# Role Sheets for Roman Prisoner’s Dilemma/Council of Antioch Game

David E Henderson and William Campbell

Version 2.2

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# ***Roles for Part 1 of the Game***

Bishop Meletius of Lycopolis– Meletian Faction

Situation- You are in prison with Peter of Alexandria. The Romans will come in periodically and select people for martyrdom. They are saving you and Peter for a special day, so you will probably live for some time in this horrible prison eating only minimal food and water. You and Peter have been arguing over how Christians should respond to the Great Persecution. You are a man of strong faith and will go willingly to your death confident in the Resurrection and your place I heaven.

You also take seriously the scriptures that make it clear than Christians who abandon their faith under persecution are never to return to the Church.

Periodically, the Roman Centurion[[1]](#footnote-1) will select some people to kill and will give them the choice of death or renouncing their faith.

Biographical Notes

* You are a senior priest from Lycopolis in Egypt
* Peter of Alexandria is the Metropolitan Bishop of Egypt and your nominal boss
* You are both considered by the Romans to be the most important prisoners

Goals

* You seek to convince everyone that to die is the best choice. Those who die will get a great reward in heaven. Those who give up must leave the Church and will never get that heavenly reward. Earthly rewards can never compete with the joys of Heaven.

Responsibilities

* You will make a speech on the glories of Heaven and the fact that Christians who are chosen for martyrdom are called to embrace their fate and will go immediately to their rewards in Heaven when they die.
* You need to emphasize the martyrs who have gone before them and that you will not accept anyone back into the church when the persecution ends who chooses to leave. If they surrender, they will lose their reward in Heaven.

Strategy advice

Two key scriptures for your arguments are

Mark 3:28-30

28 “Assuredly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they may utter; 29 “but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation” — 30 because they said, “He has an unclean spirit.”

Hebrews 6:4-6

4 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.

Priest working for Bishop Meletius of Lycopolis–

Situation

You are in prison with Meletius of Lycopolis and Peter of Alexandria. They have been arguing over how Christians should respond to the Great Persecution. The Roman Centurion will come in periodically and select people for martyrdom. If you are chosen for martyrdom, you will go cheerfully as an example to others. You are confident that your death will lead to rewards in heaven.

Biography

You are a priest in Egypt who faces martyrdom soon. You agree with Meletius, your superior bishop, that true Christians will face this in the faith that they will be rewarded in heaven.

Goals

* You seek to convince everyone that to die is the best choice. Those who die will get a great reward in heaven. Those who give up must leave the Church and will never get that heavenly reward. Earthly rewards can never compete with the joys of Heaven.

Responsibilities

* You will make a speech on the glories of Heaven and the fact that Christians who are chosen for martyrdom are called to embrace their fate and will go immediately to their rewards in Heaven when they die.
* When the Roman Centurion[[2]](#footnote-2) enters, you need to emphasize the martyrs who have gone before them and that Meletius will not accept anyone back into the church when the persecution ends who chooses to leave. If they surrender, they will lose their reward in Heaven.
* If you are selected as a martyr, you will go cheerfully praising God for the blessed opportunity to be a martyr.

Strategy Advice

Emphasize scriptures that promise heavenly rewards.

Luke 6:23

Be glad in that day and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven. For in the same way their fathers used to treat the prophets.

Matthew 5:10-12

“Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. “Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Revelation 22:12

“Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.

Bishop Peter of Alexandria and Metropolitan for Africa –

Situation

You are in prison with Meletius of Lycopolis. The Roman Centurion[[3]](#footnote-3) will come in periodically and select people for martyrdom. They are saving you and Meletius for a special day, so you will probably live for some time in this horrible prison eating only minimal food and water.

You and Meletius have been arguing with over whether those who are not able to face martyrdom and surrender their faith to the Romans should be allowed back into the Church when persecution ends, as it always has.

Biography

* You are Metropolitan, the bishop in charge of all of Egypt.

Goals

* You want your fellow prisoners to understand that martyrdom is a gift from God but that not everyone is called to receive it.
* Those who do not feel called to martyrdom can repent and be accepted back into the Church after the persecution ends.

