

CHAPTER 5

BELIEF IN THE MIRACLES OF THE LORD JESUS

- A) Meaning of a miracle**
- B) The Devil and the miracles**
- C) How do we discern between the miracle and the
deception - the witchcraft and conjuration**
- D) The believers, sorcery and sorcerers**
- E) Belief in the miracles of the Lord Jesus**
 - 1- Healing of the Paralytic who was carried by four men**
 - 2- Healing the Hemorrhaging Woman**
 - 3- Opening the Eyes of Bartimaeus**
 - 4- Healing the Daughter of the Canaanite Woman**
 - 5- Healing the Servant of the Centurion**
- F) Contemporary miracles**

Before we speak about the subject of "Belief in the miracles of the Lord Jesus", we find it necessary to speak first about "What is a miracle" and the difference between a Divine miracle and the deception of the Devil. That leads us to speak about witchcraft and conjuration. We will then discuss the subject of the Divine miracles, about which there are many debates, and whether these miracles took place only in the early era of Church history. Also, what conclusion we draw from the miracles happening today by the intercessions of the saints?

A) MEANING OF A MIRACLE

A miracle is the wonder which causes astonishment, and is called a miracle because men are unable to perform its parallel. There are three synonyms to the meaning of a miracle in the New Testament: "wonders, mighty deeds and signs". As the Apostle Peter was talking about the message of Christ, he said: "Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by **miracles, wonders, and signs** which God did through Him in your midst" (Acts 2:22). Also as the Apostle Paul was talking about the legality of his apostleship, he said: "Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in **signs and wonders and mighty deeds**" (2 Corinthians 12:12).

We notice that the surprise caused by the happening of a miracle is not meant for itself, but as the sign which witnesses the nearness of God, His presence, and His work of intervention in making the miracle. It does not happen except by Divine intense power, and could not be from the work of man or the act of a human being.

We can summarize by saying that a miracle is the Divine work of God either directly or through one of His prophets, disciples or saints in a way which exceeds and surpasses all human discipline, arrangement or power. They are not a source of amusement or a phenomenon for curiosity, rather God has a noble purpose in every miracle he makes.

A miracle is any unusual, rare and uncommon occurrence. Normal means may be used in the miracle, yet these means could not end in astonishing results except for the actual intervention of God. **The purpose of the miracle is to reinforce or strengthen the witness for religion, or as a help or a rescue in which ordinary means do not work.**

The Old Testament presents to us a variety of Divine miracles such as the ten Plagues by the hands of Moses against Egypt; crossing the Red Sea; feeding the Israelites for forty years in the wilderness; making the sun stand still over Gibeon by one word from Joshua the successor and disciple of Moses; making the moon stand still in the Valley of Aijalon

until the people had revenge upon their enemies (Joshua 10:12, 13); raising the son of the widow of Zarephath by Elijah (1 Kings 17:17-24); raising the son of the Shunammite woman by Elisha (2 Kings 4:18-37); the angel of the Lord in the camp of the Assyrians killing one hundred and eighty-five thousand in one night (2 Kings 19:35); delivering the three young men from the burning fiery furnace (Daniel 3:15, 17), and shutting the lions' mouths so that they would not hurt Daniel in the lions' den (Daniel 6:21, 22).

The New Testament is full of miracles performed by the Lord Jesus and His Apostles and Disciples. In this chapter we shall talk about some of these miracles.

OBJECTIONS AGAINST MIRACLES:

Some people do not believe in miracles at all because they do not believe in God; they are atheists. Some others do not believe in miracles because they assume that it is impossible for God to change His natural laws which He laid down to manage the universe and His creatures. Rather He asserts these natural rules because He created them, and they function forever as they should.

Some people believe in miracles because they were recorded in the Holy Bible to prove the intervention of God and His dominion over the universe, and to insure the declared Divine Right. Others believe that miracles do not happen any more after the Divine Right was realised and acknowledged and after Christianity was established in the world. Hence miracles would not reoccur since their purpose and goal was established. This means that the era of miracles has ended.

There are some who insist that miracles are true, and still happen till now and that their message in testifying for God, His existence and His power did not end yet. There is nothing in the Bible which indicates that miracles happened for a limited period of time.

We now respond to the above points of view.

FIRST - concerning the atheists, we do not need proof for the existence of God in this research, it is not our aim in this book. The fact that God exists is stronger and more powerful than any claim an atheist can imagine.

SECOND - the claim that it is not likely for God to change His natural laws which He laid down to manage the universe and His creatures, is not acceptable. This claim means that natural laws are like another god which is equivalent to God and independent of Him, and are not subject to supervision and they are above all control and should not be interfered with.

This claim also means that God laid down these natural laws to look at them as a spectator, and is unable to do anything about them. It is like an engineer who constructed a huge machine and after making it run he stands watching its motion without being able to stop it or to increase or to decrease its speed as he wishes.

