

ST. JOHN

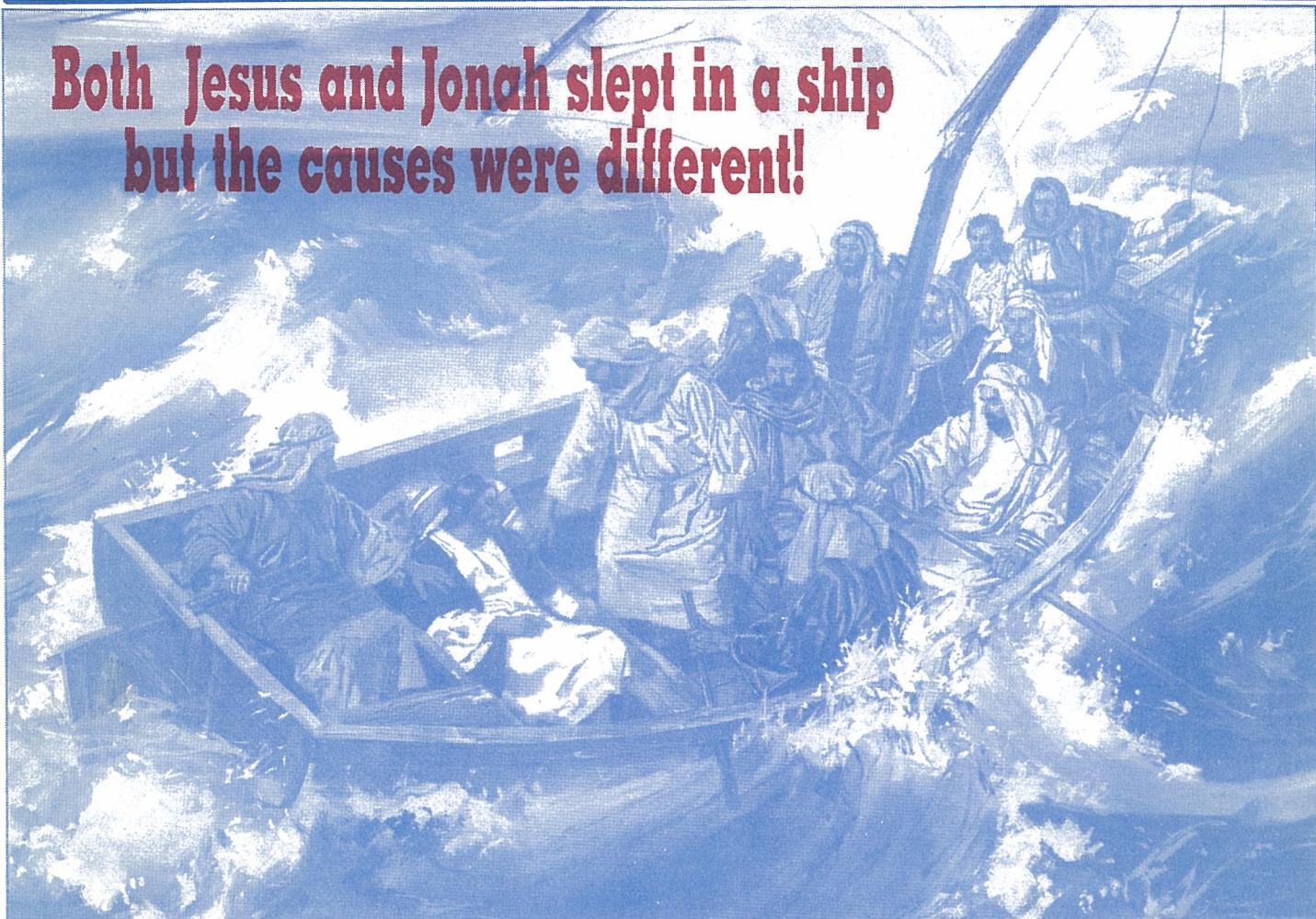
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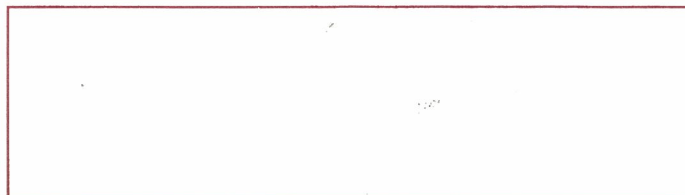
**Both Jesus and Jonah slept in a ship
but the causes were different!**



Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate
St. John Coptic Orthodox Church
P.O. Box 598
West Covina, CA 91793-0598

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The Book of Jonah

By
Fr. Augustinos Hanna



On the occasion of the 3 day-fast named after Jonah and Nineveh, (Monday, February 8 - Wednesday 10, 93) it is appropriate to study an introduction to the Book of Jonah.

Jonah's Personality:

Jonah is a Hebrew name meaning "dove". He was a prophet of Israel, son of Amittai, a citizen of Gath-hepher (three miles from Nazareth - Josh. 19:13). **2 Kings 14:25** is the only other mention of this prophet, and that would place him in the mid-8th century BC.

