



## I Am Arius

Does it really matter if Jesus is God or not?

Couldn't God have just picked a man and made him a savior or a messiah? He did it before with Moses and the Prophets. Could he not have accomplished the same if he had made Jesus a great spiritual guide like Buddha, or a man of peace and action like Gandhi?

I know it sounds like a shocking question coming from an Orthodox priest, but I am not the first to ask it. The first to ask this kind of question was a man named Arius. To Arius, it seemed absurd to think that God who is eternal, invisible, inexpressible, and unattainable would appear on earth as a man. So, Arius held that God created Jesus and so Jesus, being a creature, was not God or equal to the Father in anyway.

Of course, the 318 Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council understood that the divinity of Jesus absolutely mattered. The life of Jesus revealed something about God that we did not know before, something that is a great mystery-God is One, but He is also One in Three Persons. This revelation of the Trinity was so profound that the Fathers knew that it was crucial to our salvation. What Arius proposed broke this unity of God and separated the persons of the Godhead. They labored in the Creed to say that Jesus was fully human, but also fully divine. Jesus was two persons in one without confusion. So, the doctrine of the Trinity was preserved. Why did the Fathers think this was essential for our salvation?

First, when I meet Jesus, I need to know that he is human. I need to know that he has experienced the struggles and the temptations of life. The Ascension of Jesus tells me something that no other religion has proposed –that a human being went to God, to sit on his right hand. In doing so, he bore in his body the marks of his crucifixion. The struggles of humanity sit next to God! Remarkable!!!

Then, when I meet Jesus, I need to know that he is God. Gregory Nazianzen said – “What Has Not Been Assumed Has Not Been Healed.” The thoughts of wise men and women can do a lot to help me, but if I want to be healed, to be fully saved; only God can do that. He took upon himself my sin and brokenness and nailed it to the Cross. He rose from the dead so that I too can rise from the dead.

So, I understand why the Fathers were so anxious to refute Arius. The problem is that while I believe in Jesus as God and man, I am still Arius. If I truly honored Jesus as God, I wouldn't do half of the things I do and I would do more than what I do.

When I am lax at prayer, I fail to honor Jesus as God and treat him like a man. I am Arius.

When I am lax in my attendance at church, I fail to honor Jesus as God and treat him like a man. I am Arius.

When I am unforgiving to someone, especially my Orthodox family, I fail to honor Jesus as God and treat him like a man. I am Arius.

When I cannot take a moment to read the words of Jesus and contemplate his wisdom, I fail to honor Jesus as God and treat him like a man. I am Arius.



When I make no attempt to be a disciple of Jesus, I fail to honor Jesus as God and treat him like a man. I am Arius.

When I do little or nothing to build His Church, which is his body on earth, I fail to honor Jesus as God and treat him like a man. I am Arius.

Jesus is God.

I am Arius.

Anathema Arius.