Church History
Lesson 14 - The Cappadocian Fathers and the Council of Constantinople

1. Introduction - The Situation After Nicea and Athanasius
   1.1. As we saw last time, after the Council of Nicea, the debate regarding the Deity of Christ continued to rage. As different Emperors and bishops arose, the tide shifted between Orthodoxy and heresy.
   1.2. Athanasius was the central figure in this controversy. The fortunes of his life shifted with the changing tides of Imperial favor for and against orthodoxy. Through all of this Athanasius stood strong for the orthodox faith, accurately seeing that to deny the Deity of Christ was to deny the faith itself. His life and writings thus became one of the most important chapters in church history.
   1.3. However, final victory for orthodoxy did not come until the Council of Constantinople in 381. The victory of Orthodoxy was largely the result of the work of three men: Basil of Caesarea, his brother Gregory of Nyssa, and their friend Gregory of Nazianzus. Collectively these three men became known as the Cappadocian Fathers.
   1.4. The work of these three was used by God to bring the victory to orthodoxy over heresy, and their work on the Trinity formed the basis for for much of the church’s reflection on God since that time.

2. Macrina - The Sister of Basil and Gregory of Nyssa
   2.1. The family of Macrina, Basil, and Gregory of Nyssa had Christian roots going back at least two generations prior to them. Their paternal grandparents had suffered during the Decian persecution. Also, one of their uncles was a bishop. Thus, they were raised in a deeply Christian environment.
      2.1.1. The family in which Macrina, Basil, and Gregory were raised had deep Christian roots that went back at least two generations. Their paternal grandparents had spent seven years hiding in the forests during the Decian persecution. - Gonzales, location 3704
      2.1.2. Thus, the grandparents of our Cappadocians, both on the maternal and paternal sides, had been Christians, and one of their uncles was a bishop. - Gonzales, location 3708
   2.2. This outstanding devotion to Christ continued in their own generations, as can be seen from the fact that three of their ten children became bishops (Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, and Peter of Sebaste), and Macrina was widely revered for model life. (Ferguson, location 4148)
   2.3. Macrina was pledged to be married when her husband to be suddenly died. After this, Macrina refused all other suitors, determining to remain celibate and to give herself to a life of contemplation. (Gonzales, location 3710-3711)
   2.4. In the coming years, Macrina became a spiritual example and guid to her brothers Basil and Gregory of Nyssa, and also to many others.
   2.5. When their brother Naucratius died, Basil was extremely shaken. This led him to resign from his teaching position and to seek guidance from Macrina regarding a religious life. In fact, Macrina advised the whole family to leave the city and move to their property at Annesi and begin a life of ascetic contemplation, almost like a desert monk.
2.5.1.1. The blow was such that Basil changed his life entirely. He resigned his teaching position and all other honors, and he asked Macrina to teach him the secrets of religious life. - Gonzales, location 3724

2.5.1.2. Macrina sought to console her family by leading their thoughts to the joys of religious life. Why not withdraw to their holdings in nearby Annesi, and there live in renunciation and contemplation? True happiness is not found in the glories of the world, but in the service of God. That service is best rendered when one breaks all ties with the world. Dress and food must be as simple as possible, and one should devote oneself entirely to prayer. Thus, what Macrina proposed was a life similar to that of the ascetics of the desert. - Gonzales, location 3726

2.6. Macrina lived the rest of her life in monastic retreat and contemplation at Annesi. Her fame spread and she became known simply as “The Teacher.” Eventually, she suffered a severe asthma attack and, after consoling her brother Gregory of Nyssa regarding the hope of the resurrection, she died.

2.6.1. Macrina spent the rest of her life in monastic retreat in Annesi. - Gonzales, location 3733

2.6.2. Her fame was such that she was known simply as “the Teacher. - Gonzales, location 3735

2.6.3. Gregory, however, was not easily consoled on finding his sister suffering from a severe asthma attack on her deathbed. - Gonzales, location 3737

2.6.4. She let him shed his tears and express his pain, and then consoled him, reminding him of the hope of resurrection. Finally, she died in great peace. - Gonzales, location 3739

2.7. Macrina’s influence on her brothers and on Gregory of Nazianzus was great. Her example led them into the establishment of monastic communities, care for the poor and sick, and to devoting their lives to the service of God, the Church, and their fellow humans. Thus, though her name is known by few today, her influence was great through the Cappadocian Fathers.

