

# The Great Arian controversy

And Its Present-Day Significance  
(**Study 5** of the **King of Glory** Series.)

Examining why three hated Arian Christian tribes  
vanished from the face of Europe between the 3<sup>rd</sup> -  
5<sup>th</sup> centuries under the power of Rome.



The Council of Nicaea, with Arius  
depicted beneath the feet of the  
Emperor Constantine and the bishops

“ . . behold, there came up among them another little horn, before  
whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and,  
behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth  
speaking great things” – Dan 7:8

Jeff **Wilson**

# King of Glory Series

Covering 5 Significant Successive Eras



**Study 5:** The Dark Ages/Today  
(The Great Arian Controversy)



**Study 4:** Pentecostal Era  
(The 3-Fold Omni Paradox)

Omni Paradox



**Study 3:** Christ's  
Advent/ Incarnation

Sacrifice of Epic Proportion



**Study 2:** The Old Test-  
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**Study 1:** "From the  
Days of Eternity" Era



Christ Our Everlasting Father

# King of Glory

Series intro (repeated)

## Study 1:

Christ Our Everlasting Father

## Study 2:

Family Attack

## Study 3:

Sacrifice of Epic Proportion

## Study 4:

The 3-fold Omni Paradox

## Study 5:

The Great Arian Controversy

And its present-day significance



Above illustration: Wulfila of Ulfilas  
Explaining the Gospels to the Goths

# The Great Arian Controversy

(Final study within a progressive interrelated series)

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## King of Glory Series Overview

### **Study 1: Christ the Everlasting Father**

*Features the Pre-existent Son and the significance of His many “given names” and “family names” as related to His nature and character. The controversy concerning the identity of God’s Son will be considered.*

### **-----2: Family Attack**

*A study of heaven’s family dispute as prefigured in the life of Joseph. We will explore the universal principle of submission and how it was reflected and demonstrated in the life of Joseph and more importantly – the life of Jesus. We will see how this principle is vitally necessary for the success and happiness of individuals, families, churches and the stability and preservation of society.*

### **-----3: Sacrifice of Epic Proportion**

*Exploring the incarnation and “infinite sacrifice” of Christ and how the inestimable value of this sacrifice is proportional to His divine identity. This study directly interconnects with the two studies before and after it*

### **-----4: The 3-Fold “Omni” Paradox**

*Features the glorification of Christ as our anointed everlasting priest and how this was connected to Pentecost and relates to us today*

### **-----5: The Great Arian Controversy . . .**

*A study concerning the 3<sup>rd</sup> century identity war over the Father and Son and how this was associated with the abomination of desolation which seems to be repeated in our day. Examining why three hated Arian Christian tribes vanished from the face of Europe between the 3<sup>rd</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> centuries under the power of Rome Considering what significance that might have for us today as SDAs, along with how we might better understand and openly relate to each other in a non-confrontational Christ-like way.*

‘Truth looses nothing by investigation’

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# PART 1

**INTRODUCTION:** For over 150 years, the Seventh-day Adventist church movement, has shown particular interest in the prophetic book of Daniel. Amidst the various prophecies of Daniel, we have interpreted the three symbolic horns mentioned in Dan 7:8,20, 24 to be three Arian tribes known as the Heruli, the Goths, or Ostrogoths, and the Vandals that were “plucked up”/“subdued” around the fifth century AD. These were successively annihilated by the “little horn” power of Rome over a two hundred year time span beginning in the third century A.D. In SDA 'Daniel Seminars' and articles, featuring Daniel's prophecies, there are usually a few brief references to the three tribes, however the emphasis is usually placed back on the Rome. Attendees and readers (not excluding most long-time SDAs) generally gain a better understanding of Daniel, which of course is good, however they gain little or no understanding of WHY the 3 Arian tribes (3 horns) were destroyed or what they actually believed. As we grow in our faith and knowledge, there comes a time when we should give more attention to this prophecy.

I am under the conviction that God is calling us to explore this area of neglected prophecy – because the ramifications from what occurred continue to this day. Another reason that will be touched on is that you will discover, the Arian controversy was connected with the “abomination of desolation”. Regarding this, Jesus warned us to be on the alert because history has a tendency to repeat - just as “the alpha of apostasy” has over the last 50 years seen to have been repeated in the form of “the omega”. (See Christ the Everlasting Father study). Another thing to keep in mind is that in relation to both events concerning phase 1 and 2 of the abomination of desolation, it involved the rejection and distortion of the identity of the Son of God and His holy covenant in a unification of church and state. (Appendix A). Given this historical fact, it seems likely the final “abomination of desolation as spoken by Daniel the prophet” (Matt 24:15) will be of a very similar nature.

This by no means an exhaustive study of Arian History or of the nature of persecution and destruction of the three tribes. More details of their overthrow, and the religious controversy which was the root of the trouble, are fully given by *Gibbon in the "Decline And Fall of The Roman Empire"*, by *Mosheim in his church history*, by *Alonzo Trevier Jones in "The Two Republics" and "Ecclesiastical Empire"*, and by others to whom their sources I have quoted from. There are many mixed opinions concerning what the Arians actually believed. I have sought to be unbiased and objective throughout part 1 in this discussion, while touching on a sensitive issue that effects both conscientious Trinity believers and the less traditional Trinity believers (sometimes referred to as “non Trinitarians”) presently today. This study was written with the intention of clearing away some misunderstandings and to encourage investigation and reflection in order to learn some practical lessons from history with the negative occurrences WE don't want to repeat.

Part 1 of this study will inform readers as to the issues behind the uprooting of the three tribes. In Part 2 I share my personal convictions concerning the strong orthodox version of the Catholic Trinity and whether it can sufficiently,

or even possibly, harmonize with the biblical Trinity/"heavenly Trio" and the biblical nature of Christ and His "infinite sacrifice". (This is interconnected with another separate study (study 3) entitled "Sacrifice of Epic Proportion").

**OVERVIEW:** Before examining the core beliefs of the Arian Christians, it might be best for those of us unfamiliar with Arian history to take a brief moment to consider some words of Daniel the prophet: -

"And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall **subdue three kings** [people-groups/tribes/kingdoms]. He shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws . . . " - Daniel 7:24,25 (Bracketed comment added)

It is particularly interesting that Dan 7:24 simply says the three horns were "subdued" while on the other hand Dan 7:8 is more explicit stating they were "plucked up **by the roots**"! In other words, Rome, along with the instrumentality of Clovis king of the Franks in AD 508, determined that no trace of these tribes OR their written doctrinal teachings should remain<sup>4</sup> before the Papacy was established in 538 AD. (There are however, some records remaining of their beliefs and practice.) In light of the Daniel passages, here a few basics concerning the tribes by Stephen. N. Haskell.

"But Roman history did not end with the division. Daniel watched, "and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before which there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots." A new power, one outside the empire, is here represented by the little horn. The three divisions which were plucked up were the Heruli in 493, the Vandals in 534, and the Ostrogoths in 538 A.D. Justinian, the emperor, whose seat was at Constantinople, working through his general Belisarius, was the power that overthrew the three kingdoms represented by the three horns, and the reason for their overthrow was their adherence to Arianism in opposition to the orthodox Catholic faith"<sup>1</sup>.

Haskell does not specify exactly what aspects of Catholic orthodox teachings the Arians were opposed to that clashed with their own cherished beliefs. However, there are a number of alternate sources that do describe these people and the beliefs they held.<sup>2</sup> So then, who exactly were the Arian Christians? Firstly, the word "Arian" comes after the notable figure *Arius*.

"**Arius** (Ἄρειος, AD 250 or 256 – 336) was a Christian presbyter [church leader or administrator] from Alexandria, Egypt. His teachings about the nature of the Godhead, which emphasized the Father's Divinity..... and his opposition to the Athanasian or Trinitarian Christology, made him a controversial figure in the First Council of Nicaea, convened by Roman Emperor Constantine in AD 325. After **Emperor Constantine legalized and formalized the Christianity** of the time in the Roman Empire, the newly recognized Catholic Church sought to unify and clarify its theology. Trinitarian partisans, including Athanasius, used Arius and Arianism as epithets to describe those who disagreed with their doctrine of co-equal Trinitarianism, a Christology representing God the Father and Son (Jesus of Nazareth) as "of one essence" (consubstantial) and coeternal"<sup>3</sup>.

"Although "Arianism" suggests that Arius was the originator of the teaching that bears his name, the debate over the Son's precise relationship to the



Father did not begin with him. **This subject had been discussed for decades before his advent; Arius merely intensified the controversy and carried it to a Church-wide audience**, where other "Arians" . . . . such as Eusebius of Nicomedia would prove much more influential in the long run . . . . (Eusebius of Caesarea is possibly one of the drafters of the Nicene Creed.) In fact, **some later "Arians"** disavowed that moniker, claiming not to have been familiar with the man or his specific teachings. However, because the conflict between Arius and his foes brought the issue to the theological forefront, the doctrine he proclaimed—though not originated by him—is generally labeled as "his"<sup>4</sup>. (Emphasis added)

It is worth noting that Arius was not the originator of so called "Arianism" even though this name suggests it. The controversy did not begin or end with him, he was just one of many others that had differing views than the Athanasians. However because he had great influence at that time, we will take a little more time to contemplate his teachings

"A certain Alexander was bishop of Alexandria. Arius was..... in charge of a parish church in the same city. Alexander attempted to explain 'the unity of the Holy Trinity.' Arius dissented from the views set forth by Alexander. A sort of synod of the presbyters of the city was called, and the question was discussed. Both sides claimed the victory, and the controversy spread. Then Alexander convened a council of a hundred bishops, by the majority of which the views of Alexander were endorsed. Upon this, **Arius was commanded to abandon his own opinions**, and adopt Alexander's. Arius refused, and Alexander excommunicated him and all who held with him in opinion, of whom there were a considerable number of bishops and other clergy, and many of the people."<sup>5</sup> (Emphasis added)

As you can see, this was no small controversy.

