

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?

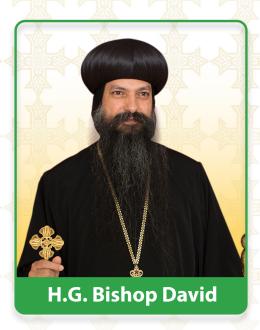
Ps 27:1

WHOM SHALL I FEAR? "PS 27:1"





Pope of Alexandria & Patriarch of the See of Saint Mark



Bishop of the Diocese of New York and New England

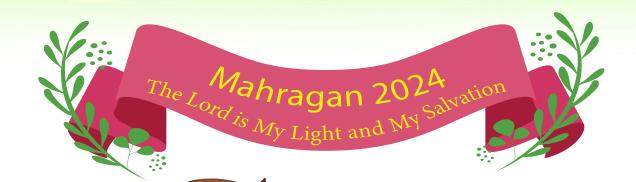




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Hello Friends.

Let me introduce myself. My name is

Lauren, and my friends are Marina,

Peter and Mina. I will tell you all about our

exploration adventure that we took with

Uncle Tony along with the rest of our friends.

In this year's adventure, we will learn many

nice stories to learn how to praise our Lord Jesus and say,



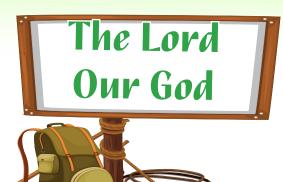




- 1– The Attributes of God: In this lesson, we will learn about some of God's attributes, so that we can get to know "The Lord Our God"
- 2– We Forgive: In this lesson, we will learn about the true meaning of forgiveness and its importance in order to know that "The Lord is the Light to Our Path."
- 3– Saint Samuel the Confessor: In this lesson, we will learn the importance of steadfastly keeping the upright faith, and we will also learn that the Lord Jesus Christ is "The Mystery of Our Salvation."
- 4- Nicodemus Meets Christ: In this lesson we will learn the importance of the mystery of Baptism, and that the church with all the rites is "The Fortress for Our Lives."
- 5- The Beloved Prophet Daniel: In this lesson we will learn that everyone who loves our Lord always lives in peace, whatever the circumstances are, because the Lord makes us feel His "Peace in Our Troubles"







The journey of our clever friends began in the forest among the trees. A new adventure and an exploration of the beautiful nature was their primary goal.

**Uncle Tony:** Everyone gather here, please. This is the first time

we camp in this location, so we must always be close to each other. We all need to study the nature of the place well and adhere to its

instructions. You have half an hour to search for the information you need to know on your tablets. We will divide into groups of 4 individuals. You will use a wireless Walkie Talkie to communicate because we won't have any

cell phones with us throughout our trip.

Marina: With the help of our GPS (navigation system) I found the exact location of our camping site and all the information about its climate, ecosystem, and wild animals. This way we can take into





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account all the required precautions to have a safe trip for everyone.

**Mina:** Why is it important to study the nature and the climate of the place? We are going on a fun trip. It is not time to study! Aren't all places in this area the same?

Marina: Actually, Mina, God distinguished each region with a specific climate in order to preserve the ecosystem. For example, a desert area will have a different climate. We must know its nature and adhere to all its natural order.

**Mina:** What does the ecosystem mean? Why is it important?

**Uncle Tony:** It is God's system by which He linked all creatures together in an integrated manner and with a wondrous system. God is the only One who has the ability to control the entire universe when there is any change in the ecosystem, whether due to certain natural conditions or human intervention. Even if humans, for example, destroy forests or

conduct harmful chemical experiments that affect the environment, which may lead to many problems and changes in the ecosystem, God is in control. His power is stronger than everything, and He is the ruler of

all, the Pantocrator. He is the Great Creator.

Mina: Okay, I understand what you mean about the ecosystem, and





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that every area has a specific climate. But what does it mean that God is the controller of all (Pantocrator)?

**Peter:** This is one of the many attributes of God alone.

**Uncle Tony:** There are many attributes of God, Mina. I can tell you about some of them so that you can get to know God more.











There are two types of attributes of God:



#### A. Attributes God shares with the People.

God has many special qualities. Some people also have these qualities. Here are some examples: wisdom, strength, knowledge, love, tolerance, mercy, giving, and beauty. One important quality is love. God has a lot of love. Many people also have love in their hearts. But God's love is very big. It never ends! People have love, too, but it is not as big as God's love.

#### **B.** Attributes Unique For God

Only God has these attributes. No one else is like God in these characteristics. Among these attributes are God Almighty (the Pantocrator), God the immeasurable, God the Creator, and God the unchangeable. Let's discuss these qualities:

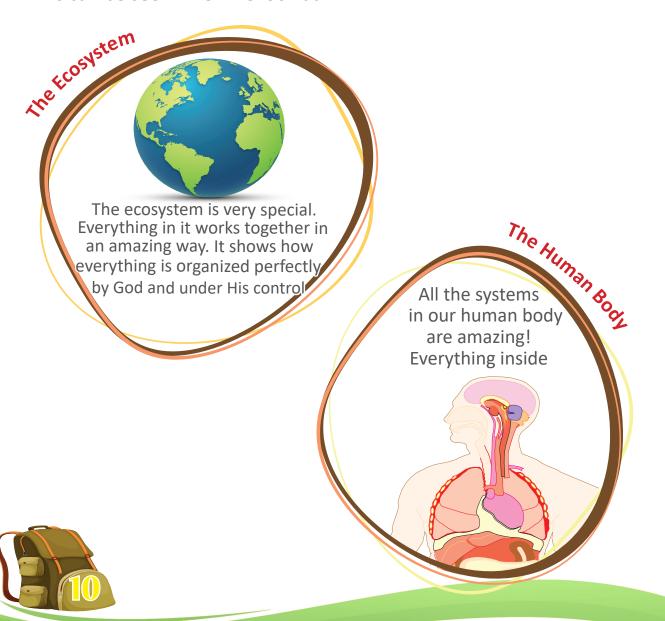






God is in charge of everything that happens in the world. Nothing happens out of luck. Nothing happens without His permission. God put a perfect system for everything in the universe, big and small.

