

# John Chrysostom Commentary Summary

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## Introduction

Under the heading, **Getting to Know Chrysostom, His Integrity**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY XXII, page 508**, he says, “For this is the import of “as much as in you lieth, be at peace with all men.” But if the other will not be at peace, do not thou fill thy soul with tempest, but in mind be friendly (φίλος, several mss. φιλόσοφος) as I said before, without giving up the truth on any occasion.”

How much could we in the Church today benefit from these words? We must not prize concord above truth, that is, Biblical truth. We can accept the fact that some will not change. But we must walk in the light if we are going to glorify our Father in heaven.

And in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TITUS, HOMILY II, page 527**, in summary, Chrysostom begins as he says, “Let us therefore pursue truth, and not be as if we were on the stage and acting a part. For of what advantage is it, tell me, to be gazed at by a multitude? It is vainglory, and nothing else.”

The “esteem of men” is rightly said to be a “slavery”. Let us “look beyond honor from the multitude, and to extend our views to heaven, and obtain the good things there”, as Chrysostom has said.

John Chrysostom was in pursuit of truth.

Under the heading, **Getting to Know Chrysostom, His Esteem of the Scriptures**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON PHILIPPIANS, HOMILY VII, page 300-301**, he says, “If ye will not any other, yet get you at least the New Testament, the Apostolic Epistles, the Acts, the Gospels, for your constant teachers. If grief befall thee, dive into them as into a chest of medicines; take thence comfort of thy trouble, be it loss, or death, or bereavement of relations; or rather dive not into them merely, but take them wholly to thee; keep them in thy mind.”

He is encouraging all believers to let the word of Christ dwell in ourselves richly, and “not simply dwell, but with great abundance”.

He encourages all to get a copy of the New Testament, which must have been difficult in those days when there was no printing press. And he did not want them just to have a copy, but to “dive not into them merely, but take them wholly to thee; keep them in thy mind”.

And in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TIMOTHY, HOMILY I, page 411-412**, he says, “He that is spiritual is truly rich. He continues, “Now these things we say superficially, as to men not knowing the Scriptures. But our discourses would be unnecessary if you would believe and take heed to the divine word, for that would teach you all things.””

# The Divinity of the Son

## Commentary Summary

Concerning **The Divinity of the Son**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY IV, page 16-19**, he says, “For this, as I before said, he has shown by the term “Word.” As therefore the expression, “In the beginning was the Word,” shows His Eternity, so “was in the beginning with God,” has declared to us His Co-eternity. For that you may not, when you hear “In the beginning was the Word,” suppose Him to be Eternal, and yet imagine the life of the Father to differ from His by some interval and longer duration, and so assign a beginning to the Only-Begotten, he adds, “was in the beginning with God”; so eternally even as the Father Himself, for the Father was never without the Word, but He was always God with God, yet Each in His proper Person.”

According to Chrysostom, the Son is Co-eternal with the Father, and this is according to Scripture. And he argues well as he says, “Still I should like to ask our objectors, what means that which is said by the Prophet, “Before Me there was no God formed, nor is there any after Me”? (Is. xliii. 10) For if the Son is younger than the Father, how, says He, “Nor is there any after me”? Will you take away the being of the Only Begotten Himself? You either must dare this, or admit one Godhead with distinct Persons of the Father and Son.”

John Chrysostom has presented the Biblical truth of the divinity of the Son of God clearly, and this he has done in spite of the many errors that were circulating in his time. He has defended the faith.

Concerning **Jesus**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, EUTROPIUS, PATRICIAN AND CONSUL, Homily II, After Eutropius having been found outside the Church had been taken captive, page 256-257**, Chrysostom acknowledged that He “was called the Way, the Door, the Rock”. He understood that He is our foundation. And he asks, “Wherefore was He called the Life? Because He raised us up when we were dead.”

And he says, “Wherefore was He called the Rock? that thou mightest understand the secure and unshaken character of the faith.”

And he says, “Wherefore was He called the Foundation? That thou mightest understand that He upholdeth all things.”

And he says, “Wherefore was He called the Root? That thou mightest understand that in Him we have our power of growth.”

And he says, “Wherefore was He called the Shepherd? Because He feeds us. Wherefore was He called a sheep? Because He was sacrificed for us and became a propitiatory offering.”

And he says, “Wherefore was He called the Life? Because He raised us up when we were dead.”

And he says, “Wherefore was He called the Light? Because He delivered us from darkness.”

And he says, “Why was He called an Arm? Because He is of one substance with the Father.”

And he says, “Why was He called the Word? Because He was begotten of the Father. For as my word is the offspring of my spirit, even so was the Son begotten of the Father. Wherefore

is He called our raiment? Because I was clothed with Him when I was baptized.”

And he says, “Wherefore is He called the Head? Because I have been made a member of His.”

And he says, “Why is He called a Bridegroom? Because He hath taken me as His bride.” Wherefore is He called undefiled? Because He took me as a virgin. Wherefore is He called Master? Because I am His bondmaid.”

There can be no doubt that John Chrysostom was a believer, and that he is with the Lord now.

Concerning **Christ’s Age**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY LV, page 198-199**, he says, ““My day,” seems to me to mean the day of the Crucifixion, which Abraham foreshowed typically by the offering of the ram and of Isaac. What do they reply?

Ver. 57. “Thou art not yet forty (fifty in John 8:57) years old, and hast Thou seen Abraham?”

So that we conclude that Christ was nearly forty.”

Chrysostom thought that Christ was nearly forty years old. But Jesus began His ministry about the age of 30, as we read in **Luke 3 (KJV):23** And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli.

And Jesus ministered about 3½ years, as is evident in the Gospel of John which mentions three different Passover feasts that Jesus attended.

The limitation of Pilate’s reign makes it impossible for Jesus to have lived past 36 A.D. The fact that Herod the Great died in 4 B.C. means that Jesus was born sometime before 4 B.C., since Herod the Great tried to kill all the infants 2 years old and younger when the Magi did not return. Since Jesus preached the Gospel for about 3 ½ years, this means that Jesus must have been crucified about 30 A.D. or before.

Concerning **The Lamb, the Christ, the Prophet**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY XVIII, page 62-64**, Chrysostom quotes John the Baptist in **John 1 (KJV):29** The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

Chrysostom testifies that the Lamb would take away the sin of the world. He concludes, “As then The Word shows us His pre-eminence, and The Son His superiority in comparison with others, so “The Lamb, The Christ, that Prophet, the True Light, the Good Shepherd,” and whatever other names are applied to Him with the addition of the article, mark a great difference. For there were many “Lambs,” and “Prophets,” and “Christs,” and “sons,” but from all these John separates Him by a wide interval.”

Concerning **His Resurrection and Ascension**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY LXXXVI, page 323-327**, Chrysostom held that Christ was resurrected bodily, and that Christ ascended to heaven after forty days, which He did. But Chrysostom also held that it was then that the Holy Spirit would give the disciples “the power of working miracles”, as he says, ““But in the other case, after forty days, they received the power of working miracles. Wherefore He saith, “Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa.” (Acts i. 8)”

Chrysostom also did not understand that Christ had to ascend into heaven before the disciples could touch Him. Christ had to first redeem us, as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):**11 But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; 12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

And in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):**24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: 25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; 26 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. 27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: 28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

So Christ entered into the holy place, that is heaven itself, by His own blood to obtain eternal redemption for us. Then He returned to earth to show Himself alive to His disciples for forty days, as we read in **Acts 1 (KJV):**1 The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, 2 Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: 3 To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: 4 And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. 5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

Then He ascended into heaven, as we read in **Acts 1 (KJV):**9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. 10 And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; 11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

Then ten days later, the Holy Spirit came upon them, as we read in **Acts 2 (KJV):**1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.



# The Priesthood

## Commentary Summary

Concerning **The Priesthood**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, On the Priesthood, Book III, page 46-49**, Chrysostom says that “the Paraclete Himself, instituted this vocation, and persuaded men while still abiding in the flesh to represent the ministry of angels. Wherefore the consecrated priest ought to be as pure as if he were standing in the heavens themselves in the midst of those powers.”

Although Chrysostom understands that “the sacrifice is one”, and that they “celebrate a memorial of a sacrifice”, he still says, “For when thou seest the Lord sacrificed, and laid upon the altar”. He also uses words like “offered” and “sacrifice” together.

Though Chrysostom says, “We do not then offer a different sacrifice, as the high priest formerly did, but always the same; or rather we celebrate a memorial of a sacrifice”, the presence of an altar, and a priest and the word “offer”, make it difficult to understand their ritual as simply “a memorial of a sacrifice”.

In the very “Liturgy which bears the name of St. Chrysostom”, he does not mention memorial but sacrifice as he says, “Grant that we may find grace in thy sight that our sacrifice may become acceptable to Thee...” So we are left to believe that it is a sacrifice.

While we can agree with Schaff that “they did not hold that the elements of bread and wine were transmuted into the body and blood of Christ in such a sense as to cease to be bread and wine”, yet the way they celebrated this memorial makes it a ritual that is more than just a remembrance.

And Chrysostom says, “They who rule on earth have indeed authority to bind, but only the body: whereas this binding lays hold of the soul and penetrates the heavens; and what priests do here below God ratifies above, and the Master confirms the sentence of his servants. For indeed what is it but all manner of heavenly authority which He has given them when He says, “Whose sins ye remit they are remitted, and whose sins ye retain they are retained?” (John 20:23)”

But Jesus was telling His disciples that they should tell those who had believed in Him that their sins had been remitted, or forgiven. The disciples were to tell those who did not believe in Him that their sins had been retained.

Chrysostom also explains his thinking about priests, as he says, "Away with such madness! For transparent madness it is to despise so great a dignity, without which it is not possible to obtain either our own salvation, or the good things which have been promised to us. For if no one can enter into the kingdom of Heaven except he be regenerate through water and the Spirit, and he who does not eat the flesh of the Lord and drink His blood is excluded from eternal life, and if all these things are accomplished only by means of those holy hands, I mean the hands of the priest, how will any one, without these, be able to escape the fire of hell, or to win those crowns which are reserved for the victorious?"

However, the priests are not “the authors of our birth from God”, for we are born of God as we read again in **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of

blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

It is not the priest who gives us faith, but faith is the gift of God, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (NKJV):8** For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, **9** not of works, lest anyone should boast.

And Chrysostom also says of priests, “For not only at the time of regeneration, but afterwards also, they have authority to forgive sins.”

Chrysostom misunderstood how one is born again. This caused him to believe that there was a great weight of responsibility on the priest, and that they were in some way responsible for people’s salvation.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, On the Priesthood, Book IV, page 68-69**, he calls “elders” priests. But he lays great stress on the need for skill in handling the word of God on the priest. The priest must be able to refute the heretics, in order to keep the laity from falling into heresy.

And he says, “But that the apostle gives the same charge to the laity, hear what he says in another epistle to other than the priesthood: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom,” (Colossians 3:16) and again, “Let your speech be always with grace seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer each one,”

He also encourages the laity to “Build each other up”, and to “be ready to render an account of their faith”,

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, On the Priesthood, Book VI, page 74-80**, Chrysostom points out the stricter judgment levied on priests. The reason for this stricter judgment was because of the responsibility of the priest. According to Chrysostom, the priest was responsible to give their “account for each of those who have been entrusted to us”, as in **Hebrews 13 (KJV):17** Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

And so the penalty of the priest is “not limited to shame, but everlasting chastisement awaits us as well.”

The office of the priest is “an office which needs the virtues of an angel”, and “the soul of the Priest ought to be purer than the very sunbeams, in order that the Holy Spirit may not leave him desolate”.

And he asks, “And whenever he invokes the Holy Spirit, and offers the most dread sacrifice, and constantly handles the common Lord of all, tell me what rank shall we give him? What great purity and what real piety must we demand of him?”

And he asks, “ought not the soul which receives so great a spirit to be purer and holier than anything in the world?”

But Chrysostom did not understand that the priesthood had changed, and we in the New Testament are not under the law of the Levitical priesthood, or any other priesthood.

And in the Liturgy of St. Chrysostom, we read, “And we pray and beseech Thee, send down thy Holy Ghost upon us and upon these gifts here outspread, and make this bread to be the precious body of thy Christ, and that which is in the cup the precious blood of Christ, having so changed them by thy Holy Spirit that to us who partake of them they may be for the cleansing of our souls, the remission of sins, the communion of the Holy Spirit.” So the bread

and wine are changed “by thy Holy Spirit that to us who partake of them they may be for the cleansing of our souls, the remission of sins, the communion of the Holy Spirit.” And this change happens “whenever he invokes the Holy Spirit, and offers the most dread sacrifice, and constantly handles the common Lord of all”. That is, it happens when the priest invokes the Holy Spirit.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 10, THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, HOMILY LXXXV, page 509-510**, he says that the Church had to have “fields, and houses, and hirings of lodgings, and carriages, and muleteers, and mules, and a great array of this kind” in order to fulfill its ministry to the poor because the laity would not give alms. And he says that as a result they “continue unfruitful, and God’s priests do not practise their proper duties.”

So the priests were having to “to imitate the houses of them that manage public affairs”, in order to provide for the poor, and were limited by this in terms of their ministry.

And even the Bishops had “gone beyond agents, and stewards, and hucksters in their care about these things”, that is, of “public affairs”. He notes there was “great neglect of the Scriptures, and remissness in prayers, and indifference about all the other duties” among the clergy in his time. But it is evident from his writing that Chrysostom himself did not neglect the Scriptures.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON THESSALONIANS, HOMILY X, page 366-367**, Chrysostom says, “He does not merely say “love,” but “very highly,” as children love their fathers. For through them ye were begotten by that eternal generation: through them you have obtained the kingdom: through their hands all things are done, through them the gates of heaven are opened to you. Let no one raise divisions, let no one be contentious. He who loves Christ, whatever the Priest may be, will love him, because through him he has obtained the awful Mysteries.”

And he says, “Tell me, if wishing to see a palace resplendent with much gold, and radiant with the brightness of precious stones, thou couldest find him who had the key, and he being called upon immediately opened it, and admitted thee within, wouldest thou not prefer him above all men?”

He refers to **Matthew 16 (KJV):19** And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

But the key into the kingdom of heaven is Jesus. He is the door. He is the way, the truth, and the life.

When we believe in Him we pass from condemnation to justification, as we read in **John 3 (KJV):18** He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

And we pass from death to life, as we read again in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

The Lord is about relationship. And it is not dependent on man, as we read in **1 John 2 (KJV):27** But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

God wants relationship with every individual believer. And He has made this possible by faith in Jesus Christ.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TIMOTHY, HOMILY VI, page 426-427**, Chrysostom says, “The Priest is the common father, as it were, of all the world; it is proper therefore that he should care for all, even as God, Whom he serves.”

So he is saying that the priest is like God. But Jesus taught us to pray to our Father, as we read in **Matthew 6 (KJV):9** After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. 10 Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. 11 Give us this day our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

We don't pray to a priest, but to God. And Jesus also taught as in **Matthew 23 (KJV):9** And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.

All believers are servants of the most high as we read in **Daniel 3 (KJV):26** Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were just everyday believers.

This thinking about the priest made the priest our mediator. But there is only one mediator between God and men, as we read in **1 Timothy 2 (KJV):5** For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TITUS, HOMILY I, page 521-522**, Chrysostom says, “Observe also how he offers the same prayers for the Teacher, as for the disciples and the multitude. For indeed he needs such prayers as much, or rather more than they, by how much he has greater enmities to encounter, and is more exposed to the necessity of offending God. For the higher is the dignity, the greater are the dangers of the priestly office. For one good act in his episcopal office is sufficient to raise him to heaven and one error to sink him to hell itself.”

And he says, “These are not the things we find blamed or applauded at all. For the qualities which a Bishop is required to possess are different, as to be blameless, sober, orderly, hospitable, apt to teach. These the Apostle requires, and these we ought to look for in a ruler of the Church, but nothing further.”

Chrysostom speaks of a ruler in the Church. But this was the apostolic ministry. The concept of the individuality of the believer, and a ministry gift for every believer, had been lost to the Church in the time of Chrysostom. This principle of ministry still needs recovery in the churches today. We must encourage the individuality of all believers, and the principle of ministry gifts which are still valid in the Church today, as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):11** And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

And we see the consequences of the hierarchy of ministry that had developed in the Church in Chrysostom's time. The elevation of a priest to a Bishop, and then the elevation of a Bishop to Archbishop, are not ministries that are defined in the word of God. The ministry of a Bishop or an Archbishop, in the sense in which it is described by Chrysostom, is the ministry of the apostle. The apostle is responsible for planting churches, establishing sound doctrine, and then caring for all the churches. We see this in the apostle Paul's ministry in **2 Corinthians 11 (KJV):28** Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

With the persecutions that the Church went through for the first three hundred years, the loss of doctrine was preceded by the loss of the apostolic ministry. Jesus Christ is still building His Church, and the reformation recovered much that was lost. The Church is growing but there is still more sound doctrine that needs to be recovered by many of the local churches.

It is true that teachers will be held to a stricter judgment, as James says in **James 3 (NASB):1** Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment. **2** For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well.

But in the case of believers, the "stricter judgment" James speaks of is for rewards, and not salvation.

Concerning **The Ministry of the Word**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, ON THE PRIESTHOOD, BOOK IV, page 64-66**, he says, "there is but one method and way of healing appointed, after we have gone wrong, and that is, the powerful application of the Word."

And in speaking of the "power of working miracles", he says, "But if there is not the least sign of such a power being left us, while on every side many enemies are constantly attacking us, why then it necessarily follows that we should arm ourselves with this weapon, both in order that we may not be wounded ourselves with the darts of the enemy, and in order that we may wound him."

And referring to Colossians 3:16, he says, "Wherefore it should be our ambition that the Word of Christ dwell in us richly".

And we must be prepared for battle, as he says, "For it is not for one kind of battle only that we have to be prepared. This warfare is manifold, and is engaged with a great variety of enemies; neither do all these use the same weapons, nor do they practice the same method of attack; and he who has to join battle with all, must needs know the artifices of all, and be at once both archer and slinger, captain and general, in the ranks and in command, on foot and on horseback, in sea-fight and in siege."

And the shepherd must be "coming equipped with accurate knowledge at all points".

Concerning **Advice to Bishops and Priests**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, ON THE PRIESTHOOD, BOOK V, page 70-73**, he says, "How great is the skill required for the teacher in contending earnestly for the truth, has been sufficiently set forth by

us.”

And in order that “his people may follow and yield to him”, the preacher must have “indifference to their praise, and the power of preaching well”.

And he says, “Thus then must the Priest behave towards those in his charge, as a father would behave to his very young children; and as such are not disturbed either by their insults or their blows, or their lamentations, nor even if they laugh and rejoice with us, do we take much account of it.”

And he says, “For since preaching does not come by nature, but by study, suppose a man to reach a high standard of it, this will then forsake him if he does not cultivate his power by constant application and exercise.”

And he notes, “So that there is greater labor for the wiser than for the unlearned”.

And he says of the preacher, “For a sufficient consolation in his labors, and one greater than all, is when he is able to be conscious of arranging and ordering his teaching with a view to pleasing God.”

And so we read in **2 Timothy 2 (KJV):15** Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

# Salvation

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY XVII, page 473-474**, Chrysostom quotes Romans 10:9, as he says, ““If thou confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thy heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.””

And referring to the faith of Abraham he says that, “he showed that there is need of vigor, and a lofty soul, that takes in things beyond expectation, and stumbles not at appearances.”

And he explains, “And what meaneth the phrase, “The Word is nigh thee?” That is, It is easy. For in thy mind and in thy tongue is thy salvation. There is no long journey to go, no seas to sail over, no mountains to pass, to get saved. But if you be not minded to cross so much as the threshold, you may even while you sit at home be saved. For “in thy mouth and in thy heart” is the source of salvation. And then on another score also he makes the word of faith easy, and says, that “God raised Him from the dead.””

Chrysostom does not even mention Baptism here, but in other writings, he says that baptism is necessary for salvation.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON EPHESIANS, HOMILY XVI, page 125-126**, he says, “If we are to attain to the kingdom of Heaven, it is not enough to abandon wickedness, but there must be abundant practice of that which is good also. To be delivered indeed from hell we must abstain from wickedness; but to attain to the kingdom we must cleave fast to virtue.”

However, entrance into the kingdom of Heaven is given to those who are born again. And one is born again when they believe in Jesus Christ, and confess Him as Lord. This is what we read in **John 3 (KJV):16** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

He also says, “Most certainly this too will have a fair show of reason, no less than the other case: for we are hence instructed, that they that have done good shall enjoy those good things that are in heaven, but they, who, though they have no evil indeed to be charged with, yet have omitted to do good, will be hurried away with them that have done evil into hell-fire.”

He bases his assertion on Matthew 25:31-46, which is the judgment of the nations. But the judgment of the nations is to determine which nations will be allowed into the Kingdom of one thousand years. We are saved by our faith in Christ, and not by our works.

He also says, “Let us not then foolishly ask such questions as these, what place shall he occupy, who has done neither any evil nor any good? For the very not doing good, is in itself doing evil.”

And he reasons, “Tell me, if thou hadst a servant, who should neither steal, nor insult, nor contradict thee, who moreover should keep from drunkenness and every other kind of vice, and yet should sit perpetually in idleness, and not doing one of those duties which a servant owes to his master, wouldest thou not chastise him, wouldest thou not put him to the rack?”

And as sons and daughters, the Lord chastens us, as we read in **Hebrews 12 (KJV):5** And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son,

despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: 6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

But He will never forsake us, as we read in **Hebrews 13 (KJV):5** Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

If all we build is wood, hay, or stubble, we will still be saved, as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):12** Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

## **Faith**

### **Commentary Summary**

Concerning **Faith**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 10, THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, HOMILY XXXI, page 206**, Chrysostom very astutely noticed that Jesus called the paralyzed man, “Son”, and the woman with an issue of blood, “Daughter” because their faith had made them a son and a daughter.

And in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON HEBREWS, HOMILY XXVIII, page 492-493**, he says, referring to Hebrews 12:1, “if we wish to run, and to learn to run well, let us look to Christ, even to Jesus “the author and finisher of our faith.” What is this? He has put the Faith within us.”

And he concludes, “He put the Beginning into us, He will also put on the End.”

We will understand more about his thinking on faith under the heading, **Faith Alone Is Not Enough**.

## **Free Will**

### **Commentary Summary**

Concerning **Free Will**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 10, THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, HOMILY XLV, page 284-285**, he says, “What then saith Christ? “Because it is given unto you,” so He speaks, “to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them it is not given.” (Matthew 13:11 [R.V., “Unto you it is given,” etc.]”

And he says, “But this He said, not bringing in necessity, or any allotment (ἀποκλῶσι) made causelessly and at random, but implying them to be the authors of all their own evils, and wishing to represent that the thing is a gift, and a grace bestowed from above.

It by no means follows, however, because it is a gift, that therefore free will is taken away; and this is evident from what comes after. To this purpose, in order that neither the one



sort may despair, nor the other grow careless, upon being told that “it is given,” He signifies the beginning to be with ourselves.”

That is, he is saying that we have to exercise our “free will” to receive the gift.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 10, THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, HOMILY LXXXII, page 494-495**, he says, “Hence we learn a great doctrine, that a man’s willingness is not sufficient, unless any one receive the succor from above; and that again we shall gain nothing by the succor from above, if there be not a willingness. And both these things do Judas and Peter show; for the one, though he had received much help, was profited nothing, because he was not willing, neither contributed his part; but this one, though he was ready in mind, because he received no assistance, fell. For indeed of these two things is virtue’s web woven.”

So Chrysostom says “that a man’s willingness is not sufficient, unless any one receive the succor from above”, and yet he says, “and that again we shall gain nothing by the succor from above, if there be not a willingness.”

Then in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY XIX, page 486-487**, he says, “For it is not to deny freewill that he speaks of their having “obtained” (as by chance, Gr. ἐπέτυχε) it, but to show the greatness of the good things, and that the greater part was of grace, though not the whole. For we too are in the habit of saying, “so and so chanced to get” (same word), “so and so met with,” when the gain has been a great one. Because it is not by man’s labors, but by God’s gift, that the greater part was brought about.”

But the Scripture does not say that the “greater part” was done by God, and the lesser part by man, but it says “of Him are you in Christ Jesus”, as in **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):30** But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: 31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

And in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON EPHESIANS, HOMILY II, page 13**, he says, ““Having first used the expression, “to them that are called according to a purpose,” and at the same time wishing to declare their privilege compared with the rest of mankind, he speaks also of inheritance by lot, yet so as not to divest them of free will.”

And in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TIMOTHY, HOMILY I, page 416-418**, he says, in speaking of Paul in 1 Timothy 1:12, “Thus everywhere, we see, he conceals his own merit, and ascribes everything to God, yet so far only, as not to take away free will.”

But Paul never speaks of the free will of man.

And again, speaking of Paul, he says, “Thus we see him acknowledge both his own part and that of God, and whilst he ascribes the greater part to the providence of God, he extenuates his own, yet so far only, as we said before, as was consistent with free will.”

He refers to **1 Timothy 1 (KJV):13** Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

The word “extenuates” means “to lessen or to try to lessen the seriousness or extent of (something, such as a fault or offense) by making partial excuses : MITIGATE

**(Merriam Webster)**

Paul is very bold to point out his unworthiness as a blasphemer and a persecutor. And he humbles himself again as he says, “but I obtained mercy”. God had mercy on him, and opened his heart to believe in Him.

And Chrysostom adds, “For he who in action, or word, or thought, does anything unworthy of Christ, does not sustain His name, and has not Christ dwelling in him.”

This would make our salvation dependent on our works, which cannot be according to Scripture. And doing “anything unworthy of Christ” is to sin. And He has provided a way for us to deal with sin. That is, we have only to confess our sins and He is faithful to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Our sin does not affect our standing with God, for God has justified us, and put His righteousness down to our account. And He has promised to never leave us.

Then in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TIMOTHY, HOMILY XV, page 463-464**, he says, “Beloved, see how we are honored! yet some are so unreasonable and so ungrateful as to say, “Why are we endowed with free will?” But how in all the particulars which we have mentioned could we have imitated God, if there had been no free will?”

We have been set free for freedom, as we read in **Galatians 5 (NASB):1** It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

We were slaves of sin, as we read in **Romans 6 (KJV):17** But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, 18 and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

What free will does a slave have? But when we are born again we are freed from sin, and then our will is free.

Then in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY XLV, page 162**, he says, “But perhaps some one will say, “If all that the Father giveth, and whomsoever He shall draw, cometh unto Thee, if none can come unto Thee except it be given him from above, then those to whom the Father giveth not are free from any blame or charges.” These are mere words and pretenses. For we require our own deliberate choice also, because whether we will be taught is a matter of choice, and also whether we will believe.”

We believe after God gives us faith by His grace, and we then willingly receive Him. It is true that we willingly accept Christ. But faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. God is under no obligation to save us for we are all under sin.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY XLVI, page 164**, referring to Jesus’ words in John 6:44, that no man can come to Him except the Father draw him, he says, “The Manichæans spring upon these words, saying, “that nothing lies in our own power”; yet the expression showeth that we are masters of our will. “For if a man cometh to Him,” saith some one, “what need is there of drawing?” But the words do not take away our free will, but show that we greatly need assistance.”

But Jesus explains in John 6:64 that no man can come to Him unless “it were given unto him of my Father”. The gift of faith is not just a great assistance, but the gift whereby we

believe. So then it is not of our free will, as we read again in **Romans 9 (KJV):16** So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

And in **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON HEBREWS, HOMILY XII, page 424-426**, he says, ““What then? Does nothing depend on God? All indeed depends on God, but not so that our freewill is hindered.”

And he says, “On this account I said, ‘so that our freewill is not hindered.’ It depends then on us, and on Him. For we must first choose the good; and then He leads us to His own. He does not anticipate our choice, lest our freewill should be outraged. But when we have chosen, then great is the assistance he brings to us.”

And he explains, “Since therefore the greater part is of Him, he says all is of Him, speaking according to the custom of men. For so we ourselves also do. I mean for instance: we see a house well built, and we say the whole is the Architect’s [doing], and yet certainly it is not all his, but the workmen’s also, and the owner’s, who supplies the materials, and many others’, but nevertheless since he contributed the greatest share, we call the whole his. So then [it is] in this case also. Again, with respect to a number of people, where the many are, we say All are: where few, nobody. So also Paul says, “not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.”

However, Chrysostom’s explanation is an invention of his own. The word of God is the word of God, and not the “custom of men”. So we do not interpret it based upon the “custom of men”.

He also says, “He did not then assert this, that we run in vain, but that, if we think the whole to be our own, if we do not assign the greater part to God, we run in vain. For neither hath God willed that the whole should be His, lest He should appear to be crowning us without cause: nor again our’s, lest we should fall away to pride.”

