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**B1027 – July 4, 2010 – Doctrine Of Hypostatic Union – Part 1**

Last week we said the NT clearly teaches, in a number of ways, the full deity of Jesus Christ. Afterward, someone raised the question, if Jesus is God then why on the cross did Jesus say, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me.” Why, if Jesus is God, did He say, My God. If Jesus has a God then isn’t Jesus less than God? You can sense from the chain of logic there’s a complexity involved. This is not easy stuff. And this person is predicting where we’re headed when we look at the next great event, the Life of the King. The short answer is the doctrine of kenosis, that there is submission inside the Trinity but it’s not a submission of essence, it’s submission of role. So, we’ll deal with the intertrinitarian relationships after the Trinity doctrine, when we get to the doctrine of kenosis. In the meantime, you want to be impressed with how involved the doctrine of the person of Christ is. This is very deep stuff. This is going to challenge our ability to think because it gets right into the center of the Godhead. We’re going to go through this and it will take many weeks. Be patient, because maybe it will sharpen your appreciation of the God whom you worship, because we’re going to take a tour of some 400 years of church history, and show you the blind alleys that godly people tried in their thinking about Jesus Christ, and some of the not-so-godly people. The Church struggled and struggled and struggled, and what I get so tired of hearing when you get in a debate or a discussion is this weak-kneed response that goes like this: the NT in its purity back then didn’t deify Jesus, that’s just an idea the Church added over the centuries, so we’ve got truth mixed together with myth, so we’ve got to shed the myth and when you shed the myth you wind up with this lowly Jewish carpenter. It’s like the apostles were so stupid, but the modern Ph.D’s are so brilliant, that they know a lot more about Jesus. It makes you wonder, how did Jesus, who didn’t have a PhD ever make it. How did Matthew who didn’t have a Ph.D. make it, the twelve apostles, none of them had Ph.D’s. Paul didn’t have one; he

probably had the equivalent of two or three. But how did God ever start the Church with these uneducated people? Actually that's how he could start it. They didn't have their Ph.D's to get in the way and mess things up.

What we're talking about here is going agonizingly through this convoluted hallway and looking at all the doors. Visualize yourself walking down a hallway and you open one door, look in, see what's in there, open another door, look in, and see what's in there. That's what we're going to do with the person of Christ. When we get done I hope to convince you that the only model that we can have in our minds of God is the Trinitarian model. The Church was forced into Trinitarianism by trying to figure out the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. It's not the other way around. The cultist will come to your door and they will send you literature, and you'll get this in the college classroom, that somewhere the Church got the Trinity from Greek philosophy. If there's any place they didn't get it it was Greek philosophy because Greek philosophy was pagan. The Greeks didn't have a concept of the Creator-creature distinction. Everybody knows that! What's this business about getting the Trinity out of the Greek philosophy?

The doctrine of the Trinity was reluctantly, *reluctantly* articulated by the Church to deal with this problem that we're working with. They came to it because they were forced to come to it; they tried every other answer, and all the other answers don't fit what we read about the Light who came into the world. They don't account for all the text. So we're embarking on the formulation of the doctrine of the hypostatic union. It will be a good exercise for some of you who have never been involved in church history because what it will do for you is get you out of this arrogant spirit that we sometimes get ourselves into as Bible church people, that the Holy Spirit only taught our generation. Everybody was stupid until we came along, and we are just so brilliant and nobody else had it straight before we walked the planet and nobody will listen to us so they can't get it straight. What church history teaches us is there were other people that the Holy Spirit did teach, believe it or not! And those people did a lot of very fine work and this doctrine of the Lord Jesus was one of the finest pieces of work the Church has ever done. And it was all done before we had Sunday Schools, church growth movements, PC Bibles and TV; how did they ever do it?

