



My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This week, we'll begin looking at the section on the second person of the Blessed Trinity – the Son. Much discussion (dare I say, argument) went into this section, as they tried to deal with the understanding that God is one, yet Jesus is Lord. As I mentioned a few weeks ago, this gave rise to two basic questions: How can God be one yet three (Father, Son and Holy Spirit)? And, how can Jesus be two, yet one (God and man)? This section of the Nicene Creed shows us the fruit of these discussions.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages.  
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,  
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;  
through him all things were made.

The Lord Jesus is one. This is important, because there were questions about how Jesus could be divine and human. One solution was to say that there was the Divine Christ, which united Itself to the human Jesus – two persons who were united, as in a marriage. The problem is that if this is so we are not saved of our sins. One of the fathers of the Church (I can't remember who right now) famously said, "What is not assumed is not redeemed." If Jesus Christ was divided into two persons, the Divine never got "low enough" to take on our humanity, and so we are not saved. The Council of Ephesus (431) put forth the dogma that there is only one Divine Person in Christ, (not two persons – divine and human).

Jesus is "the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages." The language is hard – "begotten," "born of." We have to remember that we are talking of divine mysteries, not human happenings. "Only Begotten" is speaking of relationship – that He is Son of God by nature, not by divine decree (we are *made* sons and daughters of God by grace, not by nature). He came forth (born) from the Father, but not in time – before all ages. He always existed. There never was a time when He was not.

"God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God." This counters the heretic Arius' claim that Jesus was a demi-god, not fully God. These words emphasize that Jesus *is* true God, from the true God. He is fully divine; not partially God. "Begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father" tells us that Jesus is not part of creation – He wasn't *made* by the Father, but eternally begotten. This is complicated, but, to simplify, it tells us there is a relationship of persons between Father and Son – they are not "its" but persons. They are not the same person, but distinct from each other, though the same God (hence, consubstantial – of the same substance or nature). The Father is the Begetter, the Son is Begotten, but from all eternity, so, as I said earlier, there was never a time when He was not.

The last line we'll look at today: "through him all things were made." The Father creates all things, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit. They all are active in creation. This is important, for instance, when people try to "de-male" the Trinity, they sometimes say: "The Creator, the Redeemer, and the Sanctifier." One problem with this is that you're only saying "God, God, and God," because The Father, Son and Holy Spirit ALL are active in creation, redemption and sanctification. None of them are "lone-rangers" – they all work together. (Another problem with this, is that it reduces the Persons of the Trinity to their actions – doing, not being.)

I've tried to simplify some of our systematic theology so it will be better understood, but when it comes down to it, we are delving into mystery. Remember that mystery in the Christian sense doesn't mean a problem to figure out, nor something beyond us that we will never be able to understand. Rather it is like a man saying his wife is a mystery (in the best possible sense) – he really does know her, but there is *more* he doesn't know than he knows. He will have to be learning about her all throughout the marriage. This mystery is a delight, since we are called to grow in our knowledge and relationship with God, but will never totally grasp Him.