, who had before spoken by Moses, came himself to the earth, he gave this express command, ‘When they persecute you in one city, flee unto another.’</p> <p>3.8.23 And shortly after, ‘When therefore ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (let whosoever reads, understand), then let those in Judea flee unto the mountains; let him that is on the house-top not come down to take anything out of his house; nor him that is in the fields return to take his clothes.’</p> <p>3.8.24 The saints therefore, knowing these instructions, had a sort of training for their action. For what the Lord then commanded, he had before his coming in the flesh already spoken of by his servants.</p> <p>3.8.25 And this is a universal rule for man, leading to perfection, ‘to practice whatever God has commanded.’</p> <p>3.8.26 On this account the Word himself, becoming incarnate for our sake, saw fit to conceal himself when he was sought for. And when he was persecuted again, consented to withdraw to avoid the conspiracy against him.</p> <p>3.8.27 For thus it was fitting for him, by hungering and thirsting and suffering other afflictions, to demonstrate that he was indeed made man.</p> <p>3.8.28 For at the very beginning, as soon as he was born, he gave this direction by an angel to Joseph: ‘Arise and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, for Herod will seek the infant’s life.’</p> <p>3.8.29 And after Herod’s death, it appears that for fear of his son Archelaus, he retired to Nazareth.</p> <p>3.8.30 Subsequently; when he gave unquestionable evidence of his Divine character by healing the withered hand, ‘when the Pharisees took council how they might destroy him, Jesus, knowing their wickedness, withdrew himself from there.’</p>		

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<p>3.8.31 Moreover, when he had raised Lazarus from the dead, and they had become still more intent on destroying him, we are told that ‘Jesus walked no more openly among the Jews, but retired into a region on the borders of the desert.’</p> <p>3.8.32 Again when the Savior said, ‘Before Abraham was, I AM;’ and the Jews took up stones to cast at him; Jesus concealed himself, and going through the midst of them out of the Temple, went away from there, and so escaped.</p> <p>3.8.33 Since then they see these things, or rather understand them, (for they will not see,) are they not deserving of being burnt with fire, according to what is written, for acting and speaking so plainly contrary to all that the Lord did and taught?</p> <p>3.8.34 Finally, when John had suffered martyrdom, and when his disciples had buried his body, Jesus, after hearing what was done, departed thus by ship into a deserted place apart.</p> <p>3.8.35 Now the Lord did these things and so taught. But if only these men of whom I speak had the modesty to confine their rashness to men only, without daring to be guilty of such madness as to accuse the Savior himself of ‘cowardice’; especially after having already uttered blasphemies against him.</p> <p>3.8.36 But even if they are insane, they will not be tolerated and their ignorance of the gospels will be detected by everyone.</p> <p>3.8.37 The cause for retreat and flight under such circumstances as these is reasonable and valid, of which the evangelists have afforded us precedents in the conduct of our Savior himself. From our Savior it may be inferred that the saints have always been justly influenced by the same principle,</p> <p>3.8.38 For whatever is recorded of him as a man is applicable to mankind in general. For he took on himself our nature and exhibited in himself the characteristics of our deficiency.</p> <p>3.8.39 John has thus indicated this: ‘Then they sought to take him; but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come.’</p>		