Tradition points out his "tomb" in the Galilee region. Jonah, an older contemporary of the prophets Hosea and Amos, in the days of Jeroboam II (786 - 746 B.C.) foretold the recovery of Israel's territory from Hamath on the North to the Dead Sea in the South (II Kings 14:23-25). Such political prognostications of court prophets were pleasing to Israel. Jonah had a major prophetic role in the reign of King Jeroboam II. He conveyed a message encouraging expansion to the King of Israel, whose reign was marked by prosperity, expansion, and, unfortunately, moral decline. In the midst of all the political corruption of Israel, Jonah remained a zealous patriot. So, he was not just a stubborn person who disobeyed God for no reason, but when we know the historical background, we can better understand his strange reaction.

Jonah was not a fanatic Jew against Gentiles, because an old tradition says that he was the same child of the widow of Zarephath whom the prophet Elijah raised from the dead, and this means that he

came from a mixed family, a Jewish father and a Gentile mother. But rather, his reluctance to go to Nineveh (the Capital of Assyria) undoubtedly, stemmed from his knowledge that the Assyrians would be used as God's instrument for punishing Israel, and that they were very cruel barbarians. The prophet, who had been sent to Jeroboam II to assure him that his kingdom would prosper, was the same prophet God chose to send to Nineveh - his major enemy - to forestall that city's destruction until Assyria could be used to punish Israel in 722 BC. It is no wonder that the prophet reacted emotionally to his commission. (*see Encyclopedia of the Bible, Marshall Pickering, Vol. 2, P. 1205*).

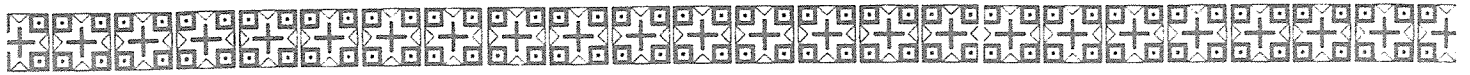
Jonah, was the only prophet whom the Lord Jesus talked about, as a type of His death, burial and resurrection after three days (Matt. 12:40).

Nineveh, was destroyed by the Babylonians in 612 BC., almost one hundred years after Jonah.

Outline of The Book of Jonah:

It is the 5th book of the 12 Minor Prophets in the OT. It is unlike the 11 other books, in that it deals almost entirely with a literary narrative rather than a series of prophetic oracles, and gives an account of Jonah's experiences after he disobeyed the Lord's command to preach to the people of Nineveh.

The Book of Jonah is composed of 4 chapters:
Chapter 1: Jonah's commission, disobedience, and



punishment .

Chap. 2: Jonah’s prayer & wonderful deliverance from drowning.

Chap. 3: Jonah preaches & Nineveh fasts and repents.

Chap. 4 Jonah complains and is rebuked by God.

The Author & Date:

The writing of the Book of Jonah has been traditionally ascribed to Jonah himself, and that makes it dated in the reign of Jeroboam II of Israel (786-746 BC.) Jonah would be then one of the great 8th-century prophets who ministered during the Silver age of Israel.

Some scholars believe, from 3:3, and the past tense used, that Jonah did not write the story himself, and it was probably written after 612 BC., the date of Nineveh’s fall.

The Lord Jesus used two of the experiences of Jonah as signs to His generation:

(1) The 3 days spent by Jonah in the great fish served as an analogy of Jesus’ death and resurrection (Matt. 12:38-41).

(2) The immediate acceptance of the Ninevites to Jonah’s preaching was used by Christ to condemn the Jews for rejecting Him, despite He was greater than Jonah (Luke 11:32).

Jonah is neither myth nor fiction but real:

Some modern scholars believe that the Book of Jonah, because of some difficulties, is a myth, or a prophetic parable, or extended allegory, rather than a real historical story.

Those who deny the historicity of the book, argue about several difficulties such as:

- (1) Jonah being swallowed by a whale.
- (2) It is unlikely that a human being could exist within a fish for 3 days.
- (3) The mass repentance of the of the Ninevites.

- (4) The use of the expression “King of Nineveh” instead of “King of Assyria”.

The answers to these difficulties:

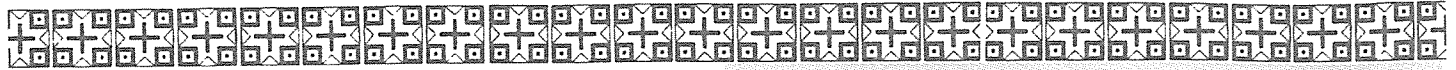
(1) The Bible did not say that it was a whale that swallowed Jonah, but simply a “*great fish*” (1:17). It is possible, however, for a sperm whale to swallow an object as large as a man. Numerous examples of individuals being swallowed by whales have been cited in the past (*Princeton Theological Review* 25, 1927, p. 636).

(2) Jonah’s survival 3 days inside the great fish, was unusual, but it was a **sign** or miracle, by the power of the Almighty God to befit and become a symbol of Christ’s death and resurrection. Jesus said: “*For as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so also the Son of Man will be to this generation*” (Lk.11:30). If we believed that God is Almighty, there would be no problem or difficulty.

(3) Regarding the mass repentance of the Ninevites, it was due to the sign of Jonah and the seriousness of his threatening message. There is historical evidence that such a response was possible. In less than a decade (765-759 BC.) the city of Nineveh had experienced a total eclipse of the sun and two serious plagues. One can understand how the citizens of Nineveh may have been prepared for the message of this prophet who came to them miraculously.

