

IN GENERAL ABOUT
THE CLOSE OF THE AGE,
THE ANTICHRIST
AND THE 2ND COMING OF CHRIST

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The Revelation of the Evangelist Saint John the theologian is the last godly inspired book of the New Testament. It was written on Patmos in 95 A.D. and comprises 22 Chapters, which refer to prophecies which are mainly ecclesiastical, political and about wars. What people could not even think about one hundred years ago, [e.g., the possibility of nuclear wars] the Book of Revelations foretold nearly 1,900 years ago.

The aim of the book of the Revelation is the spiritual strengthening of the believers in the persecutions, and the avoidance of the deception of the various false prophets; especially at the age of the Antichrist, when the state of the Church will be critical and chaotic, with natural upheavals in the earth, the sea and the sky. All these things will help the unsealed evil people to repent, and - from among the believers - the good to become better. Sin has such power that it not only pollutes people who committed it, but also the natural world ~ the trees, the waters, the sea, the air... etc.

The cause of the evil, for the Antichrist's power to be imposed, will be **"our own transgressions and illnesses"**, as saint Gregory the Theologian says. The more we approach in time toward the end of unrepentant humanity, the more abundant light is cast on very many points which are difficult to interpret; and the dramatic and worldwide events will triumphantly

proclaim about the truths of the Holy Scripture as regards to the end of the world.

It is time for the godly inspired book of the Revelation of the Evangelist John the Theologian to be studied by all faithful Christians, in order to avoid the dreadful traps which the instruments of the Antichrist are craftily setting up.

The Holy Spirit Himself urges us to do this through the godly-wise Evangelist, John, not only to hear and read; but also to keep the godly inspired words it teaches us, telling us. **"Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy and keep what is written in them. For the time is near" (Rev. 1:3).**

The word of God is always useful to us, especially during these last wicked times; when, because of our many and great sins, the all-seeing God will allow the just punishment of unrepentant humanity with a multitude of great afflictions.

The signs of the times shout to us that we are living in apocalyptic times, and the things which the Holy Spirit has prophesied about our days are being fulfilled. Our general apostasy bears witness to the worldly and satanic train of thought - contrary to God's will - which imbues us.

We will subsequently mention only a few of the passages of the New Testament which deal with the end of the world, the Antichrist and the 2nd Coming of our Christ for our related notification.

In the Gospel according to Matthew we read: **"Now if one of you says, behold Christ is here do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets shall arise and will give great signs and wonders, so as to deceive, if possible, even the chosen. Behold I have foretold you."**

In other words, Christ is telling us when the Antichrist comes there will be many false christs and false prophets, who will deceive people - even the righteous ones, if they are not careful - with demonic phantasies. Therefore, since He has forewarned us of this, we have no excuse.

In Matthew 16:27 we read: **"The son of man will come in the glory of His Father, and then He will pay back to each one according to his deed."**

In Mark, 13:32 we read: **"Concerning that day or that hour no one knows, not even the Angels in heaven, nor the Son, except the Father. Take heed, be vigilant and pray. For you do not know when the time is..."**

These things the Lord commands to all of us. We ought not only to be vigilant, but to pray also. For our own benefit the Lord hid both our end and the end of the world, so that we are always ready.

In Luke 21: 25-28 the following is written: **"And there will be signs in the sun and the sky and the stars, and upon the earth the distress among the nations with perplexity, the seas and waves roaring. Men's hearts will fail them for fear, and the expectation of what is to come upon the universe; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming on a cloud with great power and glory. When these things begin to happen look up and raise up your heads, because your deliverance is approaching..."**

Here the Lord prophesies that the heavenly powers will be shaken, and then everyone, both believers and non believers, will see the Son of Man, i.e. our Lord Jesus Christ, coming as God in the clouds, with great power and glory, with the Precious Cross preceding, which will shine more brilliantly than the sun; and He will be known by everyone.

For this reason, our Lord tells us. When these things are happening, lift up your heads, you who are heavy laden with

corruption, because your deliverance, i.e., complete freedom of soul and body, has arrived.

In the same chapter, vss 34-36, of the Gospel Luke, the following awakening things are written, **"But take heed to yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a snare; for it will come upon all who dwell upon the face of the whole earth. But watch at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."**

Here our Lord urges us to a life of prayer and watchfulness, as an antidote to the hardships which will find sinners. Because whoever is careful in doing good work, and doesn't find rest in worldly things, to them that day will not be like a trap, but like a day of celebration. For this reason, it is necessary for us to keep vigil and to pray to God; not only to avoid all the evils which will come to us, but also that we may be granted the eternal goods.

In the 2nd epistle to the Thessalonians, the Apostle Paul writes the following words worthy of attention: **"Let no one deceive you in any way; for that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you this? And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, and the Lord Jesus will slay him with the breath of His mouth and destroy him by His appearing and His coming. The coming of the lawless one by the activity of Satan**

will be with all power and with pretended signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are to perish, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. Therefore God sends upon them a strong delusion, to make them believe what is false, so that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

Brief explanation. Let no one, the Apostle Paul tells us, deceive you in a certain way, because the Coming of the Lord will not happen, if the apostasy doesn't happen first, i.e., the Antichrist, who will lead many to apostasy, even the elect. He named the Antichrist also a man of sin and a son of perdition, because not only will he do every sin and will be lost; but he will also bring down into sin the others as well, to send them to perdition.

The Antichrist will strive to annihilate every image, even of God also, and only himself will he preach as God. He will sit not only in the distinct Temple of God in Jerusalem, but also in every Temple of God he will sit. He will strive to prove himself as God. 'Don't you (St. Paul is saying) recall that I was telling you these things when we were together?*' The Antichrist will reveal himself in his own time. He left unknown the time in which he would come. However, in a hidden way and with unclarity, he spoke of Nero, who is not much lower in evil than the Antichrist. When the kingdom is dissolved, then the Antichrist will attempt to grab the authority of men and the authority of God. The Lord will annihilate the Antichrist with His breath, with merely His command. He will make him completely useless, because merely with His appearance, Christ will put an end to the Antichrist's deception and delusion. The Antichrist will be a person who will have Satan acting in him and through him. He will do signs and false wonders and will bring into deception those who pay attention to him. He will seem dread-

ful from every side - from authority, beastliness and inhumanity-and will make all his work to deceive and treat people unjustly « preventing and harming their salvation. However, the Antichrist does not have power over the believers and the elect; but on the unbelievers and those who are lost.

The presence of this iniquitous person will happen according to Satan's energy, with every power and with signs and strange, false and deceptive occurrences; and with every type of unjust deception between those who are destined for perdition, because they refused to accept the love for truth in order to be saved. And for this reason God will allow the energy of the devil to come upon them, deceiving them into believing the falsehood; so that all those who did not believe the truth will be condemned, having given their preference to injustice.

