

## *Sunday of the Fathers of the 1<sup>st</sup> Ecumenical Council The Church in Ephesus*

**June 13, 2021**  
**7<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Pascha**  
**Revision E**

**Gospel:       John 17:1-13**  
**Epistle:       Acts 20:16-18, 28-36**

Today's Gospel lesson is used in the West also today, the Seventh Sunday after Easter. Today's Epistle lesson is used in some Western Churches on the 8<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity (July).

The theme of the last five Sundays has been the development of the Early Church. This continues by focusing on what the Twelve Apostles and their successors did to establish their churches on a correct doctrinal foundation. The Reading from John 17 speaks of Who Jesus is in relation to the Father. The Reading from Acts 20 addresses the Apostle Paul's prophecy that people would come into the church in Ephesus after Paul left and challenge the statements in John 17. This was a major issue for the Church in the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century. The Gospel writer John, the son of Zebedee, spent the latter part of his life in and around Ephesus combating the heretics that Paul warned everyone about. The Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council did the same thing later on in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century.

In the 1<sup>st</sup> century the leader of heretical opinions was the Arch-Heretic Simon Magus<sup>1</sup>, who tried to purchase the gift of the Holy Spirit from the Apostle Peter (Acts 8). He also claimed to be the Christ, stating that he only appeared to be crucified, but wasn't really. As a master of illusions, he demonstrated his "powers" by bodily flying through the air, and by having plates and dishes fly through the air to serve him at dinner. He impressed some Christians so much that four of the original Seventy Apostles apostatized to follow him. He impressed Emperor Claudius and the Roman Senate so much that they commissioned a statue of Simon with the inscription: "To Simon, the Holy God". Especially vocal regarding the heresies of Simon were Irenaeus of Lyons and Justin Martyr in the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century, where the statue of Simon was still there.

In the 4<sup>th</sup> century the leader of heretical opinions was the priest Arius of Alexandria, who claimed that Christ was not equal with the Father, but was some kind of a lesser god. Arius quoted the Scriptures very authoritatively taking statements that refer to Christ's human nature and applying them as if they referred to His Deity. The Arians used force and bloodshed to suppress the voice of the Orthodox and they hounded and hunted down anyone who dissented with them. The Arians were blindsided at the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD, not expecting such a clear and powerful argument against them from the Scriptures, especially by Athanasius of Alexandria and others. Especially vocal against the Arians in the 4<sup>th</sup> century were Athanasius of Alexandria, John Chrysostom, Hilary of Poitiers and Ambrose of Milan.

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<sup>1</sup> For more details, see Mark Kern, [Simon Magus the Heresiarch](#), St Athanasius Press, 2004.

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### Gospel: John 17:1-13

Most of the major heresies in the history of the Church seem to revolve around Who Jesus is. For example, the Arian heresy dealt with by the First Ecumenical Council claimed that Jesus was not really God but was a lesser being created by God. The heresies of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century, on the other hand, denied the Incarnation and claimed Jesus was not really a man. Today's Gospel lesson can be used as a theological treatise to answer many of these mistaken beliefs. A brief outline of John 17, where Jesus was speaking to the Father is:

1. Glorify the Son (i.e. by crucifixion) that the Son may glorify the Father. The Father gave the Son authority over all flesh (John 17:1-2)
2. There is One God and Father, the only True God (John 17:3)
3. The Son glorified the Father on earth and finished the work He was given to do; i.e. Incarnation, Cross, etc. (John 17:4)
4. The Son will return to the glory He had with the Father before the world was (John 17:5, 13, 24)
5. The Father gave the Son the Twelve; the Twelve know the Father's love for us (John 17:6)
6. The Twelve know that:

- i. All the Son was given came from the Father (John 17:7)
  - ii. The Son's Words came from the Father (John 17:8, 14)
  - iii. The Father sent the Son (John 17:8)
  - iv. The Twelve are the Father's (John 17:9, 20)
  - v. The Son is glorified in them (John 17:10)
7. No one knows the Father but Christ (John 17:10, 25)
  8. The Son asked the Father to keep the Twelve as one as the Father and the Son are one (John 17:11, 21-23, 26). The oneness in the Church parallels the oneness in the Trinity.
  9. The Son kept the Twelve in the Father's Name. None of the Twelve were lost except Judas (John 17:12)
  10. The World hated the Twelve because they, like the Son, were not of the world (John 17:13-16). This aspect of the Christian life was repeated many times by those saints who became known as the Unmercenary Healers.
  11. The Father sanctified the Twelve. The Son sanctified Himself that the Twelve might thus be sanctified by the Truth (John 17:17-19).
  12. The reward of the faithful: to be with God for eternity (John 17:24).

After this, Jesus went on to speak of those who will believe on Him through the word of the Twelve. In Revelation 21:14, John also wrote about his vision of the New Jerusalem where the wall of the city had twelve foundations on which were written the names of the Twelve Apostles. Thus the Twelve Apostles are crucial to the Church; their mission goes back not just to 1<sup>st</sup> century evangelism, but all the way to God the Father in Eternity. If one rejects the Twelve or what they taught, one rejects God the Father.

Contained within the above twelve points from John 17 is enough to fill twelve volumes. Perhaps this is one reason why the Apostle John is referred to as John the Theologian. In John's days (just as today), there was an urgent need for these things that John wrote. For example, in Revelation 2:6 and 2:15, John refers to the Nicolaitans, which were a sect started by ex-deacon Nicolas (Acts 6:5), one of the first seven deacons who apostatized. This sect was strong in Ephesus and Pergamos, and perhaps other parts of Asia Minor. Rejecting what the Twelve Apostles taught, ex-deacon Nicolas' sect tolerated idolatry and fornication. To them, only spiritual things mattered. Things relating to the body and to physical things were irrelevant. By rejecting the Twelve, they had lost the connection with God the Father and had cast themselves adrift. This is why a correct understanding of God is important. It's one thing to be pursuing the things of God but to be ignorant of some of its depth. It's something else to know better and deliberately distort the truth or rebel against it. In this regard, Apollos and his twelve disciples didn't know about the Holy Spirit and taught only the baptism of John; but they were willing to be corrected by Aquila, Priscilla and Paul (Acts 18:24-19:7). Ex-deacon Nicholas knew better of the things of God and rebelled against the Truth.

Even the Mosaic Law contained instructions for rejecting heresy. If a false prophet was to advocate something contrary to the Truth, and backed up his teaching by miracles, he was still to be rejected (Deuteronomy 13:1-5). Thus the Faith tests the miracles and not vice-versa.

In the following Sections, we will examine the twelve points from John 17 to see what the Church has always taught regarding the teachings of the Apostle John.

## Looking Forward to the Cross (John 17:1-2)

John said, “Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: ‘Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him’” (John 17:1-2).

There are three issues here that need to be clarified. One is what Jesus meant by “Glorify Your Son”, that is by the Cross. Another is what He meant by “My Hour had not yet come”. The third is what is meant by Christ having authority over all flesh.

### We Glorify the Son

As Jesus approached the Cross, He saw it as His glory, and asked His Father to glorify Him through the Cross. This is completely opposite to our intuition, but the Twelve Apostles and their successors experienced the same thing. Since Christ is co-eternal with the Father in His Divinity, He is already glorified in that way. But in His humanity He had emptied Himself; therefore He was glorified in His humanity. In going to the Cross by His obedience to the Father, Christ glorified the Father also. The way we see this is to look at the world before and after the Cross: Prior to Christ’s coming, Israel didn’t know Him. But after the Crucifixion, the whole world ran to Him. For Christ to go willingly to the Cross with its suffering and shame illustrates the depth of His love for mankind. The heretics just did not understand this and scoffed at it. But our destiny is to not just understand it but to behold the glory of God for eternity as we dwell with Him.

John Chrysostom pointed out<sup>2</sup> that Jesus rejoiced as He approached the Cross, saying to the Father, “Glorify Me” through the Cross. The Apostles had the same opportunity in their persecution to rejoice in the Holy Spirit. The same was true for the three youths in the Babylonian furnace; and it is also true for us.

“The Apostles ‘rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His Name’ (Acts 5:41). It is this that is admirable, although it is not a slight matter, in any way to bear afflictions. But this was the part of men surpassing human nature, and having, as it were, a body incapable of suffering.”

“How were they imitators of the Lord? (1 Thessalonians 1:6) Because He also endured many sufferings, but rejoiced! He came to this willingly; for our sakes He emptied Himself. He was about to be spit on, beaten and crucified, and He so rejoiced in suffering these things, that He said to the Father, ‘Glorify Me’” (John 17:1-5).

“How can we of ‘affliction’ and ‘joy’ in the same breath? How can both meet in one? Paul added, ‘with joy of the Holy Spirit (1 Thessalonians 1:6). The affliction is in things bodily, and the joy is in things spiritual. How? The things which happened to them were grievous, but not so the things which sprang out of them, for the Spirit does not allow it. It is possible both for him who suffers, not to rejoice, when one suffers for his sins; and also being beaten, to take pleasure, when one suffers for Christ’s sake. Such is the joy of the Spirit. In return for the things

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<sup>2</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on 1 Thessalonians, I, v. 6.

which appear to be grievous, it brings out delight. They have afflicted you and persecuted you, but the Spirit did not forsake you, even in those circumstances. As the Three Young Men in the furnace were refreshed with dew, so also were you refreshed in afflictions. In the furnace it was not of the nature of the fire to sprinkle dew, but it was of the ‘dew-laden breeze’ (Daniel 3:50<sup>3</sup>); so also here it was not of the nature of affliction to produce joy, but of the suffering for Christ’s sake. The Spirit bedewed them in the furnace; for us, in the furnace of temptation He sets us at ease. Not merely with joy, but ‘with much joy’. For this is of the Holy Spirit.”

Hilary of Poitiers stated<sup>4</sup> that the glorification of Christ referred to the obedience that He displayed in His Incarnation. If Christ had not been co-eternal with the Father before all time, why should the Father glorify Him so? It was because Christ had emptied Himself at the Incarnation that He was glorified by the Father.

“The Lord said, ‘And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent’ (John 17:3), with a reference to the obedience displayed in His incarnation ‘I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do’ (John 17:4). Then, that we might know the reward of His obedience, and the secret purpose of the whole divine plan, He continued, ‘And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was’ (John 17:5). Does anyone deny that Christ remained in the nature of God or believe Him separable and distinct from the only true God? Let him tell us what the meaning of this prayer is. ‘And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself’. For what purpose should the Father glorify Him with His own self? What is the significance of these words? What follows from their significance? The Father neither stood in need of glory, nor had He emptied Himself of the form of His glory. How should He glorify the Son with His own self, and with that glory which He had with Him before the world was made? And what is the sense of which He had with Him? Christ does not say, ‘The glory which I had before the world was made, when I was with You’, but, ‘The glory which I had with You’. When I was with You would signify, ‘when I dwelt by Your side’. But ‘which I had with You’ teaches the Mystery of His nature. Further, ‘Glorify Me with Yourself’ is not the same as ‘Glorify Me’. He does not ask merely that He may be glorified, that He may have some special glory of His own, but prays that He may be glorified of the Father with Himself. The Father was to glorify Him with Himself that He might abide in unity with Him as before, since the unity with the Father’s glory had left Him through the obedience of the Incarnation. This means that the glorifying should reinstate Him in that nature, with which He was united by the Mystery of His divine generation. He might be glorified of the Father with Himself that He should resume all that He had had with the Father before. The assumption of the servant’s form should not estrange from Him the nature of the form of God, but that God should glorify in Himself the form of the servant, that it might become forever the form of God, since He, Who had before abode in the form of God, was now in the form of a servant.”

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<sup>3</sup> This verse was originally part of the Book of Daniel, but was later separated into the short book called “The Song of the Three Children”

<sup>4</sup> Hilary of Poitiers, *On the Trinity*, IX, 39.

Hilary of Poitiers summarized<sup>5</sup> what Jesus meant when He asked His Father to glorify Him. His “glory” was about to come from His crucifixion, but it also included His Incarnation and His life as a man. The centurion, who kept order at the Cross and at the Tomb, testified to Christ’s glory. The way this works is the Father is glorified as the Son was to bestow on us eternal life, by virtue of that power over all flesh which the Father gave Him. So when the Son received all things from the Father, the Father glorified Him; and conversely, when all things were made through the Son, He glorified the Father. For the glory of Him who executes a charge returns to the glory of Him Who gave it, the glory of the Begotten to the glory of the Begetter.

“Jesus said, ‘Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You’ (John 17:1). The hour, of course, of which he speaks, to strengthen His disciples, is the hour of His passion. This then is the hour in which He prays to be glorified by the Father, that He Himself may glorify the Father. But what does He mean? How was the Son to be glorified? He had been born of a virgin, from cradle and childhood He had grown to man’s estate, through sleep, hunger, thirst, weariness and tears He had lived man’s life. Now He was about to be spit on, scourged and crucified. These things were ordained for our assurance that in Christ is pure man. But the shame of the cross is not ours; we are not sentenced to the scourge, nor defiled by spitting. How does the Father glorify the Son? Immediately following this prayer, Christ is nailed to the cross.”

“What happened next? The centurion of the cohort, the guardian of the cross, cries out, ‘When the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, ‘Truly this was the Son of God!’ (Matthew 27:54). So, after He was glorified, the centurion confessed Him the true Son of God that no believer might doubt facts which even the servant of His persecutors could not deny.”

“We must next ascertain what and from where this glorifying is. God is not subject to change; His eternity has no defect or amendment, of gain or of loss. It is the character of Him alone; that is what He is; He is from everlasting. What He is from everlasting, it is by His nature impossible that He should ever cease to be. How then can He receive glory, a thing which He fully possesses, and of which His store does not diminish; there being no fresh glory which He can obtain, and none that He has lost and can recover? To tell us what return of glory it was that the Son should make to the Father, he gives the words: ‘You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent’ (John 17:2-3). The Father, then, is glorified through the Son, by His being made known to us. And the glory was this, that the Son, being made flesh, received from the Father power over all flesh, and the charge of restoring eternal life to us, who are burdened with the body. Eternal life for us was not the result of work done, but of pure power. It was not by a new creation; the glory of that eternity to be acquired was simply by knowledge of God. Nothing was added to God’s glory; it had not decreased, and so could not be replenished. But the Father is glorified through the Son in the sight of us, who were ignorant, exiled, defiled, and dwelling in hopeless death and lawless darkness. The Father is glorified

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<sup>5</sup> Hilary of Poitiers, On the Trinity, III, 10, 11, 13.

inasmuch as the Son was to bestow on us eternal life, by virtue of that power over all flesh which the Father gave Him. It is through this work of the Son that the Father is glorified. So when the Son received all things from the Father, the Father glorified Him; and conversely, when all things were made through the Son, He glorified the Father. The return of glory given lies herein, that all the glory which the Son has is the glory of the Father, since everything He has is the Father's gift. For the glory of Him who executes a charge returns to the glory of Him Who gave it, the glory of the Begotten to the glory of the Begetter."

John Chrysostom concurred<sup>6</sup> that the Father was also glorified by the crucifixion. Prior to Christ's coming, Israel didn't know Him. But after the Crucifixion, the whole world ran to Him.

"Christ came not merely to manifest Himself, but also to teach virtue ineffable. But the teacher ought to teach, not by words only, but also by actions. Let us listen to what He said in this place. 'Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You'" (John 17:1).

"He shows us, that willing He came to the Cross. For how could He be unwilling, who prayed that this might come to pass, and called the action 'glory', not only for Himself the Crucified, but also for the Father? This was the case, for not the Son only, but the Father also was glorified. For before the Crucifixion, not even the Jews knew Him. 'The ox knows his owner, and the donkey his master's crib: but Israel does not know Me' (Isaiah 1:3 LXX); but after the Crucifixion, all the world ran to Him."

John Chrysostom also stated<sup>7</sup> that he would prefer to suffer all kinds of evil for Christ's sake than to receive honor at Christ's hands. He would rather be in chains with Paul than in heaven with the angels. Paul proclaims himself "a prisoner in the Lord", not one who heard "unspeakable words". Christ Himself "emptied Himself" of His glory to become man. All this has to do with a real understanding of the love of Christ.

"Listen to what Luke said; 'They departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name' (Acts 5:41). To all others it seems to be foolishness, that to suffer dishonor is to be counted worthy, that to suffer dishonor is to rejoice. But to those who understand the love of Christ, this is seen of all things the most blessed. Were any to offer me my choice, the whole Heaven or Paul's chains, those chains I would prefer. Were any to ask whether Christ should place me on high with the Angels, or with Paul in his bonds, the prison I would choose. Were any about to change me into one of those powers, that are in Heaven, that are round about the throne, or into such a prisoner as this, such a prisoner I would choose to be. Nothing is more blessed than those chains. Would that I could be at this moment in that very spot, to behold and admire those men, for their love of Christ. Would that I could behold the chains, at which the demons fear and tremble, but which Angels reverence. Nothing is nobler than to suffer any evil for Christ's sake. I don't count Paul as happy, because he was 'caught up into Paradise' (2 Corinthians 12:4), as because he was cast into the dungeon; I count him not so happy, because he heard 'unspeakable words', as

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<sup>6</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on John, LXXX, 1.

<sup>7</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Ephesians, VIII, vv. 1-2.

because he endured those bonds. I count him not so happy, because he was ‘caught up to the third Heaven’, (2 Corinthians 12:2), as I count him happy for those bonds’ sake. For these are greater than those; listen to how Paul himself knew this. He didn’t say, I who ‘heard unspeakable words’, beseech you; but ‘I, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you’ (Ephesians 4:1). Paul doesn’t inscribe this in all his Epistles, for he was not always in prison, but only at certain times. I deem it more desirable to suffer evil for Christ’s sake, than to receive honor at Christ’s hands. This is transcendent honor, this is glory that surpasses all things. If Christ Himself who became a servant for my sake, and ‘emptied His glory’ (Philippians 2:7), yet thought not Himself so truly in glory, as when He was crucified for my sake, what ought not I to endure? Listen to His own words, ‘Father, glorify<sup>8</sup> Your Son’ (John 17:1). What is this He is saying? He was about to be led to the cross with thieves and grave-robbers; to endure the death of the accursed; to be spit on and punched; and yet He calls this glory? Yes, He said, for I suffer these things for My beloved ones, and I count them altogether glory. If He who loved the miserable and wretched calls this glory, not to be on His Father’s throne, nor in His Father’s glory, but in dishonor -- if this was His glory, and if this He set before the other; much more ought I to regard these things as glory.”

Hilary of Poitiers found it incredulous<sup>9</sup> that the Arians completely missed or scoffed over such obvious statements in the Scriptures that describe Christ’s humanity versus His Deity. The bottom line is that they are saying that God has lied concerning Himself.

“I can conceive of no man so destitute of ordinary-reason as to be unable to recognize in each of the Gospel confessions by the Son of the humiliation to which He has submitted in taking a body upon Him. For instance His words, often repeated, ‘Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was’ (John 17:5, 13:32, 16:14, 17:1), and ‘Hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven’ (Matthew 26:64), and “‘I am going to the Father”, for My Father is greater than I’ (John 14:28), and more strongly, ‘Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? “Father, save Me from this hour”? But for this purpose I came to this hour’ (John 12:27), and even this, ‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken me’? (Matthew 27:46) In the face of these constant expressions of His humility, they charge Him with presumption because He calls God His Father, as when He says, ‘Every plant, which my heavenly Father has not planted, shall be rooted up’ (Matthew 15:13), or, ‘Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!’ (John 2:16). I can conceive of no one foolish enough to regard His assertion that God is His Father as a bold and baseless claim, and not as the simple truth sincerely stated from certain knowledge. We cannot denounce this constantly professed humility as an insolent demand for the rights of another, a laying of hands on what is not His own, an appropriation of powers which only God can wield. Nor, when He calls Himself the Son, can we accuse Him of what would be an equal presumption with that of calling God His Father. For example, ‘For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world

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<sup>8</sup> Christ referred to the glorification with His Father which was to follow His humiliation (John 17:5, Philippians 2:9)

<sup>9</sup> Hilary of Poitiers, On the Trinity, VI, 25.



through Him might be saved' (John 3:17), and, 'Do you believe in the Son of God?' (John 9:35) But what else is it if they make the accusation that Jesus Christ has the name of Son by adoption only? Do we not charge Him, when He calls God His Father, with daring to make a baseless claim? The Father's voice from heaven says 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Listen to Him!' (Matthew 17:5) I hear Him saying regarding Lazarus, 'Father, I thank You that You have heard Me' (John 11:41), and 'Do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, "You are blaspheming", because I said, "I am the Son of God"?' (John 10:36) If I may not believe these names, and assume that they mean what they assert, how am I to trust and to understand? No hint is given of an alternative meaning. The Father bears witness from heaven, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased' (Matthew 17:5); the Son on His part speaks of 'In My Father's house are many mansions; if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you' (John 14:2), and 'If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would have no sin; but now they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father' (John 15:24). The confession of that name gives salvation, when faith is demanded in the question, 'Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said to him, "Do you believe in the Son of God?' (John 9:35) The pronoun 'My' indicates that the noun which follows belongs to the speaker. What right, I demand, have you heretics to suppose it otherwise? You contradict the Father's word and the Son's assertion; you empty language of its meaning, and distort the words of God into a sense they cannot bear. On you alone rests the guilt of this shameless blasphemy, for you say that God has lied concerning Himself."

Ambrose of Milan stated<sup>10</sup> that our destiny is to behold the glory of God. We will not have the glory of God, but we will be with Him. We will be His Body, and He our Head. We will sit together (Ephesians 2:6), but we will not take over His function.

"I do not come to this conclusion of my own mind, but because of the utterances of our Lord's own mouth. For the Lord Himself, in commending the Apostles to the Father, says, 'Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me' (John 17:24). But if He had thought that the Father would give the divine throne to men, He would have said, 'I will that where I sit, they also may sit with Me'. But He says, 'I will that they be with Me', not 'that they may sit with Me'; and 'where I am', not 'as I am'".

"Then follow the words, 'That they may behold My glory which You have given Me' (John 17:24). Here too He did not say: 'that they may have My glory', but 'that they may see' it. The servant sees, the Lord possesses; as David also has taught us, saying, 'That I should dwell in the house of the Lord, all the days of my life, that I should behold the fair beauty of the Lord' (Psalm 27:4 LXX). And the Lord Himself in the Gospel has revealed it, stating, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God' (Matthew 5:8). 'They shall see', He says; not 'They shall sit with God upon the cherubim'".

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<sup>10</sup> Ambrose of Milan, Exposition of the Christian Faith, V, vi, 85-86.

## My Hour Has Come

On several occasions, Jesus mentioned that His hour had not yet come. Now all of a sudden, Jesus stated that “the hour has come”. This was the focus of His Incarnation and His 33 years living as a man. He knew well in advance when His hour had come. This was not the same glorification that He had with the Father before the world was, but He looked forward to it as the salvation of mankind. We also have an appointed time for everything, but no one knows what that time is. As God, Christ knew this.

John Chrysostom pointed out<sup>11</sup> that when Jesus said, “Father, the hour has come” (John 17:1), there had been other times when His hour had not yet come. At those other times, His enemies tried to lay hands on Him, but couldn’t. Even when His mother asked Him to provide wine for the Wedding Feast at Cana<sup>12</sup>, Jesus replied that His hour had not yet come. Christ was not dependent on seasons to do His work, but He did everything at the time set by the Father. Similarly, there would be a proper hour to glorify the Son by His crucifixion.

“It is no slight question to consider when the mother of Jesus says, ‘They have no wine’, and Christ replies, ‘Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come’ (John 2:4). Having thus spoken, He did as His mother had said; an action which also needs inquiry. Let us then, proceed to the explanation.”

“The words are not used in this place only, but in others also; for John says, ‘No one laid hands on Him, for His hour had not yet come’ (John 8:20); and again, ‘No one laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come’ (John 7:30); and again, ‘Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You’ (John 17:1). What then do the words mean? I have brought together more instances, that I may give one explanation of all. Christ did not say, ‘Mine hour is not yet come’ as being subject to the necessity of seasons, or the observance of an ‘hour’; how can He be so, who is Maker of seasons, and Creator of the times and the ages? To what else then did He allude? He desires to show that He works all things at their convenient season, not doing all at once. A kind of confusion and disorder would have ensued, if, instead of working all at their proper seasons, He had mixed all together, His Birth, His Resurrection, and His coming to Judgment. Observe this; creation was to be, yet not all at once; man and woman were to be created, yet not together; mankind was to be condemned to death, and there was to be a resurrection, yet the interval between the two was to be great. The Law was to be given, but not grace with it, each was to be dispensed at its proper time. Now Christ was not subject to the necessity of seasons, but rather settled their order, since He is their Creator; and therefore He said in this place, ‘My hour has not yet come’ (John 2:4). His meaning is, that as yet He was not revealed to the many, nor had He even His whole company of disciples. Andrew followed Him, and next to him Philip, but no one else. None of these, not even His mother or His brethren, knew Him as they ought; for after His many miracles, John says of His brethren,

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<sup>11</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on John, XXII, 1.

<sup>12</sup> The bridegroom was the future Apostle Simon the Zealot. See N. Velimirovic, Prologue from Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, May 10.

‘For even His brothers<sup>13</sup> did not believe in Him’ (John 7:5). Those at the wedding in Cana did not know Him either, for in their need they would certainly have come and asked Him (John 2:1-11). Therefore He said, ‘Mine hour is not yet come’; that is, ‘I am not yet known to the wedding party, nor are they even aware that the wine is gone; let them first be sensitive to this. I ought not to have been told this by My mother, and made the miracle suspicious. They who wanted the wine should have come and asked Me, not that I need this, but that they might accept the miracle. For one who knows that he is in need, is very grateful when he obtains assistance; but one who has no sense of his need, will never have a plain and clear sense of the benefit.’”

“Why then after He had said, ‘Mine hour is not yet come’ and given her a denial, did He do what His mother desired? Chiefly it was, that they who opposed Him, and thought that He was subject to the ‘hour’, might have sufficient proof that He was not subject to any hour; for had He been so, how could He, before the proper ‘hour’ was come, have done what He did? He did it to honor His mother, that He might not seem to contradict and shame her in the presence of so many; and also, that He might not be thought to lack power, for she brought the servants to Him.”

Cyril of Jerusalem stated<sup>14</sup> that Jesus went to His crucifixion willingly; He knew well in advance when His hour had come. Jesus saw this event as His glorification. It was not the same glorification that He had with the Father before the world was, but He looked forward to it as the salvation of mankind.

“May I persuade you that Christ came to His passion willingly? Others, who don’t know when they will die, do so unwillingly; but Christ spoke before of His passion: ‘You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified’ (Matthew 26:2). Do you know why this Friend of man did not shun death? It was lest the whole world should perish in its sins. ‘Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death’ (Matthew 20:18); and again, ‘When the time had come for Him to be received up, He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem’ (Luke 9:5). Do you know certainly, that the Cross is a glory to Jesus? Listen to His own words, not mine. Judas had become ungrateful to the Master of the house, and was about to betray Him. Having just gone away from the table, and drunk His cup of blessing, in return for that draft of salvation he sought to shed righteous blood. ‘Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up *his* heel against me’ (Psalm 41:9); his hands had just received the blessed gifts, and presently for the wages of betrayal he was plotting His death. After reproving Judas with that word, ‘You have said it’ (Matthew 26:25), Judas left; then Jesus said, ‘The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified’ (John 12:23). Notice how Christ knew the Cross to be

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<sup>13</sup> Jesus’ “brothers”, actually step-brothers (Matthew 13:55), did not all believe in Him at the same time. James, the youngest, accompanied Him into Egypt and had been devoted to Jesus from the beginning. Jude came around next and was chosen as one of the Twelve Apostles (Luke 6:16). Joseph, called Barsabas (Acts 1:23, 15:22), who was the oldest, came around later and was chosen as one of the Seventy Apostles.

<sup>14</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechetical Lectures, XIII, 6.

His proper glory? What then, is Isaiah not ashamed of being sawn in half<sup>15</sup>, and shall Christ be ashamed of dying for the world? ‘Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him’ (John 13:31). He was not without glory before; for He ‘was glorified with the Father before the world was’ (John 17:5). He was always glorified as God; but now He was to be glorified for wearing the Crown of His patience. He did not give up His life by compulsion, nor was He put to death by murderous violence, but of His own accord. Listen to what He says: ‘No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again’ (John 10:18): I yield it of My own choice to My enemies; for unless I chose, this could not be. He came therefore of His own set purpose to His passion, rejoicing in His noble deed, smiling at the crown, cheered by the salvation of mankind; not ashamed of the Cross, for it was to save the world. It was no common man who suffered, but God in man’s nature, striving for the prize of His patience.”

Athanasius of Alexandria referred<sup>16</sup> to another aspect of the Lord’s words “The hour has come” (John 17:1). Everyone has an appointed time for everything, but no one knows what that time is. Christ, as God, knew this, and also knew when “His hour had come”.

“The case is clear in the Scriptures, that the saints know that a certain time is measured to every man, but that no one knows the end of that time is plainly intimated by the words of David, ‘Tell me the fewness of my days’ (Psalm 102:23 LXX). What he did not know, that he desired to be informed of. Accordingly the rich man also, while he thought that he had yet a long time to live, heard the words, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’ (Luke 12:20) And the Preacher speaks confidently in the Holy Spirit, ‘surely man also knows not his time: as fishes that are taken in an evil net’ (Ecclesiastes 9:12). The Patriarch Isaac said to his son Esau, ‘Behold, I am grown old, and know not the day of my death’ (Genesis 27:2 LXX). Our Lord therefore, as God, and the Word of the Father, both knew the time measured out by Him, was conscious of the time for suffering, which He Himself had appointed also to His own body. Yet since He was made man for our sakes, He hid Himself when He was sought after before that time came, as we do. When He was persecuted, He fled. Avoiding the designs of His enemies He passed by, and so went through the midst of them’ (Luke 4:30; John 8:59, 10:39). But when He had brought on that time which He Himself had appointed, at which He desired to suffer in the body for all men, He announced it to the Father, saying, ‘Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You’ (John 17:1). Then He no longer hid Himself from those who sought Him, but stood willing to be taken by them. The Scripture says, He said to them that came unto Him, ‘Whom are you seeking?’ When they answered, ‘Jesus of Nazareth,’ He said to them, ‘I AM’ (John 18:4-8). He did this more than once; and so they immediately led Him away to Pilate. He neither allowed Himself to be taken before the time came nor did He hide Himself

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<sup>15</sup> Isaiah was sawn in half by Manassah.

See also Justin Martyr, *Dialog with Trypho*, 120.

Nikolai Velimirovic, *Prologue from Ochrid*, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, May 9.

<sup>16</sup> Athanasius of Alexandria, *Defense of His Flight*, 15.

when it was come. He gave Himself up to them that conspired against Him, that He might show to all men that the life and death of man depend upon the divine sentence; and that without our Father which is in heaven, neither a hair of man's head can become white or black, nor a sparrow ever fall into the snare .

### **Christ Was Given Authority over All Flesh**

John said, "Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: 'Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him'" (John 17:1-2).

When Christ was given authority over all flesh, this was in His flesh because of His obedience. In His Deity, He had this authority all along; in His humanity, He emptied Himself to receive a kingdom, namely us; then He will deliver that kingdom to the Father.

Athanasius of Alexandria pointed out<sup>17</sup> that when Christ took on human flesh from the Virgin Mary, He deified that flesh. In the flesh, He carried our ignorance, even though He didn't cease to be God. When He said, "Power is given to Me" and "Glorify Your Son", He said these things humanly because of His human body. Though He had no need to receive these things, He did so that the grace may be irrevocable and so that men might not lose this grace as Adam did.