3. The Lives of the Cappadocian Fathers

3.1. Basil of Cesarea

3.1.1. Basil was raised in a Christian family, and he was sickly from his earliest days. However he survived, and his father gave him the greatest education available. Basil thus studied in Cesarea, Antioch, Constantinople, and eventually Athens. It was at Athens that he met both Gregory of Nazianzus and Julian, who later became the Emperor known as Julian the Apostate.

3.1.1.1. It was in the ancient Greek city that he met Gregory, who would eventually become bishop of Nazianzus, as well as Prince Julian, later dubbed “the Apostle. - Gonzales, location 3716
3.1.2. After his studies, Basil returned to Cesarea. Given his great education and his families connections, he soon secured a post as a teacher of rhetoric. However, he was full of pride in his knowledge and position - so Macrina began to tell her brother of his vanity and lack of real Christian faith. During this time, news arrived that their brother Naucritus had died, which shook Basil to the core of his being. This led to Basil utterly changing his life. He resigned his position, sold his possessions to give to the poor, and asked Macrina to teach him how to walk with God.

3.1.2.1. After such studies, Basil returned to Caesarea, puffed up in his own wisdom. His studies, as well as his family’s prestige, guaranteed him a place of importance in Caesarean society. Soon he was offered a position teaching rhetoric. It was then that Macrina intervened. She bluntly told her brother that he had become vain, acting as if he were the best inhabitant of the city, and that he would do well in quoting fewer pagan authors and following more of the advice of Christian ones. - Gonzales, location 3717

3.1.2.2. Then tragic news arrived. Their brother Naucratius, who was living in retirement in the country, had died unexpectedly. Basil was shaken. He and Naucratius had been very close. - Gonzales, location 3722

3.1.2.3. The blow was such that Basil changed his life entirely. He resigned his teaching position and all other honors, and he asked Macrina to teach him the secrets of religious life. - Gonzales, location 3724

3.1.2.4. Back home, Basil’s career as a rhetorician was short, for a spiritual awakening and a journey to Egypt and Palestine to meet ascetics led to his baptism. He divided his fortune among the poor and went into solitude at Annesi near Neocaesarea. - Ferguson, location 4151

3.1.3. Basil then began living the monastic life, and was soon surrounded by others. He then began a monastery, for which he drew up rules which became the source for almost all monastic rules in the Eastern church. Central in his conception of a monastery was community and service, especially to the poor.

3.1.3.1. He and his friend Gregory of Nazianzus founded a community for men similar to the one Macrina had created for women. He believed that community life was essential, for one who lives alone has no one to serve, and the core of monastic life is service to others. - Gonzales, location 3744

3.1.3.2. Since all the legislation in the Greek church regarding monastic life is based on the teachings of Basil, he is usually regarded as the father of Eastern monasticism. - Gonzales, location 3747

3.1.4. After about six years, Basil was ordained as a presbyter against his will. However, he soon had conflicts with the bishop of Caesarea (who was Orthodox), and so Basil decided to return to the monastery rather than creating further difficulties. However, when the Arian Valens became Emperor, the bishop of Caesarea decided to put other differences aside and ask Basil to assist him in the struggle against Arianism. Basil did this, and when the bishop died, he was eventually selected as the new bishop.
3.1.4.1. He had lived as a monk for little more than six years when he was ordained a presbyter against his will. He soon had conflicts with the bishop of Caesarea, and rather than creating greater difficulties decided to return to his monastic community. He remained there until Valens became emperor. Since the new emperor was Arian, the bishop of Caesarea decided to set aside his differences with Basil and call on the holy monk to assist him in the struggle against Arianism. - Gonzales, location 3749

3.1.4.2. When the bishop of Caesarea died, the election of his successor became a focal point for the struggle between the orthodox and the Arians. Basil’s prestige was such that he seemed to be the most likely candidate. The Arian party found only one point at which Basil was vulnerable: his questionable health. The orthodox responded that they were electing a bishop, not a gladiator. Eventually, Basil was elected. - Gonzales, location 3758

3.1.5. Basil knew that Valens would not rest easy with an Orthodox bishop in Caesarea. Eventually the emperor tried to subdue Basil through both promises and threats. However, Basil refused to abandon his orthodox faith. Eventually the emperor threatened loss of all property, banishment and even death - to which Basil replied “All that I have that you can confiscate are these rags and a few books. Nor can you exile me, for wherever you send me, I shall be God’s guest. As to tortures you should know that my body is already dead in Christ. And death would be a great boon to me, leading me sooner to God.” The prefect hearing this reply stated he had never been spoken to in that manner, to which Basil replied “Perhaps that is because you have never met a true bishop.” (Gonzales, location 3764)

