

JOHN OF DAMASCUS



**AN EXACT
EXPOSITION
OF THE
ORTHODOX FAITH**

THE EARLY CHURCH FATHERS

John of Damascus

An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith: The Early Church Fathers

Enriched edition.

Introduction, Studies and Commentaries by Travis Norton

Published by

MUSAICUM

Books

- Advanced Digital Solutions & High-Quality eBook
Formatting -

musaicumbooks@okpublishing.info

Edited and published by Musaicum Press, 2021
EAN 4066338117083

Table of Contents

[Introduction](#)

[Synopsis](#)

[Historical Context](#)

[An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith: The Early Church Fathers](#)

[Analysis](#)

[Reflection](#)

[Memorable Quotes](#)

[Notes](#)

Introduction

[Table of Contents](#)

Between reverent fidelity to the Church's inherited confession and the disciplined desire to articulate that faith with precise, reasoned clarity, John of Damascus composes *An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* as a poised synthesis that gathers Scripture and the Fathers into a coherent whole while refusing to let systematic order eclipse the mystery it serves; set in the early Byzantine world and shaped by catechetical aims as much as by doctrinal defense, this work steadies the reader at the intersection of worship, tradition, and reason, where definition can guide adoration without pretending to comprehend the incomprehensible.

An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith is a doctrinal compendium written in Greek by John of Damascus (c. 675–749), composed in the early eighth century within the Byzantine Christian world. As the culminating part of his larger work *The Fount of Knowledge*, following the preliminary *Dialectica* and the catalog of heresies, it offers a comprehensive, orderly statement of the Church's teaching. The project belongs to a period when theologians assembled the insights of earlier Fathers into accessible syntheses for instruction and discernment. Without being tied to a single local controversy, it situates the reader inside a mature patristic consensus carefully marshaled for clarity.

Readers encounter a systematic tour through the main loci of Christian doctrine, arranged with pedagogical

economy: the knowledge of God, the confession of the Trinity, the creation and governance of the world, the person and work of Christ, the life of the Church, and the hope set before believers. The voice is measured and confident, more catechetical than polemical, and it proceeds by concise chapters that define, distinguish, and connect. Scripture citations anchor each point, and testimonies from the Fathers are woven in to confirm balance and continuity. The tone favors lucidity over flourish, inviting reflection rather than controversy.

Among its central themes is the disciplined harmony of revelation and reason: philosophical terms are employed, but always as servants of the Church's worship and preaching. Language about God is treated with care, distinguishing what may be affirmed from what must remain beyond grasp, while insisting that confession be consistent and coherent. Personal and essential language is clarified to safeguard trinitarian and christological faith. The work repeatedly demonstrates how doctrine forms a single fabric, where affirmations about creation, salvation, and sacrament cohere with the confession of the one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, without collapsing mystery into speculation.

In an age crowded with summaries that simplify by subtraction, this Exposition models clarity that does not reduce: it shows how to explain without erasing depth. Its patient synthesis equips contemporary readers to navigate theological discussions with steadiness, to test claims against Scripture read within a common tradition, and to see how individual teachings interlock. It also supplies a shared vocabulary helpful for ecumenical conversation,

enabling careful agreement and honest differentiation. Beyond doctrinal content, its method offers an enduring lesson in intellectual humility, reminding readers that disciplined speech about God aims to foster faith, hope, and charity.

Because the work gathers and arranges rather than narrates, the reading experience rewards unhurried attention to connections: terms recur with deliberate consistency, brief chapters build cumulatively, and definitions illuminate later sections. The style is spare and orderly, presenting central points before adducing scriptural and patristic support. Readers new to patristic theology will find clear signposts and minimal digression, while those more experienced can trace the careful intertextual stitching of earlier voices. The emphasis on precision does not stifle devotion; instead, the cadence encourages contemplation, letting doctrinal clarity become a companion to prayer and a guide to theological conversation.

Across centuries of transmission, the Exposition has served as a durable point of orientation for Eastern Christian teaching and as a window into the mature articulation of patristic theology. Scholars consult it to map inherited debates and definitions; pastors and students read it to learn how the Church remembers and reasons. Its enduring appeal lies not in novelty but in balance, offering a trustworthy baseline from which deeper study can proceed. To open these pages is to join a sustained conversation in which doctrine is ordered for understanding and devotion, inviting today's reader into wisdom tested by long use.

