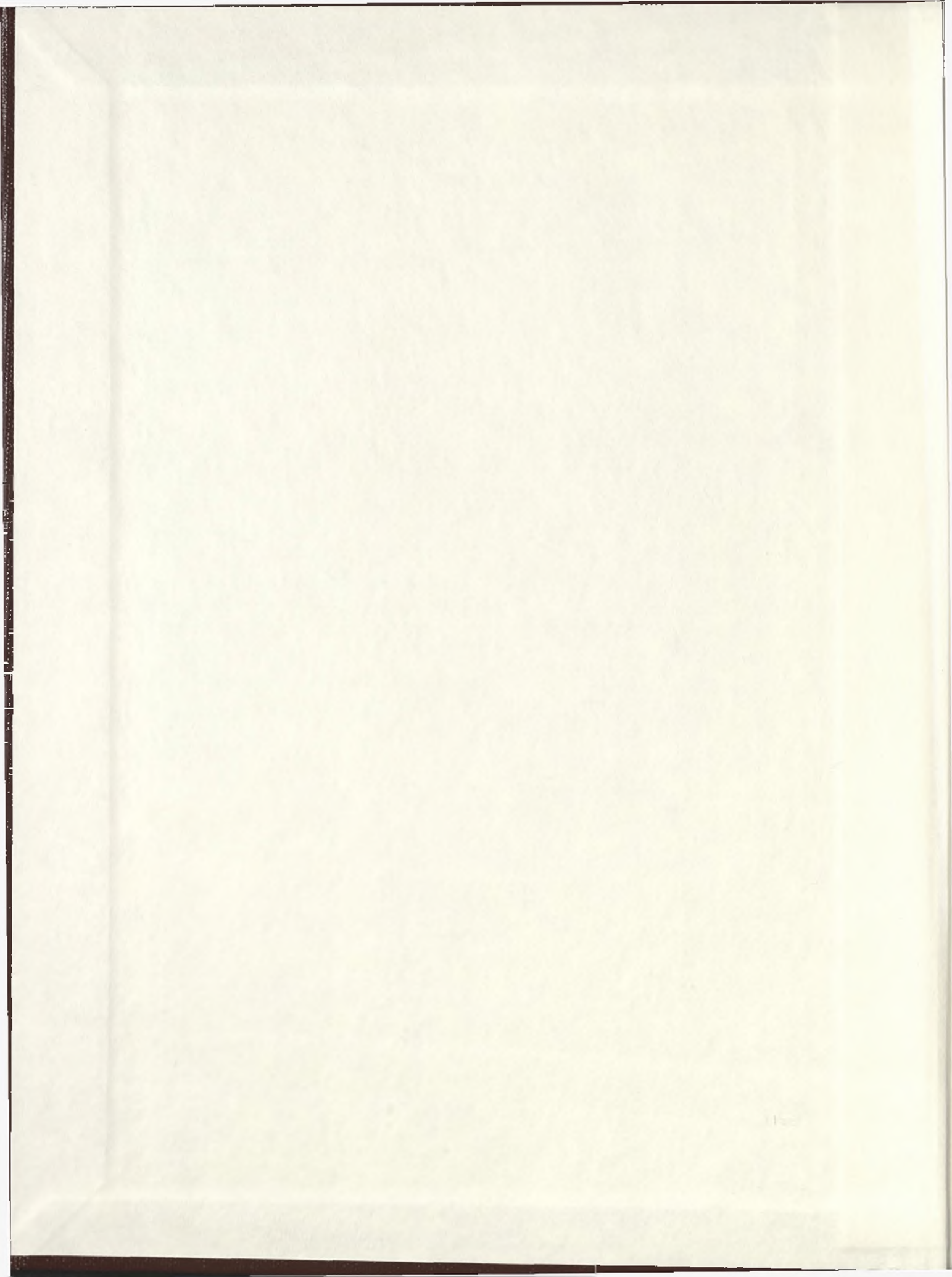
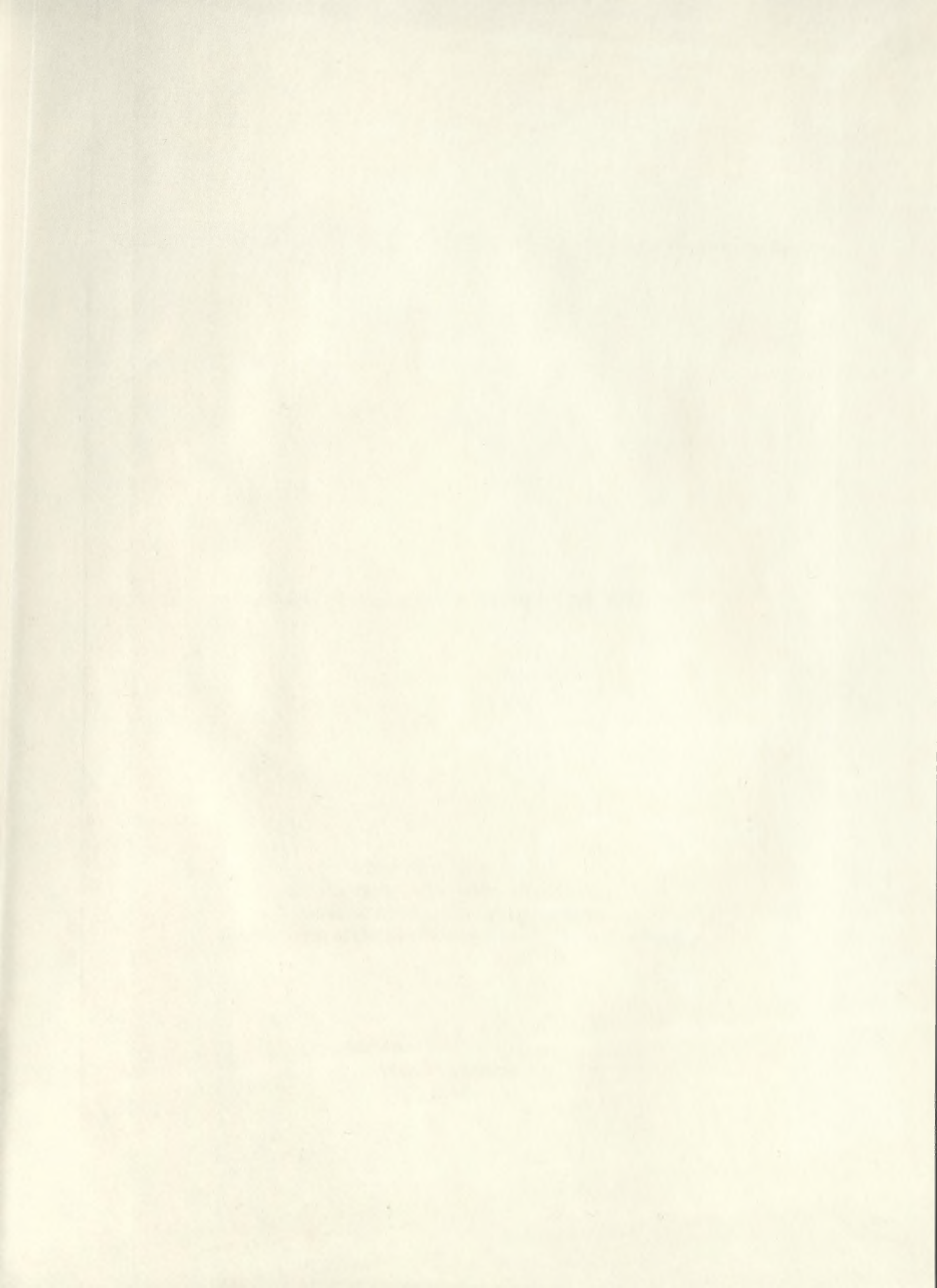


THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH: JOHANNINE PNEUMATOLOGY  
IN THE LETTERS OF ATHANASIUS TO SERAPION

BY

HATHAM A. ISSAK,  
Dip. Th., Dip. ECS, BA., MTS





THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH: JOHANNINE PNEUMATOLOGY IN THE LETTERS OF  
ATHANASIUS TO SERAPION

by

Haitham A. Issak, Dip. Th., Dip. ECS., BA., MTS

A dissertation submitted to  
the Faculty of McMaster Divinity College  
in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Christian Theology)

McMaster Divinity College  
Hamilton, Ontario  
2018

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
(Christian Theology)

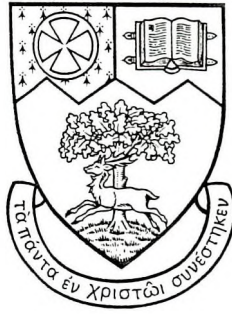
McMaster Divinity College  
Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: The Spirit of Truth: Johannine Pneumatology in the  
Letters of Athanasius to Serapion

AUTHOR: Haitham A. Issak

SUPERVISORS: Gordon L. Heath and Steven M. Studebaker

NUMBER OF PAGES: vi + 267



## McMASTER DIVINITY COLLEGE

Upon the recommendation of an oral examining committee,

this dissertation by

**Haitham A Issak**

is hereby accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY)**

Primary Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_  
Gordon L Heath, PhD

Secondary Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_  
Steven M Studebaker, PhD

External Examiner: \_\_\_\_\_  
Brian J Arnold, PhD

Academic Dean: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phil C Zylla, DTh

Date: April 11, 2018

## ABSTRACT

“The Spirit of Truth: Johannine Pneumatology in the Letters of Athanasius to Serapion”

Haitham A. Issak  
McMaster Divinity College  
Hamilton, Ontario  
Doctor of Philosophy, 2018

Athanasius’ three letters to Serapion were the first comprehensive writings to discuss the divinity of the Holy Spirit. The letter written by Serapion bishop of Thmuis to Athanasius asked him how to deal with a group in the Nile Delta, the Tropicis, who denied the deity of the Holy Spirit. Athanasius was in his third exile when he received Serapion’s request. The letters are replete with biblical references in order to support his defense of the divinity of the Holy Spirit. Particularly prominent are the Johannine texts; the Gospel of John and 1 John are cited more than ninety times. This dissertation demonstrates Athanasius’ reliance on John’s writings for the composition of his *Letters to Serapion*, as well as provides a preliminary exploration of the links between John and Athanasius’ pneumatology.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful to the faculty of McMaster Divinity College for all the help given to me throughout my studies. I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. Gordon Heath, and the second reader Dr. Steve Studebaker, for support and guidance through the years that I spent in my journey to accomplish this work. I also thank Dr. Pablo Argárate in Austria, University of Graz, for his support. I thank Dr. Michael A.G. Haykin, FRHistS, Professor of Church History and Biblical Spirituality and Director of the Andrew Fuller Center Louisville, Kentucky for his support, guidance, and advice since I started writing my dissertation. Thanks as well to Dr. Brian Arnold, my external examiner, from Phoenix Seminary. I thank my family and friends for the support they gave me. I dedicate this work to my late father; this work was his dream and I accomplished it with the blessing and help of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, to whom always befit glory. Amen.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

SUMMARY PAGE.....	ii
SIGNATURE PAGE.....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 2: PRECURSORS TO THE FOURTH CENTURY.....	9
CHAPTER 3: CRISES IN THE FOURTH CENTURY.....	24
CHAPTER 4: ATHANASIUS: A SKETCH OF HIS LIFE AND WRITINGS.....	58
CHAPTER 5: ATHANASIUS' RESPONSE: THE LETTERS TO SERAPION AND JOHANNINE WRITINGS, ISSUES RELATED TO THE ORIGINAL TEXT.....	70
CHAPTER 6: THE JOHANNINE TEXTS IN THE FIRST LETTER TO SERAPION.....	85
CHAPTER 7: THE JOHANNINE TEXTS IN THE SECOND AND THIRD LETTERS TO SERAPION.....	150
CHAPTER 8: UNDERSTANDING ATHANASIUS' USE OF JOHN: TRADITION, HERMENEUTICAL PRINCIPLES, AND TRINITY.....	196
CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION.....	253
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	257

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is an endeavor to demonstrate the teaching and the instruction of one of the important Fathers in the fourth century, Athanasius of Alexandria, who was representing the Orthodox Church, the church of Alexandria. His thought represented the foundational teaching of the church against the Arians and the Pneumatomachi who caused an unstable condition in the life of the early church.<sup>1</sup> Their heterodox and heretical teachings led him to defend the fundamental doctrines of the church against doctrines he considered might lead to the destruction of the church.

Athanasius' writings formed not only the teaching of the church, but also its belief in the most important doctrines, the doctrine of the Son, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, and the Trinity. His writings against the Arians and Pneumatomachi served to provide solid proof and defence of these doctrines. His three letters to Serapion were the major works of Athanasius to argue that the Holy Spirit is not a creature but rather divine.<sup>2</sup>

Concerning the three letters to Serapion, many scholars have written books, chapters, and articles discussing the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in these letters but no important work has shed light specifically on the Gospel of John in these letters. This dissertation offers a major survey on the Gospel of John and the first letter of John in the letters to Serapion by identifying all the verses that Athanasius cited from the Gospel of John and his first letter. It is a work that discovers how Athanasius used these Johannine documents in his argument with his opponents.

---

<sup>1</sup> Concerning the Pneumatomachi, see 55–56.

<sup>2</sup> See chapter 5 for discussion of the letters.

This dissertation identifies the context in which Athanasius cited them, the changes he made in his citation, and how these changes made by him affected the meaning. The verses, which he cited from John, shaped his Trinitarian theology especially with the doctrine of the Spirit and his position on the Trinity.

The purpose of this dissertation is to demonstrate the pneumatology of Athanasius' use the Gospel of John, and to see the way he dealt with subject in using these verses to prove the divinity of the Holy Spirit against his opponents. To accomplish this demonstration, it analyzes the verses he used in his three letters, and the way he put them in context together in order to link all these citations with the other verses from the scripture to prove his point. Athanasius' purpose of using all these citations is to affirm the divine attributes of the Spirit. It also discusses the position of the Holy Spirit in the Trinity, whether He is divine or not, His relationship to the Son, and also to the Father.

### **Literature Review of the Scholarship on the Letters to Serapion**

The three letters to Serapion are replete with biblical verses in order to support Athanasius' defense of the divinity of the Holy Spirit. His massive list of quotations, which refer to the Holy Spirit are from Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Judges, Psalms, Proverbs, Isaiah, Amos, Matthew, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Ephesians, Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, Titus, Hebrews, 1 Peter and 1 John. As Michael Haykin states, "In general, Athanasius' writings reveal that he had a broad knowledge of the Scriptures, a fact of which was well-known in his own day."<sup>3</sup> Although Athanasius quoted a significant number of passages he relied most heavily on John's writings; the Gospel of John and 1 John are cited more than ninety times. John's

---

<sup>3</sup> Haykin, "The Spirit of God," 519.

pneumatology profoundly shaped Athanasius' theology and spirituality, especially with regard to the hypostasis of the Holy Spirit.

Surprisingly, no significant work has been focused on the influence of John's pneumatology in Athanasius' view of the Holy Spirit. For instance, recently, Adolf Laminski provides a brief summary of the subject of the Holy Spirit up to 360, and then he speaks about the Tropic, followed by an explanation regarding Athanasius' method in these letters. He also mentions the explanation of the two verses Amos 4:13 and 1 Tim 5:21, on which the Tropic depend to explain their position. Laminski mentions the dogma of the church and how Athanasius looked to the tradition, the teaching and the faith of the Catholic Church and the Trinity and salvation. He mentions the synod of Constantinople (381), when he explains in brief, the third article of the Creed. In his book Laminski also discusses the first letter, the fourth letter, and the verse from Matthew 12:32. At the end of his book he explains the properties of the Spirit, the being of the Spirit and the personality of the Spirit. Adolf Laminski does not mention the Gospel of John and the way Athanasius used the Gospel in his three letters.<sup>4</sup>

Theodore Campbell, in a 1974 article, started with an introduction discussing authorship, and date of the letters to Serapion, and the Tropic. He provides information about the relation between the Son and the Holy Spirit; he also mentions the Council of Alexandria (362). After he discussed the Spirit as a member of the Triad and the *μία ἐνέργεια* (One Activity) of the Triad, he concluded with what Athanasius contributed to the discussion of the Spirit's deity and his influence on the Fathers who followed him

---

<sup>4</sup> Laminski, *Der Heilige Geist als Geist Christi*.

such as Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory of Nazianzus. There is no mention of how the Gospel of John influenced Athanasius.<sup>5</sup>

In his book, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, Yves Congar devotes three volumes to the Holy Spirit. Volume 1 deals with Holy Spirit in the Old and New Testament. He mentions also, in brief detail, the Johannine writings, which include the relation of the Paraclete with the Father, Son, and the disciples. Volume 2 speaks about the role of the Holy Spirit in the church and the life of the believer. Volume 3 is dedicated to the development of the theology of the Holy Spirit. He briefly mentions the Arian controversy, some of the church Fathers and their reflection on the Holy Spirit in their writings such as: Athanasius, Didymus the Blind, Basil, Gregory the Great, Gregory of Nazianzus, Cyril. Congar did not mention anything regarding the Gospel of John and its influence on Athanasius.<sup>6</sup>

Thomas Torrance, in a 1989 article, began with a Christological approach when he speaks about the *Contra Arians*, written by Athanasius, then he speaks about the Semi-Arians followed by short analysis to the four letters of Athanasius to Serapion. In his analysis Torrance mentions the apostolic faith and the tradition in the letters, the mission of the Spirit, and he explains how Athanasius offered an account of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit based on the teaching of Jesus Christ himself. Torrance also mentions the council of 362 regarding the one being *οὐσία* and the three persons. There is no mention of the Gospel of John and pneumatology.<sup>7</sup>

In his book *The Spirit of God*, Michael Haykin examines the exegesis of 1 and 2 Corinthians in the Pneumatomachian controversy. He also mentions Basil and Gregory of

---

<sup>5</sup> Campbell, Theodore C. "The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit." 408–40.

<sup>6</sup> Congar, *I Believe*.

<sup>7</sup> Torrance, "The Doctrine of the Holy Trinity," 395–405.

Nazianzus in their dealing with the Pneumatomachians. He starts with an introduction, the four letters to Serapion and explores the way Athanasius dealt with his opponents. Haykin gives information regarding the familiarity of Athanasius with the Scriptures. He explains some of the functions of the Spirit in the believer's life, such as sanctification and unction. Haykin did not mention the influence of the Gospel of John on Athanasius.<sup>8</sup>

Franz Dünzl, in chapter twelve of his book that discusses the controversies of the early church, deals with question of the Holy Spirit. He offers a brief explanation of what the Fathers Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Origen said concerning the Holy Spirit. Dünzl acknowledged that the letters of Athanasius counted as one of the first to develop an orthodox pneumatology. But he did not mention the way Athanasius used the Gospel of John.<sup>9</sup>

In a journal article, Pablo Argárate presented an historical survey of the church fathers. He talks about the patristic doctrine of the Holy Spirit from the first to the fourth century. He then discusses the four letters of Athanasius: their authorship, date, goal, and the biblical proofs, which Athanasius used to defend the deity of the Spirit. Again, there is no mention of the Gospel of John and its pneumatology.<sup>10</sup>

DelCogliano, Radde-Gallwitz, and Ayres, in their 2011 translation of the *Letters to Serapion* discussed, in the introduction, the life and legacy of Athanasius, as well as the context of the letters, their structure, and date. Nothing is mentioned in the book regarding Athanasius' use of the Gospel of John.<sup>11</sup> In all the above cases, the influence of Johannine pneumatology has been overlooked. This dissertation will address that issue.

---

<sup>8</sup> Haykin, *The Spirit of God*.

<sup>9</sup> Dünzl, *A Brief History*.

<sup>10</sup> Argárate, "The Holy Spirit." 21–41.

<sup>11</sup> DelCogliano, et al., trans., *Works on the Spirit*.

## Chapter Outlines

This dissertation has eight chapters. Chapter 1 is the introduction, which is composed of a general introduction to the subject, followed by the literature review of the scholarship on these three letters to Serapion. This literature review is a survey of the subject to see how the scholars dealt with the subject in their writings. The result of this survey will demonstrate there is no comprehensive work that has been focused on the impact of John's pneumatology in Athanasius' view of the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 2 discusses the precursors of the fourth century, showing there was no extensive study in the early church on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. While some exceptions exist, such as Ignatius of Antioch, Irenaeus of Lyons, Tertullian, and Origen, who spoke about the doctrine of the Spirit in their writings, their work was not definitive. This chapter provides a study of these three early church Fathers and explores the way in which they dealt with the subject.

Chapter 3 examines the crises in the fourth century, which had a direct connection to the doctrine of the Spirit. The big crisis was the Arian controversy, which led to the first ecumenical Council of Nicaea (325). This council sought to put an end to the heresy, but did not address the doctrine of the Spirit. This chapter also discusses the important synod of Alexandria, which was held in 362 to address specifically the doctrine of the Spirit against the Tropici. The new Arians did not surrender but rather they declared that the Holy Spirit is a creature. This situation stimulated the church to have another council, the Council of Constantinople (381), to put an end to this heresy regarding the Spirit. This chapter studies the council and the third article of the Nicene Creed, which gives five features to the Holy Spirit. The last part of this chapter discusses the emergence of

the Tropicci who believed that the Spirit is a creature and that He is a stranger to the Trinity.

Chapter 4 provides general information concerning the life of Athanasius and his writings. A sketch of Athanasius' life is presented in this chapter, as well as his writings and a brief statement to each work, divided into dogmatic and apologetic writings. Most of his works were concentrated on the person of Christ as the Son of God and his relation to the Father.

Chapter 5 deals with Athanasius' response to a request sent by his friend Serapion, bishop of Thmuis. The *Three Letters to Serapion* were the only documents written by Athanasius to deal with a group who denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit. This chapter also analyzes the three letters, how many sections each letter consists of, as well as providing general information regarding each letter.

Chapters 6 and 7 identify the Johannine texts in the three letters. In general, the three letters are filled with biblical verses to support Athanasius' defense of the doctrine of the Spirit. He cited the Gospel of John and 1 John more than ninety times which will be my central contribution in this dissertation. These chapters present a survey of the Johannine texts that are mentioned in the three letters of Athanasius, and analyzes the differences that Athanasius made to the original text. He cited verses from the Bible and used them in his argument with the Tropicci. Sometimes he used a direct citation, a word substitution, illusion, or similar words. These chapters explore the way Athanasius used these verses in his arguments.

Chapter 8 seeks to determine the hermeneutical principles that Athanasius used in his letters, specifically in his argument on Amos 4:13 and 1 Tim 5:21 on which his



opponents rely. It will explore the biblical, theological, and philosophical principles that directed him in his controversy with the Tropici. This chapter discusses the term *ὁμοούσιος* (of the same substance) a philosophical term used by the church Fathers in the Council of Nicaea (325) to defend the divinity of the Son. Athanasius used the term in his three letters to Serapion. He used it sixteen times in the second letter and applied the term to the Holy Spirit.

This chapter also studies Athanasius' use of Johannine pneumatology to develop a Trinitarian theology. It provides an overview of how Athanasius connected Christology with pneumatology and tries to understand how this link helped him to shape his Trinitarian theology. It discusses first, his understanding of the word *Τριάς* (Trinity), which is mentioned more than sixty times in his letters. The chapter also discusses how the Spirit is *ἴδιον τοῦ λόγου* (Proper to the Word) and the way he used it in his first and second letter. Athanasius talked also in his three letters about the *μία ἐνέργεια* (One Activity) in the Trinity by which he argued the Holy Spirit is not a creature. The term *παραδείγματα* (Images or Symbols) is the subject of discussion in this chapter when Athanasius started metaphorically demonstrating the relationship with the Triad. He used the term twice in his letters to discover the relationship between the Son and the Spirit.

## CHAPTER 2 PRECURSORS TO THE FOURTH CENTURY

In general, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit was not developed in the writings of the early church Fathers until the fourth century, though exceptions exist. In their writings, the church Fathers wrote concerning the Holy Spirit, but not in detail as Athanasius did in his letters to Serapion. This is because the heresies of Docetism, Gnosticism, and Arianism in the early centuries were against the divinity of the Son, Christological debates. Most of the debates were to defend the divinity of the Son with references to the Holy Spirit. This chapter will discuss the church Fathers who were precursors to the fourth century, such as Ignatius of Antioch, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Origen.

### Ignatius of Antioch

Ignatius of Antioch, one of the Apostolic Fathers, was the most famous name associated with the early Apostolic Fathers.<sup>1</sup> He was also “one of the key figures of the church of the early second century.”<sup>2</sup> Ignatius identified himself in all his letters as, Θεοφόρος bearer of God.<sup>3</sup> He was sentenced to be ravaged by beasts during the reign of Roman Emperor Trajan, due to the fact that the ruler of Syria heard of his passion to spread Christianity.<sup>4</sup> In his journey to Rome for martyrdom, he wrote virtually as his “last will and testament”<sup>5</sup> six letters to the churches and one to the bishop Polycarp. These letters were written

---

<sup>1</sup> Ignatius of Antioch wrote six letters addressed to the churches at Ephesus, Magnesia, Tralles, Rome, Philadelphia, Smyrna, and to the bishop Polycarp (at Smyrna). Concerning the letters, see Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch*. On his pneumatology, see Burges, *The Holy Spirit*; Swete, *The Holy Spirit*. On Ignatius, see Walter J. Burghardt. “Did Saint Ignatius of Antioch.” 130–56; McNamara. “Ignatius of Antioch on his Death.” 1–258.

<sup>2</sup> Barnard, “The Background of St. Ignatius,” 193.

<sup>3</sup> Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch*, 35, 103, 137, 165, 195, 219.

<sup>4</sup> Jefford, *Reading the Apostolic Fathers*, 57.

<sup>5</sup> Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 128.

under a very difficult situation within a short time. The letters “revealed a person passionately devoted to his faith, one who strongly desired martyrdom, yet one who is concerned with the practical details of church life and order and especially with the problem of heresy and schism.”<sup>6</sup> In his letter to the Romans, he described his custody of escort of ten soldiers as, “the leopards.”<sup>7</sup> Regarding these letters, Swete states, “they bear the marks of a strong personality, wanting perhaps in balance and in culture, but loyal to its convictions and full of spiritual power.”<sup>8</sup> In his writings, Ignatius focused on Christology, his understanding of Jesus Christ, his incarnation, and crucifixion, but he did not disregard the Holy Spirit in his letters. He briefly mentioned the role of the Holy Spirit in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. In his *Letter to the Ephesians* he stated, “For our God, Jesus the Christ was carried in the womb by Mary according to God’s plan—of the seed of David of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>9</sup>

In his *Letter to the Philadelphians*, he declared that the Holy Spirit speaks to him, “For though some desired to deceive me at the fleshly level, yet the Spirit, which is from God, is not deceived; for it knows whence it comes and whither it goes, and exposes hidden things.”<sup>10</sup> He continued to explain not just how he spoke in the Spirit but rather how to live and do things in the Spirit. In his *Letter to the Magnesians*, he clarified that, “in everything you do may prosper, as to flesh and spirit, as to faith and love, in the Son and the Father [and in the Spirit], in the beginning and in the end.”<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Barnard, “The Background of St. Ignatius,” 193.

<sup>7</sup> Ignatius, *Letter to the Romans*, 5.1.

<sup>8</sup> Swete, *The Holy Spirit*, 14.

<sup>9</sup> Ignatius, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 18.2.

<sup>10</sup> Ignatius, *Letter to the Philadelphians*, 7.1.

<sup>11</sup> Ignatius, *Letter to the Magnesians*, 13.1.

According to Ignatius the relation between the faithful and the Holy Spirit is a mutual one; the Spirit works in Christians in order to see his fruit in their lives. Ignatius mentioned this in his *Letter to the Ephesians* when he said, “Since you are stones of the Father’s temple, made ready for the building of God the Father, carried up to the heights by the crane of Jesus Christ (which is the cross), using the Holy Spirit as a rope.”<sup>12</sup> Concerning this matter, Swete states, “But Ignatius realizes the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the faithful members of the church.”<sup>13</sup>

It is understandable that Ignatius did not elaborate on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit even though the Trinity is mentioned in his letters. The reason is that he was wrestling with the Docetism, which denied the humanity of Jesus Christ.<sup>14</sup> As Barnard states, “In the first place Ignatius argued against a Docetism and Judaism which is rampant in the churches in Asia Minor.”<sup>15</sup>

### Irenaeus of Lyons

Irenaeus was Bishop of Lyons and one of the church fathers in the second century. He was born Smyrna, Asia Minor (115–202), and according to Swete “he became a bishop of Lynos at the time of persecution.”<sup>16</sup> Irenaeus’ pneumatology can be understood from his

---

<sup>12</sup> Ignatius, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 9.1.

<sup>13</sup> Swete, *The Holy Spirit*, 15.

<sup>14</sup> Docetism was one of the heresies in Ignatius’ time; this group maintained that the incarnation of Jesus was illusion, meaning that his incarnation did not take place. Ignatius sent his letter to Trallians and to Smyrnaeans to defend the faith of the church against this heresy. Docetism *δοχηταί* is mentioned in the work of Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 6.12.6. He stated, “By Docetism we understand the doctrine that Christ had no true body, but only an apparent one. The word is derived from *δοκέω* to seem or appear. For more information about this heresy see, Murphy, *The General Councils*; Sumney, “Those who ‘Ignorantly denied Him,’” 345–65; Barnard, “The Background of St. Ignatius,” 163–206; Goulder, “Ignatius’ ‘Docetists,’” 16–36.

<sup>15</sup> Barnard, “The Background of St. Ignatius,” 197.

<sup>16</sup> Swete, *The Holy Spirit*, 84. For more information about his life and works, see, Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 5.4.5; Hamm, “Irenaeus of Lyons,” 301–304; Clark, “Irenaeus,” 587–88.

two works *Against Heresies*. These works were written against the Gnostic heresy which was rising in the second century. Burgess Stanley states, “In response to Gnostic theology of the Holy Spirit, Irenaeus has much to say about the person and work of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>17</sup> His most significant pneumatological statement was when he called the Son and the Holy Spirit the two hands of God, “It is the Father who anoints, but the Son who is anointed by the Spirit, who is the unction.”<sup>18</sup> However, he did not significantly develop a theology of the Holy Spirit.

### Tertullian

In the late second and third centuries, according to Schuiz, Tertullian was the “first Latin Christian writer.”<sup>19</sup> He was born around 159 from heathen parents. He was converted to Christianity and was baptized immediately after his conversion.<sup>20</sup> According to Stuart Hall, Tertullian “was well educated in Latin rhetoric, well-read, and deeply imbued both with Stoic and philosophy and Christian Scripture.”<sup>21</sup> Thirty-one treatises have been preserved from his works. As Alfred Plummer notes, “many of his writings are lost, especially his earlier ones and those written in Greek.”<sup>22</sup> *Against Praxeas* is an important work of Tertullian in which he explained the oneness of God; One God in three Persons,

---

<sup>17</sup> Burgess, *The Holy Spirit*, 58.

<sup>18</sup> Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 3.18.3. Irenaeus mentioned again the term of the “two hands” where he represented the Word and Wisdom as the Son and the Holy Spirit. See *Against Heresies*, 4.20.1. For more information concerning his pneumatology, see Briggman, *Irenaeus of Lyons*; Franses, “Irenaeus of Lyons.” 405–07.

<sup>19</sup> Flügel, “Tertullian,” 553–57.

<sup>20</sup> Farrar, *Lives of the Fathers*, 159–69. See also Plummer, *The Church of the Early Fathers*, 111–18.

<sup>21</sup> Hall, *Doctrine and Practice*, 67. For more information about his life, see Jerome, *On Illustrious Men*, 53; Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 2.2.4.

<sup>22</sup> Plummer, *The Church of the Early Fathers*, 115. See also Kalantzis, *Caesar and the Lamb*, 98; Flügel, “Tertullian,” 553–57; Sider, “Tertullian,” 1107–08.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.<sup>23</sup> According to William, this work “gives him an opportunity of expressing his views on the Trinity and the Incarnation.”<sup>24</sup> In this work, Tertullian reflected on the relationship between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

In his work *Against Praxeas*, Tertullian expressed his belief through his understanding of the Trinity. His argument “is of interest less for its specific contribution on the Spirit than for the new ground it breaks in the more general area of the Trinity.”<sup>25</sup> His contribution to the doctrine of the Trinity is important in his time, and according to Burgees, Tertullian “contributes significantly to the Christian doctrines of the Trinity and of the Holy Spirit. He gives to the church its language of Trinity and of person in Trinity, he was able to distinguish the personhood and work of the Spirit from that of the Father and the Son.”<sup>26</sup> From the beginning of his treatise Tertullian declared his belief in the Trinity. This declaration is clear in his works that reflected his understating to the doctrine of the Trinity, that there is one God in three persons without any separation, when he proclaimed that:

We, however, as we indeed always have done (and more especially since we have been better instructed by the Paraclete, who leads men indeed into all truth), believe that there is one only God, but under the following dispensation, or *οἰκονομία*, as it is called, that this one only God has also a Son, His Word, who proceeded from Himself, by whom all things were made, and without whom nothing was made, Him we believe to have been sent by the Father into the Virgin, and to have been born of her—being both Man and God, the Son of Man and the Son of God, and to have been called by the name of Jesus Christ; we believe Him to have suffered, died, and been buried, according to the Scriptures who sent also from heaven from the Father, according to His own promise, the

---

<sup>23</sup> Praxeas was a teacher of Modalist Monarchianism, he said that the Father Himself came down, crucified, and indeed was Himself Jesus Christ, and he put to fight the Paraclete and crucified the Father. Most of the information about him comes from this treatise *Against Praxeas* chs. 1–2. See also Döpp & Geerlings, eds., *Dictionary of Early Christian Literature*, 497; Hall, *Doctrine and Practice*, 70.

<sup>24</sup> Ferrar, *Lives of the Fathers*, 229.

<sup>25</sup> Heron, *The Holy Spirit*, 67.

<sup>26</sup> Burgess, *The Holy Spirit*, 63.

Holy Ghost, the Paraclete, the sanctifier of faith of those who in the Father, and in the Son, and in the Holy Ghost.<sup>27</sup>

In this passage, Tertullian made it clear that he believed in one God and three distinct persons. In this passage, he emphasized the word, believe (πιστεύω) when he mentioned it three times. He proclaimed the manifestation of God for the salvation of humanity, which is why he used the word οἰκονομία in this passage in his argument with Praxeas. According to Danker Frederick, the word οἰκονομία means “of God’s unique plan private plan, plan of salvation.”<sup>28</sup> Tertullian stressed the words Monarchy and connected it with the word οἰκονομία many times in *Against Praxeas*. He believed that God is One but in three persons with an οἰκονομία perspective.<sup>29</sup>

Tertullian continued in the same chapter concerning the unity of the three persons stating that, “All are of One, by unity (that is) of substance; while the mystery of the “dispensation” is still guarded, which distributes the Unity into a Trinity, placing in their order the three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.”<sup>30</sup> The word dispensation in this passage is equal to the οἰκονομία which involves the three persons in this plan (the divine economy). He affirmed also the word “substance,” which connected to the unity means that they are co-equal and one in substance. Tertullian declared his faith straightforward without any hesitation saying, “I testify that the Father, and the Son, and the Spirit are inseparable from each other, and so will you know in what sense this is said. Now, observe, my assertion is that the Father is one, and the Son one, and the Spirit

---

<sup>27</sup> Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*, 2.

<sup>28</sup> Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 697; Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 279; Bauer, et al., *Greek English Lexicon*, 562.

<sup>29</sup> Tertullian used the words οἰκονομία and monarchy many times; see chs. 2, 3, 8, 9, 30.

<sup>30</sup> Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*, 2.

is one and they are distinct from each other.”<sup>31</sup> The three persons of the Trinity are inseparable according to Tertullian. In his work, *Against Praxeas*, he stated, “Bear always in mind that this is the rule of faith which I profess; by it, I testify that the Father, and the Son, and the Spirit are inseparable from each other.”<sup>32</sup> Regarding this inseparable relation in the Trinity, Congar explains that, “and that he (the Holy Spirit) came third from Father and the Son, just as the fruit from the branch comes third from the root, the channelled from the river comes third from the source.”<sup>33</sup> In his work, *Against Praxeas*, Tertullian defended the doctrine of the Holy Trinity when he declared that the three are one in essence, and he also clarified that the Holy Spirit is distinct from the Father and from the Son. He stated, “Thus the connection of the Father in the Son, and of the Son in the Paraclete, produces three coherent Persons, who are yet distinct from one another. These Three are one essence, not one Person, as it said; I and my Father are One, in Respect of unity of substance, not singularity of number.”<sup>34</sup>

In *Against Praxeas*, Tertullian also discussed the third person in the Trinity.<sup>35</sup> From the beginning of his treatise, he declared that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father. He stated, “I believe the Spirit to proceed from no other source than from the Father through the Son.”<sup>36</sup> Tertullian continued his explanation about the relation of the Holy Spirit in the divine economy and their relation with each other; he formulated the relationship within the Trinity, writing that “all are of one—by unity (that is) of

---

<sup>31</sup> Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*, 9.

<sup>32</sup> Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*, 9.

<sup>33</sup> Congar, *I Believe*, 20.

<sup>34</sup> Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*, 25.

<sup>35</sup> For his pneumatology, see Paschke, *Praying to the Holy Spirit*; Alexander, *Tertullian and Origen*; Morgan, *The Importance of Tertullian*; Burgess, *The Holy Spirit*; Heron, *The Holy Spirit*.

<sup>36</sup> Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*, 4.



substance.”<sup>37</sup> This declaration was very important in the early church as Stanley Burgess suggests. He states, “In the writings of Tertullian important steps were taken toward the Trinitarian distinction between the three persons that paved the way for Nicene formula.”<sup>38</sup> Tertullian called the Spirit third in Person from God and the Son and he gave an example of the tree and its fruit.

In his work *Against Praxeas*, he continued his argument that the Holy Spirit is not separable from the Father or foreign to the Trinity when he said, “Now the Spirit indeed is third from God and the Son; just as the fruit of the tree is third from the root, or as the stream out of the river is third from the mountain.”<sup>39</sup> Tertullian did not believe that if the Holy Spirit is numbered as a third would change the Monarchy or the oneness of the Trinity, but rather he believed that the Three Persons are indivisible and mutually related. He used *παράδειγματα* (images) in order to give an explanation to the relationship within the Trinity as Athanasius did later in his *Letters to Serapion*.<sup>40</sup>

He mentioned the root and the tree, also the fountain and the river in order to explain the inseparable relationship between the three persons, he said, “for the root and the tree are distinctly two things, but correlatively joined; the fountain and the river are also two forms, but indivisible.”<sup>41</sup> Hall discusses this relation through images mentioned by Tertullian saying, “In each case, there is only one tree, one light, one water, determined by the single source, which is the root, the sun or the spring.”<sup>42</sup> In stating that the three are one as the tree with its root and as the fountain with its river and they are not

---

<sup>37</sup> Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*, 2.

<sup>38</sup> Burgess, *The Holy Spirit*, 57.

<sup>39</sup> Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*, 8.

<sup>40</sup> DelCogliano, et al., trans., *Works on the Spirit*, 82.

<sup>41</sup> Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*, 8.

<sup>42</sup> Hall, *Doctrine and Practice*, 71.

separated, he confirmed the consubstantiality within the Trinity saying that, “the Father and Son and Spirit are inseparable from each other.”<sup>43</sup>

Tertullian continued discussing the relationship within the Trinity using a monarchy and economy perspective. He said that “the Father is one, and the Son one, and the Spirit one, and they are distinct from each other.”<sup>44</sup> This declaration that Tertullian made did not mean that they are separated from each other rather they are distinct as a person but not in essence or substance. He continued his explanation in this chapter when he began discussing the position of the Holy Spirit. He clarified that the Holy Spirit is a third in degree and distinct from the Father. He proclaimed, “thus making the Paraclete from Himself (Father), even as we say that the Son is also distinct from the Father; so he showed a third degree in the Paraclete, as we believe the second degree is in the Son, by reason of the order observed in the economy.”<sup>45</sup> But in the meantime, the Son and the Holy Spirit “are so closely joined with the Father in His substance.”<sup>46</sup> Tertullian also discussed the role and the distinguishing activity of the Holy Spirit, such as sanctification, as one of the functions of the third person of the Trinity. He stated, “the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete, the sanctifier of faith of those who believe in the Father, and in the Son, and in the Holy Ghost.”<sup>47</sup> Tertullian mentioned again that the Spirit is a sanctifier. Later in his treatise he wrote that, “the Spirit on the other, who was to sanctify man.”<sup>48</sup> The One who sanctified must be a member of the holy Trinity, otherwise, how can the Spirit sanctify men if he is not a part of the Trinity?

---

<sup>43</sup> Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*, 9.

<sup>44</sup> Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*, 9.

<sup>45</sup> Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*, 9.

<sup>46</sup> Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*, 3.

<sup>47</sup> Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*, 2.

<sup>48</sup> Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*, 12.

To conclude, the Three Persons of the Trinity are related to each other. Tertullian explained the relation between them from the divine economy perspective, the activity of each person in the Trinity, and that they are equal, coeternal, and participate in one substance “of the Three in One.”<sup>49</sup> One God in His Monarchy and Three Persons in His economy.

### Origen

The *Ecclesiastical History* of Eusebius of Caesarea (269–339 AD) counts as an important source concerning the life of Origen. In book VI of this work, Eusebius devoted a whole chapter to Origen and his childhood, journey, works, and eventually his death during the reign of Commodus.<sup>50</sup> Origen’s father Leonidas died as a martyr.<sup>51</sup> His father’s martyrdom influenced the personality of Origen to a great degree. His father’s violent death encouraged him to suffer for his faith. As Jurgens states, “he was tortured and imprisoned, most likely in Caesarea; and as a result of his suffering he died at Tyre at the age of sixty–nine, in 253 or 254 A.D.”<sup>52</sup> According to Daly Robert, Origen was “the most prolific writer in antiquity, producing by dictation some 2,000 works.”<sup>53</sup> He was a man of Scripture, as Menzies states, “he was the great interpreter of scripture in the church.”<sup>54</sup> His views on the Scripture can be well seen in *On First Principles*. He declared, “we

---

<sup>49</sup> Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*, 3.

<sup>50</sup> Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 6.2.2. For more information about his life, see Daniélou, *Origen*, 27; Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, 1:189; Lubac, *On First Principles*, 23.

<sup>51</sup> Vogt, “Origen,” 444–51; Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 6.2.6.

<sup>52</sup> Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Church Fathers*, 1:189.

<sup>53</sup> Daly, “Origen,” 835–36. Concerning his works, see Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 6.24; 6.32; 6.36.

<sup>54</sup> Menzies, *Ante-Nicene Fathers. Origen’s Commentaries on the Gospel of John*, 9:291.

believe to be divine, both from what is called the Old Testament and also from the New, endeavouring to confirm our faith by reason.”<sup>55</sup>

In spite of this evident love for Scripture, Origen was anathematized in the eleventh anathema of the fifth Ecumenical Council (553).<sup>56</sup> He was condemned for subordinationism, namely, the view that the Son and the Holy Spirit are subordinate to the Father. He was also condemned for holding the pre-existence of the soul and the restoration of all creation. His idea of subordinationism may have come from the schools of philosophy in Alexandria.<sup>57</sup>

Regarding the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, it seems that he did not say much about it, although there are some key texts in *On First Principles*, which Daniélou regards as “one of Origen’s most important works.”<sup>58</sup> In the preface of *On First Principles*, Origen stated that the whole Scriptures are inspired by the Holy Spirit. He states, “the scriptures were composed through the Spirit of God and that they have not only that meaning which is obvious, but also another which is hidden from the majority of readers.”<sup>59</sup> Origen provides an outline regarding his belief in the Holy Trinity, and explains the position of the Holy Spirit in the Triad, declaring:

First, that God is one, who created and set in order all things, and who, when nothing existed, caused the universe to be. Then again: Christ Jesus he who came to earth, was begotten of the Father before every created thing. And after he had ministered to the Father in the foundation of all things, for all things were made through him. Then again, the apostles delivered this doctrine, that the Holy Spirit is united in honour and dignity with the Father and the Son. In regard to him it is not yet clearly known whether he is to be thought of as begotten or unbegotten, or as being himself also a Son of God or not; But these are matters which we must

---

<sup>55</sup> Lubac, *Origen on First Principles*, 4.1.1.256; Hall, *Doctrine and Practice*, 102.

<sup>56</sup> Gray, *The Defense of Chalcedon*, 68.

<sup>57</sup> Concerning this matter see, Burgess, *The Holy Spirit*, 73; Daniélou, *Origen*, 73; Balthasar, *Origen*, 14.

<sup>58</sup> Daniélou, *Origen*, xii. For his Trinitarian theology and pneumatology, see Berthold, *Origen and the Holy Spirit*; Kennengiesser, *Origen of Alexandria*; Crouzel, *Origen*;

<sup>59</sup> Lubac, *Origen on First Principles*, 1. Preface.8.5.

investigate to the best of our power from holy scripture, inquiring with wisdom and diligence. It is, however, certainly taught with the utmost clearness in the Church, that the Spirit inspired each one of the saints, both the prophets and the apostles, and that there was not one Spirit in the mean of old and another in those who were inspired at the coming of Christ.<sup>60</sup>

In this passage Origen declared that the Holy Spirit is united in honour and dignity with the Father and the Son, even though he is not sure whether the Holy Spirit is begotten or unbegotten. This latter matter has to be investigated by him before he makes his decision regarding the theology of the Spirit. In this matter Henri Crouzel explains that “Origen did not find it stated in the rule of faith whether the Holy Spirit was born or not born, whether he was a Son or not, but neither did he find it stated in the Scriptures that He was made or created.”<sup>61</sup> It seems that this passage is contradictory to a previous one from *On First Principles* 1.3. There, Origen stated that the Father is superior to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, and in the subsequent passage he gives the same honour and dignity to the Holy Spirit in his relationship with the Father and the Son. He did not say third in honour or dignity but rather he is united with the Father and Son in glory. In this passage, Origen elucidated that the Holy Spirit is not a creature but rather is divine and united with the other two persons in the Trinity, which means he is truly God.

To continue examining his doctrine on the Holy Spirit, we should also read through *On First Principles* 3.1 to understand in more detail his pneumatology. He believes that the whole scriptures were inspired by the Holy Spirit. Then he goes to the Bible to see what it says regarding the Holy Spirit, and he gives proofs from the Scriptures about the Holy Spirit. After he gives passages from the Scripture concerning

---

<sup>60</sup> Lubac, *Origen on First Principles*, 1. Preface.5.2-4.

<sup>61</sup> Crouzel, *Origen*, 200.

the Spirit, he emphasized the role of the Spirit in baptism and that it would not be complete without the Holy Spirit. He says:

From all of which we learn that the person of the Holy Spirit of so great authority and dignity that saving baptism is not complete except when performed with the authority of the most excellent Trinity, that is, by the naming of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; And that the name of the Holy Spirit must be joined to that of the unbegotten God the Father and his only-begotten Son.<sup>62</sup>

Here Origen proclaimed the equality of the three persons in the Trinity and that baptism will not be completed if the Holy Spirit is not joined with the other two persons. This gives the reader assurance of the equality of the Holy Spirit to the Father and the Son. Second, the reader understands that the Holy Spirit is not a creature. If the Holy Spirit were merely a creature then the baptism would not be complete. Third, the phrase “must be joined.” here is important. If the Holy Spirit is not divine, the consequences would be that we have a dyad instead of the triad, and this would destroy the church’s faith. Finally, this passage clearly declares that the Holy Spirit is divine and eternal because He is within the Trinity as the Spirit with the Father and the Son.

Origen then argued on the issue of revelation with regard to the Spirit. He declared again the inseparable relationship within the Trinity. He asserted, “For all knowledge of the Father, when the Son reveals him, is made known to us through the Holy Spirit.”<sup>63</sup> It is the Spirit who declares to us the things regarding the Father through his Son. This *μία ἐνέργεια* (one activity) within the Trinity demonstrates the activity of the Triad as one and it reflects the co-operation of the three persons with each other.

In many places in *On First Principles* Origen’s teaching on the Holy Spirit was based on the Scriptures. He declared that the Holy Spirit is a sanctifying power. As he

---

<sup>62</sup> Lubac, *Origen on First Principles*, 1.3.2.30.

<sup>63</sup> Lubac, *Origen on First Principles*, 1.3.4.32.

observed, “Further, although many saints partake of the Holy Spirit, he is not on that account to be regarded as a kind of body, which is divided into material parts and distributed to each of the saints; but rather as a sanctifying power.”<sup>64</sup> Sanctification is one of the Holy Spirit’s functions in the life of the church. Origen declared that the substance of the Trinity does not belong to any corporeal entity, but to one who is “wholly incorporeal”<sup>65</sup> This idea is mentioned in many places in his book when he explained that, “the Holy Spirit is far different from the system or science of medicine, for the Holy Spirit is an intellectual existence.”<sup>66</sup> All of the three persons of the Trinity belong to the nature of God and to one οὐσία. In his reflection on the Holy Spirit, Origen spoke about the unity, equality, and inseparability of the persons in the Trinity. Regarding the equality in the Trinity he argued, “But more, nothing in the Trinity can be called greater or less, for there is but one fount of deity, who upholds the universe by his word and reason, and sanctifies ‘by the Spirit of his mouth’ all that is worthy of sanctification.”<sup>67</sup>

There is one source or origin in the Trinity, God the Father, who upholds the universe by his Word and reason and sanctifies by the Spirit. Origen continued by showing that the three persons of the Trinity are in union with each other without any separation, “Here we are most clearly shown that there is no separation in the Trinity,”<sup>68</sup> but rather unity, “This then, is the testimony we bear to the unity of Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.”<sup>69</sup> *On First Principles* 2.7 deals with the word Paraclete παράκλητος which is mentioned in John 14:16, 26; 15:26; and 16:7. The word Paraclete means “advocate,

---

<sup>64</sup> Lubac, *Origen on First Principles*, 1.1.3.8.

<sup>65</sup> Lubac, *Origen on First Principles*, 4.3.15.312.

<sup>66</sup> Lubac, *Origen on First Principles*, 1.1.3.8–9.

<sup>67</sup> Lubac, *Origen on First Principles*, 1.3.7.37.

<sup>68</sup> Lubac, *Origen on First Principles*, 1.3.7.38.

<sup>69</sup> Lubac, *Origen on First Principles*, 1.3.8.38.

intercessor, comforter, consoler or spokesman on someone's behalf."<sup>70</sup> Then Origen moved on to explain the role of the Spirit in the prophets and the apostles, showing that it is the same Spirit who is working in both, without any change. This was in response to the Gnostic attempt to divide the Testaments and denigrate the work of the Spirit in the Old Testament.

He continued by explaining the gifts of the Spirit, saying that if the Spirit dwelt *on* specific people in ancient times, then after Christ, the Holy Spirit dwelt in each person to fulfill the prophecy of Joel 2:28. At the end of this chapter, Origen came to the conclusion that the Paraclete is the Holy Spirit himself. To conclude, Origen refused to regard the Holy Spirit as created in *On First Principles*. His teaching is based on the Scriptures. Moreover, he developed, "the beginning of an explicit pneumatology by defining the Spirit as a distinct hypostasis."<sup>71</sup>

To conclude this chapter, one can notice that the church Fathers did not develop the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in detail in their writings. But what is mentioned above is a brief summary of the how these Fathers dealt with the subject in their writings. Ignatius proclaimed briefly the role of the Spirit in the Incarnation, and how to live and speak by the Spirit. Tertullian reflected on the Spirit in the divine economy. Origen based his reflection on the Spirit depended on the Scripture.

The next chapter discusses the theological crisis which happened in the fourth century, the heresy of Arianism, which led to the Council of Nicaea. The chapter discusses also the important synod of Alexandria (362) to address the Tropicis who denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit.

---

<sup>70</sup> Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 1018; Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 297; Bauer, et al., *Greek English Lexicon*, 623.

<sup>71</sup> Dünzl, *A Brief History*, 118.



### CHAPTER 3 CRISES IN THE FOURTH CENTURY

From the very beginning of Christianity, the church faced theological controversies. In the book of Acts 15, we find the first theological controversy between Jews and Gentiles. The second theological controversy happened during the time of the Apostolic Fathers. Ignatius of Antioch, one of the apostolic Fathers, focused his writings on Christology and the humanity of Jesus because he was wrestling with the Docetists, who denied Jesus' humanity.<sup>1</sup> In his letters, as previously mentioned, he talks about the incarnation and crucifixion of Jesus Christ. He ascribed to Christ both flesh and spirit. Ignatius has in his mind the union of the divine and human in Jesus Christ. In his *Letter to the Ephesians*, he stated, "There is one physician, both fleshly and spiritual, begotten and unbegotten, come in flesh, God, in death, true life, both of Mary and of God, first passible and then impassible, Jesus Christ, our Lord."<sup>2</sup> In this letter, Ignatius' concern was about the incarnation and crucifixion, which was based on false teachers at that time, especially the Docetists who denied the reality of the incarnation. Remarkably, in resisting and countering the false teachers, Ignatius tried to affirm both the divinity of Jesus and the reality of his incarnation. This is why Ignatius confirmed in his letters that Jesus Christ suffered under Pontius Pilate: "Be deaf, then, when someone speaks to you apart from Jesus Christ, of the family of David, of Mary; who was truly born, both ate and drank; was persecuted under Pontius Pilate, was truly crucified and died, as heavenly, earthly, and sub earthly things looked on."<sup>3</sup> In the second century, another heresy came to the

---

<sup>1</sup> Concerning this heresy, see, Brown, *The Image of Christ*; Goulder, "Ignatius' Docetists," 16–30; Murphy, *The General Councils*; Slusser, "Docetism," 163–72.

<sup>2</sup> Ignatius, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 7.2.

<sup>3</sup> Ignatius, *Letter to the Trallians*, 9.1; *Magnesians* 1.1; *Smyrnaeans* 1.2.

surface named Gnosticism. The word in Greek is γνῶσις or Knowledge. They understood that the plan of salvation was based on their knowledge.<sup>4</sup> This chapter discusses the heresies in the fourth century starting with Arianism, which denied the divinity of the Son. Followed by the synod of Alexandria (362), which was held after the return of Athanasius from his third exile. In this synod Athanasius continued his defense of the divinity of the Holy Spirit. This chapter also discusses the Nicene – Constantinopolitan Creed (381) that was held fifty-six years after the Council of Nicaea. The Council completed the creed, the third article that includes the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. The last section of this chapter discusses the emergence of the Tropicis, a group that denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit.

### **The Spirit in the Arian Controversy**

In the fourth century, the church had to face another heresy. As Lewis Ayers states, “The fourth century of the Christian era witnessed a controversy that produced some of the basic principles of Trinitarian and Christological doctrine, the most important creed in the history of Christianity, and theological texts that have remained points departure for Christian theology in every subsequent generation.”<sup>5</sup> This was the Arian heresy against the Son. Hans Williams suggests, “The crisis of the fourth century was the most dramatic internal struggle the Christian church had so far experienced.”<sup>6</sup> In general, this heresy was proposed by Arius and his followers, and led to the Council of Nicaea (325). The

---

<sup>4</sup> Gnosticism was a heresy in the second century, and the rise of this heresy was attributed to Simon of Magus who tried to buy the gift of the Holy Spirit as mentioned in the book of Acts 8. The famous Gnostic at that time was Marcion who rejected the Old Testament and proclaimed two gods. For more information regarding Gnosticism, see Von Wahlde, *Gnosticism, Docetism, and the Judaisms*; Pearson, *Ancient Gnosticism*; King, *What is Gnosticism*; Brown, *Heresies*, 50; Davis, *The First Seven Ecumenical Council*, 33–80.

<sup>5</sup> Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy*, 1.

<sup>6</sup> Williams, *Arius*, 1.

church Fathers assembled in Nicaea and affirmed that the Son has the same substance with the Father.<sup>7</sup>

According to Bush, Arius was born in Libya and studied theology at the school of Lucian in Antioch. After he finished his studies, he was ordained as a priest and was appointed to the church Boucalia.<sup>8</sup> Jones Matthew describes Arius as:

tall and gaunt, his hair tangled, his eye piercing, his movements quick and nervous. He was a musical genius, and he hit upon the idea of popularizing his doctrines by composing hymns set to the tunes of banquet halls of the time. He was strongly ascetic in his way of life, strict, rigid, pure, and though very attractive to the ladies and “going about from house to house”, he yet lived an unimpeachable life, free from all scandal.<sup>9</sup>

Bush shares the same idea about the personality of Arius. He states, “Arius was described as a man of ability, he was a subtle disputant—a man of daring versatility—proud, factious, restless, and exasperated by opposition, he seems altogether half-dead as he walked along.”<sup>10</sup> The controversy with Arius began in Alexandria with a simple question “If God the Son was begotten the Father, does that not imply that the Father existed before the Son.”<sup>11</sup>

Arius’ teaching denied the divinity of the Son. Franz Dünzl suggests that the verse on which Arius relies is from Proverbs 8:22–25.<sup>12</sup> The RSV reads, “The LORD created me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of old. Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth. When there were no depths I was brought forth,

---

<sup>7</sup> For more information about this council, see. Davis, *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils*; Murphy, *The General Councils*; Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*; Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*; Need, *Truly Divine and Truly Human*.

<sup>8</sup> Bush, *St. Athanasius: His Life and Times*, 42. On Arius, see Williams, *Arius*; Behr, *The Nicene Faith*; Belitto, *The General Councils*; Bray, *Creeds, Councils, and Christ*; Brown, *The Image of Christ*; Davis, *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils*.

<sup>9</sup> Jones, *The Church’s Debt to Heretics*, 86.

<sup>10</sup> Bush, *St. Athanasius: His Life and Times*, 43.

<sup>11</sup> Cozens, *Handbook of Heresies*, 31; for studies of this controversies, see Pelikan, *Creeds and Confessions of Faith*. 1; Hanson, *The Search*; Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*.

<sup>12</sup> Dünzl, *A Brief History*, 42

when there were no springs abounding with water.” In the Septuagint LXX, it reads κύριος ἔκτισέν με ἀρχὴν ὁδῶν αὐτοῦ εἰς ἔργα αὐτοῦ πρὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος ἐθεμελίωσέν με ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸ τοῦ τὴν γῆν ποιῆσαι καὶ πρὸ τοῦ τὰς ἀβύσσους ποιῆσαι πρὸ τοῦ προελθεῖν τὰς πηγὰς τῶν ὑδάτων. πρὸ τοῦ ὄρη ἐδρασθῆναι πρὸ δὲ πάντων βουνῶν γεννᾶ με. According to this verse, the Son was created at the beginning, which means that the Son had a beginning before the earth, before the depth, before the springs. If he had a beginning, it means he is not in the same essence with God, as Franz Dünzl declares, “if the preexistent Son of God had a beginning, then he did not exist before he was ‘begotten, created and set up.’ Before the ‘begetting, creating or setting up’ of the Son, God existed alone. This sole eternal God is the only True God.”<sup>13</sup>

According to Lewis Ayres “Arius saw the Son as a being distinct from and inferior to the Father. The Son was an image of the Father, but only by being created as a derivative copy of some of the Father’s attributes.”<sup>14</sup> The Fathers of the church gathered in Nicaea to discuss many matters that had to be resolved, the most important being the Arian controversy. From the works of Athanasius, who was considered Arius’ great enemy, one can understand the danger of Arius’ teaching. In his work *Arian History*, Athanasius described the teaching of Arius as equal to poison that comes from a serpent. He states, “But Eusebius and Arius, like serpents coming out of their holes, have vomited forth the poison of this impiety; Arius daring to blaspheme openly, and Eusebius defending his blasphemy.”<sup>15</sup> Arius denied the divinity of the Son. He was not with the Father from the beginning. J. Wand summarizes the teaching of Arius and declares:

---

<sup>13</sup> Dünzl, *A Brief History*, 43.

<sup>14</sup> Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 16.

<sup>15</sup> Athanasius, *Arian History*, 66.

Recognizing the difficulty of believing that there were three co-equal persons in one God and that the second person of the Trinity had actually become man and been crucified. If the Son, he said, is truly God then he must be outside the range of all human pain and suffering. Arius therefore taught that the second person of the Trinity was not God in the full sense; He was a kind of secondary Divine being who had been created by the Father in time and had been capable of change, and so of joining himself with human flesh.<sup>16</sup>

For Arius the Son was a creature, only the Father was God. According to Yves Congar concerning the teaching of Arius, “His (Arius) systematic teaching was largely based on subordinationism.”<sup>17</sup> This teaching means that the Son had a beginning and the result of this was that there was a time when the Son did not exist. In this case, the Son was counted among creatures, but was created before them. According to Sozomen, Arius had a relationship with Melitians. He mentions:

He was a presbyter of the church Alexandria in Egypt, and was at first a zealous thinker about doctrine, and upheld the innovations of Melitius, eventually, however, he abandoned this later opinion, and was ordained deacon by bishop Peter, bishop of Alexandria, who afterwards cast him out of the church, because when Peter anathematized the Zealots of Melitius and rejected their baptism, Arius assailed him for these acts and could not be restrained in quietness.<sup>18</sup>

To count the Son among creatures or to deny his divinity means that the Father was the origin of the Son. This leads to say that there was a time when the Son was not in existence. The Father is the source or the beginning of the Son, and the Son has not had the same substance with the Father from the beginning. The one who represented the church against Arius and his followers was Athanasius, who was born in Alexandria, in which, “He received a thorough grounding in the scriptures and in biblical exegesis, which formed the basis of his thought and writings throughout his life.”<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> Wand, *The Four Councils*, 5.

<sup>17</sup> Congar, *I Believe*, 3:25.

<sup>18</sup> Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History*, 2.1.15.

<sup>19</sup> Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius*, 11. On the thought of Athanasius, see, Anatolios, *Athanasius: The Coherence of his Thought*; Bray, *Creeds, Councils, and Christ*; Petersen, *Athanasius*.

Athanasius is counted as the Nicene champion; he stood firm against Arius and refuted his teachings. “He (Athanasius) is sometimes regarded as both bilingual and bicultural, equally at home in Coptic and in Greek. Hence his theology can be considered to represent a fusion of Coptic literalism and Hellenic spiritualism.”<sup>20</sup> As soon as he started his work in office as a bishop, Athanasius faced a war from Arius and his followers. Barnes states, “Athanasius faced a war on two fronts – in Egypt, against the Melitians and a rival bishop of Alexandria who claimed his see, and outside of Egypt, against the allies of Arius, who wished to complete his rehabilitation by securing his return to Alexandria.”<sup>21</sup> Athanasius refused Arius’ request, which was sent via Eusebius to return back to Alexandria. Concerning this request, Athanasius declared in his

*Apology:*

Eusebius, who had the lead in the Arian heresy, sends and buys the Meletians with large promises, becomes their secret friend, and arranges with them for their assistance on many occasions when he might wish for it. At first he sent to me, urging me to admit Arius and his follows to communion and threatened in his verbal communication, while in his letters he [merely] made a request. And when I refused, declaring that it was not right that those who had invented heresy contrary to the truth, and had been anathematized by Ecumenical Council, should be admitted to communion.<sup>22</sup>

The Eusebius party tried to admit the Arians to communion. However, this was not permitted under ecclesiastical law due to Athanasius’ refusal, but under the emperor’s order. In his work, *Arian History*, Athanasius made that very clear when he stated:

For they no sooner had formed their plans, but they immediately admitted Arius and his follows to communion. They set aside the repeated condemnations, which had been passed upon them, and again pretended the imperial authority in their behalf. And they were not ashamed to say in their letters, ‘since Athanasius suffered, all jealousy has ceased, and let us henceforth receive Arius and his

---

<sup>20</sup> Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius*, 13.

<sup>21</sup> Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius*, 20.

<sup>22</sup> Athanasius, *Apology*, 5.59.

follows;’ adding, in order to frighten their hearers, because the Emperor has commanded.<sup>23</sup>

As mentioned earlier, the Arian controversy began in Alexandria when Arius and his followers started teaching that the Son is a creature or He and the Father do not share the same substance. Franz Dünzl suggests that, “the lack of unity among Christians alarmed Constantine, since it affected the foundations of his religious views: if the benevolence of the deity was dependent on Christians worshipping God rightly, any lack of unity and any division could only have negative effects.”<sup>24</sup> The Emperor Constantine “wrote to Alexander bishop of Alexandria and Arius telling them to stop quarrelling about what seemed to him such a small matter.”<sup>25</sup> In his letter to both of them, Emperor Constantine convinced them to keep peace and unity in the community; he tried to reconcile the church in Egypt and to restore peace between churches. “How deep a wound did not my ears only, but my very heart receive in the report that divisions existed among yourselves.”<sup>26</sup> He continued expressing his concern about the unity of the faithful people, stating, “For as long as you continue to contend about these small and very insignificant questions, it is not fitting that so large a portion of God’s people should be under the direction of your judgment, since you are thus divided between yourselves.”<sup>27</sup> He was convinced that the dispute between them was small and insignificant, “because of you who wrangle together on points so trivial and altogether unessential.”<sup>28</sup>

The mediator between the two groups was the Spanish bishop, Ossius of Cordoba, who was sent by Constantine to restore peace within the church. Unfortunately, the

---

<sup>23</sup> Athanasius, *Arian History*, 1.1.

<sup>24</sup> Dünzl, *A Brief History*, 49.

<sup>25</sup> Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy*, 18.

<sup>26</sup> Eusebius, *The Life of Constantine*, 2.68.

<sup>27</sup> Eusebius, *The Life of Constantine*, 2.69.

