

Council of Nicaea Documents (English) – Part 1

Sources Used

Excerpts from the *Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller* (GCS) and *Athanasius Werke* series are used by permission. Most other texts and translations are in the public domain. Click [here](#) for a key to the FCC (fourthcentury.com) translators.

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).

Spring 325 – Constantine summons a council in Nicaea							
Athanasius, <i>De Synodis</i>		Gelasius	Socrates			Sozomen	Theodoret
5a As to the Nicene Council, it was not a common meeting, but convened upon a pressing necessity, and for a reasonable object. The Syrians, Cilicians, and Mesopotamians were out of order in celebrating the feast and kept Easter with the Jews. On the other hand, the Arian heresy had risen up against the Catholic Church, and found supporters in Eusebius and his fellows, who were both zealous for the heresy and conducted the attack upon religious people. This gave occasion for an Ecumenical Council, that the feast might be everywhere celebrated on one day and that the heresy which was springing up might be anathematized.		F11 (p. 71) Such wondrous things full of wisdom did the emperor’s epistle urge, but the evil was stronger than both the emperor’s zeal and the trustworthiness of him who served to convey the letters.	1.8.1 Such admirable and wise counsel did the emperor’s letter contain. But the evil had become too strong both for the exhortations of the emperor and the authority of him who was the bearer of his letter, for neither Alexander nor Arius was softened by this appeal. Moreover, there was incessant strife and tumult among the people. 1.8.2 Moreover another local source of disquietude had pre-existed there, which served to trouble the churches, namely the dispute in regard to the Passover, which was carried on in the regions of the East only. This arose from some desiring to keep the feast more in accordance with the custom of the Jews, while others preferred its mode of celebration by Christians in general throughout the world. This difference, however, did not interfere with their communion, although their mutual joy was necessarily hindered.			1.17.1a Matters turned out differently than the emperor had hoped. The disagreement was too great for reconciliation, and the one who had been sent to make peace returned without accomplishing his mission.	1.7.1a The emperor, who possessed the most profound wisdom, having heard of these things, endeavored, as a first step, to stop up their fountain-head. He therefore dispatched a messenger renowned for his ready wit to Alexandria with letters, in the endeavor to extinguish the dispute and expecting to reconcile the disputants.
Eusebius	Gelasius	Rufinus	Philostorgius	Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret	Anonymous Church History
3.6a Then, as if to bring a divine array against this enemy, he convened a general council and invited bishops from all over to attend with haste, sending them letters which expressed the esteem in which he held them. It was not his command alone, but also the emperor’s good will, which contributed much to its being carried out. For he provided public transportation to some, while he supplied horses to transport others.	F11 (p. 73) Therefore the emperor, seeing the church troubled, convened an ecumenical synod, sending letters to the bishops everywhere exhorting them to meet at Nicaea in Bithynia.	10.1b Word of it reached all the way to the ears of our pious emperor, who tends to our affairs with zeal and diligence. He then convened a council of bishops at the city of Nicaea in accordance with the desire of the priests and commanded Arius to come to be judged for his statements and inquiries by three hundred and eighteen bishops who assembled there.	1.8a Not very long after this, the council was held in Nicaea.	1.8.4a When, therefore, the emperor beheld the church agitated on account of both of these causes, he convened a general council, summoning all the bishops by letter to meet him at Nicaea in Bithynia.	1.17.1b Because of this, Constantine convened a council at Nicaea in Bithynia and wrote to the most eminent men of the churches in every country, directing them to be there on an appointed day.	1.7.2 But when his hopes were frustrated, he went on to summon the celebrated council of Nicaea. He pledged his word that the bishops and those accompanying them would be furnished with donkeys, mules, and horses for their journey at public expense. When all those who were able to endure the fatigue of the journey had arrived at Nicaea, he went there himself, both to see the multitude of bishops and to fulfill his desire of leading them into unity. At once, he arranged that all their wants should be liberally supplied.	2.5.1 Therefore, when the emperor saw that the church was in disorder, he convened an ecumenical council, sending letters urging bishops from all parts to meet at Nicaea in Bithynia. It was in the sixth month of the sixteenth year of his reign when he zealously undertook these efforts for ecclesiastical peace. 2.37.28a In the sixth month of the sixteenth year of his reign, as this book explained earlier using the ancient accounts, Constantine assembled the holy council of bishops.