Responsibilities

* You will make a speech on the forgiveness of Jesus and reassure people that God does not call everyone to martyrdom. They should pray for guidance. If they don’t feel called to sacrifice in this way, then it is alright for them to abandon the church until the persecution is over.
* You must explain to the prisoners that Jesus’ message is about forgiveness. If Jesus could forgive the Roman soldiers who crucified him, would he not also forgive those who give up under the difficult conditions of prison and the needs of their families to have them stay alive. Even Bishop Ignatius counseled his student Polycarp to hide to avoid arrest and martyrdom. Polycarp did embrace his own martyrdom in his 80’s. Hiding is not the same as sacrificing to the Roman gods, but it indicates that not everyone is called to martyrdom and that Christian forgiveness is available to all.

Strategy Advice

You should use scriptures on forgiveness to reassure prisoners that those who can’t face martyrdom can be forgiven if they later repent. A good scripture to start with is below.

Luke 17:3-4

Jesus said, “If your brother or sister sins against you, rebuke them; and if they repent, forgive them. Even if they sin against you seven times in a day and seven times come back to you saying ‘I repent,’ you must forgive them.”

Priest working for Bishop Peter of Alexandria and Metropolitan for Africa –

Situation

* You are in prison with Peter and Meletius. The Roman Centurion[[4]](#footnote-4) will come in periodically and select people for martyrdom. They are saving Meletius and Peter for a special day, so you may be selected soon. You may have to face the choice of what to do.
* Peter and Meletius have been arguing with him over whether those who are not able to face martyrdom and surrender their faith to the Romans should be allowed back into the Church when persecution ends, as it always has. You understand that Jesus’ message is about forgiveness. If Jesus could forgive the Roman soldiers who crucified him, would he not also forgive those who give up under the difficult conditions of prison and the needs of their families to have them stay alive. Even Bishop Ignatius counseled his student Polycarp to hide to avoid arrest and martyrdom. Polycarp did embrace his own martyrdom in his 80’s. Hiding is not the same as sacrificing to the Roman gods, but it indicates that not everyone is called to martyrdom and that Christian forgiveness is available to all.

Goals

* You have prayed about your situation and believe God will forgive you if you avoid martyrdom by making sacrifice to the Roman gods. You do not feel called by God to become a martyr.

Responsibilities

* You will make a speech on the forgiveness of Jesus and reassure people that God does not call everyone to martyrdom. They should pray for guidance. If they don’t feel called to sacrifice in this way, then it is alright for them to abandon the church until the persecution is over.
* If you are chosen for martyrdom, you will say a prayer asking for forgiveness and then surrender to the Romans and make a sacrifice to Saturn. You may want to keep your fingers crossed when you do.

Strategy Advice

You should use scriptures on forgiveness to reassure prisoners that those who can’t face martyrdom can be forgiven if they later repent. Your point is that not everyone is called by God to be a martyr. A good scripture to start with is below.

Matthew 6:13-15

Jesus said, “For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”

## Indeterminate

Situation

You are a Priest serving in Egypt. When the Great Persecution arrived, you were arrested and placed in prison with Bishop Meletius of Lycopolis and Metropolitan Bishop Peter of Alexandria. Meletius has been stressing the need for all Christians to hold fast to their faith. He sees martyrdom as a gift from God that one should embrace if you are chosen for it. Peter seems more flexible. He notes that Ignatius counseled Polycarp that he should leave the city to avoid martyrdom. Ignatius embraced his death, but he was quite old and felt he had lived his life.

If you are selected for martyrdom by the Romans, you will have to decide whether to accept martyrdom or not. Everyone selected is given the choice to either make a sacrifice to the Roman gods or die in the arena. This choice will be yours.

Peter has made it clear that he feels those who are unable to face death and sacrifice to the Roman gods can return to the Church after the persecution ends if they ask forgiveness. Meletius, on the other hand has ruled that once one abandons their faith, they are doomed to Hell with no chance to return to the Church.

The Roman Centurion will come to the prison periodically to select people to kill.

Goal

* You must decide whether to accept martyrdom in the hope of a heavenly reward or to sacrifice to the Roman gods and accept an earthly reward.

Responsibilities

* You will draw a token from the urn. One token will mean you have not been chosen for sacrifice in that round.
* The other color will mean you have been selected for death. You must decide whether to die a Christian Martyr and go immediately to your rewards in Heaven, whatever they are, or to surrender your faith and enjoy the earthly rewards of the Empire. If you surrender, you will certainly be able to find food again and end the starvation diet of the Roman prison.
* Listen to Peter and Meletius and consider the scriptures when you make your decision.