Synopsis

[Table of Contents](#)

An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith, by John of Damascus, presents a systematic synthesis of Christian doctrine rooted in Scripture and the teachings of the early Fathers. Written in the eighth century as the culminating section of his larger work often known as The Fountain of Knowledge, it gathers authoritative insights into a coherent whole. John aims to outline what the Church confesses, to clarify terms, and to forestall misunderstandings that had generated controversy. The treatise moves from God's being and the Trinity to creation, humanity, Christ, the Church's worship, and the last things, shaping a concise map of theological convictions for instruction and defense.

John begins with God's existence, unity, and transcendence, emphasizing that the divine essence is beyond comprehension while truly known through God's self-revelation. He carefully distinguishes affirmations about God from the limits of human language, ensuring that names and attributes do not divide the simple divine nature. Trinitarian teaching occupies a central place: one essence in three hypostases—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. John articulates the relations proper to each person while safeguarding divine unity, drawing on earlier Fathers to avoid confusion or subordination. The section establishes terms and boundaries crucial for the arguments that follow.

From theology proper he turns to creation, asserting that all things were made by God out of nothing, ordered and

sustained by divine providence. He describes the spiritual and material realms, the angelic ranks, and the tragic turning of some angels away from goodness. Humanity, created in God's image with rationality and freedom, stands at the juncture of both realms. John treats the fall and its consequences without denying human responsibility, affirming that foreknowledge does not impose necessity. Evil is presented not as a positive substance but as privation, arising from misuse of freedom. Providence guides without coercing, inviting return to virtue.

Christology anchors the work. John sets forth the confession that the eternal Word became truly human for our salvation, uniting two complete natures in one person without confusion or division. He affirms the title Theotokos for Mary in order to secure the truth of the incarnation. With careful attention to patristic language, he upholds the integrity of Christ's human will and energy alongside the divine, preserving the fullness of both. The account of redemption stresses liberation from death and corruption and the restoration of human destiny, while maintaining the mystery of how divine condescension accomplishes renewal.

Doctrinal teaching flows into ecclesial life. John presents the Church as the locus where saving truth is confessed and enacted, with Scripture read within the consensus of the Fathers. He treats the sacraments—especially baptism and the Eucharist—as real participations in Christ's life, while insisting that their mysteries surpass explanation. The reverent veneration of the cross, the saints, and holy images is situated within a clear distinction between worship due to God alone and honor borne to what signifies

God's work. Prayer, fasting, and liturgical observance are described as means of formation in the faith handed down.

Moral teaching and eschatology complete the design. John outlines Christian virtues, the struggle against the passions, and the healing of the soul through repentance, prayer, and almsgiving. He encourages disciplined freedom shaped by grace rather than compulsion. Concerning the future, he affirms the resurrection of the body, final judgment, and the enduring consequences of one's orientation toward God. The hope of restored communion is held together with sober warnings, while speculative excess is restrained by fidelity to revelation. The moral and eschatological sections show doctrine's practical implications for the believer's life and ultimate hope.

The treatise's enduring significance lies in its clarity, breadth, and fidelity to the earlier Fathers, offering one of the earliest comprehensive syntheses of Greek Christian theology. It became a touchstone for Byzantine and later Orthodox teaching, circulating widely and shaping catechesis, controversy, and devotion. In modern editions, including collections dedicated to the Early Church Fathers, it provides a reliable window into the doctrinal consensus that framed subsequent debates. Without aiming at novelty, John of Damascus gathers, orders, and safeguards the tradition, leaving a concise, accessible map of Christian belief whose balance and precision continue to inform theological study.

