

The Christian CREED

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THE CHRISTIAN ORTHODOX CREED

PREFACE

These lectures were delivered to the Sunday School servants in various churches throughout Los Angeles, from the year 2000-2007, and was never intended to be a book.

But as the need became imminent for those who want to join the holy orthodox church-from many beliefs-I found it useful for these potential Christians-to-be, to understand the belief as source of Christianity put by the authority of the Holy Spirit Who inspired the men of God to put the Christian belief in a well authenticated formula to be recited by every believer in Christ Jesus as Lord, Savior and Redeemer.

The teaching of the Lord Jesus, which appeared in Matthew 28:19, 20 in the words to be spoken at baptism, where the resurrected Lord concluded His earthly teaching with this summary: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the end of age." In this way, the

Lord Jesus linked baptizing and teaching with the promise of His continuing presence.

Each phrase of the Creed, the church fathers looked for its full meaning and implications.

Each phrase has a history of debate concerning its meanings and consequences.

Each part must be consistent with the whole confession that brings the believer fittingly to the Lord's table.

Each part must be carefully defended against distortions and misinterpretations.

The purpose of this book is to clarify the original ecumenical faith into which Christians of all times and places are still being baptized.

This Christian Creed is the most reliable rule of baptismal faith, and to bring the best thinking of early Christian teachers.

Studying this 'creed' is important as it remains the most authoritative common confession of worldwide Christians.

The Creed is set forth in three parts or articles corresponding with the three Icons/Persons of the One God attested in holy Scriptures.

Those baptized are expected to understand what it means to believe in God the Father, in God the Son and in God the Holy Spirit.

The Creed is a confession of the cumulative meaning of the prayers, liturgy and common acts of confession of the whole Christian community of all times and places.

It expresses the common sense of the faithful about what the revelation of God in Scripture narrates and proclaims.

Through the intercessions of the blessed Theotokos St. Mary the ever-Virgin, and the great archangel Michael the chief of the heavenly hosts, and our beloved Evangelist St. Mark the apostle and martyr, and the prayers of our Pope and Patriarch Abba Tawadros II, and his partner in the apostolic service His Eminence Metropolitan Serapion, may the holy God use this work for the salvation of many. Amen.

Fr. Markos R. Hanna

May 8th 2014AD

Baramuda 30th, 1730 AM

The Feast of St. Mark the Apostle

THE TEXT OF THE CREED:

We believe in One God, God the Father, the Pantocrator, Creator of heaven and earth, and of all things seen and unseen.

We believe in One Lord, Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages.

Light of Light, true God of true God; begotten, not created; of One essence with the Father by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was Incarnate of the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary, and became Man.

And He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, suffered and was buried; and on the third day He rose from the dead according to the Scriptures.

Ascended into heaven, He sits at the right hand of His Father; and He is coming again in His glory to judge the living and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

Yes, we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father, who, with the Father and the Son, is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets.

And in one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. We confess one Baptism, for the remission of sins.

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

THE HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CREED

THE PART CONCERNING THE FATHER AND THE SON WAS PUT TOGETHER IN NICEA COUNCIL

Reign of Emperor Constantine						
COUNCIL	Attended	YEAR	WHERE	THE HERESY	LEADERS	THE DECISIONS
I Nicea	318 bishops	325AD	Nicea/Asia	'Arius said' Jesus was not God	Hosius, Alexander Pope of Alexandria/ Egypt & Athanasius his deacon/ disciple.	The Orthodox Creed "Truly we believe in One God..Whose Kingdom shall have no end".

THE SECOND PART CONCERNING THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GOD FOR THE CHRISTIAN CREED, WAS PERFECTED

Reign of Emperor Constantine						
COUNCIL	Attended	YEAR	WHERE	THE HERESY	LEADERS	THE DECISIONS
II Constanti- nople	150 bishops	381AD	Constanti- nople	Macedonius said 'The Holy Spirit was created or made' Appolina- rius & Sabillios	Timothy, bishop of Alexnadria was one of the three leaders	The last part of the Creed was added 'Yes, we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord.

THIS COUNCIL WAS IN REGARDS TO SAINT MARY
 ,BEING MOTHER OF ‘GOD INCARNATE’ THUS
 “THE TITLE ‘MOTHER OF GOD’ i.e. “THEOTOKOS

Reign of Emperor Constantine						
COUNCIL	Attended	YEAR	WHERE	THE HERESY	LEADERS	THE DECISIONS
III Ephesus	200 bishops	431AD	EPHESUS	Nestorius said ‘St. Mary is the mother of the flesh, but not Mother of God.	Cyril I, 24th Pope of Alexan- dria	Each church made a prayer to include the title ‘Theotokos’

INTERPRETATION & **EXPLANATION**

INTRODUCTION:

* This is the Christian Creed, the chore of the Christian dogma, and all the traditional churches believe in it and recite it, and any church which doesn't recite it or believe in it, is not considered a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ.

* Before the Church put a formula of faith in words, i.e. Creed, the Church lived this faith and belief for more than three centuries.

The Church preached always saying, "Repent and believe in the Gospel".

* But there came some deviations and heresies in expressions concerning the sound faith and belief which the Church found necessary then to put a formula for the sound faith and belief, thus, the Christian Creed became in existence in an Ecumenical (international) meetings having all the churches of the world agreeing to formula of faith.

* This doctrine can be summed up in a single word – monotheism.

It is also clear that by the time of the Lord Jesus, Jews were monotheistic in the modern sense of the term.

+ The goal of our faith is to ‘love God’, which was the first law given by God to Moses on Tablets in Deuteronomy 6:4 “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. You shall love our God..”

The New Testament also says the same in 1 Corinthians 12:3 “Jesus .. is Lord ..”

* Therefore, Jehovah’s Witness, The Adventists and the Mormons along with many other cults are not considered Christians as they do not believe in any part or all the text of this Creed.

- These cults also believe that Jesus Christ is not “God appearing in flesh” [1Tim.3:16], thus, denying His deity and also denying being of one essence with the Father.

THE CHRISTIAN CREED

“TRULY WE BELIEVE IN ONE GOD...”

INTRODUCTION:

In the early church after the Three Litanies in the Divine Liturgy were prayed, the Catechumens used to leave the church for they cannot comprehend the mystery of the Body and Blood.

-The deacon cries out saying; **‘In the wisdom of God, let us attend. Lord have mercy. Lord have mercy. Truly — (in truth-we believe).’**

-So, the deacon is asking the congregation to be calm and be in awe to continue praying, after the Catechumens have left, and be ready to recite the Creed in full respect.

As the congregation recites the Christian Creed, better known as ‘The Nicean Creed’, with a firm voice in one accord, as if of one voice, to have its effect and strength. [Mineret of The Holies, Fr. Mankarious Awadalla, vol.2, p.13]

-The importance of reciting the Christian Creed is to proclaim the faith.

-“Without ‘faith’ we cannot please God” [Hebrews 11:6]
“Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” [Hebrews 11:1]

-We declare this faith to please God. **“for he that comes to God must believe ..”** [Hebrews 11:6]

-When we recite the Christian Creed we declare our orthodox faith in the one God with His Three Hypostases.

-We also proclaim our **hope** and anticipation in the Resurrection from the dead, as Christ will come again into the world to judge the living and the dead.

-We also **hope for the eternal life**, of the world to come with its unending happiness and joy.

-When we recite the Creed and exchange holy kisses/greetings, we have obtained the three great Christian virtues; **Faith, Hope and Love** [1 Corinthians 13:13]

* * * * *

FIRST: HISTORICALLY

The First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea:

In the end of the third, beginning of the fourth century, there lived in Alexandria-Egypt a priest called 'Arius'. His origin was from Libya, under the Coptic Church of Alexandria, who taught the people false teachings and doctrines against the Bible.

He taught that Christ was not God! He said, 'Jesus was a god, but not God'!

This teaching is extended today in the Jehovah's Witness who claim that Jesus is Archangel Michael! They also claim that Jesus is the beginning of all the 'creations' of God Almighty, putting Jesus among the creatures and creation of God!?

The Pope of Alexandria then, Pope Alexandros (*Alexander*) the 19th Pope and Patriarch on the throne of the See of St. Mark, had a very bright and spiritual young deacon named 'Athanasius'. Pope Alexander tried hard to convince Arius that he was teaching the wrong

DOCTRINE (teaching), but he was a stubborn and arrogant man, and refused to listen. Arius was ordered by Pope Alexander not to teach in churches.

But Arius took a step further using his gifted voice to put together some songs using his false teachings and pushed the people to learn it, and they did, and that caused an alarm on the sound doctrine of the holy Church.

So, the Pope called for an ecumenical council to discuss this dangerous matter, as it was spreading. Emperor Constantine heard about the matter, and welcomed the Council to be held to discuss the problem. So, letters were sent to the different bishops around the world, and finally, in the year **325 A.D., in the city of Nicaea, 318 bishops and priests** from all over the world were gathered together. Among the great men who attended the Council of Nicaea were Pope Alexander, who was the chief of the council and his deacon Athanasius helped to formulate or put together a formula for the Christian faith.

Saint Paphnotius, a Bishop from Upper-Egypt attended the COUNCIL too. He was a confessor, since he had lost an eye and a leg during the persecution, and was the one who suggested that the priest has to be married for safety and simplicity of his service.

Bishop Paul from Syria also attended. He too suffered during the persecution. He had burns on his hands.

There was also a famous Bishop from Italy, who attended the COUNCIL of Nicaea, his name was Saint Nicholas. Well some people call him Santa Clause!

(Therefore, Saint Nicholas is a real Saint and not a giant man dressed in a red gown).

We celebrate his feast day in December.

The Council resumed after Emperor Constantine took the blessings of the Bishops attending the Council,

by kissing their wounds, for he said, ‘these members were lost for Christ, Christ must be healing it.’

For historical records, counts of the attendants were made before they sat, and found them to be 319, but after they sat they were 318. This was done three times, and they were then sure that Christ was in their midst.

The Council started and heard what Arius, the heretic, had to say. He said that Jesus is not God or One in Essence with the Father, but less than the Father and is the

first of His creation, denying the deity of Christ.*[this is the present heresy of Jehovah’s Witness]*

Then the young deacon Athanasius debated him explaining the proper Biblical DOCTRINE (teaching) of the Church: That Christ is of ONE ESSENCE WITH THE FATHER. He is Light of Light. True God of True God. Begotten but not created.

By Whom all things were created and made. He came down from heaven for the purpose of our redemption to grant us salvation from the bondage of Satan.

The Council then decided that the teaching of Arius was a HERESY (wrong teaching), and confirmed the ORTHODOX (straight and correct) teaching of Athanasius.

The Orthodox Doctrine was then written down, in a formula, so that all the Churches in the world would use it and teach it.

These teachings are known to us today as the **CHRISTIAN (Orthodox) CREED**.

It is also called the:

NICEAN-CONSTANTINOPLE CREED.

The Text of The CREED according to the Council of Nicaea:

“We believe in One God, God The Father the Pantocrator, Creator of heaven and earth, and of all things seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages.

Light of Light, true God of true God; begotten not created, of one Essence with the Father by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was Incarnate of the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

And He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, suffered and was buried; and on the third day He rose from the dead according to the Scriptures.

Ascended into heaven, He sits at the right hand of His Father; and He is coming again in His glory to judge the living and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.”

Today, Christians all over the world believe in the
CREED.

Anyone who does not believe in the CREED is not a
Christian, and is called a HERETIC.

‘The Second Ecumenical Council of Constantinople’

Almost 56 years later, a man called ‘Macedonious’ was teaching that the Holy Spirit is not divine, and is created! [There were two more heretics against the Holy Spirit who were ex-communicated also, these were Appolinarius and Sabillios]

An Ecumenical Council was imminent, and took place **in Constantinople in the year 381 AD, where 150 Bishops attended**, headed by St. Meletius, the patriarch of Antioch-Syria. But his call to give an account before the Lord whom he loved came during the Council, and departed from this world.

A quorum of three bishops were chosen to run the Council. St. Timotheos (Timothy) of Alexandria, St. Gregory the Theologian along with a third bishop, were chosen to head the Council.

The Council debated the matter and concluded; Mecedonious to be ex-communicated, and perfected the second part of the Nicæan Creed.

The Holy Spirit inspired the Fathers then, to add this part concerning the Holy Spirit;

“Yes, we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Life-Giver, Who proceeds from the Father, Who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, Who spoke by the prophets.

And in one holy, catholic and apostolic church.

We confess one baptism for the remission of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the coming age. Amen.”



SECOND: THE CREED IS BIBLICAL

All the words of the Christian Creed are taken from the Holy Bible.

CONCERNING GOD THE FATHER

We believe [Hebrews 11:6]
In One God, [Mark 12:32]
God The Father [John 6:27]
The Pantocrator, [Genesis 1:17; 1Corinthians 8:6]
Creator of heaven and earth, [Genesis 1:1;
Rev. 1:6]
And of all things seen and unseen.
[Gen. 1; 1 Cor. 2:9; John 20:29]

CONCERNING GOD THE SON-LOGOS

We believe in one Lord [Col. 1:16; Deut. 6:4]
Jesus Christ, [Mark 1:1]
The Only-begotten Son of God,...
[Mark 1:1; Hebrews 1:2]

Begotten of the Father before all ages.

[John 1:1-3; 3:16; 1 John 4:9]

Light of Light,..... [Psalm 2:7; Micah 5:2; John

1:7-9; John 8:42; 16:17,18]

True God [1 John 1:5; Psalm 104:2]

Of true God,..... [Jeremiah 10:10; John 17:3]

Begotten not created,..... [Ps. 2:8; John 8:42]

Of one Essence with the Father [Phil. 2:6]

By whom all things were made;.. [John 1:3]

Who for us men and for our salvation

[1 Timothy 1:15]

Came down from heaven, [John 3:13]

And was Incarnate [John 1:14]

Of the Holy Spirit [Mat.1:18,20;

Luke 1:34,35]

And of the Virgin Mary,... [Mat.1:18-25]

And became man..... [Phil. 2:8]

And He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, suffered and was buried;[Matthew 27]

And on the third day [Acts 10:40; 1 Cor. 15:4]

He rose from the dead ... [Matthew 28]

According to the Scriptures.....
[1Corinthians 15:3,4; Luke 24:25-27]

Ascended into heaven... [Mark 16:19]

He sits at the right hand of His Father;
[Mark 16:19; Acts 7:55, 56]

And He is coming again in His glory to judge the living and the dead; ...
[Acts 10:42; Matthew 16:27]

Whose kingdom shall have no end” ...
[Daniel 7:14; Luke 1:33]

CONCERNING GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

Yes, we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Life-Giver, ... [Rom. 8:11; Mat. 28:19]

Who proceeds from the Father [Jn.15:26]

Who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, Who spoke by the prophets. [2 Peter 1:21; Joel 2:28, 29]

CONCERNING THE CHURCH, BAPTISM & ETERNITY

And in one holy.....[Ez.28:14; Ps. 87:1; Dan. 9:24]

..catholic and ... [Acts 14:27]

..apostolic church [Rom. 1:1; 1 Cor.1:1; 1Tim. 2:7; 1:11]

We confess one baptism..... [Ephesians 4:5]

For the remission of sins..... [Acts 2:38]

We look for the resurrection of the dead ...
[Acts 24:15]

And the life of the coming age...

[Mk.10:30; Tit. 1:2]

Amen [Deut.27:15-26; Psalm41:13]

INTERPRETATIONS & COMMENTARY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

CONCERNING GOD THE FATHER :

“We believe”,

Belief is not only trusting, but rather deep convincing beyond the thought and mind, and above argument and proof. It is not a subject to discuss.

- Note, we start by saying, ‘We’, for the church is not made of individuals but **members**, members of the one body which is of Jesus Christ.

. The member attached in the one body works in harmony with the rest of the members to serve the interest of the whole body.

- St. Irenaeus says; ‘Although the church is dispersed throughout the world, even to the ends of the earth, it has received this common faith from the Apostles and their disciples: We believe in one God’.

- Belief, in general, needs humbleness, humility and simplicity of heart.

- Hearts are cleansed through faith and belief .. replaces all evil and wickedness (**Acts 15:9**)

- Tertullian said; ‘The rule of faith prescribes the belief that there is only one God and that He is none other than the Creator of the world, who produced all things out of nothing by His Word, which He sent forth. This Word is called ‘His Son’.

-“**Faith and belief** will open the eyes so many may turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God. Then they will receive forgiveness for their sins and be given a place among God’s people, who are set apart by faith in Me.” .. gain sight, know the right and only way **(Acts 26:18)**

-“The Kingdom of God is near! Turn from your sins and believe this Good News, Gospel.” **(Mark 1:15)** .. repentance is associated with belief.

- **Faith** is associated closely to justice and mercy, as mentioned in Matthew 23:23

- We, the Christians, believe in truth, in every part of this Creed, not just as rules, or teachings, but a true belief. Among the first things we believe in is the dogma of the;
One God

- **St. Athanasius** said; ‘When the fathers of the council of Nicea wrote about the date of Easter, they prefaced their remarks with the words, ‘It seemed good to us’, but when they wrote about the faith, they put “Thus believes the catholic church” in order to show that their opinions were not something new but derived from the Apostles”. **[On Synods 1.5, PG 26:688; cf. NPNF2 4:453]**

“in One God”

We believe that God exists, and is One.

- **Tertullian** said in this regards; ‘In so far as a human being can form a definition of God, let me present one that the conscience of all people will acknowledge. God is the Supreme Being, existing in eternity, unbegotten, not made, without beginning, without end. The Supreme Being must by definition be unique.”

