

MIGHTY MAGAZINE ARROWS

Life. God. Truth. For Coptic Youth

GO.

Live Your Faith.

“Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one’s youth”

Psalm 127:4

Contents

MIGHTY ARROWS FALL 2009

MIGHTY

MAGAZINE

ARROWS

A PUBLICATION OF THE COPTIC
ORTHODOX DIOCESE OF THE
SOUTHERN UNITED STATES

PRESIDENT	The Almighty God
VICE PRESIDENT	H.G. Bishop Youssef
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF	Marilyn Ekladios
ASSOCIATE EDITOR	Hala Schepmann
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS	Justine Ekladios Carine Iskander Freda Masoud
CONTRIBUTING WRITERS	H.G. Bishop Youssef Fr. Kyrillos Makar Victor Beshir Diana Habib James Helmy Maria Mansour Christine Massoud Mareya Naguib Michael Rizkalla
DESIGN & LAYOUT	Rafik Massoud
TECH SUPPORT	Mina Abdalla
SUBSCRIPTIONS	http://suscopts.org/mightyarrows/
MISISON STATEMENT	We, the magazine staff, have a mission regarding you, the reader: to encourage you on your Christian walk and to strengthen you through articles, answers and more about God's very special plan for you.
MATERIAL SUBMISSION	By submitting letters and other materials to Mighty Arrows Magazine, you agree that the materials submitted are the property of Mighty Arrows Magazine and will not be returned, and you agree that Mighty Arrows Magazine, its assigns and licensees, have been granted the non-exclusive right to use and/or reproduce the materials in any manner and for any purposes.

My Blessed Youth

It is my sincere pleasure to welcome with you another Coptic New Year, 1726. While in our Coptic Orthodox community, we are celebrating the beginning of a new year, we are reminded that the fall season brings about change. The leaves will first change in color, fall to the ground, then the mighty tree can replenish and revive with newness, strength, and beauty. Like the awesome grandeur of nature, we too ought to have first said goodbye to the former old ways, changed the colors of our hearts, and be renewed in faith.

“To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven” (Ecclesiastes 3:1). Each year brings a series of memoirs, good times and hard times, blessings and missed opportunities. Time cannot be recaptured, but a new day can bring about the change you need to renew your spiritual life and to set things right with God. Let us value each day and every person in our lives, making the most of yet another chance to offer repentance, to make peace, to show love, and to experience a day with God.

While a tree stands barren of its leaves that have fallen, we should learn from that tree to empty ourselves. This movement of heart goes even beyond our personal attempt at humility to a Christ-like pouring out of one’s self. Let us empty ourselves of pride, conceit, selfishness, and all the vanities of the world so that when Spring arrives, i.e., the new you, after repentance has cleansed you from darkness and pitfalls, can be fruitful and serene. Let us not be like that old fig tree that adorned itself with impressive leaves out of season, but bare no fruit.

This issue of the Mighty Arrows Magazine will inspire you to consider the many gifts, strengths, and revelations of mysteries God has so generously given us. With these tools, you and I have responsibilities towards our inner selves and our brothers and sisters in the Lord and in the world to share our hope in Christ with them. In His delight to see us grow and mature in faith and kindness in deeds, He has shown us the ways of Salvation. Daily, He proves His faithfulness towards us by walking every step of those ways with us, whether they are baby steps on a simple road or jumping hurdles on a demanding obstacle course. I pray that each of you will know that God has a special plan and purpose for you. Let us learn from the wisdom of Solomon:

To everything there is a season,
A time for every purpose under heaven:
A time to be born,
And a time to die;
A time to plant,
And a time to pluck what is planted;
A time to kill,
And a time to heal;
A time to break down,
And a time to build up;
A time to weep,
And a time to laugh;
A time to mourn,
And a time to dance;
A time to cast away stones,

And a time to gather stones;
A time to embrace,
And a time to refrain from embracing;
A time to gain,
And a time to lose;
A time to keep,
And a time to throw away;
A time to tear,
And a time to sew;
A time to keep silence,
And a time to speak;
A time to love,
And a time to hate;
A time of war,
And a time of peace.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-11

God bless you,

Youssef

Bishop Youssef

Bishop of the Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



4 More Than Just Stories
Diana Habib



6 St. Verena: A Life of Service
Mareya Naguib



7 Faith Q&A
How Are We Judged



8 Conquering Challenges
His Grace Bishop Youssef



12 Satan’s Lies: Same Lies, New Package
Michael Rizkalla



14 The Coptic Language
Fr. Kyrillos Makar



17 To The Student
H.H. Pope Kyrillos IV, Submitted by Maria Fawzy



18 Unanswered Questions
Christine Massoud



20 Spritual Driy Spells
Maria Mansour



22 Let Others Listen
Victor Beshir



24 Spiritual Warfare Part 4: The Journey
James Helmy



27 Bible Study: The Book of Genesis
Questions To Concider While Reading



27 Events & Activities
Up-coming Conventions

As simple as they appear, the parables of Christ are not just stories told for entertainment purposes. A parable is “a short allegorical story designed to illustrate or teach some truth, religious principle, or moral lesson.” (College Dictionary, 1998) But what truth did the Lord intend to teach us through His parables? The Lord Jesus said, “*To you it has been given to know the **mysteries of the kingdom** of God, but to the rest it is given in parables.*” (Luke 8:10) Two important facts can be drawn out of this verse: the mysteries of the kingdom of God are found in the parables, and not everyone is granted an understanding of them.

Since the mysteries of the kingdom of God are hidden in the parables, it is of great value to study each of them. Most of the parables are found in the gospels of

Sts. Matthew and Luke. However, the total number of parables in the gospels is not clearly defined, but there are at least 40 parables mentioned. One of the best ways to study the parables is to group them by theme and see how they explain a complete truth about God. There are various ways in which the parables can be grouped by theme. One method is to group them under four main categories: repentance as a requirement for the kingdom, the men of the kingdom, the characteristics of the kingdom, and the coming of the kingdom.

Take into consideration the parables about repentance. God searches for the lost in the Parable of the Lost Sheep. (Matthew 18:10-14, Luke 15:1-7) Then, in the Parable of the Lost Coin (Luke 15:8-10), the Church’s role

in searching for those who need repentance is demonstrated. Again, in the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32), we obtain a better view of God’s compassion towards sinners. The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard (Matthew 20:1-16) teaches us that repentance is always accepted regardless of the time it is made, and the Parable of the Two Sons (Matthew 21:28-32) shows us that repentance requires action.

Some examples that fall under the category of men of the kingdom include the good merchant in the Parable of the Hidden Treasure (Matthew 13:44), wise builders and warriors in the Parable of Building a Tower and Making a War (Luke 14:25-33), and merciful travelers in the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). The good merchant sold all that he had and bought

the field containing the hidden treasure. This field represents the Holy Bible where we can find the Lord Jesus Christ, the real treasure. (Fr. Malaty, 1983) Moreover, as the wise warriors count the cost before making a war, we also ought to count and be willing to pay the cost of discipleship and follow Christ. (Fr. Malaty, 1985) The final example of a man of the kingdom is the Good Samaritan who brought the wounded stranger to an inn. Thus, to become merciful travelers, we should bring our friends, who are wounded by sin, to the church to find healing. (Fr. Malaty, 1985)

When talking about the characteristics of the kingdom, we are referring to the kingdom of God being within us as in the Parable of the Leaven (Matthew 13:33). It is given to us as a gift as

noted in the Parable of Unprofitable Servants (Luke 17:7-10), and it is growing consistently as described in the Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matthew 13:31-32). Furthermore, in representing the coming of the kingdom, the Lord spoke the Parable of the Ten Virgins (Matthew 25:1-13), the Parable of the Watchful Porter (Mark 13:32-37), the Parable of the Faithful and Wise Servants (Luke 12:35-48), and the Parable of the Fig Tree (Matthew 24:32-35).

It is evident that the Lord did not explain His parables openly to everyone, “*All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them.*” (Matthew 13:34), but He did reveal their mysterious meanings privately to His disciples: “*But when He was alone, those around Him with the twelve asked*

Him about the parable.” (Mark 4:10) The disciples wondered why the Lord did not reveal His mysteries to everyone, “*Why do You speak to them in parables?*” (Matthew 13:10)

Of course, the Lord did not want to deprive anyone from His mysteries, as He “*desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*” (1 Timothy 2:4) In his book, Contemplations on the Parables of Christ, Pope Shenouda III explained that Christ spoke in parables to attract those who are yearning for the knowledge of truth. Additionally, the Lord did not want to present His teaching openly to everyone, so that those who do not have the desire to follow the truth would not disrespect the word of God, “*Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not*

see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.” (Matthew 13:13) St. John Chrysostom also explained that the parables were used to indirectly rebuke some of the listeners. However, the Lord did not rebuke them openly so that they would not fall into despair. This is clear in Matthew 21:45, “*Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that He was speaking of them.*”

Being disciples of the Lord, we also have a share in understanding those mysteries. What a privilege! Therefore, we should not take the parables for granted but we should try to study them. This can be a good spiritual exercise, as we begin a new Coptic year. We should investigate the parables to uncover the lessons found in each of them and to thank the Lord for revealing His mysteries to us.