(4) There is nothing wrong in using the expression “King of Nineveh”, instead of “King of Assyria, because Nineveh was the capital of Assyria and both are the same. There are many similar expressions used in the O.T., for instance, Ahab, the King of Israel, is called “King of Samaria” (1 Kgs. 21:1), and Ben-Hadad, the king of Syria, is designated “King of Damascus” (2 Chr.24:23).

(5) The story of Jonah is not a parable because there are no such long extensive parables in the whole



Bible, as the Book of Jonah. There is no convincing reason for rejecting the historicity of the book.

(6) It is not myth, because it talks about a real prophet, real cities like Joppa, Nineveh and Tarshish, and real historical customs of the time.

(7) The Lord Jesus Christ supported the validity of the Book of Jonah, He can't compare His redemption with a myth, but with two real facts from the life of Solomon and Jonah (Matt. 12 & Lk. 11).

The Purpose of The Book:

1. The allegorical indication to the redemption of Christ, His death and resurrection after three days.
2. The teaching that God's grace was not limited to the Jews. He places Jonah's pity for the plant in stark contrast to God's concern and mercy for the thousands of people of Nineveh, Israel's enemies, and even the livestock (Jonah 4:11).
3. God is the "Pantocrator", the Almighty, Omnipotent Creator who cares for His creation, and has control over everything such as: the people, the sea, the wind, the lot, the fish, the plants and the worms. He can guide all things to work together for the good of His people (Rom. 8:28).
4. God's mighty invisible hands work from behind the scenes, the eyes of faith only can see and feel His Providence, but the ungodly people consider all of that coincidence.
5. All creatures obey God unconditionally, except man. But God still works out His will and plans, despite man's disobedience.
6. Fasting and prayer can do miracles, but through repentance only. That is why it is written in chapter 3 that when "*God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way, He relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring on them*" (3:10).
7. God would not allow His servant to disobey without chastisement and discipline (Heb. 12:6).

The Schedule of Meetings & Occasions

1. Sunday English Liturgy8:00 - 10:30 A.M.
2. Sunday Arabic Liturgy8:00 - 11:30 A.M.
3. Wednesday & Friday Liturgies.....8 - 10:30 AM.
4. Saturday Vespers & Bible: Study 6:30 - 8:30 PM. followed by **confessions** and Tasbeha.
5. English Youth Meeting....Saturday after Vespers.
6. The Youth leaders and Sunday School Teachers, Service Preparing Meeting...Saturday 5- 6:30 PM.
7. Arabic Youth Meeting.....Friday 7 - 9:30 P.M.
8. The Deacon's Meeting.....Friday 7:30 - 8:30 PM.
9. Teaching Church Hymns for beginners....Friday from 6:30 - 7:30 P.M.
10. The Church Board Meeting: The first Thursday.

Six Extra Liturgies During February

1. Saturday Feb. 6: A spiritual day Liturgy, for the youth, from 8 - 10 A.M.

Three Liturgies of the Fast of Jonah:

2. Monday Feb. 8:.....from 10:00 A.M.- 12:00.
3. Tuesday Feb. 9:.....from 12 - 2:00 P.M.
4. Wednesday 10:.....from 2:00 - 4:00 P.M.
5. Thursday 11:Liturgy of Jonah's Feast 8-10 A.M.
6. Monday Feb. 15, The Feast of Jesus First Entry to the Temple.....from 8:00 - 10:00 A.M.

The Holy Lent (55 days), starts February 22, and ends with the Easter on April 18, 1993.





The Sin of Prayerlessness

(1 Samuel 12:23)

By
Fr. Augustinos Hanna

The title might seem strange, is prayerlessness considered a sin? It is looked upon merely as a weakness. There is so much talk about lack of time and all sorts of distractions that the deep guilt of the situation is not recognized.

So, let us consider the following facts:

1. The Bible calls it sin:

“As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you” (1 Sam. 12:23).

2. Prayer is the mother of virtues:

The Church fathers used to teach that “prayer is the mother of virtues, care for the mother and she will provide you with children”. The prayerless life is a barren life that lacks Christian virtues and values, while God orders us: *“Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue”* (2 Peter 1:5), because the faith which lacks virtues is a Satanic faith (James 2:19).

3. Prayer is a vital sign of life:

Praying and reading the Bible, are vital signs of spiritual life, like the cycle of respiration, inhalation and exhalation. St. John Chrysostom said, “If you saw someone who does not pray, be sure that he is lifeless exactly as the cold, dead statue”. Accordingly prayerlessness is equal to lifelessness.

4. Praying gives life and cure to others:

It is written that, *“If anyone sees his brother sinning, he will ask, and He will give him life”* (1 John 5:16). Also, it is written: *“Pray for one another, that you*