### **The Council of Nicaea:**

The council of Nicaea was the first of a number of councils over following years that the Emperor called for to try and settle the divided opinions between Alexander, the Athanasian bishops, and the differing Arian party

"In an attempt to settle the matter Constantine called a general council in A. D. 325 held in a city called Nicaea, thus known as "The Council of Nicaea." There were 318 bishops present, not including an innumerable company of deacons, presbyters, acolytes, and other attendants."<sup>6</sup>

"Then the great question that had caused the calling of the council was taken up. There were three parties in the council—those who sided with Alexander, those who sided with Arius, and **those who were non-committal, or, through hope of being mediators, held the middle ground**. Arius, not being a bishop, could not hold an official seat in the council, but he had come at the express command of Constantine, and 'was frequently called upon to express his opinions.'<sup>7</sup> (Emphasis added)

Although there appears to be two strongly opposing parties (strict Arians and the Athanasian party) involved in the controversy, there were in fact three groups. There were in addition to the main two, those who held the middle ground ("semi-Arian").

**THE CHARACTER OF ROME:** It appears from the available records about Arius himself, that he was far from mean-spirited, unreasonable or violent. It seems he and his followers were for the most part non-violent, peaceful people who prized liberty of conscience avoiding unnecessary controversy whenever possible. This was not unlike some of the other Arian leaders such as the Herulian monarch, Odoacer,<sup>8</sup> who in fact was a champion of religious freedom until he and his people faded from history under Roman intolerance. Arius was however often accused of misusing Scripture. Yet one may wonder WHY the vast majority of the writings of Arius were destroyed during the councils of Nicaea. James T. Dennison comments on this,

“Reconstructing the life and doctrine of Arius has proven to be a difficult task, as **none of his original writings survive. Emperor Constantine ordered their burning while Arius was still living**, and any that survived this purge were later destroyed by his Orthodox opponents. Those works which have survived are quoted in the works of churchmen who denounced him as a heretic. This leads **some—but not all—scholars to question their reliability**”<sup>9</sup>. (*Emphasis added*)

Scripture provides clues as to why Rome likely uprooted the 3 Arian tribes. Students of Scripture will recognize Rome, or “antichrist”, is *generally* not threatened by error, but she is threatened by truth – especially core doctrines relating to the gospel of righteousness and the nature and identities of the infinite Father and Son (Dan 11:44; 1 John 2:22,23; 4:2,3).

We have noted this in previous studies. Christ said, “If a kingdom be **divided against** itself, that kingdom cannot stand” (Mark 3:24). And according to Matt 12:25 a divided “kingdom” or “house” (church) will fall and be “brought to desolation”. Therefore we would not expect Rome to persecute those holding her *own* erroneous beliefs and traditions, or those espousing error in general (unless it is for manipulative or selfish purposes.) She does not cause division in her own church communion. She is however *especially* opposed to beliefs that conflict with, OR expose, her own beliefs as revealed in her creeds. (The fact that the Arians were Sabbath keepers may well have been another reason why further on in the controversy, after the introduction of Sunday observance, the Alexanderian or Athanasian parties opposed them and finally uprooted them.) Rome could not defend herself or her doctrines on the basis of Scripture<sup>10</sup>.

*If* the reason Rome uprooted the Arians was not because of *what* they believed, then it must have been because of what they REFUSED to believe. It seems likely the religious controversy was all about power and control on the side of Alexander - and latter Athanasia (representatives of the Roman Emperor Constantine), and ultimately the Papacy in 538 AD. Interestingly, while alive, Arius was not ashamed or unenthusiastic about what he believed, and neither did he remain quiet. He did not allow his doctrinal beliefs (however we might judge them) to remain on parchments to be merely discussed by theologians in ivory towers so they would be inaccessible to the common country or townsfolk. Regardless of what we may feel about him, or the soundness of his theology, it seems fair to say he possessed something that stirred his heart in which he considered of such value that he delighted to put to music and sing – and it triggered inquiry and conversation among many. As A.T. Jones recounts,

"Arius for himself wrote a book entitled "Thalia" – **Songs of Joy** – a collection of songs in which he set forth his views. This expedient took well, for in the excited state of the parties, his doctrinal songs were hummed everywhere.....the controversy spread everywhere and as it spread, it deepened" <sup>11</sup>

"Although his character has been severely assailed by his opponents, **Arius appears to have been a man of personal ascetic achievement, pure morals, and decided convictions**" <sup>12</sup> (*Emphasis added*)

*One more word about Arius.*

"Arius was accused of being too liberal in his theology and too "loose" with heresy (as defined by his opponents). However, **some historians argue** that Arius was actually quite conservative and that he deplored how, in his view, Christian theology was being too freely mixed with Greek paganism." <sup>13</sup>

In apparent contrast to the Arians, notice how pagan based Catholicism forced their people to subscribe to her doctrines,

### ***The Unsuspected Birth of a New Papal Doctrine?***

"The Council of Nicaea, convened in 325 AD by **Emperor Constantine, started the religious controversy, which has never ceased.** Assembling under the sanction of a united church and state, that famous gathering **commanded the submission of believers to new doctrines . . . . .**

The burning question of the decades succeeding the Council of Nicaea was how to state the relations of ***the Three Persons of the Godhead: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The council had decided, and the Papacy had appropriated the decision as its own. The personalities of the Trinity were not confounded, and the substance was not divided.*** The Roman clergy claimed that Christianity had found in the Greek word *homoousios* (in English, "consubstantiality") an appropriate term to express this relationship" <sup>14</sup> (*Emphasis added in above quotes*)

**ARIUS' BELIEFS:** The following is a description of what kind of spirit the Arian party manifested during the Catholic councils and how it seems they were willing to do whatever they could do to retain the peace without consciously compromising their Scriptural convictions. You may notice at least in this instance how their character seems to stand in contrast to the Roman party of Alexander and Athanasius. The latter sided with the Roman hierarchy in what was clearly subtle manipulation and **eventual force in attempting to control individual conscience**, and strangely, even when there was a willingness on the party of Arius part to settle matters peacefully by signing the creed! (Evidently in this case below, the principles outlined in the creed seemed to be in harmony of the teachings of the Arians)

"The first creed presented to the council was written by 18 of the Arian bishops. Couched in scriptural language, this creed stated the Arian position so offensively that bedlam broke loose when it was solemnly presented to the attention of the bishops.

At this point, Eusebius of Caesarea [bishop and friend of Arius] suggested a creed that he had first heard as a child, an astonishingly beautiful creed that was to form the basis of the creed finally adopted.

Eusebius was careful to say he advanced this creed only because he believed divine things cannot be fully expressed in human language: it was not perfect, but it was as close to perfection as he ever hoped to reach." <sup>15</sup> . . . . . It reads as follows: --

"I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of all things both visible and invisible, and in one Lord **Jesus Christ, the Word of God, God of God, Light of Light, Life of Life, the only begotten Son, the First-born of every creature, begotten of the Father before all worlds, by whom also all things were made. Who for our salvation was made flesh, and lived amongst men,** and suffered, and rose again on the third day, and ascended to the Father, and shall come in glory to judge the quick and the dead. **And we believe in one Holy Ghost. Believing each of them to be and to have existed, the Father, only the Father; and the Son, only the Son; and the Holy Ghost, only the Holy Ghost:** as also our Lord sending forth his own disciples to preach, said, 'Go and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:' . . . . . That we have thought these things from our heart and soul . . . . .and that we now think and say thus in truth, we testify in the name of Almighty God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . . ."<sup>16</sup>

***As soon as this was read in the council, the party of Arius all signified their willingness to subscribe to it. But this did not suit the party of Alexander and Athanasius; it was rather the very thing that they did not want, for "they were determined to find some form of words which no Arian could receive." They hunted about, therefore, for some point or some word, upon which they could reject it. It will be noticed that this creed says nothing about the substance of the Son of God, while that was the very question which had brought the council together."***<sup>17</sup> *(Emphasis added)*

I doubt there is anything in this creed any SDA reading this now would disagree with.

"This creed the emperor accepted, and the **Arians, seeing in it nothing that specifically destroyed their position,** would have accepted it if their opponents had not seen that this creed failed in any way to resolve the conflict. It was necessary to state the creed in such a way that the Arians would be forced to deny their essential tenets."<sup>18</sup>

"In this form, [the athematizing Nicene Creed] left much to be desired. It was tortured, blunt-edged, without poetry or rhythm, and without the nobility of the creed of the church of Palestine. But many words that gave a living significance to the original creed—"the Word of God," "the Firstborn of every creature," "begotten of the Father before all worlds"—were in fact deliberately omitted to show that the triumphant Alexandrians would allow no compromise, no loophole for the Arians and were bent on avoiding all misunderstanding."<sup>19</sup>

As we will touch on in part two, the signing of a human creed, no matter how beautifully, poetically or Scripturally accurate it reads, instead of consenting to Scripture alone, always seems to invite problems. Namely, something SDA'S SHOULD BE AWARE OF and avoid like the plague - Church-State union or "the abomination of desolation"!!! (Matt 24:15; Mark 13:14; Luke 21:20) *(Note: There are three phases to the abomination of desolation and one of these took place during immediately before, during and after the uprooting of the Arian Christians under Clovis. Clovis was the king of the Franks, an instrument of Rome we can liken to the state political military power).* The Arians not

realizing at the time were not immune from the ramifications that seemed to have later eventuated from their compliance. Signing a creed seems to be one way the abomination of desolation (politically power driven church OR "church-state union") is set up. See Appendix A for more details.

