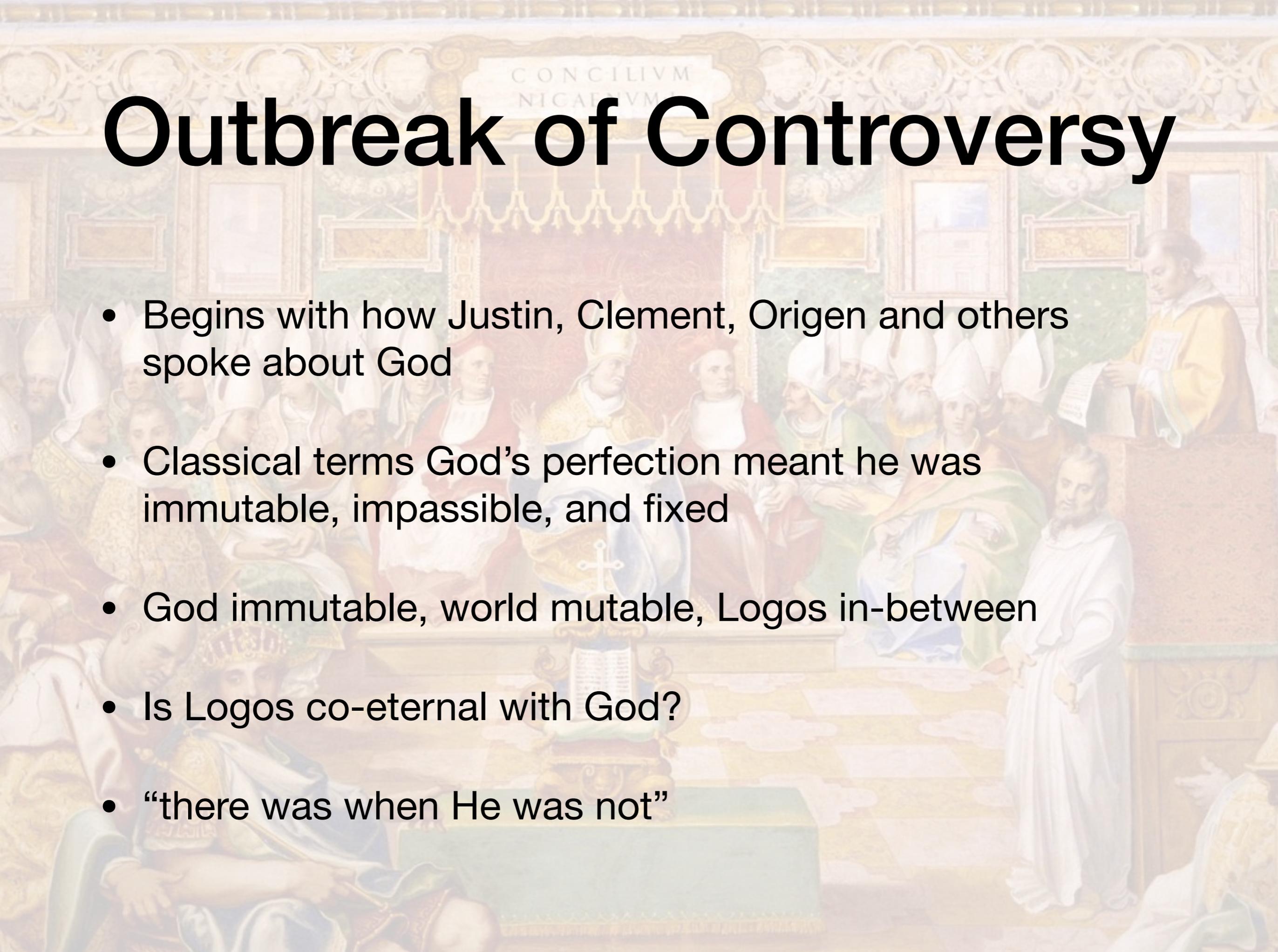


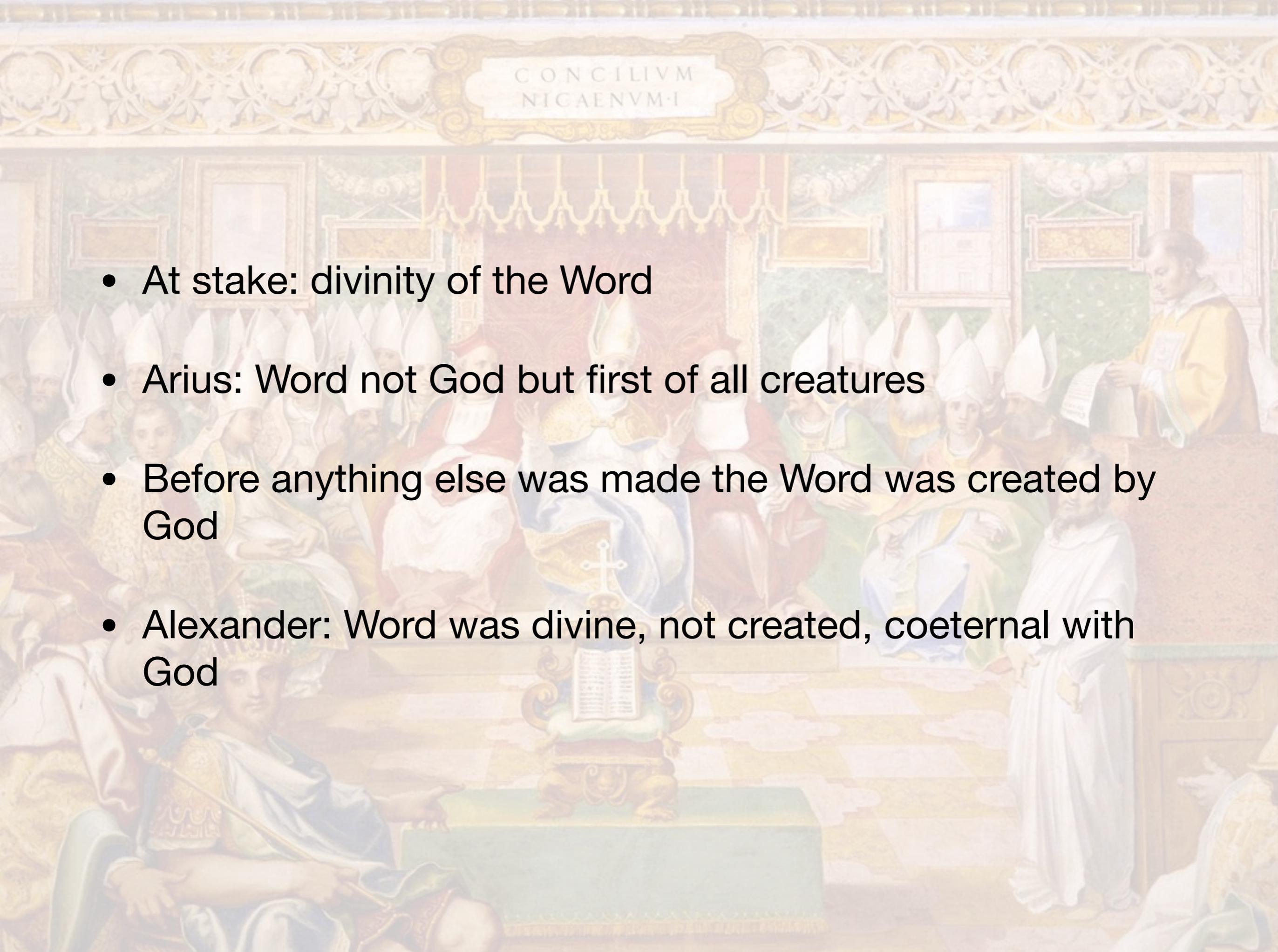
# Arian Controversy & Council of Nicea

- Theological argument changed — appeal to the state
- Stable state needed theological agreement
- Politics and intrigue takes place of debate
- Arian controversy starts with a priest and a bishop