This can be seen when we look at:







Many other things in the universe show that God manages all His creation and controls it with an amazing system.

But you, our God, are good and true, slow to anger, and governing all with mercy" (Wisdom 15: 1).







"Bossom of the Father." The Bossom of the Father is a curved wall inside the Altar on the east side. It has an icon of the Lord Jesus holding the globe in His right hand and the Shepherd's staff in His left hand. This icon is called

the "Pantocrator," meaning "the Ruler of All." Mina: Now I understand that God is the ruler of all,

and that everything God created is important.

**Uncle Tony:** Another attribute I can tell you about is:



This means that God fills the heavens and the earth and every place. God is present in every place at every time. He is unlimited. These verses are my

evidence from the Bible: The first verse shows that God is everlast-

ing in time. Memory Verse

"From everlasting to everlasting you are God" (Psalm 90: 2).

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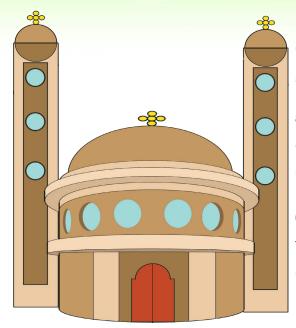
This verse shows that God is infinite in His attributes.



Our beautiful church reminds us that God is eternal, everlasting, and unlimited in time. We see this in how the church is built in the shape of a circle which does not have a beginning or an end. The structure of the



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church building, in the shape of a circle, symbolizes that our Lord has no beginning and no end. (To the servant: it shows the eternal nature of the church because the church, when uniting with God, takes on an unlimited dimension. The circle is infinite, neither knowing its beginning nor its end).

God is the only Creator. He is the One who made everything out of nothing. The nature of creation is specific to God alone. The greatest thing the





human mind has ever invented is making amazing things; however, the things that humans make are not created. They are made from materials that God created. Man cannot create something out of nothing.



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Lauren: I will give you an example, Mina. When a carpenter makes a chair, he needs wood. He takes this wood from the trees that God created. In order for him to make the chair, the carpenter uses his mind, which God created, to think about the best design for the chair.



**Uncle Tony:** Also remember, no one created God. He has existed before all ages. He is the Creator of the entire universe, as this verse confirms



Our beautiful church teaches us to thank God for His creation. The church has many thanksgiving prayers of praise to our Lord for His beautiful creation and for His love for man. (For the servant: An example







group of cars. Each car pulls the next car. But who is the first car to pull it? No one moves it because it is the source that moves itself and pulls the cars behind it),





**Uncle Tony:** This attribute means that our Lord is the only One who does not change. He never changes His attributes, or His promises and love for us. Just as the verse teaches us:



Mina: Now I can identify the attributes of God.

**Uncle Tony:** So, what can you do in return to all what God did for you?













Mina: God's qualities are amazing. He is The Almighty, The Pantocrator, and The Creator of the universe.

Now, can you please tell us what do we need to watch out for in here? Mina, Marina, Peter, and Lauren began to study the climate of the area.



They followed Uncle Tony's instructions and handed him their cell phones. Uncle Tony gave the children special shoes to wear throughout the trip. The adventure begins and they go on a long hike.





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Peter: Let's take a break. I'm really tired and my feet hurt.

Lauren: There's no time for breaks, Peter. We have a lot to do.

Marina: Let's take a sample of the soil here. It looks interesting!

Lauren: Okay. Let's

assign roles. Peter and Mina, please bring the digging tools and start digging. Marina, take the soil sample, and I will start analyzing it with you.

They all began to work.

Marina: Peter, you and Mina can take

a short break. Meanwhile, can you charge the walkie talkie? Suddenly, they heard Mina calling out.

**Lauren:** Mina, are you alright? What happened? Where is Peter?

Mina: Peter wandered far away towards that hill. I told him not to go

far, but he did not want to listen. He ran far away.





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Marina: Let's follow him quickly, lest he gets lost. Please bring the walkie talkie and the shoveling tools.

Mina: Actually, Peter has the walkie

talkie with him. I don't have it.

**Lauren:** No way! Let's go find him.

Marina, Lauren and Mina walked to the hill and found Peter.

**Lauren:** Peter, why did you leave us? We were worried about you.

Marina: Oh Peter, you have interrupted our research and delayed us from Uncle Tony's appointment. He must be worried about us because it's getting dark.

Lauren: May I have the walkie talkieso we can contact him?

Peter: The walkie talkie? I dropped it while I was running, and it broke. It fell down the hill. I came down and tried to look for it, but I couldn't find it.

**Mina:** We are so lost. How will we ever get back? How did you do this? You are a reckless person, and you don't care about others.

Peter: I didn't mean to break it! And watch your language, Mina.

Peter pushed Mina and he fell to the ground.









**Mina:** Yes, you are reckless, and I will never forgive you. Now go away.

**Peter:** Me too. I don't forgive you either for being rude to me. I am leaving.

Lauren: Wait, Peter! Mina didn't mean to hurt your feelings. Marina, please follow Peter. Take him to the tent and wait for us there. I will bring Mina and meet you there

Marina followed Peter, while Lauren tried to calm Mina down.

**Lauren:** Calm down, Mina. You can't talk to Peter like that. I am sure he didn't mean to break the radio. Your words made him very upset.

**Mina:** Peter is always like that. He is always clumsy and careless. One time -

**Lauren:** Mina, please stop! Do not speak in such a manner about your friend, even if he did something that made you upset. We should handle the situation differently. I will tell you how.







Lauren: The first thing you need to do is STOP the insults, quarrels, and gossip. We can stop this through the commandments of the Holy Bible that guide us and enlighten our path. Let me explain more.