* * *

In the 1st Epistle of the Apostle Peter we read:

"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God that in due time he may exalt you. Cast all your anxieties on him, for he cares about you. Be sober, be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith."(5:6-9)

Here the Apostle Peter urges us to humble ourselves beneath the strong hand of God, so that he can lift us up in the appropriate time ~ urging us to not be concerned for earthly things, but to throw the care of our lives onto God, Who is our provider.

Because the devil usually dominates those who are not careful, but who live with negligence, the Apostle urges us to pay attention to our intellect and to have a vigilant spirit in the virtues and commandments of the Lord; because our enemy the

devil walks like an angry and wild lion and seeks whom to find careless in wicked thoughts to tear him down into the act of sin and thus he swallows him — throwing him into despair. For this reason St. Peter urges us to not cower, but to resist with firmness and unhesitating faith in God; because by doing this, we will make useless all the fiery darts of the devil. And let us not forget the Lord's saying: **"for apart from me you can do nothing."** (John 15:5) as well as Isaiah's saying earlier **"there is no one saving except for me"** (43:11).

In the 2nd epistle of the Apostle Peter we read the following dreadful things: **"But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and the works that are upon it will be burned up. Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of persons ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be kindled and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire! But according to His promise we wait for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, since you wait for these, be zealous to be found by Him without spot or blemish, and at peace And count the forbearance of our Lord as salvation...."** (3:10-15)

Here the Apostle Peter reveals the unknown and un hoped for coming of the Lord, and that we ought to always be careful, vigilant and prepared with repentance to await the Lord. Because then - during the second coming of Christ, with a dreadful sound - the heavens will be altered and will receive the renewal for the better. This alteration for the better of heaven, Isaiah also prophesies as follows: **"All the host of heaven shall rot away, and the skies roll up like a scroll. All their host shall fall, as leaves fall from the vine, like leaves falling from**

ful from every side - from authority, beastliness and inhumanity-and will make all his work to deceive and treat people unjustly ~ preventing and harming their salvation. However, the Antichrist does not have power over the believers and the elect; but on the unbelievers and those who are lost.

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the fig tree." (34:4) About the alteration of the sky and the stars the Lord foretold the following: **"Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken..."** (Matt. 24:29).

In other words, the whole material world will become, Saint Nikodemos the Haghiorite tells us, a stove fired up well and a furnace from earth to the sky in which the skies, the elements, the plants, the irrational animals and sinful people will be burned up. All the material elements through this burning will be renewed. Although the sins of sinners will be burned up, they will be eternally punished.

First the renewal of people will occur through the resurrection, and then the whole creation will be renewed.

Because dreadful and fearsome things will occur, what life therefore should we lead? Of course a holy, pious, god-loving and virtuous life. And because we await the dreadful coming of the Lord, we should reach that great day of the recompense of the works uncondemned.

Because insufferable punishments await the impious, as well as inexpressible goods for the pious, let us show eagerness so that we are not polluted with sins; but let us be preserved pure with the general continence of all the senses.

* * *

Prior to the 2nd Coming of Christ to the world, according to the Holy Scripture and the Fathers of the Orthodox Church, the Antichrist will precede — a most impious man activated by Satan. Saint Cyril of Jerusalem informs us that the Antichrist **"is coming... when the close of the world is approaching"**, that he will reveal all his murderous disposition against the Church, and **"against all (people) especially against us Christians"**.

According to Saint John Chrysostom, the Antichrist will be a person accepting all the energy of Satan. **"What will he not work then? He will move all, he will disturb all..., for he will work a million things and prepare others to work hardships"** (P.G. 62,482). **"When the Antichrist becomes prevailing,"** says the sacred Chrysostom, **"he will persecute the Church of God and reveal his wickedness..."**

Among many other things, Saint Cyril of Jerusalem makes known to us the following also about the Antichrist: **Daring such things for only 3 & 1/2 years, he will then be abolished by the second glorious coming from the heavens of the only begotten Son of God, of our true Lord and Savior Christ Who, defeating the Antichrist with the breath of His mouth, will hand him over to the fire of Gehenna"** (Catech. 15, Chapter 12).

Hate amongst brothers, according to Saint Cyril of Jerusalem, will give ground to the Antichrist; because the Devil prepares the schisms of peoples, so that he who is coming can become acceptable. St. Cyril places above all martyrs, those who at the time of the Antichrist - will witness with piety for the name of Christ; because the former struggled only with people, whereas the martyrs of the Antichrist's time will fight with Satan himself in person.

The temptation to define the time of the events of the revelations is limited by the terms of Saint Irenaeus, who says: **"It is safer and less dangerous, to await the outcome of the prophecy, rather than to ponder and guess at the name"** (Contra Hares. 30:3), and elsewhere he tells us: **"Every prophecy before being fulfilled is an enigma and something irrational to people. When, however, the time comes and that which has been prophesied is realized, then it achieves the most precise explanation."** While Saint Andrew of Caesarea says: **"Time and experience will reveal to those who are vigilant."**

The Antichrist will precede the 2nd Coming of Christ. He will preach on earth a worldwide persecution against the faithful, and for this reason great attention and spiritual wakefulness is demanded; so that we not be deceived in any way, as the Apostle Paul proclaims to the Thessalonians.

The Antichrist will be a natural person, who will place himself against the God-man Christ, His teaching and His Orthodox Church. Antichrist means he who is coming instead of Christ and is opposed to Christ. He is essentially the opponent, according to the Apostle Paul, of Christ and His world saving work.

The Evangelist John tells us (1 John 2:22) "**This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son.**" While Saint John Damascene assures us, that "**he who does not confess the Son of God having come in the flesh and that he is perfect God and has become a perfect man, after being God, is antichrist**" (P.G. 94, 1216). Whoever, that is, rejects the incarnation of Christ is antichrist. Whoever again are enemies of Christ's Faith, opponents of the Gospel of the Lord, are antichrists. There existed many forerunners of the Antichrist in the past, but also very many who are working today in his own plans, as are the heresies, sorceries, Zionism and many international political and financial organizations.

Additional signs of the last days will be: the appearance of many false prophets; the increase of destructive wars; hunger; dreadful and mortal illnesses; earthquakes in places; and the scandals of lay people and clergymen. Saint Cyril of Jerusalem writes in relation: "**Bishops against bishops and clergymen against clergymen and peoples against peoples unto blood**". The Holy father urges us not to pay attention to those things which are happening, but to those which have been written; nor should the per chance evil conduct of the clergy be a cause, for our own perdition.

Another eschatological sin is the lessening of love and the

increase of hating brothers before the coming of the Antichrist "**And because wickedness is multiplied, most men's love will grow cold**", as the Evangelist Matthew mentions in chapter 24 verse 12.

Another sign is the preaching of the Gospel to all the world, independently of whether the people believe or not: "**And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, as a testimony to all nations; and then the end will come.**" (Mat. 24:14).

