THE QUESTION

Why did the early church reject the teaching of Arius about Christ?

Asked by a THF member on May 22, 2026 · published November 9, 2026 · 9 numbered quotations · the 11 early Christian passages and 65 Bible verses we kept are listed at the back, each with a link.

Read it online: thehistoricfaith.com/early-church-questions/why-did-the-early-church-reject-the-teaching-of-arius-about-christ

The short answer *From the text: says what the passages say*

The church rejected Arius because he denied the Godhead of Christ and said the Son came from nothing, making Him like other creatures. Alexander of Alexandria answered that the Son is begotten of the Father, not made, and the church cast out Arius and his followers. Earlier writers had already confessed the Word as eternal God.

LIBRARY ONLY	This study was written only from The Historic Faith's library of early-Christian writings and the Bible, never from the web. Every passage we kept from what the library gave is listed at the back, with a link to read it.
HOW IT WAS MADE	Compiled by machine learning from The Historic Faith's library of early-Christian writings and the Bible only. Every quotation was matched word for word against our stored text. Not yet reviewed by The Historic Faith.
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POINT 1 OF 6

Arius denied the Godhead of the Savior

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Alexander of Alexandria, writing against Arius, says the heart of the problem was that Arius and his circle denied Christ's Godhead. He says they made the Son no greater than anyone else.

1

> “For since they call into question all pious and apostolic doctrine, in the manner of the Jews, they have built a workshop for contending against Christ, denying the Godhead of our Savior, and preaching that He is only the equal of all others.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Alexander of Alexandria,** *Epistles on the Arian Heresy* 1 (c. 313–328 AD)
THF's updated English

Source 9, page 6 Read it in the library ›

POINT 2 OF 6

They said the Son came from nothing

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Alexander reports that the Arians said the Son's coming was from things that are not, that is, from nothing like any creature. He calls this an impious blasphemy with no basis in Scripture.

2

> “For these inventors of stupid fables say that we, who turn away with disgust from the impious and unscriptural blasphemy against Christ, spoken by those who say that His coming was from things that are not, assert that there are two unbegottens.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER
Alexander of Alexandria, *Epistles on the Arian Heresy* 1 (c. 313–328 AD)
THF's updated English

Source 10, page 6 Read it in the library ›

POINT 3 OF 6

The Son is begotten, not made from nothing

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

The Arians claimed the only choices were a Son made from nothing or two unbegotten beings. Alexander answers that the Son is neither: He is the only begotten, begotten of the Father Himself, and the Word through whom the Father made everything else from nothing.

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3 “Between these two, holding the middle place, is the only begotten nature of God, the Word by whom the Father formed all things out of nothing, begotten of the true Father Himself.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Source 10, page 6** Read it in the library ›
Alexander of Alexandria, *Epistles on the Arian Heresy* 1 (c. 313–328 AD)
THF's updated English

POINT 4 OF 6

The church cast out Arius and his followers

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Alexander names Arius and the priests, deacons and bishops who sided with him as apostates. He says they were excommunicated and anathematized because they tried to destroy the Godhead of Christ.

4 “Now these are the apostates from the Church: Arius, Achilles, Aithales, Carpones, the other Arius, and Sarmates, who were formerly priests; Euzoius, Lucius, Julius, Menas, Helladius, and Gains, formerly deacons; and with them Secundus and Theonas, who were once called bishops.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Source 11, page 6** Read it in the library ›
Alexander of Alexandria, *Epistles on the Arian Heresy* 1 (c. 313–328 AD)
THF's updated English

5 “But these men, by all their words, have tried to destroy the Godhead of Christ.”

later in the same passage

“Therefore they have been excommunicated and anathematized by the Church.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Alexander of Alexandria,** *Epistles on the Arian Heresy* 1 (c. 313–328 AD) **Source 8, page 6** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

POINT 5 OF 6

Earlier writers said the Word always existed

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Long before Arius, Theophilus taught that the Word always exists within the heart of God. Hermas also says the Son of God is older than all creatures and shared in the Father's work of creation.

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6 “Not as the poets and writers of myths speak of the sons of gods begotten from intercourse with women, but as the truth explains, the Word always exists, dwelling within the heart of God.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Theophilus of Antioch,** *To Autolycus* 22 (c. 169–183 AD) **Source 4, page 5** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

7 “He said, "Listen and understand, O ignorant man. The Son of God is older than all His creatures, so that He was a fellow-councillor with the Father in His work of creation. For this reason He is old."”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Hermas,** *Shepherd* (c. 90–150 AD) **Source 1, page 5** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

POINT 6 OF 6

Earlier writers freely called Christ God

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Novatian asks why anyone should hold back from calling Christ God when He is shown to be God in so many ways. The Ignatian letters go further and condemn anyone who uses belief in one God as a way to deny Christ's divinity.

