

The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed

A Symbol of Faith

Image: Oldest extant manuscript of the Nicene Creed, dated to the 5th Century



Αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐνηνθρώπισεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς θεοποιηθῶμεν

The word “creed” comes from the Latin credo, translated here as “we believe.” Credo is not simply belief in accurate propositions, but more deeply a sense of relationship or trust—an alternate translation might be “we give our heart,” “we trust,” “we rely upon.” Developed in the fourth century as a means of unifying a divided church, the Nicene Creed has been used by Christians in worship for almost two thousand years, and connects us to our ancient ancestors in the Communion of Saints. The Creed is used in worship not because it comprises a list of doctrinal statements one must affirm in order to be considered a Christian, but rather as a song of praise and confidence in the Holy Trinity: God in three persons who creates, redeems, and sanctifies a holy people.

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not
made, of one Being with the Father.

Through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became truly
human.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and
was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his
kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the
Father,

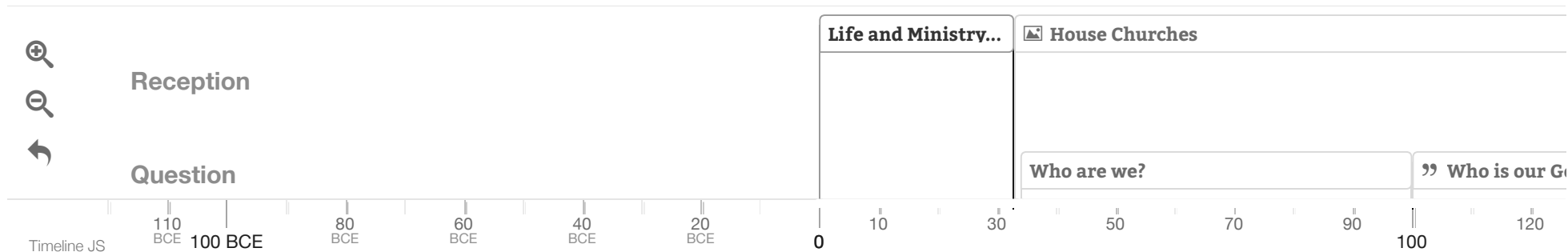
who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.

Amen.



0 — 33

Life and Ministry of Jesus

Who do you say that I am?

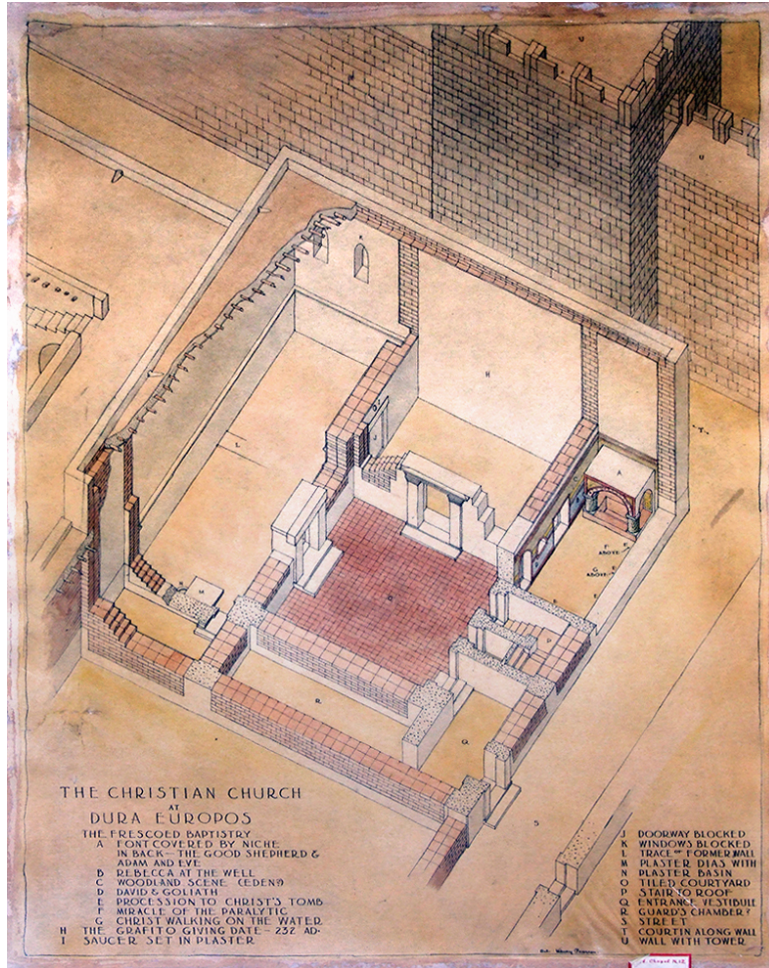
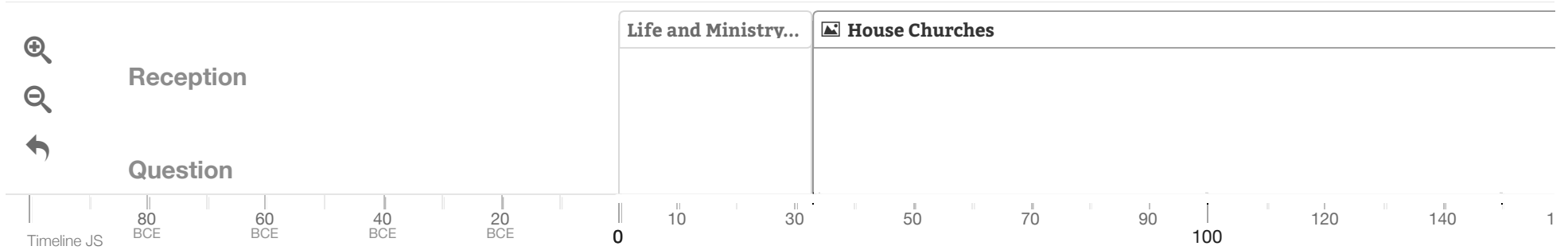