- God is always like and equal to Himself. What is not born cannot be changed, for the only things that undergo change are those that are made or begotten. Things that have no birth or creation are incapable of change because they have no beginning, which is the cause of change. So, God is proclaimed as the One who has no equal. Whatever is without beginning or end is infinite, and whatever has occupied the whole excludes the beginning of another.

- **St. John Chrysostom** says; ‘Let us then call Him the ineffable, unintelligible God, invisible, incomprehensible, surpassing the power of human language (to express), exceeding the comprehension of mortal mind, unexaminable by angels, invisible to the seraphim, unintelligible to the cherubim, undetectable by principalities, dominions and powers – in a word, by the whole creation – known only by the Son and the Holy Spirit.’ **[On The Incomprehensible Nature of God, PG 48:720]**

- **Hilary of Poitiers** says; ‘God is Spirit (John 4:24), which means that He is an invisible, infinite, self-sufficient and eternal nature. It is also written, “A spirit does not have flesh and bones” (Luke 24:39). These make up a body, and so the substance of God does not have them. But at the same time God, who is everywhere and in everything; hears, sees, acts and sustains everything there is.’ **[Homilies on the Psalms]**.

- **Rufinus of Aquileia** says; ‘When the Eastern churches put “in one God” in their versions of the creed, the “one” is not to be understood numerically (as if there were also others), but absolutely. He is said to be one because there is no other.’ **[Commentary on The Apostles’ Creed]**.

- **St. Cyril of Alexandria** says; ‘God is the source of all things, but He Himself has no origin. Everything that

exists came into being through Him, but He was not born of anyone – He is the one who is and who is to come. That is His name’ [Commentary on Isaiah 4.2, PG 70:924].

+ **Our belief in the Holy Trinity** does not contradict our belief in One God.

-We pray and say “In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit” [Matthew28:19] and conclude immediately saying, “One God. Amen”.

Note also, that we begin by saying “In the Name” and not ‘names’!

Confirming the unity of the Holy Trinity as One God.

Biblical verses confirming the Holy Trinity:

(1) “In the beginning God created .. and the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters .. Then God said ..” [Genesis 1:1,2,3],

- God created is God the Father, the beginning that had no beginning ..
- the Spirit of God hovering, is of course the Holy Spirit of the Living God ..
- Then God said, the word of God is the Logos, i.e. the mind of God. “Nothing was done without Him” **(John 1:4)** .. “..and the Word was with God” **(John 1:1)**
- He is eternal. Thus, the Father, the Logos-Son, and the Holy Spirit .. a clear passage of the Holy Trinity

“Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in our image, according to Our likeness;” [Genesis1:26], and then the Scriptures confirms the Holy Unity of the Holy Trinity in the following verse, “So God created man in His own image” [Genesis 1:27].

(2) In the event that John the Baptist baptizing the Lord Jesus; “When He [Jesus] had been baptized, Jesus

came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven [of the Father], saying ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased’ [Matthew 3:16, 17].

(3) “For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are One” [1John 5:7, 8].

We also have to remember the first Commandment which confirms the One God, it says; “I am the Lord your God, .. you shall have no other gods before Me” [Exodus 20:2,3].

Also, the Book of Isaiah says; “Before Me there was no God formed, nor shall there be after Me, .. and beside Me there is no Savior” [Is. 43:10,11]. “Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts” ‘I am the First and I am the Last; besides Me there is no God’ [Is.44:6].

To conclude then; the Holy Trinity is to explain Who God is: the Father is the ‘Essence of God’, the Son is ‘His Word – His Logic – His Mind’, the Holy Spirit is ‘the Spirit of God’.

“God the Father”,

St. Athanasius: To call God ‘Father’ is to name the fullness His essence, not one of His attributes.

St. Basil, St. Gregory of Nyssa and Origen: The Father has always been the Father, which is one reason why the Son must be regarded as eternal.

Clement of Rome: The name ‘Father’ is given to the Creator of the universe and is used by Christians to show that we love God and do His will.

St. Theophilus of Alexandria: The Father is the source of all things, (Tertullian) and it is to Him that we pray, having been commanded by Jesus to do so.

Justin Martyr: The Father is uniquely eternal and unbegotten, (Tertullian) and is uniquely invisible.

St.Theophilus of Antioch: If I call Him Father, I am claiming that everything comes from Him .. He is called Father because He came before everything else.

God the Father is the Essence of GOD.

This word-GOD, could also be said for the Holy Trinity as a whole.

Thus, we can say; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Those who love God call Him Father:

No eye can see Him, nor thought apprehend Him nor language describe Him.

Those who love Him speak of Him as Father and God of truth.

Examples in the Holy Scriptures for the expression ‘God the Father’;

- “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].

- He is the Father for all the creation, which is the fatherhood of love, care and shepherd-hood. This is not fatherhood in the nature of His divine Essence, as is the case with His Son, His Logic and His Mind.

- “Are we not all children of the same Father? Are we not all created by the same God?” (Malachi 2:10)

- Our relationship with God is that He is our Father, and we are His children by Baptism, we are born in a mysterious way.

- “Our Father is God Himself.” (John 8:41)

- “.. and there is only One God and Father, who is over us all and in us all and living through us all.” (Ephesus 4:6)

- We call God, ‘our Father’, for He adopted us as His children, as St. John the beloved says in his epistle, “Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!” [1John 3:1].

- The Lord Jesus identifies Himself as being the Son of the Father. While the Jews correctly understood this a claim to deity (John 5:18; 10:30,33; 19:7) .. Jesus Himself also related His Son-ship to that which they enjoy “to whom the word of God came” (John 10:35).

- Note that the expression ‘our’ Father is never used by Christ, but rather the deliberate ‘My Father and your Father’.

- The Lord’s Prayer (Matt.6:9) is not prayed by Christ Himself, but is an instruction to the Disciples as to how they are to pray, for they asked Him “teach us to pray” [Matt.6:7]

“The Pantocrator”,

Pantocrator; means to control everything, nothing is conducted without His divine permission and decision.

- Everything, means the seen and unseen world, all that is in heaven and on earth and the sea and all that is therein, and the air and what is in it, everything is under His divine control.

- He controls the galaxies, the planets, the sun, and the earth.

- He controls life and death, for He is the Resurrection and Life and Destroyer of death.

- Even the devil, is subject to God and is not free to do what he wants, except what is permitted by God .. for the devil is not ‘god of evil’ like some say, but he is a creature that fell, but still is under God’s control, he is subject to the PANTOCRATOR.

- In the story of Job we see that the devil is asking permission to try Job before starting his evil mission (**Job 1:9-11**), and we see God allowing him only few things (**Job 1:12**), and showed his limits which he should not cross or exceed. God saw what will bring benefit for Job.

- As a Pantocrator, He knows our thoughts, analyzes the hearts, understand the intentions and all the feelings, and nothing is hidden before Him.

- This word ‘Pantocrator’ is not to scare people but to give them comfort and tranquility, for this unlimited God who is Pantocrator and unlimited in His power and Might, is our FATHER.

God Rules Everything:

God is Almighty because He rules and embraces everything. The heights of heaven and the depths of the abyss, as well as the ends of the earth, are all in His hands. [**Theophilus of Antioch**]

God's Attributes Are Proof That He is Almighty:

We call God the One, the Good, the Mind, the absolute Being, the Father, God, the Creator and Lord. We are not giving Him names, but because we have no alternative, we use these words as points of reference so as not to go astray. None of these words by itself expresses God fully, but taken together they are all indicative of the power of the Almighty. [St. Clement of Alexandria]

All Things Are Possible with God:

Nothing is impossible to the Pantocrator/Almighty, nor is anything incapable of being restored by its Creator. [Origen the scholar]

The Creation Subject To Almighty God:

If God is Almighty and nothing has power over Him because He has power over everything else, how can those who deify creation fail to see that their view does not measure up to this definition of God. [St. Athanasius the 20th Pope of Alexandria]

Jesus Christ Is The Almighty God:

Having become Man, Christ is still God forever. St. John put it like this; *"Who is, and Who was and Who is to come, the Almighty/Pantocrator."* [Revelation 1:8]

He was right to call Christ "Almighty," because this is merely what Christ said about Himself when He declared: *"All things have been delivered unto Me by My Father."* [Hippolytus]

"Creator"/ "Maker"

Creator, who creates, means to make from nothing.

- Science asks 'how things were created?', but what concerns us is 'Who created?',

God The Logos – The Mind of God – The Wisdom of God.

- God the Father created all things by God the Son-the Word or Logos or Mind of Him [God the Father], through the Holy Spirit.

- So, God created everything by His wisdom, Mind, Word, etc. Thus, we say in the divine Liturgy of St. Basil, ‘by Whom-Jesus Christ-You have created all things’.

- God created the heaven and its hosts (Gn.1:1), the earth is His creation (Gn.1:2), the light (Gn.1:3), God also created the waters and separated water from water (Gn.1:6), also created the grass and the seed-bearing plant, and the trees (Gn.1:11), He created fish and other life (Gn.1:20), also the birds of every kind (Gn.1:21,22), also animals, livestock, small animals, and wildlife (Gn.1:24,25), finally He created man in His image created He them, male and female (Gn.1:26,27).

- When we say that someone solved the mathematical problem by his/her mind. Now, did he/she solved it or his/her mind solved it? He/she and his/her mind are one! [H.H.Pope Shenouda III]

- If God created all things, then everything is under His divine control.

- If He created from nothing, then He has the power to raise from the dead.

- Everything has an originator, GOD is the one who designed, put together the pieces, and formed everything from nothing for He has the power of life and existence and in Him is all the wisdom needed to make things, and create things.

So That People Would Come To Know God:

For God, being good and loving to the human race and caring for the souls made by Him, since He is by nature invisible and incomprehensible, having his being beyond all created existence, for which reason the human race was likely to miss the way toward knowing Him, since they are made out of nothing while He is unmade. For this reason, God gave the universe the order it has, using His own Word to do so, so that those who cannot see Him, because He is invisible, may come to know Him by His works. [St. Athanasius of Alexandria]

Creation Out of Nothing:

To say that things that exist were made out of some primary matter and to deny that the Creator of all made everything out of nothing would be the height of stupidity. [St. John Chrysostom]

The Creator Trinity:

In the creation, think first of the original cause of everything that has been made-the Father. Then think of the creative cause-the Son; and then of the perfecting cause-the Holy Spirit. The ministering spirits therefore subsist by the will of the Father, they are brought into being by the action of the Son, and they are perfected by the presence of the Holy Spirit. [St. Basil the Great]

The Creator Is Independent of His Creation:

The world's Creator made time and space as a background to receive what was to come into being; it was on that foundation that He built the universe. It is not possible for anything that has come or is now coming into being by means of creation to be outside space and time. [St. Gregory of Nyssa]

Matter Is Not Eternal:

“In the beginning”, says Moses, “God created the heavens and the earth.” [Genesis 1:1]

It is therefore wrong to think, as some do, that matter existed with God from the beginning and is both eternal and un-created .. It was in time, and at its beginning that God called matter into being and established the creation as something that was brought forth out of nothing according to His will and made it to be what it is now. [St. Cyril of Alexandria]

“Of Heaven and Earth”,

heaven and that is therein.

How many heaven(s) do we have? And what is in each? St. Paul told us that he was lifted to the ‘third heaven’, i.e. celestial Paradise. What about the first and second heavens?

The FIRST heaven; is that of the birds, oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, and planes, which is known as ‘Atmosphere’. (Genesis 1:20, 22)

The SECOND heaven; is the ‘Firmament’ as the book of Genesis called it, where the sun, moon, and stars; science calls it ‘stratosphere’, i.e. non-gravitational, or space.

- this was created on the second period/day of creation (Gn.1:7,8).

The THIRD heaven; is the waiting place for the righteous and saints, till Christ comes in His Second coming to judge the living and dead, and give each one according to his/her deeds. (2Corinthians 12:2, 4)

- It is this heaven which St. Paul was taken to “whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows, such a one was caught up to the third heaven, .. Paradise, .. and heard inexpressible words, which is not lawful for a man to utter, ..” [2 Corinthians 12:2, 4]

- There is also the Heaven of heavens; were the THRONE of God the Pantocrator, no one were taken there, that is what the Lord Jesus Christ meant by saying “No one ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven” [John 3:13].

- Where the Throne of God, (not the third heavens), but the Heaven of heavens, is were the; angels, archangels, principalities, thrones, dominions, powers, cherubim, and seraphim are all gathered around The Throne of God offering worship, praise and hymns to the One seated on the Throne forever and ever.

ONLY IN THE THRONE OF HEAVEN WE FIND THE FOLLOWING STYLE OF LIFE EXISTING, not in any of the other three heavens:

- The 144,000 “sang as it were a new song before the Throne, before the four living creatures, and the 24 presbyters, and no one could learn that song except the 144,000 who were redeemed from the earth” [Rev.14:3]

- All those “who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his

mark and over his number .. standing .. having harps of God.. praise the Lord saying, the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, ..” [Rev.15:2,3]

- “ .. I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying ‘Alleluia’ salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God!” [Rev.19:1]

- ¹¹ Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. ¹² His eyes *were* like a flame of fire, and on His head *were* many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. ¹³ He *was* clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. ¹⁴ And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. ¹⁵ Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. ¹⁶ And He has on *His* robe and on His thigh a name written:

KING OF KINGS & LORD OF LORDS. [Rev.19:11-16]

- ¹ “And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. ² In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, *was* the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each *tree* yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations.” [Rev.22:1, 2]

The order of creation did not evolve naturally out of a primordial chaos but was inherent in it from the beginning (Origen, Dionysius), although the created order contains undeveloped potential that comes to fruition in the course of time (Augustine).

-God does not need the world but made it for His own pleasure (Lactantius). The creation was planned by God beforehand and is fundamentally good (Augustine, John of Damascus), having been made out of a spirit of love. It was made for our enjoyment (Tertullian), but it is not eternal (Athanasius, Cyril of Alexandria & Gregory the Great).

Time was made on the first day of creation (Augustine) and through the agency of Christ the mediator (Hilary).

-God exists independently of His creation (Gregory of Nyssa), though He sustains it by the power of His will (John of Damascus), and the universe is not governed by an impersonal fate (Eusebius).

-Even though He is said to have rested on the seventh day, He is still at work in maintaining what He has made. (Ambrose & Augustine)

“Heaven and Earth” Includes The Whole World:

By naming the two extremes of heaven and earth, God indicates the substance of the whole world, granting heaven the privilege of seniority and putting earth in the second rank. All the intermediate beings were created at the same time as the two extremes. Thus, although there is no mention of the elements, fire, water, and air, imagine that they were all compounded together, and you will find water, air and fire in the earth. [St. Basil the Great]

There Are No Limits To God:

There is no place that holds divinity, yet it is absent from nothing at all, for it fills all things, goes through all things, is beyond all things and yet within all things too. [St. Cyril of Alexandria]

“And of All Things seen” - “of all that is seen”.

-The seen world is everything visible and seen.

God created Adam out love (Irenaeus & Tertullian) and wanted him to be happy (Theophilus). Human beings are special in God’s eye (St. Clement of Alexandria), although they are not the biggest or the strongest of the creatures,

and they were made perfect at the beginning (**St. Cyril of Alexandria**). A human being consists of body, soul and spirit (**Augustine**) and is both spiritual and material in nature (**John of Damascus**).

-Women were created out of Adam's body, but they have souls of their own (**Ephraim**). Both male and female reflect the nature of the rational soul, which holds the primary place in God's creation (**Augustine**).

-In Christ, human beings are now being restored to the image of God in which they were created (**Ephrem the Syrian & Leo the Great**).

“And Unseen”

- As for the unseen, includes the creatures which are unseen, i.e. the spirits such as the angels, archangels, principalities, authorities, thrones, dominions, powers, cherubim and seraphim.

- The 'unseen world' could also include little creatures which we-humans-cannot see by the naked eye, yet we can see some of these creatures by microscopes and telescopes.

Angels are numerous (**Clement of Rome & Athenagoras**), and their role is essentially beyond our comprehension (**Ignatius**).

They are agents of God's judgment (**John of Damascus**) and of His salvation (**Origen**).

They helped to preach the Gospel (**Augustine**) and may take on human form (**Tertullian**). They pray and watch for God, and spiritual people pray with them (**Clement of Alexandria**). The angels are spirits of fire (**Gregory of Nazianzus**) who share in God's goodness (**Eusebius**), and

they see God to the extent that they are able to do so (Cyril of Jerusalem), though they are not gods and must not be worshipped (Origen).

They were created at the beginning of time (Epiphanius) but they are not holy by nature and must earn their sanctification by their obedience to God (St. Basil the Great).

They fully understand creation (Augustine), though they did not take part in it (Irenaeus), and they have specific tasks assigned to them by God (Clement of Alexandria & Origen). They intercede for us in prayer (Tertullian & Hillary) and reveal the glory of creation to us (John Chrysostom). At the last judgment, the angels will separate the good from the wicked (Origen).

-Angels protect us from evil spirits (Origen).

Every Christian has a guardian angel, as do churches and nations (Clement of Alexandria & Origen). Guardian angels bear witness to the dignity of human beings (Jerome).

As imperfect people we need them to help us in our spiritual life (Origen).

There is a hierarchy of angelic beings, called by different names in Holy Scripture (Jerome, Augustine & Gregory the Great).

-Angels have free will (Athenagoras & Augustine). Some of them fell from God by rebelling against Him (Justin Martyr & Origen), which they did of their own free will (Augustine). Because they are higher than human beings, their fall was greater, but no more will fall away (Augustine & Gregory the Great).

The fallen angels will be judged by God and punished (Irenaeus), and they have no hope of salvation (Tertullian).

By this statement we conclude the text words in the
Christian Creed for the Iconum of God Father, the
Pantocrator.