Here's what we're going to do: we're going to summarize what the church went through for almost 600 years trying to get all the Scriptural data into a consistent articulation. The story of that struggle will take us through four great conclusions that were eventually reached concerning the person of Christ. To get to these conclusions, and this is key, the early Christians tried and rejected one false concept of God after another in their search to explain all the NT revelation in a logically consistent manner. That is absolutely key! The church tried many different ideas about God and they wouldn't line up. The stuff the cultists bring to your front door is garbage; its stuff that has been tried 100 other times before and every time people try it, it still doesn't work. Surprise! To argue, as liberals and cultists do, that the Trinity was 'imported' from Greek philosophy by the early Church is quite contrary to historical fact. The Trinity was an original concept coming from within the Church only after all the 'imported' concepts of God from outside the Church failed to correlate with NT revelation.

Here's the deal, here's the first problem. The first big argument that the Church had, the first big issue was: is Christ a divine person, distinct from the Father, or not? The first point is, are the Father and the Son the same person? Are Father and Son two masks worn by the same God, or can we explain the divergence between them as one is God and the other is less than God. The first thing we're struggling with is this problem: how to differentiate the Father from the Son. We all go through this. This is not theory, think about proper prayer. Do we pray to the Father or do we pray to the Son? Most prayers in the Bible are to the Father. The only prayers to the Son are when the Son was present on earth in His physical body. All the others are to the Father. So this is practical, not theoretical.

The first blind alley to describe Christ doctrinally was known as Monarchianism." Look at the chart.

<b>Ancient Heresy</b>	<b>Modern Heresy</b>	<b>Error</b>
Modal Monarchianism	Local Church of Witness Lee	<u>Solitary Monotheism</u> : three person's only masks of appearance
Dynamic Monarchianism	Unitarianism; old liberal theology; later Judaism; Islam	<u>Solitary Monotheism</u> : only the Father is God
Arianism	Jehovah's Witnesses	<u>Pure Ideal</u> called "God" that can only communicate with non-ideal world through an intermediary being; Son less in essence than the Father
Docetism	Extreme Calvinism	<u>Only the Pure Ideal</u> called "God" is real; physical history, including Christ's humanity, not "real" existence; only an illusion
Nestorianism	Neo-Orthodoxy	<u>God limited by His creation</u> : Son's divine nature only loosely associated with his human nature.
Monophysitism	Oriental claims of "incarnations" of Krishna; modern/liberal/pagan theology	<u>God and Creation are basically one</u> (Monism); Son's two natures mixed together into one nature.

Those are the heresies; we're going to go through them one by one. Look at the first two, the first two rows on that chart. Both of them involve what is called Monarchianism. Let me define that word. The stem in that word is Monarch. What's a monarch? He's a solitary ruler, a solitary king who rules over all. So Monarchianism said God is a solitary king over all. God is not a Trinitarian king over all; He's a solitary king over all.

Think about Scripture. Before God created the world, what does Jesus say that the Father did for Him? He loved Me before the foundation of the world. So before creation was there a personal relationship between the Father and the Son? Yes, there was. If God can have a personal relationship within Himself, how does that fail to correlate with these kinds of NT Scriptures? If God is a solitary being what is absent from His existence before creation? Another person. So if I'm a Muslim, or I'm a modern Judaist, and I have a solitary God, is a solitary God personally complete before creation? Ah, interesting, and it's interesting that Islam's divine attribute of love is missing. Allah has many attributes; love is not one of them. Do you see why? What's the object of his love? If he's a solitary being then who's he going to love? There's no other person there to love? To have another person there to love Allah has to create. So is Allah complete without the creation? No, Allah

has to create to have an object of love. In Islam, Allah is dependent on the creation.

It's precisely the Trinity that permits God to have personal relationships within His own being, independent of His creation. A very important point. If you screw this up, you're going to make God dependent on His own creation. Or, you're going to make God a non-person, in His essence, you'll say, He is not personal, it's just an abstract set of qualities. You've got to do one or the other, but it's precisely this multiplicity of persons in God that keeps Him self-contained, self-sufficient, such that He never had to create the universe if He didn't want to. But if you don't have multiple persons within God then He has to create the universe to have an object to love. God doesn't need us, first theological lesson. He doesn't need you, He doesn't need me, and He doesn't need angels. He's got everything He needs in Himself. That's what we mean by self-contained. He doesn't need anything outside of Himself; He's perfectly content with Himself. Jesus says the Father loved Me before the foundation of the world. They talked, they had fellowship, they had complete and full existence. So the Trinity is very important.