The lesser part then which would be our own is what he would call our freewill.

But even the good works that we may do, after having received faith from God, were “ordained of God that we should walk in them”.

## **Election**

### **Commentary Summary**

Concerning **Election**, he says, “But it is upon God’s knowledge that he has cast the whole, and this no one would venture to gainsay, though he were ever so frantic. “For the children being not yet born,” he says, “it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.” And he shows that noble birth after the flesh is of no avail, but we must seek for virtue of soul, which even before the works of it God knoweth of. For “the children,” he says, “being not yet born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, it was said unto her that the elder shall serve the younger:””

But God chose us before we were born, before we had done any good or evil, that His purpose according to election might stand, not of works, or even “virtue of soul”.

Chrysostom believes that God knows there would be “virtue of soul” in the ones He has chosen, so this is why God chose us. But the Scripture clearly states that He chose us not on the basis of our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, as we read in **2 Timothy 1 (KJV):9** Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began...

Chrysostom also says, “For He that knoweth how to assay the soul, knoweth which is worthy of being saved. Yield then to the incomprehensibility of the election. For it is He alone Who knoweth how to crown aright.”

That is, he is saying that God knows a good soul from a bad soul, even before they are born.

And he says, “But He that knoweth things undeclared, and is able to assay the mind’s aptitude, knew the pearl though lying in the mire, and after passing by others, and being well pleased with the beauty of this, He elected it, and by adding to the noble born freewill grace from Himself, He made it approved.”

By the “noble born freewill grace from Himself” he means the freewill which he believes even the unsaved have.

Chrysostom evidently believed that God adds grace to “the noble born freewill grace from Himself”, to make the elect approved. So all have this “freewill grace”, the saved, and the unsaved, as God’s creation.

Chrysostom would have us believe that it is ultimately by a man’s good works and “a nobleness of choice and an obedient temper” that God chooses him.

And he reasons, “And when he does go on to say, “Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?” do not suppose that this is said by Paul as an account of the creation, nor as implying a necessity over the will, but to illustrate the sovereignty and difference of dispensations; for if we do not take it in this way, divers incongruities will follow, for if here he were speaking about the will, and those who are good and those not so, He will be Himself the Maker of these, and man will be free from all responsibility. And at this rate, Paul will also be shown to be at variance with himself, as he always bestows chief honor upon free choice.”

So he is saying that if man does not have free will, that would mean then that God made some good and some bad.

Chrysostom does not take into account that all are guilty, and unworthy of honor, because all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. God is not unrighteous then to choose some out of the lot of the unrighteous to be saved, and to leave the rest.

And he says, “And yet not even is it on the potter that the honor and the dishonor of the things made of the lump depends, but upon the use made by those that handle them, so here also it depends on the free choice.”

So he is saying that after the pot is made, whether a pot is honored or not depends on the free choice of it’s owner. However, it is the perception of man in his unsaved state that he has freewill, and is in control of his own destiny. But as the potter has power to make one vessel to

honor, and another to dishonor, so the Lord as the potter has chosen us, and so we believe and we are vessels of honor.

And he says, “Because when he says, “it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth,” he does not deprive us of freewill, but shows that all is not one’s own, for that it requires grace from above. For it is binding on us to will, and also to run: but to confide not in our own labors, but in the love of God toward man. And this he has expressed elsewhere. “Yet not I, but the grace which was with me,” referring to 1 Corinthians 15:10.

So he is saying that we are saved by our freewill, and by God’s grace from above.

And he says “Whence then are some vessels of wrath, and some of mercy? Of their own free choice.”

And he says, “Because when he says, “it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth,” he does not deprive us of freewill, but shows that all is not one’s own, for that it requires grace from above.”

And he says, “Do you see that he too does not say that all are to be saved, but that those that are worthy shall? For I regard not the multitude, he means, nor does a race diffused so far distress me, but those only do I save that yield themselves worthy of it.”

To “yield themselves worthy of it”, that is, of salvation, would mean we are worthy of salvation based on our merit. But grace is the unmerited favor of God, and we are saved by grace, through faith, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Chrysostom did not understand that the whole lump of clay of mankind is bad. There are none righteous as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):10** As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: 11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. 13 Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: 14 Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: 15 Their feet are swift to shed blood: 16 Destruction and misery are in their ways: 17 And the way of peace have they not known: 18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.

There is none who are worthy. But by God’s grace, we willingly accept Jesus Christ to be our Lord and Savior. It is after we come to Christ, and yield to the Holy Spirit in a progressive sanctification, that our will is set free.

## **Drunkenness**

### **Commentary Summary**

Concerning **Drunkenness**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, CONCERNING THE STATUES, HOMILY I, page 335-336**, he says, “The belchings, and gapings, and speech of the intoxicated, are at once unpleasant and offensive, and are utterly abhorrent to those who see and converse with them; and the crown of these evils is, that this disease makes heaven inaccessible to drunkards, and does not suffer them to win eternal

blessedness: for besides the shame attending those who labour under this disease here, a grievous punishment is also awaiting them there!”

But drunkenness is a work of the flesh, as we read in Galatians 5:19. What Paul is saying here is that they who do such things will not be present in the kingdom of God, because those who inherit the kingdom of God will be in a glorified state. He is not saying that the sin of drunkenness is not covered by the blood of Jesus.

## **Slander**

### **Commentary Summary**

Concerning **Slander**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, CONCERNING THE STATUES, HOMILY III, page 335-336**, he says, “Let us flee then, beloved, let us flee slander! knowing that it is the very gulph of Satan, and the place where he lurks with his snares.”

The definition of slander is “the utterance of false charges or misrepresentations which defame and damage another's reputation”.

**(Merriam Webster)**

He says that “the devil leads us into this custom”. And he says, “For God will determine the sentence, not only from the nature of our transgressions, but from the judgment which thou hast passed upon others. Therefore He gave the admonition, “Judge not, that ye be not judged,” referring to Matthew 7:1.

And we read in **James 4 (KJV):11** Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. 12 There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?

## **Giving to the Poor**

### **Commentary Summary**

Concerning **Giving to the Poor**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY XXI, page 504-506**, he says, “Hast thou not heard what punishment they suffer that feed not the poor? to what vengeance they are condemned? For He says, “Depart to the fire prepared for the devil and his angels”, referring to Matthew 25:41-46.

But this judgment relates to the judgment of the nations in order to determine which nations will go into the kingdom of one thousand years. The early Church misunderstood the teaching about judgments in the word of God. They thought that there would be one final judgment of the righteous and the unrighteous. And so they thought that Matthew 25:41-46 referred to the final judgment. But the judgment in Matthew 25:41-46 happens after the tribulation of 7 years that was prophesied by Daniel as the seventieth week of seventy for Israel,

as we read in **Daniel 9 (KJV):24** Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. 25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. 26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. 27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

The command “to restore and to build Jerusalem” occurred in 445 B.C. in the Fourth Decree of Artaxerxes I (Artaxerxes Longimanus), that is, in Ancient Greek: **μακρόχειρ** (pronounced *Makrókheir*), and in Latin: *Longimanus*.

Artaxerxes I commanded to build Jerusalem, as we read in **Nehemiah 2 (KJV):1** And it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that wine was before him: and I took up the wine, and gave it unto the king. Now I had not been beforetime sad in his presence. 2 Wherefore the king said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? this is nothing else but sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid, 3 And said unto the king, Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire? 4 Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven. 5 And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it. 6 And the king said unto me, (the queen also sitting by him,) For how long shall thy journey be? and when wilt thou return? So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time. 7 Moreover I said unto the king, If it please the king, let letters be given me to the governors beyond the river, that they may convey me over till I come into Judah; 8 And a letter unto Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which appertained to the house, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into. And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me.

In verse 1, the “month Nisan” on the Hebrew calendar corresponds to March-April on the Gregorian calendar. So in Daniel 9:25, “from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks”, that is, 7 weeks and 62 weeks. In Daniel 9:25, a week stands for 7 years, so  $((7 \times 7) + (62 \times 7)) = 483$  years. A Biblical year is 360 days in the Biblical calendar, or  $(483 \times 360)$ , we get 173,880 days. We then divide  $(173,880 / 365.25)$  to get 476.05 years, which are the actual years of 365.25 days. However, if Jesus died in A.D. 30, we B.C. 445 to A.D. 30 is 475 years.

If we now take into account the exact month of the decree in B.C. 445 which is some time in March, say March 14 as Clarence Larkin counts, and we subtract days in January and

February up to March 14 which equal (173,880 - (31 + 28 + 14)), or (173,880 - 73), we get 173,807 days. We can then do the same for the year Jesus died, and since He died on Passover, which would be April 14, we can subtract the rest of the days of the months in A.D. 30, which would be the days in the rest of April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November, and December, which would equal (173,807 - (16 + 31 + 30 + 31 + 31 + 30 + 31 + 31 + 31)), or (173,807 - 262), and we get 173,545. Then if we divide 173,545 by the actual days in a year, 365.25, we get 475.14 years which is very close to our mark of 475 years when we take into account the Biblical calendar.

We also have to consider the fact that the secular chronology is possibly not without error as well. Nevertheless, the prophecy in Daniel 9:26 that Messiah would be cut off was fulfilled when Jesus died on the cross. This leaves one more week of the 70 prophesied in Daniel 9:24 to be fulfilled for Israel.

So in Daniel 9:27, this week will be fulfilled when Antichrist will “confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate”. That is, the Antichrist will confirm the covenant with Israel, but in the middle of the week, he will set himself up in the temple and proclaim himself to be God. This is also mentioned in **Matthew 24 (KJV):15** When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

And in **2 Thessalonians 2 (KJV):3** Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; 4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

The faithful remnant in Israel will then be given protection by the Lord for the final 3½ years, as we read in **Revelation 12 (KJV):14** And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

The final battle of Armageddon will then take place, when the nations shall come against Israel in **Revelation 16 (KJV):16** And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

But these nations will be defeated by the Lord Jesus at the second coming, as we read in **Revelation 19 (KJV):11** And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. 12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. 13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

And in **Revelation 19 (KJV):19** And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. 20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. 21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.



After this Jesus will sit on the throne of His glory on earth, as we read in **Matthew 25 (KJV)**:31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: 32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: 33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. 37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? 38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? 39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? 40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

The nations will be judged on how they treated the Jews, Christ's brethren, during the tribulation. Christ will be King over all the earth during the millennium, and He will rule with a rod of iron, as we read in **Psalms 2 (KJV)**:1 Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? 2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, 3 Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. 4 He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. 5 Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. 6 Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. 7 I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. 8 Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. 9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. 10 Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. 11 Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. 12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

We continue to read in **Matthew 25 (KJV)**:41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: 43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. 44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? 45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. 46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

We are not saved, nor do we keep our salvation, by our works. We are saved by faith in Jesus Christ. Our salvation is a surrender to the Lord, and a surrender to what He has done for us which we could not do for ourselves.

## Alms

## Commentary Summary

Concerning **Alms**, we see that Chrysostom laid great emphasis on almsgiving. He believed that without it one could not be saved. He believed that if we give alms, God will remit our sins, basing this on **Daniel 4 (Septuagint):24** Therefore, O king, let my counsel please thee, and atone for thy sins by alms, and *thine* iniquities by compassion on the poor: it may be God will be longsuffering to thy trespasses:

And we read as in **Daniel 4 (KJV):27** Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.

The words “break off” are a translation of the Hebrew word פָּרַק (pronounced per-ak'); (Aramaic) corresponding to H6561; to discontinue:—break off. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, H6562**

The word translated “righteousness” in the Hebrew is צִדְקָה (pronounced tsid-kaw'); (Aramaic) corresponding to H6666; beneficence:—righteousness. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, H6665**

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 10, THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, HOMILY XLVII, page 295**, he says, speaking of Matthew, “Let us imitate then this virtue, and most of all his humility and almsgiving, without which one cannot be saved.”

His thinking about almsgiving was mainly based on Matthew 25:31-46. The root meaning of the Greek word translated “alms” in the New Testament is compassion, and showing mercy. At the judgment of the nations, the sheep nations are those who had compassion, or showed mercy to Christ’s brethren during the tribulation period. The goat nations are those who did not have compassion, or show mercy, to Christ’s brethren during the tribulation. But Chrysostom interpreted this reference in Scripture to mean that one could not be saved if they had not had compassion, or shown mercy to anyone.

And he says, “And this is shown by the five virgins, and together with them by the Pharisee. For without virginity indeed it is possible to see the kingdom, but without almsgiving it cannot be. For this is among the things that are essential, and hold all together. Not unnaturally then have we called it the heart of virtue.”

So to Chrysostom, almsgiving is “essential”, that is, to salvation.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 10, THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, HOMILY LXIV, page 395-396**, he says, “And why do I speak of the whole code.”

By “code” he is speaking of the “entire code of laws” of the Old Testament and the New Testament.

And he says, “For even a part of it overlooked brings upon one great evils; as, for instance, almsgiving overlooked casts into hell them that have come short in it; and yet this is not the whole of virtue, but a part thereof.”

And he says, “But I have also something more than these things to say again. I mean, that not only one of them overlooked shuts Heaven against us, but though it be done, yet not in due perfection and abundance, it produces the selfsame effect again. “For except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven.” (Matthew 5:20)”

And referring to the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, he says, “So that though thou give alms, but not more than they, thou shalt not enter in.”

But the Pharisees trusted in themselves that they were righteous. We need God’s righteousness which we can only obtain by faith.

The scribes and the Pharisees were unbelievers who had not been born again. Chrysostom did not understand that we do not enter in because of our own righteousness, but because of His righteousness, as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):23** For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; **24** Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: **25** Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; **26** To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. **27** Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. **28** Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. **29** Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: **30** Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. **31** Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

Paul didn’t want his own righteousness, as we read in **Philippians 3 (KJV):9** And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

When he doesn’t really say how much in alms one must give, Chrysostom was laying a terrible burden on believers by making almsgiving a requirement to be saved. We are saved when we surrender to the Lord in faith, believing that Jesus rose from the dead, and we confess Him as Lord.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 12, HOMILIES ON FIRST CORINTHIANS, HOMILY XXX**, he says, “Since nothing is more fearful and full of anguish than that voice which they who departed without abundant almsgiving shall then hear the Bridegroom, “I know you not.” (S. Matt. xxv. 12)”

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON PHILIPPIANS, HOMILY I, page 187-188**, he says, “So that what I want is this, that you may have a relief from your own sins. But he that gives not so will have no relief.”

To Chrysostom, feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, covering the naked, giving shelter to the stranger, freed us from our sins, and was a requirement to be saved.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TIMOTHY, HOMILY VI, page 497-500**, he says, “Seest thou that a failure in alms-giving is enough to cast a man into hell fire?”

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TITUS, HOMILY VI, 540-543**, he says, “For almsgiving is the mother of love, of that love, which is the characteristic of Christianity, which is greater than all miracles, by which the disciples of Christ are manifested. It is the medicine of our sins, the cleansing of the filth of our souls, the ladder fixed to heaven; it binds together the body of Christ.”

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY VII, page 216**, he says, “since a continual accusation and remembrance of sins

contributes not a little to lessen their magnitude. But there is another more prevailing way than this; to bear malice against none of those who have offended against us, to forgive their trespasses to all those who have trespassed against us. Will you learn a third? Hear Daniel, saying, “Redeem thy sins by almsdeeds, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor.” (Dan. iv. 27, LXX)”

He refers to **Daniel 4 (Septuagint):24** Therefore, O king, let my counsel please thee, and atone for thy sins by alms, and *thine* iniquities by compassion on the poor: it may be God will be longsuffering to thy trespasses.

And to **Daniel 4 (KJV):27** Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.

The words “break off” are a translation of the Hebrew word פָּרַק (pronounced per-ak’); (Aramaic) corresponding to H6561; to discontinue:—break off. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, H6562**

And he says, “And there is another besides this; constancy in prayer, and persevering attendance on the intercessions made with God. In like manner fasting brings to us some, and that not small comfort and release from sins committed, provided it be attended with kindness to others, and quenches the vehemence of the wrath of God. (1 Tim. ii. 1)”

And he says, “For “water will quench a blazing fire, and by almsdeeds sins are purged away.” (Ecclus. iii. 30, LXX)”

But Ecclesiasticus is not a canonical book of the Old Testament, though it was accepted by the Church in the time of Chrysostom.

He did not realize that a simple confession of sin is enough because the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY LIX, page 216**, he says, ““Come,” it saith, “ye blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungered, and ye gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in; sick, and ye visited Me; I was in prison, and ye came unto Me.” (Matt. xxv. 34–36) That then we may hear these words, let us clothe the naked, let us bring in the stranger, feed the hungry, give the thirsty drink, let us visit the sick, and look upon him that is in prison, that we may have boldness and obtain remission of our sins, and share those good things which transcend both speech and thought.”

But nowhere in the canonical Scriptures is it said that we receive remission of our sins by showing mercy, or giving alms. This was an assumption based on a misinterpretation of Matthew 25:31-46, and Daniel 4:27, and Ecclesiasticus 3:30.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY LIX, page 255-256**, he says, “and, “Give alms—and all things shall be clean unto you” (Luke xi. 41);”

But Jesus was speaking of cleansing the inside of the cup. This cleansing comes about by faith in Him.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY LXXXI, page 302**, he says, “For almsgiving is that which is free from all injustice,

“this” makes all things clean. This is a thing better even than fasting, or lying on the ground; they may be more painful and laborious, but this more profitable. It enlightens the soul, makes it sleek, beautiful, and vigorous.”

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY LXXXV, page 322**, he says, “For if the memory of admirable men, though dead, hath protected the living, (for, “I will defend,” it saith, “this city for Mine Own. sake, and for My servant David’s sake”— 2 Kings xix. 34,) much more will alms-doing effect this; for this hath raised even the dead, as when the widows stood round showing what things Dorcas had made, while she was with them. (Acts ix. 39)”

But the faith of Peter is what God used to work a miracle, and bring her back to life. It was not her alms, but God’s mercy.

The Scriptures are clear, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

It is not by good works, as we read in **Titus 3 (KJV):5** Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; 7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

We are saved by our faith in Jesus Christ as we read in **Romans 10 (KJV):8** But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

When we believe, we pass from death to life as Jesus taught in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

The reason we “shall not come into condemnation” is because Jesus justifies us because of our faith, and puts His righteousness down to our account, as we read again in **Philippians 3 (KJV):9** And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

## **Penance**

### **Commentary Summary**

Concerning **Penance**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, LETTERS TO OLYMPIAS, page 295-296**, Chrysostom wanted moderation in doing penances, as he says, “Taking all these things then into consideration pray shake off the despondency which now oppresses you, and do not exact inordinate and cruel penances from yourself.”

And in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 10, THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, Homily X, Matt. III. 1, 2, page 64-65**, he says, speaking of John the Baptist,

“But if he, who was so pure, and more glorious than the heaven, and above all prophets, than whom none greater was born, and who had such great boldness of speech, thus exercised himself in austerity, scorning so exceedingly all dissolute delicacy, and training himself to this hard life; what excuse shall we have, who after so great a benefit, and the unnumbered burdens of our sins, do not show forth so much as the least part of his penance, (ἐξομολογεῖν) but are drinking and surfeiting, and smelling of perfumes, and in no better trim than the harlot women on the stage, and are by all means softening ourselves, and making ourselves an easy prey to the devil?”

So he calls John the Baptist’s discipline “penance”. He is referring to **Matthew 3 (KJV)**: 1 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, 2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. 3 For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. 4 And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey. 5 Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, 6 And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

The word “confessing” in the Greek is ἐξομολογέω (pronounced ex-om-ol-og-eh'-o); from G1537 and G3670; to acknowledge or (by implication, of assent) agree fully:—confess, profess, promise. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G1843**

This word is derived from two Greek words, the first is ἐκ (pronounced ek); a primary preposition denoting origin (the point whence action or motion proceeds), from, out (of place, time, or cause; literal or figurative; direct or remote):—after, among, × are, at, betwixt(-yond), by (the means of), exceedingly, (+ abundantly above), for(- th), from (among, forth, up), + grudgingly, + heartily, X heavenly, × hereby, + very highly, in, ...ly, (because, by reason) of, off (from), on, out among (from, of), over, since, × thenceforth, through, × unto, × vehemently, with(-out). **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G1537**

The second is ὁμολογέω (pronounced hom-ol-og-eh'-o; from a compound of the base of G3674 and G3056; to assent, i.e. covenant, acknowledge:—con- (pro-)fess, confession is made, give thanks, promise. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G3670**

And this Greek word is derived from two Greek words, the first is ὁμοῦ homoû, hom-oo'; genitive case of ὁμός (pronounced homós) (the same; akin to G260) as adverb; at the same place or time:—together. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G3674**

And the second is λόγος lógos, log'-os; from G3004; something said (including the thought); by implication, a topic (subject of discourse), also reasoning (the mental faculty) or motive; by extension, a computation; specially, (with the article in John) the Divine Expression (i.e. Christ):—account, cause, communication, × concerning, doctrine, fame, × have to do, intent, matter, mouth, preaching, question, reason, + reckon, remove, say(-ing), shew, × speaker, speech, talk, thing, + none of these things move me, tidings, treatise, utterance, word, work. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G3056**

So ἐξομολογέω (pronounced ex-om-ol-og-eh'-o) means to speak out the same things, that is, to confess before others in agreement with the Lord.

The same Greek word is translated as “confessing” in **Acts 19 (KJV):18** And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds.

It does not mean “do penance” as Chrysostom implies.

He also says, “Wherefore neither did he keep them in the wilderness to take them about with him, but baptizing them, and teaching them the rules concerning self denial, he dismissed them; by all means instructing them to scorn whatever things are on earth, and to raise themselves up to the things to come, and press on every day.”

So by “penance” Chrysostom means “rules concerning self denial”.

And he says, “For it is not, it is not possible at once both to do penance (ἐξομολογεσθαι) and to live in luxury. And this let John teach you by his raiment, by his food, by his abode. What then? dost thou require us, you may say, to practice such self-restraint as this? I do not require it, but I advise and recommend it. But if this be not possible to you, let us at least, though in cities, show forth repentance, for the judgment is surely at our doors.”

So “penance” in Chrysostom’s thinking relates to John’s raiment, his food, and his abode. But the word “penance” is not found in Scripture.

And he says, “For no man while sleeping can see the sun, nor delight his eyes with the beauty of its beams; but whatever he may see, he beholds all as in a dream. For this cause we need much penance, and many tears; both as being in a state of insensibility while we err, and because our sins are great, and beyond excuse.”

And he says, “But by repentance I mean, not only to forsake our former evil deeds, but also to show forth good deeds greater than those. For, “bring forth,” saith he, “fruits meet for repentance.”

And in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 10, THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, Homily LXXI, Matt. XXII. 34-36, page 434-435**, he says, “And the first prayer too is full of mercy, when we entreat for the energumens; and the second again, for others under penance seeking for much mercy; and the third also for ourselves, and this puts forward the innocent children of the people entreating God for mercy.”

An “energumen” is “a person possessed by or as if by an evil spirit : DEMONIAC”. He also mentions “others under penance seeking for much mercy”. (**Merriam Webster**)

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY XIV, page 447-449**, he says, “For we also do many sins through willfulness, or rather we do them all through willfulness, and yet God doth not presently call us to punishment, but gives us a set time for penance, nurturing us day by day, disciplining us, teaching us, supplying us with all other things, that we too may emulate this mercy of His.”

We could also define “penance” as “voluntary self-punishment inflicted as an outward expression of repentance for having done wrong”. (**Merriam Webster**)

And in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 12, HOMILIES ON SECOND CORINTHIANS, HOMILY IV, page 296-297**, he says that, when Paul is speaking of the one who committed fornication with his father’s wife, that, ““He bids them not only take off the censure; but, besides, restores him to his former estate; for if one let go him that hath been scourged and heal him not, he hath done nothing. And see how him too he keeps down lest he should be rendered worse by the forgiveness. For though he had both confessed and repented, he makes it manifest that he obtaineth remission not so much by his penitence as by this free

gift.”

The word “penitence” means “the quality or state of being penitent : sorrow for sins or faults”. (**Merriam Webster**)

And he says, “Now this he said, (as I have already observed,) both to keep him low, and to teach him not to be over-listless after this restoration. For, not as one who has washed all quite away; but as fearing lest he should work aught of deeper mischief, I have received him, he saith. Whence we learn that we must determine the penance, not only by the nature of the sins, but by the disposition and habit of them that sin. As the Apostle did in that instance. For he feared his weakness, and therefore said, “lest he be swallowed up,” as though by a wild beast, by a storm, by a billow.”

Chrysostom equates the discipline of the apostle Paul, on the one who committed fornication with his father’s wife, with penance.

And in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 12, HOMILIES ON SECOND CORINTHIANS, HOMILY XVIII, page 365-367**, he says, “For in behalf of the possessed, in behalf of those under penance, the prayers are made in common both by the priest and by them; and all say one prayer, the prayer replete with pity.”

We don’t have a clear picture of how penance was administered in the time of Chrysostom, but from his writing, we get some idea of what it entailed. That is, one under penance would have voluntary self-punishment or self-abasement, or mortification, or devotion performed or inflicted as an outward expression of repentance for having done wrong.

When I was a Catholic I understood it to mean an atonement for the sins I had committed. It was prescribed by the priest in confession. But the word “penance” is not found in the Bible. Instead, the word “repentance” is found. In the context of how this word “repentance” is used in the Bible, it means to have a change of mind about our sin, and to turn, or return, to God.

The idea of penance began to develop in the early Church as a result of a misunderstanding of the Biblical truth about justification. When we understand that God imputes His righteousness down to our account when we believe in Jesus Christ, and confess Him as Lord, and we are born again, then dealing with our sin is simply a confession to God of our sin of which He is faithful and just to forgive, as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. **8** If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. **9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

## **Good Works**

### **Commentary Summary**

Concerning **Good Works**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 10, THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, HOMILY LXV, page 400-401**, he says, “Like then as we should not say that he did not give the crown from want of vigor, but as not wishing to corrupt the law of the games, nor to disturb the order of justice; in like manner now should I say Christ said this, from every motive to compel them, after the grace of God, to set their hopes of salvation



and approval on the proof of their own good works.”

But we are not saved by works, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON EPHESIANS, HOMILY IV, page 67-70**, Chrysostom says, speaking of entering the kingdom of heaven, “And observe how it is not possible to enter without works of mercy; but if even this alone be wanting, we shall depart into the fire.”

He makes works of mercy a requirement for entering the kingdom of heaven.

He also says, “He doeth away iniquity here, both by the laver of Baptism, and by penitence.”

By penitence, he means “voluntary self-punishment inflicted as an outward expression of repentance for having done wrong”.

And he adds, “Let us not then vainly flatter our own souls with speeches like these; no, let us take heed, let us have a regard for our own salvation, let us make virtue our care, let us rouse ourselves to the practice of good works, that we may be counted worthy to attain to this exceeding glory, in Jesus Christ our Lord with whom to the Father, together with the Holy Spirit be glory, might, honor, now and ever, and for ages of ages. Amen.”

Our character is transformed by the renewing of our minds, as we present ourselves a living sacrifice, as we read in **Romans 12 (KJV):1** I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

We are not saved by the “practice of good works”, but we will be rewarded for good works at the judgment seat of Christ. When we believe in Jesus Christ, we are “counted worthy to attain to this exceeding glory”, the glory of salvation. The Lord justifies us and places His righteousness down to our account. We will then be rewarded for the works He has ordained for us to do as we walk in them, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):10** For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

And in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY LXXVI, page 278-281**, referring to John 15:2, “Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit the Father taketh away”, he says, “Here He alludeth to the manner of life, showing that without works it is not possible to be in Him.”

That is, he is saying that without works it is not possible to be saved.

And referring to John 15:6, he says, “Ver. 6. “He is cast forth,” He saith.” No longer enjoying the benefit of the husbandman’s hand. “And is withered.” That is, if he had aught of the root, he loses it; if any grace, he is stripped of this, and is bereft of the help and life which proceed from it. And what the end? “He is cast into the fire.” Not such he who abideth with Him.”

But Jesus is talking about bearing fruit, as we read in **John 15 (KJV):4** Abide in me, and

I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

If we don't bear fruit, we will bear the fire of our bad choices, but we will not lose our salvation, as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):15** If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

The Scriptures are clear. It is not by works of righteousness which we have done, as we read again in **Titus 3 (KJV):5** Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

And "works of righteousness" are good works. So we are not saved by good works.

And we read in **Philippians 3 (KJV):8** Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, 9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

And by "mine own righteousness", Paul refers to the good works he has performed according to the law.