Eusebius						
3.6b Even the place selected for the council, the city of Nicaea in Bithynia (named after the word for “victory”), was appropriate to the occasion. As soon as the imperial order had become well known, all hurried eagerly to Nicaea as if competing in a race. They were encouraged by the anticipation of a happy result to the conference, by the hope of enjoying present peace, and the desire of beholding something new and strange in the person of so admirable an emperor. Now when they were all assembled, it appeared obvious that the proceeding was the work of God, inasmuch as men who had been most widely separated, not merely in sentiment but also personally, and by difference of country, place, and nation, were here brought together. Comprised within the walls of a single city, they formed, as it were, a vast garland of priests, composed of a variety of the choicest flowers.						
Notable bishops and confessors attend the council						
Eusebius	Athanasius, <i>De Decretis</i>	Gelasius	Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret	Anonymous Church History
3.8b However, at this council, the number of bishops exceeded two hundred and fifty, while that of the presbyters and deacons and the many other attendants was altogether beyond count.	37 The bishops who gathered at Nicaea were about three hundred in number.	F11 (p. 73) In this assembly the number of bishops exceeded three hundred, while the number of the presbyters, deacons, and others who attended them was almost impossible to count. . .In response, the bishops assembled out of the various provinces and cities. This is what Eusebius Pamphilus writes about them, word for word, in his third book of the life of Constantine:	1.8.9b In this assembly the number of bishops exceeded three hundred, while the number of the presbyters, deacons, and others who attended them was almost impossible to count. 1.8.4b In response, the bishops assembled out of the various provinces and cities. This is what Eusebius Pamphilus writes about them, word for word, in his third book of the life of Constantine:	1.17.3 About three hundred and twenty bishops were present, accompanied by a multitude of presbyters and deacons. There were, likewise, men present who were skilled in dialectics and ready to assist in the discussions.	1.7.3a Three hundred and eighteen bishops were assembled. The bishop of Rome, because of his very advanced age, was absent, but he sent two presbyters to the council, with authority to agree to what was done.	2.5.6b In the case of the present company, however, the number of bishops exceeded three hundred, and the number of priests, deacons, and many other attendants who accompanied them was beyond reckoning. 2.5.2 Bishops came from many provinces and cities. Eusebius Pamphili says the following about them in the third book of his Life of Constantine:
Eusebius	Gelasius		Socrates	Sozomen	Anonymous Church History	
3.7a ‘So the most eminent of the ministers of God in all the churches which have filled Europe, Africa, and Asia, were brought together. And one house of worship, as it was opened wide by God, contained on the same occasion both Syrians and Cilicians, Phoenicians, Arabs and Palestinians, and in addition to	F11 (p. 73) ‘So the most eminent of the ministers of God in all the churches which have filled Europe, Africa, and Asia, were brought together. And one house of worship, as it was opened wide by God, contained on the same occasion both Syrians and Cilicians, Phoenicians, Arabs and Palestinians, and in addition to these, Egyptians, Thebans, Libyans, and those who came from Mesopotamia. A Persian bishop was also present at this		1.8.5 ‘So the most eminent of the ministers of God in all the churches which have filled Europe, Africa, and Asia, were brought together. And one house of worship, as it was opened wide by God, contained on the same occasion both Syrians and Cilicians, Phoenicians, Arabs and Palestinians,	1.17.2a Of those who occupied the apostolic sees, the following participated in this conference: Macarius of Jerusalem, Eustathius, who already presided over the church of Antioch on the	2.5.3 “One house of prayer, as if enlarged by God, held Syrians, Cilicians, Phoenicians, Arabs, Palestinians, Egyptians, Thebans, Libyans, and Mesopotamians. A Persian bishop was present at the council, nor did the company want for a Scythian. Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia sent their finest men. Moreover, Thracians, Macedonians,	

<p>these, Egyptians, Thebans, Libyans, and those who came from Mesopotamia. A Persian bishop was also present at this council, and Scythians were at the assembly as well. Pontus as well, and Galatia, Pamphylia, Cappadocia, Asia and Phrygia, supplied those people who were most distinguished among them. Besides those, Thracians and Macedonians met there. Achaians and Epirots, and even those who lived even further away than those, and the most celebrated of the Spaniards himself, took their seats among the rest. The prelate of the imperial city was absent because of his age, but some of his presbyters were present and stood in for him.</p>	<p>council and Scythians were at the assembly as well. Pontus and Asia, Pamphylia, and Phrygia, supplied those people who were most distinguished among them. Besides those, Thracians and Macedonians met there. Achaians and Epirots, and even those who lived even further away than those. Even the highly celebrated Hosius of Spain himself, acting in the place of Bishop Silvester of great Rome together with the Roman priests Vito and Vicentius, sat in council with many others. The bishop of the current capital city [Byzantium], Metrophanes, was absent due to his old age, but his priests were present to represent him. One of those priests was Alexander, who became bishop of that city after him.</p>	<p>and in addition to these, Egyptians, Thebans, Libyans, and those who came from Mesopotamia. A Persian bishop was also present at this council and Scythians were at the assembly as well. Pontus as well, and Galatia, Pamphylia, Cappadocia, Asia and Phrygia, supplied those people who were most distinguished among them. Besides those, Thracians and Macedonians met there. 1.8.6 Achaians and Epirots, and even those who lived even further away than those, and the most celebrated of the Spaniards himself, took their seats among the rest. The prelate of the imperial city was absent because of his age, but some of his presbyters were present and stood in for him.</p>	<p>Orontes, and Alexander of Alexandria near Lake Mareotis. Julius, bishop of Rome, was unable to attend on account of extreme old age, but his place was supplied by Vito and Vicentius, presbyters of his church.</p>	<p>Achaean, and Epirote, who live far away, attended the meeting. Even the highly celebrated Hosius of Spain himself, acting in the place of Bishop Silvester of great Rome together with the Roman priests Vito and Vincent, sat in council with many others. 2.5.4 The bishop of the current capital city [Byzantium], Metrophanes, was absent due to his old age, but his priests were present to represent him. One of those priests was Alexander, who became bishop of that city after him.</p>
<p>Eusebius</p>	<p>Gelasius</p>	<p>Socrates</p>	<p>Anonymous Church History</p>	
<p>3.7b Emperor Constantine alone continued to dedicate such a crown, composed as a bond of peace, to Christ his Savior. He dedicated it to him as a thank-offering worthy of God for victory over his enemies by appointing this gathering among us as an imitation of the Apostolic Assembly. 3.8. For among them, it is said, were gathered “devout men of every nation under heaven; Parthians, Medes and Elamites, and those who dwelled in Mesopotamia, Judaea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the part of Libya which is toward Cyrene, strangers from Rome also, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs” [Acts 2:5, 9-11].</p>	<p>F11 (p. 73) Emperor Constantine alone continued to dedicate such a crown, composed as a bond of peace, to Christ his Savior. He dedicated it to him as a thank-offering worthy of God for victory over his enemies by appointing this gathering among us as an imitation of the Apostolic Assembly. For it is said that also in the days of the apostles ‘God-fearing men from every nation under heaven’ gathered together, according to the Acts of the Apostles, among whom were ‘Parthians, Medes, and Elamites’ [Acts 2:5, 9]. That congregation, however, was inferior in this way: that everyone present was not a minister of God.</p>	<p>1.8.7 Emperor Constantine alone continued to dedicate such a crown, composed as a bond of peace, to Christ his Savior. He dedicated it to him as a thank-offering worthy of God for victory over his enemies by appointing this gathering among us as an imitation of the Apostolic Assembly. 1.8.8 For among them, it is said, were gathered “devout men of every nation under heaven; Parthians, Medes and Elamites, and those who dwelled in Mesopotamia, Judaea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the part of Libya which is toward Cyrene, strangers from Rome also, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs” [Acts 2:5, 9-11].</p>	<p>2.5.5 Since the beginning of time, Emperor Constantine alone presented such a crown, woven with a bond of peace, to Christ his Savior as a divinely suitable offering of thanksgiving for victory against his enemies in the war, bringing together this image of the apostolic company in our own time. 2.5.6a For it is said that also in the days of the apostles ‘God-fearing men from every nation under heaven’ gathered together, according to the Acts of the Apostles, among whom were ‘Parthians, Medes, and Elamites’ [Acts 2:5, 9], but their gathering was lacking in that not all of them were ministers of God.</p>	

