

Council of Nicaea Documents (English) – Part 2

Sources Used

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Anonymous Church History (pseudo-Gelasius) (CPG 6034)

Greek text: *Anonyme Kirchengeschichte (Gelasius Cyzicenus, CPG 6034)*, ed. Günther Christian Hansen. GCS N.F. 9 (Walter de Gruyter: Berlin, 2002).
English translation by FCC (NJ and RR).

Athanasius, Letter to the Bishops of Africa (CPG 2133)

Greek text: *Athanasius Werke*, vol. 2.8, ed. H.C. Brennecke et al. (Berlin, 2000).
English translation by A. Robertson (NPNF² 4:488-494), updated by FCC (AGC).

On the Nicene Definition (de Decretis) (CPG 2120)

Greek text: *Athanasius Werke*, vol. 2.1-2:1-45, ed. H.-G. Opitz (Berlin, 1935).
English translation by J. H. Newman and A. Robertson (NPNF² 4:149-172), updated by FCC (AGC).

On the Synods of Ariminum and Seleucia (de Synodis) (CPG 2128)

Greek text: *Athanasius Werke*, vol. 2.6-7, ed. H.-G. Opitz (Berlin, 1940).
English translation by J. H. Newman and A. Robertson (NPNF² 4:48-480), updated by FCC (AGC).

Eusebius of Caesarea, Life of Constantine (CPG 3496)

Greek text: *Eusebius Werke 2. Die Kirchengeschichte*, ed. E. Schwartz. GCS 9.1 (Leipzig, 1903).
English translation by A.C. McGiffert (NPNF² 1:73-404), updated by FCC (AGC).

Gelasius of Caesarea, Ecclesiastical History (CPG 3521)

Greek Text and English translation: *Ecclesiastical History: The Extant Fragments With an Appendix containing the Fragments from Dogmatic Writings*. GCS, ed. M. Wallraff, J. Stutz, and N. Marinides. Translated by N. Marinides. (De Gruyter, 2018).

Jerome, Dialogue Against the Luciferians (CPL 608)

Latin Text: *Patrologia Latina* vol. 23, coll. 153-182B. ed. J.P. Migne, (Paris, 1883).
English translation by W.H. Fremantle (NPNF², 6:319-34), updated by FCC (AGC).

Philostorgius, Ecclesiastical History (CPG 6032)

Greek Text: *Philostorgius Kirchengeschichte.*, ed. J. Bidez. GCS 21 (Leipzig, 1913).
English translation by FCC (AGC).

Rufinus of Aquileia, Ecclesiastical History

Latin text: *Eusebius Werke 2.2. Die Kirchengeschichte*, ed. E. Schwartz and T. Mommsen (Leipzig, 1908).
English translation by FCC (AGC).

Socrates, Ecclesiastical History (CPG 6028)

Greek Text: ed. G.C. Hansen. GCS N.F. 1, Berlin, New York: De Gruyter, 1995.
English translation by A.C. Zenos (NPNF² 2:1-178).

Sozomen, Ecclesiastical History (CPG 6030)

Greek Text: G.C. Hansen, *Sozomenus Kirchengeschichte*, 2nd ed., GCS N.F. 4. (Berlin 1995)
English translation by C. Hartranft (NPNF² 2:179-427).

Theodoret, Ecclesiastical History (CPG 6222)

Greek Text: *Theodoret: Kirchengeschichte*. ed. Parmentier, Léon, GCS N.F. 5. Berlin, New York: De Gruyter, 1998.
English translation by B. Jackson (NPNF² 3:33-159).