**"In its original form, the Nicene Creed was a weapon:** it was to become a more sublime article of faith in time, when poetry and ornament and a less abrupt rhythm were fashioned for it by the simple process of adding words. These words, which gave depth and resonance to the Creed, were added at the Council of Constantinople in 381, and finally approved at the Council of Chalcedon in 451."<sup>20</sup>



**Wulfila of Ulfilas** *Explaining the Gospels to the Goths*

### **CHARACTER OF THE GOTHs AND VANDALS:**

We now have an idea as to the general background of Arius. However, not every historian perceived him as favorably. In this section we will objectively consider the differing views concerning the character of the Arians, and those who held similar opinions. We will begin with the Arian Goths and Vandals. What kind of people were they? B.J. Wilkinson's portrayal in *Truth Triumphant* provides a window into their world.

### **Some of the Non-Violent Arian Christians:**

"At this point it should be clearly stated that the Goths are not being presented as constituting the Church in the

Wilderness. However, they certainly were not in sympathy with the church at Rome. **They were a people in which truth was struggling to come to the surface.** But, on the other hand, the religious power predicted in Daniel 8:12 was to cast down the truth to the ground, and so to practice and prosper."<sup>21</sup>

**"The Goths and the Vandals did not fight because of a bloodthirsty temperament,** but because they were blocked by the Romans when driven westward by the wild masses from Scythia and Siberia. The historian Walter F. Adeney has pictured the spirit and methods of the Goths when they sacked Rome in 410: **"In the first place, it was a great thing for Europe that when the Goths poured over Italy and even captured Rome they came as a Christian people, reverencing and sparing the churches, and abstaining from those barbarities that accompanied the invasion of Britain by the heathen Saxons.** But, in the second place, many of these simple Gothic Christians learned to their surprise that they were heretics, and that only when

their efforts toward fraternizing with their fellow Christians in the orthodox Church were angrily resented”<sup>22</sup>

The following words from Thomas Hodgkin show how superior were these invading hosts to the corrupt condition of the state church in northern Africa, when the **Vandals who also refused Rome’s state-prescribed doctrines** seized the homeland of Tertullian and Cyprian:

August had said: ‘I came from my native town to Carthage, and **everywhere around me roared the furnace of unholy love**.... Houses of ill-fame swarming in each street and square, and haunted by men of the highest rank, and what should have been venerable age; hastity outside the ranks of the clergy a thing unknown and unbelieved, and by no means universal within that enclosure; the 138 darker vices, the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah practiced, avowed, gloried in’ — such is the picture which the Gaulish presbyter draws of the capital of Africa<sup>23</sup>

*Into this city of sin marched the Vandal army, one might almost say, when one reads the history of their doings, the army of the Puritans. With all their cruelty and all their greed they kept themselves unspotted by the licentiousness of the splendid city. They banished the men who were earning their living by ministering to the vilest lusts. They rooted out prostitution with a wise yet not a cruel hand. In short, Carthage, under the rule of the Vandals, was a city transformed, barbarous but moral”<sup>23</sup> (Emphasis added)*

A.T. Jones in Ecclesiastical Empire states:

**“Theodoric and his people were Arians, yet at the close of a fifty-years’ rule of Italy, the Ostrogoths could safely challenge their enemies to present a single authentic case in which they had ever persecuted the Catholics.** Even the mother of Theodoric and some of his favorite Goths had embraced the Catholic faith with perfect freedom from any molestation whatever. The **separation between Church and State**, between civil and religious powers, was clear and distinct. Church property was protected in common with other property, while at the same time it was taxed in common with all other property. The clergy were protected . . . with all other people.”<sup>24</sup>

It must be said not all Arians were as respectful as the Gothic ones. Some Arians were so stirred and indignant by the incessant tyranny of Athanasius and his followers that they decided to take matters into their own hands. A.T. Jones describes the nature of the reports of the two opposing Athenasian and Arian parties at two different “rival” councils in A. D. 345-6, one council in Sardica, and the other in Philippopolis.

“The bishops who remained at Sardica complained that the Arians had inflicted upon them deeds of violence by armed soldiers, and . . . threatened to prosecute them before the magistrates; had forged letters against them; had stripped virgins naked; had burnt churches; and had imprisoned the servants of God.

Those assembled at Philippopolis retorted against Athanasius and his

followers, that with **violence, slaughter, and war**, they had wasted the churches of the Alexandrians and had stirred up the pagans to commit upon them assaults and slaughter. They declared that the assembly at Sardica, from which they had seceded, was composed of a multitude of all kinds of wicked and corrupt men from Constantinople and Alexandria, who were guilty of murder, bloodshed, slaughter, highway robbery, pillaging and despoiling; of breaking altars, burning churches, plundering the houses of private citizens, profaning the sacred mysteries, of betraying their solemn obligations to Christ, and of cruelly putting to death most learned elders, deacons, and priests of God. There is little doubt that the statements of both parties were correct:"<sup>25</sup> (*Emphasis added*)

One possible reason for the defensiveness of some of the Arians was in view that they understood the implications if Rome were to gain ecclesiastical power in Europe, and therefore they took desperate measures to oppose this.

"It is evident . . . that this conflict between the Franks and the Visigoths was regarded by the orthodox party of his own and preceding ages as **a religious war**, on which, humanly speaking, the prevalence of the **Catholic or the Arian creed in western Europe depended**."<sup>26</sup>

By this victory, "it was decided that the Franks, and not the Goths, were to direct the future destinies of Gaul and Germany, and that **the Catholic faith, and not Arianism, was to be the religion of these great realms**."<sup>27</sup> (*Emphasis added*)

It is interesting to note from the following quotation that the establishment of the Papacy, with its following 1260 years of inhumane control and tyranny, came on the heels of Clovis king of France shortly after the defeat of the Gothic Christians took place. This church-state union was the driving influence that determined the dominant Roman theology for the following 1,260 years!

"Thus when **Clovis and the Franks defeated the Arian Visigoths and drove them into Spain**, it was also **a theological victory for the bishop of Rome**."<sup>28</sup> (*Emphasis added*)

This provides some background to the issues of the 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> Centuries of the Arian Christians (three kingdom/tribes) that were eventually subdued or driven out from Europe.

**Why Does This Matter To Us Today?:** With this general picture of Arian history in mind, and the intentions of their relentless opponent Rome, I would like now to move toward the main point of this article. Namely, what lessons and affect the whole Arian controversy, including SOME of its doctrinal origins (*in relation to the nature of Christ and His atoning sacrifice*) may have for and upon us today. Presently the influence of the council of Nicaea and its related controversies largely go unrecognized. There is however, a growing number of Seventh-day Adventists that believe the continued influence of Nicaea, and the successive following councils and its creeds, powerfully influences Protestantism, and I dare say respectfully, even unguarded ambivalent SDAs. Furthermore, some believe what should be of even critical importance and denominational concern is that the doctrines devised during the Roman Church councils negatively impact the nature and identities of the three powers within the Godhead, Christ's atonement, His human nature and consequently the gospel in modern protestant Christianity. I fully realize here that most readers will be wondering how that is possible. This should become

a lot clearer when we move on further. ***This article is not just for the intent to journey back through history for no real purpose or relevance. The heart of this study concerns, as mentioned, the "infinite sacrifice" of Christ and in Part 2 we will key in on how this is inseparable from the whole Arian issue.***

**Today's Reoccurring Misrepresentations:** Aside from what one thinks the Arians believed, be those assumptions true or false, non-Trins (Non Trinity believers or "Non-Trinitarian") are often accused of espousing Arianism. Something that is overlooked is that Arius' friend Eusebius of Caesarea was said to be even more influential than Arius and gauging by his personal letters (included later) it seems apparent he did not believe Jesus was created in any way. It is likely many semi-Arians would have believed the same and were eventually despised even more so by the Athanasians. Today within the SDA church, "Non-Trins" (not Arians) are sometimes targeted being accused of promulgating that Christ was created when in fact they seem to believe the contrary. They firmly hold Christ was *begotten* and not created. This is most interesting because in his book *Truth Triumphant*, B. J. Wilkinson believes the heretical '*Jesus a created being*' charge directed toward the Arians was an "erroneous" one. If Wilkinson is right here then it is strikingly apparent that history, along with these kinds of false charges, is being repeated within Adventism today.

"Then the papal party proceeded to call those who would not subscribe to this teaching, Arians, while they took to themselves the title of Trinitarians. ***An erroneous charge was circulated that all who were called Arians believed that Christ was a created being. This stirred up the indignation of those who were not guilty of the charge.***"<sup>29</sup>

A letter written by Eusebius, bishop and supporter of Arius, also indicates Arius may not have subscribed to the notion that Christ was created.

Here is Wilkinson's quote,

"When this form was dictated by the prelates, their expressions 'of the substance of the Father,' and 'consubstantial with the Father,' were not suffered to pass without examination. Hence, therefore, several questions arose, and answers were made, and the sense of these terms was carefully considered. They admitted that the words 'of the substance' signified that the Son was of the Father, but not as a part of the Father [the same Being]. **We thought it well to assent to this explanation, as conveying the pious doctrine, that the Son was of the Father; but not, however, a part of the Father.** We therefore agreed to this opinion; nor did we reject the word consubstantial, having in view the promotion of peace, and being anxious to avoid a departure from the right belief. For the same reason, **we approved also of the words 'begotten, not made,'** since the word make, they said, was common to the other creatures which were made by the Son, and to which He has nothing similar; and that therefore He is not made like those who were created by Himself, but is of a more excellent substance than any created being . . .

