

THE COUNCIL OF NICAEA — 325 CE

A COVENANT WITNESS ANALYSIS

Violations of the Torah of Yahweh

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Authority: *The Tanakh — The Word of Yahweh Alone* | Standard: *Devarim 19:15 — Two or Three Witnesses*

WHAT NICAEA WAS AND WHAT IT WAS ACCOMPLISHING

The Council of Nicaea was convened in June 325 CE by the Roman Emperor Constantine I — not by any prophet, not by any covenant authority in the Tanakh, and not at the direction of **Yahweh**. The primary source document records it plainly: *“Since the grace of God and the most pious emperor Constantine have called us together.”* A pagan Roman emperor — who at this same period was still minting coins honoring *Sol Invictus* (the Invincible Sun) — called, funded, presided over in person, and gave imperial force to a council that claimed to speak for the God of Israel.

Approximately 250–318 bishops attended. Constantine personally participated. The decisions of the council were enforced by imperial edict — not by covenant authority, not by the two or three witnesses standard of **Devarim (Deuteronomy) 19:15**, and not by any Torah-authorized court.

The council accomplished six primary objectives, each with direct covenant consequences:

1. Establish a creedal formula for the nature of Yeshua — the *homoousion* (“consubstantial”) declaration — as binding imperial doctrine, with anathema pronounced on all who disagreed.
2. Destroy the Arian position — banishing Arius and forcing a uniform Christological doctrine across the empire.
3. Sever the Passover/Easter calendar from the lunar covenant calendar of the Torah — formally separating the resurrection observance from the Jewish practice and placing it on a Roman solar calculation.
4. Centralize ecclesiastical power — establishing a hierarchy of metropolitan bishops under Rome and Alexandria, governed by imperial law.
5. Impose imperial enforcement on religious doctrine — making theological disagreement a matter for the Roman state, not covenant community adjudication.
6. Formally displace Hebrew covenant practice — the letter to the Egyptians explicitly states the goal: that “all the brethren in the East who have hitherto followed the Jewish practice will henceforth observe the custom of the Romans.”

VIOLATION ONE — REPLACING YAHWEH’S COVENANT CALENDAR

The Tanakh Standard: Shemot (Exodus) 12:2; Devarim (Deuteronomy) 16:1

“This month shall be for you the head of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you.” — Shemot (Exodus) 12:2

“Observe the month of Aviv and keep the Passover to Yahweh your Elohim.” — Devarim (Deuteronomy) 16:1

The Nicaea letter to the Egyptians contains one of the most consequential sentences in the history of the Abrahamic world:

“All the brethren in the East who have hitherto followed the Jewish practice will henceforth observe the custom of the Romans and of yourselves and of all of us who from ancient times have kept Easter together with you.”

This is a direct, documented replacement of **Yahweh’s** lunar covenant calendar — the Passover feast cycle commanded in **Shemot (Exodus) 12** — with a Roman solar calculation. **Yahweh** gave the covenant calendar at the Exodus as the first commandment to the Hebrew nation. No council, no emperor, and no bishop has Torah authority to transfer that calendar to Roman custom.

The Covenant Verdict: Devarim 4:2 declares: “You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it.” Devarim 12:32 repeats it: “Everything that I command you, you shall be careful to do. You shall not add to it or take from it.” Replacing **Yahweh’s** appointed Passover with “the custom of the Romans” is precisely what these verses prohibit. This was not a refinement — it was a substitution of covenant authority.

VIOLATION TWO — THE ANATHEMA WEAPON: HUMAN COURTS PRONOUNCING FINAL JUDGMENT

The Tanakh Standard: Devarim 19:15–17; Yeshayahu 33:22

“A single witness shall not suffice against a person for any crime or for any wrong... A matter shall be established by the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses.” — Devarim 19:15

“For Yahweh is our judge; Yahweh is our lawgiver; Yahweh is our king.” — Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 33:22

The council document opens with: **“These the catholic and apostolic church anathematizes.”** The letter to the Egyptians adds that the synod *“pronounced anathemas”* against Arius and his followers. Canon 8 requires the Cathars to submit or face loss of rank. Canon 5 establishes excommunication systems governed by episcopal vote. Throughout, the council — convened by a Roman emperor — pronounces binding spiritual judgments against individuals by majority vote of bishops.