"It is plain to everyone that the flesh is ignorant, but the Word Himself, considered as the Word, knows all things even before they come to be. For He did not, when He became man, cease to be God; nor, whereas He is God does He shrink from what belongs to man. Rather, being God, He has taken to Him the flesh, and being in the flesh deifies the flesh. He asked questions in the flesh, so also in it He raised the dead; and He showed to everyone that He who quickens the dead and recalls the soul, much more discerns the secret of all. He knew where Lazarus lay, and yet He asked; for the All-holy Word of God, who endured all things for our sakes, did this to carry our ignorance. He might grant to us the knowledge of His own only and true Father, and of Himself, sent because of us for the salvation of all, above which no grace could be greater. When Christ uses the words, 'You have given Me authority over all flesh' (John 17:2), and, 'Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You' (John 17:1), we understand that He says this in the same sense; humanly because of the body. Though He had no need, nevertheless He is said to have received what He received humanly, that as the Lord has received, and the grant is lodged with Him, the grace may remain sure. While mere man receives, he is liable to lose again, as was shown in the case of Adam, for he received and he lost. But that the grace may be irrevocable, and may be kept sure by men, therefore He Himself appropriates the gift. He says that He has received power, as man, which He always had as God; He says, 'Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was' (John 17:5), to show that He has a flesh which has need of these things. Therefore, when the flesh receives, since that which receives is in Him, and by taking it He has become man, therefore He is said Himself to have received."

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<sup>17</sup> Athanasius of Alexandria, Four Discourses Against the Arians, III, xxvii, 38.

John Chrysostom stated<sup>18</sup> that when Christ said to the Father, ‘You have given Me authority over all flesh’ (John 17:2); this was the first invitation to the Gentiles, and He notes that this was the will of the Father also. Christ did not receive this authority then for the first time; He had it all along. Christ said it then to show that this now seems good to the Father also.

“By saying this Christ shows that what belongs to the preaching is not confined to the Jews alone, but is extended to all the world. He lays down beforehand the first invitation to the Gentiles. Since He had said, ‘Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans’ (Matthew 10:5), and after this is about to say, ‘Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit’ (Matthew 28:19), He shows that the Father also wills this. This greatly offended the Jews, and the disciples too; after this they didn’t easily endure to lay hold on the Gentiles, until they received the teaching of the Spirit. This was no small stumbling block for the Jews. Therefore, when Peter after such a manifestation of the Spirit came to Jerusalem, he could scarcely, by relating the vision of the sheet (Acts 10:9-20), escape the charges brought against him (Acts 15:5-12). But what is, ‘You have given Him authority over all flesh?’ I will ask the heretics, ‘When did He receive this authority? Was it before He formed them at Creation, or after?’ He himself said, that it was after that He had been crucified, and had risen again; at least then He said, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth’ (Matthew 28:18), and, ‘Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations’ (Matthew 28:19). Didn’t He have authority over His own works? Did He make them, and had He not authority over them after having made them? Yet He is seen doing everything in times of old, punishing some as sinners? ‘The Lord said, “Shall I hide from Abraham my servant what things I intend to do?”’ (Genesis 18:17, LXX); and He honored others as righteous. Had He the power at that time, and now had He lost it, and did He again receive it? What demon could assert this? But if His power was the same both then and now, what is the meaning of the words? For He said, ‘As the Father raises the dead and gives life to *them*, even so the Son gives life to whom He will’ (John 5:21). He was about to send them to the Gentiles; in order therefore that they might not think that this was an innovation, because He had said, ‘I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel’ (Matthew 15:24), He shows that this seems good to the Father also. If He said this with great humility of circumstance, it is not wonderful. For so He edified both those at that time, and those who came afterwards; He always by the excess of humility firmly persuaded them that the words were those of condescension.”

Ambrose of Milan pointed out<sup>19</sup> that Christ emptied Himself and took on humanity to receive a Kingdom, and that Kingdom is us. At some point, Christ delivers that Kingdom to the Father; then we will see His glory, which He had before the world was.

“Jesus therefore came to this earth to receive for Himself a kingdom from us, to whom He says: ‘The kingdom of God is within you’ (Luke 17:21). This is the kingdom which Christ has received, this the kingdom which He has delivered

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<sup>18</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on John, LXXX, 1.

<sup>19</sup> Ambrose of Milan, Exposition of the Christian Faith, V, xii, 146, 149, 151.

to the Father (1 Corinthians 15:28). For how did He receive for Himself a kingdom, Who was a King eternal? ‘The Son of Man therefore came to receive for Himself a kingdom and to return’ (Luke 19:12). The Jews were unwilling to acknowledge Him, of whom He says, ‘Bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay *them* before me’” (Luke 19:27).

“Let the Son then deliver up His kingdom to the Father. The kingdom which He delivers up is not lost to Christ, but grows. We are the kingdom, for it was said to us, ‘The kingdom of God is within you’ (Luke 17:21). And we are the kingdom, first of Christ, then of the Father; as it is written, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me’ (John 14:6). When I am on the way, I am Christ’s; when I have passed through, I am the Father’s; but everywhere through Christ, and everywhere under Him.”

“Therefore we are now under Christ’s rule, while we are in the body, and are not yet stripped of the form of a servant, which He put on Him, when He ‘emptied Himself’ (Philippians 2:7 NAS). But when we shall see His glory, which He had before the world was (John 17:5), we shall be in the kingdom of God, in which are the Patriarchs and Prophets, of whom it is written, ‘When you see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the Prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out’ (Luke 13:28); then we shall acquire a deeper knowledge of God.”

### **One God and Father; the Only True God (John 17:3)**

John stated, “And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent” (John 17:3). There has been a lot of discussion about Jesus’ words over the last 2000 years!

Many heretics have had some pretty shallow ideas about the relationship between Christ and His Father. They didn’t understand because they didn’t want to understand; on the other hand, the Twelve Apostles understood Him correctly. It is crucial to understand some basic things about God, or we are easily ripped off by some smooth-talking heretic.

John Chrysostom used<sup>20</sup> a good analogy to describe the eternal begotten-ness of the Son and showed what the implications of denying this are: The rays of the sun cannot exist without the body of the sun, and the rays exist at the same time as the sun; where the sun is akin to God the Father and the rays are akin to Christ. Both always exist at the same time, and there cannot be one without the other. Those like the Arians, who tried to assign a beginning to the Son of God in His Deity, by implication, also imply a beginning for the Father.

“Tell me, then, does the radiance of the sun proceed from the substance itself of the sun, or from some other source? Anyone not deprived of his senses must confess that it proceeds from the substance itself. Yet, although the radiance proceeds from the sun itself, we cannot say that it is later in point of time than the substance of that body, since the sun has never appeared without its rays. Now if in the case of these visible and sensible bodies there has been shown to be something, which proceeds from something else, and yet is not after that from

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<sup>20</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on John, IV, 2.

whence it proceeds; why are you incredulous in the case of the invisible and ineffable Nature? This same thing takes place, but in a manner suitable to That Substance. It is for this reason that Paul calls Him 'Brightness' (Hebrews 1:3); setting forth thereby His being from Him and His Co-eternity. Again, tell me, did he not create all the ages and every interval? Any man not deprived of his senses must necessarily confess this. There is no interval therefore between the Son and the Father; and if there is none, then He is not after, but Co-eternal with Him. For "before" and "after" are notions implying time, since, without age or time, no man could possibly imagine these words; but God is above times and ages."

"But if in any case you say that you have found a beginning to the Son, see whether by the same reason and argument you are not compelled to reduce the Father also to a beginning, earlier indeed, but still a beginning. For when you have assigned to the Son a limit and beginning of existence, do you not proceed upwards from that point, and say, that the Father was before it? Clearly you do. Tell me then, what is the extent of the Father's prior subsistence? For whether you say that the interval is little, or whether you say it is great, you equally have brought the Father to a beginning. For it is clear, that it is by measuring the space that you say whether it is little or great. Yet it would not be possible to measure it, unless there was a beginning on either side; so that as far as you are concerned you have given the Father a beginning, and henceforth, according to your argument, not even the Father will be without beginning. Do you see that the word spoken by the Savior is true, and the saying everywhere discovers its force? And what is that word? It is, (John 5:23) 'He that honors not the Son, honors not the Father'" (John 5:23).

Hilary of Poitiers pointed out<sup>21</sup> that Christ proved Himself the true God, even when He appeared to confess the opposite. The Arians claimed that when Christ said, "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (John 17:3), He was excluding Himself from being "the only true God". However after He said this, His disciples confessed, "Now we are sure that You know all things, and have no need that anyone should question You. By this we believe that You came forth from God" (John 16:30). His disciples understood Him correctly; the Arians didn't.

"Christ proclaimed Himself Lord out of The Law, even when He seems to deny the fact; so in the Gospels He proved Himself the true God, even when He appeared to confess the opposite. To escape the acknowledgment that He is the true God, the heretics plead that He said, 'And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent' (John 17:3). When He says, 'You, the only true God', they think He excludes Himself from the reality of God by the restriction of solitariness. They say the only true God cannot be understood except as a solitary God. The Apostolic faith does not allow us to believe in two true Gods, for nothing which is foreign to the nature of the one God can be put on equality with the truth of that nature. There is more than one God in the reality of the one God, if there exists outside the nature of the only true God a true God of another kind, not possessing by virtue of His birth the same nature with Him."

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<sup>21</sup> Hilary of Poitiers, On the Trinity, IX, 28-29.



“By these very words He proclaims Himself plainly to be true God in the nature of the only true God. To understand this, let our answer proceed from statements which He made previously, though the connection is unbroken right down to these words. We can then establish the faith step by step, and let the confidence of our freedom rest at last on the summit of our argument, the true Godhead of Christ. There comes first the mystery of His words, ‘He who has seen Me has seen the Father’ (John 14:9); and, ‘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. Believe Me that I *am* in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves’ (John 14:10-11). At the close of this discourse, teeming with deep mysteries, follows the reply of the disciples, ‘Now we are sure that You know all things, and have no need that anyone should question You. By this we believe that You came forth from God’ (John 16:30). They perceived in Him the nature of God by the divine powers which He exercised; for to know all things, and to read the thoughts of the heart belongs to the Son, not to the mere messenger of God. They confessed, therefore, that He was come from God, because the power of the Divine Nature was in Him.”

Hilary of Poitiers continued to say<sup>22</sup> that Christ was born of the Virgin with such divine powers that He has to be God. It is not faith to believe in the only true God without Christ, and therefore the Arians cannot obtain eternal life. The outcome of true divinity must be a true begetting, and that the one God could not produce from Himself a God of a second kind.

“Christ, dispenses eternal life (John 17:2), is glorified of, and glorifies, the Father (John 17:1): Who overcame the world (John 16:33); Who, deserted, is not alone, but has the Father with Him (John 16:32); Who came out from God, and came from the Father (John 16:27-28). He is born with such divine powers; what of the nature and reality of God will the Arians allow Him? It is in vain that we believe in the only true God the Father, unless we believe also in Him, Whom He sent, even Jesus Christ. Why do you hesitate? Tell us, what is Christ to be confessed? You deny what has been written: what is left, but to believe what has not been written? O unhappy willfulness! O falsehood striving against the truth! Christ is united in belief and confession with the only true God the Father: what faith is it to deny Him to be true God, and to call Him a creature, when it is not faith to believe in the only true God without Christ? But you are narrow, heretic, and unable to receive the Holy Spirit. The sense of the heavenly words escapes you; stung with the asp’s poison of error, you forget that Christ is to be confessed true God in the faith of the only true God, if we would obtain eternal life.”

“But the faith of the Church, while confessing the only true God the Father, confesses Christ also. It does not confess Christ true God without the Father the only true God; nor the Father the only true God without Christ. It confesses Christ true God, because it confesses the Father the only true God. Thus the fact that God the Father is the only true God constitutes Christ also true God. The Only-begotten God suffered no change of nature by His natural birth. He Who, according to the nature of His divine origin, was begotten God from the living God is, by the truth

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<sup>22</sup> Hilary of Poitiers, On the Trinity, IX, 35-36.

of that nature, inalienable from the only true God. Thus there follows from the true divine nature its necessary result: that the outcome of true divinity must be a true begetting, and that the one God could not produce from Himself a God of a second kind.”

### **Christ Finished His Work (John 17:4)**

John stated, “I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do” (John 17:4).

John Chrysostom stated<sup>23</sup> that this refers to the earth and to Christ’s humanity, where not everyone glorifies the Father on earth, but the exact opposite is true in heaven. Further, Chrysostom stated that these statements don’t refer to Christ’s Essence, which has always been glorified, but to His humanity. There are different interpretations of what is “finished”.

“Jesus well said, ‘I have glorified You on the earth’ (John 17:4); for in heaven He had been already glorified, having His own natural glory, and being worshipped by the Angels (Hebrews 1:6). Christ then speaks not of that glory which is bound up with His Essence, but of that which cometh from the service of men. That glory from His Essence, though none glorify Him, He always possesses in its fullness. And so the, ‘Glorify Me’, is of this kind; and that you may understand that He speaks of this manner of glory, listen to what follows. ‘I have finished the work which You have given Me to do’ (John 17:4). Yet the action was still but beginning, or rather was not yet beginning. How then did He say, ‘I have finished?’ Either He means, that ‘I have done all My part’; or He speaks of the future, as having already come to pass. Or, which one may say most of all, that all was already effected, because the root of blessings had been laid, which fruits would certainly and necessarily follow, and from His being present at and assisting in those things which should take place after these. On this account He said again in a condescending way, ‘Which You have given Me to do’ (John 17:4). Had He waited to hear and learn, this would have fallen far short of His glory. That He came to this of His own will, is clear from many passages. As when Paul said, that ‘Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us’ (Ephesians 5:2); and, ‘He emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant’ (Philippians 2:7 NAS); and, ‘As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you’” (John 15:9)

### **Christ before the Incarnation (John 17:5)**

John stated, “And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was” (John 17:5).

Prior to the Incarnation, the Son of God did not have a human body; thus His humanity had a beginning in time. Not so with His Divinity! In His Divinity, He was God of God back to eternity past. In His humanity, Christ had to grow into His human understanding of everything. In His Divinity, He always had everything. The heretics did not understand this and kept mixing

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<sup>23</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on John, LXXX, 2.

up statements that refer to either His humanity or His Divinity as if they were interchangeable. A lack of real understanding of the Scriptures was the basis of the problem for the heretics.

Hippolytus of Rome stated<sup>24</sup> that Christ, in His humanity, grew into that which He had been from the beginning. After His mission was complete at the Resurrection, He was restored to what He had before the world was created by Him. Therefore He received the Name that is above every name. He can also be understood as the “youngest son”, who appeared in the last times, where His older brothers are the prophets.

“The word of prophecy passes again to Immanuel Himself. For, in my opinion, what is intended by it is just what has been stated in the words, ‘In that day the Branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious’ (Isaiah 4:2). For he means that Christ increased and grew up into that which He had been from the beginning, and indicates the return to the glory which He had by nature. This, if we apprehend it correctly, is just ‘restored’ to Him. For as the only begotten Word of God, being God of God, emptied Himself, according to the Scriptures, humbling Himself of His own will to that which He was not before, and took to Himself this vile flesh, and appeared in the ‘form of a servant’. He ‘became obedient to God the Father, to *the point of* death, even the death of the cross’; so hereafter He is said to be ‘highly exalted’. Therefore He ‘receives the name which is above every name’ (Philippians 2:7-9). But the matter, in truth, was not a ‘giving’, as for the first time, of what He had not by nature; far otherwise. But rather we must understand a return and restoration to that which existed in Him at the beginning, essentially and inseparably. It is for this reason that, when He had assumed, by divine arrangement, the lowly estate of humanity, He said, ‘Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was,’ (John 17:5). He, who was co-existent with His Father before all time, and before the foundation of the world, always had the glory proper to Godhead.”

“‘He’ too may very well be understood as the ‘youngest son’. He appeared in the last times, after the glorious and honorable company of the holy prophets, and simply once, after all those who, previous to the time of His sojourn, were reckoned in the number of sons by reason of excellence.”

Hilary of Poitiers gave<sup>25</sup> a very good explanation of Christ’s words, “The Father is greater than I” (John 14:28). The Arians interpreted this as meaning that Christ was a lesser god than the Father. Hilary explained that this had to do with the Son of God emptying Himself (Philippians 2:7) at the Incarnation to become man. The form of God had departed from Him due to His “emptying Himself”, but His Divine Nature did not cease, as exhibited by His works.

“He who has not grasped the clear truths of the faith, obviously cannot have an understanding of its mysteries; because he doesn’t have the doctrine of the Gospel he is an alien to the hope of the Gospel. We must confess the Father to be in the Son and the Son in the Father, by unity of nature, by might of power, as equal in honor as Begetter and Begotten. But perhaps you say, the witness of our Lord Himself is contrary to this declaration, for He says, ‘I am going to the Father, for My Father is greater than I’ (John 14:28). Is this, heretic, the weapon of your

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<sup>24</sup> Hippolytus, “Commentaries on Genesis 49:21-26”, in Extant Works and Fragments.

<sup>25</sup> Hilary of Poitiers, On the Trinity, IX, 51-52.

profanity? Has it escaped you, that the Church does not confess two Unbegotten or two Fathers? Have you forgotten the Incarnation of the Mediator, with the birth, the cradle, the child hood, the passion, the cross and the death belonging to it? When you were born again, did you not confess the Son of God, born of Mary? If the Son of God, of Whom these things are true, says, ‘The Father is greater than I’, can you be ignorant that the Incarnation for your salvation was an emptying (Philippians 2:7 NAS) of the form of God? The Father was unaffected by this assumption of human conditions; He abode in the blessed eternity of His own incorrupt nature without taking our flesh! We confess that the Only-begotten God, while He abode in the form of God, abode in the nature of God. We do not teach that the Father is in the Son, as if He entered into Him bodily; but that the nature which was begotten by the Father of the same kind as His own, possessed by nature the nature which begot it. This nature, abiding in the form of the nature which begot it, took the form of human nature and weakness. Christ possessed all that was proper to His nature: but the form of God had departed from Him. By emptying Himself of it, He had taken the form of a servant. The divine nature had not ceased to be, but still abiding in Him, it had taken upon itself the humility of earthly birth, and was exercising its proper power in the fashion of the humility it assumed. So God, born of God, being found as man in the form of a servant, but acting as God in His miracles, was at once God as His deeds proved, and yet man, for He was found in the fashion of man.”

“He had borne witness to the unity of His nature with the Father’s: ‘He who has seen Me has seen the Father’ (John 14:9); ‘Though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father *is* in Me, and I in Him’ (John 10:38). These two quotes perfectly agree, since Both Persons are of equal nature; to behold the Son is the same as to behold the Father; that the One abides in the One shows that They are inseparable. Lest someone should misunderstand Him, as though when they beheld His body, they beheld the Father in Him, He had added, ‘Believe Me that I *am* in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves’ (John 14:11). His power belonged to His nature, and His working was the exercise of that power; in the exercise of that power, then, people might recognize in Him the unity with the Father’s nature. In proportion as anyone recognized Him to be God in the power of His nature, he would come to know God the Father, present in that mighty nature. The Son, Who is equal with the Father, showed by His works that the Father could be seen in Him. He did this in order that we, perceiving in the Son a nature like the Father’s in its power, might know that in Father and Son there is no distinction of nature.”

Hilary of Poitiers pointed out<sup>26</sup> that the Scribe Jesus said was not far from the Kingdom of God recognized Jesus as Messiah, but he was not aware that the Law also taught that Messiah was God. The Scribe called Messiah the son of David, but David called Messiah His Lord. After Jesus brought this up, none of the Scribes dared to ask Jesus any more questions.

“Jesus said to the Scribe, ‘You are not far from the kingdom of God’ (Mark 12:34), rather than, ‘You shall be in the Kingdom of Heaven’. Then follows: ‘But

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<sup>26</sup> Hilary of Poitiers, On the Trinity, IX, 26.

after that no one dared question Him'. 'Then Jesus answered and said, while He taught in the temple, "How *is it* that the scribes say that the Christ is the Son of David? For David himself said by the Holy Spirit: 'The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool" ' (Psalm 110:1). Therefore David himself calls Him 'Lord'; how is He *then* his Son? (Mark 12:36-37) The Scribe is not far from the Kingdom of God when he confesses one God, Who is to be loved above all things. But his own statement of the Law is a reproach to him: the mystery of The Law has escaped him; he does not know Christ the Lord. The Son of God, by the nature of His birth needs to be included in the confession of the one God. The confession of one God according to The Law seemed to leave no room for the Son of God in the mystery of the one Lord. So Jesus asked the Scribe, how he can call Christ the Son of David, when David calls Him his Lord, since it is against the order of nature that the son of so great a Patriarch should be also his Lord. He asked the Scribe, who regards Him only in respect of His flesh, and His birth from Mary, the daughter of David, to remember that, in respect of His Spirit, He is David's Lord rather than his son. The words, 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one' (Deuteronomy 6:4), do not sever Christ from the mystery of the One Lord. He does not pass over the Law, or forget that none other is to be confessed Lord. But without violating the faith of the Law, He teaches that He is Lord, in that He had His being by the mystery of a natural birth from the substance of the incorporeal God. He is one, born of one, and the nature of the one Lord has made Him by nature Lord."

### **The Father's Love for Us (John 17:6-7)**

John stated, "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You" (John 17:6-7).

The Father's love for us has existed since the Creation, but it took on a whole new form with the Incarnation. People had been keeping the Father's word since time began, but with the Incarnation, this was personified in the man Jesus and in His relationship with the Father. As a result, there will be many different rewards for the faithful based on what they have done for Jesus.

Gregory Thaumaturgus put<sup>27</sup> the love of God for us in perspective. This love has been there all along, but it took shape in a whole new way with the Annunciation to the Virgin Mary. Of old, the Feast Days were characterized by bitter herbs and the pain of circumcision; but now even our afflictions are turned to joy. All this hinges on the Law and the Prophets, plus the Evangelists and the Apostles.

"Of old Israel kept their festival, but then it was with unleavened bread and bitter herbs (Exodus 12:8), of which Amos says: 'I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation' (Amos 8:10). But our Lord has assured us that our afflictions He will turn into joy by the fruits of penitence (Jeremiah 31). The first covenant maintained the righteous requirements of a divine

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<sup>27</sup> Gregory Thaumaturgus, "On the Annunciation to the Holy Virgin Mary", in Four Homilies, II, 2. "Thaumaturgus" means "wonder-worker".

service, as in the case of our forefather Abraham; but these stood in the inflictions of pain in the flesh by circumcision, until the time of the fulfillment. ‘The Law was given to them through Moses’ for their discipline; ‘but grace and truth have been given to us by Jesus Christ’ (John 1:17). The beginning of all these blessings to us appeared in the annunciation to Mary, the highly-favored, in the plan of the Savior which is worthy of all praise, and in His divine and spiritual instruction. From there the rays of the light of understanding upon us begin to rise. From there the fruits of wisdom and immortality spring for us, sending forth the clear pure streams of piety. From there the brilliant splendors of the treasures of divine knowledge come to us. ‘For this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent’ (John 17:3). Again, ‘Search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me’ (John 5:39). For on this account the treasure of the knowledge of God is revealed to them who search the divine oracles. That treasure of the inspired Scriptures the Paraclete has unfolded to us this day. And let the tongue of prophecy and the doctrine of the Apostles be the treasure of wisdom to us; for without The Law and the Prophets, or the Evangelists and the Apostles, it is not possible to have the certain hope of salvation. For by the tongue of the Holy Prophets and Apostles our Lord speaks, and God takes pleasure in the words of the saints. Not that He requires the spoken address, but He delights in the good disposition. Not that He receives any profit from men, but He finds a restful satisfaction in the rightly-affected soul of the righteous. It is not that Christ is magnified by what we say; but we receive benefits from Him, and we proclaim with grateful mind His benefits to us. Not that we can attain to what is worthy therein, but that we give the fitting return to the best of our ability.”

John Chrysostom stated<sup>28</sup> that the Apostles “kept the Father’s word” by believing in Jesus, recognizing that He was from God and that everything Jesus taught are the Father’s doctrines.

“How did the Apostles ‘keep Your word?’ (John 17:6) ‘By believing in Me, and paying no attention to the Jews. For he that believes in Him ‘has received His testimony and has certified that God is true’ (John 3:33). John continues, ‘Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You’ (John 17:7). How would the Son be ignorant of the things of the Father? No, the words are spoken of the disciples. From the time, He said, that I told them these things, ‘they have received *them*, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me’ (John 17:8). They therefore have known that all things, whatever I teach, are Your doctrines and teachings. How have they learned it? From My words; for so have I taught them. And not only this have I taught them, but also ‘that You sent Me’ (John 17:8). For this He was anxious to prove through the entire Gospel.”

Jerome of Bethlehem outlined<sup>29</sup> what is in store for us when the Lord returns. There are many different “mansions” prepared for us, and many different ranks and honors. These are not

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<sup>28</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on John, LXXXI, 1.

<sup>29</sup> Jerome of Bethlehem, Against Jovinianus, II, 28.

awarded to persons but to persons' works. These are not awarded as salvation, which is the reward of all who believe, but as a result of what we have done in response to salvation.

“We must interpret in the same way what our Lord says to the sons of Zebedee, one of whom wished to sit on His left hand, the other on His right: ‘You will indeed drink My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but *it is for those* for whom it is prepared by My Father’ (Matthew 20:23). It is not the Son’s to give; how then is it the Father’s to prepare? There are, He says, prepared in heaven, many different mansions (John 14:2), destined for many different virtues, and they will be awarded not to persons, but to persons’ works. In vain therefore do you ask of me what rests with yourselves, a reward which my Father has prepared for those whose virtues will entitle them to rise to such dignity. Again when He says: ‘If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also’ (John 14:3). He is speaking especially to the Apostles, concerning whom it is elsewhere written, ‘That they all may be one, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us’ (John 17:21), inasmuch as they have believed, have been perfected, and can say, ‘God *is the strength* of my heart, and God is my portion forever’ (Psalm 73:26 LXX). If, however, there are not many mansions, how is it taught in the Old Testament correspondingly with the New, that the chief priest has one rank, the priests another, the Levites another, the door-keepers another, the sacristans another? How is it that in the book of Ezekiel, where a description is given of the future Church and of the heavenly Jerusalem, the priests who have sinned are degraded to the rank of sacristans and doorkeepers, and although they are in the temple of God, that is on the right hand, they are not among the rams, but among the poorest of the sheep? (Ezekiel 44:10-14) How again is it that in the river which flows from the temple and replenishes the salt sea, and gives new life to everything, we read there are many kinds of fish? (Ezekiel 47:9-10) Why do we read that in the kingdom of heaven there are Archangels, Angels, Thrones, Dominions, Powers, Cherubim and Seraphim, and every name which is named, not only in this present world, but also that which is to come? (Colossians 1:16) A difference of name is meaningless where there is not a difference of rank. An Archangel is of course an Archangel to other inferior angels; Powers and Dominions have other spheres over which they exercise authority. This is what we find in heaven and in the administration of God.”

#### The Father Sent the Son (John 17:8)

John said, “For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received *them*, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me. I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours” (John 17:8-9).

Jesus made a bigger deal about His being sent by the Father than we emphasize today. The Jewish leaders in Jesus’ day thought they knew the Father but wouldn’t accept Christ. The heretics of the late 1st century and following centuries thought they knew Christ but missed the Father. As

Jesus tried to enlighten both groups by His miracles showing that He and the Father were one, the Jews were infuriated at what He said and the heretics later became irrational at what He said.

Cyprian of Carthage pointed out<sup>30</sup> the contrast between the Jews and the heretics of his day. The Jews knew the Father from the Law and the Prophets, but were unwilling to accept Christ. The heretics were baptized in the Name of Christ, but didn't acknowledge the Father. Neither can be saved as a result; both need to know that the Father sent the Son.

“In the Gospels, and in the Epistles of the Apostles, the name of Christ is alleged for the remission of sins. It is not in such a way as that the Son alone, without the Father, or against the Father, can be of advantage to anybody; but that it might be shown to the Jews, who boasted as to their having the Father that the Father would profit them nothing, unless they believed on the Son whom He had sent. They who know God the Father the Creator, ought also to know Christ the Son, lest they should flatter and applaud themselves about the Father alone, without the acknowledgment of His Son. He said, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me’ (John 14:6). But He also sets forth, that it is the knowledge of the two which saves, ‘This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent’ (John 17:3). From the preaching and testimony of Christ Himself, the Father who sent must be first known, then afterwards Christ, who was sent, and there cannot be a hope of salvation except by knowing the two together. How can they among the heretics who are said to be baptized in the name of Christ, be judged to have obtained the remission of sins when God the Father is not known, nay, is even blasphemed? The case of the Jews under the Apostles was one; but the condition of the Gentiles is another. The Jews had already gained the most ancient baptism of The Law and Moses, but had to be baptized also in the name of Jesus Christ, in conformity with what Peter tells them. ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’<sup>39</sup> “For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call’ (Acts 2:38-39). Peter makes mention of Jesus Christ, not as though the Father should be omitted, but that the Son also might be joined to the Father.”

John Chrysostom pointed out<sup>31</sup> that it is very obvious at the raising of Lazarus that the Father sent Christ from the unusual prayer to the Father that Jesus made. Jesus prayed as if He didn't need to pray, but only to be understood by His listeners, which included many of the Jews (John 11:19), since Lazarus was a wealthy and prominent man. Jesus showed that His Will and the Will of the Father are the same thing. By doing this, Jesus infuriated the Jews present, and they crucified Him a week later.

“After they rolled back the stone from where Lazarus lay, ‘Jesus lifted up *His* eyes and said, “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said *this*, that they may believe that You sent Me”’ (John 11:41-42). Let us then ask the heretic, ‘Did Jesus receive an impulse from the prayer, and so raise the dead man? How

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<sup>30</sup> Cyprian of Carthage, Epistles, LXXII, 17.

<sup>31</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on John, LXIV, 2.



then did He work other miracles without prayer?’ saying, ‘Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!’ (Mark 9:25). Also ‘I am willing; be cleansed’ (Mark 1:41); and, ‘Rise, take up your bed and walk’ (John 5:8); and, ‘Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you’ (Matthew 9:2); and to the sea, ‘Peace, be still!’ And the wind ceased and there was a great calm (Mark 4:39). In short, How is He different than the Apostles, if He also works only by prayer? Or rather I should say, that neither did they work everything by prayer, but often they worked without prayer, calling upon the Name of Jesus. Now, if Jesus’ Name had such great power, how could He have needed prayer? Had He needed prayer, using His Name would not have worked. When He created man, what manner of prayer did He need? Was there not then great equality of honor? ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness’ (Genesis 1:26)? What could be a greater sign of weakness, if He needed prayer? But let us see what the prayer was: ‘Father, I thank You that You have heard Me’ (John 11:41). Whoever prayed in this manner? Before uttering any prayer, He said, ‘I thank You’, showing that He didn’t need prayer. ‘I know that You always hear Me’ (John 11:42). This He didn’t say as though He Himself were powerless, but to show that His will and the Father’s is one. But why did He assume the form of prayer? Listen not to me, but Himself, saying, ‘Because of the people who are standing by I said *this*, that they may believe that You sent Me’ (John 11:42). He didn’t say, “That they may believe that I am inferior, that I have need of an impulse from above, that without prayer I cannot do anything; but, ‘That You have sent Me’. For all these things the prayer declares, if we take it simply. He didn’t say, ‘You have sent me weak, acknowledging servitude, and doing nothing of Myself’; but dismissing all these things, that you may have no such suspicions, He puts the real cause of the prayer, ‘That they may not consider Me an enemy of God; that they may not say, “He is not of God”, that I may show them that the work has been done according to Your will. This is all but saying, ‘Had I been an enemy of God, what is done would not have succeeded’; but the, ‘You heard Me’, is said in the case of friends and equals. ‘I knew that You hear Me always’, that is, ‘in order that My will be done I need no prayer, except to persuade men that to You and Me belong one will’. Why then does Jesus pray at all? For the sake of the weak sort!

