



# THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

Session 3: The Beginnings of Christendom





THE BEGINNINGS OF CHRISTENDOM

EMPEROR CONSTANTINE

# CONSTANTINE'S CONVERSION

- A military leader, searching for power and longing to be emperor of Rome.
- The Battle of Milvian Bridge.
- The Edict of Milan - Constantine made Christianity legal.
- Christianity went from imperial persecution to imperial favor almost instantly.

# CHURCH AND STATE MERGE

- **Advantages:** Christianity was instantly respected. Persecution stopped. Given governmental perks such as tax-supported church construction and clergy on the Roman payroll. Christian art and culture flourished.
- **Disadvantages:** It was now economically and socially advantageous to be a Christian, as a result the purity of the church waned, and the church began to look a lot like the mainstream culture. It was also around this time that infant baptism became the normal practice.



# CULTURAL COMPROMISE

- Two Examples: Christmas and Easter
- "Power, ease, and comfort changed the Church from an elite minority into a comfortable, all-inclusive Church that could no longer be distinguished from the rest of society. Discipline and self-sacrifice were not its marks. Its life had ceased to be an inspiration and challenge to men." (Church From Age to Age, 106)



THE BEGINNINGS OF CHRISTENDOM

# MONASTICISM



# THE BIRTH OF MONASTICISM

- Monasticism was a protest movement from the sullied church that looked more and more like the world.
- Monasticism was a movement of withdrawal from the world's comforts and fleshy pleasures to set your sole attention on Christ. In many ways they were trying to go back to the time before Constantine.

# THREE FORMS OF MONASTICISM

- Individual Withdrawal
- Communal Withdrawal
- Hybrid Model





# BASIL OF CAESAREA

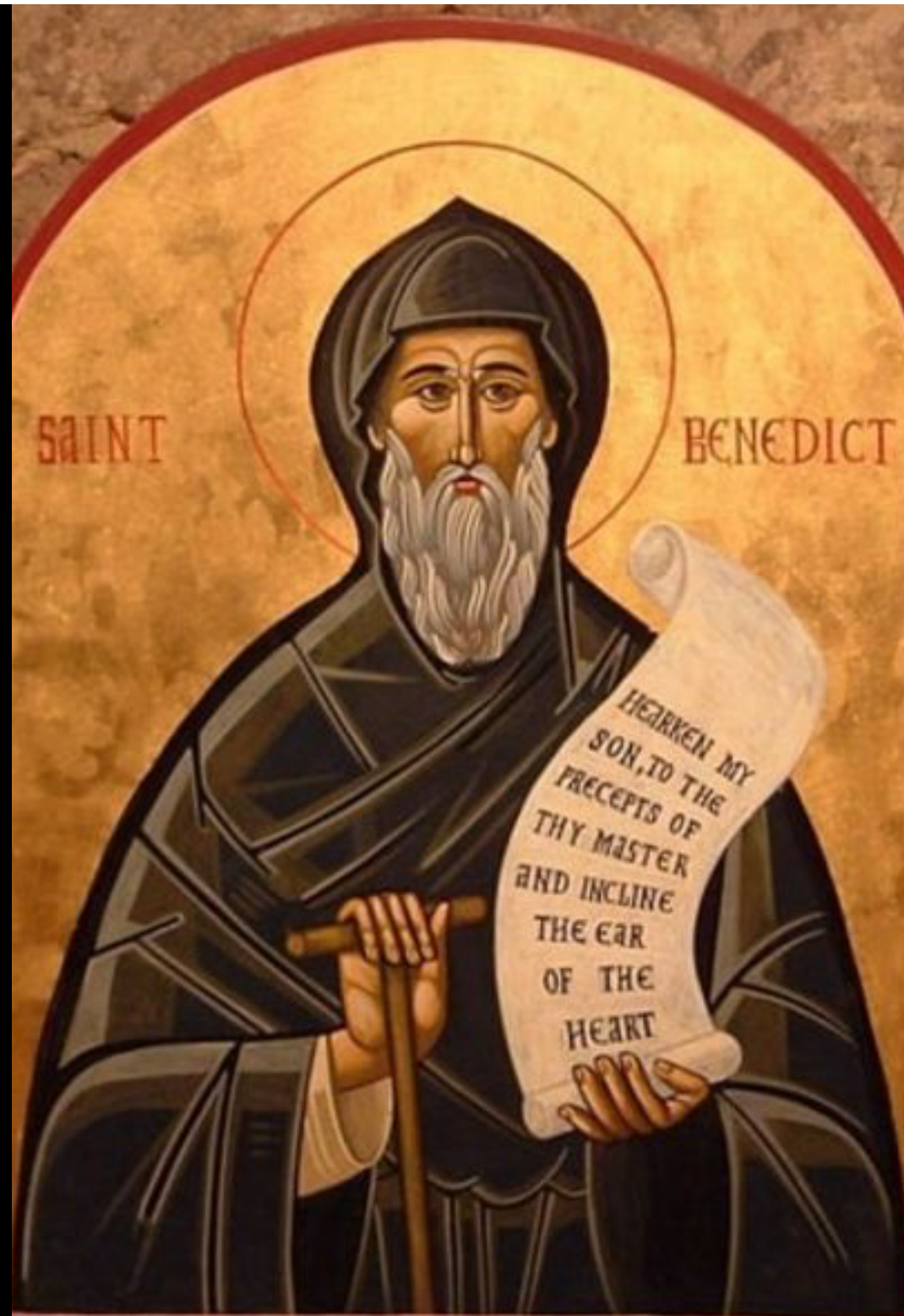
- An eastern church leader who was attracted to Monasticism.
- He established reforms to communal monasticism setting "rules" over the community including a strict schedule for work, prayer, and meals.





