

# CHURCH HISTORY LITERACY

## The Cappadocian Fathers and The Trinity

### Lesson 23

*Biblical-Literacy.com*

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Who is  
Jesus?

# Who is Jesus?







# Who is Jesus?

“We believe in one God, the Father Almighty ...  
and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God,  
begotten from the Father ... God of God ...  
begotten not made, of one substance with the  
Father...”

# Two Different Heresies:

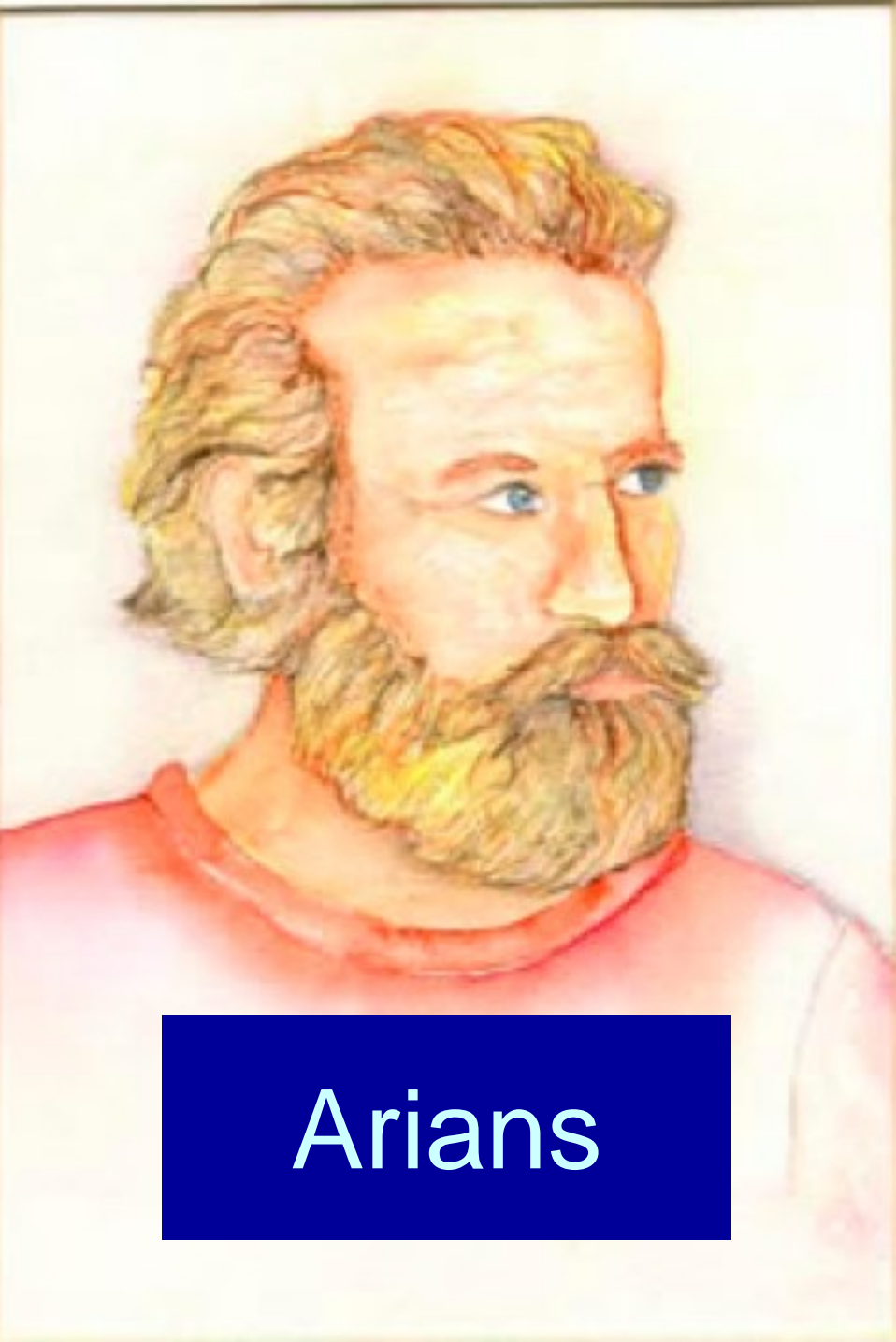
# Two Different Heresies:

Arians

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Arians

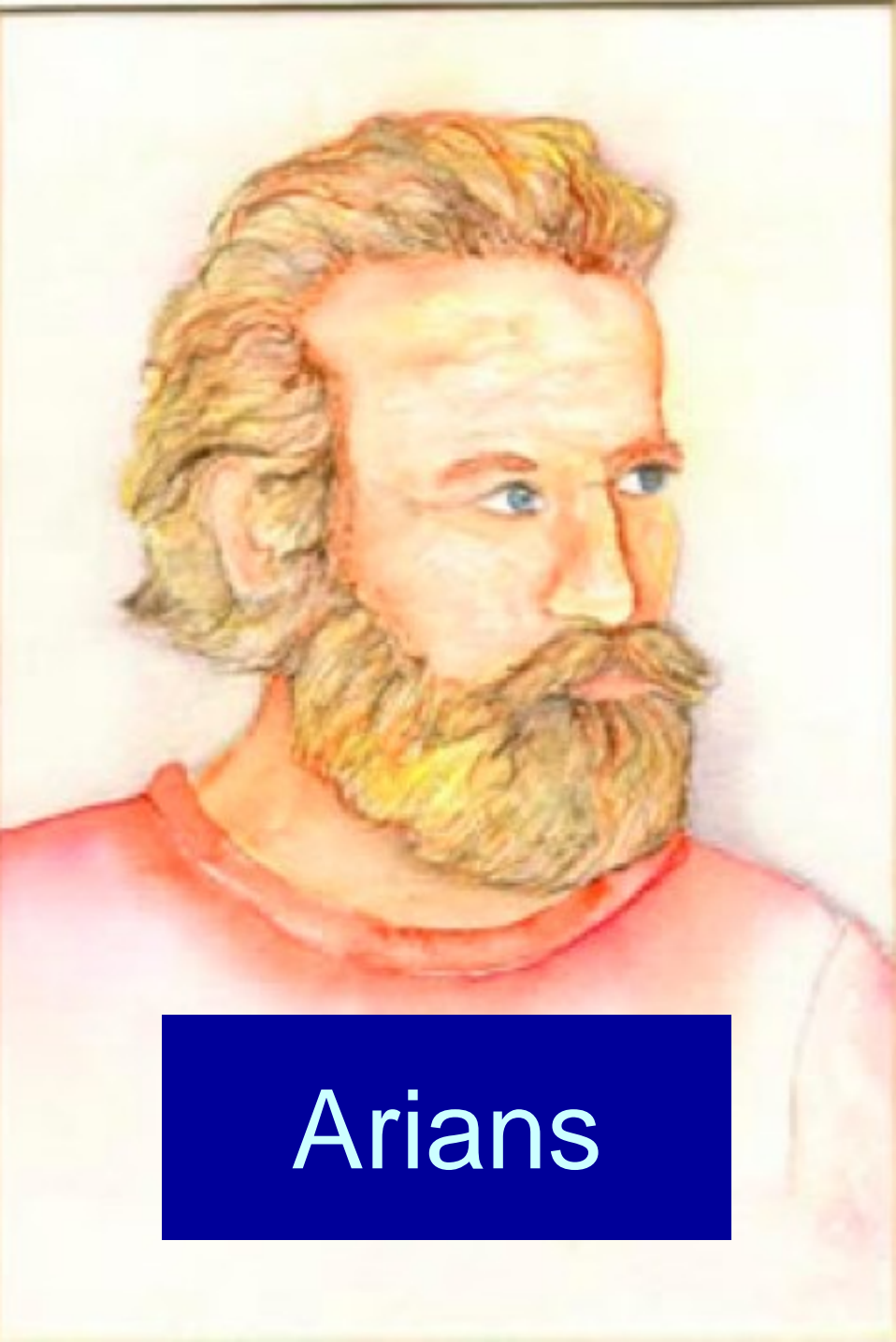
Sabellians



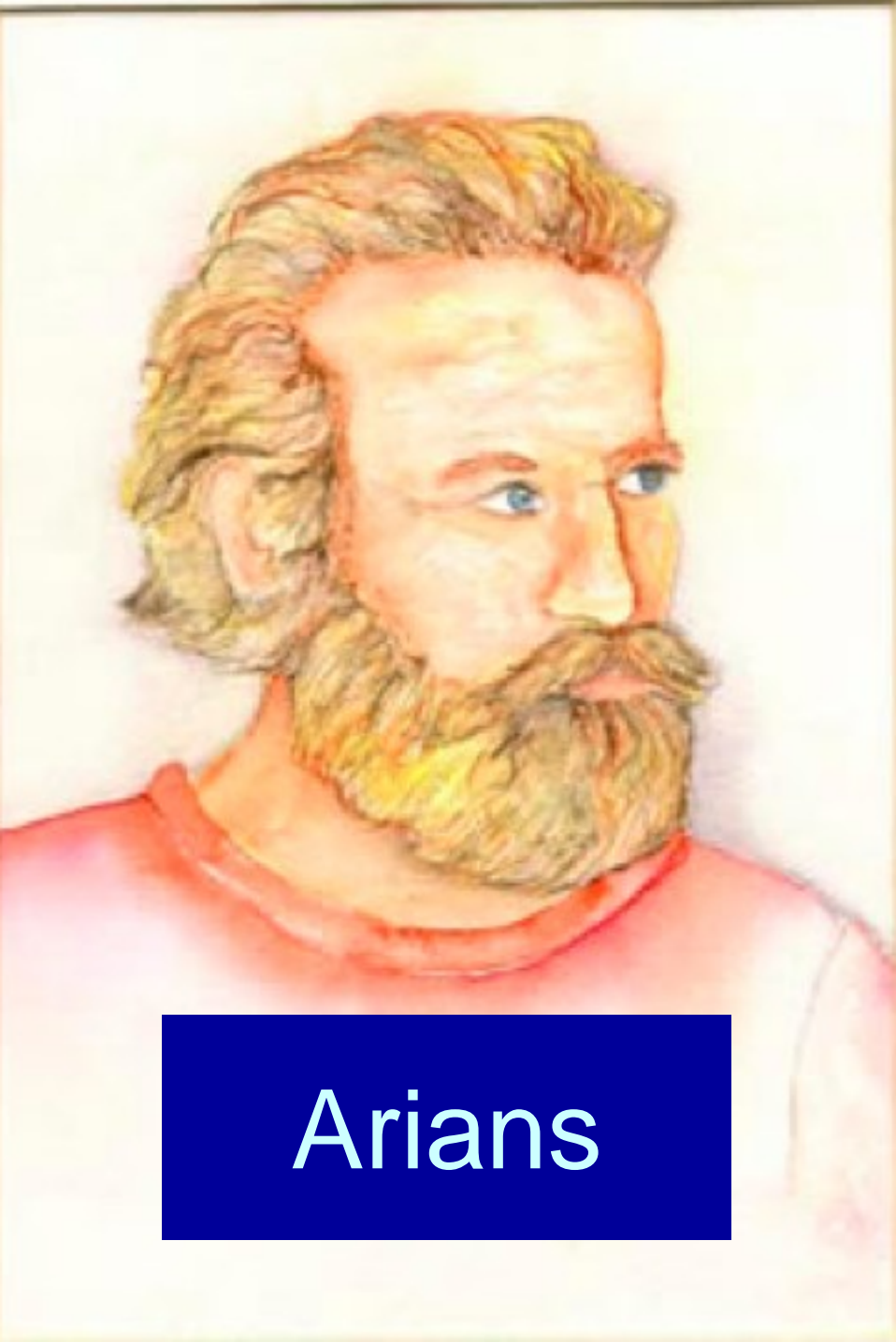
Arians



**God**

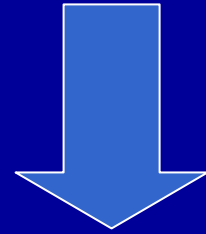


**Arians**

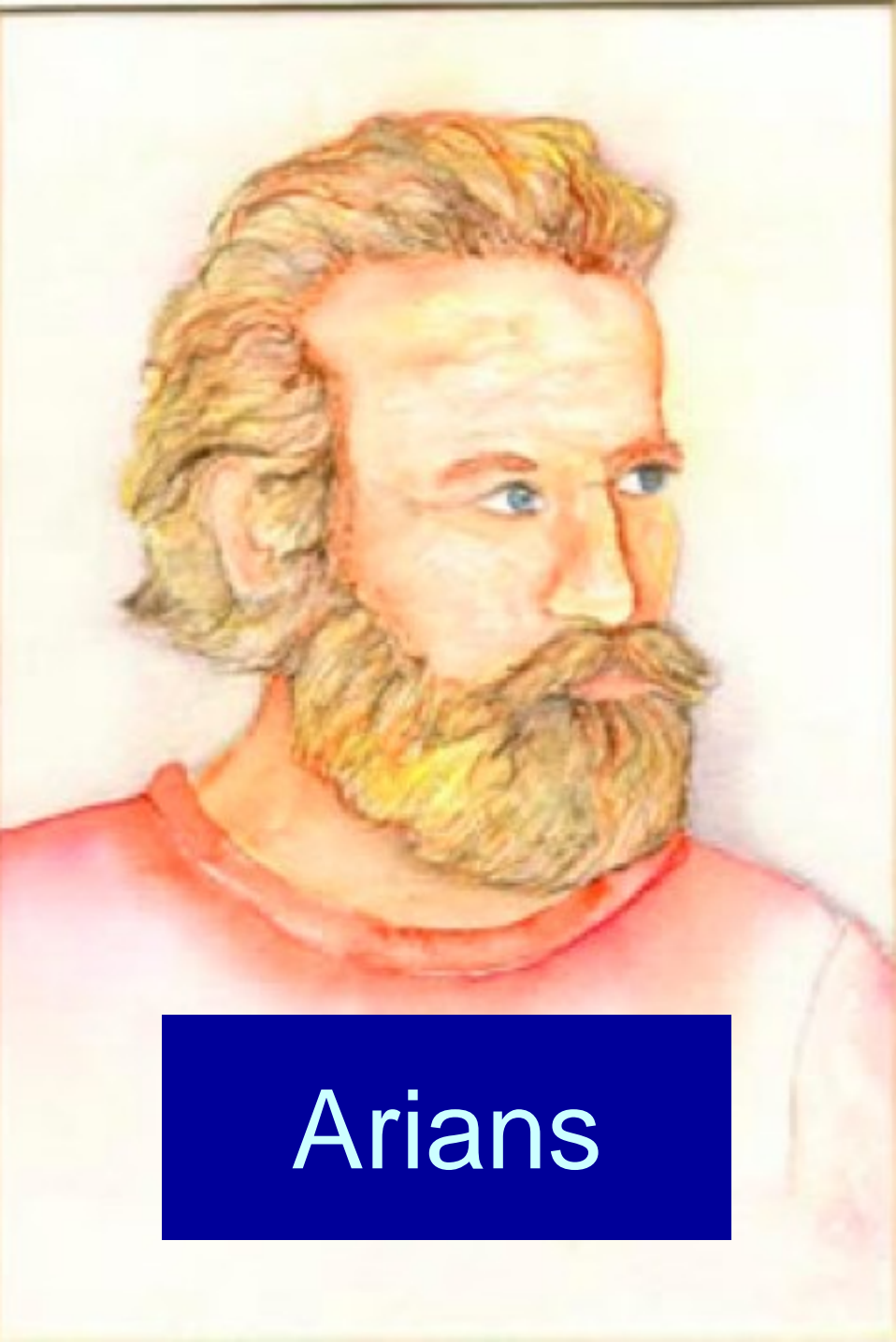


Arians

God

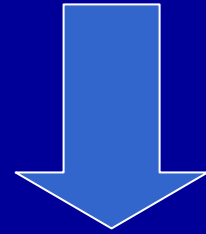


Jesus  
(Logos)