20 May 325 – Council officially begins when Constantine arrives					
Eusebius	Gelasius	Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret	Anonymous Church History
<p>3.10 Now when the appointed day arrived on which the council met for the final solution of the questions in dispute, each member was present for this in the central building of the palace, which appeared to exceed the rest in magnitude. On each side of the interior were many seats arrayed in order, which were occupied by those who had been invited to attend, according to their rank. As soon, then, as the whole assembly sat down in orderly fashion, there arose a general silence in expectation of the emperor’s arrival. First, three of his immediate family entered in succession, then others also preceded his approach, not of the soldiers or guards who usually accompanied him, but only friends in the faith. And now, all rising at the signal which indicated the emperor’s entrance, at last he himself proceeded through the midst of the assembly, like some heavenly messenger of God, his clothes glittering as if they were rays of light, reflecting the glowing radiance of a purple robe and adorned with the brilliant splendor of gold and precious stones. Such was the external appearance of his person. With regard to [Constantine’s] mind, it was evident that he was distinguished by piety and godly fear. This was indicated by his downcast eyes, the blush on his countenance, and his gait. For the rest of his personal distinctions, he surpassed all present in height of stature and beauty of form, as well as in majestic dignity of appearance and invincible strength and vigor. All these united in a graceful demeanor, along with a calmness suitable to his imperial position, declared the excellence of his mental qualities to be above all praise. As soon as he had proceeded to the upper end of the seats, at first he remained standing, and when a low chair fashioned of gold had been set for him, he waited until the bishops had beckoned to him, and then sat down, and after him the whole assembly did the same.</p> <p>3.11 The bishop who occupied the chief place in the right division of the assembly then rose, and, addressing the emperor, delivered a concise speech, in a strain of thanksgiving to Almighty God on his behalf. When he had</p>	<p>F11 (p.75) And the emperor too, after celebrating the festival of his victory over Licinius, met them in person in Nicaea. On the following day all the bishops were assembled together in one place; the emperor arrived soon after. When he had entered, he stood in among them and would not take his place until the bishops, by nodding their assent, indicated that they wanted him to sit. Such was the respect and reverence which the emperor entertained for these men.</p>	<p>1.8.17 On the following day all the bishops were assembled together in one place; the emperor arrived soon after. When he had entered, he stood in among them and would not take his place until the bishops, by nodding their assent, indicated that they wanted him to sit. Such was the respect and reverence which the emperor entertained for these men.</p>	<p>1.19.1b When the appointed day that had been chosen to settle the points in question finally arrived, they assembled together in the palace because the emperor had signified that he would like to take part in the deliberations. When the emperor was in the same place with the priests, he passed through to the head of the conference and seated himself on the throne which had been prepared for him, and the council was then commanded to be seated.</p> <p>1.19.2a Seats had been arranged on either side along the walls of the palace room, for it was the</p>	<p>1.7.7b When they were all assembled, the emperor ordered a great hall in the palace to be prepared to accommodate them, in which a sufficient number of benches and seats were placed.</p> <p>1.7.8 When he had prepared everything in a way that would honor them properly, he allowed the bishops to enter and discuss the subjects which had been proposed.</p> <p>1.7.9 The emperor, with a few attendants, was the last to enter the room. He was noticeable because of his impressive stature, worthy of admiration for personal beauty and for the still more marvelous modesty set on his brow. A low stool was placed for him in the middle of the assembly, but he did not seat himself on it until he had asked the permission of the bishops. Then all the sacred assembly sat down around him.</p> <p>1.7.10 Immediately, before anyone else, rose the great Eustathius, bishop of Antioch (the unanimous vote of the bishops, priests, and Christ-loving laity had compelled him, reluctantly, to become the successor when Philogonius, whom I already referred</p>	<p>2.6.1 After the emperor had held a festival in honor of his victory against Licinius, he himself also went to Nicaea. The next day, all the bishops assembled. The emperor arrived after them. When he entered, he stood in the center and did not sit down until the bishops signaled to him, such great reverence and respect for these men filled him.</p> <p>2.6.2 The all-praiseworthy emperor offered a word of encouragement and instruction giving praise, glory, and thanks to the God of all who had graciously given such great things to him. He said the following:</p>