# BENEDICT

- “The Father of Western Monasticism”
- He implemented his own “rule”. The motto was ora et labora or “pray and work”
- Held a stricter rule with constant activity and little to no leisure time.





# CONTRIBUTIONS OF MONASTICISM

- Contributed to culture and education. (The arts, hand copying, innovative farming methods).
- Preserved serious christian living and discipline in a secularizing church.
- Provide education and leadership opportunities to woman.
- Had a long lasting influence on Christianity.



# CRITIQUE OF MONASTICISM

- non-Christian teaching that the body is bad.
- Sectarian and reclusive.







THE BEGINNINGS OF CHRISTENDOM

JOHN CHRYSOSTOM



# JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

- "Golden Tongue"
- Born in Antioch in A. D. 347.
- He felt drawn to the monastic movement, but restrained by his mother's tears. After his mother's death he would enter.
- Became Archbishop of Constantinople.
- Controversy with Emperor Arcadius' wife.







THE BEGINNINGS OF CHRISTENDOM

# TRINITARIAN CONTROVERSIES

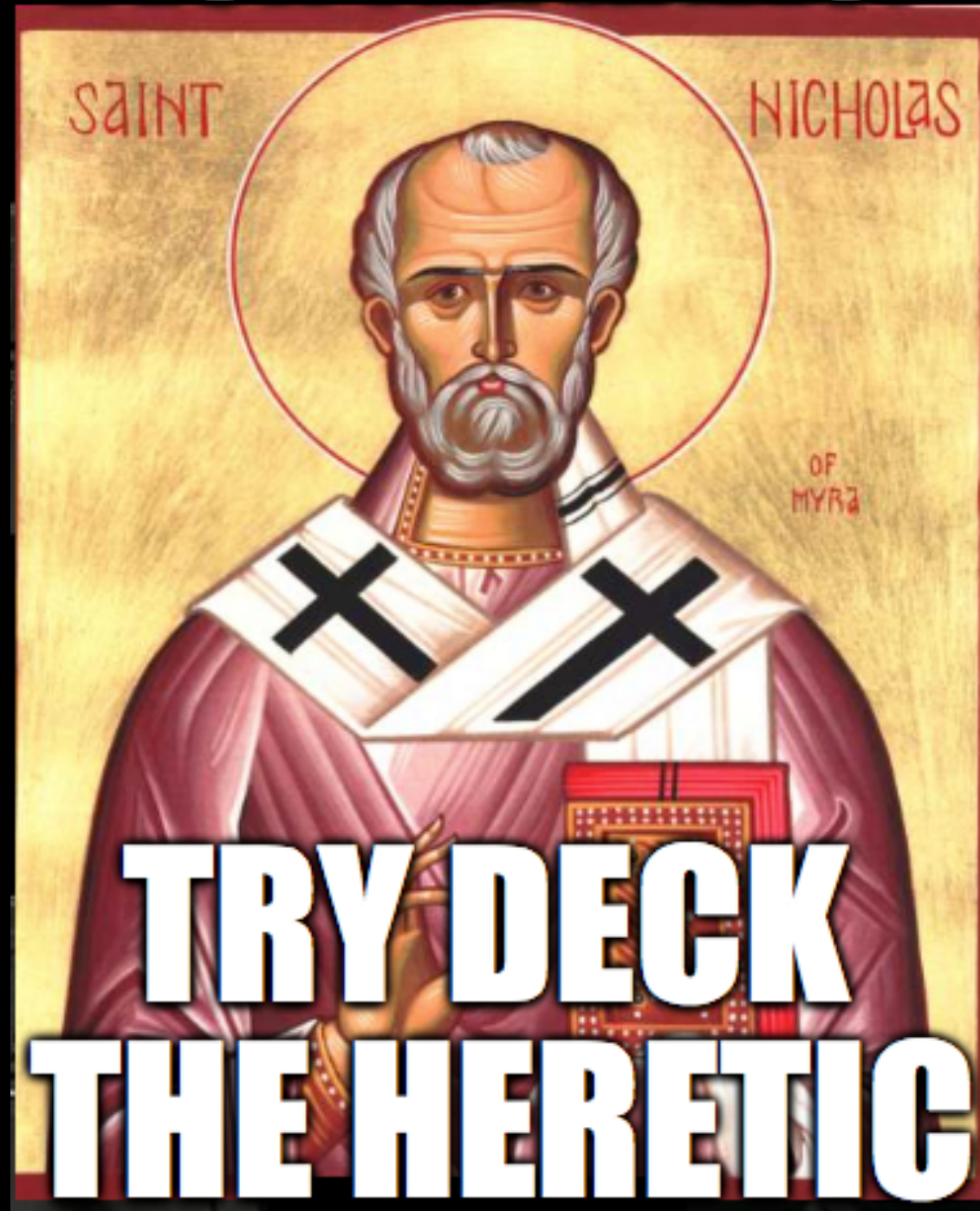
COLOSSIANS 1:13-2:10



# ARIUS

- Aries taught the son is subordinate to the Father, not just in role but in his being.
- Motto: "There is a time when the son was not".
- "homoiousios" of similar substance" rather than "homousios" "Of the same substance".

