

SEASON OF THE GLORIOUS BIRTH OF OUR LORD

Announcement to Zechariah أحد بشارة زكريّا



LITURGIES INTENTIONS

SEASON OF THE GLORIOUS BIRTH OF OUR LORD

Announcement to Zechariah

Saturday, November 15 (Eng)

Sts. Gurias, Samonas & Habib the Deacon

4:00 pm +Steven Blair, *By his wife, Marlene, his children, Charlene & Steven, & their Families*

Sunday, November 16

St. Matthew the Evangelist

8:00 am Private Intention

9:30 am Private Intention

11:00 am 40 Day Anniversary +Michael Geha, *By his wife, Bassima, children, their spouses & Families*

Announcement to the Virgin Mary

Saturday, November 22 (Eng)

*Sts. Joachim & Anne, Parents of Our Lady,
the Virgin Mary*

4:00 pm +Maroun Mouawad, *By his wife, Habouba, children, Simon, Michael & Renee*

Sunday, November 23

St. Sassine, Bishop of Cyzicus

8:00 am Private Intention

9:30 am Private Intention

11:00 am +Said Boutros, Chafica Azzi & Elham Azzi, *By Pierre Azzi & Family*



SANCTUARY LAMPS

**For the Living & Deceased Members of
the Hassan Family**

Book your Sanctuary lamp Online:

www.stanthonylawrence.org/sanctuary-lamp/

Daily Liturgies

Monday, November 17

St. Gregory the Wonderworker

Rom 4:1-12/Jn 8:31-37

9:00 am +Jean A. Kalil, *By Victor & Elaine Azzi*

Tuesday, November 18

St. Romanos (Raymond)

St. Rose Philippine Duchesne (USA)

Rom 2:1-8/Jn 8:38-40

9:00 am +Deceased Members of the Goulart & Pereira Families, *By Dora Pereira*

Wednesday, November 19

Pope St. Pontian (+235)

Rom 2:9-16/Jn 8:41-45

9:00 am +Shaker Samaan & Fadi Youseff,
By Abboud Mallouh

Thursday, November 20

St. Gregory of the Decapolis

Rom 2:17-29/Jn 8:46-50

9:00 am +Jennifer L. Connelly, *By Deacon & Mrs. Nadim Daou & Family*

Friday, November 21 - OFFICE CLOSED

Presentation of the Virgin Mary in the Temple

Rom 3:1-12/Jn 8:51-55

NO LITURGY

MASS INTENTIONS

Liturgies are offered for many reasons:

- ◆ For the souls in purgatory
- ◆ In remembrance of our loved ones who are deceased
- ◆ In honor of someone's birthday
- ◆ Special anniversary, and more

Liturgy stipend or offering given, signifies the sacrificial nature of giving something of yourself to associate more intimately with Christ who offers himself in the Eucharist.

Please contact the Parish Office to book your mass intentions or for more inquiries.



"When God Speaks Through Silence"

Dear Parishioners,

This Sunday we reflect on the *Announcement to Zechariah* (Luke 1:5-25), the first chapter of the Christmas story. Zechariah, a righteous priest, receives the most extraordinary message: that his elderly wife Elizabeth will bear a son, John the Baptist, who will prepare the way for the Lord. Yet when the angel Gabriel delivers this divine promise, Zechariah hesitates and questions, "How shall I know this?" In that moment of doubt, his voice is taken away until the child is born.

Why did God choose silence? Silence in Scripture is never punishment alone; it is purification. Zechariah's muteness was not a divine rejection but an invitation to deeper faith. God silenced him so that his heart could learn to listen. In a world filled with words, opinions, and noise, silence becomes the place where God's Word can finally take root. When human reasoning fails to grasp divine mystery, silence is the only language of faith.

Theologically, Zechariah's silence represents the transition from the old covenant to the new. The priest of the temple becomes the witness of a new creation that cannot be born by human power, but only by the Spirit. His silence echoes the long centuries when the prophets' voices had ceased, and now, out of that silence, God's voice breaks forth again in the cry of a newborn child. It is the same silence that enveloped Mary's heart at the Annunciation, Joseph's contemplation in his dreams, and the night of Bethlehem when the Word became flesh.

