



# Christ... Above Time

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# Christ... Above

# Time

His Grace

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A beautiful expression about our Lord Jesus is that He is above time.

As the world celebrates the third millennium,

And the beginning of the twenty-first century after the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ in the flesh

We live according to another way of calculation...

The eternal birth of Christ,

For He is born of the Father before all ages,

Light of Light,

True God of true God,

Begotten not created,

One with the Father in essence.

Christ has two births:

One is eternal, and the other is in time.

One concerns His divinity,

One concerns His humanity.

Our Christ is God who appeared in the form of Man.

He is not just a man who claims, or whom we claim, is God.

St. Paul says, "**Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh**" (1Tim. 3:16).

Christ is also everywhere, in heaven, on earth through His divinity, the liturgy of the Eucharist, God's spreading word, and the saints in heaven and on earth.

Christ is also for every man, for the Jew and Gentile, the learned and the simple, the rich and the poor, for He is the Savior of all races.

This is our Christ whose 2000<sup>th</sup> birthday in the flesh we celebrate. I would like to thank **Mrs. Hoda Rashed Iskander** from all my heart for the translation of this book and many other of our books and tracts in a rare spirit of love and with great professionalism. May God bless this ministry through the prayers of His **Holiness Pope Shenouda III**, and may God's grace be with us all.

**Bishop Moussa**

**Bishop of Youth**

# Our Christ.. Above Time

## 1

In distant eternity, before the universe was created, before man was made, and even before the angels were created was God, the Eternal, the Immortal, the Everlasting, the Origin of all creation, the One who grants life.

The concept of an Eternal Being is a very rational one although it is beyond human comprehension. When we count numbers in descending order, that is, minus one, minus ten, minus a thousand, minus a million, we will get to what we call minus infinity, which is eternity.

If we count positive numbers and say plus one, plus two, plus ten, plus a thousand, plus a million, we will get to plus infinity, which is eternity.

If we add minus infinity to plus infinity, we will obtain one infinity, God. This is a logical concept, for Infinity, which we express numerically, is a number that is beyond finite calculations. Mathematicians call it “**the critical number**” because it can enter finite calculations and equations.

$$\infty + s = \infty$$

$$\infty - s = \infty$$

$$\infty + s = \infty - s$$





Thus, we should not combine this infinite number with our finite numbers, and it is not possible for the finite mind to comprehend the Infinite Being, God.

## The king and the vizier :

This is a simple tale that we were told as children but it has a lot of meaning. A king once asked his vizier, **“I want to embrace God in my mind, to understand, examine, and study Him as any other creature”**. The vizier answered, **“Give me three days”**. After three days the king and the vizier went for a walk on the seashore. After drinking a cup of tea, the king went for a walk along the shore while the vizier remained seated by the sea. While the king watched in amazement from afar, the vizier scooped up seawater with a teaspoon into the teacup until it was full. He kept adding more and more water and the cup kept overflowing :

- **“What are you doing?”** asked the king.
- **“I am trying to put the sea into the cup”**.
- **“Have you taken leave of your senses?”**.
- **“Excuse me, sire, you insult yourself when you say that”**.
- **“What do you mean?”**.
- **“If it is impossible to put the sea into a cup, how do you want your finite mind to embrace the Infinite God?”**.

The king smiled and praised the wisdom of the vizier.

## God is Infinite :

If there were more than one god, each would have had limits. That is why we reject the ideas of the philosophers,

the Gentiles, and ancient Egyptian gods, for there is only one infinity, the Being without limits or boundaries. The notion of a god of good and a god of evil, Isis, Osiris, and Horus, and others are philosophical endeavors to understand the universe and man. However, there is only one infinity, one God without limits who gives life and who has power and authority and power over all creation, and the evidence is that all creatures, including man, die. Can man delay his death by an instant, or can he prevent it? Of course, not.

He who gives life has ordained death, and He raises man from death to life again through the resurrection because man, in contrast to other creatures, possesses a rational soul, a holy breath of God which makes him an eternal creature, if it is possible to so describe him. Because of the holy breath that was breathed into his earthly body, he will remain alive forever in either of two places, the eternal kingdom of heaven, or the place of eternal punishment.

## God is One Essence and Three Persons :

Of course, God is of one essence, “infinity”, without beginning or end, the origin of creation, Infinite Being, Infinite Wisdom, and Infinite Life. It is impossible for more than one Infinite Being to exist, or each would be finite. The divine eternal immortal essence of God is different from that of man who has a beginning (**which he takes from God**). Even if he has an everlasting life, he takes that too from God because of the rational eternal soul that he was given by God his Creator. God said, *“Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the*

*birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. So God created man in His own image; in the image of God he created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them and God said to them, ' Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth" (Gen. 1:26-28).*

Man is therefore made of dust + the breath of God. *"And the Lord formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being" (Gen. 2:7).* The dust became a body and the living soul is a rational soul, the breath of God, which renders man eternal.

Every human has a beginning but no end.

All the other creatures have both a beginning and an end.

God alone has no beginning or end; He is eternal and everlasting, the only infinity in the universe, in conception, in being.

But this one essence is manifested in Three Persons.

God the Father is the origin.

God the Son is born of Him.

God the Spirit emanates from Him.

We can simplify this truth by the analogy of the sun, a finite material example, in order to make it easier to understand. The orb of the sun is the origin; the light of the sun is born of the fiery orb; the heat of the sun flows from the fiery orb.

## One sun = orb + light + heat :

- 1- Just as it is impossible for the orb to be separated from light and heat, so is it impossible for the Father to be separated from the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- 2- Just as the orb, the light, and the heat of the sun are one, so is the God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.
- 3- And just as it is impossible to have the orb without the light or the heat, to have the light without the orb and the heat, and to have the heat without the orb and the light, so is it impossible to have the Father without the Son and the Holy Spirit, to have the Son without the Father and the Holy Spirit, or to have the Holy Spirit without the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit flows from the Father and is sent to us by the Son, but all Three Persons are one in essence.

## We believe in One God :

† We cry out and declare many times a day in the creed, “**We believe in One God**”. We then explain in detail, for this One God is of the same essence but Three Persons.

† We end the sign of the cross by saying, “**In the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, one God**”.

† The two Testaments of the Bible affirm, “**Hear, O Israel: The lord our God, the Lord is one!**” (Deut. 6:4, Mk. 12:29).

† Even the devils believe in One God. *“You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe... and tremble!” (Jas. 2:19).*

The belief in the unity of God is a deep-rooted tenet in Christianity and he who claims that there is more than one God is of necessity a heretic.

### Three Persons :

† God the Father is Wise, the Son is Wisdom, and the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Wisdom. Undoubtedly, the Wise + Wisdom + the Spirit of Wisdom = One.

† God the Father is the Loving, the Son is the Love that is born of Him, and the Spirit is the Spirit of Love that flows from Him. The Loving + Love + the Spirit of Love = One.

