

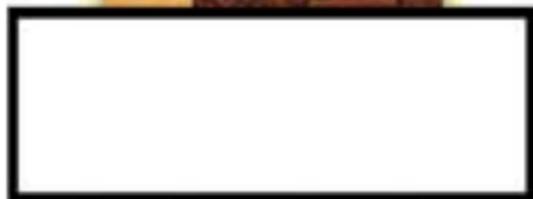


ARCHANGEL MICHAEL

Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate
Archangel Michael Church
P.O. BOX 256 Howell, NJ 07731

**ADDRESS CORRECTION
REQUESTED**

**MONTHLY
NEWSLETTER**



December 2002

Volume 3

Issue 34

Kialik 1719

www.archangelmichaelchurch.net



“**39** And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda; **40** And entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth. **41** And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: **42** And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. **43** And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? **44** For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. **45** And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord. **46** And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, **47** And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. **48** For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. **49** For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name. **50** And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation. **51** He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. **52** He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. **53** He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away. **54** He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy; **55** As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever. **56** And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house. ” (Luk 1:3 9-56)

This Newsletter is a free monthly publication of the Archangel Michael Coptic Orthodox Church, PO Box 256 Howell, NJ 07731, under the supervision of the priests of St. Mary Coptic Orthodox Church, East Brunswick, N.J.

The committee welcomes your participation in the form of articles, reviews, news or comments. Please mail your articles, comments...etc. to the church or e-mail them to newsletter@archangelmichaelchurch.net

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FIVE PROOFS OF THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST

By: His Grace Bishop Moussa



Ever since our Lord descended to us and took our human nature, Satan has tried hard to cast doubt on the wonderful mystery of the Incarnation. Although a thousand heresies have attempted to deny the divinity of the Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ to Him be all glory, was "*declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.*" (Rom. 1: 4).

A short article such as this one is not adequate for this important subject, but is only a simple introduction we present to our blessed youth after which we direct them to the writings of the church and of the fathers which are full of explanations of this important mystery.

Introduction:

We do not elevate a man called Jesus to the level of a god, but on the contrary, we believe in the Person of the Word who condescended to take our flesh and to appear to us in the person of Jesus Christ. The Lord is not a man we are trying to deify and worship, but He is God Who condescended and appeared to us in the flesh. Therefore, all the efforts of the opponents of Christianity to prove the humanity of Christ do not harm us in any way. On the contrary, we believe that our Christ is the Word made flesh, perfect divinity and perfect humanity united in one nature. When Eutychus tried to dissolve the humble human nature in the glorious divinity saying that the body of Christ was merely ephemeral, the Church ex-communicated him.

We differ from them in our belief that the humanity of our Lord was without sin, whereas they expend their energy in a desperate attempt to distort this image that is purer than the sun with imaginings prompted by their impure thoughts. Christ is holy and without sin; His enemies witness to that.

The real human nature that is tired, hungry and sleeps is a basic purpose of the Incarnation. How can Christ represent humanity if He does not take its nature and how can salvation be accomplished unless the Lord conceals His divinity in the humility of humanity. Otherwise, man would not have crucified Him and we would have lost our salvation!

The problem is not that Christ is perfect humanity; we believe this. The problem resides in the question: Is this perfect human the true God at one and the same time?

The answer is: Definitely, He is Incarnate God. And these are some of the proofs.

The First Proof: 'His Infinite Holiness':

1. Our glorious Lord lived among us without sin, for He is "*holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens*" (Heb. 7: 26), "*Who knew no sin*" (2 Cor. 5: 21), and He once defied the Jews saying: "*Which of you convicts Me of sin?*" (Jn. 8: 46). Their mouths were then closed and their tongues tied.

2. All the prophets and apostles "have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3: 23), for "There is none righteous, no not one" (Rom. 3: 10). Even righteous David, of whose heart the scriptures say that it was after God's own heart, says: "*Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me*" (Ps. 51: 5).

Therefore, although Christ is perfect humanity, he is without sin since the Holy Spirit had purified the matter that the Person of the Word took from the body of the pure Virgin Mary to be His flesh. Long ago, Pascal said: "If we find a perfect human, he must be God."