NOW WE BEGIN WHAT CONCERNS THE ICONUM OF THE LOGOS , THE SON, THE WORD OF GOD:

“We Believe in One Lord”,

Lord means also Master and God.

- St. Thomas, one of the twelve Apostles, called Him, “My Lord and my God” [John 20:28]. The same expressions were bestowed on God the Father, as it was mentioned in the introduction of the Ten Commandments, “I am the Lord your God” [Exodus 20:2].

- The root of the idea behind this first of the Creed’s Christology clauses lies in the apostolic utterance of St. Paul, we know that “there is no God but one.”. For us Christians, there is one God.

- The Lordship of Jesus, the risen Mediator who stands as the way to the Father (“through whom are all things”) is articulated by the apostle as entirely a dynamic of salvation.

- The church does not progress from its understanding of who Jesus is to a sense of His charismatic gift to the world but always the other way, from the experience of salvation to the understanding of the significance of the person.

- The idea of the Son of God’s mediation is significant in the following texts. It is a threefold understanding; first, how He shares the life of the eternal Father; second, how He mediates the power of God to the material creation that He orders as Logos; and third, how He stands as the

mediator between the Father and humanity, which He redeems.

The Harmony of Father and Son:

- **St. Gregory of Nazianzus**; For us the monarchy is formed by equality of nature, harmony of will, identity of activity and the concurrence with the One (St. Gregory is referring to the Father here as the single Cause and source of unity of the Godhead) of those beings who derive from with One (the hypostases of the Son and the Spirit), a unity impossible among creaturely beings, so that while they are numerically distinct there is no severance in substance.

Faith in the Divine Son:

Acts of The Council of Alexandria (362AD);

- The Word did not, as He came to the prophets, so dwell in a holy man at the consummation of the ages, but that the Word Himself became flesh, and “being in the form of God”, “took the form of a servant” (**Philippians 2:7**). From St. Mary after the flesh He became Man for us, and thus in Him the human race is perfectly and wholly delivered from sin and quickened from the dead and is brought to the kingdom of the heavens.

- And being Son of God in truth, He became also Son of man, and being God’s only-begotten Son, He became also at the same time “firstborn among many brethren” (**Romans 8:29**) [St. Athanasius, *On The Synods*].

The Word God incarnate:

St. Cyril of Alexandria;

The Son, therefore, certainly is God by nature; and how then did the Father give Him that “name that is above every name”? [**Philippians 2:9**]

To this we say that when He was flesh, that is, human like us, He took the name of a servant and assumed our poverty and low estate. But when He had finished the

mystery of the dispensation in the flesh, He was raised to the glory that belonged to Him by nature, nor as to something unaccustomed or strange or that accrued to Him externally and was given Him from another, but rather as to that which was His own. For He spoke to God the Father in heaven, “Father, glorify Me with the glory I had with You before the world was.”

[John 17:5]

For existing before the ages and before the worlds, as one that was of God and was God, He was clothed with the glory that belongs to the Godhead; and when He became a Man, as I said, He endured neither mutation nor change but continued rather in that state in which He had constantly existed and such as the Father was who begot Him, that is to say, like Him in everything.

God in Person:

St. Clement of Alexandria; God is indemonstrable and therefore is not an object of knowledge. But the Son is Wisdom and Knowledge and Truth and all that is akin to these, and He admits of demonstration and explanation. All the powers of the Spirit (the divine nature) gathered together into unity complete the notion of the Son, but He is not completely expressed by our conception of each of His powers. He is not merely one, as unity, or many, as having parts, but One as All. Hence He is All. For He is the circle of all powers, which in Him are rounded and united.

The Word Reigns Eternally:

St. Eusebius of Caesarea; This Only-begotten Word of God reigns, from ages that had no beginning to infinite and endless ages, the partner of His Father’s kingdom.

The Characteristics of Each Iconum:

St. Gregory of Nazianzus: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit have this in common; that they are uncreated, and they are divine.

The Monad is adored in the Trinity, the Triad in the Monad.

The Son Glorifies and Is Glorified:

St. Gregory of Nyssa: The phrase “I have glorified You [John 17:4] is said by our Lord to the Father; and again He says, “Glorify Me with the glory I had with you before the world was.” [John 17:5]

The divine voice answers, “I have glorified and will glorify again.” [John 12:28]

You see the revolving circle of the glory moving from Like to Like? The Son is glorified by the Spirit; the Father is glorified by the Son; again the Son has his glory from the Father. **[on The Holy Spirit]**

* * * * *

<u>“Jesus Christ”,</u>
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- Jesus is of Hebrew origin pronounced ‘Yashwa’, meaning ‘Savior’, as the angel told Joseph the carpenter in a dream concerning St. Mary the Virgin, that she will give birth and call Him ‘Jesus’, for He will save His people from their sins” [Matthew 1:21; Luke 1:31] .. “.. that Holy One Who is born will be called the Son of God.” [Luke 1:35]

- As for the name ‘Christ’, its origin again is Hebrew and is pronounced ‘Messikh’, i.e. ‘Messiah’, meaning ‘anointed’, as this was mentioned about Jesus in the book of Isaiah “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me ..” [Isaiah 61:1]. Thus, the name Jesus Christ is ‘the Anointed Savior’.

- That was the goal and purpose of the four Evangelists to show and prove that Jesus who is born of the Virgin St. Mary, is the Messiah-*Christ*-which all the earth will be blessed by, as St. John the beloved and Evangelist mentioned in his Gospel saying, “but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name” [John 20:31].

Deuteronomy 18:15-19 foreshadows Christ as the promised Prophet. The New Testament reveals several instances when Jesus is recognized and proclaimed as this Prophet of whom Moses wrote; “This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world” [John 6:14; John 7:40].

Psalms 109:1-4 foreshadows Christ as the great High Priest; “The Lord said to my Lord .. ‘You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.’” “Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Jesus Christ” [Hebrew 3:1] “We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens” [Hebrew 8:1]

The prophet Jeremiah records God’s promise of a coming King. The Lord says, “Behold, days are coming when I will raise up for David the Righteous Orient, and a King shall reign. He will understand, and bring about judgment and righteousness on the earth” [Jeremiah 23:5] .. Isaiah the prophet promises His government will be not temporal, but eternal, ruling from the throne of David [Isaiah 9:6,7]. In Zechariah 6:13, a priest on His throne is foreshadowed.

The Name Jesus Christ Signifies Priest and Savior:

St. Cyril of Jerusalem: And He is called by two names, Jesus Christ; Jesus-because He saves, [*Joshua, Hebrew; the Greek equivalent is Jesus-signifies 'Savior'*], and Christ, [*The Hebrew term Messiah-the Greek equivalent is Christ-signifies 'anointed one', designate Jesus' priesthood in this instance*], because He is a priest. And knowing this, the inspired prophet Moses conferred these two titles on two men distinguished above all: His own successor in the government, he renamed JESUS [Numbers 13:16], and His own brother Aaron He surnamed Christ [*Exodus 30:30, where Aaron is 'anointed'~ (Christ-ed)*], that by two well-approved men He might represent at once both the high priesthood and the kingship of

the one Jesus Christ who was to come. For Christ is a high priest like Aaron; He did not glorify himself to be made a high priest, but rather the one that spoke to him: “You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.” [Psalm 110:4; Hebrew 5:6, 10; Hebrew 6:20].

Christ As Judge:

St. Clement of Rome: Brothers, we ought to think of Jesus Christ as we do of God, as “Judge of the living and dead.” [Acts 10:42]

* * * * *

“The Only-begotten Son of God”,

Jesus Christ is the Only Son of God, meaning of His same Essence, of His same divinity, of the True Light, therefore He is called ‘The Only-begotten Son of God, the Father’.

This term is Biblical as it is mentioned several times:

+ “No one has seen God at any time. The Only- begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared” [John 1:18].

+ “For God so loved the world that He gave His Only- begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” [John 3:16].

+ “He who believes in Him is not condemned, but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the Only-begotten Son of God” [John 3:18].

+ “In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His Only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him” [1 John 4:9] .

The term ‘Son of God’:

* In the story of the man born blind, Jesus Christ said to the man, “Do you believe in the Son of God?” The man answered after Jesus revealed Himself, saying “Lord I believe’ and he worshipped Him” [John 9:35-39].

* ‘Son’ because He took flesh and was born in human form from a Virgin. So, He is Son but of God The Pantocrator, of His same Essence, He is the mind and word of God; “Let there be light” [Gen.1:3], by this Word, light was created .. “by whom all things were made”[Christian Creed].

* If Christ Son-ship to God the Father was like ours, by adoption, this would not have required special belief, and faith followed by worshipping Him!

The Deity of Jesus Christ, Our God, Born of St. Mary:

St. Ignatius of Antioch: Our God, Jesus Christ, was conceived by St. Mary according to God’s plan, both

from the seed of David and of the Holy Spirit. He was born and was baptized, in order that by His suffering He might cleanse the water.

The Son Is Not in the Ranks of Creatures:

St. Athanasius, the 20th Pope of Alexandria; He would not have been worshipped or spoken of in this way [Hebrew 1:6; Isaiah 45:14; John 13:13; 20:28] if He belonged merely to the rank of creatures. But as it is, since He is not a creature but the offspring of the God who is worshipped, an offspring proper to His substance and a Son by nature, this is why He is worshipped and is believed to be God, and is Lord of hosts, and has authority is All-sovereign, just as the Father is; for He himself says, “All things that belong to the Father are mine.” [John 16:15]

For it is proper to the Son to have all that the Father has and to be such that the Father is beheld in Him, and that through Him all things were made and that in Him the salvation of all is brought about and is established.

The Son Gives Life and Place:

St. Cyril of Jerusalem; Believe, therefore, in Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, and a Son Only-begotten, according to the Gospel, which says, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His Only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” [John 3:16]

And again, “Whoever believes in the Son is not judged, but has passed out of death into life.” [John 5:24]

But whoever does not believe in the Son shall not see life, since “the wrath of God abides on Him.” [John 3:36] And John testified concerning Him, saying, “And we beheld His glory, glory as of the Only-begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth;” [John 1:14] at whom the devils

trembled and said, “Ah, what have we to do with you, Jesus, Son of the living God?” [Mark 5:7]

“Begotten of the Father Before All Ages (eternally)”.

* As the birth of the thought from the mind, as the bringing forth of the light from light, So, it is and eternal begetting, expressed as ‘before all ages’.

* The Lord Jesus Christ said to God the Father, “And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was” [John 17:5].

* The Son was there before the world was created, of course, for the world was made by Him [John 1:10], but rather “All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made” [John 1:3].

* Since He-Jesus-is the Mind of God, or the intelligent Word of God, therefore He is eternal as God the Father, for the Mind of God is eternal.

The Son is ‘Light from Light’:

Origen the Scholar said; “God is Light” [1John 1:5], and St. Paul calls the Son “the radiance” of eternal light [Hebrews 1:3].

Therefore, as light can never be without radiance, how can it be said that there was a time when the Son was not? [This would later become the slogan of the Arian party, which denied the eternity and thus the deity of the Son].

For that is as much as to say that there was a time when Truth was not, when Wisdom was not, when Life was not, and so on... But we have to apologize for using such phrases as “there was never a time when He was not,” [this, likewise, would be adopted later as the slogan Athanasius

arranged for his party to spread abroad at Alexandria in an attempt to refute the Arian propaganda. Both parties in the early Arian crisis were calling on the authority of the great Origen. From this passage, it is clear that it is Athanasius, however, who has correctly interpreted him], for these words have a temporal significance; but when they are used of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, they are to be understood as denoting something supernatural.

The Son is not after The Father in Time:

St. Gregory of Nazianzus; Ask me again, and I shall answer you, “When was the Son begotten?”

When the Father was not begotten. [Here St. Gregory shows that the question is illegitimate]

When did the Spirit proceed?” When the Son did not proceed but was begotten timelessly, in a way we cannot understand.

The Son is Radiance always with the Sun:

St. John Chrysostom; Someone may ask, “How can Christ be a Son, without being younger than the Father, for anything which derives its being must be later than its source?” We answer that such arguments suppose a human context... though we are discussing the nature of God... come now, does the sun’s radiance proceed from the sun’s own substance, or from elsewhere? Any sensible person is bound to acknowledge that it proceeds from the sun’s own substance. But although the radiance proceeds from the sun, we cannot assert that it is later in time than the substance of that body, for the sun has never appeared without its rays.

St. Paul calls Him the “brightness”, [Hebrews 1:3] thus showing His derived existence and His coeternity.

Moreover, were not all the ages and every measure of time created by Him?

Therefore there is no interval of time between Son and the Father.

If so, then the Son cannot be after but coeternal; since ‘before’ and ‘after’ are ideas that imply time.

Tertullian the historian; Before all things existed, God was alone.

He was Himself His own universe, His own place, everything. He was alone in the sense that there was nothing external to Him, nothing outside His own being. Yet even then He was not alone, for He had with Him something that was part of His own being, namely, His Reason [His Logos, or Word]. For God is rational, and Reason existed first with Him, and from Him extended to all things. That Reason is His own consciousness of Himself.

The Greeks call it LOGOS, which is the term we use for discourse, [that is, LOGOS was also the common word in Greek for a rhetorical oration or speech], and thus our people usually translate it literally as, ‘Discourse was in the beginning with God’ [the common translation of ‘Word’ (**John 1:1**) has endured to this day], although it would be more correct to regard Reason as anterior to Discourse, because there was not Discourse with God from the beginning, but there was Reason, even before the beginning.

The Word is everlasting Brightness:

St. Athanasius; Was God “who is”, ever without reason [or Word]?

Was He “who is light”, without radiance? Or was He always the Father of the Word?

Who can endure to hear them say that God was ever without reason... or that God was not always Father?

God is eternally. Thus, since the Father always is, His brightness exists eternally, and that is His Word.

The Author of Time:

St. Gregory of Nazianzus; The apostle writes, “From Him and through Him for Him are all things; to Him be glory forever, Amen.” [Romans 11:36]

The Father is Father and without beginning, for He is underived.

The Son is Son, and not without beginning, in the sense that He derives from the Father.

But if one is thinking of a temporal beginning, then the Son is indeed without beginning, for the Author of time is not subject to time.

The Son is the Wisdom of God:

Origen the Scholar; The Only-begotten Son of God is His Wisdom existing substantially... how could anyone believe that God the Father could have existed at any time without begetting Wisdom?

We must believe that Wisdom is without any beginning... He is called the Word because He is, as it were, the interpreter of the secrets of the Mind of God.

The Son, always in the Bosom of the Father:

St. Gregory of Nyssa; But in fact the Deity is incapable of change and alteration.

So, everything that is excellent and good is always contemplated in the fountain of excellence. But “the Only-begotten God, who is the bosom of the Father” [John 1:18], is excellent, and beyond all excellence.

Note that He always says, “who is in the bosom of the Father”, not ‘who came to be’ there.

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“Light of Light, (God of God)”

The Son who is Light, from the Father who is Light. So, the birth of the Son from the Father, is like the birth of light from light.

The Holy Scriptures says that the Father is Light:

- “God is light and in Him is no darkness at all” [1John1:5].
- “Who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen” [1Timothy 6:16].

The Holy Scriptures calls the Son ‘the Light’:

- John the Baptist witnesses for the True Light, saying “to bear witness of the Light, .. he-John- was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light” [John 1:8].
- The Lord Jesus said, “I am the Light of the world” [John 8:12].
- “As long as I am in the world, I am the Light of the world” [John 9:5].
- Jesus said, “I have come as Light into the world, that whoever believes in Me may not remain in darkness” [John 14:46].

The Word derives from God without ever being separate from God, just as the radiance is never separate from the light that emits it (Tertullian).

The Word and the Son is not just like God but is equal to God (Hilary).

The whole tenor of New Testament teaching proclaims that the Son is inseparable from the Father (Marcelius).

The divine throne is shared from all eternity, as the Word sits on it in the Father’s Mind (Cyril of Jerusalem).

All Christians sentiment thus recognizes that it is an aberration *-go stray, or wander-* to separate the Son from the Father by ranking Him among the creatures (Athanasius).

All that characterizes what we mean by the divinity of the Father is witnessed in the character of the Son of God also (Athanasius).

While the Word can be recognized as a distinct person (*hypostasis*) within the deity, the divine nature and status that He possesses is none other than the Father's own Godhead (Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa).

This profound union and coincidence of being between the two is shown in the constant and perfect harmony of action and will between the Father and the Son in all things (Augustine).

God calls humanity to the light through Jesus the Savior, who is the enlightener of the world. His gift of salvation is our enlightenment. (Clement of Rome).

Like a great sun peering into all things, the Word of God illuminates and scrutinizes every aspect of a person's life (Clement of Alexandria).

The Light of God the Father is so vast and brilliant that earthly conceptions cannot bear to look on it directly, and so the Son and Logos stands as a mediator of the divine

brightness to the cosmos. The Word adapts the infinite brightness to suit our capacity and in order to teach us, and to this extent our salvation is in essence a divine illumination and reformation (Tertullian, Origen).

Because the Son mediates the true light of God to the world, it is not possible that we can distinguish the Son's light from that of the Father.

The Son offers the world the same radiance of the Father, not a dimmed version of that Son of God is the Light of the Father, it confesses that this is the same as

acknowledging the Homooousion. Whoever sees the light of the Son has seen the Father.

The Son is God's own Light:

St. Basil the Great of Caesarea: The preceding words prove that this was the meaning of the fathers (St. Basil is referring to the conciliar fathers gathered at Nicea in 325AD).

For after the assertions, “Light of Light”, “begotten of the Father’s substance, not made”, they added the phrase “of the same substance.” (**Homo-ousios/consubstantial-with the Father**)

In this they showed that the meaning attached to “light”, when applied to the Father, holds good when applied to the Son.