<p>resumed his seat, silence ensued, and all regarded the emperor with fixed attention. He looked around the assembly calmly and cheerfully, and, having collected his thoughts, in a relaxed and gentle tone spoke the following words.</p> <p>3.12 “It was once my chief desire, dearest friends, to enjoy the spectacle of your united presence. Now that this desire is fulfilled, I feel myself bound to give thanks to God the universal King, because, in addition to all his other benefits, he has granted me a blessing higher than all the rest in permitting me to see you not only all assembled together, but all united in a common harmony of sentiment. I pray therefore that no malignant adversary may henceforth interfere to disrupt our happy condition. I pray that, now the impious hostility of the tyrants has been forever removed by the power of God our Savior, that spirit who delights in evil may devise no other means for exposing the divine law to blasphemous slander. For, in my judgment, internal strife within the Church of God is far more evil and dangerous than any kind of war or conflict, and these our differences appear to me more grievous than any outward trouble. Accordingly, when, by the will and with the cooperation of God, I had been victorious over my enemies, I thought that nothing more remained but to render thanks to him and sympathize in the joy of those whom he had restored to freedom through me. As soon as I heard that news which I had least expected to receive, I mean the news of your dissension, I judged it to be of no secondary importance, but with the earnest desire that I might help find a remedy for this evil, I immediately sent to require your presence. And now I rejoice in beholding your assembly! But I feel that my desires will be most completely fulfilled when I can see you all united in one judgment and that common spirit of peace and concord prevailing amongst you all, which is fitting to you, as consecrated to the service of God, to commend to others. Delay not, then, dear friend! Delay not, you ministers of God and faithful servants of him who is our common Lord and Savior! Begin from this moment to discard the causes of that disunion which has existed among you, and remove the perplexities of controversy by embracing the principles of peace. For by such conduct you will at the same time be acting in a manner most pleasing to the supreme</p>			<p>largest and better than the other rooms.</p> <p>1.19.2b After they were seated, Eusebius Pamphilus rose and delivered a speech in honor of the emperor, giving thanks to God because of him.</p>	<p>to, passed into the better life). He crowned the emperor’s head with the flowers of panegyric and commended how diligently he had paid attention to ecclesiastical affairs.</p> <p>1.7.11 The excellent emperor next exhorted the bishops to unanimity and concord; he recalled to their remembrance the cruelty of the late tyrants and reminded them of the honorable peace which God had, in his reign and by his means, accorded them. He pointed out how dreadful it was, aye, very dreadful, that at the very time when their enemies were destroyed, and when no one dared to oppose them, they should fall upon one another and make their amused adversaries laugh, especially as they were debating about holy things, concerning which they had the written teaching of the Holy Spirit.</p> <p>1.7.12 “For the gospels,” he continued, “the apostolic writings, and the oracles of the ancient prophets clearly teach us what we ought to believe concerning the divine nature. Let, then, all contentious disputation be discarded, and let us seek in the divinely inspired word the solution of the questions at issue.”</p>	
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<p>God, and you will confer an exceeding favor on me—one who is your fellow servant.”</p>					
<p>Constantine’s opening address</p>					
<p>Anonymous Church History</p>					
<p>2.7.1 “The flourishing righteousness of God Almighty has paved many remarkable paths for the benefit of humanity, not least of which the outstanding, brilliant path he prepared for us all in the chief point of his catholic church’s holy law more than any wonder: faith, which is the Lord’s dwelling place.</p> <p>2.7.2 We see that his dwelling place reaches up to the shining stars, and even though the work is just beginning, we know God’s command has planted its foundations so deeply and securely that all the world perceives it.</p> <p>2.7.3 Moreover, from the top of this dwelling, which sits above everything else, a smooth and level path, illuminated by bright light, extends to the end of this life. Twelve pillars, brighter than snow and immovable on the foundation of faith, eternally support, by the power of our Savior’s divine nature, the front wall of his dwelling, which is adorned with a star-like seal.</p> <p>2.7.4 The architect of this mighty building, when we received the righteous faith of the soul, placed his majestic undying law in our minds. Whoever wishes to enter its gates requires nothing except holy and pious desire driven by the singular confidence of a pure mind.</p> <p>2.7.5 The Savior’s plan added wonderful brilliance to this building as a decoration. What I mean is this: Inside, human faith is honored through all the courts of the Lord’s house with wreaths, gathers the fruit of immortality, reveals pure products of human life, and makes them manifest. Outside, heavenly glory, likewise wreathed, designs prizes for the contest which is constantly beginning, or rather increasing, and the prizes adorn the total completion of this building with due praise.</p> <p>2.7.6 Two guards watch over this house of the Lord. Fear of God opposes the ambition of some as a warning, and praise of God is always next to it for those who think rightly, a reward for their understanding. When both guards stand before the doors of the most holy place, wide open doors welcome righteousness, and it remains undisturbed dwelling inside. Injustice may not even approach the doors; it is banished and shut out of this house.</p> <p>2.7.7 Honorable brothers worthy of praise, these clear facts led me to the brightness of the eternal, immortal light, so that, even if I stand far away, my soul’s wavering faith will not make me unfit for the truth.</p> <p>2.7.8 But what should I assert first—the blissful image enclosed within my breast, or the divine benefits granted to me by God Almighty? Of his many works, it is enough to say that our God himself, the Father of all things, has rightly caused my humble self to submit to him.</p> <p>2.7.9 Believe me, honorable brothers, and accept my words with unprejudiced faith. Even if my mind, saturated with divine blessings, appears happy and therefore able to render excellent praise, my guarantee of truth nevertheless clearly demonstrates that neither voice nor tongue can adequately do what the mind commands, and for good reason.</p> <p>2.7.10 Since his great blessings are immeasurable, the mind, lofty as it is, reaches up far above the physical realm. But the tongue, limited in what it can express and thus almost useless, remains altogether silent. Who of us would think so hastily that he utters such a self-confident word and audaciously claims that he can easily and perfectly speak glorious, worthy praise of God, who can do all things, who created all good things?</p> <p>2.7.11 If anyone should merely consider the magnificence of the one who ordained his birth, he would surely realize that he cannot find anything to say which is worthy of God.</p> <p>2.7.12 Therefore, what should I speak about, devoted and humble as I am, except what God’s true Word demonstrates? Deep reverence ought to clearly contemplate the greatness of the Word; if it is able to attain to the things said about the Word, then no error will make it slip.</p> <p>2.7.13 If only I, your fellow servant, had ample ability to speak in praise of those things which deserve to be proclaimed, which our divine Savior, the guardian of all things, demonstrated by his calm divine will when he first came. He deigned for our sake to receive a pure body from a virgin as a dwelling place. In this way he proved his compassion for all humans.</p> <p>2.7.14 So where shall I begin? With his teaching and dignity? Or with the teachings of God, of which he has proven to be the sole teacher, without anyone having taught him? Or how through his providence such large crowds, which could not be numbered, were refreshed through a small amount of food—very little bread and only two fish?</p>					