† God the Father is the Powerful, the Son is the Power who is born of Him, and the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Power that emanates from Him. The Powerful + Power + the Spirit of Power = One.

### The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit :

† The Son is born of the Father before all ages, Light of Light, just as light is born of fire. Is there a time lag? When I light a candle and light shines from it, which is first, the light or the fire? There is absolutely no time difference. Which emanates from the other, the light or the fire? Of course, the light comes from the fire without any time difference.

† There is also no separation. Although the light is born of the fire, it is not separate from it. In the same way, the Father begets the Son in an eternal and spiritual birth, not a physical one as some believe. This is similar to the birth of light from fire, or of an idea from the mind. Although light comes forth out of the fire, it is inherent in it and inseparable from it. When an idea is born of the mind and is recorded on paper, it still remains in the mind and is not separated from it by this birth. If this is possible with the tangible such as fire and the human mind, how much more for the divine.

† The Father is not the Son nor the Holy Spirit. The essence is the same but the Three Persons are distinctive without however being separate from each other.

† St. Augustine says that God the Father is not the Son and is not the Spirit, but the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God.

## The Golden Triangle :

If we visualize a golden equilateral triangle ABC, we notice that :

- Angle A is not angle B is not angle C.
- Angle A = angle B = angle C.

All of A, B, C, are equal to the whole triangle, for each of the angles embraces the whole triangle.

In the same way, the Person of the Father is not the Person of the Son nor the Person of the Spirit. The Father

is the origin, the Son is begotten of Him, and the Spirit flows from Him, However,

- The Father is God. - The Son is God.

- The Spirit is God.

And just as it is impossible to separate A from B from C, so is it impossible to separate the three Persons one from the other.

The Father creates the world through the Son and in the Holy Spirit.

The Son redeems the world through the Father and in the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit sanctifies the world with the Father's will and through the work of the Son.

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are One God.

## God and Man :

God created man from dust and breathed the breath of life into him. He created him in His own image and likeness:

- 1- **Righteousness...** Adam and Eve were holy and righteous.
- 2- **Freedom...** God gave them the freedom to obey or to rebel.
- 3- **Wisdom...** He gave man a mind to think.
- 4- **Immortality...** He breathed an immortal soul into him.

Because of freedom, because God left Satan alive after his fall from heaven, and because Adam had the

opportunity to choose and to exercise this freedom, to live with God or with Satan, man fell.

## The fall had two results :

- 1- *The death sentence* : the wage of sin is death, that is, a physical and spiritual death (**separation from God**) and a moral one (**for the earth was cursed and nature and animals revolted against Adam**); it is also eternal (**because the separation from God could last forever**).
- 2- *Nature became corrupt* : Human nature became corrupt because of man's sin and thus he needed to be renewed and recreated in order for his holy image to be restored.

## The Best Solution :

**After the fall of man, there were three possibilities :**

- 1- That God carry out His sentence and kill Adam and recreate another substitute for him. But this solution runs counter to the love of God, His wisdom and His dignity. What would be the meaning of creating the man Adam only to have him deceived by Satan and killed by God? This would be repeated again, twice and thrice with each new Adam created by God. The best solution would be
- 2- That God forgive Adam and Eve, for He loves man, but :

† Where is God's justice and His laws?



† Where is the radical solution for this matter, for what value is it for God to forgive Adam and to leave his corrupt nature to sin further and to die?

Therefore, the ideal solution was.

† For God to redeem man, that is, for another person to die instead of Adam so that justice can take its course, for when this person dies, love takes its course and Adam is saved and forgiven.

**However, this redeemer has to :**

- 1- *be a man* ... for it is man who sinned.
- 2- *die*... for the wages of sin are death.
- 3- *be infinite*... for Adam's sin is infinite, for it is against God who is Infinite.
- 4- *be sinless*... for no one can give what he does not possess.
- 5- *be a Creator*... in order to renew man's creation and purify him of corruption so that the original divine image he was created in is restored.

## Who is this Redeemer ?

- 1- It is impossible that He be an archangel, because while it is possible through the power of God for the archangel to take human flesh, he is still finite and he is not a creator.
- 2- It is impossible for the redeemer to be a patriarch like Abraham because he is a human who can die; in other words, he is finite and born with sin, and is not a creator.

- 3- The only possible solution is for God to take human form, for in Him all the conditions are met. When God is incarnate He can, in His human form, become a man who dies; in His divinity He is infinite, sinless and a Creator who is able to renew our nature and recreate us anew.

## The Incarnation was necessary :

The incarnation was necessary so that God could faithfully manifest all His infinite virtues and attributes for He is infinite love, infinite justice, infinite wisdom, and infinite power.

That is why the “**Word**” became man so that He would, in the flesh, take our place and die and in His divinity renew and recreate man.

## The Purpose of the Incarnation :

### St. Augustine delineates three aims of the Incarnation :

- 1- *Teaching* : As wise teacher it was necessary for God to condescend to His human creation and teach them the way of salvation. This is naturally within His power for He is the omnipotent God. Man, on the other hand, is poor so how can he ascend to God to get to know Him? Man’s body is the work of God and that is why God does not disdain to unite with it in order to redeem humanity and sanctify it.
- 2- *Redemption* : The Lord redeems us by His death on the cross and we thus obtain forgiveness, purification, sanctification, and rooting in eternal life.

We are also renewed and recreated so that the divine image is restored in us.

- 3- **Union** : When the divine nature is united with human nature this meant His union with us and His dwelling within us. Naturally we will not become gods for there is only one God. But He will adopt us and make us His people, His flock, and the members of His household so that we might live with Him in His kingdom forever.

And that is why our Lord had a temporal birth.

## The Lord's temporal birth :

God had prepared humanity for the Incarnation and Redemption two thousand years ago through many events:

- 1- The predominance of the Greek language all over the world facilitated the spread of the Gospel. Indeed, in a few years, Christianity had spread to all the known world. Through his travels, St. Paul evangelized in Antioch, Asia Minor, and Europe; the other apostles spread the gospel in Palestine, North Africa, and Egypt. The Ethiopian eunuch came from Ethiopia and Thomas went to India.
- 2- The Romans, men of war and strength, also built good safe roads along which the apostles and disciples traveled to all the known world in Asia, Africa, and Europe.
- 3- The Lord also prepared a people for Himself separate from the pagans, from whom came the Holy Virgin Mary to be His beloved and honored Mother.

4- Ptolemy Philadelphius had ordered seventy Israeli elders to translate the Torah from Hebrew into Greek thus producing the version that spread in Greek throughout the world so that all would become familiar with the Old Testament and with the prophecies about our Lord Jesus Christ.

5- The Gentiles themselves, apart from the Jews, were eager for salvation and a Savior; an example is Akhnaton, the Egyptian pharaoh who believed in one god and in immortality.

