



ST. MARK'S FESTIVAL
2012

GRADE 9-12

BE TRANSFORMED
+ BY THE RENEWING OF YOUR MIND

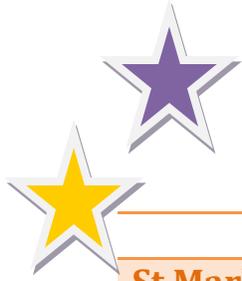


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Be Transformed

St. Mark's Festival 2012 Anthem

I fear my heart has changed after a shiny world
How did my way become very twisted and curled?!

Reform me back, O Lord, to your image, I pray!
Come work your way through a heart long gone astray } x2

Come live within me, transform me, renew the mind
So I can live my life truly as your child

Give me the strength to change the inside of me first
My soul becomes so free to the world no longer thirsts } x2
to the world no longer thirsts

Be Transformed

Many times people think about change in their lives and its necessity for the improvement of their lives. People may think about changing to improve their health or financial situation or living conditions.

This change is good, but after all, it is temporal. Radical change, on the other hand, is a change from the roots; a change for the present and the future, temporal and eternal.

*“Change is a feature of life, everything is evolving and changing.
You can say that change is the thing that is constant.” St. Makarius*



There are 2 kinds of people...What kind of person are you?

The Contented

Happy with what they have and do not see a need for change.



The Adventurous

Loves change and thinks change is healthy.

Healthy change is not a superficial change, but a fundamental change from the inside, as St. Paul said **“Be transformed by the renewing of your mind” Romans 12:2**

I- Elements of Change

St Paul gives us 4 elements of this fundamental change

1. The renewing of our minds with repentance

2. Membership in the Body of Christ

3. Using our gifts in service

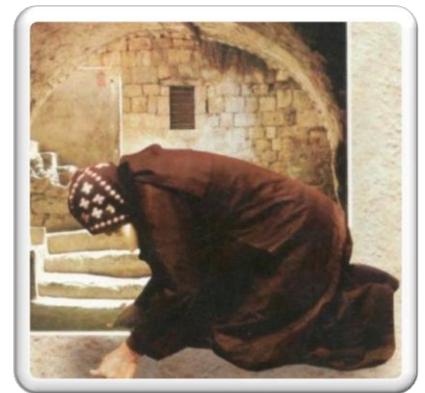
4. Faithfully witnessing in our society

1. Renewing of the mind with repentance:

The Greek word “Metania” means change of mind. Meta = change, nos= mind.

This means that the repentant is a person that thought about the consequences of sin and separation from God, and realized that sin:

- a- Destroys the spirit: since it separates me from God
- b- Destroys the thought: it becomes dark and scattered
- c- Destroys the soul: instinct and desires rebel against us
- d- Destroys the body: addiction is an example
- e- Destroys relationships



However, holiness builds the spirit (we get filled with God), the mind (enlightened by the Holy Bible), the soul (controlled with spiritual struggle and by grace), the body (kept away from sin), and relationships (if we are successful spiritually, we will also be socially successful)

2. Membership in the Body of Christ (the Church):

With faith, baptism, and repentance; we become members of the body. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the head of it, with His unconditional love, and unlimited powers; the saints are the members who are in heaven, who became our role models and intercessors; and the believers are the ones here on earth, we live in communion through the Eucharist.

“For we, though many are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that One Bread.” 1 Corinthians 10:17-

WE ALL HELP OTHER MEMBERS FOR THE GOOD OF THE WHOLE BODY.

3. Gifts are for serving the Church:

St. Paul tells us about 12 gifts that are given by the Lord to the members of His Holy Body: **prophecy, ministry, teaching, exhortation, giving, leadership, showing mercy, brotherly love, worship, distributing to the saints, and hospitality.**



- Every member of the body has a vital role in building the whole body.

We cooperate despite our differences, and are united despite diversity. (1 Corinthians 12)

4. Faithfully witnessing in our society:

Christianity does not isolate us from society but sends us as messengers of love, peace, and goodness.

St. Paul is teaching us this through these verses in Romans 12:

“Given to hospitality” (13), “Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men” (17),

“If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men” (18),

“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” (21)

II- How I Can Change

The Holy Bible and the Orthodox Church teach us that change will occur through personal striving and divine grace.

1. PERSONAL STRIVING: This is manifested in different ways...

a. **Sincerity:** The Lord Christ said to the man with the infirmity *“Do you want to be made well.” John 5:6.*

The Holy Spirit reproves me when I sin, but do I want to get rid of my sins and live for the Lord? The Spirit works in me, but I have to respond. The Lord Christ says *“Behold, I stand at the door and knock.” Rev 3:20;* and waits for me to open and let Him in so He can come and dine with me.

b. **Making an effort:** It is necessary to make an effort in...

• **Keeping the senses pure:** what I listen to... what I say... and what I watch...

• **Good relationships:** salvation is impossible in the middle of bad company

• **Striving against sin:** by staying away from circumstances that can lead to sin

• **If I fall I will get up again:** don't stay in sin but repent and confess to my father of confession to receive an absolution and guidance

c. **Spiritual Satisfaction:** *“A satisfied soul loathes the honeycomb.” Proverbs 27:7*

I can be satisfied by the means of grace such as prayers and praises, the Holy Bible, partaking in the communion, spiritual readings, spiritual meetings, fasting and mutually beneficial friendships, etc...

d. **Spiritual watchfulness:** by watching my senses and being watchful for the war and being prepared with the weapons (Ephesians 6)

2. GRACE OF GOD: Human are limited beings. We need God to save us because He is unlimited in His love, wisdom, and power. Therefore when we are filled with the means of grace, we can say with St. Paul: *“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” Philippians 4:13*

The Grace of God:

- **Justifies:** through the blood of Christ who carried our sins on the cross and paid the price of sin instead of us.
- **Saves:** the Lord saves us from sin through repentance and confession.
- **Sanctifies:** The Holy Spirit abides in us and we become holy temples for Him through the Chrismation.
- **Glorifies:** we become children of God and at the end of days, we will have heavenly bodies and will live with Him forever and be heirs in His kingdom.

Thus with striving and the grace of God, we can change and become better!!





Careful...Bump Ahead!

It is good to ask for change, but it's also important to start by changing ourselves

***“And why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye,
but do not consider the plank in your own eye?” Matthew 7:3***

Our Lord Jesus Christ warns us about being judgmental of others. It is *so much easier* to see sin in others than it is to see it in ourselves. Chances are good that if you see a sinful behavior or attitude in another person that irritates you, you yourself, to some degree, probably exhibit that same behavior. Before you go pointing fingers at someone else (as a Pharisee would), examine yourself very carefully.

Notice the great contrast our Lord Jesus Christ uses in Matthew 7:3: “And why do you look at the *speck* in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye?” If we have a critical heart, we will find and judge people for small offenses all the while ignoring our own, much larger offenses against God! Our Lord Jesus Christ tells us simply: **deal with your own sin before you try and help others with theirs.**

If we don’t, others will see our hypocrisy. It’s pretty hard to miss a plank sticking out of someone’s eye! Again, none of this is to say that we should not approach our brothers and sisters in Christ if we feel the Lord is leading us to speak to them about a behavior, sin, or attitude that is not reflecting the Lord. **But we must do so carefully, in prayer, humbly and with love.** If our attitude is one of condemnation then we will do absolutely no good. See Gal. 6:1-5 and James 5:19-20.

“Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who *are* spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.” Galatians 6:1

Watch your heart, **do not have a critical heart,**

Only God can truly and rightly judge others, for only He can see the heart and motive of a person.



“Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.” 1 Corinthians 10:12

Purity- Is it Possible?

There are two rooms in separate areas of a large building that have curtains instead of doors. Both rooms are filled with the finest of jewels. The owner of the jewels is always present in the building but wishes to have each of these rooms closely guarded, since there are a lot of people in the building on a day-to-day basis, and a curtain does little to stop thieves. He posts one guard per room, and tells each of them to stand outside of the curtain until he tells them they are relieved of their duty. Before the owner leaves them to their assignment, he promises that each guard will receive the contents of the room, the finest jewels he is protecting as payment for his service, but only if he fulfills his duty. *Only one* of the guards knows what lies behind the curtain. The owner leaves to attend to other business and does not return until two days later. He finds only one guard left standing. Which guard do you think was still at his post? Why? What do you think happened to the unguarded valuables?



It is very important to understand what purity means, until we appreciate the *value* of what we are protecting, we are much more likely to fail in our attempts to remain pure in a God-glorifying way. Without that understanding, we will be more likely to let down our guard, and the treasure will be stolen away by those who are not meant to have it.

WHAT IS PURITY?

Purity—it's much more than just abstaining from sex before marriage. It's a way of life. In 1 Timothy 4:12–16, the Apostle Paul instructed Timothy, the young preacher, to strive for purity in all areas of his life—including speech, conduct, love, and faith—so that Timothy's ministry would not be despised by his hearers. As Christian youth we desperately need to be inspired to live pure lives—to be a remnant of purity in our generation and bring glory to our Creator and Savior.

A person who lives in purity lives in Jesus Christ and has the power of the Holy Spirit working in their heart. If you are truly pure in Christ then you are the temple of the Holy Spirit. Purity is only possible with the grace of God. Do not rely on your efforts alone, but pray and ask for the Grace of God to purify your heart, soul, mind and senses.

HOW CAN I DEVELOP PURITY?

1. **First, we must understand what God's perspective of purity is.** "teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age." Titus 2:12. God wants us to live righteously and to live like God even in today's world. To live righteously you should choose activities and friends that will encourage you to live purely.
2. **"Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity." 2 Timothy 2:19.** St Paul says it simply 'depart' meaning you should leave the sin, say good bye to sinful activities and run from evil. Many youth enjoy hanging out in the mall, beach or other popular places, wherever you go ask yourself "is there something here that I should not be hanging around, something I should not be seeing, something I should not be doing. When God is First in your life, then living purely will be your priority. "you also be holy in all *your* conduct" 1 Peter 1:15.
3. **Surrender your mind to God!** The battle of purity begins in your mind; your thought must be surrendered fully to God. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." Christian youth need to present themselves to God for God's service and design. If we want to live right before God we need to say "Here I am Lord, I am ready to Serve You" In order to give of ourselves in this way, it's a process that involves the mind and your thoughts. Not only does your mind belong to God, but all of you belong to God. "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. You are the temple of God; your mind is the door to God's temple.

With our bodily temples we are to worship and serve God. This cannot be accomplished sin and filth in your mind. When our Lord Jesus Christ cleansed the Temple, He drove out all that was evil and unacceptable from God's temple. Apply this to your own life! What is in your life and in your mind that you need to drive out? Decide for yourself, will I live for God and depart from sinful activities and evil thoughts or will I serve myself. Proverbs 23:7 say "For as he thinks in his heart, so is he." What are you reading? What are you watching? What do you day dream about? It should only be God honoring things. Philippians 4:8 says "Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy--meditate on these things."



THE IMPORTANCE OF PURITY

1. **We were created in the image of God and to grow in His likeness.** St. Peter tells us, "...but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, 'Be holy, for I am holy'" (1 Peter 1:15-16).

2. **Our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.** St. Paul says, "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own" (1 Corinthians 6:19).

What would you do if you saw someone take the paten and chalice, which are consecrated for the Holy Communion, and that person was eating and drinking food out of them? Would you not stop this person from doing such an unholy act? Just as the paten and chalice are consecrated and dedicated for the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ during the Holy Divine Liturgy, our bodies being the temple of the Holy Spirit are consecrated and dedicated for God only. That is why we cannot defile our bodies through

3. **Purity is a divine commandment.** St. Paul tells Timothy, "Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace, with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Timothy 2:22). So, simply put, we need to keep ourselves pure because it is a divine commandment.