Historical Context

[Table of Contents](#)

An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith, the third part of John of Damascus's Fountain of Knowledge, emerged in the late seventh to mid-eighth century Eastern Mediterranean. John (c. 675–749) was born in Damascus, then capital of the Umayyad Caliphate, and later became a monk and priest at the Mar Saba monastery near Jerusalem. Educated in Greek Christian learning, he wrote in a region where Byzantine, Syriac, and Arabic cultures met. His monastic milieu preserved classical and patristic texts, enabling systematic theological work. The Exposition presents a concise, ordered synthesis of doctrine for catechesis and controversy, drawing authority from Scripture and earlier Fathers.

It was composed after centuries of Christological debate that shaped the creedal framework of Eastern Christianity. The first ecumenical councils—Nicaea (325) and Constantinople (381)—defined the divinity of the Son and the Holy Spirit. Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451) rejected Nestorian and Monophysite extremes, affirming one person in two natures in Christ. The Third Council of Constantinople (680–681) condemned Monothelitism, teaching two wills and operations in Christ. John's Exposition systematizes this conciliar settlement, clarifying key terms such as essence, hypostasis, and energy, and consolidating the doctrinal consensus his monastic audience defended against recurring misunderstandings in the Eastern provinces.

Another decisive backdrop was the first phase of Byzantine Iconoclasm, initiated under Emperor Leo III around 726. Imperial edicts against images sparked theological disputes, persecutions, and council proceedings within the empire. Living under Muslim rule outside Byzantine jurisdiction, John publicly defended the veneration of icons in treatises composed from Mar Saba, arguing for the legitimacy of material mediation grounded in the Incarnation. While the *Exposition* ranges far beyond images, its sacramental realism and anthropology reflect the same convictions. The Second Council of Nicaea (787), convened after his death, would endorse positions he articulated, restoring the veneration of holy images.

John wrote as a synthesizer of the Greek patristic tradition. He depends heavily on Athanasius, the Cappadocians (Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa), Cyril of Alexandria, and Maximus the Confessor, and integrates the mystical theology of Pseudo-Dionysius. The *Exposition* uses Aristotelian logical tools—definitions, distinctions, and categories—to arrange topics from the Trinity and creation to providence and eschatology. Its precise vocabulary (*ousia*, *hypostasis*, *prosopon*, *energeia*) mirrors late antique theological philosophy. By collecting earlier authorities in an ordered summary, John provides a reference manual for monks, clergy, and educated laity navigating technical debates and pastoral instruction.

His setting in the Umayyad Caliphate shaped the conditions of Christian scholarship. Christians held protected but subordinate status and paid special taxes, yet

monasteries and patriarchates in Palestine and Syria continued liturgical life and learning. Damascus linked Greek, Syriac, and emerging Arabic intellectual currents. John also wrote polemical notices on Islam as a contemporary religious challenge, situating it among heresies in his catalogue. Although the *Exposition* concentrates on positive doctrine rather than polemic, it assumes readers who must articulate Christian teaching coherently in a multi-confessional society, defending the continuity of biblical revelation and patristic consensus against rival interpretations.

The work thus consolidates themes characteristic of late antique Eastern theology. It affirms creation *ex nihilo*, the goodness of matter, free will and grace in synergy, and salvation as participation in divine life (*theosis*). It outlines Trinitarian processions and missions, Christ's two natures and wills, and the role of the *Theotokos*. It treats angels and the celestial hierarchies, sacraments and liturgy, relics and the veneration of saints. By arranging these *loci* coherently, John furnishes a doctrinal map aligned with Scripture and conciliar rulings, enabling communities to maintain orthodoxy amid doctrinal fragmentation and the shifting political authorities of his region.

An *Exact Exposition* circulated widely in Byzantium and later in the Latin West. It became a standard theological handbook cited by Byzantine authors, while John's authority was invoked by the iconophile cause received at Nicaea II. In the twelfth century, Burgundio of Pisa translated it into Latin as *De fide orthodoxa*, facilitating its adoption in schools. Medieval theologians, including Peter Lombard and Thomas

Aquinas, quoted “Damascenus” extensively, treating him as an authoritative witness to patristic doctrine. Through manuscripts and later printings, the Exposition shaped curricula and confessional boundaries, serving as a bridge between Greek patristic synthesis and medieval systematic theology.