## He was born of a Virgin :

The Lord Jesus was "*born of a woman, born under law to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons*" (Gal. 4: 4,5).

Many other prophecies in the Old Testament were also fulfilled:

His birth: The Lord Himself gives them a sign; "*A virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Emmanuel (God with us)*" (Is. 7:14). Simon the Elder was amazed at this while he was translating the verse, was too embarrassed to mention a virgin conceiving. He wanted to write "**a maiden**" shall conceive, but an angel of the Lord appeared to him, ordered him to translate accurately, and promised him that he would live to see the prophecy fulfilled. And in fact he lived almost three centuries till he saw the child Jesus in the arms of His Mother, the Virgin, and made his memorable statement: "*Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace, for my eyes have seen your salvation which you have prepared in the sight of all people*" (Lk. 2:28,29).

*“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulders, and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace” (Is. 9:6),* only a simple child but He is a Mighty God, meaning that God took human flesh and came to live among us to teach us, redeem us, and be united to us.

In the Old Testament there are more than 300 prophecies of the Lord’s incarnation, His rejection by the Jews, His crucifixion, His resurrection, His ascension, His sending the Holy Spirit, and His establishing the Church. St. Augustine says, **“The Old Testament is revealed in the New and the New Testament is hidden in the Old”** (See some of the examples in the following table).

<i>No.</i>	<i>Subject of the Prophecy</i>	<i>Old Testament</i>	<i>New Testament</i>
1	His earthly genealogy.	<i>(Is. 11:1)</i>	<i>(Mt. 1:1-7)</i>
2	The place of His birth.	<i>(Mic. 5:2)</i>	<i>(Mt. 2:1-6)</i>
3	He is the Incarnate Deity.	<i>(Is. 9:6)</i>	<i>(Jn. 1:14)</i>
4	He is preceded by John the Baptist.	<i>(Is. 40:3)</i>	<i>(Mt. 3:1-6)</i>
5	The time of His coming.	<i>(Dan. 9:24-26)</i>	<i>(Gal. 4:4)</i>
6	Born of a Virgin.	<i>(Is. 7:14)</i>	<i>(Mt. 1:8-23)</i>
7	His entry into Jerusalem.	<i>(Zec. 9:9)</i>	<i>(Mt. 21:1-11)</i>
8	Sold for Silver.	<i>(Zec. 11:12)</i>	<i>(Mt. 26:14,15)</i>

<b>No.</b>	<b>Subject of the Prophecy</b>	<b>Old Testament</b>	<b>New Testament</b>
9	Betrayed by a friend.	(Ps. 25:12-14) (Ps. 41:9)	(Mt. 26:47-50) (Jn. 13:18)
10	The potter's field.	(Zec. 11:13)	(Mt. 27:1-10)
11	His disciples abandon Him.	(Zec. 13:7)	(Mt. 26:56)
12	False witnesses.	(Ps. 35:11)	(Mt. 26:59,60)
13	He is beaten and spat on.	(Is. 50:4-6) (Ps. 35:15,21)	(Lk. 22:64) (Mt. 26:67, 68)
14	His silence before His accusers.	(Is. 53:7)	(Mt. 27:15-24)
15	His wounds.	(Is. 53:5)	(Mt. 27:26,29)
16	His falling under the weight of the cross.	(Ps. 109:24)	(Jn. 19:17)
17	Piercing His hands and feet.	(Ps. 22:16)	(Lk. 23:33)
18	His crucifixion between thieves.	(Is. 53:12)	(Mk. 15:27, 28)
19	His prayer on the cross.	(Is. 53:13)	(Lk. 23:24)
20	People shaking their heads at Him.	(Ps. 109:25)	(Mt. 27:39)
21	People mocking Him.	(Ps. 22:7,17)	(Mt. 27:41-43)
22	People's astonishment at Him.	(Ps. 22:17) (Is. 52:14)	(Lk. 23:35)

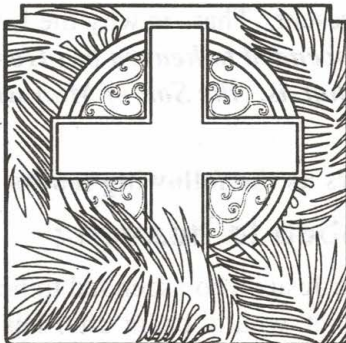
<b>No.</b>	<b>Subject of the Prophecy</b>	<b>Old Testament</b>	<b>New Testament</b>
23	Division of His clothes.	(Ps. 22:18)	(Jn. 19:23, 24)
24	His cry on the cross.	(Ps. 22:1)	(Mt. 27:46)
25	His drinking vinegar and gall.	(Ps. 61:21)	(Mt. 27:34)
26	His giving up the spirit.	(Ps. 31:5)	(Lk. 23:46)
27	His disciples standing afar.	(Ps. 38:11)	(Lk. 23:49)
28	None of His bones were broken.	(Ps. 34:30) (Ex. 12:46)	(Jn. 19:34-37)
29	The piercing of His side.	(Zec. 12:10)	(Jn. 19:34-37)
30	The breaking of His heart.	(Ps. 22:14)	(Jn. 19:24)
31	The darkness at the time of the crucifixion.	(Am. 8:9)	(Mt. 27:45)
32	His burial in the grave of a rich man.	(Is. 53:9)	(Mt. 27:57-60)
33	His resurrection from the dead.	(Ps. 16:10) (Ps. 33) (Ps. 41:10) (Ps. 22:22)	(Mt. 28) (1Cor. 15) (Jn. 20:21)
34	His ascension to heaven.	(Ps. 47:5) (Ps. 68:18) (Ps. 118:19)	(Lk. 24:51) (Acts 1:9-12)
35	His is seated at the right hand of God.	(Ps. 110:1)	(Acts. 7:56)

And so as we celebrate the third millenium and the temporal birth of our Lord Jesus Christ in the flesh, let us not forget His eternal birth before all ages, so that we cry out with St. John the Beloved: "***In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God***" (*Jn. 1:1*). That is, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one God.

So let us come worshipfully to the Child in the manger whose birth the angels sang saying: "***Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, goodwill to all men***" (*Lk. 2:14*) and to whom the Wise men came from afar to worship Him and to present Him with gold (**symbol of His Kingdom**), frankincense, (**symbol of His priesthood**), and myrrh (**symbol of His redemption of us**).

Let us be saved by Him "***A Savior has been born to you***" (*Lk. 2:11*).

Come let us offer Him,  
Gold... What is most dear to us,  
Frankincense... our prayers and incense,  
Myrrh... our suffering and sacrifices To Him be all glory.





# Our Christ is... Everywhere

## 2

**Our Christ is not only above time, but He is also present everywhere through :**

- I - His infinite divinity.      II - The Eucharist.  
III - The written word.      IV- The saints and angels.

