

**The Marian Month
Celebrating St. Mary**

Α ΤΑΙ ΠΑΡΘΕΝΟΣ (A Tai Parthenos)

**The Hymn of the 10 Strings
9th & 10th String**

Last week we learned about the 7th & 8th strings of the A Tai Parthenos Hymn. Today, we will go deeper into the last 2 strings of the hymn, the 9th & 10th strings.

The 9th string says, “He moved the ninth string from his harp proclaiming and saying, ‘Glorious things are spoken of you O city of God’”, based on [Psalm 87:3](#). This is followed by the 10th string, “He moved the tenth string from his harp proclaiming and saying, ‘For the Lord has chosen Zion. He has desired it for His habitation’”, found in [Psalm 132:13](#).

When speaking of the “City of God,” the Fathers often identified it with Mount Zion or Jerusalem, since it was in Jerusalem that Solomon built the glorious Temple of the Lord. Yet, they also recognized a deeper, spiritual meaning. St. Augustine explains, “the city of God is not bounded by earthly walls, but is the society of the saints, built by God Himself.” In the New Testament, St. Paul reveals this fulfillment when he writes, “you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem...” ([Hebrews 12:22-23](#), ESV).

We see, then, that both strings point to the same mystery. St. Cyril of Alexandria calls St. Mary “the holy temple of God” and “the place that held Him whom no place can contain,” drawing a profound parallel between Zion, the Temple of God, and the Virgin who bore the Word. Likewise, St. Athanasius the Apostolic affirms this truth, describing Mary as “the dwelling place of God the Word.”

This same biblical symbol appears throughout our prayers and liturgical services. In the Sunday Theotokia, we honor the Theotokos with the hymn: “For they spoke of you, with great honor, O Holy City of the Great King.” In the Sunday Psali, we proclaim: “This is Jerusalem, the city of our God, the throne of all the ranks of the Cherubim.” And in the Psali Watos, we pray: “This is the city of the Merciful One, the dwelling of Adonai, Mary the Theotokos.”

St. Mary, the pure Virgin, humbly accepted to become the dwelling place of God, carrying the Divine within her womb for nine months. With profound humility and obedience, she offered herself fully to the will of the Lord, setting aside her own desires so that she might bear the Lover of Mankind and be an instrument in His divine plan.

May we learn to be obedient and humble like St. Mary as she carried our Lord, and may we always carry Him in our hearts. May her intercessions be with us always.

Sources:

Bible, English Standard Version (ESV)
Catena Bible

Holy Psalmody

[Homily Cyril of Alexandria to the council of Ephesus](#)

St. Athanasius - [St. Shenouda Monastery](#)

[Augustine, *Exposition on Psalm 86\(87\)*](#)