The planned superinflation will aid in the nations being subjected to the electronic money system. All exchanges and buying/selling will occur through the electronic means of exchanging values, and will be conducted with the "mark": "**Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead, so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name. This calls for wisdom: let him who has understanding reckon the number of the beast, for it is a human number, its number is six hundred and sixty-six.**" (Revelation 13:16-18).

The Antichrist's coming is being prepared by his forerunners, who with impious and sinful works will lead humanity to great apostasy and uselessness; and to idolatry, in order to accept the Antichrist. They will pursue the joining of the currents of politics, of economy and of religion with the aim of the creation of a worldwide state with a worldwide Governor-Dictator, and a pan-religion with the Antichrist as God.

The heresies, many satanic organizations, as well as the atheistic material systems are forerunners of the Antichrist; which cause confusion, disbelief in Christ's Church, and lead unsupported people to perdition. With all these things they strive to wound Orthodoxy, in order to work unbattered for Satan and his ungodly instruments. The most effective manner of facing

the forerunners of the Antichrist, and of the Antichrist himself, are to know Christ and place Him correctly inside us with such intensity, that we will love Him first and above all; so that, henceforth, it is not possible for anything to separate us from Him.

The par excellence Antichrist will be him whom God will allow to appear to the world a little prior to the 2nd Coming of Christ **"he who is coming during the close of the world"**, according to St. John Damascene, **"to fight the Church of Christ and the faithful disciples of Christ"**. He will perform in a word whatever Satan dictates to him, as if Satan is acting in person through him. He will be the person through whom Satan will act.

God will allow the Antichrist to come for the unbelieving, the Jews and the believers. According to Saint John Chrysostom he will not be powerful on the believers, but on all those who follow the road of perdition, as well as unrepentant believers.

Saint Ephraim the Syrian tells us in relation, that **"by the allowance of Holy God, he (the Antichrist) will receive authority to deceive the world; because the impiety of the world has multiplied and everywhere he works hardships"**

Let us forbear, beloved, the satanic violence with bravery in our wicked days, to avoid the Antichrist's deception.

Saint Cyril of Jerusalem stresses to us: **"So man, guard please your own self. You now have all the signs to know before hand of the Antichrist. And do not just think about it, but also tell them and inform the others, as many more as you can."**

"While the Son of God", according to Athanasios the Great, **"coming will destroy him"** (BEPES 35, 150).

So, while we don't know the precise year of the coming of the Antichrist, we know from the Holy Scriptures and the God-bearing fathers quite a few things about his dark person and his actions.

In our wicked generation many international organizations work for the more general plan of people being governed by the Antichrist. The complete giving over of people to the demon is being pursued by the dark powers. So let us be wakeful, because faith is a delicate thing and we should not deny it either with words or actions; so that we not lose the Grace of Holy Baptism.

We are called to pay attention, because whoever accepts the mark denies holy Baptism, the faith of Christ; and he can no longer repent. For this reason, a careful Christian life is demanded and great attention; so that we never accept the deceiver Antichrist as true. It is necessary that we be in a state of repentance and spiritual readiness. And we must not forget such sacred words of our Lord as: **"Now the Kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and men of violence take it by force."** (Mat. 11:12); and **"Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming."** (Mat. 5:13). The Lord will come again suddenly to judge the world as we also say in the Symbol of Faith: **"And He will come again with glory to judge the living and the dead, Whose kingdom shall have no end...."**

The Lord will come as the flood of Noah, that is, suddenly: **"As were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man."** (Mat. 24:37) Like the thief: **"But the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night"** (2 Peter 3:10). Like lightning! **"For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man."** (Mat. 24:27) That is, it will be felt like lightning, and will be seen all over the earth and to all people.

The Lord will come again on earth with the same manner that He left. The angels Who were present with the disciples of the Lord in His Ascension assured this: **"This Jesus, Who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven."** (Acts 1:11). Till then, let us cul-

tivate inside us this sweet expectation ~ with worthy works of repentance and virtue, love and holiness.

In chapter 24, verse 30 of the Evangelist Matthew we read: **"Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man (the precious Cross) in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory".**

While in the first chapter of Revelation verse 7 is written. **"Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, every one who pierced Him; and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of Him."**

Christ will not leave His faithful people, so long as we walk the path of the Saints of our Church: To live with the fear of God, with humility, with prayer, with charity, with repentance, with patience, with love. Let us walk the path of truth, of light, of grace, of sanctification, studying the Holy Scripture, patristic works, the lives of our Saints, partaking worthily in the sacramental life of our Church; and the philanthropic and soul-saving Lord will not leave us helpless. Our Lord assured us of this with the following consoling words of His: **"And lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age."** (Mat. 28:20).

We are called completely to entrust ourselves to God, to strive to serve the truth, to do that which pleases God; and to never forget, neither God's Judgment nor the Recompense. Then, and only then, the peace of God and His divine protection will accompany us and guard us always.



Saint Ephraim the Syrian, 306-373

Concerning the Antichrist

- "... **If** someone ends up showing a little indifference, he is easily sieged and imprisoned by the miracles of the wicked and sly Dragon. Such a person will appear unforgivable in the judgment. Because with his own eyes he believed willfully in the tyrant...

- "... Be careful, brethren, of the haughtiness of the beast and the wicked crafts, because he begins from the belly. So that when someone ends up in difficulty deprived of food, he will be forced to accept the mark of him. In order that a person not have difficulty in accepting the mark, the wretched one does not carve it on all parts of the body; but on the right hand of man, so that a person will not have the power to form the symbol of Christ [i.e., the Cross]. Similarly on the forehead he also carves the impious mark, (Rev. 13:26). If someone does not accept the mark of him, he is not imprisoned by the fantastic wonders. Nor also does the Lord depart from such a person, but he illumines his heart and draws him near Him. If we keep with sincerity the firm faith of Christ, we will easily scatter the power of the Enemy, we will obtain an unshakable and pious thought; and the weak Enemy will depart from us, because he will not have the power to do something.

- "... Dreadful, my brethren, is the struggle in all Christ loving people so that till the time of death they not cower, nor

be negligent, when the Dragon (the Antichrist) will be carving his seal instead of the Cross of the Savior. Because he will use every manner so that the name of our Lord and Savior is not mentioned at his time.

"His coming will become manifest to those who have their mind attached to things above. To those, however, who have their mind in earthly cares and long for earthly things, this will not become manifest."

* * *

Saint Kosmas Aitolos

- "... As at the time of Noah people did not believe but were mocking, until suddenly the wrath of God and the flood came and it drowned all the people. Likewise now also, my Christians, at the Second Coming of our Christ people will not believe... The words I tell you are not mine, they are words of the All-Holy Spirit ... and whoever wants, let him believe. Nevertheless, each one is free and will do as he wants. I am doing my obligation..."

