

## St. Athanasius: On Luke 10:22 and Matthew 11:27

1    § 1. This text refers not to the [eternal](#) Word but to the Incarnate.

2    “All things were delivered to Me by My Father. And none [knows](#) Who the Son is,  
3    save the Father; and Who the Father is, save the [Son](#), and he to whomsoever the  
4    Son wills to reveal Him.”

5    And from not perceiving this they of the [sect](#) of [Arius](#), Eusebius and his fellows,  
6    indulge impiety against the Lord. For they say, if all things were delivered  
7    (meaning by 'all' the Lordship of Creation), there was once a time when He had  
8    them not. But if He had them not, He is not of the [Father](#), for if He were, He would  
9    on that account have had them always, and would not have required to receive  
10   them. But this point will furnish all the clearer an exposure of their folly. For the  
11   expression in question does not refer to the Lordship over Creation, nor to  
12   presiding over the works of [God](#), but is meant to reveal in part the intention of the  
13   Incarnation (τῆς οἰκονομίας). For if when He was speaking they 'were delivered' to  
14   Him, clearly before He received them, creation was void of the Word. What then  
15   becomes of the text in Him all things consist [Colossians 1:17](#)? But if  
16   simultaneously with the origin of the Creation it was all 'delivered' to Him, such  
17   delivery were superfluous, for 'all things were made by Him' [John 1:3](#), and it would  
18   be unnecessary for those things of which the Lord Himself was the artificer to be  
19   delivered over to Him. For in making them He was Lord of the things which were

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being originated. But even supposing they were 'delivered' to Him after they were originated, see the monstrosity. For if they 'were delivered,' and upon His receiving them the Father retired, then we are in peril of falling into the fabulous tales which some tell, that He gave over [His works] to the [Son](#), and Himself departed. Or if, while the Son has them, the Father has them also, we ought to say, not 'were delivered,' but that He took Him as partner, as [Paul](#) did Silvanus. But this is even more monstrous; for God is not imperfect, nor did He summon the Son to help Him in His need; but, being Father of the Word, He makes all things by His means, and without delivering creation over to Him, by His means and in Him exercises Providence over it, so that not even a sparrow falls to the ground without the Father [Matthew 10:29](#), nor is the grass clothed without God [Matthew 6:30](#), but at once the Father works, and the Son works hitherto cf. [John 5:17](#). Vain, therefore, is the opinion of the impious. For the expression is not what they think, but designates the Incarnation.

§2. *Sense in which, and end for which all things were delivered to the Incarnate Son.*

For whereas man [sinned](#), and is fallen, and by his fall all things are in confusion: death prevailed from [Adam](#) to [Moses](#) cf. [Romans 5:14](#), the earth was cursed, Hades was opened, Paradise shut, [Heaven](#) offended, man, lastly, corrupted and

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39 brutalised cf. [Psalm 49:12](#), while the [devil](#) was exulting against us — then [God](#), in  
40 His loving-kindness, not willing man made in His own image to perish, said,  
41 'Whom shall I send, and who will go?' [Isaiah 6:8](#). But while all held their peace,  
42 the Son said, 'Here am I, send Me.' And then it was that, saying 'Go,' He 'delivered'  
43 to Him man, that the [Word](#) Himself might be made Flesh, and by taking the Flesh,  
44 restore it wholly. For to Him, as to a physician, man 'was delivered' to heal the bite  
45 of the serpent; as to life, to raise what was dead; as to light, to illumine the  
46 darkness; and, because He was Word, to renew the rational nature (τὸ λογικόν).  
47 Since then all things 'were delivered' to Him, and He is made Man, straightway all  
48 things were set right and perfected. Earth receives blessing instead of a curse,  
49 Paradise was opened to the robber, Hades cowered, the tombs were opened and the  
50 dead raised, the gates of [Heaven](#) were lifted up to await Him that 'comes from  
51 Edom?' [Psalm 24:7](#), [Isaiah 63:1](#). Why, the Saviour Himself expressly signifies in  
52 what sense 'all things were delivered' to Him, when He continues, as Matthew tells  
53 us: 'Come unto Me all you that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you  
54 rest' [Matthew 11:28](#). Yes, you 'were delivered' to Me to give rest to those who had  
55 laboured, and life to the dead. And what is written in John's [Gospel](#) harmonises  
56 with this: 'The Father loves the [Son](#), and has given all things into His hand' [John](#)  
57 [3:35](#). Given, in order that, just as all things were made by Him, so in Him all things

