

Katameros: Acts: 7:30-34

7:33 *Remove the Shoes*

THE INEFFABLE AND MYSTERIOUS ILLUMINATION.

GREGORY OF NYSSA: It is upon us who continue in this quiet and peaceful course of life that the truth will shine, illuminating the eyes of our soul with its own rays. This truth, which was then manifested by the ineffable and mysterious illumination that came to Moses, is God. And if the flame by which the soul of the prophet was illuminated was kindled from a thorny bush, even this fact will not be useless for our inquiry. For if truth is God and truth is light . . . such guidance of virtue leads us to know that light that has reached down even to human nature. . . . From this we learn also the mystery of the Virgin: The light of divinity which through birth shone from her into human life did not consume the burning bush, even as the flower of her virginity was not withered by giving birth. That light teaches us what we must do to stand within the rays of the true light: Sandaled feet cannot ascend that height where the light of truth is seen, but the dead and earthly covering skins, which was placed around our nature at the beginning when we were found naked because of disobedience to the divine will, must be removed from the feet of the soul. When we do this, the knowledge of the truth will result and manifest itself. The full knowledge of being comes about by purifying our opinion concerning nonbeing. LIFE OF MOSES 2.19-22.¹

7:34 *God Heard Their Groaning*

THAT THEY MIGHT GIVE THANKS TO GOD.

CHRYSOSTOM: Hearing these things, let us in our afflictions flee to him. "And their groans," says he, "I have heard," and not simply, "because of their calamities." But if someone should ask, "Why did he allow them to be mistreated there?" we would answer: above all it was because sufferings are justly the cause of rewards. Then "why did he mistreat them?" To show his power, that he is able; and not only this but also to educate them. Notice, in fact, that when they were in the desert, they "became fat, grew thick, spread out in girth and kicked." ² As always, ease was an evil. Therefore in the very beginning he said to Adam, "With sweat on your brow shall you eat your bread." ³ And also that they might give thanks to God after they have come out of much suffering into respite. For affliction is a great good. Listen to what the prophet says: "It is good for me, O Lord, that you have humbled me." ⁴ HOMILIES ON THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 16.⁵

APPLY YOURSELVES TO PRAYER.

CHRYSOSTOM: Prayer is a mighty weapon if offered with suitable mind. Learn its strength from the following examples! Continued entreaty has overcome shamelessness, injustice, savagery and effrontery, as when he says, "Listen to what the unjust judge says." ⁶ On another occasion, continued entreaty also overcame hesitation and accomplished what friendship did not. "Even though he will not give to him because he is his friend, at least because of his persistence he will get up and give to him." ⁷ Tireless persistence also made her worthy who was unworthy. "It is not fair," he said, "to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." "Yes, Lord," she replied, "yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." ⁸ Let us then devote ourselves to prayer. It is a mighty weapon if offered with earnestness, without vainglory and with a sincere mind. Prayer routed enemies and benefited an entire nation, undeserving though it was. "I have heard their groaning," he said, "and I have come down to rescue them." Prayer is a saving medicine and has power to prevent sins and heal misdeeds. It was to prayer that the widow, left all alone, turned her mind. ⁹ ON THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS 27.9.10