

2025-06-01: 24 Pashons - Lord's Entry into Egypt

Background

The Church arranges us the readings of the Holy 50 Days to reveal to us who the Lord Jesus Christ is.

- In the 1st week, the Lord confirms the faith of the disciples and reveals to them with Thomas His Resurrection
- In the 2nd week, the Lord tells us I am the Bread of Life
- In the 3rd week, the Lord is the One who gives us the everlasting water - the Holy Spirit
- In the 4th week, I am the Light of the World
- In the 5th week, I am the Way, the Truth and the Life
- That was last Sunday. Then, this past week on Thursday, we celebrated the Feast of the Ascension (blessed Feast to you all).
- Now on the 6th Sunday, we would have read the Gospel when the Lord tells the disciples "in the world you will have tribulation, but he of good cheer, I have overcome the world"

But this year is a little bit special. We have a special Feast that we are celebrating today - you can always remember June 1 (24 Pashons) - the Feast of the Lord's Entry into Egypt. It's a Minor Feast of the Lord. So when this Feast comes on a Sunday, like today, then we read the readings for it and sing the hymns for it.

So today our readings are based on the Feast of the Lord's Entry into Egypt!

Introduction

We know the story of the Holy Family flight to Egypt. As we read it today in Matthew 2. King Herod, after finding out that a King was to be born in Bethlehem, was determined to kill all of the infants in Bethlehem. An angel appears to Joseph and tells him to take St Mary and the Lord Jesus and go to Egypt. And the gospel tells us that they stayed there until King Herod died, and then they returned to Israel and went to the city of Nazareth.

This period of time that they spent in Egypt is unaccounted for in the Gospels - it's estimated to be 2-3 years

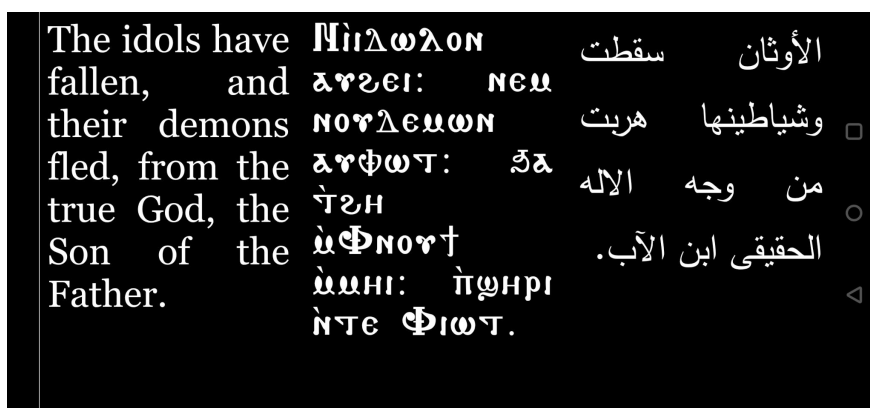
It is a great blessing for us, being Coptic Orthodox Christians and children of the Church of Alexandria - that the Lord visited Egypt. Even if I am not Egyptian by nationality or if I am not culturally Egyptian, as a Coptic Orthodox Christian, I belong to the Church of Alexandria - the Church of Egypt that was established by St Mark when he evangelized in Egypt.

And because of this, we have various traditions about the time that the Lord spent in Egypt!

In many different places in Egypt, you can go and see where St Mary laid the Lord Jesus - a rock that He laid on, a cave they slept in, etc. and altars are built on those sacred sites. There are many traditions in various places - the Synxarion recounts for us the story of the great saint, HH Pope Theophilos, to whom St Mary appeared and revealed many facts about the trip to Egypt.

In every place that the Lord went, there was a common theme - you know that Egypt was a pagan country in the 1st Century - they were still worshipping the gods of Ancient Egypt. And those gods would be represented by idols. But when the Lord Jesus went to a city, the idols tottered and fell. When He enters a city, the idols cannot stand His presence. He is the God of gods and the King of kings and they are demons - they totter at His presence.

As we prayed in the Psali last night:



This was prophesied by Isaiah 700 years before it happened: "Behold, the Lord rides on a swift cloud, And will come into Egypt; The idols of Egypt will totter at His presence, And the heart of Egypt will melt in its midst." (Isaiah 19:1)

Message

There is an important message that we can take from this

Egypt was filled with foreign idols - my heart can be too. Thoughts, Fears, Relationships, Desires or Lusts, Anger, Ambitions, Disputes, Sadness.

How can these be idols?

- They take away my focus
- They take from my time
- They use up all my energy
- I can lose my life worried about these things
- I can lose my future
- I can lose the effort that I have put in already

There is nothing more important than my relationship with God and my eternity - but if I am constantly focused on a relationship that God is not a part of, then I drive myself further from Him.

That relationship becomes my idol - taking me from my spiritual life, taking me from Liturgy and Vespers and Praises, causing me to sin, causing me to be a stumbling block.

If I am so driven in my ambition - my career and my education - that I neglect my spiritual life: no time for prayer, no time for Bible, no time for Liturgy or Vespers or Praises, then my ambition has become my idol and has become my god.

Dispute - sometimes I am in a dispute or I disagree with someone or I have a different school of thought and it becomes my idol. My mind is completely focused on this dispute "I am right and they are all wrong" and everyone around me is at peace but I am not at peace and I won't even allow myself to be at peace. So now the dispute itself has become my idol! Or anger itself has become my idol. I would rather be angry than to be wrong.

Desires - someone may go with the wind in his life. Whatever he desires he has it. If he wants a certain kind of food, he goes to get it. Doesn't matter fasting or not fasting. Doesn't matter if his wife labored at home to make him a meal - I want what I want, I go get it. Then my desires have become my idol. God forbid when he wants something sinful.

Something physical - money or possessions (car, house, brand name clothes or shoes, jewelry). If my first thought in the morning is about money or checking on my possessions then they have become for me and idol.

When the Lord entered Egypt, the idols tottered and fell. Let us take this Feast as an opportunity to pray to the Lord that He enters our heart and totters the idols of our heart.

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