The very notion of light makes impossible any difference between one true light and another. Then since the Father is unoriginated light and the Son is begotten light, but each is light, the Fathers were right to use the term “of the same substance”, in order to establish the equal dignity of their nature. “Of the same substance” does not, as some have supposed, describe entities connected by a fraternal relation.

The term is used when the source and that which derives its being from the source are identical in nature.

Brightness of the Father's Glory:

St. Gregory of Nysaa: The majesty of the Father is expressly imaged in the greatness of the power of the Son, so that the one may be believed to be as great as the other is known to be. Just as the radiance of light sheds its brilliancy from the whole of the sun’s disk (for in the disk one part is not radiant and the rest dim), so all that glory that the Father is sheds its brilliancy from its whole extent by means of the brightness that comes from it, that is, by

the true Light. And just as the ray is of the sun (for there would be no ray if the sun were not), yet the sun is never conceived as existing by itself without the ray of brightness that is shed from it. This is why the apostle, delivering to us the continuity and eternity of that existence that the Only-begotten has the Father, calls the Son “the brightness of His glory.” [2 Corinthians 4:6]

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“True God of True God”;

Meaning of the same Essence of the Father, True divinity not just a title.

The Holy Scriptures has many verses concerning the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ:

- “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” [John 1:1].
- “.. of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen.” [Romans 9:5].
- “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh” [1 Timothy 3:16].

Note all the verses mention “God” and not just Lord.

Other verses prove Jesus’ divinity through His divine characteristics and His work:

- “I am the First and the Last”, “I am the Alpha and the Omega”, “I am the Beginning and the End” [Revelation 1:8 , 11; 22:13].
- “Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel, and His Redeemer, the Lord of hosts; I am the First and I am the Last; besides Me there is no God” [Isaiah 44:6].

The Holy Scriptures ascribed very important attributes ONLY for the Lord Jesus Christ; such as: Creator, forgive sins, Omnipotent, knowing the hearts and thoughts, Holy, Judge...

Patristic Views:

The Word is the very Wisdom of God, and His very Truth (Origen).

He is the ‘visible’ of the Father, and the Father is the ‘invisible’ of the Son (Irenaeus).

He is not the Father, being a discrete person-Iconum, but He is nevertheless divine of the same being (Gregory of Nazianzus), equal to the Father in Godhead (Athanasius, Augustine), and lacks nothing of the divine dignity (Cyril of Jerusalem).

The heretics have wrongly supposed that the Father must also be the “God of the Son and the Spirit” (Gregory of Nyssa), but the Word is the Only true revelation of the being of God (Origen).

The divine “I Am” includes all three members of the divine Trinity (Clement of Alexandria).

All that the Father is, He gives to the Son (Gregory of Nyssa), and the Son reveals the Almighty power of God in His role as co-creator of humanity (Cyril of Jerusalem).

The Son, nevertheless, is co-eternal and consubstantial with the Father (Augustine).

In the end of times the Father sends His Son to earth to earth in a humble economy of salvation (Athanasius), but even in this hidden ministry He is the kingly emissary of the High King and is truly divine (Letter to Diognetus).

The Son is Truly God, just as the Father is:
Origen: He Himself is wisdom itself and righteousness itself and truth itself; is He not also sovereignty itself?

The Word shares the Throne of God:

Cyril of Jerusalem: Believe also in the Son of God, one and only, our Lord Jesus Christ, who was begotten God of God, begotten Life of Life, begotten Light of Light; who is in all things like to Him that begot, [Cyril here confesses the total similitude of the Son to the

Father, The Nicene party under Athanasius resisted this throughout the fourth century and demanded the confession of the consubstantiality (homooousion) of the Son, the position that was to be endorsed as Nicene orthodoxy at the second ecumenical council of 381AD, which Cyril lived to endorse] who did not receive His being in time but was before all ages eternally and incomprehensibly begotten of the Father: the Wisdom and the Power of God and His Righteousness personally subsisting, who sits on the right hand of the Father (*confirmed in His power and might*) before all ages.

He holds His royal dignity and shares the Father's seat, being God and Wisdom and Power, as has been said; reigning together with the Father and creating all things for the Father yet lacking nothing in the dignity of Godhead and knowing Him that has begotten Him, even as He is known by Him that has begotten.

Remember what is written in the Gospels, that "no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son" [Matthew 11:27].

The Equality of the Son:

St. Athanasius: The words "I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me" [John 14:10] do not mean, as the Arians suppose, that they are decanted into each other, being each filled from the other, as in the case of empty vessels, so that the Son fills the Father's emptiness and the Father the Son's, each of them separately not being full and perfect.. for the Father is full and perfect, and the Son is "the fullness of the Godhead" [Colossians 1:19].

Again, God is not the Son in the same way as He comes into the saints and thus strengthens them. For the Son is Himself the “power and wisdom” [1 Corinthians 1:24] of the Father.

It is by partaking of Him that created things are sanctified in the Spirit. But He Himself is not Son by participation; on the contrary, He is the Father’s proper offspring.

The Son is not the Father in the sense that “we live and move and exist in Him” [Acts 17:28]. For He is the life, as being from the fount of the Father, in which all things are brought to life and have substantial existence.

Life itself does not live “in Life”, for then it would not be Life, but rather He brings all things to life.

* * * * *

“Begotten, not Created/Made”;

Jesus Christ is of the Father, of the same divine Nature, begotten of the Father but not created, for He is eternal and everlasting, and has no beginning.

Any created being has a beginning, but Jesus Christ is everlasting, and is eternal like the Father, as He is His Logos, His Mind, and His eternal Word.

As for the Incarnation: in the fullness of time He was born of The Virgin without the seed of man, to fulfill the requirements of the divine Sacrifice to redeem humanity from perdition.

As The Incarnate God, He maintained His divinity uniting with the humanity in the womb of St. Mary The Virgin, without mingling, confusion or alteration.

The birth of the Son is something divine and mysterious that surpasses human capacity and imagination, which are space and time bound, as it is not (**Irenaeus**).

The divine being begetting, being timeless, manifests all the characters of divine perfection in the timeless of the Son (**Athanasius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Gregory of Nyssa**).

This is why the Son is the timeless perfection of God His Father (**Augustine**).

The Word is the natural offspring of the Father, not an adopted son (**Athanasius**), and this is why He has the selfsame being, not a share in the being of God (**Basil the Great**).

The particular title “Only-begotten Son” demonstrates this most concise and specifically teaches the consubstantiality of the Father and Son.

The eternal Sonship, however, is also a mystery meant for the salvation of the world, for the Son is the Savior of the cosmos (**Cyril of Jerusalem, Eusebius**).

The Incarnation of the eternal Son invests the human race with glory (**Ephraim**), and the Incarnation becomes the point of the union between deity and humanity (**Hilary**).

The fragility of the Son of God on earth does not detract from His glory as eternal Son.

The Word effects the transfiguration of humanity itself in and through His own adoption of human nature (**Cyril of Alexandria**).

The Son, Begotten from Perfection:

St. Athanasius: It is right to call the Son the eternal offspring of the Father, for the substance of the Father was never imperfect so that what belonged to it might be added later. To beget in time is characteristic of humankind. For humans nature is incomplete; God’s offspring is eternal, for His nature is always perfect (**Against the Arians**).

God adopts a body to come to the world as Savior:

St. Cyril of Jerusalem: Learn also another cause of the incarnate economy. Christ came that He might be baptized and might sanctify baptism.

He came that He might work wonders, walking on the waters of the sea.

Since then, before His appearance in flesh, “the sea saw Him and fled, and Jordan was turned back,” [Psalm 114:3] the Lord took to Himself His body that the sea might endure the sight and Jordan receives Him without fear.

This, then, is one cause, but there is also a second. Through Eve, yet a virgin, came death; through a virgin or rather from a virgin, must Life appear: that as the serpent beguiled the

one, so Gabriel might bring good tidings to the other.

People forsook God and made carved images of people.

Since, therefore, an image of a person was falsely worshiped as God; God became truly Man that the falsehood might be done away. (Catechetical Lectures)

The Incarnation Invests Humanity with Glory:

St. Ephraim the Syrian: You are the Son of the Creator, who resembles His Father and is equal to Him. As Maker, He made Himself in the womb; He put on a pure body and

emerged. He made our weaknesses put on glory, by the mercy that He brought from His Father’s presence. From Melchizedek, the high priest, the hyssop came to you; (that is, Christ) a throne and a crown from the house of David; a family and a people from Abraham. (Hymns on the Nativity)

The Lord Possesses the Glory of God even as Man:

St. Cyril of Alexandria: In every way, therefore, we may perceive that the Word of God, even when He was man, nevertheless continued to be one Son. [Cyril, throughout his writings, insists on the personal, subjective unity of the Word of God enfleshed: that Jesus of Nazareth was one and the same as the word of God Incarnate]

For He performs those works that belong to deity, possessing the majesty and glory of the Godhead inseparable from Him.

If so we believe, He will crown us with His grace, by whom and with whom to God the Father be glory and dominion with the Holy Spirit, to ages of ages. Amen. [Homilies on the Gospel of Luke]

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“of One Essence/Being with the Father”

This phrase answers those who say that ‘My Father is greater than I’. This does not mean that the Father is greater in essence, or in divinity, or in the divine nature; for the divinity of the Son is equal and one with the Father, for He is the mind of the Father and His divine Logic.

For this reason, and by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to the fathers of the ecumenical councils they were inspired to write and include ‘of One Essence with the Father’, i.e. that the Father is not greater in any aspect, but we-the believers-say, that the Holy Trinity is equal, meaning that the Three Iconums are equal and one.

Equal in eternity, not limited, equal in the ability and power over all things, existing in all times and place, etc. The Lord Jesus Christ said, “I and the father are one” [John 10:30]. This verse/sentence when the Jews heard it wanted to stone Him. It was repeated again in John 17:22 saying, “As we are one”.

Other verses proving that the Son and the Father are one; “He who has seen Me has seen the Father” [John14:9].

As for the verse “My Father is greater than I” was said when the Lord Jesus became in the flesh and was Incarnate for the salvation of mankind, and not concerning His divinity .. He said it concerning His humility and humbleness, as He took the form of the slave, and became like us humans, except sin alone.

Hilary of Poitiers: The orthodox believer will assert ‘one substance of Father and Son,’ the Son ‘does not come from nothing; He is generate. He is not unborn, but He shares in timelessness. He is not the Father, but the Son derived from Him. He is not a portion, He is whole: He is the image of God, born of God, from God. He is God. God is one, not in person but in nature.

Eusebius of Caesarea: The Son is consubstantial with the Father.

The phrase ‘consubstantial with the Father’ indicates that the Son of God bears similarity with the creatures of God that came into being, but is in every way made like only to the Father who begot Him and is not of any other hypostasis or essence, but of the Father.

Basil of Caesarea: The Nicene fathers added the phrase ‘of the same substance’ to rule out this irreverence. For the conjunction of the Son with the Father is timeless and continuous. The Son is ‘of the substance of the Father, begotten, not made.’ There is no division of substance, as if it were taken from the Father and given to the Son, nor

did the substance generate by a process of flux or by production, like a plant bearing fruit.

If a light shows no difference of degree from another light, I conceive that one would not be right in calling it 'the same' as the other, since each light exists in the individuality of its *ousia*; but one would rightly describe it as 'precisely similar in respect of *ousia*, without difference. "Like in substance", provided that 'without any difference' is added.

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"By/Through Whom All Things Were Made";

Meaning, by the Iconum of the Word-Logos, the Mind of God, the Wisdom of God, everything was created. The Son is the Wisdom of God [1Corinthians1:23].

St. Paul said, ".. His Son .. also He made the worlds" [Hebrews1:2].

The Gospel of St. John starts by saying, "All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made" [John1:3].

As long as everything were made by Him, therefore He is eternal, before all ages, before the universe and all creation.

-Like to mention an important saying of St. Augustine (bishop of Hippo); 'The Son has two births: one from the Virgin in the fullness of time without man, and another birth from the Father before all ages. If the virginal birth from St. Mary is hard to comprehend, howbeit the birth from the Heavenly Father?!'.

There is no "Before" with Him. The Son of God is far above time.

Theodore of Mopsuestia: We are stating that is saying ‘born of His Father before all the worlds,’ they showed us that He is a Son truly not figuratively only. He is alone the true Son of God the Father because He is the Only-Begotten and is alone born of God His Father. The Son is from the nature of the Father and eternally from Him and with Him.

He who is above everything is also above time and from eternity. If, therefore, **God the Father is eternal and if the Son is God, then He is also eternal, God from God and Eternal from Eternal.** There is nothing before the Son as He also is God, because He is born of His Father before everything and is eternal, born of the One who is eternal.

Ephraim the Syrian: He is from eternity, and the length of His times is incomprehensible.

* * * *

“Who for Us Men”,

For us men, He took flesh and became man to save us from the bondage of the enemy.

The main reason and cause for His descending from heaven was ‘the salvation of mankind’, which was fulfilled by the redemption on the Cross on Mount Golgotha.

FOR OUR SAKE: The incarnation was ordained from the beginning (**Irenaeus**) and foreshadowed in Eden (**Clement of Alexandria**) and in Israelite history (**Hippolytus**). Nevertheless, it was hidden from Satan (**Ignatius**), being a remedy for the fall (**Leo III**). This remedy could be effected only by a sacrifice (**Gregory of Nazianzus**), which

redeems both body and soul (**Augustine**), because it involved both the body and the soul of the Word incarnate (**Theodore**).

Baptism delivered Christ from the law (**Theodore**), though He was free of actual sin (**Athanasius**) and any inherited stain (**Cyril of Alexandria**). Sinners have all the more reason to be baptized (**Augustine**). The dove reveals the character of the Spirit (**Augustine**). Christ baptizes not with water (**Origen**), but with the Spirit (**Augustine**), while baptism prefigures death, for Christ as for his saints (**Tertullian**).

He suffers in His human soul (**Augustine**), having assumed flesh like our own (**Tertullian**). Hence too His temptations can be ours (**Maximus the Confessor**), and we can learn to imitate His fortitude. [**Ancient Christian Doctrine vol.3, p. 1,2**]

When He was Incarnate and became man, He did many, many things, but for the sake of discussion, if He only wrought salvation by His Incarnation, that would suffice.

- ‘Who for us men’: tells and reveals how important the human race is to God. It also shows that salvation is for them only.
- He loves to call Himself ‘Son of Man’, as He carries their sins and on their behalf goes to the Cross, for He came to pay the price of their sins.

Epistle to Barnabas: The Son of God, although He is Lord and Judge of the living and the dead, underwent suffering, so that His affliction might give **us** life. Let us therefore, believe that the Son of God could not suffer except **for our** sake.

Ephraim the Syrian: Let us thank Him who was beaten and who saved us by His wound.

Let us thank Him who took away the curse by His thorns.
Let us thank Him who killed death by His death.
Let us thank Him who was silent and vindicated us.

Let us thank Him who cried out in death that had devoured us.

Blessed is He whose benefits have laid waste the enemies of God.

Let us glorify Him who watched and put to sleep our captor.

Glory to God the healer of human nature.

Glory to the One who plunged in and sank our evil into depth and drowned our 'Drowner'.

Let us glorify with all our mouths the Lord of all means of salvation.

Blessed is the Physician who descended and cut painlessly and healed the sores with a mild medicine.

His child was the medicine that takes pity on sinners.

Blessed is the One who dwelled in the womb, and is it built a palace in which to live, a temple in which to be.

A garment in which to be radiant and armor by which to conquer.

Blessed is the One whom our mouth is not sufficient to thank.

Whose gift is too great for those gifted with speech.

For however much we thank Him, it is too little, and because it is of no use for us to be silent and unnerved.

Let our weaknesses return to God a song of thanksgiving.

THE INCARNATION MAKES US CHILDREN OF GOD

John Chrysostom: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelled among us."

The one is a natural Son of God became a Son of man, in order to make children of God out of the children of men.

The lofty is mingled with the lowly but suffers no damage to its own glory, while the lowly rises out of the depths of its lowliness. This is what happened with Christ.

He in no way diminished His own nature through this descent, but He raised **us**, who were sitting forever in dishonor and darkness, up to indescribable glory.

* * * *

“And for Our Salvation”

The Incarnation re-establishes the Image of God.

Irenaeus: The Word existed in the beginning with God, and through Him all things were made. We have shown that the Son of God did not then begin to be: He existed always with the Father. But He was incarnate and made man, and then He fulfilled in Himself the long line of the human race, procuring for us a comprehensive salvation, that we might recover in Christ Jesus what in Adam we had lost, namely, the state of being ‘in the image and likeness of God.’

The Incarnation gives humanity a new birth.

Irenaeus: And how shall humanity pass to God unless God has passed into humanity.
How can human beings receive adoption by God if they remain as they are by human birth in this world?

Athanasius: We should not have been freed from sin and the curse had not the flesh which the Word assumed been by nature human.
There would have been no profit to us humans if either the Word had not been truly and by nature the Son of God or the flesh that He assumed had not been real flesh.

* * * *

“He Came Down”

The Word/Logos of the Father, stoops down to earth.

The Word takes a Body in order to deify the Race.

Athanasius: The Scriptures says; “Gave to Him a name above all names.” (**Philippians 2:9**), but this does not refer to the Word Himself, for as we have said, even before He became man He was worshipped by the angels and by the whole creation in respect of His unique heritage. It was because of us, and for us, that this also is written of Him. For as Christ died and was exalted as man, so as man, He is said to receive what, as God, He always had, in order that this great gift might extend to us. The Word was not degraded but receiving a body, so that He should ever need to seek to receive God’s gift.

Rather, He deified what He put on, and more than that, He bestowed this gift on the human race.