<p>That congregation, however, was inferior in this way: that everyone present was not a minister of God.</p>				<p>1.8.9 That congregation, however, was inferior in this way: that everyone present was not a minister of God.</p>		
Eusebius	Geladius		Socrates	Sozomen	Anonymous Church History	
<p>3.9 Some of these ministers of God were notable for their wisdom, some for the strictness of their life and patient endurance [of persecution], and others adorned themselves with all of these distinguished characteristics. Some were venerable because of their advanced age, others were conspicuous for their youth and vigorous minds, and others had only recently entered their ministerial career. For all these the emperor arranged for an abundant supply of daily food to be provided.</p>	<p>F11 (p. 75) Some of these ministers of God were notable for their wisdom, some for the strictness of their life and patient endurance [of persecution], and others adorned themselves with all of these distinguished characteristics. Some were venerable because of their advanced age, others were conspicuous for their youth and vigorous minds, and others had only recently entered their ministerial career. For all these the emperor arranged for an abundant supply of daily food to be provided.’ That is Eusebius’ account of those who met on this occasion.</p>		<p>1.8.10 Some of these ministers of God were notable for their wisdom, some for the strictness of their life and patient endurance [of persecution], and others adorned themselves with all of these distinguished characteristics. 1.8.11 Some were venerable because of their advanced age, others were conspicuous for their youth and vigorous minds, and others had only recently entered their ministerial career. For all these the emperor arranged for an abundant supply of daily food to be provided.’ 1.8.12 That is Eusebius’ account of those who met on this occasion. The emperor, when he had completed the festal celebration of this triumph over Licinius, also came in person to Nicaea.</p>	<p>1.17.2b Many other excellent and good men from different nations were gathered together. Some were celebrated for their learning, their eloquence, their knowledge of the sacred books and other learning, some for the virtuous quality of their life, and others for a combination of all these qualifications.</p>	<p>2.5.7 Some of these ministers of God were renowned for their wise words; others were renowned for their strict lifestyle and patient endurance; still others possessed a mild manner. Some of them were respected because of their many years; others radiated with youth and high spirits; still others had just begun their ministerial service. 2.5.8 The emperor ordered that food should daily be supplied to all of them in abundance.” This is what Eusebius Pamphili reported about those who assembled there.</p>	
Geladius	Rufinus	Philostorgius	Socrates		Theodoret	Anonymous Church History
<p>F12 (p. 97) But of course Athanasius too, of whom we also spoke earlier, being then a deacon, was acknowledged by all to have had his share in the choir of those holy men. He was present there with Alexander, the bishop</p>	<p>10.5c Therefore there were also in those times many men who shined in the churches of the Lord, many of whom were at this council. Athanasius, who at that time was a deacon to</p>	<p>1.8b. Basileus, the bishop of Amaseia, and Melitius, the bishop of Sebastopolis, were present along with the other high priests of God.</p>	<p>1.8.13 Many of the laity who were skilled in the art of reasoning were also present. Each one was eager to advocate the cause of his own party. Eusebius, bishop of Nicomedia, as was said before, supported the opinion of Arius, together with Theognis and Maris; of these the former was bishop of Nicaea, and Maris of Chalcedon in Bithynia. These were powerfully opposed by Athanasius, a deacon of the Alexandrian church, who was highly esteemed by Alexander, his bishop. This resulted in jealousy against him, as will be seen later.</p>		<p>1.7.3b During this time many individuals were richly endowed with apostolic gifts, and many, like the holy apostle, bore in their bodies the marks of the Lord Jesus Christ. 1.7.4 Jacob, bishop of Antioch, a city of Mygdonia (which is called Nisibis by the Syrians and Assyrians), raised the dead and restored them to life. He also performed many other wonders, but it would be superfluous to mention them again in detail in this history, as I have already given an account of them in my work entitled “Philotheus.” 1.7.5 Paul, bishop of Neocaesarea, a fortress situated on the banks of the Euphrates, had suffered from the frantic rage of</p>	<p>2.11.8 Moreover, Athanasius, about whom we have already spoken, at that time still a deacon, belonged to the company of those saints, as everyone attests. He accompanied Alexander, bishop of</p>