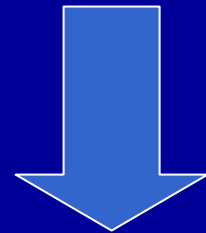


Arians

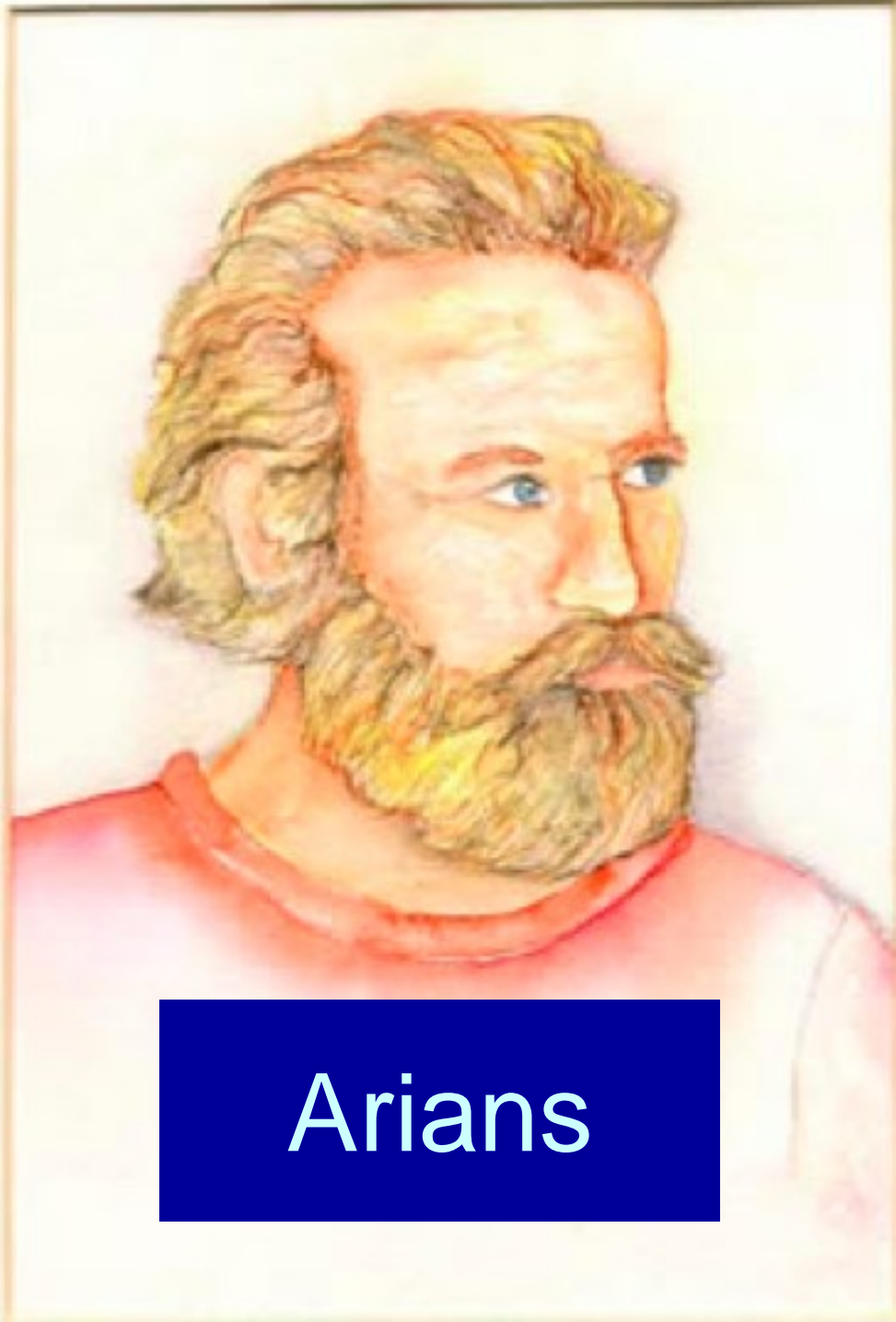
God



Jesus  
(Logos)

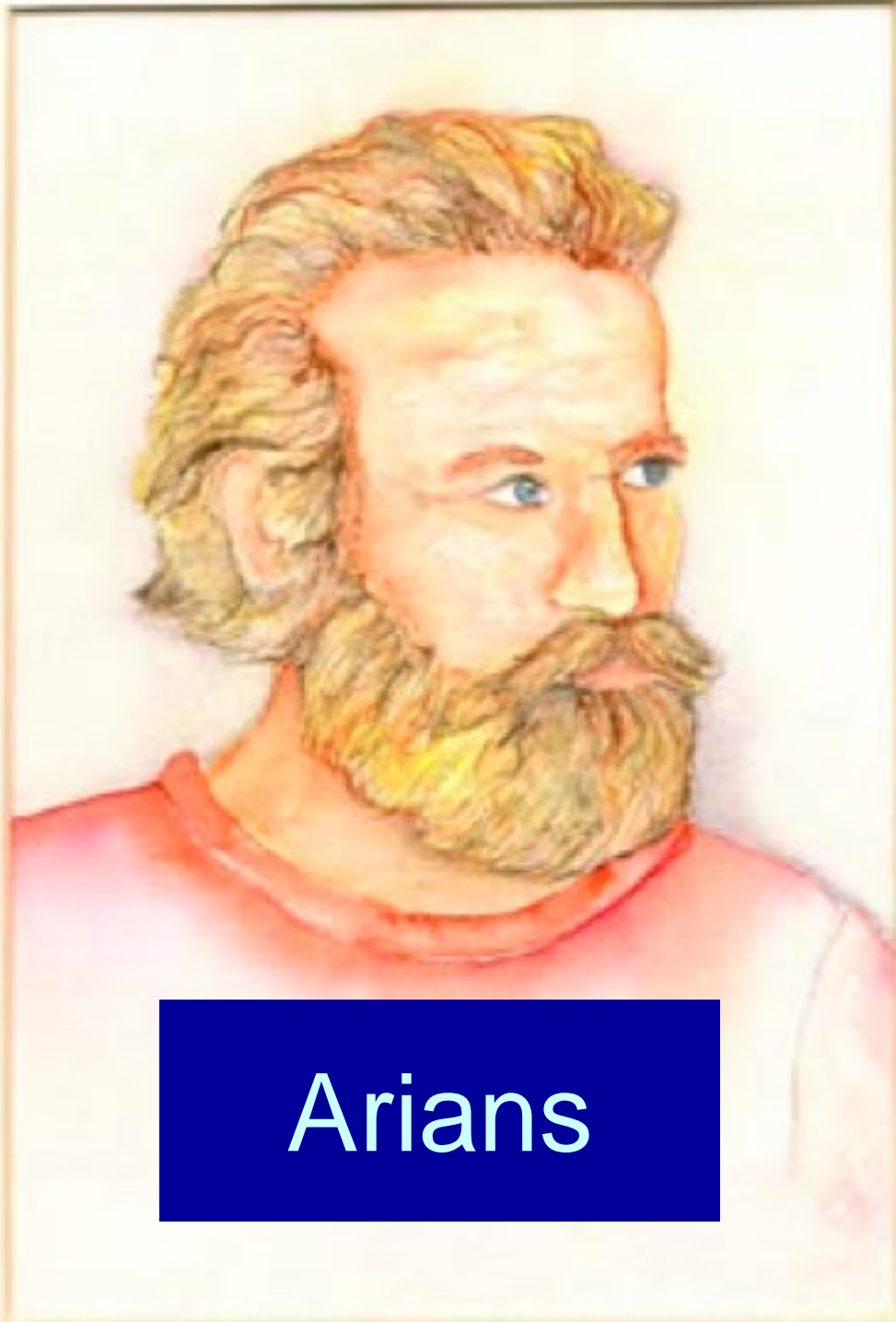


□ World



Jesus is truly  
great ...