But by the expression 'consubstantial with the Father' nothing else is intended, than that the Son of God has no similitude with created beings, but resembles in all things the Father only, by whom He was begotten, and that He is of no other substance or essence than that of the Father. The proposition being thus explained, we thought that we might justly



accede to it; We finally embraced, without further contention . . . . ”  
(*Emphasis added*)<sup>30</sup>

“It is very clear that Eusebius of Cæsarea [or Nicodemia] did not believe that Christ was a created being in any way but that he was begotten of His Father, thus making Him of a much higher nature than any created being. It is also interesting to notice that Eusebius of Cæsarea was writing to Arians, defending his signing of the creed. This view did not seem to be contrary to the beliefs of the Arians. Also, his belief that Christ was begotten rather than created was accepted by the party of the Athanasians as suitable to allow him to continue in his position as a bishop.”<sup>31</sup> (Bracketed comment added)

Here following is B.J. Wilkinson’s description of the Gothic Arian tribes, the Waldensian church, and the early Celtic church of the wilderness which provide a window into the type of people they were and ties all that has been said in this article together.

“All the disputants over the Trinity recognized that when God made man in His image it was the equivalent of writing the Ten Commandments in his heart by creating man with a flawless moral nature. All parties went a step further. They confessed and denied not that in all the universe there was found no one . . . . except **Christ, whose death could atone for the broken law.**

Then the schism came. Those who rejected the intense, exacting definition of three Divine Persons in one body, as laid down by the Council of Nicaea, believed that **Calvary had made Christ a divine sacrifice**, the sinner’s substitute. **The Papacy repudiated the teaching that Jesus died as man’s substitute upon the cross. Consequently it ignored the exalted place given the Decalogue by the crucifixion of Christ.** Those who saw the eternal necessity of magnifying the law, and making it honorable, maintained that death claimed the Son of God, but had left untouched the Father and Holy Spirit. . . . .

No wonder that the Celtic, the Gothic, the Waldensian, the Armenian Churches, and the great Church of the East, as well as other bodies, differed profoundly from the Papacy in its **metaphysical conceptions of the Trinity** and consequently in the importance of the Ten Commandments.” (*Emphasis added*)<sup>32</sup>

**Assessing our methods, attitudes, principles and spirit:** Let’s now make a practical application. We will proceed back from our journey in history and come a little “closer home” and ask what relevant lessons they might teach us. We will observe a few things and learn some lessons regarding *character* in relation, or reaction, to this topic. This can be remembered by the acronym M.A.P.S. (Methods, Attitude, Principles, Spirit). The kind of “MAPS” one adopts, cherishes and cultivates toward the Arian or Trinity issue, or any issue for that matter, is of critical importance.

### **“O. Trin’s” and “L F-S R Trin’s”**

Over the past two decades it is most unfortunate that opposition has been developing and intensifying between what I will call **literal Father-Son relationship Trin’s** (“L F-S R Trin’s”) and those SDAs who strongly hold to the traditional view of the Trinity (Orthodox Trin’s or O. Trin’s).

*Note: After careful reflection I decided to stop using the word "Non Trin" as frequently because of the potential confusion it creates and its negative combative tone. I decided to take a calculated risk and replace that word with "L F-S R Trin" (Literal Father-Son Relationship Trin). I know it's a bit of a mouthful, and may not sit well with everybody but I feel this comprehensive term might be necessary to prevent possible further misunderstandings.*

I will use these abbreviations from now on. *Please understand the statement that follows here is not a criticism and there is no malice in me writing this. It is NOT AN ATTACK against the SDA church which I love and consider a part of.* In 1980, the General Conference voted on a new set of "27 Fundamental Beliefs" in which the Trinity doctrine was officially upheld. Although we have only barely touched on some of the general Godhead aspects in question, it is inappropriate to go into more details of either view here. **Again it should be stressed what follows from here in this section is not for the intention of defending either of the two prominent positions or variant views.** This aside, I am however reporting what I have read and observed from others - which admittedly may contain some bias from them. Readers who don't know about some aspects of the Godhead can thoroughly explore these topics and decide for themselves. I personally believe some individuals on both sides of the argument have made a few HUGE mistakes.

Firstly, strong non-Trin's or even L F-S R Trin's should be careful in their **manner** and use of the expression "Trinitarian" in describing truehearted trinity believing SDA's. It might be difficult at times to avoid the expression, but we need to assess our motives when we do use that term. I have felt sometimes that description can come across very insensitively if one is unfeeling or thinks their character and beliefs are under attack. On the other hand, L F-S R Trin's who are sometimes spoken of by O Trin's as "Arian" or "Semi-Arian" in belief, are generally not in favor of being called such. This is mostly because of the stigma often associated with Arianism. (Besides there were variants of Arius' teaching, for example his friend Eusebius of Cæsarea (Nicodemia) and many he influenced did not believe Jesus was a created being.) Non-trin's should be prepared to take note here of something written by A.T. Jones that may come as a surprise. (For Jones to have written such a statement as follows, we can only guess he was a non-Trin in one sense of the word (i.e. opposed to the strict Catholic version of the Godhead) but not altogether in another). We could say he was a L F-S R Trin. Jones was a prominent figure and pioneer within the SDA church, a brilliant and gifted scholar and wrote extensively on the topic of Arianism. His following statement may challenge the attitude and perception that some non-Trin's maintain in relation to the word *Trinity*. It poses a question regarding whether, historically, the mere *term* "Trinity" was of any real major threat or concern to the Arians. The answer might surprise some readers.

**"There was no dispute about the fact there being a Trinity, it was about the *nature* of the Trinity.** Both parties believed in precisely the

same Trinity, but they differed on the precise relationship which the Son bears to the Father." <sup>33</sup>

Secondly, if you ask L F-S R Trin's if they uphold the divinity of Christ and believe He was uncreated they will tell you they do. Strangely, at least on the surface, it seems Arius believed Jesus was "created". Yet in the same breath he said Christ was begotten of the Father. An Arian paradox. (*Something seems amiss here. Some would consider being begotten and being created are mutually exclusive and history indicates Arius believed the former.*) A number of SDAs assume Arians denied the divinity of Christ and believed He was a created being much like the Jehovah's Witnesses teach and promulgate today. Yet some would say history suggests that this is not true (at least from some sources including his actual letter to Eusebius Bishop of Nicomedia in 321. See end of this article for the full letter to make up your own mind).

*Even though admittedly Arius was a little off guard, or indeed intentional with a couple of his apparently theologically incorrect expressions, we may need to remember he, as with ALL reformers throughout Christendom (like Martin Luther etc.), was growing in understanding and knowledge. It is lot fairer to go by the recorded "weight of evidence" when assessing somebody's beliefs rather than judging them by a single page or two. As mentioned, Arius' opponents burned most of his "positive" writings and as it turned out his literary voice was also silenced. And by the way, eventually his own voice was silenced - there is strong indication that he was poisoned to death.*

*Going by the minimal writings that were preserved, it does seem Arius believed Christ was created from nothing. On the other hand, from what I have observed over recent years, L F-S R Trin's in no way believe the same as Arias here but hold that God's Son was begotten of the Father from the days of eternity (Micah 5:2; Col 1:15). They perceive the Son of God to be such in the literal sense of the word in contrast to merely taking on the role of a Son. They argue that to believe otherwise is to lesson the magnitude of His sacrifice. Furthermore, for these reasons they do not subscribe to the orthodox Trinity but see a difference between the Father and eternal Son - not so much in the Son of God's equality, divinity or even nature (as do most Trinity believers also believe), but a difference in authority and submission - the Son eternally subject to His Father. This is their main argument. Christ's equality with the Father, they say, is **based** on His literal Sonship. In other words, His Sonship establishes His equality. They also argue a Son inherits the very nature of his father.*

Therefore, truehearted O Trin believing SDAs who have opinions regarding Arianism need to be aware of Rome's attitude and spirit against the Arian people and be careful whether by the pen, pastoral voice or in casual unguarded church conversations, not to inadvertently bare false witness against those they perceive and classify as Arian or Semi-Arian and in so doing repeat unpleasant and regrettable history. Neither should *unfounded* statements be circulated, such as, "Non-Trins don't believe in the divinity of Christ or the divinity of Holy Spirit" OR things like ". . . they", or perhaps worse, "he", or "she" "believe/s Christ was created..." without at least providing more concrete evidence to substantiate these claims.

On the other hand, some Non-Trins need to be careful not to place what they prize as truth beyond the gospel righteousness and not allow their beliefs to make them feel secretly spiritually superior, judgmental or defensive against "Trinitarians". (I must say though, most L F-S R Trin's I have met over recent years, like many Trin's, have a beautiful humble spirit and don't harbor malice toward those who differ from them in their beliefs.)

#### **Popularized Assumptions On Both Sides:**

Stepping aside from my objectivity for a moment, I must say I have witnessed L F-S R Trin's that are adamant that their rival friends are theologically off the mark. And on the other hand, Trin's are just as convinced L F-S R Trin's are way off, and even committing blasphemy, by believing what they do! It is very often ASSUMED L F-S R Trin's do not subscribe to "the third person of the Godhead". To Trinity believers this assumption of theirs SEEMS to be implied by the way they perceive L F-S R Trin's default to the orthodox Trinity doctrine. In other words, this appears to be assumed because it is true that SOME L F-S R Trin's resist coming under the singular name Trinitarian. This often leads to further assumptions on the behalf of Trin's. They assume non-Trin's (L F-S R Trin's) understanding of the Holy Spirit is nothing other than an essence or impersonal force. L F-S R Trin's feel nothing could be further from the truth.