<sup>28</sup> Eusebius, *The Life of Constantine*, 2.69.

bishop returned to the Emperor without achieving anything.<sup>29</sup> When the Emperor Constantine saw that the problem was spreading and the controversy becoming greater in society, he called the church Fathers for a council. As Kannengiesser mentions, “He (Constantine) convoked an imperial synod in the spring of 325, at Nicaea, not far from Nicomedia, in modern Turkey.”<sup>30</sup>

In general, the church councils were very important since the church Fathers shaped and formulated the doctrine of the church in order to protect the faith of the church. We saw that the apostles made the decisions in the first council in Jerusalem as mentioned earlier. J. Wand states, “On the theological side the Councils will always be of paramount importance because they represent the stages by which Christian doctrine was officially formulated.”<sup>31</sup> In these councils, the church had to discuss many issues in order to make decisions and determine the true faith. In these councils many issues became a dogma within the church after they were discussed. Wand states, “In them the church’s teaching about the reality of God and of Christ was reduced to the form of Dogma, and as such it has been accepted as authoritative by almost every branch of Christendom ever since.”<sup>32</sup> These councils were held due to the urgent situation the church had to face.

The Council of Nicaea was the first Ecumenical Council due to the number of representatives, who attended the council from all over the world, representing their churches.<sup>33</sup> It was a council of the inclusive church; the representatives came almost from

---

<sup>29</sup> Dünzl, *A Brief History*, 50–51.

<sup>30</sup> Kannengiesser, “Arius,” 114–15.

<sup>31</sup> Wand, *The Four Councils*, 1.

<sup>32</sup> Wand, *The Four Councils*, 1.

<sup>33</sup> For more information about the council, see Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History*, 1.8–13; Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History*, 1.17–24; Theodoret, *Ecclesiastical History*, 1.7.1–9.



churches in the Roman Empire. The council was called in order to put an end to the dispute between Arius, his followers and Alexander, the Bishop of Alexandria, regarding the status of the Son. This dispute was spread out to the Eastern churches.

The exact number of those who attended the council is unknown. R. Hanson states, “one of the earliest witnesses must be the statement of Eustathius of Antioch given to us in its original form by Theodoret. Eustathius said that about 270 bishops were presented, though he could not calculate the exact number.”<sup>34</sup> Eusebius of Caesarea, in his work *Life of Constantine* suggested another number. He suggested “the number of bishops exceeded two hundred and fifty, while that of the presbyters and deacons, their train, and the crowd of acolytes and other attendants was altogether beyond computation.”<sup>35</sup> Athanasius, in his work *Arian History*, suggested that about three hundred attended the council. He mentioned, “Our fathers called an Ecumenical Council, when three hundred of them, more or less, met together and condemned the Arian heresy, and all declared that it was alien and strange to the faith of the church.”<sup>36</sup> Athanasius mentioned the same number in his work *Apology*. He declared, “Who then are the parties who dishonour a council? Are not they who have set at nought the votes of the three hundred, and have preferred impiety to godliness.”<sup>37</sup>

Ambrose mentioned in his work *On the Christian Faith* that the number was three hundred and eighteen. He states, “It was of no determination by man, of no human counsel, that three hundred and eighteen bishops met, as I showed above more at length,

---

<sup>34</sup> Hanson, *The Search*, 155.

<sup>35</sup> Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, 3.8.

<sup>36</sup> Athanasius, *Arian History*, 66.

<sup>37</sup> Athanasius, *Apology*, 23. In Note 6, 112. Schaff and Wace say that number of the Fathers at the Nicene Council is generally considered to have been 318. The number of Abraham’s servants, Gen 14:14. Anastasius (*Hodeg.* 3. fin.) referring the first three Ecumenical Councils speaks of the faith of the 318, the 150, and the 200. [Prolegg. Ch. ii. § 3(1).]

in Council, but that in their number the Lord Jesus might prove, by the sign of His Name and Passion.”<sup>38</sup> It seems that this number has been widely accepted. Whenever we discuss the council of Nicaea, the number that is often mentioned is three hundred and eighteen attendees.

Eusebius of Caesarea attended the council, and from his work *Life of Constantine*, one can gain some information about the actions that took place inside the council. Eusebius described those who attended the council.<sup>39</sup> Eusebius also described the scene inside the council. He said that, at the opening of the council, the Emperor spoke at the council concerning peace in the church. He declared, “It was once my chief desire, dearest friends, to enjoy the spectacle of your united presence; and now that this desire is fulfilled, I feel myself bound to render thanks to God the universal King, because, in addition to all his other benefits, he has granted me a blessing higher than all the rest, in permitting me to see you not only all assembled together, but all united in a common harmony of sentiment.”<sup>40</sup>

Constantine urged the bishops to “achieve unity and peace.”<sup>41</sup> Many issues were discussed but the main issue was the Arian heresy. Other than the issues, they celebrated the twenty years of his reign. “About this time he completed the twentieth year of his reign. On this occasion public festivals were celebrated by the people of the provinces generally, but the emperor himself invited and feasted with those ministers of God whom he had reconciled.”<sup>42</sup> They had to discuss the main subject, which was the essence of the Son and his relationship to the Father. It was a Christological controversy and concerned

---

<sup>38</sup> Ambrose, *On the Christian Faith*, 1.18.

<sup>39</sup> Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, 3.7.

<sup>40</sup> Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, 3.12.

<sup>41</sup> Chadwick, *The Early Church*, 130.

<sup>42</sup> Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, 3.12.

Christological doctrines. Afterwards, “Eusebius of Nicomedia, laid before the assembly a confession of faith in which the Son of God was completely subordinated to the Father and was designated as of a different nature.”<sup>43</sup> Ambrose mentioned this confession of faith, in his work *On the Christian Faith*, and he explained how the church fathers made some changes to it and added the word *ὁμοούσιος* of the same substance with the Father.

He stated:

This is betrayed in the letter of Eusebius of Nicomedia. If, writes he, we say that the Son is true God and uncreate, then we are in the way to confess Him to be of one substance (*ὁμοούσιος*) with the Father. When this letter had been read before the Council assembled at Nicaea, the Fathers put this word in their exposition of the Faith, because they saw that it daunted their adversaries; in order that they might take the sword, which their opponents had drawn, to smite off the head of those opponents’ own blasphemous heresy.<sup>44</sup>

Eusebius of Nicomedia was a friend of Arius and he spoke on behalf of Arius, who could not attend the council since he was not a bishop. On the other side of the assembly, there was another group who condemned the teaching of Arius and saw that Arius’ thought would threaten the orthodox faith. Alexander of Alexandria led this group. Among this group was a young deacon named Athanasius, who was the secretary to Bishop Alexander. In his letter to the people of his diocese, Eusebius of Caesarea declared to them what the assembly had agreed on what we call the Nicene Creed:

We believe in One God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible. And in One Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, Only-begotten, that is, from the essence of the Father; God from God, Light from Light, Very God from Very God, begotten not made, One in essence with the Father, by Whom all things were made, both things in heaven and things in earth; Who for us men and for our salvation came down and was made flesh, was made man, suffered, and rose again the third day, ascended into heaven, and comes to judge quick and dead.<sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup> Vogt, “Nicaea,” 810–12.

<sup>44</sup> Ambrose, *On the Christian Faith*, 3.15.

<sup>45</sup> Athanasius, *Council of Nicaea*, 4.

Eusebius continued saying, “And those who say, ‘Once He was not,’ and ‘Before His generation He was not,’ and ‘He came to be from nothing,’ or those who pretend that the Son of God is ‘Of other subsistence or essence,’ or ‘created,’ or ‘alterable,’ or ‘mutable,’ the Catholic Church anathematizes.”<sup>46</sup> This formula is known today in the Orthodox and Catholic churches as the Nicene Creed. This creed contains the church doctrine on the Son and confirmed that the Son is not a creature as the Arians said, or less than the Father in essence. The key word in this creed is one in essence with the Father “ὁμοούσιος” translated as “of the same substance.” This declares that the Son is divine as the Father.

But it seems that the Council of Nicaea did not put an end to the Arian controversy. When Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria died, Athanasius succeeded him. Due to his position at the Nicene Council, he became the Nicene champion and one of the greatest church figures in the fourth century. As soon as he became a bishop of Alexandria, the battle started against Eusebius of Nicomedia and the Arian leaders. They accused him of many things in order to eliminate him and cast him out of the church. He was exiled many times and still insisted on his faith and defending the Nicene cause.

After the council of Nicaea, a controversy about the divinity of the Holy Spirit spread widely. One group of Christians said that the Holy Spirit is not divine, but rather is a creature or an angel. As a result, the Council of Nicaea and the Creed had asserted the belief only in the Holy Spirit as Franz Dünzl states, “the Spirit had never been brought into the centre of the disputes—even the Nicene Creed (325) had limited itself in its third article to the formula: We believe ... in the Holy Spirit.”<sup>47</sup>

The Third Person in the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, was never discussed in the

---

<sup>46</sup> Athanasius, *Council of Nicaea*, 4.

<sup>47</sup> Dünzl, *A Brief History*, 118.

Council. The reason is there was no specific and clear heresy against the Spirit. Most of the heresies from the beginning of Christianity until that time were against the Son. The second reason was that the Arians could not succeed in the “Arian heresy” so they adopted the second heresy against the Spirit. Campbell defines them as, “a group of ‘insufficiently converted’ Arians not directly connected with the Macedonians soon to come upon the ecclesiastical scene.”<sup>48</sup> It seems that the idea of denying the divinity of the Holy Spirit already existed but it was not announced.

According to John Murphy, “Arius studied in Antioch under Lucian, and Lucian was a friend of Paul of Samosata and both they believed that there was no Trinity.”<sup>49</sup> It is obvious to see later their influence on Arius regarding the Trinity, especially since the school of Antioch was focusing on the literal meaning of the Scripture. Lewis Ayres states, “For Arius, the three hypostasis have different levels of glory befitting their different status.”<sup>50</sup> And as Gerald Bray states, “Arius learned that a difference of names implied a difference of substance.”<sup>51</sup> What is mentioned reaffirms that the idea of denying the divinity of the third Person was in the mind of Arians. Kelly suggests, “Arius could speak of the Holy Triad but the three he envisages are entirely different beings, not sharing in any way the same nature or essence.”<sup>52</sup> This is why they called those who were against the Holy Spirit and denied his divinity the new Arians or semi-Arians.

Athanasius linked the two heresies in his letters to Serapion. Macedonius was the leader of this group and had a relationship with the Arians in Constantinople, due to their support. From what was previously mentioned, it is obvious to say that Arius did not

---

<sup>48</sup> Campbell, “The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit,” 411.

<sup>49</sup> Murphy, *The General Councils*, 21.

<sup>50</sup> Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 52.

<sup>51</sup> Bray, *Creeds, Councils and Christ*, 106.

<sup>52</sup> Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 226.

believe that the Holy Spirit was divine even though he did not explicitly declare it as he did regarding the Son. This concept of denying the divinity of the Holy Spirit was already in existence, but was not announced because the subject of the Son was the main issue plaguing the church.

To conclude, we can say that those who followed Arius at that time thought that their belief was simple and did not significantly alter Christianity. Indeed, their belief could destroy the concept of the doctrine of the Trinity, which was the center of Christianity. For the pro-Nicene group, Arianism was against the teaching of the Bible itself. It was the reason to assemble almost all the church leaders at that time to discuss this heresy and make decisions. It was the first ecumenical council, which sought to end this heresy and affirm that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God.

### **Later Athanasius' Trajectories—Tomus Antiochenos (362)**

After the Council of Nicaea, Arius and his followers did not surrender to the decisions made by the church fathers in the council. They held many synods under the direction and command of Constantius II and heretical bishops dominated these entire synods.<sup>53</sup> There was a short period of time between Athanasius writing his *Letters to Serapion* and the *Synod of Alexandria* in 362. This synod was held after Athanasius' return from his

---

<sup>53</sup> These Synods are: Antioch 341; Serdica 343; Sirmium 357, 358; Rimini and Seleucia 359. Dvornik, *The General Councils*, 17–21. For more information regarding these synods, see Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History*, 2.8, 20; Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History*, 3.5; 4.6; Athanasius, *Defence Against the Arians*, 36–40; Athanasius, *Defence of his Flight*, 5; Hilary, *On the Councils*, 2.

third exile and was summoned by him.<sup>54</sup> However, the synod of Alexandria (362) was probably very important due to the significant events, which happened in the fourth century. R. B. C. Hanson states, “The most important event concerned with Athanasius’s return to his see was calling of a council there. This council must have taken place at some point between March and October 362.”<sup>55</sup>

It seems that Athanasius, Eusebius, and Lucifer did not delay a call for a synod in Alexandria, in a short time not more than four or five months. According to Henry Gwatkin, Athanasius reappeared in Alexandria in 22 February 362 and the synod was held in the summer of the same year.<sup>56</sup> In this synod, Athanasius played an important role, particularly because he continued to defend the full divinity of the Holy Spirit as he did before when he wrote the *Letters to Serapion Concerning the Holy Spirit*. The importance of this synod is, “it laid the groundwork of the eventual reaffirmation of Nicene orthodoxy at Constantinople in 381 . . . this synod of Alexandria was important as the first to stress the deity and the personhood of the Holy Spirit as well as the Son . . . it called for acceptance of the homoousios formula without any glosses or footnotes.”<sup>57</sup> This synod was called in order to impose decisions that put an end to the two heresies, which the church was facing: Arians and Tropici.

The number of those who attended the synod was twenty-one bishops, “among the twenty-one bishops who formed the assembly the most notable are Eusebius of Vercellæ, Asterius of Petra, and Dracontius of Lesser Hermopolis and Adelphius of

---

<sup>54</sup> For more information concerning this synod, see, Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History*, 3.7; Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History*, 5.12.

<sup>55</sup> Hanson, *The Search*, 639. On this Synod, see, Gwatkin, *Studies of Arianism*, 208; Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*; Armstrong, “The Synod of Alexandria.” 347–55.

<sup>56</sup> Gwatkin, *Studies of Arianism*, 208–9.

<sup>57</sup> Brown, *Heresies*, 126.

Onuphis.”<sup>58</sup> Henry Gwatkin mentioned the same number in his book *Studies of Arianism*.<sup>59</sup> Newman says that after Athanasius returned from his third exile he held a council with his followers. “He was soon join by his fellow exile, Eusebius of Vercellæ; Lusifer, who had journeyed with the latter from the Upper Thebaid, on his return to the West, having gone forward to Antioch on business which will presently explained. Meanwhile, no time was lost in holding a Council at Alexandria (362) on the general state of the church.”<sup>60</sup>

A letter that was addressed from the synod to the church in Antioch is preserved among Athanasius’ writings.<sup>61</sup> The letter consists of eleven sections. In general, this letter demonstrated very important themes and it is counted as a continuation to the Council of Nicaea and its decision. The important themes in the letter were regarding those who would like to come back to the faith of the church and to join the Nicene faction: the mandatory condemnation of Arianism, confessing the faith of the church Fathers, and to condemn those who say that the Holy Spirit is a creature as it mentioned in section 3 of the letter, *μηδὲν πλέον ἀπαιτήσητε παρ’ αὐτῶν ἢ ἀναθεματίζειν μὲν τὴν Ἀρειανὴν αἵρεσιν, ὁμολογεῖν δὲ τὴν παρὰ τῶν ἁγίων Πατέρων ὁμολογηθεῖσαν ἐν Νικαίᾳ πίστιν*.<sup>62</sup> Athanasius made it clear to the churches in Antioch that in order to have peace, restoration, and to be in communion with other churches, you have to denounce the Arian heresy, and accept the council of Nicaea. It is understandable from the letter that there is no clear evidence

---

<sup>58</sup> Athanasius, *Tomus Ad Antiochenos*. Introduction.

<sup>59</sup> Gwatkin, *Studies of Arianism*, 209.

<sup>60</sup> Newman, *The Arians of the Fourth Century*, 354.

<sup>61</sup> This letter *Tomus ad Antiochenos* is located in Migne’s *Patrologia Graeca* XXVI.796–810. It is mentioned also in Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.6–9.

<sup>62</sup> Athanasius, *Tomus Ad Antiochenos*, 3. “Without requiring more from them than to anathematize the Arian heresy and confess the faith confessed by the holy fathers at Nicaea.” Unless noted other wise, all English translations in this section are from Athanasius, *Synodal Letter to the People of Antioch*.



that the synod decided any new doctrine, but rather defended what had been decided before as Socrates mentioned, “For they did not introduce any doctrine of their own devising into the church, but contended themselves with recording their sanction of those points which ecclesiastical tradition has insisted on from the beginning.”<sup>63</sup>

In general, the Holy Spirit is mentioned nine times in the letter. The first time that the Holy Spirit is presented is in section three when Athanasius asked the people in Antioch to make an important acknowledgment related to the Holy Spirit. He said that they had to ἀναθεματίζειν δὲ καὶ τοὺς λέγοντας κτίσμα εἶναι τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, καὶ διηρημένον ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ Χριστοῦ.<sup>64</sup> Athanasius refused also the division of the holy Trinity. He said, τὸ μὴ διαιρεῖν τὴν ἁγίαν Τριάδα, καὶ λέγειν τι ταύτης εἶναι κτίσμα.<sup>65</sup> With this clarification, he continued defending the deity of the Third Person and made him coequal with the Father and the Son.

The subjects that are mentioned in Section three of *Tomus Ad Antiochenos* declare that the Spirit is not a creature. And regarding the division of the Trinity, it was discussed in previous works of Athanasius in his argument with the Tropici, and also in his *Orations against the Arians*. Regarding the first subject, the Holy Spirit is not a creature because He is, “peculiar to Christ and belongs to the Godhead.”<sup>66</sup> Athanasius explained this matter in his first *Letter to Serapion*. He said, Νῦν δὲ, ὅτε λεγόμεθα μέτοχοι Χριστοῦ καὶ μέτοχοι Θεοῦ, δείκνυται τὸ ἐν ἡμῖν χρίσμα καὶ ἡ σφραγὶς μὴ οὐσα τῆς τῶν γεννητῶν

<sup>63</sup> Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History*, 3.7.

<sup>64</sup> Athanasius, *Tomus Ad Antiochenos*, 3. “Anathematize also those who say that the Holy Spirit is a creature and separate from the Essence of Christ.”

<sup>65</sup> Athanasius, *Tomus Ad Antiochenos*, 3. “To refuse to divide the Holy Trinity, or to say that any part of it is a creature.”

<sup>66</sup> Laminski, *Der Heilige Geist als Geist Christi*, 121.

φύσεως, ἀλλὰ τῆς τοῦ Υἱοῦ, διὰ τοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ Πνεύματος συνάπτοντος ἡμᾶς τῷ Πατρὶ.<sup>67</sup>

Athanasius also rejected the division of the Trinity in his *Letter to Serapion*. He said, οὕτω, διαιροῦντες ἀπὸ τοῦ Λόγου τὸ Πνεῦμα, οὐκέτι μίαν τὴν ἐν Τριάδι θεότητα σώζουσι.<sup>68</sup>

Athanasius continued to refuse the division of the Holy Trinity, emphasizing the unity of the Trinity and that there is nothing foreign or mixed with it. He said, Τριάς τοίνυν ἁγία καὶ τελεία ἐστίν, ἐν Πατρὶ καὶ Υἱῷ καὶ ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι θεολογοῦ μένη, οὐδὲν ἀλλότριον ἢ ἕξωθεν ἐπιμιγνύμενον ἔχουσα, οὐδὲ ἐκ δημιουργοῦ καὶ γενητοῦ συνισταμένη, ἀλλ' ὅλη τοῦ κτίζειν καὶ δημιουργεῖν οὔσα. ὁμοία δὲ ἑαυτῇ καὶ ἀδιαίρετός ἐστι τῇ φύσει, καὶ μία ταύτης ἡ ἐνέργεια.<sup>69</sup> In his orations, Athanasius also defended the unity of the Trinity and objected its division. He said, “but there is an eternal and one Godhead in a Triad, and there is one glory in the Holy Triad. And you presume to divide it into different natures.”<sup>70</sup>

The Holy Spirit is mentioned for the second time in section 5 while Athanasius answered the question of hypostasis. In this section, Athanasius mentioned the synod of Sardica in 343, and he declared that, “For the synod made no definition of the kind.”<sup>71</sup> ὡς ἐν τῇ κατὰ Σαρδικὴν συνόδῳ συνταχθὲν περὶ πίστεως. οὐδὲν γὰρ τοιοῦτον ὤρισεν ἢ

<sup>67</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, I.24.1.510. I am using Savvidis, Kyriakos, ed. *Athanasius Werke*. All citations consist of letter, section, subsection, and page number. “When we are said to be partakers of Christ and partakers of God, it shows that the anointing and the seal which is in us does not belong to the nature of things which have been brought into existence. But to the Son, who joins us to the Father through the Spirit that is in Him.”

<sup>68</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, I.2.3.453. “By dividing the Spirit from the Word they no longer preserve the divinity in the Trinity as one.”

<sup>69</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, I.28.2.520. “So, the Trinity is holy and perfect, confessed in Father and Son and Holy Spirit. It has nothing foreign or external mixed with it, nor is it composed of Creator and creature, but is entirely given to creating and making. It is self-consistent and indivisible in nature, and it has one activity.” See also I.29.521.

<sup>70</sup> Athanasius, *Orations Against the Arians*, I.vi.18.

<sup>71</sup> Athanasius, *Synodal Letter to the People of Antioch*, 5. For more information about this synod, see, Hanson, *The Search*, 293; Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History*, II.20.

σύνδοδος.<sup>72</sup> He continued attacking the synod of Sardica saying that the synod, “was indignant and decreed that no statement of faith should be drafted.”<sup>73</sup> ἡ δὲ ἅγια σύνοδος ἢ ἐν Σαρδικῇ συναχθεῖσα ἠγανάκτησε, καὶ ὥρισε μηδὲν ἔτι περὶ πίστεως γράφεσθαι.<sup>74</sup> On other hand, Athanasius defended the faith, which was confessed by the church fathers in Nicaea. At the end of this section, Athanasius discussed the question of hypostasis. Related to this subject, it is necessary to mention that there was a difference between the East and the West in this matter. The Eastern churches followed the three hypostases and the Western churches followed the one hypostasis. “In this difficulty, Athanasius was the natural mediator.”<sup>75</sup> Regarding those who spoke of three hypostases or substances, he declared:

διὰ τὸ εἰς ἁγίαν Τριάδα πιστεύειν, οὐκ ὀνόματι Τριάδα μόνον, ἀλλ’ ἀληθῶς οὖσαν καὶ ὑφειστώσαν. Πατέρα τε ἀληθῶς ὄντα καὶ ὑφειστώτα, καὶ Υἱὸν ἀληθῶς ἐνούσιον ὄντα καὶ ὑφειστώτα, καὶ Πνεῦμα ἅγιον ὑφειστώως καὶ ὑπάρχον οἶδαμεν . . . ἀλλ’ εἰδέναι ἁγίαν μὲν Τριάδα, μίαν δὲ θεότητα, καὶ μίαν ἀρχὴν, καὶ Υἱὸν μὲν ὁμοούσιον τῷ Πατρὶ, ὡς εἶπον οἱ Πατέρες, τὸ δὲ ἅγιον Πνεῦμα, οὐ κτίσμα, οὐδὲ ξένον, ἀλλ’ ἴδιον καὶ ἀδιαίρετον τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ Υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ Πατρὸς.<sup>76</sup>

The language that Athanasius used here in defending the deity of the Holy Spirit had the same tone of that in his *Letters to Serapion*.<sup>77</sup> In section six of the letter, and while Athanasius continued to answer the question of the hypostasis, the Holy Spirit was mentioned twice when he answered those who spoke of one substance. The synod, which

<sup>72</sup> Athanasius, *Tomus Ad Antiochenos*, 5.

<sup>73</sup> Athanasius, *Synodal Letter to the People of Antioch*, 5.

<sup>74</sup> Athanasius, *Tomus Ad Antiochenos*, 5.

<sup>75</sup> Gwatkin, *Studies of Arianism*, 211.

<sup>76</sup> Athanasius, *Tomus Ad Antiochenos*, 5. “Because they believed in a holy Trinity, not a Trinity in name only, but existing, and subsisting in truth. Both a Father truly existing and subsisting, and a Son truly substantial and subsisting, and a Holy Spirit subsisting and really existing do we acknowledge that they acknowledged a holy Trinity but One Godhead, and one beginning, and that the Son is coessential with the Father, as the fathers said; while the Holy Spirit is not a creature, nor external, but proper to and inseparable from the Essence of the Father and the Son.”

<sup>77</sup> DelCogliano, et al., trans., *Works on the Spirit*, 1.24.7.91; 1.27.1.95; 1.28.2.97.

was summoned by Athanasius, realized that there is no difference between the two groups. Henry Swete declares, “The synod wisely recognized that neither the Western formula ‘one hypostasis’ nor the Eastern ‘three hypostases’ was a bar to inter-communion, since there was no lurking Sabelianism in the one and no taint of tritheism in the other.”<sup>78</sup>

It seems that Athanasius had a conversation and discussion with both groups in the synod, and came to declare that, Ἀμέλει κάκει οἱ αἰτιαθέντες ὡς εἰρηκότες τρεῖς ὑποστάσεις συνετί θεντο τούτοις καὶ αὐτοὶ δὲ οἱ εἰρηκότες μίαν οὐσίαν τὰ ἐκείνων ὥσπερ ἠρμήνευσαν καὶ ὠμολόγουν, καὶ ἀνεθεματίζετο παρ’ ἀμφοτέρων τῶν μερῶν Ἄρειός τε ὡς Χριστομάχος, καὶ Σαβέλλιος.<sup>79</sup> It is understandable from what is mentioned above that there is no difference between the two groups, “As soon as both parties had stated their views before the council, it appears that both were perfectly orthodox.”<sup>80</sup>

The Holy Spirit is mentioned again in section eleven, which is the last section of the letter. This section explained that *Tomus Ad Antiochenos* was accepted and signed in Antioch. In this section, Paulinus made it clear that he was received from the fathers, who gathered in Alexandria and declared the orthodox faith. He wrote, Ἐγὼ Παυλῖνος οὕτω φρονῶ, καθὼς παρέλαβον παρὰ τῶν Πατέρων, ὄντα καὶ ὑφεστῶτα Πατέρα τέλειον καὶ ὑφεστῶτα Υἱὸν τέλειον, καὶ ὑφεστηκὸς τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον τέλειον ... Ἀναθεματίζω δὲ τοὺς

---

<sup>78</sup> Swete, *The Holy Spirit*, 173.

<sup>79</sup> Athanasius, *Tomus Ad Antiochenos*, 6. “Well, thereupon they who had been blamed for saying there were three substances agreed with the others, while those who had spoken of One Essence, also confessed the doctrine of the former as interpreted by them. And by both sides Arius anathematized as an adversary of Christ, and Sabellius.”

<sup>80</sup> Gwatkin, *Studies of Arianism*, 211.

λέγοντας τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον κτίσμα δι' Υἱοῦ γεγονός.<sup>81</sup>

It is clear the letter clarified that the Holy Spirit is not a creature, but rather coequal with Father and the Son and the Spirit and is not separate from the essence of Christ. Henry Swete suggests this when he discusses the synod in his book *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church*. He says that, “This [synod] was particularly to extend the Homoousion to the Spirit, though it is not probable that the term was definitely used by the synod in reference to the Third Person, as the church historians of the next century would lead leaders to suppose.”<sup>82</sup> Regarding this subject, Socrates in his *Ecclesiastical History* wrote that, “The bishops assembled on this occasion out of various cities, took into consideration many subjects of the utmost importance, they asserted the divinity of the Holy Spirit, and comprehended him in the consubstantial Trinity.”<sup>83</sup> Athanasius reiterated this significant subject in the synod as he did before in his *Letters to Serapion* when he declared that, “He [the Holy Spirit] is proper to the one Word and proper to and the same as the one God in substance.”<sup>84</sup>

Another subject, which had to be discussed in the synod, was whether Jesus has a human soul (ψυχή) or not. A certain group who had this view was completely rejected in the synod. The synod declared that, Ὁμολόγουν γὰρ καὶ τοῦτο, ὅτι οὐ σῶμα ἄψυχον, οὐδ' ἀναίσθητον, οὐδ' ἀνόητον εἶχεν ὁ Σωτὴρ. Οὐδὲ γὰρ οἶόν τε ἦν, τοῦ Κυρίου δι' ἡμᾶς ἀνθρώπου γενομένου, ἀνόητον εἶναι τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ, οὐδὲ σώματος μόνου, ἀλλὰ καὶ ψυχῆς

<sup>81</sup> Athanasius, *Tomus Ad Antiochenos*, 11. “I Paulinus hold thus, as I received from fathers, that the Father perfectly exists and subsists, and that the Son perfectly subsists, and that the Holy Spirit perfectly subsists... Moreover, I anathematize those who say that the Holy Spirit is a creature made through the Son.”

<sup>82</sup> Swete, *The Holy Spirit*, 173.

<sup>83</sup> Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History*, 3.7. See also, Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History*, 5.12.

<sup>84</sup> DelCogliano, et al., trans., *Works on the Spirit*, 1.27.3.96.

ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ Λόγῳ σωτηρία γέγονεν.<sup>85</sup>

As a summary of this letter, which was addressed to the church of Antioch, the synod reasserted the council of Nicaea and its decisions. The synod made it clear that those who wanted to withdraw from the Arian party and to come back to the Nicene faction had to condemn Arianism and to confess the council of Nicaea. The synod also did not make any decision whether they spoke of one hypostasis or three hypostases, so that there would be no confusion. The synod confirmed the Nicene faith and the consubstantiality of the Holy Spirit to the Father and the Son.

### **Nicene–Constantinople Creed (381)**

After the council of Nicaea, the Arians refused to give up. They still had an impact and influence on people, especially in Antioch. In addition to Arianism, other heresies appeared, such as: the Pneumatomachoi who claimed that the Holy Spirit is not divine, and Appollinarius of Laodicea, who could not comprehend how the Logos can be united with the human nature of Jesus.<sup>86</sup> In general, the whole situation motivated the church to have another council in 381. The main reason, which made the church Fathers and the Emperor Theodosius call for a council was the heresy against the Holy Spirit. As Kelly states, “one of the express objects was to bring the church’s teaching about the Holy Spirit into line with what it believed about the Son.”<sup>87</sup> Although Athanasius wrote letters to Serapion concerning this matter, and later he summoned the synod of Alexandria in

---

<sup>85</sup> Athanasius, *Tomus Ad Antiochenos*, 7. “The Saviour had not a body without a soul, nor without sense or intelligence; for it was not possible, when the Lord had become man for us, that His body should be without intelligence: nor was the salvation effected in the Word Himself a salvation of body only, but of a soul also.”

<sup>86</sup> For more information regarding Appollinarianism, see: Jenkins, *Jesus at Wars*, 53; Need, *Truly Divine and Truly Human*, 71; Gwatkin, *Studies of Arianism*, 250–54; Wand, *The Four Councils*, 21–41.

<sup>87</sup> Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 340.

362 and anathematized those who called the Spirit a creature and not divine, it was important to call for a council and put a stop to the Pneumatomachoi heresy.

By the time the Emperor Theodosius called for a council in Constantinople in 381, Athanasius had died (373). Nevertheless, he elaborated the fundamental principles of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in his *Letters to Serapion*. It was necessary to call for a council, especially for the church in the East, which was facing numerous heresies and the trouble caused by these heretics.<sup>88</sup> The exact number of those who attended the council was 150 bishops, as well as those who were representing the Pneumatomachian party. Regarding those who attended the council, Sozomen suggested that, “about a hundred and fifty bishops who maintained the consubstantiality of the Holy Trinity, were present at this council, as likewise thirty-six of the Macedonian bishops.”<sup>89</sup> In spite of all the bishops who attended, the council was not ecumenical as some scholars say. For instance, Dvornik declares that, “the council 381 was not an ecumenical synod. It obtained its ecumenical character because of its dogmatic character, and because its addition to the Nicene Creed.”<sup>90</sup>

It was fifty-six years between the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea and the Second Ecumenical Council of Constantinople 381. It is one of the “undisputed General Councils, one of the four of which St. Gregory he revered as he did the four holy Gospels.”<sup>91</sup> As Karmirēs, writes, “It is well known that the Second Ecumenical Council was called mainly as a general synod only of the Eastern, Byzantine, Empire, but was

---

<sup>88</sup> For more information about these heresies, see, Karmirēs, “The Second Ecumenical Council,” 245.

<sup>89</sup> Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History*, 7.7. Regarding the number, see, Theodoret, *Ecclesiastical History*, 5.7; Gwatkin, *Studies of Arianism*, 269; Geanakoplos, “The Second Ecumenical,” 410–11.

<sup>90</sup> Dvornik, *The General Councils*, 17.

<sup>91</sup> NPNF, *The Second Ecumenical Council*, 162.

recognized as the Second Ecumenical Council also by the church in the West; it was ratified by the Fathers of the Fourth Ecumenical Council.”<sup>92</sup> It was not counted as ecumenical because the Western churches were not represented. Only the Eastern churches and those who represented the Pneumatomachoi heresy were present. This is why Henry Gwatkin calls “a somber gathering.”<sup>93</sup>

Geanakoplos gives two reasons as to why Emperor Theodosius invited only the bishops in the East and not the West. He clarifies, “Technically he [Theodosius] was ruler of the East not yet of the Western half of the empire. Moreover, the problems of doctrine, especially the various ramifications of the Arian heresy, seemed to be concentrated primarily in the East. In any case, the idea of a synod was apparently his alone.”<sup>94</sup> The bishop who led the council was Meletius of Antioch. This is why Henry Gwatkin suggests, “Meletius of Antioch presided in the council, and Paulinus was ignored.”<sup>95</sup> The Emperor and the bishop accepted the election of Meletius to be the president of the council. The question is why? Did the Emperor accept the presidency of Meletius to the council because of the dream he had when Meletius appeared to him in a dream, putting the crown on his head? To answer this question it is important to mention that Theodoret, in his *Ecclesiastical History*, mentioned the story of the emperor’s dream. He stated, “and then saw a wonderful vision clearly shown him by the wonderful by the very God of the universe himself. In it he seemed to see the divine Meletius, chief of the church of the Antiochenes, investing him with an imperial rope, and covering his head with an imperial

---

<sup>92</sup> Karmirēs, “The Second Ecumenical Council,” 244.

<sup>93</sup> Gwatkin, *Studies of Arianism*, 269.

<sup>94</sup> Geanakoplos, “The Second Ecumenical,” 410.

<sup>95</sup> Gwatkin, *Studies of Arianism*, 269.



crowns.”<sup>96</sup> It seems that this dream made it easy for the Emperor to accept Meletius to preside on the council. However, Theodoret died during the first session of the council.

The council of Constantinople articulated a number of canons. Seven canons were pronounced at the end of the council.<sup>97</sup> Karmirēs suggests the number of canons was seven.”<sup>98</sup> Geanakoplos gives two suggestions regarding the number of canons; one based on the Greek tradition and the other based on the Western canonists. He declares, “The Greek tradition, the canonists Balsamon and Zonaras in particular, usually attribute seven to the synod. Western canonists, on the other hand, include only four, affirming that canons five and six came from the Synod of Constantinople of 382, and canon 7, from the mid-fifth century.”<sup>99</sup> Wand in his book *The Four Councils* is not certain whether the synod passed four or seven canons. He argues that, “the council pronounced Macedonians heretical. Beside this they passed four or perhaps seven canons.”<sup>100</sup> What it is important to note here is that the council anathematized all the heretics and completed the creed; the third article that includes the basic doctrine regarding the divinity of the Holy Spirit. The council complemented the work and the foundation of the first ecumenical council of Nicaea concerning the church’s belief in the Trinity.

The third article, which related to the Holy Spirit says, *καὶ εἰς τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ Ἅγιον, τὸ Κύριον καὶ Ζωοποιόν, τὸ ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐκπορευόμενον, τὸ σὺν Πατρὶ καὶ Υἱῷ συμπροσκυνούμενον καὶ συνδοξαζόμενον, τὸ λαλῆσαν διὰ τῶν προφητῶν* “And [we believe] in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver-of-Life, who proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spoke by the

<sup>96</sup> Theodoret, *Ecclesiastical History*, 5.6.

<sup>97</sup> NPNF, *The Second Ecumenical Council*, 172–85.

<sup>98</sup> Karmirēs, “The Second Ecumenical Council,” 247.

<sup>99</sup> Geanakoplos, “The Second Ecumenical,” 419.

<sup>100</sup> Wand, *The Four Councils*, 21.

prophets.”<sup>101</sup> This article is important and, with the first two articles, the Council of Constantinople expanded the creed and added the third one concerning the divinity of the Holy Spirit. The third article gives five characteristics to the Holy Spirit, which declared that the Holy Spirit is not a creature nor a ministering spirit, but rather divine and co-eternal with the Father and the Son. These characteristics explained the theology of the third Person in the Trinity, which had been decided by the church fathers in the council. Following is the discussion of these characteristics.

The first characteristic is τὸ Κύριον (Lord). This expression was against the Tropici who taught that the Holy Spirit is one of the ministering spirits. According to Kelly, this Greek word τὸ Κύριον (Lord) “was the Septuagint equivalent of the Hebrew Yahweh, though its use was too widespread in the Hellenistic world for it to be decisive.”<sup>102</sup> Athanasius mentioned this teaching in his first letter to Serapion. He said, λεγόντων αὐτὸ μὴ μόνον κτίσμα, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν λειτουργικῶν πνευμάτων ἐν αὐτὸ εἶναι, καὶ βαθμῶ μόνον αὐτὸ διαφέρειν τῶν ἀγγέλων.<sup>103</sup> For Athanasius, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Almighty. He stated, Εὐδηλον οὖν, ὡς ὁ λαλῶν ἄγγελος τῷ προφήτῃ οὐκ ἦν τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, ἀλλ’ αὐτὸς μὲν ἄγγελος, τὸ δὲ τὸ Πνεῦμα τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐστὶ τοῦ παντοκράτορος. καὶ διακονεῖται μὲν παρ’ ἀγγέλου, ἀδιαίρετον δὲ τῆς θεότητός ἐστι, καὶ ἴδιον τοῦ λόγου.<sup>104</sup>

<sup>101</sup> NPNF, *The Second Ecumenical Council*, 163.

<sup>102</sup> Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 342.

<sup>103</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, I.1.2.450. “Claiming not only that he is a creature but also that he is the one of the ministering spirits and is different from the angels only in degree.” See also, Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History*, 4.27.

<sup>104</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, I.1.4.480. “It is obvious that the angel who spoke within the prophet was not the Holy Spirit. For the angel was an angel, but the spirit was the Spirit of Almighty God, to whom the angel ministers and who is inseparable from the divinity and proper to the Word.”

The second characteristic is “τὸ Ζωοποιόν” (giver of Life) this expression is given to the Holy Spirit in the third article of the Creed. Athanasius discussed this matter in his first *Letter to Serapion* claiming that the creatures receive life, but the Holy Spirit gives life. He declared, Πνεῦμα ζωοποιὸν λέγεται.<sup>105</sup> (The Spirit is said to be life giving.) The word ζωοποιόν from the verb ζωοποιέω means, “of God’s action make alive, give life to.”<sup>106</sup> This attribute is given to the Holy Spirit in the Scripture also, as the evangelist John says in 6:63, τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν τὸ ζωοποιούν, ἡ σὰρξ οὐκ ὠφελεῖ οὐδέν. τὰ ῥήματα ἃ ἐγὼ λελάληκα ὑμῖν πνεῦμά ἐστιν καὶ ζωὴ ἐστιν. (It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.) St. Paul also attributes life to the Spirit. In his letter to the Rom 8:11 he says, εἰ δὲ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ ἐγείραντος τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐκ νεκρῶν οἰκεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν, ὁ ἐγείρας Χριστὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν ζωοποιήσει καὶ τὰ θνητὰ σώματα ὑμῶν διὰ τοῦ ἐνοικοῦντος αὐτοῦ πνεύματος ἐν ὑμῖν. (If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.)

In I.23, Athanasius also mentioned the verses from Acts 3:15; John 4:14; and John 7:39, which clearly describe that the Holy Spirit gives life to creatures. These two verses from the Gospel of John are connected together, and both demonstrate that the Holy Spirit gives way to those who believe in him. The verse from John 4:14 is a part of the conversation between the Lord Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well of Jacob. In this conversation, the Lord Jesus is talking about the living water. He says, ὃς δ’ ἂν πίη ἐκ τοῦ ὕδατος οὗ ἐγὼ δώσω αὐτῷ, οὐ μὴ διψήσει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, ἀλλὰ τὸ ὕδωρ ὃ δώσω αὐτῷ

<sup>105</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, I.23.2.508.

<sup>106</sup> Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon*, 187.

γενήσεται ἐν αὐτῷ πηγὴ ὕδατος ἀλλομένου εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον. (But those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.) This illustration of the Holy Spirit in this chapter was completed in John 7:39 at the feast of Tabernacle concerning the living water. He says, τοῦτο δὲ εἶπεν περὶ τοῦ πνεύματος ὃ ἔμελλον λαμβάνειν οἱ πιστεύσαντες εἰς αὐτόν· οὐπω γὰρ ἦν πνεῦμα, ὅτι Ἰησοῦς οὐδέπω ἐδοξάσθη. (Now he said this about the Spirit, which believers in him were to receive; for as yet there was no Spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified). Athanasius declares that the Holy Spirit gives life at the end of his work, the *Defence of the Nicene Council (De Decretis)*. He declared, “To God and the Father is due the glory, honour, and worship with His co-existent Son and Word, together with the All-holy and Life giving Spirit, now and unto endless ages of ages, Amen.”<sup>107</sup>

The third characteristic is ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐκπορευόμενον (Who proceeds from the Father). This statement is quoted from the Gospel of John 15: 26 and the preposition παρά is changed to ἐκ “Ὅταν ἔλθῃ ὁ παράκλητος ὃν ἐγὼ πέμψω ὑμῖν παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς, τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας ὃ παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκπορεύεται, ἐκεῖνος μαρτυρήσει περὶ ἐμοῦ. (When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf.) This passage is important due to the fact that Athanasius claimed that the Holy Spirit shares the same essence with the Father because He is from Him. This statement also explains that the Spirit is not like other creatures, because creatures came from nothing and they have beginning, whereas the Spirit is from God. He discussed the procession of the Holy Spirit in his first *Letter to*

---

<sup>107</sup> Athanasius, *Defence of the Nicene Council*, 32.

*Serapion*. The change of preposition was used by St. Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians 2:11-12, which was cited by Athanasius to argue that the Spirit is from God. τίς γὰρ οἶδεν ἀνθρώπων τὰ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου εἰ μὴ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τὸ ἐν αὐτῷ; οὕτως καὶ τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐδεὶς ἔγνωκεν εἰ μὴ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ. ἡμεῖς δὲ οὐ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ κόσμου ἐλάβομεν ἀλλὰ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα εἰδῶμεν τὰ ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ χαρισθέντα ἡμῖν.<sup>108</sup>

Athanasius used this formulation in his letters I.15 and I.22. The fourth characteristic is *συμπροσκυνούμενον, συνδοξαζόμενον* (Worshipped and Glorified). In this statement, the Holy Spirit is numbered with the Father, both worshipped and glorified, and this means that the Spirit has the same honor as the Father. Athanasius mentioned the glorification of the Spirit with the Son and the Father in his first letter. He said, Τὸ τοίνυν μὴ ὄν κτίσμα, ἀλλ' ἠνω μένον τῷ Υἱῷ, ὡς ὁ Υἱὸς ἠνωταὶ τῷ Πατρὶ, τὸ συνδοξαζόμενον Πατρὶ καὶ Υἱῷ, καὶ θεολογούμενον μετὰ τοῦ Λόγου, ἐνεργοῦν τε ἅπερ ὁ Πατὴρ διὰ τοῦ Υἱοῦ ἐργάζεται.<sup>109</sup> This is the only time in which Athanasius used the expression *συνδοξαζόμενον* (glorified together) in his letters. He used the word *δόξα* (glory), referring to the doxology of the Trinity. He used it in his first letter, where he stated, καὶ μία ἡ ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ Τριάδι θεότης ἐστὶ, καὶ μία πίστις, καὶ ἓν βάπτισμά ἐστιν, ἐν αὐτῇ διδόμενον, καὶ ἡ τελείωσις μία, ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τῷ Κυρίῳ ἡμῶν, δι' οὗ καὶ μεθ' οὗ τῷ

<sup>108</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, 1.22.1.506. "For what human being knows what is truly human except the human spirit that is within? So also no one comprehends what is truly God's except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God."

<sup>109</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, 1.32.2.526. "So, the Spirit who is not a creature but is united to the Son as the Son is united to the Father, who is glorified together with the Father and the Son, who is acknowledged as God along with the Word, and who is active in what the Father accomplishes through the Son."

Πατρὶ ἢ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος σὺν ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι εἰς τοὺς σύμπαντας αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.<sup>110</sup>

The word *συνδοξαζόμενον* is from the verb *συνδοξάζω* which means, “glorify together with”<sup>111</sup> and it comes only in the passive in the New Testament, as it is mentioned in St. Paul’s letter to the Rom 8:17. He says, *εἰ δὲ τέκνα, καὶ κληρονόμοι· κληρονόμοι μὲν θεοῦ, συγκληρονόμοι δὲ Χριστοῦ, εἴπερ συμπάσχομεν ἵνα καὶ συνδοξασθῶμεν* (and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.)

The fifth characteristic is *τὸ λαλήσαν διὰ τῶν προφητῶν* (Who spoke by the prophets). It was important to elucidate the position of the Holy Spirit in the Trinity, as well as to put an end to the *Pneumatomachoi* by expanding the Nicene Creed to include the Holy Spirit. Also as Geanakoplos states, “the Synod of Constantinople succeeded in destroying the part of the Macedonians, conciliar acceptance of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed would be the most effective way to insure doctrinal unity on the Trinity.”<sup>112</sup> The council did not give the word *δμοούσιος* to the Holy Spirit. They used other expressions as mentioned above, which was adopted by the fathers concerning the Holy Spirit as divine and co-equal with the Father and the Son. Belitto writes, “Constantinople I put the Holy Spirit on the same level as God the Father and Son.”<sup>113</sup> Dvornik argued that after the council of Nicaea, the Arian group was becoming weak due to the embranchment of several sects, which made the party very weak.<sup>114</sup> The statement,

---

<sup>110</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, III.7.2.574. “And in the Trinity there is one divinity, and there is one faith, and one baptism, which is given in the Trinity, and one baptismal initiation into our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom and with whom be glory and might to the Father along with the Spirit for ever and ever.”

<sup>111</sup> Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon*, 365.

<sup>112</sup> Geanakoplos, “The Second Ecumenical,” 415.

<sup>113</sup> Belitto, *The General Councils*, 21.

<sup>114</sup> Dvornik, *The General Councils*, 17–21.

“who spoke by the prophets” was used during the third century. Cyril of Jerusalem used it in his catechetical lectures when he talked about the Holy Spirit, who spoke in the prophets. He said, “Who spoke in the law and in the prophets, in the Old and in the New Testament.”<sup>115</sup> Cyril mentioned again that the Holy Spirit spoke in the prophets. He stated, “He preached concerning Christ in the Prophets.”<sup>116</sup> Athanasius used it as evidence that the Holy Spirit spoke in the prophets. He stated, Διὸ καὶ, γινομένου τοῦ Λόγου ἐν τοῖς προφήταις, ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ Πνεύματι τῷ ἁγίῳ προφητεύουσι. Τῆς γοῦν Γραφῆς λεγοῦσης, Καὶ ἐγένετο Λόγος Κυρίου πρὸς τόνδε τὸν προφήτην, δείκνυται προφητέων ἐν τῷ Πνεύματι τῷ ἁγίῳ.<sup>117</sup> Athanasius mentioned it again in his second letter. He said, Ἀμέλει οὕτως ἐστὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα ἀδιαίρετον πρὸς τὸν Υἱὸν, ὡς μὴ ἀμφιβάλλειν ἐκ τοῦ λεγομένου. Ὅτε γὰρ ὁ Λόγος ἐγένετο πρὸς τὸν προφήτην, τὰ παρὰ τοῦ Λόγου ἐν τῷ Πνεύματι ἐλάλει ὁ προφήτης.<sup>118</sup> Athanasius articulated these proofs in order to demonstrate that the Holy Spirit spoke in the Prophets. This was not just mentioned by him, but also by Cyril before him.

<sup>115</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lecture on the Ten Points of Doctrine*, 4.16.

<sup>116</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lecture on the Article, and in One Holy Ghost*, 24.

<sup>117</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, I.31.5.527. “Hence it was when the Word came to the Prophets that they used to prophesy in the Holy Spirit Himself. So when Scripture says, ‘And the Word of the Lord came’ to such and such Prophet, it indicates that he prophesied in the Holy Spirit.”

<sup>118</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, II.14.2.558. “It is so certain that the Spirit cannot be divided from the Son that there is no need for us to have any doubts about what is now being said. When the Word came to the Prophet, the Prophet said what he said through the Word in the Spirit.”

### The Emergence of the Tropici

The group who denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit is addressed in these letters as Τροπικοί (Tropici).<sup>119</sup> The name is derived from τρόπος,<sup>120</sup> which literally means a specific way, method, path, manner, or approach to interpret verses in the Bible. It comes from the verb τρέπω, which means to turn.<sup>121</sup> The table below shows the number of times the word is mentioned in the Letters of Athanasius to Serapion:

τροπικοί	I.10.4; I.17.4
τροπικῶν	I.30.3; I.32.1
τροπικῶν	I.21.4
τρόπον	I.8.4; I.16.4
τρόπος	I.3.2
τρόπους	I.7.2; I.10.4
τρέπω	I.2.2; I.6.11

The word τρόπος is mentioned twelve times in the letters of Athanasius to Serapion.

According to Davis, “the Tropici were strong in Constantinople, Thrace, Bithynia.”<sup>122</sup>

Athanasius pointed out these Tropos in his letters saying, “you have invented your own modes of exegesis.”<sup>123</sup> Campbell defines them as “a group of ‘insufficiently converted’ Arians not directly connected with the Macedonians soon to come upon the ecclesiastical scene.”<sup>124</sup> It has to be mentioned here that the name Macedonians is derived from

Macedonius who had a relation with the Arians and supported him in Constantinople.

Ayres states, “during the late 370 and 380s they are termed Macedonians after

<sup>119</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, I.10.4.477; I.17.4.495. Shapland, *The Letters*, I.10.85; I.17.105; I.21.120; I.30.141; I.32.147. On the name and their beliefs, see Smythe, “The Interpretation of Amos 4:13 in St. Athanasius and Didymus.”

<sup>120</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, I.3.2.454.

<sup>121</sup> Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 1414–15; Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 385; Bauer, et al., *Greek-English Lexicon*, 835.

<sup>122</sup> Davis, *The First Seven*, 107.

<sup>123</sup> DeCogliano, et al., trans., *Works on the Spirit*, I.7.2.64; I.10.4.69.

<sup>124</sup> Campbell, “The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit,” 411.



Macedonius the bishop of Constantinople who was exiled in 360.”<sup>125</sup> Hanson also points out that Eusebius of Nicomedia ordained Macedonius as a bishop of Constantinople in 358.<sup>126</sup>

The Tropicists believed that the Spirit is a stranger to the Triad. Kelly describes their teaching when he states, “they say that the Spirit was other in substance ‘eterousion’ ἑτεροούσιον from the Father and the Son.”<sup>127</sup> The word ἑτεροούσιον means, of a different substance or essence, and it is the opposite of the word ὁμοούσιος, which means from the same substance.<sup>128</sup> We do not know if this designation was used in Serapion’s letter to Athanasius or not, nor do we know what term Serapion used in his letter, or how he described them. Shapland declares, “From the abrupt way in which Athanasius introduces it, it seems that he did not invent it, but that it was already in circulation when Serapion wrote to him.”<sup>129</sup> Athanasius said that, “they have doubts, even to the point of being well practiced in uttering such blasphemies.”<sup>130</sup> He describes them as, “they are in truth fighting against the Spirit.”<sup>131</sup> Athanasius also called them, Πνευματομαχοῦντες, Pneumatomachones.<sup>132</sup> from the verb πνευματομαχέω which means fight against the Spirit.<sup>133</sup> The name was mentioned twice in the letters to Serapion. They were conservatives,<sup>134</sup> not wanting to consider anything about the Holy Spirit, and saying that the Holy Spirit is a creature. “Because they cannot understand how the Holy Trinity is

<sup>125</sup> Ayres, *Nicaea*, 215

<sup>126</sup> Hanson, *The Search*, 760.

<sup>127</sup> Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 255.

<sup>128</sup> Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 553.

<sup>129</sup> Shapland, *The Letters*, 27.

<sup>130</sup> DeIcoglianò, et al., trans., *Works on the Spirit*, I.14.3.74.

<sup>131</sup> DeIcoglianò, et al., trans., *Works on the Spirit*, I.32.2.103.

<sup>132</sup> DeIcoglianò, et al., trans., *Works on the Spirit*, I.32.2.103; See also, Savvidis, *Athanasius Werke*, I.32.2.531; III.1.2.568. On Πνευματομαχοῦντες, see, Hanson, *The Search*; Haykin, *The Spirit of God*; Barclay, *The Holy Spirit*.

<sup>133</sup> Lampe, *Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 1106.

<sup>134</sup> Shapland, *The Letters*, 32.

indivisible, the Arians make the Son one with the created order, and the Tropicci, for themselves, classify the Spirit with the creatures.”<sup>135</sup> They say also that “the Spirit must be counted with the angels, and belong to their category, and be an angel greater than the others.”<sup>136</sup> This teaching or thought came from Valentinus,<sup>137</sup> to whose opinions they were referring. There is a similarity between the two groups, “for just as Arians by denying the Son also deny the Father, so to these people by disparaging the Holy Spirit also disparage the Son...so that, with some setting their minds against the Word and others against the Spirit, they may hold the same blasphemy against the holy Trinity.”<sup>138</sup>

The Tropicci held a doctrine of the “creaturehood of the Spirit, derived from their former connection with the Arians (or one of the branches of the homoiousians), while holding to the *ὁμοούσιον* of the Son. This might explain why Athanasius links the Tropicci with Arianism.”<sup>139</sup> The Tropicci believed that the Spirit is different in ousia. Kelly states, “they say that the Spirit was other in substance, *ἕτεροούσιον* from the Father and the Son.”<sup>140</sup>

As mentioned earlier, the name is connected with *τρόπος* and Athanasius refers to this *τρόπος* in his letters, “you have invented ‘*τρόπος*’ your own modes of exegesis.”<sup>141</sup> That means, you have invented your own way to interpret the verses from the Bible, and your own direction in your belief in the Holy Spirit. Athanasius mentioned the name

---

<sup>135</sup> DelCogliano, et al., trans., *Works on the Spirit*, 1.17.4.80.

<sup>136</sup> DelCogliano, et al., trans., *Works on the Spirit*, 1.10.7.69.

<sup>137</sup> Shapland, *The Letters*, 1.10.86. Note 11 notes: for this doctrine of the Spirit, see Hippolytus, *Ret.*, VI, 26, and Swete, H.S.A.C.55-6. Valentinus certainly associated both Christ and the Spirit with the hierarchy of aeons. He also affirmed the descent of the Spirit upon Jesus and Mary. But he place his main activity in the pleroma rather than on earth, and there is no evidence that he ever spoke of the angels accompanying the Spirit upon a mission thither.

<sup>138</sup> DelCogliano, et al., trans., *Works on the Spirit*, 1.1.3.53-4.

<sup>139</sup> Campbell, “The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit,” 411.

<sup>140</sup> Kelly, *Early Christians Doctrines*, 255.

<sup>141</sup> DelCogliano, et al., trans., *Works on the Spirit*, 1.7.2.64.

again, “but the Tropikoi, true to their name,”<sup>142</sup> they do not distinguish between spirits, “and claim that the Spirit said to be created is nothing other than the Holy Spirit.”<sup>143</sup> It seems that they denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit because the Bible does not clearly state that the Holy Spirit is God. According to Joseph Lébon, “their doctrine is ignorance, an unreasonable fiction, an aberration, a bad thought, an error, a real opposition to the orthodox faith, a blasphemy against the trinity equal to that of the Arians.”<sup>144</sup>

The following chapter provides a general biography of Athanasius and a summary of his writings. Most of his written work (dogmatic and apologetic) were to defend the faith against Arianism.

---

<sup>142</sup> DeIcogliano, et al., trans., *Works on the Spirit*, 1.10.4.69.

<sup>143</sup> DeIcogliano, et al., trans., *Works on the Spirit*, 1.7.2.64.

<sup>144</sup> Lébon, *Lettres à Sérapion*, 60.

## CHAPTER 4 ATHANASIUS: A SKETCH OF HIS LIFE AND HIS WRITINGS

The fourth century differed from the first three centuries in the life of the church due to two significant heresies. The first was the heresy of Arianism, which denied the full deity of the Son. This heresy led to the Council of Nicaea in 325 in which the church Fathers affirmed that the Son is of the same substance *ὁμοούσιος* with the Father. The second one was that of Pneumatomachi, who denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit. Athanasius stood firmly against this later heresy in three letters he wrote to his friend and episcopal colleague Serapion of Thmuis, in which he defended the divinity of the Holy Spirit. Both heresies ultimately would have destroyed the doctrine of the Trinity in the church.

### **His Life and Ministry**

At the time, Athanasius was “the most dynamic leader of Egyptian Christianity.”<sup>1</sup> He was an important leader in the life of the church in the fourth century. His opponents tried to diminish his status as an important figure at that time especially after the Council of Nicaea. His name always comes to mind when remembering the Arian controversy, because he played an important role in that conflict, as well as his fight against the second heresy, that the Pneumatomachi. Frances Young and Andrew Teal state, “Athanasius became a legendary figure, to some extent even in own lifetime, but especially in subsequent conflicts, throughout the fourth and the fifth century and beyond.”<sup>2</sup> This chapter will examine Athanasius’ career.

---

<sup>1</sup> Kannengiesser, “Athanasius,” 137-39.

<sup>2</sup> Young and Teal, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon*, 40.

According to Metzler, Athanasius was born between 295 and 300 in Lower Egypt (perhaps Alexandria).<sup>3</sup> Some scholars, like Alban Butler, have suggested that Athanasius' parents were Christian.<sup>4</sup> Others, such as Metzler,<sup>5</sup> have argued that Athanasius was born of a pagan family, a thought also shared by Anatolios that, "his parents were not Christians."<sup>6</sup> It seems that there is no exact record about his childhood. According to Socrates who quotes Rufinus, we have a story regarding the childhood of Athanasius. Apparently, he used to play a game with his friends who were of approximately of the same age as him. He was allocated to play the role of the bishop in this game, and the rest of his friends played the role of presbyter or deacons, which seems to indicate a Christian background.<sup>7</sup>

The city of Alexandria was an important multicultural center with Jews, pagans, and Christians at that time. Bush states, "We had seen how paganism, Judaism, and Christianity all grew up side by side in Alexandria."<sup>8</sup> Brown argues that it was in Alexandria that the seventy scholars gathered to translate the Hebrew Scripture, called the Septuagint, or LXX. This city was also the home of Philo, the very famous Jewish scholar and philosopher.<sup>9</sup> The city was populated with various schools of philosophy. Moreover, as Anatolios states, "Alexandria was the ecclesiastical center of Egypt."<sup>10</sup> It seems Athanasius studied in the city of Alexandria, where he received his theological education. As Barnes suggests, "Athanasius received a thorough grounding in the scriptures and in biblical exegesis, which formed the basis of his thought and writings

---

<sup>3</sup> Metzler, "Athanasius of Alexandria," 54–59.

<sup>4</sup> Butler, *Lives of the Saints*, 38.

<sup>5</sup> Metzler, "Athanasius of Alexandria," 54–59.

<sup>6</sup> Anatolios, *Athanasius*, 3.

<sup>7</sup> Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History*, 1.15.20.

<sup>8</sup> Bush, *St. Athanasius: His Life and Times*, 26.

<sup>9</sup> Brown, *Heresies*, 86.

<sup>10</sup> Anatolios, *Athanasius*, 2.

throughout his life.”<sup>11</sup> Athanasius was also a dedicated churchman. He was a deacon, and we saw his role in the council of Nicaea 325, although at the time he was still a secretary of bishop Alexander of Alexandria when he accompanied the bishop to the council.<sup>12</sup> Regarding his relationship with the bishop of Alexandria, Alexander, there is no exact record indicating when this relationship as a deacon and secretary started and how it began.

After the death of Alexander, in 328, Athanasius was appointed bishop of Alexandria, which involved the exercise of “authority over nearly one hundred bishops—all the churches throughout Egypt, the Pentapolis, and Libya being subject to his jurisdiction.”<sup>13</sup> Kannengiesser has noted that Athanasius “was under the jurally age when he was chosen to be a bishop of Alexandria, he was under thirty when he was elected in 328.”<sup>14</sup> Young and Teal also suggest that Athanasius “was still only in his thirties when he succeeded Alexander as bishop in 328.”<sup>15</sup> Certain accusations were made after his ordination. As Anatolios states, “there were accusations that he was under the canonical age of 30, that he was consecrated by a group of seven bishops who withdrew from a larger synod in order to ordain Athanasius secretly.”<sup>16</sup>

In his early years, Athanasius had a good relationship with the monks in the desert and was familiar with monastic life. He spent much time visiting monasteries in the desert of Egypt, staying with them in their settlements and building relations with them. In fact, Metzler suggests, “he [Athanasius] was perhaps the first to consecrate monks as

---

<sup>11</sup> Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius*, 11.

<sup>12</sup> Metzler, “Athanasius of Alexandria,” 54–59.

<sup>13</sup> Bush, *St. Athanasius: His Life and Times*, 25.

<sup>14</sup> Kannengiesser, “Athanasius,” 137–39.

<sup>15</sup> Young and Teal, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon*, 49.

<sup>16</sup> Anatolios, *Athanasius*, 4.

bishops.”<sup>17</sup> When the Fathers at the Council of Nicaea made the decision to anathematize Arius and his followers, a war started against Athanasius, especially when he succeeded Alexander as bishop of Alexandria. The Arians persecuted Athanasius almost for the rest of his life as bishop of Alexandria and he was exiled five times. Anatolios states, “he is a persecuted shepherd of an embattled flock who is not only at pains to provide his people with cogent and persuasive reasons for denying Arian doctrine, but who is also quite desperate to coach them in the appropriate affective repugnance which they ought to feel toward such blasphemy.”<sup>18</sup> However, his dogmatic position eventually triumphed and his writings against both the Arians and the Pneumatomachi. Through their influence on the dogmatic decision at the Council of Constantinople, they decisively shaped the future of the church and its teaching in the most important doctrines: the doctrine of the Son and the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

### **His Written Works**

Metzler states that Athanasius’ work can mainly be divided into two categories, “dogmatic and apologetic writings.”<sup>19</sup> Most of his works were written in response to theological controversies. As Quasten mentions, “Most of his writings, it is true, are intimately connected with his fight for the defense of the faith of Nicaea.”<sup>20</sup> His writings were against Arius and his followers who denied the divinity of the Son and against the Tropici who denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit. Metzler further suggests, “Almost all

---

<sup>17</sup> Metzler, “Athanasius of Alexandria,” 54–59.

<sup>18</sup> Anatolios, *Athanasius*, 36.

<sup>19</sup> Metzler, “Athanasius of Alexandria,” 54–59. For more information about his writings, see also Kannengoesser, “Athanasius,” 137–39.

<sup>20</sup> Quasten, *Patrology*, 3:22.

the works have the characters of occasional writings.”<sup>21</sup> Similarly, Schaff and Wace state, “Athanasius was not an author by choice.”<sup>22</sup> They classified the writings of Athanasius as extremely important due to the role he played in these controversies.

In his work *On the Incarnation*, which according to Schaff and Wace consists of fifty-seven sections, Athanasius argued that it was due to the goodness of God that Jesus became incarnate in order to save human beings. According to Metzler, Athanasius presented, “the history of salvation, at the center of which he places the incarnation.”<sup>23</sup> Athanasius also spoke of the way death had sway over all humanity and that God’s Word became flesh in order to save humanity and to restore the image of God. “For God would not be true if, after saying that we would die, the human being did not die. On the other hand, it was improper that what had once been made rational and partakers of his Word should perish, and once again return to non-being through corruption. It was not worthy the goodness of God that those created by him should be corrupted through the deceit wrought by the devil upon human beings.”<sup>24</sup> Athanasius also spoke about Jesus’ death and the impact this should have on believers, “For by nature human beings are afraid of death and of the dissolution of the body. But this is most amazing, that one who has put on the faith of the cross scorns even things according to nature, and is not afraid of death because of Christ.”<sup>25</sup>

*Against the Heathen* is another work of Athanasius in which he argued that God is known through his works. This work is “a refutation of pagan mythologies, worship and

---

<sup>21</sup> Metzler, “Athanasius of Alexandria,” 54–59.

<sup>22</sup> Schaff and Wace, eds., *NPNF: Athanasius*, vol.4:64.

<sup>23</sup> Metzler, “Athanasius of Alexandria,” 54–59.

<sup>24</sup> Lewis, *On the Incarnation*, §6. 3–5.55.

<sup>25</sup> Lewis, *On the Incarnation*, §28. 2.78.



beliefs.”<sup>26</sup> He spoke about the relationship of the nature of the body and soul, sin and evil and the conflict between soul and body when Paul speaks of his own conflict (Romans 7). Referring to the possibility of good and evil in God, Athanasius wrote “for it is impossible for them to exist together, their nature being unmixed and unlike.”<sup>27</sup> In this work and according to Metzler, Athanasius, “comes out against the errors of the pagans. Idolatry and polytheism are extensively refuted and condemned; the responsibility for our personal salvation rests on our human activity, in which we must strive for the perfection of our own souls.”<sup>28</sup>

*The Life of Antony* is another key work. The fourth century was marked by the growth of the monastic movement when faithful men and women attempted to live out the Gospel message by separating themselves from the society around them. In Egypt, they went to the desert to battle alone with the devil in tombs, cells, and remote places. Most of what we know about the life of Antony comes from this work written by Athanasius. There is another mention about Antony in Athanasius’ writings, in the *Arian History*.<sup>29</sup> One of the purposes of this work is mentioned in the prologue, where Athanasius gives an account of Antony’s life and asks monks to imitate him and the way he spent his life, “Now since you asked me to give an account of the blessed Antony’s way of life, and are wishful to learn how he began the discipline, who and what manner of man he was previous to this, how he closed his life, and whether the things told of him are true, that you also may bring yourselves to imitate him.”<sup>30</sup> Another purpose was focused against the Arians who denied the divinity of the Son. He states, “In the same

---

<sup>26</sup> Quasten, *Patrology*, 3, 24.

