

Sunday After the Feast of the Nativity

Sunday of the Holy Righteous Ones:

Joseph the Betrothed, David the King, and James the Brother of the Lord

Twenty-Seventh Sunday After Pentecost

December 29, 2024

On December 29th we Commemorate:

The Fourteen Thousand Infants slain by Herod in Bethlehem.

Venerable Marcellus of the Monastery of the Unsleeping Ones.



Icon of the Flight into Egypt

Holy Wisdom Orthodox Mission

1355 North 4th Street • Grand Junction, CO 81501 • 970-778-4160

<https://www.holywisdomorthodox.com>

holywisdomorthodox@gmail.com

Great Vespers, Saturday Evenings at 6:00 pm

Divine Liturgy, Sunday Mornings at 9:30 am (Hours at 9:05 am)

Paraklesis to the Theotokos, Wednesday Evenings at 6:00 pm

Very Reverend Archpriest Luke Uhl, Retired, Interim Rector

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is a Parish in the Diocese of the West
of the Orthodox Church in America*

*Under the Spiritual and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction of
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EPISTLE AND GOSPEL READINGS

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Epistle for the Sunday After the Nativity, Galatians 1:11-19

BRETHREN, I make known to you that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia and returned again to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother.

Gospel for the Sunday After the Nativity, Matthew 2:13-23

AT THAT TIME, when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him." When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son." Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying: "A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted, because they are no more." Now when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, 20 saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child's life are dead." Then he arose, took the young Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside into the region of Galilee. And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, "He shall be called a Nazarene."



In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

In the Epistle reading this morning, Saint Paul defends his Apostleship and tells how he became an Apostle of Christ.

Saint Paul was not among the twelve Apostles and was not a follower of Christ during His public ministry. Yet he was directly called by Christ, just as the twelve had been. And, just as the twelve received the Gospel directly from Christ, so did Saint Paul receive it by direct revelation. Of the Gospel he preached Saint Paul states that, “I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ” (*Galatians 1:12*).

Indeed, all of *true* Christianity is *revealed*. Everything we believe, and everything we practice, is God’s revelation to His faithful. Holy Scripture is filled with the witness of this revelation to mankind. For instance, in the Old Testament God spoke through Moses and the Prophets to His faithful. In both the Old and New Testaments, we read that God also spoke through His angels – such as in this morning’s Gospel where an Angel was sent to Joseph in a dream, guiding him to preserve the lives of Jesus and His Mother.

Most importantly, God did not only speak through His prophets and angels but, as incarnate God, He revealed Himself directly to us. Saint Paul writes that God “has spoken to us by His Son, Whom He has appointed Heir of all things, through Whom also He made the worlds” (*Hebrews 1:2*).

After His Resurrection and Ascension into the heavens, this *Evangélion* – this “Good News” or “Gospel” – of Jesus Christ was entrusted to His holy Apostles who preached it to the nations. The Gospel is not man’s invention, but it is the Word of God spoken by God the Word. This is why Saint Paul warns the Galatians not to accept any false and perverted “gospel.” In the beginning of the same chapter from which we read today, Saint Paul says, “Even if we, or an Angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than we have preached to you, let him be accursed” (*Galatians 1:8*).

We possess a great and the most-valuable treasure: the true Gospel revealed by Jesus Christ and handed down through and within the Orthodox Church. Indeed, we profess that our Orthodox faith is precisely and only “what Jesus taught, the Apostles preached, and the Church faithfully maintains.” Everything we believe and everything we practice in the Orthodox Church is, and must be, absolutely consistent with this foundational premise.

Each of us, in our individual lives, must maintain our Orthodox Tradition faithfully and share it with “all nations.” We must never adulterate it by adopting strange and new teachings inconsistent with our historical faith. We must never alter what has been, and always will be, the true Gospel.

Amen.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

On this Sunday the Church commemorates three individuals who were particularly close to Christ.

First of all, His ancestor, the holy King and Prophet David, who foresaw the Coming of Christ in his Psalms.

Secondly, the righteous Joseph the Betrothed, who protected the Mother of God and her Child before, during and after His birth.

Thirdly, the son of Joseph, James, who accompanied the Mother of God, Christ and Joseph on the flight into Egypt, and later became one of the Apostles and indeed was martyred as James the Righteous, the first Bishop of Jerusalem.

(Note: We know from Sacred Tradition that Joseph was a kinsman of Mary’s father, Joachim. He a widower with four sons and three daughters who was chosen by lot to be “betrothed” – not married – to the young Virgin, Mary. This was done at the direction of the priests of the Temple so that Mary could keep her vow to remain unmarried and dedicate her life to God and to the study of the Holy Scriptures. Living in Joseph’s home with his extended family Mary was respected and protected.)

It is interesting to recall the words of the Gospel regarding this Flight into Egypt, and how Joseph was commanded to “take the young child and his mother into Egypt.” We note how the Scriptures clearly do not call Christ, “Joseph’s son,” or his mother, “your wife. Again, the Scriptures say that all this was to fulfill the words of the Scriptures: “Out of Egypt have I called my son,” and not, “out of Egypt have I called Joseph’s son.”

In addition to David, Joseph, and James, there are also three others who were closely associated with Christ at this time, the Three Wise Men, also called the Magi. They are commemorated on Christmas Day itself, but somehow, we often overlook them.

The Wise Men, by tradition three in number, came from Babylon, which was at that time a center of astronomy. They came to worship Christ for they had seen a great sign in the sky, the star which was the light of the Holy Spirit.

