

I Am from Him, and He Sent Me

Saint John the Evangelist recorded a dialogue between our Lord Jesus Christ and the Jews as follows, “*Then Jesus cried out, as He taught in the temple, saying, "You both know Me, and you know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know. But I know Him, for I am from Him, and He sent Me."* (Jn 7:28-29).

The Lord Jesus Christ gave this response in answer to the Jews’ comments of Him, “*However, we know where this Man is from; but when the Christ comes, no one knows where He is from*” (Jn 7:27). They did not understand that the Lord Jesus Christ came from heaven, and became incarnate from Virgin Mary without the seed of man. They thought that He was a biological natural son to Saint Joseph and Virgin Mary, therefore they incorrectly believed that they knew where He was from. However, their knowledge was not genuine, since the divine incarnation was concealed from evil minds.

However, the Lord Jesus Christ, although not speaking frankly at that time as regards to His virginal birth, was pointing at both: His birth from the Father before all ages, and His mission to the world by the Father, i.e. becoming incarnate in the fullness of time.

The Lord Jesus Christ summarized the facts relating to both His birth according to divinity from the Father before all ages, and His birth from Virgin Mary according to humanity in the fullness of time by describing His relationship with the heavenly Father as, “*For I am from Him, and He sent Me*” (Jn 7:29).

It is a short phrase composed of even two shorter segments, yet, it carries doctrinal facts of immense power and importance.

The first segment consists of, “*For I am from Him*”. It points to the generation of the only begotten son from the Father; of the same essence with the Father. This is the first generation of the Son the Logos.

The second segment consists of, “*and He sent Me*”. It points to being sent from the Father to the world in order to become incarnate from Virgin Mary. This is the second generation of the Son the Logos.

For I Am From Him:

It is wonderful that the Son says of Himself that He is from the Father. In other words He has the same nature and essence of the Father.

His Holiness Pope Shenouda III explained in an illustration that an intelligent mind generates intelligent thoughts, a strong mind generates strong thoughts, a wise mind generates wise thoughts, a holy mind generates holy thoughts, etc. Meaning that the mind generates thoughts of its same essence, since both mind and thought are of the same

essence. The mind generates thoughts within itself, without separation. If the thought is uttered as a word it also does not separate from the mind, but always exists within it.

In our Lord Jesus Christ's conversation with the Jews who claimed to know where He was from, He denounced this fact because His origin is the Father, a fact not comprehended by the Jews. He answered that they do not know the Father, but He surely knows Him, since He is from Him.

Our teacher Saint Paul the apostle similarly wrote about the Holy Spirit, "*For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.*" (1Cor 2:10).

The Son, being of the Father by generation, has a full, ultimate, and unlimited knowledge of the Father. Also, the Holy Spirit, being of the Father by procession, has a full, ultimate, and unlimited knowledge of the Father.

Combining the words of our Lord Jesus Christ regarding His knowledge of the Father, with His statement about His generation from the Father, "*I am from Him*", confirms that in this segment of the phrase, He was speaking of the superior relationship that unites the Father with the Son in the one divine essence. In other words, the Son is born of the Father in His same essence and nature.

He Sent Me:

Our teacher Saint Paul the apostle wrote, "*But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law*" (Gal 4:4-5).

The phrase "*He sent Me*" points to sending the only begotten Son to the world, born of a woman, to redeem the world from the curse of sin.

The Lord Jesus Christ frequently repeated in the gospels, especially the one recorded by Saint John, that the Father sent Him to the world. This fact was repeated numerous times. Examples are found in chapter eight where our Lord Jesus Christ mentioned several times that the Father sent Him. He said, "*I am with the Father who sent Me*" (Jn 8:16) "*The Father who sent Me bears witness of Me*" (Jn 8:18), "*He who sent Me is true*" (Jn 8:26), "*He who sent Me is with Me*" (Jn 8:29), "*Nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me*" (Jn 8:42).

Our Lord Jesus Christ's emphasis that the Father sent Him bears two angles. On the one hand it glorifies the heavenly Father, meaning that everything that the Son does for the salvation of the world is through the divine economy of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We sing in the mid-night praises, "For of His own will, the pleasure of the Father and the Holy Spirit, He came and saved us". Therefore the Lord Jesus Christ always emphasized that He does not work alone, but with the Father who sent Him. The work of the trinity is one, in spite of the distinction of the roles of each hypostasis in the same deed.

On the other hand, our Lord Jesus Christ's emphasis on being sent from the Father highlights the veracity of His mission and its connectedness to the heavenly Father through the Father's witness of Him.

When our Lord Jesus Christ spoke to Nicodemus about His crucifixion for the salvation of the world He said, "***For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life***" (Jn 3: 16).

The cross does not only express Christ's love for us, as the only begotten son of God, but it also emphasizes the Father's love for us.

Love that originates from the Trinity is one love. The saintly fathers expressed this by saying, "From the Father, by the Son, in the Holy Spirit". The three hypostaseis love us with the same amount and strength.

Saint Isaiah the Prophet mentioned that the Holy Spirit participated in the mission of the only begotten son. He recorded the following words as from the mouth of Christ the Lord, "***And now the Lord God and His Spirit Have sent Me***" (Is 48:16). The Holy Spirit in this phrase is the subject and not the predicate, meaning that He and the Father has sent the Son to the world.

How great was this mission, that it made us enjoy the manifestation of God the Word in the flesh. How splendid was this divine economy which gave us pleasure in the presence of God with us. It is the fulfillment of the prophecy of the Prophet Isaiah, "***Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,***" which is translated, 'God with us' " (Mat 1:23).

The phrase 'God with us' is no longer said with aspiration or in feeling God's aid, but it became a truth which humanity touched, and therefore grasped onto eternal life. Saint John the apostle expressed these concepts by saying, "***That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life, the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us***" (1 Jn 1: 1-2).