<sup>27</sup> Athanasius, *Against the Heathen*, 7.

<sup>28</sup> Metzler, “Athanasius of Alexandria,” 54–59

<sup>29</sup> Athanasius, *Arian History*, 14.

<sup>30</sup> Athanasius, *Life of Antony*, prologue.

manner also he loathed the heresy of Arians, and exhorted all neither to approach them nor to hold their erroneous belief.”<sup>31</sup> The *Life of Antony* is also an apologetic document useful for monks to read to the pagans, as we read in the last chapter, where he said, “Read these words, therefore, to the rest of the brethren that they may learn what the life of monks ought to be; and if need be, read this among the heathen.”<sup>32</sup> A further purpose of the *Life of Antony* was to do with “spiritual authority.” This spiritual authority the *Life of Antony*, especially in paragraphs 16 to 43, when Antony gave a sermon to many monks who had gathered to hear words from him. He spoke to them about the importance of the scriptures. “The Scriptures are enough for instruction, but it is a good thing to encourage one another in the faith.”<sup>33</sup> Since life cannot be separate from doctrine, he also gave them encouragement and how to stand firm in their faith and told them that discipline and sacrifice will win a heavenly reward.

*Orations Against the Arians* is another work written by Athanasius, in which he utilized the Gospel of John and explains the relation between the Son and the Father. According to Young and Teal, these orations, “constitute Athanasius’ most important dogmatic work, became the Anti-Arian classic, and the argumentation development here was later followed very closely by others.”<sup>34</sup> In *Against the Arians* 1, according to Ayres, Athanasius offered, “a refutation of the basic principles of Arians’ theology.”<sup>35</sup> In this oration, Athanasius warned against Arianism, the heresy against the Son. Christians are called after their teacher Christ. Arians are called after their teacher Arius; this is why we cannot call them Christian. According to Quasten who declares that the first oration

---

<sup>31</sup> Athanasius, *Life of Antony*, 68.

<sup>32</sup> Athanasius, *Life of Antony*, 94.

<sup>33</sup> Athanasius, *Life of Antony*, 16.

<sup>34</sup> Young and Teal, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon*, 61.

<sup>35</sup> Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 110.

summarizes, “The Arian doctrine as contained in Arius’ *Thalia*, and defends the definition of the Council of Nicaea that the Son is eternal, uncreated and unchangeable and that there is a unity of Divine Essence between the Father and the Son.”<sup>36</sup> One can summarize this oration by saying that Athanasius explained the teaching of Arius who said that, “God was not always a Father, the Son was not always.”<sup>37</sup> In chapter IV of this oration, Athanasius argued once more against their teaching on the Son. They say that there was a time when the Son was not. For Athanasius, Christ is eternal and co-existent with the Father. He is not one of the powers but the power of God and the wisdom of God.<sup>38</sup> Athanasius defended the belief in Jesus’ eternality by explaining the term, “I AM,” to argue that Jesus was before Abraham and before time. In *Oration Against the Arians II*, Athanasius in Ch. XIV–XXII discussed Heb 3:2 against an Arian appeal to the verse. Also he discussed Acts 2:36, and Prov 8:22. For instance, when Athanasius compared Aaron to Jesus he says:

Aaron has this day become high priest; he had not implied that he then had been born man, for man he was even before he became a high priest, but he had been made high priest in his ministry, on putting on the garments made and prepared for the high –priesthood; in the same way it is possible in the Lord’s instance also understand aright, that he did not become other than Himself on taking the flesh, but, being the same as before, He was robed in it.<sup>39</sup>

In *Oration Against the Arians III*, he explained John 14:10. The Arian, Asterius, held that the son has what he has, not from himself but from the Father. Athanasius argued that this argument designates that the Father receives power from a creature, the Son. The Son is not related to the Father by participation but by essence.<sup>40</sup> Athanasius continued

---

<sup>36</sup> Quasten, *Patrology*, 3, 26.

<sup>37</sup> Athanasius, *Against the Arians*, 1.5.

<sup>38</sup> Athanasius, *Against the Arians*, 1.11.

<sup>39</sup> Athanasius, *Against the Arians*, 2.8.

<sup>40</sup> Athanasius, *Against the Arians*, 3.1.

defending his doctrine of the Son focusing on the Gospel of John in his defense.<sup>41</sup>

*Oration Against the Arians IV* is a continuation of the previous three orations. Athanasius did not deal with the Arians as he dealt more with the Sabellians, the school of Marcellus of Ancyra.<sup>42</sup> The Arians wanted to say that God has Wisdom and Word in himself, and Christ is other than that Wisdom and Word. In responding to this Athanasius mentioned that Christ says that He and the Father are one.<sup>43</sup>

*Defence of the Nicene Council* is another work written by Athanasius in which he defended the expression homoousios against the Arians. According to Schaff and Wace, this work, “was written during his third exile about the end of 359 and intended as a formal offer of peace to the Homoeusian party.”<sup>44</sup> The reason Athanasius gave for writing this treatise is that he had been asked by interrogators to know the transactions of the Council.<sup>45</sup> The Arians continued to complain of how the fathers of Nicaea used an expression that is not in the scriptures. Athanasius continued to defend the Nicene terminology of the divinity of the Son against Eusebius of Nicomedia and the other Arians. Their argument was that the Son is a creature and there was a time when he was not, therefore he cannot be called the Word of God by nature.

*Apology to the Emperor* is another work written by Athanasius for which he had been criticized and had four charges leveled against him. The first charge was that he had incited Constans against Constantius. The second charge was that he was in agreement and communication with the usurper Magnentius, a Gallic general who had killed Constans. The third was that Athanasius used a church during the Easter celebration, and

---

<sup>41</sup> Athanasius, *Against the Arians*, 3.10.

<sup>42</sup> Athanasius, *Against the Arians*, 4.

<sup>43</sup> Athanasius, *Against the Arians*, 4.3.

<sup>44</sup> Schaff and Wace, eds., *NPNF: Athanasius*, 4:57.

<sup>45</sup> Athanasius, *Defence of the Nicene Council*, 2.2.

the church was undedicated. The last charge was Athanasius did not obey the imperial order to leave the church. All these charges came from his enemies who tried their hardest to drive Athanasius from the church.

The *Letters to Serapion* are extremely important.<sup>46</sup> He wrote them to Serapion, bishop of Thmuis,<sup>47</sup> who had sought Athanasius's help to deal with a group denying the divinity of the Holy Spirit. According to Schaff and Wace, these letters were written in his third exile and count as dogmatic letters. They state, "The four dogmatic letters to Serapion, the second of which reproduces the substance of his position against the Arians, while the other three are devoted to a question overlooked in the earlier stages of the controversy, the Coessentiality of the Holy Spirit."<sup>48</sup> This group, named the Tropici, maintained that the Holy Spirit is a creature or an angel, the heresy that led ultimately to the Council of Constantinople (381). The council declared the divinity of the Holy Spirit and that He proceeds from the Father, which led to the development of the third article of the Nicene Creed. In these letters, Athanasius not only defended the divinity of the Holy Spirit within the Trinity but also the divinity of the Son.

Of *The Festal Letters of Athanasius*, according to Metzler, only thirteen letters have been preserved in their entirety in a Syriac translation.<sup>49</sup> In general, these letters deal with the feast celebrating the crucified Jesus, as the new Passover, where Athanasius compared the old and the new Passover. Athanasius, again attacked the Arians, states, "because of his coming down, which was on behalf of man, they have denied His

---

<sup>46</sup> Most scholars believe that Athanasius wrote three letters because the letter II and III were a single letter. For more information regarding this matter, see, Haykin, *The Spirit of God*, 59; Hanson, *The Search*, note 50, 748; Lébon, *Letters à Sérapion*, 31; Argarate, "The Holy Spirit," 24.

<sup>47</sup> Heron, *The Holy Spirit*, 77.

<sup>48</sup> Athanasius, *The Letters to Serapion*, ivii.

<sup>49</sup> Metzler, "Athanasius of Alexandria," 54–59.

essential Godhead; and seeing that He came forth from the Virgin, they doubt His being truly the Son of God, and considering Him as become incarnate in time, they deny His eternity.”<sup>50</sup>

The *Personal Letters of Athanasius* contains many letters sent by Athanasius to the emperors, to local churches, clergy, and people. These letters were written to encourage recipients to stand firm in their faith and to face heretics without fear in order to be true witnesses to the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>51</sup> These letters include a letter to the church of Mareotis located south of Alexandria, a letter to the church of Alexandria, a letter to Amun, a Nitrian monk in the desert of Egypt, the fourth is the letter to Dracontius bishop of Hermupolis, the fifth are the two letters to Lucifer, bishop of Cagliari in Sardinia, the sixth are the two letters to various Monks, the seventh are letters to Serapion, bishop of Thumis in the Nile Delta, the eighth is the letter to Rufinianus, the ninth is the letter to emperor Jovian, the tenth is the letter to Orsisius, the eleventh is the letter to Epictetus, bishop of Corinth, the twelfth is the *Letter to Adelphius*, bishop of Onuphis, the thirteenth is the letter to Maximus the Cynic Philosopher, the fourteenth is the letter to John and Antiochus, the fifteenth is the letter to Presbyter Palladius, and the sixteenth is the letter to Diodorus of Tyre.

In *Defence of his Flight*, Athanasius defended his flight from his see. David Gwynn suggested that the *Defence of his Flight* was written not to convince his detractors, but to assure his supporters.<sup>52</sup> They had charged him with cowardice for escaping, and the reason behind this charge was to eliminate him because he did not

---

<sup>50</sup> Athanasius, *On the Festal Letters*, 10.9.

<sup>51</sup> Athanasius, *The Personal Letters*, 554–81.

<sup>52</sup> Gwynn, *The Eusebians*, 40.

support their heretical teaching.<sup>53</sup> Athanasius stated, “For if it be a bad thing to flee, it is much worse to persecute. If then they reproach me with my flight, let them be more ashamed of their own persecution.”<sup>54</sup> Athanasius continued by citing an example of people fleeing in the Bible, like St. Paul did when he was in Damascus.

From what is mentioned in this chapter, one can understand that Athanasius of Alexandria was one of the most important fathers in the history of the church. He is the one who formulated the doctrine of the Son as co-eternal with the Father and also the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, as fully God. The major works of Athanasius were focused on the identity of Jesus Christ (Christology) and his relationship with the Father. In his writings, Athanasius’ contribution to the Trinitarian doctrine was significant, especially in his conflict with Arius and his followers. Athanasius’ theological contribution to the church was great and important. Most of his work was written in response to the theological controversies raised by Arianism, and against those who denied the deity of the Holy Spirit.

The next chapter deals with the three letters written by Athanasius to Serapion during his third exile. The chapter will examine critical issues related to the texts, such as why three letters not four?

---

<sup>53</sup> Athanasius, *Defence of his Flight*, 1.

<sup>54</sup> Athanasius, *Defence of his Flight*, 8.

CHAPTER 5  
 ATHANASIUS' RESPONSE: THE *LETTERS TO SERAPION* AND JOHANNINE  
 WRITINGS. ISSUES RELATED TO ORIGINAL TEXT

Serapion, bishop of Thmuis, sought Athanasius' help in order to deal with a group who denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit.<sup>1</sup> According to Schaff and Wace, Serapion, "reported to Athanasius the growth of the doctrine that, while the Son was coessential with the Father, the Spirit was merely a creature superior to Angels."<sup>2</sup> Athanasius accepted Serapion's request and eventually wrote three letters to him. Athanasius wrote these letters originally in Greek.<sup>3</sup> The letters can be counted as the first important documents regarding the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.<sup>4</sup> Shapland states, "It is strange and sad that these letters of Athanasius on the Holy Spirit have had to wait so long for translation into English. They are indeed only the first and most important of a whole series of Patristic writings on the same subject."<sup>5</sup> Some of the church Fathers, such as those mentioned in chapter 1, reflected on the Holy Spirit, but *The Letters to Serapion* are entirely concerned with the doctrine of the Holy Spirit and against those who counted the Spirit as a creature or an angel.

Most scholars and historians support the originality of these letters. Lébon, in his explanation of the authenticity of the letters, gives us witnesses who testify that Athanasius wrote these letters and never mentioned any other name than Athanasius as the author of these letters. He states that as well as the Syriac and Armenian, the Greek manuscripts provide an early testimony, which goes back to the early eighth century. He

---

<sup>1</sup> Heron, *The Holy Spirit*, 77.

<sup>2</sup> Schaff and Wace, eds., *NPNF: Athanasius*, 4:43.

<sup>3</sup> Egan, *The Armenian Version*, vii. The Letters located in Migne's *Patrologia Graeca* 26:529–676.

<sup>4</sup> I will be using the Greek Text of the Letters to Serapion in *Athanasius Werke*: I/1: 383–600.

<sup>5</sup> Shapland, *The Letters*, 9.



suggests that the literary tradition is even older than can be found in direct quotation drawn from these letters and he gives examples such as the council of Lateran in 649 (canon 1), Anastasius of Antioch, and the patriarch Severius in Antioch also.<sup>6</sup>

The *Letters to Serapion* give us the evidence of the great struggles of the church in facing two big heresies in the fourth century regarding the doctrine of the Holy Trinity; the Arians, which were condemned in Council of Nicaea, and the heresy of the Tropici, which was condemned in the Council of Constantinople. As Egan has noted, “Athanasius was the great defender of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, and though he was mainly concerned with defending the full divinity of Christ, it is not surprising that in later years the question of the divinity of the Holy Spirit became a subject of discussion for him.”<sup>7</sup> These letters were the only documents written by Athanasius concerning the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. As Shapland states, “we cannot be certain that Athanasius never wrote anything further on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>8</sup>

These letters were addressed Πρὸς Σεραπίωνα Επίσκοπον (to the bishop Serapion) who was a close friend with Athanasius, especially during the time of Athanasius’ exile.<sup>9</sup> That friendship can be seen in the statement such as, “Even if the persecution leveled against us is somewhat bitter and the pursuit by those looking to kill us in intense, nonetheless the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation has used your letter to comfort us . . . It seemed to me that you and they were present with me at that time.”<sup>10</sup> This friendship between Athanasius and Serapion can be seen also in many other events. First of all, in one of Athanasius’ personal letters, was sent to Dracontium around 354 or

<sup>6</sup> Lébon, *Lettres à Sérapion*, 29–30.

<sup>7</sup> Egan, *The Armenian Version*, viii.

<sup>8</sup> Shapland, *The Letters*, 14.

<sup>9</sup> Savvidis, *Athanasius Werke*, 449.

<sup>10</sup> DelCogliano, et al., trans., *Works on the Spirit*, 1.1.1.53.

355, the name Serapion is mentioned as a monk and responsible over a number of monks.<sup>11</sup> Second, one of Athanasius' festal letters was sent to Serapion in 340. The date and the style of this twelfth festal letter explains the depth of the relationship between them. Athanasius addressed this letter saying, "To Beloved Brother, and our fellow Minister Serapion." The phrase "beloved brother" is repeated a couple of times in the letter.<sup>12</sup> Third, in the *Life of Antony*, which was written between 356 and 362, the names of Athanasius and Serapion are mentioned when Antony handed down two sheepskins, one to Athanasius and one to Serapion.<sup>13</sup> All of these texts demonstrate a strong friendship between Athanasius and Serapion.

#### **Issues Related to the Original Text**

Most scholars believe that Athanasius wrote three letters to his associate Serapion concerning the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Letters II and III were a single letter, but tradition always refers to four letters instead of three. Heron suggests three letters instead of four as he states, "He (Athanasius) wrote three letters (in the subsequent MS tradition, the second letter was incorrectly divided into two, so that what is now referred to as *Ad Serap. III* is, in fact, the second part of the second letter, while *Ad Serap. IV* is really the third."<sup>14</sup> Haykin also suggests that the *Letters to Serapion* are three, not four. He states, "These four letters are indeed only three, since the second and the third are only one."<sup>15</sup> Hanson declares, "The letters 2 and 3 are from a single letter . . . Letter 3 is in fact little

---

<sup>11</sup> Athanasius, *Letter to Dracontius*, 7.

<sup>12</sup> Athanasius, *Festal Letter*, xii.

<sup>13</sup> Athanasius, *Life of Antony*, 91.

<sup>14</sup> Heron, *The Holy Spirit*, 77.

<sup>15</sup> Haykin, *The Spirit of God*, 59

more than an abridgment of letter 1.”<sup>16</sup> Shapland also mentions this in his introduction when he states, “In the Benedictine edition of Montfaucon, the correspondence of Athanasius with Serapion concerning the Holy Spirit is arranged in four letters. There is every reason to believe that this is not the original form of the material.”<sup>17</sup>

The second problem with these letters according to Lébon is regarding letter IV that in the Benedictine 1698 edition of Paris, “consists of two parts, the first from 1–7 and the second from 8–23 which addresses an exegetical discussion regarding the passage from the New Testament.”<sup>18</sup> Regarding these two parts, Lébon put them together without separation.<sup>19</sup> Most scholars argue letter four as being only seven sections. Hanson notes, “Letters 2 and 3 are from a single letter, and 4.8–23, though probably by Athanasius, is quite a separate fragment not integrally connected with the letters.”<sup>20</sup> In his book *The Spirit of God*, Haykin examines the exegesis of 1 and 2 Corinthians in the Pneumatomachian controversy. He quotes Stülcken and says that he believes that, “on the basis of manuscript tradition, that the third reply to Serapion (that is, the fourth letter) originally comprised only section 1–7. Section 8–23, an exposition of Matt 12:32, are to be regarded, in Stülcken’s view, as a separate work.”<sup>21</sup> Pablo Argárate, in a 2011 article discussing the three letters of Athanasius quotes Cattaneo saying, “The last part of the epistle IV (8–23) forms a separate exegetical treatise on the blasphemy against the

<sup>16</sup> Hanson, *The Search*, note 50.748-49,

<sup>17</sup> Shapland, *The Letters*, 11; See also Joseph Lébon who mentions in his book *Lettres à Sérapion* that the manuscript tradition also refers to four letters of Athanasius to Serapion on the divinity of the Holy Spirit, but this will create two problems. The first problem is regarding the legality of the letters II and III, he states, “Montfaucon was the first to elevate himself against the separation of the two parts and pretend that they were originally one and the same letter.” 31; Also in *The Armenian Version*, George Egan who discusses the connection between the two letters, he states, “the arguments given for this are both internal and textual, but neither is conclusive at this point. Though the connection is probable, since the question is not crucial at this point. x; See also Argárate, “The Holy Spirit in Athanasius.” 24.

<sup>18</sup> Lébon, *Lettres à Sérapion*, 32.

<sup>19</sup> Lébon, *Lettres à Sérapion*, 32–39.

<sup>20</sup> Hanson, *The Search*, 748.

<sup>21</sup> Haykin, *The Spirit of God*, 60.

Spirit.”<sup>22</sup> Anatolios, in his book *Athanasius*, discusses the letters to Serapion and he states, “The latter part of the fourth letter (4:8–23), a short commentary on Matthew 12:32, appears to be a distinct composition.”<sup>23</sup> Shapland also supports the separation of 8–23, as he states: “the fourth letter, as Montfaucon gives it, clearly falls into two parts: 1–7, which is the final letter of this correspondence, and 8–23, which is an exposition of Matt 12:32 and has no connection with it at all.”<sup>24</sup> According to Savvidis, Letter IV.1–7 and 8–23 in the same letter are two independent works.<sup>25</sup> Thus, regarding the division of the letters, we will look at three letters in our study: Letter I which contains thirty three sections; Letter II which contains sixteen sections; and Letter III which contains seven sections, as it has appeared in the recent translation of the letters in *Works on the Spirit* (2011) by Mark DelCogliano, Andrew Radde-Gallwitz, and Lewis Ayres.

The *Letters to Serapion* were written under very difficult circumstances, when Athanasius was in the desert. Most scholars agree that these letters were written during Athanasius’ third exile. Anatolios, states that these letters, “were penned during Athanasius’ third exile (356–362), which he spent in the refuge of monastic communities in the desert of Egypt.”<sup>26</sup> Haykin also suggests that these letters were written while Athanasius was in his third exile. He states, “They were written by Athanasius from a desert refuge during his third exile. The traditional date for the letters is 358–359.”<sup>27</sup> In the introduction of the *Armenian Version of the Letters of Athanasius to Bishop Serapion Concerning the Holy Spirit*, George Egan suggests the same date given by Haykin to the

---

<sup>22</sup> Argarate, “The Holy Spirit,” 23.

<sup>23</sup> Anatolios, *Athanasius*, 212.

<sup>24</sup> Shapland, *The Letters*, 11.

<sup>25</sup> Savvidis, *Athanasius Werke*, 385.

<sup>26</sup> Anatolios, *Athanasius*, 212.

<sup>27</sup> Haykin, *The Spirit of God*, 59.

letters. He states, “These four letters were written probably about the year of 358 or 359 A. D.”<sup>28</sup> Athanasius himself, in his first letter mentioned that he was in the desert when he received Sarapion’s letter. He stated, “The letter of your sacred kindness has reached me in the desert (ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ).”<sup>29</sup> Athanasius mentioned again that he was hiding in the desert when he received Serapion’s request. He stated, “So then, even though I am living in the desert (ἐν ἐρήμῳ) nonetheless, because of the brazenness of those who have turned away from the truth.”<sup>30</sup> He was living under a very difficult situation hiding in the desert within a monastic community. He himself admitted that this situation was difficult, stating, “I wrote this letter, brief as it is, though I am scarcely capable of such a thing. But take this letter, as an opportunity to add what still needs to be said, as seems best to your understanding. And so, thus will the refutation of this impious heresy become complete.”<sup>31</sup>

An edition of these letters that were published in Latin was in two folios. The Heidelberg (1600–1601) by Jerome Commelin was printed several times during the seventeenth century, and according to Felckmann, this edition used five manuscripts.<sup>32</sup> A second edition is the Benedictine in Paris 1698, in three folios by B. de Montfaucon. This edition was reprinted in four volumes published in Padua in 1977. It was this text that was later was reprinted in XXV–XXVIII in volume XXVI of J. P. Migne’s *Patrologia Graeca* (Paris, 1857).<sup>33</sup> It is the Greek text in the *Athanasius Werke* edition that will be used in this dissertation. This edition was published in 2010 and edited by Kyriakos

---

<sup>28</sup> Egan, *The Armenian Version*, viii.

<sup>29</sup> DelCogliano, et al., trans., *Works on the Spirit*, 1.1.153.

<sup>30</sup> DelCogliano, et al., trans., *Works on the Spirit*, 1.33.1.103.

<sup>31</sup> DelCogliano, et al., trans., *Works on the Spirit*, 1.1.4.54.

<sup>32</sup> Lébon, *Lettres à Sérapion*, 18.

<sup>33</sup> Lébon, *Lettres à Sérapion*, 19. For more information see Shapland, *The Letters*, 11.

Savvidis and is the most recent text.

It needs to be noted that the sections numbered in Shapland's translation are totally different than the numbering of the sections in the *Athanasius Werke*. The numbering in Shapland consists of numbered sections, however, the numbered sections in *Athanasius Werke* consists of sections and these sections are subdivided into subsections. This new system of numbering in *Athanasius Werke* is also found in the new translation by Mark DeIcogliano, Andrew Radde-Gallwitz, and Lewis Ayres. For example, 1.4 in the Shapland English translation means section four of the first letter. In *Athanasius Werke* 1.4.3 is different than above. This new numbering means the third subsection of section four of the first letter.

### **The First Letter**

The *First Letter* is the longest and is divided into thirty-three sections. It is mentioned also in the Armenian version.<sup>34</sup> It is a very important letter due to the defense that Athanasius used in order to demonstrate the relation in the Trinity, and his explanation of the two passages on which his opponents rely. Schaff and Wace state that this letter is a "long dogmatic letter, upon receiving which Serapion was begged to induce the author to abridge it for the benefit of the simple."<sup>35</sup> This letter includes the essential argument about the divinity of the Holy Spirit. Athanasius provides a comparison between the Holy Spirit and creatures in order to identify whether the Holy Spirit is divine or should be counted among creatures.

---

<sup>34</sup> Egan, *The Armenian Version*, viii.

<sup>35</sup> Schaff and Wace, eds., *NPNF: Athanasius*, 4:63.

From the beginning of this letter Athanasius made the connection between the two heresies; the Arians and the Tropici. He stated, οὕτω καὶ οὗτοι, δυσφημοῦντες εἰς τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, δυσφημοῦσι καὶ εἰς τὸν Υἱόν. Καὶ ἀμφότερα τὰ μέρη διείλοντο τὴν πρὸς τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἀντίστασιν . . . τὴν αὐτὴν ἔχουσιν εἰς τὴν ἁγίαν Τριάδα βλασφημίαν.<sup>36</sup> Also, he mentioned again the connection between the two groups. He stated, Τῶν μὲν οὖν Ἀρειανῶν οὐκ ἀλλότριον καὶ τοῦτο ἐνθύμημα Ἄπαξ γὰρ ἀρνούμενοι τὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγον, εἰκότως τὰ αὐτὰ καὶ κατὰ τοῦ Πνεύματος αὐτοῦ δυσφημοῦσι.<sup>37</sup>

This kind of teaching can damage the relationship between the three persons of the Trinity. By counting the Holy Spirit among creatures, the holy Triad is no longer one anymore. As Haykin states, “The belief that the Spirit is a creature not only blasphemes the Son, but also destroys the Christian concept of God, for it makes the Trinity consist of Creator and creature.”<sup>38</sup> Athanasius refuted this irrational thinking and the behavior of this group who deny the divinity of the Holy Spirit while maintaining the divinity of the Son and his relation with the Father. From the beginning of this letter, Athanasius rejected their teaching against the Holy Spirit and how this kind of teaching can damage the doctrine of the holy Trinity. He stated, Τοῦτο δὲ πάλιν οὐκέτι ἔν εἶναι δείκνυσι τὴν

---

<sup>36</sup> Savvidis, *Athanasius Werke*, I.1.3.451. “So too these people by disparaging the Holy Spirit also disparage the Son. And these two groups divide between themselves the opposition to the truth . . . they might hold the same blasphemy against the Holy Trinity.” DelCogliano, et al., trans., *Works on the Spirit*, 1.1.354. Unless noted other wise, all English translations of Athanasius’ Greek are from DelCogliano, et al., trans., *Works on the Spirit*.

<sup>37</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, 1.2.1.452. “This kind of thinking is not foreign to the Arians. For having once denied the Word of God, it is natural for them also to disparage his Spirit in the same way.”

<sup>38</sup> Haykin, “The Spirit of God,” 520–521.

Τριάδα, ἀλλὰ ἐκ δύο καὶ διαφόρων φύσεων συγκειμένην αὐτήν, διὰ τὸ ἑτεροούσιον τοῦ Πνεύματος, ὡς αὐτοὶ ἑαυτοῖς ἀνεπλάσαντο.<sup>39</sup>

In the *First Letter*, after the introduction, which concludes in I.3, Athanasius dealt with his opponents from 3–20. The rest of the letter is Athanasius' own argument regarding the relationship between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In the introduction Athanasius explained his relation with Serapion by mentioning the persecution which both faced. Καὶ εἰ καὶ πικρὸς τις ἦν ὁ καθ' ἡμῶν διωγμὸς ἐπικείμενος, καὶ πολλὴ ἔρευνα τῶν ζητούντων ἡμᾶς ἀνελεῖν.<sup>40</sup>

From the beginning of this letter, Athanasius believed that the new Arians were embedded in evil and they became implements in the hands of the devil. He states, Ταῦτ' οὖν συνορῶν καὶ πολλὰ λογιζόμενος, ἐν ἀθυμίᾳ γέγονα, ὅτι πάλιν εὔρε παίζειν ὁ διάβολος ἐν τοῖς ὑποκρινομένοις τὴν μανίαν αὐτοῦ.<sup>41</sup> But even more than that, Athanasius accused that their teaching is nothing more than false insolence, ἀλλοδοξίας καὶ σατανικῆς προπετείας.<sup>42</sup> God is Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. There will be no Trinity but rather a dyad if we believe or mix something strange to the substance of the Trinity. οὕτως, διαιροῦντες ἀπὸ τοῦ Λόγου τὸ Πνεῦμα, οὐκέτι μίαν τὴν ἐν Τριάδι θεότητα σώζουσι, σχίζοντες αὐτήν καὶ ἐπιμίσγοντες αὐτῇ ἀλλοτρίαν καὶ ἑτεροειδῆ φύσιν, καὶ τοῖς κτίσμασι

<sup>39</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, I.2.4.453. "This in turn renders the Trinity no longer one but compounded of two distinct natures, because the Spirit, as they imagine among themselves, is different in substance."

<sup>40</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, I.1.1.460. "Even if the persecution leveled against us is somewhat bitter and the pursuit by those looking to kill us is intense."

<sup>41</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, I.1.4.451. "So then, observing these matters and giving them careful consideration, I came to lose heat because once again the devil has found players to stage his mind."

<sup>42</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, I.1.451. "Heterodoxy and diabolical presumption."



συνεξισοῦντες αὐτήν.<sup>43</sup>

Athanasius' response to Serapion in this letter can be divided into two consecutive parts. The first one is from sections 3–20 are devoted to the refutation of the teachings and the arguments on which his opponents rely. This first part is important because, first, it includes the main argument of Athanasius against his opponents and the two passages they rely on, second, his examination of the scriptures, and third his discussion on the relationship within the Triad.

In these sections, Athanasius mentioned the two passages from the Bible on which they rely. The first is Amos 4:13 and the second is 1 Tim 5:21. Regarding the passage from Amos 4:13, διότι ἐγὼ στερεῶν βροντὴν, καὶ κτίζων πνεῦμα, καὶ ἀπαγγέλλων εἰς ἀνθρώπους τὸν Χριστὸν αὐτοῦ· ποιῶν ὄρθρον καὶ ὀμίχλην, καὶ ἐπιβαίνων ἐπὶ τὰ ὑψηλὰ τῆς γῆς, Κύριος ὁ Θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ.<sup>44</sup> The discussion regarding the passage from Amos starts in 1.3.1–1.10.3. In these sections, Athanasius explains that since the word spirit here does not have a definite article, means that the prophet does not mean the Holy Spirit. There is a great difference in the use of the word spirit in the Bible as Athanasius said.<sup>45</sup>

The second passage is from 1 Tim 5:21 Διαμαρτύρομαι ἐνώπιον τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ τῶν ἐκλεκτῶν ἀγγέλων, ἵνα ταῦτα φυλάξης χωρὶς προκρίματος, μηδὲν

<sup>43</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, 1.2.3.453. "By dividing of the Spirit from the Word they no longer preserve the divinity in the Trinity as one, but rupture it, and mix with it a nature that is foreign to it and different in kind, and reduce it to the level of creatures."

<sup>44</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, 1.3.2.455. In the RSV version it reads, "For lo, he who forms the mountains, and creates the wind, and declares to man what is his thought; who makes the morning darkness, and treads on the heights of the earth – the LORD, the God of hosts, is his name."

<sup>45</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, 1.3.68.

ποιῶν κατὰ πρόσκλησιν.<sup>46</sup> The discussion over this passage is from 1.10.4–1.14. In his interpretation of this passage, Athanasius connected their teaching with that of Valentinus,<sup>47</sup> a second-century Gnostic whose thought about the Spirit was probably quite unlike that of the Tropicists. In the second part, which includes sections 21–31 of this first letter, Athanasius demonstrated his exegesis and affirms again that the Spirit is not a creature, and he is totally different than them supporting his teaching.

Finally, in the last sections 32–33, which counted as a conclusion to the letter, Athanasius mentioned the church's faith, which was handed down from the apostles through the fathers. He also mentioned the traditions as well. He addressed Serapion with a few words, urging him to read what he wrote to him and lastly to be careful and to be cautious of them and their thinking.

### The Second Letter

The *Second Letter* formerly known as letter Two–Three,<sup>48</sup> consists of sixteen sections.<sup>49</sup> In this letter, Athanasius defended the divinity of the Son and argued that the Son is coeternal and coequal with the Father; he is eternal and true God.<sup>50</sup> The whole first part of the original letter 2.1–2.10 is devoted against the Arians and is dedicated to the

---

<sup>46</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, 1.10.4.478. In the RSV version it reads, “In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and the elect angels I charge you to keep these rules without favor, doing nothing from partiality.”

<sup>47</sup> Shapland, *The Letters*, I.11. 89. On Valentinus, see Shapland, *The Letters*, I.10.86. Note 11 notes: For this doctrine of the Spirit, see Swete, *The Holy Spirit*, 55–6. Valentinus certainly associated both Christ and the Spirit with the hierarchy of aeons. He also affirmed the descent of the Spirit upon Jesus and Mary. But he placed his main activity in the pleroma rather than on earth, and there is no evidence that he ever spoke of the angels accompanying the Spirit upon a mission thither.

<sup>48</sup> DelCogliano, et al., trans., *Works on the Spirit*. 106. Letter two starts from 2.1–2.9 and letter three starts from 2.10–2.16.

<sup>49</sup> In the *Armenian Version*, they count them as a separated letters, so the Epistle II is 9 sections and the Epistle III is 7 sections and the total become 16 sections.

<sup>50</sup> Shapland, *The Letters*, II.2.152.

doctrine of the Son, to prove that the Son is not a creature but rather divine. This Letter according to Schaff and Wace is useful in, “drawing out the proofs of the Godhead of the Son.”<sup>51</sup>

In these sections, Athanasius explained in detail the relation between the Son and the Father. In section 2 of this letter, he declares that the Son is not a creature, by identifying his attributes as equivalent with those of the Father. He made clear that the Father is light and the Son is his brilliance. Εἰ πηγὴ, καὶ φῶς, καὶ Πατὴρ ἐστὶν ὁ Θεός, οὐ θέμις εἰπεῖν οὔτε τὴν πηγὴν ξηρὰν, οὔτε τὸ φῶς χωρὶς αὐγῆς, οὔτε τὸν Θεὸν χωρὶς Λόγου, ἵνα μὴ ἄσοφος, καὶ ἄλογος, καὶ ἀφεγγής ᾗ ὁ Θεός.<sup>52</sup> If the Son is the brilliance of the Light who is the Father, likewise, Athanasius contributes that all the characteristics and attributions that belong to the Father belong to the Son. The Father is eternal so the Son must also be eternal. The Son is in the Father and the Father is in the Son. The Father is light; the Son is radiance and true light. The Father is true God; The Son is true God.<sup>53</sup>

In sections 2.3.1–2.4.4 of this letter, Athanasius made a distinction between the creatures and the Son. He compared the creatures that are brought into existence from nothing with the Son who is before time, καὶ πάντα ἀλλοιούμενά ἐστιν Ὁ δὲ Υἱὸς ἀτρεπτός ἐστι καὶ ἀναλλοίωτος, ὡς ὁ Πατὴρ.<sup>54</sup> In section 2.5–2.6, Athanasius again discusses the deity of the Son and his relation with the Father. He declares and repeats what the church fathers affirmed in the Council of Nicaea in 325 regarding the relationship between the Son and the Father and the word homoousios of the same substance with the Father. It

<sup>51</sup> Schaff and Wace, eds., *NPNF, Athanasius*, vol.4:33.

<sup>52</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, II.2.1.539. “If God is Fountain and Light and Father, it is not right to say that the Fountain has been exhausted or that the Light is without its brilliance or that God is without the Word, lest God be deprived of his Wisdom, his Word, and his Splendor.”

<sup>53</sup> DelCogliano, et al., trans., *Works on the Spirit*, 2.2.2–2.2.3. 107.

<sup>54</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, II.3.3.541. “And all things are changeable. But the Son is immutable and unchangeable, just as the Father is.”

would be impossible for any created being to say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, as Jesus did for a simple reason. All things have a beginning but the Son did not. *Εἰ τοίνυν Πατήρ ἐστι καὶ Υἱός, ἀνάγκη τὸν Υἱὸν φύσει καὶ ἀληθεία εἶναι Υἱόν.*<sup>55</sup> What Athanasius declared here is the church faith that believes in the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, this faith handed down from generation to generation. *Ὁ μὲν χαρακτήρ οὗτος ἐκ τῶν ἀποστόλων διὰ τῶν Πατέρων.*<sup>56</sup> This is the aspect of the church belief, which is supported by the Scriptures. But it seems that those people did not understand this belief very well, otherwise they would not say such things regarding the Son. In sections 7–8, Athanasius rejected their interpretation to the verse from Prov 8:22, saying that they had made a mistake in their understanding to the *σκόπος* of the Divine Scripture. Finally, in section 9 he discussed the verse from the Gospel of Mark 13:32 regarding the day and the knowledge of his second coming.

The sections from 2.10–2.16 is the *Third Letter*, which is the second part of the original letter. According to Campbell it is an abridgment of the first. He states that it was, “intended to be joined to the second as a concise statement of his teaching on the Trinity.”<sup>57</sup> Schaff and Wace also suggest the same idea regarding the connection between this letter and the first letter. They state, “the third restating more concisely the argument of the first.”<sup>58</sup> In these sections, Athanasius reasserted that the Holy Spirit is not a creature but rather divine by explaining; first of all, the relation between the Son and the Spirit, then he mentioned the functions of the Spirit, then he explained how the faithful sealed

---

<sup>55</sup> Savvidis, *Athanasius Werke*, II.6.3.546. “So if there is Father and Son, then the Son must be Son by nature and truth.”

<sup>56</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, II.8.1.548. “This is the character of the faith which we have received from the Apostles through the Fathers.”

<sup>57</sup> Campbell, “The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit,” 410.

<sup>58</sup> Schaff and Wace, eds., *NPNF: Athanasius*, vol. 4:ixiii.

with the Spirit and become the temple of the God. Οὕτως ὁ τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἔχων ἔχει τὸν Υἱὸν, καὶ ἔχων αὐτὸν, ναὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐστὶ.<sup>59</sup> And Athanasius finished these sections of the letter by declaring the unity and the indivisibility of the Holy Trinity, which is the church's belief from the beginning of Christianity. On this belief, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the Lord Jesus established his church. If the Holy Spirit was a creature, he would not be ranked with the Father and Son.

### The Third Letter

The *Third Letter* (formerly known as *Letter Four*), which consists of seven sections, comprised of several themes, which had already been developed in the first letter. In section 1–2 of this letter, Athanasius declared the certainty of this group that they are fighting against the Spirit (Tropikoi). He wrote using powerful language regarding this subject when he says, Εἰ μὲν οὖν ἀρνεῖσθε τὰ γεγραμμένα, οὐκ ἔτι μὲν ὑμεῖς Χριστιανοὶ λεχθείητε ἄν.<sup>60</sup> In section three Athanasius goes back and connects the two doctrines together (Son and the Holy Spirit) by mentioning that He breathes upon the disciples, ὁ Υἱὸς ἐμφυσῶν δίδωσιν αὐτὸ τοῖς μαθηταῖς.<sup>61</sup> This breath explains the depth of the relation between the Son and the Holy Spirit, and that the Spirit is the Spirit of Christ.

Following this section Athanasius announces that the Spirit is not a creature but rather divine and has the same substance as the Father. Οὕτως οὐκ ἔστι κτίσμα τὸ

---

<sup>59</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, II.12.4.555. “Anyone who has the Spirit has the Son. When anyone has him, he is the temple of God.”

<sup>60</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, III.2.4.567. “So then, if you deny what is said in the Scripture, you can no longer be called Christians.”

<sup>61</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, III.3.6.570.

Πνεῦμα, ἀλλ' ἴδιον τῆς τοῦ Λόγου οὐσίας, ἴδιον καὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ λέγεται εἶναι.<sup>62</sup>

At the end of this letter, sections 3.5–3.7 we understand how Athanasius focused on the church tradition, which was handed down, τὰ γὰρ τῇ πίστει παραδιδόμενα ἀπεριέργαστον ἔχει τὴν γνῶσιν. He also emphasized baptism, such as when Jesus told his disciples to go to all nations and baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. In section 7 of this letter, which is a conclusion, Athanasius determines the correct understanding of the Trinity by addressing the Tropokoi saying, Ἀρκεῖ πιστεύειν ὑμᾶς, ὅτι οὐκ ἔστι κτίσμα τὸ Πνεῦμα, ἀλλὰ Πνεῦμα τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐστὶ, καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ Τριάς, Πατὴρ, καὶ Υἱὸς, καὶ Πνεῦμα ἅγιον.<sup>63</sup> In the sections from 2.10–2.16, and *Third Letter*, Athanasius defended the doctrine of the Holy Spirit based on the teaching of Jesus Christ himself as recorded in the Bible (especially John 16:13–14 and John 15:16).

The following two chapters identify the Johannine texts which Athanasius used in his letters. He cited the Gospel of John and 1 John more than ninety times, and the following chapters survey and analyze the texts that he used in the three letter of Athanasius concerning the divinity of the Holy Spirit.

---

<sup>62</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, III.4.1.571. “Thus the Spirit is not a creature but it said to be proper to the substance of the Word and proper to God in God.”

<sup>63</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, III.7.2.574. “It is sufficient for you to believe that the Spirit is not a creature, but rather that the Spirit is of God and in him there is a Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”

CHAPTER 6  
THE JOHANNINE TEXTS IN THE FIRST LETTER TO SERAPION

The Gospel of John is considered to be a distinctive Gospel when compared to the synoptic Gospels, because one can find read many references regarding the Holy Spirit in this Gospel, which are not found in the synoptic Gospels. Burke and Warrington suggest that “The Gospel of John provides us with a unique and richly textured theology of the Spirit that is unmatched by any of the Synoptic gospels.”<sup>1</sup> This Gospel was used by the Church Fathers as a main source to defend the doctrines of the church, especially the doctrine of the Holy Trinity against heresies. As Köstenberger and Swain state, “From the patristic period until today, John’s Gospel has served as a major source for the church’s knowledge, doctrine and worship of the Triune God.”<sup>2</sup> The Gospel offers many verses regarding the Holy Spirit, which cannot be found in the synoptic Gospels. In his Gospel, John used the word *πνεῦμα* many times and in different ways. At times, he used the word alone without any addition, and at other times, he would use it in the following ways:

1. He used the word *πνεῦμα* (Spirit) alone six times in his Gospel as it is mentioned in John 3:5, 6; 4:23, 24; 6:63; 7:39.
2. John also used the word *τὸ πνεῦμα* (the Spirit) nine times in his Gospel. He added (*τό*) as a definite article in John 1:32, 33; 3:6, 8, 34; 6:36; 7:39; 11:33; 13:21; 19:30.
3. He used the word *πνεῦμα ἅγιον* (Holy Spirit) twice in his Gospel, 1:33; 20:22.
4. John used the expression *τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον* (the Holy Spirit) once, in 14:26.

---

<sup>1</sup> Burke and Warrington, *A Biblical Theology*, 104.

<sup>2</sup> Köstenberger and Swain, *Father, Son, and Spirit*, 19.

5. Finally, he used the expression τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας (the Spirit of Truth) three times in 14:17; 15:26; 16:13.

If we examine his first letter, we find that John also used the word πνεῦμα in different ways, with the following minor differences:

1. John used the word πνεῦμα alone, three times in his first letter, 4:1, 2, 3.
2. He added the definite article (τό) to the word πνεῦμα five times, 3:24; 4:1, 13; 5:6, 8.
3. He used the expression τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας (the Spirit of truth) once in his first letter, 4:6.
4. We read also a new expression in his letter τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ (the Spirit of God) in 4:2.
5. He also used τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς πλάνης (the spirit of error) in 4:6.

The *Letters to Serapion* are replete with biblical verses in order to support Athanasius' defence of the divinity of the Holy Spirit. They are filled with a significant number of citations which refer to the Holy Spirit, as noted by Haykin: "In general, Athanasius' writings reveal that he had a broad knowledge of the Scriptures, a fact of which was well-known in his own day."<sup>3</sup> Although Athanasius quoted a significant number of passages, he relied heavily on John's writings. The Gospel of John and 1 John are cited more than a hundred times. John's pneumatology profoundly shaped Athanasius' theology, especially with regard to the hypostasis of the Spirit and Athanasius' spirituality. This chapter will identify and discuss the many references mentioned in the *Letters to Serapion* that Athanasius quoted from the Gospel of John and from his first letter regarding the Holy

---

<sup>3</sup> Haykin, "The Spirit of God," 519.



Spirit. One key element of this dissertation is identifying Athanasius' use of biblical texts. In order to do so with certainty one needs to have a criterion for such determination. As mentioned above, Athanasius was very familiar with the Scriptures. For Athanasius, the whole Scripture is considered to be his first source to defend the divinity of the Holy Spirit.

The *Letters to Serapion* are replete with texts from the Scriptures in order to support his defence of the divinity of the Holy Spirit. He quoted verses from the Scriptures and used them in his argument through direct citation, allusion, terms, echo, or similar words. Porter has "identified five categories to include all of the forms of direct and indirect reference to extra biblical material: formulaic quotation; direct quotation; paraphrase; allusion; and echo."<sup>4</sup> Ernest James in his book *The Bible in Athanasius of Alexandria* studied the way Athanasius used the Scriptures. He quoted John Brogan who discusses Athanasius text of the Scriptures. He mentioned five examples of changes that Athanasius made while he was using the Scriptures. These changes are, "grammatical changes, word substitutions, complex conflation, minor additions to text, wholesale invention of biblical text."<sup>5</sup> These various criteria, along with Porter's, will be used in identifying Athanasius' use of the Johannine writings.

Table 1: The total of the Johannine texts that Athanasius used in the three letters

John 1	18
John 3	3
John 4	3
John 5	2
John 7	2
John 8	1
John 10	3

<sup>4</sup> Porter and Stanley, eds., *As It is Written*, 29.

<sup>5</sup> Ernest, *The Bible in Athanasius of Alexandria*, 27.

John 14	26
John 15	8
John 16	13
John 17	3
John 20	6
1 John 1	1
1 John 2	5
1 John 4	6
1 John 5	1

From above it can be seen that these letters were replete with the Johannine texts. He referenced the Gospel of John 88 times, and from the first letter of John 13 times.

Athanasius used the Johannine texts in his letters a total of 101 times. This chapter will identify all the Johannine texts that Athanasius used in his first letter to Serapion and what changes he made to the original text in order to see the way he used them in his letter.

Table 2: The Johannine texts that are mentioned in the first letter to Serapion

John 1	I.6.2; I.9.7; I.9.9; I.10.2; I.19.4; I.19.5; I.23.6; I.24.6
John 3	I.20.6
John 4	I.10.2; I.23.2; I.33.3
John 5	I.20.7
John 7	I.23.3
John 8	I.20.6
John 14	I.4.1; I.6.2; I.11.1; I.11.1; I.19.7; I.19.8; I.19.9; I.20.7; I.25.3; I.30.5; I.31.4; I.33.4; I.33.4
John 15	I.2.5; I.6.2; I.11.1; I.11.7; I.20.5; I.25.3; I.33.4
John 16	I.11.1; I.11.7; I.20.6; I.20.6; I.20.6; I.25.3
John 17	I.20.6
John 20	I.6.2; I.11.6; I.19.7
1John 1	I.19.2
1John 2	I.1.3; I.2.6; I.23.4
1John 4	I.6.6; I.19.7; I.24.3; I.25.4

Table 3: The total of the Johannine texts in the first letter to Serapion

John 1	8
John 3	1
John 4	3
John 5	1
John 7	1
John 8	1
John 14	13
John 15	7
John 16	6
John 17	1
John 20	3
1 John 1	1
1 John 2	3
1 John 4	4

### Letters to Serapion I.1.3; 1 John 2:23-24

“Ὡσπερ γὰρ ἐκεῖνοι, ἀρνούμενοι τὸν Υἱὸν, ἀρνοῦνται καὶ τὸν Πατέρα (KS)<sup>6</sup>  
For just as Arians by denying the Son deny also the Father (MD)<sup>7</sup>”

πᾶς ὁ ἀρνούμενος τὸν υἱὸν οὐδὲ τὸν πατέρα ἔχει, ὁ ὁμολογῶν τὸν υἱὸν καὶ τὸν πατέρα ἔχει (NA28)<sup>8</sup>  
No one who denies the Son has the Father; everyone who confesses the Son has the Father also (NRS)<sup>9</sup>

In his introduction of the first letter, Athanasius mentioned the relationship between himself and Serapion, and those who withdrew from the Arians (the new Arians) and their blasphemy against the Spirit. From the beginning, he declared that those who denied the Son would deny the Father. This would be linked with the new blasphemy against the Spirit, saying that those who denied the Spirit denied the Son. The verse, which Athanasius used here, is the only verse that he cited in section 1 of his letter. It is a paraphrased verse from 1 John 2:23–24 regarding the divinity of the Son and his relation to the Father. Athanasius used different words as word substitutions to the original verse

<sup>6</sup> Savvidis, *Athanasius Werke*.

<sup>7</sup> DelCogliano, et al., trans., *Works on the Spirit*.

<sup>8</sup> Aland and Aland, eds. *Nestle Aland Novum Testamentu Graece*.

<sup>9</sup> NRSV.

in order to clarify his argument against this group. He used the first half of the verse, added his own words and framed it to give the same meaning when compared to the verse from Scripture. He added the words "Ὡσπερ γὰρ ἐκεῖνοι, with each word having its own meaning. The word "Ὡσπερ means "adverb, of manner, like as even as, conjunction, just as, like as."<sup>10</sup> The word γὰρ has three meanings: "first, introducing the reason or cause of what precedes; secondly, the word could mean inversion, preceding the fact explained and thirdly, to confirm or strengthen something said."<sup>11</sup> And finally the word ἐκεῖνοι which means, "pronoun, the person, or to denote well-known persons"<sup>12</sup> In the English translation, it is substituted with the word Arians, with the indirect signal to the Arian's teachings regarding the Son. No one who denies the Son knows the Father. Our knowledge about the Father includes our knowledge about the Son, and no one can come to the Father unless it is through the Son. If you know the Father, then you would know His only begotten Son, who is the Image of the Father. As Parnsenios suggests, "Whatever the false teachers were propagating, 1 John 2:23 takes the opportunity to affirm the close connection between the Father and the Son. The disposition that one shows toward the Son shows also one's disposition toward the Father."<sup>13</sup> John called anyone who denies Jesus a liar, ψεύστης like the devil, as mentioned in John 8:44. The word is also mentioned in Tertullian's work in *Against Praxeas* 28, who claimed that Christ is not the Father. Athanasius wanted to give a strong indication to the new group's heresy, because he substituted the word πᾶς (every, no one) to ἐκεῖνοι (those or the Arians). He is

---

<sup>10</sup> Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 2040; Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon*, 416; Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 908.

<sup>11</sup> Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 338; Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon*, 96; Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 151.

<sup>12</sup> Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 506; Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon*, 136; Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 238.

<sup>13</sup> Parnsenios, *First, Second, and Third John*, 89.

confirming what he said in his letter concerning the new Arians, their manner, how they are connected, the similarities to the Arian heresy that denied the deity of the Son and the connection between the two heresies. Athanasius calls this kind of thinking as, *ἀλλοδοξίας καὶ σατανικῆς προπετείας*.<sup>14</sup> (heterodoxy and diabolical presumption).

### Letters to Serapion I.2.5; John 15:26

ὁ παρὰ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐκπορεύεται (KS)  
Who proceeds from the Father (MD)

Ὅταν ἔλθῃ ὁ παράκλητος ὃν ἐγὼ πέμψω ὑμῖν παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς, τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας ὃ παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκπορεύεται, ἐκεῖνος μαρτυρήσει περὶ ἐμοῦ (NA28)  
When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf (NRS)

In section 2 of this letter, Athanasius cited the Gospel of John twice and once from the first letter of John. He began to explore how the teaching of the Tropicci is equal to that of the Arians. He linked the two heresies and said that this is not new to the Arians who first denied the Son and is now denying the Spirit. It is the first time that Athanasius mentioned the word *τρόπος* (mode of exegesis) followed by many questions that he asked his opponents concerning the unity of the Son with the Father and the Spirit with the Son. Athanasius quoted the first part of the second section of the verse; a direct citation, which affirms the relation between the Spirit and the Father, since the Father is counted as the origin to the Spirit. It is an important verse with a deep theological controversy in the history of the church concerning the procession of the Holy Spirit. This procession is from the Father and is sent by the Son. But, there is a difference between *πέμψω* (send) and *ἐκπορεύεται* (proceed). The word *ἐκπορεύεται* means: “send out or as proceeding from Father, as the Holy Spirit is proceeding from the Father who is the *εκπορευτής*, that

<sup>14</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae* 1-IV *Ad Serapionem*, 1.1.4.451.

is the one who causes the procession.”<sup>15</sup> Regarding of the procession of the Holy Spirit, Gregory of Nazianzus states, “The Holy Ghost is truly Spirit, coming forth from the Father indeed, but not after the manner of the Son, for it is not by Generation but by Procession . . . There is then One God in Three, and These Three are One,”<sup>16</sup> And as Athanasius said in his *Letters to Serapion*, ὁ παρὰ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐκπορεύεται, καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ ἴδιον ὄν “who proceeds from the Father and, being proper to the Son.”<sup>17</sup> On the other hand, the verb πέμψω (send), of a divine sending<sup>18</sup> and the future tense is πέμψω as is mentioned in the verse for the third person singular. Here we can see the Trinitarian image. He proceeds from the Father, and Jesus will send Him from the Father. In the NRS English translation, we notice that the same meaning is given to both ἔλθῃ in the beginning of the verse and ἐκπορεύεται, which means, ‘comes’. In both cases they used the word ‘comes.’ Certainly, there is a difference in meaning between the words ἔλθῃ and ἐκπορεύεται. The verb ἔλθῃ is from the verb ἔρχομαι which means ‘to come.’ On the other hand, the verb ἐκπορεύομαι, is a third person singular passive voice. The ἐκ here is important, since it means “from out of origin”<sup>19</sup> Ignatius of Antioch also uses this in his

<sup>15</sup> Lampe and Liddell, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 437; Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon*, 139; Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 243. This verb applied to the Holy Spirit. There is another verb, which applied to the Son more often, ἐξέρχομαι means literally go or come out which mostly applied to Jesus as in John 16:27, 28, 30; 17:8. For the meaning of this verb, see, Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 69; Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon*, 155.

<sup>16</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration On the Holy Lights*, 39.12. He continued explaining that the procession belongs to the Spirit, he sated, “The Holy Ghost, then, always existed, and exists, and always will exist. He neither had a beginning, nor will He have an end . . . Therefore He was ever being partaken, but not partaking; perfecting, not being perfected; sanctifying, not being sanctified; deifying, not being deified . . . Life and Lifegiver; Light and Lightgiver; absolute Good, and Spring of Goodness . . . Why make a long discourse of it? All that the Father hath the Son hath also, except the being Unbegotten; and all that the Son hath the Spirit hath also, except the Generation.” *Oration On Pentecost*, 41.9

<sup>17</sup> DelCogliano, et al., trans., *Works on the Spirit*, I.2.5. 55.

<sup>18</sup> Lampe and Liddell, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 1057; Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon*, 305; Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 647.

<sup>19</sup> Lampe and Liddell, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 424; Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon*, 134; Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 233.

letter to Smyrna when he talked about the virgin birth of Jesus. He stated, “Son of God according to the will and power of God, truly born of a virgin.”<sup>20</sup> Υἱὸν θεοῦ κατὰ θέλημα καὶ δύναντιν θεοῦ, γεγεννημένον ἀληθῶς ἐκ παρθένου. A proceeding from the Father was a statement passed by the church Fathers in the Council of Constantinople in 381 when they formulated the third article of the Nicene Creed concerning the Holy Spirit. This phrase, ‘proceeding from the Father’ was understood “to refer to the Spirit’s ontological relationship with the Father, not to the mission on which he was sent.”<sup>21</sup> The Spirit is called the Comforter because He is the one who strengthens believers during difficult times, as St. Paul states in his letter to the Rom 8:26. He says, Ὡσαύτως δὲ καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα συναντιλαμβάνεται τῇ ἀσθενείᾳ ἡμῶν· τὸ γὰρ τί προσευξώμεθα καθὸ δεῖ οὐκ οἶδαμεν, ἀλλ’ αὐτὸ τὸ πνεῦμα ὑπερεντυγχάνει στεναγμοῖς ἀλαλήτοις (Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words). The two verbs συναντιλαμβάνεται from the verb συναντιλαμβάνομαι which means “help, come to the aid with or strictly grasp hold of with someone,”<sup>22</sup> and the verb ὑπερεντυγχάνει from the verb ὑπερεντυγχάνω means “plead, intercede”<sup>23</sup> are important in this verse; they explain that the Spirit helps and intercedes for Christians. Origen, in his work *On First Principles*, emphasizes the idea of helping and interceding when he writes, “For in Greek, Paraclete has both significations—that of intercessor and comforter.”<sup>24</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Ignatius, *Letter to Smyrnaeans*, 1.1.

<sup>21</sup> Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 528.

<sup>22</sup> Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 190; Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon*, 364; Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 792.

<sup>23</sup> Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 206; Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon*, 390; Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 848.

<sup>24</sup> Lubac, *Origen on First Principles*, 2.7.4.

### Letters to Serapion I.2.6; 1 John 2:23

οὗτοι καὶ τὸν Υἱὸν ἀρνοῦνται. Τὸν δὲ Υἱὸν ἀρνούμενοι, οὐδὲ τὸν Πατέρα ἔχουσι (KS)  
Those who deny the Son do not even have the Father (MD)

πάς ὁ ἀρνούμενος τὸν υἱὸν οὐδὲ τὸν πατέρα ἔχει, ὁ ὁμολογῶν τὸν υἱὸν καὶ τὸν πατέρα ἔχει (NA28)  
No one who denies the Son has the Father; everyone who confesses the Son has the Father also (NRS)

This verse was quoted again from 1 John 2:23 regarding the divinity of the Son and his relationship with the Father. He quoted the first half of this verse and made changes. It is a formulaic quotation or word substitution. If any one denies the Son, they do not have the Father, and this explains the close relationship between the Son and the Father.

Olsson states, “The confession of Jesus as Messiah in the Johannine tradition has a close connection with the relationship between Jesus and God, between the Son and the Father.”<sup>25</sup> In his citation, Athanasius changed πᾶς in the original verse to οὗτοι. The word πᾶς here means, “as an adjective, with distributive, significance, denoting each individual in a class each, every, all.”<sup>26</sup> Or “the noun, emphasizing the individual members of the class denoted by the noun every, each.”<sup>27</sup> On the other hand, the οὗτοι means “the near demonstrative pronoun used to call attention to a designed person or object, often with special emphasis.”<sup>28</sup> It could also refer to something happening now, as it used by Athanasius who refers to all those who deny the Son “refer to something here and now. Directed attention to it.”<sup>29</sup> If they think this way, Athanasius said, “Erring in this way

<sup>25</sup> Olsson, *A Commentary on the Letters of John*, 155.

<sup>26</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 302; Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 152

<sup>27</sup> Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 636.

<sup>28</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 288.

<sup>29</sup> Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 600.



they do not even have sound faith about the Father.”<sup>30</sup>

### Letters to Serpion I.4.1; John 14:6

Ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ἀλήθεια (KS)  
I am the Truth (MD)

λέγει αὐτῷ [ὁ] Ἰησοῦς· ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ὁδὸς καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια καὶ ἡ ζωὴ· οὐδεὶς ἔρχεται πρὸς τὸν πατέρα εἰ μὴ δι’ ἐμοῦ  
(NA28)  
Jesus said to him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me  
(NRS)

This section of the letter is a continuation of section 3, in which Athanasius started giving the correct interpretation of Amos 4:13, by defending the Godhead of the Spirit against the new Arians. His defending of Amos 4:13 continues until section 10 of this letter. In section 3, Athanasius started explaining, in detail, the verse from Amos 4:13 on which his opponents relied on to support their teaching that the Spirit was a creature. In section 4, he cited only one verse from John and many others from the Scriptures.<sup>31</sup> In his citation from John, he quoted only a part from the verse, a direct quotation to three words, which explains that Jesus is the Truth and is connected with what he is saying about the Spirit.<sup>32</sup>

The table 4 below shows the expression ἐγώ εἰμι (I am) in the Gospel of John:

ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς	I am the bread of life	6:35
ἐγώ εἰμι τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου	I am the light of the world	8:12
ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ μαρτυρῶν περὶ ἐμαυτοῦ	I am One who bears witness of Myself	8:18
ἐγώ ἐκ τῶν ἄνω εἰμί	I am from above	8:23
ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ θύρα τῶν προβάτων	I am the gate for the sheep	10:7
ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ἀνάστασις καὶ ἡ	I am the resurrection and	11:25

<sup>30</sup> DelCogliano, et al., trans., *Works on the Spirit*, 55.

<sup>31</sup> Gal 3:2; 1 Pet 1:23; Titus 3:5; 1 Thess 5:19; Luke 4:1; Matt 4:1; and Luke 3:21–22.

<sup>32</sup> Von Wahlde in his work, *The Gospel and Letters of John* suggests that this verse “identifies three theological realities with Jesus: he is the Way, the Truth, and the Life,” 637.

ζωή	the life	
ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ὁδὸς καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια καὶ ἡ ζωή	I am the way, and the truth, and the life	14:6
ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ἀμπελος ἡ ἀληθινή	I am the true vine	15:1

When the Spirit is without any addition or if the Spirit is unqualified, this means that the spirit cannot be called “Spirit.” Athanasius gave an example when he mentioned the Son in this verse ἡ ἀλήθεια the truth with a definite article. The ἡ here is very important. It means, “article, derived a demonstrative pronoun, the.”<sup>33</sup> Keener suggests that the “Truth included moral integrity as I John 3:21. Later Rabbis use ‘truth’ as title for God because God’s character was truth; they remarked that truth used the first, last, and middle letters of the Hebrew alphabet, and God as the first and the last was therefore to be called the truth.”<sup>34</sup> He explains that since the word Spirit does have a definite article, the word ‘spirit’ means the Holy Spirit. He is making a connection between the Spirit and the Son in which they are both the Truth that is the Christ and the Holy Spirit that is Spirit of the Truth who came to witness the Truth, and according to Barrett who states, “Jesus is the means of access to God who is the source of all truth.”<sup>35</sup> The Holy Spirit then proceeds from the Father and will teach the disciples all the Truth and remind them of what Jesus told them. In this verse, Jesus declares that his name is Truth. According to Carson, “the first noun ἐγώ εἰμι (I am) governing the other two . . . the three terms are syntactically coordinate.”<sup>36</sup> This was the second article of the Nicene Creed which was affirmed in the

<sup>33</sup> Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 551; Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon*, 188.

<sup>34</sup> Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 1:943.

<sup>35</sup> Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 382.

<sup>36</sup> Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 491.

Council of Nicea. The second article belongs to Christ.<sup>37</sup> In his exposition of the Christian faith, Ambrose stated, “Hence it is that Christ is not only God, but very God indeed very God of very God, in so much that He Himself is the Truth, If, then, we inquire His Name, it is the Truth; if we seek to know His natural rank and dignity, He is so truly the very Son of God, that He is indeed God's own Son.”<sup>38</sup> Ambrose continued discussing the term Truth, by saying, “If they say that the Father alone is true God, they cannot deny that God the Son alone is the Truth; for Christ is the Truth... We do not deem it so between the Father and the Son. For there is nothing wanting to the Father, because the Father is full of truth; and the Son, because He is the Truth, is equal to Him that is true.”<sup>39</sup> Even though Athanasius did not cite any verse from John in section 5 of this letter, he did cite a collection of verses from the Scriptures, especially the Old Testament.<sup>40</sup>

### Letters to Serapion I.6.2; John 1:32-33

καταβεβηκέναι ἐπ’ αὐτὸν τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον (KS)  
The Holy Spirit descended upon him (MD)

Καὶ ἐμαρτύρησεν Ἰωάννης λέγων ὅτι τεθέαμαι τὸ πνεῦμα καταβαῖνον ὡς περιστερὰν ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καὶ ἔμεινεν ἐπ’ αὐτόν. καὶ γὰρ οὐκ ᾔδειν αὐτόν, ἀλλ’ ὁ πέμψας με βαπτίζειν ἐν ὕδατι ἐκεῖνός μοι εἶπεν· ἐφ’ ὃν ἂν ἴδῃς τὸ πνεῦμα καταβαῖνον καὶ μένον ἐπ’ αὐτόν, οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ βαπτίζων ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ (NA28)

And John testified, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit (NRS)

All the citations in section 5 were to testify to the qualifications of the Spirit. What is important is that Athanasius, in section 6, continued his biblical citations from the Gospel

<sup>37</sup> And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten (γεννηθέντα) from the Father, only-begotten, that is, from the substance of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God. See, Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 215.

<sup>38</sup> Ambrose, *Exposition of the Christian Faith*, 1.17.108.

<sup>39</sup> Ambrose, *Exposition of the Christian Faith*, 5.2.28.