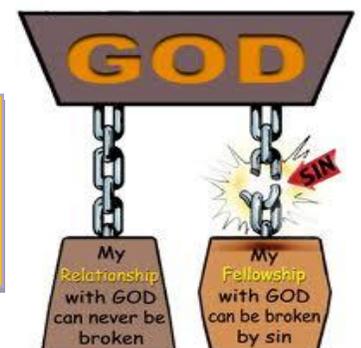
4. **Purity is the way to success and prosperity.** There are many examples in the Bible of people who maintained their purity and were successful. Likewise, there are many who did not maintain their purity and were defeated and unsuccessful in their endeavors. Review each of these stories and note the success, failures, and sin that lead to destruction.

- Joseph, Jacob's son
- Daniel and the 3 Young Men
- The people at the time of the Great Flood
- People in Sodom and Gomorrah (prior to their destruction)
- David
- Samson

5. **Purity gives a person health and strength.** Those who are weak are enslaved by their desires and instincts. Those who practice a life of purity develop a strong will and are able to say no to temptations of all kind!

6. **Purity will lead to a successful marriage in the future.** Those who keep their purity and virginity until they are married are the ones who have successful marriages. Why? These experiences before marriage will affect the relationship between a husband and a wife in a negative way. They will be unable to differentiate between the pure bed of marriage and the impure bed of sin. These two experiences become confused together, and this will lead to failure in marriage. All the relationships before marriage are lustful and selfish relationships. However, in marriage, we find agape love, a sacrificial love.

Remember, if you are content or satisfied with God, you will despise sin and its pleasure. If you are stuffed, you will refuse to eat even the most scrumptious of foods. If you are hungry or starving, you will eat anything that is placed before you.



FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT:

What should you do if you are tempted? You need to fight the good fight as St. Paul did. He tells us, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing” (2 Timothy 4:7-8). Fighting the good fight requires resisting the devil. “Therefore submit to god. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you” (James 4:7-8). If a stray dog comes to you and you feed him, he will continue to come back to you for more food. However, if you kick the dog and do not give him food, he will leave with his tail between his legs and never come back. This is what must be done with the devil when he comes to tempt you. Hit him with the sign of the cross and make him run away with his tail between his legs. Do not give him a place in your mind or heart. Fight against the internal thoughts and external offenses because temptation can be internal or external.

HOW CAN WE “FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT?”

Be watchful. Do not let down your guard and be on the lookout for temptation. Listen to internal alarms that warn you of danger. Many homes have alarm systems. This is a watch for the first trigger of attack. When a thief tries to attack, the alarm goes off. You must have a very strong spiritual alarm system that is very sensitive to the attacks of Satan. The Lord tells his disciples, “Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matthew 26:41; Mark 14:38). Without watchfulness, it will be easy to fall into temptation.

1. **Run and escape.** “Flee sexual immorality.” (1 Corinthians 6:18). If a fire alarm goes off, what do we do? We run and escape. Similarly, when the spiritual alarm goes off, we must run and escape. Our spiritual alarm is our conscience. Sometimes when the alarm goes off, we take the battery out. We do the same when we try to suppress our conscience so it will not bother us anymore. Run to a safe place, a place of refuge, through prayer. Listen to your conscience.
2. **Do not negotiate with the devil.** If a thief comes to your house, are you going to make any negotiations with him? Of course not. If the devil comes to our heart, do not even listen to what he has to say, and do not negotiate with him regarding his proposals. Do not accept to go to a bad party but not drink, or any other kind of negotiations. The devil is very smart and very persuasive; he has been successful in his tricks for thousands of years. Do not listen to his proposals and do not negotiate with him. Instead, hit him with the sign of the cross and kick him out through the grace of God and prayer.
3. **Small sins are still SINS.** Watch for the little foxes that can ruin the vineyard. Impurity can start with just a little flirting, often misconstrued as “joking around.” This behavior is like a little fox that can ruin the vineyard, or a little sin that will grow into a big sin of impurity. Maintain the love and respect for yourself and others that will lead you to the crown of righteousness. Remember, we belong to God, as our Lord Jesus Christ has purchased us with His precious blood.
4. **Reject sensual pleasure.** Do not be led by pleasure. Do what is right and not what is pleasurable. In the letter of St. Paul to Timothy, he says, “But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money...lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God...And from such people turn away!” (2 Timothy 3:1-5).
5. **Fight against evil thoughts.** Do not allow evil thoughts to dwell. Distract the thoughts through prayer and by keeping yourself busy.
6. **Stay humble.** We know that the sin of impurity attacks the prideful people. So humble yourself before the Lord, and He will exalt you.

7. **Do not give up!** Do not lose your hope, regardless of how many times you fall. “But I will look to the Lord. I will wait for God my savior, for my God will hear me. Do not rejoice over me, O my enemy, for though I have fallen, yet will I arise, because even if I should sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light to me” (Micah 7:7-8).

Just P.U.S.H.

A man was sleeping at night in his cabin when suddenly his room filled with light, and God appeared. The Lord told the man he had work for him to do, and showed him a large rock in front of his cabin. The Lord explained that the man was to push against the rock with all his might.

So, this the man did, day after day. For many years he toiled from sun up to sun down; his shoulders set squarely against the cold, massive surface of the unmoving rock, pushing with all of his might. Each night the man returned to his cabin sore and worn out, feeling that his whole day had been spent in vain.

Since the man was showing discouragement, the Adversary (Satan) decided to enter the picture by placing thoughts into the weary mind: "you have been pushing against that rock for a long time, and it hasn't moved." Thus, giving the man the impression that the task was impossible and that he was a failure. These thoughts discouraged and disheartened the man.



Satan said, "Why kill yourself over this?" "Just put in your time, giving just the minimum effort; and that will be good enough." That's what he planned to do, but decided to make it a matter of prayer and take his troubled thoughts to the Lord.

"Lord," he said, "I have labored long and hard in your service, putting all my strength to do that which you have asked. Yet, after all this time, I have not even budged that rock by half a millimeter. What is wrong? Why am I failing?"

The Lord responded compassionately, "My friend, when I asked you to serve Me and you accepted, I told you that your task was to push against the rock with all of your strength, which you have done. Never once did I mention to you that I expected you to move it. Your task was to push.

And now you come to Me with your strength spent, thinking that you have failed. But, is that really so? Look at yourself. Your arms are strong and muscled, your back sinewy and brown, your hands are callused from constant pressure, your legs have become massive and hard. Through opposition you have grown much, and your abilities now surpass that which you used to have. Yet you haven't moved the rock. But your calling was to be obedient and to push and to exercise your faith and trust in My wisdom. This you have done. Now I, my friend, will move the rock."

At times, when we hear a word from God, we tend to use our own intellect to decipher what He wants, when actually what God wants is just a simple obedience and faith in Him. By all means, exercise the faith that moves mountains, but know that it is still God who moves mountains.

When you feel like you are being led into temptation ... just P.U.S.H.
When you feel like it's hard to be pure ... just P.U.S.H.
When you have evil thoughts... just P.U.S.H.
When you feel like you are negotiating with the devil...just P.U.S.H. !!!

P= Pray
U=Until
S= Something
H=Happens



The Book of Nehemiah



In order to understand the history recorded in the Book of Nehemiah, we must refresh our memories with the history of humanity in the Old Testament, which begins with Adam, Noah and the flood, and then God making a new start with Noah and his family. Shortly thereafter, a new period begins with a chosen people, Abraham and his descendants Isaac and Jacob, called Israel. Jacob has twelve sons who are known as the twelve tribes of Israel. One of his sons, Joseph, leads them to Egypt to escape a great famine, where they remain for 400 years and end up being enslaved by the Egyptians. Moses is sent to deliver them out of Egypt and leads them across the Sinai desert where they dwell for 40 years. It is Joshua who then leads them across the Jordan River to the promised land of Canaan (Palestine) and conquers this land.

After Joshua, a new period called the “Judges” begins; the people were ruled by a group of Judges, a leader or savior sent by God to His people. Many of these Judges were corrupt, and the people of Israel become disobedient to God. Therefore, God allowed them to be enslaved, and then they would cry out for mercy and forgiveness which would lead to a new Judge being sent. The period of Judges lasted 400 years, with Samuel being the last Judge and first prophet of the next period. Once again, the people transgressed and asked for an earthly king. Samuel was upset, but God told him, **“They have not refused you, but it is I they refused so that I do not rule over them” (1 Samuel 8:7)**. Saul was then ordained as their chosen king, followed by David, then Solomon.

During the period of David and Solomon, the kingdom was settled and became the strongest kingdom on earth. Solomon built the temple that became the first permanent place of worship. After he built the temple, Solomon died and his descendants deviated from God’s commands, through idolatry and sexual immorality. Due to their disobedience, the kingdom was divided in two: the Northern Kingdom (Israel) and the Southern Kingdom (Judah). They were continually at war with one another. After multiple warnings from God, they remained stubborn, so He allowed them to be enslaved by the surrounding kingdoms of Assyria, then Babylon, and finally, Persia.

After being humiliated in captivity, they came back to God begging for mercy and deliverance. He sent them many prophets who reassured them that they would return back to the Promised Land from their captivity. At this time, part of the temple and the wall of Jerusalem were destroyed, while the city was burned. Many of the men and youth were taken into captivity, including Daniel and Ezekiel.

They came back from captivity in stages while they were under the Persian rule. They wanted to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple and regain their glory as the chosen people of God. However, life was very difficult for the Jewish people, and they were required to pay heavy taxes. It was during this time that Nehemiah lived; he was the cupbearer to King Artaxerxes I in Persia. This was a prestigious position and one that required great trust by the king, as the cupbearer could easily poison the king. Nehemiah found favor in the eyes of King Artaxerxes I, and he allowed him to lead a group of Jews back to Judah, where Nehemiah became the governor. It is at this point that the Book of Nehemiah begins.

PURPOSE: God had made a covenant with Israel and spoke of a place where He would establish His name. Moses told the Israelites, **“Seek the place where the Lord your God chooses, out of all your tribes, to put His name for His dwelling place” (Deuteronomy 12:5)**. Later, it was revealed that this place would be Jerusalem. During the reign of Solomon, the temple was built, and Jerusalem was at the height of its glory. Its fame helped to spread the glory of God’s name to many nations who respected and feared Israel. Due to the disobedience of the people, God allowed the land to be taken over by the surrounding nations and the people to be taken captive. However, it was still God’s plan to establish His name there again. Thus, the Book of Nehemiah records the restoration of Jerusalem under the leadership of Nehemiah. The returning Jewish people had great spiritual indifference toward God. Nehemiah’s determination is what motivated the people to return to God and rebuild Jerusalem’s walls. Nehemiah sets a wonderful example of dedication, patience and perseverance, while being guided by prayer and love but never discouraged by his enemies.

Finally, we see that God continually restored His people. In spite of their unfaithfulness, God accomplished His will, which was to restore the walls of Jerusalem, repopulate Jerusalem, and reform the Israelites to be obedient to his commandments. In the end, His name would be glorified.

CHAPTER 1: Nehemiah means “comforted of God.” Nehemiah’s relative Hanani tells him about the poor state of the people in Jerusalem, the broken wall of Jerusalem, and the burned gates. At that time, a city’s wall was protection for its people, the likely reason for the poor state of those living there, and it was a reflection of the power and strength of their God. The broken wall and burned gates are the keys to understanding the Book of Nehemiah.