The Exposition reflects an era seeking consolidation after upheaval: the redefinition of imperial borders, the aftershocks of doctrinal controversies, and the rise of Islam reshaping the Eastern Mediterranean. John’s choice to compile, clarify, and defend rather than innovate mirrors monastic priorities of fidelity to Scripture and Fathers under unstable regimes. Its measured tone, precise terminology, and reliance on conciliar decrees reveal confidence in a received consensus capable of addressing new disputes. As a culmination of Greek patristic theology, the work both safeguards tradition and critiques reductionist tendencies of its age, proposing a coherent, sacramental vision of Christian faith.

An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith: The Early Church Fathers

[Main Table of Contents](#)

[Book I](#)

[Book II](#)

[Book III](#)

[Book IV](#)

Book I

[Table of Contents](#)

[Chapter I.](#)

[Chapter II.](#)

[Chapter III.](#)

[Chapter IV.](#)

[Chapter V.](#)

[Chapter VI.](#)

[Chapter VII.](#)

[Chapter VIII.](#)

[Chapter IX.](#)

[Chapter X.](#)

[Chapter XI.](#)

[Chapter XII.](#)

[Chapter XIII.](#)

[Chapter XIV.](#)

Chapter I.

[Table of Contents](#)

—That the Deity is incomprehensible, and that we ought not to pry into and meddle with the things which have not been delivered to us by the holy Prophets, and Apostles, and Evangelists.

No one hath seen God at any time; the Only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him¹. The Deity, therefore, is ineffable and incomprehensible. For no one knoweth the Father, save the Son, nor the Son, save the Father². And the Holy Spirit, too, so knows the things of God as the spirit of the man knows the things that are in him³. Moreover, after the first and blessed nature no one, not of men only, but even of supramundane powers, and the Cherubim, I say, and Seraphim themselves, has ever known God, save he to whom He revealed Himself.

God, however, did not leave us in absolute ignorance. For the knowledge of God's existence has been implanted by Him in all by nature. This creation, too, and its maintenance, and its government, proclaim the majesty of the Divine nature⁴. Moreover, by the Law and the Prophets⁵ in former times and afterwards by His Only-begotten Son, our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ, He disclosed to us the knowledge of Himself as that was possible for us. All things, therefore, that have been delivered to us by Law and Prophets and Apostles and Evangelists we receive, and know, and honour⁶, seeking for nothing beyond these. For

God, being good, is the cause of all good, subject neither to envy nor to any passion⁷. For envy is far removed from the Divine nature, which is both passionless and only good. As knowing all things, therefore, and providing for what is profitable for each, He revealed that which it was to our profit to know; but what we were unable⁸ to bear He kept secret. With these things let us be satisfied, and let us abide by them, not removing everlasting boundaries, nor overpassing the divine tradition⁹.

Footnotes

¹ St. John i. 18 (R.V.).

² St. Matt. xi. 27.

³ 1 Cor. ii. 11.

⁴ Wisd. xiii. 5.

⁵ Greg. Naz., Orat. 34.

⁶ Dionys., De div. nom., c. 1.

⁷ Greg. Naz., Orat. 34.

⁸ Reading ὅπερ δε οὐκ ἐδυνάμεθα for ὅπερ δε οὖν ἐδυνάμεθα. Cod. Reg. 3379 gives καὶ ὃ οὐ δυνάμεθα.

⁹ Prov. xxii. 28.

Chapter II.

[Table of Contents](#)

—Concerning things utterable and things unutterable, and things knowable and thing unknowable.

It is necessary, therefore, that one who wishes to speak or to hear of God should understand clearly that alike in the doctrine of Deity and in that of the Incarnation¹, neither are all things unutterable nor all utterable; neither all unknowable nor all knowable². But the knowable belongs to one order, and the utterable to another; just as it is one thing to speak and another thing to know. Many of the things relating to God, therefore, that are dimly understood cannot be put into fitting terms, but on things above us we cannot do else than express ourselves according to our limited capacity; as, for instance, when we speak of God we use the terms sleep, and wrath, and regardlessness, hands, too, and feet, and such like expressions.