In our own lives, God often speaks through silence, when prayers seem unanswered, when we wait for healing, or when our plans fall apart. In those moments, the Lord is writing something new, forming faith within us that trusts without seeing, believes without proof, and waits with hope.

A story is told of a sculptor who was once asked how he carved such a beautiful angel out of marble. He replied, "I simply chipped away everything that wasn't the angel." God did the same with Zechariah. Through silence, He chipped away fear, doubt, and self-reliance, until faith shone through. May we, too, embrace holy silence—not as emptiness, but as the sacred space where God shapes our hearts to believe in His promises.

In Christ's love,

Fr. Neemtallah (Edgard) Oneissy

OFFICE HOURS:

M-TH 10:00 am-3:00 pm

FRI OFFICE CLOSED

SAT By Appointment

DAILY LITURGIES @ 9 am

MON & WED (Ar)

TUE & THU (Eng)

WEEKEND LITURGIES

SAT 4 pm (Eng)

SUN 8am(Ar) 9:30 am (Eng)

11 am (Eng.& Ar)

Holy days of obligation:

Vigil Liturgy @ 7:00 pm

MEET OUR PRIEST:

Fr. Edgard -Neemtallah- Oneissy

pastor@stanthonylawrence.org

MEET OUR DEACONS:

Nadim Daou, James T. Demers

& David Leard

Sub-Deacons: *Antoine Nammour*

& George Merheb

CLERGY DAY OFF

Fr. Neemtallah: Fridays

SACRAMENTS

Baptism & Confirmation:

1 month in advance with the Pastor,

Donations: Church: \$200

Priest: Free Will

Matrimony: *Arrangements should be made by couples six months prior to the wedding date*

Donations: Church \$500

Priest: Free Will

Reconciliation: *One hour Before Thursday & Saturday Liturgies, or by appointment*

Anointing of the Sick: *Please notify the Rectory if a member of your family is ill, hospitalized, or unable to come to Church and would like to receive communion at home.*

Please refer to our website for more Sacrament Celebrations Guidelines.

OBSERVANCES

THANKSGIVING - Thursday, November 27, 2025 - No Liturgy - Office Closed

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

UPCOMING SESSIONS

Saturday, November 22 @ 5 - 7pm

Please visit our website for the yearly calendar

Our Religious Education program is looking for enthusiastic substitute teachers to join our team! If you'd like to learn more or get involved, please reach out to LawrenceReligious@gmail.com.



M-WINE

"We Serve Better Together"

Next Meeting: Monday, November 17 @ 7pm
Forgiveness & Reconciliation - Part 2

Family of St Sharbel & Our Lady of Lebanon Sodality



Thursday, November 20: Rosary @ 6:30pm
followed by The Liturgy & procession

Every Tuesday—Zoom Prayer @ 8pm
Zoom ID: 335616991 Passcode: 816342

Or you can join by clicking this link:
<https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/335616991>

For more information email:
communications@familyofsaintsharbel.org

DAUGHTERS OF SAINT ANTHONY

"The Oldest Organization of St. Anthony's Church"

SAVE THE DATE

Thursday, December 4th @ 12pm
Christmas Party & Luncheon

Stay tuned for more details

KNIGHTS OF THE ALTAR

Be a Knight of the Altar - Register online:

www.stanthonylawrence.org/application/



UPCOMING SESSIONS

For those who signed up for Friday classes:

Friday, November 21 @ 6:30pm-8pm

For those who signed up for Saturday classes:

Saturday, November 22 @ 11:30am - 1pm

Classes will be held in the CCD classrooms
Please send a little snack & water with your child.

