

DIVINIZATION

θέωσις

A DEFINITION

- (or)

A DEFINITION OF THEOSIS

“The omnipotent and sanctifying, divine and Triadic activity which, because of the indwelling of the Trinity and grace and because of the inborn and natural capacity of the creature for transfiguration, induces a process of assimilation to God the Father of the whole human person, of mankind and of the visible and invisible universe in its totality, through the mediation of the incarnate Logos, Christ the Pantocrator, and in the Holy Spirit.”

P.B.T. Bilaniuk, "The Mystery of Theosis or Divinization," in *Studies in Eastern Christianity*, Vol. One Toronto, 1977, p.46.

DIVINIZATION/
DEIFICATION=
THE PROCESS OF
BEING MADE DIVINE



SCRIPTURAL BASIS FOR THEOSIS

2Peter 1:4 (Partakers of the divine nature)

Romans 8 (Sons of God)

IMMORTALITY AND POWER

1 Cor 15:42-49 (corruption/incorruption)

1 Cor 3:21-23 (all is yours, you are Christ's)

1Cor 6:2-3 (world will be judged by you)

Rom 16:20 (Satan crushed underfoot)

SCRIPTURAL BASIS FOR THEOSIS

John 14-17 (indwelling Trinity)

2 Cor 3: 17-18 (glory to glory)

John 10:34 (ref to Ps 82:6)

Ps. 82:6 (You are gods)

CHURCH FATHERS ON THEOSIS

Theophilus of Antioch (115-181):

"... a man, by keeping the directions of God, may receive from him immortality as a reward and become God" (*ad Autolyicum* 11.27).

Irenaeus of Lyons (c125-203)

"For we cast blame on Him, because we have not been made gods from the beginning, but at first merely men, then at length gods" (*Against Heresies*, Book IV, Chapter XXXVIII; ANF, Vol. I, pg. 522).

CHURCH FATHERS ON THEOSIS

Irenaeus of Lyons (c125-203)

"For this is why the Word became man, and the Son of God became the Son of man: so that man, by entering into communion with the Word and thus receiving divine sonship, might become a son of God." (*Against Heresies*)

"God shall be glorified in His handiwork ... for the perfect man consists in the comingling and the union of the soul receiving the spirit of the Father ... For this is why the Word became flesh, and the Son of God became the Son of man: so that man, by entering into communion with the Word and thus receiving divine sonship, might become a son of God." (*Against Heresies*)

CHURCH FATHERS ON THEOSIS

Irenaeus of Lyons (c125-203)

“There is none other called God by the Scriptures except the Father of all, and the Son, and those who possess the adoption” (*Against Heresies*, book IV, preface, section 4; AnteNicene Fathers 1:463).

We are raised up “to the life of God” (*Against Heresies*, V 9.2; ANF 1:535).

CHURCH FATHERS ON THEOSIS

Hippolytus of Rome (?-c236)

“And thou shalt be a companion of Deity, and a co-heir with Christ, no longer enslaved by disease., For thou hast become God ... For the Deity (by condescension,) does not diminish aught from the dignity of His divine perfection; having made thee even God unto His glory! - Hippolytus, *The Refutation Of All Heresies*, chapter XXX; ANF, Vol. V, pg 153)

CHURCH FATHERS ON THEOSIS

Hippolytus of Rome (?-c236)

“Thy body shall be immortal and incorruptible as well as thy soul. For thou hast become God. All the things that follow upon the divine nature God has promised to supply to thee, for thou was deified in being born to immortality” (Hippolytus, *Philosophoumena* X.34).

“If, therefore, man has become immortal, he will also be God. And if he is made God by water and the Holy Spirit after the regeneration of the laver he is found to be also joint-heir with Christ after the resurrection of the dead” - Hippolytus, *Discourse On The Holy Theophany*, 8; ANF, Vol. V. pg 237)[This may be a wrong attribution].