Additional References:

Pope Shenouda III, Contemplations on the Parables of Christ. (2001) Cairo, Egypt.

Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty, Commentaries on the Gospel to St. Matthew. (1983) Cairo, Egypt: Anba Rweis Press.

Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty, Commentaries on the Gospel to St. Luke. (1985) Cairo, Egypt: Anba Rweis Press.



More Than Just Stories

As youth, we spend much of our free time hanging out with our friends. As a result, Christian service often ends up at the bottom of our priority list. Additionally, when we consider making time for service, we often think that the best way to serve is to bring about dramatic changes. However, most youth forget that even the most insignificant acts of service are seen as something great in the eyes of God – a fact that Saint Verena understood well.

Saint Verena was born to a noble Christian family in the Theban region of Egypt (modern day Luxor in Upper Egypt). St. Verena was given to Bishop Sherimon, Bishop

of Beni Suef, who taught her and baptized her. St. Verena was a relative of St. Victor of the Theban legion. Since soldiers' relatives were allowed to accompany them on missions, St. Verena joined the Theban legion, in its mission to Rhaetia (modern day Switzerland), to look after the soldiers and take care of their wounds. After St. Maurice, St. Victor and the other members of the Theban legion were martyred, St. Verena led an isolated life, likened to that of a hermit. She eventually moved into a cave near present day Zurich. She was known to fast and pray continuously and God performed several miracles through her. St. Verena served the poor and provided them food. She was particularly concerned about young girls and looked after their spiritual and physical well-being. Moreover, she enjoyed serving the sick, especially those suffering from leprosy. She used to wash their wounds and put ointments on

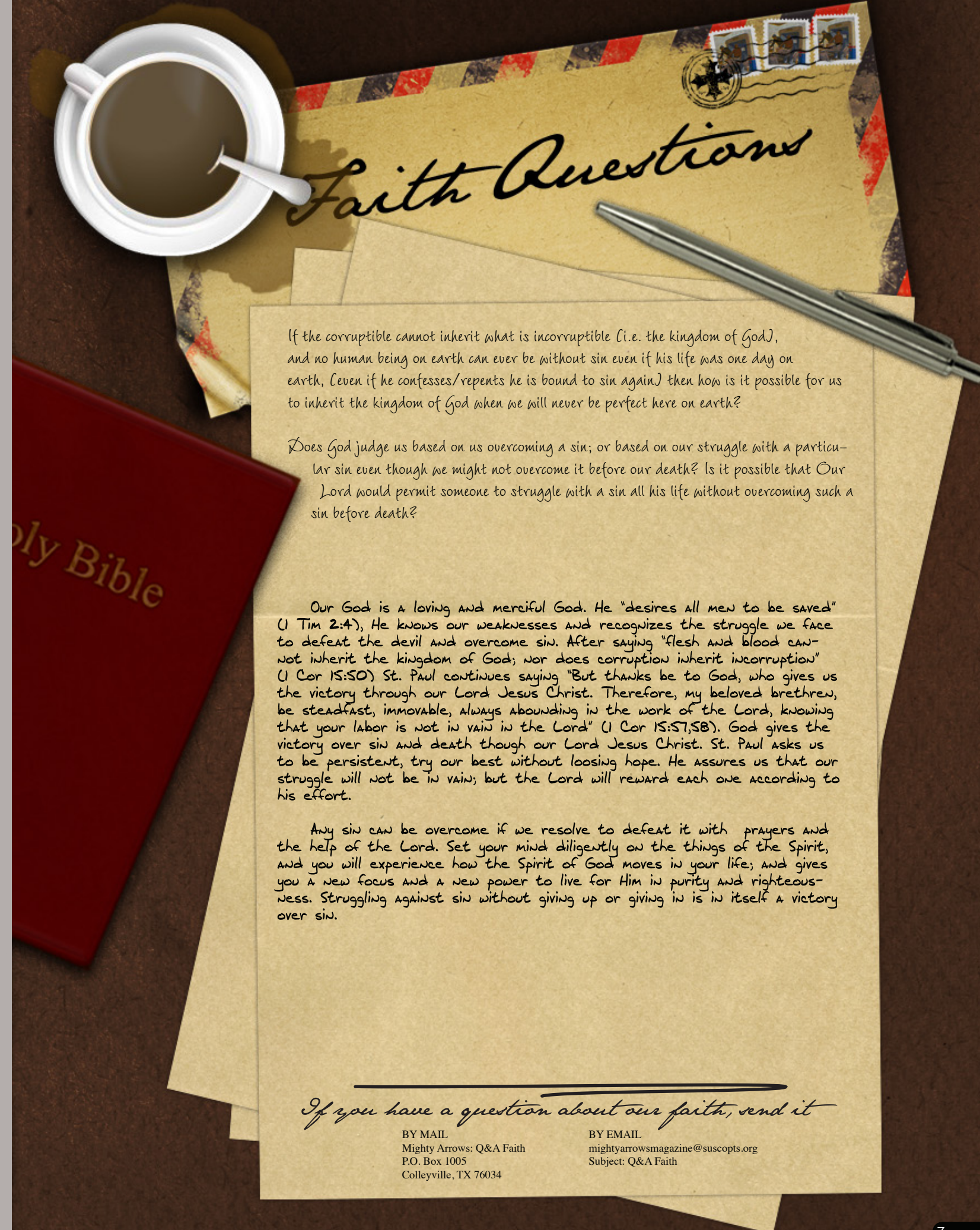
them, without fear of contracting an infection. As a result of her fame, the ruler arrested her and sent her to jail, where St. Maurice appeared to her to console and strengthen her. After her release from jail, God worked several miracles through her prayers and many were converted to Christianity.

At the time of her departure from this world, the Most Holy Virgin Mary appeared to St. Verena to console and strengthen her. St. Verena departed on the 4th day of the Coptic month Tout (September 14). Although her service was not grandiose, it was life-changing for the many people she helped convert to Christianity. Small, yet significant deeds, were the hallmark of St. Verena's Christian life. *"As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." (1 Peter 4:10)*

The life story of St Verena was obtained from the website of St. Maurice and St. Verena Coptic Orthodox Church, Canada; http://www.smsv.ca/our_saints.shtml

St. Verena

A Life of Christian Service



If the corruptible cannot inherit what is incorruptible (i.e. the kingdom of God), and no human being on earth can ever be without sin even if his life was one day on earth, even if he confesses/repents he is bound to sin again) then how is it possible for us to inherit the kingdom of God when we will never be perfect here on earth?

Does God judge us based on us overcoming a sin; or based on our struggle with a particular sin even though we might not overcome it before our death? Is it possible that Our Lord would permit someone to struggle with a sin all his life without overcoming such a sin before death?

Our God is a loving and merciful God. He "desires all men to be saved" (1 Tim 2:4), He knows our weaknesses and recognizes the struggle we face to defeat the devil and overcome sin. After saying "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption" (1 Cor 15:50) St. Paul continues saying "But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor 15:57,58). God gives the victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ. St. Paul asks us to be persistent, try our best without losing hope. He assures us that our struggle will not be in vain; but the Lord will reward each one according to his effort.

Any sin can be overcome if we resolve to defeat it with prayers and the help of the Lord. Set your mind diligently on the things of the Spirit, and you will experience how the Spirit of God moves in your life; and gives you a new focus and a new power to live for Him in purity and righteousness. Struggling against sin without giving up or giving in is in itself a victory over sin.

If you have a question about our faith, send it

BY MAIL
Mighty Arrows: Q&A Faith
P.O. Box 1005
Colleyville, TX 76034

BY EMAIL
mightyarrowsmagazine@suscopts.org
Subject: Q&A Faith

Conquering Challenges

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, One God, Amen.

In our life's journey, we face everyday hardships, tribulations, and trials. How then can we be victorious in the midst of all these hardships and trials? St. Paul answers this question in *Romans 8:37*, “*we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.*” It is our faith in God that gives us victory. “*So then faith comes by hearing.*” (*Romans 10:17*) Hearing the word of God and His promises will establish and strengthen your faith, “*we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.*” (*Romans 8:37*) God has made four promises to us. Recalling these promises will serve to strengthen our faith and lead us to be victorious through Jesus Christ who loved us. These four promises are found in St. Paul's letter to the Romans (*Romans 8*).

The **first promise** is “*we know that all things work together for good to those who love God.*” (*Romans*

8:28) St. Paul assures us that ***ALL*** things, ***NOT most*** things, ***NOT*** often, but ***ALL*** things will work together for good. Even the evil that is inflicted upon us by others, or by Satan himself, God will turn it into good for those who love Him. We know how Joseph's brothers tried to destroy him and sold him as a slave. Although his brothers intended to harm him, God intended it for good. Even evil intentions, God converted into blessings and goodness for Joseph.