- "Prior to the 2nd Coming, the Antichrist will be born and will do so many evils in the world, and will name himself the son of God and will stand as a king to order the whole world and to do miracles, according to fantasy, to deceive people to confess him as Christ; and whoever believes in him he will promise goods, and afterwards he will mark them on the forehead ... and it is better that they are tyrannized and be killed rather than to believe him and be marked..."

"I believe these things, my brethren, startled you ... and I who tell them tremble and cower; but what can I do in that I have the obligation to reveal them to you? ... After these evils of the accursed Antichrist, the All-holy Cross will shine above in the sky..."



Are we in the age of the Antichrist?

All the things, beloved, that we see the governments - which are controlled and directed by other centers - impose, lead to the fact that soon everything and everyone will be placed in a worldwide super-government. There will be a worldwide electronic network in which various information and facts will be exchanged; and, in addition, the production of foods and currencies will be under the direct control of this global authority. With crafty and very complicated systems and machines they will oppress the peoples. The key of the new financial order of things will be, unfortunately, the mark 666 on the right hand or on the forehead.

We are already in the age of the marking of the Antichrist. The forerunners, with knowledge and ignorance and servants of the Antichrist, will first strive for the loss of people's financial freedom and, subsequently, their personal freedom.

Satan, the relentless enemy of people, for centuries now is ceaselessly working, with his instruments, for the departure of people from the "in spirit and truth" worship and veneration of the Trinitarian God; and, finally, to succeed in the Antichrist being easily accepted.

Here, beloved, we must underline that the dark and satanic aims of the devil are being fulfilled on account of the fact that we are living in sin and unrepentance. If we are living without fervent faith, without good disposition, without piety and virtue, then he entraps us and gains us.

For our offensive unrepentance and disbelief, God will allow harsh chastising visitations to humanity - such as wars, illnesses, earthquakes and other things - for our repentance and return. Our great apostasy - the secular train of thought with which we are living and our unrepentance - will lead to our being harshly tried, and undergoing years of great crises.

"Behind the secular spirit," the blessed Fr. Paisios the Haghiorite used to say, of today's 'freedom' **"...is hidden the spiritual slavery, the anxiety and the anarchy which lead the world to the impasse - to destruction of soul and body"**.

The people will seek prosperity from the Antichrist which will be contrary to the Cross. God, however, gives salvation through Christ.



Archim. Eusebius Vitas

Concerning the Antichrist and his symbol, 666

(Excerpt from his homily)

Many of our brethren, of a good disposition in other things, don't know anything - or know very little and confused things - about the 666 and the marking. So once we ourselves first are sufficiently enlightened, we ought to enlighten others as well. Fortunately, there exist today magazmes and cassettes and other related means...

* * *

We ourselves should know also, and tell others as well, that: whether the name of the Antichrist is written on the marking or his number 666, it is the same thing. Revelations says it clearly: **"he who has the mark, the name of the beast or the number of his name."** Consequently there exists no difference between the name and the number.

* * *

The mark on us with the number of the beast will have dreadful consequences for our spiritual hypostasis and life. It will make inert - or rather, will cause to depart from us - the grace and blessing of God. It will make the Holy Baptism useless, since we will go again with satan, whom we denied when we were baptized. We will lose within us the life-giving influence of the Holy Chrism, the gifts of the All-Holy Spirit, which makes our existence a whole Temple of the living God. Christ

and satan cannot coexist in us. We must digest this well... (2 Cor. 6, 14-18).

... Our criterion should not be the names and the external validity of the people, but the criterion must be what our Church says and teaches — what the Tradition and the spirit of Orthodoxy indicates to us...

... Do not let the external characteristics of him who says something impress you. Only accept what he says if it is in accordance with the tradition of our Church, ~ if it agrees with whatever our Holy Fathers taught us, and with whatever contemporary venerable personalities teach us...

* * *

The voice of the Church is clear

The more we pay attention to people of the world, we will not listen to the voice of the Church, but even if we listen to it, we will not understand it. And consequently we will be in deception. And, nevertheless, the voice also about the matter of the 666 is clear: "**And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, 'If any one worships the beast and its image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he also shall drink the wine of God's wrath, poured unmixed into the cup of His anger, and he shall be tormented with Are and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up for ever and ever; and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name.'**" (Rev.14:9-11).

The mark is one of the most blasphemous manifestations on the icon of Christ, which we have inside us (As many of you as were baptized in Christ have put on Christ, don't we chant?). Is there a more disgusting and filthy curse against Christ than to

allow the most haughty Antichrist to put his seal on His own photograph? And would we allow the enemy to completely slander the Lord of love as well as to say triumphantly that he smudged - even in our own case - the image of his opponent - of Christ? And is not the mark the confession of faith in the devil and in his par excellence instrument, the Antichrist, with a simultaneous denial of Christ? If the Christians don't understand this, then they have suffered a complete insensitivity and have fallen from their Christian quality. These people are not Christians, even if they light up candles as tall as their height and they run to Monasteries and to celebrations of Saints.

* * *

Whoever accepts the mark of Antichrist is cut off from God

Whoever accepts this hated number "denies Christ", that is, he leaves from Christ's group and is "attached to satan", — he goes with the devil. Him whom he rejected during his baptism, with him again he goes. We aren't saying this out of fanaticism, but the Scripture itself. Now if some people want to consider whatever the Scripture says as being fanaticism, etc., let them do so. **We will listen to the Scripture and not to them.** For our salvation, Christ was sacrificed — not them. They don't give a dime for us. Christ gave Himself completely for us. And Him we prefer and no one else. For us, whatever the Scripture says is from God. Will we place people - no matter who they are, no matter how important and grand they are - at the same level with God? They are very deceived. Both the Scripture and the Revelation says. "**So the first angel went and poured his bowl on the earth, and foul and evil sores came upon the men who bore the mark of the beast and worshipped its image.**" (Rev.16:2).

He tells us, clearly and without beating around the bush that whoever accepts the mark is cut off from God, becomes bound by satan, and is subjected to the same consequences which will be measured out upon those practicing impiety and this most audacious revolt against God. And it stresses that the financial benefits, which the mark will supposedly gain for them who will accept it, will cause against them the wrath of God, not only in eternity - in which they, of course, don't believe - but also in this life, whether they believe it or not. And when the wrath breaks out, and the vial is poured out upon them, neither the financial gains nor anything else will benefit them; nor will the mark (if in the end the mark gives them anything) benefit them.

* * *

One is the language of truth

Whoever says with a light conscience that they accept the 666 without denying Christ, they can't see the correct thing; they don't have the delicate virtue of discretion to estimate what is God's will and what is the devil's will — what is denial and what isn't denial of Christ. And so they are ready to accept the mark with the same ease in which they will go to their barber, or to the store to shop for whatever they need.

