

THE THEOPHANIES OF GOD THE WORD AS THE CHURCH'S TESTIMONY FOR THE HOMOOUSION IN THE NICENE CREED

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Abstract

The present study examines the theophanies of the Son and Word of God as a basic axis for the proof of the homoousion of the First Ecumenical Council. The verbal formulations of the earlier tradition are investigated and compared with the interpretative propositions of Athanasius the Great against the Arians. Theophanies are examined in the light of God the Word, who a) co-exists eternally with the Father, b) creates the world and c) reveals in the Old and the New Testament God the Father to the faithful.

Keywords: Theophanies, *homoousion*, Athanasius, Council of Antioch 268, Apologists

In enumerating the interpretative propositions of Arius' *Thalia*, Athanasius the Great records two words and two wisdoms in the Holy Trinity. For Arius, God the Father has his own uncreated word, which characterises the Father exclusively, and through this uncreated word, he creates the created word, who is also called the Son of God the Father. Exactly the same applies to the uncreated wisdom of God the Father, which, as the Father's own, creates through the uncreated paternal will the created wisdom, which is the Son of the Father, the second hypostasis of the Holy Trinity. The created Son is called the Word and Wisdom of the Father by participation and by grace, without taking the expressions in their literal sense¹.

¹ ATHANASIUS OF ALEXANDRIA, *Contra Arianos* I, 5. Phillip SCHAFF, Henry WACE, *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church. Second Series. Athanasius: Select Works and Letters*, vol. 4, The Christian Literature Company, London, 1897, p. 309: "For God", he says, "was alone, and the Word as yet was not, nor the Wisdom. Then, wishing to form us, thereupon He made