

## Introduction

- The Christianization of the Roman Empire began with Constantine's conversion just prior to the Battle of the Milvian Bridge in 312 A.D.
- Constantine defeated Maxentius and became ruler of the western Roman Empire.
- The Edict of Milan in 313 A.D. made the practice of Christianity legal in the Roman Empire.

## Why Study Church History?

1. It reaffirms the biblical value of looking to the past.
2. It gives us perspective.
3. It provides warnings about what to look out for and what not to do.
4. It implants hope in dark times.
5. It tethers us to our spiritual family.

## Who was Athanasius?

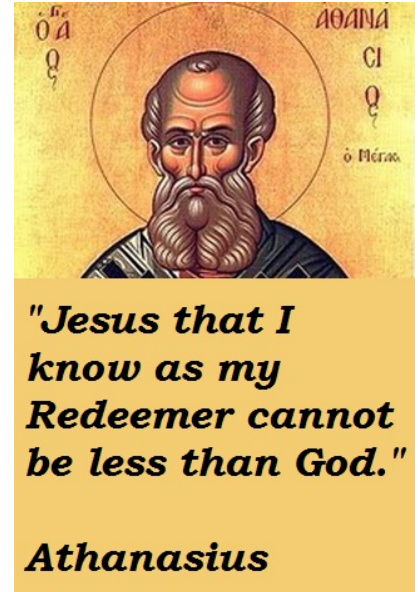
1. Athanasius was a bishop in the city of Alexandria, Egypt during the fourth century, A.D.
2. Known as "the father of orthodoxy" for his firm support of the Nicene Creed in opposition to Arianism.

## What was Arianism?

1. Arius taught that Christ was a created being who had not always existed.
2. This teaching caused disunity in both the church and the empire.
3. To combat this, Constantine called the Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D.
4. There, over 300 bishops rejected Arius' teaching.

## Lessons from Athanasius' Life

1. Fidelity to sound teaching and love for people are inseparable.
2. Athanasius feared God rather than men.
3. Public opinion is never a test of orthodoxy.
4. Our efforts may not bear fruit in our lifetime.



*Spreading the fame of God through  
making disciples of Jesus Christ*