There is another matter of great importance, **that "material law" is but among many laws which God created, and not the only one. There exist for example the "humanities laws" which deal with the characters of human beings and their conducts whether in their own lives or in dealing with others. Such laws in the sight of God are superior to material laws, and throughout the ages God had intervened to correct and perfect them.** After healing the Paralytic at the Pool of Bethesda on a Saturday, the Lord Jesus said to the Jews: "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working" (John 5:17). These words were directed to the Jews who accused Him of breaking the commandment of keeping the Sabbath, which is one of the humanities laws.

On the other hand, what can we say about the recent ingenious scientific inventions which resemble miracles, such as sending rockets beyond the scope of the earth's gravity, and the astronauts who walk in space in weightless atmosphere, and recalling rockets to earth at the exact point and time which the scientists predetermine. **Can we say in such cases that the law of the earth gravity has been broken?** Let us illustrate by using another example: if we hold a piece of iron by our fingers and let it go, it falls down by gravity. Yet if we let this piece of iron be subject from above to a strong magnet, the piece of iron will not fall down, defying the law of gravity.

If the human will with its limited ability can defy the natural laws, could God with His complete and infinite will and power not defy any known or unknown laws? For God, a miracle is concluded by a simple command from Him.

The whole issue concerns the difference between man's wisdom and power and God's wisdom and power. What man considers unusual in his sight and for his abilities, on the contrary is simple and normal for God with His wisdom and power.

In summery there is no contradiction or breaking of laws in making miracles, but it is enslaving or controlling the laws by Him Who made them.

THIRD - the claim that miracles occurred only in the early history of the Church for the purpose of establishing and spreading of Christianity, there are no verses in the Holy Bible, specially in the New Testament, which specify a period for the occurrence of miracles. On the contrary the Lord Jesus said to His Disciples: "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. **And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink**

anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover" (Mark 16:15-18).

The history of the Church after the time of the Apostles and up till now, is full of the miracles which God did at the hands of His saints and the righteous people in every generation. Hence we say that miracles occur as long as there is a man or a believer on the surface of the earth. From the side of God, they are to help man, rescue him from difficulties, and to strengthen and encourage him. Besides, miracles witness to God that He still cares for His creatures in realization to His promises. Miracles will occur as long as man needs them, which is actually the case.

No one hesitates in confessing that there are numerous miracles which occur every day, such as the miracles of healing which happen after the doctors fail to cure chronic diseases, confirming the promise that what is impossible for man is possible for God: "But Jesus looked at them and said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26; Mark 10:27; Luke 18:27).

God is glorified not only in the miracles of healing but also in the miracles which He makes with His people as a Church. The God of miracles works up till now as he did in the Old Testament and in the beginning of Christianity. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). What the Apostle Paul says: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13) does not refer to Paul only but to everyone who believes, as Christ said: "All things are possible to him who believes" (Mark 9:23).

B) THE DEVIL AND THE MIRACLES

It is important to mention here that whatever man does using methods of deceit, inspiration, hypnotism, conjuration, or communication with the spirits is not considered a miracle. The basis of a miracle starts when all human power fails. **We now ask: "Can the Devil make miracles and wonders?"**

As a fallen angel, the Devil has the power to make wonders. This happened many times in order to show off his power in response to the real miracles of God. But at the end, victory is for God and for His power. We have a clear example in the miracles which God made at the hands of Moses in the ten Plagues. The Egyptian magicians tried to match with their magic

what Moses did. But what was the end result?

Before the first Plague, every magician threw down his rod and they became serpents. "But Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods" (Exodus 7:12). In the first plague the waters of Egypt became blood. "Then the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments" (Exodus 7:22). In the second plague the frogs smote Pharaoh's territory. "And the (Egyptian) magicians did so with their enchantments, and brought up frogs on the land of Egypt" (Exodus 8:7). **In the third plague which was about the lice, the Egyptian magicians stopped and declared their inability to match: Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God" (Exodus 8:19). That was the end result; failure of the magicians in front of the power of God.**

We would like to explain here that because of his nature the Devil has the power to make wonders which astonish people. This is what the Lord said to the people of Israel by the Prophet Moses: "If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying, "Let us go after other gods -- which you have not known -- and let us serve them, you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the Lord your God is testing you to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul" (Deuteronomy 13:1-3).

The Lord Jesus said: **"Many will say to Me in that day, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name? And then I will declare to them, I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!" (Matthew 7:22, 23). The Lord also said: "For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect" (Matthew 24:24).**

St. Paul said that the coming of the lawless one **"is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders"** (2 Thessalonians 2:9). St. John speaks in the Book of Revelation about the Dragon saying: **"He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived"** (Revelation 13:13, 14). He also says about the false prophet: **"Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshipped his image"** (Revelation 19:20).