Chrysostom misinterpreted **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

He thought that because verse 10 mentions good works, it is a proof that faith plus good works are what saves us. He did not understand that being born again of the Spirit of God, and having a new divine nature as a result in our spirit, and having the Holy Spirit as the life of our spirit, we were now capable of doing good works, and we will be rewarded accordingly. If we build gold, silver precious stones we will be rewarded as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):12** Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

If all we produce is wood, hay, or stubble, we will not receive any rewards, but we will still be saved as we continue in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):15** If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

Good works don't save us. We are saved by grace, through faith, the gift of God. And Paul makes it simple, as we read in **Romans 10 (KJV):8** But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

## Worthy of the Kingdom

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON EPHESIANS, HOMILY XXI, page 156-157**, he says, “If a man who has unruly children is unworthy to be a Bishop (Tit. i. 6), much more is he unworthy of the kingdom of Heaven.”

He refers to **Titus 1 (KJV):6** If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly.

Chrysostom would make “unruly children” a means of being disqualified from the kingdom of Heaven.

He then says, “What sayest thou? If we have an unruly wife, or unruly children, shall we have to render account? Yes, we shall, if we do not with exactness bring in that which is due from ourselves; for our own individual virtue is not enough in order to salvation.”

It is true that “our own individual virtue is not enough in order to salvation”. This is why we need the grace of God. And even so, we are also not saved by “our own individual virtue”, but by the grace of God through faith, which is the gift of God. And we are not responsible for anyone else’s salvation in order for ourselves to be saved.

Again he says, “If the man who laid aside the one talent gained nothing, but was punished even in such a manner, it is plain that one’s own individual virtue is not enough in order to salvation, but there is need of that of another also.”

But this one individual had no faith. He did not commit, or do anything with the talent that he had received. This is why he was condemned to outer darkness.

Chrysostom did not understand the grace of God. We are not counted worthy by what we have done, but by our faith in what Christ has done for us. It is by faith in Jesus Christ that we are justified, and it is by grace that we are saved.

## The Power of Fear

### Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON THESSALONIANS, HOMILY II, page 382-384**, he writes, ““If we always think of hell, we shall not soon fall into it. For this reason God has threatened punishment; if it was not attended with great advantage to think of it, God would not have threatened it. But because the remembrance of it is able to work great good, for this reason He has put into our souls the terror of it, as a wholesome medicine.”

Our God is a consuming fire, but if we have believed in Jesus Christ, God has justified us, and we stand in grace with the righteousness of God put down to our account.

He also writes, “Let us not then overlook the great advantage arising from it, but let us continually advert to it, at our dinners, at our suppers.”

But the Lord would have us to rejoice always, and to seek the things above, as we read in **Colossians 3 (KJV):1** If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. **2** Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. **3** For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

Again he says, “Whether thou speakest of it or not, the fire boils forth. Let it be continually spoken of, that thou mayest never fall into it. It is not possible that a soul anxious about hell should readily sin.”

But it is not possible for the righteous to fall into hell. In Chrysostom’s thinking, it is possible for one to lose their salvation. This we will cover under the heading, **Losing Salvation**.

And he says, “Let us not remember the kingdom so much as hell. For fear has more power than the promise.”

However, we read in **1 John 4 (KJV):18** There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. 19 We love him, because he first loved us.

He also says, “Let us not avoid discourses concerning hell, that we may avoid hell. Let us not banish the remembrance of punishment, that we may escape punishment.”

But let us teach the truth about the consequences of sin, and the security of the believer. For when one has believed in Jesus, they have passed from death to life, as in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

And we read in **Colossians 2 (KJV):6** As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:

We received Him by faith. Let us continue to walk in Him by faith.

## **Righteous Deeds Done after the Grace of God**

### **Commentary Summary**

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY XXI, page 74-76**, he says, “We must place our hopes of salvation in nothing else, but only in our own righteous deeds (done) after the grace of God.”

Now we see clearly what John Chrysostom believed about salvation. According to him, God gives us grace to hear the Gospel, but God does not infringe upon our free will to believe. After we believe, we have the grace of God to help us, but our salvation will then depend on “our own righteous deeds after the grace of God”.

He also says, “The Apostles, on the contrary, appeared greater than any, because they followed the true and excellent way of gaining relationship with Him, that by obedience. And from this we learn that we have always need of faith, and a life shining and bright, since this alone will have power to save us.”

So ultimately, according to Chrysostom, we are saved by our own good works and faith.

And he says, “Knowing then this, let us use every means that we may be saved by our own works, lest having deceived ourselves by vain trusting on others, we learn that we have been deceived when the knowledge of it will profit us nothing.”

But the Scriptures are clear that we are not saved by works, but by grace through faith, and that not of ourselves, as we read again in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man

should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Righteous deeds done after the grace of God refers to our own good works which “God hath before ordained that we should walk in them”.

And in **Romans 10 (KJV):8** But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

## Faith Alone Is Not Enough

### Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY XXXI, page 106-107**, he says, “Is it then enough,” saith one, “to believe on the Son, that one may have eternal life?” By no means. And hear Christ Himself declaring this, and saying, “Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. vii. 21);”

He refers to **Matthew 7 (KJV):21** Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

And Jesus also said in **John 6 (KJV):40** And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

If we have truly believed in Jesus, we have everlasting life, and we are saved.

He continues, “But why speak I of a portion of doctrine? Though a man believe rightly on the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, yet if he lead not a right life, his faith will avail nothing towards his salvation. Therefore when He saith, “This is life eternal, that they may know Thee the only true God” (c. xvii. 3), let us not suppose that the (knowledge) spoken of is sufficient for our salvation; “we need besides this a most exact life and conversation.”

He refers to **John 17 (KJV):3** And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

And he says, “Since though he has said here, “He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life,...yet not even from this do we assert that faith alone is sufficient to salvation. And the directions for living given in many places of the Gospels show this.”

However, he who has believed in Him has passed from death to life, as we read in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

And we were washed, sanctified, and justified when we were born again, as we read in **1 Corinthians 6 (NKJV):11** And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

We are not our own, for we have been bought with a price. If we don't walk rightly after

having truly believed in Jesus Christ, the Lord will discipline us, but He will not take away what He has given.

And in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON HEBREWS, HOMILY VII, page 398**, he says, “Faith is indeed great and bringeth salvation, and without it, it is not possible ever to be saved. It suffices not however of itself to accomplish this, but there is need of a right conversation also.”

And so to Chrysostom, faith plus works are needed to be saved.

And he says, “So that on this account Paul also exhorts those who had already been counted worthy of the mysteries; saying, “Let us labor to enter into that rest.” “Let us labor” (he says), Faith not sufficing, the life also ought to be added thereto, and our earnestness to be great; for truly there is need of much earnestness too, in order to go up into Heaven.”

But Jesus said in **Matthew 11 (KJV):28** Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

We enter His rest when we come to Him in faith. We must continue to walk by faith, as we read in **Colossians 2 (KJV):6** As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:

As we continue to walk by faith, and serve Him, we will enter more of His rest.

And he asks, “how shall we be counted worthy of Heaven, if we live carelessly and indolently?”

But once we have truly believed, our salvation is secure. The one who has truly believed has been born again, and has everlasting life, as we read again in **John 3 (KJV):36** He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

Once we have faith, God justifies us, as we read in **Romans 5 (NKJV):1** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

God puts His righteousness down to the account of the one who has faith, as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):21** But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

We are more than conquerors, as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):31** What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? 32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## When Are We Clean

### Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY LXX, page 258-259**, he refers to **John 13 (KJV):10** Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. 11 For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

He then asks, ““And if they are clean, why washeth He their feet?” That we may learn to be modest. On which account He came not to any other part of the body, but to that which is considered more dishonorable than the rest. But what is, “He that is washed”? It is instead of, “he that is clean.” Were they then clean, who had not yet been delivered from their sins, nor deemed worthy of the Spirit, since sin still had the mastery, the handwriting of the curse still remaining, the victim not having yet been offered? How then calleth He them “clean”? That thou mayest not deem them clean, as delivered from their sins, He addeth, Behold, “ye are clean through the word that I have spoken unto you.””

He refers to **John 15 (KJV):3** Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

And we are cleansed by the word, as we read in **Psalms 119 (KJV):9** Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.

But Jesus was talking about a different cleansing here. In John 13:10, Jesus says, “He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit”. The one who “is washed” is one who has believed in Jesus Christ, and has been born again. This is the washing, or cleansing, of regeneration, as we read in **Titus 3 (KJV):5** Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

When we believe in Jesus Christ, and we are born again, our sins are washed away. God justifies, and puts His righteousness down to our account. We then have a standing of righteous ones. Because of our standing as sons and daughters of God, we then only need to wash our feet and we are “clean every whit”.

All of the disciples except for Judas had believed in Jesus, and had been born again. This is why Jesus said, “and ye are clean, but not all”.

Chrysostom did believe that the disciples had “not yet been delivered from their sins”, because the “victim” had “yet been offered”. But just as Abraham believed in Him who was to come, and was justified, so the disciples believed in the one who was to come, and die for our sins. The disciples had faith in Jesus, and were born again. This is why Jesus said they were all clean, except for Judas. The early Church did not understand the teaching about regeneration in the Scriptures.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN,**

**HOMILY LXXIII, page 270**, he says, “Let us then use every means to wipe off the filthiness. But first the font cleanseth, afterwards other ways also, many and of all kinds. For God, being merciful, hath even after this given to us various ways of reconciliation, of all which the first is that by alms-doing. “By alms-deeds,” it saith, “and deeds of faith sins are cleansed away.” (Ecclus. iii. 30)”

Though the book of Ecclesiasticus does say this, this book is not in the canon of Scripture.

And he says, ““Let us also wash ourselves, not with mire, but with fair water, with alms-doing, not with covetousness.”

And he says, “Stay thy hands from covetousness, and so bring them to alms-giving. But if with the same hands we strip one set of persons, though we may not clothe the others with what has been taken from them, yet we shall not thus escape punishment. For that which is the groundwork of the propitiation is made the groundwork of all wickedness.”

But alms-giving is not the “groundwork of the propitiation” as Chrysostom seems to think. The “groundwork of the propitiation” is the blood of Christ. And so we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):22** And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

The Old Testament sacrifices were only types of what would be required to atone for man’s sin. That is, they were symbolic of what the Messiah, the Christ, would do for us.

And so we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):1** Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. 2 For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary. 3 And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; 4 Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; 5 And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly. 6 Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. 7 But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people:

And in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):12** Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

Therefore we read in **Hebrews 7 (KJV):27** Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.

Christ has “put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself”, as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):24** For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: 25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; 26 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. 27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:



28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

And we see the efficacy of the offering, as we continue to read in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):1** For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. 2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. 3 But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. 4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. 5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: 6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. 7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. 8 Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; 9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. 10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

So we are “sanctified”, or set apart to God, “through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all”. And so we read that there is “no more offering for sin”, as we continue in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):11** And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: 12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; 13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. 14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. 15 Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, 16 This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; 17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. 18 Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.

And we are now able to enter into the “holiest by the blood of Jesus”, as we continue to read in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):19** Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; 21 And having an high priest over the house of God; 22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) 24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: 25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

But we must remember that having “received a knowledge of the truth” is not enough to be saved. We must commit to Jesus as our Lord, as we continue to read in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):26** For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, 27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. 28 He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: 29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be

thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. 31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

We must believe to the “saving of the soul”, as we conclude in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):32** But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; 33 Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. 34 For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. 35 Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. 36 For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. 37 For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. 38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. 39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY LXXXII, page 303**, he says, “Ver. 17. “Sanctify them through Thy truth.” “Make them holy by the gift of the Spirit, and of right doctrines.””

He refers to **John 17 (KJV):17** Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

And he says, “And yet He saith that the Spirit doth this. How then doth He now ask it from the Father?” That thou mayest again learn their equality of Honor. For right doctrines asserted concerning God sanctify the soul. And if He saith that they are sanctified by the word, marvel not. And to show that He speaketh of doctrines, He addeth,

“Thy word is truth.””

And he says, “As also Paul saith concerning the Church, that He hath sanctified it by the Word. For the Word of God is wont also to cleanse. (Eph. v. 26)”

And he says, “Moreover, the, “sanctify them,” seems to me to signify something else, such as this, “Set them apart for the Word and for preaching.” And this is made plain from what follows. For, He saith,

Ver. 17. “As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.””

And Aaron’s sons were sanctified in this sense, that is, they were set apart for the ministry of the priesthood among the Levites.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY LXXXIII, page 312**, he refers to Jacob’s ladder, which was a dream that Jacob had in Genesis. Chrysostom is formulating an analogy of our sanctification from this dream.

And so he says, “And so mounting as it were by steps, let us get to heaven by a Jacob’s ladder. For the ladder seems to me to signify in a riddle by that vision the gradual ascent by means of virtue, by which it is possible for us to ascend from earth to heaven, not using material steps, but improvement and correction of manners.”

But the dream was simply a confirmation to Jacob of God’s purpose in his life, and in the generations succeeding him, that is, Israel.

Chrysostom is inventing an allegory of this dream of Jacob which has no foundation in the Scriptures. We are not gradually being saved, as if we were gradually becoming worthy of the kingdom of heaven, step by step, by correction of our manners. We are saved by faith, and that not of ourselves. It is the gift of God. When we believe and we are born again, God justifies us, and puts His righteousness down to our account. We then have a standing of righteousness. Our state is a different story. Our soul contains all of the baggage of our past. This is gradually cleansed in a progressive sanctification as we grow in grace and knowledge. Our standing doesn't change, but our state changes moment by moment as we walk in the light.

## The Three Rests

### Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON HEBREWS, HOMILY VI, page 393**, referring to Hebrews 3:7-11, "He says that there are "three" rests: one, that of the Sabbath, in which God rested from His works; the second, that of Palestine, into which when the Jews had entered they would be at rest from their hardships and labors; the third, that which is Rest indeed, the kingdom of Heaven; which those who obtain, do indeed rest from their labors and troubles. Of these three then he makes mention here."

Chrysostom then explains, "And why did he mention the three, when he is treating of the one only? That he might show that the prophet is speaking concerning this one. For he did not speak (he says) concerning the first. For how could he, when that had taken place long before? Nor yet again concerning the second, that in Palestine. For how could he? For he says, "They shall not enter into My rest." It remains therefore that it is this third."

So, he is saying that there are three rests, the rest of the Sabbath, the rest of Palestine, or the inheritance, and the rest of the kingdom of heaven.

But in the Scriptures, there are actually four rests for the believer. The first is the rest of salvation, as we read in **Matthew 11 (KJV):28** Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

The second is the rest of serving, as Jesus also taught in **Matthew 11 (KJV):29** Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

The third rest is the rest of the inheritance. This is the rest that Israel was to enter when they entered into the promised land. This is the Sabbath rest spoken of in **Hebrews 4 (NASB 1995): 8** For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that. 9 So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. 10 For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His. 11 Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

Then there is one final rest, which is the rest of glorification, as we read in **Philippians 3 (KJV):20** For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: 21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

And in **1 John 3 (KJV):2** Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

## Helping Our Salvation

### Commentary Summary:

Concerning **Helping Our Salvation**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 10, THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, HOMILY LXXVIII, page 472-473**, he says, ““Seest thou how not only the spoiler, and the covetous, nor only the doer of evil things, but also he that doeth not good things, is punished with extreme punishment.

Let us hearken then to these words. As we have opportunity, let us help on our salvation, let us get oil for our lamps, let us labor to add to our talent. For if we be backward, and spend our time in sloth here, no one will pity us any more hereafter, though we should wail ten thousand times.”

And he says, “For this end God gave us speech, and hands, and feet, and strength of body, and mind, and understanding, that we might use all these things, both for our own salvation, and for our neighbor’s advantage.”

Helping “our own salvation” by using “all these things” which he has listed was the understanding of the Church in Chrysostom’s time. It was as if no one could be sure of their own salvation because they never knew if they had given enough.

Jesus wanted us to remember what He had done for us, as we read in **Luke 22 (KJV):14** And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. 15 And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: 16 For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. 17 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: 18 For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. 19 And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. 20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

It is His body and blood that was shed for us. It was not by the blood of goats and calves that He redeemed us, as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):12** Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

And in **Ephesians 1 (KJV):7** In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

And in **Colossians 1 (KJV):14** In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

And in **Colossians 1 (KJV):20** And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

And in **Hebrews 13 (KJV):12** Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

And in **1 John 1 (KJV):7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

And in **Revelation 1 (KJV):4** John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; 5 And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, 6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

The only thing that cleanses us from sin is the blood of Jesus. He alone is our propitiation and our advocate, as we read in **1 John 2 (KJV):1** My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

There is no other way to atone for sin. He alone is our mediator, as we read in **1 Timothy 2 (KJV):5** For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

We are saved by grace, as we read again in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

We are saved by our faith, as we read in **Romans 10 (KJV):8** But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

When we were born again, we were washed, sanctified, and justified, as we read in **1 Corinthians 6 (NASB):11** Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

Jesus' sacrifice on the cross was the one sacrifice that could take away sin. And this was done once for all, as we read in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):10** By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. 11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: 12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; 13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. 14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

When we sin after we have been born again, we don't have to atone for our sin. We only need to confess our sins, and He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin, and cleanse us of all unrighteousness.

We cannot help our salvation. But let us make sure we have believed from the heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, and we have confessed Him as Lord. If so, we shall be saved.

# The Doctrine of Baptisms

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON HEBREWS, HOMILY VII, page 408-410**, he says, “I was speaking concerning evil deeds. For he that intends to pursue virtue ought to condemn wickedness first, and then go in pursuit of it. For repentance cannot prove them clean. For this cause they were straightway baptized, that what they were unable to accomplish by themselves, this might be effected by the grace of Christ. Neither then does repentance suffice for purification, but men must first receive baptism. At all events, it was necessary to come to baptism, having condemned the sins thereby and given sentence against them.”

He is commenting on **Hebrews 6 (KJV):1** Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, 2 Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. 3 And this will we do, if God permit.

The word “baptisms” in Hebrews 6:2 in the Greek is in the plural case.

And he says, “But what is “the doctrine of baptisms”? Not as if there were many baptisms, but one only.”

He refers in context to **Ephesians 4 (KJV):4** There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; 5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

But there are seven baptisms mentioned in the word of God. The baptism of John the Baptist was a baptism of repentance telling them to believe on the one who would come after him. The baptism into the body of Christ, the baptism into His death, and the baptism into Christ are all done sovereignly by the Lord when we believe in Jesus Christ, and confess Him as Lord, and we are born again. Again, these baptisms are sovereignly done by the Lord when we are born again. The baptism in water, the baptism with the Holy Spirit, and the baptism of suffering are done when we take steps of faith to obey the Lord’s call. Let us walk by faith, as we have received Him, and enter into all the baptisms that the Lord has for us.

# Doctrine of Repentance

## Commentary Summary

Concerning **The Doctrine of Repentance**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON HEBREWS, HOMILY IX, page 410-413**, he refers to **Hebrews 6 (KJV)**:<sup>4</sup> For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, <sup>5</sup> And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, <sup>6</sup> If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

He then says, “What then (you say)? Is there no repentance? There is repentance, but there is no second baptism: but repentance there is, and it has great force, and is able to set free from the burden of his sins, if he will, even him that hath been baptized much in sins, and to establish in safety him who is in danger, even though he should have come unto the very depth of wickedness. And this is evident from many places. “For,” says one, “doth not he that falleth rise again? Or he that turneth away, doth not he turn back to [God]?” (Jer. viii. 4)”

And he says, “Again we fell away, and not even so does He punish us, but has given medicine of repentance, which is sufficient to put away and blot out all our sins; only if we knew the nature of the medicine, and how we ought to apply it.”

And he says, “What then is the medicine of Repentance and how is it made up? First, of the condemnation of our own sins;”

And he says, “Secondly, of great humbleness of mind: For it is like a golden chain; if one have hold of the beginning, all will follow. Because if thou confess thy sin as one ought to confess, the soul is humbled. For conscience turning it on itself causeth it to be subdued.”

And he says, “Other things too must be added to humbleness of mind if it be such as the blessed David knew, when he said, “A broken and a contrite heart God will not despise.””

And he says, “And after humbleness of mind, there is need of intense prayers, of many tears, tears by day, and tears by night: for, he says, “every night, will I wash my bed, I will water my couch with my tears. I am weary with my groaning.” (Ps. vi. 6) And again, “For I have eaten ashes as it were bread, and mingled my drink with weeping.” (Ps. cii. 9)”

And he says, “And after prayer thus intense, there is need of much almsgiving: for this it is which especially gives strength to the medicine of repentance.”

And he adds, “And as there is a medicine among the physicians’ helps which receives many herbs, but one is the essential, so also in case of repentance this is the essential herb, yea, it may be everything. For hear what the Divine Scripture says, “Give alms, and all things shall be clean.” (Luke xi. 41)”

And he says, “But let us all humble our own souls by alms-giving and forgiving our neighbors their trespasses, by not remembering injuries, nor avenging ourselves.”

And he says, “Also, the converting our brethren from their wandering.”

And he adds, “But now that we have learned by what means repentance and remission is brought to a successful issue, and that we shall be able entirely to escape, if we be willing to use it aright, what forgiveness can we possibly obtain, if we do not even enter on the thought of our

sins? since if this were done, all would be accomplished.”

Chrysostom believed that at baptism, our sins were washed away. Then, if we sinned after baptism, we had to atone for our sins. The process whereby this was done was in repentance. Repentance was like a “medicine” made up of first, the condemnation of our sins, second, the humbleness of mind, then prayer, and then the essential herb of giving alms.

But repentance in the Greek means to have a change of mind. In the Hebrew, it had to do with returning, or turning back to God. So the sense in the Scriptures of repentance is to have a change of mind about our sin, and about Jesus. Then it is a turning to God, that is, a surrender to God. It has nothing to do with making atonement for our sin. Our sin has already been atoned for by Jesus’ death on the cross. He is the propitiation for our sins. It is not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins, as we read in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):4** For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

The only one who could atone for our sins was Jesus Christ, who was without sin. And this He has done by dying on the cross. He is the way, the truth, and the life, as we read in **John 14 (KJV):6** Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

After we are born again, we are to walk in the light, as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

When we are born again, our spirit is born of God and made new. We are washed from all our sin, and we have a standing of righteousness. Now we will go through a progressive sanctification in our soul, that is, our mind, will, heart, emotions, and conscience. If we sin, we only have to confess our sin, as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Concerning **Punishing Ourselves**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON HEBREWS, HOMILY XXVIII, page 492-493**, he says, “He that is penitent ought never to forget his sin, but on the one hand, to beseech God not to remember it; while on the other, he himself never forgets it. If we remember it, God will forget it. Let us exact punishment from ourselves; let us accuse ourselves; thus shall we propitiate the Judge.”

Speaking of our soul, he says, “But let us persuade it that it has sinned; let us persuade it that it has sinned, that it may also repent, in order that having repented it may escape torment. How dost thou think to obtain pardon for thy sins, tell me, when thou hast not yet confessed them?”

And he adds, “Assuredly he is worthy of compassion and kindness who has sinned. But thou who hast not yet persuaded thyself [that thou hast sinned], how dost thou think to be pitied, when thou art thus without shame for some things?”

And he says, “I do not say to thee, Make a parade of thyself, nor accuse thyself before others: but be persuaded by the prophet when he saith, “Reveal thy way unto the Lord.” (Ps. xxxvii. 5)”

And he says, “[7.] Seest thou how many excellent [effects] are produced from the remembrance of our sins? Let us then write them in our minds. I know that the soul does not endure a recollection which is so bitter: but let us constrain and force it. It is better that it should be gnawed with the remembrance now, than at that time with vengeance.”



But continual remembrance of our sins will only bring us down. Trusting in the Lord means trusting in what He has done for us. This brings us unending joy. It is not about us, but about Him.

And he says, “For that this is true, and that in that day the sins of us all are [to be] publicly displayed, unless we now do them away by continual remembrance, hear how cruelty and inhumanity are publicly exposed, “I was an hungered” (He says) “and ye gave Me no meat.” (Matt. xxv. 42)”

And speaking of sin after baptism, he says, “But if not, at all events, let us not sleep after the stain, but continue always washing away the pollution by repentance, by tears, by prayers, by works of mercy.”

Let us read again in **Proverbs 28 (KJV):13** He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

And in **1 John 1 (KJV):7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

God does not require us to punish ourselves. We just need to confess our sins, and He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us of all unrighteousness. But He will chasten us, and scourge every child He receives as a good Father. If we have wronged someone, He would have us make amends. This may take time, and may not depend on us if the one we have wronged is not willing to forgive.

# Marriage

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, Letters to the Fallen Theodore, Letter 2, page 87, 113-114**, he says, writing to Theodore, “Marriage is right,” you say; I also assent to this. For “marriage,” we read, “is honourable and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge;” (Hebrews 13:4) but it is no longer possible for thee to observe the right conditions of marriage. For if he who has been attached to a heavenly bridegroom deserts him, and joins himself to a wife the act is adultery, even if you call it marriage ten thousand times over; or rather it is worse than adultery in proportion as God is greater than man.”

And he says, “Let no one deceive thee saying: “God hath not forbidden to marry;” I know this as well as you; He has not forbidden to marry, but He has forbidden to commit adultery, may you be preserved from ever engaging thyself in marriage! And why dost thou marvel if marriage is judged as if it were adultery, when God is disregarded?”

Theodore became warmly attached to a young lady named Hermione, and resolved to marry and to leave the ascetic brotherhood of which Chrysostom and Theodore were members. In the eyes of Chrysostom, this would be committing adultery because as a member of the ascetic brotherhood, he had pledged himself in “marriage” to the Lord.

And he says, “If then mercy has been a cause of condemnation more than slaughter because God was disobeyed, what wonder is it if marriage condemns more than adultery when it involves the rejection of Christ?”

And he says, “For if the wife hath not power over her own body, but the husband, (1 Corinthians 7:4) much more they who live in Christ must be unable to have authority over their body.”

Did Chrysostom imagine that only priests “live in Christ”? But all believers are baptized into the body of Christ.

And he says, “But the unseemly pleasures of this life nowise differ from shadows and dreams; for before the deed of sin is completed, the conditions of pleasure are extinguished; and the punishments for these have no limit. And the sweetness lasts for a little while but the pain is everlasting.”

Chrysostom imagined that Theodore was destined for hell because of his “adultery” with the woman, for according to Chrysostom, Theodore was already married to the “Bridegroom” by his commitment to the “ascetic brotherhood”.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 10, THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, Homily VII, Matt. II. 4-5, page 49**, he says, “For I neither “forbid to marry,” (1 Tim. iv. 2) nor hinder thy taking pleasure; but I would have this be done in chastity, not with shame, and reproach, and imputations without end.”

He refers to **1 Timothy 4 (KJV):3** Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.

Chrysostom, unlike Augustine, would not hinder those who are married from “taking pleasure”.

And in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 12, HOMILIES ON FIRST CORINTHIANS, HOMILY XIX, page 105-108**, he says, referring to 1 Corinthians 7:3, “Now what is the meaning of “the due honor? The wife hath not power over her own body;” but is both the slave and the mistress of the husband. And if you decline the service which is due, you have offended God. But if thou wish to withdraw thyself, it must be with the husband’s permission, though it be but a for short time. For this is why he calls the matter a debt, to shew that no one is master of himself but that they are servants to each other.”

And he says, “What then can this mean? “Let not the wife,” says he, “exercise continence, if the husband be unwilling; nor yet the husband without the wife’s consent.””

And he explains, “For that one should practice continence against the will of the other is “defrauding;” but not so, with the other’s consent: any more than I count myself defrauded, if after persuading me you take away any thing of mine.”

So defraud means to say no to your spouse when they want intimacy. Chrysostom has interpreted this Scripture well here.

Chrysostom says that the only valid case for divorce is fornication, which is in agreement with Jesus in **Matthew 19 (KJV):9** And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

Chrysostom correctly interprets the case where one in the marriage is an unbeliever. The believing spouse should not leave if the unbelieving is content to stay in the marriage, as he says, “He did not say, If any one wish to take an unbelieving wife, but, “If any one hath an unbelieving wife.” Which means, If any after marrying or being married have received the word of godliness, and then the other party which had continued in unbelief still yearn for them to dwell together, let not the marriage be broken off. “For,” saith he, “the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife.””

And he says, “But what is the meaning of, “if the unbelieving departeth?” For instance, if he bid thee sacrifice and take part in his ungodliness on account of thy marriage, or else part company; it were better the marriage were annulled, and no breach made in godliness. Wherefore he adds, “A brother is not under bondage, nor yet a sister, in such cases.” If day by day he buffet thee and keep up combats on this account, it is better to separate. For this is what he glances at, saying, “But God hath called us in peace.” For it is the other party who furnished the ground of separation, even as he did who committed uncleanness.”

Chrysostom has done well here. God does not want us to be victims. This is the plain sense of the Scripture.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, COMMENTARY ON GALATIANS, CHAPTER II, page 15**, he says, “We have a similar instance, in Paul’s Epistle to the Corinthians, in his command to husbands and wives to come together again. To which, that he might not be thought to be legislating for them, he subjoins, “But this I say by way of permission, not of commandment.” (1 Cor. vii. 5) For this was not a judgment authoritatively given but an indulgence to their incontinence; as he says, “for your incontinency.” Would you know Paul’s sentence in this matter? hear his words, “I would that all men were even as I myself,” (1 Cor. vii. 7) in continence.”

