



# Homoousios

A SUMMER SERMON SERIES ON THE NICENE CREED

Dan 7:13-14 Heb 1:1-4 John 10:14-18

July 14, 2024

Pastor Dave Bolte

**Jesus said this** in Matthew chapter 5:

Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Matthew 5:17-18

In context, Jesus was emphasizing that He would fulfill the **entire** Law of God for us, even down to the smallest letter of the Law. An **iota** is the Greek letter for **i**. Jesus is teaching that He will thoroughly and completely fulfill the Law of God for us with His perfect life. His perfect life, or His “righteousness,” is given to you as a gift of faith.

**Interestingly** an **iota** comes into play in Church history. In the most dramatic story of the Nicene Creed saga, the smallest letter in the Greek language, an **iota**, was the difference between confessing the true teaching of Scripture or promoting a false doctrine.

In the 4th century, a false teacher named Arius arose who taught that Jesus was not fully God, not fully equal with God the Father. He was teaching that Jesus was less than the Father, but more than a man, so He was some kind of a “**third thing**” *if you will*. The Church convened a council to discuss the matter, which we know today as the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD. The high point of this council was the discussion of an **iota**, the smallest of the Greek letters. The false teacher Arius wanted to use the word **homoiousios** to describe Jesus; which meant Jesus was of **similar substance** to God the Father. The Christian Church held that Jesus was **homoousios** with the God the Father, that is **of the same substance**. The Greek letter **iota** was the only difference between the two words!

Here is how it looks in Greek → [see sidebar](#)

Homoousios  
Homo**i**ousios

That one *iota* was going to make all the difference in the world! If it remained, then Christianity is gutted, and Jesus is not God, and we are lost in our sins. If it is taken out, Jesus is truly the One, True and Only God, *of the same substance* with God the Father, and Savior of the world, just like the Bible teaches!

The Holy Spirit worked through the Council of Nicaea to proclaim the truth of Holy Scripture: that Jesus is *homoousios* with the God the Father, that is *of the same substance*. Those who taught that Jesus was only *similar* to God the Father were **condemned as false teachers**. That one *iota* was going to make all the difference in the world<sup>1</sup>!

**Homoousios; NOT Hom*i*ousios**

The entire second article of the Nicene Creed has led up to this word *homoousios*: *of the same substance*. Note:

And in One Lord  
Jesus Christ,  
the Only-begotten Son of God,  
Begotten of His Father before all worlds,  
God of God,  
Light of Light,  
Very God of Very God,  
Begotten, not made,  
*Homoousios* with the Father,  
By whom all things were made

All of these words and phrases are meant to teach you **ONE THING**: that Jesus is fully God, equal to the Father, equal to the Spirit; or as the word *homoousios* teaches: *of the same substance as the Father!*

Because Jesus is fully God, He was able to live a holy and godly life for you and in your place. He perfectly obeyed the 10 commandments on your behalf. His

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<sup>1</sup> The Church Fathers of the 4th century understood that this false teaching of *homoiousios* directly undermines the truthfulness of Scripture and the doctrine of eternal salvation. This sermon will highlight the significance that our eternal salvation is dependent on the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

perfect life is given to you as a gift of faith, and God considers you to have lived a perfect and holy life.

I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation; He has covered me with the robe of righteousness Isaiah 61:10

That robe of righteousness is Jesus' perfect life; His righteousness that covers over your sinfulness<sup>2</sup>. This is how God chooses to see you, and you are well pleasing in his sight.

Because Jesus is fully God, He was able to take up your sins upon Himself and suffer and die on a cross for you and in your place. God Himself is your Savior; His death has eternal significance for every single person ever conceived --- including you. Because of the death of the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. **God died for your sins!** *You have peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ!* Your sins are no longer a hindrance between you and God. Your guilt no longer hangs over you, you are reconciled with God.

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our sins, according to the riches of His grace Ephesians 1:7

That phrase *Through His Blood* is a reference to the death of Jesus on the cross. When God died on the cross for you, your sins were forgiven<sup>3</sup>.

Because Jesus is fully God, He is able to live a holy and godly life for you and in your place; and He is able to take your sins upon Himself and suffer and die on the cross for you. The power and divinity of Jesus is most clearly seen in His resurrection from the dead on the Third Day. Jesus Himself, as God Almighty, has power over death and the grave.

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<sup>2</sup> For those who followed Arius, and believed in *homoiousios*, there is no robe of righteousness to cover over their sinfulness. As a creature, Jesus would be as broken as this world and as sinful as all other people, and He could not save Himself, let alone everyone else. That is why those groups that deny the divinity of Jesus are works righteous groups.

<sup>3</sup> For those who followed Arius, and believed in *homoiousios*, there is no perfect sacrifice for their sins. God's justice would remain, their guilt would still hang over them, they would die in their sin, and they would be condemned forever. Jesus' death would have been his own death, not as a substitute for all people.

This is why the Father loves me—because I lay down My life, so that I may take it back again. No one takes it away from Me, but I lay it down of My own free will. I have the authority to lay it down, and I have the authority to take it back again. This commandment I received from my Father.” John

10:17-18

Only God has power to give life, and Jesus demonstrates this when He rose from the dead. And Jesus, **who is fully God**, promises to use His mighty and divine power to raise you from the dead as well<sup>4</sup>. At the moment of death your soul will be immediately with the Lord in Heaven; and on the Last Day Jesus will raise your body from the dead, glorify it, and you will live in the Kingdom of Heaven in both body and soul. This is the power and the promise of Easter Sunday!

Today we thank God the Holy Spirit that He worked through the men and the women of the 4th Century to diligently guard the Christian faith from that tiny Greek letter called an *iota*. It is the difference between Jesus being similar to God<sup>5</sup>, as opposed to Him being **fully God**, and *of the same substance* as God the Father<sup>6</sup>.

Because **Jesus is God**, you have a Savior:

1. He lived a holy and righteous life for you and in your place
2. He took your sins upon Himself and suffered and died on a cross for you
3. and He rose from the dead on the Third Day, guaranteeing that you too will rise from the dead on the Last Day.

**Amen!**

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<sup>4</sup> For those who followed Arius, and believed in *homoiousios*, there is no hope of the “resurrection of the dead and the life everlasting.” Jesus has no power over death, and He cannot raise you from the dead.

<sup>5</sup> Tragically, Arianism is alive and well today in the Jehovah’s Witnesses cult. Their website directly quotes the false teaching of Arius: in a section called “Who is Jesus Christ”, they write “. . . He was God’s first creation . . .” In the Nicene Creed of 325 AD, the Holy Christian Church specifically condemns that statement with a strong ‘anathema’ (=condemned): “But those who say . . . ‘The Son of God is created’ . . . are condemned by the Holy, Christian, and Apostolic Church.”

<sup>6</sup> Jesus clearly teaches in John 10:30, “I and the Father are one.”

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**God the Father, we thank You that You work all things for the good of Your people, even when things get complicated, like they did in the 4th century AD. We thank you for the men and women who held to the truth of Your Holy Word and condemned those teaching false doctrines about Your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. Help us to understand that Your Son is both God and Man, conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary. Give us boldness and courage to stand firm in the faith, as we confess during our time on earth that Jesus is *one substance with the Father*. In Jesus' precious Name we pray, Amen!**

## **Daniel 7:13-14**

"In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence.<sup>14</sup> He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

## Hebrews 1:1-4

In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways,<sup>2</sup> but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.<sup>3</sup> The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.<sup>4</sup> So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.

## **John 10:14-18**

Jesus said, 14 “I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. 16 I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. 17 The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. 18 No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.”