

# Church History - the Christian Empire Part 3 (312-1500)

by David Guzik

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*David Guzik's sermon explores the pivotal events and theological debates in church history from 312 to 1500, focusing on the Aryan heresy and the formation of key creeds.*

**Duration:** 36:51

**Scripture:** Matthew 27:26-31, Matthew 28:5-6, Luke 1:35, John 1:1-3, John 14:16-17, Acts 1:9-11, Ephesians 4:5-6

**Topics:** "Church History", "Christology"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the popularity and influence of Arius, a controversial figure in the Aryan debate of the 4th century. The speaker highlights how Arius' teachings on the nature of the sun and the relationship between the Father and the Son were widely discussed and debated in Constantinople. The speaker also emphasizes Arius' skill in marketing his ideas, using catchy jingles to spread his teachings. However, the speaker warns that while Arius may have been a gifted communicator, his teachings were ultimately a dangerous lie. The sermon also briefly touches on the fall of the Roman Empire and the Crusades as relevant historical events.

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## Transcript

We've talked last couple of weeks about different aspects of this third period that we're considering. Today we want to talk about some important events, and hopefully we're going to get to some important people and writings. But first of all, let's talk about some significant events and challenges, and really go back to the beginning, where you had what we're going to call the Aryan heresy.

You know, it says in Ecclesiastes that there's nothing new under the sun. Modern day Jehovah's Witness doctrine of who Jesus is could be taken exactly, almost, from this guy Arius. You know, that's what's so funny about this.

I mean, the church dealt with this back then, and they looked at it carefully, and they decided, rightfully so, that this guy Arius was a heretic. And they cast him and his teaching out of the church. That didn't end the issue, but let me begin like this.

What we call the Aryan heresy began in the early 4th century, with a popular elder, we would probably call him a pastor today, in the Christian community at Alexandria, Egypt. Now, Arius called himself a Christian.

I mean, you know, people thought of him as a Christian.

But he emphasized certain ideas that you would find in Greek philosophy and in Greek theology. You see, in Greek theology and philosophy, there's an emphasis on what we might call the transcendence of God. And that emphasizes the idea of God being other than man.

God is God. Man is man. There's a Grand Canyon gulf between God and man.

God is completely unique, and God is unknowable. Now, Jesus was a man. Jesus was knowable.

So, if God is completely unique, if you would have met Jesus on the street, you would have said, yeah, great guy. I've met other guys like him. I mean, you might say, there's something special about him.

But you wouldn't think he was from Mars. Jesus was a man, and he was knowable. If God is completely unique and unknowable, then Jesus isn't God.

Arius taught that Jesus was not God. He was simply the highest being in God's creation. You take every being that God has ever created, and we know that God has created beings of different kinds.

There's angelic beings, there's human beings. Arius would say, Jesus Christ is the highest being that God the Father ever created, but he's not God. Arius' teaching had a great appeal.

It was very popular for many reasons. First of all, it was consistent. It ran alongside with ideas that were popular in just the way people thought.

Greek philosophy and theology. There are ideas and ways of thinking that can be so deeply ingrained in people, you're not even aware of them. But they're there, and they influence a lot.

Let me tell you one place that we're like this here in America, in our culture. It's the idea of independence. When you compare Americans to other cultures, Americans are almost fiercely independent.

Now, a lot of times, in damaging ways. You know, the rights of the individual. You know, his civil rights, his protections, all that stuff.

We hold that very dear, and it just goes into the way we think. If you were to preach a gospel, which many people do today, if you were to preach a gospel that would appeal to the American inner instinct to approve of independence, you'd have something really going for you. Well, this is what Arius' teaching did along lines of Greek philosophy and Greek theology.

So, that was one important aspect of it. Now, here's another thing. Arius' teaching basically presented Jesus as being one, very much like, of the divine human heroes of Greek mythology.

Jesus was the new Zeus. He was the new this. And again, people were conditioned by society and culture and just their environment to think along those lines so it had appeal.

Secondly, Arius was an excellent preacher and communicator. People liked to listen to him. He was a powerful communicator.

That's a precious gift, isn't it? But when it's used in support of a lie, it's a dangerous gift. You might say that Adolf Hitler was a very gifted communicator. I mean, he was.