* * *

The holy martyrs knew one language, the language of truth, and this is what they always used. Their yes was yes and their no, no. They did not know the yes which meant no and the no which meant yes. Double talk is not a suitable plant for Christian ground. Either you believe in Christ and confess him courageously, being indifferent for the consequences, or you deny him... But why do we forget the words of the Lord? **"So every one who acknowledges Me before men, I also will acknowledge before My Father Who is in heaven; but whoever**

denies Me before men, I also will deny before My Father Who is in heaven. (Mat. 10:32).

"If God is with us, who is against us?"

No matter whatever satan does and his beast, we Christians won't worship it. If we wish to remain indelibly written in God's book of life, as we are through Holy Baptism and Holy Chrism, let us not cower from any threats of the tyrant. If we align our life in accordance with the will of the Lord, and if we keep constantly our association with the Lord, no one will be able to defeat us even if it is necessary for us to go through martyrdom. This will be the unique honor for us. In the struggle which satan undertook through the ages against Christ, and that which he will undertake especially with his instrument the Antichrist, we should know that Christ will be the victor. And this, in many places and many ways, the Sacred Revelations stresses to us. So have courage and optimism, my beloved brethren. And **"this is the victory which overcame the world, our faith,"** says Saint John in his epistle (1 John 5:4), so long as we remain faithful to the Lord **"as having been born of God."**

"Do not trust in rulers, on the sons of men, in whom there is no salvation" (Psalm 145:3)

"My help is from the Lord who created the Heaven and the earth." (Psalm 120: 2)



AWAKENING AND STRENGTHENING SAYINGS

(A) of Fr. Paisios the Haghiorite

- Today, since the state goes against the divine law..., whoever doesn't speak, should be closed up in jail. Today this occupation is a confession.

- When everything is burning up around you, pain won't allow you to be silent. Prayer is prayer and speech is speech.

- God loves Greece. Since we weren't lost in so many past storms, we won't be lost in the present sea storm. The people have hidden strength for times of need.

- God allows and concedes for our sins. Let us not sleep, however, and let us be ready. *Silence some times bears great responsibility.* If we don't shout, our fathers will get up from their tombs and will thrash us and curse us. They forbore so many things for the homeland and us. What are we doing for her: Orthodox Greece, with her traditions her saints and heroes to be fought by the Greeks themselves? It is a shame.

- No matter what is voted, it cannot abolish God's law and calm down the conscience.

- ... Behind the E.O.K. (European Common Market) is hidden the dictatorship of those Satanists. But God will utilize it for the good...

- ... *Such a dictatorship that they are thinking of doing, only the devil could have thought up.*

In relation to the above the blessed Fr. Paisios in the manuscript texts, "Signs of the times", wrote the following also in 1987:

"I wonder! Don't all the events problematize them? Why don't they put even one question mark about the interpretations of their own mind. And if they assist the antichrist for the marking, how do they sway other souls to perdition as well? This is what '...to deceive, if possible even the elect' (Mark 13:22) means. **Those who interpret them with the mind will be deceived.**

And although the signs show very clearly, 'the beast' in Brussels with the 666 has almost swallowed up all the nations in the computer. The card, 'the identification card', 'the introduction of the marking' what do they reveal? Unfortunately on the radio we only follow what weather we will have..." and the venerable Elder finishes with the following: "Consequently, the devil, the antichrist, when he is on our identification card, or on our hand, or on our head, with his symbol, cannot be sanctified by us putting a Cross there also. We have the power of the Precious Cross, of the Holy Symbol, the divine Grace of Christ, only when we suffice with the Holy Sealing of Baptism, where we deny satan and go on the same side as Christ, and we receive the Holy Seal: "The Seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit."

May Christ give us good enlightenment. Amen.

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(B) of Fr. Epiphanius Theodoropoulos

The ever-memorable wise and virtuous Archim. Epiphanius Theodoropoulos wrote the following, referring to the identification cards, **"as offending our religious sensitivity with the use of a suspect and accusable number, they are absolutely unacceptable. WE WILL NOT ACCEPT THEM!"**.

The Christians are the most law-abiding of people, when the Laws don't offend their religious convictions. When the contrary occurs, then **"it is better to be obedient to God rather than men"** (Acts 5:29), they enter into transgressing the law, being indifferent of the consequences then we will say and will live the, **"unto us it was given on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake"** (Phil. 1:29). Our faith has the Cross as its symbol and foundation!...

If what is spread about is true, and the new identification cards will bear, manifestly or unseen, either the figure of Beelzebub or the number 666 or whatsoever anti-Christian symbol, or even if they have only the E.K.A.M..., we will say NO and again NO and a million times NO, to these new cards, no matter what **we will face... "Let the King-Government hear these things,"**

* *

(C) of the Holy Mountain

The Sacred Community of the Holy Mountain setting out from the Pan-Haghioritic vigil in the Sacred Church of the Protaton at Karyes of the Holy Mountain on September 8, 1997 ABOUT THE TOPIC OF THE SHEGHEN AGREEMENT, among other things, said:

"... creates in us worries that the evil will become generalized, much more so since the implementation in our country of the Sheghen Agreement leads to the publication of electronic identification cards, which should be avoided. Under these conditions, that is, the inscription of the number of the ill-famed Antichrist on our personal identification cards, henceforth the boundaries of confession or denial of our Lord Jesus Christ begin to be prescribed.

"But even if in the beginning the inscription of the number - emblem of the Antichrist - is omitted on the electronic identi-

fication cards, we - in accordance to the decisions of the Sacred Community - refuse to receive them as denying subjection in the electronic "filing", which oppresses personal freedom, personal privacy and the proof of innocence of the citizen, which were absolutely guaranteed in the Constitution of our country till this day.

"... we refuse to receive any type of electronic identification card the with Universal Bar Code Registration (E.K.A.M.) as offending the freedom of the person and our Christian conscience."

* * *

(D) of the Metropolis of Stagon and Meteora

The Sacred Metropolis of Stagon and Meteora in reference to the Sheghen agreement and the electronic identification cards proclaimed the following also: "The inscription in these new identification cards of the number 666, the number of the 'beast' of the Revelation, proves precisely the association of this system of control with the immanent worldwide domination of the antichrist..."

We categorically refuse to receive the new electronic identification cards, whether they contain the number 666, or whatsoever other one, which will serve the same unfree plans of the Shegen Agreement.

The use of the number 666 on the new electronic identification cards comprises the last step before the marking on the hand or the forehead. For this reason, their reception by the Christians means the denial of Christ, a naturalization in the rank of Satan and spiritual death...We refuse their reception because these introduce us to an unfree regime, inhuman, dictatorial, antidemocratic and totalitarian. They bind us in an all-strong financial system of authority and control, and lead us

politically and spiritually imprisoned in the bonds of an electronic dictatorship."