3.1.6. He was particularly interested in organizing and spreading the monastic life, and in advancing the Nicene cause. Through a vast correspondence and several theological treatises, he made a significant contribution to the final victory of Trinitarian doctrine. But, like Athanasius, he was unable to see that final victory, for he died a few months before the Council of Constantinople confirmed the Nicene doctrine in 381. - Gonzales, location 3772

3.1.6.1. As bishop, Basil became a pioneer in establishing Christian benevolent institutions—homes for the poor, hospices for travelers, and hospitals. - Ferguson, location 4154

3.1.6.2. Basil stood his ground in the Arian controversy, successfully resisting efforts at his banishment, and began the literary refutation of the Neoarian Eunomius. He worked for unity among the opponents of Arianism and for better understanding between the Eastern and Western churches. His doctrinal treatises, letters, and sermons laid the basis for the theological accomplishments of the two Gregories. - Ferguson, location 4159

3.2. Gregory of Nyssa

3.2.1. Gregory of Nyssa, who was Basil’s younger brother, had a completely different temperament than his older brother. He simply wanted to avoid controversy and live a quiet contemplative life. Furthermore, while Basil and Gregory of Nazianzus took up the monastic life, Gregory of Nyssa was happily married. (Gonzales, location 3777, 3780)
3.2.2. Gregory received his main education from Basil, and was drawn to a strong Christian life by Basil’s example as a monk and bishop. (Ferguson, location 4192)

3.2.3. Learned in philosophy, rhetoric, and medicine, Gregory of Nyssa is remembered as the philosophical theologian of the Cappadocians, effecting a synthesis of Greek philosophy and Christian theology. - Ferguson, location 4193

3.2.4. For him, the monastic life was a way to avoid the pains and struggles of active life. He became known for his mystical life and for the writings in which he described that life and gave directives for those wishing to follow it. - Gonzales, location 3783

3.2.5. Basil appointed Gregory bishop of the small town of Nyssa in 372. Gregory reluctantly accepted the position, and appropriately so, for he showed a lack of firmness in dealing with people and an unfitness for church politics. His carelessness with financial affairs gave Arians occasion to charge misappropriation of church funds, and he was deposed by a synod in 376 and banished by the emperor Valens. - Ferguson, location 4195

3.2.6. Recalled along with other banished bishops by Gratian in 378, Gregory returned to a triumphant welcome by his church. His main period of literary activity came after Basil’s death in 379. - Ferguson, location 4198

3.2.7. Gregory attended the Council of Constantinople in 381, and the emperor Theodosius named him among those bishops with whose doctrine on the Trinity all should agree. - Ferguson, location 4199

3.2.7.1. After that great council, Emperor Theodosius took him as one of his main advisors in theological matters, and Gregory was thus forced to travel throughout the empire, and even to Arabia and Mesopotamia. Although there was great value in this work, Gregory always saw it as a hindrance, keeping him away from the life of contemplation. - Gonzales, location 3791

3.2.8. Finally, being assured that the Nicene cause was firmly established, Gregory returned to the monastic life, hoping that the world would leave him alone. In this he was so successful that the date and circumstances of his death are not known. - Gonzales, location 3793

3.3. Gregory of Nazianzus

3.3.1. Gregory of Nazianzus was, like Basil and Gregory of Nyssa, from a devout Christian family.

3.3.1.1. The other Great Cappadocian was Gregory of Nazianzus, whom Basil had met when they were fellow students. Gregory was the son of the bishop of Nazianzus, also called Gregory, and his wife Nona—for at that time bishops were often married. - Gonzales, location 3797

3.3.1.2. Gregory was born at Arianzum, near Nazianzus, where his father was later bishop. His mother, Nonna, was the daughter of Christian parents and was responsible for the conversion of her husband and the early religious training of her son, - Ferguson, location 4170

3.3.2. Gregory studied at Cappadocian Caesarea, Caesarea in Palestine, Alexandria, and Athens. It was during this time that he first met Basil. (Ferguson, location 4172)
3.3.3. When he was thirty years old, around 358 AD, Gregory returned to his home area, and then he joined Basil in the monastic life. Together they worked on preserving some of the works of Origen in Greek, and also on Basil’s rules for monastic life.