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58 might be renewed. For they were not 'delivered' unto Him, that being poor, He  
59 might be made rich, nor did He receive all things that He might receive power  
60 which before He lacked: far be the thought: but in order that as Saviour He might  
61 rather set all things right. For it was fitting that while 'through Him' all things came  
62 into being at the beginning, 'in Him' (note the change of phrase) all things should  
63 be set right cf. [John 1:3](#), [Ephesians 1:10](#). For at the beginning they came into being  
64 'through' Him; but afterwards, all having fallen, the Word has been made Flesh,  
65 and put it on, in order that 'in Him' all should be set right. Suffering Himself, He  
66 gave us rest, hungering Himself, He nourished us, and going down into Hades He  
67 brought us back thence. For example, at the time of the creation of all things, their  
68 creation consisted in a fiat, such as 'let [the earth] bring forth,' 'let there be' [Genesis](#)  
69 [1:3, 11](#), but at the restoration it was fitting that all things should be 'delivered' to  
70 Him, in order that He might be made man, and all things be renewed in Him. For  
71 man, being in Him, was quickened: for this was why the Word was united to [man](#),  
72 namely, that against man the curse might no longer prevail. This is the reason why  
73 they record the request made on behalf of [mankind](#) in the seventy-first Psalm:  
74 'Give the King Your judgment, O God?' [Psalm 72:1](#): asking that both the judgment  
75 of death which hung over us may be delivered to the [Son](#), and that He may then, by  
76 dying for us, abolish it for us in Himself. This was what He signified, saying

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77 Himself, in the eighty-seventh Psalm: 'Your indignation lies hard upon me' [Psalm](#)  
78 [88:7](#). For He bore the indignation which lay upon us, as also He says in the  
79 hundred and thirty-seventh: 'Lord, You shall do vengeance for me' [Psalm 137:8](#).

80 §3. *By 'all things' is meant the redemptive attributes and power of [Christ](#).*

81 Thus, then, we may understand all things to have been delivered to the [Saviour](#),  
82 and, if it be necessary to follow up understanding by explanation, that has been  
83 delivered unto Him which He did not previously possess. For He was not man  
84 previously, but became man for the sake of saving man. And the Word was not in  
85 the beginning flesh, but has been made flesh subsequently cf. [John 1:1 sqq.](#), in  
86 which Flesh, as the Apostle says, He reconciled the enmity which was against  
87 us [Colossians 1:20](#), [2:14](#), [Ephesians 2:15-16](#) and destroyed the law of the  
88 commandments in ordinances, that He might make the two into one new man,  
89 making peace, and reconcile both in one body to the Father. That, however, which  
90 the Father has, belongs also to the [Son](#), as also He says in John, 'All things  
91 whatsoever the Father has are Mine' [John 16:15](#), expressions which could not be  
92 improved. For when He became that which He was not, 'all things were delivered'  
93 to Him. But when He desires to declare His unity with the [Father](#), He teaches it  
94 without any reserve, saying: 'All things whatsoever the Father has are Mine.' And  
95 one cannot but admire the exactness of the language. For He has not said 'all things