**Appeal To All SDAs - even if we must differ:** When it comes to this issue, there is need for humble reevaluation of our terminology and conduct. If he were here today, A.T. Jones may argue that one's understanding of the *nature*, or *concept*, of the Trinity is what is important. It is all a matter of how an individual perceives and gives devotion to the three-personalities/powers/Holy dignitaries within the Godhead and NOT whether a Trinity exists, because in one sense (at least numerically), as far as the Arians were concerned, there was a Trinity! Therefore I dare say guardedly there may be a few Non-Trin's that maybe publically manifesting their resistance to the term "Trinity" (Tri = three, as used in the word tricycle) beyond what is necessary. Is it wise to get hung up on a mere expression IF that unexplained definitive word has the potential to confuse people or, even worse, cause them to form sharp inflexible and militant opinions? Therefore some of the stronger personality type Non-Trin's may need to reconsider giving misplaced (exaggerated) importance or attention to something that, at the end of the day, is found to be a mere label that has proven to confuse people and sometimes inadvertently lead them to form un-Biblical ideas.

If people would humbly sit down in an effort to REALLY understand CLEARLY what each other is trying to communicate, there would more than likely be far less friction, and there would be more favorable reconciliation. However, it appears pride regrettably has prevented some from coming to this beautiful place of togetherness – even IF some must agree to differ.

It might be worth repeating that this article was not and is not for the purpose of defending the doctrine of historical Arianism or historical semi-Arianism. And it is certainly not for the purpose of defending the Athanasian Creed and its orthodox Trinity. Both are seen by many to be wrong in nature and principle in that they fall short of the Scriptural view of the personality of the Godhead and nature of Christ.

For a time the Arians could not fully subscribe to the doctrine of their opponents Alexander or latter Athanasius the newly appointed archbishopric of Alexandria and his bishops. AND THIS IS THE REASON WHY THEY WERE EVENTUALLY BANISHED AND "UPROOTED" AND "SUBDUED"

We have noted in this study that the Arian Goths were generally decent non-violent people. There were times however when some Arians retaliated by resorting to manipulation, force or even bloody conflict although probably not to the degree of the Alexandrian or Athanasian parties.

Unfortunately as it turned out a number of Arian Christians eventually gave in to the constant pressure of Rome, compromising and consenting to their Nicene creeds. In relation to this shift, A.T. Jones expounded and stated: - "Arianism Became Orthodox". This is similar to what has happened to Protestantism over the last two centuries. Protestantism started off relatively doctrinally pure, at least compared to the spiritual darkness surrounding them, but it stopped advancing in the truth and eventually apostatized – reconciling to Rome. This is not to say there are not faithful truth believing souls within that church community anymore than to say there was not faithful God-fearing truth-believing souls during the time when Arianism became orthodox. In an attempt counter defense against the Athanasians they manifested a similar spirit by resorting to trickery, manipulation, calling upon the Emperor to defend them, and they were involved in tumult and religious war.

The lesson to be learned here as sincere truehearted SDA's, is that we should carefully consider these things before subscribing to the orthodox Trinity doctrine of Rome. And whether we choose to be a general Trinity believer or not, we need to guard our heart, our spirit, our attitude ("MAPS") and our tongue avoiding dogmatism, slander and misrepresentation. We should be very on guard so as not to subscribe to and carry out the *spirit* of Rome – namely intolerance, accusation or even persecution, to any one who does not believe as we or "I" do even if we believe our or "my" doctrine to be right.

Could it be that the greatest lesson to be gained from Arian history is so much about doctrinal nuances, be they big or small, but more about our attitude? What spirit, what character do we manifest under injustice, and how do we treat others who differ from us? What have been the ramifications of the loss of God-given religious liberty and personal freedoms under Rome? I will close by allowing A.T. Jones to answer this:

"Even though the decision of the Council of Nicaea had been absolutely, and from honest conviction, spontaneously unanimous, it never could rest with the slightest degree of obligation or authority upon any soul, who had not arrived at the same conclusion from **honest conviction derived from the free exercise of his own power of thought. There is no**

**organization, nor tribunal, on earth that has any right to decide for anybody what is the truth upon any religious question. "The head of every man is Christ."** 1 Cor. xi, 3. "One is your Master, even Christ." Matt. xxiii, 8. "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. . . . So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." Rom. xiv, 4, 12. (*Emphasis added*)

**In the quest for truth every man is free to search, to believe, and to decide for himself alone.** And his assent to any form of belief or doctrine, to be true, **must spring from his own personal conviction** that such is the truth. "The truth itself, forced on man otherwise than by its own inward power, becomes falsehood." -- Neander. And he who suffers anything to be so forced upon him, utters a lie against himself and against God. (*Emphasis added*)

**The realm of thought is the realm of God. Whosoever would attempt to restrict or coerce the free exercise of the thought of another, usurps the dominion of God,** and exercises that of the devil. **This is what Constantine did at the Council of Nice.** This is what the majority of the Council of Nice itself did. In carrying out the purpose for which it was met, this is the only thing that it could do, no matter which side of the controversy should prove victorious. **What Constantine and the Council of Nice did, was to open the way and set the wicked precedent for that despotism over thought, which continued for more than fourteen hundred dreary years,** and which was carried to such horrible lengths when the pope succeeded to the place of Constantine as head over both Church and State. (*Emphasis added*)<sup>34</sup>

### **Summary:**

With all this in mind, whatever we decide to believe concerning the personality of the Godhead, it is good to 1) be cautious not to judge or carelessly label, demeaningly categorize or condemn others for their particular chosen belief, be it Trinitarian OR Non-Trinitarian or other, IF we have a tendency to do that. 2) Remember that the Arians may have been for the most part a God-fearing liberty loving people. They lived in a time when truth was struggling to surface, they were not perfect in either belief or practice and according to A.T. Jones the strict Arians did compromise and eventually become completely orthodox. They made a mistake by signing creeds in an attempt to establish peace where possible but this led to the abomination of desolation - which may be a sign and warning to us today to guard against anything similar. 3) Remember there seemed to three groups involved in the controversy. Arius' friend Eusebius of Cæsarea (we could perhaps say a "semi-Arian") even held a wider circle of influence than Arius and he did not believe Jesus was a created being. Some of the Arians believed similarly and therefore were the object of Rome's persecution. History reveals however, that whatever those who refused to comply believed, and died for, was in sharp contrast with antichrist of Rome. She did not commence her long tyrannical rule while these Arian tribes had influence. She likely purposely waited for their banishment. Therefore she violently - even to the point of bloodshed and utter annihilation - opposed them and "plucked them up by the roots" immediately before the papal Roman church commenced her rule for 1,260 awful and oppressive bloody years of Church-State darkness.

All things considered, there was one thing that Rome could not take away,

one thing it was powerless to affect or stop. That was the faith and conscience of the many uncompromising God-fearing Arian Christians who loved not their lives unto death. Despite the persecution and hardships they bore, the power of their life-witness is an example of the spirit we need to manifest at the end of time; regardless of what Rome assails onto us, that we might also be God-fearing and uncompromising in what we believe, and thus bring forth fruit unto everlasting life, where we can live forevermore joyous and free from the unreasonable oppression of what man attempts to usurp in the place of God. It is my appeal therefore that we will join the numerous companies and countless multitudes of the redeemed of all ages that prized their Lord and Saviour, and His holy covenant, above the creeds of man.

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# EPIC IDENTITY WAR: Seven Examples of Attack Against CHRIST'S SONSHIP

**Attack # 1) Beginning of Controversy In heaven**

**Father  
Son**

**Lucifer  
(Choir leader  
master musician)  
His associates**

**Attack # 2)  
Soon after Exodus**

**Moses: prefigures God  
Aaron: prefigures the Son**

**Korah: A Levite, in  
charge of the sanctuary  
and music. Reflected  
Lucifer's rebellion**

**Attack # 3) Beginning of Christ's Ministry  
(at His Baptism)**

**The Father confirms  
His Son's identity**

**Satan questions  
the Son's identity  
shortly afterwards  
in the wilderness**

## THE ADVENT OF THE MESSIAH

**Beginning of Jesus  
3 1/2 year Ministry**

Jesus tests His  
disciples to see if  
they comprehend  
His real Sonship

**Transfiguration**

The Father  
Confirms the  
Son's Identity  
Again

**Attack # 4)  
At the Cross**

Religious leaders  
question/deny/mock  
Christ's divine identity  
as the Son of God

**Attack # 5)  
325 AD  
The Council  
of Nicaea**

Issue over  
The identity of  
The Father and Son

**Attack # 6)  
508-538 AD  
Clovis King of  
Franks joins Rome.  
Uproots 3 the horns**

Abomination of  
Desolation set up  
Tradition is placed  
above Scripture

**Attack # 7  
TO THIS DAY  
Antichrist**

Denieth the  
Father and the Son  
by spiritualizing  
away truth (the "Omega"?)

# PART 2

## What's the Significance?

**IMPORTANT INTRODUCTORY NOTE:** *Although I have endeavoured to maintain a reasonable level of objectivity in part 1 of this study (difficult to do), I feel the nature of the atonement of Christ, and its relationship to the orthodox Trinity is something of great significance and needs contemplation. Therefore I decided this must somehow be included in this study. So in order openly share my convictions clearly it is necessary for me in this chapter to take off my objective hat. I want to make it clear however, my intention is NOT to try and convince readers to "see it my way" but to appeal to them to at least seriously contemplate what bearing these issues may have upon one another.*

*I hope and pray that you would carefully evaluate and prayerfully consider the things you are about to read. I will begin with the specific differences between Trin's and non-Trin's before discussing how I believe the strict orthodox Trinity is at least incompatible with the true nature of Christ and the Biblical atonement.*

### **How One's Godhead Picture Imperceptibly Effects How One Views The Nature of Christ and the Atonement:**

The main differences between the two parties are *not* over the number of divine persons, OR even the particular functions within the Godhead. It is not a difference in relation to the nature of the Father's, the Son's, or the Holy Spirit's individual work and place in salvation – both sincere truehearted L F-S R Trin's and genuine truehearted Trin's are in harmony and agreement here. Yet it is apparent many are either simply not aware or loose sight of this - especially when differences get magnified! So what *are* the main less recognized differences? Let's now consider them.