KNIGHTS OF MARY

UPCOMING SESSION

Saturday, November 15 @ 5 - 7pm

BE PART OF OUR MINISTRIES

Religious Education

www.stanthonylawrence.org/registration-form/

Maronite Youth Organization -MYO

www.stanthonylawrence.org/registration-form-2/

Maronite Young Adults -MYA

Please email the Parish to add your name to the MYA Group: rectory@stanthonylawrence.org

Knights of Mary -KOM

www.stanthonylawrence.org/registration-form-4/

Knights of the Altars

www.stanthonylawrence.org/application/

In addition our Parish takes pride and invites you to be part of the other ministries such as:

- **Daughters of St Anthony**
- **Our Lady of Lebanon Sodality**
- **Sunshine Committee**
- **M-Wine**
- **Bereavement Ministry**
- **Ushers**
- **Men's Ministry**



St. Anthony



Knights of Columbus Men's Group
Thanksgiving Food Drive

Please help us assist the Maronite Monks at
Petersham and consider donating the
following:

- Honey
- Canned Vegetables
- Pure Maple Syrup
- Canned Soup
- Dried Lentils
- Dried Fruit
- Cheese (any)
- Healthy Breakfast Cereal
- Onions
- Ketchup-Mustard-Relish
- Potatoes
- Lemon Juice
- Old Fashioned Oats
- Stevia Sweetener Packets
- Brown Rice-Barley-Quinoa
- Za'atar
- Canned Chicken Salad
- Canned Chickpeas
- Canned Tuna-Sardines
- Canned Tomato Paste
- Canned Sliced Mushrooms
- Canned Diced Tomatoes
- Canned Green Beans, Carrots
- Pasta Sauce (Ragu etc.)

Please drop off food items in the church lobby by
November 23, 2025

Thank you for your generosity & continued support



ST. ANTHONY'S CHURCH SHAWARMA LUNCH

*A fundraising effort to support
Family of St Charbel*

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 23, 2025
10:30AM-2:00PM
145 AMESBURY ST. LAWRENCE, MA

Chicken Shawarma

Garlic, pickles, French fries

- **Sandwich** \$12
- **Plate \$15** (includes soda)
- **Family platter \$45**
(includes bread, 16oz Tabouli & Hummus)

Beef Shawarma

Tahini sauce, parsley, tomato, onion, pickles

- **Sandwich** \$14
- **Plate \$17** (includes soda)
- **Family platter \$55**
(includes bread, 16oz Tabouli & Hummus)

Sides

Tabouli, Hummus, Rice or French fries \$5
Soda or Water \$2





BIRTHDAY WISHES

November 15: Melhem Azzi, Mila Azzi, Katy Bailin, Laure El Feghali, Katy Kalil, Eden Sfeir
November 16: Logan Gabriel, Leslie Hassan
November 17: Natasha Hashem, Pascal Zaarour
November 18: Chaouki Bouchrouche, Amale Chantiri, Andrew Dabrowski, Fadi Francis
November 19: Rana Abi-Rached, Ana Bradley, Ayla Jean, Nadine Sader, Wayne Swanson
November 20: Pierre Abdilmasih, Marie Akiki, Fredy Corey, Roy Rached, Sharbel Saab, Michele Sfeir
November 21: Louis Assaf, Rita Azzi, Gabriel Farhat, Michael Karam, George Saad, Erin Sadek, Bernice Spencer

ANNIVERSARY WISHES

November 15: Bradford & Paula Brooks
November 19: Mounir & Antoinette Jermany
November 20: James & Lisa Abdallah, Joseph & Maria Azzi, Kenneth & Maureen Daher

WEEKLY CONTRIBUTIONS

11/09/2025

Candles	\$123.00
Sunday Collection	\$2,664.00
Utilities, Fuel & Electricity	\$200.00
Maronite Patriarchal Charity	\$740.45
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	\$3,727.45

Thank you for your generous support to our parish. Please remember to remit your Fuel/Utilities Envelope. Your contribution helps us keep the heat on in the Winter and the AC on in the Summer.

OUR SYMPATHIES TO

The loving family of **Anis Melham Chahine**, husband of the late **Therese (Al Sayah) Chahine**, who passed away peacefully on November 4.

We express our sincere condolences to his children, Sami (Sayde), Fadi (Hannan), Lina (Geryes Hakim), Amal (Joseph Parsekhian), Jay (Francis), Micheline (Paul Karam) his grandchildren & great-grandchildren, as well as extended family members.