Strategy Advice

The choice of what to do is entirely yours. You are a committed Christian and that would lead you to accept death. But you also have listened to Metropolitan Peter, one of the highest ranking descendants of the Apostles of Jesus explain that forgiveness is possible. If you make sacrifice to Saturn, you can enjoy the treats the Centurion is offering. You have no idea what awaits you in the afterlife.

You can’t do what Polycarp did and flee to the countryside, but you can try to be at the end of the line for each drawing. This may let you avoid having to decide what to do.

Your mind goes to the writings in 1 Corinthians. On the one hand, Paul calls on you to stand firm, but he also promises you will not be tested beyond what you can endure. Is a sacrifice to Saturn the way out that God is providing?

1 Corinthians 10:12-13

So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall! No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

1 Corinthians 15:57-58

But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

Roman Centurion–

Situation

You are the Roman Centurion[[5]](#footnote-5) in charge of selecting prisoners for execution in the arena. Like most Roman soldiers, you are very superstitious. You have found that when your legion made the proper sacrifices, you were successful in battle. On the few occasions when someone failed to do so, your legion suffered too many casualties. The Christians have refused to make the necessary sacrifices, and this leads to famine, plague, and military defeat. Thus, it is important that they all be forced to sacrifice to the god Saturn on the appropriate feast days. Those who refuse deserve to be killed. You fully support the actions begun by Diocletian to purge the empire of those who offend the gods.

You will make a short speech encouraging them to take the simple act of bowing down to Saturn and being freed from prison. You should accuse them of causing many problems for the empire because of their refusal. Also, those who make the proper sacrifices will not only be freed from prison but will be rewarded with delicious snacks. You have a container of snacks that you promise to everyone who does this. You will mock the idea that they will be rewarded in some magical heaven if they are martyrs.

Goals

* You would like everyone chosen for martyrdom to make sacrifice to Saturn. This would please the gods.

Responsibilities

* You will enter the prison to select prisoners three times You will begin by asking if anyone wants to volunteer for martyrdom.
* You will also encourage all prisoners to make sacrifice to Saturn and be freed from prison and enjoy the earthly rewards you offer.
* If there are prisoners who don’t bow to Saturn, you will draw lots for death in the arena. You will have an urn with two color pieces. Explain which color means death. Prisoners will line up and each prisoner except Peter and Meletius will select a stone in turn until you have the required number of martyrs. Each person who gets a life stone will move back to the end of the line. Each person who gets a death stone will be asked, “Do you renounce your faith and bow down to Saturn or will you go to the Arena? Those who agree to bow down to Saturn will take a seat in the classroom and be given food and drink. You will continue this process until you have enough martyrs. You will escort who choose the arena out of the classroom and give them each a new role sheet. After about 5 minutes, you will return and select the next martyrs.
* You will mock those selected for martyrdom by telling them of the horrible fate that awaits them with the lions and encourage people to give up and enjoy the food and drink available to those who worship Saturn.

## Apostates who sacrifice to Saturn

Situation

* You have decided not to face martyrdom. You will kneel before the Roman god Saturn. Then you will be given food and drink. After this you will remain on the edge of the classroom.

Responsibilities

* Try to convince those still in prison that the food is good and that they can rejoin the church when the persecution ends according to Peter.
* While you enjoy your life outside prison, discuss the arguments you will make to be allowed to resume your jobs as priests now that you are released from prison.

Strategy Advice

* Try to convince as many prisoners as possible to join you. If there are a large number of apostates, it may convince the Church that you are needed as clergy.
* Review the scriptures on forgiveness in the handout and prepare to argue that you should do penance and return to full membership in the Church.
* called you to martyrdom.
* Finally, there are practical issues. The Church is growing rapidly and needs experienced clergy.
* Penance may include a period of observation of your faithfulness before full reinstatement. You should argue for as short a period as possible.
* One of the most powerful scriptures on forgiveness is below.
* Luke 17:3-4 Jesus said, “If your brother or sister sins against you, rebuke them; and if they repent, forgive them. Even if they sin against you seven times in a day and seven times come back to you saying ‘I repent,’ you must forgive them.”