* * *

Freedom is a great good

The precious good of freedom" is a God-given gift, and we should never sell it to the devil. Let us not forget that Christ, with His precious blood on the Cross, expiated us, granting us spiritual life and immortality. The Apostle Paul reminds us. **"You were bought for a price. Do not become the slaves of people"** (1 Cor. 7:23).

Our personal freedom, our free will, God does not circumvent; but He respects it. Today, however, the satanic powers, with guile and deception, are carving out the deprivation of the gift of freedom with the gradual imposing of a world wide super government; which is the world wide dictatorship of the Antichrist, with the seal of the mark and its number, 666. Our Lord and God, Who is blessed unto the ages, said with disappointment towards the disbelieving Jews, **"I came in the name of My Father, and you do not receive Me. If another comes in his own name, him you shall receive"** (John 5:43).

"But watch at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man." (Luke 21:36)

**"Lord Jesus Christ, Son and Word of God,
through the Theotokos and all the Saints,
have mercy on us."**

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It is time for us to deal seriously with Christ and to come to know well the wealth of our Orthodox faith -- to come to know our own selves, and to localize the various small antichrists which are near us and dwell inside us also... Doesn't the satanic television, which does brain washing, startle us? Don't the ungodly laws, the lewdnesses, the abortion-murders, the denuding of men and women, the blasphemies and so many other wretched things startle us? Don't the antichristian parareligions - like Buddhism, Yoga, white and black magic, satanism, New Age, and so many other deceptions which act unhampered - startle us? Don't the various heresies and the schisms startle us? Here our soul is in danger: We are ignorant of the majesty and the treasure of the faith of our Holy Fathers. We are in ignorance and spiritual numbness. We work in vanity and sinful desires, and remain unmoved. When will we wake up from the lethargy of sin, of the 'good life' and the worship of money — we who are governed by our passions and the secular train of thought, we who do the works of the devil, we who live like after-Christ-idolaters, we who are now in the evil one's net, and will be found, unfortunately, to also be eager followers of the awaited Antichrist?

Let us not forget that God has adopted and sealed us Orthodox through Holy Baptism and Chrism with the Holy Spirit. In his Epistle to the Ephesians 1:13 the Apostle Paul assures us "... **and have believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.**" That is, since you have believed in the preaching of the truth of the Gospel, you received in accordance with God's promises the seal of the Holy Spirit. The Antichrist will seal his own. Let us stay far from sin and the ungodly works, struggling to become people of God ~ people of faith and love, of humility and patience, of prayer and repentance. And the Almighty Lord will preserve us from every deception

and trap of every antichrist, because it is written: "**The Lord shall guard ail those who love Him**" (Psalm 144:20), and "**to those who love God all works for the good**" (Rom. 8:28).

Let us place, beloved, Christ as the beginning and foundation of our every virtue; and let us not fear anything aside from sin, because God is with us. Our God-man Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ, lives and reigns and protects us; so long as we also love Him as He loves us, and move in harmony with Him until our last breath. We are in God's hands, while the saints live among us and help us. And let us never forget the words of the Apostle Paul: "**Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and unto the ages**" (Heb. 13:17).

The Lord, the knower of hearts, admires sincere and dis-cretionate reactions against the Antichrist. We are all taking tests for our future enlistment. Let us remain faithful to our Christ with words and works, and may the Divine Grace cover us and strengthen us in those difficult days of the government of the world for three and one half years by the Antichrist.

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Signs of Christ and signs of the Antichrist

The signs of Christ will be true, while those of the Antichrist will be hallucinations. They will deceive the senses; they will increase deception and, as a result, perdition. With these signs he will sway humanity to accept the messenger of satan as God's messenger, and from the imaginary miracles which will deceive those who have a carnal train of thought.

Let us face the coming of the Antichrist with the following effective spiritual weapons and supplies:

1) **With a living faith.** Let us unite with Christ in one spirit, and then the signs of the Antichrist will never be able to draw our attention.

With scorning and indifference we must turn our gaze away from the signs of the Antichrist so that we are not deceived. Only a living faith shows God to the eyes of the soul.

2) **With humblemindedness.** The signs of the Antichrist will remain foreign to the humble person. He will have no relationship with them, nor will he dabble with something which is outside of God's will, or which the Lord's will has condemned. Humility is imitation of Christ, whereas pride is imitation of the devil.

3) **With prayer.** When the great affliction begins, in the age of the Antichrist, the true believers will seek help and strength from the Lord, that He hold them by the hand ~ strengthening them by empowering them with His divine grace. The divine grace will overshadow the elect of God and will make all the threats of the Antichrist to remain ineffective and without result. Then God will give strength to His servants. They will confess Christ with courage, as Savior of the world. They will denounce the false messiah Antichrist, and will face his martyrdoms with joy and even death itself.

Let us pray to God, because He is compassionate to His faithful servants.

4) **With spiritual readiness.** Our Lord pre-announced the affliction prior to His Second Coming. And the commandment He gave His disciples was: **"See, be wakeful and pray. For you do not know when the time is"** (Mark 13:33). We are constantly in need of attention and prayer, especially in dangers and afflictions, because they draw the help of God to us and take us out of impasses.

* * *

The correct knowledge of God and of His law, living faith, blessed humblemindedness, pure prayer, perfect love [all these] comprise the spiritual logic, whereas ignorance of God, disbelief, pride, self confidence, and self love comprise the carnal

train of thought. The carnal train of thought does not know God, nor does it understand the means with which God wishes to lead man to knowledge of God.

- Despite all the trials of the last days, humanity will be walking towards destruction; and people will live a completely carnal life and will strive, unfortunately, only for their sinful desires ~ like in the days of Noah.

- The righteous will struggle against sin and injustice, and the impious and unrighteous - with haughtiness - will be lewd and unjust ~ scorning the virtuous and pious people of God.

- We ought to always be ready even to die for our holy faith, and to become confessor martyrs of Orthodoxy.

In the 2nd chapter verse 10 of Revelations we read: **"Do not fear what you are about to suffer... Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life."**

We were born Orthodox Christians, we should remain Orthodox Christians, but we should also die as such. The martyrs of the faith, of more ancient and recent times, show the path of firm confession. Saint Ignatios the Godbearer used to say: **"It is better for me to die in Christ Jesus than to reign over the ends of the earth..."**

And the new-martyr Aggelis proclaimed to the Hagarenes: **"...Even if you would give me your Kingdom itself, you would not be able to sway my heart from my faith and from my most sweet Jesus"**.

We are called to become participants in the sufferings of Christ, and to be granted to also become partakers of His heavenly glory. In the arena of Orthodoxy, a harsh struggle is occurring between the confessors of the faith and the united powers of disbelief.