The Covenant Verdict: Yahweh alone is judge. Yeshayahu 33:22 is unambiguous. The anathema belongs to no human court and to no council called by a pagan emperor. The two or three witness standard of Devarim 19:15 governs all legal proceedings. The anathemas at Nicaea were pronounced by majority vote, under imperial pressure, with no Tanakh-authorized tribunal, no two-witness evidentiary process, and no authority derived from **Yahweh’s** covenant law. These pronouncements carry no covenant weight. Only **Yahweh** anathematizes.

VIOLATION THREE — A PAGAN EMPEROR EXERCISING COVENANT AUTHORITY

The Tanakh Standard: Devarim 17:14–20; Shemot 18:21; Yeshayahu 8:12–13

“You shall appoint over you a king whom Yahweh your Elohim will choose... He must not acquire many horses for himself... nor shall he acquire for himself excessive silver and gold.” — Devarim 17:15–17

“Choose for the people able men who fear Elohim, who are trustworthy and hate a bribe.” — Shemot 18:21

Constantine I, who called, funded, attended, and enforced this council, was:

- An unconverted pagan who was not baptized until his deathbed in 337 CE — twelve years *after* Nicaea.
- The sitting *pontifex maximus* of Rome — the high priest of Roman state religion, including sun worship.
- Still minting coins with Sol Invictus and the Chi Rho together during and after Nicaea.
- A man who executed his own son Crispus and his wife Fausta in the same year the council met.

The document describes him as *“most pious”* and *“most God-beloved.”* The bishops who submitted to Constantine’s presidency and described him in these terms transferred their covenant fear from **Yahweh** to a Roman emperor — which is the violation of **Vayikra 19:15** and **Yeshayahu 8:12–13**: ***“Do not fear what they fear... Yahweh of hosts — him you shall honor as holy.”***

The Covenant Verdict: Devarim 17 establishes covenant qualifications for leadership over **Yahweh's** people: fear of **Yahweh**, Torah observance, no multiplication of wealth or military power. Constantine violated every criterion. He was not of the covenant people. He was not Torah-observant. He was the chief pagan religious officer of Rome. His presidency over Nicaea carried no covenant authority recognized by the Tanakh.

VIOLATION FOUR — THE HOMOOUSION CREED: ADDING TO THE COVENANT DEFINITION OF YAHWEH

The Tanakh Standard: Devarim 6:4; Shemot 20:3; Yeshayahu 46:9

“Hear O Israel: Yahweh is our Elohim, Yahweh is One.” — Devarim 6:4

“You shall have no other gods before Me.” — Shemot 20:3

“I am Elohim, and there is no other; I am Elohim, and there is none like Me.” — Yeshayahu 46:9

The Nicene Creed as recorded in this document declares:

“We believe in one God the Father all powerful... And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten begotten from the Father, that is from the substance of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, CONSUBSTANTIAL with the Father...”

The word *homoousion* — “consubstantial” — was the politically decisive term, insisted upon by Constantine himself. It was a Greek philosophical category from Platonist and Neoplatonist thought, not a Hebrew covenant term. It had no precedent in the Tanakh, no Hebrew lexical root, and no Torah-based definition. The council used a pagan Greek philosophical framework to define the nature of the **Elohim** of Israel.

The Covenant Verdict: Devarim 4:2 prohibits adding to **Yahweh's** covenant word. The Tanakh's covenant definition of **Yahweh** is given in Devarim 6:4 — the Shema. **Yahweh** declares: “To whom will you liken Me?” (Yeshayahu 40:25). Defining **Yahweh** through Greek philosophical categories of *ousia* (substance) and *hypostasis* — terms from Plato and Aristotle — and enshrining them as binding imperial doctrine is precisely what Devarim 4:2 and Devarim 12:32 prohibit. The Tanakh was complete. The Nicene homoousion was an addition.