### 1- His Infinite Divinity

The Lord Jesus Christ was manifest in the flesh to the Jews who knew that He was born of the Virgin Mary, that His legal father was Joseph the carpenter, that He came from Bethlehem, and that He lived in Nazareth. However, He was also God in the human form and so, in His divinity, He was omnipresent. That is why the Lord Himself said, *“No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven”* (Jn. 3:13).

This verse shows us the following truths:

#### 1- He ascended to heaven :

It is the Lord Jesus who ascended to heaven taking into consideration what would occur after His crucifixion, His

death, and His glorious resurrection. The Lord knows His path for it is He who was incarnate through His economy or providence, that is, His own will, and it is He who was also crucified of His own free will, who rose from the dead in confirmation of His glorious divinity.

He was crucified and died, not because of a sentence passed by Pilate, but of His own free will to redeem us from the death of sin, to wash us of the stain of transgression, and to free us from the curse of the fall. That is why when Pilate said to the Lord during the judgment, *“Do you not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?”* Christ answered, *“You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above”* (Jn. 19:10,11).

When Peter drew his sword and cut off the ear of the High Priest’s servant, Christ told him, *“Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? How than could the scriptures be fulfilled that it must happen thus?”* (Mt. 26:51-54).

During His crucifixion, Christ gave proof of His divinity in many ways, **among which are** :

- 1- a- The soldiers and Jews fell back and fell to their faces as soon as they asked about the Lord Jesus Christ and He answered *“I am He”* (Jn. 18:5) for this expression, *“I am He”* bears the power of His divinity. *“I am the Being... I am the origin of existence, I exist”*. He grants life; He is the great Architect of the universe, He is Jehovah. When the Lord had thus given proof of His divinity

through the falling back of the soldiers, the servants of the High Priests and the Pharisees, He hid the power of His divinity from them so that they could complete the redemption. When He asked them, **“Whom are you seeking?”** they answered, **“Jesus of Nazareth”**. Whereupon He told them, ***“I have told you that I am He” (18:3-9).***

- b- Christ healed the ear of the servant of the High Priest, Malachi, which Peter had cut off with his sword (*Mt. 26:51, Mk. 14:47, Lk. 22:50,51*). Christ said, ***“Permit even this, and he touched his ear and healed him” (Lk. 22:51).***
- c- Pilate’s wife had a dream that caused her to send to her husband, ***“Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him” (Mt. 27:19).***
- d- There was darkness over the earth during His crucifixion. ***“Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land” (Mt. 27:45).***
- e- The veil of the temple ***“was torn in two from the top to the bottom” (Mt. 27:51)*** to show that the priesthood of Aaron was at an end and that of Melchizedek was beginning, that is that of Christ. It also showed that the door to paradise and the kingdom was now open to humans.
- f- ***“The earth quaked and the rocks were split” (Mt. 27:51).***
- g- The rocks were split, the graves opened, and many saints who had died rose, emerged from their graves, and entered the city and appeared to many after the resurrection of the Lord.

h- *“The blood and water came out of His holy side”*  
(*Jn 19:34*).

i- The faith of the centurion (*Lk. 23:47*).

The faith of the thief on His right (*Lk. 23:40-43*).

### **The Lord also gave proof of His divinity in His Resurrection through :**

- 1- He arose by Himself and not through any outside power or through the prayers of another person.
- 2- He arose with a glorious body of light and entered the locked upper room without the locks being an obstacle or a hindrance.
- 3- He arose and was alive and remains alive forever.
- 4- He raised others while he was still dead on the cross because His body died and His spirit left His body, but His divinity was not separated neither from His spirit or His body.
- 5- He released those who were dead and made them enter Paradise.
- 6- He granted his disciples mighty spiritual energy and faith so that they could witness to Him. He appeared to them many times (**those that are recorded are 11**) in different places (**Jerusalem, Galilee, the mount of Olives, Tiberias**) and to great numbers (**the disciples and more than 500 brethren**).

### **In His glorious ascension to heaven, He revealed His divinity :**

- i- He rent the heavens and ascended physically.
- ii- He sent two angels to console His disciples.

- iii- He then sent the Comforter and filled them with the Holy Spirit.
- iv- He promised He would have a glorious awesome Second Coming.

He who ascended to heaven is the same as He who descended from heaven:

## 2- He descended from heaven:

**In His birth, the Lord proved that He had come from heaven :**

- 1- *“The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God” (Lk. 1:35).*
- 2- *“Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which is translated ‘God with us’” (Mt. 1:23).*
- 3- *“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” (Is. 9:6).*
- 4- A star appeared in the East to announce the birth of the Great King in fulfillment of Balaam’s prophecy (Num. 24:17).
- 5- Angels came down from heaven to announce the marvelous birth (Lk. 1:13).
- 6- The virgin birth from the Virgin Mary (Mt. 1:25).
- 7- The angel sang, *“Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is*

*born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord” (Lk. 2:10,11).*

8- The prophet Micah foretold, *“But you Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be ruler in Israel” (Mic. 5:2, Mt. 2:6).*

9- Herod and all of Jerusalem were troubled (Mt. 2:2).

10- The Magi brought symbolic gifts; the gold symbolized His kingdom, the frankincense His priesthood, and the myrrh His glorious redemption (Mt. 2:11).

11- Angels appeared to Mary, to Joseph, and to the shepherds and God guided the Magi through a dream and the star (See Lk. 1:26, Lk. 2:8, Mt. 1:20, Mt. 2:13, Mt. 2:19, Mt. 2:9-12).

He who ascended to heaven had come down from heaven...

### **3- He is in heaven :**

In His humanity, He was manifest to all people in a tangible body, but in His divinity, He was everywhere, in heaven and on earth. The broadcast television waves are an illustration of this; they are everywhere in the world and take the shape of an image and a sound that emanates from a television set. But this image on the set does not conflict with the fact of the waves in the air. This is naturally a simple material example with the difference that these waves are material and finite, whereas God is Infinite Spirit.

That is why we must not imagine that when the Lord appeared in the flesh He “left” heaven so that it was devoid of His divinity, for His divinity is unlimited and God is infinite and omnipresent.

Since the Lord Jesus proved the power of His divinity through His incarnation, He is present among people in the flesh on earth and in heaven and everywhere through His infinite divinity.

**The Lord proved His omnipresence through :**

## 2- The Eucharist

The Lord gave us His body and His blood in continuity of the work of the cross and the power of His holy sacrifice. The Eucharist is not a mental or symbolic remembrance, but is an actual remembrance. The body and the blood do not remind us of the body and blood of Christ, but are the body and blood of Christ.

They are exactly like the manna which was preserved in the manna jar. It was the same manna that had come down from heaven when the children of Israel were in the wilderness.