The Nicene-
Constantinopolitan
Creed



House
Churches

Αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐνηνθρώπισεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς θεοποιηθῶμεν

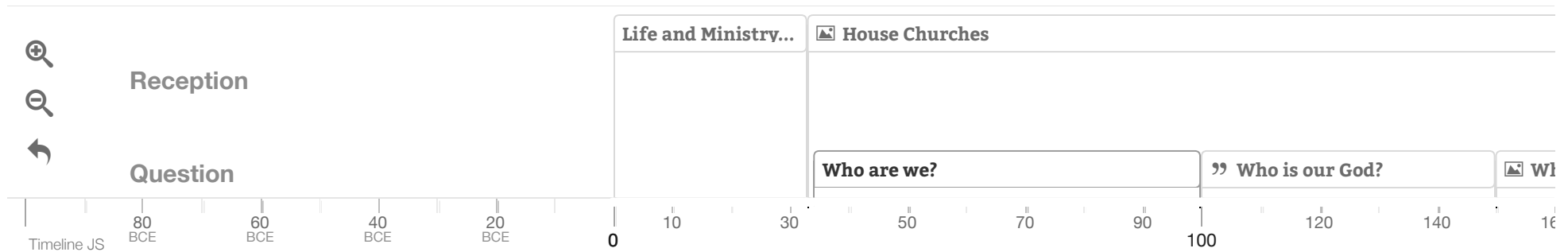


33 — 180

House Churches

Christians gathered in homes, listened to traveling preachers like Paul, Barnabas, Timothy, Thekla, Priscilla, and ate a common meal together.

Αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐνηνθρώπισεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς θεοποιηθῶμεν



34 — 100

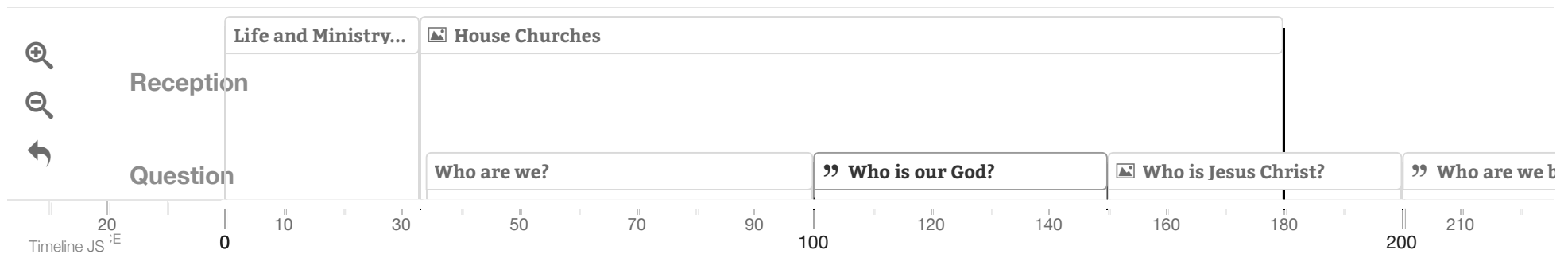
Who are we?