Modal Monarchianism says solitary person; that's the doctrine here. This was the presupposition of these two arguments. I hope another thing we learn is that this is going to show what presuppositional thinking is all about, and how important it is to examine your presuppositions; these poor people didn't even realize that they were presupposing this. That's what's so nasty about presuppositions, you catch them like viruses and you don't even know they're there. You say why do I keep thinking this way? You've got to get deep down, and all of a sudden you say oh, that's why I'm thinking this way, deep down in the hardwiring of my thinking I've got some wrong connections. So these guys, when they worked on this doctrine, they realized after a while the Church came to this awareness, something's wrong here, we keep walking into the wrong room as we walk down this hallway. So the room, we'll call it Monarchianism, that's the presupposition that had to be exposed for what it was. It took a long time and a lot of arguments and a lot of dissatisfaction before Christians said that's the wrong door, that's not the Jesus Christ of the Scripture, there's something wrong with this formulation.

Here's what happened. One version of Monarchianism, known as Modal Monarchianism, held that all three persons—Father, Son, and Spirit—were

not really separate persons but only masks that the solitary God put on Himself to meet man. So when God wants to meet man in a certain role, He puts on the Father mask; when He wants to meet man in another role He puts on the Son mask; when He wants to meet man in another role He puts on the Spirit mask. It's the same person appearing under three masks. Anybody immediately see a problem with that? If these are masks that God puts on, who's the real God? If these are masks, they're not the real revelation of who He is. So now you start to make God unknowable.

The Father and Son “were not really separate persons but only appearances of masks that the solitary God put on Himself to meet man. Sabellius, for example,” (this is another word for Modal Monarchianism, for those church history buffs, Sabellianism), taught that ‘He himself is the Father; he himself is the Son; he himself is the Spirit—as I say there are three names in one object....’ God, therefore had three labels, none of which expressed what God was really like. Man saw Him in one situation as the Father, in another situation as the Son, and so forth; but man never saw Him as He really is. Modal Monarchianism tried to maintain the truth of monotheism,” it was good to do that, they tried to protect monotheism, but the attempt was defective because it failed to fit the obvious NT data that speak of the Father and the Son as two distinct persons.”

Think of Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane. Who is He praying to? If Jesus is the mask of God at that moment, who was He talking to? Was he trading out masks, talking to Himself, I'll put on the Son mask, say a few words, take it off and put on the Father mask and hear the words as the Father? Modal Monarchianism can't escape this conclusion, whether in its ancient form or in a modern form” - modern back in the 70's when they originally wrote this, “(like the Local Church movement of Witness Lee).” It's mostly in other parts of the world now, but it picked up a lot of followers of Watchman Nee, and he held to Modal Monarchianism, it's the same old stuff. So Modal Monarchianism, which was the first attempt at this thing, failed. It got refuted by the fact that the NT data clearly shows the Lord Jesus talking to the Father and the Father talking to the Son.

The next one came out, this one known as ‘Dynamic Monarchianism.’ Same model deep underneath; don't lose the forest for the trees, deep down these guys hold the same idea, God is a solitary person, and if He's a solitary

person He can't be the Father and the Son. But what Dynamic Monarchianism did is it made the Father God, and that made Christ what? If the Father is God and there are two distinct people, then Christ can't be God. So they began to attack and undercut the deity of Christ. Watch how they did it. This new version took the NT distinction between the Father and Son seriously, but it failed to correct the same faulty monotheism of Modal Monarchianism and thus incorrectly described Christ. Since God was one in person, the Dynamic Monarchians reasoned, both the Father and the Son could not be this one person. They made the Father the real God, leaving the Son as a mere human vessel of an impersonal divine power. The Dynamic Monarchian Theodotus taught that Jesus, born of a virgin," (watch this now, here's what they did, they accepted the virgin birth), "Jesus was a true man, into whom at His baptism a divine power called Christ entered." See what they did? They took the baptism of Christ and they made that the point at which this infusion of divine power came upon Him, but He was no more than a man. "Although this version of Monarchianism better explained the NT data concerning the Father-Son distinction, it left unexplained other NT data affirming Christ's deity, His role in salvation, and His authority to reveal directly God's Word.