Athanasius of Alexandria pointed out<sup>32</sup> the irrationality of the Arian heresy in the light of the Scriptures. They claim that the Son’s relation to the Father is like Paul’s relation to the Father. But this means that the Son is not an exact image of the Father and that the Father is just a Father in name only. The Scriptures speak of the Father and the Son together where grace from the Father comes through the Son.

“The notion of the Arians is irrational; the ‘likeness’ and the ‘oneness’ refers to the Essence of the Son. Unless it is so taken, He will not be shown to have anything beyond things originate, nor will He be like the Father, but He will be like the Father’s doctrines. He differs from the Father, in that the Father is Father, but the doctrines and teaching are the Father’s. If then with respect to the doctrines and the teaching the Son is like the Father, then the Father according to the Arians will be Father in name only. The Son will not be an exact Image (2 Corinthians 4:4,

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<sup>32</sup> Athanasius of Alexandria, Four Discourses Against the Arians, III, xxv, 11.

Colossians 1:15, Hebrews 1:3) and rather will have no likeness to the Father. It will be like Paul compared to Christ; Paul taught like the Savior, yet was not like Him in essence. For what likeness has Paul who is so utterly different from the Father? Having such notions, they speak falsely; the Son and the Father are one like the radiance towards the sun. When the Son works, the Father is the Worker; when the Son comes to the Saints, the Father is He who comes in the Son, as He promised when He said, 'If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him' (John 14:23). In the Image (Hebrews 1:3) is contemplated the Father, and in the Radiance is the Light. Therefore when the Father gives grace and peace, the Son also gives it, as Paul says in every Epistle, 'Grace to you and peace<sup>33</sup> from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ'. For one and the same grace is from the Father in the Son; as the light and the radiance of the sun is one, and as the sun's illumination is affected through the radiance. When Paul prays for the Thessalonians, 'Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way to you' (1 Thessalonians 3:11), he has guarded the unity of the Father and of the Son. For he didn't say, 'May they direct,' as if a double grace were given from two Sources, but 'May He direct,' to shew that the Father gives it through the Son."

### **The Effect of Christ's Flesh**

Some clarifying words are necessary regarding Christ's humanity before proceeding. Jesus is the Son of God, one person, but He has two natures: God and man. As God (that is as a spirit), He can be everywhere at the same time. As man, He is limited to one place at a time, and He currently is seated at the Right Hand of the Father in heaven, awaiting the Second Coming on the clouds of heaven<sup>34</sup>. In His Divinity, He is just like the Father (but a different person than the Father); in His humanity, He is just like us. In His humanity, He is still God, not some lesser creature like the Arians claimed. In His humanity, He has a human will, which He subjected to the Divine Will at the Cross.

Athanasius of Alexandria pointed out<sup>35</sup> that we do not worship a creature; we worship the Lord of Creation. Christ's flesh has become God's body and we don't divide the Body from the Word. The Creator of the universe now dwells in a created Temple. Creation itself recognizes this and responds to the man Christ as it does to God. Christ's Flesh did not diminish the glory of the Word; on the contrary, it is glorified by Him.

"We do not worship a creature. Such an error belongs to heathen and the Arians. We worship the Lord of Creation, Incarnate, the Word of God. The flesh also is in itself a part of the created world, yet it has become God's body. We neither divide the body from the Word, nor worship it by itself, nor when we wish to worship the Word do we set Him apart from the Flesh. Knowing that 'the Word was made flesh', we recognize Him as God also, after having come in the flesh. Who is so senseless as to say to the Lord, 'Leave Your Body that I may worship You'; or so impious as to join the senseless Jews in saying, on account of the Body,

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<sup>33</sup> Paul begins each of his Epistles, except Hebrews, with these words.

<sup>34</sup> See Matthew 24:30, 26:64; Acts 1:11-12; Revelation 19:11-16.

<sup>35</sup> Athanasius of Alexandria, Letter to Adelphius, LX, 3-4.

‘For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God’ (John 10:33) But the leper was not one of this sort, for he worshipped God in the Body, and recognized that He was God, saying, ‘Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean’ (Matthew 8:2). Neither by reason of the Flesh did he think the Word of God a creature; nor because the Word was the maker of all creation did he despise the Flesh which He had put on. But he worshipped the Creator of the universe as dwelling in a created temple, and was cleansed. So also the woman with an issue of blood, who believed, and only touched the hem of His garment, was healed (Matthew 9:20); and the sea with its foaming waves heard the incarnate Word, and ceased its storm (Matthew 8:26), while the man blind from birth was healed by the fleshly spitting of the Word (John 9:6). What is greater and more startling, when the Lord was hanging on the actual cross (for it was His Body and the Word was in it), the sun was darkened, the earth shook, the rocks were rent, the veil of the temple torn, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose.”

“These things then happened, and no one doubted whether one is to believe the incarnate Word; but even from beholding the man, they recognized that He was their maker, and when they heard a human voice, they did not, because it was human, say that the Word was a creature. On the contrary, they trembled, and recognized nothing less than that it was being uttered from a holy Temple. How then can the impious fail to fear lest ‘as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting?’ (Romans 1:28) Creation does not worship a creature. Nor did Creation on account of His Flesh refuse to worship her Lord. But she beheld her maker in the Body, and ‘in the Name of Jesus every knee’ bowed. Every knee ‘should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father’ (Philippians 2:10-11), whether the Arians approve or not. The Flesh did not diminish the glory of the Word; on the contrary, it is glorified by Him. Because the Son was in the form of God and took upon Him the form of a servant (Philippians 2:6-7), He was not deprived of His Godhead. On the contrary, He has thus become the Deliverer of all flesh and of all creation. God sent His Son brought forth from a woman; this fact causes us no shame but contrariwise glory and great grace. For He has become Man, that He might deify us in Himself. He has been born of a woman, and begotten of a Virgin, in order to transfer to Himself our erring generation, that we may become henceforth a holy race, and ‘partakers of the Divine Nature’ (2 Peter 1:4). ‘What the Law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God *did* by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh” (Romans 8:3).

Hilary of Poitiers pointed out<sup>36</sup> some details of the Son’s relationship to the Father. They have one Will and one Knowledge but are two persons; yet the Son also has a human will that He subjects to the Will of the Father. The Son is ignorant of nothing that the Father knows; however, the Son’s human nature may sometimes be ignorant and may need to learn through normal human learning. As man Jesus wept, slept, and sorrowed, but God is incapable of tears, sleep or fear. Jesus’ human nature did not hinder or impair His Divine Nature.

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<sup>36</sup> Hilary of Poitiers, On the Trinity, IX, 74-75.

“Christ received all that belonged to the whole being of God, namely, His knowledge and His will. What the Father knows, the Son does not learn by question and answer; what the Father wills, the Son does not will by command. Since all that the Father has, is His (John 17:10), it is the property of His nature to will and know, exactly as the Father wills and knows. But to prove His birth He often expounds the doctrine of His Person, as when He says, ‘I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me’ (John 6:38). He does the Father’s will, not His own, and by the will of Him that sent Me, He means His Father. But that He Himself wills the same, is unmistakably declared in the words, ‘Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am’ (John 17:24). The Father wills that we should be with Christ, in Whom, according to Paul, ‘He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world’ (Ephesians 1:4), and the Son wills the same, namely that we should be with Him. His will is, therefore, the same in nature as the Father’s will, though to make plain the fact of the birth it is distinguished from the Father’s.”

“The Son is ignorant, then, of nothing which the Father knows, nor does it follow because the Father alone knows, that the Son does not know. Father and Son abide in unity of nature, and the ignorance of the Son belongs to the divine Plan of silence seeing that ‘in Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge’ (Colossians 2:3). The Lord Himself testified of this, when He answered the question of the Apostles concerning the times, ‘It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority’ (Acts 1:7). The knowledge is denied them, and not only that, but the anxiety to learn is forbidden, because it is not theirs to know these times. Yet after He was risen, they asked again, though their question on the former occasion had been met with the reply, that not even the Son knew (Matthew 24:36). They cannot possibly have understood literally that the Son did not know, for they asked Him again as though He did know. They perceived in the mystery of His ignorance a divine Plan of silence, and now, after His resurrection, they renew the question, thinking that the time has come to speak. And the Son no longer denies that He knows, but tells them that it is not theirs to know, because the Father has set it within His own authority. If then, the Apostles attributed it to the divine Plan, and not to weakness, that the Son did not know the day, shall we say that the Son knew not the day for the simple reason that He was not God? Remember, God the Father set the day within His authority, that it might not come to the knowledge of man, and the Son, when asked before, replied that He did not know. But now, no longer denying His knowledge, He replies that it is theirs not to know, for the Father has set the times not in His own knowledge, but in His own authority. The day and the moment are included in the word ‘times’: can it be, then, that He, Who was to restore Israel to its kingdom, did not Himself know the day and the moment of that restoration? He instructs us to see evidence of His birth in this exclusive prerogative of the Father, yet He does not deny that He knows. While He proclaims that the possession of this knowledge is withheld from ourselves, He asserts that it belongs to the mystery of the Father’s authority.”

“We must not therefore think, because He said He did not know the day and the moment that the Son did not know. As man He wept, slept, and sorrowed, but

God is incapable of tears, fear, or sleep. According to the weakness of His flesh He shed tears, slept, hungered, thirsted, was weary, and feared, yet without impairing the reality of His Only-begotten nature. Equally so must we refer to His human nature, the words that He knew not the day or the hour.”

### **Christ Prays for Us (John 17:9, 20)**

John said, “I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours” (John 17:9).

“I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word” (John 17:20).

Cyprian of Carthage pointed out<sup>37</sup> that Christ was always praying, even though He was without sin. He prayed for us, not for Himself, that we might be one as He and the Father are One. He who divides unity and peace commits a great sin, since discord cannot come into the Kingdom of God.

“Nor was it only in words, but in deeds also, that the Lord taught us to pray, Himself praying frequently and imploring, and thus showing us, by the testimony of His example, what we ought to do. ‘So He Himself *often* withdrew into the wilderness and prayed’ (Luke 5:16). Again: ‘in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God’ (Luke 6:12). But if He prayed who was without sin, how much more ought sinners to pray. If He prayed continually, watching through the whole night in uninterrupted petitions, how much more ought we to watch nightly in constantly repeated prayer!”

“But the Lord prayed and implored not for Himself — for why should He who was guiltless pray on His own behalf? — but for our sins, as He Himself declared. ‘Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift *you* as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail’ (Luke 22:31-32). And subsequently He implored the Father for all, ‘I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us’ (John 17:20-21). The Lord’s loving-kindness, no less than His mercy, is great with respect to our salvation, in that, not content to redeem us with His blood, He in addition also prayed for us. Behold now what was the desire of His petition, that like as the Father and Son are one, so also we should abide in absolute unity. From this it may be understood how greatly he sins who divides unity and peace, since for this same thing even the Lord besought, desirous doubtless that His people should thus be saved and live in peace, since He knew that discord cannot come into the kingdom of God.”

### **The Reward of the Faithful (John 17:24)**

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<sup>37</sup> Cyprian of Carthage, Treatises, IV, 29-30.

John said, “Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world” (John 17:24).

In the battle between the Church and heretics, the method has always been the same. First the heretics try to get the faithful to believe a lie, like their father the devil. Following that, there is the lure toward perdition, forsaking our reward; this comes from believing the lie. Our rewards have been planned since the Creation according to the Master Plan of Salvation. For those who rebelled, He gave us a Law; to those who repented, He killed the fatted calf and gave us the finest robe. Christ’s Resurrection had an enormous effect on the people of God in that it gave us a glimpse into what our rewards might be like and that they are beyond our conception. Our death is just a passage into that Kingdom and this is not something to mourn about. However, our rewards are dependent on our living like sons of God and not like those who have no hope. We disqualify ourselves when we act contrary to His commandments and allow darkness to fill our souls.

Hippolytus of Rome summarized<sup>38</sup> the reward of the faithful as partaking of the Divine Nature and sitting with Christ on His throne. In such a state, we will become like gods. The heretics of Hippolytus’ day aimed to take all that away by seducing men into believing lies.

“To you I have become an adviser, inasmuch as I am a disciple of the benevolent Logos, in order that you may hurry and may be taught by us who the true God is, and what is His well-ordered creation. Do not devote your attention to the fallacies of artificial discourses, nor the vain promises of plagiarizing heretics; but devote your attention to the venerable simplicity of unassuming truth. By means of this knowledge you shall escape the approaching threat of the fire of judgment, and the rayless scenery of gloomy Tartarus, where never shines a beam from the irradiating voice of the Word!”

“You shall escape the boiling flood of hell’s eternal lake of fire and the eye ever fixed in menacing glare of fallen angels chained in Tartarus as punishment for their sins. Now such torments as these shall you avoid by being instructed in knowledge of the true God. You shall possess an immortal body, even one placed beyond the possibility of corruption, just like the soul. You shall receive the kingdom of heaven, you who, while you sojourned in this life, knew the Celestial King. You shall be a companion of the Deity, and a co-heir with Christ, no longer enslaved by lusts or passions, and never again wasted by disease. For you have become a god<sup>39</sup>: for whatever sufferings you underwent while being a man, these He gave to you, because you were of mortal mold. But whatever it is consistent with God to impart, these God has promised to bestow upon you, because you have been deified, and begotten unto immortality<sup>40</sup>. This constitutes the import of the

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<sup>38</sup> Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies*, X, 30.

<sup>39</sup> Satan had promised man that they would be like gods (Genesis 3:5) if they ate of the fruit of the forbidden tree. Christ has gone one better than this in that we may be partakers of the Divine Nature (2 Peter 1:4). The glory that the Father gave to Christ’s human nature, Christ has given to us (John 17:22-23). As a result, we will sit with Christ on His throne (Revelation 3:21). Christ has given more than was offered by the Father of Lies.

<sup>40</sup> Compare John 10:34 (which quotes Psalm 82:6) with Revelation 5:10. We are Kings and Priests to our God (Revelation 5:10), and members of the Church are sons of the Most High (Psalm 82:6). Kings of the earth may even be called “gods” in a sense.

proverb, ‘Know yourself’; i.e., discover God within yourself, for He has formed you after His own image. For with the knowledge of self is connected the being an object of God’s knowledge, for you are called by the Deity Himself. Don’t be inflamed, O men, with enmity one towards another; don’t hesitate to retrace your steps and repent with all speed. For Christ is the God above all and He has arranged to wash away sin from human beings, rendering regenerate the old man. God called man His likeness from the beginning, and has clearly shown in a figure His love towards you. Provided you obey His solemn injunctions, and become a faithful follower of Him who is good, you shall resemble Him, inasmuch as you shall have honor conferred upon you by Him.”

Irenaeus of Lyons stated<sup>41</sup> that God doesn’t need men in order to be glorified, but He has had this since before creation. When we serve Him, we are glorified by Him; He has both formed us and prepared us for partaking of His glory. Man was formed in the Garden for this; after the Fall of Man, He sketched out, like an architect, the plan of salvation to those that pleased Him. To those who became unruly in the desert He gave a Law very suitable to their condition. On the people who entered into the good land He bestowed a noble inheritance; and He killed the fatted calf for those converted to the Father, and presented them with the finest robe.

“In the beginning, God formed Adam, not as if He stood in need of man, but that He might have someone upon whom to confer His benefits. Before all creation, the Word glorified His Father, remaining in Him; and was Himself glorified by the Father. As He Himself declares, ‘Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was’ (John 17:5). He did not stand in need of our service when He ordered us to follow Him; but He thus bestowed salvation upon ourselves. To follow the Savior is to be a partaker of salvation, and to follow light is to receive light. Those who are in light do not themselves illumine the light, but are illumined and revealed by it; we certainly contribute nothing to it, but, receiving the benefit, and are illumined by the light. Service rendered to God doesn’t profit God, nor has God need of human obedience. He grants to those who follow and serve Him life and incorruption and eternal glory, bestowing benefit upon those who serve Him, because they serve Him, and on His followers, because they follow Him. He does not receive any benefit from them; for He is rich, perfect, and in need of nothing. For this reason God demands service from men, in order that He may benefit those who continue in His service. As much as God lacks nothing, so much does man stand in need of fellowship with God. This is the glory of man, to continue and remain permanently in God’s service. Therefore the Lord said to His disciples, ‘You did not choose Me, but I chose you’ (John 15:16), indicating that they did not glorify Him when they followed Him; but that, in following the Son of God, they were glorified by Him. Again, ‘I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me’ (John 17:24); He is not vainly boasting because of this, but desiring that His disciples should share in His glory. Of this Isaiah said, ‘I will bring your descendants from the east, and gather you from the west; and I will say to the north, “Give them up!”, and to the south, “Do not keep them back!” Bring My sons from afar, and My daughters from the

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<sup>41</sup> Irenaeus, Against Heresies, IV, xiv, 1-2.

ends of the earth -- everyone who is called by My name, whom I have created for My glory; I have formed him, yes, I have made him' (Isaiah 43:5-7). As He said, 'wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together' (Matthew 24:28). We participate in the glory of the Lord, who has both formed us, and prepared us for this, that when we are with Him, we may partake of His glory."

"Thus it was that God formed man at the first, because of His munificence; but chose the patriarchs for the sake of their salvation; and prepared a people beforehand, teaching the headstrong to follow God. He raised up prophets on earth, accustoming man to bear His Spirit within him, and to hold communion with God. He Himself, having need of nothing, but granting communion with Himself to those who stood in need of it, and sketching out, like an architect, the plan of salvation to those that pleased Him. He furnished guidance to those who beheld Him not in Egypt, while to those who became unruly in the desert He promulgated a Law very suitable to their condition. Then, on the people who entered into the good land He bestowed a noble inheritance; and He killed the fatted calf for those converted to the Father, and presented them with the finest robe (Luke 15:22-23). Thus, in a variety of ways, He adjusted the human race to an agreement with salvation. On this account John declares, 'His voice as the sound of many waters' (Revelation 1:15). For the Spirit of God is truly like many waters, since the Father is both rich and great. And the Word, passing through all those men, did liberally confer benefits upon His subjects, by drawing up in writing a Law adapted and applicable to every class among them."

John Chrysostom stated<sup>42</sup> that Christ's Resurrection had an enormous effect on the Twelve Apostles. They were looking at rewards that are beyond conception. Those who were worthy to see and hear so great a gift were motivated to a life that was worthy of such blessings. If the glory that they saw was so bright in these corruptible bodies, imagine what it will be like in our incorruptible bodies.

"While the seal of His tomb were still fastened on the vault, the Dead arose, the Crucified, the nail-pierced One, and filled His eleven disciples with His mighty power. He sent them to men throughout the entire world, to be the common healers of all their kind to correct their way of living, to spread through every part of the earth the knowledge of their heavenly doctrines. Also He sent them to break down the tyranny of demons, to teach those great and ineffable blessings, to bring to us the glad tidings of the soul's immortality, and the eternal life of the body, and rewards which are beyond conception, and shall never have an end. These things then, and yet more than these, John had in mind, things which though he knew, he was not able to write, because the world could not have contained them. For if all things 'were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written' (John 21:25). Reflecting there, on all these, he cries out, 'We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth' (John 1:14). It behooves therefore those who have been deemed worthy to see and to hear such things, and who have enjoyed so great a gift, to display also a life worthy of the doctrines, that they may enjoy also the good things which are laid up there. For our Lord Jesus Christ came, not only that

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<sup>42</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on John, XII, 3.



we might behold His glory here, but also that which shall be. Therefore He said, ‘I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me’ (John 17:24). Now if the glory here was so bright and splendid, what can one say of that which shall be? It shall appear not on this corruptible earth, nor while we are in perishable bodies, but in a creation which is imperishable, and doesn’t grow old. O blessed, thrice blessed, yea many times so, they who are deemed worthy to be beholders of that glory! It is concerning this that the prophet says, ‘Let the ungodly be taken away, that he see not the glory of the Lord’ (Isaiah 26:10, LXX). God grant that not one of us be taken away nor excluded ever from beholding it.”

Cyprian of Carthage stated<sup>43</sup> that those who mourn for the departed act as if they have no hope of the Resurrection. Our death is a transition or passage to eternity that we may be with Christ in eternal mansions; this is not something to mourn about. Sometimes those who are especially pleasing to God in this life are taken from this life early so that the contagion of this life doesn’t affect their holiness and they become polluted by the wickedness of this life.

“Paul reproaches, rebukes and blames any who are in sorrow at the departure of their friends. ‘I would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them which are asleep in Jesus will God bring with Him’ (1 Thessalonians 4:13). He says that those have sorrow in the departure of their friends who have no hope. But we, who live in hope, believe in God, trust that Christ suffered for us and rose again, abide in Christ, and through Him and in Him rise again. Why are we ourselves unwilling to depart from this life; why do we bewail and grieve for our friends when they depart as if they were lost? Christ Himself, our Lord and God, encourages us, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live; and whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die?’ (John 11:25-26) If we believe in Christ, let us have faith in His words and promises; and since we shall not die eternally, let us come with a glad security to Christ, with whom we are both to conquer and to reign forever.”

“In the meantime when we die, we are passing over to immortality by death; eternal life cannot follow, unless it should befall us to depart from this life. That is not an ending, but a transit and this journey of time being traversed is a passage to eternity. Who would not hasten to better things? Who would not crave to be transformed into the likeness of Christ, and to arrive more quickly to the dignity of heavenly glory? Paul the Apostle announces, ‘For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body’ (Philippians 3:20-21). Christ the Lord also promises that we shall be such when we are with Him, and that we may live with Him in eternal mansions, and may rejoice in heavenly kingdoms. He prays to the Father for us, ‘Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world’ (John 17:24). He who is to attain to the throne of Christ, to the glory of

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<sup>43</sup> Cyprian, Treatises, VII, 21-23.

the heavenly kingdoms, shouldn't mourn or lament, but rather, in accordance with the Lord's promise, in accordance with his faith in the truth, rejoice in this his departure and translation."

"Thus, we find that Enoch also was translated, who pleased God. 'And Enoch walked with God; and he *was* not, for God took him' (Genesis 5:24). To have been pleasing in the sight of God was thus to have merited to be translated from this contagion of the world. The Holy Spirit teaches by Solomon, that they who please God are taken early from this life, and are more quickly set free, lest while they are delaying longer in this world they should be polluted with the contagions of the world. 'There was one who pleased God and was loved by him, and while living among sinners he was taken up. He was caught up lest evil change his understanding or guile deceive his soul' (Wisdom of Solomon 4:10-11). So also in the Psalms, the soul that is devoted to its God in spiritual faith hastens to the Lord, 'How lovely *is* Your tabernacle, O Lord of hosts! My soul longs, yes, even faints for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God'" (Psalm 84:1-2).

John Chrysostom pointed out<sup>44</sup> that our rewards are dependent on our living like sons of God and not having a life full of sin. Christ wants us to be with Him for eternity, but we disqualify ourselves when we act contrary to His commandments. We can increase the brightness of the flame that we received by the grace of the Spirit. If we will not do this, we will lose it and there will be nothing but darkness in our souls.

"Jesus spoke some very harsh things to the Jews; but we might be concerned lest what He said may be applicable to us also, that 'where He is' we 'cannot come' on account of our life being full of sin. Concerning the disciples Jesus said, 'I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am' (John 17:24); but concerning ourselves, I fear that the contrary may be said, that, 'Where I am, you cannot come'. When we act contrary to the commandments, how can we go to that place? Even in the present life, if any soldier acts unworthily towards his king, he will not be able to see the king, but will be deprived of his authority and will suffer the severest punishment. If therefore we steal, or covet, if we wrong or strike others, if we don't work deeds of mercy, we shall not be able to go there, but shall suffer what happened to the virgins. For where He was, they were not able to enter in, their lamps having gone out (Matthew 25:1-13), that is, grace having left them. We can, if we want to, increase the brightness of that flame which we received by the grace of the Spirit. But if we will not do this, we shall lose it, and when that is quenched, there will be nothing other than darkness in our souls. While a lamp is burning the light is strong, so when it is extinguished there is nothing but gloom. Therefore Paul said, 'Do not quench the Spirit' (1 Thessalonians 5:19). It is quenched when It has no oil, when there is any violent gust of wind and when It is cramped and confined, for so fire is extinguished. It is also cramped by worldly cares, and quenched by evil desires. In addition to the causes mentioned, nothing quenches It so much as inhumanity, cruelty, and pillage. When, besides having no oil, we pour cold water on it, (for covetousness is this, which chills with despondency the souls of those we wrong) how shall it be kindled again? We shall

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<sup>44</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on John, L, 3.

depart, therefore, carrying dust and ashes with us, and having much smoke to convict us of having had lamps and of having extinguished them. Where there is smoke, there must have been fire which has been quenched. May none of us ever hear that word, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you' (Matthew 25:12). Where shall we hear that word, but from this: if ever we see a poor man, and act as though we never saw him? If we will not know Christ when He is hungry (Matthew 25:31-46), He too will not know us when we ask His mercy. Also with justice; how shall he who neglects the afflicted, and doesn't give of that which is his own, how shall he seek to receive that which is not his own? Therefore, I entreat you, let us do everything, so that oil won't fail us, but that we may trim our lamps, and enter with the Bridegroom into the bride-chamber."

### **The Father in the Son (John 17:10, 25)**

John said, "And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them" (John 17:10). "O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me" (John 17:25).

What Christ did in His earthly ministry was totally unique and could have been done by no one but God. He had to be perfectly synchronized with the Father in everything. Whether creating the earth or becoming incarnate, the Son of God is always in perfect harmony with the Father, since they both have one and the same Will of God. The workings of the entire Trinity can be seen from the beginning until now if one pays attention to what is going on. The Scripture actually uses similar words to describe Father, Son and Holy Spirit, since the Son and the Holy Spirit have received everything from the Father through the Unity of Knowledge. As a result, the Son and the Holy Spirit always do the Will of the Father according to the one Will of God. But there are limitations as to how much we humans can know about the mystery of the generation of the Son from the Father and of the inner workings of the Trinity.

Athanasius of Alexandria stated<sup>45</sup> that what Christ did could have been done by no one else. In order to do what He did, He had to be in the Father and the Father in Him. Angels can't do this; we see the Father's works in everything Christ does.

"The work of Christ could not have been brought to pass by any other than the Son, who sits on the right hand of the Father. This denotes the Son's genuineness, and that the Godhead of the Father is the same as the Son's. The Son reigns in His Father's kingdom, is seated upon the same throne as the Father, and is contemplated in the Father's Godhead. Therefore the Word is God, and he who beholds the Son, beholds the Father; and thus there is one God. The Son sits at the right hand of the Father (Hebrews 1:3), yet He does not place His Father on the left; but whatever is right and precious in the Father, that also the Son has, as He says, 'All things that the Father has are Mine' (John 16:15). The Son, though sitting on the right, also sees the Father on the right, though it was after He became man that He says, 'I foresaw the Lord always before my face; for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved' (Psalm 16:8 LXX). This shows moreover that the Son is in the Father and the Father in the Son (John 14:10-11); for the Father being on the

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<sup>45</sup> Athanasius of Alexandria, Four Discourses Against the Arians, I, xiii, 61.

right, the Son is on the right; and while the Son sits on the right of the Father, the Father is in the Son. The Angels minister ascending and descending (Genesis 28:12). Concerning the Son he said, ‘Let all the Angels of God worship Him’ (Deuteronomy 32:43 LXX). And when Angels minister, they say, ‘I am sent unto you’ (Luke 1:19) and, ‘The Lord has commanded’ ( ). But the Son, though He says in human fashion, ‘I am sent’ (John 17:3) and comes to finish the work and to minister (Mark 10:45). Nevertheless He says, as being Word and Image, ‘I am in the Father, and the Father in Me’ (John 14:10-11); and ‘He who has seen Me has seen the Father’ (John 14:9); and ‘The Father that is in Me’ (John 14:10). He does the works; what we see are the Father’s works in everything that the Judge does.”

John Chrysostom stated<sup>46</sup> that Christ’s Will and the Father’s Will were one and the same. In stating this, Chrysostom is not talking about Jesus’ human will, but the Will of His Divinity.

“Jesus said, ‘I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me’ (John 6:38). What is He saying? Why, is His Will one thing, and the Father’s Will another? That none may suspect this, He explains it by what follows, ‘This is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life’ (John 6:40). Is not then this Christ’s will? And how does He say, ‘I came to send fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!’ (Luke 12:49) If Christ also desires this, it is very clear that Christ’s will and the Father’s is one. In another place also Jesus said, ‘For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to *them*, even so the Son gives life to whom He will’ (John 5:21). But what is the will of the Father? ‘It is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish’ (Matthew 18:14). This the Son wills also. So that the will of the One differs not from the will of the Other. So in another place He is seen establishing yet more firmly His equality with the Father, saying, ‘If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him’ (John 14:23). What He said then is this; ‘I came not to do anything other than that which the Father wills. I have no will of My own different from that of the Father, for all that is the Father’s is Mine, and all that is Mine is the Father’s’ (John 17:10). If now the things of the Father and the Son are in common, He said with reason, ‘Not to do My own will’” (John 6:38).

Cyril of Jerusalem wrote<sup>47</sup> that the Father and the Son always work together in whatever they do, whether it is creating the earth or sending the Son to come to be Incarnate as a man. The Father had the Son create everything so that He willed that the Son should reign over His own workmanship.

“Christ made all things, whether you speak of angels, archangels, dominions, or thrones. Not that the Father lacked strength to create the works Himself, but because He willed that the Son should reign over His own workmanship, God Himself gave Him the design of the things to be made. For honoring His own Father the Only-begotten said, ‘The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does

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<sup>46</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on John, XLV, 3.

<sup>47</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechetical Lectures, XI, 23-24.

in like manner' (John 5:19). And again, 'My Father has been working until now, and I have been working' (John 5:17), there being no opposition in those who work. For all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine (John 17:10), said the Lord in the Gospels. And this we may certainly know from the Old and New Testaments. For He who said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness' (Genesis 1:26), was certainly speaking to someone present. But clearest of all are the Psalmist's words, 'He spoke, and they were made; he commanded, and they were created' (Psalm 148:5 LXX), as if the Father commanded and spoke, and the Son made all things at the Father's bidding. And this Job said mystically, 'Who alone has stretched out the heavens, and walks on the sea as on firm ground' (Job 9:8); signifying to those who understand that He who when present here walked upon the sea is also He who before made the heavens. And again the Lord said, 'Didst you take clay of the ground, and form a living creature, and set it with the power of speech upon the earth? (Job 38:14) then afterwards, 'Do the gates of death open to you for fear; and did the porters of hell quake when they saw you? (Job 38:17) This signifies that He who through loving-kindness descended into hell, also in the beginning made man out of clay."

"Christ then is the Only-begotten Son of God, and Maker of the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him (John 1:10-11), as the Gospel teaches us. And not only of the things which are seen, but also of the things which are not seen, is Christ the Maker at the Father's bidding. 'For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist (Colossians 1:16-17). Even if you speak of the worlds, of these also Jesus Christ is the Maker by the Father's bidding. 'In these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds'" (Hebrews 1:2).

Ambrose of Milan noted<sup>48</sup> that if one pays attention, he can see the entire Trinity from the beginning: the Father speaks the Son acts as the Holy Spirit hovers over the waters. The Father acknowledges the Son: "Let Us make man". After the Incarnation, the Father speaks and the Son works; at other times, the Son speaks and the Father does what the Son says. Abraham recognized the Trinity also: he saw three and worshipped One.

