



UNITY: THE FORGOTTEN TREASURE

ETC Course Handout - Lesson 17

Christ's Nature and the Nicene Creed

Course Section	Section 3 - A Unifying Analysis of Our Doctrines
Book Connection	Chapter 15 - Christ's Nature and the Nicene Creed
Lesson Aim	Examine the Nicene controversy as a case study in defending essential Gospel truth while recognizing later doctrinal development.

Key Scriptures

John 1:1-3, 14; Colossians 1:15-20; Philippians 2:5-11; Hebrews 1:1-4.

1. Why Christ's Nature Matters

- The identity of Jesus Christ is not a peripheral issue; it is bound to the Gospel itself.
- If Christ is reduced to a creature, the Christian confession of His saving lordship is fundamentally altered.

Notes:

2. A Brief Historical Background

- The Nicene controversy arose as the church sought language faithful to Scripture concerning the Son's relation to the Father.
- The resulting creed aimed to protect essential truth about Christ.

Notes:

THINK ABOUT IT

What makes a doctrinal disagreement serious enough to affect the Gospel itself?

3. Relationship to the Gospel

- Doctrinal precision serves unity when it protects what the Gospel requires.
- Core Christological confession gives believers a common center across cultures and traditions.

Notes:

4. The Controversy's Development

- Historical debate also illustrates how technical terms and later explanations can become increasingly complex.
- Students should distinguish the biblical truth being defended from every later argument used in its defense.

Notes:

5. Learning From the Case Study

- The Nicene Creed provides a useful example of both the necessity of core doctrine and the need for humility in theological development.

Notes:

Study & Application

Use these after the lesson and related book reading. The complete chapter study-question set remains in the textbook.

1. Why is the nature of Christ a core Gospel issue?

2. What problem was the Nicene Creed trying to address?

3. How can a creed faithfully protect biblical truth without becoming equal to Scripture?

4. What can the Nicene controversy teach us about distinguishing essential truth from later theological detail?

KEY TAKEAWAY: Core doctrine matters most when it protects the biblical identity and saving work of Jesus Christ.

Next: Complete the 7-question Lesson 17 online quiz.