We, therefore, both know and confess that God is without beginning, without end, eternal and everlasting, uncreate, unchangeable, invariable, simple, uncompound, incorporeal, invisible, impalpable, uncircumscribed, infinite, incognisable, indefinable, incomprehensible, good, just, maker of all things created, almighty, all-ruling, all-surveying, of all overseer, sovereign, judge; and that God is One, that is to say, one essence³; and that He is known⁴, and has His being in three subsistences, in Father, I say, and Son and Holy Spirit; and that the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are one in all respects, except in that of not being

begotten, that of being begotten, and that of procession; and that the Only-begotten Son and Word of God and God, in His bowels of mercy, for our salvation, by the good pleasure of God and the co-operation of the Holy Spirit, being conceived without seed, was born uncorruptedly of the Holy Virgin and Mother of God, Mary, by the Holy Spirit, and became of her perfect Man; and that the Same is at once perfect God and perfect Man, of two natures, Godhead and Manhood, and in two natures possessing intelligence, will and energy, and freedom, and, in a word, perfect according to the measure and proportion proper to each, at once to the divinity, I say, and to the humanity, yet to one composite person⁵; and that He suffered hunger and thirst and weariness, and was crucified, and for three days submitted to the experience of death and burial, and ascended to heaven, from which also He came to us, and shall come again. And the Holy Scripture is witness to this and the whole choir of the Saints.

But neither do we know, nor can we tell, what the essence⁶ of God is, or how it is in all, or how the Only-begotten Son and God, having emptied Himself, became Man of virgin blood, made by another law contrary to nature, or how He walked with dry feet upon the waters⁷. It is not within our capacity, therefore, to say anything about God or even to think of Him, beyond the things which have been divinely revealed to us, whether by word or by manifestation, by the divine oracles at once of the Old Testament and of the New⁸.

Footnotes

¹ τά τε τῆς θεολογίας, τά τε τῆς οἰκονομίας.

² Dionys., De div. nom. c. 1; Greg. Naz., Orat. 34 and 37.

³ οὐσία, substance, being.

⁴ ὑποστάσεις, hypostases, persons.

⁵ μιᾷ δὲ συνθέτῳ ὑποστάσει.

⁶ οὐσία, substance, being.

⁷ Dionys., De div. nom., c. 2.

⁸ Ibid. c. 1.

Chapter III.

[Table of Contents](#)

—Proof that there is a God.

That there is a God, then, is no matter of doubt to those who receive the Holy Scriptures, the Old Testament, I mean, and the New; nor indeed to most of the Greeks. For, as we said¹, the knowledge of the existence of God is implanted in us by nature. But since the wickedness of the Evil One has prevailed so mightily against man's nature as even to drive some into denying the existence of God, that most foolish and woe-fulest pit of destruction (whose folly David, revealer of the Divine meaning, exposed when he said², The fool said in his heart, There is no God), so the disciples of the Lord and His Apostles, made wise by the Holy Spirit and working wonders in His power and grace, took them captive in the net of miracles and drew them up out of the depths of ignorance³ to the light of the knowledge of God. In like manner also their successors in grace and worth, both pastors and teachers, having received the enlightening grace of the Spirit, were wont, alike by the power of miracles and the word of grace, to enlighten those walking in darkness and to bring back the wanderers into the way. But as for us who⁴ are not recipients either of the gift of miracles or the gift of teaching (for indeed we have rendered ourselves unworthy of these by our passion for pleasure), come, let us in connection with this theme discuss a few of those things which have been delivered to

us on this subject by the expounders of grace, calling on the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

All things, that exist, are either created or uncreated. If, then, things are created, it follows that they are also wholly mutable. For things, whose existence originated in change, must also be subject to change, whether it be that they perish or that they become other than they are by act of will⁵. But if things are uncreated they must in all consistency be also wholly immutable. For things which are opposed in the nature of their existence must also be opposed in the mode of their existence, that is to say, must have opposite properties: who, then, will refuse to grant that all existing things, not only such as come within the province of the senses, but even the very angels, are subject to change and transformation and movement of various kinds? For the things appertaining to the rational world, I mean angels and spirits and demons, are subject to changes of will, whether it is a progression or a retrogression in goodness, whether a struggle or a surrender; while the others suffer changes of generation and destruction, of increase and decrease, of quality and of movement in space. Things then that are mutable are also wholly created. But things that are created must be the work of some maker, and the maker cannot have been created. For if he had been created, he also must surely have been created by some one, and so on till we arrive at something uncreated. The Creator, then, being uncreated, is also wholly immutable. And what could this be other than Deity?