"If anyone pays attention he will recognize in the beginning the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. For of the Father it is written: 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth' (Genesis 1:1). Of the Spirit it is said: 'The Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters' (Genesis 1:2). Well in the beginning of creation is there set forth the figure of baptism whereby the creature had to be purified. Of the Son we read that He it is Who divided light from darkness, for there is one God the Father Who speaks, and one God the Son Who acts."

"Do not think that the Father assumed superiority in asking the Son to work, or inferiority on the part of Him Who carried out the work. The Father'

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<sup>48</sup> Ambrose of Milan, On the Holy Spirit, II, 1-4.

acknowledges the Son as equal to Himself in the execution of the work, saying: ‘Let us make man according to Our image and likeness’ (Genesis 1:26). The common image, the working and the likeness can signify nothing but the oneness of the same Majesty.”

“But that we may more fully recognize the equality of the Father and the Son, as the Father spoke: the Son made; so, too, the Father works and the Son speaks. The Father works, as it is written: ‘My Father has been working until now, and I have been working’ (John 5:17). You find it said to the Son: ‘Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed’ (Matthew 8:8). And the Son says to the Father: ‘I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am’ (John 17:24). The Father did what the Son said.”

“But neither was Abraham ignorant of the Holy Spirit; he saw Three and worshipped One, for there is one God, one Lord, and one Spirit. And so there is a oneness of honor, because there is a oneness of power.”

Basil the Great pointed out<sup>49</sup> that the Scripture uses similar words to describe the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, since all are God. In contrast to this is the world, which cannot comprehend much about God.

“Moreover the surpassing excellence of the nature of the Spirit can be learned not only from His having the same title as the Father and the Son, and sharing in their operations, but also from His being, like the Father and the Son, unapproachable in thought. For what our Lord says of the Father as being above and beyond human conception, and what He says of the Son, this same language He uses also of the Holy Spirit. ‘O righteous Father!’, He says, ‘the world has not known You’ (John 17:25), meaning here by the world not the complex whole compounded of heaven and earth, but this life of ours subject to death, and exposed to innumerable vicissitudes. When speaking of Himself He says, ‘A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me’ (John 14:19). Again in this passage, applying the word *world* to those who being bound down by this material and carnal life, and beholding the truth by material sight alone, were ordained, through their unbelief in the resurrection, to see our Lord no more with the eyes of the heart. John said the same concerning the Spirit, ‘The Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you’” (John 14:17).

Ambrose of Milan pointed out<sup>50</sup> that not only has the Son received everything from the Father, but the Holy Spirit has received everything from the Son through Unity of Substance. As a result of this, Christ knows the Last Day. Because of this Unity of Knowledge, the Holy Spirit also knows the Father just as the Son does.

“But if you are willing to learn that the Son of God knows all things, and has foreknowledge of all, notice that those very things which you think to be unknown to the Son, the Holy Spirit received from the Son. The Holy Spirit received them, however, through Unity of Substance, as the Son received from the

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<sup>49</sup> Basil the Great, On the Spirit, Chapter 22, 53

<sup>50</sup> Ambrose of Milan, On the Holy Spirit, II, xi, 118-119, 123-125.

Father. The Holy Spirit ‘will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare *it* to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare *it* to you (John 16:14-15). What, then, is clearer than this Unity? What things the Father has pertain to the Son; what things the Son has the Holy Spirit also has received.”

“Yet learn that the Son knows the Day of Judgment. We read, ‘The Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with him. It shall come to pass in that day that there shall be no light, and there shall be for one day cold and frost, and that day *shall be* known to the Lord (Zechariah 14:5-7 LXX). This day, then, was known unto the Lord, Who shall come with His saints, to enlighten us by His second Advent.”

“There is, then, a Unity of knowledge, since, as the Father, Who gives the Spirit of revelation, reveals, so also the Son reveals, for it is written: ‘No one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and *the one* to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him*’ (Matthew 11:27). He said more concerning the Son, not because He has more than the Father, but lest He should be supposed to have less. Appropriately then is the Father thus revealed by the Son, for the Son knows the Father even as the Father knows the Son.”

“Notice that the Spirit too knows God the Father, for it is written that, ‘For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God’ (1 Corinthians 2:11). Is, then, the Son of God excluded? Certainly not, since neither is the Spirit excluded, when it is said: ‘No one knows the Father, except the Son.’”

“Therefore the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are of one nature and of one knowledge. The Spirit is not to be numbered with all things which were made by the Son, since He knew the Father, Whom (as it is written) who can know save the Son? But the Holy Spirit knows also. What then? When the totality of created things is spoken of, it follows that the Holy Spirit is not included.”

Ambrose of Milan stated<sup>51</sup> that the Son and the Holy Spirit always do always do the Will of the Father because of their Unity of nature. However this is not an argument for the weakness of the Son or the Spirit, since the Trinity is One by substance and can’t be separated. They always work together according to the one Will of God.

“The Son received all things from the Father, for He Himself said: ‘All things have been delivered to Me by My Father’ (Matthew 11:27). All that is the Father’s the Son also has, for He says again: ‘All things that the Father has are Mine’ (John 16:15). And those things which He Himself received by Unity of nature, the Spirit by the same Unity of nature received also from Him, as the Lord Jesus Himself declares, when speaking of His Spirit: ‘Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare *it* to you’ (John 16:15). Therefore what the Spirit says is the Son’s, and what the Son has given is the Father’s. So neither the Son nor the Spirit speaks anything of Himself. For the Trinity speaks nothing external to Itself.”

“But if you contend that this is an argument for the weakness of the Holy Spirit, and for a kind of likeness to the lowliness of the body, you will also make it an argument to the injury of the Son. Because the Son said of Himself: ‘I can of

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<sup>51</sup> Ambrose of Milan, On the Holy Spirit, II, xii, 134-135.

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) and 'The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do' (John 5:19). The Son said: 'All things that the Father has are Mine' (John 16:15); and the Son according to the Godhead is One with the Father, One by natural substance, not according to the Sabellian<sup>52</sup> falsehood. That which is one by substance certainly cannot be separated, and so the Son cannot do anything except what He has heard of the Father, for the Word of God endures forever (Psalm 119:89 LXX). Nor is the Father ever separated from the operation of the Son; and that which the Son works He knows that the Father wills, and what the Father wills the Son knows how to work."

Hilary of Poitiers probed<sup>53</sup> into what we know and what we can't know about the mystery of the generation of the Son from the Father. We know that the Son was not torn away from the Father; He was not adopted by the Father; and He was not created out of nothing by the Father. He has life in Himself just like the Father and all things that the Father has are the Son's also. No one knows the Father except the Son, but how this came to be is a mystery that is unfathomable by human minds.

"In what sense can we conceive that the Only-begotten is the Offspring of the Unbegotten? Repeatedly the Father cries from heaven, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased' (Matthew 3:17, 17:5). It is not rending or severance from the Father, for He that begat is without passions, and He that was born is the Image of the invisible God and bears witness, 'The Father *is* in Me, and I in Him' (John 10:38). It is not adoption, for He is the true Son of God and cries, 'He who has seen Me has seen the Father' (John 14:9). The Son did not come into existence in obedience to a command as did created things, for He is the Only-begotten of the One God; and He has life in Himself, even as He that begot Him has life. He says, 'As the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself (John 5:26). Nor is there a portion of the Father resident in the Son, for the Son bears witness, 'All things that the Father has are Mine' (John 16:15), and again, 'All Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine' (John 17:10), and Paul testifies, 'For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily' (Colossians 2:9); and by the nature of things a portion cannot possess the whole. He is the perfect Son of the perfect Father, for He Who has all has given all to Him. Yet we must not imagine that the Father did not give, because He still possesses, or that He has lost, because He gave to the Son."

"The manner of this birth is therefore a secret confined to the Two. If anyone thinks it is just his personal incapacity for his failure to solve the mystery of how the Father and Son stand to Each Other in those relations, he will be still more pained at the ignorance to which I confess. I, too, am in the dark, yet I ask no questions. I look for comfort to the fact that Archangels share my ignorance that Angels have not heard the explanation, and worlds do not contain it; no prophet has known it and no Apostle has sought for it; the Son Himself has not revealed it. Let

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<sup>52</sup> Sabellius denied the doctrine of the Trinity and claimed that God is one person only, but appears in three different characters.

<sup>53</sup> Hilary of Poitiers, On the Trinity, II, 8-10.



such pitiful complaints cease. Whoever you are that search into these mysteries, I do not suggest that you resume your exploration of height, breadth and depth; I ask you rather to acquiesce patiently in your ignorance of the mode of Divine generation, seeing that you know not how His creatures come into existence. Answer me this one question: Do your senses give you any evidence that you yourself were begotten? Can you explain the process by which you became a father? I do not ask from where you drew perception, how you obtained life, where your reason comes from, what is the nature of your senses of smell, touch, sight, hearing. The fact that we have the use of all these is the evidence that they exist. What I ask is: How do you give them to your children? How do you graft the senses into your children, lighten the eyes, and implant the mind? Tell me, if you can. You have, then, powers which you do not understand, you impart gifts which you cannot comprehend. You are calmly indifferent to the mysteries of your own being, yet you are profanely impatient of ignorance concerning the mysteries of God's!"

"Listen then to the Unbegotten Father, listen to the Only-begotten Son. Hear His words, 'My Father is greater than I' (John 14:28), and 'I and My Father are one' (John 10:30), and 'He who has seen Me has seen the Father' (John 14:9), and 'The Father *is* in Me, and I in Him' (John 10:38), and 'I came forth from the Father and have come into the world' (John 16:28), and 'Who is in the bosom of the Father' (John 1:18), and 'All things have been delivered to Me by My Father' (Matthew 11:27), and 'As the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself' (John 5:26). Hear in these words the Son, the Image, who will declare His generation?" (Isaiah 53:8) Note the Lord's assurance, 'No one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and *the one* to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him*' (Matthew 11:27). Penetrate into the mystery, plunge into the darkness which shrouds that birth, where you will be alone with God the Unbegotten and God the Only-begotten. Make your start, continue, and persevere. I know that you will not reach the goal, but I shall rejoice at your progress. For He who devoutly treads an endless road, though he reaches no conclusion, will profit by his exertions. Reason will fail for lack of words; but when it comes to a stand, it will be the better for the effort made."

### **The Shallow Arian Arguments**

Appendix C summarizes the shallow Arian arguments used at the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD. The way this came down at the Council is the Arians first explained their shallow interpretations of the Scripture to everyone. The Orthodox present at the Council then debunked the Arian arguments one at a time, all this while Emperor Constantine sat patiently listening to both the Arians and the Orthodox. Finally the Arians were so embarrassed at how their arguments had been completely shot down, that they remained silent, content to bring up their worthless arguments again at another time. The Arians even signed the Statement of the Faith that was generated by the Council (which we know today as The Nicene Creed) to avoid getting de-frocked by the consensus of the rest of the Bishops present. Emperor Constantine was totally impressed with the results of the Council (he had called the Council together to solve this disagreement!), and he remained a life-long opponent of Arianism. The Arians, on the other hand, began a

campaign of slander and murder to get rid of their main opponents at the Council in order to bring up their heresy again at a later time.

Some other arguments brought up following the Council of Nicaea are:

1. The Arians interpreted Peter's words: "He has made Him both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36) to imply that Christ was a creation of the Father. The Orthodox countered that Peter also said, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God' (Matthew 16:16). Christ was "made" to rule and reign.
2. The Arians contended that God was material, and thus their material arguments applied. To them, Jesus was one of many sons of God. The Orthodox countered that Christ is the Image of the Father (Colossians 1:15) like a statue is the image of the emperor. A person who looks at the image, sees in it the Emperor and vice versa. Thus whatever things the Son did are the Father's works.
3. The Arians claimed that human unity, such as between Paul and Apollos (1 Corinthians 3:4-6) is the same as the Unity between Father and Son. It was inconceivable to the Arians that Christ could be both perfect God and perfect man.
4. The Arians claimed that Christ was a lesser god. The Orthodox countered that all that is the Father's is the Son's.
5. The Arians claimed that the Father created the Son, then the Son made all things. The Orthodox countered that this implies that the Son made things that existed before Him.
6. By claiming that the Son was created, the logical consequence is to disparage the Power and Authority of the Father.
7. The Arian heresy is worse than other heresies because of its façade that makes it look Orthodox, when in reality, it's full of falsehood.

Athanasius of Alexandria stated<sup>54</sup> that while the Scriptures clearly show Jesus to be Lord and Christ, the Arians prefer to remain as the Jews who crucified Christ and opposed Peter. The Arians had interpreted Peter's words: "He has made Him both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36) to imply that Christ was a creation of the Father. Athanasius shows that Peter did not mean this at all, but Peter clearly stated that Christ was the Son of God and equal to the Father.

"You have seen what has taken place among us; be sure that this Jesus, whom you crucified, is the expected Christ. For David and all the Prophets died, and the sepulchers of all of them are with you, but that Resurrection which has now taken place, has shown that the scope of these passages is Jesus. For the crucifixion is denoted by 'Your Life shall hang before your eyes' (Deuteronomy 28:66 OSB) and the wound in the side by the spear answers to 'He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth' (Isaiah 53:7) and the resurrection of the ancient dead from out their sepulchers (for these most of you have seen), this is, 'You will not leave my soul in Sheol, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption' (Psalm 16:10) and 'He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces' (Isaiah 25:8). For the signs which actually took place show that He who was in a body was God, and also the Life and Lord of death. For it became the Christ, when giving life to others, Himself not to be detained by death; but this could not have happened, had He, as you suppose, been a mere man."

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<sup>54</sup> Athanasius of Alexandria, Four Discourses against the Arians, II, xv, 16-18.

“Therefore the Word Himself became flesh, and the Father called His Name Jesus, and so ‘made’ Him Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36), as much as to say, ‘He made Him to rule and to reign’; that while at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow (Philippians 2:10), we may acknowledge as Lord and King both the Son and through Him the Father.”

“The Jews then, most of them, hearing this, came to themselves and acknowledged the Christ (Acts 2:36-38). But, the Ario-maniacs on the contrary choose to remain Jews, and to contend with Peter; so let us proceed to place before them some parallel phrases. Perhaps it may have some effect upon them, to find out how divine Scripture is used. Now that it has become plain that Christ is everlasting Lord and King by what has gone before, there is no one to doubt it. Being Son of God, He must be like the Father; and being like the Father, He is certainly both Lord and King; for He says Himself, ‘He who has seen Me has seen the Father’ (John 14:9). On the other hand, Peter’s words, ‘He has made Him both Lord and Christ’ (Acts 2:36), do not imply the Son to be a creature.”

“Much more then did Peter say this without meaning that the Essence of the Word was a work; for he knew Him to be God’s Son, confessing, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God’ (Matthew 16:16), but he meant His Kingdom and Lordship which was formed and came to be according to grace. While saying this, he was not silent about the Son of God’s everlasting Godhead which is the Father’s; and that He had poured the Spirit on us. To give the Spirit with authority, is not in the power of creature or work, but the Spirit is God’s Gift. Creatures are hallowed by the Holy Spirit; but the Son is not hallowed by the Spirit, but on the contrary Himself is the Giver of the Spirit to all. He is therefore not a creature, but a true Son of the Father. Yet He who gives the Spirit, the same is said also to be made; that is, to be made among us Lord because of His manhood, while giving the Spirit because He is God’s Word. For He always was and is, as Son, so also Lord and Sovereign of all, being like in all things to the Father, and having all that is the Father’s as He Himself has said” (John 16:15).

Athanasius of Alexandria took apart<sup>55</sup> the Arian argument that Jesus was not God. They considered God to be material, and they thought that their material arguments applied. They considered Jesus to be just one of many sons of God. If this were true, Jesus should have said, “I too am in the Father, and the Father is in Me too”. Athanasius pointed out that the Son is of the Father’s Essence as radiance from Light and as a stream from a fountain; both have always existed. Similarly the Scriptures use the same words for Christ as for the Father. The attributes of the Father also belong to the Son, for in the Son is contemplated the Father’s Godhead. This is like the statue of the emperor; the likeness of the Emperor in the image is exact; so that a person who looks at the image, sees in it the Emperor<sup>56</sup> and vice versa. This Form of the Godhead is not a

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<sup>55</sup> Athanasius of Alexandria, *Four Discourses against the Arians*, III, xxiii, 1-6.

<sup>56</sup> Athanasius also pointed out that no one sees the emperor’s statue as a second emperor. Similarly no one who bowed before the emperor’s statue was considered to have worshipped the statue, but simply to have paid respect to the emperor. In the Western Church, customs were different; Jerome and others set themselves against this custom as idolatrous similar to Nebuchadnezzar’s statue (Daniel 3:18). In the East, incense was burned before the image of the emperor and before the images of the saints. For more information, see Schaff & Wace, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Volume PN4, p. 396, Note 6.

partial form as the Arians claimed, but the fullness of the Father's Godhead is the Being of the Son. Thus whatever things the Son did are the Father's works.

"The Arians proceed to disparage our Lord's words, 'I am in the Father, and the Father in Me' (John 14:10) saying, 'How can the One be contained in the Other and the Other in the One?' or 'How at all can the Father who is the greater be contained in the Son who is the less?' (John 14:28) or 'What wonder, if the Son is in the Father, considering it is written even of us, 'In Him we live and move and have our being?' (Acts 17:28) This state of mind is consistent with their perverseness, who think God to be material, and don't understand what is 'True Father', 'True Son,' 'Light Invisible', 'Eternal,' 'Radiance Invisible,' 'Invisible Subsistence,' 'Immaterial Expression' and 'Immaterial Image.'"

"Each of the Arians is able to say, 'I in the Father and the Father in me;' and as a consequence that He is no longer one Son of God and Word and Wisdom, but is only one out of many."

"But if the Lord said this, His words would not rightly have been, 'I in the Father and the Father in Me,' but rather, 'I too am in the Father, and the Father is in Me too,' that He may have nothing of His own and by prerogative, relatively to the Father, as a Son, but the same grace in common with all."

"However, the Son is in the Father, as it is allowed us to know, because the whole Being of the Son is proper to the Father's essence, as radiance from light, and stream from fountain. Whoever sees the Son, sees what is proper to the Father, and knows that the Son's Being, because from the Father, is therefore in the Father. For the Father is in the Son, since the Son is what the thought is from the Father and proper to Him, as in the radiance the sun, and in the word, and in the stream the fountain. Whoever thus contemplates the Son, contemplates what is proper to the Father's Essence, and knows that the Father is in the Son."

"The same things are said of the Son, which are said of the Father, except His being said to be Father. For instance, that He is God, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God' (John 1:1); that He is Almighty, 'I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the* Beginning and *the* End', says the Lord, 'who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty' (Revelation 1:8); that He is Lord, 'There is one God, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom *are* all things, and through whom *we live*' (1 Corinthians 8:6); that He is Light, 'I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life' (John 8:12); that He wipes out sins, 'that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins, I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house' (Luke 5:24); and so with other attributes. For 'all things,' says the Son Himself, 'All things that the Father has are Mine' (John 16:15); and again, 'All Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them'" (John 17:10).

"The Son, being the proper Offspring of the Father's Essence, reasonably says that the Father's attributes are His own also. This is consistent with saying, 'I and My Father are one' (John 10:30); He adds, 'that you may know and believe that the Father *is* in Me, and I in Him' (John 10:38). Moreover, He has added this again, 'He who has seen Me has seen the Father' (John 14:9); there is one and the same sense in these three passages. For he who in this sense understands that the Son

and the Father are one, knows that He is in the Father and the Father in the Son. The Godhead of the Son is the Father's, and it is in the Son; and whoever enters into this, is convinced that 'He that has seen the Son, has seen the Father' for in the Son is contemplated the Father's Godhead. We may perceive this at once from the illustration of the Emperor's image. In the image is the shape and form of the Emperor, and in the Emperor is that shape which is in the image. For the likeness of the Emperor in the image is exact; so that a person who looks at the image, sees in it the Emperor; and he who sees the Emperor, recognizes that it is he who is in the image."

This is what is said, 'Who, being in the form of God' (Philippians 2:6) and 'the Father in Me' (John 10:38). This Form of the Godhead is not a partial form, but the fullness of the Father's Godhead is the Being of the Son, and the Son is whole God. Therefore, being equal to God, He 'did not consider it robbery to be equal with God' (Philippians 2:6); and again since the Godhead and the Form of the Son is none other's than the Father's, this is what He says, 'I am in the Father, and the Father in Me' (John 14:10). Thus 'God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself' (2 Corinthians 5:19); for the true nature of the Father's Essence is that Son, in whom the creation was then reconciled with God. Thus whatever things the Son then did are the Father's works, for the Son is the Form of that Godhead of the Father, which wrought the works. Thus he who looks at the Son, sees the Father; for in the Father's Godhead is and is contemplated the Son. The Father's Form which is in the Son shows in Him the Father; and thus the Father is in the Son. And that true nature and Godhead which is from the Father in the Son, shows the Son in the Father.

Ambrose of Milan clearly disproved<sup>57</sup> the objection raised by Arians, who said that human unity, such as between Paul and Apollos, is the same as the Unity between Father and Son. The Arians refused to consider that the things of God are different than the things of man. It was inconceivable to the Arians that Christ could be both perfect God and perfect man.

"The Head of Christ, then, is God, in so far as His form of a servant is considered; that is, His form of man, not of God. But it is nothing against the Son of God, if, in accordance with the reality of His flesh, He is like men; while in regard of His Godhead He is one with the Father. By this account of Him we do not take anything from His sovereignty, but attribute compassion to Him."

"But who can with a good conscience deny the one Godhead of the Father and the Son, when our Lord, to complete His teaching for His disciples, said: 'That they may be one as *We are*' (John 17:11). The record stands for witness to the Faith, though Arians turn it aside to suit their heresy; for, inasmuch as they cannot deny the Unity so often spoken of, they endeavor to diminish it. They try to claim that the Unity of Godhead subsisting between the Father and the Son may seem to be such as is unity of devotion and faith among men, though even among men themselves community of nature makes this kind of unity."

"Thus with abundant clearness we disprove the objection commonly raised by Arians, in order to loosen the Divine Unity, on the ground that it is written: 'Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward

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<sup>57</sup> Ambrose of Milan, Exposition of the Christian Faith, IV, iii, 33-36.

according to his own labor' (1 Corinthians 3:8). This passage the Arians, if they were wise, would not quote against us; for how can they deny that the Father and the Son are One, if Paul and Apollos are one, both in nature and in faith? At the same time, we do grant that these men cannot be one throughout, in all relations, because things human cannot bear comparison with things divine."

"No separation, then, is to be made of the Word from God the Father; no separation in power, no separation in wisdom, by reason of the Unity of the Divine Substance. Again, God the Father is in the Son, as we often find it written, yet He dwells in the Son not as sanctifying one who lacks sanctification, nor as filling a void, for the power of God knows no void. Nor, again, is the power of the one increased by the power of the other, for there are not two powers, but one Power. Nor does Godhead entertain Godhead, for there are not two Godheads, but one Godhead. We, on the contrary, shall be One in Christ through Power received from another dwelling in us."

Athanasius of Alexandria pointed out<sup>58</sup> several reasons why Christ is equal to the Father and not a lesser god who didn't know the end times as the Arians claimed. (1) He Who knows the Father, much more knows creation and its end. (2) If He created the universe, He certainly knows when it will end. (3) If all that is the Father's is the Son's, then the knowledge of the end is included. (4) If the Father is in the Son and vice versa, then the Son knows the day of the end from being in the Father.

"All men but the Arians would join in confessing, that He who knows the Father, much more knows the whole of the creation; and in that whole, its end. If the day and the hour has already been determined by the Father, it is plain that through the Son they are determined (Hebrews 1:2); He knows Himself what through Him has been determined, for all things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made (John 1:3). Therefore He, being the Framer of the universe, knows of what nature, and of what magnitude, and with what limits, the Father has willed it to be made; and in the how much and how far is included in its period. If all that is the Father's, is the Son's, as He Himself has said (John 17:10), and it is the Father's attribute to know the day (Acts 1:7), it is plain that the Son too knows it, having this proper to Him from the Father. Again, if the Son is in the Father and the Father in the Son (John 10:38, 14:10-11, 17:21), and the Father knows the day and the hour, it is clear that the Son, being in the Father and knowing the things of the Father, knows Himself also the day and the hour. If the Son is also the Father's Very Image (2 Corinthians 4:4, Colossians 1:15, Hebrews 1:3), and the Father knows the day and the hour, it is plain that the Son also has this likeness to the Father of knowing them."

John Chrysostom took apart<sup>59</sup> the Arian arguments to see what they implied. They said that the Son made all things, but that the Father existed before Him. This implies that the Son made things that existed before Him. If the Son is not of the same Essence as the Father, there is another God. If the Son is not Co-eternal with the Father (as the Arians said), His Life is not

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<sup>58</sup> Athanasius of Alexandria, Four Discourses Against the Arians, III, xxviii, 44.

<sup>59</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on John, IV, 2.

infinite. For if it has a beginning from before, although it is endless, yet it is not infinite; for the infinite must be infinite in both directions.

“How could the expression, ‘All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made’ (John 1:3), be true? If there is an age older than the Son, how can that which was before Him have been made by Him? Do you see to what daring the argument has carried the Arians, when once the truth has been disturbed? Why didn’t John say, that Christ was made from things that were not, as Paul declares of all things, when he says, ‘Who calls those things which do not exist as though they did’ (Romans 4:17); but says of Christ, ‘Was in the beginning?’ (John 1:1-2) One is contrary to the other; and with good reason. God is not made, and has nothing older; even the Greeks say this! Would you not say that the Creator beyond all comparison excels His works? Yet since that which is created from nothing is similar to the Arians, where is the incomparable superiority? And what does the expression mean, ‘I *am* the First and I *am* the Last; besides Me *there is* no God’ (Isaiah 44:6); and, ‘Understand that I AM. Before Me there was no God formed, nor shall there be after Me?’ (Isaiah 43:10). For if the Son is not of the same Essence as the Father, there is another God; and if He is not Co-eternal, He is after Him. And if the Son did not proceed from the Father’s Essence, it is clear that He was made. But if they assert, that these things were said to distinguish Him from idols, why do they not allow that it is to distinguish Him from idols that John says, ‘And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent?’ (John 17:3) Besides, if this was said to distinguish Him from idols, how would you interpret the whole sentence? ‘After Me is no other God’ (Isaiah 43:10). In saying this, He does not exclude the Son, but that ‘After Me there is no idol God’, not that ‘there is no Son’. The expression, ‘Before Me there was no God formed’, understand, as that no idol God indeed was formed before Him, but yet a Son was formed before Him? What evil spirit would assert this? I do not suppose that even Satan himself would do so.”

“Moreover, if He is not Co-eternal with the Father, how can you say that His Life is infinite? For if it has a beginning from before, although it is endless, yet it is not infinite; for the infinite must be infinite in both directions. As Paul also declared, when he said, ‘without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually’ (Hebrews 7:3); by this expression showing that He is both without beginning and without end. The one has no limit, so neither has the other. In one direction there is no end, in the other no beginning.”

Ambrose of Milan answered<sup>60</sup> the claim by the Arians that the Son had a beginning when the Father begat Him. By saying this, the logical consequence is a disparagement of the Power and Authority of the Father.

“If the Father is Almighty because He begat the Son, then, either the Son is co-eternal with the Father, because if the Father is eternally Almighty, then the Son also is eternal. Or, if there was a time when there was not an eternal Son, there was by consequence a time when there was not an Almighty Father. When the Arians

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<sup>60</sup> Ambrose of Milan, Exposition of the Christian Faith, IV, viii, 80-81.

claim that there was a time when the Son began to be, they are sliding back into the error of saying that the Father's Power also has not been from everlasting, but began to be as a result of the generation of the Son. So, in their desire to dishonor the Son of God, they increase His honor as to seem to make Him the source of His Father's Power. The Son said, 'All things that the Father has are Mine' (John 16:15) — that is to say, not the things which He has bestowed upon the Father, but which He has received from the Father by right as the Son Whom the Father has begotten."

"Therefore we declare the Son to be Eternal Power (Romans 1:20). If, then, His Power and Godhead are eternal, surely His Sovereignty is eternal also. He, then, who dishonors the Son dishonors the Father, and is an enemy of God. Let us honor the Son, in Whom the Father is well pleased (Matthew 3:17, 17:5), for it is the Father's pleasure that praise be given to the Son."

Athanasius of Alexandria stated<sup>61</sup> that the Arian heresy is worse than the other heresies because the Arians both prop it up to make it look Orthodox, and because it is crammed full of falsehood. Other heresies belittle some aspect of the Son or the Holy Spirit, but the Arians are unfaithful against the Father Himself.

"There are many other heresies too, which use the right words, but not in a right sense, nor with sound faith. Consequently the water which they administer is unprofitable, as deficient in piety, so that he who is sprinkled by them is rather polluted by lack of faith than redeemed. Gentiles also, though the name of God is on their lips, incur the charge of atheism, because they don't know the true God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. So Manicheans, Montanists, and the disciples of the Samosatene, though using the Names, nevertheless are heretics. The Arians follow in the same course, though they read the words of Scripture, and use the Names, yet they mock those who receive the baptismal rite from them, being more unfaithful than the other heresies; they advance beyond them, and make them seem innocent by their own recklessness of speech. For these other heresies lie against the truth in some certain respect, either erring concerning the Lord's Body, as if He did not take flesh of Mary, or as if He has not died at all, nor become man, but only appeared, and was not truly, and seemed to have a body when He didn't, and seemed to have the shape of man, as visions in a dream. But the Arians are without disguise unfaithful against the Father Himself. Hearing from the Scriptures that His Godhead is represented in the Son as in an image, they blaspheme, saying, that it is a creature. Everywhere concerning that Image, they carry about with them the phrase, 'He was not', as mud in a wallet<sup>62</sup>, and spit it forth as serpents their venom. Whereas their doctrine is nauseous to all men, as a support against its fall, they prop up the heresy with human patronage, that the simple, at the sight or even by the fear may overlook the mischief of their perversity. Right indeed is it to pity their dupes; well is it to weep over them, for they sacrifice their own interest for that immediate fantasy which pleasures furnish, and forfeit their future hope. In thinking to be baptized into the name of one who doesn't exist, they will receive nothing. Ranking themselves with a creature, from the creation they will have no help, and believing in one unlike and foreign to the Father in essence. To the Father they will not be

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<sup>61</sup> Athanasius of Alexandria, *Four Discourses against the Arians*, II, xviii, 43.

<sup>62</sup> That is, instead of provisions.



joined, not having His own Son by nature, who is from Him, who is in the Father, and in whom the Father is, as He Himself has said. Being led astray by them, the wretched men henceforth remain destitute and stripped of the Godhead. This fantasy of earthly goods will not follow them upon their death. When they see the Lord whom they have denied, sitting on His Father's throne, and judging the living and the dead, will they be able to call to their help any one of those who have now deceived them? They shall see them also at the judgment-seat, repenting for their deeds of sin and unfaithfulness."

### **Oneness like the Father and the Son (John 17:11, 21-23, 26)**

John stated, "Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are" (John 17:11).

"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word;<sup>21</sup> "that they all may be one, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.<sup>22</sup> "And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one:<sup>23</sup> "I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me" (John 17:20-23).

"And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare *it*, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them" (John 17:26).