3.3.3.1. He was thirty years old when he returned to his home country and joined Basil in the monastic life. - Gonzales, location 3802

3.3.3.2. He joined Basil in his retirement in 358–59, where together they worked on the Philocalia, excerpts from Origen’s writings (preserving the Greek of many passages otherwise known only from Latin translation), and on Basil’s monastic rules. - Ferguson, location 4173

3.3.4. Gregory loved the monastic life, and did not want to be engaged in ecclesiastical affairs and controversy. However, against his will, in 361 AD his father appointed him as a presbyter in Nazianzus.

3.3.4.1. He shared with Basil a desire to unite ascetic piety with literary culture, but unlike Basil, his preference for quiet contemplation left no taste for the active ecclesiastical life. - Ferguson, location 4164

3.3.4.2. Gregory’s sentiment, “Quiet and freedom from affairs is more precious than the splendor of a busy life” (Epistle 131). - Ferguson, location 4167

3.3.4.3. His life is characterized by a succession of flights from and returns to the world. - Ferguson, location 4169

3.3.4.4. Back in Nazianzus, Gregory was ordained a presbyter, although he did not wish it. - Gonzales, location 3805

3.3.4.5. Very much against his will, Gregory’s father ordained him a presbyter in 361. - Ferguson, location 4175

3.3.5. In 371 AD, Basil made Gregory the bishop of the small town of Sasima in order to strengthen the cause of orthodoxy. However, Gregory did not want this, and it actually placed a great strain on their friendship. This was furthered when several people close to Gregory died, and Gregory left the church for a retreat and time of meditation. It was during this time that Gregory learned of the death of Basil.

3.3.5.1. In 371 Basil ordained him bishop of the small town of Sasima, as part of his program of appointing supporters throughout the province in order to strengthen his ecclesiastical influence, but Gregory never obtained possession of the see. - Ferguson, location 4176

3.3.5.2. From then on, Gregory became more involved in the controversies of the time. When Basil made him bishop of a small hamlet, Gregory felt that his friend had imposed on him, and their friendship was sorely strained. It was a sad time for Gregory, marked by the deaths of Caesarius, Gorgonia, Gregory the Elder, and Nona. Alone and bereaved, Gregory left the church that had been entrusted to him, in order to have time for quiet meditation. He was in his retreat when the news arrived of the death of Basil, with whom he had never been reconciled. - Gonzales, location 3807
3.3.6. Through a series of events, Gregory became the preacher of a small orthodox church in Constantinople in 379. He only stayed in the Capital a few years, but they were incredibly fruitful. In fact, his preaching there completely turned the tide in the city from Arian to Orthodox. In particular, five key orations he gave during this time turned the tide, and provided the foundation of much Trinitarian reflection ever since. This series of orations were considered so powerful that they earned Gregory the title of “The Theologian” by which he is still known in Church history.

3.3.7. Eventually, during the council of Constantinople in 381, he was made bishop of the Capital, though he resigned from this position when some complained that it was unlawful for bishops to change to another location. He then returned to Nazianzus until 384, and from there returned to the monastic life until his death in 390 AD. (Ferguson, locations 4177-4181).

3.3.7.1. After that great council, Emperor Theodosius took him as one of his main advisors in theological matters, and Gregory was thus forced to travel throughout the empire, and even to Arabia and Mesopotamia. Although there was great value in this work, Gregory always saw it as a hindrance, keeping him away from the life of contemplation. - Gonzales, location 3791

3.3.7.2. Finally, being assured that the Nicene cause was firmly established, Gregory returned to the monastic life, hoping that the world would leave him alone. In this he was so successful that the date and circumstances of his death are not known. - Gonzales, location 3793

3.3.7.3. As to Gregory, he returned to his homeland, where he spent his time composing hymns and devoted himself to his pastoral duties. When he heard that Theodosius planned to call another council and ask him to preside over it, he flatly refused. He lived away from all civil and ecclesiastical pomp until he died when he was some sixty years old. - Gonzales, location 3832

3.4. Some important lessons from the life of the Cappadocian Fathers

3.4.1. God often uses lesser known people to affect the people of greater accomplishment.

3.4.1.1. Most people know little of the families of Basil and Gregory of Nyssa, or of Gregory of Nazianzus, both their families' vibrant faith was instrumental in shaping these giants of the church.

3.4.1.2. Most of us are unfamiliar with Macrina, but it was her faith and piety that had the deepest impact on Basil and Gregory of Nyssa, and through them on Gregory on Nazianzus.