**"DECK THE HALLS?"**



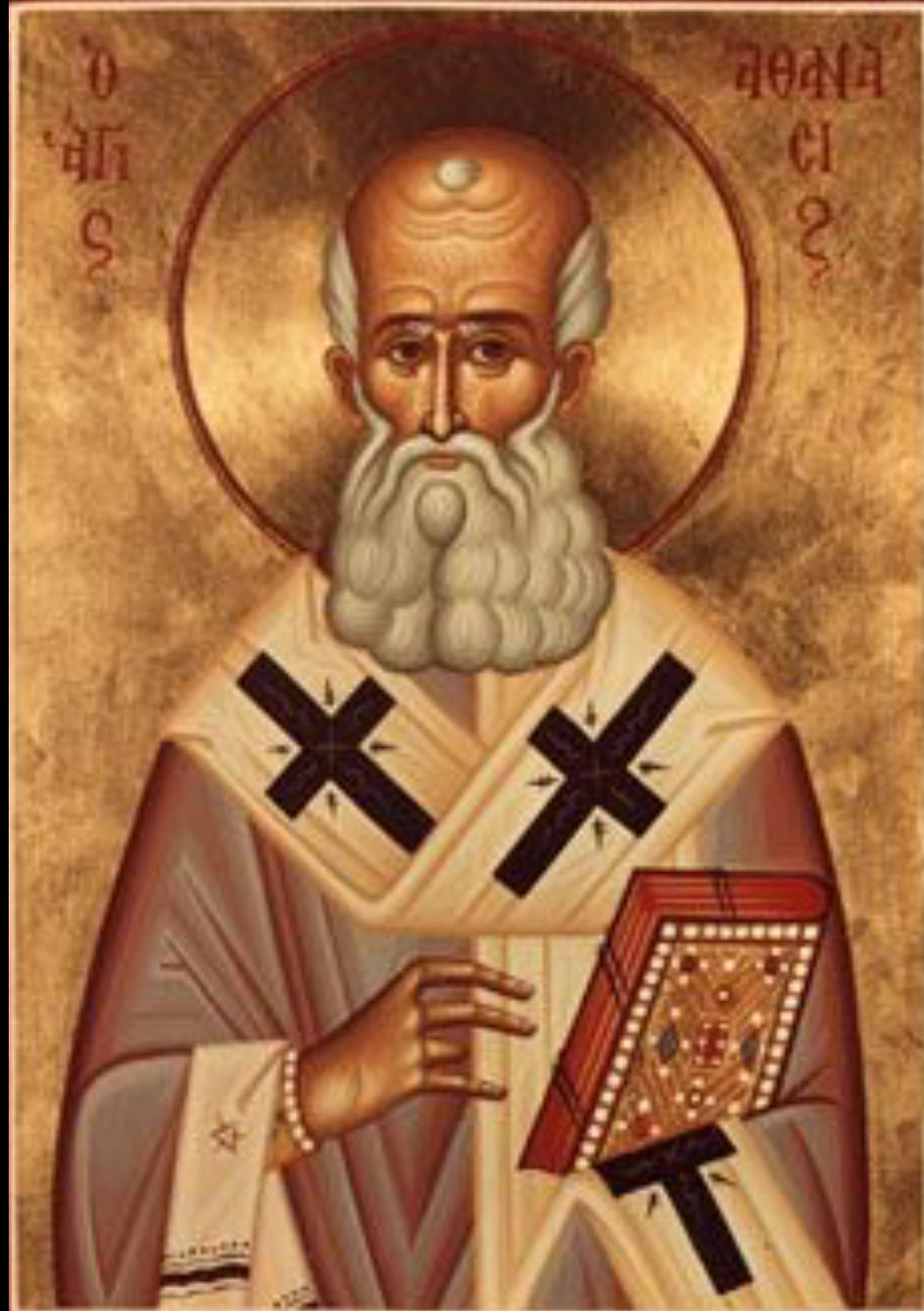
"And before He (the Son) was begotten or created or defined or established, He was not. For He was not unbegotten. But we are persecuted because we say, "the Son has a beginning, but God is without beginning." ... We are persecuted because we say, "He is from nothing." But we speak thus inasmuch as He is neither part of God nor from any substratum. On account of this we are persecuted"