Direct Insults

Do not do to others as they have done to you, returning evil for evil. The Godly way is to follow God's words. It is important to stop the insults because when you respond to the person who did you wrong with an insult, it is as if you are saying to him, "If you curse me, I will curse you." This reaction does not show love. Our Lord Jesus taught us to love and forgive one another.

Memory Verse "not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing"

(1 Peter 3: 9).

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Telling Peter that you will never forgive him is the wrong attitude. The Godly attitude is to keep in mind our Lord's commandment to us. He said to us: "Moreover, if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother" (Matthew 18: 15).



You should not say bad things about your friend or discuss his bad choices with others. Remember how you told me that Peter is clumsy and made him look bad in front of everyone? You wanted all of us to get upset with him too.





Mina: What you're saying is that when someone annoys me, I should not say anything, or tell him what bothered me?





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Lauren: No, of course not. This is called

negativity. God does not want us to ignore our feelings, but we can express them the correct way. For example, when you get hurt, you cannot ignore your pain. You cannot pretend that it does not hurt because it can hurt you even

more. You should learn how to express

your feelings without insulting others. Keep

in mind the words of our Lord: "Be angry and do not sin. Do not let the sun go down on your wrath" (Ephesians 4: 26).

**Mina:** I am so confused! If everything I have done is wrong, then what is the right thing that will make me feel better after what happened from Peter?

Lauren: One thing that will make you feel better is forgiveness. When we forgive and make up with each other, we are reconciled. I can tell you a story to help you understand this. There is a parable that the Lord Jesus told His dis-

ciples when Saint Peter asked him how often he should forgive his brother for sinning against him.





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The parable tells about a king that had many servants. One of his ser-



vants owed him ten thousand talents which is a large amount of money. When he was not able to pay back the money to the king. The king ordered his

soldiers to sell the servant, his wife, his children and all that he had for the king to get his money back. The servant fell down on his knees in front of the king, and begged him saying, 'Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' Then the master of that felt bad and decided to give him another chance and forgave him.

Mina: Wow! That king is very kind.

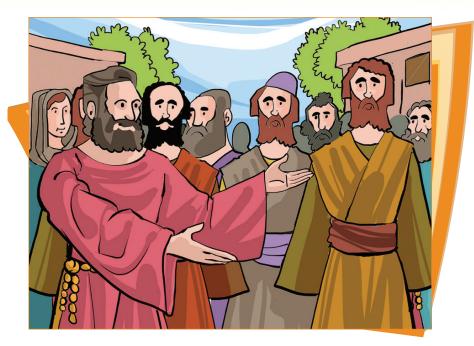
Lauren: That's so true. He is indeed very compassionate. However, the servant was not kind. The servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, which is not that much at all. He put his hands on him and grabbed his neck, saying, 'Pay me what you owe!' His fellow servant fell down to the ground and begged him



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to give him another chance, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will

pay you all.' But he would not. He dragged him and threw him in jail and demanded that he would pay him back all the money he owed. Even though his friend's debt to



him was verysmall compared to what he himself had owed the king, he refused to forgive his friend.

A word came to the king and when he heard about what the servant did with his friend. The king called the wicked servant and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?' The king was very angry and put him in jail until he payed all that was due to him.





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**Lauren:** Mina, do you like what the wicked servant did to his friend?

**Mina:** Of course not! It was wrong because he should have forgiven his friend as the king forgave him.

**Lauren:** You are absolutely correct! He should have forgiven his friend just as the king forgave him. Can you guess who is the king in this parable?

Mina: I am not sure!

Lauren: In this parable, the king is the Lord Jesus Himself. The master is the Lord Jesus Himself. This parable was told by the Lord Jesus because it explains God's dealings with us while we are here on earth. Jesus wanted to teach the people that when we forgive one another here on earth, God will forgive him his sins in heaven. And he who will not forgive his brother here on earth, God will not forgive him either. Do you remember what we say in the Lord's Prayer when we say "And forgive us our trespasses, as we also forgive those who trespass against us."

**Mina:** But if I forgive the one who did me wrong, he will think that I am weak.

**Lauren:** Who said that? When you forgive someone who has wronged you, you show him that you are stronger, and that you have a strong self-control.





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**Mina:** Now I understand the importance of forgiveness. I want to forgive Peter, but I can't. What should I do?

**Lauren:** For you to be able to forgive, you must ask God to help you. With the power of God and the work of the Holy Spirit inside you, God will help you, if you want to forgive him. Forgiveness is your choice, but you have to work together to reconcile.

**Mina:** What do you mean? I thought that by forgiving him, we would reconcile.

**Lauren:** No, there is a difference between forgiveness and reconciliation.

Mina: I understand forgiveness, but what about reconciliation?

**Lauren:** The Lord Jesus told us: "if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone" (Matthew 18: 15). Here is the way to do it:



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Go and talk with your friend quietly about your feelings.

> Go talk to Peter and tell him that you are upset about what he did to you.

Listen and understand what he got to say.

Try to pay attention to what he says to you. Listen to his point of view.

**Explain** what made you upset.

After you understand his point of view. explain to him what made you upset, and you expect him to be careful and not Forgive and reconcile.

Then tell him that you have forgiven him and ask him to forgive you because you yelled at him when you were upset.

Confess to **God in front** of your Father of Confession.

Then you have to confess to God in front of your father of confession about the bad feelings you had towards your friend and the wrong things you did.

Mina: But how can I forgive Peter and reconcile with him? What if he pushes me again? What do I do then?

Lauren: Forgiving and asking for reconciliation does not mean that you do not stand up for yourself. You should ask for your rights in a proper way.

Mina: I am not sure what you mean by asking for my rights in a respectful way? I don't understand what I should do.

Lauren: You show love to your friend and explain to him what he did that made you upset.

Mina: What if he doesn't stop?

**Lauren:** You will do your best to make him stop hurting you. That means if someone tries to hit you, you block him, and you stop him. Turn away and firmly explain to him that his behavior is wrong. If he





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does not stop, you have to talk to a trusted adult who is in charge to help you with the situation.