That man had the ability to communicate to people in an awesome, awesome way. But he used it in service of evil. Arius used his in the support of a lie.

Third, I would say, Arius was good at what we would call today marketing. He put his ideas, he put his teachings into jingles that people would sing. You know, you got that commercial on your head, you can't get it out of your head.

Arius knew how to package things and present things. The guy was a savvy marketer. And so he had all these things going for him.

His teaching was very popular. Gregory of Nysa, who lived in the middle part of the 4th century, he spoke on the popularity of the Aryan debate, you know, on the nature of it. He says, if you ask anyone in Constantinople for change, he'll start discussing with you whether the son is begotten or unbegotten.

If you ask about the quality of the bread, you'll get the answer, the father is greater, the son is less. If you suggest taking a bath, you will be told, there was nothing before the son was created. Do you get what he's trying to say? He's saying it was on everybody's lips.

You go down to the marketplace and say, hey, can I change for 20? And the guy will say, man, I'm telling you, the son was not begotten, he was created. What? I just want change. Everybody was talking about a theological debate, the nature of the son in relationship to the father.

Nobody seems to care about that stuff in our culture today. But it was a different way of thinking back then, and it shows how effectively Arius marketed his stuff. Even though it was popular, it wasn't true.

And so Alexander, the bishop of Alexandria, condemned and excommunicated Arius, and it made for a huge controversy, because Arius was popular. And so the emperor Constantine called together a church council at the city of Nicaea in 325. More than 300 bishops from churches all over the world, all over the known world, I should say, gathered at Nicaea for this conference.

It would have been something to go back to the council of Nicaea. And one of the reasons why was not just because of the vigor of the theological debate and the excellence of the work they produced. But at the council of Nicaea, you're not talking about being very long from the time of severe persecution.

I mean, you're talking about it only being 15 years from the time when the church was severely, severely persecuted. You get together 300 church leaders from all over the known world. I mean, the 300 most prominent leaders of the church.

Put them together, and you know what? Almost every one of them has battle scars. Every one of them is a hero of the faith. Having suffered for Jesus Christ.

I mean, that's something, isn't it? That's powerful. For these guys to come together and, you know, love each other and encourage one another. But they didn't come together for a big love fest.

They came together to discuss this business about Arius' doctrine. And Arius appeared before the council and he made his case. He claimed that Jesus was a created being.

He claimed, number two, that Jesus was capable of change. God is not created. So, if Jesus is created, Jesus isn't God.

Number two, God doesn't change. If Jesus changed, Jesus isn't God. That was his main argument.

The council listened to him. They debated it. They discussed it.

And the council rejected Arius' teaching. They then went on to make an affirmative statement about the nature of Jesus. Nicene Creed.

We believe in one God, the Father all-sovereign, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages, light of light, true God of true God, begotten, not made. A human being begets human beings.

You create something of a different substance than yourself. Think of a very skilled sculptor. They make a sculpture of themselves that looks so incredibly lifelike.

You look at the two of them side by side and you would have to study it to see which one is the real and which one is the fake. It looks exactly like him. But is it human? No.

The sculptor there, the guy at the wax museum, he has a son. The son may not even look exactly like him, right? But that son is 100% human being. If you beget something, it's of the same substance, the same vital principle, the same being as you.

So this is a hugely significant idea. Begotten or created. You see how the Nicene Creed comes down.

Look at it again here. Begotten of the Father before all the ages, light of light, true God of true God. In other words, just as much as the Father is true God, so is the Son.

There's no distinction there. Begotten, not made, of one substance with the Father. Remember that phrase.

We'll get back to it in a minute. Of one substance with the Father, through whom all things were made, who for us men and for our salvation came down from the heavens and was made flesh of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became man and was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate and suffered and was buried and rose again on the third day according to the Scriptures and ascended into the heavens and sits on the right hand of the Father and comes again with glory to judge the living and the dead of whose kingdom there shall be no end. And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and life giver that proceeds from the Father who through with the Son is worshiped together and glorified together, who spoke through the prophets in one holy Catholic and apostolic church.

We acknowledge one baptism unto the remission of sins. We look for a resurrection of the dead and of the life to the age to come. This is one of the critical phrases.