VIOLATION FIVE — ROMAN HIERARCHY REPLACING COVENANT GOVERNANCE

The Tanakh Standard: Devarim 1:13–17; Shemot 18:21; Vayikra 19:15

“Choose for the people wise, understanding, and experienced men... and they shall judge the people at all times... You shall not be partial in judgment. You shall hear the small and the great alike.” — Devarim 1:13–17

Canon 6 of Nicaea establishes:

“The ancient customs of Egypt, Libya and Pentapolis shall be maintained, according to which the bishop of Alexandria has authority over all these places since a similar custom exists with reference to the bishop of Rome.”

Canon 4 establishes that no bishop may be appointed without the consent of the metropolitan. Canon 7 establishes honor for the bishop of Aelia (Jerusalem). The entire structure is a Roman imperial administrative hierarchy — provinces, metropolitans, primacy — grafted onto religious governance. Canon 5 further establishes that excommunications from one bishop must be upheld by all bishops in the province.

The Covenant Verdict: Yahweh’s covenant governance model in Devarim 1 and Shemot 18 is built on qualifications — wisdom, understanding, fear of **Elohim**, hatred of dishonest gain, impartiality. It is not built on geography, Roman provincial boundaries, or metropolitan primacy. Vayikra 19:15 prohibits deference to the powerful in judgment: “You shall do no injustice in court. You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great.” The Nicene hierarchical structure enshrined geographic and political power — Rome, Alexandria, Antioch — as the governing principle of ecclesiastical authority. This is the deference to the great that **Yahweh** explicitly prohibits.

VIOLATION SIX — CANON 20: INSTITUTIONALIZING THE SOLAR CALENDAR AND SUNDAY OBSERVANCE

The Tanakh Standard: Shemot 20:8–10; Shemot 31:13–17; Bereishit 2:2–3

“The seventh day is a Sabbath to Yahweh your Elohim.” — Shemot 20:10

“It is a sign between Me and the people of Israel forever.” — Shemot 31:17

Canon 20 of Nicaea states:

“Since there are some who kneel on Sunday and during the season of Pentecost, this holy synod decrees that, so that the same observances may be maintained in every diocese, one should offer one’s prayers to the Lord standing.”

This canon does not merely permit Sunday worship — that was already being pushed by Constantine’s 321 CE Sunday edict, four years earlier. Canon 20 confirms, codifies, and universalizes Sunday as the normative observance day across all dioceses, treating it as the established covenant day requiring liturgical uniformity across the entire empire.

The Covenant Verdict: **Yahweh** established the seventh-day Sabbath at creation (Bereishit 2:2–3), re-established it through the manna test before Sinai (Shemot 16), and declared it a covenant sign *throughout all generations* (Shemot 31:13). No council, no canon, and no emperor transfers covenant obligations **Yahweh** established at creation. Canon 20’s universalizing of Sunday observance is the continuation of Constantine’s systematic displacement of **Yahweh’s** seventh-day Sabbath with a Roman solar institution. The covenant standing of the seventh-day Sabbath is unchanged.

VIOLATION SEVEN — CANON 17: PARTIAL PROHIBITION ON USURY, FULL COVENANT STANDARD ABANDONED

The Tanakh Standard: Shemot 22:25; Vayikra 25:35–37; Devarim 23:19–20

“If you lend money to any of My people with you who is poor, you shall not be like a moneylender to him, and you shall not exact interest from him.” — Shemot 22:25

Canon 17 addresses clergy charging interest:

“Since many enrolled among the clergy have been induced by greed and avarice to forget the sacred text ‘who does not put out his money at interest’, and to charge one per cent a month on loans... if any are found after this decision to receive interest by contract... they shall be deposed from the clergy.”

This canon partially mirrors **Yahweh’s** prohibition. But the Torah’s usury prohibition applies to the entire covenant community — not merely to clergy. Vayikra 25:35–37 and Shemot 22:25 address all covenant people lending to the poor. By limiting the prohibition only to the clergy class, Nicaea implicitly permitted usury for the lay population — a narrowing of the covenant standard that left the bulk of economic life unaddressed by **Yahweh’s** actual law.

The Covenant Verdict: The Torah’s usury prohibition is not a clerical rule. It is a covenant economic standard governing the entire community, rooted in the same covenant principle as Yechezkel 45:9 — “put away violence and oppression” — and

Shemot 22:25–27’s protection of the poor. A council that restricts this covenant obligation to a priestly class while leaving the broader economic system untouched has reduced **Yahweh’s** covenant to an institutional policy manual.