3.4.2. God uses different strengths in each of us to combine together to accomplish his work.

3.4.2.1. Each of the Cappadocian Fathers had different gifts, and served different purposes in helping defend Orthodoxy. In fact, while Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory of Nazianzus did not do well as ecclesiastical officials, but they served God's purposes as theologians, thinkers, poets, and writers.
3.4.2.2. To accomplish His work God always uses a variety of people and gifts, and we do best when we serve within the gifts we have been given.

3.4.3. The Cappadocian Fathers did not long for conflict, but were willing to stand firm when needed.

3.4.3.1. We should not like conflict, nor seek it out. Being combative and argumentative is not a fruit of the Spirit! But, there are times when standing for the faith will force us into difficult situations we would otherwise choose to avoid.

3.4.3.2. The times even required both Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory of Nazianzus into roles that they would have preferred to avoid. They simply wanted to spend time in seclusion and contemplation, but the times required them to serve in more public roles. God may do the same thing with us.

4. The Cappadocian Fathers Work on Defining the Trinity and Defeating Arianism

4.1. The Cappadocian Fathers made many important contributions to the life and theology of the Church. Among these are there rules for communal monastic life, ministries to care for the poor and sick, composing poems that serve as hymns in the Eastern Church until today, and works of theology and philosophy. However, the most important and enduring work of the Cappadocian Fathers was their help in further defining the Church’s understanding of the Trinity.

4.2. The problem of terminology in understanding the Trinity

4.2.1. At the council of Nicea, the Greek words ousia and hypostasis had been used interchangeably. The word ousia means “being/that which exists and therefore has substance” while hypostasis means “the essential or basic structure/nature of an entity” (from the words meaning ‘under’ and ‘to stand’)

4.2.2. This caused Arians to claim that Nicene orthodoxy claimed that God was One Being and Three Beings at the same time and the same way. Though this was not what the Nicene fathers had intended, their focus on saying the Son was of the same ousia (homoousia) as the Father gave this claim traction.

4.2.3. This problem was further worsened by differences in Greek and Latin. Latin used substantia for the common “substance” or nature of the Godhead. The etymological equivalent in Greek was hypostasis, a word coming to be commonly used by the Homoiousians for the individual persons in the Godhead. Therefore, the impression was given to the Greeks that the Latins in saying “one substance” meant “one individual” and to the Latins that the Greeks were saying “three substances.” A clarification of the different senses in which the two words were being used facilitated mutual understanding. - Ferguson, location 4024

4.2.4. This problem began to be addressed by Athanasius and Hilary of Potiers who both spoke Greek and Latin fluently. They encouraged acceptance of both homoousios (of the same substance) and homoiousios (of like substance) to refer to the fact that the Son was both One with the Father and distinct.

4.2.5. However, since both terms still employed ousia further clarification was needed - and this task fell to the Cappadocian Fathers.

4.3. The Cappadocian Fathers clarification of the doctrine of the Trinity
4.3.1. The Cappadocians argued that ousia and hypostasis should not be understood as synonyms. Rather, ousia should be used to refer to the One Being of God, while hypostasis should be referred to the Three “Persons”. In short, ousia is used to refer the Oneness of the Trinity, while hypostasis is used to refer to the Threeness of the Trinity.

4.3.1.1. The real innovation in the debate, with revolutionary implications in the history of both philosophy and theology, occurred when the fourth-century Cappadocian theologians (Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Basil of Caesarea) introduced a distinction between ousia and hypostasis, the former referring to Aristotle’s deutera ousia and the latter to his prōtē ousia. “Persons” finally attained their own ontological status as something more than a subcategory of essence. Thus, faced with the fact of the incarnation, Christians could for the first time talk about persons as sharing in a common essence and yet related to each other as distinct individuals with their own properties of personal identity. This breakthrough turned out to have tremendous significance not only for the doctrine of the Trinity but for the concept of human personhood as well. Thus, the formulation of the third-century Latin father Tertullian, “one in essence, three in persons,” was given a deeper conceptual footing. (Horton, page 281)

4.3.1.2. The three great Cappadocian church fathers, Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa, sometimes called “Neonicenes,” by building on the foundation laid by the Homoiousians, became the great theologians of the new synthesis. For them, the Father is the fount and cause of the other two co-equal Persons. They helped establish the terminology of hypostasis for the threeness and ousia for the oneness of the Trinity. Their theological expositions were the basis for the position endorsed by the second ecumenical council, Constantinople 381. - Ferguson, location 4033

4.3.2. The explanation of this understanding was in many ways crystallized in a series of five orations given by Gregory Nazianzus during his brief time in Constantinople. This, along with the ascension of the Orthodox Theodosius to being Emperor changed the tide. Arianism was swept away fully and finally at the Council of Constantinople in 381.