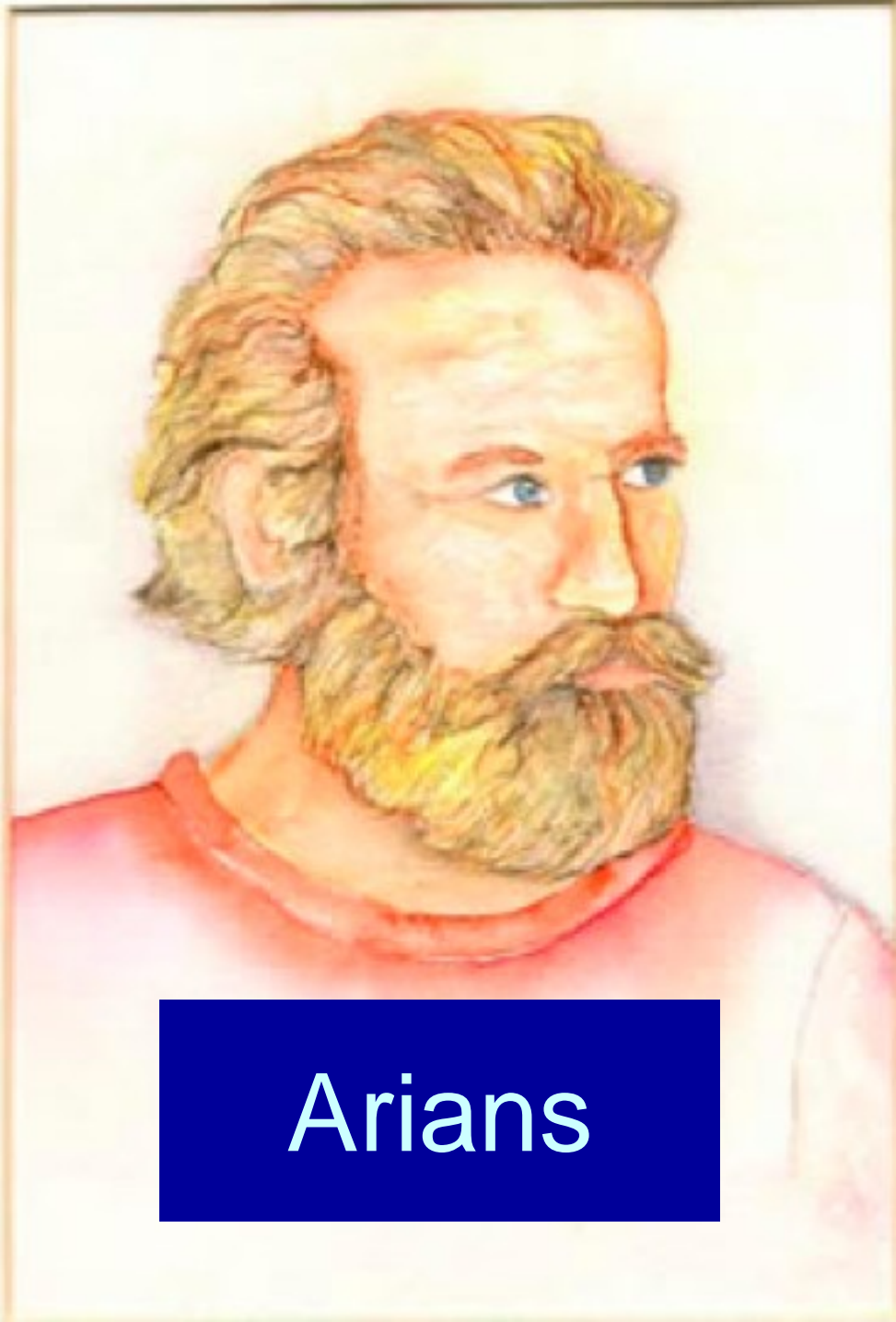
Arians



Arians

Jesus is truly  
great ... but  
lesser than  
God

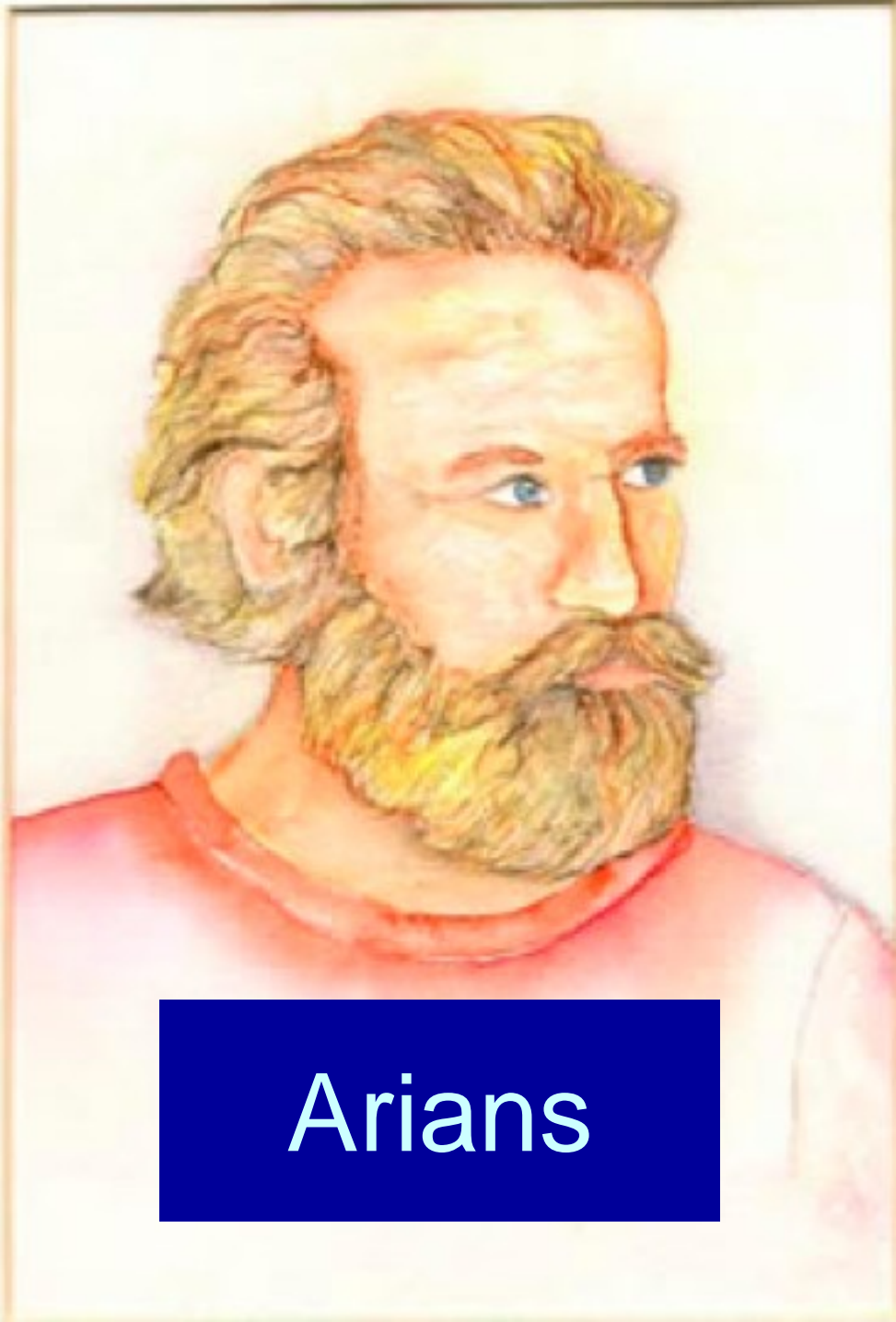




Arians

LOGIC:

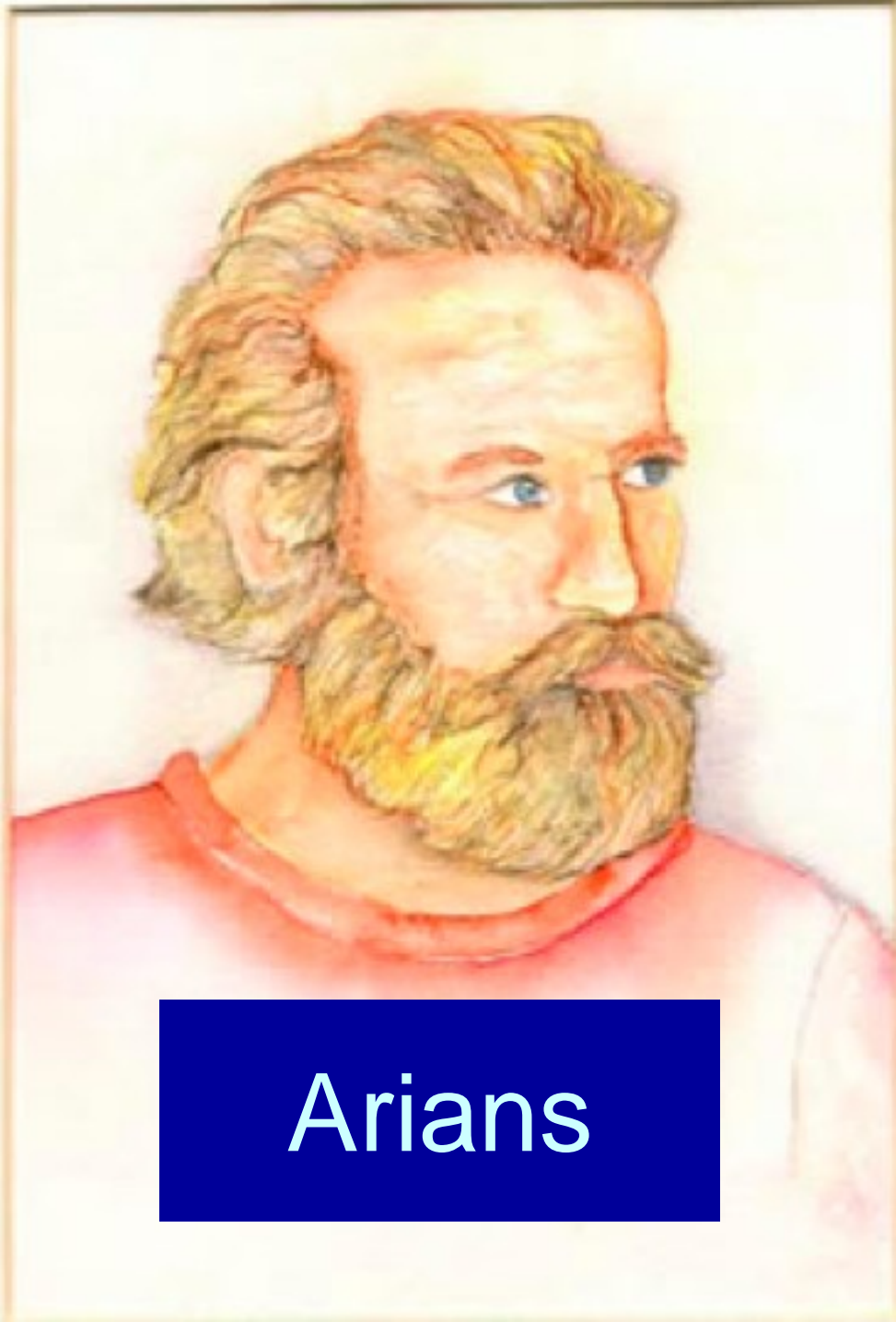




Arians

LOGIC:

God can't change

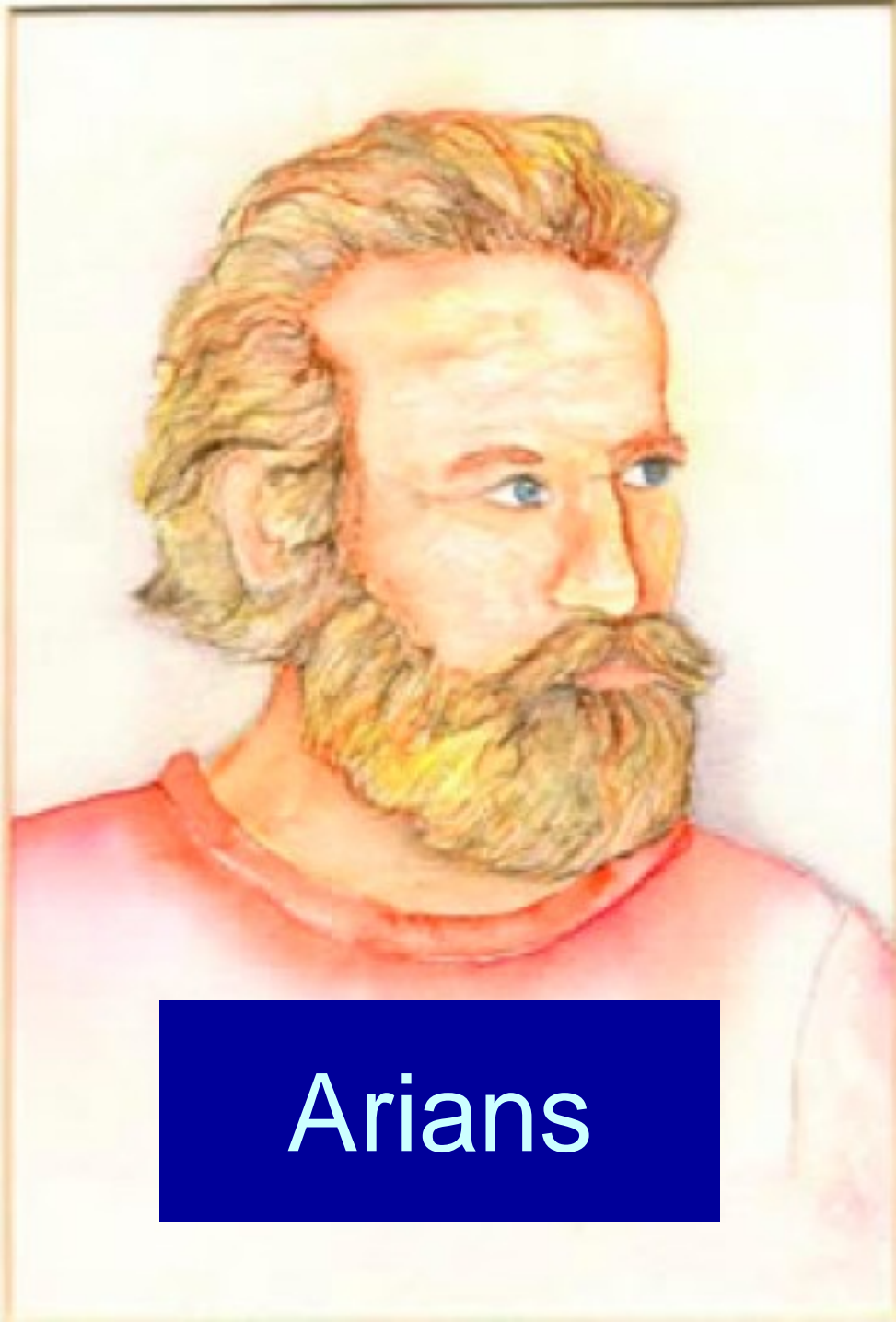


Arians

LOGIC:

God can't change

So how can God  
become man?



Arians

# SCRIPTURE

## Proverbs 8

“The Lord brought me forth as the first of his works, before his deeds of old; I was appointed from eternity, from the beginning, before the world began, when there were no oceans, I was given birth...

# SCRIPTURE

## Proverbs 8

“before the  
mountains were  
settled in place,  
before the hills I  
was given birth ... I  
was there when he  
set the heavens in  
place, when he  
marked out the  
horizon on the face  
of the deep ...

# SCRIPTURE

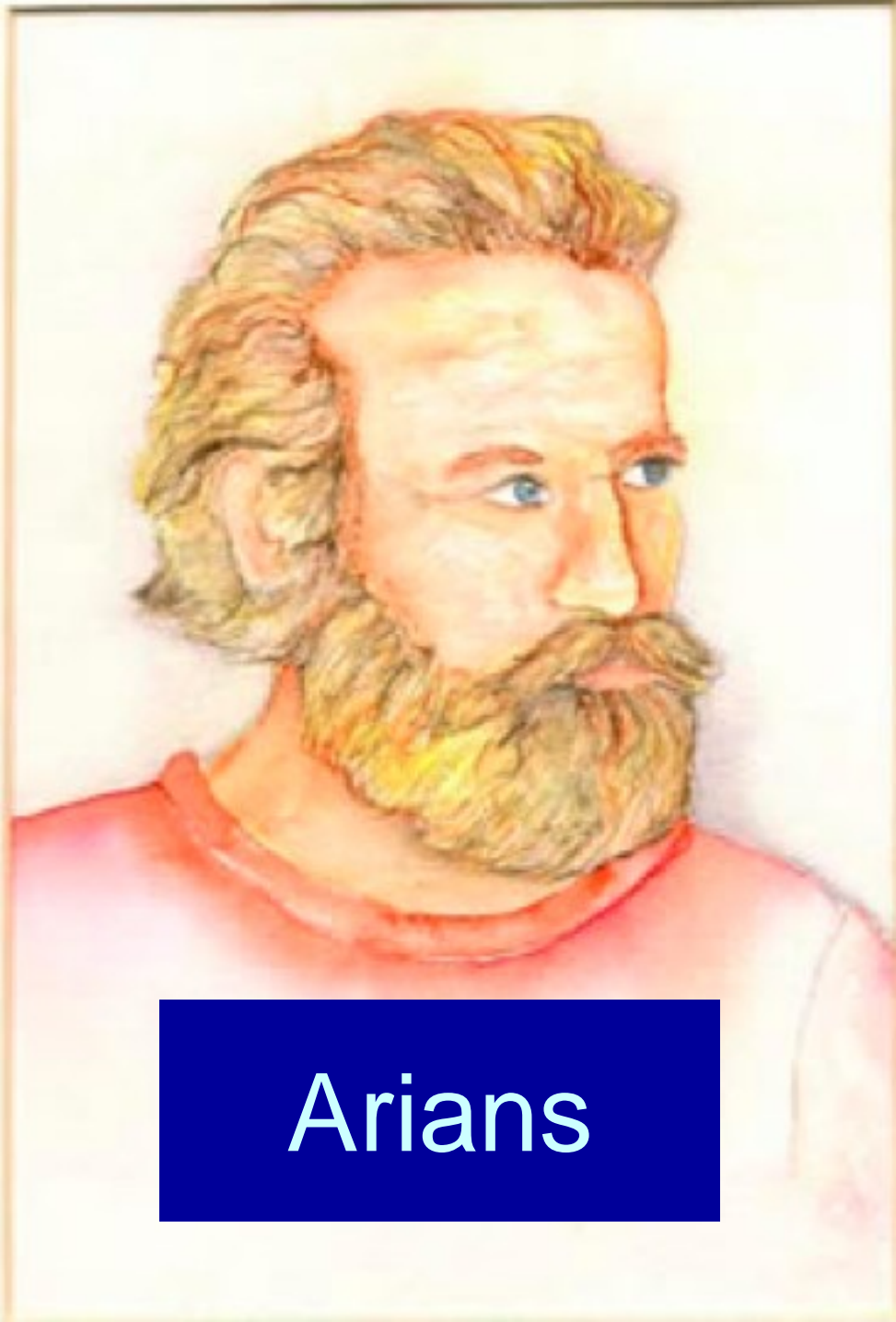
## Proverbs 8

“and when he marked out the foundations of the earth. Then I was the craftsman at his side. I was filled with delight day after day, always rejoicing in his presence.”