CHURCH FATHERS ON THEOSIS

Clement of Alexandria (155-220)

“the Logos of God had become man so that you might learn from a man how a man may become God” (*Protreptikos* 1.8.4).

“Christians, with whom has been mingled the regal gold, the Holy Spirit Accordingly, as wine is blended with water, so is the Spirit with man” and for man to inherit immortality: “to be imperishable is to share in Divinity” (*Stromateis* V.10.63).

CHURCH FATHERS ON THEOSIS

Origen of Alexandria (185-254)

“From Him [Christ] there began the union of the divine with the human nature, in order that the human, by communion with the divine, might rise to be divine” (*Against Celsus* 3.28).

"in order that the human, by communion with the divine, might rise to divine, not in Jesus only, but in all those who believe, but enter on the life that Jesus taught" (*Against Celsus*).

CHURCH FATHERS ON THEOSIS

Cyprian of Carthage (200-260)

"He is the power of God, He is the reason, He is His wisdom and glory; He enters into a virgin; being the Holy Spirit, He is endued with the flesh; God is mingled with man. This is our God, this is Christ, who, as the mediator of the two, puts on man that He may lead them to the Father. What man is, Christ was willing to be, that man also may be what Christ is."

CHURCH FATHERS ON THEOSIS

Eusebius of Caesarea (267-339)

"The Word of God [Christ] is now God as He had been man, in order to deify mankind together with himself" (*Demonstratio Evangelica* iv.14).

CHURCH FATHERS ON THEOSIS

Athanasius of Alexandria (298?-373)

The Word "was made man so that we might be made God" (*On the Incarnation* 54.3)

"For man had not been deified if joined to a creature, or unless the Son were very God" (*Oration Against Arians* 2.70)

"The Word was made flesh in order to offer up this body for all, that we might be deified" (*De Decretis* 14).

"He was God, and then became man, and that to deify us" (*Oration Against Arians* I. para.39).

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CHURCH FATHERS ON THEOSIS

Athanasius of Alexandria (298?-373)

“To become as the Father is impossible for us creatures.”

“There be one Son by nature...we too become sons, not as He in nature and truth, but according to the grace of Him that calleth, and though we are men from the earth, and yet called gods, not as the True God or His Word....We are sons, not as the Son, as gods, not as He Himself.” (Oration C.Ar. 3.19-20; Robertson 404-405).

We are similar to the Son “not in essence but in sonship, which we shall partake from Him” (De Synodis 53; Robertson 479).

CHURCH FATHERS ON THEOSIS

Athanasius of Alexandria (298?-373)

“We are as God by imitation, not by nature” (Oration C.Ar. 3.20; Robertson 405).

Jesus did not mean “that we might be as God,” but that we should imitate him (Oration C.Ar. 3.19; Robertson 404).

“Albeit we cannot become like God in essence, yet by progress in virtue imitate God” (Ad Afros 7; Robertson 492).

CHURCH FATHERS ON THEOSIS

Athanasius of Alexandria (298?-373)

“As the Lord, putting on the body, became man, so we men are deified by the Word...and henceforth inherit life everlasting” (Orat 3.34; Robertson 413).

Because we partake of the divine nature, we will “reign everlastingly” (Orat 3.40; Robertson 415).

After Christ's resurrection from the dead, his “flesh had risen and put off its mortality and been deified” (Orat 3.48; Robertson 420).

“Whereas what is human comes to an end, what is divine does not. For which reason also when we are dead...he raises us up” (Easter letter 29, frag. 2; Robertson 550).

CHURCH FATHERS ON THEOSIS

Athanasius of Alexandria (298?-373)

“The Word became flesh in order...that we, participating in His Spirit, might be deified” (*De Decretis* 14; Kelly 377).

“We are divinized by intimate union with the Holy Spirit, who unites us to the Son of God” (Pelikan 1:379, citing *Orat C.Ar.* 2.59 and *Ad Serap* 1.23-24).