VIOLATION EIGHT — ANATHEMA AGAINST ARIUS WITHOUT COVENANT EVIDENTIARY PROCESS

The Tanakh Standard: Devarim 19:15–19; Bemidbar 35:30

“On the evidence of two witnesses or three witnesses shall a person be put to death. No one shall be put to death on the testimony of one witness.” — Bemidbar (Numbers) 35:30

“If a malicious witness arises to accuse a person of wrongdoing... then both parties to the dispute shall appear before Yahweh... the judges shall inquire diligently.” — Devarim 19:16–18

The council pronounced anathema against Arius and exiled him. The document records the unanimous anathema as *fait accompli* — a vote of assembled bishops under imperial pressure. Crucially, the document itself acknowledges uncertainty about who even presided: *“it is uncertain who presided over the sessions.”*

The Covenant Verdict: The two or three witness standard of Devarim 19:15 governs all covenant proceedings. Arius was anathematized by imperial assembly vote, without a defined evidentiary process, without a named presiding judge, under the authority of an unbaptized Roman emperor. Devarim 19:18 requires the judges to *“inquire diligently.”* What happened at Nicaea was not diligent inquiry — it was political consolidation under imperial enforcement. Devarim 19:19 requires that a false witness receive the punishment he intended for the accused. The covenant holds that standard regardless of the size of the assembly that voted.

WHAT NICAEA ACCOMPLISHED IN COVENANT TERMS — SUMMARY VERDICT

It replaced Yahweh’s authority with imperial authority. A pagan Roman emperor called, presided over, and enforced a council claiming to speak for the **Elohim** of Israel. This is the deference to the powerful that Vayikra 19:15 and Yeshayahu 8:12–13 prohibit.

It replaced Yahweh’s calendar with Rome’s calendar. The letter to the Egyptians declares the intention plainly — separating from “the Jewish practice” and adopting “the custom of the Romans.” Devarim 16:1 commands guarding the month of Aviv. Nicaea formally abandoned it.

It replaced Yahweh’s Sabbath with the Roman solar day. Canon 20, building on Constantine’s 321 CE Sunday law, institutionalized Sunday observance across all dioceses. Shemot 31:13 declares the seventh-day Sabbath a covenant sign throughout all generations. No council cancels what **Yahweh** established at creation.

It replaced Yahweh’s definition of Himself with Greek philosophy. The homoousion formula is not from the Tanakh. It is from Platonist ontology. Devarim 4:2 prohibits exactly this addition.

It replaced Yahweh’s covenant governance with Roman hierarchy. Metropolitan primacy, provincial boundaries, and Roman administrative structure replaced the qualifications-based covenant governance of Devarim 1 and Shemot 18.

It replaced Yahweh’s evidentiary standard with political anathema. The two or three witness standard of Devarim 19:15 — the governing judicial standard of the covenant — was set aside in favor of imperial assembly votes.

The single most important sentence in the entire Nicaea document is the council’s own confession of what it accomplished:

“All the brethren in the East who have hitherto followed the Jewish practice will henceforth observe the custom of the Romans.”

That sentence is not a doctrinal refinement. It is a transfer of allegiance — from the covenant of **Yahweh** given at the Exodus, to the customs of Rome enforced by an emperor who would not be baptized for twelve more years.

Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 6:16 remains the covenant answer to everything Nicaea built:

“Stand in the ways and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls.” — Yirmeyahu 6:16

The ancient paths were not in Nicaea. They were — and remain — in the Tanakh.

PART TWO

ARIANISM — A FULL COVENANT INVESTIGATION

What Arius Taught, Why Nicaea Rejected It, and What the Tanakh Says About the Entire Dispute

WHO WAS ARIUS

Arius (c. 256–336 CE) was an Alexandrian Christian presbyter of Berber/Libyan descent, trained under Lucian of Antioch. He was a theologically serious man operating within a well-established stream of Christian thought. As the historian R.P.C. Hanson established, Arius's espousal of subordinationist theology brought *"into unavoidable prominence a doctrinal crisis which had gradually been gathering... He was the spark that started the explosion. But in himself he was of no great significance."* Modern scholarship has demolished the older portrait of Arius as a radical innovator. He was in fact a committed theological conservative defending positions that had been widespread in Christian thought for over two centuries.