May the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace and their memories be eternal

LECTORS SCHEDULE

Saturday, November 15
 4:00 pm - Susan Kalil
Sunday, November 16
 8:00 am - Huguette Sfeir
 9:30 am - Michael Faris
 11:00 am - (Eng) Michelle Korbani
 (Ar) Hicham Geha

LECTORS SCHEDULE

Saturday, November 22
 4:00 pm - Pat Ferguson
Sunday, November 23
 8:00 am - Hitaf Nammour
 9:30 am - Joey Safi
 11:00 am - (Eng) Elias Azzi
 (Ar) Sub-deacon Antoine Nammour



Saint Anthony Maronite Church

Celebrating the birth of Jesus
through faith, color, and creativity!

CHRISTMAS DRAWING COMPETITION 2025



You are invited to express
the joy of Christ's birth through art.
you must reflect
the spiritual meaning of Christmas –
the Nativity, the Holy Family, or any symbol
of Christ's light and peace and you should inspire
faith, joy, and hope, in harmony with the Advent and
Christmas season.

Size: 8.5 x 11 inches (standard paper) or 11 x 14 inches maximum.

Cash Prize:
\$200



**art works
presented
will be displayed
during the
Meelad Christmas
Festival**



**and
many
more
surprises**

Submission Deadline: Sunday, December 11, 2025

Final Decision & Announcement of Winners:

Sunday, December 14, 2025,

during the Tree lighting

Submit your artwork by December 11, 2025,
to be delivered to the Parish Office (in person).

Include your full name, age, phone number,
on the back of the artwork.

For more information, please contact:

rectory@stanthonylawrence.org (978) 685-7233

Let your creativity reflect
the true meaning of Christmas love, hope, and light!



Announcement to Zechariah

Book of Genesis 17:15-22

God said to Abraham, 'As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall give rise to nations; kings of peoples shall come from her.' Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said to himself, 'Can a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Can Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?' And Abraham said to God, 'O that Ishmael might live in your sight!' God said, 'No, but your wife Sarah shall bear you a son, and you shall name him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him. As for Ishmael, I have heard you; I will bless him and make him fruitful and exceedingly numerous; he shall be the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this season next year.' And when he had finished talking with him, God went up from Abraham.

Letter to the Romans 4:13-25

The promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation. For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, as it is written, 'I have made you the father of many nations') in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become 'the father of many nations', according to what was said, 'So numerous shall your descendants be.' He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. Therefore his faith 'was reckoned to him as righteousness.' Now the words, 'it was reckoned to him', were written not for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.

Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Saint Luke 1:1-25

Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed. In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife was a descendant of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years. Once when he was serving as priest before God and his section was on duty, he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and offer incense. Now at the time of the incense-offering, the whole assembly of the people was praying outside. Then there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified; and fear overwhelmed him. But the angel said to him, 'Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John. You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He must never drink wine or strong drink; even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit. He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.' Zechariah said to the angel, 'How will I know that this is so? For I am an old man, and my wife is getting on in years.' The angel replied, 'I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. But now, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time, you will become mute, unable to speak, until the day these things occur.' Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah, and wondered at his delay in the sanctuary. When he did come out, he could not speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the sanctuary. He kept motioning to them and remained unable to speak. When his time of service was ended, he went to his home. After those days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she remained in seclusion. She said, 'This is what the Lord has done for me when he looked favorably on me and took away the disgrace I have endured among my people.'