The Wise Men came with presents, gold, incense and myrrh. Gold represented the Kingship of Christ. Incense represented the Priesthood of Christ. Myrrh represented the Prophetic nature of Christ: His death, resurrection, and triumph over Death.

We might well ask ourselves, what significance do these three gifts of the Magi have in *our* relationship with Christ and His Church?

Continued on page 5 ☛

Continued from page 4 ☞ First of all, do we give gold to the Church? Not literally gold, but financial support. There are some people who may think that it is indelicate, or unspiritual, but the fact is that the Church needs material support to survive. At this time of the year especially, it might be good for us to look again at how we support the Church in this respect. The Wise Men gave gold to Christ, which may well have paid for the Flight into Egypt. How do we give gold to Christ?

Secondly, do we give incense to the people who form the Church, the “members” – or limbs – of the Body of Christ? Again, not literally incense, but respect, love of our neighbors whom we come across every time we attend church. This is what incense means.

This is why the priest censes icons in church as well as the people who are images of Christ. By so doing, the priest shows honor and respect, not hatred and dislike. Do we honor one another and show concern and love for one another? The Wise Men did so to Christ in Whose image we are all created. How do we honor one another, showing love and patience?

Finally, do we give myrrh to those around us? Here too, not literally myrrh, but merciful love and compassion to all those whom we meet in our daily life, whoever they may be. The Wise Men gave the mercy of myrrh to Christ. How do we show mercy to those around us who are all made in the image of Christ?

Let us, on this Sunday after Christmas, look at what we give to Christ, to those in His Church, and to those in His world, and let us ask ourselves if we are Wise. Amen.

*Reverend Andrew Phillips,
Saint John the Wonder Worker Church, Colchester, England*

GOSPEL COMMENTARY

Luke 2:13. And when they had departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young Child and His mother. Do you see now the reason why God permitted the Virgin to be betrothed? It is revealed to you here: that Joseph might care for her and watch over her. The angel did not say, “take thy wife,” but “take the mother of the Child.” For once his suspicion had been allayed, and the righteous man had understood from the miracles attendant at His birth that everything was of the Holy Spirit, the angel no longer calls her Joseph's “wife.”

And flee into Egypt. Even the Lord flees, to confirm that He was truly man. If He had fallen into the hands of Herod and had not been slain, it would have seemed that He had been made flesh only in appearance. He flees into Egypt to sanctify even such an unholy place. There were two lands that were the workshops of every iniquity: Babylon and Egypt. *Continued on page 6* ☞

Continued from page 5 ☞ By means of the Magi He accepted the adoration of Babylon, and by His own presence He sanctified Egypt.

And be thou there until I bring thee word. Remain there until you receive God's command. So, we, too, should do nothing apart from the will of God.

For Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him. Behold the foolishness of a man who labors to prevail against the will of God. If it is not of God, what do you fear? But if it is of God, how can you destroy the Child?

14-15. And he arose and took the young Child and His mother by night and departed into Egypt; and was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called My Son (cf. Hosea 11:1). The Jews claim that this prophecy was spoken of the people whom Moses led out of Egypt. We reply, Is it anything remarkable that something spoken of the people in type as a foreshadowing, was realized by Christ in truth? Furthermore, who is the Son of God—the Hebrew people who worshipped the idols and carvings of Beelphegor, or He Who truly is the Son of God?

16. Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the Magi, was exceedingly wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem. As God used Moses to trick Pharaoh, so, too, He used the Magi to trick Herod. For both Herod and Pharaoh were child slayers: Pharaoh slew the male children of the Hebrews in Egypt, and Herod slew the male children of the Hebrews in Bethlehem. Herod vents his wrath against the Magi upon those who had wronged him in nothing.

Why were the children allowed to be slaughtered? So that Herod's wickedness might be revealed. But perhaps you will ask, “Why did the children have to suffer wrong in order to show Herod's wickedness?” Listen then. The children were not wronged—they were made worthy of crowns.

Anyone who suffers some evil in this life, does so either that his sins might be absolved, or that his crowns might be multiplied. So it is with these children: for their suffering they will receive a greater crown in heaven.

And in all the region thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had carefully ascertained of the Magi.

17. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying. Lest anyone think that the slaying of the children took place against the will of God, the Evangelist indicates that God both knew of it beforehand and foretold it.

18. In Rama was there a voice heard. Rama is a place in Palestine of high elevation; the name itself means “high.” This place fell by lot to the inheritance of the tribe of Benjamin, who was *Continued on page 6* ☞

the son of Rachel, and Rachel was buried in Bethlehem. By Rachel, therefore, the prophet Jeremiah means “Bethlehem,” for Rachel was buried in Bethlehem.

Lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children... Listen to what the prophet is saying that weeping and lamentation will be heard from on high, that is, Bethlehem weeping for its children.

...and would not be comforted, because they are not. In this life they are no more, but their souls are immortal.

*From “The Explanation of the Gospel of Saint Matthew”
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SUNDAY SYNAXARION

The Synaxarion

On the Sunday after the Nativity of Christ, we commemorate the holy and just Ancestors of God: Joseph the Betrothed of the Holy Virgin, our Lady the Theotokos; James the Brother of the Lord and the First Bishop of Jerusalem; and David the Prophet and King.

Verses

I honor Joseph, the Betrothed of the Virgin, who to be her protector was alone chosen.

Thou art a carpenter’s son, but also the brother of the Lord that built all with a word, O blest James.