# SCRIPTURE

## Proverbs 8



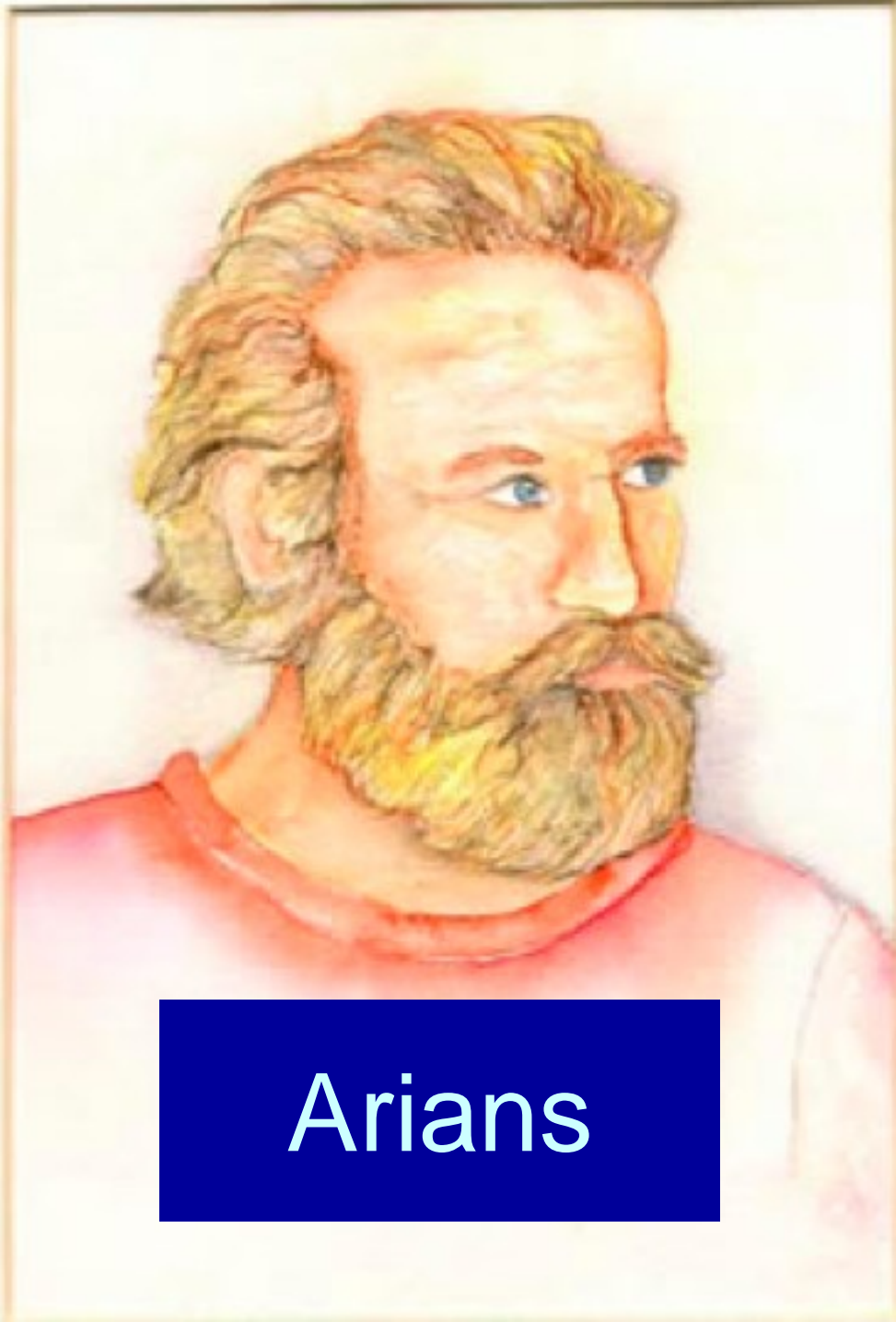


Arians

SCRIPTURE

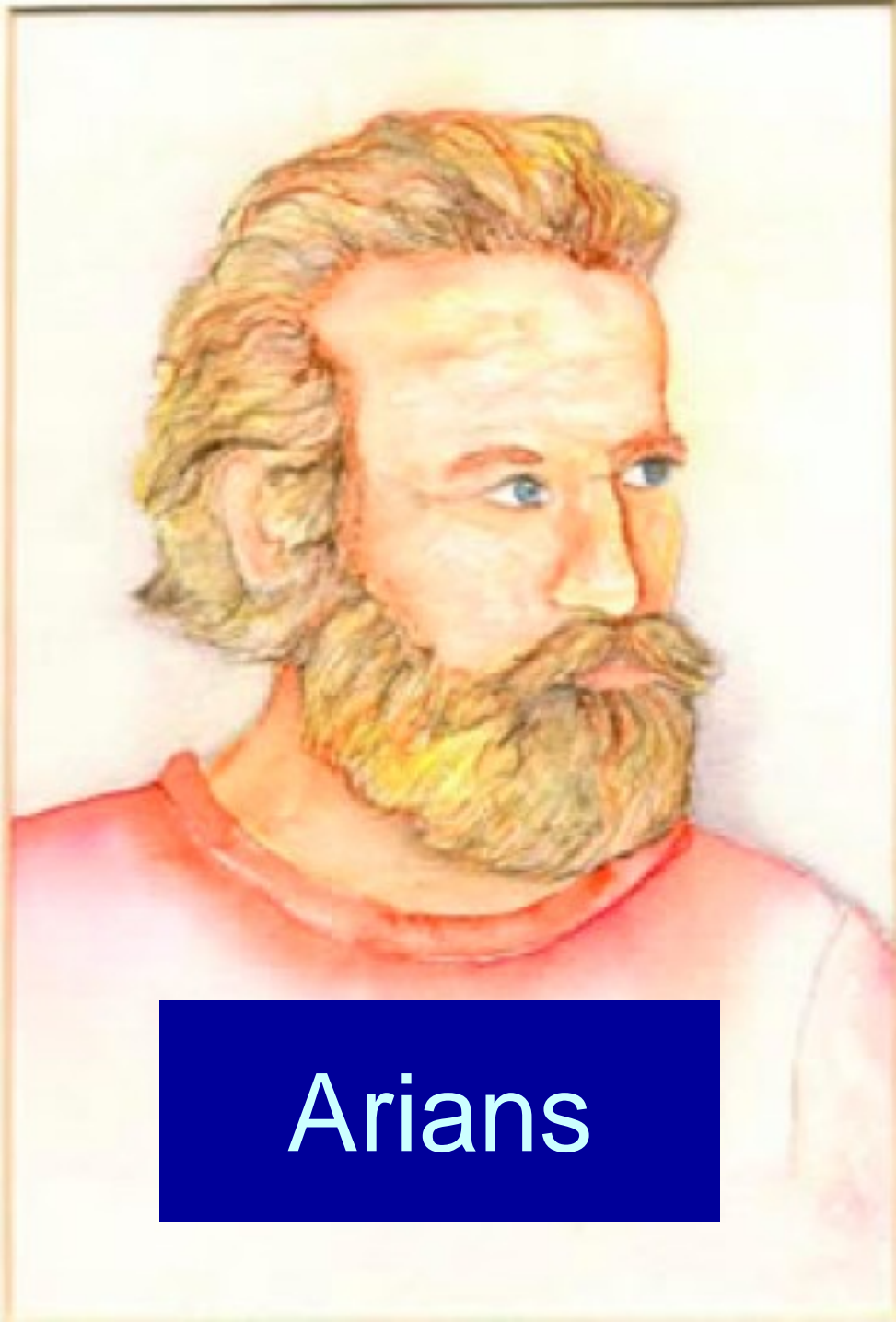
Proverbs 8

John 1



Arians

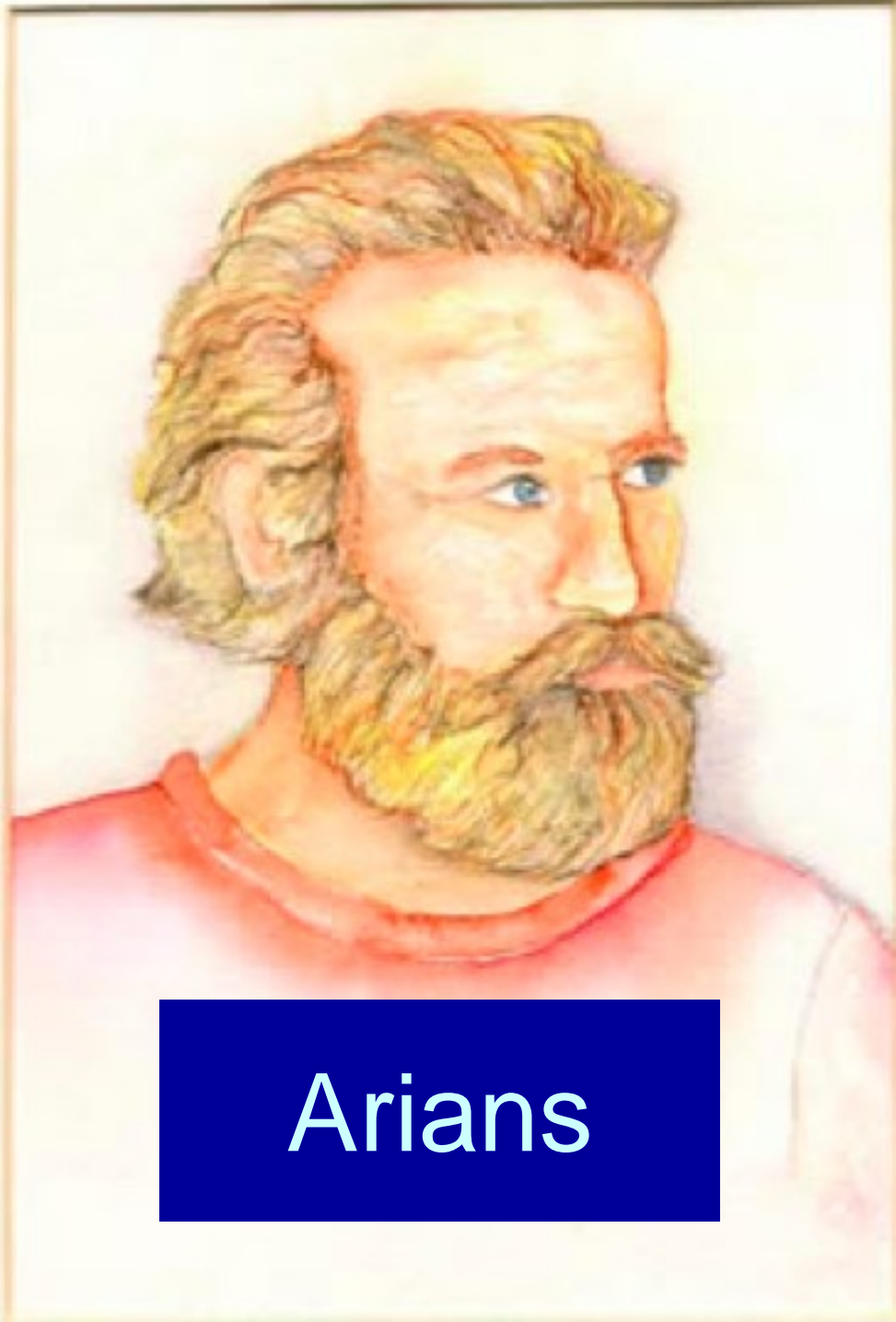
IMPORTANT



Arians

IMPORTANT

Blasphemy



Arians

IMPORTANT

Blasphemy

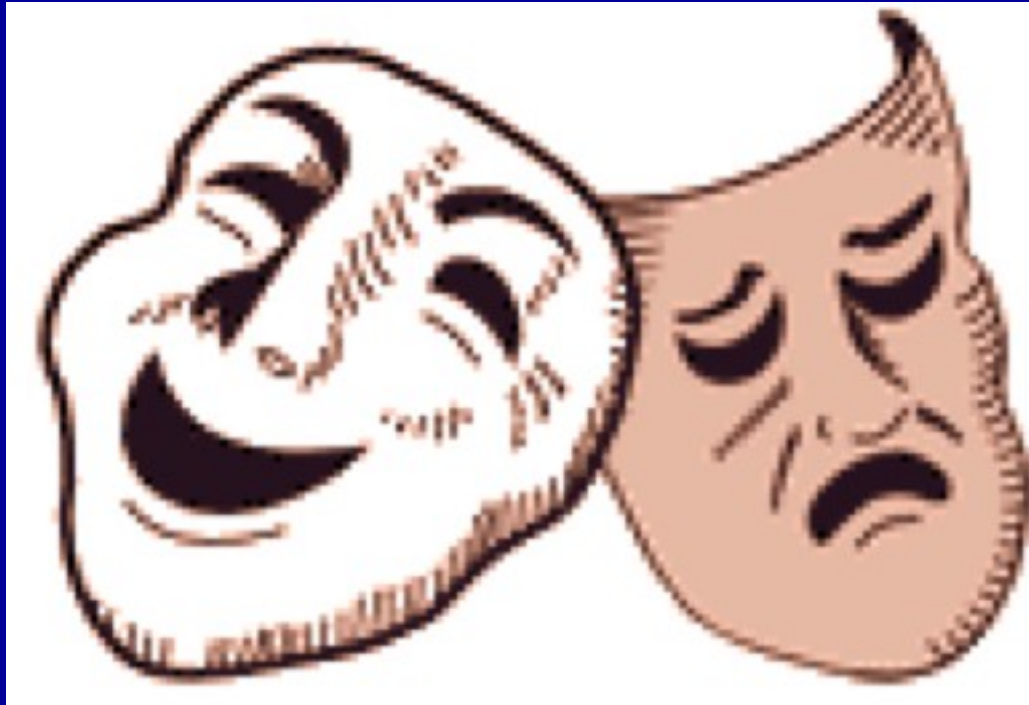
Salvation

# Two Different Heresies:

Arians

Sabellians

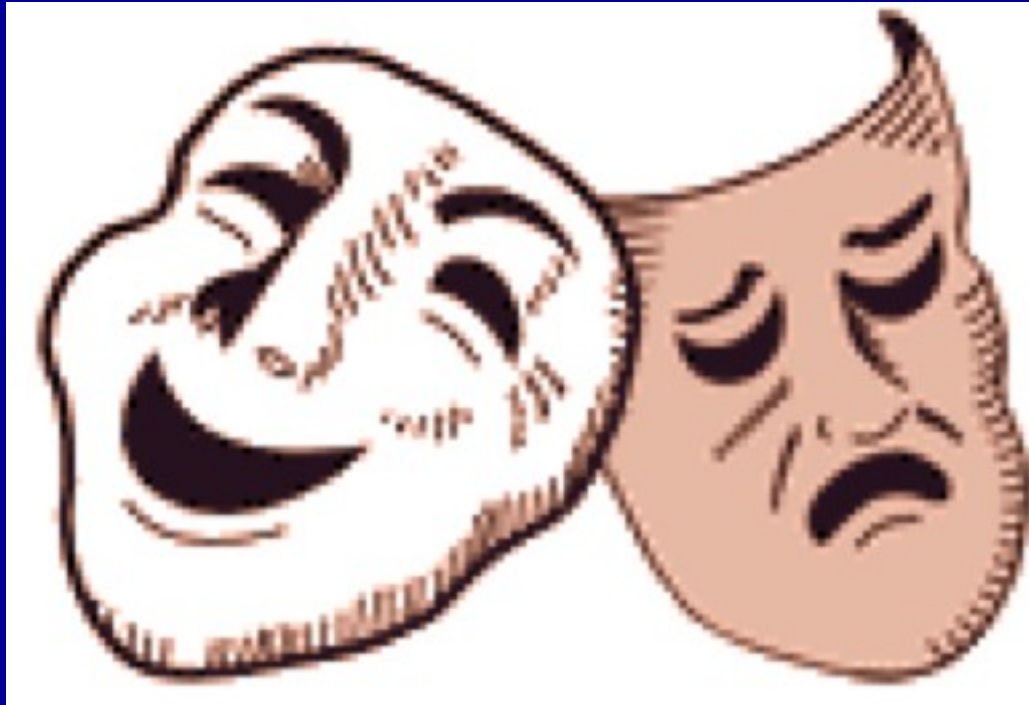
# Sabellianism



One God ...



# Sabellianism



One God ... Three Roles

A painting depicting the Council of Nicea in 325 AD. It shows a large, ornate hall filled with many bishops seated in rows, facing a central altar area. The architecture features high vaulted ceilings and large windows. The scene is crowded, with people standing in the aisles and at the front. The overall style is that of a classical religious painting.

# Nicea - 325 a.d.

“We believe in one God, the Father Almighty ...  
and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God,  
begotten from the Father ... God of God ...  
begotten not made, of one substance with the  
Father...”

Not just a lofty philosophical  
