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Gregory of Nazianzus and Scripture Engagement

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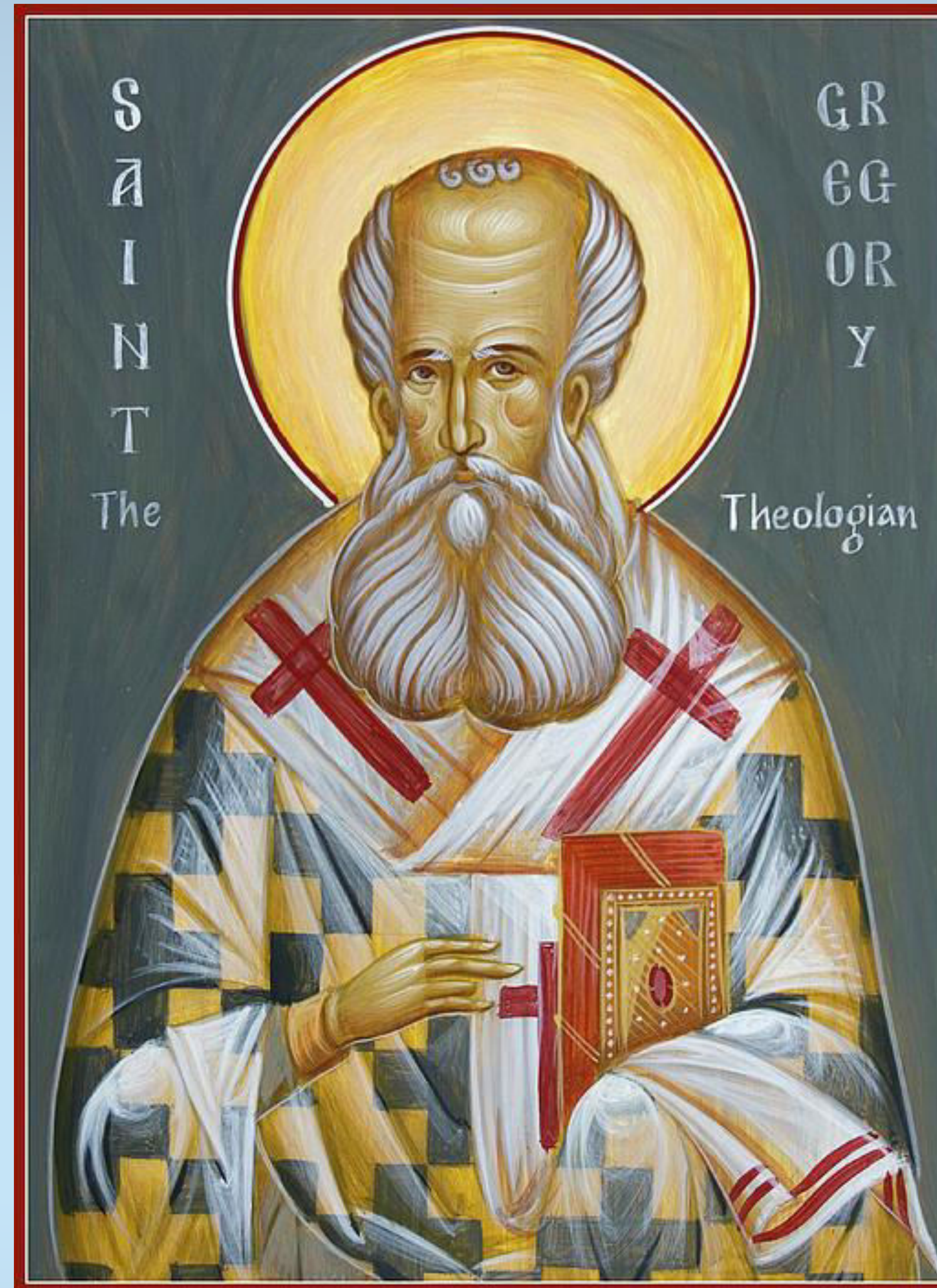
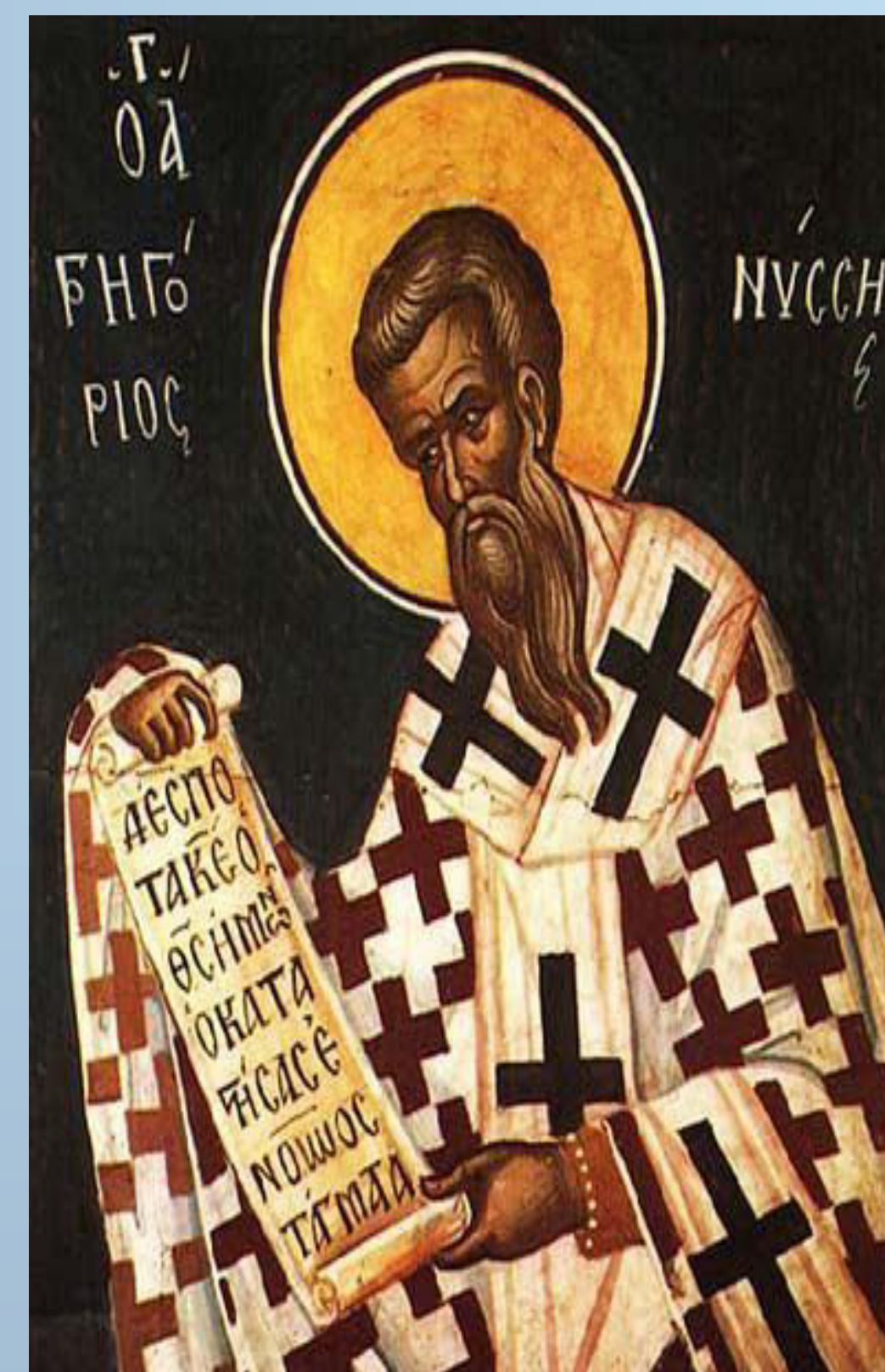