# Outbreak of Controversy



- Begins with how Justin, Clement, Origen and others spoke about God
- Classical terms God's perfection meant he was immutable, impassible, and fixed
- God immutable, world mutable, Logos in-between
- Is Logos co-eternal with God?
- "there was when He was not"



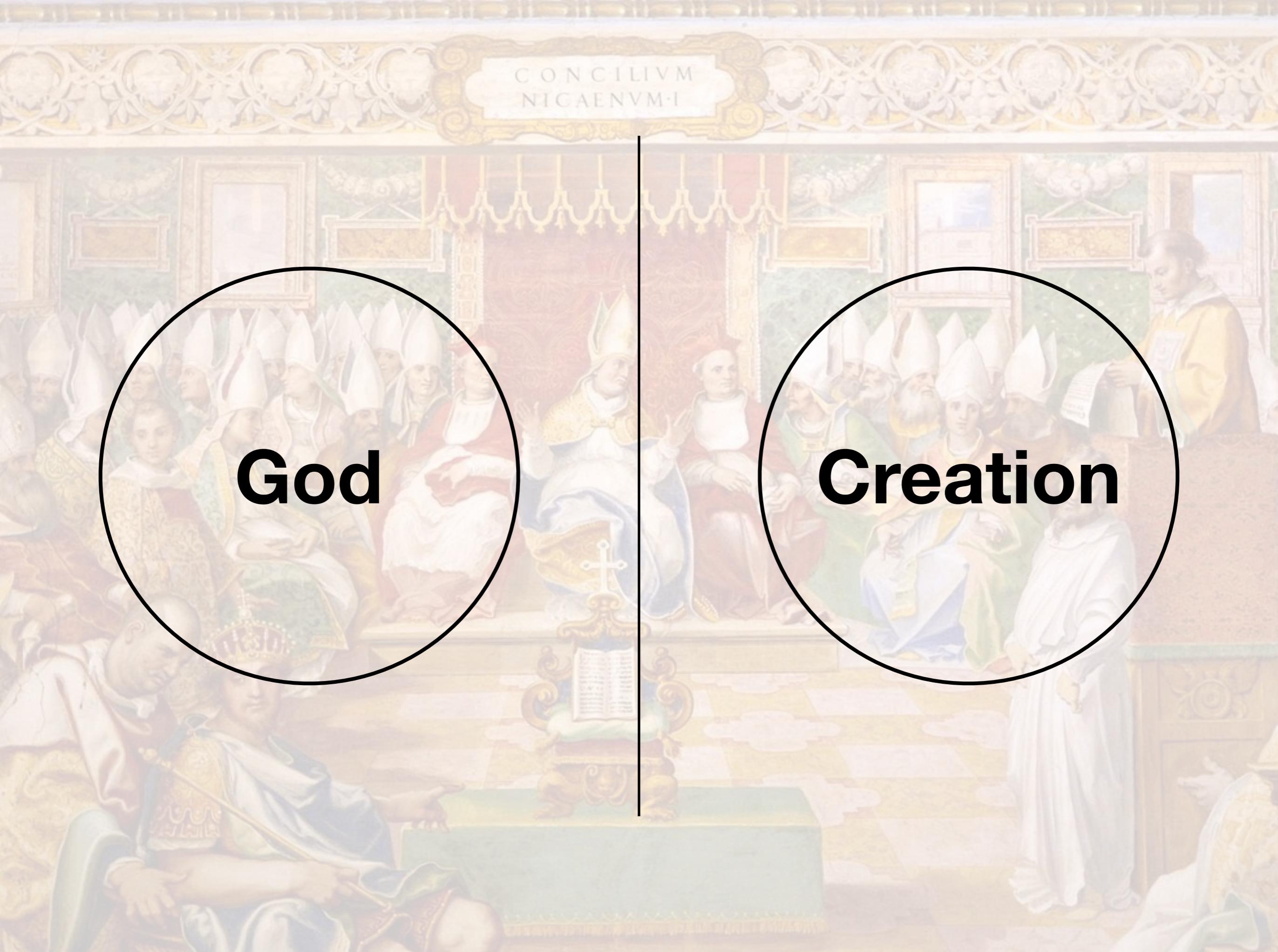
CONCILIUM  
NICAENVM·I

- At stake: divinity of the Word
- Arius: Word not God but first of all creatures
- Before anything else was made the Word was created by God
- Alexander: Word was divine, not created, coeternal with God