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“From Heaven”

From heaven: means that He left heaven*. Left it for our sake, and yet He remains eternally in it. He fills heaven, and earth, and is in both, and what’s in between.

The Lord Jesus said a statement to Nicodemus, saying “No one has ascended to heaven* but He who came down from heaven*, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven*” [**John3:13**]. ‘Who is’, note the present tense, meaning He is in heaven* as He is talking to Nicodemus on earth.

The Three heavens:

The first heaven is the one of the oxygen, nitrogen, helium, etc. where the birds fly freely.

The second heaven: is the non-gravitational, which we call in science ‘space’, where our moon and the other planets belonging to our galaxy is.

The third heaven: is the one that St. Paul saw and wrote about it in 2 Corinthians 1-6, and is called in Scripture ‘Paradise’. This is the waiting place for the righteous when they depart earth and the flesh, awaiting the Second Coming for Judgment and enjoy eternal life.

Heaven* of heavens:

Is His throne, where He is eternally, in the abode of the Father.

Where He is **“in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girded about the chest with a golden band/girdle. His head and his hair were white like wool, as white as snow: and His eyes were as a flame of fire; and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters.”** [Rev. 1:13, 14]

Origen: Though the God of the whole universe descends in His own power with Jesus to live the life of people, and the Word that “was in the beginning with God and was Himself God.” (John 1:1) comes to us; yet He does not leave His home or desert His state. The result is not that one place is emptied of Him while another is full, which did not before contain Him. The power and divinity of God takes His dwelling as He wills, and where He finds a place for Himself: God does not change His place .. when we speak of His leaving one and filling another, we shall not be speaking of locality but asserting that the soul of

the worthless and utterly degenerate is deserted by God, while the soul of one who wishes to live according to virtue, .. is filled with divine spirit or partakes of it. Therefore, in respect of Christ's descent, or the sojourn of God with people, there is no need of his leaving his greater state.

God's Descent from Heaven to Save Fallen Humanity

Irenaeus: The name of God or Lord is given only to him who is God and Lord of all, who said to Moses, "My name is I am. And you shall say to the Israelites, 'He who is' has sent me to you." (Ex. 3:14) The name of God and Lord is given also to His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who makes humans into the children of God if they believe in His name. And the Son says to Moses, "I have come down to rescue this people." (Ex. 3:8)

For it is the Son who descended and ascended for the salvation of people. Thus, through the Son who is in the Father and has the Father in himself, "He who is" has been revealed. The Father bears witness to the Son; the Son proclaims the Father. So Isaiah says, "I am witness, says the Lord God, and so is the Child/Servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe and understand that I am."

Clement of Alexandria:

God is Himself love, and because of his love He pursued us.

This love was the reason He came down and assumed human nature. This was why He willingly endured the sufferings of humanity, that by being reduced to the level of His power.

* * * * *

“And was Incarnate/He Became Incarnate”

Was incarnate, meaning took flesh and became human like us. He united with our flesh in the virginal womb of St. Mary. Therefore, the womb of Virgin St. Mary became the divine laboratory where the divinity united with the flesh yet without mingling, confusion, change or alteration to either the divinity or humanity.

- This unity was complete and perfect, and the divinity parted not the humanity for a single moment nor a twinkle of an eye.
- Thus after the union of the divinity with the flesh, Jesus Christ became God appearing in flesh .. God-man, not God and man, for He is one united nature after the divine Incarnation.
- Pope Cyril I, the 24th Patriarch of Alexandria, said, ‘One Nature of the Word Incarnate’ . as St. Paul said to his disciple Timothy, “God was manifested in the flesh” [**I Timothy3:16**].
- The Virginal birth took place by the action of the Holy Spirit, not by man, that’s why the fathers of the council-inspired by the Holy Spirit-said ‘was incarnate of the Holy Spirit ..’, this confirms what the angel said to Virgin Mary that, “the Holy Spirit will overshadow her” [**Luke1:35**].
- Thus, He took flesh from Virgin Mary, by the action of the Holy Spirit, and became man.

Cyril of Jerusalem: The cross is the deepest point of the humility that the incarnation represents, but it is not the shame of Christians; instead, it is their glory and boast.

Origen: In the incarnate Lord, the soul is the bond between the divinity and the flesh. It is a bond of such force that this is how we can speak of Jesus as God.

Athanasius & Augustine: In times past God could be said to have dwelled in His saints, but never before had God done what is seen in the incarnation, that is, took body to Himself.

Gregory of Nyssa: The same one who as Word was universally present to the cosmos has now in the incarnation come in flesh to us.

Basil the Great: His incarnation was real and not symbolic.

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“By the Power of The Holy Spirit”

Clement of Rome: Jesus Christ did not have the Spirit in the way the ancient prophets possessed it; rather, He knew all things that were to pass and spoke out of His own knowledge.

Cyril of Alexandria: The Spirit by which Jesus performed miracles was not alien to Him or a gift but rather was His own Spirit.

Christ’s gift of the Spirit to the world is the veritable beginning of a new humanity.

Athanasius of Alexandria: The Spirit is always one with the Son in the perfection of the divine unity.

The Spirit is especially seen in the anointing it gave to the humanity of Jesus, a gift that signified Jesus' role and status as the divine giver of the Spirit to the world.

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“And of the Virgin Mary/From The Virgin Mary”

Athanasius: Adam originally came from a virgin soil, thus created by God, and this is why the new Adam thought it fitting to come from the Virgin as from a new beginning.

Gregory of Nizianzus: The incarnate Word issued from a noble mother, who was a vessel of the Spirit. Being the mother of the Christ, she is thus the Mother of God. Those who deny this theology are devoid of the knowledge of God.

Gregory of Nyssa: Her blood nourished Him, but He took the Virgin's purity to be the substance of the flesh He made for Himself. Her significance was hidden from the ruler of this age, and so in her humility she became the stratagem of His downfall.

Cyril of Alexandria: If Christ is God, then it is clear that His mother is the '*Theotokos*', and in this, Mary stands as a demonstration of His twofold reality as human and divine.

Being of David's line, she ensures Christ's true descent from the house of David, as Messiah (**Ignatius**). And proves to all the world that the incarnate Lord is truly flesh and blood (**Ignatius, Polycarp, Leo**).

“And was Made Man/ Became Man”..

+The Nicean fathers added “and was made man” to make sure that no one took refuge in mythological understandings of the Word assuming flesh (like a pagan Greek god masquerading at being human).

+For them, the incarnation was no less than the stooping down of the divine Lord to heal and comfort His own creation.

+Their eloquent and robust words retain all their power and force today.

Gregory of Nazianzus: The Word was made flesh and assumed a personal existence within history.

Ephraim the Syrian: The Word wove for Himself a robe of flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary.

This means that He truly became a man (**Cyril of Alexandria**), and did not simply inhabit a man (**Athanasius**)

Gregory of Nyssa: This stooping down into incarnation was no matter of shame for the Logos. For a short time we saw Him living in our weakness, though He always remained what He was as God (**Cyril of Alexandria**)

He had become small for our sake (**Ephraim the Syrian**)

In His incarnation He became the Physician for the human race (**Eusebius, Cyril of Jerusalem & Gregory of Nyssa**)

Cyril of Alexandria & Cyril of Jerusalem:

By becoming flesh, the Word set a trap for death and broke its power over humanity.

Athanasius:

He was firstborn of Mary, signifying that His humanity and life on earth were authentic.

In the person of Emmanuel, two natures, of divinity and humanity, are brought into a unity, that is dynamically inseparable and profoundly organic, like a lily with its perfume or a soul with its own body (Cyril of Alexandria)
In this union of natures the one Christ is the sacrament of the reunion between God and humankind (Hilary)

The incarnate Lord may be known by many diverse titles (**Ephraim the Syrian**), but His title as Son of man indicates His assumption of the flesh within history (**Gregory of Nyssa & Cyril of Alexandria**), though even so, we ought to note that it is the Son of man who sits on the heavenly throne as Judge of the worlds (**Cyril of Alexandria**).

John Chrysostom: His incarnation is a universal blessing on our race.

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“And He was Crucified for Us”; **“He was Crucified”**

‘Crucified for us’ meaning that He did no sin or committed any sin, but on our behalf, the Righteous without sin, was crucified to fulfill the requirement of the divine sacrifice mentioned in Genesis 3.

- John the Baptist said, confirming this meaning, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” [**John 1:39**]..”And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all .. and carried our sorrows” [**Isaiah 53:6,4**].

Cyril of Jerusalem: The holy wood of the cross, which is seen among us to this very day, bears testimony and, through those who in their faith have plucked bits from it,

has filled almost the whole inhabited world. And this holy Golgotha that stands over us bears visible testimony .. showing up to the present how through Christ the stones were shattered on that occasion: the sepulcher nearby where He was laid, and the stone laid across the door, which up to the present day lies by the sepulcher. He stretched out His hands on the cross that He might embrace the farthest reaches of the inhabited world; for this Golgotha is the midmost point of the earth. This is not my assertion; it is a prophet who says, “You have wrought salvation in the midst of the earth.” [Psalm 74:12]

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“Under Pontius Pilate”,

Crucified for us under Pontius Pilate: this shows historically the event of crucifixion took place in the time and reign of a ruler called Pontius Pilate.

Crucifixion is proof for our redemption, the very important task for all the human race.

* ‘us’ meaning that He did not commit any sin, but for us and for our salvation, as He represents the human race, is paying the dues for the divine Justice.

Augustine: The name of the judge (Pontius Pilate, whose name appears in the Apostles’ Creed on which Augustine is commenting, needed to be added so that the time might be known.

Eusebius:

The same Josephus shows in the 18th book of his *Antiquities* that Pontius Pilate received charge of Judea in the 12th year of the reign of Tiberius (this man having succeeded to the universal empire after Augustus had maintained his rule for 57 years) and that he remained

there for a full 10 years, almost up to the death of Tiberius succeeded in AD 14 and died in 37, so that the dates assigned to Pilate are 16/17-26/27. (The reign of Augustus is dated not from the year 27 BC, in which he received this title, but from 43 BC, the year in which he formed a governing triumvirate with Lepidus Antony).

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“Suffered/ He Suffered Death”

“He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; 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]. He truly suffered, oppressed and was afflicted, and did not open His mouth to pay the dues to the divine Justice to free us from the bondage of the enemy.

- When He committed His Spirit in the Hands of the Father at 3:00 o'clock in the afternoon on the Cross, (9th hour according to the Jewish timing), His human soul left His body, still uniting with the divinity, as His flesh did [John 19:30].
- He was taken down from the Cross, washed His body and put the spices [John 19:40], then they buried Him in a tomb of Joseph from Aramathea [John 19:38].

Athanasius:

God did not let human beings be carried off by corruption, because this would have been unseemly and unworthy of God's goodness.

Having assumed the likeness of our condition, because all were under the chastisement of mortal corruption, He handed this body over to death in exchange for all and then conveyed it to the Father, doing this also from

humane love, so that, all having died to Him, the law imposing corruption on humans would be relaxed. And so that He could convert to incorruption the human beings who had reverted to corruption and restore them from death to life, he obliterated their death like a reed in the fire by making the body peculiarly his own and by the boon/blessing of resurrection.

Cyril of Alexandria:

“For God so loved the world that He gave His Only-begotten Son.” [John 3:16] If the great and super-abundant love of God the Father is what the Lord has toward the world, it is recognized in the fact that His Son exposed Himself to vicissitude for the sake of the world and on its account.

Justin Martyr:

And indeed as to that which is aid in the Law, “Cursed is he that hangs on a tree,” [Deut. 21:23] it is not God’s malediction on this crucified one that strengthens that hope of ours that depends on the crucified Christ but the fact that God predicted all the things that you and your like would do because of your failure to recognize that this man was the one before all things, the one who was to be the eternal priest of God, the king and Christ.

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“And was Buried”,

Iranaeus:

If then, the Lord obeyed the law of death that He might become “firstborn from the dead,” [Col. 1:18] and having lingered up to the third day in the depths of the earth, rose after that in the flesh, so that, having displayed the wounds of the nails to

His disciples, He ascended in this form to the Father how can they escape confusion who say that the depths are this world itself, and that their own inner man, forsaking the body, ascends to the super-celestial place?

Cyril of Jerusalem:

The site of the tomb was prophesied, and the garden is a mirror of paradise, as Solomon foresaw.

Obedience to death is a token of His real humanity (Tertullian) and the means of life for us (Irenaeus).

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“And on the Third Day He Rose from the dead”

On the Third Day He Rose again:

The Holy Scriptures says about Death for humans:

- 1- **It is sleep** ... as our Lord said about Lazarus to His disciples, “*Our friend Lazarus sleeps*” (**John 11:11**).
- 2- **It is good** ... because the end of a mission is better than its beginning. “*The day of death is better than one’s birth*” (**Ecc. 7:1**)
- 3- **It is gain** ... St. Paul said I considered everything a loss, to gain Christ. “*To die is gain*” (**Phil. 1:21**)
- 4- **It is leaving a tent** ... and going to the heavenly building. “*For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*” (**II Cor. 5:1**)

5- **It is a release from prison ... “Bring my soul out of prison” (Psalm 142:7).**

The resurrection took place in the dawn of the third day of His burial.

On the third day, according to the Holy Scripture, His soul along with the flesh united with the divinity, came together and Jesus Christ rose from the dead on the third day [John 20: 1-10].

PATRISTIC VIEWS:

The Resurrection was not without witness.

It is implicit in the Incarnation (Ephraim), as death cannot hold the Lord of life.

Thus the conquest of death is complete, redeeming the universal fall of the species in Adam (Romanus). In the resurrection we see the harvest of the cross, and in every natural harvest we see an earnest of the resurrection (Clement of Rome).

The first day of the week is now the Lord’s day (Gregory of Tours), commemorating a new creation (Gregory of Nyssa). Hence is it not the Sabbath, or rather it is a spiritual Sabbath (Gregory of Nyssa) and the birthday of an everlasting King (Gregory of Nyssa).

Both manhood and Godhead are visible in the resurrection (Ambrose). Thomas bore witness to His divinity, while if His body differs in quality from that of fallen humans (Clement of Alexandria), it anticipates the condition of the saints in heaven.

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“According to the Scriptures”. **“In Accordance with the** **Scriptures”.**

The resurrection of the Lord Jesus is different than those who were raised from the dead and died again.

- He rose from the dead by His divine will and power.
- If death was the divine payment for sin, then resurrection is the victory of this death, that lost its sting.
- ‘According to the Scriptures’, means that the Disciples and Apostles witnessed this resurrection and they professed and confessed it to the whole world.
- The Old Testament shows the resurrection of the Lord Jesus from the dead, as is mentioned in the Psalm 3, “I lay down and slept; I awoke ..” [Ps.3:5].
- In the divine Liturgy we say, “Amen .. Your death O, Lord, we proclaim. Your holy Resurrection, .. we confess”

PATRISTIC VIEWS:

Christ predicted His glorious resurrection (Tertullian), which was ordained from the beginning (**Gregory of Nyssa**), prophesied in Hosea (**Tertullian**) and anticipated in the return of Jonah (**Athanasius**). The resurrection frees us from death (**Athanasius**). Our deliverance is commemorated in every cock-crow, every new day, and every spring. For all that, it was not foreseen before it was accomplished.

Christ saves all (**Gregory of Nyssa**), reversing the effects of Adam’s sin (**Gregory of Nyssa**). While the body remains (**Cyril of Alexandria**), all resurrection is spiritual, and thus

we should not repine at suffering in the present body (Athanasius).

Christ commends belief without ocular proof; this is His guarantee of salvation to the Gentiles (Augustine). As the women approached Him through love and humility (Chrysostom), we too can discover Him through love of neighbor (Chrysostom).

For a testimony we have the Lord's Day itself (Ignatius).

The Jews prepared their own witnesses; the faithful guard could not choose but see (Ephraim). The body lay long enough in the tomb to prove that it was dead (Athanasius); it is trifling to suppose that the corpse was stolen without the wrappings (Chrysostom) or that it was taken by the gardener (Tertullian). The appearances of the resurrected Jesus can be harmonized. They were designed for the edification of believers (Athanasius), and we need not cavil/trivial accusations because none were vouchsafed to the incredulous/doubts (Origen).

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“Ascended into Heaven”, **“He Ascended into Heaven”**

The Lord God ascended into the heavens by His body, not His divinity, for His divine presence never left heaven.
[H.H.Pope Shenouda III]

- So, He ascended into the heavens by His body united with His divinity. His ascension is mentioned in Acts 1:9.
- Ascended also has a divine meaning, that is, He emptied Himself taking the form of a slave, has been completed, now He ascended with the victorious flesh over death, united with the divinity, in a glorious form.

- We too, will resurrect in this glorious form, an illuminated body, conquering death as we unite with Christ, Who conquered death and rose from the dead on the third day according to the Holy Scriptures.

Historical

The ascension of the Lord Jesus after His glorious Resurrection is predicted at John 20:17, described at Luke 24:51 and Acts 1:1-9 and pre-supposed at Ephesians 4:8.

His exaltation as Lord is commemorated at Philippians 2:9-11

-The word translated “ascended” can also mean “returned”, and the framers of the Creed will have been conscious that the Son of man is said at John 6:51 and John 6:62 to have His proper seat in heaven.

-The ascension did not bestow a new dignity on the eternal Son but revealed Him for what He had always been, and that He did not bring His human element down from heaven but assumed it on earth, so that this, unlike the Godhead, is now exalted for the first time.

Augustine:

Having given them a demonstration of the resurrection in His own flesh, He ascended to heaven, taking His presence also from their eyes, and He did not bestow on any of them in their flesh a good of the kind that He had exhibited in His own flesh. His aim was that they should live in faith and that, while the reward of that righteousness by which one lives in faith will be visible hereafter, it should in the meantime be awaited without sight.