8 “What in the world is the reason that we should hesitate to call Him God, when in so many ways He is acknowledged to be proved God?”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Novatian,** *Treatise Concerning the Trinity* 18 (c. 240–258 AD) **Source 7, page 5** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

9 “Whoever, therefore, declares that there is only one God, merely to deny the divinity of Christ, is a devil and an enemy of all righteousness.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Ignatius of Antioch,** *Epistles of Ignatius* (c. 98–117 AD) **Source 2, page 5** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

THE LIMITS

What these passages don’t tell us

- No writings of Arius himself are in these passages, so his views are known here only through his opponent.

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- Alexander's own list of the Arian statements is cut off in these passages, and the Council of Nicaea is not described.
- A word-for-word match shows that a quotation really is in our text. It does not show that our reading of it is right, or who wrote each work.

WHERE EVERY QUOTE CAME FROM

The Sources

The 11 early Christian passages and 65 Bible verses we kept for this question (repeats and weak or off-topic search hits were left out): early Christian passages first (sources 1–11, grouped by writer, earliest first), then Bible verses in The Faith Once Delivered Bible (sources 12–42, in Bible order), then 34 more verses THF links to these passages, by reference. **Quote 1, page 2** beside a source shows where the study quotes it. Passages are in THF's updated English unless marked "1885 English" (the Roberts–Donaldson translation, public domain). "… [continues online]" marks a passage the library gave only in part. **On paper?** At **thehistoricfaith.com**, Bible verses are in the **Audio Bible** and early Christian writings in the **Library** (search for the title).

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITERS *11 passages from 7 writers*

Hermas, *c. 90–150 AD · source 1*

1 *Shepherd* **Quote 7, page 4** First of all, sir, I said, explain this to me: what is the meaning of the rock and the gate? He answered, "This rock and this gate are the Son… [continues online] **read ›**

Ignatius of Antioch, *c. 98–117 AD · sources 2–3*

2 *Epistles of Ignatius* (1885 English) **Quote 9, page 4** he that rejects the incarnation, and is ashamed of the cross for which I am in bonds, this man is antichrist… [continues online] **read ›**

3 *Epistles of Ignatius* (on point 6) The prophets, when they speak as if in the person of God, saying, "I am God, the first, and I am also the last, and besides Me there is no… [continues online] **read ›**

Theophilus of Antioch, *c. 169–183 AD · source 4*

4 *To Autolycus* 22 **Quote 6, page 4** of whom, John, says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God… [continues online] **read ›**

Irenaeus, *c. 175–202 AD · source 5*

5 *Against Heresies: Book V* (on point 6) The Father supports both creation and His own Word at the same time, and the Word carried by the Father bestows the Spirit upon all, as the Father desires. To… [continues online] **read ›**

Tertullian, *c. 196–220 AD · source 6*

6 *Against All Heresies* 3 (1885 English) "him broke out the heretic Cerinthus, teaching similarly… [continues online] **read ›**

Novatian, *c. 240–258 AD · source 7*

7 *Treatise Concerning the Trinity* 18 (1885 English) **Quote 8, page 4** "acknowledges concerning the destruction of the people of Sodom, what they deserve to suffer… [continues online] **read ›**

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Alexander of Alexandria, *c. 313–328 AD · sources 8–11*

8 *Epistles on the Arian Heresy* 1 (1885 English) **Quote 5, page 3** "these by all their words have attempted to do away with the Godhead of Christ, have made those seem righteous, since they have come nearer to Antichrist… [continues online] **read ›**

9 *Epistles on the Arian Heresy* 1 (1885 English) **Quote 1, page 2** "since they call in question all pious and apostolic doctrine, after the manner of the Jews, they have constructed a workshop for contending against Christ, denying the Godhead of our… [continues online] **read ›**

10 *Epistles on the Arian Heresy* 1 (1885 English) **Quotes 2, 3, pages 2, 3** "those inventors of stupid fables say, that we who turn away with aversion from the impious and unscriptural blasphemy against Christ, of those who speak of His coming from the… [continues online] **read ›**

11 *Epistles on the Arian Heresy* 1 (1885 English) **Quote 4, page 3** "the words invented by them, and spoken contrary to the mind of Scripture, are as follows… [continues online] **read ›**

THE BIBLE *31 verses, The Faith Once Delivered Bible (Old Testament from the Septuagint), in Bible order*