argument







Do you have change?





Do you have change?

Let me first explain how  
God made Christ







Do you have change?

Let me first explain how  
God made Christ

What is the price for  
bread?

A pixelated, low-resolution illustration of a medieval street scene. In the foreground, a man in a red and white striped tunic and a woman in a grey dress stand on a cobblestone street. In the background, there are stone buildings with arched windows and a balcony. A horse-drawn carriage is visible in the distance. The overall style is reminiscent of early computer graphics or video game sprites.

Do you have change?

Let me first explain how  
God made Christ

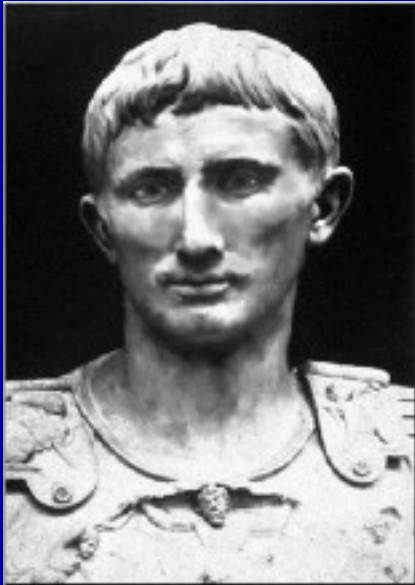
What is the price for  
bread?

The Father is greater  
and the son is lesser

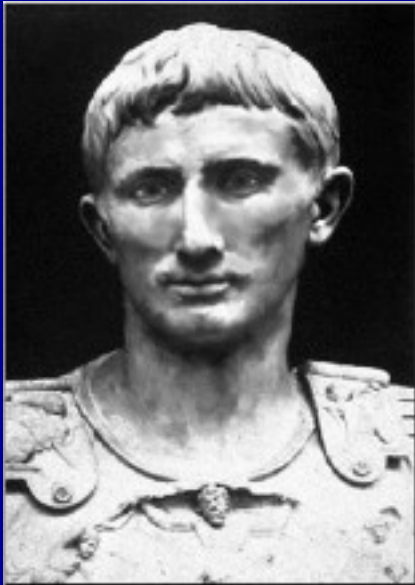
By the death of Athanasius  
(373):



By the death of Athanasius  
(373):

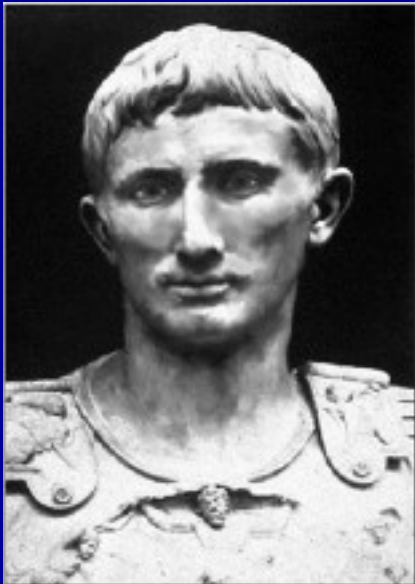


# By the death of Athanasius (373):



Arian  
Emperor

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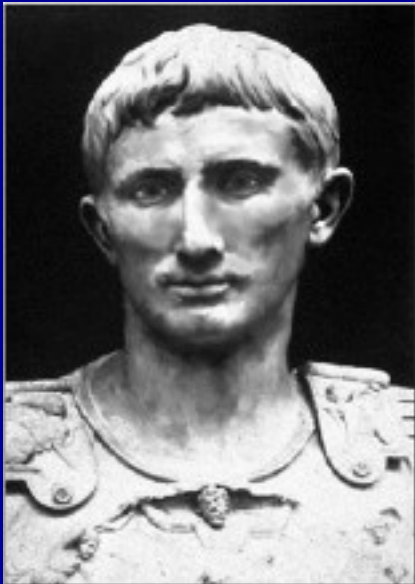