Cyril of Alexandria:

When we affirm that our Lord Jesus Christ is from heaven and from above, we do not mean in affirming this that His

holy flesh was brought down from above or from heaven, but we rather follow the inspired Paul, who declared very clearly, “The first man was of the earth, earthly; the second man is from heaven.” [1Corinthians 15:45] And we are mindful that the Savior says, “None has gone up into heaven, if not the one who has come down from heaven, the Son of man,” [John 3:13] even though He was born, as I said but lately, of the holy Virgin. The fact is that God the Word, in His descent from above and from heaven, “emptied Himself,” [Phil. 2:7] taking the form of a servant and playing/assuming His part as Son of man while remaining God as He was, since He is by nature unchangeable and immutable. But being considered as one with His own flesh, He is said to have come down from heaven and is called the man from heaven, being perfect in divinity and perfect as the same one in humanity and being considered as in a single person. For there is one Lord Jesus Christ, [1Corinthians 8:6] even if we do not overlook the difference of the natures, from which we affirm that the ineffable union has been forged.

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**“He sits at the Right Hand of His
Father”;**
**“And is seated as the Right Hand of
the Father”**

Of course, God has no right and left, theologically.

- Right refers to the power, righteousness, and might of God, as is mentioned in the Psalm “The right hand of the Lord is exalted; the right hand of the Lord does valiantly” [Ps. 118:16].

- ‘Sits at the right hand’ means He is confirmed in the power, might and righteousness of God the Father. No more weakness and no more form of the defeated slave-man, suffering, smacking Him, spitting on Him, crucifying Him, etc.
- The phrase ‘His Father’ reveals the divinity of the Son, while the previous statements in the Creed shows His humanity; suffering, crucifixion, etc.

Historical

This clause announces the fulfillment of Christ’s prophecy in Matthew 26:4, Mark 14:62 and Luke 22:69. It also ratifies the vision of Stephen the proto-martyr (**Acts 7:56**) and sustains the harmony between the two Testaments, since the same words applied at Psalm 110:1 and Daniel 7:13 to an anonymous personification of the chosen people. While the expression/location “right hand of the Father” must be understood metaphorically, the reference to Christ’s sitting can be reasonably construed to imply that even when ascended He retains His human attributes.

Augustine: As God is incorporeal, the right hand is metaphorical.

Likewise Psalm 24 must be applied figuratively to Christ (**Justin**), as a dramatic account of His descent and return (**Gregory of Nyssa**). Isaiah foretells the enthronement of the risen Son (**Eusebius**), and He is the one saluted in Psalm 110 and Psalm 72 (**Tertullian**).

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“And He is Coming Again in His Glory”:

This statement refers to the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus in His glory to Judge the living and the dead. [see **Matthew 25:31**] “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, ..”.

* Also, “ .. and they will see the Son of Man will appear in heaven, .. coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” [**Matthew 24:30**].

* The Book of Acts mentions and confirms the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus, saying, “.. Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven” [**Acts 1:11**].

At His Second Coming, foretold in Old Testament prophecy, Christ will come as the all-conquering King of kings to execute judgment, destroy the forces of evil, and establish an everlasting peace.

Psalm 2:6 tells us, “the Father established His Son over the holy hill of Zion.”

Psalm 21:28, the kingdom belongs to the Lord, and He will rule over all nations.

Isaiah reveals the Gentiles as being included in His Kingdom [**Isaiah 62:2, 3**].

Jesus Christ Himself promised the day when people “.. see the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom” [**Matthew 16:28**].

In the apocalyptic vision of the Apostle John the beloved, Christ’s title is:

“KING OF kings AND LORD OF lords” [**Revelation 19:16**]

Historical Context:

The return of Christ in judgment, predicted in Mark 8:38 and 1Thessalonians 4:16, is an article of previous creeds and inseparable from the preaching of the gospel. It is because Christ rose as the first-fruits of the elect that the believer is confident of his own resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:12-20).

It implies that those who acknowledge Him as Lord, it also tells us why nature and origin of this lordship. The words “in glory”, authorized though they are by Mark 8:38

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“To Judge the Living and the Dead”:

This statement refers to His Second Coming ‘*Parousia*’, for Judgment.

This is in no way to be understood that He is coming to rule for 1,000 years on earth, this is a wrong teaching and unbiblical, as some sects think and believe.

“I tell you, on the day of judgment men will render account for every idle word they utter, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned” [Matthew 12:36]

“For the Son of Man is to come with His angels in the glory of His Father, and then He will repay every man according to his works. [Matthew 16:27; Revelation 2:23]

“He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs .. Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same JESUS, **Who was taken up from you into heaven,**

will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.” [Acts1:3,9-11]

“Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and **they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.** And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” [Matthew 24:30-31]

“Therefore you also be ready, for **the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.**” [Matthew 24:44]

“For the Father judges no one, but **has committed all judgment to the SON,** that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father.” [John 5:22]

“For **the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout,** with the voice of an archangel, and with a trumpet of God,. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up [rapture] together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.” [1Thessalonians 4:16-18]

“Behold, I tell you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet .. and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.” [1Corinthinas 15:51-53]

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“Whose kingdom shall have no end”: **“And His Kingdom will have no end”:**

Archangel Gabriel, in his annunciation to blessed Virgin Mary said, “And He will reign .. forever, and His Kingdom there will be no end.” [Luke 1:33]

Also, Daniel says a statement on the same line, “.. Daniel saw a dream and visions .. the he wrote down the dream, .. One like the Son of Man was coming with the clouds of heaven, until He came to the Ancient of Days and approached Him. Then dominion, honor, and the kingdom were given to Him, .. His authority is an everlasting authority which shall pass away, and His kingdom shall not be destroyed.” [Daniel 7:1, 3, 14]

This eternal Kingdom does not agree with those who say that Christ will come and reign on earth for 1,000 years at the end of times.

The Kingdom of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ is an eternal and spiritual Kingdom.

That Kingdom is not limited by years or time, for it is a heavenly Kingdom not earthly.

Our Lord Jesus Christ said Himself, “ My Kingdom is not of this world.” [John 18:36]

Historical Context:

Of the clauses from the Creed of 381AD this is the most substantial addition to the Nicene Creed of 325AD.

The purpose of this clause, then, is to make it clear that just as the Second Iconum/ Person (or hypostasis) of the Trinity has existed from eternity, so He will continue to exist for all eternity after the end of the created order – in willing submission to God the Father but without surrendering either His own identity of the individuality of the saints.

Augustine:

“Now, Christ has risen from the dead as the first-fruits of them that slept”; for the resurrection of the dead was His subject. This was done in the Lord by virtue of the assumption of humanity .. Now there are other things in this passage, (1Cor. 15:21-28) the whole text of which I have just quoted, FIRST, that it says, “when He has handed over the kingdom to God and the Father,” (1Cor. 15:24) as though the Father does not already possess the kingdom. Then that it is said, “until He has put all His enemies under his feet,” (1Cor. 15:25) as though after this He will not go on reigning and this is the import of the words “the end” above. (1Cor. 15:24)

On this the heretics put their own impious construction, as though by “end” He meant the termination of His kingdom, whereas in the Gospel (Luke 1:33) it is said that “His kingdom will have no end.” And finally, where it is said that “When all things have been made subject to Him, then also the Son Himself will be made subject to Him who has made all things subject,” they choose to understand this as though at present either there was something not yet subject to the Son or the Son was not subject to the Father.

The solution of the question, therefore, lies in the manner of speaking. For it is a frequent device in Scripture to speak of that which is always the case as becoming so for someone when he begins to be conscious of it. Thus we say in our prayer, “Hallowed be Your name,” (Matt. 6:9) as though it has not been hallowed at some time. “Hallowed be,” then, means “let it be known to be hallowed,” and likewise also the meaning of “when He has handed over the kingdom to the Father” is “when He has proved that the Father reigns and that which is now believed by the faithful and denied by the infidel becomes evident through visible manifestation.”

As for “He must reign until He has put all His enemies under his feet,” this means his kingdom must be made

manifest up to the point where all his enemies confess that He is reigning; for that is what it means to say that all his enemies will be under his feet. If we understand this of the righteous, the meaning of enemies is that they will be made righteous from a state of unrighteousness and will be subjected to Him by believing.

Of the unrighteous, who have no share in the future beatitude of the righteous, it may be taken to mean that when that manifestation of his kingdom occurs, they for their part will confess in their consternation that He reigns.



CONCERNING THE HOLY **SPIRIT:**

“Yes, We Believe in The Holy Spirit”:

This statement was in response to the heretic Macedonius, who pronounced blasphemy against the Holy Spirit and denied Its deity. [The Papacy, 1866AD, by Abbe’ Guettee’, p.332]

God is alive by His Spirit, and His Spirit is in Him since eternity, therefore, He is the Living God, and we believe in Him.

-The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God [Genesis 1:1-3; Exodus 3; Matthew 3:16,17; 1John 5:7]

The Spirit of God is sent by the Son: according to the Gospel of St. John the beloved, he says, “But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth ..” [John 15:26] “Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.” [John 16:7]

The work of The Holy Spirit:

1-“.. He will teach you all things” [John 14:26]

2-“.. and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you” [John 14:26]

3-“.. He will convict the world of sin [John1:5], and of righteousness (John21:35), and of judgment [John10:18]” [John 16:8]

The Gifts of The Holy Spirit:

“.. the word of wisdom, .. the word of knowledge, ..faith, ..healings, .. working of miracles, ..prophecy, ..discerning of spirits, ..different kinds of tongues, .. interpretation of tongues.” [1Corinthians12:1-11]

The Fruits of The Holy Spirit:

“But the fruits of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.” [Galatians 5:22]

To Acquire the Fruits of The Holy Spirit:

1-“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God” [Ephesians 4:30] .. our sins grieve Him.

2-“Do not quench the Spirit” [1Thessalonians 5:19] .. let us rise and return to Him.

3-“Walk in the Spirit” [Galatians 5:16] .. do not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

4-“..be filled with the Spirit” [Ephesians 5:18] .. by praises, Psalms, spiritual songs.

The Spirit Testifies about Christ

Cyril of Alexandria:

When the Spirit comes, the Lord Jesus says, “He will not speak from Himself.” (**John 16:13**) Jesus does not say, “He will make you wise and will reveal to you the mystery of the truth.” He, Jesus says, will tell you nothing that is not in agreement with My teaching, nor will He expound to you any strange doctrine because He will not be introducing laws peculiar to Himself. Instead, since He is My Spirit and is it were My mind, He will surely speak to you of the things concerning Me. And the Savior says this is not so that we should think the Holy Spirit has merely ministerial functions, as some ignorantly maintain. He says this, rather, from a desire to satisfy the disciples that His Spirit is not separate from Him as far as identity of substance is concerned and that it will surely speak what concerns Him [Jesus] and will work and bring about the same things.

[Commentary on the Gospel of John 10.2-LF 48:451]

Irenaeus:

The Church is wherever the Spirit is. The preaching of the church is everywhere consistent and continues in the same consistent way, receiving testimony from the prophets, the apostles and all the disciples-as I have proved-throughout its beginning, middle and end (these three terms refer to the prophets, apostles and the church catholic) and through the entire dispensation of God and that well-grounded system that tends to humanity’s salvation, namely, our faith. We preserve this faith that we received from the church and that always, by the Spirit of God, renews its youth as if it were some precious

deposit in an excellent vessel-causing even the vessel that contains it to renew its youth also.

The Holy Spirit, the promise of incorruption, the means of confirming our faith and the ladder of our ascent to God. "For in the church," it is said, "God has set apostles, prophets, teachers," (1Cor.12:28) and all the other means through which the Spirit works. Not all, however, share in these gifts when they do not join themselves to the church. Instead, they defraud themselves of life through their perverse opinions and infamous behavior. For where the church is, there is the Spirit of God; and where the Spirit of God is, there is the church and every kind of grace.

Cyril of Jerusalem:

The many names of the Spirit in Scriptures.

Although He has many names, the Holy Spirit is but one. He is called the Spirit, "For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom." (1Cor.12:8)

He is called the Spirit of truth, as the Savior says, "When He, the Spirit of truth, comes." (John 16:13)

He is also called the Comforter, as He said, "For if I do not go away, the Comforter will not come to you." (John 16:7)

He is also called the Spirit of the Father, as the Savior says, "For it is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you." (Matt.10:20)

He is also called the Spirit of the Lord, according to that which St. Peter spoke, "Why is it that you have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord." (Acts 5:9)

He is also called the Spirit of the Son of God, as it is said, "And because you are children, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son." (Galatians 4:6)

He is also called the Spirit of Christ, as it is written, "Searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ that was in them signified." (1Peter 1:11)

He is called the Spirit of holiness, as it is written, “According to the Spirit of holiness.” (**Romans 1:4**)

He is also called the Spirit of adoption, as St. Paul says, “For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, ‘Abba Father.’” (**Romans 8:5**)

He is also called the Spirit of revelation, as it is written, “May He give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.” (**Ephesians 1:17**)

He is also called the Spirit of grace, as when he-St. Paul says, “And has outraged the Spirit of grace.” (**Hebrews 10:29**)

And in Isaiah He was styled the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and might, of knowledge and of godliness, and of the fear of God. (**Isaiah 11:2**)

The Holy Spirit is He Himself who speaks and works and dispenses and sanctifies, even as the working out of the plan of salvation for us from the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit is inseparable and harmonious and one.

For I want you to keep in mind those things that were recently spoken and to know clearly that there is not one Spirit in the Law and the Prophets and another in the Gospels and apostles. Rather, it is one and the same Holy Spirit who both in the Old and in the New Testament spoke the divine Scriptures. [**St. Cyril of Jerusalem Catechetical Lecture 4.16; 16.4**]

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“The Lord”:

He is The Spirit of God Eternal, therefore, He-*The Holy Spirit*-is Eternal

Biblical references;

Genesis 1:3 “Then God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light”.

Matthew 3:16,17 “When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased”.

1 John 5:7 “For there are three that bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are One”.

Cyril of Jerusalem:

The Holy Spirit is the third Iconum (person) of the Trinity is called Spirit in a different sense than all forms of created spirit.

Athanasius:

The Bible does use the word ‘spirit’ in many ways in Old Testament writings and the Gospels, Acts and the Pauline writings of the New Testament. But these different uses of ‘spirit’ are to be distinguished from the Holy Spirit.

He is unchangeable and immortal. , also because of what He does and who He is as the sevenfold Spirit.

Augustine: The Holy Spirit is what the Father and the Son have in common with Him.

Hilary: The Holy Spirit is also known as the Spirit of Christ who dwells in us.

Basil the Great:

In the Book of Acts, the Holy Spirit is identified as God by St. Peter when he rebukes Ananias and Sapphira, who, he says, have not lied to people but to God.

The Holy Spirit is Eternal and holy.

Gregory of Nazianzus & Epiphanius: The presence of the Holy Spirit is recorded throughout Scripture in the Old and New Testaments as possessing divine attributes that only God could possess, acting as only God should be referred to.

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“The Giver of Life”: **“The Life-Giver”**

Life is spoken of in Holy Scriptures not only in terms of physical life or eternal life but also in terms of the life of faith that leads to salvation.

Tertullian:

The Spirit gives life and salvation through the gift of repentance. This gift of repentance was first given to Adam after he and Eve had sinned in the Garden of Eden.

+It is clear that repentance and faith need to go hand in hand since the Lord swears on oath that when we come to Him in repentance and faith, He will forgive.

Cyril of Jerusalem:

There are numerous examples in Scripture of individuals and even nations who were given the gift of repentance due to the forbearance of God. God’s call to repentance extends even to what one might call the worst-case scenarios who, although they were obviously undeserving, did listen to call and repent, and were forgiven.

+When there is faith and trust in the God who saves us by his mercy, an amazing transformation can occur through the gift of repentance.

Augustine:

There is no human renewal possible, however, without a Savior who atones for our sin and the Spirit of God who makes that saving act available to us.

+Thus, repentance includes a resolution empowered by the Spirit to forsake sin and a realization of how dangerous sin is.

+Those who repent seek a change in behavior and a clean break from their former life as they renounce their sin and the world that seeks to feed that sin.

Basil the Great:

The mission of the Holy Spirit is to bring such transformation and restoration.

John Chrysostom & Ephraim the Syrian:

Transformation and restoration happens through the drowning and reviving waters of Holy Baptism.

Ambrose:

Our whole life of sin must be renounced, renewing the vow we made at baptism to renounce the devil and all his ways.

+Faith understands and trusts that God freely forgives us because of Christ and His promise and not because of our works, our contrition, our confession, our satisfaction or our works of love that we do.

+Forgiveness demonstrates the power of faith in limiting the damaging effects of sin.

+Repentance understands that sin must be confronted head on.

JUSTIFICATION by the Holy Spirit, has a juridical or legal meaning like that used with forensic courtroom terminology (**Chrysostom**), in the sense of declaring someone righteous or innocent (**Origen**) or pardoned by the Commander-in-Chief (**Augustine**).

Christ acts as our Lawyer or advocate with the Father (**Chrysostom**) who not only defends us (**Hilary**) but also takes on himself the sentence of death that we deserved (**Athanasius, Hilary**). He satisfies God's justice, which had rightly delivered the human race to the power of the devil because of sin. The Son of God offered Himself, even though He was innocent, for all of us who were guilty. Thus He used justice rather than power to defeat Satan (**Augustine**).

We as defendants, are then relieved of all charges, declared just and innocent so that we can stand upright before the Judge (**Chrysostom & Rufinus**) instantly innocent of all charges (**Chrysostom**).