CONCILIUM  
NICAENVM·I

**God**

**Creation**



CONCILIUM  
NICAENVM·I

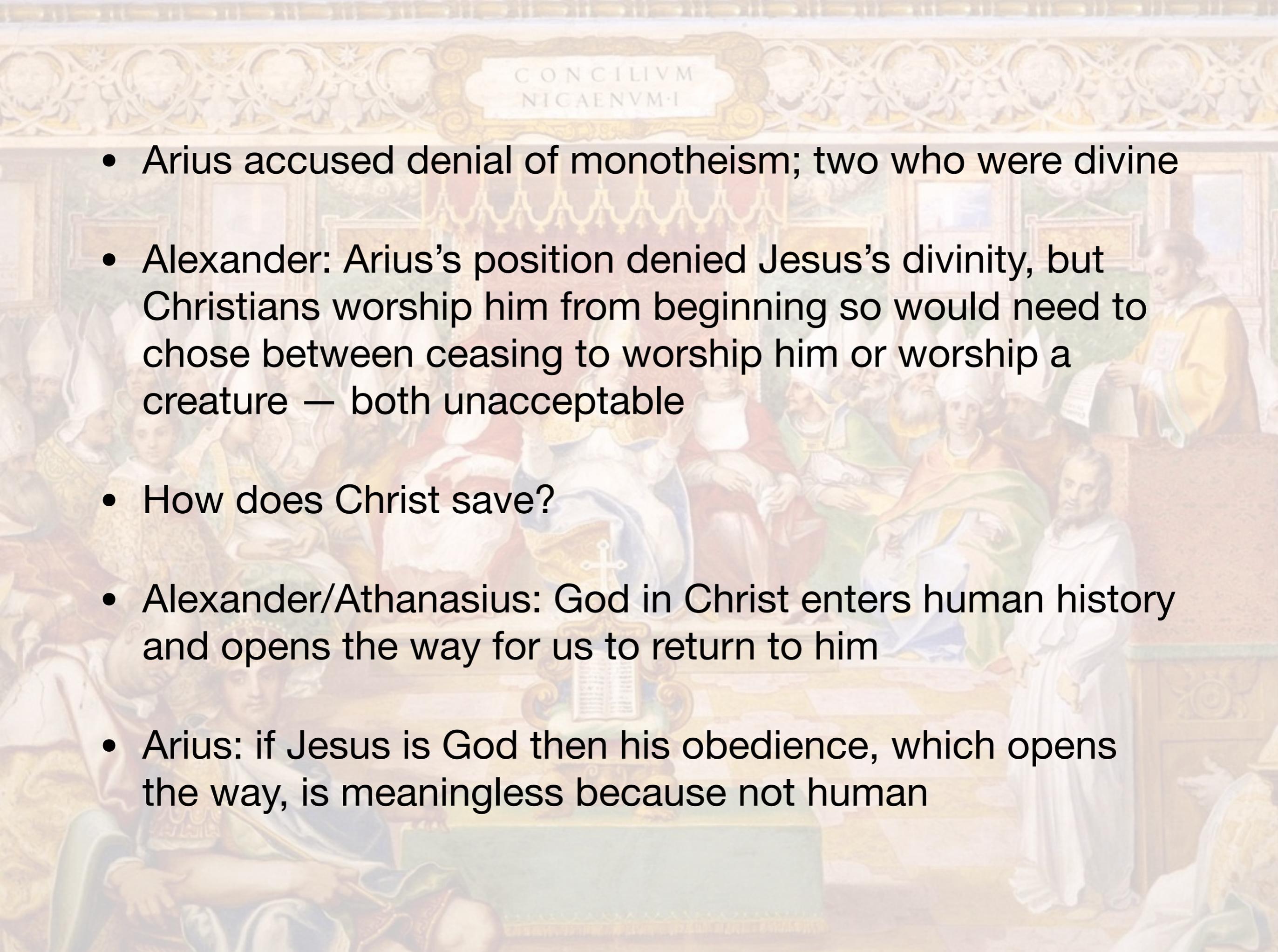
**God**

**Word &  
Creation**

CONCILIUM  
NICAENVM·I

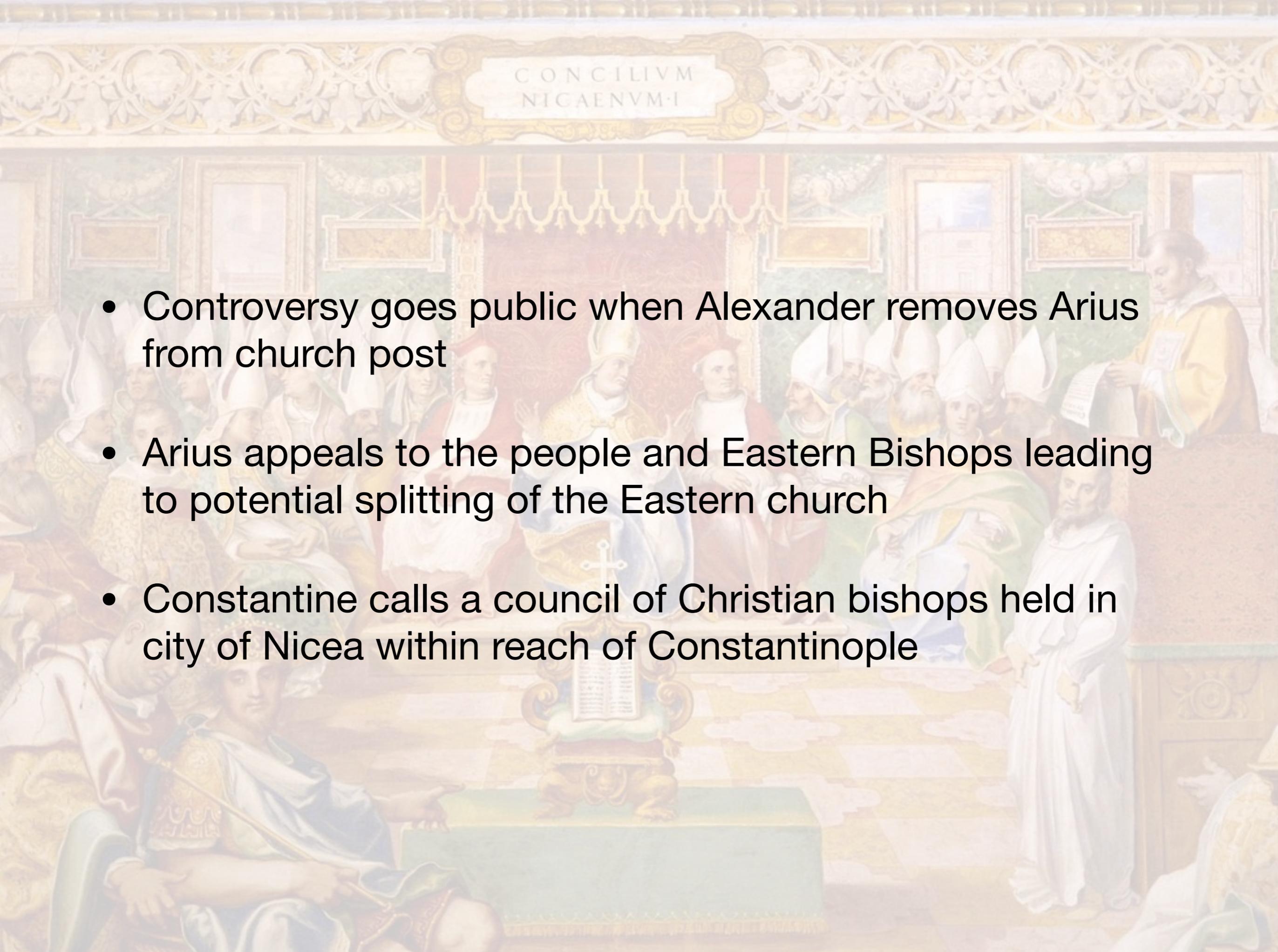
**God &  
Word**

**Creation**



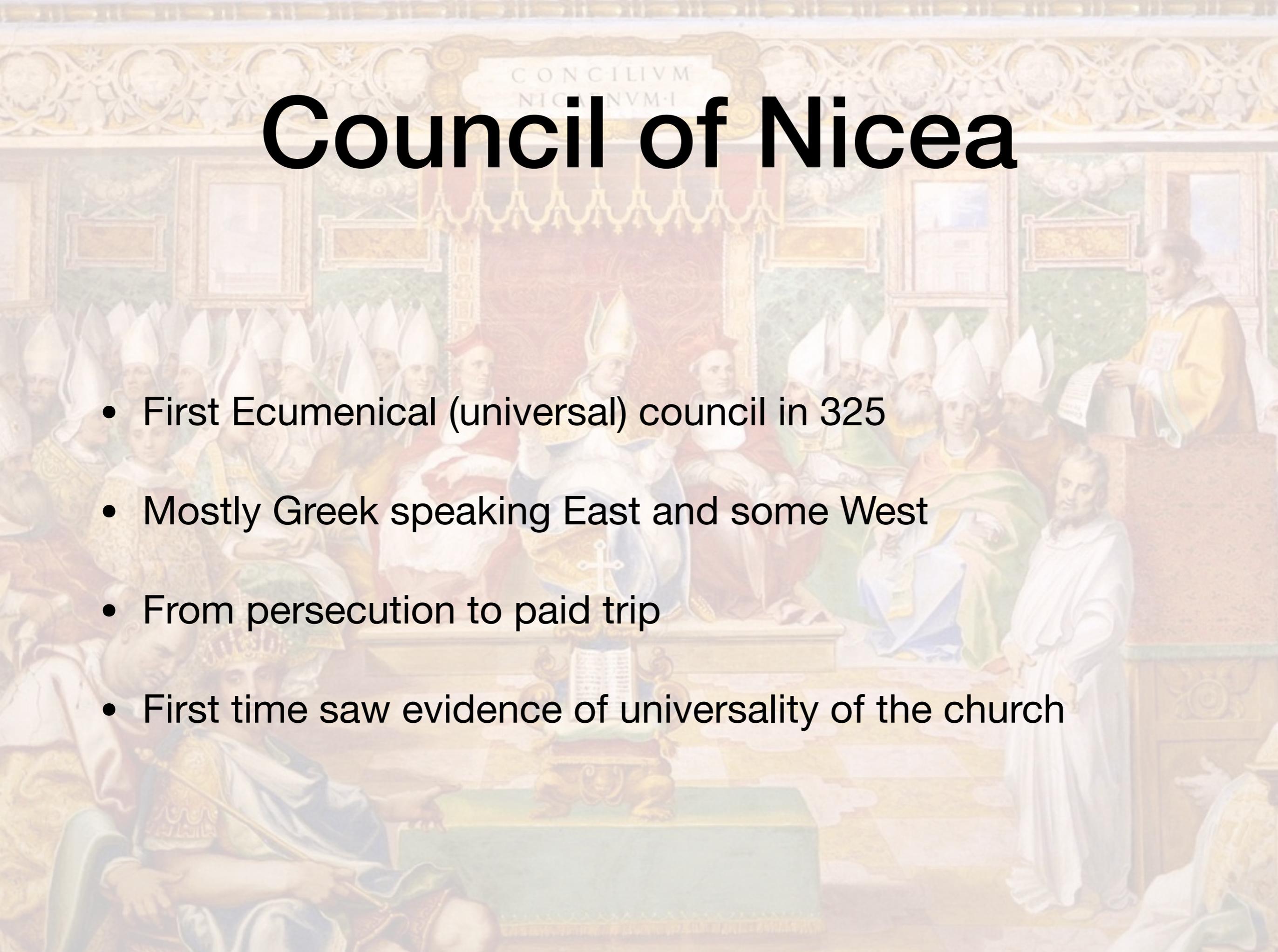
CONCILIUM  
NICAENVM I

- Arius accused denial of monotheism; two who were divine
- Alexander: Arius's position denied Jesus's divinity, but Christians worship him from beginning so would need to chose between ceasing to worship him or worship a creature — both unacceptable
- How does Christ save?
- Alexander/Athanasius: God in Christ enters human history and opens the way for us to return to him
- Arius: if Jesus is God then his obedience, which opens the way, is meaningless because not human



CONCILIUM  
NICAENVM I

- Controversy goes public when Alexander removes Arius from church post
- Arius appeals to the people and Eastern Bishops leading to potential splitting of the Eastern church
- Constantine calls a council of Christian bishops held in city of Nicea within reach of Constantinople



# Council of Nicea

- First Ecumenical (universal) council in 325
- Mostly Greek speaking East and some West
