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BOOK OF THE GENESIS OF JESUS CHRIST

A characteristic manner of expression of the Scripture

“This is the book of the generation of heaven and earth” (Gen. 2:4). In other words, “this is the book which speaks about the creation of heaven and the earth”. With these words Genesis is self characterized from the beginning, the first book of the Old Testament, which sets out with the creation of the world. “The book of the generation of Jesus Christ” (Matt. 1:1). In other words, “a book which refers to the birth of Jesus Christ”. With these words Matthew begins the first book of the New Testament, which proclaims the joyous message of the recreation of the corrupt world.

The titles which these first books of the Old and New Testament give to themselves do not seem to respond to their content. Genesis doesn't only speak about creation, but also describes the fall of the first created humans and their exile from paradise, it gives information about the first humans, the flood and the Tower of Babel, whereas subsequently it makes an extensive reference to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the twelve patriarchs. Likewise, the Gospel according to Matthew sets out with everything which is related to the birth and coming of Christ in the world and reaches up to His crucifixion and resurrection.

This seeming lack of agreement among the title and the content of the divinely inspired books is not due to some mistake or lack of exactness of their authors. On the contrary, it is a basic part of the Scripture, which the Fathers of the Church repeatedly note, for the beginning to be unbreakably associated with the whole. So, sometimes from the beginning, the whole receives its name, as we saw in these two examples, whereas at other times the whole gives its name to the beginning. So for this reason, the Father, who is the head of the Godhead, from whom the Son is born and the Holy Spirit proceeds, very often in the Scripture is denoted by the word “God”. Likewise the Scripture often distinguishes the two genders as “human” and “woman”, not of course because it doesn't consider the woman as human, but because the man is the head from which the woman came forth: coessential and equal in value with him.

And we find many other similar examples in the Scripture, which, if we don't know this basic manner with which the Sacred Books express themselves, there is danger that we will misunderstand

them and fall into dogmatic mistakes and treat the sacred text unjustly and place our salvation in danger.

Two basic presuppositions

From the first chapter of his Gospel, Matthew certifies to his readers two basic presuppositions which Jesus Christ as the Messiah fulfills in His person. First of all, the Messiah, according to the prophecies of the Old Testament, had to be in the offspring of Abraham, to descend from the tribe of Judah and to come from the royal tribe of David. So for this reason Matthew begins the gospel with the genealogical tree of Jesus Christ proving very amply that Jesus Christ is truly an offspring of David, of Judas, of Abraham.

All the Jews ought to know their genealogical tree, in order to indisputably prove that they belong to the one or the other tribe. So for this reason in the Old Testament we encounter quite a few genealogical catalogues. With the destruction however of Jerusalem by Titus in 70 A.D. the genealogical catalogues were lost by the Jews. Commenting on this event St. Nectarios observes that henceforth no other Messiah can be awaited, since the evidence has vanished, in other words the genealogical charts, and consequently, and henceforth it is impossible to be fulfilled, if they were not fulfilled before the destruction of Jerusalem during Titus.

The second presupposition was the Messiah would be born of a Virgin-in Hebrew “Alma”, in other words an unwed young maiden – about which the prophet Isaiah had spoken of about eight centuries before. The angel of the Lord reminded Joseph betrothed about this prophecy, in order to give him explanations about the mystery of the Virgin Mary being with child. According to the prophecy, the son of the Virgin would be named Emanuel, in other words “God is with us”. Truly, the Church in all centuries admits and proclaims Jesus Christ as God the Word, who became man for our sake and indwelt among us and lived among us and He would be with us all the days until the close of the age (Matt. 28:20).

The righteous Joseph

The Scripture characterizes Joseph betrothed as righteous. His righteousness lies in the fact that when he saw that the Virgin was pregnant even though they didn't have carnal relations between them, he did not want to denounce her to the world, as the Mosaic law appointed, in order to stone her as an adulterous – the angel of God had not yet of course appeared to him. With his love he exceeded the law, or rather, he kept the essence and the spirit of the law. So he became similar to the righteous people of the Old Testament, like Moses and David, who, exceeding the law, showed love and forgiveness to the impious people, towards murderers and toward lewd people.

This righteousness we are also called to imitate. Injustice damns us, human righteousness keeps us glued to the earth. Only divine righteousness saves us and sanctifies us, because it is identified with love. One Saint was saying that “for you to love your neighbor as yourself” essentially means for you to love your neighbor more than your own self. So much righteous we will be in our life, as the more we treat our own selves unjustly, favoring what is the truly good and advantage of our fellow men. According to the degree we proceed on this path, we will resemble God and all His righteous ones.

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