

**Ancient Church History 15**  
*Athanasius of Alexandria*

“Contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.”  
—Jude 3

“He, indeed, assumed humanity that we might become God.”  
—Athanasius, *De Incarnatione Verbi Dei* (*On the Incarnation of the Word of God*)

- I. Introduction to Athanasius
  - a. His Importance
  
  - b. His Character
    - i. *Athanasius contra Mundum* (“Athanasius against the World”)
  
- II. Life
  - a. Early Life
    - i. Christian Parentage?
  
    - ii. Secular Education
  
  - b. Clerical Career
    - i. Alexander – Bishop of Alexandria
  
    - ii. Ordained a Deacon (319)
  
    - iii. Ordained as Bishop of Alexandria (326)
  
  - c. Five Exiles
    - i. 337
    - ii. 339
    - iii. 356
    - iv. 362
    - v. 365

- d. Writings
- III. Theological Contributions
- a. Trinitarian Doctrine
    - i. Essence/Being (*Ousia*)
  
    - ii. Subsistence/Person (*Hypostasis*)
  
    - iii. What is a person?
  
  - b. Christology (esp. the Incarnation)
    - i. *De Incarnatione Verbi Dei* (*On the Incarnation of the Word of God*)
  
    - ii. “We cannot speak adequately about even a part of His work, therefore, it will be better for us not to speak about it as a whole. ... For, indeed, everything about it is marvellous, and wherever a man turns his gaze he sees the Godhead of the Word and is smitten with awe.”<sup>1</sup>
  
  - c. The New Testament Canon
  
  - d. Monasticism
    - i. *The Life of Saint Antony*
- IV. Lessons We Can Learn from Athanasius
- a. Orthodoxy is worth suffering for.
  
  
  - b. God rewards faithful perseverance.

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<sup>1</sup> St. Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*, trans. John Behr, Popular Patristics Series 44B (Yonkers, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2011), 93.