- From persecution to paid trip
- First time saw evidence of universality of the church

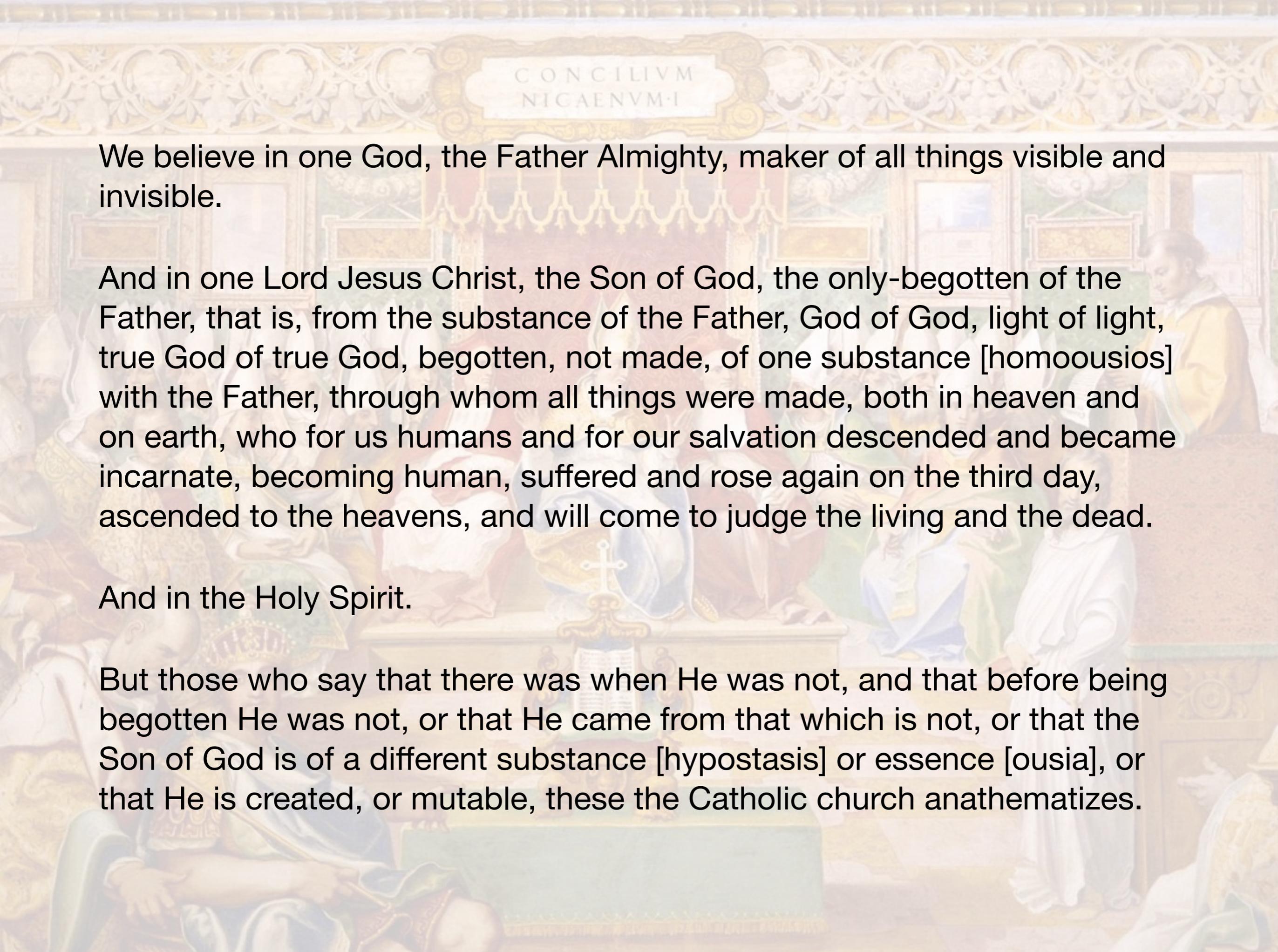


CONCILIUM  
NICAENVM I

“There were gathered the most distinguished ministers of God, from the many churches in Europe, Libya and Asia. A single house of prayer, as if enlarged by God, sheltered Syrians and Cilicians, Phoenicians and Arabs, delegates from Palestine and from Egypt, Thebans and Libyans, together with those from Mesopotamia. There was also a Persian bishop, and a Scythian was not lacking. Pontus, Galatia, Pamphylia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Phrygia sent their most outstanding bishops, jointly with those from the remotest areas of Thrace, Macedonia, Achaia, and Epirus. Even from Spain, there was a man of great fame who sat as a member of the great assembly. The bishop of the Imperial City could not attend due to his advanced age; but he was represented by his presbyters. Constantine is the first ruler of all time to have gathered such a garland in the bond of peace, and to have presented it to his Saviour as an offering of gratitude for the victories he had won over all his enemies.” (Life of Constantine by Eusebius)