Of one substance, in Greek, is homoousios. If you know your Greek roots and suffixes and prefixes, homo means like or, no, not like, same. There's a difference.

Same, and isos means substance. Same substance. This is how, now again, God has a substance, right? God has a, and I'm not talking about something that you can touch or feel, but there's human being, there's angelic being, and there's divine being.

There's the stuff that makes up divinity. God the Father has that stuff. Jesus has that stuff.

They are of the same substance, homoousios. Arians argued for this word. They said, no, no, no, let's put this in the creed.

Homoousios, which means similar substance, right? Similar substance. No, no, it's not similar substance. It's same substance.

You see how this would appeal to the Arian. They said, no, no, no, Jesus, hey, the Father and the Son, baby, they're like this. Man, I mean, they're right along the same line.

You're never going to find anything in the universe more like God the Father than the Son. Never, never. But they're not the same.

The Nicene Creed said, no, no, no. Over this one letter. Over one letter.

Well, I'll tell you, over one letter, might I say, the church was significantly split. Because just because the council of Nicaea said Arius was wrong, you think that made Arius think he was wrong? Not a chance. It didn't make most of Arius' followers think they were wrong.

And the church had to deal with the popular followers of Arius for a long time. The council voted against him. Of the 300 bishops there at the council of Nicaea, 298 voted for the creed.

Two guys didn't. And they and Arius were excommunicated. And so it was tough.

It was tough dealing with the Arian heresy because it was very popular. One more thing, just quickly. It shows us how dangerous a popular lie can be.

If it's packaged well, if you've got that, then you've really got something going for you. Fast forward 100 years. Then you have the council of Chalcedon.

That was 451. I think Nicaea was 326. Now, things are being debated a different way about who Jesus is.

Everybody's agreeing on his divinity. Now, it's his humanity. What is the character of Jesus' humanity? In some places, the deity of Jesus was emphasized so much that they essentially denied that he was human.

There was a tendency to allow the deity of Jesus to swallow up his humanity. Some people thought that Jesus was God on the inside with a human shell. Practically speaking, that's probably the way a lot of people think about Jesus today.

We talk about body, soul, and spirit. They would say Jesus had a human body, but God's soul or spirit. The outside was human, but the inside was God.

Now, this is probably a very common way people think, but you know what? It's inaccurate. It's not true at all. That would mean that Jesus was not truly human.

It would mean that he only appeared to be human. This view was taught by a man named Apollinarius and is known as Apollinarianism. Now, there was another challenge known as Monophysism.

Mono means one, and physis means nature. Now, this was a doctrine that basically looked to two things. First of all, thinking that the human nature of Jesus was just kind of totally absorbed within his divine nature.

So there really wasn't any distinct human nature of Jesus. It was just all divine nature. But in another variation of this, it's what we would call today the Jesus-only doctrine.

And it's the teaching that God was the Father, then the Son, now he's the Holy Spirit. In other words, God does not dwell in three persons at the same time. In the Old Testament, he was the Father.

In the New Testament, he was the Son. They would say that when Jesus prayed to his Father, he was just doing a charade, just being an example, showing how people should do it. Because you don't have three in one, you have one God.

And he is called the Father in the Old Testament, the Son in the New Testament, and now he's the Holy Spirit. So this doctrine was going around. Well, the Council of Chalcedon got together and they talked about this.

Again, it was called in 451 to settle the issue. And this time they had 400 bishops gathering. Now, what's interesting about this is, what significant development takes place in the Church, say, between 325 and 450? You've got 125 years.

You've got 125 years when the Emperor dominates the Christian world. And where, well, let me put it to you this way. The Council of Nicaea was presided over by Constantine, the Emperor Constantine.

But it had a spiritual and a noble character to it that was really remarkable. The Council of Chalcedon, especially the events leading up to it, filled with political backstabbing and infighting and intrigue. And, I'm excommunicating you.

You're not excommunicating me. I'm excommunicating you. You know, oh, back and forth, on and on.

It's just ugly, terrible mess. But they finally got, and once they got the Council together, it worked pretty good. Now, they settled on this definition.

That Jesus is, and I don't have this written down. I'll just read it to you. That Jesus is recognized in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation, the characteristic property of each nature being preserved and coming together to form one person.