- 2.7.15 By his divine providence he also raised Lazarus with a short staff after his death and brought him back into the brilliant light.
- 2.7.16 How should I speak of his pure divine nature through which he saw that a woman was secretly suffering from an illness, and after he let her merely touch him, he restored her to health, free of sickness?
- 2.7.17 Who could speak adequately of his immortal deed by which he suddenly restored strength by divine healing to someone weakened by constant, prolonged illness, who was lying with his limbs spread out wide, and the man placed on his shoulders the very mat on which he had been lying and ran throughout his hometown and the region, offering thankful praises?
- 2.7.18 Or of his sure divine step as he bound the stormy sea, walking and treading upon it, and with his divine footsteps he made the liquid of the deep sea solid and went straight through the middle of the sea, not limited in depth, as if it were land?
- 2.7.19 Or of his gentle forbearance through which he, victor in all things, overcame the insolence of the foolish masses and, removing their conquered savagery far away, subjected them to the law?
- 2.7.20 Or of the bright and great works of his divine nature by which we live, in which we find pleasure—we who not only hope for future bliss, but in a sense already possess it?
- 2.7.21 What more dare I say, given my meager preparation for this speech, except the following, which my pure devoted soul ought to understand: how God Almighty, who dwells in heaven, relates to the entire human race, and especially to the noble righteousness above all praise, since even his own Holy Spirit deigned to take a body, live in it, and thus grant salvation to human bodies.
- 2.7.22 Therefore, since our immeasurably insane enemies, as if shrouded by fog, waste no time in spreading their poisonously perverse interpretations concerning Almighty God's most holy saving arrangement, I will try to briefly explain how much my faithful devoted soul overflows with words.
- 2.7.23 The heresies of these pagans make them so shameless that they are not afraid to sacrilegiously say that God Almighty has neither done nor willed to do all the things described in his holy law.
- 2.7.24 What a sacrilegious statement! It merits every excessive punishment against itself. Truly insane and reckless, it wishes to obscure the glory of this divine blessing, glory which no human being can comprehend.
- 2.7.25 What quality is more fitting for God than purity? Purity has gone forth from its holy dealings with the source of righteousness, has flooded the whole world, and has shown humanity the effects of its holy virtues. They at first thought these virtues were hostile to them, so they suffered the fate of the Assyrians, who set a bad example. The other peoples were determined to support them.
- 2.7.26 In this situation, as we scrutinize it with our consideration, we see that the divine compassion of God our Savior cooperates, for day by day and year by year he called many of them, once driven by the fiery sting of madness, to return to the Savior's patient healing. Such a great blessing is nevertheless unable to benefit the rest, for humans are unaware of God's power to exalt any people, and, once exalted, make them secure or again tear down and dissolve them.
- 2.7.27 Yet human history would have turned out even worse if God Almighty had not determined to manage all things with his silent divine will. Human insanity would have been more widespread, limitless human arrogance would have corrupted all souls, and many other things which fulfill their own function in the operation of the universe could not have appeared.
- 2.7.28 Rather, all things together would have quickly perished due to their ignorance of the divine. The crime of envy and jealousy would not have remained limited to a few people. Rather, no one would have been free from this jealousy, for the various superstitions would have become so big and broad in human souls that, as a result of their shamelessness, this bright light of ours would have been obscured so that they would never benefit from it.
- 2.7.29 Therefore, no spoken word can snatch my faith from my soul, for when nothing evil hinders faith, perfect power attends it—the living Word of truth, the only Almighty, the guardian of all things, the protector of our salvation. So he seems, in a way, to give the use of his holy Word in order to preserve knowledge of the Liberator and grant us clear light.
- 2.7.30 Why, then, do all the pagan nations still fail to perceive the heavenly light and thus despise the glorious Holy One, instead pursuing the earthly, which has no true substance, no pure bright splendor, and no divine heavenly authority?
- 2.7.31 What an outrageous deed! Even now they do not forsake their godlessness, do not look to what is right, and do not notice that they are succumbing to wretched deception. They do not stop tarnishing his splendor with their filthy worldly works, consecrating wood, stone, bronze, silver, gold, and other such earthly materials for worship. They promise hope of life through them and build magnificently decorated temples for them. They thus increase their adoration, for the great buildings they have made are a veritable wonder, in their opinion.
- 2.7.32 Therefore, when they make such plans, one can clearly see (although they themselves certainly do not perceive or realize, arrogant as they are) that they are seemingly guilty of boasting in their works. Moreover, we do not see the greatness and might of God Almighty, who is Lord and Judge of all. Some, by confidence in their supposed excellence, inadvertently revile him.

2.7.33 By his arrangement even our bodily form received the shape it ought to have. The same God connected all our limbs with strong tendons so that our physical structure might have untiring stamina in every action we undertake. Moreover, when he had accomplished this by his preserving arrangement, he breathed into us so that all our parts could move and be strong. He granted sight to our eyes, placed them in our head to aid our understanding, and enclosed therein the reasoning of all our thinking faculties.