What shall I say, seeing that the Lord testifieth, as a man after Mine own heart, I have found David.

David committed adultery and murder, yet God forgave him and glorified him above all the kings of Israel. He gave him the great grace to compose the most beautiful penitential prayers (the Psalms) and to prophesy the coming of Christ. Thus, God was not ashamed to take upon Himself flesh from David’s seed. God designated Joseph to protect the Most-holy Virgin and imparted to him great honor in the plan of the salvation of mankind. Although Joseph was of the royal lineage of David, he was a humble carpenter in Nazareth. At the age of 80, Joseph took the Most-holy Virgin from the Temple in Jerusalem and into his home. He entered into rest at the age of 110. The Apostle James is called the “Brother of the Lord” because he was the son of the righteous Joseph the Betrothed. James greatly loved Jesus and, according to tradition, he traveled to Egypt with the Most-holy Virgin and Joseph, when Herod sought to slay the newborn King.

By their holy intercessions, O God, have mercy upon us and save us. Amen.



Tone 2, Troparion of the Resurrection

When Thou didst descend to death, O Life immortal, • Thou didst slay Hades with the splendor of Thy Godhead. • And when from the depths Thou didst raise the dead, • all the powers of heaven cried out: • “O Giver of life, Christ our God, glory to Thee.”

Tone 8, Troparion of the Temple, of the Midfeast of Pentecost

O Savior at the Middle of the Feast, • fill my thirsting soul with the waters of piety, as Thou didst cry to all: • “If anyone thirst, let him come to Me and drink.” • O Christ God, Fountain of our life, glory to Thee.

Tone 4, Troparion of the Feast

Thy Nativity, O Christ our God, • has shone to the world the light of wisdom. • For by it, those who worshipped the stars, • were taught by a star to adore Thee, • the Sun of Righteousness, • and to know Thee, the Orient from on high. • O Lord, glory to Thee.

Tone 2, Troparion of the Righteous Ones

Proclaim the wonder, O Joseph, • to David, the ancestor of God; • thou hast seen a Virgin great with child; • and thou didst give glory with the shepherds; • thou didst worship with the Magi, • and didst receive the news from the Angel. • Pray to Christ God to save our souls.

Tone 4, Kontakion of the Temple, of the Midfeast of Pentecost

Christ God, the Creator and Master of all, • cried to all in the midst of the feast of the law: “Come and draw the water of immortality.” • We fall before Thee and faithfully cry: • “Grant us Thy mercies for Thou art the Fountain of our life.”

Tone 3, Kontakion of the Righteous Ones

Glory... Today godly David is filled with joy; • Joseph and James offer praise. • The glorious crown of their kinship with Christ fills them with great joy. • They sing praises to the One ineffably born on earth, • and they cry out: “O Compassionate One, save those who honor Thee.”

Tone 3, Kontakion of the Feast

Both... Today the Virgin gives birth to the Transcendent One, • and the earth offers a cave to the Unapproachable One. • Angels with shepherds glorify Him. • The Wise Men journey with the star, • since for our sake the eternal God was born as a little Child.

Prokeimena

The Lord is my strength and my song; • He has become my salvation.
God is wonderful in His saints, • the God of Israel.

Instead of “It is truly meet...,” we sing:

Magnify, O my soul, the most pure Virgin Theotokos, • more honorable and more glorious than the heavenly hosts. • I behold a strange, most glorious mystery: • heaven—the cave; • the cherubic throne—the Virgin; • the manger—the place where Christ lay: • the uncontainable God, Whom we magnify in song. • Out of fear, we should choose to love silence, • for that is a safer course; • so difficult it is lovingly to compose intricately woven songs • to thee, O Virgin. • But grant us strength, O Mother, • equal to our natural calling.

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For Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him. Behold the foolishness of a man who labors to prevail against the will of God. If it is not of God, what do you fear? But if it is of God, how can you destroy the Child?

14-15. And he arose and took the young Child and His mother by night and departed into Egypt; and was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called My Son (cf. Hosea 11:1). The Jews claim that this prophecy was spoken of the people whom Moses led out of Egypt. We reply, Is it anything remarkable that something spoken of the people in type as a foreshadowing, was realized by Christ in truth? Furthermore, who is the Son of God—the Hebrew people who worshipped the idols and carvings of Beelphegor, or He Who truly is the Son of God?

16. Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the Magi, was exceedingly wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem. As God used Moses to trick Pharaoh, so, too, He used the Magi to trick Herod. For both Herod and Pharaoh were child slayers: Pharaoh slew the male children of the Hebrews in Egypt, and Herod slew the male children of the Hebrews in Bethlehem. Herod vents his wrath against the Magi upon those who had wronged him in nothing.

Why were the children allowed to be slaughtered? So that Herod's wickedness might be revealed. But perhaps you will ask, "Why did the children have to suffer wrong in order to show Herod's wickedness?" Listen then. The children were not wronged—they were made worthy of crowns.

Anyone who suffers some evil in this life, does so either that his sins might be absolved, or that his crowns might be multiplied. So it is with these children: for their suffering they will receive a greater crown in heaven.

And in all the region thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had carefully ascertained of the Magi.

17. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying. Lest anyone think that the slaying of the children took place against the will of God, the Evangelist indicates that God both knew of it beforehand and foretold it.

18. In Rama was there a voice heard. Rama is a place in Palestine of high elevation; the name itself means "high." This place fell by lot to the inheritance of the tribe of Benjamin, who was

Continued on page 6 ☞

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

In the Epistle reading this morning, Saint Paul defends his Apostleship and tells how he became an Apostle of Christ.