# Roles for the Council of Antioch phase (optional)

## Martyrs of the Church-Bishop Ossius - Alexandrian

Situation

* You have accepted martyrdom. You were torn limb from limb in the arena and eaten by lions. Your death was painful and slow. However, throughout the ordeal you prayed to God and Jesus to accept your sacrifice and welcome you into Heaven.
* You are in Antioch to lead a Church Council to examine Arius, Eusebius of Caesarea, Narcissus, and others who hold the belief that Jesus is not co-eternal and equal to God the Father.

Biography

* You are now reincarnated as a Bishop Ossius of Cordoba.

Goals

* You recognize the belief of Arius is obviously heretical and seek to excommunicate those who hold it from the Church. It is necessary to purge this heresy before it spreads and leads faithful Christians into error.

Responsibilities

* You will lead the Council in examining Arius and his followers. Use scriptures below to convince Arius and his supporters of their error. The Scriptures say that when a brother is in error, you must confront them and try to convince them of their error. Only after this fails can they be removed from the community by shunning and excommunication.
* When the third round of martyrs arrive and complete reading their role sheets, hold a vote on whether to excommunicate all the Arians.

Strategy Advice

* The most powerful statement of your theology is the beginning of the Gospel of John, which explicitly equates the Word (Jesus) with God. You accept only one hypostasis (substance) for God. This avoids the danger of slipping into polytheism, but it complicates the issue of the Son and his connection to the hypostasis of God. The purpose of God entering Jesus in the form of his Word was to reunite God with all humanity. God has acted through his Word becoming flesh in Jesus to elevate humanity, returning them to their original state before they were separated from God after the Garden of Eden.
* The Son/Word shares in the hypostasis of God and salvation could be viewed as the Word or hypostasis of God entering all Christians. But this way of putting it runs into the other heresy of identifying God and humanity, making them one with each other. This is heresy because it denies the transcendence of God over all created things, which would include humanity. As close as human beings and God come to each other they never become ontologically one, a position that would deny the difference between Creator and creature.

**Relevant Scriptures**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. John 1:1

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:14

Jesus says “I and My Father are one.” John 10:30

[Jesus], being in very natureGod, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very natureof a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself. Philippians 2:6-8

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our savior, Jesus Christ. Titus 2:13

## Martyrs of the Church- Alexander of Alexandria - Alexandrian

Situation

* You have accepted martyrdom. You were torn limb from limb in the arena and eaten by lions. Your death was painful and slow. However, throughout the ordeal you prayed to God and Jesus to accept your sacrifice and welcome you into Heaven.
* You are in Antioch to attend a Church Council to examine Arius, Eusebius of Caesarea, Narcissus, and others who hold the belief that Jesus is not co-eternal and equal to God the Father.

Biography

* You are now reincarnated as a Bishop Alexander of Alexandria. You are Metropolitan bishop in charge of all of Egypt and one of the most prominent bishops of the church. You have led the fight to exclude the ideas of Arius and his supporters from the church.

Goals

* You recognize Arius’ belief as obviously heretical and seek to excommunicate those who hold it from the Church. It is necessary to purge this heresy before it spreads and leads faithful Christians into error.
* The Scriptures say that when a brother is in error, you must confront them and try to convince them of their error. Only after this fails can they be removed from the community by shunning and excommunication.

Strategy Advice

The most powerful statement of your theology is the beginning of the Gospel of John, which explicitly equates the Word (Jesus) with God. You accept only one hypostasis (substance) for God. This avoids the danger of slipping into polytheism, but it complicates the issue of the Son and his connection to the hypostasis of God. The purpose of God entering into Jesus in the form of his Word was to reunite God with all humanity. God has acted through his Word becoming flesh in Jesus to elevate humanity, returning them to their original state before they were separated from God after the Garden of Eden.

The Son/Word shares in the hypostasis of God and salvation could be viewed as the Word or hypostasis of God entering all Christians. But this way of putting it runs into the other heresy of identifying God and humanity, making them one with each other. This is heresy because it denies the transcendence of God over all created things, which would include humanity. As close as human beings and God come to each other they never become ontologically one, a position that would deny the difference between Creator and creature.