Paul’s actual words are as in **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):6** But I speak this by permission,

and not of commandment. 7 For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.

Paul was single, and he wished that all were single for he says that it is good for a man not to touch a woman in **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV)**:1 Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. 2 Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.

So he is saying in verse 7 that not everyone has the gift to be single, and not everyone has the gift to be married.

Chrysostom then compares this “permission” with the apostles’ judgment in Acts 15 when some “false brethren” were saying that believers had to be circumcised. The apostles’ judgment was that it was permissible to be circumcised, but not a requirement. And so it is permissible for one to marry or not to marry.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON PHILIPPIANS, HOMILY XII, page 316-321**, he says, “For instance, wine is given for cheerfulness, not drunkenness, bread for nourishment, sexual intercourse for the procreation of children. As then these things have gained an ill name, so also have tears.”

But sexual intercourse was also given for intimacy between a man and his wife. The desire for intimacy in marriage is natural, and not lust.

He also says, “Thou marriest a wife for chastity, and procreation of children; what then mean these harlots?”

And he says, “Remember,” he saith, “my bonds.” Marriage is a bond, a bond ordained of God, a harlot is a severing and a dissolving. It is permitted you to embellish marriage with other things, such as full tables, and apparel. I do not cut off these things, lest I should seem to be clownish to an extreme; and yet Rebecca was content with her veil (**Schaff Note:** θέριστρον, “summer robe.”) only (Gen. xxiv. 65);”

And speaking of weddings in his time, he says, “Everything should be full of chasteness, of gravity, of orderliness; but I see the reverse, people frisking like camels and mules. For the virgin, her chamber is the only befitting place.”

And he adds, “But those harlots, what mean they? They ought to hide their faces when marriage is celebrated; they ought to be dug into the earth, (for harlotry is the corruption of marriage,) but we introduce them at our marriages.”

And he says, “Marriage is a sweet ointment. Why then introducest thou the foul stench of the dunghill into the preparation of thy ointment?”

And he says, “What? is marriage a theater? It is a mystery and a type of a mighty thing; and even if thou reverence not it, reverence that whose type it is. “This mystery,” saith he, “is great, but I speak in regard of Christ and of the Church.” (Eph. v. 32)”

And he says, “How is it a mystery? They come together, and the two make one.”

And he says, “I know that many are ashamed at what is said, and the cause of this is what I spoke of, your own lasciviousness, and unchasteness. The fact of marriages being thus performed, thus depraved, hath gained the thing an ill name: for “marriage is honorable, and the bed undefiled.” (Heb. xiii. 4)”

And, speaking of marriage, he says, “For this cause I am desirous of having it thoroughly purified, so as to bring it back again to its proper nobleness, so as to stop the mouths of the

heretics. The gift of God is insulted, the root of our generation; for about that root there is much dung and filth. This then let us cleanse away by our discourse.”

And he says, “Shall I tell how marriage is also a mystery of the Church? As Christ came into the Church, and she was made of him, and he united with her in a spiritual intercourse, “for,” saith one, “I have espoused you to one husband, a pure virgin.” (2 Cor. xi. 2) “And that we are of Him, he saith, of His members, “and of His flesh.” Thinking then on all these things, let us not cast shame upon so great a mystery. Marriage is a type of the presence of Christ, and art thou drunken at it? Tell me; if thou sawest an image of the king, wouldest thou dishonor it? By no means.”

Chrysostom gives us a window into marriage in his time. His encouragement as to how to celebrate a wedding is healthy, and even applicable to today.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON THESSALONIANS, HOMILY V, page 396-397**, he says, “For let a man, tell me, be dear to God, and shining in virtue, and having a wife; (for it is possible for a man having a wife and children and servants and friends to please God;) will he not be able much more than I to benefit them all?”

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TITUS, HOMILY V, page 536**, speaking of Paul, he says, “And you see him often laying down rules for a lawful intercourse, and he permits the enjoyment of this desire, and allows of a second marriage, and bestows much consideration upon the matter, and never punishes on account of it.”

And he says, “But he everywhere condemns him that is fond of money. Concerning wealth also Christ often commanded that we should avoid the corruption of it, but He says nothing about abstaining from a wife.”

And he says, “And the blessed Paul says, “Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled” (Heb. xiii. 4);”

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON HEBREWS, HOMILY VII, page 402**, he says, “Moreover the Beatitudes [pronounced] by Christ, were not addressed to solitaries only: since in that case the whole world would have perished, and we should be accusing God of cruelty. And if these beatitudes were spoken to solitaries only, and the secular person cannot fulfill them, yet He permitted marriage, then He has destroyed all men. For if it be not possible, with marriage, to perform the duties of solitaries, all things have perished and are destroyed, and the [functions] of virtue are shut up in a strait.”

So by “solitaries”, he is referring to a “monastic” or someone who is not in the laity.

He continues, “And, how can marriage be honorable, which so hinders us? What then? It is possible, yea very possible, even if we have wives, to pursue after virtue, if we will. How? If having “wives,” we “be as though we had none,” if we rejoice not over our “possessions,” if we “use the world as not abusing it.” (1 Cor. vii. 29, 31)”

And he concludes, “And if any persons have been hindered by marriage state, let them know that marriage is not the hindrance, but their purpose which made an ill use of marriage.”

Marriage was a good thing in the eyes of Chrysostom. And he is in agreement with the Scriptures. But Chrysostom did not understand that marriage is about intimacy between a man and a woman, and not only about the procreation of children.

# Catechumens

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, Instructions to Catechumens, page 159-161**, he writes, “To those about to be illuminated; (**Schaff Note: I.e., to be baptized.**”

And speaking of baptism, he says, “But, if you will, let us discourse about the name which this mystic cleansing bears: for its name is not one, but very many and various. For this purification is called the laver of regeneration. “He saved us,” he saith, “through the laver of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.” (Titus 3:5)”

And we read in **Titus 3 (Latin Vulgate: Douay Rheims):5** Not by the works of justice which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us, by the laver of regeneration and renovation of the Holy Ghost.

But we read as in **Titus 3 (KJV):5** Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

The word “laver” is not in the Greek. The Greek word is **λουτρόν** (pronounced lü-tro'n), from G3068; a bath, i.e. (figuratively), baptism:—washing. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G3067**

Since regeneration is not about baptism but about being born from above by the Holy Spirit when we believe in Jesus Christ, the washing that is referred to in Titus 3:5 is about the cleansing of our sins which God does as a result of our faith in Jesus Christ. Water baptism is then done to show that we have believed.

Chrysostom also says, “It is called also illumination, and this St. Paul again has called it, “For call to remembrance the former days in which after ye were illuminated ye endured a great conflict of sufferings;” (Hebrews 10:32) and again, “For it is impossible for those who were once illuminated, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and then fell away, to renew them again unto repentance.” (Hebrews 6:4-6)”

However, nothing is said about baptism in these Scriptures. Chrysostom is interpreting them based on the tradition of the Church in his time. His whole speech seems to be about introducing the Catechumens to the Church, and preparing them for the first ritual of water baptism.

Concerning **Baptism**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, Instructions to Catechumens, page 161-162**, he is saying that baptism, “the laver of grace”, cleanses the real uncleanness, the defilement of soul and body.

He refers to **1 Corinthians 6 (NKJV):11** And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

And he interprets the washing in this verse as baptism. But the washing here speaks of the cleansing of our sins when we believe, for we are justified by faith, as we read in **Romans 5 (NASB):1** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

Our faith is all that is necessary for us to be born again, as we read in **John 3 (KJV):16** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

And he says, “And for what reason, says one, if the laver take away all our sins, is it called, not a laver of remission of sins, nor a laver of cleansing, but a laver of regeneration? Because it does not simply take away our sins, nor simply cleanse us from our faults, but so as if we were born again.”

His wording about the new birth, “as if we were born again”, is so vague and indefinite. Chrysostom does not seem to understand the change that happens when one is born of the Spirit of God. Jesus did not say that unless you have something like a birth of the Spirit, you cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. Jesus said that we must be born again, as in **John 3 (KJV):4** Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

And Chrysostom says, “For it creates and fashions us anew not forming us again out of earth, but creating us out of another element, namely, of the nature of water. For it does not simply wipe the vessel clean, but entirely remoulds it again.”

But the new birth Jesus describes in John 3:1-8 is a spiritual birth. Our spirit is given eternal life by being born of the Holy Spirit when we believe in Jesus. Chrysostom thought that the new birth was about the grace of the Spirit. So in his thinking, the one who is born again has a vessel that is clean and remoulded by the grace of God abiding in it. In his understanding, it is then possible to lose the grace of God, and be destined for hell. But it is still possible, in his understanding, to come back by repentance. But if one lost the grace of God, then according to his understanding, if they repented they would have to be born again, again. This is not in agreement with the Scripture.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, Instructions to Catechumens, page 165-166**, he says, “This too he has bidden thee do according to thy power, with what has been entrusted to thee, to extend the holiness which thou hast received, and to make the righteousness which comes from the laver brighter, and the gift of grace more radiant;”

While he doesn't say exactly what the “gift of grace” is, the understanding of the Church in his time appears to be that one received the grace of the Spirit when one was baptized. Then if one fell away from God, they would lose this grace, but could regain it again upon repentance.

The understanding of Chrysostom about regeneration was that when one is baptized, they are regenerated, or born again.

And he says, “For when grace has come, and driven away the darkness of the understanding, we learn the exact nature of things, and what was before dreadful to us becomes contemptible.” He did not understand that being born of the Spirit of God makes us new creations, that is, our spirit, being born of the Spirit of God, now has a new divine nature, as we

read in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):3** According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: 4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

It is not just a matter of receiving the “grace of the Spirit”. There has been a change in our nature in our spirit because of being born of the Spirit of God.

He also says, “For this reason I said before, and speak now and will not cease speaking, if any has not rectified the defects in his morals, nor furnished himself with easily acquired virtue, let him not be baptized. For the laver is able to remit former sins, but there is no little fear, and no ordinary danger lest we return to them, and our remedy become a wound. For by how much greater the grace is, by so much is the punishment more for those who sin after these things.”

Chrysostom does not realize that one only had to believe in Jesus Christ, and confess Him as Lord, to be born again. Our spirit then receives eternal life, and our standing before God is as righteous ones, having been justified by God because of our faith which He gave us. We are not in danger of losing our salvation as Chrysostom intimates. God has made provision for us to be restored to fellowship with Him by confessing our sins. He is then faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us of all unrighteousness, as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

And if we have been born from above, we are saved. Our works will then be judged at the judgment seat of Christ for rewards, but not for salvation, as in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):15** If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

This fear of losing salvation caused the Church to hold back those who had become Catechumens from being baptized for three years. They had to undergo three years of instruction and probation before they were allowed to be baptized.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, EUTROPIUS, PATRICIAN AND CONSUL, Homily II, After Eutropius having been found outside the Church had been taken captive, page 259**, he says, “For observe: He took dust from the earth and made the man; He formed him. The devil came, and perverted him. Then the Lord came, took him again, and remoulded, and recast him in baptism, and He suffered not his body to be of clay, but made it of a harder ware. He subjected the soft clay to the fire of the Holy Spirit. “He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:” (Matthew 3:11) He was baptized with water that he might be remodelled, with fire that he might be hardened. Therefore the Prophet speaking beforehand under divine guidance declared “Thou shalt dash them in pieces like vessels of the potter.” (Psalm 2:9)”

Chrysostom did not understand that in Matthew 3:11 John the Baptist was speaking of a different baptism, that is, the baptism with the Holy Spirit. To Chrysostom, there was only one baptism, that is, water baptism. And in Psalm 2:9, this verse does not refer to believers, but to the nations, whom the Lord Jesus in the Kingdom Age will rule as with a rod of iron, as we read in **Revelation 2 (KJV):15** And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name



written, King Of Kings, And Lord Of Lords.

And in **Revelation 2 (KJV):26** And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: 27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.

And Chrysostom says, “Speaking beforehand therefore of the remoulding which is wrought by means of baptism he saith, “thou shalt dash them in pieces like vessels of a potter”—He means that He remodels and recasts them. I descend into the water of baptism, and the fashion of my nature is remoulded, and the fire of the Spirit recasts it, and it is turned into a harder ware. And that my words are no empty vaunt hear what Job says, “He hath made us as clay,” (Job 10:9) and Paul, “but we have this treasure in earthen vessels.” (2 Corinthians 4:7)”

The remoulding he refers to is the new birth of the Spirit of God. But this birth does not happen at baptism, but when one believes in Jesus Christ. And it is not just a remodeling, but a new creation, as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):24** And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

The fire that John the Baptist spoke of in Matthew 3:11 relates to the sanctifying presence of the Holy Spirit in the believer. This happens when one is baptized with the Holy Spirit, as we read in **Acts 2 (KJV):1** And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

The baptism with the Holy Spirit is for the empowering of the believer, as Jesus taught in **Acts 1 (KJV):5** For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

And in **Acts 1 (KJV):8** But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

And in **Luke 24 (KJV):49** And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

This baptism was not about salvation, for the disciples were already clean, except for Judas, as we read in **John 13 (KJV):10** Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. 11 For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 12, HOMILIES ON FIRST CORINTHIANS, HOMILY III, page 12-13**, he refers to 1 Corinthians 1:14, and, speaking for Paul, he says, ““Why are you elated at having baptized, when I for my part even give thanks that I have not done so!” Thus saying, by a kind of divine art (οἰκονομικῶς) he does away with their swelling pride upon this point; not with the efficacy of the baptism, (God forbid,) but with the folly of those who were puffed up at having been baptizers: first, by showing that the Gift is not theirs; and, secondly, by thanking God therefore. For Baptism truly is a great thing: but its greatness is not the work of the person baptizing, but of Him who is invoked in the Baptism: since to baptize is nothing as regards man’s labor, but is much less than preaching the Gospel. Yea, again I say, great indeed is Baptism, and without baptism it is impossible to obtain the

kingdom. Still a man of no singular excellence is able to baptize, but to preach the Gospel there is need of great labor.”

And, speaking of Paul again, he says, “And why, not being sent to baptize, did he baptize? Not in contention with Him that sent him, but in this instance laboring beyond his task. For he saith not, “I was forbidden,” but, “I was not sent for this, but for that which was of the greatest necessity.” For preaching the Gospel is a work perhaps for one or two; but baptizing, for everyone endowed with the priesthood.”

But Baptism is only a ritual, and doesn’t save anyone. This is why Paul thanked God that he had baptized none of them, “but Crispus and Gaius”. Chrysostom is upholding the Church’s teaching of regeneration by baptism by his interpretation of these verses. But Paul would never give such thanks if baptism had any ability to save.

And he concludes, “For as to teach the wrestlers in the games is the part of a spirited and skilful trainer, but to place the crown on the conquerors head may be that of one who cannot even wrestle, (although it be the crown which adds splendor to the conqueror,) so also in Baptism. It is impossible to be saved without it, yet it is no great thing which the baptizer doth, finding the will ready prepared.”

When we believe in Jesus Christ, we pass from death to life. We then, in obedience to the Lord’s command, take another step of faith, and we are baptized. Baptism is only an outward display of the faith that we already have in Jesus Christ. We are baptized because we believe, not in order to believe.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 12, HOMILIES ON FIRST CORINTHIANS, HOMILY VII, page 34**, he says of the unbeliever, “He hearing of a laver, counts it merely as water: but I behold not simply the thing which is seen, but the purification of the soul which is by the Spirit. He considers only that my body hath been washed; but I have believed that the soul also hath become both pure and holy; and I count it the sepulchre, the resurrection, the sanctification, the righteousness, the redemption, the adoption, the inheritance, the kingdom of heaven, the plenary effusion (χορηγίαν) of the Spirit.”

But the laver is not what saves us, nor does faith in the laver. It is faith in Jesus Christ that saves us in order to be resurrected, sanctified, justified, redeemed, adopted, made joint heirs with Christ, and recipients of the Spirit. And it is not in the soul that regeneration takes place, but in our spirit, as Jesus taught in **John 3 (KJV):6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Baptism is only an outward sign of an inward work, much like circumcision which avails nothing, as we read in **Galatians 5 (KJV):6** For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

And the “purification of the soul” is not by the Spirit in water baptism. The purification of the soul will be a progressive work of sanctification after one is born again. As our minds are renewed by the knowledge of the word of God, we will grow in grace and knowledge. Our hurts in our past will be healed as we process our feelings with the Lord, and let go of our old ways. But our spirit is made new by the new birth from above by the Spirit of God.

The Church in the time of Chrysostom did not understand that it is in our spirit where one is born again. Then in our soul we will be renewed as we walk in the light of the word of God. The Church in his time thought that one had to be pure before they could even be baptized. So

they had a class for Catechumens, whom they would not permit to be baptized until they had reached a certain purity. But baptism is only a sign like circumcision, as we read in **Romans 4 (KJV):8** Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. 9 Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. 10 How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. 11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: 12 And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised.

Abraham's faith is what justified him, just as the faith of all believers justifies them today, and not water baptism.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON THESSALONIANS, HOMILY IV, page 390**, he asks, "Where now are those who lessen the Son, because He is named in the grace of the Laver after the Father?"

But where do we find any reference in the Scriptures to "the grace of the Laver"? There is no such reference in the Scriptures.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TIMOTHY, HOMILY IV, page 419-420**, he says, "What then was it that was thought incredible? That those who were enemies, and sinners, neither justified by the law, nor by works, should immediately through faith alone be advanced to the highest favor. Upon this head accordingly Paul has discoursed at length in his Epistle to the Romans, and here again at length. "This is a faithful saying," he says, "and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

As the Jews were chiefly attracted by this, he persuades them not to give heed to the law, since they could not attain salvation by it without faith. Against this he contends; for it seemed to them incredible, that a man who had misspent all his former life in vain and wicked actions, should afterwards be saved by his faith alone."

But then he says, "And when we speak of the Laver, and of the remission of sins through it, this too they say is unworthy of God, that he who has committed offenses without number should have his sins remitted."

Chrysostom has just stated that salvation is by faith alone, and not by works, and yet he speaks of the Laver as if remission of sins were through it.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON PHILEMON, HOMILY III, page 556**, he says, "Hath not the Laver saved us, who had committed infinite evils? It hath delivered us from them, not that we should commit them again, but that we may not commit them. For "how shall we," it is said, "that are dead to sin, live any longer therein"? (Rom. vi. 2)"

When he asks, "Hath not the Laver saved us, who had committed infinite evils?", he is giving credit to the ritual of baptism for saving us. This takes away our focus on what Jesus Christ has done for us. His focus is on the ritual, and not on Jesus Christ. Jesus is our advocate with the Father. He is our mediator. He is our propitiation. He is the way, the truth, and the life

for us. When our focus is on rituals, it makes one feel a distance between ourselves and God. But we are to come boldly before the throne of grace. The Lord wants intimacy with us.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY XXV, page 88-89**, he says, “The first creation then, that of Adam, was from earth; the next, that of the woman, from his rib; the next, that of Abel, from seed; yet we cannot arrive at the comprehension of any one of these, nor prove the circumstances by argument, though they are of a most earthly nature; how then shall we be able to give account of the unseen generation by Baptism, which is far more exalted than these, or to require arguments for that strange and marvelous Birth? Since even Angels stand by while that Generation takes place, but they could not tell the manner of that marvelous working, they stand by only, not performing anything, but beholding what takes place. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, worketh all.”

And he says, ““What then says it? That what is effected is a Generation. If any ask, “How,” stop his mouth with the declaration of God, which is the strongest and a plain proof.”

But the answer is very simple if you leave out baptism. We are born again when we believe, that is, when we have faith, as we read in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

A regeneration is a passing from death to life. And it occurs by the will of God, unseen like the wind, as we read in **John 3 (KJV):6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

Concerning **Regeneration**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY XXVI, page 90-92**, he says, “There is no longer a mother, or pangs, or sleep, or coming together, and embracings of bodies; henceforth all the fabric of our nature is framed above, of the Holy Ghost and water. The water is employed, being made the Birth to him who is born; what the womb is to the embryo, the water is to the believer; for in the water he is fashioned and formed.”

And he says, “At first it was said, “Let the waters bring forth the creeping things that have life” (Gen. i. 20 , LXX);”

He refers to **Genesis 1 (Septuagint):20** And God said, Let the waters bring forth reptiles having life, and winged creatures flying above the earth in the firmament of heaven, and it was so.

And to **Genesis 1 (KJV):20** And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.

But this was a creative act of God. Water doesn't give life.

And he says, ““That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” His meaning is of this kind; “He that is born of the Spirit is spiritual.” For the Birth which He speaks of here is not that according to essence, but according to honor and grace.”

But that which is born of the Spirit is spirit, not “honor and grace”. Spirit has essence, as it were, since it is unique to the person. That we have a spirit is stated in **1 Thessalonians 5**

**(KJV):23** And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And in **Romans 8 (KJV):16** The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

Since we have a spirit, it follows that it is different from every other spirit. This understanding was not in the Church in the time of Chrysostom. They thought that the spirit was synonymous with soul. They did not understand the difference between soul and spirit. Our spirit is where we connect with God. Our soul is where we connect with our fellow man.

He then says, “Christ then having said, “He that is born of the Spirit is spirit,” when He saw him again confused, leads His discourse to an example from sense, saying,

Ver. 7, 8. “Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. (**Schaff Note:** or, “from above.”) The wind bloweth where it listeth.”

And he explains, “The expression therefore, “bloweth where it listeth,” is that of one who would show that it cannot be restrained, that it is spread abroad everywhere, and that none can hinder its passing hither and thither, but that it goes abroad with great might, and none is able to turn aside its violence.

[2.] “And thou hearest its voice,” (that is, its rustle, its noise,) “but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.””

Chrysostom had no understanding of what it means to be born of the Spirit. To him it just meant that “honor and grace” were bestowed on an individual.

We can see the blindness that tradition caused in the early Church. That the Spirit moves like the wind, and we cannot tell where He is going, describes the birth of the Christian who in a moment receives faith from God, and believes in Jesus Christ, and is born of God. Baptism is merely a ritual that the Lord commanded to be done by those who believe in Him. It is only a sign like circumcision that one has believed.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY LI, page 183-184**, he says, “As in another place He saith, “A well of water springing up unto eternal life” (c. iv. 14), that is to say, “he shall possess much grace”; and elsewhere He calleth it, “eternal life,” but here, “living water.” He calleth that “living” which ever worketh; for the grace of the Spirit, when it hath entered into the mind and hath been established, springeth up more than any fountain, faileth not, becometh not empty, stayeth not.”

He refers to **John 4 (KJV):14** But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

The “water” Jesus is speaking of is the water of His words, which are “Spirit and life”, as we read in **John 6 (KJV):63** It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

Chrysostom did not understand what happens to our spirits when we are regenerated, or born again. It is not just the receiving of the grace of the Spirit, which thinking leads one to believe that they could lose it if they did not walk rightly. Rather, it is an actual birth in our spirits by the Spirit of God whereby we who were dead in trespasses and sin are made alive in our spirit with eternal life. We now have fellowship with God, our maker. And it is a change in our nature. We are now partakers of the divine nature in our spirit that has been born from

above.

All of this thinking on Baptism and Regeneration affected the Catechumens perception of what the word of God actually said. But the early Church did the best they could. Tradition began to be a stronghold in the early Church. This is why we ultimately needed a reformation, and why we continue to need to reform as we walk in the light of the word of God.

# The Church

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, Homily, TO THOSE WHO HAD NOT ATTENDED THE ASSEMBLY, page 224-225**, he says that “the greater part of the body of the Church is like a dead and motionless carcass.”

His solution is to call on the members who are salt, as he says, “For what profit is a lamp if it does not give light to him who sits in darkness? and what profit is a Christian when he benefits no one, neither leads any one back to virtue? Again salt is not an astringent to itself but braces up those parts of the body which have decayed, and prevents them from falling to pieces and perishing. Even so do thou, since God has appointed thee to be spiritual salt, bind and brace up the decayed members, that is the indolent and sordid brethren, and having rescued them from their indolence as from some form of corruption, unite them to the rest of the body of the Church. And this is the reason why He called you leaven: for leaven also does not leaven itself, but, little though it is, it affects the whole lump however big it may be. So also do ye: although ye are few in number, yet be ye many and powerful in faith, and in zeal towards God.”

Many were complaining about the heat, and using it as an excuse to not come to Church. But Chrysostom points out that they do not let the heat keep them from the market place.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, EUTROPIUS, PATRICIAN AND CONSUL, Homily II, After Eutropius having been found outside the Church had been taken captive, page 255-256**, he says, “Do not hold aloof from the Church; for nothing is stronger than the Church. The Church is thy hope, thy salvation, thy refuge.”

While he correctly states that “the master of the Church has many names: being called the Father, and the way, and the life, (John 14:6) and the light, (John 1:8-9, 8:12) and the arm, (Psalm 98:1, Isaiah 33:2, 51:9) and the propitiation, (1 John 2:2) and the foundation, (1 Corinthians 3:11) and the door, (John 10:7) and the sinless one, (1 John 3:5, 1 Peter 2:22) and the treasure, (Matthew 6:21, 13:44) and Lord, and God, and Son, and the only begotten, and the form of God, (Philippians 2:6) and the image (Colossians 1:15) of God...”

He then adds, “so is it with the Church itself: does one name suffice to present the whole truth?”

But the Church is not our “hope”, or our “salvation”, or our “refuge”.

We hope in the Lord, as we read in **Psalm 38 (KJV):15** For in thee, O Lord, do I hope: thou wilt hear, O Lord my God.

And in **Psalm 42 (KJV):5** Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.

He is our salvation, as we read in **Psalm 68 (KJV):19** Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Selah.

And in **Psalm 95 (KJV):1** O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.

And we read in **Isaiah 52 (KJV):10** The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

And in **Revelation 19 (KJV):1** And after these things I heard a great voice of much

people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God:

God is our refuge, as we read in **Deuteronomy 33 (KJV):27** The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them.

And in **Psalm 46 (KJV):1** God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. This is why we praise Him, and not the Church.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, CONCERNING THE STATUES, HOMILY VI, page 381**, he says, “Since therefore the rulers also make you afraid, and render you anxious, the Church, which is the common mother of us all, opening her bosom, and cradling us in her arms, administers daily consolation; telling us that the fear of rulers is profitable, and profitable too the consolation that comes from hence. (**Schaff Note:** *i.e.*, from the Church)”

Because the Church administered Baptism by which it was believed one was born again, and entered the Church, it was thought that the Church was our mother. This made the priest the spiritual father, because he administered baptism by which it was thought that one was born again. The Church did not understand at this time that one passed from death to life when one believed in Jesus Christ as in John 5:24.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, HOMILY III, page 20**, he says, “Again, consider the moderation of James. He it was who received the Bishopric of Jerusalem, and here he says nothing.”

A “Bishopric” was what a bishop ruled over in Chrysostom’s time. James was an apostle. A bishop in the New Testament sense is an overseer, that is, an elder in a local church.

He then says, “Mark also the great moderation of the other Apostles, how they concede the throne to him, and no longer dispute with each other. For that Church was as it were in heaven: having nothing to do with this world’s affairs: and resplendent not with wails, no, nor with numbers, but with the zeal of them that formed the assembly. They were “about an hundred and twenty,” it says.”

Notice how Chrysostom places James on a “throne”. A bishop presided on a throne in the time of Chrysostom. Chrysostom seems to think James had a throne because of his judgment in Acts 15 when Barnabas and Paul came to Jerusalem about the need to circumcise Gentiles, as we read in **Acts 15 (KJV):19** Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: 20 But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood.

But James was simply speaking in concord with the “apostles and elders and brethren”, as we read in **Acts 15 (KJV):22** Then pleased it the apostles and elders with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas and Silas, chief men among the brethren: 23 And they wrote letters by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia. 24 Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment: 25 It seemed



good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, 26 Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 27 We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth. 28 For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; 29 That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, HOMILY III, page 21-25**, he says, “Besides, on the other hand, thy life is irreproachable, and thy habits those of a well nurtured man, but in the Church this is not all that is wanted. Moreover, one man is adapted for one thing, another for another. Do you not observe, how much discourse the holy Scripture has made on this matter? But let me say why it is that the thing has become a subject of competition: it is because we come to the Episcopate not as unto a work of governing and superintending the brethren, but as to a post of dignity and repose. Did you but know that a Bishop is bound to belong to all, to bear the burden of all; that others, if they are angry, are pardoned, but he never; that others, if they sin, have excuses made for them, he has none; you would not be eager for the dignity, would not run after it. So it is, the Bishop is exposed to the tongues of all, to the criticism of all, whether they be wise or fools. He is harassed with cares every day, nay, every night. He has many to hate him, many to envy him. Talk not to me of those who curry favor with all, of those who desire to sleep, of those who advance to this office as for repose.”