Over the years I have come to conclude that the main difference between traditional conscientious Trin's and L F-S R Trin's is largely over the question of *identity*. As mentioned, it concerns the *relationship* between the Father and Son, and furthermore, the voluntary INCARNATE nature of Christ, in connection with His death, and the *identity* of the Holy Spirit. It is true the general unseen nature and supernatural work of the Holy Spirit will forever remain a mystery to all of us (1 Tim 3:16; Col 1:27), yet it's/His identity will not be a mystery to those sincere L F-S R Trin's L F-S R Trin's or Trin's who diligently pray and humbly study.

Coming back to the atonement, we need to seriously ask a sobering question that may make some feel a little uncomfortable. Was Jesus play-acting during the incarnation? And if so would the nature of His death still amount to a divine "infinite" sacrifice? Are the "roles" within the Godhead interchangeable so that the "Son" if he chose, could become the unchangeable "immortal" "Father" or the Father if He chose could become the Son? ***In His assumed humanity*** (and not before) was Christ incapable of choosing to follow His own will, incapable of committing sin or incapable of truly becoming our

substitute to die in our place? It should be understood by SDAs that an affirmative response to these Q's is in fact what the Roman Papal church proposes. This is because of its theological position particularly of the Son within the Godhead - which some Protestants and L F-S R Trin's believe is a kin to blurring their unique and separate yet completely unified identities. In fact it is interesting that no Catholic, Protestant or SDA dares to question the identity and position of the Almighty Father in and of Himself. Indeed non Trin's reason that before he fell, "Lucifer" ("Son of the morning") as he was named, and renamed after his fall "Satan" (adversary), along with countless religious organizations he influenced, have certainly either directly or indirectly attacked, counterfeited or otherwise spiritualized away the true nature of the relational identities between the Father and Son.

L F-S R Trin's believe one way to spiritualize away truth is by the acceptance or promulgation of the orthodox Trinity. They see that what they consider the very real and authentic Father and Son relationship within the Godhead, has been replaced by Rome's "**metaphysical conceptions of the Trinity**" which is based on the doctrinal idea of "'consubstantial' [*Homoousion*, of the same substance]." <sup>35</sup> the formulation of Athanasian Creed the Father and Son are said to be co-equal, **co-eternal**,<sup>36</sup> and con-substantial, which many Arians felt contradicted their teaching that Christ was begotten. L F-S R Trin's believe therefore she had to come up with a interconnected doctrine to deal with their inconsistency between their spiritualized view of the Godhead and the gospel atonement.

What then eventuated is what L F-S R Trin's believe were now two erroneous doctrines. (A misconstrued confusing blurry picture of the Godhead *and* a false teaching concerning the nature of Christ.) Here is what paved the way for Rome's later devised "Immaculate Conception" doctrine.

**Let's simply ask them:** The mistake some Trinity believers fall for is to make sweeping generalizations and even public falsifications before gathering ALL their facts. (Unfortunately, I have witnessed this firsthand more than once). As I have dialogued with and questioned L F-S R Trin's over recent years, contrary to what is so often said by the more fiery type Trinity proponents, and even to my surprise, I must confess I discovered the vast majority of them *do* believe in the third person of the Godhead. Furthermore they *do* believe the Holy Spirit is divine (in contrast to an impersonal force or essence), and they do believe in all the activities (sanctifying work) of the Holy Spirit as the "third person of the Godhead" just as Trinity believers do. And more than this, they do believe in the divinity of Christ and that He is equal to the Father.... (I eventually learned, to my humble confession, by the crucible of experience, rather than to surmise or repeat something picked up on the rumor mill, it is best to **ask them** directly what they believe.)

### **"The Immaculate Conception"**

In AD 431 the doctrine of the "Immaculate Conception" of the Virgin Mary was born to serve this purpose. In short, it purports that because Mary, the "new Eve", was sinless (incapable of sin) then Jesus was sinless in the sense of being wholly incapable of sin.<sup>37</sup> This is also known as the doctrine of "holy flesh", the teaching that denies Jesus' fallen humanity (a physical nature in common with every man and woman).

The implications here are that Jesus had a different nature to that available to us and therefore cannot possibly identify or empathize with us in our trials or temptations as our brother, everlasting High Priest and Divine/human example. Mary was not the "new [sinless] Eve" anymore than Christ was the new (first sinless Adam). She was certainly a holy God-fearing woman chosen by Him to give birth to the world's Messiah. However she was still a sinner in need of grace like the rest of us (See Luke 1). Christ was the "last Adam" (1 Cor 15:45; Rom 1:3-5; 8:3; Heb 2:9-18) who at GREAT risk took upon His sinless nature man's fallen nature. The two natures were mysteriously blended. *For those interested, here below is more detailed description of the immaculate conceptions origin.*

"One of the most discussed doctrines in Catholic-Protestant dialogues is the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. By this dogma, we mean that at the very instant of her conception, by a singular privilege and grace of the omnipotent God, in consideration of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin Mary was preserved free from all stain of original sin (defined 1854 by Pope Pius IX in *Ineffabilis Deus*)."<sup>38</sup>

"Some ask the question, "Why did it take so long for the Immaculate Conception to be defined?" The answer is again, development. Before something can be defined, it must have a firm foundation to stand on. For example, the dogma of the Mother of God (*Theotokos*) developed in the early Church and was finally defined at the Council of Ephesus in the fifth century" 431 AD.<sup>39</sup>

### **Catholicism's Dilemma In Attempting to Harmonize the Orthodox Trinity with the Biblical Nature of the Atonement:**

SDA's are not all opposed to the trinity doctrine in general. Many, even other than L F-S R Trin's SDA's, do not however subscribe to the orthodox Catholic version of the Trinity. It should be of interest to them that in vain attempt did the Church of Rome try to harmonize Christ's atoning sacrifice at Calvary with *their* view of the assumed indivisible and unchangeable Godhead. On one hand, one may argue their belief of Jesus being the EXACT same (*homoousios*) *substance* as God, (Unconditionally immortal in His humanity) cannot match with two other Scriptural beliefs that teach 1) Jesus could have sinned and fallen *had He chose* and At Calvary, for a time, He truly died. (Heb. 4:15; 2:9). I have covered this aspect extensively in "Sacrifice of Epic Proportion"

L F-S R Trin's concern is that the orthodox indivisible changelessness aspect of the Trinity may be a more subtle form of misrepresentation than many, Adventists included, realize. When examined more closely, there seem to be gaps and it may leave one to question whether it can possibly harmonize with Christ's "infinite [divine] sacrifice". This was one of the REAL doctrinal issues between the lengthy controversy surrounding the Council of Nicaea and those councils following between the persecuting Roman Church and the Arian Christians for over two bloody centuries. One may wonder if the reason the Arian Christians resisted the mounting pressure of the Pontifical church, even to the point of bloodshed and death, was because they thought that these issues were something more than mere trivial doctrinal matters. The issues were in no way small in their eyes.

## The Great Divide

Without going into theological details here, as do A.T. Jones, Gibbon and Wilkinson in their books, we may need to clarify some things that have been said and state what they mean in everyday language. In short, the Roman Church and growing Papacy believed and forcibly taught Christ as the “everlastingly” begotten Son of God who was the same in substance in an **unchangeable indivisible sense**. On the other hand, many Arian Christians believed Christ the Son of God was not the same substance. It could be seen however they believed that by inheritance, through His begotten nature, **the Son is very similar to His Father and almost identical**. There was a difference however in identity and ultimate authority and submission. (Heb. 1:3,4). On the previous point they may have agreed with Ellen White when she stated,

“From eternity there was a complete unity between the Father and the Son. They were two, **yet little short of being identical; two in individuality**, yet one in spirit, and heart, and character.” (Ellen G. White, *Youth’s Instructor* 16<sup>th</sup> December 1897’).

**Ramifications of “One Substance”:** Some will argue that just because the Arian Christians did not subscribe to the Catholic doctrine of “Consubstantiality” or “One substance” this is not to say the Arians didn’t believe that Christ was the “express image” [exact likeness] to the Father or *equal and one in unity, purpose, nature and character*. It seems as though many of them did. We need to recognize what a seemingly insignificant difference can lead to. (Interestingly, according to A.T. Jones, during the time of Arius many people did not understand the real nature or ramifications of the whole controversy either.) The first difference is that they simply believed Christ was truly the pre-existent eternal Son of the Father and therefore subject to Him, yet, in a position of *relational* equality. In his discussions with his opponents, Arius was known to refer to some of the following verses. (Heb. 1: 3, 4; John 1:14,18; John 14:28; 1 Cor. 8:6; 11:3). Secondly, L F-S R Trin’s today perceive that although Catholicism appears to believe Christ was begotten of the Father, in reality, it appears the “mystery” of their Trinity teaching subtly denies this. L F-S R Trin’s say the way they spiritualize Christ’s literal Sonship to the Father is to say He was “**eternally** begotten” (See below quotes). In other words, Christ was never at one point literally begotten of the Father.<sup>40</sup> Some L F-S R Trin’s argue that the “time” factor (how many billions or trillions of years old the Son of God is) has little to do with measuring His divinely inherited nature or equality with the Father. Other L F-S R Trin’s believe Christ “the Word” always existed in the Father, yet was at one point, possibly multiple trillions of years ago, begotten and thus made visibly manifest. So in that sense, the Father was never alone – Christ was IN Him just as Levi was in Abraham and even “paid tithes” and “received tithes” IN him years before he was manifestly begotten. (See Heb. 7:9). These issues however, are not as important as Christ’s current literal Sonship with His Father.