CONCILIUM  
NICAENVM I

- Settling issue of Arianism difficult because of many different groups:
- Convinced Arians — Eusebuis of Nicomedia (not historian)
- Those opposed to Arians — Alexander of Alexandria
- Western Bishops (Latin) “three persons one substance”
- Father and Son same — *patripassianism*
- Majority wanted compromise for unity



CONCILIUM  
NICAENVM I

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible.

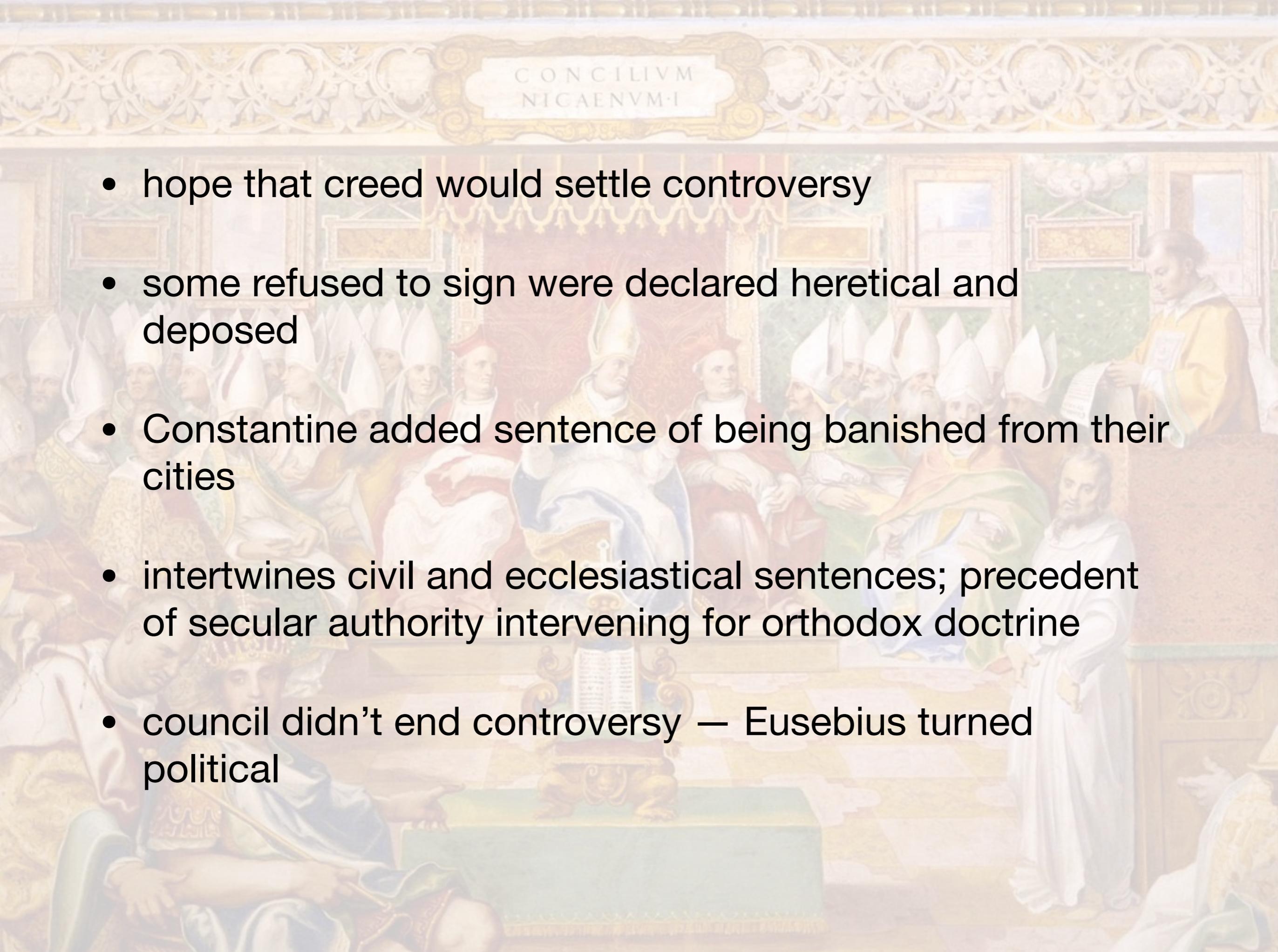
And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten of the Father, that is, from the substance of the Father, God of God, light of light, true God of true God, begotten, not made, of one substance [homoousios] with the Father, through whom all things were made, both in heaven and on earth, who for us humans and for our salvation descended and became incarnate, becoming human, suffered and rose again on the third day, ascended to the heavens, and will come to judge the living and the dead.

And in the Holy Spirit.

But those who say that there was when He was not, and that before being begotten He was not, or that He came from that which is not, or that the Son of God is of a different substance [hypostasis] or essence [ousia], or that He is created, or mutable, these the Catholic church anathematizes.

CONCILIUM  
NICAENVM I

- main objective to clarify Son/Word/Logos not a creature less than Father
- Son is begotten not made so not part of visible/invisible
- condemns those who say Son came out of nothing, i.e. creation
- key word *homoousios* “of the same substance” — Son as divine as Father
- grounds for resistance because it makes Son undistinguished from Father



CONCILIUM  
NICAENVM I

- hope that creed would settle controversy
- some refused to sign were declared heretical and deposed
- Constantine added sentence of being banished from their cities
- intertwines civil and ecclesiastical sentences; precedent of secular authority intervening for orthodox doctrine
- council didn't end controversy — Eusebius turned political