Chrysostom did not count himself in that number, as he then says, “We have nothing to do with these; we speak of those who watch for your souls, who consider the safety and welfare of those under them before their own.”

And speaking of the work of a Bishop, he says, “Why speak of the anxiety connected with the word and doctrine? the painful work in Ordinations? Either, perhaps, I am a poor wretched incompetent creature, or else, the case is as I say. The soul of a Bishop is for all the world like a vessel in a storm: lashed from every side, by friends, by foes, by one’s own people, by strangers. Does not the Emperor rule the whole world, the Bishop a single city? Yet a Bishop’s anxieties are as much beyond those of the emperor, as the waters of a river simply moved, by the wind are surpassed in agitation by the swelling and raging sea.”

So a “Bishop” ruled over “a single city”.

And he adds, “I speak not otherwise than it is, but as I find it in my own actual experience. I do not think there are many among Bishops that will be saved, but many more that perish: and the reason is, that it is an affair that requires a great mind.”

And he says, “Do not tell me, that the presbyter is in fault, or the deacon. The guilt of all these comes perforce upon the head of those who ordained them,” meaning the Bishop.

And according to Chrysostom, the Bishop is responsible for the souls under him. If one is lost, he is the “cause of another’s destruction”, and “is worthy of death”, even “in the next world”.

So we notice by Chrysostom’s words that the existence of presbyters and deacons is evident during his time, but the elevation of the bishop is also evident because he ordained the presbyters and deacons. The bishop had taken the place of the apostle.

However, Paul called for the elders of the church at Ephesus, as we read in **Acts 20 (KJV):17** And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.

The elders were the presbyters. Then we read that the elders were overseers, or bishops, in **Acts 20 (KJV):28** Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

The word in the Greek translated “overseers” is **ἐπίσκοπος** (pronounced e-pe'-sko-pos), from G1909 and G4649 (in the sense of G1983); a superintendent, i.e. Christian officer in genitive case charge of a (or the) church (literally or figuratively):—bishop, overseer. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G1985**

Chrysostom looked on this office as one of great responsibility, as he says, “I mean, that even if you have sinned, but in your own person merely, you will have no such great punishment, nothing like it: but if you have sinned as bishop, you are lost. Remember what Moses endured, what wisdom he displayed, what good deeds he exhibited: but, for committing one sin only, he was bitterly punished; and with good reason; for this fault was attended with injury to the rest.”

And he says, “The contrary plainly is the fact. Prefects, and governors (ὑπαρχοὶ καὶ τοπάρχαι) of provinces, do not enjoy such honour as he that governs the Church. If he enter the palace, who but he is first? If he go to see ladies, or visit the houses of the great, none is preferred to him. The whole state of things is ruined and corrupt.”

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY XIV, page 441-442**, he says, “After intimating all these then by speaking of the Spirit, and fear, and the adoption, he gives a fresh proof again of having the Spirit of adoption. Now what is this? That “we cry, Abba, Father.” And how great this is, the initiated know (**Schaff Note:** St. Cyr. Jer. Cat. 23, §11, p. 276, O.T.), being with good reason bidden to use this word first in the Prayer of the initiated. What then, it may be said, did not they also call God Father? Dost thou not hear Moses, when he says, “Thou desertedst the God that begot thee?” (Deut. xxxii. 15. LXX) Dost thou not hear Malachi reproaching them, and saying, that “one God formed you,” and there is “one Father of you all?” (Mal. ii. 10. LXX) Still, if these words and others besides are used, we do not find them anywhere calling God by the name, or praying in this language. But we all, priests and laymen, rulers and ruled, are ordered to pray herein. And this is the first language we give utterance to, after those marvellous throes, and that strange and unusual mode of labor. If in any other instances they so called Him, that was only of their own mind. But those in the state of grace do it through being moved by the in-working of the Spirit.”

He is referring to **Romans 8 (KJV):15** For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

So there were priests and laymen in the Church in the time of Chrysostom.

## The Election of a Bishop

### Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, ON THE PRIESTHOOD, BOOK III, page 53-55**, he says, “Come, then, and take a peep at the public festivals when it is generally the custom for elections to be made to ecclesiastical dignities, and you will then see the priest assailed with accusations as numerous as the people whom he rules. For all who have the privilege of conferring the honor are then split into many parties; and one can never find the council of elders of one mind with each other, or about the man who has won the prelacy; but each stands apart from the others, one preferring this man, another that. Now the reason is that they do not all look to one thing, which ought to be the only object kept in view, the excellence of the character;”

And Chrysostom says that many choose a bishop on the basis of his “illustrious family”, or his “great wealth”, or “because he has come over from the camp of the adversary”, or because of “intimacy with himself”, or one who is “related to him by birth”, or one who is a “flatterer”.

And he asks, “Could anything be more contrary to right rule than this? that bad men, laden with iniquity, should be courted on account of those things for which they ought to be punished, and ascend to the priestly dignity on account of things for which they ought to be debarred from the very threshold of the Church.”

And he testifies, “For I consider it as atrocious to expel the useful men as to force in the useless. And this in fact takes place, so that the flock of Christ is unable to find consolation in any direction, or draw its breath freely.”

Chrysostom gives us insight into the Church in his time. It seems to have been strongly influenced by outside forces in many ways. The focus of the Church must be on the word of God, rightly divided. Our intimacy with the Lord is what is most important.

## **Bishops and Deacons**

### **Commentary Summary**

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON PHILIPPIANS, HOMILY I, page 184-185**, he refers to **Philippians 1 (KJV):1** Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: 2 Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Chrysostom says, “To the fellow Bishops and Deacons.” What is this? were there several Bishops of one city? Certainly not; but he called the Presbyters so. For then they still interchanged the titles, and the Bishop was called a Deacon.”

In the Church in the time of Chrysostom, according to Chrysostom, they “still interchanged the titles”, but a Bishop was over a city, and Presbyters were just elders in a church.

Actually, according to Acts 20:17-28, a Bishop was a Presbyter, which was an elder. So evidently things were changing. Not only so, but apparently according to Chrysostom, “the Bishop was called a Deacon”. We see that Chrysostom and the Church in his time had no real understanding of what a bishop or a deacon was according to Scripture.

And he says, referring to Timothy, “For that he was a Bishop appears by his saying to him, “Lay hands hastily on no man.” (1 Tim. v. 22) And again, “Which was given thee with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery.” (1 Tim. iv. 14)”

But Paul refers to himself, Timothy, and Silvanus as apostles in **1 Thessalonians 2 (KJV):6** Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ.

This fact is not recognized even in the Church today. When Paul called for the “elders” at the Church at Ephesus in Acts 20:17, he called them overseers, as we read in **Acts 20 (KJV):28** Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

The Greek word translated “elders” in the New Testament is the Greek word **πρεσβύτερος** (pronounced pres-bü'-te-ros). The word translated “presbytery” in the New Testament is the Greek word **πρεσβυτέριον** (pronounced pres-bü-te'-re-on), and is a presumed derivative of **πρεσβύτερος** (pronounced pres-bü'-te-ros), which is translated “elders”.

Chrysostom also says, “And again, in writing to Titus, he says, “For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldest appoint elders in every city, as I gave thee charge. If any man is blameless, the husband of one wife” (Tit. i. 5, 6); which he says of the Bishop. (1 Timothy 3:2)”

Paul does give the same requirement for the elders as for the bishops. This is because the elders are bishops as we noted in Acts 20:16-29.

Chrysostom himself says that a Bishop is over one city. But Paul is commanding Titus to appoint elders in every city, which is the job of the apostle. Chrysostom says that this is “of the Bishop”. But 1 Timothy 3:2 says nothing about caring for all the churches. A bishop is simply an overseer, who is also a presbyter or elder of a local church.

He also says, “So then, as I said, both the Presbyters were of old called Bishops and Deacons of Christ, and the Bishops Presbyters; and hence even now many Bishops write, “To my fellow-Presbyter,” and, “To my fellow-Deacon.” But otherwise the specific name is distinctly appropriated to each, the Bishop and the Presbyter. “To the fellow Bishops,” he says, “and Deacons,

Ver. 2. “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.””

He refers to **Philippians 1 (KJV):2** Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is no Scriptural support for Chrysostom’s assertion that the Presbyters were called Deacons. A Deacon was a servant of the local church, and not a Bishop, or a Presbyter. The first Deacons were appointed in **Acts 6 (KJV):1** And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. 2 Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. 3 Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. 4 But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. 5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: 6 Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.

The Deacons were not teachers, but servants who served tables. This did not mean that that was the totality of their ministry, as we see in the ministry of Stephen in **Acts 6 (KJV):8** And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.

And Chrysostom says, “He said in another of his writings, “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them: for they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account; that they may do this with joy, and not with grief.” (Heb. xiii. 17)”

He refers to **Hebrews 13 (KJV):17** Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

The word “rule” in the Greek is ἡγέομαι (pronounced hayg-eh'-om-ahee); middle voice of a (presumed) strengthened form of G71; to lead, i.e. command (with official authority); figuratively, to deem, i.e. consider:—account, (be) chief, count, esteem, governor, judge, have the rule over, suppose, think. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G2233**

And this Greek word is derived from ἄγω (pronounced ag'-o); a primary verb; properly, to lead; by implication, to bring, drive, (reflexively) go, (specially) pass (time), or (figuratively) induce:—be, bring (forth), carry, (let) go, keep, lead away, be open. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G71**

And the word “rule” in Hebrews 13:17 in the actual Greek is ἡγουμένοις (pronounced heg-oo-men-oys) which is a participle. Therefore, the verse could be translated as, “Obey them that are leading you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON THESSALONIANS, HOMILY III, page 387**, he says, “For when the Reader standing up says, “Thus saith the Lord,” and the Deacon stands and imposes silence on all, he does not say this as doing honor to the Reader, but to Him who speaks to all through him. If they knew that it was God who through His prophet speaks these things, they would cast away all their pride.”

So Chrysostom is saying that everything that was done by the ministers, the Deacon, and the Reader, was of God, and that one should just believe this.

As ritual began to take over in the Church, it was assumed that everything that was heard by the ministers was of God.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TIMOTHY, HOMILY XI, page 441-442**, he says, “Discoursing of Bishops, and having described their character, and the qualities which they ought to possess, and having passed over the order of Presbyters, he proceeds to that of Deacons. The reason of this omission was, that between Presbyters and Bishops there was no great difference. Both had undertaken the office of Teachers and Presidents in the Church, and what he has said concerning Bishops is applicable to Presbyters. For they are only superior in having the power of ordination, and seem to have no other advantage over Presbyters.”

But the reason in 1 Timothy that Paul seems to have passed over Presbyters is because Presbyters were simply elders, who were also overseers, that is, bishops. So they were not passed over because they were different but because they were actually the same. The Church in the time of Chrysostom had elevated the Bishop to the place of an apostle. This was an invention of the early Church.

And he quotes Ver. 11. “Even so must the women be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.””

He refers to **1 Timothy 3 (KJV):11** Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.

He continues, “Some have thought that this is said of women generally, but it is not so, for why should he introduce anything about women to interfere with his subject? He is speaking of those who hold the rank of Deaconesses.”

Chrysostom has rightly interpreted the Scripture here. He also says, “This must be understood therefore to relate to Deaconesses. For that order is necessary and useful and honorable in the Church. Observe how he requires the same virtue from the Deacons, as from the Bishops, for though they were not of equal rank, they must equally be blameless; equally pure.”

And he has also rightly interpreted the Scripture here as well. The Deacons were helpers. So Chrysostom did not say that the Bishops and the Deacons are of “equal rank”, but that “they were not of equal rank”. But he misunderstood the title of Bishop as above an elder, or presbyter.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TIMOTHY, HOMILY XIII, page 449-450**, he refers to **1 Timothy 4 (KJV):14** Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

And he says, ““With the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.” He speaks not here of Presbyters, but of Bishops. For Presbyters cannot be supposed to have ordained a Bishop.”

The word “gift” in verse 14 above in the Greek is **χάρισμα** (pronounced khar'-is-mah); from G5483; a (divine) gratuity, i.e. deliverance (from danger or passion); (specially), a (spiritual) endowment, i.e. (subjectively) religious qualification, or (objectively) miraculous faculty:—(free) gift. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G5486**

Chrysostom ignores the simplicity of the Scripture. He did not understand that Bishops were Presbyters. The presbytery in this verse were not ordaining a bishop, but confirming a spiritual gift. But we see that the ranking of the Bishops had grown above the rank of Presbyters in the church in the time of Chrysostom.

## Ordination

### Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TIMOTHY, HOMILY XVI, page 464**, he says, “Having spoken of Bishops and Deacons, of men, and women, of widows and elders, and of all others, and having shown how great was the authority of a Bishop, now he was speaking of judgment, he has added, “I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.”

He says, “As if he had said, I call to witness God and His Son and His servants, that I have charged thee: so before them I charge thee. He impresses Timothy with fear; after which he adds, what was most vital, and bears most on the maintenance of the Church, the matter of

Ordinations. "Lay hands," he says, "suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins." What is "suddenly"? Not upon a first, nor a second, nor a third trial, but after frequent and strict examination and circumspection. For it is an affair of no common peril. For thou wilt be responsible for the sins committed by him, as well his past as his future sins, because thou hast delegated to him this power. For if thou overlook the past unduly, thou art answerable for the future also, as being the cause of them, by placing him in that station, and of the past too, for not leaving him to mourn over them, and to be in compunction. For as thou art a partaker of his good actions, so art thou of his sins."

He is referring to **1 Timothy 5 (KJV):21** I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality. **22** Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure. **23** Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.

Chrysostom seems to feel that the laying on of hands was solely for ordination purposes. But the laying on of hands was also to heal the sick, as we read in **Mark 16 (KJV):17** And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; **18** They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

Jesus healed in this way, as we read in **Mark 6 (KJV):5** And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them.

When we lay hands on someone, we must be discerning. If sin is the reason for their sickness, we must call it out. If we discern sin in someone whom we are confirming as elders, we must call that out as well. To ignore sin is to leave the door open for us to fall into their sin. This is what Paul means to say in **1 Timothy 5 (KJV):22** Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TITUS, HOMILY II, page 524-526**, he says, "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city as I had appointed thee: If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of riot, or unruly."

He refers to **Titus 1 (KJV):5** For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: **6** If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly.

Speaking of Paul, he says, "For where there was a case of danger and great difficulty, he in his own person set it in order. But those things which were rather attended with honor and praise he committed to his disciple, as the ordination of Bishops, and such other things as required some farther arrangement, or, so to speak, to be brought to greater perfection."

And he says, "And ordain elders in every city," here he is speaking of Bishops, as we have before said, (**Schaff Note:** See on 1 Tim. iii. 7, Hom. x.) "as I had appointed thee. If any is blameless."

And he says, "Why does he bring forward such an one? To stop the mouths of those heretics, who condemned marriage, showing that it is not an unholy thing in itself, but so far honorable, that a married man might ascend the holy throne; and at the same proving the

wanton, and not permitting their admission into this high office who contracted a second marriage.”

He refers to **Titus 1 (KJV):6** If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly.

So Chrysostom would allow a married man to “ascend the holy throne”, for it was a “high office”. It was certainly not one to be taken lightly, but it is never described in Scripture as a “holy throne”, or a “high office”.

He again mentions “throne” as he says, “For if when nature prompted, he was so void of affection or so senseless, that he thought more of his wealth than of his children, how should he be raised to the Episcopal throne, and so great rule?”

We see the influence of the world on the thinking of the early Church. The “Episcopal throne, and so great rule” speaks of the throne of a bishop in the time of Chrysostom. But this is nothing like the place of a bishop in the church according to the word of God.

## A Sacrilegious Priest

### Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TIMOTHY, HOMILY II, page 480-483**, he says, “You see his anxiety in this matter, his regard for the good of his disciples, not less than for his own. For teachers ought to surpass natural parents, to be more zealous than they. And it becomes their children to be kindly affectioned towards them. For he says, “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls as they that must give account.” (Heb. xiii. 17)”

He refers to **Hebrews 13 (KJV):17** Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

And he warns, “And consider what it is to be responsible and anxious for each of those who are under his rule. What honor wouldest thou have reckoned equal, what service, in requital of such dangers? Thou canst not offer an equivalent. For thou hast not yet devoted thy soul for him, but he lays down his life for thee, and if he lays it not down here, when the occasion requires it, he loses it There.”

So in Chrysostom’s thinking, the priest could lose salvation if “he lays it not down here, when the occasion requires it”.

And he says, “And even if the Priest be wicked, God seeing that thou respectest him, though unworthy of honor, through reverence to Him, will Himself reward thee.”

And he adds, “Knowest thou not what the Priest is? He is an Angel (**Schaff Note:** Or, “a messenger.”) of the Lord. Are they his own words that he speaks? If thou despisest him, thou despisest not him, but God that ordained him. But how does it appear, thou askest, that he is ordained of God? Nay, if thou suppose it otherwise, thy hope is rendered vain. For if God worketh nothing through his means, thou neither hast any Laver, nor art partaker of the Mysteries, nor of the benefit of Blessings; thou art therefore not a Christian.”



The esteem of ritual by Chrysostom and the Church in his time is quite evident here. We are not saved through priests, nor any of His servants, nor through any of the rituals they performed. We are saved by God alone, through faith alone. All believers have an anointing of the Holy Spirit, and they are not dependent on a man, a priest, or a deacon, as we read in **1 John 2 (KJV):27** But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

Chrysostom holds the office of the priest to be the “office of Christ”. He did not realize that the priesthood had changed, as we read in **Hebrews 7 (KJV):11** If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? 12 For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. 13 For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. 14 For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. 15 And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, 16 Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. 17 For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

Jesus is a “priest forever after the order of Melchisedec”, and “after the power of an endless life”. The Levitical priesthood has been discontinued because of Jesus.

Chrysostom also says, “How great an evil is sacrilege, it is impossible to say. But I spare you. For I would not that our virtue should be rendered vain by accusing others. What was worse than the Publican? For it is true that he was a publican, and guilty of many offenses, yet because the Pharisee only said, “I am not as this publican,” he destroyed all his merit. I am not, thou sayest, like this sacrilegious Priest. And dost not thou make all in vain?”

There is no excuse for a “sacrilegious Priest” before God. We are not bound to obey wicked ministers, as we read in **1 Timothy 5 (KJV):19** Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. 20 Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.

Not only was Chrysostom, and the Church in his time, upholding an invalid ministry of priests over the people, he was treating the priests as rulers over the people, to be obeyed simply because of their office, even if they were “wicked”, as we read before when he said, “And even if the Priest be wicked, God seeing that thou respectest him, though unworthy of honor, through reverence to Him, will Himself reward thee.”

This is known as the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which we read of in **Revelation 2 (KJV):15** So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate.

The Nicolaitanes were those who held the doctrine that they ruled over the people.

## Peter

### Commentary Summary

In Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 10, THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW,

**Homily X, Matt. III. 1, 2, page 64-65**, he says, “On this wise again Paul saith, “I am not meet to be called an apostle;” (1 Cor. xv. 9) because of this he became even first of all.”

And he says, “So Peter too said, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man;” (Luke v. 8) because of this he became a foundation of the Church.”

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY XXIX, page 547**, he says, speaking to the flock of shepherds, “And therefore do ye, as being acquainted with what the labor is, coöperate with them, with prayers, with zeal, with readiness, with affection, that both we may have to boast of you, and you of us. For on this ground He entrusted this to the chief of the Apostles, who also loved Him more than the rest; after first asking him if He was loved by him, that thou mayest learn that this before other things, is held as a proof of love to Him.

Chrysostom recognized Peter as the “chief of the Apostles”.

And he says, “For this requireth a vigorous soul. This I have said of the best shepherds; not of myself and those of our days, but of any one that may be such as Paul was, such as Peter, such as Moses.”

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 12, HOMILIES ON FIRST CORINTHIANS, HOMILY XXXVIII, page 229**, he says, “[5.] Ver. 5. “And that He appeared to Cephas:” he names immediately the most credible of all. “Then to the twelve.””

He refers to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):5** And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:

And he says, “Yet surely the Gospel saith the contrary, that He was seen of Mary first. (Mark xvi. 9)”

He refers to **Mark 16 (KJV):9** Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.

But Paul is not recording an exact succession of appearances of the Lord after His resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15.

He continues, “But among men He was seen of him first who did most of all long to see Him.”

And he says, “Therefore neither did He appear to all together, nor in the beginning to many, but to one alone first, and him the leader of the whole company and the most faithful: since indeed there was great need of a most faithful soul to be first to receive this sight. For those who saw him after others had seen him, and heard it from them, had in their testimony what contributed in no small degree to their own faith and tended to prepare their mind beforehand; but he who was first counted worthy to see Him, had need, as I have said, of great faith, not to be confounded by a sight so contrary to expectation. Therefore he appears to Peter first. For he that first confessed Him to be Christ was justly also counted worthy first to behold His resurrection.”

And he adds, “Therefore also He appeared to the women first. Because this sex was made inferior, therefore both in His birth and in His resurrection this first tastes of His grace.”

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON THESSALONIANS, HOMILY IX, page 360**, he mentions Peter again, as he says, “Why are you curious? Peter, the chief of the Apostles, and his fellows, heard this said, as if they were seeking things too great for them to know.”

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TIMOTHY, HOMILY V, page 493**, he says, “And why is he ever so careful to guard him against shame? Because it was natural for many to be ashamed both of Paul himself, as being a tentmaker, and of the preaching, since its teachers perished. For Christ had been crucified, himself was about to be beheaded, Peter was crucified with his head downwards, and these things they suffered from audacious and despicable men.”

This was an early tradition in the Church that Peter was crucified upside down. Tradition says that it was because he would not allow himself to die like his Lord. However, this is an unsubstantiated tradition. It is difficult enough to imagine someone being crucified, let alone being crucified upside down without the muscles tearing.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TIMOTHY, HOMILY VI, page 516**, he refers to **2 Timothy 4 (KJV):21** Do thy diligence to come before winter. Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren.

And then he says, “This Linus, some say, was second (**Schaff Note:** i.e. the next. See Euseb. iii. 2, and note in Reading’s Ed.; also Cave Hist. Lit. Linus is thought not to have survived the persecution of Nero, and probably to have been bishop in St. Peter’s lifetime, and supplied his place when absent.) Bishop of the Church of Rome after Peter.”

But there is no historical evidence that Peter was ever in Rome. We know that Peter was in Babylon, as we read in **1 Peter 5 (KJV):13** The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son.

To Paul was committed the Gospel to the uncircumcision, but to Peter the Gospel to the circumcision. So Peter was in Babylon, because that is where there were many Jews left from the Babylonian conquest and deportation of the Jews to Babylon in approximately 586 B.C.

## **The Church in Chrysostom’s Day (His Testimony)**

### **Commentary Summary**

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 12, HOMILIES ON FIRST CORINTHIANS, HOMILY XXXVI, page 219-222**, he says, “What now can be more awful than these things? For in truth the Church was a heaven then, the Spirit governing all things, and moving each one of the rulers and making him inspired. But now we retain only the symbols of those gifts. For now also we speak two or three, and in turn, and when one is silent, another begins. But these are only signs and memorials of those things. Wherefore when we begin to speak, the people respond, “with thy Spirit,” (**Schaff Note:** The “Anaphora,” or more solemn part of the Liturgy begins with the Versicle and Response here alluded to, in the Clementine Liturgy, and in those of St. Mark, St. Chrysostom, St. Basil, and the Roman Missal.) indicating that of old they thus used to speak, not of their own wisdom, but moved by the Spirit. But not so now: (I speak of mine own case so far.) But the present Church is like a woman who hath fallen from her former prosperous days, and in many respects retains the symbols only of that ancient prosperity; displaying indeed the repositories and caskets of her golden ornaments, but bereft of her wealth: such an one doth the present Church resemble. And I say not this in respect of gifts: for it were nothing marvelous if it were this only: but in respect

also of life and virtue.”

Ritual took over in the Church during the time of Chrysostom. The manifestations of the Spirit were supposed to continue in the Church because of the presence of the Holy Spirit. But their tradition and their faith limited their exercise. Chrysostom gives us a telescopic view into the early Church here. Chrysostom is not commending the spirituality of the Church in his time.

The lack of spirituality in the Church in the time of Chrysostom is quite evident. This is a natural result of the emphasis on ritual that existed in the Church at that time.

And he says, “For in truth there ought to be but one voice in the church always, even as there is but one body. Therefore both he that reads utters his voice alone, and the Bishop himself is content to sit in silence; and he who chants chants alone; and though all utter the response, the voice is wafted as from one mouth. And he that pronounces a homily pronounces it alone. But when there are many conversing on many and diverse subjects, why do we disturb you for no good? since surely unless ye thought that we are but disturbing you for no good, ye would not in the midst of our speech on such high matters, discourse on things of no consequence.”

We see again the emphasis on ritual in the Church. The reader reads, the one who chants “chants alone”, and all “utter the response”. And Chrysostom was experiencing a lot of disturbances in the meetings in church.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON PHILEMON, HOMILY I, page 547**, he refers to **Philemon 1 (KJV)**:1 Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellow labourer, 2 And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier, and to the church in thy house: 3 Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Chrysostom says, “It seems to me too, that he, whom he joins with him in this request, was also one of the Clergy. And he calls him his fellow soldier, that he may by all means cooperate with him.”

Chrysostom did not understand that all believers have a ministry, being a member of the body of Christ, and placed in the body as it pleased the Lord, as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV)**:18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

Chrysostom saw Paul as “one of the Clergy”.

# Man's Makeup

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, EUTROPIUS, PATRICIAN AND CONSUL, Homily II, After Eutropius having been found outside the Church had been taken captive, page 264-265**, he says, “17. Attend, and let us learn what corporeal, and what spiritual beauty are. There is soul and body: they are two substances: there is a beauty of body, and there is a beauty of soul.”

But we read of the three parts of man in **1 Thessalonians 5 (KJV):23** And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He then asks, “What then is beauty of soul? Temperance, mildness, almsgiving, love, brotherly kindness, tender affection, obedience to God, the fulfillment of the law, righteousness, contrition of heart. These things are the beauty of the soul. These things then are not the results of nature, but of moral disposition.”

But one wonders why he did not mention the fruit of the Spirit, as we read in **Galatians 5 (KJV):22** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

He then says, “For as in the case of the body I was saying that she who is ungraceful cannot become graceful; so in the case of the soul I say the contrary that the graceless soul can become full of grace.”

He then explains, “Seest thou that thou canst not alter grace of body, for it is the result not of moral disposition, but of nature. But grace of soul is supplied out of our own moral choice. Thou hast now received the definition. Of what kind are they? that the beauty of the soul proceeds from obedience to God. For if the graceless soul obeys God it puts off its ungracefulness, and becomes full of grace.”

We get the impression that, in the mind of Chrysostom, the soul is like a tank, as it were, that can be full of grace if it makes godly choices, but it loses grace if it makes ungodly choices.

And he says, “Seest thou that thou canst not alter grace of body, for it is the result not of moral disposition, but of nature. But grace of soul is supplied out of our own moral choice. Thou hast now received the definition.”

Chrysostom's thinking of the graceful and ungraceful soul began to be the basis for salvation in the Church during the time of Chrysostom. When one was baptized, they became full of grace. If one made good moral choices, they would keep their grace, so to speak. If one made bad moral choices, they would lose their grace. He did not seem to understand what happens when one is born again.

We must understand that when one is born again by faith in Jesus Christ, his or her spirit is made alive to God, and given a new divine nature by being born again by the Spirit of God. This does not erase the sin nature in our flesh, but births a new nature in our spirit. Now we have the victory over our flesh by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus in the new nature in our spirit. And since we have been justified by God because of our faith, our standing is not affected by sin because the righteousness of God has been imputed to us, as we read in **Romans**

**4 (KJV):**5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. 6 Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, 7 Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.

The word translated “counted” in verse 5 is the same Greek word translated “imputeth” in verse 6, that is, λογίζομαι (pronounced lo-ge'-zo-my), middle voice from G3056; to take an inventory, i.e. estimate (literally or figuratively):—conclude, (ac-)count (of), + despise, esteem, impute, lay, number, reason, reckon, suppose, think (on). **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G3049**

We are saved by grace through faith. But our fellowship with the Lord must be maintained by confession of any subsequent sin, or God will chasten us that we should not be condemned with the world, as we read in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):**32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

## The Nature of the Flesh

### Commentary Summary

Concerning **The Nature of the Flesh**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY XII, page 419-427**, he says, “And what, it will be said, is the good of the Law, if it adds to the disorder? None; but much mischief even. Yet the charge is not against the Law, but the listlessness of those who received it.”

