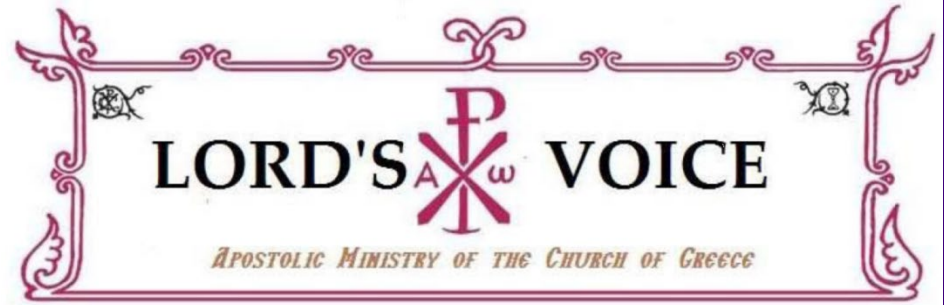


That is why the hope that comes from our faith in the Lord, contributes to us submitting "ourselves and each other" to Christ, God, "for he cares about us" (1 Pet. 5:7); and to obtain the feeling that we are heirs of God's promise for salvation, sanctification, our "christification", and participation in His Kingdom

Archim. N.K



71<sup>ST</sup> YEAR MARCH 26 2023 PAMPHLET # 13 (3643)

## THE PROMISES OF GOD

Today's Sunday is the fourth Sunday of Holy Lent, and the Church presents the ascetic figure and teaching of an abba of the Sinaitic desert, Saint John of the Ladder. He lived in the 7th century, and he realized the ideals of true evangelical asceticism and repentance in his life, because his whole being was flooded with the light of faith and love for God and fellow men.

At the Divine Liturgy, the Epistle passage from the Apostle Paul to the Hebrews was read, in which the patience and perseverance of the patriarch Abraham is underlined towards God's promises. Called e.g. by God to leave his land and his relatives and to go to a foreign place, he obeyed; God promised him that his descendants would reach as the stars of heaven and the sand of the sea in multitude; that he would give birth to a child with Sarah, even though they were both very advanced in age. However, also God's command for him to sacrifice his only precious child, whom he obtained beyond every human expectation, seems to ultimately put to naught God's.

### SUNDAY, MARCH 26, 2023 SUNDAY OF SAINT JOHN OF

CLIMACUS, *Synaxis in honor of Archangel Gabriel, 26 Martyrs in Crimea, Irenaeus the Hieromartyr of Hungary*

**EPISTLE READING:** *St. Paul's Letter to Hebrews 6:13-20*

**GOSPEL READING** : *Mark 9: 17-31*

**TONE OF THE WEEK** : *Plagal fourth Tone*

**EOTHINON** : *Eighth Eothinon*

### SUNDAY, APRIL 2, 2023 SUNDAY OF SAINT MARY OF

EGYPT, *Titus the Wonderworker, Theodora the Virgin martyr of Palestine, Amphianos and Aedesios the martyrs of Lykia*

**EPISTLE READING:** *St. Paul's Letter to Hebrews 9: 11 - 14*

**GOSPEL READING** : *Mark 10: 32-45*

## THE SUNDAY EPISTLE *HEBREWS 6:13-20*

BRETHREN, when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore to himself, saying, "Surely I will bless you and multiply you." And thus Abraham, having patiently endured, obtained the promise. Men indeed swear by a greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he interposed with an oath, so that through two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible that God should prove false, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to seize the hope set before us. We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner shrine behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

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original promise. But Abraham trusts God. And precisely here is found the foundation of his hope, that did not prove him wrong.

When God promises man, it means that between the two, there is a personal relationship and communion. This relationship is the expression of God's infinite love offered in the person of Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit. Because Christ is the pre-eminent fulfillment of God's promise to man concerning his deification.

And the acceptance of the mystery of Christ is a voluntary offering of man's being to God, through faith and the evangelical life. In fact, as the Apostle says, because God

wanted to show more clearly to those who would inherit what He promised, that His decision was irrevocable, He guaranteed it with an oath. By this action of His, He condescends to human weakness, to help people remain firm and unwavering in their faith.

After all, the Holy Bible contains quite a few anthropomorphic expressions about God, who by His actions worked the salvation of man. And since there is nothing higher than God, that's why He swears to Himself.

### The Lord as the guarantor of man's hope

The Lord Jesus in the New Testament sealed the communion of His love for man with His own Blood, which He offered, being sacrificed "for the life of the world". That is why the content of hope in Christ consists of the immutable will of God for the promised salvation of man. And hope, like every other virtue in the Church, is an enhypostatic truth; that is, it is manifested through a person, the person of light, the Lord of Glory.

"Christ is the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27). The Lord is the firmament, the refuge and the deliverer; the hope that secures us and affirms us like an anchor (Heb. 6:19). Man's life is like a stormy sea; sorrows, temptations, illnesses, injustices, slanders, and disappointment. And yet, when everything around us is shaken, and when a dark flood wants to drown everything that is beautiful and bright, the believer has as an anchor "safe and certain" the possibility of recourse to the insurmountable power and love of God for him.