St. Paul had a disease in his eyes that made his vision weak and produced secretions that may have been offensive. St. Paul states in his letter to the Galatians, “*And my trial which was in my flesh you did not despise or reject, but you received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. What then was the blessing you enjoyed? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me.*” (*Galatians 4:14-15*) He understood

that his eye disease was not from God, but an attack from Satan to hinder his service. Because of this ailment, he could not travel alone but needed to have companions to help him. He also worried that people may be offended by the discharge from his eyes. St. Paul also loved to read, but was not able to read or write as he wanted to. He prayed for the ministry and three times asked God to heal him. “*Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me.*” (*2 Corinthians 12:8*) To his surprise, God told him no, He would not heal him! Many times when we pray and God answers our prayers with a ‘*No*,’ we think He did not listen or answer our prayers. God answers our prayers either by *Yes* or by *No* because He knows what is best for us. The Lord confirmed that although St. Paul's infirmity was from Satan, He would make his illness work out for good. It appears that the Lord was protecting St. Paul from pride. Since St. Paul saw many revelations and visions he would be

susceptible to becoming exalted. This weakness would protect St. Paul's humbleness and save him from the sin of pride.

God wanted to teach St. Paul another lesson, to have faith in the grace of God and to place his trust and confidence in God not in his own abilities. “*My grace is sufficient for you.*” (*2 Corinthians 12:9*) Cannot God's grace work in weakness? Do we need to be healthy for God's grace to work for us? NO! “*My grace is sufficient.*” Actually the Lord says, “*My strength is made perfect in weakness.*” (*2 Corinthians 12:9*) When we are strong, we trust in our own abilities and are self-confident. We do not go to God for help, and thus we fail. If we realize our weaknesses, then we will put our trust in God. This will give the strength of God the opportunity to be manifested and to work at its fullest in my life. St. Paul understood that God is able to turn his weakness and hardship into victory, “*we are more*

than conquerors through Him who loved us.” (*Romans 8:37*) With weak eyes, St. Paul wrote more than one half of the New Testament. “*Therefore, most gladly, I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*” (*2 Corinthians 12:9-10*)

The **second promise** that we need to remember is that God invested His blood in us! The Lord Jesus Christ did not invest gold or silver in us, He invested His blood. Do you think that after God purchased us with His blood, He would make us fail? “*If God is for us, who can be against us?*” (*Romans 8:31*) God is for us because He made us and purchased us. We are His children.

When the army of Aram went to attack Elisha the prophet, his disciple Gehazi was afraid, but Elisha's faith

was strong. He didn't lose heart when he saw an army fighting him. Elisha knew that God would make him victorious. Can you imagine a single person along with one disciple fighting an army? Gehazi started to lose hope. Elisha prayed for him and asked God to open his eyes so that he could see God's invisible army of heavenly hosts. (2 Kings 6:16-18) *"The angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, And delivers them."* (Psalm 34:7) God opened Gehazi's eyes. He saw thousands of angels surrounding them and their number outnumbered the army of Aram. Gehazi realized that those who are with them were more than those who were against them.

We should not lose hope or feel defeated. We know that God is for us. He purchased us. David was not afraid of Saul. He told Saul that he could only kill him if God allowed it. Our lives are in the hands of God. If God allowed hardships to come upon us, like what happened with Job, we must trust *"that all things work together for good."* (Romans 8:28) If God did not give permission that we be hurt, nobody could harm us. When St. Paul was imprisoned, there were rumors that Nero would soon order his execution. St. Paul did not lose heart because he knew that his life was in God's hands, not in the hands of Nero. *"I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as*

always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death." (Philippians 1:19-20). Whether God allowed him to be delivered from prison into the world or to be delivered from prison into heaven, God will be glorified in him, whether by life or by death. St. Paul was not afraid of death.

Death is not an enemy to us because Christ, in His resurrection, abolished the power of death. Before the resurrection, we were afraid of death; we were in bondage. After Christ's resurrection, death actually became life, a bridge to heaven. *"For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain."* (Philippians 1:21) In the lives of the children of God, death is a celebration.

God purchased us because He LOVED us! One of the church fathers said, *"the love of God is the nail that nailed Him to the cross. It is not the Jews; it is not the betrayal of Judas. It is the love of Christ. His love nailed Him on the cross to save us."* Do you know how much God loves us? St. Paul reveals the answer in God's **third promise** to us. *"He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things."* (Romans 8:32) What is more precious for God the Father than His own Son? Absolutely nothing! To that extent, He loved us. If He gave us His Son, then with His Son He will give us anything else freely.

Our victory is not because we are worthy, or strong, or powerful. It is

because He loved us. *GOD is LOVE!* His love is unconditional. He shed His blood for sinners who rejected Him, *"while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."* (Romans 5:8) He prayed for them, *"Father forgive them."* (Luke 23:34) In His love, we are victorious. St. Paul went through a similar experience, *"For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life. Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead."* (2 Corinthians 1:8-9) Christ is the hope of the hopeless and the help of the helpless. If I am dead, Christ is the resurrection, life, and truth. We need to remember God's love and put our confidence in Him, *"who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will deliver us."* (2 Corinthians 1:10)

This brings us to the **last promise**. In order to strengthen our faith and be victorious through our faith in Christ, we need to remember that nothing will separate us from the love of Christ. In other words, nothing will make Christ cease to love us. *"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"* (Romans 8:35) Nothing! Not tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, or sword! Friends may leave me during times of tribulation. Relatives may forsake me during times of persecution. My beloved may stay away from me during times of distress. But Christ, NEVER!

NEVER! St. Paul said, *"For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."* (Romans 8:38-39)

"Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies." (Romans 8:33) Do you think Satan will dare to bring charges against us? We are God's elect. Satan cannot complain against us because the penalty is paid. Who is the judge? My Father! The Judge is also my Lawyer. He is the one who died for me to defend me. *"Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercessions for us."* (Romans 8:34) What is He expecting from me? He only expects me to live for Him in gratefulness and appreciation for all that He has done. *"It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me."* Galatians 2:20

"For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:38-39) St. Paul affirms in all hardships, tribulations, trials, in ALL, not in most, not in 90%, but in ALL things, *"we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us."* (Romans 8:37) Our victory is through His love.

Promise One

"All things work together for good to those who love God." (Romans 8:28)

1

Promise Two

"If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31)

2

Promise Three

"He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:32)

3

Promise Four

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" (Romans 8:35)

4

If we keep in our minds and in our hearts these four promises, then regardless of the hardships that we face every day, we can say with St. Paul, *"Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us."* (Romans 8:37)

Glory be to God forever. Amen.

How often has the subject of spirituality come up with a friend or colleague and at some point in the conversation this person states, “I don’t believe in organized religion; it is run by corrupt people. However, I believe in God and am a spiritual person.”

The other common line espoused by many celebrities, including Oprah Winfrey, is, “There are many paths to what you call God.” These have become the mantras of the modern day “enlightened” western person. Interestingly, these statements are often made in a condescending manner, implying that you are an ignorant sheep who follows what others tell you to believe. In contrast, they have risen above manmade rules regarding their spiritual life and discovered their own path to spirituality. This “new” spirituality is a mixture of Christianity and Eastern mysticism or New Age theology. According to proponents of this view, it is freeing. However, what these people do not realize is that they are not free, but are following lies fed to them by Satan. These are not new ideas but a new packaging of an ancient lie. In order to better understand this concept we must return to the Garden of Eden

where man’s acceptance of Satan’s Great Lie brought him into this fallen world.

In Eden, Satan approached Eve with a very deceiving question, “*Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’*” (*Genesis 3:1*) This appears to be an innocent question but it is full of deceit. The serpent knew that God’s command was to avoid the fruit of only one tree in the garden. However, he framed the question to make it seem as if God was being very restrictive with man and forbidding him from all of the fruit He had created. This could not be further from the truth. However, as he engaged Eve in this conversation, he began to sow the seeds of doubt in her heart to make her feel limited by God’s laws. Once those seeds were sewn, her mind was intrigued and she became vulnerable to Satan’s lie. This is the same thing that Satan continues to do with man in our current age. He presents God’s laws as being restrictive instead of freeing and life-giving. As Jesus said to the Jews who believed in Him, “*If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*” (*John 8:31-32*) He also said, “*The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.*” (*John 10:10*) Jesus came so that by His life-giving Word we may live the abundant life, not be bound or imprisoned. If we abide in His Word we will be free from the snares of Satan. However, if we seek “freedom” from God’s laws, we will walk into Satan’s snares by our own doing.

Just as Eve became open to Satan’s lie by doubting, so does modern man become open to the same lie by doubting that God’s commands are freeing and life-giving. Once Satan introduced doubt in Eves’ heart, he told her the Great Lie, “*You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.*” (*Genesis 3:4-5*) In this statement are the four lies upon which this new spirituality is built. The first lie is to redefine God, “*you will be like God.*” Basically, the

first lie is the concept of pantheism. This is the belief that everything is God and God is everything. This dilutes God’s essence and makes Him merely a part of all things. In fact, proponents of this belief go on to say God does not exist outside of man; God exists only within man’s consciousness. He is not a separate sovereign being, but is the essence of man’s consciousness. Since one can define one’s consciousness, one can also define the essence of God to suit his own purposes. Instead of striving to be like God, man makes God in man’s own image. This is a reversal of the reality of creation! In *Genesis 1:26*, God makes man in His image. The lie of pantheism feeds into man’s laziness. Instead of reaching upwards to elevate ourselves to be like God, man deceives himself into believing he can bring God down to his level. Consequently, God is no longer holy. The classic definition of holy is “dedicated or devoted to the service of God.” (<http://dictionary.com>) However, if God is no longer seen as outside of ourselves then “holy” has no meaning and God only becomes holy if we perceive ourselves as being holy - another perversion of the Truth. For as God says to the Israelites, “*You shall therefore consecrate yourselves, and*

In the end, man finds that he has fled from the freeing Word of God and, of his own accord, has walked into the bondage of the enemy.

you shall be holy; for I am holy.” (*Leviticus 11:44*) We can only be holy by consecrating ourselves to God. He is the Holy One there is no holiness without Him. Any definition of holiness that is not derived from the essence of God is devoid of meaning. In essence, this lie is the deification of man; man comes to see himself as God. This is the gateway to the remaining lies of the Great Lie because if man is God then there can be no sin. Sin is any action that goes against the will of God. However, if God only exists as part of man’s consciousness then God has no will outside of man’s will, and it is logically impossible to sin.