In other words, Jesus is, and this is the biblical understanding, fully God and fully man. He's not man on the outside and God on the inside. Fully man and fully God.

You need to understand, if you want to understand how this works, think of the incarnation as addition, not subtraction. Jesus Christ is God. And the second person of the Trinity, dwelt as God from all eternity.

The second person of the Trinity added humanity to his deity. Nothing was taken away. Not one bit of deity was taken away.

And the humanity wasn't diminished. He added perfect, unfallen humanity unto his deity. And so Jesus is fully God and fully man.

Remember our word here? Same substance. Remember our other word? The eye in the middle. Which means of similar substance.

Which word was approved at Nicaea? Top one, right? Which one was condemned at Nicaea? The bottom one. Which one was approved at Chalcedon? You know why? Because they were fighting a different battle. This time they were saying, the Father is not the Son.

The Son is not the Father. There's a distinction there. There's a difference.

And so Chalcedon said, much to their credit, they realized they were fighting a different battle. We're not going to make this about words so much. We're going to make this about the ideas reflected.

And it's important for us to say, the Father is not the Son. They are not the same person. And so this term was adopted to reflect that they're not the same person.

Now, I could get into the other Greek and Latin words that were used to reflect that more specifically and more accurately. But it was interesting that they used these same terms and revisited them. If you want to talk about the upshot from the creeds, this is the upshot from it.

The upshot is that there is one God in three distinct persons. That's number one. That's the Christian understanding of the Trinity.

Number two, Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man. He's an eternal God who added humanity to His deity. There you have it.

Now we want to talk a little bit, hit some topics quickly here, about tension between Rome and Constantinople. Now, we talked about the patriarchs, the patriarchal cities. As time went on, Antioch slipped from prominence and Constantinople, if you will, replaced it.

Before Constantine became emperor, they basically, for administrative purposes, divided the Roman Empire in half. And they established two capital cities, Rome in the west and Constantinople in the east. And Constantine embarked on a huge building program and development program to promote and to build up Constantinople.

Well, such a prominent city is going to have a prominent church, right? And basically, as it developed, these became the two centers of the Christian world. By the way, what do we call Constantinople today? Istanbul, which is in Turkey. Sitting there on that division, really, between Europe and Asia, in a way there.

There you have that great, tremendous city, Istanbul. There was a natural competition between these two cities, right? The two capitals. Just like they say there's a natural competition between Los Angeles and New York.

But there were many things that divided things among east and west. In the Roman church, they spoke Latin. In the eastern church, they spoke Greek. They had different times that they celebrated Easter.

They had different times when they celebrated Christmas. They performed different customs and ceremonies differently. They just did a lot of things differently.

And, for example, in the west, in the Roman church, priests were expected to be celibate. Not in the east. In the east, it was considered not just proper, but mandatory.

Priests had beards. In the west, no. Priests should be clean shaven.

Out of little things like this, huge controversies were made. Just to point out, these were different cultures, different regions, different areas. And as they were both centers, they drew more to themselves and further apart from each other.

To the point where, well, in the year 1054, known as the Great Schism, in the year 1054, you have the head of the Roman church, whom we call what? The Pope, right? The Roman Catholic Church. And the head of the eastern church, which today is called what? The Orthodox Church. You have the two of them talking to each other.

They're each excommunicating each other. This was just a very important trend developing. Now, as it ended up, the church in the east ended up suffering greatly under the emergence of Islam.

Because Islam swept over that part of the world. And Constantinople stood for a long, long time. I mean, 700 years.

It wasn't conquered by the Muslims until 1453. But it eventually came under the domination and the sway of Islam. And so this, the Roman church, ended up being really the leading church in the world.

The leading, you know, the one where there was life and dynamism. So this very important development, this division between eastern Christianity and western Christianity. By the way, just a note on that and aside.

You just see how people, you know, name themselves. You have, on the one hand, the Catholic Church. On the other hand, you have the Orthodox Church.

What church do you belong to? Oh, I belong to Catholic Church. The universal church. The one that reigns over all the world.

This is like saying, the real church. Not the church of Podunkville. I belong to the church that rules over the whole world.

Oh no, which church do you belong to? Well, I belong to the Orthodox Church. What does that mean? Correct belief. I belong to the correct belief church.