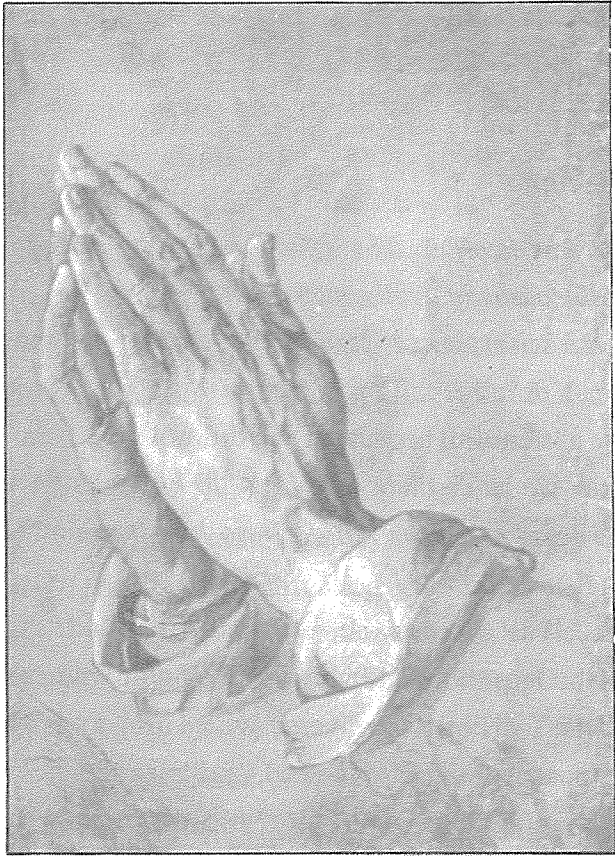
may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much” (James 5:16).

As a result, prayerlessness causes sicknesses, death or rather killing to others, it is a kind of murder by abstention, because if we did not give them life, then we leave them dead, for *“to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin”* (Jam. 4:17).

5. It is a reproach and insult to God: There is the most holy and glorious God who invites us to come to Him, to converse with Him, to ask from Him such things as we need, and to experience what a blessing there is in fellowship with Him. He has created us in His own image and has redeemed us by His own Son, so that in prayer with Him we might find our highest glory and salvation, and *“be conformed to the image of His Son”* (Rom.8:29).

Many people take only five minutes daily for prayer! They say that they have no time and that the heart desire for prayer is lacking; they do not know how to spend half an hour with God! They pray everyday but they have no joy in prayer, as a token of communion with God which shows that God is everything to them.

If a friend comes to visit them, they have time, they make time, even at the cost of sacrifice, for the sake of enjoying conversation with him. They find time for a creature who can be of service to them; but day after day, month after month passes, and there is no time to spend one hour with God. Do not our hearts begin to acknowledge what a dishonor and ungreatfulness this is to God, that I dare to say I cannot find time for fellowship with Him?



6. It is the cause of a deficient spiritual life:

It is a proof that our life is still under the power of "the flesh". Prayer is the pulse of life; by it the doctor can tell the condition of the heart.

Many complaints are made about the feebleness of the Church to fulfill her calling, to exercise an influence over her members, to deliver them from the power of the world, and to bring them to a life of holy consecration to God.

Much is also spoken about her indifference to the millions of heathen and non-Christians whom Christ entrusted to her, that she might make known to them His love and salvation. What is the reason that thousands of Christian workers do not have a greater influence? Nothing except this, the prayerlessness of their service.

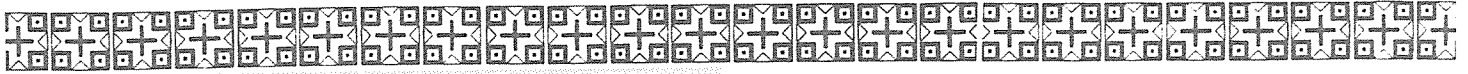
7. The dreadful loss in prayerlessness:

It is the business of the spiritual leaders to

train believers up to a life of prayer; but how can a leader do this if he himself has little understanding of the art of conversing with God and of receiving from the Holy Spirit every day, out of heaven, abundant grace for himself and for those who serve? Any leader can not lead his congregation higher than he is himself. Don't we repeat and claim everyday in the gospel of the morning prayer, that "*of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace?*" (Jn.1:16)

The enemy uses all his power to lead the Christian, and above all the minister, to neglect prayer among his busy schedule. Satan knows that however admirable the sermon may be, however attractive the service, however faithful and active the pastoral visitation, all these things can not damage him or his kingdom without prayer. The inner chamber is the place where the decisive victory is obtained. In the conflict between Satan and the believer, God's child can conquer everything by prayer. Through prayer we can move the hand that moves and controls the universe. Is it any wonder that Satan does his utmost to snatch that weapon from us, or to hinder us in the use of it? When St. Paul talked about the whole armor of God, he added: "*praying at all times with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit...with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints, and for me...*"(Eph.6:18). Without prayer, the helmet of salvation, and shield of faith, and the Sword of the Spirit, which is God's word, have no power.

It is much more effective to preach five minutes after one hour of prayer, than to preach one hour after five minutes of prayer. This is the secret, why did St. Peter win 3000 souls by few words, in the day of Pentecost, while 3000 ministers now preach 3000 sermons without winning one single soul!! Lord have mercy upon us and teach us how to pray without ceasing...Amen.