The second lie of the Great Lie is to redefine conversion: “*your eyes will be opened.*” (*Genesis*

3:5) In order to convert to this new spirituality there is no ritual process. Since God is man’s consciousness, man only needs to “open his eyes” to this belief to become converted. It is a new consciousness, one in which man becomes aware that he is God. However, for man to be in this new consciousness, he must rise above all preconceptions and free his mind of previous ideas of right and wrong. As stated earlier, since there is no God outside of oneself there can be no sin, so one must free himself of the notion of sin so as not to feel guilty about any action. Therefore salvation from sin no longer comes via the life-giving sacrifice of Christ on the cross, but by the acknowledgement that there is no sin. Heaven is not a location to try to reach but a consciousness that one may attain in his own mind. Man becomes his own way, truth and life. Yet there is a major problem here. There is no denying that there is a spiritual world outside of ourselves that is filled with other spiritual beings. The result is that once man rejects the true God, all attempts to communicate with this spiritual world results in communication with demons. Thus man freely walks into the world of the adversary and becomes ensnared.

The third lie of the Great Lie is to redefine death: “*You will not surely die.*” (*Genesis 3:4*) Mary Ann Williamson, author of [A Course on Miracles](#) and one of the main proponents of this new spirituality, wrote that death is the central dream from which all illusions stem. This is not to say that the body does not die, but that the physical world as a whole is an illusion. The real world is the spiritual world. Along the same lines, sickness does not exist. Once again this is not a denial of the obvious fact that people develop illnesses in this world, but a belief that illness is a physical manifestation of a spiritual problem. Kenneth Wapnick, author of [Healing the Dream of Sickness](#) and a proponent of these views, states “all illness is mental illness” indicating that physical ailments

are symptoms and should not be confused with the cause. The cause of all physical ailments is a weak mind, one that has allowed guilt to infiltrate it. Allowing oneself to feel guilt is incompatible with the new consciousness. Remember, in the new consciousness man *is* God so he has divine power. Therefore, the problem is that if man allows himself to feel guilt, then he must not be God and he loses divine power and this guilt leads to physical ailment. This philosophy leads us away from the True Physician, who heals the maladies of our souls and bodies, and leads us to seek false cures.

The final lie of the Great Lie is moral relativism: “*knowing good and evil.*” (*Genesis 3:5*) This is the part of the lie that has permeated western society with the most force. It is taught in almost every college campus in America. Moral relativism is taught as tolerance. The concept is sometimes taught as a way of being accepting of other cultures, i.e., no culture is inherently better than any other and all systems of morality are equal regardless of their basis. There is no absolute morality, no good and evil, all is relative. This is the conclusion of the Great Lie. If God only exists as part

of man’s consciousness and does not exist outside of it, there is no sin and man is “free” to act in whatever way he pleases. As man “opens his eyes” to the new consciousness and separates himself from any notion of good and evil, he is completely open to all of the wicked councils of Satan. This is where Satan wants you to be.

Therefore, this new spirituality, which surrounds us in the present age, is nothing more than a repackaging of Satan’s Great Lie. He seeks to draw man little by little from the life-giving grace of God by telling him that God’s laws are restrictive. In the end, man finds that he has fled from the freeing Word of God and, of his own accord, has walked into the bondage of the enemy

Additional References:

[Interpretation of the Book of Genesis](#) by Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty

Lutzer, Erwin, [Oprah, Miracles and The New Earth: A Critique](#), Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2009.

Same Lies.
New Package.

SATAN’S LIES

The Coptic language is described by Professor Rodolphe Kasser of the University of Geneva, Switzerland as “one of the most beautiful, most cleverly structured and most musical in the world.”¹

The origin of the words Coptic and Egypt (Figure 1)

The words copt, coptic, Egypt, and Egyptian have the same origin. They are derived from one of the old names of Egypt “E-KA-Ptah” meaning *the House of the Spirit of Ptah* (E means *House*; Ka means *Spirit*; and Ptah is one of the famous Gods of Old Egypt).

Development of the Egyptian Spoken Language

According to most coptologists, the Egyptian language, as a spoken language, went through various stages starting with Old Egyptian, followed by Middle Egyptian, Late Egyptian, Demotic then Coptic. Coptic represents the final stage of the development of the Egyptian language which was the language spoken by the Egyptians until the 11th century in Northern Egypt and the 17th century in southern Egypt² when it was gradually replaced by Arabic. In the words of Cyrus Gordon,³ we have “an unbroken tradition of Egyptian texts spanning about 5000 years.

Development of the Egyptian Language Scripts (Figure 2)

The Egyptians developed the Hieroglyphic writing system around 3000 B.C.⁴ It consisted originally of signs that stood for words or ideas, but gradually each sign began to represent a syllable or sound. Hieratic, which is a simplified cursive form of hieroglyphics, was soon developed by Egyptian scribes who used it for both religious and nonreligious purposes.⁵ Around 700 B.C., demotic writing was developed. This was simpler and faster to write than hieratic. The scribes used it for correspondence and record keeping.⁵

Around 1500 B.C., the Semites developed an alphabet which is based on the Egyptian hieroglyphic system.^{4,6,7} The Phoenicians, one of the Semitic peoples, perfected an alphabet around 1000 B.C. The Greek alphabet, which is the progenitor of Roman (Latin) letters,^{4,6} was directly derived from the Phoenician alphabet.^{4,6,7} The Greeks not only took the forms of letters, they also used some Phoenician names for the letters. The first letter of the Phoenician alphabet “aleph”, meaning ox, became “alpha” in Greek. The second letter “beth”, meaning house, became “beta” in Greek.⁴

The contribution of the Coptic Alphabet to the Russian Alphabet

The current alphabet of the Russian language is known as the Cyrillic Alphabet. It was invented by Saint Cyril (826 - 869 A.D.) and Saint Methodius (815 - 884 A.D.), two Greek brothers who were missionaries in Russia during the 9th Century. They included in the Russian alphabet a letter derived from Coptic, which is the Shai, one of the 7 Coptic letters derived from Demotic.¹²

The Use of Greek Words in the Coptic Language

In the first few centuries of Christianity, the Greek language was the cultural language of the world, in much the same way as the English language is today. Greek was the language used in international councils (e.g. Ecumenical councils). The New Testament was written in Greek so it would be accessible to everybody in the known world at that time. The religious and theological terms that developed, on an international scale, were usually in Greek. Churches in all countries, including the Coptic church, borrowed the same Greek terms, such as anathema, angel, apostle, archangel, baptism, catholic, choir, cosmos, deacon, demon, evangelist, icon, logos, martyr, orthodox, patriarch, prophet, psalm, zeal, etc...