4.3.3. This breakthrough in explaining how God could be One and also Three turned the tide. It undercut the arguments of the Arians in the East and the Sabellians (Modalists) in the West.

4.3.4. In the words of Gregory of Nazianzus, “No sooner do I conceive of the One than I am illumined by the Splendor of the Three; no sooner do I distinguish Them than I am carried back to the One.” Thinking of the one without the three leads to Arianism (or Unitarianism), and thinking of the three without the one leads to tritheism (or polytheism). (Horton, page 282)

5. Council of Constantinople

5.1. The Council of Constantinople met in 381 AD. Essentially it affirmed the Nicene Council and Creed, but made certain clarifications and additions.
5.2. Interestingly, what is commonly referred to as the Nicene Creed and is recited in many Churches today is actually the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed that was modified and approved at the Council of Constantinople. The table below shows both Creeds for comparison.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nicene Creed</th>
<th>Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of all things, visible and invisible;</td>
<td>We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten from the Father, only-begotten, that is, from the essence of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, of one essence with the Father, through Whom all things came into being, things in heaven and things on earth, Who because of us men and because of our salvation came down and became incarnate, becoming man, suffered and rose again on the third day, ascended to the heavens, and will come again to judge the living and the dead;</td>
<td>And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Only-begotten, Begotten of the Father before all ages, Light of Light, True God of True God, Begotten, not made, of one essence with the Father, by Whom all things were made: Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and was made man; And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried; And the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; And ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of the Father; And He shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead, Whose kingdom shall have no end.</td>
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<tr>
<td>And in the Holy Spirit.</td>
<td>And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, and Giver of Life, Who proceedeth from the Father, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, Who spoke by the Prophets; And I believe in One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins. I look for the Resurrection of the dead, And the Life of the age to come. Amen.</td>
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6. Seeds of Future Controversy

6.1. For the time, the advances brought by the Cappadocians brought peace and unity throughout the Church. This was an amazing accomplishment.

6.2. However, there were still seeds of problems which remained and would later blossom into a rupture between the Western and Eastern Church.

6.3. Without going into great detail, the basic problem is that the West and East were wrestling with two different heresies and tendencies. At the risk of oversimplifying, the problems/heresies were:

6.3.1. In the West, the classic heresy has been Sabellianism/Modalism, which posits that God is One, and denies the Trinity. The Father, Son, and Spirit are only modes of Divine revelation. There is thus no real distinction of Persons.

6.3.2. In the East, the classic heresy is Arianism, which posits that the only God is the Father, and that Jesus is the highest created being, and the Spirit is either an impersonal force or some lesser being. There is thus no unity of of the Father, Son, and Spirit.

6.4. The Eastern Church has tended to stress the multiplicity of Persons, and to find the unity in the Person of the Father, who is “the Ground of Deity.” This is why they have held to the affirmation that the Spirit proceeds from the Father alone (and not from the Son.) To the West, this shows a tendency towards Arianism, for it seems to somehow make the Father prior to or somehow “more God” than the Son.

6.5. The Western Church has tended to stress the unity of the Being of God, and to find the Unity of God in the Essence of God's Being rather than in a single Person. To the East this shows a tendency to impertinence, since we can not really know God in His Essence but Only in the Three Persons, and furthermore it shows a tendency to Sabellianism, reducing the Trinity to a Monad of Essence to which the Three Persons are really secondary.

6.6. We will see how this difference grows the doctrine of the Trinity is developed differently in the East (who never really move beyond the work of the Cappadocians) and the West (whose thought is further developed and really based on Augustine’s work on the Trinity in decades after the death of the Cappadocians).

6.7. It will finally come to a head when the West adds a line to the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed at the Council of Toledo in 589. The Latin phrase filioque - and the Son - is added so that in the West the Creed now reads “And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, and Giver of Life, Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son.”

6.8. This alteration is completely rejected by the East, as they believe it undermines the Doctrine of the Trinity and undermines the Father as the ground of Deity and Unity within the Trinity.

6.9. This eventually leads to a formal split between the Romans Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church in 1054 - a split that remains to this very day.

NEXT CLASS: Saturday, October 17 or 31
NEXT TIME: Ambrose, Chrysostom, and Jerome (Chapter 21-23).