<sup>40</sup> Gen 1:2; 6:3; Num 11:29; Judg 3:10; 11:29; 13:24–25; 15:14; Ps 50:13; 142:10–11; Isa 61:1; 30:1; 48:16; 59:21; 63:9–10; Ezek 11:24; 1:6; 7:12; Mic 2:7; Joel 3:1.

of John and the rest of the Scriptures. In this section, he cited John 5 times, as well as other numerous other New Testament verses.<sup>41</sup> These numerous quotations give evidence of the divinity of the Spirit. The first verse from John is important to Athanasius; it is the descending of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus in the river Jordan. He mentioned the part when the Holy Spirit descended on him as a dove, but Athanasius removed the word *περιστεράν* (dove) from his citation.<sup>42</sup> It is the testimony of John the Baptist of what he had seen concerning Jesus' baptism, and this is the first time we read about the Holy Spirit in the Gospel of John. Differing from the Bible text, Athanasius mentioned the very term *τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον* (the Holy Spirit) rather than the Spirit alone *τὸ Πνεῦμα* as is mentioned in the Bible verse. This verse showed that, "the Spirit is prominent in this gospel."<sup>43</sup> He used the verb *καταβεβηκέναι* from the verb *καταβήσομαι* with a basic meaning to step down.<sup>44</sup> The verb consists of two words *κατά*, which means down from<sup>45</sup> and *βαίνω*, which means walk-step or precede in a direction that is down.<sup>46</sup> The appearance of the dove is important in the fourth Gospel. The Bible mentions in many places the descendance of Jesus from heaven, such as in John 3:13, *καὶ οὐδεὶς ἀναβέβηκεν εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν εἰ μὴ ὁ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καταβάς, ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου* (No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man). Another thing of note in this verse is the verb *ἔμεινεν* (remained). According to Burke and Warrington the

<sup>41</sup> Luke 3:22; Matt 10:20; 12:28; 28:19; Acts 1:4; 2:1–4; 21:11; 20:28; 8:39; 1 Pet 1:9–11; 1 Cor 2:10–12; 3:16; 6:11; 12:11; 2 Cor 3:17; Gal 3:14; 4:6–7; Eph 4:30; 4:3; Phil 1:18–20; 3:3; 1 Thess 4:8; Heb 9:8; 10:29; 9: 13–14; 2 Thess 2:8.

<sup>42</sup> The dove appears in the Bible in many places Old and New Testament. In the story of Noah, the dove was a symbol of peace (Gen 8:18). The story is mentioned also in the 1 Pet 3:20; Matt 24:38.

<sup>43</sup> Keener, *The Gospel of John*, 1:457. For instance see also John 3:5, 8; 4:23; 6:63; 7:39; 14:17; 26; 15:26, 20:22.

<sup>44</sup> Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon*, 216.

<sup>45</sup> Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 882.

<sup>46</sup> Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 302.

verb ἔμεινεν, “is a term of a divine union in Johannine thought, and, later in the gospel.”<sup>47</sup> In the KJV, the English translation of the verb ἔμεινεν is (abide) and Barrett suggests that, “the Spirit abides permanently upon Jesus.”<sup>48</sup> What does τό, which precedes the Πνεῦμα in this verse mean? The Spirit cannot be called the Spirit without qualification. In this verse it means “a prepositive article; plural τὰ, it mainly usages as a definite article with nouns *the* to individual nouns and provides focus.”<sup>49</sup> Athanasius was proclaiming in this verse that the Holy Spirit was descending on Jesus, in the river of Jordan, is descending from heaven, which means the Spirit is divine and was sent by God and, “the central point here is that not merely human agents like John but God’s own Spirit testifies to Jesus’ identity.”<sup>50</sup> John the Baptist and others understood what happened in the river Jordan.

### Letters to Serapion I.6.2; John 20:22

Λάβετε Πνεῦμα ἅγιον (KS)  
Receive the Holy Spirit (MD)

καὶ τοῦτο εἰπὼν ἐνεφύσησεν καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς. λάβετε πνεῦμα ἅγιον (NA28)  
When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit (NRS)

This is a direct quotation of the second part of the verse. This is the last verse concerning the Holy Spirit mentioned in the Gospel of John, when Jesus met His disciples in the upper room on the day of resurrection. Keener states that this verse “alludes back to the wind of 3:8, linking it with the image of regeneration by the Spirit in that context 3:3–

<sup>47</sup> Burke and Warrington, *A Biblical Theology*, 105–6.

<sup>48</sup> Barrett, *The Gospel according to St. John*, 148; Von Wahlde, *The Gospel and Letters of John*,

56.

<sup>49</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 276.

<sup>50</sup> Keener, *The Gospel of John*, 1:461.

6.”<sup>51</sup> This event on the day of resurrection gives way to the problem that there is a contradiction between what happened on this day and on the day of Pentecost concerning the Holy Spirit. Scholars have different ideas and interpretations regarding this verse. Burge does not agree to give this passage a symbolic meaning. He states, “the symbolic interpretation gives no genuine significance to the event within the Johannine economy.”<sup>52</sup> On the other hand, van Rossum gives this verse another interpretation by saying, “the bestowing of the Holy Spirit by Christ appears to be a gradual processes rather than an event that happened only at one particular moment. This process starts on the day of resurrection, on ‘that day’ the ‘first Day of the week’ and is fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost and in the life of the church after Pentecost.”<sup>53</sup> Concerning this matter, Carson states, “Jesus’ exhalation and command to receive the Holy Spirit are best understood as a kind of acted parable pointing forward to the full enduement still to come.”<sup>54</sup> This verse is the fulfillment of the verse in Luke 24:49 when Jesus asked His disciples to stay in Jerusalem until they were clothed with power from above. It says, καὶ [ιδού] ἐγὼ ἀποστέλλω τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πατρὸς μου ἐφ’ ὑμᾶς· ὑμεῖς δὲ καθίσατε ἐν τῇ πόλει ἕως οὗ ἐνδύσησθε ἐξ ὕψους δύναμιν (And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high). Von Wahlde suggests that this verse “fulfills the promise that the Spirit would be given those who believed in Jesus. According to 7:37–39 the Spirit would be given when

---

<sup>51</sup> Keener, *The Gospel of John*, 2:1204.

<sup>52</sup> Burge, *The Anointed Community*, 118.

<sup>53</sup> Rossum, “The ‘Johannine Pentecost,’” 155.

<sup>54</sup> Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 655.

Jesus was glorified.”<sup>55</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus discussed the receiving of the Holy Spirit from Christ. He stated:

And that in three ways, as they were able to receive Him, and on three occasions; before Christ was glorified by the Passion, and after He was glorified by the Resurrection; and after His Ascension...Now the first of these manifests Him the healing of the sick and casting out of evil spirits...and so does that breathing upon them after the Resurrection...But the first manifested Him indistinctly, the second more expressly, this present one more perfectly, since He is no longer present only in energy, but as we may say, substantially, associating with us, and dwelling in us.<sup>56</sup>

Athanasius refers to this second half of the verse, when Jesus spoke to his disciples on the day of resurrection. He appeared to them in the upper room, and after he showed them his hands and his side, he breathed on them saying, *Λάβετε Πνεῦμα ἅγιον* receive the Holy Spirit. The verb *λάβετε* is an imperative from *λαμβάνω* as “being a recipient of something, receive.”<sup>57</sup> Spiritually, as “being a recipient of God’s grace, forgiveness, life, etc.”<sup>58</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem also discussed this verse in his Catechetical lectures that this is the second time that he breathed on human beings. He stated, “this was the second time He breathed on man His first breath having been stifled through wilful sins . . . Receive it in part now; then, ye shall wear it in its fulness. For he who receives, often possesses the gift but in part; but he who is clothed, is completely enfolded by his robe.”<sup>59</sup>

The tense of the verb that Jesus used here means that He is giving them an order, He speaks to them with a magisterial form. Why did Athanasius quote only the last part of the verse and not mention “breathed on them”? According to Keener, this event explains “an important christological function because as the giver of God’s Spirit, Jesus

<sup>55</sup> Von Wahlde, *The Gospel and Letters of John*, 858.

<sup>56</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration on Pentecost*, 41.11.

<sup>57</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 243

<sup>58</sup> Zerwick and Grosvenor, *A Grammatical Analysis*, 345.

<sup>59</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures*, 17.12.

himself is divine, especially here, where his actions evoke God's creative work of breathing life into Adam."<sup>60</sup> This λάβετε πνεῦμα ἅγιον (receive the Holy Spirit) means that He is in them and they abide with him as mentioned in 14:17, τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας, ὃ ὁ κόσμος οὐ δύναται λαβεῖν, ὅτι οὐ θεωρεῖ αὐτὸ οὐδὲ γινώσκει. ὑμεῖς γινώσκετε αὐτό, ὅτι παρ' ὑμῖν μένει καὶ ἐν ὑμῖν ἔσται (This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you).

### Letters to Serapion I.6.2; John 14:26

Ὁ Παράκλητος τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, ὃ πέμψει ὁ Πατὴρ ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί μου, ἐκεῖνος ὑμᾶς διδάξει πάντα (KS)  
But the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things  
(MD)

ὁ δὲ παράκλητος, τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, ὃ πέμψει ὁ πατὴρ ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί μου, ἐκεῖνος ὑμᾶς διδάξει πάντα καὶ ὑπομνήσει ὑμᾶς πάντα ἃ εἶπον ὑμῖν [ἐγώ] (NA28)  
But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you (NRS)

This verse explains that the Father is the origin of the Holy Spirit, and it shows also the relation between the Son and the Spirit. Athanasius used the first half of it as a direct quotation. In this verse Jesus reasserts and makes clear that the Paraclete is indeed the Holy Spirit. This verse shows that the Paraclete will teach them all things that Jesus told them while he was with them. It reminds the reader as to what John mentions in his first letter 1:27 that the, ἀλλ' ὡς τὸ αὐτοῦ χρῖσμα διδάσκει ὑμᾶς περὶ πάντων (But as his anointing teaches you about all things). The table 4 below shows the translation of the word Παράκλητος in some English versions of the Bible:

<p>Παράκλητος: John 14:16; 14:26; 15:26; 16:7; 1John 2:1 KJG...Comforter</p>
--

<sup>60</sup> Keener, *The Gospel of John*, 2:1205.



KJV...Comforter NAS...Helper NIV...Advocate NKJ...Helper NRS...Advocate RSV...Counselor
--

This verse demonstrates the inner relation between the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. The Spirit will be sent from the Father, in the name of the Son. Köstenberger and Swain mention that, “the Spirit’s arrival will not only guarantee Jesus’ ongoing communion with the disciples; the Spirit’s arrival will also empower them to continue Jesus’ mission in the world.”<sup>61</sup> John Chrysostom shares a similar idea. He said, “And (The Spirit) remaineth with you, is the expression of One implying that Himself will depart. Then that they may not be grieved.”<sup>62</sup> All the verbs in the first half of the original verse which Athanasius cited are in the future tense, which means the Spirit comes after the ascension of Christ. He will be sent and teach them all things. Athanasius removes the δέ that is found in the original verse. It is a “conjunctive particle, most commonly used to denote continuation and further thought development taking its specific sense from the context and; contrast but; transition then, now (with no temporal sense).”<sup>63</sup> Danker suggests almost the same idea when he gives an explanation regarding δέ; he says, “one of most Greek particles, used to connect one clause to another, either to express contrast or simple continuation.”<sup>64</sup> Athanasius used δέ before he mentioned the verse from John 14:26 to make the connection between this verse and the verse he mentioned before λάβετε Πνεῦμα ἅγιον or ‘receive the Holy Spirit’. After he mentioned receive the Holy Spirit in

<sup>61</sup> Köstenberger and Swain, *Father, Son, and Spirit*, 144.

<sup>62</sup> Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of John*, 75.3.

<sup>63</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 104; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 170; Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 56.

<sup>64</sup> Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 213.

I.6.2 he said, ‘and he taught them’. As a result, Athanasius mentioned *δέ* which means *and* here to connect the two verses together. The Paraclete will teach the disciples everything and this is one of his activities in the life of the believers. As Barrett states, “one of the primary functions of the Paraclete is to teach.”<sup>65</sup> Jesus makes it clear when he says *ἐκεῖνος* (He) (the Holy Spirit) will teach you. In the NRS version, the pronoun *ἐκεῖνος* (He) is omitted from the verse in the translation. He *ἐκεῖνος* will guide you and be with you.

### Letters to Serapion I.6.2; John 15:26

“Ὅταν ἔλθῃ ὁ Παράκλητος, ὃν ἐγὼ πέμψω ὑμῖν παρὰ τοῦ Πατρὸς, τὸ Πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας, ὃ παρὰ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐκπορεύεται, ἐκεῖνος μαρτυρήσει περὶ ἐμοῦ (KS)  
When the Paraclete comes, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me (MD)

“Ὅταν ἔλθῃ ὁ παράκλητος ὃν ἐγὼ πέμψω ὑμῖν παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς, τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας ὃ παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκπορεύεται, ἐκεῖνος μαρτυρήσει περὶ ἐμοῦ (NA28)  
When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf (NRS)

This verse, which Athanasius used, is a direct quotation as it appears in Scripture. In I.6.2 Athanasius used many verses from the Scriptures regarding the Holy Spirit, in order to give a clear picture of how the Scripture testifies to the deity of the Holy Spirit. The *τὸ Πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας* (the Spirit of Truth) is mentioned many times in the writings of John (14:17; 15:26; 16:13; 1 John 4:6; 1 John 5:6). This verse is one of the most important verses concerning the Holy Spirit. His name *παράκλητος*, coming from the Father, he is the Spirit of Truth, proceeds from the Father, and the Spirit bears witness to Jesus. The word *παράκλητος* from the verb *παρακαλέω*, which means “summon to one’s aid, call

---

<sup>65</sup> Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 390.

upon for help.”<sup>66</sup> Tertullian used the word *παράκλητος* twice in the second century in his treatise *Against Praxeas* with the Comforter meaning.<sup>67</sup> The Spirit comes from the Father, meaning that He has no beginning. As Gregory of Nazianzus suggested, “The Holy Ghost, then, always existed, and exists, and always will exist. He neither had a beginning, nor will he have an end; but He was everlastingly ranged with and numbered with the Father and the Son.”<sup>68</sup> He comes from the Father and is sent by the Son clarifies the relationship in the Trinity who is one in three distinct persons. Proceeding from the Father means proceeding from the source or the origin, and He is not a creature or ministering angel. Ambrose gave a beautiful interpretation of this verse by saying:

For if the Spirit proceeds from a place and passes to a place, both the Father Himself will be found in a place, and the Son likewise. If He goes forth from a place, Whom the Father or the Son sends, certainly the Spirit passing from a place, and making progress, seems to leave, according to those impious interpretations, both the Father and the Son like some material body. I am saying this with reference to those who say that the Spirit comes down by movement. But neither the Father, Who is above all not only of corporeal nature, but also of the invisible creation, is circumscribed in any place; nor is the Son, Who, as the Worker of all creation, is above every creature, enclosed by the places or times of His own works; nor is the Spirit of Truth as being the Spirit of God, circumscribed by any corporeal limits, Who since He is incorporeal is far above the whole rational creation through the ineffable fulness of His Godhead, having over all things the power of breathing where He wills, and of inspiring as He wills.<sup>69</sup>

According to this verse, the Son sends the Spirit from the Father. This means that the Son is the Sender, and the Spirit is proceeding from the Father. The Spirit will testify on behalf of the Son *ἐκεῖνος μαρτυρήσει περὶ ἐμοῦ* (he will testify on my behalf). Does this statement elucidate that the Spirit knows what the Son knows? Yes, it does as Ambrose stated, “So the Holy Spirit both proceeds from the Father, and bears witness of the Son.

---

<sup>66</sup> Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 764; Zerwick and Grosvenor, *A Grammatical Analysis*, 333.

<sup>67</sup> Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*, ii, ix

<sup>68</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration on Pentecost*, 41.9.

<sup>69</sup> Ambrose, *On the Holy Spirit*, I.11.117–18.

For the witness Who is both faithful and true bears witness of the Father, which witness nothing is more full for the expression of the Divine Majesty, nothing more clear as to the Unity of the Divine Power, since the Spirit has the same knowledge as the Son, Who is the witness and inseparable sharer of the Father's secrets."<sup>70</sup> The verb μαρτυρήσει is from the verb μαρτυρέω and it means, "bear witness, be a witness, testify,"<sup>71</sup> as in John 1:7.

### Letters to Serapion I.6.6; 1 John 4:13

Ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν, ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ μένομεν, καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν ἡμῖν, ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ Πνεύματος αὐτοῦ ἔδωκεν ἡμῖν (KS)  
By this we know that we remain in him, and he is in us, because he has given to us from his Spirit (MD)

Ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ μένομεν καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν ἡμῖν, ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος αὐτοῦ δέδωκεν ἡμῖν  
(NA28)

By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit (NRS)

This is a direct quotation given by Athanasius from the first letter of John explaining the relationship between the faithful people and Christ through the Spirit or the Spirit of Christ. This verse has a connection with 1 John 3:24, which our relation with God is through his Spirit ἐκ τοῦ Πνεύματος that he has given to us. This verse has a connection with another verse at the beginning of the Gospel of John. In John 1:16 it says, "From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace" (ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ πληρώματος αὐτοῦ ἡμεῖς πάντες ἐλάβομεν καὶ χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος.) In their work *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*, Elowsky and Oden, who quote Theodore of Mopsuestia on his commentary on this verse 'from his fullness,' say that "we have all received that is the grace of the Spirit, which is given to us as a gift, we received from his abundance . . . through the union with the divine Word, by means of the Spirit, he was made participant in the true relationship. We have taken a part from his spiritual grace, and through it we are made participant

<sup>70</sup> Ambrose, *On the Holy Spirit*, I.1.25.

<sup>71</sup> Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 8.

together with him in his adoptive affiliation.”<sup>72</sup> The verb μένομεν is the key in this verse, from the verb μένω, which means, “to remain, abide.”<sup>73</sup> Christians remain in him and become the temple of the Spirit in order to see his fruits in their lives. Christians know that they abide in him from the work that they do. His Spirit, which is given to His followers, should bear fruit in their lives and express that they are the children of God. The beginning of this verse that Athanasius cited from 1 John 4:13 Ἐν τούτῳ (by this) is used by John 13 times in this letter. At the end of section 6 of this letter, Athanasius stopped citing John until section 9 in which he quoted John twice. He did, however, quote other Old and New Testament Scriptures in sections 7 and 8, to prove his point in the interpretation of Amos 4:13 to defend the Godhead of the Spirit.

### Letters to Serapion 1.9.7; John 1:3

Καὶ εἶπερ, διὰ τὸ πάντα γενέσθαι διὰ τοῦ Λόγου (KS)  
Because all things came into existence through the Word (MD)

πάντα δι’ αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν. ὃ γέγονεν (NA28)  
All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being (NRS)

In his defending of the divinity of the Spirit, Athanasius linked the divinity of the Spirit with that of the Son by citing two verses from John chapter 1 to prove that all things were created through Him and He (the Word) became flesh and dwelt among humanity. (He also used many additional citations from the Scriptures.) He used only three words from the original verse, and he changed the word αὐτοῦ (Him) to Λόγου (Word). First of all, he cited John 1:3 but only the first half of the verse, which talks about the divinity of the Son

<sup>72</sup> Elowsky and Oden, *Ancient Christian Commentary: John 1–10*, 51.

<sup>73</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 258; Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 125; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 504.

and the Λόγου, who participated in the creation because he is the Word of God. How could the Son be a creature and all things come into existence through Him? This citation used by Athanasius, declared the Word's Deity that everything was created through Him. Everything came into existence through Him, τὸ πάντα γενέσθαι. As Von Wahlde states, "the Word is the instrument through whom creation takes place."<sup>74</sup> This verse justifies that the Word was not made; rather that everything was created through Him. When Augustine defended the church's belief regarding the Son against the Arians, he stated, "Now some unbelieving Arian may come forth and say that the Word of God was made. How can it be that the Word of God was made, when God by the Word made all things? If the Word of God was itself also made, by what other Word was it made?"<sup>75</sup> In his quotation, Athanasius added two words to the verse from the Bible. He added καί which means "a connective, connecting single words and or connecting clauses and sentences."<sup>76</sup> The word εἴπερ consists of two parts; the first one is εἴ which means "conditional particle if, since; with the indicative to express a condition of fact regarded as true or settled since, because."<sup>77</sup> The meaning of the word is changed depending on the particle in which the word combined to. In general, in this case here with περ means "if indeed, if after all, since."<sup>78</sup> Athanasius also changed the pronoun αὐτοῦ (Him) in the original verse to the word Λόγου (Word). He is emphasizing the word Λόγου (Word) because he is defending the deity of the Spirit and his defense is dependent on his defense on the deity of the Son. This would allow him to put an emphasis on the subject he is

---

<sup>74</sup> Von Wahlde, *The Gospel and Letters to John*, 3.

<sup>75</sup> Augustine, *Lectures or Tractates on the Gospel of John*, 1.11.

<sup>76</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 211.

<sup>77</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 130.

<sup>78</sup> Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 219.

discussing and to change the pronoun to the original word. The word Λόγος from the verb λέγω that means as a general term of speaking, the word refers to the second person of the Trinity. This is not the first time that this term was used by Athanasius. He used it in his work *Defence of the Nicene Definition*. In that instance, he said, “And concerning the everlasting co-existence of the Word with the Father, and that He is not of another essence or subsistence, but proper to the Father’s.”<sup>79</sup> (Περὶ δὲ τοῦ αἰδίως συνεῖναι τὸν λόγον τῷ πατρὶ καὶ μὴ ἐξ ἐτέρας οὐσίας ἢ ὑποστάσεως, ἀλλὰ τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς ἴδιον γέννημα αὐτὸν εἶναι.) John at the very beginning of his Gospel adopted this word when he declares the eternity of the Second Person in the Trinity, and that He is of one substance with the Father. As Augustine said, “But herein is declared, not only that He is God, but also that He is of the same substance with the Father.”<sup>80</sup> This is not the first time that this verse is used to declare that everything was created through the Word. St. Paul in his letter to the Col 1:16–17; in Heb 1:2, and in Rev 3:14, it is stated that all things were created through Him. The word πάντα is important here, since it is an adjective, and when used with a noun, pronoun, or participle, in the plural it means “all things, everything”<sup>81</sup> and the same word is used in both verses; to the Colossians, and to the Hebrews.

### Letters to Serapion I.9.9; John 1:14

ὅτε ὁ Λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο (KS)  
When he became flesh (MD)

Καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, καὶ ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός, πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας (NA28)

<sup>79</sup> Athanasius, *Defence of the Nicene Definition*, 27. The word Λόγος also used by Justin in his dialogue with Trypho, 128; it is also used by Tertullian in his *Against Praxes*, 7, 24.

<sup>80</sup> Augustine, *On the Holy Trinity*, 1.6.9.

<sup>81</sup> Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 152.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth (NRS)

This is the second verse that Athanasius used in this section of the letter, and it is only the first part of this verse in which he continued explaining the divinity of the Son through whom all things were created because he is the Λόγος of God. When the time came, this Λόγος became σάρξ (flesh) for our salvation and dwelt among us.<sup>82</sup> This is the second time that the word Λόγος (Word) appears in the Gospel of John. It is a direct citation, but he made one change when he substituted the Καί, (kai) with ὅτε (when). In his quotation, Athanasius added ὅτε even though he is quoting only the first three words of the verse. The word ὅτε means “temporal adverb used as a conjunction when, while, as long as.”<sup>83</sup> And the verb ἐγένετο from γίνομαι means, “become, come into being.”<sup>84</sup> This verse is against the docetic heresy, which denied the incarnation of Jesus at the beginning of the first century.<sup>85</sup> Concerning the incarnation of Jesus, Keener states that, “just as God tabernacled with his people in the wilderness, God’s Word tabernacled among the witness of the new exodus accomplished in Christ.”<sup>86</sup> One of the important works that was written by Athanasius is *On the Incarnation* in which he defended the incarnation of

---

<sup>82</sup> Von Wahlde, in his work, *The Gospel and Letters to John*, 9–10 suggests that the word σάρξ (flesh) “considered significant theologically. It occurs in 1:13, 14; 3:6; 6:51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 63; 8:15; 17:2. It is used as a way of referring to the realm of the human but with three different connotations. In 1:13 and 17:2, it is used in a neutral way as a synonym for humanity. In 3:6; 6:63; and 8:15 it is used in a pejorative sense to contrast the realm of the human with the realm of the Spirit. The remaining instances refer to the flesh of Jesus, 1:14; 6:51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, and do so in a positive way. The instances of chapter 6 indicate that the believer must eat the flesh of Jesus in order to have eternal life.”

<sup>83</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 286.

<sup>84</sup> Zerwick and Grosvenor, *A Grammatical Analysis*, 285.

<sup>85</sup> Ignatius of Antioch was wrestling with the heresy of the Docetists who denied the humanity of Jesus. In his letters to the churches, his concern about the incarnation and crucifixion was based on false teachers at that time especially the Docetists who denied the reality of the incarnation. This is why Ignatius confirmed in his letters that Jesus Christ suffered under Pontius Pilate. So in resisting and countering the false teachers, Ignatius tries to affirm both the divinity of Jesus and the reality of his incarnation. See Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch*.

<sup>86</sup> Keener, *The Gospel of John*, 1:408.



the Lord Jesus. This is the first time in the Gospel where it is mentioned that the Word became flesh, one having flesh and blood, and, “this is the supreme revelation.”<sup>87</sup>

### Letters to Serapion I.10.2; John 1:1

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ Λόγος, καὶ ὁ Λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν Θεόν, καὶ Θεὸς ἦν ὁ Λόγος (KS)  
In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and God was the Word (MD)

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος (NA28)  
In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (NRS)

Here in section 10.4 of this letter, Athanasius began to defend the divinity of the Holy Spirit and give the correct interpretation of 1 Tim 5:21. His argument started from this section until I.14.7. He cited John once again and it is a direct quotation used by him to prove the eternity of Christ and that he was from the beginning with the Father. In his interpretation, Athanasius made the connection between the persons in the Trinity (Son and the Spirit). When we read Ἐν ἀρχῇ (in the beginning) we remember the beginning of the creation in the book of Gen 1:1. It becomes clear two verses later in John 1:3, when he says that everything came into being through him. The word ἀρχῇ means, “beginning, origin.”<sup>88</sup> This verse is different than the one in 1 John 1:1, which says, Ο ἦν ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς, ὁ ἀκηκόαμεν, ὁ ἑώρακάμεν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς ἡμῶν, ὁ ἔθεασάμεθα καὶ αἱ χεῖρες ἡμῶν ἐψηλάφησαν περὶ τοῦ λόγου τῆς ζωῆς. (We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life). The beginning here in this verse “will refer to the beginning of the community’s experience of Jesus.”<sup>89</sup> In John 1:1, the verse starts with Ἐν ἀρχῇ (in the beginning), where in 1 John 1:1 says ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς (from the

<sup>87</sup> Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 127.

<sup>88</sup> Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 27; Zerwick and Grosvenor, *A Grammatical Analysis*, 285.

<sup>89</sup> Von Wahlde, *The Gospel and Letters of John*, 2.

beginning). The Ἐν means, “preposition with dative, most common preposition in the N.T. used with greatest variety of meanings.”<sup>90</sup> While ἀπ’ means, “preposition with genitive from, away from, out of.”<sup>91</sup>

### Letters to Serapion I.10.2; John 4:26

Αὐτὸς ὁ λαλῶν πάρεμι (KS)

I who speak am here (MD)

λέγει αὐτῇ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· ἐγὼ εἰμι, ὁ λαλῶν σοι (NA28)

Jesus said to her, I am he, the one who is speaking to you (NRS)

This verse is a part of the conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well of Jacob. Athanasius cited only one word from the original verse; λαλῶν from the verb λαλέω means, “speak as with message”<sup>92</sup> and he made minor additions to the verse. However, he changed the name Ἰησοῦς (Jesus) to αὐτὸς (who). In the previous quotation, Athanasius mentioned the verse from John 1:1 regarding the divinity of Christ. Here Athanasius references the meeting between Jesus and the Samaritan woman. He is declaring that the Word who was from the beginning with God became flesh and He came near us. She told him Λέγει αὐτῷ ἡ γυνή· οἶδα ὅτι Μεσσίας ἔρχεται ὁ λεγόμενος χριστός. ὅταν ἔλθῃ ἐκεῖνος, ἀναγγελεῖ ἡμῖν ἅπαντα. (The woman said to him, I know that Messiah is coming who is called Christ. When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us). From his words one can understand that she is speaking with an eschatological perspective ὅτι Μεσσίας ἔρχεται (Messiah is coming).<sup>93</sup> Jesus’ answer to the woman, as

<sup>90</sup> Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 64; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 257.

<sup>91</sup> Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 21.

<sup>92</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 243; Zerwick and Grosvenor, *A Grammatical Analysis*, 296; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 464.

<sup>93</sup> Μεσσίας, Hebrew Messiah = the anointed one, translated into Greek as Χριστός, see Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 11.

given is this verse, reassures her that, “I who speak am here.” This quotation is paraphrased; he even added the word *πάρειμι* to the verse. The word *πάρειμι* consists of two parts, “the first one *παρά* which means beside, and *εἰμί* which means be.”<sup>94</sup> The *ἐγὼ εἰμι* is a significant expression in which Jesus revealed Himself as the Messiah. This declaration caused the Samaritan woman to begin worshipping Him. This verse was given by Athanasius to emphasize the humanity of Christ, and to indicate that the Samaritan woman understood that He was the Messiah the Jewish people were waiting for. From the conversation, one can grasp that Jesus first showed her that he is a Jew. She said to him in 4:9 λέγει οὖν αὐτῷ ἡ γυνὴ ἡ Σαμαρίτις. πῶς σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ὢν παρ’ ἐμοῦ πεῖν αἰτεῖς γυναικὸς Σαμαρίτιδος οὔσης; οὐ γὰρ συγχρῶνται Ἰουδαῖοι Σαμαρίταις (The Samaritan woman said to him, How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria? Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans). Secondly, in v. 19 he declared to her that he is a prophet, λέγει αὐτῷ ἡ γυνὴ. κύριε, θεωρῶ ὅτι προφήτης εἶ σύ (The woman said to him, Sir, I see that you are a prophet), and thirdly that he is the Messiah. She says to him in v. 25, λέγει αὐτῷ ἡ γυνὴ· οἶδα ὅτι Μεσσίας ἔρχεται ὁ λεγόμενος χριστός· ὅταν ἔλθῃ ἐκεῖνος, ἀναγγελεῖ ἡμῖν ἅπαντα (The woman said to him, I know that Messiah is coming [who is called Christ]). When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us). This gradual declaration explained by Ephrem the Syriac was, “from degree to degree he led her and placed her on the highest degree. She first saw him as someone thirsting, and then as Jew, then as prophet, and after that as God. As someone thirsting, she persuaded him, as a Jew, she recoiled from him, as a learned one, she interrogated him, as a prophet she was reprimanded, and as the Messiah, she worshiped

---

<sup>94</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 299.

him.”<sup>95</sup> This expression is used again by Jesus in John 6:35 when he declares to the Jewish people that He is the ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς (I am the bread of life).

### Letters to Serapion I.11.1; John 14:16

Παράκλητος ἐλέχθη (KS)  
Paraclete (MD)

κάγώ ἐρωτήσω τὸν πατέρα καὶ ἄλλον παράκλητον δώσει ὑμῖν, ἵνα μεθ’ ὑμῶν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα ᾗ (NA28)  
And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever (NRS)

Athanasius started section 11 with what the Bible calls the Spirit; Spirit of adopted sonship (Rom 8:15), Spirit of sanctification (Rom 1:4), Spirit of God (Matt 3:16), Spirit of Christ (Rom 8:9; 1 Pet 1:11), and Paraclete. He cited John 4 times in this section of the letter, as well other citations from the Scriptures. In this verse, Athanasius quoted the word Παράκλητος referring to the Holy Spirit and added the verb ἐλέχθη. In his continuation of His farewell discourse with His twelve disciples, which was mentioned in chapter 13, the Lord Jesus promised His disciples he would send them the Holy Spirit:

1. The promise of sending the Holy Spirit is mentioned in John five times: 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7, 13.
2. The term Παράκλητος (Advocate) is mentioned only in John’s writings five times: 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7; and 1 John 2:1.
3. Only in John’s writing may we find another term for the Holy Spirit, he used τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας (the Spirit of Truth) three times: 14:17; 15:26; 16:13.
4. John used also ἄλλον παράκλητον (another Advocate) as in 14:16, and this means that Jesus was the first Advocate. We read this expression again when John calls

---

<sup>95</sup> Ephrem the Syriac, *Commentary on Tatian’s Diatesaron*, 12.18.

Jesus himself as παράκλητον (Advocate) in 1 John 2:1.

The term ἄλλον means “other, another, generally, another person or thing in the same kind.”<sup>96</sup> This verse indicates that Jesus was the first Paraclete, even though the Gospel of John does not say that Jesus is a Paraclete. In this case, the Holy Spirit will come as ἄλλον (another) Advocate to substitute for Jesus and continue the work, which was done by Him. Hoeck says, “John emphasizes the role of the Paraclete in exalting Jesus and interpreting his work of salvation while omitting any account of gifts of the Spirit.”<sup>97</sup> The ἄλλον παράκλητον or the second Paraclete will be with the disciples forever, and His mission will be parallel to that of Christ. He will be with them, helping, guiding, and protecting them.

What does the word Παράκλητος mean? Is there any Aramaic or Hebrew word equivalent or synonym for it? Did the church Fathers use this term in their writings? Why did Jesus call Him ἄλλον παράκλητον (another Advocate) in 14:16? If Jesus is the first Παράκλητος what is the similarity between the first Advocate and the second Advocate? All of these questions should be answered in order to understand the concept of Παράκλητος in the Gospel of John. The word Παράκλητος from the verb παρακαλέω means, “call in, call on, invoke, comfort, exhort, entreat, and beseech.”<sup>98</sup> The word Παράκλητος consists of two parts; the first one is Παρά which means issuing from, and the second part is καλέω means call, divine calling.<sup>99</sup> In all these meanings, the word in general means someone who requests or asks for help from someone else. The noun of

<sup>96</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 44.

<sup>97</sup> Hoeck, “The Johannine Paraclete,” 27.

<sup>98</sup> Lampe and Liddell, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 1017.

<sup>99</sup> Lampe and Liddell, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 696; 1006; Zerwick and Grosvenor, *A Grammatical Analysis*, 331; Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 296; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 623.

this verb is Παράκλητος means “advocate, intercessor, spokesman on someone’s behalf, comforter, consoler.”<sup>100</sup> And all these meanings apply to the Holy Spirit. According to Hoeck, “there is no Aramaic or Hebrew equivalent to it.”<sup>101</sup> In the Syriac church, which still uses the Aramaic language and modern-day Syriac in their services, they do not have this term in the Syriac language but rather they use the original Greek term. Origen, one of the church fathers in the second century, used the term Παράκλητος in his book *On First Principles* II.VII six times.<sup>102</sup> He reflected on the Holy Spirit and His role in the Old Testament (prophets) and the New Testament (Apostles). He gave two meanings to the word Παράκλητος. He said, “Let us then consider whether perhaps this title ‘Paraclete’ means one thing when applied to the Saviour and another when applied to the Holy Spirit.”<sup>103</sup> John mentions in 14:16 what Jesus says regarding the Holy Spirit; he uses the term ἄλλον παράκλητον (another Advocate). Jesus will ask the Father to give them another Advocate, which means that he Himself was the first Paraclete while He was with the disciples during his earthly ministry. Regarding this subject, Gregory of Nazianzus stated, “And therefore He came after Christ, that a Comforter should not be lacking unto us; but another Comforter, that you might acknowledge His co-equality. For this word another marks an Alter Ego, a name of equal Lordship, not of inequality. For another is not said, I know, of different kinds, but of things consubstantial.”<sup>104</sup> Regarding this matter Hoeck states:

The Paraclete is like Christ Jesus in nature and operation. The Paraclete will continue forever after Jesus’ exaltation to the Father. Both are sent into the world from the Father (16:28; 14:16), both will remain with the disciples (15:4; 14:17,

<sup>100</sup> Lampe and Liddell, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 1018.

<sup>101</sup> Hoeck, “The Johannine Paraclete,” 24.

<sup>102</sup> Lubac, *Origen on First Principles*, 116–119.

<sup>103</sup> Lubac, *Origen on First Principles*, 119.

<sup>104</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration On Pentecost*, 41.12.

and teach them what they need to know (13:13; 14:26). Both Jesus and the Paraclete are holy (6:39; 14:26), and both are the truth (16:16,17). As Jesus glorifying the Father during his ministry (17:4), the Paraclete will glorify Jesus (16:14). Both Jesus and the Paraclete are known by the disciples, but both will be rejected by the world (1:11–12; 14:17).<sup>105</sup>

This is why Jesus mentions that He will send them another Paraclete; it is to continue what Jesus had done while with them and will remind the disciples whatever Jesus had told them. Köstenberger and Swain suggest that, “Jesus’ reference to the Spirit as another Paracletos indicates that the Spirit’s presence with the disciples will replace Jesus’ encouraging and strengthening presence with them while on earth.”<sup>106</sup>

Why did Athanasius add the word ἐλέχθη in his quotation? First of all, it is from the verb ἐλέγχω that means, “convict or convince someone of something.”<sup>107</sup> Secondly, he is explaining the work of the Spirit in someone who has done something wrong and brings him or her to repent. Carson states that, “The Paraclete will prove the world wrong about sin; that is, he will convict the world of wrong ideas about sin.”<sup>108</sup> The same verb is mentioned in John 3:20, where it says: For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed (πᾶς γὰρ ὁ φαῦλα πράσων μισεῖ τὸ φῶς καὶ οὐκ ἔρχεται πρὸς τὸ φῶς, ἵνα μὴ ἐλεγχθῇ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ). It is the same idea as in this verse quoted by Athanasius, urging the faithful to repent and come to the light. The same verb is also used also in John 16:8, but in the future tense.

### Letters to Serapion I.11.1; John 14:26

Παράκλητος ἐλέχθη (KS)  
Paraclete (MD)

<sup>105</sup> Hoeck, “The Johannine Paraclete,” 27.

<sup>106</sup> Köstenberger and Swain, *Father, Son, and Spirit*, 97.

<sup>107</sup> Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 248; Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 142.

<sup>108</sup> Carson, “The Function of the Paraclete in John 16,” 549.

ὁ δὲ παράκλητος, τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, ὃ πέμψει ὁ πατὴρ ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί μου, ἐκεῖνος ὑμᾶς διδάξει πάντα καὶ ὑπομνήσει ὑμᾶς πάντα ἃ εἶπον ὑμῖν [ἐγώ] (NA28)

But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you (NRS)

Athanasius again used the word Παράκλητος. In this verse, the Father will send the Holy Spirit in the Son's name, and He will teach and remind them. This verse explains the role and the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the disciples. He will teach them everything that was told by Jesus during His earthly ministry. Not just teach them, but also remind them of that entire saying by Christ to them. This verse gives comfort to the disciples, assuring them they will not be alone in their ministry. As Chrysostom stated, "but remaineth with you (ver.17), is the expression of the One implying that Himself will depart. Then that they may not be grieved, He saith, that as long as He should remain with them and the Spirit should not come."<sup>109</sup>

### Letters to Serapion I.11.1; John 15:26

Παράκλητος ἐλέχθη (KS)  
Paraclete (MD)

Ὅταν ἔλθῃ ὁ παράκλητος ὃν ἐγὼ πέμψω ὑμῖν παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς, τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας ὃ παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκπορεύεται, ἐκεῖνος μαρτυρήσει περὶ ἐμοῦ (NA28)

When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf (NRS)

This verse explains the relationship between the three persons in the Trinity and that the Father is the origin and the source of the Spirit. One can see the difference between this verse and the previous one. In this verse the Son will send the Spirit, but in the previous verse, the Father will send the Spirit. As a matter of fact, there is no difference between the two verses but both of them explain that the three Persons of the Trinity are working

<sup>109</sup> Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of John*, 75.3.



simultaneously, which demonstrates the relationship within the Trinity. The Spirit will testify on behalf of Jesus, which means that He will be witness to the life of Jesus on this earth. The verb μαρτυρήσει, from the verb μαρτυρέω, is mentioned many times by Jesus himself in the Gospel of John 3:11, where it says, ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω σοι ὅτι ὃ οἶδαμεν λαλοῦμεν καὶ ὃ ἑώρακαμεν μαρτυροῦμεν, καὶ τὴν μαρτυρίαν ἡμῶν οὐ λαμβάνετε (Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony). The verb is mentioned again in the Gospel of John 5:36, where it says, Ἐγὼ δὲ ἔχω τὴν μαρτυρίαν μείζω τοῦ Ἰωάννου· τὰ γὰρ ἔργα ἃ δέδωκέν μοι ὁ πατὴρ ἵνα τελειώσω αὐτά, αὐτὰ τὰ ἔργα ἃ ποιῶ μαρτυρεῖ περὶ ἐμοῦ ὅτι ὁ πατὴρ με ἀπέσταλκεν (But I have a testimony greater than John's. The works that the Father has given me to complete, the very works that I am doing, testify on my behalf that the Father has sent me). The Spirit proceeds from the Father. This is the third article of the Nicene Constantinopolitan Creed in which the church Fathers affirmed the procession from the Father. In his work *On the Holy Spirit*, Didymus the Blind suggested that, "He does not say, from God, or from the Almighty, but from the Father, because though the Father and God Almighty are the same, yet the Spirit of Truth probably proceeds from the God as the Father, the Begetter . . . the Father and the Son together mend the Spirit of Truth: He comes by the will both of the Father and the Son."<sup>110</sup>

### Letters to Serapion I.11.1; John 16:7

Παράκλητος ἐλέχθη (KS)  
Paraclete (MD)

ἀλλ' ἐγὼ τὴν ἀλήθειαν λέγω ὑμῖν, συμφέρει ὑμῖν ἵνα ἐγὼ ἀπέλθω. εἰάν γὰρ μὴ ἀπέλθω, ὁ παράκλητος οὐκ

---

<sup>110</sup> Didymus the Blind, *On the Holy Spirit*, 26.

ἐλεύσεται πρὸς ὑμᾶς· ἐὰν δὲ πορευθῶ, πέμψω αὐτὸν πρὸς ὑμᾶς (NA28)  
 Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the  
 Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you (NRS)

Athanasius emphasizes the word *Παράκλητος*, which is mentioned in the Gospel of John four times. The sending of the Holy Spirit is related to the glorification of Jesus and His ascension into heaven after He finishes His mission on the cross.

### Letters to Serapion I.11.6; John 20:22

Λάβετε Πνεῦμα ἅγιον (KS)  
 Receive the Holy Spirit (MD)

καὶ τοῦτο εἰπὼν ἐνεφύσησεν καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς· λάβετε πνεῦμα ἅγιον (NA28)  
 When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit (NRS)

This verse reminds us of what happened in the upper room on the day of the resurrection when Jesus appeared to his disciples and breathed on them. Athanasius mentioned this verse to make a distinction between the Spirit and the minister's angels. In this section of the letter, he started to invoke the events that have a direct relation that proved the deity of the Spirit. He referred to the Spirit as a Paraclete who proceeds from the Father, and then he mentioned the baptism in the river Jordan and the Spirit, which descended as a dove. Finally, he mentioned the event, which happened on the day of Resurrection, when Jesus appeared to His disciples and told them to receive the Holy Spirit. Athanasius quoted it is a direct citation to the second half of the verse; breathed on them (*ἐνεφύσησεν*). The verb *ἐνεφύσησεν*, which is from the verb *ἐμφυσάω*, meaning, "breathe on."<sup>111</sup> This is the only time that the Bible mentions that Jesus breathed on His disciples.

---

<sup>111</sup> Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 326.

### Letters to Serapion I.11.7; John 15:26

τὸ Πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας, ὃ παρὰ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐκπορεύεται (KS)  
But the Spirit of Truth, who proceeds from the Father (MD)

Ἵταν ἔλθῃ ὁ παράκλητος ὃν ἐγὼ πέμψω ὑμῖν παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς, τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας ὃ παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς  
ἐκπορεύεται, ἐκεῖνος μαρτυρήσει περὶ ἐμοῦ (NA28)  
When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from  
the Father, he will testify on my behalf (NRS)

It is a direct citation to the first part of the second half of the verse, which asserted that the Spirit is the Spirit of Truth. The Spirit of Truth proceeds from the Father. Concerning this procession, John of Damascus stated, “Likewise we believe also in one Holy Spirit the Lord and Giver of Life: Who proceeds from the Father and rests in the Son: the object of equal adoration and glorification with the Father and Son, since He is co-essential and co-eternal: the Spirit of God, direct, authoritative, the fountain of wisdom, and life, and holiness.”<sup>112</sup>

### Letters to Serapion I.11.7; John 16:14

καὶ ἐκ τοῦ αὐτοῦ λαμβάνει καὶ δίδεται (KS)  
And from him receives and is given (MD)

ἐκεῖνος ἐμὲ δοξάσει, ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ ἐμοῦ λήμψεται καὶ ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν (NA28)  
He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you (NRS)

In this passage, Athanasius spoke in a passive voice while referring to the Son. It is a substitution of words; Athanasius changed the second part of the original verse. He changed the verb, which is in the original verse. He changed ἀναγγελεῖ to δίδεται. The verb in the original verse ἀναγγελεῖ from the verb ἀναγγέλλω means, “as carrying back news of happening, report, inform; in religious usage preach, teach, declare.”<sup>113</sup> He changed this verb to δίδεται a third person passive from the verb δίδωμι, which means to

<sup>112</sup> John of Damascus, *An Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, 1.8.

<sup>113</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 48; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 50.

give.<sup>114</sup> So the Holy Spirit λήμψεται from the Son and ἀναγγελεῖ or δίδοται to the disciples. This statement means that the Spirit is inseparable from Jesus because he will take what is His and declare it to the disciples. Keener states that, “the glorification of Jesus by the Spirit may relate to a continuing exposition of his character.”<sup>115</sup> The Spirit will continue to spread Jesus’ message in this World through the Spirit, and according to Keener, “this passage indicates that Jesus passed the Father’s message, so the Spirit would continue to mediate Jesus’ message.”<sup>116</sup> With the end of this section, Athanasius did not cite any verse from John in the next seven sections, until section 19.

### Letters to Serapion I.19.2; 1 John 1:5

Ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν φῶς ἐστὶ (KS)  
Our God is Light (MD)

Καὶ ἔστιν αὕτη ἡ ἀγγελία ἣν ἀκηκόαμεν ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀναγγέλλομεν ὑμῖν, ὅτι ὁ θεὸς φῶς ἐστὶν καὶ σκοτία ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδεμία (NA28)

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all (NRS)

In this section of the letter, Athanasius cited numerous references from the Bible. He cited the Gospel of John 8 times, in addition to the other biblical references when he started to give examples or images from the Bible. These examples or images explained the order in the Trinity; the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Athanasius started to use παραδείγματα (images) in order to illustrate the relation within the Trinity, and he gave a direct part quote of the original verse. He used expressions like fountain, river, and light to explain the functional relation between the three persons in the Trinity. In this section of the letter, Athanasius gave Scriptural images to make it easy on the reader to

<sup>114</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 114; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 191.

<sup>115</sup> In note 119 he quotes Schlier who says that “the Spirit illuminates the work of Jesus in his glory.”

<sup>116</sup> Keener, *The Gospel of John*, 2:1041.

comprehend the relation between the three persons in the Trinity. The ὅτι, which means “conjunction, that, introducing an indirect statement.”<sup>117</sup> is important since Athanasius omitted it in his citation. There is no mention in the Gospel of John that God is light. However, that Jesus is light is mentioned in many places. It is found in 1:4; 8:12; 9:5; 11:9; 12:35, 46. This is the first time John mentioned that God is light, and in Him there is οὐδεμία no darkness.

### Letters to Serapion I.19.4; John 1:9

τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν, ὃ φωτίζει πάντα ἄνθρωπον ἐρχόμενον εἰς τὸν κόσμον (KS)  
He was the true Light who enlightens every human being coming into the world (MD)

Ἦν τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν, ὃ φωτίζει πάντα ἄνθρωπον, ἐρχόμενον εἰς τὸν κόσμον (NA28)  
The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world (NRS)

In this verse, Athanasius gave an example how Jesus carries the same character as God the Father does. He is the true light from true light. It is a direct quotation of the verse, but Athanasius removed the Ἦν from the original verse. Did the elimination affect the meaning? It seems that Ἦν is left untranslated in this verse. John the Baptist was not the Light but a μαρτυρέω, or witness to the Light. Christ was the true Light that came to this world, and in him we are enlightened. He is τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν (the true light). Christ, and not John the Baptist, is the True and genuine light. The expression τὸ φῶς (the Light) is the subject in this verse which is the Christ “who was in existence or he ‘the Word’ as subject and ‘τὸ φῶς’ as predicate.”<sup>118</sup> Athanasius declared, “But if the Son is the Light, which has come into the world, beyond all dispute the world was made by the Son. For in

<sup>117</sup> Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 142; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 592; Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 287.

<sup>118</sup> Zerwick and Grosvenor, *A Grammatical Analysis*, 285.

the beginning of the Gospel, the Evangelist, speaking of John the Baptist, says, He was not that Light, but that he might bear witness concerning that Light For Christ Himself was, as we have said before, the True Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.”<sup>119</sup>

### Letters to Serapion I.19.5; John 1:12

“Οσοι γάρ ἔλαβον αὐτόν, ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν τέκνα Θεοῦ γενέσθαι (KS)

For however many received him, to them he gave the power to become the children of God (MD)

ὅσοι δὲ ἔλαβον αὐτόν, ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν τέκνα θεοῦ γενέσθαι, τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ  
(NA28)

But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God (NRS)

Athanasius continued explaining the relations within the Trinity, and how faithful people become children of God when they accept Jesus by faith. It is a direct quotation of the first half of the verse, but he changed δέ to γάρ. Why did he change this? Did this change affect the meaning of the verse? It did not change the meaning, rather Athanasius put an emphasized that those who receive Him will become children of God. The word δέ means “conjunctive Particle; most commonly used to denote continuation and further thought development, taking its specific sense from the context and; contrast but; transition then, now with no temporal sense.”<sup>120</sup> On the other hand, the word γάρ means “conjunction used to express cause, inference, continuation, or to explain, cause or reason: for.”<sup>121</sup> He explains that the cause or the reason that ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν (he gave them the power) to become the children of God, is to believe in him.<sup>122</sup> We become children of God by the

<sup>119</sup> Athanasius, *Against the Arians*, 4.19.

<sup>120</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 104.

<sup>121</sup> Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 151; Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 189; Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 96.

<sup>122</sup> In his work, *The Gospel and Letters to John*, Von Wahlde comments, “This is the only time in the Johannine tradition that the believer is said to have ἐξουσίαν (Power) to become a child of God.

Spirit in Christ. The word ἔλαβον from the verb λαμβάνω means, “in a more or less active sense take, take hold of, grasp, receive.”<sup>123</sup> Receiving Jesus can mean “welcoming him as God’s agent.”<sup>124</sup> As, for instance, in John 5:43: those who are receiving him will become the children of God, ἐγὼ ἐλήλυθα ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ πατρὸς μου, καὶ οὐ λαμβάνετε με. ἐὰν ἄλλος ἔλθῃ ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τῷ ἰδίῳ, ἐκεῖνον λήμψεσθε. (I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive).

### Letters to Serapion I.19.7; John 20:22

Λάβετε γὰρ Πνεῦμα ἅγιον (KS)  
Receive the Holy Spirit (MD)

καὶ τοῦτο εἰπὼν ἐνεφύσησεν καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς· λάβετε πνεῦμα ἅγιον (NA28)  
When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit (NRS)

It is through the Spirit that Jesus breathed on his disciples in the upper room while they were gathering together, due to their fear from the Jewish leaders. Receiving the Holy Spirit means God is in us, and we are becoming a holy temple of God. It is a direct quote but he added γάρ. He added it to explain the continuation of the work of Jesus when He breathed on his disciples.

### Letters to Serapion I.19.7; 1 John 4:12-13

Ἐὰν ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους, ὁ Θεὸς ἐν ἡμῖν μένει Ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν, ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ μένομεν, καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν ἡμῖν, ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ Πνεύματος αὐτοῦ ἔδωκεν ἡμῖν (KS)

If we should love one another, God remains in us. In this we know that we remain in him, and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit (MD)

θεὸν οὐδεὶς πώποτε τεθέαται. ἐὰν ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους, ὁ θεὸς ἐν ἡμῖν μένει καὶ ἡ ἀγάπη αὐτοῦ ἐν ἡμῖν τετελειωμένη ἐστίν. Ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ μένομεν καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν ἡμῖν, ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος αὐτοῦ

---

Elsewhere, the word refers to ‘power’ given to Jesus (5:27; 10:18; 17:2) or the ‘authority’ of Pilate (19:10, 11), 7.

<sup>123</sup> Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 116.

<sup>124</sup> Keener, *The Gospel of John*, 2:399.

δέδωκεν ἡμῖν (NA28)

No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit (NRS)

It is a direct quotation but he quoted only the second part of the first verse, and the second part of the second verse. These verses explain the mutual relationship between Him and the followers as the children of God.

### Letters to Serapion I.19.7; John 14:23

Ἐλευσόμεθα ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ Πατήρ, καὶ μονὴν παρ' αὐτῷ ποιήσομεν (KS)  
I and the Father will come and make our home with him (MD)

ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· ἐάν τις ἀγαπᾷ με τὸν λόγον μου τηρήσει, καὶ ὁ πατήρ μου ἀγαπήσει αὐτὸν καὶ πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐλευσόμεθα καὶ μονὴν παρ' αὐτῷ ποιήσομεθα (NA28)  
Jesus answered him, Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them (NRS)

This verse shows the relation between the Father and the Son. It illustrates that Jesus is the Son of God when he says, my Father ὁ πατήρ μου and me. It is a paraphrase quoted by Athanasius. First of all, the last word in both verses is different in the English translation. In fact, there are no differences in the Greek words ποιήσομεν and ποιήσομεθα because both of them are from the verb “ποιέω means *do, make*.”<sup>125</sup> Those who keep his commandments, love, and obey him, Jesus and his father will come to dwell among them, among the believers. The word μονήν means, “staying, live, stay dwelling (place), room, abide.”<sup>126</sup> The same word is mentioned in John 14:2 as a dwelling place ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ τοῦ πατρὸς μου μοναὶ πολλαί εἰσιν· εἰ δὲ μή, εἶπον ἂν ὑμῖν ὅτι πορεύομαι ἑτοιμάσαι τόπον ὑμῖν (In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?). This word is mentioned only in these two

<sup>125</sup> Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 687.

<sup>126</sup> Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 130.



places with this meaning. Concerning this verse, Origen in his work *On First Principles* stated, “According to His own declaration, I and the Father shall come, and we shall make our abode with him. He makes them, after all their vices and passions have been consumed, a holy temple, worthy of Himself.”<sup>127</sup>

### Letters to Serapion I.19.8; John 14:6

εἰμι ἡ ζωὴ (KS)  
I am the Life (MD)

λέγει αὐτῷ [ὁ] Ἰησοῦς· ἐγὼ εἰμι ἡ ὁδὸς καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια καὶ ἡ ζωὴ· οὐδεὶς ἔρχεται πρὸς τὸν πατέρα εἰ μὴ δι’ ἐμοῦ  
(NA28)

Jesus said to him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me  
(NRS)

Athanasius cited only two words from the original verse. What Athanasius is saying here is that Jesus is the life and Christians are a temple of God, a temple of the Holy Spirit and have been given life in the Spirit who is in them. Christians have been given Life in the Spirit, and Christ is the Life, and as a result, Christ is living in His followers. For the faithful this means to die to this world and live for Christ. This happens when one accepts Jesus as savior and become a new person in Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit. Because of this fact His followers are the children of God and see his fruits in their lives and leave their old lives behind in order to become a new creation in Jesus Christ. The term ἡ ζωὴ (the Life) is an appropriation of “a way of behavior but also appropriate to the one who brings them life.”<sup>128</sup> This verse shows that Jesus is the life and that no one can come to the Father unless through him. As Von Wahlde states, “having a life is impossible without having Jesus.”<sup>129</sup> He is life itself, as given in John 5:26, ὡσπερ γὰρ ὁ

<sup>127</sup> Origen, *On First Principles*, 1.1.2.

<sup>128</sup> Keener, *The Gospel of John*, 2:43.

<sup>129</sup> Von Wahlde, *The Gospel and Letters to John*, 637.

πατήρ ἔχει ζωὴν ἐν ἑαυτῷ, οὕτως καὶ τῷ υἱῷ ἔδωκεν ζωὴν ἔχειν ἐν ἑαυτῷ (For just as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself). The word ζωή (life) is the opposite of the word θάνατος (death) and by saying that Christ is the life means that He is immortal, without beginning and without end. He is the only one who has immortality as St. Paul declares in 1 Tim 6:16, when he says, ὁ μόνος ἔχων ἀθανασίαν, φῶς οἰκῶν ἀπρόσιτον, ὃν εἶδεν οὐδεὶς ἀνθρώπων οὐδὲ ἰδεῖν δύναται· ὧς τιμὴ καὶ κράτος αἰώνιον, ἀμήν (It is he alone who has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see; to him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen).

#### Letters to Serapion I.19.9; John 14: 10–11

Ὁ Πατήρ γὰρ, φησὶν, ὁ μένων ἐν ἐμοί, αὐτὸς ποιεῖ τὰ ἔργα Πιστεύετε μοι, ὅτι ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ Πατρὶ, καὶ ὁ Πατήρ ἐν ἐμοί· εἰ δὲ μὴ, διὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτὰ πιστεύετε μοι (KS)  
 The Father who remains in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Otherwise, believe me because of the works themselves (MD)

οὐ πιστεύεις ὅτι ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ καὶ ὁ πατήρ ἐν ἐμοί ἐστιν; τὰ ῥήματα ἃ ἐγὼ λέγω ὑμῖν ἀπ' ἑμαυτοῦ οὐ λαλῶ, ὁ δὲ πατήρ ἐν ἐμοί μένων ποιεῖ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ. πιστεύετε μοι ὅτι ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ καὶ ὁ πατήρ ἐν ἐμοί· εἰ δὲ μὴ, διὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτὰ πιστεύετε (NA28)  
 Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves (NRS)

These two verses explain that the work which Jesus is doing is accomplished by the Father. Athanasius quoted the second verse and it is a direct quotation. However, the first verse is a paraphrased quotation. He added two words to the first verse; γὰρ, φησὶν. The question arises of why he added them to the verse. Concerning the meaning of the word γάρ see above *Letters to Serapion* I.19.5; 1:12. The second word φησὶν means, “φημί, third person singular, as introducing direct discourse or to affirm, and also as introducing

the quotation.”<sup>130</sup> In this quotation, Athanasius added to the verse in order to introduce a quotation. He is in the Father and the Father is in Him, otherwise we have to believe in him because of the works τὰ ἔργα, which he is doing. Concerning this indwelling, Hilary of Poitiers suggested that, “The words of the Lord, I in the Father, and the Father in Me, confuse many minds, and not unnaturally, for the powers of human reason cannot provide them with any intelligible meaning. It seems impossible that one object should be both within and without another.”<sup>131</sup> He continued discussing the divine existence, saying to those who could not comprehend this kind of indwelling between the Father and the Son. He said, “This is a problem which the wit of man will never solve, nor will human research ever find an analogy for this condition of Divine existence. But what man cannot understand.”<sup>132</sup> They are within each other, and this declaration clarifies the inner relationship between them. As Jesus says in Matt 11:27, Πάντα μοι παρεδόθη ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρός μου, καὶ οὐδεὶς ἐπιγινώσκει τὸν υἱὸν εἰ μὴ ὁ πατήρ, οὐδὲ τὸν πατέρα τις ἐπιγινώσκει εἰ μὴ ὁ υἱὸς καὶ ὃ ἂν βούληται ὁ υἱὸς ἀποκαλύψαι. (All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him). The verb ἐπιγινώσκει (knows) from the verb ἐπιγινώσκω means, “know exactly, completely”<sup>133</sup> and this verse refers to the full knowledge of Christ towards his Father.

---

<sup>130</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 398; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 864; Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 210.

<sup>131</sup> Hilary of Poitiers, *On the Trinity*, 3.1.

<sup>132</sup> Hilary of Poitiers, *On the Trinity*, 3.1.

<sup>133</sup> Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 73.

### Letters to Serapion I.20.5; John 15:26

ἥτις ἐκ Πατρὸς λέγεται ἐκπορεύεσθαι (KS)  
This is said to proceed from the Father (MD)

Ὅταν ἔλθῃ ὁ παράκλητος ὃν ἐγὼ πέμψω ὑμῖν παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς, τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας ὃ παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκπορεύεται, ἐκεῖνος μαρτυρήσει περὶ ἐμοῦ (NA28)  
When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf (NRS)

As in the previous section, Athanasius continued discussing the image that he started in section 19, and he cited John 9 times to support his defence of the Godhead of the Spirit. Most of them have a direct link to the Spirit and they are mentioned by Jesus Himself concerning the Holy Spirit. His first citation, regarding the procession of the Spirit to prove that the Father is the origin, is an important one. He emphasized the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father. This verse is very clear regarding this matter and was declared in the council of Constantinople. He quoted a direct part from the verse and added changes to the original one. He changed *παρά* to *ἐκ* in his quotation. What is the difference between them? Did the new word change the meaning? He also added the word *ἥτις* in his quotation. Why did he do this? The word *ἥτις* from *ὅστις* means “a relative pronoun usually occurring in the nominative case: as an indefinite relative referring to anyone or anything in general whoever, whatever, everyone who, anything that.”<sup>134</sup>

### Letters to Serapion I.20.6; John 3:16

ὁ Θεὸς ἠγάπησε τὸν κόσμον, ὥστε τὸν Υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ ἀπέστειλεν (KS)  
God so loved the world that he sent his only-begotten Son (MD)

οὕτως γὰρ ἠγάπησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν κόσμον, ὥστε τὸν υἱὸν τὸν μονογενῆ ἔδωκεν, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν μὴ ἀπόληται ἀλλ' ἔχῃ ζωὴν αἰώνιον (NA28)

<sup>134</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 286; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 590; Gingeich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 142.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life (NRS)

In section 6, Athanasius cited John 6 times: sending the Son, sending the Paraclete, the glorification of the Father by the Son, the Spirit glorifies the Son, the Son declared what he heard from the Father, the Spirit receives from the Son as the Son from the Father and the Father sent the Spirit in the name of Jesus. This first verse in this section explains the greatest and unlimited love that God the Father shows toward humanity when he sent his only begotten *μονογενῆ* Son to save mankind. As Carson suggests, the, “Son’s mission was itself the consequence of God’s love.”<sup>135</sup> It is an important verse which shows the mission of Christ on earth and the good news he brought to humanity. In his quote, which is a direct citation with some changes, Athanasius removed the words *οὕτως γάρ*, which are in the original verse. He also changed the verb *ἔδωκεν* to *ἀπέστειλεν*. Does this change the meaning? First of all, the word *οὕτως* means, “an adverb from the near demonstrative *οὕτως* (this), in this manner, in this way, thus, so.”<sup>136</sup> Athanasius also changed the verb *ἔδωκεν* in the original verse to the verb *ἀπέστειλεν*. The verb *ἔδωκεν* from *δίδωμι* with a basic meaning to give.”<sup>137</sup> Regarding *ἔδωκεν*, the verb is mentioned in Scripture many times with the meaning to give. For example in John 1:12 it says, *ὅσοι δὲ ἔλαβον αὐτόν, ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν τέκνα θεοῦ γενέσθαι, τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ* (But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God). Another example is in John 4:5, during his meeting with the Samaritan woman where it says, *Ἐρχεται οὖν εἰς πόλιν τῆς Σαμαρείας λεγομένην Συχάρ πλησίον τοῦ χωρίου ὃ ἔδωκεν*

<sup>135</sup> Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 204.

<sup>136</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 289; Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 144; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 602.

<sup>137</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 114; Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 48.

Ἰακώβ [τῷ] Ἰωσήφ τῷ υἱῷ αὐτοῦ (So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph.) The verb was altered from ἀπέστειλεν to the verb ἀποστέλλω, which means “send forth, send out, in relation to a sender send with commission, send with authority, send for a purpose.”<sup>138</sup> There is no difference between the two verbs in this case, the mission of Christ on earth. The original verb explains that the Father gave his only begotten Son to be a sacrifice on the cross. As Keener suggests, “the aorist ἔδωκεν plainly refers to Jesus’ death on the cross, which this passage defines as the ultimate expression of divine love for humanity.”<sup>139</sup> It summarizes the work of the Christ that He is going to do on the cross. The second verb used by Athanasius explains that the Father sent Jesus for a mission, and this mission was to die on the cross. This is why the meaning of this verb is completely agreed upon when discussing the mission of Jesus. He was sent with authority, sent with a purpose, and the purpose was to die on the cross. Scripture describes many events similar to this one. In Matt 11:10, the mission of John the Baptist is outlined and it says, οὗτός ἐστιν περὶ οὗ γέγραπται· ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἀποστέλλω τὸν ἄγγελόν μου πρὸ προσώπου σου, ὃς κατασκευάσει τὴν ὁδόν σου ἔμπροσθέν σου (This is the one about whom it is written, See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you). This means that John was on a mission, which was to prepare the road, as a messenger for Jesus. The word μονογενής is a significant expression used by John to explain the Father-Son relationship. The word means “of what is the only one of its kind of class, unique; an only child born to human parents one and only. Or as a child born in a unique way; used of God’s Son

---

<sup>138</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 71.

<sup>139</sup> Keener, *The Gospel of John*, 1:566.

Jesus only, only begotten.”<sup>140</sup> We see this here and also in Heb 11:17 when Paul calls the son of Abraham the only begotten son. It says, Πίστει προσενήνοχεν Ἀβραάμ τὸν Ἰσαάκ πειραζόμενος καὶ τὸν μονογενῆ προσέφερεν, ὁ τὰς ἐπαγγελίας ἀναδεξάμενος. (By faith Abraham, when put to the test, offered up Isaac. He who had received the promises was ready to offer up his only son). We see the word in another place in the Scripture with a meaning of the only child born to parents. In Luke 7:12 when Jesus raised the widow’s son in the town of Nain. It says, ὡς δὲ ἤγγισεν τῇ πύλῃ τῆς πόλεως, καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐξεκομίζετο τεθνηκῶς μονογενῆς υἱὸς τῇ μητρὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ αὐτὴ ἦν χήρα, καὶ ὄχλος τῆς πόλεως ἱκανὸς ἦν σὺν αὐτῇ. (As he approached the gate of the town, a man who had died was being carried out. He was his mother’s only son, and she was a widow; and with her was a large crowd from the town).