The Second Proof: 'His Infinite Authority':

He was not only a man, but He had infinite authority:

1. Authority over matter: this appears in the miracle of the feeding of the multitudes (Mk. 6: 35-44).

2. Authority over water: this appears when He walks on water and makes Peter walk on it too (Mk. 6: 48-51).

3. Authority over plants: this appears when He curses the barren fig tree (Mt. 21: 18-23).

4. Authority over animals: this is evident in His allowing the evil spirits to enter the pigs (Mt. 8: 28-34).

5. Authority over humans:

a. In sickness: He healed by touch (Mt. 9: 20-23), by word (Jn. 5: 1- 9), and from a distance (Jn. 4: 43-54).

b. In death: He raised the daughter of Jarius who had just died (Lk. 6: 49-56), the son of the widow of Nain when he was on his way to be buried (Lk. 7: 11-15), and Lazarus, after he had been in the grave and already stank (Jn. 11: 38-44).

6. Authority over nature: we see this in His calming of the sea and wind (Mk. 4: 37-39).

7. Authority over thoughts: He revealed the thoughts of Simon, the Pharisee (Lk. 7: 39, 40), and of the crowds when He forgave the sins of the paralytic (Mt. 9: 4).

8. Authority over the future: He prophesied about the destruction of Jerusalem

(Mk.13:14-23), about Peter's denial of Him (Lk.22:34), and about His death on the cross (Jn.21:18,19).

9. Authority over the spirits: they used to be afraid when they saw Him (Mk. 1: 22), and left people at a word from Him (Mk. 1:34).

10. Authority over sin: He forgave sin and only God has the authority to do so (Mk.2:7-10).

The Third Proof: 'His Witnessing to Himself':

As long as the Lord is holy and without sin, His witnessing to Himself is acceptable and true: "*Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true:*

(Jn. 8: 14). He told the man who was born blind after He healed him:

"Do you believe in the Son of God?" *The man asked: "Who is He Lord, that I may believe in Him?"* Jesus answered: "*It is He who is talking to you.*" Then he said: "*Lord, I believe.' And he worshipped Him.*" (Jn. 9:

35-37).

The Jews understood from Jesus' calling Himself the Son of God that He was equal with God for He "said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God." (Jn. 5:18). They had a great conflict with Him when He told them: "*before Abraham was, I AM.*" (Jn. 8: 58). They tried to stone Him saying: "*For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a man, make Yourself God.*" (Jn. 10: 33).

The basic problem in our understanding of the Lord Jesus Christ lies in His uniting two natures in the one nature of the Incarnate Word of God. The Lord of Glory used the expression : "I AM" a number of times and this is the same expression God used to Moses about Himself in the Old Testament. Look at John 6: 20, 35, 41, 51; 8: 12, 18; 11: 25; 14: 6; 18: 5.

The sonship of the Son to the Father does not have the same meaning as human sonship, neither is there a time difference, or is there more than one God, as some people imagine. It means the unity of nature and substance. "I am in the Father, and the Father in Me: (Jn 14: 10), and "he who has seen Me, has seen the Father" (Jn. 14: 9), and "I and the Father are one" (Jn. 10: 30). Our great God is of Himself, uttering the

Living Word through His Spirit. The Father is inner love; the Son is manifest love; and the Spirit is love working in our hearts. As light is born of light without any time difference or separation, so is the Son Light from Light, true God from true God.

The Fourth Proof: 'the Witnessing of Others of Him':

The Lord, during His life on earth, heard many people witnesses to His Divinity and accepted them all, such as:

- + John the Baptist said: "And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God." (Jn. 1: 34).
- + Peter said: "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God." (Mt. 16: 16).
- + Martha said: "I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world." (Jn. 11: 27).

The Fifth Proof: 'His Work in hearts':

In fact, this is the strongest proof we can offer others. The Lord of glory has been able to make celibates out of adulterers, lions who faced hungry lions with amazing courage out of weak women and small children. In a few minutes with the Samaritan woman, he made of her a saint who witnessed to him. A simple visit to the house of Zachias who loved money changed him into a giving individual who loved the poor.

O what millions followed You, O Lord! O how many hearts loved You., and You enslaved them with Your sweet love! How many spirits refused to live among men in order to be filled with Your love in the deserts and caves! What sword did you use, Lord? What war did You wage to win all these supporters and followers? It is the sword of sacrificial Love, even to the cross! It is the war of Light which conquers the bonds of darkness in hearts! O Anointed of God, of Whom all those anointed of God, whether kings, priests, or prophets were only symbols! O You Who were the desire of the men of the Old Testament, You have become the only hope of man in the New Testament! "For there is no other name under heaven, given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4: 12). Accept our faith in You, our Lord and God, for ever! Establish Your children in You, O Eternal Rock of Ages! Open eyes blinded by the god of this age lest You shine on them with your radiant Face!

