

Here the Apostle Paul will remind us again that, in order for us to enjoy such a high inheritance, we passed through the image or condition of an imperfect religiosity. This referred to a mechanical worship, which at some point caused the abhorrence of God as well (Is. 1:14). When however, the time appointed by God was completed, He sent us His Son, who became a man of a woman. A woman first fell into sin, and from a woman He was born, Who saved us from the bonds of sin. He humbled Himself and submitted Himself to the perfect keeping of the Mosaic Law, to expiate us from the condemnation to the curse of the Law, which every one of us would undergo, as its transgressors. With such an incalculable sacrifice, He helped us to become adult, leading us from slavery to freedom and to the chief honor and glory of His adoption.

Archim. B. L.

**SUNDAY, JUNE JULY 07, 2019 3RD SUNDAY OF MATTHEW ,**

*Thomas the Righteous of Malea , Kyriake the Great Martyr , Akakios of Sinai, Willibald, Bishop of Eichstatt .*

**TONE OF THE WEEK :** *Second Tone*

**EOTHINON :** *Third Orthros Gospel*

**EPISTLE READING:** *St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 3:23-29,4:1-5*

**GOSPEL READING:** *Matthew 6:22-33*

**NEXT SUNDAY, SUNDAY, JULY 14, 2019 SUNDAY OF THE HOLY**

**FATHERS OF THE 4TH ECUMENICAL COUNCIL ,** *Aquila the Apostle among the 70 , Our Holy Father Joseph the Confessor, Archbishop of Thessalonica , Nicodemus the Righteous of Mount Athos, Justus the Martyr, Peter the New Hieromartyr and the four New Martyrs of Melissourgeio Kissamos.*

**EPISTLE READING:** *St. Paul's Letter to Titus 3:8-15*

**GOSPEL READING:** *Matthew 5:14-19*



**67<sup>TH</sup> YEAR JULY 7 2019 PAMPHLET #27 (3449)**

## **“FROM ENSLAVEMENT TO ADOPTION”**

It is natural that the supposedly contemporary adult man, who believed that already from the time of the Enlightenment, he came out of his immaturity, grumble when he hears that he is not as mature as he thinks, and that he must still pass through stages of adulthood “under trainers” obeying rules. At some point, of course, he is forced by matters, to seek, on his own, such undesired programs, like a certain French author, who is considered a “frontwoman” of women’s liberation, when she asked to enter a clinic in order to detoxify from alcohol, she said: “O woe!” For the first time I am forced to put limitations on my life, and to sign them, furthermore”.

On the day of the memory of the, young in age, on the one hand physically, while spiritually not only adult, but also glorious holy and great martyr Kyriaki, our Church presents in the Epistle Reading the stages – according to the Apostle Paul – of our spiritual adulthood.

### **A safe guard**

Initially we must, with the help of the sacred Chrysostom, remember that we were made by God so pure, “that we did not need the written law, since the grace of the Holy Spirit acted directly on our hearts. Furthermore, even in the age of the Old

### *THE GOSPEL ST. PAUL'S FIRST LETTER TO THE GALATIANS 3:23-29*

Brethren, before faith came, we were confined under the law, kept under restraint until faith should be revealed. So that the law was our custodian until Christ came, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a custodian; for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no better than a slave, though he is the owner of all the estate; but he is under guardians and trustees until the date set by the father. So with us; when we were children, we were slaves to the elemental spirits of the universe. But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

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Testament, God did not address the prophets with written texts, but He Himself directly personally, because He found their heart pure. . Because however, the Jews fell into a depth of wickedness, the written texts and the slabs of the Law were needed”.

The Apostle prefers, in a most gentle manner, to characterize the fall “into a depth of wickedness” as a relegation into “infancy”. In this immaturity, God did not leave His people unprotected, but He gave them the Mosaic Law to be their guard and pedagogue. On the one hand, the guarding was comprised of guiding the Jews to the sense that they are not autonomous but they have a law from somewhere else, and that their rebellion and apostasy is a sin and mortal separation from God. Due, of course, to their infant-mindedness, the philanthropic God completed the Law with a multitude of regulations, which created the sense of «confinement» in the narrow prison of scaring to transgress. It was, nevertheless, an awakening fear, which did not aim to condemn them to slavery, but to prepare them to participate in the future “freedom of the glory of the children of God».

### **Pedagogue and colleague of Grace**

On the other hand, the pedagogy of the Law, aimed to not leave them stagnant in the infant spiritual condition, but to prepare them to receive the teaching of Christ. “The pedagogue” explains the Golden-tongued one, echoing the viewpoints of the age, “does not oppose the teacher but also cooperates, preparing the child for the higher lessons which he will hand down to him. So if, the Law guarded us pedagogically, not only is it not opposed to the grace of Christ, but is also its colleague. If, however, after the coming of Christ it [the Law] insists on governing, then it becomes opposing”. It is like the lantern of the older time, which is beneficial, on the one hand, at night, but if in the day it wants to force us to not see the sun, then not only does it not offer anything, but it is also harmful.

The Galatians , to whom the Apostle Paul addresses himself, were using the Law in this destructive manner, insisting on keeping its mechanical regulations, and believing that with this alone, they are able to be saved. Thus they remained in the infancy and the slavery of the Law, at the moment when the Apostle is shouting to them: “grow up finally.” The age of slavery has passed, and the time of adoption has come. Now everyone, both those Jews under the Law, and the idolaters without the Law, became children of God, with faith in Jesus Christ”.

This adoption is the fruit of the Mystery of Baptism, through which we were united with Christ to such a degree, that we “put Him on” as our unbreakable garment. Photius the Great, of course, finding this image insufficient, will add that “Christ is not for us, simply an external garment, but He also fills our heart and thoughts with His light, and makes our face shine from His grace”.

### **The two gifts**

Our union with Christ grants us two more invaluable gifts. First: It abolishes every type of distinction between the believers, such as distinctions of ethnicity, race and social rank, since thanks to our union with Him we are united between us so much, that it seems that we are one person. The second very great gift is the inheritance of His Kingdom, of the new Land of Promise, which God promised to the patriarch Abraham. Because, as the body of Christ, henceforth, the Descendant in the flesh of Abraham, we also became descendants of the holy Patriarch.