<p>of the church of the Alexandrians, and was a most excellent helper to him.</p>	<p>Alexander bishop of Alexandria, was also present to advise him.</p>		<p>1.13.11 As I imagine it will be appreciated by lovers of learning, I shall here add on the names of those who were present, as far as I have been able to ascertain them, with the province and city over which they presided, and likewise the date at which this assembly took place. 1.13.12 Hosius, who was, I believe, bishop of Cordova in Spain, as I have before stated. Vito and Vicentius, presbyters of Rome, Alexander, bishop of Egypt, Eustathius of Antiochia Magna, Macarius of Jerusalem, and Harpocraton of Cynopolis: the names of the rest are fully reported in the Synodicon of Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria.</p>	<p>Licinius. He had been deprived of the use of both hands by the application of a red-hot iron, by which the nerves which give motion to the muscles had been stretched out and made dead. 1.7.6 Some had had the right eye dug out; others had lost the right arm. Among these was Paphnutius of Egypt. In short, the Council looked like an assembled army of martyrs. 1.7.7 Yet this holy and celebrated gathering was not entirely free of opposition; there were some, though so few they were easy to count, who appeared safe, like dangerous shallows. In reality, though not openly, they supported the blasphemy of Arius.</p>	<p>the church of Alexandria, since he was a great help to him.</p>
---	--	--	--	---	--

The most noteworthy bishops in attendance

Gelasius	Rufinus	Socrates	Anonymous Church History
<p>F12e (p. 91) And there was at the synod another man from among the choir of confessors by the name of Paphnutius, an Egyptian, a man of God, from the company of those whose right eyes Maximian the emperor had gouged out and whose left legs he had hamstrung when he committed them to be held in the mines. In him there was so much grace of God that he accomplished signs in no way inferior to those done of old by the apostles. For by word alone he routed demons, and by prayer he healed various ill people, and by petitioning God he granted sight to the blind, and he brought the paralyzed to natural soundness, making their members to function healthily. The emperor held him in great honor and frequently invited him to the palace and would kiss his gouged-out eye, so much piety did Constantine have! Moreover, Spyridon, a certain Cypriot man eminent in the Lord, who placed his experience</p>	<p>10.4 Moreover, there was at this council a man of God named Paphnutius, a bishop from the regions of Egypt. He was a confessor and was one of those whom Maximian had condemned to work the mines after he ordered their right eyes gouged out and their hamstrings severed. But there was such grace of power in him that the miraculous signs he performed were not fewer than those in the time of the apostles, such that he drove out demons with a word and healed the sick by prayer alone. It is said that he also restored sight to the blind and revived paralytics to bodily stability. Constantine held him in such veneration and esteem that he often called him into the palace, embraced him and adored with passionate kisses the place of that eye which had been torn out on account of his confession of faith. 10.5 If someone from their number could be considered even nobler, it is said to have been Spyridon, bishop of Cyprus, a man from the order of prophets. Such is what we learned from the report of</p>	<p>1.8.12c Among the bishops, two were especially prominent: Paphnutius, bishop of Upper Thebes, and Spyridon, bishop of Cyprus. After the following, I will explain why I have referred to those two in particular. 1.11.1 As we have promised above to make some mention of Paphnutius and Spyridon, it is time to speak of them here. Paphnutius then was bishop of one of the cities in Upper Thebes: he was a man so favored divinely that extraordinary miracles were done by him. 1.11.2 In the time of the persecution he had been deprived of one of his eyes. The emperor honored this man exceedingly and often sent for him to the palace and kissed the part where the eye had been torn out. So great devoutness characterized the emperor Constantine. 1.11.3 Let this single fact respecting Paphnutius suffice. 1.12.1 With respect to Spyridon, so great was his sanctity while a shepherd that he was thought worthy</p>	<p>2.9.1 Among them was the great saint Paphnutius, whose presence adorned the company of confessors and bishops. He was an Egyptian, a man of God numbered among those whose right eyes Emperor Maximinus had gouged out and whose left hamstring tendons he had cut. Then he handed them over to work in the mines. 2.9.2 God’s grace was so strong in him that he did miracles equal to those done long ago by the apostles. He drove away demons with a single word, healed various sick people with prayer, granted sight to the blind by entreating God, and restored natural strength to the paralyzed, making their limbs function normally. The emperor regarded him with great honor; he frequently invited him to his palace and kissed his empty eye socket. Such was the pious emperor’s trust in the saints. 2.10.1 There was also Spyridon, a Cyprian man, distinguished in the Lord, who dedicated his experience herding sheep since childhood to the flock of Christ. He became known for his prophetic lifestyle. Even while he</p>