2.7.34 Therefore, if any sensible person should consider the reason for this arrangement and disregard other things which can be grasped neither by reasoning nor by arithmetic, with quick reflection he would be able to see and understand the eternal saving power of the immortal God, and no one could entangle him in snares of deception, for he would clearly also be able to see that everything which has been made exists by God’s power, just as God has willed everything to exist.

2.7.35 In order that you may see that a lawless, worldly way of life has made people ignorant of God in that the enemy’s deception produced sin rather than reasoning in the wretched souls of wicked people, we will show you clear proof from the holy law.

2.7.36 From the moment those two created in the beginning failed to keep God’s holy command with due reverence, the flower called sin was born. It became constant and grew even more after those two were banished according to God’s will.

2.7.37 Matter itself was prostituted to such a degree with human depravity that sin condemned the eastern and western foundations. This excess of hostile power seized and impaired human minds.

2.7.38 Even in this circumstance, to be sure, God Almighty’s inexhaustible mercy is eternal and undying. Day by day, in the years which have gone by, God keeps releasing countless multitudes of enslaved peoples from the burden of sin through me, his servant, and will lead them to the perfect splendor of the eternal light. Therefore, dearest brothers, I am confident because of our immortal God’s special providence and glorious blessings that in the future I will be even more distinguished by my pure faith in him.

2.7.39 Therefore, may your pure holy council accept me. Let the prudent church, which is the pure mother common to us all, not oppose me at its doors. Although my soul’s reasoning, even now seeking the completely pure catholic faith, denies that this will happen for it easily, it nevertheless impels and reminds me. The modesty of its self-respect has produced a seal of all noble virtues. It begins to touch and knock at the gates of immortality so that you also have forthwith deigned to grant your affectionate brotherhood with a view toward complete peaceful unity in the catholic faith.

2.7.40 This is indeed proper in the sight of God, agreeable to the catholic church’s faith, and beneficial for the common good of the state, with the result that we all publicly give worthy thanks to God for the honorable peace which he has graciously granted to us.

2.7.41 It would indeed be awful, and in fact worse than awful, now that our enemies have been defeated and no one dares to oppose us any longer, to reproach each other and thus provide our opponents an object of malicious pleasure and ridicule, especially by arguing about theological questions even though we have the written teaching of the Holy Spirit. The Gospels, the apostolic epistles, and the prophetic writings of the ancient prophets clearly teach us what we should believe concerning God. Therefore, let us cast out conflict which leads to war and find the solution to these questions in the Scriptures inspired by God.”

Theodoret	Anonymous Church History
1.7.13 The wise emperor offered these and similar words to his fathers the priests like a child who loves his father, trying to understand the apostolic beliefs. Most members of the council, won over by his arguments, established concord among themselves and embraced sound doctrine.	2.7.42a The wise emperor offered these and similar words to his fathers the priests like a child who loves his father, trying to understand the apostolic beliefs.

Constantine addresses the bishops’ grievances against each other

Gelasius	Rufinus	Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret	Anonymous Church History
F12b (p.79) Moreover, I ought not omit the amazing deed which the all-victorious emperor	10.2 I do not think it is right to keep silent about the admirable thing which the emperor did at the	1.8.18 When they had achieved a silence suitable to	1.17.3b And, as was usually the case on such occasions, many priests used the council	1.11.4 I do not account it right to pass over the following circumstance in	2.8.1 Moreover, I ought not omit the amazing deed which the all-victorious emperor performed during the council. When all the bishops gathered, as is the