BACKGROUND

- **4th Century** – Emperor Constantine legalized Christianity and allowed freedom of worship throughout the Roman Empire. This proclamation opened the door for both orthodox and heretical version of Christianity.
- **Gregory of Nazianzus (d. 390)** – Archbishop of Constantinople and theologian during the 4th century who opposed the heretics who were advocating for unbiblical doctrine.
- **Scripture Engagement** – “Interaction with the biblical text in a way that provides sufficient opportunity for the text to speak for itself by the power of the Holy Spirit, enabling readers and listeners to hear the voice of God and discover for themselves the unique claim Jesus Christ is making upon them.” – Dr. Fergus Macdonald, Taylor University Center for Scripture Engagement
- **Christian Spiritual Classic** – “A non-canonical text attested to across generations and cultures as helpful for the cure of souls,” and “intentionality addresses issues such as sanctification, Christian living, holiness, cure of souls, and a developing relationship with God.” – Isaiah Swain

PURPOSE & RESEARCH QUESTION

Gregory of Nazianzus challenged the heretical leaders of his day to produce sound biblical doctrine. The purpose of this research is to answer the question: What can we learn about Scripture Engagement through spiritual classics authored by Gregory of Nazianzus?



Gregory Of Nazianzus Quotes

“[My desire] brings to mind retreats and mountains and deserts, and peacefulness of soul and body, and that the mind turn back into itself and move inward, away from perceptible things, so as to enter into God without stain and be purely illumined by the bright rays of the Spirit.” – Oration 12

“You sought someone to play Barnabas to your Paul [Gal 2:1]. You sought a Titus to complement Silvanus and Timotheus in order that your charism might course though those who are genuinely concerned for you and you might fully preach the Gospel from Jerusalem and as far round as Illyricum [Rom 15:19]...” – Oration 10

MATERIALS AND METHODS

First, a study was conducted on Gregory of Nazianzus's orations and his relationship with Basil of Caesarea. Special attention was placed on Gregory's focus on the Holy Spirit. Last, there was an analysis conducted on Gregory's impact on contemporary theology and spirituality.

PRELIMINARY RESULTS

WHAT WE ARE LEARNING ABOUT SCRIPTURE ENGAGEMENT

- In Oration 12, Gregory of Nazianzus claims that the source of “private illumination” is the “bright rays of the Spirit.” The Holy Spirit is crucial in Scripture engagement. Gregory’s private illumination can be paralleled to Scripture engagement.
- In Oration 10, Gregory Of Nazianzus described himself as a Barnabas or Titus to the ministry of Basil of Caesarea. Basil’s works contributed to and developed current orthodox Trinitarianism. Gregory saw spiritual friendship as an important context for fruitful Scripture engagement.

FURTHER RESEARCH

- Gregory of Nazianzus’s emphasis on personal retreat with the Lord.
- The influence of Gregory’s and Basil’s spiritual friendship on their practices of Scripture engagement.
- Gregory of Nazianzus’s contribution to pastoral theology.

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