**The Eucharist in Coptic and Christian belief is :**

- 1- **To be rooted in Christ** : This means to be completely close to the Lord, to be fixed in Him (*Jn. 6:56, Mt. 26:26*). When we are united with Christ, we take His image and become partakers of His divine nature (*2Pet. 1:4*).

The Eucharist is the summit of the Liturgy, through it we offer the sacrifice of praise to God (*Heb. 13:15*).

2- **The Eucharist is piety and purity** : “Through this sacrament you are preserved from enemies and the powers of darkness overcome whomever takes it lightly”.

The Lord prepared this awesome table for us as the Psalms say (*23:5, 43:5*).

We are granted forgiveness of our sins through this sacrament. For sin is only forgiven through the blood of Christ. The sacrament of the Eucharist is a continuation of the sacrifice of the cross that was for the redemption of all the sins of the world. The Eucharist is the purity that was bestowed on Isaiah when his lips were touched with a hot coal from the altar (*Is. 6*).

3- **The Eucharist is life and resurrection** : (*Jn. 6:48-58*).

From these words, we can infer the following :

a- Christ is the source of life (*Jn. 14:6, Jn. 11:25*).

b- The manna the children of Israel ate in the wilderness was a symbol of the incarnation of the Lord. The manna could not satisfy the hunger of the body but the divine mass is food for the soul.

4- **The Eucharist is fruitfulness and witnessing** : (*Jn. 15:4,5*).

Our fallen nature cannot bear fruit to the glory of God and our efforts to improve ourselves are futile unless we



unite with Christ, just as the a bad tree cannot bear good fruit unless it is grafted onto a good tree.

If the life of Christ bears fruit in us, we bear witness to the virtues of the One who called us out of the darkness into His marvelous light, and our lives and behavior speak of His wonders as we witness to His death and acknowledge His resurrection.

5- **The Eucharist is fellowship and joy** : How beautiful are the feelings of joy of the one who partakes of this Holy sacrament. How marvelous is the humility of the Lord and His love for us, for it was not enough that He died for us, but He was pleased to give us His body and blood to feed us (*Ps. 23:5, Ps. 116:12, Zech. 9:17*).

6- **The Eucharist is unity of the body** : Through it we become living members of the body of Christ, united to the rest of the members of the body whether they are saints in heaven or believers on earth. St. Paul said, "*The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, being many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread*" (*1Cor. 10:16,17*).

7- **The Eucharist is eternal life** : The Lord Himself said, "*Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day*" (*Jn. 6:54*). That is why the faithful take Holy Communion as way to immortality.

How wonderful it is that the church grants us the experience of fellowship with the members of the one body when it adopts unified rituals such as readings, fasts, feasts, praise, and when it has the same ecclesiastical practices in every Coptic church on the face of the earth so that we all feel members of one body and that our Christ is everywhere.

If anyone inquires as to how he can become a part of the body of a perfect whole Christ, we can tell him, "look at your face in the mirror and you will see it, but break the mirror in two or four or ten, and you will see your face repeated in every piece of the mirror". This is only a simple analogy. Our Christ is everywhere; He is in every church, every mass, every particle of the Holy body we partake of.

**The Lord Jesus is everywhere through :**

### 3- The Written Word

There is no doubt that the Lord Jesus is everywhere through the Holy Bible which has become widespread this century in more than 2000 languages and in innumerable dialects. Through this divine written word the whole Bible, or the new Testaments, the gospels, or parts of them are now available to hundreds of millions.

The written word has exactly the same impact as the spoken word or the visible word, and in our computer age, through the electronic word.

We need to exert a greater effort in making God's word known to all at the different stages of life: childhood, youth, adulthood, and maturity through various channels:

- 1- **Short booklets** : that explain the books of the Holy Bible.
- 2- **Explanatory books** : that are patristic in nature and that explain the books of the Holy Bible, such as the books authored by Father Tadros Yacoub.
- 3- **Training ministers** : who love God's word to teach it to others of various ages.
- 4- **Youth meetings that focus on Bible study** : in groups, especially open meetings, retreats, and conferences held during vacations.
- 5- **Video films** : that explain the Bible and others that show us the lives of different personalities.
- 6- **Competitions** : held regularly to encourage children and young men and women in Bible study.
- 7- **Specialized study** : in church readings. Our Coptic church has absorbed the word of God and offers it to us in various 'Katmarises' throughout the year, for the different fasts, for Lent, and during the Paskha.
- 8- **The lives of Saints** : who were affected by the word of God, such as Anba Antonius, who obeyed the commandment of God as soon as he heard it in church and sold all he had, distributed it among the poor, and chose the monastic life. Or like St. Augustine, who upon hearing about St. Anthonius, was grieved for his sins. He used to carry his Bible

and when told by a little girl, **“Open and read,”** he felt that this was the voice of God. So he opened his Bible and read Romans 13, **“The hour has come for out to wake up rom your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed... So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light” (Rom. 13:11-14).** Or St. Dionysius, a Sabine, who when he read a few sheets of the epistles of St. Paul asked for the whole Bible, was converted and became a monk. He was one of the pillars of the School of Alexandria and subsequently became one of the patriarchs of the Coptic Church.

- **Biblical Computer Programs** : for the various ages that attract our young boys and girls.
- **CDS** : offer us different versions, guides, and indices for the Bible, to be used as study aids for ministers and specialists.

The Lord said through St. Paul, **“Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ” (Rom. 10:17).** He also said, **“How then can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?” (Rom. 10:14).**

There is no doubt that we pay special attention to the Bible, for of old it was said, **“there is the greatest hope for the greatest sinner who reads the bible, and there is**

**the greatest danger to the greatest saint who neglects it". But why should we search far when we have the teachings of the great St. Anthony:**

- **"Exert yourself in reading for it saves you from impurity".**
- **"Let there be a witness from the Holy Books for every work you do".**
- St. Siusious said, **"I read the Old and then go on to the New".**

### **1- Our Church and the Holy Bible :**

Our Coptic Orthodox Church is primarily an evangelical church and gives priority to the word of God, as many rituals attest:

- 1- Always placing the gospel on the altar.
- 2- Carrying it above the heads and kissing it.
- 3- Lighting the icon bearer when the gospel is read.
- 4- There are two lighted candles on both sides of the gospel, symbolizing the angels who surround the Lord.
- 5- Standing in awe and reverence to listen to the gospel reading.
- 6- Special prayers for the gospel so that we hear it and act in accordance with its teachings.
- 7- Numerous readings during mass, nine in number: a psalm and gospel reading for vespers, a psalm and gospel reading for matins, a passage from the epistles of St. Paul, a passage from the Catholicum, the Acts of the Apostles, followed by the psalm and gospel reading of the liturgy.