أحد بشارة زكريّا

سفر التكوين 17: 15 - 22

قَالَ اللَّهُ لِإِبْرَاهِيمَ: «سَارَايَ امْرَأَتُكَ لَا تَسْمِيهَا سَارَايَ، بَلْ سَمِّهَا سَارَةُ. وَأَنَا أَبَارِكُهَا وَأَرْزُقُكَ مِنْهَا ابْنًا وَأَبَارِكُهَا فَتَصِيرُ أُمَمًا، وَمُلُوكٌ شُعُوبٌ مِنْهَا يَخْرُجُونَ». «فَسَقَطَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ عَلَى وَجْهِهِ وَضَجَّكَ، وَقَالَ فِي قَلْبِهِ: «الْإِبْنُ مِئَةَ سَنَةٍ يُولَدُ وَلَدًا، أَمْ سَارَةُ وَهِيَ ابْنَةُ تِسْعِينَ سَنَةً، تَلِدُ؟». «فَقَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ لِلَّهِ: «لَوْ أَنَّ إِسْمَاعِيلَ يَحْيَا أَمَامَ وَجْهِكَ!». «فَقَالَ اللَّهُ: «بَلْ سَارَةُ امْرَأَتُكَ سَتَلِدُ لَكَ ابْنًا وَسَمِّهِ إِسْحَاقَ، وَأَقِيمَ عَهْدِي مَعَهُ، عَهْدًا أَبَدِيًّا، لَأَكُونَ لَهُ إِلَهًا لِنَسْلِهِ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ. وَأَمَّا إِسْمَاعِيلُ فَقَدْ سَمِعْتُ قَوْلَكَ فِيهِ. وَهَاءَ نَذَا أَبَارِكُهُ وَأَتَمِّمَهُ وَأَكْثِرُهُ جَدًّا، وَيَلِدُ اثْنَيْ عَشَرَ رَئِيسًا، وَأَجْعَلُهُ أُمَّةً عَظِيمَةً. غَيْرَ أَنَّ عَهْدِي أَقِيمُهُ مَعَ إِسْحَاقَ الَّذِي تَلِدُهُ لَكَ سَارَةُ فِي مِثْلِ هَذَا الْوَقْتِ مِنَ السَّنَةِ الْمُقْبِلَةِ. «فَلَمَّا أَنْتَهَى اللَّهُ مِنْ مُخَاطَبَةِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، ارْتَفَعَ عَنْهُ.

رسالة القديس بولس إلى أهل رومة 4: 13-25

يَا إِخْوَتِي، الْوَعْدُ لِإِبْرَاهِيمَ أَوْ لِنَسْلِهِ بِأَنْ يَكُونَ وَارِثًا لِلْعَالَمِ، لَمْ يَكُنْ بِوَاسِطَةِ الشَّرِيعَةِ، بَلْ بِالْبِرِّ الَّذِي نَالَهُ بِالْإِيمَانِ. فَلَوْ كَانَ أَهْلُ الشَّرِيعَةِ هُمُ الْوَارِثِينَ، لَأَبْطُلَ الْإِيمَانُ، وَالْغِييَ الْوَعْدُ؛ لِأَنَّ الشَّرِيعَةَ تُسَبِّبُ غَضَبَ اللَّهِ؛ وَحَيْثُ لَا شَرِيعَةَ، فَلَا تَعْدِي لِلشَّرِيعَةِ. لِذَلِكَ فَأَهْلُ الْإِيمَانِ هُمُ الْوَارِثُونَ، لِكَيْ تَكُونَ الْوَرَاثَةُ هِبَةً مِنَ اللَّهِ. وَهَكَذَا تَحَقَّقَ الْوَعْدُ لِكُلِّ نَسْلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، لَا لِلنَّسْلِ الَّذِي هُوَ مِنْ أَهْلِ الشَّرِيعَةِ فَحَسَبَ، بَلْ أَيْضًا لِلنَّسْلِ الَّذِي هُوَ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْإِيمَانِ، إِيْمَانِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، الَّذِي هُوَ أَبٌ لَنَا أَجْمَعِينَ؛ كَمَا هُوَ مَكْتُوبٌ: «إِنِّي جَعَلْتُكَ أَبَا لَأُمَمٍ كَثِيرَةٍ». «فَإِبْرَاهِيمُ الَّذِي آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ هُوَ أَبٌ لَنَا أَمَامَ اللَّهِ، الَّذِي يُخَيِّ الْأَمْوَاتِ، وَيَدْعُو غَيْرَ الْمَوْجُودِ إِلَى الْوُجُودِ. وَقَدْ آمَنَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَاجِيًا عَلَى غَيْرِ رَجَاءٍ، بِأَنَّهُ سَيَصِيرُ أَبًا لَأُمَمٍ كَثِيرَةٍ، كَمَا قِيلَ لَهُ: «هَكَذَا يَكُونُ نَسْلُكَ». «وَلَمْ يَضْعُفْ بِإِيمَانِهِ، بَرَّغِمَ أَنَّهُ رَأَى، وَهُوَ ابْنُ نَحْوِ مِئَةِ سَنَةٍ، أَنَّ جَسَدَهُ مَائِتٌ، وَأَنَّ حَسَا سَارَةَ قَدْ مَاتَتْ. وَبِنَاءٍ عَلَى وَعْدِ اللَّهِ، مَا شَكَّ وَلَا تَرَدَّدَ، بَلْ تَقَوَّى بِالْإِيمَانِ، وَمَجَّدَ اللَّهَ. وَأَيُّقِنَ مَلَأَ الْيَقِينَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ قَادِرٌ أَنْ يُنْجِزَ مَا وَعَدَ بِهِ. فَلِذَلِكَ حُسِبَ لَهُ إِيْمَانُهُ بَرًّا. وَلَمْ يُكْتَبْ مِنْ أَجْلِهِ وَحْدَهُ أَنَّهُ «حُسِبَ لَهُ بَرًّا»، بَلْ كُتِبَ أَيْضًا مِنْ أَجْلِئَا، نَحْنُ الَّذِينَ سَيُحْسَبُ لَنَا بَرًّا، لِأَنَّنَا نُوْمِنُ بِالَّذِي أَقَامَ مِنْ بَيْنِ الْأَمْوَاتِ يَسُوعَ رَبَّنَا، الَّذِي أَسْلَمَ مِنْ أَجْلِ زِلَاتِنَا، وَأَقِيمَ مِنْ أَجْلِ تَبْرِيرِنَا.

