



April 4, 2010
THE FEAST OF FEASTS:
THE PASCHA OF OUR LORD,
GOD AND SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST

PASCHAL TROPARION - TONE ONE:

Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life!

PASCHAL HYPAKOE - TONE FOUR:

Before the dawn, Mary and the women came and found the stone rolled away from the tomb. They heard the angelic voice, "Why do you seek among the dead, as a man the one who is everlasting life? Behold the clothes in the grave--go and proclaim to the world that the Lord is risen! He has slain death, as He is the Son of God, saving the race of men!"

PASCHAL KONTAKION - TONE EIGHT:

You did descend into the tomb, O Immortal. You did destroy the power of death. In victory did you arise, O Christ God, proclaiming, "Rejoice" to the myrrh-bearing women, granting peace to Your Apostles and bestowing Resurrection on the fallen!



EPISTLE & COMMENTARY

THE PROKIMENON IN THE 8TH TONE:

This is the day which the Lord has made! Let us rejoice and be glad in it!

Verse: O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endures forever!

ACTS 1: 1-8

The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. And being assembled together with [them,] He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; "for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

ALLELUIA

You did arise and have mercy on Zion.

The Lord looked down from heaven and saw all the sons of men.

COMMENTARY

Jesus Christ is risen from the dead--and yet, because the Apostles had not yet received the "Promise of the Father" (the Holy Spirit), they asked the wrong question. The reason this question is incorrect is because it starts from the wrong perspective. The Risen Christ doesn't restore the Kingdom to something which is imperfect, like Israel. Rather, He restores and redeems Israel to something perfect: the Kingdom of Heaven. Through His death on the Cross and His Glorious Resurrection, Christ redeems not only mankind, but the entirety of Creation. He, as the Sacrificial Lamb washes not only humanity but the world in His Innocent Blood, making Creation truly "whiter than snow." May our Risen Lord grant us all the humility to be washed in His Blood, and so participate in His Glorious Resurrection!



GOSPEL & COMMENTARY

JOHN 1: 1-17

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.' " And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

COMMENTARY

This is the Day which the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it! Christ, the New Pascha, the Wisdom, Word and Power of God, has, through His Death on the Cross and Glorious Resurrection, redeemed humanity. He has become the New Adam, fully uniting Humanity to God. He is truly the Firstborn of the New Creation! The Word of God is the co-creator with the Father and the Holy Spirit and not merely an instrument or servant used by the Father. Will, operation and power are one in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. And, by unifying ourselves to His Body (the Church), we too might walk in the newness of life. We are initiated into this unification through our baptism, and fulfill it through receiving Christ's Body and Blood in the Eucharist. Then we are to go out into the world, and proclaim His Resurrection to all! May the Light of our Risen Lord shine in our hearts as a beacon, calling all to Himself!

SPIRITUAL ARTICLES

The Catechetical Homily of St. John Chrysostom

If any man be devout and love God, let him enjoy this fair and radiant triumphal feast. If any man be a wise servant, let him rejoicing enter into the joy of his Lord. If any have labored long in fasting, let him now receive his recompense. If any have wrought from the first hour, let him today receive his just reward. If any have come at the third hour, let him with thankfulness keep the feast. If any have arrived at the

sixth hour, let him have no misgivings; because he shall in nowise be deprived thereof. If any have delayed until the ninth hour, let him draw near, fearing nothing. If any have tarried even until the eleventh hour, let him, also, be not alarmed at his tardiness; for the Lord, who is jealous of his honor, will accept the last even as the first; he gives rest unto him who comes at the eleventh hour, even as unto him who has wrought from the first hour.

And he shows mercy upon the last, and cares for the first; and to the one he gives, and upon the other he bestows gifts. And he both accepts the deeds, and welcomes the intention, and honors the acts and praises the offering. Wherefore, enter you all into the joy of your Lord; and receive your reward, both the first, and likewise the second. You rich and poor together, hold high festival. You sober and you heedless, honor the day. Rejoice today, both you who have fasted and you who have disregarded the fast. The table is full-laden; feast ye all sumptuously. The calf is fatted; let no one go hungry away.

Enjoy ye all the feast of faith: Receive ye all the riches of loving-kindness. Let no one bewail his poverty, for the universal kingdom has been revealed. Let no one weep for his iniquities, for pardon has shown forth from the grave. Let no one fear death, for the Savior's death has set us free. He that was held prisoner of it has annihilated it. By descending into Hell, He made Hell captive. He embittered it when it tasted of His flesh. And Isaiah, foretelling this, did cry: Hell, said he, was embittered, when it encountered Thee in the lower regions. It was embittered, for it was abolished. It was embittered, for it was mocked. It was embittered, for it was slain. It was embittered, for it was overthrown. It was embittered, for it was fettered in chains. It took a body, and met God face to face. It took earth, and encountered Heaven. It took that which was seen, and fell upon the unseen.

O Death, where is your sting? O Hell, where is your victory? Christ is risen, and you are overthrown. Christ is risen, and the demons are fallen. Christ is risen, and the angels rejoice. Christ is risen, and life reigns. Christ is risen, and not one dead remains in the grave. For Christ, being risen from the dead, is become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. To Him be glory and dominion unto ages of ages. Amen.