In our day with tens of thousands of different denominations within Christianity, unity of faith among believers is not emphasized as much as it was by the early Church Fathers. To the early Church Fathers love for the brethren was the characteristic of Christianity and this was more important than raising the dead. The Arians also acknowledged the unity of the Father and the Son, but they diverted and twisted the meaning of this to imply that it was mere willpower. In the end, the Arians claims make no sense. After the Arians had been thoroughly refuted at the Council of Nicaea, they modified their claims and arrogantly stated that as we become one in Christ, we take on the nature of the Godhead. The Early Church Fathers taught that there is a right sense to us being one in Christ, but there is always a distance and a difference between us and God.

John Chrysostom taught<sup>63</sup> that the oneness of the saints is more important than the ability to work miracles, and the oneness of the saints comes from the love of the brethren. Considering the gifts of the Holy Spirit, love for the brethren is far more important than raising the dead just by having a shadow fall on the dead man. Love for the brethren is the characteristic of Christianity by which we are known to everyone.

"None of the gifts of God are small; we should not be grieved if we don't have the gift of teaching. Which seems greater, to have the gift of teaching, or the gift of driving away diseases? Doubtless the latter! Does it seem to us greater to give eyes to the blind than to drive away diseases? Yes! Again; does it not seem to us greater to raise the dead than to give eyes to the blind? Yes again! Further,

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<sup>63</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Hebrews, III, 10-11.

does it not seem to us greater to do this by shadows and aprons (Acts 5:15, 19:12), than by a word? Yes! Which then would we prefer? Raise the dead with shadows and napkins, or have the gift of teaching? Doubtless we will say the former, to raise the dead with shadows and napkins. If then I should show that there is another gift far greater than this, and that we do not receive it when it is in our power to receive it, are we not justly deprived of those other gifts? This gift is for not one or two people, but all may have it. I know that we are amazed at hearing that it is in our power to have a greater gift than raising the dead, and giving eyes to the blind, doing the same things which were done in the time of the Apostles. This may seem beyond belief to us. What then is this gift? Love! Believe me; the words are not mine, but Paul's. 'But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way' (1 Corinthians 12:31). What is this, 'more excellent way'? What he means is this. The Corinthians were proud of their gifts, and those having tongues, the least gift, were puffed up against the rest. Paul said therefore, 'By all means desire gifts? I show you a way of gifts not merely excelling but far more excellent'. Then he said, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing" (1 Corinthians 13:1-2).

"Have you seen the gift? Earnestly desire this gift. This is greater than raising the dead. This is far better than all the rest, and that it is so, listen to what Christ Himself said, 'By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another' (John 13:35). He mentioned not the miracles, but, 'If ye have love one with another'. Again Jesus said to the Father, 'Hereby shall the world believe that You sent Me, if they may be one in Us' (John 17:21). And He said to His disciples, 'A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another' (John 13:34). Such a person therefore is more venerable and glorious than those who raise the dead; and for a good reason. Performing miracles is wholly of God's grace, but love has to do with our own earnestness also. This kind of person is one who is a Christian indeed; this shows the disciple of Christ, the crucified, the man that has nothing common with earth. Without this, not even martyrdom can profit."

"And as a proof, Paul mentioned two of the highest virtues, or rather three; namely, those which consist in miracles, in knowledge, in life. And without love, these and all the others are nothing. And I will say how these are nothing. 'Though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned<sup>64</sup>, but have not love, it profits me nothing' (1 Corinthians 13:3). For it is possible not to show love even when one feeds the poor and exhausts one's means."

"This then let us zealously seek after: and we shall be in no way inferior to Paul and Peter and those who have raised innumerable dead, though we may not be able to drive away a fever. But without this Love; though we should work greater miracles even than the Apostles themselves, though we should expose ourselves to innumerable dangers for the faith, there will be to us no profit from any of this."

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<sup>64</sup> That is, in martyrdom for the Faith.

Hilary of Poitiers pointed out<sup>65</sup> some things Christ said that the Arians had difficulty with. Christ said of the Father, “And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them” (John 17:10). Since the Arians taught that Christ was a lesser being than the Father, they had to divert the sense of these words since they did acknowledge the Unity of Father and Son.

“Now I ask whether to receive from the Son is the same thing as to proceed from the Father. If one believes that there is a difference between receiving from the Son and proceeding from the Father, surely to receive from the Son and to receive from the Father will be regarded as one and the same thing. For our Lord Himself says, ‘He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare *it* to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare *it* to you’ (John 16:14-15). That which He will receive, — whether it will be power, excellence or teaching, the Son has said must be received from Him, and again He indicates that this same thing must be received from the Father. For when He says that all things whatsoever the Father has are His, and that for this cause He declared that it must be received from Himself, He teaches also that what is received from the Father is yet received from Himself, because all things that the Father has are His. Such a unity admits no difference, nor does it make any difference from whom that is received, which given by the Father is described as given by the Son. Is a mere unity of will brought forward here also? ‘All things which the Father has are the Son’s, and all things which the Son has are the Father’s’ (John 16:15, 17:10). For He Himself said, ‘All Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine’ (John 17:10). It is not yet the place to show why He spoke thus, ‘He will take of what is Mine and declare *it* to you’ (John 16:14). These words point to some subsequent time, when it is revealed that He shall receive. Now at any rate He says that He will receive of Himself, because all things that the Father had were His. Discover if you can the unity of the nature, and introduce some necessary unlikeness through which the Son may not exist in unity of nature. For the Spirit of truth proceeds from the Father and is sent from the Father by the Son. All things that the Father has are the Son’s; and for this cause whatever He Who is to be sent shall receive, He shall receive from the Son, because all things that the Father has are the Son’s. The nature in all respects maintains its law, and because Both are One that same Godhead is signified as existing in Both through generation and nativity; since the Son affirms that that which the Spirit of truth shall receive from the Father is to be given by Himself. So the disobedience of heretics must not be allowed an unchecked license of impious beliefs, in refusing to acknowledge that this saying of the Lord has to do with unity of nature.”

Hilary of Poitiers also took<sup>66</sup> the Arians head on in their refusal to believe that Christ was of the same essence as the Father. The Arians couldn’t deny this, so they twisted it to mean that the Unity of Father and Son was mere willpower. They twisted parts of Scripture to back up their claims; but their twisting didn’t account for our Baptism, much less everything else. If the Arians were correct in their understanding, then the Lord Jesus didn’t know how to speak, that He was confused in the meaning of words, that He couldn’t speak the truth, that what He said was foolish talk, and that he was so weak that He could not speak what He wished to be understood. In all

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<sup>65</sup> Hilary of Poitiers, On the Trinity, VIII, 20.

<sup>66</sup> Hilary of Poitiers, On the Trinity, VIII, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10-12.

this, the Arians mistake “glory” for “will”. Had “will” been given to the Son, and then to us, faith would carry with it no requirement, for a necessity of will attached to us would also impose faith upon us and leave us without any freewill. Thus the Arian claims about Christ’s nature being lesser than the Father’s make no sense.

“Christ, in order to affirm the mystery of the One God, while declaring and proving His own Godhead, said, ‘I and *My* Father are one’ (John 10:30); and, ‘If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also’ (John 14:7); and, ‘He who has seen Me has seen the Father’ (John 14:9); and, ‘Believe Me that I *am* in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves’ (John 14:11). He has signified His own birth by the Name Father, and declares that in the knowledge of Himself the Father is known. He avows the unity of nature, when those who see Him see the Father. He bears witness that He is indivisible from the Father, when He dwells in the Father Who dwells in Him.”

“Now seeing that heretics cannot deny these things because they are so clearly stated and understood, they nevertheless pervert them by the most foolish and wicked lies so as afterwards to deny them. For the words of Christ, ‘I and *My* Father are one’ (John 10:30), they endeavor to refer to a mere concord of unanimity, so that there may be in them a unity of will not of nature; that is, that they may be one not by essence of being, but by identity of will. And they apply to the support of their case, ‘Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul’ (Acts 4:32), in order to prove that a diversity of souls and hearts may be united into one heart and soul through a mere conformity of will. Or else they cite, ‘Now he who plants and he who waters are one’ (1 Corinthians 3:8), to shew that, since They are one in Their work for our salvation, and in the revelation of one mystery, Their unity is a unity of wills. Or again, they quote the prayer of our Lord for the salvation of the nations who should believe in Him: ‘I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us’ (John 17:20-21). They try to show that since men cannot, so to speak, be fused back into God or coalesce into one undistinguished mass; this oneness must arise from unity of will. All perform actions pleasing to God, and unite one with another in the harmonious accord of their thoughts, and that thus it is not nature which makes them one, but will.”

“If, however, they have been begotten again into the nature of one life and eternity, then inasmuch as their soul and heart are one, the unity of will fails to account for those who are one by regeneration into the same nature.”

“Paul shows that this unity of the faithful arises from the nature of the sacraments. ‘For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus’ (Galatians 3:27-28). These are one amid so great diversities of race, condition, sex; is it from an agreement of will or from the unity of the sacrament, since these have one baptism and have all put on one Christ? What, therefore, will a concord of minds avail here when they are one in that they have put on one Christ through the nature of one baptism?”

“Every man is outside the promises of the Gospel who is outside the faith in them, and by the guilt of an evil understanding has lost all simple hope. The

greatest service of faith is to hope for that which you don't know. But it is the madness of most consummate wickedness either not to believe things which are understood or to have corrupted the sense in which one believes."

"But although the wickedness of man can pervert his intellectual powers, nevertheless the words retain their meaning. Our Lord prays to His Father that 'those who shall believe in Him may be one, and as He is in the Father and the Father in Him, so all may be one in Them' (John 17:21). Why do the Arians bring in here an identity of mind; why a unity of soul and heart through agreement of will? For there would have been no lack of suitable words for our Lord, if it were will that made them one, to have prayed in this fashion. He could have said, 'Father, as We are one in will, so may they also be one in will, that we may all be one through agreement'. Or could it be that He Who is the Word was unacquainted with the meaning of words? Could He Who is Truth not know how to speak the truth; and could He Who is Wisdom go astray in foolish talk? Could He Who is Power have been compassed about with such weakness that He could not speak what He wished to be understood? He has clearly spoken the true and sincere mysteries of the faith of the Gospel. And He has not only spoken that we may comprehend, He has also taught that we may believe, saying, 'That they all may be one, as You Father art in Me, and I in You, that they also may be in Us'. The promotion of unity is set forth by a pattern of unity, when He says, 'as You, Father, art in Me, and I in You, that they also may be in Us'; as the Father is in the Son and the Son in the Father, so through the pattern of this unity all might be one in the Father and the Son."

"It is proper to the Father and the Son that They should be one by nature because God is from God, and the Only-begotten from the Unbegotten can subsist in no other nature than that of His origin. He Who was begotten should exist in the substance of His birth, and the birth should possess no other different truth of deity than that from which it issued. Our Lord has left us in no doubt as to our belief by asserting throughout the whole of the discourse which follows the nature of this complete unity. For the next words are these, 'That the world may believe that You sent Me' (John 17:21). Thus the world is to believe that the Son has been sent by the Father because all who shall believe in Him will be one in the Father and the Son. How they will be so we are soon told, 'The glory which You gave Me I have given them' (John 17:22). Now I ask whether glory is identical with will, since will is an emotion of the mind while glory is an ornament or embellishment of nature. So then it is the glory received from the Father that the Son has given to all who shall believe in Him, and certainly not will. Had 'will' been given, faith would carry with it no requirement, for a necessity of will attached to us would also impose faith upon us. However He has shown what is effected by the bestowal of the glory received, 'That they may be one just as We are one' (John 17:22). Since all are one through the glory given to the Son and by the Son bestowed upon believers, I ask how can the Son be of a different glory from the Father's, since the glory of the Son brings all that believe into the unity of the Father's glory."

Athanasius of Alexandria stated<sup>67</sup> that the Arians modified their theological position after they were thoroughly refuted by the Orthodox. They stated that as we become one in Christ, we take on the nature of the Godhead, just as Christ is One with the Father. What was given to man by grace, this they would make equal to the Godhead of the Giver. This logic is similar to that of Lucifer before his fall, 'We will ascend above the heights of the clouds; we will be like the Most High' (Isaiah 14:14). They deceived themselves and arrogantly stated that they were equal to God.

Jesus Himself troubled the Jews with these words, 'The Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form; but you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe' (John 5:37-38). Christ has joined the 'Word' to the 'Form,' to show that the Word of God is Himself Image, Expression and Form of His Father; the Jews who did not receive Him who spoke to them, thereby did not receive the Word, which is the Form of God. By contrast, the Patriarch Jacob saw this, and received a blessing from Him and the name of Israel instead of Jacob, as Scripture witnesses, 'Jacob called the name of that place, the Face of God; for, *said he*, I have seen God face to face, and my life was preserved. And the sun rose upon him, when he passed the Face of God' (Genesis 32:31-32 LXX). Thus Christ said, 'He who has seen Me has seen the Father' (John 14:9); and, 'I am in the Father, and the Father in Me' (John 14:10); and, 'I and My Father are one' (John 10:30). Thus God is One, and one the faith in the Father and Son; for, though the Word is God, the Lord our God is one Lord; for the Son is proper to that One, and inseparable according to the peculiarity of His Essence.

The Arians, however, unabashedly reply, 'Not as you say, but as we will'. Whereas you have overthrown our former arguments, we have invented a new one. They say that the Son and the Father are One, and so is the Father in the Son and the Son in the Father, just as we too may become one in Him. This is written in the Gospel and Christ desired it for us in these words, 'Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as *We are*' (John 17:11). And shortly after; 'I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me' (John 17:20-23). Then, as having found an evasion, these men of craft say that as we become one in the Father, so also He and the Father are one, and thus He too is in the Father. They pretend from His saying, 'I and My Father are one' (John 10:30), and 'I am in the Father, and the Father in Me' (John 14:10), that both we and Christ are like the Father's Essence. This suggests either that we too are part of the Father's Essence, or Christ is foreign to it, as we are foreign. Thus they idly babble; in their perverseness I see nothing but unreasoning audacity and recklessness from the devil, since it is saying after his pattern, 'We will ascend above the heights of the clouds; we will be like the Most High' (Isaiah 14:14). For what is given to man by grace, this they would make equal to the Godhead of the Giver. Thus hearing that men are called sons, they thought themselves equal to the True Son by nature.

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<sup>67</sup> Athanasius of Alexandria, Four Discourses Against the Arians, III, xxv, 16-17.

Again hearing from the Savior, ‘that they may be one just as We are one,’ (John 17:22) they deceive themselves, and are arrogant enough to think that they may be such as the Son is in the Father and the Father in the Son; not considering the fall of their ‘father the devil’ (John 8:44), which happened upon such an imagination.

Athanasius of Alexandria further explained<sup>68</sup> how our oneness with Christ does not make us equal to the Father, as the Arians claimed. We are called “gods”, yet we do not become like the True God in nature. There is a right sense to us being one in Christ; there is always a distance and a difference between us and God. We become merciful as He is merciful, since the oneness of the Son and the Father is a pattern and lesson to all.

“Taking patterns for man from divine subjects, Jesus said, ‘Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful’ (Luke 6:30) and, ‘Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect’ (Matthew 5:48). He said this too, not that we might become like the Father; for to become as the Father, is impossible for us creatures, who have been brought to be out of nothing. He charged us, ‘Don’t be like the horse *or* the mule, *which* have no understanding, which must be harnessed with bit and bridle’ (Psalm 32:9) not lest we should become as draft animals, but that we should not imitate their lack of reason. Similarly He said, ‘Be merciful as your Father’; looking at His beneficial acts, we might do similarly, not for men’s sake, but for His sake, so that from Him and not from men we may have the reward. In doing this, we too become sons. We become not as He is in nature and truth, but according to the grace of Him that calls. We are men from the earth, yet we are called gods (John 10:34). We are not as the True God or His Word, but as has pleased God who has given us that grace. So also, as God do we become merciful, not by being made equal to God, but in order that what has accrued to us from God Himself by grace, these things we may impart to others, without making distinctions in our kind service. For only in this way can we become imitators, when we minister to others what comes from Him. The Apostle John does not say that we must become as the Son is in the Father. How could this be? He is God’s Word and Wisdom, and we were fashioned out of the earth; He is by nature and essence Word and true God. John says, ‘We know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life’ (1 John 5:20); we are made sons through Him by adoption and grace. We partake of His Spirit. ‘As many as received Him, he says, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name’ (John 1:12). Therefore also He is the Truth saying, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life’ (John 14:6) and in His address to His Father, He said, ‘Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth’ (John 17:17); we by imitation become virtuous and sons. Therefore not that we might become such as He, did He say ‘that they may be one just as We are one’ (John 17:22)’ but that as He, being the Word, is in His own Father, so that we too, taking an example and looking at Him, might become one towards each other in concord and oneness of spirit, like those five thousand in the Acts (Acts 4:4, 32), who were as one.”

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<sup>68</sup> Athanasius of Alexandria, Four Discourses Against the Arians, III, xxv, 19, 21.

“The words, ‘that they may be one in Us’ (John 17:21) have a right sense. If, for instance, it were possible for us to become as the Son in the Father, the words ought to read, ‘that they may be one in You,’ as the Son is in the Father. But, as it is, He has not said this; but by saying ‘in Us’ He has pointed out the distance and difference. Christ is alone in the Father, as Only Word and Wisdom; but we in the Son, and through Him in the Father. By saying this, He meant, ‘By Our unity may they also be so one with each other, as We are one in nature and truth’. That ‘in Us’ has this significance, we may learn from Paul, who says, ‘Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written’ (1 Corinthians 4:6). The words ‘in Us’ then, are not ‘in the Father,’ as the Son is in Him; but imply an example and image, instead of saying, ‘Let them learn of Us.’ For as Paul was to the Corinthians, so is the oneness of the Son and the Father a pattern and lesson to all, by which they may learn, looking to that natural unity of the Father and the Son, how they themselves ought to be one in spirit towards each other. This could also be stated: the words ‘in Us’ mean the same as saying, that in the power of the Father and the Son they may be one, speaking the same things (1 Corinthians 1:10); for without God this is impossible. This mode of speech we also find in Scripture, as ‘Through God we will do valiantly, for *it is* He *who* shall tread down our enemies’ (Psalm 60:12), and ‘By my God I can leap over a wall’ (Psalm 18:29), and ‘Through You we will push down our enemies’ (Psalm 44:5). Therefore it is plain, that in the Name of Father and Son we shall be able, becoming one, to hold firm the bond of love. Dwelling still on the same thought, the Lord says, ‘And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one’ (John 17:22). He has here not said, ‘that they may be in You as I am’, but as an image and example.”

### **The Importance of Christian Unity**

There is a major difference between our life today and life in the Early Church, especially regarding how the Church views Christian Unity. In our day with tens of thousands of different denominations within Christianity, unity of faith among believers is not emphasized as much as it was by the early Church Fathers. To the Early Church, Christian Unity was one of the most important aspects of the Christian Faith. Souls cannot be united which divide themselves from God’s unity. Gathering as the Church increases the love of the brethren; and love being increased, the things of God follow. Forsaking gathering as the Church comes from unbelief.

John Chrysostom pointed out<sup>69</sup> that Christian unity is one of the most important aspects of the Christian Faith. This lets everyone know that the Father sent Christ (John 17:21), and that we are followers of Christ (John 13:35). To do this, we need to show love to those who may not return any kind of love; and we need to be persistent at doing this, since we answer to a higher standard. To just love those who love us in return is satanic.

“This is a thing that doth God especial glory, the being closely united. Even if against your will and for His sake, you have a disagreement with your brother, consider that by putting an end to your anger you are glorifying your Master. At

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<sup>69</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Romans, XXVII, v. 7.



all events be reconciled to him. For Christ insists on this upon all possible grounds; when addressing His Father he said, 'By this shall all men know that You have sent Me, if they are one in Us' (John 17:21). Let us obey then, and knit ourselves to one another. For in this place it is not any longer the weak, but all that he is rousing. If a man intends to break with you, do not break with him also. Don't give utterance to that cold saying, 'I love him that loves me; if my right eye doesn't love me, I'll tear it out'. These are satanical sayings, and fit for publicans, and the little spirit of the Gentiles. But we who are called to a greater citizenship, and are enrolled in the books of Heaven, are liable to greater laws. Do not speak in this way, but when he refuses to love you, then display the more love, that you may draw him to you. For he is a member; and when by any force a member is cut off from the body, we do everything we can to unite it again, and then pay more attention to it. For the reward is the greater then, when one draws a person who does not want to love. If Christ asks us to invite to dinner those that cannot make us any recompense, that what goes for recompense may be the greater, much more ought we to do this in regard to friendship. Now he that is loved and loves in return pays you recompense. But he that is loved and does not love in return has made God a debtor to you in his own way. Besides, when he loves you he doesn't need much effort; but when he doesn't love you, he stands in need of your assistance. Just because it takes some effort, don't make this a cause for listlessness; don't say, because he is sick, that is the reason I don't care about him. For a sickness indeed is the dulling of love. But warm again that which has become chilled. Suppose he will not be warmed; 'what then?' Continue to do your own part. 'What if he grows more perverse?' He is only setting you up for so much greater return, and showing you so much the greater imitator of Christ. The loving one another was to be the characteristic of disciples. 'By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another' (John 13:35); consider how much greater in God's eyes it must be to love someone that hates us. For your Master loved those that hated Him, and called them to Him; and the weaker they were, the greater the care He showed them. He said, 'Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick' (Matthew 9:12). He considered publicans and sinners worthy of the same table with Him. As great as was the dishonor that the Jewish people treated Him with, so great was the honor and concern He showed for them. Him we should emulate! For this good work is no light one, but one without which not even he that is a martyr can please God much. Do not say then, 'I get hated', and that is why I do not love. This is why we ought to love most. Besides, it is not in the nature of things for a man who loves to be soon hated; brute as a person may be, 'For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?' (Matthew 5:46) But if everyone loves those that love him, who is there that would not love those who show love while they are hated? Display this conduct, and don't cease to use this phrase, 'Hate me as much as you may; I will not stop loving you', and then you will humble his quarrelsomeness, and cast out all coldness?"

Cyprian of Carthage stated<sup>70</sup> that souls cannot at all be united which divide themselves from God's unity. Yet he expressed great joy that people in his day who were separated by distance were still of one mind in the bond of love.

“We have exulted with great joy, and have given God thanks that we have found in brethren placed at such a distance such unanimity of faith and truth with us. The grace of God is mighty to associate and join together in the bond of love and unity even those things which seem to be divided by a considerable space of earth. This is like the way of old the divine power associated in the bond of unanimity Ezekiel and Daniel with Job and Noah, who were among the first, but separated from them by a long space of time. Although they were separated by long periods, yet by divine inspiration they felt the same truths. This also we now observe in you, that you who are separated from us by the most extensive regions, approve yourselves to be, nevertheless, joined with us in mind and spirit. All of which arises from the divine unity. For even as the Lord who dwells in us is one and the same, He everywhere joins and couples His own people in the bond of unity. Because of this ‘Their sound has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world’ (Romans 10:18), who are sent by the Lord swiftly running in the spirit of unity. On the other hand, it is of no advantage that some are very near and joined together bodily, if in spirit and mind they differ, since souls cannot at all be united which divide themselves from God's unity. For lo, it says, ‘those who are far from You shall perish’ (Psalm 73:27). But such shall undergo the judgment of God as they deserve. They depart from the words of Him who prays to the Father for unity, and says, ‘Father, grant that that they all may be one, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us’” (John 17:21).

John Chrysostom noted<sup>71</sup> that gathering as the Church in oneness of heart increases the love of the brethren; and love being increased, of necessity the things of God must follow also. By this means we stir up love and good works as iron sharpens iron and as stone rubbed against stone produces fire. Our faintheartedness in forsaking the assembling of ourselves together comes from not believing.

“Let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching’ (Hebrews 10:24-25). And again in other places, ‘The Lord *is* at hand. Be anxious for nothing’ (Philippians 4:5, 6). ‘Knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep, for now our salvation *is* nearer than when we *first* believed’ (Romans 13:11). What is the meaning of, ‘not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together?’ (Hebrews 10:25) He knew that much strength arises from being together and assembling together. ‘For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them’ (Matthew 18:20); and again, ‘That they may be one as We are’ also are (John 17:11); and, ‘the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul’ (Acts 4:32). And not this only, but also because love is increased by the gathering of ourselves together; and love being increased, of necessity the things of God must follow also. ‘But constant prayer

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<sup>70</sup> Cyprian of Carthage, Epistles, LXXIV, 3.

<sup>71</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Hebrews, XIX, 3.

was offered to God for Peter by the church (Acts 12:5). ‘As is the manner of some’ (Hebrews 10:25); Here he not only exhorted, but also blamed them.”

“‘Let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works’ (Hebrews 10:24). He knew that this also arises from ‘gathering together’. For ‘As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend’ (Proverbs 27:17), so also association increases love. For if a stone rubbed against a stone sends forth fire, how much more soul mingled with soul! This does not refer to jealousy but ‘to the sharpening of love’. What is ‘the sharpening of love?’ Unto the loving and being loved more. ‘Let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works’ (Romans 10:24). For if doing has greater force for instruction than speaking, you also have in your number many teachers, who effect this by their deeds. What is ‘let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith?’ That is, without hypocrisy; for ‘Woe to timid hearts and to slack hands, and to the sinner who walks along two ways!’ (Ecclesiasticus 2:12). Let there be (he means) no falsehood among us; let us not say one thing and think another; for this is falsehood; neither let us be fainthearted, for this is not a mark of a ‘true heart’. Faintheartedness comes from not believing. But how shall this be, if we fully assure ourselves through faith? ‘Having our hearts sprinkled’ (Hebrews 10:22); why did he not say ‘having been purified?’ Because he wished to point out the difference between the sprinklings: one he says is of God, the other our own. For the washing and sprinkling of the conscience is of God; but ‘the drawing near with a true heart in full assurance of faith’ (Hebrews 10:22) is our own. Then he also gives strength to their faith from the truth of Him that promised.”

“What is the meaning of ‘having our bodies washed with pure water?’ (Hebrews 10:22) With water which makes pure; or which has no blood. Then he adds the perfect thing: love. ‘Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together’ (Hebrews 10:25), which some he says do, and divide the assemblies. For ‘A brother helped by a brother is as a strong and high city; and is *as* strong as a *well*-founded palace” (Proverbs 18:19 LXX).

### **Judas, the Son of Perdition (John 17:12)**

John stated, “While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled” (John 17:12).

John Chrysostom pointed out<sup>72</sup> the details of Judas’ organizing the soldiers to arrest Jesus. Because of Jesus’ invincible power, the soldiers and Judas couldn’t even see Jesus in the Garden, never mind arrest Him until Jesus gave Himself up into their hands. When Jesus announced Who He was to Judas and the soldiers, they all fell backward due to His power. Yet Jesus showed kindness to them all. Judas and the soldiers were restrained from arresting the Apostles by the same Power that threw them backwards.

“‘Jesus said to Judas’ band of soldiers, “Whom are you seeking?” They answered Him, “Jesus of Nazareth”. Jesus said to them, “I AM” (John 18:4-5). Notice Jesus’ invincible power: He was in the midst of them, but He disabled their

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<sup>72</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on John, LXXXIII, 1.

eyes! The darkness was not the cause of their not knowing Him, John has shown, by saying, that they had torches also. Even if there had been no torches, they ought at least to have known Him by His voice; or if they did not know it, how could Judas be ignorant, who had been so continually with Him? Judas stood with them, and knew Him no more than they, but with them fell backward. ‘Now when Jesus said to them, "I AM", they drew back and fell to the ground’ (John 18:6). Jesus did this to show, that not only they could not seize Him, but could not even see Him when in their midst, unless He gave permission.”

“Jesus asked them again, "Whom are you seeking?"” (John 18:7) What madness! His word threw them backward, yet not even so did they turn; they had just learned that His power was so great; yet again they set themselves to the same attempt. When He had fulfilled all that was His intent, then He gave Himself up.”

“Jesus answered, "I have told you that I AM"” (John 18:8). ‘Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them’ (John 18:5). Notice the forbearance of the Evangelist John, how he does not insult the traitor, but relates what took place, only desiring to prove one thing, that the whole took place with Jesus’ own consent. No one can say that He Himself brought them to this, by having placed Himself into their hands, and revealed Himself to them; He merely showed them all things which should have been sufficient to repulse them. When they persevered in their wickedness, and had no excuse, He put Himself in their hands, manifesting until the last hour His loving-kindness towards them. He said, ‘If you seek Me, let these go their way’, for, behold, I give Myself up.”

“That the saying might be fulfilled which He spoke, "Of those whom You gave Me have I lost none"” (John 18:9). By ‘loss’ He does not here mean that which is of death, but that which is eternal; though John in the present case includes the former also. And one might wonder why they did not seize the Apostles with Him, and cut them to pieces, especially when Peter had exasperated them by what he did to the servant (John 18:10). Who then restrained them? No other than that Power which cast them backward! And so John, to show that it did not come to pass through their intention, but by the power and decree of Him whom they had seized, has added, ‘That the saying might be fulfilled which He spoke, none of them is lost except the son<sup>73</sup> of perdition”” (John 17:12)

### **We Have Joy and We Are Not of the World (John 17:13-16)**

John said, “But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. <sup>14</sup> "I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. <sup>15</sup> "I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. <sup>16</sup> "They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world” (John 17:13-16).

Jesus had some very kind words to say about the Twelve Apostles: they were not of this world and they were hated by the world just like Himself. This was illustrated shortly afterward

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<sup>73</sup> The only other place in the Scripture that this term “son of perdition” is used it refers to the Antichrist in the Last Days (2 Thessalonians 2:3). For the Scriptures to speak of Judas in the same breath as Antichrist, suggests that the name “son of perdition” is truly appropriate.

as the Twelve began to interact with the Jewish leaders (Acts 5:17-42). This interaction with the Jewish leaders illustrated to everyone what being “of the world” really meant. Even during His trial before Pilate, Jesus demonstrated to Pilate how He was not of the world: His servants didn’t resist; His Empire isn’t human; and therefore His kingdom is not of this world.

John Chrysostom stated<sup>74</sup> that Jesus spoke at length in praise of the Twelve. They were the Father’s; they were not of this world; and they kept His word. As a result they were hated by the world, but they look to another world; they have nothing common with earth, but have become citizens of heaven.

“Jesus referred to ‘the men whom You have given Me out of the world; they were Yours’ (John 17:6). Then He said, ‘They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world’ (John 17:14). In the first case He spoke of their nature; in the second, He spoke of wicked actions. He put together a long statement of praise of the Twelve. First, that ‘they were not of the world’ (John 17:14); then, that ‘the Father Himself had given them’ (John 17:6); and finally ‘they have kept Your word’ (John 17:6); and that on this account ‘they were hated’ (John 17:14). Jesus said, ‘As I am not of the world’ (John 17:14); this ‘as’ is not expressive of unvarying exactness. In the case of Christ and the Father, ‘as’ is used to signify a great Equality, because of the Relationship in Nature. When it is used of us and Him, the interval is great, because of the great and infinite interval between the respective natures. If He ‘committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth’ (1 Peter 2:22), how could the Apostles be reckoned equal to Him? When He said, ‘They are not of the world’ (John 17:16), He meant, ‘They look to another world; they have nothing common with earth, but have become citizens of heaven’. And by these words He shows His love, when He commends them to the Father, and commits them to Him who begat Him. When He said, ‘Keep them’ (John 17:15), He does not speak merely of delivering them from dangers, but also with regard to their continuance in the faith.”

John Chrysostom pointed out<sup>75</sup> what being “of the world” really meant by describing how the Jewish leaders continually tried to arrest Jesus for what He taught. They were not impressed by His miracles, but were obsessed with killing Him. Jesus showed them that what they were doing is sin, but that He was far removed from their wickedness, as were His disciples.