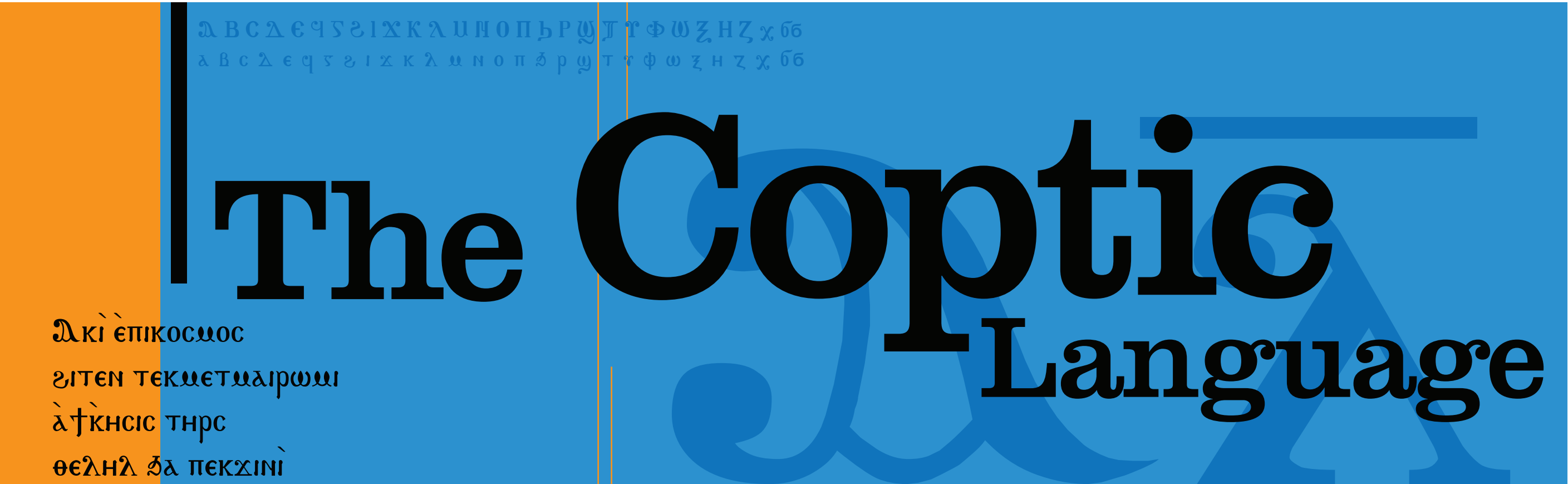
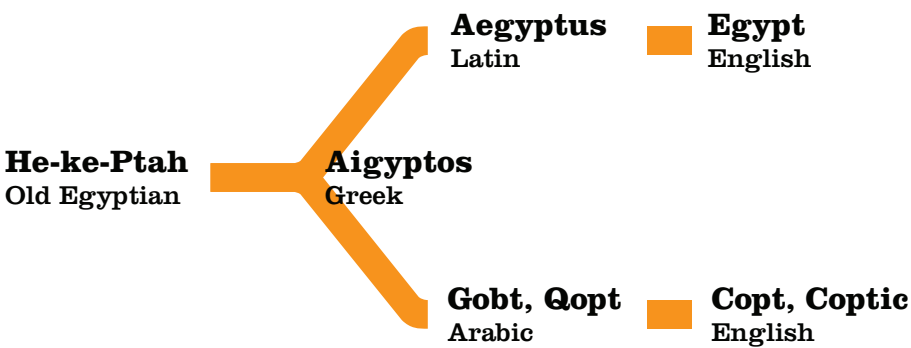


Figure 1
Origin of the words
Egypt and Coptic



The Coptic script, which is considered the last stage of the development of the Egyptian scripts, is derived from two sources. The first 25 letters of the alphabet are modified from the Greek alphabet (however, the origin of these Greek letters can be traced back to the old Egyptian Hieroglyphic script⁴) whereas the last 7 letters are a modification from Egyptian Demotic letters. (Figure 3)⁹

Based on the history of the development of the Coptic alphabet, as shown in Figure 2, it is interesting to note that the English alphabet of today can be traced back to the sign writing of ancient Egypt. In this regard, Barbara Mertz stated, “The birds and the bees of the ancient Egyptian script may have a more direct relationship to our own alphabet than we realize.”¹⁰ Davies¹¹ cites a quote by Gardiner describing this observation: “The hieroglyphs live on, though in transmuted form, within our own alphabet.”

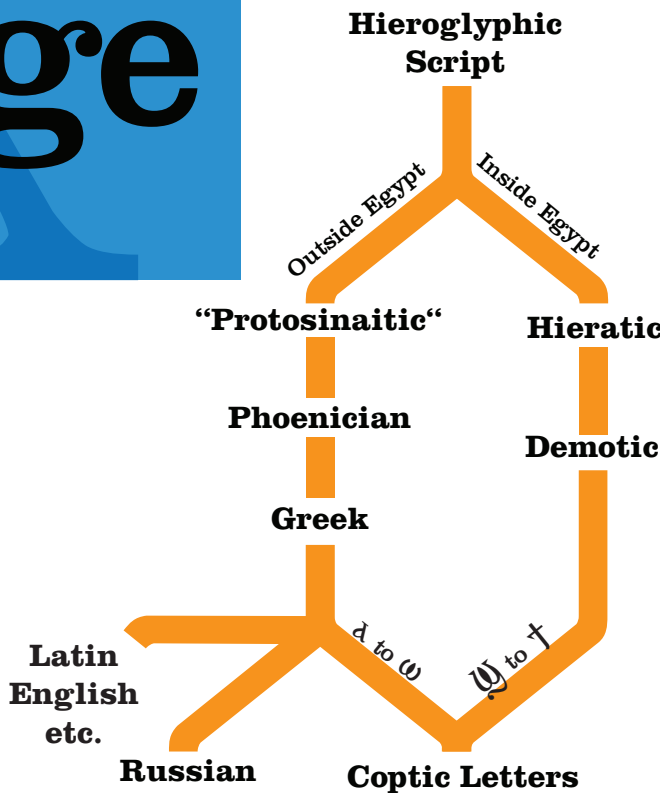


Figure 2
Development of
several alphabets
from the Egyptian
Hieroglyphic Script

The Coptic Liturgy used today is approximately 85% Coptic and 15% Greek. There is a historical reason for this fact. Saint Mark did not speak Coptic, he spoke only his native tongue (Hebrew/Aramaic) and Greek. So, when he came to Alexandria, Egypt and started his ministry, Greek was the language that he used in preaching and it was the language of the Liturgy that He handed down to his successors. This did not cause any problems since everybody in Alexandria understood Greek. The Alexandrian population at that time included 40% foreigners who only spoke Greek. The remaining 60% were Egyptians who spoke both Coptic and Greek fluently. Later, when the Church decided to translate the liturgy into Coptic, they did not want to alienate the 40% who did not speak any Coptic, so they left many Greek Hymns, such as Agios Otheos, Thoxa Patri, Khristos Anesti and some others, so that the Greek speaking foreigners living in Alexandria would still feel they belonged to the Coptic Church.

1. Egypt was the only country Jesus visited outside his home country. Coptic was the language that Jesus heard and spoke as a baby visiting Egypt with Saint Mary and Saint Joseph. Therefore, we feel that Egypt and the Coptic language were blessed through this visit.

2. Although the Coptic language, at the present time, is no longer used by a significant number of Egyptians, it still lives on in hundreds of words in the Egyptian Arabic dialect spoken today.¹³

3. Around the second century, the Bible was translated into the Coptic language by Egyptian scholars who were fluent in both Greek and Coptic. Therefore the Coptic translation is considered one of the most reliable and accurate translations available.

Letter	Hieroglyphic	Hieratic	Demotic	Coptic
Shai				
Fai				
Khai				
Hori				
Ganga				
Cheema				
Tee				

Figure 3
The origin of the last 7 letters of the Coptic alphabet

1. Kasser, R., *The Coptic Language(s)*, The Coptic Encyclopedia, Vol. 8, Atiya, A.S., ed., Macmillan Publishing Co., NY, 1991, Page 145.
2. Bishop Yoannis, *The History of the Coptic Church following the Council of Chalcedon*, (Arabic Reference), El Ra-ed Publication Corporation, Staten Island, NY 1989, Pages 48 - 50.
3. Gordon, Cyrus H., *Forgotten Scripts: Their Ongoin Discovery and Decipherment*, Dorset Press, New York, 1987, Page 23.
4. Cooley, Marianne, *The World Book Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1, World Book Inc., Chicago, 1991, Pages 382 - 383.
5. *Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1, World Book Inc., Chicago, 1991, Pages 228 - 229.
6. *Compton's Encyclopedia*, Vol. 2. E. F. Compton Company (Division of Encyclopedia Britannica), Helen Hemingway Benton, Publisher, 1974, Page 284.
7. Gelb, I.J. and Whiting, R.M., *Academic American Encyclopedia*, Vol. 20, Grolier Inc., Danby, Connecticut, 1992, Page 293.
8. Jackson, Donald, *The Story of Writing*, Taplinger Publ. Co., Inc., New York 1981, Page 26.
9. "A Reference Book in the Grammar of the Coptic Language", (Arabic Reference) Publications of the Society of Saint Mina the Miracle-Maker, Alexandria, Egypt, 1969, Page 18.
10. Mertz, Barbara, *Temples, Tombs and Hieroglyphs: A History of Ancient Egypt*, Dodd, Mead & Company, New York, 1978, Page 258.
11. Davies, W.V. *Egyptian Hieroglyphs*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, California 1987, Page 60.
12. "A Reference Book in the Grammar of the Coptic Language", (Arabic Reference) Publications of the Society of Saint Mina the Miracle-Maker, Alexandria, Egypt, 1969, Page 34.
13. Guirguis, Piseni Rizkallah, *Coptic Words in the Spoken Arabic Dialect (of Egypt)*, (Arabic Reference) Quased Kheir Publication Co., Cairo, Egypt, 1975, Pages 1 - 115.



To The Students

When you wake up in the morning,

South Africa 2010 Mission Trip May 1st - May 18th

For more information on the upcoming trip, please contact Irene Bakheet:
(850) 499-4878 or ibakheet1@yahoo.com

Under the auspices of
His Grace Bishop Youssef

The Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



"The Joy of the LORD is your strength"

Nehemiah 8:10

"Do the work of an evangelist."

2 Timothy 5:4

Make the sign of the Cross and say
The Lord's Prayer.

Say a beautiful Psalm.

Thank the Lord for keeping you safe
the night before And bringing you to
this morning.

Ask Him for what you need.

Go kiss your parents' hands. pray
the Lord's Prayer. Pray any special
prayer you would like to say.

Then get dressed and read a chapter
from the Bible.