<p>performed during the council. When all the bishops gathered, as is the custom, some of the bishops introduced investigations and controversies over quarrels they had with each other. When they filed indictments and brought their charges before the pious emperor, he accepted the indictments, sealed them with his signet ring, and ordered that they be kept safe. On observing the mutual strife between these bishops, he said that they should all meet on a specific day to sort out these issues. When the appointed day came, the emperor took a seat in the middle, and when everyone had fallen silent, as was fitting for the occasion, he had everyone’s indictments brought in. Then he took them and put them on his lap. Because he desired not to examine them, he said: “God appointed you as priests and rulers, and he has determined that you will judge and evaluate the multitudes and be gods, for you stand above all people, according to the Scripture, “I said, ‘You are gods; you are all sons of the Most High’” [Ps.</p>	<p>council. For when the bishops had gathered from many places, they began doing what they were accustomed to—namely, reporting grievances for various reasons against each other. The emperor was being continuously accosted by each one in turn; they brought forth documents and presented their complaints, giving all their attention to this rather than to the reason for which they had come in the first place. When he saw that the true purpose of the council was being frustrated by this bickering, he determined a certain day on which any one of the bishops, if he should like to file a grievance, could present it. Then, when he had sat down, he received each man’s document. Holding all of them in his lap, he did not open any of them to see what they contained, but said to the bishops, “God appointed you priests and gave you power even to judge us, and for that reason we are rightly judged by you. You, however, are not able to be judged by men. On account of this, wait for God alone to judge between you and your grievances; whatever they are, reserve them for that divine examination. You, on the other hand, are given to us by God to be</p>	<p>the occasion, the emperor, still sitting, began to address them. He spoke with words of exhortation to harmony and unity and advised each person to lay aside every private grievance. For several of them had brought accusations against one another and many had even presented petitions to the emperor the day before. 1.8.19 But he, directing their attention to the matter before them, which was the reason they were assembled, ordered these petitions to be burned. He merely observed that ‘Christ urges the one who is</p>	<p>as an excuse to bring up their own private affairs. They considered this an opportune time to rectify their grievances. Concerning those grievances, each person blamed another and presented a document to the emperor in which he reported the offenses committed against him. 1.17.4 As this kept happening day after day, the emperor set apart one certain day on which all complaints were to be brought before him. When the appointed time arrived, he took the memorials which had been presented to him and said, “All these accusations will be brought forward in their own time at the great day of judgment, and there will be judged by the Great Judge of all men; it is not right to drag out a hearing like this against each other before me, a man, when the accuser and the accused are priests. Priests ought to present themselves in a way that never falls under the judgment of others. Imitate, therefore, the divine love and mercy of God, and be reconciled to one another;</p>	<p>silence. Some quarrelsome individuals wrote accusations against certain bishops and presented their indictments to the emperor. 1.11.5 This occurred before the establishment of concord. He received the lists, formed them into a packet which he sealed with his ring, and ordered them to be kept safely. After the reconciliation had been effected, he brought out these writings and burned them in their presence, at the same time declaring upon oath that he had not read a word of them. He said that the crimes of priests ought not to be made known to the multitude, lest they should become an occasion of offense and lead them to sin without fear. 1.11.6 It is reported also that he added that if he were to detect a bishop in the very act of</p>	<p>custom, some of the bishops introduced investigations and controversies over quarrels they had with each other. 2.8.1 When they filed indictments and brought their charges before the pious emperor, he accepted the indictments, sealed them with his signet ring, and ordered that they be kept safe. 2.8.2 On observing the mutual strife between these bishops, he said that they should all meet on a specific day to sort out these issues. When the appointed day came, the emperor took a seat in the middle, and when everyone had fallen silent, as was fitting for the occasion, he had everyone’s indictments brought in. Then he took them and put them on his lap. Because he desired not to examine them, he said: 2.8.3 “God appointed you as priests and rulers, and he has determined that you will judge and evaluate the multitudes and be gods, for you stand above all people, according to the Scripture, “I said, ‘You are gods; you are all sons of the Most High’” [Ps. 82:6], and “God stands in the assembly of gods” [Ps. 82:1]. Therefore, you need not worry about political affairs. Instead, direct all your attention to theology.” 2.8.4 He had them start a fire and burn the indictments, for he was trying to ensure that no one outside would learn of the inappropriate efforts of these bishops. Such was the emperor’s reverence for the priests of God. All who think clearly should admire this reverence. 2.8.5 Nor should I omit a similar deed of his. Quarrelsome and slanderous laymen had indicted some of the bishops and delivered the indictments to the emperor. This happened before harmony had been established.</p>
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<p>82:6], and “God stands in the assembly of gods” [Ps. 82:1]. Therefore, you need not worry about political affairs. Instead, direct all your attention to theology.” He had them start a fire and burn the indictments, for he was trying to ensure that no one outside would learn of the inappropriate efforts of these bishops. Such was the emperor’s reverence for the priests of God. All who think clearly should admire this reverence.</p>	<p>like gods, and it is not fitting for a man to judge gods except that one alone about whom it is written, ‘God has taken his place in the congregation of the gods; he gives judgment among the gods’ [Ps. 82:1]. Therefore set these things aside and, without any contention in your hearts, apply yourselves to those things which pertain to the faith of God.” When he had said these things, he ordered that all their documents of grievances be burned together, in order that the strife amongst the priests might not become known to anyone.</p>	<p>anxious to obtain forgiveness, to forgive his brother.’ 1.8.20a When, then, he had strongly insisted on the maintenance of harmony and peace, he turned their attention back to more closely investigating the questions at hand.</p>	<p>withdraw your accusations against each other. Let us make peace and devote our attention to those subjects connected with the faith, the reason we are assembled here.” 1.17.5 After this address, in order to nullify each document, the emperor commanded the memorials to be burned, and then appointed a day for solving the disagreements.</p>	<p>committing adultery, he would throw his imperial robe over the unlawful deed, lest any should witness the scene and be thereby injured. Thus did he admonish all the priests, as well as confer honors upon them, and then exhorted them to return each to his own flock.</p>	<p>2.8.6 After receiving the indictments, he tied them together, sealed them with his signet ring, and ordered that they be kept safe. Then, after he had orchestrated harmonious agreement, he had the indictments brought in. With all the bishops present, he burned them with an oath that he had read nothing written in them. 2.8.7 He said that the priests’ wrongdoings should not be revealed to the people lest they use the scandal as an excuse to sin without restraint. It is said that he added that if he had seen a bishop undermining someone else’s marriage with his own eyes, he would have concealed the lawless act with his purple cloak so that no one would be harmed by seeing the act. Such was the emperor’s admirable, godly discernment.</p>
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The bishops debate Arius