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<p>3.8.40 Moreover, before that hour came, he himself said to his mother, ‘My hour has not yet come;’ and to those who were called his brethren, ‘My time is not yet come.’</p> <p>3.8.41 Again when the time had arrived, he said to his disciples, ‘Sleep on now, and take your rest, for behold the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of sinners.’</p> <p>3.8.42 So that he neither permitted himself to be apprehended before the time came, nor when the time was come did he conceal himself, but voluntarily gave himself up to those who had conspired against him.</p> <p>3.8.43 Thus also the blessed martyrs have guarded themselves in times of persecution. On being persecuted, they fled and kept themselves concealed. But on being discovered, they suffered martyrdom.</p> <p>3.8.44 Such is the reasoning of Athanasius in his apology for his own flight.</p>		
Eusebius finds Antioch divided		
<p>3.9.1 As soon as the council of Alexandria was dissolved, Eusebius, bishop of Vercellae, went from Alexandria to Antioch.</p> <p>3.9.2 There finding that Paulinus had been ordained by Lucifer and that the people were disagreeing among themselves, for the partisans of Meletius held their assemblies apart, he was exceedingly grieved at the lack of harmony concerning this election, and in his own mind disapproved of what had taken place.</p> <p>3.9.2b However, his respect for Lucifer compelled him to be silent about it, and, on his departure, he engaged that all things should be set right by a council of bishops.</p>	<p>5.13.1 On the termination of the council, Eusebius traveled to Antioch and found dissension prevailing among the people. Those who were attached to Meletius would not join Paulinus, but held their assemblies apart.</p> <p>5.13.2a Eusebius was much grieved at the state of affairs; for the ordination ought not to have taken place without the unanimous consent of the people.</p> <p>5.13.2b Yet out of respect towards Lucifer, he did not openly express his dissatisfaction. He refused to hold communion with either party, but promised to solve their respective grievances by means of a council.</p>	
<p>3.9.3 Subsequently he labored with great earnestness to unite the dissenters, but did not succeed. Meanwhile, Meletius returned from exile, and after finding his followers holding their assemblies apart from the others, he set himself at their head.</p> <p>3.9.4 But Euzoïus, the chief of the Arian heresy, had possession of the churches. Paulinus only retained a small church within the city, from which Euzoïus had not ejected</p>	<p>5.13.3a While he was thus striving to restore peace and unanimity, Meletius returned from exile. And finding that those who held his beliefs had seceded from the other party, he held meetings with them beyond the walls of the city.</p> <p>5.13.3b Paulinus, in the meantime, assembled his own party within the city; for his mildness, his virtuous life, and his advanced age had so far won the respect of</p>	

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<p>him, on account of his personal respect for him. But Meletius assembled his adherents outside of the city gates.</p> <p>3.9.5a It was under these circumstances that Eusebius left Antioch at that time.</p>	<p>Euzoïus, the Arian president, that instead of being expelled from the city, a church had been assigned to him for his own use.</p> <p>5.13.3c Eusebius, on finding all his endeavors for the restoration of peace frustrated, departed Antioch.</p>	<p>3.5.3a At the time in question, however, Lucifer made the quarrel worse and spent a considerable time in Antioch.</p>
Origin of the “Luciferians”		
<p>3.9.5b When Lucifer understood that his ordination of Paul was not approved of by Eusebius, regarding it as an insult, he became deeply angered; and not only separated himself from communion with him, but also began, in a contentious spirit, to condemn what had been determined by the Synod.</p> <p>3.9.6 These things occurring at a season of grievous disorder, alienated many from the church; for many attached themselves to Lucifer, and thus a distinct sect arose under the name of ‘Luciferians.’</p> <p>3.9.7 Nevertheless, Lucifer was unable to give full expression to his anger, since he had pledged himself by his deacon to assent to whatever should be decided on by the Synod.</p> <p>3.9.8 On account of this, he adhered to the tenets of the church, and returned to Sardinia to his own see. But those who at first identified themselves with his quarrel, still continue separate from the church.</p>	<p>5.13.4 Lucifer felt that he had been injured by him, because he had refused to approve the ordination of Paulinus; and, in displeasure, seceded from communion with him. As if purely from the desire of contention, Lucifer then began to criticize the enactments of the council of Alexandria. And in this way, he seems to have originated the heresy which has been called after him, Luciferian. Those who espoused his cause seceded from the church.</p> <p>5.13.5 But, although he was deeply chagrined at the way things turned out, because he had sent a deacon to accompany Eusebius in lieu of himself, he yielded to the decrees of the council of Alexandria, and conformed to the doctrines of the Catholic Church. Around this time period he journeyed to Sardinia.</p>	<p>3.5.3c When Lucifer returned to Sardinia he made certain additions to the dogmas of the church and those who accepted them were named after him.</p> <p>3.5.4 And for a considerable time they were called Luciferians. But in time, the flame of this dogma too went out, and it passed away into oblivion. Such were the events that followed on the return of the bishops.</p>
<p>3.9.9 Eusebius, on the other hand, traveling throughout the Eastern provinces like a good physician, completely restored those who were weak in the faith, instructing and establishing them in ecclesiastical principles.</p> <p>3.9.10 After this he passed over to Illyricum, and from there to Italy, where he pursued a similar course.</p>	<p>5.13.6 In the meantime Eusebius traversed the Eastern provinces, restored those who had declined from the faith, and taught them what was necessary to believe. After passing through Illyria, he went to Italy, and there he met with Hilarius, bishop of Poitiers in Aquitania.</p>	<p>3.5.3b And when Eusebius arrived on the spot and learned that bad doctoring had made the malady very hard to heal, he sailed away to the West.</p>
Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers and Lucifer defend the doctrine of the <i>homoousion</i>		
<p>3.10.1 There, however, Hilary bishop of Poitiers (a city of Aquitania Secunda) had anticipated him, having previously confirmed the bishops of Italy and Gaul in the doctrines of the orthodox faith; for he had returned from exile first to these countries.</p> <p>3.10.2 Both therefore nobly combined their energies in defense of the faith. And Hilary being a very eloquent man,</p>	<p>5.13.7a Hilary had returned from exile before Eusebius, and had taught the Italians and the Gauls what doctrines they had to receive, and what to reject; he expressed himself with great eloquence in the Latin tongue, and wrote many admirable works, it is said, in refutation of the Arian dogmas.</p>	