Nehemiah’s sorrow shows us his great love for his people and God, a quality that exemplifies a holy man. He could very easily shake his head and say that the people got what they deserved. His sitting on the floor allows us to appreciate his humility and utter grief. Although Nehemiah is very sad to hear about the state of Jerusalem, his response is too fast and pray, “before the God of heaven.” He does not make impetuous decisions to run immediately and ask the king for leave to go to Jerusalem. Instead, he takes his time to fast and pray and to intercede on behalf of the people. In his intercessory prayer, he first glorifies God, then asks for forgiveness, and finally asks God to grant the king mercy on him. His first two words, “No indeed,” reflect Nehemiah’s determination to not accept the poor state of Jerusalem which is a reflection of God. Also, believing and knowing that God keeps His promises, He reminds God of the promise He made to Moses: “If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations, but if you return to Me, and keep My commandments and do them, even if your dispersion be to the farthest part of heaven, yet I will gather them from there and bring them to the place which I have chosen as a dwelling for My name” (Nehemiah 1:8-9). Here we also see Nehemiah’s faith in and devotion to Scripture.

Let us also recognize Nehemiah’s humility. In addition to sitting on the floor, he asks for forgiveness of his sins and the people’s sins. He also asks God to hear his prayer and the other servants’ prayers. He does not assume that he is the only one praying to God on behalf of Jerusalem and its people.

CHAPTER 2: King Artaxerxes I sees Nehemiah sad and also learns of the state of Jerusalem. He asks Nehemiah what he would like to request regarding this matter. He asks the king to send him to Judah so he can rebuild the city. He also asks the king for letters to ensure his safe travel and for timber to make gates for the city. We see Nehemiah’s wisdom in this request, as he would need to pass through Iraq, Jordan, Syria, and Palestine to reach Jerusalem.

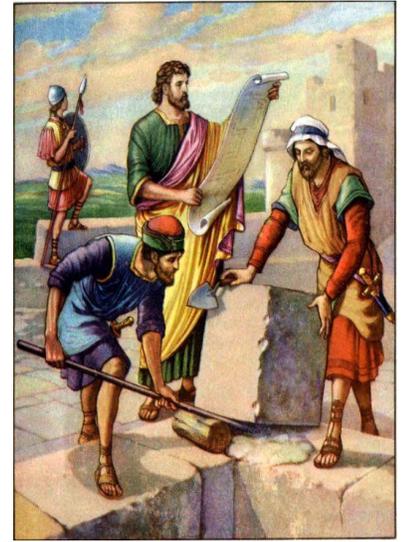
“And the king granted these to me as the good hand of God was upon me” (Nehemiah 2:8). Notice, Nehemiah did not attribute the success with the king to his shrewdness or to the king being a nice man. He gives all the glory to God. We can also notice that Nehemiah prays almost reflexively. Praying in this way can only occur if one is “used” to praying regularly and all the time.

Finally, we learn about Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official (descendants of Lot) who were sworn enemies of the Jews and did not want to see Jerusalem rebuilt. They preferred its destruction for their own benefit. They are a reminder that anytime people try to do good for God, the devil will plant seeds of deterrence. Just as our Lord Jesus Christ tells his disciples, “Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves” (Matthew 10:16). He warns them so they will not be wounded which would prevent them from spreading the gospel. Also, He does not want them to retaliate against those who do them wrong, so they may be blameless in their witness of the gospel.



Once again, we see Nehemiah’s wisdom as he inspects the wall of Jerusalem secretly by night. We should learn from his example and be careful about talking too much and revealing our spiritual plans and projects in service, as the devil is waiting to delay and stop the work of God. Nehemiah realizes that he cannot build the wall of Jerusalem on his own. He had to form an army for God, gathering priests, nobles, governors, and workers to come together in one spirit under the good hand of God. He encouraged the people by telling them how God had softened the heart of King Artaxerxes who had given him permission to rebuild Jerusalem and had even given him the wood to do so. Once the people agreed to start the process of rebuilding, we see the devil coming to them through Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite official, and Geshem the Arab who mocked them and placed doubt in their minds regarding this great task they were doing for God. Nehemiah quickly squashes their attempts to dissuade their efforts; he does not get into a discussion with them but gives glory to God, “The God of heaven will prosper us, we His servants will arise and build.”

CHAPTER 3: This chapter is the beginning of rebuilding of the wall. Eliashib the high priest starts first with the other priests. The priests were viewed as leaders, and the people looked to them for leadership. It is also significant that they were the ones to build the “Sheep Gate.” This gate was used for bringing sheep to the temple for sacrifice. The very first thing they did was build this gate and dedicate it to the Lord. They knew they needed God to be with them to keep them safe and complete this project. Nehemiah uses the words “next to” to recount all those who helped to rebuild the wall from the high priest to the poorest people. He emphasizes the idea that all the people worked together and in cooperation with one another. If we see Jerusalem as representing the New Testament Church, we learn an important lesson. If all members of the church build their spiritual lives upon the rock and work together to achieve the will of God, as all are members of one body with the head being our Lord Jesus Christ, the church will be strong, fortified, and unshaken. We must see ourselves as part of the church and not external to it.



Once again we see how the critics of God’s work use ridicule in an attempt to distract the workers and overall progress. However, we also see Nehemiah’s consistency in his faithful prayer as a response to all adversity and blessings in his life. He prays that God will bring vengeance upon them; he does not take matters into his own hands but continues God’s work. St. Paul tells us, **“Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand”** (Ephesians 6:13).

CHAPTER 4: Sanballat (Samaria to the north), Tobiah, the Arabs (to the south), the Ammonites (to the east), and the Asdodites (to the west) develop a conspiracy when they hear that the rebuilding of the wall of Jerusalem is progressing well. Jerusalem is literally surrounded by its enemies. They are no longer using ridicule only, but now they use violence to stop the people from doing God’s work. We are told, **“a great evil came over them.”** Nehemiah responds with prayer. He also shows us how the people not only worked together with one another, but worked together with God. Even though the people are ready to fight, and defend themselves he promising the people that God will fight for them. So, half of the people defended the city, and half continued working to rebuild the wall, while they also girded their swords. Often, we too need to endure sacrifice and discomfort to not only complete God’s work but also to sustain over time the projects God gives us to do.

In addition to the external enemies, we begin to see an internal enemy, the enemy of despair. The people said, **“The strength of the enemy is broken, but there is so much rubbish that we will be unable to do work on the wall.”** This is not only the enemy of despair, but the sins of despair, hopelessness, and lack of faith. We begin to see doubt among the people. However, Nehemiah remained firm in his conviction and faith in God. He continued to pray and encouraged his people by giving glory to God. At the end of Psalm 50, we pray, **“Build the walls of Jerusalem, then you shall be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering.”** The spiritual meaning is to build a wall around yourself, your family, and your people. This wall should separate you from the world so you do not let sin go in and out of your house. Also, make a wall without openings around your senses and thoughts.

CHAPTER 5: We see even more attacks from within. The poor had been oppressed and enslaved by the rich for many years. There were grain shortages, and they had to borrow money simply to pay the king’s taxes (usury). They were also forced to sell their children into slavery just to be able to buy food. This is not a problem limited to this time period but has been pervasive throughout many generations and societies, including ours today. This is why we pray in the Holy Divine Liturgy for, **“help to the poor and goodness to the rich.”**

Nehemiah was angry when he heard these injustices and knew that the people’s repentance could not be complete. He rebuked them and told them that God would remain angry as long as they continued to enslave their brethren. He asked that the oppressed people be given their rights and be set free. Even the priests were guilty of this oppressive behavior and were asked to make an oath to stop enslaving their brethren and lending them money with interest.

We can learn two things from Nehemiah in these verses:

1. We should never be afraid to speak the truth and ask for justice. Those who live in the light should never be angry to hear the truth and should adjust their behavior accordingly.
2. We can see that Nehemiah continues to give glory to God. At no time does he take credit or allow himself to be glorified for his achievements. We too should recognize that every opportunity we are given to serve the Lord is given to us by His grace and for His glory. Let us always remember our humility in our service to God.

Nehemiah had been appointed the governor of Judah. The governor would live at the taxpayer's expense, by placing heavy taxes on people and even acquiring their land. However, Nehemiah appreciated great blessings from God, and he feared God. Therefore, he never used his power to benefit personally, and he provided for himself through the grace of God.

CHAPTER 6: As Nehemiah's enemies saw that the wall of Jerusalem was very close to being rebuilt, they began to intensify their attacks to distract the people and thwart their efforts.

The Attack

Nehemiah's Response

Sanballat and Geshem send a letter asking Nehemiah to meet them in the Plain of Ono, a two day journey, where his life would be at risk, and the wall would be jeopardized. They send this letter several times.

Nehemiah tells them that he is doing great work, and he cannot stop now. He will come when he is finished with his work. He responds this same way each time.

Sanballat sends an open letter stating there are rumors that Nehemiah is leading a rebellion, and these rumors are being delivered to the king. He asks Nehemiah to meet him to discuss these rumors.

Nehemiah tells him that he is the one inventing the rumors, and he will not stop his work or be afraid of his lies. He prays that God will strengthen his hands.

Sanballat and Tobiah hire false prophets to convince Nehemiah that they are going to kill him, and he should hide in the temple. This was an effort on their part to ruin his reputation among his people and weaken his popularity.

He realized that this prophet could not be from God, asking him to act cowardly and lose his trust in the protection God had shown him thus far. He replied like a courageous martyr who knew the Lord would fight for him, and he would not flee.

Rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem and its gates took 52 days, an amazing accomplishment, as it should have taken years. This is the result of trusting in God and fighting the devil with perseverance, prayer, courage, love of God, purity of heart, and wise leadership. Even with this great achievement, Nehemiah and the people give the glory to God, of which He is due. Also notice that Tobiah continues to try to frighten Nehemiah. When he saw that his external threats were to no avail, he tried to destroy Nehemiah and Jerusalem from within by sending letters to some of the nobles in Jerusalem. They in turn showed these letters to Nehemiah, and once again, by the grace of God, the devil's attacks were defeated.

CHAPTER 7: The voice of God inside of Nehemiah was clear and was the driving force for his actions. God put in his heart to start registering the people who returned from captivity so he would know their children, their rights, and their share in the land. These are the Jewish people that due to their faithfulness to God and steadfast obedience to the Mosaic Law were allowed to return to Jerusalem. Similarly, we should know the members of our church by name and should truly take an interest in knowing them personally.

We are told that through the genealogy reports that some priests' fathers appeared to have married wives from daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite, a friend of David, but not Levite. Rather than make an exception, Nehemiah decided to deprive them of the priesthood and forbade them from eating the holy bread until a priest who hears the voice of God regarding this matter could be consulted. His righteousness and wisdom once again prevail.

CHAPTER 8: The first day of the seventh month is the Feast of Trumpets, or the Jewish New Year. Thus, all the people gathered in the square, and Ezra read the Book of the Law, known as the Torah, Pentateuch, or Mosaic Law – (the first five books of the Old Testament). Note that the people stood for the reading of Scripture, as we do today for the reading of the Gospel. The people had ignored the Law of Moses for many generations, and this disobedience is what led to their exile initially. Therefore, even though they were Jewish, they did not know the law, celebrate feasts, offer sacrifices, or keep the Sabbath. We see that the people were truly zealous to go back to God and to know His commandments. They were grateful for God’s blessings, His hand in building the wall, and His helping them overcome their enemies. When the law was read to them, the people realized that their lives were sinful, and this was the reason for the destruction of Jerusalem, their captivity, and their tribulations. They were truly sad and sorry – the beginning of repentance.

When the people begin to weep, they are told not to mourn because the day was Holy to the Lord. They were to celebrate finding their joy and strength in the Lord. When people find themselves returning to God and repenting, once again the devil tries to attack them through sorrow that becomes despair, depression, and hopelessness. Also, the people are told to send food to the poor, as a true celebration, or feast, should include caring for the poor, or **“those for whom nothing is prepared.”**

The Feast of the Booths was first described by Moses in [Leviticus 23:33-44](#). It is also known as the Feast of Tabernacles or Sukkot. The feast started on the 15th day of the seventh month according to the Jewish calendar (September-October) and was celebrated for eight days. It was Israel’s Thanksgiving feast. During this time, they would thank God for the fall harvest, while remembering and being thankful that God delivered them from Egypt and provided for all their needs during the 40 years that they wandered in the wilderness. During this time, they lived in booths, or tents, and worshiped in the Tabernacle, also a tent; hence, it is called the Feast of Tabernacles or Booths. For this reason, every year in the seventh month, the Jewish people were to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and were to build and live in tents, or booths, made from tree branches for seven days to remember and celebrate this feast.