Go to your school in peace after you

ask your parents blessing.

On your way say, "Lord Jesus Christ
keep me in peace. Lord Jesus Christ
spare me."

When you enter your classroom,
make the sign of the Cross.

Say, "Lord Jesus Christ give me un-
derstanding and wisdom."

Ask from your heart when you face
a difficult question and he will give
you understanding.

During free time, be aware of bad
company for it spoils good people.

Do not engage in useless conversa-
tion.

When you leave school REMEM-
BER TIME IS GOLD.

Always make quiet time especially
if your parents are present.

Be obedient in everything. For the
sons of obedience are blessed.

Do not tell lies for liars are the sons
of the devil.

Do not swear, get angry, or curse.

It is my prayer that you will always
apply these things to your life.

Unanswered Questions

An Article by Christine Massoud

the Wonderful Counselor that we call “Lord.”

Habakkuk continued to cry out persistently and for an extended period of time without receiving an answer. It is apparent that although God heard Habakkuk, He did not answer when the prophet wanted him to or even in the way the latter expected. God had been listening to him, but Habakkuk needed to learn to listen to God in return. Ultimately, listening to God is what praying really means. Prayer is asking God our honest questions and then listening to what He has to say, hearkening for His perspective.

As you read through the book of Habakkuk, you’ll see that God doesn’t answer all of Habakkuk’s questions. I want to tell you that God is not going to answer all of your questions either. If you knew all the answers, you would be God and you wouldn’t need God. Instead God wants to give you a perspective that will enable you to face your situation and your circumstances without knowing all of the reasons. In the end, Habakkuk learns how to worship without understanding everything that is going on. Or in other words, he learned to have faith.

Having the kind of faith that allows us to worship, despite not knowing or understanding all the answers, is pleasing to God. So what it really comes down to is deciding whether or not God is worthy of our trust. I want to tell you that the answer is a resounding “YES!” He can be trusted and is worthy of your trust. As you ask your candid questions, humbling yourself to a position where God can reveal Himself to you and enlighten you with His perspective and wisdom, *you* will find that God really can be trusted. It is perfectly

acceptable, even encouraged, to ask God “why” as long as we ask with a searching heart not a clenched fist. There is a tremendous difference between asking earnest, honest questions and making accusations or demanding that God give us the answers we want in the way we want them. You will find that when you choose to trust God, you will have chosen the way to joy and peace.

Eventually, God responded to Habakkuk’s prayer saying, “*Look among the nations and watch — Be utterly astounded! For I will work a work in your days Which you would not believe, though it were told you.*” (Habakkuk 1:5) In the Hebrew, the verb *look* is in its plural form. God is not just speaking to Habakkuk here, He is speaking to all of His people. He is essentially saying, “Y’all look. Y’all see. Not just Habakkuk, but all of you. Look and see.” So often we only see our little piece of the whole picture. We see our health, our issues, our family, our church, our country, our circumstances; and we get totally engrossed in what is happening to us because we live as if life is all about us! We have this self-centered, myopic perspective on life, seldom thinking about anything or anyone outside our limited microcosm. If we could see what God sees and know what God knows, we would be dumbfounded, awestruck even, by what is happening in our world from His point of view. God’s perspective is so infinitely greater, so radically different than ours. Recall Elisha’s servant who saw their home surrounded by the Syrian army and panicked. Elisha prayed to God to open his servant’s eyes to the truth. The servant saw the angels of God and chariots of fire surrounding the enemy (2 Kings 6:15-17). Once the servant had eyes to see the spiritual

reality, he was astonished! He was no longer in fear, no longer discouraged or depressed. If we could see the spiritual realities as God sees them, we too would wonder and be astonished.

However, what does God want Habakkuk to see? Let’s look at the second half of verse 5: “*For I will work a work in your days Which you would not believe, though it were told you.*” (Habakkuk 1:5) That verse has become one of my favorite phrases in the book of Habakkuk. Believe it. Take it by faith. God is always at work. He never slumbers or sleeps like us. He is always at work in every era, in every circumstance, in every season, and in every situation of life. God is working in our day. Whether you can see it or not, God is at work. He is not passive. On the contrary, He is present and active. He is engaged. He is involved. He is sovereign over the lives and the affairs of His people and of this world. The fact that we cannot see what He is doing does not mean that He is not working. Jesus said, “*My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.*” (John 5:17) Jesus is at work building His church. He is bringing about His kingdom. The day will come when the knowledge of the glory of the Lord will fill and cover the earth as the waters fill the sea. Until that day comes, God’s works - amazing, supernatural, and beyond human comprehension - continue to take shape. So the message here is to take heart. Have faith and be encouraged, for God *is* at work.

Someone recently handed me a verse that quickly became one of my favorites: “*Who among you fears the LORD? Who obeys the voice of His Servant? Who walks in darkness and has no*

light?” (Isaiah 50:10) This verse describes someone who is trying to please and serve the Lord but cannot comprehend what is going on. So what is God’s response? “*Let him trust in the name of the LORD And rely upon his God.*” (Isaiah 50:10) We must walk by faith, not by sight. An airplane pilot does not fly by sight. He trusts the plane’s instruments - even when he cannot distinguish where he is going. Trust the One who controls the instruments. Know that God is at work in our day and in our churches, desperate as our circumstances may seem. God is at work now as in the days of Habakkuk. God is at work in countries that appear to be closed to the Gospel. He has a heart of compassion and mercy that longs for nations to repent and come to faith in Christ. Take the servant’s example and look among the nations and see. Wonder and be astounded. God is at work!

I hope that this article will inspire you to open your Bible to the book of Habakkuk and read it for yourself, making notes, looking for patterns, trying to understand what God is saying to you. You’ll get so much more out of the Scripture if you will dig into it for yourself. Let the Holy Spirit be your guide. Now, let’s pray. “Father, we thank You that You are at work in our day, that You never cease bringing glory to Yourself and redeeming this fallen world. You are making all things new. You are at work where we can see and where we can’t see. So help us, Lord, when we can’t see - not to judge you by what we can see - but to trust that what You have said is true and that You are always at work to accomplish Your purposes in our world. May that bring us joy. May that bring us wonder and amazement! Amen.”

A biblical prophet had some serious questions about God’s goodness. He was a man who had a lot of questions, a man who prayed constantly and fervently about his concerns without seeming to get any response. In fact, the situation seemed to get worse. And when God finally did reveal Himself, His answers made no sense at all to his human thinking. The man’s name is Habakkuk. There are only three chapters in the book of Habakkuk and they consist of an intimate exchange between God and the prophet Habakkuk. This profound conversation reads like a prayer journal, giving us a glimpse into the prophet’s heart, as well as God’s.

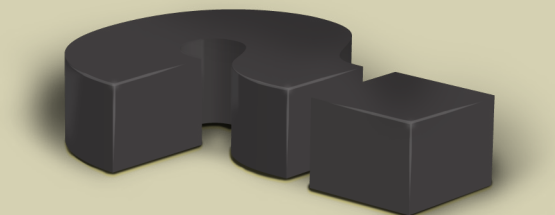
How many of you would say that you have had a situation in your life that you have prayed about for a long time, seemingly to no avail?

You’ve read passages in the Bible promising that God will hear and answer prayer. But isn’t it true, if we are honest, that sometimes our experiences seem to contradict those promises? We have all had moments when we questioned God’s presence because He didn’t answer when we asked for His help. Anyone can maintain their trust in God through short-term situations. But when you have long-term suffering and you call out, “How long, Lord? I keep crying out to You, Lord, but You still don’t do anything!” faith becomes more difficult to sustain.

The dark moments of our lives are very similar to those which Habakkuk experienced. He cried out to God and, in essence, he said that unless he gets some answers to his troubling questions, he cannot

trust God. Throughout his book, he shapes his perspective on what is happening around him. He goes directly to the Lord saying, “*O LORD, how long shall I cry, And You will not hear? Even cry out to You, ‘Violence!’ And You will not save.*” (Habakkuk 1:2) You see, Habakkuk knows that God is the One who is in charge. He knows that the Lord is the only One who can actually address his worries so he rightly calls to Him in reverence saying, “O Lord.” Then he presents his concerns, “*Why do You show me iniquity, and cause me to see trouble? For plundering and violence are before me; There is strife, and contention arises. Therefore the law is powerless, And justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous; Therefore perverse judgment proceeds.*” (Habakkuk

1:3–4) Habakkuk clearly has a problem with the way God was running the universe, or rather, the way it seemed He was not running it. Habakkuk directs his prayer to the only One who can do something about the situation. This is a pattern we can emulate. Think about what’s going on in your life and honestly ask the Lord, “Lord, what is going on here? What are You trying to say? What are You trying to do?” Pray about that situation saying, “O Lord, what do I do? What’s Your perspective?” Seek Him. Listen to Him. We need to remind ourselves that ultimately the peace and the perspective and the answers we need to life’s mysteries will not be found by going to a counselor or therapist or by reading a book or by pouring our hearts out to a trusted friend. They can only come from the wisdom of



Spiritual Dry Spells

A traveler wanders the dry land preoccupied with his thoughts, the dry heat weighs down every step of his aimless journey. Why doesn't he return to the oasis from which he came?