C) HOW DO WE DISCERN BETWEEN THE MIRACLE AND THE DECEPTION

How do we discern between the deceit of the Devil and the miracle? We have to study the unusual event from three sides: the maker of the wonder, the means by which it is concluded and its aim.

The maker of the wonder should have a holy life and live the life of piety. If he were an evil sinner, then he is a liar, belongs to the Devil and his action cannot by any means originate from the Holy God. Also the means by which the wonder happened can tell and unveil its nature. Sorcery, soothsaying, witchcraft, conjuration, or the like, are devilish means and could not be from the will of God and from His Holiness.

We have the Holy Bible with its Old and New Testaments and we have the life stories of the pious and righteous saints, by whom we can discern how God made miracles and wonders through them. They made miracles by prayers which we all know or by a word uttered from the mouth of the saint.

Finally, the aim of the wonder or its intent shows to a great extent whether it was from God or from the Devil. Miracles, wonders and signs are not meant to astonish people or the like. Anything which separates man from God or from a holy life cannot come from God. Anything which leads to nonsense, deceit, amusement, cannot come from God. Would God the Wise perform a miracle or a wonder without a holy propose? Absolutely not. God performs a miracle for either glorifying His name, or for reinforcing peoples' faith, or for easing the pains of sicknesses, calamities and the like. Numerous are the deceits which appeared and still appear in our days, which unfortunately are believed by simple naive people and by even the educated as well.

We complement this subject in a brief way by talking about sorcery and conjuration and conclude by telling some stories from past and contemporary times concerning the Devil and sorcery, showing that they have no authority over the believers

D) SORCERY AND CONJURATION

Is sorcery true and does it exist? The answer is yes. But to start with we have to distinguish between sorcery and deceit. Many of the deceivers pretend to be sorcerers. They take advantage of the simplicity of some people and the difficulties which they go through and trap them in their deceptions. **True sorcery is doing unusual work which is beyond human capacity, and which no one can do without the power of the Devil. That is why sorcery is a sin!**

The New Testament mentions Simon the sorcerer "who previously practised sorcery in the city and astonished the people of Samaria, claiming that he was someone great, to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, "This man is the great power of God. And they heeded him because he had astonished them with his sorceries for a long time" (Acts 8:9-11). **The Book of Acts mentions that because of the active preaching of the Apostle Paul in Ephesus "Many of those who had practised magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all" (Acts 19:19).**

The Apostle Paul mentions that sorcery and idolatry go hand in hand and are among the works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19, 20). **In the Book of Revelation St. John mentions that sorcerers and idolaters shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone (Revelation 21:8), and they will be outside the heavenly Jerusalem (Revelation 22:15).**

In the island of Cyprus, in the city of Paphos, St. Paul resisted Elymas the sorcerer: "Then Paul filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him and said, "O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord? And now, indeed, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time". And immediately a dark mist fell on him, and he went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand" (Acts 13:9-11).

The above is what is recorded in the New Testament. Yet there are many complementing verses in the Old Testament. God said to Moses: "And the person who turns to mediums and familiar spirits, to prostitute himself with them, I will set My face against that person and cut him off from his people" (Leviticus 20:6). In this regard, the attitude of God and His wrath is clear and obvious, as He commanded Moses saying: "You shall not permit a sorceress to live" (Exodus 22:18).

Concerning conjuration we say that we believe in the existence of the spirits and their immortality and we call upon the saints seeking their help and ask for their intercession on our behalf, their assistance and prayers for us. That is without asking for their appearances to us to answer our questions. The spirits of the departed saints are not subject to the dominion of the living. They are entirely subject to the dominion of God and do not relocate except by His Holy will. **Hence it is not permitted for us to conjure the spirits of the dead by reciting a prayer or a psalm.**

In the Old Testament, the spirit of the Prophet Samuel appeared to King Saul, not via the woman medium whom he sought at En Dor but by the command and the will of God, so that He caught Saul red-handed committing the crime of going to a medium against the commandment of God (Deuteronomy 18:10; 1 Samuel 15:23). "When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice" (1 Samuel 28:12) indicating that she saw the spirit of the Prophet Samuel which completely differed from the evil spirits which she conjured by the power of the Devil or the jinn who accompany them.

We mention again that we are allowed to communicate with the spirits of the saints by prayers only. They may come to us and be of help to us according to the will of God which control them. **We have no authority over them and no one has the authority to conjure them or release them as he wills, as some people claim.**

Our Saviour explained this issue in the Parable of the "Rich Man and Lazarus" (Luke 16:19-31). When the Rich Man being tormented in Hades asked Father Abraham to send Lazarus from the world of the spirits to the world of the living, to the brothers of the Rich Man in order to warn them, lest they also come to this place of torment, Abraham said to him "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them" (Luke 16:29). That is they have the books of Moses and all the prophets and these are sufficient for them to learn.