Oh, you don't belong to the correct belief church? Oh, sorry. Oh, you don't belong to the universal church? Which would merit for us speaking, just for a few moments, about the emergence of Islam. You know, if you take the year 662, the followers of Muhammad in Arabia were a small persecuted group of visionaries in Arabia.

But a hundred years later, a hundred years after this, they controlled all of Arabia, all of North Africa, all of the Palestine region, all of Persia, all of Spain, parts of India, and they were threatening France and Northern Europe. The spread of Islam by the sword is one of the most amazing stories in the history of the world. I mean, the way it just swept its domination over the landscape was just amazing.

This had an effect on Christianity for a couple of reasons. I mean, one of the big effects it had was that the Christian communities in the places where Islam conquered, a lot of times they weren't free to practice their faith. There was no one Islamic philosophy towards Christianity in a political sense.

Sometimes Islamic rulers were very generous and very free, and, okay, fine, go ahead, practice your religion. Other times they were not. Other times there were forced conversions to Islam.

Probably the most common way was that there was no forced conversion to Islam, but basically the Islamic ruler came in and they established a few things. They said, first of all, this is an Islamic land now, period. You can be a Christian, but you've got to pay for the right.

And so Christians were taxed specially, okay, and special taxes on them, special restrictions put on them. Number two, they would say, you can't build any more churches. The one you've got now, fine.

But you know, when that one crumbles, tough luck, no more churches. Finally, they would say, you're free to be a Christian. Fine, you want to be a Christian? Go ahead.

But if you ever convert a Muslim, you're going to be executed. You and they will be executed. And that was, I mean, that was the custom.

That philosophy, you know, you just keep that philosophy. You say, right now, everybody in the world who's a Christian, right now, okay, you can be a Christian, but you can't convert anybody on pain of death. And if you do convert somebody, how long does it take Christianity to die out? With the fall of the Roman Empire, there was a great power vacuum in that whole area of the world that had been left so empty for so long that it was ready for somebody to rush in and take it.

That played a huge role. Also relevant to that is the whole business of the Crusades. And let's talk about that for a little bit.

Oh, make it about the year 1095. A guy named Peter the Hermit shows up in Italy and he says, man, I got a story to tell and I got to tell it to the Pope. I went on a pilgrimage to go see the sacred shrines of Christianity.

I wanted to make my trip to the Holy Land. So I went on a pilgrimage and, you know, you can imagine what it would be like to essentially walk or go on a donkey for all that distance. I mean, this was a tremendous undertaking.

I went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and when I got there, I was so mistreated by the Turks, so mistreated by the Muslims, that people in my company were killed. Women were ravished. I barely escaped with my life.

And Peter the Hermit said, I got to talk to the Pope about this. And Peter the Hermit got an audience with the Pope. He saw the Pope and the Pope approved the first Crusade.

And do you know what a Crusade is? What the word means? It means a war on behalf or in the service of the cross. It comes from the word cross. It's a war on behalf of the cross.

And so it was the cross against the crescent. And, you know, the Pope, who was Urban II at the time, he said, okay, I'm going to promote this. And Peter the Hermit went around and he just traveled from city to city throughout Italy and France saying, this is what happened to me.

We can't stand for this. These Muslim infidels are desecrating these Christians. They're saying, this is our land.

This is the land where Jesus walked. And it's bad enough that the Muslims rule, but we can't even go there and visit. In 1095, Pope Urban II gave an impassioned appeal for an army to march to the Holy Land and win it back.

He says, a horrible tale has gone forth. An accursed race, utterly alienated from God, has invaded the lands of the Christians and depopulated them by sword, plundering and fire. Tear that land from the wicked race and subject it to yourselves.

Let's go make war. We're going to march down and we're going to liberate the Holy Land from the Muslims. When he made this fiery sermon, it said that the people cried out in response.

In Latin, they said, Deus vult, Deus vult, God wills it. God wills it. It's God's will.

It's God's will. Let's go. And so they did.

And Pope Urban II took a little page from the Muslim playbook. If you're a Muslim and you're fighting in a jihad, a holy war, what happens if you die? Straight to paradise. And they really believe it.

That's a big motivation for them. Pope Urban II said, if you die in the service of the crusade, you're freed from purgatory. Now, this is interesting.