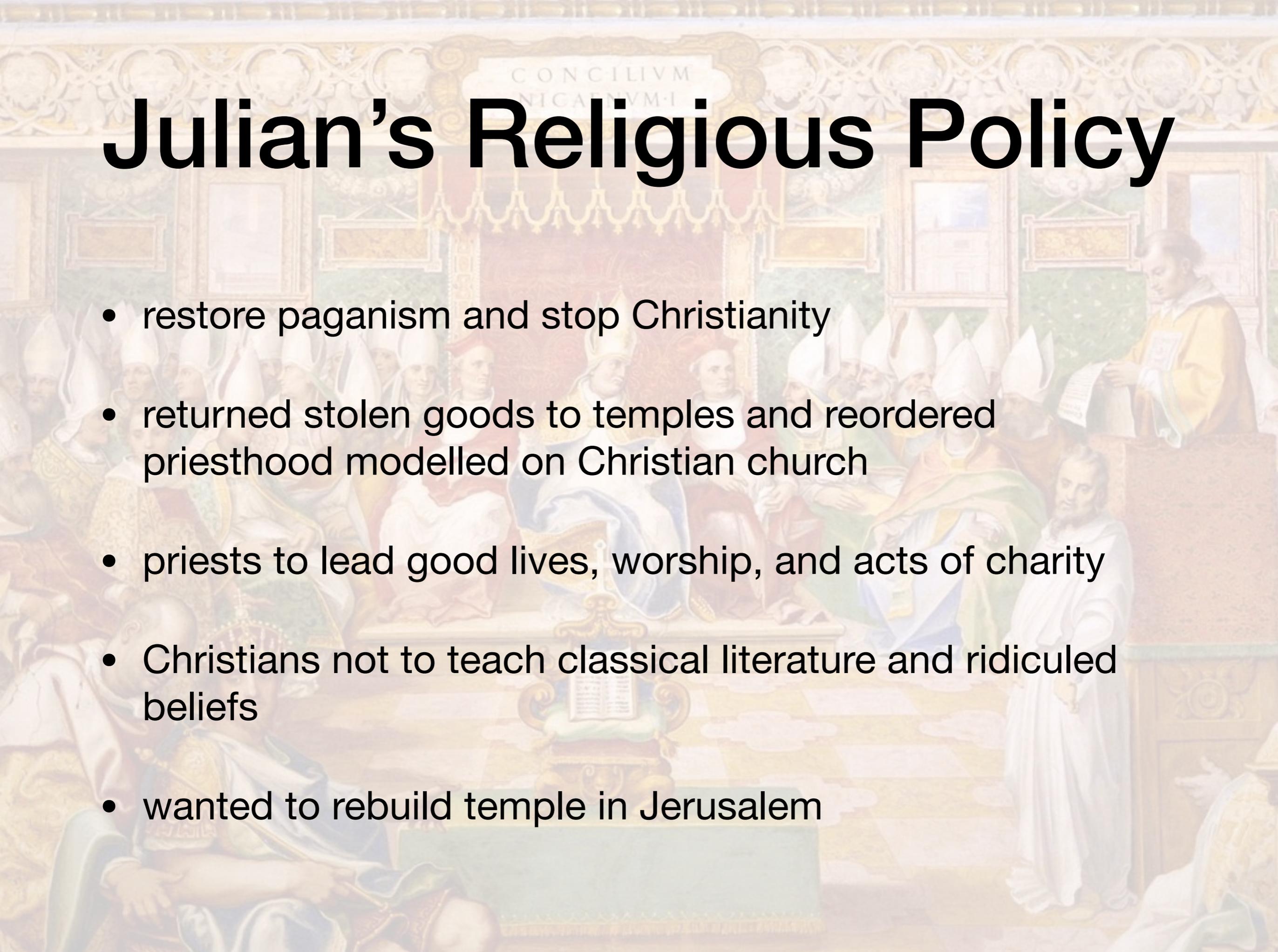
CONCILIUM  
NICAENVM·I

- Constantine persuaded to side with Arius
- Alexander dies in 328 succeeded by Athanasius
- Nicean bishops exiled
- Constantine takes baptism on deathbed performed by Eusebius
- Succession of emperors impacts Nicean or Arian favour
- Until Julian the Apostate

# Pagan Reaction: Julian the Apostate

- Julian's family killed for politics but was spared because he was only 6 years old
- Julian given Christian rites growing up but interested in classical philosophy
- In Athens enamoured with ancient mystery religions
- Made caesar — junior emperor — ruling Gaul well
- Became Augustus and ruler of whole empire 361

# Julian's Religious Policy



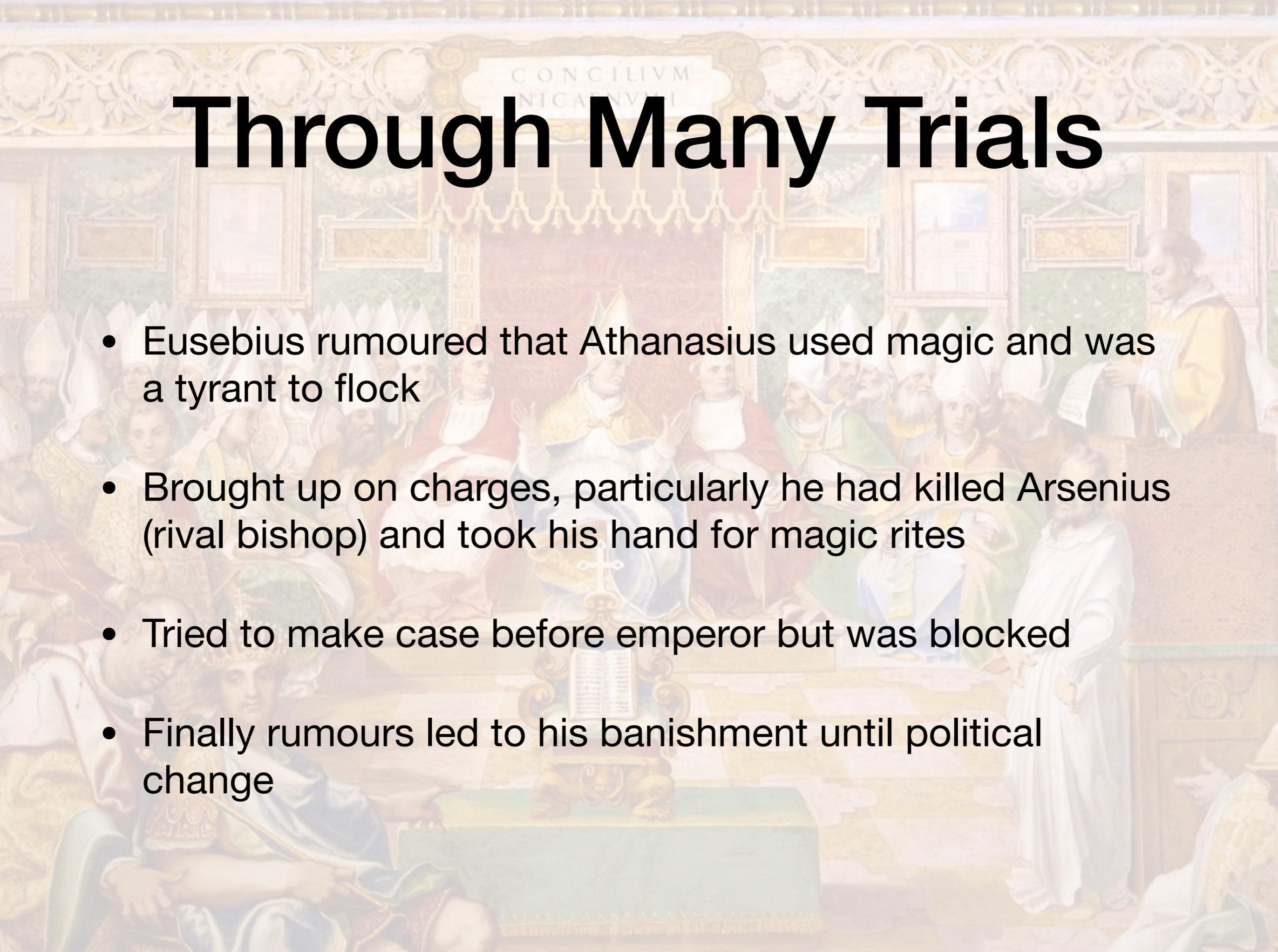
- restore paganism and stop Christianity
- returned stolen goods to temples and reordered priesthood modelled on Christian church
- priests to lead good lives, worship, and acts of charity
- Christians not to teach classical literature and ridiculed beliefs
- wanted to rebuild temple in Jerusalem