### Letters to Serapion I.20.6; John 16:7

Ἐὰν γὰρ, φησὶν, ἐγὼ ἀπέλθω, ἀποστελῶ τὸν Παράκλητον (KS)  
If I go away, I will send you the Paraclete (MD)

ἀλλ’ ἐγὼ τὴν ἀλήθειαν λέγω ὑμῖν, συμφέρει ὑμῖν ἵνα ἐγὼ ἀπέλθω. ἐὰν γὰρ μὴ ἀπέλθω, ὁ παράκλητος οὐκ ἐλεύσεται πρὸς ὑμᾶς· ἐὰν δὲ πορευθῶ, πέμψω αὐτὸν πρὸς ὑμᾶς (NA28)  
Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you (NRS)

This verse which Athanasius used is the promise that Jesus gave his disciples, that he would send the Holy Spirit. It is explained that this will take place after the ascension of Jesus. The Holy Spirit will be sent to be with the disciples in their mission, helping them and reminding them of what Jesus told them. It is a paraphrased quotation which is found

<sup>140</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 266; Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 658; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 529; Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 130. Zerwick and Grosvenor in their work, *A Grammatical Analysis* say that the expression μονογενῆς which consists of two words μονο-γενῆς means only child, 292.

to be in the negative in the original verse. However, Athanasius put it in an affirmative way. It is a conditional sentence, the presence of the Son will prevent the coming of the Spirit who will continue the work of Christ. As Augustine said, “But this is said, not on account of any inequality of the Word of God and of the Holy Spirit, but as though the presence of the Son of man with them would be a hindrance to the coming of Him.”<sup>141</sup> It is a continuation of the work of the Holy Trinity and that the Third Person will remain with the disciples and the church will encourage them and not leave them alone. Rather, He will accompany them in their mission in the world. The mission of Christ has been completed on the cross. Christ has presented salvation and forgiveness on the cross. Jesus told them that he is going away and will send to them the Advocate; He is preparing them to receive the Spirit, which is why He asked them to stay in Jerusalem until they received a power from above. Those who give up their old life, by accepting Christ, are transformed into a new one, which is pleasing to God. This kind of life requires participating and sharing in the Spirit. So it is important that Jesus told them to stay in Jerusalem in order to be clothed with the power from above. He spoke to them this way for two reasons. As Chrysostom said, “since they were hardly to be drawn away from Himself, exhorting them to hold fast to the Spirit, and in order that they might cherish it.”<sup>142</sup>

### Letters to Serapion I.20.6; John 17:4

Πάτερ, ἐγὼ σε ἐδόξασα (KS)  
 Father, I have glorified you (MD)

ἐγὼ σε ἐδόξασα ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς τὸ ἔργον τελειώσας ὃ δέδωκάς μοι ἵνα ποιήσω (NA28)

<sup>141</sup> Augustine, *On the Trinity*, 1.9.

<sup>142</sup> John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of John*, 78.3.



I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do (NRS)

This verse explains the relationship between the Son and the Father which was in existence before the world was established and before time. It is a direct quotation of part of the verse, but he added the word Πάτερ to the original verse. The verb ἐδόξασα is in the past tense from the verb δοξάζω which means, “praise, honor, and magnify.”<sup>143</sup> This verse is a part of Jesus’ Prayer on the night before His crucifixion. He declares to His Father that he had glorified His name on earth during his earthly ministry. The life of Jesus was not easy, but he still glorified his Father’s name on earth. As Chrysostom mentions:

For in heaven He had been already glorified, having His own natural glory, and being worshiped by the Angels. Christ then speaketh not of that glory which is bound up with His Essence, (for that glory, though none glorify Him, He ever possesseth in its fullness,) but of that which cometh from the service of men. And so the, Glorify Me, is of this kind; and that thou mayest understand that He speaketh of this manner of glory, hear what follows. I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me that I should do it.<sup>144</sup>

### Letters to Serapion I.20.6; John 16:14

Ἐκ τοῦ ἐμοῦ γὰρ λήψεται καὶ ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν (KS)

For he shall receive from what is mine and announce it to you (MD)

ἐκεῖνος ἐμὲ δοξάσει, ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ ἐμοῦ λήμψεται καὶ ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν (NA28)

He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you (NRS)

This is a direct quotation from the second half of the verse; however he removed ὅτι and added γὰρ to the original. He removed ὅτι which means, “conjunction, used declaratively after speech verbs to turn a direct assertion into an indirect assertion or used after verbs of perception to introduce what is perceived, or means because, since, for (this reason), used

<sup>143</sup> Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 51; Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 120; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 203.

<sup>144</sup> Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of John*. 80.2.

to introduce a cause or reason based on an evident fact.”<sup>145</sup> Athanasius added γάρ, and the meaning of this word is mentioned in the *Letters to Serapion* I.19.5; John 1:12. In this quote, Jesus announced that the Spirit receives from Him and declares to the disciples. There are two verbs in this verse, the first, λήψεται is from the verb λαμβάνω which means, “in a more or less active sense take, take hold of, grasp; or in a more or less passive sense receive, get, obtain.”<sup>146</sup> The second verb is ἀναγγελεῖ from the verb ἀναγγέλλω, which means, “report, make known, proclaim, preach; or as carrying back news of happenings report, inform.”<sup>147</sup> The two verbs, to receive and announce explains the dynamic relationship between and within the Trinity. The Holy Spirit receives from Christ as Christ receives from the Father as Tertullian suggested, “He shall receive of mine says Christ, just as Christ Himself receives of the Fathers. Thus the connection of the Father in the Son, and of the Son in the Paraclete, produces three coherent Persons, who are yet distinct One from another. These three are one essence, not one Person as it said.”<sup>148</sup>

### Letters to Serapion I.20.7; John 5:43

Καὶ ὁ μὲν Υἱὸς ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ Πατρὸς ἦλθε (KS)  
And the Son came in the name of the Father (MD)

ἐγὼ ἐλήλυθα ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ πατρὸς μου, καὶ οὐ λαμβάνετε με· ἐὰν ἄλλος ἔλθῃ ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τῷ ἰδίῳ,  
ἐκεῖνον λήμψεσθε (NA28)

I have come in my Father's name, and you do not accept me; if another comes in his own name, you  
will accept him (NRS)

<sup>145</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 287; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 592; Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 142.

<sup>146</sup> Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 116; Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 243; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 465.

<sup>147</sup> Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 11; Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 48; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 50; Zerwick and Grosvenor, *A Grammatical Analysis*, 334.

<sup>148</sup> Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*, 25.

This is a formulaic quotation and Athanasius added Καὶ ὁ μὲν to his interpretation. This verse, used by Athanasius, declares that the Father sent the Son and still there were people who did not accept him. The words he added are μὲν, used with the definite article ὁ, to assert that the Son came in the name of the Father. The coming of Jesus in the name of God was a prophecy by David in Ps 118:26 and was fulfilled when Jesus entered Jerusalem, as given in Matt 21:9. Concerning this coming, Hilary of Poitiers stated, “He comes in the name of the Father: that is, He is not Himself the Father, yet is in the same divine nature as the Father . . . for as Son and God it is natural for Him to come in the name of the Father. Him they will glorify, and will be glorified of him: but the glory of Him, Who alone is God, they will not seek.”<sup>149</sup>

#### Letters to Serapion I.20.7; John 14:26

Τὸ δὲ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, φησὶν ὁ Υἱὸς ὃ πέμψει ὁ Πατὴρ ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί μου (KS)  
The Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name (MD)

ὁ δὲ παράκλητος, τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, ὃ πέμψει ὁ πατὴρ ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί μου, ἐκεῖνος ὑμᾶς διδάξει πάντα καὶ ὑπομνήσει ὑμᾶς πάντα ἃ εἶπον ὑμῖν [ἐγώ] (NA28)

But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you (NRS)

Athanasius quoted only part of the original verse. This verse again shows the relationship between the three persons in the Trinity. He added φησὶν from the verb φημί which means, “say affirm, or as introducing quotations.”<sup>150</sup>

#### Letters to Serapion I.23.2; John 4:14

Τὸ ὕδωρ, ὃ ἐγὼ δώσω αὐτῷ, γενήσεται ἐν αὐτῷ πηγὴ ὕδατος ἀλλομένου εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον (KS)

<sup>149</sup> Hilary of Poitiers, *On the Trinity*, 9.22.

<sup>150</sup> Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 210; Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 398; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 864.

The water that I will give to him shall become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life (MD)

ὅς δ' ἂν πίη ἐκ τοῦ ὕδατος οὗ ἐγὼ δώσω αὐτῷ, οὐ μὴ διψήσει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, ἀλλὰ τὸ ὕδωρ ὃ δώσω αὐτῷ  
γενήσεται ἐν αὐτῷ πηγὴ ὕδατος ἀλλομένου εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον (NA28)

But those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life (NRS)

After section 20 Athanasius did not mention any verses from John in either section 21 or 22, but he cited many verses from the Scriptures in order to argue that the Spirit is not a creature. He argued that if the Spirit is a creature, the Son must also be a creature. He affirmed, in section 22, that the Spirit is proper to the Son, and he began to clarify the testimonies from the Scriptures to prove his point. In this section (23) Athanasius quoted John 4 times, and the verse above is a direct quotation. His argument was that the Spirit is life giving unlike the creatures that receive life. In general, his argument was based on the activities of the Spirit that are presented in the Bible. The Spirit gives life and he cited Rom 8:11, in which Paul says that the Spirit gives us life because he dwells in us. He also cited John 4:14 and the conversation with the Samaritan woman at the spring of water. This statement is linked with John 7:39 where it clearly mentioned the Spirit that people are going to receive when they believe in him. It is a direct quotation of the second part of the original verse and is part of Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well of Jacob, concerning the living water. This water was a symbol of the Holy Spirit which the disciples are going to receive as mentioned in John 7:38. As Chrysostom said, "Scripture calls the grace of the Spirit sometimes Fire, sometimes Water, showing that these names are not descriptive of its essence, but of its operation . . . but by that of water, to declare the cleansing wrought by it, and the great refreshment which it affordeth to those minds which receive it."<sup>151</sup>

---

<sup>151</sup> Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of John*, 32.1

### Letters to Serapion I.23.3; John 7:39

Τοῦτο δὲ ἔλεγε περὶ τοῦ Πνεύματος, οὗ ἔμελλον λαμβάνειν οἱ πιστεύοντες εἰς αὐτόν (KS)  
He said this about the Spirit whom those who believe in him were about to receive (MD)

τοῦτο δὲ εἶπεν περὶ τοῦ πνεύματος ὃ ἔμελλον λαμβάνειν οἱ πιστεύσαντες εἰς αὐτόν· οὐπω γὰρ ἦν πνεῦμα, ὅτι  
Ἰησοῦς οὐδέπω ἐδοξάσθη (NA28)  
Now he said this about the Spirit, which believers in him were to receive; for as yet there was no Spirit,  
because Jesus was not yet glorified (NRS)

This is a direct quotation of the first part of the original verse. Athanasius continued explaining the living water to the Samaritan woman and what Jesus declared here in chapter 7 when he speaks of the Spirit whom those who believe are going to receive. What John is saying here regards the Holy Spirit as living water, from verse 38, that flows ποταμοὶ ἐκ τῆς κοιλίας αὐτοῦ ρεύσουσιν ὕδατος ζῶντος (Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water). Regarding this living water and because we are the temple of the Holy Spirit, Irenaeus said, "while the Spirit is in us all, and He is the living water, which the Lord grants to those who rightly believe in Him, and love Him."<sup>152</sup>

### Letters to Serapion I.23.4; 1 John 2:27

Καὶ ὑμεῖς τὸ χρίσμα ὃ ἐλάβετε παρ' αὐτοῦ, μένει ἐν ὑμῖν καὶ οὐ χρειαν ἔχετε, ἵνα τις διδάσκη ὑμᾶς ἀλλ' ὡς τὸ αὐτοῦ χρίσμα, τὸ Πνεῦμα αὐτοῦ, διδάσκει ὑμᾶς περὶ πάντων (KS)  
The anointing which you have received from him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you, since, rather, his anointing teaches you about everything (MD)

Καὶ ὑμεῖς, τὸ χρίσμα ὃ ἐλάβετε ἀπ' αὐτοῦ ἐν ὑμῖν μένει, καὶ οὐ χρειαν ἔχετε ἵνα τις διδάσκη ὑμᾶς· ἀλλ' ὡς τὸ αὐτὸ χρίσμα διδάσκει ὑμᾶς περὶ πάντων, καὶ ἀληθές ἐστιν, καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ψεῦδος, καὶ καθὼς ἐδίδαξεν ὑμᾶς, μενεῖτε ἐν αὐτῷ (NA28)  
As for you, the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and so you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, abide in him (NRS)

Athanasius continued to lay out another activity of the Holy Spirit, that is the anointing

---

<sup>152</sup> Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 5.18.2. In his work *On the Holy Spirit*, Ambrose of Milan had a voice in this matter, he said, "And he showed me a river of living water, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb . . . This is certainly the River proceeding from the throne of God, that is, the Holy Spirit, Whom he drinks who believes in Christ, as He Himself says if any man thirst, let him come to Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as saith the Scripture. out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spoke He of the Spirit. Therefore the river is the Spirit," 3.20.

and sealing. For his argument he cited the first letter of John, and while it is a direct quotation of most of the original verse, he did make some changes in his quotation. He added τὸ Πνεῦμα to χρίσμα; making them equal to each other (the anointing and the Spirit). He also changed ἀπ' αὐτοῦ to παρ' αὐτοῦ. Is there any difference in the meaning of the two words? The word ἀπ' means, "preposition genitive to indicate source or origin from, out of."<sup>153</sup> It explains the source of the χρίσμα, which is God the Father. The word χρίσμα is from the verb χρίω, and it is important here because it means, "literally, as what has been spread on ointment, unguent, anointing, used in the Old Testament to symbolize appointment to and empowerment for a task; figuratively in the N.T. as the gift and empowering of the Holy Spirit for a task anointing, endowment, appointment."<sup>154</sup> It is mentioned in verse 20 of this chapter. The verse has a connection with John 14:26, the verse that explains that the Spirit will teach the disciples and remind them of everything that Jesus told them. And if the Spirit teaches us, we have no need for anyone else to teach us, because we are anointed with the Spirit, who dwells in us in order to denote His fruit in our life. The word μένει (abide) expresses the personal relationship between the Spirit and those who are anointed.

### Letters to Serapion I.23.6; John 1:3

Οὐκοῦν καὶ κατὰ τοῦτο οὐκ ἂν εἶη τῶν πάντων αὐτό (KS)

He cannot be one of the all things (MD)

πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν. ὃ γέγονεν (NA28)

All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being (NRS)

<sup>153</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 65; Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 105; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 87.

<sup>154</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 410; Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 218; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 894.

This is a formulaic quotation. Athanasius is defending the deity of the Son saying that the Son cannot be one of the creatures because he created all things as the Scripture says, so we cannot compare between him and the things that were made through him. This verse is a paraphrase cited by Athanasius, and it is directed against the Arians. How could the Word of God, through whom all things were created, be one of the creatures? Regarding this subject, Augustine said in like fashion, “How can it be that the Word of God was made, when God by the Word made all things? If the Word of God was itself also made, by what other Word was it made? But if thou sayest that there is a Word of the Word, I say, that by which it was made is itself the only Son of God.”<sup>155</sup> In Col 1:16, St. Paul says, ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ ἐκτίσθη τὰ πάντα (for in him all things were created). And if he is not made, it means he participates and shares the same substance with the Father as the Son of God.

### Letters to Serapion 1.24.3; 1 John 4:13

Ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκωμεν, ὅτι ἐν τῷ Θεῷ μένομεν, καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν ἡμῖν, ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ Πνεύματος αὐτοῦ αὐτὸς ἔδωκεν ἡμῖν (KS)

By this we know that we remain in him, and he in us, because he has given to us of his Spirit (MD)

Ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκωμεν ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ μένομεν καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν ἡμῖν, ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος αὐτοῦ δέδωκεν ἡμῖν (NA28)

By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit (NRS)

Athanasius persisted in his argument concerning the activities of the Spirit and moved to another point when he opened this section, by claiming that we participate in God through the Spirit. This verse, from 1 John, is a direct quotation explaining the relation between the faithful and the Spirit. The ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ μένομεν (we remain in him) is mentioned two more times in this chapter. It is mentioned in verses 12, 13, and 15.

<sup>155</sup> Augustine, *Tractates on the Gospel of John*, 1.1

According to John Stott, “the last two are the development of the first. It is by the Spirit that we come to acknowledge the incarnation of the Son, and by the same Spirit that we are enabled to love.”<sup>156</sup> If the Spirit is not divine, we would not have participated in God through him and we would not have a fellowship with him. Athanasius cited other verses to support this argument. He cited 1 Cor 3:16–17, in which Paul declares that we are the temples of the Spirit and the Spirit dwells in us. He also cited 2 Pet 1:4 in which Peter declares that we are, *θείας κοινωνοὶ φύσεως* (participants of the divine nature) the word *κοινωνός* means, “companion, partner, sharer often with; as one who fellowships and shares something in common with another partner; partaker.”<sup>157</sup> If we become partakers and sharers of the divine nature, it would be absurd to count the Spirit among creatures.

### Letters to Serapion I.24.6; John 1:3

δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα κτίζεται (KS)

Through whom all things are created (MD)

πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν. ὃ γέγονεν (NA28)

All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being (NRS)

This is a word substitution, and he also changed words. He changed the verb *ἐγένετο* to *κτίζεται*, but it does not change the meaning. The verb *ἐγένετο* from the verb *γίνομαι* that means, “as what comes into existence become, come to be, originate, or of what is created; be made, be done, be brought into existence.”<sup>158</sup> As was mentioned, in this verse Athanasius changed the verb to *κτίζεται* from the verb *κτίζω*, which means, “create, call

<sup>156</sup> Stott, *The Letters of John*, 168.

<sup>157</sup> Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 111; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 440.

<sup>158</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 99; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 157; Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 196; Zerwick and Grosvenor, *A Grammatical Analysis*, 285.



into being.”<sup>159</sup> For example, we see the same verb in the book of Rev 10:6, where it says, *καὶ ὤμοσεν ἐν τῷ ζῶντι εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, ὃς ἔκτισεν τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ καὶ τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ, ὅτι χρόνος οὐκέτι ἔσται* (and swore by him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and what is in it, the earth and what is in it, and the sea and what is in it: There will be no more delay). Also in 1 Tim 4:3, it says, *καλυόντων γαμεῖν, ἀπέχεσθαι βρωμάτων, ἃ ὁ θεὸς ἔκτισεν εἰς μετάλημψιν μετὰ εὐχαριστίας τοῖς πιστοῖς καὶ ἐπεγνωκόσιν τὴν ἀλήθειαν* (They forbid marriage and demand abstinence from foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth).

### Letters to Serapion I.25.3; John 14:17

*τὸ Πνεῦμα εἶναι Πνεῦμα ἀληθείας* (KS)  
The Spirit is the Spirit of Truth (MD)

*τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας, ὃ ὁ κόσμος οὐ δύναται λαβεῖν, ὅτι οὐ θεωρεῖ αὐτὸ οὐδὲ γινώσκει· ὑμεῖς γινώσκετε αὐτό, ὅτι παρ’ ὑμῖν μένει καὶ ἐν ὑμῖν ἔσται* (NA28)

This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you (NRS)

In this section, Athanasius cited the Gospel of John 4 times to discuss that the Spirit is proper to the Son. He described what the Spirit is called in the Bible. In this verse, Athanasius cited only three words from the original verse and added the word *πνεῦμα*. He repeated it twice in order to put an emphasis on the word Spirit as the Spirit of Truth, and, *ἐξ οὗ δεικνυται τελείαν εἶναι ἐν τούτῳ τὴν Τριάδα*.<sup>160</sup> (by this he shows that the Trinity is complete in the Spirit). There are two verbs, which are important in the original verse, *μένει*, and *ἔσται* and both of them are in the future tense to explain that the Spirit of Truth

<sup>159</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 239; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 456; Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 572.

<sup>160</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, 1.25.4.514.

will be sent by the Son and abides with them and will be in them.<sup>161</sup> In this section, Athanasius is explaining that the Spirit is proper to the Son and he mentioned many names of the Spirit from the Gospel itself. He started this section saying that the Spirit is totally different from creatures, and because he has nothing to do with creatures, he is not separate from the Godhead. Then Athanasius moved to discuss the deity of the Spirit by mentioning the name of the Spirit. Before he quoted the Gospel of John, he cited Rom 8:15 where St. Paul declares that the Spirit is the Spirit of adoption and sonship. He quoted Isa 11:2 and Eph 1:17 where it stated that the Spirit is the Spirit of wisdom. He came back again to the Gospel of John and quoted from chs. 14, 15, 16, in which John declares that the Spirit is the Spirit of Truth. Then he went to the first letter of St. Peter 4:14, where Peter witnessed that the Spirit is the called the Spirit of Power and the Spirit of Glory. Athanasius finished this section with two citations from letters of St. Paul; 1 Cor 2:8 and Rom 8:15 where in both verses, Paul declares that the Scripture tells how the Spirit is proper to the Son and not separate from the Godhead.

### **Letters to Serapion I.25.3; John 15:26**

τὸ Πνεῦμα εἶναι Πνεῦμα ἀληθείας (KS)  
The Spirit is the Spirit of Truth (MD)

Ὅταν ἔλθῃ ὁ παράκλητος ὃν ἐγὼ πέμψω ὑμῖν παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς, τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας ὃ παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκπορεύεται, ἐκεῖνος μαρτυρήσει περὶ ἐμοῦ (NA28)  
When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf (NRS)

This verse is the same as above, and it is a direct quotation.

---

<sup>161</sup> Omanson and Metzger, *A Textual Guide*, 203.

### Letters to Serapion I.25.3; John 16:13

τὸ Πνεῦμα εἶναι Πνεῦμα ἀληθείας (KS)  
The Spirit is the Spirit of Truth (MD)

ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ ἐκεῖνος, τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας, ὀδηγήσει ὑμᾶς ἐν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ πάσῃ· οὐ γὰρ λαλήσει ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ, ἀλλ' ὅσα ἀκούσει λαλήσει καὶ τὰ ἐρχόμενα ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν (NA28)  
When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come (NRS)

This verse goes side by side with 14:26. Both verses 14:26 and 16:13 are regarding the work of the Holy Spirit in the disciples. In 14:26 the Spirit will teach them and remind them of what Jesus told them while He was with them, while in 16:13 the Holy Spirit will guide them and He will take what belongs to Jesus and declare it to the disciples. Two different verbs are used regarding the function in 14:26 and in 16:13 and it seems that they give convergent meaning in both cases. The verb in 14:26 is διδάξει from the simple tense διδάσκω which means, “teach, demonstrate, or give direction.”<sup>162</sup> The verb in 16:13 is ὀδηγήσει from the simple tense ὀδηγέω means, “lead, guide.”<sup>163</sup> The two verbs give almost the same meaning when it comes to the work or the mission of the Holy Spirit in the life of the disciples and every believer. When the verse says that the Holy Spirit διδάσκω them, it means teaching them or demonstrating to them or give them direction in their mission in the world. And when the second verse says that the Holy Spirit ὀδηγέω them, it means leading them in their mission also, and it is the same purpose for the two verbs which are used in these verses concerning the work of the Holy Spirit.

### Letters to Serapion I.25.3; 1 John 4:6

τὸ Πνεῦμα εἶναι Πνεῦμα ἀληθείας (KS)  
The Spirit is the Spirit of Truth (MD)

<sup>162</sup> Lampe and Liddell, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 365.

<sup>163</sup> Lampe and Liddell, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 935.

ἡμεῖς ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐσμεν· ὁ γινώσκων τὸν θεὸν ἀκούει ἡμῶν· ὃς οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐκ ἀκούει ἡμῶν. ἐκ  
τούτου γινώσκουμεν τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς πλάνης (NA28)  
We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us, and whoever is not from God does not listen to us.  
From this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error (NRS)

This verse, which is cited by Athanasius, is a continuation of what John says in the beginning of his letter when he speaks concerning God’s spirit and Antichrist’s spirit. He is warning the believer to distinguish between the two spirits, τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας (the spirit of truth) and τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς πλάνης (the spirit of error). Regarding this matter, Birger comments, “the spirit of truth, according to John 14–16, is the spirit that is stamped by the truth and that conveys the truth.”<sup>164</sup>

### Letters to Serapion I.30.5; John 14:23

Ἐλευσόμεθα ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ Πατήρ, καὶ μονὴν παρ’ αὐτῷ ποιήσομεν (KS)  
I and the Father will come and make our home with him (MD)

ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· ἐάν τις ἀγαπᾷ με τὸν λόγον μου τηρήσει, καὶ ὁ πατήρ μου ἀγαπήσει αὐτὸν  
καὶ πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐλευσόμεθα καὶ μονὴν παρ’ αὐτῷ ποιήσομεθα (NA28)  
Jesus answered him, Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will  
come to them and make our home with them (NRS)

After section 25, Athanasius stopped citing from the Gospel of John until section 30. In this section, he cited only one verse from John that explains the relationship between the Son and the Father. It is a formulaic quotation. He quoted this verse after he was speaking concerning the one activity in the Trinity, as well as he suggested that if the Spirit is counted with the creatures, it means that there is a strange member in the Trinity and is not Trinity anymore but rather dyad. If one believes in a dyad, there will be a problem in baptism, in that it would be invalid and incomplete. This is not the belief of the church, because the church has one faith and believes in one baptism as the Scriptures explain.

---

<sup>164</sup> Olsson, *A Commentary on the Letters of John*, 207.

**Letters to Serapion I.31.4; John 14:23**

Ἐλευσόμεθα ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ Πατήρ (KS)

I and the Father will come (MD)

ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· ἐάν τις ἀγαπᾷ με τὸν λόγον μου τηρήσει, καὶ ὁ πατήρ μου ἀγαπήσει αὐτὸν καὶ πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐλευσόμεθα καὶ μονὴν παρ' αὐτῷ ποιησόμεθα (NA28)

Jesus answered him, "Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them (NRS)

This is a paraphrase quotation; Athanasius picked up just four words from the original verse and put them together. He repeated this citation again in this section, explaining the dwelling of the Son and the Father with those who love them and keep the word of Jesus. In section 31, Athanasius cited only twice from the Gospel of John. He cited from the Old and New Testament to clarify the one activity of the Spirit and also the unity within the Trinity. It's a conditional relation between the Son, the Father, and people, in order for the Son and the Father to come and make a home with them; people should love the Son and keep his word. When they come, the Spirit will come with them, said Athanasius, and he cited Eph 3:16–17, where he spoke about the power through his Spirit in the inner man. ἵνα δῶ ὑμῖν κατὰ τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ δυνάμει κραταιωθῆναι διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸν ἔσω ἄνθρωπον. (I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit). The one who gives power and strength is the Spirit, by His dwelling and working in the inner being. The word ἔσω means "in, into, inside, within, inner."<sup>165</sup>

**Letters to Serapion I.31.4; John 14:10**

Ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ Πατρὶ, καὶ ὁ Πατήρ ἐν ἐμοί (KS)

I am in the Father and the Father is in me (MD)

<sup>165</sup> Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 79. Concerning the inner man, see also Rom 7:22.

οὐ πιστεύεις ὅτι ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἐν ἐμοὶ ἐστίν; τὰ ῥήματα ἃ ἐγὼ λέγω ὑμῖν ἀπ' ἐμαυτοῦ οὐ λαλῶ,  
ὁ δὲ πατὴρ ἐν ἐμοὶ μένων ποιεῖ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ (NA28)  
Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not  
speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works (NRS)

This is a direct quotation to the part of the original verse but the word ἐστίν is missing.

Does this makes any different to the meaning? Removing the word ἐστίν did not change  
the meaning which Athanasius wanted to approach.

### Letters to Serapion I.33.3; John 4:21, 23, 24

Πίστευέ μοι, γύναι, ὅτι ἔρχεται ὥρα, καὶ νῦν ἐστίν, ὅτε οἱ ἀληθινοὶ προσκυνηταὶ προσκυνήσουσι τῷ Πατρὶ ἐν  
Πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ. καὶ γὰρ ὁ Πατὴρ τοιούτους ζητεῖ τοὺς προσκυνοῦντας αὐτόν. Πνεῦμα ὁ Θεός, καὶ τοὺς  
προσκυνοῦντας αὐτόν ἐν Πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ δεῖ προσκυνεῖν (KS)

Believe me, woman, the hour is coming and is now here when true worshipers will worship the Father in  
Spirit and Truth. For the Father seek such to worship him. For God is Spirit, and those who worship him  
must worship him in Spirit and Truth (MD)

λέγει αὐτῇ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· πίστευέ μοι, γύναι, ὅτι ἔρχεται ὥρα ὅτε οὔτε ἐν τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ οὔτε ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις  
προσκυνήσετε τῷ πατρὶ. ἀλλ' ἔρχεται ὥρα καὶ νῦν ἐστίν, ὅτε οἱ ἀληθινοὶ προσκυνηταὶ προσκυνήσουσι τῷ  
πατρὶ ἐν πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ. καὶ γὰρ ὁ πατὴρ τοιούτους ζητεῖ τοὺς προσκυνοῦντας αὐτόν. πνεῦμα ὁ θεός,  
καὶ τοὺς προσκυνοῦντας αὐτόν ἐν πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ δεῖ προσκυνεῖν (NA28)

Jesus said to her, Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this  
mountain nor in Jerusalem. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship  
the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who  
worship him must worship in spirit and truth (NRS)

This is a direct quotation of most of the three verses. He removed οὔτε ἐν τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ  
οὔτε ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις from the original verse. This happened during Jesus' conversation  
with the Samaritan woman at the city of Sychar, when He was tired from His journey and  
sat at Jacob's well. While He was sitting there, a woman from Samaria came to draw  
water from the well. Jesus started the discussion regarding the living water. Gary Burge  
states, "John's gospel is the only New Testament writing to mention living water."<sup>166</sup> The  
hour is coming, Jesus said to her, ἔρχεται ὥρα the verb ἔρχεται is a present tense third  
person singular from ἔρχομαι and νῦν ἐστίν (now is). In this discussion, Jesus gives an

<sup>166</sup> Burge, *The Anointed Community*, 96.

eschatological sign, as mentioned in v.14 from this conversation saying, *ὅς δ' ἂν πίη ἐκ τοῦ ὕδατος οὗ ἐγὼ δώσω αὐτῷ, οὐ μὴ διψήσει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, ἀλλὰ τὸ ὕδωρ ὃ δώσω αὐτῷ γενήσεται ἐν αὐτῷ πηγή ὕδατος ἀλλομένου εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον* (but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life). In section 33, which is the last section of his first letter, Athanasius cited the Gospel of John 6 times. As a conclusion of his argument with the Tropici, he stated that his argument regarding the deity of the Spirit is not built on external sources *ἔξωθεν ἐπινενόηται* but rather he used proof from the Scriptures. This faith is the apostolic faith that was handed down from the fathers to today.

#### **Letters to Serapion I.33.4; John 14:6**

*Ἐγὼ εἰμι ἡ ἀλήθεια* (KS)  
I am the Truth (MD)

*λέγει αὐτῷ [ὁ] Ἰησοῦς· ἐγὼ εἰμι ἡ ὁδὸς καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια καὶ ἡ ζωὴ· οὐδεὶς ἔρχεται πρὸς τὸν πατέρα εἰ μὴ δι' ἐμοῦ*  
(NA28)  
Jesus said to him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me  
(NRS)

Athanasius here quoted only three words *Ἐγὼ εἰμι ἡ ἀλήθεια*. Athanasius cited this verse, which is said by Jesus Himself, that He is the Truth in order to link it to the other verse cited from John, who declares the Spirit, is the Spirit of Truth. As Athanasius argued before in this letter the Spirit is inseparable from the Son as the Son is inseparable from the Father.

#### **Letters to Serapion I.33.4; John 15:26+17**

*Πέμψω ὑμῖν τὸν Παράκλητον, τὸ Πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας, ὃ παρὰ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐκπορεύεται, ὃ ὁ κόσμος οὐ*

δύναται λαβεῖν (KS)

I will send you the Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth, who proceeds from the Father, whom the world cannot receive (MD)

"Όταν ἔλθῃ ὁ παράκλητος ὃν ἐγὼ πέμψω ὑμῖν παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς, τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας ὃ παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκπορεύεται, ἐκεῖνος μαρτυρήσει περὶ ἐμοῦ (NA28)

When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf (NRS)

This is paraphrase quotation. Athanasius moved from declaring the word of Jesus that He is the Truth to declare in his second citation of John that the Spirit is the Spirit of Truth.

He removed ἐκεῖνος μαρτυρήσει περὶ ἐμοῦ and added ὁ κόσμος οὐ δύναται λαβεῖν.

Athanasius combined the two verses together 26 and 17, so the addition is from verse 17.

#### Letters to Serapion I.33.4; John 14:17

Πέμψω ὑμῖν τὸν Παράκλητον, τὸ Πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας, ὃ παρὰ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐκπορεύεται, ὃ ὁ κόσμος οὐ δύναται λαβεῖν (KS)

I will send you the Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth, who proceeds from the Father, whom the world cannot receive (MD)

τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας, ὃ ὁ κόσμος οὐ δύναται λαβεῖν, ὅτι οὐ θεωρεῖ αὐτὸ οὐδὲ γινώσκει· ὑμεῖς γινώσκετε αὐτό, ὅτι παρ' ὑμῖν μένει καὶ ἐν ὑμῖν ἔσται (NA28)

This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you (NRS)

This is a formulaic quotation. Athanasius added ὃ παρὰ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐκπορεύεται.



CHAPTER 7  
THE JOHANNINE TEXTS IN THE SECOND AND THIRD LETTERS TO SERAPION

The second letter of Athanasius is comprised of 16 sections. The whole first part of the letter 2.1–2.10 is written against the Arians, and Athanasius dedicated it to the doctrine of the Son, to prove that the Son is not creature but rather divine. In these sections, Athanasius argued that the Son is not a creature, but rather is eternal as the Father is eternal. He based his argument on the Scriptural account that declares the Son's relation to the Father. We will see in the letter the way Athanasius discussed this relation using many citations from the Scriptures, in which he provided arguments that the Son is not one of the creatures, but is Almighty as the Father, and that through Him all things were made. This chapter will identify all the Johannine texts that Athanasius used in his second and third letters to Serapion, what changes he made to the original text, and how he used them in his letters.

Table 1: The Johannine texts mentioned in the second letter

John 1	II.3.3; II.4.2; II.7.3; II.7.4; II.8.2; II.9.4; II.12.6; II.12.6; II.13.4
John 3	II.12.6; II.12.6
John 5	II.13.4
John 7	II.7.4
John 10	II.2.3; II.4.4; II.9.3
John 14	II.2.3; II.2.3; II.4.5; II.9.3; II.9.3; II.12.4; II.12.5; II.13.2; II.13.3; II.15.3
John 15	II.10.3
John 16	II.2.2; II.5.2; II.9.4; II.10.1; II.10.2
John 17	II.2.2; II.10.3
John 20	II.10.1
1 John 2	II.11.1; II.12.1
1 John 4	II.12.4; II.12.6
1 John 5	II.2.3

Table 2: The total of the Johannine texts in the second letter

John 1	9
John 3	2
John 5	1
John 7	1
John 10	3
John 14	10
John 15	1
John 16	5
John 17	2
John 20	1
1 John 2	2
1 John 4	2
1 John 5	1

After the introduction Athanasius gave in section 1 of this letter, he did not cite any verse from the Gospel of John, but rather three verses from Ps 23:2 and 1 Cor 15:32, through which he defended the deity of the Son by stating that He is not a creature. He likened the Arians and their belief to the Sadducees, which denied the divinity of the Son and did not believe that the Son is Wisdom, radiance, and Word.

### Letters to Serapion II.2.2; John 16:15

Πάντα, ὅσα ἔχει ὁ Πατήρ, ἐμὰ ἐστι (KS)  
All that the Father has is mine (MD)

πάντα ὅσα ἔχει ὁ πατήρ ἐμὰ ἐστίν· διὰ τοῦτο εἶπον ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ ἐμοῦ λαμβάνει καὶ ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν (NA28)  
All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you (NRS)

In section 2 of the second letter, Athanasius cited the Gospel of John 5 times and one time from the first letter of John. The Scriptural account that Athanasius cited provided evidence of the relation between the Son and the Father. Athanasius used these citations as Scriptural proof in his argument that the Son is eternal, true God, almighty, and radiance. In section 2 of this letter, the first verse is a direct quotation to the first part of the original verse, and this part is important, because it declares that both the Father and

the Son share and have the same things. He began his argument by saying that, “if the Father is eternal and the Son must also be eternal (αἰδίου τοιγαρ οὖν ὄντος τοῦ Πατρὸς, ἀνάγκη καὶ τὸν Υἱὸν αἰδίου εἶναι). The word αἰδίου literally means “everlasting, eternal, always existing.”<sup>1</sup> Athanasius emphasized the eternity of the Son in this verse when he used the word “must” (ἀνάγκη) which means it is necessary. St. Paul mentioned the same word in his letter to the Heb 9:16 “Ὁπου γὰρ διαθήκη, θάνατον ἀνάγκη φέρεσθαι τοῦ διαθεμένου (Where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established). This auxiliary verb explains the imperative situation concerning the relation of the Son to the Father. Concerning this relationship and the sharing between the Father and the Son, Gregory of Nazianzus stated, “all that belongs to the Son is the Father’s. Nothing then is peculiar, because all things are in common. For Their Being itself is common and equal, even though the Son received it from the Father.”<sup>2</sup> This explanation does not mean that the Holy Spirit is not part of the Trinity, or that He is secondary, less than the Father and the Son, or He is a creature. Later, Augustine questioned those who believe that the Spirit is less than the Father or the Son. He declared, “Is the Holy Spirit inferior to the Son; as if the Son received from the Father, and the Holy Spirit from the Son, in reference to certain gradations of natures.”<sup>3</sup> The Spirit is not apart from the Trinity because the Son said that He (the Spirit) should take of the Son and show it to the disciples, in this case the Spirit receives from the Father through the Son. Augustine continued saying that, “The Holy Spirit thus receives of the Father, of whom the Son receives; for in this Trinity the Son is born of the Father, and from the Father the Holy

---

<sup>1</sup> Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 21; Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 37.

<sup>2</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration on the Son*, 4 (30). 11.

<sup>3</sup> Augustine, *Tractates on the Gospel of John*, 100.4.

Spirit proceedeth.”<sup>4</sup>

### Letters to Serapion II.2.2; John 17:10

καὶ τὰ ἐμὰ πάντα τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐστὶν (KS)  
All that is mine is the Father's (MD)

καὶ τὰ ἐμὰ πάντα σὰ ἐστὶν καὶ τὰ σὰ ἐμὰ, καὶ δεδόξασμαι ἐν αὐτοῖς (NA28)  
All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them (NRS)

Athanasius continued in this section clarifying the relation of the Son to the Father. In this quotation he removed the words *καὶ τὰ σὰ ἐμὰ* from his citation and changed it to a paraphrase citation, and he changed *σὰ ἐστὶν* in the original verse to *τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐστὶν*. In examining what Athanasius removed from the original verse, we will notice that there is no major different between the original verse and the way he cited it. The original verse is a direct conversation between Jesus and His Father, but Athanasius changed the second part of the verse speaking of indirect way to express the relation of the Son to the Father. Concerning the alteration, the pronoun *σὰ* means, “possessive pronoun of the second person, singular.”<sup>5</sup> The other word *ἐστὶν* from *ἐμός*, means possess, pronoun; first person possessive adjective my,<sup>6</sup> as in Matt 18:20 *οὗ γάρ εἰσιν δύο ἢ τρεῖς συνηγμένοι εἰς τὸ ἐμὸν ὄνομα, ἐκεῖ εἶμι ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῶν* (For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them). At the end of this section Athanasius cited the letters of St. Paul to the Rom 9:5 to clarify the Scriptural account concerning the relation of the Son to the Father, *ὧν οἱ πατέρες καὶ ἐξ ὧν ὁ Χριστὸς τὸ κατὰ σάρκα, ὁ ὧν ἐπὶ πάντων θεὸς εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ἀμήν* (to them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the

<sup>4</sup> Augustine, *Tractates on the Gospel of John*, 100.4.

<sup>5</sup> Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 766; Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 352; Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 183.

<sup>6</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 146; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 254; Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 64.

flesh, comes the Messiah, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.) If the Father is eternal, the Son also must be, said Athanasius and he is God over all (θεὸς εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας). It explains that both of them are equal, because He is the Son and born from the Father, so what is the Father's is the Son.

### Letters to Serapion II.2.3; 1 John 5:20

Ἔσμεν ἐν τῷ ἀληθινῷ, ἐν τῷ Υἱῷ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ. οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἀληθινὸς Θεὸς, καὶ ζωὴ ἡ αἰώνιος (KS)  
We are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life (MD)

οἶδαμεν δὲ ὅτι ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ἦκει καὶ δέδωκεν ἡμῖν διάνοιαν, ἵνα γινώσκωμεν τὸν ἀληθινόν, καὶ ἐσμεν ἐν τῷ ἀληθινῷ, ἐν τῷ υἱῷ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ. οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἀληθινὸς θεὸς καὶ ζωὴ αἰώνιος (NA28)  
And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life (NRS)

This is the third citation which Athanasius used in his defense. It is a direct quotation of the second part of the original verse. Athanasius started this section when he mentioned the Arians belief that there was a time when the Son was not. This statement is mentioned in Athanasius' work *Against the Arians*, where he declared, "there was once when the Son was not."<sup>7</sup> In his argument, Athanasius argued that there is no Scriptural evidence to support their belief in the Son, but rather, the Scripture testifies that the Son is eternal, coexistent and always with the Father. This verse emphasizes that the Son is true God and eternal. He came to shine on humans helping them to know God the Father. Before Athanasius quoted this verse from the gospel of John, he cited from the book of Rev 1:8 ἐγὼ εἰμι τὸ ἄλφα καὶ τὸ ὦ, λέγει κύριος ὁ θεός, ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος, ὁ παντοκράτωρ (I am the Alpha and the Omega, says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty). This is to confirm that Christ is true God as the Father is true God. The ἄλφα (Alpha) means, "indeclinable, the name of the first letter of

<sup>7</sup> Athanasius, *Against the Arians*, I.11.

the Greek alphabet, figuratively, as a title for Christ the beginning.”<sup>8</sup> The  $\omega$  (Omega) means, “the figuratively last in a series, reflecting ultimate importance; related to alpha as ἀρχή (beginning) to τέλος (end).”<sup>9</sup> The expression Ἐγώ εἰμι (I am) is very significant in biblical language regarding the divinity of Christ and His existence. It points out, “Christ’s self-designation of himself.”<sup>10</sup> This expression was used by Jesus in his conversation with the Jewish people, through which he declared that He was before Abraham as mentioned in John 8:58. He says, εἶπεν αὐτοῖς Ἰησοῦς· ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, πρὶν Ἀβραὰμ γενέσθαι ἐγώ εἰμι (Jesus said to them, Very truly, I tell you, before Abraham was, I am). The expression proclaims the continuity of Jesus’ existence that He was before all ages, and before time. The word ἀληθινῶς (true) which is found in the verse, is important also. It is an adjective meaning, “true, dependable.”<sup>11</sup> We see that John used this word elsewhere in his Gospel in 6:32, when Jesus had a conversation concerning the true bread. He says, εἶπεν οὖν αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς· ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, οὐ Μωϋσῆς δέδωκεν ὑμῖν τὸν ἄρτον ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, ἀλλ’ ὁ πατήρ μου δίδωσιν ὑμῖν τὸν ἄρτον ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ τὸν ἀληθινόν (Then Jesus said to them, Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven). Jesus Christ who is the true God has given his followers the understanding that they may know him. It is not just to know Him, but they are in Him, who is ἀληθινὸς θεὸς καὶ ζωὴ αἰώνιος (true God and eternal life). This statement is a significant one, in which

<sup>8</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 45; Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 9.

<sup>9</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 415; Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 220; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 903.

<sup>10</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 131; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 222; Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 55–56.

<sup>11</sup> Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 8; Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 43; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 63.

John testifies that Jesus is true God and eternal life.

### Letters to Serapion II.2.3; John 14:10

ὁ Υἱὸς ἐν τῷ Πατρὶ, καὶ ὁ Πατὴρ ἐν τῷ Υἱῷ (KS)  
The Son is in the Father and the Father in the Son (MD)

οὐ πιστεύεις ὅτι ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἐν ἐμοὶ ἐστίν; τὰ ῥήματα ἃ ἐγὼ λέγω ὑμῖν ἀπ' ἐμαυτοῦ οὐ λαλῶ,  
ὁ δὲ πατὴρ ἐν ἐμοὶ μένων ποιεῖ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ (NA28)

Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works (NRS)

Athanasius continued defending the deity of the Son and he quoted another verse, which testifies to the relation between the Son and the Father. In the original verse Jesus is talking about His relationship to His Father. Athanasius cited the same verse but he changed ἐγὼ (I am) to Υἱός (the Son) and he also changed ἐμοὶ ἐστίν (is in me) to τῷ Υἱῷ (the Son). The change Athanasius made in his citation did not alter the meaning of the verse. In the original verse, Jesus Himself is talking, and he used ἐγὼ, which means, “first person-personal pronoun with references to the speaker, I, me, we, us.”<sup>12</sup> He also changed ἐμοὶ ἐστίν (is in me). This modification did not affect the meaning since as in the first case it is Jesus who was speaking to the disciples. The pronoun ἐμοί means “ἐγὼ first-person personal pronoun ἐμοῦ (μου), ἐμοί (μοι), ἐμέ (με).”<sup>13</sup> and the ἐστίν from εἰμί means, “as a predicate *be*, relating to what exists; 1) to denote God's existence 2) to denote Christ's self-designation of himself ἐγὼ εἰ (I am).”<sup>14</sup> In both cases the meaning is the same, since in the original Jesus is talking directly to His disciples, and Athanasius refers to Jesus' speech. In this conversation, Jesus told them if you do not believe, see the

<sup>12</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 128; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 216; Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 55.

<sup>13</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 128.

<sup>14</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 131; Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 156; Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 128; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 221.

works I am doing, which testify that is the works of my Father. The works which Jesus was doing emphasized that there is no separation or division between the Father and the Son, and also to asserted that the Son is not a creature or less than the Father, as the Arians believed. Hilary of Poitiers spoke concerning this relation and also the unity between them. He declared, “He speaks as abiding in the Divine substance . . . And He is inseparable and indistinguishable in unity of nature from the Father . . . That the Father dwells in the Son proves that the Father is not isolated and alone; that the Father works through the Son proves that the Son is not an alien or a stranger.”<sup>15</sup>

### Letters to Serapion II.2.3; John 10:30

Ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ Πατὴρ ἓν ἐσμεν (KS)  
I and the Father are one (MD)

ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἓν ἐσμεν (NA28)  
The Father and I are one (NRS)

Athanasius citing again from the Scriptures affirms the relationship between the Father and the Son. This time it is a direct quotation through which Jesus declares very clearly that He and the Father are one; not two but rather one, and what the Father has, the Son has also. It expresses Christ’s unity with the Father. The statement ἓν ἐσμεν (we are one) is important because he did not say ‘am one’ but rather ‘are one’ which refers to the two persons in the Trinity (Father and Son). The ἓν from εἷς, μία, ἓν means, “numeral one.”<sup>16</sup>

Athanasius in his work *Against Praxeas* discussed this verse and the number one. He

---

<sup>15</sup> Hilary of Poitiers, *On the Trinity*, 7.40. In his work *Against the Arians*, Athanasius discussed this matter from another perspective when he declared that the Son shares the same attributes that the Father has because the Son is the Image of the Father. He said, “the Father is eternal, immortal, powerful, light, king, sovereign, God, Lord, Creator, and Maker. These attributes must be in the Image, to make it true that he that hath seen the Son hath seen the Father.” I.21.

<sup>16</sup> Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 57; Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 132; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 229.



said:

For if He said one person, He might have rendered some assistance to their opinion. Unus, no doubt, indicates the singular number; but here we have a case 'two' are still the subject in the masculine gender. He accordingly says Unum, a neuter term, which does not imply singularity of number, but unity of essence, likeness, conjunction, affection on the Father's part, who loves the Son, and submission on the Sons, who obeys the Father's will. When He says 'I and my Father are one' in essence—Unum—He shows that there are Two, whom He put on an equality and unites in one.<sup>17</sup>

Jesus proclaims two persons with one essence. Having said that they are one means that there is no difference between them. They are two but there is no separation. This declaration affirms the unity of the Godhead. As John says in his first letter 5:7, the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit are one. Regarding this oneness and the unity between the Father and the Son, Augustine declared, "In these two words, in that He said one, He delivers thee from Arius; in that He said are, He delivers thee from Sabellius. If one, therefore not diverse; if are, therefore both Father and Son. For He would not say are of one person; but, on the other hand, He would not say one of diverse."<sup>18</sup>

### Letters to Serapion II.2.3; John 14:9

Ὁ ἐμὲ ἐώρακώς ἐώρακε τὸν Πατέρα (KS)  
He who sees me sees the Father (MD)

λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· τοσοῦτω χρόνῳ μεθ' ὑμῶν εἰμι καὶ οὐκ ἔγνωκός με, Φίλιππε; ὁ ἐώρακώς ἐμὲ ἐώρακεν τὸν πατέρα· πῶς σὺ λέγεις· δεῖξον ἡμῖν τὸν πατέρα (NA28)

Jesus said to him, Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father?' (NRS)

This is the last verse, which Athanasius cited in section 2 of this letter, and it is a direct quotation of the original verse. He made a small change in that he shifted the word ἐμέ to the beginning of his quotation. The verb in this verse is ἐώρακώς, from the verb ὁράω,

<sup>17</sup> Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*, 22.

<sup>18</sup> Augustine, *Tractates on the Gospel of John*, 36.9.

which means, “see, catch sight of.”<sup>19</sup> Concerning this relation Ambrose stated what Jesus says to Philip, “Yes, he who looks upon the Son sees, in portrait, the Father. Mark what manner of portrait is spoken of. It is Truth, Righteousness, the Power of God: not dumb, for it is the Word; not insensible, for it is Wisdom; not vain and foolish, for it is Power; not soulless, for it is the Life; not dead, for it is the Resurrection.”<sup>20</sup> Yes in the Old Testament says in Exod 33:20 that no one shall see my face and live, so what does Christ mean in this verse? It means that He is the Image of invisible God. Jesus announces here His consubstantiality with the Father. Concerning this matter Chrysostom explained this relationship and stated, “declaring nothing else but this, that the Son is no other than what the Father is.”<sup>21</sup>

### Letters to Serapion II.3.3; John 1:3

πάντα ἀλλοιούμενά (KS)  
All things (MD)

πάντα δι’ αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν. ὃ γέγονεν (NA28)  
All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being (NRS)

Here Athanasius quoted only one word from the original verse and added the word, ἀλλοιούμενά from the verb ἀλλοιόω (change). This verse explains creation and that when God the Father created the world the Second person in the Trinity was there. The Word was with Him, and the Father through the Word created the world. He cited this verse in order to affirm that the Son is different than creatures. They are changeable ἀλλοιούμενά but the Son is unchangeable as the Father is unchangeable. Creatures were created

<sup>19</sup> Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 56; Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 284; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 581.

<sup>20</sup> Ambrose, *On the Christian Faith*, 1.7.50.

<sup>21</sup> Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of John*, 45.

through Him and without Him nothing was made. As well as this verse, Athanasius also cited Heb 1:10–12, *καί σὺ κατ' ἀρχάς, κύριε, τὴν γῆν ἐθεμελίωσας, καὶ ἔργα τῶν χειρῶν σου εἰσιν οἱ οὐρανοί. αὐτοὶ ἀπολοῦνται, σὺ δὲ διαμένεις, καὶ πάντες ὡς ἱμάτιον παλαιωθήσονται, καὶ ὡσεὶ περιβόλαιον ἐλίξεις αὐτούς, ὡς ἱμάτιον καὶ ἀλλαγῆσονται. σὺ δὲ ὁ αὐτὸς εἶ καὶ τὰ ἔτη σου οὐκ ἐκλείψουσιν* (And, In the beginning, Lord, you founded the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands; they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like clothing; like a cloak you will roll them up, and like clothing they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will never end). He also cited Ps 101:26–28 in order to prove the point that the Son is different than creatures, and he went back to Heb 13:8 in which St. Paul declares, *Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ἐχθὲς καὶ σήμερον ὁ αὐτὸς καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας* (Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever).

### **Letters to Serapion II.4.2; John 1:3**

*καὶ πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο· καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν* (KS)  
And all things came to be through him and without him not one thing came to be (MD)

*πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν. ὃ γέγονεν* (NA28)  
All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being (NRS)

In section 4 of this letter Athanasius quoted three verses from the Gospel of John, all of them describing the relationship between the Son and the Father. Before this citation Athanasius cited six verses from the Scriptures to affirm that creatures were made from nothing, while the Son makes all things. He cited: Isa 40:23, Rom 4:17, Gen 1:1, Isa 66:2, Exod 3:4, and Rom 9:5. All of these citations explain that God created all things, and declare that all things came into being from nothing, and through the Son. God created all things says St. Paul in Rom 4:17, *ζωοποιῶντος τοὺς νεκροὺς καὶ καλοῦντος τὰ μὴ ὄντα ὡς*

ὄντα (who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist). After that Athanasius cited the first verse from the Gospel of John gives a direct quotation, however, the word ὃ γέγονεν is missing in his quotation. The word γέγονεν from the verb γίνομαι means, “to become, be, verb indicative perfect active third person singular.”<sup>22</sup> He quoted all these verses in order to declare that, καὶ οὐ ποιούμενός ἐστιν, ἀλλὰ ποιῶν. καὶ οὐ κτιζόμενος, ἀλλὰ κτιζῶν καὶ ποιῶν τὰ ἔργα τοῦ Πατρὸς.<sup>23</sup> (Just as the Son is not made but makes, so too he is not created but creates and does the works of the Father).

#### Letters to Serapion II.4.4; John 10:35

Εἰ ἐκείνους εἶπεν θεοὺς, πρὸς οὓς ὁ Λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐγένετο (KS)  
If he called them gods to whom the Word of God came (MD)

εἰ ἐκείνους εἶπεν θεοὺς πρὸς οὓς ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ οὐ δύναται λυθῆναι ἡ γραφή (NA28)  
If those to whom the word of God came were called ‘gods’ and the scripture cannot be annulled (NRS)

This is a direct quotation to the first part of the verse. They are gods not by nature but by participating in the Son. He cited Ps 81: 6–7 and Ezek 28:2 to prove the point that they are not gods but rather human beings and they will die like men, and that no creature is God by nature.

#### Letters to Serapion II.4.5; John 14:10

Ἐν αὐτῷ γὰρ ἐστίν, καὶ ὁ Πατὴρ ἐν τῷ Υἱῷ (KS)  
For the Son is in the Father and the Father in the Son (MD)

οὐ πιστεύεις ὅτι ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἐν ἐμοί ἐστιν; τὰ ῥήματα ἃ ἐγὼ λέγω ὑμῖν ἀπ’ ἐμαυτοῦ οὐ λαλῶ,  
ὁ δὲ πατὴρ ἐν ἐμοὶ μένων ποιεῖ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ (NA28)  
Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works (NRS)

<sup>22</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 99; Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 39; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 157; Zerwick and Grosvenor, *A Grammatical Analysis*, 285.

<sup>23</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, II.4.2.542.

In this section of his letter, Athanasius continued citing from the Scriptures to discuss the deity of the Son. He cited Ps 44:7 and Isa 45:14–15, and at the end of the section he cited this verse from John. It is a formulaic quotation. Athanasius added these words to his quotation, Ἐν αὐτῷ γὰρ ἐστίν. The word ἐν means, “preposition with the dative; the primary idea is within, in, withinness, denoting static position or time, but the many and varied uses can be determined only by the context.”<sup>24</sup> Athanasius used twice in his citation in order to emphasize on the inner relationship between the Son and the Father. Then Athanasius used the pronoun αὐτῷ, instead of ἐγώ, or the Son, because in the original verse Jesus was speaking about Himself and His relationship to the Father. Then there is the word γὰρ, which means, “a conjunction basically introducing an explanation; expressing cause or reason *for*, because.”<sup>25</sup> And the final word which Athanasius added is ἐστίν, from the verb εἰμί which means, “as a predicate *be*, relating to what exists, to denote God’s existence, or to denote Christ’s self-designation of himself.”<sup>26</sup> The last word is very significant in the Gospel of John and is mentioned many times in John’s gospel. In Jesus’ conversation with the Samaritan woman, in John 4:26 it says, λέγει αὐτῇ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· ἐγώ εἰμι, ὁ λαλῶν σοι (Jesus said to her, I am he, the one who is speaking to you). Again in John 8:58, it says, εἶπεν αὐτοῖς Ἰησοῦς· ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, πρὶν Ἀβραὰμ γενέσθαι ἐγὼ εἰμί (Jesus said to them, Very truly, I tell you, before Abraham was, I am). The expression ἐγὼ εἰμί is very important in the Scriptures due to the explanation it gives regarding Jesus’ existence before creation, outside or beyond time. This formula is used

---

<sup>24</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 147; Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 64; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 257.

<sup>25</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 96; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 151.

<sup>26</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 131; Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 56; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 223.

in the Gospel more often as in Matt 14:27; John 4:26; 6:20; 8:24. All these verses explain the existence of Jesus, to declare Christ' self-existence.

### **Letters to Serapion II.5.2; John 16:15**

Πάντα, ὅσα ἔχει ὁ Πατήρ, ἐμέ ἐστιν (KS)  
All that the Father has is mine (MD)

πάντα ὅσα ἔχει ὁ πατήρ ἐμέ ἐστιν· διὰ τοῦτο εἶπον ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ ἐμοῦ λαμβάνει καὶ ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν (NA28)  
All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you  
(NRS)

This is the only verse that Athanasius cited in this section of the letter which declares that the Son has the same substance with the Father. To prove his point Athanasius uses the word, ὁμοούσιος (substance) five times to clarify the relationship between the Son and the Father. Athanasius also mentioned the Council of Nicaea in 325 in which the church Fathers gave this expression to the Son to affirm the inner relation between them. Athanasius also used the word ἴδιος (one's own) which also declare that the Son is proper to the Father. Then Athanasius cited this verse from John, which is a direct quotation of the first part of the original verse, in order to declare that the Son must be the same as the Father. Because of all that had been said concerning the Son and His relationship to the Father, as a result, the Son must not be counted among creatures, but rather the same as the Father in substance. Due to this relationship and because God is Almighty, the Son also is Almighty; God is immutable, the Son is also immutable and He possessed what the Father had. This was his clear declaration when he says, "All that the Father has is mine."

### Letters to Serapion II.7.3; John 1:1

Ἐν ἀρχῇ γὰρ ὁ Λόγος, καὶ Θεὸς ἦν ὁ Λόγος (KS)  
In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God (MD)

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος (NA28)  
In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (NRS)

In the beginning of this section Athanasius discussed the correct interpretation of Prov 8:22, in which his opponents believed that the Son was created in the beginning. It says, Κύριος ἔκτισέ με ἀρχὴν ὁδῶν αὐτοῦ εἰς ἔργα αὐτοῦ.<sup>27</sup> (The Lord created me as the beginning of his ways for his works). They said that the Son is created, as mentioned here, and they depended on the verb ἔκτισέ (created) to prove their point. They came to the conclusion that the Son is a creature. Athanasius discussed this from a Scriptural perspective saying that his opponents ignored the scope of the Divine Scripture. As well he cited the baptismal formula, which is impossible to contain a creature. If it does, it means that baptism is not valid and there is a dyad instead of Triad. He argued against them from a Christian character perspective when he said, Εἰ γὰρ ἐνόουν καὶ ἐγίνωσκον τὸν χαρακτῆρα τοῦ Χριστιανισμοῦ, οὐκ ἂν τὸν Κύριον τῆς δόξης ἔλεγον κτίσμα εἶναι, οὐδὲ προσέκοπτον τῷ γεγραμμένῳ καλῶς.<sup>28</sup> (if they had understood and knew the character of Christianity, they would not have called the Lord of glory a creature, nor stumbled over what is well written). The word, χαρακτῆρα that Athanasius used here is very important and means, “reproduction, (exact) representation, character.”<sup>29</sup> Athanasius uses it because he wanted to put an emphasis on the teaching of the church, in which he believed. He is saying that this is foundational to the Christian faith, which is impressed and engraved on

<sup>27</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae 1-IV Ad Serapionem*, II.7.1.546.

<sup>28</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae 1-IV Ad Serapionem*, II.7.2.547.

<sup>29</sup> Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 215; Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 406; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 884. The word χαρακτῆρα (chatacter) was used by Athanasius seven times in his letters: I.19.2; I.20.4; II.7.2; II.7.3; II.8.1; II.11.1; II.16.1.

Christian's hearts and minds. This is the exact teaching of the church. This faith is reinforced by what is written in the Scriptures. This word is mentioned once in the New Testament in Heb 1:3 ὃς ὢν ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης καὶ χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ, φέρων τε τὰ πάντα τῷ ῥήματι τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ, καθαρισμόν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ποιησάμενος ἐκάθισεν ἐν δεξιᾷ τῆς μεγαλωσύνης ἐν ὑψηλοῖς (He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high). Then Athanasius cited the first part and the last part of the original verse. This verse demonstrates that the Word was from the beginning with God the Father. When the verse says, (ἐν ἀρχῇ) means before time, and that the Son of God, (Λόγος), who was with the Father, is God. He changed ἦν to γάρ. Why? Instead of ἦν Athanasius added the conjunction γάρ which means, "indeed, certainly, to be sure."<sup>30</sup> He added this to his citation as a matter of affirmation that the Son was, for sure, from the beginning with God and he is God. Following this citation, Athanasius cited 1 Cor 1:24 and Heb 9:26; both verses talking about how Jesus is God's Power and God's Wisdom, and he became human at the end of the ages.

#### Letters to Serapion II.7.4; John 1:14

καὶ ὁ Λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο (KS)  
And the Word became flesh (MD)

Καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, καὶ ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός, πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας (NA28)

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth (NRS)

Athanasius quoted only the first four words of the original verse, and gave a direct

<sup>30</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 96; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 151.



citation. It is a continuation of the previous verse, which Athanasius cited. The Word who was from the beginning with God became flesh, when the time came, as St. Paul says in Gal 4:4 *ὅτε δὲ ἦλθεν τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου* (But when the fullness of time had come).

This verse explains that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we saw His glory. It is against the Arians to which Athanasius states that the Word of God, the *Λόγος* became flesh and dwelt among us.

### Letters to Serapion II.7.4; John 7:19 & 8:40

*Τί με ζητεῖτε ἀποκτεῖναι, ἄνθρωπον ὃς τὴν ἀλήθειαν ὑμῖν λελάληκα* (KS)  
Why do you seek to kill me, a human being who has spoken the truth to you? (MD)

*Οὐ Μωϋσῆς δέδωκεν ὑμῖν τὸν νόμον; καὶ οὐδεὶς ἐξ ὑμῶν ποιεῖ τὸν νόμον. τί με ζητεῖτε ἀποκτεῖναι; νῦν δὲ ζητεῖτέ με ἀποκτεῖναι ἄνθρωπον ὃς τὴν ἀλήθειαν ὑμῖν λελάληκα ἣν ἤκουσα παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ· τοῦτο Ἀβραὰμ οὐκ ἐποίησεν* (NA28)

Did not Moses give you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. Why are you looking for an opportunity to kill me? But now you are trying to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did (NRS)

Immediately, Athanasius quoted another verse from the Gospel of John. This time a direct quotation is given, but from part of the two verses. He cited only three words from the first verse and the second part of the second verse. He removed *ἀποκτεῖναι; νῦν δὲ ζητεῖτέ με* in his quotation. This is a part of the conversation between Jesus and the Jewish people, and Athanasius put the two verses together. The verse clarifies the teaching in the temple during the feast of tabernacles. Jesus told the Jewish people that His teaching was not His but rather was the teaching of His Father. Even the second verse, which Athanasius cited, was from the conversation between Jesus and the Jewish leaders, in the temple, in which Jesus declares that he was telling them the truth, which was heard from God. The whole conversation can be summarized with the words of Jesus when He told them that, *εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς· εἰ ὁ θεὸς πατὴρ ὑμῶν ἦν ἠγαπᾶτε ἂν ἐμέ,*

ἐγὼ γὰρ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐξῆλθον καὶ ἦκω· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἀπ' ἐμαυτοῦ ἐλήλυθα, ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνός με ἀπέστειλεν (Jesus said to them, If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now I am here. I did not come on my own, but he sent me). Athanasius concluded this section with the verse from 1 Tim 2:5 that explains that Jesus, who was from the beginning and became flesh, is the Mediator between God and humanity.

### Letters to Serapion II.8.2; John 1:3

δι' αὐτοῦ τὰ πάντα ἐγένετο, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν (KS)

Through him all things were made, and without him not one thing was made (MD)

πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν. ὃ γέγονεν (NA28)

All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being (NRS)

This is the only verse that Athanasius cited in this section of the letter. He came back in this section to confirm the character of faith that was received from the Apostles, through the Fathers, and handed down from generation to generation. After mentioning that, he cited this verse from John, which is a direct citation. Athanasius changed the order of the first four words of the verse, which explains that every thing came into being through the Son. He also cited: Pss 32:6, 106:20, 103:24, Prov 3:19, Ps 44:7–8, Isa 61:1 and finished his citation with Matt 16:16. All these citations explain the activity of the Word, which are: by the Word heavens were made, the Word healed all things, the Word is the Wisdom of God, and through Wisdom made all things; the Word was anointed with the oil of gladness, and concludes his citation with the confession of St. Peter in Matt 16:16, ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ Σίμων Πέτρος εἶπεν. σὺ εἶ ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ζῶντος (Simon Peter answered, You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God).