- 8- Innumerable reading for the seven sacraments and their rituals: Baptism, Mayroun or Holy Chrism, Repentance and Confession, the Anointing of the Sick, Marriage, and the Priesthood.
- 9- There is also the ritual of the prayer for the dead.
- 10- The daily hymns of praise are taken from the Holy Bible.
- 11- In the hymns of Kyahk and the Paskha prayers, whole chapters are read; the four gospels, the books of Job and Revelations, in addition to a great number of psalms.
- 12- If you study the liturgy, you find a great number of Bible verses as the margins of the missal show.

## 2- The Rank of ' Agnostus' :

One strong piece of evidence of the importance given to the Bible by the Coptic Church is assigning the special rank of Agnostus among the deacons. He is responsible for the care of the Bible in addition to serving the altar and sacrifice.

After an individual is nominated for this position, the bishop says four prayers over him and instructs him:

- 1- In the first prayer, he enjoins him to serve the altar and the sacrifice.
- 2- In the second prayer, he urges him to recite God's sayings.
- 3- In the third prayer, he encourages him to read the Bible and to offer it to others.

- 4- In the fourth prayer, he asks him that his behavior be blameless; he then confirms this in his final prayer.

### **We can study the Holy Bible in several ways :**

- 1- **Quick reading** : to get the stories in the Bible, the lives of the personalities in it, the events, the topics, the promises, the commandments and experiences that are important for our lives.
- 2- **Contemplative reading** : When I pray in the words of the Bible asking for healing from my sins when I read the healing of the leper, when I ask Him to free me from the bondage of sin upon reading the story of the Samaritan woman, or from the love of money on reading the story of Zachariah, and so on.
- 3- **Analytic study** : when I use reliable patristic reference works in the study of the books of the Bible in order to plumb the depths of the Bible, its events and personalities, so that I can reach the springs that slake my thirst and the food that fills me.

### **3- Suggestions for the year 2000:**

My suggestion to the reader for the year 2000 is to study all the Holy Bible in the three previous ways. **This is possible if :**

- 1- We read a chapter from the New Testament in the contemplative method, that is, to chose a verse, a miracle, or a number of promises, and then speak to

- the Lord about them, asking for the blessing of the Lord and the work of the Holy Spirit.
- 2- We read 3 chapters from the Old Testament in the evening using the quick method, to get to know the stories, the meanings and the topics.
  - 3- We then study a book every month, using reliable references such as His Holiness' books or those of Fr. Tadros Yacoub.

If we do the above we will make the year 2000 the Year of the Bible and will fill ourselves with the word of God and will have our minds enlightened by the light of the gospel.

**But the Lord is also present everywhere through :**

## 4- The Saints

The Lord Jesus is the head of the church and the savior of the body, so He certainly dwells within His saints, whether they have victoriously completed their struggles and attained paradise, or are still striving on earth in expectation of everlasting life.

Saints are finite but God is infinite. However, the Infinite accepted in His humility to unite with us with His talents and the work of His Holy Spirit, thus transforming us into icons that bear His image, His love, and His word into the world.



## **The Head and the Body; the Bridegroom and the Bride :**

**When the Bible wished to explain the relationship between Christ and the church, it gave us two analogies :**

- 1- The union of the head with the body.
- 2- The union of the bride with the bridegroom.

The first analogy explains the strong relationship between Christ and the church. The believers are in the Lord who lives in them and so they become members of His body. Some are in heaven, the victorious saints, and some are on earth, the struggling repentants.

† *“The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body... As it is, there are many parts, but one body” (1Cor. 12:11,12,20).*

† *“Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it” (1Cor. 12:27).*

† *“Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others” (Rom. 12:4,5).*

† *“Christ is the head of the church, His body, of which He is the Savior” (Eph. 5:23).*

The second analogy of the bridegroom is mentioned many times in the Holy Bible :

† *“I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to Him” (2Cor. 2:11).*

† *“The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend (John the Baptist) who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom’s voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete” (Jn. 3:29).*

† *“You are a garden locked up, my sister, my bride; you are a spring enclosed, a sealed fountain” (Song 4:12).*

† *“My love is mine and I am his” (Song 2:16).*

† *“I belong to my lover, and his desire is for me” (Song 7:10).*

Just as the smallest member of the body is attached to the head through the nervous system, so is the smallest member of the church attached to its head, the Lord Jesus who feels our pains just as the head feels the pain of the smallest toe. *“In all their distress he too was distressed” (Is. 63:9).*

Also, just as the smallest member of the body has its own work and function, so every believer in Christ has his role to play in the service of the body and the church. Just as the members feel for each other, complement each other, and do not separate, so also the sons of Christ should not

separate but should unite and contribute to the building of the body and of man in every place and in every age.

***“Through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of Him. For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing” (2Cor. 2:14,15).***

**In addition to comparing us to a pleasing aroma, the Lord also compared us to :**

- 1- Light that is spread everywhere (*Mt. 5:14*).
- 2- Salt that dissolves without being lost (*Mt. 5:12*).
- 3- Yeast that spreads through the whole dough (*Mt. 12:23*).
- 4- An ambassador who carries the image of Christ to all those around him (*2Cor. 5:20*).
- 5- A letter known and read by all (*2Cor. 3:3*).

Thus, Christianity spread everywhere through holy human examples who were attached to heaven and who walked along the way of salvation and immortality through the beloved Savior.



# Our Christ.. for Every Man

## 3

***“For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life” (Jn. 3:16).***

This is the essence of the Christian call:

- 1- To declare God's love for man.
- 2- To declare that redemption is absolutely necessary.
- 3- To affirm that our Christ is the Christ of the whole world.

### **1- Christ of the Jews and the Gentiles :**

The Jews have led a ghetto existence isolated from others throughout the various stages of their history. When the Word was incarnate and Christ came among us, the Jews tried to surround and isolate Him and to make Him their King who would free them from the bondage of the Romans. But Christ assaulted their emotions and their minds when He said, ***“My Kingdom is not of this world” (Jn. 18:36)***. He tried to raise their hearts, minds and hopes to God, heaven and immortality, but they totally rejected this. And when they despaired of Christ's becoming an earthly king (***Jn. 6:15***), they crucified Him on the cross.

All throughout Jesus' time on earth, He tried to open up the heart of the Jews to the world. He showed His love to the Gentiles and the Samaritans just as He loved the Jews and came to save them from themselves and from their racial prejudice. The following are some examples of the world view of the Lord Jesus Christ:

- 1- His coming with the Virgin Mary and St. Joseph to the land of Egypt, which offered the Holy Family a safe refuge just as it did to many prophets and apostles. The Lord blessed the land of Egypt from north to south and from east to west, thereby fulfilling the promise, "*blessed is Egypt My people*" (Is. 19:25), as well as the prophecy, "*In that day there will be an altar to the Lord in the heart of Egypt*" (Is. 19:1). When He came to Egypt, the idols fell out of fear of Him.