Why couldn't he say you're automatically saved? You're going to go to heaven. Why couldn't he say that? You know why I don't promise him heaven? He's already got heaven. Because he went through the rituals that the church says you've got to go through, right? The church has already guaranteed him heaven.

The only thing we've got to hold over his head is purgatory. Now, maybe we should talk just for a minute here. What's the whole purpose of purgatory? First of all, is purgatory a biblical idea or a biblical doctrine? Not in the slightest.

Purely the invention of man. But purgatory, in the conception of these people, is what? Not just waiting. You just don't wait in purgatory.

What happens to you in purgatory? You die and you go straight to heaven? Unless you're a saint. If you're a saint, you go straight to heaven. What happens to you in purgatory? You're tortured.

You're punished for your sins on this earth. You are purged of your sins. That's what purgatory comes from.

It's the place where you're purged of your sins. The priest has told him that he's saved because he jumped through the hoops. You know your heart isn't right towards God.

So you feel guilty about that. I can't go to heaven the way I am. So it's like, oh good, they let me go to purgatory and get cleaned up.

I don't know if a single born again person in the history of the world has ever thought, oh yeah, I'm going to go to purgatory. They know they're righteous because of the work of Jesus Christ on their behalf. But the whole idea of purgatory is that's where you go to get cleaned up before you go to heaven.

And depending on how bad you've been, the longer you have to stay. If you were a saint, you don't have to go at all. You go straight to heaven.

Now, here's the point. What possible business does the pope have promising anybody that they can get out of purgatory? Because the pope has power over purgatory in Roman Catholic teaching. If there's a soul in purgatory right now, there's a soul in purgatory right now.

Old Aunt Elda is in purgatory. The pope can pray to God and say, Lord, send Aunt Elda on her way. Send her up to heaven.

And God will answer that prayer. The pope has the power to free a soul from purgatory. So you know what he says? Albert, you go on that crusade, you die.

I'm going to pray for your soul and God will free it from purgatory. Boom, like that. That's a sweet deal.

Okay, you get the picture here. Now, this is important to say because this ties into the Reformation in such a powerful way. The pope's power over purgatory provided the little trigger that shot off the gun of the Reformation.

The trigger is just a little thing, right? It's just a little piece of metal. But it shoots the whole gun. That's how it was with this whole idea of the pope's power over purgatory.

All right. Did the crusades succeed? Well, in a way. I mean, the crusades went and some of them enjoyed some... There was about a hundred year period where Christians controlled the Holy Land.

But brutal fighting, horrible fighting. The crusaders used to go and on their way marching there, they'd go to Jewish communities and wipe them out just to warm up or whatever. Just horrible, horrible stuff.

And the crusades got really strange. There were two children's crusades. You know, you've got children's ministry, children's church.

Here's the children's crusades. In one of them, a 12-year-old boy named Stephen of Cloyes inspired 30,000 children to march to the Holy Land. Because they were going to make a supernatural conquest because they were pure in heart.

They were children. Of course, if you think that all children are pure in heart, you don't know your children very well. But that's another matter.

That was their thinking. Can you imagine 30,000 children marching as an army saying, you know, well, God's just going to bless our spirituality and that? You know what? A huge disaster. A lot of them died along the way.

Many of them lost heart when they came to a body of water that they had to cross. And they were going to part it. You know, they'd been reading their Bible, right? It didn't part.

And so many of them fell away then. And most of the remaining children either died at sea, were slaughtered, or were sold into slavery. Just a huge debacle.

But this was their thinking. I'm just going to let you read the rest of the stuff on the handouts for some of the important people and writings. We just mentioned Cyprian and Athanasius and John Chrysostom and Augustine and Anselm and Thomas Aquinas.

I just have little excerpts from some of those guys. Just get a little tiny flavor, a little tiny drop on your tongue of what these guys write and what they speak about. Time's kind of escaped us.

I don't want to begin at that point next week. Next week we'll begin talking about the Reformation. That's a fun thing to talk about.

Lord, we thank you and we ask God that you just help us to keep a focus on who Jesus Christ really is. Lord, we want to understand and appreciate these controversies through the centuries. But Lord, as much as anything, to really glorify you by knowing and serving and following after Jesus.

We pray this, Lord, in Jesus' name. Amen.

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