"Interestingly, this second version of Monarchianism corresponds to modern liberal ideas about Jesus." I quote the Roman Catholic theologian here because at this point Protestants and Catholics are agreed. This is one area where Rome and Geneva both got together; we both defend the hypostatic union of Jesus Christ. "The renowned Roman Catholic Christologist, Karl Adam, has commented: 'Modern liberal assessments of Jesus as the great, unique, but purely human means of divine revelation are remarkably close to this heretical dynamism....'" We read Harry Emerson Fosdick's quote; what did he call Jesus? The Master. Any Dynamic Monarchianism could have called Him the Master. What you want to see is that there are not many ideas in the world, they keep repeating, it's the same old garbage, it just revisits, recycled garbage. All you have to do is go through the first tries, don't go through eight tries of it, go through it once, and move on.

These two Monarchian views of Christ failed *because of their common starting assumption of a solitary monotheistic God*. That was their problem; that was their key presupposition that misled them. And after awhile they had trouble explaining the NT data, they couldn't morph the text enough to

get a good fit because they had a wrong presupposition about the nature of God Himself.

Now we're going to move on to the third one. This is the most famous of all, Arianism. Look at the chart. Today Jehovah's Witnesses are just another example of Arianism; it's about the sixth recycle of this heresy. Arianism started out with something else. Notice what they did. Look on the right column. Here's where the Greeks came in, if you want to say somebody imported something into the Church, here's an import. The Greeks held to the ideal world, Plato is an illustration of what they're talking about. Try to draw a perfect triangle. In plain geometry you get the compass and you work it out, there are rules how to create a triangle on a piece of paper. Can you ever create a perfect triangle on a piece of paper? No, because you've got the graphite from your pencil, it doesn't always go in a straight line, the paper is imperfect; if you take the finest drawing of a triangle and look at it under a magnifying glass it looks horrible. So you can never create a perfect triangle. Yet we all know what a triangle is. We all know when it's not a triangle, but try to make the perfect triangle. You just can't ever do it. So here's what the Greeks said: the real triangle doesn't exist in the physical world, it only exists in the mental world. That was the world of the ideal.

So because they wanted to create this ideal, they had to have the ideal because they realized if you don't have an ideal where do you get your categories from? Where do you get logic from? You've got to have an absolute. So they projected a world of absolute principles. It was just a mental world, a world of ideas. That was what the Greeks generated because they truly recognized something; if you don't have something like that everything becomes relative. This is what happens in our society today. We don't have any basis for what right and wrong is. And Plato would have agreed. We disagree with Plato on where these absolutes are located but he would have agreed with us, you cannot have right and wrong if there's no absolute standard - somewhere to which everybody is committed. So they were right in seeing a need for absolutes. The problem they saw was that in this world you can't ever get absolutes, you can't make perfect triangles, the idea doesn't exist in this world. So they separated the ideal from this world and put it in a mental world. On the right column under Arianism, the "Pure Ideal called God." Now here's what happened, here's the import happening, see if you catch it. They took this Greek bifurcation between the ideal and our world



and it looked so great, it seemed to explain things so nicely, and they said gee, this is a great tool for studying the Bible. So they started doing this, they moved over here and said now we're going to re-label it. So they took Greek ideas and put Christian terms on them. They said we'll just call the ideal world God. What happens when you do something like that? This is a fatal error. What's the content of G-o-d? It's this pre-understanding of the Greeks; in other words, all they have done is re-label their own mental world G-O-D. What has happened to the content of the meaning of the word "God?" It's no longer Biblical, you can talk God but the content of the word "God" now is this ideal world that is nothing more than my mental projections or those of the Greek philosophers. It's not the Biblical God.