Athanasius, <i>de Decretis</i>	Gelasius	Rufinus	Anonymous Church History
<p>3. Now this is what happened to Eusebius and his associates at the council of Nicaea: while they stood out in their irreligion and attempted their fight against God, the terms they used were replete with irreligion. But the assembled bishops, who numbered about three hundred, mildly and charitably required them to explain and defend themselves on religious grounds. Scarcely, however, did they begin to speak, when they were condemned, and one differed from another. Then, embarrassed on account</p>	<p>F12c (p. 83) While he met with the bishops for many days and even years, the emperor discussed matters of faith with them and gathered their various opinions. There were some among them, as we have said several times, who agreed with the heinous doctrine of Arius and opposed the majority of holy bishops, champions of the truth. Our excellent, holy fathers, however, guarding themselves with the weapon of truth, boldly preached the clear, blameless faith. There were also many confessors among them who resisted the</p>	<p>10.2d The council of bishops spent many days considering the question of faith. A few men held opposing opinions and vehemently promoted those of Arius. Nevertheless, there were many who detested his impious enterprise. Because there was a great number of priest confessors at that council, they were opposed to Arius’s novelties. The men who favored him were clever in their reasonings and for this reason were averse to simple faith.</p>	<p>2.7.44 Our holy fathers Alexander of Constantinople, who was a priest at the time, and Athanasius, archdeacon of the church of Alexandria, staunchly resisted [the Arians]. This is why malice took up arms against them, as we will report later. But our holy bishops invited Arius to the council with permission to defend his doctrine, according to the all-victorious emperor’s will, for he also attended the council, as we just said. 2.8.8 While he met with the bishops for many days and even years, the emperor discussed matters of faith with them and gathered their various opinions. There were some among them, as we have said several times, who agreed with the heinous doctrine of Arius and opposed the majority of holy bishops, champions of the truth. Our excellent, holy fathers, however, guarding themselves with the weapon of truth, boldly preached the clear, blameless faith. There were also many confessors among them who resisted the willing adopters of the wretched doctrine of Arius.</p>

<p>of their heresy, they remained silent and by their silence confessed the disgrace which came upon their heterodoxy. On this the bishops, having rejected their invented terms, published against them the sound and ecclesiastical faith.</p>	<p>willing adopters of the wretched doctrine of Arius.</p>	<p>10.5a. Meanwhile, the council was convened each day, and they did not dare make any decision easily or thoughtlessly. Arius was frequently summoned before the council, and they examined his assertions with great care and sought with much deliberation to determine what action should be taken against him.</p>	<p>2.11.9 Day by day our holy bishops discussed numerous matters of faith for a long time, for they did not want to make any rash or presumptuous decisions on such a critical issue. 2.11.10 They often summoned Arius. By frequent inquiry they examined and disproved his theses. Their greatest trouble and concern was how they might overthrow his lawless doctrine and define sound doctrine with their vote.</p>	
<p>Jerome</p>		<p>Theodoret</p>		<p>Anonymous Church History</p>
<p>19 O. ... We know that at the council of Nicaea, which was assembled on account of the Arian treachery, eight Arian bishops were welcomed, and there is not a bishop in the world at the present day whose ordination is not dependent on that council. This being so, how could they act in opposition to it, when their loyalty to it had cost them the pain of exile? 20. L. Were Arians really then received after all? Please tell me who they were. O. Eusebius, bishop of Nicomedia, Theognis, bishop of Nicaea, Saras, at the time presbyter of Libya, Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea in Palestine, and others whom it would be tedious to enumerate; Arius also, the presbyter, the original source of all the trouble; Euzoius the deacon, who succeeded Eudoxius as bishop of Antioch, and Achillas, the reader. These three who were clerics of the Church of Alexandria were the originators of the heresy. L. Suppose a person were to deny that they were welcomed back, how is he to be refuted? O. There are men still living who took part in that council. And if that is not enough, because owing to the time that has elapsed they are but few, and it is impossible for witnesses to be everywhere, if we read the acts and names of the bishops of the council of Nicaea, we find that those who we saw just now were welcomed back and did subscribe to the <i>homoousios</i> along with the rest.</p>		<p>1.7.14 There were, however, a few, of whom mention has been already made, who opposed these doctrines and sided with Arius; and among them were Menophantus, bishop of Ephesus, Patrophilus, bishop of Scythopolis, Theognis, bishop of Nicaea, and Narcissus, bishop of Neronias, which is a town of the second Cilicia, and is now called Irenopolis; also Theonas, bishop of Marmarica, and Secundus, bishop of Ptolemais in Egypt. 1.7.15a They drew up a formulary of their faith and presented it to the council. As soon as it was read it was torn to pieces and was declared to be spurious and false.</p>		<p>2.7.43 The rest, however, as we said before, kept fighting against apostolic doctrine. They tried their utmost to support the opinion of Arius. There were seventeen of them: Eusebius of Nicomedia, who was mentioned before, Theognis of Nicaea, Maris of Chalcedon, Theodore of Heraclea in Thrace, Menophantus of Ephesus, Patrophilus of Scythopolis, Narcissus of Neronias (which is now called Irenopolis) in Cilicia Secunda, Theonas of Marmarica, Secundus of Ptolemais in Egypt, and with them eight others who had mixed themselves in with that company of 300 saints, as if they were actually orthodox, yet opposed apostolic doctrine by advocating for Arius.</p>
<p>The praiseworthy conduct of Constantine during the debate</p>				
<p>Eusebius</p>	<p>Socrates</p>	<p>Sozomen</p>	<p>Theodoret</p>	<p>Anonymous Church History</p>
<p>3.13 The emperor having delivered this discourse in Latin, it was translated into Greek by an interpreter, and then he gave liberty of speech to the leaders of the council. Some at once began to bring forward</p>	<p>1.8.20b But it may be useful to hear what Eusebius says on this subject in his third book of the</p>	<p>1.20.1a The next debate by the priests turned upon doctrine. The</p>	<p>1.13.1b [Eusebius] again bears testimony to the same fact in another work, in which he highly extols the conduct of the great Constantine. He writes as follows:</p>	<p>2.29.4 I think it is reasonable to include in my narrative the words Eusebius Pamphili excellently chose at the beginning of his account of this (what</p>