**Relevant Scriptures**

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The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:14

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Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our savior, Jesus Christ. Titus 2:13

## Martyrs of the Church- Alexandrian

Situation

* You have accepted martyrdom. You were torn limb from limb in the arena and eaten by lions. Your death was painful and slow. However, throughout the ordeal you prayed to God and Jesus to accept your sacrifice and welcome you into Heaven.
* You are in Antioch at a Church Council held to examine Arius, Eusebius of Caesarea, Narcissus, and others who hold the belief that Jesus is not co-eternal and equal to God the Father.

Goals

* You recognize the belief of Arius is obviously heretical and seek to excommunicate those who hold it from the Church. It is necessary to purge this heresy before it spreads and leads faithful Christians into error.

Strategy advice

* The scriptures below can be used to support your position. Try to use these to convince Arius and his supporters of their error. The Scriptures say that when a brother is in error, you must confront them and try to convince them of their error. Only after this fails can they be removed from the community by shunning and excommunication.
* The most powerful statement of your theology is the beginning of the Gospel of John which explicitly equates the Word (Jesus) with God. You accept only one hypostasis (substance) for God. This avoids the danger of slipping into polytheism, but it complicates the issue of the Son and his connection to the hypostasis of God. The purpose of God entering Jesus in the form of his Word was to reunite God with all humanity. This allows God has acted through his Word becoming flesh in Jesus to elevate humanity, returning them to their original state before they were separated from God after the Garden of Eden.
* The Son/Word shares in the hypostasis of God and salvation could be viewed as the Word or hypostasis of God entering all Christians. But this way of putting it runs into the other heresy of identifying God and humanity, making them one with each other. This is heresy because it denies the transcendence of God over all created things, which would include humanity. As close as human beings and God come to each other they never become ontologically one, a position that would deny the difference between Creator and creature.

**Relevant Scriptures**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. John 1:1

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:14

Jesus says “I and My Father are one.” John 10:30

[Jesus], being in very natureGod, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very natureof a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself. Philippians 2:6-8

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our savior, Jesus Christ. Titus 2:13

## Martyr of the Church - Arius

Situation

* You have accepted martyrdom. You were torn limb from limb in the arena and eaten by lions. Your death was painful and slow. However, throughout the ordeal you prayed to God and Jesus to accept your sacrifice and welcome you into Heaven.
* You are in Antioch at a Church Council held to examine you and others who hold the belief that Jesus is not co-eternal and equal to God the Father. If the decision of the Council goes against you, there is a good probability that you will be removed from the Church.

Biography

* You are now reincarnated as Arius. You are a presbyter[[6]](#footnote-6), having failed in your efforts to become Bishop of Alexandria. You were excommunicated by Alexander and fled to the protection of Metropolitan Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea.

. Goals

* You wish to convince the Council that your understanding of Jesus is the true one.
* You must avoid being excommunicated.

Strategy Advice

* The scriptures below can be used to support your position. Try to use these to convince the Alexandrians of their error and convince them you are correct.
* You also know that the Council is stacked against you based on the large number of Alexandrian Bishops who have come. You will probably lose, but you need to make your best arguments. If you do lose, you should appeal your excommunication directly to the emperor.
* You believed that God and Jesus represented two different substances (hypostases). God was the first of these and Jesus, the Son, Christ, the Word, was a second hypostasis that was in some way derived from or created by God. The details of the origin of the Son were not clear, but it was clear that God was not divided to form the Son nor was the Son equal to the fullness of God’s divinity. Jesus came after God, or as you like to say, “there was a time when Jesus was not”. In this construction, the Son was the hypostasis that interacted with humanity throughout the Scriptures. It was the Son/Word who spoke to Abraham, wrestled with Jacob, and spoke to the prophets. The Son/Word became visible when it entered into Jesus.[[7]](#footnote-7) The Son was clearly in some way subordinate to the Father, and this idea is supported by many passages of scripture (see John 14:28 for example). There are passages in which Jesus speaks of being less than God or that Jesus is not privy to God’s secrets (see Mark 13:32 for example). Also, Jesus prays to God on many occasions. Was he talking to himself?