We are called, beloved, in the general flood of spiritual wretchedness: to remain in virtue throughout our life « elect of God; to face persecutions and afflictions with patience; to avoid

; deception of various false prophets and of the Antichrist; to be vigilant in good deeds and in the ceaseless preservation of virtues; to live daily the awaiting of the coming of Christ. The Lord in Revelations 16:15 foretells us: "**Behold I am coming as thief. Blessed is he who is vigilant and keeps his garments.**" The Lord urges us to practice spiritual watchfulness, and blesses him who is vigilant; and keeps pure the virtues, which are the things of his soul.

Saint Gregory the Theologian urges us: "**While we have not seen Christ, let us visit Christ, let us serve Christ, let us nourish Christ, let us clothe Christ, let us offer hospitality to Christ, let us honor Christ**".

Let us struggle, beloved, to live with the fear of God and to always keep His commandments — to become strong and glorious, and to remain unshaken, with our faith in Christ

- Christ will help His faithful servants, and will strengthen all who confess before people, and before the Antichrist of the last days. The faithful who will confess or will become martyrs for Christ will be granted the greatest honor of having the Lord confess them at the last day of Judgment before His Heavenly Father.

The faithful are given the opportunity to struggle and to receive the crown of life: "**To him who is victorious I will give him the right to sit with me in the throne of my Father.**"

The coming of the Antichrist will distinguish the real faithful from the unbelievers.

Let us love the Lord with our whole soul, so that He will become our defender and surround us with His mercy.

Let us remain firm in our Orthodox faith, living and with Orthodox action; and we will be blessed, because no one who stands in the Lord was ever put to shame.

And let us not forget that our Lord Jesus Christ is almighty and will not abandon His Church and His believers, but will

defend them, will protect them and will crush their enemies as clay pots. The Lord assured us. "**I will edify my church, and the gates of hades will not prevail against her**" (Math. 16:18), and elsewhere "**I am the Alpha and the Omega the first and the last, the beginning and the end**", (Rev. 22:13). And the Theologian continues, "**Blessed are those who fulfill his commandments, that they may have the right to the Tree of Life, and that they may enter the city by the gates. Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and fornicators and murderers and idolaters, and every one who loves and practices falsehood.**" (22:14-15).

"I shall love You, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my foundation and my refuge and my deliverer" (Psalm 17:1).

The Lord works everything for our advantage, and we - with faith and patience - undergo the days of our trials and afflictions, having our hope in God, undergoing our misfortunes with heartfelt prayer and thankful bravery until the divine grace and His philanthropy helps us, delivers and saves us. The prophet David tells us: "**He shall cry out to Me and I Shall hear him, I am with him in affliction, I shall deliver him...**" (Psalm 90:15). And elsewhere again. "**I was younger and became old and did not see a righteous one abandoned and his seed seeking bread**".

Unfortunately, from our chronic negligence: our heart became hardened; our spiritual sight became blinded; and all the senses of our soul lost their spiritual functioning. And to return to their normal functioning: an honor-loving attempt, fervent interest, return to God, repentance, confession, regular church attendance and Divine Communion are necessary. With a new spiritual life, with true humility, faith and love for God and His

image (i.e., man), together with the help of our Savior Jesus Christ and the intercessions of the Most Holy Theotokos and of all the Holy Fathers of our Orthodox Church, we will obtain the Kingdom of the heavens.

Whoever loves goodness and truth and has good spiritual hearing, hears the saving voice of Christ, which assures us: **"Whoever is of the truth hears My voice"** (John 18:37).

The Apostle James gives us the following spiritual recipe, with bright and eternal results: **"Submit ye therefore to God, resist the devil, and he shall flee from you. Approach God, and He will approach you..."** (James 4:7). We must be obedient to God's will, with the keeping of His commandments, to obtain our purification from the passions and our spiritual progress.

St. John Chrysostom teaches us, saying. **"And even if the enemies are innumerable, our own defender is stronger...An angelic army defends the pious, a group of prophets, the power of the Apostles, the intercessions of the Martyrs."**

Saint Chrysostom tells us that one thing is grievous, sin alone. All other things are dust and smoke, and if we love God we will be able to suffer all the unpleasant things with pleasure... Good disposition and hope for eternal rewards makes afflictions light.

We are, beloved, in God's hands, and nothing happens without His will. Let us entrust to God our every hope and He will provide for us. In psalm 54:23 we read: **"Cast upon the Lord your care and He will nourish you."** While in psalm 117, verse 11 **"circling they encircled me, and by the name of the Lord I staved them off"** is written.

Saint Theodosios the Great, to brothers of the Monastery who were distressed for their indigence, used to say: **"Did, perhaps, did He who nourished with manna the whole people in the wilderness - and fed such a multitude with five breads -**

become weaker in power or unnerved in granting today also?"

When, beloved, we possess God with the keeping of the commandments and the obtaining of virtues, then we have all of His things.

In the Gospel according to Matthew, the Lord urges us: **"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you"**, (5:33). One person has to be our refuge: God. Truly he who hopes in the God-man Christ will never fail. Sure hope is a gift of God, which sprouts on the ground of living faith and beautifies our life.

In the Acts of the Apostles, it is written: **"There is salvation in nothing else. Nor is there another name under heaven given to men, in which we should be saved"** (4:12).

So much is the power of Christ, that in His name alone angels, people, and demons will kneel, who will confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord and the only Deliverer of our souls and of our bodies.

The most shaking news of all ages is that God was manifested on the earth as man, taught the truth, did miracles, was crucified, resurrected, ascended, and will again come with glory. All the other things are small news. For this reason, the best preparation for the years that are coming is for us to become better Christians ~ to struggle to keep the door of our heart open to the mercy, enlightenment and grace of our Lord and God Jesus Christ.

Our main work here on earth is our salvation. All other things are secondary. Unfortunately, we are very difficult to move spiritually and eager in secular things. It is time for us to seriously decide to readjust our course with the sacred Gospel as the compass. We are called to obtain a genuine ecclesiastical train of thought, and to be conscientious members of the Church

of Christ. Our life must be crucified to the world, and we should not forget that two things in our life are unbreakably associated: Affliction and Grace. **"Through the grace of our Lord Jesus, we believe we will be saved."** But Grace presupposes the Cross: **"Through many afflictions it is necessary for us to enter into the kingdom of God."** And **"he who forbears unto the end, he will be saved."** If we suppose that our life here is seven days, we must, with patience, reach up to the last minute of the last day ~ implementing the Lord's will, day and night. Thus we will obtain heaven!

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Basil the Great relates the following didactic thing about the all-wise and philanthropic providence of God: *"/ heard from a certain sea person, that the urchin, that very small and easily scornable animal, forewarns the sailors about good weather or stormy weather. The urchin, when it pre-senses a storm, secures itself beneath a large rock; and, having the weight of the rock as an anchor, is not swayed by the waves... Who taught the urchin this tactic? There is nothing which God neglects, or for which He does not provide. He watches everything, offering to each one its salvation."*

"If God did not leave the urchin outside His loving care and attendance, your own life-what do you say? - won't He embrace it with the same loving care?"