There are two ways to be justified: by works of the law or by grace through faith. Justification under the law failed to produce the desired effect (**Tertullian**) because the law was too weak to confer righteousness but also because we are too weak to fulfill its demands (**Chrysostom**). Nothing saved or saves us except faith alone in the Mediator (**Chrysostom, Augustine & Athanasius**).

Justification is not a payment for merit, nor is it given to anyone because he or she deserves it. It is free, unmerited gift (**Leo**). Those who receive it are justified solely by faith alone in Christ (**Basil, Chrysostom, Jerome & Origen**).

Christ's Life in Us Through the Spirit – THEOSIS:

The apostle Paul is the primary source for the church's teaching on justification but also for its teaching of incorporation and union with Christ via the Holy Spirit. St. Paul often uses the phrase "in Christ" or "in Christ Jesus" to indicate not only a change in our relationship with God but also a change in us through our incorporation into Christ.

It is the apostle Peter, however, who has provided the church with the clearest text concerning our participation in the divine nature—a concept that has been found

predominantly in the East, although the selections here will demonstrate that this was a teaching in the West as well. In the first chapter of his second letter/epistle, St. Peter writes: “Jesus’ divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us to His own glory and excellence, by which He has granted to us His precious and very great promises, that through these you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of passion, and become partakers of the divine nature.” [2Peter1:3, 4]

St. Peter and St. Paul no doubt took this idea from Christ as inspired writers. In the Gospel of John 10:34, the Lord Jesus quotes Psalm 82:6, “I said you are gods” and tells the Jews to whom he was speaking that God “called them gods to whom the word of God came.”

In John 1:12, 13 we are given the power to become the children of God. In John 17, He also speaks of His disciples becoming one with Him and the Father. Many other passages could be cited as well.

The Cappadocians; Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa, take this **Alexandrian** understanding of salvation and bring it into the larger tradition of the church.

St. Augustine in the West incorporated the transformative effects of divinization into his theology of the sanctified life, demonstrating how *theosis* had moved into the mainstream of theological discourse.

Cyril of Alexandria:

The Son dwells in us in a corporeal sense as man, comingled and united with us by the mystery of the Eucharist; and also in a spiritual sense as God, by the effectual working and grace of His own Spirit, building up our spirit into newness of life and making us partakers

of His divine nature. Christ, then, is seen to be the bond of union between us and God the Father, as man making us, as it were, His branches, and as God by nature inherent in His own Father. For in no other way could that nature that is subject to corruption be uplifted to incorruption, except by the coming down to it of that nature that is high above all corruption and changeability.

We have, therefore been made perfect in unity with God the Father, through the mediation of Christ. For by receiving in ourselves both in a corporeal and spiritual sense, as I said just now, Him that is the Son by nature and who has essential union with the Father, we have been glorified and have become partakers in the nature of the Most High.

[Commentary on the Gospel of John 11.12]

SANCTIFICATION by the Holy Spirit:

In John 17:17, the Lord Jesus prayed for His disciples that His Father would sanctify them in the truth. The church has continued with such a prayer ever since. **[Apostolic Constitution].**

Sanctification which etymologically in Latin means “to make holy”, sets one apart for service to God **[Cyril of Jerusalem].**

According to John’s Gospel, even Christ was sanctified as He set Himself apart for service to His Father in order to sanctify us and set us apart from the world to serve God **[Cyril of Alexandria].**

We were set apart by grace **[Chrysostom]**, having been sanctified in the Son **[Augustine].**

The Father, too, sanctifies along with the Son and the Holy Spirit **[Ambrose]**. In fact, the whole Trinity is involved in our sanctification **[Gregory of Nyssa].**

And yet, it is in the person of the Holy Spirit, sent by the Father through the Son, that this work of sanctification is accomplished and completed in us **[Cyril of Alexandria].**

He wants His image-us-to also become His likeness so that we become holy just as He is holy [Tertullian] and that we love what He loves [Polycarp].

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“Who Proceeds from The Father”: **“Who Comes Forth from The Father”**

The Lord Jesus Himself said, concerning this issue very clearly in the Holy Scriptures.

“But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth Who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.” [John15:26]

Proceeding from the Father makes His procession from one source.

Leo III (December 795-June 816AD), Pope of Rome in the 9th century, protested against an innovation, by having the Creed engraved upon two tablets of silver-in Latin and Greek, that were hung in St. Peter's Church, and under which was written the following inscription: **“I, Leo, have put up these tablets for the love and preservation of the Orthodox faith”**. [The Papacy, by Abbe' Guettee', D.D., 1866AD, Minos Publishing Co.-New York, p. 330]. At the beginning of the ninth century the addition was already condemned in France by the most learned pious men. It has been written, *“Do not overstep the limits laid down by the Fathers; insert nothing new in the creed of the Catholic faith, and in religious functions be not pleased with traditions unknown to ancient times.”* [Alcuin Epist. 69] (ibid. p.329)

John 8:42 The Lord Jesus says He proceeded and came forth from God.

John 15:26 The Spirit proceeds from the Father.

St. Athanasius: was the first to assert that the Holy Spirit was *homoousios* with the Father and the Son and that this became a distinctive of Alexandrian theology regarding the Spirit that was shared by the Cappadocian Gregory of Nazianzus, as well as Didymus, Cyril of Alexandria and also Epiphanius of Salamis.

St. Athanasius was adapting the method of his predecessor at Alexandria, Dionysius, who sought to defend the divine monarchy against any notion of three gods or any idea that God was one person existing in three modes. In providing his defense, Dionysius resorted to discussing the procession of the Holy Spirit, concerning “both from whom and through whom he proceeded” to prove his point. Dionysius focused on what the Father and Son shared, “in whose hands is the Spirit, who cannot be parted either from him who sends or from him who conveys him” [**Athanasius Defense of Dionysius 17**].

The Father and Son each have a unique role: the Father sends the Spirit; the Son conveys Him. However, since each person is wholly God, “whole of the whole” [**Athanasius Against the Arians 1.16**] there is a sense in which the Spirit could be said to proceed from the Son since the Son, too, is of the essence of the Godhead, even as the Father is.

As **Epiphanius** said, “When you pronounce the *homoousion*, you assert nothing other than that the Son is God of God, and that the Holy Spirit is God of the same Godhead, not three Gods. The Spirit is of one and the same *ousia* with the Father and the Son. Therefore, just as the Son was confessed at Nicea to be *homoousios* (of one substance/essence/being) with the Father, the

Spirit too should be confessed as being *homoousios* with the Father.

Athanasius the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and receives from the Son. The distinctive properties of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit always remain the same in the equality and consubstantiality of the Holy Trinity. [Torrance, *Trinitarian Faith*, 245]

Athanasius, the Son is entirely from the essence of the Father. The Spirit is said to be from God, since the Spirit is one but is also said to be proper to the Word who is one, the Spirit is also proper to God who is one and is, then, *homoousios* with God because there is only one divinity.

The West in its '*filioque*', can be heard to be saying that Spirit comes from the Father through the Son without implying that the Son is the source for the Spirit's existence. [Maximus] Is this the true intention of the West?

Hilary of Poitiers: I hold fast in my consciousness the truth that your Holy Spirit is from you [Father] and through Him [Son], although I cannot by my intellect comprehend it. For in your spiritual things I am dull .. Let me win the favor of your Holy Spirit who takes His being from you through your Only-begotten. [On The Trinity 12.56-57]

Double procession is rejected by the Orthodox Church:

The mention of a double procession was First adopted by the Synod of Toledo (589AD).

H.H. Pope Shenouda III says, that this dogma makes two Fathers in the Holy Trinity, for there would be two origins'.

The double procession declares that the Father's procession of the Holy Spirit is imperfect then, thus the need to proceed from the Son as well! God forbid,

The adoption of the 'Filioque' clause has occurred without the authority of an ecumenical council, as it is declared by the agreed statement issued by the Anglican Orthodox Commission in Moscow, in 1967.

This dogma caused a great division between Orthodox and Catholics for many years. It has also caused dispute among the Catholics themselves.

The Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of wisdom, the Spirit of understanding, the Spirit of knowledge (Isa. 11:2); the Spirit of love, the Spirit of a sound mind (2Tim 1:7); the Spirit of adoption (Rom 8:15) etc... and it is not said that He proceeds from wisdom, understanding, knowledge, love, sound mind, adoption etc...

We conclude by saying that although some western fathers accepted the doctrine of the double procession of the Holy Spirit as a philosophical and metaphysical thought, **yet a great number of Roman Pontiffs, such as: Celestien, Leo the Great, Hadrian I, Leo III, Benedict III and John VIII held the opposite view, i.e. Correct Orthodox vision for the true faith.**

The addition of the 'Filioque' to the Nicene Creed opposes:

- + The teaching of the Bible,
 - + The Ecumenical Councils,
 - + The Didaskalia of the Fathers, and
 - + The Holy Tradition of the Church.
-
-

“Who (the Holy Spirit), with the Father and the Son”

We worship You, O, Christ, with Your good Father, and The Holy Spirit, The One God. For You came, was incarnate, suffered and resurrected from the dead, redeemed us and saved us.

The Father is the Divine Essence of the God-head, His wisdom is the Logos-*Jesus Christ*, and He is alive by His Spirit, the Holy Spirit.

The Father worked by His Logos-*The Son*- through His Holy Spirit in all His actions; creation, salvation, and maintaining the world till His Kingdom come.

The Three Iconums are of the same and one Essence; eternal, divine and everlasting.

Wherever the divinity of the Son was questioned, it followed that the divinity of the Spirit was questioned. As a result of the Arian controversy, the Council of Nicaea in 325AD worked out the relationship between the Father and the Son, confessing its belief that the Son is *homoousios* with the Father.

-The third article of the Nicene Creed of 325AD also confessed a belief in the Holy Spirit but did not expand on what that belief entailed in relation to the Father and the Son. It simply said, “And we believe in the Holy Spirit”, followed by a condemnation of the Arians. It is also true that, while the Nicene Creed may have settled in principle the debate regarding the Son being of the same substance of the Father, it still took another fifty years before the church definitively settled the issue.

-The relationship of the Son to the Father was being debated during this time, but the ancient church writers, as well as the heretics, also realized that if the Spirit was in any way denigrated, this too affected the Son, as goes the Spirit, so goes the Son. The logic was inescapable.

Thus, at the Second Ecumenical Council at Constantinople in 381AD the full divinity of the Spirit too was confessed and included in the creed formulated for the Council at Constantinople in 381AD, once the full implications of what had been decided at Nicaea had been debated. There was no inclusion of the *homoousios* in its confession of the Spirit, however. Such an omission may reflect the reticence of the period evidenced in such writers as Athanasius, but especially Basil, for whom “**worshipped and glorified**” was as close as they came to saying that the Holy Spirit was God. The full divinity and consubstantiality of the Spirit with the Father and the Son is the consensual teaching of the entire church.

Hilary of Poitiers:

Those who deny the Spirit must also deny the Father and the Son.

John of Damascus:

The Spirit is of equal adoration with the Father and the Son because He is of the same substance of the Godhead and is also eternal, while at the same time existing in His own proper and peculiar subsistence.

Gregory of Nyssa:

Although the Holy Spirit is listed third in number, this sequence in no way implies subordination.

Athanasius:

The Spirit, in regard to order and nature, bears the same relationship to the Son as the Son to the Father.

Augustine:

Being of one substance with the Father and the Son, He is what binds them together in holiness and love in the Trinity.

Cyril of Alexandria:

We declare, then, that the Spirit is of one divine essence (substance) with the Father and the Son as the fathers at Constantinople intended.

* * * * *

“He Is Worshipped and Glorified”

Athenagoras & Basil:

The Holy Spirit was included with the Father and the Son from the earliest times of the church in its worship of the Trinity.

Ambrose:

Even Abraham saw three but worshipped one.

Gregory of Nyssa:

In worshipping anyone of the three, we worship all three in one.

John Chrysostom:

If the Holy Spirit did not exist, there would not be pastors or teachers in the church, since the Holy Spirit has made you guardians to feed the church of the Lord [Acts 20:28].

* * * * *

“Who Spoke by the Prophets”,
“He has Spoken Through the Prophets”.

The Holy Spirit was the source of the divine inspiration for the prophets in the Old Testament.

The Book says; “.. for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” [2 Peter 1:21]

“All Scriptures is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” [2 Timothy 3:16]

From the earliest days of the church, the Spirit has been known as the one who spoke through the prophets and writings of the Old Testament.

The Holy Spirit is the Giver of revelation. The Lord Jesus refers to David the Psalmist as one inspired by the Spirit (Matt.22:42), as does St. Peter in Acts 1:16; 4:25.

Elizabeth, Simeon and Zechariah were all filled with the Holy Spirit when they spoke the words recorded in the Gospels (Luke 1:41, 67; 2:25; Acts 1:8).

The Lord Jesus told the Apostles that when they would be called to speak, it would not be they speak, but the Holy Spirit that he would give them (Mark 13:11; John 20:22).

Clement of Alexandria:

The divinely inspired Scriptures are filled with heavenly gifts, among these gifts are the prophets, both men and women, of the Old Testament who were given of revelation. What they spoke and wrote was not on their own.

Theophilus:

They were inspired and divinely taught by the Spirit as they learned and taught the same faith we share.

John Chrysostom:

The work of the Holy Spirit, although present in the Old Testament, becomes fully manifest in the New Testament with the advent of Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

Cyril of Alexandria:

Christ received the Spirit and then gave that Spirit to us.

* * * * *

CONCERNING THE CHURCH:

We believe in One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church

The church was born on the cross: “There came out our blood and water,” which is Christ’s church, and it is built on Him, just as Adam’s wife was taken from His side. The rib of Adam was his wife, and the blood of our Lord, His church.

From the rib of Adam came death, and from the rib of our Lord, life.

The olive is the symbol of Christ, for from him spring milk, water and oil; milk for babes, water for the young and oil for the sick.

Likewise the Olive gave these also, water and blood, in His death, and gave oil in or by death.

**Will attempt to analyze/interpret
each phrase in this statement**

+ + + + +

And in One:

The Church is; the congregation of the believers, also the shepherds and the clergy men.

Also includes the building where the believers assemble/gather to worship God.

The fourth vital part of the 'One' church is the victorious church in Paradise, were the martyrs, anchorites, hermits, monks, and saints who departed mention us in our struggle on earth to complete our mission and achieve what they achieved.

Irenaeus:

The church throughout all the world, having its origin firmly from the apostles, perseveres in one and the same opinion with regard to God and His Son.

The Biblical Meaning of The One Church is:

1-It is the body of Christ and His bride [Ephesians 5:23-32]

2-One Church as “.. there will be one flock and one shepherd” [John 10:16]

3-One Church in faith, dogma, teaching, and spirit” [Ephesians 4:4-6]

It is 'one church' here and in heaven also, it is the House of God with people, and God will be in their midst [Revelation 21:1-3]

Rufinus:

“We believe the holy church”, not as God but as the church gathered together to God. And we believe that there is “forgiveness of sins.” And we believe that there will be a “resurrection of the flesh”; we do not say, “We believe in the resurrection of the flesh.” But this monosyllabic preposition, therefore, the Creator is distinguished from the creatures and things divine are separated from things human. [Commentary on Apostolic Creed].

In other words, we believe in God and things divine. We do not believe in things human; we simply believe them.

The understanding of the Fathers of the significance and the nature of the church is grounded on Scripture, especially on the New Testament. The strong images of St. Paul support their explanation: the Christian community as the body of Christ, as His bride, as mother. Because she is a bride, she can generate sons and daughters for the Father.

+St. Paul, in describing the nature of the Christian community, introduces the image of the church as the body of Christ [1Corinthians 12:27-31] and expounds it in Pastoral Letters [Ephesians 5:23; 29-32]

+Christ is the head of that body: “He is the head of the body, the church .. Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of His body, that is, the church.” [Colossians 1:18, 24]

+There is a mystical identification between believers and Christ, as is shown in the conversion of St. Paul: “As he journeyed, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed about him. And he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?’ And he said, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And He said, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.’” [Acts 9:3-5]

+To belong to Christ, to have a personal relationship with Him, to have union with Him, implies the result of union with other believers. “Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? .. But he who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with Him.” [1Corinthians 6:15, 17]

Individuals are unified by the same faith and love in Christ:

“So we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.” [Romans 12:5] According to Paul, believers are members of a body and are connected, serving different functions.

+The unity is of higher order. It is not only a social or moral unity but a mystical body. “Mystical” does not

mean something strange or hidden; it means that Christ binds, guides, ties, unites us to Himself.

+The unity comes from one bread, one cup and one Holy Spirit [Liturgy of St. Basil the Great]

Cyprian:

Tradition handed down to us says that there is one God and one Christ, one hope and one faith, one church and one baptism appointed only in that one church. Whoever departs from that unity must be found in company with heretics; and in defending heretics against the church, he is launching an attack on the sacred mystery of this divine tradition.

Holy:

The Church is holy and sanctified by the Blood of Christ in baptism, for; “.. Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, .. that she should be holy and without blemish.” [Ephesians 5:25-27]

+It is ‘holy’ by the precious and holy anointing; ‘Holy Myron’ or ‘Chrism’, by the descent of The Holy Spirit on it [1John 2:26]

From the beginning of the second century, we find the saying the “holy church”.

The texts of the Fathers repeatedly and incessantly define the church as holy, up to the Nicean-Constantinopolitan profession of faith.

+The believers are called ‘saints’ in the early church “To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus: .. just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame ..” [Ephesians 1:1, 4]

+In the holy divine Liturgy, the priest calls on the congregation before partaking of the Holy Communion saying; ‘The Holies-Body & Blood, for the holy-congregation’.