Mina: Thank you, Lauren for being a good friend. Let's go check on

Peter and Marina.

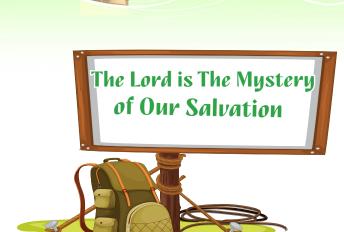
The friends went down the hill to meet the rest of the friends.

And Mina went to Peter. Mina and Peter reconciled in a loving manner. The friends started to think calmly about how to return to the campsite.









Peter: Let's go back the same way we came from.

Marina: The way we came from?! How? There is no street signs in here.

Mina: We can trace our footprints. It will lead us to the way we came from.

Marina: Footprints!! Look!! Look at these footprints. These footprints look like our footprints but much larger. That means that someone is

wearing the same shoes we are wearing, but a larger size.

**Lauren:** This means that these are the footprints of Uncle Tony.

Marina: You are right, Lauren. Of

course, when the radio signal was disconnected, Uncle Tony became worried and started looking for us.







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If we follow his footprints, we will find him.

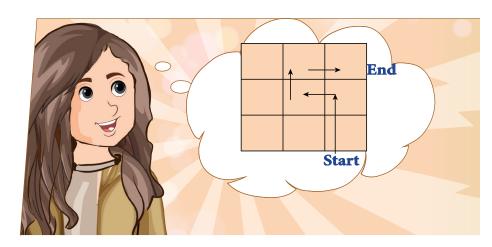
Lauren: But these traces lead to that rocky road and then to that high



mountain, it will be difficult for us to climb.

**Mina:** Whatever the road may be, we still have to follow Uncle Tony's footsteps. The road will be difficult, but if we walk on the same path, we are most likely to arrive. Marina, do you remember the story that Uncle Tony told us while we were playing the game Tracing the Sheep's Tracks?

Marina: Yes! We were split into two teams. Each team was asked to try moving on squares. Each person in the



team moved one step. If the step matched the drawing, the player will be asked to complete the move. But if the step was wrong, he would



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go back to the starting point and someone else would take a turn. The

team whose members all followed the leader was the winning team. I also remember when Uncle Tony told us the story of Saint Abba Samuel the Confessor that day!

Mina: Abba Samuel followed the teachings of the church's fathers that came before him. He did not change any of their teachings, even though he faced so many difficulties and troubles.

**Lauren:** Can you tell us the story?



(Al-Qalamouni) was a very special saint. He believed strongly in the same teachings that he learned from holy fathers. These teachings were passed down from the Lord

Jesus Himself. Abba Samuel was always ready to tell others about the Lord, no matter what was happening.



Saint Abba Samue

he Confessor

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Abba Samuel was born in a town called Malig Elnasara. His father was a priest named Father Silas and his mother's name was Qasmiyana. They taught him to love our Lord very much. He liked praying, fasting, and going to church. He became a deacon when he was young. For this reason, he was ordained a deacon with the rank of Aghnostos (meaning reader). Samuel loved God very much. He wanted to be a monk to pray more. Samuel did not want to get married because he wanted to become a monk. After his mom went to heaven, his dad prayed for him. One night, his dad dreamt of an angel who said Samuel would be a father for many monks. His dad was happy to hear that about his son Samuel.





After Samuel's dad went to heaven, Samuel decided to become a monk. He sold everything he had and gave his money to the poor people who needed it. Then he went to the widerness of Shehit (WIGHT). Shehit is a Coptic word meaning "the Balance of the Heart". An angel came to Samuel and told him to go to the Monastery of Abba Macarius.

At the Monastery of Saint Macarius, Samuel learned many things from Abba Agathon. He wore the Holy Schema, which is a special belt with crosses. He stayed with Abba Agathon for 3 years. Then, Abba Samuel became a priest at the church of St. Macarius the Great.

Marina: During Abba Samuel's life, the ruler of Egypt was called Al-Muqawqis. It was also when Pope Benjamin the 38th Patriarch was in charge. The Roman state wanted Christians to approve the Tome of Leo". "Leo" was the bishop of Rome and the word "Tome" means a special message or part of something important.





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Lauren: What was the Tome of Leo talking about?

Marina: It had wrong teachings about the Lord Jesus.

Lauren: What did it say?

Marina: I will tell you. As you know that the Lord Jesus is God, the

incarnate Word.

Lauren: Of course. This is our faith, as the Archangel Gabriel told our

**Mother Saint Mary** 

"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" (Luke 1: 35).

This means that the Lord Jesus took a **complete human body** from our Mother the Virgin Mary, **was incarnate and became man**. His divinity is united with His humanity without mixing, confusion, or alteration. As we say in the prayer of the Liturgy, **"His divinity never parted from His humanity for a single moment or a twinkling of an eye."** 









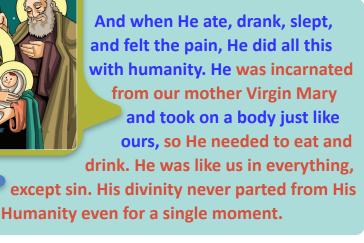
We believe in one nature of the Lord Jesus Christ, a complete human being united with complete divine, without mixing, blending, or change. It is one nature of God, the incarnate Word, after the union.

Peter: Can you please explain it more?

Lauren: You got it, Peter. Listen

When the Lord Jesus did amazing miracles, He performed them with the power of His divinity. While His divinity was never separated from His humanity.







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**Mina:** I will give you an example to help you understand.

If there was a doctor who graduated from medical school and then

served in the army and became an officer, would that mean he was no longer a doctor?

Peter: No, of course not.

He is both a doctor and an officer at the same time.







**Mina:** Perfect! That's what I mean. A doctor who can examine patients and an officer who is able to fight enemies, but he's still the same person. We can call him an officer and we can call him a doctor. The same person can decide when he will be an officer and when he will be a doctor.