<p>from youth up as a shepherd in the service of the flock of Christ, was known for leading a prophetic way of life. In fact, although governing the church, he did not cease tending his own sheep. He was so kind and forbearing that once, when highway robbers had set upon his flock stealthily and were held by invisible bonds and unable to move until morning, when he chanced upon them he set them free from their detention by prayer. Not only that, but as they were leaving he even gave them his best ram, saying, “Take this, lads, for your use, lest having been unsuccessful this night on my account you blame me as the cause of your privation.” Now, we have heard about many other wonders of his, but we will present just one from among many. It is said that he had a daughter, Irene by name, who, after having ministered to the old man, departed this life a virgin. After her death someone returned from a journey and requested from the old man a deposit that he had previously entrusted to her, of which the blessed Spyridon was unaware. As this person was very insistent toward him, the old man searched the house carefully top to bottom, and, not having found anything, he distressed the man greatly by saying that he knew nothing of the matter. But he who had entrusted the deposit continued to cry out and, wracked by tears, said that he would lay hands on himself if he did not receive the deposited articles, saying that he had entrusted this deposit to her as a consolation for his old age. So he had the old man hasten to the grave of his daughter to inquire about the matter. Upon arriving, he</p>	<p>those who saw him: he remained a shepherd of sheep even when he had become bishop. On a certain night thieves came and put their wicked hands to work making a hole in his fence through which to lead the sheep out. But they were restrained as if by invisible bonds until daylight, so as to be handed over to the torturers. When the elder arrived early in the morning to lead the sheep out to pasture, he saw the young men suspended as if by man-made chains, stretched out across the fence. Once he understood the reason for their punishment, with but a word he released them, even though they had been justifiably bound. In order to prevent their wasting a night with no productive work, he said to them, “Young men, take for yourselves one ram, in order that you may not be seen to have come without cause. For it is better for a man to seek to acquire something by asking rather than by theft.” They also report this miracle about him. He had a daughter named Irene who, after she had served him well, died a virgin. After her death, a man came to him saying that he had entrusted a certain deposit to her. Her father had been ignorant of the matter. Searching the whole house, the man’s property was nowhere to be found. The one who had lent it persisted, and he pressed him with weeping and tears. He attested that he would end his own life unless he received back what had been lent. Distressed because of the man’s tears, the old man hastened to his daughter’s grave and shouted out her name. Then she said from the grave, “What do you want, Father?” “What was lent to you,” he said. “Where did you place it?” Telling him the location, she said, “You will find it hidden there.” Returning to his house, he found the item just as his daughter had told him from the grave and returned it to the one demanding it. Many</p>	<p>of being made a pastor of men. Having been assigned the bishopric of one of the cities in Cyprus named Trimuthus, on account of his extreme humility he continued to feed his sheep during his incumbency of the bishopric.</p> <p>1.12.2 Many extraordinary things are related of him; I shall, however, record but one or two, lest I should seem to wander from my subject. Once about midnight, thieves having clandestinely entered his sheepfold attempted to carry off some of the sheep.</p> <p>1.12.3 But God who protected the shepherd preserved his sheep also, for the thieves were by an invisible power bound to the folds.</p> <p>1.12.4 At daybreak, when he came to the sheep and found the men with their hands tied behind them, he understood what was done: and after having prayed he liberated the thieves, earnestly admonishing and exhorting them to support themselves by honest labor and not to take anything unjustly. He then gave them a ram and sent them away, humorously adding, “So that you may not appear to have watched all night in vain.”</p> <p>1.12.5 This is one of the miracles in connection with Spyridon. Another was of this kind. He had a virgin daughter named Irene, who was a partaker of her father’s piety. An acquaintance entrusted to her keeping an ornament of considerable value. She, to guard it more securely, hid what had been deposited with her in the ground, and not long afterwards died.</p> <p>1.12.6 Subsequently the owner of the property came to claim it, and not finding the virgin, he began an excited conversation with the father, at times accusing him of an attempt to defraud him, and then again beseeching him to restore the deposit.</p> <p>1.12.7 The old man, regarding this person’s loss as his own misfortune, went to the tomb of his daughter, and</p>	<p>served as bishop, he did not stop shepherding his own sheep.</p> <p>2.10.2 He was so kind and patient that when robbers who had tried to raid his flock were restrained by invisible chains so that they were unable to move until morning, he came near and released them from their restraints with a prayer, blessed as he was. He even gave them his best ram as they left, saying, “Young men, take this for your use, lest you leave empty-handed tonight and blame your poverty on me.”</p> <p>2.10.3 We have heard many other stories of miracles related to this saint, but we will mention just one.</p> <p>2.11.1 This blessed, famous man of God had a daughter named Irene. While caring for her old father, as is proper, she passed away from human life as a virgin.</p> <p>2.11.2 After her death, a merchant returned from a journey and asked the old man for a deposit which he had entrusted to his virgin daughter.</p> <p>2.11.3 Blessed Spyridon had no idea what he was talking about, but since the man begged him so urgently, he carefully searched his house from top to bottom. When he could not find it, he was greatly distressed. He told the man that he knew nothing about the deposit and that there was nothing in the house.</p> <p>2.11.4 The merchant shouted, burst into tears, and moaned as he asked for the deposit. He said that he would kill himself because of the loss if he did not get his deposit back. He explained that he had entrusted the deposit to the virgin for safekeeping so that he might use it in his old age.</p> <p>2.11.5 Therefore, the holy old man had to head to his daughter’s tomb with the merchant to inquire about the matter. When he got there, he called his daughter by name, saying, “Irene, my child.” Answering from the grave, she said to him, “What is it, father?” The old man</p>
---	---	--	---