But the law gives us knowledge of sin, which leads us to Christ, as we read in **Galatians 3 (KJV):**24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

The law shows us our need for Christ. When we become aware of our sin, we become aware of our need of a Savior.

And he says, “For it did not give existence to sin that before was not, but only pointed out what had escaped notice. And this is even a praise of the Law, if at least before it they had been sinning without perceiving it.”

And he says, “This then was why the Law was given. Now no law is ever given to put an end to things natural, but in order to correct a way of acting purposely wicked. And this the lawgivers that are without too are aware of, and all mankind in general. For it is the evils from viciousness alone that they are for setting right, and they do not undertake to extirpate those allotted us along with our nature; since this they cannot do. For things natural remain unalterable (**Schaff Note:** Arist. *Eth.* b. 2, c. 1), as we have told you frequently in other discourses also.”

We can agree with Chrysostom that our bodies are good as the creation of God. But sin brought death upon the human race. Without sin, there would be no death. Sin brought a change in our nature in our flesh. Our flesh now has a nature to sin. This is overcome by faith in Jesus Christ and being born again. Chrysostom did not understand the new birth. To him it was simply grace received at baptism. He did not understand that our spirit is made alive to God when we are born again, and it now has a new divine nature as a result of being born of the

Spirit of God. As we yield to this new nature in our spirit, we do not sin. If we yield to the sin nature in our flesh, we sin, but God has made provision for us, as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Our soul, that is, our mind, will, heart, emotions, and conscience, is in between our spirit and our body. While our spirit has been born again, our soul will go through a progressive sanctification.

And he says, “For if we cast out wickedness, we should bring virtue in also: and by these means we shall clearly teach that wickedness is no natural evil, and shall be able easily to stop the mouths of them that enquire for the origin of evil, not by means of words only, but of actions also, since we share the same nature with them, but are freed from their wickedness.”

It is true that we share the same nature in our flesh with unbelievers, but in our spirit we have been raised from the dead.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY XIII, page 427-439**, He begins, as he quotes, “Rom. VII. 14 “For we know that the Law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.””

He refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):14** For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

He explains “sold under sin”, as he says, “For when the body had become mortal, it was henceforth a necessary thing for it to receive concupiscence, and anger, and pain, and all the other passions, which required a great deal of wisdom (φιλοσοφίας) to prevent their flooding us, and sinking reason in the depth of sin. For in themselves they were not sin, but, when their extravagancy was unbridled, it wrought this effect. Thus (that I may take one of them and examine it as a specimen) desire is not sin: but when it has run into extravagance, being not minded to keep within the laws of marriage, but springing even upon other men’s wives; then the thing henceforward becomes adultery, yet not by reason of the desire, but by reason of its exorbitancy.”

And Chrysostom is correct here. Desire in itself is not sinful. We have a desire to eat something for dinner. This is not sinful. But if we overeat, this could be detrimental to our health. And if we indulge ourselves in this “exorbitancy”, this could lead to other sinful indulgences.

And he says, “You see here, that the understanding is not yet perverted, but keeps up its own noble character even during the action.”

However, as we read in Ephesians 4:18, the unbeliever is darkened in his understanding.

And he says, “And yet if the Law was to blame for the sin, how comes it that he felt a delight in it, yet hated what it orders to be done? For, “I consent,” he says, “unto the Law, that it is good.””

But Paul did not hate “what it orders to be done”, referring to the Law. He hated what he did in spite of what he would not do, as we read again in **Romans 7 (KJV):15** For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. 16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.

Chrysostom “makes sin answerable for everything”. So, even though our flesh is where sin dwells, he does not hold our flesh in any way responsible for our actions. To Chrysostom, it

is just sin, and a choice one makes. It doesn't matter where it dwells.

And he says, "so Paul in saying, that "in my flesh dwelleth no good thing," is not finding fault with the body, but pointing out the soul's superiority. For this it is that has the whole duty or pilotage put into its hands, and that of playing. And this Paul here points out, giving the governing power to the soul, and after dividing man into these two things, the soul and the body, he says, that the flesh has less of reason, and is destitute of discretion, and ranks among things to be led, not among things that lead."

But we just read in **Romans 7 (KJV):15** For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

If the soul is governing, why isn't the flesh following. Chrysostom did not understand that there are three parts to man's being, that is, spirit, soul, and body. Before we accept Christ, our spirit was dead in trespasses and sins. Our soul could not connect with God. We lived "according to the flesh", and we "walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air", as in Ephesians 2:2. We could not please God. But when we were born again, we now delight in the law of God after the inward man, because our spirit is that part of us that is born again. But in our flesh is a law of sin, as in Romans 7:23.

And he says, "And this Paul here points out, giving the governing power to the soul, and after dividing man into these two things, the soul and the body, he says, that the flesh has less of reason, and is destitute of discretion, and ranks among things to be led, not among things that lead. But the soul has more wisdom, and can see what is to be done and what not, yet is not equal to pulling in the horse as it wishes. And this would be a charge not against the flesh only, but against the soul also, which knows indeed what it ought to do, but still does not carry out in practice what seems best to it. "For to will," he says, "is present with me; but how to perform that which is good, I find not.""

Chrysostom did not find "fault with the body", or the soul. His assumption that man has free will, even in his unregenerate state, affected his thinking. Even though Paul says that "in my flesh dwelleth no good thing" in Romans 7:18, he still didn't find fault with the body. He believed that man has free will regardless.

He says, "Do you see, how he acquits the essence of the soul, as well as the essence of the flesh, from accusation, and removes it entirely to sinful actions?"

So to Chrysostom, sin is not a nature in our flesh, but a choice of our mind. He seems to ignore the fact that Paul said sin was in him, that is, in his flesh.

Chrysostom considers sin an outward force working on our will to make "the evil moral choice". But Paul says that "in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing" in Romans 7:18. And he is very specific where sin resides, as he says, "(that is, in my flesh)", and "the law of sin which is in my members" in Romans 7:23.

And so Chrysostom says, "And so the willing what is good and the not willing what is evil was made a fundamental part of us from the first."

But when man sinned, change happened. Death came upon the human race. Man's flesh became mortal, and it now has a nature to sin, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):3** Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

Now he again quotes **Romans 7 (KJV):23** But I see another law in my members, warring



against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

And he says, “so here he calls sin a law, owing to those who are so obsequious to it, and are afraid to leave it, just as those who have received the Law dread leaving the Law. This then, he means, is opposed to the law of nature; for this is what is meant by “the law of my mind.”

But Paul does not call sin a law. Paul is saying that there is a law of sin in his members, his flesh. A “law” speaks of the way things are, like the law of gravity. If we jump off a roof, we will fall to the ground. There is a force that draws everything to the earth. It is true for everyone on earth.

And Paul is not speaking of the law of nature when he says, “the law of my mind”. As a born again believer, Paul’s mind is being renewed.

Man without the Spirit of God cannot do good, as we read above in **Romans 3 (KJV):12** They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

It is only after we have come to Christ and have been born again that we can do good.

The “law of sin” means that it is just the way it is. If there is a “law of sin” in my members, it is its nature to sin. Chrysostom leaves out the spirit of man, which he thought was synonymous with the soul. And so he is very vague as to what this “law of sin” is, and calls it “the thrall, the power”. He also turned it around and said that Paul, “calls sin a law warring against the other”. But Paul did not call sin a law, but he said that there was a law in his members which was “the law of sin”, as we read again in **Romans 7 (KJV):23** But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

Chrysostom did not understand the Biblical truth of regeneration. When we are born again, we are born of the Spirit of God. The reason we must be born again is because we were dead in our trespasses and sins. Being in this state of spiritual death, we were “by nature children of wrath”. We were totally dominated by the lusts of our flesh, and dead to God. So when we are born again, we are made alive to God, and we have a new divine nature in our spirit.

Now being made alive together with Christ, it is the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus that is the life of our spirit which has been born of the Spirit of God. Because the Spirit of God has now given life to our spirits, we have a new divine nature in our spirit.

This new divine nature in our spirits is what has set us free from the law of sin and death which is in our members. Chrysostom cannot admit this to being a nature because he did not understand that man is not just soul and body, but body, soul, and spirit.

So this life that is in our spirits, which have been born again, is eternal life.

We are not trying to keep ourselves full of grace to keep our salvation. When we believe in Jesus Christ, we pass from death to life.

The Church’s belief in regeneration by baptism placed an emphasis on ritual that is not supported by Scripture. We are saved, that is, born again, when we believe in Jesus Christ. Sin still dwells in our flesh, in our members. But our spirit has a new divine nature having been born of the Spirit of God. Our soul has all of the baggage of our past. We will go through a progressive sanctification in our soul, that is, in our mind, will, conscience, heart, and emotions

as we grow in grace and knowledge of the word of God. This will not cease until we see Him, when we will be like Him.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, COMMENTARY ON GALATIANS, CHAPTER I, page 5-6**, he says, “And if you tell me of murderers, of adulterers, of tomb robbers, these things have nothing to do with the present life, for these offences proceed not from that life which we live in the flesh, but from a depraved will. For, if they were necessarily connected with this life, as embraced in one lot with it, no man would be free or pure from them, for no man can escape the characteristic accidents of humanity, such as, to eat and drink, to sleep and grow, to hunger and thirst, to be born and die, and the like; no man can ever become superior to these, neither sinner nor just man, king nor peasant, We all are subject to the necessity of nature. And so if vice were an essential element of this life, no one could avoid it, any more than the things just mentioned.”

But the Scripture says all have sinned, as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):23** For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

And the unsaved cannot please God, as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):8** So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

And all are by nature children of wrath.

When Chrysostom says, “these offences proceed not from that life which we live in the flesh, but from a depraved will”, he will not allow man to have a depraved nature, but only a “depraved will”. But the Scripture is clear. Sin is in our members, in our flesh. And it is warring against the “law of my mind”, as we read again in **Romans 7 (KJV):23** But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

## The Soul

### Commentary Summary

Concerning **The Soul**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, COMMENTARY ON GALATIANS, CHAPTER V, page 38-39**, he says, “How then does it happen, one may say, that when the body is pampered, lust is inflamed? Observe here too that it is the sin of the soul, for to pamper the flesh is not an act of the flesh but of the soul, for if the soul choose to mortify it, it would possess absolute power over it.”

Chrysostom would have us believe that it is “only necessary to correct the unruly passion of the soul”.

But even we believers must choose to yield to the Spirit in order to “possess absolute power over it”, that is, the flesh.

And he says, “These remarks I have not made at random, but as a prelude to a dispute, as skirmishing against those who assert that the workmanship of God is evil, and who neglecting the sloth of the soul, madly inveigh against the body, and traduce our flesh, whereof Paul afterwards discourses, accusing not the flesh, but devilish thoughts.”

But the flesh is the instigator of sin. It is “the sloth of the soul” that yields to the flesh and

sin is committed. While standing for the work of God as good, that is, man's flesh, Chrysostom did not understand the law of sin, which was in our members.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, COMMENTARY ON GALATIANS, CHAPTER V, page 40-41**, he says, "Wherefore then does Paul say, "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit?" he is wont to call the flesh, not the natural body but the depraved will, as where he says, "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit," (Rom. viii. 8, 9) and again, "They that are in the flesh cannot please God.""

And he says, "What then is his meaning? it is the earthly mind, slothful and careless, that he here calls the flesh, and this is not an accusation of the body, but a charge against the slothful soul. The flesh is an instrument, and no one feels aversion and hatred to an instrument, but to him who abuses it. For it is not the iron instrument but the murderer, whom we hate and punish. But it may be said that the very calling of the faults of the soul by the name of the flesh is in itself an accusation of the body."

And he says, "In his expression, "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit," he means two mental states. For these are opposed to each other, namely virtue and vice, not the soul and the body."

And he says, "How then does it lust, for lust belongs to the soul not to the body, for in another place it is said, "My soul longeth," (Ps. lxxxiv. 2) and, "Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do it for thee," (1 Sam. xx. 4) and, "Walk not according to the desires of thy heart," and, "So panteth my soul." (Ps. xlii. 1)"

The "lust of the soul" is never mentioned in Scripture. Paul does say "desires of the flesh and of the mind" in Ephesians 2:3. So it is possible to think of something and have a lust for it, and so it would be a desire of the mind. But our flesh has desires also, like a hunger for something. Chrysostom would not allow for this.

And he says, "Wherefore then does Paul say, "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit?" he is wont to call the flesh, not the natural body but the depraved will, as where he says, "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit," (Rom. viii. 8, 9) and again, "They that are in the flesh cannot please God.""

But the flesh has desires as we read in Ephesians 2:3. And the flesh has feelings. The flesh feels cold or hot. The flesh feels hungry.

And he says, "In the same way writing is performed by means of the hands. Do you not see that the ministry of the flesh produces for us a thousand benefits? In his expression, "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit," he means two mental states. For these are opposed to each other, namely virtue and vice, not the soul and the body."

Chrysostom makes an analogy which obscures the meaning of the verse. It's as if he reads the verse as, "For vice is against virtue, and virtue is against vice: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." But the verse reads as in **Galatians 5 (KJV):17** For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

Chrysostom did not understand that our flesh contains sin. It is where sin dwells. When Adam sinned, our flesh became mortal. Our flesh also inherited a nature to sin. But this nature to sin in our flesh is overcome by the new nature in our spirits when we are born again. We who have been born again are able to utilize our flesh in a right way, not yielding to its lusts. Our

soul now has the ability to say yes to the Spirit, and yield to the leading of the Spirit.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, COMMENTARY ON GALATIANS, CHAPTER V, page 42**, he says, “Let it be allowed that adultery and fornication proceed, as you assert, from the flesh; yet hatred, variance, emulations, strife, heresies, and witchcraft, these arise merely from a depraved moral choice. And so it is with the others also, for how can they belong to the flesh? you observe that he is not here speaking of the flesh, but of earthly thoughts, which trail upon the ground.”

And he argues, “If these things belonged to nature and not to a bad moral choice, his expression, “they practice,” is inappropriate, it should be, “they suffer.” And why should they be cast out of the kingdom, for rewards and punishments relate not to what proceeds from nature but from choice?”

But our actions are a result of our choices, and our flesh is what we yield to when we make bad choices. After we have believed in Jesus Christ, we have a choice to yield to the Spirit of God, or yield to our fleshly desires. All of the works in Galatians 5:19-21 are called “works of the flesh”. Chrysostom would have us call them works of our soul.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, COMMENTARY ON GALATIANS, CHAPTER V, page 42**, he says, as he quotes, “Ver. 24. “And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof.”

He refers to **Galatians 5 (KJV):24** And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

He then says, “That they might not object, “And who is such a man as this?” he points out by their works those who have attained to this perfection, here again giving the name of the “flesh” to evil actions.”

Paul is not speaking here of “those who have attained to this perfection”, but of our standing with Christ. That is, we who have believed are in Christ, as we read in **Romans 12 (KJV):5** So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

And in **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):30** But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

Being in Christ, we are identified with Him in His death, and resurrection. As we acknowledge our crucifixion with Christ, we walk by the Spirit.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON EPHESIANS, HOMILY V, page 73-74**, he says, “Think then, how vast an evil is it, when God hath employed so many methods to reconcile us, and hath effected it, that we should again fall back into enmity! This enmity no fresh Baptism, but hell itself awaits; no fresh remission, but searching trial.”

One who had been baptized, and born again according to their belief in the time of Chrysostom, could lose their salvation if they “again fall back into enmity”.

And he says, “For if I have a mind to put on a strong curb, I stop the horse; but the body is unable to check the soul in her evil courses. Wherefore then does he call it the carnal mind? Because it comes to be wholly of the flesh, for when she has the mastery, then she goes wrong, as soon as ever she has deprived herself of reason, and of the supremacy of the soul. The virtue therefore of the body consists in this, in its submission to the soul, since of itself the flesh is neither good nor evil. For what could the body ever do of itself?”

However, the flesh is where our sin dwells, as we read in **Romans 7 (KJV):23** But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

And he says, “For in proof that it is not drunkenness that is the natural desire of the body, mark how, whenever you exceed the measure, when you go beyond the boundary lines, it cannot hold out a moment longer. Up to this point it is of the body, but all the rest of the excesses, as e.g., when she is hurried away into sensualities, when she becomes stupefied, these are of the soul.”

Chrysostom has turned it around. He does not realize that the sinful impulses come from the sin nature in our flesh where sin dwells, and which will produce the works of the flesh if we do not yield to the Spirit of God. He is essentially calling these works of the flesh the “works of the soul”.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON EPHESIANS, HOMILY XVIII, page 134-135**, he says, “The death of the soul, however, is not like the death of the body; it is far more shocking.”

And he says, “And as therefore there is a death of the soul, so is there also a slaughter of the soul.”

And he says, “What is the slaughter of the soul? It is its being made a corpse also. And how is the soul made a corpse? Because as the body then becomes a corpse when the soul leaves it destitute of its own vital energy, so also does the soul then become a corpse, when the Holy Spirit leaves it destitute of His spiritual energy.”

And he agrees with the Scripture, as we read in **Matthew 10 (KJV):28** And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

But the Holy Spirit does not leave the believer, as we read in **John 14 (KJV):16** And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TIMOTHY, HOMILY IV, page 421-422**, he says, “Moral. Let us then “glorify God,” and bear God both “in our body and in our spirit.” (1 Cor. vi. 20)

And how is one to glorify Him in the body? saith one, and how in the spirit? The soul is here called the spirit to distinguish it from the body.”

Chrysostom did not see a difference between soul and spirit, which is mentioned in **Hebrews 4 (KJV):12** For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

And he says, “But how is it possible to glorify God in our spirit? By practicing virtue, by adorning the soul. For such embellishment is not forbidden. Thus we glorify God, when we are good in every respect, and we shall be glorified by Him in a much higher degree in that great day. For “I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.” (Rom. viii. 18)”

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY XXXIII, page 116**, he says, ““But when he saith,

Ver. 24. “God is a Spirit” [God is spirit]. He declareth nothing else than His incorporeal Nature.”

He refers to **John 4 (KJV):24** God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

He then says, “Now the service of that which is incorporeal must needs be of the same character, and must be offered by that in us which is incorporeal, to wit, the soul, and purity of mind.”

Chrysostom again equates the soul with the spirit.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON HEBREWS, HOMILY II, page 372**, he says, “And what marvel, if it be so in respect of God, since not even in respect of an Angel, could one find a name expressive of his substance? Perhaps too, neither in respect of the soul. For this name [soul] doth not seem to me to be significative of the substance thereof, but of breathing. For one may see that the same [thing] is called both Soul and Heart and Mind: for, saith he, “Create in me a clean heart, O God” (Ps. li. 10), and one may often see that it [the soul] is called spirit.”

It is true that at times, soul and spirit are used interchangeably as the unseen parts of man. But when God breathed into man the breath of life, referring to the spirit of man, man became a living soul. The spirit united with the body makes man a living soul.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON HEBREWS, HOMILY VI, page 396**, he says, “Then, lest any think that they will simply be deprived of rest only, he adds also the punishment, saying (c. iv. 12), “For the Word of God is quick, and powerful; and sharper than any two-edged sword, and pierceth even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow: and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” Here he is speaking of Hell and of punishment. “It pierceth” (he says) into the secrets of our heart, and cutteth asunder the soul. Here it is not the falling of carcasses nor, as there, the being deprived of a country, but of a heavenly kingdom; and being delivered to an everlasting hell, and to undying punishment and vengeance.”

But the Scripture is not speaking of cutting “asunder the soul”, but of the difference between the soul and spirit. The word of God is able to give us discernment between soul and spirit, just as we have discernment in the physical realm of the difference between joints and marrow. The word of God also gives us discernment of “the thoughts and intents of the heart”, that is, of knowing good and evil.

# Prayers for the Dead

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, CONCERNING THE STATUES, HOMILY VI, page 389**, he says, “But God forbid that any in this fair assembly should appear there suffering such things! but by the prayers of the holy fathers, (See **Schaff Note**) correcting all our offences, and having shown forth the abundant fruit of virtue, may we depart hence with much confidence, through the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom, and with whom, be glory to the Father together with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.”

The **Schaff Note** said, “In the fourth century, the invocation of departed saints, or prayer to God for their prayers, becomes common.”

And in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 12, HOMILIES ON FIRST CORINTHIANS, HOMILY XLI, page 253-254**, he says, “But grant that he departed with sin upon him, even on this account one ought to rejoice, that he was stopped short in his sins and added not to his iniquity; and help him as far as possible, not by tears, but by prayers and supplications and alms and offerings. For not unmeaningly have these things been devised, nor do we in vain make mention of the departed in the course of the divine mysteries, and approach God in their behalf, beseeching the Lamb Who is before us, Who taketh away the sin of the world;—not in vain, but that some refreshment may thereby ensue to them. Not in vain doth he that standeth by the altar cry out when the tremendous mysteries are celebrated, “For all that have fallen asleep in Christ, and for those who perform commemorations in their behalf.””

And, speaking of the departed, he says, “Let us then give them aid and perform commemoration for them. For if the children of Job were purged by the sacrifice of their father, why dost thou doubt that when we too offer for the departed, some consolation arises to them?”

He refers to **Job 1 (KJV):4** And his sons went and feasted in their houses, every one his day; and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them. **5** And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.”

But this Job did while his children were still alive. In the time of the Old Testament this was the accepted method of atoning for sins before God.

And he says, “Let us not then be weary in giving aid to the departed, both by offering on their behalf and obtaining prayers for them: for the common Expiation of the world is even before us.”

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TIMOTHY, HOMILY III, page 484-485**, he says, “So those who are out of the contest may perchance be the cause of victory to him, who is engaged in it, and may be partakers of the crowns reserved for the victor. And what wonder, if he who communicates to the living is thought worthy of the same rewards with those who contend, since it is possible to communicate after death even with the departed, with those who are asleep, who are already crowned, who want for nothing. For

hear Paul saying, “Partaking in the memories of the Saints.””

But as the **Schaff Note** explains, the word in the Greek that Chrysostom translates as “memories” is not found in the Greek text of the New Testament. The Greek word is **χρεία** (pronounced khra'-ä), from the base of G5530 or G5534; employment, i.e. an affair; also (by implication) occasion, demand, requirement or destitution:—business, lack, necessary(-ity), need(-ful), use, want. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G5532**

The correct translation is as in verse 13, as we read in context in **Romans 12 (KJV):9** Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. 10 Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; 11 not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; 12 rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; 13 distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.

So Paul is not saying, “Partaking in the memories of the Saints”, but “distributing to the needs of the saints” in verse 13 above.

There is no middle ground between the righteous and the unrighteous at death, as we read in **Luke 16 (KJV):19** There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: 20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, 21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; 23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. 25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. 26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

At the resurrection of Jesus all of the righteous in Abraham’s bosom were taken up to heaven. Now all the righteous go directly to heaven.



# Grief

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, CONCERNING THE STATUES, HOMILY VII, page 390**, he says, “1. Yesterday, I discoursed unto your Charity in many words, and upon many subjects; and if out of this variety, it be not possible for you to retain all, I wish more particularly to recall to memory the observation, that God hath implanted the affection grief in our natures for no other reason but because of sin, and He hath made this evident from actual experience.”

Chrysostom would have us “mourn for sin only, and for nothing besides”. But grief is a process that takes time. When we experience a loss, our feelings are involved. We may experience shock. But grief will follow, and usually in the five stages of denial, anger, bargaining, sadness, and acceptance. This is known as the Kubler-Ross model.

Mourning is like sadness, the fourth stage of grief. Grief is a natural process which we can accomplish by processing our feelings as we go through each of the five stages. This will take time, but as we process our feelings, we will get through it.

# The Sabbath

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, CONCERNING THE STATUES, HOMILY XII, page 421-422**, he says, “we shall now direct our discourse to another point which is itself also demonstrative of God’s providence. What then is this second point? It is, that when God formed man, he implanted within him from the beginning a natural law. And what then was this natural law? He gave utterance to conscience within us; and made the knowledge of good things, and of those which are the contrary, to be self-taught.”

And we read also in **Romans 2 (KJV):14** For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: 15 Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)

Chrysostom writes that the law of the Sabbath is not one the conscience would recognize, but that it is still a law. But he says in his Homily X (7) on Genesis 2:3, “Now already from the beginning God offered us instruction typically (αἰνιγματωδῶς), teaching us to dedicate and separate the one day in the circle of the week wholly to employment in things spiritual;” thus making the Sabbath a type of the Lord’s Day, and rest from secular, of rest in spiritual work.”

We read in context in **Genesis 2 (KJV):1** Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. 2 And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. 3 And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

And we read in **Hebrews 4 (NASB):8** For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that. 9 Consequently, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. 10 For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His.

The words “Sabbath rest” in verse 9, are a translation of the Greek word **σαββατισμός** (pronounced sab-bat-is-mos’); from a derivative of G4521; a "sabbatism", i.e. (figuratively) the repose of Christianity (as a type of heaven):—rest.

In Hebrews 4:9 above, this is referring to the rest of the inheritance, which Israel did not enter into because of their unbelief. We as believers in Jesus Christ enter into His rest as we rest from our works “as God did from His”.

But the first rest for the believer is the rest of salvation, which Jesus taught in **Matthew 11 (KJV):28** Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

As we take His yoke upon us, we will enter the rest of serving, walking in the works that He has ordained for us to do. We can then enter the rest of the inheritance mentioned in Hebrews 4:8-10 above. The final rest for us will be the rest of perfection, as we read in **1 John 3 (KJV):2** Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

# Forgiveness

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, CONCERNING THE STATUES, HOMILY XX, page 477-479**, he says, “What excuse then have we, in not ascribing the same honour to the Lord, that we should do to those who are our fellow servants? For this reason we are commanded to say, “Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.” (Matthew 6:12)”

And he asks, “Art thou willing to learn that there is no pardon for us, if we are mindful of injuries, and that there is no one who can deliver us?”

And he says, “Thus, for example, suppose the servant owes his master a hundred pieces of gold; and the debtor of the servant owes ten pieces, should the latter remit his debt, the master does not remit him his hundred pieces, but these ten only; and all the rest he still demands. But it is not so with God; if you remit a few things to your fellow-servant, He remits all your debt.”

We see that the real issue in Chrysostom’s thinking about forgiveness is salvation. Salvation is about faith in Jesus Christ, as we read in **Romans 10 (KJV):8** But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; **9** That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. **10** For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

After we have faith in Jesus Christ, we are born again, and God justifies us. With His righteousness imputed to us, we have a standing of righteousness. Forgiveness is then something we do as we walk in the light of the word of God. This is how we maintain our fellowship with the Lord, moment by moment, but our salvation is secure because of our standing of righteousness.

Jesus said, “I am the door” in **John 10 (KJV):9** I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

Once we have gone through the door, we are saved. We don’t lose our salvation if we don’t forgive someone. But we will lose fellowship with the Lord if we do not forgive from our heart those who have offended us. But if we confess our sins, He forgives, as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

# The Sacraments

## Communion

### Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, CONCERNING THE STATUES, HOMILY XX, page 481**, he says, “Therefore I protest, and give warning to all, that if, when I have met you in private, and put the matter to the proof (and I will certainly put it to the proof), I detect any who have not corrected this vice, I will inflict punishment upon them, by ordering them to be excluded from the Holy Mysteries; not that they may remain always shut out, but that having reformed themselves, they may thus enter in, and with a pure conscience enjoy the Holy Table; for this is to be a partaker of the Communion!”

In the **Introduction to the Orthodox Church**, we read “The word ‘Mystery’ is used in Orthodoxy to denote what is known in Western Christianity as a Sacrament. The Italian theologian Peter Lombard (c.1100-1160) first enumerated seven Sacraments and this number was later adopted by the Orthodox church. However, Orthodoxy does not restrict the list to these seven, rather any action designed to bring us closer to the presence of God and done through the church has some degree of sacramentality about it. As in the Catholic Church, the Mysteries of the faith convey divine grace to those who receive them worthily.”

<http://orthodoxfaith.co.uk/mysteries>

They also list the seven sacraments as Baptism, Chrismation (Confirmation), Eucharist, Holy Orders, Holy Unction, Marriage, and Penance. However, they were not all as well defined in the time of Chrysostom. But certainly they were all present in his time. And it is interesting that they were essentially the same as the western Church based in Rome.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, PREFACE TO THE BENEDICTINE EDITION, CONCERNING THE STATUES, page 325**, he says, “He supposes it was spoken on the third Sunday in Lent, reckoning for the first Sunday that which preceded the first day of the fast, which we call **Quinquagesima Sunday**.”

“The name Quinquagesima originates from Latin *quingagesimus* (fiftieth). This is in reference to the fifty days before Easter Day” using inclusive counting which counts both Sundays (normal counting would count only one of these). Since the forty days of the Lent do not include Sundays, the first day of Lent, Ash Wednesday, succeeds Quinquagesima Sunday by only three days.” <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quinquagesima>

We see the emphasis on ritual in the time of Chrysostom.