The Jewish leaders continually sought Jesus to arrest Him, especially before the Passover. Then having found Him in their midst, and they often attempted to take Him by their own or by others’ hands without being able. They were not awed by His power, but set themselves to their wickedness, and desisted not. They continually made the attempt; ‘These words Jesus spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one laid hands on Him, for His hour had not yet come’ (John 8:20). He spoke in the Temple, and in the character of teacher, which was more adapted to rouse them. He spoke those things, which stung them; they charged Him with making Himself equal to the Father. For ‘the witness of two

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<sup>74</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on John, LXXXII, 1.

<sup>75</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on John, LIII, 1.

men<sup>76</sup> is true', proves this. Yet still He spoke in the Temple in the character of teacher, and 'no one laid hands on Him, for His hour had not yet come' (John 8:20); that is, it was not yet the fitting time at which He would be crucified. So that even then the deed done was not of their power, but of His dispensation, for they had long desired, but had not been able, nor would they even then have been able, except He had consented.

What then does Christ do? To remove their suspicion, and to show that what they are doing is sin, He said, 'You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world' (John 8:23). What He said is this: 'It is no wonder that you imagine such things, you who are carnal men, and have no spiritual thoughts, but I shall not do anything of the kind, for, 'I am from above. You are of this world' (John 8:23). Here He speaks of their worldly and carnal imaginations, whence it is clear that the, 'I am not of this world' (John 8:23), does not mean that He had not taken flesh upon Himself, but that He was far removed from their wickedness. Jesus even said, that His disciples were 'not of the world' (John 15:19), yet they had flesh. When Paul said, 'You are not in the flesh but in the Spirit' (Romans 8:9), he does not mean that they are incorporeal; so Christ when He said, that His disciples are 'not of the world', does nothing else than testify to their heavenly wisdom.

John Chrysostom showed<sup>77</sup> that Jesus continued to say that He was not of this world during His trial before Pontius Pilate. Pilate feared that Jesus was about to try to seize kingly power, but Jesus assured him that His Kingdom is not of this world, because His Empire is not human, it is from above and it does not depend on servants.

"During Jesus' trial before Pilate, Pilate desired to clear himself of the matter. Because Pilate had said, 'Are You the King of the Jews?' (Matthew 27:11), Jesus reproved him, 'This you have heard from the Jews. Why do you not make accurate inquiry? They have said that I am a malefactor; ask them what evil I have done. But this you don't do, but are simply framing charges against Me'. Jesus answered him, 'Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?' (John 18:34) Pilate then cannot say that he had heard it, but simply goes along with the people, saying, 'Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me.' (John 18:35). 'I must therefore ask you what you have done'. What then said Christ? 'My kingdom is not of this world' (John 18:36). He leads Pilate upwards, where Pilate was not a very wicked man, nor after their fashion, and desired to show that He is not a mere man, but God and the Son of God. What did He say? 'If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here' (John 18:36). Jesus undoes that which Pilate for a while had feared, namely, the suspicion of Jesus seizing kingly power. 'Is then His kingdom not of this world also?' Certainly it is. 'How then did He say, it 'is not'? Not because He does not rule here, but because He has his empire from above, and because it is not human, but far greater than this and more splendid. 'If then it is greater, how

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<sup>76</sup> This is referred to in many places; for example Deuteronomy 17:6, 19:15; Matthew 18:16; 2 Corinthians 13:1; 1 Timothy 5:19; Hebrews 10:28.

<sup>77</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on John, LXXXIII, 4.

was He made captive by the other?’ By consenting, and giving Himself up! But He does not at present reveal this, but what did He say? ‘If I had been of this world, My servants would fight, that I should not be delivered’. Here He shows the weakness of kingship among us, that its strength lies in servants; but that which is above is sufficient for itself, needing nothing. From this the heretics taking occasion say, that Christ is different from the Creator. What then, when it said, ‘He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him?’ (John 1:11) What, when He said, ‘They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world?’ (John 17:14) So also He said that His kingdom is not from hence, not depriving the world of His providence and superintendence, but showing that His power was not human or perishable.”

### **Christ Sanctified Himself for Us (John 17:17-19)**

John said, “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth” (John 17:17-19).

When Jesus referred to “sanctifying Himself”, He was referring to His upcoming passion as a sacrifice on the Cross for all mankind. We are asked to do this also by presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God (Romans 12:1). The Arians claimed that Jesus was a lesser being than the Father, and that His passion on the Cross was done to promote Himself to equality with the Father. The Orthodox emphasized that He was always God, and that He is the Sanctifier, not the sanctified. The point of His sanctification was that we might become the Temple of God. The entire Trinity is involved in our sanctification: the Father is the Source; the Son was sanctified in His flesh for us; and the Holy Spirit works to keep us in sanctification. What the Arians missed completely is that Jesus was both God and man at the same time. Sometimes He speaks as God; other times He speaks as a man. His flesh needed sanctification; His Deity didn’t.

John Chrysostom explained<sup>78</sup> what Jesus meant by sanctifying<sup>79</sup> Himself: offering Himself as a Sacrifice. He both offered Himself and encouraged His followers to offer their bodies as a living sacrifice. This was an encouragement to His followers just before the Crucifixion.

“What does it mean when Jesus said, ‘For their sakes I sanctify Myself?’ (John 17:19) ‘I offer to You a sacrifice’. Now all sacrifices are called ‘holy’, and those are especially called ‘holy things’, that are laid up for God. Whereas of old in type the sanctification was by the sheep, but now it is not in type, but by the Truth Himself. Jesus therefore said, ‘That they also may be sanctified by the truth’ (John 17:19). That is, ‘I both dedicate them to You, and make them an offering’. This He said, because their Head was being made so, and because they also were sacrificed; for, ‘Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service’ (Romans 12:1); and, ‘For Your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter’ (Psalm 44:22). And He makes them; without death, a sacrifice and offering; for that He alluded to His own sacrifice, when He said, ‘I sanctify’, is clear from what follows. ‘I do not pray for

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<sup>78</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on John, LXXXII, 1-2.

<sup>79</sup> i.e. devoting Himself as a sacrifice

these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word” (John 17:20).

“Since Christ was dying for them, and said, that ‘For their sakes I sanctify Myself’ (John 17:19), lest anyone should think that He did this for the Apostles only, He added, ‘I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word’ (John 17:20). By this He revived their souls, showing that the disciples should be many. Because He made common what they possessed peculiarly, He comforted them by showing that they were being made the cause of the salvation of others. After having thus spoken concerning their salvation and their being sanctified by faith and the Sacrifice, He afterwards spoke of concord, and finally closed his discourse with this, having begun with it and ended in it. For at the beginning He said, ‘A new commandment I give to you’ (John 13:34); and here, ‘That they all may be one, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us’ (John 17:21). Here again the ‘as’ does not denote exact similarity in their case, (for it was not possible for them in so great a degree,) but only as far as was possible for men. Just as when He said, ‘Be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful” (Luke 6:36).

Athanasius of Alexandria emphasized<sup>80</sup> that Christ sanctifying Himself was not to promote Him as a lesser being to equality with the Father, but for our sake. He had always been God. He was the Sanctifier, not the sanctified; the point was that we might be sanctified in the truth. The descent of the Spirit on Christ in the Jordan was a descent upon us because of His bearing our body. Therefore we share His anointing and become the Temple of God.

“The Scriptures refer to Christ as the eternal God, saying, ‘Your throne, O God, *is* forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness *is* the scepter of Your kingdom’ (Psalm 45:6), and has declared that all other things partake of Him. What conclusion must we draw, but that He is distinct from originated things, and He only is the Father’s veritable Word, Radiance, and Wisdom, which all things originate partake, being sanctified by Him in the Spirit? Therefore He is here ‘anointed,’ not that He may become God, for He was so even before; nor that He may become King, for He had the Kingdom eternally, existing as God’s Image, as the sacred Oracle shews; but in our behalf is this written, as before. For the kings of Israel, upon their being anointed, then became kings, not being so before, as David, Hezekiah, Josiah, and the rest. But Christ on the contrary, being God, and ever ruling in the Father’s Kingdom, and being Himself He that supplies the Holy Spirit, nevertheless is here said to be anointed. Being said as man to be anointed with the Spirit, He might provide for us men, not only exaltation and resurrection, but the indwelling and intimacy of the Spirit. Signifying this the Lord Himself has said, ‘As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth’ (John 17:18-19). In saying this He has shown that He is not the sanctified, but the Sanctifier; for He is not sanctified by others, but Himself sanctifies Himself, that we may be sanctified in the truth. He who sanctifies Himself is Lord of sanctification. How then does this take place? What does He mean but this? ‘I, being the Father’s Word, I give to Myself, when becoming man, the Spirit; and

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<sup>80</sup> Athanasius of Alexandria, Four Discourses against the Arians, I, xii, 46-47.



Myself, become man, do I sanctify in Him, that henceforth in Me, who am Truth, for “Your word is truth” (John 17:17), all may be sanctified.”

“If then for our sake He sanctifies Himself, and does this when He has become man, it is very plain that the Spirit’s descent on Him in Jordan was a descent upon us, because of His bearing our body. It did not take place for promotion to the Word, but again for our sanctification, that we might share His anointing, and of us it might be said, ‘Do you not know that you are the temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you?’ (1 Corinthians 3:16) When the Lord, as man, was washed in Jordan, it was we who were washed in Him and by Him. When He received the Spirit, we it was who by Him were made recipients of It.”

Basil the Great stated<sup>81</sup> that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit all sanctify those who are worthy. We may not perceive all the goings-on of the Holy Spirit and the angels, but the Trinity is always directing everything.

“The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit alike sanctify, quicken, enlighten, and comfort. No one will attribute a special and peculiar operation of sanctifying to the operation of the Spirit, after hearing the Savior in the Gospel saying to the Father about His disciples, ‘keep through Your name those whom You have given Me’ (John 17:11), and ‘Sanctify them by Your truth’ (John 17:17). In like manner all other operations are equally performed, in all who are worthy of them, by the Father, by the Son and by the Holy Spirit. This includes every grace and virtue, guidance, life, consolation, change into the immortal, the passage into freedom and all other good things which come down to man. Even the dispensation which is above us in relation to the creature considered both in regard to intelligence and sense is not constituted apart from the operation and power of the Holy Spirit, every individual sharing His help in proportion to the dignity and need of each. Truly the ordering and administration of beings above our nature is obscure to our perception. Nevertheless anyone, arguing from what is known to us, would find it more reasonable to conclude that the power of the Spirit operates even in those beings, than that He is excluded from the government of celestial things. To assert otherwise is to advance a blasphemy bare and unsupported; it is to support absurdity on top of fallacy. On the other hand to agree that even the world beyond us is governed by the power of the Spirit, as well as by that of the Father and of the Son, is to advance a contention, supported on the plain testimony of what is seen in human life.”

Ambrose of Milan concurred<sup>82</sup> that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit all sanctify. The Father is the Source of all Sanctification. The Son was made Sanctification for us in the flesh. The Holy Spirit works in us to keep us in sanctification. All this sanctification is one, since the Baptism and Grace of the sacrament are one.

“As the Father sanctifies, so, too, the Son sanctifies, and the Holy Spirit sanctifies. The Father sanctifies according to what is written: ‘May the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ’ (1 Thessalonians

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<sup>81</sup> Basil the Great, Letters, CLXXXIX, 7.

<sup>82</sup> Ambrose of Milan, On the Holy Spirit, III, iv, 25-28.

5:23). And elsewhere the Son says: ‘Father, sanctify them by Your truth’” (John 17:17).

“But of the Son, Paul said: ‘He became for us wisdom from God -- and righteousness and sanctification and redemption’ (1 Corinthians 1:30). Do you see that He was made sanctification? But He was made so for us, not that He should change that which He was, but that He might sanctify us in the flesh.”

“Paul also teaches that the Holy Spirit sanctifies. ‘We are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth’” (2 Thessalonians 2:13).

“So, then, the Father sanctifies, the Son also sanctifies, and the Holy Spirit sanctifies; but the sanctification is one, for baptism is one, and the grace of the sacrament is one.”

Ambrose of Milan pointed out<sup>83</sup> that the Son of God contains the Godhead within Himself, but He doesn’t always speak in the same manner. Sometimes He speaks from the glory of God; other times He speaks from the affections of man. The flesh needed sanctification; the Godhead didn’t. He is sanctified in the flesh for us, and He sanctifies by virtue of His Divinity. This created confusion among His enemies: they challenged Him as a man, but He answered as God.

“Let us pay attention to the distinction of the Godhead from the flesh. In the person of the Godhead there speaks one and the same Son of God, for each nature is present in Him; yet while it is the same Person Who speaks, He speaks not always in the same manner. Notice in Him, now the glory of God, and now the affections of man. As God He speaks the things of God, because He is the Word; as man He speaks the things of man, because He speaks from my nature.”

“‘I am the living bread which came down from heaven’ (John 6:51). This bread is His flesh, even as He Himself said: ‘This bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world’ (John 6:51). This is He Who came down from heaven; this is He Whom the Father has sanctified and sent into this world. Even the letter of the Law itself teaches us that not the Godhead but the flesh needed sanctification, for the Lord Himself said, ‘For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth’ (John 17:19), in order that you may acknowledge that He is both sanctified in the flesh for us, and sanctifies by virtue of His Divinity.”

“This is the same One Whom the Father sent, ‘But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law’ (Galatians 4:4). This is He Who said: ‘The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon Me, because He has anointed Me To preach the Gospel to *the* poor’ (Luke 4:18). This is He Who said: ‘Jesus answered them and said, “My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me. If anyone wants to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or *whether* I speak on My own authority”’ (John 7:16-17). Doctrine that is of God, is one thing; doctrine that is of man, another. When the Jews, regarded Him as man, and called in question His teaching, ‘they marveled, saying, “How does this Man know letters, having never studied?”’ (John 7:15), Jesus answered, ‘My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me’ (John 7:16). In

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<sup>83</sup> Ambrose of Milan, Exposition of the Christian Faith, II, ix, 77-80.

teaching without elegance of letters, He seems to teach not as man, but rather as God, having not learned, but devised His doctrine.”

“Christ has found and devised all the way of discipline, as we read above, inasmuch as of the Son of God it has been said: ‘This is our God; no other can be compared to him! He found the whole way to knowledge, and gave her to Jacob his servant and to Israel whom he loved. Afterward she appeared upon earth and lived among men’ (Baruch 3:35-37). How, then, could He, as divine, not have His own doctrine — He Who has found all the way of discipline before He was seen on earth? Or how is He inferior, of Whom it is said, ‘None shall be accounted of in comparison with Him?’ Surely He is entitled incomparable.

John Cassian stated<sup>84</sup> that Christ gave us four kinds of communication with God: prayer, supplication, intercession and thanksgiving; and he gave examples of each. Paul mentioned the same things. Sometimes these are all used together; sometimes separately, where sanctification is part of prayer. We ought especially to include thanksgiving with our prayers.

“The Lord by His own example granted four kinds of supplication for us, so that in this too He might fulfill that which was said of Him: ‘that Jesus began both to do and teach’ (Acts 1:1). For He made use of supplication when He said: ‘Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You *will*’ (Matthew 26:39); or this which is chanted in His Person in the Psalm: ‘O God, my God, attend to me: why hast thou forsaken me?’ (Psalm 22:2 LXX), and others like it. It is prayer when He says: ‘I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do’ (John 17:4); and this: ‘for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth’ (John 17:19). It is intercession when He says: ‘Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me’ (John 17:24); or at any rate when He says: ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do’ (Luke 23:34). It is thanksgiving when He says: ‘I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from *the* wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes.’<sup>26</sup> “Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight’ (Matthew 11:25-26). Or at least when He says: ‘Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. And I know that You always hear Me’ (John 11:41-42). But though our Lord made a distinction between these four kinds of prayers as to be offered separately and one by one according to the scheme which we know of, yet they can all be embraced in a perfect prayer at one and the same time as He showed by His own example in that prayer which at the close of John’s Gospel we read that He offered up with such fullness<sup>85</sup>. From the words of this prayer (as it is too long to repeat it all) the careful inquirer can discover by the order of the passage that this is so. Paul also has expressed the same meaning, by putting these four kinds of prayers in a slightly different order, and has shown that they ought sometimes to be offered together in the fervor of a single prayer, saying: ‘Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God’ (Philippians 4:6). By this

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<sup>84</sup> John Cassian, First Conference of Abbot Isaac, IX, 17.

<sup>85</sup> That is, John 17:1-26

he wanted us especially to understand that in prayer and supplication thanksgiving ought to be mingled with our requests.”

## *The Church in Ephesus*

7<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Pascha

**Epistle: Acts 20:16-18, 28-36**

In the Epistle lesson for the 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Pascha, we caught a snapshot from the early part of Paul's Second Missionary Journey in about 49 AD. This week, we look at a snapshot from the end of Paul's Third Missionary Journey, or about 57 AD. Traveling with Paul at various times on his Second Missionary Journey were 21 members<sup>86</sup> of the original Seventy. At various points of the Second journey, Paul worked with fifteen others<sup>87</sup> of the Seventy plus the Apostle Peter. On his Third Journey, Paul traveled with 23 members<sup>88</sup> of the original Seventy at various times and worked with 21 others at various locations<sup>89</sup>. Thus the Apostle Paul was very tightly connected to the Twelve and the Seventy<sup>90</sup>.

The setting for the Epistle lesson is in Miletus (Acts 20:17), a few miles South of Ephesus. Paul was hurrying to get back to Jerusalem in time for Pentecost and he knew that chains and tribulations awaited him there (Acts 20:22-23). This was in fact the case and Paul spent the next five years under some form of lock up (in Jerusalem, Caesarea and Rome) before he was released in 62 or 63 AD. From Miletus, Paul called for the elders (Greek: *presbyteros*) and the bishops (Greek: *episkopos*) from Ephesus to meet him there in Miletus (Acts 20:17, 28).

At this time, there were churches all over the area surrounding Ephesus that had been raised up during the early part of Paul's Third Missionary Journey (Acts 19:8-12). "This continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks" (Acts 19:10). The "all who dwelt in Asia" refers to the Roman province of Asia which includes the seven churches listed in Revelation 2-3 (Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea) plus Colossae (which Paul wrote to from Rome about five years later). It is quite possible that the elders and bishops from Ephesus refer to the Ephesus area and not just the city itself.

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<sup>86</sup> Andronicus and Junia, Aquila and Priscilla, Artemas, Cephas, Crispus, Dionysius, Gaius, Herodion, Jason, Linus, Luke, Olympas, Onesiphorus, Rufus, Silas, Sosipater, Sosthenes, Tertius, Timothy.

<sup>87</sup> Amplias, Apelles, Aristobulus, Carpus, Epaphroditus, Hermas, Justus, Narcissus, Philologus and Julia, Phlegon, Stachys, Titus, Urbanus.

<sup>88</sup> Aquila and Priscilla, Aristarchus, Cephas, Crispus, Epaphras, Epaphroditus, Erastus, Gaius, Herodion, Jason, Linus, Lucius, Luke, Onesiphorus, Rufus, Sosipater, Sosthenes, Timothy, Titus, Trophimus, Tychicus, Urbanus.

<sup>89</sup> Amplias, Andronicus and Junia, Apelles, Aristobulus, Asyncritus, Carpus, Dionysius, Epaphroditus, Hermas, Hermes, James the Lord's brother, Narcissus, Olympas, Patrobus, Philologus and Julia, Phlegon, Silas, Stachys, Tertius.

<sup>90</sup> For a detailed study of how this worked, see Mark Kern, *The Life of the Apostle Paul*, St. Athanasius Press, 2014, especially pp. 291-328.

Paul's message to the elders and bishops was as follows:

- Remember my life when I was with you (Acts 20:18-21)
  - I coveted no one's wealth (Acts 20:33).
  - My hands provided for my needs and those with me (Acts 20:34). This is probably referring to Paul's trade of tent making (Acts 18:2-3).
- Take heed and shepherd the Church (Acts 20:28, 31).
  - Do as I did; remember to support the weak (Acts 20:35).
  - It is more blessed to give than receive (Acts 20:35).
- Savage wolves will come in among you (Acts 20:29).
  - Heretics will rise up from among you (Acts 20:30).
- I commend you to God and the Word of His Grace (Acts 20:32).

Following Paul's admonition, there was a very emotional farewell (Acts 20:37-38). John Chrysostom commented<sup>91</sup> on this as follows, "He had comforted them so they would not grieve that he was treated in such a bad way. For my anxiety is not that you should be saved through me as the means, but only that you should be saved: the person as the instrument is immaterial. You do not know the pangs of spiritual childbirth, how overpowering they are, how he who is in travail with this birth would rather be cut into ten thousand pieces, than see one of those to whom he has given birth perishing and undone".

Paul's admonition here is exactly what the Church Fathers had to deal with at the First Ecumenical Council in the early 4<sup>th</sup> century. At this Council, convened at Nicaea, about 150 miles from Ephesus, a summary statement of the Faith was agreed upon and is referred to today as the Nicene Creed. [The original Nicene Creed was appended by a series of anathemas on all who taught otherwise. Later at the Council of Chalcedon, the anathemas were removed to make the "Nicene Creed" a totally positive statement of the Faith.]

But the Nicene Creed did not just fall out of the sky. It was based on a much earlier Creed called the Apostles Creed which was drafted between 30 and 31 AD by the Twelve Apostles. In a commentary on the Apostles' Creed by Rufinus of Aquileia (c. 345-411 AD), Rufinus gives some insight into how the Apostles' Creed was used<sup>92</sup> in the early Church.

For example, Rufinus states:

- The Creed was generated by the Twelve Apostles prior to leaving Jerusalem on their separate missionary journeys.
- Each of the Twelve contributed one clause of the Creed.
- The intent of the Creed was the establishment of a common faith throughout the world; a simple statement of the Faith.
- The Twelve decreed that the Creed should be standard teaching to new converts. By Rufinus' time (4<sup>th</sup> century) the Creed was referred to as the Baptismal Creed and was memorized before baptism.
- The Twelve prescribed the Creed as a badge for distinguishing the man who preached the truth about Christ from false apostles.

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<sup>91</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Acts, XLIV, Recapitulation.

<sup>92</sup> For more details, see Schaff & Wace. The Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers Second Series v.3 pp 541-563.

- The Creed was intentionally not written down (until the 4<sup>th</sup> century) to ensure that it was learned from Apostolic traditions and not from captured texts.

Because the Apostles' Creed was so brief and concise, it was also subject to being twisted by the wolves and the heretics that Paul warned about. The Nicene Creed follows the same outline and covers the same subject as the Apostles' Creed, but expands on it to make it much more difficult to twist. In some Churches today, both the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed are used. In the Orthodox Church, primarily the Nicene Creed is used since it amplifies the Apostles' Creed. Let us look at what Paul said to the presbyters and bishops of Ephesus in more detail:

### **Remember My Life and Imitate Me**

Paul said, "Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears. So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me. I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'" (Acts 20:31-35).

Clement of Rome wrote<sup>93</sup> to the Corinthians about 40 years after Paul wrote his epistles to them. Clement encouraged the Corinthians in a very similar manner as Paul encouraged the presbyters and bishops of Ephesus. Clement also noted how the Corinthians had fallen from their first love, and were now not even acting like Christians.

"You were all distinguished by humility, and were in no respect puffed up with pride, but yielded obedience rather than extorted it, and were more willing to give than to receive. Content with the provision which God had made for you, you were inwardly filled with His doctrine, and carefully attending to His words; His sufferings were before your eyes. Thus a profound and abundant peace was given to you all, and you had an insatiable desire for doing good, while a full outpouring of the Holy Spirit was upon you all. Full of holy designs, you did, with true earnestness of mind and a godly confidence, stretch forth your hands to God Almighty, beseeching Him to be merciful to you, if you had been guilty of any involuntary transgression. Day and night you were anxious for the whole brotherhood that the number of God's elect might be saved with mercy and a good conscience. You were sincere and uncorrupted, and forgetful of injuries between one another. Every kind of faction and schism was abominable in your sight. You mourned over the transgressions of your neighbors: their deficiencies you deemed your own. You never grudged any act of kindness, being 'ready for every good work'. Adorned by a thoroughly virtuous and religious life, you did all things in the fear of God. The commandments and ordinances of the Lord were written upon the tablets of your hearts."

"Every kind of honor and happiness was bestowed upon you, and then was fulfilled that which is written, 'Jacob ate and was filled, and the beloved one kicked; he grew fat, he became thick and broad: then he forsook the God that made him,

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<sup>93</sup> Clement of Rome, First Epistle to the Corinthians, Chapters 2-3.

and departed from God his Savior' (Deuteronomy 32:15). From this flowed emulation and envy, strife and sedition, persecution and disorder, war and captivity. So the worthless rose up against the honored, those of no reputation against such as were renowned, the foolish against the wise, and the young against those advanced in years. For this reason righteousness and peace are now far departed from you, inasmuch as everyone abandons the fear of God, has become blind in His faith, and doesn't walk in the ordinances of His appointment. You do not act like Christians, but each walks after his own wicked lusts, resuming the practice of an unrighteous and ungodly envy, by which death itself entered into the world."

John Cassian pointed out<sup>94</sup> that Paul worked at his tent-making trade to support all the Apostles that were traveling with him; this was a very weighty matter, and it was a command of the Lord Himself. The bounty of the giver in doing this is more blessed than the need of the receiver. While the giver shares the poverty of the receiver, yet still he is diligent in providing pious care by his own work, not merely enough for his own needs, but also what he can give to others in need.

"When Paul went to Miletus, and from there sending to Ephesus, and summoning to him the elders of the church of Ephesus, he charged them how they ought to rule the church of God in his absence. He said: 'I have coveted no one's silver, gold or apparel. Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me'<sup>95</sup>. I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive"' (Acts 20:33-35). He left us a weighty example in his manner of life, as he testifies that he not only worked for what would supply his own bodily needs alone, but also what would be sufficient for the needs of those who were with him. Those others, I mean, who, being taken up with necessary duties, had no chance of procuring food for themselves with their own hands. He told the Corinthians that he had worked to give them an example that they might imitate him (1 Corinthians 11:1), so here too he implies something of the same sort when he says: 'I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak' (Acts 20:34). This includes in mind or body; i.e., that we should be diligent in supplying their needs, not from the store of our abundance, or money laid up, or from another's generosity and substance, but rather by securing the necessary sum by our own labor and toil."

"Paul says that this is a command of the Lord. 'For He Himself', namely the Lord Jesus, 'said it is more blessed to give than to receive' (Acts 20:35). That is, the bounty of the giver is more blessed than the need of the receiver, where the gift is not supplied from money that has been kept back through unbelief or

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<sup>94</sup> John Cassian, Twelve Books on the Institutes of the Coenobium, X, 18-19.

<sup>95</sup> "Those who were with Paul" numbered at least 10 and sometimes 20 other Apostles-in-training. For Paul to say that he supported them all with his tent-making trade is quite a statement! Probably the members of the Seventy who were with him helped out in Paul's tent-making shop somewhat as they were available. But since they all didn't travel with Paul continuously they never got to be a master tent-maker like Paul was. For example, Paul started his 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey with Tertius of the Seventy accompanying him among others. Passing through Tarsus, Derbe, Lystra, Iconium and Antioch of Pisidia in quick order, Paul left Tertius behind as Bishop of Iconium. Thus Tertius didn't travel with Paul for very long on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey.



faithlessness, nor from the stored-up treasures of avarice, but is produced from the fruits of our own labor and honest toil. And so 'it is more blessed to give than to receive', because while the giver shares the poverty of the receiver, yet still he is diligent in providing pious care by his own work, not merely enough for his own needs, but also what he can give to one in need. And so he is adorned with a double grace, since by giving away all his goods he secures the perfect self-denial of Christ, and yet by his labor and thought displays the generosity of the rich; thus honoring God by his honest labors, and plucking for him the fruits of his righteousness."

### **Paul Warned the Ephesians Night and Day**

Paul said, "Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears. So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me. I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'" (Acts 20:31-35).

Paul here imitated the Prophet Samuel. When Samuel was old, the people demanded a king, so Samuel anointed Saul as king of Israel. After Saul had become king, Samuel needed to say some weighty things to the people, just like Paul did to the presbyters and bishops of the Ephesus area. Just like Samuel, Paul needed to say some great things about himself, so he tried to make the least he can of it.

Samuel had said, "Indeed I have heeded your voice in all that you said to me, and have made a king over you. And now here is the king, walking before you; and I am old and gray-headed, and look, my sons *are* with you. I have walked before you from my childhood to this day. Here I am. Witness against me before the Lord and before His anointed: Whose ox have I taken, or whose donkey have I taken, or whom have I cheated? Whom have I oppressed, or from whose hand have I received *any* bribe with which to blind my eyes? I will restore *it* to you". And they said, "You have not cheated us or oppressed us, nor have you taken anything from any man's hand". Then he said to them, "The Lord *is* witness against you, and His anointed *is* witness this day, that you have not found anything in my hand". And they answered, "*He is* witness" (1 Samuel 12:1-5). Samuel then went on to call down thunder and rain from heaven and to reproach all the people for their wickedness.

John Chrysostom pointed out<sup>96</sup> what Paul did here that was similar to what Samuel did. He got his listeners to agree that he was speaking the truth in humility.

"Notice what Paul does here: first he cites their own testimony: that you may not imagine his words to be mere boasting, he calls the hearers themselves as witnesses of the things he says, since he was not likely to speak lies in their presence. This is the excellence of a teacher, to have for witnesses of his merits those who are his disciples. What is wonderful, not for one day nor for two, he says, have I continued doing this. He wishes to cheer them for the future, that they

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<sup>96</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLIV, vv. 17-21.

may bravely bear all things, both the parting from him, and the trials about to take place — just as it was in the case of Moses and Joshua. Notice how he begins: ‘How I have been with you the whole time, serving the Lord with all humility of mind’. Observe, what most become rulers: ‘hating pride’ (Exodus 18:21 LXX.), says Moses. This qualification is especially in point for rulers, because to them there is almost a necessity of becoming arrogant.”

John Chrysostom also gave a little perspective<sup>97</sup> on the problem addressed by Paul to the elders of Ephesus. This was going to be a war internal to the Church. There will be two concerns: Paul would not be there and others will attack from within the Church.

“Paul engages them from another quarter, from the things which should come after: as when he says, ‘We wrestle not against flesh and blood’ (Ephesians 6:12). After my departing, he says, ‘savage wolves will come in among you’ (Acts 20:29); twofold the evil, both that he himself would not be present and that others would attack them. We might ask, ‘Then why depart, if you know this beforehand?’ The Spirit draws me, Paul says. Both ‘wolves’, and ‘grievous, not sparing the flock’; and what is worse, even ‘from among your own selves’. The grievous thing is that this war is an internal war within the Church. The matter is exceedingly serious, for it is ‘the Church of the Lord’; great is the peril for with blood He redeemed it; mighty is the war, and twofold. ‘Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves’ (Acts 20:30). How will they do this? What comfort shall there be? ‘Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears’ (Acts 20:31). Notice how many strong expressions are here: ‘with tears’, ‘night and day’, and ‘everyone’”.

John Chrysostom in addition pointed out<sup>98</sup> a difficulty for the presbyters in dealing with heretics: It is important for the teachers in what they do, and by what they say; both matter a great deal. If a dispute arises between a presbyter and a heretic, and the presbyter is not able to show the error of the heretic, the people may see their leader defeated and lay the blame of his defeat not on his own weakness, but on the doctrines themselves. This can end with shipwreck for the people listening. On the other hand, if the presbyter lives a corrupt life, the heretic can point to hypocrisy on the part of the presbyter and cause similar shipwreck.