<p>called his daughter by name and said, “Irene my child.” And she answered from the sepulcher saying, “What do you want, father?” And he responded to her, “Where did you place this man's deposit, daughter?” And she said to him, “It lies in such and such a place,” clearly signifying the place to her father. So the old man, returning to the house and finding the deposit exactly where the virgin said it was, restored it to the man. Many other wondrous deeds of this man are sung, which even till today are pointed out by the locals to those who are in the know, for their benefit. So indeed in those times the church was still adorned by such holy men, many of whom were present at the synod in Nicaea.¹</p>	<p>other of his miraculous deeds were also reported, which are even now celebrated by the lips of all.</p>	<p>called upon God to show him before its proper season the promised resurrection. Nor was he disappointed in his hope, for the virgin again reviving appeared to her father, and having pointed out to him the spot where she had hidden the ornament, she once more departed. Such characters as these adorned the churches in the time of the emperor Constantine. These details I obtained from many inhabitants of Cyprus. I have also found a treatise composed in Latin by the presbyter Rufinus, from which I have collected these and some other things which will be hereafter adduced.</p>	<p>said to her, “Where did you hide this man’s deposit, my daughter?” She said to him, “It is hidden here, father,” clearly indicating the place to her father. He said to her, “Go in peace, Irene, my child.” 2.11.6 Then the old man returned home, found the deposit hidden right where the virgin said it was, and returned it to the man. 2.11.7 People still celebrate many other wonders and miracles of Spyridon. Even to this day the locals tell them to travelers as certain proof of our true faith in Christ. The church up to those times was adorned with such holy men, many of whom were present at the council of Nicaea.</p>
<p>Socrates</p>			
<p>1.13.1 I have heard moreover concerning Eutychian, a devout person who flourished about the same time, who also belonged to the Novatian church, yet was venerated for the performance of similar miracles. 1.13.2 I shall unequivocally state my authority for this narrative, nor will I attempt to conceal it, even though I give offense to some parties. It was Auxanon, a very aged presbyter of the Novatian church, who when quite a youth accompanied Acesius to the council at Nicaea and related to me what I have said concerning him. 1.13.3 His life extended from that period to the reign of Theodosius the Younger, and when I was a mere youth he recounted to me the acts of Eutychian, enlarging much on the divine grace which was manifested in him. 1.13.4 But one circumstance he alluded to, which occurred in the reign of Constantine, peculiarly worthy of mention. One of those military attendants, whom the emperor calls his domestic [or body] guards having been suspected of treasonable practices, sought his safety in flight. The indignant monarch ordered that he should be put to death, wherever he might be found: 1.13.5 who, having been arrested on the Bithynian Olympus, was bound with heavy and painful chains and kept imprisoned near those parts of Olympus where Eutychian was leading a solitary life and healing both the bodies and souls of many. The aged Auxanon, being then very young, was with him and was being trained by him in the discipline of the monastic life. 1.13.6 Many persons came to this Eutychian, entreating him to procure the release of the prisoner by interceding for him with the emperor. For the fame of the miracles done by Eutychian had reached the ears of the emperor. 1.13.7 He readily promised to go to the sovereign, but as the chains inflicted intolerable suffering, those who interested themselves on his behalf declared that death caused by the effect of his chains would anticipate both the emperor’s vengeance and any intercession that might be made for the prisoner. Accordingly Eutychian sent to the jailers requesting them to relieve the man.</p>			

¹ This section of Gelasius has been reconstructed by the editors of *Gelasius of Caesarea, Ecclesiastical History: the Extant Fragments* “based on the agreement between BHG 129 and Cyzicenus [the Anonymous Church History]” (pg. 91). Because our Greek text for the Anonymous Church History does not precisely match that provided by the editors of Gelasius, we have maintained separate translations.

1.13.8 But they having answered that they should bring themselves into danger by relieving a criminal, he went himself to the prison, attended by Auxanon. As they refused to open the jail, the grace which rested on Eutychian was rendered more conspicuous, for the gates of the prison opened of their own accord, while the jailers had the keys in their custody.

1.13.9 As soon as Eutychian, together with Auxanon, had entered the prison, to the great astonishment of all then present the fetters spontaneously fell from the prisoner’s limbs. He then proceeded with Auxanon to the city which was anciently called Byzantium but afterwards Constantinople, where, having been admitted into the imperial palace, he saved the man from death.

1.13.10 For the emperor, entertaining great veneration for Eutychian, readily granted his request. This indeed occurred some time after [the period to which this part of our history refers].

A philosopher debates with the bishops before the council begins

Geladius	Rufinus	Socrates	Sozomen	Anonymous Church History
<p>F12d (p. 85) For due to the extraordinary nature of the imperial order, there were also present at the synod philosophers extremely well-versed in dialectic. Among them was one who was wondered at by all and who sparred with the bishops very often on Arius' behalf, so that as a result of the contest a large audience was formed as a crowd rushed together. And for a time the bishops were unable to confute the philosopher as he argued, since he would easily meet the objections brought against him, solving the arguments that were set in motion, and like an eel slipping out of the arguments that were more strongly put forward against him, even when he seemed to be caught by them. But in order for God to show that the kingdom does not consist in word but in power, among the aforementioned confessors a certain man, who was by nature extremely simple and knew nothing except Jesus Christ and him crucified, was in the audience with the</p>	<p>10.3 We recognize indeed from what took place there how much virtue there is in simplicity of faith. For when the priests of God were convened from across the world by the zeal of the religious emperor, many philosophers and dialecticians who were held to be very noble heard the news and also gathered. Among them was a certain dialectician who was exceptional at his craft. He engaged every day in fierce debate with our bishops who were likewise highly educated in dialectics, so that an extraordinary spectacle developed in the presence of the learned and educated men who were gathered to listen. The philosopher was not able to be confined or checked in any way whatsoever, for he answered the other side’s questions with such skill that whenever it seemed that he had been thoroughly trapped, he worked his way out like a slippery snake. But this is what happened by which God made known that the kingdom of God does not consist of</p>	<p>1.8.14 Now a short time before the general assembling of the bishops, the disputants competed in preparatory debates before the multitudes. 1.8.15 When many people were drawn in by their interesting discourse, one of the laity, a confessor, a man with an unsophisticated mind, rebuked these rationalists. He told them that Christ and his apostles did not teach us dialectics, craftiness, or vain subtleties, but simple-mindedness, which is preserved by faith and good works. 1.8.16 When he had said this, all who were present admired the speaker and agreed with what he said. The disputants themselves, after hearing his plain statement of the truth, exercised a greater degree of moderation. That is how the</p>	<p>1.17.7 Many of the assembled bishops and the clergy who accompanied them were remarkably skilled in dialectics and trained in the art of rhetoric. They appeared prominent and so attracted the notice of the emperor and the court. Of that number Athanasius, who was then a deacon of Alexandria and had accompanied his bishop Alexander, seemed to have the largest share of advice about these subjects. 1.18.1 A number of the pagan philosophers desired to take part in the debates. Some wanted to learn more about the doctrine that was being taught. Others, who hated the Christians because of the recent suppression of pagan religions, wanted to turn the discussion about doctrine into an argument over words. They sought to introduce dissension among the Christians and make</p>	<p>2.12.9 Many philosophers were present. The enemies of truth, having placed their hope in them, as we just said, were fittingly refuted along with their teacher and his blasphemy. So the Holy Scripture which says, “Cursed is everyone who puts his hope in humans and whose heart turns away from the Lord” [Jer. 17:5], was fulfilled with respect to him and to them.</p> <p>2.13.1 One of Arius’s mercenary philosophers, admired much more than all the others, fiercely contended for Arius against our bishops for many days. So each day a large audience gathered to hear the war of words. The crowd of those who gathered grew larger as the philosopher poured forth the ungodly blasphemies of Arius against the holy council’s statements. He said about the Son of God, “He did not always exist,” and, “He is a creature, a product from what did not exist, and of a different essence and substance.”</p> <p>2.13.2 He staunchly supported the abominable doctrine of Arius; his words were like a blizzard as he ranted against the Son of God and derided that company of holy clergy, for the enemy of mankind’s salvation was speaking in him and through him.</p> <p>2.13.3 But our bishops, fighting for truth, fearlessly employed proper and fitting arguments for apostolic doctrine against the philosopher. They thus imitated the great prophet and king David, who said, “I was prepared and was not deterred” [Ps. 119:60], for they destroyed all the philosopher’s crafty premises with God’s Word just as flax is consumed by fire.</p>

