



The Christ-Child Reclining (Ὁ Ἀναπεσών)*

“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us” (St. John 1:14).

This iconographic type of our Savior Jesus Christ, Who is depicted semi-recumbent on a cradle, symbolizes in Orthodox Iconography the Incarnation of the Divine Word and the fulfillment of the following Messianic prophecy of the Old Testament:

“Having couched, He lay as a lion, and as a lion’s whelp; who shall rouse Him? A ruler shall not fail from Juda, nor a prince from his loins, until there come the things stored up for Him; and He is the Expectation of the nations” (Genesis 49:9-10).

This passage is directly related to the following verses from the New Testament:

“Our Lord sprang out of Juda” (Hebrews 7:14); “behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David” (Revelation 5:5).

When the Patriarch Jacob was on his deathbed, he blessed his twelve sons and foretold their future and that of their descendants.

Specifically for Juda, he prophesied by Divine inspiration the glorious progress of his tribe, from which the Messiah would come forth.

Christ was awaited with vivid hope and intense expectation by the peoples of the earth, because He would reconcile mankind with God and bring the world spiritual peace through His victory over the Devil, sin, and death.

The characterization of the Incarnate Word as a “lion” and as a “lion’s whelp” (a young and vigorous lion) suggests the royalty and glory of our Savior, as well as His valor and courage, as victor over the Devil, sin, and death.



*Source: *Άγιος Κυπριανός*, No. 281 (November-December 1997), p. 300.