“By participation of the Spirit, we are knit into the Godhead” (*Orat.C.Ar.* 3.24; Pelikan 1:216).

“... of the Son with us ... By a partakability of the Spirit we shall become partakers of the divine nature” (*Ad Serapionem* 1.24; Egan 161-162)

CHURCH FATHERS ON THEOSIS

Athanasius of Alexandria (298?-373)

Due to the Holy Spirit "the Word makes divine these originated things" (*Ad Serapionem* 1.25; Egan 166).

This starts at baptism when we become united with the Godhead – at that time we become His child (*Orat.C.Ar.* 2.41; 1.34).

"The Word became flesh in order...that we, participating in His Spirit, might be deified" (*De Decretis* 14; Kelly 377).

"The Word of God...took a human body for the salvation and well-being of man, that having shared in human birth He might make man partake in the divine and spiritual nature" (*Vita Antonii* 74; Robertson 215).

CHURCH FATHERS ON THEOSIS

Athanasius of Alexandria (298?-373)

“He himself has made us sons to the Father, and deified man, having become man himself ... Being God, he later became man, that instead he might deify us” (*Orat. C.Ar.* 1.38-39; Rusch 101-102). “Being God, He [the Son] has taken to Him the flesh, and being in the flesh deifies the flesh ... If that He might redeem mankind, the Word did come among us; and that He might hallow and deify them, the Word became flesh” (*Orat. C.Ar.* 3.38-39; Robertson 414-415).

“The Son of God became man so as to deify us in Himself” (*Ad Adelphium* 4; Kelly 378; Letter 60.4).

CHURCH FATHERS ON THEOSIS

Gregory of Nyssa (335-395)

[Christ's fleshly presence on the earth]

"deified everything kindred and related to mankind".

"There is nothing remarkable in man being the image and likeness of the universe: for the earth passes away, the sky changes, and all that is contained therein is as transient as that which contained it." (Lossky, Vladimir *Orthodox Theology* Translated By Kesarcodi-Watson, Ian and Ihita St. Vladimir's Seminary Press Crestwood, NY 1989, p.70)

CHURCH FATHERS ON THEOSIS

John Chrysostom 347-407

"Christ came to us, and took upon him our nature and deified it"

CHURCH FATHERS ON THEOSIS

Augustine of Hippo (354-430)

“Let us rejoice then and give thanks that we have become not only Christians, but Christ himself. Do you understand and grasp, brethren, God's grace toward us? Marvel and rejoice: we have become Christ. For if he is the head, we are the members; he and we together are the whole man ...” (*In Jo. ev. 21, 8: PL 35, 1568*)

"The Son of God was made a partaker of mortality, so that mortal man might partake of divinity" (*Hom. in Ps. 52:6 36:646*).

CHURCH FATHERS ON THEOSIS

Pseudo-Dionysius (5th-6th centuries)

[Salvation] "can only happen with divinization of the saved. And divinization consists of being as much as possible like God" ... as much as possible in union with God. (*Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, chapter 1:3)

CHURCH FATHERS ON THEOSIS

Symeon the New Theologian (10th century)

"As it [the Holy Spirit] regenerates you, it changes you from corruptible to incorruptible, from mortal to immortal, from sons of men into sons of God and gods by adoption and grace."

THOMAS AQUINAS (1225-1274) ON THEOSIS

"The only-begotten Son of God, wanting to make us sharers in his divinity, assumed our nature, so that he, made man, might make men gods." (*Opusculum contra errores graecorum*)

"For Dionysus teaches that the height of understanding is for man to become conjoined to God as the wholly unknown. He agrees but limits it and qualifies it. Although he uses not the term energy, he says that he can't see God's essence." (*Summa Theologiae*. Gilby, Thomas O.P. translator Black Friars/ Mc Graw Hill vol.16 page 83 from question 3 article 8 "What Happiness is.")