# Athanasius of Alexandria

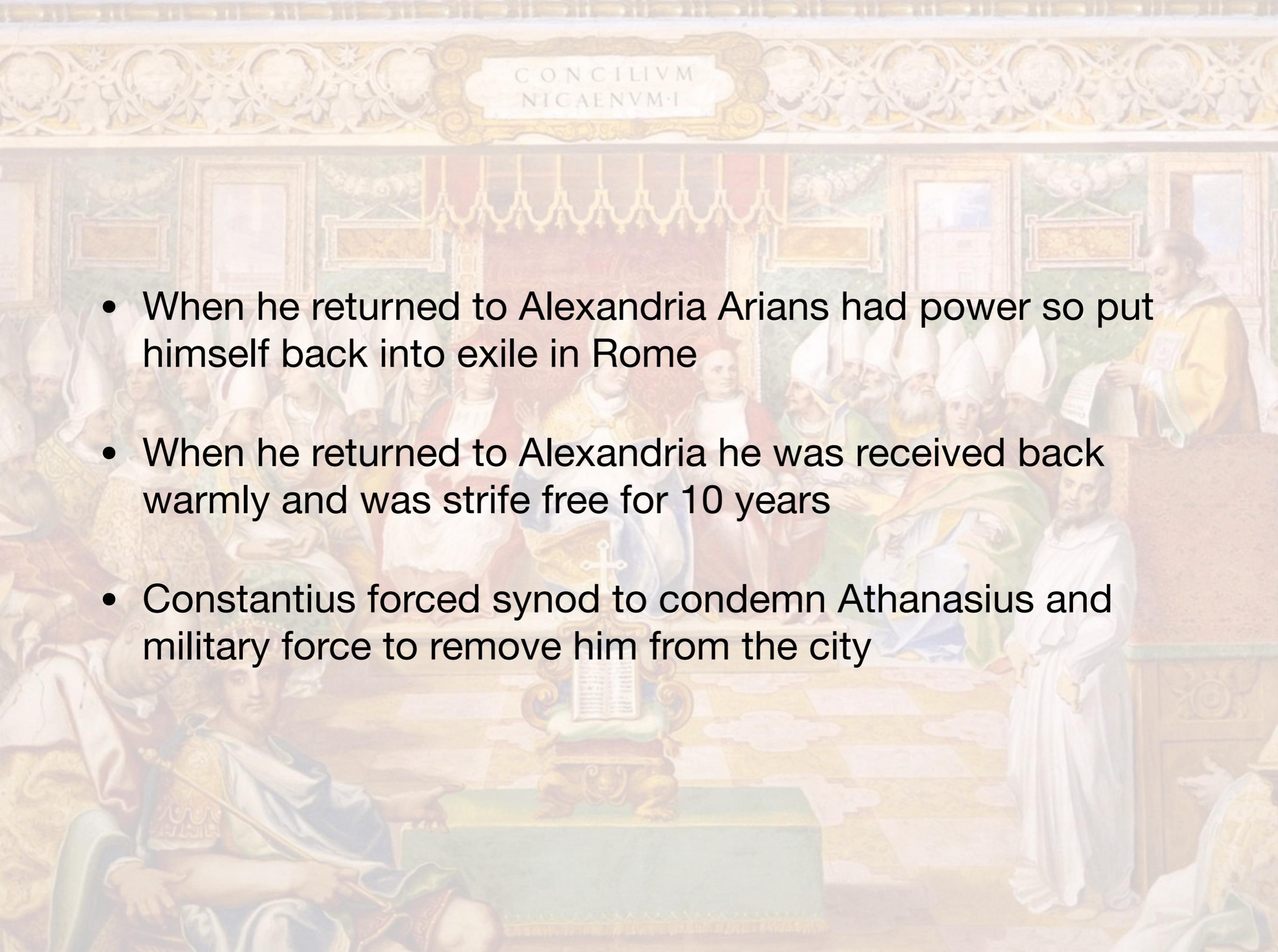
## Early Years

- Lower class of Egypt born in small village along Nile
- lifelong relationship with monks of the desert
- *Against the Gentiles* and *On the Incarnation of the Word*
- Incarnation centre of faith, of theology and of human history
- It is God coming to us that frees us to live as we were designed: in communion with God

# Through Many Trials



- Eusebius rumoured that Athanasius used magic and was a tyrant to flock
- Brought up on charges, particularly he had killed Arsenius (rival bishop) and took his hand for magic rites
- Tried to make case before emperor but was blocked
- Finally rumours led to his banishment until political change



CONCILIUM  
NICAENVM·I

- When he returned to Alexandria Arians had power so put himself back into exile in Rome
- When he returned to Alexandria he was received back warmly and was strife free for 10 years
- Constantius forced synod to condemn Athanasius and military force to remove him from the city