### The Most Important Events of the Holy Family's Flight into Egypt :

No.	Place	Current Name of Place or of Nearest Place	Important Events
1	Bethlehem	Bethlehem.	Killing of Infants (Mt. 2:16).
2	Pharos	Pharos.	Opening of the city gates.
3	El Farma (Pelozion)	Tel el Farma (between Arish and Port Said).	
4	Basta	Tel Basta (Zagazeeg).	A spring of water and the idols falling.

<i>No.</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Current Name of Place or of Nearest Place</i>	<i>Important Events</i>
5	Al Mahma	Mostorud.	A spring of water in which the Child was bathed.
6	Belbeis	Belbeis.	Raising the child of a widow from the dead.
7	Minya Ginah	Samanoud (near Mehalla el Kobra).	
8	Sakha	Sakha (near Kafr el Sheikh).	The imprint of Christ's heel on a rock.
9	The wilderness of Shaheet	Wadi al Natrun.	The monasteries of Wadi al Natrun.
10	Ein Shams	Mataria.	The tree of the Virgin Mary.
11	Babylon	Old Cairo.	The cave at Abi Serga.
12	Maadi	Maadi.	The church of the Virgin (the Bible that was found floating on the waters of the Nile open onto Isaiah 19).
13	East of Bahnasa	Between Beni Mazar and Bahnasa.	
14	Gabal Teir al	Samalout.	The imprint of the Lord's hand on a rock.

<b>No.</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Current Name of Place or of Nearest Place</b>	<b>Important Events</b>
15	Al Ashmounein	Al Ashmounein (west of Malawi).	The city idols town fall and the martyrdom of Wadamoun the Armanti.
16	Dairout Om Nakhla	Dairout Om Nakhla (west of Malawi).	The trees and palm trees bow down
17	Beir al Sahaba	Anesna (east of Malawi).	A spring of water from which the Child Jesus drank.
18	Kom Maria	Deir Abu Henes (east of Malawi).	The Holy Family rested on the kom (mound).
19	Phillipus	Dairout al Sharif.	
20	Old Koussia	Koussia.	The city idols fall .
21	Meira	Meir.	
22	Gabal Quosquam	The Monastery of the Virgin (Al Muharraq).	The structure of the ancient church of the Virgin.
23	Return to Nazareth of Galilee ( <i>Mt. 2:22,23</i> ).		

**Other evidence that Christ is for every man is:**

- 1- He said to Nicodemus, an elder of the Jews, in a long conversation, that He had come for the sake of all the world, to save it and redeem it, so that man is born anew of water and the Spirit (*Jn. 3:1-13*). And here

we repeat the golden verse, ***“For God so loved the world...” (Jn. 16).***

2- At His birth, He sent the good news to the Jews through the angels, and to the Gentiles through the star and the Magi (***Mt. 2:1-15***).

3- He worked a miracle for the centurion and praised his faith, rebuking the people of Israel, ***“I have not found anyone in Israel of such great faith” (Mt. 8:5-13).***

4- Although when He first sent His disciples out, He told them, ***“Do not go into the ways of the Gentiles, and do not enter the city of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Mt. 10:5,6)***, at the appropriate time, He went with them to Samaria where He saved the Samaritan woman and ministered to the Samaritans who believed in Him (***Jn. 4***).

5- When He sent forth His disciples, He told them:

† ***“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come” (Mt. 24:14).***

† ***“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Mt. 28:19).***

† ***“Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation” (Mk. 16:15).***

† ***“Then the disciple went out and preached everywhere” (Mk. 16:20).***



- 6- We should not forget the healing of the daughter of the Canaanite woman (*Mt. 15:22-28*) and His praise of her great faith, "***Woman, you have great faith***" (*Mt. 15:28*). He rebuked the Jews who considered the Gentiles no better than "***dogs***" (*Mt. 15:26*).
- 7- He broadened His disciples' horizons to include the whole world in His farewell address (*Jn. 14:16*) and in His intercessory prayer for all who would believe in Him. His commission to His disciples included the whole world; "***As You sent Me into the world, I have sent them into the world***" (*Jn. 17:18, Jn. 20:21*).
- 8- When He arose and appeared to His disciples, they asked Him about the time when the kingdom of Israel would be restored. He asked them instead to raise their thoughts to heaven, to being filled with the Holy Spirit, and to witnessing in "***Jerusalem, all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth***" (*Acts 1:6,8*).

Our Christ is not racist and does not approve of racial supremacy; He does not address His promises to a specific people. He is simply the Christ of the whole world!

## Christ of the Simple and the Wise :

We find the philosopher and the simple man among the followers of Christ; we find Paul who studied at the feet of Gamaliel, who learned the philosophy of the Jews and the Gentiles, just as we find Peter, the simple fisherman and the faithful servant.

Although Christianity contains the most refined thought and has the answer to all the questions philosophy poses, it

is a simple religion. Simple faith in the Savior is the way to eternity. The Lord advised the wise of this age to abandon their human wisdom so that they could obtain divine wisdom from above, a wisdom that enlightens their minds and leads them in the path of salvation. *“For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know Him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified; a stumbling-block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than man’s wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man’s strength”* (1Cor. 1:21-25). The word **“foolishness”** means what seems to us to be foolish, and the word **“weakness”** means what we think is weak. These are all providential matters for God in His providence arranged everything so that the Jews and the Romans would crucify Him and thus bring about Redemption. For Christ did not die because of the power of the Jews, but rather He died of His own free will out of love for us in order to redeem us and pay our debt.

*“But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things - and the things that are not - to nullify the things that are”* (1Cor. 1:27,28) so that *“no one may boast before Him”* (1Cor. 1:29). but so that we would boast of Christ who became for us **“wisdom**

***from God - that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption” (1Cor. 1:30).***

That is why St. James exhorts us to abandon human wisdom and to ask for the wisdom of God ***“who gives generously to all without finding fault” (Jas. 1:5).*** For the wisdom of God ***“is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere” (Jas. 3:17).*** Human wisdom, on the other hand, can be appealed to by Satan so that it becomes ***“earthly, unspiritual, of the devil” (Jas. 3:15)*** for it ***“does not come down from heaven” (Jas. 3:15).***

So let us read what we wish, think what we please, or study all the philosophical, scientific, and humanistic subjects of the world, but let us not forget the necessity of an enlightened mind in order to benefit from this knowledge and to find the answer to the questions of men. If they ask us: what is behind existence, death, matter or time, we find the answer: it is God, who must exist, the Giver of life, Infinite and unlimited. If Darwin asks, where did the first cell come from, we can answer that it was made by God. And when man is puzzled by the immense gap between man and monkey, we can reply that it is God who made all things, who created man in His own image and likeness and gave him a rational soul that animals that resemble us don't have. He is the Creator of all, but He put a rational soul and a divine breath of God into the clay we were made of, and this soul He will reclaim with the body after we become a spiritual body at the resurrection. Man was created to be immortal, responsible for his behavior with a life that does not end with physical death. In this he

is inherently different from animals because ***“the life of every creature is its blood”*** (Lev. 17:14), for the animal consists of body and soul only, without mind or spirit.