“When Paul speaks of priests he says, ‘Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor; especially those who labor in the word and doctrine’ (1 Timothy 5:17). For this is the perfection of teaching when the teachers both by what they do, and by what they say as well, bring their disciples to that blessed state of life which Christ appointed for them. Example alone is not enough to instruct others. I do not say this of myself; it is our Savior’s own word. ‘Whoever does and teaches *them*, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven’ (Matthew 5:19). Now if doing were the same as teaching, the second word here would be superfluous; and it would have been enough to have said ‘whoever shall do’ simply. But by distinguishing the two, he shows that practice is one thing and doctrine another and that each needs the help of the others in order to complete edification.

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<sup>97</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLIV, vv. 29-31.

<sup>98</sup> John Chrysostom, Treatise Concerning the Christian Priesthood, IV, 8-9.

Listen also to what Paul says to the Ephesian elders: ‘Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears’ (Acts 20:31). But what need was there for his tears or for admonition by word of mouth, while his life as an apostle was so illustrious? His holy life might be a great inducement to men to keep the commandments, yet I don’t dare say that it alone could accomplish everything.”

“But when a dispute arises concerning matters of doctrine, and all take their weapons from the same Scriptures, of what weight will anyone’s life be able to prove? What then will be the good of his many austerities, when after such painful exercises, anyone from the Priest’s great unskillfulness in argument fall into heresy, and be cut off from the body of the Church, a misfortune which I have myself seen many suffering. What profit will his patience be to him? None; just like there will not a sound faith if one’s life is corrupt. For this reason more than for all others, it concerns him whose office it is to teach others, to be experienced in disputations of this kind. Though he himself stands safely, and is unhurt by those who contradict, yet the simple multitude under his direction, when they see their leader defeated, and without any answer for the critics, will be apt to lay the blame of his defeat not on his own weakness, but on the doctrines themselves. It will appear as though they were faulty; and so by reason of the inexperience of one, great numbers are brought to extreme ruin. Though they do not entirely go over to the adversary, yet they are forced to doubt about matters in which formerly they firmly believed. Those whom they used to approach with unswerving confidence, they are unable to hold to any longer steadfastly, but because of their leader’s defeat, so great a storm settles down upon their souls, that the mischief ends in their shipwreck altogether.”

### **It Is Better to Give Than to Receive**

Paul had said, “Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me. I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’” (Acts 20:34-35).

Because some people misinterpreted Christ’s words to Martha as preferring that we sit and listen rather than doing hard work, John Chrysostom quoted<sup>99</sup> Paul’s words to the Ephesian Elders to help us understand what the Lord meant. Paul was always traveling with over a dozen people<sup>100</sup>, and he worked at his tent-making trade to support them all<sup>101</sup>. Those who won’t work, on the other hand, slander and ridicule Christianity because of their idleness. To “take no thought for tomorrow”, does not mean “to avoid work”. It means to avoid being nailed to the things of this

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<sup>99</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on John, XLIV, 1.

<sup>100</sup> Those who were with Paul were largely members of the Seventy Apostles. On the average, Paul traveled with at least a dozen members of the Seventy, and he supported them all using his tent-making trade. For details, see Mark Kern, The Life of the Apostle Paul, St Athanasius Press, 2014 at [www.stathanasius.org](http://www.stathanasius.org).

<sup>101</sup> Some of Paul’s traveling companions may have helped in the tent-making business as laborers, with Paul as the master craftsman. Paul’s traveling companions were often left behind as presbyters of the city when Paul left to go elsewhere, so they probably didn’t have time to master the trade. See John Cassian, Institutes of the Coenobia, X, 9.

life! In working to serve Christ and the Apostles, Martha was ignoring Christ's teachings, which Mary was paying attention to. Christ did not forbid Martha's hospitality, but showed that she ought to be listening when it is appropriate rather than being busy about other matters.

“Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him” (John 6:27). What He said is of this kind: ‘Make no account of this earthly food, but of that spiritual food’. But since some of those who desire to live by doing nothing have abused this instruction, as though Christ entirely abolished working, it is important to say something to them. They slander all Christianity, and cause it to be ridiculed because of their idleness. First however, we must mention what Paul said. ‘Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive”’ (Acts 20:35). Why then did Jesus say to Martha, ‘You are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her’ (Luke 10:41-42); and again, ‘Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things’ (Matthew 6:34). It is necessary now to resolve all these questions, not only that we may check men if they want to be idle, but also that the oracles of God may not appear to bring in what is contradictory. Paul in another place said: ‘But we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more; that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, that you may walk properly toward those who are outside’ (1 Thessalonians 4:10-12). Again; ‘Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with *his* hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need’ (Ephesians 4:28). Here Paul asks us not simply to ‘work’, but to work so vigorously and laboriously, as to have something to give to others. And in another place Paul said: ‘These hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me (Acts 20:34). And writing to the Corinthians he said, ‘What is my reward then? When I preach the Gospel, I may present the Gospel of Christ without charge’ (1 Corinthians 9:18). When he was in Corinth, he stayed with Aquila and Priscilla, ‘and worked; for by occupation they were tentmakers’ (Acts 18:3). We must therefore now bring forward the solution. To ‘take no thought’, does not mean ‘not to work’, but ‘not to be nailed to the things of this life’; that is, to take no care for tomorrow’s ease, but to consider that superfluous. A man may do no work, and still lay-up treasure for tomorrow; and a man may work, yet be careful for nothing. Carefulness and work are not the same thing; it is not as trusting to his work that a man works, but, ‘that he may have something to give him who has need’. That too which was said to Martha refers not to works and working, but to this; that it is our duty to know the right season, and we should not spend our time on carnal things when the time comes for listening. Thus Christ spoke not words urging her to ‘idleness’, but to rivet her to listening. ‘I came’, said He, ‘to teach you needful things, but you are anxious about a meal. Do you desire to receive Me, and to provide for Me a costly table? Provide another sort of entertainment, by giving me a ready hearing, and by imitating your sister’s longing for instruction’. He said this not to forbid her hospitality, but to show that she ought to be listening when it is appropriate rather than being busy about other matters. To say, ‘Do not labor for the food which perishes’, is not the

expression of one implying that we ought to be idle; (in fact, this most especially is ‘food that perishes’, for idleness teaches everyone wickedness) but that we ought to work, and to give. This is food that never perishes; but if anyone is idle and gluttonous, and cares for luxury, that man works for ‘the food that perishes’. So too, if a man by his labor should feed Christ, give Him drink, and clothe Him (Matthew 25:31-46), who is so senseless to react as to say that such a one labors for the food that perishes. There is for this the promise of the kingdom that is to come, and of those good things! This food endures forever.

John Cassian mentioned<sup>102</sup> the tradition of the Egyptian Church started by the Evangelist Mark. Not only did the monks work hard during the day for the benefit of all, but they didn’t bother to eat more often than every other day. The Church there was very similar to the Church in Jerusalem after Pentecost.

“In the early days of the faith when only a few, and those best of men, were known by the name of monks, who, as they received that mode of life from the Evangelist Mark of blessed memory, the first to preside over the Church of Alexandria as Bishop. They preserved those grand characteristics for which we read, in the Acts of the Apostles, that the Church and multitude of believers in primitive times was famous. ‘The multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all. Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, and laid it at the feet of the Apostles, and distribution was made to every man as he had need’ (Acts 4:32-35). They added to these characteristics others still more sublime. Withdrawing into more secluded spots outside the cities they led a life marked by such rigorous abstinence that even to those of another creed the exalted character of their life was a standing marvel. They gave themselves up to the reading of Holy Scripture and to prayers and to manual labor night and day with such fervor that they had no desire or thoughts of food. Unless on the second or third day bodily hunger reminded them, and they took their food and drink not so much because they wished for it as because it was necessary for life. Even then they didn’t eat before sunset, in order that they might connect the hours of daylight with the practice of spiritual meditations, and the care of the body with the night, and might perform other things much more exalted than these. About these matters, one who has never heard anything from one who is at home in such things may learn from ecclesiastical history. At that time, therefore, when the perfection of the primitive Church remained unbroken, and was still preserved fresh in the memory by their followers and successors. And when the fervent faith of the few had not yet grown lukewarm by being dispersed among the many, the venerable fathers with watchful care made provision for those to come after them. They met together to discuss what plan should be adopted for the daily worship throughout the whole body of the brethren; that they might hand on to those who should succeed them a legacy of piety and peace that was free from all dispute and dissension. They were

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<sup>102</sup> John Cassian, *Institutes of the Coenobia*, II, 5.

afraid that in regard to the daily services some difference or dispute might arise among those who joined together in the same worship, and at some time or other it might send forth a poisonous root of error, jealousy or schism among those who came after.”

John Cassian also stated<sup>103</sup> that Paul preferred to work to support all his mission work in every city rather than set an example which people who tend to lord it over the flock might abuse.

“‘We had the power; but that we might give ourselves a pattern to you to imitate us, we didn’t use that power’ (1 Corinthians 9:5-6, 12). Paul lays bare the reason why he imposed such labor on himself: ‘That we might give a pattern to you to imitate us, that if by chance you become forgetful of the teaching of our words which so often passes through your ears, you may at least keep in your recollection the example of my manner of life given to you by ocular demonstration’. There is here also no slight reproof of them, where he says that he has gone through this labor and weariness by night and day, for no other reason but to set an example. Nevertheless they did not want to be instructed, for whose sakes he imposed on himself such toil, although not obliged to do it. He says that though we had the power, and opportunities were open to us for using all your goods and substance, and I knew that I had the permission of our Lord to use them (1 Timothy 5:18). Yet I did not use this power, lest what was rightly and lawfully done on my part might set as an example of dangerous idleness to others. Therefore when preaching the Gospel, I preferred to be supported by my own hands and work, that I might open up the way of perfection to you who wish to walk in the path of virtue, and might set an example of good life by my work.’”

John Chrysostom pointed out<sup>104</sup> that Paul was always very serious about his interaction with everyone in all the Churches. Yet some Christians act as if nothing is going on, all of life is a party and they never get serious about their Faith. Too many people are ignorant about how the demons are constantly trying to devour us in our playtime and leisure.

“Let there not be one idle word; for from idle words we fall also into foul words. The present is not a season of loose partying, but of mourning, tribulation and lamentation; do you joke about it? What wrestler on entering the ring neglects the struggle with his adversary, and acts as a comedian? The devil stands at hand to catch you, ‘Your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8). He is moving everything, turning everything against your life, scheming to force you from your retreat, grinding his teeth and bellowing, breathing fire against your salvation. Do you act as a stand-up comic, ‘talking stupid’, and uttering things ‘which are not fitting’? How will you be able to overcome him? It is like we are in the Olympics, beloved. Do you know the life of the saints? Listen to what Paul said. ‘Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears’ (Acts 20:31). If so great was the zeal he exerted in behalf of those of Miletus and Ephesus, not making pleasant speeches, but introducing his admonition with tears, what should one say of the rest? Listen again to what he says to the Corinthians. ‘Out of much

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<sup>103</sup> John Cassian, Institutes of the Coenobia, X, 10.

<sup>104</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Ephesians, XVII, Moral.

affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you, with many tears' (2 Corinthians 2:4). And again, 'Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with indignation?' (2 Corinthians 11:29) Listen again to what he says elsewhere, desiring every day, as one might say, to depart out of the world. 'For we who are in *this* tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life' (2 Corinthians 5:4). Do you just laugh and play as if nothing is happening? It is war-time, and are you handling the dancers' instruments? Look at the faces of men in battle, their dark and contracted visage, their brow serious and full of awe. Notice the stern eye, the heart eager, beating and throbbing, their spirit collected, trembling and intensely anxious. All is good order, all is good discipline, all is silence in the camps of those who are arrayed against each other. They don't speak an impertinent word, but they utter not a single sound. Now if those who have visible enemies, and who are in nowise injured by words, yet observe so great silence, do you who have your warfare, and most of your warfare is in words, do you leave this part of your life naked and exposed? Or are you ignorant that it is here that we are most beset with snares? Are you amusing and enjoying yourself, uttering coarse jokes and raising a laugh, and regarding the matter as a mere nothing?"

### **Grievous Wolves Speaking Perverse Things**

Paul said, "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves" (Acts 20:28-30).

Paul's words apply specifically to the 1<sup>st</sup> century due to the activity of Simon Magus and his followers, where Simon was so influential that four of the Seventy Apostles (Luke 10:1-20) apostatized to follow him and his teachings. See Appendix A for details.

Paul's words also apply to the 4<sup>th</sup> century due to the activity of Arius of Alexandria. Arius was a presbyter who didn't believe that Jesus was really God, thinking Him to be a lesser being than the Father. Constantine the Great called the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD specifically to deal with the heresy of Arius, and the Council thoroughly refuted Arius and his opinions<sup>105</sup> from the Scriptures. But the followers of Arius afterward began a campaign of slander and murder to eliminate their enemies. By the middle of the 4<sup>th</sup> century most of the Churches (at least in the Eastern half of the Empire) were Arian. By the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, the tide had turned and most of the Churches had become Orthodox again, especially due to the teachings of Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian and John Chrysostom in the East and Ambrose of Milan and Hilary of Poitiers in the West among others.

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<sup>105</sup> For details, see Appendices B and C.

Basil the Great lamented<sup>106</sup> to some of the Western Bishops how bad the heresy of Arias had gotten in the Eastern part of the Empire, where the Arian heresy hadn't spread as much in the West at that time.

“The distresses in the Church are notorious, even though we leave them untold, for now their sound has gone out into the entire world. The doctrines of the Fathers are despised; apostolic traditions are regarded as worthless. The devices of innovators are in vogue in the Churches; now men are contrivers of cunning systems rather than theologians. The wisdom of this world wins the highest prizes and has rejected the glory of the cross. Shepherds are banished, and in their places are introduced grievous wolves hurrying the flock of Christ. Houses of prayer have none to assemble in them; desert places are full of lamenting crowds. The elders lament when they compare the present with the past. The younger are yet more to be compassionated, for they do not know what they have been deprived of. All this is enough to stir the pity of men who have learned the love of Christ; but, compared with the actual state of things, words fall very far short. If there are any consolation of love, any fellowship of the Spirit, any bowels of mercy, let them be stirred to help us. Be zealous for the true Faith, and rescue us from this storm. Let that famous teaching of the Fathers ever be spoken among us with boldness, which destroys the ill-famed heresy of Arius, and builds up the Churches in the sound doctrine, wherein the Son is confessed to be of one substance with the Father, and the Holy Spirit is ranked and worshipped as of equal honor. To that end through your prayers and cooperation may the Lord grant to us that same boldness for the truth and glorying in the confession of the divine and saving Trinity which He has given you in the West?”

John Chrysostom noted<sup>107</sup> the reasons why heretics are allowed even to get started with their heresy. This is all part of proving our faith, just like with the Patriarch Job. Jesus and Paul predicted that heretics will come and stated that we need to watch out for them. We don't have to get sucked in to their heresy; and all heretics attempt to hinder us from following God. They are generally incorrigible, but the righteous are able to resist them. Those who get sucked in to the teaching of the heretics do so because of their own negligence. The righteous that fall into the teachings of the heretics get awakened and they become more quick-sighted and sharper, if they rise up again quickly.

“Jesus used the word ‘Woe’ thoroughly to rouse us, and to make us in earnest, and to work upon us to be wakeful. ‘Woe to the world because of offenses! Offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes’ (Matthew 18:7). He shows forth the good will He had towards those very men and His own mildness, that He mourns for them even when they contradict Him, not taking mere disgust at it, but correcting them, both with the mourning, and with the prediction, so as to win them over. But how is this possible? For if ‘offenses must come’, how is it possible to escape these? The offenses must come, but that men should perish is not altogether necessary. As though a physician should say, this disease will come, but it is not a necessary consequence that he should be destroyed by the disease if he pays attention. He said this to awaken everyone together with His

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<sup>106</sup> Basil the Great, Letters, XC, 2.

<sup>107</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, LIX, 1.



disciples that they may not slumber, as if sent for peace and an untroubled life. He shows many wars close upon them, from without, from within. Declaring this, Paul said, ‘When we came to Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were troubled on every side. Outside *were* conflicts, inside *were* fears’ (2 Corinthians 7:5); and, ‘In perils among false brethren’ (2 Corinthians 11:26). In his discourse to the Milesians too He said, ‘Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves’ (Acts 20:30); and He Himself too said, ‘A man's enemies will be those of his *own* household’ (Matthew 10:36). But when He said, ‘offenses must come’, it is not as taking away the power of choosing for themselves, nor the freedom of the moral principle, nor as placing man’s life under any absolute constraint of circumstances, that He said these things. He foretells what would surely be; and this Luke sets forth in another form of expression, ‘It is impossible that no offenses should come’” (Luke 17:1).

“But what are the offenses? They are the hindrances to the right way. It is not then His prediction that brings the offenses; far from it; neither because He foretold it, therefore does it take place; but because it surely was to be, therefore He foretold it. If those who bring in the offenses had not intended to do wickedly, the offenses would not have come; and if they were not going to come, neither would they have been foretold. But because those men did evil, and were incurably diseased, the offenses came, and He foretells that which is to be.”

“If everyone were to keep to the right way, He would not have said, ‘offenses must come’, but because He foreknew some people would be incorrigible, therefore He said, the offenses will surely come. Why did He not take them out of the way? Why should they have been taken out of the way? For the sake of those that are hurt? But the heretics are not the ruin of those that are hurt; this comes from their own negligence. The virtuous prove this; so far from being injured thereby, the virtuous are even in the greatest degree profited, such as was Job, such as was Joseph, such as were all the righteous, and the Apostles. But if many perish, it is from their own slumbering. If it were not so (that is, the ruin was the effect of the offenses), everyone would have perished. And if there are those who escape, let him who does not escape impute it to himself. For the offenses awaken us, and render us more quick-sighted, and sharper, not only him that is preserved; but even him that has fallen into them, if he rise up again quickly. They render him safer, and make him more difficult to overcome; so that if we are watchful, no small profit do we reap, even to be continually awake. If we have enemies, and when so many dangers are pressing upon us, we still fall asleep, what should we be like if living in security? Look at the first man. He lived in paradise a short time, perhaps not so much as a whole day, and having enjoyed delights, he drove on to such a pitch of wickedness, as even to imagine equality with God, and to account the deceiver a benefactor. He did not keep one commandment; if he had lived the rest of his life also without affliction, what would he not have done?”

John Chrysostom also pointed out that Timothy was fighting heretics in Ephesus when Paul wrote his Second Epistle. The heretics come out of the woodwork when the saints develop “itching ears” and heap up teachers for themselves. To prevent this, Timothy needed to work on the saints

to preoccupy their minds before the pestilence comes. Similarly, Christ prepared the Twelve just before the Crucifixion.

“Paul said, ‘For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine’ (2 Timothy 4:3). Before they grow stiff-necked, preoccupy them all. For this reason Paul says, ‘Be ready in season *and* out of season’ (2 Timothy 4:2); do everything so as to have willing disciples. ‘But after their own lusts’, he says, ‘they will heap up for themselves teachers’ (2 Timothy 4:3). Nothing can be more expressive than these words. By saying ‘they shall heap to themselves’, he shows the indiscriminate multitude of the teachers, as also by the teachers being elected by their disciples. ‘They shall have itching ears’ (2 Timothy 4:3). Seeking for such as speak to gratify and delight their hearers.”

“Paul continued, ‘they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables’ (2 Timothy 4:4). This Paul foretold, not as willing to throw Timothy into despair, but to prepare him to bear it firmly, when it shall happen. Just like Christ also did in saying, ‘they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues, for My sake’ (Matthew 10:17-18). Paul elsewhere said, ‘For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock’ (Acts 20:29). But this he said that they might watch, and duly use the present opportunity.”

“Paul concluded, ‘But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions’ (2 Timothy 4:5). It was for this therefore, that he foretold these things; as Christ also toward the end predicted that ‘false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect’ (Matthew 24:24); so Paul too, when he was about to depart, spoke of these things. ‘But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions’ (2 Timothy 4:5); that is, labor, preoccupy their minds before this pestilence assails them; secure the safety of the sheep before the wolves enter in, everywhere endure hardship. ‘Do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry’ (2 Timothy 4:5). Thus it was the work of an evangelist that he should endure hardship, both in himself, and from those without. The expression, ‘Fulfill your ministry’ means to ‘make full proof of’ your ministry”.

Athanasius of Alexandria stated<sup>108</sup> that heretics and schismatics cannot praise God because they speak perverse things. Because they are sinners, and sin has no place in common with the praise of God, there can be no fellowship between light and darkness.

“Wicked men press forward to keep the feast, and as at a feast praise God, and intrude into the Church of the saints, yet God reasons with the sinner, ‘Why do you talk of my ordinances, and take up my covenant in your mouth? You have hated instruction, and have cast my words behind you’ (Psalm 50:16-17). And the gentle Spirit rebukes them, saying, ‘Praise is not proper in the mouth of a sinner because it was not sent from the Lord’ (Ecclesiasticus 15:9 LXX). Sin has no place in common with the praise of God; for the sinner has a mouth speaking perverse things; as the Proverb says, ‘The mouth of the wicked pours forth evil’ (Proverbs 15:28). How is it possible for us to praise God with an impure mouth, since things which are contrary to each other cannot coexist? ‘What fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?’

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<sup>108</sup> Athanasius of Alexandria, Festal Letters, VII for 335 AD, 4.

(2 Corinthians 6:14) So exclaims Paul, a minister of the Gospel. Thus it is that sinners, and all those who are aliens from the Church, heretics, and schismatics, since they are excluded from glorifying God with the saints, cannot properly even continue observers of the feast. But the righteous man, although he appears dying to the world, uses boldness of speech, saying, 'I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord' (Psalm 118:17). Even God is not ashamed to be called the God of those who truly mortify their members which are upon the earth, but live in Christ; for He is the God of the living, not of the dead (Matthew 22:23-32). By His living Word He quickens all men, and gives Him to be food and life to the saints; as the Lord declares, 'I am the bread of life' (John 6:48). The Jews, because they were weak in perception, and had not exercised the senses of the soul in virtue, and did not comprehend this discourse about bread, murmured against Him, because He said, 'I am the living bread which came down from heaven, and gives life to the world'" (John 6:51, 33).

In Paul's writings, he referred to the household of God as being built on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets (Ephesians 2:19-20). Peter referred to the words spoken by the holy prophets and the commandments of us, the Apostles (2 Peter 3:2). And John referred to the ability of the Ephesians to test false apostles and find them to be liars (Revelation 2:2). All this attests to the existence of a definable metric (the Apostles' Creed) that was in common use at that time.

Next Sunday concludes the seven week series of the development of the Early Church. Today's Gospel and Epistle lesson takes us up to the present where the Church has been established on good foundations and can trace its roots to the teaching of the Twelve Apostles. Next Sunday we return to the beginning to consider the establishment of the Church at Pentecost.

## Appendix A: Simon the Heresiarch and His Followers

We sometimes think that the explosive growth of the Church in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century came as a result of times of peace and calm. From the writings of the Church Fathers, however, we see that the 1<sup>st</sup> Century was a time of great turmoil and there were extreme heresies that the Church had to deal with. Simon Magus was referred to as the source of all these heresies, and he had many followers, where each added a little twist to make their own teachings unique. These followers are summarized by century below:

### 1<sup>st</sup> Century Followers:

**Dositheus** was contemporary with Simon as a disciple of John the Baptist.

**Menander** was Simon's disciple and also a Samaritan magician.

**Saturninus** (also spelled Saturnilus) was a disciple of Menander and continued to teach into the early 2<sup>nd</sup> Century. Saturninus was also closely associated with the **Ophites** (snake worshippers), who probably pre-dated Christ along with the **Cainites** and the **Sethites**.

**Carpocrates** was a contemporary of Menander and Saturninus, who was also a magician.

**Nicolas of Antioch**, the ex-deacon (Acts 6:5), took Simon's teaching that God is the author of evil to its extreme, and ended up<sup>109</sup> with "lechery that knew no rest by night or day".

**The Ebionites** were a Jewish-Christian heretical group that rejected the writings of Paul and accepted only the Gospel of Matthew in Hebrew. They were strict followers of the Mosaic Law, and advocated a return to Judaism. Some practiced a strict form of asceticism, and abhorred certain foods.

**Cerinthus** was connected to the Ebionites and other Gnostics, and was opposed by the Apostle John in Asia Minor<sup>110</sup>. Irenaeus stated<sup>111</sup> that John wrote his Gospel specifically to oppose the heresy of Cerinthus.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Century Followers:

**Basilides** of Alexandria was a disciple of Saturninus who was prominent in the early 2<sup>nd</sup> Century. Since Ignatius warned<sup>112</sup> the Trallians about Basilides in c. 107 AD as he was being led to Rome and martyrdom, the implication is that Basilides got started before the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century.

**Cerdo** of Rome taught things similar to the Ebionites in the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> Century.

**Marcion**, a major figure in the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> Century, was a wealthy ship owner from Sinope of Pontus and was a disciple of Cerdo.

**Valentinus** of Egypt claimed to be taught by Theodas, a pupil of Paul, and proclaimed his heresy in Rome in the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> Century just after Cerdo.

**Bardesanes** of Edessa taught his heresy in the late 2<sup>nd</sup> Century and early 3<sup>rd</sup> Century.

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<sup>109</sup> Jerome, "Dialogue Against the Luciferians", 23, Treatises, Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, v. 6.

<sup>110</sup> Eusebius, Church History, III, 28.

<sup>111</sup> Irenaeus, Against Heresies, III, xi, 1.

<sup>112</sup> Ignatius, "To the Trallians", 10-11, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 1.

### **Later Followers:**

**Arius** of Libya taught his heresy in the late 3<sup>rd</sup> and early 4<sup>th</sup> Century, and it was his heresy that triggered the 1<sup>st</sup> Ecumenical Council in Nicaea in the early 4<sup>th</sup> Century.

**Eunomius** was a late 4<sup>th</sup> Century figure following Arius, who also held some of Simon's views.

### **Simon Magus' Teachings**

Many of the Church Fathers referred to Simon as the source of all the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Century heresies. Irenaeus stated<sup>113</sup> that the disciples and successors of Simon Magus of Samaria corrupted the truth, and injuriously affect the preaching of the Church. They do not confess the name of their master, in order all the more to seduce others, yet they do teach his doctrines. They use the name of Christ Jesus as a sort of lure to introduce the impieties of Simon; and thus they destroy multitudes.

They teach<sup>114</sup> that creation at large was formed after the image of their invisible Pleroma, and by the Demiurge, their supreme being. The multitude of those Gnostics sprang from him, and there are points of difference between them, in their several doctrines. All these heretics, taking their rise from Simon, have introduced impious and irreligious doctrines into this life.

“Simon Magus was the first<sup>115</sup> who said that he himself was God over all, and that the world was formed by his angels. Then those who succeeded him still further depraved his teaching through their impious and irreligious doctrines against the Creator. These heretics now referred to, being the disciples of those mentioned, render such as assent to them worse than the heathen”.

“You have indeed enjoined<sup>116</sup> upon me, my very dear friend, that I should bring this to light showing that they spring from Simon, the father of all heretics — to exhibit both their doctrines and successions, and to set forth arguments against them all”.

Cyril of Jerusalem also referred to Simon as the source of all the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Century heresies:

“The inventor of all heresy<sup>117</sup> was Simon Magus, who heard the words, ‘You have neither part nor lot in this matter’ (Acts 8:20-21). The rest, concerning whom it is written, ‘They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us’ (1 John 2:19). This man, after he had been cast out by the Apostles, was the first that dared with blasphemous mouth to say that it was himself who appeared on Mount Sinai as the Father, and afterwards appeared among the Jews, not in real flesh but in seeming, as Christ Jesus, and afterwards as the Holy Spirit whom Christ promised to send as the Paraclete. And he so deceived the City of Rome that Claudius set up his statue, and wrote beneath it, in the language of the Romans, ‘To Simon the Holy God’”.

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<sup>113</sup> Irenaeus, Against Heresies, I, xxvii, 4.

<sup>114</sup> Irenaeus, Against Heresies, II, Preface, 1.

<sup>115</sup> Irenaeus, Against Heresies, II, ix, 1.

<sup>116</sup> Irenaeus, Against Heresies, III, Preface.

<sup>117</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechetical Lectures, VI, 14.

Ignatius, the Bishop of Antioch, writing at the turn of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century (c. 107 AD) as he was being led to Rome to be fed to the lions, referred to Simon as the firstborn son of Satan. Ignatius also referred specifically to Simon's claim to be Christ in appearance only, which was a major 1<sup>st</sup> Century heresy promoted by Simon and his followers.

“Some that are without God say<sup>118</sup> that He became man in appearance only, that He did not in reality take unto Him a body that He died in appearance merely, and did not in very deed suffer. Then does the prophet in vain declare, ‘They shall look on Him whom they have pierced, and mourn over themselves as over one beloved’ (Zechariah 12:10). These men are as much unbelievers as were those that crucified Him. But as for me, I do not place my hopes in one who died for me in appearance, but in reality. For that which is false is quite abhorrent to the truth. Mary then did truly conceive a body, which had God inhabiting it. And God the Word was truly born of the Virgin, having clothed Himself with a body of like passions with our own. He who forms all men in the womb, was Himself really in the womb, and made for Himself a body of the seed of the Virgin, but without any intercourse of man. He was carried in the womb, even as we are, for the usual period of time; and was really born, as we also are; and was in reality nourished with milk, and partook of common meat and drink, even as we do”.

“Therefore flee from these ungodly heresies; for they are the inventions of the devil, that serpent that was the author of evil, and who by means of the woman deceived Adam, the father of our race”.

Vincent of Lerins (5<sup>th</sup> Century) stated<sup>119</sup> that Simon's heresies had formed the basis for even the heretics of his own time. One of the foundations of Simon's theology was that God was the author of evil. To them, then, practicing evil was part of godliness.

“From Simon Magus, that ancient sink of everything vile has flowed by a secret continuous succession even to Priscillian (5<sup>th</sup> Century) of our own time. He dared to say that God, the Creator, is the author of evil, that is, of our wickedness and impieties. He asserts that He created with His own hands a human nature of such a description, that of its own motion, and by the impulse of its necessity-constrained will, it can do nothing else, can will nothing else, but sin. Seeing that it is tossed to and fro, and set on fire by the furies of all sorts of vices, it is hurried away by unquenchable lust into the utmost extremes of baseness”.

“There are innumerable instances of this kind, such that it is an established Law in the case of almost all heresies, that they evermore delight in profane novelties, scorn the decisions of antiquity, and, through oppositions of science falsely so called, make shipwreck of the faith. On the other hand, it is the sure characteristic of Catholics to keep that, which has been committed to their trust by the holy Fathers. They condemn profane novelties, and, in the apostle's words, anathematize every one who preaches any other doctrine than that which has been received” (Galatians 1:8-9).

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<sup>118</sup> Ignatius, “To the Trallians”, 10-11, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 1.

<sup>119</sup> Vincent of Lerins, The Commonitory, XXIV, 62-63.

Hippolytus compared<sup>120</sup> Simon to Apsethus the Libyan, where he said Apsethus went about with greater wisdom and moderation. This is quite a condemnation of Simon when one considers the absurdity of Apsethus' methods. This also shows Paul's insight into how magicians like Jannes and Jambres, in performing their illusions, continue deceiving and being deceived (2 Timothy 3:8-13).

"It seems expedient to explain the opinions of Simon, a native of Gitta, a village of Samaria. His successors, taking a starting-point from him, have endeavored to establish similar opinions under a change of name. This Simon, a sorcerer, made a mockery of many, partly according to the art of Thrasymedes, and partly also by the assistance of demons, and attempted to deify himself. But the man was a cheat, and the Apostles reprovved him (Acts 8:18-24). With much greater wisdom and moderation than Simon, did Apsethus the Libyan endeavor to have himself considered a god in Libya".