So they misidentified God and once they did that they were in trouble again, because where did Jesus walk and talk? In this world or the ideal world? This world. Uh-oh, now if I'm a Greek and I don't believe that you can ever get the ideal into this world, what happens to the nature of the Lord Jesus Christ? Can he be God? He can't be God; He could be close to God. There are better triangles and there can be worse triangles, and Jesus was a pretty good triangle, but He wasn't the ideal triangle because the ideal triangle doesn't exist in this world. So see what happens, here we go; we thought we had this nice cool idea and it seemed to solve everything. We imported it from Greek Philosophy, baptized it with Christian vocabulary, real smooth. The Church has done this again and again. You can't be too picky about the dangers of importing this crud in. That's why Paul said "Beware of" what in Col. 2:8, "Beware of philosophy and vain deceit." Paul knew this. He had studied under the top people of his day. Paul knew Aristotle, Paul probably read it when he was eleven, he didn't have TV, had to have something else to do. He could read Plato and Aristotle when he was a kid. He was clued in to this kind of thing.

So the question now with Arianism; whereas before it was number one, is the Father distinct from the Son? Now we come to the second issue. We know the Father is distinct from the Son, we've solved that, but what we want to do now is how and in what way is the Son subordinate to the Father? Clearly Jesus obeys the Father. Jesus said everything the Father says I do. Now that we've distinguished the two, how are we going to handle this subordination without making the subordination an inferiority? By the way, watch carefully what's happening here, because when we get done with this

you're going to say it's all heavy theory. We're going to show you something. Modern feminism is dealing with this problem. There's a Biblical role of women, in the Scripture they're supposed to be subordinate. But this is taken to be as an affront to the women because it makes women less than men in essence. If that argument holds, let's move that argument over to the Father and Son and see what happens. If subordination of the Son to the Father means subordination of essence, like they're saying, then Jesus is inferior to God and then Jesus is something less than God.

Feminists can't work with the Trinity, and I was reminded of this when Gwen Shamblin came out with her diet book a number of years ago. And you read this thing and it has some heavy feminism in it and someone I knew was interested in the diet and she was a Christian. So it's okay, she's a Christian, right, we'll do the Christian diet thing. And would you believe this feminist dietician is having problems with the doctrine of the Trinity? Fortunately, the woman who gave me the book was the one pointing out something's wrong here. So she didn't buy it. Maybe the diet works, I don't know, we're just saying that the woman who wrote the book had a concept of subordination that always involved essence, and she was saying I'm really struggling with this doctrine, we've got to rethink this one. Yea, sure, it's only the hub of the Christian faith, go ahead and re-think it, why don't you destroy the foundation of Christianity too. It's all interconnected; this is not theory.

Let's look at some of these passages because ultimately the doctrine has to be drawn from the text, not the other way around. You can come up with a lot of neat ideas, but does it fit the text of what God has told us in His Word? Is Christ's subordination to the Father one of essence, Christ is inferior to the Father, or is it of role? That's the question. NT references such as Matt 19:17; Mark 13:21; Luke 18:19; John 14:28; 1 Cor 11:3; 15:28. Turn to Matt 19:17. Here's an interesting dialogue. In verse 16 a guy comes to Jesus and said, "Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?" Watch the response. Jesus is so quick, He cuts right to the chase. If we could just master the technique that Christ used. He was so in tune with the Father. Watch it. "Why are you asking Me about what is good? There is only One who is good;" did you catch it? What is Jesus asking this guy? It's interesting, a guy asks Jesus how to get eternal life and Jesus turns around and asks him a question. What can we learn from that? We don't always answer someone's question first. Maybe we ask them a question, get them to think a little bit.

What's Jesus asking the guy this question for? Are you saying I'm God? Yes, no. There's a difference but there's also a non-difference.

Turn to John 14:28, "You heard that I said to you, 'I go away, and I will come to you.' If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced because I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I." So here we clearly have subordination. In v 31 we clearly have subordination. But is it of essence or role? Why does Jesus make these differences? Why doesn't He just say, I'm God? We've shown some passages where that identification is made, Titus 2:13 is one of them. Very clearly Jesus is called God, but generally He doesn't, generally there's this difference. So the pattern argues that there is some sort of subordination of the Son to the Father. Other NT data discussed a few weeks ago, however, equally demand full deity for the Son. Remember, we saw dual streams of revelation, both God and man?