## Christ of the Poor and the Rich :

The Lord Jesus came to our passing world as a small child, born of a poor mother and with a carpenter for a father. The Holy Bible says, ***“for your sakes He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich”*** (2Cor. 8:9). He practiced the trade of carpentry, a very simple trade in those days.

Even after Christ began His ministry and became famous, He continued to lead a life of poverty so that the women ***“helped to support them out of their own means”*** (Lk. 8:3).

Jesus went around with His disciples, most of whom were poor fishermen, without purse or funds and the one who kept the purse was a thief (Jn. 12:6).

The Lord Jesus did not deprive the rich from following Him, but all He asked of them was to be ***“rich in good deeds”*** (1Tim. 6:18), that they should not rely on their riches (1Tim. 6:17), or be harsh on their laborers (Jas. 5:4).

Thus Christianity became the religion of all, rich and poor, with the condition that all should feel that they are loving brothers with equal membership in the one body.

James the apostle rebuked the cruel rich, ***“Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming upon you. Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes, (from being stored in closets) Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days. Look! The wages you failed to pay the workmen who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters (whose wages you have lowered) have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty. You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter”*** (Jas. 5:1-5).

St. Paul gives the rich good advice and says to Timothy his disciple in his first epistle to him;

† ***“For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many grieves”*** (1Tim. 6:10).

† ***“Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good; to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life”*** (1Tim. 6:17-19).

† *“For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that” (1Tim. 6:7,8).*

† *“People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction” (1Tim. 6:9).*

† *“Be content with what you have” (Heb. 13:5).*

† That is why we pray using a Bible verse, *“so that we, in all things at all times, having all we need, will abound in every good work” (The Liturgy of St. Basil based on 2Cor. 9:8) (See also Phil. 4:11).*

This is Christianity and this is our Christ, who lived in humility and simplicity. He did not reject the righteous rich who do not sell the kingdom for the treasures of this world (*Mt. 6:19-21*).

## The Christ of All Races :

The Lord Jesus Christ, who came to save the world, calls all the races and nationalities to salvation, the white, yellow, and black. With all His strength, He rejects the racial discrimination or Apartheid that was prevalent in South Africa and elsewhere.

In Christianity, man is a divine creature because he was created in the image of God and in His likeness. That is why men everywhere on earth are equal regardless of the color of their skin or the blood that runs in their veins. The essence of man is a rational soul and the divine breath of God and that applies to all humanity. The physical differences are due to environmental and genetic factors

that do not add to or detract from the dignity of each individual.

In heaven, we will find all races “*every nation, tribe, people and language*” (Rev. 7:9). That is why Christ’s disciples went to all the races, nations, and peoples and told them the good news of salvation, “*in the whole world*” (Mt. 24:14). Some of them were forced to sell themselves to one of the citizens of a country in order to gain entrance to it. Then this blessed “*slave*” freed the citizens of this country from the bondage of sin.

Christianity has never condoned ‘slavery’ but has done the following:

- † Encouraged the masters to free their slaves.
- † Asked the masters to treat their slaves as beloved brothers, with gentleness and mercy (Eph. 6:5,9, Col. 3:22;4:1).
- † Commanded slaves to attain inner freedom when they believe in Christ and become truly free from the bondage of sin, which is more important.
- † Encouraged them if possible to attain civil freedom, but without resorting to violence.

We have the story of Philemon, the master, and Onesimus, the slave, in which the slave stole from his master and fled. The penalty for this in those days was death, but Onesimus met St. Paul who freed him on the inside by the grace of God and sent him back to his master Philemon (who was a disciple of St. Paul’s) with a letter that is full of human dignity, sacrificial love, brotherhood among men, and a forgiving spirit. He told Philemon,

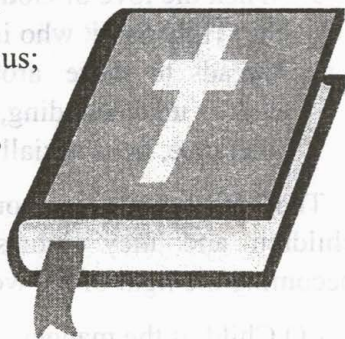
*“I am sending him - who is my very heart - back to you.. no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother. He is very dear to me but even dearer to you, both as a man and as a brother in the Lord... welcome him as you would welcome me” (Philo. 1:11-17).*

Thus the master and the slave are equal members of the body of Christ, the church.

## Christ of the whole man :

The Lord Jesus did not come to save a part of the human being and neglect another. He did not come to save the spirit and destroy the body, taking the divine breath and leaving the clay. Rather He made man into a unified whole and a harmonious entity. Both spirit and body are involved in sinning and when man repents, he does so with all his being. In the Kingdom, man will reign with his rational spirit and with his body of light.

- Thus Christ has become for us;
- Food for the spirit,
- Enlightenment for the mind,
- Control for the self,
- Health for the body,
- Success for relationships.



## The Human Being :

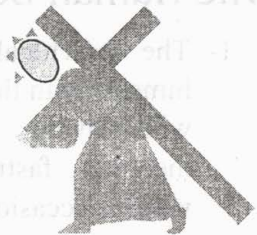
- 1- The individual who perseveres in prayers, who fills himself with the word of God, with spiritual readings, with hymns and the liturgy, with educational meetings, fasting, and the life of the church with its various occasions, satisfies his spirit.

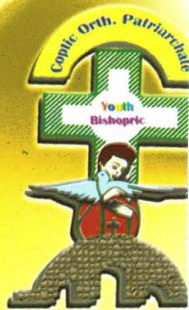


- 2- When he studies the Bible and becomes wise with the wisdom of God's word, when he perseveres in reading the books of the Bible, the word of God becomes a lamp to his path and his mind is enlightened.
- 3- When through grace he strives, controlling himself in all things, controlling his senses, inclinations, friendships, reading, and what he watches; when he controls his instincts, softens his reactions, he controls himself.
- 4- When he is temperate where his body is concerned, giving it the food, rest and sleep it needs without either severity or indulgence, when he protects it from what could harm the temple of God such as smoking, drugs, alcohol, and impurity, the body is healthy.
- 5- When the love of God is poured into his heart through the Holy Spirit who is given to us and when this love spreads to those around him, when he deals with all with understanding, cooperation, giving, and tolerance, he is socially successful.

The well-rounded personality is a gift of God to His children and they witness to their Christ through it, becoming the light of the world and the salt of the earth..

- O Child of the manger,
- As we celebrate Your earthly birth,
- We confess that You are
- Above time,
- Everywhere,
- And for everyone.





# In This Book

1- Our Christ... Above Time.

2- Our Christ... Everywhere.

3- Our Christ... for Every Man.



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