Marina: That is a good example, Mina. You and Lauren did a good job explaining this. The words that were written in the Tome of Leo said that our Lord Jesus Christ had two separate natures after being united. His human nature would show when He was in pain and His divine nature shows when He performed miracles.

**Everyone:** This is all wrong, of course!

**Peter:** There is one nature of God, the incarnate Word, not two natures. Can you tell us what happened next with Abba Samuel, please?







Marina: One day, the governor's representative came carrying the Tome of Leo and read it to the monks. Then he asked the monks if they believe the message in it and asked them to sign it.

Lauren: You mean they would change their faith and beliefs? Is this even possible?

Marina: Don't you worry Lauren! The monks did not accept it, and they even refused to answer him back. The representative became very angry and asked them again to sign it.



The governor's representative became so angry and ordered his soldiers to beat Abba Samuel. Abba Samuel got beaten and he lost his right eye. The governor's representative kicked Abba Samuel out of the Monastery. An angel appeared to Abba Samuel and told him to go live in Mount Al Qalamoun.



**Peter:** Abba Samuel had to suffer a lot to follow the teachings of the fathers. What happened next?

Marina: Our saint was in a new situation that tested his strong belief and his teachings. Let me share what happened after.

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Samuel was taken by the

Barbarians and made

to serve them.

The Barbarians

did not believe

in God; instead,

they believed in the sun. Their leader wanted

Abba Samuel to worship the sun,

but Abba Samuel bravely said no. The leader got very mad and hurt him a lot. But, God helped Abba Samuel to stay strong. He kept believing in his faith and was never scared to show it to everyone.

Lauren: Truly Abba Samuel is a great saint. Did he stay with the

Barbarians for the rest of his life?

Marina: No. One day, the son of the Barbarian chief got very sick.

Abba Samuel prayed for him, and through the grace of our Lord Jesus

Christ, the boy was healed.





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The chief was very happy. He apologized for being mean to Abba

Samuel. He asked Abba Samuel what he wanted in return, and Abba Samuel asked to go back to his monastery. Finally, the Barbarian chief let Abba Samuel go back home. Lots of monks,



came and lived close to him. Our Mother Saint Mary also came to see him, made him feel better, and told him, "This place will always be special to me."

Abba Samuel and his monk friends were always prepared to go to



departed in peace (passed away),



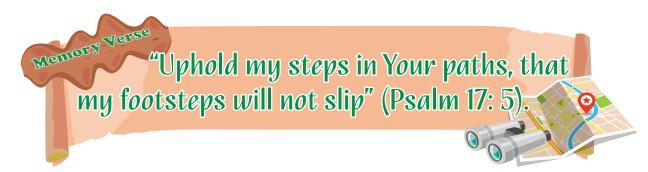
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and we celebrate his feast on the 8th of Kiahk of every Coptic year. His body is kept in the Monastery of Abba Samuel the Confessor on Mount Qalamoun. There we will also find the bodies of some of the martyrs of the same monastery who were martyred on May 25, 2017 AD.

They are in the "Church of the Martyrs."

**Peter:** Why do we call him "Abba Samuel the Confessor"?

Mina: Abba Samuel was very brave. He was hurt because of his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and he stayed strong. He was known as the Confessor because he defended his faith but he was not martyred or killed. Abba Samuel is a true hero. Abba Samuel showed us the meaning of the verse that says:



**Peter:** The story of Saint Abba Samuel is very beautiful. Let us follow Uncle Tony's footsteps, and we will certainly reach the right path.



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And we started to follow Uncle

Tony's footsteps. We climbed mountains up and down and we walked

and walked until the night came.

**Lauren:** Look, it's cloudy! It looks like it will rain.

Mina: Oh no! It's starting to rain. Run quickly!

Mina stood under a large rock, and Peter took the tent out of the bag and we started to pitch the tent so we could sit in it until the rain stops.



Lauren: What should we do now? This is what I was afraid of.

Mina: Are you scared of the rain, Lauren?

rain. What's wrong with you, Mina? Why are you shaking so hard? It's raining, but it's not cold.



## WHOM SHALL I FEAR? "PS 27:1"

Marina: Mina is scared, Lauren, because he doesn't like the rain. He's

very scared of water. Is that true, Mina, or what?

Mina: I... I... To be honest, I don't like the rain at all. I'm so scared of the water.



Marina: Don't worry, Mina! We are all here with you to help you feel better.

Peter: Only if you know how important water

is, you would be able to overcome your fear,

Mina. Water helps make new life.

**Mina:** Make a new life? I do not understand what you mean.

**Peter:** The Holy Bible told us about someone who went to our Lord Jesus and the Lord talked

to him about how the water makes new life. Let me tell you about this man and his conversation with the Lord Jesus.



# WHOM SHALL I FEAR? "Ps 27:1"



(To the servant: The Pharisees were a group of Jewish people who knew lots about the laws of the Old Testament, They followed the rules very carefully and taught others how to worship properly.)

pon a time, there was a man named Nicodemus. Nicodemus was a man who belonged to a group called the Pharisees. The Pharisees thought that they were the most important people. They, also liked to teach people about God's rules from long ago.

demus and some of his Pharisee friends were so impressed with what the Lord Jesus did. Nicodemus had many questions to ask the Lord Jesus. He wanted to meet the Lord Jesus so he went to meet Him at night. They talked for a long time and the Lord Jesus answered his many questions.

Nico-



**Mina:** I thought the same thing as Nicodemus. What did the Lord Jesus mean with being born again?

**Peter:** For sure Mina He meant the New Birth. We have to be born from the water and Spirit in the Sacrament of Baptism. That is why He said:



WHOM SHALL I FEAR? "Ps 27:1"

Memor<sup>3</sup> a Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3: 5)

**Peter:** The Lord Jesus explained many other things to Nicodemus.

**Lauren:** I liked how Nicodemus went to the Lord Jesus to find answers to his many questions. The Lord Jesus always has the right answers to all our questions.

