

6 november 335 **Constantine to the Bishops at Tyre**

Constantine, Victor, Maximus, Augustus, to the Bishops assembled at Tyre.

I know not what the decisions are which you have arrived at in your council amidst noise and tumult; but somehow the truth seems to have been perverted in the consequence of certain confusions and disorder, in that you, through your mutual contentiousness which you are resolved should prevail, have failed to perceive what is pleasing to God. However, it will rest with Divine Providence to disperse the mischief which manifestly is found to arise from this contentious spirit, and to show plainly to us, whether you, while assembled in that place, have had any regard for the truth, and whether you have made your decisions uninfluenced by either favor or enmity. Therefore I wish you all to assemble with all speed before my piety, in order that you may render in person a true account of your proceedings.

The reason why I have thought good to write thus to you and why I summon you before me by letter, you will learn from what I am going to say. As I was entering on a late occasion our all-happy home to Constantinople, which bears our name (I chanced at the time to be on horseback), all of a sudden the Bishop Athanasius, with certain others whom he had with him, approached me in the middle of the road, so unexpectedly as to occasion me much amazement. God, who knows all things, is my witness, that I should have been unable at first sight even to recognize him had not some of my attendants, on my naturally inquiring of them, informed me both who it was, and under what injustice he was suffering. I did not however enter into any conversation with him at that time, nor grant him an interview; but when he requested to be heard I was refusing, and all but gave orders for his removal; when with increasing boldness he claimed only this favor, that you should be summoned to appear, that he might have an opportunity of complaining before me in your presence of the ill-treatment he has met with. As this appeared to me to be a reasonable request and suitable to the times, I willingly ordered this letter to be written to you, in order that all of you who constituted the council which was held at Tyre, might hasten without delay to the court of my clemency, so as to prove by facts that you had passed an impartial and uncorrupt judgment. This, I say, you must do before me, whom not even you will deny to be a true servant of God.

For indeed through my devotion to God, peace is preserved everywhere, and the name of God is truly worshiped even by the barbarians, who have hitherto been ignorant of the truth. And it is manifest, that he who is ignorant of the truth, does not know God either. Nevertheless, as I said before, even the barbarians have now come to the knowledge of God, by means of me, His true servant, and have learned to fear Him whom they perceive from actual facts to be my shield and protector everywhere. And from this chiefly they have come to know God, whom they fear through the dread which they have of me. Be we, who are supposed to set forth (for I will not say to guard) the holy mysteries of His Goodness, we, I say, engage hatred, and, in short, whatever contributes to the destruction of mankind. But hasten, as I said before, and all of you with all speed come to us, being persuaded that I shall endeavor with all my might to amend what is amiss, so that those things especially may be preserved and firmly established in the law of God, to which no blame nor dishonor may attach; while the enemies of His holy name bring in manifold and numerous blasphemies, shall be scattered abroad, and entirely crushed, and utterly destroyed.