Concerning **Communion**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 10, THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, HOMILY LXXXII, page 491-492**, he says, “And as they were eating, He took bread, and brake it.” Why can it have been that He ordained this sacrament then, at the time of the passover? That thou mightest learn from everything, both that He is the lawgiver of the Old Testament, and that the things therein are foreshadowed because of these things. Therefore, I say, where the type is, there He puts the truth.”

Chrysostom understood that the Lord had fulfilled the laws of sacrifice in the Old Testament, and that His blood was for “the remission of the sins of the whole world”.

He also understood that the Passover was a type of the sacrifice of the cross. That is, the Passover “foreshadowed” the cross.

And in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 10, THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, HOMILY LXXXII, page 496-497**, he says, ““For he that hath fallen into sin and draws nigh, is worse than one possessed with a devil. For they, because they are possessed are not punished, but those, when they draw nigh unworthily, are delivered over to undying punishment. Let us not therefore drive away these only, but all without exception, whomsoever we may see coming unworthily.”

He is speaking to priests in order that they should not allow anyone to come to the Lord’s Supper unworthily. Chrysostom says that one who partakes unworthily shall be “delivered over to undying punishment”. He implies that the punishment is eternal. But even though a brother may commit this sin, and he or she is “chastened of the Lord” even unto death, they will “not be condemned with the world”, as we read in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):32** But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON HEBREWS, HOMILY XVII, page 448-450**, he says, ““It is not another sacrifice, as the High Priest, but we offer always the same, or rather we perform a remembrance of a Sacrifice.”

And he says, “[6.] What then? do not we offer every day? We offer indeed, but making a remembrance of His death, and this [remembrance] is one and not many. How is it one, and not many?

Inasmuch as that [Sacrifice] was once for all offered, [and] carried into the Holy of Holies. This is a figure of that [sacrifice] and this remembrance of that.”

And, speaking of the offerings of the Old Testament, he explains, “The “offering” indeed then, was an evidence of sins, the “continually,” an evidence of weakness. But with regard to Christ, it was the contrary: He was “once offered.””

And he explains how the sacrifices of the Old Testament were only types of the true sacrifice of Christ on the cross, as he says, “The types therefore contain the figure only, not the power; just as in images, the image has the figure of the man, not the power. So that the reality and the type have [somewhat] in common with one another. For the figure exists equally in both, but not the power. So too also is it in respect of Heaven and of the tabernacle, for the figure was equal: for there was the Holy of Holies, but the power and the other things were not the same.”

And he says, “It is not another sacrifice, as the High Priest, but we offer always the same, or rather we perform a remembrance of a Sacrifice.”

So Chrysostom here is clear that the Lord’s Supper is not another sacrifice, but a “remembrance of a Sacrifice”.

But then he says, “Many partake of this sacrifice once in the whole year, others twice; others many times.”

He doesn’t mention a remembrance here.

And then he says, “Thou assignest forty days for the health of the soul, or perhaps not even forty, and dost thou expect to propitiate God? Tell me, art thou in sport?”

But we read in **1 John 2 (KJV):1** My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

We don't need to "propitiate God". Jesus Christ the righteous is the propitiation for our sins. All we need to do is confess our sin when we sin, and He is faithful to forgive us, as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

And he says, "[8.] These things have been given to the holy. This the Deacon also proclaims when he calls on the holy;"

And he says, "he utters this voice after the whole sacrifice has been completed, that no person should come to the spiritual fountain carelessly and in a chance way."

Here he does not include the word "remembrance". And what is a "sacrifice" that "has been completed", but a sacrifice that has been offered?

And he explains, "For when he says, The Holy things for the holy, he means this: "If any is not holy, let him not draw near."

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, On the Priesthood, Book VI, page 76-77**, he says, "And whenever he invokes the Holy Spirit, and offers the most dread sacrifice, and constantly handles the common Lord of all, tell me what rank shall we give him? What great purity and what real piety must we demand of him? For consider what manner of hands they ought to be which minister in these things, and of what kind his tongue which utters such words, (**Schaff Note:** "And we pray and beseech Thee, send down thy Holy Ghost upon us and upon these gifts here outspread, and make this bread to be the precious body of thy Christ, and that which is in the cup the precious blood of Christ, having so changed them by thy Holy Spirit that to us who partake of them they may be for the cleansing of our souls, the remission of sins, the communion of the Holy Spirit." (**Liturgy of St. Chrysostom**)) and ought not the soul which receives so great a spirit to be purer and holier than anything in the world? At such a time angels stand by the Priest; and the whole sanctuary, and the space round about the altar, is filled with the powers of heaven, in honor of Him who lieth thereon."

So according to the **Liturgy of St. Chrysostom**, it was more than just a "remembrance". And there was an altar, and all this was done "in honor of Him who lieth thereon."

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON EPHESIANS, HOMILY III, page 63-64**, referring to Communion he says, "Tell me, wouldest thou choose to come to the Sacrifice with unwashed hands?"

Again he does not mention "remembrance" here when he mentions "the Sacrifice". But Jesus said to do this in remembrance of Him, as we read in **Luke 22 (KJV):19** And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.

# Losing Salvation

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 10, THE GOSPEL OF ST. MATTHEW, HOMILY XXVI, page 181**, he says, “For Judas too was a child of the kingdom, and it was said to him with the disciples, “Ye shall sit on twelve thrones;” (Matt. xix. 28) yet he became a child of hell;”

Jesus knew whom He had chosen, as we read in **John 13 (KJV):18** I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.

And in **John 6 (KJV):70** Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?

In this sense, Judas was a “child of the kingdom”, that is, he was an Israelite. But Judas was never a child of the kingdom of God. He was always a “child of hell”. So Judas did not lose his salvation. He never had salvation.

And in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, HOMILY I, page 8-9**, he says, “A man has again committed adultery and murder; the former adultery is indeed done away, the murder forgiven, and not brought up again to his charge, “for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance” (Rom. xi. 29);”

He refers to **Romans 11 (KJV):29** For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.

He continues, “but for those committed after Baptism he suffers a punishment as great as he would if both the former sins were brought up again, and many worse than these. For the guilt is no longer simply equal, but doubled and tripled.”

But we note that God has made provision for believers who sin after being born again, as we read in **1 John 2 (KJV):1** My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

The apostle John is addressing believers here, as he says, “My little children”, in verse 1.

And Chrysostom says, “For he that has cast the whole matter upon God, and, after his baptism, sins, as being man it is likely, he may, and repents, shall obtain mercy; whereas he that prevaricates with God’s mercy, and departs this life with no portion in that grace, shall have his punishment without a word to be said for him.”

But after one has been born again by faith in Jesus Christ, he will not depart “this life with no portion in that grace”. If he only builds wood, hay, or stubble, or even if he commits the sin unto death, he will still be saved, yet as by the fire of his bad choices in this life.

And he says, “Now God forbid that it should happen to us to fall into so great straits as to sin after baptism. However, even if aught such should happen, God is merciful, and has given us many ways of obtaining remission even after this. But just as those who sin after baptism are punished for this reason more severely than the Catechumens, so again, those who know that there are medicines in repentance, and yet will not make use of them, will undergo a more grievous chastisement.”

But they will still be saved, yet as by fire, as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):15** If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 12, HOMILIES ON FIRST CORINTHIANS, HOMILY XXIII, page 132-133**, he says, “For, “think not,” saith he, “because ye have believed, that this is sufficient for your salvation: since if to me neither preaching nor teaching nor bringing over innumerable persons, is enough for salvation unless I exhibit my own conduct also unblameable, much less to you.””

But in 1 Corinthians 9, Paul is not speaking of running for salvation, but running for rewards, as we read in context in **1 Corinthians 9 (KJV):24** Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. 25 And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. 26 I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: 27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

The word “castaway” in Greek is **ἀδόκιμος** (pronounced ä-do'-ke-mos), which means “not approved”.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY X, page 37**, he says, ““In order to preserve our purity, it is not sufficient for us merely to have been baptized and to have believed, but we must if we will continually enjoy this brightness, display a life worthy of it. This then is God’s work in us. To have been born the mystical Birth, and to have been cleansed from all our former sins, comes from Baptism; but to remain for the future pure, never again after this to admit any stain belongs to our own power and diligence.”

In other words, he is saying that we must keep ourselves saved.

And he says, “For there is no small fear, lest, having sometime defiled that beautiful robe by our after sloth and transgressions, we be cast out from the inner room and bridal chamber, like the five foolish virgins, or him who had not on a wedding garment. (Matt. xxv.; Matt. xxii)”

But if we have believed in Jesus Christ from our heart, we will have oil in our lamps, and we will be ready for the bridegroom when he comes. Chrysostom saw this parable as an instance where one lost their salvation. But Jesus was speaking to Jews who had no faith, and who were relying on being sons of Abraham for their salvation. Not having oil in their lamps, or not having a wedding garment would make them think, “what am I missing?” He spoke to them in parables to get them to see that what they really needed was faith. The oil is symbolic of the new birth of the Spirit of God, which happens when we have faith in Jesus Christ. The wedding garment speaks of the righteousness of God that is imputed to us when we have faith in Jesus Christ. These are all obtained by faith in Jesus Christ. We are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. This is what Jesus was trying to tell them.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY XII, page 43**, he says, ““For one defense only, that through works, (**Schaff Note:** There are places where he allows that the prayers of others may avail a man in the Judgment, when they are the consequence of his good deeds. See on Statues, Hom. ii. § 17.) is there, and he who is deprived of that cannot be saved by any other means.”

But the clear statement of the word of God is that we are saved by grace, as we read again



in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

And in **Romans 10 (KJV):8** But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

## **The Unpardonable Sin**

### **Commentary Summary**

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY XVI, page 57-58**, he says, “Therefore it is not only fornication or adultery that are wont to defile those who practice them, but pride also, and that far more than those vices. Why? Because fornication though it is an unpardonable sin, yet a man may plead the desire; but pride cannot possibly find any cause or pretext of any sort whatever by which to obtain so much as a shadow of excuse; it is nothing but a distortion and most grievous disease of the soul, produced from no other source but folly.”

Chrysostom says that fornication “is an unpardonable sin”, but pride is a far worse sin. By unpardonable, I believe he means one who commits this sin loses the grace of the Spirit by which they are saved, and becomes unsaved unless he or she repents.

## **Losing the Holy Spirit**

### **Commentary Summary**

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY XXVIII, page 539-540**, he says, “For just as food maintaineth our life, and by this ruleth the body, so if we have good works, we shall have the Spirit; and if we have the Spirit, we shall also have good works. As also, on the other hand, if we have no works, the Spirit flieth away. But if we be deserted by the Spirit, we shall also halt in our works.”

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY XXIX, page 543**, he says, “For there is need not only of faith, but also of a spiritual way of life, that we may keep the Spirit that was given once for all. For it is not wood and fire, nor altar and knife, but the Spirit that is all in us. For this cause, I take all means to prevent that Fire from being extinguished, as I have been also enjoined to do.”

So he is saying that if the fire be extinguished, the Holy Spirit is no longer in us, and we lose our salvation. But when we are born again, the Holy Spirit has given life to our spirit, that is, the Holy Spirit has given us eternal life in our spirit.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE OF THE ROMANS, HOMILY XIII, page 436-437**, he says, “And so if while here thou drive away the grace of the Spirit, and do not depart with it still safe, thou wilt assuredly perish, though thou dost rise again.”

So if one drives “away the grace of the Spirit”, and does “not depart with it still safe”, they will “assuredly perish”. In other words, they will lose their salvation.

And he says, “For he does not speak of any short stay made thereby, but of a continual indwelling. Hence he does not say “the Spirit which” dwelt, but “which dwelleth in us,” so pointing to a continual abiding. He then is most truly alive, who is dead to this life. Hence he says, “The Spirit is life because of righteousness.””

But Jesus says that if we believe in Him, we have passed from death to life, as we read again in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

We are not “most truly alive”, or mostly alive, but actually alive to God in our spirit, the Spirit of God having given birth to our spirit when we believe in Jesus Christ. This life that is given to us by the Spirit of God is eternal life, as we read again **1 John 5 (KJV):13** These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

And we are not to be “dead to this life”, but dead to sin, as in **Romans 6 (KJV):2** God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

And dead to the law, as in **Romans 7 (KJV):4** Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

And Jesus taught as in **John 10 (KJV):10** The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY L, page 182-183**, he says, “For when we act contrary to the commandments, how can we go to that place? Even in the present life, if any soldier act unworthily towards his king, he will not be able to see the king, but being deprived of his authority will suffer the severest punishment; if therefore we steal, or covet, if we wrong or strike others, if we work not deeds of mercy, we shall not be able to go thither, but shall suffer what happened to the virgins. For where He was, they were not able to enter in, but retired, their lamps having gone out, that is, grace having left them.”

He refers to **Matthew 25 (KJV):1** Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. 2 And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

The point of the parable is that we need to be ready for the Lord’s coming. Those virgins who ran out of oil did not commit to being ready for the Lord’s coming. That is, they did not commit themselves to the Lord from their heart, but only outwardly. They did not lose grace because they were never born again. We are made ready when we are born again.

And he says, “For we can, if we will, increase the brightness of that flame which we

received straightway (**Schaff Note:** i.e. in baptism.) by the grace of the Spirit; but if we will not do this, we shall lose it, and when that is quenched, there will be nothing else than darkness in our souls; since, as while a lamp is burning the light is strong, so when it is extinguished there is nothing but gloom. Wherefore the Apostle saith, “Quench not the Spirit.” (1 Thess. v. 19)”

He refers in context to **1 Thessalonians 5 (KJV):19** Quench not the Spirit. 20 Despise not prophesyings.

What Paul is saying is to not prohibit spiritual manifestation. That is, do not prohibit the exercise of spiritual gifts, such as prophecy. Chrysostom would not have understood this because the gifts of the Spirit were not operational in the Church in his time, for he said they had ceased.

And he says, “And It is quenched when It hath not oil, when there is any violent gust of wind, when It is cramped and confined, (for so fire is quenched,) and It is cramped by worldly cares, and quenched by evil desires.”

But the Lord has promised that the Holy Spirit would abide with us forever, as we read in **John 14 (KJV):16** And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

We cannot lose the Holy Spirit after we have been born again, for the life of the Holy Spirit is the life of our spirit, being born of the Spirit of God. Then when we are born again, God justifies us, and imputes His righteousness down to our account. So Jesus is the author of eternal salvation for us, as we read in **Hebrews 5 (KJV):9** And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;

And he says of those who have quenched the Spirit by “inhumanity, cruelty, and rapine”, and by “covetousness” that it will be for them as in **Matthew 25 (KJV):12** But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

But this is not possible for one who has truly believed. This parable is about being ready for the Lord’s return. We are ready if we have believed in Jesus Christ, and have been born again. Chrysostom imagines that sin takes away the grace of the Spirit, and so if we continue in sin, we will lose the Spirit of God. But when we have faith in Jesus Christ, God imputes His righteousness down to our account, having justified us. And our walk is then a walk by faith. If we believe not He abides faithful, as we read in **2 Timothy 2 (KJV):13** If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.

But let us make sure that we have truly believed, and that Jesus Christ is in us, as we read in **2 Corinthians 13 (KJV):5** Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

# Baptism with the Holy Spirit

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, HOMILY IV, page 25-26**, he says, “but now that Man has gone up on high, the Spirit also descends mightily from on high. “As it were a rushing mighty wind;” making it manifest by this, that nothing shall be able to withstand them, but they shall blow away all adversaries like a heap of dust.”

He refers to **Acts 2 (KJV):1** And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

And he says, “Nor is this all; but what is more awful still, “And there appeared unto them,” it says, “cloven tongues like as of fire.” (v. 3)”

He refers to **Acts 2 (KJV):3** And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

And he says, “And it sat upon each of them.” This means, that it remained and rested upon them.” For the sitting is significant of settledness and continuance.

Was it upon the twelve that it came? Not so; but upon the hundred and twenty.”

He refers to **Acts 1 (KJV):15** And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,)

And he says, “Observe now, how there is no longer any occasion for that person to grieve, who was not elected as was Matthias, “And they were all filled,” he says; not merely received the grace of the Spirit, but “were filled. And began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.””

And he says, “It would not have been said, *All*, the Apostles also being there present, unless the rest also were partakers.”

The baptism with the Holy Spirit is for all believers, as Peter taught in **Acts 2 (KJV):37** Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? 38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. 39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

# Miracles

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 12, HOMILIES ON FIRST CORINTHIANS, HOMILY VI, page 30-33**, he says, “But some one may say perhaps, “If the Gospel is to prevail and hath no need of words, lest the Cross be made of none effect; for what reason are signs withholden now?””

He refers to **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):17** For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

And he says, “Do not then urge the fact that signs are not done now, as a proof that they were not done then. For as then they were usefully wrought; so now are they no longer so wrought.”

It was Chrysostom’s testimony that “signs”, or miracles, or manifestations of the Spirit were not being done in the Church in his time.

And he argues, “It follows that by how much the more evident and overpowering the course of events, by so much is the part of faith abridged. For this reason miracles are not done now.”

The word “abridged” means “to shorten by omission of words without sacrifice of sense : **CONDENSE**”

But the reason mighty works are not done is because of a lack of faith, as we read in **Mark 6 (KJV):5** And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them. **6** And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages, teaching.

And he says, “For so it is, that our upright living seems unto the many the more trustworthy argument of the two: miracles admitting of a bad construction on the part of obstinate bad men: whereas a pure life will have abundant power to stop the mouth of the devil himself.”

But we read in **Matthew 9 (KJV):27** And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, Thou son of David, have mercy on us. **28** And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord. **29** Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you. **30** And their eyes were opened; and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, See that no man know it. **31** But they, when they were departed, spread abroad his fame in all that country.

In verse 29, Jesus said, “According to your faith be it unto you.”

## Spiritual Gifts

### Commentary Summary

Concerning **Spiritual Gifts**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 12, HOMILIES ON FIRST CORINTHIANS, HOMILY XXIII, page 168-173**, he says, “Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. Ye know that when ye were Gentiles, ye were led away unto those dumb idols, howsoever ye might be led.” This whole place is very obscure: but the obscurity is produced by our ignorance of the facts referred to and by their cessation, being such as then used to occur but now no longer take place.”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):1** Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. **2** Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led.

And he says, “And why do they not happen now? Why look now, the cause too of the obscurity hath produced us again another question: namely, why did they then happen, and now do so no more?”

So it is Chrysostom’s testimony that the gifts of the Spirit were no longer taking place. But it is interesting that Chrysostom refers to this Scripture in which Paul says that he would not have us “ignorant” of spiritual things.

And he says, “Wherefore also he so calls it, saying, “But to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given to profit withal;” (v. 7) calling the gifts “a manifestation of the Spirit.””

And he has said correctly that the gifts in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 are a “a manifestation of the Spirit.”

He also says, “For as the Apostles themselves had received this sign first, so also the faithful went on receiving it, I mean, the gift of tongues; yet not this only but also many others: inasmuch as many used even to raise the dead and to cast out devils and to perform many other such wonders: and they had gifts too, some less, and some more.”

But the 120 in the upper room were not all apostles, and the Spirit fell on “each of them”, and they “were all filled”, as we read in **Acts 2 (KJV):1** And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. **2** And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. **3** And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. **4** And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

And Chrysostom has spoken well of the gifts here, for they were for the “faithful”. And we read of Stephen in **Acts 6 (KJV):8** And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.

Now Chrysostom thought that prophecy was always having to do with future events. But this had consequences if those who heard the prophecy had to wait until it was fulfilled. And so his method of discerning a true prophet involved two signs.

He notes the first sign, as he says, “So he is saying that the soothsayer will “cause distraction and madness and great darkness”, which “is the proper work of a demon.” But a true prophet will be doing “God’s work to illuminate and with consideration to teach things needful.”

And he notes the second sign, as he says, “Again, when thou seest another speaking all things with His Name, understand that he is spiritual.”

But a simpler method is as Paul reveals in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):3** Wherefore I give

you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

And then all prophecy must be judged according to the word of God, as Paul taught in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):29** Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.

And Chrysostom says, “But what is “the word of wisdom?” That which Paul had, which John had, the son of thunder. And what is “the word of knowledge?” That which most of the faithful had, possessing indeed knowledge, but not thereupon able to teach nor easily to convey to another what they knew.”

But the Lord told Saul in Acts 9:6 to go into the city where it would be told him what he must do. The word of wisdom relates to the plans and purposes of God. This was not something that Saul read out of the Bible. He heard a voice.

And the Lord spoke to Ananias in a vision, and the Lord told him where Saul was, that is, on a street which is called Straight in Acts 9:11. This is a word of knowledge. It is, so to speak, a factoid from God. It is something that we could not have known, but is revealed to us by the Spirit for a specific purpose.

But Chrysostom has said correctly that this faith, given by the Holy Spirit, is “the faith of miracles”, that is, the faith by which one may operate in the working of a miracle.

And he says, “But to possess the power of working miracles and gifts of healing, is not the same thing: for he that had a gift of healing used only to do cures: but he that possessed powers for working miracles used to punish also. For a miracle is not the healing only, but the punishing also: even as Paul inflicted blindness: as Peter slew.”

He refers to Acts 13:6-12, when Elymas the sorcerer withstood Paul and Barnabas when they preached the Gospel, and Paul spoke blindness upon him for a season. And he refers to Acts 5:1-10 when Ananias and Saphira lied to the Holy Ghost about how much they had sold their land for as a donation, and fell down dead before Peter.

We note that the casting out of an evil spirit is also done by the spiritual gift of working of miracles.

And he asks, “What is, “discernings of spirits?” the knowing who is spiritual, and who is not: who is a prophet, and who a deceiver: as he said to the Thessalonians, “despise not prophesyings:” (1 Thess. v. 20, 21) but proving all things, hold fast that which is good.””

However, there is more to the operation of the gift of “discerning of spirits”, as we read in Mark 9:17-29 when Jesus identified the evil spirit of the son of one in the multitude as the “dumb and deaf” spirit. This was an evil spirit that often “cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him”. Jesus identified him by the gift of discerning of spirits, and cast him out by the gift of working of miracles. Jesus had all the gifts of the Spirit, and so we read in **John 3 (KJV):34** For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.

Chrysostom says, ““To another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues.” For one person knew what he spake himself, but was unable to interpret to another; while another had acquired both these or the other of the two.”

But the operation of the gift of divers kinds of tongues includes the utterance of a language unknown to the speaker, but known somewhere in the world. And it also includes

the utterance of an unknown language to the world of mankind, such as the tongues of angels, as we read in 1 Corinthians 13:1, and implied in 1 Corinthians 14:2. This is why the Spirit also gives the gift of interpretation of tongues, mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:10.

And he says, “But the word of teaching not so.” And in reference to teaching he says, “Wherefore that he places first, but this last: for this was on account of that, and so indeed were all the rest; both prophecies, and working of miracles, and divers kinds of tongues, and interpretation of tongues. For none is equal to this. Wherefore also he said, “Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and in teaching.” (1 Tim. v. 17)”

Chrysostom taught from his own experience, which did not include spiritual gifts, which he said had ceased in the Church. But teaching is a ministry gift, and not a spiritual gift. That is, it is a place in the body of Christ, the Church, as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):28** And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles?

Each one is set in the body as it pleased the Lord, as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):18** But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

Our function in the body of Christ will relate to our individuality, and where God has set us in the body. As we grow in grace and knowledge, we will discover more about who we are, and what our function is, that is, our ministry gift.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON THESSALONIANS, HOMILY XI, page 370-372**, he says, “On this account Paul says, “Quench not the Spirit,” that is, the gift of grace, for it is his custom so to call the gift of the Spirit.”

In the mind of Chrysostom, when we receive the “gift of the Spirit”, he means “the gift of grace”.

Chrysostom is saying basically that sin quenches the Spirit, as he says, “this an impure life extinguishes”.

And he says, “And the flame is often liable to be extinguished even when no temptation assails it. When the oil fails, when we do not alms, the Spirit is quenched. For it came to thee as an alms from God. Then He sees this fruit not existing in thee, and he abides not with an unmerciful soul.”

Again, Chrysostom misinterprets the Scripture. We read in context again as in **1 Thessalonians 5 (KJV):19** Quench not the Spirit. 20 Despise not prophesyings.

Paul is saying don't prohibit spiritual gifts from being exercised in the Church. He says also in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):39** Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues.

Quenching the spirit is not allowing spiritual manifestation to occur in the Church.

Chrysostom is encouraging us to let our light shine. He did not understand that our light is our spirit that has been born again by the Spirit of God. Our spirit is the candle of the Lord, as we read in **Proverbs 20 (KJV):27** The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward part of the belly.



We can hide our light, but we cannot extinguish it because it is the eternal flame of eternal life given to us by the Spirit of God.

We are commanded not to grieve the Holy Spirit, as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):30** And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

But the Spirit doesn't leave us if we sin, or grieve Him. God will discipline us as a good Father, but He will never leave us.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY XIV, page 446-447**, he says, "This statement is not clear, owing to the cessation of many of the wonders which then used to take place. Wherefore I must needs inform you of the state of things at that time, and in this way the rest of the subject will be cleared. What therefore was the state of things then? God did in those days give to all that were baptized certain excellent gifts, and the name that these had was spirits. For "the spirits of the Prophets," it says, "are subject to the prophets." (1 Cor. xiv. 32)"

He refers to **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):32** And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

The "spirits" in this verse refer to the spirit of each prophet. Chrysostom did not understand the threefold nature of man, that is, body, soul, and spirit.

And the gifts actually are mentioned in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):1** Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.

And Chrysostom says, "And one had the gift of prophecy and foretold things to come; and another of wisdom, and taught the many; and another of healings, and cured the sick; and another of miracles, and raised the dead; another of tongues, and spoke different languages."

Chrysostom had no experiential knowledge of the gifts of the Spirit. So he misunderstood the operation of these gifts. Knowledge is something we obtain by the illumination of the Holy Spirit as we read His word, and wisdom comes from that knowledge. But the gifts of the Spirit are given by the Spirit in the moment to meet a need.

# Justification

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY VIII, page 385-391**, he says, “See you how he shows the Jews to be as it were of the class of parasites (i.e. guests), rather than those in uncircumcision, and that these were added to the others? For if he was justified and crowned while in uncircumcision, the Jews came in afterwards, Abraham is then the father first of the uncircumcised, which through faith appertain to him, and then of those in the circumcision. For he is a forefather of two lines. See you faith lightening up? for till it came the patriarch was not justified. The circumcision therefore is behind the faith. And why wonder that it is behind the faith, when it is even behind the uncircumcision. Nor is it behind faith only, but very far inferior to it, even so far as the sign is to the reality of which it is the sign; for instance, as the seal is to the soldier.”

That is, circumcision is after faith, as it is also after uncircumcision, for Abraham was uncircumcised before he had faith, and he had faith when he was uncircumcised, and before he was circumcised.

And he says, “For if to the uncircumcised, it is not in that he is uncircumcised that he is their father, although justified in uncircumcision; but in that they imitated his faith; much less is it owing to circumcision that he is the forefather of those in the state of circumcision, unless faith also be added.”

Chrysostom understood that there is now “no need” of “bodily signs”, such as circumcision. Yet he still saw baptism as the means whereby one was regenerated. He also saw the significance of all of the laws of circumcision, and sacrifice, and sabbath, and feasts. They were all things that would lead us to faith in Christ, as we read in **Galatians 3 (KJV):24** Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

And Chrysostom understood that circumcision is only a sign of the faith which Abraham had. Yet he could not see that baptism is also only a sign “to the reality of which it is the sign”, that is, that one has had faith. We are only baptized because we believe, that is, because we have faith.

And he says, “For if you follow not in the steps of his faith, though you were ten thousand times in a state of circumcision, you will not be Abraham’s offspring.”

And so it is with baptism, but Chrysostom did not realize this.

And speaking of circumcision, he says, “For this is then a sign, when the reality of which it is the sign is found with thee, that is, faith; since if thou have not this, the sign to thee has no longer the power of a sign, for what is it to be the sign of? or what the seal of, when there is nothing to be sealed? much as if you were to show one a purse with a seal to it, when there was nothing laid up within. And so the circumcision is ridiculous if there be no faith within.”

Chrysostom understood that circumcision was only to be a sign that one had faith, and therefore was justified by faith and had righteousness. But if the circumcised had no faith, they also had not been justified, and therefore had no righteousness. There is not doubt that Chrysostom had the “reality”, that is, faith, within himself.

Chrysostom also understood that the time of Abraham's justification was when he was uncircumcised, that is, when he had faith.

He says, "For he that clings to the Law, as if of saving force, does disparagement to faith's power; and so he says, "faith is made void," that is, there is no need of salvation by grace."

Chrysostom has stated correctly that, "he that clings to the Law, as if of saving force, does disparagement to faith's power". The true force of the law is to show us our need of grace.