### Letters to Serapion II.9.3; John 10:30

Ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ Πατὴρ ἓν ἐσμὲν (KS)  
I and the Father are one (MD)

ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἓν ἐσμὲν (NA28)  
The Father and I are one (NRS)

In this section of the letter, Athanasius cited the Gospel of John six times. The first one is a direct quotation of the original verse. Before he quoted this verse, he cited many verses from the Scriptures, through which he discussed Mark 13:32. His opponents took this verse as proof that the Son does not know everything. He is ignorant and they based their conclusion on this verse and said that the Son is a creature. When he said “nor the Son” is certainly referring to his humanity. Athanasius gave a correct interpretation to this verse and he mentioned the other case from Prov 8:22. Both cases referring ἀνθρωπίνως εἶρηκε to His humanity, and Athanasius gave two reasons; first, ἵνα δείξῃ, ὅτι ἀληθῶς ἀνθρώπινον ἔχει σῶμα.<sup>31</sup> (that he could show that he really has a human body), and the second reason, ἵνα καὶ, τὴν ἄγνοιαν τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐν τῷ σώματι ἔχων, ἀπὸ πάντων λυτρωσάμενος καὶ καθάρσας, τελείαν καὶ ἁγίαν παραστήσῃ τῷ Πατρὶ τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα.<sup>32</sup> (since he had human ignorance in his body, so that he could redeem his humanity from all and cleanse it and so offer it perfect and holy to the Father). Then he cited this first verse from John, which explains the relationship and the equality between the Father and the Son.

### Letters to Serapion II.9.3; John 14:9

Ὁ ἐωρακώς ἐμὲ ἐώρακε τὸν Πατέρα (KS)  
He who sees me sees the Father (MD)

λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· τοσοῦτω χρόνῳ μεθ' ὑμῶν εἰμι καὶ οὐκ ἔγνωκός με, Φίλιππε; ὁ ἐωρακώς ἐμὲ ἐώρακεν

<sup>31</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, II.9.2.550.

<sup>32</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, II.9.2.550.

τὸν πατέρα· πῶς σὺ λέγεις· δεῖξον ἡμῖν τὸν πατέρα (NA28)

Jesus said to him, Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, Show us the Father? (NRS)

Athanasius continued in section 9 of this letter discussing the position of the Son and His relationship to the Father. He cited another verse, a direct quotation of the part of the original verse. But before he cited this verse, he mentioned the Arians and their problem with the verse from Prov 8:22, and he said that they do not understand the meaning of the verse. This is a conversation between the Lord Jesus and Philip. All this time I am with you and you do not know me Philip. Any one who sees me, says Jesus, sees the Father. Concerning the verb *ἑωρακώς* see the previous section (II.2.3).

### Letters to Serapion II.9.3; John 14:10 & 10:38

Ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ Πατρὶ, καὶ ὁ Πατὴρ ἐν ἐμοί (KS)  
I am in the Father and the Father in me (MD)

οὐ πιστεύεις ὅτι ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἐν ἐμοί ἐστίν; τὰ ῥήματα ἃ ἐγὼ λέγω ὑμῖν ἀπ' ἑμαυτοῦ οὐ λαλῶ, ὁ δὲ πατὴρ ἐν ἐμοὶ μένων ποιεῖ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ. εἰ δὲ ποιῶ, κἂν ἐμοὶ μὴ πιστεύητε, τοῖς ἔργοις πιστεύετε, ἵνα γνῶτε καὶ γινώσκητε ὅτι ἐν ἐμοὶ ὁ πατὴρ καὶ ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ (NA28)

Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. But if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father (NRS)

This direct quotation is a continuation of the previous verse in His conversation with Philip, and it is a direct citation. Athanasius quoted only the first part of the first verse as a direct quotation, even though the words *οὐ πιστεύεις ὅτι* are missing in his quotation. These missing words did not change the meaning of the verse, because what is important is the inner relationship between the Son and the Father.

### Letters to Serapion II.9.4; John 16:30

Νῦν οἶδαμεν, ὅτι πάντα οἶδας (KS)  
Now we know that you know all things (MD)

νῦν οἶδαμεν ὅτι οἶδας πάντα καὶ οὐ χρεῖαν ἔχεις ἵνα τις σε ἐρωτᾷ· ἐν τούτῳ πιστεύομεν ὅτι ἀπὸ θεοῦ ἐξῆλθες  
(NA28)

Now we know that you know all things, and do not need to have anyone question you; by this we believe that you came from God (NRS)

In this section, Athanasius cited two verses from John. The first one was the disciple's answer when they confessed that He knows everything. He cited only the first five words only and changed its order.

### Letters to Serapion II.9.4; John 1:3

δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα ἐγένετο (KS)  
Through whom all things were made (MD)

πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν. ὃ γέγονεν NA28)  
All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being (NRS)

This is the second verse, which he cited from John. Again he quoted the first part and changed the order of the quotation. Because Jesus came from God, the outcome would be that God created all things through Him. Then Athanasius concluded this section beautifully when he said, Τῶν δὲ πάντων οὕσα καὶ ἡ ἡμέρα ἐκείνη, πάντως δι' αὐτοῦ γενήσεται, κἂν διαρραγῶσι μυριάκις τῇ ἑαυτῶν ἀγνοίᾳ οἱ Ἄρειανοί.<sup>33</sup> (But since that day is one of the all things, it will certainly come to pass through him, even though the Arians in their ignorance burst ten thousand times).

### Letters to Serapion II.10.1; John 16:13-14

Οὐ λαλήσει παρ' ἑαυτοῦ ὁ Παράκλητος. ἀλλ' ὅσα ἀκούσει, λαλήσει. ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ ἐμοῦ λήψεται, καὶ ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν (KS)

The Paraclete will not speak on his own, but whatever he hears he will speak, for he will take from what is mine and declare it to you (MD)

ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ ἐκεῖνος, τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας, ὁδηγήσει ὑμᾶς ἐν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ πάση· οὐ γὰρ λαλήσει ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ,

<sup>33</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, II.9.4.551.

ἀλλ' ὅσα ἀκούσει λαλήσει καὶ τὰ ἐρχόμενα ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν. ἐκεῖνος ἐμὲ δοξάσει, ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ ἐμοῦ λήμψεται καὶ ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν (NA28)

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you (NRS)

In section ten of this letter, Athanasius started to shift his direction of defending, this time to the Holy Spirit, and started to link his interpretation of the Spirit to the Son. In this section Athanasius cited the Gospel of John 5 times; four of these citations related to the Holy Spirit. The first one is a formulaic quotation. In this verse the Lord Jesus talked to his disciples regarding the Holy Spirit. He told them that the Spirit of truth would guide them to the truth. The Spirit will also disclose to them things to come. He will glorify me, said Jesus, because he will take what is mine and declare it to them. Athanasius changed the pronoun ἐκεῖνος which means, “a demonstrative adjective referring to an entity relatively absent from the discourse setting; often substantively, as a pronoun that (person), that (thing),”<sup>34</sup> to the word, παράκλητος, in order to put an emphasis on the Spirit that He is the one to come. This is why he added the word παράκλητος and put it beside the pronoun ἑαυτοῦ, which is the same as the word αὐτοῦ that means, “a reflexive pronoun referring action in a verb back of its own subject.”<sup>35</sup> He removed γάρ in his quotation, and changed ἀφ' to παρ'. Did these changes affect the meaning? The word ἀφ' from ἀπό means, “preposition with genitive, to indicate source or origin from, out of”<sup>36</sup> and the word παρά means, “preposition with a root meaning beside; with the genitive

<sup>34</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 136; Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 59; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 238.

<sup>35</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 124; Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 53. Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 211.

<sup>36</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 65; Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 21; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 85.

spatially, coming from the closeness of a person from (beside).”<sup>37</sup> Both words give the same meaning.

### Letters to Serapion II.10.1; John 20:22

καὶ ἐμφυσήσας δέδωκεν ἐξ αὐτοῦ τοῦτο τοῖς μαθηταῖς (KS)  
he breathed on them (MD)

καὶ τοῦτο εἰπὼν ἐνεφύσησεν καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς· λάβετε πνεῦμα ἅγιον (NA28)  
When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit (NRS)

This is a paraphrase quotation or word substitutions. He removed λάβετε πνεῦμα ἅγιον that is the second part of the verse, and in the same part he changed αὐτοῖς to μαθηταῖς. The English translation of Athanasius’ citation is not correct. It should be translated as (breathed and gave, from himself to disciples). The two verbs that Athanasius used here are: ἐμφυσήσας and δέδωκεν. The first one ἐμφυσήσας from the verb ἐμφυσάω means, “breathe into or on someone, as a symbolic and spiritually creative act conveying God’s power or blessing.”<sup>38</sup> The second verb is δέδωκεν is from the verb δίδωμι, which means, “from δίδω with a basic meaning give, the translation varying widely to suit the context; of persons; of what is given by a person in superior position to one in subordinate position.”<sup>39</sup> After the Lord Jesus was resurrected, He appeared to His disciples in the upper room because they were afraid of the Jews. In that first appearance, He breathed on them saying, “receive the Holy Spirit” and the translation should be “He gave the Spirit to his disciples ἐξ αὐτοῦ from himself when he breathed on them.”

<sup>37</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 293; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 614.

<sup>38</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 147; Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 64; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 257.

<sup>39</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 114; Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 48; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 181.

### Letters to Serapion II.10.2; John 16:15

Πάντα ὅσα ἔχει ὁ Πατήρ ἐμά ἐστιν (KS)

All that the Father has is mine (MD)

πάντα ὅσα ἔχει ὁ πατήρ ἐμά ἐστιν· διὰ τοῦτο εἶπον ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ ἐμοῦ λαμβάνει καὶ ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν (NA28)  
All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you  
(NRS)

This is a direct quotation of the first part of the original verse. This verse explains the relationship between the three persons in the Trinity. The Spirit takes from the Son and discloses it to the disciples. Whatever the Father has is the Son's also. The word ὅσα is important and means, "a correlative adjective with πόσος (how great?) and τοσοῦτος (so great, so much); used substantivally with measurements of space, time, number, size, degree in the sense in such an amount as."<sup>40</sup>

### Letters to Serapion II.10.3; John 17:10

Τὰ ἐμά τοῦ Πατρός ἐστιν (KS)

All that is mine is the Father's (MD)

καὶ τὰ ἐμά πάντα σὰ ἐστιν καὶ τὰ σὰ ἐμά, καὶ δεδόξασμαι ἐν αὐτοῖς (NA28)  
All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them (NRS)

This is a formulaic quotation. This verse explains the relationship between the Son and the Father. The Lord Jesus declares that every thing that the Father has is his also. This declaration was made in His prayer to the Father after His conversation with the disciples. The adjective ἐμά is from ἐμός and means mine, what one possesses. What Jesus says is that the entirety of what the Father has Christians have also. Athanasius removed πάντα in his citation, and by doing so did not change or affect the meaning of the verse because ἐμά gives the same meaning. He also changed σὰ (yours,) to Πατρός

---

<sup>40</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 286; Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 142; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 590.



(Father). The adjective *σά*, from *σός*, means “a possessive adjective of the second-person singular used for emphasis or contrast your, yours, with a noun your, yours.”<sup>41</sup>

### Letters to Serapion II.10.3; John 15:26

“Όταν ἔλθῃ ὁ Παράκλητος, ὃν ἐγὼ πέμψω ὑμῖν παρὰ τοῦ Πατρὸς, τὸ Πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας, ὃ παρὰ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐκπορεύεται, ἐκεῖνος μαρτυρήσει περὶ ἐμοῦ (KS)

When the Paraclete comes, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me (MD)

“Όταν ἔλθῃ ὁ παράκλητος ὃν ἐγὼ πέμψω ὑμῖν παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς, τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας ὃ παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκπορεύεται, ἐκεῖνος μαρτυρήσει περὶ ἐμοῦ (NA28)

When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf (NRS)

This is a direct quotation. The verse explains the mission of the Holy Spirit; that He will be sent from the Father, through the Son, and also explains His characteristics.

### Letters to Serapion II.11.1; 1 John 2:23

Ὁ ἀρνούμενος τὸν Υἱὸν, οὐδὲ τὸν Πατέρα ἔχει (KS)

Whoever denies the Son does not even have the Father (MD)

πᾶς ὁ ἀρνούμενος τὸν υἱὸν οὐδὲ τὸν πατέρα ἔχει, ὁ ὁμολογῶν τὸν υἱὸν καὶ τὸν πατέρα ἔχει (NA28)

No one who denies the Son has the Father; everyone who confesses the Son has the Father also (NRS)

This is a direct quotation of the first part of the verse. Athanasius removed the word *πᾶς*.

Does this affect the meaning? The word *πᾶς* means, “singular each one, everyone; plural all, everyone.”<sup>42</sup> Removing this word did not affect the meaning of Athanasius’

explanation concerning the faith of the person in the Son. Athanasius here made it clear that John did not mean that the denial or the confession is in private, but rather in public due to the docetic heresy at the beginning of Christianity that denied Jesus had a real

<sup>41</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 352; Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 182; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 766.

<sup>42</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 302; Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 152. Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 636.

fleshly body. The one who defended the faith of the church at that time was Ignatius of Antioch in his letters to Trallians and to Smyrnaeans.

### Letters to Serapion II.12.1; 1 John 2:27

Καὶ ὑμεῖς τὸ χρίσμα ὃ ἐλάβετε παρ' αὐτοῦ μένει ἐν ὑμῖν. καὶ οὐ χρεῖαν ἔχετε, ἵνα τις διδάσκη ὑμᾶς, ἀλλ' ὡς τὸ αὐτοῦ χρίσμα, τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτοῦ διδάσκει ὑμᾶς περὶ πάντων (KS)

But the anointing which you received from him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you, since, rather, his anointing – his Spirit – teaches you about everything (MD)

καὶ ὑμεῖς τὸ χρίσμα ὃ ἐλάβετε ἀπ' αὐτοῦ μένει ἐν ὑμῖν, καὶ οὐ χρεῖαν ἔχετε ἵνα τις διδάσκη ὑμᾶς, ἀλλ' ὡς τὸ αὐτοῦ χρίσμα διδάσκει ὑμᾶς περὶ πάντων, καὶ ἀληθές ἐστιν καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ψεῦδος, καὶ καθὼς ἐδίδαξεν ὑμᾶς, μένετε ἐν αὐτῷ (NA28)

As for you, the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and so you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, abide in him (NRS)

This is a direct quotation of most of the original verse. He did make some changes in that he added τὸ πνεῦμα beside χρίσμα. Why did he add it? What is behind this addition? He added it in order to put an emphasis on αὐτοῦ χρίσμα (his anointing) is τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτοῦ (his Spirit).

Table 3: the word χρίσμα (anointed) is mentioned three times in chapter 2:

1 John 2:20

καὶ ὑμεῖς χρίσμα ἔχετε ἀπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου καὶ οἴδατε πάντες

But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and all of you have knowledge

1 John 2:27a

καὶ ὑμεῖς τὸ χρίσμα ὃ ἐλάβετε ἀπ' αὐτοῦ μένει ἐν ὑμῖν, καὶ οὐ χρεῖαν ἔχετε ἵνα τις διδάσκη ὑμᾶς

As for you, the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and so you do not need anyone to teach you

1 John 2:27b

ἀλλ' ὡς τὸ αὐτοῦ χρίσμα διδάσκει ὑμᾶς περὶ πάντων, καὶ ἀληθές ἐστιν καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ψεῦδος, καὶ καθὼς ἐδίδαξεν ὑμᾶς, μένετε ἐν αὐτῷ

But as his anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, abide in him

The word *χρῖσμα* means “literally, as what has been spread on ointment, anointing, and used in the Old Testament to symbolize appointment to and empowerment for a task; and figuratively in the N.T. as the gift and empowering of the Holy Spirit for a task anointing, endowment, appointment.”<sup>43</sup> The verb *χρίω* means, “anoint; figuratively in the N.T. of God’s activity in appointing someone to an office, function, or privilege; appoint, assign, give a task.”<sup>44</sup> According to Coetzee, the word *χρῖσμα* (anointed) describing, “the substance by which one is anointed rather an action word describing the act of anointing.”<sup>45</sup> The word in these three verses refers to the Holy Spirit. This anointing teaches the faithful all things that Jesus said, and reminds them that they do not need someone else to teach them. In 1 John 2:20, John is talking to the church concerning those who left the community and says they are antichrists. But you *ὁμοίως χρῖσμα ἔχετε ἀπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου* (you have been anointed by the Holy One), means you have a divine anointing by the Holy One. In the Old Testament, the expression ‘Holy One’ is a reference to God himself, as for instance in Ps 71:22. But the Holy One that is mentioned in this verse refers to Jesus as mentioned in several places in the Gospel and in Revelation. In John 6:69 it says, *καὶ ἡμεῖς πεπιστεύκαμεν καὶ ἐγνώκαμεν ὅτι σὺ εἶ ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ* (We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God). It is mentioned also in the Reve 3:7 where it says, *Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Φιλαδελφείᾳ ἐκκλησίας γράψον· Τάδε λέγει ὁ ἅγιος, ὁ ἀληθινός, ὁ ἔχων τὴν κλεῖν Δαυὶδ, ὁ ἀνοίγων καὶ οὐδεὶς κλείσει καὶ κλείων καὶ οὐδεὶς ἀνοίγει* (And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia

---

<sup>43</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 410; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*; 894; Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 218.

<sup>44</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 410; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 895; Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 218.

<sup>45</sup> Coetzee, “The Holy Spirit in 1 John.” 52.

write: These are the words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens). Yarbrough suggests that the “adjective Holy occurs five times, three times it refers to the Holy Spirit (John 1:33; 14:26; 20:22), once to Jesus (6:69), and once to God the Father (17:11).”<sup>46</sup> Then John mentions for the second time the word *χρῖσμα* in 1 John 2:27 in which he declares that *χρῖσμα* (anointed) *μένει* (abides) in believers and teaches all things, they are taught by the Spirit. In this verse John mentions one of the activities of the Spirit, which is to *διδάσκει* *ὑμᾶς* (teaches you), as he mentioned before in his Gospel, 14:26 where he mentions the activities of the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit. Athanasius continued quoting the Scriptures, citing Isa 61:1 and Eph 1:13; 4:30 in order to prove that creatures are anointed and sealed by Him (the Spirit), and if creatures are anointed by Him, then the result would be that the Spirit cannot be counted among creatures.

### Letters to Serapion II.12.4; John 14:9

ὁ ἑωρακώς τὸν Υἱὸν ὁρᾷ τὸν Πατέρα (KS)  
Anyone who has seen the Son sees the Father (MD)

λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· τοσοῦτω χρόνῳ μεθ' ὑμῶν εἰμι καὶ οὐκ ἔγνωκάς με, Φίλιππε; ὁ ἑωρακώς ἐμέ ἑώρακεν τὸν πατέρα· πῶς σὺ λέγεις· δεῖξον ἡμῖν τὸν πατέρα (NA28)  
Jesus said to him, Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, Show us the Father? (NRS)

This is a direct quotation of part of the original verse. He changed the verb *ἑωρακώς* to the verb *ὁρᾷ*. Did this change the meaning? The *ἑωρακώς* is from the verb *ὁράω* that means, “to see, and the perfect tense is *ἑώρακα*.”<sup>47</sup> There is no difference between this verb and the verb *ὁρᾷ* that was used by Athanasius in his quotation. But sometimes the verb *ὁρᾷ*

<sup>46</sup> Yarbrough, *1-3 John*, 150.

<sup>47</sup> Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 581; Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 140. Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 581.

means, “don’t do that.”<sup>48</sup> For example in Rev 19:10 it says, καὶ ἔπεσα ἔμπροσθεν τῶν ποδῶν αὐτοῦ προσκυνῆσαι αὐτῷ. καὶ λέγει μοι· ὄρα μή· σύνδουλός σου εἰμι καὶ τῶν ἀδελφῶν σου τῶν ἐχόντων τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ· τῷ θεῷ προσκύνησον. ἡ γὰρ μαρτυρία Ἰησοῦ ἐστὶν τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς προφητείας (Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, You must not do that I am a fellow servant with you and your comrades who hold the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy). But in the other English versions of the Bible it is translated as “to see” as in the KJV and NKJV.

#### Letters to Serapion II.12.4; 1 John 4:13

Ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν, ὅτι ἐν τῷ Θεῷ μένομεν, καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν ἡμῖν, ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ Πνεύματος αὐτοῦ δέδωκεν ἡμῖν  
(KS)

By this we know that we remain in him, and he in us, because he has given to us of his Spirit (MD)

Ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ μένομεν καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν ἡμῖν, ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος αὐτοῦ δέδωκεν ἡμῖν  
(NA28)

By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit (NRS)

This is a direct quotation with a small change. He replaced the pronoun αὐτῷ, which refers to God, with Θεῷ. Athanasius linked the Spirit with the Son, saying if his followers abide in him they would have the Spirit and become the temple of the Spirit. He cited 1 Cor 3:16 in which Paul declares that the faithful are the temple of the Spirit and the Spirit dwells in them, and he cited this verse from first John. The Spirit in this verse is “the link, even agent, who permits believers to see this reciprocity for what it is.”<sup>49</sup> It is the divine presence in believers’ life, ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος αὐτοῦ δέδωκεν ἡμῖν (he has given us of His Spirit).

<sup>48</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 284.

<sup>49</sup> Yarbrough, *1-3 John*, 246.

### Letters to Serapion II.12.5; John 14:11

ἐν αὐτῷ γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ Υἱὸς, καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν τῷ Υἱῷ (KS)  
He is in the Father and the Father in him (MD)

πιστεύετε μοι ὅτι ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ καὶ ὁ πατήρ ἐν ἐμοί· εἰ δὲ μή, διὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτὰ πιστεύετε (NA28)  
Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves (NRS)

This is a formulaic quotation. He speaks indirectly about the inner relation between the Son and the Father. Athanasius quoted this verse in order to explain the relationship between the Father and the Son, and from this he proved that the Son is not a creature because He is in the Father. As a result of this relationship, the Spirit also is not a creature, because God has given Christians His Spirit, and it is impossible to say that the Spirit of God is a creature.

### Letters to Serapion II.12.6; John 1:14

μονογενῆς Υἱὸς (KS)  
Only-begotten (MD)

Καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, καὶ ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός, πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας (NA28)  
And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth (NRS)

Athanasius quoted only one word from this verse. The word is *μονογενῆς* and he added the word *Υἱός* to it. Why did he quote only one word, which is a very significant one? Why did he add the second one? The word *μονογενῆς* is mentioned several times in Athanasius' letters, and this word is a significant word as it describes the relationship between the Son and the Father. In this verse, the word *μονογενοῦς* has a connection with the glory of the Lord Jesus, his glory as the Father's only Son, who was incarnated for the salvation of humanity. The glory mentioned here "is therefore not merely a comparison but really the indication of an essential possession: He is indeed the only (be-gotten)

Son.”<sup>50</sup> And this glory was *παρὰ πατρός* (as of a Father). John is the only evangelist who used this term in his gospel and he used it five times. The table below shows the other references in the letters and each mention of the word clarifies an important event and presents a message to the world: The Word mentioned in the Gospel many times:

Letters to Serapion II.12.6; John 1:18

μονογενῆς Υἱός (KS)  
Only-begotten (MD)

Θεὸν οὐδεὶς ἑώρακεν πώποτε· μονογενῆς θεὸς ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο (NA28)  
No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known (NRS)

Letters to Serapion II.12.6; John 3:16

μονογενῆς Υἱός (KS)  
Only-begotten (MD)

οὕτως γὰρ ἠγάπησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν κόσμον, ὥστε τὸν υἱὸν τὸν μονογενῆ ἔδωκεν, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν μὴ ἀπόληται ἀλλ' ἔχη ζωὴν αἰώνιον (NA28)  
For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life (NRS)

Letters to Serapion II.12.6; John 3:18

μονογενῆς Υἱός  
Only-begotten (MD)

ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν οὐ κρίνεται· ὁ δὲ μὴ πιστεύων ἤδη κέκριται, ὅτι μὴ πεπίστευκεν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ μονογενοῦς υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ (NA28)  
Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God (NRS)

Letters to Serapion II.12.6; 1 John 4:9

μονογενῆς Υἱός (KS)  
Only-begotten (MD)

ἐν τούτῳ ἐφανερώθη ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν ἡμῖν, ὅτι τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ ἀπέσταλκεν ὁ θεὸς εἰς τὸν κόσμον, ἵνα ζήσωμεν δι' αὐτοῦ (NA28)  
God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him (NRS)

The word in general means, “one, one and only, of child.”<sup>51</sup> In his commentary to the Gospel of John, Rudolf Bultmann suggests another meaning to the word, “descended

<sup>50</sup> Du Plessis, “Christ as the ‘Only Begotten,’” 26.

<sup>51</sup> Lampe and Liddell, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 880; Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 130.

from a single begetter, only begotten.”<sup>52</sup> The word is used by the early church Fathers, as Christ is the only begotten Son of the Father. Irenaeus mentioned it in his work, *Against Heresies*, when he mentioned Abraham offering his son Isaac as a sacrifice. He stated, “according to his faith, followed the command of the Word of God, and with a ready mind delivered up, as a sacrifice to God his only-begotten and beloved son, in order that God also might be pleased to offer up for all his seed His own beloved and only-begotten Son, as a sacrifice for our redemption.”<sup>53</sup> The story of Abraham is mentioned by St. Paul in his letter to the Heb 11:17, in which he speaks about the people of faith. He states, Πίστει προσενήνοχεν Ἀβραὰμ τὸν Ἰσαὰκ πειραζόμενος καὶ τὸν μονογενῆ προσέφερεν, ὃ τὰς ἐπαγγελίας ἀναδεξάμενος (By faith Abraham, when put to the test, offered up Isaac. He who had received the promises was ready to offer up his only son). It was used by Tertullian also in his work *Against Praxeas*. He stated, “It is of course the Father, with whom was the Word, the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, and has Himself declared Him.”<sup>54</sup> The word refers to the generation of Christ from the Father.

The second verse concerning the μονογενῆς θεός is from John 1:18, which explains the inner relation between the Father and the Son, because the Son is the one who ἐξηγήσατο (made known). The verb is from ἐξηγέομαι, which means, “explain, interpret, tell, report, describe; make known, bring news of.”<sup>55</sup> Athanasius changed the μονογενῆς θεός to μονογενῆς Υἱός. He changed θεός (God) to Υἱός (Son). By doing so, Athanasius declared that Jesus (the Word) is the Son of God, and to make the reading more understandable. In this verse the word μονογενῆς is linked to θεός. According to Barrett,

<sup>52</sup> Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 71.

<sup>53</sup> Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 4.5.4.

<sup>54</sup> Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*, 15.

<sup>55</sup> Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 69.



“the sense is substantially unaltered by the textual variation. The Son is the Word, and the Word has already been declared to be θεός.”<sup>56</sup> Du Plessis suggests that “the deity of the only (begotten) is accentuated to indicate that He was the only one who could reveal God to man-kind and explain what God is and means for man.”<sup>57</sup> The Son is the Word, which is mentioned in the beginning of ch. 1, the Word became flesh and He is θεός (God) as proclaimed in this verse. In John 3:16, the word explains how the Father gave his only begotten Son as a sacrifice to save the world. The word οὕτως contains an important meaning. It is an adverb which means, “in this manner, thus”<sup>58</sup> and the manner was that he was lifted up on the cross as a sacrificial lamb. This manner expresses the unconditional love that the Father had toward humanity; the story of the cross turned into the most beautiful story of love known in the world and as a result of God’s love toward mankind, He gave his only begotten Son. The verb ἔδωκεν in this verse is very important because it explains the death of Jesus on the cross. It comes from the verb δίδωμι meaning “of persons; of what is given by a person in superior position to one in subordinate position.”<sup>59</sup> This verb δίδωμι, (to give), is found in the fourth Gospel frequently. Keener suggests that the verb, “occurs sixty-three times that it constitutes one of John’s motifs, though it is linked explicitly with love only on occasion (3:16, 35; 17:24).”<sup>60</sup> In John 3:18, the evangelist linked the faith with condemnation, because he differentiates between those who believe and those who do not. In 1 John 4:9, John

<sup>56</sup> Barrett, *The Gospel according to St. John*, 141.

<sup>57</sup> Du Plessis, “Christ as the ‘Only begotten,’” 27.

<sup>58</sup> Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 148; Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 289; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 602.

<sup>59</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 114; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 191; Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 48.

<sup>60</sup> Keener, *The Gospel of John*, 1:567.

declared that God sent His Son to the World, ὅτι τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ ἀπέσταλκεν ὁ θεὸς εἰς τὸν κόσμον (God sent his only Son into the world). He sent His Son and His μονογενῆ (only Son). This is the only place in the letters of John where this expression occurs. All the verses mentioned in the table above are linked together and explain that Jesus is the savior and humans must believe in him. These verses “demonstrate the definitive act of God’s love in sending Jesus Christ.”<sup>61</sup> In John 1:14, the Word became flesh and humans see his glory, the glory of a Father’s only Son. In John 1:18, Jesus who is God, the only Son, by his incarnation made God known to the world. In John 3:16, God gave his only Son to save humanity, and those who believe in him may not perish. In John 3:18, he declares that believers are not condemned. In 1 John 4:9, God sent his only Son that his followers may live through Him. In summary, “The greatest of God’s love, manifest in the nature of his gift and its purpose, is seen also in its beneficiaries, for God gave his Son to die for us undeserving sinners.”<sup>62</sup>

### **Letters to Serapion II.13.2; John 14:11**

ἐν Πατρὶ γὰρ ὢν, καὶ τοῦ Πατρὸς ὄντος ἐν αὐτῷ (KS)  
He is in the Father and the Father in him (MD)

πιστεύετε μοι ὅτι ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἐν ἐμοί· εἰ δὲ μή, διὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτὰ πιστεύετε (NA28)  
Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves (NRS)

In this section of the letter, Athanasius started his discussion saying that there is a multitude of creatures but the Son and the Spirit are one. This is the first verse, which Athanasius used to defend his position against his opponents. In this section Athanasius cited the Gospel of John four times, and all of these verses explain the relationship

<sup>61</sup> Parsenios, *First, Second, and Third John*, 115.

<sup>62</sup> Stott, *The Letters of John*, 165.

between the Father and the Son. This is the first verse and it is a formulaic citation to the first part of the original verse. Athanasius presented an explanation based on the doctrine of the Son. To see the Son is to see the Father because they are one in substance not because they are the same person. And if you do not believe, see the works I do, says Jesus. Concerning this matter, Keener states, “As in the Exodus tradition, divine signs attest the identity of the true Lord. Jesus summons them to believe even if initially only because of the works.”<sup>63</sup> Athanasius added two words, γάρ, ὄντως in his citation. The first addition is γάρ, which means, “a conjunction basically introducing an explanation.”<sup>64</sup> The second word is ὄντως means, “with a noun, to attribute genuineness real, true, indeed.”<sup>65</sup> And by adding this word, Athanasius put an emphasis on the relation between the Father and the Son that it is indeed the Father in the Son and the Son in the Father.

### Letters to Serapion II.13.3; John 14:11

καὶ ὁ Υἱὸς ἐν τῷ Πατρὶ (KS)  
As the Son is in the Father (MD)

πιστεύετε μοι ὅτι ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ καὶ ὁ πατήρ ἐν ἐμοί· εἰ δὲ μὴ, διὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτὰ πιστεύετε (NA28)  
Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves (NRS)

Athanasius continued his argument and cited from the Scriptures to prove his point. He cited Wis 1:7 as a witness that the Spirit of the Lord has filled the world and He is everywhere, as David said in Ps 138:7. Athanasius cited this verse as an indirect quotation to part of the original verse, to explain that the Son fills all things and He is everywhere because He is in the Father and the Father is in Him.

<sup>63</sup> Keener, *The Gospel of John*, 2:945.

<sup>64</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 96; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 151.

<sup>65</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 283; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 577.

### Letters to Serapion II.13.4; John 5:19

Ἄ γὰρ βλέπω, φησί, τὸν Πατέρα ποιῶντα, ταῦτα καὶ γὰρ ποιῶ (KS)  
For whatever I see the Father doing, this is what I also do (MD)

Ἀπεκρίνατο οὖν ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς· ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, οὐ δύναται ὁ υἱὸς ποιεῖν ἄφ' ἑαυτοῦ οὐδὲν ἢ μὴ τι βλέπη τὸν πατέρα ποιῶντα· ἃ γὰρ ἂν ἐκεῖνος ποιῇ, ταῦτα καὶ ὁ υἱὸς ὁμοίως ποιεῖ (NA28)  
Jesus said to them, Very truly, I tell you, the Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise (NRS)

This is a formulaic quotation. He changed the word order of the verse and he added the word φησί. Why? The word φησί from the verb φημί means, “third person singular, to say, affirm; or in introducing scripture quotation.”<sup>66</sup> In adding this word to his quotation Athanasius affirmed the common work that the Son and the Father are doing, and that what Jesus does is the reflection of the Father works, because he is in the Father and sees what the Father is doing. Carson suggests that, “It is impossible for the Son to take independent, self determent action that would set him over against the Father as another God, for all the Son does is both coincident with and coextensive with all that the Father does.”<sup>67</sup> That Athanasius removed the pronoun ἐκεῖνος (Father) is important in the original verse because it refers to the separation of the persons in the Trinity. The verse mentions here two divine persons in the Trinity.

### Letters to Serapion II.13.4; John 1:3

Πάντα γοῦν δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν (KS)  
All things came to be through him, and without him not one thing came to be (MD)

πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν. ὃ γέγονεν (NA28)  
All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being (NRS)

Athanasius continued his argument in this section concerning the divinity of the Spirit,

<sup>66</sup> Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 864; Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 1053; Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 398.

<sup>67</sup> Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 251.

and the activities of the three persons in the Trinity. It is a direct quotation with a minor change. Why did he add the word γοῦν to his quotation? He also removed the word ὁ γέγονεν from the original verse. Athanasius ended this section saying that if all things were created through him, then the Spirit is not a creature. He cited Ps 103:29 in which David declared, “you send forth your Spirit, they are created, and renew the face of the earth.”

### Letters to Serapion II.15.3; John 14:23

ἐλεύσεται ὁ Υἱὸς, καὶ ὁ Πατὴρ, καὶ μονὴν ποιήσουσιν ἐν ἡμῖν (KS)  
The Son and the Father will also come and make their home in us (MD)

ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· ἐάν τις ἀγαπᾷ με τὸν λόγον μου τηρήσει, καὶ ὁ πατήρ μου ἀγαπήσει αὐτὸν καὶ πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐλευσόμεθα καὶ μονὴν παρ’ αὐτῷ ποιησόμεθα (NA28)  
Jesus answered him, “Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them (NRS)

This is the last verse in this letter and is a formulaic quotation. In this section Athanasius focused on unity and the undivided Trinity. Before this citation he cited 2 Cor 13:13, Luke 1:35, and 1 Cor 1:24 as witnesses in order to support his words when he said, Τοῦ γὰρ Πνεύματος μετέχοντες, ἔχομεν τὴν τοῦ Λόγου χάριν, καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ τὴν τοῦ Πατρὸς ἀγάπην. Ὡς δὲ μία τῆς Τριάδος ἡ χάρις, οὕτως ἀδιαίρετος ἡ Τριάς.<sup>68</sup> (When we participate in the Spirit, we have the grace of the Word and, in the Word, the love of the Father. Just as there is one grace of the Trinity, so too is the Trinity indivisible). Following this Athanasius discussed the faith of the Catholic Church and cited the baptismal formula in Matt 28:19, in order to say that if the Holy Spirit was a creature, he would not have ranked in this formula with the Father and the Son. He ended this section with two more citations from Isa 1:11, and Eph 4:4 and he came to the conclusion that there is, ἐπειδὴ

<sup>68</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae* I-IV *Ad Serapionem*, II.15.1.560.

καὶ μία τῆς Τριάδος ἡ θεότης, ἐξ ἑνὸς τοῦ Πατρὸς γνωσσομένη.<sup>69</sup> (For there is one divinity of the Trinity, and it is manifested by the one Father).

Table 1: The Johannine texts that are mentioned in the third letter

John 1	III.3.2
John 14	III.3.3; III.3.6; III.4.2
John 16	III.1.3; III.3.6
John 20	III.2.3; III.3.6

Table 2: The total of the Johannine texts in the third letter

John 1	1
John 14	3
John 16	2
John 20	2

### Letters to Serapion III.1.3; John 16:14

ἐκ τοῦ Υἱοῦ λήψεται τὸ Πνεῦμα (KS)  
If the Spirit shall receive from the Son (MD)

ἐκεῖνος ἐμὲ δοξάσει, ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ ἐμοῦ λήψεται καὶ ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν (NA28)  
He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you (NRS)

This is the first verse Athanasius cited in his third letter. He quoted only four words from the original verse and he changed the word ἐκεῖνος (He) to τὸ Πνεῦμα (the Spirit). This verse shows the relationship between the Holy Spirit and Jesus and that the Spirit receives from the Son and declares to the disciples. As Keener states, this verse “ties the Spirit inseparably to Jesus as the rest of the Fourth Gospel ties Jesus to the Father.”<sup>70</sup> Before this citation from the Gospel of John, Athanasius cited from the Scriptures in his

<sup>69</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae 1-IV Ad Serapionem*, II.15.6.561.

<sup>70</sup> Keener, *The Gospel of John*, 2:1041.

argument with his opponents. He was asking Serapion to avoid heretics and he cited Titus 3:10-11, because their mind is *διστραμμένην* (perverse); from the verb *διαστρέφω* that means, “figuratively pervert, corrupt, distort.”<sup>71</sup> Athanasius used the same verb that was used by Jesus in Matt 17:17 while he talking to his disciples, when they could not heal one who was possessed with demons. Athanasius reminded his opponents that formerly you were *λογομαχεῖν* fighting against the Word, and now you are *πνευματομαχοῦντες* (fighting against the Spirit).

### Letters to Serapion III.2.3; John 20:22

*ἐμφυσήσας δέδωκεν αὐτὸ τοῖς μαθηταῖς* (KS)  
He breathed on them (MD)

*καὶ τοῦτο εἰπὼν ἐνεφύσησεν καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς· λάβετε πνεῦμα ἅγιον* (NA28)  
When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit (NRS)

Athanasius continued his arguments in this section. It is a formulaic quotation. He changed the verb *ἐνεφύσησεν* in the original verse to *ἐμφυσήσας*. What is the difference between the two verbs? It is the same verb, from *ἐμφυσάω* means, “breathe into or on someone, as a symbolic and spiritually creative act conveying God's power or blessing.”<sup>72</sup> And the verb which Athanasius used is the same verb but in the past tense. He concluded this section with a very strong statement and said, *Εἰ μὲν οὖν ἀρνεῖσθε τὰ γεγραμμένα, οὐκ ἔτι μὲν ὑμεῖς Χριστιανοὶ λεχθεῖητε.*<sup>73</sup> (if you deny what is said in the Scripture, you can no longer be called Christians).

<sup>71</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 112; Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 47; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 188.

<sup>72</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 147; Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 64; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 257.

<sup>73</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, III.2.4.568.

### Letters to Serapion III.3.2; John 1:3

πάντα διὰ τοῦ Λόγου ἐγένετο, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν (KS)  
All things came to be through the Word and without him not one thing came to be (MD)

πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν. ὃ γέγονεν (NA28)  
All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being (NRS)

In this section of the letter Athanasius cited the Gospel of John five times. This is the first verse, which is a direct quotation with a minor change. He changed αὐτοῦ, in the original verse, to Λόγου in his citation. In this section Athanasius discussed that the Spirit is not the Word as they believed, by asking them questions supported by citations from the Scriptures (Prov 3:19; Ps 103:24; 1 Cor 8:6), to prove his point. He concluded his section by asking them, “did God make all things by two agents, that is by his Wisdom and by his Spirit?”

### Letters to Serapion III.3.3; John 14:26

Τὸ δὲ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, φησὶν ὁ Υἱός, ὃ πέμψει ὁ Πατὴρ ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί μου (KS)  
The Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name (MD)

ὁ δὲ παράκλητος, τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, ὃ πέμψει ὁ πατὴρ ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί μου, ἐκεῖνος ὑμᾶς διδάξει πάντα καὶ ὑπομνήσει ὑμᾶς πάντα ἃ εἶπον ὑμῖν [ἐγώ] (NA28)  
But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you (NRS)

In the same section Athanasius continued his argument and cited another verse from John, which is a direct citation of part of the original verse, with the addition of the words δέ and φησὶν ὁ Υἱός. The conjunction δέ means, “conjunctive particle; (1) most commonly to denote continuation and further thought development, taking its specific sense from the context and; contrast but; transition then, now with no temporal sense.”<sup>74</sup> And the word

<sup>74</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 104; Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 42; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 142.



φησίν is from φημί, “third-person singular φησίν as introducing direct discourse say, affirm.”<sup>75</sup> Athanasius added also the word ὁ Υἱός (Son) in order to emphasize that the Son says that the Father, in my name, will send Holy Spirit. The translation of Athanasius’ citation becomes, “and the Father in my name, says the Son, will send the Holy Spirit.” Before he cited this verse from John, Athanasius cited Col 1:15 which testifies that the Son the image of the invisible Father. He also cited Rom 8:29 and he refers back to his first letter I.24.7–8 in which he explained how the Spirit is the image of the Son.

### Letters to Serapion III.3.6; John 14:26

τοῦ Πατρὸς πέμποντος τὸ Πνεῦμα (KS)  
When the Father sends the Spirit (MD)

ὁ δὲ παράκλητος, τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, ὃ πέμψει ὁ πατὴρ ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί μου, ἐκεῖνος ὑμᾶς διδάξει πάντα καὶ ὑπομνήσει ὑμᾶς πάντα ἃ εἶπον ὑμῖν [ἐγώ] (NA28)

But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you (NRS)

Athanasius continued his arguments in this section of the letter concerning the deity of the Holy Spirit. He cited many verses to declare what the Scriptures say about the Son and the Spirit, and he cited again John 14:26. Here it is not just a formulaic quotation, but rather a word substitution. After this verse Athanasius cited what Jesus did on the day of resurrection, when he appeared to his disciples in the upper room, making a link between this verse and the previous one. In his citation Athanasius used another verb, changing to πέμποντος from πέμπω, “from a basic meaning send, of causing movement from one place to another; of persons send, dispatch.”<sup>76</sup> And there is no difference between the verb he used in John 14:26 in section 3 in this letters and the verb used here in section 6.

<sup>75</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 398; Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 210; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 864.

<sup>76</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 305; Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 155; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 647.

### Letters to Serapion III.3.6; John 20:22

ὁ Υἱὸς ἐμφυσῶν δίδωσιν αὐτὸ τοῖς μαθηταῖς (KS)  
The Son breathes upon his disciples (MD)

καὶ τοῦτο εἰπὼν ἐνεφύσησεν καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς· λάβετε πνεῦμα ἅγιον (NA28)  
When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit (NRS)

Athanasius continued citing John and went to the day of resurrection and the first meeting between Jesus and his disciples. It is a paraphrase quotation, or word substitution. He linked verses talking about the Son and the Father concerning the Holy Spirit. While it is the Father who sent the Spirit, it is the Son who breathed on them on the day of resurrection, and whatever the Father has is the Son's also, and he cited the verse to explain the relationship between the Son and the Father.

### Letters to Serapion III.3.6; John 16:15

πάντα ὅσα ἔχει ὁ Πατήρ, τοῦ Υἱοῦ ἐστι (KS)  
All the Father has is the Son's (MD)

πάντα ὅσα ἔχει ὁ πατήρ ἐμά ἐστιν· διὰ τοῦτο εἶπον ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ ἐμοῦ λαμβάνει καὶ ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν (NA28)  
All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you (NRS)

This is a direct quotation. He changed only the word Υἱοῦ in his quotation, which is equal to the word ἐμά because in the original verse Jesus was speaking of himself.

### Letters to Serapion III.4.2; John 14:10

Ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ Πατρὶ, καὶ ὁ Πατήρ ἐν ἐμοί (KS)  
I am in the Father and the Father in me (MD)

οὐ πιστεύεις ὅτι ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ καὶ ὁ πατήρ ἐν ἐμοί ἐστιν; τὰ ῥήματα ἃ ἐγὼ λέγω ὑμῖν ἀπ' ἐμαυτοῦ οὐ λαλῶ, ὁ δὲ πατήρ ἐν ἐμοὶ μένων ποιεῖ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ (NA28)  
Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works (NRS)

This is a direct quotation of the part of the original verse, with the word ἔστιν missing.

This is the last verse cited by Athanasius from the Gospel of John. From the beginning of section four, Athanasius declared that, Οὕτως οὐκ ἔστι κτίσμα τὸ Πνεῦμα, ἀλλ' ἴδιον τῆς τοῦ Λόγου οὐσίας, ἴδιον καὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ λέγεται εἶναι.<sup>77</sup> (Thus the Spirit is not a creature but is said to be proper to the substance of the Word and proper to God and in God). Athanasius explained this relation very clearly in I.19.3 when he was discussing the order among the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and also in I.27.1 in his discussion how to participate in the Spirit.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, there were a number of ways in which Athanasius appropriate the writings of John in his *Letters to Serapion*. Sometimes Athanasius cited a part of an original verse, other times he used different words in is citation in order to elucidate his argument with his opponents. He often added his own words and framed it in order to give the exact meaning he desired. Sometimes he changed words in his citation. For instance in I.9.7; John 1:3 he changed the word αὐτοῦ (Him) to Λόγου (Word) to support his argument with his opponents, his defense on the Holy Spirit dependent on his defense on the Son. This kind of interpretation would allow him to put an emphasis on the subject he is discussing with his opponents by changing the pronoun αὐτοῦ (Him) to the original word Λόγου (Word). In other citations, we see Athanasius citing only one word from the original verse, or making a minor addition to the verse. Using this kind of citation, Athanasius showed his purpose, which was to emphasize on important subjects, and in this case, he was emphasizing on Jesus when He declared Himself to the Samaritan woman that He is

---

<sup>77</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, III.4.1.571.

the Messiah. In these cases of using the Johannine writings he was concerned with demonstrating a doctrine of the Holy Spirit that attested to his full divinity.

According to Athanasius, the Holy Spirit is divine because of a number of reasons. First, the Spirit proceeds from the Father. One of the important terms that were used by Athanasius is the term ἐκ (from) to discuss the divinity of the Holy Spirit and his relationship to the Father and the Son. This term is mentioned many times in his letters, and he used it to refer that the Holy Spirit is from God. When Athanasius said the Spirit is ἐκ from God he meant from the being of God. As Adolf Laminski says “what is from God, cannot come from non being, also cannot be a creature.”<sup>78</sup> On the other hand, when the term was used referring to the creatures it means that they are from God, created by him, and that “the creature come from non being and had a beginning of their existence.”<sup>79</sup> To support his argument, Athanasius cited the verse from 1 Cor 2:11–12 in which Paul declares that no one knows the things belong to God except the Spirit of God because we have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit that is from God.<sup>80</sup> The other important passage regarding the term ἐκ is mentioned in I.25.2 when he said that “but Spirit of God, he is to be in God himself and from God himself.”<sup>81</sup> This declaration by Athanasius means “the assertion that the Spirit is from God, who is uncreated being, can mean only that the Spirit’s nature is uncreated, as God’s nature is uncreated.”<sup>82</sup> Joseph Lébon confirms what Athanasius explained when he said that the Holy Spirit is from God “ἐκ τοῦ Θεού.”<sup>83</sup>

---

<sup>78</sup> Laminski, *Der Heilige Geist als Geist Christi*, 71.

<sup>79</sup> Laminski, *Der Heilige Geist als Geist Christi*, 71.

<sup>80</sup> DelCogliano et al., *Works on the Spirit*, I.22.1.87.

<sup>81</sup> DelCogliano et al., *Works on the Spirit*, I.25.1. 92.

<sup>82</sup> Haykin, *The Spirit of God*, 79.

<sup>83</sup> Lébon, *Lettres à Sérapion*, 63.

Second, Athanasius was eager to demonstrate the relationship between the Father and the Spirit through which he can declare the divinity of the Holy Spirit. He mentioned another verse from the Scripture in I.6.2; John 14:26 Ὁ Παράκλητος τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, ὃ πέμψει ὁ Πατήρ ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί μου (But the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name).<sup>84</sup> And he cited again this verse in I.20.7; John 14:26 to show the inner relationship the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Third, Athanasius declared that the Holy Spirit is a life giver, a divine attribute. To prove his point against his opponents, he cited in I.23.2 (John 4:14) Τὸ ὕδωρ, ὃ ἐγὼ δώσω αὐτῷ, γενήσεται ἐν αὐτῷ πηγὴ ὕδατος ἀλλομῆ ἐνου εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον (The water that I will give to him shall become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life). Athanasius also cited Rom 8:11, in which Paul says that the Spirit gives believers life because he dwells in them. This water was a symbol of the Holy Spirit which the disciples were going to receive as mentioned in John 7:38.

Fourth, in his argument concerning the divinity of the Holy Spirit, Athanasius mentioned another activity of the Holy Spirit that is anointing and sealing (I.23.4; 1 John 2:27). Athanasius explained the source of the *χρίσμα*, which is God the Father, and by doing so he declared the inner relationship between the Father and the Son. The word in these three verses 1 John 2:20; 1 John 2:27a; 1 John 2:27b refer to the Holy Spirit.<sup>85</sup> This anointing teaches the faithful all things that Jesus said, and reminds them that they do not need someone else to teach them. What Athanasius showed in his argument concerning the activity of the Holy Spirit is that the Spirit is united with the Father and the Son. It

---

<sup>84</sup> Concerning the word Paraclete, see, I.11.1; John 14:16; I.11.1; John 14:26; I.11.1; John 15:26; I.11.1; John 16:7; I.20.6; John 16:7; I.33.4; John 14:17; II.10.3; John 15:26 in chs. 6 and 7.

<sup>85</sup> See also, II.12.1; 1 John 2:27.

should be noted that at times Athanasius moved from economic Trinity to immanent Trinity for his theology of the Son's relationship from the Father, but he seemed less inclined moving from economic to immanent relations in respect to the Holy Spirit and the Son. Thus, since Father sends the Son, the Son is begotten from the Father in the godhead, but the same principle is not applied to the Son being involved in the procession of the Holy when the Son sends the Holy Spirit.

An important aspect of Athanasius' theology of the Holy Spirit is the link he made between Christology and pneumatology in order to defend both the divinity of the Son and the divinity of the Holy Spirit. The link between the Son and the Holy Spirit in his letters was evident because the first part of the original letter 2.1–2.10 was devoted to the Son. His defense of the theology of the Holy Spirit required the link between the Son and the Spirit. Athanasius acknowledged the deity of the Holy Spirit in his three letters to Serapion, because he affirmed that the Spirit proceeds from the Father, coequal, eternal, as well as he applied to the Holy Spirit the same attributes of the Son and the Father. This declaration for Athanasius was based on the Scriptures because he used more than 45 books from the Old and the New Testament in his argument with his opponents.

Athanasius came to conclusion that the Holy Spirit is not a creature, nor he is one of the ministering angels, but rather divine and equal with the Father and the Son.

The following chapter is a preliminary inquiry into Athanasius' understanding of tradition, Scripture, hermeneutical principles, and Trinitarianism particularly as they pertain to his exegesis of the Johannine literature. It also raises questions about Athanasius' theological horizon as he engaged with Scripture.

## CHAPTER 8 UNDERSTANDING ATHANASIOUS' USE OF JOHN: TRADITION, HERMENEUTICAL PRINCIPLES, AND TRINITY

Athanasius' correspondence with Serapion is, first and foremost, a rich resource for understanding his Trinitarian theology, especially the way he positioned the Holy Spirit fully within the Godhead. As noted in the previous chapters, his argument for the latter is essentially guided by the text of the Holy Scripture. The principles worked out in his battle with Arianism also shaped the question he asked of the biblical text. This chapter will be an examination of Athanasius' use of tradition and Scripture, his hermeneutical principles, and Trinitarianism particularly as they pertain to his exegesis of the Johannine literature. How did he view Scripture in terms of its authority as a source of dogma, and his understanding of tradition? What were the specific hermeneutical principles (biblical, theological, and philosophical) that guided his rebuttal of Arian Christology and that shaped and informed the questions that he asked of the Bible, especially the Johannine corpus, with the regard to the Holy Spirit? It is more fruitful to understand what questions he asked of the text and why. In other words, Athanasius' theological horizon needs to be considered as he engaged with the landscape of Scripture.

### **Athanasius' Understanding of Scripture and Tradition**

Regarding the first question, one can comprehend that the three letters of Athanasius are filled with extensive quotations from the Scripture in order to uphold his defence of the Godhead of the Spirit. This explains his knowledge and familiarity with the Scriptures. As Haykin states, "When he had achieved a familiarity with all of the Old and New Testament such as no one else had achieved with even one of them, he was, on the one

hand, rich in contemplation, and, on the other, rich in the glory of a good life.”<sup>1</sup> The table below shows Athanasius’ quotations from the Scripture in his *Letters to Serapion*:

Table 1: The total of his quotations from the Scripture in the three letters to Serapion

Genesis	I.5.1; I.7.5; I.14.5; I.26.8; II.4.1; II.11.2
Exodus	I.8.2; I.12.1; I.12.2; I.14.4; I.22.1; I.28.3; II.4.2; II.6.1
Numbers	I.5.2; I.8.2; I.15.4; III.6.4; III.6.5
Wisdom of Solomon	I.8.3; I.17.4; I.26.1; I.26.2; I.26.7; I.26.7; II.13.3; III.4.1; III.4.1
Ecclesiastes	I.17.2; I.18.2
Leviticus	I.12.4
Deuteronomy	I.12.5
Judges	I.5.3; I.12.4
1 Kings	I.8.5
Pssalms	I.5.4; I.7.3; I.7.5; I.9.6; I.9.8; I.10.3; I.12.4; I.19.2; I.19.6; I.19.6; I.22.5; I.24.5; I.24.5; I.26.3; I.26.7; I.31.3; I.31.3; I.33.4; II.1.3; II.3.2; II.3.2; II.3.2; II.3.2; II.3.3; II.4.2; II.4.4; II.4.5; II.6.3; II.6.3; II.7.2; II.7.2; II.8.2; II.8.2; II.8.2; II.8.2; II.11.1; II.13.3; II.13.4; II.13.4; II.14.1; III.3.2; III.3.6; III.5.1; III.6.7
Baruch	I.7.3; I.19.2
Proverbs	I.3.3; II.7.1; II.8.2; II.9.1; II.9.3; III.2.6; III.3.2
Daniel	I.7.3; I.11.4; I.27.3; II.6.4; II.6.4
Ezekiel	I.5.7; I.7.6; I.8.3; I.9.5; I.9.10; I.11.3; I.26.5; I.26.5; II.4.4
Jeremiah	I.19.1
Isaiah	I.3.1; I.5.5; I.5.6; I.8.4; I.9.4; I.10.2; I.12.2; I.12.4; I.13.3; I.13.3; I.16.2; I.23.5; I.25.3; II.4.1; II.4.1; II.4.5; II.8.2; II.12.1; II.15.5; III.4.1
Joel	I.5.8; I.31.9
Job	I.26.4; I.26.4; I.26.8; II.3.3
Zechariah	I.5.8; I.9.9; I.11.2; I.11.3; I.31.6; I.31.6; II.14.2; II.14.2; II.14.2
Amos	I.3.2
Micah	I.5.8

<sup>1</sup> Haykin, “The Spirit of God,” 520.



Hosea	I.12.4
Haggai	I.13.3
Matthew	I.3.1; I.4.3; I.6.3; I.9.4; I.11.1; I.11.5; I.11.6; I.14.7; I.15.1; I.28.4; II.6.1; II.8.2; II.9.3; II.10.2; II.15.4; II.16.4; III.2.6; III.5.4
Mark	I.10.1; II.9.1; II.9.3; II.9.3
Luke	I.4.3; I.6.2; I.11.1; I.11.4; I.14.1; I.15.1; I.26.5; II.15.2; II.15.2; III.5.4
Acts	I.2.6; I.3.1; I.6.4; I.6.5; I.6.6; I.8.2; I.23.2; I.31.7; I.31.7; I.31.8; I.31.10; I.31.11; II.14.2; II.14.3
Romans	I.6.7; I.7.4; I.8.1; I.11.1; I.12.1; I.17.3; I.17.3; I.19.5; I.19.6; I.19.9; I.22.3; I.23.2; I.24.7; I.25.3; I.26.3; II.2.2; II.4.1; II.4.2; II.16.3; III.1.3; III.3.3; III.4.1; III.4.3
1 Corinthians	I.6.8; I.6.9; I.7.4; I.15.2; I.19.4; I.19.4; I.19.6; I.20.3; I.22.1; I.22.2; I.22.2; I.22.4; I.24.1; I.25.3; I.25.3; I.25.3; I.26.2; I.26.5; I.30.4; I.31.3; II.1.3; II.7.3; II.10.3; II.11.1; II.11.1; II.11.1; II.11.2; II.12.4; II.12.6; II.13.1; II.13.1; II.14.4; II.15.3; III.2.5; III.3.2; III.4.1; III.4.2
2 Corinthians	I.1.1; I.6.9; I.8.1; I.16.5; I.17.2; I.20.3; I.23.7; I.30.6; I.31.9; II.12.2; II.14.3; II.15.1
Ephesians	I.6.11; I.9.9; I.14.6; I.19.3; I.19.6; I.23.5; I.23.5; I.25.3; I.28.3; I.29.1; I.31.4; II.12.2; II.12.2; II.15.6; II.16.3; III.3.5
Galatians	I.4.2; I.6.10; I.17.2; I.19.8; I.23.7; I.25.4; II.10.3; II.12.3; II.16.4; III.4.2
Colossians	I.16.5; I.27.3; I.31.12; II.7.4; II.13.2; III.3.3
1 Thessalonians	I.4.2; I.6.12; I.7.4
2 Thessalonians	I.6.13
Philippians	I.6.11; I.6.12; I.31.9; II.12.3; II.14.3
1 Timothy	I.10.4; I.11.3; I.11.4; I.14.2; I.31.8; II.7.4
2 Timothy	I.14.7; II.7.4
Titus	I.4.2; I.15.3; I.22.4; I.24.5; III.1.1
Hebrews	I.1.2; I.6.13; I.10.2; I.16.5; I.17.4; I.18.3; I.19.2; I.22.5; I.26.8; I.27.1; II.3.3; II.3.3; II.4.2; II.7.3; II.11.1; III.6.7
1 Peter	I.4.2; I.6.6; I.11.1; I.25.3; I.25.4; I.26.2; II.6.5; III.7.2
2 Peter	I.23.7; I.24.4
James	I.26.2
Jude	I.26.4

Revelation	II.2.3; II.6.5
------------	----------------

From this table one can understand how deeply Athanasius went into the Scriptures in order to answer the heretics in his time. Athanasius quoted 45 books from the Old and New Testament, as Handspicker states, “For Athanasius, however, there was a profound unity in the witness of the two. He speaks of their interrelationship in various ways.”<sup>2</sup> And by doing so he declared his devotion to the Scriptures and showed the scope of the Scriptures. This scope is mentioned in his interpretation of the passage from Prov 8:22 in his second letter. He said, ἀναγκαῖόν ἐστι καὶ ἐκ τούτου δεῖξαι ὅσον πλανῶνται, μὴ εἰδότες τὸν σκοπὸν τῆς θείας Γραφῆς.<sup>3</sup> For Athanasius, the scope of the Scripture is key because he depended on the Scripture in his argument with his opponents as shown in above table which gives the reader an example that the word scope for him “a richness of meaning which cannot be gotten from a dictionary or lexicon.”<sup>4</sup> His knowledge of the Scriptures gives the reader an indication that Athanasius provided a great deal of support for his defense, against his opponents, from within the Scriptures, and provided him with what he needed in his defense against Arianism and the Tropic.

He did not depend on couple of verses only as his opponents did, but rather discussed all the verses which supported his argument. This is why he was able to discover the scope of the Scripture as a whole. As James says, “Athanasius’ biblical exegesis is something like putting together a puzzle. One might turn the various pieces in different directions individually; not only when the individual pieces are aligned and connected correctly will they yield a worthy unified picture. That picture corresponds the

<sup>2</sup> Handspicker, “Athanasius on Tradition and Scripture,” 18.

<sup>3</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, 2.7.1.546. “We must know from this passage too how greatly they err, not realizing the scope of the Scripture.”

<sup>4</sup> Handspicker, “Athanasius on Tradition and Scripture,” 24.

διάνοια or σκοπός of the whole.”<sup>5</sup>

This is not the first time we see Athanasius’ knowledge of the Scriptures. But rather, we read about his devotion to the Bible in his work *Vita Antony*, in which Athanasius gives an account of Antony’s life and asks monks to imitate him and the way he spent his life. He spoke to them of the importance of the Scriptures by saying, “The Scriptures are enough for instruction, but it is a good thing to encourage one another in the faith.”<sup>6</sup> It is known that Athanasius, in his third exile, spent time with monks in the desert. This participation left them with long lasting effects on their lives since the monks not only studied the Scriptures, but memorized them as well. This is why James quoted Brogan, who believes that Athanasius probably “memorized extensive portions of Scripture as youth and habitually cited Scripture from memory in his writings.”<sup>7</sup>

Laminski mentions the method that Athanasius used with his opponents in order to build a clear formulation concerning the subject. He states, “Athanasius usually begins the discussion with the Arians’ position in a methodical fashion, with an analysis of the position under condition, in order to bring the concealed formulation down to their true essence.”<sup>8</sup> One can notice that Athanasius followed this kind of method in *Against the Arians* when he discussed the position of the Son and whether or not He was eternal. He stated, “Say then what was once, O slanderous and irreligious men? If ye say the Father, your blasphemy is but greater; for it is impious to say that He was ‘once’ or to signify Him by the word once.”<sup>9</sup>

Athanasius continued arguing with the Arians regarding this subject and their

---

<sup>5</sup> Ernest, *The Bible in Athanasius of Alexandria*, 18.

<sup>6</sup> Athanasius, *The Life of Antony*, 16.

<sup>7</sup> Ernest, *The Bible in Athanasius of Alexandria*, 26.

<sup>8</sup> Laminski, *Der Heilige Geist als Geist Christi*, 38.

<sup>9</sup> Athanasius, *Against the Arians*, I.11.

thoughts on the possibility that the Son was not eternal. He reminded them that the Scriptures do not use this kind of language concerning the eternity of the Son. He declared, “For no holy Scripture has used this such language of the Saviour, but rather ‘always’ and ‘eternal’ and ‘coexistent’ always with the Father.”<sup>10</sup> He constantly goes back to the Holy Scripture in his arguments with his opponents, as James states, “In the *Orations Against the Arians*, Athanasius never relies on his personal authority; he always grounds his argument in Scripture.”<sup>11</sup>

In his *Letters to Serapion*, Athanasius also discussed the faith of the Catholic Church, its teachings, and tradition. This is the faith, which the Lord first gave to the Apostles, who proclaimed the good news to all nations, and then to the fathers who protected it from the heretics. In an important passage mentioned in his first letter, he explains the faith, which was given by the Lord to the Apostles and handed down to the church Fathers. He clarified, “Ἰδωμεν δὲ ὅμως καὶ πρὸς τούτοις καὶ αὐτὴν τὴν ἐξ ἀρχῆς παράδοσιν καὶ διδασκαλίαν καὶ πίστιν τῆς καθολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας, ἣν ὁ μὲν Κύριος ἔδωκεν, οἱ δὲ ἀπόστολοι ἐκήρυξαν, καὶ οἱ πατέρες ἐφύλαξαν. ἐν ταύτῃ γὰρ ἡ Ἐκκλησία τεθεμελιώται, καὶ ὁ ταύτης ἐκπίπτων οὐτ’ ἂν εἴη, οὐτ’ ἂν ἔτι λέγοιτο Χριστιανός.”<sup>12</sup> In this passage, the word παράδοσιν (tradition) goes synonymously with διδασκαλίαν καὶ πίστιν τῆς καθολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας (the teaching and faith of the Catholic Church).

In the beginning of this section Athanasius described the importance of the faith, which was handed down through Apostles, traditions, and Fathers. Athanasius continued

<sup>10</sup> Athanasius, *Against the Arians*, I.11.

<sup>11</sup> Ernest, *The Bible in Athanasius of Alexandria*, 25.

<sup>12</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, I.28.1.519. “Nonetheless, in addition to these arguments, let us examine the tradition, teaching, and the faith of the Catholic Church from the beginning, which is nothing other than what the Lord gave, the Apostles preached, and the Fathers preserved. On this, the Church is founded and whoever falls away from it can no longer be nor called a Christian.”

in the following section I.28.2 to explain and declare what the church's belief is. He described the belief in the Trinity and the belief that was handed down through generations. This section declares the unity of the Trinity as one nature and one activity. The first half of this section shows that, *Τριάς τοίνυν ἁγία καὶ τελεία ἐστίν, ἐν Πατρὶ καὶ Υἱῷ καὶ ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι θεολογουμένη* (the Trinity is holy and perfect, confessed in Father and Son and Holy Spirit.) The next sentence of this part is, *οὐδὲν ἀλλότριον ἢ ἕξωθεν ἐπιμιγνύμενον ἔχουσα, οὐδὲ ἐκ δημιουργοῦ καὶ γενητοῦ συσταμένη.* (It has nothing foreign or external mixed with it, nor is it composed of Creator and creature, but is entirely given to creating and making). Athanasius ended this section when he illustrated the indivisible Trinity *ἀλλ' ὅλη τοῦ κτίζειν καὶ δημιουργεῖν οὐσα. ὁμοία δὲ ἑαυτῇ καὶ ἀδιαίρετός ἐστι τῇ φύσει, καὶ μία ταύτης ἡ ἐνέργεια.* (It is self co-consistent and indivisible in nature, and it has one activity).

