

## The Bliss of Paradise (Saint Nicodemus the Hagiorite)

[Ξένες γλώσσες / In English](#)



*‘Blessed are those who know you even if they know nothing else; those who know you and everything else, however, aren’t blessed for that reason, but simply because they know you’.*

Oh, the bliss of Paradise! Where the blessed will be similar and equal to the angels and not ‘a little less than them’. They’ll be ‘children of God’ as the Lord said: ‘They will be equal to the angels and children of God, truly sons of the resurrection’ (Luke 20, 36). And as Saint Augustine says: ‘When we see your face without a covering, then what shall prevent us from being a little less than the angels? Or rather, we shall be similar and in all things equal to the angels (Prayer 15 or 7). Oh, the bliss of Paradise! In which life will be life, but without death. Joy will be joy, only without sorrow. Day will be day, only without night. Happiness will be happiness, only without sadness. In short, bliss where good will be only good, without any evil. This is why Saint Augustine says: ‘Blessed are they who have everything they want and

don't desire anything wicked'.



Oh, the bliss of Paradise. In which the blessed will have no need of the actual sun and the actual moon to illumine them, since God will be sun and moon for them, shining eternally upon them. 'The sun will no more be your light by day, nor will the brightness of the moon shine on you, for the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory'. (Is. 60, 19).

This, then, is how the godly Maximos resolved the questioning of some who wanted to know the difference between the kingdom of heaven and the Kingdom of God. He said: 'The kingdom of heaven is the comprehension of the pure, pre-eternal knowledge of the things- according to their causes- which exist within God. The Kingdom of God, however, is the transmission, by grace, of the good things which exist within God' (Two Hundred Chapters on Theology).

You see here that only the natural qualities in God are presented to the blessed to be seen, known and enjoyed; not the divine essence from which these natural and inseparable qualities derive. Because that essence is not merely beyond conception, it is also entirely unknown and invisible to the blessed (Is. 60, 19). There will no longer be a need for a lamp to shine at night, nor a residence for them to live in, because, for them, God will be both light and dwelling-place. 'There

will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever' (Rev. 22, 5). And again: 'I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple' (Rev. 21, 22).

The blessed have no need of air, food, drink or any of the other things we desire on this earth. Because, for them, God will be all things, as Saint Paul says: 'So that God may be all in all' (Cor. 15, 28). Gregory the Theologian interprets this as: 'At the time of the restitution, God will be above all else...when we shall not be divided, as we are now, by many things, such as our desires and our passions, so that we do not have God within us, or only to a very small degree. Then we shall be filled with God alone, for this is the perfection we are hastening to reach'. (Discourse 2 On the Son).

Oh, the bliss of Paradise, which is the last and final goal for which we were made at the creation and re-made through the dispensation of the incarnation. To put it briefly: Oh, the bliss of Paradise, in which the blessed, seeing the thrice-bright sun of the glory of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, will say to the Lord what Philip said to Him: 'Lord, show us the Father and that is sufficient'. And you, too, my friend, when you are in this bliss, will no longer be merely blessed, but will almost be that bliss itself, as the Lord has promised: 'I will make you the everlasting pride and the joy of all generations' (Is. 60, 15).

Do you see this bliss? It's won with toil and labour. Do you see this joy? It's gained with tears and sorrows. Do you see this glory of Paradise? Its seed is love.