**Justin Martyr – Ecumenical Councils**

100-165 – Justin Martyr. Philosopher and Christian Apologist. Most of his works have been lost, but his first two “Apologies” survive. He wrote passionately concerning Christian morality. He also wrote to Emperor Antonius, making ethical and philosophical arguments trying to convince him to abandon persecution. He recognized the OT, believed Jesus was Son of God, Creator, born in the flesh, crucified, and risen. Thus, he refuted dualism, and pagan and Gnostic heresies. Justin was the first to write about the *Logos* (John 1:1-Word). He wrote that Jesus was the embodiment of all wisdom. Socrates, Plato, etc., had a portion of the Logos, but Jesus is its completion. He asserted that these philosophers were Christians even though they pre-date Jesus. He was martyred alongside his students.

130-202 - Irenaeus of Lyon (in what is now southern France). Student of Polycarp, who was a student of John. His best-known work is “Against Heresies”, an aggressive argument against Gnosticism, directed at Valentinus, one of the foremost leaders of it. In his work “The Demonstration of Apostolic Preaching”, he writes:

“And this is the drawing up of our faith, the foundation of the building, and the consolidation of our way of life. God, the Father, uncreated, beyond grasp, invisible, one God, the maker of us all; this is the first and foremost article of our faith. But the second article is the Word of God, the Son of God, Christ Jesus our Lord, who was shown forth by the prophets according to the design of their prophecy and according to the manner in which the Father disposed, and through Him were made all thing whatsoever. He also, in the end of times, for the recapitulation of all things, is become a human among humanity, visible and tangible, in order to abolish death and bring light to life, and bring about the communion of God and humanity. And the third article is the Holy Spirit, through whom the prophets prophesied and the patriarchs were taught about God and the just were led in the path of justice, and who in the end of times has been poured forth in new manner upon humanity over all the earth, renewing humanity to God.”

In his other writings, he emphasizes Scripture (including the four Gospels and most of the NT books), the Episcopate (bishops, elders of each city), and tradition, as sources of truth. With his assertion of bishops as reliable sources of Scripture interpretation, he is one of the first theologians to use the principle of *apostolic succession* to refute his opponents.

306-337 – Constantine is Emperor of Rome. He builds a residence in Byzantium and renames it Constantinople. Later, when the Empire is divided into East and West, The Eastern Empire is referred to as the Byzantine Empire. Constantine is known as the first Christian Emperor of Rome.

*Arius* – A false teacher who believed heavily in the OT and denied the deity of Christ. The controversy his movement created was referred to as the Arian Controversy.

325 – The Council of Nicaea (now Iznik, Turkey) and The Nicene Creed. Now nearly 250 years removed from the Apostles, many different schools of thought and false teachings existed within Christianity. This Council and it’s resulting Creed were an effort to provide a doctrinal statement of correct belief, or *Orthodoxy*. The Arian Controversy was one of the problems that inspired the necessity of the Council. It recognizes Jesus as deity and the Son of God. It is revised at the First Council of Constantinople in 381, to recognize the Holy Spirit as God (the Trinity).

As the Empire takes on Christianity as its national religion and later divides into East and West, the Western national church becomes the Roman Catholic Church, and the eastern church becomes The Eastern Orthodox Church. The Nicene creed becomes foundationally recognized by both.