Saint Paul was not among the twelve Apostles and was not a follower of Christ during His public ministry. Yet he was directly called by Christ, just as the twelve had been. And, just as the twelve received the Gospel directly from Christ, so did Saint Paul receive it by direct revelation. Of the Gospel he preached Saint Paul states that, "I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ" (*Galatians 1:12*).

Indeed, all of true Christianity is revealed. Everything we believe, and everything we practice, is God's revelation to His faithful. Holy Scripture is filled with the witness of this revelation to mankind. For instance, in the Old Testament God spoke through Moses and the Prophets to His faithful. In both the Old and New Testaments, we read that God also spoke through His angels – such as in this morning's Gospel where an Angel was sent to Joseph in a dream, guiding him to preserve the lives of Jesus and His Mother.

Most importantly, God did not only speak through His prophets and angels but, as incarnate God, He revealed Himself directly to us. Saint Paul writes that God "has spoken to us by His Son, Whom He has appointed Heir of all things, through Whom also He made the worlds" (*Hebrews 1:2*).

After His Resurrection and Ascension into the heavens, this *Evangelion* – this "Good News" or "Gospel" – of Jesus Christ was entrusted to His holy Apostles who preached it to the nations. The Gospel is not man's invention, but it is the Word of God spoken by God the Word. This is why Saint Paul warns the Galatians not to accept any false and perverted "gospel." In the beginning of the same chapter from which we read today, Saint Paul says, "Even if we, or an Angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than we have preached to you, let him be accursed" (*Galatians 1:8*).

We possess a great and the most-valuable treasure: the true Gospel revealed by Jesus Christ and handed down through and within the Orthodox Church. Indeed, we profess that our Orthodox faith is precisely and only "what Jesus taught, the Apostles preached, and the Church faithfully maintains." Everything we believe and everything we practice in the Orthodox Church is, and must be, absolutely consistent with this foundational premise.

Each of us, in our individual lives, must maintain our Orthodox Tradition faithfully and share it with "all nations." We must never adulterate it by adopting strange and new teachings inconsistent with our historical faith. We must never alter what has been, and always will be, the true Gospel.

Amen.

SUNDAY HOMILY
The Sunday After Nativity

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

On this Sunday the Church commemorates three individuals who were particularly close to Christ.

First of all, His ancestor, the holy King and Prophet David, who foresaw the Coming of Christ in his Psalms.

Secondly, the righteous Joseph the Betrothed, who protected the Mother of God and her Child before, during and after His birth.

Thirdly, the son of Joseph, James, who accompanied the Mother of God, Christ and Joseph on the flight into Egypt, and later became one of the Apostles and indeed was martyred as James the Righteous, the first Bishop of Jerusalem.

(Note: We know from Sacred Tradition that Joseph was a kinsman of Mary's father, Joachim. He a widower with four sons and three daughters who was chosen by lot to be "betrothed" – not married – to the young Virgin, Mary. This was done at the direction of the priests of the Temple so that Mary could keep her vow to remain unmarried and dedicate her life to God and to the study of the Holy Scriptures. Living in Joseph's home with his extended family Mary was respected and protected.)

It is interesting to recall the words of the Gospel regarding this Flight into Egypt, and how Joseph was commanded to "take the young child and his mother into Egypt." We note how the Scriptures clearly do not call Christ, "Joseph's son," or his mother, "your wife. Again, the Scriptures say that all this was to fulfill the words of the Scriptures: "Out of Egypt have I called my son," and not, "out of Egypt have I called Joseph's son."

In addition to David, Joseph, and James, there are also three others who were closely associated with Christ at this time, the Three Wise Men, also called the Magi. They are commemorated on Christmas Day itself, but somehow we often overlook them.

The Wise Men, by tradition three in number, came from Babylon, which was at that time a center of astronomy. They came to worship Christ for they had seen a great sign in the sky, the star which was the light of the Holy Spirit.

The Wise Men came with presents, gold, incense and myrrh. Gold represented the Kingship of Christ. Incense represented the Priesthood of Christ. Myrrh represented the Prophetic nature of Christ: His death, resurrection, and triumph over Death.

We might well ask ourselves, what significance do these three gifts of the Magi have in *our* relationship with Christ and His Church?

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Continued from page 4 ☞ First of all, do we give gold to the Church? Not literally gold, but financial support. There are some people who may think that it is indelicate, or unspiritual, but the fact is that the Church needs material support to survive. At this time of the year especially, it might be good for us to look again at how we support the Church in this respect. The Wise Men gave gold to Christ, which may well have paid for the Flight into Egypt. How do we give gold to Christ?

Secondly, do we give incense to the people who form the Church, the "members" – or limbs – of the Body of Christ? Again, not literally incense, but respect, love of our neighbors whom we come across every time we attend church. This is what incense means.

This is why the priest censes icons in church as well as the people who are images of Christ. By so doing, the priest shows honor and respect, not hatred and dislike. Do we honor one another and show concern and love for one another? The Wise Men did so to Christ in Whose image we are all created. How do we honor one another, showing love and patience?

Finally, do we give myrrh to those around us? Here too, not literally myrrh, but merciful love and compassion to all those whom we meet in our daily life, whoever they may be. The Wise Men gave the mercy of myrrh to Christ. How do we show mercy to those around us who are all made in the image of Christ?

Let us, on this Sunday after Christmas, look at what we give to Christ, to those in His Church, and to those in His world, and let us ask ourselves if we are Wise. Amen.