Now we want to look at Arianism because this was a very, very serious, serious heresy in church history. "The Arian heresy, the most popular answer to the dilemma, dominated the Church for a limited period." It actually was the majority view, by the way. The Arians won the day; they kicked out the theologians who didn't go along with this. "Arians taught that Christ's subordination to the Father was a subordination of essence. Christ was made of like substance (Greek: *homoiousion*) as the Father but not the same substance (*homoousion*) as the Father." Notice these two Greek words; what do you notice in those two Greek words that's different? They look almost alike except for one letter, the little letter "i". In the Greek that's iota. Did you ever hear the expression, it doesn't matter one iota? Do you know where that came from? The Arian controversy. Now you see how these things that have slipped into our language. Do you know who started that? It was Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, and he had some little snotty footnote in this history book, he says ha-ha, the Christians fighting about over one iota. So that expression, "it doesn't matter one iota" is absolutely foolish. It does matter a lot - that one iota, the difference it makes is whether Jesus is God or not. So let's look.

"The Arians, however, like the Monarchians before them, had imported an outside, unbiblical idea of God into the discussion. They relied upon Platonism in which 'God' was the name for pure essence, above and separate from the world. In Platonic tradition this one 'God' could communicate with

the world only through some intermediary being, a half-god/half-man, called the logos (unfortunately, the very word used in John 1 to describe Christ). When Arians borrowed this Platonic concept of God, (notice that, who's doing the borrowing? It's not the orthodox Christians borrowing from Plato, it's the heretics that are doing it, and it's precisely the opposite of what you learn in history class. It's the heretics that are importing this stuff into the church.) and used the intermediary being idea to solve the subordination dilemma," making Jesus Christ a semi-God, semi-man, "they naturally identified Christ the Son as this intermediary being, making Him 'a divine,' but not in the true Biblical sense."

"By ignoring the NT data supporting Christ's full deity and, therefore, His role in revelation and salvation, Arians were led by their error into a serious problem. Watch this, because you start down what appear to be primrose paths but after awhile you find out they're not so primrose. "They so separated God the Father in the Ideal world from God the Son" (by the way, think how close this comes in our thought patterns, haven't you had this thought many times in your Christian life, well, God really isn't here, He doesn't walk around the crud I walk around in, it's very nice to have these promises, but boy He isn't here to see this mess. See how easy it is to slip into this stuff.) Who spoke in this world that neither the Son nor mankind who listened to Him could really 'know' God." Now here's a quote, this is Arius himself: "God Himself, then, in His own nature, ineffable, unknowable by all men. Equal of like Himself He alone has none, or one in glory.... The Unbegun" look at this, "the Unbegun," that means He's the eternal one, "made the Son a beginning of things originated; and advanced Him as a Son to Himself by adoption." What does that sound like? That God the Father created the Son. "He has nothing proper to God in substance." Look at that one, that's talking about the Son. The Son "has nothing proper to God in substance. For He is not equal, no, nor one in essence with Him.... God is ineffable, unknowable, to His Son." ...to HIS SON, see where they were driven, "For He is to Himself what He is, that is, unspeakable. So that nothing which is called comprehensible does the Son know to speak about; for it is impossible for Him to investigate the Father, Who is by Himself. For the Son does not know His own essence, for being Son, He really existed, at the will of the Father." There's so much language to carry through this stuff. This is hard stuff; you have to read this over 20 times before it clicks.

So they denied Christ's full deity and what this led the Arians into was the conclusion that God was unknowable, revelation about God was nothing more than a relative approximation, and salvation being impossible from Christ. The anti-Arians," (now watch what happens), are the guys that were the minority crowd, they had to get up and they had to argue their way out of the penalty box. Remember the Arians won, they won the vote, so the orthodox guys were the small party here. But here's what they did to win the day. Watch their argument. This finally the Church, the Holy Spirit bore witness that this was Scriptural reasoning. "The anti-Arians who insisted on the sharp Creator-creature distinction without any such 'intermediary' being, asked why are you worshipping Jesus Christ if Jesus Christ isn't full deity? Who said to you, abandon the worship of the created universe except for Jesus, you should pick up again and worship something that was created and made?" Do you see the argument?