Acts 15: The Council of Jerusalem

¹Then certain individuals came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, 'Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.' ²And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to discuss this question with the apostles and the elders. ³So they were sent on their way by the church, and as they passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, they reported the conversion of the Gentiles, and brought great joy to all the believers. ⁴When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they reported all that God had done with them. ⁵But some believers who belonged to the sect of the Pharisees stood up and said, 'It is necessary for them to be circumcised and ordered to keep the law of Moses.';

⁶The apostles and the elders met together to consider this matter...

Αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐνηνθρώπισεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς θεοποιηθῶμεν



We believe in One God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

God from ages unto ages

Who is our God?

1st Ecumenical Council

- **pistis**. We believe; denotes confidence and trust, to give/offer in context of a relationship.
- **ena theon**. One God.
- **poiytyn ... pantwn**. Maker of all things
 - Matter does not pre-exist (contra Plato)
 - Order out of Chaos (Genesis)
 - *ex nihilo*: out of nothing

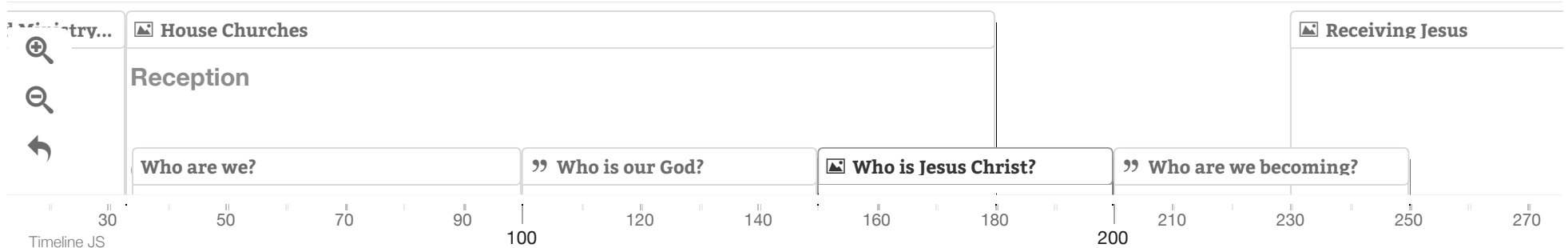


Who are we?



Who is Jesus Christ?

Αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐνηνθρώπισεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς θεοποιηθῶμεν



Jesus the Good Shepherd, Crypt of Lucina (2nd c.)

150 — 200

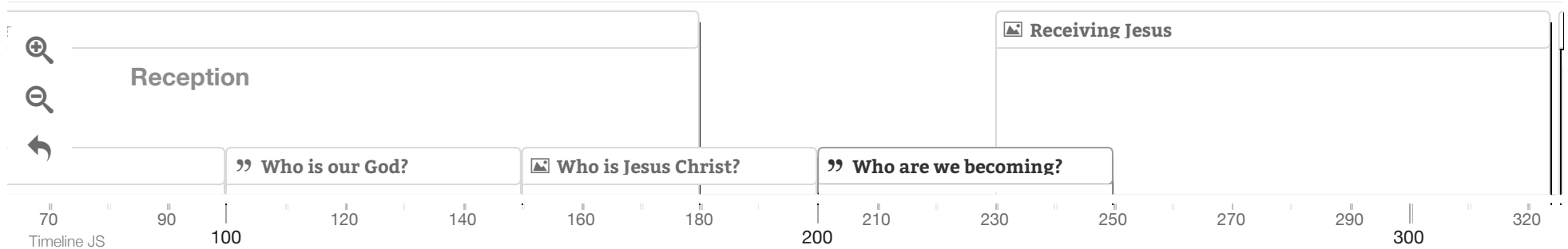
Who is Jesus Christ?