*Reverend Andrew Phillips,
Saint John the Wonder Worker Church, Colchester, England*

GOSPEL COMMENTARY

Luke 2:13. And when they had departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young Child and His mother. Do you see now the reason why God permitted the Virgin to be betrothed? It is revealed to you here: that Joseph might care for her and watch over her. The angel did not say, "take thy wife," but "take the mother of the Child." For once his suspicion had been allayed, and the righteous man had understood from the miracles attendant at His birth that everything was of the Holy Spirit, the angel no longer calls her Joseph's "wife."

And flee into Egypt. Even the Lord flees, to confirm that He was truly man. If He had fallen into the hands of Herod and had not been slain, it would have seemed that He had been made flesh only in appearance. He flees into Egypt to sanctify even such an unholy place. There were two lands that were the workshops of every iniquity: Babylon and Egypt. *Continued on page 6*



Евангелие

Когда же волхвы отошли,- се, Ангел Господень является во сне Иосифу и говорит: встань, возьми Младенца и Матерь Его и беги в Египет, и будь там, доколе не скажу тебе, ибо Ирод хочет искать Младенца, чтобы погубить Его. Он встал, взял Младенца и Матерь Его ночью и пошёл в Египет, и там был до смерти Ирода, да сбудется реченное Господом через пророка, который говорит: из Египта воззвал Я Сына Моего. Тогда Ирод, увидев себя осмеянным волхвами, весьма разгневался, и послал избить всех младенцев в Вифлееме и во всех пределах его, от двух лет и ниже, по времени, которое выведаль от волхвов. Тогда сбылось реченное через пророка Иеремию, который говорит: глас в Раме слышен, плач и рыдание и вопль великий; Рахиль плачет о детях своих и не хочет утешиться, ибо их нет. По смерти же Ирода,- се, Ангел Господень во сне является Иосифу в Египте и говорит: встань, возьми Младенца и Матерь Его и иди в землю Израилеву, ибо умерли искавшие души Младенца. Он встал, взял Младенца и Матерь Его и пришёл в землю Израилеву. Услышав же, что Архелай царствует в Иудее вместо Ирода, отца своего, убоился туда идти; но, получив во сне откровение, пошел в пределы Галилейские и, придя, поселился в городе, называемом Назарет, да сбудется реченное через пророков, что Он Назореем наречется (Мф. 2, 13-23).

Протоиерей Александр Шаргунов

Во имя Отца и Сына и Святого Духа.



Иудейский царь Ирод, обманутый волхвами, замышляет убийство Богомладенца. Если ему не удалось осуществить свой преступный замысел после того, как волхвы ушли домой другим путем, — это не значит, что он отказался от своего намерения. Он уверен, что, убив всех младенцев в Вифлееме, он поразит в их числе и родившегося Царя Иудейского.

И Христос в вечер Рождества становится изгнанником. Он разделяет Свою судьбу со всеми людьми, с миллионами наших современников.

☞ Сколь многие из них познали, что значит быть изгнанниками из своей земли, когда необходимо вставать среди ночи и спасать свою жизнь бегством! Но бегство Святого Семейства имеет одну особенность. Младенец, Которого хотят спасти, — Сын Божий, и волхвы называют Его *«родившимся Царем Иудейским»* (Мф. 2, 2). Он вынужден бежать от Ирода Великого, могущественного и жестокого царя. Начинается неравная борьба между Иродом, облеченным полнотой власти, готовым потопить в крови всякое сопротивление, и нищим Семейством, в котором он ищет убить Младенца.

Единственный враг, которого Ирод не может сокрушить, — его собственная смерть, день ото дня все более приближающаяся к нему. Она безжалостно смотрит на него, и однажды отнимет у него навсегда его жизнь — со всей его властью и силой. Из страха перед этим врагом — ничем не устранимой личной смертью — Ирод ищет убить Младенца, Который может претендовать на его царский трон. Отсюда панический ужас, толкающий его на убийство всех младенцев этого возраста в окрестностях Вифлеема.

Нас не может не печалить, что он так легко находит исполнителей неслыханного кровавого преступления. Однако вся история мира свидетельствует, что в них никогда не бывает недостатка. Точно так же Христос будет стоять перед Пилатом, и толпа будет кричать: «Распни, распни Его! Нет у нас царя, кроме кесаря». Историки говорят, что Ироду в это время было около семидесяти лет, так что Младенец, только что родившийся, не мог представлять для него как для царя какой-либо опасности. Это злодеяние было совершено чисто по внушению человеконенавистника дьявола, распяющего его гордостью и жестокостью. Перед нами — предтеча антихриста. Поразительно, что он убивает всех младенцев в возрасте двух лет и ниже. Богомладенцу, по всей видимости, не было тогда и года. Однако Ирод убивает всех детей до двух лет, чтобы не упустить Христа. **Он убивает младенцев не только в Вифлееме, но и в его окрестностях, являя безумие зла.**

Так исполняется пророчество Писания: *«Глас в Раме слышен: плач и рыдание, и вопль великий. Рахиль плачет о детях своих, и не хочет утешиться, ибо их нет»*. Это пророчество уже исполнилось однажды во времена Иеремии. Мы слышим в Писании его слово о Иерусалиме, ведомом в плен, покидающем землю, где остается гробница Рахили. Для него Рахиль — образ Земли Обетованной, она плачет о детях, которые должны быть там, но их там нет. Точно так же в Вифлееме надежда на будущее исчезает со смертью детей. В Рождество Христово это пророчество раскрылось с новой силой.