We really Live when we Live to give

By
Mary Habib

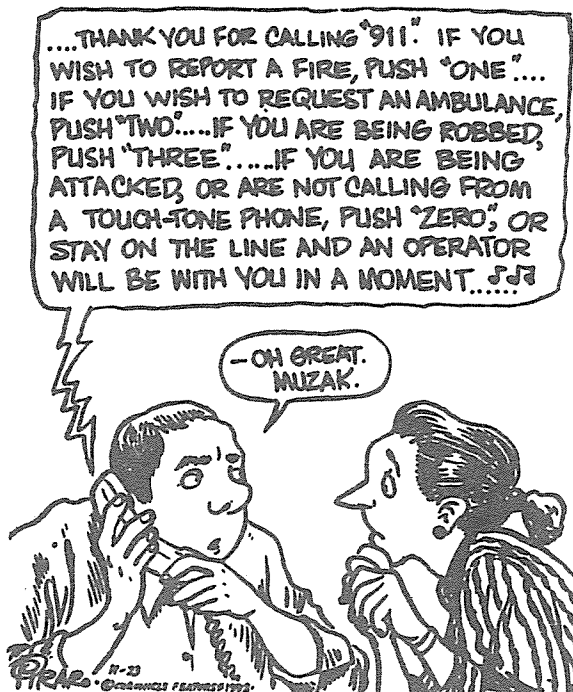
I was extremely touched and impressed by the enormous love and support extended to me during my recent illness. It reminded me of an article I have read about a Christian mother who had the following words taped to her refrigerator door:

Hgppy are those who...

- + Give love rather than demand it.
- + Reach out to others rather than expect to be reached out to.
- + Desire to be a friend more than to have friends..
- + Express appreciation rather than think only of their own suffering.
- + Behind these sayings is a way of thinking that focuses on other people rather than on ourselves.

Lord grant us a giving heart.

Let us live to give, because "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).



Smile

Adam and Eve

Adam and Eve had many advantages, but the principal one was that they escaped teething!

Donations

The pastor asked his congregation to participate in the church offering and said: "Let us give generously, according to what you reported on your income tax."

Age

The best way to cure your wife of nervousness is to tell her it is caused by advancing age!

Fired

He was the big gun in the office until he was fired!

Cooking

Young Bride: There are two things that I am good at preparing...meatballs and lemon pie.

Young Husband: And which one is this?

Gossip:

- Gossip is that which no one claims to like but every one enjoys!
- "Listen to me carefully," said the gossip, "because I can tell this only once. I promised not to repeat it."!!
- First Gossip: Why did they separate?
Second Gossip: Nobody knows.
First Gossip: Oh, how terrible.
- * Remember what God says: "Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor, Him I will destroy" (Psalm 101:5).

Snoring:

Patient: Doctor, is there anything you can do to cure my snoring?
 Doctor: Does it disturb your wife?
 Patient: No, it only embarrasses my wife. It is the rest of the people in the church that are disturbed.

* Remember St. Peter's advice: "But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers" (1Pet. 4:7).



REINCARNATION

A False Non-Christian Belief (1)

By
Fr. Augustinos R. Hanna

Reincarnation, an ancient Indian doctrine, tries now to re-appear in a new form! It is originally a Buddhist religious belief widespread in the far East. It had its echo in the Greek mythology, and even affected some Jews. In the time of the early church, the gnostics tried to bring up such a belief but it was strictly rejected.

Lately, I read two strange books, about reincarnation, the first titled *“May a Christian believe in Reincarnation?”*, and the second, *“Reincarnation and the Christian Church”*, written by Abbot George Burke in 1984 and issued by St. George Press, from Holy Protection Orthodox Monastery in Oklahoma.

The author, in those two books, tried hard to prove that “reincarnation” is not just a local Indian or Buddhist belief, but a true Christian dogma also! He tried to reconcile some of the Biblical verses with that belief, twisting their interpretation to serve his view and quoting some abrupt sayings from the early church fathers out of their context!

Since we have to be knowledgeable about what is going on around us, and protect our faith and children from heresies and false teachings, I found myself obliged to bring up the subject and discuss it in two articles.

What is Reincarnation?

Reincarnation, also known as the *“Transmigration of souls”*, has three views:

1. That there is an immortal soul which goes from birth to birth until it attains salvation, which ends the rebirth process.

2. That the immortal soul is reborn eternally with no ending of rebirth.

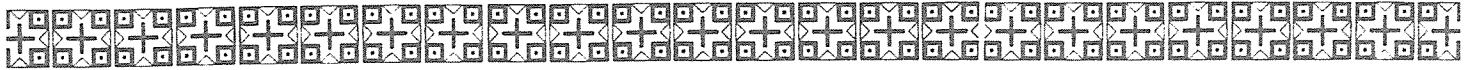
3. That there is no immortal soul, but only a kind of force or energy which keeps creating a chain of rebirths (This one is the typical Buddhist doctrine).

The Law of Justice Behind Reincarnation!

The mentioned author, says that the foundation of reincarnation, is the rule which Paul set in Galatians 6:7,8 *“Whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.”* He adds: *“In other words, if we lie, we shall be lied to; if we steal, we shall be stolen from; if we cheat, we shall be cheated; if we injure, we shall be injured; if we kill, we shall be killed....Jesus confirmed the same rule and said to Peter: “Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword..., yet how many murderers go undetected and unpunished? Think of the murderers that die natural deaths, even in prisons...So we shall reap in our bodies exactly what we sow in our bodies. And if we die before so doing? Rebirth is the law” !!*

Their Evidence of Reincarnation:

Abbot Burke says that, *“Many books referred to by early writers as being widely used by the church have vanished. Even the book of Enoch, quoted by Saint Jude in his epistle, is no more; nor is the book of Jasher, mentioned in Joshua and 2 Samuel. Reincarnation is commonly represented in the West as being an exclusively Hindu/ Buddhist belief, but it is not. Reincarnation is a tenet of Orthodox Judaism, wherein it is called “gilgul or*



ha' atakah", and was so at the time of Christ, and automatically passed over into Christian theology" !!