12 **Proverbs 12:20** Deceit is in the heart of him who devises evil, but those who desire peace will be glad. **read ›**

13 **Ecclesiastes 12:2** before the sun and the light are darkened, and the moon and the stars, and the clouds return after the rain; **read ›**

14 **Song of Solomon 3:4** Scarcely had I passed from them when I found him whom my soul has loved. I held him and did not let him go, until I brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her who conceived me. **read ›**

15 **Isaiah 7:11** "Ask for yourself a sign from the Lord your God, in the depth or in the height." **read ›**

16 **Isaiah 7:19** and they shall all come into the valleys of the land, and into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves, and into every crevice. **read ›**

17 **1 Esdras 5:40** And Nehemiah and Attharias told them not to share in the holy things until a high priest should arise clothed with the Manifestation and the Truth. **read ›**

18 **Wisdom of Solomon 12:27** For in the things at which they were angry when they suffered, in those they thought to be gods, being punished by them, seeing him whom they had long refused to know, they recognized the true God; therefore the final condemnation came upon them. **read ›**

19 **Wisdom of Solomon 13:6** Yet for these the blame is small, for they perhaps go astray while seeking God and wishing to find him. **read ›**

20 **Wisdom of Solomon 13:7** For living among his works they search diligently, and they trust their sight, because the things seen are beautiful. **read ›**

21 **1 Maccabees 12:20** "Oniares king of the Spartans to Onias the high priest, greeting. **read ›**

22 **1 Maccabees 15:37** But Trypho boarded a ship and fled to Orthosia. **read ›**

23 **2 Maccabees 12:2** But among the local governors, Timothy and Apollonius the son of Gennaeus, and also Hieronymus and Demophon, and besides these Nicanor the Cypriarch, would not let them settle down and live in quiet. **read ›**

24 **2 Maccabees 12:45** And then, looking to the most splendid reward laid up for those who fall asleep in godliness—a holy and godly thought—he therefore made atonement for the dead, that they might be released from their sin. **read ›**

25 **2 Maccabees 14:14** And the nations from Judea who had fled before Judas flocked to join Nicanor, thinking that the misfortunes and calamities of the Jews would be their own good fortune. **read ›**

26 **2 Maccabees 14:38** For in the former times of separation he had been brought to trial for Judaism, and he had risked body and soul for Judaism with all earnestness. **read ›**

27 **2 Maccabees 15:26** but those with Judas met the enemy with invocation and prayers. **read ›**

28 **3 Maccabees 2:30** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

29 **3 Maccabees 3:4** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

30 **4 Maccabees 7:11** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

31 **4 Maccabees 7:19** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

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32 **Luke 21:8** He said, “Take care that you are not led astray, for many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am he,’ and, ‘The time is at hand.’ Therefore do not follow them. **read ›**

33 **John 1:1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **read ›**

34 **John 1:14** And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we looked upon his glory, glory as of the only-begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. **read ›**

35 **Acts 11:26** When he found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they gathered with the church and taught a considerable multitude. The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch. **read ›**

36 **Acts 17:11** These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so. **read ›**

37 **1 Timothy 4:1** But the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith, paying attention to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, **read ›**

38 **1 Timothy 6:3** If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not consent to sound words, the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, **read ›**

39 **1 John 2:22** Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son. **read ›**

40 **1 John 4:3** and every spirit that does not confess Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming, and now it is already in the world. **read ›**

41 **2 John 1:7** For many deceivers have entered the world, who do not confess Jesus Christ coming in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist. **read ›**

42 **2 John 1:9** Everyone who transgresses and does not remain in the teaching of Christ does not have God. He who remains in the teaching of Christ has both the Father and the Son. **read ›**

ALSO LINKED BY THF TO THESE PASSAGES *34 verses, by reference*

Partly machine-linked: related to the passages, not always quoted in them. Each reference links to the verse in our audio Bible.

Deuteronomy 29:29

Proverbs 8:22 · 18:3

Matthew 1:23 · 5:14 · 20:5 · 22:1

Luke 2:49 · 4:18 · 7:35 · 10:16

John 1:3 · 1:10 · 1:17 · 2:22 · 4:3 · 4:14 · 5:1 · 6:70 · 7:38 · 7:39 · 13:23 · 14:6 · 17:3

Acts 7:53

Galatians 3:19

Ephesians 3:10 · 4:6

Colossians 1:15 · 1:17

2 Timothy 2:17

Hebrews 1:2 · 1:3

1 Peter 1:20

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Searched: Ante-Nicene Fathers volumes 1–9 and the Bible, including the Septuagint.

ABOUT THIS STUDY

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THE END OF THIS STUDY