The Issues:

- **Time:** Is Jesus Christ really and truly God from before time?
- **Creation:** Jesus a creature, or creator? Is creation **worthy** of divinity?
- **Is Jesus Divine?:**
 - Does Jesus merely 'appear' human? Did he only appear to suffer and die?
 - Jesus 'from above'.
 - Docetism/Sabellianism/modalistic-monarchianism
- **Is Jesus human?:**
 - Was Jesus simply a specially endowed human?
 - Jesus 'from below'.
 - Ebionism/dynamic monarchianism/Adoptionism

What does the experience of God in Jesus

Αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐνηνθρώπισεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς θεοποιηθῶμεν



'That which He has not assumed, He has not healed.'

—Gregory of Nazianzus: *Epistle 101*

This 'Logic of Salvation':

'...instinctively explains all the mysteries of Christology and the incarnate economy by reverting to the fundamentals: that the mission of the Son of God on earth was for no other reason than the same compassion God the Father had for the cosmos.'

—John McGuckin

Experiencing 'salvation'

Who are we becoming?

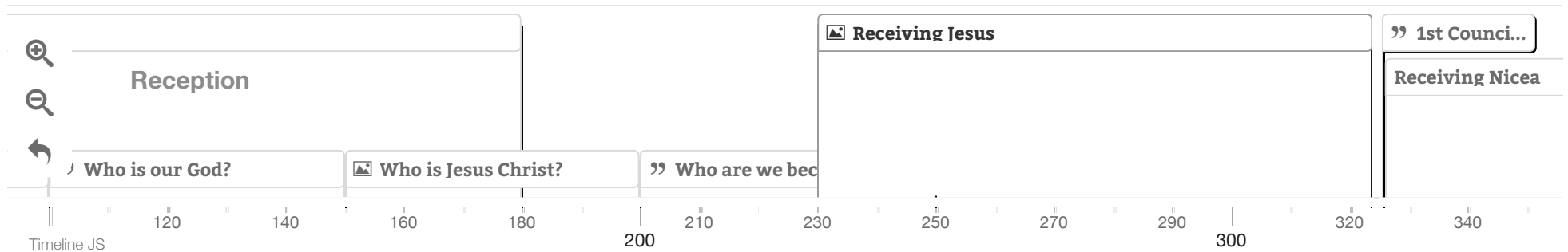
2 Peter 1:4: Thus he has given us, through these things, his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may ... become participants in the divine nature.

Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons (c. 130–202): God 'became what we are in order to make us what he is himself.' *Against Heresies*, Bk 5., preface.

Clement of Alexandria (c. 150–215): 'the Word of God became a human so that you might learn from a human how to become a god.' *Exhortation to the Greeks*, 1

Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria (c. 296–373): 'For the Son of God became human so that we might become God [gods]!' *On the Incarnation*, 54, 3.

Αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐνήνθρωπισεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς θεοποιηθῶμεν



From MS CLXV, Biblioteca Capitolare, Vercelli, a compendium of canon law produced in northern Italy ca. 825.

Constantine I burning Arian books.

Time and time again...

Receiving Jesus

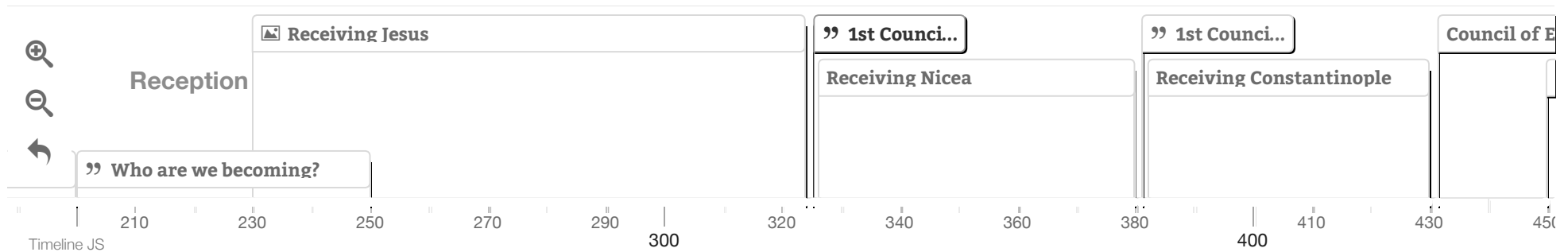
The Players:

- Arius (c. 256–336): a priest of Alexandria: **'There was when he was not.'**
- Alexander, Archbishop of Alexandria: **'There was not when he was not.'**
- Eusebius (d. 341), another bishop, and cousin to the Emperor Constantine.
- Constantine, Emperor, ambivalent peacemaker.

Who are we becoming?