Unfortunately, Nehemiah tells us that the Jewish people stopped celebrating this feast, as well as the other feasts, and did not offer sacrifices since the time of Joshua, almost 1,000 years earlier. The next generations were markedly disobedient and did not follow any of God’s commandments. Now for the first time since the days of Joshua, they were celebrating this feast and were truly joyous and thankful.

CHAPTER 9: After Ezra read the Book of the Law, and they heard the word of God, they were convicted of their sins and sorrowful. Fasting, sackcloth, and dust were traditional signs of mourning. At this point, the people had been participating in public worship continuously for three weeks. They were moved to repentance with fasting, confession, and prayer. We should also note that they worshipped, praised, and confessed publically in the midst of those assembled, but separated themselves from foreigners.

Ezra begins by declaring, **“You are the only Lord.”** This is significant because one of the major sins of the Israelites was their idolatry and worshipping other gods. He then goes on to recount God’s goodness, beginning with creation, and all the sins of their forefathers, beginning with Abraham, in succession. He acknowledges that God was just and merciful, while they were the ones who were wicked. **“You are just in all that has befallen us; for You have dealt faithfully, but we have done wickedly.”** He then goes on to declare a covenant, a pledge to walk in God’s Law, to observe and do all the commandments of God. Essentially, they should not neglect the house of God. They were saying that God was just in punishing them for their sins, and they deserved this punishment. They ask for mercy and forgiveness. **“For His mercy endures forever” (Psalm 136:2).**

CHAPTER 10: Nehemiah listed the names of those who signed the covenant and included priests, the Levites, and the political leaders of the people. The rest of the people then took an oath to abide by the covenant. A summary of the oath follows. It is interesting to note that the order of commandments begins with purification by separating themselves from the Gentiles and their sins of idolatry and sexual immorality. They are then sanctified by keeping the Sabbath. Only then can they turn all their attention to carrying out the observance of divine worship in other respects.

CHAPTER 11: While the leaders lived in Jerusalem, the majority of the people lived outside the city. Some willingly agreed to live in Jerusalem, and others cast lots, allowing the will of God to be part of the decision making process. Their names were written, and they were grouped as follows: laypeople, priests, Levites, and gatekeepers. Remember, the city had been burned and would require significant restoration work. Some believe this scenario is representative of the church where most believers live faithfully in the world, and only a dedicated few can accept the monastic life of serving God in separation from this world.



CHAPTER 12: The names of Priests and Levites who returned from captivity to Jerusalem are listed. Once the wall was built, it had to be dedicated. A beautiful dedication is described with all the Levites from the surrounding areas being brought to Jerusalem to celebrate the dedication, “with gladness, with thanksgivings and singing, and with cymbals, stringed instruments, and harps.”

Does this sound familiar? Who started this type of praise? In what part of the Holy Divine Liturgy do we praise in a similar way? We are told that the priests and Levites purified themselves, then the people, the gates, and the wall. The ritual involved dividing the singers into two groups, Thanksgiving choirs, on either side of the wall and singing in turn. There was great rejoicing by all; so much so, it was heard afar off.

Nehemiah continued organization and established a system for everything. He also appointed leaders to follow up on all that had been done thus far. Here we can see another desirable quality in Nehemiah, the virtue of being meticulous. He ensured that all bases were covered and realized that God’s work would need to continue in his absence, as he needed to return to Shushan and being the king’s cupbearer. He delegates the work and rejoices in the success of others.

CHAPTER 13: Nehemiah begins the difficult job of “cleaning house.” He shows us that being pure in heart is better than being popular. He teaches us that it is not only important to read Scripture and know the word of God but to follow and implement His commandments and teachings in our lives.

Nehemiah first separates the Ammonites and Moabites from the children of Israel. Ammon and Moab were very troublesome people in the history of the Old Testament. Lot’s daughters begot Ammon and Moab after they got their father drunk and committed sin with him. They had learned these sexually immoral practices from the pagans in Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19:30-38). The children of Ammon and Moab became symbols of evil and were constantly in enmity with the Jewish people. However, when the Jewish people deviated from God, they mixed with their neighbors, including the daughters of Moab and Ammon, and did not lead a spiritual life. God spoke to Moses and commanded him that the Ammonites and Moabites were not to mix with the people of God forever. Here, Nehemiah begins to restore all of God’s commandments.

Eliashib the priest was a conspirator with Tobiah the Ammonite official and allowed him to stay in the large room of the temple that had been used for storing grain and other items. In fact, Tobiah had been given access to several rooms in the temple. When Nehemiah discovered this, he removed all Tobiah’s furniture and things from the room, cleansed it, and returned it to a storeroom filled with grain and other articles of the house of God.

Nehemiah realized that the collections from the tribes were not going to the Levites, requiring them to go back to work in the fields. This jeopardized the house of God, and he blamed the leaders for neglecting the house of God in this way. They were essentially allowing robbery to take place. So Nehemiah collected the tithes and appointed “faithful” people to administer their distribution equally and fairly.

Nehemiah observed people doing work on the Sabbath. He was determined to bring back the dignity of the Sabbath. He reminded them how their fathers broke the Sabbath and invoked God’s wrath. Nehemiah found that some of the Jews had married pagan women from Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab. Even worse, they spoke with these women in their pagan language and forgot their original Jewish language. He forbade them from doing this in the future, as God had previously commanded. Nehemiah also drove out several who had defiled their responsibilities by this practice.

SUMMARY Nehemiah was a simple ordinary servant; he was not a prophet or priest. However, because of his deep love for God and his meticulous obedience to His every command, he was able to achieve what no one else in his generation could. Nehemiah was a spiritually zealous man of prayer, faithful, diligent and hardworking. He persevered for the glory of God.

The Epistle of James



AUTHOR: The author identifies himself as “James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ” (James 1:1). He is believed to be the “brother” or cousin of our Lord Jesus Christ and first bishop of Jerusalem, also known as James the Just.

WHEN: James the Just was martyred about 62 A.D.; thus, it is thought that this epistle was written about A.D. 55–60, or sometime between A.D. 44 and 62. Some believe this to be the first New Testament book that was written after the martyrdom of St. Stephen and the dispersion of Christians from Jerusalem (Acts 8:1).

TO WHOM: St. James addresses, “the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad” (James 1:1).

Unlike other New Testament letters, he does not denote a particular church or region. As a Jewish Christian, he assumes the recipients are familiar with the Old Testament; however, the letter is written in Greek. Thus, there is no indication that it addresses only Jewish Christians. It is clear, however, that the epistle is addressed to those who have been persecuted, imprisoned, and deprived of their possessions and livelihoods. These people often fell into the clutches of worldliness, fought among themselves, favored the rich, and lost their love for one another.

PURPOSE: The Epistle of James is a “how-to” book about the Christian life. It offers instruction for those experiencing problems. The people that St. James is addressing are experiencing persecution, economic injustice, poverty, apostasy, and fragmentations within the Church. St. James attempts to rekindle true living faith and encourages repentance, patience, and self-control. One should also note that St. James teaches the harmony of both faith and works. Dead faith, without works, does not save. The human will is not nullified in salvation; grace does not eliminate personal responsibility and good works. St. James is telling the people that works are a natural result of faith and to get their lives on board with what they believe.

Chapter 1

James 1:1 ~ Greetings St. James refers to himself as, “a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ” (James 1:1). He establishes his authority through proclaiming his servitude. Keep in mind, he could have introduced himself as a brother (cousin) of Christ or bishop of Jerusalem.

James 1:2-4 ~ The Purpose of Trials (Outward)

“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing” (James 1:2-4).

Trials: Outward circumstances encountered by all believers – conflicts, sufferings, and troubles. Trials are not pleasant and can cause much grief, but believers should consider them opportunities for rejoicing. They refine and purify our faith, producing patience and endurance. Of note, here, patience transcends the idea of bearing affliction; it includes the idea of standing fast under pressure, with a staying power that turns adversities into opportunity. The trials of this world occur with the permission of God; to become angry with the circumstances is to become angry with God. The Godly reactions to trials are joy and perseverance. It is through these trials that our true hearts are revealed. Trials are food for our faith, which must be continually fed in order to grow.

James 1:5-11 ~ Wisdom for Trials St. James is encouraging us to find faith in a relationship with God, through prayer. Through true faithful prayer, we should request knowledge, understanding, and correct judgment to contend with life’s trials. The wisdom of God does not necessarily get us out of the “trouble” we are experiencing, but it is insight on how to learn from the troubles and difficulties and realize the blessing. Unwavering loyalty to God and confidence in Him are essential elements of

faithful prayer. The pursuit of worldly riches is in vain. Those who are poor will be tempted to be envious and bitter; the rich will be tempted to be greedy and arrogant. Both will lose their salvation. The rich man should always trust the Lord, not himself or his money. However, the poor who remain steadfast in their faith will have the most in Kingdom of heaven. In addition, the poor should glory in the fact that God has allowed them to experience difficult circumstances, because these circumstances will perfect their character and faith.

How can we endure difficulties in life?

1. By obtaining the heavenly wisdom
2. By obtaining humility
3. By realizing that the world will pass away

James 1:12-18 ~ Temptations (Inward) The focus of the chapter now turns from outward trials to inward temptation. God does not tempt us. He would never deliberately lead a person to commit sin because that would not only go against His nature, but it would be opposed to His purpose of molding His creation into His holy image. We are tempted when we are drawn away from God by our desires, our own sinful passions, that lure us until we are tragically entrapped. These desires are conceived, as we fixate and delight in these passions, and give birth to sin. In a similar way, habits become addictions. We fall into temptations because we allow ourselves to do so. God does not cause us to be tempted or to yield to these temptations. Sin grows and ultimately brings death; separation from God spiritually and physically.



“Just as the world has to pass through winter before the spring comes and the flowers bloom, so a man must go through many temptations before he can inherit the prize of eternal life. For as Paul said: ‘Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God’ (Acts 14:22). Temptations come in three ways, by persuasion, by attraction, and by consent. Satan persuades, the flesh is attracted, and the mind consents.”

“If you are gold, why do you fear fire? For inside fire, you will come out pure. If you are wheat, why do you fear hay, for when the tares are removed, you will be well shown and your genuinity is exposed that you may be honored.” **St. Augustine**

St. Augustine tells us that there are three stages of sin:

1. Excitement – to be drawn to sin by our desires
2. To enjoy sin – to be conceived
3. To please sin, not controlling it – to give birth

Likewise, he says that there are three kinds of sin, and they resemble three kinds of dead people:

1. Sin in the heart (not implemented) – the dead person who did in the house but has not been carried out yet
2. Sin by deed – the dead person who is carried outside the house
3. Sin as a habit – the dead person who has an odor in the grave

In the Gospel, we see that the Lord has raised those three kinds of dead people while using different expressions for each:

1. “Talitha, cumi, which is translated, ‘Little girl, I say to you arise’” (Mark 5:41).
2. “Young man, I say to you arise” (Luke 7:14).
3. Jesus groaned in the spirit and was troubled. He cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come forth” (John 11:33,43).

Therefore, God provides for our salvation through His grace. He brings us out of our sinful nature through baptism, by which we become children of God. We are the preeminent creatures made in the image of God and consecrated to God, as were the “first fruits” in the Old Testament.