Then Burke, quoted a few lines from the writings of some famous Jewish scholars like Philo, Josephus, and Rabbi Hillel, and used several verses from both the Old and the New Testaments which he thought supported his view.

Our Answer To This Deception & Heresy:

1. First of all, I want to clarify that Philo Judaeus was a Jewish philosopher and not a theologian. Also, Flavius Josephus was a Jewish historian, not a theologian, and he was wrong if he ever wrote that the Pharisees believed in rebirth and not in the resurrection of the physical body, because this contradicts history and the Scriptures (Acts 23:8).
2. Rabbi Hillel, "who was considered the greatest Rabbi in Jewish history, and a contemporary of Jesus", did not ever agree upon "Reincarnation", and the story which is attributed to him, that he saw a skull floating on the surface of the water, and said to it: "*Because you drowned others, others have drowned you; and those who have drowned you shall themselves be drowned*"-- this story as is, has nothing to do with reincarnation, but rather about his belief in God's justice and punishment to criminals.
3. When St. Paul said that "*Whatever a man sows, that he will also reap*" (Gal. 6:7), he meant that if a man sows evil, he will reap evil, and if he sows good, he will reap good. He explained what he said in the following verse by saying: "*For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life* (Gal. 6:8). So, it is clear that St. Paul did not talk at all about reincarnation, and that verse has nothing to do with "the immortal soul

which goes from birth to birth until attaining salvation, or is reborn eternally and endlessly".

4. St. Paul, when he talked about sowing and reaping, did not mean literally that every sinner must take his punishment for every sin here on earth, but as a general speaking, the harvest will be of the same kind of sowing. And he himself said: "*Some men's sins are clearly evident, preceding them to judgment, but those of some men follow later*" (1 Tim.5:24). That means, some sinners may get away with their sins and escape the earthly justice, but their sins will surely follow them in eternity and will be judged and condemned there.
5. On the contrary of that misunderstanding to Galatians 6:7, St. Paul was very decisive when he said: "**It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment**"(Hebrews 9:27). Here he talked in crystal clear language about death only one time "**once**", and **judgment after death**. There are no births after death, no moving from body to body.
6. The Lord Jesus Christ, has never talked about reincarnation, or recycling of life on earth, but He said the opposite ten times in His teachings and in His parables. When He talked about Lazarus and the rich man in Luke 16:19-31, He mentioned that Lazarus "*the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.*" From this declaration, it is understood that there is only one death for the believer, and afterwards he goes to the Paradise, just as in the case of the right thief on the cross. Jesus said to him; "*Today, you will be with Me in Paradise.*"(Lk 23:43)



There is also one death only for the wicked, and after that he goes immediately to hades, and there are no other births or transmigration to other bodies, no other cycles on earth, but one physical birth, one physical death and then one judgment only.

The Lord Jesus described also very clear, the resurrection of the dead and the immediate judgment in John 5:28,29 and in Matt. 25:31-45 (see also 1 Thess 4:14-17 & 1 Pet. 3:19 & Rev. 14:13).

7. Reincarnation, also denies the resurrection of the bodies. It conflicts with Judaism (Daniel 12:2 & Ezekiel 37), and contradicts Christianity of course in that also (John 5:28,29 & 1 Cor. 15 & 1 Thess.4:13)

8. The theory of reincarnation, moreover, destroys the principle of judgment, for if we supposed that there are “endless rebirths, or even many, or just energy which keeps creating a chain of rebirths”, so how will the person be judged? and for what cycle will he be judged? This is impossible and ridiculous.

9. The first view of reincarnation, leads to saying that every human being will get saved and no one will perish! Its third view which describes the human life as just “*an energy which keeps creating a chain of rebirths*”, denies totally the human spirit and the immortal soul, and the eternal life in heaven and the eternal punishment of the wicked, besides the mere existence of heaven and hell... and all these are against Christianity.

In conclusion, reincarnation, is an idolatry doctrine, it is sort of superstition, or a heresy, and contradicts both Judaism and Christianity. It has no ground at all in the Holy Bible, neither in the Old Testament nor in the New Testament.

Needless to say that the book of Enoch is not a canonical book but an Apocryphal one, and the

book of Jashar was an etymological book (of language and poetry). Also it is a false statement that “*reincarnation passed over to Christian Theology*” or that “*it has an echo in the church fathers’ sayings.*”

In the next issue, I will refute the falacies and the misunderstanding of some of the Biblical verses claimed to support this pagan false teaching.