1st Council of Nicea

Αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐνηνθρώπισεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς θεοποιηθῶμεν



And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, the only-begotten; that is, of the essence of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father;

who for us, and for our salvation, came down and was incarnate and was made human;

he suffered, and the third day he rose again, ascended into heaven; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

And in the Holy Ghost.

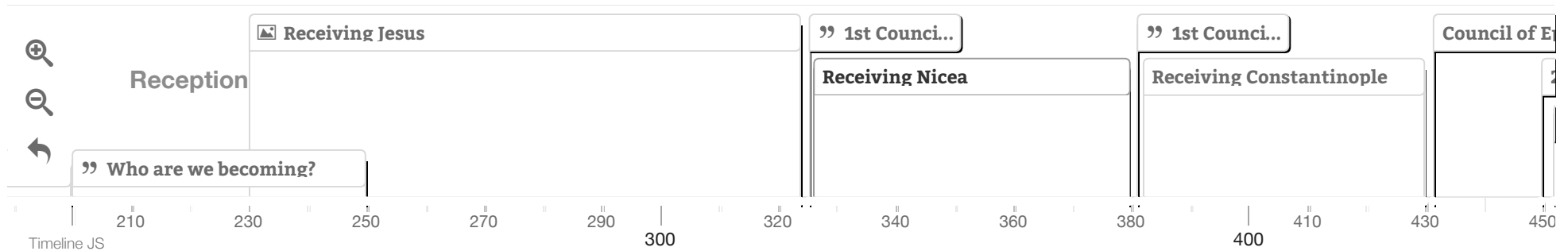
May 325

1st Council of Nicea

1st Ecumenical Council

- **yennythenta**: Begotten not made, that is, not a created being (contra Arius).
- **homoousios**: One in being, essence.
 - *homoousios* (same) vs. *homoiousios* (similar).
 - The only NON-scriptural concept in the Creed.
 - longstanding tradition of worshipping Christ as God and of experiencing that worship as divinizing
- **enanthropisanta**: (participle) humanizing, became human
- **For Our Salvation**: completes our humanity and lead the human race to its ultimate fulfillment

Αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐνηνθρώπισεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς θεοποιηθῶμεν



326 — 380

Receiving Nicea

The Issues:

- Apollinarianism: emphasizes the unity of Jesus the detriment of the divine. Christ had a human body but divine mind. Effectively undercuts any claim that Jesus could freely act.
- Pneumatomachianism/Macedonians: Denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit

The Players:

- Constantius II, Emperor, Son of Constantine I and an Arian sympathizer.
- Arius and Eusebius, welcomed back by Constantius II.
- Apollinarius, Bishop of Laodicea (d. 390): Arian opponent who went to the other extreme. who so elevated the unity of the person of Jesus that claimed Christ had a human body but divine mind, undercutting any claim that Jesus could freely act.
- Athanasius, Archbishop of Alexandria (successor of Alexander), exiled.

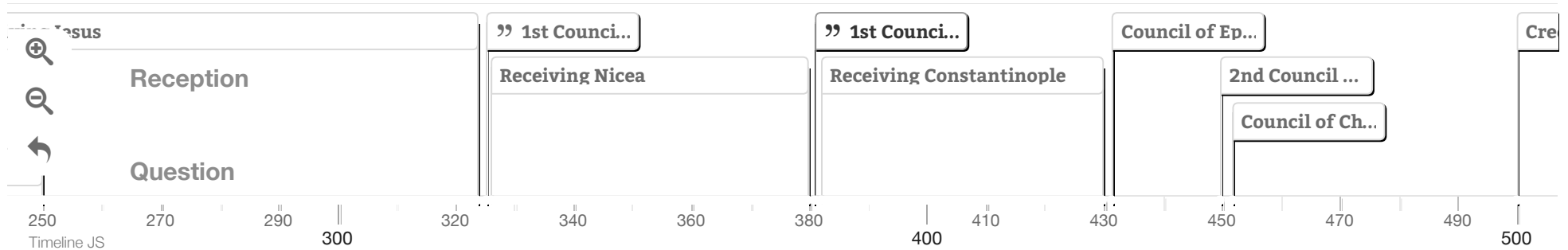


1st Council of
Nicea



1st Council of
Constantinople

Αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐνήνθρωπισεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς θεοποιηθῶμεν



*We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life, who proceeds from
the Father,*

*who with the Father and the Son is
worshipped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.*