James 1:19-27 ~ The Corrective: Hear and Do As children of God, we must be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger. We must also uproot the seeds of evil and plant the seeds of the Word of God. Finally, we must restrain our tongues, be merciful to others, and be unspotted from the world.

“Truth is more safely heard than preached. For when it is heard, lowliness is preserved, but when it is preached some bit of boastfulness may steal in almost unawares, and this brings corruption.” **St. Augustine**

“Often I have talked and regretted it, but I have never regretted being silent.” **St. Arsanus**

There are three kinds of keeping silent and three kinds of speaking. Abbot Poemen	
Keeping Silent	Speaking
Holy Silence: the mouth is silent so that the heart may talk to God.	Holy Words: St. Basil the Great writes that these words manifest the aroma of incense, the inner disposition full of wisdom. They are for teaching, or learning, and improving spirituality.
False Silence: the mouth is silent without the heart being occupied with God.	Idle Words: not for edification and have no meaning. We will be asked to give an account of these words (Mt 12:36).
Evil Silence: the mouth is silent and the inside is busy thinking evil.	Evil Words: Destroy the soul and others.

St. James warns us against uncontrolled anger that leads us to be unfair, rude, and cruel in our dealings with others. We should not mistake this behavior as the judgment of God. However, for us to be in the “righteousness of God,” we must have tolerance, kindness and controlled passions.

Righteousness of God: To be in the “right way” of God and to adhere to His moral principles

“The role of anger is to fight against the demons.”

“Turbid anger is calmed by the singing of the psalms, by patience, and by almsgiving.”

“But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does” (James 1:25). “The perfect law of liberty” refers to the Jewish notion that “freedom” is found in obedience to the Law. St. James applies this principle to Jesus’ law, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (James 2:8). It is Jesus’ love that frees us from our sins and allows us to love others.

St. James goes on to emphasize the essential relationship between faith and works and provides three eloquent examples.

1. Mastery over speech: What proceeds out of the mouth flows from the heart, for sooner or later our tongue will reveal the quality of our faith in God.
2. Ministry to the needy: Faithful Christians must be the guardians of the poor, especially of those orphans and widows who have lost their natural guardians.
3. Moral purity in thought and deed: A traditional indicator of a working faith. “Let us make haste to wash away through fasting the filth of our transgressions, and through acts of mercy and compassion to the needy let us enter into the bridal chamber of the Bridegroom Christ, who grants to us great mercy” (Vespers, week before Lent).

Chapter 2

James 2:1-13 ~ The Law of Love St. James warns us against judging others by the earthly standards of rank, wealth, attainments, and appearance. In addition, a person’s dignity and worth come from God, not from fellow humans.

Favoring the rich over the poor is an example of fainthearted faith that comes from unjustly judging and showing partiality, or favoritism. God is not partial, or does not favor, anyone. “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). The salvation and grace of God is for all. However, the poor are more likely to repent and renounce this world for the sake of the Kingdom of heaven because they see the emptiness of earthly things. These are poor people who are rich in faith. On the other hand, the rich take pride in earthly possessions which give them their rank among worldly men. Let us remember that in these verses, St. James is referring to the prideful rich man, as evidenced by his jewelry and fine apparel, and not the rich man in general.

Again, we see the “law of liberty,” referred here to, “the royal law.” “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (James 2:8). It is the second greatest commandment of Christ. Showing partiality is committing a sin and is not in keeping with “the whole law.”

Therefore, by showing partiality we become guilty of “the whole law.” God does not allow partial obedience. We cannot pick and choose which laws we want to follow. The whole divine law must be accepted as God’s will for his people.

We are asked to show mercy so we will not be judged mercilessly. “[Mercy triumphs over judgment](#)” (James 2:13).

During the Holy Great Lent we sing: “Blessed are those who have mercy, who give to the poor and fast and pray. The Holy Spirit will fill their hearts. The Son will show them mercy on Judgment Day.”

James 2:14-26 ~ Faith that Works “But someone will say, ‘You have faith, and I have works.’ Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works” (James 2:18).

“Is our teaching weak? If you are Christian, believe in Christ. If you believe in Him, show me your faith by your works.” **St. John Chrysostom**



Faith that saves is a “complete” faith, one that trusts and lives with God. Therefore, complete faith is both faith and works. “You will know them by their fruits” (Mt 7:16). Let us not forget that God will reward us according to our deeds (Mt 16:27). Even demons have faith and tremble before the living God. Their faith does not lead them to love, submission, and obedience but to hatred, rebellion, and disobedience. The concept of a living faith is not a static but dynamic. Living faith evolves over time through works with eventual fulfillment of God’s promises.

“Those who believe but who do not fear God are even worse than the devils. And those who believe and tremble but who do not practice what they preach are just like the devils.”

“For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also” (James 2:26).

Faith produces works, and works make faith perfect or complete.

Chapter 3

James 3:1-12 ~ The Work of Faith: Controlling What We Say St. James does not give the warning about judgment to others before applying it to himself first. He tells us that teachers will stand before the judgment seat of Christ and be judged more strictly than others. A position of leadership or influence means a greater responsibility. Also, dead faith without works can drive one to appear in the form of a teacher who talks and rebukes others without any inner remorse. Likewise, in the Holy Divine Liturgy, the priest prays for his sins before he concerns himself with the sins of others.

What we say reveals who and what we are. If we can control what we say, we can control what we do, our greatest spiritual warfare. List three analogies that St. James uses to illustrate power of the tongue.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

It is only the work of the Holy Spirit within us that can bring the destructive force of the tongue under control.

“Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so” (James 3:10).

James 3:13-18 ~ Godly Counsel St. James warns us about counseling others. He tells us if we are truly wise and understanding, let us show this wisdom with good conduct. We should refrain from counseling others with our “wisdom” that can be rooted in pride and sinful passions.

Have you ever received advice from a Christian friend that was not of Godly wisdom?

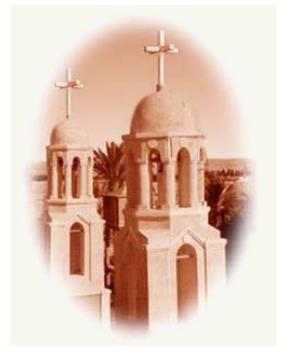
How can we know if the advice we receive is coming from God?

“Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace” (James 3:18).

Chapter 4

James 4:1-10 ~ Lack of Faith and Works: Quarrels in the Church

Wars and fights in the Church are another example of the result of faith without works. These disputes come from worldly desires and passions, like pride, that cause disruption in the body of Christ. Similarly, when we ask for things that arise from selfish desires, our prayers will not be answered. We are told, “Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God” (James 4:4)? We cannot serve, or love, two Gods. We must choose between God and the world.



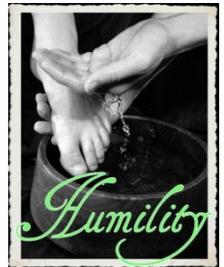
What are some choices that you make on a daily basis that require you to choose between God and the world?

“Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, ‘The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously’? But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: ‘God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble’” (James 4:5-6).

“If God does not love the human soul, He would not have been jealous over her, like a man who is jealous over his bride who loves someone else.” **St. Jerome**

How can we conquer pride and self-seeking pleasures?

1. Stop praying for self-centered pleasures.
2. Renounce the world and build a friendship with God.
3. Yield to the Holy Spirit who dwells in us through chrismation.
4. Be humble, recognizing that God resists the proud.
5. Resist Satan and submit to God.
6. Approach God in worship; purify our hearts and hands through repentance in preparation for worship.
7. Never laugh off God’s call to mourn for sin. No sin is funny, and we should laugh at neither our own sins nor the sins of others.



“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up” (James 4:10).

What have you asked from God in prayer that He has not given to you?

Why do you think these prayers have gone unanswered?

“Whatever you ask from the Father in My Name, He will grant you. The name of the Son is ‘Jesus,’ or Savior. Whoever asks in the name of the Savior is the one who asks for his salvation. So let us review our requests to see whether they are in the name of ‘Jesus,’ that is, matters pertaining to our salvation. Do you request a field, a garment, material gifts, or do you ‘Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness?’” **St. Gregory**

James 4:11,12 ~ Criticizing Others When we criticize others, it is another example of pride that becomes evident in what we say, a proud proclamation of the law in the manner of judging. It is a lack of faith combined with evil works that is an offense to the person and God. God’s will is to love others with humility and mercy, even if they are in the wrong.

James 4:13-17 ~ Being Overly Confident True faith is to completely depend upon God and to seek ways to do good works. We should preface all that we do and say with, “If God wills...” When we plan as if we know what will happen tomorrow is to exhibit arrogance. Let us neither boast nor be arrogant; “God resists the proud” (James 4:6). It is not wrong to plan; it is wrong to leave God out of the plan.

Finally, St. James also warns against the sin of omission. We typically think of a sin as something we do. However, equally sinful is not doing what we know is right.

What are common sins of omission that youth commit today?

Chapter 5

James 5:1-6 ~ Warning to Rich Oppressors St. James describes in great detail the fate that awaits the unjust rich and how their wealth will condemn them. He is referring to those who have become rich unfairly by stealing, cheating, and taking advantage of others. These are the rich people whose passions are worldly and their richness led them to become greedy and covetous.



For many youth today, they may not be “rich oppressors,” but they may seek other “riches” in an oppressive, or unfair, way.
What are some of these “riches?”

James 5:7-12 ~ Encouragement to the Oppressed We should stop grumbling at each other, and we must not demand that life be “fair.” We must be patient and wait on the Lord, realizing that plants do not produce fruit overnight. Finally, we must not swear by God as a way of proclaiming proof of truthfulness. We should always be truthful, exhibiting integrity, as an evidence of our faith.

“Job saw that the world is a place where people are tested on the earth (Job 7:1), so they are purified by sufferings and hardships, and each one will receive his reward according to his deeds, for God said, through Jeremiah the prophet, (Jer 17:10) ‘I the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, And according to the fruit of his doings.’” **Pope Athanasius the Apostolic**



James 5:13-18 ~ The Work of Faith: Healing Salvation involves the whole person, for each human being is a united body and soul. Therefore, the sacrament of the unction of the sick has a double purpose, the healing of the body and forgiveness of sins. Praying and olive oil are used in combination during the healing of the sick; the oil symbolizes not only the primary medicine of ancient times, but also the Holy Spirit in the Church. Notice that confession is a necessary component of this healing. It is also interesting to note that St. James writes, “Confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed” (James 5:16). In the days of the early Church, people confessed their sins before the whole Church as an act of repentance. Later, as the Church grew and those who were not part of the community came to observe, the priest heard the confession on behalf of the entire community. However, nowhere in the Scripture are we told to privately confess our sins before God only.

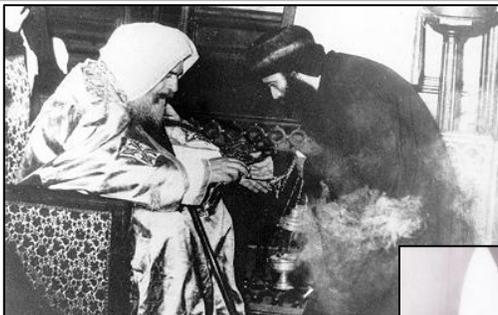
James 5:19, 20 ~ Restoration St. James tells us the importance of the work of faith in bringing back a fellow Christian who turns away from Christ.



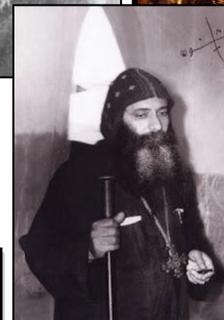
LIGHT TO THE WORLD- HIS HOLINESS POPE SHENOUDA III

He was born in the village of Salam in Assiyut, on Aug. 3rd, 1923, the youngest of 8 brothers & sisters with the name of Nazeer Gayed Roufail. He graduated from Cairo University with a Bachelor of Arts, majoring in English & History in 1947. He chose the monastic life, went to the Virgin Mary monastery known as El-Suriyan, and on July 18th, 1954, he became Fr. Antonios El-Syriyani, he was ordained a priest on Aug. 31st, 1958.