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96 whatsoever the Father has, He has given to Me,' lest He should appear at one time  
97 not to have possessed these things; but 'are Mine.' For these things, being in the  
98 Father's power, are equally in that of the Son. But we must in turn examine what  
99 things 'the Father has.' For if Creation is meant, the Father had nothing before  
100 creation, and proves to have received something additional from Creation; but far  
101 be it to think this. For just as He exists before creation, so before creation also He  
102 has what He has, which we also [believe](#) to belong to the Son [John 16:15](#). For if the  
103 Son is in the [Father](#), then all things that the Father has belong to the Son. So this  
104 expression is subversive of the perversity of the heterodox in saying that 'if all  
105 things have been delivered to the [Son](#), then the Father has ceased to have power  
106 over what is delivered, having appointed the Son in His place. For, in fact, the  
107 Father judges none, but has given all judgment to the Son?' [John 5:22](#). But 'let the  
108 mouth of them that speak [wickedness](#) be stopped' [Psalm 63:11](#), (for although He  
109 has given all judgment to the [Son](#), He is not, therefore, stripped of lordship: nor,  
110 because it is said that all things are delivered by the Father to the [Son](#), is He any  
111 the less over all), separating as they clearly do the Only-begotten from [God](#), Who  
112 is by nature inseparable from Him, even though in their [madness](#) they separate  
113 Him by their words, not perceiving, the impious men, that the Light can never be  
114 separated from the sun, in which it resides by nature. For one must use a poor

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115 simile drawn from tangible and familiar objects to put our idea into words, since it  
116 is over bold to intrude upon the incomprehensible nature [of God].

117 §4. The text [John 16:15](#) , shows clearly the essential relation of the Son to the  
118 *Father*.

119 As then the light from the Sun which illumines the world could never be supposed,  
120 by men of sound [mind](#), to do so without the Sun, since the Sun's light is united to  
121 the Sun by nature; and as, if the Light were to say: I have received from the Sun  
122 the power of illumining all things, and of giving growth and strength to them by  
123 the heat that is in me, no one will be mad enough to think that the mention of the  
124 Sun is meant to separate him from what is his nature, namely the light;  
125 so [piety](#) would have us perceive that the Divine Essence of the Word is united by  
126 nature to His own Father. For the text before us will put our problem in the clearest  
127 possible light, seeing that the Saviour said, 'All things whatsoever the Father has  
128 are Mine;' which shows that He is ever with the Father. For 'whatsoever He has'  
129 shows that the Father wields the Lordship, while 'are Mine' shows the inseparable  
130 union. It is necessary, then, that we should perceive that in the Father reside  
131 Everlastingness, Eternity, Immortality. Now these reside in Him not as  
132 adventitious attributes, but, as it were, in a well-spring they reside in Him, and in  
133 the Son. When then you wish to perceive what relates to the [Son](#), learn what is in

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134 the [Father](#), for this is what you must [believe](#) to be in the Son. If then the Father is a  
135 thing created or made, these qualities belong also to the Son. And if it is  
136 permissible to say of the Father 'there was once a time when He was not,' or 'made  
137 of nothing,' let these words be applied also to the Son. But if it is impious to  
138 ascribe these attributes to the [Father](#), grant that it is impious also to ascribe them to  
139 the Son. For what belongs to the [Father](#), belongs to the Son. For he that honours  
140 the [Son](#), honours the Father that sent Him, and he that receives the [Son](#), receives  
141 the Father with Him, because he that has seen the Son has seen the Father [Matthew](#)  
142 [10:40](#); [John 14:9](#). As then the Father is not a creature, so neither is the Son; and as  
143 it is not possible to say of Him 'there was a time when He was not,' nor 'made of  
144 nothing,' so it is not proper to say the like of the Son either. But rather, as the  
145 Father's attributes are Everlastingness, Immortality, Eternity, and the being no  
146 creature, it follows that thus also we must think of the Son. For as it is written [John](#)  
147 [5:26](#), 'As the Father has life in Himself, so gave He to the Son also to have life in  
148 Himself.' But He uses the word 'gave' in order to point to the Father who gives. As,  
149 again, life is in the [Father](#), so also is it in the [Son](#), so as to show Him to be  
150 inseparable and everlasting. For this is why He speaks with exactness, 'whatsoever  
151 the Father has,' in order namely that by thus mentioning the Father He may avoid



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152 being thought to be the Father Himself. For He does not say 'I am the [Father](#),' but  
153 'whatsoever the Father has.'