To Be Unique

By
Mary Tawadros

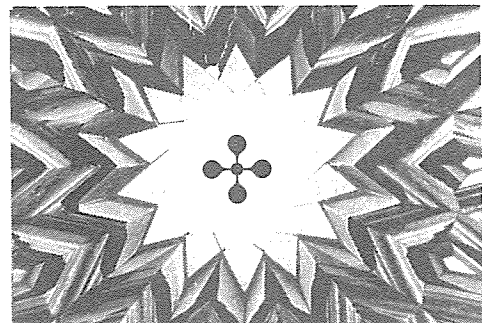
**To be unique is a big responsibility,
You always have to look good,
Know what you say
Know how to act
Give good advice.**

**As strange as it might sound,
A unique person can do all these
things without worrying
about making a mistake.**

**Unique people are out going,
Polite, and are understanding.
Unique people are not perfect,
Each person has a flaw.**

**But for unique people sometimes,
I guess it's an exception,
As long as unique people are down
to earth and loving**

**You'll have no problems
Being their friend !**





The Divinity of Christ

Jesus Christ Is Lord & God

By
Fr. Augustinos Hanna

(1)

A Dogma of Great Importance:

The Divinity of Christ is the basic dogma in Christianity, and its cornerstone. All other dogmas are built on it. The divinity of Christ means, that Jesus Christ is God, He is the same Lord & God. Jesus is the “*Word of God*” (John 1:1-14). Also, He is the “*Son of God*”, the only begotten Son (Jn.1:18, 3:16). He is the “*Wisdom of God*” (Col. 2:3 & 1 Cor.1:30), and the “*Image of the invisible God*” (Col.1:15). Jesus said “*I and the Father are ONE*” (John 10:30).

If Jesus Christ were not God, there would be no Trinity, no incarnation, no redemption, no salvation, no forgiveness of sins, no resurrection, no justification for mankind, and all the Christian dogmas would have collapsed, and all human beings would perish.

That is why Satan declared his fierce war against this faith from the beginning, at the end of the first century, St. John wrote his Gospel especially to defend this dogma and confirm the Deity or the Divinity of Christ.

Once again Satan, through Arius, attacked the Divinity of Christ and said that He was just a “mediator god” but not the true God! The church held the first Ecumenical Council of Nicea, 325 A.D., and excommunicated him and put the creed of faith which we still use in our churches till now.

In the 7th century, Islam denied the Divinity of Christ and believed that He was just a great prophet.

Finally, in these last days, some groups call

themselves, “Jehovah’s witnesses” and “Advantists” deny the Divinity of Christ and think He is one of the “gods”, or the “Archangel Michael” !

Therefore, it is of great importance for us to know and understand this vital dogma, because our salvation depends on it, and the Bible says clearly that, “*He who believes in the Son of God has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him*” (Jn. 3:36). So, we may live and die without hearing about the prophets, and yet this does not affect our salvation. The situation is not the same regarding the Lord Jesus Christ, whom if we do not believe or miss, we shall never get saved, or have eternal life, but surely will perish.

The Evidence of Christ’s Divinity:

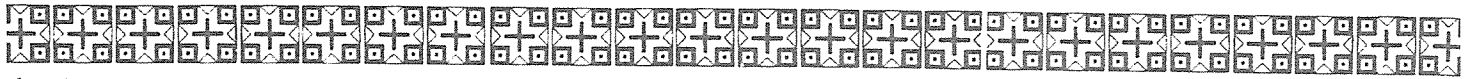
I would like to simplify these proofs in few titles, so that every Christian can easily memorize them:

1. The prophecies
2. His Divine Names.
3. His Divine attributes.
4. His Divine works.
5. His Divine declarations.
6. His Divine honor.
7. The testimony of the angels and demons.
8. The personal experience.
9. Proof of History.
10. Admission of other Religions.

1. The Evidence of the Prophecies:

No one but God, can know the future and predict about hundreds of things and events which will take place in the far future, and they all happen accurately, unless God inspires him.

The Holy Bible tells us about **30 of the prophets** in the Old Testament, who prophesied about Christ,



the Messiah, the Saviour of the world, in **330 prophecies** throughout more than **2000 years**, and all of them were fulfilled in an amazing way.

It is impossible to know the life of anyone, or his characteristics and works before his birth. But the Lord Jesus Christ is the only exception from this rule. His whole life, attributes, works and miracles, His incarnation, miraculous birth, His crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension into heaven, His way of teaching in parables, and even His journeys to Egypt and Nazareth etc., all that were quite known in full detail, hundreds and thousands of years before his birth! This alone, by itself, is a sufficient evidence for any wise person to believe, and to drive away any shadow of doubt.

In the following lines, you will find some selected prophecies indicate to Christ's Divinity:

(1) His miraculous conception and birth:

Isaiah the prophet (750 B.C.) prophesied saying: *"Therefore, the Lord Himself will give you a sign; behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Emmanuel"* (Isa. 7:14). The sign of coming from a virgin alone by the Holy Spirit, in order not to inherit Adam's sinful nature, and the meaning of His name, "*Emmanuel*" "*God with us*" prove His Divinity (Matt. 1:23).

(2) His Divine qualities:

Isaiah prophesied also saying: *"For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of peace"* (Isa.9:6).

(3) His birthplace & everlasting presence:

The prophet Micah (760 B.C.) prophesied saying: *"But you Bethlehem though you are little... yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be ruler in Israel. Whose goings forth have been from*

the old, from the everlasting" (Micah 5:2).

So, Christ existed from the everlasting, before His birth from the virgin Mary in Bethlehem, and no one (no creature nor angel) is everlasting but God alone.

(4) The Lord of David and equal with God:

"The Lord said to My Lord Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool"

(Ps. 110:1 & see the interpretation and application from the Lord Jesus Himself in Matthew 22:41-46).

(5) Christ is the LORD GOD Himself:

"Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. "

(Psalm 45:6, see Hebrews 1:8, St. Paul interprets and applies it on Christ the Son of God).