Again it is not permitted for the saints to speak about anything in the other world, outside the limits drawn for them from God and revealed in the Holy Books. St. Paul had the chance to be caught up into Paradise by his spirit, but he did not permit himself to speak about the world which he saw. He only said that he "heard inexpressible words, **which it is not lawful for a man to utter**" (2 Corinthians 12:4).

Moreover, in order to guard the believers against deceit, the Divine Revelation warned us not to receive from the spirits any teaching or knowledge outside the teachings which are proclaimed to us in the Holy Books. The Apostle Paul says: "But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:8, 9). That means that the Divine Revelation prohibits the believers from receiving knowledge other than those designed by God, or to listen to an angel or a spirit whose teachings differ from those received from the Church.

The deceptions into which simple people fall are numerous, and they are from the Devil. The

Devil and his troops are strong fiery spirits which enjoy power, knowledge and fast movement. The Devil appeared to many saints, sometimes in the form of a man, woman, child, animal and sometimes in the form of a saint or a pure angel. St. Paul refers to this by saying: "**And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light**" (2 Corinthians 11:14).

In any case it is not proper for the children of faith to consult the spirits in order to enquire about something or to know the answer of a question. The Lord's command is: "There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For all who do these things are an abomination to the Lord, and because of these abominations the Lord your God drives them out from before you" (Deuteronomy 18:10-12).

The vengeance of God from those who seek sorcery or soothsaying is great. We have a stern example in the Old Testament of what happened to Manasseh the King of Judah who "caused his sons to pass through the fire in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom; he practised soothsaying, used witchcraft and sorcery, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger" (2 Chronicles 33:6). The vengeance of God upon Manasseh was the following: "The king of Assyria took Manasseh with hooks, bound him with bronze fetters, and carried him off to Babylon (2 Chronicles 33:11).

To justify seeking the sorcerers, some people say that there is sorcery for doing evil, that is rejected and forbidden. Sorcery is used for doing good, such as to bring two people together to love one another, and the like. That is all deceit, evil and rejected by God. The decree is that one should not seek except God and His help. Anything else is from the work of the Devil.

There is an important question which we pose here. Have the sorcerers authority over the children of God? The answer is: If sorcery is from the Devil, the Devil has no authority over the Children of God and the believers. If the Lord Jesus has given the believers the authority to cast out demons, would it be reasonable for the demons to have authority over the believers? The Seventy returned (to Jesus) with joy, saying, Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name" (Luke 10:17). He said to them: "And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; ... they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them: (Mark 16:17, 18).

E) THE BELIEVERS, SORCERY AND SORCERERS

We said that demons have no authority over the believers. Jesus said to His Disciples: "Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you" (Luke 10:19). As long as sorcery depends on the power of the Devil and is concluded by him, the sorcerers have no authority over the children of God.

We present some stories about the Devil and sorcery, showing that they have no authority over the believers.

a) The story of Justina and Cyprianus the sorcerer: Cyprianus was clever in his knowledge and sorcery. In the city of Antioch he met a young man from a famous family. The young man lusted for a Christian virgin who was called Justina. He tried to gain favor with her but could not succeed. He sought Cyprianus the sorcerer who promised to fulfil his desire.

Cyprianus used all the work of his sorcery and failed. Finally he called his devils and said to them: "If you do not bring Justina to me, I shall adopt Christianity". Here one of them tried to deceive him by disguising himself and to take the form of Justina. When Cyprianus saw that, he rejoiced and rose up to embrace her and as soon as he called her name, the disguised devil melted away and an unpleasant smell came out of his body. Cyprianus thought about his devils who could not stand to hear the name of a Christian virgin. He rose up at once, burnt his books of sorcery and became a Christian. The Coptic Church commemorates his feast on the twenty first day of the Coptic month of Tute.

b) The wonder which appeared at the hands of St. Basil the Great, Bishop of Caesarea of Cappadocia: A hired young man loved the daughter of his master and his heart was flamed with love for her. As it was impossible for him to marry her, he went to one of the sorcerers who wrote something for him on a piece of paper. He commanded the young man to go to the graves of non-Christians, stand there and raise his hand while holding this paper. The young man did that and Satan took the paper from him, asked him to write a covenant on another piece of paper to deny his Christian faith, and to never change his mind after granting him his wish. The young man agreed.

Satan kindled lust in the heart of the girl. She informed her father and asked him insistingly not to object to her marriage to this young man and threatened to kill herself if her father refused. Finally her parents married her to this young man, but they were praying with tears for God to lift up their sadness.