What we can comprehend from these passages is that the church and its beliefs are resting on the Apostles, traditions, Fathers, and whoever leaves it or swerves from it cannot be a Christian or have a place in the church. According to Shapland, Athanasius' view on tradition "is not an indefinite source of knowledge, independent of Scripture. Not only does he insist upon the sufficiency of the Scripture, nor he is appealing to the authority of earlier fathers."<sup>13</sup> One of the critical items that had been handed down from generation to generation is the image of the light and the radiance. As Pelikan suggests, "Now among the images for Christ that had been handed down by Scripture and tradition for the theologians' reflection, the image of the light and the radiance was assuredly one

---

<sup>13</sup> Shapland, *The Letters*, 133.

of the more important.”<sup>14</sup> He continued concerning the image of the light and the radiance by saying that “Because of its importance in Scripture and in the liturgical tradition, the image of light and radiance might be expected to appear often in the writings of Athanasius.”<sup>15</sup>

Athanasius again mentioned the apostolic faith and the church fathers in his letters. He said, Κατὰ γὰρ τὴν παραδοθεῖσαν ἡμῖν παρὰ τῶν Πατέρων ἀποστολικὴν πίστιν παρέδωκα, μηδὲν ἕξωθεν ἐπινοήσας, ἀλλ’ ὅπερ ἔμαθον ἐνεχάραξα συμφώνως ταῖς ἁγίαις Γραφαῖς. Σύμφωνον γὰρ καὶ τοῦτο τοῖς προαποπεφασμένοις πρὸς βεβαίωσιν ἐκ τῶν ἁγίων Γραφῶν.<sup>16</sup> The sentence παρὰ τῶν Πατέρων ἀποστολικὴν πίστιν παρέδωκα (the apostolic faith that handed down by the fathers) is an important sentence due to the meaning, as he wanted to say that we received from the Fathers, which is proven by the Scriptures. In section 33 of this letters, Athanasius declared that faith is not based on external sources: Καὶ οὐκ, ἕξωθεν ἐπιπενόηται, ἀλλ’ αὐτὸς ὁ Κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς δι’ αὐτοῦ ἐδίδασκε.<sup>17</sup> It is based on the teaching of the Lord Jesus in the Scripture, and he linked this teaching with tradition in this section. He stated, ἀλλ’ ὅπερ ἔμαθον ἐνεχάραξα συμφώνως ταῖς ἁγίαις Γραφαῖς (But have written only what I learned in harmony with the Holy Scriptures). The word συμφώνως in this sentence from the verb συμφωνένω means, “fit in with, match

<sup>14</sup> Pelikan, *The Light of the World*, 30.

<sup>15</sup> Pelikan, *The Light of the World*, 31.

<sup>16</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, I.33.2.532. “What I have handed down on accords with the apostolic faith that the Fathers handed down to us. I have not made any thing up that falls outside of it, but have written only that I learned in harmony with the Holy Scriptures. For it is also harmonizes with those passages of the Holy Scriptures cited as proof.” Shapland translated this way: “In accordance with the Apostolic faith delivered to us by tradition from the Fathers, I have delivered the tradition, without inventing anything extraneous to it. What I learned that have I inscribed conformably with the Holy Scriptures; for it also conforms with those passages from the holy Scriptures which we have cited above by way of proof.” 147.

<sup>17</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, I.33.3.532. “It is not something made up on the basis of external sources.”

with, agree with, harmonize.”<sup>18</sup> It means that the faith of the church, which was handed down in the Scriptures, which is the teaching of the Lord Jesus. He cited the Gospel of John seven times in section 33 of this letters to support his argument with his opponents. Before he started citing from the Gospel of John, Athanasius mentioned that our faith *Καὶ οὐκ, ἔξωθεν ἐπιενόηται, ἀλλ’ αὐτὸς ὁ Κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς δι’ αὐτοῦ ἐδίδασκε* (It is not something made up on the basis of external sources, but it is what the Lord Jesus Christ himself taught).

He used a group of verses from the Gospel starting with the conversation between the Lord Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well of Jacob (John 4:21–24). Followed by the verse from John 14:6 which testifies that Jesus is the Truth. Athanasius finished his citations with two verses from John 15:26; 14:17, which both of them are talking about the Holy Spirit. The first verse is an important because it declares that the Holy Spirit will be sent by Jesus from the Father, the Spirit of Truth, who proceeds from the Father. The second verse also testifies that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth. He mentioned these verses to show his opponents how the word Spirit is used in the Scripture, and to tell them that the Church’s tradition depended on the teaching of Jesus in the Scripture. It is not something external, but rather internal, from the Scripture, the teaching of the Lord Jesus Himself. In all these verses, Athanasius explained the connection within the Trinity, between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and to show his opponents how the Scripture speaks about the Holy Spirit.

In his letters Athanasius again mentioned the faith that he had received from the Apostles through the Fathers. He declared, *Ὁ μὲν χαρακτῆρ οὗτος ἐκ τῶν ἀποστόλων διὰ*

---

<sup>18</sup> Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 788.

τῶν Πατέρων. δεῖ δὲ λοιπὸν, ἐντυγχάνοντα τῇ Γραφῇ, δοκιμάζειν καὶ διακρίνειν, πότε μὲν περὶ τῆς θεότητος τοῦ Λόγου λέγει, πότε δὲ περὶ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων αὐτοῦ, ἵνα μὴ ἕτερα ἀνθ' ἐτέρων νοοῦντες παραπαίωμεν, οἷα πεπόνθασιν οἱ Ἄρειανοί.<sup>19</sup> The preposition ἐκ is important in this sentence because it is a, “preposition with genitive; denoting source, cause, motive, reason from, of, by.”<sup>20</sup> In this sentence ἐκ means that the faith Athanasius had received from the Apostles came via the Fathers. In this section 8 of the second letter, Athanasius used the Gospel of John once. But before that he told his opponents that δεῖ δὲ λοιπὸν, ἐντυγχάνοντα τῇ Γραφῇ, δοκιμάζειν καὶ διακρίνειν, πότε μὲν περὶ τῆς θεότητος τοῦ Λόγου λέγει, πότε δὲ περὶ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων αὐτοῦ (Anyone who reads the Scripture must examine and judge where it speaks of the divinity of the Word and where it speaks of his human acts). The words must examine and judge that was told by Athanasius are very important. He suggested to his opponents what is there in the Scripture and how it describes the Holy Spirit.

To support his explanation of the divinity of the Son in this section, he cited John 1:3 that through his all things were made, and without his not one thing was made. But before he cited this verse, Athanasius describes the character of our faith in Christ and he cited the Gospel of John six times in section seven and eight of this letters. He cited John 1:1, 14; 7:19; 8:40; 1:3. In all these citations, he used the Gospel of John to support his argument concerning the divinity of the Son.

Athanasius again mentioned the faith of the Catholic Church when he declared the

---

<sup>19</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, II.8.1.548. “This is the character of the faith, which we have received from the Apostles through the Fathers. Anyone who reads the Scripture must examine and judge where it speaks of the divinity of the Word and where it speaks of his human acts, so that we do not fall prey to the same delirium that has befallen the Arians.”

<sup>20</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 134.



belief in the Trinity and that there is one divinity in the Trinity. He declared, Αὕτη τῆς καθολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας ἡ πίστις.<sup>21</sup> What is the faith of the Catholic Church? He explained in the previous sentence saying that the Trinity is united and indivisible. He stated, Ἀδιαίρετος γὰρ ἡ Τριάς (For the Trinity is indivisible). What Athanasius is explaining in this sentence is that the Trinity is inseparable and is incapable of being divided into parts. The Trinity is not only indivisible but he continued to say that the Trinity, καὶ μία ταύτης ἡ θεότης (And there is one divinity of the Trinity). The word θεότης in this sentence means, “as an abstract noun for Θεός (God); divinity, deity, Godhead, divine nature.”<sup>22</sup> But before he mentioned the Catholic Church’s view that the Trinity is undivided, Athanasius asserted the relationship in the Trinity, he mentioned the verse from John 14:23 to support his interpretation on the Trinity, the faith of the Catholic Church, which was handed down through generations. This faith is declared in the Scriptures. When the Spirit comes into believers, the Son and the Father will also come and make their home in them.

Athanasius continued expressing the faith of the Catholic Church by saying that καὶ εἷς Θεὸς ἐπὶ πάντων καὶ διὰ πάντων, καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν (And there is one God over all, and through all, and in all). This is the faith of the Catholic Church that was handed down through generations, and upon this faith, the Lord Jesus Christ has built and founded his Church. It is mentioned by Athanasius in the following sentence, ἐν Τριάδι γὰρ αὐτὴν ἐθεμελίωσε καὶ ἐρρίζωσεν ὁ Κύριος (For it was on the Trinity that the Lord established and founded the church).

---

<sup>21</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae* I-IV *Ad Serapionem*, II.15.4.560. “This is the faith of the Catholic Church.”

<sup>22</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 169.

The two verbs that Athanasius used in this sentence are important due to their meanings. The first verb used here is ἐθεμελίωσε from the verb θεμελιόω, which means, “literally provide with a foundation, found, lay the foundation; figuratively, as providing a firm basis for belief or practice establish, strengthen, settle, cause to firm and unwavering.”<sup>23</sup> The Evangelist Matthew uses this verb in his Gospel 7:25, when he talks about hearing and enacting Jesus’ teachings. He says, καὶ κατέβη ἡ βροχὴ καὶ ἦλθον οἱ ποταμοὶ καὶ ἔπνευσαν οἱ ἄνεμοι καὶ προσέπεσαν τῇ οἰκίᾳ ἐκείνῃ, καὶ οὐκ ἔπεσεν, τεθεμελίωτο γὰρ ἐπὶ τὴν πέτραν (The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been *founded* on rock). This concerned the house built on the rock that is Jesus. No matter what difficulties the faithful face in life, they can overcome them if they have established their life on a solid foundation, which is Christ.

St. Peter also uses this verb in 1 Pet 5:10 saying, ὁ δὲ θεὸς πάσης χάριτος, ὁ καλέσας ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν αἰώνιον αὐτοῦ δόξαν ἐν Χριστῷ ὀλίγον παθόντας αὐτὸς καταρτίσει, στηρίξει, σθενώσει, θεμελιώσει (And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you). The verb is used once again in this verse when Peter encourages the faithful during a time of suffering. In the aftermath Christ will restore and establish his followers through him and in him. The other verb that Athanasius used in this sentence is ἐρρίζωσεν, which is from the verb ριζόω, meaning “literally cause to take root; passive be rooted, take root; figuratively and only passive in the N.T. of spiritual

---

<sup>23</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 196; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 356.

stability be firmly established, be strengthened.”<sup>24</sup>

Paul used this verb in his letter to the Col 2:7, saying, ἐρριζωμένοι καὶ ἐποικοδομούμενοι ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ βεβαιούμενοι τῇ πίστει καθὼς ἐδιδάχθητε, περισσεύοντες ἐν εὐχαριστίᾳ (rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving). He says that believers have to root themselves in Christ, and when they do so, they feel that they are in him and he is in them. A deep relationship firmly implanted in Christ is one where he is the Vine and His followers are the branches.

Athanasius mentioned in the section to follow the character of the Catholic faith and the belief in the indivisible Trinity. If anyone believes that there is a creature within the Trinity, then the Trinity ceases to exist and becomes a dyad instead. He said, Τῆς μὲν οὖν καθολικῆς πίστεως ὁ χαρακτήρ οὗτος.<sup>25</sup> (So then, this is the Character of the Catholic faith.) He mentioned this character in the previous sentence when he said, ἐπειδὴ καὶ μία τῆς Τριάδος ἡ θεότης, ἐξ ἑνὸς τοῦ Πατρὸς γινωσκομένη.<sup>26</sup>

In the third letter to Serapion, Athanasius mentioned the Scriptures and tradition. He went back again, as mentioned above, to emphasize that the faith is rooted within the Trinity. The Scriptures testify to the unity and inseparability of the Trinity. He said, Εἰ μὲν οὖν ἀρνεῖσθε τὰ γεγραμμένα, οὐκ ἔτι μὲν ὑμεῖς Χριστιανοὶ λεχθίητε ἄν. δίκαιον δὲ ἡμᾶς τοὺς Χριστιανούς ἐρωτᾶσθαι παρ’ ὑμῶν.<sup>27</sup> What Athanasius declared here is that faith

<sup>24</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 342; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 743.

<sup>25</sup> Savvidis, *Athanasius Werke*, II.16.1. 562.

<sup>26</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, II.15.6.561. “For there is one divinity of the Trinity, and it is manifested by the one Father.”

<sup>27</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, III.2.4.568. “If you deny what is said in the Scriptures, you can no longer be called Christians, and it is only fair that you ask us questions since we are Christians.” Shapland gives another translation to γεγραμμένα (written). He said: if you deny those things

comes from the Scriptures, and if there is no belief in what is written in the Scriptures, then that person may no longer call or name themselves a Christian.

In this letter Athanasius reported the word Scriptures again and that believer has to abide by it. He declared, Ἀλλὰ πρότερον ἑαυτῶν κατάγνωτε (ὕμεις γὰρ τοιαῦτα ἐρωτᾶν εἰώθατε), καὶ πείθεσθε ταῖς Γραφαῖς, καὶ ἀποροῦντες εἰπεῖν, μάθετε λοιπόν. Υἱὸς μὲν ἐν ταῖς Γραφαῖς τὸ Πνεῦμα οὐκ ὠνομάσθη, ἀλλὰ Πνεῦμα ἅγιον καὶ Πνεῦμα τοῦ Θεοῦ.<sup>28</sup> The verb πείθεσθε is from the verb πείθω, which means to persuade.<sup>29</sup>

Athanasius was trying to incite the readers of his letters to believe in the Scriptures that concern the Holy Spirit, or that He is called Holy Spirit or Spirit of God. This verb is mentioned in the Scriptures with the same meaning in the letter of St. Paul to the Heb 13:17, explaining the obedience of the faithful. He says, Πείθεσθε τοῖς ἡγουμένοις ὑμῶν καὶ ὑπέικετε, αὐτοὶ γὰρ ἀγρυπνοῦσιν ὑπὲρ τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν ὡς λόγον ἀποδώσοντες, ἵνα μετὰ χαρᾶς τοῦτο ποιῶσιν καὶ μὴ στενάζοντες· ἀλυσιτελὲς γὰρ ὑμῖν τοῦτο (Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls and will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with sighing for that would be harmful to you).

The last time that Athanasius mentioned the word tradition is in his third letter, where he said, Τὰ γὰρ τῇ πίστει παραδιδόμενα ἀπεριέργαστον ἔχει τὴν γνῶσιν.<sup>30</sup> The word

---

which are written, then you can no longer be called Christians, and it is just for us who are Christians to be questioned by you. 180.

<sup>28</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, III.3.4.570. "Blame yourselves first, since it is you who used to ask such questions. Be obedient to the Scriptures, and when you are at a loss for words, become their disciples at long last. In the Scriptures the Spirit is not called son but Holy Spirit and Spirit of God."

<sup>29</sup> Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 644; Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 304.

<sup>30</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, III.5.2.572. "The traditions handed down by faith cannot be known by futile investigations."

ἀπεριέργαστον is from the verb περιεργάζομαι, which means, “do something, unnecessary or useless, be a busybody.”<sup>31</sup> The verb is used by St. Paul in 2 Thess 3:11, in which he explained the act of some people and called them busybodies. He says, Ἀκούομεν γάρ τινας περιπατοῦντας ἐν ὑμῖν ἀτάκτως μηδὲν ἐργαζομένους ἀλλὰ περιεργαζομένους (For we hear that some of you are living in idleness, mere busybodies, not doing any work).

Athanasius did not use the word tradition in his *Letters to Serapion* only, but rather we find it elsewhere in his writings. In *Defence of the Nicene Council* he used the word παράδοσιν (tradition), which is equivalent with the faith and the Fathers. In this work he spoke about the letter that was sent by Eusebius to his church, confessing the true faith. He stated, “but afterwards subscribed, sent to his (Eusebius) church a letter saying that this was the Church’s faith, and the tradition of the Fathers; and made a public profession that they were before in error, and were rashly contending against the truth.”<sup>32</sup> From what is mentioned concerning the Scripture and the tradition, Athanasius declared that faith and doctrines are based on the Scriptures. The tradition, the teaching of the Catholic faith given by the Lord Jesus Himself, was given to the Apostles who preached it, and the Fathers protected it.

Athanasius understood the relationship between the tradition and the Scripture when he linked them together in his writings. In one of his festal letters, Athanasius linked the Canon and the tradition, he stated, “to set before you the books included in the Canon, and handed down, and accredited as Divine.”<sup>33</sup> And in the same letter, he continued to mention the canonical books, the Old and New Testament. Athanasius did

---

<sup>31</sup> Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 652; Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 308.

<sup>32</sup> Athanasius, *Defence of the Nicene Council*, 3.

<sup>33</sup> Athanasius, *Festal Letters*, 39, 3.

not link the Canon and the tradition, but rather he linked the Ecumenical Councils with the Canon when he declared “the Ecumenical Councils, for committing to writing, not your doctrines, but that which from the beginning those who were eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word have handed down to us.”<sup>34</sup> What Athanasius meant here is that the faith of the Ecumenical Councils, which was decided by the church Fathers was depending on the writings, the Scripture. This is why he linked the tradition with the Scripture and linked the Ecumenical Councils with the writings (the Canon).

### **Athanasius’ Use of Hermeneutical Principles**

Concerning the second question, Athanasius used specific principles in his three letters to Serapion, whether they were biblical, theological or philosophical. One can comprehend the way he used his hermeneutics in his interpretation of Amos 4:13 and 1 Tim 5:21 and the philosophical term *ὁμοούσιος* (of one substance) that he used in his letters. To understand these principles, one has to comprehend the way he defended the Godhead of the Holy Spirit in the two main verses upon which the Tropici relied. This section will explain Amos 4:13 and 1 Tim 5:21, along with the term *ὁμοούσιος* (of one substance).

#### Amos 4:13

The first passage on which his opponents depended to support their teaching is from Amos 4:13: “Ὅτι Ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ στερεῶν βροντὴν, καὶ κτιζῶν πνεῦμα, καὶ ἀπαγγέλλων εἰς ἀνθρώπους τὸν Χριστὸν αὐτοῦ.”<sup>35</sup> It seems that this passage became a formula for the

---

<sup>34</sup> Athanasius, *Defense of the Nicene Council*, 27.

<sup>35</sup> It reads in the NRS, “For I, the one who forms the mountains, creates the wind, reveals his thoughts to mortals, makes the morning darkness, and treads on the heights of the earth, the LORD, the

Tropici because of the verse that mentioned the Spirit as created, *κτιζων πνεῦμα* (created Spirit). Athanasius objected to the Tropici's interpretation of Amos 4:13. In that verse it is stated that the Spirit must be a creature, and he emphasized I.3.1–I.10.3 to clarify the correct interpretation of Amos 4:13.

From the beginning of his interpretation he told them that one knows how to correctly interpret the passage from Prov 8:22 in which they refused to say that the Word is a creature. Athanasius examined the word *pneuma* and he declared, “*pneuma* means ‘wind’ and not ‘Spirit’ (this is why he calls his opponents Tropici, because they insist on taking literally passages such as this metaphorically, using allegories or ‘tropes’); or the spirit of man renewed by the Incarnation.”<sup>36</sup> So the *pneuma* in this verse does not have anything to do with the Holy Spirit. Thus he asked them, “Tell me: have you found any passage in the Divine Scripture where the Holy Spirit is called ‘spirit’ without qualification.”<sup>37</sup> Athanasius maintained that there is a great difference between the uses of the word “spirit”<sup>38</sup> and the “spirits.”<sup>39</sup> Athanasius went back to the Scriptures and studied each verse to give a very complete interpretation, besides the traditional teaching of the church, to testify to the divinity of the Holy Spirit. As Dünzl states, “Athanasius presents hermeneutical principles for dealing with the Bible.”<sup>40</sup>

It would be important to establish hermeneutical principles that will help to

---

God of hosts, is his name.”

<sup>36</sup> Hanson, *The Search*, 750.

<sup>37</sup> DeIcogliano, et al., trans., *Works on the Spirit*, I.4.1.57. Concerning this matter, Shapland says that the problem of differentiating the various uses of *πνεῦμα* had been realized by earlier writers. Origen speaks of certain predecessors who thought that the Holy Spirit is referred to in the New Testament even when the word ‘Spirit’ is used without a qualifying adjective. *de Prin.* I.iii.4.

<sup>38</sup> Shapland, *The Letters*, I.3.68.

<sup>39</sup> Shapland, *The Letters*, I.6.72.

<sup>40</sup> Dünzl, *A Brief History*, 119–120. The general view is that there were two schools for interpretation; the school of Alexandria which adopted an allegorical interpretation, and the school of Antioch which adopted a literal interpretation. This sharp division has been recently questioned. For instance, see Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation on Christian Culture*.

understand the passages that refer to the Holy Spirit. First of all, it has to be said that the spirit does not have the definite article here in this verse, as he said in his first letter. He declared, *καὶ μάλιστα, ὅτι καὶ οὕτω μετὰ τοῦ ἄρθρου λέγεται. καὶ ὅλως ἄνευ τοῦ ἄρθρου, ἢ τῆς προειρημένης προσθήκης, οὐκ ἂν εἶη σημαίνονμενον τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον.*<sup>41</sup> Secondly, there is also no addition to the word spirit in this verse. Athanasius states, “Tell me, have you found any passage in the Divine Scriptures where the Holy Spirit is called ‘spirit’ without qualification, without being modified with either of ‘of God,’ or ‘of the Father,’ or ‘my,’ or ‘his,’ or ‘of the Christ,’ and ‘of the Son,’ or ‘from me,’ that is from God, or with the definite article such that he is not called “spirit” without qualification but “the Spirit” or the very term ‘the Holy Spirit’ or ‘Paraclete.’”<sup>42</sup> This is a very important point that Athanasius repeated constantly, with a series of definitions as mentioned above. From the beginning of his arguments with his opponents Athanasius set principles in order to give a correct interpretation to each passage. Concerning this subject Smythe comments, “St. Athanasius formulates a principle to determine the object of reference in each particular case: without the use of the definite article or of some addition of words, the Holy Spirit is not indicated by *πνεῦμα* in the scripture.”<sup>43</sup>

Athanasius insisted that the Spirit should be identified either by the definite article or by additions that connect him with the divine persons. In these cases, the term is generally used with the definite article, “To sum up, unless the article is present or the above-mentioned addition, it cannot refer to the Holy Spirit.”<sup>44</sup> After he mentioned all the

---

<sup>41</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae 1-IV Ad Serapionem*, 1.4.2.457. “In general, if ‘spirit’ is said without the definite article or without one of the aforementioned modifies, it cannot be the Holy Spirit who is signified.”

<sup>42</sup> DelCogliano, et al., trans., *Works on the Spirit*, 1.4.1.57.

<sup>43</sup> Smythe, “Interpretation of Amos 4:13” 159.

<sup>44</sup> Shapland, *The Letters*, 1.4.69–70.



examples of the additions as mentioned above, Athanasius reported many examples from the Scripture, which explain and clarify how the Holy Spirit is qualified. He refers to some verses from the Scripture, such as Gal 3:2, which says, *τοῦτο μόνον θέλω μαθεῖν ἀφ' ὑμῶν· ἐξ ἔργων νόμου τὸ πνεῦμα ἐλάβετε ἢ ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως* (The only thing I want to learn from you is this: Did you receive the Spirit by doing the works of the law or by believing what you heard?) The word Spirit is qualified in this verse with *τό*, which means 'the' and refers to the Holy Spirit.

Also, Athanasius referred to 1 Pet 1:23, Titus 3:5, and 1 Thess 5:19 concerning the same subject. After section 4 of the first letter, in 1.5–6, Athanasius quoted verses from the Old Testament and from the New Testament, as testimonies of qualified usage of spirit that refer to the Holy Spirit. He cited twenty verses from the Old Testament to interpret how the Scriptures proclaim that the Spirit should be qualified. For instance, he cited from:

Genesis	1:2; 6:3
Numbers	11:29
Judges	3:10; 11:29; 13:24-25; 15:14
Psalms	50:3; 142:10-11
Isaiah	61:1; 30:1; 48:16; 59:21; 63:9-10
Ezekiel	11:24
Daniel	13:45
Micah	2:7
Joel	3:1
Zechariah	1:6; 7:12

Athanasius quoted also the New Testament, which testifies the qualification of the Spirit more than thirty two times He cited from:

Luke	3:22
John	1:32-33
John	20:22; 14:16; 15:26
Matthew	10:20; 12:28; 28:19

Acts	1:4; 2:1-4; 21:11; 20:28; 8:39
1 Peter	1:9-11
1 John	4:13
Romans	8:9-11
1 Corinthians	2:10-12; 3:16; 6:11; 12:11
1 Corinthians	3:17
Galatians	3:14; 4:6-7
Ephesians	4:30; 4:3
Philippians	1:18-20; 3:3
1 Thessalonians	4:8
Hebrews	9:8; 10:29; 9:13-14
2 Thessalonians	2:8

On the other hand, in the following section 7, Athanasius cited many passages from the Scripture that are not qualified and refer to the human spirit, wind and divine words. These different usages in the Scriptures give the correct interpretation and meaning to the word *πνεῦμα* as mentioned in I.7. In the first letter, section 7, Athanasius declared that the word *πνεῦμα* could describe the human spirit and he cited many passages from the Scripture. He quoted: Ps 76:7, Bar 3:1, Dan 3:86, Rom 8:16–17, 1 Cor 2:11 and 1 Thess 5:23. Athanasius used these verses from Scripture in order to explain that the word spirit could refer to a human being in the Scriptures. Also, in section 7, Athanasius mentioned that the wind can also be called ‘spirit’ in the Scripture and he cited the following verses that could support this: Gen 8:1; Jonah 1:4; Pss 106:25; 148:7–8; and Ezek 27:25–26.

Athanasius also clarified in I.8.1, that the spirit could be used to communicate the divine words themselves, such as in 2 Cor 3:6, Rom 7:14, 6:6, 7:25–8:2, Acts 8:30, Num 14:24, Wis 4:10, and Ezek 18:31. These citations prove that *πνεῦμα* has many meanings in Scripture, depending on the text and the correct interpretation of the text. Moreover, Athanasius came to the conclusion that the Holy Spirit is always described in the Scripture with a definite article or with an addition. Also, the word *πνεῦμα* has many

meanings in the Scripture. He discussed verses from the Scripture to support his position, for instance, in I.8.4 Athanasius cited the verses Isa 7:2, Jonah 1:4, and 1 Kgs 18:45.

Athanasius continued to argue that the word *πνεῦμα* in Amos 4:13 means, “wind.”

In I.9, Athanasius explained the relationship between the Holy Spirit and Christ, and cited passages from Scripture that clarify the meaning of the word *πνεῦμα*, in order to find more appropriate verses from the Scripture with the word *πνεῦμα*. He declared that the Holy Spirit and Christ belong together. It is nonsensical to call the Holy Spirit a creature but not Christ. Also, it is foolish to praise and glorify what is against nature. Not just to praise and glorify, but rather it would be against what the Lord says to his disciples in Matt 28:19, when he sent the disciples to all nations.

Athanasius cited the verse from Ezek 36: 26–27, which gave two meanings to the word *πνεῦμα* in the same passage. It reads, “A new heart I shall give, and a new spirit I shall give you; and I shall take out of your flesh the stony heart and give you a fleshy heart; and I shall put my Spirit within you” The first meaning is ‘a new spirit’ which refers to the human spirit, and the second meaning is ‘my Spirit’ which refers to the Holy Spirit. Also, the addition of ‘my’, which escorts the Spirit, is noticeable. This passage demonstrates that the Holy Spirit is not a spirit without qualification. His Spirit renews the spirit; this renewal is one of the divine activities of the Holy Spirit in humans.

Athanasius cited more verses from Scripture concerning this matter, in which he clarified the difference between human spirit and the Spirit of God, such as; Ps 103: 29–30, 50:12, Ezek 12:1, Eph 2:15, 4:24, and, Ezek 18:31–32. Athanasius argues for the proclamation of the humanity of Christ and cited Isa 7:14, which explains the virgin birth and how His name will be Emmanuel. The passage from Ezekiel also demonstrated the

difference of the spirits. In his last discussion of Amos 4:13, Athanasius argued concerning the word στερεῶν βροντῆν (thunder) in I.10.1–3, and he declared the word thunder as the unshakable law of the Spirit. He cited many passages from Scripture such as: Mark 3:17, John 1:1, Heb 10:1, 12:26–28, Isa 52:6, John 4:26, and Ps 92:1, in which he explained that the law was a shadow of good things to come.

Origen in his *First Principles*, realized the various uses of pneuma by mentioning that, “now some of our predecessors have observed that in the New Testament, whenever the Spirit is mentioned without its qualifying adjective, the expression should be understood to refer to the Holy Spirit; as for instance, ‘the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace.’”<sup>45</sup> The Tropicists made their argument more forcible because the verse in the Septuagint version mentioned the name of Χριστόν (Christ). Therefore, “since the text makes mention of Christ, to be consistent we must take the spirit it speaks of to be none other than the Holy Spirit.”<sup>46</sup>

Athanasius describes here the relation between the Son and the Holy Spirit in the doctrine of the Tropicists and he states, “It is absurd to name together things which are by nature unlike.”<sup>47</sup> There are various meanings of “spirit” in the Scripture. The one, which is mentioned by the prophet, has not the definite article, “but they have invented tropes for yourselves and identified the spirit which is said to be created with the Holy Spirit himself.”<sup>48</sup> Their mistake is simple and basic because, “even from students of language you could have learned of the difference between spirits.”<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>45</sup> Lubac, *Origen On First Principles*, I.iii.31.

<sup>46</sup> Shapland, *The Letters*, I.9.80.

<sup>47</sup> Shapland, *The Letters*, I.9.80.

<sup>48</sup> Shapland, *The Letters*, I.7.76.

<sup>49</sup> Shapland, *The Letters*, I.7.77.

## 1 Timothy 5:21

The second passage on which his opponents depended to support their teaching and thought is from 1 Tim 5:21 Διαμαρτύρομαι ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ καὶ τῶν ἐκλεκτῶν ἀγγέλων, ἵνα ταῦτα φυλάξῃς χωρὶς προκρίματος, μηδὲν ποιῶν κατὰ πρόσκλισιν.<sup>50</sup> Athanasius objected to the explanation that the Tropici gave to 1 Tim 5:21, which is that the Spirit must be numbered among the angels. Athanasius expounded in I.10.4–I.14.7 to clarify the correct interpretation of 1 Tim 5:21.

Athanasius started his argument concerning the Godhead of the Holy Spirit in I.10.4–5 and he mentioned, “First of all, this invention smacks of the impiety of Valentinus, and they have not been able to conceal that they repeat his ideas.”<sup>51</sup> If the Holy Spirit has an angelic status, then they believe that any angel or every angel can be numbered in the Trinity, ἔπειτα δὲ τὸ Πνεῦμα κατάγοντες εἰς τοὺς ἀγγέλους εἰς τὴν Τριάδα συντάσσοντες.<sup>52</sup> This teaching can destroy the concept of the Trinity, and the Christian idea concerning the Trinity becomes distorted due to the strange addition to the Trinity. This kind of teaching would create another problem which contradicts the function of the angels as ministering spirits. This is stated in Heb 1:14, where he says, οὐχὶ πάντες εἰσὶν λειτουργικὰ πνεύματα εἰς διακονίαν ἀποστελλόμενα διὰ τοὺς μέλλοντας κληρονομεῖν σωτηρίαν (Are not all angels spirits in the divine service, sent to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?).

As a result, if they are counted in the Trinity, they are no longer ministering

<sup>50</sup> It reads in the NRS “In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of the elect angels, I warn you to keep these instructions without prejudice, doing nothing on the basis of partiality.”

<sup>51</sup> DelCogliano, et al., trans., *Works on the Spirit*, 69.

<sup>52</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, I.10.5.478. “They rank all the angels with the Trinity.”

spirits and they sanctify others, ἀλλ' αὐτοὶ μᾶλλον ἀγιάζοντες ἄλλους ἢν εἶεν (nor they sanctified but they themselves sanctify others). Athanasius challenged his opponents again, asking where in the Scriptures they find the Spirit being referred to as an angel. He stated that the Holy Spirit is called, “Paraclete, Spirit of adoption, Spirit of sanctification, Spirit of God and Spirit of Christ. Nowhere is he called angel or archangel, or ministering spirit, as are the angels.”<sup>53</sup> Nowhere in the Scriptures is the Holy Spirit called an angel, archangel, or ministering spirit. He also mentioned Luke 1:35 and the story of the announcement of the birth of Jesus, which affirmed Athanasius’ interpretation. The verse mentions that the angels are ministering spirits as in this case where the angel Gabriel declared that the Holy Spirit will come upon Mary.

Athanasius cited another passage from Zech 4:5–6 in which he showed that there is a difference between angels and the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of the Almighty. He stated that, Εὐδὴλον οὖν, ὡς ὁ λαλῶν ἄγγελος τῷ προφήτῃ οὐκ ἦν τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, ἀλλ' αὐτὸς μὲν ἄγγελος, τὸ δὲ τὸ Πνεῦμα τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐστὶ τοῦ παντοκράτορος. καὶ διακονεῖται μὲν παρ' ἀγγέλου, ἀδιαίρετον δὲ τῆς θεότητός ἐστι, καὶ ἴδιον τοῦ λόγου.<sup>54</sup> Athanasius continued arguing against his opponents from the Scriptures when he discussed the baptismal formula found in Matt 28:19. In this declaration Jesus did not rank the angels with the Father and the Son, but rather the Holy Spirit. Also, on the day of resurrection when he appeared to his disciples in the upper room and breathed on them, in John 20:22, he told them the Holy Spirit is not an angel. If the Holy Spirit is an angel, as the Tropici believed, why did the Lord Jesus differentiate between angels and the Holy Spirit? He

<sup>53</sup> DelCogliano, et al., trans., *Works on the Spirit*, 70.

<sup>54</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, I.11.4.480. “It is obvious that the angel who spoke within the prophet was not the Holy Spirit. For the angel was an angel, but the spirit was the Spirit of Almighty God, to whom the angel ministers and who is inseparable from the divinity and proper to the Word.”

gave to the disciples the Holy Spirit, not an angel. When he sent the disciples to all nations, he made no mention of an angel instead of the Holy Spirit in the baptismal command.

Athanasius continued his argument against his opponents and he explained the way God guided the Israelite people in the wilderness. He cited two passages from Scripture and connected them together. The first passage is Exod 33:1–2, which is connected with Exod 33:15. In the first passage Moses refused the angelic creature to be the guide to him and his people, Πορεύου, ἀνάβηθι ἐντεῦθεν σὺ καὶ ὁ λαός σου, οὐς ἐξήγαγες ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου εἰς τὴν γῆν, ἣν ὤμοσα τῷ Ἀβραάμ, καὶ τῷ Ἰσαὰκ, καὶ τῷ Ἰακώβ λέγων Τῷ σπέρματι ὑμῶν δώσω αὐτήν. καὶ συναποστελῶ πρὸ προσώπου σου τὸν ἄγγελόν μου, καὶ ἐκβαλεῖ τὸν Χαναναῖον.<sup>55</sup> Moses refused this saying, Εἰ μὴ αὐτὸς συμπορεύη μετ' ἡμῶν, μὴ με ἀναγάγῃς ἐντεῦθεν.<sup>56</sup> The people were led by the Spirit ἀλλὰ τὸ Πνεῦμα αὐτοῦ, ὃ ἐστὶν ὑπὲρ τοὺς ἀγγέλους, καὶ αὐτὸ καθ' ἡγουμένον ἐστὶ τοῦ λαοῦ.<sup>57</sup> Athanasius' argument here is to declare that God himself, through the Word, in the Spirit, guided the people.<sup>58</sup> He proclaimed the divine presence with the people and not an angel, who is one of the creatures, but rather the Spirit of God guided them. The Spirit of God cannot be a creature or one of the ministering angels as Athanasius mentioned, Τὸ ἄρα τοῦ Θεοῦ Πνεῦμα οὐκ ἂν εἴη ἄγγελος, οὐδὲ κτίσμα, ἀλλ' ἴδιον τῆς θεότητος αὐτοῦ. Τοῦ γὰρ

<sup>55</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, 1.12.1.482. “Go up from this place, you and your people, whom you have led up from the land of Egypt into the land which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, to your seed I will give it. And I will send my angel before you, and he will drive out the Canaanites.”

<sup>56</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, 1.12.1.482. “If you yourself do not go along with us, do not lead me up from this place.”

<sup>57</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, 1.12.3.483. “But superior to the angels, and he guides the people.”

<sup>58</sup> Shapland states that “God ...through the Word in the Spirit: Athanasius evidently intends us to see Isaiah 63:14 a reference to all Three Persons of the Trinity, the Spirit descending from the Son by the will of the Father, who is apostrophized in the following sentence.” P.90.no.7.

Πνεύματος ὄντος ἐν τῷ λαῷ, ὁ Θεὸς δι' Υἱοῦ ἐν Πνεύματι ἦν ἐν αὐτοῖς.<sup>59</sup>

Athanasius continued arguing concerning the divinity of the Holy Spirit in I.13.1 and answered his opponents' objection, which said that the Holy Spirit is not listed in the verse from 1 Tim 5:21, but rather the elected angels, are mentioned instead of the Holy Spirit. They said that the Spirit is not named in the verse. Athanasius replied by questioning them, "Why did Paul only list the elect angels, but not archangels, nor cherubim nor seraphim, nor dominions, nor thrones, or anything else?"<sup>60</sup> Only God and Jesus Christ are mentioned, with the elect angels. However, the Holy Spirit is noticeably absent. In I.14.1–5, Athanasius demonstrated a beautiful analysis to the many verses from Scripture, in which the name of Jesus and the Spirit are absent. Because some verses mention the names God and man, and God and Moses does not mean that they are members of the Trinity. Athanasius cited Luke 18:2, in which the name God is mentioned with man. In 1 Tim 6:13–14, the name Jesus Christ is mentioned in addition to Pontius Pilate. In Exod 14:31, the name God is mentioned with Moses. The question remains the same. Are these names (man, Pontius Pilate, and Moses) members of the Trinity? To mention these names does not make them members of the Trinity.

It is the same situation in 1 Tim 5:21. When the name of the Holy Spirit is not mentioned, this does not mean that the Spirit is not a member of the Triad, and Athanasius made it clear that, 'Ἡ γὰρ ἅγια καὶ μακαρία Τριάς, ἀδιαίρετος καὶ ἡνωμένη πρὸς ἑαυτὴν ἔστι. καὶ λεγομένου τοῦ Πατρὸς, πρόσσεσι καὶ ὁ τούτου Λόγος καὶ τὸ ἐν τῷ Υἱῷ Πνεῦμα. Ἐὰν δὲ καὶ ὁ Υἱὸς ὀνομάζεται, ἐν τῷ Υἱῷ ἔστιν ὁ Πατὴρ, καὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα οὐκ ἔστιν

<sup>59</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, I.12.5.483. "And so, the Spirit of God cannot be an angel, nor a creature, but is proper to his divinity. For when the Spirit was among the people, God was among them through the Son, in the Spirit."

<sup>60</sup> DelCogliano, et al., trans., *Works on the Spirit*, I.13.1.73.



ἐκτὸς τοῦ Λόγου.<sup>61</sup>

In his argument with his opponents concerning the divinity of the Holy Spirit, Athanasius used many verses from the Gospel of John and 1 John. The table below shows the verse he used in his three letters. This table demonstrates that the doctrine of the Holy Spirit was based on the teaching of Jesus himself. Again this brings to our mind the link between pneumatology and Christology, between the Son and the Spirit due to the citations he used from the twelve different chapters from the Gospel of John and from the first letter of John.

John 1	18
John 3	3
John 4	3
John 5	2
John 7	2
John 8	1
John 10	3
John 14	26
John 15	8
John 16	13
John 17	3
John 20	6
1 John 1	1
1 John 2	5
1 John 4	6
1 John 5	1

From this table, one can comprehend that Athanasius focused a lot on the verses from the Gospel of John chs. 1; 14; 15; 16; 20, as well as the verses he used from the rest of the Gospel of John and the first letter. Ernest James suggests, “of the Johannine citations, a couples are texts that will also figure prominently in the anti-Arians writings. The Gospel

---

<sup>61</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae* 1-IV *Ad Serapionem*, 1.14.6.488. “For the holy and blessed Trinity is indivisible and united in itself. When the Father is mentioned, with him are both his Word and the Spirit who is in the Son. If the Son is named, the Father is in the Son, and the Spirit is not external to the Word.”

citations and quotations, and also the allusions and reminiscences serve a variety of purposes: they present Jesus' own teaching on a doctrinal point."<sup>62</sup> All these citations explain that Athanasius depended on the Scriptures and was using it as proof in his defence against the Tropici, which showed the variety of these biblical texts that Athanasius used. Donald Fairbairn clarifies that "Athanasius bases his arguments largely on biblical interpretation rather than philosophical or logical arguments."<sup>63</sup>

He depended largely on the Scriptures, because his opponents took a few of the biblical texts out of context. He did use and collect all the verses belonging to the subject he argued. This was unlike his opponents, who picked out specific verses to defend their arguments. As Haykin says, "Athanasius recognized that a literalistic approach to the Scriptures, a method which select a proof-text at random, was not a satisfactory hermeneutic. Rather, proper Scriptural exegesis presupposed an understanding of the central theme of the Scriptures resulted in the distortion of the Scriptures."<sup>64</sup> We cannot really cite a few verses to prove our arguments and leave out the rest that have a direct link to the same subject. In this case, one cannot draw any conclusions in any biblical subject, but rather to cite all the verses that refer to the subject in order to have a correct interpretation, and correct understanding as to what the Bible says regarding that subject. Athanasius' approach to Scripture would agree with Torrance: "Interpretation is proper and correct when it does the following: (1) keeps to the scope of the divine revelation in the Scriptures. (2) Respects the economical nature of God's acts and words. (3) Keeps to

---

<sup>62</sup> Ernest, *The Bible in Athanasius of Alexandria*, 97.

<sup>63</sup> Fairbairn, "Context, Context, Context," 119.

<sup>64</sup> Haykin, *The Spirit of God*, 63.

the orderly connection signified by the words and sentences of Holy Scripture. (4)

Checks and proves its statements in accordance with the role of faith.”<sup>65</sup>

From the above table, one can demonstrate that discussing the divinity of the Spirit goes parallel with the divinity of the Son. No one can separately examine the theology of both, as McDonnell suggests, “In Johannine theology, also, there is no lofty revelation of the Spirit-Paraclete independent of Christ’s identity.” In John 14:26, Jesus declares that the Father sends the Holy Spirit in the name of Jesus. In John 15:26, Jesus also declares that He Himself sends the Holy Spirit from the Father. In these two verses, the Father became the source of the Spirit. As mentioned in the table, Athanasius used chapter 14 in his letters twenty-six times.

The following table 3 shows where Athanasius used this verse in his letters

John 14:26
I.4.1; I.6.2; I.11.1; I.11.1; I.19.7; I.19.8; I.19.9; I.20.7; I.25.3; I.30.5; I.31.4; I.33.4; I.33.4; II.2.3; II.2.3; II.4.5; II.9.3; II.9.3; II.12.4; II.12.5; II.13.2; II.13.3; II.15.3; III.3.3; III.3.6; III.4.2

The verse says, ὁ δὲ παράκλητος, τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, ὃ πέμψει ὁ πατὴρ ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί μου, ἐκεῖνος ὑμᾶς διδάξει πάντα καὶ ὑπομνήσει ὑμᾶς πάντα ἃ εἶπον ὑμῖν [ἐγώ] (But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you). And he used 15:26 in his letters 8 times, “Ὅταν ἔλθῃ ὁ παράκλητος ὃν ἐγὼ πέμψω ὑμῖν παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς, τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας ὃ παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκπορεύεται, ἐκεῖνος μαρτυρήσει περὶ ἐμοῦ (When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf). In both missions, the Father is the source;

<sup>65</sup> Torrance, *The Hermeneutics of Athanasius*, 234–35.

the Spirit in 14:26 was πέμψει (send) from the Father in the name of the Son, and in 15:26 the Spirit πέμψω (send) by the Son from the Father and ἐκπορεύεται (comes) from the Father. In both missions, the Father is the origin, but with the participation of the Son. This explains the way Athanasius dealt with the subject of the Spirit in his letters. Meanwhile, this explains Athanasius “as a demand of his Trinitarian theology, he developed no pneumatology apart from Christology and soteriology.”<sup>66</sup> John 14:17, 26; 15:26; 16:7,13 explain the promise of the Holy Spirit that was given by Jesus. In these chapters, the Spirit was mentioned five times, prior to Jesus’ farewell to heaven. Almost all of these verses clarify that Jesus is sending the Holy Spirit.

In his interpretation of Amos 4:13 which started from I.3.1–I.10.3, Athanasius used the Gospel of John eleven times to support his argument with his opponents.

I.4.1; 14:6
I.6.2; 1:32–33
I.6.2; 20:22
I.6.2; 14:26
I.6.2; 15:26
I.6.6; 1 John 4:3
I.9.7; 1:3
I.9.9; 1:14
I.10.2; 1:1
I.10.2; 4:6

This table shows that in his interpretation of the verse from Amos 4:13, Athanasius used the Gospel of John eleven times, six of these citations occurred in section six of the first letter. He cited these verses in order to prove that there is a great difference among spirits, and the Holy Spirit is not called Spirit without qualification as mentioned above while explaining the hermeneutic principles. Athanasius quoted the descending of the Holy

<sup>66</sup> McDonnell, “A Trinitarian Theology of the Holy Spirit,” 215.

Spirit upon Him in the river of Jordan (John 1:32–33); then he quoted the breath on his disciples (John 20:22); he quoted (John 14:26) where Jesus speaks of the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in Jesus name; he quoted (John 15:26) in which the expression Paraclete mentioned again who proceeds from the Father and send by the Son; and the last citation in section six is from 1 John 4:13. All these citations are to argue that the Holy Spirit is not a creature as the Tropici believe, but rather the Spirit proceeds from the Father, sent by the Son.<sup>67</sup> These citations explain the deepest relationship between the Three Persons in the Trinity. Athanasius had in his mind that he should focus on the Scriptures and what they say about the Third Person in the Trinity. He cited all these verses in order to affirm what the Scriptures as a whole teach about the Holy Spirit.

In his defense of 1 Tim 5:21, Athanasius gave the correct interpretation in his argument with his opponents to defend the divinity of the Holy Spirit that he is not an angel. In his argument, Athanasius cited the Gospel of John seven times from I.10.4–I.14.7 in order to affirm that the Holy Spirit is divine. All these citations are founded in section 11 of this letter. These citations are:

I.11.1; 14:16
I.11.1; 14:26
I.11.1; 15:26
I.11.1; 16:7
I.11.6; 20:22
I.11.7; 15:26
I.11.7; 16:14

From this table, one can understand that Athanasius focused on specific citations used them in his argument against the two verse Amos 4:13; 1 Timothy 5:21. These citations

---

<sup>67</sup> This language may sound like *filiogue* language, but the emphasis is on the sending of the Spirit by the Father. There is no support for the *filiogue* in Athanasius.

are common in his argument with the Tropici. The common citations between the two tables are: 14:16, 26; 15:26; 20:22. These citations used by Athanasius in both cases are to affirm that the Holy Spirit is not an angel or creatures, but rather he is divine, member in the Trinity, and he is the Spirit of Almighty.

#### The Philosophical Term *ὁμοούσιος* (of one substance)

Beside the hermeneutical principles mentioned above, Athanasius also used a philosophical term in his *Letters to Serapion* to defend the divinity of the Holy Spirit. The term is *ὁμοούσιος*, of one substance.<sup>68</sup> He used this term fifteen times in his three letters.

The table below shows all of Athanasius' use of the term *ὁμοούσιος* in his *Three Letters to Serapion*:

Term	Letter	Page number in Savvidis
<i>ὁμοούσιόι</i>	II.3.1	540
<i>ὁμοούσιόν</i>	I.27.3	519
<i>ὁμοούσιον</i>	II.5.2; II.5.2	544
	II.6.2; II.6.3	545
	II.6.3	546
	II.9.3	550
<i>ὁμοούσιος</i>	II.5.1; II.5.1; II.5.1	544
	II.5.3	545
	II.10.4	553
<i>ὁμοουσίου</i>	II.6.1	545
<i>ὁμοουσίους</i>	II.6.1	545

This term is not biblical but was used by the Council of Nicaea to defend the Godhead of the Son against Arianism. It seems that, “the suggestion to use the term came from the

<sup>68</sup> For studies of this term, see, Hanson, *The Search*, 190–202, 437–445; Davis, *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils*, 56–69; Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy*, 93,190; Stead, *Divine Substance*, 190–216; Kelly, *Early Christians Creeds*, 243–54; Bethune, *The Meaning of Homoousios*, 11–63; Beatrice, “The Word Homoousios,” 243–72.

West and not from the East.”<sup>69</sup> The Fathers who gathered in this council to discuss the problem decided that the Son has the same nature of the Father, and they used the term *ὁμοούσιος*, which literally means “of the same substance.”<sup>70</sup>

This term is one of the most important words in the theological expressions used in the church since the Council of Nicaea. It is used to express the Christology of Jesus and his relationship to the Father. Baker suggests, “Its supporters believed that the nature of the three ‘persons’ to be the same, divine.”<sup>71</sup>

While not mentioned in the Scriptures, the term was adopted by the Gnostic heresy in the second century. Most scholars agreed that Gnostic writers used the term first. As Kelly suggests, “its first occurrence among Christian writers was in Gnostic circle.”<sup>72</sup> Christopher Stead also states that Gnostic writers used the term. He says, “The word *ὁμοούσιος* usually translated ‘consubstantial’ or ‘coessential’ appears to have been introduced by Gnostic Christians of the second century.”<sup>73</sup>

This term was not used to express any Christian theology or doctrine until it was used by the church fathers to clarify the relationship between the Son and the Father, the consubstantiality relationship and to affirm the Godhead of the Son against Arianism. The reason that Christian writers did not use the term, according to Hanson, who is quoting Ricken, is because, “the term, by the middle of the third century had a suspiciously Gnostic smell about it.”<sup>74</sup> The term was used by the Gnostic heresy in the

---

<sup>69</sup> Bethune, *The Meaning of Homoousios*, 2. He also mentions that Hosius for many years previously the most influential bishop in the West, the intimate friend and trusted adviser in ecclesiastical matters of Constantine was the real ‘draftsman’ of the Creed, seems certain. 2.

<sup>70</sup> Lampe and Liddell, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 958.

<sup>71</sup> Bethune, *The Meaning of Homoousios*, 30.

<sup>72</sup> Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 245.

<sup>73</sup> Stead, *Divine Substance*, 190. See also, Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought*, 197–218.

<sup>74</sup> Hanson, *The Search*, 191.

second century and according to Ayres, “The term was used to describe the products of acts of creation in which semi divine being are made of pre-existing (semi material) substance.”<sup>75</sup> But this term, according to Kelly who discusses the meaning it had before Nicaea, suggests, “The net result of our survey, therefore, is that *ὁμοούσιος* was a word with a variety of meanings. At the time of the Arian controversy it was viewed in a very different light by different groups.”<sup>76</sup>

Athanasius of Alexandria used the term *ὁμοούσιος* fifteen times in his three letters to Serapion. Specifically in letter one and two as mentioned in the table above. Each verse will be discussed alone to see the way Athanasius adopted the term in his defence of the Godhead of the Son and the Holy Spirit.

ὁμοούσιόν (I.27.3)

Καὶ πάλιν ἓν ἐστὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον. τὰ δὲ κτίσματα πολλὰ ἄγγελοι μὲν γὰρ χίλια χιλιάδες καὶ μύρια μυριάδες. φωστῆρες δὲ πολλοὶ, καὶ θρόνοι, καὶ κυριότητες, καὶ οὐρανοὶ, καὶ χερουβὶμ, καὶ σεραφίμ, καὶ ἀρχάγγελοι πολλοί. καὶ ἀπλῶς οὐκ ἐστὶ τὰ κτίσματα ἓν, ἀλλὰ πάντα πολλὰ καὶ διάφορα. Εἰ δὲ τὸ μὲν Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἓν ἐστὶ, τὰ δὲ κτίσματα πολλὰ, καὶ ἄγγελοι πολλοί. καὶ ἀπλῶς οὐκ ἐστὶ τὰ κτίσματα ἓν, ἀλλὰ πάντα πολλὰ καὶ διάφορα. Εἰ δὲ τὸ μὲν Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἓν ἐστὶ, τὰ δὲ κτίσματα πολλὰ, καὶ ἄγγελοι πολλοί. ποία ὁμοιότης τῷ Πνεύματι πρὸς τὰ γενητά; Καὶ οὐκ ἄδηλον, ὅτι οὐκ ἐστὶ τῶν πολλῶν τὸ Πνεῦμα, ἀλλ’ οὐδὲ ἄγγελος, ἀλλ’ ἓν ὄν, μᾶλλον δὲ τοῦ Λόγου ἐνός ὄντος ἴδιον, καὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐνός ὄντος ἴδιον καὶ ὁμοούσιόν ἐστὶ.

And again, there is one Holy Spirit, but there are many creatures. As for angels, there are a thousand thousand and ten thousand times ten thousand. And there are many luminaries, and many thrones and dominions, and many heavens, cherubim, seraphim, and archangels. Simply put, there is not one creature, but there are many of them, all of them different. But if there is one Holy Spirit and many creatures and many angels, then what sort of likeness does the Spirit have with things that have come into existence? And so, it could not be any clearer that the Spirit is rather, he is proper to the one Word and proper to and the same as the one God in substance

This section of the first letter is the most important in Athanasius’ letters to Serapion. It is the only passage where Athanasius declared that the Holy Spirit is God and he applied the term *ὁμοούσιος* to the Holy Spirit. He argued with his opponents saying that there is a

<sup>75</sup> Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 93.

<sup>76</sup> Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 248.



multitude of creatures but there is one Holy Spirit,<sup>77</sup> and there is no likeness between the creatures who are many and the one Holy Spirit. He stated, ποία ὁμοιότης τῷ Πνεύματι πρὸς τὰ γενητά (what sort of likeness does the Spirit have with things that have come into existence?)

The term ὄντως is important due to its use as an adverb in this sentence, it means “really, certainly, in truth.”<sup>78</sup> As John says in his Gospel 8:36, ἐὰν οὖν ὁ υἱὸς ὑμᾶς ἐλευθερώσῃ, ὄντως ἐλεύθεροι ἔσεσθε (So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed). In this verse John reasserts that Christ is the only one can make you free, truly you will be free, it is to confirm freedom in Christ.

#### ὁμοούσιόι (II.3.1)

Τούτων δὲ οὕτω δεικνυμένων, ἀσεβής ἐστὶν ὁ λέγων κτίσμα εἶναι τὸν Υἱόν. Ἀναγκασθήσεται γὰρ εἰπεῖν κτίσμα καὶ τὴν πηγὴν βρύουσαν, κτίσμα τὴν σοφίαν, τὸν Λόγον, ἐν ᾧ ἐστὶ πάντα τὰ τοῦ Πατρὸς. Ἄλλως τε καὶ ἀπὸ τούτων ἂν τις ἴδοι τὸ σαθρὸν τῆς αἰρέσεως τῶν Ἀρειομανιτῶν. Ὡς ἐσμὲν ὅμοιοι, καὶ τὴν ταυτότητα ἔχομεν τούτων, καὶ ὁμοούσιόι ἐσμὲν. ἄνθρωποι γοῦν ὅμοιοι καὶ ταυτότητα ἔχοντες, ὁμοούσιόι ἐσμὲν ἀλλήλων. Τὸ αὐτὸ γὰρ πᾶσι, τὸ θνητὸν, τὸ φθαρτὸν, τὸ τρεπτὸν, τὸ ἐκ μη ὄντων. Καὶ ἄγγελιοι δὲ πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς, καὶ τὰ ἄλλα πάντα, ὡσαύτως ὁμοφυῆ ἐστὶν ἀλλήλων

Now that these points are thus demonstrated, whoever says that the Son is a creature is impious. For he will be also compelled to say that the abundant Fountain is a creature, that Wisdom is a creature, and that the Word in whom all that is the Father's exists, is a creature. One can say particularly well how corrupt the heresy of the Ariomaniacs is from the following consideration. With those whom we are like and with whom we have identity we are the same in substance. For example, since we human beings are alike and have identity, we are the same as each other in substance. For everyone has the same morality, corruptibility, mutability, and status of coming from nothing. In a similar way, the angels too, and all other things, are among themselves the same in nature with each other

In this passage, Athanasius explained that no one could say that the Son is a creature, if they do so, the consequences would be that the πηγὴν βρύουσαν (abundant fountain) is a creature, the κτίσμα τὴν σοφίαν (Wisdom is a creature), and, τὸν Λόγον, ἐν ᾧ ἐστὶ πάντα τὰ τοῦ Πατρὸς (and that the Word in whom all that is the Father's exist, is a creature).

Athanasius continued arguing that the Son is not a creature and that His nature is

<sup>77</sup> Concerning this matter, Shapland says that Athanasius here applied to the Holy Spirit an argument he has already used of the Son, *c. Ar.* II.27. Didymus repeats it, *De Trin.* II.553A.

<sup>78</sup> Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 577.

different than the creatures. He elucidated that “Ὡν ἔσμεν ὅμοιοι, καὶ τὴν ταυτότητα ἔχομεν τούτων, καὶ ὁμοούσιοι ἔσμεν (With those whom we are like and with whom we have identity we are the same in substance) he is talking from a human perspective and the way they are ὅμοιοι (alike) and have the same substance because they have the same morality, corruptibility, and mutability.

But, this not the case between the Son and the creatures, said Athanasius. There is no likeness between the Son and the creatures, and nothing that belongs to the Son belongs to the creatures, because what belongs to the Son belongs to the Father and no one has the necessary courage to say that there is a similarity between the Word and creatures.

Athanasius declared this in his work *Defence of the Nicene Definition*, when he said, “for bodies which are like each other may be separated and become at distances from each other.”<sup>79</sup> Immediately thereafter, Athanasius clarified the relationship between the Son and the Father. He said, “but since the generation of the Son from the Father is not according to the nature of men, and not only ὅμοιοι (like), but also inseparable from the essence of the Father, and He and the Father are one, as He has said Himself, and the Word is ever in the Father and the Father in the Word.”<sup>80</sup>

This is what Shapland declares in this passage regarding the term ὅμοιοι (like), which is mentioned by Athanasius in this passage. He suggests, “Athanasius always refused to allow ‘ὅμοιοι’ to be equivalent to ‘ὁμοούσιος.’”<sup>81</sup> This clarification asserts that

---

<sup>79</sup> Athanasius, *Defence of the Nicene Definition*, 20.

<sup>80</sup> Athanasius, *Defence of the Nicene Definition*, 20.

<sup>81</sup> Shapland, *The Letters of Saint Athanasius*, 154. Note.3. Shapland continues in the same note saying that Athanasius uses the ὁμοούσιον to express: that, to be from the Father, the Son must be in the Father.

the Son is totally different than the creatures. The Son is Almighty just as His Father is Almighty.

ὁμοούσιος (II.5.1)

Τίς, τούτων ὄντων καὶ εγγραμμένων, οὐ συνορᾷ, ἐπεὶ τῶν μὲν κτισμάτων οὐδὲν ὅμοιον ὁ Υἱὸς ἔχει, πάντα δὲ τὰ τοῦ Πατρὸς τοῦ Υἱοῦ ἐστίν, ὅτι ὁμοούσιος ἂν εἴη ὁ Υἱὸς τῷ Πατρί; Ὡσπερ γὰρ, εἰ τῶν κτισμάτων τινὰ εἶχεν ὁμοιότητα καὶ πρὸς αὐτὰ τινὰ εἶχε συγγένειαν, ὁμοούσιος ἂν αὐτοῖς ᾗν. οὕτως ἀλλότριος μὲν ὢν κατ' οὐσίαν τῶν γενητῶν, ἴδιος δὲ τοῦ Πατρὸς Λόγος. οὐκ ἄλλος ὢν οὗτος ἐκείνου. ἐπειδὴ καὶ αὐτοῦ ἐστὶν ἴδια πάντα τὰ τοῦ Πατρὸς, ὁμοούσιος εἰκότως ἂν εἴη τῷ Πατρί

Since all of this is true and written in Scripture, who cannot see, inasmuch as the Son has no likeness to creatures but has all that belongs to the Father, that the Son must be the same as the Father in substance?

For if he were to have any likeness to creatures or any kinship with them, then he would be the same as them in substance. Likewise, since he is foreign in substance to those who have come into existence and is the proper Word of the Father, and since he is different from them, and since all that is proper to the Father in his, it follows that he must be the same as the Father in substance

In this section of the second letter the term *ὁμοούσιος* is mentioned three times, in which Athanasius affirmed that the Son is the same as the Father in substance. He declared the equality in substance after he discussed, in the previous section of this letter, what the Scripture says (John 10:35; 14:10) concerning the relationship between the Son and the Father. Athanasius' argument is that the Son is different than the creatures and since the Scriptures explain this relationship between the two of them, the result would be that the Son is of the same substance with the Father.

ὁμοούσιον (II.5.2)

Οὕτω γὰρ καὶ οἱ Πατέρες νοήσαντες, ὡμολόγησαν ἐν τῇ κατὰ Νίκαιαν συνόδῳ ὁμοούσιον καὶ ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ Πατρὸς τὸν Υἱόν. Συνεΐδον γὰρ καλῶς, ὅτι κτιστὴ οὐσία οὐ δύναται ἂν ποτε εἰπεῖν· «Πάντα, ὅσα ἔχει ὁ Πατήρ, ἐμὰ ἐστίν.» Ἀρχὴν γὰρ ἔχουσα τοῦ γίνεσθαι, οὐκ ἔχει τὸ ὢν, καὶ τὸ ἦν ἀίδίως. Καὶ διὰ τοῦτο, ἐπεὶ δὴ ταῦτ' ἔχει ὁ Υἱὸς, καὶ πάντα δὲ τὰ προειρημένα τοῦ Πατρὸς τοῦ Υἱοῦ ἐστίν, ἀνάγκη μὴ κτιστὴν εἶναι τὴν οὐσίαν τοῦ Υἱοῦ, ἀλλ' ὁμοούσιον τῷ Πατρί.

This is what the Fathers thought, when at the Council of Nicaea they confessed that the Son is "the same as the Father in substance" and "from the substance of the Father." For it was perfectly clear to them that no created substance would ever say: *All that the Father has is mine*. Since a created substance has a beginning to its coming into existence, the phrase "he is" and "he was eternally" cannot be said of a created substance. But since these phrases can be said of the Son, and since all things mentioned earlier that belong to the Father are the Son's, the substance of the Son must not be created, but he must be the same as the Father in substance

In this section of the second letter, Athanasius proclaimed that the Son has the same substance as the Father. He mentioned the Council of Nicaea 325, in which the church

fathers decided the Godhead of the Son and declared He is of the same substance as the Father.

ὁμοούσιος (II.5.3)

"Ἄλλως τε καὶ κατὰ τοῦτο οὐκ ἂν εἴη κτιστὴ οὐσία, δεκτικὴ τῶν ἰδίων τοῦ Θεοῦ. Ἴδια δὲ αὐτοῦ ἐστίν, ἐξ ὧν γινώσκεται ὁ Θεὸς, οἷον τὸ παντοκράτωρ, τὸ ὦν, τὸ ἀναλλοίωτον, καὶ τὰ ἕτερα τὰ προειρημένα, ἵνα μὴ ὁμοούσιος τῶν κτισμάτων αὐτὸς ὁ Θεὸς φαίνεται κατὰ τοὺς ἄφρονας, ἔχων ἅπερ καὶ τὰ κτίσματα ἔχειν δύναται

His substance cannot be created above all for this reason: it is capable of receiving the distinguishing marks of God. Now his distinguishing marks are the characteristics by which God is recognized. For example, that he is almighty, that he is, that he is immutable, and the other things mentioned earlier. Therefore, God himself will not appear to be the same as creatures in substance, as these fools want him to be, as if he possessed what creatures can possess

Again Athanasius explains how the Son has the same substance as the Father and his substance cannot be created like other things. The term *δεκτικὴ* is important in this passage. It is from the verb *δέχομαι*, which means, "receive, accept."<sup>82</sup> When Athanasius said, *δεκτικὴ τῶν ἰδίων τοῦ Θεοῦ* (it is capable of receiving the distinguishing marks of God) it means that the Son possessed what the Father possessed. He possessed the attributes of God the Father.

ὁμοουσίους & ὁμοουσίου (II.6.1)

Καὶ οὕτως δ' ἂν τις διελέγξειε τὴν ἀσέβειαν τῶν λεγόντων κτίσμα εἶναι τὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγον. Ἡ πίστις ἡμῶν εἰς Πατέρα καὶ Υἱὸν καὶ ἅγιον Πνεῦμά ἐστι, λέγοντος αὐτοῦ τοῦ Υἱοῦ τοῖς ἀποστόλοις. «Πορευθέντες, μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος.» Εἶπε δὲ οὕτως, ἵνα ἐξ ὧν οἶδαμεν, ἀπὸ τούτων νοῶμεν καὶ περὶ τῶν προειρημένων. Ὡσπερ οὖν οὐκ ἂν εἴποιμεν τοὺς πατέρας ποιητὰς, ἀλλὰ γεννήτορας, καὶ αὐτοὺς δὲ ἡμᾶς οὐκ ἂν εἴποι τις κτίσμα πατέρων, ἀλλὰ υἱὸς φύσει, καὶ ὁμοουσίους τῶν πατέρων. οὕτως, εἰ Πατὴρ ὁ Θεός, πάντως Υἱοῦ φύσει καὶ ὁμοουσίου ἐστὶ Πατὴρ

The impiety of those who call the Word of God a creature can also be refuted in the following manner. Our faith is in Father and Son and Holy Spirit, as the Son himself said to the Apostles: *Go, make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.* He spoke in this way so that on the basis of what we already know we may understand the matters on which we just now spoke.

