

## The Marian Month Celebrating St. Mary

### Ἀ ΤΑΙ ΠΑΡΘΕΝΟC (A Tai Parthenos)

#### The Hymn of the 10 Strings 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Strings

The fifth string is taken from [Psalm 48:1](#) which reads, “*Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, In His holy mountain*”.

At first glance, this verse may seem unrelated to St. Mary, unlike the previous strings, there is no explicit reference to a “queen” or “daughter.” Yet, within the tradition of the Church, the titles “City of God” and “Holy Mountain” are intimately connected to her.

In [Psalm 132:13](#), David proclaims: “For the Lord has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His dwelling place.” Just as the Lord chose Zion for His dwelling, so He chose the Virgin Mary to be His living temple. St. Augustine affirms that Zion is “the dwelling of God among His people,” fulfilled when the Word took His dwelling in Mary’s womb. The “City of God” is therefore a prophetic title for the Theotokos.

Further, the Prophet Daniel prophesized saying; “A stone was cut out by no human hand..... became a great mountain and filled the whole earth” ([Daniel 2:34-36](#)). This is a clear type of the Virgin birth. Hence, “His holy mountain” reveals her as the lofty, unshakable vessel from whom Christ came forth.

Therefore, whenever we sing of the “Holy Mountain” or the “City of God,” we are proclaiming the mystery of the Theotokos; chosen, sanctified, and exalted as the dwelling place of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The sixth string (The bold & underlined part of the verse below) is directly taken from Psalm [68:13](#) which in its entirety reads, “*Though you lie down among the sheepfolds, you will be like **the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.***”

In this verse King David reminds us that even those in lowly places, hidden, humble, and overlooked, are not forgotten by God. He is able to transform us to become like doves adorned with silver and gold. The silver and gold here are not earthly metals but symbols of purity and glory.

However, this verse is sung for St. Mary In the hymn Ἀ ΤΑΙ ΠΑΡΘΕΝΟC. So, while this verse is applicable to all of us, how does it relate to St. Mary specifically? Many church hymns, such as the Praxis Response or the Seventh Part of the Sunday Theotokia, call St. Mary “the fair dove” or “the beautiful dove”. Just as the dove in Noah’s day carried the olive branch, the sign of peace and the end of wrath, so the Virgin through the Birth of Christ, she delivered us the news of our Salvation. Through her humility, she “*lay among the sheepfolds*” of her people, yet God clothed the “Beautiful Dove” with silver purity and golden glory.

May this hymn serve as a reminder of the importance of St. Mary to our faith, and may it calls us to remember that divine glory often hides beneath the cloak of humility.

Amen

**Resources:**

- [Zion: Epitome of Saint Mary – Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahdo Church Sunday School Department – Mahibere Kidusan](#)
- [Titles of the Holy Theotokos, Saint Mary | Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Los Angeles](#)
- [Psalm 68 by C. H. Spurgeon](#)
- [St. Augustine \(City of God, XVII.16\)](#)