"The Christian belief is that the Christ of history is the Son of God, eternally begotten by one ceaseless action from the Father..."<sup>41</sup>

"This is what the Catholic Church teaches today. They claim that the term, "*eternally begotten*" means that Christ was begotten of the Father in one ceaseless action. They claim that Christ has been in the process of being begotten forever in the past, is still being begotten, and will continue to be begotten forever in the future. They apparently adopted this idea in an attempt to reconcile this new teaching of Christ always existing with the plain Bible statements that Christ was begotten of His Father".<sup>42</sup>

### **The Link Between The Nature of Christ and The Godhead:**

In addition to Christ's pre-existent nature, Rome's view of the *unchangeableness* of the Son (the assumption He Jesus didn't truly take on humanities flesh and blood nature) as reflected in their teaching of the Trinity, was also a major concern of the Arians. For them it essentially spiritualized away a fundamental truth of Christ's incarnation leaving no room for the very real risk factors involved. Not only does this diminish Christ as our example, **it leaves no room for the Son of God's conditional immortality and His eventual TOTAL sacrifice in death.** Maybe at this point we should briefly consider these very real risk factors. Expounding on the mysteriously blended dual nature of Christ Ellen White wrote,

"Our Lord was tempted **as man is tempted.** He was **capable of yielding to temptations,** as are human beings. **His finite nature was pure and spotless, but the divine nature** that led Him to say to Philip, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father" also, was not humanized; neither was humanity deified **by the blending or union of the two natures;** each retained its essential character and properties."<sup>43</sup>

Here one can see how the incarnation immediately introduced these risk factors into Christ's life. Now, as a man, He *could* be tempted whereas prior to that, in His pre-existence in heavenly security, majesty and glory, He could not.

Ellen White then went on to say that we must not think that in His human nature Christ possessed the sinful propensities of fallen humanity. However repeating what she said previously she did emphasize: -

"The divine nature, combined with the human, made Him **capable of yielding to Satan's temptations.**"<sup>44</sup>

This was the heavy inestimable price that Christ was required to pay in becoming incarnate and taking our place in every respect.

"Remember that Christ **risked all;** "tempted like as we are," **he staked even his own eternal existence upon the issue of the conflict.**"<sup>45</sup>

Then she added these astonishing and profound words

"**Heaven itself was imperiled for our redemption.** At the foot of the cross, remembering that for one sinner Jesus would have yielded up his life, **we may estimate the value of a soul.**"<sup>46</sup>

"Alexander [of Rome] reasoned that the Son could not sin neither could He undergo change. This is obviously in contrast to what was believed by Arius

and his followers. **Here therefore we can see the very crux of the debate.** The Arians believed that even though Christ was the Son of God, the incarnation made Him susceptible to sin and change. On the other hand, the Alexandrians (those whose theology became what we now know as trinitarianism) disagreed with this reasoning".<sup>47</sup>

Yet Scripture says,

"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Hebrews 4:15

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If during the days of His flesh Jesus the Son of man was not in a position where there was the possibility of yielding to His own will through temptation, then He would be advantageously different from every human being. It could *not* then be said of Him that He "was "tempted like as we are". IF Jesus did the unthinkable and indulged the clamoring of His offending flesh nature and been carried away by temptation to evil, then He certainly would have forfeited His attributes of deity and thus would have said "Good bye" to His eternal existence!

Notice now there is a monumental difference between the position of Christ prior to taking upon Himself our human nature, and that during the 33 years after He did.

"As God, Christ could not be tempted any more than He was not tempted from His allegiance in heaven. But as Christ humbled Himself to the nature of man, He could be tempted."

Therefore prior to the incarnation, as "being in the [very] form of God" Christ could not possibly be tempted in any way. Yet in His incarnation He had to be in a state where following the rules of engagement on a level playing field. He demonstrated not what a God could do but what a *man* could do by submission to God through active living faith. The relational Godhead picture models and demonstrates complete submission and faith that we cannot question making Christianity unique above all other religions with impersonal gods. Christ willingly subjected Himself to a position where this would change and where He COULD be "tempted in ALL points like as we are". Contrary to Rome, this is what Arius believed and this is a major context we need to understand. - The above paragraphs under the blue-stared line were partly adapted from *a research paper on the history of the trinity doctrine within the early Christian Church and within Seventh-day Adventism, Section eight, Terry Hill*

**Bottom Line Q's:**

Concerning the Trinity or Godhead the question of the identity of the Holy Spirit might come to mind. it will not be very appropriate to branch off into this topic here. Although, perhaps we personally and prayerfully would benefit to ask ourselves, Is the Holy Spirit an independent self-originating God-being that could exist without the Father or Son? Or does the identity of the Holy Spirit originate with the Almighty Father and "Great Source of all" (D.A. 21; Acts 17:24-26)? All these are the serious questions that matter much more than whether or not one views him or herself "Trinitarian" or "non-Trinitarian". I believe it narrows right down to something bigger than all this.

I have come to believe it to be a question of, does one TRULY believe "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16)? I am NOT talking about a charade play-acting atonement here as espoused by orthodoxy. I am referring to God *giving* His Son in the real sense of the word just as typified by Abraham when He was prepared to offer up his "only begotten son" Isaac as a sacrifice (Heb. 11:17) who was a direct "figure" of Christ. How much greater is God than Abraham? Therefore the answer to the following Q is easy - Was Abraham prepared to make a more valuable sacrifice than God by willingly yielding up the son of his love?! If we believe the Father and His eternal Son were play-acting together we may hesitate to answer.

### **Human Or Divine Sacrifice?**

We may benefit at this point by further exploring the nature of the atonement. We will look at some of the related theological ramifications in relation to both the Arian controversy and similar issues that seem to be repeating and developing today within the Adventist community of faith. The questions are; was the death that Christ subjected Himself to different from a mere human death and was there any possibility of Him loosing His immortality?

**Christ's "Infinite Sacrifice":** if it was just a human sacrifice that occurred at the cross - a mere case of where the Son of God was only prepared to lay down His humanity - then what difference was Christ's death to that of the martyrs? (See 2 T 213-215). T.V. "stars", "superheroes" or war heroes throughout history at best only have in times of desperation and crisis yielded their mortal lives, be it real, or, during pretended fantasy through drama. They have yielded their lives in rescuing others from danger - maybe on occasion for foreseen publicity to boost their own egos. But one thing is overlooked. As admirable as they sometimes are, these successful rescue missions by people sometimes referred to as heroes, are only individuals rescuing another individuals from the *first* temporary death Scripture likens to "sleep". In contrast to this, Christ the Son of the living God rescued a whole world from sudden death (Rom 5:6-21; Heb. 2:9) and furthermore He rescues all who whole heartedly accept His sacrifice and yield their lives to Him from the second death (eternal permanent annihilation and separation from God!). And that's not all. He had an infinitely greater pre-existent life to offer as sacrifice in order to accomplish this (Heb. 9:26). It was indescribable Heavenly relational joys, riches, glory and immortality that Christ was willing to risk, and eventually lay down, for the totally undeserving - and even His mortal enemies. Who else can lay claim to that?!!!)

### **How the creed was used as a weapon**

In concluding I would like to quote A.T. Jones which aptly summarizes the issues of Rome's intolerance to individual thought contrary to its creeds, OR even when a party consents to it when it can, her spirit of coercion and therefore her violation of the principle of God-given religious liberty.

"The council at Rimini was already met, and was earnestly discussing the faith . . . the bishops arrived from Srimium with the above creed, which they read aloud to the assembly . . . . To this all the Arians in the council readily agreed, but the Catholics, with loud voices, proclaimed their dissent.



They declared that any new formula of faith was wholly unnecessary; that **the Council of Nice had done all that was necessary in regard to the faith**; and that **the business of the council was not to find out what was the true faith, but to put to confusion all its opponents.**" <sup>48</sup>

"Thus Constantius had succeeded much more fully than had his father, in establishing "the unity of the faith." That faith was the **original Arian. And Arianism was now as entirely orthodox, and, if the accommodated sense of the word be used, as entirely Catholic**, as the Athanasian had ever been.

Having like his father, by the aid of the bishops, united the world "under one head," and brought the opinions respecting the Deity to a condition of "settled uniformity," the emperor Constantius died the following year, A. D. 361." <sup>49</sup>

Now we have a clearer picture of some of the core issues surrounding the whole Arian Controversy. It was not a debate concerning a non-salvation issue or something detached from the gospel. Moreover we should now be a little less inclined to brush over it as an insignificant chapter in history. I hope and pray now that the reader will better understand that Daniel did not just happen to make three references to the uprooting of these tribes in a post-apostolic prophecy for no real significant reason that can be applied to us today.

Earth's kingdoms, be they good or bad, have fallen or have been subdued. All of the successive world kingdoms have been shown throughout history to be unfit to rule. But God will soon usher in His everlasting kingdom, a kingdom of freedom and liberty, where He will gather the faithful of all ages and be to them their eternal king before His throne of glory. The eternal Son of God will be their servant, Lord and their God – the one whom they will worship and adore for all eternity.

But until that time may we be always mindful of our MAPS (Methods, Attitudes, Principles and Spirit) and the "infinite" cost and inestimable risks involved for our salvation.