—ARIUS IN ARIUS'S LETTER TO EUSEBIUS



# ATHANASIUS

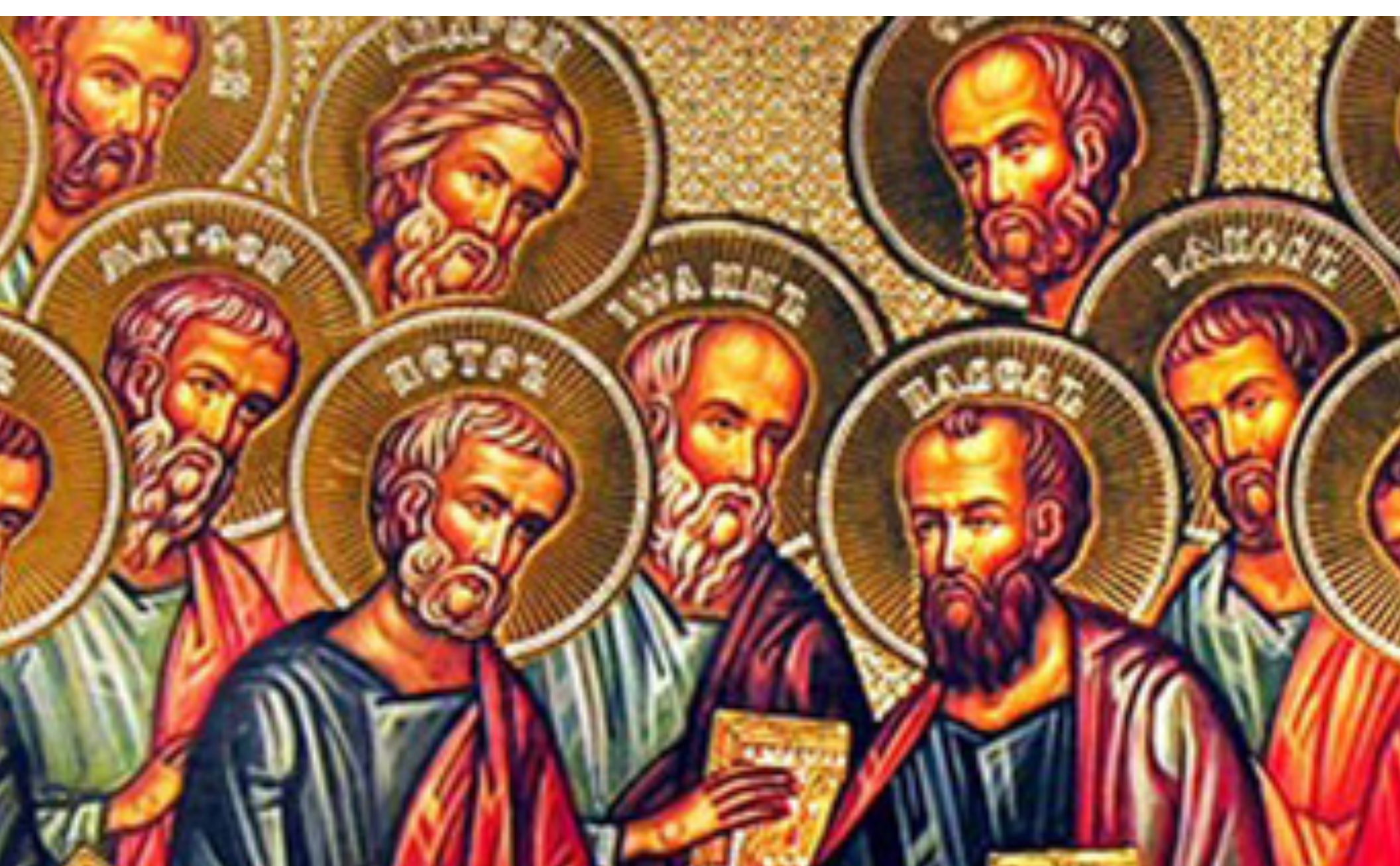
- The Bishop of Alexandria saw a group of boys playing "church service." Athanasius was the bishop performing baptism by immersion.
- He was brought in and trained by the bishop.
- At the council of Nicea, Athanasius demonstrated great skill in refuting the Arian heresy.



"If Christ is just another created being, even though he is the firstborn and most exalted of all created beings, then it is more natural to think of him as our teacher and example than as our atoning sacrifice. Rather than simply having faith in him, we are called upon to imitate him. Because it considered Jesus a creature, and attributed our salvation to him, Arianism exalted what a creature can do."

—ATHANASIUS





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# NICENE CREED

"We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten of his Father, of the substance of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father. By whom all things were made, both which be in heaven and in earth. Who for us men and for our salvation came down [from heaven] and was incarnate and was made man. He suffered and the third day he rose again, and ascended into heaven. And he shall come again to judge both the quick and the dead. And in the Holy Ghost.



“And whosoever shall say that there was a time when the Son of God was not, or that before he was begotten he was not, or that he was made of things that were not, or that he is of a different substance or essence [from the Father] or that he is a creature, or subject to change or conversion—all that so say, the Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes them”

– NICENE CREED

DATE	LOCATION	HERETIC	RESULT
325 A. D.	NICEA	ARIUS	JESUS IS FULLY GOD
381 A. D.	CONSTANTINOPLE	APOLLANARIUS	JESUS IS FULLY MAN
431 A. D.	EPHESUS	NESTORIUS	TWO NATURES FULLY JOINED
451 A. D.	CHALCEDON	EUTYCHUS	TWO NATURES IN ONE PERSON



# APPLICATION POINTS

- The importance of separation of church and state.
- The importance of the purity of the church.
- The tension of remaining in the world and distinct from the world (Sectarian vs. Accommodation)
- Our bodies and pleasure are not inherently bad and hinder our Christian lives.