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<p>maintained with great power the doctrine of the <i>homoousion</i> in books which he wrote in Latin. In these he gave sufficient support [to the doctrine] and unanswerably refuted the Arian tenets.</p> <p>3.10.3 These things took place shortly after the recall of those who had been banished.</p>	<p>5.13.7b In this way, Hilary and Eusebius maintained the doctrines of the Nicæan council in the regions of the West.</p>	
Opposition builds to the term <i>homousian</i>		
<p>3.10.4 But it must be observed, that at the same time Macedonius, Eleusius, Eustathius, and Sophronius, with all their companions, who had but the one common designation Macedonians, held frequent Synods in various places.</p>	<p>5.14.1 At this period the followers of Macedonius, among whom were Eleusius, Eustathius, and Sophronius, who now began openly to be called "Macedonians" as their own distinct sect, adopted the bold measure on the death of Constantius, of calling together those of their own beliefs who had been convened at Seleucia, and of holding several councils.</p>	
<p>3.10.5 Having called together those of Seleucia who embraced their views, they anathematized the bishops of the other party, that is the Acacian. And rejecting the creed of Ariminum, they confirmed that which had been read at Seleucia. This, as I have stated in the preceding book, was the same as had been before promoted at Antioch.</p> <p>3.10.6 When they were asked by someone, ‘Why have you, who have been called Macedonians until now, retained communion with the Acacians as if you were agreed in opinion, if you really hold different beliefs?’</p> <p>3.10.7a They replied thus, through Sophronius, bishop of Pompeiopolis, a city of Paphlagonia:</p> <p>3.10.7b ‘Those in the West,’ said he, ‘were infected with the <i>homoousian</i> error as with a disease: Aëtius in the East adulterated the purity of the faith by introducing the assertion of a dissimilitude of substance.</p> <p>3.10.8 Now both of these dogmas are illegitimate; for the former rashly blended into one the distinct persons of the Father and the Son, binding them together by that cord of iniquity, the term <i>homoousion</i>.</p> <p>3.10.9 Meanwhile, Aëtius completely separated that affinity of nature of the Son to the Father, by the expression <i>anomoion</i>, unlike as to substance or essence.</p> <p>3.10.10 Since then both these opinions run into the very opposite extremes, the middle course between them appeared to us to be more consistent with truth and piety.</p>	<p>5.14.2a They condemned the followers of Acacius and the faith which had been established at Ariminum, and confirmed the doctrines which had been set forth at Antioch, and afterwards approved at Seleucia.</p> <p>5.14.2b When interrogated as to the cause of their dispute with the followers of Acacius, with whom they had formerly held communion since they held the same beliefs, they replied by the mouth of Sophronius, a bishop of Paphlagonia.</p> <p>5.14.3a They said that while the Christians in the West maintained the use of the term “consubstantial,” the followers of Aetius in the East upheld the dogma of dissimilarity as to substance; and that the former party irregularly wove together into a unity the distinct persons of the Father and of the Son, by their use of the term “consubstantial.” But the latter party represented too great a difference as existing in the relationship between the nature of the Father and of the Son.</p> <p>5.14.3b Instead, they themselves kept the middle road between the two extremes, and avoided both errors, by religiously maintaining that in hypostasis, the Son is like</p>	

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<p>We accordingly assert that the Son is “like the Father as to subsistence.”’</p> <p>3.10.11 Such was the answer the Macedonians made by Sophronius to that question, as Sabinus assures us in his Collection of the Synodical Acts.</p> <p>3.10.12 But in decrying Aëtius as the author of the Anomoion doctrine, and not Acacius, they flagrantly disguise the truth, in order to seem as far removed from the Arians on the one side, as from the <i>homoousians</i> on the other.</p> <p>3.10.13 For their own words convict them of having separated from them.</p>	<p>the Father. It was by such arguments as these that the Macedonians vindicated themselves from blame.</p>	