إنجيل القديس لوقا 1: 1-25

بِمَا أَنَّ كَثِيرِينَ أَخَذُوا يُرَتِّبُونَ رَوَايَةَ لِأَلْحَدَاتِ الَّتِي تَمَّتْ عِنْدَنَا، كَمَا سَلَّمَهَا إِلَيْنَا مَنْ كَانُوا مُنْذُ الْبَدْءِ شُهُودَ عَيَانٍ لِلْكَلِمَةِ، ثُمَّ صَارُوا خُدَامًا لَهَا، رَأَيْتُ أَنَا أَيْضًا، أَيُّهَا الشَّرِيفُ تِيْمُوثِيُوسُ، أَنْ أَكْتُبَهَا لَكَ بِحَسَبِ تَرْتِيبِهَا، بَعْدَمَا تَتَّبَعْتُهَا كُلَّهَا، مُنْذُ بَدَايَتِهَا، تَتَّبَعًا دَقِيقًا، لِكَيْ تَتَّيَقَنَ صِحَّةَ الْكَلَامِ الَّذِي وَعُظْتُ بِهِ. كَانَ فِي أَيَّامِ هِيرُودُسَ، مَلِكِ الْيَهُودِيَّةِ، كَاهِنٌ أَسْمُهُ زَكْرِيَّا، مِنْ فِرْقَةِ أَبِييَا، لَهُ أَمْرَأَةٌ مِنْ بَنَاتِ هَارُونَ أَسْمُهَا إِلِيصَابَاتُ. وَكَانَا كِلَاهُمَا بَارَيْنِ أَمَامَ اللَّهِ، سَالِكَيْنِ فِي جَمِيعِ وَصَايَا الرَّبِّ وَأَحْكَامِهِ بِلَا لُومٍ. وَمَا كَانَ لَهُمَا وَلَدٌ، لِأَنَّ إِلِيصَابَاتَ كَانَتْ عَاقِرًا، وَكَانَا كِلَاهُمَا قَدْ طَعَنَّا فِي أَيَّامِهِمَا. وَفِيمَا كَانَ زَكْرِيَّا يَقُومُ بِالْخِدْمَةِ الْكَهْنُوتِيَّةِ أَمَامَ اللَّهِ، فِي أَثْنَاءِ تَوْبَةِ فِرْقَتِهِ، أَصَابَتْهُ الْفُرْعَةُ، بِحَسَبِ عَادَةِ الْكَهْنُوتِ، لِيَدْخُلَ مَقْدِسَ هَيْكَلِ الرَّبِّ وَيُحْرِقَ الْبُخُورَ. وَكَانَ كُلُّ جُمْهُورِ الشَّعْبِ يُصَلِّي فِي الْخَارِجِ، فِي أَثْنَاءِ إِحْرَاقِ الْبُخُورِ. وَتَرَاءَى مَلَكَ الرَّبِّ لِزَكْرِيَّا وَاقِفًا مِنْ عَن يَمِينِ مَذْبَحِ الْبُخُورِ، فَاضْطَرَبَ زَكْرِيَّا حِينَ رَأَاهُ، وَاسْتَوَلَى عَلَيْهِ الْخَوْفُ. فَقَالَ لَهُ الْمَلَكُ: «لَا تَخَفْ، يَا زَكْرِيَّا، فَقَدْ اسْتَجِيبَتْ طِلْبَتُكَ، وَأَمْرَأَتُكَ إِلِيصَابَاتُ سَتَلِدُ لَكَ ابْنًا، فَسَمِّهِ يُوْحَنَّا. وَيَكُونُ لَكَ فَرْحٌ وَابْتِهَاجٌ، وَيَفْرَحُ بِمَوْلِدِهِ كَثِيرُونَ، لِأَنَّهُ سَيَكُونُ عَظِيمًا فِي نَظَرِ الرَّبِّ، لَا يَشْرَبُ خَمْرًا وَلَا مُسْكِرًا، وَيَمْتَلِئُ مِنَ الرُّوحِ الْقُدُسِ وَهُوَ بَعْدُ فِي حَسَا أُمِّهِ. وَيَزِدُّ كَثِيرِينَ مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ إِلَى الرَّبِّ إِلَهُهِمْ. وَيَسِيرُ أَمَامَ الرَّبِّ بِرُوحٍ إِبِلِيًّا وَقُوَّتِهِ، لِيَزِدَّ قُلُوبُ الْآبَاءِ إِلَى الْأَبْنَاءِ، وَالْعَصَاةُ إِلَى حِكْمَةِ الْأَبْرَارِ، فِيهِئِي لِلرَّبِّ شَعْبًا مُعَدًّا خَيْرَ إِعْزَادٍ». «فَقَالَ زَكْرِيَّا لِلْمَلَكِ: «بِمَاذَا أَعْرِفُ هَذَا؟ فَإِنِّي أَنَا شَيْخٌ، وَأَمْرَأَتِي قَدْ طَعَنَتْ فِي أَيَّامِهَا!». «فَأَجَابَ الْمَلَكُ وَقَالَ لَهُ: «أَنَا هُوَ جِبْرَائِيلُ الْوَاقِفُ فِي حَضْرَةِ اللَّهِ، وَقَدْ أُرْسِلْتُ لَأَكَلِمَكَ وَأُبَشِّرَكَ بِهِذَا. وَهَا أَنْتَ تَكُونُ صَامِتًا، لَا تَقْدِرُ أَنْ تَتَكَلَّمَ، حَتَّى الْيَوْمَ الَّذِي يَحْدُثُ فِيهِ ذَلِكَ، لِأَنَّكَ لَمْ تُؤْمِنْ بِكَلَامِي الَّذِي سَيَتِمُّ فِي أَوَانِهِ. «وَكَانَ الشَّعْبُ يَنْتَظِرُ زَكْرِيَّا، وَيَتَعَجَّبُ مِنْ إِبْطَانِهِ فِي مَقْدِسِ الْهَيْكَلِ. وَلَمَّا خَرَجَ زَكْرِيَّا، لَمْ يَكُنْ قَادِرًا أَنْ يَكَلِّمَهُمْ، فَادْرَكُوا أَنَّهُ رَأَى رُؤْيَا فِي الْمَقْدِسِ، وَكَانَ يُشِيرُ إِلَيْهِمْ بِالْإِشَارَةِ، وَبَقِيَ أَبْكَمًا. وَلَمَّا تَمَّتْ أَيَّامُ خِدْمَتِهِ، مَضَى إِلَى بَيْتِهِ. وَبَعْدَ تِلْكَ الْأَيَّامِ، حَمَلَتْ أَمْرَأَتُهُ إِلِيصَابَاتُ، وَكَتَمَتْ أَمْرَهَا خَمْسَةَ أَشْهُرٍ، وَهِيَ تَقُولُ: هَكَذَا صَنَعَ الرَّبُّ إِلَيَّ، فِي الْأَيَّامِ الَّتِي نَظَرْتُ إِلَيَّ فِيهَا، لِئَزِيلَ الْعَارَ عَنِّي مِنْ بَيْنِ النَّاسِ!

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