And even the very continuity of the creation, and its preservation and government, teach us that there does

exist a Deity, who supports and maintains and preserves and ever provides for this universe. For how⁶ could opposite natures, such as fire and water, air and earth, have combined with each other so as to form one complete world, and continue to abide in indissoluble union, were there not some omnipotent power which bound them together and always is preserving them from dissolution?

What is it that gave order to things of heaven and things of earth, and all those things that move in the air and in the water, or rather to what was in existence before these, viz., to heaven and earth and air and the elements of fire and water? What⁷ was it that mingled and distributed these? What was it that set these in motion and keeps them in their unceasing and unhindered course⁸? Was it not the Artificer of these things, and He Who hath implanted in everything the law whereby the universe is carried on and directed? Who then is the Artificer of these things? Is it not He Who created them and brought them into existence. For we shall not attribute such a power to the spontaneous⁹. For, supposing their coming into existence was due to the spontaneous; what of the power that put all in order¹⁰? And let us grant this, if you please. What of that which has preserved and kept them in harmony with the original laws of their existence¹¹? Clearly it is something quite distinct from the spontaneous¹². And what could this be other than Deity¹³?

Footnotes

¹ Supr.c. 1; cf. Greg. Naz., Orat. 34[1].

² Ps. xiv. 1 (E.V.).

³ The readings vary between ἀγνωσίας and ἀγνοίας.

⁴ Greg. Naz., Orat. 34.

⁵ Reading προαίρεσιν; a variant is τροπήν.

⁶ Athan., Cont. Gent.

⁷ Various reading, Who.

⁸ Greg. Naz., Orat. 34.

⁹ The Greek is τῷ αὐτομάτῳ, to the automatic; perhaps = to the accidental, or, to chance.

¹⁰ Or, Whose was the disposing of them in order?

¹¹ Or, Whose are the preserving of them, and the keeping of them in accordance with the principles under which they were first placed?

¹² παρὰ τὸ αὐτόματον; or, quite other than the spontaneous, or, than chance.

¹³ Athan., De Incarn. Verbi, near the beginning. Greg. Naz., Orat. 34.

Chapter IV.

[Table of Contents](#)

—Concerning the nature of Deity: that it is incomprehensible.

It is plain, then, that there is a God. But what He is in His essence and nature is absolutely incomprehensible and unknowable. For it is evident that He is incorporeal¹. For how could that possess body which is infinite, and boundless, and formless, and intangible and invisible, in short, simple and not compound? How could that be immutable² which is circumscribed and subject to passion? And how could that be passionless which is composed of elements and is resolved again into them? For combination³ is the beginning of conflict, and conflict of separation, and separation of dissolution, and dissolution is altogether foreign to God⁴.

Again, how will it also be maintained⁵ that God permeates and fills the universe? as the Scriptures say, Do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord⁶? For it is an impossibility⁷ that one body should permeate other bodies without dividing and being divided, and without being enveloped and contrasted, in the same way as all fluids mix and commingle.

But if some say that the body is immaterial, in the same way as the fifth body^[2]⁸ of which the Greek philosophers speak (which body is an impossibility), it will be wholly subject to motion like the heaven. For that is what they mean by the fifth body. Who then is it that moves it? For

31 A citation of the New Testament Epistle to the Philippians, chapter 2 verse 8, where Paul speaks of Christ's humility and being 'obedient unto death, even the death of the cross,' frequently invoked in Christological argumentation.

32 Gregory the Theologian is Gregory of Nazianzus, a 4th-century Cappadocian Church Father (c. 329–c. 389) revered in Eastern Christianity for his theological writings on the Trinity and the person of Christ; the epithet “the Theologian” is an honorific used in Eastern tradition.

33 John Chrysostom (c. 347–407) was Archbishop of Constantinople and a major early Christian preacher and exegete whose surname means “golden-mouthed”; his homilies and commentaries were highly influential in Eastern and Western patristic thought.