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Это происходит после смерти Ирода, которая наступила очень скоро после убийства невинных младенцев. «Мне отмщение и Аз воздам», — говорит Господь. **Как быстро может совершаться Божие отмщение! Из всех грехов невинно пролитая кровь скорее всего переполняет долготерпение Божие.** Такой злобы и неистовства был исполнен Ирод, что являлся непрестанным мучением для себя и страхом для окружающих. Господь показывает нам, что представляют из себя гонители Его и Его последователей. **Все, кто противостоит Христу и Его Церкви, оказываются извергами.** Они — вне рода человеческого. Они будут извержены из числа людей — если не покаются.

И снова слово Божие напоминает нам, **как осмотрительно совершает с самого начала Свой путь Спаситель, и научает этому Свою Церковь.** Можно было бы думать, что Младенец, родившийся в Вифлееме, туда же и возвратится. Но святой Иосиф Обручник со всяким опасением остерегается неосторожных шагов. «Услышав же, что Архелай царствует в Иудее вместо Ирода, отца своего, убоился туда идти». Мы видим, как одни враги сменяют других, чтобы сражаться со Христом и Его Церковью. Едва исчезает один, как на его месте появляется другой. **Диаволу надо, чтобы вражда против Господа и Церкви Его в мире не ослабевала.** Святой Иосиф Обручник не идет с Богомладенцем и Божией Матерью в Иудею, потому что **Бог никогда не хочет подвергать Своих чад бессмысленной опасности.** Но всё делает только ради их испытания в верности и ради вечной их славы. Придет час, когда

3 ☞ они, благодаря Бога, пойдут за Своим Господом на крест. Но теперь — время пребывания в Назарете.

Мы слышим сегодня, что нашего Спасителя называют Иисусом из Назарета — то, что для иудеев было соблазном. Ибо «из Назарета может ли быть что доброе?» В Евангелии сказано, что так исполняется реченное пророками, что Он Назореем наречется. Святые отцы говорят, что в этом имени есть некая тайна. Согласно пророку Исаии, оно означает Отрасль, из которой произойдет спасение всем. Он называет Его Великим Назореем. Не то, что Христос будет в строгом смысле назореем, ибо Он будет пить вино и прикасаться к умершим. Но пророк называет Его так за Его исключительную, единственную святость, за всецелое посвящение Себя Богу в деле спасения рода человеческого. И это имя, к которому учителя духовности будут относиться с презрением. Быть назарянином — значит быть человеком, от которого нельзя ожидать ничего хорошего и который не заслуживает никакого уважения. Так велико помрачение и падение человеческое, в том числе среди тех, кто должен бы быть «светом языков».

Но Господь берёт на Себя с самого начала весь наш позор, чтобы дать нам Свою славу. Пусть никакие оскорбления не будут для нас непереносимы, если мы сподобляемся получить их ради Христа. Наш Господь называет Себя самым уничижительным именем. Он пришел, чтобы всех спасти, чтобы имя Назорей — «человек из Назарета» было созвучно имени Еммануил — «с нами Бог», Господь наш Иисус Христос.

Аминь.



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Евангелие

Когда же волхвы отошли, - се, Ангел Господень является во сне Иосифу и говорит: встань, возьми Младенца и Матерь Его и беги в Египет, и будь там, доколе не скажу тебе, ибо Ирод хочет искать Младенца, чтобы погубить Его. Он встал, взял Младенца и Матерь Его ночью и пошёл в Египет, и там был до смерти Ирода, да сбудется реченное Господом через пророка, который говорит: из Египта воззвал Я Сына Моего. Тогда Ирод, увидев себя осмеянным волхвами, весьма разгневался, и послал избить всех младенцев в Вифлееме и во всех пределах его, от двух лет и ниже, по времени, которое выведал от волхвов. Тогда сбылось реченное через пророка Иеремию, который говорит: глас в Раме слышен, плач и рыдание и вопль великий; Рахиль плачет о детях своих и не хочет утешиться, ибо их нет. По смерти же Ирода, - се, Ангел Господень во сне является Иосифу в Египте и говорит: встань, возьми Младенца и Матерь Его и иди в землю Израилеву, ибо умерли искавшие души Младенца. Он встал, взял Младенца и Матерь Его и пришёл в землю Израилеву. Услышав же, что Архелай царствует в Иудее вместо Ирода, отца своего, убоился туда идти; но, получив во сне откровение, пошел в пределы Галилейские и, придя, поселился в городе, называемом Назарет, да сбудется реченное через пророков, что Он Назореем наречется (Мф. 2, 13-23).

Протоиерей Александр Шаргунов

Во имя Отца и Сына и Святого Духа.



Иудейский царь Ирод, обманутый волхвами, замышляет убийство Богомладенца. Если ему не удалось осуществить свой преступный замысел после того, как волхвы ушли домой другим путем, — это не значит, что он отказался от своего намерения. Он уверен, что, убив всех младенцев в Вифлееме, он поразит в их числе и родившегося Царя Иудейского.

И Христос в вечер Рождества становится изгнанником. Он разделяет Свою судьбу со всеми людьми, с миллионами наших современников.