On Sept. 30th, 1962, Pope Kyrollos VI, ordained Fr. Antonios a bishop of Christian education with the name of Bishop Shenouda.



On Nov. 14th, 1971, H. G. Bishop Shenouda was enthroned His Holiness Pope Shenouda, the 117th Pope & Patriarch of the See of St. Mark.



H. H. is the author of 101 books; some are translated to English, French, German, and Italian. Also he is the composer of a bank of poems known as the "Spiritual Poetry".



He ordained about 80 metropolitans and bishops and over 600 priests. He established new branches to the Theological Seminary in Egypt, America, Australia, and the UK.

During his papacy, he increased the number of parishes in North America from 4 to over 200; (200 in the US, 23 in Canada and 1 in Mexico). He established 2 dioceses in North America (Los Angeles and the Southern United States "SUS", also in Latin America (Brazil & Bolivia), as well as Australia, New Zealand, Africa, and Europe.



He visited the sister churches of Constantinople, Moscow, Romania and Antioch. He was the first Coptic Pope to visit the Vatican (Rome) for over 1500 years. During his papacy, the Coptic Church became a member of the World Council of churches, National Council of Churches in Christ in USA, Canadian Council of Churches, and Australian Council of Churches. He paid several Pastoral visits to Ethiopia, North America, Australia and Europe. He also established new monasteries in many of these places.



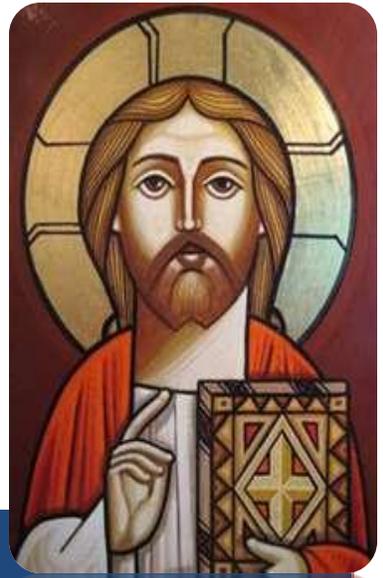
He departed on March 17th, 2012 after shepherding the Flock of Christ for 40 years, 4 months & 4 days at the age of 88. According to his will, his body is resting (buried) in the monastery of St. Pishoy in the Western desert (Wadi El-Natroun) of Egypt

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.



Who is Christ?

Many heresies arose that denied the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the church always confronted them and proved them wrong. The Arian heresy is the most famous one; it was examined and refuted in the first ecumenical council, the council of Nicaea. Nevertheless, until this day, many atheists are rising trying to deny the divinity of the Lord Christ.



Here, we include some verses that prove the divinity of Christ

1. “Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.” John 8:58
2. “No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man Who is in heaven”. John 3:13
3. “I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen”. Matthew 28: 20
4. “For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works”. Matthew 16:27
5. “Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’” Matthew 7:22
6. “I and My Father are one”. John 10:30
7. “Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, “How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly.” Jesus answered them, “I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father’s name, they bear witness of Me”. John 10: 24-25
8. “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. 28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand” John 10: 27-28
9. “Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me”. John 14: 11
10. “Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death.” John 8:51

Memorization

1-From the Agpeya - Prayer of the 12th Hour (Compline)

The Gospel according to St. Luke 2:25-32

“And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and this man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen Christ the Lord. So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, he took Him up in his arms and blessed God, and said: “Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; for my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, a light for the revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel.”

Litanies

1. Behold, I am about to stand before the Just Judge terrified and trembling because of my many sins. For a life spent in pleasures deserves condemnation. But repent, O my soul, so long as you dwell on this earth, for inside the grave, dust does not praise. And among the dead, no one remembers, neither in hades, does anyone give thanks. Therefore arise from the slumber of laziness, and entreat the Savior, repenting and saying, “God, have mercy on me and save me.”

2. If life were everlasting, and this world ever-existing, you would have an excuse, O my soul. But if your wicked deeds and ugly evils were exposed before the Just Judge, what answer would you give while you are lying on the bed of sins, negligent in disciplining the flesh!? O Christ our God, before Your awesome seat of judgement I am terrified, and before Your council of judgement I submit, and from the Light of Your divine radiance I tremble, I, the wretched and defiled, who lies on my bed, negligent in my life. But I take example of the Publican, beating my chest and saying, “O God, forgive me and have mercy on me, a sinner.”

3. O pure Virgin, overshadow your servant with your instant help, and keep the waves of evil thoughts away from me, and raise up my ailing soul for prayer and vigil, for it has gone into a deep sleep. For you are a capable, compassionate and helpful mother, the bearer of the Fountain of Life, my King and my God, Jesus Christ, my hope.

Absolution

Lord, all our sins which we committed against You in this day, whether in deeds or in words or in thoughts or through all senses, please remit and forgive us, for the sake of Your holy name, as You are Good and Lover of mankind. God, grant us a peaceful night and a sleep free from all anxiety. And send us an angel of peace to protect us from every evil, and every affliction, and every temptation of the enemy; through the Grace, compassion and love of mankind of Your Only-Begotten Son, our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ, to Whom is due, with You and with the Holy Spirit, the Life-Giver Who is of one essence with You, all glory, honor and dominion, now and forever and unto the ages of all ages. Amen.

2-Who is Christ? Verses on page 29

THE COPTIC ALPHABET

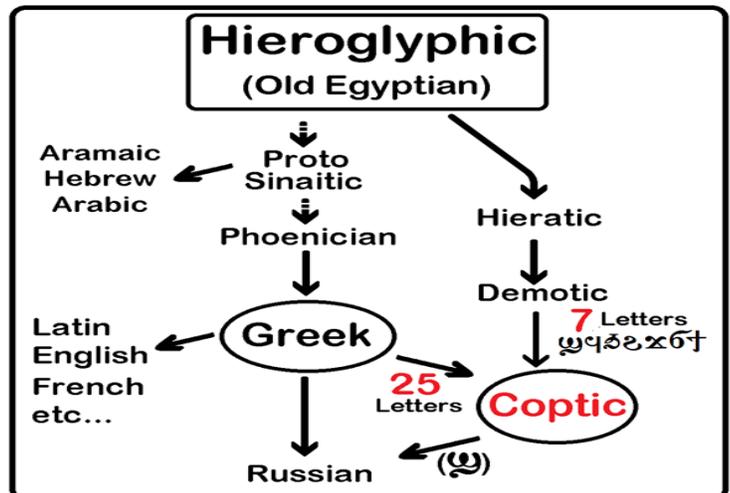
(The Egyptian Alphabet)

✠	Α α Alpha	Β β Veeta	Γ γ Gamma	Δ δ Delta	✠
Ε ε Eyy	Ϝ ϝ So-oo Not a true letter	Ζ ζ Zeeta	Η η Eeta	Θ θ Theeta	Ι ι Yota
Κ κ Kappa	Λ λ Lavla	Μ μ Mey	Ν ν Ney	Ξ ξ Eksee	Ο ο O
Π π Pee	Ρ ρ ro	Ϛ ϛ seema	Τ τ tav	Υ υ Epsilon	Φ φ Fey
Χ χ Key	Ψ ψ Epsee	Ω ω Oo	Ϡ ϡ Shai	ϣ ϛ Fai	ϣ ϛ Khai
✠	Ϟ ϟ Hori	Ϡ ϡ Ganga	Ϣ ϣ Cheema	Ϥ ϥ Tee	✠

Origins of the Coptic Alphabet

The Coptic Alphabet has 32 letters

- 24 consonants
- 7 vowels (Α Ε Η Ι Ο Υ Ω)
- 1 letter used only as a number (Ϝ)

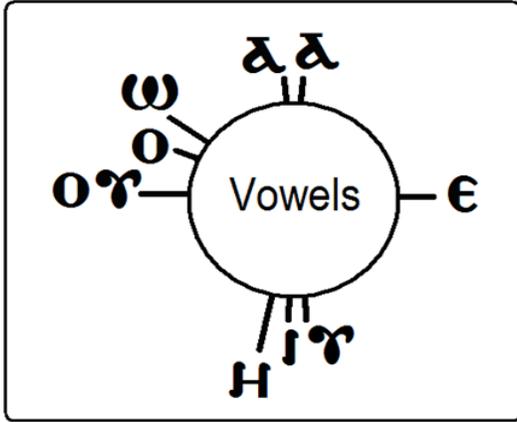


First 25 letters
from Hieroglyphic through
Proto-Sinaitic, Phoenician and **Greek** alphabets

Last 7 letters
from Hieroglyphic through
Hieratic and **Demotic** Alphabets

Letter	Name	Pronounced as	Letter	Name	Pronounced as
Α	Alpha	A	Π	Pee	P
Β	Veeta	B, V	Ρ	Ro	R
Γ	Gamma	G, N, Gh	Σ	Seema	S - Z
Δ	Delta	D, Th(the)	Τ	Tav	T
Ε	Eyy	E	Υ	Epsilon	V, I, (oo)
Ϝ	So-oo	The number 6	Φ	Fey	F
Ζ	Zeeta	Z	Χ	Key	K, Kh, Sh
Η	Eeta	EE	Ψ	Epsee	PS
Θ	Theeta	TH (think), T	Ω	Oo	Oo
Ι	Yota	I, Y	Ϸ	Shai	SH
Κ	Kappa	K	ϸ	Fai	F
Λ	Lavla	L	Ϲ	Khai	KH
Μ	Mey	M	Ϻ	Hori	H
Ν	Ney	N	ϻ	Ganga	G, J
Ξ	Eksee	KS	ϼ	Cheema	CH
Ο	O	O	Ͻ	Tee	Tee

Vowels



Jinkim ◌

When placed over a letter, it makes this letter a **separate syllable**.

When placed over a **consonant**, The letter will be pronounced as if there is an "e" before it.

ἦ will be pronounced "en"

ἔ will be pronounced "ef"

When placed over a **vowel**, the vowel will retain its pronunciation but as a separate syllable.

