**Arianism, Monophysitism, Nestorianism, Palegianism**

**Arianism** is the theological teaching attributed to [Arius](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arius) ([ca.](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Circa) AD 250–336), a Christian [presbyter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Presbyter) in [Alexandria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexandria), Egypt, concerning the relationship of God to the [Son of God](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Son_of_God) ([Jesus of Nazareth](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus_of_Nazareth)). Arius asserted that the Son of God was a subordinate entity to God the Father. Deemed a [heretic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heresy) by the Ecumenical [First Council of Nicaea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Council_of_Nicaea) of 325, Arius was later exonerated in 335 at the regional [First Synod of Tyre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Synod_of_Tyre),[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arianism#cite_note-1) and then, after his death, pronounced a heretic again at the Ecumenical [First Council of Constantinople](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Council_of_Constantinople) of 381.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arianism#cite_note-2) The Roman Emperors [Constantius II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constantius_II#Christianity_under_Constantius) (337–361) and [Valens](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Valens#Struggles_with_the_religious_nature_of_the_Empire) (364–378) were Arians or [Semi-Arians](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Semi-Arianism).

The Arian [concept of Christ](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christology) is that the Son of God did not always exist, but was created by—and is therefore distinct from—God the Father. This belief is grounded in the [Gospel of John](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_John) passage “You heard me say, ‘I am going away and I am coming back to you.’ If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I." (verse 14:28)[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arianism#cite_note-3)

Arianism is defined as those teachings attributed to Arius which are in opposition to currently mainstream Trinitarian Christological doctrine, as determined by the first two [Ecumenical Councils](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecumenical_Council) and currently maintained by the [Roman Catholic Church](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholic_Church), the [Eastern Orthodox Churches](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_Orthodox_Churches), the [Oriental Orthodox Churches](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oriental_Orthodox_Churches), the [Assyrian Church of the East](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assyrian_Church_of_the_East), all [Reformation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reformation)-founded [Protestant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protestant) churches (Lutheran, Reformed/Presbyterian, and Anglican), and a large majority of groups founded after the Reformation and calling themselves Protestant (such as Methodist, Baptist, most Pentecostals), with the exception of such groups as [Oneness Pentecostals](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oneness_Pentecostals), the [Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_Jesus_Christ_of_Latter-day_Saints) and [Jehovah's Witnesses](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jehovah%27s_Witnesses).[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arianism#cite_note-4) "Arianism" is also often used to refer to other [nontrinitarian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nontrinitarian) theological systems of the 4th century, which regarded [Jesus Christ](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus_Christ)—the Son of God, the [Logos](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Logos_%28Christianity%29)—as either a created being (as in Arianism proper and [Anomoeanism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anomoeanism)), or as neither uncreated nor created in the sense other beings are created (as in [Semi-Arianism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Semi-Arianism)).

**Monophysitism** (pron.: [/](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help%3AIPA_for_English)[məˈnɒfɨsaɪtɨzəm](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help%3AIPA_for_English#Key)[/](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help%3AIPA_for_English) or [/](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help%3AIPA_for_English)[məˈnɒfɨsɪtɨzəm](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help%3AIPA_for_English#Key)[/](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help%3AIPA_for_English); [Greek](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greece): **monos** meaning "only, single" and **physis** meaning "nature"), is the [Christological](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christology) position that, after the union of the divine and the human in the historical Incarnation, [Jesus Christ](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus_Christ), as the incarnation of the eternal Son or Word ([*Logos*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Logos_%28Christianity%29)) of God, had only a single "nature" which was either divine or a synthesis of divine and human. Monophysitism is contrasted to [dyophysitism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dyophysite) (or dia-, dio-, or duophysitism) which maintains that Christ maintained two natures, one divine and one human, after the Incarnation.

Historically, Monophysitism (usually capitalized in this sense) refers primarily to the position of those (especially in Egypt and to a lesser extent Syria) who rejected the [Council of Chalcedon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Council_of_Chalcedon) in 451 (the Fourth Ecumenical Council).