2 ☞ Сколь многие из них познали, что значит быть изгнанниками из своей земли, когда необходимо вставать среди ночи и спасать свою жизнь бегством! Но бегство Святого Семейства имеет одну особенность. Младенец, Которого хотят спасти, — Сын Божий, и волхвы называют Его *«родившимся Царем Иудейским»* (Мф. 2, 2). Он вынужден бежать от Ирода Великого, могущественного и жестокого царя. Начинается неравная борьба между Иродом, облеченным полнотой власти, готовым потопить в крови всякое сопротивление, и нищим Семейством, в котором он ищет убить Младенца.

Единственный враг, которого Ирод не может сокрушить, — его собственная смерть, день ото дня все более приближающаяся к нему. Она безжалостно смотрит на него, и однажды отнимет у него навсегда его жизнь — со всей его властью и силой. Из страха перед этим врагом — ничем не устранимой личной смертью — Ирод ищет убить Младенца, Который может претендовать на его царский трон. Отсюда панический ужас, толкающий его на убийство всех младенцев этого возраста в окрестностях Вифлеема.

Нас не может не печалить, что он так легко находит исполнителей неслыханного кровавого преступления. Однако вся история мира свидетельствует, что в них никогда не бывает недостатка. Точно так же Христос будет стоять перед Пилатом, и толпа будет кричать: *«Распни, распни Его! Нет у нас царя, кроме кесаря»*. Историки говорят, что Ироду в это время было около семидесяти лет, так что Младенец, только что родившийся, не мог представлять для него как для царя какой-либо опасности. Это злодеяние было совершено чисто по внушению человеконенавистника дьявола, распяляющего его гордостью и жестокостью. Перед нами — предтеча антихриста. Поразительно, что он убивает всех младенцев в возрасте двух лет и ниже. Богомладенцу, по всей видимости, не было тогда и года. Однако Ирод убивает всех детей до двух лет, чтобы не упустить Христа. **Он убивает младенцев не только в Вифлееме, но и в его окрестностях, являя безумие зла.**

Так исполняется пророчество Писания: *«Глас в Раме слышен: плач и рыдание, и вопль великий. Рахиль плачет о детях своих, и не хочет утешиться, ибо их нет»*. Это пророчество уже исполнилось однажды во времена Иеремии. Мы слышим в Писании его слово о Иерусалиме, ведомом в плен, покидающем землю, где остается гробница Рахили. Для него Рахиль — образ Земли Обетованной, она плачет о детях, которые должны быть там, но их там нет. Точно так же в Вифлееме надежда на будущее исчезает со смертью детей. В Рождество Христово это пророчество раскрылось с новой силой.

2 ☞ *«По смерти же Ирода, — се, Ангел Господень во сне является Иосифу в Египте и говорит: встань, возьми Младенца и Матерь Его и иди в землю Израилеву, ибо умерли искавшие души Младенца. Он встал, взял Младенца и Матерь Его и пришел в землю Израилеву»*. Уже второй раз мы слышим о явлении Иосифу Ангела. Он ввергает свою Семью деснице Божией, и Бог ведет его. Он приемлет Младенца, Который не от него, а от Бога — не как сокровище, ему принадлежащее, но как служение, доверенное ему Богом. Теперь вся его жизнь сосредоточена на этом служении. Содержание его жизни составляет не то, что лично с ним происходит, но служение этому Младенцу, Который станет Спасителем всех людей. **Праведный Иосиф предаётся водительству Божию, и Бог показывает ему, какой следующий шаг он должен сделать.** Он бежит, потом возвращается с Младенцем и Его Матерью и, наконец, поселяется в безвестном селении Назарет.

Это происходит после смерти Ирода, которая наступила очень скоро после убиения невинных младенцев. *«Мне отмщение и Аз воздам»*, — говорит Господь. **Как быстро может совершаться Божие отмщение! Из всех грехов невинно пролитая кровь скорее всего переполняет долготерпение Божие.** Такой злобы и неистовства был исполнен Ирод, что являлся непрестанным мучением для себя и страхом для окружающих. Господь показывает нам, что представляют из себя гонители Его и Его последователей. **Все, кто противостоит Христу и Его Церкви, оказываются извергами.** Они — вне рода человеческого. Они будут извержены из числа людей — если не покаются.

И снова слово Божие напоминает нам, как осмотрительно совершает с самого начала Свой путь Спаситель, и научает этому Свою Церковь. Можно было бы думать, что Младенец, родившийся в Вифлееме, туда же и возвратится. Но святой Иосиф Обручник со всяким опасением остерегается неосторожных шагов. *«Услышав же, что Архелай царствует в Иудее вместо Ирода, отца своего, убоился туда идти»*. Мы видим, как одни враги сменяют других, чтобы сражаться со Христом и Его Церковью. Едва исчезает один, как на его месте появляется другой. **Дьяволу надо, чтобы вражда против Господа и Церкви Его в мире не ослабевала.** Святой Иосиф Обручник не идет с Богомладенцем и Божией Матерью в Иудею, потому что **Бог никогда не хочет подвергать Своих чад бессмысленной опасности. Но всё делает только ради их испытания в верности и ради вечной их славы.** Придет час, когда

The Children's Word

"Let the little children come to me, and do not forbid them, for to such is the Kingdom of Heaven." Mark 10:14

Sunday, December 29, 2024

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A Ministry of the
Orthodox Christian Network



God reveals His Son to us!

Have you ever found a word in the Bible that you don't understand? Sometimes grown-ups even have to find out what a word means.

In the epistle reading today, Saint Paul tells us where the gospel, the good news, came from.

"For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ." Do you know what the word "revelation" means? A revelation means something that is revealed, something that is shown.

Saint Paul means that God showed him something. God showed him the way with Jesus Christ.