God answered their prayers. God opened the girl's mind and eyes and she found out that the young man was not a Christian because he did not practice any worship. She started to regret and weep over what she did. She revealed to him her doubts about his faith. At first he denied but soon he told her everything. The girl hurried to the Bishop of her city, St. Basil the Great, told him her story and asked him to rescue her. The Bishop called the young man, heard his story and asked him if he was eager to return to Christ.

The Bishop prayed over him, kept him in a nearby room and asked him to pray for three days. When the Bishop visited him, he told the Bishop that the evil spirits did not cease disturbing and troubling him. The Bishop strengthened him, prayed over him, and asked him to continue to pray in the nearby room. After forty days the Bishop went to visit him, and asked him about his state. The young man told him that he saw the Bishop fighting the Devil for him and that he defeated the Devil.

The Bishop gathered all the monks and the priests who prayed over him all that night. In the morning he led him into the church and asked the people of the city to attend the church. He asked everyone in the church to cry with a loud voice and say "Lord have mercy on us". As they continued to cry out, a paper fell from above. It was the covenant which the young man wrote to deny his faith which he gave to the Devil. The Bishop read this paper to the people, blessed the young man, gave him Holy Communion, returned him to his wife and blessed both of them. The Coptic Church commemorates this wonder on the thirteenth day of the Coptic month of Tute.

c) The story of St. Georges and Athanasius the sorcerer: Christian martyrs and confessors amazed their torturers to how they withstood pains and suffering, the torturers related it to the power of magic.

In the story of the martyrdom of St. Georges, a sorcerer named Athanasius was asked to prepare a strong poison for St. Georges to drink that would kill him at once. When they presented the cup to St. Georges he drew the sign of the cross over the cup, drank it and was not hurt. They related that to the magic sign, meaning the sign of the cross! In order to prevent St. Georges from drawing the sign of the cross, they tied his hands and gave him a cup of a stronger poison. Because of his strong belief in the sign of the cross, he looked to the cup and asked them: "Do you want me to drink from here or from there, from here or from there". By his head he was drawing the sign of the cross over the cup. He then drank it and was not hurt.

Besides drinking the cup of poison, St. Georges raised to life a person who was dead for a short while. All that was reason for the sorcerer Athanasius to become a Christian and was later

martyred by King Deocledian.

d) In this century a lady from the family of Bedard from the city of Nacada in Upper Egypt was ill for a long time: She was desperate and she called a sorcerer to heal her. When he entered her room he told them that the room was dark and not fit to do sorcery. They wanted to open the windows of the room, but he still refused. **When they insisted to know the reason, he said: "Frankly a pious man once slept in this room". They knew who this person was, he was the late Anba Marcos Bishop of Luxor, Esna and Aswan who reigned for 56 years and was a saint. He slept in the room 20 years earlier and obviously he prayed and read his Psalms in this room.**

e) This event happened in 1969 at the hands of the late Father Bishoy Kamel, Archpriest of St. Georges Church in Sporting, in Alexandria, Egypt: One of his daughters in confession named "Fawzia" was a student in the "Institute of Cotton" in Alexandria. She was in the last year and she used to fear sitting at her exams.

One day on her way to the Institute, which was located in a narrow street, she met at the beginning of the street a black woman. With a foreign accent the woman said to Fawzia, not to worry and to trust in God. Fawzia started to open up to this woman. The woman then told her some information about the Institute and also said: "Do not worry, I shall answer for you the examinations at the end of the year".

When Fawzia returned home that day, she told her mother about this woman. Her mother was pleased to hear the news about the examinations at the end of the year. Fawzia then contacted Fr. Bishoy by phone and when she did not find him she told her story to his wife. The wife of Fr. Bishoy was upset and told Fawzia that the black woman was a devil and next time you meet her ask her: "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ who are you?".

Next morning Fawzia met the black woman and asked her: "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ who are you?". The woman made loud noises and waved her necklace in the face of Fawzia to frighten her. But Fawzia drew the sign of the cross over the woman and over the necklace which then fell from the woman's hand, and went to her Institute shaking. Fawzia went to Fr. Bishoy in the same day. In a gentle manner Fr. Bishoy asked to hear her confession, gave her the Holy Communion and told her that he would make a "Candeel" for her.

The following day Fawzia again met the black woman who told her: "If Fr. Bishoy makes a "Candeel" for you I shall demolish a wall over both of you. Also your mother is restless at home (her mother was praying)". With courage, Fawzia told the woman: "You will not be able to do anything except by the permission of Christ".