**Relevant Scriptures**

My father is greater than I. John 14:28

My father is greater than All. John 10:29

I cast out demons with the Spirit of God. Matthew 12:28

I cast out demons with the finger of God.” Luke 11:20

Then Jesus Answered and said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, the son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like Manner.  For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel.” John 5: 19-20

I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and my judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me. John 5: 30

The word which you hear is not mine but the Father’s who sent me. John 14: 24

Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth. And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:9-11

Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the father in Me? The Words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the father who dwells in Me does the works. John 14:10

At Gethsemane, Jesus prays to his Father that his hour of death may arrive soon. (Mark 14: 35). Here Jesus is clearly offering prayer to God who is separate from him, and asks God to bring about an event (Jesus’ death) which is not in his control.

This is the beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Mark 1:1

Son of man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One. Mark 14: 62

But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Mark 13:32

## Martyr of the Church – Eusebius of Caesera

Situation

* You have accepted martyrdom. You were torn limb from limb in the arena and eaten by lions. Your death was painful and slow. However, throughout the ordeal you prayed to God and Jesus to accept your sacrifice and welcome you into Heaven.
* You are in Antioch at a Church Council held to examine you and others who hold the belief that Jesus is not co-eternal and equal to God the Father. If the decision of the Council goes against you, there is a good probability that you will be removed from the Church.

Biography

* You are now reincarnated as a Eusebius of Caesarea. You are Metropolitan of Palestine and thus consider your rank equal to Alexander. You are a supporter of Arius and took him in when he was exiled from Alexandria.

. Goals

* You wish to convince the Council that your understanding of Jesus is the true one.
* You must avoid being excommunicated.

Strategy Advice

* The scriptures below can be used to support your position. Try to use these to convince the Alexandrians of their error and convince them you are correct.
* You also know that the Council is stacked against you based on the large number of Alexandrian Bishops who have come. You will probably lose, but you need to make your best arguments. If you do lose, you should appeal your excommunication directly to the emperor.
* You believed that God and Jesus represented two different substances (hypostases). God was the first of these and the Son, Christ, the Word, was a second hypostasis that was in some way derived from or created by God. The details of the origin of the Son were not clear, but it was clear that God was not divided to form the Son nor was the Son equal to the fullness of God’s divinity. Jesus came after God, or as Arius would say, “there was a time when Jesus was not”. In this construction, the Son was the hypostasis that interacted with humanity throughout the Scriptures. It was the Son/Word who spoke to Abraham, wrestled with Jacob, and spoke to the prophets. The Son/Word became visible when it entered into Jesus.[[8]](#footnote-8) The Son was clearly in some way subordinate to the Father, and this idea is supported by many passages of scripture (see John 14:28 for example). There are passages in which Jesus speaks of being less than God or that Jesus is not privy to God’s secrets (see Mark 13:32 for example). Also, Jesus prays to God on many occasions. Was he talking to himself?

**Relevant Scriptures**

My father is greater than I. John 14:28

My father is greater than All. John 10:29

I cast out demons with the Spirit of God. Matthew 12:28

I cast out demons with the finger of God.” Luke 11:20

Then Jesus Answered and said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, the son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like Manner.  For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel.” John 5: 19-20

I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and my judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me. John 5: 30

The word which you hear is not mine but the Father’s who sent me. John 14: 24

Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth. And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:9-11

Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the father in Me? The Words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the father who dwells in Me does the works. John 14:10

At Gethsemane, Jesus prays to his Father that his hour of death may arrive soon. (Mark 14: 35). Here Jesus is clearly offering prayer to God who is separate from him, and asks God to bring about an event (Jesus’ death) which is not in his control.

This is the beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Mark 1:1

Son of man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One. Mark 14: 62

But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Mark 13:32

## Martyr of the Church – Narcissus - Bishop of Neronia.

Situation

* You have accepted martyrdom. You were torn limb from limb in the arena and eaten by lions. Your death was painful and slow. However, throughout the ordeal you prayed to God and Jesus to accept your sacrifice and welcome you into Heaven.
* You are in Antioch at a Church Council held to examine you and others who hold the belief that Jesus is not co-eternal and equal to God the Father. If the decision of the Council goes against you, there is a good probability that you will be removed from the Church.

Biography

You are Narcissus, a Bishop from Neronia. You were educated with Arius and Eusebius.

Goals

* You wish to convince the Council that your understanding of Jesus is the true one.
* You must avoid being excommunicated.

