

But He was a Baby. He was a Child, so that ye may be a perfect man; He was wrapped in swaddling clothes that ye may be loosed from the snares of death (Ps. 17:5, 6). He was in a manger, so that ye may be in the Altar; He on earth, the ye may be in the stars. He had no other place in the inn, so that ye may have many mansions in the heavens (Jn. 14:2; Eph 2:6). “He,” it says, “being rich, became poor for your sake, that through His poverty ye might be rich” (2 Cor 8:9). Therefore, His poverty is my inheritance, and the Lord’s weakness is my virtue. He chose lack for Himself, that He may abound for all.
Saint Ambrose of Milan

Today Christ is born in Bethlehem of the Virgin. Today the Beginningless doth begin, and the Word becometh incarnate. The powers of heaven rejoice and earth is glad with mankind. The Magi do offer presents, and the shepherds with wonder declaim. As for us, we shout ceaselessly, crying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men.

St. John of Damascus

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**Excerpts from a Homily on the Nativity of Christ
by St. John Chrysostom**

I behold a new and wondrous mystery! My ears resound to the Shepherd’s song, piping no soft melody, but chanting full forth a heavenly hymn.

The Angels sing!

The Archangels blend their voices in harmony!

The Cherubim hymn their joyful praise!

The Seraphim exalt His glory!

All join to praise this holy feast, beholding the Godhead here on earth, and man in heaven. He who is above, now for our redemption dwells here below; and he that was lowly is by divine mercy raised.

Bethlehem this day resembles heaven; hearing from the stars the singing of angelic voices; and in place of the sun, enfolds within itself on every side the Sun of Justice.

And ask not how: for where God wills, the order of nature yields. For

He willed, he had the power, He descended, He redeemed; all things move in obedience to God.

This day He Who Is, is Born; and He Who Is becomes what He was not. For when He was God, He became man; yet not departing from the Godhead that is His. Nor yet by any loss of divinity He became man, nor through increase He became God from man; but being the Word He became flesh, His nature, because of impassibility, remaining unchanged.

And so the kings have come, and they have seen the heavenly King that has come upon the earth, not bringing with Him Angels, nor Archangels, nor Thrones, nor Dominations, nor Powers, nor Principalities, but, treading a new and solitary path, He has come forth from a spotless womb.

Yet He has not forsaken His angels, nor left them deprived of His care, nor because of His Incarnation has he departed from the Godhead.

And behold,

Kings have come, that they might adore the heavenly King of glory;
Soldiers, that they might serve the Leader of the Hosts of Heaven;
Women, that they might adore Him Who was born of a woman so that He might change the pains of child-birth into joy;

Virgins, to the Son of the Virgin, beholding with joy, that He Who is the Giver of milk, Who has decreed that the fountains of the breast pour forth in ready streams, receives from a Virgin Mother the food of infancy;

Infants, that they may adore Him Who became a little child, so that out of the mouth of infants and sucklings, He might perfect praise;
Children, to the Child Who raised up martyrs through the rage of Herod;

Men, to Him Who became man, that He might heal the miseries of His servants;

Shepherds, to the Good Shepherd Who has laid down His life for His sheep;

Priests, to Him Who has become a High Priest according to the order of Melchisedech;

Servants, to Him Who took upon Himself the form of a servant that He might bless our servitude with the reward of freedom;

Fishermen, to Him Who from amongst fishermen chose catchers of

men;
Publicans, to Him Who from amongst them named a chosen
Evangelist;
Sinful women, to Him Who exposed His feet to the tears of the
repentant;

And that I may embrace them all together, all sinners have come,
that they may look upon the Lamb of God Who taketh away the sins
of the world.

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Come, let us rejoice together! Come, let us celebrate! The manner of
the feast is strange—as is also the word on the birth of Christ.

Today are dissolved the ancient bonds.

The devil is disgraced.

The demons flee.

Death is despoiled.

Paradise is opened.

The curse disappears.

Sin is cast out.

Error is driven away.

Truth is revealed.

The message of piety is poured forth and is given everywhere.

The kingdom of the heavens is transplanted to earth.

Angels speak with men.

All have been united.

Why?

Because God has descended to earth, and man has ascended to the
heavens.

God descended to earth, and again is found in heaven. He is wholly
in heaven and wholly on earth. He became man and is God. He is
God and took on flesh. He is held in virginal arms, and with His
hands holds the world.

The Magi hasten to Him; let us also hasten.

The star hastens to reveal the Lord of heaven, and He Himself
hastens.