At times, the soul finds itself thirsty but there is not enough water to quench its thirst. We, much like this traveler, often drift away from the spring of life and wander around looking for hope. These spiritual dry spells are often due to the challenges we face in life: personal failures, the loss of a loved one, or other difficult circumstances. In these times, we need to trust in the power and blessings of PRAYER! Saint Ambrose of Milan refers to prayer as "the wing on which the soul flies to heaven."

Prayer is Heaven in the heart; it is the kingdom of God within us. Many times we find ourselves in spiritual wars where our relationship with God is weakened and daily temptations overcome us; so, we give up on prayer and lose hope. However, it is comforting to know that we are not alone and that many great saints had their faith tested too. The difference, however, is that they prayed until God gave them strength. King David is a great witness of the power of prayer. Among all people, God had chosen King David to serve Him. Moreover, God called him

His Beloved, *"I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will."* (Acts 13:22) Nevertheless, King David had his weaknesses and sinned greatly before God (2 Samuel 11). However, he did not stop praying but instead humbly offered supplications to God asking for forgiveness. King David knew that in order to see God, he had to have a pure soul which can be obtained through prayer. A hermit once said, "No one can see his face reflected in the muddy water; so the soul cannot pray to God with contemplation unless it is first cleansed of harmful thoughts." When a person takes responsibility for his mistakes and prays with humility, his prayers become effective and God supplies the power and strength to persevere. Saint John Chrysostom reflected on prayer saying: "Prayer is a great weapon, a rich treasure, a wealth that is never exhausted, an undisturbed refuge, a cause of tranquillity, the root of a multitude of blessings and their source."

Jabez was a simple man in the Bible who prayed to God daily to

help him with his responsibilities saying, *"Oh that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain!"* So God granted him what he requested." (1 Chronicles 4:10) When the pressures of our daily responsibilities cause us to become stressed and we mix up our priorities. Our worries take hold of us and we try to plan our future without God's help. It is at this point that we need to remember Jabez. What is noteworthy about Jabez's prayer is that he prayed to God for support and guidance throughout his life. The result: his prayers became a blessing to him and his family. Prayer vigilance is a source of purification for our hearts and minds. It allows us to focus on the center of life: God. When we focus on Christ, our worries dissipate knowing that when God is in control the best always happens to His children. Our fathers, the desert monks, teach the importance of the prayer, "O my Lord Jesus Christ help me, a sinner." Daily repetition of this short yet powerful prayer will

help us remember to not be fearful for God always knows how to take care of what belongs to Him. As St. John Climacus once said, "When a man has found the Lord, he no longer has to use words when he is praying, for the Spirit Himself will intercede for him with groans that cannot be uttered."

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego followed God with their hearts and sought Him daily. They strove to keep His commandments and trusted His presence among them despite their captivity. Therefore, it was not a surprise to hear them calling upon God during their time of need. Now, let us stop for a minute and meditate about their situation. It would have been normal to want to follow the crowd, and it is an even stronger instinct to try to survive and live! So why did they refuse the king's order? What gave them the courage to obey God's Word even unto death? My friends, it was the power of prayer and the trust they had in His promises. *"Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me."* (Psalm 50:15) The three saintly youths trained themselves, through the power of prayers, to overcome their difficulties. They trusted God's will for their lives and drew so close to

Him through their prayers that even the possibility of death would not separate them from Him. There is indeed power in prayer, power that can change hearts, open eyes, crumble mountains, and put out fires! *"The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much."* (James 5:16) Let us seek God daily so that through prayer we gain the virtues of trust, love, and patience. When we pray passionately and purposefully, seeking God's will, God responds powerfully!

Humility is an important factor in effective prayer for it leads to constant prayer that results in spiritual growth. A humble soul always remembers his sins; therefore, the basis for his prayer is the mercy of God. As a result, prayer takes us to a point where God continually imparts grace upon us, by which we are increasingly conformed into His image. This is what makes our prayer fruitful. Therefore, let us obey St. John Climacus' words on prayer saying, "Make the effort to raise up, or rather, to enclose your mind within the words of your prayer; and if, like a child, it gets tired and falters, raise it up again. The mind, after all, is naturally unstable, but the God who can do everything can also give it firm endurance. Persevere in this, therefore, and do

not grow weary; and He who sets a boundary to the sea of the mind will come to you too during your prayer and will say, *"This far you may come, but no farther."* (Job 38:11) The Spirit cannot be bound, but where He is found everything yields to the Creator of the Spirit. The beginning of prayer is the expulsion of distractions from the very start by a single thought; the middle stage is the concentration on what is being said or thought; its conclusion is rapture in the Lord."

When you drift away from the source of life remember to pray. Whatever cross you bear, trust that God is always ready to answer your call. When you lose hope because your plans have come to nothing, remember God is your All-in-All and has better plans for you. You are His child whom He will take care of. Pray and trust in His power and the blessings in store for you. When the world turns against you and Satan tempts you, do not be afraid. Always trust that God will deliver you as He delivered the three saintly youths. Meanwhile, do not ever give up hope but rather pray in humility, for through prayer we will regain the image of God in us. Last but not least, do not forget to P.U.S.H. - Pray Until Something Happens!

LET OTHERS LISTEN

God's Word
Beautiful
As Ever

Why should we evangelize? The best reason to evangelize is because Our Lord commanded us to do so. Additionally, evangelization was the secret behind the First Church's success in spreading the Gospel. By spreading God's Word today, we help people fight the evil in this world.

Furthermore, other religions continue to spread throughout the West (e.g. Far East religions, Islam, Atheism, and cults). Concurrently, modern Christian churches have lost their connection to the historical church, which has resulted in a "spiritual void" within these churches. In this article, we will consider our role as evangelists in view of Our Lord's commandment and the first church's response.

Why evangelize? First and foremost, it is Our Lord's commandment. Our Lord Jesus Christ's last words on earth were, *"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you."* (Matthew 28:19-20) The spirit and essence of the New Testament is summed up in this verse, *"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."* (John 3:16) Thus, God's heart is tied to the salvation of each of His children. He offered the highest price anyone could pay, His life. He is looking for us to spread the great news of His salvation. Notice the words, "whoever believes." His love and interest is in the salvation of everyone.

The intense desire of the Lord to save every individual is apparent in *Luke 15*, where He spoke three parables to the people: "The Lost Sheep," "The Lost Coin," and "The Lost Son." In each parable, we see that God's heart is focused on reaching out to the lost. Therefore, it is the Lord's desire to find someone like us to carry forth the Gospel's joyful message, the Word of Life and the Light of Salvation, to those lost ones. Take a look at this striking verse, *"there would be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance."* (Luke 15:7) Think about how much joy would result in Heaven over the course of your life if you work as an evangelizer!

Over 25 years ago, an old wise servant named Ayaad used to lecture in the Sunday school servants meeting that I attended. Ayaad was a truly spiritual person. His words always inflamed our hearts with the

love of our Lord and His children. His tears were a great witness to the burning flames of love for the lost sheep in his heart. One day Ayaad told us this story:

"A Sunday school servant saw a person entering the church one day, whom he had not seen in the church before. He ran to him and welcomed him warmly. The person looked at the servant in amazement and asked him if he knew him. The servant answered, "Yes, my beloved I have been praying for this moment for twenty years."

These were Ayaad's last words before his eyes filled with tears and he sat down. His words touched our hearts deeply that day because he was speaking from the bottom of his heart.

Dear friend, we need to care about the salvation of others as we care about our own salvation. Imagine on the last day, if you find out that your name is not written in the Book of Life. Think about it. Would you like this to happen you? If not, then we should help others, through evangelism, to have their names written in the Book of Life. We need to have the love of the Lord for the lost sheep in our hearts as we evangelize to the best of our abilities.

"And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved." (Acts 2:47) Evangelism is the secret behind the first church's success. Historians estimate that the early church was growing at an annual rate of 40%. This is why Christianity reached most of the civilized known world over a very short period of time. The Holy Spirit was working strongly because people just like us were ready to follow the Lord, no matter what the price - including death. They truly believed that their lives were no longer theirs but rather the life of Christ in them. They no longer lived for themselves but for the Lord, *"to live is Christ, and to die is gain."* (Philippians 1:21) Now, I would like to ask you, how much joy did they have? Was it an earthly joy that goes away after a while, or a heavenly joy that grew into more inner peace, more boldness to evangelize, and more joy? I think the latter answer is the correct one. I will not hesitate

to say that the source of our sadness is the lack of our life commitment to God, and also the lack of our love to the lost sheep. Can we compare our faith and love to theirs? I would be the first to confess my weak faith. But let us courageously confess these sins and ask God to help us not live for ourselves anymore. Let our work in evangelism and our love for our brothers and sisters erase these years of ignorance! God needs people who put Him first in their life because He is their life. Away from God, we have no life, something all of us experience repeatedly. Isn't it time to surrender our will and our life to God and choose life instead of the spiritual death we live in now?

