

Description of Heaven in St. Ephrem the Syrian and in the Triodion

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Abstract

The image of Paradise was ‘secularized’ with the birth of modernity. Towards the end of the 18th century, the search for the Garden of Eden was abandoned to make way for a historical-critical approach to Creation. For anyone familiar with the Eastern order of fasting, the Triodion period expresses not only a longing for the eschatological future of the world, but also an extensive journey in search of Paradise. In fact, hymnographers return to this theme that supports the ascetic effort of the Christian. Heaven is not only valuable for the ascetic effort, but also offers the opportunity for spiritual and personal locations. The continual challenges to repentance are doubled by mystical descriptions of the place to which we deserve to run. St. Ephrem superimposes in his description a sacred topography and the history of salvation, which is evident in the analogies he uses. Heaven is a mysterious place beyond the reach of the world and, at the same time, an inter-temporal reality, at the eastern boundary of time.