

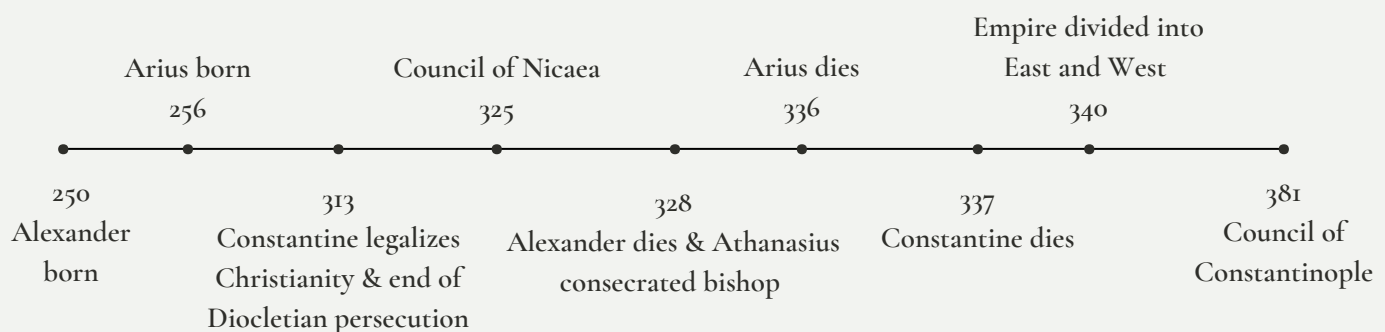


## History

The Council of Nicaea is recognized as the first ecumenical council. Although Constantine had legalized Christianity in 313 AD, ongoing theological controversy threatened the unity of his empire. Hoping to resolve the conflict, he called his theologians to a council in Nicaea, that he attended himself. Around 300 bishops responded to the call and convened in the summer of 325. Of principal interest was a controversy regarding Jesus' identity and relationship to the Father. On the one side was Arius—an influential presbyter of a notable Alexandrian church—who maintained that the

Son was the first and highest work of creation, but not *homoousios* (of one substance) with the Father. Arius' chief opponent, Alexander (the bishop of Alexandria), held that the Son is "of one substance with the Father" and "begotten, not made." Alexander and his party won and on June 19th promulgated a creed which would later be expanded and adopted at the Council of Constantinople in 381—what we know as the Nicene Creed. The Council of Nicaea also sought to settle another controversy by establishing a single date for the observance of Easter, and it gave numerous other rulings to help order church practice..

## Timeline



# Leading Characters

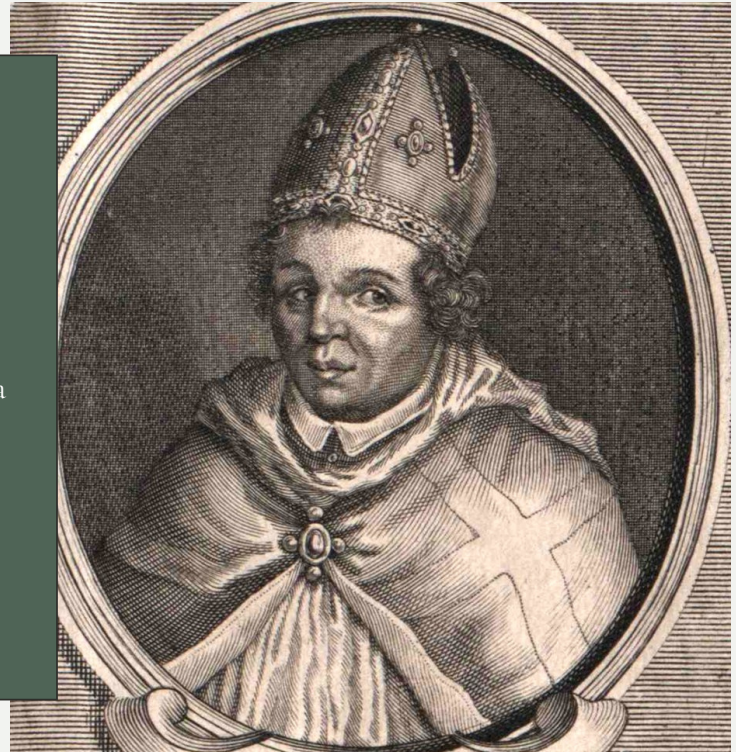


## ALEXANDER OF ALEXANDRIA

Alexander lived from 250 to 328. As the bishop of Alexandria, he was one of the men present at the Council of Nicaea and played an important role in defending against the Arian heresy. He confessed, with the faithful, that Jesus is *homoousius* with the Father. Alexander was succeeded by Athanasius who would continue in Alexander's steps defending the orthodox faith as Arianism grew in popularity even after Arius' death.

## ARIUS

Born around the year 250 in Libya, Arius was an ordained presbyter in Alexandria and a contemporary of Constantine and Alexander of Alexandria. He presided over one of the largest churches in Alexandria and held popularity and influence there as a skilled orator. After the Council of Nicaea he was exiled from Constantine's empire, but he later returned and even after his death his teachings grew in popularity under the approval of Constantine's successors.



# Sources

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Williams, R. (2002). *Arius: Heresy and Tradition*. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

## IMAGES:

The Council of Nicaea, unknown, Italy, ca. 16th century.

Alexander of Alexandria, unknown. Source: *Szentelek élete I*, Budapest 1899, page 222

Arius, unknown. Source: [https://onb.digital/result/BAG\\_8184746](https://onb.digital/result/BAG_8184746)