* * *

The consoling message of St. Simon of the Holy Mountain

... These fervent problems forced me, after the Vespers at the Main Church of the Sacred Monastery of Simonos Petras to go to the cave of St. Simon to pray and for him to take me out

of the impasse. I did the prayer rope saying: **Tell us Saint Simon, what will happen to us with the Antichrist, the identification cards, the marking etc.?**

At night, when I was sleeping, I heard a loud voice: **"Tell the Christians not to fear the Antichrist, because the Lord will not allow him to thresh His flocks. The Lord will be with you also and you will see Him with your natural eyes"...**

I thanked Saint Simon the miracle-worker who very quickly solved my problem, while my joy was indescribable. Subsequently I chanted the **"I glorify You, O Lord"**, which I always chant, much more so when my humble prayer is fruit bearing.

* * *

I heard with my ears chanting of the then Holy Fathers of the Sacred Monastery and the sound writing of the Holy Spirit

Once I visited a small and simple little Monastery with a few souls. Once, when we venerated with awe the Saint of the Monastery and smelled the ineffable fragrance, the true God in Trinity - Who searches out kidneys and hearts - enlightened me, and I was telling them: **"Don't fear, my sisters, here in the wilderness where you are alone. You have day and night the protection of the ancient Holy Fathers who lived at the little Monastery and became victims of the Turkish beastliness,"** and I kept telling them this many times; so that the humble Abbess later revealed to me, in the hospitable guesthouse of the sacred Monastery, a mystery of the present age.

"You were right Father," the Abbess said, "that you were telling us that we are not alone," and she continued: "The holy Monastery had, when it was flourishing, many holy fathers. It was a men's monastery. However, an attack occurred from the

then bloodthirsty Turks, and they butchered around five hundred holy fathers. One year, some visitors gave us a cassette recorder. A nun asked permission to record in church the Orthros service, because we did not have a clergyman, and the blessing was given her. It was the 2nd Sunday of the Fast, at which time our Church honors Saint Gregory Palamas. The nun joyfully took the cassette recorder into the church, and taped the sacred service of the Orthros. Afterwards, we went to the guesthouse to take our breakfast. There we turned on the cassette recorder to hear how it taped the service. The cassette recorder began playing what was chanted by the sister nuns. When, however, it reached the odes, and while the nuns were chanting, a certain choir of the Holy Fathers could be heard chanting hymns from the pamphlet of the service for Gregory Palamas. They sang, "Saint of God intercede for us", so loud that the recorder began to shake. They also chanted four troparions from the 1st ode. What voice was that! What lads were they who passed by there!...

"When I heard it, I cried very much « asking my Lord and God to reveal in what chronology these lads lived and what venerable martyrdom they underwent. But it was not yet revealed to me..."

This historical event is a mystery because during the taping no other voice was heard except their own, and how did the tape record a sound which was not heard?

(An Orthodox Clergyman)

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And a few didactic examples

a) In the life of Saint Mark the Athenian it is mentioned that when, according to God's commandment, Abba Serapion visited St. Mark, he asked him:

"Now **tell me Abba, does the world still exist?**"

"It exists with your prayers holy Elder."

"Is there still faith in the world?"

"There is, by your holy prayers holy Elder."

"Is there faith of that which the Gospel talks about, to tell this mountain, leave, and for it to go to the sea?" However, as he was saying these words, with his hand he pointed to the mountain across, which began moving towards the sea. And then St. Mark tells the moving mountain: **"Hey! Be still, we are just discussing, I didn't command you to leave."**

"Is there such faith?"

* * *

• We know the symbol of our faith (i.e. the Creed) by heart. We have icons of saints. Yet in every difficulty we lose sight of this and run here and there — even to the doors of satan: the psychics, the mediums. We believe with words, but with works we are unbelieving. We name God, Father, and daily are fainthearted; and this happens to us because of weak faith.

What is Christ, some incapable poor thing? Absolute faith and trust in Christ is necessary, and then we will live under God's protective umbrella — a permanent miracle. On account of our egotism, our lewdness, our money loving, the world, the fashion and our lack of repentance, we chase away the grace of God ~ we suffer hardships and are deprived of the rich gifts of God.

If we want God to listen to us in petitions which are just and advantageous to our souls, we ought previously to listen to Him in the keeping of His commandments. When, in other words, we are working for God's holy will, with grateful love of honor and a good disposition, then He is obligated to provide the necessities to His humble faithful servants who love Him.

* * *

The first love to Christ

*"He who loves son or daughter more than Me,
is not worthy of me" (Math. 10:37)*

On January 9th St. Polyeuktos is celebrated. Listen to the last part of his life:

He was to become a martyr, under Decius, in 250 A.D. And the idolater Tyrant tells him:

"Either you deny Christ and sacrifice to the idols, or you will be butchered like an ox!"

And immediately at that moment, his wife falls at the Saint's feet and tells him:

"Oh, don't leave me alone, abandoned, unprotected, poor and a widow!"

And his little child was kissing him and tears were running down his cheeks...

And Saint Polyeufktos then told them:

"God alone, Who reads my heart knows how much I love both of you, but the first love belongs to Christ! I won't sacrifice to the idols. I am a Christian!"

And right away the idolaters beheaded him.

But, my Christian, *"the first love to Christ"* must have taken root and found an echo in our own heart as well. It is our own duty. Do you, perhaps, instead of Christ, love pleasures and enjoyments more? Maybe you struggle to obtain superfluous wealth? **"Christ and our soul we need"**, Saint Kosmas Aitolos used to say.

May, beloved, the All-holy Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, through the intercessions of the Most Holy Theotokos and of all the Saints, enlighten us, strengthen us, make us firm in the Orthodox confession, have mercy and save us freely. Amen.

* * *

STRENGTHENING PASSAGES FROM THE HOLY SCRIPTURE

"In the world you have tribulation; but be of good courage, I have overcome the world" (John1 6:33).

"There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, ... but glory and honor and peace for every one who does good,," (Rom. 2:9-10).

"I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us." (Rom. 8:18).

"By your endurance you will gain your lives." (Luke 21:19).

"Nevertheless, when the Son of man comes, will He find faith on earth?" (Lukel8:8).

"... This Jesus, Who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven." (Acts 1:11).

"The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His servants what must soon take place; ... Blessed is he who reads aloud the words of the prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written therein; for the time is near." (Rev. 1:1 and 3).

* * *

"If someone is teaching you outside of the things which the holy catholic Church received from the Holy Apostles, Fathers and Synods and preserved up till now, do not listen to him..., close your ears." (St. John Damascene).

"The Church of Christ is not comprised of the many, but of those who keep the correct and saving confession of faith, even if they are few" (St. Theodore Studite).

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Whoever of you have been benefitted by this volume take an interest T for the enlightenment of other friends of yours with a good disposition.

Our indifference for others will be considered a sin.