I've shown this 150 times. What does it all boil down to? The Creator-creature distinction. You've got to have that distinction. This is where the anti-Arians hung them up, they said okay guys, if you want to be so smart, if you want to make Jesus Christ less than God on the Creator-creature distinction, that makes Jesus Christ a creature, not the Creator; now we accuse you of blasphemy, because you're saying that I am supposed to worship Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ can't be the Creator, therefore your telling me to worship a creature. How do you defeat that logic? What is that logic coming up in tension against? Do you feel the tension coming up? Something's wrong here, and what is wrong is that substrata, that presupposition that came in, that "Ideal," they mislabeled the Ideal and called it God. They didn't inform themselves from the Scripture; they informed themselves from Plato and Aristotle.

So, here's the argument, they kept on pressing the point. "They furthered argued that if the semi-divine Logos/Christ were not fully God, he had to be mutable." What does mutable mean? He was changing. Like we all are. We're in a world of flux; He changes. So here's one of their arguments, "How can he who beholds the mutable" the changing "think that he is beholding the immutable" the unchanging. In other words, how do you see God's face looking at Jesus? If Jesus is a creature and He's subject to this world and He's changing all the time and I go to worship Him, I can't be worshipping God then, can I? I'm looking at the wrong object, because you've turned Christ

into a creature. Now you're making me worship a creature and telling me I can see God's face in the creature. Impossible!

Then they had a third argument. "The anti-Arians, led by Athanasius," there's the hero; he was the guy that stood up and took the heat. Athanasius got up, he was a deacon in Alexandria, and his famous saying was, here's another key sentence, "if Jesus be not God, then Christians are not saved." Why? What's eternal life? To know Him. If Jesus isn't God we don't know God, we know a creature named Jesus. We don't have eternal life then. See, that's the same thing, the Jehovah Witnesses still have a problem with today. Karl Adams summarizes the debate: "The dogmatic result of the Arian disputes could be summarized thus: Christ is not a god of secondary order.... He is God Himself.... This was the basis of the formulation 'God-man'.... What Christ does, thinks, utters, works, has absolute validity. [*All Christianity is thereby exalted above the mere human and historical condition.*]"

The next quote comes out of the Nicene Creed. Here's the original version of the Nicene Creed, not the one that we have in the hymn book is somewhat edited, what did we notice when we looked at it? Look at the original version. Keep in mind, Athanasius is going at it with Arius and they're fighting, they're arguing and they're voting in Church Councils and they're maneuvering for positions, they've got their spin doctors out, and they're going through all this argument. And finally the Church says you know, the Spirit within us testifies that Athanasius must be right. If Jesus Christ is not God we know not God, we are not saved, so therefore they said we've got to go back to the Apostle's Creed and address this so this doesn't happen again. We've had too much church discord over this point. So to get the unity of the faith, they went back and they touched up the creed. They said we're going to put a lid on this danger. We've been through the history, now read this Nicene Creed and see if it doesn't make sense to you.

"We believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of all things visible and invisible;" why'd they put that in there? Because the intermediary beings, the invisible angels. God is the Creator of all things; what does that sentence doing to the Creator/creature distinction? Strengthens it. "We believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of ALL things, visible and invisible." That wasn't in the Apostle's Creed. There was a hole in there; the Arians could say

oh yea, I believe in God the Father. They recited the Apostle's Creed; the Creed didn't filter them out. So the Church made the mesh on the filter a little finer. Now we're going to strain out the Arians. "...Creator of all things visible and invisible, and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, only begotten of the Father," now look, "that is, *of the substance of the Father, God of God, begotten, not made, being of the same substance with the Father....* [Emphasis supplied.]" See all that vocabulary packed into that creed, we don't even recite the creed any more in our churches. What a sad day.

In this creed the Church used every vocabulary word it could find to deny the Arian heresy that Jesus' subordination to the Father was one of essence. The Son was of the same essence (*homoousion*) as the Father' He was not merely of like essence (*homoiousion*). The iota did make a difference.

I hope this gives you a flavor for the fact of how to appreciate that a lot of godly men and women had to pray this thing through, had to argue this thing through, had to go back to Scripture and think this thing through until we could get it straight. Without the doctrine of Christ's person pure we cannot preach a pure gospel. The whole issue of salvation is contingent on Christ being who He is.

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