Arian  
Emperor





# By the death of Athanasius (373):

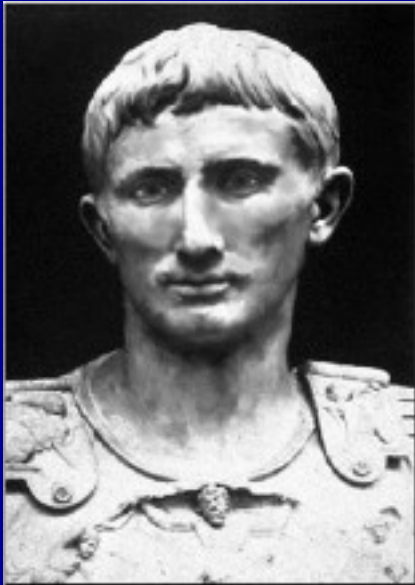


Arian  
Emperor

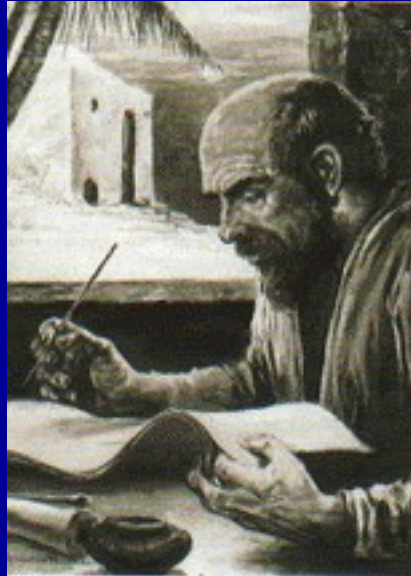


Arian  
Bishops

# By the death of Athanasius (373):



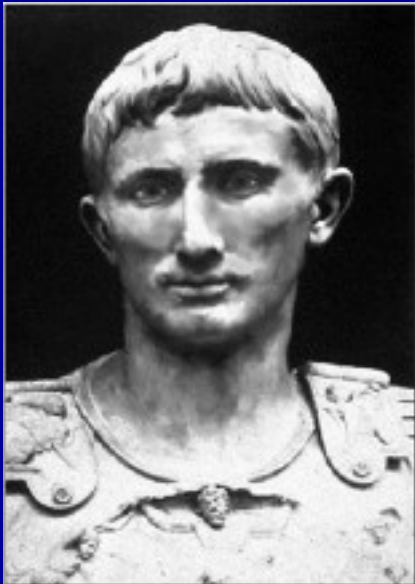
Arian  
Emperor



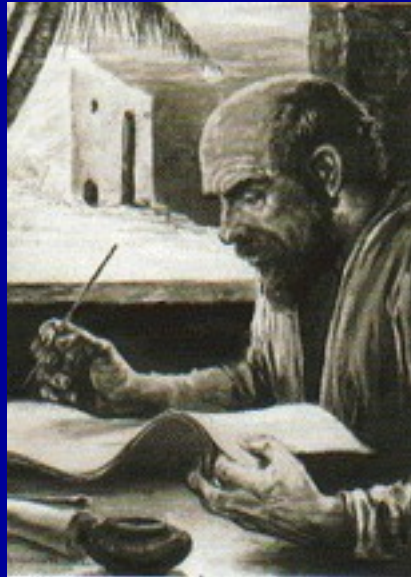
Arian  
Bishops

12 Arian  
Creeds

# By the death of Athanasius (373):



Arian  
Emperor



Arian  
Bishops

12 Arian  
Creeds

By the death of Athanasius  
(373):

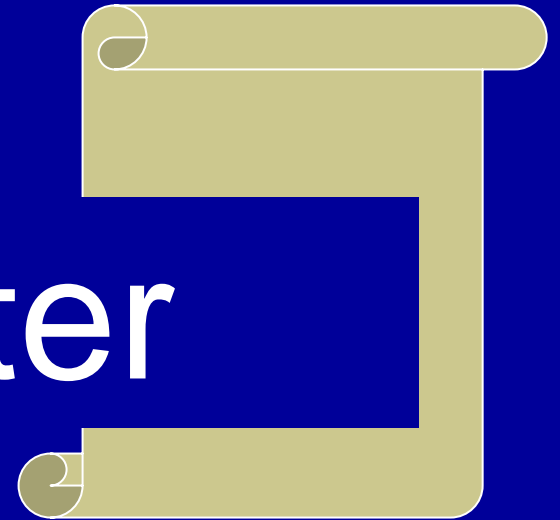


Arian  
Emperor



Arian  
Bishops

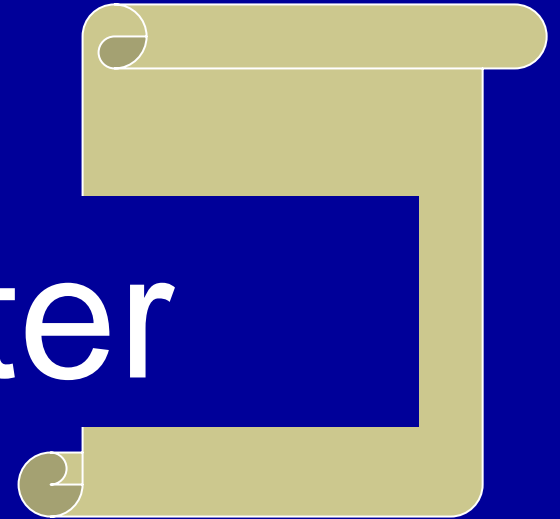
8 years later



By the death of Athanasius  
(373):



8 years later



Arianism Wiped Out









Council of Constantinople 381





“From the Council onward, denial of the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity as spelled out in the Nicene Creed has been considered by all major branches of Christianity as heresy and possibly even apostasy.”

How does God get there in 8  
short years?

How does God get there in 8  
short years?

Enter the Cappadocian  
Fathers

How does God get there in 8  
short years?



Enter the Cappadocian  
Fathers

# How does God get there in 8 short years?



Basil

## Enter the Cappadocian Fathers



# How does God get there in 8 short years?



Basil

Gregory

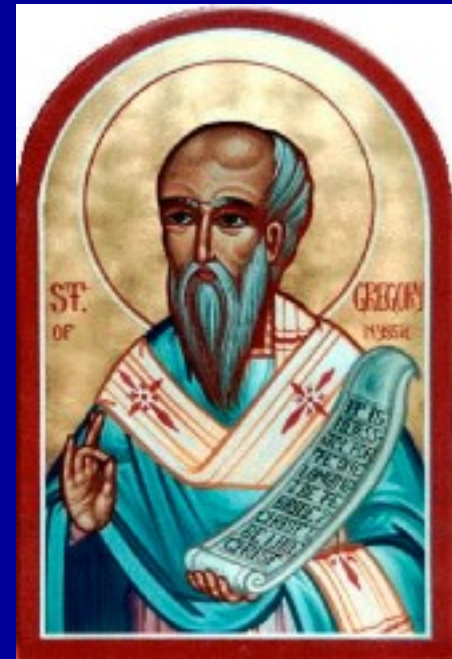
## Enter the Cappadocian Fathers

# How does God get there in 8 short years?



Basil

Gregory



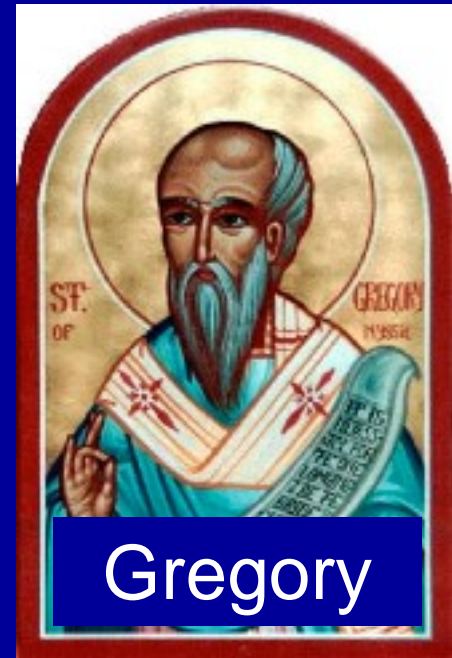
## Enter the Cappadocian Fathers

# How does God get there in 8 short years?



Basil

Gregory



Gregory

## Enter the Cappadocian Fathers



Basil of  
Caesarea





# Basil of Caesarea

Known for Trinity and Charity



Basil of  
Caesarea

God is three persons, but one  
substance



“Begotten” like the rays of the sun



# Trinity like a rainbow







Basil of  
Caesarea



Basil of  
Caesarea

Don't forget the Holy Spirit



## Basil of Caesarea

Don't forget the Holy Spirit

Don't lose the mystery



Gregory of  
Nazianzus





Gregory of  
Nazianzus

“The Theologian” with great  
sermons on the Trinity

How can Jesus join us to  
God if Jesus is not God?



Gregory of  
Nazianzus

# Gregory of Nyssa



# Gregory of Nyssa



“Negative Theology”



God is not three different beings, he is one.

Gregory of Nyssa



“Negative Theology”

Jesus and the Holy Spirit  
are not lesser beings.

Gregory of  
Nyssa



“Negative Theology”

Hold the mystery! How can a finite mind grasp the infinite?

Gregory of  
Nyssa



“Negative Theology”

# Points for Home

- Jesus is “the Christ, the Son of the living God.” (Mt. 16:16)



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- “In Christ, the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form.” (Col. 2:9)

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- Jesus is “the Christ, the Son of the living God.” (Mt. 16:16)
- “In Christ, the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form.” (Col. 2:9)
- This is the “mystery of God, namely Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” (Col 2:2-3)