
Letter from Arius to Alexander Bishop of Alexandria c.320 AD

Text taken from J. Stevenson, *A New Eusebius: Documents illustrating the history of the Church to AD 337* (London: SPCK, 1987), pp.326-7

1 To our blessed Pope and Bishop Alexander, the Presbyters and Deacons send greeting in
2 the Lord.

3
4 Our faith from our forefathers, which we have learned also from you, Blessed Pope, is this:
5 We acknowledge One God, alone unbegotten, alone everlasting, alone unbegun, alone true,
6 *alone having immortality*,¹ alone wise, alone good, alone sovereign; judge, governor, and
7 administrator of all, unalterable and unchangeable, just and good, God of Law and
8 Prophets and New Testament; who begat an Only-begotten Son before eternal times,
9 through whom he has made both the ages and the universe; and begat him not in semblance,
10 but in truth: and that he made him subsist at his own will, unalterable and unchangeable;
11 perfect creature of God, but not as one of the creatures; offspring, but not as one of things
12 that have come into existence;

13
14 nor as Valentinus pronounced that the offspring of the Father was an issue; nor as
15 Manichaeus taught that the offspring was a portion of the Father, consubstantial
16 (*homoousios*); or as Sabellius, dividing the Monad, speaks of a Son-and-Father; nor as
17 Hieracas, of one torch from another, or as a lamp divided into two; nor that he who was
18 before, was afterwards generated or new-created into a Son, as you too yourself, Blessed
19 Pope, in the midst of the Church and in session have often condemned; but, as we say, at
20 the will of God, created before times and before ages, and gaining life and being and his
21 glories from the Father, who gave real existence to those together with him. For the Father
22 did not, in giving to him the inheritance of all things, deprive himself of what he has
23 ingenerately in himself; for he is the Fountain of all things.

24
25 Thus there are three Subsistences (*hypostaseis*). And God, being the cause of all things, is
26 unbegun and altogether sole but the Son being begotten apart from time by the Father, and
27 being created and found before ages, was not before his generation; but, being begotten
28 apart from time before all things, alone was made to subsist by the Father. For he is not
29 eternal or co-eternal or co-unoriginate with the Father, nor has he his being together with
30 the Father, as some speak of relations, introducing two ingenerate beginnings, but God is
31 before all things as being Monad; and Beginning of all.

32
33 Wherefore also he is before the Son, as we have learned also from your preaching in the
34 midst of the Church. Even as then from God he has being, and glories and life, and all
35 things are delivered unto Him, in such sense is God his Origin. For he is above him, as
36 being his God and before him. But if the terms *from him*² and *from the womb*³ and *I came*
37 *forth from the Father and I come*⁴ be understood by some to mean as if a part of him, being
38 consubstantial, or as an issue, then the Father is according to them compounded and
39 divisible and alterable and material, and, as far as concerns them, undergoes what is
40 appropriate to a body, who is the Incorporeal God.

¹ Timothy 6.16

² Romans 11.36

³ Psalm 110.3 – “I have begotten you from the womb before the morning”

⁴ John 16.28