*We believe in one holy catholic and
apostolic Church.*

*We acknowledge one baptism for the
forgiveness of sins.*

*We look for the resurrection of the
dead, and the life of the world to
come.*

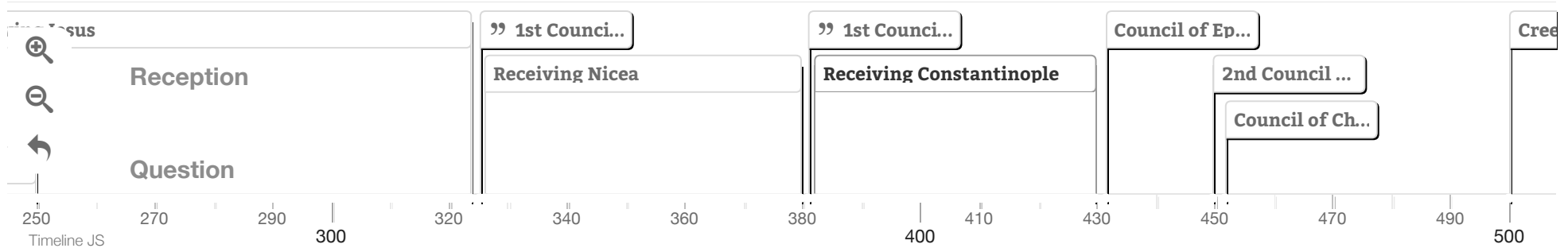
381

1st Council of Constantinople

2nd Ecumenical Council

- **Pneuma to Agion:** Proclaims the divinity of the Spirit
- **Proceeds from the Father:** a declaration of direct connection between God the Father and the spirit.
 - The *filioque* ('and the Son'): added in response to a local (Spanish) Arian controversy.
 - Theologically, runs the danger of subordinating the Spirit to the Son as well as the Father.
 - Ecclesiologically, inserted without conciliar consensus.
- **kath olos:** 'according to the whole.'

Αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐνήνθρωπισεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς θεοποιηθῶμεν



382 — 430

Receiving Constantinople

The Issues:

- How many natures, wills, substances, persons?
- Is Mary the 'bearer of God' (*Theotokos*) or the 'bearer of Christ' (*Christokos*)?

The Players:

- Nestorius (386–450), Patriarch of Constantinople: continued Apollinarianism by referring to Mary as *Christokos*.
- Antiochene School: emphasized distinction of two natures at the expense of articulating unity. They begin with the Jesus of the synoptic gospels.
- Alexandrian School: emphasizes divinity at the expense of either Jesus' human nature/soul (Arius, Apollinarius) or its salvific significance (Athanasius). They begin with the Jesus of the prologue of John, 'The Word was ...'

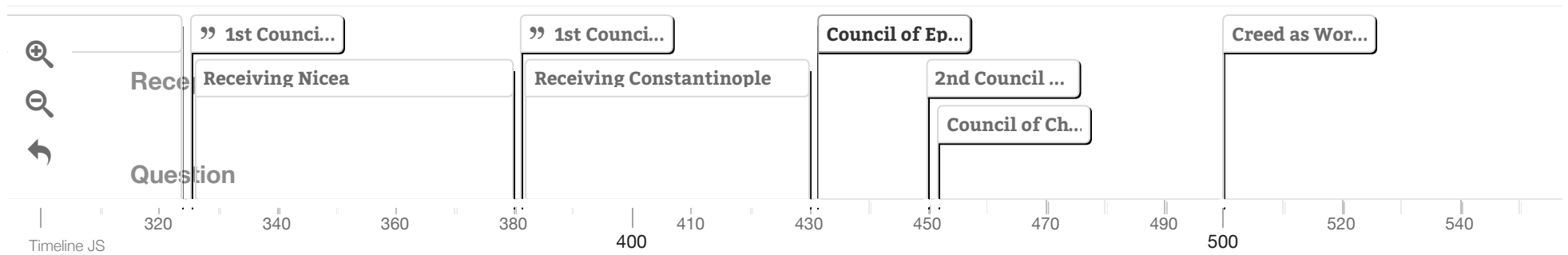


1st Council of
Constantinople



Council of
Ephesus

Αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐνήνθρωπισεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς θεοποιηθῶμεν



June 431

Council of Ephesus

3rd Ecumenical Council

The Players:

- Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople.
- Cyril (c. 376 – 444), Patriarch of Alexandria
- Pope Celestine I, (d. 26 July 432)
- Theodosius II.