δΕΝ φ̇ΡΑΝ ἠ̇φ̇ΙΩΤ
 ΝΕΥ Π̇ΥΗΡΙ
 ΝΕΥ ΠΙΠ̇ΝΕΥΜΑ ΕΘΟΥΑΒ
 ΟΥΝΟΥΪ ἠ̇ΟΥΩΤ ἄΜΗΝ

In the Name of the Father
 and the Son
 and the Holy Spirit
 One God Amen

ΧΕ ΠΕΝΙΩΤ

Our Father

ἄΡΙΤΕΝ ἠ̇ΕΥΠ̇ΥΑ ἠ̇ΧΟΣ
 ΔΕΝ ΟΥΨΕΠ̇ΘΜΟΥΤ

Make us worthy to say
 thankfully

ΧΕ ΠΕΝΙΩΤ ΕΤΔΕΝ ΝΙΦΗΟΥΤΙ

Our father who art in heavens

ΜΑΡΕΥΤΟΥΒΟ ἠ̇ΧΕ ΠΕΚΡΑΝ

Hallowed be Thy name

ΜΑΡΕΪ ἠ̇ΧΕ ΤΕΚΜΕΤΟΥΡΟ

Thy kingdom come

ΠΕΤΕΘΝΑΚ ΜΑΡΕΥΨΩΠΙ

Thy will be done

ἠ̇φ̇ΡΗΪ ΔΕΝ ΪΦΕ ΝΕΥ ΘΙΧΕΝ ΠΙΚΑΘΙ

On earth as it is in heaven

ΠΕΝΩΙΚ ἠ̇ΤΕ ΡΑΪΪ ΜΗΙΥ ΝΑΝ ἠ̇ΦΟΥΥ

Give us this day our daily bread

ΟΥΘΟ ΧΑ ΜΗΕΤΕΡΟΝ ΝΑΝ ἔΒΟΛ

And forgive us our trespasses

ἠ̇φ̇ΡΗΪ ΘΩΝ ἠ̇ΤΕΝΧΩ ἔΒΟΛ

As we forgive

ἠ̇ΝΗΕΤΕ ΟΥΟΝ ἠ̇ΤΑΝ ἔΡΩΟΥ

those who trespass against us

ΟΥΘΟ ἠ̇ΠΕΡΕΝΤΕΝ ἔΔΟΥΝ ἔΠΙΡΑΪΜΟΣ

And lead us not into temptation

ΑΛΛΑ ΝΑΘΜΕΝ ἔΒΟΛΘΑ ΠΙΠΕΤΘΩΟΥ

But deliver us from the evil one

ΔΕΝ ΠΙΧΡΙΪΤΟΣ ΙΗΟΥΤΕ ΠΕΝΒΟΙΣ

In Christ Jesus our Lord

ΧΕ ΘΩΚ ΤΕ ΪΜΕΤΟΥΡΟ ΝΕΥ ΪΧΟΥ

For Thine is the kingdom,
the power

ΝΕΥ ΠΙΩΟΥ ΨΑ ἔΝΕΘ ἄΜΗΝ

and the glory, forever, Amen

The Possessive Pronouns

		For s.m. nouns e.g. Father (ΙΩΤ)	For s.f. nouns e.g. Mother (ΜΑΥ)	For plural nouns e.g. Books (ΧΩΞ)
		Π	Τ	Ν
1 st Person	My	ΠΑΙΩΤ My father	ΤΑΜΑΥ My mother	ΝΑΧΩΞ My books
	Our	ΠΕΝΙΩΤ Our father	ΤΕΝΜΑΥ Our mother	ΝΕΝΧΩΞ Our books
2 nd person	Your (s.m.)	ΠΕΚΙΩΤ Your father	ΤΕΚΜΑΥ Your mother	ΝΕΚΧΩΞ Your books
	Your (s.f.)	ΠΕΙΩΤ Your father	ΤΕΜΑΥ Your mother	ΝΕΧΩΞ Your books
	Your (pl.)	ΠΕΤΕΝΙΩΤ Your father	ΤΕΤΕΝΜΑΥ Your mother	ΝΕΤΕΝΧΩΞ Your books
3 rd person	His	ΠΕΦΙΩΤ His father	ΤΕΦΜΑΥ His mother	ΝΕΦΧΩΞ His books
	Her	ΠΕΚΙΩΤ Her father	ΤΕΚΜΑΥ Her mother	ΝΕΚΧΩΞ Her books
	Their	ΠΟΥΩΤ Their father	ΤΟΥΜΑΥ Their mother	ΝΟΥΧΩΞ Their books

Practice the **possessive pronouns**
with these nouns

ΡΑΝ (m.) name, names	ΜΑΥ mother, mothers
ΙΩΤ father	ΙΟΥ fathers
ΚΟΝ brother	ΚΟΝΟΥ brothers
ΚΩΝΙ sister, sisters	ΚΑΘΙ (m.) earth
ΥΗΡΙ son, sons	ΥΕΡΙ daughter, daughters
ΖΑΙ husband	ΖΕΥΑΙ woman, wife
ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ (f) Church	ΕΤΑΥΡΟΣ (m) Cross
ΕΙΚΩΝ (f) Icon, image	ΑΝΑΤΑΞΙΣ (f) Resurrection
ΕΞΟ (m) Horse	ΧΗΧ (m) Donkey, Ass

Conversation

ΝΟΥΡΙ Hi

ΟΥΧΑΙ Bye

		Present Tense	Future Tense	Past Tense	Negative Past Tense
1 st Person	I	†ΨΛΗΛ I pray	†ΝΑΨΛΗΛ I will pray	ΔΙΨΛΗΛ I prayed	ὐπιΨΛΗΛ I did not pray
	We	†ΕΝΨΛΗΛ We pray	†ΕΝΝΑΨΛΗΛ We will pray	ΔΝΨΛΗΛ We prayed	ὐπενΨΛΗΛ We did not pray
2 nd person	You (s.m.)	ἶΨΛΗΛ You pray	ἶΝΑΨΛΗΛ You will pray	ΔΚΨΛΗΛ You prayed	ὐπεκΨΛΗΛ You did not pray
	You (s.f.)	τεΨΛΗΛ You pray	τεΡΑΨΛΗΛ You will pray	ἀρεΨΛΗΛ You prayed	ὐπεΨΛΗΛ You did not pray
	You (pl.)	†Ε†ΕΝΨΛΗΛ You pray	†Ε†ΕΝΝΑΨΛΗΛ You will pray	ἀρε†ΕΝΨΛΗΛ You prayed	ὐπε†ΕΝΨΛΗΛ You did not pray
3 rd person	He	ἑΨΛΗΛ He prays	ἑΝΑΨΛΗΛ He will pray	ΔϞΨΛΗΛ He prayed	ὐπεϞΨΛΗΛ He did not pray
	She	ἑΨΛΗΛ She prays	ἑΝΑΨΛΗΛ She will pray	ΔϞΨΛΗΛ She prayed	ὐπεϞΨΛΗΛ She did not pray
	They	ϞεΨΛΗΛ They pray	ϞΕΝΑΨΛΗΛ They will pray	ΔϞΨΛΗΛ They prayed	ὐποϞΨΛΗΛ They did not pray

Negative Present and Future tenses are formed by
ΔΝ or **Ἰ...ΔΝ**

Examples

Present ϞεΨΛΗΛ **ΔΝ** or ἸϞεΨΛΗΛ **ΔΝ**

Future ϞΕΝΑΨΛΗΛ **ΔΝ** or ἸϞΕΝΑΨΛΗΛ **ΔΝ**

**Practice Present, Future and Past tenses
and their negatives
with the following verbs**

ԸՕՐՆ to know

ՆԱԶԺ to believe

ՋԵԱՐ to sit down

ՃԵՐՃԵՐ to snore

ՕՅ to read

ՇՃԱԻ to write

ՕՐՕԱ to eat

ԸՕ to drink

ԺՇԽ to teach

ԽԻՇԽ to learn

Ժ to give

ԽԻ to take, receive

ՕՐՕՄԻ to worship

ՄԵՍՅՈՒՄ to give thanks

Ի to come

ԸՕԺ to save, redeem

ՇՕՐ to bless, praise

ՋՕԸ to sing, chant

Conversation

ՄԵՍՅՈՒՄ Thanks

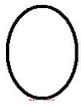
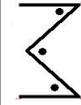
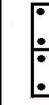
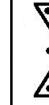
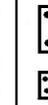
ԱՄՈՆ ՉՆԻ You're welcome (for nothing)

The Numbers

At the time of developing the Coptic Script, all known languages at that time were using their alphabets as numbers. e.g. Greeks, Arabs and Hebrews

	Coptic			Greek		Arabic		Hebrew	
1	ⲟⲩⲁⲓ	ⲁ̅	Alpha	α	Alpha	ا	Alef	א	Aleph
2	Ⲉⲛⲁⲩ	ⲃ̅	Veeta	β	Beta	ب	Baa	ב	Beth
3	Ⲭⲟⲙⲧ	Ⲅ̅	Gamma	γ	Gamma	ج	Geem	ג	Gimel
4	Ⲫⲧⲟⲩ	ⲅ̅	Delta	δ	Delta	د	Dal	ד	Daleth
5	Ⲉⲓⲟⲩ	Ⲇ̅	Ey	ε	Epsilon	ه	Haa	ה	He
6	Ⲙⲟⲟⲩ	Ⲉ̅	So-o	?	?	و	Waw	ו	Waw
7	ⲬⲁⲬⲥ	ⲇ̅	Zeeta	ζ	Zeta	ز	Zayn	ז	Zayin

Later on, the current numbering system (1,2,3,...) was developed from the system used by the **Phoenician sailors**, where the number of angles in the figure indicates the number

Phoenician Figures										
Number of Angles	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

The Coptic Numbers (at the time of writing most Coptic manuscripts)

1	ⲁ̅	ⲟⲩⲁⲓ	10	ⲧ̅	ⲙⲏⲧ	100	ⲡ̅	Ⲭⲉ
2	ⲃ̅	Ⲉⲛⲁⲩ	20	Ⲭ̅	ⲭⲟⲩⲧ	200	Ⲙ̅	Ⲉⲛⲁⲩ Ⲭⲉ
3	Ⲅ̅	Ⲭⲟⲙⲧ	30	ⲅ̅	ⲙⲁⲡ	300	ⲩ̅	Ⲭⲟⲙⲧ Ⲭⲉ
4	ⲅ̅	Ⲫⲧⲟⲩ	40	ⲙ̅	Ⲉⲙⲉ	400	ⲩ̅	Ⲫⲧⲟⲩ Ⲭⲉ
5	Ⲇ̅	Ⲉⲓⲟⲩ	50	ⲛ̅	ⲧⲉⲃⲓ	500	Ⲙ̅	Ⲉⲓⲟⲩ Ⲭⲉ
6	Ⲉ̅	Ⲙⲟⲟⲩ	60	ⲇ̅	Ⲙⲉ	600	ⲭ̅	Ⲙⲟⲟⲩ Ⲭⲉ
7	ⲇ̅	ⲬⲁⲬⲥ	70	ⲟ̅	Ⲭⲱⲃⲉ	700	Ⲙ̅	ⲬⲁⲬⲥ Ⲭⲉ
8	ⲏ̅	Ⲭⲱⲙⲏⲏ	80	ⲡ̅	ⲃⲁⲙⲛⲉ	800	ⲱ̅	Ⲭⲱⲙⲏⲏ Ⲭⲉ
9	Ⲑ̅	Ⲭⲱⲓⲧ	90	ⲥ̅	ⲡⲓⲘⲧⲁⲩ	900	Ⲭ̅	Ⲭⲱⲓⲧ Ⲭⲉ
						1000	ⲁ̅	Ⲭⲟ

Numbers from 1 to 20 can be masculine or feminine. Other numbers have only one form.