Come, let us bow to our God, the Lord Jesus Christ, and give Him all our life, to the last drop of blood!!

Short Story

A Special Friend

Selected by: Monica Michael

Two friends were walking through the desert. During some point of the journey they had an argument, and one friend slapped the other one in the face. The one who got slapped was hurt, but without saying anything, wrote in the sand: *"TODAY MY BEST FRIEND SLAPPED ME IN THE FACE."*

They kept on walking until they found an oasis, where they decided to take a bath. The one who had been slapped got stuck in the mire and started drowning, but the friend saved him. After he recovered from the near drowning, he wrote on a stone: *"TODAY MY BEST FRIEND SAVED MY LIFE."*

The friend who had slapped and saved his best friend asked him, "After I hurt you, you wrote in the sand and now, you write on a stone, why?" The other friend replied: "When someone hurts us we should write it down in sand where winds of forgiveness can erase it away. But, when someone does something good for us, we must engrave it in stone where no wind can ever erase it."





Coptic People ask His Holiness Pope Shenouda III

Question: Is every bad thought which goes round in my head to be considered a sin? Where do these bad thoughts come from and how can I stop them from coming?

His Holiness Pope Shenouda III Answers:

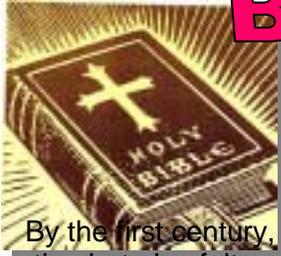
Not every bad thought which goes round in your mind is to be considered a sin, for there is a difference between being under attack by thoughts and falling into sin through thoughts. Being under attack by thoughts is when a bad thought harasses you, but you don't give into it and try with all your heart and might to banish it, even though it might remain for some time. And when such a thought persists against your own wishes, it is not considered a sin. On the contrary, your resisting it could be credited to you as righteousness. But falling into sin through one's thoughts is when you give in to bad thoughts and begin to take pleasure in them. There are bad thoughts which come from outside and others which come from inside. If your heart is very honest from within, it will not betray its master with these thoughts nor let them gain entrance. It will have nothing to do with them so they end up fleeing your mind. There are bad thoughts which enter a clean heart because of its lack of purity.

An example of bad thoughts which come from the outside is that of the serpent's attack on Eve. Eve had a pure heart but because she wasn't firm enough with the serpent, the ideas entered her heart and turned them into desire and then into action. Ideas which come from the mind are not as powerful as the ones that come from the heart, because the ones from the heart are mixed with emotion or desire. Thus it is easy to banish ideas which come from the mind, but if they are retained or accommodated they may move the heart and become influenced by its emotional reactions and more powerful. For this reason, a person should guard his heart as well as his mind and should keep a dividing line between his head and his heart. If something unsuitable reaches your ears, comes to your eyes or enters your thoughts, do not let it go deep within you but let it pass straight through. Being able to forget is one of God's blessings to mankind by which passing thoughts and transitory sensory perceptions can be wiped away. "Above all else, guard your heart, for it is a wellspring of life." (Prov. 4:23)



The Departure of Saint Gregory, the Wonder Worker.