The following morning Fr. Bishoy went to the flat of Fawzia, made a "Candeel" in the

presence of the picture of the Virgin Mary. He then sprinkled holy water in the flat. Fawzia then went to her Institute and saw the black woman paralysed. The woman said to her: "When Fr. Bishoy made the Candel for you, the light of the Virgin blinded my eyes and I cannot see except in your bathroom. The bathroom was the only place in the flat in which Fr. Bishoy did not sprinkle water. When Fawzia informed Fr. Bishoy, who prayed over a glass of water and asked Fawzia to sprinkle the water in the bathroom. In the last meeting with the black woman, she said to Fawzia: "See how I am now completely paralysed?".

F) BELIEF IN THE MIRACLES OF THE LORD JESUS

We mentioned that faith does miracles: "**All things are possible to him who believes**" (Mark 9:23). **In the New Testament there are many miracles which the Lord Jesus did by the faith of whom the miracle was made to; we realize the degrees of faith through their behaviour.** The Apostle James was correct to say: "I will show you my faith by my works" (James 2:18). **To illustrate that we speak about five of the miracles of the Lord Jesus which show the progression of faith and its levels.**

1 - HEALING OF THE PARALYTIC WHO WAS CARRIED BY FOUR MEN: (Matthew 9:2-8; Mark 2:1-12; Like 5:17-26)

This miracle happened in Capernaum. A paralytic lying on his bed was carried by four men who brought him to the house where Jesus was.

That house was full of people and more people were standing outside the house. As the four men could not find a way to enter the house, and as they were determined to seek Jesus and not to let this chance escape, they ascended to the top of the house and uncovered the roof. And when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying. **When Jesus saw their faith,** He said to the Paralytic: "Son your sins are forgiven" (Mark 2:5).

Immediately, an argument took place between a group from the Scribes and Jesus concerning His authority in forgiving sins. As Jesus wanted to give them pragmatic proof of His authority to forgive sins, He said to the Paralytic: "I say to you, arise take up your bed and go your way to your house" (Mark 2:11). And immediately he arose, took up his bed, and went out in the

presence of them all, "so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this" (Mark 2:12).

Bible commentators, including St. John Chrysostom a leader in explaining the Holy Bible, agree that the verse: "When Jesus saw their faith", does not only point to the faith of the four men who carried the Paralytic but it includes the faith of the Paralytic.

In this miracle we see faith which overcomes the difficulties it meets until it gets what it wants. It would have been easy for the four men to abandon their effort of seeking Jesus when they found themselves unable to enter the house where Jesus was. Rather, pressed by strong faith, they thought how to reach Jesus and presented their patient to the Great Physician. So they ascended to the roof of the house and when they had broken through, they let down the paralytic and the miracle took place.

2 - HEALING THE HEMORRHAGING WOMAN: (Matthew 9:20-22; Mark 5:25-34; Luke 8:43-48)

A woman was having a flow of blood for twelve years. According to the Old Testament Law, this woman was perpetually unclean, and whoever touched her shall be unclean and everything that she laid on shall be unclean; also everything that she sat on shall be unclean, and whoever touched her bed shall be unclean (Leviticus 15:19-32). Accordingly, because of being unclean, she was not allowed to take part in the worship. The teachers of the Jewish Law gave a legal opinion that such a woman be divorced from her husband. We can easily imagine the misery of this woman as she lived isolated from the society.

This woman heard about the Lord Jesus, about His great miracles and about His healing power. And she had suffered many things from many physicians and she had spent all that she had. Moreover, she was no better, but rather grew worse (Mark 5:26). But this woman said to herself, "If only I may touch His garment, I shall be made well" (Matthew 9:21).

That was what happened. This miserable woman collected all her psychological strength, and she came behind Him in the crowd and touched His garment; and immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of the affliction (Mark 5:27-29). She was healed instantly and her body was freed from its suffering.

Jesus turned around in the crowd and said: "Who touched My clothes?" These words of the Lord Jesus indicate that someone of a strong faith got hold of Him and that this person received the healing power which had gone out of Jesus as a result of this faith, and not as His Disciples answered Him: "You see the multitude thronging You, and You say, "Who touched Me?"

The question of the Lord "Who touched me?" shows that there is a difference between the multitude thronging Him, and the touch of the believing soul which needed Him!

Next the woman "fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth". The story did not end here, as Jesus revealed the reason behind her healing (her faith): **"Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction"**. This is the only occasion in the Bible where the Lord Jesus said the word "Daughter". **This story shows complete faith in the Lord Jesus.**

3 - OPENING THE EYES OF BARTIMAEUS: (Mark 10:46-52)

This is the story of a blind man who met Jesus on the road. As Jesus went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great multitude, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the road begging. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Jesus was in His way from Jericho to Jerusalem before the events of the Cross. As many warned him (Bartimaeus) to be quiet; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called. Then they called the blind man, saying to him, "Be of good cheer. Rise, He is calling you". **And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus. So Jesus answered and said to him, "What do you want Me to do for you?". The blind man said to Him, "Rabboni, that I may receive my sight". Then Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well". And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road.** Perhaps he was the last person to follow Jesus!