Later on, Saint Paul says that God "was pleased to reveal his Son to me." God showed Jesus to him. God showed him the way to our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Did you know that God can reveal His Son to us too? God shows us His Son, Jesus Christ, when we read the Bible. He shows us His Son when we go to church and receive Holy Communion. He shows us His Son when we pray to Him, together with our friends at church, or when we pray alone. Let's ask God to reveal His Son to us, so we can be more like our Lord, Jesus Christ!



WORD SEARCH

Can you find these words in the jumble?

- Bible
- Christ is born
- Communion
- David
- King
- Nativity
- Prophet
- Revelation
- Salvation
- Shepherd

P	Q	S	Y	B	O	Y	I	D	S	E	K	T	N	Q
T	O	O	A	N	Z	R	T	H	W	F	N	O	S	N
D	N	R	Z	L	K	O	E	I	F	J	I	O	L	O
Q	D	P	L	A	V	P	P	U	V	N	F	P	W	I
Z	K	D	F	V	H	A	B	S	U	I	R	Z	T	T
B	I	B	L	E	I	B	T	M	V	O	T	Z	I	A
L	N	K	R	R	L	Y	M	I	P	G	J	A	O	L
W	G	D	G	V	P	O	C	H	O	P	J	F	N	E
K	X	U	X	O	C	R	E	P	P	N	F	S	A	V
N	R	O	B	S	I	T	S	I	R	H	C	V	D	E
G	J	T	M	Y	M	L	P	D	A	X	W	V	M	R
U	P	P	K	G	F	C	D	A	V	X	L	C	Z	W
M	L	X	N	F	P	A	Y	V	A	M	O	F	P	M
G	I	J	N	G	W	V	A	I	I	D	E	V	H	K
I	J	A	F	J	I	W	Z	D	Q	F	Q	N	C	E

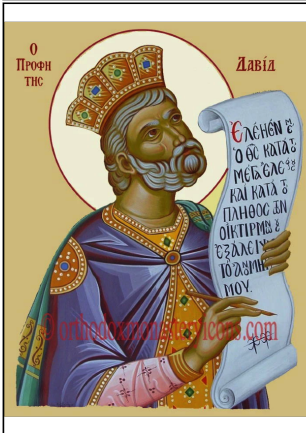
WHAT'S IN THE ICON?

In most icons, you see King David with a crown and a scroll with words from the book of Psalms.

But here, you see him with a lyre (like a harp) instrument. That's because he played it for King Saul!



HOLY PROPHET DAVID WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT HIM?



Have you ever read a biography? Let's say you learned about a president. You might find out where he went to school, what he did before he became president, and then what he did as president. Biographies are interesting because we like to find out how somebody grew to be a great person.

But today we celebrate a saint who has one of the most interesting biographies of all! David was a shepherd. He sang and played the harp too. He killed the great Goliath

with his slingshot. He worked for King Saul and became his friend. Then David even became king himself! He didn't always do the right thing, but he asked God to forgive him and he became close again with God.

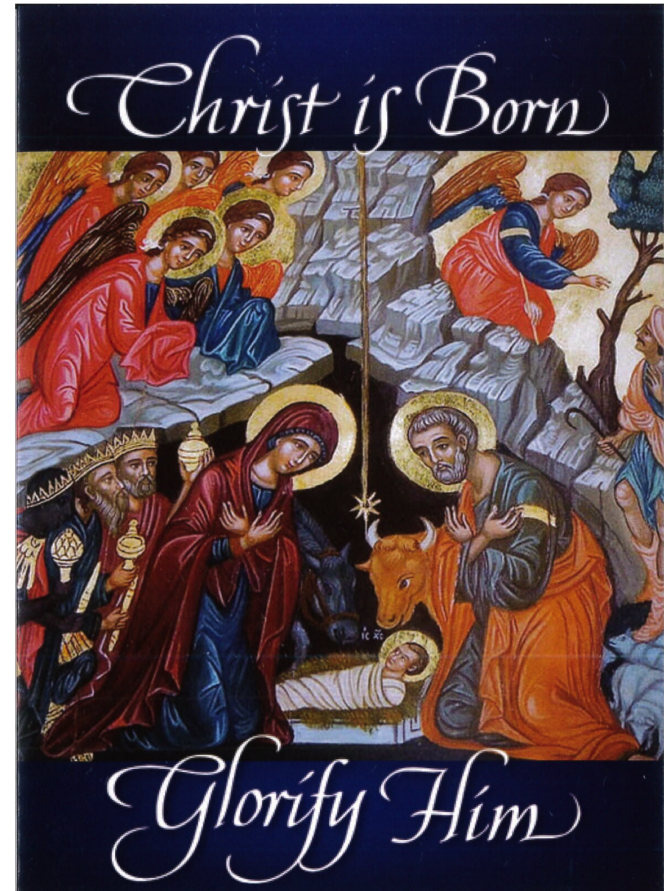
We can read about King David in the Bible, and we can pray with the beautiful psalms (songs) that he wrote in the Bible. We hear these words in our church services too! We call David a prophet, because the psalms tell us things that God wanted His people to hear.

We celebrate David today because he was a relative of Christ, and of course we celebrated His birth just a few days ago!

We celebrate St. David today, the Sunday after Christmas.

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Christ is born!



The Children's Word is a weekly bulletin for Orthodox Christian young people. Copyright 2024 Alexandra Houck. Email is orthodoxchildrensword (at) gmail.com. Find it each week at myocn.net.