

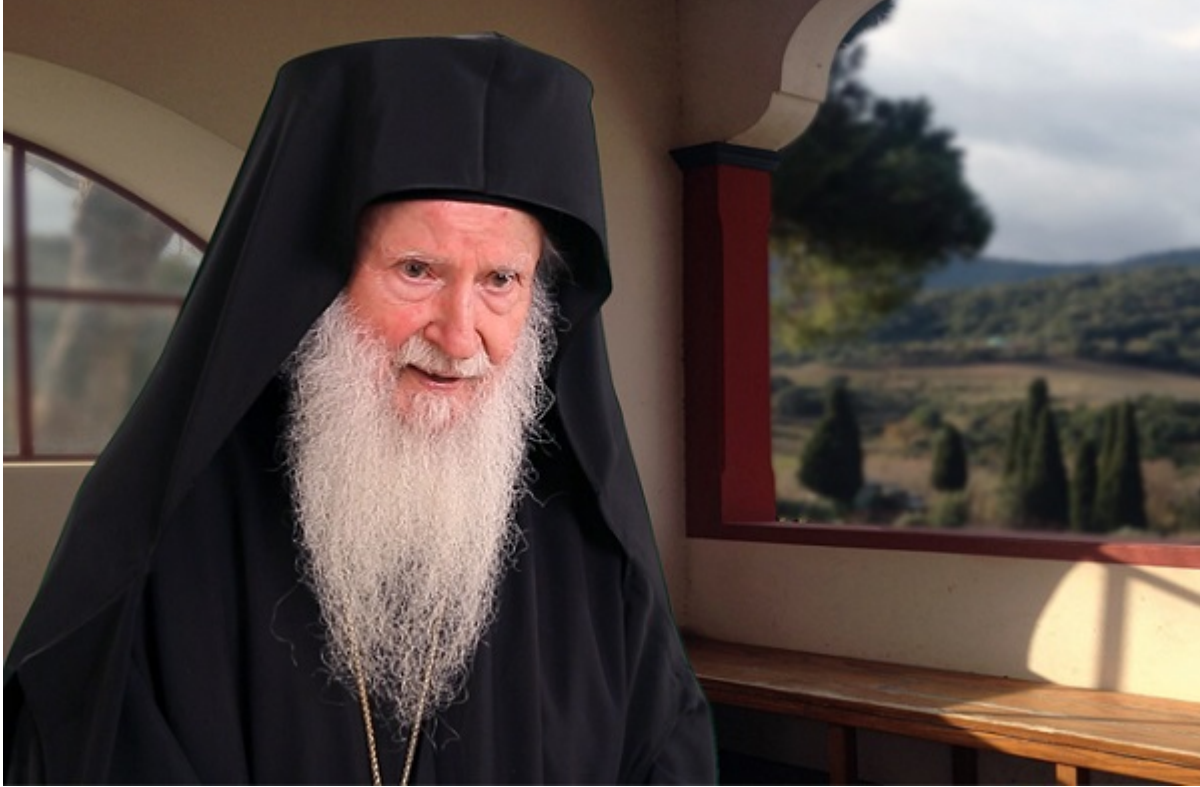
9 Δεκεμβρίου 2018

Sermon on the Apostolic Reading for the 15th Sunday of Luke (Galatians 4: 22-27) (Metropolitan of Pisidia Sotirios)

[Ξένες γλώσσες / In English](#)



The Apostle Paul, with this reading from his Epistle to the Galatians, seeks to educate those who still do not realize that the Mosaic Law has a temporary and not eternal value. To illustrate this, he uses the example of the two sons of Abraham. The first child born from Hagar the slave symbolizes the current city of Jerusalem, which is undermined by her and her children. The other child of Abraham, born from the free woman Sarah, according to the promise of God, symbolizes the heavenly Jerusalem. The heavenly Jerusalem is free, and is the mother of all of us Christians. Since she is free from the Mosaic Law, this means that her children also are free from the Mosaic Law.



In

speaking of the heavenly Jerusalem, the Apostle Paul gives us the opportunity to look more closely at this eternal homeland promised to us by God, where Christians will live forever. The Lord often refers to it as the “Kingdom of the Heavens,” so that people will not confuse it with the kingdoms of this world. He also sometimes calls it the “Kingdom of God” or “My Father’s Kingdom,” giving honor to God the Father and His own kingdom. He also calls it Paradise (Luke 23:43).

As Jesus revealed to us, God has prepared His Kingdom “before the creation of the world” for His Angels and those on earth who desire it by their seeking communion with God. This is done by applying His commandments, especially the commandment of love (see Matthew 25: 34-35). This heavenly kingdom is eternal, it has no end. The joy, rest, peace and happiness of all those who will live in it is also forever. In this kingdom of God there are none of the sorrows that people face in this life: such as the “pain, sorrow, sigh” of death and the like, but a happy “life of endlessness.”

After the Second Coming of the Lord, the bodies of all people will be raised from materials that are, with the energy of the Almighty Creator, transformed into the spiritual. That is why in the Kingdom of Heaven we will have no material needs such as food, water or anything else we need here. “The Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Romans 14:17).

The element that dominates the Kingdom of Heaven is light. But it is not the natural light that radiates from the sun. The Prophet Isaiah prophesies: "There the sun shall no longer be your light by day, nor shall the rising of the moon shine on you at night, but the Lord shall be your everlasting light" (Isaiah 60:19). The Apostle John also reveals to us: "The new Jerusalem, the kingdom of the heavens," does not need sun or moon to brighten it, for the splendor of God is blazing, and its lamp is the Lamb, that is Jesus Christ who was sacrificed for our salvation as a lamb (see Revelation 21:23). Part of this light of Christ was seen (not the full splendor of the Divine) by Peter and the other two Apostles at the Transfiguration of the Savior on Mount Tabor. Peter felt such spiritual joy that he did not want to leave, and asked the Lord to set up places to stay, so they did not have to leave this wonderful situation. From this alone we can understand, what pleasure and happiness is felt by those who live in the light of the Kingdom of Heaven.

This uninterrupted presence of the Lord in the heavenly Paradise gives indescribable joy to all people and the Angels. After all, as Jesus said, after the common resurrection people "will be like the angels of God in heaven" (Matthew 22:30). And the countless crowds of Angels with all the Saints will be a pan-harmonium chorus, as revealed by John the Apostle, and will chant: "You are worthy because you have redeemed us to God by your blood...Blessing and glory and wisdom, Thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever" (Revelation 5:9 & 7:12). There will always be hymns of thanksgiving and praise to the Triune God and everyone will live in a delightful feast.

My brothers and sisters, this is our permanent home, for which God has destined us for. Let us take care of our lives to be made worthy to hear from the Lord: "Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Amen.