"Apsethus the Libyan longed to become a god; when he failed to accomplish his desire, he wished to appear to have become *a god*. And he did appear, as time wore on, to have in reality become a god. The foolish Libyans used to sacrifice to him as to some divine power, supposing that they heard a voice that came down from heaven. Apsethus had collected a great number of parrots into the same cage. Now there are very many parrots throughout Libya, and very distinctly these imitate the human voice. This man nourished the birds and taught them to say, 'Apsethus is a god'. After the birds had practiced this for a long period, he released the parrots, each in a different direction. While the birds were on the wing, their sound went out into all Libya, and the expressions of these reached as far as the Hellenic country. The Libyans, astonished at the voice of the birds and not perceiving the knavery of Apsethus, held Apsethus to be a god. One of the Greeks perceived the trick of the supposed god, recaptured many of the parrots, and re-taught them to say, 'Apsethus caged us and compelled us to say he is a god'. Having heard the recantation of the parrots, the Libyans unanimously decided on burning Apsethus".

#### **Four of the Seventy Apostles Apostatized to Follow Simon**

##### **Jesus Warned the Twelve That Simon's Heresies Were Coming**

Prior to the Crucifixion in c. 30 AD, Jesus had warned the Twelve that these heretics would be coming and that they would show great signs promoting their evil. Christ's warning was fulfilled within a couple years when Simon began promoting himself as the Christ. Simon, who was formerly a disciple of John the Baptist, ran into Deacon Philip (Acts 8:9-24) just after the death of Stephen in c. 31 AD. Jesus had warned:

"Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand. Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it" (Matthew 24:23-26).

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<sup>120</sup> Hippolytus, The Refutation of All Heresies, VI, 2-3.

### **False Apostles from Among the Seventy and from Paul's Associates**

Four of the original Seventy (Luke 10:1-20) turned traitor to follow the teachings of Simon. In addition, three of Paul's fellow workers also did so. These are

- **Nicolas** of Antioch was one of the first seven deacons (Acts 6:5) and one of the original Seventy (Luke 10:1-20). When Simon came to Antioch, Nicolas began to follow his teachings, and the Apostle John later rebuked Nicolas very strongly (Revelation 2:14-15).
- **Demas** was a companion of Paul and Luke at the time that Paul was under house arrest in Rome (c. 62 AD), and was Paul's fellow worker as Paul drafted his Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon (Colossians 4:14, Philemon 1:24). However, Demas began following the teachings of Simon shortly afterward, and within 5 years, Paul stated that Demas "had forsaken me, having loved this present world" (2 Timothy 4:10). Hippolytus stated that Demas became "a priest of idols"<sup>121</sup>
- **Phygellus and Hermogenes**: Just before his death in c. 67 AD, Paul wrote that Phygellus and Hermogenes had turned away from him (2 Timothy 1:15). Hippolytus stated that these two of the Seventy began to follow Simon's teachings, and were therefore deleted from the ranks of the Seventy<sup>122</sup>
- **Alexander** was the son of Simon of Cyrene, who helped to carry Jesus' Cross (Mark 15:21). Together with his father and brother Rufus, who was one of the Seventy, Alexander helped to found the Church in Antioch (Acts 11:20). By the mid 60's AD, Alexander had become a follower of Simon, and Paul delivered him over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh<sup>123</sup> on account of his blasphemy (1 Timothy 1:20). A year or two later, Alexander was instrumental in affecting Paul's martyrdom (2 Timothy 4:14-15).
- **Hymenaeus** was associated with Alexander and was also delivered over to Satan by Paul (1 Timothy 1:20). A year or two later, Hymenaeus was still busy teaching Simon's doctrine of the resurrection (2 Timothy 2:17-18).
- **Philetus** was an associate of Hymenaeus who also taught Simon's doctrine (2 Timothy 2:17-18).

The Apostle John, writing toward the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century, warns people of these well-known apostates, calling them "antichrists". These people left the Church when they were exposed as wolves (Acts 20:29); they continued to deceive after they left the Church, piling sin upon sin.

"Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but *they went out* that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us" (1 John 2:18-19).

"Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also. Therefore let that

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<sup>121</sup> Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 5.

<sup>122</sup> Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 5.

<sup>123</sup> Compare 1 Corinthians 5:4-5. The intent was the eventual salvation of the individual through a greater recognition of who it is that he's in league with.



abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise that He has promised us -- eternal life. These things I have written to you concerning those who *try to* deceive you” (1 John 2:22-26).

“Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God. In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor *is* he who does not love his brother” (1 John 3:7-10).

## Appendix B: Some details about the Council of Nicaea

The Creed of Nicaea was a little different<sup>124</sup> than modern versions, since it contained anathemas on those who held otherwise, like the Arians.

“We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible. 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, true God of true God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made, both which are in heaven and on earth. Who for the sake of us men, and on account of our salvation, descended, became incarnate, and was made man. He suffered, and the third day he rose again, ascended into heaven; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. We also believe in the Holy Spirit. But those who say: 'There was a time when he was not;' and 'He was not before he was made;' and 'He was made out of nothing,' or 'He is of another substance' or 'essence,' or 'The Son of God is created,' or 'changeable,' or 'alterable', we the holy Catholic and Apostolic church anathematize.”

Five (or six) Bishops<sup>125</sup> refused to sign<sup>126</sup> the statement of the Creed: Eusebius bishop of Nicomedia, Theognis of Nicaea, Maris of Chalcedon, Secundus of Ptolemais, Theonas of Marmarica [added by Scholasticus] and Patrophilus, bishop of Scythopolis [added by Sozomen], objecting to the words “consubstantial with the Father”. These were exiled, along with Arius, and Arius himself was anathematized. Theodoret added<sup>127</sup>, “Those siding with Arius were Menophantus, bishop of Ephesus, Patrophilus, bishop of Scythopolis, Theognis, bishop of Nicaea, and Narcissus, bishop of Neronias, which is a town of the second Cilicia, and is now called Irenopolis; also Theonas, bishop of Marmarica, and Secundus, bishop of Ptolemais in Egypt. They drew up a formulary of their faith, and presented it to the council. As soon as it was read it was torn to pieces, and was declared to be spurious and false. So great was the uproar raised against them, and so many were the reproaches cast on them for having betrayed the Faith, that everyone, with the exception of Secundus and Theonas, stood up and took the lead in publicly renouncing Arius. This impious man, having thus been expelled from the Church, a confession of faith which is received to this day was drawn up by unanimous consent; and, as soon as it was signed, the council was dissolved.

Theodoret records<sup>128</sup> a letter of Eustathius, the famous bishop of Antioch, describing the methods of the Arians at the Council of Nicaea.

“When they began to inquire into the nature of the faith, the formulary of Eusebius of Nicomedia was brought forward, which contained undisguised evidence of his blasphemy. The reading of it before everyone caused great grief to the audience, on account of its departure from the Faith, while it inflicted irremediable shame on the writer. After the Eusebian gang had been clearly

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<sup>124</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicene\\_Creed](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicene_Creed).

Scholasticus, *Ecclesiastical History*, I, 8.

<sup>125</sup> Depending on which account is used. Noted above.

<sup>126</sup> Scholasticus, *Ecclesiastical History*, I, 8.

Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History*, I, 21; III, 19.

<sup>127</sup> Theodoret, *Ecclesiastical History*, I, 6.

<sup>128</sup> Theodoret, *Ecclesiastical History*, I, 7.

convicted, and the impious writing had been torn up in the sight of everyone, some among them by concert, under the pretense of preserving peace, imposed silence on all the ablest speakers. The Ariomaniacs, fearing that they should be ejected from the Church (by so numerous a council of bishops), sprang forward to anathematize and condemn the doctrines of Arius, and unanimously signed the confession of faith. Thus having retained possession of their Episcopal seats through shameful deception, although they ought rather to have been degraded, they continue, sometimes secretly, and sometimes openly, to patronize the condemned doctrines, plotting against the truth by various arguments. Wholly bent upon establishing these plantations of tares, they shrink from the scrutiny of the intelligent, avoid the observant, and attack the preachers of godliness. But we do not believe that these atheists can ever thus overcome God. Though they 'should again strengthen themselves, they shall again be conquered' (Isaiah 8:9).

Theodoret continued<sup>129</sup>, "When the formulary of the Nicene Creed had been set forth, there was no room to deny it; but Constantine himself was the first to testify that it was most Orthodox, and that he coincided in opinion with it. He exhorted the others to sign it, and to receive all the doctrine it contained, with the single addition of the one word 'consubstantial'. He explained that this term implied no bodily condition or change, for the Son did not derive His existence from the Father either by means of division or of cutting off, since an immaterial, intellectual, and incorporeal nature could not be subject to any bodily condition or change. These things must be understood as bearing a divine and mysterious signification. Athanasius stated<sup>130</sup> that it was Hosius of Córdoba who generated the words of the Nicene Confession.

The emperor wrote letters<sup>131</sup> to every city against Arius and those who had received his doctrines, and commanded Eusebius of Nicomedia and Theognis to leave the cities where they were bishops. He addressed himself in particular to the church of Nicomedia, urging it to adhere to the Faith which had been set forth by the council, to elect orthodox bishops, to obey them, and to let the past fall into oblivion. He threatened with punishment those who should venture to speak well of the exiled bishops, or to adopt their sentiments. In these and in other letters, he showed resentment against Eusebius, because he had previously adopted the opinions of the tyrant Licinius and had engaged in his plots. In accordance with the imperial edicts, Eusebius and Theognis were ejected from the churches which they held, and Amphion received that of Nicomedia, and Chrestus that of Nicaea.

Eusebius of Caesarea at first had a problem<sup>132</sup> with the word homoousios (consubstantial) referring to the Son's relationship to the Father. At Constantine's insistence on this as being true, Eusebius investigated the correctness of this expression and was finally convinced of its truth; he sent a letter around to all the Churches in Caesarea to this effect when he returned home.

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<sup>129</sup> Theodoret, *Ecclesiastical History*, I, 11.

<sup>130</sup> Athanasius, *History of the Arians*, VI, 42.

<sup>131</sup> Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History*, I, 21.

<sup>132</sup> Scholasticus, *Ecclesiastical History*, I, 8.  
Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History*, I, 21.

## Appendix C: Scriptures Used by the Arians and the Orthodox at the Council of Nicaea

### A. The Arians said that Christ is a Created Being.

#### The Arians said:

1. Quoting one<sup>133</sup> of the Seventy Apostles, “First of all, believe that there is one God who created and finished all things, and made all things out of nothing”, the Arians claimed<sup>134</sup> that Christ was one of the things that were made out of nothing. They consider<sup>135</sup> that the Son has this prerogative over others, and therefore is called Only-begotten, because He alone was brought to be by God alone, and all other things were created by God through the Son.
2. 1 Corinthians 8:6 “Yet for us *there is* one God, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom *are* all things, and through whom we *live*”. The Arians claimed<sup>136</sup> that the term “from God” applied equally to us as to Christ; therefore Christ had a beginning.

#### The Orthodox Countered:

1. Psalm 110:3 “I have begotten Thee from the womb before the Morning Star”. This refers<sup>137</sup> to the Father begetting the Son in Eternity past.
2. John 8:42 “Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me”. Thus Jesus is<sup>138</sup> of the Father’s Essence.
3. John 6:46 “Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father”. Thus Jesus is<sup>139</sup> equal to the Father.
4. John 10:30; 14:10 “I and *My* Father are one”; “Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me?” This is equivalent<sup>140</sup> to saying, ‘I am from the Father, and inseparable from Him.
5. John 1:18 “No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared *Him*”. “In the bosom” intimates<sup>141</sup>, the Son’s genuine generation from the Father.
6. John 1:3 “All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made”. The Arians claimed<sup>142</sup> this occurred in thought only where Christ originated from nothing; the Orthodox claimed that this speaks of the Trinity together creating the world.
7. Colossians 1:16 “For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created

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<sup>133</sup> Hermes, The Shepherd, II, 1

<sup>134</sup> Athanasius, De Decretis, Chapter 5, 18.

Theodoret, Ecclesiastical History, I, 7, from Eustathius.

<sup>135</sup> Athanasius, De Decretis, Chapter 3, 7.

<sup>136</sup> Athanasius, De Decretis, Chapter 5, 19.

Theodoret, Ecclesiastical History, I, 7, from Eustathius

<sup>137</sup> Athanasius, De Decretis, Chapter 3, 13; 5, 21, 26; Deposition of Arius, 3.

<sup>138</sup> Athanasius, De Decretis, Chapter 5, 21.

Athanasius, To the Bishops of Egypt, Chapter 1, 9.

<sup>139</sup> Athanasius, De Decretis, Chapter 5, 21.

<sup>140</sup> Athanasius, De Decretis, Chapter 5, 21, 26; Deposition of Arius, 3.

Theodoret, Ecclesiastical History, I, 3, from Alexander of Alexandria’s letter to Alexander of Constantinople; I, 7 from Eustathius; II, 6 from the Council of Sardica

<sup>141</sup> Athanasius, De Decretis, Chapter 5, 21.

<sup>142</sup> Athanasius, On the Opinion of Dionysius, 2; Deposition of Arius, 3.

Theodoret, Ecclesiastical History, I, 3, from Alexander of Alexandria’s letter to Alexander of Constantinople; II, 6 from the Council of Sardica.

through Him and for Him”. The Arians claimed<sup>143</sup> that the artificer of all things is a creature, and that He is a created thing in whom all things created have come into being and subsist.

## **B. The Arians said that We Are Like Christ; therefore Christ is a Created Being.**

### **The Arians said:**

1. 2 Corinthians 5:17 “Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new”. Therefore, the Arians said<sup>144</sup>, we are like Christ.
2. 1 Corinthians 11:7 “For a man indeed ought not to cover *his* head, since he is the image and glory of God”. Therefore, the Arians said<sup>145</sup>, man is like Christ.
3. 2 Corinthians 4:11 “For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh”. The Arians read this as “we who live are always in Him”. Therefore we are like Christ.
4. Acts 17:28 “For in Him we live and move and have our being”. Therefore<sup>146</sup> we are like Christ.
5. Romans 8:35 “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” i.e. Nothing shall separate us. Therefore<sup>147</sup> we are unalterable like Christ.

### **The Orthodox Countered:**

1. Proverbs 8:22 “The Lord made me the beginning of his ways for his works”. The Father set the Son over the works that the Son already had created. The Arians interpreted<sup>148</sup> this as saying that God created the Son first, then everything else. Athanasius stated<sup>149</sup>, Christ is called also in the Scriptures, ‘servant,’ and ‘son of a handmaid,’ and ‘lamb,’ and ‘sheep,’ and it is said that He suffered toil, thirst, was beaten, and has suffered pain. But there is plainly a reasonable ground why such representations as these are given of Him in the Scriptures; it is because He became man and the Son of man, and took upon Him the form of a servant, which is the human flesh: for ‘the Word,’ says John, ‘became flesh.’ (John 1:14) Since He became man, no one ought to be offended at such expressions; for it is proper to man to be created, born, formed, to suffer toil and pain, to die and to rise again from the dead. As, being Word and Wisdom of the Father, He has all the attributes of the Father, His eternity, His unchangeableness, and the being like Him in all respects and in all things. He is neither before nor after, but co-existent with the Father, and is the very form of the Godhead; He is the Creator, and is not created. Since He is in essence like the Father, He cannot be a creature, but must be the Creator, as Himself hath said, ‘My Father has been working until now, and I have been working’ (John 5:17). So being made man, and bearing our flesh, He is necessarily said to be created and made, and that is proper to all flesh; however, these men, like Jewish vintners, who mix their wine with water, debase the Word,

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<sup>143</sup> Athanasius, De Decretis, Chapter 5, 18.

Theodoret, Ecclesiastical History, I, 3, from Alexander of Alexandria’s letter to Alexander of Constantinople.

<sup>144</sup> Athanasius, De Decretis, Chapter 5, 19.

Theodoret, Ecclesiastical History, I, 7, from Eustathius.

<sup>145</sup> Athanasius, De Decretis, Chapter 5, 20.

Theodoret, Ecclesiastical History, I, 7, from Eustathius.

<sup>146</sup> Athanasius, De Decretis, Chapter 5, 20.

<sup>147</sup> Athanasius, De Decretis, Chapter 5, 20.

<sup>148</sup> Athanasius, De Decretis, Chapter 3, 13, 14, 26.

Theodoret, Ecclesiastical History, I, 5, from Eusebius of Nicomedia’s letter to Paulinus of Tyre.

<sup>149</sup> Athanasius, To the Bishops of Egypt, Chapter II, 17.

Theodoret, Ecclesiastical History, I, 7 Arius refuted by Eustathius.

and subject His Godhead to their notions of created things. Wherefore the Fathers were with reason and justice indignant, and anathematized this most impious heresy; which these persons are now cautious of and keep back, as being easy to be disproved and unsound in every part of it. See also Athanasius, Four Discourses Against the Arians, II, 16-22.

2. Deuteronomy 32:6 “Do you thus deal with the Lord, O foolish and unwise people? *Is* He not your Father, *who* bought you? Has He not made you and formed you?” Christ could not be<sup>150</sup> a creature like man if He Himself created man.
3. Proverbs 8:25 “Before the mountains were settled, and before all hills, he begat Me”. In many passages<sup>151</sup> of the divine oracles is the Son said to have been generated, but nowhere to have come into being; which clearly convicts those of misconception about the Lord’s generation, who presume to call His divine generation a making.
4. Hebrews 11:3 “By faith we understand that the ages were framed by the Word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible”. That is, the Word<sup>152</sup> created everything out of nothing.

### **C. The Arians said that Other Physical Created Things Are Called “Power of God”; therefore Christ Can’t Be that Great**

#### **The Arians Said:**

1. Joel 2:25 “So I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the crawling locust, the consuming locust, and the chewing locust, My great army (power *dunamis* LXX) which I sent among you”. The caterpillar and locust are called “great power”; therefore<sup>153</sup> Christ as the Power of God is not saying much.
2. Exodus 12:41 “And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years -- on that very same day -- it came to pass that all the armies (powers *dunamis* LXX) of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt”. The Arians read<sup>154</sup> this as saying that the people of God are called the “Power of God”; Christ can’t be that great.
3. Psalm 46:7 “The Lord of hosts (powers *dunameon* LXX) *is* with us; The God of Jacob *is* our refuge”. The Arians read<sup>155</sup> this saying that the people of God have the power of God.

#### **The Orthodox Countered:**

1. 1 John 5:20 “And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life”. The Arians, as if in contradiction to this, allege<sup>156</sup> that Christ is not the true God, but that He is only called God, as are other creatures, in regard to His participation in the divine nature.

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<sup>150</sup> Athanasius, De Decretis, Chapter 6, 26.

<sup>151</sup> Athanasius, De Decretis, Chapter 3, 13.

Theodoret, Ecclesiastical History, I, 3, from Alexander of Alexandria’s letter to Alexander of Constantinople.

<sup>152</sup> Athanasius, De Decretis, Chapter 5, 18

<sup>153</sup> Athanasius, De Decretis, Chapter 5, 20.

Athanasius, To the Bishops of Egypt, II, 16.

Theodoret, Ecclesiastical History, I, 7, from Eustathius

Athanasius, Four Discourses Against the Arians, II, ix, 32; xviii, 37-42; xviii, 37

<sup>154</sup> Athanasius, De Decretis, Chapter 5, 20.

<sup>155</sup> Athanasius, De Decretis, Chapter 5, 20.

Theodoret, Ecclesiastical History, I, 7, from Eustathius.

<sup>156</sup> Athanasius, To the Bishops of Egypt, Chapter II, 13.

2. The Fathers used<sup>157</sup> the illustration of the Light and the Radiance to describe the relationship of the Father to the Son. If the Father is the sun, the Son is the beam of the sun. One cannot speak of the sun without its beams. The light and the radiance are one, and the one is shown in the other; the radiance is in the sun, so that whoever sees this, sees that also. The Arians tried to twist this to speak of the heat generated by the sun; that is something different; that is the effects of the sun, not the sun itself.

#### **D. The Arians Claimed that the Word and Wisdom Refer to the Father Only.**

##### **The Arians stated:**

1. John 1:1 “In the beginning was the Word” and 1 Corinthians 1:24 “Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God”. The Arians said<sup>158</sup> that the Word and the Wisdom which is in God is distinct from that one of which John and Paul spoke of. That is, only the Father is Word and Wisdom.
2. Psalm 14:7 “Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity: therefore God, thy God, has anointed thee with the oil of gladness beyond thy fellows”. Thus the Arians stated that the Father anointed Christ with “deity”. The Orthodox countered with “No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared *Him*” (John 1:18), where there never was a time<sup>159</sup> when He was not.

##### **The Orthodox Countered:**

1. Hebrews 1:3 “Who being the brightness of His glory the very image of His subsistence”. The Arians dare<sup>160</sup> to separate them, and to say that Christ is alien from the essence and eternity of the Father; and impiously to represent Him as changeable, not perceiving, that by speaking thus, they make Him to be, not one with the Father, but one with created things. Who does not see, that the brightness cannot be separated from the light, but that it is by nature proper to it, co-existent with it, and is not produced after it?
2. When the Father says, ‘This is My beloved Son’ (Matthew 17:5) and when the Scriptures say that ‘He is the Word’ of the Father, and ‘By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth’ (Psalm 33:6) and in short, ‘All things were made by Him’ (John 1:3); these inventors<sup>161</sup> of new doctrines and fictions represent that there is another Word, and another Wisdom of the Father, and that He is only called the Word and the Wisdom conceptually on account of things endued with reason, while they don’t perceive the absurdity of this.
3. Hebrews 2:10 “For it was fitting for Him, for whom *are* all things and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings”. If all things<sup>162</sup> that were made by the will of God were made by Him, how can He be Himself one of the things that were made? How can these men say, that we were not made for Him, but He for us? If it be so, He ought to have said, ‘For whom the Word was

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<sup>157</sup> Athanasius, De Decretis, Chapter 5, 23, 24, 27.

<sup>158</sup> Athanasius, On the Opinion of Dionysius, 25.

Athanasius, De Decretis, Chapter 3, 6, 28, 32.

Athanasius, To the Bishops of Egypt, II, 13.

<sup>159</sup> Theodoret, Ecclesiastical History, I, 3, from Alexander of Alexandria’s letter to Alexander of Constantinople.

<sup>160</sup> Athanasius, To the Bishops of Egypt, Chapter II, 13; Deposition of Arius, 3.

Theodoret, Ecclesiastical History, I, 3, from Alexander of Alexandria’s letter to Alexander of Constantinople; I, 7 from Eustathius.

<sup>161</sup> Athanasius, To the Bishops of Egypt, Chapter II, 13.

<sup>162</sup> Athanasius, To the Bishops of Egypt, Chapter II, 12, 15.

made;’ but He didn’t say this, but, ‘For whom are all things, and by whom are all things,’ thus proving these men to be heretical and false.

4. Matthew 11:27 “All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and *the one* to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him*”. And again, ‘Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father’ (John 6:46). Are not these indeed enemies of God<sup>163</sup> which say that the Father is neither seen nor known of the Son perfectly? If the Lord says, ‘As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep’ (John 10:15); and if the Father knows not the Son partially, are they not mad to say idly that the Son knows the Father only partially, and not fully?

### **E. The Sequence of Arian Arguments.**

The sequence in the Arians’ logic was as follows. When they were proven to be wrong in the first point, they shifted to the second; then the third, etc.

- a. In showing that the Word is no work, it has been also shown that He is no creature. For it is the same to say work or creature, so that the proof that He is no work is a proof also that He is no creature. Whereas one may marvel at these men, devising excuses to be unscriptural, and were not daunted at the refutations which meet them upon every point. First they set about deceiving the simple by their questions, ‘He who is made from that which was not, was He one that was not or one that was; and, ‘Had you a son before begetting him?’
- b. And when this had been proved worthless, next they invented the question, ‘Is the Unoriginate one or two?’
- c. Then, when in this they had been confuted, immediately they formed another, ‘Has He free-will and an alterable nature?’
- d. But being forced to give up this, next they set about saying, ‘Being made so much better than the Angels’.
- e. When the truth exposed this pretense, they collected them all together and recommended their heresy by referring to ‘work’ and ‘creature’. They thus repeated the same things over again, and are true to their own perverseness, putting into various shapes and turning the same errors over and over, as if to deceive some by that variability.

### **F. The Arguments of Athanasius of Alexandria against the Arians.**

Athanasius stated<sup>164</sup>, “Now it happened to Eusebius of Nicomedia and his fellows in the Nicene Council as follows: while they stood out in their unscriptural statements, and attempted their fight against God, the terms they used were replete with unscriptural statements; but the 300 some assembled Bishops mildly and charitably required of them to explain and defend themselves on their religious beliefs. Scarcely did they begin to speak, when they were condemned, and one differed from another; then perceiving the bind in which their heresy lay, they remained silent, and by their silence confessed the disgrace which came upon their heterodoxy. On this the Bishops, having rejected the terms they had invented, published against them the sound and ecclesiastical faith; and, as all subscribed to it, Eusebius and his fellows subscribed to it also in those same words, of which they are now complaining, I mean, “of the essence” and “one in essence,” and

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<sup>163</sup> Athanasius, To the Bishops of Egypt, Chapter II, 16.

Theodoret, Ecclesiastical History, I, 3, from Alexander of Alexandria’s letter to Alexander of Constantinople.

<sup>164</sup> Athanasius, De Decretis, Chapter 2, 3.



that “the Son of God is neither creature or work, nor numbered among things originated, but that the Word is an offspring from the substance of the Father.”

When the Arians had been thus cornered at the Council of Nicaea, they brought up the term “Unoriginate” (borrowed from the pagan Greeks) to refer<sup>165</sup> to the Father, expecting that they could then apply the term “originate” to the Son. Athanasius pointed out that the Greeks referred to intellect and the soul as also being “Unoriginate”, implying that man was also “Unoriginate”. Greek philosophers define this term as (1) what has not yet, but may, come to be; (2) what neither exists, nor can come into being; (3) what exists indeed, but was neither originated nor had origin of being, but is everlasting and indestructible. Using definition (3), this argument is just another way of stating the Arian heresy: that the Son is a created being. Using the term “Unoriginate” is just cloaking their perverseness like their father the devil. They have broached the term “Unoriginate” that they might pretend to speak piously of God, yet might cherish a concealed blasphemy against the Lord, and under a veil might teach it to others. In addition, the term “Unoriginate” refers to things created, not to things begotten; if an architect is referred to as “Unoriginate”, the city he designs is referred to as “originate”; but the architect’s son is not referred to as “originate”, but as “begotten”.

This explains what was done in the Council; but I know that the contentious among Christ’s foes will not be amenable to change even after hearing this, but will always search about for other pretenses. For as the Prophet speaks, ‘If the Ethiopian can change his skin, or the leopard his spots, then will they be willing to think scripturally, who have been instructed in unscriptural statements’ (Jeremiah 13:23). If these men say that the Lord is a creature, and worship Him as a creature, how do they differ from the Gentiles?

What use are the Scriptures<sup>166</sup> to the Arians, and why do they bring them forward, men who say that the Word of God is a creature, and like the Gentiles ‘serve the creature rather than God the Creator?’ (Romans 1:25) Each of the heresies of Marcion, Manichaeus, Paul of Samosata, and Arius, regarding the peculiar impiety of its invention, has nothing in common with the Scriptures. Their advocates are aware of this, that the Scriptures are very much altogether, opposed to the doctrines of every one of them; but they do this to deceive the more simple sort -- such as are those of whom it is written in the Proverbs, ‘The simple believes every word’ (Proverbs 14:15). They pretend, like their ‘father the devil’, to study and to quote the language of Scripture, in order that they may appear by their words to have a right belief, and so may persuade their wretched followers to believe what is contrary to the Scriptures. In every one of these heresies the devil has disguised himself, and has suggested to them words full of craftiness. The Lord spoke concerning them, that ‘false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect’ (Matthew 24:24). Accordingly the devil has come, speaking by each and saying, ‘I am Christ, and the truth is with me;’ and he has made them to be liars like himself. Strange it is, that while all heresies are at variance with one another concerning the mischievous inventions which each has framed, they are united together only by the common purpose of lying. They have one and the same father that has sown in them all the seeds of falsehood. Wherefore the faithful Christian and true disciple of the Gospel, having grace to discern spiritual things, and having built the house of his faith upon a rock (Matthew 7:24-25), stands continually firm and secure from their deceits.

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<sup>165</sup> Athanasius, De Decretis, Chapter 5, 28-29.

<sup>166</sup> Athanasius, To the Bishops of Egypt, 4, 13.

Athanasius stated<sup>167</sup> that the Arian argument was as follows: “The Arians say that as all things are in essence separate and alien from the Father, so Christ also is in all respects separate and alien from the essence of the Father. He belongs to things made and created, and is one of them; for He is a creature, a thing made, and a work. Again, they say that God did not create us for His sake, but Him for our sakes. They say, ‘God was alone, and the Word was not with Him, but afterwards when He would produce us, then He made Him; and from the time He was made, He called Him the Word, the Son, and the Wisdom, in order that He might create us by Him. As all things subsisted by the will of God, and did not exist before; so He also was made by the will of God, and did not exist before. For the Word is not the proper and natural Offspring of the Father, but has Himself originated by grace; for God who existed made by His will the Son who did not exist, by which will also He made all things, produced, created, and willed them to come into being.’ The Bishops who assembled from all parts at the Council of Nicaea, began to hold their ears at these blasphemous statements of Arius, and all with one voice condemned this heresy on account of them, and anathematized it, declaring it to be alien and estranged from the Faith of the Church. It was no compulsion which led the judges to this decision; they all deliberately vindicated the truth; and they did so justly and rightly. Infidelity is coming in through these men, or rather a Judaism counter to the Scriptures, which has close upon it Gentile superstition. He who holds these opinions can no longer be called a Christian, for they are all contrary to the Scriptures. These men allege that Christ is not the true God, but that He is only called God, as are other creatures, regarding of His participation in the divine nature. Paul blames the Gentiles, because they worship the creature, saying, ‘They served the creature rather than God the Creator’ (Romans 1:25). If these men say that the Lord is a creature, and worship Him as a creature, how do they differ from the Gentiles? They say that He is alien from the essence and eternity of the Father; and impiously to represent Him as changeable, not perceiving, that by speaking thus, they make Him to be, not one with the Father, but one with created things. These inventors of new doctrines represent that there is another Word and Wisdom of the Father, and that Christ is only called the Word and the Wisdom conceptually on account of things endued with reason, while they don’t perceive the absurdity of this.

Athanasius stated<sup>168</sup> that the Arians may be able to learn something from the demons that resemble them, for the demons spoke of Him, not as if there were many besides, but, as knowing Him alone. They said, ‘Let *us* alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are -- the Holy One of God!’ (Mark 1:24) and ‘Suddenly they cried out, saying, ‘What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?’ (Matthew 8:29) Although Satan suggested this heresy to the Arians, while he was tempting Jesus on the mountain, he didn’t say, ‘If You are a Son of God,’ as though there were others besides Him, but, ‘If You are the Son of God,’ as being the only one. The Gentiles, having fallen from the notion of one God, have sunk into polytheism. So these wonderful men, not believing that the Word of the Father is one, have come to deny Him that is really God and the true Word, and have dared to conceive of Him as a creature, not perceiving how full of impiety is the thought. For if He is a creature, how is He at the same time the Creator of creatures?

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<sup>167</sup> Athanasius, To the Bishops of Egypt, II, 12-13.

<sup>168</sup> Athanasius, To the Bishops of Egypt, II, 14.