Catholic:

-‘Catholic’ is defined in the Webster Dictionary as; universal, wide-spread. [Webster’s Third New International Dictionary, p.353, 1976]

Linguistically the word *catholic*, being traced to its Greek origin, turns out to be of two syllables: the first one ‘*cath*’ meaning in accordance with ‘*Kata*’ (Coptic); the second syllable meaning **WHOLE**. The ‘wholeness’ meant here is that which transcends the totality of finite existence. It is an unalterable, infinite, unbreakable, innumerable whole; it is a ONE fixed WHOLE analogous to the concept of Christ’s nature which is indivisible, unconfused and unchangeable. [Fr. Matta El-Meskeen, St. Macarius Monastery-Egypt]

-The church gathers all; Jews, Gentiles, tribes, and various people and nations.

The Church is WHOLE, in other words *catholic*, as it gathers in its own body of Christ, which fills it, all that belongs to man as well as to God together into one single entity which both visible and invisible, both finite and infinite; an existence within the sphere of time and place, but at the same time eternal and metaphysical.

Catholicity in the Church is that of Christ; it is the making effective of the nature of Christ which is capable of bringing together simultaneously man with man with God. In other words the Church, by nature of its

catholicity, is against all sorts of discrimination, of division, of isolation and even all that causes division whatever its source may be, whether within man or without him.

-The 'catholicity' of the church is above any ethnicity; no differentiation between black & white, rich or poor, Jews or Gentile, big or small. **"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Christ Jesus."** [Galatians 3:28]

-Christ is all in all. There is diversity in gifts and talents, but no diversity in faith.

-The divinity of Christ has caused His humanity to surpass all racialism, nationality and partiality, even sin death.

Augustine:

Spirituality belong to the church, which has filled the whole world. All spiritual people see that the church throughout the whole world is one, true and catholic.

Cyril of Jerusalem:

The word *ecclesia* is applied to different things. It is written of the multitude in the theater of the Ephesians, "And when he said this, he dismissed the assembly." [Acts 19:41] If ever you are visiting in cities, do not ask simply where the Lord's house is, not merely where the church is, but where is the catholic church.

+It is called 'catholic' because it extend over all the world, from one end of the earth to the other, and because it teaches universally and completely one and all the doctrines that ought to come to human knowledge, concerning things both visible and invisible, heavenly and earthly.

+It is called 'catholic' because it brings into subjection to godliness the whole race of humankind, governors and governed, learned and unlearned, and because it

universally treats and heals the whole class of sins that are committed by soul or body and possesses in itself every form of virtue that is named, both in deeds and words and in every kind of spiritual gifts.

(And) Apostolic Church:

-Does not mean historically the church is established by the Apostles and Disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, but built and based on Apostolic Teaching.

-The Church is established on the teaching of the Apostles and their evangelism, being Biblical teachings, as is supported by the words of St. Paul saying, “.. **having being built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, ..**” [Ephesians 2:20]

-They gathered to keep the teaching of the Apostles; **“And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”** [Acts 2:42]

An important point to study, the Apostles doctrine:

- a) What the Lord Jesus Christ said.
- b) What the Apostles taught as eye witness
- c) What the fathers of the church kept

Clement of Rome:

The apostles have preached the Gospel to us from the Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ has done so from God. Christ therefore was sent forth by God, and the apostles by Christ.

+The teachings of the Apostles then are divine teachings, deposited to the generations, “And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit

these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” [2Timothy 2:2]

The Apostolicity of the Church commits to its authenticity and being ancient.

+This also provides that the ‘Priesthood’ is by laying of hands, i.e. ‘succession’, from Jesus Christ to the Apostles then the early fathers, till our day, the same ‘holy breath’ and ‘laying of hands’, and this gives comfort and tranquil to the believers for the priesthood trust.

We acknowledge/confess one **Baptism:**

DEFINITION:

‘**Baptizein**’, in Greek means ‘to immerse’, ‘to dye’, thus, the word ‘**Baptism**’.

COMMENTARY:

Christian baptism means “immersion”, it goes back to Christ in the sense that it is administered because of his mandate. It is distinct from other previous types of baptism is use among the Hebrews. Regardless of who officiates in baptism, i.e. priest or bishop, it is considered that it is always Christ who baptizes: “He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. [Matthew 3:11]

In the epistle/letter to Titus, baptism is defined as “the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit.” [Titus 3:5] It is given that “He might sanctify her-the church, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word.” [Ephesians 5:26]

This statement, “one baptism”, is taken from the inspired Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians 4:5

“ .. one Lord, one faith, one baptism: one God and Father of all, ..”.

It is one baptism because it is death with Christ “Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him through baptism into death, ..” [Romans 6:3, 4]

As for sins committed after baptism, these are forgiven through repentance and confession.

Now, if a Christian person denied his/her Christianity for another philosophy then returned to Christianity, his/her baptism is NOT to be repeated, for it is an un-erasable dye, by which the person is born of the water and Spirit [John 3].

The person is born from his/her mother’s womb once, and thus, the person who is returning to Jesus Christ will practice some spiritual disciplinary measurement by the church to prove his/her repentance, then be joined to the membership of the church once again.

Cyril of Jerusalem:

In baptism we receive the spiritual cleansing of the forgiveness of sins and new birth. We also receive participation in Christ’s suffering.

Augustine & Ambrose:

In baptism a death occurs, but there is also regeneration, as the old Adam dies and the new Adam is raised from the font in a type of resurrection.

Basil the Great:

In baptism our life is regenerated through the Holy Spirit, who produces the new person in us.

Ephraim & Irenaeus:

We become the dwelling place for God the Spirit, having been made clean in the waters of baptism.

BAPTISM IS COMPLETED BY CHRISM:

Cyril of Jerusalem:

Now that you have been “baptized into Christ” and have “put on Christ”, you have become conformed to the Son of God. [Galatians 3:27; Romans 8:29]

For God “destined us to be His sons,” [Ephesians 1:5], so He has made us like to the “glorious body of Christ.” [Philippians 3:21] Thus, since you “share in Christ,” [Hebrews 3:14] it is right to call christs or anointed ones.

As God said, referring to you: “Touch not my anointed ones.” [1 Chronicles 16:22]

You have become anointed ones by receiving the sign of the Holy Spirit.

Since you are images of Christ, all the rites carried out over you have a symbolic meaning.

Christ bathed in the river Jordan, and having invested the waters with the divine presence of His body, He emerged from them, and the Holy Spirit visited Him in substantial form, coming to rest on like. In the same way, when you emerged from the pool of sacred in a manner corresponding with Christ’s anointing. That anointing is the Holy Spirit, of whom the blessed Isaiah spoke when he prophesied in the person of the Lord: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because He has anointed me; .. you love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellows.” [Isaiah 61:1, 3]

Just as Christ was truly crucified, buried and raised again, and you are considered worthy to be crucified, buried and raised with Him in likeness by baptism, so too in the matter of anointing, Christ was anointed with the spiritual oil of gladness because He is the author of spiritual joy. And you have been anointed with CHRISM because you have become fellows and sharers of Christ.

Now that you are considered worthy of this Holy Chrism, you are called Christians, and this title you substantiate by your new birth. For before being thought worthy of this grace you did not strictly merit such as address. You were still advancing along the path toward being Christians.

“For the Remission of Sins”:

This statement is taken from the inspired book of the Acts of The Apostle 2:38

“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.”

“Then a certain Ananias, .. stood and said .. ‘Brother Saul, .. now are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, ..’ [Acts 22:12-16].

Cyril of Jerusalem:

As the Lord Jesus died in taking away the sins of the world, that, by putting sin to death, he might rise in righteousness, so too, when you go down into the water and are, in a fashion, entombed in the water as He was in the rock, you may rise again to walk in newness of life.

“And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.” [Matthew 6:12]

We have many sins. We offend both in word and in thought, and we do very many things worthy of condemnation. And if we say that we have no sin, we lie, as St. John says: “We deceive ourselves.” [1John 1:8] And we make a covenant with God, entreating Him to forgive us our sins, as we also forgive our neighbors their debts. Considering then what we receive, and in return for what?, let us not put off or delay forgiving one another.

The offenses committed against us are slight and trivial and easily settled. But those which we have committed

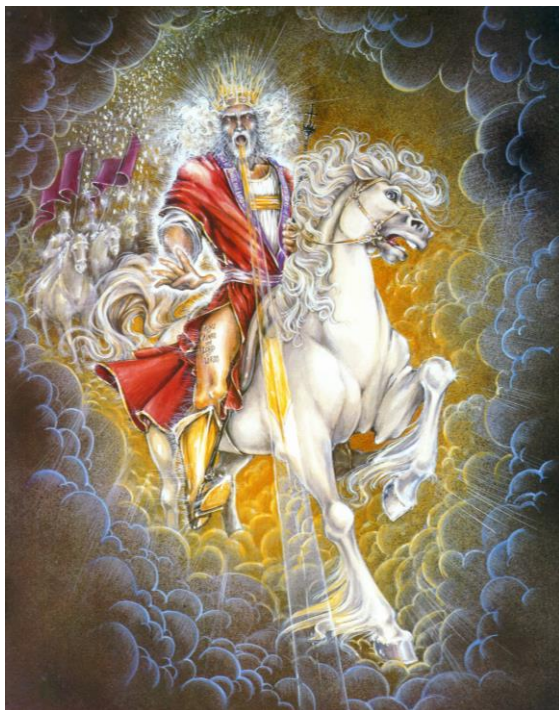
against God are great and need such mercy as only He has.

Pay attention, therefore, lest the slight and trivial sins against you cut you off from forgiveness from God for your horrible sins.

No one should think, then, that his baptism is merely for the remission of sins and for adoption in the way that John's baptism brought only remission of sins. We know well that not merely does it cleanse sins and bestow on us the gift of the Holy Spirit, it is also the sign of Christ's suffering. This is why, as we heard just now, St. Paul cried out, "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death. [Romans 6:3, 4] These words he said to those who had assented to the view that baptism confers remission of sins and adoption but not that it further implies a share by imitation in the true suffering of Christ.

Melito of Sardis:

Come then, all you families of humanity who are compounded with sins, and receive forgiveness of sins. For I am your forgiveness, I am the Pascha of salvation, I am the lamb slain for you, I am your ransom, I am your life, I am your light, I am your salvation, I am your resurrection, I am your king. I will raise you up by my right hand; I am leading you up to the heights of heaven, there I will show you the Father from ages past. [On Pascha, 59]



CONCERNING ETERNITY:

“We look for the Resurrection of the Dead,”

-The one, only, holy, catholic and apostolic church believes in ‘the resurrection of the dead’, and there is life-eternal after death.

-This resurrection will be in His Second Coming to judge the living and the dead, “ .. for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth, those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation” [John 5:28,29]

-So, we look for the sequential order of Jesus' Second Coming, the resurrection, the judgment, then eternity; the final destination.

-In the final resurrection, the resurrected bodies shall not eat or drink, nor will it hunger or thirst, nor be in pain or become sick, nor will there be death any more .. nor will there be marriage nor will they give in marriage in heaven in the presence of God we shall all concentrate on Him, and be like the angels of God in heaven; pray, praise and rejoice.

Clement of Rome:

Do we then deem it any great and wonderful thing for the Maker of all things to raise up again those who have piously served Him in the assurance of a good faith, when even by a bird he shows us the mightiness of his power to fulfill his promise? For the Scripture says in a certain place, "You will raise me up, and I will praise you," [1Peter 4:7] and again, "I laid down and slept; I awoke, because you are with me," [Psalm 3:6] and again Job says, "you will raise up this flesh of mine, which has suffered all these things." [Job 19:25, 26]

In the Book of Ezekiel the prophet, it shows that we will rise again for Judgment; **"Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, .. and you shall live."** [Ezekiel 37: 12, 14]

In I Corinthians 15:42-44, 46, 48 Saint Paul declares;

"So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. .. As is the earthly, such are they also that

are earthly: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.”

-The Coptic Orthodox Church, prays concerning the ‘departed’, those who slept and reposed in the Lord, saying;

“.. for there is no death among your people/servants but a departure”.

-Departing from one place to another. Departing earth, to Paradise celestial, the third heavens, which St. Paul saw, which is the waiting place for the righteous (II Cor. 12:2). St. Paul could not explain or elaborate on what he saw, because it was beyond what he knows, and nothing came close to describe it. All what he said was; **“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him” (I Cor. 2:9).**

-In the Coptic Orthodox Church, we believe that the spirits of the righteous rest in Paradise, the third heaven, waiting for the Judgment Day then we change the format of the body into the heavenly format, and then we take an illuminated body that which is like or similar to the glorified one of The Resurrected Jesus.

So; We leave the temporal, to the permanent.
We leave the limited, go to the unlimited.
We leave the time, and go to the beyond time.
We leave the unknown, and go to the known.

The Holy Scriptures says about Death that:

- 1- **It is sleep** ... as our Lord said about Lazarus to His disciples, *"Our friend Lazarus sleeps"* (**John 11:11**).
- 2- **It is good** ... because the end of a mission is better than its beginning. *"The day of death is better than one's birth"* (**Ecc. 7:1**).
- 3- **It is gain** ... St. Paul said I considered everything a loss, to gain Christ. *"To die is gain"* (**Phil. 1:21**).
- 4- **It is leaving a tent** ... and going to the heavenly building. *"For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens"* (**II Cor. 5:1**).
- 5- **It is a release from prison** ... *"Bring my soul out of prison"* (**Psalms 142:7**).

"And the Life of the Age/World to Come."

This is the life in heavenly Jerusalem, God's abode, the dwelling of God with His people eternally, the place which is higher than the "eye has not seen, nor ear heard nor is it lawful for a man to utter." [2 Corinthians 12:2, 3]

-There is a blessing and condemnation that await believers and unbelievers simultaneous, in that life which is to come.

-‘Life of the age to come’ is eternal life, eternity with Jesus Christ, forever and ever.

-Eternal life deriving from the final judgment will have a different development for the righteous and the wicked; the former will be destined to blessedness of heavenly glory, the latter to eternal damnation.

-Perfect happiness will be reached only in eternal life, when the righteous grasp the reasons of the realities, when they as pure intelligences, directly contemplate the rational essences. [Origen: On First Principles 2.11]

Theophilus:

The present world is of short duration and transient, whereas the future life will be eternal, great and wonderful. God will give to the righteous eternal life, joy, peace, rest and abundance.

Irenaeus & Tertullian:

God will grant the saints the beatific vision, so that they will always be with Him, being clothed with eternity.

Clement of Alexandria:

Being clothed with eternity, their hearts will be purified in order to gain access to the contemplation of God.

Augustine:

The one who is blessed by the Lord will receive eternal life, that is, eternal happiness, which coincides with the seventh age of humanity before the eighth day, the day of the Lord.

ETERNAL DAMNATION:

The demons walk the way of death and persist in death. The gods of the nations are demons (Justin). Christ has revealed to Satan his real end (Irenaeus).

-The cross of Christ has marked its triumph on its enemy, the prince of this world (Origen). Christ will not return before the antichrist has acted on earth by cheating and seducing people.

-Later, on the Day of Judgment, the city of the devil with its prophet, the antichrist, will be thrown into the eternal fire (**Augustine**).

The devil and the demons are fallen angels who have no possibility to repent and will be destined to eternal fire.

* * * * *

Amen.

It is a Hebrew word means ‘will be’, confirmation for a condition and sayings .. in Greek it is equivalent to ‘I believe’.

-Hebrew term meaning “so be it” or “truly”, used by Jews and Christians as a word of affirmation of and response to a prayer or benediction. [**The New Jewish Encyclopedia, David Bridger, 1976AD, p.12**]

-St. Jerome said, ‘in the conclusion of congregational prayers, all the believers say ‘Amen’, and it was like a roaring waters or lightning’. [**Unger’s Bible Dictionary, p.44**]

The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of The Bible:

-The same spelling for Amen, is retained in Latin and Greek. It is the most universal of all words.

-The Hebrew means “to make firm”, “confirm, so be it”, it is used as an adjective, ‘true’ or ‘faithful’.

The Greek usage may more clearly be defined as *truly, verily, indeed*.

“Amen” carries the weight of approval, confirmation, and support of what is said or sung.

-Its significance is seen in Moses’ instructions to Joshua. When the curses were to be read by the priests at Shechem, “all the people shall say, ‘Amen’.” [**Deut. 27:15-26**]

-Grammatically, ‘Amen’ is used as an adverb at the beginning of a sentence-veryly, truly; optatively at the end of ascriptions of prayer or praise; and substantively as a name of Christ [**Rev. 3:14**].

-The synoptic Gospels record fifty-four (54) instances of Jesus’ use of the Greek word ‘Amen’, all of which mean ‘truly’. In Matthew 31 times, mark 14 times, Luke 9 times.

In the Gospel of John it was used double, “Amen. Amen” and does so in every one of the twenty-five (25) times where it occurs. This double use has the force of superlative.

Apostolic foundation for the Councils to come:

Our fathers the Apostles established the rules for councils and how it should be conducted, which the early fathers of the Church followed in the Ecumenical Councils of: Nicea, Constantinople, & Ephesus.

Here is a summary of the first two main councils conducted by our fathers the holy Apostles:

THE TWO COUNCILS OF THE APOSTLES

[Acts 1:13; 23-26] during the reign of Herod the king						
COUNCIL	Attended	YEAR	WHERE	THE HERESY	LEADERS	THE DECISIONS
JERUSA- LEM	11 Apostles	34AD	Jerusalem	Judas Iscariot betrayal	Holy Spirit	Matthias the 12th of The Apostles.

[Acts15:6-21]						
COUNCIL	Attended	YEAR	WHERE	THE HERESY	LEADERS	THE DECISIONS
JERUSA- LEM Paul & Barnabas	14 Apostles	49AD	Jerusalem	Dispute about the converts to adopt Moses' Law	JAMES	abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, & from sexual immorality.

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