## REFERENCES

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<sup>35</sup> *Same substance, Nicene Creeds 325 AD, 381 AD Wikipedia (See "Consubstantiality" Wikipedia*

<sup>36</sup> *The Two Republics by A.T. Jones, p. 334, 335.)*

<sup>37</sup> *(Alexander of Alexandria to Alexander of Constantinople, Theodoret's History, Book 1 chapter 3 page 38)*

<sup>38</sup> Catholic Statement from an article entitled, *Development of the Immaculate Conception*, (<http://www.philvaz.com/apologetics/a95.htm>).

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid. See also Ecumenical Nicene Creeds 1973, 1975, 1988 .*

<sup>40</sup> *Ecumenical Nicene Creeds 1973, 1975, 1988*

<sup>41</sup> *Tell Us About God... Who Is He?, , by the Knights of Columbus (Page 30)*

<sup>42</sup> *The Formulation of the Doctrine of the Trinity, Lynnford Beachy (Page 9)*

<sup>43</sup> *Ellen G. White, Manuscript Releases Volume 16, MR 1211 The Humiliation of Christ, Diary 1890, Emphasis added)*

<sup>44</sup> *(Ibid)*

<sup>45</sup> *(Ellen G. White, General Conference Bulletin 1<sup>st</sup> Dec. 1895 'Seeking the Lost', Week of Prayer reading for Sabbath December 28<sup>th</sup> 1895)*

<sup>46</sup> *(Ibid) – S.O.P. quotation in a research paper on the history of the trinity doctrine within the early Christian Church and within Seventh-day Adventism, Section eight, Terry Hill (Emphasis added)*

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>48</sup> *A.T. Jones, The Two Republics (Online) p. 182*

<sup>49</sup> *A.T. Jones, The Two Republics (Online) p. 183*

*The Letter of Arius to Eusebius, Bishop of Nicomedia, c.321*  
**Theodoret, Alexander Bishop of Cyrus, 423-458, H.E.I.v**

*To his dearest lord, the man of God, the faithful and orthodox Eusebius, Arius, unjustly persecuted by Pope Alexander on account of that all-conquering truth which you also champion, sends greeting in the Lord.*

*Since my father Ammonius is going into Nicomedia, I thought it my duty to salute you by him, and at the same time to advise that naturally charitable disposition of yours, which you display towards the brethren for the sake of God and his Christ, how grievously the bishop attacks and persecutes us, and comes full tilt against us, so that he drives us from the city as atheists because we do not concur with him when he publicly preaches, "God always, the Son always; at the same time the Father, at the same time the Son; the Son co-exists with God, unbegotten; he is ever-begotten, he is not born-by-begetting; neither by thought nor by any moment of time does God precede the Son; God always, Son always, the Son exists from God himself".*

*Eusebius, your brother, Bishop of Caesarea, Theodotus, Paulinus, Athanasius, Gregory, Aetius, and all the other bishops of the East, have been condemned for saying that God existed, without beginning, before the Son; except Philogonius, Hellanicus, and Macarius, men who are heretics and unlearned in the faith; some of whom say that the Son is an effluence, others a projection, others that he is co-unbegotten.*

*To these impieties we cannot even listen, even though the heretics threaten us with a thousand deaths. But what we say and think we both have taught and continue to teach; that the Son is not unbegotten, nor part of the unbegotten in any way, nor is he derived from any substance; but that by his own will and counsel he existed before times and ages fully God, only-begotten, unchangeable.*

*And before he was begotten or created or appointed or established, he did not exist; for he was not unbegotten. We are persecuted because we say the Son has a beginning, but God is without beginning. For that reason we are persecuted, and because we say that he is from what is not. And this we say because he is neither part of God nor derived from any substance. For this we are persecuted; the rest you know.*

*I trust that you are strong in the Lord, mindful of our afflictions, a true fellow-disciple of Lucian, Eusebius.*

- *Documents of the Christian Church*, Selected and Edited by Henry Bettenson, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, 1963. p.39. Oxford University Press.

# APPENDIX A

## THE ABOMINATION (TRANSGRESSION) OF DESOLATION IN CONNECTION WITH THE BANISHMENT OF THE ARIAN CHRISTIANS AND “THE MIGHTY AND HOLY PEOPLE”

### The setting up of the 1260-year “ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION”

**508**      **538**    CHURCH/STATE UNION “BY REASON OF TRANSGRESSION”      **1798**

**Clovis** (In 508 Clovis king of the Franks headed the “army” to serve the purpose of the papacy  
He [Clovis - signifying the state] has “Intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant”  
And “He [PAGAN Rome] shall be mighty, but not in his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully”  
“Takes away” Heb. “ruwm” [takes up or embraces] the continual [paganism] while at the same time  
distorting the heavenly sanctuary truth by introducing a counterfeit AND destroys or “take[s] away”  
[“suwr” Heb.] (Dan 11:31, 12:11) or tramples upon or God’s sanctuary/church body [the “holy city”])

Abom.	Papal	Tramples the “host” or “sanctuary” “underfoot”	Fatal
Des.	Supremacy	“They shall tread upon the holy city 42 months”	wound
set up	# 1: (1,260 years)	“Pollute the sanctuary of strength”	



### ***The Church-State Union Has Indignation Against the Holy Covenant***

The first abomination of desolation occurred by “reason of transgression”. It was the result of the transgressions of the Jews in rejecting Christ as the Son of God and His holy covenant. That’s why the abomination of desolation or “the abomination that maketh desolate” is also called “the transgression of desolation” (Dan 8:13). A miniature church-state union occurred when the “people of the covenant” said, “We have no king but Caesar” At that time Rome was in power and the church continued to decline in apostasy as it continued to unite with the state. The Apostle Paul warned of a “falling away” first before the “man of sin” would be revealed. (2 Thess 2:3-4)

The powers of Rome that arose out of Greece are said to be strong but “not” in their own “power”.

The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia. <sup>21</sup>And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king. Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but **not in his power**. And in the latter time of their kingdom, **when the transgressors are come to the full**, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences shall stand up. And his power shall be mighty, but **not in his own power**: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper and practice, and shall destroy the mighty and holy people" – Dan 8:20-24

The implication here is that there is no great power when a kingdom is divided. When kingdoms unite under a church-state union temporary political strength eventuates. Jesus could see in the future what would take place when His people forsook the holy covenant and rejected Him as the "Prince of the covenant" and joined Rome in crucifying Him.

He said, <sup>38</sup>Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." (Matthew 23:37-38)  
When in the future Jesus leaves the heavenly sanctuary He will declare  
"Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." (See also Luke 19:43)

Dan 9:26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. – Dan 9:26

According to the context of this passage, the "prince" to come is the Messiah and not a Roman prince which has no context to suggest this. The Jews were not "the people of the Prince" after 34 A.D. nor did they destroy the city and the sanctuary. Thus the people of the Prince can only be His Covenant church going into apostasy and joining Rome.

The church-state union has "indignation against the holy covenant". Pagan Rome is said to "be mighty, but not in his [own] power". Those who forsook the Holy Covenant joined with the state power and that's what made it "mighty" and to be able to "destroy wonderfully"

And his [Pagan Rome's] power shall be mighty, but **not by his own power**: [It joined with those who rejected the holy covenant] and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall **prosper, and practice**, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. – Dan 8:24 (Bracketed comments added)

During the time of Christ, the Jewish nation rejected "the Holy Covenant" and the "Prince of the Covenant". They united with Pagan Rome (the state that had "indignation against the Holy Covenant") in their rejection of Christ – "the Prince of the covenant" (Dan 11:30; 8:25; 9:25). The following prophecy was fulfilled

The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand; <sup>50</sup>**A nation of fierce countenance, [Pagan Rome]** which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favour to the young:- Deut 28:49-50

A little over two centuries later, around the time when the papacy was emerging to power, another prophecy concerning Pagan Rome was fulfilled. The newly formed Roman Catholic (church-state) Empire “cast the truth to the ground” employed policy and craft, “and by peace” [through a creed] it would “destroy many”

And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and **by peace shall destroy many**: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand – Dan 8:24,25

For the ships of Chittim shall come against him: therefore he shall be grieved, and return, and have **indignation against the holy covenant**: so shall he do; he shall even return, and have intelligence with them that **forsake the holy covenant**. <sup>31</sup>And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall **pollute the sanctuary of strength**, and shall take away the daily, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate. <sup>32</sup>And **such as do wickedly against the covenant** shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits. - Dan 11:30-32

“And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the **indignation be accomplished**: for that that is determined shall be done. – Dan 11:36

Pagan Rome unites with the apostate church

he [Rome] shall be grieved, and return, and have indignation against the holy covenant: so shall he do; he [Rome] shall even return, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant.” - Dan 11:30.

The “**them**” (those “that forsake the holy covenant”) is the “host” (Dan 8:12) who is given to Rome “by reason of transgression”. Because of the “falling away” (2 Thess 2:3-4) and rejection of truth, the corrupt church [“host”] had “intelligence” [joined] with the Roman Empire and the two had “indignation against the holy covenant” - and the people of the holy covenant – many no doubt who were Arian Christians who were opposed to this.

Thus although the pagan religion of the empire had now given way to the Christian religion, there was a difference in theology that prevented the Pope from assuming the title so recently bestowed upon him by Emperor Justinian. **The Vandals, Ostrogoths and Heruli, all avowed Arians, refused to acknowledge the Bishop of Rome as head over the churches and opposed the Catholic Emperor.** – Author unknown

We see here that the indignation is against the Holy Covenant and two parties are coming together for this common hatred. In Dan 11:36 we see this indignation again: The primary focus of Daniel’s vision is on this indignation which is against the Holy Covenant. And that’s why it destroyed the mighty and holy people (the God-fearing Christians) that worshiped and adored the Father and His only begotten Son – the Prince of the covenant.