34 Athanasius of Alexandria (c. 296–373) was a 4th-century bishop and a principal defender of Nicene Trinitarian doctrine against Arianism, known for numerous theological writings and orations; dates are approximate.

35 Followers of Apollinaris of Laodicea (4th century), who taught that Christ had a divine mind in place of a human rational soul; this Christological position was judged heretical by later orthodox councils and authors.

36 A theological term used in patristic Christology to denote the single activity or operation of Christ that is at once

divine and human; it describes how the divine and human natures act in communion without being confused or reduced to one nature.

37 Abbreviation for Gregory of Nazianzus (a 4th-century Cappadocian Church Father, c.329–389); “Orat. 37” refers to his forty-seventh numbered oration in collections of his sermons/orations commonly cited in patristic literature.

38 A canon from the Trullan (also called Quinisext) Council, a 7th-century council (commonly dated to 692 AD) that issued disciplinary and liturgical rules for the Church; later patristic writers cite its canons as authoritative church regulations.

39 Golgotha is the Aramaic name (rendered in Latin as Calvary) given in the New Testament for the hill outside Jerusalem where Jesus was crucified, literally 'place of the skull'; its traditional site is near the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, though exact archaeological identification is uncertain.

40 Melchisedek is a biblical figure (Genesis 14:18) described as king of Salem and priest of the Most High God who brought out bread and wine to meet Abraham; in Jewish and Christian tradition he is often portrayed as a priestly type or foreshadowing of Christ.

41 The Greek adjective ἐπιούσιος appears in the Lord’s Prayer and is traditionally translated “daily,” but its exact

sense is debated; here it is explained as either 'necessary for existence' or 'pertaining to the future/coming age,' reflecting scholarly uncertainty about the word's precise nuance.

42 The Greek name τῆς προβατικῆς (rendered here as Probatica) refers to the 'Sheep Gate,' a gate/area of Jerusalem traditionally associated with the Pool of Bethesda (John 5); in this passage it denotes the locality linked with Joachim's birth or upbringing.

43 A traditional title for Mary (Greek Theotokos) asserting that she bore Jesus, who in Christian doctrine is regarded as God; the designation was affirmed in historic councils (notably Ephesus, 431 AD) and is common in liturgical and theological usage.

44 Augarus (noted in a footnote as i.e. Abgarus) refers to the king of Edessa in Syriac/early Christian tradition who, according to a famous legend, received an image of Christ impressed on a cloth (the Image of Edessa or Mandylion); the historical identification is usually linked to King Abgar V (reigned roughly c. 4 BC-AD 50), though the origin and dating of the legend are debated by scholars.

45 A Greek title meaning 'things left out' used in ancient biblical lists for the books now called 1 and 2 Chronicles; in the Septuagint and some Christian traditions these two books were often treated as a single work and thus counted together.

46 A Greek theological term (often transliterated 'perichoresis') meaning mutual indwelling or co-inherence, used in Trinitarian theology to describe the reciprocal indwelling of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

47 Abbreviation for Gregory of Nazianzus, Oration 36; Gregory was a 4th-century Cappadocian Church Father and theologian, and his 'Orations' are a collection of theological speeches composed roughly in the mid-4th century.

48 Followers of Manichaeism, a dualistic religious movement founded by the prophet Mani in the 3rd century CE (c. 216–274) that combined elements of Christianity, Zoroastrianism, and Gnostic ideas and was later judged heretical by orthodox Christian authorities.

49 This is the Greek form of the prophet Elijah (Hebrew Eliyahu), traditionally called 'the Thesbite' from Tishbe in Gilead; he is a prominent Old Testament prophet (commonly dated to the 9th century BCE) noted for events such as the 40-day journey in 1 Kings 19.

50 "Elias" is the Greek form of the prophet Elijah from the Hebrew Bible, traditionally described as being taken up into heaven in a fiery chariot (see 2 Kings 2:11); biblical and scholarly traditions usually place his activity around the 9th century BCE (approx.).

51 Refers to two Old Testament prophets: Enoch (Genesis 5:24), a pre-Flood figure said to have been taken by God,