**Nestorianism** is a [Christological](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christology) doctrine advanced by [Nestorius](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nestorius), [Patriarch of Constantinople](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patriarch_of_Constantinople) from 428–431. The doctrine, which was informed by Nestorius's studies under [Theodore of Mopsuestia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theodore_of_Mopsuestia) at the [School of Antioch](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/School_of_Antioch), emphasizes the disunion between the human and divine natures of [Jesus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus). Nestorius' teachings brought him into conflict with some other prominent church leaders, most notably [Cyril of Alexandria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyril_of_Alexandria), who criticized especially his rejection of the title [*Theotokos*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theotokos) ("Bringer forth of God") for the [Virgin Mary](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virgin_Mary). Nestorius and his teachings were eventually condemned as [heretical](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heresy) at the [First Council of Ephesus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Council_of_Ephesus) in 431 and the [Council of Chalcedon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Council_of_Chalcedon) in 451, leading to the [Nestorian Schism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nestorian_Schism) in which churches supporting Nestorius broke with the rest of the Christian Church. Afterward many of Nestorius' supporters relocated to [Sassanid](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sassanid_Empire) [Persia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persia), where they affiliated with the local Christian community, known as the [Church of the East](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_the_East). Over the next decades the Church of the East became increasingly Nestorian in doctrine, leading it to be known alternately as the Nestorian Church.

Nestorianism is a form of [dyophysitism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dyophysitism), and can be seen as the antithesis to [monophysitism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monophysitism), which emerged in reaction to Nestorianism. Where Nestorianism holds that Christ had two loosely-united natures, divine and human, monophysitism holds that he had but a single nature, his human nature being absorbed into his divinity. A brief definition of Nestorian [Christology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christology) can be given as: "[Jesus Christ](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus_Christ), who is not identical with the Son but personally united with the Son, who lives in him, is one [hypostasis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hypostasis_%28philosophy%29) and one nature: human."[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nestorianism#cite_note-1) Both Nestorianism and monophysitism were condemned as heretical at the [Council of Chalcedon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Council_of_Chalcedon). Monophysitism survived and developed into the [Miaphysitism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miaphysitism) of the modern [Oriental Orthodox](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oriental_Orthodox) churches.

**Pelagianism** is a theological theory named after [Pelagius](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pelagius_%28British_monk%29) (AD 354 – AD 420/440), although he denied, at least at some point in his life, many of the doctrines associated with his name. It is the belief that [original sin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Original_sin) did not taint [human nature](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_nature) and that mortal [will](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Will_%28philosophy%29) is still capable of choosing [good](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goodness_and_value_theory) or [evil](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evil) without special [Divine aid](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grace_%28Christianity%29#Augustine_versus_Pelagius).

Pelagius was opposed by [Saint Augustine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Augustine), one of the most influential early Church Fathers. When Pelagius taught that moral perfection was attainable in this life without the assistance of divine grace through human free will, [Saint Augustine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Augustine) contradicted this by saying that perfection was impossible without grace because we are born sinners with a sinful heart and will. The Pelagians charged Augustine on the grounds that the doctrine of original sin amounted to [Manichaeism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manichaeism): the Manichaeans taught that the flesh was in itself sinful (and they denied that Jesus came in the flesh) – and this charge would have carried added weight since contemporaries knew that Augustine himself had been a Manichaean layman before his conversion to Christianity. Augustine also taught that a person's salvation comes solely through an irresistible free gift, the [efficacious grace](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Efficacious_grace) of God, but that this was a gift that one had a free choice to accept or refuse.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pelagianism#cite_note-1)

Pelagianism was attacked in the *Council of Diospolis* (also known as Lydda; modern [Lod](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lod))[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pelagianism#cite_note-2) and condemned in 418 at the Council of Carthage.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pelagianism#cite_note-William_L_Reese_p.421-3) These condemnations were ratified at the [Council of Ephesus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Council_of_Ephesus) in 431. The strict moral teachings of the Pelagians were influential in southern Italy and Sicily, where they were openly preached until the death of [Julian of Eclanum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julian_of_Eclanum) in 455, and in Britain until the coming of [Saint Germanus of Auxerre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Germanus_of_Auxerre).[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pelagianism#cite_note-4)

In *De causa Dei contra Pelagium et de virtute causarum*, [Thomas Bradwardine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Bradwardine) denounced Pelagians in the 14th century and [Gabriel Biel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gabriel_Biel) did the same in the 15th century.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pelagianism#cite_note-William_L_Reese_p.421-3)