

27 Δεκεμβρίου 2017

On the Nativity of Our Saviour Jesus Christ (Saint John Chrysostom)

[Ξένες γλώσσες / In English](#)



I see a strange and wondrous mystery.

Shepherds' music reaches my ears: not the piping of a plaintive melody, but the singing of a heavenly hymn. The angels are singing. The archangels join in. The cherubim hymn, the seraphim glorify. They all rejoice at the sight of God on earth and humankind in heaven. He Who is above, is now here below through His dispensation; and we who were below are now above through His mercy.

Today, Bethlehem resembles heaven. In the place of stars, it has received the angels singing; and in place of the sun, it welcomes the Sun of Righteousness. And do not ask how, for where God so wills, the order of nature is overcome. For He willed; He was able; He descended; He saved; all things collaborated with God.



Today He Who is, is born and becomes what He was not. As God, He has become human, though not departing from His being as God. He became human not by departing from His divinity, nor through any increase did He become God from being human. As the Word, He became flesh, His nature, because of impassability, remaining unchanged.

When he was born, the Jews denied the strange birth, the Pharisees misinterpreted the holy books, the Scribes disputed the law. Herod wished to see the new-born Child, not to honour Him, but to do away with Him.

Today they are all at loggerheads. For, as the psalmist said, all this would be

revealed to their children in a later generation. And so the kings came, and they wondered at seeing the heavenly King Who has come to earth, not bringing with Him angels, nor archangels, nor thrones, nor dominions, nor powers, nor principalities, but following a strange untrodden path. He has come forth from a spotless womb...

Kings came to venerate the heavenly King of Glory; soldiers to serve the Captain General of the Hosts of Heaven; women for Him Who was born of a woman to change the sorrow of woman into joy; virgins for the child of the virgin, seeing that He who created breasts and milk has now made the milk flow freely from His mother's breasts, and is thus nourished by her; infants for the Him Who became an infant, so that out of the mouth of infants and suckling babes there might pour forth praise; children to witness Him because of Whom Herod, in his madness, would sacrifice them; men for Him Who became incarnate and Who cures the ills of His servants; shepherds for the Good Shepherd, prepared to lay down His life for the sheep; priests for Him Who is the High Priest after the order of Melchizedek; servants for Him Who took the form of a Servant, so that He might honour our servitude with freedom; fishermen for Him Who made them into fishers of men; tax-collectors for Him Who made a tax-collector an Evangelist; the harlots for Him Who allowed His feet to be washed with a harlot's tears. In brief, all the sinners came to see the lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world: the magi bearing gifts, the shepherds blessing, the tax-collectors evangelizing, the harlots bearing myrrh, the Samaritan woman thirsting for the spring of life, the Canaanite woman with her unreserved faith...

Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good-will among people. Today, He Who was born in an inexplicable manner from the Father, is born from a virgin in a way beyond my understanding. Then, before all ages, He was born in a natural way, which His Begetter knew; now He's born in an unnatural way, which only the grace of the Holy Spirit understands. His birth above is real; His birth below incontrovertible. The true God was born from the true God, and the true human person was born from a virgin. Above, the only-begotten Son of the One; below, the only-begotten Son of the one Virgin. Just as it would be impious to consider that in His birth above He had a mother, so it's blasphemy to think that in His birth below, He had a father...

Thus, the birth above has no explanation, nor will it be susceptible to complex elucidations in the future. I know that the Virgin gave birth today. I believe she gave birth to God Who is outside time. I've learned to honour the manner of His birth in silence and not to become involved in complex arguments over it.

Let us, then, offer glory to Christ, Who has made a path through that which was impenetrable, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.