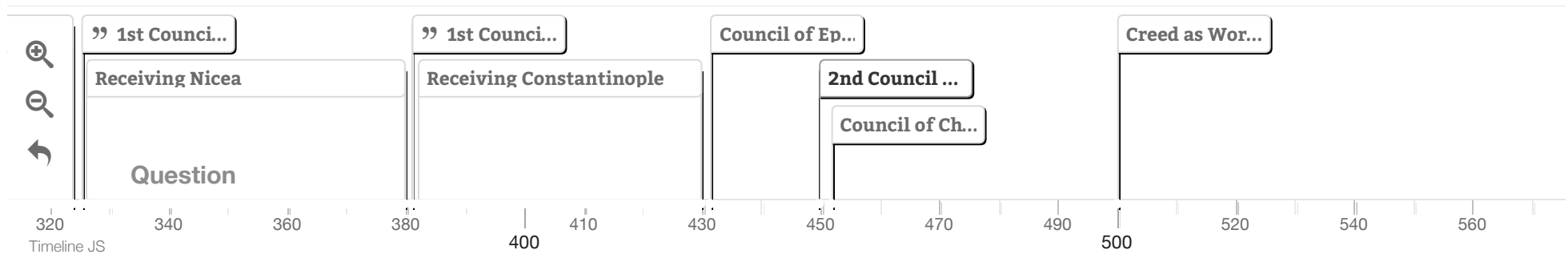


Receiving
Constantinople



2nd Council of
Ephesus

Αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐνηνθρώπισεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς θεοποιηθῶμεν



October 449

2nd Council of Ephesus

The Robber Council of Ephesus

- Monophysitism: Christ has a single 'nature', either divine, or a synthesis of divine and human.
- Eutyches of Constantinople (c. 380 – c. 456): Opposed Nestorius' refusal to refer to Mary as *Theotokos* by asserting that Christ's nature was a fusion of divine and human elements.
- Pope Dioscorus I of Alexandria
- Pope Celestine I, (d. 26 July 432)
- Theodosius II. Seriously.

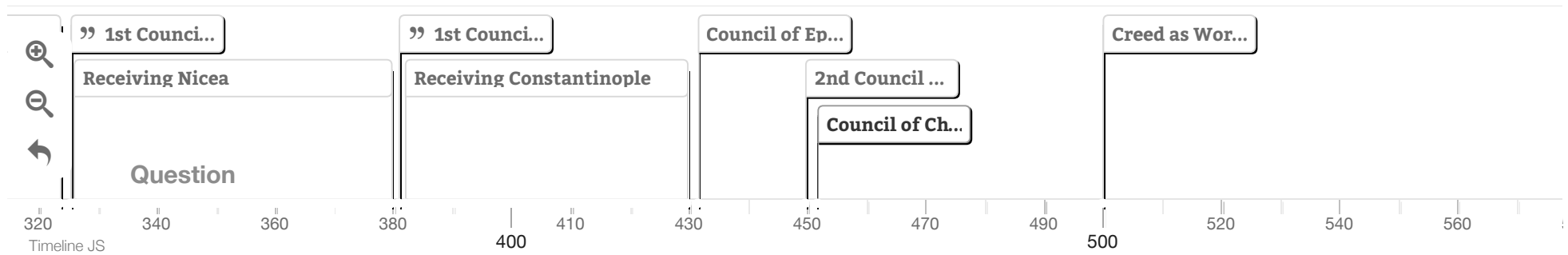


Council of
Ephesus



Council of
Chalcedon

Αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐνηνθρώπισεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς θεοποιηθῶμεν



October 451

Council of Chalcedon

4th Ecumenical Council

- Explicitly rejects the Second Council of Ephesus
- Monophysitism: Christ has a single 'nature', either divine, or a synthesis of divine and human.
- May rest almost entirely on how the word 'nature' or *physis* is understood.

Christ is the eternal Son of God, made known in two natures without confusion [i.e. mixture], without change, without division, without separation, the difference of the natures being by no means removed because of the union, but the property of each nature being preserved and coalescing in one *prosopon* [person] and one *hupostasis* [subsistence]--not parted or divided into two *prosopa* [persons], but one and the same Son, only-begotten, divine Word, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐνήνθρωπυσεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς θεοποιηθῶμεν