He was the bishop of Neocaesarea, in the province of Pontus, where he was born to rich pagan parents. He learned philosophy and wisdom at an early age and surpassed many of his colleagues. Then he went to Beirut, where he studied the Greek and Latin subjects. From there he went to Caesarea, Palestine, where the erudite Origen was, who taught him Christian philosophy. He also learned Theology and the interpretations of the holy books. In the year 235 A.D., he went to the city of Alexandria, the cultural center of the world at that time, to complete his studies. He returned to his town in the year 237 A.D. In the year 239 A.D., he was baptized in the holy baptism and became a Christian, for he realized the vanity of this world and chose the way of the everlasting kingdom of heaven. He directed all his attention to the salvation of his soul. When he knew that the Bishop of his town was seeking him to assist him in the bishopric duties, he escaped to the wilderness. He devoted himself to prayers and ardent worship, forsaking the world and the futility of its glories. When the Bishop of his town departed, they sought him in order to make him the new bishop but they did not know where to find him. It happened while the people were gathered with St. Gregory, the Theologian, that they heard a voice say, "Seek Gregory the Hermit and set him a Bishop over you." They could not find him, so they decided to take a Bible and pray the prayer of ordination over it, as though he were present. They called him Gregory even though his given name was Theodore. St. Gregory, the Theologian, presided over this service. The angel of the Lord appeared to St. Gregory in the wilderness and said to him, "Rise up and go to your town, for they have made you the bishop over it and refuse not, for it is the Will of God." He did not hesitate, rose up immediately and descended from the mountain and went to his town. The people went forth to meet him with great honor, and they completed his ordination in the year 244 A.D. The Lord performed many signs and wonders at his hands, so that he was called the wonder worker. For example, two brothers who owned a lake from which they made a good living by catching large amounts of fish had a falling out because of it, for each one of them claimed his ownership of it. When they were unable to reach an agreement, they sought the wisdom of St. Gregory to help them settle their differences. He ordered that they should divide the yield of the lake equally between themselves. When they did not heed his judgment, he entreated God and the waters of the lake dried up and it became a farmland, which they divided between them. Reports of the signs and wonders which he made were heard throughout the land. Finally, when he completed his strife, he departed in peace.
His prayers be with us. Amen.



BIBLE STUDY

The Book of Revelation

By: Christine Michael

By the first century, the Christians of the church not only felt persecution but also felt problems within the church as well. Their struggles were of suffering, war of the spirit, heretical practice and teachings and spiritual apathy. The readers of Revelation, at this point, needed encouragement. However, Revelation was written as a promise of divine protection from God's judgment on the world, which the people were to obey, holding strong to the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. The objective being for Christian believers to persevere in faith through a life of obedience in the new established messianic kingdom.

John is said to be the author of Revelation, referring to himself several times in the book itself. Being involved in seven churches of Roman province of Asia in perseverance, blessing, and suffering, John stands steadfast "for the Word of God for the testimony of Jesus Christ" (1:9) bringing him to his eventual exile to the island of Patmos. His writing resembles the Gospel of St. John while also making references to the Old Testament revealing his Jewish background. The time set around 70 to 100 A.D. seems to be the approximate date of writing, during the time of Christian persecution and historical dates of the apostle John's ministry throughout the province of Asia to the Christians of the seven churches of Revelation. At this time of strong persecution, John's exile to Patmos finally led to his release after eighteen months and return to Ephesus as one of the leaders of the church.

The book of Revelation of Jesus Christ creates many images of Christ, sends direction to the churches, and gives messages to the churches, throughout the book, which Christians needed to hear. The many references to Jesus Christ, throughout the book of Revelation, as "the King of kings, the Lord of lords, the glorified Son of Man, the worthy Lamb," and so on, brings forth worship and praise due to God. In addition, the detailed directives of Christ for the churches warn of the wrath and judgments at "His eternal rule" prior to "His Second Coming." The reminders the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ that offered to the world redemption from sin and eternal life encourages believers and non-believers to repent and to turn praying before God. Finally, John depicts great visions of the Holy Spirit sending forth vital messages for the church to understand. In understanding, they learn of the divine struggle of Satan and the demons, which has already been won by the blood of the Lamb, Christ our Savior. This leaves Satan and his followers to be sentenced to their just and eternal damnation by the Lord.

"From The Nelson study Bible: Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville"

But as , for me, I will come into Your house in the
multitude of Your mercy; in fear of You I will worship
towards Your holy temple

(Ps 5)

Starting Friday
December 13th
the church will hold
Kiahk's Praise(7&4)
every Friday from 7:30
PM to 11 PM.

**New Year EVE.
Tuesday,
December 31, 2002**

- 8:30 PM – 11:30 PM
New Year Celebration &
Aghabi

11:30 PM- 12 AM
Prayers

-12 AM– 3:30 AM
Midnight Praises

-3:30 AM– 6:00 AM
Divine Liturgy.

**CHURCH SERVICES
DECEMBER 2002**

Fridays

-7:30 PM– 11 PM :
Kiahk's Praise(7&4)

Saturdays

-8:00AM-11:30AM:
Divine Liturgy

-12.00 Noon– 1: 00PM:
Sunday School &
Youth group meeting



*Please do not forget to pray to the Lord
that He may heal the sick
and
repose the souls of those who have passed away in the
paradise of joy.*