<p>other bishops. He, seeing the philosopher mocking our people and vaunting arrogantly against them with his knavish disputation, asked that room be made for him to converse. Then those of our belief, conscious of the man's simplicity and knowing that he had no experience of education, tried to persuade him not to intervene, lest he become a laughingstock to the knaves. But he would not abide it and approached the man and said: "In the name of Jesus Christ, philosopher, hear the dogmas of truth." And the other replied to him, "If you say so." And the former said: "God is one, he who created heaven and earth, who also fashioned man out of the earth, who caused both visible and invisible things to subsist by his Word and Holy Spirit. Recognizing this Word as Son of God, we worship him, believing that he was born of a virgin for our redemption and that through the cross and death he has freed us from eternal condemnation, and that through his resurrection he has prepared eternal life for us; him also we expect to come to be judge of all that we have done. Do you believe this, philosopher?" And the latter, as if he never before had experience of speeches involving the raising of objections, was dumbfounded and, as if deaf or dumb, became silent, saying to him this only,</p>	<p>words but rather in power. One of the confessors, a man of the simplest nature and knowing nothing except "Jesus Christ and him crucified" [1 Cor. 2:2], was present with the other bishops who were listening. When he saw the philosopher insulting us and boasting in his cleverness and skill in disputation, he requested a chance to speak from the audience, for he desired to converse just a little with the philosopher. Then our people, who to this point only knew about the man's simplicity and ignorance, feared that his holy simplicity might become a cause for laughter from the clever men and bring shame on all of us. Nevertheless the elder persisted, and this is how he began his speech. "In the name of Jesus Christ, philosopher, hear what is true! There is one God, who made heaven and earth and who gave spirit to man, whom he formed from the dust of the earth. He made the universe, all that is seen and not seen, by the power of his Word, and he fortified it by the sanctification of his Spirit. This Word and Wisdom, which we teach is the Son, had pity on wandering mankind and was born of a virgin, and by suffering death he freed us from everlasting death and by his resurrection brought us eternal life. We wait for him to return as the judge of all we do. Do you believe this,</p>	<p>disturbance caused by these logical debates was suppressed at that time.</p>	<p>them appear to hold contradictory opinions. 1.18.2 It is said, then, that one of these philosophers who prided himself on his well-known superiority in speaking eloquently, began to ridicule the priests. This roused the indignation of a simple old man, who was highly esteemed as a confessor. Although he was unskilled in logical debate and spoke simply, he dared to oppose him. The less serious of those who knew the confessor laughed at his expense for what he wanted to do; but the more thoughtful were anxious that, in opposing such an eloquent man, he would only make a fool of himself. 1.18.3 Yet his influence was so great and his reputation so high that they could not stop him from engaging in the debate. He said, "In the name of Jesus Christ, O philosopher, listen to me. There is one God, the maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. He made all things by the power of the Word and established them by the holiness of his Spirit. The Word, whom we call the Son of God, seeing that man was sunk in error</p>	<p>2.13.4 Nevertheless, trusting in his devilish skill with words, the philosopher kept shooting his arrows at the truth the bishops proclaimed. He easily addressed all the arguments brought against him very well, so he thought. He vigorously tried to resolve the issues which had been raised. Although he seemed to vindicate himself by these arguments, slipping free like an eel by presenting his superior thoughts, he got caught by his own words and fell with them. 2.13.5 Yet he kept arguing against the peaceful council, deluded in his frenzy, in the hope of overcoming the invincible power of Christ's invincible Spirit in them. 2.13.6 But God, "who catches the wise in their craftiness" [Job 5:13; 1 Corinthians 3:19], wanted to show that "his rule resides not in word but in power" [1 Corinthians 4:20], so through one of his servants there he not only forcibly silenced the evil demon speaking in the philosopher but also drove it out. 2.13.7 There was a man among the holy confessors present at the council who was simple in nature, like hardly any of the other saints, who knew nothing "except Jesus Christ and him crucified" [1 Cor. 2:2] in the flesh, according to the Scriptures. He was together with the bishops and saw that the philosopher was belittling our holy bishops and boasting about his fallacious argumentation. So he asked the bishops, as clergy of God, to grant him the floor to speak to the philosopher. 2.13.8 Our holy bishops, seeing the man's simplicity and lack of education, tried to dissuade him from joining the debate lest he become a laughingstock for the wretched enemies of truth. 2.13.9 Refusing to be deterred, he approached the philosopher and said to him, "In the name of Jesus Christ, God the Word, who always exists with the Father, listen to true doctrine, philosopher!" The philosopher replied, "Speak." The saint said to him, "There is one God, who created the heavens, the earth, the sea, and all that is in them. He also formed man from earth and brought everything into existence by his Word and by the Holy Spirit.</p>
---	--	---	--	--