**Peter:** That's true, Lauren. Also, Nicodemus had great love for the Lord Jesus. His love is shown through more than one situation:



1- When the Pharisees decided to crucify the Lord Jesus, Nicodemus did not agree with them. (John 7: 50-52).

Write the verse on the lines below

2- Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea took care of the Body of the Lord Jesus after He died on the Cross (John 19: 39-42). The church remembers what they did on Good Friday when we sing Golgotha. Read the verse to find out what he did.





WHOM SHALL I FEAR? "Ps 27:1"

**Mina:** The story of Nicodemus is such a beautiful story. It helped me understand that we can get a new life when we are born of water and Spirit. This is when we get baptized.

Lauren: You see, Mina how the Lord Jesus confirmed that without baptism, we cannot enter the Kingdom of God (John 3:5). Baptism is very important for salvation as the Lord mentioned in the Gospel according to saint Mark: "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned". The Lord Jesus also confirmed the same idea after His resurrection when He said:

Memory "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28: 19).



WHOM SHALL I FEAR? "Ps 27:1"

1– We
get our salvation
from what we inherited
because of the sin of Adam
and Eve.

Adam and Eve didn't

listen to God and ate from the
tree, they listened to the serpent, they
sinned and were sent out of the garden.
They fell in sin and all of humanity fell
with them as we came from Adam. All
humans carried the consequences
of sin.

When
the Lord Jesus died on
the cross, our sins were forgiven. By getting baptized, we show
that we accept Jesus's redemption.
This redemption removed from us the
punishment of death we got from
Adam and Eve. Our corrupted
nature was renewed.







WHOM SHALL I FEAR? "Ps 27:1"

2Through baptism,
even our own sins are
forgiven too.
(If the baptized is an adult).

As the verse explains: "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2: 38). As we always say in the Creed, "We confess one baptism for the remission of sins."

The church ensures that baptism happens only once and does not repeat because it is a new birth. No one is born twice from his mom. Also, Christ rose from the dead once and for all. That is why we get baptized once.

3– Through baptism, we become children of God. That's why
Saint Paul told us:
"For you are all sons of God through faith
in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were
baptized into Christ have put on Christ"
(Galatians 3: 26-27).

When put on Christ we become His image and His likeness.



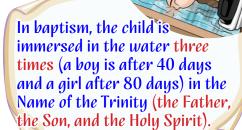
# WHOM SHALL I FEAR? "Ps 27:1"

Through baptism, we become members of the church, which is the body of Christ, and Christ is the head of this body.

4–
Through baptism
we become members
of the body of
Christ.



It is because of this that the church agrees that Baptism is the sacrament of sacraments since it's the first sacrament that you receive in your life and without it, you cannot receive any of the other sacraments!







After that, the child receives the Sacrament of Chrismation. In it, Abouna anoint the baptized with 36 crosses in every part of his body.

The church shows her joy with the child's new birth and dresses him in all white outfit as a sign of purity. A red ribbon is tied for the through the Blood of Jesus we received salvation. At the end of the liturgy, the deacons take the child in a procession around the whole church and sing beautiful hymns.



WHOM SHALL I FEAR? "Ps 27:1"

Mina: You are right! The water gives birth to new life.

**Peter:** From now on, nothing should worry you, Mina. And never be afraid again. Look! It stopped raining.

**Mina:** Thank you, guys, for teaching me how to overcome my fear. Now Lauren what was your concern? Why were you scared?

**Lauren:** Uncle Tony's footprints, that we were tracing, are all gone! They were wiped out by the rain.

Peter: Does this mean we got lost again?!

Marina: We need to find a way to get back. It is getting late and we need to find a way to get back.

**Mina:** Don't worry, everyone! I have an idea. Since we are at the highest point on the hill, we can make good use of it.

**Everyone:** How?





# WHOM SHALL I FEAR? "Ps 27:1"

Mina: We will start a campfire and Uncle Tony, who is surely looking for us, will notice it.
This way he can locate us.

Peter: That's a good idea, Mina.

Also, Uncle Tony had a special whistle and he said that if someone was far

away from him, he could call him by whistling.
Let's try to whistle loudly together. Maybe he will hear us.

We started the campfire and began to whistle

together. Surprisingly, we heard a voice responding to them.

Mina: I hear a sound and I feel that it is approaching. Listen!









Marina: Yes, that's Uncle Tony's voice. It's coming from there. It's getting very close. Let's call him again, louder.





WHOM SHALL I FEAR? "Ps 27:1"

**Peter:** Look, it looks like someone is running towards us. It's Uncle Tony.

**Uncle Tony:** I hear you. Do you hear me? I am here.

**Everyone:** We hear you. We are coming to you.

We ran quickly towards the voice.

Uncle Tony also ran towards us

and he hugged us tight. He seemed so tired from running so hard.

On our way back, we told Uncle Tony all that had

happened to us and how we got lost. When we arrived at the

camp, we found all our friends waiting

for us. Everyone was so happy to see us back.

Marina: Thank you to all our friends for your care, and thank you to Uncle Tony, for going through so much trouble to find us. You can't imagine how joyful we were when we heard your voice when we were lost.

**Uncle Tony:** I was also very happy when I found you. I was very worried about you.





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Marina: As soon as I heard your voice, I felt reassured before I even saw you. I felt safe just because I felt your presence with us.

**Lauren:** I understand now why many of our saintly fathers were always reassured and not afraid at the time of any hardships or problems they encountered. They were confident in the leader of their lives. They were confident in their God.

Mina: I don't understand! What do you

mean, Lauren?

Lauren: Do you remember,
Uncle Tony, the story you
told me? It was about a
man who felt the
presence of God with
him all all the time.

He always felt at peace. His name was Daniel,

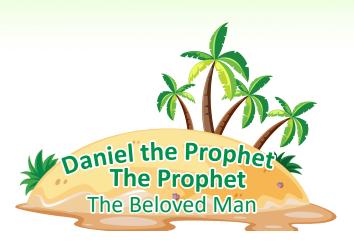
the beloved man.