154 §5. *The same text further explained.*

155 For His Only-begotten Son might, you [Arians](#), be called 'Father' by His Father, yet  
156 not in the sense in which you in your [error](#) might perhaps understand it, but (while  
157 Son of the Father that begot Him) 'Father of the coming age' [Isaiah 9:6](#), [Septuagint](#).  
158 For it is necessary not to leave any of your surmises open to you. Well then, He  
159 says by the [prophet](#), 'A Son is born and given to us, whose government is upon his  
160 shoulder, and his name shall be called Angel of Great Counsel, mighty [God](#), Ruler,  
161 Father of the coming age' [Isaiah 9:6](#). The Only-begotten [Son of God](#), then, is at  
162 once Father of the coming age, and mighty [God](#), and Ruler. And it is shown clearly  
163 that all things whatsoever the Father has are His, and that as the Father gives life,  
164 the Son likewise is able to quicken whom He will. For 'the dead,' He says, 'shall  
165 hear the voice of the [Son](#), and shall live' cf. [John 5:25](#), and the will and desire of  
166 Father and Son is one, since their nature also is one and indivisible. And  
167 the [Arians](#) torture themselves to no purpose, from not understanding the saying  
168 of [our Saviour](#), 'All things whatsoever the Father has are Mine.' For from this  
169 passage at once the delusion of Sabellius can be upset, and it will expose the folly  
170 of our modern [Jews](#). For this is why the Only begotten, having life in Himself as

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171 the Father has, also [knows](#) alone Who the Father is, namely, because He is in the  
172 Father and the Father in Him. For He is His Image, and consequently, because He  
173 is His Image, all that belongs to the Father is in Him. He is an exact seal, showing  
174 in Himself the Father; living Word and [true](#), Power, Wisdom, our Sanctification  
175 and Redemption [1 Corinthians 1:30](#). For 'in Him we both live and move and have  
176 our being' [Acts 17:28](#), and 'no man [knows](#) Who is the [Father](#), save the [Son](#), and  
177 Who is the [Son](#), save the Father?' [Luke 10:22](#).

178 §6. *The Trisagion wrongly explained by [Arians](#). Its [true](#) significance.*

179 And how do the impious men venture to speak folly, as they ought not, being men  
180 and unable to find out how to describe even what is on the earth? But why do I say  
181 'what is on the earth?' Let them tell us their own nature, if they can discover how to  
182 investigate their own nature? Rash they are indeed, and self-willed, not trembling  
183 to form opinions of things which [angels](#) desire to look into [1 Peter 1:12](#), who are so  
184 far above them, both in nature and in rank. For what is nearer [God] than the  
185 Cherubim or the Seraphim? And yet they, not even seeing Him, nor standing on  
186 their feet, nor even with bare, but as it were with veiled faces, offer their praises,  
187 with untiring lips doing nought else but glorify the divine and ineffable nature with  
188 the Trisagion. And nowhere has any one of the divinely speaking [prophets](#), men  
189 specially selected for such vision, reported to us that in the first utterance of the

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190 word Holy the voice is raised aloud, while in the second it is lower, but in the third,  
191 quite low — and that consequently the first utterance denotes lordship, the second  
192 subordination, and the third marks a yet lower degree. But away with the folly of  
193 these haters of [God](#) and senseless men. For the Triad, praised, revered, and  
194 adored, is one and indivisible and without degrees (ἁ σχηματιστός). It is united  
195 without confusion, just as the [Monad](#) also is distinguished without separation. For  
196 the fact of those venerable living creatures [Isaiah 6](#); [Revelation 4:8](#) offering their  
197 praises three times, saying 'Holy, Holy, Holy,' proves that the Three Subsistences  
198 are perfect, just as in saying 'Lord,' they declare the One Essence. They then that  
199 depreciate the Only-begotten [Son of God blaspheme God](#), defaming His perfection  
200 and accusing Him of imperfection, and render themselves liable to the severest  
201 chastisement. For he that blasphemes any one of the Subsistences shall have  
202 remission neither in this world nor in that which is to come. But God is able to  
203 open the eyes of their heart to contemplate the Sun of Righteousness, in order that  
204 coming to [know](#) Him whom they formerly set at nought, they may with  
205 unswerving [piety](#) of mind together with us glorify Him, because to Him belongs  
206 the kingdom, even to the Father Son and [Holy Spirit](#), now and forever. [Amen](#).

207