As a person, Arius was known for austere habits, considerable learning, and a smooth, winning address. His moral character was described as irreproachable even by his fiercest opponents. He was not condemned because of his life — he was condemned because of his theology, under the political weight of a Roman emperor who needed one religion for one empire.

WHAT ARIUS ACTUALLY TAUGHT — HIS FIVE CORE POSITIONS

Position One: The Father Alone is Truly and Absolutely God

Arius's foundational premise was the absolute uniqueness of **Yahweh** — that God is alone, self-existent, not dependent for his existence on anything else, and immutable. Since the Son derives his existence from the Father, the Son cannot be identical in nature to the self-existent and immutable Father. Because the Godhead is unique, it cannot be shared or communicated. In Arius's framework, this was not an attack on Yeshua's dignity — it was a defense of strict monotheism.

Position Two: The Son Had a Beginning — "There Was a Time When He Was Not"

This was Arius's central and most explosive claim. It is recorded verbatim in the Nicaea primary source document as the first position anathematized: ***"those who say 'there once was when he was not,' and 'before he was begotten he was not.'"*** Arius formulated his core syllogism: *"If the Father begat the Son, then he who was begotten had a beginning in existence, and from this it follows there was a time when the Son was not."* If begetting implies origin, then the Son has an origin, and what has an origin was not always.

Position Three: The Son Was Created Out of Nothing

Arius taught that the Son was not begotten of the substance of the Father but was made freely by the Father out of nothing — what the Arians called *ex ouk onton* (creation from non-existence). The Son was a creature of the Father, created before all other creatures and exalted above them, the instrument used by the Father for creation. The Nicaea document anathematizes this directly: those who say the Son “*came to be from things that were not, or from another hypostasis or substance.*”

Position Four: The Son Was Divine by Grace, Not by Nature

The Arian Son was not a mere human being — he was exalted far above all creation, the first and highest of all beings. But that divine status was granted by the Father, not inherent to his nature. In the Arian system, the Logos is not eternal. He is not a son by nature but merely by grace and adoption. God adopted him in prevision of his merits, since he might have sinned but did not. Instead of being **Yahweh**, he is a kind of intermediary who advanced in virtue and merit and thus came to be closely associated with the Father.

Position Five: The Son is Separated from the Father by “An Infinity of Glories”

From Arius’s own work, the *Thalia* — preserved only in quotations by his opponent Athanasius, the closest we have to Arius’s own primary voice — come these words:

“The Father alone has neither equal nor like, none comparable in glory... The Son has nothing proper to God in his essential property. For neither is he equal nor yet consubstantial with him... One is more glorious than another by an infinity of glories. Thus the Son who was not, but existed at the paternal will, is only-begotten God, and he is distinct from everything else.”

For Arius, the Son is the highest created being, separated from the Father not by a small degree but by an infinite gulf of glory. He is a “begotten God” — divine by participation and grant — but not the unbegotten, self-existent, immutable, and incommunicable Father.

WHERE ARIANISM CAME FROM — ITS INTELLECTUAL ROOTS

Root One: Neoplatonism

The Neoplatonic system placed an absolutely transcendent One at the summit of existence, with descending intermediary beings of diminishing divinity between the One and the material world. Arius imported this hierarchy directly into Christian theology, placing Yeshua in the intermediary position — highest of creatures, instrument of creation, but fundamentally beneath the transcendent Father. As one scholar noted,

Arianism, scarcely disguised by the addition of scriptural quotations, was “*pagan to the core*” — the Neoplatonic cosmological scheme applied to the God of Israel.

Root Two: Origen

Origen (185–254 CE), the most influential Christian theologian before Nicaea, had called the Son a “*secondary God*” without the definite article, while the Father is “*the God*.” He taught the subordination of the Son to the Father as a foundational premise. Arius drew directly on this tradition, though he pushed it further than Origen intended — where Origen taught the eternal generation of the Son, Arius taught there was a time when the Son was not. Both Arius and his opponents invoked Origen’s authority at Nicaea, each for opposite conclusions.