Strategy Advice

* The scriptures below can be used to support your position. Try to use these to convince the Alexandrians of their error and convince them you are correct.
* You also know that the Council is stacked against you based on the large number of Alexandrian Bishops who have come. You will probably lose, but you need to make your best arguments. If you do lose, you should appeal your excommunication directly to the emperor.
* You believed that God and Jesus represented two different substances (hypostases). God was the first of these and the Son, Christ, the Word, was a second hypostasis that was in some way derived from or created by God. The details of the origin of the Son were not clear, but it was clear that God was not divided to form the Son nor was the Son equal to the fullness of God’s divinity. Jesus came after God, or as Arius would say, “there was a time when Jesus was not”. In this construction, the Son was the hypostasis that interacted with humanity throughout the Scriptures. It was the Son/Word who spoke to Abraham, wrestled with Jacob, and spoke to the prophets. The Son/Word became visible when it entered Jesus.[[9]](#footnote-9) The Son was clearly in some way subordinate to the Father, and this idea is supported by many passages of scripture (see John 14:28 for example). There are passages in which Jesus speaks of being less than God or that Jesus is not privy to God’s secrets (see Mark 13:32 for example). Also, Jesus prays to God on many occasions. Was he talking to himself?

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## Martyr of the Church – Theognus- Bishop of Nicaea.

Situation

* You have accepted martyrdom. You were torn limb from limb in the arena and eaten by lions. Your death was painful and slow. However, throughout the ordeal you prayed to God and Jesus to accept your sacrifice and welcome you into Heaven.
* You are in Antioch at a Church Council held to examine you and others who hold the belief that Jesus is not co-eternal and equal to God the Father. If the decision of the Council goes against you, there is a good probability that you will be removed from the Church.

Biography

You are Theognus, a Bishop from Nicaea. You were educated with Arius and Eusebius.

. Goals

* You wish to convince the Council that your understanding of Jesus is the true one.
* You must avoid being excommunicated.

Strategy Advice

* The scriptures below can be used to support your position. Try to use these to convince the Alexandrians of their error and convince them you are correct.
* You also know that the Council is stacked against you based on the large number of Alexandrian Bishops who have come. You will probably lose, but you need to make your best arguments. If you do lose, you should appeal your excommunication directly to the Emperor.
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# Role Addendum Part 2 Final Debate – Martyrs and those who were not chosen for death.

**Situation**

You are a bishop meeting at Nicaea to debate what to do with apostates, those who abandoned their faith during persecution.

* Should they be readmitted to the Church with full privileges? If the class decides to do this, then everyone, including all apostates will share equally in the heavenly reward provided to the martyrs.
* Should they be excluded from the Church? If the class decides that those who abandoned their faith are not true Christians and not to be trusted back in the Church, then the apostate students will not receive the heavenly reward. In a sense, they have had their reward on earth and do not deserve anything more. All remaining heavenly rewards will be shared by everyone except the apostates.

Goals depend on role from Part 1

* Followers of Meletius want apostates to be punished so they do not share in the heavenly rewards
* Followers of Peter want apostates to be forgiven and to receive heavenly rewards.
* Indeterminates are free to vote their understanding of the relevant scriptures.

Responsibilities

* If you were a follower of Meletius, you will argue to exclude the apostates using the scriptures on holding steadfast in the faith.
* If you were a follower of Peter, you will vote to readmit the apostates using the scriptures on forgiveness.
* If you were an indeterminate, you will let the scriptures and the Holy Spirit guide you in making this decision.

Strategy

Relevant Scriptures are contained in the handouts provided.

Followers of Meletius will focus on scriptures on holding fast to one’s faith

Followers of Peter will focus on scriptures on forgiveness.

Indeterminates will listen and question both sides and consider how to vote.

1. Centurions were Roman soldiers [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Centurions were Roman soldiers [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Centurions were Roman soldiers [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Centurions were Roman soldiers [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Centurions were Roman soldiers [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Priest [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The term Incarnation or God Incarnate derives from the Latin and means literally “In Meat”. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. The term Incarnation or God Incarnate derives from the Latin and means literally “In Meat”. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. The term Incarnation or God Incarnate derives from the Latin and means literally “In Meat”. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. The term Incarnation or God Incarnate derives from the Latin and means literally “In Meat”. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)