**Uncle Tony:** Of course. I'll tell you the story, Mina.



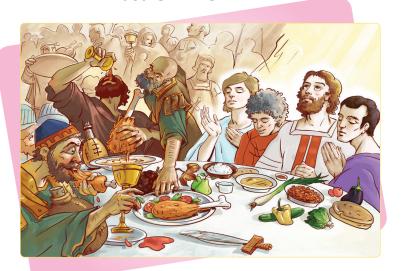






**Uncle Tony:** The name Daniel means "God is my judge." He was from the tribe of Judah. In the beginning, Daniel lived in the city of Jerusalem. King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came and took over Jerusalem. He

took many people from Jerusalem captive, and brought them to his kingdom, Babylon. Then the king instructed Ashpenaz (The master of his eunuchs) to bring some of the children of Israel that are from the king's family.



They had to be good-looking,

smart, and quick to understand. The king also wanted them to learn the language and literature of the Chaldeans. The children would eat special food from the king and train for three years.





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Among the young men were Daniel and his three young friends who refused to eat the food that the king ordered to be served to them.

Daniel and the three young men requested to eat legumes (like lentils

and beans) and drink water only. When the master of the eunuchs refused their request, Daniel suggested that they try them for 10 days and then see their bodies afterwards. And after 10 days, the master of the eunuchs found Daniel and his friends stronger and



smarter than the rest of the young men who ate the king's food. As the days passed, all the young men stood before the king. God gave favor to Daniel and his three young friends in the eyes of the king. Additionally, they were found to be filled with wisdom and understanding, surpassing by ten times the magicians and sorcerers in all the kingdom of Babylon.



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had a dream that made him worried. He called for his sorcerers and magicians to explain the dream to him. He wanted to make sure that they weren't making things up, so he asked them to tell him what was in his dream before they



explained it, but they couldn't. So, the king decided to kill them all, including Daniel and his friends.

Mina: That's terrible. So what did Daniel and his friends do?



**Uncle Tony:** Daniel, because he was a praying man, always felt the presence of the Lord in his life at all times. This is what filled his heart with peace, even when he knew they could get hurt. He bravely asked the





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king to give him some time to tell him the dream and explain it. After that, Daniel prayed with the three young men so that the Lord would save them from this distress. Indeed, the Lord revealed the dream and its interpretation to Daniel. Daniel then boldly stood before the king and explained to him that no one can know the dream or its interpretation except God alone. He showed everyone that only the Lord is all-powerful. The Lord helped Daniel understand the dream and its meaning.

And Daniel started telling the king his dream saying: Your Majesty, you saw a very beautiful statue. Its head is made of gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, and its legs and feet of iron and clay. Then a large stone cut without a hand struck the statue and crushed it into dust. The wind blew it all away. And afterwards that stone became a great mountain that filled the whole earth.



WHOM SHALL I FEAR? "Ps 27:1"



After telling the king his dream, Daniel explained it to him. That the parts of the statue symbolized kingdoms that will rule the world. One kingdom after another. The big stone symbolized the kingdom of Our Lord which will crush all other kingdoms and would reign forever.

After Daniel told the king the dream and its meaning, the king was so impressed by what he heard. At that moment, the king bowed down to Daniel and rewarded him with many gifts and honors. The king said to Daniel, "Truly your God is the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets" (Daniel 2: 47). The king decided that Daniel should be in charge of Babylon. Daniel asked the king if his three friends could help too.





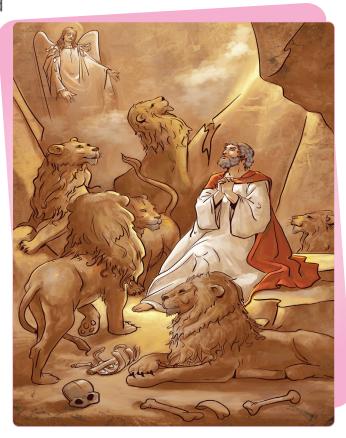
WHOM SHALL I FEAR? "Ps 27:1"

**Mina:** Indeed, Daniel was able to bear witness to our Lord in front of everyone around him, and everyone glorified the name of our Lord...

Can you tell me what happened

to Daniel after that?

Uncle Tony: Years passed, and the kingdoms of Media and Persia took over the kingdom of Babylon. King Darius took control of the kingdom and appointed Daniel as one of the top 3 administrators of the kingdom. His great wisdom and his honesty made Darius love him very much and wanted to elevate him above all the kingdom At that time,



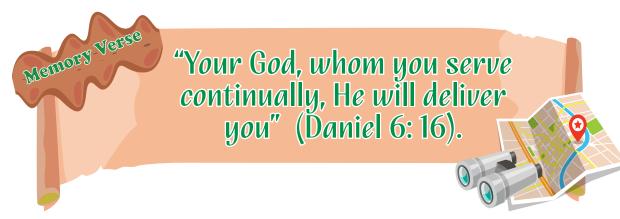
Daniel was around 90 years old... Some of the ministers tried to get rid of Daniel... they told the king to issue a decree saying: "that anyone who asks anything from any god or human other than you, Your Majesty, for a period of 30 days shall be thrown into the lion's den". But Daniel remained faithful to our Lord... praying as he was accustomed to every





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day. That's why they brought Daniel and put him in the lion's den... At that time the king said to Daniel:



Indeed, our Lord saved Daniel. God sent His angel and shut the mouths of the lions. The lions did not even scratch Daniel. The king felt really happy. He told the guards to take Daniel out of the den. The king punished the evil men who complained against Daniel and ordered his guards to throw them into the lions' den. King Darius announced in front of everyone that Daniel's God is the only true and everlasting God, and that His kingdom will last forever. This showed how Daniel stayed faithful to our Lord no matter what difficulties he faced.

Daniel was very special to many kings, such as Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon and King Darius in Media and Persia. Even the king who came after King Darius loved Daniel, especially after a special event that showed how God gives wisdom to His children, so everyone can know and glorify Him.