Root Three: The Pre-Nicene Mainstream — The Most Suppressed Historical Fact

This is the most historically significant and least widely acknowledged reality about the entire controversy: **Arius was not the innovator. Nicaea was.** According to Robert M. Grant (*Gods and the One God*, p. 160): “*Before Nicaea, Christian theology was almost universally subordinationist. Theology almost universally taught that the Son was subordinate to the Father.*” Martin Werner (*The Formation of Christian Dogma*, p. 125, 234) confirms: “*Every significant theologian of the Church in the pre-Nicene period had actually represented a Subordinationist Christology.*”

Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Irenaeus, Origen, Hippolytus — all held some form of the Son’s subordination to the Father as self-evident. Scholars who have studied pre-Nicene history conclude that there is no theologian in the Eastern or Western Church, before the 4th-century controversy, who did not regard the Son as subordinate to the Father. Subordinationism was the pre-Nicene orthodoxy. This means the Nicene *homoousion* formula — declaring the Son of one substance with the Father, equal in being and rank — represented a significant theological departure from what almost all Christians from 100–300 CE had taught.

WHY NICAEA REJECTED ARIANISM — THE THREE DRIVING FORCES

Force One: Political Unity Imposed by Constantine

The dispute had spread from Alexandria into most African regions and was considered a disturbance of public order by the Roman Empire. Constantine needed one religion for one empire. The *Thalia* debate had become so divisive and so public that it was the subject of mockery in Roman theater. Constantine sent two letters to Arius and Alexander asking them to stop the controversy, and when that failed, he called Nicaea. According to the church historian Eusebius of Caesarea, Constantine himself expressed his support of the term *homoousios* to the council. Arius’s views may have been losing the day in any case, but once the Emperor weighed in, the Arian cause was politically hopeless regardless of its theological merits.

The primary source document makes this visible on every page: Constantine is called “most pious” and “most God-beloved” throughout. The council opened “in the presence of the emperor.” His authority presided over a theological judgment that the Tanakh assigns to **Yahweh** alone (Yeshayahu 33:22). Ironically, as multiple historians have noted, Constantine’s effort to unify Christianity through Nicaea produced the deepest divisions in fourth-century Christian history.

Force Two: The Salvation Argument — Athanasius’s Theology

Athanasius of Alexandria, the young deacon who attended Nicaea as an assistant and became the lifelong champion of the Nicene Creed, argued on internal Christian theological grounds: if Yeshua was a created being — even the highest of created beings — he could not save humanity from sin. The argument ran: only **Yahweh** can grant eternal life; only **Yahweh** is infinite; therefore the redeemer must himself be fully **Yahweh**, not a creature, or the cross is insufficient. Worship of a created being, Athanasius argued, is idolatry. This was a theological argument entirely internal to Christian soteriology, not derived from any Tanakh text or covenant standard.

Force Three: The homoousios Formula and the Rejection of Compromise

Eusebius of Caesarea, the prominent church historian and moderate voice at Nicaea, proposed a compromise: affirm the Son as *homoiousios* — “of similar substance” — with the Father. Athanasius and Alexander rejected this because the single-letter Greek difference between *homoousios* (same substance) and *homoiousios* (similar substance) would allow Arians to remain technically within orthodoxy while continuing to teach their position. The maximalist *homoousios* was therefore chosen — enforced by imperial power, not by covenant consensus.

THE AFTERMATH — NICAEA DID NOT SETTLE THE QUESTION

A fact often obscured in popular accounts: Nicaea did not settle the Arian controversy. It inflamed it. From 325 to 337, when Constantine died, those church leaders who had supported Arius and had been exiled after Nicaea attempted to return to their churches and to banish their enemies. They were partly successful. The Roman Emperors Constantius II (337–361) and Valens (364–378) were themselves Arians or Semi-Arians. The first King of Italy, Odoacer, was Arian. The Lombards were Arian until the 7th century. The ruling elite of Visigothic Spain was Arian until 589. Many Goths adopted Arian beliefs upon their conversion. The Vandals actively spread Arianism in North Africa.

