

***Julian - 'the apostate'***

Born in 331, he and his half-brother Gallus escaped the massacre at the end Constantine's reign. He was educated early under the eunuch Mardonius, and later under rhetoricians at Nicomedia. Gallus was Caesar in Syria from 351-354 and then executed. Julian was saved by Empress Eusebia, and retired to Athens.

In 355 he was made Caesar in Gaul. With his great energy and kindliness he won Gaulian hearts, he expelled the Germans from Gaul. In 360, the soldiers mutinied in Paris, to proclaim Julian Augustus. By 361 he had advanced down the Danube and at Naissus was master of 3/4 of the Empire.

361 Appointment and exit of Meletius

361[November] **The Death of Constantius**

With Constantius dead the Eastern army presented itself to Julian, now 30 years old, at Naissus.

***Julian's policy towards the Christians***

To him, Christianity was a prison, and under Constantius, was the murderer of his family. The church's worldliness and hypocrisy he saw through. And, under the welcome which the philosophers of Nicomedia gave him, he was led to a straight heathenism. He camouflaged this for 10 years, walking with the Christians in hypocrisy, but when he became emperor, he publicly threw it off.

He did not want persecute and kill Christians, he just wanted to get them to know the pagan gods, for he was enthusiastic about them. He led sacrificial public dinners to the gods, he aimed at degrading the Christianity around him into a vulgar superstition. He deprived the Christian teachers of state support and promoted the return to the ancient Greek authors. But the Greek religions were too weak to deal with everyday life.

This action of Julian provoked a climate which, strangely, helped the Nicene cause.

For it :

[i] undid the Arianisers who Constantius had left in power. The Homoeans couldn't survive politically without the support of the emperor's court.

[ii] provoked a reaction against heathen learning. This in turn, undid the philosophical underpinning of Arianism. The Anomoeans found themselves preaching to those who were beginning to see how little ground is common to heathenism and Christianity.

Julian wanted the Christians to peaceful for the Empire's sake, so as a cynical move to let the Galileans argue among themselves, he;

[i] proclaimed toleration for all the sects

[ii] recalled exiled bishops - these included Athanasius

The Christians, being left free by Julian to quarrel, actually found themselves free to combine. They closed rank against Julian. Nicene and Arians forgot their hatred and turned to revile the gods of Julian.

***Council of Alexandria in Summer of 362***

Bishops, 21 met at Alexandria. Four subjects claimed their attention:

[1] The returning Arians

[2] The Lord's human nature

[3] Old misunderstandings of hypostasis - the words 'essence' and 'person'

[4] The schism at Antioch.

One thing Julian could not miss - that Athanasius was master of Egypt. Julian, fearing Athanasius' theological status and ecclesiastical clout, re-interpreted his own decree saying that exiled bishops were to be allowed back to their home country but were not permitted to resume their sees. He particularly singled out Athanasius, stating that he was forbidden to reside in Alexandria. And, because of the outcry this brought, Julian said he must leave Egypt. Having resided in Alexandria for only eight months, on the 23 October 362 the desert monks joyfully accepted Athanasius into their company again.

362 Council at Alexandria - **The Fourth Exile of Athanasius**

The leniency and wisdom of the Council however had succeeded: one bishop after another accepted the Nicene faith.

The Semi Arians took a middle position between the Nicene and the Anomoeans - accepting the Lord's deity but not that of the Holy Spirit.

Meanwhile Julian was fighting the Persian war and had come all the way through to the Tigris River. But when he looked for help northwards, the Armenian Christians would not fight for the apostate emperor. In his retreat to Nisbis a chance arrow took his life on June 26, 363. Athanasius returned to Alexandria.

363 [June 26] **Death of Julian**; Jovian succeeds.

Jovian befriended Athanasius, but he died shortly afterwards in 364. and was succeeded by Valentinian

364 [Feb 16] **Death of Jovian**; Valentinian succeeds.