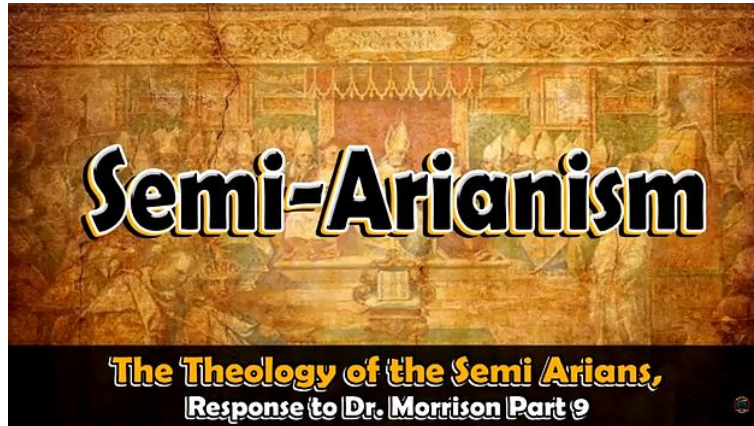




GLOBAL IMPACT MINISTRIES

*A Defense of the Apostolic
Christian Faith*

The Theology of the Semi Arians, Response to Dr. Morrison Part 9



The Theology of the Semi-Arians

Under "Arianism," the New Advent Encyclopedia explains the theology of the Semi-Arians:

"... while they affirmed the Word of God to be everlasting, **they imagined Him as having become the Son to create the worlds and redeem mankind** ... Five ante-Nicene Fathers are especially quoted: Athenagoras, Tatian, Theophilus of Antioch, Hippolytus, and Novatian, whose language appears to involve a **peculiar notion of Sonship, as though it did not come into being or were not perfect until the dawn of creation**. To these may be added Tertullian and Methodius. Cardinal Newman held that their view, which is found clearly in Tertullian, of **the Son existing after the Word, is connected as an antecedent with Arianism...**"

Wiki Encyclopedia explains the theology of the Semi-Arians:

"the Semi-Arians, however, admitted that **the Son was 'of a similar substance' (homoiousios) as the Father but not "of the same substance" (homoousios) as him.**"

At 5:05 into the Christian Answers Part 5 Lecture on Early Christian History, Mr. Morrison said, "**Jesus was in heaven FROM AGES PAST.**" Mr. Morrison was referencing the belief of the pre-Nicene Semi Arians when he said, "from ages past" rather than "from eternity past" because not a single early Christian writer before Origen (3rd century) ever taught an eternal Son. In contradistinction to the Semi Arians, Modalists such as Ignatius of Antioch taught that the timeless invisible God became visible via virgin conception and birth as the Son, but no one taught that an alleged timeless Son could be timeless visible as a Son until the time of Origen (3rd century).

Ignatius wrote to Polycarp 3:2, "Look for Him who is above all time, **THE TIMELESS, THE INVISIBLE, WHO FOR OUR SAKE BECAME VISIBLE ...**"

Like modern Trinitarians and Jehovah's Witnesses, Semi-Arians such as Justin had taught that the Son was seen as an angel before the incarnation; yet Ignatius had taught that the timeless God was invisible before becoming visible via virgin conception and birth. Therefore, the earliest Christian witness (predating Arianism and Trinitarianism) did not believe in the latter Semi-Arian and Trinitarian view that the Son could be seen as an angel in the Hebrew Scriptures.

The Semi-Arians Did Not Believe That Jesus Is God

At 14:00 into the Christian Answers Part 5 Video on church history, Mr. Morrison and Mr. Wessels were agreeing that the early Christians worshiped Jesus as God. However, while the Modalists were worshiping Jesus as God, the Semi-Arians like Origen and Hippolytus were denying that Jesus is the Most High God in their polemic against the Oneness Modalists.

Origen wrote in Contra Celsus 8:14, "Grant that there may be some individuals among the multitudes of believers who are not in entire agreement with us, and **who incautiously assert that the Savior is the Most High God; however, we do not hold with them**, but rather believe Him when He says, 'The Father who sent Me is greater than I.'" Contra Celsus 8:14

Origen further wrote against the Modalists, "**I WONDER AT THE STUPIDITY OF THE GENERAL RUN OF CHRISTIANS** (the Christian majority) **IN THIS MATTER**. I do not mince matters; it is nothing but stupidity ... **THEY PROCEED DIFFERENTLY AND ASK, WHAT IS THE SON OF GOD WHEN CALLED THE WORD? THE PASSAGE THEY EMPLOY IS THAT IN THE PSALMS, 'MY HEART HAS PRODUCED A GOOD WORD;'** AND **THEY IMAGINE THE SON TO BE THE UTTERANCE OF THE FATHER DEPOSITED**, as it were, in syllables ... **THEY DO NOT ALLOW HIM ... ANY INDEPENDENT HYPOSTASIS** (substance of Being), nor are they clear about His essence. I do not mean that they confuse its qualities, but the fact of **His having AN ESSENCE OF HIS OWN** (Origen's view). For **NO ONE CAN UNDERSTAND** (among "the general run of Christians") **HOW THAT WHICH IS SAID TO BE THE WORD CAN BE A SON. AND SUCH AN ANIMATED WORD, NOT BEING A SEPARATE ENTITY FROM THE FATHER** (Origen's view) ... **God the Word IS A SEPARATE BEING AND HAS AN ESSENCE OF HIS OWN.**" (*Origen's Commentary on the Gospel of John, Book 1, Chapter 23*)

Origen identified the Modalists as "the general run of Christians" in the early to mid-third century who believed that the word (logos) is "the utterance of the Father deposited." Origen differentiated his theology from the Modalists in that the Modalists taught that Jesus has the same Essence of Being (hypostasis) of the Father while Origen taught that the Son is "a separate entity from the Father" as "a separate being" with "an essence of his own." Thus, it is clear that Origen not only denied the divinity of Jesus Christ, he also denied the later Nicene Creed.

In Contra Noetus 10-11 Hippolytus wrote, "God, subsisting alone, and having nothing contemporaneous with Himself, determined to create the world. And **conceiving the world in mind, and willing and uttering the Word, HE MADE IT; and straightway IT APPEARED, FORMED AS IT HAD PLEASSED HIM.** For us, then, it is sufficient to know that **THERE WAS NOTHING CONTEMPORANEOUS WITH GOD. BESIDE HIM THERE WAS NOTHING ... He begat the Word** [and] uttering the voice first, and begetting Him as Light of Light, He set Him forth to the world as its Lord ... **And thus THERE APPEARED ANOTHER BESIDE HIMSELE.**" (Cited by Johannes Quasten, *Patrology Vol. 2, Page 200 – Hippolytus, Refutation of all Heresies 9:12*)

After citing Hippolytus (above), Church historian Johannes Quasten identified Hippolytus and his adherents as unorthodox "ditheists" (*Johannes Quasten, Patrology Vol. 2, Page 200*).

"Thus Pope Callistus (a Modalist) was correct in dubbing Hippolytus and his adherents DITHEISTS or worshipers of two gods, although Hippolytus resented this bitterly (*Refutation of all Heresies 9:12*)." (Note: the early Roman bishops were not called Popes within the first few centuries of the Christian era)

Wherefore, the historical evidence proves that the Modalists were the true Christians who believed in the deity of Christ long before the Council of Nicaea while the Semi-Arian minority denied the true divinity of Jesus Christ.

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