The blind Bartimaeus represents the insistence of faith which does not allow chance to escape.

4 - HEALING THE DAUGHTER OF THE CANAANITE WOMAN: (Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30)

This miracle was performed in the region of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a woman of Canaan who was a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician by birth, a Gentile atheist and she kept crying asking Jesus to cast the demon out of her daughter saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed". But the Lord answered her not a word. That was a strange and uncommon behaviour from Jesus whom the people knew as compassionate and gentle! He made miracles to many people without them asking Him first. But this woman kept crying and He answered her not a word!

The woman cried even more. And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, "Send her

away, for she cries out after us". But He answered and said, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel". What did the woman do after she heard the verdict of the Lord Jesus? She did not despair. She came and worshipped Him, saying, "Lord, help me!". Again His response was unexpected. He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs". In spite of the exterior cruelty in the words of the Lord, she said in humility, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table".

The Lord Jesus did not mean to insult this woman. He is the Holy and He is Perfect. But He meant to display the faith of this Gentile atheist woman. She showed great lowliness. She fell at His feet worshipping Him and by her persistence and her demand she showed her strong faith in Him and her insistence to get what she wanted. Nothing would deviate her from what she wanted.

How did the story of her meeting end? She displayed a profound and complete faith. Then Jesus answered and said to her, "O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire". And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

When faith reaches this level, it gets what it wants "Let it be to you as you desire". **The story of the Canaanite woman is the story of perfect faith which is supported with patience, humility and no despair.**

5 - HEALING THE SERVANT OF THE CENTURION: (Matthew 8:5-13; Luke 7:2-10)

This miracle happened in Capernaum, the unbelieving city, upon which the Lord Jesus said: "And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you" (Matthew 11:23, 24).

The inhabitants of Capernaum were all Jews. Yet the Lord praised an atheist who was there and said: "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!" (Matthew 8:10). That person was a Roman atheist centurion and he was an amazing person who represented the conqueror. Yet he loved the Jewish people and they loved him, that they came to Jesus, and begged Him earnestly, saying that the one for whom He should do this was deserving, "for he loves our nation, and has built us a synagogue" (Luke 7:4, 5). This centurion was also a humane person as he loved his servant and wanted him to be healed.

The story is centred around the centurion's servant who was very sick and about to die. With great humility, this centurion felt that he is not worthy to meet the Lord Jesus, though he wanted to heal his servant. He asked the elders of the Jews to mediate and to ask the Lord Jesus. And Jesus answered their request saying: "I will come and heal him". **The Lord went with them towards the house of the centurion. While Jesus was near the house, the centurion sent his friends to tell**

Jesus: "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed" (Matthew 8:7, 8). As if he was saying, as a leader I can do what I want by giving a command and You (Jesus) can do what you want by giving a command.

When Jesus heard it, He marvelled, and said to those who followed, "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!" Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you". And his servant was healed that same hour. It was the discerning humble faith which exceeded the faith of those who believed in the God of Israel, that the Lord rebuked the Jews saying: "Many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 8:11, 12).

G) CONTEMPORARY MIRACLES

1 - The mother of Bishop Gregorius was a pious woman who loved the Virgin Mary greatly, and used to ask for her intercession and the Virgin Mary used to answer her requests and to appear to her.

Once her face was swollen and pus collected under all the skin of her face. As she did not like to show herself to physicians, she tried all kinds of home made means, but without any success. One day one member of her family insisted to show her to a physician. She asked him to wait for one more day. That night she fervently asked the Virgin Mary to heal her. During the night the Virgin Mary appeared to her in a dream, and stretched her hand to the face, as if the Virgin was trying to collect the pus to the lower part of the face, under the chin. In the morning, they found all the pus under the chin. They broke the skin, removed the pus and she was healed.

Again when she was on her death bed, she asked the Virgin Mary to heal her. St. Mary appeared to her in a dream and said to her: "I have asked my Son, and the matter is out of my hand". She knew then that she was going to die and that was what actually happened.

2 - The following miracle happened to a young lady named Yvonne Selim Rizk-Allah. At the time of the event she was living in the city of Tanta, and now she lives in the city of Beni-Sweif in Upper Egypt.

In the morning of May 5, 1946, she woke up with great pains in her right leg. That was twelve days after she gave birth to her first daughter. The doctors reported that the pain was the result of a clot in the right leg. They treated her without success. Two weeks later, the doctors told her father that the chance of her recovery was one in a thousand, and if she recovered she would be

using a cane to walk with.

In the room where she was lying, there was a big picture of the Virgin Mary sitting on a chair and over her legs was the body of the Lord Jesus after they took Him down from the Cross. Every time the pains intensified, the patient looked to the picture and said: "I have to break up this picture of the Virgin Mary because the Virgin Mary is not caring about me".