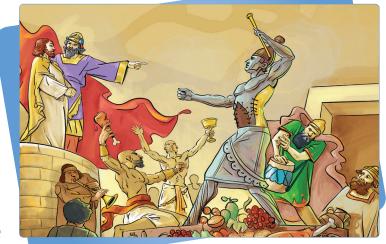


WHOM SHALL I FEAR? "Ps 27:1"

Lauren: I remember the story that happened with that king well and I can tell it to you. One day the king asked Daniel to worship an idol named Baal. The king thought that Baal is their god that cared for them. They also offered Baal lots of food.

Mina: How can an idol eat? What did Daniel do after the king's request? Lauren: Daniel bravely said, "I don't pray to statues made by people. I pray to the one true God who made everything." The king was surprised and said, "But this statue is a god! It eats and drinks!" Daniel explained, "No, statues are just figures made of clay and metal.

They can't eat or drink."
The king was very upset.
He brought the seventy
priests of Baal, and said
to them, "If you don't tell
me who is eating the food,
all of you will die. And if
you confirm that Baal is the
one eating the food, then
Daniel will be the one to die."







## WHOM SHALL I FEAR? "PS 27:1"

**Peter:** For sure Daniel agreed with the king's words, because he is certain that our Lord is the only true God.



Lauren: Indeed, that's what happened. The priests of Baal also agreed, and they told the king to bring food for Baal and lock all doors, sealing it with the king's seal. And the next day, if the king finds the food still there,

then all the priests will die. If the food is gone, then Daniel will die. At the end of the day they all left, and the king placed the food in front of

Baal, sealed the doors and went home.

At the same time, Daniel asked his servants to bring ash and spread it all over the ground. They sealed the door with the king's seal and everyone left.







WHOM SHALL I FEAR? "Ps 27:1"

The next day early morning, the king came with Daniel. When they opened the door, they found the food finished. The king was happy and exclaimed, "Great are you, Baal," because he thought Baal actually ate the food. But Daniel laughed and asked the king to look at the ground. He saw many footprints, and at that moment, they discovered that the priests made secret passages to enter the place and eat the food there. This way, people would believe that Baal was the one eating it. Then the king arrested the priests and gave Baal over to Daniel, who smashed it into pieces.

Uncle Tony: Bravo, Lauren! Daniel's life was full of difficulties and crises from beginning to end. However, he never complained or got upset. He always held on to our Lord. He faced any difficulty calmly without any worry or fear because he knew that: "The LORD is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid?" (Psalm 27: 1)

At the end of the trip, each group began presenting their research to the rest of the groups. Despite what happened to Marina, Lauren, Mina and Peter, they were able to conduct the research and present it to the other groups. Despite the challenges they faced, they did not lose hope, and demonstrated that the soil in this area may contain oil and valuable metals. Their group came in first place, and Uncle Tony decided that the research would be kept in the church library as a reference for everyone to study.





O Lord, my heart was not exalted, neither have my eyes been haughtily raised; neither have I walked in great matters, nor in wonders greater than me. If I have not humbled myself, but raised my soul, as a weaned

child with his mother, so is the recompense upon my soul. Let Israel hope in the Lord, from now and forever. ALLELUIA.









THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE (CH. 2: 25-32)

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





Graciously accord, O Lord, to keep us this night without sin. Blessed are You, O Lord, God of our fathers, and exceedingly blessed, and glorified be Your name forever. Amen.

Let Your mercy, O Lord, be upon us, according to our hope in You; for the eyes of everyone wait upon You, for You give them their food in due season. Hear us, O God, our Savior, the hope of all the regions of the earth. And You, O Lord, keep us safe from this generation and forever. Amen.

Blessed are You, O Lord; teach me Your statutes. Blessed are You, O Lord; make me to understand Your commandments. Blessed are You, O Lord; enlighten me with Your righteousness. Your mercy, O Lord,





WHOM SHALL I FEAR? "Ps 27:1"

endures forever. Despise not, O Lord, the works of Your hands. You have been my refuge from generation to generation.

I asked the Lord and said, "Have mercy on me, heal my soul; for I have sinned against You." Lord, I have fled unto You, save me, and teach me to do Your will, for You are my God, and with You is the fountain of life. In Your light shall we see light.

Let Your mercy come unto those who know You, and Your righteousness unto the upright in heart. To You belongs blessing. To You belongs praise. To You belongs glory, O Father, Son and Holy Spirit, existing from the beginning, now, and forever and ever. Amen.

It is good to give thanks to the Lord, and to sing praises unto Your name, O Most High; to show forth Your mercy every morning, and Your righteousness every night.





WHOM SHALL I FEAR? "PS 27:1"





WHOM SHALL I FEAR? "PS 27:1"





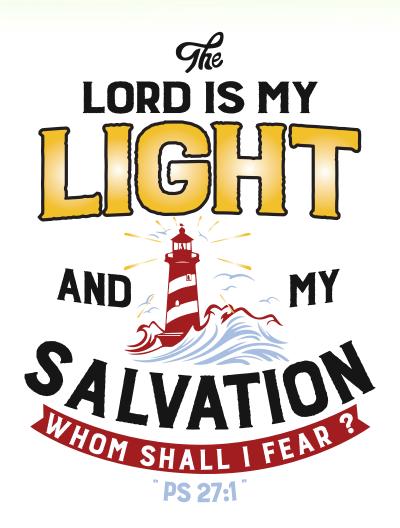
WHOM SHALL I FEAR? "PS 27:1"







WHOM SHALL I FEAR? "Ps 27:1"



Through the grace of God and under the auspices of His Grace Bishop David, Bishop of the Diocese of New York and New England. This Mahragan book was translated and formatted by the blessed servants of the Coptic Orthodox Diocese of New York and New England. All material was translated from the Arabic Language to the English Language.







### **COPTIC ORTHODOX PATRIARCHATE**

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