(6) Solomon's seven prophetic questions regarding the incarnate Son of God:

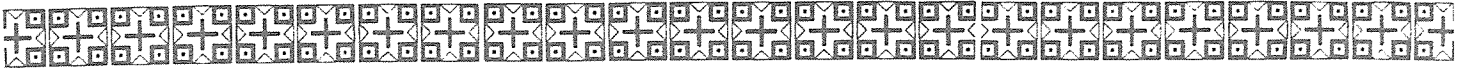
By the Holy Spirit, Solomon inquired: *"Who ascended into heaven, or descended? Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has bound the waters in a garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His name, and what is His Son's name, if you know?"* (Prov.30:4).

2. The Divine Names of Christ:

The Lord Jesus has more than **200 names** and **Divine titles** in the Bible and here are some of them:

(1) The Great Holy Name, "GOD":

- a) *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was GOD"* (Jn.1:1).
- b) *"And they will call His name Emmanuel, which is translated GOD with us"* (Matthew 1:23).
- c) *"And His name will be called...Mighty God, Everlasting Father..."* (Isaiah 9:6).
- d) *"But to the Son He says Your throne O God is forever and ever"* (Hebrews 1:8).
- e) *"Great is the mystery of godliness, GOD was manifested in the flesh"* (1 Timothy 3:16).
- f) *"There is one GOD and one Mediator between*



God and men, the Man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim.2:5)

(2) The Holy Name of the “LORD”:

Jesus Christ is called “Lord” in the N.T. 375 times, here are some examples:

- a) The angel said to the shepherds: *”For there is born to you this day in the city of David, a Savior who is Christ the LORD”* (Lk 2:11 & 1:43).
- b) Elizabeth said to Mary *”But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord come to me”*
- c) Thomas said to Jesus *”My Lord and my God”* (John 20:28).
- d) *”And He has on His robe a name written King of Kings and LORD of LORDS”* (Rev. 19:16).
- f) *”That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that JESUS CHRIST IS LORD”* (Phil.2:10 & 1 Cor 12:3).
- g) Jesus said, *”For the Son of Man is LORD, even of the Sabbath”* (Matt. 12:8).
- h) He said *”Not everyone who says to Me Lord Lord, shall enter ... heaven”* (Matt. 7:21 -23).

(3) The Only Son of God:

Jesus was called the Son of God, and the Only begotten Son of God, to prevent any confusion with

us when we are called also the sons of God. He is the Son of God by nature and essence, but we are sons of God by creation and adoption through faith in Him. The summary of the whole Gospel is this : *”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 also Lk. 1:35 & Jn. 9:35-38, Isa.9:6).

(4) The Son of Man:

Jesus called Himself the “Son of Man”, not only out of Humility or His love to man - kind, but rather because of His incarnation as God in the form of man to save us, and fulfil the prophecy of Daniel: *”I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven...Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is everlasting which shall not pass away ”* (Dan. 7:13,14).

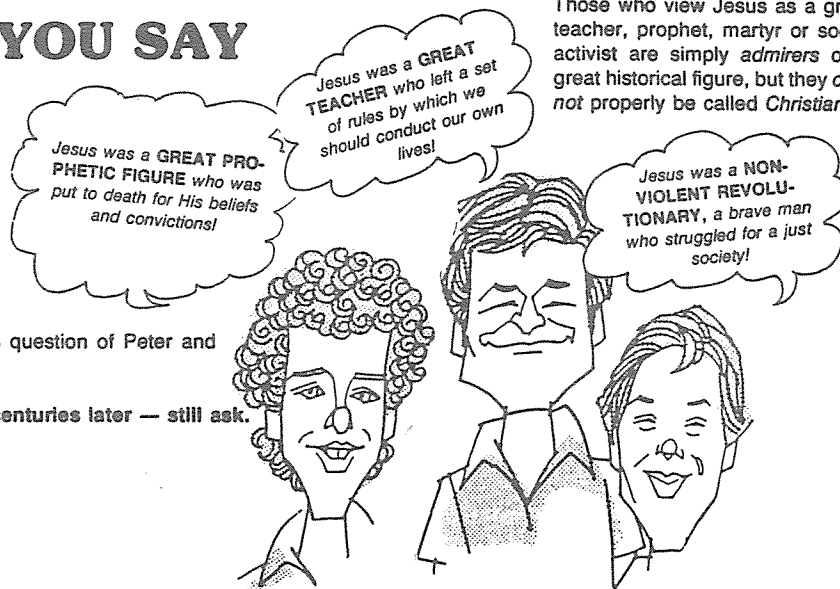
So, the term “Son of Man” is not a human title, but on the contrary it is a Divine Title, because there is no son of man can sit on the clouds and be worshipped from all nations and His dominion shall not pass away, but last forever. **(To be continued)**

WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?

Jesus Christ once asked this question of Peter and the other apostles.

It is a question that we — centuries later — still ask.

FOR SOME PEOPLE...



Those who view Jesus as a great teacher, prophet, martyr or social activist are simply admirers of a great historical figure, but they cannot properly be called Christians!

ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS BELIEVE THAT JESUS IS

- the Christ, the Son of the Living God, who came into the world to save sinners;
- the long-awaited Saviour and Messiah, the One who came into the world to save and transform fallen creation;
- the fulfillment and perfection of God's revelation to mankind; and
- both God and man, the eternal Son of God who, while retaining His divinity, took on our human nature in order to make us holy.