

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR SUNDAY DECEMBER 19, 2010

Hebrews 11:9-10, 17-23, 32-40 (Epistle, Sunday Before)

Brethren, ⁹ By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; ¹⁰ for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. ¹⁷ By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, ¹⁸ of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called," ¹⁹ concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense. ²⁰ By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. ²¹ By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff. ²² By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones. ²³ By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's command. ³² And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: ³³ who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, ³⁴ quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. ³⁵ Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. ³⁶ Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. ³⁷ They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented- ³⁸ of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. ³⁹ And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, ⁴⁰ God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

Matthew 1:1-25 (Gospel, Sunday Before)

At that time, ¹ The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham: ² Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers. ³ Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram. ⁴ Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon. ⁵ Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, ⁶ and Jesse begot David the king. David the king begot Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah. ⁷ Solomon begot Rehoboam, Rehoboam begot Abijah, and Abijah begot Asa. ⁸ Asa begot Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat begot Joram, and Joram begot Uzziah. ⁹ Uzziah begot Jotham, Jotham begot Ahaz, and Ahaz begot Hezekiah. ¹⁰ Hezekiah begot Manasseh, Manasseh begot Amon, and Amon begot Josiah. ¹¹ Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brothers about the time they were carried away to Babylon. ¹² And after they were brought to Babylon, Jeconiah begot Shealtiel, and Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel. ¹³ Zerubbabel begot Abiud, Abiud begot Eliakim, and Eliakim begot Azor. ¹⁴ Azor begot Zadok, Zadok begot Achim, and Achim begot Eliud. ¹⁵ Eliud begot Eleazar, Eleazar begot Matthan, and Matthan begot Jacob. ¹⁶ And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ. ¹⁷ So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations, from David until the captivity in Babylon are fourteen generations, and from the captivity in Babylon until the Christ are fourteen generations. ¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. ²⁰ But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. ²¹ And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins...

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²² So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: ²³ Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which is translated, "God with us." ²⁴ Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, ²⁵ and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS.

GLORY TO THEE O LORD, GLORY TO THEE!



THE PROLOGUE OF OHRID:
THE DAILY LIVES OF THE SAINTS AND REFLECTIONS
BY ST. NIKOLAI OF ZICHA AND SOUTH GANAAN
<http://www.westsrbdio.org/prolog/my.html>

REFLECTION

Can faith move mountains? (Matthew 17:20). Without a doubt it can, and it can do even more than that: by faith, God Himself can be moved to mercy toward us sinners. In the Omirian town of Safar, the majority of the inhabitants were Jews. St. Gregory endeavored to convert them to Christianity. Then the Jews suggested to St. Gregory and to King Abramis that they should have a debate about faith with the assurance that if they [the Jews] were defeated then all of them would enter the Christian Faith. This debate lasted several days in the presence of several thousand people, both Jews and Christians. The Jews, seeing that they would be defeated by Gregory's irrefutable reasons and proofs, sought from Gregory that, in some way, he show them Christ alive so that they might see Him with their own eyes and then they would believe. Having great boldness before the Lord because of the purity of his heart, St. Gregory knelt facing east and, before everyone, began to pray to God. When he had finished his prayer, the earth quaked, thunder clapped, and the heavens opened in the east. A cloud, glowing with a flaming fire and shining rays, moved from the east and then slowly descended to the earth toward that place where the assembly of people had gathered. In the midst of the cloud there stood a man of inexpressible beauty, with a face of extraordinary brightness and in a vesture that appeared to be woven of lightning. He moved upon the cloud until He came over Bishop Gregory himself. Everyone saw Him in unsurpassable glory and beauty, and in fear fell to the ground on their faces. Gregory cried out: ``One is Holy, One is the Lord, Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father. Amen." At this, there came a voice to the Jews from the Lord's glory: ``For the sake of the bishop's prayers, He Who was crucified by your fathers heals you." And the shining cloud moved away as slowly as it came. After that, the Jews were baptized.