For more than two centuries after Nicaea declared Arianism heresy, enormous portions of the Christian world — including multiple Roman emperors — held the position that had been anathematized. Arianism was not finally suppressed within the empire until the Edict of Thessalonica in 380 CE, fifty-five years after Nicaea, which made Nicene

Christology the compulsory state religion of Rome — and even then it survived outside imperial borders for centuries more.

Constantine also ordered all copies of Arius's primary theological work, the *Thalia*, to be burned by imperial decree. This is why Arius's own words survive only in quotations by his enemies — primarily the hostile pen of Athanasius. The destruction of the primary source documents by which Arius's actual position could be assessed is itself a violation of the covenant evidentiary standard: **Devarim 19:18** requires the judges to "*inquire diligently*." You cannot inquire diligently into a position whose books have been burned by imperial order.

WHAT THE TANAKH SAYS ABOUT THE ENTIRE DISPUTE

This is the question that neither Arius nor Nicaea asked — because both sides were operating within a Greek philosophical framework that the Tanakh does not share and never authorized.

On the Nature of Yahweh

"Hear O Israel: Yahweh is our Elohim, Yahweh is One." — *Devarim (Deuteronomy) 6:4*

The Shema is not a Greek philosophical proposition about substance, hypostasis, or the ontological generation of divine persons. It is a covenant declaration about identity and allegiance. **Yahweh** defines himself through covenant relationship, covenant name, and covenant action — not through Platonic categories of *ousia* or the Neoplatonic concept of the transcendent One emanating lesser divine beings. The entire debate at Nicaea was conducted in a language — *ousia, hypostasis, homoousios, homoiousios, Logos-as-intermediary* — that has no Hebrew lexical equivalent and no Tanakh precedent.

On the "Begotten" Question

"You are My Son; today I have begotten you." — *Tehillim (Psalms) 2:7*

Arius built his entire syllogism on the word "begotten": if the Father begat the Son, the Son had a beginning. The Tanakh does address divine sonship — but in the covenant framework of **Tehillim 2**, this is a covenant declaration addressed to the Davidic king, designating royal appointment and authority. In the Tanakh's framework, "son of Yahweh" is the language of covenant appointment — not a statement about ontological origin or Greek philosophical substance. Both Arius and Nicaea read a Hebrew covenant text through Greek philosophical eyes and arrived at Greek philosophical answers to a question the Hebrew text never asked.

On What Both Sides Got Wrong — The Forbidden Addition

“You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it.” — Devarim 4:2

“Since you saw no form on the day that Yahweh spoke to you at Horeb from the midst of the fire, beware lest you act corruptly by making a carved image for yourselves, in the form of any figure.” — Devarim 4:15–16

Both Arius and Nicaea made the same foundational error: they attempted to define **Yahweh’s** inner nature through Greek philosophical tools the Tanakh never supplied and never authorized. Arius used Neoplatonic hierarchy to subordinate the Son. Nicaea used Platonic *ousia* to declare consubstantiality. **Devarim 4:2** prohibits both additions equally. The warning against making any “form of any figure” in **Devarim 4:15–16** extends to philosophical images as well as physical ones: imposing a Greek metaphysical structure onto the covenant reality of **Yahweh** is precisely the kind of corruption these verses warn against.

The Covenant Verdict on the Entire Controversy

The Tanakh’s covenant instruction is not: *“Settle the internal philosophical structure of the divine persons.”* **It is:** *“Walk in all the way that Yahweh your Elohim has commanded you, that you may live.”* — Devarim 5:33. Both Arius and Nicaea were debating a question the Tanakh never asked, in a language the Tanakh never used, before a court the Tanakh never authorized, enforced by a pagan emperor the Tanakh never recognized. The entire fourth-century Arian controversy — both the heresy and the council that condemned it — was conducted within the framework of Hellenized Christianity that had already departed from the covenant of **Yahweh** at its foundations. The ancient paths were not in Alexandria, not in Nicaea, not in the Platonic academies of the Eastern Roman Empire. They were — and remain — in the Tanakh.

“Stand in the ways and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls.” — Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 6:16

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