<p>complaints against their neighbors, while others had recourse to recriminations and reproaches. Each party had much to urge, and at the beginning the debate waxed very violent. The emperor listened to everything with patient attention, quietly and attentively considering whatever was advanced. He partially supported the statements which were made on either side, and gradually softened the severity of those who belligerently opposed each other, placating each side with his mildness and persuasiveness. He addressed them in the Greek language—he was not unacquainted with it. He was at once courteous and endearing, persuading some, winning over others with a plea, and applauding those who spoke well,</p> <p>3.14. until, at length, he reduced them all to oneness of mind and opinion on all the disputed points, so that they all agreed to hold the same faith and to celebrate the festival of Salvation upon the same day. Those points also which were agreed to by all of them were committed to writing and received the signature of each member. Then the emperor, believing that he had thus obtained a second victory over the adversary of the Church, proceeded to celebrate a triumphal festival in honor of God.</p>	<p>Life of Constantine. His words are these:</p> <p>1.8.21 ‘A variety of topics were introduced by each party and lengthy debate arose from the very beginning. The emperor listened to everything with patient attention, quietly and attentively considering whatever was advanced.</p> <p>1.8.22 He partially supported the statements which were made on either side, and gradually softened the severity of those who belligerently opposed each other, placating each side with his mildness and persuasiveness. He addressed them in the Greek language—he was not unacquainted with it. He was at once courteous and endearing, persuading some, winning over others with a plea, and applauding those who spoke well.</p>	<p>emperor gave patient attention to the speeches of both parties; he applauded those who spoke well and rebuked those who displayed a tendency to bicker. According to his understanding of what he had heard—for he was not completely unfamiliar with the Greek language—he addressed himself with kindness to each one.</p>	<p>1.13.2 The emperor having delivered this discourse in Latin, it was translated into Greek by an interpreter, and then he gave liberty of speech to the leaders of the council. Some at once began to bring forward complaints against their neighbors, while others had recourse to recriminations and reproaches. A variety of topics were introduced by each party, and lengthy debate arose from the very beginning. The emperor listened to everything with patient attention, quietly and attentively considering whatever was advanced. He partially supported the statements which were made on either side, and gradually softened the severity of those who belligerently opposed each other, placating each side with his mildness and persuasiveness. He addressed them in the Greek language—he was not unacquainted with it. He was at once courteous and endearing, persuading some, winning over others with a plea, and applauding those who spoke well, and excited all to unanimity; until, at length, he reduced them all to oneness of mind and opinion on all the disputed points, so that they all agreed to hold the same faith and to celebrate the festival of Salvation upon the same day.</p>	<p>was discussed at the council, I mean) in the third book of his Life of Constantine:</p> <p>2.29.5 While both sides advanced many arguments and some initially started intense quarrels, the praiseworthy emperor listened to everything, calmly accepting the proposals of both factions.</p> <p>2.29.6 Taking up the statements of each side in turn, he gently took those who were stubbornly contentious and dealt kindly with each of them. He spoke Greek, for he was familiar with it.</p> <p>2.29.7 So he proved to be friendly and pleasant, winning some by persuasion, rebuking others with words, commending those who spoke well, and compelling everyone to unity until he had led them to a common opinion and belief with him so that the pious formula of faith prevailed unanimously and they confirmed the saving faith truly pronounced by the Holy Spirit through all our aforementioned holy fathers.</p>
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