Are you eager to start to evangelize? Although we are weak and we do not know that much about evangelism, God promised that He would be with us *"always, even to the end of the age."* (Matthew 28:20) My friend, no matter how old you are or how much you know or how strong or weak you are, put your life in God's hands and let His Spirit strengthen you, complete every weakness you have, and lead you. But make evangelism a serious commitment in your life. Make it as one of your everyday necessities.

we need to care about the salvation of others as we care about our own salvation

Make it a one-time surrender to God. Decide in your heart that this is the beginning of a life that you have longed to live. Decide that there is no turning back, by the grace of God, the One Who loves you dearly and needs your salvation first. I urge you to make this decision.

When it comes to evangelism, there is no more joyful news than what you read in "An Introduction Into Theology of Mission," by H.G. Bishop Antonious Markos and published by the Coptic Bishopric of African Affairs, Johannesburg, South Africa, ISBN 977-19-41372, 2001. I refer to Bishop Markos as "The Father of Evangelism in the Coptic Church in the Twentieth Century." I highly encourage you to read Bishop Markos' book in which he discusses the source and effect of evangelism in the early church, the church of the Apostles.

What happens *after* a raging spiritual battle has come to an end and how should we proceed? In reality, there is no “after” when it comes to spiritual warfare; there is only “between.” Our lives often consist of a series of spiritual clashes, like a driver advancing through traffic lights, exerting his energy at each struggle and recuperating in the interludes. With regard to our spiritual lives, scripture reminds us to never sleep in this war against Satan. It portrays Satan as a predator who quietly creeps about waiting for our heads to nod and our eyes to droop so that he may lead us into evil.

Life is like an arduous journey in which we are constantly being presented with temptations from the Devil. However, we can take solace in the fact that God has

allowed us to venture on this dangerous journey. We must meet our challenges and bear our pains; if we do not face these tribulations our existence will become nothing more than a burden. One of the greatest feats we can achieve is to *accept* our mission. A great act of courage is to cheerfully go about overcoming life’s difficulties to the best of our abilities.

Albert Einstein once made a notable comment, “Life is like riding a bicycle: you must always move forward in order to keep your balance.” Now Mr. Einstein was no religious mystic, but he did manage to capture the essence of the spiritual journey - *we must never lose our momentum*. In a brilliant passage about our spiritual race, St. Paul tells the Philippians that he must leave behind all of the useless dust of his

past, and *press forward* to the prize placed before him by Christ Jesus: “*Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*” *Philippians 3:13,14* In essence, he is telling us to never look back at a past full of sins that have already been forgiven, but to only keep moving forward towards a future of salvation.

Lorenzo Scupoli, in his book *Unseen Warfare*, states that the path of spiritual life differs from an ordinary journey in two important respects. If a traveler on an ordinary journey halts temporarily, he loses nothing of what he has already gained; but if a traveler on

the path of virtue stops for awhile, he loses much of the virtue he worked so hard to acquire. Good moral qualities can fade over time and eventually disappear if they are not continually replenished through strenuous efforts. Secondly, the further a traveler progresses on an ordinary journey, the more tired he becomes. However, as a traveler progresses on the spiritual path, his strength becomes continuously replenished until he feels a terrific surge of energy, like a bonfire that has been fed a stream of kerosene.

“*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.*” (*Ephesians 6:10*) In the end, there is no power but God’s power, for all spiritual warfare must be supported by earnest prayer. The only time a person will truly feel victory over a particular sin is when he feels God’s strong hand lifting him up to overcome it. We might feel as though we wield the sword for a time; and in slaying the mighty dragons we may begin to rejoice in our own arm until we realize that it was God holding both hand and sword, guiding us as a mother guides a child’s hands when writing his first rough letters. The Savior is prepared to save us...He is waiting for our call.

Spiritual Warfare Series Part 4

The Journey

The BOOK OF GENESIS

CHAPTER 1	CHAPTER 2	CHAPTER 3
1. Were the six days of Creation literal 24-hour days? Why?	1. Why did Adam call his mate “woman”?	1. After Adam sinned why God did not want him to eat from the tree of life?
2. Give verses in chapter one, which proves that, the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were all, involved in the Creation.	2. Where was the Garden of Eden?	2. How did Adam and Eve realize they were naked?
CHAPTER 4	CHAPTER 5	CHAPTER 6
1. Why did God not accept Cain’s offering?	1. Who was Enoch?	1. How was Noah able to bring the animals into the ark?
2. Of whom was Cain afraid?	2. What happens when a person defies the world and walks with God?	2. Who were the daughters of man?
CHAPTER 7	CHAPTER 8	CHAPTER 9
1. How long did Noah remain in the Ark?	1. How long did Noah remain in the Ark?	1. How long did Noah remain in the Ark?
2. Why take more clean than un-clean animals into the Ark?	2. Why take more clean than un-clean animals into the Ark?	2. Why take more clean than un-clean animals into the Ark?

Bible Study

Turkey & Greece
2010 Pilgrimage
July 31st - Aug. 10th

In the Footsteps of St. Paul and the
Seven Churches of Revelation

For more information on the upcoming
trip, please contact Irene Bakheet:
(480) 206-7740 or turkeygreece2010@yahoo.com

Under the auspices of
His Grace Bishop Youssef

The Coptic
Orthodox Diocese
of the Southern
United States

Subscribe Now!
@ www.suscopts.org/mightyarrows/



Events & Activities

WTL High School Conventions

Dec. 21–24 2009
[Boys-Panama City, FL]
[Girls-Destin, FL]

WWF College Winter Convention

Dec. 25–28 2009
[Panama City, FL]

TCL Graduate Convention

Jan. 15–18 2010
[FL]

2010 Missionary Trip to South Africa

May 1–18 2010
[Africa]

2010 Pilgrimage to Turkey & Greece – The Footsepts of St. Paul and the Seven Churches of the Book of Revelation

July 31 – Aug. 10 2010
[Turkey, Greece]

Pre-Marital & Newlywed Program

Any couple planning to marry within the year must attend at least one retreat hosted by the SUS Diocese. Newlyweds are also encouraged to attend.

Jan. 22–24 2010 [FL]

Feb. 5–7 2010 [TX]

www.suscopts.org/programs/pre-marital/

Help Other People Excel

Through advancement in Education, Finance, Employment, Medical, Needs, Newcomers, etc. Each case is studied by His Grace and an appointed committee.
www.suscopts.org/programs/social-services/

St. Verena Resource Ministry

Do you need help or resources from knowledgeable professionals in our Coptic Orthodox community? Place your request here: www.suscopts.org/svrm/assistance.html
If you are still a student, you can serve by volunteering as a tutor. If you are a graduate and wish to volunteer, register as a consultant in your professional field or area in which you could help.
www.suscopts.org/svrm/volunteers.html



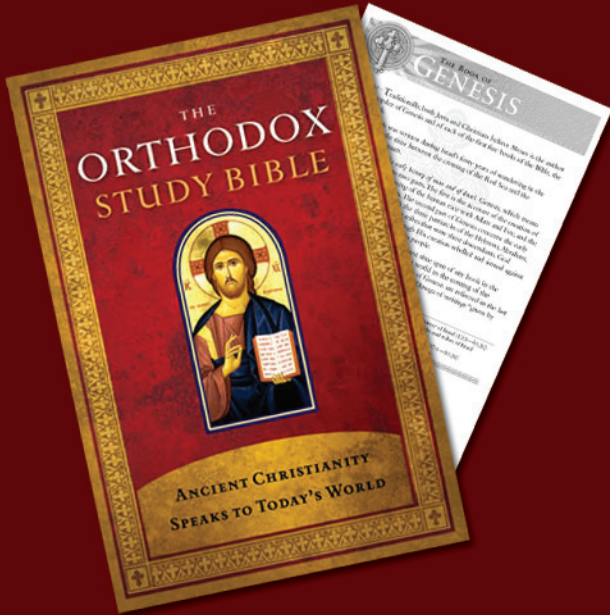
Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States, 2009 Evangelism Conference. Attended by over 180 persons from all over the SUS Diocese and other regions and countries. This event was broadcast via live stream on the Diocese website and was watched in the US, Canada, Europe, and the Middle East. Photo courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. Ghabbour, St. George, Tampa FL. From left to right, Fr. Shenouda Kalleeny (St. Mary & Archangel Michael, Oviedo FL), H.G. Bishop Youssef of Bolivia, Fr. Paisail Altchul (Serbian Orthodox, Kansas), & Fr. Daoud Tawadrous (St. Mary & Archangel Michael, Oviedo FL).

Condolences

On behalf of the Mighty Arrows Magazine staff and readers, the priests and servants, and the entire Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States, we offer our deepest condolences to the Awad Family. We pray for God's mercy and solace to comfort them for the loss of their loved ones. May the Lord repose the souls of these faithful children of God in the arms of our fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.



The first ever full-length Orthodox Study Bible in English presents the Bible of the early church and the church of the early Bible



The Orthodox Study Bible is the fruit of over twenty years of labor by many of the best Orthodox Christian theologians of our time. This long-awaited single volume brings together an original translation of the Old Testament from the Septuagint with the classic Orthodox Study Bible: New Testament and Psalms. Here, by the grace of God, you will find the living water of His Word with comprehensive study guides and teachings that bring to our modern world the mind of the ancient Christian Church.

to preorder or for more info go to
<http://orthodoxstudybible.com/>