		Masc.	Fem.
1	ⲁ̅	ⲟⲩⲁⲓ	ⲟⲩⲓ
2	Ⲃ̅	Ⲛ̀ⲛⲁⲩ	Ⲛ̀ⲛⲟⲩⲥ
3	Ⲅ̅	ⲩⲟⲙⲧ	ⲩⲟⲙⲥ
4	Ⲍ̅	ⲩ̀ⲧⲟⲩ	ⲩ̀ⲧⲟⲓ̀
5	Ⲉ̅	ⲥ̀ⲓⲟⲩ	ⲥ̀ⲓⲓ̀
6	Ⲭ̅	Ⲙⲟⲟⲩ	Ⲙⲟ

		Masc.	Fem.
7	Ⲛ̅	ⲩⲁⲩⲩ	ⲩⲁⲩⲩⲓ
8	Ⲭ̅	ⲩ̀ⲙⲙⲛ	ⲩ̀ⲙⲙⲛⲓ
9	Ⲟ̅	ⲩⲓⲧ	ⲩⲓⲥ
10	Ⲥ̅	ⲙⲛⲧ	ⲙⲛⲥ
20	Ⲙ̅	ⲭⲟⲩⲧ	ⲭⲟⲥ

How to write and read numbers

12	ⲓⲂ̅	ⲙⲛⲧ Ⲛ̀ⲛⲁⲩ
24	Ⲙ̅Ⲍ̅	ⲭⲟⲩⲧ ⲩ̀ⲧⲟⲩ
49	ⲙ̅Ⲟ̅	ⲩ̀ⲙⲓ ⲩⲓⲧ
50	ⲛ̅	ⲧⲉⲃⲓ
72	ⲟ̅Ⲃ̅	ⲩ̀ⲃⲉ Ⲛ̀ⲛⲁⲩ
100	ⲣ̅	ⲩⲩⲉ
111	ⲣ̅ⲓⲁ̅	ⲩⲩⲉ ⲙⲛⲧ ⲟⲩⲁⲓ
318	ⲧ̅ⲓⲛ̅	ⲩⲟⲙⲧ ⲩⲩⲉ ⲙⲛⲧ ⲩ̀ⲙⲙⲛ
200	Ⲙ̅	Ⲛ̀ⲛⲁⲩ ⲩⲩⲉ
666	ⲭ̅ⲗ̅Ⲭ̅	Ⲙⲟⲟⲩ ⲩⲩⲉ Ⲙⲉ Ⲙⲉ Ⲙⲟⲟⲩ
969	ⲩ̅ⲗ̅Ⲟ̅	ⲩⲓⲧ ⲩⲩⲉ Ⲙⲉ Ⲙⲉ ⲩⲓⲧ

The Days of the week

ⲛⲓⲉⲗⲟⲟⲩ ⲛ̀ⲧⲉ ⲣⲓⲁⲛⲩⲩⲁⲩⲩ

(Names derived from the numbers 1-7)

Day	Coptic	Other names
Sunday	ⲣⲓⲟⲩⲁⲓ	ⲣⲓⲉⲗⲟⲟⲩ ⲛ̀ⲧⲉ ⲛ̀ⲃⲟⲓⲘ (Coptic) ⲕⲣⲣⲓⲁⲕⲛⲛ (Greek) (means the day of the Lord.)
Monday	ⲣⲓⲘⲁⲩ	
Tuesday	ⲣⲓⲩⲟⲙⲧ	
Wednesday	ⲣⲓⲩ̀ⲧⲟⲩ	
Thursday	ⲣⲓⲥ̀ⲓⲟⲩ	
Friday	ⲣⲓⲘⲟⲟⲩ	ⲣⲓⲉⲗⲟⲟⲩ ⲛ̀ⲧⲉ ⲣⲓⲘⲟⲃⲥ (Coptic) ⲣⲁⲣⲁⲥⲕⲉⲩⲛⲛ (Greek) (means the day of preparation.)
Saturday	ⲣⲓⲩⲁⲩⲩ	ⲣⲓⲘⲁⲃⲃⲁⲧⲟⲛ (in Hebrew means rest.)

Bible Verses

ΦΗΝΟΥΤ ΟΥΔΑΣΑΠΗ ΠΕ

God is love – 1 John 4:16

ΝΘΩΤΕΝ

ΠΕ ΦΟΥΩΙΝΙ ΞΠΙΚΟCΜΟC

You are

The light of the world – Matt 5:14

ΑΝΟΚ

ΠΕ ΦΟΥΩΙΝΙ ΞΠΙΚΟCΜΟC

I am

The light of the world - John 8:12

ΧΕΛΝΟΥΤ

ΑΝΟΚ ΠΕ ΞΠΕΡΕΡΕΘΟΥΤ

Be of good cheer

It is I, Do not be afraid – Mark 6:50

ΞΠΕΡΜΕΝΡΕ ΠΙΚΟCΜΟC

Do not love the world – 1John 2:15

ΑΝΟΝ ΤΕΝΜΕΙ ΞΦΟΥΤ

ΧΕ ΝΘΟΥ ΔΥΜΕΝΡΙΤΕΝ ΝΨΟΥΡΠ

We love God

Because He first loved us – 1John 4:19

ΡΑΨΙ ΔΕΝ ΠΒΟΙC ΝΧΟΥ ΝΙΒΕΝ

Rejoice in the Lord – Phil 4:4

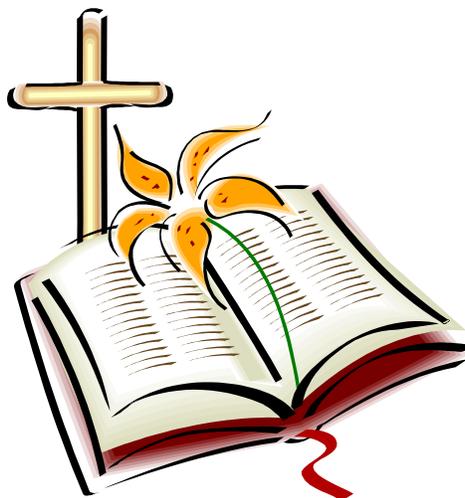
ΠΙΝΑCΟΥΤ ΧΩΡΙC ΝΙΣΒΗΟΥΤΙ ΞΨΩΟΥΤ

Faith without works is dead – James 2:20

ΠΒΟΙC ΠΕΘΝΑΔΜΟΝΙ ΞΜΟΙ
ΝΝΕΥΘΡΕΡΔΑΕ ΝΕΛΙ.

The Lord is my Shepherd

I shall not want – Psalm 23:1



Hymns & Rituals

1- Annual Psalm of Distribution

During the distribution of the Holies (Body & Blood); Communion, the Psalm 150 is chanted with different tunes according to the season of the church, in the annual days we sing the annual distribution followed by the Psalm in Coptic, English or Arabic.

Allhlouia> `cmou `eVnou; 'en nheqouab throu `ntaf. Al?.	Alleluia. Praise God in all His saints. Alleluia.
Cmou `erof 'en pitajro `nte tefjom. Al?.	Praise Him in the firmament of His power. Alleluia.
Cmou `erof `e`rhi \ijen tefmetjwri. Al?.	Praise Him for His mighty acts. Alleluia.
Cmou `erof kata `p`a]ai `nte tefmetni];. Al?.	Praise Him according to the abundance of His greatness. Alleluia.
Cmou `erof 'en ou`cmh `ncalpiggoc. Al?.	Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet. Alleluia
Cmou `erof 'en ouyalthrion nem oukuqara. Al?.	Praise Him with psaltery and harp. Alleluia.
Cmou `erof 'en \ankemkem nem \anxoroc. Al?.	Praise Him with timbrels and chorus. Alleluia.
Cmou `erof 'en \ankkap nem ouorganon. Al?.	Praise Him with strings and organ. Alleluia.
Cmou `erof 'en \ankumbalon `enece tou`cmh. Al?.	Praise Him with pleasant-sounding cymbals. Alleluia.
Cmou `erof 'en \ankumbalon `nte oue]hlou`i. Al?.	Praise Him with cymbals of joy. Alleluia.
Nifi niben marou`cmou throu `e`vran `mPsoic Pennou;. Al?.	Let everything that has breath praise the name of the Lord our God. Alleluia.
Do[a Patri ke Uiw ke `agiw Pneumati. Al?.	Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. Alleluia.
Ke nun ke `a`i ke ic touc `e`wnac twn `e`wnwn> `amhn al?.	Now and ever and unto the ages of the ages. Amen. Alleluia.
Al?. Al?. Do[a ci `o Qeoc `hmwn. Al?.	Alleluia. Alleluia. Glory to You, our God. Alleluia.
Al?. Al?. Pi`wou va Pennou; pe. Al?.	Alleluia. Alleluia. Glory be to our God. Alleluia.
Ihcouc Pixrictoc P]hri `mVnou; cwtem `eron ouo\ nai nan.	O Jesus Christ, the Son of God, hear us and have mercy upon us.

2-Long Agios with Paschal Tune:

Agios (the Trisagion) is a Greek hymn commonly prayed after reading the Acts of the Apostles in the Liturgy, before reading the gospel, it has 3 different tunes: annual, paschal & joyful, the paschal is chanted during the Holy Week & in funerals, all 3 parts are switched to “crucified for us”.

Agios `o Qeoc> Agioc icxuroc>
 Agioc `aqanatoc> `o `ctaurwqic di
 hmac> `ele`hcon `hmac.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal,
 crucified for us, have mercy upon us.

Agios `o Qeoc> Agioc icxuroc>
 Agioc `aqanatoc> `o `ctaurwqic di
 hmac> `ele`hcon `hmac.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal,
 crucified for us, have mercy upon us.

Agios `o Qeoc> Agioc icxuroc>
 Agioc `aqanatoc> `o `ctaurwqic di
 hmac> `ele`hcon `hmac.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal,
 crucified for us, have mercy upon us.

Do[a Patri ke Uiw ke `agiw
 Pneumati> ke nun ke `a`i ke ic
 touc `e`wnac twn `e`wnwn> `amhn.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to
 the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto
 the ages of the ages. Amen.

Agia Triac `ele`hcon `hmac.

O Holy Trinity, have mercy upon us.

3-Golgotha

A paschal hymn specifically chanted towards the conclusion of the Good Friday prayers, during the Burial of the Holy Body of our Lord Jesus Christ after His Death on the Cross for our salvation.

<p>Golgoqa `mmet `ebreoc> pi`kranion `mmetoueinin> pimaetaua]k Psoic `n'htf> akvwr] `nnekjij `ebol> au`iji nemak `nkeconi `cnau> catekou`i nam nem catek jash> `nqok ekxh `en toumh;> `wpicwthr `n`agaqoc.</p>	<p>Golgotha in Hebrew, kranion in Greek, the place where You were crucified, O Lord. You stretched out Your hands, and they crucified two thieves with You; one on Your right side, the other on Your left, and You O good Savior, in the middle.</p>
<p>Do[a Patri ke Uiw ke `agiw Pneumati.</p>	<p>Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.</p>
<p>Afw] `ebol `nje piconi> etcaou`i nam efjw `mmoc> je `aripameu`i wpasoic> `aripameu`i wpacwthr> `aripameu`i wpaouro> ak]an`i `en tekmetouro> af`erouw naf `nje Psoic> `en ou`cmh `mmetremrau]> je `mvoou ek `e]wpi nemhi> `n`rhi `en tametouro.</p>	<p>The right-hand thief cried out saying: Remember me, O my Lord, remember me, O my Savior, remember me, O my King, when You come into Your Kingdom. The Lord answered him in a lowly voice saying: This day you will be with Me in Paradise.</p>
<p>Ke nun ke `a`i ke ic touc `e`wnac tw n `e`wnwn> `amhn.</p>	<p>Now and ever and unto the ages of the ages. Amen</p>
<p>Au`i `nje nidikeoc> Iwchv nem Nikodhmoc> ausi `n`tcar[`nte Pixrioc> au; `noucojen `e`rhi `ejwf> aukocf aukaf `en ou`m\au> eu\wc erof eujw `mmoc> je `agioc `o Qeoc> `agioc icxuroc> `agioc `aqanatoc> `o `ctaurwqic di`hmac `ele`hcon `hmac.</p>	<p>The righteous Joseph and Nicodemus came took away the Body of Christ, wound it in linen cloths with the spices, and put it in a sepulcher and praised Him saying: Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, who was crucified for us, have mercy on us.</p>
<p>Do[a Patri ke Uiw ke `agiw Pneumati.</p>	<p>Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.</p>
<p>Anon \wn marenouw]t `mmof> enw] `ebol enjw `mmoc> je nai nan Vnou; pencwthr> vh`etaua]k `e pi`ctauroc> ek`e'om'em `m`pcatanac> capecht `nnensalauj.</p>	<p>We also worship Him saying: Have mercy on us, O God our Savior, who was crucified on the cross, trample Satan under our feet.</p>
<p>Cw; `mmon ouo\ nai nan> Kuri`e `ele`hcon Kuri`e `ele`hcon Kuri`e euloghcon `amhn> `cmou `eroi `cmou `eroi> ic ;metanoia> xw nhi `ebol jw `mpi`cmou.</p>	<p>Save us and have mercy on us. Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy, Lord bless us. Amen. Bless me. Bless me. Lo, the repentance. Forgive me. Say the blessing.</p>