So then, just as we would not call our fathers 'makers' but 'begetters,' and just as no one would call us 'creatures' of our fathers but 'sons' by nature who are the same as our fathers in substance, so too, if God is Father, surely he is Father of one who is his Son by nature and who is the same as him in substance

In this section of the second letter Athanasius made a clear comparison between the relationship of fathers and sons by nature, elucidating that we are not called creatures of

<sup>82</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 107; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 176.

our fathers, but rather sons. The same rule applies when we mention our fathers and how they are not called makers, but rather begetters. This illustration that Athanasius gave regarding fathers and sons connected the relationship between the Father who is the Father of one, who is the Son by nature and has the same substance with him. Human physical fathers did not create their offspring (ποιητάς) but rather they begot (γεννήτορας) them. The term ποιητάς means, “what is made, creation, only of the work of the divine creation.”<sup>83</sup> As St. Paul mentions in his letter to the Rom 1:20, τὰ γὰρ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου τοῖς ποιήμασιν νοούμενα καθορᾶται, ἢ τε ἀίδιος αὐτοῦ δύναμις καὶ θεϊότης, εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτοὺς ἀναπολογήτους (Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made. So they are without excuse). On the other hand the term γεννήτορας means, “begotten, of Christ, begotten and unbegotten, and born he that is born of woman.”<sup>84</sup> This is, of a human being, which is different than God. For instance, in the Gospel of Luke 7:28 when the Lord Jesus witnesses John the Baptist saying, λέγω ὑμῖν, μείζων ἐν γεννητοῖς γυναικῶν Ἰωάννου οὐδεὶς ἐστίν. ὁ δὲ μικρότερος ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ μείζων αὐτοῦ ἐστίν (I tell you, among those born of women no one is greater than John; yet the least in the kingdom of God is greater than he).

ὁμοούσιον (II.6.2)

Ἄβρααμ γοῦν οὐκ ἔκτισε τὸν Ἰσαὰκ, ἀλλ' ἐγέννησε. Βεσελεὴλ δὲ καὶ Ἐλιὰβ οὐκ ἐγέννησαν, ἀλλ' ἐποίησαν πάντα τὰ ἔργα τὰ ἐν τῇ σκηνῇ. Καὶ ναυπηγὸς δὲ καὶ οἰκοδόμος οὐ γεννώσιν ἃ ποιοῦσιν, ἀλλ' ἕκαστος ἐργάζεται, ὁ μὲν τὸ σκάφος, ὁ δὲ τὴν οἰκίαν. Ὁ μέντοι Ἰσαὰκ οὐ ποιεῖ, ἀλλὰ γεννᾷ φύσει καὶ ὁμοούσιον τὸν Ἰακώβ. καὶ ὁ Ἰακώβ δὲ οὕτως τὸν Ἰούδαν καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς αὐτοῦ.

Abraham certainly did not create Isaac, but begot him. Bezalel and Oholiab did not beget all the products in the tabernacle, but made them. The shipbuilder and the house builder do not beget what they make, but each produces a work, the former a ship and the latter a house. Isaac does not make Jacob but begets him by nature, and Jacob is the same as him in substance. The same holds true for Jacob and Judah and his

<sup>83</sup> Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 689; Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 319.

<sup>84</sup> Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 155; Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 89.

Athanasius is continuing his explanation of the previous section regarding the nature of Christ and his relationship with his Father. He brought more examples to his illustration in order to make it clear to the readers the kind of relationship that exists between the Father and the Son. There is a difference between the words ἔκτισε and ἐγέννησε. The word ἔκτισε is from the verb κτίζω, means, “create, call into being”<sup>85</sup> and in the New Testament, it refers to the divine activity, as mentioned in 1 Tim 4:3, κωλύοντων γαμεῖν, ἀπέχεσθαι βρωμάτων, ἃ ὁ θεὸς ἔκτισεν εἰς μετάληψιν μετὰ εὐχαριστίας τοῖς πιστοῖς καὶ ἐπεγνωκόσιν τὴν ἀλήθειαν (They forbid marriage and demand abstinence from foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.).

Also, in Matt 13:19, ἔσονται γὰρ αἱ ἡμέραι ἐκεῖναι θλίψεις οἷα οὐ γέγονεν τοιαύτη ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς κτίσεως ἣν ἔκτισεν ὁ θεὸς ἕως τοῦ νῦν καὶ οὐ μὴ γένηται (For in those days there will be suffering, such as has not been from the beginning of the creation that God created until now, no, and never will be). In both verses the verb refers to the work of God concerning creation, which is His activity. While the verb ἐγέννησε is from the verb γεννάω means “beget, become the father of.”<sup>86</sup> As we read in the Gospel of Matt 1:2, Ἀβραὰμ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰσαάκ, Ἰσαάκ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰακώβ, Ἰακώβ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰούδαν καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς αὐτοῦ (Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers). In these verses, Abraham did not make Isaac, but rather he begot him by nature and he is the same as him in substance, καὶ

<sup>85</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 239; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 456.

<sup>86</sup> Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 154; Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 97.

ὁμοούσιον τὸν Ἰακώβ, this means that they share or have the same nature. No one can declare this kind of relationship between God and His creation; that they share the same nature. If they do so, this means that the creature shares the same substance with God.

#### ὁμοούσιον (II.6.3)

Ὅσπερ οὖν μαίνοιτ' ἂν τις λέγων τὴν οἰκίαν ὁμοούσιον τοῦ οἰκοδόμου, καὶ τὸ σκάφος τοῦ ναυπηγοῦ, οὕτως πρεπὸν τως ἂν τις εἴποι πάντα Υἱὸν ὁμοούσιον εἶναι τοῦ ἑαυ τοῦ Πατρὸς. Εἰ τοίνυν Πατὴρ ἐστὶ καὶ Υἱός, ἀνάγκη τὸν Υἱὸν φύσει καὶ ἀληθείᾳ εἶναι Υἱόν. Τοῦτο δὲ ἐστὶ τὸ ὁμοούσιον εἶναι τῷ Πατρὶ, ὡς ἐκ πολλῶν ἐδείχθη. Ἀμέλει περὶ μὲν τῶν ποιημάτων. «Αὐτὸς εἶπε, καὶ ἐγενήθησαν. αὐτὸς ἐνετείλατο, καὶ ἐκτίσθησαν.»

Περὶ δὲ τοῦ Υἱοῦ. Ἐξηρεύξατο ἡ καρδία μου Λόγον ἀγαθόν.

So then, just as it is insane for anyone to claim that the house is the same as the house builder in substance and the ship is the same as the shipbuilder in substance, so too it is appropriate for someone to say that every son is the same as his own father in substance. So if there is Father and Son, then the Son must be Son by nature and in truth. But this is what it means to be the same as the Father in substance, as has been shown by many passages. Indeed, of the things which have been made it is said: God spoke and they came to be; he commanded, and they were created. But of the Son it is said: My heart overflowed with a good Word.

In this section, Athanasius reasserted the relationship between the Father and the Son. He mentioned the word *ὁμοούσιον* four times, three of which explain the relationship between the house and the house builder and the ship and the shipbuilder. Afterwards, Athanasius mentioned *ὁμοούσιον* two more times to explain the relationship between any father and his own son. In the fourth one, Athanasius clarified what it means to be the same as the Father in substance by nature and in truth. If God is called a Father, this means that His Son has the same substance, as Athanasius explained in the *πολλῶν ἐδείχθη* (many passages) that he discussed in previous sections.

#### ὁμοούσιον (II.9.3)

Ποίαν ἔτι πρόφασιν εὐρήσουσιν οἱ Ἀρειανοί; Τί λοιπὸν ἐπινοήσαντες γογγύσουσι; Κατεγνωσθησαν μὴ εἰδότες τὸ, «Κύριος ἔκτισέ με εἰς ἔργα αὐτοῦ.» Καὶ ἐδείχθησαν μὴ νοοῦντες τὸ, «Περὶ δὲ τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης οὐδεὶς οἶδεν, οὐδὲ οἱ ἄγγελοι, οὐδὲ ὁ Υἱός.» Καὶ γὰρ ὡσπερ λέγων μὲν τὸ, «ἔκτισε,» τὸ ἀνθρώπινον σημαίνει, ὅτι ἄνθρωπος γέγονε καὶ ἐκτίσθη. λέγων δὲ, «Ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ Πατὴρ ἐν ἑσμεν,» καὶ, «Ὁ ἐμὲ ἐωρακὼς ἐώρακε τὸν Πατέρα,» καὶ, «Ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ Πατρὶ, καὶ ὁ Πατὴρ ἐν ἐμοί,» τὴν αἰδιότητα καὶ τὸ πρὸς τὸν Πατέρα ὁμοούσιον σημαίνει. ὕτως λέγων, «Οὐδεὶς οἶδεν, οὐδὲ ὁ Υἱός,» ὡς ἄνθρωπος πάλιν λέγει. ἀνθρώπων γὰρ ἴδιον τὸ ἀγνοεῖν. λέγων δὲ, «Οὐδεὶς οἶδε τὸν Πατέρα εἰ μὴ ὁ Υἱός, οὐδὲ τὸν Υἱὸν εἰ μὴ ὁ Πατὴρ,» οἶδε πολλῶ πλέον τὰ γενητά.

Will the Arians discover yet another pretext? What else will they concoct to murmur about? They have been convicted of misunderstanding the verse: *The Lord created me*. And they have been shown to have no understanding of the verse: *Of that day or that hour no one knows, not even the angels, nor the Son*. For when he says he created, he signifies his humanity that he became human and was created. But when he says: *I and the Father are one*, and: *He who sees me sees the Father*, and: *I am in the Father and the*

*Father in me*, he signifies his eternity and that he is the same as the Father in substance. Likewise, when he says: *no one knows, not even the Son*, he again speaks as human being. For being ignorant is proper to human being. But when he says: *No one knows the Father except the Son, and no one knows the Son except the Father*, so much more does he know the things which have come into existence.

This section is a continuation of the previous section II.9.1 in which Athanasius defended the divinity of the Son, and contains his arguments concerning the passage of the Gospel according to Mark 13:22, regarding the Son's knowledge of things to come. This passage proclaims that Jesus is fully human and fully divine. When the Bible says in Mark 13:32 that he does not know the day or the hour, this signifies the humanity of Jesus. For being ignorant of the future is proper to human beings. On the other hand, the verse from John 10:30, is a clear declaration of the divinity of Jesus. This verse proclaims the eternity of Jesus, *τὴν ἀϊδιότητα καὶ τὸ πρὸς τὸν Πατέρα ὁμοούσιον σημαίνει* (he signifies his eternity and that he is the same as the Father in substance). There is no inconsistency between the two verses, but rather, both verses describe Jesus as fully human and fully divine. The word *ἀϊδιότητα* is important in this passage. It means, "everlasting, eternal, always existing"<sup>87</sup>

St. Paul mentions the term in his letter to the Rom 1:20. He says, *τὰ γὰρ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου τοῖς ποιήμασιν νοούμενα καθορᾶται, ἢ τε αἰδίου αὐτοῦ δύναμις καὶ θεϊότης, εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτοὺς ἀναπολογήτους* (Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made. So they are without excuse). Athanasius' argument in this section is to assert that the Lord Jesus was the Incarnate God. There are times he acts as a human being, and other times he acts as the Son of God.

*ὁμοούσιος (II.10.4)*

<sup>87</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 37; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 21.



Καὶ ἐν πάσῃ δὲ τῇ θείᾳ Γραφῇ εὐρήσεις, ὅτι τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον λεγόμενον τοῦ Υἱοῦ, τοῦτο λέγεται τοῦ Θεοῦ εἶναι. καὶ τοῦτο ἐν τοῖς ἐμπροσθεν ἐγράψαμεν. Οὐκ οὖν εἶ ὁ Υἱὸς διὰ τὴν πρὸς τὸν Πατέρα ιδιότητα, καὶ διὰ τὸ εἶναι αὐτοῦ τῆς οὐσίας ἴδιον γέννημα, οὐκ ἔστι κτίσμα, ἀλλ' ὁμοούσιος τοῦ Πατρὸς. οὕτως οὐκ ἂν εἴη οὐδὲ τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον κτίσμα, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀσεβῆς ὁ λέγων τοῦτο, διὰ τὴν πρὸς τὸν Υἱὸν ιδιότητα αὐτοῦ, καὶ ὅτι ἐξ αὐτοῦ δίδεται πᾶσι, καὶ ἃ ἔχει τοῦ Υἱοῦ ἔστιν.

And you will find in every passage of Divine Scripture that the Holy Spirit, who is said to be the Son's, is also said to be God's: this precisely what we wrote in our previous letter. Hence, if the Son is not a creature because of the way in which he belongs to the Father and because he is the proper offspring of the Father's substance, but is the same as the Father in substance, then likewise the Holy Spirit is not a creature indeed, whoever says such a thing is impious because of the way in which the Spirit belongs to the Son, and because he is given from the Son to all people and all that he has is the Son's.

In this section Athanasius continued his arguing regarding the Godhead of the Holy Spirit. From the beginning of this section Athanasius clarified that the Spirit is not a creature and because the Spirit is proper to the Son and he also proper to the Father. Athanasius was dependant on the *θεία Γραφή* (Divine Scripture) to defend the deity of the Son, and also in his defence of the deity of the Holy Spirit, as he wrote in his previous letter. For instance, in letter I.20, in which he explained the unity between the three persons in the Trinity, Athanasius stated, *ἢ τίς οὕτω τολμηρὸς, ὡς εἰπεῖν ἀνόμοιον καὶ ἑτεροφυῆ τὴν Τριάδα πρὸς ἑαυτὴν, ἢ ἀλλοτριούσιον τοῦ Πατρὸς τὸν Υἱὸν, ἢ ξένον τὸ Πνεῦμα τοῦ Υἱοῦ.*<sup>88</sup> (who could be so audacious as to say that the Trinity is unlike itself and different in nature? Or that the Son is foreign to the Father in substance? Or that the Spirit is estranged from the Son?). Also, in his letter I.30 he declared that if God is a dyad, then the baptismal formula is invalid. The whole section discusses that the Trinity is, *ἔστι, δέδεικται δὲ ἀδιαίρετος οὕσα καὶ οὐκ ἀνόμοιος.*<sup>89</sup>

### **How Does the Larger Commitment to the Trinity Impact His Use of John And The Theological Arguments He Formulated?**

Athanasius was one of the first church fathers to defend the divinity of the Holy Spirit in his argument with the Tropicists. Most of his writings, prior to the Tropicist heresy, were

<sup>88</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, I.20.501-2.

<sup>89</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, I.30.1.523. "Indivisible and not inconsistent with itself."

characterized as Christological debates to defend the divinity of the Son, with some references to the Holy Spirit. With that being said, some questions come to mind concerning his understanding of the theology of the Holy Spirit, such as, did he lack understanding of the Holy Spirit before his three letters to Serapion? What was the reason Athanasius was relatively silent until his three letters to Serapion, to discuss the deity of the Spirit? In these three letters he cites 102 verses from the Gospel of John and also from the first letter of John as proof to declare the divinity of the Holy Spirit. He quoted many references from the Gospel of John and from other Scriptures as well.

Athanasius did not lack a theology of the Holy Spirit, even though some scholars may agree that because of his limited mention of the subject that he developed his pneumatology later in his arguments with the Tropicici. He did not write about the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, maybe because the heresies of Docetism, Gnosticism, and Arianism were against the Son, until the Pneumatomachoi surfaced.

Athanasius understood the theology of the Spirit, and he declared it in his letters to Serapion when the problem of the Tropicici arose. However, when one reads his writings, which are mentioned in ch. 3 of this dissertation, then one will understand the contribution that Athanasius gave to the Trinitarian doctrine and how these works are important. As it is widely known, most of his works were written in response to theological debates raised by Arians and later by the Tropicici. In these works, we find connections to the Holy Spirit.

In his famous work *On the Incarnation*, he mentioned the Holy Spirit in the last chapter of this work. He said, "Through Whom and with Whom be to the Father Himself, with the Son Himself, in the Holy Spirit, honour and might and glory for ever and

ever.”<sup>90</sup> This reference to the Holy Spirit does not mean that he lacked a theology of the Spirit. He was defending the incarnation of the Lord Jesus against Arianism, and it was a Christological debate, not pneumatological. Regarding this matter Kevin Hill states, “The absence of pneumatological content in *Pagans-Incarnation* should not be taken as proof that Athanasius lacked a theology of the Spirit at the time he wrote a double apology.”<sup>91</sup> In his *First Festal Letter on the Celebration on Easter*, he mentioned the Holy Spirit a number of times. He stated, “Behold our savior who went up, and breathed upon the face, and said to his disciples, receive ye the Holy Ghost.”<sup>92</sup>

#### The Term Τριάς (Trinity)

In order to discuss the way the Johannine pneumatology developed Athanasius’ Trinitarian theology, we must first clarify how many times he mentioned the word Τριάς (Trinity) in his letters to Serapion. Secondly, one must also discuss the connection between the pneumatological and the Christological verses, since Athanasius wrote the first part of the original letter 2.1–2.10, which was devoted to the Son. In other words, we must discuss the link between Christology and Pneumatology and how this link helped Athanasius develop and shape his Trinitarian Theology. The reason to link Christology with the pneumatology is because the Arians were against the Son and the Tropici (the new Arians) were against the Spirit. Both teachings can destroy the Christian concept of the Trinity. Athanasius had a large commitment to the Word Τριάς (Trinity), it is

---

<sup>90</sup> Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*, 57.

<sup>91</sup> Hill, *Athanasius and the Holy Spirit*, 5.

<sup>92</sup> Athanasius, *Festal Letter*, 1.8. See also 1.9; 1.10.

mentioned 73 times in the *Letters to Serapion*.<sup>93</sup> The table below clarifies the total use of the word, Τριάς (Trinity), in Athanasius' letters:

<p style="text-align: center;">Τριάδα</p> <p>I.1.3; I.2.4; I.2.4; I.2.4; I.10.5; I.20.1; I.21.3; I.25.4; I.29.2; I.29.3; I.29.3; I.30.4; I.32.1; I.33.6; II.16.2</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Τριάδι</p> <p>I.2.3; I.11.4; I.17.1; I.17.1; I.20.1; I.21.4; I.30.1; I.30.6; I.31.1; II.14.4; II.15.2; III.3.5; III.3.5; III.7.2</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Τριάδος</p> <p>I.2.4; I.10.6; I.16.7; I.17.4; I.17.5; I.18.3; I.20.2; I.20.3; I.27.4; I.28.3; I.30.1; I.30.2; I.31.1; I.33.3; II.15.1; II.16.3; III.6.2</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Τριάς</p> <p>I.14.6; I.17.4; I.20.2; I.28.2; I.28.3; I.30.2; II.15.4; II.15.4; II.16.1; II.16.1; II.16.3; III.6.7; III.7.2</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Τριάς</p> <p>I.2.4; I.2.4; I.20.2; I.28.3; I.29.1; I.30.1; II.15.1; II.15.5; II.16.1; II.16.1; II.16.1; II.16.2; III.5.2</p>

Concerning Athanasius' use of the word Τριάς (Trinity), Edwards suggests that Athanasius, "articulates a theology of God Trinity in creation and salvation, using the word Trinity (trias) more frequently than in his other works."<sup>94</sup> For Athanasius, the expression Τριάς (Trinity) acts as one and this formula is found in the baptismal rite. Without the Spirit, baptism is not complete. It was Jesus' order to his disciples when he sent them to all of the nations. As mentioned in Matt 28:19, Πορευθέντες μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος.<sup>95</sup> The baptismal formula does not say in the names but in the name because they are one. For they all share the same divine being. Ἄ γὰρ τὸ Πνεῦμα ἐκάστῳ διαιρεῖ, ταῦτα παρὰ τοῦ Πατρὸς διὰ τοῦ Λόγου χορηγεῖται. Πάντα γὰρ τὰ τοῦ Πατρὸς, τοῦ Υἱοῦ

<sup>93</sup> According to Hanson. *The Search*, 749, the word Τριάς (Trinity) was used first by Theophilus of Antioch in the second half of the second century.

<sup>94</sup> Edwards, "Athanasius' Letters to Serapion," 43.

<sup>95</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, I.28.4.521. "Go, make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." See also I.30.2.534.

ἔστι.”<sup>96</sup> This Triad is, Τριάς δέ ἐστιν οὐχ ἕως ὀνόματος μόνον καὶ φαντασίας λέξεως, ἀλλὰ ἀληθεία καὶ ὑπάρξει Τριάς.<sup>97</sup> According to the Lord’s teaching in Matthew 28, denying the divinity of the Spirit means that the baptism is not completed and it is initiated into a dyad and not a Triad.

#### The Term ἴδιον τοῦ Λόγου (Proper to the Word)

In previous statements found in section 27.2, 3 of the first letter, Athanasius used the word ἴδιον (proper) three times. It means that the Holy Spirit being proper to the Son, the same substance with the Son, it was given by the Son to the disciples. The word ἴδιον (proper), was used frequently by Athanasius, as shown in table 2:

<p>ἴδιον (proper)</p> <p>I.2.5; I.11.4; I.12.5; I.21.4; I.21.4; I.23.1; I.25.1; I.25.2; I.25.5; I.26.1; I.26.4; I.27.2; I.27.3; I.27.3; I.27.4; I.27.4; I.32.1; II.8.3; II.9.2; II.9.3</p> <p>ἴδιος</p> <p>I.21.3; I.25.2; II.5.1</p>
---

The word ἴδιον or ἴδιος is mentioned 23 times in his letters. The use of this word by Athanasius expresses the unique relationship between the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit, since there is no like or equal to this relation in the Trinity. Athanasius used this word nine times to explain how the Spirit is proper to the Son. He used it four times to mention God; four times to the Father; once to mention the divinity; and seven times to make the argument that the Spirit is not proper to any creatures. This shows that, “the pneumatological statements clearly linked to the Christological-Soteriological ones.

<sup>96</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae* I-IV *Ad Serapionem*, I.30.4.525. “The gifts which the Spirit distributes to each are bestowed by the Father through the Word. For all that the Father has is in the Son’s.”

<sup>97</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae* I-IV *Ad Serapionem*, I.28.3.520. “It is not a Trinity in name alone and in linguistic expression, but in truth and actual existence.”

These statements are essential for the presentation of the pneumatology of Athanasius.”<sup>98</sup>

The first mention of the word ἴδιον (proper, one’s own) is in the beginning of his first letter. He said, ὁ παρὰ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐκπορεύεται, καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ ἴδιον ὄν.<sup>99</sup> This statement clarifies the inner relationship between the Three Persons in the Trinity. The Spirit proceeds from the Father, which means that the Father is the origin, and the Spirit is proper to the Son. This illustrates the direct relationship between them, not just the Spirit with the Father, but also the Spirit with the Son. The preposition ὄν is very important in this statement. It means, “ὄν, οὔσα, ὄν, εἶναι, which is a function word and maybe variously rendered as am, are, is, was, were, etc . . . All of this will be dependent on requirements of English structure. As a predicate *be*, relating to what exists.”<sup>100</sup> In this statement it expresses the relationship within the Trinity and its existence, as well as the existence of God. In the book of Rev 11:17, it says, λέγοντες· εὐχαριστοῦμέν σοι, κύριε ὁ θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ, ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν, ὅτι εἴληφας τὴν δύναμίν σου τὴν μεγάλην καὶ ἐβασίλευσας (singing, we give you thanks, Lord God Almighty, who are and who were, for you have taken your great power and begun to reign).

In section 11, Athanasius mentioned that the Spirit is proper to the Word. He said, τὸ δὲ τὸ Πνεῦμα τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐστὶ τοῦ παντοκράτορος. καὶ διακονεῖται μὲν παρ’ ἀγγέλου, ἀδιαίρετον δὲ τῆς θεότητός ἐστι, καὶ ἴδιον τοῦ λόγου.<sup>101</sup> The Spirit is not strange to the Trinity, but belongs and is proper to the, δὲ τοῦ Λόγου ἐνὸς ὄντος ἴδιον, καὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐνὸς

<sup>98</sup> Laminski. *Der Heilige Geist als Geist Christi*, 128.

<sup>99</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, I.2.5.453. “Who proceeds from the Father, and, being proper to the Son.”

<sup>100</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 131; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 221.

<sup>101</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, I.11.4.480. “But the Spirit was the Spirit of Almighty God, to whom the angel ministers and who is inseparable from the divinity and proper to the Word.”

ὄντος ἴδιον καὶ ὁμοούσιόν ἐστι.<sup>102</sup> The three Persons participate in the same essence of the Godhead. No one can divide the Spirit from the Trinity and count Him as a creature or an angel. If they do, the unity of the Trinity is not one anymore. As Athanasius said, οὕτω, διαιροῦντες ἀπὸ τοῦ Λόγου τὸ Πνεῦμα, οὐκέτι μίαν τὴν ἐν Τριάδι θεότητα σώζουσι.<sup>103</sup>

In section 25 of the first letter, Athanasius again argued that the Spirit is proper to the Son, ἴδιον εἶναι τοῦ Υἱοῦ, καὶ οὐ ξένον τοῦ Θεοῦ.<sup>104</sup> Athanasius continued his argument regarding the position of the Spirit in the Trinity. In the same section he stated, ἀλλὰ Πνεῦμα τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ Θεῷ καὶ ἐξ αὐτοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ εἶρηται.<sup>105</sup> From these two statements Athanasius declared that the Spirit is the Spirit of God and is proper to the same one God in substance. This means that he belongs to the Godhead, and he cannot be a creature, as the Tropici taught. These two statements also explain the relationship between the members of the Godhead, and that the Godhead is inseparable and indivisible. The two prepositions ἐν (in God) and ἐξ (from God) are very important. The preposition ἐν (in God) means, “preposition with the dative, designating a close relationship, especially with God, Christ, or the Spirit.”<sup>106</sup> The ἐξ (from God) is the same as ἐκ, which means, “preposition with genitive, denoting direction from which something comes from, denoting origin, source.”<sup>107</sup> This statement is a continuation of what Athanasius had already declared before in I.22. He said, Ἐκ δὲ τοῦ Θεοῦ λέγεται τὸ

<sup>102</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, I.27.3.519. “He is proper to the one Word and proper to and the same as the one God in substance.”

<sup>103</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, I.2.3.453. “By dividing the Spirit from the Word they no longer preserve the divinity in the Trinity as one.”

<sup>104</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, I.25.1.513. “Proper to the Son and not foreign to God.”

<sup>105</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, I.25.2.513. “But Spirit of God, he is said to be in God himself and from God himself.”

<sup>106</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 147–148. Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 258.

<sup>107</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 134; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 258.

Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον.<sup>108</sup> (But the Holy Spirit is said to be from God). This statement by Athanasius can only mean, “the Spirit’s nature is uncreated, as God’s nature is uncreated.”<sup>109</sup> Athanasius did not apply this statement to the Spirit only, but applied it to the Son also, indicating that He is from God. He stated, Εἰ δὲ ὁ Υἱὸς, ἐπειδὴ ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐστίν. ἴδιος τῆς οὐσίας αὐτοῦ ἐστίν.<sup>110</sup> (And if the Son is proper to the Father’s substance because he is from the Father). This is to confirm that the nature of the Son is uncreated.

What we have seen so far is that there is clear evidence to the Christological approach by Athanasius in order to shape his pneumatological doctrine, depending on the link between the Word and the Spirit. This link between the Son and the Spirit explains what Irenaeus said before when he stated, “Now man is a mixed organization of soul and flesh, who was formed after the likeness of God, and moulded by His hands, that is, by the Son and Holy Spirit.”<sup>111</sup> Athanasius took the idea of the two hands of God in order, “to bring out not only the unity of the divine nature, but also the divine correlationality.”<sup>112</sup>

Later in this letter Athanasius argued again that the Spirit is proper to the Word. He said, οὐκ ἂν εἴη τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον οὔτε ἄγγελος, οὔτε ὄλωσ κτίσμα, ἀλλ’ ἴδιον τοῦ Λόγου.<sup>113</sup> This affirmation by Athanasius concerning the relationship between the Word and the Spirit took place while he was discussing the participation of the faithful in the

<sup>108</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae* I-IV *Ad Serapionem*, I.22.1.506.

<sup>109</sup> Haykin, *The Spirit of God*, 79.

<sup>110</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae* I-IV *Ad Serapionem*, I.25.2.513.

<sup>111</sup> Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, iv. Preface 4.

<sup>112</sup> Edwards, “Athanasius’ Letters to Serapion,” 49. In his translation to the Letters, Shapland states that “The majority of the early Fathers would probably have been willing to say with Irenaeus that the Word and the Spirit are the two hands of God; with the implication that what one hand does not perform is left for the other,” 36.

<sup>113</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae* I-IV *Ad Serapionem*, I.27.2.518. “The Holy Spirit can be neither an angel nor a creature in any way, but must be proper to the Word.”



Spirit. Athanasius cited Heb 6:4, which explains that Christians are partakers of the Holy Spirit and have tasted the heavenly gift. In the same section, Athanasius continued his argument in which he insisted that there are many creatures but only one Holy Spirit. He said, Καὶ οὐκ ἄδηλον, ὅτι οὐκ ἔστι τῶν πολλῶν τὸ Πνεῦμα, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ ἄγγελος, ἀλλ' ἐν ὄν, μᾶλλον δὲ τοῦ Λόγου ἐνός ὄντος ἴδιον, καὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐνός ὄντος ἴδιον καὶ ὁμοουσίον ἐστι.<sup>114</sup>

In the section 27, Athanasius concluded the section and said that the Spirit, ἴδιον δὲ καὶ οὐ ξένον τῆς τοῦ Υἱοῦ οὐσίας καὶ θεότητος, δι' ἣν καὶ τῆς ἁγίας Τριάδος ὄν, καταισχύνει τὴν ἐκεῖνων ἀναισθησίαν.<sup>115</sup> He is from the, “οὐσίας καὶ θεότητος” (the substance and the divinity) of the Son and to the, τῆς ἁγίας Τριάδος ὄν (belongs to the Holy Trinity). Shapland discusses the link between the Spirit and the Son from the perspective that the Spirit is the Spirit of the Son. He reported, “Here we recover once again the New Testament conception of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of the Son, not only inasmuch as the Son gives and sends Him, but because He is the principle of Christ’s life within us. His ministry is the ministry of the Son; and all the activity of the Son is accomplished in Him.”<sup>116</sup>

At the end of his first letter, Athanasius also declared that the Spirit is not a creature, as the Tropicists believe, but proper to the Word. He stated, Συμφώνως ἄρα ἀπὸ τῶν θείων Γραφῶν δείκνυται μὴ εἶναι κτίσμα τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, ἀλλὰ ἴδιον τοῦ Λόγου καὶ

<sup>114</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, 1.27.3.519. “It could not be any clearer that the Spirit is neither of the many nor even an angel, but he is the only one. Or rather, he is proper to the one Word and proper to and the same as the one God in substance.”

<sup>115</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, 1.27.4.519. “He is proper to and not foreign to the substance and divinity of the Son. And so, because of this he belongs to the Holy Trinity and their stupidity is put to shame.”

<sup>116</sup> Shapland, *The Letters*, 35.

τῆς τοῦ Πατρὸς θεότητος.<sup>117</sup> Athanasius finished his first letter with the proclamation of the natural relationship in the Godhead and the indivisibility of the Holy Trinity. The one faith of the church is that the Trinity is indivisible. Laminski stated that, “The confession of the Trinity is for him (Athanasius) the head piece of our faith on which the church is grounded, in which she is rooted.”<sup>118</sup>

At the end of his first letter Athanasius expressed that this is the faith of the church, which was given by the Lord to the Apostles, and they gave it to the Fathers who preserved it. He said, “Ἰδωμεν δὲ ὁμῶς καὶ πρὸς τούτοις καὶ αὐτὴν τὴν ἐξ ἀρχῆς παράδοσιν καὶ διδασκαλίαν καὶ πίστιν τῆς καθολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας, ἣν ὁ μὲν Κύριος ἔδωκεν, οἱ δὲ ἀπόστολοι ἐκήρυξαν, καὶ οἱ πατέρες ἐφύλαξαν ἐν ταύτῃ γὰρ ἡ Ἐκκλησία τεθεμελίωται, καὶ ὁ ταύτης ἐκπίπτων οὐτ’ ἂν εἴη, οὐτ’ ἂν ἔτι λέγοιτο Χριστιανός.”<sup>119</sup>

The Tropici tried to destroy this kind of faith and the concept of the Trinity. This is why Athanasius called them in his letters, *πνευματομαχοῦντες* (fighting against the Spirit<sup>120</sup>). The relationship between the Spirit and the Son parallels the relationship between the Son and the Father. Torrance sees that Athanasius emphasized this relationship, and he stated, “Since everything that is the Son’s belongs to the Father, the Holy Spirit who is the Spirit of the Son belongs to the Father and is of one being with

---

<sup>117</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae* I-IV *Ad Serapionem*, I.32.1.531. “And so, the Divine Scriptures constantly show that the Holy Spirit is not a creature, but is proper to the Word and to the divinity of the Father.”

<sup>118</sup> Laminski, *Der Heilige Geist als Geist Christi*, 130.

<sup>119</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae* I-IV *Ad Serapionem*, I.28.1.519–20. “Nonetheless, in addition to these arguments, let us also examine the tradition, teaching, and the faith of the Catholic Church from the beginning, which is nothing other than what the Lord gave, and the Apostles preached, and the Fathers preserved. The church is founded on this, and whoever falls away from it can no longer be nor be called a Christian.” See also II.15.4.560–61; III.5.3.572.

<sup>120</sup> The word *πνευματομαχοῦντες* (fighting against the Spirit) is mentioned twice in the letters of Athanasius; I.32.2; III.1.2

him.”<sup>121</sup> Therefore, if the Spirit is not divine, then the Son is not also, because he is the, Εἰκὼν τοῦ Υἱοῦ λέγεται καὶ ἔστι τὸ Πνεῦμα.<sup>122</sup> And Οὐκοῦν τοῦ Υἱοῦ καὶ κατ’ ἐκεῖνους ὁμολογουμένου μὴ εἶναι κτίσματος, οὐκ ἂν εἶη οὐδὲ ἡ τούτου εἰκὼν κτίσμα.<sup>123</sup>

### The Term Μία Ενέργεια (One Activity)

Athanasius mentioned the distinctive activities of the Holy Spirit in his letters, such as sanctification, perfecting, illumination, quickening, anointing, sealing, and divinizing. Hanson suggests that Athanasius “turns to description of the function of the Holy Spirit as witness in the New Testament.”<sup>124</sup> However, Athanasius does not focus on the role of the Holy Spirit in salvation, because his previous debates were about the Christology of Jesus, especially in his controversies with the Arians.

The word *ἐνέργεια* from the verb *ἐνεργέω*, which means, “active be at work, and the noun is *ἐνέργεια* means function, activity; in the N.T. used of supernatural activity energy, operation, working.”<sup>125</sup> This word is mentioned in the letters of Athanasius four times.<sup>126</sup> Campbell states, “The Spirit performs certain functions and exhibits certain characteristics that can be ascribed only to God. This example he gives for this line of argument is one of his favorite religious themes: the sanctification of men through

<sup>121</sup> Torrance, “The Doctrine of the Holy Trinity,” 400.

<sup>122</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae 1-IV Ad Serapionem*, 1.24.7.512. “The Spirit is said to be and is the Image of the Son.”

<sup>123</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae 1-IV Ad Serapionem*, 1.24.7.512. “Therefore, if our opponents confess that the Son is not a creature, it is impossible for his Image to be a creature. For an image must be just like that of which it is an image.”

<sup>124</sup> Hanson, *The Search*, 750.

<sup>125</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 150; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 264; Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 66.

<sup>126</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae 1-IV Ad Serapionem*, 1.20.5.503; 1.28.2.520; 1.30.5.525; 1.31.1.526.

participation in the divine.”<sup>127</sup>

He is the Spirit of holiness and renewal, Τὸ τοίνυν μὴ ἀγιαζόμενον παρ’ ἑτέρου, μηδὲ μετέχον ἀγιασμοῦ, ἀλλ’ αὐτὸ μεθεκτὸν ὄν, ἐν ᾧ καὶ τὰ κτίσματα πάντα ἀγιάζεται, πῶς ἂν εἶη ἐν τῶν πάντων, ἴδιον τῶν μετεχόντων αὐτοῦ.<sup>128</sup> Sanctification is one of the significant themes in Athanasius’ argument with the Tropicists. The one who sanctified cannot be counted among creatures, “whoever recognizes the sanctifying role of the Spirit, yet denies divinity to him, must likewise claim that the Son, through whom all things came to be, is one from among all things.”<sup>129</sup> Burgess shares the same idea. He states, “The Spirit is the instrument of the Son in both creation and sanctification. From the Son the Spirit receives his mission to create, to sanctify and to make divine. In the context of his mission the Spirit proceeds from the Father.”<sup>130</sup> Therefore, if the Spirit is not divine, then neither is the Son, since he is the image of the Son.

This big gap, which lies between the Holy Spirit and the creatures, is what Athanasius mentioned in his first letter regarding the relation between the Holy Spirit and the Father. He stated, Ἐκ δὲ τοῦ Θεοῦ λέγεται τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον.<sup>131</sup> He continued saying that, “δὲ Θεὸς ὧν ἐστίν, ἐξ οὗ καὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα. Τὸ δὲ ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ οὐκ ἂν εἶη ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος, οὐδὲ κτίσμα, ἵνα μὴ κατ’ ἐκεῖ νους καὶ ὁ ἐξ οὗ ἐστὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα, κτίσμα εἶναι

<sup>127</sup> Campbell, “The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit,” 412.

<sup>128</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, 1.23.1.507. “So, he who is not sanctified by another, nor participates in sanctification, but is himself the one who is participated in, the one in whom all creatures are sanctified: how can he be one of the all things? And proper to those who participate in him?”

<sup>129</sup> Campbell, “The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit,” 413.

<sup>130</sup> Burgess, *The Holy Spirit*, 118.

<sup>131</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, 1.22.1.506. “But the Holy Spirit is said to be from God.”

νομισθῆ.<sup>132</sup> This means that the Spirit is uncreated because he is from God. Athanasius repeated this point in his second letter. He declared, ὡσπερ ὁ Υἱὸς λέγει, Τὰ ἐμὰ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐστίν, οὕτως τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐστὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον.<sup>133</sup>

Any activity of the Spirit means that the Triad acts, Τριάς τοίνυν ἁγία καὶ τελεία ἐστίν, ἐν Πατρὶ καὶ Υἱῷ καὶ ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι θεολογοῦ μένη, οὐδὲν ἀλλότριον ἢ ἐξωθεν ἐπιμιγνύμενον ἔχουσα, οὐδὲ ἐκ δημιουργοῦ καὶ γενητοῦ συνισταμένη, ἀλλ' ὅλη τοῦ κτίζειν καὶ δημιουργεῖν οὔσα. ὁμοία δὲ ἑαυτῇ καὶ ἀδιαίρετός ἐστι τῇ φύσει, καὶ μία ταύτης ἡ ἐνέργεια γὰρ Πατὴρ διὰ τοῦ Λόγου ἐν Πνεύματι ἁγίῳ τὰ πάντα ποιεῖ.<sup>134</sup> This explains without any doubt that the Triad acts as one, that the Father creates through the Word in the Holy Spirit, and that the baptismal formula is a very important example to the unity of the Trinity without any separation or divisibility. Campbell says, “The common activity from the Father through the Son in the Spirit is common because they all share the same divine being flowing from the Father; this flowing is not exterior, but interior.”<sup>135</sup>

### The Term παραδείγματα (Images or Symbols)

As mentioned above, Athanasius started metaphorically explaining the relationship and the activity between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit through παραδείγματα

<sup>132</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae* I-IV *Ad Serapionem*, I.22.1.506. But God is He Who is, and the Spirit is from him. The one who is from God cannot be from nothing, nor can he be a creature—unless they think that the one from whom the Spirit comes is also a creature.”

<sup>133</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae* I-IV *Ad Serapionem*, II.10.3.552. “Just as the Son says: all that is mine is the Father’s, so too is the Holy Spirit, who is said to be the Son’s, also the Father’s.”

<sup>134</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae* I-IV *Ad Serapionem*, I.28.2–3.520. “So, the Trinity is holy and perfected, confessed in Father and Son and Holy Spirit. It has nothing foreign or external mixed with it, nor is it composed of Creator and creature, but is entirely given to creating and making. It is self-consistent and indivisible in nature, and it has one activity. The Father does all things through the Word in the Holy Spirit.”

<sup>135</sup> Campbell, “The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit,” 422.

(images or symbols).<sup>136</sup> This word is mentioned twice in his letters to express the relationship between the Son and the Spirit.<sup>137</sup> These images that were used by Athanasius show that the Spirit has the same characteristics as the Father and the Son. Athanasius used these images and found “rich theological insight in exploring the Biblical names or symbols (*paradeigmata*) for God, showing how these symbols apply not to the Father and the Word, but also to the Spirit.”<sup>138</sup> He used these images, symbols or the language of symbols in order to enable the reader to discover the theology behind it. Pelikan says, “biblical images were always at least clear enough to make their symbolic, nonliteral character evident.”<sup>139</sup>

Images give us the inner meaning, which expresses Christian thought in theology. Concerning this matter, Pelikan says, “this theological method, which Athanasius advocated in his discussion of the problem of biblical *paradeigmata* and which he himself practiced in his constructive and polemical writings, I shall call ‘the collation of biblical images.’”<sup>140</sup> It is something that represents something else. Symbols or images are more than symbols signs; they give the meaning within themselves and help the reader comprehend the Holy Trinity. The use of imagery against his opponents was one of Athanasius’ tactics.

In his first letter Athanasius discussed the relationship within the Trinity by using images from the Scriptures. He stated, *περὶ τούτου παραδείγματα. Πηγὴ τοίνυν καὶ φῶς*

---

<sup>136</sup> For more information regarding this subject, see Biesen, *Simple and Bold*, 22–46; Brock, *The Luminous Eye*, 53; McVey, *Ephrem the Syrian*, 259.

<sup>137</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae I-IV Ad Serapionem*, I.19.1.498; I.20.4.503.

<sup>138</sup> Edwards, “Athanasius’ Letters to Serapion,” 47.

<sup>139</sup> Pelikan, *The Light of the World*, 27.

<sup>140</sup> Pelikan, *The Light of the World*, 28.

λέγεται ὁ Πατήρ.<sup>141</sup> He used images from the Scriptures such as Fountain, Light, River, and Radiance.<sup>142</sup> All these images are found in the Scriptures. Concerning the Father as πηγή which means, “(1) literally spring, fountain, (living) well, as a source of water; (2) metaphorically, the fountain of the water of life, identified in John 4:14 as eternal life.”<sup>143</sup> To explain why he used these images, Athanasius cited Jer 2:13, which explains that the people of the Old Testament have forsaken God, who is the Fountain of living water. He also quoted from Bar 3:10,12, which refers to how the people have forsaken the Fountain of Wisdom. In both verses, the Father is the Fountain and the source. The Son is called the River according to Ps 64:10 and Christians drink the Spirit as Athanasius cited 1 Cor 10:4. The Spirit is the water and Christians drink the Spirit, and drink Christ himself, according to Athanasius, because they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.

The Father is the Light, because our God is Light according to John 1:5. The Son is called the ἀπαύγασμα means “active radiance, outshining.”<sup>144</sup> The Son is His reflection, and he cited St. Paul to the Heb 1:3 in which Paul named the Son as, ὃς ὡν ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης (He is the reflection of God’s glory). Athanasius wanted to extend this image to the Holy Spirit saying that in Him we are φωτιζόμεθα from the verb φωτίζω which means, “(1) intransitively; shine, give light; (2) transitively; (a) literally give light to, light (up),

---

<sup>141</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae 1-IV Ad Serapionem*, I.19.1.498. “For the Examples on this subject, the Father is called Fountain and Light.”

<sup>142</sup> Athanasius used this image in *Orations Against the Arians* I.19 in which he mentioned the Fountain of Wisdom and he cited again the same verse from Jer 2:13 and also Bar 3:12. He argued about the existing of the Son as the Arians said that there was a time when He was not, and if He was not means that the Fountain was dry.

<sup>143</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 312; Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 661; Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 158.

<sup>144</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 62; Bauer et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 81; Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 19.

illuminate.)<sup>145</sup> He cited Eph 1:17–18, where Paul says that our hearts are enlightened in him (Spirit). He also says that it is Christ who enlightens followers in him, prior to citing John 1:19. Therefore, “biblical paradeigmata like “radiance” or “fountain” were the basis for an explication of what the Bible meant when it said that God had “begotten” a Son.”<sup>146</sup>

When Athanasius said that the Father is the Fountain, the Son is the River, and His followers drink the Spirit, it explains the equality in the Trinity. The Three of them are equal. He also clarifies the continued relationship between them. As Haykin suggests, “The illustration of fountain-river is frequently employed by Athanasius to express the full unbroken continuation of the being of the Father and the Son.”<sup>147</sup>

The same applies when Athanasius said that the Father is the Light, the Son is His Radiance, and the Spirit enlightens us. All these images used by Athanasius against the Tropicis are taken from the Bible. They show the character that draws near the divine mysteries, and to explore these mysteries in a symbolic way helps followers comprehend the aspects of the hidden divinity. They give a beautiful picture regarding the Trinity and illustrate the relationship within the Trinity in order to make it easier to comprehend. By using these images, Athanasius, “is seeking to manifest the full divinity of the Word and the Spirit, by showing what is said of the Father is also said of them. He mines the Scriptures according to his own understanding of good interpretation.”<sup>148</sup> They are very important to Athanasius who used the whole Scriptures, whether through citations or images, in order to defend his faith.

---

<sup>145</sup> Friberg, et al., *Analytical Lexicon*, 405; Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, 214.

<sup>146</sup> Pelikan, *The Light of the World*, 28.

<sup>147</sup> Haykin, *The Spirit of God*, 73.

<sup>148</sup> Edwards, “Athanasius’ Letters to Serapion,” 48.



## CHAPTER 9 CONCLUSION

The Gospel of John is replete with verses which attest to the divinity of the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Son descends from the Father, and the Spirit proceeds from Him.

Athanasius was one of the significant fathers in the fourth century due to his writings against the heresies which the church faced in his time. Quasten comments, “The history of dogma in the fourth century is identical with the history of his life.”<sup>1</sup> Concerning his pneumatology, Franz Dünzl suggests that Athanasius was, “the first to develop orthodox pneumatology in the letters that he wrote to Serapion and then required this pneumatology at the synod of Alexandria in 362.”<sup>2</sup>

Chapter 1 of this dissertation began with the general introduction to the subject and a literature review of the scholarship on the *Letters to Serapion* through which one can understand that no one has focused on the influence of John’s pneumatology in Athanasius. Chapter 2 provided a brief discussion of the church fathers who were prior to Athanasius such as Ignatius of Antioch, Origen, Tertullian. Chapter 3 discussed the crises, which happened in the fourth century, such as the Arian controversy, the Council of Nicaea, the synod in 362, the Ecumenical Council of Constantinople in 381, and also the emergence of the Topicists who denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit. Chapter 4 of this dissertation is a sketch of Athanasius’ life as well as his writings. What follows in Chapter 5 is a discussion of the actual letters to Serapion, considering whether they were three or four letters, as well as issues related to the original text, followed by an analysis to each of the letters.

---

<sup>1</sup> Quasten, *Patrology*, 3:66.

<sup>2</sup> Dünzl, *A Brief History*, 119.

One key element of this dissertation is to examine how Athanasius used the biblical text in his argument with the pneumatomachoi. It examines Athanasius' hermeneutical principles, and how he engaged the landscape of the Scripture when he cited numerous verses from the Scripture, specially the Gospel of John.

This dissertation has provided two major analyses, which are given in the last three chapters concerning Athanasius' pneumatology. The first one in Chapters 6 and 7 presented a large survey and analysis all the Johannine texts cited from the Gospel of John and the first letter of John. He quoted verses from the Bible and used them whether they were direct citation, illusion, word, word substitutions, grammatical changes, and formulaic usage.

The second analysis, in Chapter 8, discussed understanding Athanasius' use of tradition, Scripture, and hermeneutical principles in his defence of the Godhead, and in particular the diety of the Holy Spirit. This chapter showed how Athanasius' argument with his opponents was dependent on Scripture. He cited from forty-five books in the Scriptures, and this showed his devotion to the Scripture in all his writings, specifically in his letters to Serapion concerning the Holy Spirit. He used the Scripture as a whole in order to support his arguments with the Tropici, much like putting together a puzzle. This chapter also showed the way Athanasius discussed the faith of the Catholic Church, which was given by the Lord Jesus to his Apostles who proclaimed the good new to the world, and the church fathers who protected it from heretics.

The second section of this chapter discussed the hermeneutical principles which Athanasius used in his argument to defend the divinity of the Holy Spirit in his interpretations of Amos 4:13 and 1 Tim 5:21, two passages which his opponents relied

on. In Amos 4:13, Athanasius declared that the spirit in this verse does not have the definite article, and there is no addition to the word spirit. Athanasius set principles in order to give a correct interpretation, and he came to the conclusion that the Spirit should be identified by definite article or by additions that connect him with the divine person. In his interpretation of 1 Tim 5:21, Athanasius declared that his opponents believed that every angel should be in the Trinity, and this would create problem since it contradicts with the function of the angels as ministering spirits. This section discussed how Athanasius used the word *ὁμοούσιος* (of one substance) regarding the Holy Spirit.

The third section of this chapter examined Athanasius' understanding of the word *Τριάς* (Trinity). This section also explained the link between pneumatology and Christology which shaped his Trinitarian theology. This section also discussed *ἴδιον τοῦ Λόγου* (Proper to the Word), an expression frequently used in his three letters. He used it twenty-three times in order to explain the unique relationship between the Son and the Holy Spirit. To conclude, Athanasius believed that there is a great and real coherence between the doctrine of the Son and the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. This coherence made Athanasius link the two doctrines together in his *Letters to Serapion*. Athanasius emphasized this coherence in order “to provide the establishment of the truth about the Third Person.”<sup>3</sup> No one can discuss the doctrine of the Holy Spirit apart from the doctrine of the Son. It would make no sense if Athanasius' opponents believed in the divinity of the Son and yet denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit. This kind of belief, according to Joseph Lébon, “is illogical and senseless.”<sup>4</sup> The section also discussed the *Μία Ενέργεια* (One Activity) through which Athanasius clarified the distinctive activities of the Holy

---

<sup>3</sup> Lébon, *Lettres à Sérapion*, 57.

<sup>4</sup> Lébon, *Lettres à Sérapion*, 57.

Spirit, and whenever the Holy Spirit acts means that the Triad acts as he argued in I.28.2–3.

Athanasius' contribution had a major impact on the Fathers that came after him (The Cappadocians). Both Athanasius and the Cappadocians defended the Godhead of the Spirit before the second Council of Constantinople.<sup>5</sup> Many scholars suggest that the Cappadocians learned from Athanasius, who wrote before them concerning the doctrine of the Spirit. As Beeley suggests, "it is often assumed that the Cappadocians read Athanasius' work and essentially picked up where he left off, bearing his theological mantle in the latter part of the fourth century."<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> The term Cappadocians Fathers always refer to: Gregory of Nazianzus (329/30–389/90); Basil of Caesarea (330–379); Gregory of Nyssa (330–395).

<sup>6</sup> Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the knowledge of God*, 5. Hanson also in his book *The Search* suggests, "the Cappadocians, however, certainly learnt from Athanasius." 679; Campbell in his article "the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit," also mentioned that "Basil acknowledged his debt to Athanasius and the two Gregories continued the lead of Athanasius and Basil." 438.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

**Primary Sources**

All the citations of the Church Fathers writings are from *Ante-Nicene Fathers. The Writings of the Fathers down to A. D. 325*, and from *The Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers*. These writings are found in the BibleWorks 10 program.

Aland, Barbara, and Aland Kurt, eds. *Nestle Aland Novum Testamentu Graece*, 28<sup>th</sup> ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012.

DelCogliano, Mark, et al., trans. *Works on the Spirit: Athanasius and Didymus*. New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2011.

Egan, George. *The Armenian Version of the Letters of Athanasius to Bishop Serapion Concerning the Holy Spirit*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1968.

Laminski, Adolf. *Der Heilige Geist als Geist Christi und Geist der Gläubigen*. Leipzig: St.-Benno, 1969.

Lébon, Joseph. *Lettres à Sérapion sur la divinité du Saint-Esprit*. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1947.

Migne, J. P., ed. *Patrologia Graeca. Patrologia Cursus Completus, Series Graeca*. Paris: Imprimerie Catholique, 1857.

Roberts, Alexander et al., eds. *Ante-Nicene Fathers. The Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325*. 9 vols. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004.

Savvidis, Kyriakos., ed. *Athanasius Werke*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010.

Scaff, Philip and Henry Wace, eds. *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*. 9 vols. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 2004.

Shapland, C. R. B, tran. *The Letters of Saint Athanasius Concerning the Holy Spirit*. London: Epworth, 1951.

**Secondary Sources**

Anatolios, Khaled. *Athanasius: The Coherence of His Thought*. New York: Routledge, 1998.

———. *Athanasius: The Early Church Fathers*. New York: Routledge, 2004.

- Argárate, Pablo. "The Holy Spirit in Athanasius' Epistles to Serapion." *Journal of the Canadian Society for Coptic Studies* 2 (2011) 21–41.
- Armstrong, C. B. "The Synod of Alexandria and the Schism at Antioch in 362." *The Journal of Theological Studies* 22 (1921) 347–55.
- Ayres, Lewis. *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Balthasar, Hans Urs Von. *Origen, Spirit and Fire*: Translated by Robert J. Daly. Washington, DC: Catholic University Press, 1984.
- Barnard, L. W. "The Background of St. Ignatius of Antioch." *Vigiliae Christianae* 17 (1963) 193–206.
- Barnes, Timothy D. *Athanasius and Constantius*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993.
- Barrett, C. K. *The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: SPCK, 1978.
- Bauer, Walter, et al. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1957.
- Beatrice, Pier Franco. "The Word 'Homoousios' from Hellenism to Christianity." *Church History* 71 (2002) 243–72.
- Beeley, Christopher A. *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Behr, John. *On the Incarnation*. Yonkers: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2011.
- Belitto, Christopher M. *The General Councils: A History of the Twenty-One Church Councils from Nicaea to Vatican II*. New York: Paulist, 1993.
- Bethume-Baker, J. F. *The Meaning of Homoousios in the Constantinopolitan Creed*. Reprint, Nendeln: Kraus, 1967.
- Bray, Gerald. *Creeeds, Councils and Christ*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1984.
- Brock, Sebastian P. *The Luminous Eye: The Spiritual World Vision of Saint Ephrem*. Kalamazoo: Cistercian, 1992.
- Brown, Harold O. J. *Heresies: The Image of Christ in the Mirror of Heresy and Orthodoxy from the Apostles to the Present*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984.

- Bultman, Rudolf Karl. *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971.
- Burge, Gary M. *The Anointed Community: The Holy Spirit in Johannine Tradition*. Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1987.
- Burgess M, Stanley. *The Holy Spirit: Ancient Christian Tradition*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1984.
- . *The Holy Spirit: Eastern Christian Tradition*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1989.
- Burke, Trevor J., and Warrington Keith, eds. *A Biblical Theology of the Holy Spirit*. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2014.
- Bush, Robert Wheler. *St. Athanasius: His Life and Times*. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1912.
- Butler, Alban, et al. *Lives of the Saints*. New York: Kennedy, 1963.
- Campbell, Theodore C. "The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit in the Theology of Athanasius." *Scottish Journal of Theology* 27 (1974) 408–40.
- Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John*. Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1991.
- . "The Function of the Paraclete in John 16:7–11." *Journal of Biblical Literature*. 98 (1979) 547–566.
- Chadwick, Henry. *The Early Church*. New York: Penguin, 1968.
- Coetzee, J. C. "The Holy Spirit in 1 John." *Neotestamentica* 13 (1979) 43–67.
- Congar, Yves. *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*. New York: Seabury, 1983.
- Cozens, M. L. *A Handbook of Heresies*. London: Sheed and Ward, 1974.
- Crouzel, Henri. *Origen*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989.
- Daly, Robert. "Origen." In *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Edited by Ferguson Everett, 835–836. New York: Garland, 1997.
- Daniélou, Jean. *Origen*. Translated by Walter Mitchell. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1955.
- Danker, Frederick W. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*. Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 2000.

- Davis, Donald Leo. *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils 325–787: Their History and Theology*. Washington: Michael Glazier, 1987.
- DelCogliano, Mark, *On Christian Doctrine and Practice*. New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2012.
- Döpp, Siegmar., and Geerlings Wilhelm, eds. *Dictionary of Early Christian Literature*. New York: Crossroad, 2000.
- Dünzl, Franz. *A Brief History of the Doctrine of the Trinity in the Early Church*. London: T. & T. Clark, 2007.
- Du Plessis, J. "Christ as the 'Only Begotten.'" *Neotestamentica* 2 (1968) 22–31.
- Dvornik, Francis. *The General Councils of the Church*. London: Burns and Oates, 1961.
- Edwards, Denis. "Athanasius' Letters to Serapion: Resource for a Twenty-First Century Theology of God the Trinity." *Phronema* 29 (2014) 41–64.
- Elowsky, Joel C., and Oden, Thomas C., eds. *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: John 11-21*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2007.
- Ernest, James D. *The Bible in Athanasius of Alexandria*. Boston: Brill, 2004.
- Fairbairn, Donald. "Context, Context, Context: Athanasius' Biblical Interpretation Contra Arianos." *Perichoresis* 12 (2014) 119–135.
- Farrar, Frederic William. *Lives of the Fathers*. New York: Macmillan, 1889.
- Ferguson, Everett, et al., eds. *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: Garland, 1997.
- Flügel, Schuiz. "Tertullian." In *Dictionary of Early Christian Literature*. Edited by Siegmar Döpp and Geerlings Wilhelm, 553–57. New York: Crossroad, 2000.
- Friberg, Timothy, et al. *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000.
- Geanakoplos, Deno John. "The Second Ecumenical Synod of Constantinople (381): Proceedings and Theology of the Holy Spirit." *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 27 (1982) 407–29.
- Gingrich, F. Wilbur. *Shorter Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983.
- Goulder, Michael D. "Ignatius' Docetists." *Vigiliae Christianae* 53 (1999) 16–30.



- Gray, Patrick T. R. *The Defense of Chalcedon in the East (451–553)*. Leiden: Brill, 1979.
- Gwatkin, Henry Melvill. *Studies of Arianism: Chiefly Referring to the Character and Chronology of the Reaction which followed the Council of Nicaea*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Cambridge: Deighton Bell, 1900.
- Gwynn, Davis M. *The Eusebians the Polemic of Athanasius of Alexandria and the Contruction of the Arian Controversy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Hall, Stuart George. *Doctrine and Practice in the Early Church*. London: SPCK, 1991.
- Hamm, U. "Irenaeus of Lyons." In *Dictionary of Early Christian Literature*. Edited by Siegmur Döpp, and Geerlings Wilhelm, 301–304. New York: Crossroad, 2000.
- Handspicker, Meredith B. "Athanasius on Tradition and Scripture." *Andover Newton Quarterly* 3 (1962) 13–29.
- Hanson, R. P. C. *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy 318–381*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988.
- Haykin, Michael A. G. *The Spirit of God: The Exegesis of 1 and 2 Corinthians in the Pneumatomachian Controversy of the Fourth Century*. Leiden: Brill, 1994.
- . "‘The Spirit of God’: The Exegesis of 1 Cor 2:10–12 by Origen and Athanasius." *Scottish Journal of Theology* 35 (1982) 513–28.
- Heron, Alasdair I. C. *The Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit in the Bible, the History of Christian Thought, and Recent Theology*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983.
- Hill, Kevin Douglas. *Athanasius and the Holy Spirit: The Development of His Early Pneumatology*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2016.
- Hoeck, Andreas. "The Johannine Paraclete: Herald of the Eschaton." *Journal of Biblical and Pneumatological Research* 4 (2012) 23–37.
- Holmes, Michael W., ed. *The Apostolic Fathers*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999.
- Jefford, Clayton N. *Reading the Apostolic Fathers*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996.
- Jenkins, Philip. *Jesus at Wars: How Four Patriarchs, Three Queens, and Two Emperors Decided What Christians Would Believe for the Next 1,500 Years*. New York: HarperOne, 2010.
- Jones, Rufus Matthew. *The Church's Debt to Heretics*. London: Clarke, 1924.

- Jurgens, William A. *The Faith of the Early Fathers*. 2 vols. Minnesota: Liturgical, 1970.
- Kalantzis, George. *Caesar and the Lamb: Early Christian Attitudes on War and Military Service*. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2012.
- Kannengiesser, Charles. "Arius." In *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Edited by Ferguson Everett, 114–15. New York: Garland, 1997.
- Kariatlis, Philip. "'What then? Is the Spirit God? Certainly!'" St Gregory's Teaching on the Holy Spirit as the Basis of the Word's Salvation." *Phronema* 26 (2011) 81–102.
- Karmirēs, Iōannēs N. "The Second Ecumenical Council." *The Ecumenical Review* 33 (1981) 244–48.
- Keener, Craig S. *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*. 2 vols. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003.
- Kelly, J. N. D. *Early Christian Doctrines*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London; New York: Continuum, 1960.
- Köstenberger, Andreas J., and Scott R Swain. *Father, Son, and Spirit: The Trinity and John's Gospel*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008.
- Lampe, G. W. H., and Henry George Liddell, eds. *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1961.
- Liddell, Henry George and Robert Scott. *A Greek-English Lexicon*. 6 ed. Oxford: Clarendon, 1869.
- Lubac, Henri De. *Origen On First Principles*. New York: Harper & Row, 1966.
- McDonnell, Kilian. "A Trinitarian Theology of the Holy Spirit." *Theological Studies* 46 (1985) 191–227.
- Mcvey, Kathleen. *Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns*. New York: Paulist, 1989.
- Metzler, K. "Athanasius of Alexandria." In *Dictionary of Early Christian Literature*. Edited by Siegmur Döpp., and Geerlings Wilhelm, 55–56. New York: Crossroad, 2000.
- Murphy, John L. *The General Councils of the Church*. Milwaukee: Bruce, 1960.
- Need, Stephen W. *Truly Divine and Truly Human: The Story of Christ and the Seven Ecumenical Councils*. London: SPCK, 2008.

- Newman, John Henry. *The Arians of the Fourth Century*. London: Longmans, 1888.
- Noble, T. A. "Gregory of Nazianzus use of Scripture in Defence of the Deity of the Spirit." *Tyndale Bulletin* 39 (1988) 101–123.
- Norris Frederick, "Gregory of Nazianzus." In *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Edited by Ferguson Everett, 491–94. New York: Garland, 1997.
- Olsson, Birger. *A Commentary on the Letters of John*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2013.
- Omanson, Roger L. and Bruce Manning Metzger. *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament*, Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006.
- Parsenius, George L. *First, Second, and Third John*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014.
- Pelikan, Jaroslav. *The Light of the World: A Basic Image in Early Christian Thought*. New York: Harper, 1962.
- Plummer, Alfred. *The Church of the Early Fathers*. London: Longmans, 1890.
- Porter, Stanley E., and Christopher D. Stanley, eds. *As It Is Written: Studying Paul's Use of Scripture*. Leiden: Brill, 2008.
- Quasten, Johannes. *Patrology*. 4 vols. Westminster, Md.: Newman, 1950.
- Rossum, Joost van. "The 'Johannine Pentecost': John 20:22 in Modern Exegesis and in Orthodox Theology." *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 35 (1991) 149–167.
- Schoedel, William R. *Ignatius of Antioch: A Commentary on the Letters of Ignatius of Antioch*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985.
- Sider, Robert. "Tertullian." In *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Edited by Ferguson Everett, 1107–08. New York: Garland, 1997.
- Slusser, Michael. "Docetism: A Historical Definition." *A Journal of Early Christian Studies* 1 (1981) 163–172.
- Smythe, H. R. "Interpretation of Amos 4:13 in St Athanasius and Didymus." *The Journal of Theological Studies* 1 (1950) 158–68.
- Stead, Christopher. *Divine Substance*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1977.
- Stott, John R. W. *The Letters of John: An Introduction and Commentary*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Grand Rapids: InterVarsity, 1988.

- Swete, Henry Barclay. *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church: A Study of Christian Teaching in the Age of the Fathers*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1966.
- Torrance, Thomas F. *The Hermeneutics of Athanasius*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1995.
- . “The Doctrine of the Holy Trinity according to St Athanasius.” *Anglican Theological Review* 71 (1989) 395–405.
- Vogt J. Herman. “Origen.” In *Dictionary of Early Christian Literature*. Edited by Siegmur Döpp, and Geerlings Wilhelm, 444–51. New York: Crossroad, 2000.
- Von Wahlde, Urban C. *The Gospel and Letters of John*. 3 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010.
- Wand, J. W. C. *The Four Councils*. London: Faith, 1951.
- Williams, Rowan. *Arius: Heresy and Tradition*. London: Longman and Todd, 1987.
- Wright, F. David. “Trinity.” In *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Edited by Ferguson Everett, 1142–47. New York: Garland, 1997.
- Yarbrough, Robert W. *1–3 John*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008.
- Young, Frances M. *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2002.
- Young, Frances M. and Andrew Teal. *From Nicaea to Chalcedon: A Guide to Literature and its Background*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983.
- Zerwick, Max and Mary Grosvenor. *A Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament*. Rome: Biblical Institute, 1974.