One day her condition totally deteriorated and three of the doctors reported to her relatives that she would die within two hours. She experienced low blood pressure and lost the ability to hear and to see. At that moment as she looked to the picture in the room, the picture was getting bigger and bigger until the Virgin had the normal size of a human. The Virgin Mary then stood up and put the Lord Jesus on the chair on which the Virgin was sitting. The room was filled with a very strong light similar to moon light.

The Virgin Mary started to talk to Yvonne with a frown saying: "What do you want? What do you want from me?". Yvonne replied: "Why are you frowning, I want to recover and be able to walk again". The Virgin responded: "You want all that!". Yvonne answered: "Yes and now". The Virgin Mary smiled and looked very very beautiful and said to Yvonne: "Take half a tablet and a capsule and you will recover". The Virgin held the capsule in her hand, it was the size of a 25 cent piece and was very hard. Yvonne said to the Virgin Mary: "There is a nearby glass of water, bring it, and let the capsule soften in the water before I swallow it". The Virgin did that and then said to Yvonne: "Now take the remaining half tablet". Yvonne replied "Put it inside the glass of water, so that I can drink it easily and be able to walk right now". The Virgin broke the half tablet into two quarters, dissolved one quarter in the glass of water which Yvonne drank, and gave Yvonne the other quarter to hold in her hand and said: "It is now soft, keep it so that you may remember me".

Yvonne answered: "I do not perspire at all and the doctors said if I perspire I shall recover". The Virgin replied: "You will perspire now". The Virgin then brought Yvonne a towel which was near the bed and put it on Yvonne's head and said: "Wipe your sweat with this towel.

After that, the Virgin Mary started to walk backward and become smaller in size, while she was smiling gently, until she reached the picture. She took the Lord Jesus and put Him on her legs and sat on the chair in the picture as before. Tears appeared on her face and the light went off. The patient said: "Why is the light off? I want some water to swallow the quarter of the tablet so that I can walk now". Her father heard her and asked for the tablet in her hand but could not find it. She then said: "I want to sleep, the pains are gone". She had a quiet sleep, perspired a lot, and in the morning she had a normal temperature.

Her father informed one of the doctors who treated her of what happened. The doctor could not believe himself and testified that what happened was a miracle. Next day she left her bed and was walking normally.

3 - A miracle which happened by Anba Marcos, the late Bishop of Luxor, Esna and

Aswan, after his death: He was a cousin to Anba Kyrillos the fifth, the Patriarch. Bishop Marcos reigned on his chair for 56 years and was known to be a pious man.

A girl named Anita Khalil from the city of Luxor became very ill around the year 1934 or 1935, and was about to die. They called all her relatives to bid her farewell. The relatives waited in the house for her to die. Her father was in a nearby room and he had great fondness of the late Anba Marcos who was dead for a short while. Yet before his death, a dispute erupted between him and Anba Marcos. In that room there was a picture of Anba Marcos. The father looked to the picture and said to Anba Marcos: "I know that you are still upset with me because of that dispute. Otherwise you would come and heal my daughter!". The father went into a light sleep and saw Anba Marcos saying to him: "Did not I tell you that I am not upset with you at all. Go, bring my shawl and put it on Anita (the father had kept the shawl of Anba Marcos, as a blessing in his cupboard). and I shall come in and anoint her.

Present in the house at that moment was a man named "Toma", an uncle-in-law to Anita who saw Anba Marcos with his own eyes outside Anita's room. This man said to Anita's father: "Would you not hold the hand of Anba Marcos?". The father asked: "Where is Anba Marcos?". Toma answered: "There near the stairs". They entered the room of Anita and found her well and healthy!

4 - The miracle with Mr. Daria a wealthy man from the city of Luxor, Upper Egypt, who was very sick with a third degree T.B.

At that time, around the year 1930, T.B. was a serious illness. This man went from Luxor to Cairo and then to Alexandria, looking for clever doctors to treat him, but without success. Finally he was advised to leave Alexandria to Switzerland for treatment. From Luxor some of his friends went to Alexandria to say goodbye to him and to encourage him.

In Alexandria they found that Bishop Marcos, the Bishop of their city (Luxor) was in Alexandria, in the Patriarchate there, so they went to greet him. They found Bishop Youanis, Bishop of Behera with him. One of the friends said to Bishop Marcos: "You Bishops are not making any efforts these days, you are letting Mr. Daria go to Switzerland for treatment and you should be able to heal him". The two Bishops went to the Pope at that time, Patriarch Kyrillos V, and asked him to pray over the patient. The patient came and knelt in front of the Patriarch who prayed over him for a whole hour. Finally the patient felt heat flowing in his body and was completely healed.