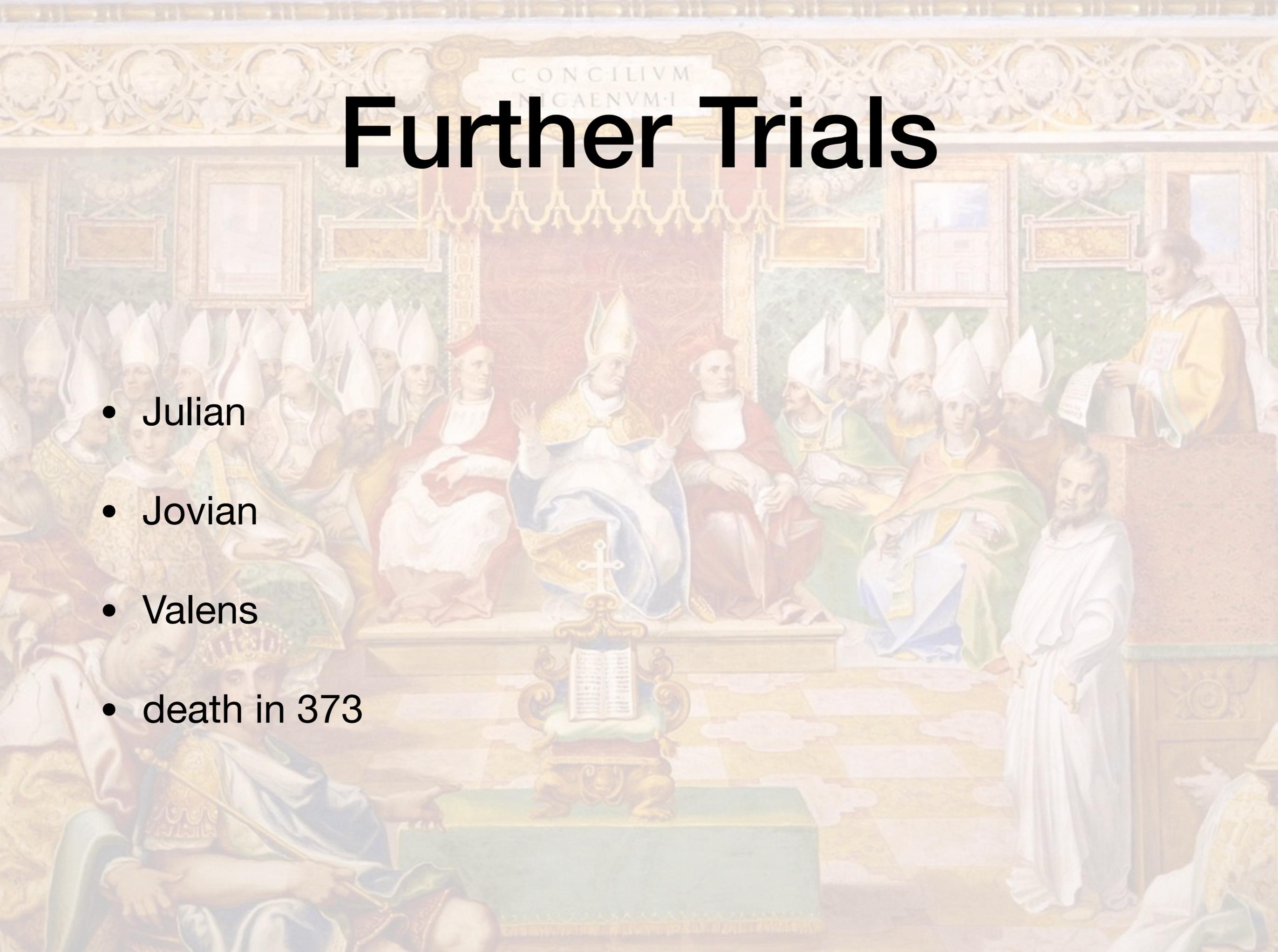
The background of the slide is a faded, historical-style illustration of the Council of Nicaea. It depicts a large assembly of bishops seated in a grand, ornate hall. In the center, a figure is seated on a throne, likely representing the Emperor or a high-ranking official. The architecture features high ceilings with intricate carvings and large windows. At the top of the illustration, the Latin text 'CONCILIUM NICAENUM I' is visible. The overall tone is historical and formal.

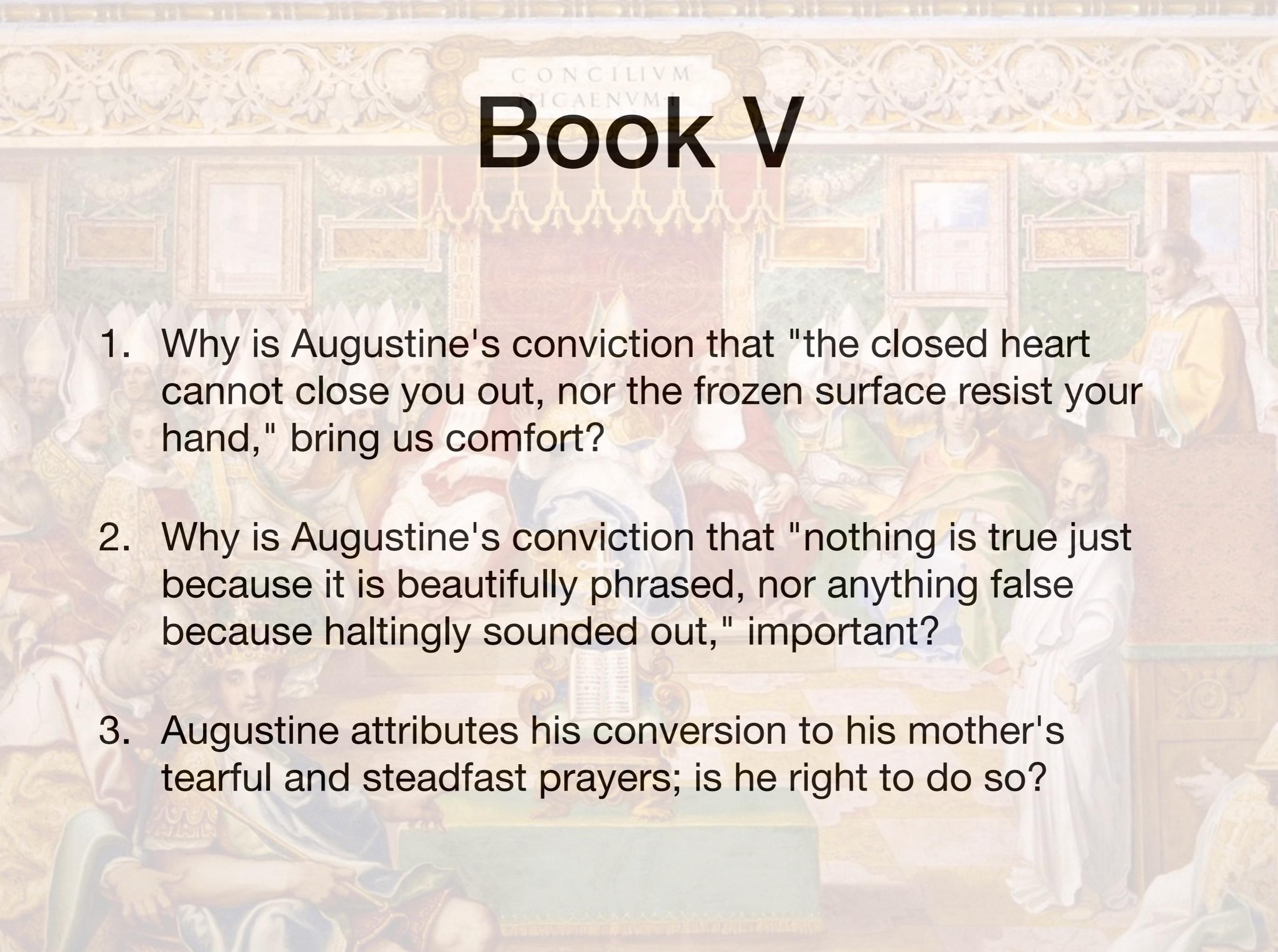
# Theological Agreement

- Arianism became an abstract argument
- For Athanasius it remained a core issue about salvation: salvation is a new creation so the one who brings it can be no less than the one who is responsible for creation
- Also, willing to be flexible: realized resistance around distinction of Father and Son
- 362 Father, Son and Holy Spirit of one substance — not obliterating distinctions
- can speak of three substances without 3 gods

# Further Trials

- Julian
- Jovian
- Valens
- death in 373





# Book V

1. Why is Augustine's conviction that "the closed heart cannot close you out, nor the frozen surface resist your hand," bring us comfort?
2. Why is Augustine's conviction that "nothing is true just because it is beautifully phrased, nor anything false because haltingly sounded out," important?
3. Augustine attributes his conversion to his mother's tearful and steadfast prayers; is he right to do so?