<p>“To me also these things seem to be thus, and there is nothing to add beyond what you have just said.” And the old man said to him, “If you believe that these things are so, philosopher, rise and follow me and let us hasten to the church, in which you will receive the sign of this faith.” And the philosopher, changing to piety, turned and said to his students and all those who had come together in the audience, “Listen, gentlemen: Ever since I took up serious study of discourse, I would set argument against argument, and whatever was proposed I overturned by the art of speaking. But when, instead of discourses, a kind of power came forth from the mouth of the debater, my words were unable to fight against that power; for neither is man able to resist God. For this reason, if there be any among you who is able to understand as I myself have come to comprehend, he will believe in Christ, and let him follow this old man through whom God has spoken.” In this way the philosopher, becoming a Christian, rejoiced at being defeated by the old man.</p>	<p>philosopher?” But the philosopher had nothing to say in response, utterly stunned by the power of his words. He was silent, unable to answer in any way other than to admit it was clear to him that there was no other truth than what the man had said. Then the elder said, “If you believe this to be true, rise and follow me to the church and receive the sign of this faith.” And the philosopher, turning to his students and to those who had convened to listen, said, “Listen, wise men! As long as I worked only with words, I set words against words and I rebutted what was said by my skill of speaking. But truly, when power rather than words proceeded from the mouth of the speaker, words were not able to resist power, neither could a man remain opposed to God. Therefore, if someone among you is able to perceive what I perceived when I heard what was said, let him believe in Christ and follow this old man, in whom God resides.” And so the philosopher became a Christian and rejoiced that he had finally been overcome.</p>		<p>and living like beasts, pitied him, and chose to be born of woman, to interact with men, and to die for them. And he will come again to judge each of us for the deeds of this present life. We simply believe these things to be true. Do not, therefore, work in vain, striving to disprove facts which can only be understood by faith or scrutinizing how these things did or did not actually happen. Answer me, do you believe?”</p> <p>1.18.4 The philosopher, astonished at what had happened, replied, “I believe.” He thanked the old man for overcoming him with his argument and began to teach the same doctrines to others. He encouraged those who still held his former sentiments to adopt the view he had now embraced, assuring them on oath that some inexplicable power had compelled him to become a Christian.</p>	<p>2.13.10 Because we know this Word as the Son of God, philosopher, we worship him, confident that he took on flesh from a virgin to redeem us, was born, and became man. Through the suffering of his flesh on the cross and through his death, he freed us from eternal damnation. Through his resurrection, he obtained eternal life for us. We have the hope, now that he has ascended to the heavens, that he will come again and judge all our deeds. Do you believe this, philosopher?”</p> <p>2.13.11 The philosopher, as if he had no experience in debate, became speechless. He remained silent like a dumb or mute man. He could only say to him with a very weak voice, “I, too, think this is true; I disagree with nothing you said.”</p> <p>2.13.12 The old man said to him, “If you believe this is true, philosopher, get up and follow me. Let’s hurry to the church, where you will receive the seal of this faith.”</p> <p>2.13.13 The philosopher, directing his whole self towards true devotion to the God of all, got up and followed the old man. Looking back, he addressed his disciples and all who had gathered in the audience: “Gentlemen, listen. While I was zealous for arguments, I set my arguments against others and refuted opponents with artful speech.</p> <p>2.13.14 But when, instead of arguments, divine power emerged from the mouth of my adversary, my arguments could no longer withstand the power, for man cannot resist God. Therefore, if any of you can understand, as I have come to understand, then he will trust in Christ and should follow this old man, through whom God has spoken.”</p> <p>2.13.15 So the philosopher came to his senses, was enlightened, and became a Christian. He rejoiced that he had been defeated by the old man. When the philosopher was baptized, was accepted into the church of God, rested, and exulted in the mighty works of God, the council rejoiced.</p> <p>[The ACH includes an expanded dialogue against the philosopher, not included in this chart due to length. The dialogue can be accessed here.]</p>
---	---	--	--	---

Debate with Arius before the council begins

Sozomen

1.17.6 But before the appointed time arrived, the bishops assembled together and summoned Arius to attend. They began to examine the disputed topics, and each one of them advanced his own opinion. As might have been expected, however, many different questions grew out of the discussion. Some of the bishops spoke against the introduction of novelties contrary to the faith which had been delivered to them from the beginning. Those who had especially adhered to simplicity of doctrine argued that the faith of God ought simply to be accepted. Others, however, contended that ancient opinions ought not to be followed without examination.

1.19.1 The bishops held long consultations, and after summoning Arius before them, they made an accurate test of his propositions. They were intently on their guard not to come to a vote on either side.