

On the Holy Transfiguration

By Saint Ephraim the Syrian (+363)

The events of Christ's life, and His own divine powers, teach those who can learn that He is true God, and His sufferings openly proclaim Him true man.

For if He were not flesh, for what reason did Mary bring Him forth? And if He was not God, who then did Gabriel call Lord?

If He was not flesh, who then lay in the manger? If He was not God, to whom did the angels coming to earth give glory?

If He was not man, who was wrapped in swaddling clothes? If He was not God, whom then did the Shepherds adore?

If He was not man, whom did Joseph circumcise? And if He was not God, in whose honour did a new star appear in the heavens?

If He was not man, whom did Mary nourish at the breast? And if He were not God, to whom did the Magi offer gifts?

If He was not man, whom did Symeon take in His arms? And if He was not God, to whom did Symeon say: Dismiss me in peace?

If He was not man, whom did Joseph take and flee with him into Egypt? And if He was not God, in whom was the prophecy fulfilled: Out of Egypt have I called my son? (Mt. ii. 15; Num. xxiv. 2-9).

If He was not man, whom did John baptize? And if He was not God, of whom did the Father from Heaven say: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased? (Mt. iii. 17).

If He was not man, who fasted and hungered in the desert? And if He was not God, to whom did the angels minister?

If He was not man, who was invited to the wedding feast at Cana of Galilee? And if He was not God, who changed the water into wine?

If He was not man, in whose hands were the loaves of bread placed? And if He were not God, who fed and filled from five barley loaves and two fishes the multitude in the desert, five thousand men, not counting the women and children?

If He was not a man, who slept in the boat? And if He were not God, who was it rebuked the winds and the sea, and calmed them?

If He was not man, who was it that ate with Simon the Pharisee? And if He were not God, who forgave the woman her sins?

If He was not a man, who sat by the well weary from the journey?
And if He was not God, who gave the Samaritan woman the water of
life; and who rebuked her, she that had already five husbands?

If He was not of our flesh, who wore the garments of a man? And if He
were not God, who then was it that wrought signs and wonders?

If He was not a man, who spat upon the earth, and made mud from
the clay? And if He were not. God, who caused eyes to see that were
made from clay? (Jn. ix).

If He was not man, who wept at the tomb of Lazarus? And if He were
not God, who by his command alone called forth him that was four
days dead?

If He was not a man, who was it sat upon an ass's colt? And if He were
not God, before whom did the crowd march to give Him glory?

If He was not a man, whom did the Jews make prisoner? And if He
were not God, who commanded the earth, and it threw them flat to
the ground?

If He was not a man, who was beaten with blows? And if He were not
God, who healed the ear which Peter had cut off, and who restored it
to its place?

If He was not a man, whose face was spat upon? And if He were not
God, who breathed the Holy Spirit upon the faces of the Apostles. (Jn.
xx. 22).

If He was not a man, who was it stood before Pilate at the judgment
seat? And if He were not God, who caused the wife of Pilate to suffer
many things in a dream?

If He was not a man, upon whose garments did the soldiers cast lots,
dividing them amongst them? And if He were not God, for what reason
did the sun grow dark above the Cross?

If He was not a man, who was it hung upon a cross? And if He were
not God, who moved the earth upon its foundations?

If He was not a man, whose hands were pierced by the nails? And if
He were not God, how was the veil of the temple rent in two, and the
rocks split asunder, and the graves opened?

If He was not a man, who cried out: My God, My God, why hast Thou
abandoned me? And if He were not God, who said: Father, forgive
them, for they know not what they do?

If He was not man, who hung with thieves upon a cross? And if He
were not God, for what cause did He say: This day thou shalt be with

me in paradise?

If He was not a man, whose side was opened by a lance, and there came out blood and water? (Jn. xix. 34). And if He were not God, who hath shattered the gates of Shoel and brake the bars of iron? (Ps. cvi. 16). And by whose command did the dead that slept in their graves come forth?

If He was not a man, whom did the Apostles behold in the Upper Room? And if He was not God, in what manner did He enter, the doors being closed!

If He was not a man, in whose hand did Thomas feel the wounds of the nails and the lance? And if He was not God, to whom did Thomas cry out saying: My Lord and My God?

If He was not a man, who ate food by the sea of Tiberias? And if He were not God, at whose command was the net filled with fishes?

If He was not man, whom did the Apostles and the Angels see received into the Heavens? If He was not God, to whom were the Heavens opened, whom did the powers adore in fear and trembling, and to whom had the Father said: Sit thou at my right hand?

This is the reason the chaste John, who leaned upon that burning Breast, confirming the voices of the prophets, and discoursing of the divinity, teaches us in His Gospel, saying: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by Him: and without Him was made nothing that was made. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us; Who is God the Word from God, and the Only-begotten Son of the Father, Who is consubstantial with the Father, Who is, from Him Who is: the Word before all ages: ineffably and before all ages Begotten of the Father without a mother; the Same in these last days is born without a father. God Incarnate, from a daughter of men, from the Virgin Mary; taking flesh from Her, and from Her made man, which He was not, remaining God, which He was, that He might redeem the world. Amen.

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