And he says, "You see that it is not the Law only that faith establisheth, but the promise of God also that it will not allow to fall to the ground. But the Law, on the other hand, by being kept to unseasonably, makes even the faith of none effect, and hindereth the promise. By this he shows that faith, so far from being superfluous, is even necessary to that degree, that without it there is no being saved."

And so we read in **Hebrews 11 (KJV):6** But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

And he says, "And again, as God is a father not by way of the relationship of nature, but by way of the affiancing of faith, so is he also inasmuch as it is obedience that makes him father of us all."

He is correct in that he speaks of the nature of the flesh. The uncircumcised are not literally children of Abraham by their flesh. But when he says, "God is a father not by way of the relationship of nature", we must understand that he did not understand the Biblical truth about regeneration. It is not just a matter of faith, as if it were like a commitment in marriage, for we are born of God when we believe in Jesus Christ. We also receive eternal life in our spirit by this birth, and we also receive a new divine nature in our spirit by this birth.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY IX, page 395-399**, he says, "After saying many great things of Abraham, and his faith, and righteousness, and honor before God, lest the hearer should say, What is this to us, for it is he that was justified? he places us close to the Patriarch again."

And comparing us to Abraham, he says, "But he speaks in authentic words of the divine law, and makes the whole a declaration of the Scripture. For why was it written, he says, save to make us see that we also were justified in this way? For it is the same God Whom we have believed, and upon the same matters, if it be not in the case of the same persons."

And he says, "For that He is willing is plain from His having given up His Son. But that He is able also is the very thing He proved likewise, from the very fact of His having justified men who were sinners. What is there then to prevent us any more from obtaining the things to come? Nothing!"

And yes, it is as Chrysostom has shown. The cause of His death, or reason for His death, is the same as the cause of His resurrection, or reason for His resurrection. That is, they were both for "our justification".

And he says, referring to Romans 5:1, "Therefore being justified by faith, let us have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.""

But we read as in **Romans 5 (NASB):1** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,...

So we should understand that our justification was not in the process of being done when we had faith in Jesus Christ, but it was absolutely done when we believed in Jesus Christ. When God saw our faith, He justified us. That is, He declared us to be righteous, and put His very own righteousness down to our account.

And he says, “For if He reconciled us when we were in open war with Him, it is reasonable that we should abide in a state of reconciliation, and give unto Him this reward for that He may not seem to have reconciled untoward and unfeeling creatures to the Father.”

Actually, it is even more “reasonable that we should abide in” our standing “of reconciliation” than our “state of reconciliation”, as Chrysostom puts it. Our state, that is, the condition of our soul at any given point in time, is constantly changing. But once we have faith, our standing of righteousness does not change.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY XIV, page 445-446**, he says, “For if the first-fruits be so great that we are thereby freed even from our sins, and attain to righteousness and sanctification, and that those of that time both drove out devils, and raised the dead by their shadow (Acts v. 15), or garments (ib. xix. 12), consider how great the whole must be.”

And in regards to our having attained “to righteousness and sanctification”, we read in **1 Corinthians 6 (NKJV):11** And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

And Chrysostom understands what will happen at the resurrection, as he says, “For that thou mayest not be perplexed at hearing so much of glory without getting any distinct knowledge of it, he partially exposes to thy view the things to come, setting before thee the change of thy body (Gr. changing thy body), and along with it the change of the whole creation. And this he has put in a clearer light in another passage, where he says, “Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious Body.” (Phil. iii. 21)”

And he says, “For this is the only gift that we brought in to God, believing Him in what He promised shall come, and it was by this way alone we were saved. If then we lose this hope, we have lost all that was of our own contributing. For I put you this question, he would say, Wert thou not liable for countless sins? wert thou not in despair? wert thou not under sentence? were not all out of heart about thy salvation? What then saved thee? It was thy hoping in God alone, and trusting to Him about His promises and gifts, and nothing besides hadst thou to bring in. If it was this then that saved thee, hold it fast now also. For that which afforded thee so great blessings, to a certainty will not deceive thee in regard to things to come. For in that it found thee dead, and ruined, and a prisoner, and an enemy, and yet made thee a friend, and a son, and a freeman, and righteous, and a joint-heir, and yielded such great things as no one ever expected even, how, after such munificence and attachment, will it betray thee in what is to follow?”

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY XV, page 453**, he says, ““Now He justified them by the regeneration of the laver. “And whom He justified, them He also glorified” by the gift, by the adoption.

Chrysostom did not understand that it is by faith that we are justified, as we read in **Romans 5 (NKJV):1** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ...

It has nothing to do with the laver. Water baptism is only a step of faith in obedience

to the Lord's command to be baptized, and it only shows that we have believed.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY VII, page 379-380**, he refers to Romans 3:28, as he asks, "What does he say then? "Therefore we conclude, that by faith a man is justified." He does not say, a Jew, or one under the Law, but after leading forth his discourse into a large room, and opening the doors of faith to the world, he says "a man," the name common to our race."

And he says, "What was the object of the Law and what the scope of all its enactments? Why, to make man righteous. But this it had no power to do. "For all," it says, "have sinned." but faith when it came accomplished it. For when a man is once a believer, he is straightway justified."

Chrysostom understood in part that once one is a believer, he is "straightway justified", but he still included water baptism as the time when one truly believes.

And he says, "But since after this grace, whereby we were justified, there is need also of a life suited to it, let us show an earnestness worthy the gift."

So in Chrysostom's thinking, after we are justified, we still need good works to show a "life suited to it" to be saved.

# Grace

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY X, page 403**, he calls the “abundance of grace”, mentioned in Romans 5:17, the “superabundance of grace”.

And relating to this, he says, “For it was not as much as we must have to do away the sin only, that we received of His grace, but even far more. For we were at once freed from punishment, and put off all iniquity, and were also born again from above (John iii. 3) and rose again with the old man buried, and were redeemed, justified, led up to adoption, sanctified, made brothers of the Only-begotten, and joint heirs and of one Body with Him, and counted for His Flesh, and even as a Body with the Head, so were we united unto Him!”

And he is correct here. When we believed in Jesus Christ, all of these benefits are ours. And we could add that we were saved.

He says, “All these things then Paul calls a “superabundance” of grace, showing that what we received was not a medicine only to countervail the wound, but even health, and comeliness, and honor, and glory and dignities far transcending our natural state.”

And he says, “For Christ hath paid down far more than we owe, yea as much more as the illimitable ocean is than a little drop.”

Although Chrysostom rightly speaks of grace here, in his mind, it was possible to lose grace, as he says under the chapter **Losing the Holy Spirit**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY L, page 182-183**, he says, “For when we act contrary to the commandments, how can we go to that place? Even in the present life, if any soldier act unworthily towards his king, he will not be able to see the king, but being deprived of his authority will suffer the severest punishment; if therefore we steal, or covet, if we wrong or strike others, if we work not deeds of mercy, we shall not be able to go thither, but shall suffer what happened to the virgins. For where He was, they were not able to enter in, but retired, their lamps having gone out, that is, grace having left them.”

And under the chapter **Justification**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY VII, page 379-380**, he says, “But since after this grace, whereby we were justified, there is need also of a life suited to it, let us show an earnestness worthy the gift.”

In Chrysostom’s thinking about grace, it was something that was showered on us with the presence of the Holy Spirit at baptism. But if one sinned, grace “left them”. In other words, they lost their salvation. But it is freely by His grace that we are justified, as we read again in **Romans 3 (NKJV):21** But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, **22** even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; **23** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, **24** being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, **25** whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, **26** to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He

might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Having been justified by faith in Jesus, we stand in grace, and we have a standing of righteousness. Who is there to condemn us? And so we read in **Romans 8 (NKJV)**:31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." 37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. 38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

# The Resurrection

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 12, HOMILIES ON FIRST CORINTHIANS, HOMILY XLII, page 255-257**, he says, referring to 1 Corinthians 15:48, “What then? Did not This Man too die? He died indeed, but received no injury there from, yea rather by this He put an end to death. Seest thou how on this part of his subject also, he makes use of death to establish the doctrine of the resurrection? “For having, as I said before, the beginning and the head,” so he speaks, “doubt not of the whole body.”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):48** As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.

And he says, “Ver. 49. “As we have borne the image of the earthy,” i.e., as we have done evil, “let us also bear the image of the heavenly,” i.e., let us practice all goodness.”

But he is referring to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):49** And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

Although many Church Fathers refer to it in this way, as the **Schaff Note** indicates, such as “Irenæus, Origen, Basil, Tertullian, Cyprian, and other Fathers”, the exhortation, “let us bear”, does not fit the context of 1 Corinthians, chapter 15. And yet Chrysostom seems to make it fit, as he asserts, “But Paul’s meaning is such as this: “as we have borne the image of the earthy,” i.e., evil deeds, “let us also bear the image of the heavenly,” the manner of life which is in the heavens. Whereas if he were speaking of nature, the thing needed not exhortation nor advice. So that hence also it is evident that the expression relates to our manner of life.”

He argues that Paul “calls it an “image” here too again showing that he is speaking of conduct, not of nature”, referring to verse 49 above.

Chrysostom then refers to “Ver. 50. “Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God””, and he then says that “by flesh he here denotes men’s evil deeds”.

But Paul is talking about the kind of body that can go to heaven, like the body of Jesus when He was resurrected and ascended into heaven.

But then Chrysostom switches topics, as he says, “Next, having completed his advice concerning our manner of life, according to his constant custom blending closely subject with subject, he passes again to the doctrine of the resurrection of the body: as follows:

Ver. 51. “Behold, I tell you a mystery.””

And then he says, “But what is this? “We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.” He means as follows: “we shall not all die, ‘but we shall all be changed,’” even those who die not. For they too are mortal.”

But Paul has not been talking about “walking in the flesh”, or “men’s evil deeds”. His whole discourse is about the “resurrection of the body” in this chapter of 1 Corinthians, as we read near the beginning of the chapter in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):12** Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: 14 And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. 15 Yea, and we are



found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. 16 For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised:

But Chrysostom explains well the actual resurrection of the body, as he says, “Thus lest any, hearing that “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God,” should suppose that our bodies do not rise again; he adds, “this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.” Now the body is “corruptible,” the body is “mortal:” so that the body indeed remains, for it is the body which is put on; but its mortality and corruption vanish away, when immortality and incorruption come upon it. Do not thou therefore question hereafter how it shall live an endless life, now that thou hast heard of its becoming incorruptible.”

And he says, “For He not only disarmed death and vanquished it, but even destroyed it, and made it quite cease from being.”

And he says, “Seest thou how the discourse is of the death of the body? therefore also of the resurrection of the body. For if these bodies do not rise again, how is death “swallowed up?””

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON THESSALONIANS, HOMILY VI, page 355-356**, he says, ““For the Resurrection takes place “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.”

And he says, ““but the gathering is the work of ministers. But if Angels gather them together, and run to and fro, how are they caught up here? They are caught up after the descent, after that they are gathered together.”

And he says, “For when they see the earth agitated, the dust mingling, the bodies rising perchance (**Schaff Note:** ἴσως, which has been translated “equally.”) on every side, no one ministering to this, but the “shout” being sufficient, the whole earth filled (for consider how great a thing it is that all the men from Adam unto His coming shall then stand with wives and children),—when they see so great a tumult upon the earth,—then they shall know.”

But at the rapture, the saints will not be gathered on earth, standing “with wives and children”. In the rapture, the saints, both the living and the dead, will be “caught up together” in order “to meet the Lord in the air”, as in 1 Thessalonians 4:17.

Now Chrysostom and the Church in his time believed that there would be one great resurrection of all the dead, both of the righteous and of the unrighteous. But in Revelation 20:4-5, the first resurrection is mentioned of the righteous. The unrighteous dead must wait another one thousand years for the White Throne judgment in Revelation 20:11-15.

Chrysostom did not understand the sequence of the events of the second coming of Christ which would lead up to this thousand year reign of Christ.

## Hell

### Commentary Summary:

Concerning **Hell**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON THESSALONIANS, HOMILY VI, page 356-360**, he says, “If any one disbelieves hell, let

him consider Sodom, let him reflect upon Gomorrah, the vengeance that has been inflicted, and which yet remains. This is a proof of the eternity of punishment.”

And he says, “But it cannot be that there is not punishment and a hell.”

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, HOMILIES ON HEBREWS, HOMILY XXXI, page 508-509**, he says, “For the resurrection shall be of all at the same time, of sinners and of the righteous. At the same time shall He be present to all in the judgment.”

And this was the thinking of the Church in the time of Chrysostom. But according to Scripture, there are two resurrections, the resurrection of life, and the resurrection of damnation, as we read in **John 5 (KJV):29** And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

The first is mentioned in **Revelation 20 (KJV):4** And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

After the thousand years are completed, there will be a second resurrection at the great white throne judgment for the wicked dead in Revelation 20:11-15.

And Chrysostom says, “For it is not, it is not possible, He says, to pass across from this side to that: for “there is a great gulf betwixt us and you” (Luke xvi. 26), and it is not possible even for those who wish it to go across, and stretch out a helping hand: but we must needs burn continually, no one aiding us, even should it be father or mother, or any whosoever, yea though he have much boldness toward God. For, it says, “A brother doth not redeem; shall man redeem?” (Ps. xlix. 7)”

And that this fire is eternal, we read in **Mark 9 (KJV):43** And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:

And in **Mark 9 (KJV):45** And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:

# Israel Will Be Saved

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY XIX, page 488-489**, he says, “But let us see what even by way of allayment he does devise for them. Now what is the allayment? “When the fulness of the Gentiles,” he says, “shall have come in, then shall all Israel be saved,” at the time of his second coming, and the end of the world.”

And he says, “And throughout it is clear that the natural course of things was this, that they should be the first to come in, and then those of the Gentiles; but since they disbelieved, the order was reversed; and their unbelief and fall caused these to be brought in first. Hence it is that he says, “through their fall salvation is come to the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.”

There is still one week of the seventy to be fulfilled for Israel, as we read in **Daniel 9 (KJV):24** Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. 25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. 26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. 27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

The seven weeks and the sixty-two weeks, or 69 weeks, have been fulfilled when Messiah was “cut off”, as we read in verse 26. Messiah was “cut off” when He died on the cross. The final week when Antichrist will come is still to come to pass. But first, the times of the Gentiles must be fulfilled, as we read in **Luke 21 (KJV):22** For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. 23 But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. 24 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

Israel shall be melted, as we read in **Jeremiah 9 (KJV):7** Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold, I will melt them, and try them; for how shall I do for the daughter of my people?

And in **Ezekiel 22 (KJV):22** As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I the Lord have poured out my fury upon you.

This will be the time of Jacob’s trouble, as we read in **Jeremiah 30 (KJV):4** And these

are the words that the Lord spake concerning Israel and concerning Judah. 5 For thus saith the Lord; We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. 6 Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? 7 Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it.

This will be at the end of the great tribulation, and at the battle of Armageddon, at the second coming of Christ, but not at the end of the world. The thousand year reign of Christ will begin after the great tribulation.

And Israel will be saved at the second coming, as we read in **Zechariah 12 (KJV)**:8 In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them. 9 And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. 10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

Israel will be born again in a single day, as we read in **Isaiah 66 (KJV)**:7 Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child. 8 Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children. 9 Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the Lord: shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb? saith thy God. 10 Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her: 11 That ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory. 12 For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees. 13 As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem.

# Mary

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, COMMENTARY ON GALATIANS, CHAPTER I, page 13**, he says, “But as he considered that he had a share in the august titles of the Apostles, he exalts himself by honoring James; and this he does by calling him “the Lord’s brother,” although he was not by birth His brother, but only so reputed. Yet this did not deter him from giving the title; and in many other instances he displays towards all the Apostles that noble disposition, which beseemed him.”

But as we read in Matthew 13:55-58, the people in Jesus’ hometown knew his father, mother, brothers, and sisters. But the early Church in the time of Augustine and Chrysostom could not believe that Mary, the mother of Jesus, could have had other children, and not have remained a virgin. But the Scripture says in **Matthew 1 (KJV):24** Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: 25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name Jesus.

# Against Heresy

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON PHILIPPIANS, HOMILY VI, page 206-210**, he says, ““First then let Sabellius the Libyan come forward. What does he assert? that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are mere names given to one Person. Marcion of Pontus says, that God the Creator of all things is not good, nor the Father of the good Christ, but another righteous one, and that he did not take flesh for us. Marcellus, and Photinus, and Sophronius assert, that the Word is an energy, and that it was this energy that dwelt in Him who was of the seed of David, and not a personal substance. Arius confesses indeed the Son, but only in word; he says that He is a creature, and much inferior to the Father. And others say that He has not a soul.”

He then rebukes them, as he says, “And Paul of Samosata has fallen, and Marcellus, and Sabellius. For he says, “Being in the form of God.” If “in the form” how sayest thou, O wicked one, that He took His origin from Mary, and was not before? and how dost thou say that He was an energy? For it is written, “The form of God took the form of a servant.” “The form of a servant,” is it the energy of a servant, or the nature of a servant? By all means, I fancy, the nature of a servant. Thus too the form of God, is the nature of God, and therefore not an energy. Behold also Marcellus of Galatia, Sophronius and Photinus have fallen.”

We can agree heartily with Chrysostom here.

He says, “Behold Sabellius too. It is written, “He counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God.” Now equality is not predicated, where there is but one person, for that which is equal hath somewhat to which it is equal. Seest thou not the substance of two Persons, and not empty names without things? Hearst thou not the eternal pre-existence of the Only-begotten?”

And remember that Sabellius asserted “that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are mere names given to one Person”.

And he concludes, “Lastly, What shall we say against Arius, who asserts the Son is of a different substance? Tell me now, what means, “He took the form of a servant”? It means, He became man. Wherefore “being in the form of God,” He was God. For one “form” and another “form” is named; if the one be true, the other is also. “The form of a servant” means, Man by nature, wherefore “the form of God” means, God by nature. And he not only bears record of this, but of His equality too, as John also doth, that he is no way inferior to the Father, for he saith, “He thought it not a thing to seize, (**Schaff Note:** [Rev. Ver. “a prize,” a thing seized, or a thing to be seized.—J.A.B.]) to be equal with God.” Now what is their wise reasoning? Nay, say they, he proves the very contrary; for he says, that, “being in the form of God, He seized not equality with God.” How if He were God, how was He able “to seize upon it”? and is not this without meaning? Who would say that one, being a man, seized not on being a man? for how would any one seize on that which he is? No, say they, but he means that being a little God, He seized not upon being equal to the great God, Who was greater than He. Is there a great and a little God? And do ye bring in the doctrines of the Greeks upon those of the Church? With them there is a great and a little God. If it be so with you, I know not. For you will find it nowhere in

the Scriptures: there you will find a great God throughout, a little one nowhere. If He were little, how would he also be God? If man is not little and great, but one nature, and if that which is not of this one nature is not man, how can there be a little God and a great one?"

Again, we agree heartily with Chrysostom. He has explained well the Biblical truth of the deity of the Son, and defended the faith.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON PHILIPPIANS, HOMILY VII, page 212-216**, he says, "Give heed to what I now say. Since many men think, that, when they are lowly, they are deprived of their proper right, and debased, Paul, to take away this fear, and to show that we must not be affected thus, says that God, the only begotten, who was in the form of God, who was no whit inferior to the Father, who was equal to Him, "counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God."

And he says, "What does one say then? That the Son of God feared not to descend from His right, for He thought not Deity a prize seized. He was not afraid that any would strip Him of that nature or that right, Wherefore He laid it (**Schaff Note:** The word is neuter, and refers only to "right" (ἄξιωμα). Some copies omit "nature.") aside, being confident that He should take it up again. He hid it, knowing that He was not made inferior by so doing."

And he says, "This equality with God He had not by seizure, but as his own by nature. Wherefore "He emptied Himself.""

And he says, "What then say the heretics? See, say they, He did not become man. The Marcionites, I mean. But why? He was "made in the likeness of man." But how can one be "made in the likeness of men"? by putting on a shadow? But this is a phantom, and no longer the likeness of a man, for the likeness of a man is another man. And what wilt thou answer to John, when he says, "The Word became flesh"? (John i. 14)"

And he says, "'And being found in fashion as a man." See, they say, both "in fashion," and "as a man." To be as a man, and to be a man in fashion, is not to be a man indeed. To be a man in fashion is not to be a man by nature. See with what ingenuousness I lay down what our enemies say, for that is a brilliant victory, and amply gained, when we do not conceal what seem to be their strong points. For this is deceit rather than victory."

And he says, "He took, say they, the form of a servant, when He girded Himself with a towel, and washed the feet of His disciples. Is this the form of a servant? Nay, this is not the form, but the work of a servant. It is one thing that there should be the work of a servant, and another to take the form of a servant. Why did he not say, He did the work of a servant, which were clearer? But nowhere in Scripture is "form" put for "work," for the difference is great: the one is the result of nature, the other of action."

And he says, "For if all was a mere shadow, (**Schaff Note:** [He refers to the various Docetic theories, that the body of Christ was only an appearance.—J.A.B.]) there was no reality. If He had not real hands, how did He wash their feet? If He had not real loins, how did He gird Himself with a towel? and what kind of garments did he take? for Scripture says, "He took His garments." (John xiii. 12)"

And he says, "Again, what in opposition to Paul of Samosata? for what did he affirm? The very same."

And he says, "For what we said against the Arians, we must repeat against these too, for they differ not from one another, save by a little space of time; both the one and the other affirm

the Son of God to be a creature.”

And he says, “What then means, “Being made in the likeness of men”? He had many things belonging to us, and many He had not; for instance, He was not born of wedlock. He did no sin. These things had He which no man has. He was not what he seemed only, but He was God also; He seemed to be a man, but He was not like the mass of men.”

And he explains, “For He was like them in flesh. He means then, that He was not a mere man. Wherefore he says, “in the likeness of men.” For we indeed are soul and body, but He was God, and soul and body, wherefore he says, “in the likeness.” For lest when you hear that He emptied Himself, you should think that some change, and degeneracy, and loss is here; he says, whilst He remained what He was, He took that which He was not, and being made flesh He remained God, in that He was the Word. (John i. 14)”

Chrysostom’s defense of the deity of Christ is very good here.

He continues, and says, “Thus much against these heretics. I must now speak against such as deny that He took a soul. If “the form of God” is “perfect God,” then the “form of a servant” is “a perfect servant.” Again, against the Arians. Here concerning His divinity, we no longer find “He became,” “He took,” but “He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men”; here concerning his humanity we find “He took, He became.” He became the latter, He took the latter; He was the former. Let us not then confound nor divide the natures. There is one God, there is one Christ, the Son of God; when I say “One,” I mean a union, not a confusion; the one Nature did not degenerate into the other, but was united with it.”

We can applaud Chrysostom here. He has upheld the Scriptures, and defended the faith.



# Widows

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON THESSALONIANS, HOMILY VI, page 348-352**, he says, “Love not thy husband more than God, and thou shalt not ever experience widowhood. Or rather, even if it should happen, thou shalt not have the feeling of it. Why? Because thou hast an immortal Protector who loves thee better. If thou lovest God more, mourn not: for He who is more beloved is immortal, and does not suffer thee to feel the loss of him who is less beloved.”

And he says, “Nothing is painful to us, if we are willing to cultivate wisdom.”

But we read in **Ecclesiastes 1 (NKJV):18** For in much wisdom *is* much grief, And he who increases knowledge increases sorrow.

We feel grief when we experience a loss. Losing a husband or a wife is a loss. God has created us with feelings. To deny our feelings is not wise. We must not deny our feelings, but process our feelings. As we do so, we will notice five stages of grief, according to Elisabeth Kübler-Ross. “These stages include denial, anger, bargaining, sadness-depression, and acceptance. Giving ourselves permission to grieve allows us to finish the work of the past and prepares us to accept the new experiences of the present. This is a process that takes time.” **Christian Adults in Recovery, A Ten Week Study Book, by Julianne Maki, M.F.C.C., and Mark Maki, 1992, page 19.**

Those who experience widowhood will feel a loss. It will take time to process. It took time for Job to process. But Job was victorious, as we read in **Job 42 (NKJV):1** Then Job answered the Lord and said: 2 “I know that You can do everything, And that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You. 3 You asked, ‘Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge?’ Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. 4 Listen, please, and let me speak; You said, ‘I will question you, and you shall answer Me.’ 5 “I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees You. 6 Therefore I abhor myself, And repent in dust and ashes.”

As we process what we feel, and agree with God, we will find the victory. Let us remember what we read in **Psalms 30 (NKJV):5** For His anger *is but for* a moment, His favor *is for* life; Weeping may endure for a night, But joy *comes* in the morning.

# The Antichrist

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON THESSALONIANS, HOMILY III, page 386-387**, he says, referring to 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4, “Here he discourses concerning the Antichrist, and reveals great mysteries. What is “the falling away?” He calls him Apostasy, as being about to destroy many, and make them fall away. So that if it were possible, He says, the very Elect should be offended. (From Matt. xxiv. 24)”

And he says, “And he calls him “the man of sin.” For he shall do numberless mischiefs, and shall cause others to do them. But he calls him “the son of perdition,” because he is also to be destroyed. But who is he? Is it then Satan? By no means; but some man, that admits his fully working in him. For he is a man. “And exalteth himself against all that is called God or is worshiped.” For he will not introduce idolatry, but will be a kind of opponent to God; he will abolish all the gods, and will order men to worship him instead of God, and he will be seated in the temple of God, not that in Jerusalem only, but also in every Church. “Setting himself forth,” he says; he does not say, saying it, but endeavoring to show it. For he will perform great works, and will show wonderful signs.”

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON THESSALONIANS, HOMILY IV, page 388-389**, he says, ““One may naturally enquire, what is that which withholdeth, and after that would know, why Paul expresses it so obscurely. What then is it that withholdeth, that is, hindereth him from being revealed? Some indeed say, the grace of the Spirit, but others the Roman empire, to whom I most of all accede. Wherefore? Because if he meant to say the Spirit, he would not have spoken obscurely, but plainly, that even now the grace of the Spirit, that is the gifts, withhold him. And otherwise he ought now to have come, if he was about to come when the gifts ceased; for they have long since ceased.”

And he says, “So indeed he also says here. “Only there is one that restraineth now, until he be taken out of the way,” that is, when the Roman empire is taken out of the way, then he shall come.”

However, it is the presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church that is restraining. When the Church is raptured, the presence of the Holy Spirit will be taken up with the Church.

And he says, “For as the kingdoms before this were destroyed, for example, that of the Medes by the Babylonians, that of the Babylonians by the Persians, that of the Persians by the Macedonians, that of the Macedonians by the Romans: so will this also be by the Antichrist, and he by Christ, and it will no longer withhold. And these things Daniel delivered to us with great clearness.”

And he says, “And then,” he says, “shall be revealed the lawless one.” And what after this? The consolation is at hand. “Whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of His mouth, and bring to nought by the manifestation of His coming, even he whose coming is according to the working of Satan.”

And he says, “But we have seen signs, you say. But many and great signs were also wrought in the case of Christ; much more therefore ought ye to have believed in Him. And yet many things were predicted concerning this one, that he is the lawless one, that he is the son of

perdition, that his coming is after the working of Satan. But the contrary concerning the other, that He is the Saviour, that He brings with Him unnumbered blessings.”

Chrysostom agrees with the Scriptures about the Antichrist, although he misunderstood what is restraining.

# Future Events

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON HEBREWS, HOMILY XXI, page 463**, he says, “Let us then say this to the slothful: Doubtless there will be punishment; doubtless He will come, henceforth the events of the Resurrection are even at the doors.”

And he says, “He said that “when the Gospel should have been preached among all the nations, then the end shall come” (Matt. xxiv. 14);”

He refers to **Matthew 24 (KJV):14** And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

He continues, “lo! now ye have arrived at the end: for the greater part of the world hath been preached to, therefore the end is now at hand. Let us tremble, beloved.”

Chrysostom had no idea how big the world is.

And he says, “Christ foretold many things. If those former things did not come to pass, then do not believe them; but if they all came to pass, why doubt concerning those that remain? And indeed, it were very unreasonable, nothing having come to pass, to believe the one, or when all has come to pass, to disbelieve the others.

But I will make the matter more plain by an example. Christ said, that Jerusalem should be taken, and should be so taken as no city ever was before, and that it should never be raised up: and in fact this prediction came to pass. He said, that there should be “great tribulation” (Matt. xxiv. 21), and it came to pass.”

But Jesus did not say that Jerusalem “should never be raised up”, but that there would be wrath upon the Jews until “the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled”. Then the Church will be raptured, and the tribulation will begin. This will fulfill Daniel’s prophecy of the 70<sup>th</sup> week in Daniel 9:24-27. Chrysostom did not understand the timetable of events of the second coming of Christ. And the “great tribulation” has not come to pass yet, for it shall be as in **Daniel 12 (KJV):1** “At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands *watch* over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, *Even* to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, Every one who is found written in the book.